GUIDE TO THE FA28 MOSSI FILE

[The Mossi file consists of twelve sources, five of which are translations from the French. The main sources are 1: Delobsom, 2: Mangin, and 6: Tauxier, all French translations, and 11: Skinner. 1: Delobsom is a general, fairly superficial survey of many aspects of Mossi life, with an emphasis on the political structure. 2: Mangin is a well-rounded, competent sketch of Mossi culture, emphasizing the material aspects. 3: Tauxier is largely a reconstruction of Mossi history. 4: Skinner discusses Mossi political organization from several viewpoints. 5: Hammond evaluates changes in the culture of those Mossi resettled in the Niger Irrigation Project. 6: Tauxier, a section from a long general work, describes occupations, family and political life, and religion. 7: Tauxier describes much the same material although with a different emphasis. 8: Skinner studies the effects of Christian and Moslem missionary work on Mossi religion. 9: Skinner analyzes patterns of succession to political office; 10: Hammond discusses the implications of Mossi joking relationships. 11: Skinner is an intensive study of Mossi political development, and 12: Skinner discusses Mossi trade and markets.

Of the authors, Tauxier was a colonial administrator with ethnological training, Mangin a Roman Catholic missionary, Dim Delobsom an educated native Mossi. Skinner and Hammond are American-trained cultural anthropologists.

In general, this file is adequate for cross-cultural purposes. There is material, superficial in many respects, on nearly every aspect of Mossi culture. Especially strong is the coverage on political organization, the family, religion and agriculture. Reliable information on kinship, physical anthropology and language is scanty. Information on clientage, the attaching of one's self to a richer household, has been placed in Category 566. The file was processed between 1959 and 1968.]

114 today; if it provides ethnography with new materials; if it makes the native better known to missionaries, administrators, officers, colonists, and merchants, and thus better understood; and if cordial relations between the native and ourselves are thereby facilitated. Railroads will soon open up and profoundly modify the country. While there is still time, let us hasten to record the mentality of this people in its primitive form. We were able to gather data which we believe reflect the truth quite closely, thanks to the circumstances of our stay in Mossi country: ten consecutive years among its people, of which seven were spent in Koupéla; a knowledge of the language sufficient to maintain a running conversation on any subject whatever with the natives; and the close contact into which our ministry brought us with the village inhabitants. We shall be the first to acknowledge, however, that errors may have crept in here and there. It is very difficult to obtain a precise piece of information, and several natives questioned on the same subject often gave different answers. We were forced to make choices, and although we always tended to adopt the story which appeared to offer the greatest number of safeguards, we may have been wrong at times.

It must not be forgotten that our goal is not to provide a complete record of Mossi manners and customs. This was not possible, it would have been onerous, and we did not feel that it was necessary in order to present what we consider to be a generally accurate over-all picture of these people. Truthfulness compels us to point out that these materials were gathered for the most part in the province of Koupéla and, therefore, bear the impress of that locality. Our fellow-workers in Ouagadougou were kind enough to provide us with some information, but we were unable to obtain any data on the Yatenga region. God permitting, we shall round out these notes in a more comprehensive work.

101 Before we broach our subject, one remark is in order. It has be-
104 come usual to speak of the Mossi, of a Mossi, of the Mossi language, as though the word did not vary. We shall follow this custom and always write "Mossi" in the singular and in the plural, although the true name of this people is Moara, plural Mosé. Likewise, we have spelled geographical names in accordance with the practice of the Administration, so as to avoid the appearance of wishing to reform everything.

000 May we thank here all those from far and near who have helped us with this work, and especially those who have contributed the interesting photographs that illustrate it.

5: Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1959
FA28 Mossi FA28

PETER B. HAMMOND

13. *Economic Change and Mossi Acculturation*

121 Some five thousand Mossi from the kingdom of Yatenga in the Upper
178 Volta have been resettled on the newly developed lands of the Niger
[177] Irrigation Project in the French Sudan. Removed from a cultural setting
which has been relatively undisturbed by the influence of European
[166] civilization, they are required to adapt themselves rapidly to an economic situation structured and directed by Europeans. Economic organization being the variable involved, a study of their adjustment provides an opportunity to examine some of the cultural problems and processes related to economic development in underdeveloped areas.

131 Yatenga is the northernmost of four Mossi kingdoms located in the
101 Upper Volta. It is a sub-Saharan savanna land of red earth, low rainfall, gently rolling plains, and low hills. Ouahigouya, the capital, gives its name to the French administrative unit, the Cercle de Ouahigouya, which has governed the kingdom from its headquarters in this ancient city since its conquest in 1895.[1]

To distinguish themselves from the people of the neighboring king-
101 doms of Ouagadougou, Fada-N'Gourma, and Tenkodogo, the Mossi of
173 the Yatenga sometimes speak of themselves as "Yadise" (those of Yadiga). This name refers to the fact that they regard themselves as being descended, as a nation, from Naba Yadiga, the half-mythical warrior-prince from Oaugadougou who broke away from his father's dynasty to form the separate political entity, Yatenga, which bears his name (*ya* for "Yadiga" and *tenga* for "country"). The Mossi have not always been numerically and culturally dominant in the Yatenga, as they are today. They recognize that their ancestors came from the south, from Mamprusi and Dagomba in the northern territories of Ghana.

171 Highly organized politico-religious states representing the cultural amalgamation of native and foreign populations and institutions are characteristic of the Voltaic region of West Africa. Acknowledging that we "owe to Rattray the discovery that these central Voltaic tribes are

[1] Capitaine Noire, *Monographie du Cercle de Ouahigouya* (Ouahigouya, 1904), p. 15.

/451/ Book Four

Black Warriors and Conquerors

Chapter I

The Mossi -- Occupations

101 The Mossi are settled between the twelfth and fourteenth de-
131 grees of north latitude, and between the second and fifth degrees of west longitude. To the south, they extend slightly beyond the twelfth degree of latitude. They are indeed to be found in Saraboutenga, Rakaye, Béré, and Tenkodogo, but this does not bring them too far south of the twelfth degree. To the north, on the other hand, they do not quite reach the fourteenth degree.

161 The Mossi form a rather large group which occupies, in the
563 center of the area, the circle /an administrative division/ of Ouagadougou; to the northwest, the circle of Ouahigouya; to the southeast, the residency /administrative center/ of Tenkodogo; and to the east of the latter, the circle of Fada N'Gourma. Of course, the Mossi do not make up the total population of these four districts. In the Ouahigouya circle, there are the Habé /Habe/ and Houmbébé /Humbe/ to the northwest, and the Samoro /Samo/ to the south. In the Ouagadougou circle, which may be regarded as the center of Mossi territory, there are the Kipirsi to the east. In the Tenkodogo residency there are the Boussansé /Busansi/ to the south and in the circle of Fada N'Gourma the Gourmantché or Gourmanké /Gurma/ to the east. The Mossi, however, make up
161 the /452/ greater part of the total population in all four areas. In the circle of Ouagadougou, they number 750,000, in the residency of Tenkodogo, 122,000, in the residency of Leo, 1,000. This adds up to 873,000 for the circle of Ouagadougou as a whole. Assuming that there are 200,000 Mossi in the circles of Ouahigouya and Fada N'Gourma (a very approximate figure), a total of 1,073,000 Mossi is obtained. This makes them by far the most numerous group in all of French West Africa. The whole of our Dahomey, for example,

10:Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1964 FA28 Mossi FA28
Yatenga

121 vented by the "playful antagonism of teasing," and he argued that the regular repetition of joking serves as a reminder of the social "disjunction" of the relation, while "conjunction" is simultaneously maintained by friendliness.

Such an analysis is insightful but inadequate. The social structural sources of the need for reliance on joking and the social and psychological processes which joking involves are more complex than Radcliffe-Brown recognized. More occurs in joking than the symbolic reification of "separateness" and the concurrent assertion of intergroup amity.

The Structural Context of Joking

In support of this contention I would like first to consider the characteristics of the structural contexts in which joking tends to be institutionalized. For it is from the nature of certain social structural situations that joking derives its reason for being.

I suggest that wherever joking is institutionalized, the relations between the participants will tend to be characterized by five interrelated factors:

(1) *separation:* either social or spatial or both;
(2) *reciprocity:* a traditionally sanctioned exchange of economic, social, or ceremonial goods and/or services;
(3) *ambivalence:* an equivocal mélange of amity and hostility;
(4) *equality:* analogous individual or group status;
(5) *independence:* the absence of relevant allegiance to a single authority.

Obviously the comparative weight of these several factors will vary with the relationships of which they are a part. Where, for example, spatial separation is great, and/or the reciprocal tie is weak, joking is likely to be mild. Where ambivalence is strong, joking may be relied on more frequently and may be more hostile in content. Where the status of the participants is unequal, joking may tend to be asymmetrical. And so on.

I further suggest that as an adjustive mechanism joking derives its significance from the manner in which it provides concurrently for the operation of three interrelated but analytically separable processes: communication, control, and catharsis. These will be considered later.

Joking Among the Mossi

101 The points in the argument just outlined may be illustrated by a brief discussion of the varieties of joking found among the Mossi living in Yatenga, an indigenous kingdom in the Voltaic Republic of West Africa. 571 Among the Mossi, joking is institutionalized as an adjustive mechanism in the following relationships: (1) between Ego and his mother's agnatic kin, particularly his mother's elder brother; (2) between Ego and his mother's brother's wife; (3) between siblings-in-law; (4) between sibs; (5) between age-sets in the same age-grade; (6) between certain villages; and (7) be-

10:Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1964 FA28 Mossi FA28
Yatenga

ship itself and the contract of interlineage co-operation and solidarity which every marriage serves to establish or reinforce.[4]

Although this joking interchange is seen in its full implications when there is an immediate source of dissension between marriage partners, it may also occur in the absence of any specific difficulty. Then it is apparently indulged in simply because it is expected, and for the pleasure which the Mossi, like all people, derive from an occasion to exercise their wit. It is this relatively disinterested joking which has been most frequently described in the literature, and this may account for the failure of many scholars to perceive more fully the important social and psychological functions which joking may fulfill.

Conclusion

This paper has been written as a tentative step toward a reformulation of the various and disparate observations on joking contained in the anthropological literature. I have contended that an analysis of this literature indicates that wherever joking is institutionalized the structural relationship between the participants tends to be characterized by five significantly interrelated structural attributes: separation, reciprocity, ambivalence, equality, and independence. I have also indicated that such joking may serve as an adjustive mechanism by providing for the concurrent maintenance of communication, control, and the culturally harmless catharsis of potentially disruptive emotions.

A variety of forms of institutionalized joking found among the Mossi of Yatenga have been cited to illustrate these points. However, I suggest that the factors which cluster with this reliance on joking as an adjustive mechanism are not unique to the Mossi. Institutionalized joking reported for other parts of Africa appears to be structurally and processually similar.

NOTES

1. A shorter version of this paper was read at the annual meeting of the American Anthropological Association held in San Francisco in November, 1963. It is based on field research conducted among the Mossi from 1954 to 1956 with the assistance of a Ford Foundation Fellowship.

2. Marriage between the members of descent groups united by a joking alliance is regarded by the Mossi as highly desirable, apparently in recognition of the useful role of joking as an adjustive mechanism. Once such a marriage is contracted, however, Ego and his wife must take care that their joking insults are directed only at the younger kinsmen of the other and that the insulting remarks are personal. It would, for example, be acceptable for Ego to call his wife's younger sister a disreputable shrew but dangerous to call her a slave (a term of disrespect used frequently in joking between sibs). To refer to her as a slave would cast unflattering aspersions on her entire kin group, including her mother and father, with whom, in their new status as parents-in-law, Ego may no longer joke.

3. I believe that joking is also institutionalized between the Mossi and the Yarse, a highly acculturated ethnic minority of Mande origin who live throughout Yatenga. There is also joking between the Mossi and the indigenous blacksmith caste. Unfortunately my data on these two instances of joking are inadequate.

121 [174] functioning of early Sudanese societies. It will also attempt to demonstrate how European conquest affected the political organization of the Mossi and contributed to its ultimate decline.

The kingdom of Ouagadougou was selected as the main object of study, primarily because it emerged as the most important Mossi polity and retained this position through the greater part of Mossi history. Attention will be given to the other Mossi polities and the three other Mossi kingdoms—Yatenga, Tenkodogo, and the more remote Fada-N'Gourma, all of which resemble Ouagadougou—only insofar as they affect the history of Ouagadougou or highlight the basic nature of Mossi government.

101 The Mossi are a Sudanese Negroid population in the new Republic of 161 the Upper Volta.[2] They number about 2,200,000, or approximately half of the country's total population. Their ancestral territory, which they call 131 *Mogho* (land of the Mossi), covers some 30,000 square miles in the southern 133 part of the Republic. It is a huge plateau, lying from 1,000 to 1,600 feet above sea level, and broken by three low mountain ranges and numerous small hills. The Kipirsi range in the northeast has an average height of about 2,000 feet and includes the sacred mountain of the Mossi, known as Plimpikou. The Boussouma range to the east reaches a height of some 1,500 feet, and the Naouri range in the southeast is almost as high.

132 The climate of Mossi country is typical of the Sudanic zone. There are two main seasons, one cold and dry, the other hot and wet. The first begins in November with the coming of the harmattan and ends in January, the coolest month, when the average temperature is about 70° F. and the humidity about 12 per cent. The hot season extends from March to October. In July, the warmest month, the temperature reaches a high of 88° F. and the humidity 78 per cent. Violent dust storms herald the rains, which begin late in May and end in September. The rain falls almost entirely in heavy showers and thunderstorms, and the average annual fall is between 30 and 40 inches. In those years when the rainfall is about 40 inches and is regularly spaced, the Mossi can look forward to a good harvest. When the rainfall is below 30 inches and is spaced irregularly during the planting season, the threat of famine is serious. So narrow is the margin of rainfall for agriculture that in 1956 the people of one Mossi district anxiously awaited "two rains" (two showers), without which they feared that in 1957 there would be a difficult "hungry period" (the time between the exhaustion of one year's crops and the maturing of the next).

133 Mossi country is drained by only three rivers: the Black Volta with its two chief tributaries, the Sourou and the Debere, and the Red and White Voltas with their numerous small tributaries. Only the Black Volta flows

The Mossi grow tobacco in fields around their

homesteads, where they also cultivate their most important cash crops, cotton and indigo, which are used in the manufacture and dyeing of cotton cloth.

The wild fauna of Mossi country include several species of antelope, deer, monkeys, rabbits, snakes, and wild pigs. Elephants roam the beds of rivers and streams and often destroy cultivated fields, while lions and hyenas distress the people by attacking livestock. The pools and rivers of Mossi country are inhabited by turtles, crocodiles, and various species of scaled and scaleless fish. Chickens, muscovy ducks, and half-domesticated guinea fowl are the most valuable species of birds.

The Mossi have long been famous for their splendid donkeys and horses. Donkeys are sometimes ridden, but they are used primarily as beasts of burden. Horses are important for military and ceremonial purposes and for export to the tsetse-fly zones to the south. The Mossi raise two main types of cattle: a zebu-like animal in the northern regions and a dwarf variety in the south. These animals are raised primarily for their milk and for export, and are seldom killed for meat until they are fairly old. Goats and sheep provide the main source of meat. Hog-raising is not widespread, and seems to be declining in importance with the increased observance of Islamic food taboos, which is on the uprise even among people who are still pagans.

The subsoil of Mossi country is not well known, but so far there have been no major discoveries of mineral deposits. The only known gold field remained unworked in aboriginal times. The Mossi do not like to wear gold ornaments, preferring jewelry worked from imported copper and silver. The northern Mossi worked their local iron in aboriginal times, but those in the south obtained this metal from caravan traders.

The nineteenth-century reports of Barth and other European travelers indicate that the Mossi conducted a rather extensive foreign trade. At least six caravan routes passed through their territory, and traders such as the Hausa and Mandingo visited the important Mossi trading centers at Yako, Pouitenga, and Ouagadougou, where they exchanged Saharan and forest products for Mossi livestock and cloth.[8]

The Mossi belong to the Voltaic culture area, a name given by Delafosse to the regions drained by the Black, Red, and White Voltas and their tributaries. The area embraces parts of Mali, the Ivory Coast, Dahomey, the Upper Volta, and northern Ghana.[4] It includes a vast congeries of peoples such as the Dagomba, Mamprusi, Dagari, Birifo, Senufo, Gurmanche, Gurunsi, Lobi, Bobo, Tallensi, Konkomba, Dogon, Somba, Fulse, and Ninisi, all of whom speak languages belonging to the Gur or Moshi-Grunshi group of

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28

the Niger-Congo family of African languages.[5] Like the Mossi, these groups are primarily horticultural; cereals are their main crops, and they cultivate yams where conditions permit. Their social organization takes both patrilineal and matrilineal forms. The veneration of ancestors lies at the core of their religious beliefs, but the existence of an otiose high god whose name contains the root *We* (*Ouennam, Win, Wene,* etc.) is also recognized. There are also tutelary spirits, the chief one being a female earth deity associated with We and called *Tenga* (also occurring as *Teng, Tena,* and *Ten*). The *Tengsobadamba,* who are priests or custodians of the earth shrines, are found among all the groups in the Voltaic family, and they often share leadership with more secular chiefs called *Naba, Na,* or *Nab.* Most of the ruling clans of the Voltaic groups claim common ancestry and acknowledge the same totems.[6]

The only glaring dissimilarity between these Voltaic peoples, and the one with which this study is primarily concerned, lies in the realm of political organization. Some are united into large kingdoms, while others form small acephalous groups. Delafosse makes the following generalizations about the smaller groups:

> It may be said of these people that, as a whole, they have remained quite primitive. With a few exceptions, they have not reached any significant level of political development; as a rule, they have not progressed beyond family unity. Although they neighbor on well-organized and powerful states such as the Mossi empires and the kingdoms of the Gourma and Bergo, which are inhabited by populations of the same ethnic group, they have derived little benefit from this proximity; some of them have been absorbed as subjects or vassals by these states, while others have remained on the outside, and seem to have but one purpose, the forceful preservation of their fierce but sterile independence. . . . Attachment to the land seems to be the only solid and fecund institution in their chaotic society.[7]

Rattray believes that the development of such highly organized political systems as those of the Mossi, Dagomba, and Mamprusi may be traced to "small bands of strangers." He thinks that the outsiders were better armed, better clothed, and familiar with the rudiments of Islam, and that since they knew about the institution of kingship, they were able to "superimpose upon the primitive tribes among whom they settled a new and unheard-of political conception, namely the idea of territorial and secular leadership in place of the immemorial institution of a ruler who was the high priest of a totemic clan and dealt only in spiritual sanctions." Nevertheless, Rattray is not certain that the Voltaic groups would not have evolved complex political systems if they had been left to themselves. He makes the significant statement that if the subjugation by the bands of strangers had not

The Mossi were probably brought to the attention of modern Europe [17] by T. E. Bowdich, an Englishman who went to Ashanti in 1817 to sign a 114 trade agreement with the Asantehene. While at Kumasi, Bowdich diligently sought information about the lands in the interior, but was relatively unsuccessful because his hosts pleaded ignorance. Nevertheless, he did find out that "five journies [days] from Yngwa [Yendi] is Mosee, a warlike but less visited kingdom: it consists of many states, but the superior monarch is named Billa, and the capital Kookoopella."[4] This misinformation is interesting because it shows that Bowdich's respondent had precise information only about Koupela, a town located near the great caravan center of Poitenga. Similarly, the linguistic data reported by Bowdich are for Dagomba rather than Mossi.

*195 Another Englishman, Joseph Dupuis, led a trade mission to Kumasi in 199 1819, and obtained data on the Mossi that are surprisingly accurate given the reluctance of middlemen traders to reveal commercial information. He reports that Ashanti traders "sometimes travel as far as Aughoa, the Magho, and to the east of Kasogho. Aughoa is distant from Coomassie twenty-five journies by the Salgha and Yandy Roads, which would give a distance of 360 British miles. Their object in frequenting this place is to collect that vegetable substance by the name of shea butter."[5] There is no doubt that "Aughoa" is really "Ouagha," the term often used by the Mossi to refer to their capital, and the distance between Kumasi and Ouagadougou as reported by Dupuis is approximately the same as the road mileage [101] today. The name "Magho," which appears from time to time in these early documents, seems to be none other than "Mogho," the traditional name of Mossi country. "Kasogho" probably refers to the section of Ouagadougou that was controlled by the Kamsaogho Naba.

The Hausa merchants knew a great deal about the Mossi and the resources of their territory, but only with difficulty did the English trader Hugh Clapperton persuade Sultan Mohammed Bello of Sokoto to give him the following information:

> The country of Mouchier or Mouchi is situated to the west of Ghurma. It is vast and possesses a gold mine, rivers, forests, and mountains. It is inhabited by tribes of the Sudan who possess many fast horses and large donkeys. Their king is called Wagadougou; their asses are sent down to the Gondja to carry the drums of the Army.[6]

[114] Either Clapperton or his informant obviously confused the capital of the Mossi with their king, and included parts of Dagomba in their territory.

Barth, who traveled extensively in the Sudan between 1849 and 1855, did

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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not enter Mossi territory. Nevertheless, he obtained rather precise information on the important caravan routes leading from Timbuktu through the Mossi trade centers of Ouagadougou, Kaya, Yako, and Koupela, down to Salaga and other towns in Ghana, and even across to Sansane Mango in Togoland. His data on the Mossi are invaluable:

> The whole triangle interposed between the Niger toward the north, and the country of the Eastern Mandingoes or Wangarawa toward the south, appears to be inhabited by a single race of people whose language, although they are divided into several states and nations, nevertheless appears originally to have been the same stock. It is very probable that this race in ancient times occupied the whole upper course of the Niger, and that this tract may have been wrested from it in later times by the Songhai and the Mandingoes, especially that section of the latter which is generally called Bambara. These are the Gourma toward the N.E., the Tombo toward the N.W., and between them the Mossi. . . . The strongest among these pagan kingdoms five centuries ago, and even at the present moment, is that of the Mossi, although the country is split into a number of small principalities, almost totally independent of each other, and paying only some slight homage to the ruler of the principality of Woghodogo.[7]

Europe learned more about the Mossi from Sigismund Koelle, who visited Sierra Leone in 1854. His informant was one Andrew Dixon, who had lived in Koupela before being captured and sold into slavery. He furnished information on the location of the Mossi, their wars with the Busansi, and their important commercial and political relations with the Ashanti.[8] Koelle's report, taken in conjunction with the reports of Dupuis, Bowdich, Clapperton, and Barth, shows that the Ashanti, like the Hausa and other coastal peoples, were protecting their trade when they attempted to isolate the peoples of the interior from the Europeans. But as soon as the British defeated the Ashanti in the war of 1873–74, the Sudan was opened and adventurers poured in. In 1877 and 1878, two missionaries of the Basel Mission visited the northern regions of Ghana, and subsequently gave a good description of Mossi commerce in that area.[9] Lonsdale, who visited Salaga in 1881, found among the traders in the market "the Mossi with his cattle, sheep, and slaves—these latter, generally Gurunsi, are not exposed for sale in the street or market, but can be seen where the owner resides."[10]

The activities of the various European nations in West Africa and other regions at this time led to military and diplomatic difficulties, which the Berlin Conference of 1884–85 was convened to resolve. Agreement was reached to assign "spheres of influence" to the various European nations, to regulate trade, and to provide for arbitration between rival claimants of conquered or "protected" territories. In West Africa, this meant the end

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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8. Cf. Marc, p. 156. 9. Cf. Fortes, pp. 258-71.
10. Skinner, "The Diffusion of Islam," pp. 659-69.
11. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Soudan*, pp. 585-86.
12. Dim Delobson, p. 205. 13. Crozat, p. 4820.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 4822. 15. *Ibid.*, p. 4835.
16. Binger, I, 452. 17. *Ibid.*, p. 456.
18. *Ibid.*, pp. 452-56.
19. Archives, Document 15G-190 (1897-98). Instructions left to Captain Scal by Destenave, June 1897.

CHAPTER NINE

1. Marc, p. 27.
2. Barth, III, 595. Although it is possible that the Wolof prince Bemoy did hear [114] about the Mossi, he was mistaken about the name of their ruler. Interestingly enough, the title "Ogane" is not too dissimilar from Hogon, the title of head men among the [174] Dogon (Habe or Kado) whom the Mossi had pushed into the hills of Bandiagara. Bascom, p. 24.
3. Barth, III, 606. 4. Bowdich, p. 180.
5. Dupuis, Appendix CVII. 6. Clapperton, II, 323.
7. Barth, III, 643-49. As cited earlier, Barth states that the Portuguese got reports about the Mossi in the year 1533 "from the wrong side, namely from Benin." This may not have been altogether "the wrong side," however, for Barth gives us data on caravans from Mossi country to Sansane Mango in Togoland that indicate how news about the Mossi might have traveled from the interior to Benin city in Nigeria.
8. Koelle, p. 6. Dixon, who seems to have been one of the few captured Mossi sold to the West, reports: "Mose is west of Gurma, east of Andemtenga, where a different [131] language is spoken. Mose is also two days journey from Butmera, where the same [101] language is spoken; four days from Bulega [Bolga tanga], the language still the same, [197] and confederate with Kambonse, i.e. Asante; two days from Yaongo, with still the same language; six days from Bosanse which is at enmity with Mose and where people [484] bore their lips, and often tie them together with grass, and whose language is different from Mose; four days from Busma also a different language, and in which country there is a very high mountain (Tanga) from which those who ascend never come back again [probably a reference to Plimpikou, the Mossi holy mountain]; three or four weeks from Kambonse, i.e. Asante. Kupeala is four days from Wardyga [Ouagadougou] the Mossi capital, whither the king of Asante often sent presents; and one month from Salak [Salaga], an Asante town, where they bring kola nuts."
9. Marc, p. 30.
10. Great Britain, Parliamentary papers xlvi, 1882.
11. The people of Nobere, Manga, and other districts surrounding Bere have traditions about Krause, who is remembered as the first white-skinned person ever [826] seen in those parts. The color of his skin was attributed to the fact that, "like the fish," he had come out of the sea.
12. Krause, pp. 92 ff. Although there is no evidence to this effect in the literature, it appears certain that Mossi government officials knew of Krause's visit. They treated [574] most travelers in the following manner: "After entering a town the party is given in charge of a man usually termed 'housemaster.' It is his duty to exercise surveillance over the action of the stranger and to report the result to the authorities. . . . The trader conducts his business through his 'housemaster,' who usually makes a handsome gain by acting as middleman (G. E. Ferguson, quoted in Wolfson, p. 199).

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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long been famous. The former are sometimes ridden but are used primarily as beasts of burden. Horses were and are still important for military and ceremonial purposes and for external trade to other areas.

The Mossi have never excelled in metalworking. The people in the northern part of the country have worked indigenous ores since aboriginal times. Those in the south get iron mainly from traders and caravans. The other metals which the Mossi smiths manufacture into tools and ornaments are also obtained from traders.

TRADE IN HISTORICAL TIMES

The geographic position of Mossi country has much to do with its being an important trade and market center. The country itself has always produced grain, cotton and livestock for export. And for several centuries caravans have passed through this region carrying Sudanese and Saharan products to the forest zones to the south, and carrying forest products back to the arid north. The beginning of this trade is lost in the dim past, but it safe to say that it developed shortly after or along with the founding of Timbuktu about 1100 A.D. The Mossi themselves were not definitely linked to this important *entrepot* until they raided it in 1328, but we can assume that they had been trading there for some time before that event took place. Similarly, we have no record of when the Mossi began trading with the forest zones, but we can also assume that this trade began around the same period or even before.

Our first evidence of Mossi trade and commerce comes from Europeans who were themselves interested in conducting their own trading activities with the peoples in the Bend of the Niger. Bowditch, an Englishman who had journeyed to Ashanti to sign a treaty facilitating the reopening of a profitable trade with the coast, wangled the first important piece of information about the Mossi from his reluctant hosts:

> Five journies from Yngwa is Mosee, a more warlike but less visited kingdom: it consists of many states, but the superior monarch is named Billa, and the capital Kookoopella. I place it to the N.W. because its merchants pass by Yngwa; they do not cross the Karhalla [White Volta] nor any river which is not fordable. (Bowditch 1819 : 180)

This information is not strictly correct since Koupela was not the capital of any of the Mossi kingdoms, but Bowditch's informant had probably heard of Koupela because it was the largest political entity near the large caravan center at Pouitenga.

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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437 prisingly good data on trade relations between the Ashanti and the Mossi, considering the reluctance of the middlemen traders to furnish any help in this matter. He discovered that Ashanti traders

[103] . . . sometimes travel as far as Aughoa, the Magho, and to the east of Kasogho. Aughoa is distant from Coomassie twenty-five journies by the Salgha and Yandy Roads, which would give a distance of three hundred that vegetable substance . . . by the name of Shea butter. (Dupuis 1824 : App. cvii)[1]

The Hausa merchants and caravaneers knew a great deal about the Mossi and their resources, but it was only with great difficulty that Clapperton persuaded Sultan Mohammed Bello of Sokoto to give him the following information:

[101] The country of Mouchier or Mouchi is situated to the west of Ghurma. It is vast and possesses a gold mine, rivers, forests and mountains. It is inhabited by tribes of the Sudan who possess many fast horses, and large donkeys. Their king is called Wagadougou; their asses are sent down to the Gondja to carry the drums of the army. (Clapperton 1829 : 323)

It is obvious that either Clapperton or his informant confused the capital of the Mossi with their king, and included parts of Ghana in
[23] their territory. Nevertheless, one does get an indication of the importance of livestock in Mossi trading.

The great bulk of the trade between the Mossi and their neighbors to the north and to the south was done through the medium of
175 caravans which crisscrossed their territory. The first person to signal
437 the existence of these caravans was Barth (1859 : III, 646–648) who,
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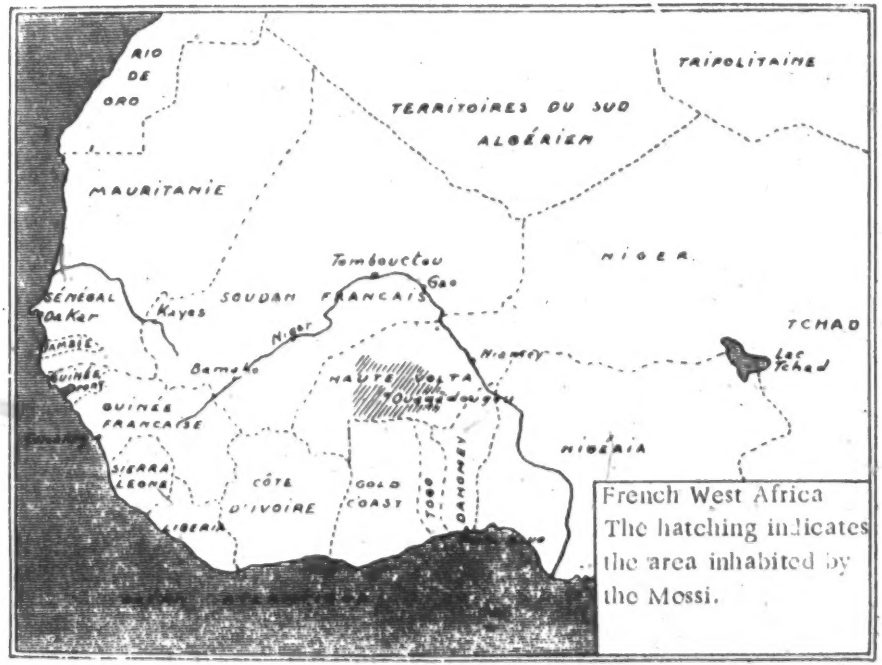

French West Africa
The hatching indicates the area inhabited by the Mossi.

From the Mission of the White Fathers at Ouagadougou.

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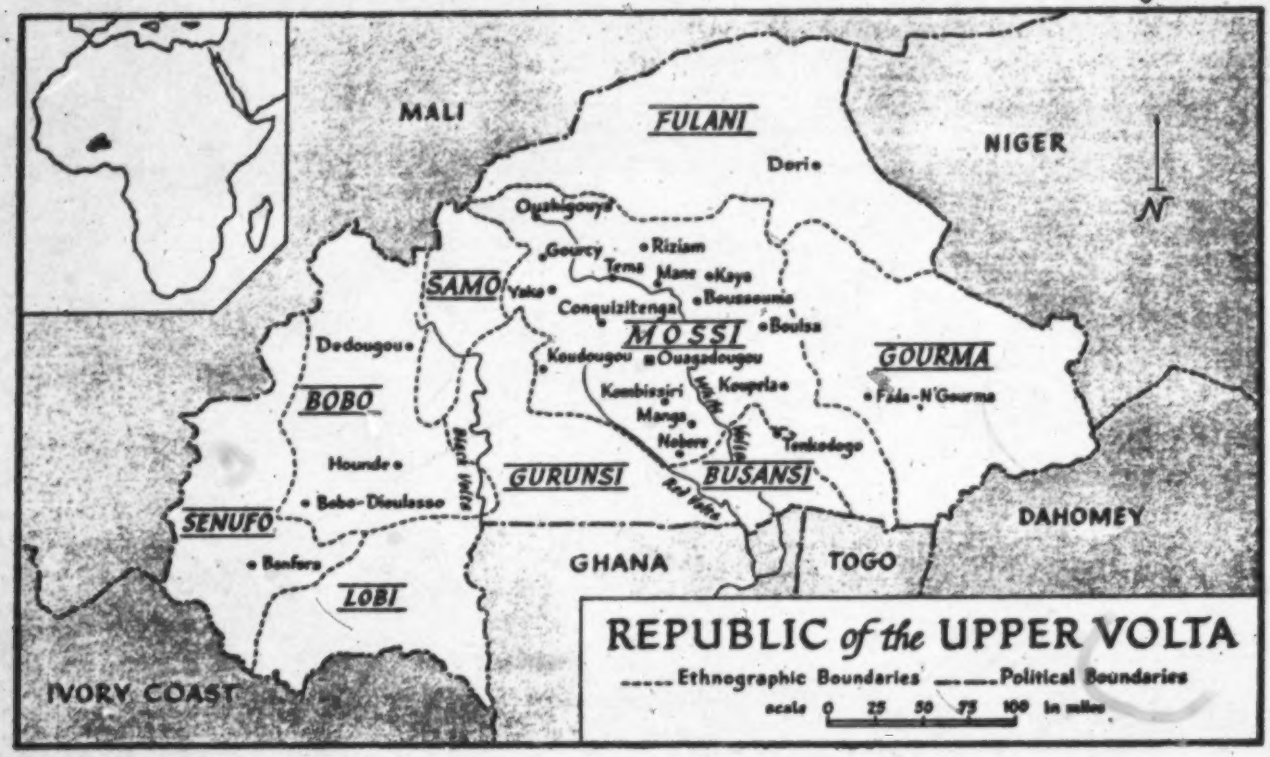

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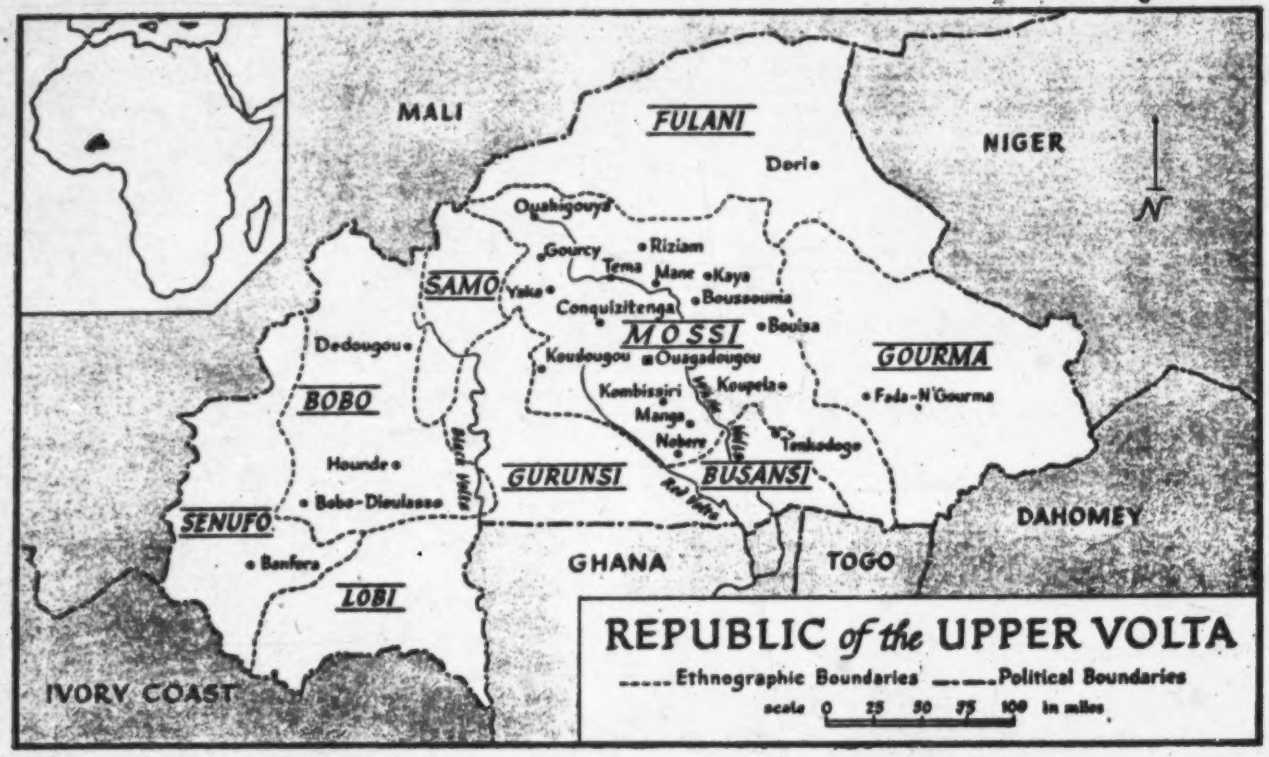

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Barth was "a well-frequented market place of Mosi, and of greater importance than all the other towns of Mosi; the governor's name is Nabere Gager. The inhabitants are celebrated archers." Barth states that by the fifteenth day, or two days later, the caravans usually arrived at Wagadougou, but he tells us in a note that:

> Other people, in going slowly from Kulfela to Woghodogho, spend eight days on the road, sleeping the first night in Pashipanga, the second in Tangay, the third in Zorogo, the next in a place ruled by a man called Mane Bogonje, the fifth in another village called Tangay, and reach Woghodogho on the eighth. (Marc 1909 : 27)[2]

Finally, he reports that another spur of this caravan route ran from Tengkodogo to Sansanne Mangho, in what is now Togoland. This journey took five days.

The second caravan route described by Barth ran from Djibo, the capital of the province of Gilgohi or Jilgodi (about 60 miles south from Montdoro, 55 miles West-Southwest from Aribinda and 35 miles South-Southwest from Tinie) by way of Kaya, to Mane and finally to Wagadougou. A caravan leaving Djibo entered Kelbo, the first village of the territory of Mossi on the eighth day, but according to Barth the "border district in general is regarded as very unsafe." On the fourteenth day the caravan entered Kaya;

> ... an important place where several roads meet. And from Kaya the route went to Wagadougou by way of Boussouma, Mane and Yako. It took a caravan ten days to traverse it.[3]

The third major caravan route that Barth described lay entirely within Mossi country. It ran from Mane to "Yadega" (probably Wahigouya, the capital of the kingdom of Yatenga) by way of Yako, and it took a caravan eight days to travel it. The fourth caravan route lay between Mane and a place called Kong by way of Tema, Yako, La and other places. On the tenth day a caravan reached Kong;

> ... a large place, according to my informant, inhabited by Bambara. It can scarcely be identical with the well-known Kong, if the itinerary be correct; but nevertheless it may be the case.

The first day after the caravan left Kong to return to Mane, it

(2) Barth received fairly accurate information about the caravan routes, and Marc was impressed with his data. Nevertheless, Marc finds it impossible to believe that caravans took two days to travel the twenty-five miles between Tengkodogo and Koupela, and only two more days to travel the ninety odd miles from Koupela to Wagadougou. Barth obviously erred here, but the timetable he gives for those persons "going slowly" from Koupela to Wagadougou appears to be quite correct.

(3) It is highly unlikely that a caravan going to Wagadougou from Kaya would have gone through Mane and Yako unless the caravaneers were interested in tapping the resources of these two western towns before heading straight south to their destination.

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175 stopped at "Fura, a large market place." On the fourth day it stopped
437 at Dullugu (probably present-day Doulougou), and on the fifth day
487 at "Dakay [or Rakay] a place belonging to the territory of Mosi."
103 Finally, on the thirteenth day it arrived at Mane.[4] The last caravan route that Barth reported ran from:

> Kaye to Belussa [Boulsa], and thence to Belanga [Bilanga] ... From Belussa a person on horseback reaches Belanga comfortably the second day, the great station between these two towns being Alitinga, still belonging to Mosi, and an important place, inhabited by Mosi and Hausa traders; but common native travellers generally halt twice between Belanga and Alitinga, in Nyennyega and Koburi [Kouri], and once between Alitinga and Belanga, in a Gurma village called Yamba.

175 The goods which these caravans carried appear to have varied a
437 great deal. Barth met a Mossi caravan at Dori, southeast of Timbuktu,
439 and reported that to this market:

> [231] The people of Mosi bring chiefly their fine donkeys, which are greatly sought after; and a numerous body of people of the Sheikh A'hmedu, of Hamda-Ailahi, had left a few days before with a number of asses which they had brought here. Besides asses, the people of Mosi supply this market [435] with gabaga [cotton strips] or tari, as the Arabs near Timbuktu call them, [434] cotton being extremely cheap in their country, so that in the great market place of that country, especially in Kulfela [Koupela, but really at Pouitenga a few miles away] an indigo-colored shirt is not worth more than from 700 to 800 [cowry] shells ... Besides salt, cotton strips, dyed cloth, Kola nuts, corn, and asses, some copper manufactured chiefly into large drinking vessels is also brought into the market by the people of Mosi. However, I do not think they manufacture the copper vessels themselves, but bring them from Asanti. (Barth 1859 : III, 203–4)

Adolphe Krause, a German who was actually the first European to enter Mossi country, went through Wagadougou with a load of kola nuts destined for Timbuktu. He joined the caravan at Salaga on July 7, 1885, stopped at the Bere market in Mossi country during August, and then proceeded to their capital where he remained until October 26 before resuming his northward journey (Krause 1887–8).

Felix Dubois, who visited Timbuktu in 1895, gives us some information on the actual products which the Mossi traded there. He reported that the Mossi came to the market organized into caravans of oxen, donkeys and porters, and brought such commodities as livestock, millet, rice, manioc, peanuts, honey, kola nuts, peppers, dried onions, tobacco, dried fish, soap, iron, antimony, lead, cotton bands, straw hats, mats, jars, pots and calabashes. These goods the Mossi

(4) Barth's skill as a reporter is evident here. He is quite correct in disbelieving that the caravans could have reached Kong on the tenth day. Marc, 1909, agrees with Barth.

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People also assemble sheep of
the Mossi variety, which are very puny. The larger variety of long-haired 175
Macina sheep are seldom exported. Once the livestock has been assembled, 437
the chief of the caravan would also provide himself with cotton bands. 439
This native fabric has often been described; it is commonly used on the [231]
caravan routes to pay for the food of the travellers. (Marc 1909 : 172) [436]

Most of the caravans through Mossi country traveled as much as 175
fifteen or twenty miles a day. They left at the first sign of dawn, 437
traveled steadily until the heat became too intense, and then stopped 484
to rest. They resumed their march when the sun was midway between the zenith and the horizon, and then stopped at some village or stream for the night. This schedule was followed on the next day if the caravan was far from a market center, but in the vicinity of a large market the caravan might remain stationary as many as six days while its merchants traded for more livestock or merchandise. This being 175
the case, it is difficult to gauge how long it took the caravans to make 437
the journey from Salaga in Ghana to Timbuktu. Our best data come 484
from an analysis of Krauss' itinerary. He left Salaga with a caravan 487
on July 7, 1885, heading north through Walwale, and arrived in Bere, 103
a distance of some 250 miles (today's road mileage) towards the end of August. Famine delayed the caravan at Bere for some time, and he [731]
did not complete the 50 miles or so to Wagadougou until September 24. He remained in the Mossi capital until October 26, some thirty-two days, before his caravan headed north again through Tema, Yatenga and Bandiagara. Krauss does not tell us when he reached Douentza, some 400 miles northwest of Wagadougou, or how long he remained there, but on December 7, a few days after he had left Douenzta on the last 200- or 250-mile leg of his voyage to Timbuktu, the Moro Naba ordered him to return to Wagadougou. It is possible that it took Krauss' caravan some thirty-five odd days to make the trip from Wagadougou to Douentza. His return to Wagadougou took him only about thirty days, since he arrived there on January 7, 1886. He apparently had to wait some fifteen days there for a caravan going south, because he did not leave the Mossi capital until January 22, 1886 (Krause 1887–88). Judging from this itinerary, it probably took caravans between five and six months to travel from the forest zones to the desert, a distance of about a thousand miles at the most. This averages about six or seven miles a day, with the normal stops for rest and marketing, instead of the fifteen or twenty miles a day which the average caravan covered when it was on the road.

The caravans did not encounter many dangers or difficulties during 175
their voyage. When the caravaneers had friends along the way they 437
stopped at their friends' homes for the night, and when they camped 484
in uninhabited places men were posted to protect the goods and live-
stock against marauding beasts and thieves.

485 o'clock in the morning to sell food to those migrants who have slept
265 under the trees or in the deserted market place and who are going on towards Ghana or to Wagadougou. At about 8:00 or 9:00 A.M. the majority of the food-sellers leave for home, but some of them remain around all day to sell to those migrants who pass by in the few trucks which can travel during the heat of the day. The food sellers then return at about 5:00 P.M. because from this time until about 1:00 A.M. most of the trucks bearing migrants stop for water and to allow
485 their passengers to eat and rest. The amount of money these women
265 gross varies from day to day depending upon the amount of traffic
434 and the time of year. During the off-season from June to October,
221 when most of the migrants are home planting, a woman may make as little as ten francs per day. In contrast, at the beginning of the dry season when the young men are migrating in droves, the women may make as much as 100 francs a day, even though twenty or thirty women line the road at trucking centers. Many women welcome this opportunity to earn money because by so doing they are free to buy in the local markets the things they need.

MARKET

366 The Mossi have always conducted most of their commercial activities
443 in market places even though some extra-market trading continually takes place. These markets were and are still divided into two main
● [103] types: (1) those specializing in external trading, such as Pouitenga, Dakay, Kaya, Mane, Yako, La, Beloussa, Tema, Wagadougou; and (2) those specializing in internal commerce such as the markets in the villages and district centers. Of course, there is an overlap between the two types of markets in the sense that some people from the villages go to the larger markets to dispose of their commodities and, in turn, buy goods which they bring back for resale on the local level. Similarly, in former days some caravaneers visited the local markets to buy commodities and in the process disposed of their goods. However, the main pattern is for local commodities to filter into the large market centers through local markets, and for goods from these centers to filter back down to the local markets. The more goods and traders available, the more numerous and successful the markets are.

443 The Mossi do not appear to have any legends about the origin of
173 markets in their country. When asked how and why markets first arose, they say that markets developed simply because people wanted to exchange goods with each other, or because the chiefs wanted markets in their own villages so that their people need not go to
443 other districts. When one asks the Mossi directly, "What is a market?"

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443 such individuals to find a market everyday in one neighboring district or another.

Every Mossi market not only has its own schedule but is also part of a cycle of markets in the sense that its main customers can and do regularly attend two other markets on the two nonmarket days without missing their "own" market. Table 30 takes the district market at 443 366 438 484 Nobere as the home market and lists the markets which Nobere's people can attend and the reasons they themselves give for going there.

[103] TABLE 30

Markets near Nobere

		Distance Away	*Reasons for Going*
First Day:			
	Nobere		Home Market
	Manga	12 kilometers	Good Pottery
	Vooko	15 kilometers	Butter and Millet
	Twese	20 kilometers	Millet and Sorghum
	Binde	35 kilometers	Good Pottery and Mats "Very far and people do not go there very often"
Second Day:			
	Basgana	10 kilometers	Good Pottery
	Sakouliga	15 kilometers	"To Have Fun"
	Giba	10 kilometers	"To Have Fun"
Third Day:			
	Nobili	27 kilometers	"Good Millet"
	Pinse	6 kilometers	"Small Market; to have fun"
	Parougre	10 kilometers	"Good Millet and Pottery"

Nobere people scarcely ever go to Manga because the market there conflicts with their own and its one unique product, pottery, can be bought at Basgana on a day when there is no market at Nobere. A [435] person is likely to go do Vooko when he wishes to buy butter and millet at cheaper prices than he can obtain in his own market. But he scarcely visits the Binde market unless he is there visiting a friend [517] or relative. Nobere people think nothing of going to Giba or to Pinse to show off their clothes or to have fun at those markets. If any [436] commodity is cheap there they take advantage of the prices, but in general they believe that they can obtain better and cheaper products at their own market.

443 It is now possible to find a great variety of products at Mossi mar- 438 kets, and the larger the market the more varied its merchandise. Apparently this was not always so. Crozart (1891 : 4848), who visited the country just before it was conquered, reported that in the market at Wagadougou, he found "millet, rice, millet beer, butchered meat, small cutlery, morocco-leather goods, basketwork and jewelry items,

114 today; if it provides ethnography with new materials; if it makes the native better known to missionaries, administrators, officers, colonists, and merchants, and thus better understood; and if cordial relations between the native and ourselves are thereby facilitated. Railroads will soon open up and profoundly modify the country. While there is still time, let us hasten to record the mentality of this people in its primitive form. We were able to gather data which we believe reflect the truth quite closely, thanks to the circumstances of our stay in Mossi country: ten consecutive years among its people, of which seven were spent in Koupéla; a knowledge of the language sufficient to maintain a running conversation on any subject whatever with the natives; and the close contact into which our ministry brought us with the village inhabitants. We shall be the first to acknowledge, however, that errors may have crept in here and there. It is very difficult to obtain a precise piece of information, and several natives questioned on the same subject often gave different answers. We were forced to make choices, and although we always tended to adopt the story which appeared to offer the greatest number of safeguards, we may have been wrong at times.

It must not be forgotten that our goal is not to provide a complete record of Mossi manners and customs. This was not possible, it would have been onerous, and we did not feel that it was necessary in order to present what we consider to be a generally accurate over-all picture of these people. Truthfulness compels us to point out that these materials were gathered for the most part in the province of Koupéla and, therefore, bear the impress of that locality. Our fellow-workers in Ouagadougou were kind enough to provide us with some information, but we were unable to obtain any data on the Yatenga region. God permitting, we shall round out these notes in a more comprehensive work.

101 Before we broach our subject, one remark is in order. It has become usual to speak of the Mossi, of a Mossi, of the Mossi language, as though the word did not vary. We shall follow this custom and always write "Mossi" in the singular and in the plural, although the true name of this people is Moara, plural Mosé. Likewise, we have spelled geographical names in accordance with the practice of the Administration, so as to avoid the appearance of wishing to reform everything.

000 May we thank here all those from far and near who have helped us with this work, and especially those who have contributed the interesting photographs that illustrate it.

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[P. 221]
[P. 220 is blank]

GLOSSARY

BABISSI. Literally, "fathers' brothers." A large extended family (minimal lineage) composed of people who had a common ancestor three, four, or five generations back.

BAGLERE. A group of bondsmen believed to be descended from the Fulani or from war captives.

BALOUM NABA. A provincial minister and the chief steward of the royal household.

BASGHA. Annual feast of the royal ancestors.

BENDERE NABA. A bard or minstrel who is often called upon to recite the ruler's genealogy at royal functions.

BOODKASMA (pl. BOODKASEMDAMBA). Head of a lineage or lineage segment.

COGANAMARSE. Stones on which dignitaries are seated during court ceremonies.

DAPORE. A group of bondsmen believed to be descended from war captives.

DIM (pl. DIMDAMBA). Literally, "submit only to God." King or king's son.

DOGUNBA. Literally, "keepers of the household." The younger wives of the ruler.

FADO. An inheritance tax.

GANDE NABA. An official charged with performing sacrifices on the ruler's behalf and with distributing gifts from the ruler to the royal officials and the royal household.

GOUNGA NABA. A provincial minister.

KAMBOINSE. Guards of the royal household.

KAMBO NABA. Head guard of the royal household.

KAMSAOGHO NABA. A provincial minister. He is also a eunuch.

KEEMA (pl. KEEMSE). Ancestral spirit; also, a deceased person.

KOMBERE OR KOMBERE NABA (pl. KOMBEMBA NANAMSE). A district chief.

KOS NABA. Collector of taxes on general merchandise sold in the market.

KOURITA (pl. KOURITADAMBA). A young son of a deceased Mogho Naba chosen to represent his father on earth. He is banned from the capital, and forbidden to see the new Mogho Naba under pain of death.

LARSIALLE NABA. A provincial minister. He was also responsible for offering sacrifices to the royal ancestors.

MABISSI. Literally, "sons of the same mother." All the children of one woman.

MOAGA (pl. MOSSI). A member of the Mossi group or nation.

MOGHO. Literally, "the world." The country of the Mossi.

MOGHO NABA. Literally, "ruler of the world." The title of the ruler of the Ouagadougou kingdom.

NABA (pl. NANAMSE). Chief, ruler, or official.

NABA ZID OUENDE. Literally, "sun king." God.

NAS'YIRI. House of the chief or ruler.

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NAB'YURE. Literally, "king's name." No child born during his reign could bear the ruler's name, and those persons who already bore it when a new ruler was chosen called themselves Nab'yure.

NAKOMCE (sing. NABIGA). Children of the Naba; people of the ruling or noble class.

NAM. Sovereignty, which was conceived of by the Mossi as "that force of God which permits one man to control another."

NAMTIBO. The royal amulets, or any substance or object embodying the nam.

NAPOKO. Literally, "female ruler." The eldest daughter of a Mogho Naba. She ritually impersonates her deceased father during the interregnum.

NEMDO NABA. Collector of taxes on meat sold in the market, and the person responsible for distributing meat within the royal household.

NINISI, see TINGUIMBISSI.

OUAGADOUGOU NABA. The earth priest (Tengsoba) who had ritual control of the capital district.

OUEDRANGE NABA. Head groom of the royal stables.

OUIDI NABA. An official of the ruler. In Ouagadougou, he was both a provincial minister and the prime minister.

POGOPOSSUM. Premarital gift from a man's family to his wife's family.

PUGHSIUDSE. Women whom the chief received from his subjects and whom he subsequently gave out as wives on condition that their husbands give him their eldest daughters as future pughsiudse.

PUGHTIEMA. Head wife of a ruler.

PWE NABA. A religious practitioner in a ruler's household; he is responsible for the virtue of the ruler's wives and pages.

RAGA NABA. Official in charge of the market.

SAKA (pl. SAGHSE). A section of a village.

SAKAKASMA (pl. SAKAKASMADAMBA). Head of a village section; usually the senior man of the senior lineage segment in the village.

SAMANDE (pl. SAMANDE-KAMBA). A servant in the royal household or the chief's household.

SAMANDE KASMA. Head retainer in a ruler's household.

SAMANDE NABA. Official in charge of palace retainers.

SEKA (pl. SEGHSE). Compulsory labor performed for a ruler by his subjects.

SIMILI-MOSSI. An ethnic group formed through the intermarriage of the Fulani and the Mossi.

SOGHONE (pl. SOGHONDAMBA). A page in the ruler's household.

SOGHONE-KASANGA. Head page.

SOLEM. Kingdom or area ruled by the Mogho Naba.

SOSOGHA (pl. SOSOSE). Voluntary labor performed for a ruler by his subjects.

TANSOBA. War minister.

TENGA (pl. TENSE). Generalized female earth deity. Tenga had local manifestations called Tengkouga, or earth shrines. The Mossi talk about these shrines as though they are deities in their own right.

TENGKOUGA (sing. TENGKOUGRE). Earth shrines, including mountains, rivers, clumps of trees, etc. See TENGA.

TENGKOM. Civil war between villages or districts.

TENGSOBA (pl. TENGSOBADAMBA). Earth priest.

TINGUIMBISSI. Literally, "sons of the earth." The autochthonous population of Mossi country; also called Ninisi.

WEOGHO (pl. WEOTO). Wasteland or uncultivated land.

YAGENGA (pl. YAGENSE). Literally, sister's son. The son or grandchild of a female lineage member.

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YIRI (pl. YIYA). A Mossi household.
YIRISOBA (pl. YIRISOBADAMBA). Head of a household.
YUMA (pl. YUMBA). Herald or musician.
ZAKA (pl. ZAGHSE). Interior courtyard of a compound.
ZOM KOM. A beverage made with millet flour and water. Sometimes honey is added.
ZONGAOONGO. War drum.
ZONGO. Reception hall of a ruler.
ZUGOABA KASANGA. Head eunuch.

105

Identification

The Lilse (Lyela) are a tribe of 39, 000 (in 1950) belonging to the Grunshi group of the Mossi-Grunshi branch of the Niger-Congo linguistic stock. With them are tentatively grouped the Nioniosse (Nyonyose).

Basic Economy

Primarily agricultural, with millet (Pennisetum spicatum) and sorghum (Andopogon sorghum) as the staples. Other important crops are maize, peanuts, beans, earth peas (Voandzeia subterranea), sesame, and cotton (Gossypium punctatum). Lesser crops include squash, "oseille" (Hibiscus sabdariffa), okra (Abelmoschus esculentus), tomatoes, peppers (Capsicum frutescens), and "chanvre" (Hibiscus cannabinus.) Almost no root crops are grown. Livestock, which are not numerous, include the following, in decreasing order of importance: goats, sheep, dogs, donkeys, horses, and cattle. (The foregoing data also apply to the Mossi of Yatenga). Horses are few, and there are some donkeys and many chickens. There is practically no trade.

Social Stratification

The Lilse supply smiths to the Mossi.

Marriage

A groom makes gifts to the bride's relatives, but there is no bride-price.

Family

There are non-residential extended families (perhaps really lineages) with heads.

Kin Groups and Exogamy

There are named "clans", and possibly lineages, presumably patrilineal. Tauxier says that few people know the clan to which they belong.

Kinship Terminology

Fa--mesa. Mo--miyin. Br, FaSo--m'iabi. Br, MoSo--m'sabi. Si--niondo. ElSi--nieboro. YoSi--nindikian. So--borobi. Hu--dibara. Wi--pongokiom.

FaBr--misabi. MoBr--bana. Father-in-law--mone. Mother-in-law--menekion. Son-in-law--mene.

Cousin or relative--bi.

Settlement Pattern

Dwellings are round, with thatched roofs.

Community Organization

Villages are divided into quarters. Many of the villages are reported to include only a single "family" (lineage?), where others have as many as 14.

Local Government

There are village headmen.

State

District chiefs are reported, but there was no higher political integration prior to the advent of Mossi rule.

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Identification

The Mossi (Mole, Moshi) are a culturally homogeneous nation belonging to the Mossi-Grunshi branch of the Niger-Congo linguistic stock. Mangin and Tauxier report that they number about 1, 500, 000, of whom over 1, 000, 000 live in the central Mossi kingdom; this figure is exclusive of a considerable number of Yarse, Fulani, and subjugated natives of alien stock. De Martonne (1921) reports the Mossi of the Haute Volta as numbering 1, 950, 000, but he possibly includes the Gurma. Tauxier believes that the population is a fusion of Mossi conquerors from the NE and aboriginal peoples akin to the Dogon, Kipirsi, Grunshi, and Bussanse. Their state is old. Apparently founded in the 12th century, it was strong enough to conquer Timbuctoo in the 14th century. Political unification and internal peace have promoted a dense population of 65 per square mile (based on the total figure of 1, 500, 000). Until the French occupation the open practice of Islam was forbidden, but since then it has made appreciable inroads on paganism. Delafosse (1912) reports a population of 1, 262, 000 Mossi exclusive of 147, 000 Gurma. Urvoy (1942) reports a total population of 1, 360, 000, of whom only about 90, 000 are Moslem, these being the Yarse. Lavergne de Tressan (1953) reports 1, 680, 000 Mossi in 1950, plus 72, 000 Yarse.

Basic Economy

Primarily agricultural, with brand-tillage and hoe cultivation. The staple crop is millet (Pennisetum spicatum), followed by sorghum and then maize. Also grown are sesame, peanuts, earth peas, "karyanga" (a forage grain), okra, roselle, tomatoes, "native eggplant", peppers, squash, gourds, cucumbers, "yergan" (Cucumeropsis?), Coleus coffini, cotton, and ambary, as well as small quantities of taro (Galadium antiquorum), yams (very few), sweet potatoes, rice, sweet sorghum, earth peas, beans, and cow peas. Onions are not grown, nor is manioc (Tauxier; but Mangin reports it).

Cattle are kept in considerable number, but mainly by Yarse and Fulani rather than Mossi. The Mossi, however, keep numerous sheep, goats, donkeys, horses, dogs (eaten), chickens, guinea fowl, and bees, to which list Mangin adds some cats, ducks, and pigeons. Hunting is fairly important, fishing less so; both are pastimes, and there are also professional hunters. Gathering, especially of the fruits of Butyrospermum parkii (karite) and Parkia afrikana (nere), is as important as hunting (the same products are also reported for the Grunshi tribes).

Trade is likewise important. Internal trade is conducted at regular markets, of which there is one in each village. External trade is mainly in the hands of the Yarse (and a few Haussa), who import salt and livestock from the N and kola nuts and slaves from the S.

Sex Division of Labor

Men and boys tend goats, sheep, and fowls (the Fulani tend cattle and horses). Women gather. Men hunt and clear land for agriculture. Both sexes participate almost equally in other agricultural work, though the men do more hoeing.

Property

Cowries are used as currency. Uncleared land belongs to the village, and the headman's permission must usually be secured before clearing a new plot. Land is owned in theory by the king, and its control is vested in district chiefs. Tilled land is held by individuals, not collectively. Each householder usually has one large bush field and a smaller garden near his compound.

Inheritance is patrilineal--by ElSo, who takes his father's compound (leaving his own to an unmarried YoBr who inherits a widow of Fa) and farm land (giving some to younger brothers if more than he can work), and about half of the livestock, slaves, and money (distributing the rest among his younger brothers and even his sisters). In the restricted regions where there are functional extended families, family property is inherited by YoBr, then ElSo inheriting the private property. If a man leaves no sons, Mangin reports that the ElDa inherits, then the youngest son, but Tauxier reports that the next younger brother inherits the compound and fields and shares the livestock, money and slaves with the daughters. In default of children and younger brothers (an ElBr does not inherit), the primary heir is the eldest fraternal nephew.

Social Stratification

Slavery is well developed. Slaves are obtained by capture in war, by purchase, and by birth into slave status. A slave who marries a daughter of his master becomes free, and his children are free. Smiths form an isolated (and inferentially endogamous caste), occupying a separate quarter in each village. Fulani herders also live in separate small settlements outside the village. Yarse traders form a privileged class, below the nobility but above the commoners, and occupy special quarters in the villages where they live. The sons of chiefs form a privileged aristocracy; they inhabit special villages, often pillage caravans, and are permitted to exact gifts from

commoners without recourse. At the top of the social pyramid is the royalty. The sons of kings are not allowed to live in the capital but are set up with special small courts in provincial villages. The daughters of kings enjoy a very high status; they dominate their husbands and often lead profligate lives.

Marriage

Normally a father choses a girl for his young son, makes periodic gifts to her family, and when she reaches puberty pays a bride-price, consisting on the average of 25, 000 cowries plus cloth, salt, and koka nuts. Where there are functional extended families, the head arranges for the marriage of young girls, sometimes by an exchange of women, sometimes with a bride-price, and sometimes without; in the last case, the bride-price for the ElDa of the union goes to the family head or his heir.

General polygyny prevails, exclusively in the non-sororal form. The first wife is chief wife, but each co-wife with her children occupies a separate hut. Secondary unions are preferred with FaWi, allowed with WiSi (but only after death of Wi) and BrWi (inferentially only ElBrWi).

Family

The normal residential unit is a polygynous family occupying a compound; it includes the wives and unmarried children of the male head, slaves, and oftentimes unmarried brothers of the head. There are also remnants of a patrilocal extended family organization in some regions, but not as a residential unit; where such an organization occurs, the head is succeeded by his YoBr, then his ElSo.

Residence

Residence is normally patrilocal. Older boys and unmarried men live in a separate hut in the compound of their father or ElBr until they marry. Then they build a new compound, which Tauxier says is normally close to that of the Fa or ElBr; Mangin, however, reports that the new compound is often in another quarter of the village or even in another village (i.e., neolocal residence). When a householder dies, the heir (usually ElSo) leaves his own compound and moves into that of the deceased.

Kin Groups and Exogamy

Dim Delobsom says local exogamy prevails.

Known kinship is reported to be a bar to marriage. This would prevent unions with any first cousin. Second cousins likewise do not marry.

Patrilineal descent prevails. There are corporate, exogamous, totemic patrilineal kin groups (their type is not specified), each headed by its eldest male member (succession is by seniority).

Kinship Terminology (from Rattray)

Fa--ba. Mo--ma. ElBr--kyema. YoBr--yawa. Sibling of opposite sex-tawa. So--biga. Da--bi-pugela. Hu--sida. Wi--pava.

Avuncular and nepotic terms are basically bifurcate merging.

Cousin terms, as reported, are strictly descriptive, i.e., of Sudanese type; if this is correct, the social structure as a whole is Normal Sudanese.

Settlement Pattern

The typical Mossi settlement is a sprawling village, or perhaps more properly a neighborhood. Dwellings are grouped into compounds --five or six round huts with mud walls and conical thatched (with straw mats) roofs arranged in a circle with connecting mud walls to surround a courtyard (the huts do not have verandas). Compounds are separated from one another by about 40-50 yards (Mangin says 15-20 yards) with fields of maize between them. Each settlement is also divided into quarters, separated from one another by 200-500 yards. The section occupied by Fulani herdsmen has low conical shelters of straw.

Community Organization

There is no information on kin-group localization, but the quarters suggest localized lineages or clan-barrios and the report of local exogamy suggests clan-communities. Circumcision of boys and clitoridectomy of girls are both practiced at 8-12 years of age.

Local Government

Each settlement has a headman or "chef de la terre" (tengasoba), who controls the land but exercises little political authority; he is succeeded, according to Ruelle, by a son selected by the village elders; his functions are primarily ritual, though he administers justice with the help of a council of elders. Mangin reports that the office of local headman (possibly different from the above-mentioned "chef de la terre") is filled by appointment by the chief of the district, who is courted and bribed by competing candidates, never by a near kinsman

of the former headman. (Two distinct offices are common among the related Grunshi tribes). Dim Delobsom says the headman is succeeded by his ElSo. Each community also has a market supervisor. Each quarter of a village also has a head, who is succeeded by the eldest surviving family head in the quarter.

State

The Mossi are politically organized into three independent states--the main Mossi kingdom (with more than 2/3 of the total population), the state of Yatenga in the NW with its capital at Ouahigouya, and the state of Gurma in the E with its capital at Fada N'gourma. The large Mossi kingdom is divided into 9 provinces--five administrative provinces headed by the five great ministers (see below) and four vassal provinces with a considerable measure of autonomy (their heads are virtual monarchs in their domains). The provinces in turn are divided into districts, each comprising a number of settlements. District heads, who are often eunuchs appointed by the king, have non-hereditary speakers, are assisted by councils, and collect regular taxes and special imposts from the local headmen. At the head of the state stands the paramount chief or king, the Mogho-Naba, who maintains an elaborate court at the capital. He is assisted by five major ministers, who also serve as provincial governors. They are: (1) the Kamisoro, the prime minister and chief of the eunuchs (Mangin says he himself is one); (2) the Widi-Naba, who is chief of the cavalry and serves as ruler in the interregnum between the death of one king and the appointment of his successor; (3) the Larale, keeper of the royal tombs; (4) the Gunga-naba, chief of the infantry; and (5) the Ballum, chief of the pages and commandant of the palace. Other important officials include a military commander-in-chief, a leader of the royal bodyguard, a chief sacrificial priest, a chief of the royal servants, an official representative of the Yarse (a privileged trading caste of Mande origin), etc. There are also numerous eunuchs (only the king is privileged to have them), pages (young boys selected for their good looks; all chiefs have them), bodyguards, and royal wives (many of whom are established in scattered villages of eunuchs, who are responsible for their fidelity), etc. In addition to regular sources of revenue, the king has unlimited powers of confiscation. The death of a king is followed by an interregnum until the installation of his successor; this is a period of anarchy, with widespread pillage and even murder. The succession is determined by an electoral college consisting of the Widi-Naba (as president), the Larale, the

Gunga-naba, and the military commander-in-chief. This meets and makes its selection in secret, to avoid influence from rival candidates. The successor is apparently always a son. Ministers are also succeeded by a son--the ElSo or another selected by his Fa while alive.

Warfare

The state has always been secure. There is no intervillage warfare, and the Zaberma (Dyerma) who ravaged the Grunshi tribes between 1872 and 1897 left the Mossi severely alone. The excellent cavalry of the Mossi was an important factor in their conquests. The last war before the French occupation was with the Gurma state. Inferentially there is no cannibalism or headhunting.

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4: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1957
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SECTION OF ANTHROPOLOGY

AN ANALYSIS OF THE POLITICAL ORGANIZATION OF THE MOSSI PEOPLE*

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121 The African Sudanic states were the subject of a discussion presented before The New York Academy of Sciences in 1949. At that time Joseph Greenberg discussed the rise of these states and evaluated the theories assigning the predominant part in their formation to Caucasian influences. However, the Negro genesis of the Mossi Sudanic state never has been seriously questioned.[1] In this paper I propose to analyze the political system of the Mossi in the light of such questions as: the power structure of the African state; the conquest theory of state formation; and the presence of feudalism or feudal-type states in the Sudan.

●105 The one and one-half million Mossi represent the largest population aggregate in what is now known as French West Africa. They inhabit an arid 125,000 square miles of sub-Saharan area drained by the Black, Red, and White Voltas and their tributaries. The Mossi are described physically as "true" Negroes as distinguished from the other Sudanic types. Their language belongs to the Mossi-Grunshi groups of the Niger-Congo family of African languages. In many respects their culture is similar to those of such Voltaic groups as the Tallensi, Dagomba, and Mamprussi peoples of the Northern Gold Coast (Ghana). The people in this Voltaic region are mainly agriculturalists who grow several varieties of millet and sorghum. They rear some cattle, sheep, and goats, but do little fishing or hunting. Their kinship systems are based on patrilineal segmented lineages. Throughout this entire region we find the institution of earth priests who are ritual owners of the land, but political organization is highly segmented and acephalous, with the exception of the centrally organized systems of the Dagomba, Mossi, and Mamprussi.

175 The *Tarikh es Soudan*, a chronicle written by Es Sadi, who lived in Timbuktu during the early seventeenth century, records that the Mossi first appeared on the historical scene about 1328. Between the years 1328 and 1477 the Mossi of the northern kingdom of Yatenga attacked and conquered Timbuktu, sacked Macina, and raided the towns of Bagana and Walata held by the Songhoi. In turn they were defeated by Sonni-Ali, the famous Songhoi ruler, who even invaded their territory, capturing slaves and booty. Askia El Hadj Mohamed, ruler of the Songhoi, raised a holy war

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[122]

**The author accepts sole responsibility for the contents of this paper.

8: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1958
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Christianity and Islam among the Mossi[1]

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797 THE twin forces of Christianity and Islam are both seriously contending for the conversion of the pagan masses of the Western Sudan. Islam first penetrated this region during the 11th century and succeeded in converting many people to its faith. Christianity arrived on the scene only 60 years ago, and has not had the time to win many converts. However, there remained many societies in this area which were largely pagan until European conquests exposed them almost simultaneously to the influences of both Christianity and Islam. One such society, the Mossi, has been described as the principal island of resistance to Islam in the Sudan (Gouilly 1952:52). André (1924:31) states that the Mossi "offered to the Animists an irreducible rampart against the invasion of Islam." And Delafosse concurs that the Mossi "seem to have been particularly hostile to Islam which has made no progress among them since the Hegira. And although an appreciable number of Moslem strangers (Yarsé) lived among them, they have almost all remained pagans" (1912, vol. 3:187).

The first Christian Catholic missionaries arrived in Mossi territory in 1900, just four years after French conquest. These missionaries were kindly if fearfully received by the people, who gave them land for building a mission and for cultivating crops. The Mossi helped the Christians cultivate these crops and willingly allowed the children to attend the mission school. Nevertheless, when the missionaries tried to convert the children to Catholicism, the parents objected and withdrew the children from school (Socquet 1956:62). The Protestant American "Assemblies of God" mission first worked among the Mossi in 1926, and in 1931 they reported that the outlook for conversions was "hopeful" (Cooksey and McLeish 1931:215). But from 1926 to date, the Protestants have made negligible progress in their conversions. There are today about 155,000 Moslems, 26,000 Catholics, and 1,760 Protestants in a Mossi population of over 1,500,000. These figures attest to the fact that despite a long history of resistance to foreign religious systems, many Mossi are now abandoning their traditional religion. But the figures also show that while Islam is gaining many converts, the Catholics are making only slight progress, and the American Protestants hardly any at all. There are obviously many reasons for the differential advance of these three religious systems. In this paper I will examine and analyze the processes by which these religious systems attempt to gain converts, and delineate the reasons for their differential success.

The Mossi who are now feeling the impact of external religious influences
173 represent the unique example of a Sudanese group which has preserved its
105 ethnic identity and political autonomy through all the vicissitudes of Sudanic
[186] history until French conquest in 1896. Tradition records that the first Mossi

rulers left the Dagomba region in the Gold Coast (present-day Ghana) during the 11th century and moved into the bend of the Niger River, carving out three large kingdoms and smaller principalities in the process. At the head of these still extant kingdoms are rulers (*Moro Nabas*, who hold feudal-like control of the provinces, districts, and villages which comprise their domains. A complex hierarchical administrative apparatus extends the power of the rulers into the smallest village, and funnels taxes and tribute back to them. French conquest modified this highly efficient system but did not greatly change it. The Mossi state apparatus rests on an economy which produces cotton cloth, horses, sheep, cattle, and goats, but the main support of this large population—one of the densest in the Sudan—is grain agriculture. Today, some Mossi districts still have as many as 70 persons per square mile.

The Mossi are divided into stratified royal, noble, and commoner patrilineages. Characteristic of this lineage system is a process by which royal sublineages descend serially until they merge with the mass of commoner lineages. Below the lineages there were once large non-Mossi groups of serfs and slaves, but these people have now been grouped into lineages and have become Mossi. Patrilocal polygynous extended family households, grouped into villages, form the basic Mossi settlement pattern. Marriages are arranged between unrelated persons through the agency of lineage members who establish "friendly" relationships. The two friends might ask their lineage heads for women to exchange as wives, or the "friend" who has received more gifts from his opposite number will give over a wife. Because only the older men have women and goods at their disposal, they are usually the ones who receive wives. The result is that most young men have no wives and must content themselves with occasional lovers until they inherit wives from lineage members. The Mossi have a great fear of incestuous relations which bring down the wrath of the ancestors (the *Keemsé*).

Ancestor veneration is at the core of Mossi religious behavior. The recent ancestors are notified, through sacrifices, of the important events in the lives of their descendants, and they are expected to aid in solving everyday problems. The ancestors also invoke their sanctions against antisocial behavior among their descendants. Once a year the Mossi people, in concert with the Moro Nabas, appeal to their individual and collective ancestors for good crops, large families, and for the preservation of the dynasty. Often associated with the ancestors as propitiatory agents are local deities called *Tengkougas* (sing. *Tenkougre*) or earth shrines, visibly manifested by clumps of trees, mountains, rocks, or rivers. *Tengsobas* or earth priests appeal to the Tengkougas on behalf of the local populations for help in sickness, for rain and good crops, and for children. When proper sacrifices are offered to the Tengkougas, their spiritual agents, called *kinkirsé*, enter the wombs of women and are born as children. Twins and children who die young are regarded as "evil" kinkirsé who entered a woman without being invited. Nevertheless, many persons consider twins as special gifts to parents in favor of the earth deities.

The earth itself, *Tenga*, is one of the principal deities of the Mossi. Tenga is

9:Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1960 FA28 Mossi FA28

during a period of transition to effective independence.

The Mossi have the unique distinction of having preserved their ethnic identity and political autonomy throughout all the vicissitudes of Sudanese history until conquered by the French on September 1, 1896. The origin of Mossi society is couched in mythological terms. According to their tradition they came from Dagomba in the Gold Coast (present day Ghana) sometime during the 11th or 12th century and moved northward towards the Niger River. During this migration they carved out three large kingdoms and many small principalities by conquering and absorbing some of the indigenous Ninisi and Foulse and Dogon populations, and by chasing the others into the cliffs of Bandiagara. In 1328, according to Es Sadi in the *Tarikh es Soudan*, the Mossi attacked, burned, and sacked Timbuktu, then held by Mali, and during the following century attacked Walata and Banku. They received their first setback by the Ali, and were severely beaten by Askia the Great, the usurper of the Songhoi throne, who lead a *jihad* against them in 1499. But their attacks into the Niger bend did not cease until the Moroccans became masters of Timbuktu sometime in the early 1590's. From that period until the French conquest, the Mossi remained relatively quiescent. They developed and maintained an economy based on grain cultivation, livestock rearing, cotton production, and trade between the forest zones and the desert. Their political system crystallized into a loose confederacy of fairly autonomous kingdoms and principalities, sometimes tribute to the Moro Naba, the ruler of Wagadougou.

Wagadougou, the most important Mossi political entity, was like the lesser kingdoms, pyramidal in political structure. At the top was and still is the Moro Naba, a lineal descendant of Wedraogo, the Dagomba conquerer who founded the Mossi group and Moro Naba Wubri, the first ruler of the Wagadougou dynasty. Paying allegiance to him, were the princes who ruled such autonomous provinces as Yako, Boulsa, Mane, Riziam, and Boussouma. These princes were all sons or near relatives of the early Moro Nabas. Directly under the Moro Naba were district chiefs who were descended from the cadet branches of the ruling family. The villages within the district were in turn ruled by the chiefs of the indigenous populations. In many of the villages,

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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CHAPTER 9

Trade and Markets Among the Mossi People

BY ELLIOTT P. SKINNER

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The Mossi represent the dominant population of the Voltaic Re- [13] public, numbering about 1,600,000 out of some 3,200,000 inhabitants. [161] They represent the unique example of a group which has preserved its [128] ethnic identity and political autonomy through all the vicissitudes [648] of Sudanic history until it was conquered by the French in 1896. Tra- [173] dition records that the people who became the Mossi left the Dagomba region in present-day Ghana during the eleventh century and moved into the bend of the Niger River, carving out three large kingdoms and smaller principalities in the process. At the head of these still [642] extant kingdoms are rulers *(Moro Nabas)* who formerly held feudal- [643] like control over the provinces, districts and villages which comprise [631] their domains. The villages, with their patri-local, polygynous, ex- [621] tended family households, formed the basic Mossi settlement pattern. [592] A complex hierarchical administrative apparatus carried the power [631] of the Mossi rulers into the smallest villages, and funneled taxes and tribute back to them. This structure still exists, but of course it has [648] been modified by the French.

The Mossi were and are still divided into stratified royal, noble [565] and commoner patrilineages. Characteristic of this lineage system is [613] a process by which royal sub-lineages descend serially until they merge with the mass of commoner lineages. Below the lineages there [563] once were large non-Mossi groups of serfs and slaves, but these people have now been grouped into lineages and have become Mossicized.

The topography of Mossi country is typical of the Sudanic grass- 133 lands. It is an immense plain, some 1,500 feet above sea level and broken only by three low mountain ranges and numerous small hills. The annual total rainfall is between 30 and 40 inches, and falls 132 almost entirely as heavy showers or thundershowers during the period from June to September. So narrow is the margin of rainfall for [433] successful crop cultivation that any variation in the cycle results in [511] low crop yields and a difficult "hungry period" the following year before the new crops are harvested. The Mossi do not practice irri- 133 gation, and would have trouble doing so because the three Volta [241] Rivers which drain their territory serve as drainage chiefly during the rainy season. Only the Black Volta has water all year round; the

1: Delobsom, A.A. Dim. L'Empire du Mogho-Naba, Coutoumes des Mossi de la Haute-Volta. /The Empire of the Mogho Naba, Customs of the Mossi of Upper Volta/. Preface by Robert Randau. Institut de Droit Comparé, Etudes de Sociologie et d'Ethnologie Juridiques, Vol. II. Paris: Les Éditions Domat-Montchrestien, 1932.

Pp. viii, 303; 24 plates /Hraf MS. Pp. ii, 166/

Yale: P50 Et81 v. 11

/Not translated: Pp. 1-46, 223-233, 289-297/

/Translated from the French for the Human Relations Area Files by Kathryn A. Looney/

/Chapters 1-2, 19-20 and the appendix, which include material on the history, proverbs and rulers have not been translated since these features are covered in other sources. Dim Delobsom was a native Mossi of the noble class, employed by the French administration. He was asked by his superiors to clear up certain

1: Delobsom, A.A. Dim

ethnographic questions, and the results of his investigations are included in this book. It contains information on the organization of the Mossi empire, slavery, festivals, the life cycle, circumcision, the penetration of Islam, housing, clothing, dances, agriculture and inheritance. Though superficial in many respects, the work is particularly valuable because it presents the point of view of an educated native.--Analyst/

Field date: No date
Analyst: Timothy J. O'Leary

Evaluation: Indigene - 5
Processed in 1959

2: Mangin, Eugène. Les Mossi, Essai sur les us et coutumes du peuple Mossi au Soudan occidental /Essay on the Manners and Customs of the Mossi People in the Western Sudan/. Paris: Augustin Challamel, 1921.

Pp. xi, 116; 17 plates. /HRAF MS: pp. ii, 141/

Yale Day Missions: Jf M31

/Translated for the Human Relations Area Files from the French by Ariane Brunel and Elliott Skinner./

/Father Mangin, who lived among the Mossi for many years, mainly in the province of Koupela, and spoke the language fluently, based this account of Mossi customs and institutions primarily upon personal observations and interviews. The book contains information on the history, physical environment, economic life, political organization, marriage and family relations, life cycle, religious beliefs, and general characteristics of the Mossi people. The author's colonial and religious biases sometimes appear, though this work is regarded as a basic source on the Mossi.--Analyst.

Field date: ca. 1910 Evaluation: Missionary-5
Analyst: Robert Lee Processed in 1959

3: Tauxier, Louis. Nouvelles Notes sur le Mossi et le Gourounsi /New Notes on the Mossi and the Gourounsi/. Paris: Émile Larose, Libraire-Éditeur, 1924.

Pp. viii, 208; preface; bibliography; errata /HRAF MS. 1-38/

Northwestern University: 572.966 T229no

/Only pages 1-33 translated for the Files/

/Translated from the French for the Human Relations Area Files by Paul A. Mankin/

/Only pages 1-33 of the original have been translated and processed for the file; the remainder deals with peoples other than the Mossi. The section processed is largely a reconstruction of the history of the Mossi based on different types of evidence including that presented by other authors, traditions and mythology of the Mossi, conclusions from linguistic studies, anthropometry, and an extensive chronology of the Mossi which the author correlates with historical notes on peoples with whom the

3: Tauxier, Louis.

Mossi have been in contact. The author adds a chapter on the cult of the sun; except for this latter section and occasional notes on various aspects of the culture, the work is devoted to history. The author had been among the Mossi and in nearby areas intermittently from 1908 to 1923. --Analyst/

Field date: 1908-1923
Analyst: George R. Bedell

Evaluation: Government Official-4,5
Processed in 1959

4: Skinner, Elliott Percival. An Analysis of the Political Organization of the Mossi People. Transactions of the New York Academy of Sciences, ser. II, Vol. 19, pp. 740-750. New York: 1957.

HRAF copy.

/This is a brief treatment of the history, traditions and present form of Mossi governmental organization. The author analyzes the political system of the Mossi in light of the power structure of the African state, the conquest theory of state formation, and the question of the occurrence of feudalistic states in the Sudan. The author is a member of the faculty of the Department of Anthropology of New York University. --Analyst/.

Field date: 1955-1957
Analyst: George R. Bedell

Evaluation: Ethnologist -5
Processed in 1959

5: Hammond, Peter B. Economic Change and Mossi Acculturation. In William R. Bascom and Melville J. Herskovits, eds., Continuity and Change in African Cultures, pp. 238-256. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959.

Yale: Nkd 74 958B

/This article is concerned primarily with the changes in the culture of those Mossi who have been resettled in the area of the recently developed Niger Irrigation Project. As a background to his statements on such changes, the author presents a survey of Mossi political and social organization, the traditional agricultural and trading economy, a few aspects of the religion which are closely related to the economy, and a brief description of the economic cycle and the calendar of ceremonial observances which mark its phases. The principal adjustments discussed with regard to the resettlement are related to new introductions in technology, the influence of Islam on the pagan religion, and the change from residence rules and social groupings based on kinship to those which are determined by the

5: Hammond, Peter B.

administration. The author is a member of the faculty in the department of anthropology and sociology of the University of Pittsburgh. --Analyst/

Field date: 1954-1956
Analyst: George R. Bedell

Evaluation: Ethnologist-5
Processed in 1959

6: Tauxier, Louis. Le Noir du Soudan, Pays Mossi et Gourounsi Documents et Analyses /The Black Population of the Sudan, Mossi and Gourounsi Country, Documents and Analyses/. Paris: Emile Larose, Librairie-Editeur, 1912.

Pp. 796; 33 appendices /HRAF manuscript, pp. 1-133/

Yale: Nkd80 912t

/Only pp. 451-598, covering the Mossi specifically, have been translated for the Mossi file./

/Translated from the French for the Human Relations Area Files by Ariane Brunel/

/This sketch of Mossi life is taken from a larger general work on the Negro peoples of the Sudan. It is divided into two sections: occupations and the family, public works and religion. Under the first section are included a brief historical sketch, and information on agriculture, diet, natural resources, domestic animals,

6: Tauxier, Louis.

pottery-making, smiths, stonework and other occupations. The second section describes the forms of the family found among the Mossi, and contains information on government, the Moro Naba, and various religious practices. --Analyst/

Field date: ca. 1908
Analyst: Timothy J. O'Leary

Evaluation: Government Official - 4,5
Processed in 1960

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7: Tauxier, L. Le Noir du Yatenga: Mossis - Nioniossés - Samos - Yarsés - Silmi-Mossis - Peuls /The Black Population of Yatenga/. Paris: Émile Larose, 1917.

Pp. iv, 790 (HRAF ms. pp. ii, 61)

Yale: Nkd80 917t

/Only pp. 223-273 have been translated for the Mossi file./

/Translated from the French for the Human Relations Area Files by Varian Schmokel./

/The section selected for translation is Book IV: The Family. It contains information on groupings larger than the single household, women and the household, children and education, appendages of the family (e.g., slaves and serfs), family property, and the laws of inheritance. Some data on marriage practices are also included. Information on clientage, the attaching of one's self to a richer household, has been placed in category 566. Tauxier was a colonial administrator with a long association with the Mossi.--Analyst/

Field date: 1913-1916 Evaluation: Government Official - 5
Analyst: Timothy J. O'Leary Processed in 1959

8: Skinner, Elliott Percival. Christianity and Islam among the Mossi. American Anthropologist, Vol. 60, pp. 1102-1119. Menasha: American Anthropological Association, 1958.

HRAF copy

/This article is a study of the history, methods and results of the attempts of Christians and Moslems to convert the pagan Mossi. Islam has the longest history in the area, first penetrating the Mossi territory in the 11th century, while Catholic missionaries arrived in 1900 and Protestant missionaries somewhat later. The Moslems have had the greatest success and the Protestants least. Christianity is looked upon with suspicion since it is the religion of the white conquerors and since so many of its tenets are at variance with pagan beliefs. The tenets of Islam are much closer to Mossi beliefs and it is far more adaptable to these beliefs as well. However, the Mossi have shown great resistance to both religions and the great majority of them are still pagan. There is a tendency today towards a greater Moslemization of the populace and a declining status for Catholicism and Protestantism. Skinner is a Professor of Anthropology at New York University. --Analyst/

Field date: 1955-1957
Analyst: Timothy J. O'Leary

Evaluation: Ethnologist - 5
Processed in 1959

9: Skinner, Elliott P. Traditional and Modern Patterns of Succession to Political Office among the Mossi of the Voltaic Republic. The Journal of Human Relations, Volume 8, pp. 394-406. Central State College, Wilburforce, Ohio, 1960.

HRAF copy (O'Leary)

[In this paper the author has described the period of political interregnum and political succession among the Mossi and how they have adapted this to meet certain political threats under the French colonial rule and to meet the demands of the present socio-political conditions in the Voltaic Republic. --Analyst]

Field date: 1955-1957
Analyst: Robert J. Theodoratus

Evaluation: Ethnologist-5
Processed in 1962

10: Hammond, Peter B. Mossi Joking. Ethnology, Vol. 3, pp. 259-267. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1964.

HRAF Copy.

[The author presents this paper as a tentative step in the reformulation of the ..."various and disparate observations on joking in the anthropological literature." He contends that an analysis of this literature would indicate that when joking has become institutionalized, the structural relationship between the participating parties would be characterized by ..."five significantly interrelated structural attributes: separation, reciprocity, ambivalence, equality and independence" which he illustrates with data obtained from the Yatenga Mossi. These data treat specifically of the mother's brother, mother's brother's wife joking relationships, siblings-in-law joking relationships, joking between sibs (i.e. lineages), joking between age-sets, intervillage joking, and joking between ethnic groups. Joking as a psychological adjustive mechanism, and a means of social control are also discussed.
Category 571 has been used as a general "cover" category for information on Mossi joking relationships. Footnotes appearing in the text will be found in category 116, pp. 266-267.]

Field date: 1954-1956
Analyst: John Beierle

Evaluation: Ethnologist-5
Processed in 1965

11: Skinner, Elliott Percival.

of Mossi-European relations, and the resulting changes taking place in Mossi political structure as the result of the European conquest of these people.

For lack of available information on the "Ninisi," an aboriginal people living in the Upper Volta area prior to the coming of the Mossi, information on this group has been subsumed under FA28 Mossi.

Footnotes appearing in the text will be found at the end of the source: see category 116, pp. 205-219./

Field date: 1955-1957
Analyst: John Beierle

Evaluation: Ethnologist-5
Processed in 1965-1968

11: Skinner, Elliott Percival. The Mossi of the Upper Volta. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1964.

Pp. xiv, 236; 1 map; 11 unnumbered photographs; glossary; bibliography; index.

Yale: Nkd83 M6 964S. DLC GN655. M65S5 DLC card no.: 64-12074.

/This source presents an intensive study of the political development of the Mossi people, a Sudanese negroid group occupying the Republic of the Upper Volta, West Africa. The author gathered his data in the Upper Volta Republic between November 1955 and January 1957, a period during which many important political changes were taking place in this region, and most of the field work was done in the territory formerly included in the kingdom of Ouagadougou, although short visits were also made to the Yatenga, Tenkodogo, and Boussouma regions. The field work was further supplemented by data gathered from various government documents and ethnographies on the Mossi. Particular emphasis in this source is on the Mogho Naba (the supreme chief or emperor of the Mossi), his household, ministers, and various territorial chiefs (e.g., provincial, district and village chiefs), and the various levels of interaction between them. Additional information may also be found on law and judicial procedures, economic foundations, and religion and government. The last three chapters of this work present a culture history

12: Skinner, Elliott Percival. Trade and Market among the Mossi People. In, Paul Bohannan and George Dalton, editors, Markets in Africa, pp. 237-278, 739-753. Northwestern University African Studies Number 9. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1962.

Yale: Nfg75 A17 962B. DLC card no. 61-12383.

[According to Skinner, the Mossi kingdoms with their elaborate class system and hierarchical administrative apparatus derive much of their wealth and power from regulating and managing both internal and external Mossi market commerce: taxation and tribute obtained from the local and regional markets being a source of revenue maintaining the government and ruling elite. The point of view of the author is that the Mossi markets have multiple functions: not only as foci for internal trade exchanges between agriculturalists, herders, and certain craftsmen, but also that marketplaces are sites for rural-urban communication, intervillage social contact, rural administration, and performance of sacred and secular rituals and ceremonies. The author's thorough and complete coverage treats the social-political-economic-religious organization of the market as seen in all its dimensions. Historical evidence points to the crucial effects long range caravan trade had in establishing Mossi political power and dominance. The author refers liberally to

12: Skinner, Elliott Percival.

these early sources for data on trade routes, volume and frequency of foreign trade, and on the marketable commodities themselves. Today, he claims that Mossi commerce is viable in two forms: external (trade with other West African societies) and internal (trade among the Mossi), both being a response to economic forces or pressures and to the existence of some surplus productivity enabling the Mossi to specialize in various types of production and distribution. Most of the article deals with the dynamics of the average daily or weekly market. He lucidly describes such ongoing processes as: market attitudes and expectations, structure and organization of mercantile establishments and retail selling, the commodities and services disposable on the market, the operation of the price mechanism in determining values and costs of products, the function of money, the nature of Mossi government supervision and inspection of the market, the integration of such institutions as marriages and funerals into the market situation, and other market rituals, ceremonies, and social behavior. While the author's discussion is not a theoretical analysis of general Mossi economic principles or their determinants, its descriptive generalizations on market interrelationships are superb. References at the end of the article are included in a combined bibliography for the entire volume.]

Field date: 1955-1957 Cultural Anthropologist-4, 5
Analyst: Gilbert Winer Processed in 1967

FA28 Mossi

Dim Delobsom, A.A. Notes sur les Yarcé au Mossi. Revue Anthropologique, Vol. 44. Paris, 1934.

/This is an article by an educated upper-class Mossi dealing with the Moslem Yarsé ingredient of the Mossi population. Since much of the material is covered in other sources processed, this source has not been processed for the Mossi file. --Analyst/

Dubourg, Jacques. La Vie des Paysans Mossi: le Village de Taghalla. Cahiers d'Outremer, Vol. 10, No. 40, pp. 285-324. Bordeaux, 1957.

/This is a study of the village of Taghalla, which lies on the left Bank of the White Volta in the savannah country. The village has a strong social cohesion under the authority of the zaka naba, the latter being the suzerain of 13 villages in the area under the Mossi feudal system. Subsistence is based on millet and maize cultivation, with Peul taking care of the cattle. There is a problem of overpopulation in the area, with many of the younger people migrating to the coast. The situation might be ameliorated by introducing new food crops, as well as by expanding into land which has not previously been under cultivation. Since subsistence and migration have been treated in other sources already processed, this source has not been translated for the Mossi file. --Analyst/

FA28 Mossi

Marc, L. A. Le Pays Mossi. Paris: Émile Larose, Libraire-Editeur, 1909.

Pp. 200

/This volume is by a colonial infantry lieutenant who was with the group of soldiers who overcame the Mogho Naba in 1896. It is a general history and description of the Mossi. Since the most valuable sections of this source have been quoted extensively in other books in this file, e.g., those by Mangin and Tauxier, this report has not been processed for the Mossi file. --Analyst/

FA28 Mossi

Ouedraogo, J. and A. Prost. Alimentation en Pays Mossi. Comptes Rendus de la Ire Conference Internationale des Africanistes de l'Ouest. 1951.

/This is a report on Mossi nutrition made at the First International Conference of West Africanists. Since the material has already been covered in other sources in the file, this report was not processed for the Mossi file. -- Analyst/

174 /13/This lack of certainty concerning the origins of the Mossi
141 should not prevent us from treating the anthropological question of the Mossi. On the contrary, for it is quite evident that, while linguistics can give us valuable information about the origins and affinities of the Mossi, anthropology can give us even more valuable and far-reaching information since, as we know, it is obviously easier for a people to change its language than the form of its skull. Let us, therefore, look to anthropology and consult Dr. Ruelle to find out what the Mossi are from a somatic viewpoint.

141 Dr. Ruelle, in the work cited below (1), has worked with 100

[18]

1. L'Anthropologie, Vol. XV (1904), pp. 519-561 and 657-703.

Mossi men (unfortunately, he did not measure women, which is a regrettable shortcoming and can invalidate certain averages, for instance, the ones concerning stature). From the viewpoint of skin color, which he generally finds dark brown (not only for the Mossi but for the other tribes of the IInd military territory which he studied at the same time as the Mossi), he gives for the Mossi the following numbers on Broca's chromatic scale:

70 Mossi out of 100 have no. 42
14 Mossi out of 100 have no. 41
19 Mossi out of 100 have no. 37 (2)

[19]

2. Page 522.

For the horizontal cephalic index:

2 Mossi have 65	15 Mossi have 75
4 Mossi have 68	11 Mossi have 76
4 Mossi have 69	7 Mossi have 77
2 Mossi have 70	8 Mossi have 78
3 Mossi have 71	6 Mossi have 79
13 Mossi have 72	1 Mossi has 80
17 Mossi have 73	2 Mossi have 81 (3)
5 Mossi have 74	

4: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1957
FA28 Mossi FA28

based on kinship." He contrasts the Geselschaft feudal system with the tribal Gemeinschaft, and recognizes the possible transition from Gemeinschaft relationships to Geselschaft relationships in the evolution of culture. However, this admission places Coulborn on the horns of a dilemma as he does not accept feudalism as a step in the evolution of the state, but as a form of government that develops after the breakdown of a state and is used for state restoration. He states that "The place of feudalism in the rise of civilized societies is not yet complete, but we must pause to notice the profound importance of the substitution of something different for kinship relations."[13] We see from the Mossi data that they used kin bonds instead of warrior-band bonds as the basis for delimiting the persons chosen for government. The warrior-band members were rewarded with hereditary administrative positions. It must be emphasized, however, that despite kinship bonds, it was the loyalty of a man that determined whether his heirs received his fief.... These new vassals were required to renew pledges of allegiance to a ruler sometimes very remotely related. It must be borne in mind that kinship does play a part in political systems that range from feudalism to twentieth century Western democracy.

We cannot fail to observe that it was in regard to the society of the Chou period in China, one similar to that of the Mossi, that Coulborn was compelled to withhold judgment as to the nature of its political system. Shang society seemed to have had many of the tribal characteristics of the people found in the pre-Mossi Voltaic area. Chou had to face the problems of ancestor veneration associated with the tribal lands, and used some of the same techniques as the Mossi. Coulborn found many of these features "foreign to a tribal society" and finally decided to "leave open the decision as to whether Chou China developed a feudal system or a system of city states as its first enduring polity."[14]

In conclusion I shall say that the political system of the Mossi had definite feudal characteristics. These feudal characteristics did not come as a result of the breakdown of a pre-existing state, but served as techniques for building a state from small scattered groups. I should certainly like to keep open the whole question of feudalism, especially as it applies to the question of the origin of the pristine state, until more comparative data from Africa can shed additional light on this important subject.

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6. TAUXIER, L. 1912. Le Noir du Soudan. : 583. Paris, France.
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4: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1957
FA28 Mossi FA28

●113 8. RATTRAY, R. S. 1932. Tribes of the Ashanti Hinterland. 2 vols. : 550. Oxford Univ. Press. Oxford, England.
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8: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1958
FA28 Mossi FA28

large Catholic population. I am indebted to Conrad Arensberg, Joseph Greenberg, Marvin Harris, and Ben Zimmermann for many helpful suggestions. 114

[2] Tauxier (1912:792) reports that when he visited Pirigui village, situated to the north of Ouagadougou, he was surprised to discover that almost half of the nobles were Moslems. It is highly probably that here, also, were the descendants of a son of Sagha who replaced a dissident chief.

[3] These figures are only approximate since many thousands of persons are unreported. Again, many persons listed as Moslems are pagans who have taken Moslem names for ritual purposes.

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1912 Le Noir du Soudan. Paris, Émile Larose.

9:Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1960 FA28 Mossi FA28

with the Moro Naba and his chiefs. The Mossi commoner who became Minister of the Interior in the Mendes-France government received the treatment fitting to his rank from French officials in Africa, but he bowed humbly and paid homage to the Moro Naba when he visited Wagadougou. In return he still receives political support from the traditional Mossi hierarchy. Whether or not this man and the other Mossi politicians of commoner origin will continue to honor and respect the chiefs in order to obtain their support is not known. It is possible that this situation will change if the growing number of urban Mossi and some of their rural fellows attack the position of the chiefs. But for the foreseeable future it appears as though the traditional dynasty will remain in power, and may even extend its power at the expense of the other non-Mossi groups who are now members of the Voltaic Republic.

The apparent success of the ancient political dynasty of the Mossi people to adapt itself to the requirements of the modern world shows the ability of African institutions to adjust novelty with tradition. It confirms what the anthropologists have always known, that Africa was not a *tabla rasa* on which conquerors could easily impose their ideas and institutions. The cultures of Africa were meaningful to its peoples and when they could not be maintained, they were reinterpreted to meet new situations.[9] It is quite true that because of historical reasons the Mossi did not come into as intensive contact with Europeans as did their neighbors to the south, and that this is possibly why their institutions have persisted. However, the experience of Ghana should make us pause before accepting such a facile answer. A British type of Parliamentary system was imposed upon that country, but it is changing so rapidly that one wonders whether it should have been imposed in the first place. It is still too early to tell what the Ghanaian and other modern African governments will look like; but one might speculate that within the bounds set by the exigencies of the modern world, these governments may resemble the traditional African ones much more than those of their ephemeral conquerors.

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1. According to C. K. Meek, among the Jukun "The King's demise was and is kept a close secret, and is not, in fact revealed until some months afterwards, when the body is formally buried. Various reasons are assigned for this secrecy, such as that

9:Skinner E-5 (1955-1957)1960 FA28 Mossi FA28

113 114

the counsellors may have time to choose a successor, that bloody contests between aspirants for the throne may be avoided, or that the royal slaves and wives may not run off." (*A Sudanese Kingdom*, C. K. Meek. London, 1931), p. 166. Among the Banyoro of Uganda, "When the King died, it was not made known for some days and only those in attendance knew that death had taken place, that, as they said, "Kutura," he "slept." (p. 21). And although there was some understanding as to who should be chief there was fighting between the different princes. "The fighting among princes might last only a few days while sometimes it would go on for weeks and even months." (p. 124) (*The Bakitara of Banyoro*. John Roscoe. Cambridge University Press, 1923). Among the BaVenda, "None of the people are informed of the death of the chief, but when some months have passed and the people begin to grow restless they are told that he has gone away; often a year or more used to elapse between the death of the chief and any recognition of it . . . It appears that during the interregnum any excitement or attempts at usurpation of power have time to work themselves out before the heir is installed; Everybody has a shrewd idea as to the true state of affairs, although no one dares to speak of it." *The BaVenda*, Hugh A. Stayt, London, 1931), p. 207.

113 2. "The Kingdom of Ankole in Uganda," by K. Oberg, pp. 157-158, in *African Political Systems*, edited by M. Fortes and E. E. Evans-Pritchard, Oxford Press, 1940.

3. "An Analysis of the Political Organization of the Mossi People" by Elliott P. Skinner, in *Transactions of the New York Academy of Sciences*, Ser. II, Vol. 19, No. 8, 00 740-750, June, 1957.

4. Copy of Telegram in the Archives of I.F.A.N. at Wagadougou, Voltaic Republic.

5. *French West Africa* Virginia Thompson and Richard Adloff, Stanford University Press. 1958, pp. 223-224.

6. "Christianity and Islam Among the Mossi," Elliott P. Skinner in *American Anthropologist*, Vol. 60, No. 6, December, 1958, pp. 1102-1119.

7. Thompson and Adloff, *op. cit.* p. 177.

8. *L'Afrique Francaise*. Vol. 66, 1957, p. 21, Paris.

9. *Man and His Works*, Melville J. Herskovits, New York, 1950, p. 542 ff, and Joseph H. Greenberg, "The Influence of Islam on a Sudanese Religion," *Monographs of the American Ethnological Society*, Vol. X, 1946.

10:Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1964 FA28 Mossi FA28

4. The importance of sibling-in-law joking as a means of regulating conflict in the Mossi marriage relationship is further substantiated by the results of comparative research conducted among the Mossi resettled at the Office du Niger in the neighboring Republic of Mali.

The Mossi, who were first forcibly and later voluntarily resettled in Mali, were allocated farm land as elementary family units without regard for their extended kinship affiliations. Thus a man often found himself living in unaccustomed "isolation," in the company only of his wife or wives and children, and otherwise surrounded by total strangers. Although the potential for conflict in the marriage relationship remained high, or was even augmented by the stresses of adjusting to a changed milieu, sibling-in-law joking, the institution through which such tension is traditionally regulated among the Mossi, was no longer operative. Unless the younger siblings of each spouse had accompanied them to the resettlement area, those individuals were absent to whom they might have communicated their grievances and expressed their aggressive sentiments in a socially harmless, psychologically satisfactory, and culturally acceptable way.

As the traditionally sanctioned means of dealing with tension resulting from marital conflict was no longer available to the Mossi resettled in Mali, there occurred an increase in the incidence both of violence in marital disputes and of separation and divorce.

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[P. 225]
[P. 224 is blank]

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175 stock against marauding beasts and thieves. All caravaneers had to
437 pay a tax to the local chiefs to cross their borders or to stop in their
486 markets to trade. Binger reported that the caravans which passed
651 through the market center of Wagadougou had to give the Moro
[661] Naba a share of their merchandise, aside from the presents which they gave to him. He also reported that the horse traders from the Yatenga, in the north of Mossi country, and the Hausa caravaneers, were sometimes forced to sell part of their wares to the Moro Naba at one-hundredth the purchase price (Binger 1892 : II, 292–300). Not all the caravaneers submitted to extortion, however, and at one period many of them traded with Mane instead of passing through Wagadougou where the tariffs were too high. On the other hand, the Mossi chiefs did not tolerate any trespassing on their territories by
[685] caravans that did not pay taxes. Those who tried to avoid doing so
[515] were subjected to attack by the mounted nobles *(nakomce)* on behalf of the district chiefs. Wise caravan leaders not only paid their taxes but established close relationships with the chiefs in order to receive adequate protection from some nobles who illegally attacked and looted the caravans.

175 It is impossible to know the actual volume of caravan trade which
437 passed through Mossi country, but we can get a fairly good idea of it
439 by examining the customs reports on goods crossing the border between Mossi country and the northern territories of the Gold Coast in the few years just following European conquest.[8] For 1901 and 1903 the official figures were:

TABLE 28A
Mossi Trade (1901–3)

Year	*Horses*	*Cattle*	*Sheep and Goats*	*Loaded Donkeys*	*Bales of Cotton Cloth*
1901	126	3,111	18,181	2,095	236
1903	196	6,624	30,892	4,294	369

Lucien Marc, who had the opportunity to check the volume of this trade for 1904 and 1905, guessed that about 16,000 cattle and 75,000 sheep and goats passed through the customs post in Mossi country. Furthermore, he believed that since

> ... the Mossi also supply in part the markets of Togoland and the market at Bondoukou [Ivory Coast], one can estimate at least an annual export of 20,000 cattle and 100,000 sheep or goats. The import of kola nuts is at least 500 tons. (Marc 1909 : 178)

[113] (8) Great Britain Parliamentary Papers: Cd. 788–27, no. 357, Northern territories of Gold Coast, report of 1901 in Acc. and Papers, vol. LXIV 1902. Cd. 2238–6, no. 429, N.Ts of Gold Coast, report of 1903 in Acc. and Papers, 1904, and 1905, vol. LI.

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their own commercial centers, they acted quite differently outside their country. Dubois reports that at Timbuktu, "the great town of pleasure" with the freest morals in the Sudan, the merchants from Bamako, Djenne, Sansanding and Touat spent a great deal of money in pleasure and in gifts to the beautiful women, but the "Mossi did not waste their money and left as soon as they had finished their affairs" (Dubois 1899 : 292–300).

The days of the caravans are now over in Mossi country, even though large groups of traders carry on the traditional commerce in livestock, cotton, kola nuts, some dried fish, and salt. As soon as the French conquered th country they formulated plants to control the caravans. One of the earliest reports, for June 1899, reads:

> The country is calm and direct administration was established at Koupela, Mane, Yake . . . The Mossi trade is mainly with the English colony of the Gold Coast. It consists mainly of livestock, very plentiful in Mossi country, which is exchanged for merchandise from England; copper and material goods . . . Our task will be to discover the materials of the northern Ivory Coast which could be exchanged for cattle, and when this information is forthcoming we should be able to direct the caravans quite easily to the Ivory Coast. At the same time the English will see their provisions of cattle and sheep diminish. They will flood us less with their cotton cloth, with their glass beads, and with their kola nuts. In their place, the products of French manufacture can arrive to us through the Ivory Coast after being exchanged for the products of our colony there.[8]

These plans did not succeed. The Mossi still export a great deal of their products towards the forest zones of Ghana, including their "numerous laborers" which, according to Beauminy writing in 1919, were "the principal riches actually utilizable in Mossi country". (Beauminy 1919 : 71–78). The migrants themselves are, in a sense, the greatest traders in contemporary Mossi society.

PRESENT-DAY TRADE

There is a constant flow of goods between Mossi country and the Ivory Coast and Ghana. Much of the trade to the former region is in the hands of the large commercial companies and as such is beyond the purview of this paper. What is of interest here is the trade which is conducted by the ordinary people. A great deal of this trade is highly unorganized and the result of one or two men, or as many as five men, joining together to trade goods to and from Ghana and the Ivory Coast. The types of goods sent down to these two areas are the same as those traded in pre-European times.

(8) Unpublished document in the archives of *Institut Français d'Afrique Noire*, Wagadougou, Voltaic Republic.

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648 to open talks with Voulet. This poor political judgment cost him his crown. Binger had been preceded in Ouagadougou by Dr. Krause, who in 1885 was the first European allowed to enter the capital; Von François, coming from German Togoland in 1887, was stopped at the first Mossi village. As already mentioned, Binger, not without difficulty, managed to reach Ouagadougou in 1888. He stayed there for some time, longer than he had wished, and it was by virtue of his admirable energy that he was able to resume his journey toward the south. In 1890 Dr. Crozat was received for the first time by the Moro Naba, but he had to leave Ouagadougou speedily. The following year Monteil did not even manage to reach the capital. He was stopped a few kilometers from it and forced to depart abruptly. The mulatto Fergusson, in the service of the British, reached Ouagadougou by way of Tenkodogo, Nyaogo, and Kombisgri. Von Carnap, a German, came from Sansané-Mango in 1897 and visited Tenkodogo and Koupéla.

114 Such are, in brief outline, the verified contacts of the Mossi with Europeans. Were they already known by John II of Portugal, and even by John III, in the sixteenth century? Did they come from far to the east, from Sokoto, Bornu, perhaps even from Wadai? There are so many questions that seem quite mysterious to us in the present state of our knowledge of these peoples of the bend of the Niger, who lack written traditions. Lt. Marc discusses at great length the various opinions on this subject in his book, Au pays des Mossi /In Mossi Country/, chapters 1 and 7. Delafosse presents his own opinion in his work on Upper Senegal and Niger (especially in volume 2). We shall limit this account to the traditions gathered from the natives themselves.

124 Our working method, indeed, has been to question as many natives as possible and to gather their statements on all matters which seemed of interest. We have avoided any "interpretation" of the facts. We have allowed the natives to talk, to tell their story, to describe /3/ their customs, to explain the phenomena of nature and of life as they understand them. Our role was limited to a day-to-day record of what we heard, to the inducement of explanations, to the arrangement of these notes. Of course, our questions sometimes remained unanswered. We shall leave them unanswered here. Having no plan to defend, we hope to have been sufficiently objective.

114 We shall, nevertheless, be happy if this modest work makes a small contribution to the study of regional history, so heavily stressed

114 today; if it provides ethnography with new materials; if it makes the native better known to missionaries, administrators, officers, colonists, and merchants, and thus better understood; and if cordial relations between the native and ourselves are thereby facilitated. Railroads will soon open up and profoundly modify the country. While there is still time, let us hasten to record the mentality of this people in its primitive form. We were able to gather data which we believe reflect the truth quite closely, thanks to the circumstances of our stay in Mossi country: ten consecutive years among its people, of which seven were spent in Koupéla; a knowledge of the language sufficient to maintain a running conversation on any subject whatever with the natives; and the close contact into which our ministry brought us with the village inhabitants. We shall be the first to acknowledge, however, that errors may have crept in here and there. It is very difficult to obtain a precise piece of information, and several natives questioned on the same subject often gave different answers. We were forced to make choices, and although we always tended to adopt the story which appeared to offer the greatest number of safeguards, we may have been wrong at times.

It must not be forgotten that our goal is not to provide a complete record of Mossi manners and customs. This was not possible, it would have been onerous, and we did not feel that it was necessary in order to present what we consider to be a generally accurate over-all picture of these people. Truthfulness compels us to point out that these materials were gathered for the most part in the province of Koupéla and, therefore, bear the impress of that locality. Our fellow-workers in Ouagadougou were kind enough to provide us with some information, but we were unable to obtain any data on the Yatenga region. God permitting, we shall round out these notes in a more comprehensive work.

101 Before we broach our subject, one remark is in order. It has be-
104 come usual to speak of the Mossi, of a Mossi, of the Mossi language, as though the word did not vary. We shall follow this custom and always write "Mossi" in the singular and in the plural, although the true name of this people is Moara, plural Mosé. Likewise, we have spelled geographical names in accordance with the practice of the Administration, so as to avoid the appearance of wishing to reform everything.

000 May we thank here all those from far and near who have helped us with this work, and especially those who have contributed the interesting photographs that illustrate it.

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1. Actually, these "Arab chroniclers" is simply Es-Sadi, the author of Tarikh-es-Soudan /History of Sudan/, who wrote as late as the seventeenth century. As a matter of fact, it was the Portuguese — writer, the great historian and geographer, Jean de Barros, author of l'Asia (1552-53), who was the first to reveal the existence of the Mossi in the sixteenth century. Léon, the African, did not know of them, nor did the Arab geographers and historians of the Middle Ages. Let us add that one should verify exactly in the area whether the Mossah resemble the Mossi other than by name. The matter has become relatively easy since the French occupation of the Cameroons.

171 Captain Lambert adds in a note:
174 "A new question arises here: can one consider the Mossi as being autochthonous to Bornu, or should their long stay in that region be considered as a step in the great migratory movement that, in successive phases, has brought them to the heart of the Niger estuary?

"In the present state of our knowledge, it would be unwise to take a firm position. We shall merely show that the feudal system that characterizes the political constitution of the Mossi can be compared to the system prevalent in Abyssinia. The hierarchical set-up seems to be identical in certain respects; leaders are appointed under analogous conditions, and the election of the Negus is accompanied by a period of anarchy which we also find here and which seems to go back to ancient traditions.

174 "It may well be that this goes beyond pure coincidence. While
197 we were in the process of editing a small dictionary of the Mossi language, we took the trouble to find out whether the dialects spoken in Abyssinia were likely to give us some clues on this point. We must admit, however, that the vocabularies of the Galla, Ahmaris /sic/, and Tigré languages that we consulted have not provided us /3/ with convincing arguments. But it is a proven fact today that, from the

viewpoint of ethnographic research, text similarities do not mean very much, and idioms that are not fixed by writing may, within a few centuries, become deformed to the extent of being unrecognizable. While the value of grammatical comparisons is much more important, we have unfortunately had neither the time nor the means to make use of this method. We will, therefore, merely indicate this point of view which, in our opinion, could lead to fruitful observations. On the other hand, missionaries have claimed that the Mossi traditionally would have preserved the symbolic notion of the Christian cross, a fact we have been unable to verify and which, without being impossible a priori, seems unlikely."

After this parenthesis about the distant origins of the Mossi, Captain Lambert continues:

"It is indeed highly probable, and here again, lacking written documents, we have only oral traditions to base our opinions on, that the Mossi people, split up by the impact of a Moslem invasion from the east, must have, through successive waves and losing ground in the opposite direction, spread further toward the west, so that the Mossi-bé (1), who still form several agglomerations in the western

1. Mossi-bé is simply the plural of the word Mossi in Peuhle /Peul/ language.

part of Sokoto and even in the Dounzou circle and who also show striking analogies with the Mossi proper, can also be used as a reference. (Captain Lambert adds in a note: "Among the Mossi-bé we find the circumflex accent which would complete the ethnic tatooing of the Mossi as it is today. This mark rightly belongs to the natives of the left bank of the Niger river up to the angle formed by the Dollol-Maouri.") These agglomerations indicate, in a very approximate fashion, the location of the Mossi empire at the historical period that evidently marks its apogee of power; toward 1350, as we saw /4/ in the Tarikh, Timbuktu was conquered by the sultan of Mossi."

The incident to which Captain Lambert refers here is the conquest of Timbuktu by the Mossi (in 1333 exactly, according to the most advanced calculations) (1), which is mentioned by Es-Sadi in

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1. See the book by Lieutenant Marc, Le Pays Mossi /The Land of the Mossi/, pp. 136-138. The author sets the date of the fall of Timbuktu to the Mossi at 1333 or 1334. Delafosse, in his book Haut-Sénegal-Niger /Upper Senegal and Niger/, took the date of 1333. Binger (op. cit. Vol. I, pp. 481, 482) gives the date of 1329 according to the Tarikh, but assumes it to be wrong and that it was in 1326 that the Mossi, who he says were then part of the kingdom of Mali, captured Timbuktu for the sake of and by the order of the Mali kings. We know now that this assumption is false, that the Mossi were never under the domination of Mali, and that they sacked Timbuktu on their own behalf in 1333. Besides, the Malinké recaptured Timbuktu fairly soon thereafter and held it until 1433, at which time the leader Targui Akil took possession. The Mossi expedition against Timbuktu was, everything considered, nothing more than a raid, perfectly executed, but without any follow-up.

the Tarikh-es-Soudan /History of Sudan/; but one cannot conclude, as Captain Lambert does, that in the fourteenth century the Mossi were still living on the east bank of the Niger River, in what today is Djerma, and that they had not yet reached, at that time, the Mossi of today, nor even the Dagomba, and that it was from Djerma that they conducted their triumphant raid on Timbuktu. If the Mossi really did come from Bornu and ended up in Dagomba, and, as is only natural, spread on to Haoussa and Djerma (2), they did so in the very

2. As a matter of fact, one can explain the Mossi colonies of Sokoto as having come from the regions of Ouagadougou, Yatenga, or Fada N'Gourma at a relatively recent date, the thirteenth, fourteenth, or fifteenth centuries.

914 distant past, since we must place Rawa, the first conqueror of
174 Ouagadougou and Ouahigouya (see further on), in the twelfth century A.D., and his parents came from Dagomba where it is clear the Mossi have lived for some time. The crossing of Haoussa and Djerma by the forefathers of the Dagomba Mossi takes us back to a period that obviously cannot be precisely established, but which is definitely earlier than the fourteenth century (when the Mossi conquered Timbuktu), and one must recognize, contrary to Captain Lambert's opinion, that the Mossi who took Timbuktu came from the south (probably from Ouahigouya) and not from the east (the Say region). We would like to point out /5/ also that they were a great deal closer to Timbuktu in Ouahigouya than in Say. Once this point has been cleared up and the ensuing mistakes corrected, the plausibility of the discovery of the road followed by the Mossi who came from Bornu (if they came from there), which was re-traced by Captain Lambert, is acceptable.

These observations also apply to the continuation of Captain Lambert's report. He says that the wars waged by the second Songhaï empire against the Mossi (sixteenth century) forced the latter to leave the Djerma country to go southwest toward Dagomba. Obviously, all of this is quite inaccurate, but, without accepting Captain Lambert's cause for the emigration and his establishing it further in the past, we can accept the route he traces.

174 "This movement," says Captain Lambert, speaking of the march from Djerma to Dagomba, "took place in a southerly direction, and the Mossi, after having followed the Niger River, crossed it at a point located between Say and Ilo, but much closer to Ilo.

[301] "North of Ilo, the custom of shaving the heads of the chieftains'
[302] wives still persists. These women also wear metal leggings (1), par-

[556] 1. Captain Lambert undoubtedly is referring to the beautiful copper leggings, about 20 centimeters high, worn by the rich Mossi women.

ticularly characteristic of the Mossi peoples and sometimes encountered among peoples who have been in contact with them.

"From this point, the migration, leaving the Bariba country on the left (2), went in a straight line through Gourma and the Pama region

174 Captain Lambert adds in a note: "According to Colonel M.-P. Northcott, the founder of the Gambakha dynasty was called Tosogo; [174] but the information that he provides about him seems hardly in agreement with the tradition we are relying upon here." (See Report on the Northern Territories of the Gold-Coast, London, 1890).

Captain Lambert continues as follows:

"The creation of the actual Mossi empire came later; it is nevertheless safe to assert that from that period on, some of the new inhabitants of Mampoursi undertook to open a passage toward the north and achieved it in two different ways. One group, after leaving Gambakha, pushed the Boussanga back into the region they occupy today and reached Béloussa country where they spread toward the west and north, occupying a vast stretch of land which is today almost exclusively inhabited by the Mossi. The other group, blazing a path in Nankana country, went north of Tiébélé and pushed the Boussanga back from the opposite side, thus crushing them in a vice, so to speak, and spread out in the country circumscribed by the Red Volta, toward Ouagadougou.

"One has only to glance at a map of the Mossi country to recognize the direction of these two parallel movements which came together north of the present-day Boussangsé, an almost uninhabited region at the time of the great Mossi migration. It was there that the autochthonous Boussanga, who were then occupying the whole Tenkodogo country, were forced to find refuge and have since been just existing, hostile to any fusion with the invader."

173 Captain Lambert then goes on to the legend of the origins of the true Mossi empire:

"A naba of the Gambakha (the Gambakha, as we have seen, were directly descended from the leader who had led the great immigration to the Mampoursi River), having reached the end of his life without an heir, believed this fact to be a fulfillment of destiny. Nothing in this world is permanent, and doubtless his glorious dynasty had to make way for a new line of leaders. He was at least resigned to this, but his lonely old age was what saddened him above all else. He therefore implored the spirits to give him a child, pronouncing the solemn vow that he would dedicate it to virginity, whether it be a boy or girl. As if by a miracle, a girl was born to him at once. He called her Pogotoenga (woman of the tree) (1), considering her, therefore, from

174 country of Gambaga?" he asks (op. cit., p. 134). "It is rather difficult to /10/ speak authoritatively on this subject: probably from the central African Sudan, the region of the Chad. All Mossi traditions are unanimous in placing their country of origin very far in the east . . ."

Lieutenant Marc had already said on page 130, "Local traditions have it that the Mossi come from very far in the east. Very long ago, they occupied a country located beyond the Niger River, whose capital was called Aliaman. This country is presently inhabited by the Songhaï. Then the Mossi came to live in Dagomba, defeated its inhabitants, and the leader of the Mossi settled in Gambaga." (1)

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1. There follows the legend of the daughter of the king of Gambakha. She is wrongly called Ouidiraogo, "stallion," as in Dr. Ruelle's version. Lieutenant Marc goes on to make another mistake by saying that Ouidiraogo means "hoof" (instead of male horse). Zoungourana (whom Lieutenant Marc calls Zoungourouma or Zougourouma) is presented here, as he was by Dr. Ruelle, as the second husband of the daughter of the king of Gambakha and as a Boussansé king. In Lieutenant Marc's version, he "waged war against his father-in-law and conquered the whole country from Gambaga to Koupéla." Then "Zougourouma had three sons: Séré, Oubri, and Couda. The first became naba of Boussouma; the second, Naba Oubri, conquered the country of Ouagadougou, set up his capital there, and took possession of Yatenga. Naba Oubri is considered by the Mossi as the first of the Moro-naba and founder of the present dynasty. His successors were his brother Couda, and then his son Nigamenda."

174 In this tradition reported by Lieutenant Marc, there is obviously an element of Moslem imaginations; Aliaman probably designates

174 Yemen. But the indication that this country is presently inhabited by the Songhay /sic/ certainly points to Djerma or Zaberma, slightly east of the Niger River in the Say and Dosso region. By dissociating the Moslem legend (undoubtedly created by some Yarse Moslem of the Mossi) from the rest of the tale, one still comes back to the temporary and distant occupation of Djerma by the ancestors of the Mossi.

174 114 Delafosse, on the other hand, contrary to Dr. Ruelle, Captain Lambert, and Lieutenant Marc, although, like the others, he has the Mossi come from Dagomba to their present habitat (see Haut-Sénégal-Niger /Upper Senegal and Niger/, Vol. I, pp. 305-310), seems disinclined to accept the idea of an eastern origin. He says (page 310, in a note), "Lieutenant Marc seems to want to attribute an eastern 174 origin to the Mossi. To strengthen his hypothesis, he says that the 171 organization of the court of the Morho nâba (emperors of the Mossi) 644 is unique in western Africa, while there are /11/ equivalents in 114 Haoussa, Bornu, etc. I should like to point out that this argument is of little value, precisely because, contrary to Lieutenant Marc's theory, one finds in all ancient states of western Africa (Ghana, Mali, Tekrour, Gao, Dahomey, Benin, etc.) an organization absolutely analogous to that of the Mossi court (see part IV of this work and compare with the reports of Arab geographers and early European 174 travelers)." Of course I agree with Delafosse in not finding Lieutenant 114 Marc's argument very penetrating (1), but Ruelle, Lambert, and

1. Here is the argument as developed by Lieutenant Marc (op. cit., p. 134, 135):

"The feudal organization of the Mossi country, the court of the Moro-Naba, its pages, and its eunuchs, are all unique in western Africa. On the other hand, the black monarchs, as they are known in central Africa, seem to live in a setting that greatly resembles the one in which the Moro-Naba lives. The sultans of Zinder, Bornu, and Wadai have also a court, eunuchs, and pages. The little we know about the organization of their empires seems rather similar to what we have seen among the Mossi. But our

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documentation on this matter is not extensive enough to enable us to attempt a comparative study."

Marc do not base themselves exclusively on this argument. They also use a tradition of the Mossi themselves, and it would doubtless be unwise to reject it without examining it further. An argument that could be cited in favor of a very ancient occupation of Djerma by the ancestors of the Mossi is Binger's following remark: "The Mossi must have remained in contact with the Touareg /Tuareg/ for a fairly long time (2) ... since they partially adopted their dress and use, as they do, the cross-handled [poignée en croix] saber."

[171 441]

2. In this quotation, I have omitted the word "after," since Binger assumes that the Mossi, after taking Timbuktu in 1326 by order of the Mali, remained there until 1433, having, therefore, one century of contact with the Touareg. In reality, the Mossi stayed in Timbuktu only a very short time, and this raid could not have given them a prolonged contact with the Touareg, from whom they were separated before the fall of Timbuktu, and again as soon as they left the town, by the entire Songhaï country stretching along the banks of the Niger River. On the contrary, if they had formerly occupied Djerma, before the Djermabé or the Songhaï, one can easily understand this contact with the Touareg as well as the existence of the sword with the short crutch-handle /poignée en croix (Binger wrongly calls this straight sword a saber). In addition, when Binger speaks of the Targui /Tuareg/ dress, adopted in part by the Mossi, he doubtless thinks of the lithâm (or face veil) which was then worn by the Mossi horsemen. At the present time, they are no longer worn, and I have never seen them among the Mossi, where I lived 1908-1909.

[291]

do, the crutch-handled /poignée en croix/ saber."

Actually, we must admit that we know nothing certain about the Mossi outside of Dagomba. This is what I /12/ clearly stated in my Noir du Yatenga /Blacks of Yatenga/ (1917) (1). The move into

1. See pp. 57 and 58.

Djerma is conjectural, and the question concerning the Mossah would have to be settled by an inquiry made in the Cameroons. At one time I was tempted to connect the Mossi with the races of the south, the Agni-Achanti /Ashanti/, and it seems certain that close relationships exist (2) between the numerical vocabularies of the Voltaic

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2. See Appendix No. I. In addition, a woman called Aoura-Poko plays as important a part in the Baoulé historic tradition as in the Mossi historic tradition. And, although the word for woman is oba, eba, bla in Achanti, Abron, and Baoulé, the Baoulé heroine is called Poko, like Poko (woman) or Pokotoéga (woman of the baobab) of the Mossi tradition.

group and the Agni-Achanti group. But can one base a linguistic comparison on vocabulary alone? It would also have to be proven, grammatically speaking, that the Voltaic linguistic group is very close to the Agni-Achanti group. (3) And this has not yet been done.

3. Delafosse says that there is no special relation between these two groups from a grammatical viewpoint. In a more general manner, Delafosse would now like to believe, as far as Mossi origins are concerned, that Mossi residence in their present country goes back far before the eleventh century A. D. Apparently only a band of pillagers and happy warriors, a princely dynasty came

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from Gambakha in the eleventh century to found small kingdoms in a country which had already been colonized by the Mossi. However, there is a drawback to this opinion: the existence among the Mossi of an autochthonous people (Nioniossé or Foulsé /Fulse/) still extant, who are far from having, always and everywhere, merged with the Mossi. According to my observations made in the area (I spent three years in Yatenga, from 1913 to 1916), there are still more Nioniossé than Mossi in Yatenga, 100,000 as against 70,000 (see my Noir du Yatenga, pages 665 and 666). The existence of this earlier people proves that the Mossi colonization is a relatively recent one. Also, the Mossi could not have penetrated and survived in an already inhabited region in any way other than by forming small, conquering military monarchies. I think therefore, that the Mossi came, with their chiefs, from Dagomba, and that they didn't reach the present Mossi country until ...

[563]

But we are coming back to the chronological question which we will deal with later on.

174 For the moment, then, we are still reduced to dealing with hypotheses insofar as the origins of the Mossi are concerned. We know that the Mossi come from Dagomba and that they probably entered the country as conquerors. But where did they come from then? From the north-east? From the south? From the east? We cannot yet answer with certainty, just as we cannot for so many other historical, philosophical, and scientific questions, alas!

Grammatici certant et adhuc sub judice lis est.

174 173 Kaogo	1803-1806	"	1803-1306
Tougouri	1806-1822	"	1806-1822
Kom	1822-1825	"	1822-1825
Ragongo	1825-1831	"	1825-1831
Ridimba	1831	"	1831
Diogoré	1831-1834	"	1831-1834
Totébalobo	1834-1850	"	1834-1850
Yemdé	1850-1877	"	1850-1877
Sanoum	1877-1879	"	1877-1879
Noboga	1879-1884	"	1879-1884
Pigo II	1884-1885	"	1884-1885
Baogo	1885-1895	"	1885-1894
Bagaré	1895-1899	"	1894-1899
Liguidi	1899-1902	"	1899-1902
Koboga	since 1902	"	1902-1914

174 [174] First of all, we can note that there is, I think, a slight confusion in the beginning /18/ of Delafosse's chronology. As a matter of fact, he counts (Vol. I, page 306) 40 years per generation, and, on the other hand (Vol. II, page 126), he places Oubri approximately from 1050 to 1090. But Oubri was the son of Zoungourana, himself the son of Ouidiraogo, himself the son of the princess Yennenga, himself the son of Nédéga, the king who ruled in Dagomba. There are, then, four generations from Nédéga to Oubri, which must make 160 years, according to Delafosse's calculations, and, if Oubri is to be placed between 1050 and 1090, that would put his great-great-grandfather Nédéga at about 890, that is, at the end of the ninth century A. D., or at least in 910, that is, at the beginning of the tenth century (1).

1. I have already noted this in my Noir du Yatenga, p. 673 (Appendix No. IV).

In this last case, the approximate dates would be the following:

[173]

Nédéga.....about 910
Yennenga.....about 950
Ouidiraogo.....about 990
Zoungourana.....about 1030
Oubri..... between 1050 and 1090

174 Ouidiraogo, but one might hesitate between Rawa and Ouemtanango. If one chose the former, he would then have lived from 1200 to 1250 (which would indicate that my date of 1293 for this naba is too recent, and that Delafosse's date, the beginning of the eleventh century, is too early). If one chose Ouemtanango, the same would still apply: my date of 1333 for this naba would be a century too recent, and Delafosse's date would be some fifty years too early (1). In conclusion,

1. Delafosse places Ouemtanango at about 1170. One can deduce this from two passages of his Vol. II, pp. 126 and 139. In the last passage, he speaks of Ouemtanango himself and, in the first, of his father and uncles.

it is impossible for us to say exactly which naba was the first to wage war against the north, but, whether it was Rawa or Ouemtanango, it seems clear that since the beginning of the thirteenth century the Mossi were settled in their present territories, including Yatenga, and, therefore, we must conclude that they came there during the twelfth century. My 1917 Mossi chronology would, therefore, need some revision, since it brings the origins of Mossi history too close to our time. On the other hand, Delafosse's chronology also would seem to need some correction, since it exaggerates in the opposite direction. It would not be the first time that the truth should be found, as often happens, between two extreme opinions. /26/

Chapter 3

Mossi and Bambara

174 114 We know that the Bambara king, N'Golo, and the Mossi king, Kango, waged war against each other toward the end of the eighteenth century. Yatenga traditions preserve in detail the memory, embellished with somewhat burlesque variations, of the events that precipitated this war (see my Noir du Yatenga /Blacks of Yatenga/, 1917, pp. 88-91), but they say nothing of the war itself. Delafosse, in his

174 114 Haut-Sénégal-Niger /Upper Senegal and Niger/ (1912), starts out by relating, according to Bambara traditions, the same stories of the causes that brought about the war (1), but he does not say much about

1. Vol. II, pp. 143, 144.

the war itself. After speaking of Kango's cruel extermination of the Bambara auxiliaries whom he had formerly needed and who had been lent to him, Delafosse adds (2): "It took place about 1760: Ngolo

2. Page 144.

Diara, then emperor of Ségou, wanted to avenge his compatriots and waged war against Yatenga, but he was driven back by Kango. Later, following a kind of civil war that broke out in Ségou, the Dioula merchants of the town fled and took refuge in Yatenga. Ngolo asked Kango to send them back to him and, upon his refusal, led for the third time an expedition against the Ouahigouya empire. This expedition had no more success than the preceding one, and Ngolo died during it, followed in death shortly thereafter by his opponent (1787)."

Further on, Delafosse says (3): "Ngolo led two expeditions against /27/

3. Same work, Vol. II, pp. 289, 290 (chapter on the history of the Bambara of Ségou).

the Mossi of Yatenga, whose emperor, Kango, had cruelly put to death some Banmana /Bambara/ warriors, who had been previously put at his disposal by Denkoro or by Ton-Mansa. Driven back after his first expedition (about 1760), Ngolo later returned to Yatenga in order to get back from Kango some Dioula merchants who had fled Ségou following a kind of civil war and whom the Yatenga emperor refused to send home. It would seem that this second expedition was no more successful than the first; in any case, in the course of this campaign, Ngolo contracted a disease from which he died before he could return to his capital (1787)."

All this is very scanty, and we would know little more about it (1) were it not for a very curious passage by Mungo-Park, which no

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1. Monteil, in his recent book, Bambara de Ségou et du Kaarta /Bambara of Ségou and Kaarta/ (1924), says nothing about these wars. He only alludes to them in a short note on page 76.

one has yet pointed out to my knowledge and which tells us of a very important event in this war: the capture of the town of Dienné by Kango, a feat of arms worthy of the ancient Mossi conquerors, Rawa, Ouemtanango, Nassodoba, etc., which assured a conclusive victory of the Mossi naba over the Bambara fama.

174 I have copied the following passage word for word from Mungo-Park (translation by the Abbé of Voisin, 1800, Vol. II, pp. 45 and 46):

"In the south of Jimbala is the Negro kingdom of Gotto (2) that

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2. Djimbala (which in Mandé means country of the great water, from gui, "water," ba, "great," and la, a suffix indicating the country or region) is the region north of Lake Débo. As for "Gotto," a name that Mungo-Park gives here to all the countries of the southeast and south (Mossi, Kong, Bondoukou, etc.), it is undoubtedly the word "Gottogo," the Sudanese and Mandé name for Bondoukou, which is given in error to everything southeast and south of Djimbala or Guimbala.

is said to be very large. In the past, it was divided into a large number of small states, governed by different chiefs whose continual wars incited neighboring countries to invade the land. One of these chiefs, called Moossie, was politic and shrewd enough to get all the others to declare war on the king of Bambarra /sic/, and to have himself unanimously named generalissimo. /28/ From the shores of Lake Debbie (1), on the upper Niger, Moossie sent a large number of

1. This refers to Lake Débo.

boats filled with provisions toward Yenné; and with his entire army

174 he entered into Bambarra. The inhabitants of Yenné saw him on the opposite shore of the Niger (2) before they had been told of his march.

2. Djenné is not right on the Niger nor on the Bani, but at a certain distance between the two rivers.

His flotilla joined him that same day, and, after having unloaded his provisions, he crossed the river with one part of his army and took Yenné by assault during the night. This exploit so frightened the Bambarra king that he asked for peace. He agreed to pay the victor an annual tribute of a certain number of slaves and to give back to the Gotto inhabitants all that had been taken away from them. (3)

[721 648]

3. This passage would indicate that the Dyoula of Gottogo (or Bondoukou), having some grievances against the Bambara of the Ségou region (assaulted peddlers, unpaid debts, etc.), went to the king of the Mossi to obtain justice, and that this might have been one of the causes of the war. There doubtless existed reciprocal grievances between Bambara and Mossi or between their natural allies.

Moussee /sic/ returned to Gotto in triumph, and he was proclaimed king. He gave his name to the capital."

As one can see, the important and valuable fact that must be extracted from this thick forest is the capture of Dienné by the king of the northern Mossi, the king of Yatenga (who at that time was Kango), during his struggles with the Bambara, that is, with Ngolo who was his contemporary. Because of his informants, who obviously did not inform him with absolute precision and thus made him commit many small errors or miscalculations, Mungo-Park embellished the true fact with imaginary details. First of all, there is the name of Kango, Moossie, Moussie /sic/, which is the name of the conqueror's country and not his own name. Then, the name of Gotto is given to the Mossi country, undoubtedly because of a confusion, either in the minds of the Blacks who informed Mungo-Park or in the mind of the great

174 ●114

174 traveler himself, between the people of Gotto who were mixed in this
114 affair and the Mossi of Yatenga who made the expedition. Finally, Naba Kango, although he brought great glory /29/ in the eighteenth century to the Mossi dynasty of Yatenga, obviously did not find, at the beginning of his reign, an absolute fragmentation of small countries which he would have gathered under single authority. He doubtless limited himself to restoring a kingdom that had formerly been powerful and centralized, and which he made so again through his personal prestige. In any case, he did not give his name to the Mossi (it is, on the contrary, the Mossi who, in Mungo-Park's description, give him his name), any more than to the capital which he indeed founded and which he called Ouahigouya. All these details are thus false or imaginary, but the principal fact remains and is very interesting. Mungo-Park arrived in Ségou just in time, in 1796, to
[153] record it before the weak memories of the Mossi and Bambara Negroes would have condemned it to hopeless oblivion. /30/

Chapter 4

The Cult of the Sun Among the Mossi

794 Do the Mossi adore the sun? And is their great god Ouendé partly or wholly a sun god?

Binger was the first to state that the Mossi adored the sun. "They are fetishists," he says (1), "but they have a cult of the sun, which

1. Du Niger au golfe de Guinée
/From the Niger to the Gulf of Guinea/,
Vol. I, p. 492.

still today bears the same name as God; they call it Wouidi."

In turn, Lieutenant Desplagnes, in his Plateau Central Nigérien /Central Nigerian Plateau/ (pp. 275, 276) said in 1907:

"The Hougho-Ouango of Mossi (these priests live in Mossi in the villages of Boujema, Mani, Kondogho, Yolo, Tio) make sacrifices to the sun in order to bind it to the earth, morning and evening, at

794 Later, in 1917, in my book Noir du Yatenga /Blacks of Yatenga/, since the few attempts that I had made in Yatenga to find this cult of the sun had given no results, I wrote (page 277):

"The sun is called ouindigho or ouindigha in Mossi (tili in Bambara). The word has a certain relationship with Ouendé, and the word Ouendé seems to be part of the construction of the word ouindigho. In any case, the Mossi and the Foulsé of Yatenga make no sacrifices to the sun. I interrogated in vain several important people about the details given by Lieutenant Desplagnes, pages 275 and 276 of his work, Plateau Central Nigérien about a cult of the sun in Mossi. It is true that these details concern the religious society of the Ouango and the villages where the members of this society would be operating: this would apply to villages of the Residency of Kaya (such as, Mané, Boujéma, etc.). One could thus pursue the studies in Kaya. /32/ In any case, the cult of the sun is totally unknown in Yatenga."

In my conclusion, I denied that there was a cult of the sun among the Mossi of Yatenga, while I admitted that one might be able to find this cult in other parts of Mossi country, particularly in the Residency (today, the circle) of Kaya.

794 The question was at that point when Father Eugène Mangin published a study on the Mossi in Anthropos ("Les Mossi. Essai sur les us et coutumes du Soudan Occidental" /The Mossi, an Essay on the Usages and Customs of Western Sudan/, Vienna, 1916), a study in which the author, who lived for a long time in Ouagadougou among the central Mossi, brought most of his effort to bear on a study of the religious life of his charges. It may well be that Father Mangin's observations touch upon the question of sun worship in that country in a definitive manner, better than Binger and Desplagnes had done.

794 The Mossi, says Father Mangin, in their sacrifices to Ouendé, offer water for his rising and pour it to the east, and offer water for his setting and pour it to the west. In an argument, the weakest will also say: "God (Ouendé) is my witness that I have done you no harm, God [796] will give it back to you," and he will point to the sun. Thus, Ouendé, the principal god of the Mossi, is indeed a sun god, and indeed the Mossi worship, in him, the sun.

Does this mean that Ouendé cannot also be a god of the sky or of the atmosphere, as I maintained in my Noir du Yatenga? Certainly not, and indeed Father Mangin mentions that Ouendé commands

4: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1957
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The village chiefs held their fiefs directly from the district chiefs, and were enfeoffed through the principle of primogeniture on the advice of district chiefs' ministers. They paid homage, and owed fealty, to their district chiefs, although part of their tribute always was sent to the Moro-naba. In the event of war they followed their district chief when he went to serve the Moro-naba. The village chiefs received presents from the heads of the families in the village and settled any local court cases in their villages. They did not have the right, however, either to put men into stocks or to have them executed. They were aided in the administration of the villages by the heads of families. 631 622

Almost every Mossi village had sections in which the nobles lived. As stated above, these people were the relatives or descendants of the district heads, and they lived in a semiparasitic condition upon the commoners in the village. Most of them owned horses and, in addition to furnishing the cavalry for the district chief's contingent during war, they raided and attacked caravans passing through the country. The nobles were subject to the control of the village chiefs, and it was not unusual for them to be under the jurisdiction of chiefs who were members of the commoner class. In such cases the district chiefs had a great deal of difficulty resolving the problems between their vassals and their kinsmen. The nobles could steal the wives and daughters of the commoners, but if a commoner tried to steal the wife of a noble he and the woman were both killed. Whenever a noble threatened to disrupt the life of a district he was secretly strangled by the district chief's men. 565 631

The above is a brief account of the origin and structure of the Mossi political system. Most of the myths regarding the origin of this system seem to suggest that here is a classic conquest state, but one neither founded by Caucasians nor extraordinarily influenced by them. The Mossi state is homogeneous in race, language, and culture, a feature not found in most of the other Sudanic states. This fact is not interesting in itself until we note that the Mossi share many cultural traits with the Voltaic peoples. Marc believes that this cultural homogeneity is the result of the Mossi invasion of the area during which they imposed their languages and customs on the indigenous populations. Apparently not believing the traditions about the Dagomba origin of the Mossi, he explains the fact that such non-Mossi groups as the Nankana, Wala, and Dagari speak Mossi dialects as proof that the Mossi were politically more powerful in ancient times, but "the feudal regime disappeared little by little.... The Mossi language was kept; [it is] the only actual witness of the ancient power of the Mossi" (author's translation).[5] We know, however, that the Mossi were still encroaching on the territories of their neighbors when the French arrived in 1896.[6] 631 692 174 114

Rattray believes that the inhabitants of Mamprussi, Dagomba, and Mossi territories are the same now as they were "centuries before the ancestors of those who are now their rulers appeared on the scene."[7] He states that

4: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1957
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631 642 174 114 these conquerors even adopted the language and culture of the indigenous populations, but introduced an "administrative machinery" that welded scattered local groups into loose confederacies without affecting in any great degree the inner life of these groups.[8] Rattray's hypothesis appears to explain quite adequately the reasons for the cultural homogeneity of the Mossi and the other Voltaic peoples. It also conforms to what we know from recent historical times of the organizing and conquering abilities of such figures as Samory and El Hadj Omar. These men carved out veritable empires in this area in remarkably short periods. However, we need not accept Rattray's hypothesis that foreigners were the ones who instituted "administrative machinery" among the Mossi. It is highly possible that the Mossi state might have been the result of internal Voltaic development when one Dagomba lineage established its hegemony over scattered local people in this area. There is some evidence here that the Mossi state had many of the features of the widespread Negro pattern of political structure so common to the other Sudanic states, and this fits in very well with what Professor Greenberg reports about the basic African nature of these states.[9]

631 642 121 171 It is clear that the Mossi state was a complex entity and many persons cannot describe it without calling it feudal.[10] However, the question of feudalism itself is a vexing one, and many scholars limit the use of this term to describe the political system of medieval France and possibly Japan. In fact, not many people would admit the presence of feudal states in Africa although some, such as S. F. Nadel, who worked among the Nupe, call the Sudanic states feudal and talk about fiefs and vassalage. It is now generally agreed that feudalism, despite its other aspects, is basically a form of government. Stephenson gives the classic features of a feudal state as: (1) fief-holding with vassalage; (2) homage and fealty; (3) mutual obligations between lords and vassals; (4) military service from the vassals; (5) inheritance of fiefs by heirs of vassals, usually by primogeniture; (6) subinfeudation; (7) attendance at court; and (8) wardship and marriage arrangements by which fiefs could be held in trust for minors and, in the case of female heirs, husbands who can render homage for them.[11]

An examination of the Mossi political system in terms of the first six characteristics of feudalism shows that this system conforms very well to the specifications for a feudal system. The Mossi did not have an elaborate court structure on the European model and, since only mature males could inherit fiefs, no arrangements for wardships and marriages were necessary. Furthermore, I do not think that these two traits are necessary for feudalism, and they can be considered as cultural content that need not be present in all social processes with similar functions.

Mossi-like societies present a special problem to political theorists because of the importance of kinship in their political systems. Coulborn[12] strongly insists that "A feudal society . . . is based on contract. It is not

8: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1958
FA28 Mossi FA28

797 labor was abolished and the Mossi could do as they wished, mission school and church attendance declined, and the Mossi mothers even refused to attend the Catholic maternity clinics. During this entire period, the Moslems were propagating the ideas that recruitment for forced labor and other injustices would cease only when all the Mossi embraced Islam.

(3) Catholicism attempted to break down the Mossi social system during the period when their political system was rendered practially impotent. But while the Mossi could not forcibly oppose the effects of French policy on their political system, they effectively neutralized the church's attempts to disrupt their social system. In contrast to Catholicism, Islamic practices and tenets harmonized with many aspects of the Mossi social system, especially with regard to polygny and the status of women. Many Mossi converted to Islam in order to fulfill the prescriptions of pagan shamans, who linked conversion with the acquisition of children to continue the lineage. Christianity did not admit the existence of the tradtional supernatural forces, and evolved no techniques for dealing with the Mossi's belief in the efficacy of such forces. In the sphere of social mobility, Islam permitted the most illiterate emancipated serf to make a pilgrimage and return an honored El Hadj, while only the most brilliant scholar is able to become an official in the Catholic community.

(4) More of the young men who leave their homes to serve in the armed forces or spend long periods away as laborers return as Moslems than as Christians. There is, however, no evidence that the increased Islamization of the Mossi is due to the heavy seasonal migration of young men to Ghana and Ivory Coast.

(5) American Protestantism, although not associated with French administrative policy, was negatively received because its missionaries were Europeans (whites). Furthermore, the extremely intolerant Protestant attitude toward the traditional Mossi religion and the puritanical nature of their religion made their efforts at conversion highly unsuccessful.

(6) The increase of public schools is lessening the importance of Catholicism and the Catholic school as the only means of social mobility through education. The newly emancipated pagan and Moslem masses are forcing the Catholic-trained Mossi politicians to act in the interest of their constituents, even if at the expense of the missions and Catholicism. The Catholics have consecrated the first Mossi bishop and have installed him in his see, but the return of each plane-load of Mossi Hadjis from Mecca spreads Islam into the remotest villages.

NOTES

114 [1] This article is an expanded version of a paper read at a meeting of the American Anthropological Association in Chicago, 1957. The field work on which this analysis is based was conducted among the Mossi of Ouagadougou from November 1955 to January 1957, and was made [122] possible by a Fellowship from The Ford Foundation African Studies Program. Needless to say, all ideas contained herein are my own. During these months among the Mossi I lived both in the predominantly Moslem district of Nobéré, and in the district of Manga, which has a fairly

8: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1958
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large Catholic population. I am indebted to Conrad Arensberg, Joseph Greenberg, Marvin Harris, and Ben Zimmermann for many helpful suggestions. 114

[2] Tauxier (1912:792) reports that when he visited Pirigui village, situated to the north of Ouagadougou, he was surprised to discover that almost half of the nobles were Moslems. It is highly probably that here, also, were the descendants of a son of Sagha who replaced a dissident chief.

[3] These figures are only approximate since many thousands of persons are unreported. Again, many persons listed as Moslems are pagans who have taken Moslem names for ritual purposes.

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9:Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1960 FA28 Mossi FA28

with the Moro Naba and his chiefs. The Mossi commoner who became Minister of the Interior in the Mendes-France government received the treatment fitting to his rank from French officials in Africa, but he bowed humbly and paid homage to the Moro Naba when he visited Wagadougou. In return he still receives political support from the traditional Mossi hierarchy. Whether or not this man and the other Mossi politicians of commoner origin will continue to honor and respect the chiefs in order to obtain their support is not known. It is possible that this situation will change if the growing number of urban Mossi and some of their rural fellows attack the position of the chiefs. But for the foreseeable future it appears as though the traditional dynasty will remain in power, and may even extend its power at the expense of the other non-Mossi groups who are now members of the Voltaic Republic.

The apparent success of the ancient political dynasty of the Mossi people to adapt itself to the requirements of the modern world shows the ability of African institutions to adjust novelty with tradition. It confirms what the anthropologists have always known, that Africa was not a *tabla rasa* on which conquerors could easily impose their ideas and institutions. The cultures of Africa were meaningful to its peoples and when they could not be maintained, they were reinterpreted to meet new situations.[9] It is quite true that because of historical reasons the Mossi did not come into as intensive contact with Europeans as did their neighbors to the south, and that this is possibly why their institutions have persisted. However, the experience of Ghana should make us pause before accepting such a facile answer. A British type of Parliamentary system was imposed upon that country, but it is changing so rapidly that one wonders whether it should have been imposed in the first place. It is still too early to tell what the Ghanaian and other modern African governments will look like; but one might speculate that within the bounds set by the exigencies of the modern world, these governments may resemble the traditional African ones much more than those of their ephemeral conquerors.

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1. According to C. K. Meek, among the Jukun "The King's demise was and is kept a close secret, and is not, in fact revealed until some months afterwards, when the body is formally buried. Various reasons are assigned for this secrecy, such as that

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113 the counsellors may have time to choose a successor, that bloody contests between
114 aspirants for the throne may be avoided, or that the royal slaves and wives may not run off." (*A Sudanese Kingdom*, C. K. Meek. London, 1931), p. 166. Among the Banyoro of Uganda, "When the King died, it was not made known for some days and only those in attendance knew that death had taken place, that, as they said, "Katuna," he "slept." (p. 21). And although there was some understanding as to who should be chief there was fighting between the different princes. "The fighting among princes might last only a few days while sometimes it would go on for weeks and even months." (p. 124) (*The Bakitara of Banyoro*. John Roscoe. Cambridge University Press, 1923). Among the BaVenda, "None of the people are informed of the death of the chief, but when some months have passed and the people begin to grow restless they are told that he has gone away; often a year or more used to elapse between the death of the chief and any recognition of it . . . It appears that during the interregnum any excitement or attempts at usurpation of power have time to work themselves out before the heir is installed; Everybody has a shrewd idea as to the true state of affairs, although no one dares to speak of it." *The BaVenda*, Hugh A. Stayt, London, 1931), p. 207.

113 2. "The Kingdom of Ankole in Uganda," by K. Oberg, pp. 157-158, in *African Political Systems*, edited by M. Fortes and E. E. Evans-Pritchard, Oxford Press, 1940.

3. "An Analysis of the Political Organization of the Mossi People" by Elliott P. Skinner, in *Transactions of the New York Academy of Sciences*, Ser. II, Vol. 19, No. 8, pp 740-720, June, 1957.

4. Copy of Telegram in the Archives of I.F.A.N. at Wagadougou, Voltaic Republic.

5. *French West Africa*. Virginia Thompson and Richard Adloff, Stanford University Press. 1958, pp. 223-224.

6. "Christianity and Islam Among the Mossi," Eliott P. Skinner in *American Anthropologist*, Vol. 60, No. 6, December, 1958, pp. 1102-1119.

7. Thompson and Adloff, *op. cit.* p. 177.

8. *L'Afrique Française*. Vol. 66, 1957, p. 21, Paris.

9. *Man and His Works*, Melville J. Herskovits, New York, 1950, p. 542 ff, and Joseph H. Greenberg, "The Influence of Islam on a Sudanese Religion," *Monographs of the American Ethnological Society*, Vol. X, 1946.

10:Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1964 FA28 Mossi FA28
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position of the set in Mossi society. In the years immediately following initiation the members are much involved in group activities, e.g., the arrangement of social dances, courtship, and co-operation in work groups composed of male and female age-sets, and during this period joking is important. As the members attain adult status the groups tend to lose their structural integrity; their minor corporate functions dwindle and ultimately disappear as the responsibility of the young people to their kin groups increases. With this shift in emphasis, joking behavior also diminishes.

While it lasts, however, this type of joking likewise has a structural context characterized by the attributes already identified. Age-sets are structurally separate within the age-grade. Their relations are reciprocal: individual members co-operate in the arrangement of one another's sexual liaisons; they pool their labor and share the profits they earn as members of their co-operative work organizations; and young men often leave Yatenga as migrant laborers in groups organized on the basis of age-grade membership, thereby reinforcing many of the reciprocal ties established in the work groups. The ambivalence characteristic of the relationship is perhaps best explained as the rivalry of peers. Since there is no status hierarchy within a Mossi age-grade, the age-sets are structurally equivalent and independent.

Intervillage Joking

When intervillage joking is institutionalized it may involve all the members of each community. However, I believe it is particularly expected of their respective chiefs. In either case, the participants are separated by their differing political affiliations. The inhabitants of each village are expected to reciprocate in one another's defense, to be mutually hospitable, and to co-operate in the regulation of land tenure at their frontiers. Ambivalence derives from a history of past hostility, dating perhaps from an earlier period when competition for new land was keener and the expanding kingdom did not yet encompass all the villages now within its borders. Such villages are always structurally equivalent in status within the political system, and each is independent of the other.

Joking Between Ethnic Groups

The joking relationship which the Mossi maintain with the Gurunsi and the Samogho peoples, among others, appears to involve the same structural characteristics. However, I learned of this relationship only shortly before I left Yatenga, and a more certain statement concerning it must therefore await further research. It is certain that such joking occurs; I am unsure only of the number of other ethnic groups involved[8] and of the relevant details of their historical relations to the Mossi of Yatenga. The groups involved are again separate. There is an expectation that members of each group should extend hospitality and assistance to members of the other. As with villages whose inhabitants joke, the participants in this relationship are ambivalent in their attitudes; the present expectation of co-operation is coupled with a past

10:Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1964 FA28 Mossi FA28
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ship itself and the contract of interlineage co-operation and solidarity which every marriage serves to establish or reinforce.[4]

Although this joking interchange is seen in its full implications when there is an immediate source of dissension between marriage partners, it may also occur in the absence of any specific difficulty. Then it is apparently indulged in simply because it is expected, and for the pleasure which the Mossi, like all people, derive from an occasion to exercise their wit. It is this relatively disinterested joking which has been most frequently described in the literature, and this may account for the failure of many scholars to perceive more fully the important social and psychological functions which joking may fulfill.

Conclusion

This paper has been written as a tentative step toward a reformulation of the various and disparate observations on joking contained in the anthropological literature. I have contended that an analysis of this literature indicates that wherever joking is institutionalized the structural relationship between the participants tends to be characterized by five significantly interrelated structural attributes: separation, reciprocity, ambivalence, equality, and independence. I have also indicated that such joking may serve as an adjustive mechanism by providing for the concurrent maintenance of communication, control, and the culturally harmless catharsis of potentially disruptive emotions.

A variety of forms of institutionalized joking found among the Mossi of Yatenga have been cited to illustrate these points. However, I suggest that the factors which cluster with this reliance on joking as an adjustive mechanism are not unique to the Mossi. Institutionalized joking reported for other parts of Africa appears to be structurally and processually similar.

NOTES

1. A shorter version of this paper was read at the annual meeting of the American Anthropological Association held in San Francisco in November, 1963. It is based on field research conducted among the Mossi from 1954 to 1956 with the assistance of a Ford Foundation Fellowship.

2. Marriage between the members of descent groups united by a joking alliance is regarded by the Mossi as highly desirable, apparently in recognition of the useful role of joking as an adjustive mechanism. Once such a marriage is contracted, however, Ego and his wife must take care that their joking insults are directed only at the younger kinsmen of the other and that the insulting remarks are personal. It would, for example, be acceptable for Ego to call his wife's younger sister a disreputable shrew but dangerous to call her a slave (a term of disrespect used frequently in joking between sibs). To refer to her as a slave would cast unflattering aspersions on her entire kin group, including her mother and father, with whom, in their new status as parents-in-law, Ego may no longer joke.

3. I believe that joking is also institutionalized between the Mossi and the Yarse, a highly acculturated ethnic minority of Mande origin who live throughout Yatenga. There is also joking between the Mossi and the indigenous blacksmith caste. Unfortunately my data on these two instances of joking are inadequate.

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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[p. vii]
[pp. iv–vi are blank]

PREFACE

THIS BOOK ATTEMPTS to contribute to our understanding of Mossi society, 114
about which relatively little is known even within the continent of Africa. [121]
Many of the data were collected in the Upper Volta Republic between November 1955 and January 1957, a period when the Voltaics were preparing for important political changes. I did most of my field work in the area formerly included within the kingdom of Ouagadougou. I stayed only one week in the Yatenga and paid but brief visits to Tenkodogo and the Boussouma region. Thus, my basic data hold chiefly for Ouagadougou. My 12
methods of research were the conventional anthropological ones: I recorded local oral histories, conducted personal interviews, attended court and important rituals, participated in the life of the people whenever possible, and collected genealogical and biographical data.

In addition, I read all the important documents I could find on the po- 127
litical history of the Mossi people in the files of the Institut Français d'Afrique Noire, in local administrative offices, and in the Archives of the Governor General of French West Africa in Dakar, Senegal. I also read published works on the Mossi by such scholars as Maurice Delafosse, A. A. Dim Delobson, Georges Cheron, Eugene Mangin, Lucien Marc, and Louis Tauxier. Their works were invaluable to me, and I owe them a debt of 121
gratitude. My hope is that what I have added to the store of knowledge about the Mossi may be of service to Mossi scholars, whose studies will ultimately bring to light aspects of their own culture that we have missed.

The ethnographer working in contemporary Africa is faced with the problem of the time dimension. In reporting his findings, he may use the "ethnographic present" and describe the cultural system he studied as though all elements, even those dredged up from the memories of old men, were still viable in the society. Or he may use the past tense and thus underscore [178]
the fact that the society is changing, even though cultural traits from the past may be present and viable. I have elected the latter course primarily

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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because, even though many of the aspects of Mossi culture described here are still in existence, Mossi society is changing ever more rapidly. Many old culture traits that I found there as late as 1955 had all but disappeared when I returned in 1960. Not to recognize this fact in preparing this study would have laid the ground for the criticism that anthropologists ignore the changes taking place around them in order to concentrate upon the past.

My own interest in the Mossi grew out of an early curiosity about the cultures and societies of Africa. It was born of my parents' concern over Ethiopia's struggle to remain free and nurtured by the writings of Mr. Marcus A. Garvey, Dr. W. E. B. Dubois, and Professors Melville J. Herskovits and E. Franklin Frazier. These factors, together with the help and encouragement of my relatives and friends, ultimately led me to choose a career in anthropology and African studies. I am grateful to Professor John L. Landgraf of New York University, who first taught me the elements of anthropology and thus provided me with the basic tools for understanding human societies. To Dr. Gene Weltfish and Professor Joseph H. Greenberg of Columbia University I owe a further debt of gratitude for having directed my first studies of African cultures. To them, and to Professors Conrad M. Arensberg, Morton H. Fried, and Charles Wagley, also of Columbia University, I owe whatever skill and competence in social-science research I may possess. I am grateful to the Ford Foundation for financing the field work on which this study is based, and to the Arts and Science Research Fund Committee of New York University for help in defraying the cost of preparing the manuscript for publication.

I am deeply indebted to the Mossi people for having permitted me to live among them for fourteen months. M. François Bouda, district chief of Manga, and Naba Boulga, district chief of Nobere, not only welcomed me but kindly consented to answer my innumerable questions about the nature of their political and other institutions. The Djiba Naba, who subsequently became Mogho Naba Kougri, also encouraged me in my task, and so did Dr. Joseph Conombo. Without the help of M. Beta Nyissa, my friend and interpreter, field work would have been difficult. He not only explained many aspects of Mossi culture to me, but put me in touch with persons who could answer my questions, and taught me the rudiments of the Mossi language.

I must also thank my good friend Mme. Ouennam Pousde for helping me to understand the point of view of the Mossi women. This kind lady never ceased to be amused at the attempts of this *yagenga* (brother's son) to participate as fully as possible in Mossi life. M. Frederic Guierma en-

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the Niger-Congo family of African languages.[6] Like the Mossi, these groups are primarily horticultural; cereals are their main crops, and they cultivate yams where conditions permit. Their social organization takes both patrilineal and matrilineal forms. The veneration of ancestors lies at the core of their religious beliefs, but the existence of an otiose high god whose name contains the root *We* (*Ouennam, Win, Wene,* etc.) is also recognized. There are also tutelary spirits, the chief one being a female earth deity associated with We and called *Tenga* (also occurring as *Teng, Tena,* and *Ten*). The *Tengsobadamba,* who are priests or custodians of the earth shrines, are found among all the groups in the Voltaic family, and they often share leadership with more secular chiefs called *Naba, Na,* or *Nab.* Most of the ruling clans of the Voltaic groups claim common ancestry and acknowledge the same totems.[8]

The only glaring dissimilarity between these Voltaic peoples, and the one with which this study is primarily concerned, lies in the realm of political organization. Some are united into large kingdoms, while others form small acephalous groups. Delafosse makes the following generalizations about the smaller groups:

> It may be said of these people that, as a whole, they have remained quite primitive. With a few exceptions, they have not reached any significant level of political development; as a rule, they have not progressed beyond family unity. Although they neighbor on well-organized and powerful states such as the Mossi empires and the kingdoms of the Gourma and Bergo, which are inhabited by populations of the same ethnic group, they have derived little benefit from this proximity; some of them have been absorbed as subjects or vassals by these states, while others have remained on the outside, and seem to have but one purpose, the forceful preservation of their fierce but sterile independence. . . . Attachment to the land seems to be the only solid and fecund institution in their chaotic society.[7]

Rattray believes that the development of such highly organized political systems as those of the Mossi, Dagomba, and Mamprusi may be traced to "small bands of strangers." He thinks that the outsiders were better armed, better clothed, and familiar with the rudiments of Islam, and that since they knew about the institution of kingship, they were able to "superimpose upon the primitive tribes among whom they settled a new and unheard-of political conception, namely the idea of territorial and secular leadership in place of the immemorial institution of a ruler who was the high priest of a totemic clan and dealt only in spiritual sanctions." Nevertheless, Rattray is not certain that the Voltaic groups would not have evolved complex political systems if they had been left to themselves. He makes the significant statement that if the subjugation by the bands of strangers had not

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taken place, the local earth-priest or priest-king "undoubtedly would have evolved into the type of native ruler . . . who was not only high priest and custodian of the land of his tribe and of the ancestral spirits but one who was a chief or king on a territorial basis, whose sanctions were secular and physical rather than spiritual; in other words, what the average European implies when he uses the word 'king' or 'chief.'"[8]

Since pristine state development has occurred so seldom, it is difficult to evaluate Rattray's speculations about the possible local development of complex political forms. Nevertheless, his view that bands of strangers were responsible for state formation in the area is supported by most of the local traditions.

The relationship between the Voltaic peoples and the bands of strangers has not received the attention it deserves. In fact, the implications of such a relationship have often been underrated. As a result, groups that may once have been part of larger political entities created by these strangers have been regarded as acephalous, that is, as having very weak chiefs or no chiefs at all. In his studies of the Tallensi of northern Ghana, for example, Fortes constantly refers to a group of lineages called *Namoos,* whose members claim to be descended from the Mamprusi ruling group. He states that a Tallensi chief from the Tongo area claimed to be "the ruler of all the Tallensi." In another context Fortes discusses the status of a chief called *Kuna'aba,* who, he tells us, is regarded by the other Tallensi chiefs as their "father," to whom they owe "loyalty, respect, and ceremonial deference." Moreover, Fortes indicates that ceremonial investiture by Kuna'aba is "the crucial act conferring chiefship" on a Tale, even if the latter is actually selected by an administrative officer.[9] These facts should have indicated to Fortes that he was dealing with a rather complex historical problem that required further investigation.

Instead of carrying the investigation further, however, he dismisses the Tongo chief's claim of control over all Taleland with the assertion that "it is a distortion in terms of the modern privileges of chiefship, of a status which is merely that of *primus inter pares* in the native system." Similarly, he doubts the historical status and role of Kuna'aba: "Kuna'aba's modern judicial and administrative authority rests solely on the sanction of force represented by the [British] Administration." Interestingly enough, Fortes tells us that "the Administration has always regarded Taleland as part of the 'Mamprusi State,' under the ultimate rule of the chief of Mampurugu, through his sub-chief and deputy, the Kuna'aba, who was considered to have full jurisdiction over the 'Kurugu Division.'"[10]

Rattray, whose study of the Tallensi predates Fortes', declares that the

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643 the name of the current ruler. When Crozat asked one of his Mossi bearers why Boukary Koutou had chosen a title that means "elephant," the man declared, "He is an elephant; he is king of all kings as the elephant is king of all animals; a great elephant-king he is."[2] Another Moaga, meeting Crozat on the road to Ouagadougou, told him to be prepared to meet a monarch "whose riches are inexhaustible and whose splendor is marvelous. [644] He and his family wear only the most admirable European clothes; a thousand horses stand before his door, and there are more than a thousand women in his house. He is served by one hundred eunuchs; he commands as master 333 chiefs; and when he speaks to them it is as though God himself had spoken; everyone bows down before him and obeys."[3] Crozat, looking at the Mogho Naba through European eyes, did not find the "great [576] king" he had expected. Yet he and later European visitors to the Mossi [516] capital did affirm that all Mossi officials and district chiefs prostrated themselves in obeisance to their sovereign, even if they did not subsequently follow his instructions.[4]

643 Many rituals associated with the person and court of the Mogho Naba 796 served to emphasize the high esteem in which he was held by his subjects. For example, the sovereign showed himself every morning at a ceremony called "Ouend pous yan" (literally, "God rises," or "the sun rises") that survives to this day. The name of this ceremony has led many scholars [114] and travelers to assert that traditionally the Mogho Naba was considered a divine king. Dim Delobson states that this ceremony "shows the regard which the Mossi have for their chief, since they compare him to the sun, and thus to a 'god.'"[5] However, the Mossi do not now and probably never did regard their monarchs either as gods or as divine kings. There is a great deal of difference between regarding a man as "powerful and brilliant" like the sun and regarding him as divine. As a matter of fact, the [522] Mossi very often dramatize in humorous fashion the all-too-human frailties of their rulers, without ever considering it sacrilegious to do so. On the other hand, the Mogho Naba, as the supreme ruler, was expected to follow faithfully the strict etiquette demanded by his exalted position.

643 The morning ceremony was opened by the ruler's chief page, the *so-* 796 *ghone-kasanga,* who sprinkled a phylacteric solution around a throne 644 (*guere*) in the courtyard in front of a reception room called the *zongo.* Other pages (*soghondamba*) brought out a large cushion (*naghpure*), the ruler's sword, and other personal accouterments, and placed them on the [292] throne. Still other pages aided the Mogho Naba in his toilet. He was clothed in a large red robe, which symbolized the rising sun; he wore a bonnet surmounted by silver streamers (*wazourfou sebere*), which repre- -sented the sun itself.

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fathers died. In this way the rulers not only retained the allegiance of the boys' fathers but had a unique opportunity to determine whether these boys were qualified to succeed to the nam. 644

The life of a page was confining, even if sometimes very rewarding. Pages were bound by the demands of the ruler, whose every wish had to be satisfied immediately. A quarrelsome ruler was a terror to his pages, who had to bear silently his insults and blows. On the other hand, a considerate monarch permitted or encouraged his pages to profit from the small political intrigues in which they were invariably involved. Prospective district chiefs "made friends" with pages to find out whether their suits were progressing, or to whom they might usefully offer gifts. The pages used any money they might procure to buy clothes for themselves, to supplement the clothing and presents they received from their relatives. Every page was "adopted" by one of the royal wives, who prepared his meals and took care of him. In return, he helped this woman cultivate her field when his presence was not required by the monarch. When a page completed his service satisfactorily, he received a pughsiudga as a wife. If his work had not been satisfactory, he was simply dismissed. [662]

The only woman who played any significant role at the court of the Mogho Naba was the Pughtiema, his head wife. She was the only wife to whom he presented his friends, and whom he allowed his subjects to visit. This woman, who was commonly the widow of the former Mogho Naba, was often chosen because she was past childbearing age: she was thus older and wiser than the other wives, less preoccupied with children, and above the sexual jealousies that may often develop in polygynous households. She arbitrated among the wives and stood *in loco parentis* to the younger ones, whom she instructed and advised. She served also as official hostess to the ancestors during the annual propitiatory rituals. It was her duty to prepare the millet beer and millet water for the sacrifices to the ancestors, who were believed to feast at her hut before they visited the rest of the household. In addition, it was she who prepared to accompany the Mogho Naba to La each day. Lastly, it was her duty to introduce any new royal wife to the ancestors, and to ask them to watch over this potential mother of their descendants. 644 595 643 [782]

The ruler inherited some of his wives from his father; some he received from his many friends and vassals; and others he selected from among his pughsiudse. Crozat reports that Mogho Naba Wobogo (1890-96) allegedly had a hundred wives. Crozat did not see this many women at Wobogo's court, understandably, since most of a ruler's wives lived in villages, where they were guarded by eunuchs.[22] Of the substantial number of royal wives [114]

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000 went to Djiba when his grandfather died and his father was installed as Mogho Naba.

The origin of Djiba's status as the seat of the Crown Prince is rather 634 obscure. The people of the neighboring district of Nobere say that Djiba 644 was founded by a "companion" of their own founder, Naba Biligo, one of 173 the numerous "eldest" sons of Mogho Naba Oubri, the implication being that Djiba was supervised by Nobere. However, no one seems to know when Djiba's status changed or what happened to the ancient family who used to govern it. The consensus is that in earlier times the heir presumptive to Ouagadougou did not necessarily become chief of Djiba, but was given any district whose chieftainship was vacant when he came of age. Dim Delobson reports that Djiba became the district of the Crown Prince [114] sometime during the seventeenth century, when Mogho Naba Zombere, who had reigned for sixty years, found it necessary to establish a permanent seat for his heir.[20] However, Dim Delobson does not report under what conditions Djiba was chosen, nor does he say what happened to the local ruling lineage when this transfer took place. That the transfer was carried out in the manner reported by Dim Delobson is not doubted, because each new [558] Mogho Naba obtained districts for his relatives in this way. Through this [613] process, the people of the ancient ruling lineages were usually reduced to the level of commoners, and this is apparently what happened to the rulers of Djiba.

634 The first public sign that the young prince was being prepared for the 643 nam came in the form of a summons commanding him to go to Ouagadougou to be installed as Djiba Naba. On his way to the capital, he visited several villages where the local Tengsobadamba made sacrifices to the earth goddess in his name. He took this opportunity to meet with the district chiefs and their assembled village chiefs; he was entertained by them; and in turn he distributed gifts to the old women, whose praises were considered especially effective in bringing health and long life. When the boy finally arrived at the capital, he lodged at the compound of the Kambo Naba, head of the palace guard, until the Mogho Naba and his ministers installed him as chief of Djiba.

The installation rites for the Crown Prince were very similar to those already described for the Mogho Naba, and identical to those for the district chiefs. During the ceremony, no mention was made of the fact that the prince was the son of the Mogho Naba. The only special feature was that when the prince went into the courtyard after the ceremony to render homage to the Mogho Naba, he sat in an area assigned to him by custom. When the ruler appeared, the prince followed the Gounga Naba, who was pro-

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cause he thought Sanum had attacked him unjustly. For such acts of war, the Dimdamba involved usually lost their lives, and in at least one such case a Dim was turned over to the Mogho Naba by another Dim. We have seen that Dimdamba occasionally came to the aid of the Mogho Naba against another Dim.

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A question of some importance is whether this relationship between the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou and the rulers of independent kingdoms and autonomous principalities was characteristic of Mossi society or a rather late development. Was warfare the natural concomitant of a system in which the normally powerful Ouagadougou ruler was sometimes too weak to command allegiance from his peers and subordinates? Did the Mogho Naba resort to warfare as the only possible means of exercising his authority when his commands were challenged or ignored? Delafosse states, "Sometimes . . . , especially in very recent times, discord arose between the emperor [of Ouagadougou] and some of his vassal kings: thus Naba Sanum had to fight against the desire for independence of the kings of Boussouma and Boulsa."[16] Delafosse seems to suggest that the Mossi people were undergoing a period of stress when the Europeans arrived, and were faced with significant new administrative problems.

Here Binger appears to support Delafosse's view:

> Ever since he acceded to the throne, [Mogho Naba Sanum] has been compelled to govern the Mossi with unmitigated despotism. His fear of losing power led him to take such severe measures that he was forced to relax them. As soon as his major vassals saw this, they took these concessions as signs of fear and began to conspire secretly against him. Today, the chiefs of Mani, Boussouma, Yako, and Koupela represent forces with which Naba Sanum will have to reckon. . . . Before long, the Mossi empire will break up; the country will organize into confederacies like those of Beledougou and Yatenga.[17]

It is not completely clear, however, whether Binger really understood the intricacies of the Mossi political organization. He lists as "vassals" of the Mogho Naba such territories as Mane, Kaya, Koupela, Bonsa, Boussouma, Djitenga, Boulsa, Dakay, and Doulougou, as though they were all related to Ouagadougou in the same way. In reality, some were autonomous and some were directly dependent on the Ouagadougou ruler. It is possible that at the time of Binger's visit, the relations between the Mogho Naba and his subordinates were so fluid that the outsider had difficulty in understanding them. If this is the case, then the situation in Mossi country had indeed changed when the Europeans came in.

Crozat, who says the Mossi governmental structure was feudal in na-

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642 66 ADMINISTRATION

631 ture, offers what is probably the best analysis of power relations among the
628 important Mossi chiefs. In commenting upon the Mogho Naba's inability
174 to stop the war between Yako and Yatenga he asks, "How could it be
114 otherwise? With what sanctions could this king without an army back up his orders if he ventured to give any? . . . In short, when the Ouagadougou ruler speaks, he is sometimes obeyed. If he is, all is well; if he is not, all is still well. Everything remains as before."[18] Crozat was mistaken if he believed that the Mogho Naba did not have a fighting force. What he did not have was a standing army to exercise his power whenever he wished. When he was able to summon an army, he was effective; when he was not, he had little power over any territory but his own. Crozat, like Binger, gives a strange picture of the political relationship between the Mogho Naba and the other rulers. He tells us that in the Mossi political hierarchy, "after the ruler of Ouagadougou comes the ruler of Boussouma, then the Yatenga ruler, and then the ruler of Yako."[19] Yatenga was traditionally independent of Ouagadougou, whereas Boussouma and Yako were simply autonomous principalities dependent on the Mogho Naba. It is possible that Crozat mistook the relative power of these various political entities for a hierarchical relationship. It is also possible that at the time of his visit, the Dimdamba felt sufficiently powerful to ignore the traditional hierarchy as far as their political relationship with other rulers was concerned, and were simply acknowledging relative gradations of power.

643 Clearly, the sovereignty of the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou over the
642 independent kingdoms and autonomous principalities depended chiefly on
628 military might. The stronger a Mogho Naba was, the more actively he tried to control the internal administration of the autonomous principalities and to exercise police powers over them or on their behalf. However, most Mogho Nanamse were content to claim superiority or control over the independent kingdoms and refrained from meddling in their affairs.

643 Within the Mogho Naba's own kingdom, however, the situation was
635 different. Here, like other important Mossi rulers, he directed the admin-
634 istrative apparatus. For administrative purposes, the kingdom of Ouaga-
[642] dougou was divided into five large provinces (*weto*; sing. *weogho*; or
[161] *solem*, from *so*, "command"). Together they included some three hundred districts, in which there were over four thousand villages inhabited by some 862,000 persons.[20] (Not included here were districts and villages directly administered by the Mogho Naba.) The provinces were not compact physical entities, because their component units were scattered throughout the country. To be sure, some of the districts within a province were close together or even contiguous, but many others stood alongside districts be-

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Naba was responsible for checking these depredations, but he had little coercive force since these nobles were infinitely superior to him in rank. 634 635

The Mogho Naba held his five ministers responsible for the administration of the districts within their provinces. Therefore they had to function as liaison officers between him and the district chiefs. Every morning, in order of precedence, the ministers reported the news they had received from their provinces since the previous day. At this time, the Mogho Naba also gave them messages for their districts. Later in the day, the ministers presented to the ruler those persons who had come from their provinces to the capital with special grievances, requests, or gifts. Delicate affairs of state were left for the evening, when they were discussed by the Mogho Naba, his minister or ministers, and other important persons. 645

From all reports, these administrative affairs kept both the ministers and the Mogho Naba quite busy. Binger, who could barely conceal his displeasure with Mogho Naba Sanum, gives this critical but otherwise highly illuminating view of the Mossi ruler's administrative activities: 643 644

> The duties of Naba Sanum are not too important. They consist of receiving visits throughout the day. In the morning, at about six o'clock, the drums announce that the ruler has arisen. When he has washed and refreshed himself with a meal, his captives and his wives go to his chamber to salute him. Then comes the turn of strangers, people of the neighborhood, petitioners, and others. They squat before the reception area until the ruler deigns to appear. When a large number of people have gathered, one of the [pages] goes to notify the ruler, who then arrives, sits on his cushion, and casts an amiable glance on the gathering while all present snap their fingers. As soon as Naba Sanum is seated, the petitioners and visitors hurry toward the monarch, throw themselves face down on the earth, and cover their heads with sand. Then each of them gets up and presents a gift of greater or lesser importance, in cowries or foodstuffs, according to what he wishes to ask. Then the [pages] come and say to the ruler, "A certain man has brought a sack of cowries, or a goat, or an ox. He desires to speak to you." The ruler thanks all of them with a *nif kende* (thanks) and retires into his chamber. It is well known that not one out of fifty petitioners was given the opportunity to have his wishes heard. Those who were heard had first spoken to an attendant who, after being paid in advance, had put off their case indefinitely by stating that it would be dealt with next. . . . Since the monarch's days are so well filled, one easily understands why he finds it difficult to deal effectively with the internal and external affairs of his kingdom; in any case, Mossi country is in a period of decadence that will only be aggravated with time.[25] [662]

The activities Binger considered frivolous were, on the contrary, important for the proper administration of the kingdom. The Mogho Naba had to receive petitions from the districts and transmit administrative orders to 643 [114]

648 warriors as El Hadj Omar and Samory Touré surprised and puzzled many
175 of their early visitors. Binger explains it as follows:

> Thanks to the primitive tribes that surrounded them like a rampart, the Mossi were spared the incursions of their powerful neighbors. This immunity cannot last much longer, because [Mogho Naba] Sanum is weak, has little spirit, and is badly counseled.[8]

Binger was partly correct in attributing the immunity of the Mossi to the presence of weaker groups on their borders. To the military adventurers of the period, the Mossi must have appeared invulnerable when compared to their weaker neighbors. Nevertheless, the Mossi declare that it was their vigilance and willingness to fight that prevented Samory Touré, among others, from invading their country.[9] They claim to have captured and executed nine of the ten spies he sent to survey their territory. The one spy who returned allegedly told Samory Touré that the Mossi were too strong to be attacked, because they banded together against all outsiders.

175 Crozat attributes the Mossi freedom from attack to miraculous and
648 magical factors:
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> There is widespread belief in surrounding territories that Mossi country is inviolable. Alone amid the troubled populations that surround it, it enjoys
[176] relative peace. It owes this to the very special protection of a deity, and also to the virtues of the special talismans owned by the ruler of Ouagadougou. The terror inspired by these charms is such that some years ago the leader of Gadiari's column suffered a mass desertion of his men when he tried to lead them to the conquest of Mossi country. He himself was killed, perhaps by his own *sofas* [soldiers]. This case cannot be expected to undermine belief in these presumptuous charms.[10]

175 This statement, like Binger's, contains an element of truth, but not in
648 the way that Crozat believed. The Ouagadougou kingdom did have a
[114] series of ritual pacts with neighboring Mossi and non-Mossi groups. Crozat found that Mogho Naba Sanum was on "good terms" with the people of Fada-N'Gourma. He tells us that this friendship was maintained by a "curious custom" whereby the Ouagadougou ruler sent wives, captives, and horses from his predecessor's estate to the ruler of the Gurmanche.[11] Similarly, Pinchon, a British officer stationed in the Gold Coast at the beginning of the century, reports that there existed an ancient pact between the Mossi and the Mamprusi. This pact kept the ruler of each country from attacking the other on pain of death by the ancestors. Like the pact between the Mossi and the Gurmanche, this agreement was sanctioned by an annual gift of a horse, slaves, and cloth from the Mossi to the Mamprusi. Pinchon speculates that it was the existence of this pact that induced the Mamprusi

Wobogo. However, he did not have to intervene, because while still en route he heard that Ouagadougou had fallen."[28] Thanks to this type of aid, the Mogho Naba was able to gather quite a large army, a fact that contradicts Crozat's belief that the Mogho Naba was a "king without an army."[29]

The early Mogho Nanamse used to accompany their armies into the field, but this practice was later abandoned and was revived periodically only by the more adventurous rulers. (The last ruler to die in warfare was Mogho Naba Doulougou [ca. 1800].) However, it was the Mogho Naba's duty to greet the army when it came to Ouagadougou, to beat the royal war drum, and to turn the troops over to the Tansoba. This officer served as commander in chief of the army, and was assisted by the Gounga Naba, a provincial minister, who served as his aide-de-camp. The Gounga Naba was expected to die rather than retreat in battle, especially if the Tansoba was killed. Two other ministers, the Kamsaogho Naba and the Larhalle Naba, also accompanied the army. The later Baloum Nanamse did not venture into battle, because they had to attend to the personal needs of the Mogho Naba. In early times, however, they accompanied their sovereigns into battle and fought alongside them. The Ouidi Naba never went to war, because it was his duty to look after the kingdom. He had to ensure the interests of all the people even if the royal army was defeated, the country invaded, and the ruler killed or forced to flee. The Samande Naba went to war and served as chief of the infantry.

Scouts preceded each district contingent as the army marched off to battle. Within the contingent, the younger warriors marched in front, followed by older men. It was the duty of the more experienced warriors to make sure that the younger men did not break ranks and run under the stress of battle. Behind the foot soldiers came the cavalry, composed of nobles and of the few commoners who possessed horses. Behind these came the district chief, surrounded by his own palace guard. Several heralds known as *yumba* (sing. *yuma*) accompanied the district forces to exhort them to fight. As the men marched to battle the yumba shouted:

> Men! Your ancestors were not slaves. They were men. They were stronger than anyone else. They did not bathe with water; they bathed with blood. Do you wish to return home to drink millet water and eat bread? Never! A man does not eat bread or drink millet water; a man fights. Your ancestors were not afraid of anyone; you must not be afraid of anyone. Even if you are killed today, you must march ahead, beat your enemies, and take their villages. You must not be afraid!

Mossi armies on the march used scouts to keep a sharp lookout for the enemy or for any evidence that he was aware of impending attack. The tactics these scouts used to avoid detection, such as camouflaging themselves

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less of the amount of millet harvested from the Mogho Naba's fields, there had to be one hundred baskets full of grain. If the number of baskets filled with the Mogho Naba's grain fell short of the mark, the serfs and slaves had to make up the difference with the produce of their own fields. The ceremony concluded with sacrifices to the royal ancestors, after which the Mogho Naba's wives, daughters, and sisters gave beer and kola nuts to the laborers.

As head of the central government, the Mogho Naba received revenue in the form of money and livestock which the district chiefs collected from the village people. These were given to him during an elaborate annual ceremony called the "Basgha" ("feast of the royal ancestors"). Several days before this post-harvest festival, the district chiefs and their retainers arrived in the capital and lodged with their provincial ministers. At a designated time during the ceremony, the district chiefs and nobles went to the palace. In provincial contingents and led by their ministers, they walked up to the sovereign's throne and gave the Mossi salute. After they had returned to their places, their servants gave the royal pages the presents they had brought to the palace.

The Dimdamba apparently made their annual contribution to the Mogho Naba at the time of the Basgha. There is one report that they took this opportunity to send gifts to the ruler's son, the Djiba Naba, as well. The Dimdamba customarily sent the Mogho Naba part of the goods they had seized in combat against non-Mossi peoples, as well as a tax (*jado*) out of the goods they had inherited from their predecessors.[3] There is also some evidence that the Mogho Naba solicited goods from the Dimdamba at other times. Crozat says:

> During my first visit to Yako, three envoys from Ouagadougou were at the chief's house. They were tax collectors. They had come to offer the vassal a silver bracelet sent by the sovereign. The Yako Naba responded by sending horses, captives, and cowries to Ouagadougou.[4]

Crozat could not understand this reciprocity between the Mogho Naba and his vassals, and questions whether the Mogho Naba really collected taxes from them. He concludes that the Mogho Naba did receive taxes, "but these are never given to him except in the form of presents which are reciprocated."[5] Crozat found it puzzling and disturbing that many of the Dimdamba had not given the Mogho Naba any "taxes" for several years. He indicated, moreover, that they did not wish to pay taxes to the Ouagadougou ruler even under the guise of an exchange of presents. This was especially true of the Yatenga Naba, who had not sent the Mogho Naba any presents for six or seven years prior to 1890. Crozat surmised that

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631 because of this delinquency, the Mogho Naba might hesitate to come to
651 the aid of any of his vassals if a general war broke out. It is true that the
643 Mogho Naba did not aid the Yatenga ruler when the French arrived.
114 But whether this was because of his failure to pay taxes, or because the
[648] French conquest of the Yatenga coincided with a civil war there, we shall
[669] probably never know. We do know that many of the Mogho Naba's vassals came to his aid when the French finally arrived at Ouagadougou. It is my opinion that the gifts exchanged between Yatenga and Ouagadougou were not "tributary," but were more in the nature of tokens of friendship between two peers.

643 The Mogho Naba and his provincial ministers also received revenue as
645 a function of their judicial roles. The nature and disposition of the fines
692 levied against legal offenders were discussed in Chapter V. The Mogho
651 Naba's fees came in the form of the traditional gifts the litigants gave him
[431] even before their cases were tried. These gifts were never regarded as bribes, for this would have contradicted the Mossi axiom that "the truth is at Ouagadougou."

643 The Mogho Naba inherited all the property of the Kamsaogho Naba,
651 and claimed all the property of district chiefs who died without close rela-
634 tives. He also received inheritance taxes (fado) from the estates of deceased
768 district chiefs. In collecting the fado, the Mogho Naba first retained the
[428] horse on which the messenger came to announce the chief's death. He reciprocated by sending envoys with cowries and animals to be offered to their common ancestors at the chief's funeral. After the funeral, the envoys claimed the dead chief's quiver of arrows to take to Ouagadougou for deposit with those of other dead chiefs. Then they demanded the fado, and jestingly told the heirs that the Mogho Naba would be satisfied with nothing less than "a thousand of everything" (*tusri bumbu fa*) the deceased had possessed: wives, slaves, horses, cows, goats, chickens, articles of clothing, and so on. The heirs pleaded poverty and jokingly gave the envoys a few old and sickly animals, old chickens, tattered pieces of clothing, etc. Eventually, they handed out the fado, which usually consisted of livestock, clothing, food, weapons, jewelry, cowries, and even slaves. Lastly, they gave the envoys the chief's ceremonial horse and presents for themselves.

643 The Mogho Naba and his ministers collected a considerable amount of
645 revenue from the traders who visited Ouagadougou and the larger market
651 towns and village markets throughout the kingdom.* The Mossi (especially
439 the assimilated Yarse) were good traders, and they benefited from their
[98] country's strategic location between the Sahara and the forest regions. According to Barth, some six caravan routes crossed the country, linking

district chief's wrath. Thus, there was some method in the collection of this tribute and certain expectations had to be met, even though many of the contributors may have felt that their gifts were voluntary.

In direct contrast, Dim Delobson, himself a chief, states that Mossi chiefs demanded a stipulated amount from their villagers. He adds, however, that the tribute "varied in amount according to the resources of the contributors," and that the district chief set the "amount of cowries and grain due from each village in accordance with the number of its inhabitants."[24] According to him, the rate of assessment was usually 100 cowries for a married man and 50 for an adult bachelor (apparently, this difference was an acknowledgment of the woman's contribution to her husband's wealth). In addition, each adult male was assessed 10 baskets of millet of about 100 pounds each. Dim Delobson adds that to these exactions the district chief added his own contributions to the Mogho Naba, usually in the form of cattle.

It seems that Dim Delobson rationalized and regularized a rather informal system of contributions. The present-day Mossi declare that soil differences in the villages and variations in rainfall prevented a district chief from demanding a set tribute, because no one could tell whether a crop would be good or bad. Only a ruler's informers could tell him how much he should receive each year, and the chief based his exactions on this report. Several of my respondents agreed with Dim Delobson that the district chief provided mostly cattle for the annual tribute to the Mogho Naba, and that the village people furnished cowries, small animals, and grain.

A district chief was seldom wealthy, because he always had to use his revenue to fulfill unexpected obligations toward his subjects, his superiors in the political hierarchy, and his household. He had to be generous to his subjects, providing millet water, millet beer, and the more expensive imported kola nuts for those who visited and conferred with him daily. He was expected to provide food and shelter for the countless strangers who settled in his district, until they could provide for themselves. He also lodged and fed the messengers who brought him orders from the capital, and gave them gifts to take back to the provincial ministers. And he had to provide goods for the many members of his family who depended upon him. Finally, in the event of crop failure or famine in any of his villages, he had to provide grain from his granaries to feed the hungry. "How could he do otherwise? Was he not a 'father' to his people?"

The expectation that the district chief should provide hospitality to his subjects was so strong that those chiefs or princes who were deprived of an income for any reason often resorted to banditry to fulfil their obliga-

they might take the lives and property of their subjects. There are many stories of avaricious chiefs who convicted wealthy commoners of spurious crimes and had them executed or banished in order to seize their wealth. There are also stories of twin tricksters, Raogo, a boy, and Poko, a girl, two *enfants terribles* who always succeeded in outwitting and killing avaricious chiefs. When I asked a district chief to explain the significance of the Raogo and Poko tales, he replied that they were "meaningless stories told by children who do not understand how difficult it is for a chief to command and protect men." This remark prompted one of his officials to add that in olden days, people gladly supported the Mogho Naba and his chiefs in order to be safe from their enemies—a statement which might have been made by a conscientious government official anywhere. However, whether commoners or chiefs, all Mossi believed that men must have government, and that without it chaos would prevail.

The Mossi political organization was subject to severe strains. For one thing, its economic basis was not very strong. True, goods and services were channeled to the capital from the smallest areas, and in time this permitted the establishment of increasingly complex governmental structures. Nevertheless, the Mossi fiscal system was not highly developed, and much of the revenue the rulers received came to them in the form of legal fees and gifts. Moreover, most of these revenues were irregular in nature.

Despite this fact, the Mossi believed that their rulers were wealthy—and there can be no doubt that they were wealthier than their subjects. Nevertheless, visiting Europeans found little difference between the standard of living of the chiefs and that of the people. Binger would have us believe that Mogho Naba Sanum bragged so much about imaginary wealth, including 10,000 horses, that he "managed to convince himself of it."[26] Binger's subsequent remarks about Sanum's resources are illuminating even if somewhat biased, because they throw light on the economic basis of the Ouagadougou kingdom. He tells us that Sanum's revenues were

> not well regulated. He lives on gifts and offerings which people have brought him with the aim of obtaining justice, or to demand something from him. He sometimes sends a band of men to capture slaves in Kipirsi country, or at least supports such ventures. But these revenues, like those of all the black chiefs, are not sufficient, because these men are prone to squander their resources. As a result, these sovereigns are compelled to use expedients in order to procure horses and other commodities. Thus, like the rulers of Tieba, Pegue, and Kong, Naba Sanum still has captives in villages devoted to agriculture, but he does not take proper care of these villages. If he does not receive enough millet in the form of gifts, he must sell his slaves in order to procure it.[27]

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Binger's statement about the "squandering" to which "all the black chiefs" are prone reveals his ignorance of the nature, role, and function of West African chiefs in general and of Mossi chiefs in particular. These men were often the center of redistribution systems that embraced their entire territory. The Mossi chiefs did not necessarily squander their resources when they used them to support their household, their administrative staff, and even visitors to their realm. A rather large portion of the millet the Mogho Naba received was not even used by his own household, but was held for gifts to visiting strangers. Binger himself benefited from the generosity of Mogho Naba Sanum, and he provides us with excellent data about how Boukary Koutou distributed his resources: "I can say that never has a chief given me food, kola nuts, and beer as often as he did. I received things to eat two or three times a day."[28] No Mossi chief could have done less. This was a role that chiefs had to play, and they lost power and prestige if they proved inhospitable or parsimonious either to visiting strangers or to their own subjects. 631 434 574 (114)

Binger's lack of insight into the economic basis of the Mossi political organization also kept him from obtaining a clear understanding of the political system itself. For example, he saw the loose political organization of the Mossi as a sign of decadence, and felt that the Ouagadougou kingdom was too weak to survive for any length of time: 642 114

> Before long the Mossi empire will break up, and the country will be organized into a confederacy like Beledougou and Yatenga. This is an event that we Europeans can only favor. Experience has shown us that as soon as a Negro chief commands more than 2,000 people, he dreams of empire; his needs grow, and he tries to expand. Since his revenues are small, he labors under a deficit, which he must remedy with slave raids. In a confederacy the chiefs do not reach this point so rapidly. As soon as one of them begins to rise, the others can band together and nip his ambition in the bud.[29]

It is quite true that many of the political systems in the western Sudan had a loose character similar to that of a "confederacy." This was not due to the vigilance of neighboring chiefs, however. From time to time, such powerful rulers as Sundiata, Mansa Musa, Sonni-Ali, El Hadj Omar, and Samory Touré did arise and conquer vast areas, but they were unable to sustain their gains over extended periods.

The political organization of the Mossi was not decadent but structurally weak—its economic base was never strong enough to support a higher degree of centralization. Strong chiefs only tested the limits of the system; they could not change the system itself. 642

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The Mossi were probably brought to the attention of modern Europe by T. E. Bowdich, an Englishman who went to Ashanti in 1817 to sign a trade agreement with the Asantehene. While at Kumasi, Bowdich diligently sought information about the lands in the interior, but was relatively unsuccessful because his hosts pleaded ignorance. Nevertheless, he did find out that "five journies [days] from Yngwa [Yendi] is Mosee, a warlike but less visited kingdom: it consists of many states, but the superior monarch is named Billa, and the capital Kookoopella."[4] This misinformation is interesting because it shows that Bowdich's respondent had precise information only about Koupela, a town located near the great caravan center of Poitenga. Similarly, the linguistic data reported by Bowdich are for Dagomba rather than Mossi.

Another Englishman, Joseph Dupuis, led a trade mission to Kumasi in 1819, and obtained data on the Mossi that are surprisingly accurate given the reluctance of middlemen traders to reveal commercial information. He reports that Ashanti traders "sometimes travel as far as Aughoa, the Magho, and to the east of Kasogho. Aughoa is distant from Coomassie twenty-five journies by the Salgha and Yandy Roads, which would give a distance of 360 British miles. Their object in frequenting this place is to collect that vegetable substance by the name of shea butter."[5] There is no doubt that "Aughoa" is really "Ouagha," the term often used by the Mossi to refer to their capital, and the distance between Kumasi and Ouagadougou as reported by Dupuis is approximately the same as the road mileage today. The name "Magho," which appears from time to time in these early documents, seems to be none other than "Mogho," the traditional name of Mossi country. "Kasogho" probably refers to the section of Ouagadougou that was controlled by the Kamsaogho Naba.

The Hausa merchants knew a great deal about the Mossi and the resources of their territory, but only with difficulty did the English trader Hugh Clapperton persuade Sultan Mohammed Bello of Sokoto to give him the following information:

> The country of Mouchier or Mouchi is situated to the west of Ghurma. It is vast and possesses a gold mine, rivers, forests, and mountains. It is inhabited by tribes of the Sudan who possess many fast horses and large donkeys. Their king is called Wagadougou; their asses are sent down to the Gondja to carry the drums of the Army.[6]

Either Clapperton or his informant obviously confused the capital of the Mossi with their king, and included parts of Dagomba in their territory.

Barth, who traveled extensively in the Sudan between 1849 and 1855, did

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not enter Mossi territory. Nevertheless, he obtained rather precise information on the important caravan routes leading from Timbuktu through the Mossi trade centers of Ouagadougou, Kaya, Yako, and Koupela, down to Salaga and other towns in Ghana, and even across to Sansane Mango in Togoland. His data on the Mossi are invaluable:

> The whole triangle interposed between the Niger toward the north, and the country of the Eastern Mandingoes or Wangarawa toward the south, appears to be inhabited by a single race of people whose language, although they are divided into several states and nations, nevertheless appears originally to have been the same stock. It is very probable that this race in ancient times occupied the whole upper course of the Niger, and that this tract may have been wrested from it in later times by the Songhai and the Mandingoes, especially that section of the latter which is generally called Bambara. These are the Gourma toward the N.E., the Tombo toward the N.W., and between them the Mossi. . . . The strongest among these pagan kingdoms five centuries ago, and even at the present moment, is that of the Mossi, although the country is split into a number of small principalities, almost totally independent of each other, and paying only some slight homage to the ruler of the principality of Woghodogo.[7]

Europe learned more about the Mossi from Sigismund Koelle, who visited Sierra Leone in 1854. His informant was one Andrew Dixon, who had lived in Koupela before being captured and sold into slavery. He furnished information on the location of the Mossi, their wars with the Busansi, and their important commercial and political relations with the Ashanti.[8] Koelle's report, taken in conjunction with the reports of Dupuis, Bowdich, Clapperton, and Barth, shows that the Ashanti, like the Hausa and other coastal peoples, were protecting their trade when they attempted to isolate the peoples of the interior from the Europeans. But as soon as the British defeated the Ashanti in the war of 1873–74, the Sudan was opened and adventurers poured in. In 1877 and 1878, two missionaries of the Basel Mission visited the northern regions of Ghana, and subsequently gave a good description of Mossi commerce in that area.[9] Lonsdale, who visited Salaga in 1881, found among the traders in the market "the Mossi with his cattle, sheep, and slaves—these latter, generally Gurunsi, are not exposed for sale in the street or market, but can be seen where the owner resides."[10]

The activities of the various European nations in West Africa and other regions at this time led to military and diplomatic difficulties, which the Berlin Conference of 1884–85 was convened to resolve. Agreement was reached to assign "spheres of influence" to the various European nations, to regulate trade, and to provide for arbitration between rival claimants of conquered or "protected" territories. In West Africa, this meant the end

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> of those chiefs whom we like, in those countries on the other side of the Niger which have been given to us? Perhaps people will tell you again that everywhere we go, we change everything and wish to be the only masters. Have we changed something in Kenedougou, whose *fama* [chief] has been our friend for a long time? We have, it is true, deposed Ahmadou of Segou, but he waged war upon us, and Segou is not his. . . .

The Mogho Naba listened to Crozat in silence and later sent a servant to him with an equally diplomatic message:

> The Mogho Naba is very happy that you came, and thanks the chiefs who sent you; he wishes to declare his friendship with the white men who are in the West, especially with the French. He will see them with pleasure when they come again to the Mossi. They will be well received by us. . . . The chief declares his alliance and friendship with the French. . . . He will be pleased to see other Frenchmen come here, provided that they are not too numerous. As for your black traders and French merchants, they can come and trade with the Mossi in all security: he will not maltreat them.
>
> On his part, the chief will send his people to trade in your possessions. As for you . . . you are now free to depart whenever you wish, and by whichever route you choose. The chief will give you four men to accompany you to the border.[26]

In his report to his superiors, Crozat suggests that the widespread belief in the Mossi immunity to attack by neighboring populations is based on imperfect knowledge of their actual strength and fighting ability. He questions the Mogho Naba's riches and power, declares that "he does not have an army," and concludes by stating that the commoners are exploited by their rulers and by the Moslem holy men and "would welcome the Europeans as rulers." He thus shows quite clearly that the Mossi were correct in viewing him as an enemy.[27] Marc, who had no reason to be hostile to Crozat, commented: "It seems to us that Crozat is somewhat unfair in his notes on the indigenous culture of the Mossi. It is possible that the total failure of his mission made him rather intolerant."[28]

[114]

Crozat was followed the next year by another French emissary, Lt.-Col. P. L. Monteil. The chief of Yako detained him briefly on the advice of a Moslem who had had unpleasant experiences with Europeans. When Monteil finally reached Ouagadougou and asked for an audience with the Mogho Naba, he was informed that the ruler would not see him and had given orders for him to be expelled from the country. Monteil had no recourse but to leave, but he made this observation: "One important result of this journey augurs well for the future. We were able to travel throughout Mossi country without difficulty."[29] He made a careful survey of the country which was used to good effect by his countrymen five years later.

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9. In Dim Delobson's account (p. 60), an unnamed wife of the Mogho Naba ran away, and he allegedly tried to follow her because she was the only person in his household who knew how to cook his favorite food. 000

It is interesting that the Mossi have a tradition in which their ruler undergoes the same experience as many a Mossi husband, namely, being betrayed by his wife. It is also interesting that Mogho Naba Waraga is the ruler named in this incident. He is the ruler who waged a five-year-long civil war with one of his vassals. It may well be that his ministers devised the myth about his wife in order to prevent him from leaving the capital to fight. [837]

10. The Mossi practice of tasting food before giving it to another person is obviously connected with the fear of poison. The Mossi believe that only a boorish person would give another person something to eat without first tasting it himself. [576]

11. The full significance of this ceremony is unclear, for the Mossi hesitate to talk about it. It is known that the "sacred fire" is linked to the nocturnal visits of the royal ancestors. But the relationship of the fire to another sacred fire kept in Koubri district (about seventeen miles from Ouagadougou) is not known. [372]

Faithful to Mossi tradition or ignorant of the true nature of the ceremony, Dim Delobson says nothing about the ceremony and does not mention the presence of the namtibo. However, he does report that the palace guards would kill anyone who approached the place where the rite was being performed (p. 62). [114]

12. There are several traditions concerning female regents. However, I believe that they may have their basis in the role the Mogho Naba's daughter played during the interregnum.

13. Mossi genealogies show that only in one case in which the nam passed from a Mogho Naba to his brother did the former Mogho Naba's sons receive districts from their uncle, the new ruler. Since it is difficult to believe that the eleven other Mogho Nanamse who were succeeded by their brothers died without issue, it can only be concluded that the descendants of a ruler who did not inherit the nam were ignored by their uncles in power.

14. To this council could be added other men whose experience was valued. For example, the Baloum Naba was called upon in 1942 to give advice about a successor to Kom.

15. Dim Delobson, pp. 130-32.

16. It is interesting that the sheepskin garb of the Mossi pretenders is similar to the dress of the chiefs among the smaller tribal groups of the Voltaic culture area. If we can assume that culture traits characteristic of ritual and ceremonial practices tend to persist longer than most other traits, we might have evidence that the complex Mossi state evolved from the political organizations found among the smaller local groups. [171] [174]

17. The "naming of a name" speech is part of most Mossi *rites de passage*, and is often used to brag about some achievement or to cast aspersions on one's enemies. Most newly elected monarchs pledge good government, brag about their elevation, and vilify their enemies.

In his inaugural speech Naba Kom II said, "When plenty of water falls during the rainy season, the rivers and seas are glad because they are enlarged." "Kom" means "water," and Kom's speech meant that he pledged to bring happiness to all his subjects.

Boukary Koutou insulted his listeners by declaring, "Even if a hundred ghosts join together, they cannot harm an elephant." He was called Mogho Naba Wobogo ("elephant").

18. It is said that if the amulets were stolen during the interregnum, the thief had to be elected Mogho Naba; if they were stolen afterwards, the ruler lost the basis for the mystical quality of leadership and authority he had inherited from his ancestors.

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000 19. There is a curious story among the people of Nobere district that Mogho Naba Mottoba (who reigned in the seventeenth century) was not a Mossi but a Fulani who was given the nam after he chanced upon the installation ceremony and assassinated the newly elected man during the night. This story is denied in Ouagadougou; in fact, it contradicts the genealogical records of the ruling dynasty. However, the genealogy does show that Mottoba's father, Mogho Naba Guiliga, had succeeded his brother, and it is possible that there was dynastic rivalry for the nam between Mottoba and the former Mogho Naba's son. [174]

20. This rite was performed during the installation of the present Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou, although it is hardly recognizable as described in *Newsweek* (December 9, 1957, p. 48): "A man named Moussa Congo assumed the name of Kougri Naba last week and became the 35th Mogho Naba of the Mossi in the capital city of Ouagadougou in the Upper Volta region of French West Africa. Son of Emperor Issoufou Congo, Kougri Naba, as the new Mogho Naba, has one white horse, 200 wives, and 8,000 warriors, who danced around his palace ten times." [182]

21. This practice has apparently lapsed since Mogho Naba Kougri moved into the modern concrete palace built for his father, Mogho Naba Sagha II.

22. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Soudan*, pp. 569–70. Tauxier claims the Mogho Nanamse used the pages for homosexual purposes on Fridays in order to circumvent the Moslem prohibition against intercourse with women on this holy day. Homosexuality is rare among the Mossi, as Tauxier himself admits, and most Mossi deny that the Mogho Nanamse ever resorted to it. However, one respondent did state that he had heard about homosexuality among certain past rulers. [838]

23. Crozat, p. 4849.

24. When Mogho Naba Kom II died under mysterious circumstances in 1942, it was rumored that he had committed suicide rather than reduce the number of his wives as ordered by the administration under the influence of the Catholic missionaries. Kom allegedly held that no one can inherit a sovereign's wife during his lifetime. Therefore, in order to avoid loss of status by seeing his wives go to commoners, he chose death so they would be inherited by nobles. [648] [762] [797]

25. The statement in *Newsweek* (December 9, 1957, p. 48) that Kougri has two hundred wives is untrue. [114]

26. Intermarriage between the Mossi and the Fulani has produced a people known as the Simili-Mossi. Nevertheless, the Mossi are strongly prejudiced against the Fulani, especially against the women, stating that the Moaga who has sexual intercourse with a Fulani woman must bathe in nine different rivers before he becomes clean. The basis of this prejudice appears to be that Fulani women are not cultivators and therefore are unacceptable as Mossi wives. [563]

27. Mossi women know a great deal about the history and traditions of their people. But they never indicate that they do except during such rituals, when they are required to play certain roles.

28. Dim Delobson, p. 96.

29. Dim Delobson (p. 101) states that there are "sacred things" in this village, but I have been unable to substantiate his report.

30. Dim Delobson (p. 104) gives the classic explanation of this nighttime ride. On his ride from Bere to Djiba, the mounted prince must try to touch a certain branch of a certain tree. If he is destined to succeed his father, he will succeed in touching the branch; if he is not, the branch will magically withdraw at his approach. [824]

I visited the area in which this ritual reportedly took place, but the people in the vicinity denied that such a tree existed.

31. *Ibid.*, p. 106.

32. IFAN (Compte Rendu No. 429). There are many other rumors concerning Kom's death. In a book praising the loyalty of the Africans to the Free French Gov- [648]

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15. *Ibid.*, p. 673.
16. Delafosse, II, 128–29.
17. Binger, II, 502.
18. Crozat, p. 4849.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 4822.

20. The structure of the Mossi kingdoms and their relationship with the autonomous principalities make it difficult to determine the exact number of districts within each unit. For example, the Mossi people always claimed that the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou was sovereign over "333" chiefs (cf. Binger, I, 502). However, since the Mossi always associate the number 3 with males, any number giving a multiple of threes is suspect. Binger stated that some of the chiefs referred to as part of the 333 were no more than village chiefs. However, Tauxier (*Le Noir du Soudan*, p. 567), describing the kingdom of Ouagadougou, states, "At the top of this hierarchy is the king, the Mogho Naba, paramount chief of the Mossi, residing at Ouagadougou. To give at least an idea of the relative importance of this empire, without going further than, say, the cercle of Ouagadougou, there were eight provinces comprising 300 *cantons* [districts], 5,000 villages or small towns, and 861,700 inhabitants."

While voicing the myth that the Mogho Naba had "under his control 333 chiefs or Nabas," Dim Delobson actually gives only about 150 chiefs in his list of district and other chiefs (pp. 46, 288–97). It was impossible for me to get any idea of the number of chiefs, because the Mossi hierarchy has changed radically since 1905.

21. Dim Delobson, p. 63.
22. Cheron, "Contribution," p. 651.
23. The Mossi did not acknowledge the defeat of Mogho Naba Wobogo by the French until the Ouidi Naba surrendered to the invaders and installed a ruler they had chosen.
24. Archives, Document 1G-334. Lambert describes Karfo as "a curious figure who unfortunately is not well known."
25. Binger, I, 465.
26. Dim Delobson, pp. 15–45, *passim*.
27. It appears that the monarchs found fault with their district chiefs most readily when they had sons or other relatives in need of districts to govern. Since a possessor of the nam could not be deprived of it while alive, he had to be accused of some crime and executed. Koabga was replaced as Doulougou Naba by Lassanne Congo (called Naba Kouliga), a son of the Mogho Naba. On the other hand, when Naba Pusha of Nobere district fled rather than commit suicide or start a civil war, he was replaced by his own brother, who became Naba Soulougou.
28. Dim Delobson, p. 44.
29. Cheron, "Contribution," p. 655.

CHAPTER FIVE

1. Mangin, p. 25.
2. Mangin does not discuss rape, but reported that an "abductor" was beaten and put in irons. The girl was returned to her family, and if she gave birth to a child, it was killed (pp. 26–27).
3. Dim Delobson, p. 55.
4. Most of my informants state quite clearly that the district chiefs did not have the right to impose the death penalty, but could do so if they were discreet about it and did not take advantage of their subjects. But Dim Delobson states: "Contrary to what people generally believe, the Kombere—the chief of the *canton* [district]—also had the power of life and death over his subjects. How many persons have been put to death only because they were wealthy? How many village chiefs have been killed by the district chiefs in their territories without the Mogho Naba's intervention?" (pp. 55–56).
5. Dim Delobson (p. 56) insists that justice was free of charge, but added that

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plaintiffs gave the chiefs the traditional presents of a white cock and a sack containing from 200 to 1,000 cowries.

6. Mangin declares: "Most of the troubles which arise between one Mossi and another derive from their wives and from their debts; yet it may not be said, as a general rule, that women are unhappy or ill treated" (p. 39; see also p. 33). But cf. Dim Delobson, pp. 182, 185.

7. Mangin states that in Koupela a recidivous thief was "led to the market place with a rope around his neck; he was supplied with an abundance of meat and beer, and then clubbed to death at the foot of a tree" (p. 25). I doubt whether this practice was very widespread, because the Mossi were afraid to anger the market Tengkouga (earth spirits) by spilling blood in the market place.

8. Cf. Ruelle, pp. 679 ff.

9. Binger, I, 462.

10. But cf. Marc, p. 134.

CHAPTER SIX

1. Sa'di, pp. 45–46. The date of this battle and the location of Benka are unknown. However, Delafosse (II, 141) believes that it was located in the Massina region on the shores of Lake Debo.

2. Sa'di, pp. 112–13.

3. *Ibid.*, pp. 114–15.

4. *Ibid.*, pp. 121–23. The chronicle also states (p. 168) that these Mossi captives were installed in a special ward of Askia's capital, a practice apparently followed by all victorious Sudanese groups including the Mossi.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 173.

6. See Delafosse, II, 143–45, and Tauxier, *Le Noir du Yatenga*, pp. 88–91.

7. Crozat, p. 4822.

8. Binger, I, 502.

9. Almamy Samory Touré was the last empire-builder in the western Sudan. He was defeated by the French in 1898 and exiled to Gabon, where he died in 1900. See Binger, I, 84ff.

10. Crozat, p. 4837.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 4849.

12. Archives, Document 1G-315 (1903–1904).

13. Crozat, p. 4849.

14. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Soudan*, p. 463.

15. Mangin, p. 13.

16. Cheron, "Contribution," pp. 655, 675–76.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 673.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 676.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 654.

20. *Ibid.*, pp. 685–86.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 674.

22. Ruelle, p. 686.

23. Mangin, p. 62.

24. Binger, I, 473.

25. Cheron, "Contribution," p. 660.

26. Crozat, p. 4849.

27. Mangin, p. 12.

28. For example, when Mogho Naba Sanum's army attacked Boussouma, it made "such a rapid retreat" that Ligidi, the Boussouma Dim, could only counterattack the army's rear guard (Cheron, "Contribution," p. 676).

29. Archives, Document 15G-190 (1897–98).

30. Mangin, p. 12.

31. *Ibid.*

32. Dim Delobson, p. 21.

33. *Ibid.*, p. 29.

34. Cf. Southall (pp. 246–60) for a discussion of the "segmentary" state in Africa.

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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CHAPTER SEVEN

1. Dim Delobson, pp. 153ff.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 251–54.
3. Cheron, "Contribution," p. 674.
4. Crozat, p. 4849.
5. *Ibid.*
6. Skinner, "Trade and Markets," pp. 237–78.
7. Barth, III, 644–49.
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 202–4.
9. Dubois, pp. 282–92, 300.
10. Great Britain, Parliamentary papers: Cd. 788–27, No. 357, Acc. Papers, Vol. LXIV (1902).
11. Marc, p. 178.
12. Binger, I, 467.
13. Crozat, p. 4849.
14. Binger, I, 465.
15. Mangin, p. 23.
16. Dim Delobson, pp. 85–86.
17. Ruelle, p. 679.
18. Bovill, p. 244.
19. Gautier, p. 139; cf. Mangin, p. 112.
20. Cf. Sa'di, p. 168.
21. The chief of the Kamboinse was the only Mossi "chief" to possess a stool, which is indicative of an Akan origin. The Akan origin of this group is further supported by Koelle's evidence: a Mossi informant told him that the Mossi called the Ashanti "Kamboinse" (Koelle, p. 6).
22. Skinner, "The Mossi 'Pogsioure,'" pp. 20–22.
23. Cf. Ouédraogo and Prost, pp. 16–18.
24. Dim Delobson, p. 25.
25. Binger, I, 470.
26. *Ibid.*, pp. 502–4.
27. *Ibid.*, pp. 504–5.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 456.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 502.

CHAPTER EIGHT

1. Cf. Dim Delobson, p. 156. He speculates that the Mogho Naba himself sacrificed the animals in the presence of his senior wife and courtiers.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 157.
3. Tauxier (*Le Noir du Yatenga*, p. 379) reports that a comparable ceremony among the Yatenga Mossi was called the "Bega," and that in reality it was a Fulse ceremony "adopted by the Mossi." According to him, both the Fulse and the Mossi held this festival in order to obtain good harvests the following year, and made sacrifices to "the ancestors, to the Earth, and to God."
4. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Soudan*, p. 588.
5. Dim Delobson's description (pp. 148 ff) of the Tense differs somewhat from that given to me by my respondents. According to his version, the Tansoba played the role I have ascribed to the Larhalle Naba. Furthermore, he states that the Tense was held on Friday, an impossible fact since Saturday is the Mossi "day of the dead." In any case, all of my respondents insisted that Saturday, and not Friday, was the day on which the Tense was held. It is possible that Dim Delobson mistook the eve of the festival for its beginning, in which case his error is understandable. In most other respects our descriptions are not too different.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 152.
7. There is a widespread tradition in Mossi country that the Tenkodogo Naba made and still makes similar sacrifices at Kouroungoutenga and Sansabloga, two important earth shrines. There is a controversy about whether human sacrifices were ever offered there. The missionaries in the region claim they were. The Mossi deny this and accuse the missionaries of slander.

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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8. Cf. Marc, p. 156. 9. Cf. Fortes, pp. 258–71. 640

10. Skinner, "The Diffusion of Islam," pp. 659–69.

11. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Soudan*, pp. 585–86.

12. Dim Delobson, p. 205. 13. Crozat, p. 4820.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 4822. 15. *Ibid.*, p. 4835.

16. Binger, I, 452. 17. *Ibid.*, p. 456.

18. *Ibid.*, pp. 452–56.

19. Archives, Document 15G-190 (1897–98). Instructions left to Captain Scal by Destenave, June 1897.

CHAPTER NINE

1. Marc, p. 17.

2. Barth, III, 595. Although it is possible that the Wolof prince Bemoy did hear about the Mossi, he was mistaken about the name of their ruler. Interestingly enough, the title "Ogane" is not too dissimilar from Hogon, the title of head men among the Dogon (Habe or Kado) whom the Mossi had pushed into the hills of Bandiagara. Cf. Bascom, p. 24. [114] [174]

3. Barth, III, 606. 4. Bowdich, p. 180.

5. Dupuis, Appendix CVII. 6. Clapperton, II, 323.

7. Barth, III, 643–49. As cited earlier, Barth states that the Portuguese got reports about the Mossi in the year 1533 "from the wrong side, namely from Benin." This may not have been altogether "the wrong side," however, for Barth gives us data on caravans from Mossi country to Sansane Mango in Togoland that indicate how news about the Mossi might have traveled from the interior to Benin city in Nigeria.

8. Koelle, p. 6. Dixon, who seems to have been one of the few captured Mossi sold to the West, reports: "Mose is west of Gurma, east of Andemtenga, where a different language is spoken. Mose is also two days journey from Butmera, where the same language is spoken; four days from Bulega [Bolga tanga], the language still the same, and confederate with Kambonse, i.e. Asante; two days from Yaongo, with still the same language; six days from Bosanse which is at enmity with Mose and where people bore their lips, and often tie them together with grass, and whose language is different from Mose; four days from Busma also a different language, and in which country there is a very high mountain (Tanga) from which those who ascend never come back again [probably a reference to Plimpikou, the Mossi holy mountain]; three or four weeks from Kambonse, i.e. Asante. Kupeala is four days from Wardyga [Ouagadougou] the Mossi capital, whither the king of Asante often sent presents; and one month from Salak [Salaga], an Asante town, where they bring kola nuts." [131] [101] [197] [484]

9. Marc, p. 30.

10. Great Britain, Parliamentary papers xlvi, 1882.

11. The people of Nobere, Manga, and other districts surrounding Bere have traditions about Krause, who is remembered as the first white-skinned person ever seen in those parts. The color of his skin was attributed to the fact that, "like the fish," he had come out of the sea. [826]

12. Krause, pp. 92 ff. Although there is no evidence to this effect in the literature, it appears certain that Mossi government officials knew of Krause's visit. They treated most travelers in the following manner: "After entering a town the party is given in charge of a man usually termed 'housemaster.' It is his duty to exercise surveillance over the action of the stranger and to report the result to the authorities. . . . The trader conducts his business through his 'housemaster,' who usually makes a handsome gain by acting as middleman (G. E. Ferguson, quoted in Wolfson, p. 199). [574]

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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larger markets there were and are solid stalls which are built and tenanted by merchants. In the small district and village markets, these stalls are built out of millet stalks which offer little but protection against the noonday sun on market days. Men build these structures for their womenfolk and for themselves. Some of the shelters which are not used for trading serve as galleries where the young blades look out and comment on the passing scene. Others are used as meeting places by adult men who sit and discuss all sorts of affairs. Still others are used by the older men, who gather there to arrange marriages between their several families, wait for gifts from younger men who seek wives, or spend a great deal of time reminiscing about their youthful adventures. Those persons who do not have such shelters sit in the sun or use grass lean-tos as protection from the sun.

Except in the large towns, Mossi markets are held between the hours of 10:00 A.M. and 4:00 P.M. every fourth day. In the larger towns there are daily markets, but these remained unimportant until today when they serve a growing urban population. The capital city of Wagadougou now even has an "evening" market which opens about 4:00 P.M. and closes at about 9:00 P.M. In addition, numerous daily markets have sprung up in many of its wards. The three-day markets are, however, the traditional type, and they are still the most numerous through the country. By "three-day market" I mean that a market is held one day, not held over the two following days, and then held again on the next day. These markets also have a 21-day cycle from one *Ragakasanga* or *Rag'kasanga* ("larger market") on a Friday to another *Rag'kasanga* on a Friday three weeks later, a total of seven markets between the two important ones. The people give no adequate explanation for the observance of the three-day cycle or the 21-day cycle. One man did suggest that it took the women three days to prepare beer and this was why markets could not be held more often, but even he did not speculate about the 21-day cycle.[10] This same man did point out, however, that the cycle made little difference to persons who really liked to go to market, since it was possible for

(10) Zahan (1954 : 373) apparently found one of the few Mossi informants with a mystical bent; he reports that the seven three-day cycles of markets in the 21-day cycle have the following significance for the Yatenga people: "The first of these numbers explains the cycle of the person (7 symbolizes the complete person: male [to which the Mossi assign the number 3] and female [to which they assign the number 4], the second that of the creation." He believes that each market starts a new cycle, a beginning and an end: "the seventh market signifies the most perfect equilibrium: the one which exists between the universe, mankind, and the divinity." In a footnote he suggests that this sybolism is not too different among the Dogon, who are "ideologically and geographically close to the Mossi." Peter Hammond, who worked in Yatenga, could not find this kind of symbolism.

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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because, even though many of the aspects of Mossi culture described here are still in existence, Mossi society is changing ever more rapidly. Many old culture traits that I found there as late as 1955 had all but disappeared when I returned in 1960. Not to recognize this fact in preparing this study would have laid the ground for the criticism that anthropologists ignore the changes taking place around them in order to concentrate upon the past.

My own interest in the Mossi grew out of an early curiosity about the cultures and societies of Africa. It was born of my parents' concern over Ethiopia's struggle to remain free and nurtured by the writings of Mr. Marcus A. Garvey, Dr. W. E. B. Dubois, and Professors Melville J. Herskovits and E. Franklin Frazier. These factors, together with the help and encouragement of my relatives and friends, ultimately led me to choose a career in anthropology and African studies. I am grateful to Professor John L. Landgraf of New York University, who first taught me the elements of anthropology and thus provided me with the basic tools for understanding human societies. To Dr. Gene Weltfish and Professor Joseph H. Greenberg of Columbia University I owe a further debt of gratitude for having directed my first studies of African cultures. To them, and to Professors Conrad M. Arensberg, Morton H. Fried, and Charles Wagley, also of Columbia University, I owe whatever skill and competence in social-science research I may possess. I am grateful to the Ford Foundation for financing the field work on which this study is based, and to the Arts and Science Research Fund Committee of New York University for help in defraying the cost of preparing the manuscript for publication.

I am deeply indebted to the Mossi people for having permitted me to live among them for fourteen months. M. François Bouda, district chief of Manga, and Naba Boulga, district chief of Nobere, not only welcomed me but kindly consented to answer my innumerable questions about the nature of their political and other institutions. The Djiba Naba, who subsequently became Mogho Naba Kougri, also encouraged me in my task, and so did Dr. Joseph Conombo. Without the help of M. Beta Nyissa, my friend and interpreter, field work would have been difficult. He not only explained many aspects of Mossi culture to me, but put me in touch with persons who could answer my questions, and taught me the rudiments of the Mossi language.

I must also thank my good friend Mme. Ouennam Pousde for helping me to understand the point of view of the Mossi women. This kind lady never ceased to be amused at the attempts of this *yagenga* (brother's son) to participate as fully as possible in Mossi life. M. Frederic Guierma en-

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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not enter Mossi territory. Nevertheless, he obtained rather precise information on the important caravan routes leading from Timbuktu through the Mossi trade centers of Ouagadougou, Kaya, Yako, and Koupela, down to Salaga and other towns in Ghana, and even across to Sansane Mango in Togoland. His data on the Mossi are invaluable:

> The whole triangle interposed between the Niger toward the north, and the country of the Eastern Mandingoes or Wangarawa toward the south, appears to be inhabited by a single race of people whose language, although they are divided into several states and nations, nevertheless appears originally to have been the same stock. It is very probable that this race in ancient times occupied the whole upper course of the Niger, and that this tract may have been wrested from it in later times by the Songhai and the Mandingoes, especially that section of the latter which is generally called Bambara. These are the Gourma toward the N.E., the Tombo toward the N.W., and between them the Mossi. . . . The strongest among these pagan kingdoms five centuries ago, and even at the present moment, is that of the Mossi, although the country is split into a number of small principalities, almost totally independent of each other, and paying only some slight homage to the ruler of the principality of Woghodogo.[7]

Europe learned more about the Mossi from Sigismund Koelle, who visited Sierra Leone in 1854. His informant was one Andrew Dixon, who had lived in Koupela before being captured and sold into slavery. He furnished information on the location of the Mossi, their wars with the Busansi, and their important commercial and political relations with the Ashanti.[8] Koelle's report, taken in conjunction with the reports of Dupuis, Bowdich, Clapperton, and Barth, shows that the Ashanti, like the Hausa and other coastal peoples, were protecting their trade when they attempted to isolate the peoples of the interior from the Europeans. But as soon as the British defeated the Ashanti in the war of 1873–74, the Sudan was opened and adventurers poured in. In 1877 and 1878, two missionaries of the Basel Mission visited the northern regions of Ghana, and subsequently gave a good description of Mossi commerce in that area.[9] Lonsdale, who visited Salaga in 1881, found among the traders in the market "the Mossi with his cattle, sheep, and slaves—these latter, generally Gurunsi, are not exposed for sale in the street or market, but can be seen where the owner resides."[10]

The activities of the various European nations in West Africa and other regions at this time led to military and diplomatic difficulties, which the Berlin Conference of 1884–85 was convened to resolve. Agreement was reached to assign "spheres of influence" to the various European nations, to regulate trade, and to provide for arbitration between rival claimants of conquered or "protected" territories. In West Africa, this meant the end

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and a bit peeved at not being able to put my idea into practice. I next sought the advice and consolation of an elder noble who listened quite calmly and then said: "The customs of these kafirs (heathens) are foolish." Being a Moslem, my friend was very often critical of the pagans, and could be relied upon to explain why their customs were "foolish." He said that in former days the Raga Naba would have climbed a tree and announced to the crowd any message from the district chief. Moreover, he was the custodian of all lost articles and restored them to their owners. The Moslem said that my request could not be granted because there was no Raga Naba, and that probably there would never be another. When the French first banned the institution, the local chief dismissed the Raga Naba. With the passage of years, however, the market became so dangerous that the chief tried to appoint another ex-serf to the job. This man soon died, and his successor died shortly after being appointed. Since that time the chief has made no attempt to name a new market chief.

With this new knowledge I called my aide and inquired from him whether this information was true and if so, why did he not tell me the true state of affairs. His reply was that he did not wish to say that the market was bad because the local people believed that they had solved the problem of the lack of a Raga Naba. When the last Raga Naba died, the chief decided not to name a new one, but in order to placate the market *tengkouga*, he ordered his *tengsoba* to make sacrifices to it. It was believed that these sacrifices would be acceptable as long as the officiant did not bear the title of Raga Naba. The other functions of the Raga Naba, such as collecting goods for the chief and preserving peace in the market, were taken over by the Kos Naba and another servant of the chief. However, the Kos Naba had to be careful lest he overstep his authority in such a way as would acquaint the *tengkouga* with the real situation. In my case, the chief was acting by trying to get the Kos Naba to acquaint the people with my loss in as inconspicuous a manner as possible. The consensus was that the Kos Naba would have risked his life had he made any kind of announcement to the market people, because the *tengkouga* would have thought that he was the new Raga Naba, and if not contented with the people would have killed him. Under these circumstances, I withdrew my request. I discovered later that my pen was not lost but had been in the hut all the time.

Those chiefs who have succeeded in retaining their market officials even secretly have been able to maintain their control over public behavior there. The Mossi are fairly law-abiding despite the persistence among them of a warrior tradition. Every man who goes to market, or anywhere for that matter, usually carries a baton over his

1: Delobsom I-5 (no date) 1933 FA28 Mossi FA28

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The Empire of the Mogho Naba, Customs of the Mossi of Upper Volta

[L'Empire du Mogho-Naba, Coutumes des Mossi de la Haute-Volta]

by A.A. Dim Delobsom

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[46] Chapter 3

Political, Administrative, and Judicial Organization of the Mossi Empire

I. Political and Administrative Organization

643 The Mossi empire of Ouagadougou was governed prior to the period of French occupation by a supreme chief, the Mogho Naba, who was revered by all his subjects as a "god" and whose territory, in the minds of his people, had no limits. He had the power of life and death over all his subjects.

[192] The word mogho means "country of the Mossi," but by extension it also means "the world." Thus, in this sense the Mogho Naba was regarded as the master of the world.

643 631 It is said that he had under his rule 333 chiefs, naba, among whom were his ministers, the three sogon'kassemsé (great servitors), and some forty petty chiefs called kougzindba, which refers to the heaps of stones designating the place of each minister or petty naba in the emperor's court.

643 177 The authority of the Mogho Naba over his vassals. In spite of the claims made by a colonial official who was trying to free the canton chiefs of one of the administrative districts of the colony from the authority of the Mogho Naba, the emperor's power never was merely nominal. If it has become so, it is a consequence of the intervention of French [47] administrative authority in the politics of the country -- an intervention which has resulted in assigning too much power to certain chiefs.

643 669 I do not mean to imply that before French penetration into the country there were not real conflicts, wars or mere skirmishes (1),

1. In Chapter 1 [not translated]we described in great detail the war waged by the Mogho Nabas Sanum and Wobgo against Lallé. We said also that Sanum warred with the Boussouma Naba and with Boulsa.

but the chiefs who tried by these means to free themselves from the emperor's authority were usually punished for their temerity.

000 Ministers and officials in the court of the emperor of the Mossi. We shall provide a list of the persons making up the emperor's court in a later chapter.

Functions of the Ministers

645 The four ministers, Ouidi Naba, Larallé Naba, Gounga Naba, and Baloum Naba, were charged with the nomination of the kombemba (plural of kombéré, vassal chief), subject to the emperor's approval. At the present time they retain the same prerogatives subject to ratification by the administrative authorities. These ministers further assisted the emperor in deciding important matters whenever he called upon them, and they transmitted the orders of the Mogho Naba to [48] his vassals. Today the Mogho 643 Naba is hardly concerned with the regulation of affairs, since these 648 are dealt with by his ministers or by the French authorities. However, the leading court dignitaries always submit to him matters of any importance, they keep him informed about all matters of general interest, and, finally, they report to him any interviews which they may have had with the administrator of the circle, who represents the government of the colony [Ed., the circle (Fr., cercle) is the largest French administrative unit below the colony (Fr., colonie)].

Organization of Territorial Control

634 Each of the emperor's ministers had authority -- we shall 845 presently see under what conditions -- over a group of cantons [Ed., the canton (Fr., canton) is a traditional Mossi administrative unit, containing a number of villages, and several cantons together form a province; the native districts were incorporated into the French administrative system to some extent]. A kombéré naba was head of each canton. Originally and up to the time of Naba Sanum's reign, the Baloum Naba commanded the dimbissi (canton chiefs who were descendants of the recent Mogho Nabas), while the other cantons, except the most thickly populated and hence the richest, such as Zittenga, Manga, etc., were distributed

634 among the other ministers. The rich and important cantons
645 were entrusted to the Kamsaogo Naba, chief eunuch. This was
[839] because the emperor wanted to be sure that he would recover the fortune left by this minister at his death. Since the latter was merely the guardian of the king's wives, he had no legitimate heirs. The eunuch appointed to replace him had to establish his own personal fortunes. Only the horses or women which the late minister might have given [49] during his lifetime to persons in his section were left with their owners. [Ed., Mossi villages are
[621] divided into sections (Fr., quartier), which are really hamlets containing several households or compounds. These sections are indigenous, not colonial subdivisions.]

Powers of the Ministers over the Vassal Chiefs of the Mogho Naba

634 It would be a mistake to think that before the French occu-
645 pation the ministers had any great authority over the canton chief.
642 Actually, the ministers' role, as has been pointed out, was to act as intermediaries between the emperor and the canton chiefs. They could not, however, under any right or pretext, intervene in canton affairs, since the kombéré was the only lord in the area whose command had been conferred upon him as an appanage by the Mogho Naba.

That is why it has been possible for canton chiefs who were dissatisfied with the minister under whose rule they found themselves to report, henceforth, to another minister. Furthermore, the Mogho Naba saw no objection to this. The Mossi expression,
[638] Gansobend'ka sambiri n'tont vigri yé ("hospitality is not like kinship; you can evade it") amply illustrates the accuracy of the
[651] foregoing. If it is further noted that before the French occupation the naba came to Ouagadougou only once a year to pay their respects to the emperor and to bring him annual tribute, one will readily understand the insignificance of the ministers' authority over them.

This does not mean, of course, that it was possible to [50] do without any intermediaries, but rather that it was possible to choose them freely. In any case, one of the incentives to

634 submission was based solely on the fact that although the em-
645 peror named new canton chiefs, he was too remote to know any-
642 thing about the children of deceased naba, so, in order to make sure during his own lifetime that his eldest son would succeed him, the kombéré affected some respect toward the emperor's ministers and made gifts to the principal dignitaries at Ouagadougou.

Present situation. It is my belief that the present political
631 and administrative reorganization, which dates back about eighteen
648 years (1912), has taken no account whatsoever of the existing hierarchy of ministers in the distribution of territorial control. Thus, it has come about that a given minister has to pass through numerous villages which are under the authority of another minister in order to reach his own administrative area. In addition, if one examines the situation closely, it seems that the sole aim of the administration ["administration" always refers to French administration] at that time was to reward certain young and capable ministers at the expense of those who were too old.

In point of fact, however, one must go back to 1908 to find the causes of such a state of disorganization. At that time the late Larrhallé Naba, Pawitraogo, a province chief, was sent off on a mission to Koudougou, and his vacated office had to be filled. Later on the emperor dismissed the Kamsogho Naba [51] and replaced him with an "incompetent," so the local administration decided to entrust the province to a more qualified minister.

It would be highly desirable if a new reorganization were put into effect which would 1) progressively eliminate certain insignificant cantons by combining them into larger units; 2) gather the so-called independent villages into cantons; and 3) grant to province chiefs identical material rewards. This last can only be achieved by an equitable allotment of the cantons. The French administration has granted equal salaries to all province chiefs and, as a consequence, has established an equality which did not formerly exist. Three of these officials are now educated men; they enjoy equal consideration, have the same needs, and alike perform valuable services. They should all be accorded equal advantages if jealousy and discontent are to be avoided.

631 Finally, to return to the kombemba, it should be stated that the vassals of the Mogho Naba at Koudougou and Kaya enjoy a

631 certain amount of independence since they can communicate with the circle commanders with no intermediary other than the interpreter, an indispensable adjunct as long as the chiefs do not attend the [French] schools. On the other hand, the authority of the vassal chiefs still attached to the administrative district of Ouagadougou is, if not entirely lost, at least greatly diminished.

Indeed, their action is thwarted by that of the ministers, the province chiefs, from whom [52] they receive orders, sometimes falsified or amplified by ambitious intermediaries.

It must certainly be conceded that such a state of affairs may have -- it has had -- an unfortunate effect on the progress of these naba. This is an evil which should be remedied without delay.

636 645 565 The local administration at the very beginning made the serious error of failing to take into account the importance of the canton chiefs, most of whom (see the list in the appendix [not translated]) are descendants of the Mogho Naba. On the other hand, virtually all the ministers and other court officials, despite the respect one owes them and the privileges they enjoy, are of humble origin (see Chapter 4 for the origins of the Ouidi Naba and the Larrhallé Naba, for example).

The Petty Kings (Dima) in the Past and Today

643 631 As has been noted in the introductory chapter [not translated], some of the chiefs have gradually freed themselves from the authority of the Mogho Naba and have assumed the title of dima, that is, "king." These chiefs are the Boussouma Naba of the Kaya circle, the Konquizitenga Naba of the Kougoudou circle, the Yako Naba of the Kougoudou circle (Yako subdivision), and the Riziam Naba of the Ouahigouya circle.

These chiefs were, in a sense, independent "rulers," since the emperor's suzerainty over them was so weak [53] that they enjoyed almost complete independence. Some of them, notably the Boussouma Naba and the Yako Naba, have authority over canton chiefs whom they invest in the same way the emperor does.

643 These dima maintain courts which with some exceptions, are like-
631 that of the emperor of the Mossi.

They were appointed directly by their own ministers; the emperor took no effective role in the proceedings.

Today. The local administration has made these petty kings into simple province chiefs and sometimes -- as happened to the Konquizitenga Naba -- into mere canton chiefs.

Respect due the Mogho Naba. Each year the petty dima sent numerous gifts to the Mogho Naba (horses, cattle, and cowries).

643 An error. The Tenkodogo Naba (1), contrary [54] to what

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1. It should not be assumed that the Tenkodogo Naba controls all the cantons in the administrative district of Tenkodogo.

Several Boussancé [Busansi] cantons were ruled by the Mogho Naba before the French occupation. Out of the 14 cantons which now make up the province called Boussanga, 11 were under the emperor's jurisdiction and their chiefs were appointed by him. Like all vassal chiefs, they were required to visit the emperor once a year and to bring him annual tribute.

Since Tenkodogo has been changed first to a subdivision and then to an autonomous circle, the Boussancé chiefs involved have been appointed directly by the local administration with the consent of the population; the Mogho Naba was no longer consulted. After trouble arose over the appointment of a canton chief, the Mogho Naba had to intervene, and from this affair arose the necessity of putting a relative of the emperor at the head of those cantons organized

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as provinces. The choice fell upon a uterine brother of Naba Kom, Moustapha Kongo.

He was recalled in 1930 after ruling for only three years. His dismissal was certainly due to errors committed in the performance of his duties, but it was also caused by the fact that the Boussancé had been independent too long to take kindly to a master.

Thus, as was pointed out at the beginning of this chapter, the local administration has interfered too much with the organization of the Mossi empire. The position of the Mogho Naba has been completely distorted, and his prestige diminished. This is why the ill-informed official to whom we have already alluded could state that the authority of the Mogho Naba over his vassal chiefs was merely nominal.

A list of Boussancé cantons under the authority of the Mogho Naba follows: (1) Niaogo, (2) Niarba, (3) Lenga, (4) Gon Boussougou, (5) Komtoéga, (6) Beguedo, (7) Ouanragou, (8) Sanogo, (9) Toalla, (10) Zourga, (11) Yakala.

643 has been accepted up to now, is a true king in his territory and as such is absolutely independent of the Mogho Naba at Ouagadougou, to the same degree as the head of the state of Yatenga (Ouahigouya) and the head of Fada N'Gourma.

As was pointed out in an earlier chapter [not translated], the Tenkodogo Naba is the descendant of Naba Zoungrana, the son of Ouedraogo, and is consequently the "elder" of the Mogho Naba, who is a descendant of Naba Oubri, the founder of the Mossi dynasty of Ouagadougou.

The Boulsa Naba, a direct descendant of the kourita [representative after death] of [55] Naba Oubri, is not a dima but merely a kombéré. He has a vassal, to be sure, the chief of Koupéla in the circle of Tenkodogo who is now considered a province chief, but the Boulsa Naba himself is a vassal of the Mogho Naba.

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II. Military Organization

701 An army, properly speaking, with cadres and hierarchies, did not exist among the Mossi.

721 In the event of war, the Tansoba or Tampsoba (war minister) notified the canton chiefs who promptly assembled with all their able-bodied men and as many horsemen as possible.

705 The villages were charged with feeding the soldiers.

III. Judicial Organization

692 693 Justice was rendered in conformity with local customs which had been handed down from generation to generation and according to local practice.

1. By village chiefs, assisted by some of the elders, for petty affairs, pilfering, and insults.

2. The canton chief, assisted by his court dignitaries and the minister, ruled on matters concerning theft, adultery, and bodily attacks, as well as on other matters.

3. The Mogho Naba took cognizance of all matters of general interest, especially with crimes of assassination and murder. In theory, he could by himself pronounce the death sentence on the [565] nakomsé [descendants of Mogho Naba]. Contrary to general belief, a [56] kombéré (canton chief) also had the power of life and death over his subjects. How many individuals have been put to 661 death merely because they were wealthy! How many village chiefs have been killed by the canton chiefs over their territories without any intervention by the Mogho Naba! The nakomsé could 565 be executed, however, only for very serious crimes, such as 684 adultery with a woman of the nobility. The guilty man was led 762 into the bush by old nakomsé; they gave him a rope with which he was expected to hang himself and thus expiate his crime.

694 Justice was free; no fee was expected or assessed. The plaintiff, however, customarily presented the naba with a white or light gray 431 rooster, accompanied by the traditional satchel containing from 200 to 1,000 cowries.

[57] Chapter 4

The Court of the Mogho Naba. Tribute and Payments Due. Obligations of Mossi Subjects to their Naba.

Morning Honors Paid to the Emperor of the Mossi

644 The council of the emperor of the Mossi is held every morning in front of an antechamber called zango which opens out upon a very large courtyard.

831 The Mossi have for a long time regarded the sun as a "god."
776 Wend'pous yan, "God shows himself," refers to the rising of
643 the sun, but it is used in a figurative sense to refer to the emergence of the Mogho Naba. This illustrates the regard held by the Mossi people for their chief since he is compared to the star of daylight and thus to a "god."

643 The Mogho Naba appears each morning dressed in an ample red robe and with a red gourmousga (a kind of burnoose) folded and
292 thrown over his shoulders. On his head he wears a cap, a fez, topped with a wazourfou sebré (literally, "silver paper" [streamers], that is to say, silver amulet). Red represents the light that comes
[822] with the appearance of the sun, while the silver on the cap represents the brilliance of the star itself.

644 Before the time set for the start of the ceremony, the three sogon'kassemsé (great servitors) bring into the courtyard the [58] cushion, nagpouré, and all the other insignia of office. As soon as
[201] the Mogho Naba appears, they arise and make a snapping sound with thumb and index finger to indicate that the naba is coming.

"Wend'pous yan" is also cried out by the gagando and luinsé
[533] (drummers) as soon as His Majesty sits down. The Bend'Naba [chief drummer] is the only one who does not beat his drum; instead, he rubs his finger back and forth over the waxed part of the drum head to imitate the roar of the lion. Four or five young men bearing loaded rifles take their places in front of the emperor.

Honors are rendered to the Mogho Naba in the following order.

1. The Samandé Naba, Baloum Naba, Wedranga Naba, and Simandé Nabila, as well as the Zusoabin'kassanga (chief eunuch and guardian of the emperor's household), are the first to greet His Majesty and to inquire about his health.

644 2. Next come the Ouidi Naba, the Larralé Naba, the Kamsaogo Naba, the Gounga Naba, the Nemdo Naba, and the Poé Naba.

[527 788] 3. On Friday and other Moslem holidays, the imam who represents Islam at Ouagadougou comes to give the doua, a kind of benediction which consists of reciting verses from the Koran, in the morning as well as in the evening.

Lebeg'sonre. As soon as these honors have been completed, the Mogho Naba goes back into his house to put on a less dazzling costume. Shortly thereafter he once more returns to the courtyard.

[59] Next the Baloum Naba and his retinue present their respects as described above. The Ouidi Naba and his followers are not required to do so unless they have foreigners to present to His Majesty.

[533] Then, the Bend'Naba, gangando, and luinsé (drummers) and the doudissi (violin players) play together in praise of the Mogho Naba.

It should be noted that the Mogho Naba speaks to no one before his morning appearance. It is not until he has finished his ceremonial duties and returned to his apartments that his tampa (sisters) greet him.

644 273 Before the officials and ministers of the court return to their homes and as soon as the Mogho Naba has withdrawn, the Sogon'-kassanga, that is, the ranking servitor, offers them some dam (known as dolo or fermented millet beer).

1. One canari [jar] of dam is offered to the Baloum Naba, who is obligated to give a gourdful to the Zusoaba, one to the Wedkim Naba (chief groom), and one to the Soré Naba (Bendré, "chief of the path").

2. A canari of dam is then offered to the Ouidi Naba who is obligated to give a gourdful to the Poé Naba (chief confessor for the wives and pages of the Mogho Naba) and one koré [gourd] to the Bend'Naba. He drinks the remainder with the other ministers in his retinue.

[276] 3. On Fridays and holidays, kola nuts, gouré are offered to the imam after he has given his doua and before the Mogho Naba goes to renew his pledge of loyalty [60] to France before the representative of the Republic in Upper Volta.

644 431 The Mogho Naba spends the rest of the day receiving individuals who have come to see him, accepting poussoum (gifts to the chief) and giving dam, gouré, foutou (garments), etc., and listening to the praises of his courtiers.

Mogho Naba Na Tough'la, "The Mogho Naba Goes to La" (1)

1. A dependent village in the administrative district of Yako, Koudougou Circle.

173 644 [262] Tradition relates that a certain Mogho Naba, Naba Warga, had a favorite, the only one who knew that his preferred food was léla (fruit of the léhinga or wild plum tree). It should be added that ordinarily anything might be chosen as a favorite food, and it should not be supposed that the Mogho Naba eats only the best foods. Obviously he does not lack choice morsels, but he cannot be expected to like everything. One day this woman asked leave to visit her home at La and failed to return. The Magho Naba, tired of waiting and missing his favorite food, had his horse saddled one morning and announced that he wished to go and join his wife. His ministers begged him to stay at home and asked him to put off his departure until the next day... Every morning the preparations for the departure were repeated and always there was the same pleading, up to the time of the ruler's death. His son, [61] who succeeded him, chose to follow his example. The following paragraph describes the manner in which this custom was still practiced only a few years ago.

[492] When the Mogho Naba appears in the morning, one of his horses, partially harnessed, is brought into the courtyard bearing a saddle with silver stirrups, but with the girth unbuckled. After the Mogho Naba has responded to the salutations of his ministers and the whole court and has dealt with some minor matters, he declares that he is going to La. The court officials, especially the Kamsaongo Naba, appear before him and say: "Sire, order them to unsaddle your horse; you shall go tomorrow." The Mogho Naba of course agrees to this, but he retires to his apartments rather

173 abruptly, as though he were somewhat provoked by this obstacle
644 to what he wants to do. At the same time the saddle is removed and the horse returned to the stables.

It should also be noted that every morning the pougtiéma (first wife) orders a basket and hamper to be filled with all the things needed for a journey, intending to accompany her husband to Là.

As soon as the Mogho Naba postpones his journey to the following day, the pougtiéma, duly warned, unpacks her basket.

Today, the breath of civilization has blown upon these ancient practices, and the present Mogho Naba merely sees his horse, which is walked up and down while he is receiving his ministers. The animal is at once taken back to the stables when the [62] king returns to his palace without having tried to mount it, much less having heard any entreaties from the Kamsaongo Naba.

Koaga Basgo

644 At sundown each day the Baloum Naba goes to the residence
789 of the Mogho Naba for the koaga. Only the Zusobin-Kassanga (chief eunuch) and the Sogon'kassanga (ranking servitor) assist at this performance. The koaga is a sort of earthenware basin into which is put a bit of fire and ... mystery. The head servitor places the koaga in the courtyard in front of the antechamber and blows on the fire, which quickly blazes up and then dies down. Meanwhile, the bendré (drummer) has been rubbing his hand back and forth over the waxed portion of the drumhead.

During the whole performance, no one is allowed either to enter or leave the house of the Mogho Naba. Anyone coming from
[687] the outside is not allowed to pass through the courtyard during the proceedings and anyone caught watching the koaga basgo was severely punished by the lash or even executed. When the performance is over, the Zusoba and the Baloum Naba, each of whom was seated at a particular place, arise, then approach and greet each other, and wait to be served some dam before separating for the rest of the night. They sometimes also salute the Mogho Naba before returning to their quarters.

[63]
Ministers and Officials of the Court of the Mogho Naba

644 645 Ministers. (a) Ouidi Naba (literally, "chief of the horses," or superintendent of His Majesty's stables). In the old days the Ouidi Naba had the duty of choosing the color and kind of horse suitable for the Mogho Naba. He usually had charge of the horses of deceased chiefs.

202 644 If a kombéré (canton chief) owned horses during his lifetime, upon his death one of them is sent to the Mogho Naba in Ouagadougou as bearer of the sad news. Branches of the tahnga (karite [or shea] tree), wound with white rope, are tied to the horse's tail.

[64] The horse thus presented to the Mogho Naba is then handed over to one of the representatives of the Ouidi Naba who, after cutting loose the branches with a knife and leaving them in the courtyard of the Mogho Naba, leads the animal to Ouidin [section of the Ouidi Naba].

Unless the Mogho Naba gives the horse to someone, the Ouidi Naba is free to dispose of it.

645 (b) Larrhallé Naba, second minister of the Mogho Naba. Formerly he accompanied the Tansoba or Tampsoba to war.

In the section where the Larrhallé Naba now lives, there were once enormous trees whose leaves were constantly astir. When he was made a minister, the Larrhallé Naba said that he wished to dwell at the place "where the leaves on the trees are always astir" (tisse vand'sin y a lag, lag zighin wan). From this came the name of Larrhallé, which designates the section.

(c) Gounga Naba, third minister (1). His section stands in a

645 173 1. Originally the Gounga Naba was the prime minister, and the title was his by right since he was a companion of Naba Oubri. One day, as he was attending to a natural need, he met a very handsome young man and offered his friendship to him; the latter accepted. Later he presented the boy to Naba Oubri who adopted him, settled him at court, and put him in charge of the royal stables. The Gounga Naba then said

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to the Mogho Naba: "Since I have come to you, give the first rank to this man. I will show him what he must do to please you. He will be the Ouidi Naba."

A man from Tansobongo, having heard that the Ouidi Naba was living in the greatest ease, came to see him. He, too, was a handsome youth. He was presented to the Mogho Naba (Naba Oubri) by the Gounga Naba who proposed the young man's appointment as second minister, the Larrhallé Naba, and reserved for himself the post of third minister.

So it came about that the Gounga Naba is the emperor's third minister.

645 place where there were once many goumsé (gounga, silk-cotton tree); hence, his name.

He is a brother-in-arms of the Tansoba and always accom-
[126] panied him to war, where he chose death rather than defeat, especially if the Tansoba had been killed.

644 (d) Baloum Naba, the chief steward of the palace and chief servitor of the Mogho Naba. He never goes to war, but remains always at the side of the Mogho Naba. It is his duty to carry out
[181] [65] sacrifices, such as killing the chickens or livestock offered to the manes or to the spirits when such sacrifices are prescribed by the soothsayers or other charlatans for the health and well-being of the Mogho Naba.

(e) Kamsaogho Naba, formerly accompanied the Tansoba to
[839] war. The Kamsaogho Naba is a eunuch, and for this reason he is commonly called Mogho Naba na poug'tiéma, "first wife of the Mogho Naba."

Other personages (not ministers). (a) Samandé Naba, in charge of all of the people in the outer courtyard of the Mogho Naba and a brother-in-arms of the Larrhallé Naba.

644 (b) Poé Naba, formerly the confessor for the wives and pages
687 of the Mogho Naba. His duty, carried out by magical practices,
661 was to denounce those wives or persons guilty of treason or of

644 attempted adultery. This practice (poéré) found many victims,
687 and its suppression by the French was a real service to the Mossi,
661 who were formerly murdered for a trifle. An ogling glance at a chief's wife was punishable by death. A man who met one of the wives of the Mogho Naba on the road was executed along with the wife. If one met a napagha [royal wife], he left the path and took to the bush. The woman herself would run off and return to the road only when she was sure that the man was a long way off.

Such is naturally no longer the case, and the wives of the Mogho Naba on their way to the market at [66] Ouagadougou no longer expect not to be looked at or even jostled. I hasten to add, however, that the Mossi still retain great respect for them and will even swallow serious insults, such as tampiri, "bastard," from a napagha if they are so unlucky as to offend them.

644 (c) Daporé Naba, chief of the section of the free or house
683 slaves. It was formerly the duty of the Daporé Naba and his followers to massacre any pages or other convicted persons whose execution had been ordered by the Mogho Naba.

644 (d) Bend'Naba, chief of the drummers of the Mogho Naba.

(e) Soré Naba (literally, "chief of the path"), the drummer who always accompanies the warriors and who, therefore, even in time of peace, is allotted a horse.

644 If the enemy appears to be winning during a battle, the Soré
726 Naba kindles the courage of the warriors of the Mogho Naba and constantly asks for a head, m'data zougou. This means that he is asking each warrior to forget himself and to think only of victory. In order to have a victory, the enemy must suffer such losses that they decide either to retreat or to surrender. Thus, the expression m'data zougou implies ruthless slaughter.

701 (f) Tansoba or Tampsoba, the war chief. The Tansoba of the Mogho Naba lives in a small village, Moussa, in the province of the Baloum Naba.

701 [67] When there is friction between the Mogho Naba and one
687 of his vassals and there seems to be no hope of agreement, the Mogho Naba sends to the Tansoba for logdo (warriors armed with arrows). The Tansoba at once proceeds to Ouagadougou and stops at Baoghin. The emperor assembles his ministers and the principal dignitaries of his court and says to them: "I never thought that chief X, to whom I myself gave the pougla (red fez) would dare to

701 oppose me. I therefore demand that his fez be returned to me."
687 To take away the fez of a naba is to dethrone him and reduce him to the level of his subjects.

The court officials, including the Tansoba, at once send emissaries to the chief at fault, asking him to choose between suicide (some take a poison called sounadré, while others kill themselves with a poisoned arrow) and war with the Mogho Naba.

If the chief is not prepared for such a summons, he kills himself, and the envoys return with the news.

669 If, on the other hand, he declares that he wants pouwega, that
701 is, war and a noble death, he sends back the representatives of the ministers. A few days later, with drums beating and the Tansoba, chief of the army, at its head, the whole warrior band appears before his walls.

The Tansoba sends the Samandé Naba to the chief to ask him to confirm his declaration of war. If the naba still wants war, he usually replies: "Ya yingri bala la ka sakénian."

The Tansoba withdraws, sending word to the chief [68] to expect him back on a stated day (seven or eight days later); this period of time will enable the chief to assemble his warriors also. When the day arrives, it is a merciless battle, a massacre.

727 Often the forces of the Mogho Naba are victorious, and in that event the slaves, livestock, and other property go to those who seized them. Only the corpses belong to the Tansoba.

701 If an arrow, even a poisoned one, wounds the Tansoba, he
577 must under no circumstances pull it out. Indeed, he must often endure thirst and hunger, and it is only when he is at rest in an enclosed place that the arrows are removed from his body. It should
[789] be noted that since the Tansoba's costume is virtually covered with amulets and other charms, he is not very likely to be wounded seriously by an arrow. This is not, of course, to belittle his bravery and composure in the face of danger, since he is expected
[762] never to retreat and, if the enemy is victorious, often prefers to kill himself rather than to report a defeat to the Mogho Naba.

644 There are, in addition to the foregoing, a great many petty naba whose role is not clearly defined and of whom it seems needless to speak.

Customary Payments by the Mossi to their Chiefs

643 651 To the Mogho Naba. In former times, before the coming of the French, the kombemba (canton chiefs) [69] and the nakomsé (descendants of Mogho Naba) were all required to come to Ouagadougou once a year to pay their respects to the Mogho Naba on this occasion to present gifts to him (cattle, horses, sheep, cowries, and loads of millet).

For all practical purposes, this amounted to a fixed fee which varied in amount, of course, with the resources of the contributors (canton chiefs and nakomsé) and the number of subjects that the administration entrusted to the leaders.

Although the horses, cattle, and sheep were personally contributed by the kombéré, the cowries and millet were furnished by their Mossi subjects. The canton chief set the amounts of cowries and grain due from each village according to the number of its inhabitants.

The assessment was usually 100 cowries for a married man and 50 for a bachelor (adult). The payment in millet was 10 baskets, each averaging 40 kilograms.

Likewise, a kind of fee was paid annually to the Djiba Naba, crown price, in cowries and livestock. This was done to stay in the good graces of his father, the emperor.

643 651 178 Nowadays the canton chiefs (kombemba), who come to Ouagadougou more often than formerly for important feasts and other events, never return to their lands without paying their respects to the Mogho Naba and giving him the traditional gifts (cowries and livestock). Gifts are now made more often, but they no longer have [70] the same importance. As a general rule, certain canton chiefs still require their people to give small amounts of cowries when they visit Ouagadougou for the celebration of July 14. Some chiefs, however, either because they fear penalties from the administration or because they think that their people are already heavily burdened, prefer to give the little they have personally acquired by selling produce (cotton, yams, etc.) or trading.

Some of the vassal chiefs of the Mogho Naba, who, however, are no longer subject to Ouagadougou since the division of the

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651 Mossi circle into several administrative districts, still continue to
178 make substantial annual gifts to the Mogho Naba (cowries, cattle, and a considerable amount of grain, millet and rice).

634 Payments Due the Kombemba (canton chiefs). Formerly each
651 canton held one or more ritual feasts each year, and the Mossi subjects, that is, the tengsoba (village elders, notables, and those in comfortable circumstances), regularly made gifts to the canton chief (cowries, goats, sheep, and roosters). The Peulh [Peul] gave cattle.

The canton chiefs also retained a portion of the payment made by the people for the benefit of the Mogho Naba.

[178] At the present time these traditional gifts are still made, but white or light gray roosters are more and more being substituted for livestock. [71]

661 Payments due the Ministers of the Mogho Naba. In order to
431 maintain good relations with the ministers, court officials, and
644 intermediaries between the emperor and his vassals, the canton
634 chiefs in former times used to present unspecified gifts to the high dignitaries at court when they paid their respects to the Mogho Naba. A certain number of cowries was given to the pougtiéma, first wife of the Mogho Naba (500 cowries equals two and a half francs, formerly 50 centimes).

A canton chief who has been called to Ouagadougou for some reason may choose not to call on the emperor, but he is obligated to bring cowries, a sheep, or a rooster to the minister who is head of the province in which his canton is located.

651 Common laws. (a) Regulation of market fees. Before the ar-
443 rival of the French, market fees at Ouagadougou were collected for the benefit of the Mogho Naba by a collector in his employ.

In important villages, fees were collected by Gourounsi [Grunshi] captives on behalf of the canton chiefs (kombemba).

651 (b) Hunting. In former times, before the fields were cleared
224 for seeding, the Mossi used to go out in groups of several villages
634 on hunting drives. Small game (partridges, guinea fowl, hares, etc.) were left to the hunters. On the other hand, a haunch of any quadruped killed (deer, gazelle, coba [a kind of horse antelope], etc.) was reserved for the canton chief.

651 [72] (c) Fishing. Fishing in the larger water holes could take
226 place only by authorization of the canton chiefs. The day on
634 which fishing took place was treated as a holiday. All the young men in the village and their neighbors, even if the latter did not belong to the canton, came out on the day set by the canton chief and fished for the benefit of the naba. All large fish were reserved for him, and only the small ones were left to the fishermen.

This practice still prevails.

776 Other common laws. Many deities are worshipped by the
782 Mossi. Groves, fields, mountains, etc., all have their "god."
661 It often happens that the naba (canton chief), at the behest of the soothsayers, offers an animal. This may be a sheep, a goat, or even a cow, and it is offered to one or another of the deities, either for his personal interests or for those of his people, or perhaps to ask for rain. The naba dispatches some sogoné [servitor] or samand'kamba [people of the outer courtyard] to one of the villages in his canton to find a victim. The animal is taken without its owner having any right to complain or to ask for compensation. Is there not a Mossi saying to the effect, Talagh-gounda
[538] Naba'gninga the serf raises livestock for the benefit of his naba)"?

For sacrifices prescribed for the Mogho Naba, the animals are provided either by the inhabitants of the [73] town of Ouagadougou and its environs or by the canton chiefs.

Labor Service Customarily Required of the Mossi on Behalf of their Chiefs

651 Forced labor was used to cultivate the fields of the naba and to repair or construct their houses.

647 The Mogho Naba. (a) Cultivation of fields. The duty of
651 cultivating the fields of the Mogho Naba fell entirely on the Bilbalsé,
241 the residents of Bilbalogo (section of the Baloum Naba) and on all former servitors and descendants of former servitors. The Kam Naba (chief of the young men), charged with assembling the workers, had a crier announce in all the important markets that on such-and-such a day the Bilbalsé were to assemble in the emperor's

644 fields. On that day, the Mogho Naba had one or two cows
651 slaughtered and a large quantity of sagbo (millet cakes) prepared
241 for the workers. If the latter, after being assembled two or three times in the manner indicated above, were not finished with all the fields, the work was carried on by the samand'kamba (the people who dwelt in the outer courtyard of the Mogho Naba).

644 The emperor, however, received none of the millet grown in
574 his own fields, which, incidentally, did not have their present boundaries. This millet was reserved exclusively [74] for use as food for foreign visitors and for the feeding of horses (1).

1. For the ceremony of threshing this millet (kawinré), see the special chapter below [Chapter 16].

644 It was the duty of the canton chiefs and the ministers to pro-
651 vide loads of millet for the use of the Mogho Naba and his harem ("harem" should be understood to mean all young or middle-aged women, but to exclude the elderly women who have to support themselves and who have their private fields).

644 (b) Repair of the houses of the Mogho Naba. The work of
651 building and repairing the houses actually belonging to the em-
356 peror fell entirely upon the inhabitants of Bilbalogo (section of the Baloum Naba), Kamsaonghin (section of the chief eunuch), and Dapoya (section of the slaves of the Mogho Naba).

[343] The outbuildings, wédanga, four round huts with thatched roofs located outside the emperor's house, served as stables for the horses given to the Mogho Naba by canton chiefs or other personages and were built and maintained by three ministers, the Ouidi Naba, Larrhallé Naba, and Gounga Naba, with the help of the people in their sections.

The tamping of the floors and clay roofs was done wholly by the wives of the persons responsible for [75] the construction or repair, that is, the wives of the ministers and of the inhabitants of their sections.

Labor service due the province chiefs, ministers of the emperor.

651 (a) Cultivation of fields. The fields belonging to the ministers
645 of the Mogho Naba were cultivated by a system of payments in kind
241 as follows.

651 For the Baloum Naba; the work was done by all the bilbalsé.
645 The Kam Naba set the day for the sekka (gathering), and all the
241 young and able-bodied men were required to report. They received the food they required from the Baloum Naba. The number of work days was not fixed. The sekka might be held once or several times, depending on the acreage.

For the other ministers, the Ouidi Naba, Gounga Naba, and Larrhallé Naba, the field work was done by the people in their entourage (that is, the inhabitants of their respective sections) and in the neighboring villages which were formerly under their jurisdiction. Since the formation of the canton of Ouagadougou and its outskirts, the area has been under the exclusive authority of the Baloum Naba (fourth minister of the emperor).

645 If, however, the fields were so extensive that their cultiva-
476 tion could not be taken care of solely by the above system -- the
241 laborers also had to care for their own fields -- the ministers [76] called for volunteers from among the young men in the neighboring villages and paid them with food and drink. This is the sissoaga, a system commonly in use among the Mossi.

645 (b) Construction and repair of houses. As a general rule, re-
651 pair of the roofs of huts in the establishments of the province chiefs
356 was the duty of the inhabitants of their respective sections and of the neighboring villages under their jurisdiction.

651 The canton chiefs. The cultivation of the fields of the naba
634 and the repair of the huts in their establishments were wholly in-
241 cumbent on their subjects. Each village had a fixed number of
356 huts to be repaired or roofed; this is known as sough'pilli, and it is still in effect annually.

651 Today, perhaps in the interests of tranquillity, canton chiefs require labor service in their fields only from their sogoné and samand'kamba and sometimes even resort to the sissoaga.

The local administration, with respect for local customs, has the policy of organizing the system in a way that, in our opinion, will safeguard the interests of the natives, overburdened due to the negligence of the province chiefs, and at the same time will enhance the prestige of the Mossi chiefs.

653 The naba is not entitled to any other labor services. The building of dams to provide water for the villages cannot be

653 considered forced labor since this work is done in the common interest.

[77] Installation of a Market

366 As in many other circumstances, the Mossi first consult soothsayers when they desire to establish a market. The Moaga [singular of Mossi] is convinced that invisible spirits are everywhere, behind his house, under the trees, in the fields and groves, and even in uninhabited places, so above all he is anxious to obtain the good will of these beings whose anger is fearful. It is, therefore, only after consulting several soothsayers, who use various types of divination (with cowries, stones, sand, etc.), that the village chief has chickens and livestock sacrificed on the site where he wishes to set up the new market. The naba chooses two or three candidates from among his followers, and the soothsayers are required to indicate which of these has the best prospect of good fortune and a promising future. This person will be the one who performs the sacrifice. The victims are furnished, in theory, by the village or canton chief, unless he decides to call on the populace. In this case, a small assessment is made on some of the notables, and the proceeds are used to buy chickens, a goat, or a sheep.

366 In any event, the canton chief is not permitted to appropriate the animals in the villages or sections under his jurisdiction as would be done in the case of sacrifices offered for the general welfare of the country.

The individual chosen by the bagba [soothsayers] presents himself at the site, accompanied by a more or less [78] impressive crowd, depending on the importance of the village. The women bring fritters and other provisions.

The following sacramental words are pronounced: "Ya sida Ting' Naba yeta nan lougoul dagh, Naba zidwendé Bad kom deghin kon zigh tinghin damba, tib kon yaramba, tib regh kon saramba, tiya gnimassem lad ratta, tib regh lass zim-yellé, tiya nogoam la tigue koada soaba lad zoïta." A literal translation follows. "This is true, the canton chief wishes to install a market on this spot. Oh God, the Sun, here are water and animals for zigh tinghin damba (people who died childless), for grandparents and ancestors. We ask

366 for good fortune and health. Prevent all bloodshed in this market.
782 We also fear those who are quarrelsome and those who talk too much, those who provoke disorder." The chicken is the first victim to be sacrificed, and if the offering is accepted, it must have first fallen on its back and only then turned over face downward (this means that the gods of the place will protect the naba and the persons who will frequent the market). Next the goat or sheep is killed.

The new market is opened immediately after the sacrifice. Those present buy the women's fritters. Ordinarily, Mossi markets
[1443] are held every three days. The news travels rapidly that such-and-such a village has a market, and thus the business of the market gradually grows.

Collection of fees. It is only later on, one or even two years
366 after the installation of his new market and when [79] it is success-
651 ful, that the canton chief appoints a yaguinga (grandson, or, more
[601] accurately in native terms, a sister's son (nephew)or son's son (grandson), of the naba or of a member of his family) or a Gourounsi captive to act as collector of market fees. (We shall list below the various fees for a place in the market as they were collected for the benefit of the naba before the arrival of the French.)

366 Transfer of the market. Upon the death of a naba (the emperor, a vassal chief, or even the chief of the village where the market is held), the market is temporarily set up in another place. In large towns, such as Ouagadougou, for example, there may be as many markets as there are sections. These temporary markets are called kim'dagha (market of the kimsé, that is, of the deceased).

366 When a new naba has been named, the market is moved back
782 to its former site and the reinstallation calls for new sacrifices of fowl and livestock. That was why in 1897, when the market at Ouagadougou was being re-established, the emperor asked the captain who was in command of the post to provide a cow to be sacrificed along with a sheep and a rooster which he himself provided.

Likewise, whenever a hyena has run through the market (its
366 presence is discovered either by the tracks left by the animal or by
825 consulting the soothsayers), just as happens when a naba dies, the
787 market must be moved elsewhere for a few days. It is believed that if [80] a brawl should occur after a hyena had passed through the market, there would certainly be a death.

Scale of Market Fees Collected by the Mogho Naba and the Canton Chiefs Before the French Occupation

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At Ouagadougou two collectors had the duty of gathering market fees.

The Kos Naba (from kossé "to sell," and naba, "chief") collected a tax on every animal slaughtered whose meat was sold at the market.

The Ragh' Naba (from ragha, "market," and naba, "chief") collected fees on all other produce.

The fees were as follows.

Captives. 1,000 cowries per captive sold; fee paid by the seller.

Large animals. (a) Oxen, 250 cowries per ox slaughtered; cows, 250 cowries per cow slaughtered. (In addition, the hump of every head of cattle slaughtered was taken for the Mogho Naba and delivered to him that evening.)

(b) Donkeys: 200 cowries per donkey sold, paid by the seller.

(c) Horses: no tax was collected. Horses, being luxury animals and sought only by chiefs and a few [81] well-to-do persons (rakangba) were not put up for sale at the market.

Small animals. No special tax on sheep, goats, etc.

Dam (dolo, beer). No tax. The seller was supposed to present a gourd or canari of beer to the chief of her section (the emperor's minister) whenever she made some. This was called the lenga, that is, a "taste." This practice no doubt explains the lack of any tax on the beer merchants.

Cotton strips. Taxes graded from 20 to 100 cowries according to the size of the rolls of cloth.

Cotton. First collected in kind and then a tax of 20 cowries paid after the sale.

Grains and fats. Small millets, sorghum, rice, peanuts, millet that is sprouted to be used for beer, beans, and peas: for these kinds of produce, the Ragh' Naba and his assistants had special measuring devices, bowls of a sort, made of wood and used to collect payments in kind. All of the grains, including the millet used to make beer, were stored by the Ragh' Naba in granaries for disposal by the emperor.

443 Ready-made clothing, beads. No tax collected.
651 [82] Soumbala (kalgo in Mossi) [locust beans pressed into balls]. Payment in kind (one ball per seller).

Other spices. No fee paid.

Karite [shea] butter. Collected with a soutga (a kind of ladle), karite butter was used almost exclusively for the horses of the Mogho Naba.

Fritters and other cooked foods. Actually no fee was called for on these products, but the collectors demanded the payment of a tax in kind to provide their own food or that of the samand'kamba (servitors of the outer courtyard).

Salt. 300 cowries for each load (ox or donkey).

Hoes, axes. Each merchant provided a daba or an axe for work in the field of the naba. Nothing was collected at the subsequent market if all of the tools had not been sold in one day.

Jewelry. No tax was collected. The jewelers who made [306] bracelets and other jewels for the wives of the naba, as well as various harness parts, were exempt from all taxes.

Other markets. Fees collected for the benefit of the canton chiefs were about the same as [83] those paid at the market of Ouagadougou. In small markets, however, payments were made in kind. The edible products made up the food of the collectors, Gourounsi captives for the most part, who were prevented by their social status from having wives and so had no one to prepare food for them.

Chapter 5

Slavery Among the Mossi

567 We shall endeavor in the following lines to describe slavery as it existed among the Mossi before the French occupation.

567 173 We know that slavery has existed for a very long time in the land of the Mogho Naba, but, because of the total lack of dates in Mossi history -- handed down from generation to generation by the griot [heralds, drummers] of the naba -- it is difficult to determine when it was first introduced.

567 It is known, however, that the first slaves of the Mossi were all of Boussanga [Busansi] origin. The canton of Garango in what is

567 now the circle of Tenkodogo constituted a reservoir (figuratively called lambagré, "cotton reserve") from which the warriors and vassals of the emperor brought back hundreds of young slaves. This was because Garango recognized no authority; it was dependent neither on the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou nor on the king of Tenkodogo. Tradition has it that the warriors of the Mossi chiefs were always surprising the people of Garango on market days. The memory of these raids is why, even today the markets at Garango
[366] are open only from six in the morning until noon.

The Mossi considered themselves to be free men, and no one,
[64] not even naba, had the [85] right to reduce a Moaga subject to slavery. The facial tattoos made it easy to distinguish the Moaga
[304] from foreigners.

Since there were few contacts between neighboring villages,
567 it was difficult even for highwaymen to sell young people from near-
674 by areas. This does not mean that there were not, all the same, captives of Mossi origin. Bandits rode, for instance, from Ouagadougou to Boussouma. They always carried large leather
[492] sacks tied to their saddles and into them thrust children and women who were taken by surprise while gathering fruit in the bush. Such captives were always sold far from their home villages. Naturally such practices were severely dealt with by the naba. Naba Wobgo drove the canton chief of Bilgotenga, Warongo, from his territory because he enslaved Mossi people. Warongo was forced to take refuge in Yatenga and returned home only after the coming of the French.

567 Some of the slaves brought back from Garango were kept by the emperor, and the rest were distributed among the warriors. Up to that time no one thought of using them for anything but field work and domestic labor.

It was Naba Baongo, the twenty-sixth successor of Oubri, who first thought of selling the slaves. He said: "Id kossi bazas kamba tib boude nan wa saf" (literally, "let us sell these slave dogs; perhaps, one day, [86] there will be no more of them"). It is as if the emperor had foreseen the suppression of slavery and the emancipation of the slaves.

Today one seldom encounters former Boussanga slaves. They have no doubt returned to their villages since the arrival of the
[304] French. Their descendants (house slaves, dogyiri) now wear the same facial tattoos as the Mossi.

567 The only slaves who have remained faithful to their masters or, more exactly, who have preferred to remain in Mossi territory after their emancipation, are nearly all Gourounsi.

The Gourounsi Captives

567 727 648 Sonrhaï [Songhai] forces led by Alpha Haïnon, Gazeré, and Babato used to raid Gourounsi country. They reduced a large number of Gourounsi to slavery, immediately making soldiers of the more enterprising among them to fight against their own people and selling or exchanging the rest for horses. Mossi country has always had a large supply of horses, so the Mossi used to go to Léo to trade their horses for slaves or simply to trade their slaves to the Sonrhaï for cowries. [439]

567 648 The Sonrhaï chiefs maintained good relations with the emperor of the Mossi, Naba Sanum. That is why they spared the Gourounsi village chiefs who had taken refuge with the Mogho Naba.

Boukary-koutou, the future Naba Wobgo, enjoyed the [87] regard and friendship of the Sonrhaï since he aided them in their wars against the Gourounsi in exchange for an ample share of the booty and slaves. We have shown that the large number of Gourounsi whom he brought with him to Ouagadougou contributed mightily to his being named emperor of the Mossi.

567 651 During the reigns of Naba Koutou, Sanum, and Wobgo, there were special slave markets attached to the regular markets at Ouagadougou and other large centers. A fee of 1,000 cowries was collected for the benefit of the naba for each captive sold, regardless of sex.

567 302 787 When owners desired to sell a slave, they first shaved his head, and it was only after the hair had begun to grow again that he was taken to market. The cutting of the hair derives from a superstition among the Mossi.

Depending on where the hair starts to grow, whether well back on the head, at the forehead, or near the ears, the interpretation varies as to how the slave is to be regarded: as a dangerous being; as a lucky or unlucky influence on the family owning him.

We shall not now go into details since such beliefs will be discussed in a special section.

567 The several categories of captives are as follows.

1. The Yemdaogo, all of whom are of foreign origin (Boussanga and Gourounsi) and either bought or captured during a war.

2. The daporé or dapobi (house slaves) who are the decendants of slaves. [88]

3. The bengaré, former slaves of the Peulh, who have abandoned their masters and put themselves under the sole authority of the Mogho Naba.

4. The Kamboiensé.

The Various Types of Slaves

567 Daporé ("living behind the house"). (a) The daporé belong-
563 ing to the Mogho Naba. At Ouagadougou there is a section called Dapoya, and its inhabitants are called Dapobi. They are wrongly considered (even by themselves) to be captives. Of Kibissi origin (we have noted that the Kibissi, the Ninissi, and the Gourounsi were the original inhabitants of the present Mossi area), they came of their own volition to Obri-Bangrenaba (Naba Oubri's chief of the bangré slaves), and he presented them to the emperor. It has been impossible to find out who was reigning when they arrived. The Mogho Naba first installed them at Wavoussé and later behind his house where they acted as guards and also were entrusted with important responsibilities.

These are voluntary captives. They are therefore not yemsé in the usual sense of the word, since they were neither bought nor sold, and the emperor did not mistreat them, although he did not grant them, as foreigners, the same rights as those possessed by his
[583] subjects. The dapobi could not marry Mossi girls. They were obliged to marry slaves, and that is perhaps why they are considered slaves themselves. The children of these marriages, called [89] dogyiri ("born in the house") make up the "house slave" class.

567 (b) Daporé of the Kamsaoughin and daporé of the canton chiefs. In addition to the foreign dapobi just mentioned, there are true dapobi who were either captured in battle or bought. The former are slaves of the Mogho Naba and are entrusted to the care of the Kamsaougho Naba, chief eunuch, who is responsible for guarding

567 part of the emperor's harem. The dapobi belonging to the canton chiefs, belonging to the kombemba, are of the same origin. While the Mogho Naba could not sell the dapobi of Kibissi origin, the emperor and the canton chiefs could do as they liked with the true dapobi. They were sold for the most trifling faults and their wives and children were either sent away with them or turned over to other deserving captives.

Slaves of the Crown. (a) The bangaré. These are Peulh captives who have gradually cast off the authority of their masters and who have submitted voluntarily to the authority of the Mogho Naba.

A herd of cattle is called nab'bangaré, and it seems likely that the word bangaré, "herd," to designate this type of slave came from that source. However, the bangaré are not solely former Peulh slaves since a free individual who has committed a serious crime in his [90] native village and fears reprisal comes to join the "herd."

Once presented to the Mogho Naba, they were henceforth considered slaves and, as such, immune from prosecution.

567 The principal bangaré villages, generally known as "independent
62 villages," are: Kaïbo (province of Gounga); Manghin, Zaanga (canton of Zorgongo); Zaon'pighin, Payaobtinga (canton of Boudry); Nabasnoghin (canton of Nedogo); Bangar'Nabilin (canton of Zorgo); Gandaogo (canton of Zoungou); Boumintoré, Sidtenga, Mandié, Bougoumbarga, etc.

567 The emperor could supply himself from these "herds" when-
681 ever the need arose. Any bangaré who had committed serious crimes or who had been denounced as dangerous individuals who spread disorder in the villages or committed robbery were castrated and made into eunuchs or sold by order of the emperor.

[582] The bangaré intermarry since no free Mossi father would give them a daughter in marriage. This is solely due to the fact that if the emperor decided to sell a bangaré, his family would share the same fate. The father of the wife would not intervene in such a case, because this might be dangerous for him. So it is easily understandable that, under these circumstances, no father would seek such a match.

567 Bangaré chiefs. The chiefs of bangaré villages [91] are ap-
622 pointed by the Mogho Naba. The villages themselves are free of any

567 control by the canton chiefs in whose territories they are located.
622 The inhabitants pay nothing to the kombéré nor can the chief require any labor service in his fields or for the upkeep of his houses. They recognize only the Mogho Naba as chief.

567 Kamboinsé. True Kamboinsé are not Mossi; they came from the west during the reign of Naba Waraga (nineteenth successor of Oubri). Like the dapobi of the Dapoya section they came with guns (their chief even had a [ceremonial] stool) to put themselves under the authority of the Mogho Naba. Their chief, Gambaré by name, told the emperor that they had come to offer themselves as soldiers and slaves to help him pacify his territory. The Kamboinsé occupy a section of the town behind the Catholic mission on the right side of the road to Pô.

When the emperor's native gunners found themselves faced with competition from foreigners, they countered by appointing their own chief who took the title of Kamboin Naba. They are, however, different from the true Kamboinsé, and they live a dozen or so kilometers from Ouagadougou in the villages of Kamboinsé and Wobrigré.

While the first-mentioned Kamboinsé are voluntary slaves, the others are true slaves captured in war or bought by the emperor.

567 426 [92] Use of slaves as security for debt. Captives might be used to settle debts. It should be noted that the right to own slaves was not limited to the emperor and his vassals. Any prosperous Moaga (dakangré) might own them.

[612] If the head of a household died leaving debts, the heirs could sell a few slaves to pay off the obligation. If, however, the creditor preferred to have the slaves, the latter were put up for appraisal just as though they were livestock.

In the same way, slaves could be traded for horses, garments, or even loads of kola nuts.

567 If slaves were maltreated by their owners, providing that the latter were not of the nobility, they could put themselves under the protection of the naba. In that event they ceased to belong to their former owners. On the other hand, if a Moaga took it upon himself [682] to kill a slave, he at once had to pay a fine of 100,000 cowries to his canton chief as a blood price.

567 439 Ordinarily, captives who were brought back from the wars were at once sold to the Haoussa [Hausa] or Yarcé [Yarse] who traded

567 them for kola nuts with the Achanti [Ashanti] or for loaves of salt
439 at Timbuktu. Although they were always transported by roundabout routes to prevent them from finding their way back to their homes, still some of them always managed to escape.

492 The naba used the young yemdado as soroné or grooms, and
567 they would often [93] take the young and attractive women (yempoksé) as wives.

441 The sale of free men. Neither the emperor of the Mossi nor
681 his vassals sold their subjects. Individuals who were regarded as dangerous were simply put to death unless they took refuge in a bangaré to avoid being executed, as has been noted above. Some were sent to the emperor to be made into eunuchs.

304 The facial tattoos worn by the Mossi clearly distinguished them
567 from neighboring peoples. However, if by accident or because of need a naba sold a free man and the latter was claimed by his rela-
689 tives, the chief was required to buy back the slave or to indemnify his family. We have described above how a canton chief was exiled by the emperor for having sold free Mossi.

583 Concealed selling of women and children. In the chapter on marriage customs among the Mossi we shall show that a native
562 Moaga did not demand a bride price because he did not want to feel that
567 he was selling his daughter. There is no doubt that this rule has exceptions. Indeed, we shall show that the failure to pay a debt, a bout of drunkenness, or a favor received might suffice to mortgage the future of a daughter, even though at the time she might be a small child and quite unaware of her fate. In any event, there would be no question of her expressing any opinion, since her wishes are never taken into account. During periods of famine -- which have been
[131] occurring almost [94] regularly for some years -- a small basket of millet is enough to make a father promise his daughter. In the same way, we regret to say, a great many girls are promised in exchange for trifling sums at the time the poll tax is paid.

567 Rights of slaves. Since he is regarded as an inferior being, the yemdaogo (slave) has no well-defined rights. He is required to perform all kinds of domestic work and must give unquestioning obedience to his master and the master's family. Besides his essential duties, however, he is permitted to do some farming for himself, practice some trade, or to raise cattle, with the proceeds constituting

567 his personal fortune. The management of any such property is left entirely to him. If the master becomes indebted [to the slave], he is required to pay the debt within a fixed time limit.

Emancipation from slavery. As was indicated in the foregoing paragraph, it was possible for a slave to amass property through his own efforts. He might then free himself by paying his master 100,000 cowries. He then might either return to his native village or settle in his master's village. There have been slaves who not only freed themselves in this way, but also became slave owners in their turn.

If, however, slaves marry female slaves given to them by their masters and become fathers of families, they do not usually leave their masters. [95] They acquire a certain standing and are counted as members of the family. It is understood that they do not have the right to dispose of their children since the latter are dogyiri (house slaves).

465 Various types of unpaid work. Aside from the labor and other obligations required of all Mossi subjects for their naba -- we have described the forced labor in a previous chapter -- it may be said that, in general, no work is required without pay, even from slaves. In an area that is predominantly agricultural there can be no question of payment in money as would be the case in private or official enterprises where contracts specify the obligations of an employer to his employees. On the purely native level, the employer is obligated only to feed the workers.

In sum, what are the duties of a Moaga?

1. Cultivation of the family fields.

2. Construction and repair of huts and roofs.

3. Private work: basketry, shoemaking, weaving cotton strips, pottery, sewing, etc.

The head of the household is required to feed the workers who 592 cultivate the family plots or repair the huts. In a later chapter we 476 shall see that when the [96] members of a family could not complete a task without help, they called on other young men in the village. In that case, animals were slaughtered, dolo (millet beer) was brewed, and sagbo (millet mush) or benga (beans) was prepared.

567 On the other hand, it should be stated that when yemdago were used for hard labor, they were very well fed and were even given double rations.

567 Were slaves part of an estate? Among the Mossi, the wives
428 are part of an estate on the same footing as the rest of the property
562 of the deceased. The same thing applies to the captives (yemsé) and dogyiri (house slaves) who constitute and integral part of the estate. They constitute a patrimony to be handed down from father to son in accordance with the customary order of succession. They remain the exclusive property of the legitimate heir and are not distributed as are the wives of the deceased.

[97] Chapter 6

Djiba Naba, Crown Prince of the Mossi Empire

Preliminary Remarks

644 In writing on this subject we have not tried to ascertain whether the canton of Djiba was once independent or whether it was under the direct authority of the Mogho Naba.

At the outbreak of the World War in 1914 the Djiba Naba, a brother of the present emperor, Naba Kom, was drafted into the army, and another brother had to be appointed to take his place. The latter's administration was in many ways unsatisfactory, so when the Djiba Naba, on his return from the front, had to be sent to Doulougou to replace a deceased son of Naba Wobgo, the Mogho Naba retained direct authority over the canton of Djiba. Meanwhile, his eldest son had returned from Tunis and had been officially named the chief of Djiba, but he had had to leave again for military service at Salonika. Thus, it can be said that even before the canton of Djiba had been made the prerogative of the eldest son of Naba Zombré, it had already been under the latter's authority.

It was during the reign of Naba Zombré, twenty-third Mogho Naba, that the eldest son of the emperor was given jurisdiction over the canton of Djiba. Naba Zombré, after Naba Niandeffo, had one of the longest reigns in the history of the country. He actually ruled for sixty years.

643 [98] An old tradition requires an emperor who has ruled for
782 thirty years to go to Oubritenga to celebrate zom'bika (literally,

643 "to mount the bika").
782 Bika. When the emperor goes to Oubritenga, a large pit is dug in which all sorts of provisions are placed and, finally, a living man. Poles cover the opening of the tomb where the suffocated man lies, and the whole thing is covered with earth. A throne (guéré) is placed on the grave, and it is there that the emperor -- with little ceremony -- receives the faithful during his stay at Oubritenga. In carrying out this practice, the emperor is considered as having died and then come to life again. Hence, when he returns to Ouagadougou, after an absence which may last for years, he is welcomed by the populace with the greatest enthusiasm, and he must carry out all sorts of customary obligations just as he did at the beginning of his reign.

This custom is of course bound to disappear. In any event, if it were still an obligatory ceremony today, the man would no doubt be replaced by a rooster.

643 Naba Zombré went to Oubritenga to mount the bika and re-
644 mained there for three years. His eldest son acted for him at Ouagadougou and in the process acquired some fame and the esteem of the populace.

When his father returned, it was obviously necessary to bestow upon this prince, who had already tasted the "joys" of ruling, and developed a real talent for command, a post of real distinction. Djiba was chosen. From that day on, [99] as soon as the eldest son of the Mogho Naba reaches the age of discretion, he is appointed Djiba Naba. It is thus understandable that Naba Kom, enthroned at an early age, was much disturbed when two of his sons were sent to Senegal and then to Tunisia.

644 The appointment of the Djiba Naba differs very little from that of other canton chiefs, but this naba has certain obligations which will be discussed below.

Before Appointment

644 Before his appointment, the crown prince of the Mossi empire
782 first proceeds to the village of Zango where he must remain for a week. He must bring with him a sheep, a white rooster, and a cow which are to be given to the village chief for use in a sacrifice to

644 782 tenpelem (the earth) in order that he may have health, happiness, etc. In addition, he provides a bar of salt which is to be shared among the old women.

As he passes through Nonsin, he gives a sheep, a white rooster, and some salt for a similar sacrifice.

644 On the seventh day he returns to Ouagadougou and stops at Bilbalogo, the home of the Kam Naba (chief of the young men), whose guest he becomes. The Mogho Naba informs his ministers, and the day is set for the appointment.

The customary formalities are nearly identical with those required for the appointment of canton chiefs (kombemba).

[100] After Appointment

On the day following his appointment, the Djiba Naba calls upon his father. A cushion (nagpouré) is placed near a shed in the emperor's courtyard at the foot of a special stake called the "zandaogo of the Djiba Naba." The Djiba Naba becomes the guest of the Gounga Naba, in whose section he will henceforth stay whenever he comes to Ouagadougou. (At the present time, because of the enmity between the emperor and his brothers, the Djiba Naba stays at Kamsaoghin [section of the Kamsaogho Naba], not far from his father's house.)

644 557 He then has to call upon his father's ministers, and precedence requires him to visit the Ouidi Naba, the prime minister, first. As soon as the latter is notified of the arrival of the Djiba Naba, he offers him a sheep, some dam (beer) and some kola nuts.

Then the crown prince goes to the Larrhallé Naba, who is required to present him with the same gifts, and thence to the Kamsogo Naba, chief eunuch, where the same honors are rendered to him and where he is also given a sheep, beer, and kola nuts.

He next calls upon the Gounga Naba, the Poé Naba, the Samande Naba and, finally, the Baloum Naba, from whom he receives many gifts.

On the third day he completes his visits by calling upon the imam who represents Islam at Ouagadougou. There he is offered water containing [millet] flour and honey, as well as kola nuts.

644 554 576 [101] It is to be noted that a gourdful of this water with millet flour on which a bit of karite butter is floating is a customary courtesy offering among the Mossi. It is most improper to greet or to receive a stranger by offering him plain water.

644 782 On the fourth or fifth day the Djiba Naba proceeds to Zoanghna (a village located two or three kilometers behind the government buildings) and there hands over a sheep and a cow to serve as offerings to the sacred amulets of the ancestors and to protect him from evil spirits and wicked people. He does not spend the night in this village but returns home immediately after the sacrifice.

644 788 Several days later the decision is made to install the new naba in his domain. A large number of soroné, drummers, and followers accompany him on what amounts to a kind of obligatory pilgrimage which we shall describe briefly.

The following itinerary is customary.

First, the Djiba Naba goes to Badnogo where he spends the night. The next day he goes on to Samba where he is offered water with flour in it, and for his part, he gives salt to be shared among the old women of the village.

One may ask why salt is given to the old women and not to the other people. The Mossi call old women nough' pouk ramba, [888] that is, those who, when blessing you, clasp their hands so as to make a higher power hear and grant their prayers.

644 788 431 [102] On the following day he proceeds to Tensobitenga where he remains for three days. Beer is prepared for him; he is given a cow for his followers and a wife for himself. At Nakamtenga, his next stop, the village chief welcomes him with a sheep and many baskets and bowls of sagbo (millet mush).

644 788 He does not remain here for the night but instead goes on to Koubri. This is the village where eunuchs formerly suffered the cruel operation of castration (1). The canton chief meets him, leads

839 304 681 1. Eunuchs. Bandits, thieves, murderers, and slaves or soroné (servitors) convicted of adultery with women of the nobility were the only ones sent to Koubri, a canton in the circle of Ouagadougou, to be castrated. This operation involved only the removal

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of the testicles, until the day when a eunuch managed, no one knows how, to take advantage of some of the women he was supposed to be guarding. From then on it was deemed necessary to remove the penis completely, and a copper cartridge was inserted for purposes of urination.

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As soon as the person fainted after undergoing the operation, a drink was concocted whose ingredients are unknown. When he revived, he was so thirsty that he downed the drink in a single gulp. It is said that the drug stupefied the eunuch to such a degree that he would be incapable of taking vengeance even if he had any weapons at hand.

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It was only after he had completely recovered that the victim was sent to the Mogho Naba. The latter assigned him the duty of guarding a harem or a royal tomb.

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him to his house, seats him by his side, and announces to the populace that he has just been visited by his son (Koubri Naba is a descendant of the Mogho Naba).

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He then offers the crown prince a cow and a great deal of [103] beer, and then, before he leaves, the Djiba Naba has free access to the chief's household where he takes as a wife the first nubile girl he encounters. The stay at Koubri traditionally lasted for seven days, but it could be shortened to two or three in view of the great expense involved in entertaining a prince of such high rank, especially at the present time when the canton chiefs no longer enjoy their former prestige.

The Djiba Naba continues on his way to Kombissiri where he is the guest of the canton chief. For a week, in addition to his food which must, of course, be copious and abundant quantities of beer, the crown prince also receives a cow, a sheep, and, before his departure for Doulougou, a wife.

[i.e. canton chief — Analyst]

644 788 431 The chief of the canton of Doulougou, where the prince is a guest for another week, also gives him beer, a sheep, a cow, a robe, and, finally, a wife.

At Bagamini, where he goes next, he receives from the canton chief a cow, a wife, a quiver, and arrows, presented with these significant words: "Ad locko la pema taon widi, laf ra taon neb'yé ti ya f'ba yemsé" (literally, "Take these arrows to shoot against horses and not against men, for the latter are your father's slaves and the country also belongs to him and therefore to you").

Seven days later he leaves Bagamini and goes to Ipelsé where he receives the same warm welcome. On leaving, he will take with him a cow and a wife.

He likewise remains at Ipelsé for seven days. Passing through Bedgo in the domain of the Peulh chief, the Djiba Naba chooses the finest [104] bull from the herd of cattle which must be presented to him. He likewise takes a girl from the chief's household who becomes his property. He then goes on to Guirgo where he is guest of the canton chief for a whole week. On his departure he receives a cow, a robe, and a wife from the chief.

The inhabitants of the village of Kakamsé, through which the Djiba Naba merely passes, bring him quantities of millet cakes (sagbo) and a gift of their choice (a sheep, a goat, a cow, cowries, beer, etc.).

The crown prince continues on to Kondrin and remains there for three days. In addition to sagho and dam, the chief of Kondrin is required to offer him a cow and a wife before his departure.

From there he proceeds to Béré where the chief, called Rimbissi Kasma (the oldest descendant of the Mogho Naba), gives the Djiba Naba a cow, a robe, and a wife and acts as his host for a week.

644 788 824 During the night of the seventh day, the notables of the canton of Djiba come to Béré to look for the naba. He allows himself to be led away, accompanied by only a single servitor and a groom. The rest of the escort from Ouagadougou remains behind and follows him the next morning (1).

1. Why this departure at night and seeming escape? On the route leading into his

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dominion, the Djiba Naba must pass under a tree whose branches he should be able to touch since he is on horseback. His whole future depends upon his doing so. It is from this day forward that the prince will have a long life and will succeed his father. It is believed that the tree has magical powers and that its branches will withdraw of their own accord as the prince passes by if, even though he is the emperor's eldest son, he is not the successor designated by Wendé (God).

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[105] In advance of his coming, care has been taken to find a nice dwelling suitable to house a prince who is the emperor's eldest son. With this in view, an establishment has been chosen which is well built and fairly large, one belonging to a dakangré (prosperous man), and His Highness is conducted to it. As soon as the Djiba Naba has dismounted, his involuntary host must leave his home and take shelter with one of his neighbors. He takes great care to gather all his property, money (liguidi) and wives, into one part of the house; the rest henceforth belongs to the naba. Indeed, it is not long before the establishment is enlarged and some of the huts demolished to make way for more sumptuous buildings.

As soon as the prince is installed, the displaced host receives some gifts and wives as a kind of indemnity for loss. A suitable house is built for him a few hundred meters away.

For several days, celebrations are the rule throughout the canton of Djiba. All the notables and village chiefs, including neighboring canton chiefs who have not had the honor of receiving the prince, come to pay their respects to the new naba and to bring him large gifts.

The escort from Ouagadougou is then sent back [106] with many gifts. The most important nayirdamba [court dignitaries] receive wives and clothing.

Besides the wives the Djiba Naba may have had before his appointment, it is to be noted that he collected quite a harem

644 during his peregrinations. He will bestow some of these on his followers
788 and keep the prettiest for himself.
431 In the old days, the Boulsa Naba, Boussouma Naba, Konkisitenga Naba, and all the others who were, so to speak, independent "rulers" of their lands never brought annual tribute to the Mogho Naba without sending gifts to his eldest son at Djiba.

In the same way, the canton chiefs were expected to make the same annual gifts to the Djiba Naba as to his father.

644 It should also be noted that chiefs who had quarreled with the
696 Mogho Naba and were in danger of being executed could readily obtain pardons by the expedient of buying the friendship of the Djiba Naba. The emperor, after all, was reluctant to distress his son by putting to death one of his intimates.

[107] Chapter 7

The Mossi Salute. Respect due the Home of a Naba.
The Cap. Precedence among Chiefs.
A Legend Concerning the Origins of Mossi Chiefdom.

Salutation of the Naba (Nab'Pousgho)

647 The kombemba (canton chiefs) and nayirdamba (ministers and other court dignitaries), when calling upon the Mogho Naba, are required to remove their cap when they reach the threshold. They hand it to their soroné (servitors) or followers. If they did not come on horseback, they must give their néoda (shoes) to a page and walk barefoot. In a word, they remove anything which might impede the execution of the very complicated Mossi salute.

The following passages concerning the Mossi salute are taken from Father Mangin.

Mossi Salute

644 "The Moaga puts down everything, load, hat, cap, and sword,
576 removes his shoes, and sits on the ground. He folds his legs slightly and bends the upper part of his body forward. The elbows rest on the ground, spread as far apart as possible. The forearms, folded

644 in front of the chest, and the half-closed hands with thumbs raised
576 together strike [108] the ground three or four times. Then the Mossi raises his body a little and rubs the palms of his hands together. He never looks at the face of the person he is saluting, but keeps his eyes slightly lowered. It is truly a very humiliating posture, especially when the chief who is being saluted remains standing or on horseback, towering above his subordinate and barely according him a glance.

"The women, instead of striking the ground with their forearms, hit it with the elbows and raise their open hands, fingers extended, to shoulder height.

"The grand salute, (1) very rarely used, consists of turning

1. Father Mangin neglected to mention that this salute is used only when the chief or other personage has given a wife, a robe, or some other gift to the person who is saluting him. Furthermore, those present cover their foreheads with dust.

around after the ordinary salute has been completed, taking some dust in both hands, spreading it on the forehead, and then saluting once more.

576 "When two natives who know each other meet along the way, the younger of the two squats first and begins the salute, which the other acknowledges by squatting in turn. If they are carrying loads, they set them down before saluting. They are never in a hurry. Servants and women, when they walk before a chief, bow slightly and join their hands in front of the chest. Though complicated, the Mossi salute is rendered easily and gracefully by the natives; they are used to it from an early [109] age and never perform it in the clumsy and awkward manner which is theirs when they attempt to imitate the military salute."

Respect Due the Home of the Naba

554 The kombéré is absolute master of his territory. His subjects must show him the same deference as he himself shows to the Mogho Naba.

However, even though he is not a noble, a minister of the emperor need not remove his cap to respond to the salute of a kombéré. On the contrary, the latter is required to humble himself, to give way before him just as he would before the Mogho Naba.

644 The nabiga (son of a naba), nakomsé (descendants of naba) and, still more, an ordinary Moaga are all categorically forbidden to wear their shoes or their caps at the court of the naba. The only exception to the rule is when the person is a Moslem convert, but even then he always leaves his shoes at the door. He may, however, wear his cap or turban. Shoes and headgear may be put on again only after the subject is 300 meters from the house of the naba. Sometimes, in places where custom is rigorously enforced, the person must be out of sight.

[687] Any infraction of these rules was punished severely by the lash and by confiscation of property by the samand'kamba of the naba [110] when the offender was not of the nobility, that is, was neither nabiga nor nakombga.

291 It is interesting to note that wearing the fez, originally one of the badges of chiefdom, was forbidden to the nabiga and all the more to the talga (ordinary Moaga). Today it is commonly worn by men and youths since European traders and shops have made common an article which was once very rare.

576 Shaking hands. One seldom sees a naba extend his hand to one
413 of his subjects or, more especially, to his brothers or fellow nobles (nakomsé).

There are two reasons for this prohibition: 1) the naba is supposed to maintain a certain distance between himself and his subjects, a normal practice; and 2) a superstitious belief has it that persons [154] harboring evil intentions toward the chief put magic powders on their hands to cause swellings which may develop into real abscesses.

576 Thus, although the Mogho Naba would not in the least object
643 to shaking hands with a Bambara or a Djerma, he would be aston-
ished if a native Moaga -- even an official -- should offer his
hand.

543 As soon as the children of a naba have reached the age of dis-
576 cretion, they may no longer play with their "papa," even less
shake hands with him. They must henceforth follow the general
rule which requires the Mossi salute, kantissé.

576 [111] Nowadays naba (kombemba) and nayiridamba (ministers
602 of the emperor) understand the uselessness of such signs of distrust.
Therefore, even though they continue to be less familiar with their
relatives (brothers, uncles, and sons -- whom they regard as rivals),
they willingly offer their hands to Mossi of any standing and to for-
eigners.

644 Reception by the naba. 1) Up to the present time and despite
some thirty-five years of French occupation, the way one is re-
ceived at the court of the emperor, which, of course, befalls his
servitors, has altered very little. Natives who are now officials in
the administration and in business enterprises are still treated on the
same footing as their less highly placed compatriots. Not only are
they required to perform the kantissé (Mossi salute) as described by
Father Mangin, but also afterwards they must sit on the ground, a
position that is difficult in European clothes. Foreigners (Bambara,
[648] Djerma, even Gourounsi) are offered seats because the soroné do not
regard them as fellow countrymen.

645 2) By the ministers. At the present time all the emperor's
576 ministers have comfortable houses and splendid drawing rooms
352 furnished with Morris chairs and folding chairs. These seats are
177 offered [112] to visitors of any standing, while benches two or
three meters long are reserved for persons of less consequence (house
boys, cooks, circle guards, notables, etc.).

631 3) By the kombemba. Benches are always reserved for visitors of
576 note or, if there are none, mats are provided. Some of these chiefs
352 even own a few commonplace chairs and perhaps one or two folding
chairs.

Hierarchies among the Ministers and Officials at the Court of the King of the Mossi

554 There exists a kind of hierarchy among the naba. One chief
631 may have to uncover his head before greeting another because he is his "little brother" (naoua) or because he is in the presence of a chief of higher rank (for instance, the "petty kings," dima).

It is extremely difficult to determine the hierarchy which exists among the kombemba because there are so many of them, but they respect it even today. It would be difficult to undertake research on the subject which has only local interest and would not benefit our work.

645 The following paragraphs, therefore, will deal only with the
554 ministers and other officials at the emperor's court.
576 Mutual relations among the ministers before the French occupation. (a) The Ouidi-Naba, prime minister and chief of the cavalry. [113] After his appointment the Ouidi Naba is required only to call on the Mogho Naba. The other ministers and the notables at Ouagadougou must call on him. Naturally, by virtue of his rank, the Ouidi Naba is expected to offer them large quantities of beer and to have sheep and even cows slaughtered in their honor.

(b) The Larrhallé Naba, a minister also and guardian of the tombs. Despite what happened quite recently (March-April, 1929), the Larrhallé Naba is only required to call on the Ouidi Naba and, if he wishes to do so, on the Gounga Naba. He does not call upon the other ministers and officials.

(c) The Gounga Naba is required to call upon the two higher ministers, the Ouidi Naba and Larrhallé Naba. The other officials at court must call on him, and, like the Ouidi Naba, he offers them beer and meat.

(d) The Baloum Naba, the steward of the Mogho Naba and chief of the pages. Early in his term of office he must call upon the three principal ministers and upon the imam. No other visits are required of him, he does not call upon other court personages.

This stated, let us go on to the most important matter.

644 Ministers and other officials at the court of the Mogho Naba. In the courtyard where the emperor's audiences are held, [114] there are heaps of stones to mark the places of the ministers and their followers.

The Ouidi Naba, Larrhallé Naba, Gounga Naba, and Kamsaongho Naba assemble with their followers. The Baloum Naba, Zusobinkassanga, and the rest also have their fixed places. They are not permitted to leave their places to greet one another until they have saluted the Mogho Naba.

In the old days only the Baloum Naba, the Zusoaba, and the Kamsaogho, together with the servitors and grooms, were allowed to call upon the emperor in his palace courtyard. The other ministers and court officials (Ouidi Naba, Larrhallé Naba, Gounga Naba, etc.) were not, under any pretext or circumstance, permitted to penetrate the interior courtyard of the home of the Mogho Naba. They had their presence announced by soroné and [344] waited under a shelter (benda zandé) in the audience courtyard. Only a few years ago, when the present Gounga Naba succeeded his father, he asked the reason for this prohibition. Since no good reason was given, he asked the emperor for permission to break the rule, and since that time all his colleagues have followed suit.

644 The cap. We have seen that at the time of his appointment 292 [115] each minister, court official, and canton chief is presented 554 with a cap by the Mogho Naba. Obviously he cannot wear the same cap for the rest of his life, so later replacements bought by him are regarded as just as sacred as the original. All his subjects, even the son of a naba, are strictly forbidden to wear this cap. We have also seen that in the old days an ordinary Moaga was expressly forbidden to wear the red fez (1) since this was the type of headgear

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1. Among the Habè [Habe] the hogon is the [illegible] is the only one who may wear the red fez. When young Habè men are taken into the [French] army as riflemen, they never again wear the red fez [part of the army uniform] after they are discharged and return to their homes.

644 conferred by the Mogho Naba on the canton chiefs.

292 With the exception of the Tenkodogo Naba and, more re-
554 cently, the Boussouma Naba, neither of whom renders honors to the Mogho Naba, all ministers, other petty dima, and chiefs of Mossi cantons must take off his cap to greet the emperor.

576 (a) Between ministers. The Ouidi Naba does not remove his
554 cap for any of his colleagues.

The Larrhallé Naba, Gounga Naba, and Kamsaongo Naba are
645 equals and greet each other with their caps on.

The Baloum Naba and Samandé Naba are also equals, and they do not take off their caps when greeting each other. However, they were required to remove their caps (pougla) and even to perform the kantissé in the presence of the three principal ministers.

[116] Next in importance are the Nemdo Naba or "chief of the meat" [in charge of slaughtering], the Poé Naba who is confessor to the emperor's wives, the Bend Naba, chief of the drummers, and, finally, a whole string of petty chiefs of no importance who can hardly be distinguished from the general populace and whom it would be fruitless to enumerate here.

The Poé Naba may keep his cap on when he is in the presence of the Baloum Naba or the Samandé Naba, but he must remove it for the other ministers and must even prostrate himself to perform the kantissé.

645 Not very long ago, when the province chiefs of Ouagadougou
574 possessed neither comfortable houses nor furniture, the ministers rarely visited each other. I have even once seen a minister sit on the ground in order to give his seat to one of his colleagues.

645 Whenever matters came up which required a meeting, the ministers met at night in one or another of their homes without the knowledge of the public.

645 Today, the principal ministers have proper reception rooms.
576 They can, therefore, remain seated when a more important colleague calls upon them and limit their special consideration of the visitor to offering him a Morris armchair or a folding chair.

701 The Tensoba, the minister of war, never takes off his cap for a
554 minister or a canton chief. He does so only before the emperor.
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701 Formerly, when war broke out and he was summoned to [117]
554 Ouagadougou, the Tansoba [sic] assembled the principal ministers
645 of the Mogho Naba at the home of his host, and his word was final.

Aside from this special case, he might call upon a minister, but then a servitor always brought along the cushion on which he would sit until the minister receives him in his private quarters. He was never received in public.

Once inside, the Tansoba occupied the best seat, and the minister got down on the floor and performed the Mossi salute.

In sum, the Tansoba was held in higher esteem than any other personage at the king's court.

(b) At the present time. Today ministers often visit each other.
645 Since they have rapid means of transportation at their disposal, they
574 regularly go about without escorts. Most often their visits are made in order to deal with matters of general interest.

When a minister calls upon another minister, he keeps his cap
645 on and neither removes his shoes nor performs the kantissé. They
576 are equals. This equality has been established by the local admin-
574 istration which has granted the same rights and salary to all. The minister shakes hands with his colleague and takes a seat. He is served copious quantities of beer, and then he takes his leave.

In spite of assertions to the contrary, the Mossi empire is po-
642 litically disorganized. This accounts for the errors committed by the local administration and the [118] mistakes held against the ministers of the Mogho Naba who for a long time were granted too much power.

The Origin of Mossi Chiefdom (Legend), or the Way the Peulh, the Yarcé, and the Blacksmiths Salute Mossi Chiefs

713 The Peulh, the Yarcé, and, to a certain extent, the black-
184 smiths do not perform the kantissé (Mossi salute). They have a dif-
576 ferent way of saluting naba. A curious legend explains this phenomenon. However bizarre it may seem, it is not lacking in interest, and we shall tell it just as it was handed down to us.

113 Origins of chiefdom. God first created four brothers. Like Adam and Eve in Paradise, they lived a life of ease without thought for tomorrow. When God saw this, he made four hàpidgou baskets and in them placed four miracles. The baskets were of different weights and shapes. Then he called the four brothers and said to them: "The future of each of you will depend on your choice." The eldest chose the heaviest basket, the second brother imitated his elder brother, the third took the largest basket, and the youngest took the last and smallest basket.

God then said to them: "Go forth into the world (that is, [119] Mossi country), and each of you build your house on a plain."

The next morning the four brothers started out. They came to a broad plain, and there the eldest brother remained. The three other brothers were grieved to leave him, but they continued on their way until each had found a place to settle.

It was then that the following miracles occurred.

1. The blacksmith (sayan in Mossi). Upon awakening the morning after he was established, the eldest brother found himself surrounded by a small family, large quantities of iron, and an anvil. These were the contents of his chosen kapidgou. The man at once realized that he was supposed to use the iron for something useful, so he set to work and, with God's help, discovered the hoe (wanka) and the axe (laré) which are essential for farming. Thus, he became a blacksmith (sayan).

2. The Peulh ("silmiga" in Mossi). The second brother, upon awakening, found himself surrounded by great numbers of oxen and cows, herded by some young men of his tribe. There was nothing in the way of shelter except a kind of crude hut (songdo), but he himself was very trim. His clothing was all white, and he had a white cap wound with a turban. He realized that he was the master of all of the beings around him, because he had only to give an order and large gourds filled with milk were at once brought to him. Thus, he became a Peulh.

3. The Yarga. The third brother, on waking, found [120] himself surrounded by donkeys laden with salt, kola nuts, and other articles of trade. Like his elder brother, the Peulh, he wore an ample white robe, but his cap was of a darker color. Thus, he

773 became the Yarga or tradesman.

4. The naba. As for the youngest brother, imagine his astonishment upon awakening to find himself in a splendid dwelling made up of many tata [houses] and surrounded by a real court with hundreds of courtiers, horses, and grooms. He saw a crowd approach and prostrate themselves in the Mossi salute as it is performed today. Furthermore, he had a harem. He realized that he was the uncontested master of all these people. Thus was created the naba.

These four brothers, however, could not endure having no news of each other. One day the eldest brother, the blacksmith, said to himself: "I am going to undertake a journey to find my brothers and learn what has happened to them." He started out, first taking care to provide himself with some of the tools he had made. When he reached the village, he had great difficulty in making his way through the herds of cattle and their herders. Finally he managed to present himself to the master of the place, the owner of so much wealth, and recognized his brother, the Peulh. The latter received him cordially and saw to it that abundant food, prepared in large part from milk, was served to him.

[121] After he had rested, the blacksmith told the Peulh the object of his journey, and the latter decided to accompany him. They left at dawn, the blacksmith with his load of daba (wanksé) and the Peulh followed by some of his cattle and by many bearers carrying gourds filled with milk for the journey. At nightfall they reached the village of their brother, the Yarga, whom they hardly recognized. For the first time they tasted kola nuts (gouré) which, they were told, came from komnoré (shores of great rivers). In short, the Yarga gave his brothers a worthy reception.

When the blacksmith and the Peulh told their brother that they were merely passing through to inquire about his health and that they were going on the next morning to seek their youngest brother, the Yarga, in turn decided to accompany them. All three set out with many followers. The tradesman loaded a donkey with salt, intending to sell some of it to people encountered along the way and to give the rest to his young brother.

They were overcome with both admiration and fear when they reached the youngest brother's house. They had heard along the

113 road -- but did not take the news seriously -- that their brother had become a "great naba," that he ruled over numerous subjects and that it would be difficult to approach the throne on which he sat. To their great surprise, all came about exactly as had been foretold. They encountered great difficulties in breaking through the rigid court protocol. They were repulsed by sogoné, jostled by grooms, and had to wait for hours [122] before His Majesty the Naba deigned to receive them as though they were the humblest of his subjects. In spite of their protestations, the courtiers of the naba had not for a moment believed that there might really be a family tie between these strangers and the one whom they regarded as a "god."

Flourishes on drums finally announced the appearance of the potentate. When he took his place on the throne (guéré), even though his three brothers were filled with wonder, jealousy nevertheless arose in their hearts. They looked at each other questioningly. Should they abase themselves as did his subjects? Here is what happened. The blacksmith sat down on the ground but did not imitate the Mossi salute. He merely struck the ground with his zanré. The Peulh, who was more arrogant, squatted, held his arms out in front, closed his fists, and then casually uttered these words: "Lafibé raoua, gang'bélafi" (literally, "Good day, man, how are you?"). He had kept his cap on but had left his néoda (shoes) at the door out of respect and fear. As for the Yarga, who was nearest to the naba, he sat down on the ground, slightly bent his legs, bowed a little, and finally rubbed his hands together slightly by way of salutation. He had also left his néoda at the door but had kept his cap on, like his brother, the Peulh.

The naba had them led to the home of one of his ministers and for several days saw to it that they were given copious meals and presented them with many gifts.

In return, the blacksmith presented the naba with a load of wanksé [123] (hoes) to cultivate his fields, the Peulh gave him some cattle, and the Yarga gave a bar of salt.

Finally they decided to leave their young brother and return to their respective villages. They took counsel along the way and decided to settle in the territory of the naba, thus making sure of his

773 protection. The Peulh would acquire more cattle by taking charge of the animals belonging to the Mossi, and the Yarga would find better markets for his salt and kola nuts. As for the blacksmith, he would make the many farm implements needed for the cultivation of the vast domains which were either not worked at all or insufficiently exploited because of the lack of tools.

They set the date for their return. Once more the naba received them very cordially, but they showed no greater deference to him than they had shown on their first visit.

And so the legend comes to an end by concluding that this is why the Peulh and the Yarga have retained their spirit of independence. As for the blacksmith, who remained poorer, he came [526] to submit to certain regulations which are common to all the Mossi although he never leaves his forge to salute the naba when he passes. As has already been noted, he merely strikes his zanré against his anvil, just as formerly he struck it on the ground by way of salutation.

[124] Chapter 8

Customs. Enthronement of the Naba. Names.

Death of a Mogho Naba

643 766 The death of a Mogho Naba is kept secret until the arrival at Ouagadougou of the Tansoba, who was forewarned when the illness became grave. On his arrival, the public is told that "the fire has gone out" (bougsaré kimé).

The personages in charge of the burial are Pazany'ting'soba (the undertaker), Tampouy Naba, Kassiri Naba, Benghin Naba, Toghin Naba, Ganin Naba, and Tanghin Naba.

The arrangement of the tomb. The grave in which the mortal remains of the king are buried is really a subterranean hut. Before the king is placed in his final dwelling (1), the following things

1. The body is wrapped in one or several cow hides.

643 are placed in the tomb: two sheep skins (gando); some cushions
766 (nagpouya); several bolsters (fourkamsé); and a zoukougré -- all made of leather. All of these are arranged as though the chief were to lie down to rest.

After the corpse has been washed (Naba Siguire, father of the present Mogho Naba, was washed by marabouts [125] since he was the son of a naba who was a Moslem believer), it is clothed all in white. In the house of every Mogho Naba a corner of the wall is
[531 decorated with rather attractive designs, and the dead Mogho Naba
761] is carried through it on his way to the tomb. The sight of this corner, which is seldom visited, reminds the chief still living of the mortality of all beings and makes him realize that in the same way as he succeeded someone, so will he, in turn, be replaced by another; the corner will one day become an opening through which his own body will pass at the end of his lifetime.

In addition to the garments in which he is clothed, the following items are placed in the grave beside him: a folded white robe (fou yorgo); a pair of trousers (kourga); a blanket (fou gobga); a pair of slippers (néoda); a small knife (souga); a sword (zangoégo); a gourd of beer (dam) with a calabash over the neck and a small cloth (leppré) over it; a loaf of salt (yamsem); a gourd filled with a hundred kola nuts (gouré wamdé); a sewn sack filled with cowries (liguide ne yolmoumdi); napaga ornaments (douamba and zuyan); and tobacco if the chief smoked or chewed it.

[767] The undertaker is entitled to take the salt, some kola nuts, and some meat when he departs.

[126] When the burial is over, one walks around the house of the deceased.

643 It should be noted that before the burial or sometimes when the death of the king is first known, all of his wives who have children take flight for fear that their son will be made kourita.

The kourita is a child of the deceased and must bear the latter's name. He is exiled and must never, so long as he lives, look upon the new Mogho Naba. Until the emperor is represented on earth by his kourita, his successor cannot be named. This explains the general flight of all of the wives who have children.

The Kourita

443 As we have just seen, the child who is made kourita is exiled and is no longer regarded as a member of the family. He is himself the Naba, and he must never see the new emperor. His brothers may visit him, and he may visit them.

1. The kourita is washed with the remainder of the water that was used to wash the body of the deceased king.

2. He is carried through the same opening (vonré) as was used to carry out the body of the dead naba.

3. He is given the woman with whom the chief last had sexual relations before he was stricken by illness.

4. He is also given the horse which the deceased king rode every Friday.

[127] He is dressed in the last garments worn by the deceased. He is given one or two servitors and as many grooms and is then sent to the Kilwin Naba (chief of a hamlet near Bissiga, three kilometers from Ouagadougou), who is required to give him hospitality for about a month.

In the old days, the power of a kourita was almost unlimited. Indeed, during his stay at Kilwin, he had the right to pillage, to ruin everything, and to live like a true potentate. Naturally he always had plenty of willing helpers to aid him in plundering the property of the unfortunate Mossi. The kourita traveled about through many cantons where the kombemba (plural of kombéré) paid him all the honors due the Mogho Naba. It was during these wanderings that he finally chose a permanent residence.

[127] The new Mogho Naba is obliged to satisfy all the desires of the kourita to avoid being visited by him, an omen of disaster. Indeed, the Mossi believe that if the kourita should visit the new Mogho Naba, the latter would die.

The Enthronement -- Before and After

As we have already seen, once the burial is completed, one walks around the house of the deceased king. Then, the following persons are summoned to Ouagadougou:

1. Loumbila Naba.

643

2. Saponé Naba.
3. Ouagadougou Naba (who lives in Ouagadougou). [128]
4. Zagtouli Naba.
5. Bingo Naba.
6. Gnimdi Naba.
7. Sabtenga Naba.

All of these personages are accompanied by many men, armed with arrows and rifles. They halt before the women's gate (paghnoré) and lie down. They have become guards of the royal household.

At this time the candidates for the position of Mogho Naba are all in Ouagadougou, and each of them is calling on the ministers and presenting many gifts to them. There is often competition for the post, but as a rule the eldest son of the king is named to succeed his father.

On the day of the nomination, the nabiga (from naba, "chief," and biga "son") is taken to the home of the Samandé Naba where the ministers hold council. If they agree unanimously to name the nabiga, they bring him out of the hut in which he has been anxiously awaiting their decision and tell him that Oubritenga, Zound'wéogo, Koudtenga, and so on are his property (that is, that he is recognized as the sole holder of power and that he alone rules all the lands enumerated). This is ordinarily done in the evening. The next morning the new Mogho Naba dresses and mounts his horse in front of the paghnoré (women's gate). The Kalzi Naba takes the bridle, leads the new appointee to the Loumbila Naba, and says to the latter and his followers: "Oubritenga Ramba, adi Naba, adi Kouda (People of Oubritenga, here is your master)."

[129] He is then taken before the Saponé Naba, and the latter and his followers are told: "Koud'tinga Ramba, adi Naba, adi Kouda (People of Koud'tinga, here is your master)."

The new chief is then presented to the Zagtouli Naba and to the Ouagadougou Naba with the words: "Naba Rimba Tenga Ramba, adi Naba, adi Kouda (People of Rimbatenga, here is your master)."

Finally, he is presented to the remaining chiefs with the words: "Zound'wéogo Ramba, adi Naba, adi Kouda (Here is your master)."

The Mogho Naba then returns to his house. He is king.

643 Soon afterward he comes out and seats himself in the shade of a tree at the home of the Samandé Nabila [assistant to the Samandé Naba]. The doudissi are played ensemble, and the whole populace shouts joyfully.

The Ouidi Naba, the Tansoba, and all the other ministers and important personages come to present homage and to swear their fealty and submission. Each one makes a profession of loyalty.

In the evening, the new naba leaves the home of the Samandé Nabila and goes to spend the night at the home of the Ouagadougou Naba.

The next day he goes to Passepanga (from passé, "to increase, to add," and panga, "power, strength") where all other chiefs and descendants of Mogho Naba come to salute him.

At Passepanga the Mogho Naba sits under a tree with thousands of men right and left, all armed with rifles and aligned as for a session of rifle practice. They leave a kind of avenue in front of the new naba so that he is easily seen. Each [130] naba, with his retinue, comes to swear fealty and to make a profession of loyalty. The brothers of the new appointee, even those who were his rivals, come to make obeisance. The Mogho Naba then retires to the home of his gansoba (host) and sees to it that everyone has ample quantities of dam and that nissi (cows) are slaughtered for them.

The Mogho Naba remains at Passepanga for a week, and then he goes to Dimvoussé ("king's rest").

Finally, two or three years later, he chooses the place where he wishes to build his permanent residence.

Certain Names and Their Meaning

551 When appointed, every chief loses his given name, and he is even forbidden to say it. He chooses a name for himself when he is appointed.

We shall now study some of these names and try to establish the moral precepts that go with them.

551 643 1. Mogho Naba Wobgo (Boukary was his real name). When Mogho Naba Sanum (literally, "gold") drove his brother Boukary from his territory, the latter took refuge at Bassawarga where he conquered the Gourounsi whom he enslaved, although later they became his sofa [guards or military retinue].

551 When Naba Sanum died, several candidates presented them-
143 selves to be named Mogho Naba.

Boukary also returned, accompanied by an impressive escort of Gourounsi armed with arrows, rifles, and clubs. He made gifts to the ministers, as all his [131] rivals were doing. However, seeing that the nomination of a successor to his late brother was being delayed, he one day remarked to the Ouidi Naba: "Designate anyone you wish for the throne, but I shall wrest it from him."

The evening of the day set for the nomination arrived (we have already noted that each candidate was put in a hut at the home of the Samandé Nabila), and the future Naba Wobgo assembled all his Gourounsi followers and addressed them more or less in these terms: "The new Mogho Naba is to be appointed tonight; when I go to the home of the Samandé Nabila you follow me, be armed, and surround the place. If by any chance I am not named, I shall say to you when I come out, 'Forward! Spare no one, not even the ministers, the other nabissi, or the new appointee.' "

That night, the Gourounsi, faithful to the commands of their chief, did as he had ordered.

While the ministers were discussing which of the nabissi should be named (of course, the future Naba Wobgo was automatically eliminated), the Larrhallé Naba came out to relieve himself. In the half-darkness he was astonished to see the men armed with arrows, rifles, and clubs. He reported these disquieting developments to the Ouidi Naba, who at once came out to see for himself. Everyone knew that only Boukary could organize such a plot. Fearing that they would otherwise all be murdered, they unanimously appointed him Mogho Naba.

When the time came for him to select the name that would be his until death, he said this: [132] "Kim missi laguem koabga kon bougouss'Wobgo (a hundred ghosts cannot frighten an elephant)." I am sure that here he was addressing his competitors. Then he added: "Ni Tiem Koudré Banghe pouiré taloug'pa salga (an old man who bequeaths his property wisely avoids strife)." Here he was addressing the ministers. He was aware that he was not liked, so he had prepared for war. The ministers had not wanted to name him and had done so only out of fear of being murdered.

551 643 2. Mogho Naba Kom (kom, "water"). When he was still quite young, Mogho Naba Kom, who is on the throne today, succeeded his father, Naba Siguiri, to the great surprise of his enemies. He took the name of Naba Kom.

(a) Kom sound Tambdo ti koulg'king lad moaghana. (During the rainy season when much water falls, the rivers and seas rejoice to see their water swell.)

(b) Neb san toul béogo bi a balem Wendé. (He who dreams of tomorrow must place his faith in God.)

(c) Sandib, laguem koabga ti pigh'pam nionré. Since he was very young at the time of his nomination, many begrudged him the appointment, and sorcery was used to cause his death. This third name means "A hundred charlatans, makers of charms, cannot prevail against the pigha (rock, i.e., the chief)."

(d) Gonpaniendégha kon nies niédga. (One does not [133] wipe one's bottom with thorns and brambles.) This alludes to his enemies and means that in spite of them he rules all the same.

(e) Tang'niebga belem mogré pamé wek'balbo. (Since the crocodile can only really live and procreate along the banks of watercourses, what is a mountain crocodile to do if he desires many offspring? He must move his dwelling and go to the water.)

551 645 3. The Ouidi Naba (actually named Rabi), Naba Boulga (literally, "well [pit]").

(a) Baning sorr'yoagba n'tilig kinsé la wamsé. (The large white or sorghum grown under the Strophanthus has no fear of being eaten by birds or monkeys.)

(b) Yel somd'boulgh'tont niédbo. (The well of righteousness cannot be filled.)

4. The Gounga Naba (actually named Namébrogo Ilboudo), Naba Yemdé (literally, "hippopotamus"). Yem deng kouilga ti zimbi datin dem yaré. ("When the hippopotamus is first to arrive at the waterhold, the fish can play about at will," or "when fish play around a hippopotamus, they will not be troubled by either big fish or fishermen.")

5. The Baloum Naba (Tenga Ouédraogo), Naba Tanga (literally, "mountain").

(a) "A mountain crowned with trees is soon noticed," or "in order to be respected, one must have good support, good backing."

551 [134] (b) Kata laghem koagb'kon sirigh tanga. (A hundred
645 barking hyenas cannot shake a mountain.)

6. Kamsoro Naba (Ouene Nongué), Naba Niouga ("cat"). He is chief eunuch. Nioug'nok wendé na pa ne Sabelem. (A cat who trusts in God is sure to preserve his blackness.) In other words, one who is protected by the Mogho Naba, his "God," will never lack for anything; everything will come to him as if by magic.

7. Naba Gnighnemdo (Mogho Naba). Naba Oubri, the founder
551 of the Ouagadougou dynasty, fell in love with one of his own daugh-
643 ters and had intercourse with her. The girl became pregnant and
835 gave birth to a son. The wives of Naba Oubri wanted to put both the child and the mother to death. They asked the girl the name of the child's father, and she replied, "Ask my father, he ought to know." When Oubri was questioned, he answered: "Bassi yan ya mam lam gnighnemdo (Do nothing, this is my own flesh)."

The child of this incestuous union was thus named Gnighnemdo and later succeeded his relative, Naba Nasbiré.

The Placing of Statues at Loumbi-Raogo

211 Ganlougdou. In the old days, upon the death of a Mogho
306 Naba or soon after, a jeweler was called in [135] to make a wax
532 statuette, later to be cast in bronze, in the likeness of the late chief. The jeweler also made statuettes of one soroné, one napagha, one bendré, and one lounga, and all were deposited at the home
[177] of the Loumbila Naba. This practice was suppressed upon the arrival of the French, and it appears that there is no statue of Naba Siguiri, father of Naba Kom, the present naba, at Loumbila.

The acting Mogho Naba is never supposed to see these statues, and the jeweler who made the likeness of his father must not see
[135] them either. The jeweler was paid 100,000 cowries, a horse, a donkey, a cow, a wife, a large robe, and 1,000 kola nuts, and he was then sent away from Ouagadougou. He must never return and must never see the new Mogho Naba.

These gifts represented a considerable sum in the old days, even today for that matter. They were given to aid the jeweler in consulting seers and charlatans for the purpose of prolonging his life. Tradition has it that unless he followed faithfully the prescriptions given by the seers, he would die within a year after completing the statues.

The Kombéré: Death, Enthronement

631 763 202 Death. Upon the death of a kombéré two representatives in mourning are sent from the canton to Ouagadougou to deliver the sad news to the Mogho Naba. The envoys are entrusted with a horse or a sheep, depending on the importance of the naba. Tanga branches are tied to the animal's tail (see Ouidi Naba, Chapter 4).

[136] When the first emissary reaches the courtyard of the Mogho Naba, he sits down, taking care to place one hand on the ground and stretching out his arm. Since the very sight of the horse is significant, even before any explanation is offered, the Zusoaba enters the house of the Mogho Naba and comes out again bearing a gourd of water with flour in it (zom kom) which he pours on the envoy's arm.

The horse is then handed over to a representative of the Ouidi Naba who removes the branches and leads the animal to Widhin [Ouidin].

The Zusoaba takes back the gourd, and it is only then that the Ouidi Naba says to the Mogho Naba: "Naba zagl yka sambga le tongalamé (Chief So-and-So has been stricken with such-and-such an illness and has succumbed)." It should be added that before going to see the Mogho Naba, the envoys first inform the ministers of the death of the kombéré.

631 766 The Mogho Naba asks a few appropriate questions and sends the representatives to prepare the kouré. On the day of the ceremony, the Nabitienga (eldest son of the deceased chief) has large quantities of beer and saghbo prepared and sheep and cattle killed to feed the people gathered in great numbers for the occasion.

The house is circled, as was described for the Mogho Naba.

[445] (a) Koupéogo (kouré basket). The koupéogo is a basket, artistically made, into which is put the foutou (clothing of the deceased), [137] koursi (trousers), his pougla (red fez), his néoda (slippers), the zandé (club), and the wed'zouré (horse's tail). This basket is laid upon a pé'gaongo (skin of a sheep) in the zaongo (antechamber).

One of the sisters of the Nabitienga, usually the eldest daughter of the deceased, carries the péogo outside and seats herself at the place where the dead chief held his daily audiences (guéré). The benda, liunsé, and gangando drums are played together, and then

631 766 everyone gives what he can. Everyone from the Nabitienga down through his brothers and sisters, close relatives, and their brothers and sisters, in short, anyone even remotely related to the deceased, comes up and offers something. Most often the gift is made up of cowries.

The koupéogo is then returned to the zaongo. Some zom kom (water with flour in it) and some dam (dolo or fermented millet beer) are poured at the door of the antechamber.

The benda and other drummers gather up all the cowries they have received and go a short distance from the house to divide them up.

The benda are expected to give a few cowries to any Yarga, Silmimoaga, or sayan (1) who happens to pass by during the distribution.

1. Yarga: a Dioula [Diula] of the Mandé [Mande] group. Silmimoaga: one who has adopted the customs of the Peulh.

Sayan: blacksmith.

643 428] (b) Fado. This is the share that goes by right to the Mogho Naba from the estate of every kombéré.

[138] The Mogho Naba sends representatives to whom are entrusted a rooster, a sheep, and, depending on the importance of the chief, a cow and 5,000 to 10,000 cowries.

As soon as he has been presented to the Nabitienga, the first envoy of the Mogho Naba says to him: "Nab'kayé ti mog'naba yel tid wa pous' nabitiengh'togo lad reguib' lokon'wa tib laguemb taba ti ya yel koudgo (Such-and-such a chief having died, the Mogho Naba sends us to deliver his condolences to the Nabitienga and to request of him that the quiver of the naba be turned over to us so that it may be placed beside those of his ancestors, as is the custom)."

The Nabitienga thanks them and orders the loko [quiver] to be brought out at once. It is placed on the ground, and sacrifice is made, in turn, of the chicken, the sheep, and even the cow sent by the Mogho Naba.

631 All of these preliminaries are only the beginning, and when
643 they are completed, the emperor's first envoy orders the Nabitienga
428 to go out into the sunshine so that the fado [share for the Mogho
766 Naba] may be claimed. The Nabitienga complies with the request. Thereupon the first envoy says to him through a messenger: "Mogh' Naba yé tid wa reg fado, ya nig'tousri (1,000 head of cattle), pissi tousri (1,000 sheep), bouss'tousri (1,000 goats), foutou tousri (1,000 garments)," etc. To which the Nabitienga replies: "Tond ba sin ki a ka bas roumsi ne arzek'yé (our late father left neither animals nor other wealth sufficient to satisfy the demands of the Mogho Naba)."

The messenger reports the reply to the emperor's representatives. The relatives of the Nabitienga go [139] to gather together a wanka (hoe), a laré (ax), and a goégo (sickle), and then they tell the nayiridamba (representatives) to go into the antechamber where all of the wealth is piled up. The nayirdamba [sic] send in some soroné who come back and report on what is there. Then they ask the Nabitienga for the fado a second time, and this time it is given to them in the form of the following articles: a robe, a pair of trousers, bracelets, fodo, rouamba (ornaments of the napagha), an ample robe, a pair of slippers, a knife (zangoégo), some salt, some cowries, kalgo (soumbala) balls, nemdo (dried meat), moui (rice), etc.

The envoys are housed for a whole week by the Mabitienga, aided by the inhabitants and his relatives.

On the eighth day, before taking leave of his guests, the Nabitienga slaughters a cow, has large quantities of saghbo and beer prepared and sheep killed, gives clothing to all the envoys of the Mogho Naba, offers them up to 50,000 cowries, depending on their importance, etc.

He has a horse saddled with his father's saddle, and the animal is tethered in front of the antechamber.

One of the nayirdamba unties the horse and walks three times around the house of the deceased naba. The person who mounts the horse is given liguidi (cowries) and clothing and the fez of the naba. He is entitled to keep all this after his return to Ouagadougou, after he has reported to the authorities. The horse becomes the property of the Mogho Naba and is turned over to the Wedranga Naba (personal equerry of the king).

63 The Nabitienga notifies the populace of the [140] canton that
43 in view of his father's death he wishes to go to Ouagadougou to lay claim to the succession. He then asks the aid of every man present: 100 cowries from each ykanda (head of compound) and 50 cowries from each dakonré (bachelor). This aid is at once forthcoming unless there is rivalry for the post. In that case the villages give their help to the candidate they wish to have appointed.

When he reaches Ouagadougou, the Nabitienga makes a series of calls and presents numerous gifts.

He gives: 1) 10,000 cowries and a sheep to the minister of the Mogho Naba who has jurisdiction over him; 2) 50,000 to 100,000 cowries, depending on his importance, a horse, and sometimes a cow to the Mogho Naba himself; 3) varying quantities of cowries, depending on the importance of the person visited, to the other ministers and important personages; 4) 1,000 to 2,000 cowries and a rooster to the Zusoaba (chief eunuch) whom he visits the following morning; and finally 5) generous gifts during the rest of his stay to the bonsramba (griot), benda, luinsé, doudissi, and gangando, as well as other courtiers.

63 Nomination. A kombéré candidate may stay at Ouagadougou from twenty to thirty days or even longer. On the eve of the nomination, the Mogho Naba summons the Baloum Naba and orders him to have the Baloum Naba and orders him to have the Nabitienga provide a chicken and a sheep for his sacrifice. This is certain proof that he is going to be appointed the next day, so he very generously rewards the soroné who brings him the message.

[141] The sheep (pesgo) and the rooster (noraogo) are sent to the Mogho Naba, who has them killed in his courtyard.

The next day the Mogho Naba, as soon as he appears, summons the Ouidi Naba, the Larrhallé Naba, the Kamsoro Naba, the Gounga Naba, and the Baloum Naba, and says to them: "Today I wish to make an end of the koubissi ("children of the kouré" or funeral observances); which among the candidates here is really capable of succeeding the late chief?" The Ouidi Naba replies: "Do whatever pleases you, Sire." After this, the Mogho Naba says: "In that case, I designate the Nabitienga, for his father did not forget me an instant during his life and it would not make sense to pass over his son." Then the Mogho Naba returns to his palace.

The Ouidi Naba returns to his place, calls the Baloum Naba, the Bend Naba, and the Poé Naba, and tells them the sovereign's

(63) decision. These three personages thank the Ouidi Naba, and the Baloum Naba in turn goes back to his place, summons the Sogoné-kassanga (chief of the sogoné), and orders him to send for a reliable sogoné. The latter, accompanied by a Bilbalga (inhabitant of Bilbalogo, the section of the Baloum Naba), is sent to answer the call of the Ouidi Naba.

The Ouidi Naba says to them: "Yelé Nakomsé, Nabaoudba tib leb saomin (tell the naba candidates to come out into the sun), Laï soki Nabitienga diessé à ba sin nan ki a yela mé ti niondi kon and nam (and ask the Nabitienga which son or relative his father, before he died, designated to succeed him)." The Nabitienga replies: "Yamb yam m'ba ka niak ned [142] yé (act as you see fit; my father designated no one)."

Once more the Ouidi Naba sends a question: "Là ting ramb yé la me tib kon anda (which candidate was chosen by the inhabitants of the canton)?" The Nabitienga replies again: "Ting ramb ka niak ned tib kon yé (the inhabitants have no choice but yours)." When this reply is brought to the Ouidi Naba, he finally says: "Go now and invest the Nabitienga with full powers; he is the choice of the Mogho Naba (Toughin kon nabitieng'nam, ti Mog'Naba yella me tib kon nien)." Then the envoys snatch the sheepskin which the Nabitienga was wearing over his shoulder and turn in one corner of it. They bear him in triumph to the tom-boko (literally, "hole in the dust"), and the appointed naba is now acclaimed by the crowd. He is then taken successively before the Ouidi Naba, the Zusoaba, and the Baloum Naba. Finally he is led to the shelter in which stands the Bend' Naba (chief of all the drummers of the Mogho Naba), who salutes him to the sound of his drum.

[551] The Zabyouré (literally, "pseudonym"). This is the name adopted by each new chief. It replaces his real name which must not be uttered during the lifetime of the naba.

As he stands before the Band'Naba, the Nabitienga says: "Everyone has honored me, respected me, and the Mogho Naba has chosen mé to succeed my father. I have no zabyouré, and I cannot, after all, get along without one." He then begins to enumerate some possible ones (for a study of these names, see [143] the special section above). Once all of these formalities are completed, the

63 new naba mounts his horse and goes off with the minister who has jurisdiction over him. The minister offers him some zom kom (water with flour in it) and then welcomes him into his courtyard where he is offered a canari of dam (beer) and gouré (kola nuts). He is then escorted back to the home of his gangsoba by a goodly throng of drummers, horsemen, etc.

63 All the defeated candidates are required to shave their heads
302 at once and to make a formal act of submission to the new naba as soon as he has returned to the home of his gangsoba (host). It should be added that the candidates allow their hair to grow from the day of the death of the naba to the day on which his successor is appointed.

63 The new appointee must offer dam, saghbo, and cowries to the
43 nayiridamba. He also offers dam, kola nuts, and cowries to the drummers.

63 On the following day he accompanies the minister to the home of the Mogho Naba. During the monarch's second audience (beg sonré),
644 the minister calls him to salute the Mogho Naba. The new naba goes forward to the tomboko, cries out three times (cries of joy), and then performs the kantissé (the Mossi salute). Thereupon, the Ouidi Naba says to the Mogho Naba: "The chief whom you deigned to honor yesterday wishes to express his gratitude." The Mogho Naba responds to the salute and then, for the first time, offers him a canari of dam.

The new naba then calls upon the ministers and other important personages (Ouidi Naba, Larrhallé Naba, Gounga Naba, [144] Poé Naba, Kamsoro Naba, Samandé Naba, the imam, Daporé Naba, and the next day the Zusoaba).

Seven days later the Mogho Naba gives him a robe, a pougla (red fez), a nagpouré (cushion), and néoda (slippers).

The new naba removes his old ragged clothes (I use the description advisedly, since custom forbids him to change his clothes until he has received those given by the Mogho Naba). He gives the discarded garments to a relative, dresses in the robe from the Mogho Naba, puts on the pougla (fez), and becomes a true naba.

63 A few days later he asks permission to return to his own lands. Many court representatives (nayirdamba) accompany him. It is the

631 duty of these representatives to assemble the notables of the villages and to order them to submit to the new naba, the only one recognized by the Mogho Naba.

631 In order to show their joy,[3] the people have large quantities of
527 beer prepared, and games are organized which may continue for several days. The village notables come to offer their submission and to swear fealty, bringing gifts (cowries, sheep, etc.) in accordance with the resources of the village and the wealth of the inhabitants.

631 When the nayirdamba leave for Ougadougou, the naba gives:
431 a wife and a robe to the Bilbalga; a wife and a robe to the soroné of the Mogho Naba; a wife and a robe to the soroné or the Baloum-Naba; a wife and a robe to the child of the Bend'Naba; etc.

Any children born to the women [145] so given belong, respectively, to the masters of these representatives.

631 Burial. Their burial is carried out in much the same manner
766 as in the case of the Mogho Naba, except for the specific persons involved. The arrangement of the tomb is also similar, although there is, of course, less pomp displayed. [146]

[3] [i.e. At the appointment of the new naba—Analyst]

Chapter 9

The Two Major Mossi Festivals

Mossi Festivals

796 In actual fact, there is only one annual festival celebrated by
527 the Mossi. It is known as tinsé or tingana. A second festival, which is more a family affair, is called basgha. The latter is variously named, depending on the region: for the Mogho Naba, it is called m'barengma; for the ordinary Moaga, basgha; in certain regions, kinkirga; etc. Although the date for the first festival is fixed by the Mogho Naba, the second festival is celebrated by each canton chief, each village chief, or each ikanda (married man) on any day that suits him, usually after the harvest.

In addition to these principal festivals, every important village has its annual festival, a kind of special market day. On

796 that day there is dam (beer) in every house and abundant meat,
527 and the inhabitants of nearby villages come to the festivities.

Here we shall describe only the two major festivals, tinsé and basgha.

Tinsé (Mossi Ritual Festival), or Naba Oubri Ma Kouré (The Funeral of Naba Oubri's Mother)

796 Origin. Naba Oubri, son of Zoungrana and [147] founder of
769 the Ouagadougou dynasty, gave his mother a very impressive kouré (funeral). The kouré took on the appearance of a great festival because of the large number of animals sacrificed, the generous supply of food, and the great quantity of beer (dam) prepared. Since Oubri was very powerful, he ordered that the anniversary of his mother's funeral should be celebrated every year, even after his death. His mother was Pogh'toe Hinga (literally, "bearded woman").

For this reason and also to obtain health for his people and abundant rain for their crops, the Mogho Naba still quite regularly celebrates this annual festival known as tinsé (from tinga "earth"). There is no set date for it; it is celebrated whenever possible, usually after the harvest.

796 Preparatory sacrifices. Before setting the date for the tinsé,
769 the Mogho Naba has livestock (cows, sheep) and roosters killed
782 on the tombs of his predecessors.

According to precedence, the sacrifices begin with Naba Zoungrana, Oubri's father, whose tomb is at Komtoega in the circle of Tenkodogo. The Mogho Naba sends a cow to the Loumbi-Raogo Naba to be sacrificed on the tomb of Naba Oubri. Oubriyaogo Naba (the guardian of Oubri's tomb) has the duty of sacrificing the animal.

The other animals are sacrificed by the Ouagadougou Naba, representing the family of the Ninissi (first [148] inhabitants of the country). He is accompanied by the eunuchs who are the guardians of the tombs (yad'nanamsé).

In order to honor emperors whose tombs are in various parts of the colony, representatives of the Mogho Naba are sent out with

796 sacrificial animals, and they are required to celebrate the festi-
769 val in these villages before returning to Ouagadougou.
782 In the old days the animals destined to be sacrificed were captured in the cantons by horsemen assigned to that duty. Today, however, the Mogho Naba requests his vassals to supply them.

It should be noted that the following Peulh chiefs provide cattle of their own volition and without any compulsion: Komtam Silmanaba, Gombogo Silminaba, Kourgou Silminaba, and Barkoundba Silminaba.

796 Setting the date for the ceremony. A week after the sacrifices
769 the emperor summons the Tansoba (war minister) or, if he cannot appear (sickness or some other chance reason), the Konkosé Naba. This personage must reply to the summons on the day he receives it.

796 The king then assembles his principal ministers and sets the
769 date for the celebration of the tinsé, twenty or twenty-one days
211 ahead. The Mogho Naba hands the Tansoba several knotted ropes (yoda) which are to be distributed by him to the following chiefs: [149] Sapone Naba, Tuili Naba, and Loumbila Naba.

The last-named chief hands his rope over to the Dapelgo Naba and to the Méguet Naba.

There are as many knots in the rope as there are days remaining until the festival.

As soon as the Tansoba has handed over the ropes, he must immediately return to his village.

The persons who have received the ropes are required to transmit them to the kombemba (plural of kombéré, canton chief) who untie a knot each day.

796 Celebration of the festival. Early on the day of the ceremony,
769 a Friday (arzouma), the ministers and other court officials present themselves before the king to wish him welcome (tabo).

The Mogho Naba presents a loaf of salt (yamss'néré, literally
796 "salt millstone") which is to be divided among the following digni-
769 taries: Ouidi Naba, Larrhallé Naba, Gounga Naba, Kamsaongho
263 Naba, Bougretenga Naba, Benga Naba, Poé Naba, Tampouf Naba, Bend'Naba, and their followers.

Half of a loaf of salt is also offered to the Baloum Naba, Dapoya Naba, Samandé Naba, and Wedranga Naba.

796 769 263 The latter reserve a small share for the Zussoba [150] (chief eunuch) and the Bilbalsé (inhabitants of Bilbalogo, the section of the Baloum Naba).

796 769 The next morning, Saturday, the king has a large number of cattle slaughtered and many sagbo cakes prepared. The latter are piled one on top of another to form tahinsé (mountains) in the courtyard where the daily audiences are held.

On these mountains of sagbo are placed whole quarters of sheep. Many bowls of cooked rice are put in rows beside the millet cakes.

The Larrhallé Naba, the second minister who is in command of the Samandé (the court), stands before one of the mountains of sagbo, takes a cake which he divides into three parts, and tosses them at random in different directions in the courtyard. Thus he offers food to the invisible spirits and to the manes of previous ministers who once frequented the place. During this ceremony he utters some words which may be translated as follows: "Take this sagbo and bring peace and happiness to the emperor and to his people."

After this, the Larrhallé Naba returns to his kouga (mound of stones) to make way for the Gand'Naba. The latter, too, picks up a cake and also the foot of a cow. Then the king's bodyguard, the followers of the ministers, the Bilbalssé, and the emperor's servitors make a dash for the mountains of sagbo and the rice, and there is a general scramble to get the biggest piece. It goes without saying that they come out of the fray covered with sauce, and half of the food is spilled on the ground. [151]

At this point, the ministers and their escorts depart.

Each ikanda (head of a family) calls the family elder (the patriarch) and gives him a rooster and a goat (lacking a sheep) to be sacrificed to the manes of his ancestors. The old man pronounces the following words: "Youmd yelle n'ta, ta zagla yel t'm konfo, tif reg kouin gnimassem, la sounogo, ta pam kodo, la rogom (accept these offerings on the part of X... and grant him health, happiness, and prosperity. Protect his family and grant him good harvests and many children.

796 769 263 776 It is interesting to note that the meat, whether boiled or roasted, is never seasoned with red pepper (tiparé), for the tinsé [spirits]

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would visit their anger upon those who were guilty of such an indiscretion by making them blind or at least causing them severe eye trouble in later years.

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[261]

Everyone celebrates the tinsé at home by preparing all sorts of food (sagbo, rice, corn, beans, etc.). The people stuff themselves to the point of indigestion.

Thirty days after the anniversary celebration of the funeral of Oubri's mother, the Tansoba (war minister) returns to the emperor the rope used for the date of the tinsé.

Around the fortieth day, that is, a week after the departure of the Tansoba, the Loumbila Naba comes to salute the emperor. The latter gives him a cow to be slaughtered at Widin (section of the Ouidi Naba).

A week after the departure of the Loumbila Naba, [152] the Guilingou Tengsoba pays a visit to the Mogho Naba. We have already seen that it was an ancestor of this Tengsoba who asked Naba Zoungrana to send his son, Oubri, to administer the country and to help him drive out the Habé who today live by the cliffs of Bandiagara (Sudan). The Mogho Naba is obligated to give a cow and some salt to this Tengsoba.

Then comes the turn of the Saponé Naba (nayrdin, representative of Naba Kouda) who, with his followers, receives a cow and some salt. Finally, for Bonsa Naba, Kamsaonguin Tengsoba, and Pazani Tengsoba, the Mogho Naba has a sheep killed which is served with many plates of sagbo.

It should be noted that when the Tangsob-ramba appear before the emperor they put down their laya (magic axes) and are at once brought white roosters which they are expected to kill in the timpelem (courtyard).

Thus, it is apparent that this festival has no particularly remarkable features. Its sole aim is to make peace between the living and the dead and to give everyone a chance to eat well.

The Basgha of the Mogho Naba, or the Nights the Emperor M'ba (Rarengma) Sleeps Away from Home

(May my father not arrive before I do.)

769 The basgha. Before making use of his newly harvested crops,
782 the Moaga ikanda (married man, head of a family) is obligated to
796 offer this new produce to his ancestors. Therefore, he has dam (dolo, millet beer) prepared with the large red [153] millet, already sprouted, and cakes made with the millet or the sorghum. He kills chickens and a goat, or a ram, and invites his neighbors and relatives to the feast. He is convinced that the manes of his ancestors share the feast.

The emperor of the Mossi is no exception to this rule. The basgha of the Mogho Naba is celebrated with more pomp, and we shall describe it briefly below.

It should first be noted that there is no particular date set by custom for the basgha, either for the Mogho Naba or for the ordinary Moaga. Everyone celebrates it whenever he can after the harvest.

491 The sotasgo (completion of the road). Before the French came
653 and the administration took over road building, each minister had a road or, more accurately, a broad path which led straight to the king's courtyard and which had to be maintained by the minister. Since everyone is busy in the fields during the winter months, it is easily understandable that the roads are somewhat neglected during that season. When the Mogho Naba decides to put everything to rights with his ancestors, he notifies the Ouidi Naba, his first minister, who sends word to the other ministers that they must clear their soyan (from soré, "path"). The ministers order the inhabitants of their respective sections to do the work, but put off completing the last stretch leading into the courtyard, samandé, [154] until the date for sotasgo is known.

653 Sotasgo takes place on a Saturday.

The Ouidi Naba makes a large pile of several loads of millet (kaguindi) and chooses about forty strong young men to carry it into the court of the king. His colleagues (Larrhallé Naba, Gounga

653 Naba, and Baloum Naba) do the same thing. (We have seen in an earlier chapter, under "Payments to the Mogho Naba" that the millet brought by the ministers and vassals makes up the food supply for the emperor and his wives; the harvest from his own fields is used to feed foreigners and to make beer for the basgha.)

[533] In order to arouse the young men to greater efforts, drummers accompany them, playing "pang'rog'kamga, kamba komsomba (these young men were born of strength; they are worthy of their parents)."

Loads of millet are presented to the emperor during his first audience (wend'pous yan), after the ministers have paid their respects. The Soré Naba (literally, "chief of the path"), taking his place before the Mogho Naba, but with his back to him, orders the young men by the sound of drums to finish clearing the roads of the naba up to the king's courtyard. Since the work was virtually completed, this is a mere formality.

The ministers' followers and the bearers who brought in the millet, equipped with axes, daba, and even sticks, pretend to work energetically. They gesticulate, cry out, and [155] sing. The Soré Naba then goes under a shelter reserved for him, and the young men join him there.

196 769 The Ouidi Naba, the Larrhallé Naba, the Gounga Naba, and the Kamsaoug' Naba salute the emperor, and it is only then that the latter sets the date for the celebration of his basgha.

Once the date is set, the bodyguards of the Mogho Nabo (samand' kamba), whose chiefs are Samandé and Rakogdo, are ordered to start at once to repairing the shelters in the courtyard where the daily audiences are held.

Sleeping away from home. Three days before the Feast of the Dead and as soon as he has given his pugtiéma (first wife) the sprouted millet for making dam (beer), the Mogho Naba becomes uneasy. This is because the kimsé (manes of his ancestors) are present in the house. He must find more peaceful lodgings.

On Wednesday evening, therefore, he goes to the home of the Samand'Naba of Kamsaoghin. He spends the night there, but at cockcrow the following morning he returns to his home where he spends the day. That night he goes to Gounghin and spends the night in a house near the home of the Gounga Naba, his third minister.

796 Friday night he stays at the home of Bangr'Naba Sambo. Very early
769 Saturday morning he returns home in time to be present when the Bend'Naba (chief of the drummers) comes to wish him a happy new year and a long life and to pray that Wenam (God) will spare him to [156] offer many more bascé (plural of basgha) in honor of his predecessors.

[431] It goes without saying that during the nights spent away from home the emperor receives many visitors and substantial gifts. The persons at whose homes he spends the night naturally give him the warmest possible welcome.

Preparatory sacrifices. These are performed inside the house of the Mogho Naba, and the details are known only to the following four persons: Mogho Naba, Emperor of the Mossi; Baloum Naba, chief steward and chief of pages; Zussoba Kassanga, chief eunuch and guardian of the harem; the pugtiéma, the first wife of the Mogho Naba.

It is known that animals are sacrificed, with the Mogho Naba
796 himself holding the victim and pronouncing the sacramental words.
769 Perhaps there is also worship of certain sacred fetishes. In any
782 event, we are convinced that there is nothing involved in the ceremony which is contrary to the principles of French civilization since there is no human sacrifice. We should have liked very much to describe these ancient practices, but the secret has been well kept.

Celebration of basgha. As soon as the Mogho Naba appears in
796 front of the zango (antechamber), the Bend' Naba beats a drum while
769 calling the names of deceased naba, beginning with Naba Oubri, the
533 founder of the Ouagadougou dynasty. [157]

As soon as the Bend'Naba stops playing, he and his followers are served sagbo (millet cakes), mouf (rice), dam (millet bee.), and nemdo (meat).

796 Likewise, the ministers and other court officials who come to
769 greet tabo (the new year) are given dam, sagbo, rice, and meat by
[554] the Mogho Naba. The food is distributed to the dignitaries in the order of precedence, and the rest is reserved for the Bilbalessé and other followers of the ministers.

About eight-thirty, the ministers and court officials say
[556] wennatassé, "God be with us," which means good bye, and then they return home.

769 they return to their homes.
796 The Bend'Naba and other drummers remain in the courtyard until the Sogon' kassanga (chief eunuch) bring to them, on behalf
533 of the emperor, the sum of 10,000 cowries and some beer. In the old days a young captive, seated amidst the cowries, accompanied these gifts. The messengers say to the drummers: "Nab'yet b'wa poustabo (the king sends us to give you these gifts on the occasion of his basgha)."

The chief of the drummers pours a drink for the Zussoba and orders his followers to play together "Tompaongo, Wend'kaouss'Naba niuré, Wenna wilig'vinré" (literally, "We thank the king for his gifts. May God give the Mogho Naba long life and allow us to come back to play here next year").

Before sending them away, the Mogho Naba is obligated to give a karfo (black robe [158] imported by the Haoussa) to the Bend' Naba and a robe to the Loun Naba (chief of the luinsé). Water with flour in it is likewise brought to the Bend'Naba, and he scatters it about the courtyard. The emperor is required by custom to walk upon this water of gnimassem (of good health) as he goes back to his apartments.

When all these formalities have been completed, the Bend'Naba, accompanied by his bards, takes his leave. The festival is over. On the days following, the drummers call on the ministers and
[431] the other court dignitaries and are given many gifts (cowries and livestock).

All of these gifts are retained by the Bend'Naba or by someone chosen by him, and they are distributed later, with due regard for the hierarchy existing among the griot. The share of the older men is always greater than that accorded to the younger ones. [159]

Chapter 10

The Wives of the Naba. The sogoné. The Pogsiouré

Naba Warga and the Origin of the Sogoné

173 Naba Warga was constantly at war with the Riziam Naba, who
644 was called Mamzi (which means "I myself do not know"). He had
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173 to be on the field of battle himself and for five years was unable
644 to vanquish his enemy who was entrenched on a mountain and
357 well supported by the local inhabitants.

After Warga had tried every means at his command to conquer his enemy, he hacked down the crops, which were almost ripe, and captured all the livestock that ventured down the mountain. In short, he devastated the country.

This succeeded so well that at last the local inhabitants, faced with famine, had to choose between the life of the chief they were sheltering and their own lives. Mamzi was therefore handed over and imprisoned at Saponé (1).

1. The principal canton town in the district of Ouagadougou.

During the five years of this difficult campaign, Naba Warga, aside from the warriors, had only a young boy to serve him since his wives were not present. The boy served as cook [160] and personal servant. In short, he performed the duties of a wife so well that Warga decided that he was worthy of some notice and decided to reward him.

When he had returned to his lands, he freed this faithful servitor after first giving him a wife. Then it occurred to him that several children in his court could perform the same services. He therefore ordered them to be recruited on a large scale, and these were the sogoné.

357 Every boy recruited to become a sogoné can expect to be given
644 a wife, however little she may be worth, when he is freed.

The sogoné have the same standing as the napagba,[1] and they
[554 304] wear the same ornaments. A group of bracelets worn on the wrists, in fact, distinguish the napagba and the sogoné from free women.

It is their duty to serve the naba. They form a half circle around the naba when he appears; they accompany him on his short outings; and they carry the scepter and all of the insignia of chiefdom. They serve drinks to the naba, fan him when he takes a nap
[293] with fans called fika, make his bed, and do various errands. Likewise a naba never sends anyone but a sogoné to take a message to his wives.

[1] [i.e. royal wives — Analyst]

644 The sogoné may not wear trousers. He wears a type of
357 drawers called benda. All the nanamsé (plural of naba) have
292 followed the example of Naba Warga, and nowadays the most insignificant kombéré has at least a dozen sogoné.

[161]

The Napogré. General Conditions. Number of Wives of the Emperor Today. Ornaments.

644 Depending on whether the napagha is destined for the chief
595 himself or for one of his brothers or sons, the instruction of the napogré are given either in the quarters of the pugtiéma (first wife of the naba) or at the home of one of the old nabissi.

Water is heated and in it is put a bit of karite butter and other
644 ingredients. After the girl's head, armpits, and public hair have
595 been shaved by some old women, the pugtiéma or the old man dips
302 a hand into the water, utters certain cabalistic words, and gives the names of all the chiefs who have succeeded each other up to the father of the current ruler.

644 The water is then given to the old women who bathe the
595 young napagha. It is at this time that she is instructed in the duties and obligations of the napogré, what she may do and what she should avoid.

[301] The new wife is then adorned with bracelets, kouaba (plural of kobré), and with rouamba [ankle rings], or with only bracelets. The chief may marry her at once or, depending on the circumstances, send her to the man for whom she is destined.

[684] The napagha must never have relations with any man other than her husband as long as she lives. Formerly she was pitilessly killed if she broke this rule. [162]

[302 As we have just seen, the napagha has no hair, and this is
30[] the primary distinctive mark. Also, she wears bracelets on her wrists, sometimes even on her arms and some on her ankles (this is done mostly by favorites). Finally some wear kouaba, ornaments most often worn by old women.

The number of wives or napagha varies according to the importance of the naba and especially according to the desires of naba. According to the 1926 census, the present Mogho Naba had thirty-seven wives.

644 It should be said that the napagha, who is regarded as a
595 piece of property, is part of the estate of a deceased chief. The
562 new naba takes some of the old and young wives, and the rest are
587 kept in the family of the nabissi. It is therefore not unusual to find women in the household of a naba who have been married to two or even three deceased chiefs. If they are not too old, they may give birth to children of the chief who is their second or third husband.

644 The establishment of a naba is often divided into three sec-
595 tions.

1. The zagkas sanga (the great house). All the old women, the unwanted ones, live here. Their mistress and guardian is the pugtiéma, who has charge of the house where the kimsé or manes of the ancestors live.

2. Zagbilin. The middle-aged women [163] who are still occasionally visited by their husband live here.

3. Dogoundba. This is the assemblage of several young and beautiful wives grouped around the favorite. They are called dogoundba, "guardians of the hut of the naba." These women receive all the favors, wear the finest ornaments, and are dressed in
[291] godé (1). Most of the time the dogoundba live in one or several

1. A skirt that is highly valued among the Mossi.

huts, depending on their number.

Each of the women in the other two sections has her own hut.

Since the naba has too many wives to be able to look after all of them, they must provide their own clothing and food. Hence, they are forced to cultivate plots and sell some of their produce. Each napagha has her own small field of millet, peanuts, beans, and peas.

The dogoundba have a collective plot. They help their husband who not only has to feed them, but is also required to support
[357] the sogoné and the samand'kamba (the latter are "people of the outer courtyard," another category of servitors who are sent on errands to the villages or who serve as grooms).

In the homes of the kombemba (plural of kombéré), it is the duty of the dogoundba to prepare food for the sogoné and for any

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595 foreigners who are being housed by the naba. [164]

Each sogoné or samanbiga chooses a mother from among the
644 wives of the naba (only those in the first two sections).
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He helps her to cultivate her plot of ground and receives in
357 return a little food over and above the ration of sagbo given to the
608 sogoné as a group.

At Nanore (1), for example, it was formerly the rule that

1. Canton in the administrative district of Koudougou.

when a woman brought some sagbo to her adopted son, she could not simply hand it to him. Instead, holes were dug in the courtyard of the naba, into which the woman put the sagbo and sauce. Then the young man came to eat the food, and later the woman came back for her bowls.

644 Finally, it is still forbidden for anyone to play a guitar when
595 a napagha is passing by unless the player is the naba himself or
533 someone called upon to play by the naba. It should be noted that
687 the Moaga prefers the guitar for intimate occasions. Therefore, to
832 play it when a napagha passes by is actually to court her.

The Pogsiouré, or the Recruitment of Sogoné and Saman'kamba

643 Aside from a few special cases limited by custom which we
562 shall presently describe, the naba can never dispose of the daughters of his subjects, either to make them [165] his own wives or to bestow them on someone else, without the permission of the parents.

Pogsiouré comes from pog', the diminutive of pagha, "woman," and from siouré, diminutive of sioubo, "to give anticipating a profit."

562 As a result of family quarrels or even voluntarily, a Moaga
431 "may give away his daughters and those of his brothers and close
643 relatives to the naba." It is obvious that the naba cannot keep all of these girls, so he gives some of them to his brothers, his uncles, his sons, and even to ordinary Mossi who have done him a service.

In the same way -- and this is more frequent -- every sogoné (page) or samand'biga [singular of samand'kamba] (bodyguard or

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431 groom) who has served his naba satisfactorily receives, at the
643 time he is freed, a young girl who may be nubile, but who may, on the other hand, be just a small child.

In either case, the former servitor is required to call upon the naba from time to time and to take him gifts (cowries or roosters). If the girl is still living with her relatives, in addition to his trifling presents to the naba, the fiancé may make a few presents to his in-laws, although it is not obligatory.

562 Pogsiouré. The first daughter born of a marriage between a
643 Moaga subject (former servitor, son, brother, or uncle of the naba,
644 etc.) and the woman given to him [166] by the naba becomes the
858 "property" of the latter with full rights over her. She is known as "the daughter of the pogsiouré" and is fated to become pogsiouré in her turn.

If the first-born is a boy, the naba may bring him to his
643 court as soon as he reaches the age of discretion to make him either
644 a sogoné or a samand'biga, and the child's father cannot make the
858 slightest objection.

357 This does not imply that under Mossi law the sogoné and samand'kamba must be children of the pogsiouré. As absolute master of all his subjects, the naba can recruit his servitors throughout his domain as he needs them, with no opposition by the Mossi to this recruitment.

644 The fate of the daughters of the pogsiouré. The girls are
858 taken from their relatives as soon as they are old enough to work
562 and are entrusted by the naba to his own wives.

The latter, for all practical purposes, become the adoptive mothers of these children and, as such, see to their food and clothing. This does not prevent the real mother from bringing cowries and clothing to her daughter, and to make sure that the child will be well treated by the napagha (wife of the naba), she sometimes
[431] even brings the latter a gift of kalgo (soumbala) or karite butter (kamé).

When the girls reach puberty, the naba chooses the most at-
[584] tractive for his fiancées, and the [167] others are given to some of his administrators or to his own relatives.

562 593 644 Rights of parents over their daughters. Although, as has already been noted, the parents retain the right to help their daughters in small ways, they may not, under any circumstances or pretext, break off their engagement nor prevent their marriage. Still less can they promise the daughter to a third party or expect any sort of gifts from the naba.

Later on, in the event that there is agreement between the parties, the husbands may give trifling presents to their in-laws, but there is neither obligation nor coercion to do so.

562 858 Exceptions. Girls given to the marabouts by the naba are considered a kind of alms (saraka), and any children born of such unions belong to the true fathers and may not be disposed of by the chief.

644 357 858 Disposition of boys. Boys recruited as sogoné or samand'kamba are required to serve the naba faithfully, but they continue to belong to their real relatives from whom they annually receive cowries and particularly the fougoibga (blanket).

644 357 661 Although the sogoné are regularly fed and clothed by the naba -- because [168] a naba must always be surrounded by many pages -- this is not done for the samand'kamba. In many cantons and especially in Ouagadougou at the emperor's court, they receive only a meager pittance every two, three, four, or seven days since their role as "vagabond" or groom is supposed to provide them with ample opportunities to rob or rather to pillage the natives. During the winter the grooms and other samand'kamba go out into fields of maize and millet at night or in the morning, and there is general looting. As for any fowl lingering in the karaga (fields of millet near the huts), they are killed and hidden in the bundles of hay used to feed the horses. There are exceptions to this rule: some ministers of the emperor and canton chiefs give their samand'kamba at least one meal per day -- at night -- and during the winter, because they are doing field work, they are given cooked beans or sagbo (millet cakes) at noon.

644 357 608 In general way, however, it may be said that this type of servitor is not supported by the naba. Like the sogoné, the samand'biga chooses a mother at the court of the naba. He helps her cultivate her plot and performs other small services for her (weaving her clothes,

644 357 608 for example), and in return the adoptive mother gives him a bit of food, over and above his regular ration.

644 357 [169] In view of these circumstances, those who are not required at the home of the naba to care for the horses or for some special service spend half the year with their relatives.

644 357 565 It is perhaps of interest to point out that the samand'kamba are mostly sons of the chiefs of villages of nabissi (sons of naba), sons of nakomsé (descendants of naba and nabissi), and sometimes even sons of canton chiefs at the court of the Mogho Naba. There is also the child of the ordinary Moaga, who was not made a sogoné because he was not thought worthy of the position. The rigorous discipline required of the former young men teaches them "to suffer in order to be able to command."

644 357 Anticipation of freedom. If the sogoné or samand'biga is the eldest son and is old enough to marry at the time of his father's death, the naba is required to free him, even though the period of obligatory service has not been completed.

643 844 584 Another custom, the zan-boko. There is another curious custom among the Mossi. If during the course of his journeys the naba stops in a village and during his stay a girl is born to a local Mossi woman, the child is his, with full rights, if he has been told of the birth.

However, the naba often knows nothing about the event, and the father takes care not to speak of it and then makes whatever disposition of the child he wishes.

844 584 [170] This custom, however, is practiced to its fullest extent between Mossi. A Moaga sana (stranger) passing through the village is invited by the elders to dig the zan-boko (hole in which the placenta must be buried). This is his zounogo, "opportunity." He gives a few cowries (100 to 200) to the head of the family and becomes the fiancé of the baby girl. Later on, when she reaches puberty, the man will make the customary gifts to the parents, and nothing will stand in the way of the marriage.

[171] Chapter 11

Marriage, Birth, and Death

Marriage

000 In this chapter we shall review all aspects of marriage throughout Mossi country. The customs are the same everywhere, ranging from the marriage of girls reared in the household of the naba to the institution of concubinage. We shall first deal with the most common forms of marriage, then discuss the matter of bride price, and finally conclude with a discussion of the social status of the Moaga woman.

587 Girls are married between the ages of seventeen and nineteen. With certain rare exceptions, a girl of sixteen or eighteen is never sent to her husband. Such an age is considered very unfavorable [843] for child-bearing, and it is even thought that children whose mothers are too young will not survive.

Young men marry between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five. [172]

562 584 Marriage of a girl reared in the household of a naba. Girls born of the marriage of a woman given to a former servitor by either province or canton chiefs became by right the property of the latter. These girls are taken from their parents when they are old enough to do some work and are entrusted by the naba to his wives. They are henceforth regarded as betrothed to the naba and are obliged to submit to all of the conditions of servitude which are imposed on the other wives.

When they reach marriageable age, they may be given, without either their own or their parents' consent, to freed servitors or to any individual who may have rendered some service to the naba.

This is the first type of forced marriage.

Marriage of a girl given by her parents. Since the girl is regarded as simply a "thing," a being without volition, she may be promised at birth. Very often gratitude for hospitality or the existence of an old debt is sufficient reason for promising a daughter.

562 When the girl reaches marriageable age, she usually finds herself
584 with a husband who is sometimes older than her father and whom she cannot possibly love. She must go to him, however, since such is her father's will.

[131 [173] The fiancé brings some gifts (cowries, chickens, millet
585] beer) and claims his wife. The girl is sent off to her husband's home with no ceremony being performed.

This second type of forced marriage has the parents' consent.

587 Marriage by inheritance. When the head of a household dies, the
428 women, who are considered a part of his estate, are divided up just as is the rest of the property. They are apportioned to the sons of
562 the deceased, or his brothers if the sons are not of marriageable age.
768 However, unlike the procedure for a chief's estate, in which the wife is just a "thing," these wives may choose their husbands from among the members of the family.

This is semi-free marriage.

587 Besides the type of marriage which we shall later call "free marriage" -- a form which occurs very frequently since it includes the marriages of loose women who may have as many as nine husbands, only stopping at the last one because of old age -- there is also remarriage due to successive widowhoods. Some women are so
[177] unlucky as to lose [174] a succession of husbands. They are finally avoided like the plague since they have the reputation of being cursed by the gods (Mossi, kombwinga; Bambara, térédiougou).

584 Marriage after a conventional proposal. When a young man wishes to ask for the hand of a young girl who is not yet engaged, he chooses as his go-between a person who is on good terms with the elders of the girl's village. If the response is favorable, the young man brings a chicken, a secco (dagnopinri) [coarse matting] to close the doorway, and some fagots. He goes back to his village and returns at intervals bearing sprouted millet or millet beer and a chicken for the head of the family. The latter at last tells the go-between: "Tell X... that we accept him as our son and that we shall try to give him satisfaction as soon as possible."

Some time later the young man returns once more with a chicken, sprouted millet, or beer for the elders of the village. He makes

584 visits and presents a few small gifts. This state of affairs goes on for one or several years. Finally the head of the family calls together his little council and makes known his intention of giving So-and-So's daughter to X... from such-and-such village. There is seldom a refusal since he has sole authority to give the girls in marriage. The young man is then sent to make the acquaintance of his prospective in-laws. As soon as he is presented, he makes a small gift (usually [175] 100 to 1,000 cowries are given).

If the girl is the oldest daughter, her fiancé is expected to bring a sheep, a hoe, a guinea hen, and some beer.

585 The young man is then told the date on which he may send for his fiancée. He has nothing further to do, except to make some preparations and to wait. When the girl is brought to him, he kills some chickens and a goat if he has one, and he has food prepared for the girl's escort. He must also give cowries to them, the amount depending on his own resources.

In many villages the girls married in this way never leave their husbands for fear of being cursed by their parents and condemned never to see their native villages again.

574 Finally, if the wife gives birth, the husband sends a chicken to
851 the village elder and the wife goes there to visit.

787 Girls who are hostile to a husband. These are girls whom the
584 soothsayers point out as hostile to a husband.

Although these girls are promised at an early age, just like other girls, they must not know that they are engaged, and if their fiancés should by chance come to visit, they are treated like ordinary guests who have just happened by.

583 When such a girl reaches seventeen, her fiancé arranges with her family to send her to the waterhole, the well, or the nearest market.

[176] The fiancé selects a group of his strongest friends, plies them with beer, and sends them off with instructions to abduct his fiancée on the way. The latter, accompanied by a woman or by other girls, is surrounded unexpectedly and seized by strong arms despite the resistance, often quite vigorous, of her brothers or her companions. She is then taken to the home of her husband.

A few days later some people are designated to take the girl's effects to her husband's home and to receive the traditional gifts.

837 588 548 [586] Free Marriage. The only marriage which can be called free, since it is accepted by both parties, is that of a woman who is unable to endure her first husband and leaves her village with the intention of becoming a prostitute. Divorce is quite rare because the Moaga does not readily agree to it. As she passes through a village, she asks for hospitality, and the news soon spreads that a "free" woman is staying at such-and-such a place. The young men hasten to her and seek to win her favors. Gifts are sent to her, and her hostess is used as go-between. Nine times out of ten, the woman accepts the candidate preferred by her hostess. After some questions concerning his origins and circumstances, one of the young men is accepted as a temporary lover. His comrades come to his aid, and for a few days there is a veritable festival in the village. There is a slight change in the [177] regular fare, since meat is added to the mush; chickens, raised with considerable difficulty, are used for this special treat. This semblance of marriage is thus celebrated. As has been pointed out, however, there has been no divorce, and the deserted husband soon learns the whereabouts of his wife. As soon as he finds out what village she is in -- it may be 100 kilometers away -- he promptly sets out, carrying in a sheepskin enough ground millet for the journey and 500 to 1,000 cowries. He also carries a rooster which, along with the shells, will be offered to the chief of the canton where the lover lives, to whom he will make his claim.

[578] Unions of this sort give rise to three-quarters of the quarrels with which the canton or province chiefs have to deal. A young Moaga who desires peace of mind never regularizes the situation by a so-called marriage even though he may not be able to resist the temptation to harbor the woman for a few days. In any event the affair is easily broken off since sooner or later the woman, eager for change, will want a new lover.

583 Thus, it may be said that although forced marriage has the disadvantage of having a girl marry without her consent, still it also has advantages and a degree of security because the woman, fearing [178] her parents' wrath, rarely leaves her husband. Furthermore, this type of marriage is vastly preferable from the standpoint of peace

583 to the sort of concubinage that "free marriage" is, as practiced in Mossi country.

The Situation of the Betrothed Couple during the Engagement

584 Generally speaking, the fiancé is supposed to avoid his betrothed before marriage. They treat each other with a kind of shy reserve.

Aside from the gifts made to the village elders and some cowries given to the future in-laws at the time of his first visit, no further demands are made on the fiancé.

584 694 The young man is formally forbidden to carry on an intrigue with a woman in the girl's village. If he does so, not only may the engagement be broken, but the lover may never again set foot in the village on paid of death.

Breaking the Engagement

584 When an engagement is broken, the gifts received need not be returned. On the other hand, the death of the girl is not regarded as breaking the engagement; the family must, sooner or later, offer another daughter to the young man to replace the girl who died.

An engagement may be broken [179] automatically in case of adultery, discussed below, or in the event of a quarrel between the two families.

Marriage Between First Cousins

582 Marriage between first cousins is not allowed. There can be no valid union between the children of a brother and sister, between a man and the daughter of either his father's or his mother's brother.

588 582 751 However, it sometimes happens -- inadvertently -- that a girl who has been given in marriage in a very distant village may find that her husband is a descendant of a great-grandparent (material or paternal) in the same family as her own. Had this been known, the marriage would not have taken place. Ordinarily, distant relationship is not discovered until long after the marriage, after complicated genealogical research. In that case, one of the pair, usually the wife,

588 582 751 wears a bracelet made of copper and iron intertwined, kalembanga, which is believed to protect the wearer against any disaster due to the technically illegal marriage. The kalembanga is also believed to protect the children born of the union from sudden death.

Polygyny

595 Polygyny is the rule throughout Mossi country. It is true that the number of wives varies with the resources and position of the individual. Mere heads of compounds who are somewhat well off may have [180] from five to eight wives and numerous fiancées. The [584] latter are usually reserved for the dakompa (older sons and younger brothers of the head of the family), assuming that these men will in turn render real service and be completely devoted to the head of the household.

There are many reasons for the practice of polygyny, but the main one is procreation. The under-nourished natives must rely on [553 134] the mother's milk to feed their babies and must therefore wait two or even three years before resuming sexual relations with a wife who is a nursing mother. Therefore, they prefer to have several wives.

Consummation

585 When the young girl is taken to her husband, she is entrusted to a woman whom she will henceforth treat as "mother."

A few days after the departure of the cortege, whose composition we shall describe presently, the man claims his fiancée. She is taken at night to the nuptial hut, which has no special features, and no one is present at the consummation of the marriage. In this respect the Mossi differ from the Bambara, who have a griot or an old woman accompany the couple to help the young man, if necessary, overcome the girl's resistance.

It goes without saying that if the girl is found to be a virgin, the [181] husband is overjoyed. If she is not a virgin, the love which he may have felt for her before possessing her is much diminished. The man shows the girl his anger, certain that she will at least tell her mother about it.

585 The following morning the new wife returns to the hut of her "mother." She is summoned by her husband several nights in a row before he resumes the practice of receiving each wife in turn.

The Bride Price. The Basket of the Fiancée

583 Bride price. Mossi custom does not require a bride price. The one thousand to several thousand cowries that are required, depending on the man's resources, plus chickens, a sheep and beer, are not a bride price, properly speaking, or "selling a daughter." Nothing is asked which could not be repaid one day without too much difficulty.

585 The fiancée's basket. The basket of the fiancée contains the girl's clothes, some soap, some karite butter, some cowries, gourds, and ladles. The basket is carried by one of the women in the cortege.

The cortege. The fiancée's cortege is usually composed of a young girl, a woman who has borne children, and a boy.

They proceed to the house of the village elder. [182] The relatives of the bridegroom provide food for them for several days. Finally, they are given a farewell dinner consisting of baskets of millet cakes and mutton, goat, or merely some chickens. They are also given cowries.

585 431 In addition to these gifts, the sum of 444 or 1,400 cowries (the "virginity price") is sewn into a sack and sent to the girl's mother. If the bride was given by a chief, he is entitled to from 2,000 to 3,000 cowries if the husband is an ordinary Moaga, 10,000 to 50,000 cowries if the husband himself is a naba. In this last case, the women in the cortege receive skirts, and the boy, a robe.

585 152 Note. While it is true that among many peoples a girl goes to her husband joyfully, it is quite the contrary in Mossi country. There is a real struggle to separate the girl from her parents. Many lose sleep and their appetites. On the day of departure they weep bitterly, and those who do not are insulted by the old women.

Social Status of the Moaga Woman and Work Assigned to Her

562 The Moaga woman is regarded as a veritable beast of burden. Household duties and the weaving of cotton for her own and her husband's clothes are not her only occupations. [183] She helps her husband cultivate the family field, and she has her own plots for peanuts, beans, etc.

She endures wretched treatment and must always submit to her husband's whims. She enjoys no consideration whatever and is never called upon to give an opinion. The husband alone rules the home.

[842] If she is so unfortunate as to have no children, she is regarded with scorn. She carries the loads when a move is in progress. A [482] basket and a pyramid of gourds containing her effects and those of her husband are balanced on her head, while the husband canters beside her on a horse or takes his ease on a donkey. If he is afoot, he carries only his quiver, his arrows, his bow, and a club.

To be sure, the Moaga woman may express in unpleasant words her resentment of the maltreatment to which she is subjected, because the Mossi admit that she has no weapon other than her tongue. This is what is meant by the saying, "A woman's mouth is her quiver."

Conjugal Life

834 Interdictions and permissible acts. The couple is forbidden to have sexual relations at the following times.

1. For a period of not less than two years and a half after the 834 birth of a child to safeguard the baby's life. Indeed, it is believed 853 that each child comes into the world with its own supply of milk, and if another child were to be conceived during the nursing period, [184] the first would die because the milk of the newborn child would be fatal to him.

2. During the menstrual period. The reason for this prohibition 834 that the husband's fetishes and charms lose part of their "power" after 841 relations at this time.

3. A pregnant woman visits her husband during the first six or 834 seven months. All relations then cease until some time after the 843 delivery, as indicated above.

843 4. A pregnant woman must not step over her husband; this would make him ill.

833 5. The sexual act may be performed with impunity in the courtyard of a dwelling (at night). Otherwise, it is expressly forbidden to do it outside the house and in any way other than lying on a mat or Peulh secco, in any case never directly on the ground.

845 6. The delivery will be difficult and complicated if the child was conceived in adultery. If the woman is to be delivered, it is 837 absolutely necessary that she confess the name of her accomplice 847 in the presence of witnesses. In this case, if the husband demands it -- and he always does -- the newborn child is killed by the erring wife immediately after it is born (1). [185]

> 1. The procedure is as follows. Some young mothers simply twist its neck and strangle it. Others put the baby in a jar of lukewarm water. The baby instinctively drinks and finally drowns.

837 Adultery. Before the arrival of the French, adultery committed 684 by the nakomsé (descendants of naba) was punished by the death of the guilty couple. Among ordinary Mossi, the culprit was simply banished from the family.

However, if the lover was not a relative of the woman's husband, he was forbidden henceforth to come to the village where the woman lived. If he failed to observe this rule, he risked being killed.

As a general rule, a Moaga woman takes a lover in a village 837 some distance away from her husband's village and not far from her own. When she asks her husband's permission to visit her family, she profits by the opportunity to spend some time with her lover or to let him know that she is going to her parents' home.

Dissolution of Marriage. Divorce.

586 A divorce may be imposed by a husband who no longer loves his wife, but neither ill-health nor sterility may be invoked for the 842 purpose. In the latter case, it is simply assumed that God does not want the woman to have children. She is often regarded with scorn, but sometimes no attention is paid to her lack of children.

586 The new husband of a woman who has been deserted does not [186] and cannot maintain any relations whatever with the former husband. In any event, the latter would never agree to see his successor, even though the divorce had been arranged with his consent. Besides, the new marriage is often contracted in another village.

The Question of Nationality Among the Mossi

641 In Mossi country the child takes the father's nationality, and any child born of a Moaga subject is himself a Moaga.

593 Any child, male or female, is under the authority, first, of his father and, above him, of the head of the family. A mother may never, under any circumstances, give her daughter in marriage.

641 If a Moaga woman happens to marry a foreigner, she does not acquire her husband's nationality. In the same way, a foreign girl (a Bambara or a Djerma, for example) does not lose her own nationality when she marries a Moaga. In the eyes of her husband's relatives, as well as the rest of the populace, she remains a foreigner, required to practice the customs of her husband but nevertheless a foreigner.

Thus, when a Moaga subject chooses to emigrate, the nationality of his children who remain in Mossi territory, whether minor or of age, does not ipso facto change.

A legitimate child takes on his father's nationality [187] even though the foreign-born father may have a Moaga as his wife.

Children born of a Moaga father and either a Moaga or foreign-born mother are Mossi.

[848] As for illegitimate children, they take the mother's nationality unless they are recognized, and this can be done only if the mother marries before the birth of the child.

If the child has not been legitimized until after his birth, he will sooner or later suffer from the omission, since his bastard origin will not long remain a secret.

Loss of nationality. The Mossi may lose their nationality only under the following two conditions.

1. When the Moaga subject has been expelled from his village for some serious crime, sent away by his relatives, and no longer regarded

641 as part of the family.

641 2. When a Moaga emigrates and settles permanently in a for-
167 eign country, either to take up trading or to study the precepts of Islam. He is forced to abandon his usual customs and to scorn ancestral ways, thus losing his personal status. If he wishes to embrace Islam, he changes his name, and if he should return to his native village, he would no longer try to be identified as a Moaga, whose customs and beliefs he no longer shares and whom he now regards as an inferior.

641 [188] As has been noted, the Moaga woman who marries a foreigner or the foreign woman who marries a Moaga subject retains her own nationality. Thus, marriage does not involve any loss of nationality. Customs may have been modified, but it is certain that even a Moaga woman who had lived abroad for a long time would soon resume the customs and practices of her own country. The same may be said of a foreign woman who might divorce her Moaga husband and return to her own land.

Naturalization. Since naturalization is unknown, children born in Mossi country of a foreign father and either a Moaga or a foreign mother remain foreign. Furthermore, since children take their father's nationality, a divorce will not affect their status.

II. Birth

842 Conception. The natives have no very well-defined idea of the
176 process of conception. In their minds, the primary cause is God (Wenam), Master of Heaven and Earth, who gives children. It seems, however, that Wendé or Wenam forces the kinkirsi (spirits) to change into a human egg when the sperm is transmitted at the time of ejaculation.

The kinkirsi are invisible beings said to resemble small children and who live near certain houses or [189] groves. Only a few favored persons can see them.

In the same connection, it is believed that ancestors or certain deceased relatives are reincarnated.

843 Pregnancy. It is known that complete cessation of menstruation and the development and darkening of the breasts are the signs of

843 pregnancy in a woman. It is also known that the woman will give birth in nine months, but since it is impossible to be sure of the date of delivery, the pregnant woman is watched over constantly and is under the surveillance of the old women. In a general way, nature is allowed to take its course, but some people prefer to con-
[787 sult the soothsayers and the priests and to give alms and sacrifices
782] to avoid a miscarriage.

During pregnancy, women are forbidden to eat honey and, in general, any sweet foods.

Seguene-vando (from seguene, "to wear a skirt," and vando, "leaves, branches"). A few months after the cessation of menstruation, the pregnant woman is sent into the kim-dogo (hut of the kimsé, manes of the ancestors) at the home of the family elder. There she is completely disrobed, and branches are tied around her loins.

844 Delivery. Delivery takes place in the woman's own hut. There is no special preparation. [190] Old women who have had much practice help the mother while others heat water in which to cleanse the newborn child of all impurities.

No one except the old women is present during the delivery.
[842] Women who have not yet borne children are sent away, and for good reason since the sight of the birth process might make them sterile.

Finally, if the afterbirth does not come out at the time of birth or soon after, there are certain special measures taken to hasten its emergence.

846 Three or four days after the delivery, depending on whether the child is a boy or a girl, the mother, who has so far remained indoors, goes out for the first time.

She carries a sickle to ward off ghosts and other evil spirits.

The new mother's co-wives and relatives bring her safandé (soap), kamé (karite butter), and kalgo (soumbala); others give her cowries. The father has a sheep or rooster killed and a millet cake prepared.

The woman who acted as midwife is sent a ball of sagbo (millet mush) and a chicken leg. The heads of the mother and child are
[302] partially shaved, and there is nothing else to do but to choose a name for the child. [191]

553 Choice of a name. Among the Mossi, a child's personal name depends on circumstances which preceded the birth or on an important

553 event associated with it. We shall classify children under two headings: 1) ordinary children; 2) children especially sought.

The second category refers to children born after their parents have consulted the soothsayers, given alms and sacrifices, or employed other magical procedures.

Since the ordinary child is regarded as a spontaneous gift of God, his name is given by the father's close relatives unless some recent or remote event requires a name having particular significance.

551 Some examples of common ordinary names are Bila and Poko.

Names having special meanings are illustrated by the following examples.

Passektale (from passek, "insufficient," and talé, "resentment, hatred") means "I do not know what has caused the hatred which is felt for me."

Paratsida (from paraté, "to be unwilling," and sida, "truth") means "enemy of truth," a name intimating that people dislike the truth.

Dimpougoubnoma (literally, dima, "great chief, king"; pougbo, "to follow"; and noma, "profitable, good") is a name given to a child born of a mother given by a chief or one whose father has been given some important gift by a chief just before the child's birth.

842 [192] If a woman has no children after several years, the hus-
782 band consults the soothsayers, makes offerings and sacrifices, employs charms, and finally resorts to the tinsé ([sing.] tinkougri, from tinga, "earth," and kougri, "stone") or to the tiga (fetish tree). The woman goes with her husband to the possessor of the god. They take a rooster and some cowries. After they explain the object of their visit, the rooster is killed by the priest, and if the offering is accepted, the couple is dismissed with a formal promise that their prayers will be answered.

553 If, in due course, the wife is delivered of a child, the baby must be named Tinga, and his brothers and sisters will be named Timbila, Timpoko, etc., or if the tiga was appealed to, the baby must be called Tiga, and his siblings, Tibila, Tipoko, etc.

715 It also happens that after successive births, the babies die. Since
553 the Mossi, as we have noted, believe in reincarnation, they assume --

775 that the same baby is returning. So, in order to induce him to
553 remain on earth, they give him a significant name.

One of these is Yewayan (literally, "one who has returned"), meaning "Here he is, back again; it is he once more, and we recognize him."

The same name is used for all members of the same family.

304 Scars. When a child is a year or two old, the family calls in an old woman who draws more or less straight lines on his face (cheeks, chin, forehead, even the nose) with a razor. These marks vary according to region and are not [193] the same, for example, at Kaya as at Ouagadougou.

The design used most often, however, has three straight lines from forehead to chin and one or two horizontal lines running across the nose and joining the vertical lines on the cheeks.

853 Feeding. If a mother does not have enough milk, she goes very early in the morning to a tree, for example, the kamsaongo
782 or wédega (of the family of gohine lianas), to ask for milk. She falls to her knees, and believing that she is addressing a living person, she makes her request humbly, but with what faith! It appears that the prayer is often granted, but the woman must never again go under the tree or she will lose her milk.

853 The question of choosing a nurse does not arise in Mossi
604 country unless the mother dies. In that case, the little orphan is entrusted to a sister of the child's father. If she has been a mother, she too goes to the tree to ask for milk, as described above, even if her most recent delivery occurred years before. Finally, if the child thus nursed is a girl and survives, she becomes the property of her father's sister who will give her in marriage, later on, to the suitor of her choice.

III. Death

764 The importance of funeral ceremonies depends on the age and
554 rank of the deceased.

Nitiema (aged persons). Upon the death of an [194] old man or woman, all the relatives who live in the village are assembled.

764 554 The body is kept in the funerary chamber for a whole day, and then the burial ceremonies are begun. The eldest son and daughter in the family throw cowries in the tomb (1) so that their father

1. Different types of tombs. Among the Mossi there are several kinds of tombs. The yaobulga (tomb in the form of a well), the highly favored type, is reserved for all those, young or old, who die a natural death.

The sampogyaogo (from sampogré, "wound," and yaogo, "tomb") is rectangular in form and reserved for all those who die following a serious wound, snake bite, lightning, and drowning, or who fall on the field of battle. In these cases there is almost no kouré (funeral ceremony). Only the relatives shave their heads and receive visitors who bring them condolence. There are no celebrations or ceremonies. On the day of the second kouré, a little beer is served to visitors.

or grandfather may buy water "when he is thirsty and pay the tolls on the way to Eternity." The persons in charge of the burial take some of the cowries.

The relatives organize games and dances which go on for three or four days. Finally, everyone has his head shaved, and the date is set for the principal funeral ceremony. On that day, all of the relatives, sons, married daughters, close relatives, and grandsons, bring chickens, livestock, and cowries. All the inhabitants of the village are expected to prepare beer. Livestock and chickens are killed, and the meat is distributed to the people who come for the ceremony. Dances [195] go on for several days, and the dancers, as well as the drummers, receive cowries.

It should be noted that the grandchildren keep their chickens or livestock after slaughtering them and may dispose of them as they wish.

764 554 [187] The sinddo is performed only at the death of an aged person. It involves cutting up a living animal whose meat, as soon as it is cooked, is eaten by all the members of the bereaved family. During this operation a strong person holds the animal's muzzle shut; it is believed that a single cry from the creature means certain death for someone in the family.

The tomb of aged persons has the form of a well at the top; it is rectangular below, or at least wider, so the corpse may lie in it.

Ikanda (married man). The ceremony is much less impressive for a young husband. The deceased is simply washed, wrapped in a Peulh secco, and buried. A few chickens are killed. There are no dances at the second kouré.

Heads of families. After the deceased has been washed, dressed, wrapped in a mat or secco, and [196] laid out on the threshold of his hut (1), the lagda (undertaker) offers him the blood

1. The venré (opening). We have already seen that among the nakomsé a hole was cut through a wall of the house or through the wall surrounding the courtyard and that through this opening the body was carried to its last resting place.

In general, this is done for the father of a family. The body is laid out by the opening, and his eldest son and all his daughters (the daughters of the deceased and those of his brothers) must pass through the opening ahead of the corpse. On this occasion the girls tie branches around their hips in lieu of skirts, and the son removes his loincloth. The children of the deceased are held by the arms and legs and put by turn through the opening, in such a way that their bodies brush against the corpse.

The eldest son, by passing safely through the venré, proves to those present

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that he did not cause his father's death. The daughters who dare go through the opening, even those who are grown women, are greeted with bravos by the crowd. The wives receive generous gifts from their husbands. The reason for this is that no girl who had been pregnant before being led to her husband would dare to pass through the opening because the deceased and other kimsé (ancestral spirits) would strike her dead.

This is why some women disappear at the crucial moment, to the great shame of their husbands.

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The funerary hut is fumigated by burning a certain aromatic plant known as sompiga. The Bambara and the Wolof call it benguefala or benguefira. The same plant was widely used by the Europeans during the recent outbreak of yellow fever, either in an infusion, in a tisane, or mixed with the shower water.

of chickens which are killed at his feet. He pronounces some ritual words which may be summarized as follows: "Accept these chickens and these cowries and do not return; may everything you leave behind profit your heirs!;" etc.

The body is then carried away. On reaching [197] the tomb, the bearers carry the corpse around it three times and then place the body on the ground. The undertaker goes into the tomb and arranges the sleeping place. The mat is removed, and the body is handed in to him. The members of the family and other relatives at once begin to weep as the opening is closed with a stone, and the whole is covered with earth.

The eldest daughter of the deceased and his wives cover their bodies with ashes. The pugtiéma (first wife) and the eldest daughter wrap leafy branches around their waists, and the rest of the family wear vines on their foreheads. This is the first mourning.

Forty or fifty days later the second funeral ceremony is held, accompanied by various games, the playing of tom-toms, killing

764 animals, beer, etc. (see the description above). This is the
554 second mourning.

Dakonré (bachelor). Only his father and mother shave their heads. He is wrapped in a Mossi secco and buried without further ceremony. He is not even washed.

Bi-kouré (funeral for a newborn child). If the first-born child of a young mother dies, the girl returns to her family and remains there for thirteen days. Then she comes back to her husband, accompanied by some of her relatives. The latter bring chickens and guinea fowl to be served with the millet cake brought to the girl's husband. In return, the husband has chickens and guinea fowl killed and millet cake prepared, thus making an even exchange with his in-laws.

[198] Custom requires that the girl's relatives spend a night on the road before returning to their village. Even if their village is quite near they spend the night in the bush.

It should be added that if a second child dies at birth, there is no kouré.

Pagh'sin kataré biga (childless woman). There is no ceremony. She is buried in the same manner as the bachelor.

The Existence of God, Heaven, and Hell

776 The Moaga believes in the existence of a superior being, invisible or visible (the sun has long been considered as a "god" by many of them), who created the heavens, the earth, and all living things. This being is called Wende or Wenam (from wende, "world," and nam, "chiefdom"; thus, "Master of the World").

Although the Moaga sometimes attributes his misfortunes to the evil spells of his enemies, nevertheless he recognizes that nothing can be done without the consent of God. Hence he constantly invokes the name in every circumstance of his life, especially when he makes sacrifices.

Even the makers of fetishes, magicians, and sorcerers recognize this power and frequently invoke it.

792 There are certain Mossi who make no charms or fetishes and who are neither Moslems nor Christians. They harm no one, [199] forgive those who offend them, and attribute everything that happens to them -- for good or ill -- solely

to divine Providence. These are the mystics.

However, the deism of either type is not very deep. All believe that a dead person will rejoin his ancestors and dwell eternally with them. They imagine, however, that "the road to Eternity is hard and the Kingdom of God so remote from the earth that they give cowries to their dead to pay their way through difficulties, the hazards of the journey being directly related to the good or bad actions of the deceased."

This may be said to be a kind of vague notion of a hell or a purgatory. However, this hell is neither the "everlasting fire of the Christians nor the horrible sufferings of the Moslems," since the person is supposed to be with his relatives.

The Alkyoamé. One sometimes hears a Moaga say: "I cannot avenge what you have done to me, but it will be settled on the day of alkyoamé." This is a somewhat superficial notion of a Day of Judgment. The Moaga does not really believe in a final judgment any more than he believes in the end of the world or the resurrection of the body. By the words alkyoamé daré, he alludes to the day when he and his enemy will both die and God will subject one of them to a punishment -- understood to be temporary -- for the harm he has done the other. [200]

Beliefs and Superstitions Concerning the Soul After Death

What do the Mossi believe the human being to be? Man is composed of three elements: the visible body, the siga or toulé (soul), and the kima (ghost).

The siga, which may be called the soul, is the part of the man which is to return to God.

Siga. According to the Mossi, the siga or toulé is easily frightened. A great sorrow, illness, or the death of a loved one can cause it to abandon the body temporarily. It then assumes a human appearance and can be seen by the person himself or by others. In that case, charms or fetishes are used to make it return.

Its temporary absence from the body is not thought to have any serious consequences since this does not disturb the normal functions of the human organism, but, since body and soul cannot

714 761 live without each other, its prolonged absence is thought to cause death.

Kima (from ki, "to die"). This is a sort of silhouette of a 714 person who is about to die. It is visible only to certain initiates. 763 It is said, however, to be somewhat deformed, and its presence may make one's hair stand on end or cause shivers that paralyze the legs and make walking impossible.

715 The siga may be distinguished from the kima in that the latter, being already dead, has its head completely shaved, wears ashes in the form of [201] a cross or X on its forehead, or has its feet stained with blood.

As soon as the person dies, his kima roams around the house for a time and then joins his ancestors at Pilimpikou.

715 Pilimpikou. Pilimpikou is a village belonging to the ad- 718 ministrative district of Koudougou (upper Volta). On a mountain nearby, there is a grotto which is regarded as the sacred place where the kimsé of all the dead Mossi assemble.

Legend has it that any deceased relative may be found again at Pilimpikou if one were so unfortunate as not to have been present during his last moments. One can also go there to find out where the deceased has hidden part of his fortune or some valuable object.

It is said that one has only to go to the Tingsoba of Pilimpikou and ask him to use his influence to call the deceased.

The Tingsoba orders the petitioner not to shed a single tear at the sight of the "ghost," and, the legend goes on to say, if the secret of the interview with the kima is not kept, the person will die within the year.

Finally, it is believed that when the kimsé welcome new members -- they represent the whole family of all the dead Mossi for countless generations -- they organize games whose echoes are heard by the inhabitants of Pilimpikou.

715 Young people of both sexes who were unmarried at the time of their death and newborn children who have died [202] return to that place where they dwelt before coming into the world in order to "return to human form in the womb of another woman or of their former mother." As we noted in an earlier paragraph, the Mossi believe in reincarnation. [203]

Chapter 12

The Penetration of Islam into Mossi Country

Islam in the Land of the Mogho Naba

643 The Mogho Naba, like his subjects, is above all an animist,
794 and it is hard to understand how he reconciles his fetishism with
791 the complex dogmas of Islam and with the many interdictions of Christianity.

The Mogho Naba, however, is quite capable of being a Catholic or a Moslem on appropriate occasions and at the same time respecting the traditions of his ancestors. Thus, when the Christians celebrate Christmas, the emperor of the Mossi devoutly attends Midnight Mass. He keeps his cap on, however, just as the bishop wears his miter. In the same way he embraces Islam during the following three festivals: the moaghrem (the Mossi zembendé); Ramadan (nolokré, "to loosen the mouth"); and, finally, the zoulhési (the Mossi tabaski or kibsa).

791 Before describing how the Mogho Naba celebrates these Moslem festivals, we shall give a brief history of Islam among the Mossi and discuss the appointment of imams.

The Arrival of Islam among the Mossi

797 It was during the reign of Naba Doulgou, the twenty-third
793 Mogho Naba [204] after Oubri, founder of the Ouagadougou dynasty, that Islam took root in the empire of the Mogho Naba, and it was at that time that an imam was appointed at Ouagadougou.

Naba Sawadogo, who succeeded his father, Doulgou, sent his children to the Koranic school. Many of them obtained a fairly good education there, and the eldest son, who later succeeded to the throne under the name of Naba Koutou, even became a marabout. The development of Islam in Mossi country dates from his reign, as does practice of giving children of the Mogho Naba Moslem names such as Saïdou, Mahama, Moumouni, etc.

191 Gambaga Naba (chief of a vast territory in the British colony
193 of the Gold Coast) was, as we have already seen [not translated], the father of Nyennenga, mother of Ouedraogo, the real founder of the Mossi empire. As is well known, any king tends to imitate an illustrious relative and to follow his lead in all matters which might lend him distinction.

This being the case, here is how Doulgou happened to install a marabout at his side. It is said that in addition to his many ministers the king of Gambaga had an imam whose duty was to settle all complicated matters. He was, at the same time, an intimate counselor of the king. Mogho Naba Doulgou, who ruled over a large territory and who felt that he was just as powerful as his ancestor, the king of Gambaga, decided that he, too, wanted to consult only an imam for certain affairs. The emperor had a friend [205] who was a marabout in the region of Zitenga and whose name was Moustapha. Doulgou summoned him to Ouagadougou and conferred upon him the title of Imam.

It goes without saying that either the learning of this adept in Islam nor any of his other qualifications were checked and that he was not chosen by other marabouts. Thus, the Imam of the Mogho Naba is principally a court dignitary, just like the Ouidi Naba, for example, and, as such, his appointment involves certain barbaric procedures. This is why, after he has been given his turban and his burnoose (insignia of chiefdom) he is invited to a house called surbinda. In this sacred place he is handed a
[271] gourdful of a loathsome beverage, tibo, a mixture of human and animal blood, which all canton chiefs, all ministers, and all court officials must drink at the time of their appointment to make them incapable of treason or lese majesty. The imam takes up the gourd and utters the following sacramental words: "I shall never, under any circumstances, betray the Mogho Naba; I shall come to his aid in time of war; I shall execute without question all orders received from my King," etc.... He then pretends to drink some of the beverage and hands it to the Ouidi Naba who puts the liquid back into the copper jar in which it has been kept for nearly a thousand years. Once these formalities have been completed, he is the Imam of the Mogho Naba. As is

797 the case for canton chiefs and ministers, this position is handed
793 down in [206] the same family. Obviously a son is not called to succeed his father unless he has been educated well enough to settle, to the satisfaction of the emperor, the few questions which will be submitted to him. In any event, the choice will always fall on a member of the family of Moustapha, the first Imam.

Celebration of the Moslem Festivals by the Mogho Naba

796 Moaghrem (the Mossi zambende). The moaghrem marks the beginning of the new year of the hegira. Every Moslem family must feast on the evening before the holiday. The next morning, that is, on the tenth day of the month of Moaghrem [Muharram], the sourata, book of the year, is read, and one learns the name of the saint who will preside over the destiny of the world for the next 360 days. Alms are stipulated. This festival, which represents a return to joy, solemnly commemorates the day on which the Patriarch, Noe [Noah] (called Nabi Nouhou by the marabouts), alone blessed by the Lord, first set foot on dry land after the flood which exterminated mankind. This was a return to life, and it was the Day of Fire.

The Mossi have never understood the meaning of the Moslem festivals and celebrate them in their own way. They did not understand that the "Day of Fire" meant a return to family life, to cooking food over a fire, but instead made up a curious custom which is more reminiscent of the taking of the Bastille. On that day they light torches, chase each other about, and burn each other. This sometimes results in [207] real injuries which fortunately are easily healed.

The Silmissi (Peulh of Mossi country) do rather better since they sprinkle themselves with cool water. This represents at least a wish for good health.

796 The tabaski (zoulhési or Mossi kibsa). In the old days the Mogho
643 Naba was required to go to the great mosque at Zoaghna on the day of tabaski.

Yamaba, chief of the Yarcé (Dioula whose ancestor, Koanda, came to Mossi country during the reign of Koumdoumié, the eighth Mogho Naba), has the duty of sacrificing the cattle and sheep

796 643 provided by the emperor. The meat is distributed among the assembled faithful. The salam took place in the mosque, and on this occasion the emperor became a Moslem whether or not he was actually a believer. He was expected to take his place among the faithful immediately behind the Imam. As soon as the Imam finished reciting verses from the sacred books, he turns toward the faithful, says, "A salama leckum," and then shakes the king's hand. When the prayer is ended, the emperor returns home, and the Imam soon follows to sacrifice the tabaski sheep. The Mogho Naba himself is required to hold the animal's tail.

Ramadan (Mossi nolokré). It is well known that Ramadan or Lent of the Moslems (the nolokré of the Mossi, from noré, "mouth," and lokré, "untie the knot, loosen") involves a series of privations and abstinences [208] during which the defenceless body is subjected to all sorts of indispositions, sometimes giving rise to real illness.

It is also obvious that the emperor is subject to so severe a regime and to so many obligations that it would be impossible for him to fast, as do the marabouts, even if he were a believer. Nevertheless, the emperor has been so thoroughly persuaded of the yelsomdé (bliss) attained by the penitent after the thirty days of suffering and since he is by no means indifferent to anything concerning the splendors of the Beyond, he asks for volunteers among his entourage who will practice abstinence in his place. On the day of the festival, they receive many gifts (robes, cowries, etc.).

What follows is a summary of the manner in which the king of the Mossi celebrated Ramadan a few years ago.

On the day of the festival, the Gare-yarga (Yarga in charge [272] of the saddle) appears early in the morning bearing hydromel in an old gourd which is said to have been used by Naba Rimba. He drinks a little of the liquid to "break the fast" and then offers a gourdful to the Mogho Naba for the same purpose. The remainder is given to the ministers and other court officials.

The emperor offers food to all present (bowls of rice and sagbo). He has had one or two cows and many sheep slaughtered in advance.

Around seven-thirty in the morning the Mogho Naba used to go with his usual entourage to Roundé-yiri (a place of prayers, a kind of outdoor mosque which [209] used to be located northwest

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643 of the present house of Ouendasida, the police adjutant), and there he attended the salam presided over by the Imam.

After the ceremony, the Imam, surrounded by the faithful, went to call upon the emperor for the doua (a kind of benediction involving the recitation of verses from the Koran). The Imam received kola nuts and sheep or a cow.

[368] At the present time the two mosques exist in name only; the one real mosque is that of the Imam in the ward of the mohémé (marabouts). The present Mogho Naba never attends the salam on feast days. He goes to the Circle [Administration Building], then to the home of the Governor, and finally returns home to await the visit of the representative of Islam in Mossi country.

643 The only Mogho Naba who was truly a Moslem was Naba
368 Koutou, the twenty-seventh successor of Oubri. He was sent to
177 the Koranic school at Sagabtenga and is said to have made a creditable record there. When he succeeded his father, he installed a mosque in front of the women's gate. Since then a mosque has traditionally been located in the same place on the palace grounds of every Mogho Naba, even though, as in the case of the present emperor, he was not a believer.

643 Naba Koutou regularly made his salam in accordance with
177 the rites of the Moslem faith and even observed the thirty days of abstinence during the month of fasting. [210] All his children had Moslem names. All, except his eldest son who succeeded him as Naba Sanum, were sent to Koranic schools, although none did any serious work there since they were more interested in becoming naba.

643 During his lifetime, Naba Koutou himself never sentenced
696 anyone to death, even if he were guilty. He loved peace. When his ministers submitted serious cases to him, he always said: "Go and do what seems best and do not tell me what fate was meted out to the guilty." Like Pontius Pilate, he allowed his ministers to bear the responsibility for the crimes. Since he gave little credence to what the priests said of poéré (confession by the use of magic), he acquitted individuals condemned to death by that barbaric method.

The Moslem Naba

791 1. Virtually all of the inhabitants of Nobéré, Nobila, and
771 Toécé (cantons in the present province of the Gounga Naba) are converts to Islam for reasons of personal convenience. They are the descendants of Naba Saga, twenty-second successor of Oubri.

2. The inhabitants of the villages of Doundoulma (descendants of Naba Kom, twenty-first successor of Oubri), Garpinné, and Kouila (descendants of Naba Doulgou or Roulgou, twenty-third successor of Oubri) are reputed to be devout Moslems. [211]

3. Kombissiri Naba Siguiri, circle of Ouagadougou.

4. Ramongo Naba Baongo, circle of Koudougou. Both of the above were descendants of Naba Warba nineteenth successor of Oubri, and were converted to Islam.

The present chiefs of these cantons are educated Moslems and possess mosques.

5. Sao Naba, a descendant of Naba Ouédraogo, circle of Ouagadougou, was converted nearly thirty years ago. His first teacher was a pilgrim returned from Mecca and a native of the village of Nakamtenga (near Kombissiri). He continued his study of the Koran under the direction of Sayenouné Bathily, a marabout originally from Kaédi (Mauretania) who was such a formidable thaumaturge that the local administration had to send him home in 1916. Sao Naba has a mosque, but it would appear that the Moslem religion has not diminished his animistic beliefs since he continues to make sacrifices to the manes and to drink beer from time to time (on customary feast days, for example).

6. Gourpila Naba (circle of Ouagadougou) is a former samand' biga of the present Mogho Naba and his conversion to Islam is recent, within the last six or seven years.

7. Boala Naba (circle of Ouagadougou) is a devout Moslem.

8. Gaongo Naba (circle of Ouagadougou) is also a devout Moslem. [212]

In conclusion let us point out that the present emperor con-
[551 tinues the tradition of giving Moslem names to his children and
771] has several of his sons in Koranic schools. There is no doubt that more of his children are being educated in these schools than in the official primary school. [213]

Chapter 13

Dwellings of the Mossi Chiefs

342 554 787 We have seen, in an earlier chapter under "Labor Duties and Obligations of Mossi Subjects to their Chiefs," how the dwelling of the naba is built and repaired. We know also that the naba like all his subjects, consults a soothsayer to select the site for his dwelling. He needs to know whether he should keep his father's establishment, build a new one on the site of his grandfather's home, or finally, if the spirits are not favorable, whether he might build on unoccupied land.

342 554 The establishment of a naba differed from those of his subjects in former times in the great number of huts included within it. Also, there was an empty ostrich egg on the roof of each hut.

The sketch which follows shows the home of a naba before the arrival of the French. Such houses exist even today in certain areas.

There were no native houses with terraces or clay roofs. To be sure, the Mogho Naba had one, but although it was copied from the Djenné style, [214] it had, aside from a few doors and tiny windows, only a single opening in the ceiling the size of a canari. This was supposed to admit air to the inhabitants, and it was blocked up during the winter.

The Ouidi Naba (first minister) and the Kamsaongo Naba (chief eunuch) also had tata, but they were smaller. The former kept the sacred water (nam-tibo) and the latter the wealth of his master, the emperor.

342 177 A description of the typical dwelling of the Moaga will be given later. At present, especially since the installation of the [French] government at Ouagadougou, virtually all of the province and canton chiefs have dwellings more or less of the European type. The present tata of the Mogho Naba, the Baloum Naba, and the Ouidi Naba at Ouagadougou, those of the Konkistenga Naba at Imasshoro and at Zoétigomdé, and that of the Lallé Naba at Koudougou -- to mention only the principal ones -- prove that real progress has been made in housing by the Mossi chiefs.

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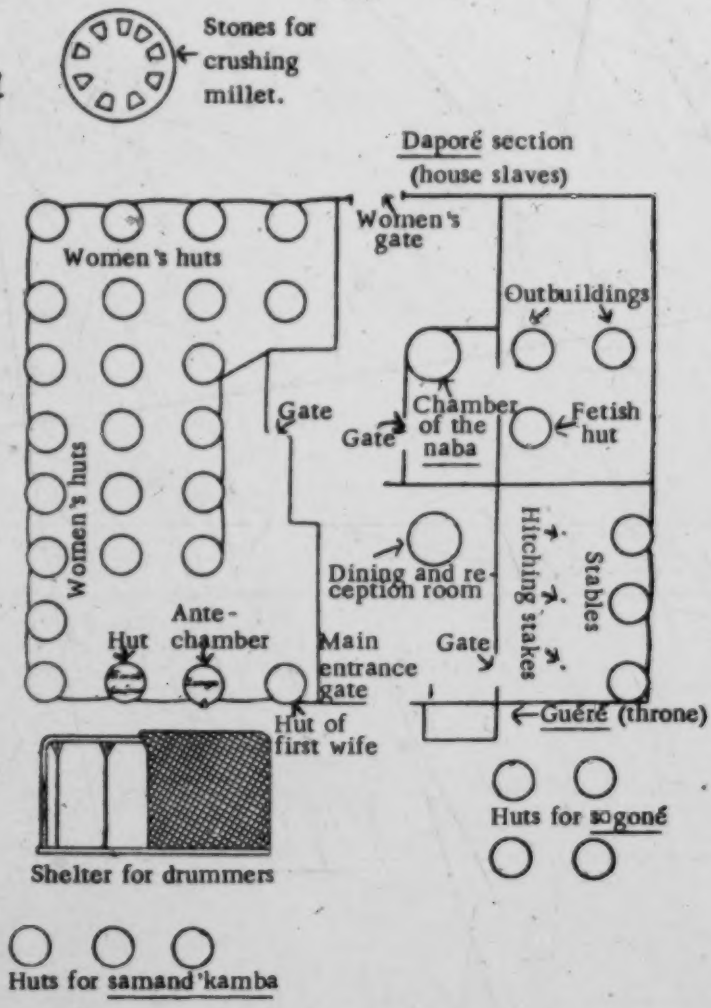

Dwelling of the Naba.

342 177 Of course, like all European houses in the region under discussion, these buildings are, unfortunately, made of mud bricks, but is that not the rule in French West Africa?

342 In the homes of those two ministers of the emperor who are most advanced, the reception rooms are arranged in such a way that callers benefit from a constant flow of fresh air through large openings. During periods of extreme heat, a punkah operated [417] by a sogoné in the middle [216] of the room provides air for the panting visitors. The wall, always whitewashed with kaolin, bears an [353] an advertisement or two, the picture of an important chief, or perhaps some family photographs, which enliven the apartments a bit. All of this shows a real anxiety on the part of the chiefs to develop along the lines of progress and civilization.

In recent years, some of the notables at Ouagadougou have built houses with clay roofs, not so much to live in as to safeguard their family valuables against fire and theft.

Finally, it should be noted that custom requires every new naba for the first three years of his reign to live in songodo, straw huts, which will be described later. Only then may he build with clay.

Dwellings of Mossi Subjects

342 787 Temporary dwelling. Before building his conjugal hut, the young man consults a soothsayer in order to make sure that the site chosen is not haunted by evil spirits and that he will have happiness and good fortune if he lives there.

342 782 Even if the soothsayer finds nothing especially alarming about the site, he always orders a chicken or other animal to be sacrificed or alms to be given. The young man arranges with the village elder [217] or, if he is a [Nioniosse], with the Tingsoba (from tenga "earth," and soba, "master"), to sacrifice the victim.

The Tingsoba goes to the site and calls for two small gourds which contain ordinary water and water mixed with flour, respectively. He invokes all his ancestors and pours the water on the ground, praying God to accept it for His wife, Tinga, who is absorbing it. Then he kills the chicken, saying: "On -- on,

342 782 mamé ka koud'ti y a niesmé yé ya saramb' boumbou, yaramb' boumbou, ti oua ta mamé" (which means something to this effect, "Accept the offering which I present in the name of X.... He appealed to me because I am the Tingsoba of the village. I do not consider myself to be more able than the other villagers, but this ceremony is a matter concerning our ancestors and I inherited the position from my predecessors").

The chicken is held with its feet up and head down, so that the blood mixes with the water having flour in it, and then it is thrown a short distance away. If the offering is accepted, the victim will fall on its back. Then it is hastily picked up, and a few feathers are pulled out and stuck into the slightly coagulated blood.

The chicken is given to the children to be plucked and roasted on the fire without salt or pepper. A leg is offered to the Tingsoba, and the rest of the meat is eaten by the family of the young man.

Part of the liver (saonré), however, is thrown onto the place of the sacrifice and thus offered to the spirits, [218] the invisible inhabitants of the place, so they will look favorably on the new household and help the couple to have children.

It should be noted that the Tingsoba may turn in any direction to make the sacrifice since no particular orientation is required.

342 A young husband's temporary dwelling is a simple straw hut made of the branches of a tree called randega. The branches are stuck into the ground, tied together at the top, walled around the base with Mossi mats (sougzakpinri), and roofed with thatch.

Permanent dwelling. After a year in the temporary dwelling the young man starts to build his permanent home if his means allow it. This is a group of clay huts, joined to each other by more or less even walls.

The earth must first be dug up, and the soil removed from the excavation must be dampened and molded into balls of mortar. A circle is laid out on the site by means of a string tied to a central stake. The foundation is built to a depth of about twenty centimeters. Mortar is put on the foundation, and construction of the walls is begun. These are always circular in form, and their dimensions vary. The mortar is allowed to dry before the work

342 is continued, and the process goes on until the hut is completed, that is, when it reaches a height of about 1.65 meters. The house is built without any openings, but when the walls are up, a [219] low door is put in, having the shape of a pointed arch. The interior of many Mossi houses is divided by a low wall, called kogré, which makes the hut very dark. A few small holes are made with the handle of a daba, and these, with the low door, are [726] the only openings. In time of war, the Moaga used to shoot his arrows through these tiny holes. Before the roof is put on, the [751] walls are daubed with wet ashes, a practice which is supposed to guarantee good health for the new inhabitants.

The roof is conical in shape. It is made with poles which are tightly tied at the top with vines. Stiff mats, zarsé, are placed on the poles. They are held in place with fibers and are covered with braided straw. Some twenty persons are needed to put up the roof. The construction of the house is then finished. Only the plastering remains to be done. For this job, the women collect a special kind of earth, boalga, which they mix with manure from cows or horses and then coat the walls with it. When this operation is completed, the women cover the floor with a ferruginous material that is sprinkled with water and tamped down with bits of flat wood called silpama. After the floor has been smoothed down, the sasgo is the next step. This involves covering the surface with a sticky material, boudou, mixed with ground charcoal. This is rubbed over and over with glass sherds or special stones called sassega. The shiny black surface obtained in this fashion prevents the ferruginous material from soiling the family's clothes. Some [824] people sprinkle the finished floor with kanmé, an infusion made of the skin of the néré fruit, in order to make it wear well.

[220] Construction workers. The master of the house is aided by his own brothers and other relatives in the same clan. He does not request help from outsiders. The women's job is to get the water needed for the mortar.

The earth used in building is taken from a hole near the house, the tan-nako (from tando, "earth," and nako, "hole"). This excavation is later filled with all the waste from the house and ordure from the courtyard. The tan-nako, well fertilized in this manner is planted with maize, and this field is called the kamanga.

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412 Tools. The only tools used are the sitoiga (native pickaxe) and the wanka (hoe).

352 House furnishings. (a) The man's hut. The only furnishings in a man's hut are a mat or thin secco, a bolster made of cotton strips or kapok, a quiver, the club, some arrows, the bow, a large knife (zangoégo), and a spear. Small bags of charms and other amulets hang from the wall here and there, and there is a sort of oval straw basket, pilgou, in which clothing is stored.

(b) The woman's hut. From one end of the hut to the other there are billi, small pieces of wood fastened to the wall to hold gourds, bowls (lensé), earthenware basins (lassé), ladles (soutissi), etc.

In the rear of the room lumps of dried earth, [221] hollowed in the center, hold the vessels, and pots, dougdo, which serve both as storage bins for clothing and as granaries for the produce of the woman's own garden.

592 Plan of a compound. As one enters a compound, the huts to left are those of the women and the master's huts stand to the right. Completely outside the establishment, there are one or two straw huts, similar to those already described, which provide sleeping quarters for the dakompa (young men).

[585] The head of the establishment lives alone. It could hardly be otherwise, since he summons his wives in turn.

The women live with their young children or with girls betrothed to their husband, until, of course, these girls receive huts of their own.

343 Kitchen arrangements. It is exceedingly rare among the Mossi to find a hut used specifically for cooking. The wife's bedroom serves also as a kitchen.

Ordinarily the husband issues provisions to the wife who is
592 cooking for the family, but there are exceptions to this rule. At
595 Ouagadougou, for example, most of the wives provide the food for
252 the husband. The latter furnishes provisions only during the winter when the fields are being worked.

[222] The wives take turns preparing the food. The woman on duty is aided by her co-wives in grinding the millet on the millstone (néré) of the section, but she alone prepares the millet cake, sagbo.

343 Chicken house and pens. Every head of a compound has a
235 small straw hut for fowl within his establishment. There is also a
231 small round hut of clay for the sheep and goats.

Repair of houses. When an establishment is damaged by rain
356 or is in need of repair, the work is done by the residents (the head of the family and the dakompa, as well as the father's wives and brothers) with no help from outsiders. There is no pay beyond the usual meals. The head of the family merely says to the workers when the work has been completed: "N'fa nel toumtogo, imaou nian (thanks for the hard work, many thanks for the labor)."

[223] Chapter 14

Mossi Clothing

Dress of the Naba

291 In this chapter we shall examine the various modifications
554 and improvements in the dress of Mossi chiefs.
435 1. Before and during the first twenty years of the French occupation. (a) Zangoego pelga: a large robe made of narrow bands of cotton fabric, rather expertly woven. These robes, which are made and embroidered by specialists, used to cost from 70,000 to 100,000 cowries (1).

1. One hundred francs. The five-franc note is now worth 1,000 cowries. The silver five-franc piece was worth from 5,000 to 7,000 cowries, depending on the fluctuations of exchange.

(b) Karfo: a large robe, dark blue in color, made of the same material as the preceding (50,000 to 70,000 cowries).

(c) Noufa: a large robe and trousers, made of very fine fabric in a dark gray color. It had the value of two slaves or 70,000 cowries for the robe and 50,000 for the trousers.

291 554 435 (d) Zag'banko: a colored garment, varying in price between 40,000 and 50,000 cowries.

(e) Baourou ganga: a light gray blanket, valued [224] at 50,000 to 60,000 cowries, which can easily be made into robes and trousers.

[439] All these garments were imported by traveling Haoussa (Zangoéto) and a few Yarcé, the only traders at the time, who bought them in Gambaga (Gold Coast), the only known trading center at that time. As we have pointed out in an earlier chapter, the Mossi knew of no country other than their own.

There were, of course, some naba who wore only rough garments made of cotton strips woven locally.

Headgear. The inhabitants of Béré (a village of the province now ruled by the Gounga Naba) used to make caps, called manfo, which were highly prized by Mossi chiefs (priced at 2,000 to 3,000 cowries).

Some notables wore caps made at Wéogtinga (province of the Ouidi Naba) by the descendants of Naba Zombré, the twentieth successor of Oubri.

291 554 177 2. Modifications and improvements introduced since the establishment of the government of Upper Volta (1919). The various fabrics available in the European outlets and the fine white or blue bazin [fabric] are more and more being used to replace the clothing of former times. [225] These fabrics are made into robes, trousers, blouses, and forkia (this last is a kind of long blouse with wide sleeves, much prized by Senegalese [362] traders). Shirts of every conceivable color and style are hoarded in trunks and chests bought at the commissary or made locally by carpenters trained in European shops.

Many chiefs claim that garments made of cotton strips are heavy and cumbersome and impede walking.

[439] Oriental caps imported from the Gold Coast, dark red velvet hats, and even sun helmets are replacing the headgear of old.

The markatassé and mougou, rustic leather boots made by Mossi shoemakers are giving way to shoes, puttees, and leggings, [494] or to new types of boots and slippers -- the shoemakers of Djenné are now well known among the Mossi.

291 554 177 Finally, many chiefs (particularly province chiefs and dignitaries at the emperor's court) appear on feast days dressed in costumes ornately embroidered in gold and silver, products of Moroccan industry. Two of these ministers even wear with pride European costumes on these occasions.

Dress of the Mossi Subjects

292 Men. The accouterments and weapons of a Moaga who wished to be admired on festive occasions used to include the following: the koiglinga and the dandaogo (kinds of long blouses with sleeves); koursi(trousers) in dark blue; the karfo (seldom worn, [226] however, because of its high cost); a zangoégo [411] (large Haoussa knife); a manyanfo (cap); a logwaoga (quiver and arrows); and a boussan-zandé (iron club).

292 177 Today he wears the same garments made from cotton strips woven locally (except the karfo), but it should be noted that young men who return from the Gold Coast or neighboring colonies nearly always have clothing made of commercial fabrics. They may even -- and this often happens -- parade a second-hand overcoat. In the villages out in the bush, the large knife (zangoégo) is still worn, hanging from the shoulder by an albolé (ornament).

Some young men, however, usually traders in prosperous circumstances, dress in the fashion of the Sudanese who live in cities.

291 Women. A Moaga woman usually had only three skirts: (a) the skirt worn at home which was her working costume; (b) an indigo-blue skirt (fou-sablaga) which was reserved for holidays and for trips to the market; and (c) a white or dark-blue skirt cloth, trimmed with long fringes -- a kind of bambara dissa -- which she wore over her shoulders or over her head on ceremonial occasions. She replaced these articles whenever necessary.

[554 435] Only the wives of naba and of certain notables [227] were able to own, in addition to the forementioned skirts, a godé, a skirt of Haoussa origin and quite expensive (1).

1. Even today it costs between 55 and 100 francs.

301 As ornaments the Moaga woman had only red or yellow copper bracelets and the kindifou (a bright red bead). Even then only women of means could procure such ornaments. The [435] kindifou cost only 50 cowries a bead, but since cowries were monopolized by the naba, notables, and rakangba (prosperous Mossi), the beads were far too expensive for the small resources of the average Moaga woman.

Bracelets made of a special stone (a mixture of gray and white) and called manekagcé (manekaka in the singular) were worn only by the Yarbi (young Yarcé of both sexes). It is said [439] that these bracelets were peddled by the Kibissi (Habé), and they seem to have come from the Timbuktu area.

301 554 Silver bracelets were worn only by the dimbissi (descendants of dima, that is, the family of the Mogho Naba), by kombemba (canton and province chiefs) and their descendants, and, finally, by prominent persons who were in favor at court.

291 177 At the present time, especially at Ouagadougou, the women adorn themselves with garments of all kinds (skirts of native material, bazin, godé, and other fabrics, as well as skirts from stores). Some have even adopted the blouse and ample robe affected by [352] elegant Sudanese [228] women. Many now own trunks which replace the sacks formerly used to store their clothing.

291 178 The Senegalese handkerchief, a head scarf, is now considered absolutely indispensable. In rural areas there is an increasing desire to dress better. More cotton is grown. Girls and women from the bush buy glass beads of all colors when they come to Ouagadougou to work, and they wear them around their necks or around their hips in the manner of Bambara women.

416 Although the "mirror" used to be the clear water of springs and brooks, there is hardly a woman today who does not have one or two mirrors. Finally, a bit of elegance is added to the wild 301 beauty of the women by silver earrings, bracelets, and amulets sewed in a panther skin -- these are becoming a passion with Mossi peasant women.

291 It should not be inferred from the above that the Moaga always feels obliged to wear clothing at home. Any time that he has no need to go out or to visit a friend or relative at some

291 distance from his home, he wears only a benda (loincloth), which does not even cover his buttocks, and a blanket.

He goes about with torso uncovered and likes to show that he is [229] well muscled. When the women are inside their huts, especially when they are engaged in the laborious task of removing the seeds from cotton with their gourça, they pull their skirts up to the hips, making themselves half-naked.

Young girls who have not yet reached puberty and are not yet excised often go about completely nude, unless they hide their sex behind the rags of an old skirt.

Personal Grooming

Ablutions and Care of the Body

515 Married persons and women are fastidious about body cleanliness and therefore have a regular morning routine. This involves washing the face, hands, arms, and legs. During the cool season (end of November to February 15), a little karite butter is added [271] to warm water to soften the skin. Since water is scarce, people take few baths. In villages where there is abundant water, however, the inhabitants bathe two or three times a week.

Unlike their elders, young people and children are careless about cleanliness and may go about all day long without washing [164] their faces. This gives rise, incidentally, to serious cases of conjunctivitis among the children.

Sanitation

312 Drinking water. Water for general use is obtained from 271 water holes created [230] by the inhabitants with dams in order to supplement the wells which often run dry during the dry season. The natives make no effort to purify the water which they often keep for days in containers where mosquito larvae flourish. Pond water is used for drinking. In some villages, however, where the water is actually muddy, the following measure are taken to clear it.

(a) The oil is extracted from crushed peanuts, and the residue is put into the muddy water. It takes about three-quarters of an

312 hour for the impurities and the residue to settle to the bottom of
271 the vessel. Then the water is poured off into another container and is ready to be used for drinking or cooking.

[B-24] (b) It is also possible to use an additive known as missim (crushed tamarind leaves). The water becomes clear, but it is, of course, somewhat sour. Although it may be drunk, it is
[252] ideally suited to cooking since the Mossi add missim (from miki, "to make sour") even to the water of springs and wells before they use it to prepare their principal food, sagbo.

744 In the town of Ouagadougou frequent visits by the sanitary officers remind the natives of the necessity of keeping fresh water
312 in their containers. They are also encouraged to fill in during the winter the low places holding water where mosquitoes might breed.

515 Laundering. There is no doubt [231] that the Moaga is care-
296 less about the cleanliness of his clothing. There is no shortage of soap -- karite butter, of which it is made, is plentiful -- but he believes that frequent laundering will wear out his clothes too quickly. He also thinks -- which is childish -- that the dirtier a garment is, the cleaner it will wash. He thinks it completely ridiculous for clothes to be ironed. It must be admitted that among the Mossi only a married man can require his wives to wash his clothes. A mother also takes care of her children's clothes, but a bachelor is forced to wash his own things. This, we think, explains the extreme negligence shown by some of them who let their clothes get dirtier and dirtier. Indolence, alas, is
[46] one of the dominant defects of the native of Mossi country.

514 Toilet arrangements. In general the Mossi have no regular latrines. Men, women, in short, everyone, simply goes into the bush. The only exception is the very young children who take care of their needs on the threshold. At night, especially during the winter when the grain is fairly tall, grownups themselves go to the kamanga or karaga (millet or maize field near the living quarters).

364 When the town of Ouagadougou was made a mixed commune [Ed., smallest French territorial subdivision, with both French and native representation in the municipal council], it was possible to install, at municipal expense, a number of lavatories in certain

364 sections and especially around the market. Now formal regulations require the inhabitants [232] to dig latrine ditches in the compounds, but it will be a long time before the native loses the habit of relieving himself in the open air.

Chapter 15

Mossi Dances and their Significance (1)

1. An excerpt, revised and completed, from a lecture delivered by the author on December 24, 1926.

535 In this chapter, we shall describe the Mossi dances, explain their meaning, and tell of the old beliefs with which they are connected.

Indeed, these dances occupy a place apart in the general category of dances of indigenous peoples.

The latter, for the most part and notably among the Boussancé and the Gourma [Gurma], are only exuberant displays, sometimes exercises in suppleness, sometimes caricatures of the motions of love.

The Mossi dances, on the other hand, are actually performed in accordance with fixed rules. There are three types: 1) dances which we shall call sentimental, known as wennega; 2) dances that are part war dance and part religious, called wadngo; and finally 3) funeral dances known as warba.

535 In order of precedence, let us begin with the love dance
533 called wennega. This is executed at gatherings. The lover and
832 his sweetheart -- the latter dressed in black, the ceremonial color -- are receiving their friends. Beer is flowing, and mouths are filled with kola nuts. Soon the musicians strike up [234] their
[534] rustic guitars (kondé) which are accompanied by the beating of gourds. The women sing:

539 M' Ba sida talem néré
533 Talem kan-kaïn, talemti
Pagh ka zaïd koulogh wa mandé

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"My husband, keep me well,
Keep me in proper fashion,
A woman ages as quickly as gombo [okra]."

In Mossi country, indeed, married women are "kept women." Other wennega songs include the following:

Kandin bilin koamba ziyob'
Ade kandin bilin koamb' ziyob ya
La Fer-nan dambin yide
Bamb' data pagha piligh' wa rebre y a
Ti prote-mannaie yaoulin pa yaguedin
Koure yanga-yanga karin kouma
f' san katarin kont'me y é
f' san katarin kont'me bif ramodeguema

"Those who work in the circle (subdivision of the circle) (1)

1. In the old days Ouagadougou was both the headquarters for the Mossi circle and a subdivision of the circle.

do not know how to chase women. Those in the big circle, the company of the Fernands, are even more ignorant of the art of pleasing. They all want to take off the womens' skirts as though they were unrolling a mat, but they keep their pocketbooks hermetically closed. Wearers of trousers in whose folds hide [235] lice, if you have nothing to give me, at least do not try to take me by force."

F' Nian néré yetta pa nan
logh là
Fola biga ma bé ba
f' ka yi wenin nana y è

"You admire this girl,
Her beauty has won you

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And you do not want to let her go!
Are you perchance this child's mother or father?
You are not the God who created her."

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832 The wennega consists mostly of back-and-forth movements of the hips in slow rhythm. Various figures are performed, but there is always the same rhythm and the same swaying of the hips. The sweetheart herself begins to dance, a curious fact, since women do not usually take part in the men's dances.

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776 We have noted that another form of Mossi dance is religious, the waongo. The waongo is a mysterious being, half animal, half spirit.

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776 Origin of the waongo. Tradition has it that this being was one day found all alone on a plain. Those who first saw him took fright and ran away. They went to tell the village elders, who assembled a goodly number of young men, armed [236] with arrows and sticks, to overcome this strange being.

He was not found at the place where he had first been seen. He had moved some distance away. The villagers surrounded him, and the elders, who had brought him a rooster, began to question him: "If he should be taken to the village, would he hurt the villagers? Would he bring misfortune?" The chicken was then sacrificed, but it is told that the sacrifice was not accepted.

The elders returned to the village and brought back a white rooster (norapelga), a he-goat (boéga), and a dog (bâga). Then they addressed the waongo, saying: "We were perhaps mistaken just now. Perhaps you wanted an animal in addition to the rooster we offered to you? If, by becoming our guest, you can bring us happiness, good health, and children, accept these offerings!" They slaughtered the rooster and the goat and killed the dog. This time the sacrifices were accepted.

[532] What the waongo is. The waongo consists of a mask, usually representing the head of an animal, and a bindou (a kind of long cloak made from the bark of the béringa shrub which is soaked in water for a long time to blacken it or from baobab fibers).

773 According to tradition, he had beside him a toabga (a kind of
535 magic axe) and a tibo (a sacred object, fetish).
776 The people captured him and put him in a safe place. But of what possible use could he be to them? Nobody knew. [237] He was something unknown and fearful.

One day the people had gone off to hold the kouré (funeral observances) of an old man and were on their way back home. They were warba dancers. They were all singing as they approached the house of the waongo, who came out. The dancers were terrified and ran away. Only one of the singers had the courage to remain behind.

He went on with the songs and the waongo followed him right up to the house of the deceased, and there he began to dance.

From this it was concluded that the waongo had something to do with funerals. Since that time the waongo is summoned whenever an old man or woman of the Nioniossé (soukoaba) dies. He never dances for deceased young people.

Since the waongo or, rather, the soukou is considered to be sacred and to embody a sort of religion which possesses secrets that should not be made known to everyone, a special language --
[198] a deformation of the môré [Mossi] language -- has been invented. It is understood only by the initiates.

535 The waongo dances to the sound of a special tom-tom, accompanied by songs and praises in the secret language. The dance is of no special interest; it involves more or less frenetic movements, such as characterize most of the dances of the indigenous peoples.

The waongo is always accompanied by a circle of young men dressed in a narrow strip of cotton, decorated with cowries, and carrying satchels at their sides. These boys make movements with their heads which [238] are precisely like those made by circus
[534] horses. In addition to the tom-tom, flute players (wissé) accompany the dances.

535 We shall now speak of the true funeral dance, called warba.
764 It is performed by men wearing skirts, a kind of net shirt dyed blue, and headdresses made of cowrie shells. A long fringe, weighted

535 764 with metal and worn around the hips, distinguishes this costume from others. The movements of the fringe follow the movements of the body. It soon is revolving so rapidly that it looks like a top.

Many people, however, do not own the special costume just described, and they merely tie a blanket around their loins. During the movements of the dance, this produces a very comical effect since it looks like the wagging tail of a monkey.

[534] The musical instruments which accompany this dance are long tom-toms (gangando); some of them are narrower at the middle and look like long, thin spools for thread.

The dancers also accompany themselves with tiny metal instruments which are like Spanish castanets.

The dance itself is performed in a circle under the direction of the chief of the warba whose costume is [239] richer than the others. All of the dancers usually wear many charms on their [789] heads (tail of an ox and heads of birds stained with the blood of sacrificed chickens).

[775] The warba proves that the Mossi believe in the immortality of the soul. They believe that the dance is necessary to enable the soul of the departed to join the souls of his ancestors. They hope in this way to earn the good favor of the new spirit.

Thus, this dance has a moral basis. However, it seems that the same cannot be said for the other dances which are performed so widely today.

535 In addition to these three national Mossi dances, there are some other dances performed only by women and girls which are actually exercises in physical culture rather than true dances. We shall speak only of the principal one, the kiguibtobo ("dance of the bumping buttocks").

The kiguibtobo. This dance is performed by a group of women, usually at the beginning of cool weather after the harvests are in. The dancers clap their hands while singers raise their melodious voices. The dance is rhythmic. Two dancers leave the group and take their places in the center of the circle. They go back and forth, and then suddenly at a given point in the song [240] they turn back to back so that their buttocks touch and bump each other in time to the music. The dancers must be equally strong

535 or there will be falls which are inevitable when one of the girls is too robust.

535 539 Here, chosen at random, is one of the kiguibtobo songs:

M'Ma ho, ka M'Ma warla y e
Lebin wa regh'big' tim boudguin
n'di Mossa yarbate ribo

"Mother, oh, my mother,
Come quickly and take my child,
For I am going to the next village
To consume pitilessly the goods of
these wretched Mossé." (1)

1. Mossi.

[241] Chapter 16

Agriculture

241 787 Selection of land to be tilled. As he is wont to do in all important matters, the Moaga entrusts to a soothsayer the responsibility of choosing the land to be cultivated. In actual fact, he chooses it himself, but the diviner must tell him whether or not it is haunted by spirits and what sacrifices are advisable to protect him from evil spirits.

The soothsayer always warns him of the presence of spirits (kinkirsi) and prescribes the necessary sacrifices and alms.

241 782 Sacrifices. The new occupant calls for the head of the family or, if he is a Nionioga, for the Tengsoba, who is in charge of sacrifices. The following sacramental words are pronounced: "A zaguel tib reg' noag'la zom kom kon Naba zidwende, tib kon zig'tinguin damba, tib kon timpelem, tib kon yaramba, kon saramba, tib reg'kon zig, kinkirga ta wa me nan baou ki, on -- on tib reg'koin gnimassem, lass' pogh'banga, lasse zoug'banga, naore banga ..." Translation: "On the part of X, I offer this rooster and this water with flour to the sun god (Zidwendé), to the

241 brothers of the family heads who died childless (zig'tinguin damba),
782 and to the ancestors and grandparents. May they see to it that these offerings are accepted by the kinkirsi (spirits of the fields) and that the latter favor X with-[242] good health and large crops of millet and beans."

[787] Once these sacrifices have been made -- if they are accepted, the rooster falls on its back -- the new owner has his land cleared and awaits the winter season.

Field work. As soon as the first rains have come, the owner goes once more to the field and has another rooster killed and offered to the kinkirga [singular of kinkirsi] with a plea for gnimassem (good health) and large harvests which he will consume with new wives and new children (pog'palla, la bipalla). Afterward he sows large and small millet, peanuts, beans, etc.

If the year has been a good one and the Moaga has had fine crops, he is happy and in good time will remember the spirit of the fields. For the moment he is busy transporting the millet to the temporary granary (lourgho).

Threshing millet. Before his millet is threshed, the Moaga must make a sacrifice to the zéiga (threshing floor). The ritual words differ from those described above only in the following words: "X asks that this millet, which he will eat, be good for him and that he eat it in peace and good health with his family." (Kita ri ki wan ne lafi layelsomdé né a zak'ramba.)

241 [243] He then appeals to the young men of the village for help
476 in threshing his grain. For the occasion he has a great deal of beer prepared and quantities of beans (benga) cooked. The beans are
[252] prepared with sesame (sinni). After the job is done, two children between the ages of six and seven are called, and their hands filled with the bean mixture. They must run around the threshing floor while eating some of the beans. The rest will be scattered to the winds. They must stop three times for breath and look at each other. Then the remaining beans are distributed among the workers. They are also given beer.

423 Do owners retain rights over abandoned land? In order to occupy abandoned land, permission must first be obtained from the former owner, who retains his rights over the land. He may reclaim it at

423 will, and the new occupant cannot make the slightest protest.

It should be pointed out, however, that since land is most often abandoned because it was thought to be unproductive or haunted, there is rarely a claim to it by a former owner. In any event the matter is settled by the interested parties. The local administration and the canton chief rarely intervene in such cases.

Owners' rights over fruit trees in cultivated fields. Donsé
423 or néré [locust bean] trees whose fruits contain a yellowish, sweet
263 powder that is edible and [244] whose seeds are used to make soumbala, a fetid condiment much prized by the natives, remain the exclusive property of the former occupant. On the other hand, the tamsé (karite tree) belong to the new owner.

423 This is because the karite tree is found almost everywhere in the bush, while the néré is less common.

Rights of the chiefs over cultivated land. As a general rule,
425 since the principle of right by possession is honored among the
423 Mossi, a canton chief will not confiscate without reason cultivated land belonging to one of his subjects if the land has always been occupied by the occupant's grandparents.

When the land is unoccupied, however, or newly occupied, the canton chief may, by virtue of his absolute authority over his territory, take possession, and the new owner may not claim any compensation.

Field Work

241 In principle, a family field is held in common. When a woman
562 grows old, however, she no longer does field work with her hus-
595 band. She has her own field and feeds herself as best she may, since her husband pays no further attention to her and no longer supports her. The work is done by the family as a group, and the size of the field varies with the size of the family.

241 Early in the morning, usually before [245] sunrise, the head
512 of the family wakens the young people. They go out to the field, which may be five to ten kilometers away. Around ten o'clock, the women bring the remains of last night's sagbo or, lacking that, some millet flour which is taken in water.

241 At noon (wend'to souka, "the middle of the day") the family
512 rests in the shade of a tree. There are always some fruit trees in every field. Work is resumed at about two in the afternoon. At five the women return home to prepare food, and the men stop work at nightfall.

241 The sisoaga. When the family fields are too extensive to be
476 cultivated without help, all the able-bodied young men in the village are called to help with the weeding.

At such a time the head of the family gives several baskets of sprouted millet to his wives to make large quantities of dam, millet beer. He also orders them to prepare sagbo (millet cakes).

On the day set for the work, the young men go to the fields, where their enthusiasm is aroused by singing and the beating of drums. For their work they receive sagbo and dam. This is what is known as the sisoaga.

It is a kind of mutual aid, and without this indispensable system of solidarity, many fields would remain uncultivated.

[573] It should be noted, finally, that when a person falls [246] ill during the winter, his friends arrange to cultivate his fields, sometimes without any pay and simply out of a sense of solidarity.

241 Farm implements. As is the case everywhere in French West Africa, the natives have only the most primitive implements. Among the Mossi these include: the wanka or kounri, a hoe or Bambara daba to cultivate the soil; the sitoaga (small pickaxe) for sowing; and the laré (ax) to clear the site of brush and shrubs.

463 Other types of work. Aside from work in the fields, everyone goes about his own affairs. Some make baskets, hampers, and fans, while others weave cotton strips. It is perhaps of some
[564 interest to note that there is no caste distinction among the Mossi,
326] except for the blacksmiths; each person may practice the trade that suits him. This is why shoemakers mostly come from among the nakomsé (descendants of naba).

Food Crops

241 The principal foods grown by the Mossi are as follows.
Kazouf (small white or gray millet).

241 Baningha (large white millet or sorghum).

These two types are grown for food, [247] although the large white millet is especially reserved for horses in well-to-do households.

[262 273] Kazinga (large red millet). As a food the poorer Mossi prefer this to the baningha, but it is more especially grown for the making of dam, millet beer.

[556] Mouf (rice) is sought only by the chiefs, notables, and a few families of dakangba (well-to-do men).

Benga (beans).

Souma (peas of either the small green variety or large white or red ones).

Niouyan (from niouri, "yam"), grown only in certain areas.

Nangouri or sounkama (peanuts).

Pèsça (fabirama) [a tuber plant].

Sinni or sili (sesame), grown only by a few people who like it.

Bito (sorrel), used in preparing the sauce served with sagbo.

Mana (gombo [okra]) is also cultivated.

Aside from its food crops, each family has its own plot for cotton (lamdo) which provides for the clothing needed during the year.

311 178 I am told that fields are much more extensive today than in former times, in spite of the abolition of slavery. This is explained by the fact that many areas supposed to be haunted were formerly left uncultivated. It is said, however, that the Moaga used to grow larger crops since in those days he was closer to the soil.

[248] At the present time there is a lack of farm hands. As [857] recently as twenty years ago, the young Moaga followed his parents to the field as soon as he was six or seven years old. He took a liking to the work at a very young age. Before the French [484] occupation, the Moaga rarely left his village because of the dangers on the roads, frequented in those days by bandits (usually descend- [579] ants of naba). People were even afraid to go into the bush alone, for fear of being attacked, captured, and reduced to slavery.

433 178 There was little contact even between adjoining villages. At Ouagadougou, no one ventured from section to section unless he had very good reason and was armed to the teeth. In short, everyone

433 made do with what his own village could produce, and there was
178 really no trade in the ordinary sense of the word. The Moaga, essentially a stay-at-home, depended on the soil for food and clothing.

241 Only two new crops have been added since the coming of the
177 French: yams (na-niouyan, "chiefs' yams") and white potatoes.

The recent increase in the cultivation of cotton makes it easier for the natives to meet their tax, and this encourages them to grow even more.

178 The French occupation has brought many benefits in its wake (creation of a network of roads, peace and the resulting free circulation among the villages, and suppression of banditry and looting), but it has also given the Moaga a desire to leave the country.

167 The extensive recruitment of [249] laborers for the needs of other colonies in the area, for work on the roads, and for the now
464 obligatory military service -- all of which are accepted reluctantly by the Mossi -- has caused many young men to emigrate.

Some of them set out, for the Gold Coast preferably, without the slightest means of support. They go to work in the English colony in order to earn money for clothes. Since they had no money when they started out, they remain there for months or even years, and this seriously diminishes the agricultural labor force at home. It also forces their old and helpless relatives to cultivate their fields alone.

Besides, so many of them never return!

The Native Diet

262 Sagbo (millet mush) is the principal item in the Mossi diet at all social levels. Rice, regarded as a luxury food, is eaten by the naba and notables. It costs from two and a half to three francs a
[435] kilogram at Ouagadougou and is therefore too expensive for most people. It may be added that it rarely is found in the diet of civil service employees.

264 Mossi chiefs usually have two main meals a day: a [250] first meal of sagbo or rice at around nine in the morning, and a second

264 meal of sagbo in the evening.

What we call breakfast is hardly known. Between the two main meals, however, the chiefs have meat grilled or roasted. They are very fond of it and have it seasoned with enough salt and pepper to make it possible to consume the endless number of [273] small gourds of beer which they drink from morning to night.

The Moaga has only one real meal a day, the evening meal. A large millet cake satisfies the day's hunger. If there is any left over, he keeps it carefully for his morning meal. If there is none left, a frequent state of affairs, he makes do with his zompanrga, crushed millet diluted with water and sometimes eaten with a bit of vegetable fat or a few peanuts.

He rarely eats any rice, and if he has no sagbo, he contents himself with benga and souma.

261 It is during the festivals that the Moaga eats his fill. At such
527 times the head of the compound kills a goat, a sheep, or some chickens and has sagbo and fabirama prepared, or beans with copious amounts of karite butter. This is the feast. The members of the family stuff themselves to the point where attacks of diarrhea are inevitable. The results of the attacks are all the more serious in that they are never cared for properly.

The only seasonings known to the Moaga are kalgo (soumbala),
263 red pepper, okra, and salt. No more than a few years ago, how-
439 ever, before the [251] development of trade in the colony, salt was brought from Timbuktu and Mopti by the Dioula and Yarcé and was so expensive that the Mossi people who lived in the countryside often went for six months without tasting salted food.

241 There is reason to believe that the time is not far off when the Moaga will devote his efforts much more intensively to cash crops, such as cotton, potatoes, peanuts, etc. In this domain, the province chiefs at Ouagadougou have made real progress.

Mogh 'Nab' Kawinré (Threshing the Grain of the Mogho Naba)

241 Sacrifices. For this ceremony, the emperor summons the
643 Mankougoudougou Tengsoba (a descendant of the autochthonous
782 Nioniossé, masters of the land) to Ouagadougou and gives him a

241 sheep to be sacrificed to the threshing floor (zéiga).
643 The work. After this sacrifice, around two-thirty in the after-
782 noon, the Kam Naba (a notable in the section of the Baloum Naba) proceeds to the threshing floor with the young men from Bilbalogo and Dapoya who have been assembled for the occasion. The operation involves beating the millet stalks with tree branches cut to form an obtuse angle and called dabandé or soika.

When the job is done, the workers depart, [252] leaving the
643 grain to be gathered up another day.
241 The next morning they return to the field, preceded by the Bend' Naba (chief drummer), who plays the bouloumbougri kabse nanamsé to which the other drummers respond with bouroum-bouroum (the Bend Naba gives the names of the emperor's ministers, recalling the origins of each one, and wishes a happy new year to Oubri-yiri Naba, "master of the house of Oubri," that is, to the Mogho Naba; bouroum-bouroum has no special meaning).

Immediately thereafter, the Bend Naba invites the young men to the warba (funeral dance), which is actually only a confused stamping on the millet which in the process is scattered far and wide. Suddenly the drums stop, the signal for a rest. Then the Kam Naba from Bilbalogo divides the pile of millet into two parts by tracing a straight line across the center of the zéiga. The people from Bilbalogo (the section of the Baloum Naba) gather one half, and those from Dapoya (section of the house slaves) gather up the other half.

Whether it is a good or bad year, the emperor's harvest is expected to yield 100 baskets (péog' koabga) full of grain.

The Mogho Naba sends 50 to 70 canari of beer to the workers and shortly goes there himself. He also distributes two or three wassé (from waga, load of 1,000 kola nuts) to the ministers and to the workers.

After thanking and encouraging the workers, the [253] emperor returns to his house, escorted by his ministers and all the horsemen.

643 Mankougoudougou Tensoba then uses wet ashes to make three
241 lines on the ground in different parts of the zéiga. Then he takes
782 a lagha (small earthenware jar) and puts some water into it. He

643 241 782 pronounces a few sacramental words and lightly sprinkles the millet, saying: "Zâbre saga Ybéogo sâga, samb'da kôbo la ka toin sameb'la fi yé (the morning and evening rains may put a stop to the cultivation of the fields, but cannot injure the health of the King)." He next takes a straw broom (sagha) and pulls it apart in order to get a bit of millet to put into the lagha mentioned [343] above. He goes then to the temporary granary (lourgho, granary made of Mossi secco) and walks around it three times. An emissary of the emperor gives him a white rooster (nora-pelga), some beer (dam), and zom-kom (water with flour in it). The priest sits down in the shade of the lourgho and before making the sacrifice pronounces the following words: "Naba Siguiri bad'kom, deghin kon Naba Wogbo, tib reg, kon Naba Sanum, tib kon Naba Koutou, tib reg' kon Naba Baongo, tib kon Naba Karfo, tib reg'kon Naba Sawadogo, tib reg la be kon Nab, gnimassem, la lafi," which means literally, "I offer this rooster, this water with flour, and this beer to Naba Siguiri (father of the reigning emperor) in order that he will persuade the Mogho Nabas Wobgo, Sanum, Koukou, Baongo, Karfo, and Sawadogo, to accept them, so that the emperor may enjoy good health and happiness."

The Tengsoba then hands the small quantity of millet [254] which he took earlier to the pugtiéma (first wife of the king) to be made into a millet cake and offered to the spirits (manes of deceased emperors and other spirits of the threshing floor).

643 251 Transporting the millet to the granaries. The wives, daughters, and sisters of the Mogho Naba are alone given the duty of carrying the millet to the granaries (baoré) (1). We have already noted that

1. This baoré granary is made of earth mixed with quantities of straw.

there are supposed to be a hundred loads of grain, even though the harvest may not fill twenty baskets. The number of baskets required by custom is attained by putting a small quantity of millet in each basket.

643 241 The millet intentionally left on the zéiga. A little millet is purposely left here and there on the zéiga, and the Kassiri Naba (village chief) takes it for his own use. This signal favor, however,

643 imposes a heavy obligation on the chief. He is expected to in-
241 vite the emperor's principal bodyguards (samand'kamba) -- and there are many of them -- to a meal. He is also required to furnish a basket of millet for sowing the field of the Mogho Naba when the first rains come.

652 Utilization of the produce of the emperor's fields. As noted
644 in an earlier chapter [255] under Labor required of Mossi subjects by their naba," the Mogho Naba does not use the millet from his own field. The produce is used to feed the horses, to support the pages and samand'kamba, and especially to make beer on the festive days known as the tinsé and basgha of the king.

[256] Chapter 17

Inheritance and Rights of Succession among the Mossi

428 We have dealt with the question of inheritance at considerable length in the chapter on "Customs and Enthronement of Mossi Chiefs." We return to the subject because it seems necessary to clarify certain details of this question which is so important from the legal point of view.

The opening of succession. The succession is open upon the death of an individual, but property is not passed until after the funeral ceremonies (for all that concerns funerals, see the section on "Death").

Why is there a delay in taking possession of the property? As we have seen above in many chapters, the Moaga is superstitious. An old belief has it that to take possession of the property of the deceased before the funeral is celebrated will bring certain death to the heir or will cause some calamity for the whole family.

Further, since all the members of the family must be assembled for the funeral observances, the inheritance is well publicized, and [257] no one can later claim to have been defrauded.

Requirements for succession. In order to inherit, the following requirements must be met.

1. To be born before the succession is opened.

428 2. Not to be disqualified for the following causes.

a. Murder of the deceased.

b. Failure to avenge his death. In the old days the son had to avenge his father's death before inheriting his property. At present the term "vengeance" should be understood to mean that he must seek satisfaction for the crime in the courts.

c. Failure to celebrate the funeral.

If the legitimate heir is a minor, his guardian must carry out the ceremony in the child's name.

d. Existence of a will whereby the deceased disinherits the heir presumptive.

Order of succession. As a general rule, property is handed down in the direct line, that is, to the eldest son of the deceased. It is handed down in a collateral line only if there is no son. In the case of certain items, however, for example, the family fetish, the heir is the eldest brother of the deceased.

If there is no heir of the first or second degree, the estate goes to the closest relative of the person from whom the deceased inherited the property.

428 431 The eldest in the family excludes the others and has sole possession of the property. Custom demands, however, that he hand over to his brothers and uncles a part [258] of the property. Nevertheless, this is a free gift which he is not actually forced to make.

428 562 184 In the case of the estate of a naba, the eldest son alone usually inherits all the property left by the deceased because of the heavy expenses he must meet to follow custom when he becomes a candidate for the chiefdom. As far as the women are concerned -- they are a part of the property -- he selects the ones he likes, and the rest are left for the nabissi (sons and descendants of naba).

The same is not true for ordinary Mossi, who have begun to realize that there are advantages in allowing all of the children of the deceased to share in the estate. In the chapter dealing with "Marriage" we have already seen that women were allowed some choice of a husband among the sons of the deceased.

428 In any case, however, the eldest son retains the largest share of the estate, and this is easily understandable in view of the

428 custom which decrees that he likewise inherits all of his father's responsibilities as head of the family.

428 Do daughters and wives share in an estate? Daughters have no share in an estate although their brothers may give them
562 trifling gifts.

Wives never inherit from their husbands. They can only benefit indirectly as the representatives of their young sons. On the contrary, since the wife is considered a piece of property, [259] she is actually a part of the estate to the same extent as the rest of the property left by the deceased.

428 Disposition of an unclaimed estate. Only the canton chief is qualified to inherit the property of a deceased person having no known relatives.

Rights and Obligations Governing Property in the Family

421 Property is owned individually. Individual property is strictly a private matter. The head of the family has no rights over property acquired individually by the women and children or by other relatives under his rule. They may dispose of their possessions as they see fit. A mother may do some trading to provide savings for her children. The head of the family may not use such property under any circumstances without the consent of the true owner.

428 Does a husband inherit from his wife? A husband has no right to his wife's property. He cannot even claim it if she dies childless,
593 since in that case it goes to her own relatives (brothers or sisters) or, failing that, to their children.

428 Aside from their rights in their father's estate, children inherit their mother's property.

When the head of a family borrows cowries from [260] a
[426] member of his compound, he must repay the loan with a given time. His own property is inalienably his as long as he lives, and then it makes up his estate, along with his wives.

768 Disposition of a house after death. When the head of a compound dies, the establishment is not destroyed. It automatically
428 passes to the heirs, that is, to his sons or, if he has no legitimate

768 heirs, to his brothers. If the deceased was the keeper and guard-
428 ian of the family fetish, it is taken to the home of his eldest brother or to a person designated by custom.

We have seen, however, that the Moaga will not live in a home without consulting a soothsayer. Therefore, if the spirits are not favorable to the heir, the home is turned over to the other sons or to the brothers of the deceased. Besides, in many cases the eldest son is already married and the head of a family and already has his own home. He then lodges his dakompa (young unmarried brothers) or one of his uncles in his father's home.

428 Acceptance or repudiation of inheritances. Consequences.
To accept and receive an inheritance involves the obligation to
426 pay the debts and claims against it. Among the Mossi, an inheri-
672 tance is never refused since a refusal does not free one from the obligation to pay the debts of the deceased. Relatives always collaborate, not because of any feeling for common property -- which [261] does not exist, as we have seen above -- but out of respect for the principle of collective responsibility which has been developed in the interests of public order. Creditors will naturally claim their due first from the legitimate heir, but if the estate cannot meet its obligations, all of the close relatives are jointly responsible.

428 The estate does not include any gifts made to members of the family by the deceased during his lifetime.

Wills. Among the Mossi, a will is always made orally.

In the presence of his relatives -- uncles and brothers -- and of his neighbors, who have been assembled for the occasion, the testator makes known his last wishes to his legitimate heir, who will have full rights as his testamentary successor. However, in the event that the will is intended to disinherit the legitimate heir and if for some reason or other he is not present, the testator will entrust the execution of his last wishes to the oldest member of the family present.

Disinheritance of the heir presumptive. In the presence of witnesses and under the conditions indicated above, the testator explains his reasons for disinheriting the heir presumptive. In the event that the reasons seem insufficient, the witnesses will seek

428 to change his mind. If, however, he absolutely refuses to heed their protests, they will not make an issue of it, but when the time comes to [262] apportion the estate, the testamentary arrangement to disinherit the heir presumptive will simply be declared null and void.

If the heir presumptive was disinherited for any of the causes for disqualification listed above or because he had committed adultery with one of his father's wives or a wife of someone in the family, the estate is given to the next in the line of succession as determined by Moaga custom.

Right to make a will. All who own property may make wills.

Revocation of wills. Wills may be revoked if the testator so desires. He has only to make a simple oral declaration of changed intention in the same manner as that described above.

Chapter 18

Circumcision. Do the Mossi Practice It?

304 Circumcision is highly esteemed among the Mossi. Some
184 colonial officials, because of their ignorance of Mossi customs, have claimed that neither circumcision nor excision was practiced. One must be able, indeed, to distinguish between the Moaga, the Boussanga, and especially the Nionioga. Although the three groups are related, they have different customs.

304 Circumcision, which is done according to precise rules, is carried out here in virtually the same way as it is among the Kassonké of Kayes.

The ceremony must originally have been imposed on the
304 Dagomba (of whom the Mossi are descendants) by Islam. Now,
626 however, young men seek to have themselves circumcised, not for any religious reason, but rather to avoid the ridicule of their friends and, especially, the scorn shown by Mossi women for an uncircumcised man.

We shall attempt to describe below the circumcision cere-
304 mony among the Mossi.

After the harvest, toward the end of November, the young men state their wish to be circimcised. Since the cost of supporting

304 a boy [264] during the circumcision process is considerable for his family, the latter will not agree to it unless they have had a good harvest.

Besides, since the affair must be quite grandiose in character, thirty to fifty boys from the ages of twelve to fifteen must be ready before permission will be given for the operation. After the relatives have consulted the soothsayers (bagba), they seek out a Yarga (Dioula of Mandé origin) or a Silmimoaga (the Toucouleur [Tukolor] of Mossi country) and ask him to perform the operation.

This surgeon for the occasion is called gounni.

Kéogo. A site is selected where there are no habitations, preferably a sandy area. A circle is laid out and walled with Mossi secco (sogsak' pinri). The size of the enclosure, the keogo, is governed by the number of boys who are going to live in it.

The boys are brought to the gate of the kéogo, which is strictly guarded by zoumsi (men who have already been circumcised). Each boy assumes a serious and defiant manner to give himself courage. Inside the circle there is a milling crowd, and there is such a noise of drums and songs that the following ritual sentence is barely audible: "Moaga wanian konlebin kouli moaga (You came in a Moaga -- here meaning an uncircumcised man -- you will not be a Moaga when you go out)."

The operation. Before the boys are brought in, a hole has been [265] dug for each one. The child is blindfolded and made to sit on a stone in front of the hole. The prepuce, stretched out as far as possible and tied with a string, is placed on a block of wood and cut off with a single slash of a razor (barga). The penis is held up with a split reed to permit the blood to flow into the hole. I believe that there is a special hole into which all the severed prepuces are thrown. A string tied around the boy's hips replaces the reed after the operation to keep the penis away from the body and thus avoid painful rubbing.

304 551 Bankoensé yuiya (names given to circumcised boys). The names vary according to the rank of each boy. The first to be operated upon is called Falinga; the second, Ouanda; the third,

304 Wanzouri; and so on through Nodo, Koulwandé, Wemba, etc.
551 There is even the favorite who is called Ponsom because he is given special privileges.

Zouinsi yuiya (names of the guards of the kéogo and of those
304 who watch over the bankoensé). Seven days after the ceremony some of the zouinsi are chosen to supervise the kéogo, to take care of its organization and to arrange the games. A real hierarchy is involved, beginning with the Soré Naba ("chief of the path"), who is, so to speak, the head of the establishment, and proceeding down in order of [266] precedence through Sobila Naba, Dag'noré, and Dag'Nobila (gatekeepers). The role of the latter is to allow any zounga [singular of zouinsi] to re-enter the enclosure while preventing any of the circumcised boys from leaving the enclosure without their permission. The Galli and Gallibila are in charge of the drums. The Imam and the Imambilla ("chiefs of pardon") protect the bankoensé from ill-treatment by the zouinsi. Then there is Banzambo, a comic character who is always performing all sorts of dances to relieve the monotony of life in the kéogo and give the boys a little fun. His gyrations always amuse the company. The duty of two characters called Wagdré, "chief thief," and Wagd'billa, "little thief," is to steal the meat acquired by the newly circumcised boys during forays or the saghbo brought by the boys' parents. They compensate for their mischief, however, by putting the younger children to bed and feeding them when the games go on too long. They do this in spite of the vigilance of the guards.

The Nané and Nanebilla, along with the Bankoé, are the masters of ceremonies.

Support of the circumcised boys. As we have already pointed out, the relatives of the boys are expected to provide them with morning and evening meals during their recovery. Actually, the boys get very meager rations since more than half of the food -- after the choicest bits have been set aside by the lembré (person in charge of tasting the food)-- is reserved [267] for the many zouinsi. Since most of them are bachelors, they welcome a chance to eat their fill.

304 Care given the sick boys. A specially arranged corner of the
752 kéogo serves as an infirmary. Treatment consists of washing the

304 wound with warm water which often is not scrupulously clean
752 since the gourd in which it is kept is not always washed. The
wound is dusted with a charred substance (made by burning the
[278] bark or leaves of the baguem-baga plant) mixed with karite butter.
It is bandaged with a leaf from the kantonga bush, tied on with a
bit of thread. Once the wound has begun to heal, it is wrapped
in cotton strips. The water used to wash the wound is thrown
into a hole that is covered with a stone.

304 Special language of the kéogo. In order to prevent the Moaga
198 (here meaning an uncircumcised person) from understanding what
is said within the kéogo or between the boys and the guards, a
special language has been developed. Some of its words are as
follows:

Water (kom in ordinary Mossi language), hargo;
Millet cake (saghbo in Mossi), lâbo;
Sauce (zindo in Mossi), kirou;
Fire (bougoum in Mossi), nionom;
Beer (dam in Mossi), sonnom;
A robe or blanket (fougou in Mossi), pilli;
Mat (pinri in Mossi), wanghé. [268]

304 Distinctive attire of the circumcised boys (bankoanga). His
292 costume, wallimba or zougba, consists of a fringed loincloth with
pockets. He carries a rough stick (zâbré) with which he hunts
rabbits and other small game.

He accompanies his evening dance with an instrument called
304 wassimba, a curved stick on the end of which are strung four or
293 five pieces of gourd, roughly circular in shape, with holes bored
through them.

Tom-toms. The bankoensé (newly circumcised boys) dance
304 to the beat of two drums like those used in the warba and waongo
534 (see the chapter on native dances). The drums are called
535 gangango when they accompany other dances, but here they are
called gallyans.

304 Prohibitions in the kéogo. A Moaga (1) is strictly forbidden

1. "Moaga" is used here in a pejorative sense and means an uncircumcised man.

304 to look into the enclosure. If he should commit such an indiscretion which is considered a gross blunder, he at once suffers the consequences. He is immediately dragged into the circle undressed, and circumcised without any consultation with his relatives.

It is strictly forbidden to enter the kéogo, with néoda (shoes), a pougla [269] (red fez), and kandé (spears). If a canton chief should take it into his head to visit the circumcised boys -- an unlikely situation -- he would have to leave all his insignia of rank outside.

304 834 Since it has been observed that young men who have had sexual intercourse before their circumcision had difficulty in being healed after the operation, they are advised to avoid sexual intercourse for the first few months after the scars form.

304 262 They do not eat wagha sauce (a sauce made of the immature fruit of the wagka, a tree of the kapok family).

Required exercises for the bankoensé. The bankoensé are 304 required to perform painful and tiring exercises, which consider- 526 ably retards their recovery. We shall describe the principal ones below.

Very early in the morning when it is very cool -- we have pointed out that the ceremony takes place at the beginning of the cool season -- the boys are awakened and forced to lie prone on the cold sand without any covering. This is the bourga. Naturally enough, the limbs become a bit stiff, so they are roundly whipped with berrella (branches of certain trees), ostensibly to give them warmth and strength. Then, to the beat of the tom-toms, they must do the exercise called guella. This difficult feat involves jumping like a frog from a crouching position [270] and at intervals making a circular movement with the legs. They may also be required to do the even more difficult nagda, an exercise which involves walking on the hands with the legs in the air. Another exercise requires the boys, starting from an erect position, to bend backwards until the hands touch the ground. This is called kaougsèga, "back breaker." The unfortunates whose hands fail to reach the ground get a bump on the head. There are also movements of the head called zouanka, like those made by Kassonké girls and the Wiskamba of Mossi country.

304 Release. The stay in the kéogo lasts from 90 to 100 days. Around the eightieth day, when all the boys have recovered, their heads are shaved and they are told that they will be released a week later. Chickens (koug'nossé, "chickens of the stone") are killed, and each boy is given half a chicken.

Actually, the ceremony of liberation will not take place until fourteen days after this ceremony. All of the boys' belongings (loincloth, bandages, sticks, etc.) are burned by the zouinsi in a great fire near the kéogo. The bankoensé, completely naked, must jump over the fire and run straight to the house of the Bankoé without looking back. A new enclosure has been built there, and the boys are given skirts, robes, trousers, and caps of various colors which their relatives bought or [271] had made for them. Everyone on this occasion wants his son to be distinguished by the richness of his costume. The procession of the circumcised boys is a motley and picturesque sight. One or two days after this, the boys must go back toward the kéogo at nightfall for the last time. They stop before reaching it, however, and return to the house of the Bankoé with their backs slightly bent; this is called lé'ssé-bourgou.

The boys enjoy a veritable festival for a week. They are in high spirits from the admiration they receive, from being able to perform dances other than those peculiar to the circumcision ceremony, from drinking beer, and especially from eating their fill, since their parents have sacrificed chickens and sheep for the occasion.

Finally, very early one morning, some zouinsi collect the boys' handsomely decorated sticks (wangha or dibissi) and go off to bury them in holes dug outside the village. This is the end of the cremony, and now the boys may return to their homes.

304 572 All of the boys have undergone the same rough treatment and have led the same life for about 100 days. During this time of trial, friendships and lasting attachments have been formed. They will henceforth call each other by their "circumcision names" and will help each other since they are now friends.

304 In order to forestall possible reprisals -- since in the kéogo no distinction is made between the son of a naba and a peasant's son -- custom forbids the [272] new initiates to hold a grudge against the zouinsi for the ill-treatment to which they were subjected.

304 184 The Nioniossé and the Soukoaba do not practice circumcision, and that is why they are called Mossé. In villages inhabited solely by Nioniossé, a kéogo may not be set up. At present some boys of Nionioga origin ignore the prohibition and go to their mother's village (Yastenga) to have the purifying operation (1).

[775] 1. Apparently the Moslems believe that those who are circumcised will not go to hell.

304 832 626 Among the Mossi many Christians voluntarily have themselves circumcised; women -- even Christians -- feel a certain repugnance for the touch of the "Moaga."

Finally, excision is also esteemed among the Mossi, except among the Nioniossé who do not practice it. Girls who are not excised are scorned by their friends and will have no lovers.

1: Delobsom--144 I-5 (no date) 1933 FA28 Mossi FA28

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The Author Mr. Dim Delobsom.

1: Delobsom--145 I-5 (no date) 1933 FA28 Mossi FA28

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Mogho Naba Kom Ruler of the Mossi.

From the Mission of the White Fathers at Ouagadougou.

1: Delobsom--146 I-5 (no date) 1933 FA28 Mossi FA28

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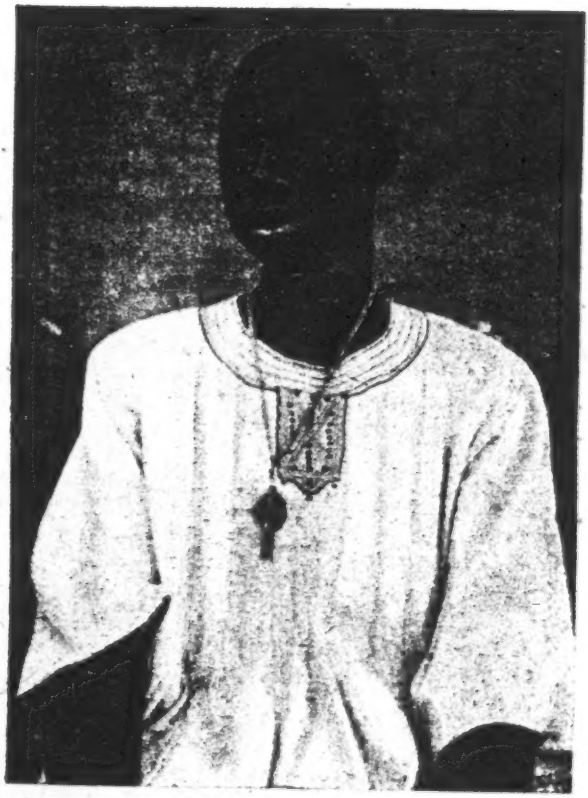

A Mossi Type.

From the Mission of the White Fathers at Ouagadougou.

1: Delobsom--147 I-5 (no date) 1933 FA28 Mossi FA28

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Drummer (bendré).

From the Mission of the
White Fathers at
Ouagadougou.

1: Delobsom--148 I-5 (no date) 1933 FA28 Mossi FA28

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Mossi Girl.

From the Mission of the
White Fathers at Ouagadougou.

1: Delobsom--149 I-5 (no date) 1933 FA28 Mossi FA28

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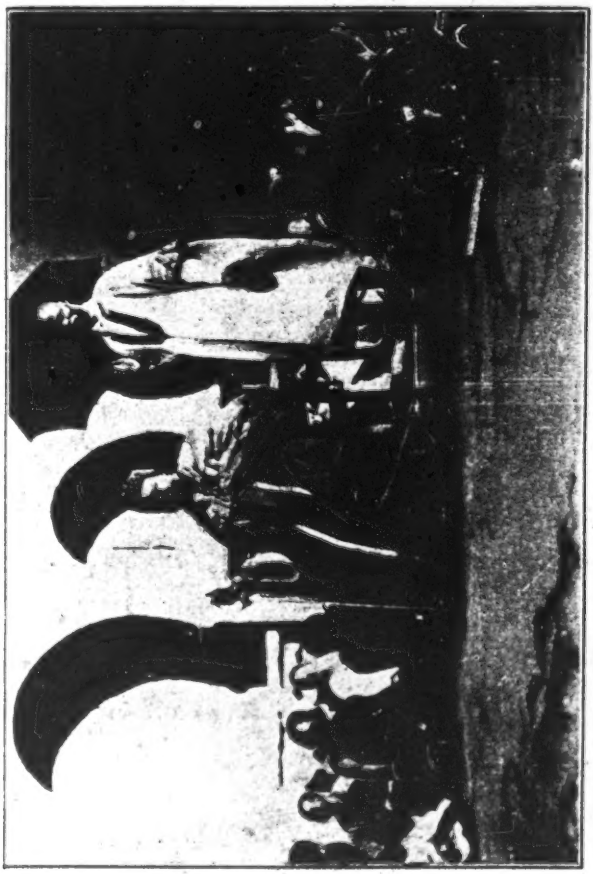

1: Delobsom--150 I-5 (no date) 1933 FA28 Mossi FA28

Ministers of the Mogho Naba and their Servitors.
(From left to right, the First, Third, and Fourth Ministers.)

From the Mission of the White Fathers
at Ouagadougou.

1: Delobsom--151 I-5 (no date) 1933 FA28 Mossi FA28

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Mogho Naba
The Ruler of all the Mossi and a Servitor.

From the Mission of the White Fathers
at Ouagadougou.

1: Delobsom--152 I-5 (no date) 1933 FA28 Mossi FA28

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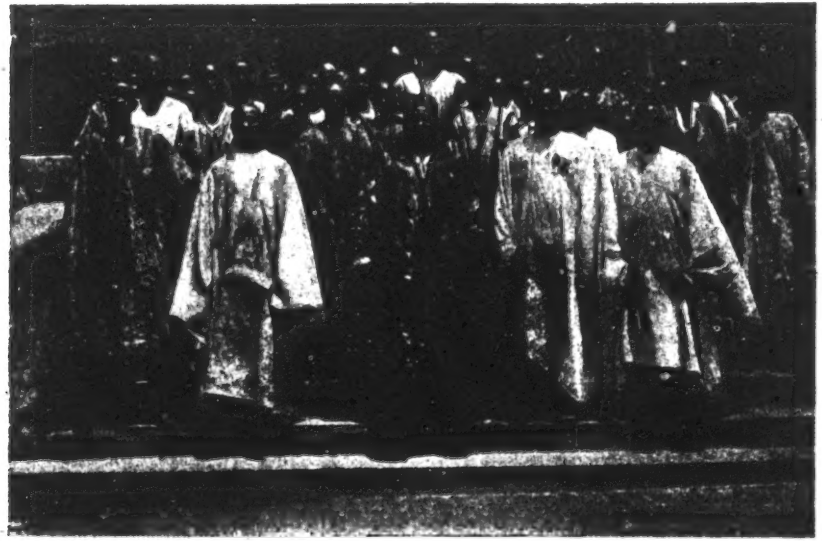

The Mogho Naba and Three of his Ministers.

From the Missions of the White Fathers
at Ouagadougou.

1: Delobsom--153 I-5 (no date) 1933 FA28 Mossi FA28

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G unga N: Gounga Naba
Third Minister of the Mogho Naba.

From the Mission of the White
Fathers at Ouagadougou.

1: Delobsom--154 I-5 (no date) 1933 FA28 Mossi FA28

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Tansoba
Mossi Minister of War.
From the Mission of the White Fathers at Ouagadougou.

1: Delobson--155 I-5 (no date) 1933 FA28 Mossi FA28

The Baloum Naba on horseback among his Courtiers.
From the Mission of the White
Fathers at Ouagadougou.

1: Delobsom--156 I-5 (no date) 1933 FA28 Mossi FA28

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Native Blacksmith.
From the Mission of the White Fathers at Ouagadougou.

1: Delobsom--157 I-5 (no date) 1933 FA28 Mossi FA28

648
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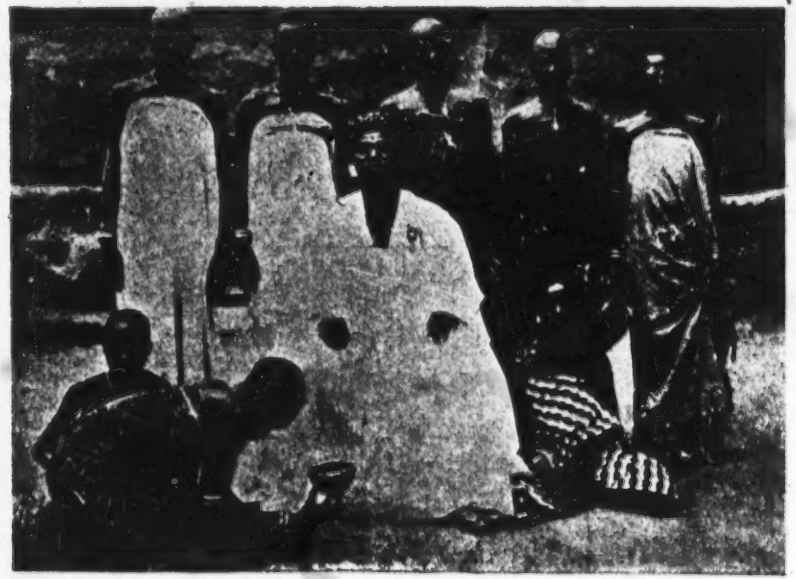

The Third Minister of the Mogho Naba (Gounga Naba) among his Servitors.
(The latter wear Christian medals)
From the Mission of the White Fathers at Ouagadougou.

1: Deloborm--158 I-5 (no date) 1933 FA28 Mossi FA28

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Three Mossi Girls.

From the Mission of the White Fathers at Ouagadougou.

1: Delobsom--159 I-5 (no date) 1933 FA28 Mossi FA28

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576.
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Mossi Woman Spinning.

From the Mission of the White Fathers at Ouagadougou.

1: Delobsom--160 I-5 (no date) 1933 FA28 Mossi FA28

The Home of the Gounga Naba.

From the Mission of the White Fathers at Ouagadougou.

1: Delobsom--161 I-5 (no date) 1933 FA28 Mossi FA28

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Mossi Weaver.

From the Mission of the White Fathers at Ouagadougou.

1: Delobsom--162 I-5 (no date) 1933 FA28 Mossi FA28

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Mossi Warba Dancers.

From the Mission of the White Fathers at Ouagadougou.

1: Delobsom--163 I-5 (no date) 1933 FA28 Mossi FA28

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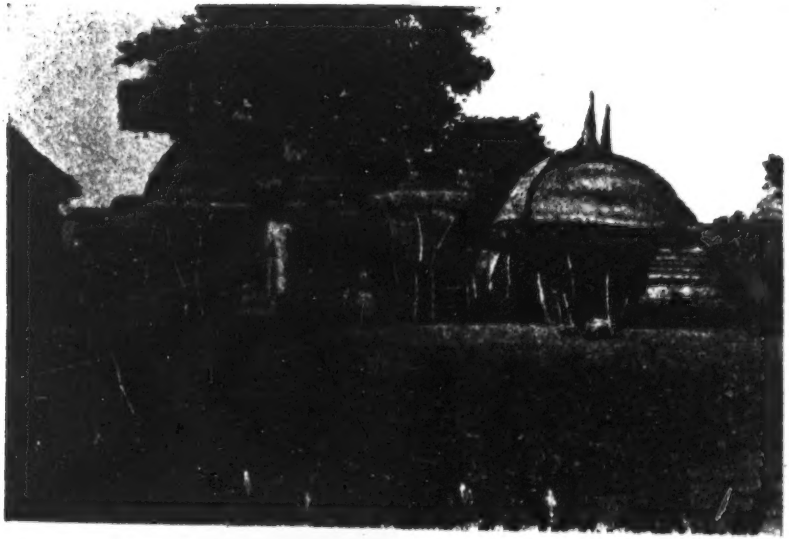

Large Mossi Granaries.

From the Mission of the White Fathers at Ouagadougou.

1: Delobsom--164 I-5 (no date) 1933 FA28 Mossi FA28

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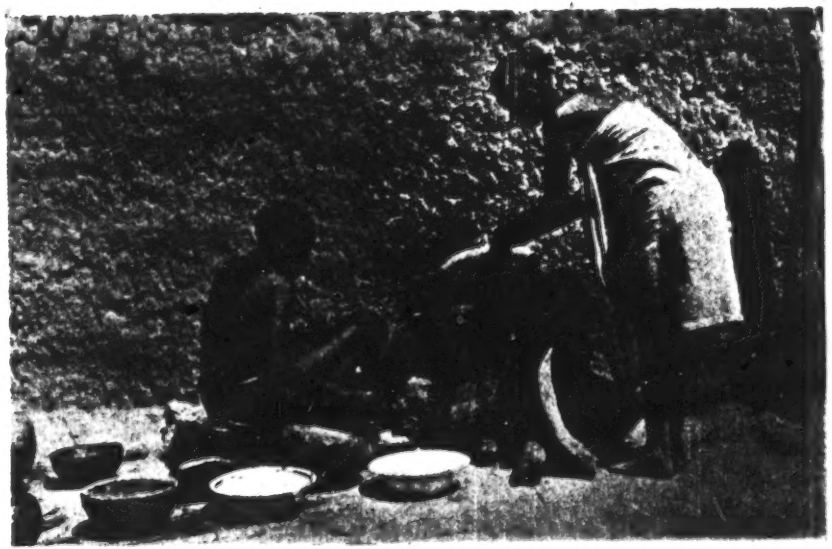

Making Saghaibo.
Millet Mush, Food of the Mossi.

From the Mission of the White
Fathers at Ouagadougou.

1: Delobsom--165 1-5 (no date) 1933 FA28 Mossi FA28

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A Canton Chief (Doulougou Naba) and his Servitor.

From the Mission of the White Fathers at Ouagadougou.

1: Delobsom--166 I-5 (no date) 1933 FA28 Mossi FA28

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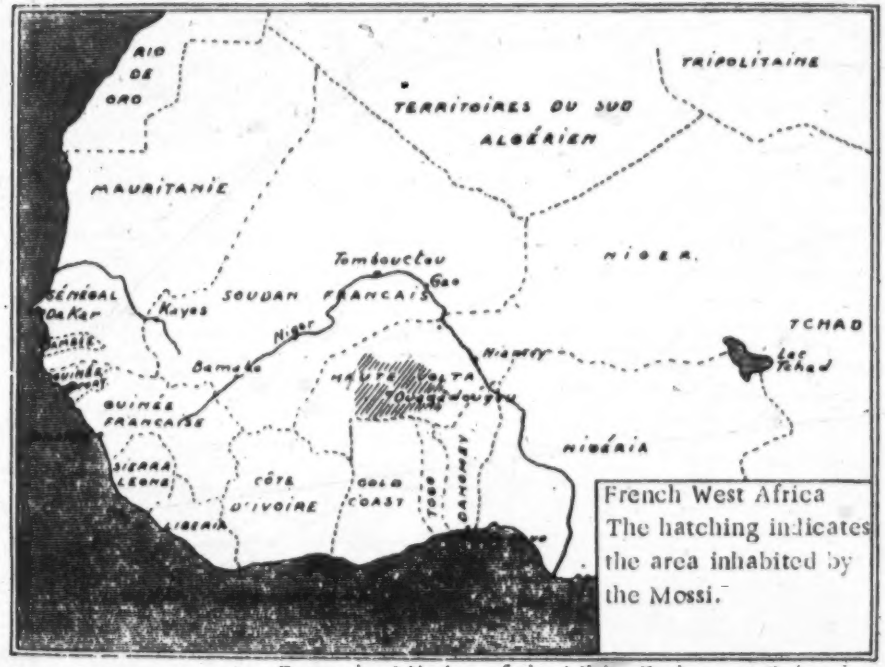

French West Africa
The hatching indicates the area inhabited by the Mossi.

From the Mission of the White Fathers at Ouagadougou.

1: Delobsom FA28 Mossi

L'auteur.
M. Dim Delobsom.

[Frontispiece]

1: Delobsom FA28 Mossi

INSTITUT DE DROIT COMPARÉ

ÉTUDES DE SOCIOLOGIE ET D'ETHNOLOGIE JURIDIQUES

publiées sous la direction de

RENÉ MAUNIER

Professeur à la Faculté de Droit de l'Université de Paris.

XI

A. A. DIM DELOBSOM

L'EMPIRE DU MOGHO-NABA

Coutumes des Mossi de la Haute-Volta

PRÉFACE

DE

ROBERT RANDAU

PARIS

LES ÉDITIONS DOMAT-MONTCHRESTIEN

F. LOVITON et Cie

160, RUE SAINT-JACQUES

1932

[Title Page]

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PRÉFACE

M. Dim Delobsom, auteur de cet ouvrage, est un fonctionnaire noir de l'Afrique occidentale, homme très distingué et l'un des plus sympathiques représentants de la jeune génération indigène élevée dans nos écoles. Les meilleurs de cette élite sont les partisans agissants de nos méthodes et acquirent, à notre contact, le goût de l'observation et de la recherche scientifique. Une classe de plus en plus nombreuse d'intellectuels se groupe dans les villes et assemble les employés de l'administration et du commerce ; ils sont de culture française, parlent couramment entre eux le français et forment le parti qu'ils appellent eux-mêmes celui des noirs évolués. *Ces novateurs qualifient volontiers de* sauvages *les gens qui obéissent intégralement à la coutume ethnique. Ils lisent nos journaux et nos livres, sont au courant de nos idées et parfois collaborent à des publications européennes littéraires ou sociologiques.*

Ces amis du progrès sont le plus souvent des gens très raisonnables. Ils savent que les Français qui vivent auprès d'eux n'ont pas le préjugé de la couleur et traitent avec courtoisie les noirs qui veulent se rendre leurs égaux par l'esprit. Tous nos établissements d'instruction leur sont ouverts. Qu'on songe aux efforts que doit multiplier, pour s'instruire en français, un noir. Sa langue native est essentiellement différente

1: Delobsom FA28 Mossi

de la nôtre; il a vécu dans un milieu social étroit, sectaire, voué à des mœurs farouches et cruelles. Tout de nous lui est d'abord incompréhensible, de notre mode de vie à nos idées les plus simples. Alors, auprès de ses maîtres, il apprend sans rien oublier; son savoir, acquis et retenu grâce à une mémoire prodigieuse, demeure d'ordinaire superficiel. Plus rarement, servi par une intelligence plus grande, il adopte, au moins en partie, nos façons de penser. Ce fut le cas de Dim Delobsom.

*Fils du chef de canton de Sao, il appartient à la caste des nabas, ou nobles, du pays Mossi en Haute-Volta. Il fut instruit en français à l'école régionale de Ouagadougou et à celle des fils de chefs à Kayes, entra de bonne heure dans l'administration et fut affecté à divers bureaux de finances. Bientôt, à la demande de ses chefs, il rédigea quelques rapports sur des points d'ethnographie qu'il leur fallait connaître pour régler de façon équitable des affaires délicates. Ces travaux parurent intéressants et furent publiés dans les revues consacrées aux choses d'Afrique. Encouragé de la sorte, Dim Delobsom se livra, sans négliger sa besogne professionnelle, à des recherches approfondies sur l'histoire et la coutume de son pays, interrogeant sans cesse les vieillards et les griots gardiens des traditions. C'est ainsi que nous possédons à ce jour des renseignements très précis sur les mœurs, si ignorées jusqu'alors, des Mossis. Dim Delobsom témoigne, dans ses ouvrages, d'un amour légitime de son sol natal et a le respect le plus profond de son grand chef, le Morho Naba, qu'il appelle couramment l'*empereur

1: Delobsom FA28 Mossi

des Mossis. *A vrai dire il s'agit d'un potentat qui a à la fois un caractère religieux et temporel, est entouré d'une cour, d'un cérémonial méticuleux, mais se trouve lui-même sous l'influence despotique de la coutume et ne peut se soustraire à ses tyrannies sans risquer de mécontenter la population. Avant notre occupation du Mossi, le Morho Naba était en guerre avec une bonne partie des chefs de province révoltés contrs son autorité. Celle-ci s'est affermie depuis notre arrivée en même temps qu'elle fut contenue dans des limites raisonnables. Le Morho Naba actuel est un personnage considérable et cordial, d'un loyalisme parfait et a été un des meilleurs auxiliaires de l'administration française dans la boucle du Niger.*

Dim Delobsom est fier de sa noblesse. Il est le descendant de Naba Kouré (le mot kouré signifie tuerie, et doit être distingué de son synonyme qui signifie funérailles), fils de Ouédraogo et oncle d'Oubri, fondateur de la dynastie qui règne depuis le XIIIe siècle de notre ère à Ouagadougou. Kouré se réserva le fief de Sao où, après lui, dix-sept nabas de sa famille se succédèrent et où se trouve la sépulture de la famille. En conformité de la coutume mossi, chaque naba n'exerçait un pouvoir légitime, absolu et incontesté qu'après avoir été désigné et intronisé par un collège électoral comprenant un chef de village, un chef de quartier et le baloum naba de Sao, chef des pages ou maire du palais. Le Morho Naba était alors avisé de l'avènement et recevait sa part de coutumes. Lors de l'annexion du Kipirsi, qui fut très longue et très difficile, le naba de Sao fut chargé par l'autorité française d'une mission pacifi-

1: Delobsom FA28 Mossi

catrice qui dura plus de quatre ans et au cours de laquelle il exposa plusieurs fois sa vie à notre service[1].

La société Mossi est hiérarchisée à l'extrême ; il y a là une organisation très serrée dont l'importance est essentielle, et qui a l'avantage, quand on sait l'utiliser, de faciliter le maintien de l'ordre et le respect des décisions. Notre administration française l'a estimée utile et n'a cessé de l'utiliser. Je dois ajouter que les nabas, seigneurs féodaux entourés de gens qui leur sont dévoués, nous ont prêté leur concours entier dans diverses circonstances[2]. *Ils mobilisaient alors leur cavalerie et se conduisaient avec bravoure à la tête de leurs contingents.*

On m'a fréquemment posé la question : Pensez-vous que les noirs soient susceptibles de notre civilisation ? A ceci je réponds sans hésitation : oui ! Mais en ce point comme en toutes choses il faut de la mesure et l'esprit de méthode.

Nous nous attachons à constituer une élite et, à côté

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1. Voici, d'après Dim Delobsom, l'énumération des dignitaires de la cour de son père, à Sao :

1° Le tinguin'naba, chargé du règlement de toutes les affaires concernant les nabissi et nakomsé (la noblesse); 2° le tanlili-naba qui s'occupe plus spécialement des petits chefs dépendant de Sao-naba ; 3° le dapoya-naba, autrefois chargé des hautes œuvres et qui procède aux sacrifices sur les tombeaux des nabas défunts ; 4° le baloum-naba intendant et chef des pages, qui règle les affaires des Mossis n'appartenant pas à la noblesse.

A ces ministres il faut adjoindre : le poe-naba qui surveille et dénonce, par procédé magique, les mœurs des femmes et des pages du naba, le bend'naba, et le loun'naba, chefs des tambourinaires, le teng'soba qui procède aux sacrifices aux fétiches et aux lieux sacrés à l'exclusion des tombes des nabas.

2. En particulier lors de la révolte, en 1916, du Kipirsi et des pays samoros, et en 1914, lors de l'occupation du Togo.

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de celle-ci, une foule qui a des notions plus ou moins étendues de notre langue. Puis nous employons ces éléments au mieux de l'intérêt général. Le principal obstacle auquel se heurte notre action civilisatrice n'est pas dans la croyance mystique, dans les tabous divers, dans les usages légués par les ancêtres. Il est uniquement dans l'esclavage où le noir tient la femme. Il ne s'agit même plus de polygamie, au Mossi, mais d'êtres humains ravalés au rang de bêtes de somme et qui sont estimés à moindre prix qu'un cheval ou une vache.

Tant qu'aux pays d'Afrique nous n'aurons pas donné à la femme la place légitime qu'elle occupe dans une société policée, notre œuvre demeurera incomplète et boiteuse. Qu'on ne croie pas un instant que la difficulté soit mince et qu'on puisse la surmonter par quelques mesures administratives. Les Français ont hérité, de leur culture latine, le goût et le respect de la loi. Or légiférer, en l'espèce, est frapper à coup sûr la société noire dans le vif de la chair. On ne doit attendre de progrès que par l'évolution progressive des mœurs. Ce progrès ne s'accomplit que du fait des individus et à l'intérieur de la masse indigène. Notre action n'a d'efficacité que si elle tend à organiser ce progrès de conscience, et avec prudence. D'autre part, la croyance mystique nous aide à l'occasion dans cette voie ; les diverses missions chrétiennes s'emploient avec zèle, quoique parfois avec indiscrétion, à modifier la mentalité de l'Africain et à le rendre monogame. Elles obtiennent des résultats imprécis. Si le noir accepte le dogme, il n'admet, sinon avec peine, qu'on le trouble dans ses habitudes familiales.

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Voici des millénaires qu'il vit dans la grande peur. Dans le passé il entretint guerre quotidienne avec ses voisins, eut à redouter les pillages de ses maîtres, les massacres exterminateurs, se serra dans son habitation dont il fit une forteresse, prépara les siens à fuir dans la brousse à la moindre alerte. Il était fatal que la femme, alors que l'homme combattait, s'occupât des cultures. Piocheuse de terre, elle était aussi faiseuse de mâles, qui accroissaient la force offensive et défensive du groupe guerrier. Des expéditions qu'ils formaient les guerriers ramenaient des femmes, j'entends de nouvelles faiseuses de mâles. Et c'est pourquoi, dévouées aux travaux pénibles et ravalées au rang de femelles, les femmes constituaient, chez les chefs de guerre, un troupeau qui, à l'occasion, servait de monnaie d'échange entre les groupes, et d'où l'on éliminait sans pitié les faibles, les inutiles, les vieilles.

Cette habitude de vie inquiète a pris fin il y a un petit nombre de lustres, du fait de notre intervention. Ce qui a été construit par des milliers d'années ne peut être démoli en quelques jours ; la coutume ethnique qui lie les hommes entre eux est plus solide que le ciment romain. De nouvelles conditions de vie sociale, l'assurance où sont les noirs de la sécurité du lendemain, l'abolition des tyrannies féroces qui pesaient sur eux, la multiplicité des voies de communication, la fréquentation des Européens, sont les puissances qui interrompront les fatalités ancestrales.

Améliorer l'existence matérielle de l'autochtone, le conduire au bien-être, lui permettre avant tout de manger à sa faim, ménager ses forces en matière fiscale, l'arra-

catrice qui dura plus de quatre ans et au cours de laquelle il exposa plusieurs fois sa vie à notre service [1].

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cher au sort misérable qui fut le sien dans le passé adouciront la barbarie. Tel est le but de notre politique indigène. Les noirs des hautes classes sont dans cet immense travail nos premiers collaborateurs. Tout jeune engagé dans notre voie, Dim Delobsom non seulement connaît à fond notre langue, mais, familier de notre idéologie, pense en Français de race.

Il n'y a pas à insister, je pense, sur l'extrême intérêt que présente une documentation d'ethnographie présentée par un noir intelligent et profondément instruit de tout ce qui concerne les gens de son pays.

ROBERT RANDAU.

[p. viii is blank]

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Communiqué par la Mission des Pères Blancs à Ouagadougou.

MOGHO-NABA KOM.
Grand Chef du pays Mossi.

[facing p. viii]

INTRODUCTION

Les Mossi, objet de cette étude, habitent la Colonie de la Haute-Volta, en Afrique Occidentale Française, dans les cercles de Ouagadougou, Kaya, Koudougou, Tenkodogo et une partie du cercle de Ouahigouya.

Avant l'arrivée des Mossi, le pays était occupé par des Ninissi, des Kibissi et des Gourounsi. — Chassés par les conquérants, réduits à l'esclavage, les Gourounsi se réfugièrent dans la région de Pô et de Léo (Subdivisions administratives du cercle de Ouagadougou) et dans une partie du cercle de Koudougou. — Quant aux Kibissi ils se seraient retirés dans les montagnes — dans la falaise de Bandiagara — et forment aujourd'hui la race connue sous le nom de Habès. — Les Ninissi, ainsi qu'on le verra plus loin, appelés Tinguinbissi (fils de la terre ou, proprement, premiers habitants du pays) n'ont pas été chassés du territoire par Naba Oubri, fondateur de la dynastie Mossi de Ouagadougou. — Leurs patriarches « les Tingsoba (maîtres du pays et de la terre) sont chargés de sacrifier les victimes offertes aux « dieux » (Tenkouga, pierres) soit pour la bonne-santé des habitants, soit pour demander la pluie, etc... et surtout ils veillent à la conservation des « dieux fétiches ».

Il ne nous a pas été possible de savoir quels étaient, avant les Ninissi, Kibissi et Gourounsi, les premiers

1: Delobsom FA28 Mossi

habitants du pays Mossi actuel. Toutes les recherches faites dans ce but sont demeurées sans résultats.

On nous a bien parlé de certaines grottes — aujourd'hui refuges de porcs-épics — qui servaient autrefois de repaires aux premiers habitants, mais aucun de nos informateurs n'a pu dire avec certitude à quelle race appartenaient ces individus [1].

Nous allons donc nous contenter dans ce qui suit de donner un rapide aperçu historique de la formation de la race Mossi.

APERÇU HISTORIQUE DE LA FORMATION DE L'EMPIRE MOSSI

Tout d'abord il convient de dire que le mot « Mossi » n'existe pas dans la langue moré ; ce terme est une déformation française du mot « Mossé » pluriel de « Moaga » habitant du « Mogho » (pays des Mossé).

I. — Les origines de la formation de l'empire

On rapporte que vers le xe siècle, une fille du Roi de Gambaga (Gold-Coast), la nommée Nyennega (c'est-à-dire : la Mince) ayant passé l'âge de puberté

1. Le Tingsoba de Goupana (cercle de Ouagadougou), nous a affirmé cependant qu'au moment de l'arrivée des Ninissi (Nioniossé) dans le pays, il y avait d'autres individus sur lesquels il ne peut donner aucune précision. Ces premiers habitants étaient cependant sûrement, déclare-t-il, des forgerons parce qu'on retrouve dans les ruines de leurs anciennes habitations des morceaux de fer.

l: Delobsom FA28 Mossi

sans que son père s'occupât de la donner en mariage, — car, dit-on, c'était une amazone de qualité dont ce dernier ne voulait pas se séparer, résolut de donner une leçon à son père; elle fit devant le palais un champ de gombo qu'elle ne récolta pas. Le Roi de Gambaga lui en ayant demandé la cause elle répondit : « Comment, tu trouves que le gombo vieillit ? Que dira-t-on d'une grande fille sans mari ? — Son père ne se fâcha pas mais continua à ne pas s'occuper de son mariage. — NYENNEGA eut alors des relations intimes avec un tiers dont il ne nous a pas été donné de connaître le nom et devint enceinte. — Le Roi son père, mis au courant du fait, trouva là un moyen de se venger d'elle; il promit de la mettre à mort. — Mais la fille, prévenue par quelques courtisans des intentions de son père, s'empara d'un cheval et s'enfuit du domicile paternel, accompagnée d'une suite nombreuse.

La course à cheval provoqua l'avortement en cours de route. Elle continua son chemin toujours accompagnée de ses fidèles et atteignit la région actuelle de Yanga, alors habitée par une population peu dense de Boussancé. — NYENNEGA s'arrêta dans la brousse, devant une case qu'elle croyait solitaire et abandonnée et qui était, en réalité, une des demeures d'un chasseur d'éléphants, le nommé RYALLÉ ou RYARÊ.

Quand ce dernier revint de la chasse, il réserva un accueil chaleureux à ce « puissant étranger »; déjà, il se comptait au nombre de ses courtisans. C'est que NYENNEGA était habillée en homme, donnait des ordres comme un Roi le ferait à ses sujets et était

1: Delobsom FA28 Mossi

très respectée ; il était dès lors difficile de deviner son sexe. — Un jour cependant, elle fit introduire auprès d'elle RYALLÉ et lui confia en secret qu'elle était la fille du Roi de Gambaga. Elle se donna à RYALLÉ et leur mariage fut célébré solennellement.

De cette union naquit un fils. Comme RYALLÉ voulait lui donner un nom, NYENNEGA s'y opposa et nomma l'enfant « OUEDRAOGO » (littéralement : étalon) en souvenir du cheval avec lequel elle s'était enfuie du domicile paternel. C'est à lui qu'elle devait d'avoir trouvé un mari à son goût.

Lorsque OUEDRAOGO eut atteint quinze ans, sa mere l'envoya rendre visite à son grand-père à Gambaga. On rapporte que celui-ci combla de richesses son petit-fils (il lui donna entre autres biens 4 chevaux et une cinquantaine de bœufs). Le pays Dagomba étant à cette époque surpeuplé, lorsque OUEDRAOGO repartit de Gambaga plusieurs Dagombas s'attachèrent à sa fortune. Il fonda avec cette bande, sur un emplacement abandonné à son approche par les « Boussancé », un village qu'il nomma « Tankourou » (actuellement Tenkodogo : litt. vieux pays). Depuis, sa puissance ne fit que s'accroître par l'arrivée continuelle de Dagombas qui venaient par milliers se grouper sous son autorité. D'un autre côté les populations voisines très peu denses et surtout très divisées durent se soumettre à OUEDRAOGO et reconnaître son autorité.

Entre temps, OUEDRAOGO s'étant marié avec la nommée « POUIRKETA » (litt. il reste encore quelque chose à partager), eut de nombreux enfants. Lorsque ceux-ci furent grands, il les installa comme chefs

1: Delobsom FA28 Mossi

dans les régions voisines pour imposer ainsi par la force des armes son autorité à ceux qui ne voulaient pas se soumettre. On rapporte que l'aîné, DIABA LOMPO, fut envoyé pour prendre le commandement du pays de Fada N'Gourma; un autre, RAOUA (litt. Homme) aurait été envoyé dans la région de Ouahigouya où il fonda le vaste royaume de Zondema — aujourd'hui écroulé et remplacé par celui du Yatenga actuel — et enfin un troisième, ZOUNGRANA, resta auprès de son père et devint plus tard son successeur.

Le tingsoba (litt. tenga : terre, soba : maître) de Guilingou, de la famille des Ninissi autochtones, étant parti à Salaga (Gold-Coast) rapporta à ses collègues qu'il avait vu dans la région de Tenkodogo ce qu'on est convenu d'appeler le « Panga » (litt. la force, la puissance) et que s'ils obtenaient que le Naba leur envoie un de ses enfants ils se débarrasseraient sans peine de leurs ennemis les Gourounsi et les Kibissi (Habès).

C'est pourquoi, ZIRI, le chef d'une agglomération composée de 7 villages formant à peu près le canton de Oubrytenga actuel, envoya offrir en mariage à OUEDRAOGO une fille de sa race. OUEDRAOGO accepta et donna la fille « POUGTOENGA » (ainsi surnommée parce qu'elle avait de la barbe) à ZOUNGRANA qui en eut un fils nommé OUBRY.

Quelques années plus tard, un envoyé des Ninissi demandait à OUEDRAOGO de prendre leur pays sous sa protection et d'en confier le commandement à un de ses fils. OUEDRAOGO se rendit lui-même chez les Ninissi pour prendre possession du pays, mais il

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succomba, au cours de cette reconnaissance, au village de Sagabtenga, après une courte maladie.

ZOUNGRANA lui succéda mais demeura à Tenkodogo.

Les Ninissi firent de nouvelles démarches auprès de ZOUNGRANA. Celui-ci réunit tous ses enfants. Les envoyés Ninissi choisirent OUBRY, peut-être parce qu'ils reconnurent en lui un de leurs descendants. OUBRY était en effet, nous l'avons déjà dit, l'enfant de la fille de race « Niniga » donnée en mariage par OUEDRAOGO à ZOUNGRANA. Mais l'enfant était petit, il fallait encore attendre quelques années avant de l'envoyer chercher. La tradition rapporte que, pour mieux le reconnaître, les Ninissi employèrent un sortilège pour le rendre boiteux, ceci dans le but d'éviter que ZOUNGRANA ne leur présentât plus tard un autre enfant.

Enfin, lorsqu'il eut atteint un âge raisonnable et sur les instances des Ninissi, ZOUNGRANA envoya OUBRY prendre possession du pays de sa mère. Le village où il s'arrêta et qui d'ailleurs porta son nom, est situé à 35 kilomètres environ de Ouagadougou.

OUBRY entreprit la conquête du pays qu'il pacifia. Il étendit son commandement au delà de la région de Boussouma, et plongea plus au Nord vers Yako, puis il commença l'organisation politique et administrative de son royaume.

Il prit le nom de Mogho-Naba[1] (litt. Mogho : pays des Mossi; Naba : chef) et par extension, maître du

1. Dans le texte nous avons employé fréquemment le mot Mogho-Naba : prononcer Morho-Naba.
De même Sogoné devra être prononcé sorhoné.

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Monde. Il est, dit-on, le fondateur de la dynastie Mossi de Ouagadougou.

A cette époque, la région était occupée par des Ninissi, des Kibissi et des Gourounsi qui vivaient les uns à côté des autres dans un perpétuel état de guerre. Les groupements dont le chef se nommait « Waregoninga » voulaient asservir les autres et leur imposer son autorité. Aussi bien, lorsque OUBRY prit possession du pays, son premier soin fut de chasser tous les partisans de Waregoninga qui se réfugièrent loin, très loin dans les montagnes. (On croit savoir qu'il s'agit de la falaise de Bandiagara.) Les Habès qui habitent en effet cette falaise sont appelés par les Mossi des « Kibissi »).

OUBRY mourut au cours d'une tournée à Koudougou dans le Kippirsi. Mais à cette époque les bases de l'organisation politique étant jetées, ses successeurs n'eurent qu'à continuer son œuvre. Chacun d'eux résida d'ailleurs dans la région où il apparaissait que sa présence fût nécessaire. C'est à partir de NABA ZANA, 15e successeur de OUBRY, que Ouagadougou devint la capitale des Empereurs Mossi.

Sous le règne de Koumdimié (litt. Je pleure tout seul), 5e successeur de OUBRY, nous assistons à la formation d'un certain nombre de petits états soi-disant indépendants. Tels sont : Boussouma, Yako, Konquizitenga, Risiam et Lâ. En réalité, ces états étaient seulement confiés à des fils ou frères de Naba Koumdimié. Mais Boussouma Naba, profitant de la mort de l'Empereur et sur les conseils de sa mère, s'est peu à peu affranchi des liens de vassalité qui l'unissaient

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au successeur de OUBRY, et prit le titre de « Dima » c'est-à-dire de Roi.

Par ailleurs, à la suite de l'autorisation, qui a été donnée au Boussouma Naba par l'Empereur, de nommer certains chefs de canton (Kombemba) en raison de l'éloignement de Ouagadougou, ce roitelet s'annexa un certain nombre de ces cantons et finit par s'en croire le maître absolu. Ses frères de Riziam, Konquizitenga, Yako et Lâ, l'imitèrent et se crurent eux aussi indépendants. Ainsi se constituèrent ces états dissidents.

C'est également sous le règne de Naba Koumdimié — déclare-t-on — que se forma l'état absolument indépendant de Yatenga (Ouahigouya) créé par YADIGA.

Il y a lieu cependant de remarquer que si, en fait, les états dissidents de Boussouma, Konquizitenga, Riziam, Yako proclamèrent leur indépendance, le Mogho-Naba de Ouagadougou, successeur légitime de OUBRY, et, par conséquent, le « Dima des Dima » (Roi des Rois), n'a jamais cessé de se considérer comme le maître incontesté de l'Empire Mossi puisque les Nabas susvisés ont toujours été placés sous la suzeraineté du Roi des Mossi. Du reste, si jusqu'à présent ces Nabas sont nommés par leur propre collège électoral, sans que le Mogho-Naba intervienne, ils sont tenus d'aviser l'Empereur de leur avènement et de lui offrir à cette occasion des présents. C'est au Mogho-Naba qu'il appartient de leur envoyer la « chechia rouge » et les chaussures (insignes de la chefferie) — ce qui, à franchement parler, revient à dire que l'Empereur ratifie leur nomination.

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Le Chef d'État de Tenkodogo, qui a également droit au titre de Mogho-Naba parce que successeur de Zoungrana et, pour employer le terme indigène, « père du Mogho-Naba de Ouagadougou » a été, jusqu'à présent, considéré à tort par l'autorité française comme un vassal du Mogho-Naba. En réalité, il est Roi au même titre que le sont les Nabas de Ouahigouya et de Fada N'Gourma. En raison de l'origine commune le Tenkodogo-Naba se considère comme frère et allié du Mogho-Naba de Ouagadougou et comme tel peut demander à ce dernier, si la nécessité s'en fait sentir, le concours de ses armes. C'est ainsi d'ailleurs que le Naba de Fada N'Gourma, descendant de Ouedraogo, envoya demander à OUOBGO (BOUKARY KOUTOU), peu avant la pénétration française, des guerriers pour l'aider à combattre un village rebelle contre lequel il luttait vainement depuis des années.

Pour ne pas gêner le lecteur par une énumération rebutante nous donnons, en appendice, la liste des Mogho-Naba depuis l'origine à nos jours, c'est-à-dire depuis Naba OUEDRAOGO. On pourra consulter ce tableau avec intérêt. Il donne, en effet, pour chaque Empereur, la liste de ses descendants.

Il nous a semblé logique, contrairement à l'usage établi par ceux qui ont entrepris des études sur le Mossi, de dresser cette liste à partir de Naba OUEDRAOGO, berceau du royaume Mossi; un certain nombre de descendants de ce Roi sont encore chefs de canton dans différents cercles de la Colonie. D'après les renseignements que nous avons recueillis c'est, paraît-il, le seul roi dont la lignée n'ait pas été altérée

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jusqu'ici, c'est-à-dire que les chefs de canton, ses petits-fils, se sont toujours succédé de père en fils, aucun des candidats n'ayant été évincé au profit d'un descendant d'un autre Mogho-Naba.

II. — Formation de la race Mossi

On peut se demander pourquoi, si les Mossi sont des « Dagombas », on ne les appelle pas de ce nom ?

Nous nous sommes livrés pour cela à une enquête; nous avons consulté les vieux et les notabilités de Ouagadougou dont le Baloum naba, Ministre de l'Empereur. Nous avons recherché si le terme « Mossé » était le nom donné par les envahisseurs aux autochtones, ou si, au contraire, ce terme avait été employé par ces derniers pour désigner les premiers.

Voici l'explication qui nous paraît la plus plausible.

La race « Moaga » est formée, on le sait, de l'amalgame des « Dagomba » (conquérants) avec les « Ninissi », « Kibissi » et « Gourounsi » (autochtones du pays avant l'arrivée des envahisseurs). Le « Moaga », au pluriel, « Mossé » — serait, croyons-nous, l'individu issu de ce métissage et ce terme plutôt péjoratif signifiant produit « impur », est de nos jours encore employé par les « Nabas » et « Nakomsès » pour désigner tout individu qui n'appartient pas à la noblesse.

Le terme « Mossé » des « Dagombas » serait alors synonyme de « métis », le père et la mère étant de deux races différentes il ne faut pas oublier, en effet, que les premiers autochtones n'ont pas tous été chassés du territoire. Chaque fois que les successeurs de

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OUEDRAOGO soumettaient les groupements rebelles, ils ne massacraient que ceux qui fomentaient les révoltes et ne refoulaient vers d'autres régions que ceux qui ne voulaient pas se soumettre ; ils se gardaient bien de changer quoi que ce soit aux institutions des « Tengsoba » (maîtres de la terre). On en peut d'ailleurs juger par le nombre considérable des « Nioniossés » qui vivent encore dans le pays Mossi actuel.

« Moaga » signifie aussi « homme non circoncis ». Or, le « Nionioga » ignorait la circoncision. D'autre part, ce serait faire une grave injure à un Naba, à un descendant quelconque de la noblesse que de l' « appeler « Moaga ». Les appellations qui lui conviennent sont : « Bourkina (noble), homme libre, mot qui a, à peu près, le même signification que « Horon » (bambara), Nabiga, Nakombga, Naba.

En définitive, on peut donc dire que les termes « Moaga » et « Mossé », sont des mots « Dagomba » pour désigner les « Ninissi » sauvages, incirconcis et par extension les enfants métis issus de l'union des « Dagombas » avec les filles des conquis.

La deuxième explication est la suivante : on croit que les mots « Moaga » et « Mossé » ont été employés par les autochtones pour désigner les Dagomba au moment de leur arrivée dans le pays, tout comme les Mossi appellent les Blancs des « Nansarba » en distinguant les Français : « Francé » des « Guemba » (Allemands) des « Anguilissi » (Anglais).

Il est aujourd'hui malaisé, pour ne pas dire impossible, de faire une sérieuse discrimination entre les éléments de la langue des conquérants et ceux de

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celle des conquis. Le peuple « Niniga » tout en ayant conservé intactes ses institutions au sein de l'actuel territoire Mossi, a cependant adopté le parler et certaines mœurs des envahisseurs.

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C'est dans le but de faire connaître cette race « Mossi » issue de divers éléments, que nous avons entrepris ce travail.

Nous avons étudié tour à tour l'organisation politique et administrative de la Cour du Mogho-Naba et de ses vassaux avant et après la pénétration française, les coutumes locales et expliqué les « mille petits riens » de la vie indigène qui tous ont une signification, se rattachent le plus souvent à une vieille croyance ou à des superstitions.

Etant originaire du pays, nous avons eu recours à l'information directe et à nos observations personnelles et ne nous sommes inspiré d'aucun auteur. Nous avons repris, en les complétant, nos deux précédentes études « Le Mogho Naba et sa Cour » (*Bulletin du Comité d'Études historiques et scientifiques de l'A. O. F.* 1928) ; les Nioniossés de Goupana (n° 4, 1929. *Revue Outre-Mer*, et n° 1, 1930 de la même Revue). Nous avons cependant consulté la monographie du cercle de Ouagadougou (1908) pour fixer certaines dates chaque fois que la mémoire de nos informateurs faisait défaut ; de même nous avons emprunté une citation et puisé quelques renseignements dans l'intéressant travail de M. André de

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BEAUMINY « Une Féodalité » (*Bulletin de l'Afrique Française*, 1924).

Nous souhaitons que ce modeste travail destiné, avant tout, à renseigner le plus exactement possible l'Administration locale sur la race Mossi, une des plus importantes de l'A. O. F., soit accueilli favorablement par tous ceux qu'intéresse l'étude des races indigènes des possessions coloniales françaises.

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CHAPITRE PREMIER

Situation avant la pénétration française. Les guerres intestines ou le commencement de la décadence de l'Empire Mossi.

GUERRES DES MOGHO-NABA SANUM ET WOBGO CONTRE LALLÉ (12 ANS) OU CAUSES DE L'INIMITIÉ QUI EXISTE ENTRE LES MOGHO-NABA ET LES CHEFS DE LALLÉ.

Naba « Wobgo » (éléphant), fut nommé chef de canton de Lallé par Naba Sanum, Empereur des Mossi, malgré son jeune âge et le nombre considérable de ses concurrents. Aussi ne cessa-t-il, les années qui suivirent son avènement, d'exprimer, par tous les moyens en son pouvoir, sa reconnaissanse au Mogho-Naba.

Il envoyait toutes les semaines à Naba Sanum, entre autres présents, une cinquantaine de moutons et une dizaine de bœufs. De plus il distribua près de 200 femmes aux principaux notables de Ouagadougou.

Ces nombreux cadeaux attirèrent vite l'attention sur lui à un tel point que les autres chefs de canton, ses voisins, presque éclipsés, avaient conçu à son égard une haine farouche.

Un jour cependant, Naba WOBGO se brouilla avec le sogoné SAMBO — celui-là même qui apportait à Ouagadougou des cadeaux pour l'Empereur — et décida de le faire périr. Sans doute, ce sogoné aimé

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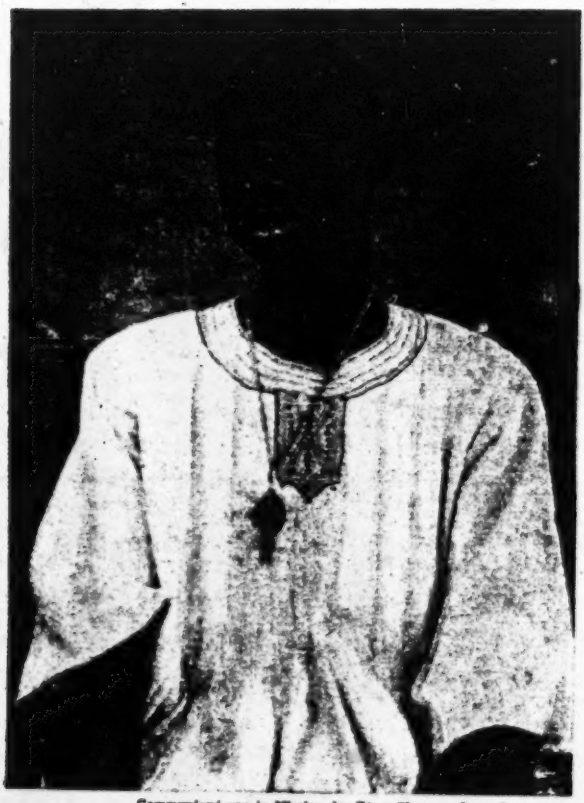
de son chef et du Mogho-Naba se croyait-il autorisé à violer certains interdits des sogonés tels que « coucher avec des femmes, piller la population dans les marchés où il se rendait ». On l'accusait aussi de détourner une partie des présents qu'il avait pour mission de distribuer à Ouagadougou.

Ainsi menacé de mort, SAMBO vint se confier à l'Empereur. Se voyant bien reçu, festoyé même, il en profita pour accumuler mensonges sur mensonges et parvint à mettre en désaccord son chef avec le Mogho-Naba à qui il déclara notamment : « Depuis longtemps « je sers d'intermédiaire entre Lallé-Naba et vous ; « je veux vous apprendre quelque chose d'impor- « tant : j'ai toujours eu peur mais aujourd'hui je vais « tout vous dévoiler : Lallé-Naba vous injurie jour- « nellement. Vous n'êtes chef, dit-il, que pour emma- « gasiner les cadeaux que l'on vous envoie ; il déclare « à qui veut l'entendre que grâce à lui vous avez pu « vous constituer de nombreux troupeaux de bœufs. « Bref, n'était votre titre d'Empereur, il n'aurait aucun « égard pour vous. D'ailleurs si vous êtes Mogho- « Naba par naissance, c'est-à-dire par succession, lui « l'est par sa façon d'agir et sa bravoure. Dieu l'a « désigné, déclare-t-il, pour vous détrôner. »

Mogho-Naba Sanum, au comble de la colère, dépêcha aussitôt un messager à Naba-Wobgo pour lui dire : « Sambo vient de me rapporter tes prétentions. Je n'avais jamais pensé que « le simple petit TANGA « (c'était le vrai nom de Lalla-Naba) que j'ai nommé « jeune malgré des concurrents cependant dignes « d'intérêt, oserait se dire mon égal. J'ai eu de l'es-



Communiqué par la Mission des Pères Blancs à Ouagadougou.

Type Mossi.

[facing p. 16]

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« time pour toi et je t'ai préféré à tous tes collègues « de l'Ouest. En quoi es-tu mon égal ? Comment peux- « tu croire que j'aie besoin de tes maigres cadeaux pour « vivre ? Sache que ma fortune personnelle et les tri- « buts que je reçois de mes vassaux me suffisent lar- « gement ! »

Lallé-Naba écouta l'envoyé de l'Empereur puis il lui posa les questions suivantes : « Ai-je, oui ou non, d'autres sogonés que SAMBO ? Et ai-je le droit de le remplacer par un autre si je ne suis pas content de lui ? L'Empereur préférerait-il un sogoné à un kombéré ? Maintenant libre à lui de choisir ! S'il aime SAMBO, qu'il le garde, car désormais c'est d'autres sogonés qui nous serviront d'intermédiaires ! »

A quoi l'Empereur répondit « qu'il garde dorénavant ses bœufs et autres présents ! Je n'en ai plus besoin ! »

Lallé-Naba dépêcha auprès du Ouidi-Naba un émissaire pour le mettre au courant du différend existant entre lui et l'Empereur. En ce qui concerne SAMBO, cause de ce fâcheux malentendu, il ajouta « peut-on croire qu'un sogoné gardien des femmes d'un Naba couche avec des femmes en ville sans qu'il touche, un jour, à celles dont il a la garde ? »

. . . . . .

Cependant, dans sa colère, Naba Sanum avait déclaré devant témoins — et parmi eux WOBGO de Lallé comptait de nombreux amis — qu'il détrônerait celui-ci et le remplacerait bientôt par un autre candidat moins prétentieux.

Naturellement cela fut rapporté à Lallé-Naba. On

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sait combien les indigènes aiment l'exagération. On amplifia si bien que Naba Wobgo fâché, écœuré à son tour, décida de ne plus mettre les pieds à Ouagadougou et de ne venir saluer l'Empereur que lorsque celui-ci ordonnerait la mort de Sambo.

Ouidi-Naba, de qui dépendait le canton de Lallé, en présence de cette grave situation, conseilla à Naba Wobgo de ne pas venir à Ouagadougou où vraisemblablement il essuierait un affront ; mieux valait au contraire qu'il se rendît chez le « Oubri-Yaogo-Naba » (gardien du Tombeau de Naba Oubri) pour lui exposer son « affaire » afin que ce dernier vînt demander pardon au Roi, car, ajouta le Ministre du Mogho-Naba, il « vaut toujours mieux éviter des conflits quand on le peut ». Naba Wobgo de Lallé écouta les conseils du Ouidi-Naba. Il se rendit à Wavoughé (près de Zibako canton de l'actuel petit Lallé) et, aissant là une trentaine de cavaliers, des serviteurs et quelques femmes il partit accompagné d'un seul sogoné à « Oubri-Yaoghin » cependant qu'on rapportait à Naba Sanum la nouvelle que Lallé-Naba levait une forte armée pour assiéger Ouagadougou. Pensant qu'il s'agissait, en réalité, d'une déclaration de guerre, l'Empereur réunit quelques intimes et à l'insu de ses ministres donna l'ordre qu'on lui ramenât mort ou vivant Wobgo de Lallé.

La petite expédition n'eut que la peine d'arriver à Wavoughé pour ramener chevaux, femmes et suivants du Lallé-Naba qui, comme nous l'avons déjà dit, était absent. Seul un petit palefrenier réussit à s'échapper en se dissimulant dans les broussailles.

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Il gagna Oubri-Yaoghin et mit son chef au courant de ce qui s'était passé : « Comment, lui dit-il, vous êtes là demandant pardon tandis que les gens de Ouagadougou nous ont surpris à Wavoughé, qu'ils ont tout pris y compris vos propres femmes ! »

Wobgo dit alors au Yaogho-Naba : « Puisqu'il en est ainsi je ne peux plus rester, je vais regagner Laï et attendre la suite des événements. Si le Mogho-Naba lâche mon monde je reviendrai. »

A son retour à Wavoughé, Lallé-Naba envoya près de Ouidi-Naba s'informer du sort réservé à sa suite. Les chevaux avaient déjà été distribués, les sogonés, palefreniers et femmes avaient été vendus à vil prix, en échange de colas, boubous achetés à des haoussas et Ouidi-Naba lui fit savoir qu'il n'avait été prévenu de rien et qu'il n'y pouvait rien ; telle avait été la volonté de l'Empereur.

Lallé-Naba Wobgo, en arrivant à Laï, convoqua tous les vieux du village, les mit au courant de ce qu'il appelait une catastrophe et leur dit : « si vous « acceptez un tel affront, une telle humiliation, vos « enfants, vos femmes seront vendus par le Mogho- « Naba et ses courtisans. Je n'ai rien fait à Naba « Sanum, je lui ai donné des biens innombrables : « (bœufs, chevaux, moutons, femmes, habits) et voilà « que le Mogho-Naba pousse l'ingratitude jusqu'à se « servir de mes propres femmes pour payer ses dettes ! « Ce qui me froisse le plus c'est qu'il a prêté foi aux « mensonges d'un chien de « sogoné » (SAMBO) et tous « ici vous savez ce que faisait ce serviteur perfide et « ce dont il aurait été capable si je ne l'avais chassé. »

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Et les vieillards de crier tous ensemble : « Kiffou, Kiffou ! » en levant la main sur la tête de leur Naba comme pour signer un pacte sacré. Et ils ajoutèrent : « Rapa, la pagba ninga Naba Sanum sin kossan la « tek'bala ton winna me ed'kon sak abada » (les hommes et les femmes que l'Empereur a fait prendre seront les derniers, nous le jurons sur la tête de nos aïeux).

Satisfait de la confiance que lui témoignaient ainsi ses administrés, Wobgo de Lallé fit capturer immédiatement une centaine de bœufs — appartenant aux peuples impuissants du Mossi —, les fit abattre et distribua la viande aux futurs guerriers.

A Kindi, Nanguela, Siguellé, où il se rendit ensuite, la population lui donna des marques de confiance ; là encore il fit tuer bon nombre de bœufs et de moutons, puis il continua sur Koudougou où il fit part aux Gourounsi, ses administrés, des intentions du Mogho-Naba. Féroces par nature, insouciants de la mort, ceux-ci furent plus catégoriques, dans leur déclaration de sauver l'honneur de leur chef : ils se donneront jusqu'aux os « Abapa kiki agué ba kimé ».

Alors Lallé-Naba appela son tambour du nom de « WELEBRE » et il se donna d'autres « zab-yuiya (surnoms) que ceux qu'il s'était choisis au moment de son avènement. Voici le plus important : « kiparinlourga taked kagang tib soak' da winda » (ceux qui sont chargés de mettre le piment au grenier ont hâte d'en finir à cause de la toux qui les tracassera, *à fortiori* ceux-là qui seront employés à battre ce piment).

Ce nouveau surnom était une menace grave contre l'Empereur qui répondit « Na také, na win » (on le

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mettra au grenier, ce piment, et on le battra sans aucune difficulté). Le Tampsoba ou Tansoba (ministre de la Guerre) fut tout aussitôt mandé.

« Je veux, lui dit le Mogho-Naba, que tu réunisses « tout de suite une armée composée uniquement « d'hommes courageux, que tu te rendes à Lallé pour « me ramener « vivant » le nommé TANGA (montagne, « prénom de Naba Wobgo de Lallé), chef de ce canton.

Quelques milliers d'hommes avides de gloire furent levés. L'armée ainsi constituée se porta sur Lallé. Elle réussit à brûler Siguelé, la résidence de Naba Wobgo, qui s'enfuit à Koudougou. Il ne fut pas poursuivi dans ce dernier point car on était au début de l'hivernage et il fallait songer aux cultures. L'armée royale se replia, rapportant à Ouagadougou un butin considérable.

L'Empereur réserva un bon accueil à son ministre de la Guerre car il entrevoyait la soumission prochaine de son irréductible ennemi. « Allez, dit-il à ses guerriers, cultiver vos champs, mais dès que les récoltes seront rentrées, souvenez-vous que vous avez « Tanga » à capturer et qu'il me le faut coûte que coûte, dussiez-vous tous périr ! »

L'année ne s'écoula pas si paisible car les propos comminatoires tenus par Wobgo de Lallé parvenaient chaque jour aux oreilles de l'Empereur qui, lorsque l'armée se reforma, voulut se rendre lui-même à Lallé. Son entourage, qui connaissait l'adresse de ces « tireurs de flèches » qu'étaient les guerriers de Wobgo, l'en empêcha, promettant de faire seul bonne besogne.

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1: Delobsom FA28 Mossi

Chassé de Laï, poursuivi à Siguelé, obligé d'abandonner Koudougou, son seul repaire jusqu'alors inviolé, Wobgo se réfugia chez les Gourounsi, ses courageux administrés. Les gens de Ouagadougou firent de nombreux esclaves, ravagèrent les villages traversés, brûlèrent tout sur leur passage et s'emparèrent d'un immense butin. Au comble de la joie ils reprirent le chemin de Ouagadougou, sans hâte, afin de se reposer des fatigues des dures journées de combat.

Mais contrairement à ce que l'on croyait, Wobgo ne s'était pas tenu pour vaincu. Il savait que l'armée royale ferait de petites étapes pour regagner Ouagadougou et qu'elle séjournerait fort probablement à Laï (33 kilomètres de Ouagadougou). En bon technicien, Wobgo sut réunir 1.000 guerriers de choix et 170 cavaliers montés sur de rapides coursiers; il les disposa lui-même sur la route de Ouagadougou dans les environs immédiats de Laï, de façon à surprendre l'ennemi et à lui faire subir la plus terrible des défaites.

Cet ingénieux stratagème lui assura un brillant succès.

Tout le monde — guerriers, esclaves, animaux — était au repos à Laï quand on vit sur la route de Ouagadougou une trentaine de cavaliers tous habillés en blanc. On crut tout d'abord qu'il s'agissait d'un chef peulh venant renforcer l'armée du Mogho-Naba ou simplement acheter des bœufs. Mais ce qui parut surprenant, sans toutefois éveiller encore des soupçons, c'était la présence parmi les peulhs d'un tambour « lounga. »

Communiqué par la Mission des Pères Blancs à Ouagadougou.

Tambourinier (bendré).

[facing p. 22]

1: Delobsom FA28 Mossi

Ce qui causa une surprise générale c'est, quand arrivé au milieu de la foule, Wobgo de Lallé s'adressant à Wélébré, son griot, lui ordonna de sonner[1] ainsi : 1° Noag'niedg kon tounsin san pame pirin a samda me, a pam tenga a sanda me (la poule ne choisit pas d'endroit pour déposer sa fiente, elle fait ses besoins aussi bien par terre que sur la natte).

2° Ki parin lourgh'taked ka gang tib soakda winda[2].

Surpris, fascinés, troublés, les guerriers désarmés ne savaient que faire. « Comment, se disait-on de toutes parts, c'est donc Wobgo, c'est donc lui!... » La foule se ruait tumultueuse.

Embarrassés de leur butin et dépourvus de leurs chevaux qui étaient alors à l'abreuvoir, les gens du

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1. Les batteries de tambours des griots mossi (Bendré, lounga) ne sont pas de sons conventionnels et fantaisistes. Soit avec la main dont les deux paumes frappent la peau du tambour lorsqu'il s'agit d'un bendré, soit à l'aide d'un bâtonnet lorsqu'il s'agit d'un lounga, nos griots parlent aux Nabas et chantent leurs louanges comme le ferait avec la bouche un griot soudanais ou wolof.

Avec leurs tambours, les griots peuvent demander des cadeaux, solliciter des faveurs, annoncer l'arrivée dans la cour du Naba d'un personnage important, remercier pour un cadeau reçu, nommer distinctement les chefs défunts. Il est facile à tout individu originaire du Mossi, surtout aux descendants des Nabas, de comprendre en peu de temps la signification des batteries de tambours. Avant la pénétration française les griots mossi enflammaient le courage des guerriers en chantant leurs louanges et lorsqu'un « noble » osait prendre la fuite devant l'ennemi les griots n'hésitaient pas à le dénigrer publiquement en sonnant par exemple ainsi : « Houille ! Houille ! f'ba yi wibg'n'dog'koutre kou ». Ce qui veut dire « Ton père a été un brave mais il a donné le jour à un couard, à un oiseau faible ». On pourrait multiplier les exemples à l'infini.

2. Voir signification page 20.

1: Delobsom FA28 Mossi

Mogho-Naba se trouvaient en triste posture. Ce fut un sauve-qui-peut général; les cavaliers s'emparaient de leurs chevaux à la hâte, les montaient sans selle ni mors; c'était une vraie débandade dont profita Naba Wobgo. Plus de la moitié des guerriers du Mogho-Naba périrent à coups de lance (kandé), de casse-têtes (goulgo et zandé), de couteau (zangoego).

On raconte que Tampsoba (ministre de la Guerre) lui-même s'en tira avec 300 flèches et le Kamsogho-Naba (chef eunuque) avec 150 environ. Cela n'a peut-être rien d'exagéré ainsi que nous le verrons dans un prochain chapitre; l'accoutrement du Tansoba chamarré de gris-gris le sauvegarde le plus souvent de l'atteinte des flèches.

Enfin ceux des guerriers qui purent revenir indemnes à Ouagadougou n'y rapportèrent aucun butin, d'aucuns ayant dû même abandonner leur propre monture.

Au contraire Wobgo de Lallé fit d'heureuses captures : c'est ainsi qu'il prit deux serviteurs de l'Empereur, les nommés NOUFOU et AMADOU. Et dans un esprit de représailles il envoya dire à Naba Sanum de garder pour toujours, s'il le désirait, le nommé Sambo, le trait d'union fâcheux et la cause de leurs brouilles, car lui Wobgo avait, pour le servir, deux jeunes sogonés du Mogho-Naba.

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Une semaine s'était écoulée; Lallé Naba, qui n'avait pas de bien mauvaises intentions, se décida à libérer les sogonés et à les laisser regagner Ouagadougou.

1: Delobsom FA28 Mossi

Il donna à chacun d'eux un beau cheval, échangea leurs habits dépenaillés contre des neufs et leur distribua des « godés »[1] comme couvertures. Il les chargea en outre de nombreux cadeaux. Mais avant de les congédier il leur confia la mission suivante : « Vous direz à votre Roi — (ce n'était plus le sien), que je désire faire la paix avec lui. S'il s'agit de faire la guerre, je ne pense pas qu'il y ait un « moaga » avec des cicatrices capable de me tenir tête. »

Comme bien on le pense, ces paroles n'ont pas été sans remuer profondément Naba Sanum. L'Empereur fit appeler Ouidi-Naba son premier ministre et lui dit : « Tu enverras une commisssion à Lallé, dire à tous les Nabissi qui briguent la place de « Tanga » de venir à Ouagadougou. »

Rigue, oncle de Naba Wobgo, seul candidat ayant quelque peu d'influence sur une partie de la population, fut nommé chef de canton de Lallé. Il descendit chez Wedranga-Naba à Ouagadougou. Quand Wobgo apprit cette nouvelle il envoya dire à Mogho-Naba « Pagh' vinbré kon pous 'bagha » (on n'abandonne pas un avorton aux chiens).

Un an s'écoula ; Wobgo de Lallé ne venait pas à Ouagadougou, Rigué ne pouvait pas non plus gagner ses nouveaux états. L'armée du Mogho-Naba se constitua sous les ordres de Rigué qui promit, jura même avant son départ à Naba Sanum que Wobgo serait pris. Mais à peine arrivée à Kindi, l'armée royale fut repoussée avec une telle vigueur qu'elle

1. Pagne d'un haut prix au Mossi.

1: Delobsom FA28 Mossi

ne put aller plus loin. L'infortuné Rigué et sa suite durent rentrer à Ouagadougou.

L'année qui suivit ne fut pas heureuse. Naba Sanum tomba malade. Il ne voulait pas engager de bataille avant d'être rétabli. Son état de santé ne faisait cependant qu'empirer. Sanum succomba le cœur ulcéré par un double mal : d'un côté l'irréductible ennemi Wobgo de Lallé, de l'autre la présence dans son territoire de son frère BOUKARY, qu'il avait lui-même chassé et qui cependant avait des prétentions au trône puisque Sanum, pour comble de malheur, n'avait eu avec ses 500 femmes qu'une seule fille, la nommée AMINATA, encore vivante à ce jour.

Nous verrons plus loin dans quelles conditions ROUKARY KOUTOU fut nommé Empereur des Mossi et prit nom « WOBGO. »

VELLÉITÉS DE RAPPROCHEMENT OU LA GUERRE ENTRE WOBGO DE LALLÉ ET WOBGO DE OUAGADOUGOU

Quand Wobgo monta sur le trône, il envoya le message suivant à son homonyme de Lallé : « Naba Sanum qui vient de succomber a été mon plus grand ennemi, il m'a chassé du Mossi et je dus séjourner dix-sept ans parmi les Gourounsi. L'Empereur n'avait rien à me reprocher sauf qu'il voyait en moi son successeur éventuel puisqu'il n'eut de son vivant aucun enfant mâle. Dans ces conditions, puisque nous fûmes tous deux ses grands ennemis, soyons des amis. Venez donc me voir et oublions le passé ! »

1: Delobsom FA28 Mossi

Un nommé « Tenga » frère du Koumbi-Naba actuel se rendit à Lallé suivi d'une bonne escorte.

Wobgo de Lallé leur fit un accueil des plus chaleureux. Pendant les sept jours qu'ils passèrent à Laï, il fit abattre 7 bœufs pour leur servir des repas copieux.

Mais, fait remarquable, le jour même de l'arrivée des envoyés de l'Empereur et sitôt que la commission lui fut faite, Lallé-Naba dénomma un de ses chevaux « Payanga » (litt. je ne suis pas un enfant). Il dit à Tenga « mon cheval payanga » est actuellement malade, il s'est blessé l'autre jour ; quand il sera rétabli je vous suivrai volontiers à Ouagadougou ! »

On comprend aisément qu'une maladie aussi imaginaire trouve difficile médication. Aussi bien, le septième jour, Wobgo dit aux envoyés de l'Empereur : « Payanga » mon cheval préféré n'est pas guéri, néanmoins je vous accompagnerai tout de même au delà de Laï. Il fit seller un autre cheval. A mi-chemin et avant de quitter les envoyés du Mogho-Naba il dit à « Wélébré » son lounga (tambour) de sonner ainsi : « Pousgh'lui n'kila t a missim yde koudme » (litt. un tamarinier tombé mais dont les racines tiennent encore au sol produit des feuilles et des fruits ; ce n'est pas parce qu'il est couché qu'il perd son aigreur. »

Il demanda à Tenga et à sa suite s'ils avaient entendu ce que disait Wélébré et lui-même le leur répéta : « Pousgh lui n'kila t a missim yde koudme. »

Quand Tenga, l'envoyé de l'Empereur, revint rendre compte de sa mission il insista sur ce point particulier : « Lorsque nous sommes arrivés, Lallé-Naba

1: Delobsom FA28 Mossi

Wobgo nous a demandé si son concurrent RIGUÉ vivait toujours et à notre réponse affirmative il répliqua : alors pourquoi m'appeler à Ouagadougou pour une réconciliation qui ne saurait durer ? Si réellement l'Empereur veut que notre amitié soit durable, qu'il supprime, au préalable, RIGUÉ, car un seul canton ne peut avoir deux chefs ! »

L'Empereur Wobgo ordonna aussitôt la mort de Rigué. Ce fut fait : Lallé-Naba promit alors de venir saluer le Mogho-Naba. Cependant deux jours plus tard il y renonça formellement et envoya quelqu'un dire à Boukary-Koutou : « Puisque vous n'avez pas hésité à tuer votre ami Rigué, que ne ferez-vous pas de moi qui suis l'ennemi de tout Ouagadougou ? » L'Empereur n'était-il lui-même le remplaçant de Naba Sanum, par conséquent un adversaire pour lui ?

La haine s'alluma dans le cœur du terrible LION [1], l'esprit de vengeance prit le dessus. Il envoya tout aussitôt un messager à son homonyme de Lallé lui dire : « Nous sommes deux « Wobdo » (pluriel de Wobgo), mais qu'il ne me voie pas du même œil que mon prédécesseur Sanum. Je lèverai une armée contre lui et le ferai venir ici à Ouagadougou où il sera tué et son corps abandonné aux vautours et aux chacals.

Tansoba, ministre de la Guerre, fut appelé. Il leva une forte armée qui mit en déroute celle de Wobgo de Lallé. Siguelé, la capitale du Naba, fut brûlée. Le chef dut se réfugier à Nanguela puis à Wili mais ces villages furent également incendiés. Il ne restait à

1. Mogho-Naba Wobgo, Boukary-Koutou.

1: Delobsom FA28 Mossi

Lallé-Naba qu'une dernière ressource, c'était de se rendre chez les Gourounsi. C'est, en effet, ce qu'il fit. Il ne fut pas poursuivi. C'était pendant l'hivernage, l'armée royale fut dissoute. Mais Mogho-Naba Wobgo maintint 200 cavaliers à Ramongo, et ils reçurent pour mission de piller les administrés de Wobgo de Lallé et de réduire un grand nombre d'entre eux à l'esclavage en attendant qu'après les récoltes une nouvelle armée vînt achever leur défaite.

Lallé-Naba revint à Siguelé dès la cessation des pluies. Il fit tirer des coups de fusil toute la nuit pour signaler sa présence non loin de Ouagadougou et jeter encore du trouble dans les esprits poltrons car il se savait très redouté.

L'Empereur envoya quelques jours plus tard une armée à Boussé (canton de Sao). Cette armée essaya mais en vain de chasser Wobgo de Lallé de sa capitale Siguelé. Au contraire l'armée royale fut mise en déroute. Le ministre de la Guerre (Tansoba) dut rentrer à Ouagadougou où Mogho-Naba lui exprima tout son mécontentement, l'accusant même d'intelligences avec l'adversaire et promit de se venger.

Wobgo de Ouagadougou envoya El-Hadj Tassere demander aux Songhaïs de venir au Mossi où ils auraient à combattre un terrible ennemi ; ils conserveraient tout ce dont ils s'empareraient : biens et esclaves.

Cette offre fut acceptée par les Songhaïs qui connaissaient déjà Naba Wobgo, encore Nabiga, lorsque, chassé par son frère Naba Sanum, il s'était refugié à Bassawarga en territoire Gourounsi. Mais les Songhaïs ne vinrent qu'un an plus tard lutter contre Koudou-

1: Delobsom FA28 Mossi

gou. Ils établirent leur quartier général à Ramongo ; ils poussèrent les ravages au delà des territoires qui leur étaient assignés. C'est ainsi qu'ils brûlèrent une partie des cantons de Kokologho et d'Ipala. L'Empereur Wobgo les laissa faire disant qu'il n'y voyait aucun inconvénient puisque tous ces individus malintionnés et poltrons n'avaient pas voulu l'aider à vaincre Wobgo de Lallé. L'essentiel pour lui était que les Songhaïs ne dépassent pas Zagtouly (village situé à 12 kilomètres de Ouagadougou).

L'armée Songhaï elle-même finit par se disloquer car la discorde régnait entre maîtres et esclaves (ces derniers composés uniquement de Gourounsi).

Les combattants allaient se retirer quand on apprit l'arrivée prochaine des Français en pays Mossi.

Dans un prochain chapitre nous étudierons la fuite de Naba Wobgo, le départ des Songhaïs pour le Dagango (pays des Dagombas).

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Wobgo de Lallé fut pris par les Français, fusillé à Ouagadougou et enterré dans un grand fossé actuellement comblé. C'est là que sont installés aujourd'hui les bureaux du cercle et de la police.

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Conclusion. — L'insécurité du pays mossi pendant ces guerres intestines, d'abord entre l'Empereur et le Boussouma-Naba et peu après avec le Lallé-

1: Delobsom FA28 Mossi

Naba Wobgo, ne laissa pas les Mossi indifférents. D'autre part, l'aide demandée aux Songhaïs était non seulement une imprudence, mais un véritable danger pour le pays tout entier, car on connaît l'esprit guerrier des Songhaïs. Il y a tout lieu de croire que sans l'arrivée des Français un grand nombre de chefs de canton, las de fournir des subsides et du renfort aux armées du Mogho-Naba, se seraient alliés à Lallé-Naba Wobgo contre Ouagadougou. La débâcle était à prévoir.

L'Empereur — qui se nommait SANUM ou WOBGO, — n'aurait pas eu à compter sur le secours de Boussouma, Ouagadougou étant déjà entré en conflit avec le « Dima » (Roi) de ce pays, non plus que de Boulsa dont le Naba avait été tué peu avant par Naba Sanum. — Or, les seuls vrais guerriers de l'Empereur étaient plutôt les tireurs de flèches des Nabas vassaux que les habitants de Ouagadougou dont la couardise est passée en proverbe.

Comment alors l'autorité du Mogho-Naba aurait-elle pu se rétablir ? A cette époque remonte le commencement de la décadence de l'Empire Mossi.

1: Delobsom FA28 Mossi

CHAPITRE II

La pénétration française racontée par un vieillard de 70 ans notable du village de Koulweoghin.

Il y a quarante-cinq ans environ, un Français traversa, pour la première fois, le pays Mossi [1]. Il rendit visite à l'Empereur et vit de même BOUKARY-KOUTOU, le futur Naba Wobgo à Bassawarga. On le considéra comme un simple passager et il partit. Il a été hébergé ici par une vieille femme du nom de Ygré (pierre) aujourd'hui décédée.

Lorsque Naba Sanum mourut et que Naba Wobgo monta sur le trône, un second Français, venant du côté de Tombouctou, arriva à Ouagadougou avec des ânes chargés de cadeaux pour l'Empereur du Mossi [2]. Il déclara qu'il avait été envoyé par son chef pour rendre visite à l'Empereur et lui remettre des présents. Tout aussitôt, Wobgo fit venir ses ministres pour les consulter sur la décision qu'il devait prendre à l'égard de l'étranger. A l'unanimité les ministres répondirent qu'il fallait refuser les présents et chasser l'étranger, ajoutant « qu'ils commençaient à s'inquiéter du passage dans leur pays des hommes blancs ».

Un nommé ZOUGDBA, alors Samandé du Mogho-Naba, se rendit escorté de quelques suivants auprès du Français pour lui intimer l'ordre de quitter le pays

1. Visite de Binger en 1887-1888, probablement.
2. Visite du docteur Crozat en 1890, probablement.

1: Delobsom FA28 Mossi

Communiqué par la Mission des Pères Blancs à Ouagadougou.

Jeune fille Mossi.

[facing p. 32]

1: Delobsom FA28 Mossi

avec les présents que l'Empereur refusait et, tandis que l'explorateur était sous un « néré » avec sa petite suite, le Samandé attendait lui aussi sous un tamarinier que l'ordre reçu fût exécuté.

Le chargé de mission attendit jusqu'au soir mais il dut partir tout de même et sous la pluie : c'était pendant l'hivernage. Sa vie était entre les mains des envoyés de l'Empereur. D'ailleurs, il n'était pas venu avec l'intention de faire la guerre.

Il alluma des lampes pour se guider et alla passer la nuit à Ourgou (dans les champs de l'Imam).

Entre temps, le fils de Naba Wobgo fut nommé Djiba-Naba ; trois ans s'étaient écoulés. Un troisième Français se rendit directement à Djiba saluer le fils de l'Empereur. Il avait des présents pour ce dernier, mais comme les Français avaient été éconduits la première fois, il venait demander au Djiba-Naba d'être son guide et d'intervenir auprès de son père pour qu'il acceptât les présents qui lui étaient offerts au nom de la France.

Cette fois, détail important, l'Européen avait une escorte composée de 70 hommes armés.

Djiba-Naba les laissa dans son canton où ils furent bien traités — et se rendit seul auprès de Naba Wobgo s'acquitter de sa mission. L'Empereur ne voulait rien refuser à son fils car il l'affectionnait beaucoup, mais la situation était grave, il ne pouvait seul se décider. Aussi, pour la deuxième fois, il convoqua ses ministres. Ceux-ci furent implacables : ils démontrèrent les dangers qu'il y avait dans toutes ces « manœuvres » et ils décidèrent l'Empereur à refuser les

1: Delobsom FA28 Mossi

présents et à donner l'ordre au Djiba-Naba de renvoyer l'étranger et ses suivants.

Le prince héritier dut rapporter cette réponse au représentant de la France qui ne se tint pas pour battu. Il remit, en effet, 20 pièces de un franc en argent (c'était une fortune alors) à l'Imam de Ouagadougou afin qu'il intervînt dans le même but auprès de l'Empereur.

Mais ce nouveau délégué ne fut pas plus heureux. Naba Wobgo et surtout ses ministres opposèrent un refus catégorique.

Un an s'écoula. Déjà à cette époque quelques dioulas Mossi commerçaient avec Tombouctou ; beaucoup s'y rendaient pour acheter du sel. Les militaires qui étaient installés dans cette région et qui espéraient s'établir un jour au Mossi firent venir un des dioulas les plus connus. C'était le nommé PASSOUM de Andem, qui n'allait pas à Tombouctou sans aviser l'Empereur et à qui le Ouidi-Naba confiait son sogoné du nom de RAKISWILGUIDA (litt. écoute toujours le bon conseiller).

PASSOUM se rendit donc auprès d'un militaire français qui convoqua tous ses suivants de quelque importance. Devant 40 militaires, 40 gardes (*sic*) et 4 Européens, et une dame, s'adressant à PASSOUM il lui tint ce langage : « Tu diras au Mogho-Naba que dans six mois au plus tard, je serai à Ouagadougou. Puisque je n'ai pu réussir par la douceur, j'emploierai les armes. Le jour de mon arrivée à Ouagadougou j'occuperai la maison de l'Empereur; c'est là où je logerai ma compagnie, et si le village ne fait pas sa soumission, je le brûlerai... »

1: Delobsom FA28 Mossi

PASSOUM resta pensif. Il était inquiet. Comment pouvait-il lui, simple « Yarga », rapporter de telles paroles au terrible Lion qu'était Naba Wobgo. Il exprima ses regrets au Français et on demanda au sogoné s'il voulait faire la commission. Comme celui-ci n'avait pas plus d'audace que Passoum, on dut adresser une lettre à l'Empereur, écrite en arabe, comme c'était la coutume. Cette lettre fut confiée à Passoum et à ses suivants.

Dans l'intervalle qui sépare les deux missions, les Anglais envoyèrent aussi un représentant au Mogho-Naba. Je ne possède aucune précision sur le moyen employé par l'Anglais pour obtenir la faveur de l'Empereur, toujours est-il que l'étranger remit à Naba Wobgo des drapeaux qui devaient, — mais ne le furent jamais, — être présentés aux Français en même temps que le Naba dirait à ces derniers : « Mon pays est sous le protectorat des Anglais. » On reviendra plus tard sur la question [1].

Donc au retour de la caravane la missive fut remise au Mogho-Naba qui la fit lire par des marabouts et interpréter en conseil.

Certains ministres conseillèrent la mise à mort de Passoum qu'on soupçonnait d'intelligences avec les blancs, le Ouidi-Naba demanda qu'on lui pardonnât

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1. Un mulâtre anglais du nom de FERGUSSON avait réussi à faire accepter au Mogho-Naba Wobgo, BOUKARY KOUTOU, un imprimé qu'il lui avait présenté comme étant un bon gris-gris et qui constituait en réalité un traité d'alliance et d'amitié avec l'Angleterre.

1: Delobsom FA28 Mossi

car il n'était qu'un simple envoyé du « Nansara » (blanc) et comme tel, innocent.

Nous étions vers le mois de la chaleur « Toulogho' wakato » (mars), personne ne s'en inquiéta. On crut qu'il s'agissait d'une simple menace qui ne serait pas suivie d'effet et l'on décida la mise à mort du premier blanc qui pénétrerait à Ouagadougou.

Au mois du Maïs (septembre[1]) un certain mardi l'expédition annoncée arriva.

Nous étions renseignés depuis longtemps sur son compte, parce que le lieutenant et sa suite passèrent par Ouahigouya[2]. Ils ne trouvèrent pas grande résistance en route. A Yako la colonne dispersa la petite armée qui s'était formée pour lui barrer la route ; à Niou le chef de canton fut tué et elle occupa sa maison. En arrivant au village de Dabaré (canton de Sao) Naba YIOGO alors chef de canton, venait de mourir, — c'est le grand-père de celui qui trace ces lignes, — SEDDO, un vénérable vieillard dont les petits-enfants avaient eux-mêmes blanchi — Dieu veille sur ses cendres ! — se rendait à Tiendpalogo pour les funérailles, quand tout à coup devant lui, il aperçut l'expédition. Il avait un mouton et un coq. On ne peut sans doute pas décrire tout ce qui s'était agité à ce moment dans sa pauvre tête de centenaire. Il ne se sauva pas ;

1. Le 1er septembre 1896 à 5 heures du soir, jour de grand marché à Ouagadougou.

2. La route la plus directe était celle de Yako, Niou, Boussé, Laï, Ouagadougou, mais à Laï résidait Wobgo de Lallé. L'expédition suivit un itinéraire irrégulier, renseignée qu'elle était sans doute par le guide.

1: Delobsom FA28 Mossi

il attendit et dès que la colonne fut proche de lui, il se présenta à l'Européen et s'exprima ainsi : « J'ai appris « que vous veniez dans le pays et que probablement « vous passeriez dans ce village ; beaucoup de gens se « sont enfuis, mais j'ai préféré vous attendre » et (qui sait, peut-être de bon cœur), il lui offrit le mouton et le coq. Le lieutenant le remercia vivement, lui rendit ses bêtes et le pria seulement de lui servir de guide. Le vieillard retourna chez lui, ordonna à un de ses fils d'aller offrir sa part de coutume au Naba défunt et se mit ensuite à la tête de la colonne. Quand ils arrivèrent à Goupana le soir tombait. La tornade menaçait. Une pluie cinglante tombait drue. Force fut de passer là la nuit, Ouagadougou étant encore assez éloigné. C'est au vieillard que revint le devoir de prévenir la population de Goupana de l'arrivée des « blancs » et de faire chercher bois de chauffage, eau et surtout des seccos pour former une enceinte dans laquelle la colonne devait camper. Mais il faisait une nuit sans étoiles. Les nuages obscurcissaient le ciel. Seddo le guide, l'aimable vieillard, fut vainement attendu.

Il avait profité de l'obscurité pour filer droit sur Ouagadougou et annoncer à l'Empereur et à ses administrés l'arrivée de l'expédition pour le lendemain.

Le conseil de l'Empereur se réunit. D'aucuns dirent qu'il fallait attendre l'arrivée du lieutenant et lui montrer les drapeaux de l'Anglais. Or ils étaient en lambeaux ; plusieurs de ces drapeaux avaient été employés par Naba Wobgo à confectionner des costumes bariolés pour ses sogonés ; d'autres, les intimes

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du Roi, lui donnèrent des conseils de prudence : « Comment ! Vous attendrez les Français. Et si en leur montrant le drapeau ils répondaient par une fusillade, alors il sera trop tard pour sauver votre vie; vous serez pris, maltraité, humilié devant tous et sans doute tué; le mieux à notre avis, c'est de partir. » Ce conseil fut celui que suivit naturellement l'Empereur.

Arrivé à Napamboumbou, le lieutenant dépêcha 8 tirailleurs ayant pour guide BIRAM MOSSI (un esclave gourounsi engagé volontaire à Tombouctou) pour voir si le Mogho-Naba avait levé une armée pour la défense. Rien n'avait été fait. Aussi les envoyés arrivèrent-ils jusqu'au marché de Ouagadougou sans rencontrer d'obstacle. Mais la vue des chechias rouges et d'un drapeau autre que celui des Anglais provoqua un gros émoi. A cette époque le collecteur du marché de Ouagadougou se nommait WANDA : c'était un sourd. Pensant, sans doute, que tout le monde allait faire des préparatifs de guerre, il se rendit directement chez lui, fit seller son cheval, prit un fusil et suivit de près les envoyés du lieutenant ; il avait l'impression, le pauvre diable, d'être suivi par une forte armée; l'idée ne lui était pas venue de regarder derrière lui. Il fit feu. Personne ne fut atteint. Les tirailleurs continuèrent leur chemin. A Toudibweoghin (banlieue de Ouagadougou) WANDA descendit de son cheval, visa bien cette fois, fit feu et abattit le cheval d'un des tirailleurs; le cavalier lui-même fut indemne. La riposte ne tarda pas. On tira sur lui à bout portant, il s'affaissa pour ne plus se relever.

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Une armée à la tête de laquelle se trouvait le Kamsogho-Naba Koabga — alla au-devant de la colonne ; la rencontre eut lieu entre l'Imamweoghin — Dapoya et Ouagadougou. C'est alors que profitant du désarroi général et aussi à la faveur des hautes tiges du mil, Naba Wobgo, l'Empereur des Mossi, quitta sa maison pour ne plus la revoir jamais.

Les guerriers, en nombre certes, n'avaient pour toutes armes que des flèches empoisonnées, des casse-têtes et de simples fusils à pierre. La colonne n'eut pas à soutenir de bataille. Quatre coups de fusil tirés en l'air suffirent à mettre en déroute l'armée royale terrifiée par la vue des chéchias rouges des tirailleurs.

Ce fut une véritable débandade, un sauve-qui-peut général dans toutes les directions; les guerriers ne cherchaient même plus à regagner leur maison.

La colonne campa dans la maison de l'Empereur devenue vacante ; les ministres eux-mêmes n'avaient pas pour la plupart suivi leur Roi ; chacun alla loin, bien loin, là où il croyait trouver un asile sûr.

Des Haoussas — seuls grands commerçants de l'époque — profitèrent du désordre général pour s'installer dans le quartier « Mohémé » (marabouts) aussi désert que les autres quartiers de la ville et commirent pendant la nuit de nombreux vols qu'ils payèrent fort cher. Le chef de la mission avait fait exercer une surveillance discrète et le lendemain matin, tous les Haoussas furent passés par les armes. Leurs têtes déposées dans des corbeilles furent exposées longtemps dans les rues de Ouagadougou.

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Cinq jours après son évasion de la capitale, l'Empereur put réunir une forte armée.

C'est sur la route de Kamsoghin qu'arrivèrent les premiers guerriers. Le lieutenant avait disposé le peu de tirailleurs que comptait la colonne si ingénieusement qu'elle défit l'armée royale.

De Ponsomtenga où il s'était réfugié, Wobgo se rendit à Kounda. Dans la même nuit la colonne quitta Ouagadougou à la poursuite de l'Empereur. Les personnes chargées de guider l'expédition furent les nommés LASSÉ et HALYARÉ. Lorsque le lieutenant et sa suite arrivèrent à Kounda, Wobgo qui avait aussi sa police secrète, était déjà parti pour Bangaré. Là on lui assura qu'étant dans le « Oubritenga » (pays de Naba Oubry), il était à l'abri de toute attaque ennemie. Wobgo, trop avisé pour se laisser surprendre, après s'être un peu reposé, reprit la fuite.

Arrivée à Sagabotinga où elle fut bien reçue par l'Imam de ce village, la colonne abandonna toute idée de poursuivre Naba Wobgo, mais manifesta le désir d'aller dans le Gourounsi livrer bataille aux « Zambaramba » (Songhaïs). Mais l'Imam de Sagabotinga leur persuada qu'ils auraient affaire à des adversaires redoutables plus nombreux et mieux armés qu'eux.

Dans ces conditions la mission rentra le seizième jour à Ouagadougou. C'est alors seulement que les maisons furent incendiées.

La colonne repartit ensuite à la poursuite de Naba Wobgo mais en vain; elle continua sa route sur Mané où elle fut attaquée mais où elle n'eut pas de difficultés

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pour mettre les guerriers en fuite ; il y eut cependant de nombreuses victimes ; poussant sur Boussouma elle incendia la maison du Boussouma-Naba et celles des habitants de la ville et des environs. L'expédition n'ayant plus de munitions et de vivres repartit pour Tombouctou. Wobgo croyant que toute guerre était terminée avait ordonné la réfection de sa maison. Les gens de Ouagadougou revenaient par centaines réparer leurs cases brûlées. Trois mois s'étaient écoulés. Il ne restait à Naba Wobgo qu'à faire son entrée triomphale dans sa capitale ; il était déjà à Tiguedalgué — (c'est lorsqu'il revint à Kounda que le père de celui qui écrit ces lignes se rendit auprès de lui pour se faire nommer chef de canton de Sao à la place de Naba Yiogo dont nous avons connu la mort au début de cet exposé) — quand il apprit en route que les Français revenaient, mais cette fois accompagnés de toucouleurs du Macina et de nombreux partisans de la région de Ouahigouya (on sait que le Yatenga avait été occupé l'année précédente par le capitaine DESTENAVE (1895).

Le jour où la colonne campa à Zitenga, Wobgo partit de Kounda pour Ganzourgou. Le lieutenant, chef de mission, apprit que l'Empereur était à Koupéla. Une petite expédition fut lancée à sa poursuite mais déjà le trop avisé Wobgo avait traversé rapidement le Boussanga et était venu se réfugier à Nobéré.

Las enfin de rechercher l'Empereur qu'il ne pouvait atteindre, le lieutenant se rendit à Kombissiri et ordonna de faire venir le nommé MASSI, frère de Naba Wobgo (mais aussi son plus grand ennemi).

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Malheureusement MASSI était gravement malade et presque mourant. Le lendemain du jour où il fut ramené chez lui, le lieutenant alla lui rendre visite. Il constata avec regret que MASSI était sur le point de mourir. Aussi fit-il dire par ses gens : « Dès qu'il sera mort, si c'est la nuit, allumez des torches et venez me trouver à Kounda. »

Dans la nuit, en effet, MASSI mourut et ses courtisans allèrent trouver le lieutenant comme il le leur avait indiqué.

Le lieutenant leur demanda si MASSI n'avait pas laissé d'enfants. On lui répondit qu'il avait des enfants mais que tous étaient en bas âge. Il leur déclara alors qu'en se rendant auprès de leur maître, il avait l'intention de le nommer Mogho-Naba pour que le pays se tranquillisât et que la paix revînt. Alors on lui apprit que MASSI avait un frère utérin qui habitait le village de Badnogo. Un autre candidat était aussi en présence. Le lieutenant avait entendu parler d'un certain TARBIGA, autre ennemi de Wobgo, mais celui-ci, lui avait-on déclaré, était dans le commandement du chef de canton de Manga.

La chance favoriserait le premier des Nabissi (fils du Naba) qui se présenterait. Les serviteurs de Massi furent envoyés à Badnogo avec mission d'inviter le futur Naba Siguiri (Hivernage) à répondre à l'appel du lieutenant, tandis que d'autres émissaires se rendaient auprès de Tarbiga.

Il ne fut pas facile d'emmener l'un et l'autre ; cela se conçoit d'autant plus facilement que chacun croyait à un traquenard du blanc. Aussi ne se décidèrent-ils

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que lorsqu'on leur eut expliqué que leur propre intérêt était en jeu et que plus ils agiraient vite, plus ils auraient de chances d'être nommés Empereur du Mossi.

KOUKA-KOUTOU arriva le premier. Le chef de mission lui apprit que son frère Massi était mort. Il lui dit d'aller remplir les formalités prévues par la coutume et de revenir dans trois jours, qu'il avait l'intention de le désigner comme remplaçant de Naba Wobgo. Ce qui fut fait.

Mais, demanda alors le lieutenant, comment procède-t-on pour nommer l'Empereur ? KOUKA-KOUTOU lui répondit que c'était le Ouidi-Naba, premier ministre, qui seul avait qualité pour nommer le chef de l'État Mossi. Ouidi-Naba Koabga s'était enfui et s'était refugié à Bazoulé; on dut l'aller chercher et il arriva à Ouagadougou dans un état qui faisait peine à voir tant il croyait que sa fin était prochaine. Il fallut du temps et de la patience pour lui faire comprendre qu'il était convoqué dans un but pacifique.

La nomination de Naba Siguiri fut faite dans les formes réglementaires.

Quelques jours après le lieutenant français posa au Ouidi-Naba la question suivante : « Maintenant que l'Empereur est désigné que me reste-t-il à faire pour que le pays soit tranquille et pour que tout le monde se soumette ?

— Voici ce que tu as à faire, répondit Ouidi-Naba. Il y a douze ans que nous luttons en vain contre Lallé-Naba Wobgo. Eh bien ! si tu réussis à t'en emparer et à le mettre à mort tout le monde saura que rien ne peut te résister et on se soumettra. » Et tandis que

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Ouidi-Naba retournait à Bazoulé ramener à Ouagadougou tout ce qu'il y avait laissé, une petite expédition partait pour Lallé (Laï 33 km. de Ouagadougou).

On cerna la maison du terrible « Wobgo » qui, surpris, ne put résister longtemps. C'est sur un poulain sans selle qu'on le conduisit à Ouagadougou où il fut tué et son corps jeté dans un grand fossé qui fut comblé ensuite à l'endroit où sont installés aujourd'hui les bureaux du cercle et de la police.

Naba Siguiri installé à Goughin fit appeler les autres ministres, les fugitifs.

C'est le cinquième jour de la nomination de Siguiri qu'arriva Tarbiga, autre candidat dont nous avons parlé plus haut.

Tarbiga fut reçu comme il convenait par le lieutenant français.

. . . . . .

On dut nommer Tarbiga chef du grand canton de « Zitenga » où il mourut, d'ailleurs, le cinquante-neuvième jour. Son fils lui succéda.

A l'heure actuelle c'est un fils de Massi qui est chef de canton de Zitenga.

. . . . . .

Lorsque les Anglais apprirent que les Français avaient occupé le pays, ils envoyèrent un ambassadeur. Quand celui-ci arriva à Tenkodogo, Wobgo le rejoignit et le mit au courant de la situation, sans doute pour justifier comment il n'avait pas pu présenter le drapeau. L'Anglais confia l'Empereur à quelques gardes pour l'amener en Gold-Coast. Les résultats de la mission anglaise n'ayant pas été fructueux, Wobgo

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fut installé à Zangoe 'yiri » où il reçut une forte pension avec la liberté de réduire en esclavage les Gourounsi.

Il y vécut trois ans. Enfin, pour la deuxième fois les Anglais décidèrent de venir le réinstaller Empereur Mossi. De nombreux Anglais et des soldats indigènes l'accompagnaient.

Le capitaine alors chef de poste à Ouagadougou se rendit à la rencontre de la mission anglaise à Kombissiri. Là s'engagea une vive discussion. Le capitaine fut catégorique, il l'emporta sur les Anglais qui durent rebrousser chemin avec Wobgo déçu.

Cinq ans après, Wobgo mourut. On fit ses funérailles à Ouagadougou. Un an après lui, Naba Siguiri succomba; c'était en 1905. Son fils lui succéda la même année (le 5 mars 1905). C'est Naba Kom, l'Empereur actuel.

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CHAPITRE III

Organisation politique, administrative et judiciaire de l'Empire Mossi.

I. — Organisation politique et administrative

L'Empire Mossi de Ouagadougou était gouverné avant l'occupation française par un Chef suprême, le Mogho-Naba, vénéré de tous ses sujets comme un « dieu » et dont le territoire, pour ses administrés, n'avait pas de limites. Il avait droit de vie et de mort sur tous ses sujets.

Si Mogho signifie pays des Mossi, il signifie par extension : Le monde ; le Mogho-Naba était pour ainsi dire considéré comme le maître du monde.

Il avait, dit-on, sous ses ordres 333 chefs ou Nabas parmi lesquels ses ministres, les trois sogon'kassemsé (grands serviteurs) et une quarantaine de petits chefs insignifiants appelés « Kougzindba » pour faire allusion à des tas de pierres désignant dans la cour de l'Empereur la place de chaque ministre ou petit Naba.

a) *Autorité du Mogho-Naba sur ses vassaux.* — Contrairement à ce qu'affirmait un fonctionnaire colonial, dans le but d'affranchir de la tutelle du Mogho-Naba, les chefs de cantons d'une des circonscriptions administratives de la colonie, le pouvoir de l'Empereur du Mossi n'a jamais été nominal. S'il l'est devenu c'est à la suite de l'immixtion de l'autorité administra-

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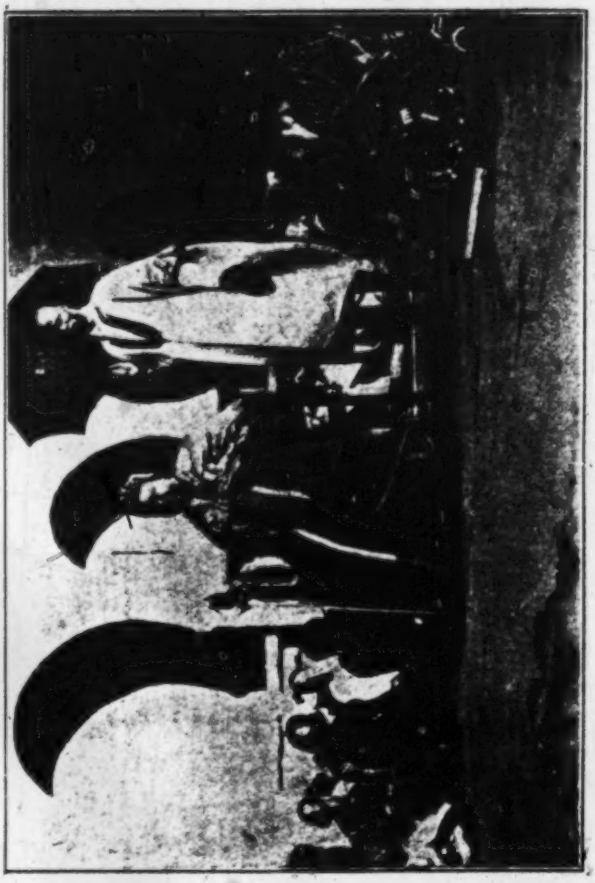

[facing p. 46]

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tive française dans la politique du pays, — immixtion qui a eu pour conséquence de donner à certains chefs un pouvoir trop étendu.

Je ne veux pas dire par là qu'il n'y a pas eu parfois, avant la pénétration française, de véritables dissidences, de guerres ou de simples escarmouches [1], mais les chefs qui essayaient par ce moyen de se soustraire à l'autorité de l'Empereur étaient généralement punis de leur témérité.

b) *Ministres et fonctionnaires de la cour de l'Empereur des Mossi.* — Nous donnerons plus loin, dans un chapitre spécial, la liste des personnages composant la Cour de l'Empereur des Mossi.

Attributions des ministres

Les quatre ministres : Ouidi-Naba, Larallé-Naba, Gounga-Naba et Baloum-Naba, procédaient à la nomination des « Kombemba » (pluriel de Kombéré chefs vassaux) avec l'assentiment du Mogho-Naba. A l'heure actuelle les mêmes attributions leur sont dévolues, sauf ratification par l'autorité administrative. Ces ministres assistaient en outre l'Empereur dans le règlement de certaines affaires importantes sur lesquelles il jugeait utile de les consulter et transmettaient les ordres du Mogho-Naba à

1. Nous avons relaté dans ses moindres détails au chapitre Ier, la guerre des Mogho-Naba Sanum et Wobgo contre Lallé. Nous avons dit aussi que Sanum avait eu également affaire au Boussouma-Naba et qu'il était également entré en conflit avec Boulsa.

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ses vassaux. A l'heure actuelle le Mogho-Naba ne s'occupe plus du règlement des affaires, qui incombe à ses ministres et à l'autorité française. Cependant les grands dignitaires de la Cour lui soumettent toujours les affaires qui ont quelque importance; ils lui rendent compte de toutes les questions d'intérêt général ; ils le tiennent au courant des entretiens qu'ils peuvent avoir avec l'Administrateur du cercle, représentant du Gouvernement de la Colonie.

ORGANISATION DES COMMANDEMENTS TERRITORIAUX

Chaque ministre de l'Empereur avait sous son autorité — nous verrons plus loin dans quelles conditions — un groupe de cantons. A la tête de chaque canton était placé un Naba « Kombéré ». Au début et jusqu'au règne de Naba Sanum le commandement du Baloum-Naba groupait les « Dimbissi » (chefs de canton descendants des récents Mogho-Naba), les autres cantons, exception faite pour les cantons les plus peuplés et par conséquent les plus riches, Zittenga, Manga, etc... étaient répartis entre les autres ministres. Ces cantons importants étaient confiés au Kamsaogo-Naba, chef eunuque. Cela s'expliquait par le souci qu'avait l'Empereur de récupérer la fortune laissée par ce ministre à sa mort, ce dernier, simple gardien des femmes du Roi, n'ayant pas d'héritier légitime. L'eunuque qui était appelé à le remplacer devait, à son tour, se constituer une fortune personnelle. Seuls les chevaux, les femmes que le chef défunt avait

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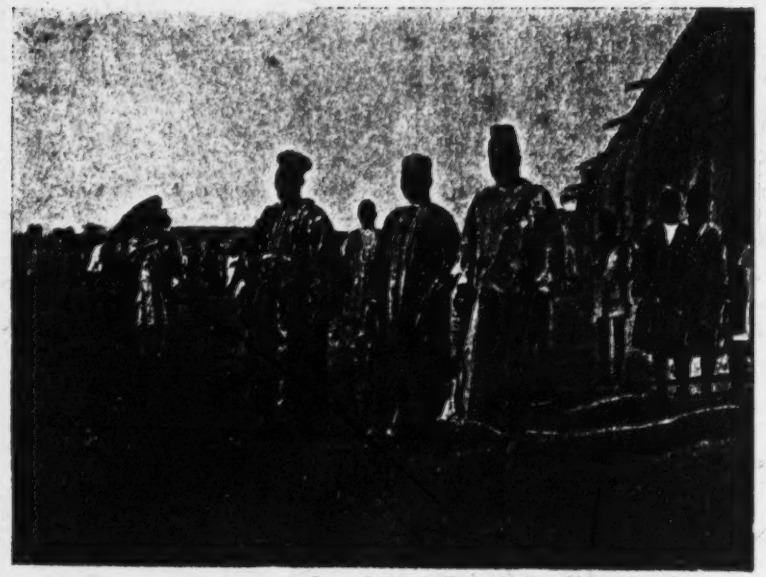

Communiqué par la Mission des Pères Blancs à Ouagadougou.

Ministres du Mogho-Naba et leurs serviteurs.

(De gauche à droite les premier, troisième et quatrième ministres.)

[facing p. 48]

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donnés de son vivant aux gens de son quartier étaient laissés à ces derniers.

Pouvoirs des ministres sur les chefs vassaux du Mogho-Naba

On a grand tort de croire qu'avant l'occupation française, les ministres de l'Empereur avaient une grande autorité sur les chefs de canton. Le rôle véritable des ministres, nous l'avons déjà dit, était de servir d'intermédiaires entre l'Empereur et les Chefs de canton, mais ils ne pouvaient, à aucun titre et sous aucun prétexte, s'immiscer dans les affaires du canton, le « Kombéré » étant le seul seigneur dans le territoire dont le commandement lui a été donné en apanage par le Mogho-Naba.

C'est ainsi qu'on a pu constater que tel chef de canton, mécontent du ministre de qui il dépendait, pouvait de son propre gré descendre désormais dans le quartier d'un autre ministre sans d'ailleurs que le Mogho-Naba y vît d'inconvénient. L'expression mossie « Gansobend'ka sambiri n'tont vigri yé » (litt. l'hospitalité n'est pas une parenté, on peut s'en défaire), démontre surabondamment l'exactitude de ce qui précède. Si à cela on ajoute qu'avant la pénétration française, les Nabas ne venaient à Ouagadougou qu'une fois par an rendre visite à l'Empereur et lui apporter les tributs annuels, on comprendra sans peine l'insignifiante autorité que pouvait exercer sur eux un ministre.

Sans doute, cela ne revient pas à dire qu'on pouvait

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se passer de ces intermédiaires, mais on pouvait librement les choisir. Au reste, une des raisons de l'obéissance qu'on leur devait reposait uniquement sur ce fait : c'est sur leur proposition que l'Empereur nommait les chefs de canton, mais le Mogho-Naba était trop haut placé pour connaître les enfants des Nabas défunts; aussi pour s'assurer de son vivant la certitude qu'il serait remplacé par son fils aîné, le « Kombéré » affectait un certain respect vis-à-vis des ministres de l'Empereur, et il offrait des présents aux principales notabilités de Ouagadougou.

Situation actuelle. — La réorganisation politique et administrative actuelle qui date déjà de dix-huit ans environ (1912), je crois, ne semble avoir tenu aucun compte de la hiérarchie existant entre les ministres pour la répartition des commandements territoriaux. Ainsi, tel ministre doit traverser de nombreux villages dépendant d'un autre ministre pour se rendre dans une région ressortissant de son commandement. Il semble d'ailleurs, si l'on examine de près la question, que l'unique préoccupation de l'Administration ait été, à cette époque, de récompenser certains ministres jeunes et capables au détriment de ceux qui étaient trop âgés.

Mais c'est en réalité à 1908 qu'il faut remonter pour rechercher les causes d'une telle désorganisation : l'envoi en mission du regretté Larrhallé-Naba PAWITRAOGO, chef de province, à Koudougou, laissait un commandement vacant à répartir ; plus tard le renvoi par l'Empereur du Kamsogho-Naba et son

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remplacement par un « incapable », détermina l'Administration locale à confier à un autre ministre plus apte la province de ce dernier.

Il serait désirable qu'une nouvelle réorganisation soit effectuée et qu'il soit procédé : 1° à la suppression progressive de certains cantons insignifiants pour en former de grands; 2° à la constitution de cantons formés des villages soi-disant indépendants : 3° à l'octroi, aux chefs de province d'identiques avantages matériels. Question qui ne peut être réglée que par une juste répartition des cantons. L'Administration française a accordé aux chefs de province les mêmes appointements — elle a par conséquent établi une égalité qui n'existait pas. Déjà trois de ces auxiliaires sont lettrés; ils jouissent d'une même considération, ils ont les mêmes besoins, rendent tous de bons services; il faut leur accorder les mêmes avantages si on ne veut pas créer de jalousies et faire des mécontents.

Enfin, pour en revenir aux « Kombemba » disons que les vassaux du Mogho-Naba à Koudougou et à Kaya, jouissent d'une certaine indépendance, puisqu'ils peuvent communiquer directement avec les commandants de cercle sans autre intermédiaire que l'interprète — auxiliaire encore indispensable tant que les chefs n'auront pas passé par les écoles — tandis que l'autorité des chefs vassaux restés rattachés à la circonscription administrative de Ouagadougou est sinon totalement effacée, du moins considérablement diminuée.

Leur action est, en effet, contrariée par celle des ministres, chefs de province, de qui, peut-on dire, ils

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reçoivent parfois des ordres déformés ou amplifiés par des intermédiaires en mal de gloire.

Une telle situation, il faut bien l'avouer, peut avoir — elle a eu —, une fâcheuse répercussion sur l'évolution de ces Nabas. Il y a là un malaise auquel il convient de remédier sans retard.

L'Administration locale a commis la lourde faute de n'avoir pas cherché à tenir compte, dès le début, de l'importance des chefs de canton dont la plupart (voir la liste en appendice), sont les descendants des Mogho-Nabas. Par contre, la quasi-totalité des ministres et autres fonctionnaires de la Cour, malgré le respect qu'on leur doit et la considération dont ils jouissent, sont de basse extraction (voir au chapitre IV, les origines du Ouidi-Naba et du Larrhallé-Naba par exemple).

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LES ROITELETS (petits Dima). *a*) ce qu'ils étaient; *b*) ce qu'ils sont aujourd'hui.

Ainsi qu'il a été dit au chapitre introductif, un certain nombre de chefs se sont peu à peu affranchis de la tutelle du Mogho-Naba et ont pris le titre de Dima, c'est-à-dire de Roi. Ce sont :

B[illegible]SOUMA-NABA, cercle de Kaya; CONQUIZITENGA-NABA, cercle de Koudougou; YAKO-NABA, cercle de Koudougou (subdivision de Yako); RIZIAM-NABA, cercle de Ouahigouya.

Ces chefs étaient, en quelque sorte, des « Gouverneurs » indépendants, du fait que la suzeraineté de l'Empereur ne pesait pas lourdement sur eux puis-

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qu'ils jouissaient d'une indépendance presque absolue. Certains d'entre eux, le Boussouma-Naba, le Yako-Naba, par exemple, ont sous leur autorité des chefs de canton qu'ils investissent comme ceux du Mogho-Naba. Ces Dima possèdent des Cours semblables, à quelques exceptions près, à celle de l'Empereur des Mossi.

Ils étaient nommés directement par leurs propres ministres sans que le Mogho-Naba y prît aucune part effective.

Aujourd'hui. — L'Administration locale en a fait de simples chefs de province et parfois même, — comme c'est le cas du Konquizitenga Naba —, de simples chefs de canton.

Respect dû au Mogho-Naba. — Chaque année les petits « Dima » envoyaient au Mogho-Naba de nombreux cadeaux (chevaux, bœufs, cauris).

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Une erreur. — TENKODOGO-NABA [1], contrairement

1. Il ne faut cependant pas croire que le commandement du Tenkodogo-Naba comprend tous les cantons de cette circonscription administrative.

Plusieurs cantons Boussancé dépendaient du Mogho-Naba avant l'occupation française. Sur 14 qui forment actuellement ce qu'on nomme la province « Boussanga », 11 cantons relevaient de l'autorité de l'Empereur des Mossi. Les chefs de ces cantons étaient nommés par le Mogho-Naba. Ils étaient tenus comme tous les chefs vassaux de venir rendre visite à l'Empereur et lui apportaient des tributs annuels.

Depuis que Tenkodogo a été transformé en subdivision d'abord

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à ce qui a été admis jusqu'ici, est un véritable Roi dans ses États et comme tel absolument *indépendant* du Mogho-Naba de Ouagadougou, au même titre que le sont le Chef de l'État de Yatenga (Ouahigouya) et le Chef de FADA N'GOURMA.

Ainsi qu'il a été dit dans un précédent chapitre, TENKODOGO-NABA est le descendant de NABA-ZOUNGRANA, fils de OUEDRAOGO et par conséquent l'aîné du Mogho-Naba, descendant de NABA-OUBRI fondateur de la dynastie Mossie de Ouagadougou.

BOULSA-NABA. — Descendant direct du « Kourita »

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puis en cercle autonome, les chefs boussancé dont il s'agit sont nommés directement par l'administration locale avec l'assentiment de la population, le Mogho-Naba n'étant plus consulté. Ce n'est qu'à la suite de difficultés soulevées à l'occasion de la nomination d'un chef de canton que le Mogho-Naba a dû intervenir et c'est de là qu'était née la nécessité de placer un parent de l'Empereur à la tête de ces cantons constitués en province. Le choix se porta sur le frère utérin de Naba Kom, le nommé MOUSTAPHA KONGO.

Ce dernier a été révoqué en 1930, après avoir exercé le commandement pendant trois ans seulement, certes pour fautes commises dans l'exercice de ses fonctions mais aussi parce que les Boussancés restés trop longtemps indépendants ne voulaient plus souffrir de maître.

Ainsi comme il a été dit au début de ce chapitre, l'administration locale s'est trop immiscée dans l'organisation de l'Empire Mossi ; on a complètement faussé la physionomie et diminué le prestige du Mogho-Naba ; ce sont autant de causes qui ont permis au fonctionnaire mal renseigné auquel nous avons fait allusion, de dire que l'autorité de l'Empereur du Mossi sur les chefs vassaux était nominale.

Liste des cantons Boussancé relevant de l'autorité du Mogho-Naba :

1° Canton de Niaogo ; 2° Niarba ; 3° Lenga ; 4° Gon Boussougou ; 5° Komtoéga ; 6° Beguedo ; 7° Ouanragou ; 8° Sanogo ; 9° Toalla ; 10° Zourga ; 11° Yakala.

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de NABA-OUBRI n'est pas un « Dima » mais un simple Kombéré. Il a sans doute un vassal, le chef de Koupéla dans le cercle de Tenkodogo, aujourd'hui considéré à son tour comme un chef de province, mais Boulsa-Naba est lui-même vassal du Mogho-Naba.

II. — ORGANISATION MILITAIRE

L'armée proprement dite avec ses cadres et ses hiérarchies n'existait pas au Mossi.

En cas de guerre, le Tansoba ou Tampsoba (ministre de la Guerre) prévenait les chefs de canton qui accouraient avec tous les hommes valides et le plus de cavaliers possible.

Les villages étaient chargés de nourrir les soldats.

III. — ORGANISATION JUDICIAIRE

La justice était rendue conformément aux coutumes locales transmises de génération en génération et aux usages locaux.

1° Par les chefs de village assistés de quelques vieillards : petites affaires, larcins, injures ;

2° Le Chef de canton assisté des dignitaires de sa Cour et le Ministre réglaient entre autres les questions de vol, d'adultère, de coups et blessures ;

3° Le Mogho-Naba connaissait de toutes les affaires d'ordre général, notamment les crimes : assassinats et meurtres. Il pouvait seul, en principe, prononcer la peine de mort pour les Nakomsé. Mais contrairement à ce qu'on croit généralement, le Kom-

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béré — chef de canton — lui aussi avait droit de vie et de mort sur ses sujets. Combien de personnes ont été mises à mort uniquement parce qu'elles étaient fortunées! Combien de chefs de village ont été tués par les chefs de cantons dans leur territoire sans que le Mogho-Naba soit intervenu! Seuls les Nakomsés n'étaient mis à mort que pour fautes graves, par exemple l'adultère avec une femme de la noblesse. Le coupable était conduit dans la brousse par les vieux Nakomsés qui lui remettaient une corde et il lui appartenait de se rendre justice par la strangulation.

La justice était gratuite; aucune taxe n'était prévue, ni perçue; néanmoins, le plaignant faisait présent au Naba d'un coq blanc ou bengré (gris clair) qu'accompagnait toujours la traditionnelle sacoche de cauris (200 à 1.000 cauris).

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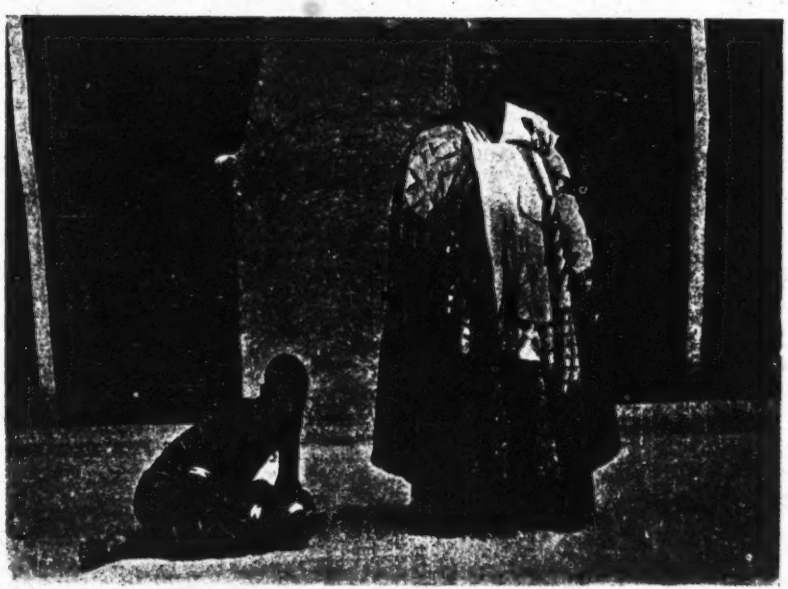

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MOGHO-NABA.
Chef de tous les Mossi et un serviteur.

[facing p. 56]

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CHAPITRE IV

La Cour du Mogho-Naba. — Tributs et redevances dues. — Obligations auxquelles les sujets Mossi étaient astreints vis-à-vis de leurs Nabas.

I. — Les honneurs du matin a l'Empereur des Mossi

Devant une antichambre appelée « zango », qui donne sur une très vaste cour, se tient chaque matin le Conseil de l'Empereur des Mossi.

Les Mossi ont longtemps considéré le soleil comme un « dieu ».

Wend'Pous Yan (Dieu se montre), indique le lever du soleil, mais, dans un sens figuré, puisqu'il s'agit de la sortie du Mogho-Naba. Ceci démontre la considération qu'a le peuple Mossi pour son chef, qu'il compare à l'astre du jour, par conséquent à un « dieu ».

Le Mogho-Naba sort, le matin, vêtu d'un grand boubou rouge, d'un « gourmousga » rouge (sorte de burnous replié que le chef jette sur les épaules) et coiffé d'un bonnet « Fez » surmonté d'un « wazourfou sebré » (littéralement : argent papier) autrement dit amulette d'argent). Le rouge représente la lumière qu'il fait lors de l'apparition du soleil et l'argent sur le bonnet l'éclat de l'astre lui-même.

Avant l'heure indiquée, les trois sogon'kassemsé (les grands serviteurs) apportent dans la cour le

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coussin « nagpouré » et tous les insignes de la chefferie. Dès que le Mogho-Naba se montre, ils se mettent debout, frottent le pouce contre le majeur, faisant ainsi entendre un claquement qui prévient le public que le Naba va venir.

« Wend'pous yan » est aussi annoncé par les « gagando », les « luinsé » (tambours) sitôt que Sa Majesté s'assied. Seul le Bend'Naba ne joue pas, il passe et repasse le doigt sur la partie recouverte de cire de son tambour, imitant ainsi le rugissement du Lion. Quatre ou cinq jeunes gens porteurs de fusils chargés se placent devant l'Empereur.

C'est dans l'ordre suivant que sont rendus les honneurs :

1° Le Samandé-Naba, le Baloum-Naba, le Wedranga-Naba et le Simandé-Nabila, en même temps que le « Zusoabin' kassanga » (chef eunuque, gardien de le maison de l'Empereur) vont les premiers saluer Sa Majesté et s'enquérir de ses nouvelles ;

2° Viennent ensuite le Ouidi-Naba, le Larralé-Naba, le Kamsaogo-Naba, le Gounga-Naba, le Nemdo-Naba et le Poé-Naba.

3° Le vendredi ou autre jour férié musulman, l'Imam, représentant de l'Islam à Ouagadougou, vient donner la « doua », sorte de bénédiction qui consiste en la récitation de quelques versets du Coran, le matin aussi bien que le soir.

Lebeg'sonre : Sitôt ces honneurs rendus, le Mogho-Naba rentre dans sa maison ; c'est pour prendre un autre costume de couleur moins voyante. Peu après, en effet, il sort à nouveau dans la cour.

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Viennent alors le saluer le Baloum-Naba et sa suite, comme nous l'avons indiqué plus haut. Le Ouidi-Naba et sa suite sont dispensés de cette obligation, à moins qu'ils n'aient des étrangers à présenter à Sa Majesté.

Le Bend'Naba, les Gangando, les Luinsé et les Doudissi (tambours et violons) jouent alors ensemble les louanges du Mogho-Naba.

A noter qu'avant de faire sa première sortie du matin, le Mogho-Naba ne parle à personne. Ce n'est que lorsque ses devoirs sont terminés et qu'il regagne ses appartements que ses « tampa » (sœurs) lui donnent le bonjour.

Avant que les fonctionnaires et ministres de la Cour regagnent leur domicile et sitôt que le Mogho-Naba s'est retiré, le Sogon'kassanga, c'est-à-dire le premier serviteur, leur envoie du « dam » (connu sous le nom de dolo ou bière de mil fermenté).

1° Un canari de « dam » est offert au Baloum-Naba, qui donne obligatoirement une calebassée au « zusoaba », au Wedkim-Naba (chef palefrenier) et une au « soré-Naba (Bendré, chemin-chef).

2° Un canari de « dam » au Ouidi-Naba qui est tenu de donner une calebassée au Poé-Naba (chef confesseur des femmes et pages du Mogho-Naba) et un « koré » au Bend'Naba. Il boit le reste avec les autres ministres ses suivants.

3° Le vendredi de chaque semaine et les jours fériés des kolas « gouré » sont offertes à l'Imam, après qu'il a donné sa « doua » et avant que le Mogho-Naba se rende au Gouvernement renouveler l'expression de

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son attachement à la France, au représentant de la République en Haute-Volta.

Le Mogho-Naba passe le reste de la journée à recevoir les particuliers venus lui rendre visite, à recevoir les « poussoums » (cadeaux offerts au chef), et à donner du « dam », des « gouré », des « foutous » (habits), etc... et à entendre les louanges de ses courtisans.

II. — Mogho-Naba na tough'la [1]
le Mogho-Naba s'en va a Là.

La tradition raconte qu'un Mogho-Naba, nommé Naba Warga, avait une favorite qui, seule, connaissait sa nourriture préférée, le « léla (fruits d'un arbuste « léhinga » (en français prunier sauvage). Il n'est pas superflu de dire que d'ordinaire un rien pour eux est pris pour le repas préféré, et il ne faut pas s'imaginer que le Mogho-Naba ne vit seulement que de bons mets; la nourriture, évidemment, ne manque pas de succulence, mais il ne touche pas à tous les plats. Un jour, cette femme lui demanda la permission de se rendre chez elle à Là, et ne revint pas. Le Mogho-Naba fatigué d'attendre et privé de son aliment préféré, fit seller son cheval, un matin, et voulut aller rejoindre son épouse. Ses Ministres le supplièrent de rester, lui demandant de ne partir que le lendemain... Chaque matin, c'étaient les mêmes préparatifs de départ et toujours la même supplication jusqu'à la mort du

1. Village dépendant de la circonscription administrative de Yako, dans le cercle de Koudougou.

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chef. Son fils, qui lui succéda, voulut suivre son exemple. Voici comment cette coutume se pratiquait encore il y a quelques années.

Quand le Mogho-Naba sort le matin, un de ses chevaux à demi harnaché avec une selle à étriers d'argent mais dont la sangle n'est pas bouclée, est amené dans la cour. Le Mogho-Naba, après avoir répondu aux saluts de ses Ministres et de toute sa Cour, réglé quelques petites affaires, déclare qu'il veut aller à Lâ. Les fonctionnaires de la Cour et notamment le Kamsaongo-Naba se présentent et lui disent : « Sire, ordonnez qu'on desselle votre cheval, vous partirez demain. » Le Mogho-Naba naturellement accepte, mais rentre vivement comme un peu courroucé de cette entrave à l'accomplissement de sa volonté et, au même instant, la selle est enlevée et le cheval reconduit aux écuries.

Notons que chaque matin aussi la Pougtiéma (première femme) fait apprêter sa corbeille et un panier dans lesquels elle entasse tout ce qui est nécessaire à un voyage, et cela dans le but d'accompagner son mari se rendant à Lâ.

Mais sitôt que le Mogho-Naba remet au lendemain son voyage à Lâ, la Pougtiéma, prévenue, défait aussi sa corbeille.

Actuellement, le souffle de la civilisation a passé par-dessus ces vieilles pratiques et le Mogho-Naba actuel se contente de voir son cheval, qu'on promène pendant qu'il reçoit ses ministres dans la cour, et l'animal est aussitôt ramené aux écuries lorsque le

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Roi rentre dans son palais, et cela sans même qu'il ait essayé de le monter : *à fortiori* de recevoir des supplications du Kamsaongo-Naba.

Koaga basgo

Chaque jour, au coucher du soleil, le Baloum-Naba se rend chez le Mogho-Naba pour le « Koaga ». N'assistent à cette opération que le « zusobin-kassanga » (chef eunuque) et le « Sogon'kassanga » (premier serviteur). Le « Koaga » est une sorte de cuvette en terre pétrie dans laquelle on met un peu de feu et... mystère. Le grand serviteur dépose le Koaga dans la cour face à l'antichambre, souffle sur le feu qui s'allume et s'éteint rapidement. Le « bendré » (tambour) pendant ce temps, passe et repasse la main sur la cire qui recouvre une partie de son tambour.

Pendant toute la durée de l'opération, il n'est permis à personne d'entrer dans la maison du Mogho-Naba ni d'en sortir. Et personne venant du dehors non plus ne passe dans la cour à cette heure-là. La personne surprise à avoir assisté au « Koaga basgo » était sévèrement punie de coups de corde ou même tuée. L'opération terminée, le Zusoba et le Baloum-Naba, qui, chacun, étaient assis à une place indiquée, se lèvent, se rencontrent, se saluent, puis attendent que du « dam » leur soit servi avant de se quitter pour le reste de la nuit ; parfois aussi ils vont saluer le Mogho-Naba avant de rentrer chez eux.

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Le Mogho-Naba et trois de ses Ministres.

[facing p. 62]

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Ministres et fonctionnaires de la Cour du Mogho-Naba

I. Ministres. — a) *Ouidi-Naba* (littéralement : « chevaux chef » (surveillant général des chevaux des écuries de Sa Majesté). C'est au Ouidi-Naba qu'incombait autrefois le soin d'indiquer la robe et l'espèce de cheval qui convenait au Mogho-Naba. C'est généralement à lui que revenait la garde des chevaux des chefs morts.

Si un Kombéré (chef de canton) vient à mourir et s'il possédait de son vivant des chevaux, un de ceux-ci est envoyé à Ouagadougou, au Mogho-Naba, comme porteur de la mauvaise nouvelle. On attache à la queue de l'animal quelques feuillages de « tahnga » (arbre à karité) autour desquels est enroulée une corde blanche.

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1. A l'origine, le Gounga-Naba était premier ministre et ce titre lui revenait de droit, étant donné que ce fut le compagnon de Naba-Oubri. Un jour, étant allé faire ses besoins, il fit la rencontre d'un garçon fort beau à qui il proposa son amitié ; ce dernier accepta. Il le fit conduire plus tard à Naba-Oubri qui l'adopta, l'installa et lui donna la charge de ses écuries. Gounga-Naba dit alors au Mogho-Naba, « puisque je suis venu avec toi, donne la première dignité à cet homme. Je lui montrerai ce qu'il doit faire pour te plaire : C'est le Ouidi-Naba ».

« Un homme de Tansobongo, ayant appris que le Ouidi-Naba vivait dans l'aisance, vint le voir. C'était également un garçon bien taillé. Il fut présenté au Mogho-Naba (Naba-Oubri) par le Gounga-Naba qui proposa sa nomination comme deuxième ministre, lui se réservant le troisième emploi, c'est Larrhallé-Naba.

C'est ainsi que le Gounga-Naba est le troisième ministre de l'Empereur.

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Le cheval ainsi présenté au Mogho-Naba est ensuite remis à un des représentants du Ouidi-Naba, qui, à l'aide d'un couteau, défait les feuillages, qu'il laisse dans la Cour du Mogho-Naba, emmène le cheval à Ouidin.

A moins que le Mogho-Naba ne donne le cheval à quelqu'un, le Ouidi-Naba est libre d'en disposer.

b) *Larrhallé-Naba.* — Deuxième ministre du Mogho-Naba; accompagnait autrefois le « Tansoba » ou « Tampsoba » en guerre.

Dans le quartier qu'habite actuellement le Larrhalé-Naba existaient autrefois des arbres géants dont les feuillages s'agitaient constamment. Nommé Ministre, le Larrhallé-Naba dit qu'il voulait aller habiter à l'endroit où « tisse vand'sin y a lag, lag zighin wan » (là où les feuillages des arbres s'agitent continuellement). D'où le nom de Larrhallé, pour désigner le quartier.

c) *Gounga-Naba.* — Troisième ministre. Quartier installé en un endroit où existaient autrefois des « goumsé » (de gounga, fromager) d'où le nom de Gounga-Naba.

Frère d'armes du « Tansoba » qu'il accompagnait toujours en guerre, acceptait plutôt la mort que la retraite, surtout si le Tansoba perdait la vie.

d) *Baloum-Naba.* — Grand intendant du palais et chef des serviteurs du Mogho-Naba, ne va jamais en guerre. Est toujours aux côtés du Mogho-Naba. C'est au Baloum-Naba que revient le soin de faire les sacri-

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GOUMGA-NABA.
Troisième Ministre du Mogho-Naba.

[facing p. 64]

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fices tels que l'égorgement de poulets ou d'animaux offerts aux mânes des ancêtres ou aux esprits, prescrits par les devins ou autres charlatans, pour la bonne santé et le repos du Mogho-Naba.

e) *Kamsaogho-Naba.* — Autrefois allait en guerre avec le « Tansoba ». Le Kamsaogho-Naba est un eunuque. De là vient qu'on l'appelle couramment « Mogho-Naba na poug'tiéma » (première femme de Mogho-Naba).

II. Autres personnages (non Ministres). — *Samandé-Naba.* — Chef de tous les gens de la Cour extérieure du Mogho-Naba, frère d'armes du Larrhallé-Naba.

Poé-Naba. — Autrefois confesseur des pages et des femmes du Mogho-Naba; sa fonction consistait, par des procédés magiques, à dénoncer la femme ou la personne convaincue de trahison ou de tentative d'adultère. Le « Poéré » a fait des victimes et sa suppression, avec l'arrivée des Français, a rendu bien des services aux Mossi qui étaient tués pour un rien. Une œillade à la femme d'un chef méritait la mort. Un homme qui rencontrait une femme du Mogho-Naba sur une route était tué aussi bien que la femme. Quand on rencontrait une « Napagha » on abandonnait le chemin, on prenait la brousse. La femme elle-même prenait le trot et ne regagnait la route que lorsqu'elle voyait que l'homme était bien loin.

Il n'en est plus évidemment de même aujourd'hui et les femmes du Mogho-Naba allant au marché de Oua-

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gadougou n'ont pas la prétention de ne pas être toisées, ni même bousculées, mais, je m'empresse de l'ajouter, les Mossi gardent encore beaucoup de respect pour elles et supportent sans broncher des injures graves, comme « tampiri » (bâtard) venant des « Napagha » s'ils ont eu tant soit peu le malheur de les avoir offensées.

Daporé-Naba. — Chef de quartier des esclaves libres ou des esclaves de case. C'était au Daporé-Naba et à ses gens qu'incombait le soin de massacrer les pages et autres coupables dont le Mogho-Naba ordonnait la mort.

Bend'-Naba. — Chef des tambourinaires du Mogho-Naba.

Soré-Naba (littéralement : chemin-chef) Tambour accompagnant toujours les guerriers; c'est pour cette raison que, même en temps de paix, on lui donne un cheval.

Si, au cours d'une bataille, les ennemis semblent prendre le dessus, Soré-Naba enflamme le courage des guerriers du Mogho-Naba et demande constamment qu'une tête lui soit donnée, « m'data zougou ». Cela veut dire qu'il demande à chacun de ne plus se compter et de n'avoir qu'une seule pensée : la victoire. Or, pour avoir la victoire, il faut que l'ennemi subisse des pertes qui le décident à prendre la retraite ou à se soumettre; « m'data zougou » suppose donc une tuerie impitoyable.

Le « Tansoba » ou « Tampsoba » (chef de guerre). Le « Tansoba » du Mogho-Naba habite un petit village (Moussa) dans la province de Baloum-Naba.

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TAUSBOA.
Ministre de la Guerre Mossi.

[facing p. 66]

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Quand il y a désaccord entre le Mogho-Naba et un de ses vassaux et qu'aucune entente ne paraît possible, le Mogho-Naba envoie demander des « logdo » (guerriers porteurs de flèches) au « Tansoba ». Ce dernier se rend aussitôt à Ouagadougou et descend à Baoghin. L'Empereur réunit ses ministres et les principaux notables de sa cour et leur dit : « je ne croyais pas que tel chef à qui j'ai offert la « pougla » (la chéchia rouge) oserait se mesurer à moi. Je demande donc que sa chéchia me soit rendue. « Enlever le bonnet d'un Naba c'est le détrôner, c'est le mettre sur le même pied que ses sujets.

Les fonctionnaires de la Cour, le Tansoba y compris, envoient tout aussitôt des émissaires au chef fautif pour lui demander de choisir entre la mort volontaire (les uns avalent un poison appelé « sounadré » d'autres se donnent la mort à l'aide d'une flèche empoisonnée) ou la guerre avec le Mogho-Naba.

Si le chef ne s'attendait pas à une pareille sommation, il se tue et les envoyés rapportent la nouvelle.

Si au contraire, il déclare qu'il veut le « Pouwega », c'est-à-dire la guerre et la mort noble, il renvoie les représentants des ministres du Mogho-Naba, et, peu de jours après, tambours battants, toute la bande guerrière, ayant en tête le « Tansoba », chef d'armée, arrive devant ses murs.

Le Tansoba dépêche le Samandé-Naba auprès du chef pour lui demander confirmation de ses déclarations. Si le Naba veut toujours la guerre, il répond ordinairement : « ya yingri bala la ka sakénian ».

Le Tansoba se replie et fait dire au chef de l'at-

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tendre tel ou tel jour (sept à huit jours plus tard) pour lui permettre de réunir lui aussi ses guerriers. Et le jour enfin arrivé, c'est la bataille sans pitié, le massacre.

Bien souvent les gens du Mogho-Naba triomphent. Les esclaves, les animaux et autres biens reviennent à ceux qui s'en sont emparés. Les cadavres, seuls, appartiennent au Tansoba.

Si une flèche, même empoisonnée, atteint le Tansoba, il ne doit en aucun cas l'arracher. Il doit d'ailleurs, dans bien des cas, supporter la soif et la faim et ce n'est qu'au repos que, dans un enclos, on lui enlève les flèches qui se sont enfoncées dans son corps. A noter que le costume du Tansoba, tout couvert d'amulettes et autres gris-gris, permet difficilement à une flèche de pouvoir sérieusement l'atteindre. Cela n'ôte rien naturellement à sa bravoure et au sang froid qu'il conserve devant le danger, puisqu'aussi bien il ne doit pas accepter la retraite et bien souvent préfère, si l'ennemi est vainqueur, perdre la vie que rapporter au Mogho-Naba la nouvelle d'une défaite.

Il existe, par ailleurs, une infinité de petits nabas dont le rôle n'est du reste pas nettement défini, et dont il nous semble inutile de parler.

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Redevances coutumières payées a leurs chefs par les Mossi

1° Au Mogho-Naba. — a) *Autrefois.* — Avant la pénétration française, les Kombemba (chefs de can-

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ton) et les Nakomsé (descendants des Mogho-Naba), étaient tenus chaque année de venir à Ouagadougou saluer le Mogho-Naba et de lui remettre à cette occasion des présents (bœufs, chevaux, moutons, cauris et charges de mil).

Cela représentait, pour ainsi dire, une redevance fixe, dont l'importance variait, bien entendu, avec la capacité des contribuables (les chefs de canton et les Nakomsé) et le nombre des sujets dont l'administration était confiée aux premiers.

Si, en effet, les chevaux, les bœufs et moutons, étaient la part personnelle du Kombéré, les cauris et le mil étaient fournis par les sujets Mossi. Le chef de canton fixait la quantité de cauris et de céréales à prélever dans chaque village en tenant compte du nombre d'habitants.

Ordinairement c'était, 100 cauris par homme marié, 50 cauris par célibataire (adultes) et pour le mil : 10 paniers pesant en moyenne 40 kilos chacun.

De même, chaque année, une sorte de redevance qui consistait en cauris et en bétail, était payée au Djiba-Naba, — prince héritier — ceci pour demeurer dans les bonnes grâces de l'Empereur son père.

b) *Aujourd'hui.* — Les chefs de canton (Kombemba), qui viennent plus souvent que jadis à Ouagadougou à l'occasion des principales fêtes ou événements, ne s'en retournent jamais dans leurs états qu'après avoir été présenter leurs respects au Mogho-Naba et lui avoir remis la sacoche traditionnelle (cauris et bétail). Les cadeaux deviennent plus fréquents, mais n'ont pas

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leur importance d'autrefois. D'une manière générale, certains chefs de canton exigent encore de la population la petite redevance en cauris quand ils viennent à Ouagadougou pour les fêtes du 14 juillet, mais quelques-uns, soit par peur des sanctions administratives, soit parce que les charges qui pèsent sur les sujets Mossi leur paraissent lourdes, préfèrent donner le peu qu'ils ont acquis personnellement en se livrant à certaines cultures rémunératrices (coton, patates, etc.), ou à quelques transactions commerciales.

Quelques-uns, les chefs vassaux du Mogho-Naba, mais qui ne dépendent plus de Ouagadougou, depuis la scission du cercle du Mossi en plusieurs circonscriptions administratives, envoient encore chaque année des cadeaux importants au Mogho-Naba (cauris, bœufs et une quantité considérable de céréales, mil et riz).

2° Redevances payées aux Kombemba (Chefs de canton) — a) *Autrefois.* — Chaque canton célébrait annuellement une ou plusieurs fêtes rituelles — les sujets Mossi (tengsoba : vieux des villages, notables et gens aisés apportaient régulièrement des présents au chef de canton (cauris, chèvres, moutons et coqs). Les peuhls donnaient des bœufs.

Les chefs de canton conservaient aussi une partie de la redevance payée par la population au Mogho-Naba.

b) A l'heure actuelle encore ces cadeaux coutumiers subsistent, mais les coqs blancs ou bengré (gris clair) font de plus en plus place aux bestiaux.

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3° Redevances payées aux ministres du Mogho-Naba. — Pour entretenir de bonnes relations avec les Ministres, fonctionnaires de la Cour et intermédiaires entre l'Empereur et ses vassaux, les chefs de canton en venant saluer le Mogho-Naba, apportaient autrefois des cadeaux dont la nature n'était pas déterminée aux grands dignitaires de la Cour. Une certaine quantité de cauris était donnée à la Pougtiéma (première femme du Mogho-Naba) (500 cauris = 2,50 en monnaie française) (autrefois 50 centimes).

Le Chef de canton convoqué pour affaire à Ouagadougou peut se passer d'aller voir l'Empereur, mais apportera obligatoirement des cauris, un mouton ou un coq au Ministre, chef de province de qui il dépend.

4° Droits coutumiers. — a) *Droits de place sur les marchés.* — Avant la pénétration française, les droits du marché de Ouagadougou étaient perçus au profit du Mogho-Naba par un collecteur à ses gages.

Dans les villages importants, les droits étaient prélevés par les captifs gourounsi pour le compte des chefs de canton (Kombemba).

b) *Chasse.* — Autrefois, avant le désherbage de leurs champs pour les semences nouvelles, les Mossi se livraient par groupes de villages à des battues ; le menu gibier (perdreaux, pintades, lièvres, etc...) était laissé aux chasseurs. Il était par contre prélevé sur tout quadrupède abattu (biche, gazelle, coba), etc..., un gigot pour le chef de canton.

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c) *Pêche.* — La pêche dans les grands marigots ne pouvait avoir lieu que sur autorisation des chefs de canton. Le jour de la pêche était assimilé à un jour férié. Tous les jeunes gens du village et leurs voisin, même si ces derniers ne dépendaient pas du canton, accouraient au jour fixé par le chef de canton et procédaient à la pêche pour le compte du Naba. Tous les gros poissons lui étaient réservés; le menu poisson était laissé à l'ensemble de pêcheurs.

Cette règle se pratique encore.

5° Autres droits coutumiers. — On sait qu'en pays Mossi les divinités sont nombreuses. Les bosquets, les champs, les montagnes, etc..., ont leur « dieu ». Il arrive assez fréquemment que le Naba (chef de canton), sur les conseils des diseurs des choses cachées, offre un animal : chèvre, mouton ou même un bœuf à telle ou telle divinité, soit dans son intérêt personnel, soit dans celui de ses administrés, soit encore pour demander la pluie. Le Naba envoie des sogonés ou des Samand' kamba dans un des villages de son canton chercher la victime. L'animal est pris sans que le propriétaire puisse proférer aucune parole de mécontentement ou réclamer la moindre indemnité de compensation. Ne dit-on d'ailleurs pas au Mossi que : « Talagh gounda Naba' gninga » (le serf élève du bétail pour les besoins de son Naba).

Pour les sacrifices prescrits au Mogho-Naba les victimes sont fournies soit par les habitants de la

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ville de Ouagadougou ou des environs, soit par les chefs de canton.

Les corvées coutumières auxquelles étaient astreints les Mossi vis-a-vis de leurs chefs

Les corvées obligatoires étaient : la culture des champs des Nabas et la réfection ou construction de leurs maisons.

I. Mogho-Naba. — a) *Culture des champs.* — La culture des champs du Mogho-Naba incombait totalement aux bilbalsé (habitants de Bilbalogo, quartier du Baloum-Naba) et à tous les anciens serviteurs ou descendants d'anciens serviteurs. Le Kamnaba (chef des jeunes gens) chargé de convoquer les travailleurs faisait crier dans les marchés importants que tel jour les bilbalsé étaient conviés à se rendre aux champs de l'Empereur. Au jour indiqué le Mogho-Naba faisait abattre un ou deux bœufs et préparer une grande quantité de « sagbo » (gâteau de mil) pour les travailleurs. Si ces derniers convoqués deux ou trois fois dans les conditions sus-indiquées ne parvenaient pas à labourer tous les champs, le travail était continué par les samand'kamba (gens de la cour extérieure du Mogho-Naba).

Mais l'Empereur ne touchait pas au mil de ses propres champs qui n'avaient pas, d'ailleurs, leurs limites actuelles. Ce mil était exclusivement réservé

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à la préparation des aliments pour les étrangers et à l'entretien des chevaux [1].

Il appartenait aux chefs de canton et aux ministres de fournir des charges de mil au Mogho-Naba pour sa propre consommation et celle de son harem (il faut entendre par harem toutes les femmes jeunes ou d'âge moyen, à l'exclusion des vieilles femmes qui doivent pourvoir personnellement à leur nourriture et qui possèdent chacune un champ particulier).

b) *Réfection des maisons du Mogho-Naba.* — Les travaux de construction et de réfection des maisons proprement dites de l'Empereur incombaient exclusivement aux habitants de :

Bilbalogo (quartier du Baloum-Naba).

Kamsaonghin (quartier du chef eunuque).

Dapoya (quartier des esclaves du Mogho-Naba).

Les dépendances dites « Wédanga » composées de quatre cases rondes couvertes en chaume, situées à l'extérieur de la maison de l'Empereur et qui servaient d'écuries aux chevaux offerts au Mogho-Naba par les chefs de canton ou autres personnages, étaient construites et entretenues par les trois ministres ci-après :

Ouidi-Naba, Larrhallé-Naba, Gounga-Naba (avec le concours des gens de quartier).

Le damage du sol et de l'argamasse incombait totalement aux femmes des personnes chargées de la

1. Pour la cérémonie du battage du mil de ce champ (Kawinré), voir plus loin le chapitre spécial.

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construction ou de la réfection, c'est-à-dire aux femmes des ministres et à celles des habitants de leurs quartiers.

II. Corvées coutumières dues aux chefs de province, ministres de l'Empereur. — a) *Culture des champs.* — La culture des champs des ministres du Mogho-Naba était faite par voie de prestations en nature dans les conditions suivantes :

1° Pour le Baloum-Naba, le travail était fait par tous les bilbalsé.

Le Kamnaba fixait le jour où devait avoir lieu le « Sekka » (c'est-à-dire la rencontre). Tous les jeunes gens et hommes valides étaient obligés de s'y rendre. Ils recevaient du Baloum-Naba de la nourriture en quantité suffisante.

Le nombre de journées de prestations n'était pas déterminé. Le « sekka » pouvait avoir lieu une ou plusieurs fois suivant la superficie du champ.

2° Pour les autres ministres : Ouidi-Naba, Gounga-Naba, Larrhallé-Naba, les travaux des champs étaient assurés par les gens de leur entourage (c'est-à-dire de leurs quartiers respectifs) et des villages environnants, qui dépendaient d'eux avant la constitution du canton de Ouagadougou et de sa banlieue, aujourd'hui placé sous l'autorité exclusive du Baloum-Naba (quatrième ministre de l'Empereur).

Cependant si les champs étaient très vastes et si les travaux de culture ne pouvaient être assurés par la seule voie de prestations — les prestataires devant s'occuper aussi de leurs propres champs — les mi-

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nistres demandaient le concours volontaire des jeunes gens des villages voisins et, comme rétribution de leur travail leur fournissaient le boire et le manger. C'est le « sissoaga » en usage partout chez les Mossi.

b) *Construction et réparation des maisons.* — D'une manière générale la réfection de la toiture des cases composant la maison des chefs de province incombait aux habitants de leur quartier et des villages environnants qui en dépendent.

III. Chefs de canton. — La culture des champs et la réparation des cases de la maison des Naba incombaient exclusivement à leurs sujets. Chaque village avait un nombre déterminé de cases à réparer ou à couvrir ; c'était le « sough'pilli » encore en usage chaque année.

Aujourd'hui, par souci de tranquillité peut-être, les chefs de canton se contentent de faire cultiver leurs champs par leurs sogonés ou samand'kamba et parfois même ont recours eux aussi au « sissoaga ».

L'Administration locale, soucieuse du respect des coutumes locales, pratique la politique de mise au point qui aura pour effet, croyons-nous, tout en sauvegardant l'intérêt de l'indigène écrasé sous le poids des charges, dû au laisser-aller des chefs de province, de rehausser le prestige des chefs Mossi.

Aucune autre prestation en nature n'est due au Naba. La construction des barrages pour l'alimentation en eau des villages ne saurait être considérée comme une prestation puisqu'il s'agit là de travaux intéressant la collectivité.

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Installation d'un marché

Comme dans bien des circonstances de la vie, pour installer un marché au Mossi, on a tout d'abord recours aux diseurs des choses cachées. Le Moaga a la conviction que partout derrière sa maison, sous les arbres, dans les champs, les bosquets aussi bien que dans les endroits inhabités, vivent des esprits invisibles et il tient avant tout à se concilier les bonnes grâces de ces êtres dont les colères sont redoutables. Ce n'est donc qu'après avoir consulté un certain nombre de devins employant des procédés différents (pierres, cauris, sable, etc...) que le chef de village fait sacrifier des poulets et animaux sur le lieu où il désire installer le nouveau marché. Le Naba choisit deux ou trois candidats parmi les gens de son entourage et les devins doivent désigner celui d'entre ceux-ci qui a plus de chance et un bon destin. C'est cette personne qui sera chargée d'immoler les victimes. Celles-ci sont fournies, en principe, par le chef de village ou le canton à moins que ce dernier ne préfère demander le concours de la population ; en ce cas une petite cotisation versée par quelques notables sert à l'achat des poulets, chèvre ou mouton.

En tout cas le chef de canton ne doit pas faire prendre ces bêtes dans les villages ou quartiers dépendant de son commandement comme s'il s'agissait de ses sacrifices à faire dans l'intérêt général du pays.

L'individu désigné par les bagba se rend sur les lieux accompagné d'une foule plus ou moins nom-

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breuse suivant l'importance du village. Les femmes portent des beignets et autres provisions de bouche.

Les paroles sacramentelles prononcées sont les suivantes : « Ya sida Ting' Naba yeta nan lougoul dagh, Naba zidwendé Bad kom deghin kon zigh tinghin damba, tib kon yaramba, tib regh kon saramba, tiya gnimassem lad ratta, tib regh lass zim-yellé, tiya nogoam la tigue koada soaba lad zoïta. » Traduction littérale : « C'est la vérité, le chef de canton veut installer un marché en ce lieu. Dieu soleil voilà l'eau et les victimes pour les transmettre à zigh'tinghin damba (les personnes décédées sans laisser d'enfants) aux grands-parents et aux pères. Nous demandons le bonheur et la santé. Évitez toute effusion de sang dans ce marché. Nous craignons aussi les querelleurs et les grands parleurs, provocateurs du désordre. » La poule est égorgée la première et si l'offrande est agréée elle doit d'abord tomber sur le dos et se retourner ensuite la face contre terre (cela signifie : la protection des dieux du terrain au chef et aux personnes qui viendront animer le marché) ; on tue ensuite la chèvre ou le mouton.

Immédiatement après les sacrifices, le nouveau marché doit se tenir. Les assistants achètent les beignets. Généralement les marchés se tiennent au Mossi tous les trois jours ; aussi la nouvelle se répand assez vite que tel village possède son marché. C'est ainsi que le marché prend peu à peu de l'importance.

Perception des droits. — Ce n'est que plus tard — un ou même deux ans après son installation suivant

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son développement que le chef de canton désigne un « yaguinga » (petit-fils ou proprement en terme indigène fils de la sœur (neveu) ou fils du fils (petit-fils) du Naba ou d'un membre de sa famille) ou un captif gourounsi comme collecteur des droits de marché (nous donnons plus loin la nomenclature des droits de place sur les marchés tels qu'ils étaient perçus avant l'arrivée des Français au profit des Nabas Mossi.

Transfert du marché. — Au décès du Naba (Empereur ou chefs vassaux ou même du chef de village où se tient le marché) on installe provisoirement le marché dans un autre endroit. Dans les grandes villes comme à Ouagadougou par exemple, il peut même y avoir autant de marchés qu'il y a de quartiers. Ces marchés provisoires prennent le nom de « Kim' dagha » (marché de kimsé, autrement dit des défunts).

Lorsque le nouveau Naba est désigné, le marché est de nouveau transféré à l'endroit qu'il occupait précédemment et cette réinstallation donne lieu à de nouveaux sacrifices de volailles et d'animaux. C'est ce qui explique la raison pour laquelle en 1897, lorsqu'on rétablit le marché de Ouagadougou, l'Empereur demanda au capitaine chef du poste, un bœuf pour être sacrifié en même temps qu'un mouton et un coq fournis par lui-même.

De même lorsqu'une hyène traverse un marché (on peut le savoir soit en voyant sur le sol l'empreinte laissée par les pattes, soit en consultant les devins), il faut comme au décès du Naba transférer ailleurs pour quelques jours le marché. On prétend que si des

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rixes avaient lieu après le passage du fauve, il y aurait certainement décès.

TARIF DES DROITS SUR LES MARCHÉS TELS QU'ILS ÉTAIENT PERÇUS PAR LE MOGHO-NABA ET LES CHEFS DE CANTON AVANT L'OCCUPATION FRANÇAISE.

A Ouagadougou, deux collecteurs étaient chargés de percevoir les droits de place sur le marché de Ouagadougou :

C'était : 1° Le Kos-naba (de Kossé : vendre ; Naba : chef). Pour tout animal abattu et dont la viande était vendue sur la place du marché les droits étaient perçus par Kosnaba ;

2° Ragh'Naba (Ragha : marché ; Naba : chef). Les droits sur tous les autres produits étaient perçus par le Ragh'Naba.

Ces droits étaient les suivants :

Captifs. — 1.000 cauris par captif vendu ; droit acquitté par le vendeur.

Gros bétail. — a) Bœufs. Pour tout bœuf abattu : 250 cauris.

Vaches. Pour toute vache abattue : 250 cauris.

(La bosse de tout bœuf abattu était prélevée en sus et apportée le soir au Mogho-Naba.)

b) Anes. 200 cauris par âne vendu, payés par le vendeur.

c) Chevaux. Aucune taxe n'était perçue; les chevaux, animaux de luxe, recherchés seulement par les

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Communiqué par la Mission des Pères Blancs à Ouagadougou.

Le BALOUM-NABA à cheval au milieu de ses courtisans.

[Facing p. 80]

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Chefs et quelques « Rakangba « (hommes aisés) n'étaient pas exposés au marché.

d) Dam (dolo). Aucune imposition. La marchande était tenue d'apporter chaque fois qu'elle préparait du dolo, une gourde ou un canari au chef de son quartier (ministre de l'Empereur). C'est le « lenga » (c'est-à-dire le goûter).

Cette obligation explique sans doute pourquoi aucune taxe spéciale n'était payée par les marchandes de dolo.

Petit bétail. — Moutons, chèvres, aucune taxe spéciale.

Bandes de coton. — Droits acquittés suivant la grosseur des rouleaux de bandes, de 20 à 100 cauris.

Coton. — Prélevé en nature d'abord et paiement d'une taxe de 20 cauris après la vente.

Céréales et oléagineux. — Petit mil, sorgho, riz, arachides, mil germé pour dolo, haricots, pois.

Pour ces sortes de produits le Ragh'Naba et ses aides possédaient des mesures spéciales, sortes d'écuelles en bois pour prélèvement en nature. Toutes ces céréales étaient gardées ainsi que le mil germé pour la fabrication du dolo, par le Ragh'Naba, dans des greniers à la disposition de l'Empereur.

Habits confectionnés et marchands de perles, aucune taxe n'était prévue.

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Soumbala (kalgo, en Mossi) paiement en nature : une boule par marchand).

Autres condiments. — Aucun droit acquitté.

Beurre de karité. — Prélevé à l'aide de « soutga » (espèce de louches) le beurre de karité était presque exclusivement destiné à l'entretien des chevaux du Mogho-Naba.

Beignets et autres produits alimentaires cuits. — En réalité aucun droit n'était prévu pour ces sortes de produits mais les aides collecteurs exigeaient le paiement d'une taxe en nature pour leur propre nourriture ou celle des sámand'kamba serviteurs de le cour extérieure.

Sel. — Bœufs ou ânes chargés de sel : 300 cauris par animal.

Pioches, haches. — Chaque marchand remettait un daba ou une hache pour les travaux des champs des Nabas. Il n'était rien prélevé aux marchés suivants si tous les instruments n'avaient pu être vendus en un seul jour.

Bijouterie. — Aucune taxe n'était perçue ; les bijoutiers chargés de la fabrication des bracelets et autres bijoux de femmes des Nabas ainsi que divers objets de harnachement étaient exonérés de toute taxe.

Autres marchés. — Droits perçus pour les chefs de canton. Les tarifs étaient à peu près les mêmes que

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ceux payés au marché de Ouagadougou. Mais pour les marchés de faible importance les droits étaient acquittés en nature. Les produits vivriers servaient à la nourriture des collecteurs, captifs gourounsi pour la plupart, qui, à cause même de leur situation sociale, étaient célibataires et n'avaient donc personne pour préparer leur nourriture.

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CHAPITRE V

De l'esclavage au Mossi.

Dans les lignes qui vont suivre nous allons essayer de donner une idée de l'esclavage tel qu'il était en usage au pays Mossi avant la pénétration française.

Nous savons que depuis fort longtemps l'esclavage a été pratiqué au pays du Mogho-Naba, mais à cause de l'absence de toute date dans l'histoire des Mossi — transmise du reste de génération en génération par les griots des Nabas — il est malaisé de fixer l'époque de la pénétration de l'esclavage dans ce pays.

On sait cependant que les premiers esclaves des Mossi étaient tous d'origine « Boussanga ». Le canton de Garango, dans le cercle actuel de Tenkodogo, constituait le réservoir (lambagré, stock de coton, sens figuré) dans lequel les guerriers de l'Empereur et de ses vassaux allaient puiser par centaines de jeunes esclaves. C'est que Garango ne reconnaissait alors aucune autorité : il ne dépendait ni du Mogho-Naba de Ouagadougou ni du Roi de Tenkodogo. On rapporte à ce sujet que les guerriers des chefs Mossi surprenaient toujours les habitants de Garango le jour de marché. C'est pourquoi en souvenir de ces pillages, les marchés de Garango ne se tiennent que de 6 heures du matin à midi, même à l'heure actuelle.

Les Mossi entre eux se reconnaissaient pour des hommes libres. Nul, pas même le Naba, n'avait le

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droit de réduire un sujet moaga à l'esclavage. Les tatouages qu'il porte sur la figure permettent d'ailleurs de distinguer facilement le moaga de l'étranger.

Comme il y avait peu de relations entre les villages voisins il était difficile même aux « barreurs de routes » de vendre certains jeunes gens des régions limitrophes. Il ne faut pas en conclure qu'il n'y a pas eu tout de même à cette époque des captifs d'origine moaga. Les pillards quittaient Ouagadougou pour se rendre à cheval à Boussouma par exemple. Ces bandits avaient, toujours, pendues à la selle, de grosses outres dans lesquelles ils enfermaient les enfants ou les femmes surpris par eux dans la brousse à la cueillette des fruits. Les captifs dont ils s'emparaient par ce moyen étaient ensuite vendus loin de leur village natal. Bien entendu de tels procédés étaient sévèrement réprimés par les Nabas. Naba-Wobgo chassa de son territoire le chef de canton de Bilgotenga Warongo parce que ce dernier réduisait les Mossi à l'esclavage. Warongo dut se réfugier dans le Yatenga et ne revint dans son pays qu'à l'arrivée des Français.

Les esclaves ramenés de Garango étaient en partie conservés par l'Empereur, les autres partagés entre les guerriers. On n'avait jusqu'alors songé qu'à les utiliser pour les travaux des champs et les corvées domestiques.

Naba Baongo, vingt-sixième successeur d'Oubri, eut le premier l'idée de vendre des esclaves. Il s'exprima ainsi : « id kossi bazas kamba tib boude nan wa saï (littéralement : vendons ces chiens d'esclaves, peut-être

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qu'un jour n'en existera-t-il plus). C'est comme si l'Empereur avait pressenti la suppression de l'esclavage et la mise en liberté des captifs.

A l'heure actuelle on rencontre peu d'anciens captifs de race « Boussanga ». Ils ont dû sans doute rejoindre leurs villages depuis l'arrivée des Français. Leurs descendants (esclaves de case) (dogyiri) doivent porter maintenant les mêmes marques faciales que les Mossi.

Les seuls esclaves restés fidèles à leurs maîtres, ou plus exactement qui ont préféré habiter le Mossi après leur mise en liberté, sont presque tous des Gourounsi.

Les captifs Gourounsi

Des Sonrhaïs conduits par Alpha Haïnon, Gazeré et Babato ont envahi le pays gourounsi. Ils réduisirent un grand nombre de Gourounsi en esclavage ; les plus dégourdis étaient aussitôt transformés en soldats pour guerroyer contre leurs compatriotes, le reste était vendu ou échangé contre des chevaux. Le pays Mossi a été de tout temps un réservoir de chevaux. Aussi les Mossi se rendaient-ils à Léo troquer leurs bêtes contre des esclaves ou échangeaient tout simplement ceux-ci aux Sonrhaïs contre des cauris.

Les chefs de bande Sonrhaïs vivaient en bonnes relations avec l'Empereur des Mossi, Naba Sanum. C'est ainsi qu'ils épargnèrent des chefs de villages Gourounsi qui étaient venus se mettre sous la protection du Mogho-Naba.

Boukary-koutou, futur Naba Wobgo, avait l'es-

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time et l'amitié des Sonrhaïs qu'il aidait à combattre les Gourounsi à la condition de garder une bonne partie du butin et des esclaves. Nous avons vu que le nombre considérable de Gourounsi qu'il emmena avec lui à Ouagadougou a puissamment contribué à sa nomination comme Empereur des Mossi.

Sous le règne des Naba Koutou, Sanum, Wobgo, il y avait, attenant aux marchés ordinaires de Ouagadougou et des grands centres, des marchés spéciaux pour la vente des esclaves. Un droit de 1.000 cauris était perçu au profit des Nabas pour tout captif vendu sans distinction de sexe.

Lorsque les propriétaires désiraient vendre leurs esclaves, ils leur rasaient d'abord la tête et c'est seulement quand les cheveux commençaient à repousser qu'on les amenait au marché. La coupe des cheveux dérive d'une croyance superstitieuse dans le Mossi.

Suivant que le point qui termine les cheveux est au milieu de la tête, sur le front ou situé près des oreilles, l'interprétation est différente : l'esclave est considéré comme un être dangereux, porte-bonheur ou porte-malheur dans une famille.

Nous n'entrerons pas dans des détails maintenant, ces croyances devant faire l'objet d'une étude spéciale.

Nous distinguerons plusieurs sortes de captifs :

1° Le Yemdaogo proprement dit d'origine étrangère (Boussanga et Gourounsi) acheté ou pris à la guerre) ;

2° Les « Daporé ou Dapobi » descendants d'esclaves (esclaves de case) ;

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3° Les « Bengaré » anciens esclaves des peulhs qui ont renié leurs maîtres pour se soumettre à la seule autorité du Mogho-Naba ;

4° Les Kamboiensé.

Les différentes variétés de captifs

Daporé (habitants derrière la maison).

a) *Daporé du Mogho-Naba.* — Il y a à Ouagadougou un quartier qu'on appelle Dapoya. Les habitants de ce quartier sont des « Dapobi ». On les prend et ils se prennent eux-mêmes à tort pour des captifs. D'origine Kibissi (on sait que les Kibissi, Ninissi et Gourounsi ont primitivement occupé l'actuel territoire Mossi) ils sont venus d'eux-mêmes chez Obri-Bangrenaba (chef de Bangré de Oubri) qui les présenta à l'Empereur. On n'a pu nous dire sous le règne de quel Naba ils sont venus. Le Mogho-Naba les installa d'abord à Wavoussé et ensuite derrière sa maison pour en être les gardiens en même temps qu'il les chargeait de l'exécution des hautes œuvres.

Ce sont des captifs volontaires. Ils ne sont donc pas des « yemsé » dans l'acception complète du mot, puisqu'ils n'ont été ni achetés, ni vendus et l'Empereur, s'il ne leur accordait pas les mêmes droits qu'à ses propres sujets, parce qu'étrangers, ne leur fit aucun mal. Les « dapobi » ne pouvaient pas contracter une union valable avec une fille d'origine Mossi. Ils devaient se contenter des captives et c'est peut-être la raison pour laquelle on les considère comme des captifs, puisque les enfants issus de ces unions « dog,

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yiri » (nés à la maison) sont ce qui constitue la « catégorie des esclaves de case ».

b) *Daporé de Kamsaoughin et Daporé des chefs de canton.* — A côté des « Dapobi » d'origine étrangère à qui nous venons de faire allusion, il y a les véritables « Dapobi » qui sont des captifs pris soit à la guerre, soit achetés. Les premiers sont les esclaves du Mogho-Naba confiés au Kamsaougho Naba, chef eunuque, chargé du gardiennage d'une partie du sérail de l'Empereur. Les « Dapobi » des chefs de canton « Kombemba » sont de même origine. Tandis que le Mogho-Naba ne pouvait vendre les « Dapobi » d'origine Kibissi, l'Empereur et les Chefs de canton pouvaient disposer librement des seconds ; ils étaient vendus pour la moindre faute commise et leurs femmes et enfants suivaient leur sort ou étaient confiés à d'autres captifs méritants.

Captifs de la couronne

Les Bangarés.

Il s'agit de captifs peulhs qui se sont affranchis peu à peu de l'autorité de leurs maîtres et qui sont venus se soumettre volontairement à celle du Mogho-Naba.

On appelle un troupeau de bœufs « nab'bangaré ». C'est de là que vient probablement le mot « Bangaré » (troupeau) pour désigner cette catégorie d'esclaves. Mais les « Bangarés » ne se composent pas uniquement d'anciens esclaves peuhls, il y a aussi des personnes libres qui ont commis quelque lourde faute dans leur

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village d'origine et qui craignant des représailles sont venues grossir le « troupeau ».

Une fois présentés au Mogho-Naba ils étaient considérés désormais comme des esclaves et dès lors, hors de toute atteinte.

Les principaux villages « Bangaré » connus généralement sous le nom de « villages indépendants » sont : Kaïbo (province du Gounga) ; Manghin, Zaanga (canton de Zorgongo), Zaon'pighin, Payaobtinga (canton de Boudry) ; Nabasnoghin (canton de Nedogo) Bangar'Nabilin (canton de Zorgo) ; Gandaogo (canton de Zoungou) ; Boumintoré, Sidtenga, Mandié, Bougoumbarga, etc., etc...

L'Empereur était libre de puiser dans ces « troupeaux » chaque fois que le besoin s'en faisait sentir. Il vendait ou faisait castrer comme eunuques les « Bangaré » qui se rendaient coupables de quelque faute grave ou qui lui étaient signalés comme des individus dangereux semant le désordre dans le village ou se livrant à des pillages.

Les « Bangaré » se marient entre eux, aucun Mossi libre ne consentant à leur donner sa fille. Cela repose uniquement sur ce fait que si l'Empereur se décidait à vendre le « Bangaré », sa famille suivait le même sort que lui. L'intervention du père de la conjointe devenait d'autant plus inopérante qu'elle pouvait être pour lui une cause d'insécurité. Et on comprend sans peine que personne ne tient dans ces conditions à engager l'avenir de sa fille.

Bangaré-Naba. — Les chefs des villages Bangaré

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sont nommés par le Mogho-Naba. Ces villages échappent entièrement au contrôle des chefs de canton dans le territoire desquels ils sont placés. Les habitants ne devaient aucune redevance au Kombéré; à plus forte raison ce dernier ne pouvait exiger d'eux aucune prestation, comme de participer par exemple à la culture de ses champs ou à le réfection des toits de sa maison. Ils ne reconnaissent pour chef que le Mogho-Naba.

Kamboinsé. — Venus de l'ouest sous le règne de Naba Waraga (19e successeur d'Oubry). Les Kamboinsé véritables ne sont pas des Mossi. Comme les « Dapobi » du quartier Dapoya, les Kamboinsé sont venus avec des fusils — leur chef avait même un siège — se soumettre à l'autorité du Mogho-Naba. Gambaré, c'est ainsi que se nommait leur chef, dit à l'Empereur qu'ils étaient venus s'offrir comme soldats et esclaves pour aider le Mogho-Naba à pacifier son territoire. Les Kamboinsé habitent un quartier de la ville derrière la mission catholique à droite de la route de Pô.

Jaloux de se voir concurrencer par des étrangers, les artilleurs du Mogho-Naba firent aussi nommer un chef qui prit le nom de Kamboin-Naba. Ils sont cependant différents des premiers et habitent à une douzaine de kilomètres de Ouagadougou dans les villages de Kamboinsé et de Wobrigré.

Mais tandis que les premiers sont des esclaves volontaires, les autres sont de vrais captifs capturés sur les divers champs de bataille ou achetés par l'Empereur.

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Mise en gage des captifs. — Les captifs pouvaient servir au paiement des dettes contractées. Il convient de remarquer que le privilège de posséder des captifs ne revenait pas uniquement à l'Empereur et à ses vassaux et que tout « Moaga » dakangré (homme aisé) pouvait en posséder.

Si un père de famille venait à mourir en laissant des dettes on vendait quelques captifs pour payer celles-ci. Mais si le créancier désirait des captifs on mettait ces derniers en adjudication et on les prisait tout comme s'il s'agissait d'animaux.

De même on échangeait librement les captifs contre des chevaux, des boubous et même des charges de kolas.

Les captifs maltraités par leurs maîtres, lorsque ceux-ci n'appartenaient pas à la noblesse, pouvaient venir se confier au Naba. Dans ce cas ils cessaient d'appartenir à leur véritable propriétaire. D'autre part quand un Moaga se permettait de tuer un captif il devait verser immédiatement 100.000 cauris à son chef de canton, comme prix du sang.

D'une façon générale les captifs ramenés comme butin de guerre étaient aussitôt vendus à des Haoussas, Yarcés qui eux-mêmes les revendaient aux Achantis contre des kolas ou les échangeaient à Tombouctou contre des barres de sel. Bien qu'on leur fît faire maints détours pour qu'ils ne sachent plus quel chemin prendre pour regagner leurs foyers, un certain nombre d'entre eux arrivaient tout de même à s'échapper.

Les Nabas faisaient des jeunes « Yemdado » des soronés ou des palefreniers, de même qu'ils pouvaient

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prendre comme épouses les jeunes et belles « Yempoksé ».

Ventes d'hommes libres. — L'Empereur des Mossi et les vassaux ne vendaient pas leurs sujets. Les individus dangereux étaient tout simplement mis à mort à moins que pour éviter la peine capitale les coupables ne se réfugiassent dans un « bangaré », comme il a été dit ci-dessus. On envoyait aussi certains d'entre eux à l'Empereur pour en faire des eunuques.

Les marques faciales des Mossi permettaient de les distinguer des autres races indigènes voisines. Mais si par accident ou pressé par le besoin un Naba vendait un homme libre qui était réclamé par ses parents, le chef était tenu de racheter l'esclave ou d'indemniser les parents de celui-ci. Nous avons déjà dit plus haut dans quelles conditions un chef de canton a été renvoyé du Mossi par l'Empereur pour avoir vendu des Mossi.

Ventes déguisées des femmes et d'enfants. — Dans le chapitre traitant du mariage au Mossi nous démontrerons que l'indigène moaga n'exigeait pas de dot précisément parce qu'il n'entendait pas vendre sa fille. Cette règle n'est sans doute pas sans exception. Nous exposerons, en effet, que le non-paiement d'une dette, l'état d'ébriété, un service reçu étaient autant de raisons pour engager la vie d'une fille, celle-ci quelquefois petite n'ayant même pas conscience du sort qui lui était réservé. Dans tous les cas elle n'a pas d'avis à exprimer, n'étant même pas consultée. Pendant les disettes — qui sévissent presque réguliè-

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rement depuis quelques années — un petit panier de mil reçu suffit pour qu'un père de famille promette sa fille. De même, — c'est très regrettable de le dire, — un grand nombre de filles sont engagées pour des sommes insignifiantes au moment du paiement de l'impôt de capitation.

Droits de l'esclave. — Considéré comme un être inférieur le « Yemdaogo » (esclave) n'a pas de droits bien définis. Il est soumis à toutes les corvées domestiques et à une obéissance passive vis-à-vis de son maître et des membres de la famille de celui-ci. Mais en dehors de ses obligations impérieuses il a le droit de se livrer à certaines cultures personnelles, à quelque artisanat ou à l'élevage du bétail dont le produit constitue sa fortune personnelle. La gestion de celle-ci lui est entièrement laissée et si son maître contracte des dettes, il se doit de les rembourser dans les délais fixés.

Le rachat de l'esclavage. — Comme il a été dit dans le paragraphe précédent, l'esclave peut par son travail se constituer une fortune personnelle. Ainsi en versant une somme de 100.000 cauris à son maître il pouvait se rendre libre. Il pouvait dès lors soit retourner dans son village natal, soit se fixer dans le village de son maître. Des captifs ont pu par leur travail non seulement se racheter, mais aussi devenir eux-mêmes propriétaires d'esclaves.

Cependant si les esclaves contractent mariage avec des captives données par leurs maîtres et deviennent pères de famille, ils ne quittent généralement plus

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ceux-ci. On a alors pour eux certains égards, et ils comptent dans la famille. Il demeure entendu qu'ils n'ont pas le droit de disposer de leurs enfants qui sont des « dogyiri » (esclaves de case).

Travail non rémunéré dans ses différentes formes. — A l'exclusion des corvées et autres obligations coutumières auxquelles les sujets Mossi sont astreïnts, vis-à-vis de leurs Naba, — nous avons décrit ces corvées dans un chapitre spécial — on peut dire que d'une manière générale aucun travail, même celui fait par des captifs, n'est exigé sans rémunération. Ici, dans un centre particulièrement agricole, il ne saurait être question de rémunération en argent comme dans les entreprises privées ou officielles, où les clauses du contrat d'engagement règlent les droits et les devoirs de l'employeur vis-à-vis de l'employé. Dans le domaine purement indigène la rémunération d'un travail repose uniquement sur l'obligation pour l'employeur de nourrir l'employé.

En somme quelles sont les obligations du Moaga ?

1° Culture des champs familiaux ;

2° Construction et réfection des cases et toitures ;

3° Travaux personnels : vannerie, cordonnerie, tissage de bandes de coton, travaux de couture, poterie, etc., etc.

Pour la culture des champs familiaux aussi bien que pour la construction et la réfection des cases d'habitation, le chef de famille est tenu pendant la durée des travaux de fournir à manger aux travailleurs. Nous verrons dans un autre chapitre que lorsque les

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membres de la famille ne pouvaient suffire seuls à la tâche, on faisait appel à d'autres jeunes gens du village. Dans ce cas, on tuait des bêtes, on préparait du dolo (bière de mil) et du sagbo (bouillie de mil) ou du benga (haricots).

D'autre part si les « Yemdado » étaient astreints à de durs travaux il convient de dire qu'ils étaient très bien nourris et qu'ils recevaient même une double ration.

Les captifs faisaient-ils partie de la succession ? — Au Mossi les femmes font partie de la succession au même titre que les autres biens du défunt. Il en est de même des captifs (yemsé) ou dogyiri (esclaves de case) qui font partie intégrante de la succession. Ils constituent un patrimoine transmissible de père en fils dans l'ordre successoral prévu par la coutume. Ils demeurent la propriété exclusive de l'héritier légitime et ne suivent pas le même sort de partage que les femmes du défunt.

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CHAPITRE VI

Djiba-Naba prince héritier de l'Empire Mossi.

Préliminaire

En écrivant sur ce sujet nous n'avons pas cherché à savoir si le canton de Djiba était autrefois indépendant ou s'il était sous l'administration directe du Mogho-Naba.

Les événements qui ont bouleversé le monde en 1914 ont amené l'incorporation du Djiba-Naba d'alors, frère du Naba Kom, Mogho-Naba actuel, et on dut en confier l'intérim à un autre frère de l'Empereur. L'administration de l'intérimaire fut en bien des points critiquable; aussi lorsqu'il fallut envoyer le Djiba-Naba revenu du front à Doulougou remplacer un fils de Naba Wobgo décédé, le Mogho-Naba conserva, pendant que son fils aîné revenu de Tunis et nommé Chef de Djiba, faisait son service militaire à Salonique, l'administration directe du canton. On peut donc dire que le canton de Djiba était, avant de devenir l'apanage du fils aîné de Naba Zombré, placé sous l'autorité de ce dernier.

1° C'est du temps de Naba Zombré, vingt-troisième Mogho-Naba, que date la désignation du premier fils de l'Empereur au commandement du canton de Djiba. Naba Zombré après Naba Niandeffo est un de ceux qui resta longtemps au trône. Il régna en effet soixante ans.

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Une vieille tradition veut que, lorsque l'Empereur a trente ans de règne, il se rende à Oubritenga pour y célébrer le Zom'bika (litt. monter sur le bika).

Bika. — Lorsque l'Empereur se rend à Oubritenga, on fait creuser une fosse assez spacieuse dans laquelle on met toutes sortes de provisions de bouche, puis on introduit parmi elles un homme vivant. Des perches ferment l'ouverture du sépulcre où gît l'homme étouffé. On recouvre le tout de terre. On élève un guéré (trône) sur la tombe. C'est là que l'Empereur reçoit, sans grande cérémonie, ses fidèles pendant son séjour à Oubritenga. Dans la pratique, l'Empereur est considéré comme mort et ressuscité... Aussi lorsqu'après une absence qui peut durer des années, il revient à Ouagadougou la population lui réserve-t-elle un accueil on ne peut plus chaleureux, tandis qu'il est lui-même soumis à toutes les obligations coutumières comme aux premiers jours de son avènement.

Cette coutume est naturellement appelée à disparaître. En tout cas si on était obligé de la pratiquer de nos jours, l'homme serait vraisemblablement remplacé par un coq.

Donc Naba Zombré alla à Oubritenga monter sur le « Bika » et y séjourna trois ans. Son fils aîné faisait son intérim à Ouagadougou et ne manqua pas d'acquérir quelque gloire et l'estime de la population.

Quand son père revint il fallut bien donner à ce prince qui avait déjà goûté la « joie » de régner et acquis de sérieuses qualités au commandement, un poste de choix. Djiba fut choisi. A dater de cette

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époque dès que le premier fils du Mogho-Naba atteint l'âge de raison il est nommé Djiba-Naba et l'on comprend aisément que Naba Kom intronisé assez jeune ait été un moment très inquiet de l'absence de ses deux enfants envoyés au Sénégal puis en Tunisie.

La nomination de Djiba-Naba diffère très peu de celle des autres chefs de canton, mais ce Naba est soumis à certaines obligations que nous allons essayer de retracer ci-après :

Avant sa nomination

Avant d'être nommé, le prince héritier de l'Empire Mossi se rend d'abord au village de Zango où il doit séjourner une semaine. Il doit apporter avec lui : un mouton, un coq blanc, un bœuf qu'il remet au Zango-Naba pour être offerts au « tenpelem » (à la terre) afin de lui donner santé, bonheur, etc... Il remet en outre une barre de sel destinée à être distribuée aux vieilles femmes.

De passage à Nonsin, il donne un mouton, un coq blanc et du sel pour les mêmes offrandes.

Le septième jour il revient à Ouagadougou et descend à Bilbalogo en principe chez le Kam-Naba (chef des jeunes gens) dont il devient l'hôte. Le Mogho-Naba prévient ses ministres et on fixe le jour de la nomination.

Les formalités d'usage sont à peu de choses près celles exigées pour la nomination des chefs de canton (Kombemba).

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Après la nomination

Le lendemain de sa nomination, le Djiba-Naba vient rendre visite à son père; on pose alors un « nagpouré » (coussin) près d'un hangar situé dans la cour de l'Empereur au pied d'un piquet spécial appelé « zandaogo du Djiba-Naba ». Le Djiba-Naba devient l'hôte du Gounga-Naba dans le quartier duquel il descendra désormais chaque fois qu'il viendra à Ouagadougou (à cause de l'inimitié qui existe entre l'Empereur et ses frères, le Djiba-Naba descend actuellement à Kamsaoghin, non loin de la maison de son père).

Il lui reste à rendre visite aux Ministres de son père. A tout seigneur, tout honneur; c'est au Ouidi-Naba, premier ministre qu'il doit sa première visite. Dès qu'il est prévenu de l'arrivée du Djiba-Naba celui-ci lui fait offrir : un mouton, du dam (dolo), des gouré (colas).

Le prince héritier se rend ensuite chez le Larrhallé-Naba qui doit lui faire les mêmes cadeaux et de là chez le Kamsogo-Naba, chef eunuque, où les mêmes honneurs lui sont rendus et où il reçoit également un mouton, du dolo et des colas.

Il rend ensuite visite aux Gounga-Naba, Poé-Naba, Samandé-Naba, en enfin au Baloum-Naba où il reçoit de nombreux présents.

Le troisième jour il finit ses visites en allant voir l'Imam représentant de l'Islam à Ouagadougou. Là on lui présente de l'eau de farine dans laquelle on a mis du miel. On lui offre aussi des colas.

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On remarquera que la calebasse d'eau de farine sur laquelle flottera nécessairement un peu de beurre de karité est très en honneur en pays Mossi et ce n'est ni saluer ni recevoir comme il convient un étranger que de lui offrir à son arrivée de l'eau pure.

Le quatrième ou le cinquième jour, le Djiba-Naba se rend à Zoanghna (village situé à 2 ou 3 kilomètres derrière les bâtiments du Gouvernement) et il remet un mouton, un bœuf, destinés à servir d'offrandes à la « chose sacrée » des aïeux, pour le protéger contre les esprits malfaisants et les mauvaises gens. Il ne passe pas la nuit dans ce village et revient dès que le sacrifice est consommé.

Quelques jours plus tard on décide d'aller installer le nouveau Naba dans ses états. C'est tout un cortège de soronés, de tambours, de suivants, etc... C'est aussi une sorte de pèlerinage que le Djiba-Naba est tenu d'effectuer. C'est ce que nous allons résumer succinctement.

L'itinéraire emprunté est le suivant :

Le Djiba-Naba se rend d'abord à Badnogo et y couche. Le lendemain il va à Samba ; là on lui offre de l'eau de farine et, de son côté, il donne du sel pour être distribué aux vieilles femmes du village.

On se demandera sans doute pourquoi ces offres de sel aux vieilles femmes et non au reste de la population. Les Mossi appellent les vieilles des « nough' pouk ramba » c'est-à-dire des personnes qui, tout en vous souhaitant des bénédictions, tapent les deux mains comme si une puissance supérieure devait entendre leurs prières et les exaucer.

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Le lendemain il va à Tensobitenga et y séjourne trois jours. On lui prépare du dolo, on lui donne un bœuf pour ses suivants, une femme pour lui-même. A Nakamtenga où il se rend ensuite, le chef de ce village le rencontre avec un mouton et de nombreux paniers et cuvettes de gâteau de mil (sagbo).

Il n'y passe pas la nuit et se rend à Koubri (c'est le village où les eunuques subissaient autrefois la rude opération de la castration[1]); le chef de canton va à sa rencontre, l'amène dans sa maison, le fait asseoir à ses côtés et déclare à la population qu'il vient de recevoir la visite de son fils (Koubri-Naba est descendant des Mogho-Naba).

Il offre ensuite au Prince héritier un bœuf, beau-

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1. Les Eunuques. — Les brigands, les voleurs, les assassins, les captifs ou les soronés (serviteurs) convaincus d'adultère avec une femme de la noblesse, étaient seuls envoyés à Koubri, canton dans le cercle de Ouagadougou), pour subir l'opération de la castration. Celle-ci consistait, au début, dans l'extraction des glandes testiculaires jusqu'au moment où un eunuque réussit, on ne sait trop comment, à abuser de certaines femmes dont la garde lui était confiée. Dès lors l'ablation totale de la verge parut un moyen efficace, mais pour faciliter l'évacuation des urines on introduit dans l'orifice de la verge une douille de cartouche en cuivre.

Dès que la personne a subi l'opération elle s'évanouit, on profite de son état pour préparer une sorte de mixture dont la composition ne nous est pas connue. Sitôt que le malade recouvre ses sens il est pris d'une soif ardente et absorbe d'un trait la drogue qui a pour effet, dit-on, d'abêtir le nouvel eunuque au point de le rendre incapable de vengeance, eût-il même des armes à sa portée.

C'est après guérison complète que l'opéré est envoyé au Mogho-Naba. Celui-ci le charge de la surveillance d'un harem ou du gardiennage d'une sépulture royale.

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coup de dolo, puis avant de le quitter, le Djiba-Naba a libre accès dans la maison du chef où il prend pour femme la première fille pubère qu'il rencontrera sur son passage. Le séjour à Koubri était de sept jours, mais il pouvait être ramené à deux ou trois jours en raison des lourdes dépenses qu'occasionne le passage d'un prince de l'importance du Djiba-Naba, à l'heure actuelle surtout où les chefs de canton n'ont plus leur prestige d'autrefois.

Le Djiba-Naba continue sur Kombissiri où il doit être à la charge du chef de ce canton. Pendant une semaine, indépendamment de la nourriture qui doit être copieuse, et le dolo abondant, le prince héritier de l'Empire Mossi reçoit un bœuf, un mouton et avant le départ pour Doulougou, une femme.

Le chef de ce dernier canton dont il devient l'hôte pendant une semaine lui donne également du dolo, un mouton, un bœuf, un boubou et enfin une femme.

A Bagamini où il se rend ensuite il recevra du chef de ce canton, un bœuf, une femme, un carquois et des flèches avec ces paroles significatives « ad locko la pema taon widi, laf ra taon neb'yé ti ya f'ba yemsé (littéralement : prends ces flèches pour tirer sur les chevaux et non sur les hommes car ces derniers sont les esclaves de ton père et le pays est aussi à lui par conséquent à toi).

Sept jours après il quitte Bagamini pour se rendre à Ipelsé où il reçoit le même chaleureux accueil ; il emportera à son départ un bœuf et une femme.

Le séjour à Ipelsé est aussi de sept jours ; de passage à Bedgo chez le chef peulh, le Djiba-Naba choi-

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sit lui-même dans le troupeau de bœufs qui lui sera obligatoirement présenté, le meilleur taureau et prendra dans la maison de ce chef une jeune fille qui deviendra sa propriété. Il continue sur Guirgo où il devient l'hôte du chef de canton pendant une semaine entière. Avant son départ il recevra de ce dernier, un bœuf, un boubou et une femme.

Les habitants du village de Kakamsé où Djiba-Naba ne sera que de passage lui apporteront beaucoup de gâteau de mil (sagbo) et un cadeau dont le libre choix leur est laissé (mouton, chèvre, bœuf, cauris, dolo, etc...).

Le prince héritier continue sur Kondrin et y demeure trois jours. Outre le sagho et le dam, le chef de Kondrin est tenu de lui offrir avant son départ, un bœuf et une femme.

Il se rend ensuite à Béré. Le chef de Béré appelé « Rimbissi kasma » (l'aîné des descendants des Mogho-Naba) donnera au Djiba-Naba, un bœuf, un boubou et une femme et l'hébergera pendant une semaine entière.

Le septième jour dans la nuit, les notables du canton de Djiba viennent à Béré chercher le Naba. Il se laisse emmener n'ayant pour tout compagnon qu'un serviteur et un palefrenier et laissant là toute l'escorte de Ouagadougou qui devra le rejoindre seulement le lendemain matin [1].

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1. Pourquoi ce départ nuitamment et cette sorte d'évasion ? Sur la route qui mène dans ses états le Djiba doit passer sous un arbre dont il devra, étant à cheval, pouvoir toucher les branchages. Tout son avenir en dépend. C'est de ce jour que

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Au préalable, on a eu soin de chercher une jolie demeure susceptible de loger le prince, fils aîné de l'Empereur. A cet effet on choisit une maison bien bâtie et assez grande appartenant à un « dakangré » (homme aisé) d'un village et l'on y conduit Son Altesse. Dès que le Djiba-Naba descend de cheval et s'avance son hôte obligé quitte sa concession pour aller demander l'hospitalité à un de ses voisins ; il a soin de réunir sa fortune ; argent (liguidi) et femmes dans une partie de la maison ; le reste devient désormais la maison du Naba. En effet, peu après l'installation la maison est agrandie, et quelques cases brisées pour faire place à des constructions plus somptueuses.

L'hôte ainsi congédié reçoit dès que le Djiba-Naba est installé quelques cadeaux et des femmes, sorte d'indemnité de déguerpissement et on lui construit à quelques centaines de mètres plus loin une maison convenable.

Pendant plusieurs jours c'est la fête dans le canton de Djiba ; tous les notables et chefs de village, voire les chefs de canton les plus proches, qui n'ont pas eu la joie de recevoir le prince héritier, viennent saluer le nouveau Naba et lui apporter des cadeaux importants.

L'escorte de Ouagadougou est ensuite renvoyée

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le prince aura longue vie et remplacera son père. En effet cet « arbre » a un don magique et ses branchages s'éloigneront d'eux-mêmes au passage du Djiba-Naba si celui-ci, bien que premier fils de l'Empereur, n'est pas le successeur désigné par « Wendé » (Dieu).

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avec de nombreux cadeaux. Les plus importants « Nayirdamba » reçoivent des femmes et des habits.

On a pu remarquer qu'indépendamment des femmes que le Djiba-Naba a pu recevoir avant sa nomination, il s'est constitué pendant son voyage une sorte de sérail; c'est une partie de ces femmes qu'il donnera à ses suivants, se réservant les plus jolies.

Autrefois Boulsa-Naba, Boussouma-Naba, Konkisitenga-Naba et tous ceux qui étaient en quelque sorte « Gouverneurs » indépendants de leurs États n'apportaient pas leur tribut annuel au Mogho-Naba sans envoyer des cadeaux à son fils aîné à Djiba.

De même les chefs de canton étaient tenus de faire au Djiba-Naba à peu près les mêmes cadeaux annuels qu'à son père.

A noter aussi que les chefs qui se brouillaient avec le Mogho-Naba et que celui-ci se proposait de mettre à mort, pouvaient obtenir facilement le pardon en achetant l'amitié du Djiba-Naba, l'Empereur ne voulant pas après tout mécontenter son fils en faisant périr un de ses intimes.

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CHAPITRE VII

Le salut mossi. — Le respect de la maison des Nabas. La question du bonnet. — Hiérarchie entre chefs. Une légende sur l'origine de la chefferie Mossie.

SALUT DES NABAS. — (NAB'POUSGHO)

Les « Kombemba » (chefs de canton), les Nayir-damba (Ministres et autres personnages de la cour), sont tenus, lorsqu'il vont rendre visite au Mogho-Naba, d'enlever leur bonnet en arrivant sur le seuil de la porte. Ils remettent alors leur bonnet à leurs soronés (serviteurs) ou suivants. S'ils ne sont pas venus à cheval, ils doivent confier leurs « néoda » (chaussures) à un page et marcher pieds nus. En un mot ils se débarrassent de tout ce qui pourrait gêner l'exécution du salut si compliqué des Mossi.

Nous empruntons au R.-P. MANGIN les passages suivants sur la façon de saluer des Mossi.

I. — SALUT MOSSI

« Le « Moaga » dépose tout, charge, chapeau, bonnet, « sabre, retire ses savates, s'asseoit à terre ; replie « légèrement ses jambes, porte le buste en avant, les « coudes appuyés à terre et aussi écartés que possible « l'un de l'autre, les avant-bras repliés devant la « poitrine et les deux mains à demi fermées, le pouce « levé en l'air, frappant ensemble la terre trois ou

1: Delobsom FA28 Mossi

« quatre fois puis l'individu se relève un peu et frotte « ensemble la paume de ses deux mains. Jamais il ne « regarde en face celui qu'il veut saluer, mais les yeux « légèrement baissés. C'est vraiment une attitude « très humiliée, surtout quand le chef ainsi salué reste « debout, ou se trouve à cheval et dominant son su- « bordonné, daigne à peine lui accorder un regard.

« Les femmes, au lieu de frapper la terre avec les « avant-bras, la frappent avec les coudes et relèvent, « à hauteur des épaules, les mains ouvertes et les « doigts allongés.

« Le grand salut[1], très rarement employé d'ailleurs, « consiste, après le salut ordinaire, à se retourner, à « prendre de la poussière avec ses deux mains et à « s'en couvrir le front puis à revenir saluer son inter- « locuteur.

« Deux indigènes qui se connaissent, se croisent-ils, « dans un chemin, le plus jeune s'accroupit à peine « et commence le salut auquel l'autre répond en s'ac- « croupissant à son tour. S'ils portent des charges, « ils les déposent à terre, puis se saluent. Ils ne sont « jamais pressés. Les serviteurs et les femmes passant « devant un chef, s'inclinent légèrement et joignent « les mains devant la poitrine. Si compliqué que soit « le salut mossi, les indigènes le font avec grâce et « aisance ; ils y sont habitués dès leur plus jeune

1. Là le R. P. Mangin a oublié de donner une petite explication, c'est que ce salut n'a lieu que lorsque le chef ou le personnage salué a donné une femme, un boubou ou un cadeau à la personne qui salue. Du reste toutes les personnes présentes se couvrent le front de poussière.

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« âge, et en tout cas ne sont pas alors gauches et « empruntés comme lorsqu'ils s'essaient à ébaucher « le salut militaire. »

II. — Le respect de la maison des Nabas

Le « Kombéré » est maître absolu sur son territoire. Ses sujets doivent lui témoigner la même déférence que celle qu'il témoigne lui-même au Mogho-Naba.

Cependant, bien que n'appartenant pas à la noblesse, un Ministre de l'Empereur n'ôtera pas son bonnet pour répondre au salut d'un Kombéré. Au contraire celui-ci doit s'humilier, s'effacer devant lui comme chez le Mogho-Naba.

Il est formellement défendu au Nabiga (fils de Naba) et aux « Nakomsé » (descendants des Nabas) et qui plus est, au Moaga vulgaire, de se chausser et de porter le bonnet dans la cour du Naba — cette règle ne souffre d'exception que lorsque le sujet est converti aux principes de l'islamisme, mais même dans ce cas il abandonne à la porte ses chaussures; il garde seulement son bonnet ou le turban. Il ne leur est permis de reprendre les savates et de remettre la coiffure que lorsqu'ils se trouvent à plus de 300 mètres de la maison du Naba et parfois même, dans les centres où la coutume est suivie rigoureusement, lorsqu'ils sont hors de la vue du Naba.

Toute infraction à la règle était sévèrement punie de plusieurs coups de corde, sans préjudice de la confiscation des biens par les samand'kamba du Naba,

1: Delobsom FA28 Mossi

lorsque le délinquant n'appartenait pas à la noblesse, c'est-à-dire n'était ni Nabiga ni Nakombga.

Il n'est peut-être pas sans intérêt de dire que la chéchia, étant à l'origine un des insignes de la chefferie, le port en était défendu au Nabiga et à plus forte raison au « talga » (Moaga vulgaire). Aujourd'hui elle est portée par les hommes et les jeunes gens, la multiplication et l'installation des comptoirs européens ayant répandu cet article autrefois très rare.

Serrement de mains. — Il est rare de voir un Naba tendre la main à un de ces sujets, et plus particulièrement à ses frères ou à ses confrères (Nakomsé).

Cet interdit repose sur deux fondements : 1° Le Naba doit tenir une distance entre lui et ses administrés, ce qui est très normal ; 2° une croyance superstitieuse admet que les individus mal intentionnés à l'égard du chef s'enduisent la main de poudres magiques, qui ont pour effet de provoquer des enflures susceptibles de se transformer en de véritables abcès.

Ainsi donc le Mogho-Naba ne voit aucun inconvénient à serrer la main d'un « bambara » ou d'un « Djerma » mais s'étonnera qu'un indigène d'origine « moaga » — fût-il même fonctionnaire —, lui tende la main.

Dès qu'ils atteignent un âge raisonnable, les enfants des Nabas ne peuvent plus jouer avec leur « papa », *à fortiori* lui serrer la main. Ils sont obligés de se plier à la règle générale qui consiste à faire des « kantissé » (salut mossi).

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A l'heure actuelle les Nabas (Kombemba) et Nayiridamba (Ministres de l'Empereur) comprennent l'inutilité de pareilles marques de méfiance; aussi, s'ils continuent à se montrer moins familiers avec leurs parents (frères, oncles et fils — parce qu'ils les considèrent comme des concurrents), ils tendent les premiers la main aux autres Mossi de quelque condition et aux étrangers.

Les réceptions chez les Nabas. — 1° *Chez le Mogho-Naba.* — Jusqu'à présent et malgré près de trente-cinq ans d'occupation française, la façon de recevoir chez l'Empereur, — qui échoit, empressons-nous de le dire, à ses serviteurs — a très peu varié. — Les fonctionnaires de l'administration et du commerce originaires du pays sont encore traités sur le même pied que leurs compatriotes moins évolués. Non seulement ils sont tenus de faire le « kantissé » (salut mossi) tel qu'il est décrit par le R. P. Mangin, mais encore ils doivent après cela s'asseoir par terre, ce qui n'est guère commode pour des costumes européens. Les étrangers (Bambaras, Djermas, voire même les Gourounsi) reçoivent des sièges : c'est que les soronés ne reconnaissent pas en eux des compatriotes.

2° *Chez les Ministres.* — Tous les Ministres de l'Empereur possèdent à l'heure actuelle des maisons très confortables et de magnifiques salons avec fauteuils « morris » et chaises pliantes. Ces sièges sont offerts

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avec empressement aux visiteurs de quelque considération tandis que des bancs mesurant de 2 à 3 mètres de longueur sont réservés aux « petits messieurs » (boys, cuisiniers, gardes de cercle, notables, etc...).

3° *Chez les Kombemba.* — Aux visiteurs de marque sont toujours réservés des bancs ou à défaut des nattes, Quelques-uns d'entre eux possèdent même quelques chaises ordinaires et une à deux chaises pliantes.

IV. — Les hiérarchies entre Ministres et fonctionnaires de la Cour du Roi des Mossi

1° — *Les Hiérarchies.*

Il existe une sorte de hiérarchie entre Nabas. Tel chef doit se décoiffer pour saluer tel autre parce qu'il est le « petit frère » (Yaoua) ou parce qu'il se trouve en présence d'un chef plus considéré que lui (par exemple les petits « Dima ») (petits rois).

Il est excessivement difficile d'établir la hiérarchie qui existe entre les Kombemba en raison même de leur nombre, mais ils la respectent encore aujourd'hui ; il serait malaisé d'entreprendre de pareilles recherches qui, si elles peuvent avoir un intérêt local, grossiraient sans profit notre travail.

Ce qui va suivre ne concernera exclusivement que les Ministres et autres fonctionnaires de la Cour de l'Empereur.

a) *Avant la pénétration française, les rapports des Ministres entre eux.*

Ouidi-Naba. — Premier ministre. Chef de la cava-

1: Delobsom FA28 Mossi

lerie. Dès sa nomination, le Ouidi-Naba n'est tenu de rendre visite qu'au Mogho-Naba seul. Il appartient aux autres Ministres ses collègues et aux notables de Ouagadougou d'aller le voir chez lui. Naturellement, — noblesse oblige, — Ouidi-Naba est tenu de leur offrir du dolo en grande quantité et de tuer des moutons ou même d'abattre des bœufs en leur honneur.

Larrhallé-Naba. — Même Ministre (gardien des sépultures).

Contrairement à ce qui s'est passé tout dernièrement (mars-avril 1929) Larrhallé-Naba ne doit rendre visite qu'au Ouidi-Naba et, — mais seulement s'il le désire — au Gounga-Naba. Il ne va pas chez les autres Ministres ou fonctionnaires.

Gounga-Naba est tenu de rendre visite aux deux premiers Ministres, Ouidi-Naba et Larrhallé-Naba. Les autres fonctionnaires de la Cour doivent aller le voir chez lui et comme il a été déjà dit pour le Ouidi-Naba, il leur offre du dolo et de la viande.

Baloum-Naba. — Intendant du Mogho-Naba et Grand Chef des pages, est tenu dans les premiers jours qui suivent son avènement de rendre visite au trois principaux Ministres et à l'Imam. Là s'arrêtent ses visites; il ne va pas chez les autres personnages de la Cour.

Ceci dit, passons au fait principal.

2° — Les Ministres et autres fonctionnaires chez le Mogho-Naba

Dans la cour où se donnent les audiences de l'Em-

1: Delobsom FA28 Mossi

pereur du Mossi se trouvent des tas de pierres indiquant la place des Ministres et de leur suite.

Ouidi-Naba, Larrhallé-Naba, Gounga-Naba et Kamsaongho-Naba se mettent ensemble avec leur suite ; le Baloum-Naba, le Zusobinkassanga ont aussi leur place, etc... Avant d'avoir rendu les honneurs au Mogho-Naba il n'est permis à aucun d'entre eux de se déranger pour aller saluer un confrère.

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Seuls le Baloum-Naba, le Zusoaba, le Kamsaogho, les serviteurs et les palefreniers étaient autrefois admis à rendre visite à l'Empereur dans la cour de son palais. Les autres Ministres ou fonctionnaires de la cour (Ouidi-Naba, Larrhallé-Naba, Gounga-Naba, etc...) ne pouvaient, sous aucun prétexte et dans aucune circonstance, pénétrer dans la cour intérieure de la maison du Mogho-Naba. — Ils faisaient annoncer leur présence par des « soronés » et attendaient sous un hangar (benda zandé) situé dans la cour où se donnent les audiences. Il y a à peine quelques années, quand le Gounga-Naba actuel a été appelé à prendre la succession de son père, il demanda la cause de cette interdiction et comme aucune raison valable ne lui fut donnée il sollicita de l'Empereur l'autorisation d'enfreindre la règle et depuis, ses autres collègues ont suivi son exemple.

3° — La question du bonnet

Nous savons qu'au moment de sa nomination tout

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Ministre, fonctionnaire de la cour et tout chef de canton, reçoit du Mogho-Naba un bonnet. Sans doute il ne peut conserver un seul bonnet toute sa vie durant; aussi ceux qu'il peut être appelé à acheter par la suite sont tous aussi sacrés que le premier. Il est formellement interdit à un particulier, fût-il fils de Naba, de porter ce bonnet.

Nous avons vu d'autre part, qu'il était défendu autrefois à tout « Moaga » de porter la chéchia rouge [1] (c'était en effet un bonnet Fez que Mogho-Naba offrait au chef de canton).

Sauf Tenkodogo-Naba, et plus récemment Boussouma-Naba, qui ne rendent pas les honneurs au Mogho-Naba, tous les chefs de cantons du Mossi : Ministres et autres petits « Dima » doivent ôter le bonnet pour saluer l'Empereur.

a) *Entre ministres.* — Ouidi-Naba conserve son bonnet devant n'importe lequel de ses confrères.

Larrhallé-Naba, Gounga-Naba, Kamsaongo-Naba, sont des égaux et se saluent le bonnet sur la tête.

Baloum-Naba, Samandé-Naba, sont aussi des égaux; ils ne se décoiffent pas pour se saluer.

Par ailleurs ces deux derniers étaient tenus d'ôter le pougla (bonnet) et même de faire « les kantissé » lorsqu'ils se trouvaient en présence des trois principaux Ministres.

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1. Chez les Habès seul le Hogon a le droit de porter la chéchia. Les jeunes Habès incorporés comme tirailleurs ne portent plus la chéchia rouge après leur libération, s'ils regagnent leurs foyers.

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Viennent ensuite par ordre d'importance : Nemdo-Naba, chef de la viande ; Poé-Naba, confesseur des femmes de l'Empereur ; Bend-Naba, chef des tambours et toute la kyrielle de petits chefs insignifiants qu'on ne peut distinguer du vulgaire et qu'il serait inutile d'énumérer ici.

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Lorsqu'il se trouve chez le Baloum-Naba ou le Samandé-Naba, Poé-Naba peut garder son bonnet, mais il l'ôte obligatoirement chez les autres Ministres et doit même se prosterner pour faire le « kantissé ».

A l'époque, encore récente, où les chefs de province de Ouagadougou ne possédaient ni maisons confortables, ni mobilier, les Ministres se rendaient rarement visite. J'ai même vu, certain jour, un Ministre s'asseoir par terre pour céder son siège à un de ses confrères.

Au reste, lorsqu'ils avaient des questions à trancher et étaient obligés de se réunir ils se rendaient la nuit, à l'insu du public, chez l'un d'entre eux.

Aujourd'hui les principaux Ministres possèdent de véritables salons de réception. Ils peuvent donc garder leur siège quand un confrère plus important vient les voir ; ils se contentent seulement de désigner au visiteur une chaise pliante ou un fauteuil « morris ».

Le Ministre de la Guerre. — Le Tensoba ne se décoiffe jamais chez un Ministre ou un chef de canton. Il ne se décoiffe que devant l'Empereur. Autrefois, quand une guerre éclatait et qu'il était convoqué à

Ouagadougou, le Tansoba réunissait chez son hôte les principaux Ministres du Mogho-Naba et sa parole était seule prépondérante.

En dehors de ce cas spécial, il pouvait rendre visite à un Ministre, mais dans ce cas un serviteur portait toujours le coussin sur lequel il devait s'asseoir en attendant que le Ministre le reçoive dans ses appartements particuliers (il ne peut être reçu en public).

Là le Tansoba occupe la meilleure place et le Ministre se met à terre et le salue à la manière des mossi.

En définitive, le Tansoba jouit d'une considération plus grande que tous les autres personnages de la cour du Roi.

b) *Aujourd'hui.* — A l'heure actuelle les Ministres se rendent de continuelles visites. En raison des moyens de locomotion rapides dont ils disposent, ils se déplacent sans escorte. Ils se voient le plus souvent pour le règlement des questions d'intérêt général.

Quand un Ministre se rend chez un autre Ministre il conserve son bonnet, ne se déchausse plus et ne fait pas de « kantissé ». Ils sont des égaux. Cette égalité a été établie par l'administration locale qui leur a attribué les mêmes droits et les mêmes appointements. Il serre la main de son confrère et prend un siège ; on lui sert force calebasses de dolo, puis il prend congé.

Il y a, quoi qu'on dise, une désorganisation politique de l'Empire mossi. C'est de là que sont nées les erreurs commises par l'administration locale et les

1: Delobsom FA28 Mossi

fautes qu'on reproche aux Ministres du Mogho-Naba auxquels on a laissé pendant longtemps des pouvoirs trop étendus.

5° — L'ORIGINE DE LA CHEFFERIE MOSSI (LÉGENDE) OU LA FAÇON DONT LES PEULHS, LES YARCÉS ET LES FORGERONS SALUENT LES CHEFS MOSSI

Les peulhs, les yarcés, et dans une certaine mesure, les forgerons ne font pas le « kantissé » (salut mossi). Ils saluent différemment les Nabas. Une légende curieuse explique ce phénomène. Pour bizarrre qu'elle puisse paraître, elle ne manque pas cependant d'intérêt : nous la raconterons donc telle qu'elle nous a été transmise.

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Origine de la chefferie. — DIEU créa d'abord quatre frères. Comme ADAM et ÈVE dans le paradis terrestre, ils vivaient désœuvrés, sans souci du lendemain. Ce que voyant DIEU fit aussi quatre couffins « hâpidgou » dans lesquels il plaça quatre miracles. Ces couffins n'avaient ni le même poids ni la même forme. Il appela ensuite les quatre frères et leur dit : « Le sort de chacun de vous dépendra de la part qu'il choisira. » L'aîné s'empara du couffin le plus lourd, le second imita son frère aîné, le troisième prit le couffin le plus volumineux, enfin le plus jeune s'empara du dernier et plus petit couffin.

DIEU leur dit « allez par le monde (sous-entendu le

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F'orgeron indigène.

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pays Mossi) et que chacun bâtisse sa maison dans une plaine.

Dès le lendemain les quatre frères se mirent en route. Ils découvrirent une vaste plaine : l'aîné y demeura ; les trois autres frères désolés se séparèrent de lui et continuèrent leur chemin jusqu'à ce que chacun ait trouvé un endroit pour s'y installer.

C'est alors que s'opérèrent les miracles suivants :

1° *Le forgeron* (sayan en Mossi). — Dès son réveil le lendemain de son installation, l'aîné se trouva en présence d'une modeste famille, de fer en abondance et d'une enclume; c'était le contenu du « kapidgou » choisi. L'homme comprit dès lors qu'il devait tirer de ce fer quelque chose d'utile : il se mit au travail et DIEU aidant découvrit la pioche (wanka) et la hache (laré) nécessaires à la culture des champs. C'est le forgeron (sayan).

2° *Le peuhl* (silmiga en Mossi). — Le deuxième frère se vit, au réveil, au milieu de nombreux troupeaux de bœufs et de vaches gardés par des jeunes gens de sa race. Il n'avait pour toute demeure que des sortes de « songdo » (huttes), mais était lui-même très propre. Ses habits étaient de toile blanche et il était coiffé d'un bonnet de même couleur entouré d'un large turban. Il comprit qu'il était le maître de tous les êtres qui l'entouraient car il lui suffisait de donner un ordre pour qu'on lui apportât des calebasses pleines de lait. C'est le « silmiga » (peulh).

3° *Le yarga.* — Le troisième frère trouva à son

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réveil des ânes, des charges de sel, des charges de kolas et autres articles de trafic. Comme son aîné le peuhl il portait un grand boubou blanc, mais son bonnet était de couleur plus foncée. C'est le yarga ou commerçant.

4° *Le Naba.* — Quant au puîné quelle ne fut pas sa stupéfaction de se trouver à son réveil dans une splendide maison composée de nombreux « tatas », entouré d'une véritable Cour, de centaines de courtisans, de chevaux et de palefreniers. Il vit venir à lui tout un peuple se prosternant et faisant le salut mossi tel qu'il est pratiqué aujourd'hui. Il possédait en outre un sérail. Il se reconnut le maître incontesté de ce peuple entier. C'est le Naba.

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Mais ces quatre frères ne pouvaient rester ainsi sans nouvelles l'un de l'autre. L'aîné, le forgeron, se dit un jour : « Je vais entreprendre un voyage en vue de « retrouver mes frères et de savoir ce qu'ils sont devenus ». Il se mit en route, ayant eu soin au préalable de se munir de quelques outils de sa fabrication. A son arrivée dans le village, il eut grand'peine à se frayer un passage au milieu des troupeaux de bœufs et de leurs gardiens. Il réussit à se faire présenter au maître du logis, propriétaire de tant de richesses et reconnut son frère le peulh. Celui-ci le reçut comme il convient et lui fit servir des mets copieux dans la composition desquels le lait entrait pour une grande part.

Après s'être reposé, le forgeron fit part au peulh de l'objet de son voyage. Le peulh décida d'accompagner son frère. Ils partirent donc dès l'aube, le forgeron avec sa charge de « dabas » (wanksé) et le peuhl suivi de quelques bœufs et de nombreux porteurs de calebasses de lait pour la route. A la nuit tombante ils arrivèrent au village de leur frère le « yarga », qu'ils eurent peine à reconnaître. Ils croquèrent pour la première fois le « cola » (gouré) qu'on leur dit provenir de « Komnoré » (bord de grandes rivières). Bref le « yarga » réserva à ses aînés une réception digne.

Lorsque le forgeron et le peuhl eurent fait connaître à leur frère qu'ils étaient seulement venus s'enquérir de sa santé et qu'ils avaient l'intention de poursuivre leur route le lendemain matin à la recherche de leur plus jeune frère, le « yarga » décida à son tour de se joindre à eux. Ils se mirent donc tous trois en route avec de nombreux suivants. Le « yarga » chargea un âne de sel dans le but d'en vendre une partie aux gens qu'il rencontrerait et de donner le reste à son jeune frère.

Ils furent saisis d'admiration et de crainte à la fois en arrivant devant la maison du « puîné ». Ils avaient appris en route — sans y ajouter foi — que leur frère était devenu « grand Naba », qu'il commandait à de nombreux sujets et qu'il leur serait difficile de s'approcher du trône sur lequel il était assis. Contrairement à ce qu'ils pensaient, tout se passa comme cela leur avait été prédit. Ils éprouvèrent de sérieuses difficultés à s'affranchir du protocole sévère de la Cour, furent repoussés par des « sogonés », bousculés par des palefreniers et durent attendre des heures entières

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que Sa Majesté le « Naba » daignât enfin leur donner audience comme au plus humble de ses sujets, car malgré leurs affirmations les courtisans du Naba ne crurent pas un seul instant qu'un lien de parenté pût exister entre ces étrangers et celui qu'ils adoraient comme un « dieu ».

Des roulements de tambours annoncèrent enfin la sortie du potentat. Quand il s'assit sur son trône (guéré), bien que saisis d'admiration pour sa grandeur, la « jalousie » naquit dans le cœur des trois aînés. Ils se questionnèrent du regard; devaient-ils s'abaisser jusqu'à imiter les sujets de leur frère ? Voici ce qui se passa : le forgeron s'assit à terre mais il n'imita pas le salut mossi : il se contenta de frapper le sol avec son « zanré » : le peulh plus fier s'accroupit, tendit le bras droit en avant, ferma le poing puis prononça légèrement ces paroles : « lafibé raoua, gang'bélafi (litt. bonjour homme, est-ce que tu te portes bien ?). Il avait gardé son bonnet sur la tête mais avait abandonné à la porte d'entrée ses « néoda » (chaussures) à la fois par peur et par respect; quant au « yarga » plus voisin du Naba, il s'assit à terre, ploya un peu les jambes, s'inclina légèrement et frotta doucement les deux mains l'une contre l'autre en guise de salut. Il avait lui aussi laissé, en entrant, ses néoda, mais avait conservé le bonnet sur la tête comme son aîné le peulh.

Le Naba les fit conduire chez un de ses Ministres et pendant plusieurs jours il leur fit servir des repas copieux et leur distribua de nombreux cadeaux.

En retour le forgeron remit au Naba une charge de

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wanksé (pioches) pour la culture des champs, le peulh lui fit don de quelques bœufs et le yarga d'une barre de sel.

Enfin ils se décidèrent à quitter leur jeune frère pour se rendre dans leurs villages respectifs. En cours de route ils tinrent conseil et prirent le parti de s'installer sur le territoire du Naba. Ils s'assureraient ainsi sa protection. Le « peulh » multiplierait ses bœufs en devenant le gardien de ceux appartenant aux Mossi, le yarga pourrait écouler plus facilement son sel et vendre ses kolas : quant au forgeron il fabriquerait beaucoup d'instruments aratoires pour la défrichement des vastes domaines incultes ou insuffisamment cultivés faute d'outils.

Ils fixèrent la date de leur retour. Le Naba les reçut à nouveau très chaleureusement mais ils ne se montrèrent pas plus déférents que la première fois envers le « Naba ».

Et la légende de conclure que c'est la raison pour laquelle le « peulh » et le « yarga » ont conservé leur esprit d'indépendance. Quant au forgeron, demeuré plus pauvre, il se plie à certaines règles coutumières communes à tous les Mossi, sans jamais quitter cependant son atelier de travail pour saluer le Naba lorsqu'il passe ; il se contente, comme il a déjà été dit, de frapper son « zanré » contre l'enclume, comme autrefois il frappa le sol en guise de salutation.

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CHAPITRE VIII

Les coutumes. — Intronisation du surnom.

Décès d'un Mogho-Naba

Le décès d'un Mogho-Naba est gardé secret jusqu'à l'arrivée à Ouagadougou du « Tansoba », qu'on prévient à temps sitôt que la maladie s'aggrave. A l'arrivée du Tansoba, on prévient le public que le « Bougsaré kimé », c'est-à-dire que le « feu s'est éteint ».

Les personnages chargés de l'enterrement sont :

Pazany'ting'soba (croque-mort), Tampouy-Naba, Kassiri-Naba, Benghin-Naba, Toghin-Naba, Ganin-Naba, Tanghin-Naba.

Aménagement du tombeau. — La fosse destinée à recevoir les restes mortels du Roi est une véritable case souterraine.

Avant d'amener le Roi à sa dernière demeure [1], on met dans le tombeau :

Deux peaux de moutons ou « gando », des « nagpouya » ou coussins, des « fourkamsé » ou traversins, et un zoukougré, tout en cuir; le tout est disposé et arrangé comme pour recevoir le chef au repos.

Après avoir baigné le défunt (Naba-Siguiri, père du Mogho-Naba actuel, a été baigné par des mara-

1. Le corps est placé dans une ou plusieurs peaux de bœuf.

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bouts, étant fils d'un Naba qui fut croyant), on l'habille tout en blanc. Il y a dans la maison de tout Mogho-Naba un coin de mur orné d'assez jolis dessins, c'est par là que le Mogho-Naba mort passe pour aller au tombeau. La vision de ce coin peu fréquenté rappelle au chef vivant la fin de tout être mortel et lui fait savoir que, s'il a remplacé quelqu'un, on le remplacera lui aussi un jour, puisque le coin doit devenir une ouverture destinée à laisser passer son corps à la fin de ses jours.

Indépendamment des habits dont on le revêt, on met à côté de lui dans la fosse :

Un boubou blanc replié (fou yorgo).

Une culotte (kourga).

Une couverture (fou gobga).

Une paire de babouches (néoda).

Un petit couteau (souga).

Un sabre (zangoégo).

Une gourde de dolo (dam), une calebasse recouvre le goulot de celle-ci, un petit « leppré » (dessus de plat).

Une barre de sel (yamsem).

Une calebasse de cent kolas (gouré wamdé).

Un sac cousu renfermant des cauris (liguidi ne yolmoumdi).

Des parements de « napaga » (« douamba » et « zuyan).

Voire du tabac, si le chef était fumeur ou s'il chiquait.

Le croque-mort, avant de se retirer, peut prendre le sel, des kolas et de la viande.

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L'enterrement terminé, on fait le tour de la maison du défunt.

Il convient de dire qu'avant l'enterrement, et même dès que la nouvelle du décès du Roi est connue, toutes les femmes qui ont des enfants prennent la fuite, de peur que leur fils ne soit fait « kourita. »

Le « kourita » est un enfant du défunt qui doit porter le nom de ce dernier, qu'on exile et qui ne doit pas voir durant sa vie le nouveau Mogho-Naba. Avant que l'Empereur soit représenté sur la terre par son kourita, on ne peut désigner son remplaçant. C'est ce qui explique le sauve-qui-peut général de toutes les femmes-mères.

Le kourita

Ainsi que nous venons de le voir, l'enfant qu'on fait « kourita » est exilé, il ne compte plus dans la famille. Il est Naba lui-même et ne peut voir le nouvel Empereur.

Ses autres frères peuvent lui rendre visite, comme à son tour il peut aller les voir.

1° On baigne le kourita avec le reste de l'eau qui a servi à laver le Roi défunt ;

2° On le fait passer par le même « vonré » (ouverture) que le corps du Naba mort ;

3° On lui donne la femme avec laquelle le chef a eu ses dernières relations avant que la maladie ne le terrasse.

4° Le cheval que le Roi défunt montait tous les vendredis lui est également offert ;

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5° On l'habille des derniers vêtements du mort.

On lui donne un ou deux serviteurs, autant de palefreniers et on le remet à Kilwin-Naba (chef d'un hameau à côté de Bissiga) à 3 kilomètres de Ouagadougou) qui doit l'héberger pendant un mois environ.

Autrefois, la puissance d'un kourita était presque sans limite. En effet, pendant son séjour à Kilwin, il avait le droit de piller, de tout ravager et de vivre en véritable potentat. Il ne manquait naturellement pas de bonnes volontés pour l'aider à spolier les biens des malheureux Mossi. Le « kourita » faisait des tournées dans beaucoup de cantons où les « Kombemba » (pluriel de Kombéré), lui rendaient tous les honneurs dus au Mogho-Naba et c'est au cours de ces randonnées qu'il se choisissait une résidence définitive.

Le nouveau Mogho-Naba est tenu de donner satisfaction aux désirs du « kourita », sous peine de recevoir la visite de ce dernier, présage de malheur.

Les Mossi croient, en effet, que si le « kourita » rendait visite au nouveau Mogho-Naba, ce dernier mourrait.

XI. — De l'intronisation. — Avant et après

Nous l'avons déjà vu, l'enterrement achevé, on fait le tour de la maison du Roi défunt. On fait ensuite convoquer à Ouagadougou :

1° Loumbila-Naba.

2° Saponé-Naba.

3° Ouagadougou-Naba (ce dernier réside à Ouagadougou).

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4° Zagtouli-Naba.
5° Bingo-Naba.
6° Gnimdi-Naba.
7° Sabtenga-Naba.

Tous ces personnages sont accompagnés de quantité d'hommes armés de fusils et de flèches. Ils font halte devant le « paghnoré » (porte des femmes) et s'y couchent. Ils sont devenus les surveillants de la maison royale.

A ce moment, les candidats à la dignité de Mogho-Naba sont tous présents à Ouagadougou; chacun rend des visites aux Ministres et leur fait force cadeaux. Le cas est assez fréquent où il y a concurrence, mais en principe, c'est le premier fils du Roi qui est appelé à remplacer son père.

Le jour de la nomination, on mène le « Nabiga » (de Naba : chef, biga : fils) chez le Samandé-Naba où les ministres tiennent conseil. S'ils sont unanimes à nommer un « Nabiga » on le fait sortir de la case où il attendait anxieux et on lui annonce que le Oubritenga, le Zound'wéogo, le Koudtenga, etc... sont sa propriété (c'est-à-dire qu'il est reconnu seul détenteur du pouvoir) et qu'il commande seul à tous les territoires que nous venons d'énumérer. Ceci se passe d'ordinaire le soir. Le matin le nouveau Mogho-Naba s'habille et monte à cheval devant le « paghnoré » (porte des femmes); le Kalzi-Naba prend la bride du cheval et amène le nouvel élu devant le Loumbila-Naba et dit à ce dernier et à ses suivants : Oubritenga Ramba, adi Naba, adi Kouda » (Gens de Oubritenga, voici votre maître).

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On l'amène ensuite au Saponé-Naba et on dit à ce dernier et à ses suivants : « Koud'tinga Ramba, adi Naba, adi Kouda (gens de Koud'tinga, voilà votre maître).

Le nouveau chef est présenté au Zagtouli-Naba et au Ouagadougou-Naba, à qui on dit : « Naba Rimba Tenga Ramba, adi Naba, adi Kouda » (Gens de Rimbatenga, voilà votre maître).

Enfin aux autres chefs qui restent on dit : Zound'-wéogo ramba, adi Naba, adi Kouda (voilà votre maître).

Le Mogho-Naba rentre dans la maison. Il est Roi.

Peu après, il sort et s'asseoit à l'ombre d'un arbre chez le Samandé-Nabila. Les « doudissi » jouent ensemble et la population entière pousse des cris de joie.

Le Ouidi-Naba, le Tansoba et les autres Ministres et personnages importants viennent présenter leurs hommages et lui jurer fidélité et soumission. Chacun fait profession de foi.

Le soir, le nouveau Naba quitte la maison de Samandé-Nabila et va passer la nuit chez Ouagadougou-Naba.

Le lendemain il va à Passepanga (littéralement : passé : ajouter, augmenter; panga, force, pouvoir).

Là, tous les descendants des Mogho-Naba et les autres chefs vont le saluer.

A Passepanga, le Mogho-Naba s'asseoit sous un arbre, ayant à sa droite et à sa gauche des milliers d'hommes armés de fusils alignés comme des tirailleurs à l'exercice et laissant une sorte d'avenue permettant de bien distinguer le nouveau Naba. Chaque

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Naba, avec sa suite, vient jurer fidélité et faire profession de foi. Les frères de l'Elu, même ceux qui ont été ses concurrents, viennent faire leur soumission. Le Mogho-Naba se retire chez son « Gansoba » (hôte) et fait donner à tout ce monde suffisamment de « dam » et fait tuer des « nissi » (bœufs) pour eux.

Le Mogho-Naba séjourne à Passepanga pendant une semaine, après quoi il vient s'installer à Dimvoussé (repos du Roi).

Enfin, deux ou trois ans plus tard, il choisit le lieu où il désire bâtir sa maison définitive.

XII. — De quelques noms et leur signification

Tout chef nommé perd son prénom et il est même défendu de le prononcer. Il se donne lui-même un surnom à sa nomination.

Nous allons essayer d'étudier quelques noms et de dégager la moralité qui en résulte ;

1° *Mogho-Naba Wobgo* (de son propre nom : Boukary).

Le Mogho-Naba Sanum (littéralement : or) ayant chassé de son territoire son frère Boukary, celui-ci se réfugia à Bassawarga où il conquit les Gourounsi, dont il fit des esclaves et qui sont devenus par la suite ses sofas.

Au décès de Naba Sanum, plusieurs candidats se présentèrent pour être nommés Mogho-Naba.

Boukary vint aussi, suivi d'une bonne escorte de Gourounsi armés de flèches, de fusils et de casse-têtes. Il fit des cadeaux aux Ministres ainsi que tous

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ses concurrents. Mais voyant qu'on tardait à désigner le successeur de son frère défunt, il dit un jour au Ouidi-Naba : « Désigne celui que tu veux voir prendre la place et j'irai l'arracher à ce dernier. »

La nuit du jour de la nomination arrivée (nous l'avons déjà dit, on met chaque candidat dans une case chez le Samandé-Nabila) le futur Naba Wogbo réunit tous ses Gourounsi et leur tint à peu près ce langage : « C'est ce soir qu'on va désigner le nouveau Mogho-Naba; quand je me rendrai chez Samandé-Nabila, tous, vous viendrez, armés, cerner la maison. Et si, par hasard, je n'étais pas nommé quand je sortirai, je vous dirai : En avant ! N'épargnez personne, pas plus les Ministres, les autres Nabissi, que le nouvel élu. »

La nuit du fameux jour, les Gourounsi, fidèles exécuteurs des ordres de leur chef, firent comme il leur avait ordonné.

Pendant que les Ministres discutaient sur le point de savoir lequel des « Nabissi » devait être désigné (bien entendu le futur Naba Wogbo était d'office évincé), le Larrhallé-Naba sortit pour faire ses besoins. Sa stupéfaction fut grande quand il remarqua, dans la demi-obscurité, des gens armés de fusils, de flèches et de gourdins; aussi ne dissimula-t-il pas son inquiétude au Ouidi-Naba, qui sortit également pour constater le fait. Tous savaient que seul Boukary était capable d'organiser un tel complot; dans la crainte d'être tués, les Ministres, à l'unanimité, le désignèrent comme Mogho-Naba.

Quand vint le moment pour lui de se donner le nom qui devait lui rester jusqu'au tombeau, il dit ceci :

« Kim missi laguem koabga kon bougouss'Wobgo ». Ceci signifie que « cent revenants réunis ne peuvent pas faire peur à un éléphant ». Je crois savoir qu'ici il s'adresse à ses concurrents. Puis il ajouta : « Ni Tiem Koudré Banghe pouiré taloug'pa salga » (un vieillard ayant su bien partager s'est ainsi évité la déchirure des côtes). Ici il s'adresse aux Ministres. Il savait qu'il n'était pas aimé; aussi avait-il préparé la guerre. Les Ministres ne voulaient pas le nommer mais, craignant d'être tués, ils l'ont désigné malgré eux.

II. *Mogho-Naba Kom (litt. Naba : chef, kom : eau).* — Très jeune encore, le Mogho-Naba Kom, celui qui règne aujourd'hui, succéda à son père, Naba Siguiri, au grand étonnement de ses ennemis.

Il prit nom : *Naba Kom.*

1° Kom sound Tambdo ti koulg'king lad moaghana. « Pendant la saison pluvieuse, quand il tombe beaucoup d'eau, cela ajoute de la joie aux fleuves et aux mers qui voient leurs eaux grossir. »

2° Neb san toul béogo bi a balem Wendé. C'est-à-dire « qui rêve à demain doit reposer sa confiance en Dieu ».

3° Sandib, laguem koabga ti pigh'pam nionré. Trop jeune à sa nomination, beaucoup lui en voulaient, aussi employait-on des sortilèges pour le faire périr. Ce troisième surnom signifie : « Cent charlatans, faiseurs de gris-gris, ne peuvent rien contre le pigha (roc, rocher), le chef s'étant comparé à ce corps ».

4° Gonpaniendégha kon nies niédga. « On ne se

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Communiqué par la Mission des Pères Blancs à Ouagadougou.

Le troisième ministre du Mogho-Naba (Gounga Naba), au milieu de ses serviteurs.

Ces derniers portent au cou les médailles des adeptes du christianisme

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torche pas le derrière avec des épines et des ronces. » Fait allusion à ses ennemis, et signifie que, malgré eux, il règne quand même.

5° Tang'niebga belem mogré pamé wek'balbo. « Le caïman ne pouvant réellement vivre et procréer qu'autant qu'il habite aux abords d'un marigot, que doit faire un caïman de montagne s'il désire avoir beaucoup d'enfants ? C'est de se déplacer de son habitat et d'aller au marigot. »

III. *Ouidi-Naba* (de son nom Rabi) Naba Boulga (litt. puits).

1° Baning sorr'yoagba n'tilig kinsé la wamsé. « Le gros mil blanc ou sorgho poussé sous un « strophantus » ne craint d'être mangé ni par les oiseaux ni par les singes. »

2° Yel somd'boulgh'tont niédbo. « Le puits du bien ne peut être comblé. »

IV. *Gounga-Naba.* — (de son véritable nom : Namébrogo Ilboudo) Naba Yemdé (littéralement : hippopotame). Yem deng kouilga ti zimbi datin dem yaré. Littéralement : « L'hippopotame, arrivé le premier au marigot, les poissons s'amusent à volonté ; ou bien, quand les poissons s'amusent aux alentours d'un hippototame, ils sont certains de n'être dérangés ni par les gros poissons ni par les pêcheurs. »

V. *Baloum-Naba* (Tenga Ouédraogo) Naba Tanga (littéralement : montagne). Une montagne sur le sommet de laquelle se trouvent des arbres est bien vite remarquée. Autrement dit : pour être bien considéré, il faut avoir un bon appui, un bon piston.

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2° Kata laghem koagb'kon sirigh tanga. « Cent hyènes réunies ne peuvent, en aboyant, faire écrouler une montagne ».

VI. *Kamsoro-Naba* (Ouene Nongué) Naba Niouga (chat) (eunuque). Nioug'nok wendé na pa ne Sabelem Littéralement : « Un chat qui se confie à Dieu estsûr de conserver toujours sa noirceur. » Autrement dit : Protégé par le Mogho-Naba, son « Dieu », il ne peut avoir faim de rien, tout devant lui venir comme par enchantement.

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Naba GNIGHNEMDO (Mogho-Naba). Naba Oubri, fondateur de la dynastie de Ouagadougou, étant devenu amoureux d'une de ses propres filles, eut avec elle des relations intimes. La fille devint enceinte et accoucha d'un garçon. Les femmes de Naba Oubri voulurent mettre l'enfant et la mère à mort. On demanda à la fille le nom du père de l'enfant. Elle répondit : « Demandez-le à mon père, il doit être renseigné. » Oubri, consulté, répondit : « Bassi yan ya mam lam gnighnemdo. » (Ne faites rien, c'est moi avec ma propre chair.)

L'enfant de cette union incestueuse fut donc nommé Gnighnemdo et, plus tard, remplaça sur le trône son parent Naba Nasbiré.

DU DÉPOT DES STATUES A LOUMBI-RAOGO

Ganlougdou. — Autrefois, au décès d'un Mogho-Naba ou quelque temps après, on appelait un bijou-

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tier pour faire une statuette en cire, assez ressemblante, qui devait l'être plus tard en bronze, à la figure du chef défunt. Le bijoutier faisait également un soroné, une napagha, un bendré, un lounga et tout ceci était déposé chez le Loumbila-Naba. Cette pratique a été supprimée avec l'arrivée des Français, et Naba Siguiri, père de Naba Kom, le Naba actuel, n'a pas, paraît-il, de statuette à Loumbila.

Le Mogho-Naba en fonctions ne doit pas voir ces statuettes, pas plus que le bijoutier qui a fait la statue de son père. On donnait au bijoutier 100.000 cauris, un cheval, un âne, un bœuf, une femme, un grand boubou, 1.000 kolas et on le chassait d'Ouagadougou où il ne devait plus venir, ne devant désormais plus voir le nouveau Mogho-Naba.

Ces dons qui représentaient jadis, et même de nos jours, une assez forte somme, devaient aider le bijoutier à consulter les devins et charlatans pour prolonger un peu son existence, la tradition racontant que s'il n'obéissait pas aux pratiques qu'ils lui enseigneraient il ne survivrait pas un an à son travail.

Le « kombéré ». Décès, intronisation, etc.

1° *Décès.* — Au décès d'un « kombéré » on dépêche deux représentants du canton en deuil à Ouagadougou, pour porter la mauvaise nouvelle au Mogho-Naba. On confie à ces deux envoyés un cheval ou un mouton, suivant l'importance du Naba. On attache à la queue de l'animal des feuillages de tanga (voir plus haut, Ouidi-Naba).

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Le premier émissaire, en arrivant dans la cour du Mogho-Naba, s'asseoit en ayant soin de poser une main par terre et en allongeant le bras. La vue du cheval étant significative, et avant même qu'aucune explication soit donnée, le « Zusoaba » entre dans la maison du Mogho-Naba, d'où il sort avec une calebasse d'eau de farine, « zom kom » qu'il verse sur le bras de l'envoyé.

Le cheval est ensuite pris et remis à un représentant du Ouidi-Naba, qui défait les feuillages et conduit l'animal à Widhin.

Le Zusoaba rapporte la calebasse et c'est alors seulement que le Ouidi-Naba dit au Mogho-Naba : « Naba zagl yka sambga le tongalamé ». (Tel chef atteint de telle maladie y a succombé). Il convient de dire qu'avant d'aller voir le Mogho-Naba les envoyés mettent d'abord les Ministres au courant du décès du « kombéré ».

Le Mogho-Naba pose quelques questions de circonstances et envoie les représentants faire le « kouré ». Le jour de la cérémonie arrivé, le Nabitienga (le fils aîné du chef défunt) fait préparer abondamment du dolo, du saghbo, fait tuer des moutons et des bœufs pour nourrir les gens venus en nombre pour la circonstance.

On fait le tour de la maison, comme nous l'avons déjà dit pour le Mogho-Naba.

a) *Koupéogo* (panier de kouré). — Le « koupéogo » est un panier artistement façonné et dans lequel on met les « foutou » (habits du défunt), des « koursi » (panta-

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lons), sa « pougla » (chéchia rouge), ses « néodas » (babouches), le « zandé » (casse-tête), le « wed'zouré » (queue de cheval), et qu'on dépose sur un « pé'gaongo » (peau de mouton) dans le « zaongo » (antichambre).

Une des sœurs du Nabitienga, généralement la plus âgée des filles du défunt, porte le « péogo » dehors et s'asseoit à l'endroit où le chef mort donnait autrefois ses audiences journalières (guéré). On bat du tambour (benda) liunsé, gangando se confondent. Alors, chacun donne ce qu'il a. A commencer par le Nabitienga, ses frères et sœurs, les proches parents, les frères et sœurs du de cujus, en un mot celui qu'une parenté même éloignée rapproche du chef fait offre de quelque chose; généralement on donne des cauris.

Le « koupéogo » est ensuite rapporté dans le « zaongo ». On verse à la porte de l'antichambre du « zom kom » (eau de farine) et du « dam » (dolo ou bière de mil fermentée).

Les « bendas » et autres tambours ramassent tous les cauris devenus leur propriété et s'éloignent un peu de la maison du défunt pour en faire le partage.

Les « Bendas » sont tenus de donner quelques cauris à tout « yarga », « silmimoaga » et « sayan »[1] qui passerait à côté d'eux au moment du partage.

b) *Fado.* — C'est la part qui revient de droit au Mogho-Naba dans la succession de tout Kombéré décédé.

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1. Yarga, Dioula de race mandé.
Silmimoaga. Individu qui a adopté les coutumes des peuhls.
Sayan, forgeron.

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Le Mogho-Naba envoie des représentants auxquels il remet : 1° un coq ; 2° un mouton ; 3° selon l'importance du chef, un bœuf et 5 à 10.000 cauris.

Une fois présenté au Nabitienga, le premier envoyé du Mogho-Naba lui dit : « Nab'kayé ti Mog' naba yel tid wa pous' nabitiengh'togo (tel chef est mort, le Mogho-Naba nous envoie porter l'expression de sa douleur au Nabitienga) « lad reguib' lokon'wa tib laguemb taba ti ya yel koudgo » (et demande à ce qu'on nous remette le carquois du Naba pour être déposé à côté de ceux de ses aïeux comme c'est la coutume).

Le Nabitienga les remercie et ordonne la sortie immédiate du « loko ». On pose le loko par terre et on égorge, à tour de rôle, la poule, le mouton, voire même le bœuf, envoyés par le Mogho-Naba.

Tous ces préliminaires qui ne sont qu'une entrée en matière, étant achevés, le premier envoyé de l'Empereur ordonne au Nabitienga d'aller se mettre au soleil pour qu'il puisse lui réclamer le « fado ». Le Nabitienga s'y soumet et voilà ce que le premier délégué du Mogho-Naba lui fait dire par un envoyé : « Mogh' Naba yé tid wa reg fado, ya nig'tousri (1.000 bœufs), pissi tousri (1.000 moutons) bouss'tousri (1.000 chèvres), foutou tousri (1.000 habits), etc... Le Nabitienga répond : « Tond ba sin ki a ka bas roumsi ne arzek'yé » (notre père mort ne nous a laissé ni bestiaux, ni autres richesses susceptibles de satisfaire aux exigences du Mogho-Naba).

L'envoyé rapporte la réponse aux représentants de l'Empereur. Les descendants du Nabitienga s'en vont

chercher une wanka (une pioche), une laré (une hache), une « goégo » (une faucille) et disent aux Nayiridamba (représentants) d'aller dans l'antichambre où toute la richesse se trouve entassée. Les « Nayirdamba » envoient des Soronés qui reviennent leur rendre compte de ce qu'il y a. Ils demandent pour la deuxième fois au Nabitienga les fado ; cette fois, on leur remet :

Un boubou, une culotte, des bracelets, des fodo, des rouamba (parements des Napagha), un grand boubou, une paire de babouches, un couteau (zangoégo), du sel, des cauris, kalgo (soumbala), nemdo (viande sèche), du mouï (riz), etc...

Pendant une semaine entière ils sont hébergés par le Nabitienga, aidé par les habitants et ses parents.

Le huitième jour, et avant de congédier ses hôtes, le Nabitienga tue un bœuf, fait préparer beaucoup de saghbo, de dolo, tue des moutons, distribue des habits à tous les envoyés du Mogho-Naba, offre près de 50.000 cauris selon leur importance, etc...

Il fait harnacher un cheval avec la selle dont son père se servait de son vivant et on attache l'animal à un piquet devant l'antichambre.

Un des Nayirdamba détache l'animal et fait trois fois le tour de la maison du Naba défunt. A la personne qui monte le cheval, on donne des liguidis (cauris), des habits et la chéchia du Naba, qu'il conserve même à son arrivée à Ouagadougou après compte rendu aux autorités. Le cheval appartient au Mogho-Naba et est confié au Wedranga-Naba (écuyer personnel du Roi).

Le Nabitienga envoie dire à tous les habitants du

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canton que son père étant mort, il veut aller à Ouagadougou chercher sa nomination. Il demande donc le concours de tout le monde (Ykanda) « chef de carré », 100 cauris, dakonré (célibataire), 50 cauris. Satisfaction lui est donnée aussitôt, sauf lorsqu'il y a concurrence. En ce cas, les villages donnent leur aide à la personne qu'ils veulent voir désigner.

A son arrivée à Ouagadougou, le Nabitienga rend des visites et fait de multiples cadeaux.

Il offre : 1° au Ministre du Mogho-Naba de qui il dépend 10.000 cauris, un mouton : 2° au Mogho-Naba lui-même 50.000 cauris à 100.000 cauris, selon son importance, un cheval et parfois même un bœuf ; 3° aux autres Ministres et personnages importants, des cauris dont la quantité varie avec la personne visitée ; 4° le lendemain matin, il rend visite au Zusoaba (chef eunuque) à qui il offre également quelque chose (1.000 à 2.000 cauris, un coq); 5° pendant tout le reste de son séjour, il fait largesse aux « bonsramba » (griots), « benda », « luinsé », doudissi », et « gangando », et autres courtisans.

Nomination. — Le séjour à Ouagadougou d'un candidat kombéré varie entre vingt et trente jours (quelquefois même plus). La veille de la nomination, le Mogho-Naba fait appeler le Baloum-Naba et le charge de faire dire au Nabitienga de remettre un poulet et un mouton pour qu'on fasse son « sacrifice ». C'est la preuve certaine qu'il sera nommé le lendemain ; aussi récompense-t-il bien le sogoné qui vient lui faire cette commission.

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Le mouton (pesgo) et le coq (noraogo) sont envoyés au Mogho-Naba qui les fait égorger dans la cour.

Le lendemain, le Mogho-Naba, dès sa sortie, fait appeler le Ouidi-Naba, le Larrhallé-Naba, le Kamsoro-Naba, le Gounga-Naba et le Baloum-Naba, et leur dit; « Je voudrais laisser aujourd'hui les « koubissi » (enfants de kouré, de funérailles); quelle est la personne parmi les candidats en présence qui est réellement capable de succéder à tel chef décédé. » Le Ouidi-Naba répond : « Sire, faites comme il vous plaira. » Après quoi le Mogho-Naba dit : « Dans ces conditions, je désigne le Nabitienga, car son père ne m'a pas oublié un seul instant durant toute sa vie, et il serait illogique d'évincer son fils. » Le Mogho-Naba réintègre après son palais.

Le Ouidi-Naba regagne sa place et appelle le Baloum-Naba, le Bend-Naba, le Poé-Naba et leur confirme la volonté du souverain. Ces trois personnages remercient le Ouidi-Naba, et le Baloum-Naba à son tour regagne sa place où il convoque le Sogonékassanga (chef des sogonés) à qui il ordonne de lui faire venir un bon sogoné, qu'il envoie accompagné d'un bilbalga (habitant de Bilbalogo, quartier du Baloum-Naba), répondre à l'appel du Ouidi-Naba.

Le Ouidi-Naba leur dit: « Yelé Nakomsé, Nabaoudba tib leb saonrin » (dites aux candidats Naba de sortir au soleil). « Laï soki Nabitienga diessé à ba sin nan ki a yela mé ti niondi kon and nam » (et demander au Nabitienga : avant sa mort, quel est celui de ses fils ou parents que son père désigna pour le remplacer). Le Nabitienga répond : « Yamb yam m'ba ka niak ned

yé » (faites selon votre désir, mon père n'a désigné personne).

Le Ouidi-Naba envoie demander encore : « Là ting ramb yé la me tib kon anda » (Quel est le candidat choisi par les habitants du canton ?), question à laquelle le Nabitienga répond encore : « Ting ramb ka niak ned tib kon yé » (Les habitants n'ont de choix que le vôtre). Cette réponse rapportée au Ouidi-Naba, celui-ci ajoute enfin : « Allez donc investir des pouvoirs le Nabitienga, c'est l'Élu du Mogho-Naba » (Toughin kon nabitieng'nam, ti Mog'Naba yella me tib kon nien). Les envoyés viennent alors lui arracher la peau de mouton qu'il portait en bandoulière et dont ils cornent un coin. On porte le Nabitienga en triomphe devant le tom-boko (litt. trou de la poussière) et le voilà élu Naba aux acclamations de la foule. On l'amène ensuite successivement devant le Ouidi-Naba, le Zusoaba, le Baloum-Naba. Enfin on le conduit sous le hangar où se trouve le Bend' Naba (Chef de tous les tambours du Mogho-Naba) et celui-ci le salue au son de son tambour.

La Zabyouré (littéralement : nom de guerre). Surnom que tout nouveau chef se donne et qui doit remplacer le véritable prénom qu'on ne doit plus prononcer pendant toute l'existence du Naba.

Le Nabitienga, devant le Bend'Naba, dit « Tout le monde m'a honoré, m'a considéré, le Mogho-Naba m'a désigné pour remplacer mon père. Je n'ai pas de « zabyouré » (surnom) mais il ne peut cependant en manquer », et c'est alors qu'il commence à en énumérer quelques-uns (pour l'étude des surnoms, se

reporter au chapitre spécial). Toutes ces formalités terminées, le nouveau Naba monte à cheval et accompagne le Ministre dont il dépend, qui lui fait donner du « zomkom » (eau de farine) et ensuite il l'appelle dans la cour, où il lui offre un canari de dam, des gouré (dolo et kolas). On le fait ensuite accompagner chez son « gangsoba » par une bonne escorte (tambours, cavaliers, etc...).

Tous les candidats évincés doivent se raser la tête immédiatement et venir faire acte de soumission dès que le nouveau Naba revient chez son gangsoba (hôte). Il convient de dire que les candidats portent leur chevelure depuis le jour du décès du Naba jusqu'au jour de la désignation de son remplaçant.

Le nouvel élu fait donner du dam, du saghbo, des cauris aux nayiridamba. Il offre également du dam, des Kolas, des cauris aux tambours.

Le lendemain il accompagne le Ministre chez le Mogho-Naba. A la deuxième sortie (le beg sonré) du Monarque, le ministre l'appelle pour saluer le Mogho-Naba. Le nouveau Naba se rend au « Tomboko », crie trois fois (cris de joie) et vient faire ensuite les « kantissé » (façon de saluer les Mossi). Le Ouidi-Naba dit alors au Mogho-Naba : « Tel chef que vous avez bien voulu honorer hier tient à venir vous exprimer toute sa reconnaissance. » Le Mogho-Naba répond à ses saluts et lui fait donner, pour la première fois, un canari de dam.

Il rend ensuite visite aux Ministres et hauts personnages (Ouidi-Naba, Larrhallé-Naba, Gounga-Naba,

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Poé-Naba, Kamsoro-Naba, Samandé-Naba, l'Imam, Daporé-Naba ; le lendemain au Zusoaba.

Sept jours plus tard, le Mogho-Naba lui donne : un boubou, une pougla (chéchia rouge), un nagpouré (coussin), des néoda (babouches).

Le nouveau Naba se défait de ses vieilles hardes (je dis hardes, car la coutume défend de changer d'habits avant de recevoir ceux du Mogho-Naba) qu'il donne à un parent et s'habille du boubou du Mogho-Naba ; se coiffe du pougla (chéchia) et devient véritablement Naba.

Quelques jours après il demande l'autorisation de regagner ses états. De nombreux représentants ou Nayirdamba l'accompagnent. C'est à ceux-ci que revient le devoir de réunir les notables des villages et de leur dire de se soumettre au seul nouveau Naba reconnu par le Mogho-Naba.

La population, pour marquer sa joie, fait préparer du dolo en abondance et organise des jeux qui peuvent durer plusieurs jours. Les notables des villages viennent se soumettre et jurer fidélité et apportent en même temps des cadeaux (cauris, moutons, etc.), variant avec l'importance des villages et la richesse des habitants.

Au départ des Nayirdamba pour Ouagadougou, le Naba donne : une femme, un boubou, au Bilbalga ; au Soroné du Mogho-Naba : une femme, un boubou ; au Soroné du Baloum-Naba : une femme, un boubou ; à l'enfant du Bend'Naba : une femme, un boubou, etc...

Les enfants issus du mariage avec les femmes ainsi

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données appartiennent respectivement aux maîtres de ces représentants.

Enterrement. — A peu près comme pour le Mogho Naba, sauf en ce qui concerne les personnes. L'aménagement du tombeau est sensiblement le même, avec naturellement moins de pompe.

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CHAPITRE IX

Les deux grandes fêtes des Mossi.

LES FÊTES DU PEUPLE MOSSI

En réalité, il n'existe qu'une seule fête annuelle connue sous le nom de « TINSE » ou « TINGANA » célébrée par les Mossi. Une seconde fête, plutôt familiale, est celle de la « basgha ». Celle-ci prend diverses appellations suivant les régions : C'est le « M'barengma » du Mogho-Naba, la « basgha » pour le vulgaire Moaga, le « Kinkirga » dans certaines régions, etc... Mais tandis que la première est fixée par le Mogho-Naba, la seconde est célébrée par chaque chef de canton, de village, chaque « Ikanda » (homme marié) le jour qui lui convient, de préférence après les récoltes.

A côté de ces principales fêtes chaque village important a sa fête annuelle : c'est une sorte de grand marché. Ce jour-là en effet, il y a du dam (dolo) dans toutes les maisons, la viande abonde, les habitants des villages voisins se rendent à la fête.

Nous ne parlerons ici que des deux fêtes « TINSÉ » et « BASGHA ».

TINSÉ (FÊTE RITUELLE MOSSI) OU NABA OUBRI MA KOURÉ (LES FUNÉRAILLES DE LA MÈRE DE NABA OUBRI).

Origine. — NABA OUBRI, fils de ZOUNGRANA et fon-

dateur de la dynastie de Ouagadougou, célébra brillamment le « kouré » (funérailles) de sa mère. Le « kouré » revêtit l'allure d'une grande fête en raison du grand nombre de bêtes sacrifiées, de l'abondance des aliments préparés et de la quantité de dolo (dam) fabriqué. Comme OUBRI était très puissant, il ordonna qu'on célébrât chaque année, même après sa mort, les funérailles de sa mère « POGH'TOE HINGA » (litt : femme portant barbe).

C'est en mémoire de cela et aussi pour obtenir la santé pour son monde et des pluies abondantes pour les cultures que le Mogho-Naba célèbre assez régulièrement cette fête annuelle connue sous le nom de « TINSÉ » (de Tinga : terre). Elle n'a pas lieu à une date fixe; on la célèbre quand on le peut, ordinairement après les récoltes.

Sacrifices préparatoires. — Avant de fixer le jour de « TINSÉ » le Mogho-Naba fait égorger des bestiaux (bœufs, moutons) et des coqs sur la tombe de ses prédécesseurs.

A tout seigneur, tout honneur; les sacrifices commencent par Naba ZOUNGRANA, père de OUBRI, dont la tombe se trouve à KOMTOEGA, dans le cercle de TENKODOGO. Mogho-Naba fait remettre à LOUMBI-RAOGO-NABA un bœuf pour être sacrifié sur la tombe de Naba OUBRI. Oubriyaogo-Naba (gardien du tombeau d'OUBRI) est chargé de sacrifier la victime.

Les autres animaux sont sacrifiés par OUAGADOUGOU-NABA, représentant la famille des Ninissi (premiers

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habitants du pays) accompagné des eunuques, gardiens des sépultures (Yad'Nanamsé).

Pour les Empereurs dont les tombes se trouvent dans divers endroits de la Colonie, des représentants du Mogho-Naba sont chargés d'amener les victimes, mais les envoyés doivent fêter le « TINSÉ » dans ces villages avant de revenir à Ouagadougou.

Anciennement les bêtes destinées aux sacrifices étaient capturées dans les cantons par les cavaliers commis à cet effet. Mais de nos jours le Mogho-Naba les fait demander à ses vassaux.

Il convient de signaler que certains chefs peulhs fournissent d'eux-mêmes et sans aucune contrainte des bœufs. Ce sont :

Komtam-Silmanaba ;
Gombogo-Silminaba ;
Kourgou-Silminaba ;
Barkoundba-Silminaba.

Fixation du jour de la cérémonie. — Une semaine après les sacrifices, l'Empereur convoque le TANSOBA (Ministre de la Guerre) ou, en cas d'empêchement (maladie ou autre cas fortuit), KONKOSÉ-NABA. Ce personnage doit répondre à la convocation le jour même où elle lui est transmise.

Le Roi réunit alors ses principaux ministres et fixe le jour de la célébration du « TINSÉ » ; ce délai varie entre vingt et vingt et un jours. Mogho-Naba remet au TANSOBA des nœuds de corde (yoda) qui doivent être distribués par le Ministre de la Guerre aux chefs suivants :

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SAPONE-NABA ;

TUILI-NABA ;

LOUMBILA-NABA.

Ce dernier passe sa corde à DAPELGO-NABA et à Méguet-Naba.

Il est fait autant de nœuds qu'il y a de jours séparant cette opération de la date fixée pour la fête.

TANSOBA doit repartir immédiatement pour son village dès la remise des nœuds.

Les personnes qui ont reçu les cordes sont chargées de les transmettre aux « kombemba » (pluriel de kombéré, chef de canton) qui défont chaque jour un nœud.

Célébration de la fête. — Le jour de la cérémonie, un vendredi (« arzouma »), les Ministres et autres fonctionnaires de la Cour se présentent de bonne heure chez le Roi pour lui souhaiter le « Tabo » (la bienvenue).

Mogho-Naba remet une barre de sel (yamss'néré) (litt : meule de sel) pour être distribuée aux dignitaires ci-après :

Ouidi-Naba, Larrhallé-Naba, Gounga-Naba, Kamsaongho-Naba, Bougretenga-Naba, Benga-Naba, Poé-Naba, Tampoui-Naba, Bend'Naba et à leur suite.

La moitié d'une barre de sel est offerte également aux :

Baloum-Naba, Dapoya-Naba, Samandé-Naba, Wedranga-Naba.

Ceux-ci prélèvent une petite part pour le Zussoba

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(chef eunuque) et les Bilbalsé (habitants de Bilbalogo-quartier du Baloum-Naba.

Le lendemain matin, c'est-à-dire le samedi, le Roi fait abattre un grand nombre de bœufs, préparer des boules de sagbo qu'on empile les unes sur les autres pour former des « tahinsés » (montagnes) dans la cour où se donnent les audiences journalières.

Sur ces montagnes de sagbo on place des quartiers entiers de moutons.

A côté du gâteau de mil sont alignées de nombreuses écuelles de riz cuit.

Le Larrhallé-Naba, deuxième Ministre, qui commande le « Samandé » (la Cour), va se placer devant une des montagnes de sagbo, prend une boule dont il fait trois parts qu'il jette au hasard dans différentes directions de la Cour, offrant ainsi à manger aux esprits invisibles et aux mânes des précédents Ministres qui fréquentent ces lieux. Il prononce pendant cette cérémonie des paroles qui peuvent se traduire ainsi : « Prenez ce sagbo et donnez la paix et le bonheur à l'Empereur et à son monde. »

Après quoi le Larrhallé-Naba regagne ses « kouga » (pierres) pour faire place au Gand'Naba. Celui-ci prend à son tour une boule de gâteau et un pied de bœuf. Les gardes du corps du Roi, les suivants des Ministres, les bilbalssés et les serviteurs de l'Empereur se précipitent sur les montagnes de « sagbo » et de riz et c'est à qui emportera le plus gros morceau. Inutile de dire qu'ils en sortent barbouillés de sauce tandis que la moitié des victuailles se répand sur le sol.

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C'est ensuite le départ général des Ministres et de leur escorte.

Chaque « Ikanda » (chef de famille) appelle le vieux de la famille (le patriarche), lui remet un coq et une chèvre — à défaut d'un mouton — pour être sacrifiés aux mânes de ses ancêtres. Les paroles prononcées par le vieillard sont les suivantes : « Youmd yelle n'ta, « ta zagla yel t'm konfo, tif reg kouin gnimassem, la « sounogo, ta pam kodo, la rogom ». « Accepte ces « offrandes de la part de X... et donne-lui bonne santé, « bonheur et prospérité. Protège sa famille. Donne-lui « de bonnes récoltes et des enfants. »

Il n'est pas sans intérêt de dire que, cuite ou grillée, la viande n'est jamais assaissonnée de piment (tiparé) car le TINSÉ peut se courroucer contre celui qui commet une si grande imprudence et le rendra aveugle, à moins qu'il ne soit affligé, dans les années qui suivront, de violents maux d'yeux.

Chacun célèbre le « TINSÉ » chez lui en faisant préparer toutes sortes d'aliments (sagbo, riz, maïs, haricots, etc...) On s'empiffre à plaisir jusqu'à l'indigestion.

Trente jours après la célébration des funérailles de la mère d'OUBRI, TANSOBA (Ministre de la Guerre) rapporte à l'Empereur les nœuds qui ont servi à la fixation du jour de TINSÉ.

Vers le quarantième jour, c'est-à-dire une semaine après le départ du Tansoba, Loumbila-Naba vient saluer l'Empereur. Celui-ci lui offre un bœuf pour le tuer à Widin (Quartier de Ouidi-Naba).

Une semaine après le départ de Loumbila-Naba,

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Guilingou-Tengsoba rend visite au Mogho-Naba — on sait déjà que c'est un ancêtre de ce Tengsoba qui a demandé à Naba Zoungrana son fils OUBRI pour administrer le pays et l'aider à chasser du territoire les Habés aujourd'hui refoulés dans les falaises de Bandiagara (Soudan). Le Mogho-Naba est tenu d'offrir à ce Tengsoba un bœuf et du sel.

C'est enfin le tour de Saponé-Naba (nayrdin) (représentant de Naba KOUDA) et de sa suite qui reçoivent un bœuf et du sel et de Bonsa-Naba Kamsaonguin Tengsoba, Pazani-Tengsoba. Pour ces derniers le Mogho-Naba fait tuer un mouton qu'il fait servir accompagné de nombreux plats de sagbo.

A notre que lorsque les Tangsob-ramba se présentent chez l'Empereur — qu'ils déposent leur « laya » (haches magiques) il leur est tout aussitôt apporté des coqs blancs qu'ils doivent égorger dans le Timpelem (cour).

Comme on le voit cette fête n'a rien d'extraordinaire. Elle a uniquement pour but de concilier les vivants avec les morts et de permettre à chacun de faire bonne chère.

BASGHA DU MOGHO-NABA OU LES DÉCOUCHERS DE L'EMPEREUR M'BA (RARENGMA)
(Que mon père n'arrive pas avant moi.)

BASGHA. — Avant de se nourrir des nouvelles récoltes de ses champs, le « moaga Ikanda » (homme marié, chef de famille) tient à offrir ces produits nouveaux à ses ancêtres. A cet effet il fait préparer avec

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le gros mil rouge, préalablement germé, du « dam (dolo) ou bière de mil et du gâteau avec du millet ou du sorgho. Il tue des coqs et une chèvre — ou un bouc — et convie ses voisins et parents au repas. Il a la certitude que les mânes de ses ancêtres participent à ce festin.

L'Empereur des Mossi ne fait pas exception à la règle. La « Basgha » du Mogho-Naba est célébrée avec plus de pompe et c'est ce nous allons essayer de relater brièvement ci-après :

Il convient de noter tout d'abord que le jour de Basgha aussi bien pour le Mogho-Naba que pour le vulgaire Moaga n'est pas fixé par la coutume. Chacun la célèbre quand il le peut après les récoltes.

Sotasgo. — (L'achèvement de la route.) Avant la pénétration française et la construction des routes par l'Administration, chaque Ministre avait une route, ou, plus exactement, un large sentier, qui conduisait droit à la Cour du Roi et dont l'entretien et la réfection lui incombaient. Comme pendant l'hivernage tout le monde s'occupe de la culture de ses champs, on comprend aisément que ces chemins soient un peu négligés à cette époque de l'année. Quand le Mogho-Naba désire se mettre en règle avec ses ancêtres, il en informe le Ouidi-Naba, premier dignitaire de sa cour et celui-ci prévient les autres Ministres d'avoir à faire débrousser leurs « soyans » (de soré : chemin). Les Ministres font entreprendre les travaux par les habitants de leurs quartiers respectifs mais attendent, pour les pousser jusque devant la cour « Samandé »

du Mogho-Naba, que le jour du « Sotasgo » soit connu.

C'est un samedi qu'a lieu le « Sotasgo ».

Ouidi-Naba fait un gros tas de plusieurs charges de mil (Kaguindi), et choisit une quarantaine de jeunes gens bien constitués pour aller les porter dans la cour du Roi. Ses autres collègues : Larrhallé-Naba, Gounga-Naba, Baïoum-Naba en font autant. (Nous avons déjà vu dans un précédent chapitre : « Redevances dues au Mogho-Naba » que c'est le mil que lui apportent ses Ministres et ses vassaux qui doit servir à la nourriture de l'Empereur et de ses femmes, les récoltes de ses propres champs étant destinées à la nourriture des étrangers et à la fabrication du dolo pour la « basgha »).

Pour donner du courage aux jeunes gens, des tambours les accompagnent en jouant « pang'rog'kamga, kamba komsomba » (la force a fait naître ces gens, ils sont dignes de leurs parents).

A la première sortie du Monarque (Wend' pous yan) (Dieu se montre), et après que les Ministres ont rendu les honneurs, les charges de mil sont présentées à l'Empereur. Soré-Nab (litt. : chemin-chef se plaçant devant le Mogho-Naba, mais lui tournant le dos invite au son du tambour les jeunes gens à achever le travail de désherbage des chemins des Nabas jusqu'à la cour du Roi. On sait déjà que le travail était presque achevé : c'est donc question de pure forme.

Les suivants des Ministres, les porteurs des charges de mil, qui s'étaient préalablement munis de haches, de dabas, voire de bâtons, font semblant de se livrer à un sérieux travail. Ils gesticulent, ils crient, ils chan-

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tent. Soré-Naba se rend ensuite sous le hangar qui lui est réservé et là les jeunes gens le rejoignent.

Ouidi-Naba, Larrhallé-Naba, Gounga-Naba, Kamsaong'-Naba vont saluer l'Empereur et c'est alors seulement que celui-ci leur fixe le jour de la célébration de sa « basgha. »

Le jour de la cérémonie étant connu, les gardes du corps du Mogho-Naba (Samand'Kamba) qui ont pour chefs « Samandé » et Rakogdo reçoivent l'ordre de procéder sans délai à la réfection des hangars situés dans la cour des audiences journalières.

Les découchers. — Trois jours avant la fête des Morts, dès qu'il a remis à sa Pugtiéma (première femme) du mil germé pour la fabrication du dam (dolo) le Mogho-Naba est dans l'inquiétude. C'est que les « Kimsé » (mânes des ancêtres) fréquentent sa maison. Force est qu'il se choisisse une demeure plus tranquille.

Il se rend donc le mercredi soir chez Samand'Naba de Kamsaoghin où il couche, mais rentre chez lui dès les premiers chants du coq, y passe la journée, se rend la nuit suivante à Gounghin et descend dans une maison contiguë à celle de Gounga-Naba, son troisième Ministre : le vendredi il va passer la nuit chez Bangr'Naba Sambo. Enfin le samedi matin de fort bonne heure, il réintègre sa maison à temps pour être présent lorsque le Bend' Naba (chef des Tambours) viendra lui souhaiter heureuse année, longévité et demander à « Wenam » (Dieu) de lui permettre de

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donner de nombreuses « Bascé (plur. de Basgha) à ses prédécesseurs.

Inutile de dire qu'au cours des nuits qu'il passe hors de chez lui, l'Empereur reçoit de nombreux visiteurs et d'importants cadeaux et que les personnes chez qui il descend lui font un accueil on ne peut plus chaleureux.

Sacrifices préparatoires. — Il se passe dans l'intérieur de la maison du Mogho-Naba des choses qui ne sont connues que des quatre personnes ci-après :

Mogho-Naba, Empereur des Mossi;

Baloum-Naba, Grand Intendant et Chef des pages;

Zussoba-Kassanga, Chef eunuque, gardien du sérail;

Pugtiéma, première femme du Mogho-Naba.

Il est procédé à des sacrifices de bétail où le Mogho-Naba lui-même doit tenir la victime et prononcer des paroles sacramentelles et peut-être aussi à l'adoration de certains fétiches sacrés. Quoi qu'il en soit, nous avons acquis la certitude que ces pratiques n'avaient rien de contraire aux principes de la civilisation française puisqu'il n'est nullement question de sacrifices humains. Sans doute nous aurions aimé pouvoir décrire ces vieilles habitudes, mais le secret en est jalousement gardé.

. . . . . .

Célébration de basgha. — Dès que le Mogho-Naba se montre devant le « Zango » (antichambre) Bend'Naba roule du tambour en citant le nom des Nabas défunts à partir de Naba Oubri, fondateur de la dynastie de Ouagadougou.

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Dès que Bend'Naba cesse de jouer on lui apporte ainsi qu'à ses suivants du sagbo (gâteau de mil), du mouï (riz), du « dam » (dolo ou bière de mil) et du nemdo (viande).

De même les Ministres et autres fonctionnaires de la Cour qui viennent saluer le « Tabo » (la bonne arrivée) reçoivent du Mogho-Naba du dam, du sagbo, du riz et de la viande. Le partage est fait par ordre de dignitaires, le reste est réservé aux bilbalessé et aux autres suivants des Ministres.

Vers huit heures et demie, les Ministres, les fonctionnaires de la Cour disent « Wennatassé » (Que Dieu nous accompagne, ce qui signifie : Au revoir) et retournent chez eux.

Bend'Naba et les autres tambourinaires restent dans la cour jusqu'à ce que le Sogon' kassanga (premier serviteur) et le « Zussob' kassanga (chef eunuque) leur apportent de la part de l'Empereur une charge de 10.000 cauris et du dolo. (Autrefois un jeune captif accompagnait ces cauris — on le plaçait assis au milieu des cauris) — et leur disent : « Nab'yet b'wa poustabo » (Le Roi nous envoie vous faire ces présents à l'occasion de sa fête de Basgha).

Le chef des tambours verse à boire au Zussoba et ordonne à ses suivants de jouer ensemble « Tompaongo, Wend'kaouss'Naba nioré, Wenna wilig'vinré (litt : Nous remercions le Roi des cadeaux reçus, que Dieu donne longue vie au Mogho-Naba et nous permette de revenir jouer ici l'an prochain).

Avant de les congédier le Mogho-Naba est tenu de donner un « karfo » (boubou teint en noir importé

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par les Haoussas) au Bend'Naba et un boubou au Loun-Naba (chef des luinsé). On fait également apporter de l'eau de farine au Bend'Naba qui doit la répandre dans la cour. L'Empereur est contraint par la coutume de marcher sur cette eau de « gnimassem » (de bonne santé) pour regagner ses appartements.

Toutes ces formalités accomplies, Bend'Naba accompagné de ses bardes prend congé. La fête est terminée. Les jours qui suivent ils vont rendre visite aux Ministres et autres dignitaires de la Cour et reviennent chargés de cadeaux (cauris et bétail).

Tous ces cadeaux sont conservés par le Bend'Naba ou par toute personne désignée par lui et le partage se fait ensuite en tenant compte de la hiérarchie qui existe entre les griots, la part des vieux étant toujours plus considérable que celle des jeunes.

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CHAPITRE X

Les femmes des Nabas. — Les sogonés.
La Pogslouré.

NABA WARGA ET ORIGINE DES SOGONÉS

Naba Warga était en conflit constant avec le Riziam-Naba, celui qui porta le nom de Mamzi (moi, je ne sais pas). Il dut se porter lui-même sur le champ de bataille, et, pendant cinq ans, ne put vaincre son ennemi retranché sur une montagne et bien secondé par les habitants du lieu.

Warga, après avoir employé vainement tous les moyens en son pouvoir pour vaincre son ennemi, fit couper à ras du sol toutes les récoltes qui arrivaient presque à maturité, capturer tous les animaux qui se hasardaient à descendre de la montagne ; en un mot il ravagea le pays.

Il fit si bien qu'à la fin, pressés par la famine, les habitants de la montagne durent choisir entre la vie du chef qu'ils avaient sous leur toit et la leur : Mamzi fut donc livré et mis aux fers à SAPONÉ [1].

Pendant les cinq années que dura cette rude campagne, Naba Warga, les guerriers mis à part, n'avait pour le servir qu'un jeune garçon, n'ayant pas été accompagné de femmes. Cet enfant lui servait de cui-

1. Chef-lieu de canton dans la circonscription de Ouagadougou.

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sinier et de boy ; en un mot il remplissait l'office de femme, si bien que Warga conclut qu'il était digne d'intérêt et se promit de le récompenser.

Rentré dans ses états, il libéra ce fidèle serviteur après lui avoir, au préalable, donné une femme. Mais, il pensa que plusieurs enfants dans sa cour pouvaient lui rendre les mêmes services ; aussi ordonna-t-il leur recrutement en grand : ce furent les « sogonés ».

Tout garçon recruté comme sogoné s'attend à recevoir une femme, fût-elle de petit prix, à sa libération.

Les « sogonés » sont considérés au même titre que les femmes « Napagba » dont ils portent les ornements. Une rangée de bracelets aux poignets distingue en effet la « napagba » et le « sogoné » de la femme libre.

Leur rôle consiste à servir le Naba. Ce sont eux qui forment un demi-cercle autour du Naba à ses sorties ; l'accompagnent dans ses petites promenades, portent le sceptre et tous les signes distinctifs de la chefferie. Ils servent également à boire au Naba, l'éventent pendant ses siestes à l'aide d'éventails appelés « fika » ; ils font le lit ou plutôt la couchette et enfin quelques commissions. Aussi bien ne voit-on jamais un Naba envoyer une autre personne qu'un sogoné faire une commission à ses femmes.

Le sogoné n'a pas le droit de porter la culotte. Il porte une sorte de petit caleçon appelé « benda ». Tous les Nanamsé (plur. de Naba) ont suivi l'exemple de Naba Warga et, de nos jours, le moindre « kombéré » n'a pas moins d'une dizaine de « sogonés ».

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Le napogré. — Conditions générales. — Nombre actuel des femmes du Mogho-Naba. Parures, etc...

Selon que la « Napagha » (femme de Naba) est destinée au Chef lui-même, à un de ses frères ou fils, les leçons de « Napogré » se donnent soit chez la « Pugtiéma (première femme du Naba) soit chez un des vieux « Nabissi ».

On fait chauffer de l'eau, dans laquelle on met un peu de beurre de karité et d'autres ingrédients et, après avoir fait complètement raser par des vieilles femmes la tête, les aisselles et même les poils du sexe de la jeune fille, la pugtiéma ou le vieillard trempe la main dans l'eau, prononce quelques paroles cabalistiques en même temps qu'il ou qu'elle cite le nom des chefs qui se sont succédé jusqu'au nom du père de celui qui règne.

L'eau est ensuite remise aux vieilles femmes qui baignent la jeune napagha. On lui dicte à ce moment-là les devoirs et obligations du napogré, ce qu'elle peut faire et ce qu'il faut éviter.

La nouvelle femme est ensuite parée de bracelets, de « kouaba » (plur. de kobré) et de « rouamba » ou de bracelets seulement. Le chef peut immédiatement après l'épouser ou, selon le cas, l'envoyer à qui elle est destinée.

La napagha ne doit pas connaître d'autres hommes que son mari durant sa vie; jadis elle était tuée sans pitié si elle enfreignait cette règle.

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Comme nous venons de le voir, la « napagha » ne porte pas de chevelure, c'est le premier signe distinctif, ensuite elle porte une rangée de bracelets aux poignets parfois même aux bras, quelques-unes des « rouamba » aux pieds — (ce sont souvent les favorites), d'autres enfin des « kouaba ». Ce dernier ornement est plutôt réservé aux vieilles femmes.

Le nombre des femmes ou « napagha » est variable selon l'importance du Naba et surtout les désirs des Nabas. D'après les recensements effectués en août 1926 le nombre des femmes du Mogho-Naba actuel était de 37 unités.

Il convient de dire d'abord que la napagha étant considérée comme un bien mobilier, fait d'office partie de la succession du chef défunt. Le nouveau Naba prend quelques vieilles femmes et des jeunes et le reste est réservé à la famille des « Nabissi ». C'est ainsi qu'il n'est pas extraordinaire de trouver dans la maison d'un Naba des femmes qui ont été épousées par deux ou même trois chefs morts. Si elles n'ont pas dépassé l'âge des plaisirs, elles peuvent donner naissance à des enfants du chef sous le toit duquel elles vivent en deuxième ou troisième noce.

La maison d'un Naba est souvent divisée en trois quartiers :

1° La zagkas sanga (la grande maison) : c'est là qu'habitent toutes les vieilles femmes, les indésirables, et qui ont pour maîtresse et surveillante la « Pugtiéma » propriétaire de la maison où se trouvent les « Kimsé » ou mânes des ancêtres.

2° « Zagbilin » ; là se trouvent les femmes d'âge moyen

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qui reçoivent encore de temps en temps la visite de leur époux;

3° « Dogoundba » c'est la réunion de plusieurs jeunes et belles femmes groupées autour de la préférée et qui portent le nom de « Dogoundba » (gardiennes de la case du Naba). Ce sont celles à qui toutes les faveurs sont accordées, qui portent les plus brillantes parures et sont vêtues de « godés » [1]. Les Dogoundba habitent la plupart du temps une ou plusieurs cases selon leur nombre.

Chacune des femmes des deux autres quartiers a sa propre case.

Le Naba ayant trop de femmes pour s'occuper de toutes, ce sont elles-mêmes qui pourvoient à leur habillement et à leur nourriture. Elles sont obligées pour cela de cultiver et de vendre une partie de leur récolte. Chaque Napagha a son petit champ de mil, d'arachides, de haricots et de petits pois.

Les « Dogoundba » ont un champ collectif. Elles aident leurs maris qui, non seulement doivent les nourrir, mais encore sont obligés de pourvoir à la subsistance des « sogonés » et des samand'kamba (ces derniers « gens de la Cour extérieure », autre catégorie de serviteurs qu'on envoie faire des commissions dans les villages ou qui servent de palefreniers.)

Chez les « kombemba » (plur. de kombéré) c'est aux « Dogoundba » qu'il appartient de préparer la cuisine pour les sogonés et les étrangers hébergés par le Naba.

1. Pagne d'un haut prix au Mossi.

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Chaque sogoné ou samanbiga se choisit une mère parmi les femmes du Naba (dans les deux premiers quartiers seulement).

Il aide celle-ci dans la culture de ses champs et reçoit en revanche un peu de nourriture en sus de la ration de sagbo donnée à l'ensemble des « Sogonés ».

A Nanoro [1] par exemple, une femme apportant à son enfant adoptif du sagbo n'avait pas le droit autrefois de remettre la nourriture de la main à la main. On avait creusé dans la Cour du Naba des trous dans lesquels la femme mettait le sagbo et la sauce. Le jeune prévenu venait manger et la femme venait reprendre ses cuvettes.

Enfin, il est défendu actuellement encore de jouer de la guitare quand une napagha passe, à moins que le joueur ne soit le Naba lui-même ou quelqu'un appelé par le Naba. Il convient de noter, en effet, que le Moaga joue de préférence de la guitare quand il a une réception intime, aussi faire de la musique, quand une napagha passe, serait la courtiser.

De la question de la Pogsiouré ou du recrutement des « sogonés » et des « saman'kamba »

En dehors des cas limitativement prévus par la coutume et que nous allons essayer de décrire ci-après, le Naba ne peut dans aucune circonstance disposer des filles de ses administrés soit pour en faire

1. Canton de la circonscription administrative de Koudougou.

ses propres femmes soit pour les donner en mariage à des tiers sans le consentement des parents.

POGSIOURÉ : de POG' diminutif de Pagha (femme) et SIOURÉ diminutif de SIOUBO (donner dans l'attente d'un profit à retirer).

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A la suite de querelles de famille ou même volontairement, le Moaga « peut donner ses filles, celles de ses frères et proches parents au Naba ». On comprend aisément que celui-ci ne peut garder toutes ces filles; aussi en distribue-t-il une partie à ses frères, oncles, enfants ou à de simples Mossi qui lui ont rendu quelques services.

De même, et c'est le cas le plus fréquent, tout « sogoné » (page) ou Samand'biga (garde du corps ou palefrenier) qui a servi convenablement son Naba, reçoit au moment de sa libération une jeune fille, parfois pubère, d'autres fois encore en bas âge.

Dans l'un comme dans l'autre cas, l'ancien serviteur est tenu de rendre visite de temps en temps au Naba et de lui remettre des cadeaux (cauris, coqs). Si la fille habite chez ses parents, outre les menus présents faits au Naba, le fiancé peut faire quelques cadeaux à ses beaux-parents, mais il n'y est pas obligé.

Pogsiouré. — La première fille issue du mariage d'un sujet moaga (ancien serviteur, fils, frère ou oncle du Naba, etc...) avec la femme qui lui a été donnée

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par le Naba devient de *plein droit* « propriété » de ce dernier. C'est ce qu'on nomme « la fille de la « pogsiouré » et qui est appelée à devenir plus tard « pogsiouré » à son tour.

Si le premier-né est un garçon, le Naba peut le prendre à sa Cour dès qu'il atteint l'âge de raison, pour en faire soit un sogoné soit un samand'biga sans que son père puisse faire la moindre objection.

Cela ne revient pas à dire qu'en droit mossi les sogonés et les samand'kamba doivent être forcément les enfants de la « Pogsiouré ». Le Naba, maître absolu de tous ses sujets, recrute ses serviteurs dans les villages de son commandement au fur et à mesure de ses besoins sans que les Mossi fassent aucune opposition à ce recrutement.

Le sort des filles des pogsiouré. — Les filles sont enlevées à leurs parents dès qu'elles commencent à pouvoir rendre quelques services et sont confiées par le Naba à ses propres femmes.

Celles-ci deviennent, en fait, les mères adoptives de ces enfants et comme telles pourvoient à leur nourriture et à leur habillement. Cela n'exclut pas cependant la faculté pour la mère véritable d'apporter des cauris et des habits à sa fille et même, pour que cette dernière soit bien traitée par la « napagha » (femme du Naba), elle apportera aussi de temps à autre à celle-ci du soumbala (kalgo) et du beurre de karité (kamé).

Lorsqu'elles deviennent pubères, le Naba fait son choix, les plus jolies deviennent ses fiancées et les

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autres sont distribuées à quelques-uns de ses administrés ou à ses propres parents.

Droits des parents sur leurs filles. — Les parents tout en gardant la faculté, comme il a été déjà dit, de rendre quelques services à leurs filles, ne peuvent, sous aucun prétexte et dans aucun cas, provoquer la rupture des fiançailles ni empêcher leur mariage. Ils ne peuvent, à plus forte raison, promettre des filles à des tiers ni attendre des cadeaux de quelque nature que ce soit du Naba.

Plus tard et dans le cas seulement où il y a entente entre eux, les maris pourront faire à leurs beaux-parents, des cadeaux de faible importance d'ailleurs puisqu'il n'y a ni obligation, ni contrainte.

Exceptions. — Les filles données aux marabouts par les Nabas constituant une sorte de « saraka » (aumône), les enfants qui naissent de ces mariages appartiennent à leurs véritables pères et le chef n'a pas le droit d'en disposer.

Le sort des garçons. — Quant aux garçons recrutés comme Sogonés, ou Samand'kamba, s'ils sont tenus de remplir leurs devoirs de serviteurs auprès du Naba, ils ne cessent pas cependant d'appartenir effectivement à leurs propres parents de qui ils reçoivent chaque année des cauris et notamment le « fougoïbga » (couverture).

C'est qu'en effet, si les sogonés reçoivent régulièrement du Naba la nourriture et les habits — cela est

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dû à la nécessité qui s'impose à chaque Naba de paraître entouré d'un nombre considérable de pages — il n'en est pas de même des Samand'kamba qui dans bien des cantons et surtout à Ouagadougou à la Cour de l'Empereur, ne reçoivent qu'une maigre pitance tous les deux, trois, quatre ou sept jours, leur rôle de « vagabond » ou de palefrenier devant leur permettre de voler ou plutôt de piller les indigènes. Pendant l'hivernage les palefreniers et les autres Samand'-kamba se rendent la nuit ou le matin dans les champs de maïs ou de mil des particuliers et c'est la rafle; quant aux poulets et pintades qui s'attardent dans le « karaga » (champ de mil à l'entour des habitations), ils leur tordent le cou et les dissimulent dans les bottes de paille destinées à la nourriture des chevaux. Cette règle n'est pas sans exception : quelques ministres de l'Empereur et chefs de cantons assurent au moins une fois par jour — (la nuit) — la nourriture des Samand' kamba et pendant l'hivernage — mais précisément parce qu'ils s'occupent de la culture des champs — ils reçoivent à midi soit des haricots cuits, soit du sagbo (gâteau de mil).

D'une manière générale, on peut dire que cette catégorie de serviteurs n'est pas entretenue par le Naba. Le Samand'biga comme le sogoné se choisit une mère dans la Cour du Naba. Il aide celle-ci dans la culture de ses champs particuliers et lui rend quelques petits services (tissage de ses vêtements par exemple) et en revanche cette mère adoptive lui donne un peu de nourriture en sus de la ration commune.

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Devant une telle situation ceux qui ne sont pas retenus chez le Naba par la surveillance des chevaux ou par quelques fonctions spéciales, passent la moitié de l'année chez leurs parents.

Il n'est peut-être pas sans intérêt de dire que, pour la plupart, les Samand'kamba sont les fils des chefs de villages des Nabissis (fils du Naba), des Nakomsès (descendants des Nabas et Nabissis) et parfois même les enfants des chefs de canton à la cour du Mogho-Naba. Il y a, sans doute aussi, l'enfant du vulgaire Moaga qui n'a pas été fait sogoné parce qu'il n'en a pas été jugé digne. Pour les premiers la mesure de rigueur qui leur est appliquée a pour effet de leur apprendre à « souffrir pour pouvoir commander ».

Libération anticipée. — Si le garçon (sogoné ou Samand'biga) est l'aîné de sa famille et s'il est en âge de prendre femme au moment du décès de son père, le Naba est tenu de le libérer alors même que la durée de son service ne serait pas achevée.

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Une autre coutume. — Le ZAN-BOKO. Il y a une autre coutume un peu bizarre au Mossi. Si au cours de ses tournées le Naba séjourne dans un village et que pendant ce temps les femmes des Mossi accouchent de filles, celles-ci appartiennent de *plein droit* au Naba s'il a été mis au courant de ces événements

Bien souvent cependant il n'en sait rien et le Moaga se garde d'en parler et dispose de son enfant comme bon lui semble.

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Mais c'est plus particulièrement entre Mossi que cette coutume trouve son application intégrale. Le « Sana » (l'étranger) Moaga de passage, est invité par les vieux du village à venir creuser le « zan-boko » (trou dans lequel doit être enfoui le placenta) c'est son « zounogo » (sa chance). Il remet un peu de cauris (100 à 200) au chef de la famille et devient le fiancé de la fillette. Plus tard lorsqu'elle sera pubère l'homme fera les quelques cadeaux prévus par la coutume et rien ne s'opposera plus à leur mariage.

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CHAPITRE XI

Du mariage, de la naissance, de la mort.

I. — Du mariage

Nous allons dans ce chapitre nous contenter de passer en revue tous les aspects du mariage dans l'ensemble du pays Mossi. La coutume est partout la même, depuis le mariage des filles élevées chez le Naba jusqu'au concubinage. Nous parlerons d'abord des formes de mariage les plus fréquentes, nous étudierons ensuite comment est réglée la question dotale et nous conclurons enfin par un exposé de la condition sociale de la femme moaga.

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Les filles ont au moment du mariage de dix-sept à dix-neuf ans. Sauf d'assez rares exceptions la fille de seize ou de dix-huit ans n'est jamais envoyée à son mari, car cet âge est considéré comme très défavorable à la procréation et on prétend même que les enfants nés de femmes trop jeunes ne survivent pas.

L'âge des jeunes gens du sexe masculin varie de dix-huit à vingt-cinq ans.

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A. — *Mariage d'une fille élevée chez un Naba.*

Les filles issues du mariage d'une femme donnée à un ancien serviteur par les chefs de province ou de canton devenaient d'office propriété de ces derniers. Ces filles sont enlevées à leurs parents quand elles commencent à pouvoir rendre quelques services et sont confiées par le Naba à ses femmes. Elles sont, dès lors, considérées comme étant les fiancées du Naba et sont obligées de se plier à toutes les conditions de servitude imposées aux autres femmes.

Lorsqu'elles atteignent l'âge de mariage, elles peuvent être données sans leur consentement ni celui de leurs parents à d'autres serviteurs libérés ou même à des individus quelconques qui auraient rendu service au Naba.

Première forme de mariage forcé.

B. — *Mariage d'une fille donnée par ses parents.*

La fille étant considérée comme un simple objet, comme un être sans volonté, peut être promise dès sa naissance. Bien souvent la reconnaisssance provoquée par l'hospitalité ou l'existence d'une dette ancienne suffit pour qu'une fille soit promise.

Lorsque celle-ci atteint l'âge de mariage, elle se trouve la plupart du temps en présence d'un homme quelquefois plus âgé que son propre père, qu'elle ne peut vraiment pas aimer et sous le toit duquel cependant, puisque telle est la volonté paternelle, elle est obligée de vivre.

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Le fiancé fait quelques cadeaux (poulets, cauris, bière de mil) et demande sa femme. La jeune fille est envoyée au domicile conjugal sans qu'aucune cérémonie soit accomplie.

Second cas de mariage forcé avec consentement des parents.

C. — *Mariage par succession.*

Lorsqu'un père de famille meurt, les femmes faisant partie de sa succession suivent le même sort de partage que les autres biens. Elles sont réparties entre les enfants du défunt ou ses frères, si les enfants ne sont pas en âge de prendre femme. Mais, contrairement à ce qui se passe pour la succession des chefs, où la femme est un objet quelconque, elles peuvent choisir elles-mêmes leur mari parmi les membres de la famille.

Mariage demi-libre.

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A côté de cette forme de mariage que nous appelons plus loin « mariage libre » et qui est très fréquente — car elle compte des femmes de mauvaise vie qui peuvent avoir au cours de leur existence jusqu'à neuf maris — elles ne se contentent du dernier sous le toit duquel elles finissent leurs jours que parce que le retour d'âge leur est une entrave —, il y a aussi le remariage pour cause de veuvage successif. Des femmes ont quelquefois le malheur de perdre plu-

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sieurs fois de suite leur époux. Elles finissent par être fuies comme des « pestiférées, » car elles ont la réputation de personnes sur qui est tombée la malédiction divine : c'est le « kombwinga » mossi ou le « térédiougou » bambara.

D. — *Mariage après demande régulière.*

Lorsqu'un jeune homme désire demander la main d'une jeune fille non encore fiancée, il choisit comme intermédiaire une personne en bonnes relations avec les vieux du village de la fille. Si la réponse est favorable, le jeune homme apporte une poule, un secco (dagnopinri) pour fermer la porte, des fagots de bois. Il repart dans son village et revient par intervalles apporter du mil germé ou de la bière de mil et une poule pour le chef de famille. Ce dernier déclare enfin à l'envoyé : « Dites à X... que nous l'agréons comme notre enfant et que nous tâcherons de lui donner satisfaction dès que possible. »

Quelque temps après, le jeune homme revient encore avec une poule, du mil germé ou du dolo pour les vieux du village. Il rend des visites et fait quelques petits cadeaux. Cette situation dure une ou plusieurs années. Enfin, le chef de famille réunit son petit conseil et fait connaître son intention de donner la fille de Tel à X... de tel Village. Rarement il y a refus car il est seul qualifié pour donner les filles en mariage. On envoie alors le jeune homme faire connaissance avec ses beaux-parents. Aussitôt qu'il a été présenté le jeune homme fait un petit cadeau. (Ordinaire-

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ment on donne des cauris : de 100 à 1.000 cauris.)

Si la fille donnée est l'aînée de sa famille, le fiancé est tenu d'apporter : Un mouton, une pioche, une pintade, de la bière.

On fixe au jeune homme la date à laquelle il pourra envoyer chercher sa fiancée. Il n'a plus qu'à faire quelques préparatifs et à attendre. Lorsqu'on lui amène sa fiancée, il tue des poules, une chèvre s'il en a, fait préparer à manger pour les personnes composant l'escorte. Il doit donner à celles-ci des cauris dont la quantité varie avec sa fortune.

Dans beaucoup de villages les filles ainsi données ne quittent jamais leur mari dans la crainte d'être maudites par leurs parents et condamnées à ne plus revoir leur pays natal.

Enfin si la femme accouche, le mari envoie une poule à la basse-cour du vieux du village et la femme va rendre des visites.

E. — *Les filles ennemies des maris.*

Il s'agit des filles que les devins disent être ennemies des maris.

Promises dès leur jeune âge comme les autres filles, elles doivent ignorer qu'elles sont fiancées, et lorsque d'aventure les futurs viennent rendre des visites, ils sont considérés comme de simples individus de passage qui reçoivent l'hospitalité.

Lorsqu'elles atteignent l'âge de dix-sept ans, les fiancés s'entendent avec les parents qui les envoient soit au marigot, au puits ou au marché le plus proche.

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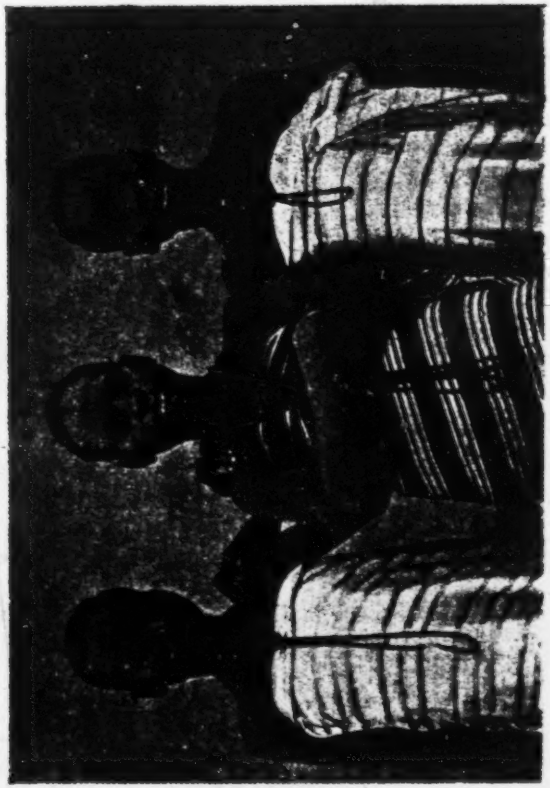
Le fiancé choisit parmi ses camarades les plus forts leur fait boire de la bière et leur donne pour mission d'enlever sa fiancée au passage. Celle-ci, accompagnée d'une femme ou d'autres filles, est cernée au moment où elle s'y attend le moins; elle est saisie par des bras vigoureux malgré le résistance parfois sérieuse opposée par ses compagnes ou ses frères, et amenée au domicile conjugal.

Quelques jours plus tard, on désigne des personnes qui se rendent chez le mari pour apporter les bagages de la fille et recevoir les cadeaux d'usage.

F. — *Forme de mariage libre.*

Le seul mariage qu'on puisse dire libre parce qu'accepté par les deux parties, est celui de la femme qui, n'ayant pu s'entendre avec son premier mari, quitte son village dans l'intention de se prostituer. Assez rarement il y a eu divorce, car le divorce est difficilement accepté par le Moaga. De passage dans un village, elle demande l'hospitalité et vite la nouvelle se répand qu'un femme « libre » est descendue chez une Telle; les jeunes gens accourent cherchant à se faire aimer. On lui envoie des cadeaux et on charge sa logeuse de commissions. Neuf fois sur dix elle accepte le candidat préféré de son hôtesse. Après quelques questions de circonstance sur son origine et ses désirs, un des jeunes gens est agréé comme amant provisoire. Les camarades de ce dernier lui viennent en aide et, pendant quelques jours, c'est une véritable fête au village. On change un peu l'or-



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Trois fillettes Mossi.

[facing p. 176]

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dinaire; on ajoute à la bouillie de la viande; les poules péniblement élevées servent à préparer ces mets. On célèbre ce semblant de mariage. Mais comme nous l'avons dit il n'y a pas eu divorce et le mari abandonné s'informe de tous côtés du sort de sa femme. Aussitôt qu'il connaît le village où elle se trouve — ce village fût-il même éloigné de 100 kilomètres — il n'hésite pas à se mettre en route, en ayant soin de mettre dans une peau de bouc du mil écrasé qui lui servira de nourriture pendant le trajet et 500 à 1.000 cauris; il emporte aussi un coq; l'animal et les coquillages sont destinés au chef de canton de qui dépend l'amant de sa femme et auquel il soumettra sa réclamation.

Ces sortes d'unions donnent naissance aux trois quarts des différends qu'ont à trancher les dirigeants mossi dans leur canton ou province. Aussi le jeune Moaga soucieux de sa tranquillité, s'il ne résiste pas au plaisir d'héberger pendant plusieurs jours la femme qui a déserté le domicile conjugal, ne régularise-t-il jamais par un soi-disant mariage des situations qui se dénouent d'ailleurs facilement, la femme avide de changement ayant, tôt ou tard, le désir de quelque autre amant.

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On peut donc dire que si le mariage forcé présente un gros inconvénient : celui de marier la jeune fille sans lui demander son consentement, il a aussi ses avantages et ses garanties du fait que la femme crai-

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gnant la colère de ses parents quitte rarement son mari. D'autre part ce mariage est de beaucoup préférable au point de vue même de la tranquillité à cette sorte de concubinage qu'est le mariage libre tel qu'il se pratique au pays Mossi.

Position des futurs durant les fiançailles

D'une manière générale, le fiancé ne peut avoir un entretien avec sa future avant le mariage. Tous deux conservent vis-à-vis l'un de l'autre une certaine réserve timide.

A l'exclusion des cadeaux faits aux vieux du village et des cauris données aux futurs beaux-parents lors de sa première visite, le fiancé ne doit plus aucune prestation.

Il est formellement interdit au jeune homme d'avoir une intrigue avec une femme du village de sa fiancée. Le fait entraîne non seulement la rupture des fiançailles, mais encore l'interdiction à l'amant de mettre le pied dans le village sous peine de mort.

Rupture des fiançailles

La rupture des fiançailles n'entraîne pas la restitution des cadeaux reçus. D'autre part, le décès de la fille promise n'est pas cause de la rupture des fiançailles, la famille se faisant un devoir, tôt ou tard, de donner une fille au jeune homme à la place de la défunte.

La rupture des fiançailles peut être prononcée

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d'office dans le cas d'adultère relaté ci-dessus ou pour cause de brouille entre les deux familles.

Mariage entre cousins germains

Cette forme de mariage n'est pas admise. Il ne peut y avoir union valable entre les enfants d'un frère et d'une sœur, entre un homme et la fille du frère de son père ou de sa mère.

Néanmoins, il arrive parfois — le cas est accidentel — qu'une jeune fille donnée en mariage dans un village fort éloigné ait pour époux un descendant d'un arrière-grand-parent (maternel, paternel) de la même famille qu'elle. Le fait, s'il avait été connu, aurait entraîné la rupture du mariage. D'ordinaire la parenté éloignée n'est découverte que fort longtemps après à la suite de recherches remontant à une généalogie fort éloignée. Dans ce cas l'un des conjoints — d'ordinaire c'est l'épouse — porte un bracelet fait de cuivre et de fer intercalés, appelé « kalembanga ». et destiné à conjurer tout sort pouvant naître de ce mariage, en principe, non autorisé. Le « kalembanga » a aussi pour effet de préserver les enfants issus de ce mariage contre la mort subite.

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Polygénie. — La polygénie est la règle commune dans tout le pays Mossi. Sans doute le nombre de femmes varie suivant la fortune et la considération de chacun. De simples chefs de carré un peu aisés, comp-

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tent de 5 à 8 femmes et de nombreuses fiancées. Ces dernières, pour la plupart, sont réservées aux « dakompas » (fils âgés et frères cadets du chef de famille), à condition qu'ils rendent, en retour, de réels services et soient très dévoués au maître de la maison.

Les raisons de la polygénie sont nombreuses, mais la principale est celle de la procréation. L'indigène sous-alimenté ne disposant pas de moyens pour nourrir ses enfants autrement que par le lait maternel est obligé, en effet, d'attendre deux ans ou même trois ans, avant de reprendre ses relations sexuelles avec une femme mère d'un enfant. Aussi préfère-t-il avoir plusieurs épouses.

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Consommation. — La jeune fille conduite chez son mari est confiée à une femme qu'elle traitera désormais de « mère ».

Quelques jours après le départ du cortège — sur la composition duquel nous reviendrons tout à l'heure — l'homme demande sa fiancée. Celle-ci est introduite la nuit dans la case nuptiale, qui ne sera pas spécialement aménagée, et aucune personne n'assiste à l'acte qui doit s'accomplir. Les Mossi n'ont pas de ce côté la même conception que les Bambaras qui enferment en même temps que les deux fiancés, un griot ou une vieille femme, qui doit aider, si c'est nécessaire, le jeune homme à vaincre la résistance de la jeune fille.

Il va de soi que si la fiancée a été trouvée vierge, le

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mari est comblé de joie. L'absence de la virginité diminue fort l'amour qu'il pouvait avoir pour sa fiancée avant de l'avoir possédée. L'homme manifeste d'ailleurs son mécontentement à la fille, certain que celle-ci en rendra compte à sa mère tout au moins.

Le lendemain matin la nouvelle femme regagne la case de sa « mère » et elle est rappelée plusieurs nuits de suite par le mari, avant que celui-ci reprenne à l'égard de ses autres femmes, le tour de rôle quotidien.

La question dotale. Le panier de la fiancée

Dot. — La coutume moaga ne prévoit pas de dot. Si elle exige seulement un ou plusieurs milliers de cauris selon la fortune du fiancé, des poulets, un mouton et de la bière, c'est qu'on n'entend pas toucher de dot à proprement parler ni « vendre les filles ». On n'exige donc que ce qu'on pourra un jour restituer sans trop de gêne.

Panier de la fiancée. — Le panier de la fiancée contient les vêtements de la jeune fille, du savon, du beurre de karité, des cauris, des calebasses et des louches. Il est porté par une des femmes chargées de constituer le cortège.

Cortège. — Le cortège de la fiancée se compose ordinairement d'une jeune fille, d'une femme-mère et d'un garçon.

Il se dirige vers la maison du vieux du village.

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Les parents du fiancé préparent à manger à ces personnes pendant quelques jours. Enfin on leur offre le dîner d'adieu : gâteau de mil dans des paniers, viande de mouton ou de chèvre ou simplement quelques poules. On leur distribue aussi des cauris.

Indépendamment de ces cadeaux, on remet pour la belle-mère, dans un sac cousu 444 ou 1.400 cauris (prix de la virginité). S'il s'agit d'une femme donnée par un chef, la part lui revenant est de 2 à 3.000 cauris pour un vulgaire Moaga, de 10.000 à 50.000 cauris quand le mari est un Naba lui-même. Dans ce dernier cas les personnes composant le cortège reçoivent : les femmes des pagnes, le jeune homme un boubou.

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NOTA. — Tandis que chez beaucoup de peuples, la fille part chez son mari le cœur joyeux, c'est tout le contraire en pays Mossi. C'est une véritable lutte pour arriver à séparer la fille de ses parents. Beaucoup d'entre elles perdent le sommeil et l'appétit. Le jour du départ elles pleurent à chaudes larmes et celles qui ne le font pas sont injuriées par les vieilles femmes.

CONDITION SOCIALE DE LA FEMME MOAGA ET TRAVAUX QUI LUI SONT ASSIGNÉS

La femme moaga est considérée comme une véritable bête de somme. Les travaux du ménage, le filage du coton pour la confection de ses vêtements et ceux de son mari, ne sont pas ses seules occupations.

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Elle aide son mari à cultiver le champ de la famille et personnellement elle possède des parcelles de terre pour ses arachides, ses haricots, etc...

Elle subit de mauvais traitements et est sans cesse tenue de se plier aux caprices de son mari. Elle ne jouit d'aucune considération et n'est appelée à formuler aucun avis. Seul le mari commande au foyer.

Si elle a le malheur de ne pas avoir d'enfants, elle est regardée avec mépris. Au cours des déplacements elle est chargée de fardeaux. Un panier et une pyramide de calebasses contenant ses effets et ceux de son mari se balancent sur sa tête, pendant qu'à ses côtés son époux caracole sur un cheval ou se prélasse sur un âne ; s'il va à pied, il n'aura pour tout bagage que son carquois, ses flèches, son arc et un casse-tête.

La femme moaga peut, il est vrai, traduire par quelques paroles désagréables son mécontentement des mauvais traitements qu'elle subit, car les Mossi admettent que la femme n'a d'autre arme que sa langue; c'est ce qu'ils expriment en disant : « La bouche d'une femme est son carquois. »

La vie conjugale

Interdictions et choses permises. — Il est interdit aux conjoints d'avoir des relations sexuelles :

1° Après l'accouchement, pendant un délai qui ne peut être inférieur à deux ans et demi pour sauvegarder la vie de l'enfant. On prétend, en effet, que chaque enfant vient au monde avec son lait et que le fait de concevoir un autre enfant pendant la période

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de l'allaitement entraîne la mort du premier à qui le lait du « nouveau sera d'un effet funeste ».

2° Pendant la période des règles. La cause de cette défense est qu'après les relations, les fétiches et gris-gris appartenant à l'époux perdent une partie de leur « puissance »;

3° Une femme en état de grossesse rend des visites à son époux pendant les six ou sept premiers mois. Toute relation cesse à partir de ce moment jusques et après l'accouchement comme il est indiqué ci-dessus;

4° La femme enceinte n'enjambe pas son mari : ce geste aurait pour effet d'indisposer celui-ci;

5° L'acte charnel peut avoir lieu impunément dans la cour des habitations — la nuit s'entend. — Par ailleurs il est formellement interdit de l'accomplir à l'extérieur des maisons ni dans une autre position que celle couchée sur une natte ou un secco peulh, en tout cas jamais par terre;

6° L'accouchement devient difficile, compliqué lorsqu'il s'agit d'un enfant adultérin. Pour que la femme soit délivrée il est absolument nécessaire qu'elle confesse le nom de son complice en présence de témoins. En ce cas si le mari l'exige — et il l'exige toujours — le nouveau-né est tué par l'épouse adultère sitôt après l'accouchement [1].

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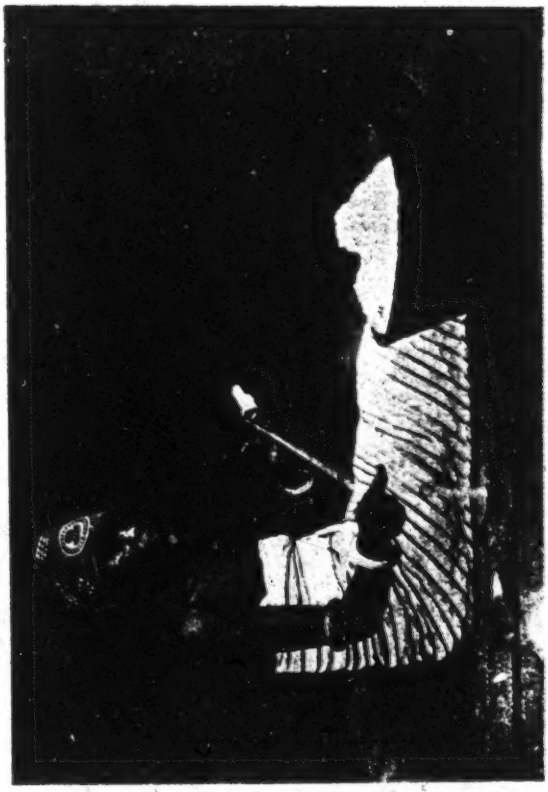
1. Voici le procédé employé : Quelques jeunes mères tordent purement et simplement le cou du nouveau-né : d'autres mettent l'enfant dans une jarre remplie d'eau tiède. Il finit par boire de l'eau à satiété et meurt asphyxié.



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Fileuse Mossi.

[facing p. 184]

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Adultère. — L'adultère commis par les Nakomsé (descendants des Nabas) était puni, avant l'arrivée des Français, par la mort des deux coupables. Chez les Mossi vulgaires on se bornait à chasser seulement le complice de la famille.

Mais si l'amant était un individu sans relations de parenté avec le mari de la femme, on lui défendait de venir dans le village où habitait la femme ; s'il ne tenait pas compte de cet avertissement, il risquait d'être tué.

Généralement, la femme moaga a son amant dans un village éloigné de celui de son mari et assez proche du sien. Lorsqu'elle demande à son mari la permission d'aller voir ses parents, elle profite de son voyage pour passer quelques jours auprès de son amant ou pour envoyer prévenir celui-ci qu'elle se rend chez ses parents.

Dissolution du mariage. Divorce

Il peut y avoir divorce imposé par le mari qui n'aime plus sa femme. Mais ni la maladie, ni la stérilité ne peuvent être invoquées pour cela. Dans ce dernier cas on considère simplement que Dieu n'a pas voulu donner d'enfants à la femme. Souvent celle-ci est regardée avec mépris, d'autres fois on ne tient aucun compte de ce fait.

Le nouveau mari d'une femme abandonnée n'en-

1: Delobsom FA28 Mossi

tretient et ne peut entretenir aucune relation avec le précédent époux qui, en aucun cas, ne consentirait à le voir, alors même que le divorce serait intervenu de son propre consentement.

Du reste la nouvelle union se fait souvent dans un autre village.

De la question de la nationalité au Mossi

L'enfant suit en pays mossi la nationalité de son père. Tout enfant né d'un sujet moaga est par cela même Moaga.

Tout enfant, garçon ou fille, dépend uniquement de son père et, par-dessus ce dernier, du chef de famille. Dans aucun cas, la mère ne peut donner sa fille en mariage.

La femme d'origine moaga qui par suite d'une circonstance quelconque, épouserait un étranger n'acquiert pas pour cela la nationalité de son mari. De même l'étrangère (une Bambara, une Djerma, par exemple) qui se marierait à un Moaga ne perdrait pas sa propre nationalité. Au regard des parents du mari aussi bien que du reste de la population c'est une étrangère, obligée de pratiquer les coutumes de son époux, mais qui n'en demeure pas moins une étrangère.

Ainsi donc le fait par un sujet moaga de s'expatrier n'entraîne pas *ipso facto* un changement de nationalité pour ses enfants majeurs ou mineurs restés dans le pays d'origine.

L'enfant légitime prend d'office la nationalité de

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son père alors même que celui-ci, étranger, aurait pour femme une « Moaga ».

De même sont mossi les enfants issus d'un père moaga et d'une femme moaga ou d'une mère étrangère.

Quant à l'enfant illégitime, sauf le cas de reconnaissance qui ne peut d'ailleurs avoir lieu que s'il y a eu mariage antérieurement à sa naissance — il suit la nationalité de sa mère.

Si la légitimation avait lieu seulement après la naissance, l'enfant en souffrira tôt ou tard, son origine bâtarde ne devant pas rester longtemps cachée.

Perte de nationalité

La perte de nationalité ne peut se poser au Mossi que dans les deux cas suivants :

a) Lorsque le sujet Moaga a été expulsé pour faute grave de son village, chassé par ses parents et considéré comme ne faisant plus partie de la famille ;

b) Lorsqu'un Moaga s'expatrie, se fixe définitivement en pays étranger soit pour y faire du commerce, soit pour y étudier les préceptes de l'islamisme. Il est obligé d'abandonner ses habitudes, de faire fi des coutumes ancestrales, il perd ainsi son statut personnel. S'il veut embrasser l'islamisme il change de nom, de prénom et si par hasard il revenait dans son village d'origine, il ne tiendrait plus à être comparé au Moaga dont il n'a plus ni les habitudes ni les croyances et qu'il considère d'ailleurs comme lui étant désormais inférieur.

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Ainsi qu'il a été déjà dit, la femme moaga mariée à un étranger ou la femme étrangère mariée à un sujet moaga conserve chacune sa propre nationalité. Le mariage n'entraîne donc pas perte de nationalité. Seules les habitudes peuvent avoir été modifiées, mais il est certain que la femme moaga, même après un long séjour à l'étranger, reprendrait en peu de temps les pratiques et les habitudes de son propre pays; il en est de même de la femme étrangère divorcée d'avec son mari moaga qui retournerait dans son pays.

Naturalisation. — La naturalisation n'étant connue ni admise, les enfants nés sur le territoire mossi d'un sujet étranger et d'une Moaga ou d'une étrangère restent des étrangers. D'autre part, les enfants suivant la nationalité du père, en aucun cas le divorce ne peut avoir d'effet sur leur statut.

II. — De la naissance

Phénomènes de la conception. — Les indigènes n'ont pas une idée bien définie du phénomène de la conception. Pour eux, comme cause première il y a Dieu (Wenam), Maître des Cieux et de la Terre, qui donne des enfants. Mais il semblerait que Wendé ou Wenam oblige des « kinkirsi » (esprits) à se transformer en œuf humain dans la transmission du sperme au moment de l'éjaculation.

Les « Kinkirsi » sont des êtres invisibles qu'on dit ressembler à des petits enfants et qui habiteraient à proximité de certaines maisons ou de certains bos-

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quets. Ils ne sont visibles que pour quelques personnes favorisées.

On croit aussi accessoirement à la réincarnation des ancêtres ou de quelques parents décédés.

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Grossesse. — On sait que la cessation complète des règles, le développement des seins et leur noirceur sont signes de la grossesse chez la femme. On sait aussi que l'enfant doit venir à neuf mois, mais l'impossibilité dans laquelle on se trouve de pouvoir préciser la date probable des couches, fait que la femme enceinte est l'objet de soins incessants, et est constamment surveillée par les vieilles femmes. D'une manière générale on laisse agir la nature, mais d'aucuns préfèrent consulter les devins et les prêtres, faire des aumônes et des sacrifices, pour éviter l'avortement.

Durant la grossesse il est défendu à la femme de manger du miel et d'une façon générale, tout aliment sucré.

Seguene-vando (de seguene : porter un pagne, vando, feuillages). Quelques mois après la cessation des règles, le femme enceinte est envoyée chez le vieux de la famille dans le « Kim-dogo » (case des kimsé, mânes des ancêtres). Là elle est complètement déshabillée et on lui attache des feuillages autour des reins.

Accouchement. — Les couches ont lieu dans la propre case de la femme. Il n'y a aucune préparation

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spéciale. De vieilles femmes spécialisées par une longue pratique aident la parturiente tandis que d'autres font chauffer de l'eau pour laver le corps de l'enfant de toutes ses impuretés.

À l'exception des vieilles, aucune autre personne n'assiste aux couches. On chasse les femmes qui n'ont jamais été mères, et à juste raison, car la vue de l'opération pourrait entraîner la stérilité chez elles.

Enfin si l'enveloppe ne sort pas en même temps ou peu après la délivrance, il y a certaines spécialités pour en hâter la sortie.

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Trois ou quatre jours après l'accouchement, suivant qu'il s'agit d'un garçon ou d'une fille, la mère qui est restée jusque-là dans la maison fait sa première sortie.

Elle a soin de prendre à la main une faucille pour se préserver contre les revenants ou autres mauvais esprits.

Les co-épouses de la nouvelle mère et ses parents lui apportent du « safandé » (savon), du kamé (beurre de karité), du kalgo (soumbala), d'autres lui donnent des cauris. Le père de l'enfant fait égorger un mouton ou un coq et préparer un gâteau de mil.

Une boule de sagbo (bouillie de mil) est envoyée en même temps qu'une cuisse du coq à la femme qui a servi d'accoucheuse. On rase en partie la tête de la mère et celle de l'enfant, et il ne reste plus qu'à choisir un nom pour ce dernier.

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Choix d'un nom. — Le prénom d'un enfant varie au Mossi suivant les circonstances qui ont précédé la naissance ou l'événement important qui l'a marquée. Nous classerons les enfants en deux catégories :

A) Les enfants ordinaires :

B) Les enfants demandés.

Nous entendons par « enfant demandé » celui né après que les parents ont consulté des devins, fait des aumônes et sacrifices ou employé des moyens magiques

A) L'enfant ordinaire étant considéré comme un don volontaire de DIEU, son nom est donné par les proches parents du père, à moins qu'une circonstance récente ou éloignée n'oblige celui-ci à donner à son enfant un nom ayant un sens.

Exemples : Prénoms communs vulgaires :

Bila, Poko.

Noms ayant un sens :

Passektale : de Passek, insuffisant ; talé, rancune, haine, signifie : Je ne vois pas en quoi ce qui est fait ou existe peut être la cause de la haine qu'on nourrit contre moi.

Parateida : Paraté, ne pas vouloir ; sida, vérité (Ennemi de la vérité, nom signifiant que les hommes n'aiment pas la vérité.

Dimpougoubnoma (litt. Dima, Grand Chef, ROI ; pougbo, suivre ; noma, profitable, bon). Il s'agit d'un enfant issu d'une mère donnée par un chef ou dont le père vient, peu avant sa naissance, de recevoir un cadeau important d'un chef.

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B) Enfants demandés. — Après plusieurs années de mariage si une femme reste sans enfants, le mari consulte les devins, fait des offrandes et des sacrifices, emploie des gris-gris et enfin a recours au « Tinsé » (tinkougri, de Tinga terre, kougri pierre) ou au « Tiga » (arbre fétiche). La femme se rend avec son mari chez le possesseur du dieu. Ils apportent un coq et des cauris. Après avoir exposé l'objet de leur visite, le coq est égorgé par le prêtre et si l'offrande est acceptée, les époux sont congédiés avec promesse formelle que leurs vœux se réaliseront.

Si par la suite la femme accouche, l'enfant se nommera obligatoirement Tinga et ses frères et sœurs Timbila, Timpoko, etc..., ou, suivant le cas, Tiga, Tibila, Tipoko, etc...

Il arrive aussi qu'après des accouchements successifs les enfants meurent. Les Mossi, nous l'avons déjà dit, croyant à la réincarnation supposent alors — d'autres affirment — que c'est le même enfant qui revient ; aussi pour l'obliger à rester lui donnent-ils un nom significatif.

Exemple : Yewayan (litt. revenu). C'est-à-dire le voilà revenu, c'est encore lui, nous le reconnaissons.

Le Nom est le même pour tous les membres d'une même famille.

Cicatrices. — Lorsqu'un enfant atteint l'âge de un à deux ans, on appelle une vieille femme qui trace sur sa figure (joues, menton, front, voire sur le nez) des traits plus ou moins réguliers avec un rasoir. Ces marques diffèrent suivant les régions — (elles ne sont

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pas les mêmes à Kaya qu'à Ouagadougou par exemple).

Le dessin le plus fréquent est cependant le suivant : Trois traits réguliers partant du front et se dirigeant vers le menton, un ou deux traits partagent le nez et rejoignent par les joues les trois traits verticaux.

Fostering. — Si une mère n'a pas suffisamment de lait, elle s'en va de grand matin sous un arbre, par exemple le « kamsaongo » ou le « wédega » (de la famille des lianes gohines) pour lui demander du lait. Elle se met à genoux et croyant s'adresser à une personne vivante, elle fait sa demande humblement mais avec quelle foi ! Il paraît que souvent la prière est exaucée. Mais alors il est défendu à la femme de revenir jamais sous l'arbre car elle perdrait son lait.

Le choix d'une nourrice ne se pose en pays mossi qu'en cas de décès de la mère. De préférence, c'est à la sœur du père qu'est confié le petit orphelin. Si la sœur du mari de la défunte a déjà été mère, elle demande du lait à un arbre dans les conditions susindiquées, même si son dernier accouchement date de plusieurs années. Enfin, si l'enfant ainsi nourri est une fille et survit, elle devient propriété de la sœur du père qui la donnera plus tard en mariage à un prétendant de son choix.

III. — De la mort

L'importance des funérailles varie suivant l'âge et la qualité du défunt.

a) *Nitiema* (personnes âgées). — Au décès d'un

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vieillard ou d'une vieille femme, tous les parents habitant le village sont convoqués. Le corps est gardé un jour entier dans la chambre mortuaire après quoi on procède à l'enterrement. Le fils et la fille aînés de la famille jettent des cauris dans le tombeau pour permettre à leur père ou grand-père de s'acheter de l'eau « quand il aura soif et de payer les droits de passage sur la route de l'Éternité ». Les personnes chargées de l'enterrement s'emparent d'une partie des cauris.

La famille organise des jeux et des danses qui durent trois à quatre jours. Enfin tout le monde se fait raser la tête et on fixe la date des grandes funérailles. Ce jour-là, tous les parents, fils, filles mariées, proches parents, petits-fils, apportent des poulets, des bestiaux et des cauris. Tous ceux qui habitent le village même sont tenus de faire préparer de la bière. On tue des animaux et poulets et la viande est distribuée aux personnes venues pour la circonstance. Les danses

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Tombes. — *Différentes formes de tombeaux.* — Il existe au Mossi différentes formes de tombeaux. Ce sont : 1° Yaobulga (tombeau en forme de puits). Très en honneur, réservé à tous ceux, vieillards et jeunes gens, morts de mort naturelle.

2° Sampogyaogo (litt. de Sampogré, blessure ; yaogo, tombeau) Tombeau de forme rectangulaire réservé à tous ceux qui sont morts à la suite d'une grave blessure, morsure de serpent, coups de foudre, noyés ou tombés sur les champs de bataille. Pour cette deuxième catégorie de trépassés, il n'y a presque pas de kouré (funérailles). Seuls, les parents se rasent la tête et reçoivent la visite des personnes qui viennent leur apporter des condoléances. Aucune réjouissance, aucune cérémonie n'a lieu. Le jour du renouvellement du kouré, on distribue un peu de bière aux visiteurs.

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durent plusieurs jours et les danseurs comme les tambourinaires reçoivent des cauris.

A noter que les petits-enfants gardent pour eux leurs poulets ou bestiaux après les avoir tués et qu'ils en disposent comme bon leur semble.

Sinddo. — Le « sinddo » n'a lieu qu'au décès d'une personne âgée. L'opération consiste à dépecer un animal vivant, dont la viande sitôt cuite est mangée par tous les membres de la famille du défunt.

Pendant la durée de l'opération, une personne forte serre la gueule de l'animal pour l'empêcher de crier, une seule plainte de la bête étant signe de mort certaine pour quelqu'un de la famille.

Tombeau. — Le tombeau des personnes âgées a la forme d'un puits au sommet ; à l'intérieur, il est rectangulaire ou évasé de manière à pouvoir coucher le mort.

b) *Ikanda* (homme marié). La cérémonie est beaucoup moins pompeuse pour un jeune marié. Le défunt est tout simplement lavé, puis enroulé dans un secco peulh et enterré. On tue quelques poulets. Le renouvellement des funérailles ne comporte pas de danses.

Règles générales pour les chefs de famille

Le lagda (croque-mort), après que le défunt a été lavé, habillé, enroulé dans une natte ou un secco et

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déposé sur le seuil de sa case [1] commence à lui offrir le sang des poulets qu'il égorge à ses pieds. Il prononce quelques paroles rituelles qui peuvent se résumer ainsi : « Accepte ces poulets et ces cauries et ne reviens pas, que tout ce que tu laisses sur la terre profite à tes héritiers ! etc. »

On procède ensuite à l'enlèvement du corps. Arrivés

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1. *Venré* (ouverture).

Nous avons vu que chez les Nakomsé on pratiquait un trou au mur ou à la palissade formant enceinte et que c'est par cette ouverture qu'on faisait passer le corps du défunt pour le conduire à sa dernière demeure.

En général, il s'agit d'un père de famille. On dépose le corps en face de l'ouverture et son fils aîné et toutes les filles (celles du défunt et celles de ses frères) doivent sortir par le trou avant la dépouille mortelle. Pour cela les filles enroulent des feuillages autour des reins pour remplacer les pagnes ; quant au fils aîné il enlève aussi son cache-sexe. Des personnes saisissent les bras, d'autres les jambes et on fait passer les enfants à tour de rôle par l'ouverture en faisant en sorte que leur corps frôle celui du mort.

Le fils aîné du défunt en passant par le « *venré* » prouve ainsi aux assistants qu'il n'est pas cause du décès de son père ; quant aux filles, même celles qui sont devenues des femmes — qui osent sortir par le trou c'est par des bravos qu'elles sont accueillies par la foule. Les femmes reçoivent d'importants cadeaux de leur mari. Voici pourquoi : Les filles qui avant d'être conduites chez leur maris ont été enceintes ne peuvent et n'osent même pas sortir par l'ouverture. Le défunt et les autres kimsé (mânes) les frapperaient mortellement.

Aussi bien certaines d'entre elles disparaissent-elles à cette heure tragique, à la grande honte de leurs époux.

On désinfecte la case mortuaire en brûlant une certaine herbe odorante connue sous le nom de « Sompiga ». C'est la plante appelée par les Bambaras et les Wolofs « Benguefala » ou « Benguefira » et qui a été très employée par les Européens à l'occasion de la récente épidémie de fièvre jaune, soit comme tisane, soit comme infusion ou mélangée à l'eau des douches.

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au tombeau, les porteurs en font trois fois le tour avec le cadavre, puis le déposent à terre. Le croque-mort pénètre dans la tombe et dispose la couchette. On défait la natte et on lui remet le corps. Les membres de la famille, les parents se mettent alors tous à pleurer. On ferme l'ouverture de la fosse avec une pierre et on recouvre le tout de terre.

La fille aînée du défunt ainsi que les femmes de ce dernier, se barbouillent le corps de cendre. La pugtiéma (première femme) et la fille aînée entourent leur taille de feuillages, tandis que les autres membres de la famille portent des lianes sur le front : c'est le premier deuil.

Quarante ou cinquante jours après a lieu le renouvellement des funérailles : jeux divers, tam-tams, mise à mort d'animaux, bière, etc... (voir explications ci-dessus) : c'est le second deuil.

c) *Dakonré* (célibataire). Seuls, ses père et mère se rasent la tête. On l'enroule dans un secco mossi et on l'enterre sans autre cérémonie. Il n'est même pas lavé.

d) *Bi-kouré* (funérailles d'un nouveau-né). — Si le premier enfant d'une jeune mariée vient à mourir, la jeune femme retourne chez ses parents et y passe treize jours. Après ce délai elle revient chez son mari. Elle est alors accompagnée de quelques parents. Ceux-ci apportent des poulets et pintades qu'ils font tuer pour être accommodés avec un gâteau de mil envoyé au mari de leur fille. L'époux à son tour fait tuer poulets et pintades, prépare du gâteau et fait l'échange avec ses beaux-parents.

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La coutume tient absolument à ce que les parents de la femme passent la nuit en route avant de rentrer dans leur village. Même si le village n'est pas éloigné, ils passent la nuit dans la brousse.

Ajoutons qu'au second accouchement, si l'enfant suit le sort du premier, il n'y a plus de kouré.

e) *Pagh'sin kataré biga* (femme sans enfants). — Aucune cérémonie. On l'enterre sans façon, comme pour le célibataire.

De l'existence de Dieu, du ciel et de l'enfer

Le Moaga croit à l'existence d'un être supérieur invisible ou visible, car beaucoup ont longtemps considéré le soleil comme un « dieu », qui a créé le ciel, la terre et tout ce qui existe. Cet être, il l'appelle « Wende ou Wenam » (litt. Wende, monde, nam, chefferie : Maître du Monde).

Si le Moaga attribue quelquefois ses malheurs aux mauvais sorts de ses ennemis, il reconnaît néanmoins que rien ne peut se faire sans le consentement de Dieu, dont il ne cesse de prononcer le nom dans toutes les circonstances de la vie, notamment lorsqu'il fait des sacrifices.

Les féticheurs, magiciens, sorciers eux-mêmes, lui reconnaissent une puissance et l'invoquent bien souvent.

Il y a une certaine catégorie de Mossi, qui, ne faisant ni gris-gris ni fétiche, n'étant ni musulmans ni chrétiens, qui ne font et ne veulent du mal à personne,

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pardonnent volontiers à ceux qui les offensent, ne voient dans tout ce qui leur arrive (bonheur ou malheur) qu'un effet de la divine Providence; ce sont les inspirés.

Mais le déisme des uns et des autres n'est guère approfondi. Tous croient qu'une personne décédée rejoindra ses aïeux pour vivre éternellement avec eux. Mais ils s'imaginent « la Route de l'Éternité épineuse « et le Royaume de Dieu si éloigné de la terre qu'ils « donnent à leurs morts des cauris pour payer le « passeport là où ils rencontreront des difficultés, la « facilité du voyage étant subordonnée aux bonnes « ou mauvaises actions du défunt ».

C'est là, peut-on dire, une très faible idée de l'existence d'un ENFER ou d'un PURGATOIRE. Mais cet Enfer n'est pas le « Feu inextinguible des Chrétiens, ni les atroces souffrances des Musulmans » puisqu'il faut que la personne soit avec sa famille.

L'*Alkyoamé*. — On entend quelquefois dire par un Moaga : « Ce que tu m'as fait je ne peux m'en venger, mais nous réglerons ça le jour de l'« alkyoamé. » Ceci est encore une conception quelque peu superficielle du Jugement de DIEU. Le Moaga ne croit guère à un jugement dernier, pas plus qu'à la fin du Monde, ni à la résurrection des Corps, mais il entend par ces mots « alkyoamé daré » le jour où tous deux — son ennemi et lui — mourront et que Dieu aura à faire subir à l'un une peine — passagère s'entend — pour le préjudice causé à l'autre.

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CROYANCES ET SUPERSTITIONS SUR L'AME APRÈS LA MORT

De quoi se compose l'être humain d'après les Mossi ?

L'homme se compose de trois éléments : le corps visible, le siga ou toulé (âme) et le « kima » (revenant).

Le « siga », qu'on peut appeler âme, est la partie de l'homme qui doit retourner à Dieu.

Siga. — D'après les Mossi, le « siga ou toulé » est peureux. Une grande souffrance, une maladie, le décès d'une personne aimée peuvent l'obliger à abandonner provisoirement le corps. Il prend alors la forme humaine. Il peut être aperçu par la personne elle-même ou par d'autres. En ce cas on a recours à des gris-gris ou fétiches pour le faire revenir.

Son abandon provisoire du corps ne présente pas, dit-on, d'inconvénients puisqu'il ne gêne en rien le fonctionnement régulier de l'organisme humain, mais comme l'un ne peut pas vivre sans l'autre, son absence prolongée peut être cause de mort.

Kima (de ki, mourir). C'est une sorte de silhouette de la personne qui va mourir. Il n'est visible qu'à certains initiés. On dit cependant qu'il est un peu difforme et que sa présence en un lieu peut faire dresser les cheveux sur la tête ou donner des frissons qui paralysent les membres et empêchent de marcher.

On distingue le « siga » du « kima » à cette différence que ce dernier étant déjà au nombre des morts a la tête complètement rasée, porte de la cendre en forme

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de croix ou d'un X sur le front, ou a les pieds maculés de sang.

Dès que la personne meurt, son kima rôde quelque temps à côté de sa maison et va rejoindre ses ancêtres à Pilimpikou.

Pilimpikou. — Pilimpikou est un village faisant partie de la circonscription administrative de Koudougou (Haute-Volta). Il y a là sur une montagne, une grotte considérée comme le lieu sacré où se donnent rendez-vous les « kimsé » de tous les Mossi morts.

La légende raconte qu'on peut retrouver à Pilimpikou un parent décédé si on n'a pas eu la bonne fortune d'assister à ses derniers moments ou si l'on désire savoir où le défunt a caché une partie de sa fortune ou un objet précieux.

Il suffit pour cela, dit-on, de se rendre chez le Tingsoba de Pilimpikou et de lui demander d'user de son influence pour appeler le mort.

Le Tingsoba vous fait la recommandation formelle de ne verser aucune larme à la vue du « revenant » et, continue la légende, si l'on ne garde pas le secret de l'entretien qu'on a eu avec le kima, on mourra avant un an.

Enfin, on prétend que lorsqu'ils vont recevoir de nouveaux membres — ils composent, en effet, la grande famille de tous les Mossi morts depuis des générations — les kimsé organisent des jeux dont l'écho est entendu par les habitants de Pilimpikou.

Toutefois les jeunes gens des deux sexes, célibataires au moment de leur décès, les nouveau-nés,

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retournent là où ils étaient avant leur venue au monde pour « reprendre au sein d'une autre femme ou de leur précédente mère la forme humaine ». Les Mossi, nous l'avons déjà dit dans un précédent paragraphe, croient à la réincarnation des morts.

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CHAPITRE XII

La pénétration de l'islam en pays Mossi.

L'ISLAM AU PAYS DU MOGHO-NABA

Le Mogho-Naba est avant tout un animiste comme tous ses sujets et on s'expliquera mal que son fétichisme se concilie avec les dogmes compliqués de l'islamisme et les nombreux interdits du Christianisme.

Et pourtant le Mogho-Naba sait à son heure être catholique ou musulman tout en respectant les traditions des ancêtres. C'est ainsi qu'à l'occasion des fêtes chrétiennes de la Noël, l'Empereur des Mossi assiste dévotement à la Messe de Minuit. Il gardera cependant sur la tête sa toque, à l'instar de l'Évêque, sa mitre. De même il embrasse l'islam pendant les trois fêtes ci-après : 1° Le moaghrem (Zembendé mossi). Le Ramadam (Nolokré — détacher la bouche) et enfin la « Zoulhési (la Tabaski ou le kibsa mossi).

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Avant de dire comment le Mogho-Naba célèbre ces fêtes musulmanes, nous allons donner dans un rapide aperçu l'origine de la pénétration de l'islam au Mossi et la désignation des Imams.

I. — ÉPOQUE A PARTIR DE LAQUELLE L'ISLAM A PÉNÉTRÉ AU MOSSI

C'est sous le règne de Naba Doulgou, 23e Mogho-

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Naba à partir de OUBRI, fondateur de la dynastie de Ouagadougou, que l'Islam prit racine dans l'Empire des Mogho-Nabas, et c'est de cette époque que date la nomination d'un Imam à Ouagadougou.

Naba Sawadogo qui succéda à son père Doulgou mit ses enfants à l'École Coranique. Un grand nombre d'entre eux y reçurent une assez bonne instruction; l'aîné de la famille qui monta plus tard sur le trône sous le nom de Naba Koutou devint même un marabout. C'est du règne de cet Empereur que date le développement de l'islamisme au pays mossi et l'attribution de noms musulmans aux enfants des Mogho-Naba :

Saïdou, Mahama, Moumouni, etc..., etc...

II. *Gambaga Naba* (Chef d'un vaste territoire dans la colonie britannique de la Gold Coast) fut, nous l'avons déjà vu, le père de NYENNENGA, mère de OUEDRAOGO, fondateur réel de l'Empire Mossi. On sait que tel ROI a tendance à imiter un parent illustre et à suivre ses traces dans tout ce qui est de nature à le distinguer.

Eh bien, voici pourquoi Doulgou installa un marabout à côté de lui. On rapporte qu'indépendamment de ses nombreux Ministres, le Roi de Gambaga avait un Imam chargé de régler les affaires compliquées. Il était en même temps le conseiller intime du Roi. Mogho-Naba Doulgou, qui eut un vaste territoire se crut aussi puissant que son ancêtre de Gambaga et voulut, pour certaines affaires, n'avoir à prendre d'autre avis que celui d'un Imam. L'Empereur avait

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un ami marabout dans la région de Zitenga qui se nommait MOUSTAPHA. DOULGOU le fit venir à Ouagadougou et lui conféra le titre d'Imam.

Inutile de dire que ni le savoir de cet adepte de l'Islam, ni ses qualités n'ont été contrôlées et que cet Imam n'a pas été choisi par d'autres marabouts. C'est ainsi que l'Imam du Mogho-Naba est avant tout un dignitaire de la Cour au même titre qu'un OUIDI-NABA par exemple et comme tel sa nomination est soumise à certaines règles barbares. C'est ainsi qu'après lui avoir remis le turban et le burnous, insignes de la chefferie, il est invité à se rendre dans une maison appelée « Surbinda. » Dans ce lieu sacré on lui présente une calebassée du breuvage abominable connu sous le nom de « Tibo » et qui n'est autre chose qu'une mixture composée de sang d'hommes et d'animaux — breuvage que tout chef de canton, tout ministre et fonctionnaire de la Cour de l'Empereur doit boire à sa nomination, ce qui le rend incapable de trahison et de lèse-majesté. L'Imam saisit la calebasse, prononce les paroles sacramentelles ci-après : « Je ne trahirai jamais le Mogho-Naba dans quelque circonstance que ce soit, je lui viendrai en aide en cas de guerre avec l'ennemi, j'exécuterai sans discussion tous les ordres que je recevrai de mon ROI, etc... », fait le simulacre de porter le breuvage à la bouche et le rend au Ouidi-Naba qui remet le liquide dans la jarre de cuivre où il est soigneusement conservé depuis près d'un millénaire. Il est, ces formalités remplies, l'Imam du Mogho-Naba. Comme pour les chefs de canton ou les Ministres cette fonction se transmet dans

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la même famille. Sans doute, le fils n'est pas appelé à remplacer son père s'il n'a pas reçu une instruction suffisante pour régler à la satisfaction de l'Empereur les quelques rares questions qui peuvent lui être soumises, mais le choix se porte toujours sur un membre de la famille de MOUSTAPHA, premier Imam.

CÉLÉBRATION DES FÊTES MUSULMANES PAR LE MOGHO-NABA

Moaghrem (*zambende des Mossi*). — Le Moaghrem, c'est le commencement d'une année nouvelle de l'hégire. Chaque famille musulmane doit faire bombance la veille au soir. Le lendemain matin c'est-à-dire le dixième jour du mois de Moaghrem on lit le « sourata », livre de l'année, et on sait le Saint qui présidera à la destinée du Monde pendant trois cent soixante jours. On prescrit des aumônes. Cette fête de retour à la joie a pour effet de commémorer solennellement le jour où le Patriarche Noé (Nabi Nouhou d'après les Marabouts), seul béni du Seigneur, put après le déluge qui extermina l'Humanité, mettre pied sur la terre ferme. Ce fut un retour à la vie et ce fut le jour du Feu.

Les Mossi qui n'ont jamais compris l'origine des fêtes musulmanes les célèbrent à leur manière. Ainsi par « jour du feu » ils n'ont pas compris que c'était le retour à la vie de famille, à la cuisson des aliments par le feu, mais ils ont imaginé une drôle de coutume qui rappelle plutôt la prise de la Bastille. Ce jour-là, en effet, ils allument des torches, se pourchassent et se brûlent les uns les autres. Cela occasionne parfois de

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véritables plaies qui, fort heureusement, guérissent facilement.

Les Silmissi (Peulhs du Mossi) font mieux, ils s'arrosent le corps d'eau fraîche : c'est tout au moins un souhait de bonne santé.

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La tabaski (*zoulhési*) (*kibsa Mossi*). — Autrefois le jour de la Tabaski, le Mogho-Naba était tenu de se rendre à Zoaghna dans la grande mosquée.

Yarnaba — chef des Yarcés — (dioulas dont l'ancêtre KOANDA est venu au Mossi sous le règne de Koumdoumié, huitième Mogho-Naba) est chargé de sacrifier les bœufs et moutons remis par l'Empereur et dont la viande doit être distribuée à l'ensemble des fidèles. Le salam avait lieu dans la mosquée. A cette occasion le Mogho-Naba devenait musulman même s'il n'était pas croyant. Il devait figurer parmi les fidèles qui se placent immédiatement derrière l'Imam. Dès qu'il a fini de réciter les versets des livres sacrés, l'Imam se tourne vers les fidèles, dit « a salama leckum » et serre ensuite la main du Roi. La prière étant terminée, l'Empereur revient chez lui où peu après l'Imam doit venir égorger le mouton de tabaski. Mogho-Naba doit tenir lui-même la queue de l'animal.

Le ramadam (*Nolokré Mossi*). — On sait que le Ramadam ou le carême des musulmans (le nolokré des Mossi — noré bouche, lokré, défaire le nœud, détacher) est une suite de privations et d'abstinences

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où le corps abandonné sans défense est sujet à toutes sortes d'indispositions se transformant parfois en de véritables maladies.

On sait aussi que le Mogho-Naba est soumis à un protocole sévère, à un ensemble d'obligations qui le mettent dans l'impossibilité absolue de pratiquer — fût-il croyant — le jeûne des marabouts. Cependant on lui a tant vanté le « yelsomdé » (le bonheur) du pénitent après les trente jours de souffrances que l'Empereur — car il n'est pas indifférent à ce qui touche les splendeurs de l'Au-delà, demande dans son entourage quelques hommes de bonne volonté pour pratiquer l'abstinence en ses lieu et place; ils recevront le jour de la fête de nombreux cadeaux (boubous, cauris, etc...).

Voici en résumé comment le Roi des Mossi célébrait le Ramadam, il y a encore quelques années :

Le jour de nolokré, Gare-yarga (Yarga, préposé à la selle) apporte de fort bon matin de l'hydromel dans une vieille gourde qui a servi, dit-on, à Naba Rimba — il boit un peu de cette liqueur pour « couper le jeûne » et offre une calebassée au Mogho-Naba dans le même but. Le reste est donné aux Ministres et autres fonctionnaires de la Cour.

L'Empereur offre à manger à tout le monde présent (cuvettes de riz, écuelles de sagbo); il fait abattre au préalable un ou deux bœufs et de nombreux moutons.

Vers sept heures et demie du matin Mogho-Naba se rendait avec son escorte habituelle à Roundé-yiri (lieu de prières, sorte de mosquée en plein air qui se

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trouvait au nord-ouest de la maison actuelle de Ouendasida, adjudant de Police, — et assistait au salam que présidait l'Imam.

Après la cérémonie ce dernier entouré de ses fidèles allait rendre visite à l'Empereur pour la « doua » (sorte de bénédiction qui consiste à réciter quelques versets de Coran). L'Imam recevait des colas, des moutons ou un bœuf.

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A l'heure actuelle les deux mosquées n'existent que de nom; la seule mosquée est celle de l'Imam dans le quartier Mohémé (Marabouts), mais le Mogho-Naba actuel n'assiste jamais au salam des jours fériés. Il se rend au Cercle puis chez le Gouverneur et revient chez lui attendre la visite du représentant de l'Islam en pays Mossi.

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Le seul Mogho-Naba qui fut vraiment musulman est Naba Koutou, 27e successeur d'Oubri. Envoyé à l'École coranique de Sagabtenga il y fit, dit-on, de bonnes études. Appelé à succéder à son père, il installa devant la porte des Femmes, une mosquée. Par tradition une mosquée se trouve au même endroit du Palais de tout Mogho-Naba même incroyant comme l'Empereur actuel par exemple.

Naba Koutou faisait régulièrement son salam suivant les rites de la religion musulmane et observait même les trente jours d'abstinence du mois de carême.

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Tous ses enfants portèrent des noms musulmans. Tous, à l'exception de son premier fils qui lui succéda sous le nom de Naba Sanum, ont été envoyés dans des écoles coraniques mais aucun d'eux n'y fit des études sérieuses, dominés qu'ils étaient tous par le désir d'être Nabas.

De son vivant Naba Koutou n'a jamais ordonné lui-même la mort d'un individu, fût-il coupable. Il aimait la paix. Aussi lorsque ses Ministres lui soumettaient des cas graves il leur disait toujours : « Allez faire pour le mieux et ne me rendez pas compte du sort réservé aux coupables. » Comme PONCE PILATE il faisait retomber sur ses ministres la responsabilité des crimes. Prêtant peu de foi aux dires des prêtres du Poéré (confession par moyen magique) il acquittait lui-même les personnes condamnées à la peine capitale par ce procédé barbare.

LES NABAS MUSULMANS

I. La quasi-totalité des habitants de Nobéré, Nobila, Toècé (cantons dans la province actuelle du Gounga-Naba) sont convertis aux préceptes de l'islamisme par convenances personnelles. Ils sont les descendants de Naba Saga, 22e successeur d'OUBRI.

II. De même les habitants des villages de Doundoulma (descendants de Naba KOM, 21e successeur d'OUBRI), de Garpinné et de Kouila (descendants de Naba Doulgou ou Roulgou, 23e successeur d'OUBRI) passent pour de fervents musulmans.

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III. Kombissiri-Naba SIGUIRI, Cercle de Ouagadougou.

IV. Ramongo-Naba BAONGO, Cercle de Koudougour, tous deux descendants de Naba Warba, 19e successeur d'OUBRI étaient convertis aux préceptes de l'Islamisme.

Les Chefs actuels de ces cantons sont des musulmans lettrés et possèdent des mosquées.

V. Sao-Naba, descendant de Naba Ouédraogo, Cercle de Ouagadougou) est converti à l'islamisme depuis près de trente ans. Son premier maître fut un pèlerin revenu de la Mecque et originaire du village de Nakamtenga (près de Kombissiri). Il continua ses études coraniques sous la direction de Sayenouné Bathily, marabout originaire de Kaédi (Mauritanie) thaumaturge redoutable que l'Administration locale dut renvoyer dans ses foyers en 1916. Sao-Naba possède une mosquée, mais la religion musulmane ne semble pas avoir diminué ses croyances animistes puisqu'il continue à sacrifier aux mânes des ancêtres et à boire du dolo de temps en temps (aux fêtes coutumières par exemple).

VI. Gourpila Naba, Cercle de Ouagadougou, Ancien Samand biga du Mogho-Naba actuel, sa conversion à l'Islamisme est de fraiche date (de six à sept ans).

VII. Boala Naba, Cercle de Ouagadougou, musulman fervent.

VIII. Gaongo-Naba, Cercle de Ouagadougou, musulman fervent.

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Signalons enfin pour terminer que l'Empereur actuel qui a continué par tradition à donner des noms musulmans à ses enfants, a plusieurs de ses fils dans des écoles coraniques. Le nombre de ceux-ci dépasse certainement celui de ses enfants envoyés à l'École primaire officielle.

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Communiqué par la Mission des Pères Blancs à Ouagadogou.

La Maison du Gounga-Naba.

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CHAPITRE XIII

De l'habitation.

Maison des chefs mossi

Nous avons déjà vu dans un précédent chapitre « Corvées et Obligations des sujets Mossi vis-à-vis de leurs chefs », comment sont effectués les travaux de construction et de réfection de la maison des Nabas. Nous savons aussi que le Naba, comme tous ses sujets, consulte le Devin sur le choix de l'emplacement où doit être édifiée son habitation, à savoir s'il doit conserver la maison de son père ou s'il doit construire sur l'emplacement de la maison de son grand-père ou enfin, s'il peut, les esprits lui étant défavorables, s'installer sur un terrain encore inoccupé.

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La maison d'un Naba se distinguait autrefois de celles de ses administrés par le nombre considérable de cases dont elle se composait et aussi par la présence sur le faite des cases d'œufs d'autruche vides.

Le croquis ci-après donne une physionomie exacte de la maison des Nabas avant la pénétration française et même encore de nos jours dans certaines régions.

Il n'existait pas de maisons à argamasse ou terrasse à la mode indigène. Le Mogho-Naba en possédait bien une, mais bien que copiée sur le style

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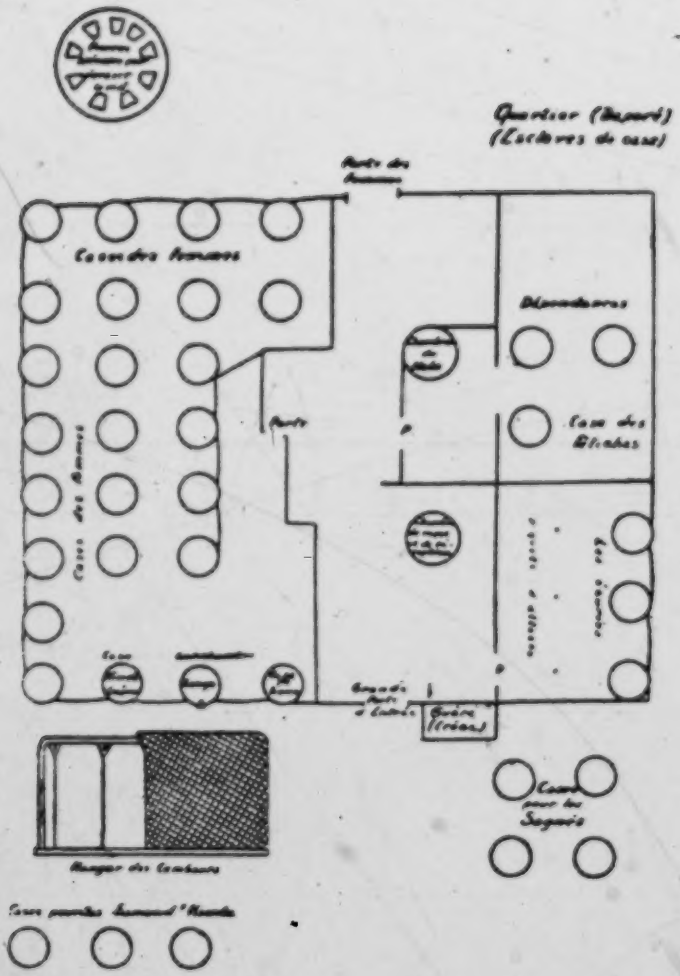
Djennéen, elle n'avait à part quelques rares portes et fenêtres minuscules qu'une seule ouverture de la grandeur d'un canari pratiquée au plafond pour donner, dit-on, de l'air aux habitants et qu'on bouchait pendant l'hivernage.

Ouidi-Naba, premier ministre, et Kamsaongo-Naba chef eunuque, possédaient eux aussi des « tatas » d'un modèle plus réduit, le premier pour conserver l'eau sacrée « Nam-Tibo », le second les richesses de l'Empereur son maître.

Nous verrons plus loin la description de l'habitation type du Moaga. A l'heure actuelle et depuis l'installation du Gouvernement à Ouagadougou, la quasi-totalité des Chefs de Province et de canton possèdent des maisons simili-européennes. Le Tata actuel du Mogho-Naba, la Maison du Baloum-Naba, du Gounga-Naba, du Ouidi-Naba à Ouagadougou ; celles du Konkistenga-Naba à Imasshoro et à Zoétigomdé ; du Lallé-Naba à Koudougou — j'en oublie — pour ne citer que les principales — prouvent que de réels progrès ont été accomplis dans le domaine de l'habitation par les chefs Mossi.

Sans doute, comme toutes les maisons européennes de la région qui nous occupe, ces constructions sont malheureusement en banco. Mais la règle n'est-elle pas à peu près générale en A. O. F. ?

Chez les deux plus évolués des ministres de l'Empereur, les salons de réception sont disposés de façon à ce que le visiteur reçoive à tout moment du vent frais sans cesse renouvelé par de larges ouvertures. Pendant les fortes chaleurs un panka placé au milieu



LA MAISON DES NABAS

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de la pièce et actionné par un sogoné donne de l'air aux visiteurs essoufflés. Au mur toujours blanchi au kaolin sont fixés çà et là quelque image de réclame, le portrait d'un grand chef ou des photographies de famille qui donnent un peu de gaîté à ces appartements. Tout ceci démontre de la part des chefs indigènes un réel souci d'évoluer dans la voie du progrès et de la civilisation.

Un certain nombre de notables de Ouagadougou ont construit ces dernières années des maisons à argamasse, plutôt pour sauvegarder les biens de leur famille contre les incendies et les vols que pour y habiter.

Enfin avant d'aborder l'étude de la case du Moaga, il convient de dire que la coutume exige que tout nouveau Naba habite, pendant les trois premières années de son avènement, des « songodo », c'est-à-dire des cases tout en paille que nous décrirons plus loin. Après seulement il pourra construire en dur.

II. — De l'habitation des sujets mossi

Installation provisoire. — Avant de construire sa case de marié, le jeune homme consulte le Devin à l'effet de savoir si l'emplacement choisi n'est pas hanté par de mauvais esprits : s'il aura de la joie et du bonheur en s'y installant.

Le Devin, même si le lieu ne présente à ses yeux aucune particularité, prescrit toujours de sacrifier une volaille, un animal, ou d'offrir des aumônes. Le jeune homme s'entend pour cela avec le vieux du

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village, le chef du clan ou s'il s'agit d'un Nionioga, le Tingsoba (de tenga, terre, soba, maître), pour sacrifier la victime.

Le Tingsoba se rend sur les lieux et fait apporter deux petites calebasses contenant la première de l'eau ordinaire et la seconde de l'eau mélangée avec de la farine : il invoque tous ceux qui l'ont précédé, verse l'eau par terre, priant Dieu d'accepter celle-ci pour sa femme Tinga qui l'absorbe ; puis il égorge la poule en disant : « On — on, mamé ka koud' ti y a niesmé yé ya saramb' boumbou, yaramb' boumbou, ti oua ta mamé (paroles signifiant à peu près : « Accepte l'offrande que je t'offre au nom de X... Il s'est adressé à moi parce que je suis le Tingsoba du village. Je ne me considère pas comme plus habile que les autres habitants du village, mais cette cérémonie est chose de nos aïeux, c'est affaire de succession et j'ai pris la place que m'a léguée mon prédécesseur. »

La poule est maintenue les deux pattes en haut, la tête inclinée, pour que le sang se mêle à l'eau farineuse, puis elle est lancée quelques pas plus loin. Si l'offrande est acceptée la victime tombera sur le dos. On se hâte alors de la ramasser et on arrache quelques plumes qu'on colle au sang à peine coagulé.

La poule est remise à des enfants pour être plumée et brûlée au feu sans assaisonnement, sans sel ni piment. Une cuisse est offerte au Tingsoba et le reste de la viande est mangée par les membres de la famille de celui qui s'installe.

Cependant une partie du « saonré (le foie) est jetée à l'endroit du sacrifice et ainsi offerte aux esprits,

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habitants invisibles du lieu, qui favoriseront le nouveau ménage et l'aideront à avoir des enfants.

Notons que, pour sacrifier, le Tingsoba peut se tourner dans n'importe quelle direction, aucune orientation précise n'est exigée.

L'installation provisoire consiste, pour un jeune mari, en une paillotte sans agrément, composée des branches d'un arbre appelé « randega » piquées en terre, attachées au sommet par une ligature, entourées à la base de nattes Mossi (sougzakpinri); le tout est couvert par une toiture en chaume.

Installation définitive. Travaux. — Un an après l'installation provisoire, si les moyens du nouveau mari le lui permettent, il procède à son établissement définitif, c'est-à-dire qu'il construit des cases en argile, reliées entre elles par des murs plus ou moins réguliers.

Pour cela il faut d'abord creuser le sol, détremper la terre qu'on a tirée du trou, puis la pétrir et faire des boules de mortier. On trace sur le terrain une circonférence avec une corde attachée à un piquet central ; ensuite, les fondations sont aménagées dans le sol ; elles ont une profondeur de 0 m 20 environ. On y jette du mortier et on commence l'édification du mur qui a toujours une forme circulaire et dont la dimension est plus ou moins grande. On laisse sécher le mortier avant de se remettre au travail et la construction se poursuit ainsi jusqu'à son achèvement complet, c'est-à-dire lorsqu'elle atteint 1 m 65 environ. La maison est d'abord bâtie sans aucune ouverture, mais lorsque les murs sont achevés, on y pratique une

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porte basse en forme d'ogive. L'intérieur de beaucoup de cases mossi est barré par une murette appelée « kogré », ce qui rend la case extrêmement obscure. On pratique aussi quelques petits trous avec le manche d'un daba. Ce sont, avec la porte basse, les seules ouvertures et c'est par ces minuscules ouvertures que le Moaga tirait des flèches en cas de guerre. Avant de poser la toiture, les murs sont recouverts de cendre mouillée. Cette pratique assure la santé des nouveaux habitants.

La toiture est conique; elle se compose de perches fortement attachées au sommet par des lianes. Sur ces perches, on place des nattes rigides appelées « zarsé » retenues par des fibres et au-dessus de la paille tressée. Il faut une vingtaine de personnes pour poser le toit. La construction est terminée. Il ne reste plus qu'à crépir. Les femmes ramassent à cet effet une terre spéciale, le « boalga » qu'elles mélangent avec de la bouse de vache ou du crottin de cheval; elles enduisent les murs avec cela. Cette opération terminée, elles étendent du ferrugineux sur le sol, répandent dessus un peu d'eau et dament à l'aide de morceaux de bois plats appelés « silpama ». Après le damage on fait le « sasgo » : cela consiste à verser sur le sol uni une matière gluante « boundou » mélangée de charbon broyé. On passe et repasse là-dessus des tessons de bouteilles ou des pierres spéciales « sassega ». Cette couche noire vernie empêche le ferrugineux de salir les vêtements. Pour rendre cet enduit résistant d'autres l'arrosent de « kanmé », c'est-à-dire d'une infusion préparée avec l'écorce du fruit du néré.

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Ouvriers employés à la construction. — Le maître de la maison est aidé par ses propres frères et ses autres parents de même clan. Il ne demande pas de concours étranger. Les femmes vont seulement chercher l'eau nécessaire à la préparation du mortier.

La terre est tirée d'un trou pratiqué non loin de la maison et appelé « tan-nako » (de tando : terre ; nako, trou). Cette excavation est comblée, plus tard, avec toutes les saletés provenant des détritus du ménage, des ordures de la cour, etc..., le tan-nako, bien fumé par ce moyen, est semé de maïs et ce champ se nomme « kamanga ».

Les outils. — Les seuls outils employés sont le sitoiga (pic indigène) et le « wanka » (pioche).

MOBILIER DES CASES. — *Case des hommes.* — Dans la case des hommes, on ne trouve pour tout mobilier qu'une natte ou un secco fin, un traversin fait avec des bandes de coton ou du kapock, le carquois, le casse-tête, des flèches, l'arc, un grand couteau « zangoégo » et une lance. Çà et là, de petits sacs à grisgris et autres amulettes pendent au mur. Le « pilgou » (sorte de corbeille ovale, faite de paille) sert à enfermer les habits.

Case des femmes. — D'un bout à l'autre de la case on trouve des « billi » (petits morceaux de bois piqués au mur et destinés à recevoir les calebasses, les écuelles (lensé), les lassés (cuvettes en terre), les soutissi (louches), etc.

Au fond de la pièce, des mottes de terre sèche,

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creusées au milieu, reçoivent les vases « yuiya », les marmites « dougdo » servant à la fois de malles pour les habits et de greniers pour les produits vivriers provenant de la récolte des champs particuliers de la femme.

Plan d'un carré. — A l'entrée de chaque maison, les cases qui se trouvent à gauche sont celles des femmes, celles du maître de la maison sont situées à droite. Tout à fait à l'extérieur de la maison, une ou deux paillottes dans le genre de celle que nous avons déjà décrite, servent de chambres à coucher aux « dakompa » (jeunes gens du sexe masculin).

Le chef de la maison habite tout seul. Il ne peut, du reste, en être autrement puisqu'il appelle ses femmes à tour de rôle.

Les femmes cohabitent avec leurs enfants en bas âge ou avec les fiancées de leur mari en attendant, bien entendu, que ces dernières aient aussi leur propre case.

Cuisine. — Il est rare — très rare — de voir au Mossi une case spécialement affectée à la cuisine. La chambre à coucher d'une femme lui sert en même temps de cuisine.

C'est au mari qu'il appartient, en général, de distribuer les provisions à la femme chargée de faire la cuisine pour la famille : mais il n'en est pas de même partout. A Ouagadougou par exemple, la plupart des femmes nourrissent leur mari. Ce dernier leur fournit des provisions pendant l'hivernage seulement, c'est-à-dire à l'époque des cultures.

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Pour la préparation des aliments, il y a un tour de rôle quotidien. La femme se fait aider par ses co-épouses pour écraser le mil au néré (meule) du quartier mais prépare seule le gâteau de mil ou sagbo.

Poulaillers et bergeries. — Il existe dans la maison de chaque chef de carré une petite paillotte pour la volaille. De même, une petite case ronde en terre sert de bergerie aux chèvres et aux moutons.

Réparations de la maison. — La réparation de la maison endommagée par les pluies ou menaçant ruine, est faite par les habitants de la maison (chef de famille, dakompa, femmes et frères du père) sans le concours de personnes étrangères. A part le repas qu'on prend comme à l'ordinaire, il n'est payé aucune rémunération. Le chef de famille se contente de dire seulement après le travail « n'fa nel toumtogo, imaou nian (Merci de la fatigue, merci beaucoup du travail).

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CHAPITRE XIV

De l'habillement au Mossi.

I. — Habillement des Nabas

Dans ce chapitre nous examinerons les différentes modifications et améliorations apportées dans l'habillement des chefs Mossi.

1° *Avant et pendant les vingt premières années de l'occupation française.*

a) *Zangoego Pelga* (grand boubou), fait d'un assemblage de bandes de coton de petite largeur et assez finement tissées. Ces habits taillés et brodés par des spécialistes se vendaient de 70 à 100.000 cauris [1].

b) *Karfo*, grand boubou, bleu foncé, de la même étoffe que le précédent (50 à 70.000 cauris).

c) *Noufa*, grand boubou et pantalon, d'une très belle étoffe tirant sur le gris foncé (valeur 2 esclaves), boubou 70.000 cauris, pantalon 50.000 cauris.

d) *Zag'banko*, habit de couleur, prix variant entre 40 à 50.000 cauris.

e) *Baourou ganga* (gris clair) couverture d'une va-

1. 100 francs de notre monnaie. A l'heure actuelle le billet de 5 francs vaut 1.000 cauris. La pièce en argent de 5 francs s'échangeait contre 5 à 7.000 cauris suivant les fluctuations du cours.

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leur de 50 à 60.000 cauris qu'on pouvait transformer à volonté en boubous et culottes.

Tous ces habits étaient importés au Mossi par des Haoussas (Zangoéto) de passage, et quelques yarcés, les seuls commerçants de l'époque et qui eux-mêmes allaient les acheter à Gambaga (Gold Coast), seul point de transactions alors connu. Nous l'avons dit dans un précédent chapitre, les Mossi ne connaissaient d'autre pays que le leur.

Évidemment, on rencontrait quelques Nabas qui se contentaient de quelques vêtements grossiers en bandes de coton du pays.

II. — Bonneterie

Les habitants de Béré (village dépendant de la province actuelle du Gounga-Naba) confectionnaient des bonnets appelés « manfo » fort prisés des chefs Mossis (prix 2.000 à 3.000 cauris) :

Quelques notables portaient des bonnets faits à Wéogtinga (province du Ouidi-Naba) par les descendants de Naba Zombré, 20e successeur d'Oubri).

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2° *Modifications et améliorations apportées depuis la création du gouvernement de la Haute-Volta* (1919).

Les différents tissus provenant des comptoirs européens, les riches bazins blancs ou indigotés remplacent de plus en plus actuellement les habits d'autre-

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Tisserand Mossi.

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fois. Ces étoffes sont transformées en boubous, culottes, blouses et forkias (ce dernier, sorte de longue blouse à larges manches fort estimée des traitants Sénégalais) ; des chemises de toutes nuances et de tous modèles s'entassent dans les malles et les cantines achetées au Commerce ou fabriquées sur place par des menuisiers instruits dans les ateliers européens.

Les bandes de coton, disent un grand nombre de chefs, sont lourdes, encombrantes et gênent la marche.

Des bonnets, façon d'Orient, exportés de la Gold Coast, des coiffures de velours grenat, voire des casques, remplacent les bonnets d'antan.

Les « markatassé » et les « Mougou », sortes de bottes rustiques en cuir travaillé par les cordonniers mossi cèdent la place aux souliers, bandes molletières, leggins ou à des bottes et babouches autrement façonnées — les cordonniers de Djenné sont maintenant fort connus au Mossi.

Enfin un grand nombre de chefs (notamment les chefs de Province, grands dignitaires de la Cour de l'Empereur) se distinguent les jours fériés par des costumes chamarrés de broderies d'or et d'argent — produits de l'Industrie marocaine. Deux de ces Ministres endossent même, avec fierté, le costume européen.

III. — Habillement des sujets mossi

a) *Hommes.* Le « koiglinga » et le « dandaogo » (sortes de longues blouses à manches), le « koursi » (culottes) en bleu foncé, et le « karfo » (ce dernier

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rarement cependant à cause de son prix élevé), un zangoégo (grand couteau haoussa), un « manyanfo » (bonnet), un « boussan-zandé » (casse-tête en fer), un « logwaoga » (carquois et flèches) étaient l'accoutrement et les armes, un jour de fête, d'un Moaga *qui veut se faire admirer*.

Aujourd'hui il porte les mêmes vêtements en bandes de coton du pays (sauf le « karfo »), mais il convient de dire que les jeunes gens revenus de la Gold Coast ou des Colonies voisines possèdent presque tous des habits en tissus de comptoirs, s'ils ne s'affublent pas, comme cela arrive souvent, d'un pardessus ou d'une redingote usagés. Dans les villages de la brousse on porte encore le grand couteau (zangoégo) qu'un « albolé » (ornement) permet de suspendre aux épaules.

Cependant quelques jeunes gens, petits traitants aisés, s'habillent à la manière des Soudanais de grande ville.

b. *Femmes*. — La femme moaga n'avait guère plus de 3 pagnes : 1° Un pagne qu'elle portait tant qu'elle restait à la maison et qui est son habit de travail ; 2° Un pagne indigoté (fou-sablaga) qu'elle ne mettait que les jours fériés ou pour se rendre au marché ; enfin un troisième pagne blanc ou teint en bleu foncé à longues franges, sorte de « dissa bambara » qu'elle jetait sur les épaules ou sur la tête les jours de cérémonie. Elle renouvelait cette garde-robe lorsque cela devenait nécessaire.

Seules les femmes des Nabas et de quelques no-

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tables avaient en plus des pagnes cités, le « godé » (pagne d'origine haoussa et d'un prix assez élevé[1]).

Comme parures (ornements) la femme moaga ne connaissait guère que les bracelets en cuivre rouge ou jaune et le « kindifou » (perle d'un rouge brillant). Il s'agit, évidemment, des seules femmes qui avaient le moyen de s'en procurer ; le « kindifou » n'était vendu qu'à 50 cauris la perle, mais la rareté des coquillages (cauris) accaparés par les Nabas, les notables et les Rakangba (ces derniers Mossi aisés) rendait son prix inaccessible à la faible bourse de la femme moaga vulgaire.

Les bracelets fabriqués avec une pierre spéciale (mélange de gris et de blanc) appelés « manekagcé » (au singulier « Manekaka ») n'étaient portés que par les Yarbi (jeunes yarcés des deux sexes). Ces bracelets étaient colportés, dit-on, par les Kibissi (Habés) et provenaient, paraît-il, de la région de Tombouctou.

Les bracelets en argent n'appartenaient qu'aux « dimbissi » (descendants des Dima : famille des Mogho-Naba), des « Kombemba (chefs de canton et de province) et leurs descendants ou quelques personnages de marque, c'est-à-dire bien vus à la Cour des Nabas.

A l'heure actuelle et notamment à Ouagadougou, les femmes se parent d'habits de toute sorte (pagnes du pays, bazins, « godés », tissus, pagnes des boutiques). Certaines femmes ont même adopté la camisole et le grand boubou des élégantes Souda-

1. Se vend encore aujourd'hui entre 55 et 100 francs.

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naises ; un grand nombre d'entre elles possèdent maintenant des malles qui remplacent les sacs à habits dans lesquels autrefois elles serraient leurs vêtements.

Le mouchoir sénégalais, le foulard de tête, sont actuellement indispensables. Dans les campagnes, le besoin de se mieux vêtir se fait aussi de plus en plus sentir. On y cultive plus de coton. Les jeunes filles et les femmes de la brousse achètent à Ouagadougou, quand elles viennent y travailler, des verroteries de toutes couleurs qu'elles suspendent au cou ou qu'elles enroulent autour des reins à l'imitation des femmes bambaras.

Tandis qu'autrefois on se « mirait » à l'eau claire des sources et des ruisseaux, il n'y a guère aujourd'hui de femme qui n'ait un ou deux miroirs ou glaces de traite. Enfin les boucles d'oreilles en argent, les bracelets et les amulettes cousues dans de la peau de panthère — et dont la possession devient une hantise pour les paysannes mossi — ajoutent, on peut le dire, un peu d'élégance parfois à leur beauté sauvage.

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Il ne faut pas s'imaginer, d'après ce qui précède, que le Moaga se croit obligé de porter constamment des vêtements chez lui. Chaque fois qu'il ne doit pas entreprendre un petit voyage, rendre visite à un parent ou ami éloigné de sa propre résidence, le Moaga se contente d'un « benda » (cache-sexe) qui ne couvre même pas ses fesses, et d'une couverture.

Il va le torse nu et aime à faire voir qu'il est bien

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musclé. Les femmes lorsqu'elles se trouvent dans leurs cases et surtout quand elles se livrent au travail pénible d'égrenage du coton avec leur « gourça », remontent le pagne jusqu'aux cuisses ce qui les met dans un état de demi-nudité.

Quand aux jeunes filles non pubères et non encore excisées, elles vont quelquefois complètement nues, si elles ne dissimulent pas leur sexe avec les chiffons d'un vieux pagne.

La toilette

Les ablutions, les soins du corps

Les gens mariés et les femmes tiennent à la propreté du corps, aussi font-ils leur toilette chaque matin. Celle-ci consiste dans le lavage de la figure, des mains, des bras et des jambes. Pendant la saison fraîche (fin novembre au 15 février), on ajoute un peu de beurre de karité à l'eau chaude pour assouplir la peau. En raison de la rareté de l'eau, les gens prennent très peu de bains; par contre dans les villages où l'eau abonde ils se baignent deux à trois fois par semaine.

Au contraire des grandes personnes, les jeunes gens et les enfants négligent la toilette et il s'en rencontre qui passent toute une journée sans se laver la figure, ce qui provoque d'ailleurs chez les enfants de graves conjonctivites.

Hygiène

1° *De l'eau de consommation.* — L'eau de consommation est puisée dans les marigots aménagés par des

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barrages construits par les habitants eux-mêmes pour suppléer à l'insuffisance des puits qui tarissent souvent pendant la saison sèche. Les indigènes ne s'occupent pas d'assainir l'eau qu'ils gardent parfois plusieurs jours dans des vases où se déposent des larves de moustiques. On boit l'eau des mares. Dans certains villages cependant lorsque l'eau est vraiment boueuse on emploie les procédés suivants pour la clarifier :

a) Écrasement des arachides, extraction de l'huile et mélange du reste à l'eau boueuse. Pendant trois quarts d'heure environ les saletés et tourteaux se déposent dans le fond du vase, l'eau est versée dans un autre récipient et peut servir à la consommation et à la cuisson des aliments;

b) On peut aussi employer le « missim » (feuilles de tamarinier pilées). L'eau devient claire mais forcément un peu aigre. Bien que servant à la consommation, elle est tout indiquée pour la cuisine, puisque les Mossi mettent même dans l'eau des sources et des puits du « missim » (de miki : aigrir) avant de l'employer à la préparation de leur aliment principal « le sagbo ».

Dans la ville de Ouagadougou, les tournées fréquentes des Agents sanitaires rappellent à l'indigène la nécessité de renouveler sans cesse l'eau contenue dans les vases et l'incitent à combler pendant l'hivernage les trous pouvant conserver l'eau nécessaire à la propagation des larves de moustiques.

2° *Blanchissage des vêtements.* — On peut reprocher

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au Moaga de ne pas se soucier suffisamment de la propreté de ses vêtements. Ce n'est pas que le savon lui manque — le beurre de karité avec lequel on fait le savon abonde — mais il croit que de fréquents lavages useront bien vite ses habits; il s'imagine aussi — ce qui est puéril — qu'il faut laisser salir le vêtement si l'on veut qu'au lavage il soit propre. Et il fait de bien ironiques réflexions lorsqu'il nous voit faire repasser nos habits avec des fers. C'est que, il faut bien le dire, un peu partout au Mossi, seul l'homme marié peut exiger que ses femmes blanchissent son vêtement; la maman s'occupe aussi des hardes de son enfant, mais le célibataire est obligé de laver lui-même ses habits. C'est, croyons-nous, ce qui explique l'extrême négligence de certains d'entre eux à laisser longtemps salir leurs vêtements, l'indolence étant aussi, fort malheureusement, un des défauts dominants de l'indigène du Mossi.

3° *Fosses d'aisance.* — Les Mossi, d'une manière générale n'ont pas de fosses d'aisance. Hommes, femmes, tout le monde, en un mot, va dans la brousse à l'exclusion des enfants encore en bas âge, qui font leurs besoins au seuil des portes. La nuit et pendant l'hivernage notamment, au moment où les tiges de mil sont assez hautes, les grandes personnes elles-mêmes se dissimulent derrière les cases dans le « Kamanga » ou le « Karaga » (champ de mil ou de maïs qui entoure l'habitation).

L'érection de la ville de Ouagadougou en Commune Mixte a permis d'installer aux frais du budget muni-

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cipal, des W.-C. dans certains quartiers et notamment aux alentours du marché. Des prescriptions formelles ont, par ailleurs, obligé les habitants à creuser des fosses d'aisance dans les maisons, mais pendant longtemps encore, l'indigène ne perdra pas l'habitude de satisfaire ses besoins en plein air.

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Danseurs Mossis de « Warba ».

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CHAPITRE XV

Les danses mossi et leur signification[1].

Dans ce chapitre nous allons examiner les danses Mossi, en expliquer le sens et dire les vieilles croyances qui s'y rattachent.

Ces danses tiennent, en effet, une place à part dans le cadre général des danses indigènes.

Celles-ci, pour la plupart, et notamment chez les Boussancé et les Gourmas, ne sont que des manifestations exubérantes, tantôt exercices de souplesse, tantôt caricatures des mouvements de la passion.

Les danses Mossi, au contraire, constituent réellement des danses soumises à des règles précises. Elles sont de trois sortes :

1° Des danses que nous dirons sentimentales et qui répondent au nom de « Wennega » ;

2° Des danses mi-guerrières, mi-religieuses, le « Waongo » ;

3° Enfin des danses de funérailles ou « Warba ».

A tout seigneur, tout honneur, commençons par la danse d'amour « Wennega ». Elle s'exécute dans une réunion. L'amant et l'amante — celle-ci vêtue de noir, couleur de cérémonie — reçoivent leurs compagnons et compagnes. Le dolo circule, la cola remplit les bouches. Bientôt les musiciens de l'Assemblée accor-

1. Extrait revu et complété d'une conférence faite par l'auteur le 24 décembre 1926.

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dent leurs guitares rustiques ou « kondés » qu'accompagnent des battements de calebasses. Et les femmes chantent :

M' Ba sida talem néré
Talem kan-kaïn, talemti
Pagh ka zaïd koulogh wa mandé
« Mon mari entretiens-moi bien,
Entretiens-moi dignement,
La femme vieillit vite comme le gombo »

Car en pays Mossi les femmes mariées sont, en effet, des femmes entretenues.

Autres chansons de « Wennega » :

Kandin bilin koamba ziyob'
Ade kandin bilin koamb' ziyob ya
La Fer-nan dambin yide
Bamb' data pagha piligh' wa rebre y a
Ti prote-mannaie yaoulin pa yaguedin
Koure yanga-yanga karin kouma
f' san katarin kont'me y é
f' san katarin kont'me bif ramodeguema

« Les employés du cercle (petit cercle)[1] ne savent pas comment courir les femmes ; ceux du grand-cercle, la compagnie des Fernand sont encore plus ignorants dans l'art de plaire. Ils veulent tous défaire les pagnes des femmes comme on déplie des nattes, mais tiennent leur porte-monnaie hermétiquement fermé.

« Porteurs de culottes dans les replis desquelles se

1. Autrefois il y avait à Ouagadougou le cercle du Mossi, et la subdivision de Ouagadougou proprement dite.

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cachent des poux, si vous n'avez rien à me donner, n'essayez tout de même pas de me posséder par la force. »

F' Nian néré yetta pa nan
logh là
Fola biga ma bé ba
f' ka yi wenin nana y è
« Tu admires cette fille,
Sa beauté te séduit
Et tu ne veux pas la laisser partir!
Es-tu le père ou la mère de cette Enfant ?
Tu n'es pas le Dieu qui l'a créée.

« La « Wennega » est surtout constituée par un mouvement de va-et-vient des reins qui s'exécute sur un rythme lent. Différentes figures se déroulent, mais toujours sur le même rythme et le même balancement des reins. L'amante elle-même se met à danser, fait curieux, car généralement les femmes ne participent pas à la danse des hommes.

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Nous avons dit qu'une autre forme de la danse mossie est religieuse. Il s'agit du « Waongo. »

Le « Waongo » est un être mystérieux, mi-animal, mi-esprit.

Origine du Waongo. — La tradition raconte qu'il a été trouvé un jour tout seul dans une plaine. Ceux qui les premiers le virent eurent peur et s'enfuirent. Ils vinrent rendre compte aux vieux du village qui réunirent bon nombre de jeunes gens armés

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de flèches et de bâtons pour aller à la conquête de cet être étrange.

A l'endroit où il avait été aperçu la première fois on ne le trouva pas. Il avait élu domicile plus loin. Les gens du village l'encerclèrent et les vieux lui ayant apporté un coq se mirent à l'interroger : « Si on l'emmenait à la maison ne nuirait-il pas aux habitants ?... Ne porterait-il pas malheur ? » On égorgea la poule qui, dit-on, ne fut pas agréée.

Les vieux s'en retournèrent au village et ramenèrent un coq blanc (norapelga), un bouc (boéga) et un chien (bâga); s'adressant au Waongo ils dirent : « Peut-être tout à l'heure nous étions-nous trompés, peut-être désires-tu un animal en plus du coq que nous t'avons offert tout à l'heure ? Si en devenant notre hôte tu peux nous apporter le bonheur, nous donner la santé et des enfants, accepte les offrandes que voici ! » On égorgea le coq et le bouc ; on abattit le chien. Cette fois les sacrifices furent acceptés.

Ce qu'est le Waongo. — Le « Waongo » se compose d'un masque représentant ordinairement la tête d'un animal et du bindou (sorte de longue soutane faite avec l'écorce d'un arbuste appelé « béringa », que l'on garde longtemps dans l'eau pour la noircir, ou de fibres de baobab). Il avait à côté de lui, nous apprend la tradition un « toabga » (sorte de hache magique) et le « tibo » (objet sacré, fétiche).

On le prit et on l'enferma dans un lieu sûr. Mais de quelle utilité pouvait-il donc leur être ? Personne n'en

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savait rien. C'était quelque chose d'inconnu et partant de redoutable.

Un jour on était allé faire le « Kouré » (funérailles d'un vieillard et l'on revenait. C'était des danseurs de « Warba. » Tout en chantant on approcha de la case habitée par le « Waongo » qui sortit aussitôt. Les danseurs terrorisés s'enfuirent. Seul un chanteur eut du courage et resta.

Il continua donc d'entonner ses chants et le « waongo » le suivit jusqu'à la demeure du défunt où il se mit à danser.

On en conclut que le « waongo » était chose de funérailles. Depuis, au décès d'un vieillard ou d'une vieille femme, de la famille des « nioniossé » « soukoaba », on fait venir le « waongo ». Il ne danse pas en effet pour les jeunes gens décédés.

Mais considéré comme sacré le « waongo » ou plutôt le « soukou » est une sorte de religion possédant des secrets qu'il ne paraît pas bon de faire connaître à tout le monde, aussi inventa-t-on un langage spécial — déformation de la langue môré — seul compris des initiés.

Le « Waongo » danse au son d'un tam-tam spécial accompagné de chants et d'éloges en langage secret; sa danse n'a rien de particulier : ce sont des mouvements plus ou moins frénétiques comme dans la plupart des danses indigènes.

Le « Waongo » est toujours accompagné d'un cercle de jeunes gens vêtus d'une mince bande de coton ornée de cauris et portant des sacoches aux côtés. Ces jeunes gens exécutent des mouvements de tête iden-

1: Delobsom FA28 Mossi

tiques à ceux qu'effectuent les chevaux de cirque. Outre le tam-tam, des joueurs de flûte ou « wissé » les accompagnent dans leurs danses.

***

Il nous reste maintenant à parler de la danse de funérailles proprement dite.

On la nomme « Warba ». Elle est dansée par des hommes vêtus de pagnes et de sortes de tricots en filet teints en bleu; ils sont coiffés de casques confectionnés avec des cauris. Une longue frange alourdie de métal posée sur les hanches, différencie ce costume des autres travestis. Cette frange s'agite aux mouvements du corps. Au bout d'un moment elle tourne tellement vite que l'on dirait une toupie.

Cependant un grand nombre de gens ne possédant pas le costume spécial dont il est parlé ci-dessus, se contente de nouer une couverture autour des reins. Aux mouvements du danseur cela produit un effet des plus comiques, car l'on croirait voir s'agiter la queue d'un singe.

Les instruments de musique avec lesquels les musiciens accompagnent cette danse sont de longs tamtams (gangando); l'un d'eux resserré dans son milieu affecte la forme d'une mince et longue bobine de fil.

D'autre part les danseurs s'accompagnent eux-mêmes avec de petits instruments de métal analogues aux castagnettes espagnoles.

La danse elle-même s'exécute en cercle sous la direction du chef de la « warba » dont le costume est

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plus riche que celui des autres. Mais tous les danseurs portent généralement sur la tête de nombreux gris-gris (queue de bœufs, têtes d'oiseaux maculées du sang des poulets sacrifiés).

La « Warba » prouve que les Mossi croient à l'immortalité de l'âme.

S'ils dansent, c'est qu'ils pensent que leur danse est nécessaire pour permettre à l'âme du défunt de rejoindre l'âme de ses ancêtres; ils espèrent ainsi se concilier les bonnes grâces du nouvel esprit.

Cette danse a donc un fondement moral. Il ne semble pas que l'on en puisse dire de même de celles que l'on danse un peu partout aujourd'hui.

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Mais à côté de ces trois danses nationales Mossies il y a un certain nombre d'autres danses exclusivement réservées aux femmes et jeunes filles et qui sont, en réalité, plutôt des exercices de culture physique. Nous ne parlerons que de la principale ou « kiguibtobo » (danse des coups de fesses).

Kiguibtobo. — Elle est exécutée par un groupe de femmes. Ordinairement c'est au début de la saison fraîche après les récoltes que ces danses ont lieu. — Les femmes battent des mains tandis que des cantatrices font entendre leurs voix mélodieuses. La danse est rythmique. Deux danseuses sortent du groupe et se placent au milieu du cercle. Elles vont et viennent, puis brusquement, à un certain passage de la chanson

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chacune d'elles tourne le dos à sa compagne et leurs fesses se rencontrent et se frappent en cadence. Il faut des danseuses d'égale force pour éviter les chutes qui se produisent parfois avec des danseuses trop robustes.

Voici au hasard, une des chansons de « Kiguib-tobo. »

M'Ma ho, ka M'Ma warla y e
Lebin wa regh'big' tim boudguin
n'di Mossa yarbate ribo
Ma mère, eh, ma mère
Viens vite me débarrasser de mon enfant,
Je vais par là, dans le village voisin
Manger sans pitié le bien de ces vulgaires Mossé [1].

1. Mossi.

Communiqué par la Mission des Pères Blancs à Ouagadougou.

Greniers Mossis (lourds).

[facing p. 240]

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CHAPITRE XVI

De l'agriculture.

Le choix du terrain de cultures. — Comme dans tous les principaux actes de la vie, le Moaga confie au devin le soin de lui indiquer son terrain de cultures. En réalité il le choisit lui-même, mais le devin doit lui indiquer d'une part, si le lieu n'est pas hanté par des esprits, d'autre part les sacrifices qu'il devra faire pour conjurer le mauvais sort.

Le « diseur des choses cachées » lui révèle toujours a présence de « Kinkirsi » (esprits) et prescrit des sacrifices et des aumônes.

Sacrifices. — Le nouvel occupant fait venir le chef de famille ou s'il s'agit d'un nionioga le Tengsoba, chargé des sacrifices. Les paroles sacramentelles prononcées sont les suivantes : « A zaguel tib reg' noag'la « zom kom kon Naba Zidwende, tib kon zig'tinguin « damba, tib kon timpelem, tib kon yaramba, kon « saramba, tib reg'kon zig, kinkirga ta wa me nan « baou ki, on — on tib reg' koin gnimassem, lass' « pogh'banga, lasse zoug'banga, naore banga... » raduction : De la part de X... j'offre ce coq et cette eau de farine au dieu soleil (zidwendé), aux frères du chef de famille morts sans enfants (zig' tinguin damba), aux ancêtres et grands-pères, pour qu'ils fassent réer les offrandes par les « Kinkirsi » (esprits du champ) et afin que ceux-ci gratifient X d'une bonne

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santé et d'abondantes récoltes de mil et de haricots.

Une fois ces sacrifices accomplis — s'ils sont agréés le coq doit tomber sur le dos — le nouveau propriétaire fait débroussailler le terrain et attend l'hivernage.

Les travaux. — Dès les premières pluies, il se rend au champ et fait encore égorger un coq qu'il offre au « Kinkirga » en lui demandant le « Gnimassem » (la bonne santé), d'abondantes récoltes qu'il mangera avec de nouvelles femmes et de nouveaux enfants (pog'palla, la bipalla). Après quoi il sème du gros et petit mil, des arachides, des haricots, etc...

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L'année a été bonne. Le Moaga a eu d'abondantes récoltes. Il est content et se souviendra, le moment venu, de l'esprit du champ... Pour le moment il s'occupe de faire transporter le mil dans le grenier provisoire (lourgho).

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Le battage du mil. — Avant de faire battre le mil, le Moaga est tenu de sacrifier au « zéiga » (à l'aire). Les paroles rituelles prononcées ne diffèrent de celles dont nous avons donné la signification ci-dessus que par cette seule variante. X... demande que ce mil qu'il va employer pour sa nourriture lui soit favorable, qu'il le mange en paix c'est-à-dire en bonne santé avec sa famille. (Kita ri ki wan ne lafi layelsomdé né a zak'ramba.)

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On fait ensuite appel aux jeunes gens du village pour le battage du mil. A cette occasion le propriétaire fait préparer du dolo en grande quantité et fait cuire beaucoup de « benga » (haricots). On mélange du « sinni » (sésame) aux haricots. Après le travail on appelle deux enfants de six à sept ans et on leur remplit les deux mains de cet amalgame. Ils doivent faire en courant le tour de l'aire, tout en mangant une partie des haricots. L'autre partie sera semée à tous vents. Ils doivent reprendre haleine trois fois et se regarder face à face. Puis il est procédé à la distribution aux travailleurs des haricots qui restent. Il leur est donné également du dolo.

Les propriétaires conservent-ils des droits sur les terrains abandonnés ? — Pour occuper un terrain abandonné il faut obtenir au préalable, l'autorisation de l'ancien propriétaire. Mais celui-ci conserve ses droits sur le terrain; il peut le reprendre quand bon lui semble sans que le nouvel occupant puisse élever la moindre protestation.

Cependant il convient d'ajouter que bien souvent le terrain n'étant abandonné que parce qu'on le croit infertile ou hanté, il y a rarement reprise de possession. En tout cas ces questions sont tranchées par les intéressés eux-mêmes; l'Administration locale et le chef de canton interviennent rarement dans ces litiges.

Les droits des propriétaires sur les arbres fruitiers des champs de cultures. — Les « donsé » (néré) dont les fruits contiennent une poudre jaunâtre sucrée comes-

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tible et dont les graines servent à fabriquer le « soumbala » condiment puant fort prisé des indigènes, demeurent la propriété exclusive de l'ancien occupant, tandis que les « tamsé » (arbres à karité) appartiennent au nouveau propriétaire.

La raison en est que l'arbre à karité se rencontre un peu partout dans la brousse tandis que le néré est plus rare.

Droits des chefs sur les terrains de cultures. — D'une manière générale, le principe des droits acquis étant observé en pays Mossi, le chef de canton ne confisque pas sans motif plausible un terrain de cultures appartenant à un de ses sujets si les grands-parents de celui-ci ont toujours occupé le terrain dont il s'agit.

Mais lorsque le terrain est vacant ou nouvellement occupé, le chef de canton peut, en sa qualité de maître absolu de son territoire, en prendre possession sans que le nouveau propriétaire puisse prétendre à aucun dédommagement.

Les travaux des champs

En principe le champ d'une famille est commun. Toutefois lorsqu'une femme devient vieille elle ne cultive plus avec son mari. Elle a son champ particulier et se nourrit comme bon lui semble, l'époux ne s'occupant plus d'elle et n'assurant plus son alimentation. Le travail se fait en commun. La superficie du champ varie selon l'importance de la famille.

De bon matin — ordinairement avant le lever du

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soleil — le chef de famille réveille les jeunes gens; ceux-ci se rendent aux champs, situés à 5 et souvent à 10 kilomètres. Vers 10 heures du matin les femmes apportent le reste du sagbo de la nuit ou à défaut de la farine de mil qu'on délaye dans de l'eau.

A midi (Wend'to souka : la moitié du jour) la famille se repose à l'ombre d'un arbre. Il y a toujours dans chaque champ quelques arbres fruitiers. Vers 2 heures de l'après-midi on reprend le travail. A 5 heuresdusoir les femmes rentrent au logis pour préparer les aliments. Les hommes cessent le travail à la tombée de la nuit.

Sisoaga. — Lorsqu'une famille possède des champs trop vastes pour pouvoir les cultiver seule, elle fait appel à tous les hommes valides du village pour le sarclage.

A cette occasion, le chef de famille donne à ses femmes plusieurs paniers de mil germé pour la fabrication d'une grande quantité de « dam » ou bière de mil fermentée; il fait aussi préparer du sagbo (gâteau de mil).

Au jour indiqué, les jeunes gens se rendent aux champs; leur ardeur est excitée par des chants et des roulements de tambours. Ils reçoivent pour leur travail, sagbo et dam. C'est ce qu'on nomme le « SISOAGA ».

Il s'agit d'une sorte d'entr'aide, de solidarité indispensable, sans laquelle bien des terres resteraient incultes.

Ajoutons enfin que lorsqu'une personne tombe

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malade pendant l'hivernage, ses camarades se concertent et vont cultiver ses champs; quelquefois sans aucune rémunération, mais par simple esprit de solidarité.

Instruments aratoires. — Comme partout en A. O. F. l'indigène ne possède que des instruments rudimentaires : Au Mossi ce sont : le « Wanka » ou « kounri » pioche ou daba bambara pour le labourage du sol; le « sitoaga » (pic, petit modèle) pour l'ensemencement et le « laré » (hache) pour la destruction des buissons et arbustes.

Travaux accessoires. — Exception faite pour les travaux des champs, chacun s'occupe de ses propres affaires. Les uns fabriquent des paniers, des corbeilles, des éventails ; d'autres tissent des bandes de coton. Il n'est peut-être pas sans intérêt de dire qu'au Mossi il n'y a pas de distinction de castes, à part celle des forgerons ; chacun peut donc pratiquer l'industrie qui lui convient. C'est ainsi que les cordonniers se recrutent pour la plupart parmi les « Nakomsé » (descendants des Nabas).

CULTURES VIVRIÈRES

Les principales cultures vivrières auxquelles s'adonnent les Mossi sont :

Kazouï (petit mil blanc ou gris ou millet);

Baningha (gros mil blanc ou sorgho);

Ces deux variétés sont destinées à la nourriture,

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bien que le gros mil blanc soit spécialement réservé aux chevaux chez les gens aisés.

Kazinga (gros mil rouge). Les Mossi peu fortunés le préfèrent au « baningha » pour l'alimentation, mais il sert plus spécialement à la fabrication du « dam » (dolo ou bière de mil fermentée);

Mouï (riz) recherché seulement par les chefs, les notables et quelques familles de « dakangba » (hommes aisés);

Benga (haricots);

Soumas (petits pois ou gros pois blancs et rouges);

Niouyan (de niouri : igname) cultivés dans certaines régions seulement;

Nangouri ou sounkama (arachides);

Pèsça (fabirama);

Sinni ou Sili (Sésame); cultivé seulement par quelques amateurs;

Enfin le Bito (oseille) employé pour la préparation de la sauce du sagbo;

On cultive aussi le « mana » (gombo).

Mais à côté de ces cultures vivrières, chacun tient à avoir son petit champ de coton (lamdo) dont la récolte est destinée à la confection des habits dont il a besoin dans l'année.

Les champs sont aujourd'hui, m'a-t-on déclaré, beaucoup plus vastes qu'autrefois, malgré l'abolition de l'esclavage. Cela provient de ce que jadis beaucoup de lieux prétendus hantés restaient incultes. On affirme cependant que le rendement était plus considérable, le Moaga étant à cette époque fort attaché au sol.

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A l'heure actuelle l'agriculture manque de bras.

Il y a une vingtaine d'années encore, dès l'âge de six à sept ans le jeune Moaga suivait ses parents aux champs. De bonne heure il prenait goût au travail. Avant l'occupation française, le Moaga quittait rarement son pays en raison de l'insécurité des routes, fréquentées par des brigands (d'ordinaire c'était les descendants des Nabas). On craignait même d'aller tout seul dans la brousse de crainte d'être attaqué, capturé et réduit à l'esclavage.

Entre des villages même frontières, il y avait peu de relations. A Ouagadougou, on ne se promenait pas librement de quartier à quartier sans de sérieuses raisons et sans s'être « armé jusqu'aux dents ». Bref, chacun se contentait de ce que son village pouvait produire ; il n'y avait, à vrai dire, pas de commerce dans l'acception du mot. Le Moaga essentiellement casanier réclamait au sol de quoi se nourrir et se vêtir.

Il n'y a que deux cultures nouvelles depuis l'occupation française : la culture des patates (Na-niouyan : ignames des chefs) et celle de la pomme de terre.

L'intensification des cultures cotonnières ces dernières années, en permettant aux indigènes de payer plus facilement leur impôt, augmente par ailleurs considérablement le goût de la production.

Mais la pénétration française avec ses nombreux bienfaits (création de réseaux routiers, tranquillité et libre circulation de village à village, suppression des bandits et des pillages), a fait naître chez le Moaga le désir d'expatriation.

Et c'est ainsi que les nombreux recrutements des

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Communiqué par la Mission des Pères Blancs à Ouagadougou.

Fabrication du Saghabo.
Bouillie de mil, nourriture des Mossis.

[facing p. 245]

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travailleurs pour les besoins des colonies du groupe et pour le service des Travaux Publics du chef-lieu, le service militaire rendu obligatoire — acceptés à contre-cœur par les Mossi, il faut bien l'avouer — poussent un grand nombre de jeunes gens à s'expatrier.

D'aucuns partent sans le moindre moyen d'existence vers la Gold Coast de préférence. Ils vont travailler dans la colonie anglaise pour se procurer de quoi acheter des habits. Mais partis sans argent, ils y passent des mois et parfois des années, ce qui diminue la main-d'œuvre agricole... et oblige les pauvres parents vieux et impotents à cultiver eux-mêmes les champs.

Combien d'ailleurs ne reviennent jamais !...

De quoi se compose l'alimentation indigène

Le sagbo (bouillie de mil) constitue le principal aliment des Mossi quelle que soit leur condition sociale. Le riz considéré comme un aliment de luxe constitue la nourriture des Nabas et des Notables. Le prix de cette durée alimentaire qui varie entre 2,50 et 3 francs le kilo à Ouagadougou, est du reste inaccessible à toutes les bourses. Aussi n'est-il pas extraordinaire de constater qu'elle n'entre que rarement dans la composition de l'alimentation de quelques petits employés de l'Administration et du Commerce.

Les chefs Mossi font généralement deux principaux repas par jour :

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Un premier repas de sagbo ou de riz vers 9 heures;
Un deuxième repas de sagbo la nuit.

Le petit déjeuner n'est guère connu. Mais entre les deux principaux repas, les chefs font griller ou brûler de la viande dont ils sont fort friands, assaisonnée de sel et de piment en quantité suffisante pour leur permettre de supporter le nombre illimité de petites calebasses de dolo qu'ils absorbent depuis le réveil jusqu'au coucher.

Le Moaga ne fait en réalité qu'un seul repas par jour, c'est celui du soir. Une assez grosse boule de gâteau lui fait passer la faim de la journée. S'il en reste il le garde soigneusement pour son déjeuner du matin. S'il n'y a pas eu de restes, comme cela arrive souvent, il se contente de son « zompanrga » mil écrasé auquel on ajoute un peu d'eau et quelquefois du beurre végétal ou des arachides.

Il mange rarement du riz, se contente à défaut de « sagbo », de « benga » et de « soumas ».

C'est surtout pendant les fêtes que le Moaga tient à satisfaire son appétit. Ce jour-là, chaque chef de carré tue une chèvre, un mouton ou des poulets, fait préparer du sagbo, des fabirama ou des haricots avec une quantité exagérée de beurre de karité et c'est la ripaille. Les membres de la famille s'empiffrent à satiété et cela provoque toujours des diarrhées dont les suites sont d'autant plus graves qu'elles sont toujours mal soignées.

Comme assaisonnement le Moaga ne connaît que le « kalgo » (soumbala), le piment, le gombo et le sel. Mais il y a à peine quelques années, avant le dévelop-

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pement du commerce dans la Colonie, ce dernier produit que les dioulas et yarcés rapportaient de Tombouctou et de Mopti coûtait si cher que dans les campagnes les Mossi passaient bien six mois sans manger d'aliments salés.

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Il y a lieu de croire que dans un avenir prochain, le Moaga s'adonnera d'une façon intensive à la culture de certains produits rémunérateurs tels que : coton, pomme de terre, arachides, etc. Dans ce domaine les chefs de Province à Ouagadougou ont réalisé un grand progrès.

MOGH'NAB' KAWINRÉ (LE BATTAGE DU MIL DU MOGHO-NABA)

Sacrifices. — Pour cette cérémonie l'Empereur convoque à Ouagadougou Mankougoudougou Tengsoba (descendant des Nioniossé autochtones, maîtres de la terre) et lui remet un mouton destiné à être sacrifié au « zéiga » (à l'aire).

Le travail. — Après le sacrifice, vers deux heures et demie de l'après midi, KAM-NABA (notable du quartier du Baloum-Naba) se rend sur les lieux avec des jeunes gens de Bilbalogo et de Dapoya appelés à cette occasion. L'opération consiste à battre fortement les épis de mil à l'aide de branches d'arbres taillées en forme d'angle obtus et qu'on nomme « Dabandé » ou « Soika ».

Le travail terminé les travailleurs se retirent lais-

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sant sur place le mil que l'on ramassera un autre jour.

Le lendemain matin ils reviennent au champ précédés du Bend'-Naba (Chef tambour) qui joue le « Bouloumbougri » kabse Nanamsé, auxquels les autres tambours répondent « Bouroum-bouroum (litt : Bend-Naba cite les noms des ministres de l'Empereur, rappelle l'origine de chacun et souhaite une année nouvelle et heureuse à Oubri-yiri Naba (maître de la maison d'Oubri, c'est-à-dire au Mogho-Naba). Bouroum-bouroum n'a aucune signification.

Tout de suite après le Bend-Naba roule du tambour invitant les jeunes gens à la danse de la warba (danse de funérailles) et ce ne sont plus que des mouvements désordonnés des pieds sur le mil qu'on éparpille de tous côtés. Puis, brusquement, les batteries de tam-tam cessent : c'est le repos. Alors Kam-Naba de Bilbalogo fait deux parts du tas de mil en traçant une ligne droite au milieu du « zéiga. » Les gens de Bilbalogo (quartier du Baloum-Naba) doivent ramasser une part tandis que le soin de réunir le second tas incombe à ceux de Dapoya (quartier des esclaves de case).

Bon an, mal an, la récolte du champ de l'Empereur doit donner 100 paniers (péog' koabga).

Le Mogho-Naba envoie de 50 à 70 canaris de dolo aux travailleurs et peu après il se rend lui-même sur les lieux. Il distribue aussi 2 à 3 wassé (de waga : charge de 1.000 colas) de colas à ses ministres et aux prestataires.

Après avoir remercié les travailleurs et leur avoir adressé quelques paroles d'encouragement, l'Empe-

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reur reprend le chemin de sa maison. Il est alors escorté de ses ministres et de tous les cavaliers.

Mankougoudougou Tensoba fait sur le sol du « zéiga » en trois endroits différents, trois traits à l'aide de cendre mouillée. Puis il prend un « lagha » (petit pot en terre cuite) y met de l'eau, prononce quelques paroles sacramentelles, arrose légèrement le mil avec ce liquide en disant : « Zâbre saga Ybéogo sâga, samb'da kôbo la ka toin sameb'la fi yé. (La pluie du matin, la pluie du soir, empêche de cultiver les champs mais ne peut rien contre la santé du Roi). Il s'empare ensuite d'un balai de paille (sagha) qu'il défait afin de prendre un peu de mil qu'il met dans le « lagha » dont il a été fait mention ci-dessus, et se rend ensuite au grenier provisoire (lourgho) (grenier fait avec des seccos Mossis). Il fait trois fois le tour du grenier. Un représentant de l'Empereur lui remet un coq blanc (nora-pelga), du dolo (dam) et du « zom-kom » (eau de farine). Le prêtre s'asseoit à l'ombre du « lourgho » et pour le sacrifice il prononce les paroles ci-après : « Naba Siguiri bad'kom, deghin kon Naba Wogbo, tib reg, kon Naba Sanum, tib kon Naba Koutou, tib reg' kon Naba Baongo, tib kon Naba Karfo, tib reg'kon Naba Sawadogo, tib reg la be kon Nab, gnimassem, la lafi. » (litt : « J'offre ce coq, cette eau de farine et ce dolo à Naba Siguiri (père de l'Empereur régnant) pour qu'il fasse agréer ces offrandes par les Mogho-Nabas Wobgo, Sanum, Kou-kou, Baongo, Karfo, Sawadogo, afin que l'Empereur ait une bonne santé et du bonheur. »

Tengsoba remet ensuite la petite quantité de mil

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prélevée par lui à la pugtièma (première femme) du Roi pour la préparation d'un gâteau de mil offert aux esprits (mânes des Empereurs défunts et autres esprits de l'aire).

Transport du mil et mise en greniers. — Les femmes du Mogho-Naba, ses filles et sœurs sont seules chargées du transport du mil pour la mise en greniers (baoré)[1]. Mais ainsi que nous l'avons déjà dit il faut qu'il y ait 100 charges de mil alors même que la récolte ne suffirait pas à remplir 20 bons paniers. On répartit donc le mil en petite quantité dans des paniers pour atteindre le chiffre obligatoire prévu par la coutume.

La destination donnée au reste du mil laissé intentionnellement dans le « zeiga. ». — On laisse de-ci de-là sur le sol du « zéiga » un peu de mil que Kassiri-Naba (chef de village) doit ramasser à son profit. Cette faveur exceptionnelle astreint cependant ce chef de village à d'impérieux devoirs. C'est ainsi qu'il est tenu de convier à manger les principaux samand' kamba (gardes du corps) — et ils sont nombreux — de l'Empereur. De même c'est lui qui doit fournir un panier de mil pour l'ensemencement du champ du Mogho-Naba dès les premières pluies.

Utilisation du produit des champs de l'Empereur. — Comme il a déjà été dit dans un précédent chapitre

1. Le grenier « baoré » est fait en terre fortement mélangée de paille.

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« Corvées auxquelles sont astreints les sujets Mossi vis-à-vis de leurs Nabas », le Mogho-Naba ne touche pas au mil de son propre champ. Cette récolte sert à la nourriture des chevaux, à l'entretien des pages et samand'kamba et plus spécialement à la fabrication du dolo le jour de la fête connue sous le nom de « Tinsé » et la « Basgha » du Roi.

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CHAPITRE XVII

De la succession et des droits successoraux au Mossi.

Nous avons assez longuement traité de la question de la succession dans les chapitres « Coutumes » et « Intronisation des chefs Mossi ». Si, nous y revenons c'est qu'il nous a paru nécessaire de préciser certains détails de ce sujet important au point de vue juridique.

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Ouverture d'une succession. — La succession s'ouvre par la mort du de cujus, mais l'entrée en possession des biens n'a lieu qu'après la fête des funérailles, (pour tout ce qui a trait aux funérailles, se reporter au paragraphe « DE LA MORT » du chapitre des « COUTUMES INDIGÈNES ».

Pourquoi l'entrée en jouissance des biens n'a lieu qu'après la fête des funérailles ? — Le Moaga, nous l'avons vu dans maints chapitres, est superstitieux. Une vieille croyance lui fait admettre que le fait de prendre possession des biens du défunt avant la célébration des funérailles entraînera la mort certaine de l'héritier ou sera cause d'un grand malheur pour toute la famille.

D'autre part tous les membres de la famille devant se trouver réunis au jour des funérailles, cela assure à la dévolution des biens une grande publicité et pré

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vient toute contestation de tous ceux qui par la suite, se prétendraient évincés de la succession.

Qualités exigées pour succéder. — Pour pouvoir succéder il faut réunir les conditions suivantes :

1° Être né avant l'ouverture de la succession;

2° Ne pas se trouver dans les cas d'indignité ci-après :

a) Meurtre du défunt;

b) Défaut de venger sa mort (autrefois le fils devait venger la mort de son père avant d'entrer en possession de ses biens). De nos jours, il faudrait plutôt entendre par « vengeance » le fait de poursuivre devant les tribunaux la réparation du crime;

c) Défaut de célébration des funérailles. Si l'héritier légitime est mineur, son tuteur doit procéder à la cérémonie en son nom ;

d) Existence d'une disposition testamentaire par laquelle le défunt déshériterait l'héritier présomptif.

Ordre successoral. — D'une manière générale les biens se transmettent en ligne directe, c'est-à-dire à l'aîné des fils du défunt et seulement, à son défaut, en ligne collatérale. Cependant pour certains biens, comme par exemple le fétiche familial, l'héritage revient de plein droit à l'aîné des frères du défunt.

S'il n'existe pas d'héritier du 1er et 2e degré, l'héritage est attribué au plus proche parent de celui de qui le défunt tenait lui-même les biens.

L'aîné de la famille exclut les autres et entre seul en possession de l'héritage. L'usage s'est cependant établi qu'il remette à ses frères et à ses oncles une par-

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tie des biens. Mais c'est là une véritable libéralité à laquelle il n'est pas tenu en fait.

Dans la succession des Nabas, le fils aîné hérite généralement seul de tous les biens laissés par le défunt, en raison même des lourdes dépenses qu'il devra effectuer conformément à la coutume au moment où il posera sa candidature de chef. En ce qui concerne les femmes — cet autre bien — il choisit celles qu'il aime et les autres sont abandonnées à l'ensemble des Nabissi (fils et descendants des Nabas).

Il n'en est pas de même des vulgaires Mossi qui ont commencé à comprendre l'utilité de faire participer tous les enfants du défunt au partage des biens. Dans le chapitre traitant du « Mariage » nous avons déjà vu que les femmes disposaient d'une certaine liberté dans le choix de leur mari parmi les fils du défunt.

Dans tous les cas, l'aîné de la famille se réserve la plus grosse part de la succession, ce qui au point de vue même de la coutume, se conçoit nettement puisqu'il s'est substitué au défunt dans la responsabilité qui incombait à ce dernier comme chef de famille.

Les filles et les femmes prennent-elles part au partage des successions ? — Les filles ne prennent pas part au partage de la succession. Elles peuvent recevoir cependant de leurs frères des cadeaux de peu d'importance.

Les femmes n'héritent jamais de leur mari. Elles ne peuvent prendre part au partage de la succession que comme représentants de leurs enfants en bas âge. Bien au contraire la femme considérée comme un bien

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meuble fait elle-même partie de la succession au même titre que les autres biens laissés par le défunt.

Sort de la succession en deshérence. — Le chef de canton a seul qualité pour hériter les biens de tout individu mort sans parents connus.

DROITS ET DEVOIRS SUR LES BIENS DANS LA FAMILLE

Les biens sont individuels.

Les biens sont strictement personnels. Le chef de famille n'a aucun droit sur les biens acquis individuellement par les femmes et les enfants, ou tout autre parent sous sa puissance. — Ceux-ci disposent de ce qu'ils possèdent comme ils l'entendent. La femme-mère fait du commerce pour constituer un pécule à ses enfants. En aucun cas le chef de famille ne peut employer ces biens sans le consentement de leur véritable propriétaire.

Le mari hérite-t-il de sa femme? — Le mari n'a aucun droit sur les biens de sa femme; il ne peut même pas en disposer si elle venait à mourir sans enfants, puisqu'en ce cas la succession de la défunte revient, de par la coutume, à ses propres parents (frères ou sœurs) ou à défaut aux enfants de ceux-ci.

Les enfants ont droit, indépendamment de la part qui leur revient dans la succession de leur père, à la succession laissée par leur mère.

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Lorsque le chef de famille emprunte des cauris à un

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membre quelconque de son carré, il se doit de les restituer dans les délais convenus. Quant à ses *propres biens* il en a seul la jouissance *sans contrôle* pendant son existence. Ces biens font partie de sa succession au même titre que ses femmes.

Sort de la maison après la mort. — A la mort du chef de carré, la maison n'est pas détruite. Elle passe d'office aux héritiers, c'est-à-dire aux enfants ou si le défunt n'a pas laissé d'héritiers légitimes à ses frères. Si le de cujus était le détenteur et le gardien du fétiche familial, celui-ci est emporté dans la maison de l'aîné des frères ou chez la personne désignée par la coutume.

On sait cependant que le Moaga n'habite pas une maison sans consulter au préalable les diseurs des choses cachées. Aussi, si les esprits sont défavorables au successeur, la maison est abandonnée aux autres fils ou frères du défunt. Du reste, dans bien des cas si le fils aîné est lui-même marié et chef de famille et possède déjà une maison, il fait loger dans celle de son père ses « dakompas » (jeunes frères célibataires) ou un de ses oncles.

Acceptation ou répudiation des successions. — Conséquences. — Le fait d'accepter et de recueillir une succession implique l'obligation d'en acquitter les charges et les dettes. En pays Mossi, on ne refuse pas une succession, puisque la non-acceptation de celle-ci n'exclut pas l'obligation de payer les dettes du défunt. Les parents sont en effet solidaires les uns des autres non pas en considération de la communauté de biens qui

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n'existe pas, nous l'avons déjà dit, mais en égard au principe de responsabilité collective établie dans un but d'ordre public. Sans doute, les dettes sont d'abord réclamées à l'héritier légitime, mais si la succession se chiffre par un passif tous les parents de même degré sont solidairement responsables.

Ne font pas partie de la succession tous les biens que les membres de la famille ont pu recevoir par donation du de cujus durant la vie de celui-ci.

Testament. — Au Mossi, le testament a toujours la forme orale.

Le testateur en présence de ses parents — oncles, frères et de son voisinage qu'il convoque à cet effet, fait part de ses dernières volontés à son héritier légitime, lequel sera de plein droit son successeur testamentaire. Mais dans le cas où le testament a pour objet d'évincer l'héritier légitime et si pour une cause ou pour une autre, celui-ci se trouvait être absent, le testateur chargerait de l'exécution de ses dernières volontés, le plus vieux des membres de la famille qu'il a réunis.

Cas où l'héritier présomptif est déshérité. — Le testateur en présence de témoins et dans les conditions sus-indiquées, expose les raisons pour lesquelles il entend écarter l'héritier présomptif de la succession. Dans le cas où les motifs invoqués ne paraîtraient pas suffisants, les témoins s'efforceraient de faire revenir le testateur sur sa décision. Cependant si leur intervention était accueillie par une fin de non-recevoir formelle, ils n'insisteraient pas mais au moment de procéder

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à la dévolution des biens la disposition testamentaire excluant l'héritier présomptif sera considérée comme nulle et non avenue.

Si l'héritier présomptif était déshérité pour une des causes d'indignité déjà citées ou pour cause d'adultère commis avec une femme du père ou de la famille par exemple, la succession est attribuée à celui qui vient immédiatement après lui dans l'ordre successoral fixé par la coutume « moaga ».

Capacité de tester. — Tous ceux qui possèdent peuvent disposer par testament.

Révocation des testaments. — Les testaments sont révocables au gré du testateur. Il suffit pour cela d'une simple déclaration verbale en sens contraire dans la même forme que celle déjà décrite.

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CHAPITRE XVIII

De la circoncision. — Les Mossi pratiquent-ils la circoncision ?

La circoncision est très en honneur au Mossi. Par suite de l'ignorance des mœurs et coutumes mossi, certains fonctionnaires coloniaux ont prétendu que les Mossi ne pratiquaient ni la circoncision, ni l'excision. Il faut, en effet, savoir distinguer le « Moaga » du «Boussanga» et surtout du « Nionioga ». Bien qu'apparentées, ces races ont des mœurs différentes.

La circoncision soumise à des règles précises s'effectue ici, à quelques exceptions près, comme chez les Kassonkés de Kayes.

A l'origine, cette cérémonie a dû être imposée aux « Dagombas » dont les Mossi sont les descendants, par l'Islamisme. Cependant à l'heure actuelle ce n'est pas l'idée religieuse qui incite les jeunes gens à se faire circoncire, mais plutôt les railleries des camarades et surtout le mépris que manifestent les femmes Mossi pour tout homme non circoncis.

Nous allons essayer, dans les lignes qui suivent, de décrire la cérémonie de circoncision au Mossi.

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C'est après les récoltes, vers la fin novembre, que les jeunes gens manifestent leur désir de subir l'opération de la circoncision. Comme l'entretien d'un cir-

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concis coûte cher à ses parents, ceux-ci ne souscrivent à la volonté de leur fils que s'ils ont fait d'abondantes récoltes.

Du reste, comme il s'agit d'une manifestation qui doit prendre un caractère grandiose, il faut une trentaine ou une cinquantaine de garçons de douze à quinze ans pour qu'on consente à leur faire subir l'opération. Les parents après avoir consulté les devins (bagba) s'en vont trouver un « yarga » (dioula d'origine mandé) ou un « Silmimoaga » (toucouleur du Mossi) et lui demandent de se charger de l'opération.

Ce chirurgien d'occasion s'appelle « Gounni ».

Keogo. — On choisit un lieu retiré de toute habitation, de préférence un endroit sablonneux ; on y trace une circonférence qu'on entoure avec des secco Mossi (sogsak' pinri). L'enceinte est plus ou moins grande suivant le nombre des jeunes gens qui doivent l'habiter. Cette enceinte se nomme « Kéogo ».

Les enfants sont conduits à la Porte du « kéogo » étroitement surveillée par les « zoumsi » (hommes déjà circoncis). Chaque enfant prend un air grave, défiant — il faut bien se donner du courage. Dans l'intérieur du cercle se trouve une foule grouillante, les roulements de tam-tams se confondent avec les chants et il se produit un tel vacarme que c'est à peine si l'on entend : « Moaga wanian konlebin kouli moaga » (litt : Moaga — dans le sens de homme non circoncis — tu es venu, tu ne repartiras plus moaga).

Comment se pratique l'opération. — Avant d'introduire les jeunes gens, on creuse, au préalable, des trous

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correspondant à leur nombre puis on les fait entrer un par un. On bande les yeux de l'enfant. On le fait asseoir sur une pierre devant un trou ; le prépuce fortement allongé et attaché par une ficelle est placé sur un billot de bois et tranché d'un seul coup de rasoir (barga). On retient la verge avec une paille fendue au milieu pour permettre l'écoulement du sang dans le trou. Je crois que c'est dans un trou spécial que sont enfouis tous les prépuces coupés; une ficelle passée autour des reins du jeune circoncis remplace après l'opération la paille fendue de façon à tenir continuellement la verge droite et à éviter tout frottement avec les autres parties du corps, ces frottements étant très douloureux.

Bankoensé yuiya (Noms attribués aux jeunes circoncis). — Les noms attribués aux jeunes circoncis varient suivant le rang de chacun. Le premier qui subit l'opération porte le nom de « Falinga », le second « Ouanda », le troisième « Wanzouri » et ainsi de suite, Nodo, Koulwandé, Wemba, etc... Il y a même l'enfant gâté qu'on nomme « Ponsom » parce qu'il lui est laissé certaines libertés.

Zouinsi yuiya (Noms des gardiens du kéogo et surveillants des Bankoensé). — Sept jours après la cérémonie, on choisit parmi les « Zouinsi » les personnes qui seront chargées de la surveillance du « kéogo », de l'organisation intérieure, ainsi que des jeux. C'est tout une hiérarchie : Soré-Naba (litt : chemin chef). C'est lui qui est pour ainsi dire le directeur de la maison : puis viennent dans l'ordre des pré-

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séances Sobila-Naba, Dag'noré, Dag'Nobila (gardiens de la porte). Le rôle de ces derniers consiste à autoriser tout « zounga » à rentrer dans le « kéogo » ; de même nul circoncis ne peut franchir le seuil de l'enceinte sans leur autorisation. Galli, Gallibila — personnages chargés des tambours. L'Imam, l'Imambilla (chefs du Pardon) délivrent des mains des « Zouinsi » les bankoensé maltraités. Banzambo, personne un peu comique qui danse à tout moment, et toutes sortes de danses pour rompre la monotonie de la vie du « kéogo » et donner un peu de gaîté aux circoncis, ses trémoussements provoquant inévitablement les rires de l'assemblée. Wagdré, Wagd'billa (chef et petit voleurs) : ces deux individus ont pour mission de voler la viande provenant des battues auxquelles se livrent les jeunes circoncis ou le saghbo apporté par les parents de ces derniers, mais aussi par compensation, de faire coucher les petits enfants et de leur offrir à manger lorsque les jeux durent longtemps et cela à l'insu des autres surveillants du kéogo.

Nané, Nanebilla sont avec le « Bankoé » les maîtres de cérémonie.

Entretien des circoncis. — Nous l'avons déjà dit, les parents sont tenus d'assurer la nourriture de leurs enfants matin et soir pendant toute la durée de leur maladie. Il n'est pas sans intérêt de dire que les circoncis ne reçoivent, en réalité, qu'une maigre pitance, plus de la moitié des aliments — les meilleurs plats étant mis à part par le « lembré » (personnage chargé d'apprécier le goût des aliments) — étant, en effet,

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réservée aux nombreux zouinsi dont la plupart, célibataires, trouvent là une occasion de satisfaire régulièrement leur faim.

Soins donnés aux malades. — Un coin du « kéogo » spécialement aménagé sert d'infirmerie. Les soins consistent dans le lavage de la plaie avec de l'eau chaude qui n'est souvent pas d'une propreté rigoureuse, la calebasse qui la contient n'étant parfois pas lavée. La plaie est saupoudrée d'un charbonnage (écorce ou feuillage de la plante « baguem-baga » calciné) mêlé à du beurre de karité. Le bandage composé d'une feuille d'un arbuste « kantonga » est maintenu à l'aide de fil. Lorsque la cicatrisation commence on entoure la plaie de bandes de coton. L'eau ayant servi à laver la plaie est ensuite jetée dans un trou qu'on recouvre d'une pierre.

Langage spécial parlé dans le keogo. — Pour éviter que le moaga (c'est-à-dire le non circoncis) comprenne ce qui se dit dans l'intérieur du « kéogo » ou entre gardiens et circoncis, il a été inventé un langage conventionnel. C'est ainsi qu'on appelle :

L'eau (kom en Mossi vulgaire) hargo;

Le gâteau de mil (saghbo en Mossi) lâbo;

La sauce (zindo en Mossi) kirou;

Le feu (bougoum en Mossi) Nionom;

Le Dolo (dam en Mossi) Sonnom;

Le boubou ou la couverture (Fougou en Mossi) Pilli;

La natte (pinri en Mossi) Wanghé.

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Signes distinctifs du jeune circoncis (Bankoanga). — Son habillement « Wallimba » ou « zougba » se compose d'un cache-sexe avec franges et pochettes. Il porte un bâton un peu rustique « zâbré » dont il se sert pour chasser les lièvres et autre menu gibier.

Il accompagne sa danse du soir d'un instrument appelé « Wassimba » composé d'un bâton recourbé à l'extrémité duquel sont enfilés quatre ou cinq morceaux de calebasses troués par le milieu et affectant la forme d'une circonférence.

Tam-tams. — Les « Bankoensé » (jeunes circoncis) dansent en suivant le rythme des batteries de deux tambours qui ne diffèrent en rien de ceux dont on se sert pour la danse de la « warba » ou du « waongo » (voir chapitre des danses indigènes), mais tandis que pour ces deux danses on appelle ces tambours des « Gangango » ici ils prennent le nom de « gallyans ».

Choses défendues dans le keogo. — I. Il est formellement interdit à un moaga[1] de regarder à travers l'enceinte. S'il commet cette imprudence qui constitue une très lourde faute, il en subit immédiatement les conséquences, puisqu'il est tout aussitôt introduit dans le cercle, déshabillé et subit l'opération de la circoncision sans que l'on ait, au préalable, consulté ses parents.

II. Il est formellement défendu d'entrer dans le « kéogo » avec des néoda (chaussures), un pougla

1. Moaga est employé ici dans un sens péjoratif et signifie : homme non circoncis.

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(chéchia rouge) et des « kandé » (lances). Le chef de canton, s'il lui prend la fantaisie — cas du reste rarement observé — de visiter les circoncis, doit abandonner dehors tous les insignes de la chefferie.

III. Il a été observé que les jeunes gens s'étant livrés avant leur circoncision à l'acte sexuel guérissaient difficilement; aussi est-il conseillé aux jeunes gens de s'abstenir de tout contact charnel pendant les premiers mois qui suivent la cicatrisation de la plaie.

IV. On ne mange pas la sauce de « wagha » (sauce faite avec des jeunes fruits du « wagka » arbre de la famille des kapokiers).

Exercices auxquels sont astreints les bankoensé. — Les Bankoensé sont soumis à des exercices pénibles et fatigants qui retardent considérablement leur guérison. Nous allons passer en revue les principaux exercices auxquels ils sont astreints.

De fort bon matin, lorsqu'il fait excessivement frais — nous l'avons déjà dit c'est au début de la saison fraîche qu'a lieu la cérémonie — les jeunes gens sont réveillés et sans couverture doivent se coucher à plat ventre sur le sable refroidi : C'est le « bourga ». Comme tout naturellement les membres sont un peu engourdis on leur distribue généreusement quelques bonnes fessées de « berrella » (branchages de certains arbres), dans le but de leur donner un peu de chaleur et de l'énergie; puis suivant le rythme du tam-tam, ils doivent exécuter le « guella » exercice difficile qui consiste à faire, accroupi des sauts à l'imitation du

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crapaud avec, par moments, un mouvement circulaire des jambes; ou bien ce qui est plus pénible encore à exécuter le « nagda » exercice consistant à marcher sur les mains avec les jambes en l'air; d'autres fois encore le jeune circoncis doit se tenir droit puis lentement se replier le ventre en l'air, les deux mains devant se poser sur le sol : C'est ce qu'on nomme « kaougsèga » (litt : casser les reins). Les malheureux qui manquent le but s'en tirent seulement avec une légère bosse à la tête. Il y a aussi des mouvements de tête comme seules savent en faire les jeunes filles « Kassonkées » et les Wiskamba » du Mossi, qu'on nomme « zouanka. »

Libération. — Le séjour au « kéogo » dure de 90 à 100 jours. Vers le 80e jour tout le monde étant guéri, on rase la tête des jeunes gens et on leur annonce qu'un semaine plus tard ils seront libérés. On égorge des poulets « koug'nossé — poulets de la pierre); chaque circoncis reçoit la moitié d'un poulet.

En réalité c'est quatorze jours seulement après cette cérémonie qu'a lieu la libération. Toutes les hardes des jeunes gens (cache-sexe, bandes à pansements, bâtons, etc...) sont brûlées par les « zouinsi ». On allume un grand feu non loin du « kéogo ». Les « bankoensé » complètement nus doivent sauter par-dessus ce feu en courant et continuer sans regarder derrière eux jusqu'à la maison du « Bankoé » où préalablement, une nouvelle enceinte a été dressée. Là on remet aux jeunes gens des pagnes, boubous, culottes et bonnets de toutes couleurs que leurs parents ont acheté ou

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fait confectionner à leur intention. Chacun tient, en effet, à ce que son enfant se distingue ce jour-là par la richesse de son costume. Le défilé des jeunes circoncis offre un aspect bigarré et pittoresque. Un ou deux jours après, les jeunes gens doivent, à la nuit tombante et pour la dernière fois, se diriger vers le « kéogo » sans toutefois y arriver et revenir chez le « Bankoé », l'échine légèrement courbée : c'est ce qu'on nomme « lèssé-bourgou. »

Pendant une semaine entière c'est une véritable fête pour les jeunes gens; ceux-ci sont fiers de se faire admirer, de pouvoir danser d'autres danses que celles de la circoncision, de boire du dolo et surtout de faire bonne chère, les parents sacrifiant à leur intention poulets et moutons.

Enfin de fort bon matin quelques zouinsi réunissent les jolis bâtons dessinés « Wangha ou dibissi » des jeunes circoncis et vont les enfouir dans des trous creusés en dehors du village. La cérémonie a pris fin, les jeunes gens sont alors autorisés à rentrer dans leur famille.

Mais tous ces jeunes gens ont subi les mêmes mauvais traitements, ils ont mené la même vie pendant cent jours environ; au cours de ces journées d'épreuves se sont formées des amitiés, des liens durables, ils s'appelleront donc familièrement de leur nom de circoncision, ils se rendront dans la vie des services, ils sont devenus des camarades.

Pour éviter des représailles toujours possibles — dans le « kéogo » on ne distingue guère le fils du Naba de celui du simple cultivateur — la coutume défend aux

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nouveaux circoncis de garder rancune aux zouinsi des mauvais traitements dont ils ont été l'objet de la part de ces derniers.

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Les « Nioniossé » et les « Soukoaba » ne pratiquent pas la circoncision. C'est pour cela qu'on les appelle des Mossé. Dans les villages où les habitants sont exclusivement des « Nioniossé » on ne peut installer un « kéogo ». Certains jeunes gens d'origine nionioga font fi actuellement de cet interdit et vont subir l'opération purificatrice[1] dans le village de leur mère (Yastenga).

Nombreux sont les adeptes du Christianisme qui subissent au Mossi la circoncision volontairement, la femme — même chrétienne — éprouvant une certaine répugnance à subir le contact du « moaga ».

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Enfin l'excision est aussi en honneur au Mossi, sauf encore chez les Nioniossé où elle ne se pratique pas. Les filles non excisées sont humiliées par leurs compagnes et n'ont pas d'amants.

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1. Les musulmans croient, paraît-il, que toute personne circoncise ne va pas en enfer.

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CHAPITRE XIX

Maximes et pensées Mossi.

Dans un précédent chapitre « Intronisation des chefs Mossi » nous avons parlé des surnoms que se donnaient les Nabas au moment de leur avènement. Le lecteur a dû remarquer que si beaucoup de ces surnoms ou « zabyuiya » exprimaient souvent une idée de menace à l'adresse des concurrents, ils exprimaient parfois aussi une pensée, ou bien encore donnaient une indication sur la politique que se proposait de suivre le nouveau Naba. D'autre part, dans le chapitre des « Coutumes locales », notamment au paragraphe traitant de la naissance nous avons donné la signification de certains noms indigènes. Tout ceci démontre l'intelligence d'un peuple. C'est que dans la vie courante, le Moaga parle souvent par énigmes et dans certaines réunions soit pour défier les curieux, soit pour éviter de mettre certains étrangers au courant des secrets du village, les paroles échangées sont le plus souvent des mots à double sens. L'indigène a certes une culture rudimentaire, mais il a une culture quand même.

Dans ce chapitre nous allons présenter au lecteur quelques proverbes et maximes Mossi.

Il en reconnaîtra la finesse et parfois la justesse.

Nous regrettons beaucoup de ne pouvoir, dans l'ensemble du travail entrepris, étudier dans ses menus

détails la psychologie de l'indigène, cela aurait permis sans doute de le mieux faire connaître pour le mieux faire aimer, car pour comprendre l'âme indigène, il faut avant tout connaître sa civilisation et saisir ses pensées dans ce qu'elles ont de subtil.

Quoi qu'il en soit, nous souhaitons que les renseignements que nous fournissons dans les différents chapitres de ce travail servent d'ébauche à une étude d'ensemble aussi complète que possible pour le bien de la race moaga dont l'histoire et les mœurs ne sont encore que très peu connues.

YELBOUNA (Proverbes)

I. *Tekre wind'kouni bi ned kam tala rinda.*

Si l'échange équivaut à un cadeau que chacun garde ce qui lui appartient.

II. *Kolkodo same rogho, menem n'loubda.*

La maison construite avec la salive ne résiste pas à la rosée (Tout ce qui est fait sans réflexion n'aboutit qu'à des mécomptes).

III. *Ned sin ting'beogho belem Wendé.*

Qui songe à demain repose sa confiance en Dieu.

IV. *Wagda noré nionstaba Nab'Niolkba.*

Si deux voleurs complices n'ont pas la même langue, leur arrestation par le Naba est proche. (Autrement dit : Pour qu'une affaire soit bien conduite il faut une parfaite entente entre les parties en cause.)

V. *Watid Wamb'lab kamba n'maneg'sondo.*

Se mettre d'accord pour manger réciproquement

leurs enfants c'est entretenir de bonnes relations entre sorciers (cela rappelle un peu de La Rochefoucault lorsqu'il dit que « l'amitié n'est autre chose qu'un échange de bons offices où chacun se propose toujours quelque chose à gagner ».

VI. *A baodin bing'din la baodin ditin yam y a yemballa.*

Celui qui mange sa fortune de son vivant et celui qui devient avare et ne veut rien dépenser sont aussi malins l'un que l'autre.

VII. *Sin pa kou kon sigue yé.*

On ne dépèce pas ce qui n'est pas mort. Signifie : Ne fais pas de grands projets si tu n'es pas sûr de pouvoir les mener à bonne fin. Le proverbe français : Il ne faut pas vendre la peau de l'ours avant de l'avoir tué, traduit exactement cette pensée.

VIII. *Boulough'ka teud dara yé n'pam kom ye.*

On ne peut forer un puits en un jour (ce qui signifie : « C'est à force de réflexion et de patience qu'on trouve la solution des grands problèmes. »

IX. *Pagh'nore là loko.*

La bouche d'une femme est son carquois.

X. *Pagh youré la pagtouba la moum nore tallé.*

Qu'est-ce que c'est que la femme ? Un être étrange, bouche-toi les oreilles, ferme la bouche et garde-la.

XI. *Sawiné wan yik pind'n'saon.*

Pensée de Mogho-Naba Wobgo signifiant littéralement : « Pendant l'hivernage se lever bon matin est

mieux. » Cette pensée signifie : « Il faut faire vite ce qu'on veut faire de façon à éviter qu'une circonstance imprévue ne vous oblige à le remettre au lendemain. »

XII. *Wend'na konf nioré, la wend'na samfo san maond' taba f'vousda bilfou.*

Proverbe de Mogho-Naba Wongo signifiant : « Lorsque les deux personnages qu'on nomme « Dieu te bénisse » et « Dieu te maudisse » sont en lutte cela vous donne le loisir de prendre un peu de repos. »

Pour faire comprendre cette pensée de l'Empereur des Mossi une explication paraît nécessaire : BOUKARY KOUTOU, Empereur des Mossi était de sa nature sanguinaire. Il faisait mettre des individus à mort pour des motifs futiles, mais, par ailleurs il avait des moments de répit pendant lesquels il était très large, distribuant les cadeaux sans compter à tel point que beaucoup de ses sujets le prenaient pour un Roi d'une grande bonté. Il savait personnellement que les avis étaient partagés et si d'aucuns lui souhaitaient les bénédictions du Ciel les autres devaient être prodigues en malédictions; aussi par esprit critique, aimait-il à répéter chaque fois qu'il commettait une mauvaise action, la pensée dont la signification a été donnée ci-dessus.

XIII. *Ned na modgh' nitiema n'soui a korg' zome.*

Peut-on obliger un vieillard à mettre du mil écrasé dans sa peau de bouc en prévision de la faim ?

Il faut être dénué de volonté pour se laisser dominer par des faibles d'esprit.

XIV. *Pagh yoda na sàonga sida.*

(Litt. : La femme mariée commet des actes d'infidélité tout d'abord parce qu'elle croit trouver toujours des hommes supérieurs à son mari et aussi parce qu'elle pense n'avoir plus rien à demander à ce dernier, comptant sur les biens qu'elle recevra de ses amants). Signifie : Ce qui conduit l'homme à commettre des actes bas et vils c'est d'abord l'idée du grand profit qu'il compte retirer de ces actes malhonnêtes. Il ne se met jamais dans l'esprit que ses projets peuvent échouer et de là la honte et l'ignominie.

XV. *Gom gomdeb laghem koabga ti sind'pam boum.*

Ce n'est pas le plus grand parleur qui a toujours raison; bien au contraire souvent le parleur essaie par sa volubilité de dissimuler la vérité. Celui qui garde le silence a le plus souvent raison ou possède la vérité.

XVI. *Ned kon banguef zib'tiri ti tousgh'paogof'ye.*

Litt. : Quand on connaît le poids de la charge qu'on va porter on prépare par avance le coussinet à poser sur la tête.

Cette pensée signifie : « Lorsqu'on sait quelle responsabilité on assume dans une affaire, on prend ses dispositions pour parer à toutes les éventualités.

XVII. *Lãre wind'zindé, zindé yida.*

Litt. : Si la hache ressemble et remplace le « zindé » (cognée) c'est que le second n'est pas à portée de la main. Signifie : On n'emploie de moyens de fortune que lorsqu'on se trouve dans l'impossibilité de faire autrement.

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XVIII. *Kombre zand'kaosgo yoda bagh'yam.*

Litt. : Tenir longtemps dans la main un os sans le jeter au chien qui l'attend c'est vraiment soumettre l'animal à une rude épreuve. Signifie : Hésiter longtemps à prendre une décision pourtant urgente c'est donner à réfléchir à son entourage.

XIX. *Toguess'sid'ka ribo la be bassem yam.*

Aimer et dire trop la vérité peut être cause qu'on vous refuse quelquefois l'hospitalité, mais la conscience est beaucoup plus tranquille.

XX. *Bonkane koum' bigha saon akin dog'yalma.*

Apprendre que son enfant est mort victime de sa grande témérité est toujours préférable à la critique qu'on vous fera d'avoir donné naissance à un être couard et sans valeur.

XXI. *Zoang'mough'na, n'va parikse n'lebin vadin.*

Litt. : Considère l'aveugle : ce qu'il a fait tomber de l'arbre il ne l'a pas encore ramassé qu'il continue quand même à le secouer. Signifie : Il ne faut jamais entreprendre une affaire quand plusieurs autres sont restées sans solution définitive. Un proverbe français dit : « Il ne faut jamais courir plusieurs lièvres à la fois. »

XXII. *Pang'san'segh poulga, lebegh' dab raniouga.*

Litt. : Lorsque la force (dans le sens de puissance des Nabas) rencontre un dolo fait pour être vendu, cette bière change aussitôt de destination, c'est-à-dire qu'elle est offerte sans exiger aucun paiement. Autrement dit : « La Force prime le droit. »

XXIII. *Nionk' loub ya ka pangha, la zo n'panbdan y a ka neda.*

Litt. : Faire tomber quelqu'un c'est démontrer qu'on est fort, mais frapper la personne ainsi terrassée prouve que celle-ci n'a pas de parents : ce qui signifie : « Médire d'une personne à son insu est une loi de nature, mais l'injurier en sa présence c'est lui montrer qu'on fait peu de cas de sa personne. »

XXIV. *Nab fan mi pogh'nyang'youre lab bond't em yaba.*

Litt. : Tout le monde connaît le nom de la vieille, pourtant on l'appelle grand'mère. C'est un reproche à ceux qui divulguent un secret que nul n'ignorait dans la famille mais que l'on voulait cependant cacher au public.

XXV. *Da pidghe loko t'eb banghe ti y a tanwingh'ye.*

Litt. : Ne montre pas ton carquois et tes flèches car il ne faut pas qu'on sache qu'ils sont faits de bambou. « La force de ceux qui commandent réside dans le secret des moyens divers qu'ils emploient pour imposer leur volonté. »

XXVI. *Teng'Naba san n'sonde Albarka, son kiela sonda yemboudou.*

Litt. : Si le chef du village a pour nom « Albarka » (nom qu'on donne aux esclaves) les habitants se nommeront « Yemboudou » (race d'esclaves), c'est-à-dire que les sujets d'un chef l'imitent dans toutes ses actions bonnes ou mauvaises. Autrement dit : « Tel chef, tels sujets. »

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XXVII. *Ned toen ti baga gandé, laf ka toen ta mouma nine ye.*

Litt. : On peut par la force ou la douceur faire coucher un chien, mais on ne peut l'obliger à fermer les yeux. « Signifie : On peut soumettre un individu ou un pays par la force ou par la douceur, mais il est malaisé, pour ne pas dire impossible, d'obtenir que les habitants abandonnent totalement ou changent leurs habitudes et coutumes. »

XXVIII. *Fo san date silfaogho niendegha bif sok dakoeogho.*

Litt. : Si tu veux le derrière le l'épervier demande-le au bois sec : Ce qui signifie : « Pour mieux connaître quelqu'un il faut se renseigner auprès des personnes qui le fréquentent. »

XXIX. *Sagh' bonsa nien saghbo n'kidmdin, saghbosoba n'sô à saghbo.*

Litt. : Le mendiant se réjouit à la vue du saghbo (gâteau de mil), il oublie que le saghbo a un propriétaire. C'est à-dire : « Il ne faut pas confondre son bien avec celui d'autrui. »

XXX. *Eb san belghe biga t'a koda, a boug'da wang'kienrga.*

Litt. : Si on dit à un enfant qu'il est déjà bon cultivateur il se promènera avec un daba sur l'épaule. Signifie : « Féliciter un orgueilleux c'est le pousser à faire preuve de plus de fatuité. »

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CHAPITRE XX

Les devinettes Mossi.

Pour faire suite au chapitre des « Maximes », nous donnons ci-après quelques devinettes Mossi. Ces deux chapitres se complètent l'un l'autre.

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I. — Q. : *Boin-bé*[1] *ta san toutin bi neb sounri nomé, ta dogom daré ya sou sanga ?* Littéralement : Quelle est la « chose » dont l'état de grossesse cause la joie dans la famille et dont l'accouchement provoque l'inquiétude et le mécontentement général ?

R. : *Baoré* (le grenier) lorsqu'il est rempli de céréales toute la famille est contente, mais le jour où l'on annonce qu'il n'y a plus rien personne n'est tranquille.

II. — Q. : *Boin-bé ta san zihin bi wogolom yida sin niansé ?*

Litt. : Quel est l'animal plus haut assis que debout ?

R. : *Bâga* (le chien) quand il se met sur son train de derrière.

III. — Q. : *Boin dengued'sane bella ta nan pa ta ting' poughin ?*

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1. Le mot « Boin-bé » signifie en mossi « Qu'est-ce qui existe ». Pour la clarté du texte nous avons préféré employer les expressions suivantes : « Quel est l'animal, l'être, la chose, etc ..., etc...).

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Littéralement : Qui est-ce qui salue le premier l'étranger avant son arrivée au village ?

R. : *Dote-souga* (les toits des maisons).

IV. — Q. : *Boin-bé tib san kon sane pinri bé denguin zinedi ?*

Littéralement : Quelle est la bête qui, lorsqu'on offre une natte à un étranger, s'y asseoit avant ce dernier ?

R. : *Zoanga* (la mouche).

V. — Q. : *Boin-bé weoguin ta pouré bé yiri ?*

Littéralement : Quel est l'être qui étant dans la brousse a son estomac à la maison ?

R. : *Tanga* (la montagne). Ceci est un peu particulier au Moaga. Il appelle en effet, la montagne « tanga » et « tampouré » (l'estomac de tanga) le tas de saletés provenant des détritus du ménage qui se trouve en face de chaque habitation indigène.

VI. — Q. : *Boin-bé ta nin-mess ba pouguin ta komb'be yinga ?*

Littéralement : Quel est l'être dont les os sont à l'extérieur et la chair à l'intérieur du corps ?

R. : *Guellé* (l'œuf); la coque inutilisable représente les os et la chair le contenu.

VII. — Q. : *Boin bé lalle dogh'la pa kindin ?*

Littéralement : Qui est à la porte, mais n'entre jamais ?

R. : *Lougri* (piquet de bois). Les Mossi ont coutume de planter un piquet de chaque côté de la porte des

cases. Ces piquets (lougri) servant à retenir pendant la nuit le secco servant de fermeture.

VIII. — Q. : *Boin-bé ka naw la roude tissé ?*

Littéralement : Quel est l'animal sans pattes qui grimpe sur des arbres ?

R. : *Wafo* (le serpent).

IX. — Q. : *Boin-bé ta toumed'wousgo la pa ritin ?*

Littéralement : Quel est l'être qui travaille beaucoup et ne mange pas ?

R. : *Wanka* (la pioche) grâce à laquelle la terre produit tout ce qui est nécessaire à l'entretien de la vie.

X. — Q. : *Boin bé bé namesdin la pa ritin ?*

Littéralement : Quelle est l'autre chose qui se fatigue beaucoup mais ne mange également pas ?

R. : *Néré* (*moulin*) dalle de pierre sur laquelle on écrase le mil pour obtenir la farine nécessaire à la fabrication du sagbo.

XI. — Q. : *Boin bé kinde bogdin lab pa touda ?*

Littéralement : Quels sont les êtres qui aiment à entrer dans des trous, mais ne creusent jamais ces trous ?

R. : *Wafo la pondré* (le serpent et le crapaud).

XII. — Q. : *Boin bé sasse zougou ta san sigue ting bé lebeg kougri ?*

Littéralement : Quelle est la chose qui se trouve dans le ciel et qui se transforme en pierre quand elle descend sur la terre ?

R. : *Andga* (l'étoile).

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XIII. — Q. : *Boin bé ditin la pa nioud kom?*

Littéralement : Quel est l'être qui mange et ne boit pas ?

R. : *Souré* (la sauterelle).

XIV. — Q. : *Boin bé meta rogo la pa gaïn bé?*

Littéralement : Quel est l'être ou l'animal qui construit des maisons dans lesquelles il ne couche jamais ?

R. : *Vounoun-vougou* (la mouche-maçonne).

XV. — Q. : *Boin bé ti ned san pa sicca bé niansa zi yendé la pa ritin?*

Littéralement : Quelle est la chose qui ne change de place que lorsqu'une puissance étrangère l'y contraint et qui ne mange pas ?

R. : *Kougri*, la pierre, corps inerte.

XVI. — Q. : *Boin bé dogda koamba tif san tare dibo datin senga tipgo bé yik datin kouffe?*

Littéralement : Quel est l'animal qui, même lorsque vous voulez offrir de quoi manger à ses petits, vous défend d'en approcher et même désire vous tuer ?

R. : *Boniéga* (le lion) et on peut dire d'une manière générale les fauves qui ne reconnaissent à personne le droit de les aider à soigner leurs petits ou à leur apporter de quoi manger.

XVII. — Q. : *Boin bé ditin la niouda yaolin pa tig'da?*

Littéralement : Quel est l'animal qui mange, boit, mais n'en a jamais assez ?

R. : *Katré* (l'hyène). Même si elle vient de se régaler d'un mouton entier, elle se jettera tout de

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suite sur le premier animal errant qui se trouvera sur son passage.

XVIII. — Q. : *Boin bé poudin la pa wanda ?*

Littéralement : Qu'est-ce qui fleurit mais ne produit jamais de fruits ?

R. : L'œil (*ni fou*) pour faire allusion à cette matière blanchâtre qui se trouve dans les coins de l'œil au réveil « *nin poudou* » (les fleurs de l'œil).

XIX. — Q. : *Boin bé kom pouga la poudin la pa wamda ?*

Littéralement : Qu'est-ce qui tout en se trouvant continuellement dans l'eau ne fleurit ni ne donne des fruits ?

R. : *Yindé* (la dent). La dent se trouve dans la bouche (marigot) qui ne dessèche jamais.

[p. 286 is blank]

APPENDICE

Liste des Mogho-Nabas de l'origine à nos jours.

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1. NABA OUEDRAOGO, décédé à Sagabtenga (Subdivision de Ouagadougou) au cours d'une reconnaissance, mais on ignore où il a été enterré.
2. NABA ZOUNGRANA, fils et successeur de Ouedraogo, mort et enterré à Komtoèga.
3. NABA OUBRI, fils de Zoungrana, fondateur de la dynastie Mossi de Ouagadougou, décédé à Koudougou au cours d'une tournée.
4. NABA SOARA, décédé à Lougsy (au delà de Zagtouly) village situé à 9 kilomètres de Ouagadougou.
5. NABA NASKIMIE.
6. NABA NASBIRE, serait décédé et enterré à Lâ (Subdivision de Yako dans le cercle de Koudougou).
7. NABA GNINGNEMDO.
8. NABA KOUDOUMIE. Tombeau à Thyou, dans le cercle de Koudougou.
9. NABA KOUDA. Tombeau à Saponé (Subdivision de Ouagadougou).
10. NABA RAWINGMA. La tradition rapporte que ce Mogho-Naba n'a pas eu de tombeau. Au moment où l'on s'apprêtait à le conduire à sa dernière demeure il se serait transformé en tourbillon et aurait disparu. Dans le tombeau destiné à le recevoir on dut seulement enfouir ses gris-gris.
11. NABA ZOETEMBOUSSOUMA. Tombeau à Gourpila (Subdivision de Ouagadougou).
12. NABA NIANDEFFO. Tombeau à Baoghin (Ouagadougou).
13. NABA NAKIN. Tombeau à Dassouri-Tanghin.
14. NABA NAMEGA. Tombeau à Baoghin (Ouagadougou).

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15. NABA KIBBA. Tombeau à Baoghin (Ouagadougou).
16. NABA KIEMBA. Tombeau à Tenguemnaoré (Koudougou).
17. NABA COIBGA, Tombeau entre Napalgué et Coibga, Canton de Niou, cercle de Ouagadougou.
18. NABA ZANA. Tombeau à Baoghin (Ouagadougou).
19. NABA GUIRGA. Tombeau à Baoghin (Ouagadougou).
20. NABA OUBI. Tombeau à Baoghin (Ouagadougou).
21. NABA MOATIBA. Tombeau à Baoghin (Ouagadougou).
22. NABA WARGA. Tombeau à Baoghin (Ouagadougou).
23. NABA ZOMBRÉ. Tombeau près de la Mission Catholique (Ouagadougou).
24. NABA KOM. Tombeau à Ouagadougou.
25. NABA SAGA. Tombeau à Ouagadougou.
26. NABA ROULGOU ou DOULGOU. Tombeau derrière la maison de l'Administrateur du Cercle, vers le camp des Tirailleurs.
27. NABA SAWADOGO. Tombeau à Baoghin (Ouagadougou).
28. NABA KABEO. Tombeau entre le camp militaire et le Cercle.
29. NABA BAONGO. Tombeau entre le camp militaire et le Cercle.
30. NABA KOUTOU. Tombeau dans le camp même des Tirailleurs.
31. NABA SANUM. Tombeau dans le camp même des Tirailleurs.
32. NABA OUOBGO. Tombeau à Zangoeog'yiri (Gold Coast).
33. NABA SIGUIRI. Tombeau face à la maison de l'Empereur actuel devant la porte des femmes.
34. NABA KOM. Empereur actuel, intronisé le 24 mars 1905.

Chefs de la famille de Naba Ouedraogo
(père de Zoungrana).

BINGO NABA. Chef des Gourmantché, Cercle de Fada.
YATENGA NABA. Chef d'État, Cercle Ouahigouya.

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Communiqué par la Mission des Pères Blancs à Ouagadougou.

Un Chef de canton (DOULOUGOU NABA)
et son serviteur.

[facing p. 288]

NANORO NABA. Chef de canton, Koudougou.
BINGO NABA. Chef de canton, Koudougou.
DAPELGO NABA. Chef de canton Ouagadougou.
SAO NABA. Chef de canton Ouagadougou.
KOGHO NABA. Chef de canton Ouagadougou.
NIOU NABA. Chef de canton Ouagadougou.
ZANGO NABA. Chef de village Ouagadougou.
TOUGOURI NABA. Chef de canton Kaya.
ZAGTOULY NABA. Chef de village Ouagadougou.
TANVI NABA. Chef de village Ouagadougou.
GNIMDI NABA. Chef de village Ouagadougou.
YABO NABA. Chef de canton Ouahigouya.

Famille de Zoungrana, fils de Ouedraogo et père d'Oubri.

TENKODOGO NABA. Chef d'État Tenkodogo.
GAMPELA NABA. Chef de canton Ouagadougou.
MANGA NABA. Chef de canton Ouagadougou.
DOUABA NABA. Chef de canton Ouagadougou (mais le chef actuel est descendant de Naba Saga).
ZOUNGOU NABA. Chef de canton Ouagadougou (actuellement le chef est descendant de Naba Kouda).
ZITTENGA NABA. Chef de canton Ouagadougou (le chef actuel est le fils de Massi, descendant de Naba Koutou).
DAKOLA NABA. Chef de canton Koudougou.
DATTENGA NABA. Chef de canton à Ouahigouya.
NANGUELA NABA. Chef de canton à Koudougou.
KOMTOEGA NABA. Chef de canton à Tenkodogo ;

Famille de Naba Oubri, fils de Zoungrana et fondateur de la dynastie de Ouagadougou.

SALMATENGA NABA, (fils de Oubri) cercle de Kaya.
BOULSA NABA « Kourita » de Naba Oubri. Le Kourita représente sur la terre le Mogho-Naba dont il a le nom et dont il prolonge la personnalité. Il est défendu au Boulsa Naba une fois nommé de revoir

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jamais le Mogho-Naba de Ouagadougou. Boulsa Naba est cependant considéré comme un vassal du suzerain et comme tel lui doit des redevances annuelles comme les autres Kombemba (Chefs de canton).

IPALA NABA. Chef de canton à Ouagadougou.

NOBERE NABA. Chef de canton à Ouagadougou.

NOBILA NABA. Chef de canton à Ouagadougou.

Ces deux derniers cantons formaient autrefois un seul canton, la scission n'a eu lieu que beaucoup plus tard. Et actuellement Nobéré est commandé par un descendant de Naba Saga tandis que Nobila est administré par un descendant de Naba Koutou.

ZINIARE NABA. Chef de canton Ouagadougou.

NIAGO NABA ET NIARBA NABA. Chefs de canton Tenkodogo.

Famille de Naba Soarba, fils d'Oubri.

N'a pas eu d'enfants.

Famille de Naba Nastiemde, fils d'Oubri et frère de Soarba.

LOUDA NABA. Chef de canton Kaya.

KANBA NABA. Chef de canton Yako (cercle de Koudougou).

VOOKO NABA. Canton aujourd'hui supprimé, Cercle de Ouagadougou.

Famille de Naba Nasbiré (autre frère de Soarba).

PISSILA NABA. Chef de canton Kaya.

KAYAO NABA. Chef de canton Ouagadougou.

SOURGOUBILA NABA. Chef de canton Ouagadougou.

SOURGOU NABA. Chef de canton Koudougou.

TOUDOU NABA. Chef de canton Ouagadougou.

BOLGO NABA. Chef d'un important village dépendant du canton de Nanoro dans le cercle de Koudougou.

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Famille de Koumdoumié, fils de Nasbiré.

BOUSSOUMA NABA. Roi. Chef de province Kaya.
KONKISTENGA NABA. Roi. Chef de canton Koudougou.
TEMA NABA. Chef de canton Kaya (dépendait de Yako en ce qui concerne l'investiture).
MANÉ NABA. Chef de canton, Kaya. (Était nommé autrefois par le Mogho-Naba, actuellement par Boussouma Naba, mais se proclame indépendant de Boussouma.)
IMIOUGOU NABA. Chef de canton Kaya.
PAWAMTORE NABA. Le chef actuel est cependant le petit-fils de Naba Wobgo (Boukary Koutou) Ouagadougou.
GUIRGO NABA. Chef de canton Ouagadougou ;
TANGHIN NABA. Chef de canton Ouagadougou.
YAKO NABA. Roi. Chef de province Yako (Koudougou).
THYOU NABA. Chef de canton Koudougou.
SABOU NABA. Chef de canton Koudougou.
POA NABA « Kourita » de Naba Koumdoumié.

Famille de Naba Kouda (fils de Koumdoumié).

PIKOUTENGA. Chef de canton Kaya.
SOUMBÈGA NABA. Chef de canton Kaya.
SABOURI NABA. Chef de canton Kaya.
IPELSÉ NABA. Chef de canton Kaya.
LALLÉ NABA. Chef de canton Koudougou (Une partie de ce canton qui a dû être scindé est confiée à un frère du Baloum-Naba de Ouagadougou).
ZORGO NABA. Chef de canton Ouagadougou.
TOÉCÉ NABA. Chef de canton Ouagadougou.
OUÉOGTENGA NABA. Chef de canton (le chef actuel est descendant de Naba Koutou).
RASSAMKANDÉ NABA. Chef de canton Ouagadougou.
SONDÉRÉ NABA. Chef de canton Ouagadougou.
ZORGONGO NABA. Chef de canton Ouagadougou (actuellement descendant de Naba Wobgo).

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KOASSANGA NABA. Chef de canton Ouagadougou.
ZIGA NABA. Chef de canton Ouagadougou.
DARIGUIMA NABA. Chef de canton Yako (Koudougou).
RIZIAM NABA. Roi. Chef de province à Ouahigouya. (Certains griots le font descendre de Zoettemboussouma et même de Koumdoumié.)
ZOUNGOU NABA. Chef de canton Ouagadougou.
NAKOONGO NABA (Kourita).

Famille de Naba Zoettemboussouma.

DIGUILLA NABA, Chef de canton Kaya. (Certains griots le font descendre de Naba Kouda.)
BOUDRY NABA. Chef de canton Ouagadougou. (Actuellement c'est un neveu de Koutou qui est chef de ce canton.)
BOUGOURÉ NABA. Chef de canton Ouagadougou.
YAÏKA NABA (Kourita). Chef de canton Ouagadougou
DOULOUGOU NABA. Chef de canton Ouagadougou (Actuellement ce canton est administré par un fils de Naba Siguiri, frère du Mogho-Naba actuel.)
GAONGO NABA. Chef de canton (actuellement descendant de Naba Karfo).
KOUBRY NABA. Chef de canton Ouagadougou.
ZAM NABA, Chef de canton Ouagadougou (descendant de Naba Saga actuellement).
KIRGUITENGA NABA. Chef de canton à Ouahigouya
KIRGOUTENGA NABA. Chef de canton à Kaya.

Famille de Naba Niandeffo (70 *ans de règne*) *fils de Zoettemboussouma.*

NABITENGA NABA. Chef de canton Ouagadougou (le chef actuel est descendant de Naba Doulgou).
RAMESSOUM NABA. Chef de canton, Yako, Cercle de Koudougou.
GOALA, LAOGO, YARGO, GOLMIDOU, NABRABOGO.

C'étaient de simples Nabissi indépendants qui étaient désignés par le Mogho-Naba au même titre que les chefs

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de canton. Ces villages ont été depuis l'occupation française annexés au Commandement du chef de canton de Sao (Cercle de Ouagadougou).

Famille de Naba Nakin (fils de Niandeffo).

TANLARGHÉ NABA. Chef de canton Ouagadougou.
BINDÉ NABA. Chef de canton Ouagadougou.
BÉRÉ NABA. Chef de canton Ouagadougou. (Primitivement descendant de Nakin, le chef actuel est de la famille de Naba Sawadogo.
SALOGO NABA. Chef de canton Ouagadougou.

Famille de Naba Zana.

ZANGHOGO NABA. Chef de canton Ouagadougou.
KOUBRI NABA (déjà porté à Zoettembousma) Ouagadougou.

Famille de Naba Warga.

NAGREONGO NABA. Chef de canton de Ouagadougou. (Actuellement le chef est descendant de Naba Koutou.)
BILGOTENGA NABA. Chef de canton Ouagadougou.
KABOUDO NABA. Chef de canton Ouagadougou.
RAMONGO NABA. Chef de canton Koudougou.
KOMBISSIRI NABA. Chef de canton Ouagadougou.
KAGOULI NABA. Chef de canton Ouagadougou.

Famille de Naba Rawingma (fils de Kouda).

NÉDOGO NABA. Chef de canton Ouagadougou.
KONIOUDOU NABA. Chef de canton Ouagadougou.
Naba Rawingma fut un Roi terrible, grand guerrier et pour cela très détesté. On rapporte qu'avant de mourir il conseilla à ses enfants de se dire descendants de Naba Kouda de peur d'être mal vus à cause de lui. Par suite, il est difficile aujourd'hui

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d'avoir des renseignements très précis sur sa famille, celle-ci se confondant avec celle-là.

Famille de Naba Oubi (20e *Mogho-Naba*).

KONDERIN NABA. Chef de canton Ouagadougou. (Actuellement c'est un neveu de Naba Sawadogo qui est chef de ce canton.)
DAWOAKA. Chef de canton Ouagadougou.
MAONKIN NABA. Chef de canton Ouagadougou.
SATTIN NABA. Chef de canton Ouagadougou.

Famille de Naba Gning'nembo fils d'Oubri et 7e Mogho-Naba.

BATONO NABA. Chef de canton Koudougou.

Famille de Naba Doulougou ou Roulgou (26e *Mogho-Naba*).

MANKARGA NABA. Chef de canton à Ouagadougou.

Famille de Naba Wobgo frère de Sanum (*Empereur des Mossi au moment de la pénétration française*).

PAWAMTORÉ NABA. Chef de canton Ouagadougou. (Le chef actuel est le petit-fils de Wobgo.)
ZORGONGO NABA, fils de Wobgo. Chef de canton Ouagadougou.

***

Chefs de canton pour lesquels il n'a pas été possible d'obtenir des renseignements précis permettant de les rattacher à la famille des Mogho-Naba. (On croit qu'ils sont cependant descendants d'une famille royale.)

SOUGRETENGA NABA. Chef de canton Kaya.
BOUREOUM NABA. Chef de canton Kaya.
KOBOURÉ NABA. Chef de canton Kaya.

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KANDO NABA. Chef de canton Kaya.
PINSA NABA. Chef de canton Kaya.
NOUNGOU NABA. Chef de canton Kaya.
ANDEMTENGA NABA. Chef de canton Kaya.

Nous ne possédons par ailleurs pas de précisions en ce qui concerne les chefs de canton de Ouahigouya.

Cantons dont les chefs n'ont pas une origine bien déterminée, la plupart d'entre eux ayant été, soit des « Kourita » d'anciens Mogho-Naba, soit des « Tansoba » (Ministres de Guerre) ou enfin de simples « Nayirdamba (Ministres ou fonctionnaires de la Cour).

BAGAMINI NABA. Chef de canton Ouagadougou (Tansoba de Koumdoumié).

BAZOULÉ NABA. Chef de canton (Wemba) Ouagadougou.

GONSÉ NABA. Chef de canton Tansoba de Oubri) Ouagadougou.

GOURPILA NABA. Chef de canton Tansoba de Oubri) Ouagadougou. (Autrefois chef eunuque et gardien de tombeau, actuellement le Chef est un ancien Samand'biga (garde du corps) du Mogho-Naba actuel.

KALZI NABA. Chef de canton (Chef Palefrenier) Ouagadougou.

KOMSILGA NABA. Chef de canton (Nayirdin) Ouagadougou.

KOUNDA NABA. Chef de canton (Nayirdin) Ouagadougou.

NAHARTENGA NABA. Chef de canton (serait le descendant du Tansoba de Ouédraogo).

RAPADAMA NABA, autrefois canton réservé à un eunuque Ouagadougou.

SABTENGA NABA. Chef de canton (Eunuque) Ouagadougou.

SAKOUINSI NABA. Ouagadougou.

SAPONÉ NABA. Chef de canton (Nayirdin de Naba Kouda) Ouagadougou.

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TANGHÉ DASSOURI NABA. Chef de canton (Tansoba de Naba Nakin) Ouagadougou.

KAIBO NABA. Chef de canton (village d'esclaves de la Couronne).

TUILI NABA. Chef de canton Tansoba.

MANDIÉ-BANGARÉ NABA. Chef de canton village d'esclaves de la couronne.

ABSOUY NABA. Chef de canton (Tansoba de Ouédraogo Ouagadougou.

LOMBI-RAOGO NABA. Ouagadougou.

LOUMBI POKO NABA. Chef de canton Eunuque Ouagadougou.

MÉGUET NABA. Chef de canton Tansoba de Naskinmdé Ouagadougou.

VOAGA NABA. Chef de canton Nayirdin Ouagadougou.

KOKOLGO NABA. Chef de canton Tansoba de Ching'-nemdo (Koudougou).

DOURÉ NABA. Chef de canton Tansoba de Yako (Koudougou).

KOUPELA NABA. Chef de Province à Tenkodogo, Kourita de Boulsa Naba lui-même Kourita de Oubri.

***

DJIBA NABA. Le Canton de Dijba depuis le règne de Naba Zombré (23e Mogho-Naba) a été toujours réservé au fils aîné de chaque Empereur.

Maisons du Chef des Mossi.
Où habitait le Mogho-Naba et quelle était l'étendue occupée par sa demeure et celle de ses femmes ?

Avant l'arrivée des Français, Mogho-Naba Wobgo (BOUKARY KOUTOU) avait deux maisons séparées par l'ancien marché de Ouagadougou.

La première de ces maisons était bâtie sur l'emplacement actuellement occupé par l'habitation de l'Administrateur du Cercle y compris les dépendances, emplacement que l'on appelait « Ratagrima » ; la deuxième « Dim-

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voussé » (Repos du Roi) occupait une partie de l'actuel camp des gardes et tout l'immeuble Quégneaux.

Dans chacune de ces maisons gardées par des eunuques et des Sogonés habitaient des femmes de l'Empereur. Ce dernier passait la nuit tantôt dans l'une, tantôt dans l'autre. Les habitations des suivants étaient situées derrière et en face de ces Maisons.

En définitive, l'emplacement occupé aujourd'hui par le Camp des Tirailleurs, les Habitations et les bureaux du cercle, la Prison et le Camp des Gardes de cercle jusqu'à l'immeuble Quégneaux, était propriété exclusive des Mogho-Naba, personne d'autre ne pouvant construire, ni s'y installer.

Endroits sacrés (Tombeaux, lieux de sacrifices).

1° *Au camp des Tirailleurs* existent les tombeaux des Mogho-Naba : SANUM, KOUTOU, DOULOUGOU, BAONGO, KARFO.

2° Entre l'habitation du Commissaire de Police et le bâtiment précédemment occupé par M. Clayssen reposent :

NABA ZOMBRÉ, SAGA, KOM.

(Il existe encore un baobab à côté de la tombe de Naba Saga.) Quartier de la Mission Catholique.

Ces tombeaux dont chacun avait son gardien particulier (un eunuque) donnaient lieu à des sacrifices annuels. A l'approche de la fête Mossi « Le TINSÉ » on égorgeait sur ces tombes des moutons et des coqs. On offrait également des sacrifices particuliers à tel ou tel Naba suivant les prescriptions des devins.

Depuis que des bâtiments administratifs et militaires ont été construits sur l'emplacement où se trouvent ces sépultures, elles ne font pas moins l'objet de sacrifices mais le sacrificateur se contente de se placer sur le sentier ou la route conduisant aux lieux sacrés et d'égorger des moutons et des coqs en prononçant les paroles rituelles habituelles.

Existe-t-il un patrimoine traditionnel aux Chefs Mossi ?

Oui. — Voir à ce sujet le paragraphe in fine de la réponse à la première question. Il convient d'ajouter que tout lieu où a été enseveli un Mogho-Naba est sacré.

Peuvent-ils sans inconvénients s'établir à leur gré n'importe où et changer d'habitation à leur gré ?

Le choix du terrain d'habitation étant subordonné aux prescriptions des « diseurs des choses cachées », le nouveau Naba peut, soit reprendre la maison de son père s'il est dit qu'il y vivra en paix, soit construire sa maison sur les ruines de celle de son grand-père ou d'un autre Mogho-Naba. Toujours est-il qu'il reste dans le périmètre des lieux occupés par ses prédécesseurs.

Cependant tout le territoire Mossi lui appartenant il peut sans inconvénient s'installer n'importe où même en dehors de Ouagadougou [1] mais dans ce cas, il laisse une partie de ses femmes et de sa Cour dans sa maison de la Capitale, sous la surveillance des Eunuques.

Les lieux sacrés à Ouagadougou.

1° KOMBEPADAMBA. Occupé par le Palais du Gouverneur à l'endroit précis où l'on jouait autrefois au tennis.

2° TINS'KAONGO. Occupé aujourd'hui par la Mission Catholique. C'était autrefois un bosquet.

3° SANKOIN. Buisson existant toujours à côté d'un baobab au Champ d'Aviation.

4° NINDAOG'KAONGO (Bois sacré). C'est là qu'était abandonné aux vautours le corps des personnes dont la mort était ordonnée par le Mogho-Naba. Sert actuellement de champ de tir aux tirailleurs. Mais le bois existe toujours.

---

1. On remarquera que les Mogho-Naba n'ont pas toujours habité Ouagadougou. Ce n'est qu'à partir de Naba Zana que Ouagadovgou devint la capitale des Empereurs Mossi.

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5° KADYOGO. Marigot sur la route de Gounghin. Il y avait là deux buissons aujourd'hui détruits. L'emplacement est occupé par le Jardin Militaire.

6° TINKINGA à Pazani (petit village dans la Commune de Ouagadougou).

7° Tous les tombeaux des Empereurs défunts déjà cités et ceux des NABA, SAWADOGO, OUBI, NIANDEFFO, GUIRGA, ZANA à Baoghin. (Un des quartiers de la ville situé à l'Ouest du Jardin du Cercle.)

Pour tous les Tinkouga (de Tinga, terre, Kouga, pierres, Fétiches) susvisés se trouvant dans les habitations européennes ou transformés en Jardins, les sacrifices continuent à être faits actuellement mais dans les conditions déjà indiquées pour les Tombes des Nabas défunts.

Autrefois chaque tombe était représentée par une case ronde couverte en chaume dont la porte fermait à clé. Chaque gardien de tombeau (c'était des eunuques pour la plupart) avait sa propre maison à proximité du tombeau. Il était formellement défendu à qui que ce soit de passer à côté de ces sépultures. Les animaux qui s'aventuraient dans ces parages étaient capturés par le gardien et vendus à son profit, de même les étrangers qui passaient là étaient dépouillés de leurs biens.

Le Mogho Naba pourrait-il transporter dans un autre quartier ses cases et un particulier pourrait-il sans encourir le mécontentement des habitants du pays, s'établir sur l'emplacement abandonné ?

Ainsi qu'il a été dit, le Mogho-Naba peut à son gré s'établir dans un autre quartier de la ville mais sa première maison ne sera pas pour cela détruite puisqu'il y laissera forcément quelques-unes de ses femmes. Il ne saurait être question pour les particuliers de s'installer sur l'emplacement abandonné car il est absolument interdit de s'établir partout où le Roi des Mossi a habité.

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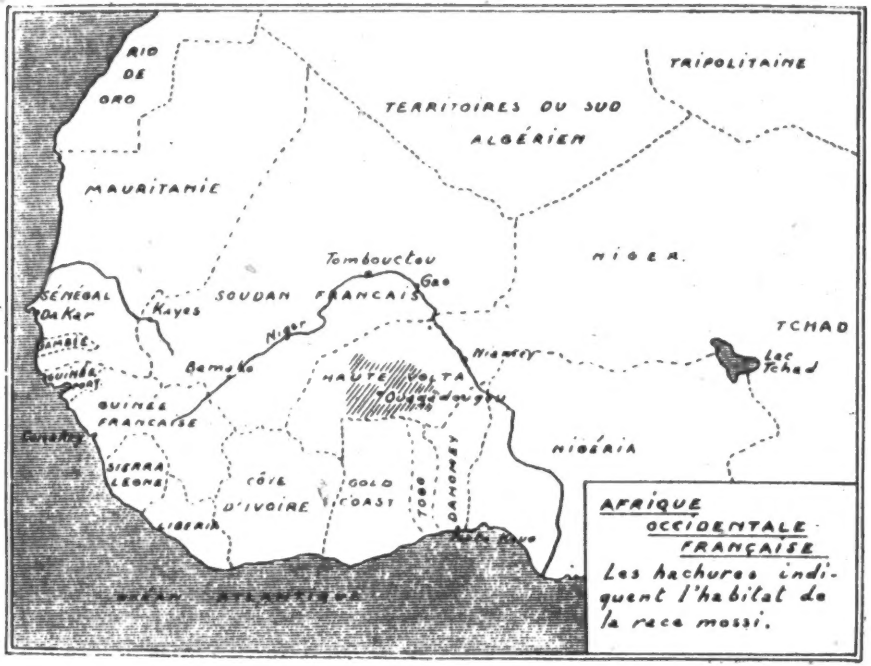

Communiqué par la Mission des Pères Blancs à Ouagadougou.

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The Mossi, Essay on the Manners and Customs of the Mossi People in the Western Sudan /Les Mossi, Essai sur les us et coutumes du peuple Mossi au Soudan occidental/

000

Eugène Mangin

Paris, Augustin Challamel
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/1/ INTRODUCTION

648 On September 1, 1896, Lt. Voulet, who had been sent by Col. de Trentinian to occupy the Mossi and Gourounsi /Grunshi/ countries, entered Ouagadougou, the Mossi capital. The reigning emperor, Naba Wobro, took to flight, and his army was routed. This was a critical hour for our /French/ Sudan. The negotiations opened at the beginning of that year between France and England on the one hand, and Germany and France on the other hand, had just been broken off. In his fine book, L'expansion française et la formation territoriale /French Expansion and Territorial Settlement/, which we are merely outlining, Terrier describes the situation as follows: "The Germans were determined to extend Togoland to the Niger by cutting off our /French/ Dahomey from the Sudan, and the British denied us access to the lower Niger and the rule of Borgu country. Had these demands been met, Dahomey would have become a mere coastal enclave." (1)

1. The achievements of the Third Republic in West Africa, p. 301.

The Germans had already occupied the very important market town of Sansané-Mango and were pressing east toward the Niger, while Fergusson, a mulatto in the service of England, advanced along the Gold Coast toward the north. At the same time, the Royal Nigerian Company seized Bussa, Say, and the surrounding territories, which were then disputed and which we had not attempted to conquer out of respect for the negotiations then underway. When this news reached France through the brilliant offices of Lt. Comm. Hourst, Col. de Trentinian decided in agreement with Mr. Ballot, Governor of Dahomey, to take possession of those territories which would make it possible to link the Sudan to Dahomey, the Niger Colony, and the Ivory Coast.

Capt. Destenave, Resident in Bandiagara, our extreme frontier post in the region, was ordered to move forward and to occupy Ouahigouya in Mossi country, but he ran into the resistance of the naba of Yako and was denied access to Ouagadougou. In May, 1896, Col. de Trentinian entrusted Lt. Voulet with the mission of reaching Mossi country before the British, who were moving forward from the south with the aid of Samory and especially of his son, Sanrankégny

648 Mory, who had occupied Gourounsi country. Lt. Voulet was then to link the Mossi territory to Dahomey by way of Gourma country. His column of some fifty riflemen left Bandiagara on July 30, proceeded to Ouahigouya, subjugated the naba of Yako, and entered Ouagadougou on September 1. Naba Wobro, who had refused to enter into negotiations with Voulet, was deposed on January 20, 1897. Kouka Kountou, a member of the family of the Moro Naba, was enthroned in his place and took the name of Naba Sigri. He signed with Voulet a protectorate treaty which granted France all territories within the jurisdiction of the Moro Naba.

Now that the Mossi were conquered, the British to the south and the Germans to the east had to be checked. Voulet heard that Capt. Donald Stewart, British Resident in Kumasi, was advancing on Tenkodogo. He proceeded there in person, overtook Stewart on February 17, and obtained an agreement that the latter should withdraw 120 kilometers farther south, /2/ outside the Mossi and Manpoursi /Mamprusi/ territories, in view of the treaties the French officer had concluded with the chiefs of those countries. Voulet abandoned Tenkodogo, leaving to the respective governments the task of deciding to whom it should belong.

While these negotiations were underway, Voulet heard that an armed body of men was advancing on Mossi country from the east. He left Tenkodogo and wrote the unknown head of the column that he was to withdraw since all those lands belonged to France in accordance with the treaties signed with the native chiefs. He then advanced with his troops on Fada N'Gourma. Along the way he seized Koupéla, whose panic-stricken population scattered, and on February 27 he arrived in Tigba, where he found Capt. Vermeesch who had been dispatched from Dahomey by Capt. Baud. Hence, the British were held in the south, the Germans in Togoland, and the /French/ Sudan was joined to Dahomey.

The land thus conquered was not unknown in France; several outstanding expeditions had already acquainted us with it. Binger especially, in his work called Du Niger au golfe de Guinée /From the Niger to the Gulf of Guinea/, had drawn attention to its peoples and presented, in the person of Boukary Koutou, a Mossi chief who was intelligent, open, and merry, and at the same time very authoritarian and strictly obeyed by his people. It is to be wondered why this same Boukary Koutou, who was Moro Naba under the name of Naba Wobro, provided such a poor reception for Dr. Crozat and Monteil and refused

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The Bush in Mossi Country.

648 to open talks with Voulet. This poor political judgment cost him his crown. Binger had been preceded in Ouagadougou by Dr. Krause, who in 1885 was the first European allowed to enter the capital; Von François, coming from German Togoland in 1887, was stopped at the first Mossi village. As already mentioned, Binger, not without difficulty, managed to reach Ouagadougou in 1888. He stayed there for some time, longer than he had wished, and it was by virtue of his admirable energy that he was able to resume his journey toward the south. In 1890 Dr. Crozat was received for the first time by the Moro Naba, but he had to leave Ouagadougou speedily. The following year Monteil did not even manage to reach the capital. He was stopped a few kilometers from it and forced to depart abruptly. The mulatto Fergusson, in the service of the British, reached Ouagadougou by way of Tenkodogo, Nyaogo, and Kombisgri. Von Carnap, a German, came from Sansané-Mango in 1897 and visited Tenkodogo and Koupéla.

114 Such are, in brief outline, the verified contacts of the Mossi with Europeans. Were they already known by John II of Portugal, and even by John III, in the sixteenth century? Did they come from far to the east, from Sokoto, Bornu, perhaps even from Wadai? There are so many questions that seem quite mysterious to us in the present state of our knowledge of these peoples of the bend of the Niger, who lack written traditions. Lt. Marc discusses at great length the various opinions on this subject in his book, Au pays des Mossi /In Mossi Country/, chapters 1 and 7. Delafosse presents his own opinion in his work on Upper Senegal and Niger (especially in volume 2). We shall limit this account to the traditions gathered from the natives themselves.

124 Our working method, indeed, has been to question as many natives as possible and to gather their statements on all matters which seemed of interest. We have avoided any "interpretation" of the facts. We have allowed the natives to talk, to tell their story, to describe /3/ their customs, to explain the phenomena of nature and of life as they understand them. Our role was limited to a day-to-day record of what we heard, to the inducement of explanations, to the arrangement of these notes. Of course, our questions sometimes remained unanswered, We shall leave them unanswered here. Having no plan to defend, we hope to have been sufficiently objective.

114 We shall, nevertheless, be happy if this modest work makes a small contribution to the study of regional history, so heavily stressed

114 today; if it provides ethnography with new materials; if it makes the native better known to missionaries, administrators, officers, colonists, and merchants, and thus better understood; and if cordial relations between the native and ourselves are thereby facilitated. Railroads will soon open up and profoundly modify the country. While there is still time, let us hasten to record the mentality of this people in its primitive form. We were able to gather data which we believe reflect the truth quite closely, thanks to the circumstances of our stay in Mossi country: ten consecutive years among its people, of which seven were spent in Koupéla; a knowledge of the language sufficient to maintain a running conversation on any subject whatever with the natives; and the close contact into which our ministry brought us with the village inhabitants. We shall be the first to acknowledge, however, that errors may have crept in here and there. It is very difficult to obtain a precise piece of information, and several natives questioned on the same subject often gave different answers. We were forced to make choices, and although we always tended to adopt the story which appeared to offer the greatest number of safeguards, we may have been wrong at times.

It must not be forgotten that our goal is not to provide a complete record of Mossi manners and customs. This was not possible, it would have been onerous, and we did not feel that it was necessary in order to present what we consider to be a generally accurate over-all picture of these people. Truthfulness compels us to point out that these materials were gathered for the most part in the province of Koupéla and, therefore, bear the impress of that locality. Our fellow-workers in Ouagadougou were kind enough to provide us with some information, but we were unable to obtain any data on the Yatenga region. God permitting, we shall round out these notes in a more comprehensive work.

101 Before we broach our subject, one remark is in order. It has be-
104 come usual to speak of the Mossi, of a Mossi, of the Mossi language, as though the word did not vary. We shall follow this custom and always write "Mossi" in the singular and in the plural, although the true name of this people is Moara, plural Mosé. Likewise, we have spelled geographical names in accordance with the practice of the Administration, so as to avoid the appearance of wishing to reform everything.

000 May we thank here all those from far and near who have helped us with this work, and especially those who have contributed the interesting photographs that illustrate it.

/4/ BOOK I. POLITICAL LIFE

Chapter 1. The Country and Its Inhabitants

142 Although the Mossi is not a handsome type of Black, there is nothing disagreeable about him. He is rather tall, with lively eyes, woolly hair, flat nose, occasionally rather fine features, lips which are broad without being too thick, and cheeks heavily marked with three parallel lines running from the temples to the chin and a fourth leading perpendicularly from the nose to the other three. His limbs are muscular, and his color neither ebony nor copper but an intermediate hue.

291 He acquires a truly attractive and resolute air when he dresses in festive clothes, with his broad, dark blue, Zouave-like trousers, his loose shirt made of white and blue fabric strips which falls lightly over the arms, and on the right shoulder his doré, a weapon consisting
411 of a slightly bent iron rod, flattened at one end and terminating at the other in a ring hafted perpendicularly to a short stick. His wrist
[301] is often adorned with a copper bracelet, and he nearly always carries at his waist a stiff knife, enclosed in a leather sheath which ends in a tuft of leather strips with cowries attached to them. He wears a
291 cap made of two diamond-shaped pieces of colored fabric half-sewn together; the two free ends may serve to cover the ears and cheeks, but are usually worn raised in the shape of a tiara. A great fighter, he wields the knife with dexterity or strikes with the doré which can become a dangerous club.

173 The Mossi are a conquering people. They have not always lived in the territory they now occupy. But where did they come from?
648 The elders questioned all say that their people came from Gambaga
643 (British Gold Coast), and this is why the Moro Naba Wobro took refuge in Gambaga when he was dethroned by the French conquest; this is also why the naba of Gambaga is notified whenever a Moro Naba dies, and why the shoes, cap, and scepter of command of the deceased are sent to him as gifts to be laid on the ancestral tomb. Gifts are also sent to the naba of Fada N'Gourma, which the Mossi call "Bingo." When the Moro Naba dies, his bow and quiver are presented to the

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Mossi Youths.

173 chief of Fada along with his two best horses, saddled, his two youngest
648 wives, twelve head of cattle, one captive, and three bars of salt.
[643] When the naba of Fada dies, however, nothing is sent to the Moro Naba, but his best horse is sent to the chief of Gambaga.

There has been contact, therefore, between the Gourmantché /Gurma/ of Fada, the Mossi, and the Dagomse /Dagomba/ of Gambaga. The Gourmantché claim that they come from Bornu. The first naba of Fada was a slave of the naba of Bornu. The Gourmantché formerly ruled the area as far as Dori. The Peul /Fulani/ came and chased them from the region after a long war. The Gourmantché, however, did not fight either the people of Gambaga or the Mossi. If they ever fought the latter, it was in the course of civil wars; the naba of Fada requested the Mossi to help him against his own subjects.

/5/ This is how the Mossi tell of the conquest of the territory. A
173 daughter of the chief of Gambaga, called Yennenga, had a son by the hunter Riala. This son was given the name Weddaogo. His son, Zougourana, seized Tenkodogo and settled there; in his turn Zougourana's son, Naba Oubri, seized the Ouagadougou area and became master of the whole country. The eldest son of Yennenga had seized Fada and founded the present dynasty, but had been unable to impose his language or his tattoing patterns on the inhabitants. This explains the gifts sent to Gambaga, the cradle of the race, and to the naba of Fada, the eldest son of the family. Part of the autochtonous inhabitants, driven away by the Mossi invasion, withdrew to the southeast and became the Bousansé /Busansi/ and the Gourounsi; the other part, remaining in the country, were assimilated by the Mossi and learned the tongue of their conquerors. A son of Naba Oubri, Naba Namendé, seized Bélousa and its territory.

In the meantime, the naba of Tenkodogo died, leaving only one son who succeeded him. His family requested the naba of Bélousa to give them his own son, who became Kourita, representative after death, of the deceased naba of Tenkodogo. Kourita wished to return to his father in Bélousa, but the latter sent him word not to do so, and Kourita stopped at Zaoré, a day's march from Bélousa, where his immediate successors resided. It was only later that this dynasty came to settle in Koupéla, after defeating and expelling, with the help of the naba of Bélousa, the descendants of Naba Guigma who had settled in Gobro near Soulgou. This is how the province of Koupéla originated, and this is why the naba of Koupéla must be invested by his overlord, the naba of Bélousa.

173 While these events occurred in the east, a sister of the Moro Naba, assigned to guard the tibo fetishes, quarreled with her brother and fled west to Ouahigouya. This region thus became Mossi territory and took the name of land of Ya. (2)

2. For further details, see Lt. Marc. op. cit. Ch. 7, and especially Delafosse, Haut Sénégal et Niger /Upper Senegal and Niger/, Series I, Vol. 2, p. 305 ff.

131 The region thus conquered lies within the bend of the Niger, approximately between the 11°30 and 13°30 parallels and from 2° to 5° longitude west of Paris. Its closest neighbors are the Macina and the Habé to the north, the Samo to the northwest, the Gourounsi to the west and southwest, the Nancana /Nankana/ to the south, the Bousansé to the southeast, the Gourmantché to the east, and the Peul of Dori to the northeast. The Mossi population has been estimated at
161 one and a half million, to which must be added the Yarsé, who are Mandé completely assimilated to the Mossi, the pastoral Peul, the Haoussa /Hausa/ who form small colonies near the large commercial centers of the region, and a few lesser groups. We shall deal with these populations only insofar as they have contact with the Mossi, in whose territory they are scattered.

Two important rivers cross the country from northwest [Tr., the
133 original reads northeast] to southeast. They are the two Volta rivers, the White and the Red. In addition to these two larger waterways, which nevertheless do not flow throughout the year, there are a large number of watercourses /Tr., the French term, marigot, covers both river branch channels and shallow depressions where water accumulates forming pools/. They become impassable torrents after a storm, /6/ but remain empty during the dry season from November to June. The
[312] shallow wells which supply water for the households are usually dug by the women in the beds of these watercourses.

There are no high mountains in Mossi country. When arriving from the north, the traveller crosses the beautiful cliffs of Bandiagara and the mountainous country of the Habe. /Two photographs appear here./ Mossi country begins almost at the foot of the cliffs. The northwestern region is, however, quite broken and includes the Pilimpikou peak; the two Volta rivers, especially the White Volta,

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The Cliffs of Bandiagara (Sudan).

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Entering the Bush.

133 are bordered with hills. Nevertheless, it may be said that Mossi country is flat. It is covered with the classic bush of the Sudan with
[137] its small shrubs and tall grass interspersed with bastard mahogany, /7/ huge trunks of the baobabs, and tamarind and silk-cotton trees, thicker on the banks of the Volta rivers, thinner around the villages.

241 The country is quite fertile and easily provides for its inhabitants.
262 The various kinds of millet grow well, especially the small white variety (Pennisetum spicatum) which, mashed and boiled, is the staple of the diet and sorghum, or large red millet, which is used to prepare the famous beer of the country. The horses eat the latter kind, although they prefer the large white millet. Around the huts maize grows well in soil fertilized by the daily accumulation of waste. It is a welcome source of grain when the millet reserves of the previous year are running low and the current harvest has not yet matured. Maize fields are surrounded with a double row of sorghum and often
[283] with a double row of a fiber plant called bérensé, a sort of hemp which the natives use to make ropes. After the maize has been harvested, the field is planted with previously prepared tobacco seedlings. Finally, the sunken areas created when huts are built, as well as all slightly damp places, are planted with gombo, okra, which is highly valued as a sauce ingredient.

[311] During the rainy season no piece of land remains unused around the villages, and when the red millet ripens and the ears join across the path, passage becomes difficult. Even the hut roofs bear all kinds
[415] of calabash plants. These supply the housewives with gourds that fulfill the purposes served by our plates, dishes, glasses, and basins; the travellers with their flasks; the snuff-takers with their boxes; and the sorcerers with their spirit-calling instruments. The large gourds that are used to make drums grow among the shoots of maize. In the marshes near the watercourses where water lies stagnant, rice fields are planted, but rice is a luxury food, hard to cultivate because of
[554] the care it requires. The natives use it only on feast days or when they wish to honor a distinguished guest. Cotton is sown in damp places among the stalks of large red millet, and it is harvested much later. Peanuts and peas also take up part of the cultivated land, while beans creep along the ground between the shoots of small millet. Peppers, sesame, the indigo plant, yams, manioc, sweet potatoes, and a small

24 tuber, Coleus coffini, which Europeans call oussounifing or fabirama,
262 and which may replace potatoes in a pinch, are cultivated in the soils most propitious to them.

22 The precious karite /shea/ tree (Butyrospermum parkii) grows in
262 most fields; its fruit, prized for its cool and slightly sweet flesh, con-
137 tains a pit which yields karite butter, the fat most widely used in
[388] cooking and to make soap. Around the villages, and sometimes even within them, the néré /locust bean/ tree (Parkia africana) produces
[356] elongated pods; its bark, mashed in water, yields a paste that is used to harden the floors of the huts. Its flour makes a cooling drink when
[272] mixed in water, and it may also be eaten; its seeds /8/ are used to make kalro /kalre in the original/, the soumbara of the Bambara, an ingredient /made from locust beans, héré/ of all carefully prepared
137 sauces. The doubalé and silk-cotton or kapokiero trees spread their shade over the weavers, numerous among the Mossi, and over the talkers who are even more. Bamboo grows well in the damp southern regions, and the palm oil tree is occasionally found. The caoutchouc liana, however, has not yet been introduced.

231 Small chickens run in all directions through the villages, along with domesticated guinea hens. Everywhere in the bush near the huts,
[857] little boys herd goats and sheep; this is the task of youngsters here at the age when their contemporaries among us /in France/ begin to learn the alphabet. The most common sheep and goats are small in size. The sheep have short hair. Sometimes, especially in the larger villages where markets are held, goats and sheep are to be seen with
[439] long legs and long, curled horns. They are imported from the northeast and fattened to be sold as butcher's meat. The height of fashion for the wife or a prosperous naba is to be followed by a Touareg /Tuareg/ sheep, well washed and very white. It is fed on millet leftovers and bean mush, and its mistress often presents it with a bit of salt to lick. In short, it is well cared for and agreeably fat; on some important feast day, it will embellish the menu.

The huts are usually guarded by very commonplace dogs, often ill-tempered, but cowardly. A stick is enough to drive them away.
[224] They are mostly used in the hunt, the great Mossi pastime during the dry season. Domesticated ducks are sometimes found in nabas' households, as well as pigeons, but these birds are not widespread and not within the reach of everyone. Finally, almost every group of huts has cats which belong to the women and which are difficult

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Above: A Baobab.
Below: Mossi Village.

IX.

23| to approach because they are half wild. The donkeys are of medium
[172] size, but strong and stout; they will carry loads of sixty kilograms for days on end, and their help is priceless to those who trade in fabrics, kola nuts, and salt. There are some donkeys in practically every village.

Horses are quite common throughout the country, and every naba of any importance possesses one or several. Two distinct races are to be found. They are described by Binger as follows: "The most common has all the characteristics of the Arab horse without its qualities: slender head, short neck, thin limbs, receding rump, and very long mane and tail. The coats most frequently seen are bay, chestnut, gray, light bay, and roan; the last three always have patches on the forehead. Horses without white stockings are rare. The other race bears no likeness to the Arab horse. The animal is strong and beautiful, with the characteristics of our cavalry horse; it is about 1.57 to 1.62 meters /in height/. The head is slender and well joined, the limbs strong and muscular, the hooves broad with firm horn, the breast wide, and the mane and tail hair short. The most usual coats are various shades of bay and chestnut." (3) /9/ The Mossi, however,

3. Binger, Du Niger au Golfe de Guinée /From the Niger to the Gulf of Guinea/, Vol. 1, p. 485. It seems exaggerated, however, to ascribe 1.57 meters to a Mossi horse. A horse of 1.52 meters /in height/ is a large horse here, and the average hardly exceeds 1.44 meters. For his part, Meniaud (Haut-Sénégal et Niger, Géographie economique II /Upper Senegal and Niger. Economic Geography, Series II, Vol. 2/, p. 106) states that "the horses of Upper Senegal and Niger seem to possess the characteristics of the Aryan and Mongolian races, occasionally modified by the Germanic race." Further on (p. 110) he includes the Mossi horse in the Mongolian race (Dougolawi or Nubian variety).

accustomed no doubt to getting horses in the course of raids, do not

23| bother to raise them; as a result the number of horses has decreased, and this country, formerly renowned for its mounts, may have none in a not too distant future.

Unfortunately, horses do not thrive in every part of the country; Ouagadougou is particularly deadly for them, although, to my knowledge, the true reason for this insalubrity has not yet been found. The natives attribute it to the water, and there is no doubt that horses watered at the wells are in better health than those watered at the streams; it is also true that horses thrive in areas only a few kilometers [136] from Ouagadougou. Europeans tend to attribute this mortality to the tsetse fly. The two opinions are easy to reconcile, for, on the one hand, tsetse flies prefer damp places, and, on the other hand, the [312] Ouagadougou wells contain salt of magnesium which purges the horses and thus checks the disease.

23| The Peul own fine herds of bovines, some rather small and without humps (small cattle), others large and humped (zebu). Traders also 563 use the zebu as a beast of burden. Much of this cattle belongs to the 437 Mossi who seldom tend their own herds but prefer to entrust them to the Peul shepherds who keep the milk in payment. An adult cow yields from two to four liters a day during the good season. The guardians, however, know how to make the best of this near slavery. When an animal dies it is never one of theirs, and if the owner of the herd /a Mossi/ dies without telling his heirs where his cattle is to be found and how many head he owns, the Peul carefully refrain from disclosing the herd entrusted to them. In former days they were slightly more conscientious because they feared retaliation, but now they bless the French occupation.

23| The herds are sometimes decimated by an epizootic disease, as happened in 1910 and 1911 when the Koupéla area was ravaged by what must have been the bovine plague or peripneumonia. The cows would cough, entirely lose their appetites, and die within a few days.

The Mossi also raise bees. The hives are made of straw or flexible sticks and placed in the trees; sometimes swarms of bees also settle in the hollow trunks of baobabs. The honey is gathered at the end and at the beginning of the winter season; the hive is smoked out and [273] the bees destroyed. Honey is used primarily to make bésé, a kind of hydromel which the Moslem Yarsé, Peul, and Haoussa like very much, and which they are allowed to drink in spite of its fermentation; [237] whereas, in principle, millet beer is forbidden to them. The wax 306 is sold to the jewelry-makers who use it to make bracelets by the lost wax process.

361 /10/ The appearance of the villages indicates that their inhabitants feel safe. There are none of those hut clusters bunched together in [171] narrow walled-in areas to withstand the invasions of an El-hadj-Omar or of a Samory, as in Bambara country; none of those family groupings of flat-roofed huts, those strongholds sheltering the whole family from the grandfather to the last of his grandchildren to resist through sheer numbers the incursions of a more powerful neighbor, as in Gourounsi [592] country where the authority of chiefs is so weak. Here every family head, that is, a man with his wives, his unmarried children, and his servants, occupies a certain number of huts that together form his yri, a grouping Europeans call by its Bambara name, soukala.

342 The huts are circular and usually built of mud, but sometimes of 333 stakes driven into the ground and surrounded with séko, a kind of mat of plaited broad straw. The huts are surmounted with a roof, likewise of straw, resting on a wooden framework. When a native wishes to build a hut, he sets a date with a mason expert in laying mud bricks and notifies the village people. On the appointed day everyone comes to him. The women fetch water from the stream; the men excavate the soil a few meters from where the hut is to be erected; the children trample the mortar and carry to the mason the clods prepared by the old men who sit gravely around the mud pile. This is a festive occasion for the village, because the man who builds must supply drink for all, and food as well if he wishes to do things properly.

A circle is traced on the ground to indicate the outline of the hut, and the mason places the mud clods obliquely side by side along the circle. When the first round is finished, he starts another, and he proceeds in this fashion to mid-height. The work is then interrupted until the following day to give the first part a chance to dry. This is why several huts are usually built at the same time. No opening is left in the wall. When it is dry, a door is cut through, usually arched and so low that one must creep on hands and knees in order to get in. Well-to-do women close their hut with a wooden door that opens inward; it is equipped with a wooden latch that works [414] by means of a large key made of a stick with small iron rods perpendicularly attached to it. The children and even the husband usually leave their clothing, their luxury items, and their cowries in these closed huts which are better protected against thieves. Those who cannot afford this luxury of a door drive two stakes into the ground, one on each side of the opening, and slip a mat between the stakes and the wall.

592 A typical soukala consists of the master's hut, a hut for each wife, one hut for the sheep and goats, another for the horse if he has one, a hut for the family mill, and, finally, a receiving hut with two doors sufficiently high to permit entrance without stooping and set sometimes as an entrance way and sometimes within the cluster of huts. All [351] these dwellings stand in a circle and are joined either by a cob wall or by /11/ mat fences taller than a man and held up by stakes. The master's hut, which usually stands beside the huts for the horses and sheep, is set off from the others by mats to insure his privacy. A low wall describes an arc within the inner courtyard; this is the kitchen when it is not raining. Big jars of fired clay which are used to brew [273 415] millet beer rest between the huts. In front of this cluster of huts, a shelter is built, usually high enough to permit standing and consisting basically of forked stakes with branches and séko resting upon them; this shelter serves as a refuge during the hot part of the day. Small boys and unmarried girls live with their mother, while older boys, servants, and slaves each have their separate huts which face the dwellings of the master and his wives.

The term yri or soukala covers this whole complex of structures. [591] Each soukala is a distinct unit, and, some time after they marry, the children build their own residence, set completely apart from that of their parents, often in another part of the village and sometimes in [361] another village altogether. The soukala stand fifteen to twenty meters apart, and, because of this, the villages, though adequately concentrated, cover a rather extensive area. The heads of cantons 392 place an ostrich egg at the peak of the roof on their own dwellings, [237] and some even build terraced huts higher than the surrounding dwell- [554] ings. They keep their riches in these huts and a prison in the base- [697] ment. An earthen stairway leads to the terrace where the master of [592] the house receives his guests when the sun begins to sink on the horizon.

721 These people, apparently so peaceful today, were formerly quite warlike and went off to war at the slightest pretext. Foreign to the land they now occupy, the Mossi must have conquered it by force of arms. The Tarik-es-Soudan /History of Sudan/ relates that the people of Yatenga seized Timbuktu in the fourteenth century, and in 721 the fifteenth they probably carried their incursions as far as Lake 701 Bébo and even Oualata. (4) The Mossi army was greatly feared.

4. Delafosse, op. cit., Vol. 2, p. 80.

701 When a chief assembled his men, no one stayed behind. Only the
72 women, children, invalids, and old men guarded the villages. Those who had no horses formed the infantry; they were armed with bow
[411] and arrows, usually poisoned, and a large sword hung from the shoulder. The horsemen carried a sword and a spear that rested on the tip of the foot and was held at mid-height with the right hand. The Mossi cavalry was especially numerous and fearful. The Moro Naba stayed
[643] home when his people went to war. He gathered together as many horses as possible, and, when horsemen lost their mounts, they came to him to get another horse and rejoin the fight.

669 The last wars before the French conquest of Koupéla, which we shall describe briefly, were civil wars that took place either between the people of Tenkodogo and those of Koupéla, or between the Mossi and the Gourmantché.

669 /12/ As generally happened in parallel cases, these wars followed
643 the death of a naba, when several pretenders wrangled over the succession. It was in order to prevent such wars that only the immediate entourage of the naba was informed of his death. Outsiders were to remain in ignorance and believe the naba to be ill in his hut. The fatal news was spread only when the head of the family had gathered all that was necessary to honor the deceased in proper fashion by celebrating the kouré. (5)

5. Kouré, funeral ceremony in honor of the dead. See below.

669 When Naba Kidba died, leaving only a child of five or six to succeed him, a man from Kazem'bouanga who was powerful by virtue of his wealth and the number of his men decided to seize the throne. His followers had taken for themselves the name of Kazem'-bouanga and used to say: "Although the hyena (katré) is not the equal (zéma) of the donkey (bouanga), she nevertheless attacks and kills him if she meets him in the bush: similarly, although we are not as powerful as the inhabitants of Koupéla, we will manage to defeat them." And indeed, they marched on Koupéla. The prime minister, who bears the title, Saman'Naba (head of the outer courtyard), and whose own name was Wenkosgaraga, seized the child and fled with him to Sapara, the nearest village under the direct authority of the Moro Naba, located nine kilometers from Koupéla.

669 Having learned of this, the men from Kazem'bouanga proceeded to Sapara, but the inhabitants of the village refused to yield the child who had been entrusted to them; meanwhile, the Saman'Naba had returned to his province and gathered all the followers of the young naba. With the aid of the inhabitants of Sapara, the warriors of the Saman'-Naba cut to pieces the pretender's column, killed a great many of his men, and drove them back home. The Saman'Naba then took the child to Ouagadougou, had him invested by the Moro Naba, and returned to Koupéla. The child was Naba Ibri, father of the present naba, who was reigning in Koupéla when Lt. Voulet arrived. His defeated rival killed himself.

669 648 About the same time, on the death of his father Yenkouaré, Batchandé was elected king of Gourma. Some of the villages, Gyékango among them, refused to recognize his authority. Batchandé appealed to the naba of Bélousa who rounded up his warriors and ordered them to join the men of the naba of Fada. Koupéla, a vassal province of Bélousa, took part in the expedition. Gyékango, however, was bravely defended by its chief and its inhabitants, who were favored by very propitious terrain covered with thorny scrub behind which the besieged men took cover to shoot on the Mossi. This was during the dry season. Thirst completed what the courage of the Gyékango people had begun, and many Mossi perished. The naba of Bélousa was so humiliated that he wished to die of thirst, but he was saved by the naba of Pwitenga. At this point Capt. Baud arrived in Fada from Dahomey. Batchandé requested his help against his rebellious subjects, and Capt. Baud seized Gyékango which has since been called Baudéni, "Baud's village."

A war waged in favor of Lébréboundou by the people of Koupéla against those of Tenkodogo /13/ has left vivid memories. Like the preceding, it was a civil war which broke out on the death of a chief. The naba of Tenkodogo having died, the elders elected Naba Korongo as his successor, but Lébréboundou attempted to seize power. He appealed to the people of Fada and to those of Koupéla. The naba of Tenkodogo, at bay, requested in vain the aid of the naba of Bélousa and that of the Moro Naba. Both replied that the winner would be recognized as chief. The men from Tenkodogo were driven back with losses, but this occurred just at the time when the French troops arrived. The elected naba of Tenkodogo appealed to the head of the expedition, who killed the pretender and installed the lawfully elected man in Tenkodogo.

669 The last wars in the Koupéla area, therefore, were all civil wars that broke out upon the death of chiefs in the adjacent regions of Koupéla, Fada, and Tenkodogo.

721 The most usual theater of warfare, however, was Bousanga /Busansi/ country. If a Bousanga woman enslaved to the naba of Koupéla ran away, the naba demanded her return. If his request was turned down, this meant war. When the Mossi ran short of millet, when their herds had been decimated by an epizootic disease, or even simply when they wished to obtain slaves, the naba would assemble his ministers and direct them to raid the Bousansé. The Saman'Naba would take [701] charge of the war. The Trabana, an experienced warrior, acted as chief of staff, and all the other chiefs, heads of cantons and villages; assembled their men. This was a festive occasion, and its abolition is still lamented by many people, especially among the chiefs.

721 Everything was looted; the harvest and herds were shared, and the 567 population was reduced to slavery. Since we have mentioned slaves, we shall provide some details on the subject.

567 Slavery existed in Mossi country, but in a very mild form. The agricultural Mossi kept slaves to till their fields. It was to their advantage to treat them well and thus turn them to good account. [435] Slaves constituted a source of wealth. An adult slave sold for 50 to 100 francs according to his strength, and no distinction was made between men and women. It was, therefore, unusual for a Mossi to kill a slave. Custom certainly sanctioned his right to do so, and no one, not even his chief, could call him to account for his act; his slave was his property, and he could do with him as he pleased. When he wished to get rid of a slave, however, he found it more lucrative to sell him. Besides, a slave should be attached to the household; a [278] maltreated slave might run away, even at the risk of being caught and in spite of the drug he was forced to drink, which, like the Lethean waters, was supposed to cause him to lose his memory. On the other hand, a well-treated, well-fed slave had the hope of obtaining a wife and becoming in turn the master of a hut. When his master was pleased with him, when he had rendered an important service, he was sometimes given one of the master's daughters in marriage; this made him free, and his children were not born slaves. Slaves could also be freed if their family agreed to redeem them. They were freed most frequently by means of an exchange: one of their daughters, sisters, or nieces was given in their place. This custom persisted until quite recently.

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Above: The Mossi Salute.
Below: A Naba and his Horsemen.

567 /14/ The Mossi obtained slaves by purchase, warfare, or birth. No distinction was made among these various kinds of slaves; they were all treated in the same manner. The Bousansé and Gourounsi furnished the greatest number of slaves, and, as elsewhere, the Moslem Yarsé and Haoussa were the main traffickers. The Mossi sold each other into slavery too, as when a powerful man seized and sold a child or even an adult whom he had found defenseless in the bush. Sometimes a child was separated from its slave mother, but this was unusual. Slaves were part of the family property and devolved to the heir when their master died. When given in marriage by their own master, they acquired a certain freedom: they had their own house and their fields which they cultivated for their own use; they could acquire property and buy beasts of burden, goats, sheep, and cattle. The only vestige of slavery was the obligation to give all their daughters in marriage to their master. This is why whole villages of slaves are to be found, in no way distinguished from other villages. The village of Koupéla, estimated at 2, 500 inhabitants, is entirely composed of the naba's slaves with the exception of three families. The prime minister himself, the Saman'Naba, and all the ministers are slaves of the naba. It is true that this designation "slave" includes slaves through indebtedness. Whenever a native had borrowed from the naba an amount of some importance, such as the price of a cow, and was unable to pay it back, an arrangement was made between the debtor and the naba. The former promised all his daughters to the latter and thus pledged all his descendants. It was then said that he had become a slave to the naba.

566 Serfs were another source of hands to work the land. There were two kinds of serfs, or man-servants if one prefers: the dakwaba and the noakansé. A dakonré (singular of dakwaba; etymologically, "one who is not married") has a family who places him in the service of a rich man with the sole purpose of getting him married, of getting him a wife when he comes of age. He labors for his master, works his fields, runs errands for him; he may, with his master's permission, have a field of his own and a few small possessions; yet, though he is free, he may not leave his master to enter someone else's service. A noakanga (singular of noakansé) has no family. He places himself into someone's service of his own free will in order to be fed, housed, sometimes clothed; his master gives him a wife more or less promptly according to region. A noakanga is freer than a dakonré, for he

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566 may leave his master whenever he pleases, either to devote himself
M to trade or to enter the service of another man; but often he gets all
F his work from his master.

563 The Peul shepherds never were slaves of the Mossi, because they
M only knew how to watch the herds and were incapable of working the
F land. They were, nevertheless, held in severe vassalage by the Mossi,
[188] especially by the nabas, and served as victims in certain sacrifices.
Some Mossi sold by the Yarsé or by other Mossi have occasionally been
their slaves, especially in the Dori region called Gyémaré by the
natives.

/15/ Chapter 2. Administration

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157 The power of the chiefs and the submission of their subjects are
characteristic traits of Mossi country. The spirit of submission
permeates the whole Mossi mentality. The Mossi are not particularly
secretive or incommunicative, as the Bambara are said to be. On
the contrary, they talk quite freely to their friends, even of their
personal affairs; this does not mean that they are unable to keep a
secret, especially if it is the king's secret. Two individuals have to
be equals if there is to be some freedom between them; this freedom
may develop into a certain closeness, but never into friendship in the
highest sense of the term. If the Mossi appears secretive, it is because
he is afraid to offend someone more powerful than himself. He al-
ways yields before a chief, before someone who "has the strength,"
as he puts it, while inwardly he may retain his own opinion and act
as he pleases. When a chief talks, he hears nothing but these words
M in reply: bé néré, naba — "That's it, that's right. I agree with you."
576 The Mossi salute, formerly used in all the Black empires of the
Sudan, especially in the courts of Ghana, Mali, and Gao, provides
good evidence of this mentality. When we first enter the country as
foreigners, we are shocked to see a man thus lower himself before
another man. In order to salute, the Mossi puts down his load, hat,
and sword, removes his shoes, sits on the ground, folds his legs slightly,
and leans the upper part of his body forward. The elbows rest against
the ground, as far apart as possible; the forearms, folded in front of

576 the chest with the hands half-closed and the thumbs raised, strike the ground together three or four times. The Mossi then raises his body a little and rubs the palms of his hands together. He never looks the person he is saluting straight in the face, but keeps his eyes slightly lowered. It is a truly humbled posture, especially when the chief who is being saluted remains standing or on horseback, towering above his subordinate, and barely according him a glance. The women, instead of beating upon the ground with their forearms, strike it with the elbows and raise their open hands, fingers extended, to shoulder height. The grand salute, very rarely used, consists of turning around after the ordinary salute has been completed, seizing some dust with both hands, spreading it on the forehead, and saluting once more.

When two natives who know each other meet along the way, the younger of the two squats first and begins the salute, which the other acknowledges by squatting in turn. If they are carrying loads, they set them down before saluting. They are never in a hurry. Servants and women, when they walk before a chief, bow slightly and join their hands in front of the chest, palms together. Though complicated, the Mossi salute is rendered easily and gracefully by the natives; they are used to it from an early age, and never perform it in the clumsy and awkward manner which is theirs when they attempt to imitate the military salute, so fine and noble when well done and so ludicrous when distorted by a Black.

622 643 Chiefs are designated by the generic term naba, but a distinction is made between naba and dimma. The latter is elected /16/ according to very precise rules, which we shall mention later, and his authority stems directly from this election. There are only five dimma among the Mossi: the Moro Naba, and the nabas of Fada, Tenkodogo, Boussouma, and Yatenga. The naba, on the other hand, receives his power from another chief more powerful than himself who has chosen him from several candidates.

643 645 Mossi country lies wholly under the authority of the Moro Naba who is assisted by five high ministers: the Widi Naba, Larale Naba, Gounga Naba, Kamisoro Naba and Ballum Naba. The respective functions of these ministers are somewhat ill-defined. The Kamisoro [839] is a eunuch and chief of the eunuchs. Upon his death, since he leaves no heirs, all his property devolves to the Moro Naba. It was thus to the latter's advantage to make him wealthy and to present him with the finest district in the country. The Widi Naba takes the place of the Moro Naba from the time of his death until the investiture

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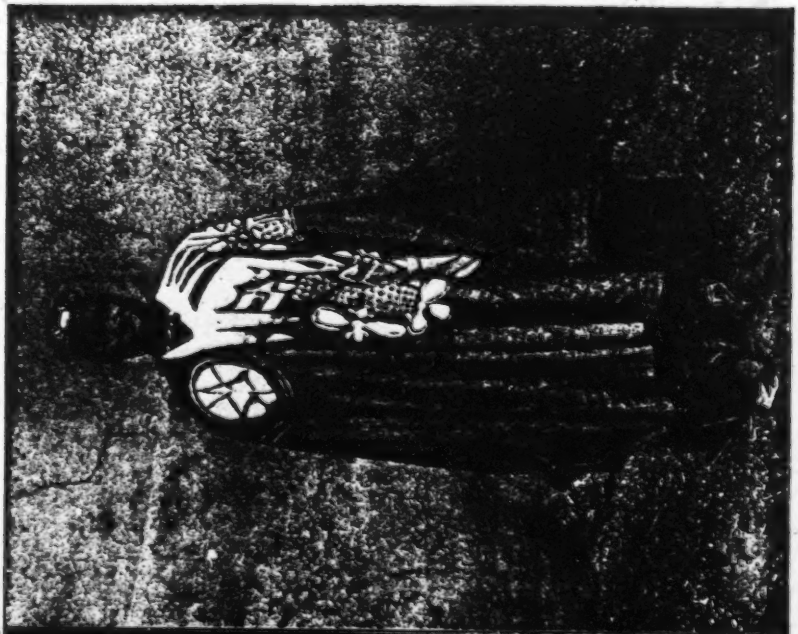

The Moro Naba of the Mossi.

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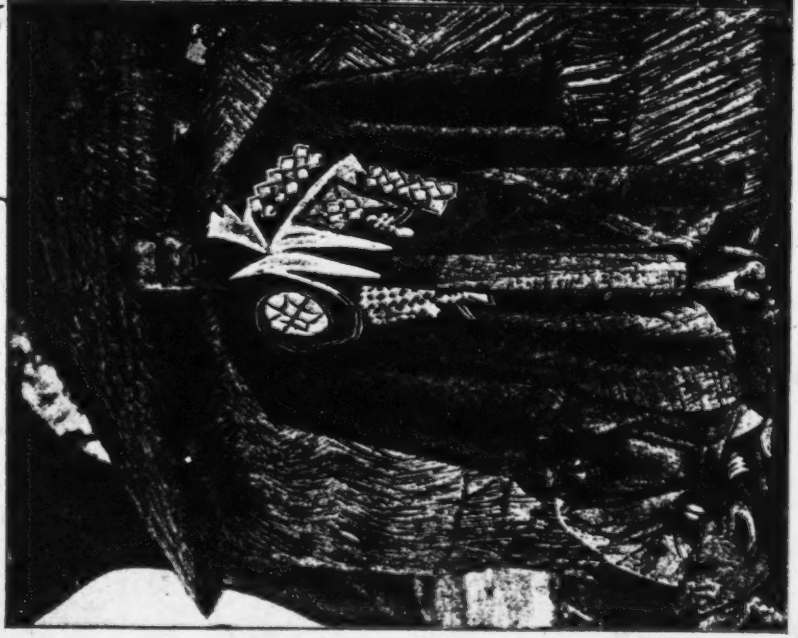

A Mossi Province Chief.

643 of his successor. He presides over the election and proclaims the new-
645 ly elected chief. The Laralé is the guardian of the Moro Naba's ancestral tombs, and the Ballum is the head of the pages and dancers. When the Moro Naba gives one of his pages in marriage, the latter settles near the huts of the Ballum Naba. This is the least important minister; prior to the French occupation, he was given no province to rule.

631 The Moro Naba ruled directly over a large part of the Mossi territories. The part under his immediate jurisdiction was apportioned among his four principal ministers, who each had under him the heads of the cantons. Those territories not directly subject to the Moro Naba were placed under the authority of powerful chiefs who might be called province chiefs, assuredly vassals of the Moro Naba, but very independent vassals, somewhat similar to the dukes of Brittany and Burgundy vis-à-vis the King of France. Such are the nabas of Ouahigouya, Yako, Boussouma, Bélousa, etc.; there are many of them outside the territory reserved to the Moro Naba, especially to the north, east, and south. These province chiefs could also have independent vassals who, nevertheless, acknowledged their authority, such as the naba of Koupéla, a true province chief, but a vassal of the naba of Bélousa, in turn a vassal of the Moro Naba. The naba of Salmatenga stands in the same position with reference to the naba of Boussouma.

Each province is divided into cantons, each headed by a naba, and the canton includes several villages, each of which usually has its naba. Some of the villages are directly controlled by the province chief who apportions them among his ministers. Some villages may not even have a true naba. These are usually villages established by the children of an important naba. In this case an old man is entrusted with the administrative functions. These villages without a naba may nevertheless obtain one. For example, if the province chief has a son who settles in the community and the inhabitants are pleased with his presence, his father may name him naba of the
[562] village. A very few villages are ruled by women who are assisted by the elders when a case is to be judged.

The power of each chief is tempered by his council. The Moro Naba himself does not act without consulting his ministers. Each province /17/ chief has a council. The titles of the ministers vary from one province to another, but their functions are the same.

631 The canton chiefs consult the oldest men in the village where they reside, and the village chiefs make no decisions bearing on the community without assembling the elders and listening to their advice.

Everything is carried out through the channels of the hierarchy. A province chief never transmits an order directly to a village ruled by a canton chief, but he advises the latter who notifies the village chief, and the village chief in turn calls the elders together, conveys the orders to them, and through them informs all his subjects. The orders passed down in this formal way are always carried out, but if perchance a canton chief should wish to disobey his province chief, he would be seconded by his people who recognize his authority before any other.

643 645 701 The last Moro Nabas had become to some extent idle kings. The protocol to which they were subjected by custom constantly encumbered them, not unlike European court etiquette. The Moro Naba was surrounded with a veritable court. As mentioned above, his High Council was composed of five chief ministers. To these should be added the Iman who represents the Moslems and who wields a certain influence, and the Teng'Soba. /Tr. Among the Mossi there is both a Teng'Soba, earth priest, and a Tan'Soba, war minister. It would seem that the latter is meant here./ The duties of the latter are quite specialized. He does not live in the same village as the Moro Naba, and he rules a canton. In case of war, he is consulted on the timeliness of the hostilities and on their chances of success. It devolves upon him at this time to make the proper sacrifices and to question the ancestral spirits. When war has been decided on, he takes command of the armies, and everyone, the ministers and the canton chiefs, must obey him. The Moro Naba remains in Ouagadougou.

644 839 A crowd of subalterns gravitate around these high dignitaries. The eunuchs are not very respectable people; sometimes habitual thieves were made eunuchs, as were, in general, those pages guilty of too much familiarity with the naba's wives. Some of them could reach a high position. The Kamisoro were always eunuchs, and several important cantons were set aside for them.

644 The pages are young boys, hand-picked from the country's most gifted children. They must serve the naba, and they bear the name soroné. The naba is never alone; he always has one or several pages by his side. One holds the fan, one stands near the monarch to help him shift his position, another takes care of his shoes, yet another of his scepter; the great cup-bearer constantly holds a gourd filled with strong millet beer and covered by a tray of artistically woven basketry.

644 The arms of the sorone are ornamented with two, three, or four copper
[301] bracelets, often of alternate yellow and red metal. Sometimes they wear them at the wrists and above the elbow, and occasionally both ankles are adorned with thick bracelets or even with copper gaiters which make walking quite difficult but which are prized very highly.
[201] All these pages wait on the monarch hand and foot. If he coughs, they all rub the palms of their hands together and snap their fingers. This is repeated /18/ even when he drinks, sneezes, or spits. If he rises, the whole court rises, and when he feels those needs common to all mortals, the whole court follows and squats as he does.

644 On important feast days, the naba is followed by music, and every
533 time he makes a gesture, says a word, or takes a step, the musicians
534 play on various kinds of drums. The typical drum peculiar to Mossi country, bindré, which only the members of the drummers' guild are allowed to play, is made of a gourd which may reach 70 or 80 centimeters in diameter. The calabash is emptied, and the side where the stem was attached is removed and replaced with a tightly stretched
533 goat skin. By hitting this skin with his hands, the artist draws many different sounds from his instrument. It is quite an art to play this drum well, and the members of the guild are trained to it from childhood. They are the troubadours, the griot of the country; they sing the praises of chiefs whose genealogies they know by heart, they frequent the markets, they follow the rich and proclaim them to be the bravest, the most generous, the most handsome men this world has ever known, for the sake of a few gifts. They attend all festivities.

534 Another instrument is the lounga, made of a hollowed piece of wood shaped like an hourglass; the two ends are rather broad and joined by a narrow cylinder. This drum is carried under the arm, and its two openings are closed with goat skins joined by cords. The artist stretches these cords more or less tightly by clasping the drum between his arm and the left side of his body, while he hits one of the skins with a small curved stick ending in a little ball and held in his right hand.

The naba's orchestra also includes flutes, from which the natives, especially the Peul, draw pretty but monotonous sounds, and small one-string violins which give forth pleasing tones under a skillful bow.

644 If the Moro Naba is to ride on horseback, the grooms bring his
492 mount magnificently decked out in a copper headstall and a large embroidered rug which covers its back and rump completely. A piece of embroidered cloth hides the horse's chest, and the Arab-type saddle,

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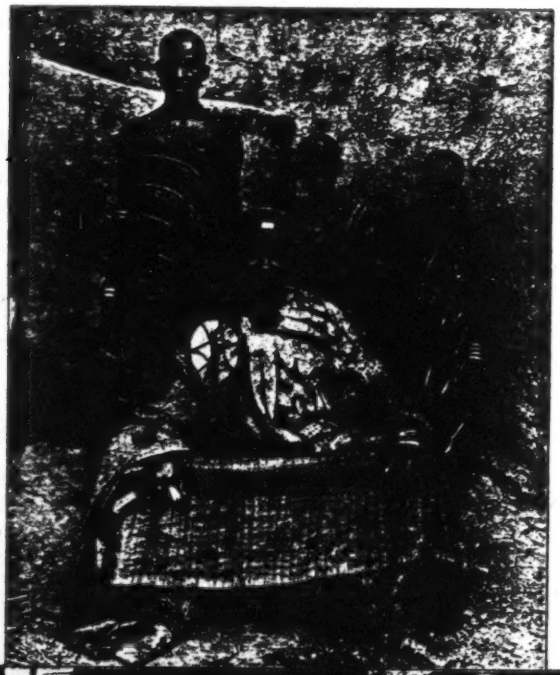

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Above: The Moro Naba. Behind him, his brother, about twelve years old and the head of a large province, flanked by two pages.

Below: The Bullom Naba and his Pages. Behind him, his two Christian sons.

644 with its tall copper stirrups, bears on either side a larger copper tray.
[492] The drums are played when the naba leaves his dwelling, shift to a different tune when he places his foot in the stirrup, and shift once more when he sets out on his way. The whole population over a radius of several kilometers is thus apprised of the Moro Naba's every gesture. A page precedes him bearing his pillow, and another carrying his scepter. The ministers present at the court and the foreign chiefs present at the capital hasten to mount their horses. Several of the Moro Naba's bodyguards accompany him: four strapping fellows walk by his side, their arms leaning against the horse's rump as though to prevent the monarch from falling, while horsemen armed with spears do a fantasia, running 100 meters ahead of the naba, brandishing their spears, returning at full gallop, and setting off again. This constant coming and going entertains the naba who does not gallop.

631 /19/ Every province and canton chief has his court, his ministers,
644 his pages, his drummers. Eunuchs, however, are solely the prerogative of the Moro Naba. In order to qualify for pages, pillow, and spurs, a chief must be invested properly. The present naba of Koupéla who failed to follow the traditions possesses none of these privileges.

The investiture of nabas follows a complex tradition. Each naba invests his own vassals in office. The Moro Naba invests the province chiefs, except for those who hold the title dimma; the province chiefs invest the canton chiefs, and the latter invest the chiefs of villages within their jurisdiction. The right of nomination is an important source of revenue for the nabas.

622 Upon the death of a village chief, several candidates vie for power.
431 They all go to the naba who rules over them, to greet him and to offer him numerous gifts, cowries, chickens, sheep, and, if they are sufficiently wealthy, salt bars, a horse, sometimes even a wife. The one who gives the most has the best chance of being chosen, and the naba decides to announce his choice only when he feels that the candidates are running out of gifts.

622 In Koupéla, a village chief under the direct jurisdiction of the province chief is nominated in the following way. The candidates must apply to the minister who has control over their village. He is the indispensable intermediary between them and the naba who is to make the choice, he is their guide, their sor'soba. When the nomination draws near, the minister goes at night to see the naba, and together they agree on the choice to be made. They may appoint

622 only a relative of the deceased or of a previously deceased naba. Once they have come to an agreement, the naba sets a date and notifies the candidates. Each of them, full of hope, comes toward evening with his men. He is dressed in trousers, a skin worn diagonally across the chest and back, and a blanket thrown over the shoulder in the classic way, leaving the right shoulder and the right arm free. Before each of them stands a young girl, holding a staff which may become a scepter a few moments later. This girl is supposed to receive power at the same time as the chosen candidate, and throughout the investiture ceremonies she will care for the objects used by the new naba and everyone will give her cowries. She will return home after the ceremonies.

All the candidates having arrived, they are seated in the outer courtyard. The naba remains in his hut, and the minister goes to him. The naba names the man of his choice, and the minister goes out, grabs the man's blanket, and tells him that he has been chosen by the naba. The defeated candidates leave hastily, while their men carry the chosen man on their shoulders, which serve for the shield of old, and sing his praises, calling him wobro, "elephant." The Trabrana /sic/, bravest of the brave, then comes to him with a leather satchel, and the chosen man must give him cowries. He also gives some to the minister to get back his blanket, and throughout the three festive days that follow his appointment he must provide large quantities of millet beer. These expenses are alleviated by his new subjects, who come to greet him and offer him gifts as soon as they get the news. /20/ The defeated candidates return on the following day, with shaved heads, to make obeisance to their fortunate competitor. For three days there is much merry-making at the household of the minister who acted as intermediary. Drums are played, the people dance, and they sing as follows:

622 539 Sen kong'nam, lébra sonkam ysa.	Those who were not chosen will gather peanuts.
Bamb'naba y minimini biga, ka zué waodo, dem kom.	Their naba is like the young of the wild duck: he does not fear the cold, he plays in the water.
Sérénde wobro, n'béla.	Come to the elephant and greet him.

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539 Sen damma nyébra, baryoro nan wa. If someone attempts to kill the crocodile, the serpent appears immediately. (1)

1. That is, to say, if someone threatens the new naba, the province chief will come to his aid.

622 On the third day the new naba is shaved. His sister, or in her absence an old woman, begins the procedure, but anyone may complete it. Everybody then goes to the naba: the chosen man is to re-
[55] ceive a name, and from now on it will be forbidden to call him by his previous name. Each naba receives three names, or rather three mottoes, chosen by his sister or by an old woman of the family. These mottoes allude to a historical event or to the chosen man's position. When everyone has arrived at the naba's house, the man's sister discloses the mottoes to the naba, who proclaims them, and the drums in turn repeat them to the people. Then the dancing, singing, and drinking are resumed. On the following day the new naba, duly invested, returns to his village to take up his duties.

Here are some of the mottoes:

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539 I. The mottoes of the naba of Koupéla allude to the war which took place at the time of his father's appointment between the latter, Naba Ibri, and the people of Kazem'bouanga:

1. Wadra yerda né kyougou. Wadra gousa menga, t'a péleum ka yd kyougou. The star glows in spite of the moon. But it should beware, for its brilliance does not obliterate that of the moon. (The star stands for the Kazem'bouanga pretender. The moon is the naba of Koupéla.)

2. Kalébdo kanenga, la son boulwaka. Kalebodo sauce is not good, but it is better than boulwaka sauce. (The naba of Koupéla is not very powerful, but he is more powerful than the people of Kazem'bouanga.)

3. Néda gwanga nan samma. The lame man claims that he will kill him. (The pretender, the lame man, intends to kill the naba of Koupéla.)

II. The mottoes of the Saman'Naba, prime minister of Koupéla, allude to his position vis-à-vis the naba, to whom he owes everything and who supports him:

622 1. Ti'douda béleum villi n'pam n'dou. Those who wish to
539 climb a tree seize the branches for support. /21/

2. Gigemdé sen touka séolro, wenniginamma, walpélronamma, nonga morbo, la'b zuéta gemdé. The lion digs up the salty earth (good to eat); the buffalo and koba /a kind of horse antelope/ like to eat it, but fear the lion. (The enemies of the Saman'Naba would like to take his place, but fear the naba.)

3. Kong'panga, bar'bala. Those who lack strength remain servants.

645 The appointment of the high ministers involves only a few gifts,
635 offered during the festive days which last from the death of the minister to the nomination of his successor. The eldest son usually inherits the position, but the province chief may designate anyone he pleases.

636 Upon the death of the naba of Koupéla, a province chief, the ministers hold a council and decide among themselves who is to be his successor. The eldest son is nearly always chosen. Before the name of the man selected is announced, the head of the village section that bears the name Koupéla notifies the canton chiefs, who gather in the village of Koupéla. When everyone has arrived, the Tabrana /sic/ proclaims the name of the man chosen, and they all proceed to Bélousa to disclose their choice to the naba and to request his investiture. The naba of Bélousa usually accepts the man thus formally designated. If there is disagreement, or if he himself would prefer a different choice, he notifies the Moro Naba accordingly and indicates his own preferences; when his messenger returns, he proclaims the appointment, and everyone submits to his will. After all, he "has the strength." As badges of investiture, the naba of Bélousa presents the chosen man with a cap, a pair of shoes, and a scepter. The new naba still may not wear the cap, put on the shoes, or hold the scepter. He must proceed first to the grave of the ancestor of the
[769] people, Naba Kourita, where he offers sacrifices, especially that of a cow. The festivities last for seven days, in the course of which millet beer flows freely and cattle is slaughtered in large numbers. In the course of these festivities the head of the chosen man is shaved, and he receives from the messengers of the naba of Bélousa the cap, shoes, and scepter; only then does he truly become a naba, with the right to

635 wear spurs and to have pages and a pillow. When the festivities are over at Kourit'Yaorin, the naba enters Koupéla where he is to reside.

643 When the Moro Naba died, the country fell prey to revolution and
669 to the servants of the deceased, who looted everything they could. This is why the death of the Moro Naba was carefully concealed until the day of the funeral; this is why, once it had been announced, no one dared go out without a bow and arrows or at least a spear. Women and children stayed home. In order to prevent any disorder, a new
643 election was called as soon as possible. The Widi Naba acted as intermediary and gathered the votes of the electors. The latter numbered twenty-five: the five high ministers and twenty other chiefs, of no great importance in everyday life, who were not canton chiefs and were often mere family heads, but who were high electors by right inherited from father to son since the founding of the Ouagadougou dynasty. These twenty-five electors consulted the people of their entourage and told the Widi Naba which candidate had received their vote. There could be several candidates, but to be elected one had to be a member of the family /22/of Naba Oubri, the founder of the dynasty. Once the funeral ceremonies were over, the Widi Naba rounded up all the canton chiefs and all the nabas present in Ouagadougou, and proclaimed the name of the man chosen, to whom he presented the badges of office. Numerous ceremonies followed, the most solemn of which took place in a small village called Paspanga, two kilometers from Ouagadougou. All the nabas went there in turn, beginning with the defeated candidates, to render their oath of loyalty.

All these customs were followed for the investiture of the present Moro Naba, Naba Kom.

Chapter 3. Rights of Chiefs and Rights of Private Individuals

631 The nabas, whether heads of villages, cantons, or provinces, were all-powerful, and no one could act without their knowledge or own anything beyond what they permitted him to possess.

In theory, Mossi country belongs entirely to the Moro Naba, who may dispose of everything as he wishes and give land to anyone he pleases. In practice, the Moro Naba delegates some of his

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Above: A Naba and his Men.
Below: Mossi Elders.

631 powers to his vassals, the province chiefs, who in turn entrust them to the canton chiefs, and these do likewise with the village chiefs. Thus, when a native wants to move from one canton to another, or
631 even from one village to another, he must be authorized to do so.
166 He must request the permission of the canton or village chief to settle
425 in such-and-such a place, and the chief of the village where he wants to live tells him where he may build his huts and which field he may cultivate. The naba may dispossess one of his subjects, if he so wishes, and give his field to another. After all, he "has the strength." This rarely happens, however, and a native who has cleared a piece of bush, fertilized a plot to sow maize, sowed and weeded the ground, is usually assured of a harvest, except in case of war. If a man is evicted, on the other hand, there is no appeal; neither the canton chief nor the province chief would listen to him; they would do the same thing if the opportunity arose.

421 There is no communal property. Every individual works his fields for his own account; he himself collects the fruit of his labor and remains its undisputed master. Nevertheless, every native owes his
651 chiefs and benefactors a tithe; and at harvest time it is interesting
431 to watch everyone sorting ears of maize, braiding sorghum stems, and measuring out baskets of small millet. The village chief is to get so many ears of maize; the canton chief, if he does not reside too far away, so many others; the father- or fathers-in-law will get theirs, and so will one friend or another to whom one owes cowries, or who has previously granted a favor. However, everyone who deals out goods right and left will in turn get some from various other people and approximately regain his expenditure. The village chiefs offer more sizable gifts to the canton chiefs, and the latter do likewise to the province chiefs.

651 These were, in fact, taxes, not fixed taxes per capita, but com-
CU pletely arbitrary ones. If the naba found a gift insufficient, he had no compunction about saying so, and the person involved had to comply. It is said that the naba of Koupéla paid annually 500,000 cowries (500 francs) and /23/ three horses to the naba of Bélousa, and a million cowries (1000 francs) in two installments to the Moro Naba, to whom he also gave five horses. The gifts to the Moro Naba were brought first to the naba of Bélousa and from there conveyed to Ouagadougou: ever the hierarchy.

This quasi-official tax, however, was not the only one. Whenever the Moro Naba wanted horses, cattle, or anything whatever, he

651 661 had a province chief notified, and everyone hastened to carry out his wishes. If a province chief in turn wanted something, if he was short of millet or wished to build huts, he had one or several canton chiefs notified, and these in turn advised the village chiefs; through them everything was slowly carried out, for it took time to transmit these orders, but the common man never failed to comply.

Such a system made it impossible for an individual to accumulate wealth. A surplus of goods would have aroused the naba's cupidity, and he would have found some excuse to tax this overly enterprising subject more than the others. This is why those who owned a few cows carefully concealed it by entrusting them to the Peul. The latter could not hope to increase their herds rapidly, because the nabas were always in need of fine, fat cattle for some alleged sacrifice or festivity.

651 661 431 At certain times the canton chiefs and even the village chiefs, as well as people desirous of making a good impression, must go to the naba to greet him and to present him with gifts which never amount to less than 500 cowries (50 francs). When the naba undertakes an important task, such as the building of several huts, the weeding of his field, or the harvesting of his millet, some of the people are summoned to help him, and it is proper for the others to come and offer him gifts. His convalescence from illness is an occasion for gifts also, and, if he has eluded some danger, he must quickly be congratulated and given cowries. On every festive day or on the days following each naba must go to his province chief to greet him and to bring him gifts in proportion to the importance of his own position. Whenever the naba travels, every village where he stops must give him food and drink, and thus offer him chickens, goats, sheep, or even a cow if the village is sufficiently important. The grooms and other servants in the retinue of the naba manage for themselves at the expense of the inhabitants. This is quite a burden, especially since the naba, when he returns home, expects more greetings and cowries.

726 War was another important source of revenue. Binger describes what he witnessed at the court of Boukari-Koutou, who was later Moro Naba under the name of Naba Wobro and who was deposed by Voulet's arrival. Before leaving for war, the sorcerers were consulted and indicated the tangandé or sacred grove where a sacrifice was to be made in order to insure victory. The province chief then took out his flag, a mere staff with charms and a cow's tail hanging at

726 the end. A man appointed for the task carried this flag in the front line of battle. He was never to look back and always to walk forward, and he bore no weapons other than a bow and arrows. If he was killed, another man took his place. When a village was besieged, 727 all the spoils devolved by right to the naba, who took /24/ his choice and left the rest to his men. All able-bodied men who could still fight and who refused to become slaves were put to death; the old men were spared, and the women and children reduced to slavery. The naba became master of all the slaves taken by cavalrymen mounted on his own horses. If any disagreement arose about a capture, the naba seized the prize; if the individuals concerned managed to reach an agreement, they shared the booty amicably. Those who had seized a horse or a slave on their own initiative could keep it, but more often than not they offered part of their prize to the naba in order to avoid difficulties. The war did not end with a peace treaty. It ceased when the loot was considered sufficient. The Gourounsi and Bousansé countries thus were true granaries for the Mossi, who drew upon them according to their needs.

692 The nabas did not merely administer their lands and collect taxes; they also dispensed justice, civil and criminal. The village chief usually judged a case of first instance, but the convicted party could appeal the sentence to the canton chief and through him to the province chief, or he might even resort directly to the latter. The judges 695 were always assisted by assessors, the village elders for the petty nabas, the ministers for the province chiefs. Criminals were judged as promptly as possible, and the accused were subjected to imprisonment only while awaiting the arrival of witnesses. They were allowed to name their own witnesses, and these were summoned.

No questioning similar to that of our examining magistrates preceded the session. Everything took place openly, and anyone could speak up whenever he pleased. Torture was not employed to obtain incriminating confessions, but sometimes was used to unmask false witnesses. Sons were not allowed to testify in favor of their father, nor slaves and servants in favor of their master: their testimony might too easily be biased.

In case of dispute, there was no trial by ordeal nor intervention by a sorcerer. The judge did not put the witnesses under oath, but a litigant could say: "If I lie, may I fail to rise from here (that is, may I die)." If someone accused of being indebted to a recently deceased individual denied this debt, the heir could lead him to the

695 tomb and force him to drink water in which earth from the grave had been diluted. This test was greatly feared, for the Mossi believe that the deceased will come and take his revenge.

The defendant went free unless his guilt was proved by witnesses. When arguments arose about the ownership of fields, domestic animals, etc., each person concerned would give his argument and summon his witnesses, and the judges made a decision on the basis of the discussions. If two women quarreled, their husbands were supposed to get together and reach a decision. The province chief judged disputes 692 concerning marriage. For instance, if a girl had been promised to someone and the bride price was paid in part, and then her father changed his mind and gave her to another, the disappointed suitor could appeal to the province chief, who saw to it that the payment was returned. If the defendant ran away to avoid trial, he could only be tried in absentia if witnesses deposed against him.

696 /25/ The sentence was carried out as far as possible, even in the 691 absence of the convicted party; if he returned, the trial was not re-
672 opened but he could appeal to the province chief. The family is held responsible in every case. If the sentence includes a fine, and if the convicted person's property is insufficient, the property of his relatives is seized. People are held accountable for their children's debts, and if the defendant runs away, one of his relatives is seized in his place. On the other hand, the head of the family is the absolute master and the judge of the family. He must pay his children's debts and the fines they have incurred, but he may chastise them, even put them to death, or banish and curse them, a punishment which as a rule is greatly feared. All this indicates the strength of the family ties, which we shall study in the second part of this work. The naba saw to the execution of the sentence pronounced by the court; the executive and judicial powers were vested in the same person. If anyone refused to pay his debts or to pay the inflicted penalty, he was stripped of his property. No commutation of the sentence was allowed, and the person condemned to irons or to death had to suffer the sentence himself and could not go free by paying a fine or by substituting a slave. Capital punishment was carried out in public. The province chief was entitled to grant a pardon, but, of course, he made use of this right quite rarely. A man's life counts for so little in the eyes of the Black!

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695 The procedure was the same for all, men and women. The sons
681 of nabas, the nakomsé, however, were neither tried nor punished in
554 public. They were not tied with ropes, but with strips of fabric; and if condemned to death, they were hanged rather than clubbed to death. In any case, complaints against them were extremely rare. The sons of a powerful naba could do anything with impunity.

681 For examples, here are a few crimes and their respective punishments. Of course, there was no written code, no formal scale of penalties. Everything depended on custom and on the whim of the
696 judge. Thus, the wealthy could obtain sentences in their favor by
691 paying the judges, and thieves could avoid punishment by sharing their loot with the naba. Otherwise, a thief caught in the act was
685 flogged, sometimes to death. He was condemned to several months in irons, and exposed to public ridicule before the naba's hut; he had to restore what he had taken, and his family was held responsible. If he repeated the offense, he was led to the marketplace with a rope around his neck; he was supplied with an abundance of meat and dolo /beer/, and then clubbed to death at the foot of a tree. In Ouagadougou he was sometimes made a eunuch instead. This was almost the equivalent of a death sentence, because the operation was carried out in such barbarous fashion that death often ensued. French justice more leniently imprisons the thieves, a cause of complaint by honest people who find the punishment too mild.

682 In case of willful murder, the killer was put to death; if he could
683 not be found, a member of his family was executed in his place.
672 In case of a brawl, no attempt was made to determine who had started the fight or who was in the right. (Manslaughter was punished by a fine paid to the victim's family. The right /26/ of self-defense was, of course, recognized. If blows and wounds had been inflicted, the adversaries were put in irons.)

681 Old women were often accused of being witches and of eating
683 children's souls. If their crime was considered proved, if the sorcerers
888 consulted declared some old woman guilty of a baby's death, she was put to death in very cruel fashion: a second opening was made in a clay pot so that her head could be put completely within it; then the pot was heated intensely and placed over the head of the unfortunate woman.

685 If a goat or sheep caused damage to a field, the animal could be killed on the spot. The owner had to be notified, but he was not

685 entitled to complain and merely removed the animal. If the damage was caused by a cow or donkey, the owner of the field had to obtain a witness and was entitled to recover damages.

425 Whoever found an object of small value, such as a knife or even a garment, was entitled to keep it, but anything valuable, such as a sheep, a donkey, or, all the more, a cow, had to be handed over to the naba and became his property.

684 837 The province chief alone could pass sentence on a rapist. He was beaten and put in irons, the girl was returned to her family, and, if she gave birth, the child was killed. If the girl had been promised to the naba, the rapist was put to death. An adulterer caught in flagrante delicto could be killed by the deceived husband, but if he had not been caught in flagrante delicto, if he had managed to run away, or if he had merely been denounced by the woman, the deceived husband could do nothing. A girl's seducer usually became her husband if she gave birth, but he had to provide another girl for her betrothed.

791 787 837 The province chief had a special procedure to insure the faithfulness of his numerous wives and his pages. When a wife or page did not behave properly, the Poënaba was supposed to point them out to the naba. He proceeded as follows. Every Friday the Poënaba left his village on foot, a whip in his hand. A servant preceded him with a leather satchel containing charms. No one was allowed to come near him. Everyone fled into the bush, and the path he had followed was closed to other people until they learned that the dreadful man had reached the home of the naba. The wives were gathered together. The Poënaba filled a large gourd with water, poured in his ingredients, and sat before it. The women came to him one by one and cast their reflection in the water. The Poënaba looked in and claimed to recognize those wives who were faithful and those who were not. The former were allowed to go free, but they were often beaten to remove any possible inclination to unfaithfulness. Those designated as unfaithful were seized and had to denounce their accomplice. Both the man and woman were clubbed to death. If the woman pointed out as guilty had no accomplice or refused to name him, she alone was killed. Women still point out with terror the place of execution. This procedure was very barbarous, and its abuses were flagrant. To avoid an accusation which would cost them /27/ their lives, the poor women were ready to do anything, and they presented the Poënaba with all the gifts they could gather in order to be spared.

177 The preceding pages deal wholly with past history. The French occupation has profoundly modified the whole administrative set-up and curtailed the rights of nabas, who are now mere civil servants. The people are slowly learning not to fear them; their authority is weakening; the gifts dwindle; and the nabas have been put on short allowance and forced to cultivate their fields like everybody else. Their judicial power is practically gone, and those few who have preserved real authority were able to do so because of their remoteness from administrative centers and their past. They were in charge before the French occupation, and they have managed to keep up their prestige in spite of everything. Yet little by little attitudes
600 change and respect vanishes. Is this good? Is it bad? The matter could be argued at great length. Although this administrative system led to regrettable abuses which had to be checked, it also had its favorable aspects, and it made the Mossi into one of the most feared and most homogeneous peoples in the bend of the Niger.

/28/ BOOK II. FAMILY LIFE

Chapter 1. Establishment of the Family Through Marriage

562 The family is established through marriage. We shall, therefore,
584 first study the marriage bond. Obviously, since Christianity was
567 introduced in the country only a short time ago, virginity is unknown there even as a concept. Every nubile girl must marry. She is given in marriage by the person to whom she belongs, and her own tastes are not taken into account. She belongs primarily to her father, but sometimes even before her birth she belongs to the person who gave her mother away on the condition — a common clause in free marriage contracts — that the first girl she bears will be given in marriage by her grandfather. Or the woman may belong to her father's master, and this may be her father's only remaining obligation toward the man who formerly owned him as a slave. Thus, nearly all girls born in Koupéla belong by right to the naba, for the inhabitants of this locality were formerly his slaves. Sometimes a

562 girl is used to pay debts; a man borrows on the promise of giving his
584 daughter in marriage. She will be handed over, often with no bride
567 price other than the borrowed sum; and, contrary to the custom noted above, since she is considered a slave, her first daughter does not belong to the grandfather. A girl may also be given in exchange for her enslaved brother or uncle, who thus recovers his freedom. A man may be seriously ill and call a doctor who agrees to treat him on the condition that the patient's daughter be given to him if he gets well. The father does recover, and the girl is given in marriage to the fortunate doctor. Exchange of daughters also takes place: a native may give his daughter in marriage to another, who in turn gives him his own.

562 A girl is given in marriage by her mother only if she was born out
584 of wedlock, and her father is thus theoretically unknown. The sisters
848 of certain nabas are the only ones permitted to choose their husbands
[554] according to their own wishes and to leave them when they please.
593 The fickle existence they lead is easy to imagine! In all other cases the girl is given in marriage by her father, or by his heir if the father is dead. (1) The mother is not consulted, but since she cares for the

[754] 1. It would be onerous and indeed impossible to list all the various situations that may arise. The sorcerers quite often interfere, and who knows what goes through a sorcerer's mind! One case among many: a woman bore a daughter after raising several others who died immediately following marriage; the father consulted the sorcerer to find out whether he should promise this last daughter in marriage. The sorcerer stated that she must be left free to choose her own husband, or else she would die like her sisters. The father left her free.

daughter until the latter marries, she may through advice, promises, or even threats dissuade her from a certain match /29/ or welcome her if she runs away from a husband to whom she was given against her will.

584 If the girl absolutely refuses to go to her betrothed, her father
[562] tries to persuade her but does not use force. If the girl persists in her refusal in spite of everything — this is extremely rare — the father returns to the betrothed any money he may have borrowed, but he does not return anything that was given him spontaneously. If the father happens to die after he has pledged his daughter, his heir may not retract the promise and give his sister or niece to another man,
[428] but he will from then on receive the gifts himself. If the betrothed man dies, his heir gets the girl promised to the father, with the condition that he will continue to pay the bride price.

584 Contrary to the situation in European countries, the woman, con-
583 sidered as valuable property, is paid for; it is not she who brings a dowry, but the man who wants her as his wife. If a man has an eye on a friend's daughter, he goes to visit the father even though the girl may still be a babe in arms. He is careful not to state what he has in mind. He comes sometimes with a few cowries, sometimes with a chicken, a piece of salt, perhaps even a sheep. The child's father understands, and when he has some work to be done, a field to be weeded, millet to be threshed, huts to be roofed, he makes it known to the suitor, who hastens to work for the man whose son-in-law he should like to become.

After a time, the father says to the suitor: "You have treated me well. I am pleased with you. I will treat you well." The suitor understands and becomes even more assiduous. He sends his friends; and on every festive occasion he presents the father of his intended with a few chickens. There is no outright promise, no betrothal in the usual sense of the term. Sometimes the father has financial difficulties, pressing debts, or he has seen a fine garment he should like to buy, and he has a request for money conveyed to his friend. The latter knows that he is loaning without return, or rather loaning against the girl. He refuses only if he is actually unable to furnish the sum; for if negotiations were ever to be broken, the child's father would have to return the money advanced, and this would greatly embarrass him and thus prevent him from profiting through the transaction. In any case, it is extremely rare for a promised girl not to be given to the man who has made the first advances and who has been favorably received. A father who should promise his daughter to a man after receiving gifts for some time from another would be held in very poor esteem and forced to return any money he might

584
583 have borrowed. In addition, he would expose himself and the preferred suitor to the vengeance of the rejected one.

583 The bride price is not exorbitant. The total gifts, spread over a period of years, amount to some fifty francs, without counting the work days. Nevertheless, it requires sufficient means to secure at least the necessary cowries. Besides, the child's father prefers to give her to someone who already boasts a certain fame and some wealth, in short, to an elderly man. /30/ This is why children are promised to old dotards, and white-haired men are paired with young girls; while the old men's sons of marriageable age cannot get wives. If the father has the means to pay the bride price, he carefully refrains from helping his son, even if the latter has found a match to his liking.
587 It is true that all the father's wives are inherited by the oldest son,
578 who gives some to his younger brothers; but this occurs only at the old man's death, and this may not happen for a long time. This ex-
593 plains why the oldest son wishes for his father's death, and why the father sends the son away for fear of a premature end. It is only fair to add that some men, with a better understanding of their own interests, marry off their sons as soon as they are old enough.

595 Polygamy exists among the Mossi as in all Black countries. The
[556] wealth of a man is gauged by the number of his wives. Women furnish hands to till the soil, for the wife works in the fields like the husband. Women also furnish children, and if these are daughters, young men will come to offer their services (dakonré) and one day take the girls in marriage; or the father will receive gifts. If the children are boys, they will later aid the father in his work. In these countries where each lives for himself alone, where selfishness reigns supreme, polygamy is easily explained, but it undoubtedly results in a lower birth rate. White-bearded old men cannot have children as numerous and sound as young men in their prime, and the latter, deprived of wives, wear themselves out with their excesses. It is true that those who can afford a dozen wives are few; most have to be content with two, three, or four. Some nabas, nevertheless, own veritable herds of women, and this is certainly a grievous abuse. Their wives are numbered in the hundreds. The greatest moral dis-
[837] order reigns in those harems, where the boys who serve as grooms and pages spend most of their time among their master's wives. This explains the precautions taken by the women's owners and the eunuchs of the Moro Naba, as well as the Poënaba and his sinister duties.

582 Marriage is exogamous, that is, relatives do not marry if their
564 kinship is known. There are no sharply defined caste lines. The Mossi marry Yarsé Malinké, Bousanse, and Gourounsi, but cannot marry Peul nor Haoussa. A Mossi who does not belong to a caste may choose his wife among Mossi who do belong to one. The latter do not intermarry freely; iron workers cannot marry from among the drummers.

584 But to go back to our story. The girl has grown. The suitor has already made numerous gifts. In short, the time has come to proceed with the wedding. The girl's father /31/ summons the betrothed and tells him: "Come and see me on such-and-such a day with a chicken." The suitor joyfully returns to his village and tells the elders that he was told to bring a chicken. On the day set, the suitor takes the bird to the girl's family, accompanied by his friends. He hands over the chicken, and everyone goes to the home of the head of the family, or, in his absence, to a village elder. The father states before all present that he wishes to give his daughter to So-and-So. Congratulations are exchanged, and everyone goes home. Now the festivities must be arranged, the relatives and friends must be notified, and the millet beer must be brewed. Meanwhile, the relatives and friends who have heard the good news come to greet the bridegroom and bring him fifty or a hundred cowries to help him meet the expenses of the festivities.

When everything is ready, the bridegroom takes 500 cowries and a rooster to the girl's father and 500 cowries to the elder in whose household the bride shall live until her wedding day. The girl's relatives have prepared dinner, while the bridegroom provides the
[302] drink. A relative of the groom shaves the bride's forehead in a circle, and she retires to the inner courtyard where her father's wives wash her thoroughly and tie a cotton cord around her waist. She dons a white garment and goes to offer a gourd of beer to her betrothed who has remained outside with his friends. Everyone thanks the girl's parents and then they all leave. On the day after next, the groom
[431] sends his friends to greet the family of his betrothed with a basket of millet flour, four kalro pellets, and salt, which are all distributed among the village people. These festivities, with their attendant ceremonies, come closest to a formal betrothal.

585 The girl, however, remains with the head of the family or with the elder who takes his place! When all these preliminary ceremonies are over, the groom sends daily for his bride. Once the trousseau has

585 been gathered together in a basket — clothes varying in number with the family's wealth, gourds, a pot for the sauce, a wooden spoon to stir the millet mush — the father tells the groom's messenger that the wedding date has been set for a certain day, nearly always on a Friday, sometimes Thursday. For the second time, the groom prepares the festivities and again the food and the drink. In the evening, his friends go out to meet the bride who is accompanied by her family. When nearing the village, they all let loose merry cries, "you, you", the bride pretends to run away, and the young men run after her and bear her on their shoulders to the head of the groom's family or to one of his uncles. And the party begins. The men eat millet mush [262] and a chicken; the women, millet mush and a guinea hen. They all drink beer, dance, and sing.

[302] On the following morning, the groom's relatives shave the bride's head, and that of her husband if she is his first wife, because their way of life has changed: the young man has become the master of a hut, and the young girl a wife. In the evening, the friends and relatives of the new husband go to the bride's village bearing in this order: a sheep killed at the husband's house, jars of beer, and finally the sarabo /millet mush/. The bride's relatives follow in complete silence /32/ and without greeting anybody. When they arrive at the home of the bride's family, the bearer of the sheep and the women who carry the millet beer and sarabo go into the inner courtyard and put down their loads; then they come out and dance, while the in-laws have the food transferred to other containers. The jars are returned to the bearers, who are driven away with blows by millet stalks and a sprinkling of water mixed with ashes.

All the while, the bride stays in the soukala of the elder, watched closely by his first wife. She remains shut in for several days, until the elder finally decides to send her to her husband. His wife prepares millet mush, sauce, and meat, and brings a jug of beer. The old women assemble and accompany the bride to the home of her husband. He returns the courtesy to the elder on the following day. Henceforth, they are married at long last.

If the new husband is prosperous, he goes to thank his in-laws a [431] few days after the festivities. In leather pouches sewn all around, he offers 1, 300 cowries to his father-in-law and 1, 400 to his mother-in-law. If he can, he also offers beer, two chickens, and a sheep. These last gifts are less essential, but if he fails to offer the cowries, the in-laws may seize his wife's children and keep them until the thank-you gifts have been received.

585 It should be noted that these ceremonies are often curtailed. They
184 may also vary in ways that will not be described here. Sometimes they may not take place at all. This happens when the girl already has a husband prior to her birth, or when she is part of an inheritance. In such cases her relatives merely take her to her husband.

585 No sacrifices are performed during the marriage ceremonies. The
782 husband does offer a sacrifice on the day he builds a hut for his wife, and at the place where the structure is to be erected. The girl's mother consults the sorcerer a few times to find out if her daughter will be welcomed in her new home, and to know which sacrifice must be offered to ward off illness while she lives with her husband. She communicates the answer to the girl's father, and he himself offers the prescribed sacrifice.

602 In theory, the husband owes nothing else to his in-laws. In practice,
431 he would hold himself in poor esteem if he were not to present them with a few more gifts, especially on important feast days. When his maize is harvested, he sets aside a few ears for his wife's relatives; when his millet is threshed, he is sure to send some to his father-in-law; whenever he organizes any sort of festivity, his in-laws are invited; and he personally helps them in their work.

586 There is no divorce in the formal sense of a judgment rendered by law. A husband may send his wife back to her relatives if she steals, if she is lazy, or especially if she commits adultery, but even in the latter case his action will be regarded with disapproval. It is a husband's duty to watch over his wife and, if necessary, to discipline her. The man who repudiates his wife makes himself unpopular and cannot obtain new wives. It also happens, and this occurs more frequently, that the wife runs away and goes back to her family, /33/ either because she complains of ill treatment, or because she is not happy with her husband, or for some other reason of a more or less dubious character. If the husband manages to catch up with her before she gets home, no great problem is involved. He merely beats her and shuts her in for a few days. If she does reach her relatives, especially if they are in connivance, the husband must present a few gifts to them and even to his wife. The in-laws usually try to convince their daughter to return to her husband, but they do not force her to do so. Even the naba, when called upon to intervene, limits himself to the use of moral authority; his threats usually persuade the woman to return to her husband, who may himself use force if he wishes.

586 It nevertheless happens, though very rarely, that the husband is unable to convince his wife and returns home alone. No one troubles the wife from then on, and her relatives give her full freedom. The grudge of the rejected husband may be persistent, however, and his vengeance frightful. The bride price is not returned; the husband should have known how to keep his wife. It is nevertheless acknowledged that the children born of the union, boys or girls, belong to the father, and he does not fail to claim them when they are grown, or if they run away to their mother.

564 467 Negro populations often contain caste groups, set apart from each other by tight barriers. The most outstanding of these are the rules prohibiting marriage between members of the same caste or between those who belong to a caste and those who do not. Such prohibitions do not exist among the Mossi, except in the sense mentioned earlier. Although three caste-like groups exist among them, drummers, smiths, and undertakers, they are castes only in the sense that those who do not belong to such a family cannot exercise the profession. It might be more accurate to call them guilds.

533 [534] The drummers (binda) are those who play the bindré, a sort of large gourd with an aperture about 40 centimeters in diameter and covered with hide. Only those who belong to the drummers' family may play on this drum, which apparently is peculiar to the Mossi, but anyone may play on the other drums. The drummers are present [762] at all sacrifices offered by the naba; on Friday, the day of sacrifice, they go and pay their respects to him. When sacrifices are offered, they are entitled to the head of the victim. They are present at all [764] burials, where they play their drum and receive a remuneration which varies with the wealth of the deceased. If it is one of their members who died, they receive neither cowries nor food. They go to war [727] with their drums. If they are so unfortunate as to be made prisoners, they are never sold but ruthlessly killed; this is done either to prevent them from going back into the fray and stirring the warriors to sack the village, or because no one would want to buy them since they belong to a naba who would retaliate against their captors, or for both reasons at once. The drummers are the country's griot, a term hallowed by custom. They know the genealogy of every naba and sing his praises. Each province chief has a number of drummers and never travels without taking some of them with him. At other times they go to /34/ the market and follow the best-dressed people, singing

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The Large Mossi Drums.

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Dance of Young Mossi Girls.

533 their praises and beating fiercely on their drums in the hope of receiving a few cowries, kola nuts, or at least some beer.

326 The smiths (saba), by which is meant those who work with iron,
306 extract the metal from the ore and make it into hoes and hatchets. They sometimes work with wood, as in other parts of the Sudan, but usually this industry is carried out by members of another guild. The jewellers make bracelets, file teeth, repair worn hoes, etc. They are not smiths, properly speaking, and anyone may exercise their trade.

767 The undertakers (lada) offer gifts to the spirits of the deceased on the day of death or its anniversary (kouré). They also lay the corpse in the grave, and if death was due to illness, it is impossible to proceed with the burial without them. But anyone may dig the grave and carry the corpse. We shall discuss the undertakers again when funerals are described.

Chapter 2. The Family

596 The structure of the Roman family and the power granted to the paterfamilias, its very foundation, have been greatly and justly admired. Something like the paterfamilias is to be found among the Mossi. Would that we also found the Roman matron! As we have seen above, every Mossi is subject to the Moro Naba, a province chief, a canton chief, and a village chief. He is also subject in a more immediate sense to the head of his family, and he can do nothing without his consent. If he wishes to marry, he consults the family head, in whose household his bride will lodge when she arrives in the village. On the other hand, the man who wishes to give his daughter in marriage never does so without consulting his family head, at whose house the girl will stay before she goes to live with her husband.

[551] The family is thus very tightly organized among the Mossi. Each family has a name which is seldom used; if one of its members was ever naba, the name derives from that of the first naba. Members of
[582 the same family may not intermarry, and usually they all have the
784] same kisgou (prohibition), whether the term designates a totem, a taboo, or something else altogether. The head of the family is its oldest member. Upon his death, the authority is transferred not to his

596 heir but to the oldest member of the family. Nothing is done without consulting the family head, and even if a member of the family occupies an important post, he continues to show the greatest deference toward his family head, his elder. This is why the present prime minister of Koupéla, the Saman'Naba, leaves the prerogatives of a family head to his uncle; he does not take the liberty of offering sacrifices on the Day of the Dead, and he consults his elder on all
596 matters which fall within his jurisdiction. The head of the family,
681 however, does not have the right of life or death over its members or over his own wives. Even if the latter steal or commit adultery, they may not be put to death; only the district chiefs may kill their own wives. A husband or family elder may beat them, put them in irons, or even more rarely /35/ turn them out of the household, but he may not kill them. Also, the family head may not dispose of the family property, nor force his kin to hand it over. He may, however, request his relatives to help him pay his debts or obtain a wife, but he may not force them to do so. Nevertheless, they always help him as best they can.

593 Children are directly subject to their father. While the latter
596 consults the family head whenever he must make a serious decision, the children consult their father, who in turn goes to the family head, who often goes to the village chief, who resorts to the canton chief, who consults the head of the province if the matter warrants it. Mature reflection thus precedes every serious decision.

593 The father is the absolute master of his children. He has the right of life or death over them, and sometimes he made use of this right, especially when a child was born deformed or became an incorrigible thief. He sees to the marriage of his daughters. He may exchange them for other women, or he may give them in marriage to a creditor in order to pay his debts. He may place his sons in the service of a relative or friend. The eldest son seldom remains in his father's household, especially if the father is wealthy or a naba; the father is too afraid that his son may do away with him, the sooner to come into his inheritance. To give one's son to another man is a convenient way to get rid of the problem of his marriage; it will become the concern of the boy's master.

861 Fathers take little part in the education of their children. Daughters always remain with their mothers until their marriage. Sons help their father as soon as they are old enough to work, but they never

861 receive any advice from him. The Mossi, fathers and mothers alike, do not know how to train their children. Under the pretext that a small child does not know what he is doing, the parents allow him to do as he pleases and to carry out his every whim without punishment. Tots who can barely articulate two words utter the coarsest insults to their mother and beat her with their small fists without being punished. The onlookers merely remark that some day he will be a fighter. To chastise him would be to make him cry, and a child's tears are always an embarrassment to be avoided as much as possible. When a child behaves badly, when he fights, steals, seeks out the company of professional thieves or young scamps, when he tells everybody what he has seen and heard and cannot keep a secret, when complaints are made against him, then his father and mother punish him and warn him not to do it again; but they do not prevent wrong doing, and [672] if necessary they will pay his debts, because all members of the family, especially the father, are held liable. The father does not teach his son the cult and the sacrifices, but he does request the boy's help. The child watches his father, and when he grows up, he does as his father did.

857 Boys of twelve or fifteen may fail to return home in the evening for any reason whatever, without warning, and no one worries about it: "He will come soon enough." The young man of twenty builds 884 himself a hut apart from his father's house, in order to have greater 593 freedom and to receive any visitors he may want. Besides his father's field, he cultivates his own piece of land and sells the produce /36/ himself in order to buy clothes. His father feeds him but rarely presents him with gifts of clothing when he is old enough to work for himself. If he weaves cloth during the dry season, he may do with it as he pleases, sell it or make clothing. His father has no say in the matter. It is the father, however, who teaches his sons how to 868 cultivate the soil, how to plait mats, and sometimes how to weave. 593 If the father works at a trade, he teaches it to his sons: the drummers teach their children to beat the drum and to sing the chief's praises; the jewellers and smiths teach their sons their respective professions.

593 The father usually is fond of his children and likes to play with them when they are small. He watches over them while the mother does her household tasks. Parents sincerely lament their children's death, and children that of their siblings. Undoubtedly there are parents with the greatest indifference toward their offspring, but such

593 cases are rare. Less rare are the children who care little for their parents. Nevertheless, old people are usually treated well and with [888] great respect. A son who abandons his old father or mother is held in very poor esteem. A woman prefers to bear daughters who will help her in her daily work, but she hopes for one or two sons with whom she may live when she is old.

857 The girls live with their mother. As soon as they can walk, they 883 follow her to the stream and return with a gourd of water on their [482 heads. As they grow, so does the gourd, and little girls carry water 312] jars weighing from fifteen to twenty kilograms. At home, young girls mill grain to feed the whole family, tend the fire, stir the sauce, wash the dishes and the clothes, sweep, in short, attend to all the household tasks under their mother's guidance. The only task of a woman with two or three half-grown daughters is to supervise their work. Because they are always with their mother, the young girls are usually more responsible and better behaved than the boys. Unfortunately they make up for this later, and more often than not, it is on their own initiative that they go at night to the young men's huts. A young man may give presents to a girl who has already been promised in marriage, and he may do so in front of her mother, who says nothing.

857 Boys help their father as soon as they are strong enough. Younger 883 boys follow their older brothers into the bush as soon as they can and 231 help them herd the sheep and goats. These boys go out every morning, before the sun has dried the dew, to look for new termite nests full of insects which the chicks are fond of eating. During the dry season, they cut down and plait grass to cover the roofs; if they are old enough, they even cut the firewood. When a little older, if their father or the person with whom they live owns a horse, they watch over it, take it to the stream to water it and to wash it, go into the bush to cut grass for it, and clean the stables. During the winter when the grass is green, each of the horses of a rich naba is cared for by three or four children. Some of them cut the grass, others /37/ stuff it almost by force into the horse's mouth, while one little boy drives the flies away with a stick to which a sort of flexible leather sole is attached. The winter season is a fine time for horses, who grow fat and heavy. Unfortunately, the Black does not think of the future and does not foresee how much dry grass will be needed to bridge the dry season; as a result, the horses suffer a great deal from hunger at that time.

857 The young Mossi, like children in our own country, like to play.
524 Babies have bone hatchets on which they chew; little girls have wooden dolls, and on important feast days they hand them out graciously with a curtsy; whoever takes the doll must give the child a few cowries when he returns it. The boys mold horses, saddles, and horsemen in clay and draw figures in the dust with their fingers, just as we at the same age used to make mud pies and draw funny figures in the margins of our spelling books. Of course, all this is done rather crudely, but it shows that human beings are the same and have similar tastes all over the earth.

857 All children like noise, and the Mossi are no exception. When
534 the stalks of millet are still green, they fashion a kind of harmonica with a vibrating tongue made of a piece of millet stem tied with a thread; or they cut a millet stalk in two and hollow it out, leaving a mere slat which vibrates under the repeated blows of a stick. The sound is augmented by a broken gourd that serves as resonator. These are expendable toys which are thrown away the following day when they have dried out, but it is so easy to make more! The children
857 also make straw rings which are usually worn around the wrist as
524 bracelets, but which may also be used in a game. They are placed on the ground before the players who take turns rolling one of the little hoops. If the ring falls on that of another child, the player who propelled it wins the hoop; if it falls at a certain distance, it is won by the opponent; and if it rolls past that distance, the throw must be repeated.

The older boys and the men have more complicated games.
524 They have a kind of checkers; the board is formed by making small holes /in the ground/ by hand, and the pawns are represented by stones. Above all, they have the cowry game, a game of chance,
525 a game of winnings and losses, and like every gamble involving money, a thrilling game. Those who take to it go as far as their European counterparts. They become cheaters, liars, thieves, and indebted. Some have gambled away everything up to their last pair of trousers, their last breechcloth, and have ended up gambling themselves away. This game should be forbidden as strictly as our own games of chance.

535 The game of games, the pastime of pastimes, that which is resorted to on every occasion, happy or sad, and sometimes without any special reason, is the dance. If the Mossi happened to know her, the muse Terpsichore would have no more devoted followers. No man, woman, or child can remain still when dance music fills the air.

535 /38/ To tell the truth, however, the Mossi do not know how to dance. With the exception of the circumcision dance and of some villages of dancers where people devote themselves methodically to choreography, the greater part of the population do not know how to dance gracefully. This does not prevent them, one and all, from indulging in the dance. Men and women dance separately. The most common male dance consists of a rapid motion of the upper part of the body, from left to right and right to left; the feet do not leave the ground, and they are moved forward very slowly. The arms are bent up to shoulder height and away from the body; the fingers are extended, and arms and hands shake along with the rest of the body. When performed by professionals, who are sometimes found in the villages, this motion is rather graceful but lacks breadth of style.
[292] The dancers wear a cardboard headpiece, its crest adorned with a band of cowries and its sides often embellished with bits of mirror fragments, feathers, and all sorts of small, gaudy articles. The upper part of the body is covered with a tight, wide-meshed garment, decorated at the waist with pompons or cowries and small bells. The dancer wears
[301] on the middle finger a piece of iron which looks like a large clam shell, and on his thumb an iron ring. He strikes one against the other in rhythm. His wrist is often adorned with a bracelet made of several of these iron shells; hanging from them are small strips of the same metal which clang at the slightest motion. Those who do not have a costume deck themselves out in tawdry finery.

The women dance two at a time, each by herself, spinning around and assuming whatever poses they consider most graceful. When they come near one another, they turn around and strike their backs together; then one of the two withdraws, and another takes her place. All the while, the women spectators clap their hands in rhythm and sing. Sometimes one of them utters a shrill cry to arouse the dancers or to laud one who has proved unusually graceful and lithe.

[831] There are no special dances for the dead, and Mossi dances apparently do not have the obscenity of some Negro dances.

857 But to return to the children. It may be stated, as a general rule, that children can do as they please as long as they help out with everyday tasks, as long as the son helps his father and the daughter her mother. Happily there are exceptions to this, and some parents watch their children quite closely, but these are exceptions. Boys
593 prefer their mother to their father, because the latter must often

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Mossi Dancers.

Mossi Dancers.

593 reprimand them, while the mother's role, here as elsewhere, is to indulge her children.

595 The children of different wives are quite fond of one another and often exchange help. When the father dies, the eldest son make no distinction among his brothers and helps them all as best he can. Polygamy seems to present no drawbacks in this respect.

When a man has several wives, his first wife (porkyema) is mistress of the household rather than his mother. All the other wives are on an equal footing, even the slaves, excepting, of course, those for whom the husband has a special preference. As the number of wives increases, so does the authority of the first wife, who wants /39/ her husband to have as many wives as possible. Each wife has a separate hut where she lives with her children, and this avoids many a quarrel. The husband goes to the hut of the woman he desires, or he has her come to his own hut. When a man works in his field, all his wives and children must help him, because he feeds them all and gives them a daily millet ration; it is, accordingly, only fair that all should take part in agricultural work within the limits of their capacity.

593 443 421 Provided that a woman remain at her husband's disposal and help him in the fields, she is free to do as she pleases. She goes to market to sell the grain, the spices for sauce, and the thread to weave cloth, but the husband sells the fabric strips and the raw cotton. During the winter each woman may have her own field to cultivate with her children, and the harvest belongs wholly to her. The husband has no say in the matter. If the woman spins cotton, she sells it at the market or even to her husband; if she brews beer, she offers one jar to her husband, but if he entertains friends and wants additional jars, he must pay cash for them. It is not unusual for a woman to refuse her husband credit, for who knows when he would pay?

593 574 A woman may visit her relatives with the permission of her husband, who sets a return date. The woman rarely comes back on the date set, and the husband goes to fetch her himself, or he sends one of his friends with a piece of salt or a small gift. A woman especially likes to visit her relatives when she is pregnant or shortly after the baby's birth. She knows that she will be well cared for and especially that she will enjoy complete freedom. As a result, it is not unusual for a woman to leave her husband for several months and to return only after considerable coaxing. Most quarrels between one Mossi and [578] another derive from their wives and from their debts; yet it may not be said, as a general rule, that women are unhappy or ill treated.

843 A woman's role is to bear children. When she knows that she is pregnant, she no longer consents to come to her husband, but she is careful not to inform him of her state; if she told him, the child would die. If her parents happen to pass away during her pregnancy, she does not go into mourning and does not attend the funeral. If she is newly wed and has not yet borne children, one of the other wives of her husband, or, if there are none, the husband's sister, comes at night to sprinkle the husband and wife with water. The young wife will henceforth call this woman her husband, prepare millet mush for her, and heat the water in which she washes. When the pregnancy begins to show, one of the wife's female relatives consults the sorcerer [782] to find out which sacrifice should be offered so that all will go well, but the husband is not informed of this consultation. Sometimes the sacrifice is repeated when the birth draws near. When the first baby 851 is born, the husband sends a child to his wife's relatives with a rooster or a hen depending on the newborn's sex. The child tosses the bird into the yard without saying a word and runs away; everybody understands.

847 /40/ A child born deformed, lame, or blind is done away with; 845 it is simply drowned without further ado if considered incurable. In 732 olden times, twins were often drowned also because their birth entails 761 difficulties for the family, who must offer special sacrifices; some- 753 times only one of them was done away with. If they are spared and die a natural death, the mother wears a small bell at her ankle until the anniversary of the death (koure). If the mother happens to die or the father becomes ill, the sorcerer need only say so and the children are put to death, because they are said to have caused the illness or death of their parents. A baby who could barely walk was once brought by relatives to the Koupéla Fathers. He had been born on a Friday and his mother had died; that was sufficient to call for his sacrifice. His relatives tried unsuccessfully to poison him; they exposed him for three days in the bush, and the child did not die. As a last resort they brought him to the missionaries, who hastened to shelter him. Children recognized as insane are abandoned in the bush where they die of hunger.

732 It is only fair to add, however, that these barbarous practices 845 reminiscent of Sparta are not invariably followed. Several lame and incurably ill children are carefully tended by their parents, and some twins born prior to the French occupation are alive and in good health.

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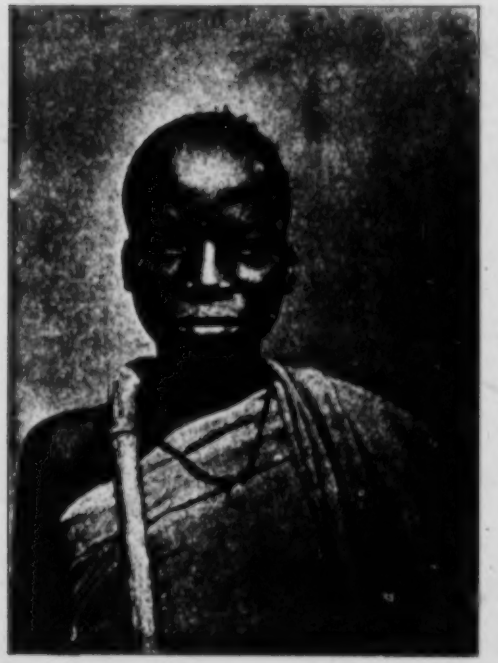
Tattooed Mossi Women.



Tattooed Mossi Youth.

852 Three days after the birth of a male child, or four days in the case
553 of a daughter, the father and mother invite the relatives to come and rejoice over the new addition to the family. On that day the baby's forehead is shaved in a circle, and he is given a name. The husband's sisters or his other wives choose a name for the first child, and the father himself chooses the names of the others.

551 The name is derived from an event which preceded, attended, or followed the birth. If the mother ever happened to kill a chicken, even by mistake, even in her childhood, her first child is called by the generic name for chickens (noara), or else he will die. If the father or mother have seen two snakes in the same spot, the child will bear the name Ganda. If several previous children died, the newborn takes the name Yéwaya, "he has come." If several reasons for specific names concur, for instance, if he should be named Noara, Ganda, Yéwaya, he is called Ywawa, "one with many names." A child often bears the name of an older sibling with the addition of the adjective Bila, "little, younger." Thus, if the older child is called Tibo, the younger one is called Tibila (Tibo Bila, "the little Tibo fetish"). In other words, names are not given haphazardly. Some names are rather pretty: Zuényendé, "he is shy"; Nongabamba, "she loves them (her parents)"; Danimmamyé, "forget me not." Sometimes the name merely indicates the child's sex: Daore, "male"; Poko, "female"; or else the festive occasion or day of the week when the child was born.

304 Just as names are not given haphazardly, tattooings do not vary without reason. The native tattooing consists basically of three parallel lines on each side of the face, running vertically across the cheek from the temples to the chin, with a fourth line leading from the nose perpendicularly to the other three and crossing the cheek horizontal hatching between them, like a ladder; this is the mark of free men and of chiefs' sons. The three vertical lines may also be interrupted halfway down the cheek by three horizontal stripes, and then continue down to the chin; this is the mark of a child who was born
[844] among the Peul because his older siblings had died and the sorcerer had decreed that his mother should give birth among the Peul. This
[197] tattooing is characteristic of a distinct Mossi tribe, which lives among them but speaks a different language—the Marensé, better known as Marka. If a child has a Yarga /Yarse/ mother or grandmother, he will bear one horizontal stripe on the right cheek in addition to the three vertical lines /on each cheek/; this is the Yarsé tattooing.

304 Children are tattooed at any age, sometimes when already grown. Many Yarsé do not tattoo their children, and the Mossi themselves do not seem especially to hold to this barbarous custom which sometimes disfigures an individual. The tattooing is done with a razor, and powdered charcoal is put into the wounds. In order to soften the skin and to alleviate the pain, the whole face is covered with oil until the wounds are healed, leaving more or less accentuated scars depending on the success of the operation. Some natives are completely disfigured by thick excrescences of flesh as the result of a faulty operation.

Sorcerers sometimes have the strange idea of prescribing tattoo marks on the belly or lower back of children whose older siblings have [789] died. For instance, a woman had lost three of her children. She consulted a sorcerer when the fourth was born, and he declared with the greatest seriousness that the child would die if his buttocks were not marked with stripes and his belly with tattooings radiating from the navel. The child was marked accordingly, and he lived! Young girls nearly always tattoo their belly with lines extending radially from the navel; many adorn their chest above the bosom with small stripes running perpendicular to the breasts and parallel between them. The tattooing patterns we have described here are, of course, only the most widespread types, because there is a great variety of markings.

304 Just as there is no set age for tattooing, there is none for circum-
852 cision. Children of seven or eight are circumcised along with youths and even mature men. Circumcision does not seem to be a Mossi [184] custom, for it is not a general practice. In Ouagadougou province most children are circumcised, while in Koupéla province most of them are not. However, the custom is gaining yearly in Koupéla. The head of the family often has himself circumcised because he is ill, and his children follow suit. Thus circumcision is introduced into the family, for once the father has undergone the operation, his
304 children do likewise. Sometimes the mother is a Yarga, thus from a
563 Moslem family, and her children are circumcised, a new gain for the
852 practice. It also happens that children are drawn to it through sheer curiosity and the enticing assurances of the Peul and Yarsé, who are usually Moslems and thus circumcised, and who spread propaganda all around them. Excision, on the other hand, is universal.

/42/ When there is a group to be circumcised, their relatives set a date with the Peul who is to perform the operation. At dawn of that

304 day the one in charge of the circumcision, a wealthy Yarga or Mossi
563 who has the means to feed several of the people to be circumcised,
852 chooses a tree to serve as shelter for the operation. Rain need not be taken into account, for circumcision is always performed during the dry season from December to April, when agricultural work is at a
[778] standstill. The tree is surrounded with straw mats, forming the téoo or sacred enclosure which no one who is not circumcised may come near without running the risk of being insulted and often beaten; if he should dare to step inside it, he would be stricken by the greatest misfortunes. The Peul sets out a flat stone, sacrifices a chicken in order to make the spirit of the tree benevolent toward those to be circumcised, and operates on the boys one by one. Drums are played throughout the operation to drown the cries of the victims.

852 For three days afterwards the newly circumcised boys do nothing. They rest and tend their wounds. They remain isolated from the rest
[535] of the community for two or three months, sometimes even longer. Judging by the dances which close the festivities, dancing must be their primary concern during that period of time. They also thresh the millet of those who invite them to do so, but no uncircumcised person may join them, no uninitiated individual may come near them.
[198] They do not speak the Mossi language at this time, but a special tongue of which they learn enough to serve them in their everyday needs. Woe to those who forget and use their native tongue; they are
[551] beaten with switches made of a kind of willow. Even their names are changed, and no one may call them by their Mossi names.

The circumcised boys are divided in two groups, one "male" and one "female." One of the groups bears the name of the hyena (kwara in their language) and the other is called masalro, whose French equivalent we do not know. The hyena group must strain their wits to snatch food, even from the other circumcised boys, who are kept constantly on the alert. The other group makes improper gestures during the dance.

852 The circumcised boys are covered with gray dust to alter their
293 appearance completely. A tail is fastened to the back of their breech-
776 cloth, hanging to the ground. It is made of plaited cotton thread and
481 ends in a pompon. Its function is to drive off the kikirsi spirits, who apparently do not like circumcised persons. The boys walk bent over and leaning on sticks like old men. This is done to test their obedience and to see if they listen carefully to what they are told.

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Mossi Dancer with Cowrie Headdress.

852 When they go into the bush, either to cut down straw or for any other reason, they sing invocations to the spirits of the paths and of the trees in order to propitiate them, to draw their blessing, and to avert illness. They chase everyone in their path, approach the villages, and, if they can, seize a few chickens, goats, or sheep as an extra tidbit. This is the custom, and they even steal the animals of their relatives in this fashion. At night they come up near the huts and beat everyone they meet; they take everything they can find, and no one would think of resisting them. /43/ In any case, during that time, people take good care of their children and send them plenty of food. To have a child undergoing circumcision is a burden to a family.

852 563 869 When the circumcised group consists largely of Moslems, Yarsé or Peul, the one in charge of the circumcision assembles them during rest periods, in the evening, or sometimes in the middle of the night, in order to instruct them. There does not seem to be any esoteric doctrine, and the instructions deal with the glorification of ancestors who were also circumcised there. Only those who are circumcised can enter heaven and have many children; those who are not will taste no happiness in the other life and will remain sterile. The group is also taught that God sits under a black tree on a sheep skin, that he eats from a dish and drinks from a bottle. It is all very childish. They are also told that they must not disclose to anyone, under penalty of death or at least of serious illness, what they have seen and learned during the circumcision period. This is to prevent them from revealing the robberies committed during that time and from discouraging those who should like to undergo the operation; for although it is tempting to eat well, to play a great deal, and especially to wear beautiful clothes, it is also unpleasant to be lashed with willows at the slightest slip, or for not dancing well, for quarreling with or insulting someone, for speaking Mossi, for being slow to go to work.

852 Occasionally, at circumcision time, two sticks are found on the path near the market. They were placed there on purpose, and if one looks to the right and left, he will see two children, all covered with dust and wearing dirty breechcloths. They are newly circumcised boys who are begging, and passersby drop a few cowries to the ground.

852 302 All these ceremonies are soon to end. The clothes are ready, and the children are getting tired and restive. The one in charge of the circumcision decides that the boys are to be shaved, that is, that the circumcision period will end in two weeks. The hair of the circumcised boys is not shaved off completely: strips of hair alternate with

852 shaved strips on top of the head, while the sides are shaved similarly
[302] in semi-circular strips. On the seventh day, people who were previously circumcised bring chickens to sacrifice to the spirits of the paths so that all will go well, but the newly circumcised take no part in the proceedings. The children wash, oil themselves, and put on their
852 beautiful clothes. Everything is brand new, the breechcloth, the
292 trousers, the shirt, the blanket, and the headgear. The belt is adorned
301 with a knife in a leather sheath and with a needle case which has at the end a tuft of leather strips with cowries attached to them. They
[776] hold a cow's tail, also adorned with cowries, to drive off the scheuyan spirits who dislike little rascals and people who dress too well. Both wrists are adorned with copper bracelets. Needless to say, this flashy new outfit with its cowries that clang like bells lures the eye and bewitches the young boys, who decide to be circumcised at the first opportunity so they too may eat well and wear beautiful clothes.

852 /44/ The circumcised boys continue to walk bent over, leaning on
[481] their sticks, but their crude staff is replaced with two sticks decorated with burnt designs and tied together. They no longer wear a tail. They go to greet the chiefs, and they thank those who have given them gifts. They walk to the sound of the large drum, since the bindré is forbidden at circumcision ceremonies, and sing plaintive chants to the spirits. They parade in the marketplace and display their clothes in the villages. They dance before the chiefs, and their dances are very
[535] graceful indeed. They dance in unison to the beat of the drum, making the same gestures all together or two by two, varying the figures in accordance with the beat. After seven days the festivities are over, and they all return to their families and take up everyday life as though nothing had happened.

We shall now study this everyday life.

/45/ BOOK III. DAILY WORK AND TRADES

1 Chapter 1. Occupations of a Mossi

221 The Mossi are essentially cultivators, and it may be said that no
241 Mossi who works at a trade will fail to cultivate his fields when the

221 rains come, laying aside any other task no matter what his profession
241 may be. The Mossi year is divided as described below, and year follows year without bringing any changes in this monotonous existence.

The rainy season from May to October is the time of the hard labor of cultivation, and all Mossi devote themselves fully to the task. Men, women, and children are always in the fields. They cut down the [805] thorn bushes at the beginning of May, as soon as the Pleiades appear on the horizon and the baobabs begin to burgeon. This is spring (sigu). For this work they use a small hatchet, a few centimeters wide, with a short, easily grasped handle, and a forked stick to fold back the thorny branches so they may more conveniently be cut at the base. The branches are piled in heaps and burned one evening as soon as they are dry. When the first copious rains fall, usually in June, the natives immediately sow the small white millet used to make sarabo, the staple of the aboriginal diet, and the large red millet or sorghum from which millet beer is made.

Sowing is regarded as one of the most laborious tasks, because it forces the sower to remain bent so as not to lose sight of the stretch already covered. The natives sow with an old worn-out hoe, with which they strike the ground twice in order to make a small hole. The grain is carried in a gourd held by a string to the left hand; this leaves the fingers free to seize a few grains which are dropped into the hole. A little soil is then replaced by the hoe. When the rain has soaked the ground more thoroughly and the millet has begun to grow, maize is sowed around the huts.

Following the first weeding of the fields, beans are sowed among the shoots of small millet, and cotton among those of large red millet or near the watercourses. The ground is then prepared to sow rice, peanuts, and native peas. Meanwhile the fields must be hoed incessantly to remove the weeds that would smother the young millet shoots. If the rain is too abundant at the end of June, the cultivators are often overwhelmed with work, and they complain that it has become impossible to keep their fields clean. Gombo (okra) and all the condiments for making sauce, peppers, tomatoes, etc., are planted around the maize fields, near the huts, along with /46/ native hemp and all sorts of gourd plants. In favorable soil, hence only in certain areas, fabirama, manioc, and yams are cultivated in a special manner.

221 Those who raise chicks take them along to the fields in an oblong
235 cage of plaited straw or willow. When they get to the spot where

221 they will be working, they open the door of the cage and the mother
235 hen comes out. She is tied to the basket with a string, and the chicks run around her. If their master finds a good termite nest, he takes it to his little charges and breaks it in two. In the evening he puts the hen and chicks back into the basket and carries it home suspended from his shoulder.

[805] The heavy rains fall in July and August. This is summer (seoro).
221 Whenever the ground is not too soggy, everybody runs to the fields at
241 dawn and works until nightfall. One or two women stay home to pre-
476 pare food for the laborers, whose strength must be maintained for all this hard work. No one may rest. Only the sick and the helpless old people stay home, and even they are put to work, looking after the babies. This is the time when wealthy people call friends to their aid. The owner of a vast field has every member of the village notified — especially the young men, those who own some obligation toward him, those who have an eye on his daughters — that on a certain date he will be weeding his field, and at dawn of that day everyone gathers and labors while the drums spur them on. On another occasion, this man in turn will help those who have worked for him. This practice of mutual aid is very advantageous because a field overgrown with weeds is cleaned in a single day, but it becomes onerous when people must appeal to their neighbors several times in the course of a season.

221 The heavy rains stop in August or September, the maize is ripe,
241 and feasting begins. Roasted corn ears are a prized tidbit, especially
262 when the kernels are still tender. There is one kind of maize, faintly sweet, which when sautéed in butter recalls our garden peas. Everywhere the children and even the elders feast on maize; everywhere people offer a visitor a few ears of maize, which are often roasted on the spot. When the maize harvest is completed, maize gruel, which recalls the famous Italian polenta, advantageously replaces millet mush and brings a pleasant change to the daily fare, especially since gombo is ripening and adds variety to the sauce as well. Bellies fill out, faces glow with health, and as a very natural sequence, hearts are flooded with joy. The end of the dry season may have been difficult because millet was running low; the winter tasks may have been laborious; but now everyone makes up for it. The harvested maize is replaced in the fields by tobacco; its seedlings were prepared as the harvest drew near.

[805] At the end of September or beginning of October, the large red millet is ripe. This is autumn (houpéla). Maize is now too tough

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Above: Water Carriers.
Below: Youths Returning from the Bush with Bundles of Straw.

Above: Threshing Millet.
Below: Winnowing Millet. Millet Granaries in the Background.

22/ 24/ 262 forroasting and is replaced with green millet, eaten raw after being beaten with a small stick to remove the chaff. /47/ Certain kinds of large millet are sweet and not too unpleasant to eat in this fashion. Horses grow fat because millet is their staple food and they may eat 221 as much as they please. Men also profit greatly, because beer brewed 241 from new millet tastes much better than that made from old millet, 273 and when millet abounds, drink is never wanting. At this time rice is harvested, threshed on the threshing floors, and laid aside carefully for festive occasions.

221 At the end of October the rains have stopped almost completely. 241 The beans are gathered and laid out in the fields on millet stalks or on séko held up from the ground by forked stakes to keep the termites from eating them, or the beans may be brought home and tossed on the séko which serve as shelters in front of the soukala. Now is the time to harvest the small millet, which is dry. The millet stalks are severed at ground level by the men and laid out with all heads oriented in the same direction to facilitate the work of the women, who cut off the heads and gather them in heaps. When the millet has been cut, the women fill their baskets. The largest containers are used for the occasion, and each woman uses her ingenuity to pile the millet as high as possible over her basket, using the longest ears or bean stems as supports, like the Zouaves who vie for the tallest pack. Should the line of women on their way back to the village meet a man known for his generosity, they sing, cry out, and surround him until he throws them a few handfuls of cowries to buy a jar of beer.

221 As they near the threshing floor their cries get louder, and each 241 woman comes to the granary and hands her basket to the man who 251 stands there. These granaries are very crudely built and consist basi- 343 cally of sticks driven into the ground in a circle to hold up a séko which is wrapped around them. The floor is made up of another séko, usually resting on the ground but sometimes raised on stones or forked sticks to avoid termites. This is where the millet is placed prior to threshing. The granaries stand around the threshing floor of beaten earth, which is located 100 or 200 meters from the village, some- 674 times even farther. Thieves are no important threat. They may cut down millet when it stands in the bush, but they rarely steal millet already stored. Only goats, sheep, and guinea hens are to be feared, and they are kept away from the granaries by thorns.

221 As soon as these heavier tasks are over, everyone digs up peanuts 241 and peas. The whole family gathers under the shade of a tree, and

221 the men bring bunches of peanuts. While nibbling on the green nuts
241 and talking, they all separate the pods from the leaves. The latter
are carefully set aside along with the bean leaves. They make ex-
[231] cellent fodder for the horses during the dry season, when the sun has
burned off all the grass in the bush.

221 By November harvesting is completed. The sun has already dried
241 out the grass, and the time has come to cut straw for séko and roofing.
356 /48/ This task is usually reserved for children and servants (dakonré).
857 The head of the household tells each one of them the number of straw
bundles he is to cut, and every morning the children set off in groups,
a sickle on their shoulders. They look for straw on the banks of the
watercourses and return when the sun begins to scorch. This marks
the end of the working day, and there is nothing to do now but rest.
The dry season is indeed a time of rest, and from November to May
there are no pressing tasks.

[805] It gets cold in December. This is winter (sapolro). The natives
221 gather at dawn around fires of millet stalks, twigs, or straw; anything
241 combustible serves. Every newcomer must contribute an armful; it
[372] is the price of admission to a seat near the fire. At the end of December
47 all the straw for roofing has been stored, and then the small millet
is threshed. Every inhabitant of the village has the use of the thresh-
ing floor in turn. He notifies his friends and acquaintances as he did
when he weeded his field. The millet beer is ready, and on the pre-
vious day the women have covered the area with cow dung diluted in
water to harden the floor. At dawn the friends arrive, and the millet
is removed from the granary and spread out on the floor. This is done
with the help of millet stalks tied together in bundles and dragged
along the ground with ropes while a man bears down upon them.
The flail is merely a stick cut in the bush, a tree branch shaped in
such a way that the part which is held in the hand is rather thin and
flexible, while the part which is used for threshing is quite thick and
forms an obtuse angle with the part in the hand. The boys line up in
a row, with the tots at either end; the drummers stand before or behind
them; and the flails fall with the beat, crushing the ears of millet
and separating the very dry grain from the stalks. All the while the
old men sit in the shade of the granaries, talking, smoking, and
sewing clothes. When the threshers get to the end of the floor, they
retrace their steps and rest, while the old men gather with straw brooms
the grain which has been scattered outside the pile.

221 After a few hours when the millet has been sufficiently threshed,
241 the emptied and broken husks are swept to the side. The grain is
476 gathered in a heap, and a strong fellow tosses it into the air with a
788 wooden shovel to separate the chaff from the good grain, which is put in a heap. When all the grain has thus been winnowed, it is surrounded with a ring of ashes to protect it against evil spirits. Then one of the threshers, who is not a member of the family, puts some millet in a gourd and sprinkles it with water. He proceeds to throw it by the handful onto the millet pile, saying: "So-and-So fears rain," mentioning the name of the owner of the harvest and the name of every member of his family. He ends by saying: "When we are finished weeding, let the drought come. When we are finished planting, let the heavy rains come." If the owner of a horse is present, he receives a gourd of millet for his mount. Each of the elders also takes some for his chicken. If this ceremony is not carried out, the millet may not be used as seed the following year.

221 /49/ The women come with their baskets; a man takes one of the
251 brooms and sinks it into the millet heap in various places; then the
[482] men fill the baskets and help the women place them on their heads. At the house the millet is unloaded into granaries made of clay mixed with finely cut straw. These granaries have the shape of large jars 1.50 meters high; they usually rest on large stones, and they are
[343] smoked out beforehand to get rid of termites. They are closed with a lid of the same material and covered with a small thatch roof as a protection against rain, for they usually stand in the open air in the inner courtyard. Millet beer is brought and drunk on the spot while the millet is being winnowed. Sometimes the festivities end with dancing, and then everyone goes home, to begin again another day. The month of January goes by in this fashion.

221 February, March, and April are vacation months, months for hunting and fishing.

224 Actually no Mossi is a hunter, yet all Mossi are hunters to some
411 degree. Since the French occupation, men armed with very primitive flint guns are sometimes seen on the fringes of the heavy bush which borders the Volta and contains large game. These flint guns are so crude that they frequently burst and wound the man who recklessly
224 loaded it with too much powder. These natives know the bush thoroughly and are very helpful to the adventurers who wish to hunt koba, buffalo, elephant, leopard, or even lion, although the latter is to the

224 Mossi as to us the king of beasts, the master of the bush (wé' naba), and they attack it only if it has killed a man.

These hunters make their own powder with ground charcoal and
224 saltpeter extracted from earth soaked with urine. This earth is washed
389 carefully, and a residue of saltpeter crystals is left when the liquid evaporates. Usually no sulphur is added because it is too costly. This powder burns well, and when made carefully it is quite effective. The hunters keep it in small gourds or ram horns; they only make a little at a time. Hard pebbles are used as bullets.

224 The natives know how to disguise themselves skillfully, and they only shoot at very close range when the animal is not moving. They often lie in wait for hours on end, sometimes for the whole night. They know the habits of the animals and the water holes where they come to drink, and they build small huts with branches or dig holes where they hid under foliage. Others more ingeniously build a vast funnel-shaped trap, its open base sometimes one or even two kilometers long; the sides of equal length consist of thorn fences, and the tip of the funnel, which is located near a thick tree, leaves barely enough space for the animal to pass through. The hunter takes his position up in the tree with bow and arrows and settles comfortably because he may have to wait a long time. Unsuspecting animals follow the thorn fence and come to the tree where they are killed. The hunters manage to fell some handsome game in this fashion, even elephants, in spite of their very primitive weapons.

/50/ Professional hunters, those who always have adventures to relate and who say like those of Tarascon that they never miss a shot, such true hunters are rare, but those who hunt as a pastime are as numerous as the Mossi themselves. A Mossi never goes out without
[411 a stick. When asked why he does so, he answers that it is to kill
752] snakes, which — alas! — take so many victims, and to drive off dogs; and then, "I might find a hare or some other animal in the bush, and
[23] what would I kill it with if I didn't have a stick?" Many of them have dogs which are truly not very ferocious, but they are poorly fed and preserve all their agility. A Mossi on his way to the fields or walking from one village to another always keeps his ears and eyes open; he is on the lookout for meat! Since he does not have many ideas, he is seldom absorbed in his thoughts or absent-minded.

The season[1] we are now studying is the time of large-scale hunting. Several villages get together and set a date and a meeting place.

1 [i.e. February-April. - Analyst]

224 Each village goes there in a group, burning the bush and driving on the game. If the plan is carried out properly, the animals are eventually enclosed within a circle of fire behind which stand the natives, some on horseback and armed with spears, others on foot with their dogs and equipped merely with sticks or sometimes with bows and arrows. The bows are of medium size and made of hard wood. The 411 string is usually made from a rattan stem or a millet stalk. Arrows 224 are made of the tough and light stems of tall reeds; they are not barbed, but the tip is made of iron and shaped like a harpoon, with two and sometimes three pairs of teeth. The leather quiver hangs from the shoulder.

224 The panic-stricken hares, deer, antelope of various kinds, guinea hens, and partridges run all around the fiery circle, and those who manage to cross this first obstacle are felled by the blows of the hunters. These hunts are sometimes quite fruitful, and buffalo and koba are 224 occasionally caught. Unfortunately, every animal killed in the bush 661 belongs by right to the naba, who searches the hunters' bags and takes what he pleases. If he learns that a lucky hunter has killed an antelope and failed to bring it, he summons him to his presence, reproves him harshly for his lack of consideration, and thrashes him soundly. It must nevertheless be said that such cases are constantly growing rarer, and now the natives flatly refuse to yield their catch.

224 Often no game is caught because one of the villages has failed to appear and the animals have fled through the unguarded opening. In short, these hunting parties are mostly a pastime and entertainment. The hunters who bring back a catch are few, owing to the large number of men who participate. It is true that when they set out for the hunt they all hope they will be lucky. They all are thirsty, for at this time of year the sun is very hot and it is better to hunt in the middle of the day when the game lies down in the bushes and cannot run very far. These hunting parties dwindle year by year. The cultivated fields are more extensive, and the game has withdrawn deeper into the bush. Also, the natives find it more difficult to reaching an agreement for large parties of beaters; /51/ they prefer to hunt in small groups, far from the chiefs' sight, so that nothing will be taken from them.

226 In addition to hunting, fishing is the great pastime at this time of year.* Professional fishermen are as rare as professional hunters. Of course, those who live on the banks of streams usually know how to [48] swim, especially when they live near those watercourses which are most difficult to ford.

*[i.e., February-April. - Analyst]

226 most difficult to ford. Each watercourse, or more exactly each pond,
[423 belongs to a naba and bears a special name, so no river has the same name
558] name all along its course. During the dry season the lelek /bed?/ of the watercourses is usually dry. Here and there are to be found ponds of varying depth where the cattle is watered. These ponds are where the natives fish. They wait until the water level subsides to knee height, for otherwise fishing would be too difficult.

226 The fishing gear is as crude as the hunting gear. There is a small
227 net held open by three sticks forming a triangle and crossed by a tough stick that is held in the hand, quite similar to the spoon-nets we use to gather shrimp. Above all a sort of wicker trap is used, conical in shape, open at the base and closed at the tip with a movable lid. This trap sometimes contains a second one made of very flexible sticks that are attached to the base of the first one. The two traps thus have a common base, but the second one opens within the first. The fish enters the trap and is held by the sticks of the smaller cone, which close in as the fish tries to get out. The fisherman removes the trap from the water or leaves it sunk in the mud, opens the lid, plunges in his hand and removes the fish, which is confined and easy to seize. The fisherman then puts it in a net or in a leather bag.

226 On a set date the owner of the pond offers sacrifices to the crocodiles
825 so they will not bite anybody. This is why the naba of Koupéla, before he fishes in his pond, must sacrifice a black goat and a chicken. No one may kill a crocodile while fishing, or the naba will die before the year is over. Was not a crocodile killed in his father's pond on
[789] the very year when he died? Before they go fishing, the natives make charms by burning roots and tree bark inside their traps. If the charm is good, the fish will rush headlong into the net or trap.

226 The fishermen gather at one end of the pond. They stand in a row across the water and move slowly forward while dipping their nets and traps over and over again. All the fish caught are put in bags or tossed to friends who stand on the shore, but, as during the hunt, the naba takes an ample share and seizes the finest specimens. The ponds hold mostly silurids anyway, which like mud and retain its odor and taste even when cooked. The Volta rivers, on the other hand, contain more abundant and more varied fish. /52/ When the natives have crossed and recrossed the pond several times, only small fry remain, and everyone goes home glad to have a little fish for the sauce and especially to have escaped the teeth of the crocodiles, for in spite of

226 the sacrifices, these amphibians have no scruples about biting a foot or leg. However, the crocodiles in these ponds are seldom large enough to sever a limb.

In those places where the water is somewhat shallow and flows for some period of time, the bank dwellers make dams of tree branches intertwined with millet stalks. These are placed diagonally to the current and lead to a sort of funnel closed with a net. The fish follow the dam, enter the funnel, and get caught in the meshes of the net.

221 The major ceremonies also take place at this time of year.[1] This
356 is when the Day of the Dead is celebrated, when the koure is held. When the first gust of wind unroofs a few huts or at least indicates those that need a new covering, everyone sets down to the task. The thatch cut in December is used for the purpose. Before the soukala,
[283] children and youths knot blades of straw with strings of hemp and
[857] plait seko. They also go into the bush to cut down branches and to gather bark which serves to bind the branches together. When everything is ready, the head of the household calls his people and gathers a few neighbors. The roof is made and laid within a short morning. This task must be repeated every two years or so, and it is men's work entirely. At the beginning of winter, the villages take on a smart
221 new look. This is when people think of building a new hut, the man who has acquired a new wife, the child who has grown into a young man and who can no longer live with his mother, the man whose wealth has increased by a few head of cattle or a horse. The women fetch water, the children knead the mortar with their feet and carry to the mason the mud clods prepared by the old men. These tasks are not laborious, and they are accomplished with merrymaking.

Now the thorn bushes have grown back, the rains will soon fall again, and already a few gusts of wind herald the coming winter. The Pleiades have appeared on the horizon, and the baobabs are budding once more. It is necessary to take up the hoe again and to sow; this is a good thing, because the millet is running low in the granaries. The working cycle we have described must begin anew. And year follows year without bringing any major changes in the life of the common man.

1 [i.e., February-April. -Analyst]

Chapter 2. Industries and Trading

443 Such are the everyday tasks of all Mossi. To these must be added visits to the marketplace all through the year, and during the dry season work performed by certain guilds or certain individuals, in short, the various industries practiced by the Mossi.

443 571 /53/ Every self-respecting Mossi, be it man or woman, child or elder, must go to market at least once in a while, were it only to look...and to be looked at if he can don some handsome new clothes. To see the natives in their best finery, one must go to the markets which follow important feast days. At those times the marketplace is thronged with Yarsé and Peul as well as Mossi, and they all vie with each other in the richness and originality of their costumes. At other times people go to market on business, except for a few individuals who go there only to be admired even on ordinary days.

443 Every community of any importance holds a market every three days. Everything is arranged so the markets will not be too far distant from each other, and the villages near to one another will not hold markets on the same day to avoid competition. A native may, if he wishes, spend all his time at market, sometimes in one village, sometimes in another, for a market is always being held not far from where he lives. All the markets are not of equal importance. Some villages of no great consequence in themselves are located at the [554] crossroads of several routes followed by caravans and become important trading centers. The following Mossi markets are said to be especially popular: Pwitenga, Kaya, Rakay, Bélousa, Mané, Téma, Yako, and La.

Formerly these markets were slave-trading centers. Nowadays they deal mostly in horses, cattle, donkeys, sheep, goats, salt, kola nuts, native or European fabrics, and petty imported wares, such as matches, glass trinkets, handkerchiefs, basins, dishes, perfumes, and even firecrackers. Every important article has a section of its own. Butchers have theirs, and so have the traders in salt, fabrics, and kola nuts. All the millet beer is sold in one place, the sauce condiments and grain in another. The most important transactions, however, are carried on outside the marketplace, in the huts that travellers who intend to stay for awhile have hastily built in the Haoussa or Yarga quarter and sometimes among the Mossi. This is

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Above: Inside a Soukala. Above: The Occupants of a Soukala.
Middle: Load-bearers. Middle: Weaver.
Below: Marketplace.

443 why only a native who is used to the transactions and who frequents the market regularly would be able to estimate the amount of business carried out on the marketplace itself and in its neighborhood; he would also have to take into account the off season, which exists here as in any other trading center. (1)

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1. I shall list below, for what they are worth, the approximate prices of some goods; they apply to a year of average yield and were recorded shortly after the harvest. Prices increase rapidly as harvest time recedes into the past, and during famine years there is no set price.

Millet, 0.02 franc a kilogram; rice, 0.10 franc a kilogram; fabirama, 0.05 franc a kilogram; karite butter, 0.50 franc a kilogram; milk butter, 1.50 francs a kilogram; peanuts, 0.07 franc a kilogram; peanut oil, 0.50 franc a liter; one jar of ordinary millet beer, containing about six to eight liters, 0.20 franc; one jar of strong millet beer (tōsé), containing about six to eight liters, 0.40 franc; hydromel (bēsé), 0.15 franc a liter; chicken, 0.40 franc; average sheep, 3.50 francs for a ram, 4 francs for a ewe; large sheep, 8 to 10 francs; donkey, 25 to 30 francs; horse, 150 francs; a head of small cattle (no hump), 50 francs; zebu, 70 francs; goat skin, 0.30 franc; sheep skin, 0.50 franc; cowhide, 1 franc; salt bars, from 1.50 to 2 francs a kilogram; kola nuts, from 0.03 to 0.10 franc a piece; one hoe, 0.50 franc; clothes: strip of white cloth, 0.05 franc, about 0.60 franc a cubit; white blanket, 2 francs; indigo blanket, 3 francs; striped blanket, 4 francs; shirt, medium size, 2.50 francs.

443 /54/ These large markets are in the minority. In the village markets the transactions are carried out between natives who know each other, and they deal almost exclusively in native goods: millet,

443 rice, beans, karite butter, roasted peanuts sold in little heaps for one centime, raw peanuts, and all the spices for the sauce. Yarsé or Haoussa girls walk from group to group with small basins full of kola nuts, and chiefs and rich men buy one or two nuts which they usually share with their followers. Foreign traders sit under shelters of foliage or millet stalks and sell a few pearls, salt or copper bars, henna or blue dye, while bald-headed vultures hovering above the butchers point out their location to everyone. The meat on sale consists of a goat or sheep, sometimes a beef found dead in the bush or more rarely one slaughtered especially for the occasion. Some people bring chicks and occasionally a hen. This is about all that is to be found.

443 To these comestibles drink must be added. The women who sell
273 millet beer occupy a whole section of the market, and this section is not the least frequented nor the quietest spot. While butchers may be located by watching the vultures, it is possible to spot the tavern-keepers merely by cocking one's ears. Their presence is revealed by the cries, the beating of drums, the hubbub inevitably connected with a crowd slightly the worse for drink. The Mossi undoubtedly drink a lot of millet beer, but the beverage sold at the marketplace does not easily go to the head. The beer that is boiled again (tēsé /sic/) is far more dangerous with its rather high percentage of alcohol, and hydromel (bésé) is even more so. The latter is made of honey and millet flour boiled in water, to which barm is added to induce fermentation. These two beverages are truly potent, especially when drunk
[579] alternately. This is why brawls occur rather frequently, and sometimes real battles in which people are wounded. These are drunkards' quarrels. Men are indeed the same everywhere, and how many fairs without a drunk or two are to be found in our own country? It must be said, however, that more intoxicated natives are to be met with in Mossi country than in France.

443 The market begins at about ten o'clock and usually closes at two; the important ones open around noon and last until nightfall. When we discuss the industries, we shall mention the other products which are sold there.

283 Weaving is the most widespread industry, the one that all men may
[284] practice and all do practice to some extent. The cotton is ginned,
462 and the thread prepared by the women. Delafosse, in his work on the Siéna, has described the process accurately: "When the cotton has been separated from the husk, the seeds are removed with an iron rod

283 which is rolled with both hands on the boll lying on a flat stone; /55/ the seeds are thus driven forward and picked up by hand... The cotton is coiled around a wooden rod which the woman holds in her left hand; with her right hand she grasps and stretches a strand of cotton from the distaff and winds it around the upper tip of a wooden needle, which bears at its lower end a sort of heavy clay ball and which is caused to spin rapidly, like a top, on the bottom of a wooden dish by the motion of the right hand. Extended between the left hand which holds the distaff and the right hand which secures and spins the top, the cotton stretches and becomes thread, which coils around the needle of the top... The thread is later uncoiled, then wound again around a wooden rod to make a thick cylindro-conical ball. When the thread is to be used for weaving, it is stretched around four stakes set in the ground in the shape of a very elongated quadrilateral." (2)

2. Delafosse, Le peuple Siéna /The Siena People/, p. 58.

286 All the young men learn how to weave; it is part of their education. The loom, like the spindle described above, is the kind used by all the Negroes of West Africa, and it is described by Delafosse as follows: "The slat loom is suspended from a piece of wood resting on two forked stakes; the shuttle is canoe-shaped and hollow, the treadled lever permits alternate crossing of the two rows of slats /heddles/; the threads are stretched by means of a large stone resting on the ground in front of the weaver who sits on a crude stool placed behind the trestle which supports the loom (here usually the weaver sits on the ground), so that his feet come to rest on the pedals. This apparatus is usually set up in the shade of the large trees which stand on the village grounds, or else under shelters of foliage built especially for the purpose. The cotton fabric is woven in strips 10 to 15 centimeters wide; several of them are sewn together to reach the width required for breechcloths and garments." (3)

3. Ibid., p. 59.

The fabric strips are not always solid in color. Often the warp consists of threads dyed red or dark blue and mixed with white strands, [531] while the woof is white. Some people know how to make strips with small blue or red checks which are quite attractive. All weavers are

286 not equally skillful, but some of them know how to weave cloth which is fine, tightly woven, and quite strong. Sewn together and cut according to unchanging patterns, these strips are made into breechcloths, trousers, wide shirts, full robes which cover the whole body, and especially men's and women's blankets, white or dark blue, which are an indispensable protection against the cold and which are worn wrapped around the body. Mossi fabrics are quite well-known in neighboring territories, and as we shall see they are an important trade item.

386 It is customary to dye the garments after they are made or the thread before it is woven. The dyer's trade is quite widespread in Mossi country, and there is no important /56/ village without dyers. They get together to dig their wells in the same spot; often choosing a small hillock for the purpose where they sink about ten wells, two or three meters deep, the inner surface baked with a charcoal fire. The dyeing solutions are poured into these wells, and the clothes or thread to be dyed are immersed in the liquid and stirred with sticks that have at the end pieces of wood set in the shape of a cross. Fabrics are left soaking for varying periods of time depending on their bulk, and then they are spread out in the sun to dry. The colors obtained vary from a very dark blue, nearly black, to light blue. Certain clothes are dyed sienna, a color favored by hunters because it is dark. Several washings are needed to remove the strong odor which permeates cloth dyed in this fashion, but each washing removes part of the dye.

285 Everyone knows how to weave, and almost everyone knows how to make basketry. When the grass is full grown, the children have fun making straw hats, some of which are not badly done; others make containers in various patterns by mixing yellow and black straws, and red ones dyed with the leaves of a variety of millet, cultivated in order to obtain the red shade desired for coloring leather; yet others plait simple trays of straw which are used to cover the gourds or to carry meat.

294 Those who are skillful make sturdy hats adorned with leather figures, and this becomes a veritable industry. There are two main kinds of hats: those shaped like pointed cones, and the bell-shaped hats with a wide brim. They are so ample that they can easily be worn over a cap which is sometimes wrapped in a strip of soft fabric. A leather [284] strap with a sliding knot holds the hat in place or permits it to hang down one's back with the cord holding it at the neck. Saponé is the manufacturing center for hats.

285 The art of basketry, however, is exercised primarily to produce woven containers. These serve many purposes and come in all shapes and sizes from large wicker containers used to protect chicks against birds of prey and small wicker baskets for collecting refuse to baskets of plaited grass for carrying millet, rice, and most other goods. Some baskets are made with greater care, decorated with designs made by mixing dyed grasses and thin leather strips and edged with cowries.

[462] Only the men do basketry, and only they work with leather; some
281 of them make leather objects which are almost artistic and very well sewn. Unfortunately the natives do not know how to tan skins properly, and their leather has no strength. The hide is simply stretched out and dried by the sun; sometimes it is briefly immersed in water containing tamarind bark. The hair is removed by pouring hot water onto the skin and then scraping it off with a knife. To make it softer, the skin is moved back and forth over a stake planted in the ground and slightly sharpened at the tip, or it is simply crumpled /57/ between the hands. When it has been softened, it is stretched once more to dry in the sun, held with small wooden pegs driven into the
[386] ground. It may be dyed red, green, or black with special herbs.

Some men make knife or saber sheaths; others specialize in the long gaiters which are tied to the belt and worn by every horseman in full regalia; still others make saddle rugs stuffed with kapok or cotton and decorated with designs. They also make the various parts of the harness: the leather strip which runs across the horse's chest, and the
294 large rug which covers its rump. Leather is also used to make all kinds
281 of footgear, from the mere piece of hide held to the feet by leather strips running between the big and second toes and all round the foot, to the Turkish-type slipper and the ornamented boots with spurs attached which are a natural complement to the long gaiters. Some of the shoemakers are truly skillful and could make quite satisfactory shoes if they had lasts and especially if they had better leather.

281 Hide is also used in the manufacture of belts adorned with cowries, pouches, amulets, bags which are sometimes nicely adorned, etc. The designs are usually made as follows: small leather strips of various colors are sewn onto a skin of solid color which serves as a base; more rarely, as in Morocco, the top layer of skin is removed.

The above-mentioned industries are performed exclusively by men,
462 and any male individual may practice them. The preparation of gun powder and tobacco is also male work. The industries listed below,

462 on the other hand, are female prerogatives; every woman knows how to make millet beer, soap, karite butter, and kalro (soumbara) with varying effectiveness.

273 Millet beer is brewed with sprouted millet, which is boiled and reboiled in a volume of water proportionate to the amount of grain; yeast is added to the brew on the last day. The liquid is strained through twigs to remove the residue of millet. The more the beer is boiled, the stronger it is; when hops are added, the beverage recalls our own beer.

388 Soap is made with karite butter to which the ashes of millet stalks are added for potash.

252 Oil is extracted from peanuts, previously roasted and crushed between two stones; the women have no press and therefore lose a considerable amount of oil, but it remains in the residue, which is also sold.

Kalro is made from the beans found in the pods of néré /locust bean tree/. It has a strong and characteristic odor, but it enhances the sauce with a not unpleasant flavor.

463 The pottery, wood, and copper industries are carried out by specialists. This does not mean that only the members of a caste may exercise them, but that an apprenticeship is required which is not undergone by everyone, and that people bequeath to their children the secrets of the trade.

323 /58/ Pottery is chiefly made by women, although the men may
462 also work with clay and actually often make jars (canari), while the women make the large jars which are used in brewing millet beer, small pots in which they cook sarabo and sauce, and shallow dishes which are used to serve food.

323 The molding and firing methods are similar. A shallow pit is dug into the ground, larger or smaller depending on the size desired for the jar. The walls of the hole are pounded smooth. The woman places in this mold the prepared clay, previously kneaded with the feet and any stones removed. The clay is slightly damp, and the pit is dusted with dry earth. The woman spreads the clay with a well-polished granite stone and makes it revolve so that every portion of the clay is worked between the stone and the pit wall. After a while, she obtains the jar she wants in the proper thickness.

When several potters live in the same village, as usually happens, they get together for the firing. The jars are marked and gathered in

323 a hollow. Straw, twigs, or pieces of bark are laid between the jars and even inside them. Then everything is covered with straw and set afire in the evening. The smaller the jar, the more heat is needed. The women fetch their goods the following morning. Some of the jars are cracked; others, insufficiently fired, would be too porous and must be fired again; the rest are gathered and sold at the market.

322 Woodworking is done by men. They use a hatchet to cut down the trees, an adze and a knife to work the lumber. The mortars and pestles used by the women to crush maize, herbs, peanuts, and sauce ingredients are made of wood, and so are the dishes shaped like gourds, the bowls for sarabo, and the tool handles. There are also stools of a rather peculiar shape. Those women who can afford them close their huts with crude wooden doors. All these industries, however, are quite primitive and of no great interest.

326 The iron and copper work is so distinctive that those who practice [564] it could only be specialists. The smiths, in fact, form a separate caste. One is born a smith, but one becomes a jeweller, since this [306] profession is open to everyone. The smiths extract the metal and make iron tools: hoes, hatchets, adzes, and knives. It is said that no layman is allowed to watch when they extract the iron from the ore, and this would explain why the natives do not know how it is done. As I was unable to visit Yatenga, the area where most iron workers are to be found, I am not familiar with the extracting process.

326 /59/ The jewellers occasionally work with iron, but they do so on 306 the sly. They may repair broken tools, sharpen hatchets and arrow tips, and re-use a piece of iron, for instance, make an old hoe into [301] nails, hinges, etc. Their main task, however, is the manufacture of all sorts of bracelets and of all the copper ornaments in a horse's harness: headstall, bit, spurs, stirrups, and the copper plates which hang from the saddle. These plates are a strange ornament which seems peculiar to the Mossi. They may reach 40 centimeters in diameter, and their edge may be as wide as 10 centimeters. The naba and the wealthy horsemen fasten them behind the stirrups, on either [415] side of the saddle, where they hang down the horse's flanks. Servants sometimes use them to drink beer when they have no other containers. To smelt the iron or copper, the Mossi use charcoal which they obtain exactly in the same manner as our /French/ colliers. The fire is kept going with a double bellows made of the skin of goats or sheep and operated by a child. The red-hot iron is hammered with a cylindrical

326 iron bar on an iron stump planted in the ground or on a stone. Copper
306 and zinc are smelted in small clay crucibles, the size of which varies with the desired thickness of the bracelet. The bracelet is first made in wax and coated with well-kneaded clayey earth which acquires the same shape. The wax is then removed with boiling water, and copper is poured into the clay mold. With a crude file the jewelry-maker removes the dross which clings to the metal, polishes the bracelet, and carves designs into it. The most skillful among them make attractive twisted ornaments of iron and red and yellow copper. One Ouagadougou Christian, deft at modeling wax, makes all sorts of objects, such as napkin rings, paper weights, inkwells, figurines, etc., which are not lacking in style.

484 The Mossi have always travelled a little, and they used to go quite regularly to Timbuktu; now, thanks to the French peace, journeys have become increasingly frequent. The European settlers in Tenkodogo, Ouagadougou, Léo, and Koudougou hire the Mossi as house boys and [464] take them to Ségou, sometimes to Kayes, and even to Saint-Louis. These boys, when they return, fill their friends with wonder and arouse their desire to take such great journeys also.

484 The recruitment of Black troops has also fostered this desire to see
464 new lands. Many natives have made the trip to Bandiagara to enlist as riflemen; others went to Kati, and when they found that no further enlistments were being made there, they went on to Saint-Louis.

484 During the dry season the Mossi are more often lured away by trading ventures. In October and November many young men who have managed to secure a sheep or two or a few goats and the wealthier natives who own cattle organize caravans in the hope of selling their livestock at a profit in faraway markets. In former times the Yarsé and Haoussa had a monopoly on trade. Nowadays the Mossi compete [65] with them, for they must find money to pay taxes to the Whites, the
648 famous five-franc piece. /60/ Besides, now the roads are safe. Highway robbers are no longer to be feared, and one no longer has to pay tolls every time he enters the territory of a new chief. From this point of view, and from it alone, the French peace is valued by the natives, although they find it onerous to pay taxes, to build roads and bridges, and to pay customs duties on leaving and re-entering French territory. Is a man ever pleased when something is required of him, even for his greatest good?

491 Now only the watercourses present some difficulty when they are full. The Administration, which does all it can to facilitate trade,

491 builds bridges, but as they are made exclusively with materials found in the country, forked sticks and beams covered with pounded earth, the first swelling of the water carries the whole structure away, and after a heavy rain one must wait for the waters to subside and resort to ferrymen who justifiably charge for their work.

481 The ferrymen proceed as follows. The person who wishes to cross
484 holds on to a thick beam, a gourd, or a simple clay jar, which holds him out of the water; sometimes two large sticks under his arms serve
501 as a life belt. In a few places rafts are available, made of sticks connected with séko and covered with dry grass. The ferryman swims next to him and prevents him from being carried too far by the current. At certain favored fords near the French posts, ferryboats are available.
484 Livestock swim across, and the ferryman holds their muzzles out of the water to prevent them from drowning. These crossings take a long time and add up to considerable expense, and animals are often carried away by the current or snatched by crocodiles. Woe to the man who dispenses with ferrymen, if he is not familiar with the bottom of the river and the strength of the current! He often drowns, and those whose aid he scorned do nothing to help him. On the other hand, if the caravans postpone their departure for too long, the rivers will be dry, the grass burned off, and the animals will die of hunger or thirst, or they will arrive at the markets exhausted and lean and will sell poorly.

These journeys thus entail a number of hazards; in addition, although imported goods sell high, living expenses run equally high, and if a profit is to be made, one cannot grow fat along the way. He will make up for it when he returns to the village.

442 The need for middlemen brings other hazards. Lt. Marc, who was well qualified to discuss the subject because he was twice in command of the Léo Post, described the situation as follows: "The livestock upon arrival is bought by interpreter-brokers, middlemen between the butchers and the meat merchants, to whom the caravaneers are practically forced to resort. These men buy all the kola nuts brought by the forest natives and control the market prices... These interpreter-brokers apparently speculate on livestock in a most curious way. They have scouts who go out to meet the caravans, sometimes two days' march to the north. /61/ These scouts attempt to alarm the cattle owners with tendentious remarks, until they are willing to cede their herds at a low price. Sometimes, at the height of the business season, in January and February, livestock prices may fluctuate by one

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Above: Cooking Sarabo.
Below: Outdoor Kitchen.

Above: Millet Granaries.
Below: Riding an Ox.

442 hundred percent within a few weeks. The Mandé-Dioula vie in eloquence, the Yarsé and Mossi in politeness, the Haoussa in friendliness. In fact, with exclusively native methods, this is a trading center in embryo, a veritable stock exchange." (4)

4. Marc, Au pays des Mossi /In Mossi Country/, p. 173.

484 487 The traders travel in all directions. The roads most commonly followed are those which run from Ouagadougou south to the Gold Coast, to Gambaga, Daboya, Salaga, Kintampo, Sékondi; from Léo through Oua and Salaga; and from Tenkodogo through Bitou to rejoin the Gambaga road. Contact also occurs, though less frequently, with German Togoland and the markets of Sansané-Mango and even Lomé on the coast.

439 These two British and German colonies are supplied with livestock and native fabrics by the Mossi. They completely lack butcher's meat, for the tsetse fly does not permit cattle to survive within the confines of the rain forest. Imported fabrics do not withstand a few washings, so the native fabric strips, although less bright in color, are preferred by the Gourounsi and forest dwellers. They formerly wore only a sheep or goat skin, but they have taken to clothes since the arrival of the Europeans. Their scant clothing does not embarrass them when they are among themselves, but they are ashamed when Europeans see them. The Mossi bring back from their journeys the kola nuts which are the basis of their import trade, but they also bring copper, European goods of all sorts, fabrics usually of inferior quality, matches, perfumes, pearls, sugar, and basins of all shapes and kinds. Trade is very active in the coastal areas, and Lt. Marc writes on the subject as follows: "The Gold Coast administration, which commands a network of posts denser than ours, recorded in 1904 and 1905 about 16,000 beeves and 75,000 sheep or goats coming from Mossi country. Considering that the Mossi also supply in part the Togoland markets and the Boudoukou market, their annual export may be estimated at a minimum of 20,000 beeves and 100,000 sheep. Their kola nut imports amount to at least 500 tons." (5)

5. Marc, op. cit., p. 178.

651 There is proof that trade tends to grow year by year in the ease with
436 which the natives now secure the five-franc piece needed to pay their
457 tax. The Europeans who live among the Mossi, including all the riflemen and circle /an administrative district/ guards, do not put into circulation a quarter of the five-franc pieces which are required each year from the natives. At first the Mossi were taken by surprise and had to give 10, 000 or even 15, 000 cowries to obtain /62/ this famous coin, this charm, which was to free them from all difficulties with the Whites. At the official rate of exchange this coin is worth 5, 000 cowries. Nowadays it is very difficult to find a native willing to give this much for one of the coins. The usual exchange rate is from 3, 500 to 4, 000 cowries; French currency has depreciated. This must mean that the natives find elsewhere, through trading, this indispensable coin. They know that the tax must be paid every year, and instead of waiting until the last minute, as soon as they have accumulated the necessary cowries, they secure the five-franc pieces from those who have fetched them from afar. The coins flow in; the rate of exchange goes down.

439 Nowadays, trading is less active toward the north. Formerly the
567 Mossi supplied Timbuktu, the desert regions, and even Morocco with slaves. The Gourounsi and Bousansé were frequently raided with the sole intent of obtaining slaves. The Mossi even sold each other into slavery, and prior to the French occupation a woman and even more a young girl or boy did not dare venture alone a few hundred meters from the village; they were too afraid that they might not return. It is said that the Mossi even supplied the Constantinople court with eunuchs; and when the great Cardinal Lavigerie was head of the Algerian Arab Orphanage, officers once brought him small children rescued in the desert. They were very young Mossi who had been sold in Saraféré or Timbuktu and whom our officers had found enclosed in bags carried by camels in a caravan halted by our troops. These children were raised in Malta, and they returned to Mossi country where they rendered significant services. Now the establishment of an administrative center in Kaya, near the important market of Salmatenga, will no doubt promote trade in this northern region.

439 Nowadays the trade between Ouagadougou and Tenkodogo on the one hand, and Ouahigouya (in Mossi country), Saraféré, and Timbuktu or Dori (called Gyémaré by the natives) on the other hand, amounts to very little. The Mossi export kola nuts which they have brought

439 from the south, bracelets, and fabric strips, and they import salt and hoes. Often they take only money with them and return with salt bars which sell on the market for one to one and a half, sometimes even two francs, a kilogram. Around Fada N'Gourma (Binge /sic/ to the natives), Say, and Niamey, Karite butter, locust bean flour, and especially kalro pellets are exported, while onions, garlic, and sometimes horses are imported. There is no trade with Dahomey.

484 The natives travel in short stages of 20, 25, or at most 30 kilometers a day. They set out at dawn or whenever the moon sheds sufficient light and stop when the sun becomes too hot. They set out again when the sun dips on the horizon and stop in time to prepare a meal if their wives accompany them, which is rare, or to buy something to eat if they are alone. They spend the night with a friend if [574] they /63/ have one in the locality and lengthen or shorten their day's march if they expect to find an acquaintance in a certain village. The livestock feed as they walk, and donkeys carry the exchange goods and especially the kola nuts on the way back.

482 Nearly all travellers bear part of their load on their head. Since we have come to mention this, let us again quote Delafosse: "Portage has been much slandered in France these past few years. It has been cited as a barbarous custom, a form of slavery which we had supposedly introduced in Africa and imposed on the unfortunate Negroes. This merely proves that the French people like to discuss things of which they know little. The very first geographers and travellers who spoke of the Sudanic Negroes—Herodotus among the Greeks, El Bekri among the Arabs—said that beyond the Sahara, where horses and camels cannot stand the climate, the natives themselves carried burdens on their heads over very long distances." (6) These remarks

6. Delafosse, Le peuple Siéna/ The Siena People/, p. 53.

are strictly true. Abuses on our part lie in forcing the pace and making the natives run with their loads in the hot sun or in exceeding the regulation weight. If reasonable limits are observed, the Blacks accustomed from infancy to the bearing of heavy burdens on their heads—in their country, everything is carried in this fashion—are no more to be pitied than our soldiers burdened on long marches with

482 their pack, their full cartridge pouches, and their gun. This is proved by the fact that it is very easy to find volunteer porters nowadays who [465] agree to carry a box weighing 25 or 30 kilograms for 200 or 400 kilometers, or even farther, for half a franc a day.

[492] The fabrics are coiled into huge rolls which hang on either side of the ox or donkey, or, when the man carries them himself, they are folded in baskets from one and a half to two meters long, made of [285] bamboo stems slit lengthwise in two. These baskets are semi-cylindrical in shape and are used to carry kola nuts on the way back. A small pillow is attached to the center of the basket, and when the traveller stops to rest, he looks for a thick tree, leans one tip of the [481] basket on the crotch of two branches and the other tip on the bamboo he uses as a staff. He can thus pick up his load effortlessly when the resting period is over.

484 The traveller always returns to his village at night to avoid those prying persons who would rush out to see what he brought back. The goods are carefully put away, and on the following day the man takes up village life as though he had never left it. It is only gradually, at the evening gatherings, that he relates his adventures. At the first subsequent festivity, however, he dons his new, bright clothes and a red tarboosh, sometimes stockings and shoes, and proudly displays them. Those who have tasted /64/ the life of travel and adventure cannot do without it, and they set out again every year. Some of the independent and carefree young men even live all winter on the [178] profits of their distant journey and no longer cultivate the soil. This is shocking to the elders, who do not understand it at all but are aware that something has changed in their country.

600 Some Europeans have attempted to engage in livestock trading like the natives. One enterprising and courageous European settled in Ouahigouya, and another near Mané; a trading house sent one of its representatives to Ouagadougou, and a Syrian settled there. None of them seems to have succeeded. We are not in their confidence and cannot say just why this happened, but would it not be, at least in part, because a European cannot easily adapt himself to the native way of life? The Blacks manage to make a profit because they do not spend much along the way; they subsist on very little and carry part of the goods themselves instead of hiring porters. Also, the natives

000 help each other. If they are sometimes, indeed too often, fleeced by middlemen—and it would seem that the various European administrations, no matter what their nationality, should prevent such speculations in their own best interests—if the natives are fleeced, a European ignorant of the customs and the language would be fleeced all the more. Who would guard his herds during his absence; who would lead them to far markets if he stayed home? It is difficult to find a native [181] who can be fully trusted. At present, however, trading in livestock is the only possible source of profit in the country.

The forthcoming railroad will soon change trade conditions and promote the interests of the Europeans without undermining those of the natives. This is to be desired, because Mossi country will only come fully into its own when its products can be exported. The natives were too long isolated as a result of their continuous warfare, and the nabas, it must be said, were too inclined to monopolize all the goods, for trade to develop in a significant way. The French peace, by making the roads safe, has already done much for the country; it will achieve even more when the railroad which is now cutting across Mossi country links it on the one hand to the Ivory Coast and on the other hand to the Niger Colony. Trade will then no longer be carried out exclusively with the Germans and the British, and as soon as native products find sure channels of export, the raising of livestock and agriculture itself will be greatly extended. The Mossi are not averse to trade. [181 They actually seem to possess a real knack for it, which until now 439] they have had no opportunity to exercise freely. They have not yet taken full advantage of their transactions, and this is why they seemed to some observers to have no aptitude for trade. They will adapt to it, as they already are.

/65/ Chapter 3. Hygiene, Disease, Death, and Burial

828 Part of life, especially the life of a Black, is spent in sleep, but 774 the slumberer is sometimes disturbed by dreams that are more or less 787 extraordinary. The Mossi attribute dreams to ancestral and other spirits. They also say that the soul leaves the body during sleep and does the things witnessed in the dream. Sorcerers are consulted to find out what caused the dreams and how to cope with the bad omens.

364 For the Mossi, as for all other men, life ends in death, with or without illness. The Blacks do not know how to prevent diseases, and they know very little about fighting them. Hygiene is almost unknown. The huts are poorly aired, the chickens and in general all the animals in the inner courtyard walk everywhere and foul everything. The courtyard is swept often, but the hut of the sheep and goats is located in the midst of the other dwellings; the horse is kept within the soukala [514] itself; and people relieve themselves anywhere, wherever they find a convenient spot. The manure is gathered in a heap, but it is kept next to the huts and gives off a nauseating smell and noxious miasmas, especially at the beginning of the rainy season.

515 The Mossi are not dirty, but they cannot be called clean. Those who dwell in villages abundantly supplied with water at all times are the cleanest. The women, who fetch water every day and thus have an opportunity to wash, are usually cleaner than the men. A Mossi never passes a pond without drinking copiously and washing all over, and this would seem to prove that those who go dirty do so unwillingly; they have no water nearby, and it would be too much trouble to go to the river to bathe. Clothing, especially breechcloths, is often repulsively dirty. This is because washing wears out clothes, and who knows when new ones will be available? No wonder disease has such a hold on this people.

855 165 Child care is quite rudimentary: a few baths; enemas two or three times a day, without which it is said their bowels would not move; and that is all. At the slightest indisposition the sorcerer is consulted, or else the child is left to himself; he will get well or die, and nothing is done about it. As a consequence, child mortality is very high.

758 Those who fall prey to a contagious disease are not isolated. A healthy child lies on the same mat as one with smallpox, a leper drinks from the common gourd unless his lips are covered with sores. People do, however, hesitate to sit where a syphilitic person with sores previously sat. The education of the Mossi in matters of hygiene is wholly yet to be learned.

576 On meeting someone, Mossi politeness requires that an inquiry be made about his health and that of all his relatives. The response invariably is "So-and-So is well," and the other in turn responds, "May God permit his health to wax." It is only after a little conversation that a certain person is said to be ill or to be getting better.

195 It is not said that someone died, but that he ran short of strength, that he passed away, that he left us.

753 /66/ This is because illness is usually attributed to an evil spirit,
761 which must not be irked with complaints. Yet in everyday language it is God who is the cause of everything, of health as well as of death. The sorcerers consulted indicate which spirit must be appeased, to whom sacrifices must be offered; or they state quite frankly that the hour of the sick person has come, that his life is over and he is about to rejoin his ancestors, for it is often the latter who call him and come to fetch him. In the case of old men and especially of old women, death is considered a natural event. An old man has many children who will give him a fine funeral, and it is time for him to make way for his eldest son. If a quarrelsome person falls sick, his illness is often attributed to an evil spell cast by an enemy. When
[763] an elder is about to die, those who have caused him offense come to beg his forgiveness and only find peace when they have obtained it, for the old man might return to obtain his revenge. Sudden death is usually ascribed to poison and, alas, this is often the case. Sometimes it is also attributed to an evil spirit, especially in case of accident, fall, snake bite, etc.

755 The instinct of self-preservation is so strong in man that the Mossi
757 although they ascribe a superhuman origin to illness, nevertheless fight it. It is true that all their treatments combine medicinal and superstitious elements to drive off evil spirits, and whatever the remedy, true medicine or amulet, it is always a tim; there is only the one
759 word to designate it. Some of the natives know how to treat certain illnesses, and people come to consult them, often from far away. One has a medicine against snakes, and he makes it in complete secrecy on a certain day; one knows how to treat colds and bronchitis;
[752] another, dysentery; yet another, sores. The bone-setters are often very skillful, and with the mere pressure of their fingers they can set a dislocated joint or a broken leg; then they enclose it between tightly-bound millet stalks as a splint. These doctors prescribe remedies without resorting to sacrifices or witchcraft. Sometimes they live with their patient to care for him, of course for a fee, especially if the person gets well.

751 Smallpox vaccination is performed, but often too late, on individuals who already have the germ. The vaccine is taken from a seriously ill person without any precautionary antiseptic measures. The vaccinated individual is usually made very sick and sometimes dies of

751 it. It is recognized that smallpox does not hit the same place twice (obviously, when it has already killed all those who could be killed), and fear of catching the disease prevents many natives from undergoing the operation. The Administration is rendering great services
744 with its vaccination tours, which will be all the more successful since the experiments carried out by our Fathers some years ago, with tubes of vaccine kindly sent by the Administrator of Ouagadougou, bore excellent results and checked an epidemic which was decimating the population. Smallpox victims are nursed /67/ as carefully as possible.
757 They are laid on a bed of sand which retains heat. When the pocks are ripe, they are punctured with a thorn, and then the patient is rubbed with sand. The eyes are washed with an antiseptic decoction, and the patient gargles frequently with peppered water.

Medicinal herbs, tree leaves, and barks are the basis of all remedies, in the form of infusions or poultices. The study of these medicines would no doubt be of interest to a specialist. But would the natives who hold the secret of their preparation be willing to surrender it?

[572] When a friend is ill, even if he lives far away, the right thing is to
755 visit him, offer him sympathy, and even more appropriately bring him some gifts. The relatives of the sick person consult the sorcerer, for it is necessary to determine the agency that caused the disease. Sorcerers rarely prescribe a medicine. Their role is to point out the part of the body which is afflicted and especially to indicate the spirit who should receive the sacrifice. Another man, who in most cases has nothing to do with witchcraft, knows the medicines. If the patient improves after the prescribed sacrifices have been offered, it means that the sorcerer knows his business well; if not, it means that he has cheated.

758 Every self-respecting sorcerer must prescribe a negative treatment, in the sense of pointing out certain things the patient must not eat. Sometimes goat or chicken flesh is forbidden for the duration of the illness or permanently. Sometimes it is a certain kind of sauce, or millet or bean fritters. On the other hand, since the Mossi eat no eggs, especially not raw, and drink hardly any milk, they sustain the sick with plenty of millet beer and with an unappetizing mush of coarsely ground millet, often mixed with powdered charcoal. Patients have difficulty absorbing such a mixture and occasionally die of
755 starvation. Sometimes the sorcerer also indicates an amulet that

755 must be procured. The leaf used to cover a wound must be held by means of a thin cotton cord with cowries attached at the end, three cowries for a boy, four for a girl. A hemp cord with three or four knots, worn around the neck, wrist, or any other part of the body, prevents swelling of that part and is also a master remedy against hair worms. Sometimes it is not so easy to secure the prescribed amulet, for instance, if it is the beak or claw of a hawk, a deer horn, or certain parts of a buffalo or koba. The poor Mossi goes to great pains to find this indispensable amulet.

763 Do as he may, sooner or later he must die. When an old man feels that his end is near, he calls his family and gives them his last instructions. He talks to his eldest son and tells him where his cattle and caches are to be found, who are his debtors and creditors. Sometimes death comes swiftly without warning, and the old man has no time to talk to his heir; a large part of the fortune is thus lost, because a Mossi in good health never tells anybody, especially not his /68/ children, where his property is, and those to whom he has entrusted it do not return it. Some Peul have made rather nice profits in this fashion.

761 The death of a young man or woman or more especially that of a small child is usually ascribed to an old woman who is said to have 754 eaten the child's soul, and some old women claim to have this secret. [683] The sorcerer points out the guilty woman who is seized and put to death. Every sudden or accidental death is ascribed to an evil spirit, and the funeral ceremonies reflect this.

762 Suicide is extremely rare, but it does occur. Here is one case where we knew the participants. A man quarreled with his wife. The wife, who was stronger than her husband, overwhelmed him in the fight, and the neighbors openly ridiculed him. The following day the husband was found hanging in his hut. A pit was hastily dug [766] in his nearest field, and he was tossed into it naked without further ceremony. Suicide is regarded as a criminal act, and even the corpse is punished for it.

763 Like all human beings, the Mossi fear death. No longer to eat millet mush or to drink dolo seems to them the greatest of misfortunes. Still, when a Mossi sees death approaching, he resigns himself to it and accepts it stoically. He rests his head on the lap of his first wife, and his other wives gather around him. His friends and the village elders sit before the soukala, and all wait silently for hours until the

763 old man passes away. Suddenly, a shrill and lugubrious cry uttered by the first wife pierces the air and announces to everyone that a soul has just left its body and appeared before God. All the women rally to this call, and for a few minutes the most plaintive laments fill the dead man's soukala.

764 767 Silence is soon restored. One of the family members fetches the undertaker, lada, without whom it is impossible to proceed with the burial. Meanwhile, one of the séko which enclose the inner courtyard is torn off to permit the soul to get through and leave the living in peace. An old woman and the dead man's children proceed to lay out the corpse, using only their left hand. The body is washed with warm water and vigorously soaped, then annointed with karite butter. The head is shaved and the hair buried, unless the shaving was done before the dying man breathed his last, in which case the hair is tossed to the wind. When the corpse has been thoroughly washed, the undertaker softens the joints of the neck, arms, and legs so the body will slide more easily into the pit; then he lays out the body in the hut of the first wife if she is still alive, otherwise in the hut of the dead man.

764 The corpse is laid out on a mat, on its side in the position of a sleeping man, with arms and legs folded, and covered with a white blanket. As soon as the body is laid out, lugubrious cries are heard once more, and the men and youths go to dig the pit while the women remain sitting in the courtyard and watch the corpse. Women friends and neighbors prepare food for the family which has been visited by death.

The grave is usually dug in the family field, where the ancestors already rest. The villages have no common graveyards; /69/ each family has its own. Nevertheless, the vicinity of a sacred grove is sometimes used as a cemetery. To be buried away from one's relatives is a great misfortune, and one who dies far from his village strongly desires that his body be returned there; the family always fulfills this last wish if at all possible. Otherwise, the dead person is buried along the road that leads to his village. In order to rest near his ancestors in his last sleep, a native who feels that his strength is ebbing may build his huts in the middle of the bush, at the place where the village of his ancestors used to stand. An old man esteemed and loved by his family is buried in front of the soukala, and this is the rule for nabas.

The undertaker prescribes the shape and size of the grave, but anyone may dig it. Mossi graves consist of a circular pit about 1.50

764 meters in diameter and 0.70 meter in depth. At the bottom of this first hole or against the wall, a second pit is dug, 0.75 meter in diameter. The bottom of the second hole is enlarged to form a sort of chamber, 1.50 to 2 meters in length and 0.75 meter in depth, where the body will be laid. This chamber is plastered with a preparation of néré to make the inner surface very smooth.

Young men spend the whole night at this task. Meanwhile, friends and absent relatives hasten to the house of the deceased as soon as they hear of his death; drummers also come, on the lookout for a few jars of beer and a few cowries. Everyone dances, sings, and makes merry.

764 The children and younger brothers of the deceased wear mourning
765 clothes: an ample apron with a large pocket, adorned with cloth streamers and various designs on a red or blue background; a small gourd as head covering; a circle of ashes on the face, and a cross of ashes on the back. The daughters and sisters of the deceased wear in addition a bunch of leaves in the back and thin white cotton cords around the neck. The eldest son wears a sheep skin across his chest and over the shoulder. At dawn the millet beer comes, the millet
764 mush is ready, and they are taken to the men who dug the grave. The undertaker tosses a little beer onto the soil removed from the pit and mixes it with some millet mush. Then the merry-making comes to a halt, and everyone drinks, eats, and rests for a while. Sometimes the dancing is taken up again around noon. When the sun dips toward the horizon, the burial gets underway.

An opening is made in the hut where the dead man lays, and the corpse is removed through it. The body is laid in front of the hole, and every one of the dead man's children must pass through and step over his father's corpse. The body is then laid on a stretcher, but not tied as yet; it is taken back into the courtyard, through the opening left by the séko which was removed at the moment of death. The eldest son now draws near with a goat or chicken, according to his means, and gives it to the undertaker who offers it to the deceased by shoving it forward three times and saying: "Your son offers you this goat, so it will bear kids for you." The other children may also present offerings, as well as the friends, /70/ and the undertaker offers them all to the deceased in the same manner. In some localities, the animals thus presented are taken home by the undertaker, who kills
[184] and eats them, and no sacrifice is made on the spot; elsewhere the victims are killed near the corpse.

764 When the last chicken has been offered, the body is wrapped in a very pliant mat and bound tightly to the stretcher. The funeral procession gets underway. The women and children walk ahead of the body, and the friends and village people follow with the drummers. If the deceased was an important person, horsemen join the procession and guns bark. If the deceased was the head of the household, the procession winds around the soukala three times. Women, who are never heads of a household, are not granted this honor. Then the procession goes toward the grave in a roundabout way, passing by the favorite spots of the deceased: an old woman, for instance, is taken to the place from which she used to fetch water and to the marketplace where she went to sell grain. The drummers bang away, everyone shrieks, sings, and exchanges insults so coarse that no one was willing to repeat them to me. The procession comes to a halt three times if the deceased was an old woman, twice if it was an old man, and the noise rises to a new pitch.

When the procession reaches the grave, everyone stops for the last time and becomes silent. The stretcher is lowered, and the relatives utter a subdued and melancholy chant: "May the chief of hatred (the being who killed the deceased) depart!" The body is laid out near the pit. One of the undertakers, who alone may bury someone who died of illness, stands in the first hole, and another waits in the funeral chamber to receive the body. The cords which bind the corpse to the stretcher are cut, and the mat removed. Those undertakers who are not occupied at the moment stretch blankets around the pit to hide the body from the onlookers. The man in the first hole seizes the corpse and passes it on through the opening of the funeral chamber to the second undertaker, who takes it in his arms, lays it on its side on a mat with the head toward the south and facing east in the case of a man, west in the case of a woman, with the arms and legs folded.

As soon as the corpse has vanished, the blankets are removed, and the eldest son steps forward. He offers the dead man a mourning [801] apron, in the pocket of which he has placed 444 cowries in the case of a woman, 333 in the case of a man, or even 4, 444 or 3, 333, according to his means, and the undertaker presents them to the deceased, saying that his eldest son is offering him cowries to buy drinking water (to be translated as beer). He also offers clothing: for a man, two pairs of trousers, two shirts, two blankets, and a cap, if he wishes to do things lavishly; and blankets in the case of a woman, some to

764 be worn, others for carrying jars or to take to market. A woman is also offered a gourd to cook sauce, along with pepper, spices of all sorts, and salt. In addition, she is given the spindle that she used to spin cotton, but first its stem is broken; in fact, everything which is offered to the dead is previously damaged or torn. Wealthy friends also present clothes, and the others toss cowries to the dead. The undertakers carefully cover the smaller hole with blankets to prevent the cowries /71/ from falling into the pit. Every once in a while they allow a few to slide down, but they keep the greater part to themselves. When everyone has tossed in his offering, the undertakers take one, two, or several pieces of clothing; this is their share, and the practice is sanctioned by custom. They also take a few handfuls of cowries from the mourning apron, and someone hastens to count them. All eyes are anxiously focussed on the person who counts them, [80] 787 for either a man or a woman will die soon, depending on whether the number of cowries comes nearer to 333 or to 444.

Finally the undertakers close up the pit. If the deceased was an old woman, the smaller opening is plugged with one of the large jars in which she prepared millet beer; if a man, it is covered with a small jar or sometimes, especially if the opening is larger, with sticks laid as close together as possible. The corpse is thus completely isolated in its funeral chamber. The larger hole is then filled up with the soil removed from the pit. A jar and an earthen sauce pot are placed on top in the case of a woman, an earthen pot and a large stone in the case of a man.

Everyone withdraws to drink, eat, and rest. There is no dancing that night, but they make up for it on the following day and even on the day after that, if the wealth of the deceased permits it. On the second day after the funeral in the case of an old man, on the third day for an old woman, the children and younger brothers of the deceased shave their heads, go to thank those who have helped them, and remove their mourning clothes. There will be no further preoccupation with the deceased until the anniversary festivities or kouré.

[184] Such are the ceremonies which usually attend the death and burial of a married man or woman, those who have children. We say "usually," for all these complex ceremonies may be curtailed and modified to a greater or lesser extent, depending on the region and the customs peculiar to one family or another.

766 The death of a naba, as we mentioned earlier, is carefully con-
cealed; the more powerful he was, the more careful the concealment.
579 This is done out of fear of the disturbances which would be created by those who aspire to his succession, or by scoundrels who might take advantage of the absence of authority to indulge in every kind of robbery. At the death of the Moro Naba his province was sacked by armed bands, and no one dared to go out unarmed. On the day following the death of Moro Naba Sigri, we had to fetch millet from a village located a few kilometers from Ouagadougou. All the bearers were armed with bows, arrows, and spears. They made an interesting picture in the moonlight.

766 In spite of all their amulets and all their sacrifices, nabas die just like their subjects, and when this happens, his relatives hastily dig a pit in the entrance hut of the soukala and lay the corpse there without any ceremonies. Those wishing to see the naba will be told that he is unwell. The naba of Koupéla is especially favored in this respect. One of the huts in his soukala, standing near the entrance, is set aside for his burial. A pit has been dug within the hut, and every /72/ day the caretaker comes to pour dolo into the hole. This caretaker must not have a wife, and if he happens to have one before his appointment to this post, the naba takes her for himself. On the other hand, the caretaker eats the same food as the naba and drinks the same millet beer. Needless to say, this job is not in great demand. The
[761] naba may not enter the hut, and when the roof is in need of repair, the drummers are sent for, and the naba must flee; woe to him if he should hear the sound of the drums, for he would die within the year. When the naba of Koupéla dies, his hands and feet are immediately pierced with big thorns so that he may not return; should he venture to seize one of his people after his death, the thorns would cause him such pain that he would immediately let go of his prey. The corpse is tossed into the pit to fall as it may. The Mossi, full of respect for their chiefs when they are alive, make up for it when they are dead.

Young unmarried men or girls are buried with a previously deceased old woman of the family, so that someone will take care of them in the other life. Their death is regarded as a true misfortune and mourned accordingly. There are no dances or ceremonies. The father, mother, and younger siblings shave their heads on the second or third day after the burial.

[775] A small child is buried by the path. He will soon return in the person of the first child borne by his mother after his death.

766 Suicides are buried like our dogs; here, all dogs are eaten. Lepers
[761] are buried at night without festivities. Accidental death, whether
[262] from a fall, snake bite, or any other cause, is attributed to an evil spirit who must not be irked by granting funerary honors to its victim, or else it would return and kill another member of the family. This is why those who die of an accident are buried without ceremonies and without undertakers. Their heads are not shaved, because God has called them with their hair on, as the Mossi say. A pit is dug, they
769 are buried, and that is all. They have no one to represent them; to the anniversary of their death, the koure, they have no kourita.

Every Mossi who dies of illness, be it man, woman, child, or naba, survives in the person of the kourita. In the case of a married man, the kourita or koutoarsa (who imitates the deceased) is a woman of the dead person's family, usually one of the wives of one of his younger brothers, someone who bears a certain resemblance to the deceased. She is chosen by the family, and sometimes designated by the dying person. She wears the clothes of the deceased, his shirt, his blanket, his hat, his shoes, his bracelets, and his rings; she wears his belt and knives, walks with his staff, his hoe, his dore, and bears his spear, blade pointing toward the ground. She walks like the person she represents. She must imitate him in every way and keep his presence alive in the household. If the deceased was usually accompanied by a /73/ child bearing his satchel, the kourita is followed by the same child bearing the same satchel, but turned inside out. If the deceased was a leper and had no fingers, she pretends not to have any; if he liked to laugh, she laughs; if he was peevish and quarreled with everyone, she maintains a constant state of anger. The children of the deceased call her their father; the wives call her their husband and prepare her millet mush. If the dead man was a naba, she is called naba; if he was not, she is called by the name of the deceased.

769 She acts in this manner until the day of koure. On that day she
428 shaves her head like the other members of the family, and her role ends there. She retains the name kourita, however, and on the day when the inheritance is distributed, she receives a garment in exchange for the clothes of the deceased. If the heir is generous, if the inheritance allows it, she is given some livestock, sometimes a child. It is said that the kourita dies sooner than if she had not played this role, because the ancestral spirits will come and fetch her. For this reason, the position is not in great demand.

769 In addition to this kourita, if the deceased was head of the house-
hold, his oldest daughter, or in her absence, his granddaughter,
[184] occasionally plays a role and is also called kourita, but this custom is
less widespread. Her mourning clothes are embellished with thin cords
of red straw (bini) around the neck and wrists and above the elbow and
at the ankles, 13 for a man and 14 for a woman. Around her head
she wears cotton threads (pana) which hang down her back like a long
tail, ending in a pompon. The first kourita, previously mentioned,
sometimes wears these badges also. This second kourita actually has
only one task, namely, to plant large millet where her father's huts
stood. When the millet is ripe, she sets it aside to use for preparing
millet beer on the day of the kouré. Sometimes her position is held
for three years, and she cannot shave during this time. To offset this,
it is she who brews the beer for the Day of the Dead (basra). At the
end of three years, she shaves and takes up her usual way of life. No
such kourita is provided for an old woman, since she was not the head
of a household.

A mother is kourita for a child who dies before he marries. She
wears at her ankle a thin cotton cord to which she adds a knot daily
[801] for the duration of mourning, 33 days for a boy, 44 days for a girl.

The Moro Naba has a kourita like other Mossi, but on the day of the
kouré a young boy of his family is appointed to represent him for life.
This kourita adopts the name of the dead naba, and all through the
dry season he goes from canton to canton, as the true Moro Naba
could not do in his lifetime. Everywhere he is greeted and entertained
with great honors, he receives many gifts, and his men loot what they
can. One place only is closed to him, Ouagadougou, the residence
of his successor. If they were to meet, one of them would die within
the year. At present there are among the Mossi two kourita of Moro
Nabas: that of Naba Sanem, who welcomed Binger, and that of Naba
Sigri, enthroned as a result of Voulet's conquest and deceased in 1905.
Naba Wobro, deposed by our troops, has no kourita because he was
[643] no longer Moro Naba when he died; he had failed tradition by leaving
Ouagadougou and thereby renounced his rights as a sovereign.

/74/ The first funeral is a temporary expedient; the human body
decomposes quickly, and the burial has to be held before all the
friends and relatives can be assembled. Also, death comes by surprise;
there are not enough cowries, the animals have not been gathered in
sufficient numbers, and the deceased must be granted the honors due
his rank, he must be offered numerous victims. These are the reasons

769 for the koure, which for lack of a better term we have called an anniversary, although the festivities may be held a few days after the burial if everything is ready.

769 The koure is always celebrated on Sunday. The kourita, the eldest
767 son, or the head of the family first sets a date, but this is not the real date. A few days later he discloses the true day to everyone. Relatives and friends gather on Saturday for a gala family dinner of meat, salt, beer, and sarabo. Sunday at daybreak the women wail, weep, and shriek. At dawn the members of the deceased person's family shave their heads, mark themselves with stripes of ashes, and don mourning clothes, exactly as they did on the day of the death. Around noon, each of the relatives and friends brings an animal as an offering to the deceased. The undertaker (lada) presents it. First he takes the sheep given by the eldest son and stands before the door of the hut in which the body was laid after death. Three times he offers the sheep by making it move forward and back, while saying: "Your son gives you a sheep. Take it and eat it with your whole family." Then he seizes the sheep and holds its jaws shut to prevent it from bleating. Helpers drag the sheep out of the inner courtyard and slit its throat. An old woman comes to catch the blood in a gourd. The meat is cooked separately, while the blood mixed with millet flour is cooked with the viscera, liver, lungs, and some salt. This is the semdle, of which all members of the family must partake. This is one of the customs to which the Mossi are most attached. While the oldest son's sheep is butchered and prepared, each of the children presents his victim to the undertaker, who offers it to the deceased as before. Then comes the turn of other relatives and friends.

When all the animals have been offered, the undertaker takes some beer from a jar which has stood in the sun and empties a gourdful onto the grave. The rest of the jar is his. The remainder of the day
769 is devoted to the slaughter of all the victims, which vary in number according to the wealth and fame of the deceased, to cooking them, eating them, and drinking. In the evening, one of the dead man's daughters takes a gourd full of water, places it on her head without a pad, and walks three times around her father's soukala, shrieking and weeping. All those present follow her and blend their wails with hers. She returns to the inner courtyard and pours the water from her gourd into the pot where the millet mush is cooking. If the head of the household had a dog, the animal is now killed and eaten. The whole night is spent in endless dances and games.

769 On Monday millet beer is prepared for Wednesday, and the dances and games continue, as they do on Tuesday. On this day all the wives of the dead man vanish, because they must not witness the ceremony of pounding the grave that will take place on the following day.

/75/ On Wednesday morning the whole family goes to the grave
769 with paddles, accompanied by drummers and the undertaker. The
767 women have brought water, and everyone pounds the earth over the grave, on top of which an earthen pot is left in the case of a woman, a stone in the case of a man. When the grave has been thoroughly pounded, the undertaker kills a chicken on the stone or pot and says: "Take the chicken from the grave, eat it with your family, and leave your children in peace." Then he takes a gourd of beer and pours it over the grave. The chicken is roasted and eaten, and the jar of beer is drunk on the spot. Everyone returns to the house of the deceased, and the games and dances are taken up with renewed vigor.

769 On Thursday the whole family goes to market and thanks the friends who have assisted at the festivities and who have helped them.

The funeral ceremonies are now over, and there will be no further ado about the deceased except once a year on the Day of the Dead.

Young men or girls who die childless also have a kouré, usually on the same day as an old man or woman who died previously. If no one in the family has recently died, the children's kouré is carried out without ceremonies. The father, mother, and younger siblings shave and build a small hut which represents the hut of the deceased, and this is where the chickens or sometimes a goat are offered to him. Millet beer, of course, is distributed to the relatives and friends who are present, but there is no dancing and no pounding of the grave.

Ostensibly the death of a naba is not known, and the poor man is
766 buried without ceremony. When his heirs have gathered all that is needed to give their father a funeral worthy of him, they have the news of his death spread everywhere on a Saturday morning. A dummy built with the dead man's clothes is laid in the hut of his first wife or in his own hut, and all the ceremonies are carried out Saturday night as they would be for any other important burial. The dummy is carried like a corpse; the soil covering the pit is disturbed slightly, and the clothes are buried there. On the following day, Sunday, all
769 the kouré ceremonies are held, and their solemnity is proportional to the naba's power.

Thus everyone has his kouré, with the exception of nursing children, who will soon return, and of suicides.

428 When the head of a household dies, he leaves an inheritance of varying magnitude. No one touches it until the day of kouré. As soon as the festivities are over, the eldest son summons the head of the family and all his uncles, brothers, and sisters. The partition of the property must be carried out. Theoretically, the whole inheritance, all the women, cattle, and cowries, belongs to the eldest son if he is married [429] or of marriageable age. If he is too young, one of the younger brothers of the deceased must act as his guardian, administer the property, and transfer it to his nephew when he comes of age. Of course, the uncle squanders his ward's property. If the deceased leaves no male heirs, the inheritance devolves to his eldest daughter. If he has no children, /76/ his younger brother, or if there is none, the son of his oldest brother, inherits the property. The oldest brother himself never inherits, except in the case of a naba; in such a case, if there is no other heir, the oldest brother comes into the fortune.

428 587 Although in theory the oldest son is the absolute master of all his father's property, in reality he must share part of it. If he has younger brothers of marriageable age, he gives them one of his father's wives. Every brother who inherits a wife must shave her head. If she refuses to have this done, it means that she does not want this new husband. 428 If the heir's brothers are too young, he gives them some livestock, cattle, sheep, goats. If the inheritance is sufficient to allow it, the uncles also get their share. No one may force the eldest son to share the property. He may state point blank that he intends to keep everything, but this will cause him difficulties and create enemies, especially if his father has squandered a nephew's fortune. Upon his uncle's death, a nephew defrauded of his father's property reminds his cousin of the matter and requests indemnities, which are usually granted in the form of wives or livestock.

428 592 The new heir becomes head of the household in his turn and often inhabits his father's soukala; sometimes he builds himself another one. He is now his own master, subject only to the family head, while his unmarried sisters and younger brothers come under his jurisdiction. He has inherited the property, but he has not inherited the power. If his father was a naba and he wishes to succeed him, he must now solicit the position from the higher naba who is empowered to grant it.

596 Such is the family life of the Mossi. To summarize: marked submission to nabas and family heads, marked freedom toward those who are not in a position of authority. The wives live side by side

596 under the supervision of the husband's first wife; the daughters are never their own masters at any age and thus live in semi-slavery. The children do not spend much time together. They undoubtedly have affection for each other and show it at times, and their parents love them, but there does not exist among them that bond, that family spirit which only Christianity can bring them.

/77/ BOOK IV. RELIGIOUS LIFE

Chapter 1. Beliefs and Ethics

000 We have studied so far the external manifestations of Mossi life: the political structure and its hierarchy, the family structure and all its derivatives, marriage, birth, life, and death. We must now take a further step and carry our investigation to a more intimate level, to analyze the deepest and most persistent feelings and attitudes of these people. It is very difficult to understand one individual and to grasp the motives for his actions in everyday life; it is all the more difficult to do so in the case of a people, especially when this people does not practice self-analysis and when no writings exist to reflect its soul, which must be detected in its most spontaneous manifestations, in the most commonplace conversations. We would, however, know almost nothing about the Mossi if we did not know their ideas about God, the world, and ancestral and other spirits, as well as the relationships they have established with this invisible world. Religious life plays a very important role in the life of any people. Would it be an exaggeration to state that the significance of its role increases with the primitiveness of the people and their resulting tendency to attribute all they cannot explain to preternatural intervention?

124 The Mossi do not like to broach these subjects with foreigners, especially with Whites, whose beliefs they know to be so different from theirs. Not only are they afraid to offend the spirits by revealing their secrets, but they fear the derisive smile. One must be careful not to laugh at their ideas, no matter how childish they may seem to us. To laugh at them is the surest way of hurting their feelings and of making them hopelessly secretive. In any case, is not sincere belief worthy of some respect, even if this respect is mixed with a certain amount of pity?

124 The problem is aggravated by the fact that the Mossi possess no religious theories and are not in the habit of discussing their beliefs. They are bewildered by the slightest "Why," the most elementary "how is it so." To fulfill the needs of our European minds, therefore, it proved necessary to put a little order and clarity into the ideas we gleaned here and there. In this area especially we have avoided as much as possible any tendency to systematize, and we can say that there is nothing of our own in the two chapters that follow. We have listened to the natives, elicited explanations, asked questions, and made note of the answers. We shall now transcribe the results. Of course the answers did not always agree, and we /78/ were forced to make choices on the basis of those testimonies which appeared most worthy of trust. The disagreements were on matters of detail only, and on the whole the statements persistently agreed on the most important points. In any case, whenever a serious doubt arises, we shall be careful to point it out.

776 576 How could Lt. Marc ever write, "We do not believe that the Mossi have the concept of a single God and Creator"? (1) The idea of God

1. Marc, Au pays des Mossi /In Mossi Country/, p. 158.

is everywhere to be found among this people. The merest wish, the simplest greeting, includes the name of God. When someone is going away, the person who is leaving and those who are staying hold the following exchange: "May God be with me," says the one who goes; "May God see you home! May God cause you to return! May God move your legs!" answer those who remain.

Persons who receive gifts tell their benefactor: "May God keep you! May God cause you to remain a long time (on this earth)! May God reward you! May God repay you!"

If a friend is seen wearing a new garment, this occasions another greeting: "May God allow you to wear it out before you discard it!"

If he is eating, he is told: "May God cause you to profit by it!"

If he comes to announce the birth of an heir: "God grant that you may suspend him from your shoulder!" /Tr., Mossi children from age [854] two or thereabouts are often carried astraddle the hip and holding on to the shoulder./

If he is leaving to return on the same day: "May God grant us the pleasure of talking to each other!"

776 At the end of the day, the Mossi greet each other as follows: "May
576 God grant you a tommorrow!" To which they must reply: "May God give you a good morrow!"

On festive days those who meet tell each other: "May God lead you to the next year! May God allow you to see a new year!"

God gives health, maintains it, and restores it to the sick:

"May God give you health!" they wish each other, "May God increase your health! May God make you happy!"

Those who are in danger, or ill, are told:

"May God keep you from misfortune! May God restore your health! May God come with health and a cooling breeze!"

When death has struck, sympathy is offered to the family as follows:

"May God hinder the day (of death)!"

An arriving horseman is told: "May God help you dismount!" And to the man who has just lost a horse: "May God restore your tethering post!" (For only those who own a horse have a tethering post.)

When asked, "Who gives power to the medicines and to the amulets?"
776 a Mossi invariably replies that it is God.

God knows everything and is called upon as a witness: "By God!" If unjustly accused, the Mossi calls upon God: "God sees inside me, /79/ and He knows that there is nothing there!" And if someone does not know the name for something, he adds immediately, "But God knows it."

God disposes of everything, and the Mossi often say among themselves:

"If God grants me the day after tomorrow, I shall come"; "he was about to fall, but God came to his aid"; "we start talking in the morning and request God's protection."

God is everywhere, and it is impossible to hide from Him. God preserves us, and one naba who bore no trace of Islamism once told me: "We are in God's hand; we are God's sheep, and He watches over us as my son watches over my own sheep." It sounds like an echo of the Gospels: "I am the good shepherd." It would be easy to furnish other examples. God is superior to all spirits. He created them and He sends them to man, but He did not make them evil. Nevertheless, God may help us obtain revenge from our enemies, and His sacred name often recurs in curses: "May God suspend from your neck the bag of poverty! May God destroy you! May He destroy him completely! May God burn him in the fire!" (2) Every

776 2. We owe this list of formulas to the kindness of Fr. Thueux, the European who undoubtedly knows the Mossi language most intimately. May we express here our hearty thanks.

sacrifice includes a curse against enemies.

Beyond these wishes, however, no prayer is addressed to God
776 directly; no sacrifice is offered to Him without mention of spirits.
782 Yet, as we shall see in the following chapter, the invocations of the sacrificial formula are addressed mostly to God, and when the sacrifice is over all those who have participated in it greet the sacrificer with these words: "May God accept your sacrifice; may God receive it!"

But who is this God? Is he one or many? Has he a body, or is he
776 spirit? Where does he dwell? So many questions which a Mossi has never asked himself and which leave him momentarily bewildered. "Is God one or many?" "I don't know" is the usual answer. If one insists, he says that God is one. But a difficulty arises: "Why then, in sacrifices, do you invoke God-king male and God-king female?" Again: "I don't know; this is what our fathers said."

Does God have a body? Yes, assuredly, for only a highly practiced
776 intelligence can conceive of a pure spirit. But what is this body like?
821 "I don't know." Where is God? "Everywhere." But does he occupy a special place? "God is the sun."

Do they identify God with the sun? It is difficult for us to establish
776 a settled opinion on the subject. They do seem to grant the identifi-
782 cation, and in the course of sacrifices—after all, their sacrificial
821 formulas must fit their concept of divinity—they offer God water for his rising and pour it to the east, water for his retiring and pour it to the west. In a quarrel the weaker party says: "God is my witness that I have not harmed you; God will pay you back in kind," and points toward the sun. Sacrifices are never /80/ offered in the middle of the night; but then they are not made in the middle of the day either, and they may be offered in the evening, when the sun has dipped below the horizon. The names for God and for the sun are
776 different. Wendé is the proper name for God, Wennam indicates
821 God's power (Wende nam). These words have no plural and thus indicate a belief in God's oneness. The sun is called Winniga, or

776 Wintoro at noon when it scorches the earth (Winniga toro). It must be
821 added, however, that sometimes the sun is called Na /Naba/ Wendé, "God-king." At night God is supposed to retire into his hut, since the sun is no longer visible, and yet he continues to be everywhere. "If you commit an offense during the night, God knows about it." The Mossi are likely to say when the sun stands at the zenith, "It is God who makes the sun scorch us today." Thus they do seem, in practice, to make a distinction between God and the sun. The sun is God's dwelling, but it is not God. But what inconsistency in all this!

Natural phenomena are sometimes attributed to God. Lightning kills those who have done evil, it kills livestock wrongly obtained through fraud or theft, and it is sent in punishment by God ... unless it is sent by an enemy. Amulets and fetishes derive their power from
776 God, as already mentioned, and the same applies to medicinal remedies. Illness is usually attributed to an evil spirit who must be
[753] appeased, but sometimes it is also attributed to God. The Mossi do not seem to grant a soul to inanimate objects, but only to animate beings: plants, animals, men. Yet, as a rule, inexplicable or abnormal phenomena are attributed to spirits dwelling in inanimate objects.

There are three kinds of spirits: the tisé (plural of tiga, "tree"), who dwell exclusively in trees; the kikirsi (plural of kikiriga), or spirits proper; and the tangamma (plural of tangandé), the protective spirits of the villages who dwell in sacred groves.

The tisé reside preferably in those trees which stand near the huts, but some of them also dwell in the bush. They have a special liking for the tamarind tree and bastard mahogany, but they are not at all fond of the doubalé, which shelters bats. At night they leave their dwelling and go into the huts. Their bodies are human in form, but invisible to the common run of mankind. They are much taller and fatter than men, and they are black and walk with their feet up in the air and their heads down to the ground.

At night they wander about, and their presence is betrayed by a
776 darkening of the doorway; they are so fat that they blot out the light.
753 Woe to the man who has no water in his soukala, who has saved no millet beer! The tiga who comes and finds nothing causes pimples to grow all over the man's body; this is the illness characteristic of the tisé. He is fortunate if he gets away with so little, for the tisé can afflict him with many other diseases or even kill him. If the tiga manages to touch someone, the place touched will swell; if someone

776 makes noise in the bush under certain leafy trees, his cheeks will swell
753 out. The tisé talk, even during the day. It is their voices which are heard when the wind stirs the leaves. We had /81/ papaw seeds planted all around our dwelling. They had sprouted and grown well; the fruit was already ripening. One morning, no papaw trees were left in
[824] Koupéla! The naba had decreed that these were talking trees, that they would cause illness to those who had them in their soukala ... and the papaws had been cut down!

776 Fortunately, it is possible to protect oneself against the tisé. First,
782 those trees which shelter them may be felled, and the spirits will move elsewhere. Some very beautiful trees vanish thus from the villages. The tisé may also be appeased with sacrifices. Does this result in tree cult, dendrolatry? Indeed not! The Mossi clearly make the distinction between the tree and the spirit that inhabits it, and they sacrifice to the spirit. Sometimes also, a tree was planted on the
[769] grave of the elder who founded the village, and sacrifices are made to the ancestral spirit at the foot of the tree. Finally, there are fetishes more powerful than the tisé. It is enough to know which roots and barks the tisé do not like, to steep them in water, and to place the pot at the door of the hut. When a tiga sees this fetish, he invariably runs away. Some Peul are said to have the power to distinguish between those trees where spirits dwell and those where they do not, and to kill the former trees merely by rubbing them with butter! This must be done in a special way.

776 The kikirsi are imps, red or black all over, and only a few centi-
754 meters high. Their body has the same shape as ours, but it is much nimbler and more tenuous—something ethereal and impalpable that only the sorcerers can discern. The latter call them with a low whistle or by shaking a peculiarly shaped gourd that looks like a handle
[534] ending in a sphere. This gourd is dried without being opened, and the seeds gather in the sphere. The sorcerer makes noise by shaking this instrument, and the kikirsi flock to him singing.

776 There are good and evil kikirsi, and the good ones only do evil when forced to do so; for instance, when someone puts pepper in their sauce. They abhor pepper but they love honey, and every good housewife who wishes to preserve her honey covers it carefully with pepper to prevent the kikirsi from eating it. They are inordinately fond of sesame, and they dote on millet cakes (samsa); every woman who makes millet cakes offers them a few. People who eat samsa while walking are careful to drop a few crumbs to the ground. On the

776 other hand, the kikirsi do not drink fermented millet beer, but they must be offered some before the yeast (da'nodo) is added. They have their preferences like human beings. They know hatred and jealousy, and sometimes they even kill one another. They are said to have two 776 sexes, to marry, and to procreate. They even have the special faculty 845 of always bearing twins, and this is why twins are called by their 551 name and are dedicated to them; it is believed that spirits dwell within them.

776 The birth of twins causes their mother much trouble. Formerly 845 both were sometimes put to death, while at other times only one was 782 killed. When a woman bears twins, she builds at the door of her hut a tiny miniature house where the spirits dwelling /82/ within her children will take shelter. Three times a year if her means allow it, in the spring, in the winter, and at the height of the rainy season, or at least once a year, a guinea hen must be offered to the kikirsi. This fowl is sacrificed exclusively to them. On that day they must also be offered their favorite foods, and this means that honey, sesame, and millet cakes must be purchased, that beer must be prepared and a jar saved without yeast, that millet mush has to be cooked, and especially that no pepper be added to the sauce. Otherwise the husband, wife, or children will be afflicted with a dreadful eye disease, for [753] such is the illness which the kikirsi have the power of visiting on human beings.

776 As children, twins may wear only the kankabra, a garment made 845 of black and whitish threads, the characteristic clothing of the kikirsi. Happily, they are later allowed to dress as they please. If the mother dies, the twins offer the sacrifices themselves and build the small hut that serves as a dwelling for their little spirit. The later born twin is considered the older of the two. They both wear the same bracelet and share everything given to them. It is not considered proper to make a gift to one without giving the same thing to the other. Actually, these customs are to be found in Africa from Bambara country to Tanganyika.

776 To return to the kikirsi themselves, they are present everywhere. In the bush they are fond of termite nests, large and small. They 241 also like open spaces. They are to be found around the villages; there are ponds set apart for the kikirsi, wells considered to belong to them. There are spirits watching over every field, and before sowing, as also before harvesting millet, the master of the field sacrifices a chicken to the spirit on a stone in the middle of the field. The

776 kikiriga, in turn, are to ward off anything that might harm the crop,
241 birds, caterpillars, thieves, and the like, and to fill with millet a granary of the size drawn on the ground with ashes at the time of harvest. If the kikiriga has properly carried out his duties, he gets another chicken when all the grain has been gathered in a heap.
776 Pregnant women are under the protection of a special kikiriga, and
[843] small children have one of their own to ward off illness and danger. Do we not say ourselves that a special Providence watches over the very young?

776 Actually, everyone has his kikiriga. Some have an evil one, and
828 those are the people who quarrel with everybody, the ones who are never successful, whose livestock dies, for the kikirsi often kill the goats, sheep, and horses that die of illness. Other people have a
[517] good kikiriga, and for them everything goes well; they were born under a lucky star. These are the engaging, sweet, good-natured people who get rich and who have many children. When a Mossi lies down
[513] to sleep in his hut, he rests his head on a stone or a small mound of beaten earth. This is where his kikiriga dwells, and from time to time, especially when he feels the need for special protection, he
[782] sacrifices a guinea hen or sometimes even a goat, with the understanding that the spirit will chase away all fellow spirits who might want to harm him and will avert all illness and all danger from his path.

/83/ The tangandé is a spirit who has the shape of an animal and
776 who is regarded as the protector of a village. The term is also ex-
778 tended to designate the spirit's place of residence, usually the sacred
825 grove but sometimes a mere stone or even an open space. The tangandé may be a crocodile, a boa, a leopard, a turtle, a deer, a hare, etc. The animal is sacred to the whole village and may not be killed in the sacred grove, but it may be killed elsewhere, even a short distance from the thicket.

776 The tangandé is a guardian spirit because it protects men and sends
755 its servants to accompany the village people on trips when they request it to do so. The natives incessantly turn to it for protection, and the sorcerers incessantly refer those who consult them to the tangandé to obtain cures and to request the release of souls held captive
776 by evil sorcerers. When someone dies, sacrifices are made to the
782 tangandé with requests to protect the survivors and to ward off illness. When souls leave the body during sleep, they often go to the sacred
[774] grove. Anyone may sacrifice to the tangandé and in the tangandé.

776 The naba does so more than anyone else; on the Day of the Dead
782 (basra) he always makes sacrifices there, and usually the village elders accompany him.

776 A village may have several tangandé /sic/, but the protective
778 animal or animals—most often there are two—are the same in all the sacred groves, of which there are as many as there are tangandé /sic/. Nothing may be taken from a sacred grove; everything in it is sacred. No wood may be cut down, and it is forbidden even to gather dead wood which has fallen by itself. By the same token, the dry grass may not be set afire, not even in the area around the grove. If all precautions have been duly taken and fire nevertheless spreads to the sacred grove, nothing can be done and the village people are not held responsible. On the other hand, outsiders are prevented, by force if necessary, from taking anything whatever from the sacred grove. If the outsider is powerful and cannot be restrained, expiatory sacrifices are offered after his departure.

776 The tangandé is thus a guardian animal, and yet some tangamma
754 retaliate by afflicting the guilty party with diseases. If one of the sorcerers who eat souls (seuya) offers gifts to a tangandé, the latter will help him and refuse to restore the soul which has been entrusted to it, unless more substantial gifts are forthcoming. One may pray to a tangandé and make a vow, for example, promise it a goat or sheep if it kills a designated enemy. The goat is purchased pending the enemy's death. Sometimes the tangandé takes its time and
[781] several years go by. The spirit is chided and told to hurry, and finally decides to do away with the person in question. Then the goat is sacrificed.

776 Some people say that all tangamma come from the Fada N'Gourma
778 region, where the father of all tangamma is to be found. It is the sorcerer's task to point out the tangamma and the place of their
787 residence. Once, for example, a village had just been founded. The elders had found a piece of ground propitious to agriculture, in the vicinity of water, and had built their huts. At the beginning /84/ of the winter season, when the time came for sowing, they shared out the neighboring bush and proceeded to lay out their fields. One day a leopard driven out of its lair took to flight before their eyes and repaired to a thicket. Immediately the people were called, the thicket surrounded and searched thoroughly. No leopard was found. On the following day the same episode took place in the same spot. This happened three times, and every time it proved impossible to

776 find the leopard, which had suddenly vanished. The puzzled elders,
778 like the good Mossi they were, consulted the sorcerer who stated that
787 the leopard was their tangandé, and the thicket to which it had repaired was its sacred grove. He also prescribed the sacrifices to be offered.

776 As the blood of the victims flowed, the children saw a turtle
787 walking toward the sacred grove and tried to seize it. The elder prevented then from doing so and again resorted to the superior knowledge of the sorcerer to find out what this might possibly mean: a turtle entering the sacred grove during a sacrifice to the tangandé! The sorcerer pronounced the following oracle: the turtle is the child of the tangandé and thus becomes sacred to our village. Since that time the village has had the leopard and turtle as its tangandé /sic/.

776 The tangandé may actually be a stone or a tree which is regarded as the guardian of the village, but this is more unusual. The tangandé might perhaps be considered as a sort of village totem. If we take Salomon Reinach's definition of the totem as "the animal, plant, or more rarely mineral or heavenly body which the clan acknowledges as an ancestor, a protector, and a rallying sign," (3) we find that the

3. Salomon Reinach, Cultes, mythes et religion /Cults, Myths, and Religion/, p. 81.

tangandé is usually an animal, a guardian animal, but that it is not regarded as an ancestor and it does not serve as a rallying sign, for
[621] several villages may have the same tangamma /sic/—many have the crocodile and boa—without considering this as a bond between them.

Monseigneur Le Roy defines totemism as follows: "An institution consisting essentially of a magic pact, which reflects and constitutes a kinship, mystical and supernatural in nature, by which an invisible spirit in the visible shape of an animal, or, in exceptional cases, of a plant, mineral, or astral body, is associated with an individual, a family, a clan, a tribe, or a secret society for the purpose of reciprocal services." (4) This definition does not correspond to the

4. Mgr. Le Roy, La religion des primitifs /Primitive Religion/, p. 132.

776 tangandé in every detail either, for only the village may have a tangandé, and there does not seem to be any magic pact unless the sacrifices offered are considered as such a pact, which does not seem justified. The tangandé-animal is never sacrificed, and no special initiation takes place.

774 761 [775] The closest thing to totemism among the Mossi seems to be their concept of the human soul, and yet it is not, properly speaking, a totem in the sense indicated by these authors. Every man has a soul that lives on after death and takes the name of kyma, while during life it is called siga. Shortly before death it takes the name of toullé [197] /85/ in Ouagadougou or toundo in Koupela, but siga, toundo, kyma are one and the same thing, one and the same principle. According to the Mossi, this soul is an animal, invisible of course, a snake, a crocodile, a deer, a hare. The soul is related to this animal, it belongs to the same family, so that to kill a snake or a crocodile in a village where the soul of the inhabitants is a snake or a crocodile is to kill an inhabitant of the village; every individual related to the snake has a snake in the village to represent thim, and he will die when his soul-animal dies.

774 784 Yet, and this runs counter to the definitions of totemism, the individual expects no aid from this animal, never sacrifices to it, and never kills it himself to renew the kinship pact. A person whose soul is a crocodile is forbidden to kill crocodiles in his own village, but he may kill them elsewhere, although he may never eat them, while he may kill the tangandé animal as long as he does so outside the tangandé, and he may eat it at any time. Some people, when they [766] find a dead soul-animal of their family near their village, render it funeral honors, weep, wail, and bury it as one of their own, but they offer it no gifts and hold no koure. Generally it is merely covered with earth. The most widespread soul-animals are a kind of snake (bosombodro) and the crocodile. Several families may have the same [582] one, and marriage, although exogamic, is not forbidden between members of these families.

774 754 The soul may leave the body and in fact leaves it often, especially during the night. If children had a good time in a certain place, if they enjoyed themselves at someone's house, the soul returns there at night. This is when the worst is to be feared from the sorcerers; they may seize the soul by surprise, and its unfortunate owner will die.

774 In the course of a dream, the soul may warn its owner of a threaten-
828 ing danger. One day a native, whose village and name were told to
761 me, dreamed that his enemy offered him a kola nut. Much anxiety ensued, for this is a sign used by the soul to indicate that an enemy threatens one with death. In such a case there is only one remedy, to deposit a few cowries on a nest of large red ants, so they will avert the disaster. The man set out immediately for the nearest ant nest. Alas, a snake bit him along the way, and he died before he could offer his gift to the ants! Such occurrences obviously make a profound imprint on the imagination of the natives, who immediately react with the sophism: post hoc, propter hoc. A few such cases are sufficient to anchor them forever in their superstitions, and innumerable such occurrences were related to me.

774 If the soul can leave the body, it is possible to seize it and to pre-
761 vent it from re-entering its body, and this is why our Blacks do not like to be photographed. They say that there is an evil spirit in the box, who takes the soul and eats it. This is proved by the fact that the individual may later be seen on the piece of paper.

774 One becomes sick when his soul cannot re-enter the body because
753 it is held prisoner by an evil sorcerer or by a kikiriga, and many sacrifices must be offered to obtain its release /86/ and return. Entreaties are usually directed to the tangandé in such cases, because it is stronger than all the other spirits, stronger even than the sorcerers, and because its function is to protect the village.

774 Sometimes the soul was so well hidden that the tangandé cannot
761 find it: the sorcerer has eaten it right away, or the tangandé itself
754 is in collusion; or the ancestral spirits are calling the sick person; or, finally, it is God who sent the disease. Nothing can be done, and
775 the person dies. His soul changes names, and henceforth is called kyma. It leaves the body at the moment of death. If it was taken by a sorcerer or by the ancestral spirits, at the moment of death it leaves the sacred grove where it was held captive. It proceeds to the place of souls from where it will return to the grave whenever sacrifices are offered to it. It will also return if it wishes to afflict the survivors with a disease of some sort.

775 Is the soul punished for the evil it has done on earth and rewarded
735 for the good? Opinions on the subject differ. Some say that when one gives alms to the poor, and the Mossi frequently do, when one is generous and hospitable, God takes all that has been given and sets

775 it aside to return it to the soul when it leaves the body. From this
[735] comes the thank-you wish, "May God repay you!" If the deceased led an evil life, if he was quarrelsome or a thief, if he killed, he is condemned to walk over live coals to reach God, or if he is a murderer, he may come to God only after he has drunk all the blood he has shed, which God has saved for this purpose. The major offenders are detained by the treetops and never reach the place of souls. It must be said, however, that most Mossi take little heed of the penalties which may await them in the other life or deny their existence altogether.

The souls go to Bourtenga, the "gathering place of the souls," according to the etymology of the word, a place of indeterminate geographical location, or they go to Pilimpikou, a mountain located
775 in Kipirsi country. Their sole occupation over there is to go to market
764 at night, and this is why on the day of burial the deceased is given cowries so that he may buy millet beer and clothes in order not to look like a tramp.

The souls are white but otherwise they look like men, although they are nimbler and can move effortlessly and with great rapidity
[264] from one place to another. They do everything upside down; they eat with the left hand and do with it all the things we do with the right, and this is why the corpse is washed with the left hand. They wear their clothes inside out, with the pocket of the breechcloth facing in; they carry the spears iron downward, and they walk backwards because their eyes are placed behind their head. This is why the kourita who represents the deceased wears everything inside out.

775 The souls of the animals sacrificed to him, chickens, sheep, goats,
769 beeves, etc., go to join the deceased, who can thus feast, invite friends, and gather kin together, for people are reunited up there. Although nabas are no longer such, those who were subject to them on earth recreate their court. It is said that parents come to fetch their children, /87/ nabas their pages and favorite wives, and friends their friends, unless the survivors treat them very well and provide them with lots of food.

Indeed, the souls of the dead come back to earth to receive the gifts which are offered to them, to drink the blood of the victims sacrificed in their honor and the millet beer prepared for them on the annual Day of the Dead (basra). This is why no Mossi faithful to tradition ever drinks millet beer without first pouring a little on the

775 ground; he also pours what is left at the bottom of the gourd, so the
769 souls will rejoice with him. It is considered a great honor when a
[554] naba tells an elder to grasp one side of the gourd and to pour along with him.

One must not laugh about the souls of the deceased and their visits
775 to earth. If you doubt their return, listen to what an old naba once
764 told me. "One day, I had gone to visit a naba, my friend and neighbor. We had arranged to meet at his house with another neighboring chief. He gave us a very nice welcome, and the day was most pleasant. We were resting at night in the shelter of his soukala when we were suddenly awakened by the sound of harness bells and horses galloping. On the following day we left our host. No sooner had we left than he took ill. A week later he died. The souls had come to fetch him. Oh! Father, do not laugh about the souls of the deceased!" And the good old man trembled with emotion. This is what our Mossi believe. They firmly believe in all these ghost stories.

775 Are the souls reincarnated? Small children who die before the age of reason are said to return in the person of the first child borne by their mother. This is why, especially if the mother has lost several
[304] children in a row, the baby is marked at birth with distinctive signs, particularly tattooings on the belly and lower back; sometimes, if he
[764] dies, a piece of his ear is cut off, or a toe or finger joint broken. It is said that the child born next will bear the same marks, but no living example of this could be cited. Often, the mother leaves the hut where her baby died. An old woman spreads ashes before the door in the evening, and if small footprints are found in the morning, it is a sign that the child came back and wishes to return to his mother's bosom.

Rebirth is not granted to anyone other than young children, not even to young unmarried people. They remain in the place of the souls for years on end, the number of which cannot be ascertained, and no distinction is made between the rich and the poor, the powerful and their subjects.

775 The soul of suicides, cursed in death, is not entitled as a rule to
762 funeral ceremonies. It wanders through the world without harming anyone, but unable to find rest.

577 Morality is reduced to its simplest expression. Whatever harms
673 other people is bad. Think your own intimate thoughts and desire anything you like; as long as you do no harm to your fellow man, no fault has been committed. Fornication and adultery are faults only

577 673 [839] insofar as they involve an offense to justice. /88/ I do not speak of unnatural practices, which are almost unknown. When theft, murder, even insults, blows and wounds are punished, they are punished as injustices. Calumny is abhorred, and it is a very serious insult to say that someone has slandered someone else. A Mossi will not forgive an insult against his mother, because it is prejudicial to the family honor and hence to himself. In dealing with the natives, therefore, it is necessary to be careful and not to commit any injustices. They are very sensitive to this; while they accept a just punishment without complaint when the offense has been proved, they reject indignantly any accusation which cannot be proved, even when it is well founded.

577 784 In addition to this general morality, many things are forbidden not because they are evil, but because they entail baleful consequences. The taboos (kisgou to the Mossi, from kisé, "to forbid") are almost innumerable. They may be divided into two classes: permanent kisgou, which affect the whole family, and personal and transitory kisgou.

784 The former usually consist of a prohibition to eat a certain animal or to do a certain thing. Thus some nabas are forbidden to meet, to see one another, and if they disregard this prohibition, one of them will die before the year is over. This prohibition is easily explained by the incessant wars which were formerly waged between important chiefs, and their fear of being poisoned or done away with in some other way by one of their enemies. Another instance: a Mossi goes to war on a frisky horse and he is forced to flee. His foes are about to seize him, and he owes his escape to the swiftness of his mount. When he returns home, he decrees that the horse will be a sacred animal to him and to his descendants, and that henceforth all his children and their children must treat horses well and may not eat their flesh under penalty of blindness or leprosy. This is the extent of the prohibition. The horse is not considered a guardian animal, no sacrifices are offered to it, and the Mossi do not call it tangandé (guardian animal of the village) or siga((soul-animal), but kisgou (prohibition).

784 262 Sometimes the kisgou affects only certain members of the family. A father has been ill after eating dog flesh on two or three occasions. He consults the sorcerer, who states that dog flesh is forbidden to him and to his children, but not to other members of his family. A person

784 born among the Peul, to whom dog flesh is forbidden, may have the
262 dog as kisgou. Sometimes the kisgou concerns only him, his son, and grandson and not his other descendants, because the son and grandson will follow his own soul, while the soul of the other descendants will follow that of his mother, their great-grandmother, to whom dog flesh is not forbidden. A sorcerer's reasoning against which there is no argument!

/89/ This kind of kisgou is the more binding of the two, but it may be terminated if the person who established it offers the proper sacrifices, or if one of his descendants, of his own will, releases himself and his children from it. Thus the family of the Saman'Naba, Prime Minister of Koupéla, has the hare as kisgou. When the naba saw his Christian brothers and son eat hare flesh with impunity, without becoming blind or leprous, he took to eating it himself without ill effects.

784 Parents teach their children about the various family kisgou and
869 instill the proper awe into them so they will not eat these animals.
753 Involuntary disregard of one's kisgou may lead to illness, and the sorcerer consulted indicates what has to be done and what sacrifice must be offered to the tangandé to obtain his forgiveness. If the slip was deliberate, if it showed contempt, no forgiveness is possible.

784 The second kind of kisgou is quite special and personal. It consists
758 of the various prohibitions imposed by the sorcerers on a sick person.
262 A certain kind of meat or sauce is forbidden to the patient, or he may not drink water containing millet flour, or he may not eat millet or bean cakes. This is how a poor rachitic child with a heart disease was successively forbidden practically every kind of food. His relatives had the greatest difficulty finding those foods that were not forbidden to him, and eventually he died of starvation. All such kisgou terminate of course with the illness that caused them, unless the disease is incurable and lasts to the end of the patient's life.

Chapter 2. The Cult

000 If we define religion with Mgr. Le Roy (1) as "The body of beliefs,

1. Mgr. Le Roy, op. cit., p. 49.

000 obligations, and practices through which man acknowledges the supernatural world, fulfills his duties toward it and requests its assistance," there remains for us to investigate, now that beliefs have been studied, how the Mossi communicate with this supernatural world, how they discharge their obligations toward it, and how they request its assistance. This involves the whole matter of sacrifices and ceremonies.

Beyond this acknowledged and reasonable cult, however, there is another, magic, which is "the art of coercing into one's service the forces of nature, or harnessing the powers of the invisible world, through certain occult practices of a more ore less religious character." (2) This involves the whole area of superstitions, amulets, fetishes,

2. Ibid., p. 331.

and charms, and, more especially, the sorcerers and their practices.

782 Sacrifice is the central act of the cult in every religion, and it is usually bloody. Whatever their origin, the Mossi are no exception to this rule which applies to all mankind. They make bloody sacrifices and commune in the sacrifice to such a point that even those who did not witness the killing may eat of the animal and are said to have offered the sacrifice along with the sacrificer.

/90/ The blood of chickens, goats, sheep, and beeves is shed at the slightest pretext; sometimes it is the blood of donkeys, horses, and formerly even men. A Mossi will not undertake anything without sacrificing to his tangandé (guardian animal) or to his kikirsi (spirits). If he does not know to whom to address his sacrifice, he consults a sorcerer.

If a member of the family is ill, one or several sacrifices are offered; if someone leaves on a journey, if he goes hunting or fishing, he offers sacrifices. Sacrifices are also made when two men have quarreled and wish to make up their differences, and innumerable sacrifices are required as a result of dreams, evil forebodings, and dangers which seem to threaten. Sacrifices are made to gain the favors of kikirsi or ancestral spirits, to beg for success in an undertaking, to fulfill a row, to ward off a disease, to harm an enemy, to appease an irked ancestor or some incensed tisé, kikirsi, or tangamma. Hardly any medicines are prepared without a sacrifice, and sacrifices are part of all spells, of all procedures meant to harm an enemy. Sacrifices are offered before sowing, before harvesting, before building

782 a hut for one's wife. Sacrifices are made for every purpose, for everybody, and practically to everything.

Sacrifices are made everywhere. The sacred grove is the place most frequently chosen, along with the dwelling-stone of the kikiriga who protects the house. Sacrifices may be made, however, in the fields, in open spaces where nothing grows, or on the path which leads to the tangandé either from the village where one lives or from one's village of origin, if it is learned that the spirit requires a sacrifice and one cannot go there in person.

Any man may offer a sacrifice once he has reached the age of reason, and children of about ten are sometimes seen offering their sacrifices with as much solemnity as their elders. Women cannot [562] themselves make sacrifices; they must resort to the agency of men. They may, however, furnish the victim and partake of it when it is eaten. Nabas and men of some wealth have their own appointed sacrificer or sacrificers. This is compulsory for province chiefs, who themselves never sacrifice in public ceremonies and quite rarely in private.

There are several kinds of sacrifices, and we shall study each one of them in turn, the better to understand how the Mossi communicate with the invisible world.

First, the characteristic sacrifice which serves as basis to all the others, the mand'zallé.

The sacrificer, accompanied by his son bearing a white or otherwise colored rooster and a gourd containing millet flour mixed with water, proceeds to the place of the sacrifice, for example, to the tangandé.

Upon arriving he says:

782 Kabré, kabré. — Excuse me, pardon me.

539 /91/ Then he sits down, his face turned to the west, and taking the victim in his hands, he says:

Na-Wend'daogo, sak'a tan!	God-king male, answer thrice!
Na-Wend'poko, sak'a nasé!	God-king female, answer four times!
Na-Wend'ka kou ned'yé, kon ky yé.	If God-king does not kill, we do not die.
Na-Wendé ka léo, ned'kon lu'yé. — Pilimpik'dim n'yélé; lila kom'dim n'yélé t'eb y noara, ti	If God-king does not bind, we are not bound. — The butterflies have told us; the spirits of the water have told us to take a

782 539 no'pelra t'eb kis'tangandé t'a déé n'di né teng'kikirsi lé teng'portapa.

bird, a white rooster, and to offer it to the tangandé, so that he may take it and it with the kikirsi of the village and their wives.

782 539 755 This formula may vary with the circumstances. This is when the sacrificer sets forth his wishes. He tells the tangandé, for instance, that his son is ill and that he has consulted the sorcerer, who has told him to take a white rooster and offer it to the tangandé with water, so that the tangandé may restore his son's health. Then he pours the water behind his back, toward the east, and says:

Na-wendé, déé a ybou kom! God-king, receive the water of your rising!

Then he pours water before him, to the west, and says:

Na-wendé, déé a kyenbo kom! God-king, receive the water of your setting!

Finally he pours water on the sacrificial stone or before his feet, saying:

Tangandé, yk'n'déé kom nyou la kwen la biga lafi! Tangandé, arise, receive the water and drink it, and grant health to my son!

Nyé lé zouanga, nini ka yé. He is like a blind man, he no longer has eyes.

Tangandé nyé youngo né wintoro la ko biga lafi. The tangandé, he sees night and day and grants health to my child.

If the sacrifice includes an offering of millet beer, he pours some on the sacrificial stone, saying:

Na-Wendé ka nyou dam yé, la porédimma nyouda. God-king does not drink beer, but those of his retinue do.

Then he seizes the rooster with his left hand, bends its head back by pulling the comb, and slits its throat. He allows the blood to flow upon the stone where the water was poured, while saying:

Tangandé déé noara n'di, la kwen la biga lafi né sounoro! Tangandé, receive this rooster and eat it, and grant my child health and joy!

Then he tosses the rooster before him, saying:

Noara bé Wennam, ba souk' ba'a. This rooster is for God; may He dispell the illness.

Then he sends his child to get the rooster. The boy grasps the bird when it is lying on its back and if necessary helps it to achieve this

782 position. /92/ He drags it along the ground by the feet to the
539 sacrificer, who says:
755 T'a vouda bemdaoge. Drag me enemies along the ground.

The sacrificer then seizes the chicken and sets it upon its feet, holding its head straight:

T'a timma biga! May He grant health to my child!

He turns the rooster around, with its head down and its legs up in the air:

T'a terida bema! May He cause my enemies to bite the dust!

With his left hand he tears feathers from the neck, spits on them, and glues them to the stone or to the ground with the victims's blood, saying:

Yelbandé tou sébro! May all that is evil go with the wind!

Ta toubré oum! May his /my enemy's/ ears catch (my curses)!

Ta nif ka nya yé! May he /my enemy's/ eyes go blind!

He breaks one of the chicken's legs:

T'a kao bemdaogo karga! Break the leg of my male enemies!

He breaks the other leg:

T'a kao bempoko karga! Break the leg of my female enemies!

He returns the bird to the child, who carries it away. The remaining water and beer are poured on the very spot of the sacrifice.

The rooster is plucked there or at home and roasted or cooked in water according to the sacrifice. The sacrificer removes the claws, beak, pinions, and liver, and he places them in the left hand of his child who lays them by the path some distance away, saying:

Mand'déé gobra, la kwen détogo nyé masem. The sacrifice is received with the left hand, but grant him health with the right hand.

He returns to the place where the people are gathered, and the victim is shared among all present. When all have eaten, they gather in a group before the sacrificer and greet him as follows:

Wennam déé mando! May God receive /Tr., the Mossi word means "eat"/ your sacrifice!

Wennam tou taoré! May God accept it!

The sacrifice is over.

782 If a goat, sheep, or beef was sacrificed, the hair on top of the
755 head is pulled out instead of neck feathers, and a piece of the rope used to tie the victim is added. All of this is glued where the blood was shed, and the victim's legs are not broken.

Such is the usual sacrificial formula. Variations are of course introduced by individuals and by the customs of particular regions. This is the mand'zallé.

/93/ The mand'lingdem or mand'dédem, which we might call "hidden sacrifice, " is offered for the sake of someone who is ill and on the point of death. His illness is due to the fact that the soul has left his body. The sorcerer has said that it is to be found in the tangandé. Without the sick person's knowledge, hence the name "hidden sacrifice, " his father goes to the tangandé, accompanied by another of his children who bears the victim and some water and by the sick person's mother who bears a large gourd half filled with water and a smaller gourd inside it.

The sacrifice is offered as previously described, but while the child is roasting the chicken, the sacrificer tosses onto the ground three cowries in the case of a sick boy, four in the case of a girl, and pours a little water. Then he invokes the sick child by name:
[801] "Bila, come, answer me." He calls three times for a boy, four times for a girl. He then takes the cowries and some of the soil which was soaked with water and the animal's blood. The woman lifts the small gourd which floats in the water, the sacrificer places the mud and cowries at the bottom of the large container, and the woman quickly covers the mixture with the small gourd which she holds down in the water. This procedure is repeated three or four times according to the patient's sex. The woman then heads toward home, holding the container in one hand and still bearing down on the small gourd to prevent it from floating. The sacrificer follows her, waving his sword or spear behind her to ward off the evil spirits. The soul is at the bottom of the water, amid the bloody mud and cowries, and they must do their utmost to prevent it from running away again.

When the procession reaches the patient, he is made to sit up, and the woman pours the water of the large gourd on his head, without lifting the smaller gourd. If the sick person, surprised by this sudden shower, gives a start, it means that he is saved; his soul has re-entered his body. Otherwise, nothing can be done, and the unfortunate person is abandoned to his fate; the tangandé did not want to return the soul.

782 755 Then the sacrificer and his assistants eat the victim, but the patient does not partake of it.

782 751 [753] The silent sacrifice, mand'moukou—also called "egg sacrifice," mand'gellé, because an egg is offered—is made in the following circumstances. Some diseases have the dismal faculty of talking like people. They call someone, who answers to his name thinking that a human being has called him. This is sufficient, he will fall ill and die.

The sorcerer decrees that such a disease threatens the village, and that a silent sacrifice is in order. The naba and the elders anxiously delegate one of the men among them to offer the sacrifice. On the following day in the morning, the appointed elder takes an egg, often also a kola nut and special roots, and follows the path which the disease would take if it came to the village. He walks in complete silence. When he reaches a certain point, he brings the egg close to his lips and tells it secretly that a disease threatens the village, and that if the disease tries to follow this path, the egg must stop it. Then he places the egg, kola nut, and roots upon the ground or buries them and retraces his steps. /94/ The egg, a chicken-to-be that cannot yet talk, is chosen as a symbol of the silence that must be observed to ward off the disease.

In the procedure called "bad sacrifice," the victim is not eaten by those present but left on the spot, where it rots or is eaten by vultures and hyenas. Any animal may be offered in this fashion, but the sorcerer alone may decide when the sacrifice is called for. It is usually performed to avert a general misfortune, for example, to ward off a contagious disease that will devour the animal and leave the people alone. The victim is sometimes abandoned alive and driven into the bush.

782 Anything may be offered in sacrifice if the sorcerer says so: kola nuts, cowries, the ashes of certain barks or roots, red stones, the inner fruit of the karite tree, etc. Chickens are the victims most commonly chosen, but sacrifices of goats and sheep are not uncommon. We have already mentioned the guinea hen as the sacrifice preferred by the kikirsi. The nabas are sometimes required to sacrifice cows or donkeys in certain cases. Some nabas, but not all, may sacrifice horses. Finally, even men were sacrificed in the old days. Certain tangamma [563] were greedy for human sacrifices, and the Peul were often used for this purpose. Natives with light skins tending to red, thus closer to [826] the color of ancestral spirits which are said to be white, were sacrificed to these spirits in preference to any others.

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782 to these spirits in preference to any others. These sacrifices were rare, and they were the sole prerogative of the highest chiefs.

Sometimes a vow is made instead of an immediate sacrifice. This is the poulongo mando. For example, a disease rages in the country, or someone has a serious undertaking at hand and wonders how it will turn out, or he wishes to dispose of an enemy. The person who makes the vow goes to the tangandé or to the kikirsi stone, carrying a gourd of water. He pours the water, saying, "Tangandé, if this illness departs, or if my understanding succeeds, or if my enemy dies, I will sacrifice to you a goat or a beef." To prove his good intentions, he buys the promised goat or cow at the first opportunity. If the tangandé or kikirsi grants his request, he fulfills his vow; in the sacrificial formula, instead of saying that the sorcerer told him to offer a certain victim, he mentions his vow and often promises another sacrifice on the following year.

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782 The Moslems have invented another bloodless sacrifice for their own benefit. Here is the recipe: "If someone is ill in your soukala,
755 take a kola nut, honey, honey cakes, beans, maize, and cowries and mix them all in a gourd filled with water. Then call in a Yarga or Peul Moslem to say a prayer. Of course, this man will only make the trip /95/ for a fee. A sheep at least must accompany the request." Grave, stately, and guarded as all good Moslems are supposed to be, the man sits down in the inner courtyard near the hut where the sick person lies, and the people sit around him, both hands open before their eyes, like a book, with their little fingers joined. The Moslem begins his prayer in Mossi, repeating the request that was made to him, that the patient should get well. When he is finished, he moves both hands across his face, three times for a boy, four times for a girl. Then the people go back to their former position, and the man utters some gibberish in Arabic or Peul. When he is through, all the people move their hands repeatedly across their faces; the head of the household dips his hand in the gourd which contains the mixture described above and puts it to his forehead; the children carry everything away; and everyone greets the sanctimonious rascal with the words: "May God grant your prayer!" Then the man sets out for home with the same gravity as before. The water will be used to wash the patient, and some of it will also be added to his food. None of this is very alarming, and if some patients get well through auto-suggestion, all the better.

789 Blessings and curses are also used. Should they be classed with the cult, or with magic? One way or the other, there are natives who have the power to kill anyone merely by saying a word. They can make the harvest wither, the cattle sicken. There are also some who can bless, make a trip propitious, an undertaking successful. If you
752 are wounded, go to them. They will put around the wounded part of
755 your body a greasy rope with three or four knots according to your sex;
801 there will be no swelling, and the wound will heal quickly.

782 Such are the major sacrifices and the practices of the cult. The
769 sacrifices offered to the spirits of the dead on the day of burial or on
796 the day of kouré have not been mentioned, because the animals offered are not properly speaking sacrificed (kou mando) but offered, presented, fabré. We shall now mention the sacrifices made on the Day of the Dead.

The Koupéla Mossi have two major feast days: the Day of the Dead or basra, and the Moslem sheep celebration called kibsa. Both are intimate family affairs.

Basra is the feast of the dead. On that day every family head must offer sacrifices to his ancestral spirits, and he alone may sacrifice upon the grave. Even if a member of the family has become powerful and wealthy, he will not offer the sacrifice which devolves by right to the family head. All members of the family who wish to offer a sacrifice on the ancestral grave must, therefore, go to their elder on that day. Anyone may sacrifice to the kikirsi and tangandé, and almost everyone does at this time. It is mainly on this occasion that little children may be seen gravely sacrificing their chicken to their kikirsi and to the tangandé; each makes it a point of honor to offer his own animal. Only chickens are sacrificed on that day.

Basra is not celebrated by every family on the same day. Some celebrate it before the province chief does, others after him, while most families do it on the same day he does.

/96/ The naba of Koupéla proceeds as described below, and the ceremonies are the same for his subjects with the sole difference that being less wealthy they cannot offer as many sacrifices. The basra is always celebrated by the naba on a Saturday. Already on Thursday he has taken non-fermented beer from the vats and poured it on the graves of his father and grandfather. He has also sacrificed a chicken on each of the tombs. Wherever an ancestor of the naba is buried, the guardian of the grave sacrifices a chicken. This is repeated on

782 Friday evening. The sacrifice is the usual one described earlier, but
769 the invoking formula is replaced with the following: "Soul of my
796 father, stretch out your hand and take this chicken which I offer you; grant me to reach next year in good health, and I will return with another chicken." The chicken killed on the grave is not roasted as in other sacrifices, but cooked in water.

On those days one must be careful not to sleep outside. The souls come to drink beer from the vats, and woe to those who lie in their way. They will kill them or at least make them seriously ill.

782 On the feast day itself, all those who have some obligation toward
769 the naba or toward the man who is holding the festivities, such as
796 those to whom he has given a wife or who have asked him for one,
431 come to greet him with a rooster and cowries if they did not come on the previous day. Many of his subjects, especially the canton chiefs, also come to offer their rooster and cowries. On the other hand, if an important visitor comes on that day, it is an elementary rule of civility to offer him a rooster.

782 Usually, on the very day of the festivities, no sacrifices are offered
769 on the graves. The victims are offered to the protective kikirsi of
796 the hut, of the inner courtyard, of the outer courtyard, of the whole soukala. The number of sacrificed chickens varies in proportion to the number of gifts. When the sacrifices are over, the naba assembles his people, and the beer is brought in and presented to him. He first pours a little on the ground as an offering to the ancestral spirits, then he drinks and distributes the ars among his people. This is not
[273] a good day to discuss important matters, because after noon everybody is more or less drunk.

On the following Monday and Wednesday, the naba proceeds at dawn with great pomp to two neighboring villages (Nakalbo and Sabré) to sacrifice a beef to the tangandé. Much feasting ensues there on those two days; the naba loses a beef /in each village/ but gains many chickens and a few thousand cowries. He also goes to the village of Toulgou on the day when basra is celebrated in that locality, because his family originated there.

527 The kibsa is the Moslem sheep feast, and it is celebrated forty days after the end of the great feast. All Mossi celebrate it in private; every family has brewed millet beer, and on that day millet mush is replaced with rice and meat. These festivities are even more intimate than the previous ones in the sense that they are held

527 everywhere on the same day, and by and large people stay home to
[574] eat and drink. They go visiting on the days which follow.[1]

On the morrow of the day when the moon appears on the horizon, that is, nine days before the feast, the chief of the Kalmodo Yarsé solemnly comes to greet /97/ the naba of Koupéla. He bears in his hand the spear of Naba Silga, one of the predecessors of the present naba, and speaks approximately as follows. Naba Gado (the naba of the Kalmodo Yarsé) and Naba Silga were friends. The slave of Naba Gado ran away, and the naba looked for him everywhere but could not find him. Naba Gado went to Naba Silga and said; "My slave has run away, and I have looked for him everywhere in vain." Naba Silga replied, "I have not seen him either." And Naba Gado went on looking for his slave. Finally he found him and came to tell Naba Silga, who had the slave returned to him. To show his gratitude, Naba Gado offered Naba Silga the feast of fire. The latter refused, saying, "It is fire, and fire burns." Then Naba Gado suggested the fast, Ramadan. Naba Silga refused again, for fasting is hunger and thirst, and would a friend make such a gift to his friend? Then Naba Gado suggested the kibsa, but with the condition that every year Naba Silga should prepare abundant food for him and all his people, that all should come and celebrate the festivities here and make merry with their hearts full of joy. Naba Silga readily agreed.

When the naba of Kalmodo finishes this little speech, the first wife of the naba of Koupéla offers him a gourd of water, for Moslems do not drink fermented beer, and the naba of Kalmodo sings the praises of all the predecessors of the present naba of Koupéla. Then everyone makes noise and dances. A week later, the naba of Kalmodo always returns with the spear and the war drum. The naba of Koupéla offers him a beef which the naba of Kalmodo slaughters. He pours the blood on the spear and says, "May God grant health to the naba and to his ministers!" The naba has the victuals brought in. When all have eaten, they come to greet the naba, saying, "May God grant you another year!" and then they depart.

These two festive days, basra and kibsa, are observed by all Mossi. (3) There are others peculiar to the naba of Koupéla, which we shall

3. To be exact, it must be said that the name basra is not used everywhere in Mossi country, but the feast itself appears to be

[1] [i.e., following the Kibsa, the Moslem sheep feast. - Analyst]

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observed everywhere. In Bélousa, it is called kytouara. The name kibsa, on the other hand, is known everywhere, but special circumstances may prevent its celebration. Thus the warriors of one canton were defeated on that day, consider the kibsa unpropitious, and no longer celebrate it.

mention briefly.

The naky (naba ky, "naba's millet") is the naba's personal feast. It is always celebrated on a Saturday, like all the naba's ceremonies. It is proclaimed at market by the village-crier twenty-one days beforehand. Seven days before the feast, the naba sacrifices a goat on [782] the threshing floor and eats it on the spot after it has been roasted. The three nabas assigned as keepers of the naba's millet thresh a little grain, and every day they return to the grounds to thresh a little more until the day of the festivities. The quantity of millet thus flailed does not fill more than two baskets.

On the day of the feast, early in the morning, the high ministers go with their retinues to greet the naba: "May God be with you; may God grant you to see the year through!" A procession is formed and proceeds to the naba's threshing floor. His sisters and wives take part of the millet threshed on the previous days and carry it /98/, shrieking and dancing, to a granary located outside the naba's soukala. Then everyone drinks copiously.

Two days later, in the evening, another ceremony takes place. The naba's relatives go to the threshing floor and wrap the remaining millet in grass stalks; the bundle is carried to the sound of drums with jesting, shrieks, and dancing, as on the day of a burial. The millet is placed in the granary alongside the grain brought in on the day of the feast, and a sheep and a chicken are sacrificed nearby and [782] shared among those present. The naba does not partake of this flesh. Actually he hides throughout the ceremony, for if he saw the pro- [784] cession he would die.

What is the origin of this custom, which reminds the naba that in spite of all his power he is mortal like his subjects? What is the origin of that other custom, mentioned earlier, of building near his dwelling the hut where he will be buried? The Romans used to remind their

527 victorious heroes that they were only mortals. The thought of death is wholesome and beneficial.

The "bean feast" is so named because on that day the naba eats bean sauce for the first time in the year.

The naba's hoeing ceremony (na-kobo) is celebrated twenty-one days after the previous one, and like it, like the naky, always on a Saturday. When the naba of Koupéla was solemnly invested by the naba of Bélousa, he used to go with a large number of horsemen and much pomp to hoe a field located some distance from Koupéla. Nowadays he merely breaks ground on a path which connects his huts with those of his two prime ministers. He gives the first blows with the [526] hoe to the sound of drums, and his men take up from there. If the Peul and the horsemen have come in sufficient numbers, they run [273] races. As is usual in such circumstances, beer flows freely, and at the end of the day everyone is drunk. These festivities bring the naba a few thousand cowries offered by his subjects.

000 There ceremonies, naky, nakobo, do they not constitute a sort of homage to agriculture, do they not recall similar festivities celebrated long ago by the Romans and even today by the Chinese?

443 The market which follows each of these feasts is always crowded. Several beeves and large numbers of sheep are killed. Everyone makes a point of attending in his very best clothes, and the sight of this motley crowd is quite interesting indeed.

Chapter 3. Magic

000 Mgr. Le Roy, as already mentioned, defines magic as "the art of coercing into one's service the forces of nature, or harnessing the powers of the invisible world, through certain occult practices of a more or less religious character." This is what we shall now study. To put some order into a subject which is wholly lacking in it in the mind of the native, we shall first discuss the superstitions, then the sorcerers.

[181] Like all primitive people, black or white, the Mossi are very superstitious. Were not our own ancestors, in the Middle Ages? Have superstitious beliefs, such as those concerning thirteen people at table,

000 spilled salt, /99/ four-leaf clovers, hares crossing the roadway, etc., been altogether eradicated by science?

751 No matter how things may stand among us, superstition reigns
789 supreme among the Mossi. Amulets and talismans are greatly valued. Anything may contribute to their manufacture, from the highly prized head of a crowned crane to that of a hawk or a gray heron. Anything may be found in the numerous little bags which hang down a native's neck, from scraps of paper with a few words of Arabic scribbled upon them which Moslem Marabouts distribute in large numbers throughout the Sudan, to cowries or the ashes of every possible and imaginable root. There are amulet bracelets which are worn on the left arm and which protect against seuya sorcerers (see p. 127) if their wearer remembers to push them swiftly up his arm when meeting one of those dreadful soul-eaters. There are bracelets which protect people in fights, and iron rings which act as safeguards against snake bite. Do you want to be welcomed and accepted by the man whose daughter you wish to marry? Wear a certain bracelet on your right arm, and your hopes will come true.

Amulets are worn around the head, neck, arm, or wrist. They are sewn to the cap or to the clothes, attached to the belt, to the pipe, to the staff, anywhere. The list would be endless if we tried to enumerate all the various kinds of amulets. The shoulder blade of a beef fastened to the end of a stick and an iron chain stretched across the soukala entrance protect its inhabitants against a host of misfortunes and unpleasant nocturnal visitations. People consider themselves fortunate to possess such easy protection against the numerous spirits prowling for victims.

787 If you have dogs, watch them carefully. If they are so careless as to lie down or relieve themselves in a basket, or to vomit within the hut, kill them fast or you will die yourself. If your bitch bears only one puppy, kill her pitilessly. When the gray heron flies over the huts shrieking, mothers beat on their jars for fear that their
783 children will get diarrhea. Hunters must not eat koba meat before
789 they engage in their sport, and if they want to gain skill, they must
224 secure certain roots, cook them in water, and wash their hands with the mixture.

777 Sunday is the day of the spirits, the day when koure is held. It is also a good day to build huts. There is nothing special about Monday, but you must be careful about Tuesday, for you never know what it

777 may hold in store. Wednesday is unreservedly bad, and you must not start a job or leave for a trip on that day. Thursday and Friday are propitious to weddings, especially Friday. On Saturday the sorcerers take the day off and hold no consultations. In addition, every individual has his own lucky day and his unlucky day, which he must know and bear in mind.

778 787 823 Some stones are said to have fallen from heaven. On the day when they fall, the village chief immediately covers all the jars in his hut which contain charms. If he knocks one down in his haste, he will die within the year. These stones are held sacred. Those who can lift them /100/ have nothing to fear, but those who cannot are soon to die. People may also interrogate such a stone, whose reply is considered favorable if they manage to lift it, unfavorable if they cannot [788] do so. Passersby toss millet stalks onto the stone, or twigs cut along the way, or sometimes cowries, to procure success in their endeavors.

821 787 Comets are omens of war or of the death of a great chief. When Halley's comet appeared on the horizon, the chickens, goats, and sheep had a bad time of it. It was necessary to ward off all the possible misfortunes. It is true that the comet was magnificent, spreading for several days from one end of the sky nearly to another, and it is understandable that the natives should be upset. We have heard that many people were troubled in our civilized countries, where the comet could not be seen in all its splendor. In spite of all those sacrifices, the chief of one of the principal cantons in the province, the naba of Pwitenga, died that very year!

000 We must limit our enumeration, and these few examples, which could easily be multiplied, suffice to make clear the role of amulets and superstitions in the life of this people.

801 One further word on superstitions. The reader may have noticed that the numbers three and four and their composites have recurred constantly according to the sex of the person spoken of. Three is reserved for men and four for women. In the sacrifices, God-king male is called three times. God-king female four times. The cord of the charm has three or four knots according to sex; mothers mourn their children for 33 or 44 days. A dead man receives 333 or 3, 333 cowries, a dead woman 444 or 4, 444, etc.

302 Every time a native changes his status, his hair must be removed. Babies are shaved before they are given a name, girls before they come to their husband, women when they are transferred to a new

302 husband by legacy; while men are shaved only when they receive their first wife, because then they become masters of a hut, but they are not shaved when they get new wives because their status does not change again. A man who is appointed naba must lose his hair which was that of a subject and no longer suitable to a chief. A dead person [764] may only be buried without being shaved if he died an accidental death, etc.

789 The cross also plays a role which must not be overrated, but which is nevertheless real. The hilts of swords bear the shape of a cross; the feet, hands, and chest of the sick are often anointed with charcoal mixed in fat, always in the shape of a cross. The chests and backs of soukala dwellers are also marked with crosses to protect them against lightning. The huts are marked likewise, and crosses are drawn even inside the mouths of horses and donkeys. A cross is also drawn on the hut door of those who are seriously ill so as to ward off evil spirits. A cross of ashes on the chest and back is part of the mourning costume.

What is the origin of this custom? The natives cannot say, and invariably reply, "This is what our fathers did."

In addition to these superstitious practices that do not commit one to anything and that harm no one, there are others which can be very useful to /101/ those who practice them, and others yet which seem indeed to fall into the category of magic. We are referring to what the natives designate by the generic name of tim, without differentiating between true remedies of medicinal origin and superstitions or evil spells which should be characterized as magic. Indeed, it is often quite difficult to distinguish between the two.

755 Amulets and charms are tim to the natives, and so are the medicines which their specialists prescribe and which seem to have real effectiveness. We mentioned them briefly when we spoke of illness. We did not say that the preparation of these medicines rarely goes unaccompanied by some sorcery, and that the person who has been cured by a remedy must at least keep some in a little bag and sacrifice a chicken to it every year. Everything is done as in the usual sacrifices, but the invoking formula is replaced with the following: "God-tim, stretch out your hand and take this chicken. God has given me a powerful medicine. May this medicine protect me night and day, in the middle of the night and on the path, where we amuse ourselves and in the huts. Keep the jaws of the snake shut so that next year I may still be in good health, so that no misfortune may come to me,

755 so that my heart may rejoice unceasingly. Then I will come back with another chicken, so that you too may rejoice and continue to protect my wives and my children." Then the sacrifice is concluded. This formula does indicate that the power of the medicine is wholly ascribed to God.

751 Certain superstitious practices that belong in the tim category are used in special cases. For the sake of curiosity, here is what is done when a man has killed a hyena and to protect the huts against lightning.

[828] If a man kills a hyena, he must hastily consult some other native who previously has killed one, or he will become raving mad. The hunter goes to such a man who knows a remedy against this raving madness and takes him a chicken. The man indicates which roots must be obtained, and the hunter gathers them in the bush. He cuts them to pieces and brings them to his doctor who seizes a jar, grabs the chicken, and pulls it toward the roots, then says while pouring water into the ar: "God-tim and his kikiriga, arise, stretch out your hand, and take this water to drink it; take this chicken to eat it, and grant the man who has killed a hyena not to become raving mad." He sacrifices the chicken and pours the blood into the pot. Then he puts half of the roots into the jar and reduces the other half to ashes.

The hunter takes the whole thing home, and for seven days he puts water from the medicine into his millet mush and ashes from the roots into his sauce.

On the seventh day all the family members get together and come with their friends to greet the hunter. They all toss cowries into the gourd which contains the medicine, then proceed to market with much ceremony. The hunter fastens the head of the hyena to the end of a staff and bears it triumphantly to market. He has /102/ the right to take pistachios, beans, millet, cakes, etc., free of charge, anything he wishes. When he is finished taking things, stealing like a hyena, the procession falls into line once more and proceeds to a thick tree near the market. There, the hunter drives his staff into the ground, and everybody starts dancing around him; then they take small sticks and strike him, and he hastily runs away. He is now sure that he will not become raving mad, and what is more from now on he may kill as many hyenas as he wishes without fear.

821 Water in general and rain in particular are a blessing in this sun-
825 scorched land. Crocodiles are reputed to attract water to their dwelling-place. To kill a crocodile may not necessarily amount to homicide, but it amounts at least to drying out a watercourse or pond, for the crocodiles will leave the place and the water will leave with them. If rain is too long delayed, the crop will not have time to ripen; if it falls too heavily, especially at the beginning and at the end of the winter season, weeds will choke the millet, or the flowers will fall before the fruit is formed.

789 Rain is, therefore, desired or feared according to the circumstances,
and the power to make rain and to ward it off devolves upon the naba,
829 who rules on the life and death of his subjects. In truth every powerful man is believed to possess this power, and how often they requested me to make rain! Is it not true that Whites can do anything? They are related to the ancestral spirits, their color proves it! Do they not come from the land of water? Did they not emerge from the water? In spite of my assertions that God alone can make rain, that one must pray for it, their skeptical smiles made it plain that they did not believe me.

789 The naba has the charm, the talisman, to draw rain. All he need do when a storm threatens is to take from his hut a certain jar full of certain roots and fill it with water to overflowing. On the other hand, if he wishes to ward off rain, he burns another kind of root, and the wind carries the smoke in the direction where the naba wishes to send the clouds; or else he hangs a cow's or horse's tail to a stick by a thread, and the wind tosses it, thus driving the clouds away. This is why the naba sends one of his men to market when the rainy season draws near, to gather karite fruit from each woman there, because the pits are used to make the charm and must be obtained in this fashion. If a person other than the naba has tried to make rain and failed, he attributes his failure to someone more powerful than himself; if the naba fails, no one says anything about it, or else it is said that the naba did not really wish to attract or to ward off the rain.

821 Every storm is accompanied by lightning, which often kills people in this land of violent thunderstorms. Its effects are attributed to an evil spirit, to an enemy ~~who can~~ send lightning if he knows the proper tim, or to God Himself. Lightning strikes thieves and murderers; it is a punishment. If it does not kill the thief himself, it kills the proceeds of the theft, the stolen horse or sheep. It never kills a person without reason.

789 /103/ Happily, it is possible to avoid lightning. To achieve this,
821 it is necessary to find in the bush a white substance rather similar to hyena droppings which the natives call "rain dung," as well as certain tree roots. Part of these roots is left to soak in water for three days, and the rest is burned to ashes. A chicken is sacrificed to the tim. Then the water in which the roots have steeped is used to cook the millet mush, and the sauce is made with baobab leaves. All the soukala dwellers must eat this millet mush, and every one of them is marked on the back and chest with a cross of ashes mixed with karite butter. The horse and donkey, alone among the animals, are similarly marked on the back, chest, and inside the mouth. The huts are marked on the east side, the direction from which the rain comes, and above the entrance. Now there is nothing to be feared. We do feel, however, that lightning-rods are more effective.

759 All these tim, medicinal remedies, amulets, talismans, and
756 superstitious recipes, are prescribed either by true doctors who actually know the properties of herbs and effect real cures or by sorcerers. The doctors are often consulted. Since they specialize in certain diseases, they are consulted for those diseases alone. Those who have been cured by a medicine willingly make it known to friends who are afflicted with the same illness. The doctors are as numerous as the diseases which afflict mankind.

278 Some doctors are not merely healers but also poisoners, and they
674 are greatly feared. The surest way to get rid of an enemy is to consult them, but their fees are high. They have slow poisons which consume the victim gradually and the overwhelming ones which kill in a few hours. They put them in drinks, in millet mush, or more
754 often in kola nuts. There are also people, sorcerers rather than doctors, who claim the power to kill at a distance and who know how to practice sympathetic magic. Their prestige has waned since the French occupation because they have not managed to kill the Whites who settled in the country; but they say that our tim are more powerful than theirs.

764 The sorcerers are also numerous. There are those who take up the
756 call of their own accord and those who are born sorcerers. The former
791 are the bagré and seuya; the latter the tibo, bartibo, waongo, and nyonnyonsé. Pardon us these barbaric words, but they are impossible to translate.

791 The bagre is the nice, innocuous kind of sorcerer, who helps the
756 poor for a penny or two. He is consulted about everything. For example, what does the future hold? Will fire destroy my huts or won't

791 it? Will my journey be successful? And so forth. If the answer is un-
756 favorable, what must I do to avert misfortune? The bagré are resorted to especially in case of illness, to find out which spirit caused the disease and what the spirit wants. The role of the sorcerers is thus /104/ chiefly to prescribe the sacrifice and to indicate to whom it must be directed. More rarely they prescribe a medicine, but no one puts much faith in such remedies; in most instances, they indicate a negative treatment by stating what is forbidden to the patient.

756 They use the process of elimination to spot the disease. "He has a headache," says the sorcerer. If the reply is negative, he mentions another part of the body. "A stomach-ache ...No. A pain in the arm ...No." He must eventually hit on the right statement. If the sick person is cured following the prescribed sacrifice, the sorcerer is said to be skillful and to be truly in touch with the spirits, and his practice and income grow accordingly. If the patient is not cured or dies, it is either because the sorcerer has cheated or because he does not "see." Another sorcerer is sought out, in the hope of finding a true seer.

Sorcerers are carefully listened to, and everything they prescribe is faithfully carried out. Since they sometimes guess right, since even more often the patient is cured through auto-suggestion because the sorcerer said that he would be cured, since among people who fall ill those who get well are fortunately more numerous than those who die, for all these reasons the prestige of the sorcerers is high and their practice numerous, for it includes all the Mossi. The bara (plural of bagré) are not feared. They are abused when their prescriptions fail, and they are never consulted in the course of trials to find out the name of a culprit.

791 On the other hand, people often ask them who has killed their
695 child, their wife, their livestock, and the bagré sometimes indicates the culprit, with resulting enmity between the wronged party and the individual pointed out as guilty. The latter often resorts to trial by ordeal in self-defense. He himself suggests that he should drink poison, or that he should be burned with a red-hot iron or strangled with braided shreds of straw. If he is innocent, the poison will not harm him, the fire will not burn him, the straws will come apart. Only those who wished to do so resorted to such ordeals, and the judges never made use of this procedure. In trials actual proof had to be submitted.

791 Anyone may become a sorcerer, and those who take up the call
756 are usually poor chaps who have nothing to live on, who do not have the strength to till the soil, or who simply want to live without working. When someone enters the brotherhood of bara, people say that he wants to learn how to be idle, and they laugh about it.

791 During the dry season the country is overrun with hordes of Gourounsi and Nankana, filthy and ragged, who claim to know everything and to possess a charm for every purpose, even to make peanuts grow. Led by a chief who speaks a few words of Mossi, they wander from one village to another, dancing and singing for the nabas like the mountebanks who perform at the wagon door of fortune tellers to attract the public... They are consulted, and they return home well rigged out thanks to the cowries they have gathered in Mossi country.

754 /105/ The seuya or soul-eaters are greatly feared. The death of
774 a native, especially that of a child, is often ascribed to them. They have the power of leaving the human body they inhabit and wandering about everywhere in search of a soul to eat. Fire is their vehicle, and they travel about at night on the will-o'-the-wisps that wander in the fields around the huts. They may be stopped by the trees and thrown to the ground, and those who possess an amulet more powerful than their can drive them away.

The seuya are extremely dangerous, for complete protection against them is impossible. They work by night. Every mortal soul leaves the body often during the night and goes wandering about. Woe to it if it should come upon a seuya. He will pounce upon the soul or put it under a big stone, and the unfortunate body that owns it will fall ill and eventually die. The only remedy is to offer a sacrifice to the tangandé, and the guardian animal of the village will go on a search until it locates and releases the unhappy soul; the tangandé causes it to re-enter the body, and the sick person gets well. If, however, the seuya ate the soul, or if he is in connivance with the tangandé, nothing can be done, and death swiftly ensues.

791 The bagré sorcerers can tell who is a seuya and who is not. Some
754 of them have a tim which permits them to distinguish the seuya in a crowd of people. They need only smoke a pipe, and the eyes of the soul-eating man will redden and fill with tears. Those accused of
754 being seuya usually deny the charge, and to call someone a seuya is
[578] one of the worst insults. We have already described the heinous death inflicted on these unfortunate people. Old women especially are

754 accused of eating the souls of little children, and I have known some who boasted of possessing this power!

The tibo are a family of sorcerers. People are born tibo, and the village they inhabit is called Tibin. The naba of this village has the special faculty of discerning all sorts of things, especially whether someone has an enemy, merely by gazing into a gourd filled with water in which a certain charm has been placed. A chicken was previously sacrificed on the gourd. This naba, and he alone, can also kill at a distance. To obtain his protection, it is necessary to bring him a goat, a chicken, millet flour mixed with water, and millet beer. Sooner or later the one designated will die! If it takes too long, the sorcerer always has an excuse handy.

754 The village of Tibin contains a hut where the tibo fetishes are lined
778 in a row. These fetishes consist basically of clay pots containing water, branches, and tree leaves. They are covered with clay gourds of the kind used to cook sauce, and the sacrifices are made on these gourds. It is said that there are snakes and turtles in the pots, but only the tibo sorcerers can see them. Every village has its tibo jar in the naba's household, either at the door of his hut or hanging inside. These tibo are the dwellings of powerful kikirsi.

754 /106/ The bartibo are professional dancers. They have the faculty
791 of distinguishing while dancing those who have the power of killing
535 people, whether poison-givers or seuya. The bartibo themselves claim to have the power of riding the wind and going to kill anyone they wish. They specialize, however, in child-bearing charms for the benefit of sterile women.

754 The waongo also belong to a special family. People are born tibo,
292 bartibo, waongo, or nyonnyonga. For their ceremonies, the waongo don garments made of the bark of baobabs which cover them completely. These strange garments completely conceal the person. A figure may be seen walking, but the person cannot be recognized, and a dreadful illness threatens those who dare to strike it. This is why people, when they see these shapeless forms, run away as fast as they can.
[769] The waongo wear masks when they celebrate the koure (death anniversary) of another waongo. They can ride the wind and inflict diseases; they can even kill if they wish.

754 The nyonnyonsé also ride the wind. The members of this family of sorcerers can kill anyone pointed out to them. People who wish to do away with an enemy go to a nyonnyonga and ask him how much he wants to kill the person they designate. The sorcerer asks for a cow, a sheep, anything whatever, and a chicken. The chicken is sacrificed on the handle of a hatchet, at the end where the iron is hafted, which is pierced with three holes and wrapped with thin cords. Following this sacrifice the sorcerer goes to sleep, and night or day his soul goes off with the wind, head down, hatchet in hand. When it meets the soul of the person who is to be killed, the sorcerer's soul strikes it with the hatchet and kills it, then returns to its own body. It seems that the female sorcerers are the most ferocious!

Anyone who wants it may obtain this power, but a fee is required. The lifespan of these sorcerers increases in proportion to the number of people they have killed, and those who wish to be initiated must offer them the life of one of their children or at least of a relative, for the sorcerers are not satisfied with a stranger or a slave.

It would be interesting to investigate the sacrifices and ceremonies which attend these initiations. It does seem that these tibo, waongo, and nyonnyonsé sorcerers belong to the realm of black magic, for the natives tell dreadful stories about them and list their victims by name. We must confess, however, that we were unable to secure any further trustworthy details about these sorcerers, and that we had no personal contact with any of them. We could not verify all that was told us about them, and therefore we shall not discuss the subject any further. In any case, these sorcerers if questioned would have told us nothing unless they had come to be converted.

754 575 These families of sorcerers are a small minority among the Mossi, and if they can be called closed sects, secret societies, /107/ they are to our knowledge the sole ones extant. In Mossi country, therefore, there are properly speaking no secret societies, nothing like the sects found in Bambara country, (1) and this is a good thing.

1. Abbé Henry, L'ame d'un peuple africain /The Soul of an African People/, Bibliothèque Anthropos 1, 2, passim.

Likewise, there are no initiations, no secret cults celebrated at night, no esoteric doctrines. Is this because the nabas, intent on remaining the sole masters, would not allow a power greater than theirs to develop? Or is it for some other reason?

77/ It would seem that living as they do in the midst of spirits who
157 permeate the air, the earth, the fire, the houses, the fields, and everything else, and who are not always in an accommodating mood, the Mossi would live in a perpetual state of terror since they have everything to fear from the poisoners during the day, the seuya during the night, but this is not the case. The Mossi are a light-hearted people; they like to laugh, and they do not look a bit worried. Once, as I pointed this out to an old man, he replied: "Everyone does not have enemies. And then, why worry about the inevitable?" In fact, those dreadful sorcerers are only to be feared by those who know that they have an enemy and that he can resort to the power of the sorcerers. The spirits are pacified with sacrifices, and if a soul is seized at night by a seuya, the only thing to do is to try one's best to release it.

Furthermore, like so many others, the Mossi easily forget all these beliefs in the course of everyday life and act as if they were masters of their own actions and confident of achieving their goals. Laughingly and playfully they toss sticks and stones at the wind eddies that whirl by, stirring up the dust and dry leaves. And yet, how many spirits and sorcerers may they conceal, each more dreadful than the next! The most ardent believers consult sorcerers and offer sacrifices before every undertaking; the others only bother with sacrifices on the Day of the Dead and when misfortune strikes. Is it not suffering that recalls us to the religious life, because it reminds us of our dependence on a power greater than ours? Here as elsewhere, there are ardent and lukewarm believers; no one seems to be indifferent, and atheism is unknown. They are not yet sufficiently civilized for such ideas!

000 Their conversion to Catholicism seems to be only a matter of time. Messis quidem multa, operarii autem pauci. /The harvest is great, but the workers are few./ May the Master of the Harvest dispatch many workers to this land and hasten the day when the whole of this people will enter the divine fold!

/108/ CONCLUSION

181 By way of conclusion, we shall now attempt to draw in rough outline the mental characteristics of the Mossi as we see them.

181 The Mossi are a mixture of defects and qualities. As a rule they
577 are not overly scrupulous about stealing and lying, but these deficiencies
674 are not so deeply rooted that they could not be corrected with the development of a more refined conscience. The Mossi are thievish because they often have the opportunity to take what belongs to others, especially cowries which are handled in a very intricate manner. It is so easy, when counting cowries, to slip a few into a pocket without the master's notice! There are some highway robbers, who are greatly feared, and many of them are very skillful. They are, of course, a very small minority.

181 Debts are the most frequent cause of theft. As a rule every Mossi
577 is both a debtor and a creditor, and when he borrows only God knows
426 when he will repay. If someone owes him a debt, he borrows, saying, "So-and-So owes me such-and-such an amount; when he pays me back, I will repay you," and he always finds someone who is willing to lend. Who can deny a friend such a favor? In order to be repaid numerous steps will prove necessary, and the day when the sum is refunded will be a happy one. This shortcoming is so ingrained among them that the wealthiest people are not exempt from it, and although able to return what they have borrowed without difficulty, they do not return it.

181 The Mossi lie easily, but they especially practice the method of
577 mental reservation. When questioned, they excel at posing another question, to find out whether their questioner is really acquainted with the facts. If they can mislead one, they do; on the other hand, if they feel that to confess would be to their advantage, they do so even if their confession implicates their accomplices; but they only do so if they are quite sure of coming through safely.

The Mossi are not false or deceitful, but they often fail to tell the truth for fear of displeasing a more powerful person. They try to guess the reply expected by their questioner, and much caution is needed when a precise piece of information is required. They also deceive by telling only half the truth; when queried, they sometimes reply to a question but suppress a detail which would have modified the answer or opened the way to another question.

They are discreet and know how to keep a secret, especially the king's secrets. When they do not wish to tell anything, they say "I don't know." This is not incriminating, and it cuts short any prying question.

181 /109/ The Mossi have passions, and they are the same as ours:
152 ambition, jealousy, gluttony, sloth, lust, and sometimes even avarice, though more rarely. All of these reign among them. Because they cannot control their emotions, cannot resist their evil inclinations, these passions become tyrannical as they grow older. The children are usually quite malleable. The spirit of obedience and complete submission to their parents is instilled into them from such an early age that when taken sufficiently young their character can be trained and they become capable of truly virtuous actions which cost them an effort. When left to themselves, however, they listen only to their own desires and seek out whatever can bring them some satisfaction. This is rather similar to the morality of a slave who fears only the whip.

The Mossi are vain and easily offended by a word they have misunderstood, even when spoken in jest. The practice of humility is far from being one of their habitual pursuits. The Mossi are quarrelsome and testy, especially when they have drunk a little more millet beer than they should have. There are no festivities and few markets of any importance where a quarrel does not arise among some natives, often for no better reason than because someone is jostled in the crowd. The brawl begins with insults, proceeds with clubs, and ends up with knives. No one gives way. A Mossi who gave way in a quarrel would feel dishonored. The man who gives in proves that he is the weakest, and at the first opportunity someone who witnessed the incident will insult him in turn. Why not, since he does not defend himself? This is why a Mossi who has been abused will give in only at the final extremity, especially if his father and mother were insulted, and all cursing soon gets to this point. When drawn apart, the opponents keep up their invectives at a distance. An angry Mossi loses all control. A quarrel often has its aftermath. The Mossi are spiteful, and, especially if they were placed in the weaker position, they will seek revenge in one way or another, so it cannot be said that they got the worst of it.

181 Not only do the Mossi have passions like ours, but like us they also
157 have their temperaments. There are the lymphatic ones, languid and incapable of any effort; there are the nervous people who are always in motion, sensitive to a fault, who weep at the slightest remark; there are the taciturn ones who almost never laugh, who think that no one loves them and that everyone wants to hurt them, who like solitude and

181 who speak little; there are the choleric people, more liable than others
157 to anger, more spiteful, but also endowed with more energy.

Energy is not the chief quality of these people, who are trained by
181 their leaders to blind and faithful obedience. The tight organization
156 we have described has its unhappy consequences, atrophy of the will and destruction of the spirit of initiative. Such is the price. A Mossi cannot resist those who are more powerful. Flexible and almost cowardly before his superiors, he makes up for it with his inferiors and shows great arrogance and disdain toward those who are weaker.

181 /110/ The Mossi do not exercise their will, and they do not exer-
153 cise their thinking faculty. This is not because they lack intelligence, but because they are not accustomed to thought except when their interests are at stake, at which time some of them demonstrate true intelligence and diplomacy.

The Mossi do not question the why of things. While small children in our country like to argue and often perplex us with their questions, the Mossi never ask themselves, "How can this be? Why is it so and not otherwise?" The first answer that comes to mind satisfies them.

This lack of thought is the cause of their lagging civilization, for is it not true that we move forward unceasingly only because we seek to investigate the cause of everything? It also results in a paucity of ideas. Conversations turn mainly upon women, food, and agriculture during the rainy season. Their sphere of ideas is quite restricted, but it is capable of expansion, for the Mossi may be considered quite intelligent.

539 If proverbs express the wisdom of a people, the Mossi certainly do not lack wisdom and often couch it with great subtlety. Permit us to prove this by quoting a few proverbs, culled in the course of conversations by Fr. Thueux, who kindly conveyed them to us and who gathered explanations, since some of them are real enigmas to our European minds.

1. Kota ningri, ka kot' sen kong'ye.
   Give above you, not below.
   (If you give to someone who is more powerful, you will always get something out of it.)
2. Maokasankaré ñarda kon lo'é naobi taoré.
   No matter how much it may hurry, the heel never catches up with the toes.
   (Who is the hen to sing before the rooster?)

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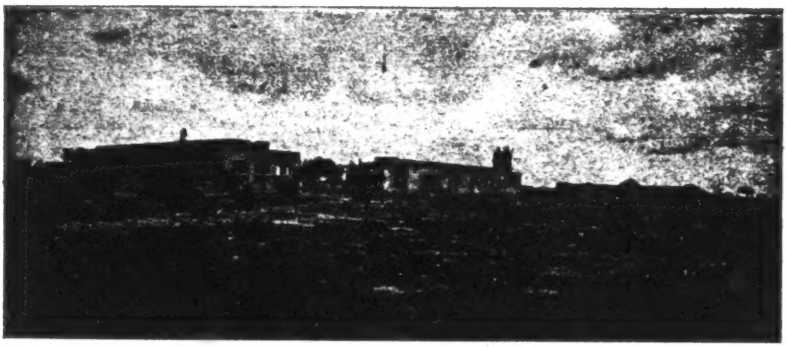

The Ouagadougou Mission.

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A Resthouse.

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3. Pang'sen tu soré, bũm buta mo'en.
When Strength walks the path, Justice steps aside into the bush.
(Might makes right.)

4. Ka suét'nil ba'a, nan nõka.
The dog will grab you if you don't respect its nose.
(Don't laugh, for you might pay for it.)

5. Soam' garedga, wamma n' so.
The master of the hunt is master of the disputed hare.
(Every disputed hare devolves to the master of the hunt.)

6. M'ba di sarabo, n' long'zom.
My father ate the millet mush, he is moving toward the flour.
(He who has drunk will drink /The rich get richer./.)

7. Fo nan ka suk'korgo, l'e kurn sa'a.
You have not yet searched the bag, and you weep about the lightning.
(You cry before you are hit.)

8. Dunna benda, saon beo' kurga.
A breechcloth today is better than trousers tomorrow.
(One thing that is yours, it is said, is worth more than two things you may have in the future /A bird in hand is better than two in the bush./.)

9. Kobré sen kyama, ya kob' kaodga.
A hard bone is a brittle bone.
(Your strength will ultimately betray your courage.)

/111/ 10. Sarab' ki n' beng' a menga.
Mush that spoils turns to water by itself.
(He has done harm to himself.)

11. Yind' kondro, ka bé sokr'ye.
Old songs are not questioned.
(No explanation is needed for familiar things.)

12. Abra kud' ka leb n' tut' bé ias' yé.
An old leopard would not go back there.
(One does not return to a person one has wronged.)

13. Katré yi no'o, ka ginn' yé.
When the hyena was good, one does not turn aside.
(One returns to those places where he was welcomed.)

14. F' sen ka nong' néda, a kurga ya yobro.
If you don't like a man, his trousers are a bag.
(An enemy does everything badly.)

539 15. Sosra sen kaosda, wata ne korg' wenbsego.
When a conversation lingers, the bag is fingered.
(Familiarity breeds contempt.)

16. Pu' pidya, bango luéya.
Full belly, gagged indiscretion.
(Those who need you are discreet).

17. Sad' no' o, yid noa' karga.
A good laugh is better than a chicken leg.
(A warm reception is better than a good meal.)

18. Ned' kon wok' a bâka, ti pemsom yi ye.
You don't cut open your shoulder just for the air to come out.
(Never abandon a friend in need.)

19. Bunbundi ka dod' zalol'n yé.
Those who give their best do not go away empty-handed.
(Work hard, do your best, there is no lack of true wealth.)

181 153 The Mossi likes to talk. Although he has few ideas of his own, if one knows how to make use of his familiar experiences to bring him to a higher level, he follows the reasoning easily, understands quite promptly what is told him, and grasps the train of ideas and even the finer gradations of meaning. In short, he has quite a noteworthy aptitude for assimilation. Often I explained to a chief in broad outline the handling of a gun or the mechanism of a watch or bicycle. If an outsider came by, the naba relayed the explanations to show that he was intelligent and that he had grasped them properly. Indeed, I was often surprised at how well most of them did this.

They like pictures. At first they often hold them upside down, but a few explanations are usually sufficient to make them grasp their meaning. First they recognize familiar things, such as people, horses, dogs, and trees, and they explain them to each other. They come to understand the scene and the reasons for the attitudes of the figures pictured.

181 522 576 /112/ In conversations, when they are not ill at ease, they are lively, merry, and they like to laugh. It is a compliment on their part when they say that someone laughs easily. They are sometimes humorous, they understand innuendoes, but they know how to keep their distance and do not permit themselves any familiarities, even in words, toward their superiors.

181 153 They are very susceptible to teaching. The little slaves raised in Malta learned the French language well, and all those who have met them say that they are quite intelligent. We had children in our school who quicly learned writing, reading, and arithmetic, and who did not forget what they had learned when they got married and had to leave school to work in the fields. Reading remains a pastime to them, and they keep up their knowledge of the French language. We did not notice among them what has so often been pointed out about the little Arabs, who give great promise when young, signs of real intelligence, and who do not live up to this promise when they grow up. The intelligence of the Mossi develops with the years, and this would make it possible to exercise considerable influence over them. 080 Teaching that opens their minds, however, should not cause them to lose their religious sense without contributing anything in its place. Within a short period of time this would bring about the demoralization and downfall of this people who seem capable of rapid progress, and it would be a pity.

538 They like to tell fables, and a volume of Mossi literature could easily be compiled by gathering the historical legends, proverbs, and fables which are to be found among this people. As an example, we shall now recount a few stories we have been told. As in all primitive tales, animals play the role of intelligent actors. The Romaunt of the Rose has long since familiarized us with this kind of literature.

The Bad Vulture and the White Hawk

539 A bald vulture was wandering about the bush. A white hawk came by and said to the vulture, "Why have you nothing to eat?" The vulture replied, "It is true, I have nothing to eat. May God help me find something." The hawk said, "God cannot give people enough food to satisfy their hunger." The vulture answered, "If God does not give me something to eat, I shall not eat."

The white hawk saw a dove alighting on a stick. The hawk swooped down upon her, but the stick pierced his breast and came out behind his head. The vulture came and ate the hawk.

The Monkey and the Turtle

539 The monkey told the turtle to come with him on his walk through the bush. They saw karite fruits, and the monkey climbed into the tree, shook it, and all the fruit fell down. The turtle told him, "Monkey, this fruit is green." The monkey abused the turtle because she had called him by his name, and he feared the dog. Finally the turtle called the monkey, who came down and told her to fetch some fire in order to roast some meat. The turtle /113/ went to get the fire and found a dog lying near the hearth. The dog asked the turtle, "Who sent you to get fire?" The turtle replied, "The monkey sent me to look for fire." The dog told her, "Is this really true?" The turtle said, "It is true." Then the dog pretended to be dead. The turtle grabbed him by the tail, took some fire, and went back to the bush.

The monkey asked, "Is the dog dead, or is he alive?" The turtle said that he was dead. Then the monkey told her to bring the dog. The monkey seized the dog by the legs to lift him and took a stone to break his teeth. But the dog opened his eyes. Then the monkey said to the turtle, "Come and get hold of this chief's son, so I'll be able to get up." The turtle answered that she would not come. The monkey pushed the dog to make him fall, got up, and ran away. But the dog ran after him, caught him and killed him, and the turtle ran away and found a place to hide.

The Goat and the Hyena

A goat had gone to Dori to buy salt. The hyena met him along the way and felt like taking his salt. As soon as she saw him, she became panicky and started running. She found a lion who was lying down because he had a stomach-ache, and she told him that she knew a man who had a medicine for stomach-ache. The hyena went and fetched the goat. The goat came and greeted the lion, who said that he had a stomach-ache and that the hyena had told him that the goat knew a medicine. The goat answered, "Indeed I know a medicine, but it is made with hyena liver." The lion said to the hyena, "Take a piece of your flesh and give it to me." The hyena took a piece of her own flesh and gave it to the goat, who cooked it with salt and gave it to the lion. The lion asked him, "Should we add some more?"

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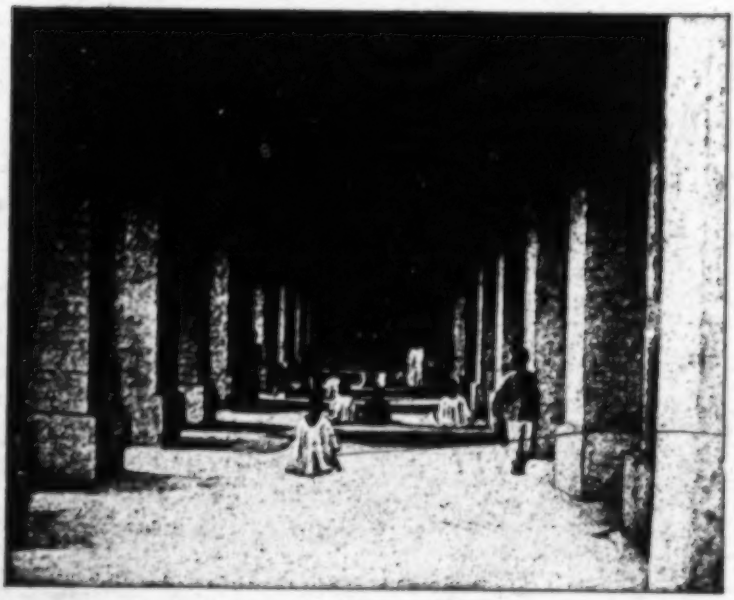

Above: The Ouagadougou Church
Below: Inside the Ouagadougou Church

539 The goat replied, "The hyena should give all of herself." The lion told the hyena to remove her own leg. The hyena bit herself. It hurt, and she ran away. The lion caught her and killed her. The goat ran away with his salt and went home.

This is why the hyena attacks livestock.

181 The Mossi are polite. This is the quality that first strikes all those
576 who have dealings with them. We mentioned earlier that the natives always greet one another. In fear of their nabas, the Mossi maintain before them a respectful, almost humiliating posture. They are very attentive to important outsiders and see to it that they should lack nothing a Mossi might wish: a sitting stool and mat are brought in immediately along with the drink; the food is abundant and usually clean and carefully prepared.

181 The Mossi are very hospitable and willingly give alms for its own
574 sake, that is, to poor people who cannot repay. They are generous and always share with their neighbors, and when they have millet beer, they hand it out liberally. No woman who is brewing beer would allow a stranger of some importance to go by without offering him a gourdful, and she is displeased if he refuses. An object once offered is never retrieved, and stratagems must be used to make a native take back under some pretext what he has given away.

576 /114/ The Mossi always offer things with the right hand. It is an insult to pass the gourd or to take it with the left hand. The oldest person in a group helps himself from a dish first, and all those present follow in order of seniority, down to the youngest. On the other
264 hand, the eldest stops eating first, and it is the youngest who eats the
27 last bits and cleans the gourd. When drinking, however, the most eminent person drinks the last drop.

576 Children do not greet their parents in the home, because it is their
574 home; but if a properly brought-up girl sees her mother coming with a full jar or a basket, she rushes to take the load from her, even if the woman is only a few yards from the soukala. When a friend has come to visit, it is considered good manners to carry her load for some distance when she leaves. In any case, visitors are always seen on their way, sometimes to the outskirts of the village.

576 The Mossi do not lack tact and sensibility. When they want something, they first delegate a friend with a gift, then send word that they have a small matter to discuss; sometimes they hint at what it may be and leave without waiting for an answer. Some time later

576 they send their friend once again to indicate what they desire, or they go and bring up the matter themselves.

181 Being sensitive and capable of attachment, even of affection, the
577 Mossi readily acknowledge the good done to them and seek to express their gratitude. If they can offer a gift, such as eggs, millet, honey, a chicken, they offer it unobtrusively. "Take this millet for your horse; give this chicken to your child." If they have nothing to give, they watch for every opportunity to spare their benefactor work or trouble. They take the hoe from him to weed his field or help him lift a load. They show their gratitude as they can, through action rather than words.

181 The Mossi are not lazy. As a rule it may even be said that they
461 like work. Lazy people are pointed at, avoided, and despised. During the winter season everyone must be in the fields from morning to night, men, women and children alike. Only those who cannot work or who have household tasks to perform stay home. The Mossi work very hard at this time of year. During the dry season, on the other hand, they enjoy some leisure. Although most of them weave during these months or travel for trading purposes, while the children cut grass to thatch the roofs and the millet is threshed, it must be said that it is not possible to work in these sun-scorched lands as it is in our temperate European counties. Besides, why work when there are so few outlets? Since the time when the French peace made the roads safe, trade has been on the upsurge. Now, sure of reaping the fruit of their toil, the natives are expanding their crops and every year the fields encroach further upon the bush. All the important villages are surrounded with cultivated fields as far as the eye can reach. If the Mossi do not work more then they do, therefore, it is not from laziness but from /115/ lack of outlets. It seems likely that the country will develop quite rapidly as soon as channels of communication open it to European trade.

181 Such are, in succinct and impartial outline, the qualities and defects of this people. Which of the two preponderate? It is for the reader to judge. In our opinion the Mossi are a very worthy people capable of a brilliant future, but under one condition, that they become Christians. Their most striking characteristics, as we have stated over and again, are their religious sense and their absolute submission to all that bears the stamp of authority.

000 Obviously, our European civilization will undermine both these tendencies at the outset, and what will it bring in their stead? As soon as their education becomes sufficient to make them doubt the existence of spirits and the power of sorcerers, as soon as they come to feel that the only remaining power of their chiefs derives from a White who often lives at a distance of several days' march, but who hears grievances and listens willingly to charges against nabas, and that it is possible to have a naba imprisoned, or at least to cause him serious difficulties, as soon as this happens, the Mossi will hold up their heads. Since they do not lack independence when they are not afraid, their chiefs will lose all their authority, and anarchy will result. When superstitious beliefs lose their grip, the natives will become skeptics, and selfishness will reign supreme with its train of vices.

Christianity alone can avert this moral breakdown by furnishing a sound conception of authority and by replacing the fear of spirits and sorcerers with the fear or rather the love of God. The Church has always been the great initiating force of civilization, which does not consist merely of economic development or greater material well-being, but especially of the moral uplift of thoughts and feelings.

Indeed, the conversion of this people to Catholicism is but a matter of time and of tact and kindness on the part of missionaries. Anything may be obtained from the Mossi by those who gain their love, who win the respect of the nabas and if possible their understanding, if not their trust and affection, by showing regard for them and respecting their respectable side, who explain to all people, old and young, what is expected of them and make them understand their task thoroughly, for they are capable of grasping it, who make sure that those people over whom they possess some authority do carry out their tasks, and who can be firm when necessary.

[197] Alas! The missionaries are too few. To this day, there are but two missions and eight missionaries for the evangelization of 1,500,000 souls. One can only wish to see their numbers increase considerably, for there is no lack of locations favorable to the establishment of missions, and wherever missionaries settle and carry out their work, they will, by spreading Christian civilization, cause the acceptance, or better, the love of the rule of France who sends them /116/ in the name of God. There is need for haste. Islam may become a danger, and in a not too distant future important lines of communication will cut through the land. Railroads are drawing near, bringing with them

material development along with the rubbish of our civilization. May they find the heart of our Mossi armored against all the lures of the world, susceptible to all that is beautiful and noble in our European ideas, but sufficiently strong to withstand their disintegrating and corrupting inducements!

Once again, Christianity alone can save them from a bondage much more fearsome than that of the body, the enslavement to every passion, but how will they come to know Christianity if no one teaches them? Who will teach them if there are no preachers? How will preachers evangelize if they have no resources? Oh, who will grant us the means to flood this land with zealous missionaries? Who will add to the royal crown of Christ this handsome jewel which the Divine Master has conquered at the cost of His blood!

2: Mangin FA28 Mossi

R. P. Eugène MANGIN
des Pères Blancs
Missionnaire d'Afrique, à Koupéla (Mossi)

LES MOSSI

Essai sur les us et coutumes du peuple Mossi au Soudan occidental

TIRAGE A PART DE L'ANTHROPOS (1916)

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1921

[title page]

A

SA GRANDEUR

MONSEIGNEUR LEMAÎTRE

ÉVÊQUE DE SÉTIF

VICAIRE APOSTOLIQUE DU SOUDAN FRANÇAIS

RESPECTUEUX ET FILIAL HOMMAGE.

[p. i]

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LETTRE
DE
MONSEIGNEUR LIVINHAC
SUPÉRIEUR GÉNÉRAL DES PÈRES-BLANCS
AU
PÈRE EUGÈNE MANGIN.

MAISON-CARRÉE (ALGER)
le 12 février 1914.

Mon cher Père,

Vous avez bien voulu, durant vos dix ans d'apostolat au milieu des Mossi, consacrer vos rares loisirs à étudier les mœurs et coutumes de ce peuple encore peu connu. Vos patientes recherches vous ont fourni les matériaux d'un travail qui, je n'en doute pas, sera lu avec autant de plaisir que de profit, par tous ceux qui s'intéressent à l'ethnographie des mystérieuses régions du centre de l'Afrique.

Je ne puis donc que vous encourager à le publier.

Votre affectionné et tout dévoué en Notre Seigneur

† Leon Livinhac.

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Les Mossi.

Essai sur les us et coutumes du peuple Mossi au Soudan Occidental.

Par le P. Eugène Mangin, P. B., missionnaire d'Afrique à Koupéla (Mossi).

Introduction.

Le 1er septembre 1896, le lieutenant Voulet, envoyé par le colonel de Trentinian pour occuper le Mossi et le Gourounsi, entrait à Ouagadougou, capitale du Mossi. Naba Wobro, l'empereur régnant, s'enfuit et son armée fut dispersée. L'heure était critique pour notre Soudan. Les négociations entamées au début de cette même année entre la France et l'Angleterre d'une part, et l'Allemagne et la France d'autre part venaient d'être rompues. M. Terrier dans son beau livre: «L'expansion française et la formation territoriale», que nous ne faisons que résumer, décrit ainsi la situation: «Les Allemands tenaient à pousser le Togo jusqu'au Niger en coupant notre Dahomey du Soudan et les Anglais nous refusaient l'accès du bas Niger et la domination du Borgou. Le Dahomey devait, si ces exigences eussent été admises, devenir une simple enclave côtière[1].» Déjà les Allemands occupaient le marché très important de Sansané Mango et poussaient à l'est vers le Niger; tandis que Ferousson, mulâtre, au service de l'Angleterre, montait de la Gold Coast vers le nord, et que la compagnie royale du Niger s'emparait de Boussa, de Say et des pays environnants, pays contestés et dont nous n'avions pas entrepris la conquête par respect pour les négociations en cours. Quand ces nouvelles furent connues en France, grâce à la brillante mission du lieutenant de vaisseau Hourst, le colonel de Trentinian, d'accord avec le gouverneur du Dahomey, M. Ballot, résolut de prendre possession des territoires qui permettraient de réunir le Soudan au Dahomey, au Niger et à la Côte d'Ivoire.

Le capitaine Destenave, résident à Bandiagara, notre poste le plus avancé dans cette région, reçut l'ordre de se porter en avant et d'occuper Ouahigouya, qui est Mossi, mais se heurta à la résistance du naba de Yako et se vit refuser l'accès de Ouagadougou. En mai 1896, le colonel de Trentinian donna pour mission au lieutenant Voulet de devancer au Mossi les Anglais qui s'avançaient par le sud, et étaient aidés par Samory et surtout par son fils Sanrankégny Mory qui occupait le Gourounsi, puis de réunir le Mossi au Dahomey par le Gourma. La colonne Voulet forte d'une cinquantaine de tirailleurs quitte Bandiagara le 30 juillet, passe à Ouahigouya, soumet le naba de Yako et entre à Ouagadougou le 1er septembre. Le 20 janvier 1897, naba Wobro, qui a refusé d'entrer en pourparler avec Voulet, est destitué et Kouka Kountou, membre de la famille du Moro Naba, est intrônisé à sa place et prend le nom de naba Sigri. Il signe avec Voulet un traité de protectorat qui donne à la France tous les territoires relevant de l'autorité du Moro Naba.

Le Mossi conquis, il fallait arrêter les Anglais au sud et les Allemands à l'est. Voulet apprend en effet que le capitaine Donald Stewart, résident anglais à Coumassie, marche sur Tenkodogo. Il s'y rend lui même, le rejoint le 17 février et obtient que l'Anglais se retirera à 120 *km* plus au sud, en

[1] L'œuvre de la troisième République en Afrique Occidentale, p. 301.

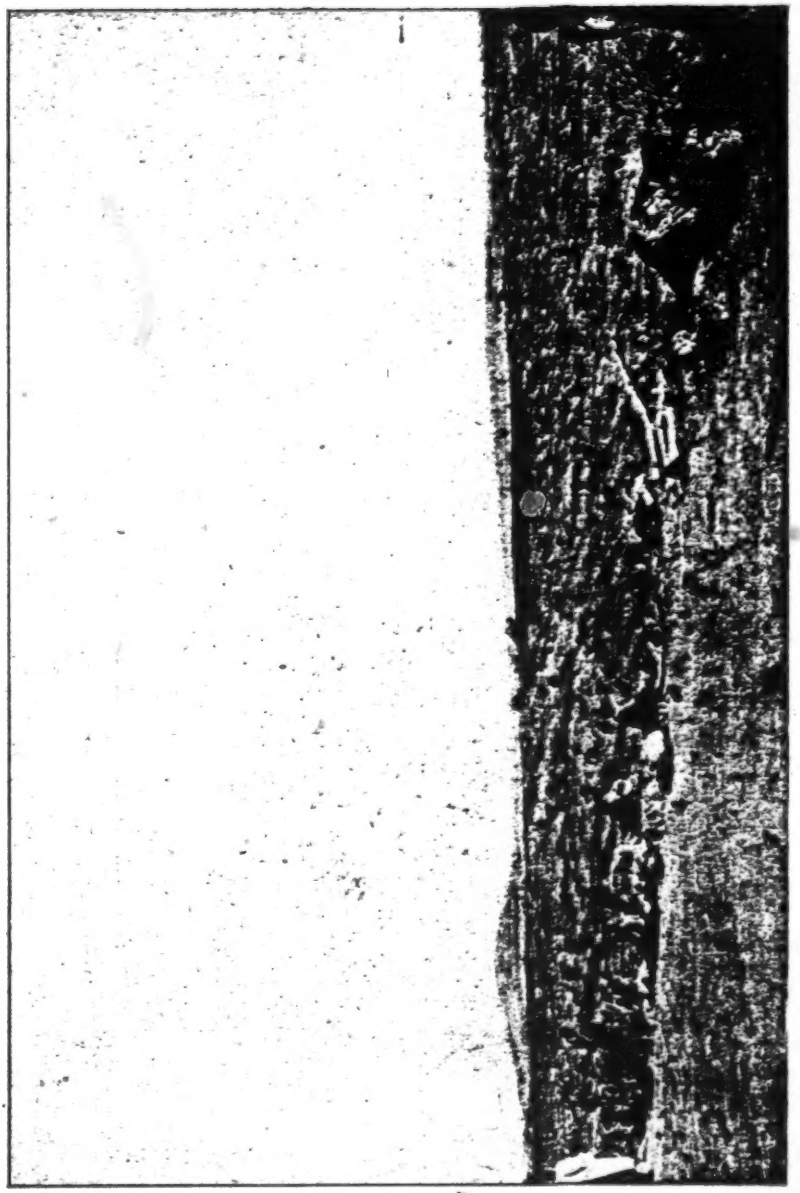
dehors des territoires Mossi et Manpoursi en raison des traités passés avec les chefs de ces pays par l'officier français qui lui même abandonnera Tenkodogo, laissant aux gouvernements le soin de décider à qui restera cette localité.

Pendant ces pourparlers, VOULET entend dire qu'une troupe armée, venant de l'est, s'avance vers le Mossi. Il quitte Tenkodogo, écrit au chef inconnu de la mission qu'il a à se retirer parce que tous ces territoires appartiennent à la France de par les traités que nous avons signés avec les chefs indigènes et lui même se dirige, avec ses troupes, sur Fada N'Gourma, s'empare au passage de Koupéla dont la population affolée fuit de toutes parts, et arrive le 27 février à Tigba, où il trouve le capitaine VERMEESCH, envoyé par le capitaine BAUD et venant du Dahomey. Ainsi les Anglais devaient rester au sud, les Allemands dans le Togo, et le Soudan était réuni au Dahomey.

Le pays ainsi conquis n'était pas ignoré en France et de très brillantes missions l'avaient déjà fait connaître. BINGER surtout par son ouvrage: «Du Niger au golfe de Guinée», attira l'attention sur ces populations et montra en Boukary Koutou, ce qu'était un chef Mossi intelligent, ouvert, gai, en même temps fort autoritaire et exactement obéi de ses gens. Pourquoi faut-il que ce même Boukary Koutou, Moro Naba sous le nom de Naba Wobro, reçut si mal le docteur CROZAT et MONTEIL, et refusat d'entrer en conversation avec VOULET? Ce manque de sens politique lui coûta sa couronne. BINGER avait été précédé à Ouagadougou, en 1885, par le docteur KRAUSE qui fut le premier Européen admis à entrer dans la capitale; VON FRANÇOIS, venant du Togo allemand, fut arrêté au premier village mossi en 1887. Nous venons de voir que BINGER put parvenir, non sans difficulté, à Ouagadougou, en 1888. Il y séjourna quelque temps, plus longtemps qu'il n'aurait voulu, et c'est grâce à son admirable énergie qu'il put poursuivre sa mission vers le sud. Le docteur CROZAT, en 1890, fut reçu une première fois par le Moro Naba, mais il dut quitter rapidement Ouagadougou. L'année suivante, MONTEIL ne put même pas parvenir jusqu'à la capitale. Il fut arrêté à quelques kilomètres et obligé de partir précipitamment. Le mulâtre FERGUSSON, au service des Anglais, passa par Tenkodogo, Nyaogo, Kombisgri, et gagna Ouagadougou. VON CARNAP, Allemand, venant de Sansané-Mango, visita Tenkodogo et Koupéla en 1897.

Telles sont, rapidement ésquissées, les relations certaines que les Mossi eurent avec les Européens. Etaient-ils, dès le XVIe siècle, connus de Jean II de Portugal; et même de Jean III? Viennent-ils de très loin dans l'est, du Sokoto, du Bornou, voire même de Ouadai? Autant de questions qui nous semblent très mystérieuses, étant donné l'état actuel de nos connaissances sur ces peuples de la boucle du Niger qui n'ont aucune tradition écrite. M. le lieutenant MARC discute longuement les différentes opinions à ce sujet dans son livre: «Au pays des Mossi» (chap. 1 et 7), et M. DELAFOSSE, dans son ouvrage sur le Haut Sénégal et Niger (spécialment dans le tome 2), donne à son tour son opinion. Nous nous en tiendrons ici aux traditions recueillies auprès des indigènes.

En effet, notre méthode de travail a été d'interroger les indigènes en aussi grand nombre que possible, et de recueillir leurs dires sur tous les sujets qui nous ont paru pouvoir intéresser. Nous nous sommes gardés d'«interpréter» ces faits. Nous avons laissé les indigènes causer, raconter leur histoire, décrire



Anthropos IX.

La brousse aux pays mossi.

[facing p. 2]

2: Mangin FA28 Mossi

leurs mœurs, expliquer, comme ils les entendent, les phénomènes de la nature et de la vie. Notre rôle s'est borné à noter au jour le jour ce que nous entendions, à provoquer des explications, à mettre toutes ces notes en ordre. Mais il est bien évident que parfois, nos questions sont restées sans réponses. Nous les laisserons telles dans cet ouvrage. N'ayant aucun système à défendre, nous espérons avoir pu rester assez objectif.

Heureux serons-nous pourtant si ce modeste travail peut apporter sa petite contribution à cette étude dont on parle tant aujourd'hui, de l'histoire des religions. Si par lui, l'ethnographie s'enrichit de documents nouveaux; si l'indigène, mieux connu de tous, missionnaires, administrateurs, officiers, colons, négociants, est par là même mieux compris; si le rapprochement entre nous et lui en est facilité. Le chemin de fer bientôt va ouvrir et profondément modifier le pays. Hâtons-nous, alors qu'il en est encore temps, de saisir ce peuple dans sa mentalité primitive. Un séjour de dix années consécutives au Mossi, dont sept à Koupéla, une connaissance de la langue suffissante pour tenir une conversation courante, sur quelque sujet que ce soit, avec les indigènes, des relations plus intimes que notre ministère nous amenait à avoir avec les habitants des villages: autant de circonstances qui nous ont permis de recueillir des documents que nous pouvons considérer comme très approchés de la vérité. Nous reconnaîtrons cependant facilement que des erreurs ont pu se glisser ça et là. Il est si difficile d'obtenir un renseignement précis, et plusieurs indigènes, interrogés sur le même sujet, nous ont fait souvent des réponses différentes. Il nous a fallu choisir, et bien que penchant toujours vers le récit qui nous semblait offrir le plus de garanties, nous avons pu nous tromper.

Il ne faut pas oublier non plus que notre but n'est pas de donner un recueil complet de tous les us et coutumes des Mossi. Ce n'était pas possible, c'eût été fastidieux et ce n'était point nécessaire pour donner de ce peuple une idée d'ensemble assez exacte, croyons nous. La vérité nous oblige à dire que ces notes ont été réunies pour la plus part dans la province de Koupéla et sentent le terroir. Nos confrères de Ouagadougou ont bien voulu nous donner quelques renseignements; mais nous sommes restés sans documents pour tout le Yatenga. Si Dieu nous le permet, nous compléterons ces notes dans un ouvrage d'ensemble.

Avant d'entrer dans notre sujet, une remarque s'impose. On a pris l'habitude de parler des Mossi, du mossi, de la langue mossi, comme si ce mot était invariable; nous suivrons la coutume et écrirons toujours «Mossi», invariable au singulier et au pluriel, bien que le vrai nom de ce peuple soit *Moara*, pluriel *Mosé*. De même, nous avons orthographié les noms géographiques comme le fait l'administration afin de ne pas avoir l'air de vouloir tout réformer.

Qu'il nous soit permis de remercier ici tous ceux qui de près ou de loin ont bien voulu nous aider dans ce travail et surtout ceux qui nous ont communiqué les intéressantes photographies qui l'illustrent.

LIVRE PREMIER.

Vie politique.

Chapitre premier. — Le pays et ses habitants.

Plutôt grand que petit, l'œil vif, les cheveux crépus, le nez épaté, les lèvres grosses sans être lippues, les traits parfois assez fins, les joues largement marquées de trois barres parallèles qui commencent aux tempes et descendent jusqu'au menton et d'une quatrième qui part du nez et tombe perpendiculairement sur les trois premières, les membres bien musclés, ni noir d'ébène, ni cuivré, mais d'une couleur intermédiaire, le Mossi sans être un beau type de Noir, n'a rien de désagréable.

Quand il a revêtu ses habits de fête, son large pantalon à la zouave bleu foncé, son ample veste de bandes d'étoffe rayées bleu et blanc qui retombe légèrement sur les bras, qu'il porte sur son épaule droite son *doré*, sorte d'arme composée d'une tige de fer un peu courbée, aplatie à l'une de ses extrémités et terminée de l'autre par un anneau qui s'emmanche perpendiculairement à un bâton court, il fait vraiment bonne impression et a l'air décidé. Souvent son poignet est orné d'un bracelet de cuivre, presque toujours il porte à la ceinture un couteau rigide, enfermé dans un fourreau en cuir que termine un pompon fait de lanières de cuir auxquelles sont attachés des cauris. Il a la tête très près de son bonnet, composé de deux losanges d'étoffe de couleur, cousus jusqu'à la moitié, les deux pointes libres peuvent couvrir les oreilles et les joues mais le plus souvent sont relevées en forme de tiare. Grand batailleur, il joue facilement du couteau ou frappe avec son *doré* qui devient alors un casse-tête dangereux.

Le Mossi est un peuple conquérant. Il n'a pas toujours habité le pays qu'il occupe actuellement. Mais d'où vient-il? Les vieux interrogés disent tous qu'ils viennent de Gambaka (Côte d'or anglaise) et que c'est pour cela que le Moro Naba Wobro, détrôné par la conquête française, s'était réfugié à Gambaka; c'est pour cela qu'à la mort de tout Moro Naba, on prévient le naba de Gambaka et on envoie en cadeau les savates, le bonnet et le bâton de commandement du défunt qui sont déposés sur la tombe de l'aïeul. Des cadeaux sont aussi envoyés au naba de Fada N'Gourma que les Mossi appellent «Bingo». A la mort du Moro Naba, le chef de Fada reçoit son arc et son carquois, les deux meilleurs chevaux sellés du défunt, ses deux plus jeunes femmes, douze bœufs, un captif, trois barres de sel. Par contre, quand le naba de Fada meurt, on n'envoie rien au Moro Naba, mais on fait don de son meilleur cheval au chef de Gambaka.

Il y a donc eu des relations entre les Gourmantché de Fada, les Mossi et les Dagomse de Gambaka. Les Gourmantché disent venir du Bornou. Le premier naba de Fada était esclave du naba de Bornou. Les Gourmantché ont été maîtres de la région jusqu'à Dori. Les Peuls sont venus et les ont chassés de cette contrée après une longue guerre. Au contraire, les Gourmantché ne se battaient ni avec les gens de Gambaka, ni avec les Mossi. S'il y a eu des luttes avec ces derniers, c'étaient des guerres civiles: le naba de Fada demandait aux Mossi de l'aider contre ses propres sujets.

Jeunes Mossi.

Anthropos IX.

[facing p. 4]

2: Mangin FA28 Mossi

Voici comment les Mossi racontent la conquête du pays. Une fille du chef de Gambaka, appelée Yennenga, eut, du chasseur Riala, un fils qui reçut le nom de Weddaogo. Ce dernier a donné le jour à Zougourana qui prit Tenkodogo et s'y installa; le fils de celui-ci, naba Oubri, s'empara de la région de Ouagadougou et devint maître de tout le pays, cependant que le fils aîné de Yennenga s'était emparé de Fada, fondant la dynastie actuelle, mais n'avait pu imposer aux habitants ni sa langue, ni ses tatouages. Ainsi s'expliquent les cadeaux envoyés à Gambaka, au berceau de la race et au naba de Fada, l'aîné de la famille. Les habitants autochtones, chassés par l'invasion mossi, se retirèrent en partie vers le sud-est et sont devenus les Bousansé et les Gourounsi, tandis que les autres, restant dans le pays, furent assimilés par les Mossi et apprirent la langue des conquérants. Un fils de naba Oubri, naba Namendé, s'est emparé de Bélousa et de son territoire.

Sur ces entrefaites, le naba de Tenkodogo mourut, ne laissant qu'un fils qui lui succéda. Sa famille demanda alors au naba de Bélousa de leur donner son propre fils qui devint le Kourita — représentant après la mort — du défunt naba de Tenkodogo. Kourita voulut retourner chez son père à Bélousa, mais ce dernier lui fit dire de ne pas revenir, et Kourita s'arrêta à Zaoré, à une journée de marche de Bélousa et où résidèrent ses successeurs immédiats. Ce n'est que plus tard que cette dynastie vint s'installer à Koupéla après avoir battu et chassé, avec l'aide du naba de Bélousa, les descendants de naba Guigma qui étaient installés à Gobro, près de Soulgou. Ainsi est née la province de Koupéla, et c'est pourquoi le naba de Koupéla doit recevoir l'investiture de son suzerain, le naba de Bélousa.

Tandis que ces événements se passaient dans l'est, une des sœurs du Moro Naba, préposée à la garde des fétiches *tibo*, se disputa avec son frère et se sauva vers l'ouest jusqu'à Ouahigouya. Cette région est ainsi devenue mossi et prit le nom de terre de Ya[1].

Le pays ainsi conquis s'étend, dans la boucle du Niger, environ entre le 11° 30 et le 13° 30 parallèle et du 2° au 5° latitude ouest de Paris. Ses plus proches voisins sont, au nord, le Macina et les Habés; au nord-ouest, les Samos; à l'ouest et au sud-ouest, les Gourounsi; au sud, les Nancana; au sud-est, les Bousansé; à l'est, les Gourmantché; au nord-est, les Peuls de Dori. La population mossi a été évaluée à 1,500.000 habitants, auxquels il faut ajouter les Yarsé, qui sont des Mandés complètement assimilés aux Mossi, les Peuls pasteurs, les Haoussa qui ferment de petites colonies près des grands centres commerciaux de la région et quelques groupes moins importants. Nous ne nous occuperons de ces populations qu'en tant qu'elles sont en relation avec les Mossi dans le territoire desquels elles sont disséminées.

Deux grandes rivières traversent le pays du nord-est au sud-est. Ce sont les deux Volta, la blanche et la rouge. En dehors de ces deux artères plus importantes, bien qu'elles ne coulent pas toute l'année, on rencontre un très grand nombre de marigots, vrais torrents infranchissables après un orage, mais

[1] Pour plus de détails voir lieutenant MARC, *l. c.* chap. 7, et surtout DELAFOSSE: «Haut Sénégal et Niger», 1re série, tome 2, p. 305 et suiv.

sans eau pendant la saison sèche, de novembre à juin. C'est généralement dans le lit de ces marigots que les femmes creusent les puits peu profonds qui fournissent l'eau du ménage.

Il n'y a pas de hautes montagnes au Mossi. En arrivant par le nord, on traverse la belle falaise de Bandiagara et le pays montagneux des Habés. Le

Les falaises de Bandiagara (Soudan).

L'entrée dans la brousse.

pays mossi commence presque au pied de la falaise. La région du nord-ouest est cependant assez accidentée et renferme le pic Pilimpikou; les deux Volta, surtout la Blanche, sont bordées de collines, mais on peut dire d'une façon générale que le Mossi est un pays plat. C'est la brousse classique du Soudan, avec ses petits arbustes et ses hautes herbes, entremêlées de cailcédrats, de

tamariniers, de fromagers, d'énormes troncs de baobabs, plus épaisse sur les bords des Volta, plus clairsemée autour des villages.

* * *

Le pays est très suffisamment fertile et nourrit sans peine ses habitants. Les différentes variétés de mil y poussent bien, spécialement le petit mil blanc *(pennisetum spicatum)* qui, écrasé et bouilli, fait le fond de la nourriture; le sorgho, ou gros mil rouge, qui sert à la fabrication de la bière, si réputée du pays; c'est aussi ce mil que mangent les chevaux, bien qu'ils préfèrent le gros mil blanc. Autour des cases, dans les terrains engraissés par les dépôts journaliers, le maïs vient bien; c'est une grande ressource quand la provision de mil de l'année précédente commence à s'épuiser et que la récolte de l'année n'est pas encore mûre. On entoure les champs de maïs d'une double ligne de sorgho et souvent d'une double rangée de *bérensé*, plante fibreuse, sorte de chanvre, dont les indigènes se servent pour faire des cordes. Quand le maïs a été récolté, on le remplace par du tabac dont on a précédemment préparé les semis. Enfin les fossées qui ont été creusées lors de la construction des cases et tous les endroits un peu humides sont occupés par des gombos, la corne grecque, très appréciée dans la sauce.

Pendant la saison des pluies, aucun coin de terre ne reste inoccupé autour des villages, et quand le mil rouge est mûr et que les épis se rejoignent de chaque côté du sentier, la circulation devient difficile. Le toit même des cases sert de support à toutes les espèces de calebassiers qui donnent aux ménagères leurs calebasses qui servent autant que nos plats, nos assiettes, nos verres et nos cuvettes; aux voyageurs, leurs gourdes; aux priseurs, leurs tabatières; aux sorciers, leur ustensile pour appeler les génies, tandis que les grosses calebasses dont sont faits les tambours croissent à travers les pieds de maïs. Dans les bas-fonds, auprès des marigots, là où l'eau séjourne, des rizières sont aménagées, mais le riz est un aliment de luxe, d'une culture difficile à cause des soins qu'elle demande; les indigènes n'en usent que les jours de fête ou quand ils veulent honorer un hôte de marque. Le coton se sème entre les pieds de gros mil rouge, dans les endroits humides et se récolte beaucoup plus tard. Les arachides et les pois occupent aussi une partie des terrains cultivés tandis que les haricots courent à terre entre les pieds de petit mil. Le piment, le sésame, l'indigo, l'igname, le manioc, la patate, et un petit tubercule, le *coleus coffini* que les Européens appellent *oussounifing* ou *fabirama*, et qui peut — à la rigueur — tenir lieu de pomme de terre, sont cultivés dans les terrains qui leur sont favorables.

Les champs renferment généralement des *karité (butyrospermum parkii)* arbre précieux, car les fruits dont la chair fraîche et légèrement sucrée, offre une friandise appréciée, renferment un noyau qui produit le beurre de *karité*, la graisse la plus généralement employée pour cuire les aliments et faire le savon. Autour des villages, souvent même dans l'intérieur des villages, les *néré (parkia africana)* produisent leurs gousses allongées; l'écorce, écrasée dans l'eau, donne un enduit qui rend plus ferme le sol des cases. La farine, délayée dans l'eau, est une boisson rafraîchissante et se mange, et les graines

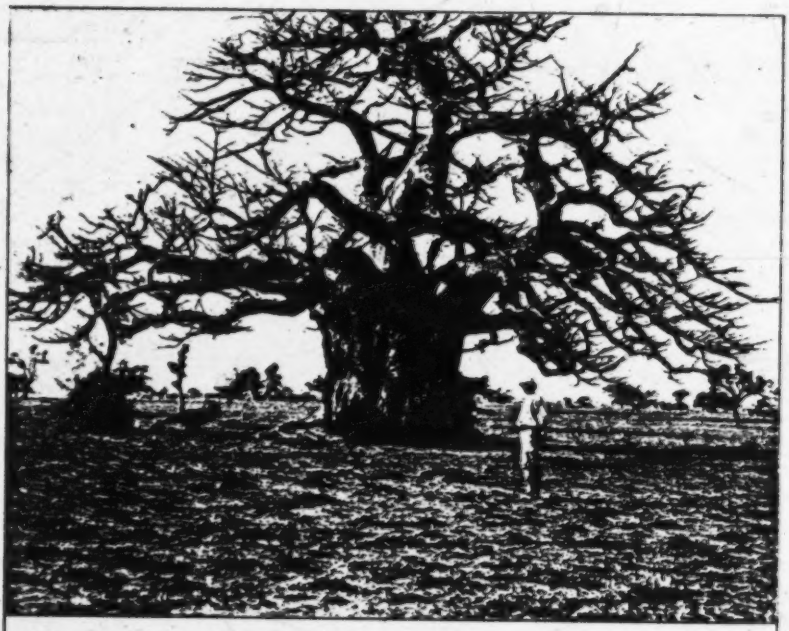
servent à la confection du *kalre*, le *soumbara* des Bambaras, qui entre dans toutes les sauces un peu soignées. Les *dioubalé* et les fromagers ou *kapokiero* offrent leur ombre aux tisserands, nombreux au Mossi, et aux causeurs plus nombreux encore. Le bambou pousse bien dans les régions humides du sud, et le palmier à huile se rencontre parfois. Par contre, la liane à caoutchouc n'a pas encore été introduite.

Les poules, de petite taille, courent dans toutes les directions dans les villages, en compagnie des pintades domestiques, et dans la brousse, à proximité des habitations, on rencontre partout des gamins qui gardent chèvres et moutons: c'est l'occupation du jeune âge ici, à l'heure où leurs contemporains de chez nous apprennent l'alphabet. Les ovidés les plus communs sont de petite taille; les moutons ont le poil court. Parfois, sourtout dans les villages un peu importants où se tient un marché, on peut voir des chèvres et des moutons hauts sur pattes, aux cornes longues et vrillées, mais ce sont des animaux importés; ils viennent du nord-est et sont engraissés pour être vendus comme viande de boucherie. Le grand chic pour une femme aisée de naba est de se faire suivre par un mouton de race touareg bien lavé et bien blanc. L'animal est nourri avec des déchets de mil, de bouillie de haricots, sa maîtresse lui présente souvent un morceau de sel à lécher, en un mot il est très soigné et bien gras; un jour de grande fête, il agrémentera le menu.

Les cases sont généralement gardées par des chiens très ordinaires, souvent rageurs, mais peureux, un bâton les met en fuite. Ils servent sourtout à la chasse, la grande occupation des Mossi pendant la saison sèche. Les canards domestiques se voient parfois chez les nabas, ainsi que les pigeons, mais ce ne sont pas des volatiles répandues et à la portée de tous. Enfin, presque tous les groupes de cases possèdent des chats, propriété de la femme et d'un abord difficile parce qu'à demi sauvages. Les ânes sont de taille moyenne mais robustes et résistants; ils peuvent pendant plusieurs jours consécutifs, porter des charges de soixante kilos et sont d'un précieux secours pour ceux qui se livrent au commerce des étoffes, des kolas et du sel. Il n'est guère de village qui ne possède un certain nombre d'ânes.

Les chevaux sont assez répandus dans tout le pays, et tout naba un tant soit peu important possède un ou plusieurs chevaux. Il y a deux races de chevaux très distinctes et que BINGER décrit ainsi: «La plus commune a, sans en avoir les qualités, tous les caractères du cheval arabe: tête fine, encolure courte, membres grêles et croupe fuyante, crinière et queue très longue. Les robes que l'on rencontre le plus souvent sont bai, alezan, gris isabelle et rouan; ces trois dernières ont toutes du ladre au chanfrein. Il est rare de rencontrer des chevaux sans balzane. L'autre race n'a rien du cheval arabe. C'est une forte et belle bête, ayant les caractères de notre cheval de dragon, environ 1 *m* 57 *cm* à 1 *m* 62 *cm*. Il se distingue par une tête fine et bien attachée, les membres inférieurs forts, bien musclés, un sabot large et la corne bien consistante, un beau poitrail large, la crinière et les crins de la queue courts. Les robes les plus communes sont différents bai et alezan[1].» Mais les

[1] BINGER, Du Niger au Golfe de Guinée, tome I, p. 485. Il semble cependant exagéré d'attribuer 1 *m* 57 *cm* au cheval mossi. Un cheval de 1 *m* 52 *cm* est un grand cheval ici et la



[facing p. 8]

En haut: Un baobab.
En bas: Village mossi.

Mossi, habitués sans doute à se procurer leur cavalerie par razzias, ne s'occupent guère d'élevage, aussi le nombre des chevaux diminue, et ce pays, réputé naguère pour ses montures, risque dans un avenir, qui n'est peut-être pas très éloigné, d'en manquer.

Malheureusement d'ailleurs les chevaux ne vivent pas dans toutes les régions, et Ouagadougou en particulier leur est funeste, sans qu'il ait été possible, à ma connaissance, d'établir la véritable cause de cette insalubrité. Les indigènes l'attribuent à l'eau, et il est un fait certain c'est que les chevaux abreuvés aux puits, se portent mieux que ceux qui le sont au marigot, et que les chevaux se portent fort bien à quelques kilomètres de Ouagadougou. Les Européens ont une tendance à attribuer cette mortalité à la tsétsé. Les deux opinions peuvent se concilier, car la tsétsé aime les endroits humides, et d'autre part, les puits de Ouagadougou contiennent du sel de magnésie qui purge les chevaux et enraye ainsi la maladie.

Les Peuls ont de beaux troupeaux de bovidés, les uns assez petits et sans bosse, les petits bœufs, les autres de belle taille et avec bosse, les zébus. Les commerçants se servent aussi de zébus pour le portage. Beaucoup de ces bœufs appartiennent aux Mossi, qui gardent rarement leurs troupeaux eux-mêmes et les confient aux Peuls pasteurs, qui retiennent le lait en paiement: une vache adulte en fournit deux à quatre litres par jour dans la bonne saison. Mais les gardiens savent tirer parti de cette quasi servitude. Quand une bête meurt ce n'est jamais une des leurs, et si le propriétaire du troupeau vient à mourir sans indiquer à ses héritiers le lieu où se trouve son troupeau et le nombre de ses bêtes, les Peuls se gardent bien de déclarer le troupeau à eux confié. Autrefois ils étaient un peu plus consciencieux qu'aujourd'hui, parce qu'ils craignaient les représailles, mais maintenant ils bénissent l'occupation française.

Les bœufs sont aussi parfois décimés par l'épizootie, et c'est ainsi qu'en 1910 et 1911, la région de Koupéla fut ravagée par la maladie, sans doute la peste bovine ou la péripneumonie. Les bœufs toussaient, perdaient tout appétit, et mouraient en quelques jours.

Les Mossi s'adonnent aussi à l'élevage des abeilles. Les ruches sont fabriquées avec de la paille ou des tiges d'un bois flexible, et posées dans les arbres; parfois aussi les troncs creux des baobabs servent de refuge aux essaims. La récolte du miel se fait à la fin et au commencement de l'hivernage: la ruche est enfumée et les abeilles sont détruites. Le miel sert surtout à la fabrication du *bésé*, sorte d'hydromel, dont les Yarsé, les Peuls, et les Haoussa musulmans sont très friands, et qu'ils peuvent boire bien que ce soit une boisson fermentée, tandis que la bière de mil leur est interdite en principe. La cire est vendue aux bijoutiers et sert à la fabrication des bracelets, faits d'après la méthode de la cire perdue.

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moyenne ne dépasse guère 1 *m* 44 *cm*. De son côté, M. MENIAUD (Haut-Sénégal et Niger, Géographie économique II, p. 106) dit que «la population chevaline du Haut-Sénégal et Niger doit présenter les caractères des races aryenne et mongolique, parfois influencés de race germanique.» Et plus loin (p. 110) il range le cheval mossi parmi les chevaux de race mongolique, variété dougolawi ou nubienne.

Rien qu'à voir les villages on sent que les habitants se croient en sûreté. Pas de ces amoncellements de cases dans un endroit restreint et entouré de murs pour résister aux invasions d'un El-hadj-Omar ou d'un Samory, comme en pays bambara; pas de ces groupements familiaux de cases à toits plats, de ces châteaux forts réunissant toute la famille depuis le grand-père jusqu'au dernier des petits fils, afin d'être assez nombreux pour résister aux incursions d'un voisin plus puissant, comme en pays gourounsi où l'autorité des chefs est si méconnue. Ici chaque chef de famille, et il faut entendre par ce mot un homme avec ses femmes, ses enfants non mariés et ses serviteurs, occupe un certain nombre de cases dont l'ensemble forme son *yri*, groupe appelé par les Européens du nom bambara *soukala*.

Les cases sont rondes, construites généralement en terre, mais faites quelques fois de pieux fichés en terre et entourés de *sékos*, sorte de natte de grande paille tressée. Elles sont coiffées d'un toit également en paille à armatures de bois. Quand un indigène veut bâtir, il prend jour avec un maçon, habile à poser les mottes de terre, et prévient les gens du village. Au jour dit, chacun se rend chez lui, les femmes vont puiser de l'eau au marigot, les hommes piochent la terre à quelques mètres de la case à construire, les enfants piétinent le mortier et portent au maçon les mottes de terre préparées par les vieux qui sont gravement assis autour du tas de boue. C'est fête au village, car celui qui fait construire doit abreuver tout son monde, et même le nourrir s'il veut bien faire les choses.

Un cercle est tracé à terre pour indiquer les dimensions à donner à la case, et le maçon pose les mottes de terre suivant ce cercle, obliquement, les unes à côté des autres. Quand il a fini un premier tour, il en commence un second et continue ainsi jusqu'à mi-hauteur. Il interrompt alors son œuvre et la remet au lendemain afin de laisser à la première partie le temps de sécher, aussi construit-on généralement plusieurs cases à la fois. Aucune ouverture n'est laissée dans le mur. Quand il est sec, on perce une porte généralement ceintrée et basée de telle sorte qu'on ne peut entrer qu'en rampant sur les mains et les genoux. Les femmes à l'aise ferment leur case avec une porte en bois qui s'ouvre dans l'intérieur, et est munie d'un loquet en bois qui fonctionne au moyen d'une grosse clef composée d'un bâton sur lequel sont perpendiculairement adaptées de petites tiges de fer. C'est ordinairement dans ces cases fermées et, par conséquent, mieux défendues contre les voleurs, que les enfants et même le mari déposent leurs habits, leurs objets de luxe, leurs cauris. Ceux qui ne peuvent pas se payer ce luxe d'une porte, plantent deux piquets de chaque côté de l'entrée, et entre eux et le mur de la case glissent une natte.

Une *soukala*-type se compose de la case du maître, d'autant de cases qu'il y a de femmes chez lui, d'une case pour les moutons et les chèvres, d'une autre pour le cheval s'il y en a un, d'une case qui abrite le moulin familial. Enfin d'une case de réception à deux portes assez hautes pour qu'on puisse entrer sans se baisser, qui tantôt sert d'entrée, tantôt se trouve dans l'intérieur du groupe de cases. Toutes ces habitations sont disposées en cercle, et sont réunies entre elles soit par un mur en pisé, soit par des barrières en

nattes plus hautes qu'un homme et soutenus par des piquets. La case du maître, à côté de laquelle se trouvent le plus souvent les cases des chevaux et des moutons, est séparée des autres cases par des nattes afin qu'il soit bien chez lui. Dans la cour intérieure, se trouve un petit mur disposé en arc de cercle: c'est la cuisine quand il ne pleut pas. Entre les cases sont disposées les grandes cruches en terre cuite qui servent à faire la bière de mil. Devant ce groupe est construit un abri, généralement assez haut pour permettre de se tenir debout et composé essentiellement de piquets fourchus sur lesquels reposent des bois et des *sékos* formant hangar et servant de refuge pendant les heures chaudes de la journée. Les garçons en bas âge et les filles non mariées vivent avec leur mère tandis que les grand garçons, les serviteurs et les esclaves ont chacun leurs cases distinctes construites devant le groupe d'habitations qui abritent le maître et ses femmes.

C'est tout l'ensemble de ces constructions que l'on appelle *yri*, la *soukala*. Chaque *soukala* est distincte, et quelque temps après leur mariage, les enfants construisent leur demeure absolument séparée de celle de leurs parents, souvent dans un autre quartier du village et parfois dans un village différent. Les *soukala* sont à quinze ou vingt mètres les unes des autres, de telle sorte que les villages, bien que suffisamment groupés, occupent cependant une superficie de terrain assez étendue. Les chefs de canton placent un œuf d'autruche sur la pointe du toit de leur propre habitation et quelques uns construisent même des cases terrassées plus hautes que celles qui les entourent. C'est dans cette case qu'ils enferment leurs richesses et dans son sous-sol se trouve leur prison. Un escalier en terre donne accès sur la terrasse où le maître des céans reçoit ses hôtes quand le soleil commence baisser à l'horizon.

Ce peuple d'aspect si paisible aujourd'hui était autrefois fort guerrier et pour un rien partait en guerre. Etrangers dans le pays qu'ils occupent actuellement, les Mossi ont dû le conquérir par la force des armes, et le Tarik-es-Soudan ne raconte-il pas que ceux du Yatenga, sans doute, s'emparèrent au XIVe siècle de Tombouctou et au XVe poussèrent leurs incursions jusqu'au lac Débo et même jusqu'à Oualata[1]. L'armée mossi était fort redoutée. Quand un chef rassemblait ses gens personne ne restait en arrière. Les femmes, les enfants, les invalides et les vieillards seuls gardaient les villages. Ceux qui n'avaient pas de chevaux formaient l'infanterie, armés d'un arc et de flèches le plus souvent empoisonnées et d'un grand sabre suspendu à l'épaule. Les cavaliers portaient le sabre et la lance plantée sur le bout du pied et tenue à mi-hauteur avec la main droite. La cavalerie mossi était particulièrement terrible et nombreuse. Quand ses gens partaient en guerre le Moro-Naba restait chez lui; il rassemblait le plus de chevaux qu'il lui était possible et quand des cavaliers avaient perdu leur monture ils venaient chercher un autre cheval chez le naba et rejoignaient les combattants.

Les dernières guerres qui ont précédé la conquête française de Koupéla et dont nous allons dire un mot, ont été des guerres civiles, soit entre gens de Tenkodogo et de Koupéla, soit entre les Mossi et les Gourmantché.

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[1] Delafosse, *l. c.* II, p. 80.

Ces guerres, comme cela arrivait généralement en pareilles circonstances, ont suivi la mort des nabas, dont plusieurs prétendants se disputaient la succession. Et c'est pour les prevenir que seul l'entourage immédiat d'un naba connaissait sa mort. Les profanes devaient l'ignorer et croire le naba malade et dans sa case. Ce n'est que quand le chef de famille avait réuni ce qu'il faut pour honorer dignement le défunt par la célébration du *kouré*[1] que la fatale nouvelle se répandait.

Naba Kidba ne laissant à sa mort pour lui succéder qu'un enfant de cinq à six ans, un individu de Kazem'bouanga, puissant par ses richesses et le nombre de ses gens, résolut de s'emparer du pouvoir. Ses partisans s'étaient eux-mêmes donnés ce nom de Kazem'bouanga et disaient: «Bien que l'hyène *(katré)* ne soit pas égale *(zéma)* à l'âne *(bouanga)*, cependant, si elle le rencontre dans la brousse, elle s'attaque à lui et le tue: de même, bien qu'ils ne soient pas aussi puissants que les habitants de Koupéla, ils sauront bien les vaincre.» Et, en effet, ils se dirigèrent sur Koupéla. Le premier ministre, qui porte le nom générique de Saman'naba (chef de la cour extérieure) et qui de son propre nom s'appelait Wenkosgaraga, prit l'enfant et se sauva avec lui jusqu'à Sapara, le premier village dépendant directement du Moro-Naba, situé à 9 *km* de Koupéla. Les gens de Kazem'bouanga l'ayant appris se dirigèrent sur Sapara mais les habitants de cette localité refusèrent de leur livrer l'enfant à eux confié, tandis que le Saman'naba retournait dans sa province et réunissait tous les partisans du jeune naba. Unis aux habitants de Sapara, les guerriers du Saman'naba taillèrent en pièces les gens du prétendant, en tuèrent un grand nombre et les repoussèrent jusque chez eux. Le Saman'naba prit alors l'enfant, le conduisit à Ouagadougou, obtint que le Moro-Naba lui donnât l'investiture et revint à Koupéla. C'est le naba Ibri, le père du naba actuel, et celui qui régnait à Koupéla lors de l'arrivée du lieutenant VOULET. Son concurrent défait se donna la mort.

Vers la même époque, à la mort de son père Yenkouaré, Batchandé fut élu roi du Gourma. Certains villages, entre autres Gyekango, ne voulurent pas reconnaître son autorité. Batchandé fit appel au naba de Bélousa qui réunit ses guerriers et donna à tous l'ordre de se joindre aux gens du naba de Fada. Koupéla, dépendant de Bélousa, prit part à l'expédition. Mais Gyekango fut vaillamment défendu par son chef et ses habitants, favorisés d'ailleurs par un terrain très propice, tout couvert d'épines derrière lesquelles les assiégés s'embusquaient pour tirer sur les Mossi. C'était pendant la saison sèche. La soif termina ce qu'avait commencé le courage des gens de Gyekango, et beaucoup de Mossi périrent. Le naba de Beloussa, humilié, voulut se laisser mourir de soif mais fut sauvé par le naba de Pwitenga. Sur ces entrefaites, le capitaine BAUD, venant du Dahomey, arriva à Fada. Batchandé lui demanda son secours contre ses sujets révoltés, et le capitaine BAUD s'empara de Gyékango qui, depuis cette époque, s'appelle Baudéni, le village de BAUD.

Une guerre qui a laissée de profonds souvenirs, fut celle entreprise par les gens de Koupéla en faveur de Lébréboundou, contre ceux de Tenkodogo,

[1] *Kouré*, cérémonie funéraire en l'honneur des défunts, v. plus bas.

Comme précédemment c'est une guerre civile qui éclata à la mort d'un chef. Le naba de Tenkodogo étant mort, les anciens élurent, pour lui succéder, Naba Korongo. Mais Lébréboundou voulut s'emparer du pouvoir. Il fit appel aux gens de Fada et à ceux de Koupéla. Le naba de Tenkodogo aux abois recourut en vain au naba de Bélousa et au Moro-Naba. Ils répondirent tous deux que le vainqueur serait reconnu pour chef. Les gens de Tenkodogo furent repoussés avec pertes, mais c'était au moment de l'arrivée des troupes françaises. Le naba élu de Tenkodogo fit appel au chef de l'expédition, qui tua son prétendant et installa à Tenkodogo celui qui avait été légitimement élu.

Les dernières guerres de la région de Koupéla furent donc toutes des guerres civiles, et éclataient à la mort des chefs de provinces avoisinantes, Koupéla, Fada, Tenkodogo.

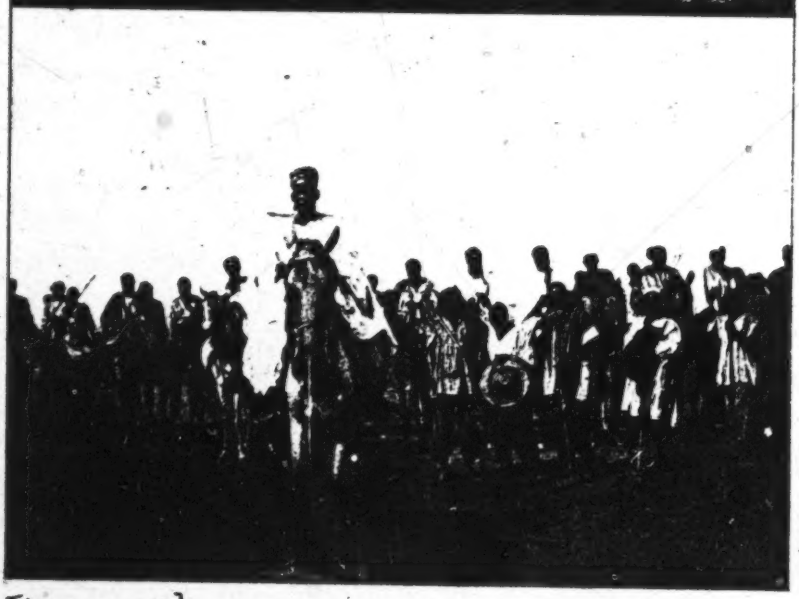
Mais le terrain le plus ordinaire de la guerre était le Bousanga. Une femme bousanga, esclave du naba de Koupéla, venait-elle à s'enfuir, le naba la réclamait. Si on refusait de la lui rendre, c'était la guerre. Quand les Mossi n'avaient pas suffisamment de mil, quand leurs troupeaux avaient été décimés par une épizootie, ou même simplement quand ils voulaient se procurer des esclaves, le naba réunissait ses ministres et les engageait à aller razzier les Bousansé. Le Saman-Naba prenait la direction de la guerre. Le Trabana, guerrier éprouvé, était chef d'état major, et tous les autres chefs, les chefs de cantons, et ceux des villages, réunissaient leurs gens: c'était une vraie fête, que beaucoup, sourtout parmi les chefs, regrettent encore d'avoir été abolie. On razziait tout ce que l'on trouvait, on se partagait les récoltes et les troupeaux, et la population était réduite en esclavage. Et puisque le cours du récit nous amène à parler des esclaves, on nous permettra d'entrer dans quelques details à leur sujet.

Car l'esclavage existait au Mossi, mais il était très doux. Peuple de cultivateurs, les Mossi avaient des esclaves pour travailler leurs champs. Ils avaient donc avantage à les bien traiter afin de pouvoir tirer d'eux un bon parti. Les esclaves étaient aussi une source de richesses. Un esclave adulte se vendait entre 50 et 100 frcs selon sa force. On ne distinguait pas entre les hommes et les femmes. Aussi était-il rare qu'un Mossi tuât son esclave. L'usage lui en donnait certes le droit, et personne, pas même son chef, ne pouvait lui demander compte de son acte; son esclave était sa chose et il en faisait ce qu'il voulait. Mais quand il désirait s'en débarasser, il le vendait, c'était plus lucratif. D'ailleurs, il fallait attacher l'esclave à la maison; l'esclave maltraité se serait sauvé au risque d'être repris, et malgré la drogue qu'on lui faisait boire, et qui comme l'eau du Léthé, devait lui faire perdre la mémoire; tandis qu'un esclave bien traité, bien nourri, avait l'espérance d'obtenir une femme et de devenir chef de case à son tour. Quand son maître était content de lui, quand il avait rendu un service signalé, son maître lui donnait parfois une de ses filles en mariage: il était libre alors et ses enfants ne naissaient plus esclaves. Un esclave pouvait être libéré quand sa famille consentait à le racheter. Le mode de libération le plus fréquemment employé était l'échange: une fille, sœur ou nièce de l'esclave à libérer, était donnée à sa place. C'est une coutume qui a existé jusqu'à ces derniers temps.

Les Mossi se procuraient des esclaves soit par achat, soit par la guerre, soit par la naissance. Aucune distinction n'existait entre ces différentes sortes d'esclavage. Les esclaves étaient tout traités de même. Les Bousansé et les Gourounsi fournirent le plus grand nombre d'esclaves, et comme partout, les Yarsé et les Haoussa musulmans étaient les grands commerçants. Mais les Mossi se vendaient aussi entre eux, et quand un homme puissant s'emparait d'un enfant ou même d'un adulte, trouvé sans défense dans la brousse, il le vendait en esclavage. Parfois l'enfant était séparé de sa mère esclave, mais c'était rare. Les esclaves faisaient partie des biens de la famille, et en cas de décès, devenaient la propriété de l'héritier. Mariés par leur maître, ils acquéraient une liberté relative, avaient leur chez eux, leur champs qu'ils cultivaient pour eux mêmes, ils pouvaient acquérir des biens, acheter des bêtes de somme, des chèvres, des moutons, des bœufs. La seule servitude qui leur restât, c'est qu'ils devaient donner en mariage, à leur maître, toutes leurs filles. C'est ainsi qu'il y a des villages entiers d'esclaves, ne se distinguant en rien des autres villages. C'est ainsi que le village de Koupéla, évalué à 2500 habitants, est entièrement composé par les esclaves du naba, excepté trois familles. Le premier ministre lui-même, le Saman-Naba, et tous les ministres sont des esclaves du naba. Il est vrai que sous cette dénomination sont compris les esclaves pour dettes. Quand un indigène avait emprunté au naba une somme assez importante, la valeur d'un bœuf, par exemple, et qu'il ne pouvait pas payer, un compromis s'établissait entre le débiteur et le naba. Le débiteur promettait de donner toutes ses filles au naba et ainsi engageait toute sa postérité. On disait alors qu'il était devenu l'esclave du naba.

Un autre moyen de se procurer des bras pour travailler la terre, c'était d'avoir des serfs. Il y a deux sortes de serfs — domestiques si l'on veut —: les *dakwaba* et les *noakansé*. Un *dakonré* (singulier de *dakwaba*, désigne, étymologiquement, celui qui n'est pas marié) a une famille, et est mis, par sa famille, au service d'un homme riche dans le seul but, quand il sera en âge, d'être marié, d'avoir une femme. Il travaille pour son maître, pioche ses champs, fait ses commissions, il peut, avec l'autorisation de son maître, avoir son champ à lui, et quelques petits biens, mais quoique libre, il ne peut quitter son maître pour se mettre en service chez un autre indigène. Un *noakanga* (singulier de *noakansé*) n'a pas de famille. Il se met librement en service pour être nourri, logé, parfois habillé, son maître le mariera plus ou moins vite selon les régions. Un *noakanga* est plus libre qu'un *dakonré*, car il peut quitter son maître quand il veut, soit pour commercer, soit pour se mettre en service chez un autre individu, mais souvent il doit tout son travail à son maître.

Les Peuls pasteurs n'ont jamais été les esclaves des Mossi par ce qu'ils ne peuvent que garder les troupeaux et sont incapables de travailler la terre; ils étaient cependant dans un vasselage très dur sous la coupe des Mossi, spécialement des nabas et servaient de victimes dans certains sacrifices. Des Mossi, vendus par des Yarsé ou d'autres Mossi, ont été parfois leurs esclaves, surtout dans la région de Dori, appelé Gyémaré par les indigènes.



[facing p. 14]

En haut: Le salut Mossi.
En bas: Un naba et ses cavaliers.

Chapitre deuxième. — **Administration.**

Un des traits caractéristiques du pays mossi, c'est la puissance des chefs et la soumission des sujets. Cet esprit de soumission imprègne toute la mentalité mossi. Le Mossi n'est pas très dissimulé, fermé à ses semblables, comme l'est, dit-on, le Bambara. Il cause au contraire assez librement avec ses amis, même de ses affaires personnelles; ce qui ne veut pas dire qu'il ne sait pas garder un secret, surtout si c'est le secret du roi. Mais pour qu'une certaine liberté, qui devient presque de l'intimité, mais jamais de l'amitié au sens le plus élevé du mot, s'établisse entre deux individus, il faut qu'ils soient égaux. Si le Mossi paraît dissimulé, c'est qu'il a peur de froisser un plus puissant que lui. En face d'un chef, de quelqu'un qui a la force, comme il dit, il cédera toujours quitte à garder intérieurement son sentiment et à agir à sa guise; et un chef quand il parle, n'entend que ces mots: *bé néré, naba* — c'est bien, c'est cela. Je suis de ton avis.

Le salut mossi, autrefois en usage dans tous les empires noirs du Soudan, spécialement aux cours de Ghana, Mali et Gao, indique bien cette mentalité et quand, étrangers, nous pénétrons pour la première fois dans ce pays, nous sommes choqués de voir un homme s'abaisser ainsi devant un autre homme. C'est que pour saluer, le Mossi, dépose tout charge, chapeau, sabre, retire ses savates, s'asseoit à terre, replie légèrement les jambes, porte le buste en avant, les coudes sont appuyés à terre et aussi écartés que possible l'un de l'autre; les avants-bras repliés devant la poitrine et les deux mains à demi fermées le pouce levé en l'air, frappent ensemble la terre trois ou quatre fois; puis l'individu se relève un peu et frotte ensemble la paume de ses deux mains. Jamais il ne regarde en face celui qu'il veut saluer, mais les yeux sont légèrement baissés. C'est vraiment une attitude très humiliée, surtout quand le chef ainsi salué, reste debout, ou se trouve à cheval et dominant son subordonné, daigne à peine lui accorder un regard. Les femmes, au lieu de frapper la terre avec les avant-bras, la frappent avec les coudes et relèvent, à la hauteur des épaules, les mains ouvertes et les doigts allongés. Le grand salut, très rarement employé d'ailleurs, consiste, après le salut ordinaire, à se retourner, à prendre de la poussière avec ses deux mains et à s'en couvrir le front, puis à revenir saluer son interlocuteur.

Deux indigènes qui se connaissent, se croissent-ils dans un chemin, le plus jeune s'accroupit le premier et commence le salut auquel l'autre répond en s'accroupissant à son tour. S'ils portent des charges, ils les déposent à terre, puis se saluent. Ils ne sont jamais pressés. Les serviteurs et les femmes, passant devant un chef, s'inclinent légèrement et joignent les mains devant la poitrine, paume contre paume. Si compliqué que soit le salut mossi, les indigènes le font avec grace et aisance; ils y sont habitués dès leur plus jeune âge, et en tous cas ne sont pas alors gauches et empruntés comme lors qu'ils s'essaient à ébaucher le salut militaire, si beau et si noble quand il est bien fait, mais geste ridicule quand il est déformé par un Noir.

Le terme générique pour désigner les chefs est *naba*. Cependant il y a une distinction entre *naba* et *dimma*. Le dimma est celui qui est élu selon

des règles très précises, que nous étudierons plus loin, mais dont l'autorité procède directement de cette élection. Il n'y a au Mossi que cinq dimma: le Moro-Naba, le naba de Fada, celui de Tenkodogo, celui de Boussouma, et celui du Yatenga. Le naba, au contraire, tient son autorité d'un autre chef plus puissant que lui, qui l'a désigné entre plusieurs prétendants. Ce sont tous les autres chefs.

Le pays mossi est tout entier sous l'autorité du *Moro-naba,* assisté de cinq grands ministres: le *Widi-naba,* le *Laralé-naba,* le *Gounga-naba,* le *Kamisoro-naba,* et le *Ballum-naba.* Les attributions de ces ministres sont assez mal définies. Le Kamisoro est eunuque et chef des eunuques. A sa mort tous ses biens reviennent au Moro-Naba, puisqu'il ne laisse pas d'héritier. Aussi le Moro-Naba avait-il avantage à l'enrichir, et à lui donner la plus belle province de ses états. Le Widi-naba remplace le Moro-Naba depuis sa mort jusqu'à l'intronisation de son successeur. C'est lui qui préside à l'élection et proclame l'élu. Le Laralé est le gardien des tombes des ancêtres du Moro-Naba, et le Ballum est le chef des pages et des danseurs; quand le Moro-Naba marie un de ses pages, celui-ci s'installe près des cases du Ballum-naba. C'est le moins important des ministres et, avant l'occupation française, il ne commandait à aucune province.

Le Moro-Naba commande directement à une grande partie des territoires mossi. La partie soumise à ses ordres immédiats était divisée entre les quatre grands ministres, qui avaient chacun sous leurs ordres des chefs de canton. Les territoires non soumis directement au Moro-Naba, sont placés sous l'autorité de chefs puissants que l'on peut appeler chefs de province, vassaux assurément du Moro-Naba, mais vassaux très indépendants et un peu comme l'étaient les duc de Brétagne et de Bourgogne vis-à-vis du roi de France. Tels sont les nabas de Ouahigouya, de Yako, de Boussouma, de Bélousa, etc., car ils sont nombreux tout autour du pays réservé au Moro-Naba, surtout au nord, à l'est et au sud. Ces chefs de province pouvaient avoir des vassaux indépendants, mais qui cependant reconnaissaient leur autorité; tel le naba de Koupéla, vrai chef de province, mais vassal du naba de Bélousa, vassal lui-même du Moro-Naba. Le naba de Salmatenga se trouve dans la même condition vis-à-vis du naba de Boussouma.

Chaque province est divisée en cantons ayant chacun à sa tête un naba, et le canton est formé d'un certain nombre de villages qui ont, en général, chacun un naba. Certains villages dépendent directement du chef de province qui les distribue entre ses ministres. Il arrive même que certains villages n'ont pas de naba proprement dit. Ce sont principalement les villages formés par les enfants d'un grand naba. Un vieillard est alors chargé des fonctions administratives. Ces villages qui n'ont pas de naba, peuvent cependant en obtenir un, par exemple, si le chef de province a un fils qui s'installe dans ce village et que les habitants soient contents de sa présence, son père peut le nommer naba de ce village. Certains villages, très rares d'ailleurs, sont commandés par des femmes, que des anciens assistent, quand il y a une affaire à juger.

L'autorité de chaque chef est tempérée par son conseil. Le Moro-Naba lui-même n'agit pas sans prendre l'avis de ses ministres. Chaque chef de

Le Moro-Naba des Mossi.

Un chef de province mossi.

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province a son conseil. Les noms donnés aux ministres varient d'une province à une autre province, mais les attributions restent les mêmes. Les chefs de cantons consultent les hommes les plus âgés du village dans lequel ils résident, et un chef de village ne prend aucune résolution, pouvant intéresser la communauté, sans réunir les anciens et sans les consulter.

Tout se fait par la voie hiérarchique. Jamais un chef de province ne donnera un ordre directement à un village dépendant d'un chef de canton, mais il fera prévenir ce dernier qui lui-même préviendra le chef de village, et ce dernier, réunissant ses vieux, leur communiquera les ordres reçus, et par eux préviendra tous ses administrés. Les ordres ainsi transmis régulièrement sont toujours exécutés, mais si, par hasard, un chef de canton voulait désobéir à son chef de province, il serait suivi par ses gens qui reconnaissent son autorité avant toute autre.

Les derniers Moro-Naba étaient devenus un peu des rois fainéants et le protocole auquel ils étaient astreints de par la coutume, ne laissait pas d'être gênant à l'instar de l'étiquette des cours européennes. Car le Moro-Naba est entouré d'une véritable cour. Nous avons vu que son grand conseil se compose de cinq grands ministres. A eux se joignent l'Iman qui représente les musulmans et a une certaine influence, et le *Teng'Soba*. Les fonctions de ce dernier sont assez spéciales. Il n'habite pas le même village que le Moro-Naba, et commande un canton. Mais en cas de guerre, c'est lui qui est consulté sur l'opportunité des hostilités et sur leurs chances de succès. C'est lui qui doit alors faire les sacrifices et questionner les mânes des ancêtres. Quand la guerre est décidée, il prend le commandement des armées, et tous, ministres et chefs de cantons, doivent lui obéir. Le Moro-Naba ne quitte pas Ouagadougou.

Autour de ces grands dignitaires s'agite tout un monde de subalternes. Les eunuques, gens peu recommandables, puisque on faisait parfois eunuques les voleurs récidivistes, et généralement les pages qui s'étaient permis trop de familiarités avec les femmes du naba. Quelques-uns pouvaient arriver à une haute situation. Le Kamisoro est toujours eunuque, et quelques cantons importants leur étaient réservés.

Les pages sont de jeunes enfants choisis avec soin parmi les mieux doués du pays. Ils doivent servir le naba et portent le nom de *soroné*. Jamais le naba n'est seul; il a toujours à ses côtés un ou plusieurs pages. Celui-ci tient l'éventail, celui-là est près du monarque pour l'aider à changer de position, un autre s'occupe des savates, un autre du bâton de commandement, et le grand échanson tient sans cesse dans sa main une calebasse remplie de bière de mil forte et recouverte d'un plateau en vannerie artistement tressé. Les soronés ont les bras ornés de bracelets de cuivre, souvent de cuivre jaune et rouge alterné, deux, trois, quatre bracelets. Ils ont parfois des bracelets aux poignets et au dessus du coude; parfois aussi les deux pieds sont ornés de gros bracelets ou même de guêtres de cuivre qui embarrassent singulièrement la marche de celui qui les porte, mais sont un ornement très recherché. Tous ces soronés sont aux petits «soins» autour du monarque. Tousse-t-il, les paumes des mains se frottent l'une contre l'autre; les doigts claquent. Il en

est de même quand il boit, éternue ou crache. S'il se lève, toute la cour se lève, et lorsqu'il est sujet aux infirmités communes à touts les mortels, toute la cour le suit et s'accroupit comme lui.

Les jours de grandes cérémonies, la musique accompagne le naba, et il ne peut plus faire un geste, dire un mot, faire un pas, sans que les musiciens jouent des différentes espèces de tambours. Le tambour type, spécial au mossi, le *bindré*, celui dont seuls les membres de la corporation des tambours peuvent jouer, se compose d'une calebasse qui peut atteindre 70 à 80 *cm* de diamètre. Elle est vidée, le côté où s'attachait la queue du fruit est enlevé, et remplacé par une peau de chèvre fortement tendue. C'est en frappant cette peau avec ses mains que l'artiste tire de son instrument des sons très différents. C'est tout un art de bien jouer de ce tambour, et les membres de la confrérie y sont habitués dès leur jeune âge. Ce sont les troubadours, les griots du pays, qui chantent les louanges des chefs dont ils connaissent toute la généalogie, qui fréquentent les marchés, qui suivent les gens riches et les proclament les plus braves, les plus généreux, les plus beaux des hommes que la terre ait portés, afin d'obtenir quelques cadeaux. Ils sont de toutes les fêtes.

Il y a aussi le *lounga*, fait d'un morçeau de bois évidé en forme de sablier; les deux extrémités sont assez larges et réunies par un cylindre plus étroit; ce tambour se porte sous le bras, et ses deux ouvertures sont fermées par des peaux de chèvres; elles sont réunies par des cordes que l'artiste tend plus ou moins en serrant le tambour entre son bras et son côté gauche, tandis que de la main droite il frappe une des peaux avec un petit bâton recourbé et terminé par une boule.

La musique du naba se compose encore de flûtes, dont les indigènes, souvent les Peuls, savent tirer de jolis sons, mais trop souvent les mêmes, et de petits violons à une seule corde, qui, sous l'archet habilement manié, ne laissent pas de rendre des sons agréables.

Si le Moro-Naba doit monter à cheval, les palfreniers amènent sa monture magnifiquement caparaçonnée avec têtière en cuivre, grand tapis brodé qui couvre tout le dos et la croupe même. Une pièce d'étoffe brodée cache tout le poitrail de la bête et la selle, genre arabe, avec grands étriers de cuivre, supporte de chaque côté de grands plateaux de même métal. Les tambours jouent quand le naba sort de sa demeure, ils changent d'air quand il met le pied à l'étrier, l'air varie encore quand il se met en route, et toute la population à plusieurs kilomètres à la ronde, est avertie de tous les gestes du Moro-Naba. Un soroné le précède portant son coussin, et un autre portant son bâton de commandement. Les ministres présents à la cour et les chefs étrangers présents à la capitale s'empressent de monter à cheval. Des gardes du corps du Moro-Naba l'accompagnent, quatre forts gaillards marchent à ses côtés, les bras appuyés sur la croupe du cheval comme pour empêcher le monarque de tomber, tandis que des cavaliers, armés de lances, font la fantasia, courent 100 *m* devant le naba, en brandissant leurs lances, et reviennent au grand galop, puis repartent. C'est un va-et-vient continuel et une distraction pour le naba qui, lui, ne peut pas galoper.

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En haut: Le Moro-Naba. Derrière lui son frère, âgé d'une douzaine d'années et chef d'une grande province; à ses côtés: deux pages.

En bas: Ballom-Naba entouré de ses pages. Debout derrière lui: ses deux enfants chrétiens.

Tous les chefs de province et les chefs de cantons ont leur cour, leurs ministres, leurs soronés, leurs tambours. Le privilège d'avoir des eunuques est cependant réservé au Moro-Naba. Mais pour avoir droit aux soronés, au coussin et aux éperons, il faut avoir été régulièrement intronisé. Et c'est pour avoir négligé de suivre les traditions, que le naba actuel de Koupéla ne possède aucun de ces privilèges.

C'est qu'il y a toute une tradition pour l'intronisation des naba. Chaque naba intronise ses vassaux. Le Moro-Naba intronise les chefs de provinces excepté ceux qui portent le titre de *dimma*; les chefs de provinces intronisent les chefs de cantons, et ceux-ci, les chefs de villages qui dépendent d'eux. Le droit de nomination est une grande source de revenus pour les nabas.

En effet, à la mort d'un chef de village, plusieurs prétendants briguent le pouvoir. Tous vont saluer le naba, qui les commande, et lui offrent de nombreux cadeaux, des cauris, des poules, des moutons, et, s'il sont assez riches, des barres de sel, un cheval, et parfois même une femme. Celui qui donnera le plus, a le plus de chances d'être choisi, et ce n'est que quand le naba électeur prévoit que les prétendants vont être à court de cadeaux qu'il se décide à désigner l'élu.

Voici comment les choses se passent à Koupéla pour la nomination d'un chef de village dépendant directement du chef de province. Les prétendants doivent s'adresser au ministre qui a la haute main sur leur village, c'est leur introducteur obligé auprès du naba dont dépend le choix, c'est le maître du chemin, le *sor'soba*. Quand la nomination est proche, le ministre se rend de nuit auprès de ce naba, et ils s'entendent ensemble sur le choix à faire. Ce ne peut être qu'un parent du défunt ou un parent d'un naba mort précédemment. Quand ils se sont mis d'accord, le naba désigne le jour et fait prévenir les intéressés. Chacun d'eux, plein d'espoir, vient, vers le soir, avec ses gens. Ils sont vêtus d'un pantalon, d'une peau qu'ils portent en sautoir, et d'une couverture rejetée sur l'épaule à la manière antique, de façon à ce que l'épaule et le bras droit soient libres. Devant chacun d'eux se tient une jeune fille, munie d'un bâton, qui deviendra peut-être dans quelques instants, le bâton de commandement. Cette jeune fille est censée recevoir le pouvoir en même temps que le prétendant élu, et pendant toutes les fêtes de l'investiture, c'est elle qui prendra soin des objets au service du nouveau naba, et chacun lui donnera des cauris. Après les fêtes, elle retourne chez elle.

Tous les prétendants étant arrivés sont assis dans la cour extérieure. Le naba reste dans sa case, et le ministre introducteur se rend auprès de lui. Le naba désigne celui sur qui porte son choix, et le ministre sort, prend la couverture de l'élu et lui dit que c'est lui, que le naba a choisi. Aussitôt les prétendants évincés se sauvent, tandis que leurs gens portent l'élu sur leurs épaules qui servent de pavois, et chantent ses louanges, en l'appelant *Wobro*, l'éléphant. Le *Trabrâna*, un brave entre les braves, vient alors avec une sacoche en cuir, et l'élu doit lui donner des cauris. Il en donnera encore à son introducteur pour avoir sa couverture, et pendant les trois jours de fête qui suivent son élection, il doit fournir quantité de bière de mil. Il est d'ailleurs aidé dans ses dépenses par ses nouveaux administrés qui, bientôt prévenus,

viennent le saluer et lui offrir leurs cadeaux. Les prétendants non élus reviennent le lendemain, tête rasée, faire leur soumission à leur heureux concurrent. Pendant trois jours donc c'est grande fête chez le ministre introducteur. On joue du tambour, on danse, on chante:

Sen kong'nam, lébra sonkam ysa.	Celui qui n'a pas été élu, glanera les arachides.
Bamb'naba y minimini biga, ka zué waodo, dem kom.	Leur naba est comme le petit de la sarcelle, il ne craint pas le froid, il joue dans l'eau.
Sérendé wobro, n'béla.	Venez à la rencontre de l'éléphant, pour le saluer.
Sen damma nyébra, baryoro nan wa.	Quelqu'un veut-il tuer le caïman, le serpent vient de suite[1].

Le troisième jour, on rase le nouveau naba. Sa sœur ou, à son défaut, une vieille, commence l'opération; mais n'importe qui peut l'achever. Puis tous se rendent chez le naba: l'élu va recevoir un nom, et désormais il sera défendu de le désigner par le nom qu'il portait précédemment. Chaque naba, en effet, reçoit trois noms, ou mieux trois devises, choisies par sa sœur, ou par une vieille femme de la famille. Ces devises font allusion à un fait historique passé ou à la situation de l'élu. Quand tous sont arrivés chez le naba, la sœur de l'élu indique les devises au naba, qui les proclame, et les tambours les redisent au peuple. Et l'on danse, et l'on chante, et l'on boit. Le lendemain seulement le nouveau naba bien dûment intronisé, retourne dans son village pour en prendre possession officielle.

Voici quelques devises:

I° Les devises du naba de Koupéla font allusion à la guerre qui eut lieu précédemment lors de l'élection de son père, naba Ibri, entre ce dernier et les gens de Kazémabouanga:

1° *Wadra yerda né kyongou. Wadra gousa menga, t'a péleum ka yd kyongou.* L'étoile brille malgré la lune. Mais que l'étoile se tienne sur ses gardes, car sa blancheur n'efface pas celle de la lune. (L'étoile représente le prétendant de Kazémabouanga. La lune c'est le naba de Koupéla.)

2° *Kalébdo kanenga, la son boulwaka.* La sauce de kalebdo n'est pas bonne, mais elle est meilleure que celle de boulwaka. (Le naba de Koupéla n'est pas très puissant, mais il l'est plus que les gens de Kazémabouanga.)

3° *Néda gwanga nan samma.* Le boiteux prétend qu'il le tuera. (Le prétendant — le boiteux — prétend tuer le naba de Koupéla.)

II° Les devises du Saman-Naba, le premier ministre de Koupéla, font allusion à sa situation vis-à-vis du naba, auquel il doit tout, et qui est son appui:

1° *Tl'douda béleum villi n'pam n'dou.* Qui veut monter à un arbre saisit les branches pour s'aider.

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[1] Pour dire que si quelqu'un attaque le nouveau naba, le chef de province, viendra l'aider.

2° *Gigemdé sen touka séolro, wénniginamma, walpélronamma, nonga morbo, la'b zuéta gemdé.* Le lion pioche la terre salée (bonne à manger), les bœufs sauvages, les kobas, aiment à en manger, mais craignent le lion. (Les ennemis du Saman'Naba voudraient bien avoir sa place mais craignent le naba.)

3° *Kong'panga, bar'bala.* Qui manque de force n'est que serviteur.

L'élection des grands ministres ne comporte que fort peu de cadeaux, offerts aux jours de fête qui suivent la mort du ministre, jusqu'à la nomination de son successeur. C'est le fils aîné qui généralement hérite de la charge, mais le chef de province peut nommer qu'il veut.

A la mort du naba de Koupéla, chef de province, les ministres tiennent conseil et désignent entre eux quel sera le successeur, presque toujours le fils aîné. Avant même la publication du nom de l'élu, le chef du quartier qui porte le nom de Koupéla, fait prévenir les chefs de canton, et ils se réunissent à Koupéla. Quand tout le monde est arrivé, le Tabrana proclame le nom de l'élu, et tous se rendent à Bélousa pour indiquer au naba celui qu'ils ont choisi et pour lui demander l'investiture. Généralement le naba de Bélousa accepte celui qui a été régulièrement nommé. En cas de conflit, ou si lui-même désire faire un autre choix, il le fait savoir au Moro-Naba en indiquant ses préférences, et quand son envoyé revient, il proclame l'élu, et tous se soumettent à sa volonté. N'a-t-il pas la force? En signe d'investiture, le naba de Bélousa remet à l'élu une calotte, des savates et un sceptre. Mais le nouveau naba ne peut encore ni mettre la calotte, ni enfiler les savates, ni porter le sceptre. Il doit tout d'abord se rendre au tombeau de l'ancêtre de la race, naba Kourita, auquel il offre des sacrifices, spécialement un bœuf. Il y a sept jours de fête, pendant lesquels la bière de mil coule à flots, et des bœufs sont tués en grand nombre. C'est pendant ces fêtes que l'élu se rase la tête et reçoit des mains des envoyés du naba de Bélousa la calotte, les savates, et le sceptre; c'est alors seulement qu'il est vraiment naba, et peut porter des éperons, avoir des pages et un coussin. Quand la fête est terminée à Kourit'Yaorin, le naba fait son entrée à Koupéla, sa résidence.

Quand mourait le Moro-Naba, le pays était en révolution, et livré aux serviteurs du naba défunt qui pillaient tant qu'ils pouvaient. C'est pourquoi la mort du Moro-Naba était soigneusement cachée jusqu'au jour des funérailles; c'est pourquoi quand elle était connue, personne ne sortait plus sans être armé de son arc et de ses flèches, ou au moins d'une lance. Les femmes et les enfants restaient à la maison. Pour prévenir tout désordre, on procédait le plus rapidement possible à une nouvelle élection. Le Widi-Naba faisait l'intérim et réunissait les voix des électeurs. Ils étaient vingt-cinq: les cinq grands ministres, et vingt autres chefs, peu importants dans le cours ordinaire de l'existence, non chefs de cantons et maîtres souvent de leur seule famille, mais grands électeurs de père en fils depuis la fondation de la dynastie de Ouagadougou. Ces vingt-cinq électeurs consultaient leur entourage et venaient désigner au Widi-Naba celui des prétendants sur lequel se portait leur suffrage. Car il pouvait y avoir plusieurs prétendants, mais ne pouvait être élu qu'un membre

de la famille de naba Oubri, le fondateur de la dynastie. Quand les fêtes de l'enterrement étaient terminées, le Widi-Naba réunissait tous les chefs de canton et tous les nabas présents à Ouagadougou et proclamait le nom de l'élu, auquel il remettait les insignes du pouvoir. Ensuite avaient lieu de nombreuses fêtes, dont la plus solennelle se déroulait dans un petit village, situé à 2 *km* de Ouagadougou, et appelé Paspanga. C'est là que tous les nabas venaient, à tour de rôle, en commençant par les prétendants évincés, prêter le serment de fidélité.

Toutes ces coutumes ont été suivies lors de l'intronisation du Moro-Naba actuel, Naba Kom.

Chapitre troisième. — **Droits des chefs, droits des particuliers.**

Les nabas, qu'ils soient chefs de villages, de canton ou de province, étaient tout-puissants, et personne ne pouvait agir que sous leur regard et ne rien posséder que dans la mesure ou le naba le permettait.

En principe, tout le pays mossi appartient au Moro-Naba, qui peut disposer de tout à sa guise et donner des terres à qui il veut. En pratique, le Moro-Naba délègue ses pouvoirs à ses vassaux, les chefs de province, qui eux-mêmes les transmettent aux chefs de canton, et ceux-ci aux chefs de village. C'est ainsi qu'un indigène qui veut passer d'un canton dans un autre canton, ou même d'un village à un autre village, doit en obtenir l'autorisation, et demander au chef de canton ou de village de s'installer dans tel ou tel endroit, c'est le chef de village dans lequel il désire résider qui lui indique où il peut construire ses cases et quel champ il peut cultiver. Le naba peut déposséder un de ses administrés, s'il le veut, pour donner son champ à un autre. N'a-t-il pas la force? Le cas était cependant rare, et un indigène qui a défriché un coin de brousse, engraissé un espace libre pour semer du maïs, qui a semé et pioché, est généralement assuré de faire sa récolte, à moins de guerre. En cas d'éviction, le malheureux dépossédé n'a aucun recours: ni le chef de canton, ni le chef de province ne l'écouteraient; n'en faisaient-ils pas autant à l'occasion?

Il n'y a pas de propriété collective. Chaque individu cultive ses champs pour son propre compte; il récolte lui-même les fruits de son travail et en est le maître absolu. Cependant chaque indigène devait une dîme à ses chefs et à ses bienfaiteurs, et il est curieux, au moment de la récolte, de voir les particuliers partager leurs épis de maïs, tresser des tiges de sorgho, mesurer des paniers plus ou moins grands de petit mil. Le chef de village aura tant d'épis de maïs, le chef de canton, s'il n'est pas trop éloigné, en aura tant, le ou les beaux-pères auront les leurs et aussi tel ou tel ami auquel on doit des cauris, ou qui a précédemment rendu un service. Mais celui qui distribue ainsi à droite et à gauche, recevra à son tour de différents côtés et rentrera à peu près dans ses fonds. Les chefs de village font des cadeaux plus importants aux chefs de canton, et ceux-ci aux chefs de province.

C'était l'impôt, non pas l'impôt fixe et par tête, mais un impôt tout à fait arbitraire, et si le naba auquel on venait apporter son cadeau ne le trouvait pas suffisant, il savait bien le dire, et l'intéressé n'avait qu'à s'exécuter. Le naba de Koupéla payait, dit-on, chaque année 500.000 cauris, soit 500 frcs. et

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En haut: Un naba et ses gens.
En bas: Un groupe de vieillards mossi.

trois chevaux au naba de Bélousa, et un million de cauris, soit 1000 frcs., en deux fois, au Moro-Naba, auquel il offrait aussi cinq chevaux. Les cadeaux au Moro-Naba étaient d'abord présentés au naba de Bélousa, et de là conduits à Ouagadougou: toujours la hiérarchie.

Mais cet impôt quasi régulier n'était pas le seul. Quand le Moro-Naba désirait des chevaux, des bœufs, ou que ce soit, il faisait prévenir un chef de province, et tous s'empressaient de le satisfaire. Un chef de province à son tour désirait-il quelque chose, manquait-il de mil ou voulait-il construire des cases, il faisait prévenir un ou plusieurs chefs de canton qui eux-mêmes prévenaient les chefs de villages et par leur intermédiaire tout arrivait à point, doucement, car il fallait du temps pour que tous ces ordres fussent transmis, mais les particuliers s'exécutaient toujours.

Avec ce système il était impossible à un indigène de s'enrichir. Trop de biens auraient excité la cupidité du naba, qui aurait trouvé un prétexte quelconque pour imposer plus que d'autres cet administré trop entreprenant, et c'est pourquoi ceux qui avaient quelques vaches, avaient bien soin de les cacher en les confiant à des Peuls. Mais ceux-ci non plus ne pouvaient pas espérer voir leur troupeau s'augmenter rapidement parce que, sous prétexte de sacrifice ou de fête, les nabas avaient toujours besoin de beaux bœufs bien gras.

Il y a aussi certaines circonstances dans lesquelles les chefs de canton et même de villages et ceux qui veulent se faire bien voir, doivent venir saluer le naba et lui offrir leurs présents, jamais moins de 500 cauris, soit 50 frcs. Le naba a-t-il entrepris un gros travail comme la construction de plusieurs cases, pioche-t-il son champ ou coupe-t-il son mil: les uns sont convoqués pour l'aider; il est de bon ton que les autres viennent lui offrir leurs cadeaux. Relève-t-il de maladie, c'est encore pour lui l'occasion de recevoir des cadeaux; a-t-il échappé à un danger, vite il faut le féliciter et lui donner des cauris. A chaque fête, soit le jour même, soit dans les jours qui suivent, chaque naba doit venir saluer son chef de province et lui apporter ses cadeaux, proportionnés à l'importance de son propre commandement. Le naba se déplace-t-il: le village dans lequel il s'arrête doit le nourrir, l'abreuver et donc lui offrir poules, chèvres, moutons, voire un bœuf, si le village est assez importante, et les palefreniers et les autres serviteurs de la suite du naba se débrouillent aux dépens des habitants. C'est assez onéreux. D'autant qu'une fois le naba rentré chez lui, il faut encore venir le saluer et lui offrir des cauris.

Enfin une grande source de profits c'était la guerre. Binger raconte les faits dont il fut témoin chez Boukari-Koutou, plus tard Moro-Naba sous le nom de naba Wobro, et détroné par l'arrivée de Voulet. Avant de partir en guerre, les sorciers étaient consultés, et désignaient le *tangandé*, le bois sacré, dans lequel il fallait sacrifier pour revenir vainqueur. Le chef de province sortait alors son drapeau, composé d'un simple bâton au bout duquel pendaient des grisgris et une queue de vache. Un homme, désigné à cet effet, portait ce drapeau sur le front de la bataille. Il ne devait jamais regarder en arrière mais toujours marcher devant lui, il ne portait aucune autre arme qu'un arc et des flèches, et s'il était tué un autre le remplaçait. Quand un village était cerné, toutes les prises appartenaient de droit au naba, qui faisait son

choix, et laissait le reste à ses gens. Tous les hommes valides qui pouvaient encore se battre et refusaient de devenir esclaves, étaient mis à mort; les vieillards étaient épargnés, les femmes et les enfants étaient réduits en esclavage. Le naba était maître de ceux pris par des cavaliers montant ses propres chevaux; en cas de discussion sur la prise, le naba s'emparait des captures; si les particuliers réussissaient à s'entendre, ils partageaient à l'amiable; celui qui avait pris un cheval ou un esclave par ses propres moyens, en était le maître, mais pour éviter des représailles, il offrait le plus souvent au naba une partie de ses prises. Aucun traité de paix ne mettait fin à la guerre. Elle cessait quand le butin était jugé suffisant. C'est ainsi que les pays Gourounsi et Bousansé étaient de vrais greniers pour les Mossi, où ils allaient puiser selon leurs besoins.

Les nabas ne se contentaient pas d'administrer et de toucher l'impôt, ils rendaient aussi la justice, au civil comme au criminel. Le chef de village jugeait généralement en première instance, mais le condamné pouvait faire appel de son jugement au chef de canton et de celui-ci au chef de province ou même recourir directement à ce dernier. Les juges étaient toujours assistés par des assesseurs, par les anciens du village pour les nabas subalternes, par les ministres pour le chef de province. Un criminel était jugé dans le plus bref délai, et l'accusé n'était mis en prison préventive que pour attendre l'arrivée des témoins. Il pouvait d'ailleurs citer ses témoins, et ils étaient convoqués.

Aucun interrogatoire ressemblant à l'inquisition de nos juges d'instruction ne précédait l'audience. Tout se passait en plein jour, chacun pouvait intervenir quand il voulait, et la torture n'était pas employée pour obtenir des aveux compromettants, mais parfois pour faire avouer de faux témoins. Un fils n'était pas admis à témoigner en faveur de son père, les esclaves et les serviteurs ne témoignaient pas en faveur de leur maître: leur déposition aurait pu trop facilement manquer de sincérité.

En cas de contestation il n'y avait pas d'ordalie ni d'intervention de sorcier. Le serment n'était pas déféré aux témoins par le juge, mais un plaideur pouvait dire: «Que je ne puisse plus me lever d'ici, si je mens (i. e. que je meure).» Si celui qui est accusé d'avoir une dette envers un individu mort récemment, nie cette dette, l'héritier peut le conduire à la tombe et l'obliger à boire de l'eau dans laquelle a été délayée de la terre du tombeau. C'est une épreuve très redoutée, car les Mossi croient que le mort viendra se venger.

La culpabilité doit être prouvée par des témoins, sinon l'accusé est laissé libre; en cas de discussion sur la propriété de champs, d'animaux domestiques, etc., chacun apportait ses arguments, citait ses témoins, et les juges décidaient d'après les débats. Si deux femmes se disputaient entre elles, les maris devaient s'entendre pour les départager; s'il s'agissait de contestations au sujet de mariage, le chef de province était juge. Par exemple: Une jeune fille a été promise et la dot en partie payée, puis le père de la jeune fille s'est ravisé et l'a donnée à un autre, le prétendant frustré pouvait recourir au chef de province qui faisait rendre la dot. Quand un accusé se sauvait pour éviter le jugement, il ne pouvait être jugé que si des témoins déposaient contre lui.

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Le jugement prononcé était exécuté autant que possible, même en l'absence du condamné, et s'il revenait, le jugement n'était pas recommencé, mais le condamné pouvait en appeler au chef de province. Dans tous les cas, la famille est responsable. Si la condamnation comporte une amende à payer, et si les biens du condamné sont insuffisants, les biens de ses parents sont saisis; les parents répondent des dettes de leurs enfants, et si un accusé est en fuite, un de ses parents est saisi à sa place. Par contre, le chef de famille est maître absolu des siens et juge dans sa famille. Il doit payer les dettes de ses enfants et les amendes qu'ils ont encourues, mais il peut les châtier, voire même les mettre à mort, ou les expulser et les maudire, punition généralement extrêmement redoutée. Et ces faits nous indiquent déjà toute la force du groupement familial, que nous étudierons dans la seconde partie de cet ouvrage. Le naba fait exécuter la sentence, prononcée par le tribunal; le pouvoir exécutif et le pouvoir judiciaire étaient confiés à la même personne. Celui qui refusait de payer ses dettes ou l'amende infligée, était dévalisé. Aucune commutation de peine n'était admise, et celui qui était condamné aux fers ou à mort, devait subir lui-même sa condamnation, il ne pouvait se libérer en payant une amende, ni se substituer un esclave. Les exécutions capitales étaient publiques. Le chef de province pouvait exercer le droit de grâce, mais évidemment il en usait fort rarement: la vie d'un homme est si peu de chose aux yeux d'un Noir!

La procédure était la même pour tous, hommes et femmes. Cependant les fils de naba, les *nakomsé*, n'étaient ni jugés ni punis publiquement; ils n'étaient pas liés avec des cordes, mais avec des bandes d'étoffe, et en cas de condamnation à mort, ils étaient pendus et non assommés. D'ailleurs les plaintes contre eux étaient extrêmement rares; les fils d'un naba puissant pouvaient tout se permettre impunément.

Voici à titre d'exemple, quelques crimes punis et le châtiment infligé. Evidemment il n'y avait aucun code écrit, aucune échelle de pénalité régulièrement prévue. Tout dépendait de la coutume et du bon plaisir du juge. Aussi les riches pouvaient-ils, en payant leurs juges, obtenir des sentences en leur faveur; aussi un voleur échappait-il au supplice qui l'attendait en partageant son vol avec le naba; sinon le voleur pris en flagrant délit était fustigé et parfois ne s'en relevait pas. Il était condamné à plusieurs mois de fers et exposé à la risée publique devant la case du naba; il devait rendre ce qu'il avait pris, et sa famille était responsable. En cas de récidive, il était conduit au marché la corde au cou, abondamment abreuvé de *dolo*, rassasié de viande, puis assommé au pied d'un arbre à coup de bâtons. A Ouagadougou, il était parfois fait eunuque, ce qui équivalait presque à une condamnation à mort, parce que l'opération, exécutée d'une façon très barbare, était souvent suivie de mort. La justice française, plus clémente, se contente de la prison, ce dont se plaignent les honnêtes gens qui trouvent le châtiment trop doux.

En cas de meurtre volontaire, le meurtrier était mis à mort ou à son défaut, un membre de sa famille était exécuté. On ne cherchait pas à connaître qui avait commencé ou qui avait raison dans une rixe. (Le meurtre par imprudence était puni d'une amende, payée à la famille de la victime. Le droit

de légitime défense était évidemment admis. S'il y avait coups et blessures, les adversaires étaient mis aux fers.)

Les vieilles femmes étaient souvent accusées d'être sorcières et de manger l'âme des enfants. Si leur crime semblait prouvé, si les sorciers consultés avaient déclaré telle ou telle vieille coupable de la mort d'un bébé, la pauvre était mise à mort d'une façon très cruelle: on prenait une marmite en terre, à laquelle on faisait une seconde ouverture pour que la tête de la malheureuse puisse entrer toute entière dans la marmite. La marmite était alors très fortement chauffée et on en coiffait la prétendue coupable.

Une chèvre, un mouton qui causaient des dégâts dans un champ pouvaient être tués sur place. Il fallait alors prévenir le propriétaire de la bête, qui n'avait rien à dire, mais enlevait son animal. Si les dégâts étaient causés par un bœuf ou un âne, le propriétaire du champ devait le faire constater et avait droit à des dommages et intérêts.

Quiconque trouvait un objet de peu de valeur, par exemple un couteau, même un habit, pouvait le garder; mais on devait remettre au naba tout ce qui pouvait atteindre un prix assez élevé, comme un mouton, un âne, à fortiori une vache, et l'objet trouvé appartenait alors au naba.

Le chef de province pouvait seul juger un ravisseur. Celui-ci était battu et mis aux fers, la fille était rendue à ses parents, et si elle mettait au monde un enfant, il était tué. Mais, si les parents donnaient la fille au naba, le ravisseur était mis à mort. Un adultère, pris en flagrant délit, pouvait être mis à mort par le mari trompé; mais s'il n'y avait pas flagrant délit, si le coupable avait réussi à s'enfuir, ou s'il avait simplement été dénoncé par sa complice, le mari trompé n'avait aucun recours. Le séducteur d'une jeune fille devient généralement maître de la fille si elle enfante, mais il doit donner une autre fille au fiancé.

Le chef de province avait un procédé spécial pour s'assurer de la fidélité de ses nombreuses épouses et de ses soronés. Quand une femme ou un soroné ne se conduisait pas bien, le poënaba devait les désigner au naba. Il procédait ainsi. Tous les vendredis, le poënaba quittait son village, à pied, un martinet à la main. Devant lui un serviteur portait une sacoche en cuir renfermant les grisgris. Personne ne pouvait l'approcher, tout le monde se sauvait dans la brousse, et le sentier qu'il avait suivi, était interdit tant qu'il n'était pas avéré que le terrible homme était arrivé chez le naba. Les femmes de ce dernier étaient réunies, le poënaba remplissait d'eau une grande calebasse, versait ses ingrédients dans l'eau et s'asseyait devant la calebasse. Les femmes s'approchaient à tour de rôle et se miraient dans l'eau. Le poënaba regardait aussi le liquide et disait reconnaître alors les femmes fidèles et celles qui ne l'étaient pas. Les premières étaient laissées en liberté, mais souvent battues afin de leur passer l'envie d'être infidèles. Celles qui étaient désignées comme infidèles, étaient saisies et devaient dénoncer leur complice. Tous deux étaient assommés à coups de bâton. Si la prétendue coupable n'avait pas de complice ou refusait de le dénoncer, elle seule était mise à mort. Les femmes montrent encore avec terreur le lieu de l'exécution. Cette manière de procéder était très barbare et les abus étaient criants. Pour éviter une dénonciation qui

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leur coûtait la vie, les pauvres femmes étaient prêtes à tout, et faisaient au poënaba tous les cadeaux qu'elles pouvaient faire afin d'être épargnées.

Toutes les pages qui précèdent ne sont plus que de l'histoire ancienne. L'occupation française a profondément modifié toute l'administration et restreint les droits des nabas, qui ne sont plus que des fonctionnaires. Le peuple apprend peu à peu à ne plus les craindre, leur autorité se relâche, les cadeaux diminuent, et les nabas sont réduits à la portion congrue, obligés de cultiver leurs champs tout comme ceux qui ne sont pas nabas. Leur pouvoir judiciaire n'existe pour ainsi dire plus, et si quelques-uns ont conservé une réelle autorité, cela tient à leur éloignement de tout centre administratif et à leur passé; ils étaient en charge avant l'occupation française et ont su, malgré tout, conserver leur prestige. Mais peu à peu la mentalité change et le respect s'en va. Est-ce un bien? Est-ce un mal? On en pourrait discuter longuement, car si ce mode d'administration comportait des abus regrettables et qui devaient être réprimés, elle avait aussi ses bons côtés, et avait su faire des Mossi un des peuples les plus craints et les plus homogènes de la boucle du Niger.

LIVRE DEUXIEME.

Vie familiale.

Chapitre premier. — Constitution de la famille par le mariage.

La famille se constitue par le mariage. C'est donc l'union matrimoniale qu'il faut tout d'abord étudier. Evidemment le christianisme n'ayant paru que depuis fort peu de temps dans le pays, la virginité y est inconnue: les indigènes n'en ont pas même l'idée. Toute fille nubile doit être mariée. Elle est donnée en mariage par celui auquel elle appartient sans que ses goûts soient jamais consultés. Elle appartient tout d'abord à son père, mais parfois dès avant sa naissance, elle est à celui qui a donné sa mère, à cette condition, — et c'est une clause ordinaire dans les contrats de mariage libre — que la première fille qui naîtrait d'elle serait mariée par son grand-père. Ou encore elle est au maître de son père qui souvent n'a plus que cette charge vis-à-vis de celui dont il fut l'esclave. C'est ainsi que presque toutes les filles qui naissent à Koupéla, reviennent de droit au naba, les habitants de cette localité ayant été ses esclaves. Parfois la fille sert à payer des dettes; on emprunte en promettant de donner sa fille en mariage. Elle sera livrée, souvent sans autre dot que la somme empruntée, et, contrairement à la coutume déjà signalée, la première fille qui naît d'elle n'appartient pas au grand père: elle-même est considérée comme une esclave. La fille peut être donnée en échange de son frère ou de son oncle réduit en esclavage et qui recouvre ainsi la liberté. Ou bien le père été atteint d'une maladie grave. Il a fait venir un médecin qui a consenti à le soigner mais à la condition que la fille du malade lui appartiendrait en cas de guérison. Le père guérit et la fille est donnée en mariage à l'heureux docteur. Il y a aussi échange de fille: un indigène donne sa fille en mariage à un autre indigène qui lui donne la sienne.

La fille n'est mariée par sa mère que si c'est une enfant naturelle, dont le père est en principe inconnu. Seules les sœurs de certains nabas peuvent choisir leur mari à leur gré et le quitter quand il leur plaît. Il est facile de s'imaginer la vie volage qu'elles mènent! Dans les autres cas, la jeune fille est mariée par son père ou par l'héritier de ce dernier si le père vient à disparaître[1]. La mère n'est pas consultée, mais comme c'est elle qui s'occupe de sa fille, jusqu'à ce qu'elle aille chez son mari, elle peut, par ses conseils, ses promesses, au besoin par ses menaces, détourner sa fille de tel ou tel parti

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[1] Il est impossible d'énumérer tous les cas qui peuvent se présenter, ce serait fastidieux. Les sorciers interviennent assez souvent et qui sait ce qui peut passer par la tête d'un sorcier! Un cas entre plusieurs: Une femme a eu une fille après plusieurs autres morts si tôt après leur mariage; le père consulte alors le sorcier pour savoir s'il doit encore promettre sa fille en mariage. Le sorcier déclare qu'il faut la laisser libre de choisir son mari, sinon, elle mourra comme ses sœurs. Le père la laissera libre.

et la recevoir si elle se sauve de chez un mari auquel elle a été donné contre son consentement.

Si la jeune fille refuse absolument d'aller chez son fiancé, son père essaie de la persuader mais n'use guère de la force. Si la fille persiste malgré tout dans son refus, ce qui est extrêmement rare, le père rendra au fiancé l'argent qu'il a emprunté mais non ce qui lui a été donné bénévolement. Si le père vient à mourir après avoir promis sa fille, son héritier ne peut pas se dédire et donner sa sœur ou sa nièce à un autre, mais c'est lui qui désormais recevra les cadeaux. Si le fiancé meurt, son héritier aura la fille promise à son père, à la condition toutefois qu'il continue à payer la dot.

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En effet, contrairement à ce qui se passe dans nos pays d'Europe, la femme, étant considérée comme une richesse, se paie et ce n'est point elle qui apporte une dot mais bien celui qui veut l'avoir pour femme. Si donc un homme désire la fille d'un ami, il va saluer le père de la jeune fille en question bien que parfois elle soit encore à la mamelle. Mais il se garde de dire ce qu'il désire. Il vient tantôt avec quelques cauris tantôt avec une poule, parfois un morçeau de sel, voire même un mouton. Le père de l'enfant comprend, et quand il a un travail à faire, son champ à piocher, son mil à battre, ses cases à couvrir, il fait prévenir le prétendant qui s'empresse de venir travailler pour celui qu'il désire avoir pour beau-père.

Au bout de quelque temps, ce dernier dit au prétendant: «Tu agis bien avec moi, je suis content de toi, j'agirai bien avec toi.» Le prétendant a compris et redouble d'assiduité. Il envoie ses amis; et à toutes les fêtes, il fait présent de quelques poules au père de sa future. Mais il n'y a pour ainsi dire jamais promesse ferme, fiançailles, au sens propre du mot. Parfois, le beau-père a des embarras d'argent, des dettes criardes, ou il a vu un bel habit et veut l'acheter; il fait demander à son ami de lui avancer l'argent. L'autre sait bien qu'il prête à fonds perdus ou plutôt sur la tête de la fille et s'il refuse c'est qu'il ne peut réellement pas donner ce qui lui est demandé car si les pourparlers venaient à être rompus, le père de l'enfant devrait rendre l'argent ainsi avancé ce qui l'embarrasserait fort et donc l'empêchera de revenir sur sa promesse. Il est d'ailleurs extrêmement rare qu'une fille ainsi promise ne soit pas donnée à celui qui a fait les premières avances et qui a été agréé. Le père qui, après avoir reçu des cadeaux pendant un certain temps, promettrait sa fille à un autre, serait fort mal vu et obligé de rendre l'argent qu'il aurait emprunté. Il s'exposerait de plus et lui-même et celui qu'il aurait préféré aux vengeances de l'évincé.

La dot, sans être excessive, puisque on peut évaluer l'ensemble des cadeaux à une cinquantaine de francs à donner en plusieurs années et sans compter, bien entendu, les journées de travail, la dot suppose cependant une certaine aisance et tout au moins la facilité de se procurer les cauris nécessaires. De plus, le père de l'enfant aimera mieux la donner à quelqu'un qui possède déjà une certaine notoriété et quelque fortune, en un mot à un homme

âgé. C'est ainsi que des fillettes sont promises à de vieux barbons et que des têtes blanches entrent en relations avec de toutes jeunes filles; tandis que les fils du vieillard, en âge d'être mariés, ne peuvent se procurer de femmes. Si le père a de quoi payer la dot, il se gardera bien d'aider son fils, même si ce dernier a trouvé lui-même un parti qui lui convient. Sans doute, toutes les femmes du père passeront dans l'héritage au fils aîné qui en donnera à ses frères plus jeunes, mais il faut attendre la mort du vieillard, et elle tarde parfois longtemps. On comprend alors que le fils aîné désire la mort de son père et que son père l'éloigne par crainte de voir sa fin hâtée. Il est juste d'ajouter que certains parents, comprenant mieux leurs intérêts, marient leurs fils quand ils commencent à prendre de l'âge.

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La polygamie existe donc au Mossi comme en tout pays noir. La richesse d'un individu se mesure au nombre de ses femmes. Des femmes, ce sont des bras pour cultiver la terre, car la femme travaille aux champs tout comme le mari. Des femmes, ce sont des enfants en perspective, et si ce sont des filles, des jeunes gens se présenteront pour être serviteurs *(dakonré)* et un jour avoir une des filles en mariage; ou bien le père recevra des cadeaux. Si ce sont des garçons, ils aideront plus tard le père dans ses travaux. La polygamie, dans ces pays où chacun ne vit que pour soi, où l'égoïsme règne en maître, s'explique fort bien, mais elle est la cause certaine d'une diminution de la natalité: des vieillards à barbe blanche ne peuvent avoir des enfants ni aussi nombreux ni aussi bien constitués que des jeunes gens dans la force de l'âge, et ces derniers, privés de femmes, s'usent dans leurs excès. Il est vrai qu'ils ne sont pas nombreux ceux qui peuvent se procurer la douzaine de femmes; la plupart des indigènes se contentent, parce qu'ils ne peuvent faire autrement, de deux, trois, quatre femmes. Certains nabas cependant possèdent des troupeaux de femmes, ce qui constitue certainement un abus regrettable. Leurs épouses se comptent par centaines. Le désordre moral le plus complet règne dans ces harems où les jeunes gens qui servent de palfreniers et de *soronés*, vivent sans cesse au milieu des femmes de leur maître et ainsi s'expliquent les précautions prises par les possesseurs de toutes ces femmes, les eunuques du Moro Naba, les *poènaba* et leur sinistre fonction.

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Le mariage est exogamique c'est-à-dire que les parents ne se marient pas entre eux tant que le lien de parenté est connu. Il n'y a pas de division de castes très tranchée. Les Mossi épousent les Yarsé Malinké, les Bousansé, les Gourounsi, mais ne peuvent épouser ni les Peuls ni les Haoussa Un Mossi qui ne fait pas parti d'une caste peut choisir son épouse parmi des Mossi castés. Mais les Mossi castés ne se marient pas indifféremment entre eux: C'est ainsi que les forgerons ne peuvent se marier avec les tambours.

Mais la jeune fille a grandi. Le prétendant a déjà fait de nombreux cadeaux, bref, il est temps de procéder au mariage. Le père de la jeune fille

fait venir le fiancé et lui dit: «Viens tel jour me saluer avec une poule.» Le prétendant, tout heureux, retourne à son village et annonce aux anciens qu'un tel lui a dit de venir le saluer avec une poule. Au jour dit, le prétendant se rend chez les parents de la jeune fille avec une poule; ses amis l'accompagnent. Il remet sa poule, et tous se rendent chez le chef de la famille ou, à son défaut, chez un vieillard du village. Le père déclare alors devant tous qu'il veut donner sa fille à un tel. On échange des félicitations, et tous retournent chez eux. Il s'agit maintenant de préparer la fête, de prévenir les parents et les amis, de faire la bière de mil. Entre temps les parents et les amis qui connaissent la bonne nouvelle viennent saluer le fiancé avec cinquante, cent cauris pour l'aider à couvrir les frais occasionnés par les fêtes.

Quand tout est prêt, le fiancé prend cinq cents cauris et un coq pour aller saluer le père de la jeune fille et cinq cents cauris pour le vieillard chez lequel sa fiancée s'est rendue pour la circonstance et où elle restera jusqu'au jour du mariage. Les parents de la jeune fille ont préparé le diner tandis que le fiancé fournit la boisson. Un parent du fiancé rase en cercle le front de la fiancée qui se retire alors dans la cour intérieure. Là, les femmes de son père la lavent à grand eau et lui mettent autour une cordellete de coton. Elle revêt un habit blanc et ainsi parée vient offrir une calebasse de bière à son fiancé qui est resté dehors avec ses amis. Toute l'assemblée remercie les parents de la jeune fille et tous se retirent. Le surlendemain, le fiancé envoie ses amis saluer la parenté de sa fiancée avec un panier de farine de mil, quatre boules de *kalro* et du sel. Le tout est partagé entre les gens du village. C'est cette fête, avec les ceremonies qui l'accompagnent, que l'on pourrait assimiler aux fiançailles.

Mais la jeune fille est toujours chez le chef de famille ou le vieillard qui le remplace! Quand toutes ces cérémonies préliminaires sont accomplies, le fiancé envoie chaque jour demander sa femme. Lorsque le trousseau est réuni: des habits dont le nombre dépend de la richesse des parents, des calebasses, un pot pour la sauce, une cuiller en bois pour remuer la bouillie de mil, le tout dans un panier, le père annonce à l'envoyé du fiancé que la date du mariage est fixée à tel jour, presque toujours un vendredi, parfois un jeudi. Le fiancé fait préparer une seconde fois la fête et encore à manger et à boire. Dans la soirée, ses amis vont à la rencontre de la fiancée qui est accompagnée de sa famille. En approchant du village, le cortège pousse des *you you* joyeux, la fiancée fait mine de vouloir se sauver, les jeunes gens courent après elle, la portent sur leurs épaules jusque chez le chef de la famille du fiancé ou, à son défaut, chez un de ses oncles. Et la fête commence. Les hommes mangent de la bouillie de mil et une poule; les femmes, la bouillie de mil et une pintade. Tous boivent de la bière, dansent et chantent.

Le lendemain matin, les parents du fiancé rasent la tête de la fiancée et celle de son mari si c'est sa première femme, car ils changent de vie: de jeune homme le mari devient maître et la jeune fille, femme. Dans la soirée, les amis et parents du nouveau marié vont au village de la jeune femme portant dans l'ordre suivant: un mouton qui a été tué chez le mari, des cruches de bière et enfin le *sarabo*. Les parents de la jeune fille suivent dans le plus grand silence

et sans saluer personne. Arrivés chez les parents, le porteur du mouton et les femmes qui portent la bière de mil et le *sarabo* rentrent dans la cour intérieure et déposent leur fardeau, puis resortent et dansent tandis que les beaux-parents font mettre les victuailles dans d'autres récipients. On rend aux porteurs leurs cruches et on les chasse en les battant avec des tiges de mil, en les aspergeant avec de l'eau mêlée de cendres.

Pendant tout ce temps, la jeune fille est dans le *soukala* de l'ancien qui la fait garder jalousement par sa première femme. Elle reste enfermée pendan plusieurs jours, jusqu'à ce qu'enfin le vieillard se décide à la faire conduire chez son mari. Sa femme prépare alors la bouillie de mil de la sauce avec de la viande et cherche une cruche de bière. Les vieilles se réunissent et accompagnent la jeune femme chez son mari. Le mari rendra la politesse le lendemain à l'ancien. Ils sont désormais mariés . . . et ce n'est pas sans peine.

Si le nouveau marié est aisé, il ira quelques jours après les fêtes remercier ses beaux-parents. Il offrira, dans des sacs en cuir entièrement cousus, 1300 cauris à son beau-père, et 1400 à sa belle-mère. S'il le peut, il offre encore de la bière, deux poules et un mouton: ces derniers cadeaux sont moins nécessaires; mais s'il n'offre pas les cauris, il risque que ses beaux-parents ne prennent les enfants de sa femme et ne les gardent jusqu'à ce qu'ils aient reçu les cadeaux de remerciement.

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Il est à remarquer que ces cérémonies sont assez souvent abrégées. Elles comportent aussi quelques variantes que nous n'avons pas à relater ici. Parfois même elles n'ont pas lieu. C'est lorsque la fille a déjà un mari avant que de naître ou encore quand elle fait parti d'un héritage. Ses parents la conduisent alors tout simplement chez son mari.

Aucun sacrifice n'accompagne les cérémonies du mariage. Mais le mari fera un sacrifice le jour où il construira la case de sa femme et là où la case sera élevée. La mère consulte cependant quelques fois le sorcier pour savoir si sa fille sera bien reçue et quel sacrifice offrir pour qu'elle ne soit pas malade chez son mari. Elle vient le dire au père de la jeune fille qui offre lui-même le sacrifice prescrit.

En principe, le mari ne doit plus rien à ses beaux-parents. En pratique, il se déconsidérait lui-même s'il ne leur faisait pas encore quelques cadeaux, surtout aux principales fêtes. Au temps du mais, il en réserve quelques épis pour les parents de sa femme; quand il bat son mil, il a soin d'en envoyer à son beau-père, et quand pour une raison quelconque il célèbre une fête, ses beaux-parents sont invités; et lui-même les aide dans leurs travaux.

Le divorce proprement dit, rendu par jugement régulier, est inconnu. Un mari peut renvoyer sa femme chez ses parents si elle est voleuse, paresseuse, surtout si elle commet un adultère, mais ce renvoi est toujours mal vu, même dans ce dernier cas. Le mari doit surveiller sa femme, au besoin la corriger. Celui qui repudie son épouse verra toutes les portes se fermer devant lui, et il ne pourra pas se procurer de nouvelles épouses. Il arrive aussi, et le cas est plus fréquent, que c'est la femme qui se sauve chez ses parents, soit

qu'elle se plaigne d'être maltraitée, soit qu'elle ne se plaise pas chez son mari, soit pour toute autre cause plus ou moins avouable. Si le mari peut la rattraper avant qu'elle ne soit arrivée chez elle, il n'y a pas grande difficulté; il se contente de la battre et de l'enfermer pour quelques jours. Mais si elle est chez ses parents, surtout s'ils sont de connivence, le mari sera obligé de faire quelques cadeaux même à l'infidèle. Les beaux-parents essaient, en général, de décider leur fille à rentrer au domicile conjugale, mais ne la forcent pas; le naba lui-même, appelé à intervenir, se contente d'user de son autorité morale et réussit généralement par ses menaces à décider la fugitive à retourner chez son mari, qui, lui, peut employer la force s'il le veut. Il arrive cependant, mais ce cas est fort rare, que le mari, ne pouvant amener sa femme à rentrer chez lui, reprend seul le chemin de ses cases. La femme n'est inquiétée par personne et ses parents lui laissent dès lors toute liberté. Mais la rancune du mari méprisé peut être tenace et la vengeance terrible. La dot n'est pas rendue: le mari n'avait qu'a mieux tenir sa femme. Il est cependant reconnu que les enfants, garçons ou filles, nés dans le mariage, appartiennent au père qui ne se fera pas faute de les réclamer quand ils auront grandis ou s'ils se sauvent chez leur mère.

Souvent, dans les peuplades nègres, on rencontre des castes séparées les unes des autres par des cloisons étanches dont la principale porte sur les interdictions de mariage entre les membres d'une même caste ou avec des individus non castés. Une telle interdiction n'existe pas parmi les Mossi, exceptés pour le cas déjà signalé ainsi que nous l'avons vu plus haut. Car s'il y a trois sortes de castes: en ce pays les tambours, les forgerons et les fossoyeurs, ce sont des castes en ce sens seulement que les Mossi qui ne sont pas de la famille ne peuvent pas exercer ces métiers, et il serait peut-être plus exact de parler simplement de corporations.

Les tambours *(binda)* sont ceux qui jouent du *bindré*, sorte de grosse calebasse, dans laquelle est percé un trou de 0·40 de diamètre environ et recouverte d'une peau. Ceux qui font parti de la famille des tambours, et ceux-là seuls, peuvent jouer de ce tambour qui semble spécial au Mossi, mais tout le monde peut jouer des autres sortes de tambours. Les tambours sont de tous les sacrifices offerts par le naba; le vendredi étant jour de sacrifice, ils vont en ce jour saluer le naba. Dans les sacrifices ils ont droit à la tête de la victime. Ils sont de tous les enterrements, jouent du tambour et reçoivent à cette occasion une gratification qui dépend de la richesse du défunt. Mais si c'est un des leurs qui meurt, ils ne reçoivent ni cauris ni nourriture. Ils vont à la guerre avec leurs tambours. S'ils ont le malheur d'être faits prisonniers, ils sont impitoyablement massacrés et jamais vendus soit pour les empêcher de revenir exciter les guerriers au sac du village, soit par ce que personne ne voudrait les acheter, ils appartiennent à un naba qui userait de représailles envers celui qui détiendrait un de ses tambours, soit pour ces deux raisons tout ensemble. Ce sont les griots du pays, mot à peu près consacré par l'usage. Ils connaissent la généalogie des nabas et chantent leurs louanges. Chaque chef de province a un certain nombre de tambours à son service et ne se déplace jamais sans en emmener quelques-uns avec lui. En temps ordinaire, ils vont

au marché; ils suivent alors les gens les mieux habillés, chantent en leur honneur, battent furieusement la caisse et espèrent bien recevoir en échange quelques cauris, des kolas, ou tout au moins avoir de la bière.

Par forgerons *(saba)*, on entend ceux qui travaillent le fer, l'extraient du minerai et le réduisent en pioches ou en hachettes. Ils travaillent parfois le bois, comme dans les autres régions du Soudan, mais ce sont plus souvent les membres d'une autre corporation qui se livrent à cette industrie. Les bijoutiers fabriquent les bracelets, liment les dents, réparent même les pioches usées, etc. Ils ne sont pas forgerons proprement dits, et qui le veut peut exercer leur métier.

Les fossoyeurs *(lada)* sont ceux qui offrent les présents faits aux mânes des défunts le jour de leur mort ou au jour anniversaire *(kouré)*. Ce sont eux qui déposent le mort dans la tombe, et sans eux il est impossible de procéder à un enterrement si le défunt est mort de maladie. Mais tout le monde peut creuser la fosse et porter le mort. Nous les retrouverons plus loin quand il sera question des funérailles.

Chapitre deuxième. — La famille.

On admire beaucoup et à juste titre la constitution de la famille romaine et la puissance donnée au *paterfamilias*, fondement même de cette famille. Nous retrouverons quelque chose du *paterfamilias* chez les Mossi. Que n'y retrouvons-nous aussi la matrone romaine! Nous avons déjà vu que tout Mossi dépend du Moro Naba, d'un chef de province, d'un chef de canton, d'un chef de village. Il dépend aussi, et d'une façon plus immédiate, de son chef de famille et ne peut rien faire sans lui. S'il veut se marier, il prend conseil de son chef de famille, et c'est chez lui qu'il mettra sa jeune épouse lors de son arrivée au village; et de son côté, celui qui veut marier sa fille, ne le fera pas sans prendre conseil de son chef de famille, et c'est chez lui qu'il mettra son enfant et c'est de chez lui qu'elle partira pour le domicile de son époux.

La famille est donc très fortement organisée au Mossi. Chaque famille a son nom, peu usité d'ailleurs, et quand un de ses membres a été naba, c'est du premier naba qu'elle tire son nom. Les membres d'une même famille ne peuvent se marier entre eux et généralement tous ont les mêmes *kisgou* (chose défendue), que ce mot désigne le totem, le tabou, ou toute autre chose. Le chef est le plus vieux de la famille. A sa mort, l'autorité passe, non à son héritier, mais au membre le plus âgé de la famille. Rien ne se fait sans consulter le chef de famille, et même quand un des membres de la famille occupe un poste important, il reste plein de déférence pour son chef de famille, pour l'ancien. C'est ainsi que le premier ministre actuel de Koupéla, le Saman Naba, laisse à son oncle les prérogatives de chef de famille; il ne se permettra pas d'offrir les sacrifices le jour de la fête des morts et il consultera son aîné pour les cas qui relèvent de son autorité. Le chef de famille n'a pourtant pas droit de vie et de mort sur les membres de sa famille ni sur ses femmes qui, même voleuses, même infidèles, ne peuvent être mises à mort: tuer les siennes est une prérogative réservée au chef de province. Leur mari ou le chef de famille peut les battre, les mettre aux fers, voire même, ce qui

Anthropos IX.

Les grands tambours chez les Mossi.

Anthropos IX.

[facing p. 34] Danse de fillettes mossi.

est plus rare, les chasser, mais non les tuer. Le chef de famille ne peut pas davantage disposer des biens de la famille, ni obliger les siens à les lui donner. Cependant il peut demander à ses parents de l'aider à payer ses dettes, à avoir une femme, mais il ne peut les forcer. Ses parents l'aident pourtant toujours dans la mesure du possible.

Les enfants dépendent directement de leur père, et si ce dernier consulte le chef de famille quand il a une détermination grave à prendre, c'est leur père que consulteront les enfants, et le père en référera à son tour au chef de famille, et celui-ci souvent au chef du village, qui aura recours à son chef de canton, qui consultera le chef de province, si la chose en vaut la peine. Toute décision grave n'est donc prise qu'après mûre réflexion.

Le père est maître absolu de ses enfants. Il a sur eux droit de vie ou de mort et il en usait parfois, surtout si son enfant naissait difforme ou devenait voleur incorrigible. C'est à lui à marier ses filles, il peut les échanger contre d'autres femmes, il peut les donner en mariage à son créancier pour payer ses dettes. Il peut mettre ses fils en service chez un parent ou un ami, et il est rare que le fils aîné reste chez son père, surtout s'il est naba ou riche: le père a trop peur que son fils ne le fasse disparaître pour avoir plus tôt l'héritage. Et puis donner son fils à un autre est une façon commode de se débarrasser du souci de son mariage; celui chez lequel il se trouve, doit y pourvoir lui-même.

Le père ne s'occupe guère de l'éducation de ses enfants. La fille reste toujours avec sa mère jusqu'à son mariage. Sitôt que le fils est en âge de travailler il aide son père, mais n'en recevra jamais un conseil. Les Mossi le père comme la mère, ne savent pas élever leurs enfants. Sous prétexte qu'un petit enfant ne sait pas ce qu'il fait, ses parents le laissent agir à sa guise, satisfaire tous ses caprices sans le corriger, et des bambins qui peuvent à peine articuler deux mots, disent les plus grossières injures à leur mère, lèvent sur elle leurs petits poings, sans s'attirer de correction. Les témoins se contentent de dire qu'un jour il sera batailleur. D'ailleurs le corriger c'est le faire pleurer et les pleurs d'un enfant sont toujours une gêne qu'il faut, autant que possible, s'épargner. Si un enfant agit mal, s'il se bat, s'il vole; s'il fréquente des voleurs de profession ou de mauvais garnements, s'il raconte à tous ce qu'il a vu ou entendu et ne sait pas garder un secret, s'il y a des plaintes portées contre lui, son père, sa mère le puniront, lui recommanderont de ne pas recommencer mais ils ne préviendront pas le mal, et le cas échéant, payeront les dettes de leur fils, car tous les membres de la famille, tout d'abord le père, sont solidaires. Le père n'enseigne pas à son fils le culte et les sacrifices, mais se fait aider par lui. L'enfant regarde faire son père et quand il a grandi il fait comme il a vu faire.

Des gamins de douze à quinze ans peuvent ne pas rentrer le soir au foyer paternel pour quelque raison que ce soit, et sans avoir prévenu, personne ne s'en inquiète: «il reviendra toujours». Le jeune homme d'une vingtaine d'années se construit une case en dehors de celles de son père afin d'être plus libre et de pouvoir recevoir telle visite qu'il lui plaira. En dehors du champ de son père, il pioche son champ à lui, dont il vendra les produits

à sa guise pour s'acheter des vêtements, car son père le nourrit mais lui fait rarement cadeau d'un habit quand il est en âge de travailler pour son compte. S'il tisse des étoffes pendant la saison sèche, il en fait ce qu'il veut, les vend ou se confectionne des habits, son père n'a rien à y voir. C'est cependant le père qui apprend à son fils les divers travaux de culture, qui lui montre à tresser des nattes et parfois à tisser. Si le père exerce un métier, il l'apprend à son fils; les tambours apprennent à leurs enfants à battre du tambour et à chanter les louanges des chefs, les bijoutiers, les forgerons, enseignent leur métier aux leurs.

Le père aime généralement ses enfants et joue volontiers avec eux quand ils sont encore tout petits. Il les garde pendant que la maman s'occupe des soins du ménage. Des parents pleurent sincèrement la mort de leurs enfants et des frères celle de leur frère. Sans doute, il y a des parents qui témoignent d'une profonde indifférence vis-à-vis de leur descendance, mais le cas est rare. Moins rare est le cas d'enfants qui s'inquiètent peu de leurs parents. Cependant les vieillards sont généralement entourés de respect et bien traités. Un fils qui abandonne son vieux père ou sa vieille mère, est très mal vu. La mère aime mieux mettre au monde des filles qui l'aideront dans le travail journalier, mais elle désire un ou deux garçons chez lesquels elle pourra se retirer dans ses vieux jours.

La fille vit avec sa mère. A peine sait-elle marcher qu'elle accompagne sa mère au marigot, elle en reviendra portant une calebasse d'eau sur sa tête. A mesure qu'elle grandit, la cruche grossit et des fillettes portent des cruches d'eau d'un poids de quinze à vingt kilos. A la maison, la jeune fille moud le grain qui servira à la nourriture de toute la famille, elle attise le feu, remue la sauce, lave les écuelles et le linge, balaie, enfin s'occupe de tous les soins du ménage sous la direction de sa mère. Une femme qui a deux ou trois filles grandelettes, n'a plus qu'à les surveiller. Vivant sans cesse avec leur mère, les jeunes filles sont généralement plus sérieuses et mieux élevées que les jeunes garçons. Mais malheureusement elles rattrapent le temps perdu et ce sont elles qui, le plus souvent, vont de leur plein gré rejoindre les jeunes gens, la nuit, dans leurs cases. Un jeune homme peut d'ailleurs faire des cadeaux à une jeune fille déjà promise en mariage, et celà en présence de sa mère, qui ne dit rien.

Les jeunes gens aident leur père sitôt que leurs forces le leur permettent. Sitôt qu'ils le peuvent les plus jeunes accompagnent leur frère aîné dans la brousse; ils gardent ensemble les moutons et les chèvres. Ce sont les jeunes garçons qui vont tous les matins, avant que le soleil ait eu le temps de sécher la rosée, chercher les termitières fraîches et encore pleines de bestioles et dont les poussins sont très friands. Pendant la saison sèche, ils couperont l'herbe pour couvrir les toits et les tresseront; s'ils sont assez grands, ils iront même couper le bois. Quand l'enfant a grandi, si leur père ou celui chez lequel il se trouve a un cheval, c'est l'enfant qui le garde, le conduit au marigot pour le faire boire et le laver, va dans la brousse couper l'herbe, nettoie les écuries. A l'hivernage, quand l'herbe verte a poussé, chaque cheval de naba riche est soigné par trois ou quatre enfants. Les uns vont couper de l'herbe, les autres

la mettent presque de force dans la bouche du cheval tandis qu'un bambin chasse les mouches avec un bâton au bout duquel est fixée une sorte de semelle de cuir flexible. Aussi l'hivernage est-il le bon temps pour les chevaux et sont-ils gros et gras. Malheureusement le Noir ne prévoit pas l'avenir et ne sait pas calculer combien il faudrait d'herbe sèche pour passer la morte saison, et les animaux souffrent alors beaucoup de la faim.

Tout comme les enfants de chez nous, les jeunes Mossi aiment à jouer. Les tout petits ont leur hachette en os qu'ils mordillent, les fillettes ont leurs poupées en bois, et les jours de grandes fêtes, elles viennent gracieusement les offrir en faisant la révérence, et qui accepte ces poupées doit donner quelques cauris en les rendant. Les garçons façonnent des chevaux, des selles, des cavaliers avec de la terre glaise et font des dessins dans la poussière avec leurs doigts comme à leur âge nous faisions des pâtés de sable ou des bonshommes dans les marges de notre abécédaire: oh! évidemment tout celà est très grossier, mais dénote bien que les hommes sont les mêmes et ont les mêmes goûts par toute la terre.

Tout enfant aime le bruit, et nos Mossi n'y manquent pas: quand les tiges de mil sont encore vertes, ils se font des sortes d'harmonicas dont la languette vibratoire est un morceau de tige de mil attaché avec un fil; ou bien ils évident par son milieu une tige de mil ne laissant qu'une lamelle qui vibre sous les coups répétés d'une baguette. Le son est renforcé par une calabasse cassée qui sert de résonnateur. Ce sont des joujoux à deux sous, bons à jeter le lendemain quand ils ont séché, mais il est si facile d'en fabriquer d'autres! Ils font aussi des cercles en paille qui, en temps ordinaire, sont passés au poignet comme des bracelets, mais peuvent aussi devenir un jeu. Les bracelets sont déposés à terre devant chacun des joueurs qui fait rouler à son tour un des petits cerceaux. Si le cerceau tombe sur celui d'un partenaire, le joueur a gagné le cerceau lancé; s'il tombe à une distance déterminée, c'est l'adversaire qui a gagné le cerceau lancé; s'il dépasse cette distance, le coup est à recommencer.

Les jeunes gens et les hommes ont des jeux plus compliqués. Ils ont une sorte de jeu de dames, les casiers sont formés par de petits trous faits à la main et les pions sont représentés par des pierres. Il y a surtout le jeu des cauris, jeu de hasard, jeu où l'on gagne et où l'on perd et, comme tous les jeux d'argent, jeu passionnant. Qui s'est adonné à ce jeu, va aussi loin que ses émules d'Europe. Il devient tricheur, menteur, voleur, fait des dettes. Il y en a qui ont joué jusqu'à leur dernière culotte, jusqu'à leur dernier pagne et ont fini par se jouer eux-mêmes. C'est un jeu à prohiber aussi sévèrement que les jeux de hasard chez nous.

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Mais le jeu des jeux, la distraction des distractions, celle à laquelle on se livre dans toutes les circonstances gaies ou tristes de la vie et souvent sans motif, c'est la danse. S'ils la connaissaient, la muse Terpsichore n'aurait pas de fidèles plus dévoués. Tous, hommes, femmes, et enfants ne se tiennent plus quand ils entendent des airs de danse.

2: Mangin FA28 Mossi

Et pourtant, à vrai dire, le Mossi ne sait pas danser. A part les danses des circoncis, à part quelques villages de danseurs qui s'adonnent avec méthode à la chorégraphie, le commun du peuple ne sait pas danser avec grâce, ce qui ne les empêche pas de se livrer tous à la danse. Les hommes et les femmes dansent séparément. La danse la plus ordinaire des hommes consiste en un mouvement rapide du buste de gauche à droite et de droite à gauche; les pieds ne quittent pas terre et le danseur les avance très lentement. Les bras sont repliés à la hauteur et à l'écartement des épaules; les doigts sont allongés et bras et mains s'agitent avec tout le corps. Fait par des professionnels, et on en trouve parfois dans les villages, le mouvement n'est pas disgracieux mais manque d'ampleur. Le costume des danseurs se compose d'un cimier en carton qui sert de coiffure et dont la crête est ornée d'une bande de cauris: souvent les côtés portent des morceaux de miroir, des plumes, et toutes sortes de petits objets voyants. Le buste est vêtu d'un maillot à grosses mailles dont la ceinture est ornée de pompons ou de cauris et de grelots. Le danseur porte au médius un morceau de fer qui ressemble, en plus gros, aux écailles de la moule, et au pouce une bague de fer. Il frappe l'une contre l'autre en cadence, l'écaille de fer et la bague. Souvent le poignet est orné d'un bracelet fait d'une certaine quantité de ces écailles de fer auxquelles pendent de petites lamelles de même métal et qui résonnent au moindre mouvement. Ceux qui n'ont aucun costume, essaient de s'affubler avec des oripeaux.

Les femmes dansent deux à deux chacune de leur côté, tournoyant sur elles mêmes et prenant les poses qu'elles jugent les plus gracieuses. Quand elles passent à proximité l'une de l'autre, elles se retournent et se frappent dos contre dos, et l'une se retire tandis qu'une autre vient prendre sa place. Pendant ce temps les spectatrices battent des mains en cadence et chantent. Parfois même, l'une d'elle pousse un cri strident pour exciter les danseuses ou en l'honneur de l'une d'elles qui s'est distinguée par sa grâce et sa souplesse.

Il n'y a pas de danses spéciales pour les morts, et il ne semble pas que les danses mossi comportent l'obscénité de certaines danses nègres.

Mais retournons à nos enfants. Il est donc vrai de dire, d'une façon générale, que les enfants font ce qu'ils veulent pourvu qu'ils aident dans les travaux ordinaires, que le fils aide son père et la fille, sa mère. Heureusement, il y a des exceptions et certains parents surveillent leurs enfants d'assez près, mais ce sont des exceptions. Les garçons préfèrent leur mère à leur père par ce que ce dernier a souvent à les réprimander, tandis que le rôle de la maman est, comme partout, de gâter ses enfants.

Les enfants des différentes femmes s'aiment assez entre eux, se rendent volontiers service, et quand le père meurt, le fils aîné ne fait guère de distinction entre ses frères et les aide tous dans la mesure du possible. La polygamie ne semble pas avoir d'inconvénients de ce côté.

Quand un individu a plusieurs femmes, c'est sa première femme *(porkyéma)* qui est maîtresse de maison et non pas sa mère. Toutes les autres femmes sont sur le pied d'égalité, même les esclaves, excepté, bien entendu celles pour lesquelles le mari a quelques préférences. Plus le nombre des femmes augmente, plus augmente l'autorité de la première épouse, qui désire

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Dansoure mossi.

[facing p. 38]

Dansoure mossi.

Anthropos IX.

vivement que son mari ait de nombreuses femmes. Chaque épouse a sa case séparée dans laquelle elle vit avec ses enfants, ce qui évite bien des querelles. Le mari se rend dans la case de celle qu'il désire ou la fait venir dans sa propre case. Quand l'homme pioche son champ, toutes ses femmes et tous ses enfants doivent l'aider, car c'est le maître de la maison qui nourrit toutes ses femmes et tous ses enfants et leur distribue chaque jour la ration de mil, il n'est donc que juste que tous prennent part aux travaux des champs dans la mesure de leurs forces.

Mais pourvu que la femme soit à la disposition de son mari et qu'elle l'aide dans les cultures, elle est libre de faire ce que bon lui semble. C'est elle qui ira au marché vendre les grains ou les condiments pour la sauce, le fil pour tisser les étoffes, mais c'est le mari qui vend les bandes et le coton brut. Pendant l'hivernage, chaque femme peut avoir son champ, se faire aider par ses enfants et la récolte lui appartient en propre, le mari n'a rien a y voir. Si la femme file du coton, elle le vendra au marché ou même à son mari; si elle fait de la bière, elle en offrira une cruche à son époux, mais si celui-ci reçoit des amis et désire d'autres cruches, il les paiera argent comptant, et il n'est pas rare de voir des femmes refuser de vendre à crédit à leur mari: qui sait quand il paierait?

La femme peut aller visiter ses parents avec l'autorisation de son époux qui lui fixe un jour de retour. Mais rarement la femme revient au jour dit, et son mari vient la chercher lui-même ou envoie un de ses amis avec un morçeau de sel ou un menu cadeau. C'est surtout quand elle est dans un état intéressant ou peu après la naissance de son bébé que la mère aime à se rendre chez ses parents. Elle sait qu'elle y sera bien soignée et surtout qu'elle y jouira d'une liberté absolue. Aussi n'est-il pas rare que des femmes quittent, pour plusieurs mois, le domicile conjugal et qu'elles se fassent un peu prier pour le réintégrer. La plupart des difficultés que les Mossi ont entre eux, viennent de leurs femmes ou de leurs dettes; on ne peut cependant pas dire, d'une façon générale, que la femme soit malheureuse et maltraitée.

Mais le rôle de la femme est d'avoir des enfants. Sitôt que la femme se sait enceinte, elle ne consent plus à s'approcher de son mari, mais elle se garde bien de lui faire part de son état: l'enfant qu'elle porte en mourrait. Si ses parents viennent à trépasser pendant sa grossesse, elle ne porte pas leur deuil, elle ne se rend pas à leur enterrement. Si c'est une jeune femme qui n'a pas encore eu d'enfant, une des autres femmes de son mari, ou, à son défaut, la sœur même du mari, vient de nuit asperger d'eau le mari et sa femme. La jeune femme l'appelle désormais son mari et lui prépare la bouillie de mil et fait chauffer l'eau pour qu'elle se lave. Quand la grossesse devient visible une parente de la femme va consulter le sorcier pour savoir quel sacrifice offrir afin que tout se passe bien, mais le mari ignore cette consultation. Parfois le sacrifice est renouvelé quand le terme approche. A la naissance du premier-né, le mari envoie chez les parents de sa femme un enfant avec un coq ou une poule, selon le sexe du nouveau né. L'enfant jette le volatile dans la cour sans rien dire et se sauve: tout le monde a compris.

Un enfant difforme, estropié, aveugle dès sa naissance est supprimé: il est tout simplement noyé sans autre forme de procès s'il est jugé incurable. Autrefois, les jumeaux étaient souvent noyés eux aussi parce que leur naissance entraîne des embarras pour la famille qui doit faire des sacrifices spéciaux; parfois un seul est supprimé. S'ils ont été épargnés et meurent de leur belle mort, leur mère porte un grelot au pied jusqu'au jour de la fête du mort *(houré)*. Mais la mère vient-elle à mourir ou le père est-il malade, le sorcier n'a qu'un mot à dire: les enfants seront mis à mort, car c'est eux qui sont cause de la maladie ou de la mort de leurs parents. Des parents vinrent un jour apporter aux frères de Koupéla un bébé qui savait à peine marcher. Il était né un vendredi et sa mère était morte; c'en était assez pour qu'il fut lui-même sacrifié. Ses parents essayèrent sans succès de l'empoisonner; ils l'exposèrent trois jours dans la brousse et l'enfant ne mourut pas. C'est en désespoir de cause qu'ils l'amenèrent aux missionnaires, qui s'empressèrent de recueillir le pauvre petit. Un enfant dont on constate la folie est abandonné dans la brousse et y meurt de faim.

Il n'est cependant que juste d'ajouter que ces coutumes barbares renouvelées des Spartiates, ne sont pas toujours appliquées. Des enfants estropiés et atteints de maladies incurables sont fort bien soignés par leurs parents, et des jumeaux, nés avant l'occupation française, se portent actuellement fort bien.

Trois jours après la naissance d'un enfant mâle, quatre jours après celle d'une fille, le père et la mère réunissent les parents afin de se réjouir de ce que la famille vient de s'augmenter d'un nouveau membre. En ce jour, le front du nouveau né est rasé en cercle et il reçoit un nom. Ce sont les sœurs du mari ou ses autres femmes qui donnent un nom au premier enfant, et le père choisit celui des autres.

Ce nom est tiré d'une circonstance qui a précédé, accompagné ou suivi la naissance. La mère a-t-elle, même par mégarde, même dans sa jeunesse, tué une poule, son premier enfant s'appellera du nom de la poule *(noara)*, sinon l'enfant mourra. Si le père ou la mère ont vu deux serpents au même endroit, l'enfant portera le nom de *ganda*. Si plusieurs enfants sont morts précédemment, le nouveau né prendra le nom de *yéwaya* «il est arrivé». S'il y a plusieurs raisons réunies pour donner un nom à l'enfant, par exemple s'il doit s'appeler *Noara*, *Ganda*, *Yéwaya*, on l'appelera *Ywawa* «celui qui a beaucoup de noms». Le puiné porte souvent le nom de son aîné avec l'adjectif *Bila* «petit», «plus jeune», ainsi l'aîné s'appelle *Tibo*, son cadet s'appellera *Tibila* (*Tibo Bila*, le petit fétiche *Tibo*). Le nom n'est donc pas donné au hasard. Certains noms sont assez jolis: *Zuényendé* il est timide; *Nongabamba* elle les aime (ses parents); *Danimmamyé* ne m'oublie pas. Le nom indique parfois simplement le sexe: *Daore* mâle; *Poko* femelle; ou bien la fête, ou le jour de la semaine qui a vu naître l'enfant.

Si le nom n'est pas donné au hasard, les tatouages ne diffèrent pas non plus sans raison. Le tatouage national se compose essentiellement de chaque côté de la figure de trois raies parallèles qui partent des tempes et coupent la joue verticalement jusqu'au menton et d'une autre raie qui part du nez et tombe perpendiculairement sur les trois premières, traversant ainsi la joue

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Femmes mossi tatouées.

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Type de jeune homme mossi tatoué.

[facing p. 40]

horizontalement. Parfois, il n'y a que deux raies verticales, et entre ces raies, de petites hachures horizontales en forme d'échelle: c'est la marque des hommes libres et des fils de chefs. Les trois raies verticales peuvent aussi être arrêtées au milieu de la joue par trois raies horizontales et reprendre ensuite jusqu'au menton: c'est la marque que porte un enfant né chez les Peuls, par ce que ses aînés sont morts et que le sorcier a déclaré qu'il faut que sa mère aille enfanter chez les Peuls. Ce tatouage est propre à une tribu distincte des Mossi, vivant au milieu d'eux et parlant cependant une langue différente, les Marensé, plus connus sous le nom de Marka. Si la mère ou la grand'mère est Yarga, l'enfant ne portera qu'une barre horizontale sur la joue droite et les trois barres verticales: c'est le tatouage des Yarsé.

Les enfants sont tatoués à n'importe quel âge, parfois quand ils sont déjà âgés. Beaucoup de Yarsé ne tatouent pas leurs enfants, et les Mossi eux-mêmes ne semblent pas tenir d'une façon spéciale à cette coutume barbare qui défigure quelque fois un individu. Le tatouage se fait à l'aide d'un rasoir et dans la plaie on met du charbon pilé, pour adoucir la peau et rendre la souffrance moins vive, la figure est toute entiere enduite d'huile jusqu'à ce que les plaies soient fermées, ne laissant que des cicatrices plus ou moins profondes selon que l'opération a été plus ou moins bien conduite. Certains indigènes ont, en guise de tatouages, de gros bourelets de chair qui les défigurent complètement; c'est que le tatouage a été mal fait.

Les sorciers ont parfois l'idée bizarre de faire tatouer sur le ventre ou sur le bas du dos les enfants dont les aînés sont morts. Ainsi une femme a perdu trois de ses enfants. Elle consulte le sorcier à la naissance du quatrième, et celui-ci déclare sans rire que l'enfant mourra si on ne marque pas chacune de ses fesses par des raies et si on ne marque pas son ventre de tatouages partant du nombril comme centre. L'enfant a été ainsi marqué et a vécu!! Les jeunes filles se tatouent presque toutes le ventre, le nombril servant de centre et les tatouages de rayons; beaucoup ornent le dessus des seins de petites raies perpendiculaires aux seins et parallèles entre elles. Nous ne donnons évidemment ici que les types les plus répandus car il y a beaucoup de variétés de tatouages.

S'il n'y a pas d'âge pour le tatouage, il n'y en a pas non plus pour la circoncision. Des bambins de sept à huit ans la reçoivent en même temps que des jeunes gens, voire même des hommes faits. La circoncision ne semble pas être une coutume mossi, puisqu'elle n'est pas générale. Dans la province de Ouagadougou, cependant, la plupart des enfants sont circoncis, c'est au contraire la minorité dans celle de Koupéla; mais cette coutume fait chaque année des progrès dans cette dernière province. Souvent le chef de famille se fait circoncire par ce qu'il est malade et ses enfants l'imitent: voilà la circoncision introduite dans cette famille, car le père étant circoncis, les enfants le sont aussi. Parfois c'est la mère qui est Yarga, donc de famille musulmane, et ses enfants se font circoncire; c'est encore un nouveau gain pour la circoncision. Il arrive aussi que les enfants vont à la circoncision par simple curiosité et alléchés par les belles promesses que leur font les Peuls et les Yarsé qui, musulmans en principe, sont circoncis et font de la propagande autour d'eux. L'excision est, au contraire, absolument générale.

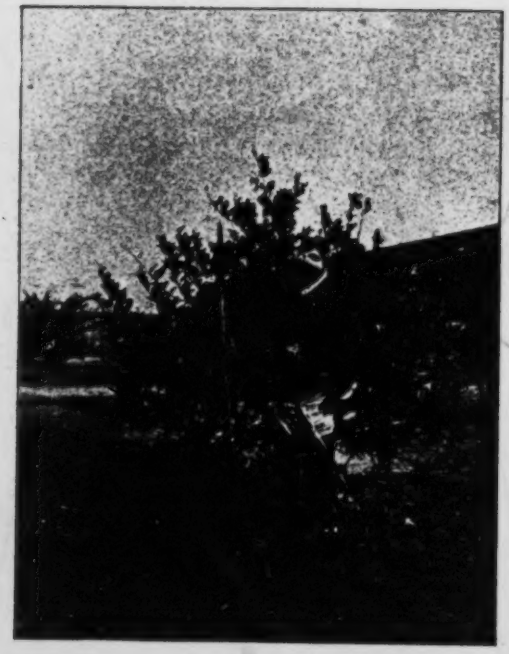
Quand un groupe de futurs circoncis est formé, les parents prennent jour avec le Peul qui doit procéder à l'opération. Dès l'aurore, le chef de la circoncision, un Yarga ou un Mossi riche et qui a le moyen de nourrir plusieurs des circoncis, choisit un arbre qui servira d'abri à ceux-ci. Il n'y a pas à craindre la pluie, la circoncision se fait toujours pendant la saison sèche, de décembre à avril, alors que les travaux des champs sont terminés. L'arbre est entouré de nattes en paille: c'est le *téoo*, le lieu sacré dont aucun incirconcis ne peut approcher sans risquer d'être injurié et souvent battu; les plus grands malheurs le frapperont s'il ose franchir l'enceinte sacrée. Le Peul prend une pierre plate, immole une poule pour rendre le génie de l'arbre favorable aux circoncis, et les enfants lui sont amenés l'un après l'autre. Pendant toute l'opération, on joue du tambour pour étouffer les cris des victimes.

Durant les trois premiers jours, les nouveaux circoncis ne font rien. Ils se reposent et soignent leurs plaies. Ils demeurent séparés du reste de la population pendant deux ou trois mois, parfois davantage. Si l'on en juge par les danses qui clôturent les fêtes, la danse doit être la grande occupation durant ces jours. Les circoncis vont aussi battre le mil de ceux qui les y convient, mais aucun incirconcis ne doit se mêler à eux, aucun profane ne peut les approcher. Ils ne parlent plus d'ailleurs le mossi entre eux, mais une langue spéciale dont ils apprennent ce qu'il faut pour le commerce ordinaire de la vie. Malheur à qui s'oublie et emploie sa langue maternelle: il est battu de verges faites d'une sorte d'osier. Leur nom même est changé et personne ne peut les appeler de leur nom mossi.

Les circoncis sont divisés par groupe de deux, l'un représente le mâle et l'autre la famelle. Un des groupes porte le nom de l'hyène (*kwara* en leur langue) et un autre s'appelle *masalro*, nom dont nous ne connaissons pas le correspondant en français. Le groupe hyène doit s'ingénier à dérober la nourriture, même des autres circoncis, ce qui les oblige à être toujours sur le qui vive. L'autre groupe a pour fonction de faire des gestes inconvenants pendant la danse.

Les circoncis sont enduits de poussière grise afin de les rendre méconnaissables. Derrière leur pagne est attachée une queue qui pend jusqu'à terre. Elle est faite de fils de coton tressés et terminée par un pompon, elle a pour but d'éloigner les génies *kikirsi*, qui, paraît-il, n'aiment pas les circoncis. Ceux-ci marchent courbés vers la terre et appuyés sur un bâton comme des vieillards: c'est un moyen comme un autre de mettre leur obéissance à l'épreuve et de savoir s'ils écouteront bien ce qui leur sera dit.

En se rendant dans la brousse, soit pour couper de la paille, soit pour toute autre raison, ils chantent des invocations aux génies des chemins et des arbres afin se les rendre favorables, s'attirer leur bénédiction et écarter les maladies. Ils chassent alors tout le monde devant eux, ils s'approchent des villages et s'ils peuvent s'emparer de quelques poules, chèvres ou moutons, c'est autant de gagné et un bon morceau à mettre dans la marmite. C'est d'ailleurs la coutume, et ils volent ainsi même les bêtes de leurs parents. La nuit, ils s'approchent des cases et battent tous ceux qu'ils rencontrent, ils prennent tout ce qu'ils trouvent, et il ne viendra à l'esprit de personne de



Anthropos IX.

Danseur mossi avec son cimier fait de cauris.

[facing p. 42]

leur résister. D'ailleurs, durant ces jours, les parents soignent bien leurs enfants et leur envoient une nourriture abondante. Avoir un enfant à la circoncision est une charge pour la famille.

Quant le groupe des circoncis est surtout composé de musulmans, Yarsé ou Peuls, pendant les temps de repos, le soir, parfois au milieu de la nuit, le chef de la circoncision les réunit et leur fait une instruction. Il ne semble pas qu'il y ait une doctrine ésotérique, et cette instruction a pour suje la glorification des aînés qui ont été circoncis en ce lieu et sont morts. Seuls les circoncis peuvent entrer au ciel et avoir beaucoup d'enfants; les incirconcis ne pourront pas jouir du bonheur dans l'autre vie et seront stériles. On leur enseigne aussi que Dieu est assis sous un arbre noir, sur une peau de mouton, qu'il a une assiette pour manger et une bouteile pour boire. C'est enfantin. A tous on dit qu'ils ne doivent raconter à personne, sous peine de mort, ou au moins de maladie grave, ce qu'ils ont vu et appris à la circoncision afin qu'ils ne racontent pas les déprédations commises pendant ce temps et n'écartent pas ceux qui voudraient y venir car s'il est tentant de bien manger, de beaucoup jouer et surtout d'avoir de beaux habits, il est aussi désagréable d'être battu de verges à la moindre peccadille, si l'on ne danse pas bien, si l'on se dispute ou s'injurie, si l'on s'oublie à parler mossi, si l'on est lent à se mettre au travail.

Parfois pendant le temps de la circoncision, on rencontre sur le chemin près du marché, deux bâtons, placés là volontairement, et si l'on regarde à droite et à gauche, on aperçoit deux enfants, tout couverts de poussière et au pagne crasseux. Ce sont des circoncis qui mendient et les passants jettent à terre quelques cauris.

Mais bientôt toutes ces cérémonies vont prendre fin. Les habits sont prêts et les enfants commencent à être fatigués et s'énervent. Le chef de la circoncision décide alors que l'on va raser les nouveaux circoncis, c'est à dire, que la circoncision prendra fin quinze jours plus tard. Les circoncis ne sont pas entièrement rasés, mais ils portent au sommet de la tête une raie de cheveux et une raie rasée alternant entre elles; les côtés sont rasés en forme de demi lune et de la même manière. Le septième jour, les anciens circoncis viennent avec des poules offrir des sacrifices aux génies des chemins afin que tout se passe bien, mais les nouveaux circoncis n'y prennent pas part. Les enfants se lavent, se graissent et revêtent leurs beaux habits. Tout est neuf, le pagne, comme le pantalon et la veste, la couverture comme la coiffure; la ceinture est ornée d'un couteau dans une gaîne en cuir et d'un étui à aiguilles terminé par un pompon en cuir aux lanières desquelles sont [illegible] des cauris. Ils ont en main une queue de vache dont le manche est [illegible] lui aussi, de cauris: c'est pour chasser les génies *scheuyan* qui n'ai[illegible] les petits faquins ni les gens trop bien habillés. Les deux poignets portent des bracelets en cuivre. Evidemment, tout cet attirail flambant neuf, tous ces cauris qui sonnent comme des grelots, attirent les yeux, fascinent les jeunes qui se disent qu'à la première occasion, ils iront eux aussi à la circoncision afin de bien manger et d'avoir de beaux habits.

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Les circoncis continuent à marcher courbés, appuyés sur leurs bâtons, mais leur bâton grossier a fait place à deux cannes, ornées de dessins faits au feu, et liées ensembles. La queue a disparue. Ils vont saluer les chefs, remercier ceux qui leur ont fait quelque cadeaux. Ils vont au son du gros tambour, car le *bindré* est interdit à la circoncision, chantant aux génies des mélodies plaintives. Ils vont se montrer au marché, se faire admirer dans les villages. Chez les chefs ils dansent, et vraiment leurs danses sont très gracieuses. Ils dansent en chœur, faisant tous les mêmes gestes avec ensemble, ou deux par deux, au son du tambour, variant les figures suivant la cadence qui leur est indiquée. Au bout de sept jours, les fêtes sont terminées, tous rentrent dans leur famille et reprennent la vie commune comme si rien ne s'était passé.

C'est cette vie de tous les jours qu'ils nous faut maintenant étudier.

LIVRE TROISIEME.

Vie active et industrielle.

Chapitre premier. — Occupations d'un Mossi.

Les Mossi sont un peuple essentiellement cultivateur et il semble qu'on puisse dire qu'il n'y a pas un Mossi qui vive d'un métier et qui, quelque profession qu'il ait embrassée de par ailleurs, au moment des pluies ne cultive ses champs, laissant de côté tout autre ouvrage. L'année d'un Mossi est donc toute entière divisée comme il suit, et les années succèdent aux années sans amener de changement dans cette existence monotone.

De mai à octobre c'est la saison des pluies, c'est l'époque du grand travail des champs, et tous s'y donnent tout entier. Hommes, femmes, enfants sont sans cesse dans les champs. Ils coupent les épines au début de mai sitôt que les Pléiades se montrent à l'horizon et quand les baobabs commencent à bourgeonner. C'est le printemps *(sigu)*. Pour ce travail ils emploient une petite hachette large de quelques centimètres, au manche court et bien en main, et un bâton fourchu qui sert à rabattre les épines afin qu'on puisse les couper commodément au pied. Les épines sont réunies en tas avec les brindilles et brûlées, un soir, sitôt sèches. En juin, généralement, tombent les premières pluies abondantes et tout de suite les indigènes sèment le petit mil blanc qui sert à faire le *sarabo*, le fond-même de la nourriture indigène, et le gros mil rouge ou sorgho pour fabriquer la bière de mil.

Les semailles sont considérées comme un des plus pénibles travaux parce qu'elles obligent à rester courbé vers la terre sans se relever afin de ne pas perdre de vue le terrain ensemencé. Les indigènes sèment avec une vieille pioche usée dont ils frappent deux fois la terre afin de faire un petit trou. Le grain est dans une calebasse retenue dans la main gauche par une ficelle et les doigts sont ainsi libres et peuvent saisir quelques grains qui sont déposés dans le trou: la pioche ramène un peu de terre par-dessus les grains. Quand les pluies ont mieux détrempé la terre, quand le mil a commencé à lever, ils sèment le maïs autour de leurs cases.

Après le premier sarclage dans les champs, ce sont les haricots qui se sèment entre les pieds de petit mil et le coton entre ceux de gros mil rouge ou près des marigots. Puis, on s'occupe à préparer la terre pour sémer le riz, les arachides et les pois indigènes, et entre temps, il faut piocher sans cesse pour arracher les mauvaises herbes qui étoufferaient les jeunes pousses de mil. Si la pluie est un peu abondante fin juin, les cultivateurs sont facilement débordés et se plaignent de ce qu'il n'y a plus moyen de nettoyer leurs champs. Le *gombo* (corne grecque) et tous les condiments pour la sauce, le piment, les tomates, etc. se plantent outre des champs de maïs, près des cases,

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ainsi que le chanvre indigène et toutes les espèces de calebassiers. Dans les terrains propices, et, par conséquence, dans certaines régions seulement, les fabiramas, le manioc et l'igname sont l'object d'une culture spéciale.

En se rendant aux champs, celui qui élève des poussins, les emporte dans une cage en paille tréssée ou en osier, de forme oblongue. Arrivé au lieu du travail, il ouvre la porte de la cage et la mère-poule sort. Elle est attachée par une ficelle au panier et ses poussins courent autour d'elle. Quand le maître trouve une bonne termitière il va la porter à ses élèves et la casse devant eux. Le soir, il rentre la poule et ses poussins et s'en retourne à la maison portant la cage suspendue à son épaule.

Les grandes pluies tombent en juillet et en août. C'est l'été *(seoro)*. Quand la terre n'est pas trop détrempée, vite tout le monde court aux champs dès l'aube et travaille jusqu'au soir. Une ou deux femmes restent à la maison pour préparer la nourriture pour les travailleurs car il faut soutenir ses forces afin de pouvoir fournir un travail plus intense. Personne n'a droit au repos, seuls les malades et les vieillards impotents restent au logis et encore ces derniers sont-ils préposés á la garde des bébés. C'est alors que les plus riches convienent leurs amis à venir les aider. Le propriétaire d'un vaste champ fait dire à tous ceux du village, aux jeunes gens de préférence, à tous ceux qui lui ont quelques obligations, à ceux qui recherchent ses filles, qu'à tel jour il piochera son champ, et dès l'aube, tout le monde se réunit et pioche tandis que des tambours excitent les travailleurs. Un autre jour, c'est lui qui ira à son tour aider ceux qui sont venus travailler pour lui. Cette façon de s'entr'aider est très profitable quand un champ commence à être envahi par les mauvaises herbes parce qu'il est nettoyé en un jour, mais elle devient onéreuse s'il faut faire appel à ses voisins plusieurs fois pendant la saison.

Les fortes pluies cessent avec le mois d'août et en septembre, le maïs est mûr, la bombance commence. Les épis de maïs grillés sont une friandise recherchée surtout quand les grains sont encore tendres. Il est telle espèce de maïs, légèrement sucrée, qui sautée au beurre rappelle vaguement nos petits pois frais. Partout les enfants, voire même les anciens, se régalent de maïs, partout ceux que l'on va saluer offrent quelques épis de maïs, qui sont souvent grillés sur place. Quand la récolte du maïs est terminée, la bouillie de maïs, qui rappelle la fameuse polenta des Italiens, remplace aventageusement la bouillie de mil et varie agréablement le menu journalier d'autant plus que les *gombo* commencent à mûrir et permettent de varier aussi la sauce. Les ventres se remplissent, les visages sont resplendissants de santé et, par une suite toute naturelle, les coeurs sont à la joie. Si la fin de la saison sèche a été dure parce que le mil commençait à manquer, si les travaux de l'hivernage ont été pénibles, on se rattrape maintenant. Le maïs coupé est remplacé par du tabac, dont les semis ont été préparés à l'approche de la récolte.

En fin septembre, commencement d'octobre, le gros mil rouge est mûr. C'est l'automne *(houpéla)*. Le maïs est devenu trop dur pour être mangé grillé, il est remplacé par les épis de mil encore verts et mangés crus après avoir été battus avec une petite baguette et ainsi débarrassés de leur bale. Certaines

2: Mangin FA28 Mossi

Les Mossi.

Anthropos IX.

En haut: **Porteurs d'eau.**
En bas: **Jeunes gens revenant de la brousse avec des bottes de paille.**

En haut: **Battage du mil.**
En bas: **Le mil battu est vanné.** Au fond: **Greniers à mil.**

variétés de gros mil sont sucrées et pas trop désagréables à manger ainsi. Et comme le mil est leur principale nourriture, les chevaux engraissent alors parce qu'ils ont du mil à volonté. Les hommes en profitent aussi largement, car la bière de mil nouveau est bien plus agréable que celle faite avec du vieux mil, et quand le mil abonde, la boisson ne fait pas défaut. C'est alors que le riz est récolté, battu sur les aires et mis soigneusement à part pour les jours de fête.

A la fin d'octobre, les pluies ont presque entièrement cessé; lorsque les haricots sont ramassés et placés dans les champs sur des tiges de mil ou des *séko*, isolés de terre par des piquets fourchus afin que les termites ne les mangent pas ou bien rapportés à la maison et jetés sur les *séko* qui servent d'abri devant les *soukala*, c'est le moment de récolter le petit mil qui est sec. Les tiges de mil sont coupées à ras de terre par les hommes et placés de telle sorte que les épis soient dirigés dans le même sens pour faciliter le travail des femmes qui coupent les épis et les mettent en tas. Quand le mil est coupé, les femmes remplissent leurs paniers. Les plus grands paniers sont sortis pour la circonstance, et chacune s'ingénie à faire tout un échaffaudage avec les épis les plus longs ou avec des tiges de haricots, afin de pouvoir mettre le plus de mil possible en dehors du panier, tels les zouaves qui rivalisent à qui aura le paquetage du sac le plus élevé. Quand la série des femmes rentrant au village rencontre un individu connu pour sa générosité, elles chantent, elles crient, elles l'entourent jusqu'à ce qu'il ait jeté quelques poignets de cauris qui serviront à acheter une cruche de bière.

Près de l'aire, les cris redoublent, et chaque femme s'approche du grenier et tend son panier à l'homme qui est dans le grenier pour le recevoir. Ces greniers sont très grossièrement construits et se composent essentiellement de baguettes de bois fichées en terre en cercle et servant à tenir un *séko* qui les entoure tandis que le fond du grenier est formé d'un autre *séko*, reposant généralement sur la terre, parfois sur des pierres ou des piquets fourchus pour éviter les termites. C'est là que le mil attendra le moment du battage. Les greniers sont alignés autour de l'aire en terre battue qui est située à cent ou deux cents mètres du village, parfois plus loin. Les voleurs sont peu à redouter. Ils iront bien couper le mil encore sur pied dans la brousse mais ne volent que fort rarement le mil déjà rentré. Seuls les chèvres, les moutons et les pintades sont à craindre, et contre eux les greniers sont protégés par des épines.

Sitôt que ces plus gros travaux sont terminés, toute la famille s'occupe à déterrer les arachides et les pois. Toute la famille se réunit sous un arbre à l'ombre duquel les hommes apportent les touffes d'arachides, et tout en grignotant les pistaches encore vertes, tout en devisant, chacun sépare les gousses des fanes. Ces dernières sont mises précieusement de côté ainsi que les feuilles de haricots: ce sera une excellente nourriture pour les chevaux pendant la saison sèche quand le soleil aura brûlé toutes les herbes de la brousse.

En novembre, toute la récolte est rentrée. Le soleil a déjà séché bien des herbes et c'est le moment de couper la paille pour faire les *séko* et

arranger les toitures. C'est un travail généralement réservé aux enfants et aux serviteurs *(dakonré)*. Le maître de la maison indique à chacun le nombre de bottes de paille qu'il aura à couper, et tous les matins les enfants partent en bandes, la faucille sur l'épaule. Ils vont chercher la paille sur le bord des marigots et reviennent quand le soleil commence à darder ses rayons brûlants. Le travail est alors terminé, et il n'y a plus qu'à se reposer toute la journée. La saison sèche est en effet le temps du repos et de novembre à mai il n'y a plus de travaux pressants.

En décembre, le froid se fait sentir. C'est l'hiver *(sapolro)*. Les indigènes se groupent à l'aurore autour de feux de tiges de mil ou de brindilles ou de paille, tout sert de combustible. Chaque nouveau venu doit apporter sa brassée et c'est à ce prix qu'il sera admis à s'asseoir autour du feu. A la fin de décembre, la provision de paille pour couvrir les cases a été faite et c'est alors que le petit mil est battu. Chaque habitant du village dispose à son tour de l'aire. Il a soin de prévenir ses amis et connaissances comme au jour où il a pioché son champ. La bière de mil est prête, et la veille, les femmes ont enduit l'aire de bouse de vache délayée dans l'eau pour affermir le sol. Au petit jour les amis arrivent, le mil est retiré du grenier et étendu sur l'aire à l'aide de tiges de mil liées ensemble et traînées par terre au moyen de cordes tandis qu'un indigène appuie les tiges de mil sur le sol. Les fléaux sont composés d'un simple bâton coupé dans la brousse; c'est une branche d'arbré choisie de telle façon que la tige du fléau soit assez mince et flexible tandis que la partie qui sert à battre est assez grosse et forme un angle obtus avec la tige tenue en main. Les jeunes gens se mettent sur une seule ligne dont les bambins occupent les extrémités; les joueurs de tambour se tiennent soit devant, soit derrière les batteurs et les fléaux tombent en cadence, écrasant les épis et séparant les grains très secs de la tige. Cependant que les vieillards sont assis à l'ombre des greniers, devisent, fument, cousent des habits. Quand les batteurs sont arrivés au bout de l'aire, ils reviennent sur leurs pas, puis se reposent tandis que les plus âgés rassemblent avec des balais de paille les grains qui ont été projetés en dehors de la masse.

Quand le mil a été suffisamment battu, au bout de quelques heures, les épis vides et brisés sont balayés à part pour ne laisser que les grains. Ces derniers sont réunis en un tas, et un fort gaillard les jette en l'air à l'aide d'une pelle en bois afin de séparer la paille du bon grain qui est mis en tas. Quand tout le mil est ainsi vanné on l'entoure d'un cercle de cendre pour le défendre contre les génies malfaisants. Puis un des batteurs, étranger à la famille, met du mil dans une calebasse et l'asperge d'eau. Il le jette ensuite par poignées sur le tas de mil en disant: «Un tel craint la pluie» et il prononce le nom du propriétaire de la moisson et le nom de tous les membres de sa famille. Il termine en disant: «Quand on aura fini de sarcler vienne la sècheresse. Quand on aura fini de planter vienne une grande pluie.» Si le propriétaire d'un cheval se trouve dans l'assemblée, il recevra une calebasse de mil pour sa monture. Chacun des anciens prélève une part pour ses poules. Si cette cérémonie n'a pas lieu, le mil ne peut servir à ensemencer les champs l'année suivante quand ces formalités sont terminées.

Les femmes arrivent avec leurs paniers, un homme saisit un des balais laissés sur place et l'enfonce dans le tas de mil en plusieurs endroits, puis les hommes emplissent les paniers et aident les femmes à les charger sur leur tête. Elles déposent le mil à la maison dans les greniers faits de terre glaise mélangée à de la paille coupée très fin. Ces greniers ont la forme de grandes jarres de 1·50 *m* de haut; ils reposent généralement sur de grosses pierres et ont été au préalable enfumés afin d'éviter les termites. Ils sont fermés par un couvercle fait comme le grenier lui-même et recouvert par un petit tois de paille pour le protéger contre la pluie parce que ces greniers sont, le plus souvent en plein air, dans la cour intérieure. C'est pendant que l'on vanne le mil que la bière de mil est apportée et bue sur place; parfois, la fête se termine par des danses, et chacun se retire chez soi pour recommencer un autre jour. Ainsi s'écoule le mois de janvier.

Février, mars et avril sont les mois de vacances, les mois de chasse et de pêche.

A vrai dire, aucun Mossi n'est chasseur et tous le sont plus ou moins. Depuis l'occupation française, on rencontre parfois sur la lisière de la grande brousse qui borde le Volta et qui renferme du gros gibier, des individus armés de fusil à pierre très primitifs, si primitifs qu'ils éclatent fréquemment et blessent leur propriétaire assez imprudent pour forcer la charge de poudre. Ces indigènes connaissent parfaitement la brousse et peuvent être d'un précieux secours pour qui veut s'aventurer à chasser le *koba*, le buffle, l'éléphant, la panthère ou même le lion bien que ce fauve soit pour les Mossi comme pour nous le roi des animaux, le maître de la brousse *(wé'naba)* et qu'ils ne l'attaquent que s'il a déjà tué un homme.

Ces chasseurs fabriquent eux-mêmes leur poudre avec du charbon de bois pilé et du salpêtre extrait de terre imprégnée d'urine. Cette terre est lavée soigneusement et, à l'évaporation, laisse un fond de cristaux de salpêtre. Le plus souvent, ils n'ajoutent pas de soufre parce que ce dernier produit est trop coûteux. La poudre ainsi obtenue brûle bien et faite avec soin produit de bons effets. Les chasseurs la mettent dans de petites calebasses ou dans des cornes de béliers; ils n'en fabriquent que de petites quantités à la fois. Une pierre dure fait l'office de balle.

Les indigènes peuvent facilement se dissimuler et ne tirent le gibier que de très près et au posé ou arrêté. Ils restent facilement à l'affût pendant des heures, des nuits entières et, connaissant les mares où vont boire les animaux, et leurs habitudes, ils se construisent de petites huttes en branchage ou creusent des trous dans lesquels ils se dissimulent sous des feuillages. D'autres, plus ingénieux, tracent un vaste entonnoir dont la base ouverte a parfois 1 ou même 2 *km* et dont les côtés, formés par des haies d'épines, ont une égale longueur, tandis que le sommet, situé près d'un arbre touffu, laisse juste assez de place pour que l'animal puisse passer. Le chasseur se poste dans l'arbre avec son arc et ses flèches et s'installe commodément car il lui faudra peut-être attendre longtemps. Les bêtes suivent sans défiance la haie d'épines, aboutissent à l'arbre, et sont tués. Les chasseurs arrivent ainsi à tuer quelques belles pièces, même des éléphants, bien que leurs armes soient très primitives.

Mais si les chasseurs de profession, les vrais chasseurs, ceux qui ont toujours des aventures à raconter et, disent-ils, ne manquent jamais leur coup, tout comme ceux de Tarascon, sont rares, ceux qui se livrent à la chasse par délassement, sont aussi nombreux que les Mossi. Un Mossi ne sort jamais sans un bâton, et si on lui en demande la raison, il répond que c'est pour tuer les serpents qui, hélas! font de trop nombreuses victimes, écarter les chiens et puis: «On peut toujours rencontrer un lièvre ou une bête dans la brousse, et avec quoi le tuerai-je si je n'ai pas de bâton?» Beaucoup ont des chiens, peu terribles à vrai dire, mais qui sont mal nourris et gardent toute leur agilité. Un Mossi qui se rend dans son champ ou va d'un village à l'autre, est toujours l'oreille aux aguets et a l'œil bien ouvert: il cherche de la viande! Et n'ayant pas beaucoup d'idées, il est rarement absorbé dans ses réflexions et distrait.

Mais la saison que nous étudions est spécialement celle de la grande chasse. Plusieurs villages s'entendent et fixent un jour et un lieu de rendez-vous, et chaque village s'y rend par groupe, brûlant la brousse et chassant le gibier devant lui. Si l'entente a été parfaite, le gibier se trouve enfermé dans un cercle de feu derrière lequel se trouvent les indigènes, les uns à cheval et armés de la lance, les autres à pieds et avec leurs chiens, munis simplement de bâtons ou même d'un arc et de flèches. Les arcs sont de taille moyenne et faits d'un bois dur. La corde est ordinairement tirée d'un rotin ou d'une tige de mil. Les flèches sont fabriquées avec la tige résistante et légère des hautes herbes et ne sont pas bardelées, mais la pointe est en fer et en forme de harpon avec deux et parfois trois paires de dents. Le carquois en cuir est suspendu à l'épaule.

Les lièvres, les biches, les différentes espèces d'antilopes, les pintades, les perdrix affolées courent tout autour du cercle de feu, et ceux qui franchissent ce premier obstacle tombent sous les coups des chasseurs. Ces chasses sont parfois assez fructueuses, et des buffles, des *koba*, font, de temps à autre, partie du tableau. Malheureusement, toute bête tuée dans la brousse appartient de droit au naba, qui sait bien visiter les sacs des chasseurs et prend ce qui lui plait. A-t-il appris qu'un chasseur fortuné a tué une antilope et ne lui en a pas fait don, il le fait appeler, lui reproche durement son manque d'égard et le roue de coups. Il est vrai, cependant, de dire que ces cas sont de plus en plus rares et que les indigènes refusent tout net de livrer leur capture.

Souvent, la chasse manque, parce qu'un village n'a pas répondu à l'appel, et les bêtes se sont sauvées par l'espace non gardé. Somme toute, ces chasses sont surtout un passe-temps et un amusement. Les chasseurs qui rapportent quelque chose sont peu nombreux, vu le nombre de ceux qui prennent part à la chasse. Il est vrai qu'au départ tous espèrent être heureux. Tous du moins ont soif parce qu'à cette époque de l'année le soleil est très chaud et il y a cependant avantage à chasser en plein midi parce que le gibier est alors couché dans les buissons et ne peut fournir une longue course. Ces chasses sont chaque année moins nombreuses. Les cultures, en effet, prennent plus d'extension et le gibier s'est retiré dans la brousse; les indigènes, d'autre part, s'entendent moins facilement pour opérer de grandes

battues; ils aiment mieux chasser par petits groupes, loin des yeux des chefs, qui alors ne pourront rien leur prendre.

* * *

La pêche est, avec la chasse, le grand divertissement à cette époque de l'année. Il n'y a pas plus de pêcheurs de profession qu'il n'y a de chasseurs de profession. Evidemment, ceux qui habitent le bord des rivières savent généralement nager, surtout au bord des marigots les plus difficiles à passer. Chaque marigot, ou plus exactement chaque mare, appartient à un naba et porte un nom spécial, de telle sorte qu'aucune rivière ne porte le même nom pendant tout son cours. A la saison sèche le *lelek* des marigots est le plus souvent à sec. De distance en distance se trouvent des mares plus ou moins importantes et dans lesquelles vont boire les troupeaux. C'est dans ces mares que pêchent les indigènes. Ils attendent pour cela que le niveau de l'eau soit assez bas, et ne dépasse pas les genoux, sinon la pêche serait trop difficile.

Les engins de pêche sont, en effet, aussi primitifs que les engins de chasse. Un petit filet écarté par trois branches formant triangle et traversé par un bâton solide que l'on tient dans la main, assez semblable aux épuisettes qui servent à pêcher la crevette; et surtout une sorte de nasse en osier de forme conique ouverte à la base et fermée au sommet par un couvercle mobile. Dans cette première nasse se trouve parfois une seconde nasse faite de bois très flexibles qui sont attachés à la base de la première nasse. Ces deux nasses ont donc une base commune. Mais la deuxième s'ouvre dans l'intérieur de la première. Le poisson entre dans la nasse et est retenu par les bois de la petite nasse qui se ferme sous l'effort que fait le poisson pour sortir. Le pêcheur sort la nasse de l'eau, ou bien la laissant enfoncée dans la vase, ouvre le couvercle, plonge sa main et retire le poisson qui est ainsi enfermé et facile à saisir. Le pêcheur le met alors dans un filet ou dans une sacoche en cuir.

Au jour fixe, le maître de la mare offre des sacrifices aux caïmans afin qu'ils ne mordent personne. C'est ainsi que le naba de Koupéla, avant de pêcher dans la mare qui lui appartient, doit sacrifier une chèvre noire et une poule. Aucun caïman ne doit être tué pendant la pêche sinon le naba mourra dans le courant de l'année. Un caïman n'avait-il pas été tué dans la mare de son père l'année même pendant laquelle mourut ce dernier? Avant de se rendre à la pêche, les indigènes font des grisgris en brûlant des racines et des écorces d'arbres dans l'intérieur de leur nasse. Si le grisgris est bon, le poisson se précipitera tout seul dans le filet ou la nasse.

Les pêcheurs se réunissent à une des extrémités de la mare. Ils se mettent sur une seule ligne de façon à barrer le marigot et avancent lentement plongeant et replongeant leurs filets et leurs nasses. Tous les poissons pris sont mis dans des sacs ou jetés à des amis qui se tiennent sur la rive, mais comme pour la chasse, le naba prélève largement sa part et prend les plus belles pièces. Les marigots ne renferment d'ailleurs presque que des silures, qui aiment la vase et en conservent l'odeur et le goût même après la cuisson. Cependant les Voltas sont plus poissonneuses et on y trouve une plus grande

variété de poissons. Quand les indigènes ont passé et repassé un certain nombre de fois, il ne reste plus guère que du menu fretin, et tous s'en retournent chez eux heureux d'avoir quelques pièces à mettre dans leur sauce et surtout d'avoir échappé à la dent des caïmans, car malgré les sacrifices qui leur sont offerts, ces amphibies ne se gênent pas pour mordre quelques pieds ou quelques mollets. Il est vrai que ceux qui vivent dans ces mares sont rarement assez forts pour briser un membre.

Dans les endroits où l'eau est peu profonde et coule pendant un certain temps, les riverains établissent des barrages faits de branches d'arbre et de tiges de mil entrelacées, disposées en biais par rapport au courant et conduisant à une sorte d'entonnoir fermé par un filet. Le poisson suit le barrage, pénètre dans l'entonnoir et est arrêté par les mailles du filet.

C'est aussi pendant cette saison qu'ont lieu les principales fêtes. On célèbre ainsi à cette époque l'anniversaire des morts, qu'on fait le *kouré*. Sitôt que le premier coup de vent a découvert quelques cases ou tout au moins indiqué celles qui ont besoin d'être recouvertes, tout le monde se met à ce travail, et c'est alors qu'est employée la paille coupée en décembre. Devant les *soukala*, les enfants et les jeunes gens sont occupés à réunir entre eux les brins de paille avec des liens de chanvre, à tresser des *séko*. Ils vont dans la brousse couper les bois et les écorces qui serviront à attacher les bois entre eux. Quand tout est prêt, le maître de la maison appelle tous ses gens et réunit quelques voisins. En une petite matinée, le toit est fait et posé. C'est un travail qu'il faut recommencer tous les deux ans environ et qui est réservé aux hommes. Au début de l'hivernage, les villages ont un petit air coquet de renouveau. C'est alors aussi que celui qui a vu son harem s'augmenter d'une femme, que l'enfant qui est devenu jeune homme et ne peut plus habiter dans la case de sa mère, que celui qui a vu sa richesse s'accroître de quelques têtes de bétail, voire d'un cheval, songe à construire une nouvelle case. Les femmes iront chercher l'eau, les enfants pétriront le mortier avec leurs pieds et porteront au maçon les boules que les anciens ont préparées. Tous ces travaux n'ont rien de pénible et se font en jouant.

Mais les épines ont repoussé, les pluies vont bientôt tomber, déjà quelques coups de vent ont annoncé l'approche de l'hivernage, les Pléiades ont reparu à l'horizon et les baobabs bourgeonnent de nouveau. Il va falloir se remettre à piocher, à semer, et c'est heureux car le mil baisse dans les greniers; il va falloir recommencer le cycle des occupations que nous venons de décrire. Et les années succèdent aux années sans apporter de grands changements dans l'existence des simples particuliers.

Chapitre deuxième. — **Industries et commerce.**

Telles sont donc les occupations ordinaires de tout Mossi. Il faut cependant y ajouter pendant toute l'année, la visite des marchés, et pendant la saison sèche, les travaux auxquels se livrent certaines corporations ou simplement certains individus, en d'autres termes, les différentes industries exercées par les Mossi.

Les Mossi. Anthropos IX.

En haut: Intérieur d'une soukala.
Au milieu: Porteurs.

En haut: Les habitants d'une soukala.
Au milieu: Tisserand.

En bas: Place d'un marché.

[Facing p. 52]

Tout Mossi qui se respecte, homme, femme, enfant, vieillard, doit au moins de temps en temps, se rendre au marché, ne serait-ce que pour voir... et être vu, s'il peut arborer de beaux habits neufs. Si l'on veut admirer les indigènes dans leurs plus beaux atours, il faut se rendre au marché qui suit les grands jours de fêtes. Les gens affluent en ces jours, les Yarsé, les Peuls tout comme les Mossi, et c'est à qui se fera le plus remarquer par la richesse ou l'originalité de son costume. En temps ordinaire, ceux qui vont au marché y vont pour leurs affaires, sauf quelques particuliers qui ne s'y rendent, même en ces jours, que pour se faire admirer.

Chaque localité un peu importante a son marché tous les trois jours. Tout est combiné de telle sorte que les marchés ne soient pas trop éloignés les uns des autres et que les villages les plus rapprochés qui ont un marché, ne le tiennent pas le même jour afin de ne pas se faire concurrence. Un indigène peut, s'il le veut, passer sa vie au marché en allant tantôt dans une localité, tantôt dans une autre; il y a toujours un marché non loin de chez lui. Ils n'ont pas tous la même importance. Certains villages, parfois peu considérables par eux-mêmes, sont situés au croisement de plusieurs routes suivies par les caravanes et deviennent un centre important de commerce. On cite au Mossi: Pwitenga, Kaya, Rakay, Bélousa, Mané, Téma, Yako et La, comme centres spécialement fréquentés.

Ces marchés étaient autrefois les lieux où venaient s'approvisionner les marchants d'esclaves. Aujourd'hui, on y trouve plus que partout ailleurs des chevaux, des bœufs, des ânes, des moutons, des chèvres, du sel, des kolas, des étoffes indigènes ou européennes, des pacotilles d'importation, allumettes, verroterie, mouchoirs, cuvettes, assiettes, parfums; on y voit même des pétards. Chaque produit important a son quartier. Les bouchers ont le leur ainsi que les marchands de sel, d'étoffes ou de kolas. Toute la bière de mil se vend au même endroit, les condiments pour la sauce et les grains dans un autre. Mais les transactions les plus importantes se font en dehors du marché, dans les cases que les étrangers de passage et qui pensent séjourner quelque temps dans la localité, se sont élevés à la hâte dans le quartier haoussa ou yarga et parfois chez les Mossi. C'est pourquoi seul un indigène, habitué aux transactions, et qui fréquente régulièrement le marché, pourrait se faire une idée du chiffre des affaires qui se traitent sur la place même du marché ou dans les environs et encore faudrait-il tenir compte de la morte saison que l'on trouve ici comme sur toute place de commerce[1].

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[1] Voici, à titre de curiosité, le prix approximatif de quelques denrées, évidemment pendant une année de récolte moyenne et peu après la récolte, car les prix augmentent rapidement au fur et à mesure que l'on s'éloigne de cette époque et, pendant les années de famine, il n'y a plus de prix.

Mil 0·02 fr. le kilo, riz 0·10 fr. le kilo, tabiramas 0·05 fr. le kilo, beurre de karité 0·50 fr. le kilo, beurre de lait 1·50 fr. le kilo, arachides 0·07 fr. le kilo, huile d'arachides 0·50 fr. le litre, une cruche de bière de mil ordinaire, d'environ 6 à 8 litres 0·20 fr., une cruche de bière de mil forte *(tôoé)*, d'environ 6 à 8 litres 0·40 fr., hydromel *(bèzé)* 0·15 fr. le litre, poule 0·40 fr., chèvre ordinaire 3 à 4 fr., chèvre grande 8 à 10 fr., mouton ordinaire 3·50 le mâle, 4 fr. le brebis, mouton grand 8 à 10 fr., âne 25 à 30 fr., cheval 150 fr., bœuf petit (sans bosse) 50 fr., bœuf zebu 70 fr., peau de chèvre 0·30, peau de mouton 0·50, peau de bœuf 1 fr., sel en barre 1·50 et jusqu'à 2 fr.

Mais ces gros marchés sont la minorité. Dans les marchés des villages les transactions se font entre indigènes qui se connaissent et ont presque uniquement pour objet les produits indigènes: mil, riz, haricots, beurre de karité, arachides grillées vendues par petits tas d'un centime, arachides crues et toutes les épices pour la sauce. Des jeunes filles yarsé ou haoussa se promènent de groupe en groupe avec de petites cuvettes remplies de kolas, et les chefs et les richards achètent une ou deux kolas qu'ils partagent généralement avec ceux de leur suite. Sous des abris de feuillage ou de tiges de mil, des étrangers vendent quelques perles, des barres de sel ou de cuivre, du henné ou du bleu, tandis que les vautours à tête chauve, planant au dessus d'eux, indiquent à tous où se tiennent les bouchers. Une chèvre, un mouton constituent toute la viande de boucherie, parfois un bœuf, crevé dans la brousse, plus rarement égorgé à l'occasion du marché, vient augmenter la quantité de viande. Quelques individus apportent des poussins, parfois des poules adultes. C'est à peu près tout ce que l'on trouve.

Mais à ces comestibles il faut ajouter la boisson. Tout un coin du marché est occupé par les vendeuses de bière de millet; ce n'est le coin ni le moins fréquenté ni le plus calme. Les vautours ont indiqué l'emplacement des bouchers, il suffit de tendre l'oreille pour connaître celui des cabaretiers. Les cris, le battement des tambours, le brouhaha inséparable des foules légèrement prises de boisson, l'ont vite indiqué. Les Mossi boivent assurément beaucoup de bière de mil, mais cette boisson telle qu'elle est vendue au marché, ne monte que difficilement à la tête. Bien autrement dangereuse est la bière recuite *(tèsé)*, dont le degré d'alcool est assez élevé, et surtout l'hydromel *(bésé)* fait de miel et de farine de mil, bouillis dans l'eau et auxquels on ajoute de la levure de bière pour produire la fermentation. Ces deux dernières boissons sont vraiment capiteuses surtout si on boit les deux alternativement. Aussi il y a assez souvent des rixes, parfois une vraie bataille avec blessés: ce sont des ivrognes qui se sont disputés. Les hommes sont bien partout les mêmes et y a-t-il chez nous beaucoup de foires sans quelque ivrogne? Il est pourtant juste d'ajouter que l'on rencontre ici plus d'indigènes pris de boisson que chez nous.

Le marché commence vers dix heures et est généralement terminé à deux heures; les grands marchés commencent vers midi et se terminent à la nuit. En étudiant les autres industries, nous verrons quels sont les autres produits qui s'y vendent.

L'industrie la plus répandue, celle que tous les hommes peuvent exercer et que tous exercent plus ou moins, est celle du tissage. Le coton est égrainé et le fil est confectionné par les femmes. M. DELAFOSSE, dans son ouvrage sur les Siéna a parfaitement décrit le procédé employé: «Le coton étant sorti de sa coque, on en retire les graines en les chassant de la bourre au moyen d'une tige de fer que l'on roule à deux mains sur la bourre placée elle-même

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le kilo, kolas de 0·03 à 0·10 la pièce, une pioche 0·50, habits: bande d'étoffe blanche 0·05, la coudée d'environ 0·60, couverture blanche 2 fr., couverture teinte à l'indigot 3 fr., couverture rayée 4 fr., veste, taille moyenne 2·50 fr.

2: Mangin FA28 Mossi

sur une pierre plate; les graines se trouvent ainsi chassées en avant et sont ensuite retirées à la main . . . Le coton est enroulé autour d'une tige de bois que la fileuse tient de la main gauche; de la droite, elle saisit et étire un brin de coton se détachant de la quenouille et l'enroule sur l'extrémité supérieure d'une aiguille de bois qui porte à son extrémité inférieure une sorte de boule pesante en terre cuite et que le mouvement des doigts de la main droite fait tourner rapidement, comme un tonton ou une toupie, sur le fond d'une assiette de bois. Le coton, étiré entre la main gauche qui soutient la quenouille et la main droite qui retient et fait tourner la tige du tonton, s'allonge et se transforme en fil, lequel s'enroule autour de l'aiguille du tonton . . . Le fil est après cela déroulé, puis enroulé de nouveau autour d'une tige de bois, de façon à former de grosses pelotes cylindro-coniques. Lorsqu'on veut l'utiliser pour le tissage, on le tend en le faisant passer autour de quatre pieux fichés en terre et disposés en forme de quadrilataire très allongé[1].»

Tous les jeunes gens apprennent à tisser, c'est une partie de leur éducation. Le métier est comme le fuseau précédemment décrit celui qu'emploient tous les Nègres de l'Afrique Occidentale et que décrit ainsi M. Delafosse: «Métier à lamelles suspendu à une pièce de bois reposant sur deux fourches, navette évidée en forme de pirogue, levier à pédales permettant de croiser alternativement les deux rangées de lamelles du métier; les fils sont tendus au moyen d'une grosse pierre reposant sur le sol en avant du tisserand et ce dernier est assis sur un tréteau grossier placé en arrière de celui supportant le métier (ici généralement le tisserand est assis par terre), de façon à ce que les pieds du tisserand viennent s'appuyer sur les pédales. Cet attirail est installé en général à l'ombre des grands arbres qui se dressent sur les places des villages ou encore sous des abris de feuillages construits tout exprès. Les lais de cotonnade obtenues sont des bandes de 10 à 15 *cm* de large; on en coud un certain nombre ensemble pour arriver à la largeur exigée par les pagnes et les vêtements[2].»

Les bandes d'étoffe ne sont pas toujours d'une couleur uniforme. Souvent, la chaîne est composée de fils teints en bleu foncé ou en rouge, mêlés à des fils blancs, tandis que la trame est blanche. D'aucuns savent faire des bandes à petits carreaux bleus ou rouges d'un joli effet. Tous n'ont pas la même habilité mais certains savent tisser des étoffes fines et dont les mailles très serrées sont assez résistantes. Ces bandes cousues ensemble, puis coupées selon des patrons immuables, se transforment en pagnes, en pantalons, en larges vestes, en un ample vêtement qui entoure tout son propriétaire et surtout en couvertures d'hommes et de femmes, blanches ou bleues foncé, indispensables contre le froid et dans lesquelles ils s'enroulent. Les étoffes mossi sont assez réputées dans les pays environnants et, comme nous le verrons, font l'objet d'un commerce assez important.

Les habits confectionnés ou le fil avant d'être tissé, sont souvent teints. La teinturerie est assez répandue au Mossi, et il n'est guère de village im-

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[1] Delafosse, Le peuple Siéna, p. 58.
[2] Ib., p. 59.

portant qui n'ait ses teinturiers. Ces derniers se réunissent afin de creuser leurs puits au même endroit, souvent ils choisissent pour cela un petit terre et creusent une dizaine de puits de deux ou trois mètres de profondeur et dont la surface intérieure a été cuite par un feu de charbon. Le liquide de teinture est versé dans ces puits, et les habits ou le fil à teindre sont plongés dans le liquide et remués à l'aide de bâtons terminés par des bois disposés en forme de croix. Les étoffes sont laissées dans la teinture plus ou moins longtemps selon leur volume et étendues au soleil pour y sécher. Les couleurs obtenues vont du bleu très foncé, presque noir, au bleu clair. Certains habits sont teints en couleur terre de Sienne, couleur aimée des chasseurs parce qu'elle est sombre. Il faut plusieurs lavages pour supprimer l'odeur forte qui se dégage des étoffes ainsi teintes, mais chaque lavage emporte une partie de la couleur.

Tout le monde sait tisser, presque tout le monde sait faire des ouvrages en vannerie. Quand les herbes sont mûres, les enfants s'amusent à confectionner des chapeaux de paille dont certains ne sont pas mal réussis; d'autres font des vide-poches aux dessins variés, obtenus en entremêlant des pailles jaunes, noires ou rouges, teintes avec les feuilles d'une variété de mil cultivée dans le but d'obtenir la couleur rouge recherchée pour teindre le cuir, d'autres tressent de simples plateaux de paille qui servent à couvrir les calebasses ou à porter la viande.

Ceux qui sont habiles, et c'est alors une véritable industrie, font des chapeaux solides ornés de dessins en cuir. Il y a deux variétés principales de chapeaux: les chapeaux en forme de cônes pointus et les chapeaux en forme de cloche et à larges bords. Ils sont d'ailleurs assez grands pour que l'on puisse garder sur sa tête une calotte, parfois entourée d'une bande d'étoffe souple, et mettre son chapeau par-dessus sans être gêné. Un cordon de cuir muni d'une coulisse, maintient le chapeau sur la tête ou permet de le laisser tomber sur le dos, le cordon le retient au cou. Saponé est le centre de la fabrication des chapeaux.

Mais c'est surtout dans la confection des paniers que s'exerce l'art de la vannerie. Les paniers sont utiles à tout; il y en a de toutes les formes et de toutes les tailles, depuis les grands paniers en osier qui servent à défendre les poussins contre les oiseaux de proie, les petits paniers, en osier aussi, qui servent à ramasser les ordures, jusqu'aux paniers en herbes tressées qui servent à porter le mil, le riz et généralement toutes les denrées. On rencontre parfois des paniers soignés, ornés de dessins obtenus on entremêlant des herbes teintes et de fines lanières de cuir et bordés de cauris.

Les hommes seuls font les ouvrages en vannerie, eux seuls travaillent le cuir et là encore quelques particuliers arrivent à faire des objets presque artistiques et fort bien cousus. Malheureusement, les indigènes ne savent pas suffisamment tanner le cuir qui, par suite, n'a aucune solidité. La peau est simplement étendue et séchée au soleil; parfois elle est passée dans un bain d'eau dans laquelle on met des écorces de tamariniers. Elle est débarrassée des poils de la manière suivante: on verse de l'eau chaude sur la peau et on racle les poils avec un couteau. Pour assouplir la peau, on la passe et la repasse sur un pieu fiché en terre et rendu légèrement tranchant à son sommet ou

bien plus simplement en la froissant entre ses mains. La peau ainsi assouplie est tendue à l'aide de petites chevilles de bois fichées en terre pour sécher de nouveau au soleil; elle peut être teinte en rouge, en vert ou en noir au moyen d'herbes spéciales.

Les uns savent faire des gaînes de couteaux ou des fourreaux de sabres, les autres se spécialisent dans les grandes guêtres qui s'attachent à la ceinture et que porte tout cavalier en grande tenue; d'autres font des tapis de selles, bourrés avec du kapok ou du coton et ornés de dessins, et les diverses parties du harnachement: la bande de cuir qui couvre le poitrail et le grand tapis qui protège la croupe du cheval. Le cuir sert aussi à fabriquer toutes sortes de sandales, depuis la simple peau qui est fixée aux pieds par des lanières, lesquelles passent entre le pouce et l'index et font le tour du pied, depuis la sandale-babouche, jusqu'aux sandales ornées de dessins, auxquelles sont fixés les éperons et qui accompagnent tout naturellement les grandes guêtres. Il y a des cordonniers vraiment adroits et qui pourraient faire des chaussures très présentables s'ils avaient des formes et surtout du cuir mieux travaillé.

Les peaux servent aussi à la fabrication de ceintures ornées de cauris, de bourses, d'amulettes, de sacoches parfois joliment ornées, etc. Ces dessins sont généralement obtenus ainsi: de petites lanières de cuir de différentes couleurs sont cousues par-dessus une peau de couleur uniforme et qui sert de fond; plus rarement, comme au Maroc la première épaisseur de peau est enlevée.

Les industries qui précèdent sont exercées uniquement par des hommes et par qui veut. Ce sont eux aussi qui préparent la poudre et le tabac. Les industries qui vont suivre sont l'apanage des femmes et toute femme sait, plus ou moins, fabriquer la bière de mil, le savon, le beurre de karité, le *kalro (soumbara)*.

La bière de mil se fait avec du mil germé, cuit et recuit dans une quantité d'eau proportionnée à la quantité de mil et à laquelle on ajoute le dernier jour de la levure. Le tout est passé sur des brindilles qui arrêtent le résidu de mil. Plus la bière est recuite, plus elle est forte, et si on y ajoute du houblon, on obtient une boisson qui rappelle notre bière.

Le savon est fabriqué avec du beurre de karité et de la cendre de tiges de mil en guise de potasse.

L'huile est extraite des arachides préalablement grillées et écrasées entre deux pierres; les femmes n'ont aucun pressoir et perdent ainsi une quantité d'huile appréciable qui reste, il est vrai, dans le résidu qui lui aussi est vendu.

Le *kalro* est fabriqué avec la graine que renferment les gousses de *néré*. Il a une odeur caractéristique et forte mais relève la sauce et lui donne un goût qui n'est pas désagréable.

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L'industrie de la poterie, celle du bois et du cuivre, demandent des spécialistes; non pas que seuls ceux qui font partie d'une caste peuvent les exercer, mais parce qu'il faut avoir fait un apprentissage que tous ne font pas et les parents lèguent à leurs enfants les secrets de la fabrication.

La poterie est une industrie plus spécialement exercée par les femmes bien que les hommes puissent, eux aussi, fabriquer des objets en terre et en pratique, ce sont souvent les hommes qui font les cruches *(canaris)* et les femmes qui fabriquent les grandes cruches qui servent à la confection de la bière de mil, les petites marmites dans lesquelles elles cuisent le *sarabo* et la sauce et les plats creux qui servent à présenter les mets à table.

Les procédés de fabrication et de cuisson sont d'ailleurs les mêmes. Un simple trou peu profond est creusé en terre, plus ou moins grand selon la capacité que l'on veut donner au récipient. Il est bien battu afin d'offrir une surface uniforme. La fabricante place, sur cette forme, sa pâte préparée à l'avance. C'est une sorte de terre glaise qui est pétrie avec les pieds et dont on a retiré les pierres. Le trou est saupoudré de terre bien sèche tandis que la masse à pétrir est légèrement humide. La femme écrase la pâte avec une pierre en granit bien polie et fait tourner la masse pour que chaque partie passe entre les parois du trou et sa pierre. Elle obtient ainsi, après un certain temps de travail, le récipient qu'elle désirait obtenir et de l'épaisseur voulue.

Quand il y a dans le village plusieurs fabricantes, et c'est ordinairement le cas, elles s'entendent pour la cuisson. Les cruches sont marquées et réunies dans une dépression de terrain. Entre elles et même dans l'intérieur de chacune d'elles, on met de la paille sèche, des brindilles de bois ou des morceaux d'écorce. Le tout est recouvert de paille et allumé le soir. Plus la cruche est petite, plus le combustible doit dégager de chaleur. Le lendemain matin, les femmes vont rechercher leur bien. Certaines cruches sont fendues, d'autres insuffisamment cuites resteront trop poreuses et devront être recuites, les autres sont réunies et seront vendues au marché.

Ce sont les hommes qui travaillent le bois. Ils emploient à cet usage une hachette pour couper les arbres, une herminette pour le travailler et un couteau. En bois sont fabriqués les mortiers et les pilons qui servent aux femmes pour écraser le maïs, les herbes, les arachides et généralement les condiments pour la sauce; les plats en forme de calebasse, les écuelles, qui servent à mettre le *sarabo*; les manches d'outils. On rencontre parfois aussi des tabourets dont la forme est quelque peu originale. En bois aussi sont faites les portes grossières qui ferment la case des femmes qui peuvent faire cette dépense. Mais toutes ces industries n'ont rien de particulièrement intéressant et restent très primitives.

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Enfin le fer et le cuivre font l'objet de travaux trop peu communs pour que ceux qui s'y livrent ne soient pas des spécialistes. Les forgerons forment même une caste à part et tout le monde ne peut pas en faire partie. On nait forgeron, mais on devient bijoutier, ce dernier métier n'étant inderdit à personne. Les forgerons extraient le fer et confectionnent les outils en fer: pioches, haches, herminettes, couteaux. Quand ils extraient le fer du minerais, ils ne doivent, dit-on, être vus d'aucun profane ce qui explique pourquoi les indigènes ne savent pas comment ils procèdent. N'ayant pas eu l'occasion de visiter la région plus spécialement habitée par les forgerons, le Yatenga, le procédé d'extraction m'est inconnu.

Les bijoutiers travaillent aussi quelque fois le fer, mais en sous main. Ils peuvent raccommoder les outils cassés, aiguiser les haches, les pointes de flèches, transformer un morceau de fer, par exemple une vieille pioche en clous, charnières, etc. Mais leur grand travail est la fabrication de toutes sortes de bracelets et de tous les ornements de cuivre que comporte le harnachement complet d'un cheval, la têtière, le mors, les éperons, les étriers, les plats de cuivre qui pendent à la selle. Ces plats sont un ornement étrange et qui semble spécial aux Mossi; ils peuvent avoir jusqu'à 40 *cm* de diamètre et le bord du plat a parfois jusqu'à 10 *cm* de largeur. Les naba et les cavaliers riches les attachent, derrière les étriers, de chaque côté de leur selle et ils pendent sur les flancs du cheval. Les serviteurs s'en servent parfois pour boire la bière quand ils n'ont pas d'autres récipients. Pour faire fondre le fer ou le cuivre, ils se servent de charbon de bois obtenu exactement par le même procédé que nos charbonniers. Le feu est entretenu au moyen d'un double soufflet de peau de chèvre ou de mouton qu'un enfant fait manœuvrer. Le fer, chauffé au rouge, est martelé sur une pointe de fer fichée en terre, ou sur une pierre, à l'aide d'une barre de fer cylindrique qui sert de marteau. Le cuivre et le zinc sont fondus dans de petits creusets en terre cuite et dont la capacité dépend de la grosseur du bracelet que l'on veut obtenir. Le bracelet a d'abord été fait en cire, la cire a été entourée d'une terre argileuse bien pétrie et qui a pris la forme exacte de la cire. La cire est enlevée au moyen d'eau bouillante et le cuivre est coulé dans le moule ainsi obtenu. Au moyen d'une lime grossière, le bijoutier enlève les scories qui restent attachées au cuivre, polit le bracelet, fait des dessins en creux. Les plus adroits obtiennent de jolis ornements en faisant des torsades composées de fer, de cuivre rouge et de cuivre jaune. Un chrétien de Ouagadougou, habile à modeler la cire, fabrique des objets de toutes espèces, ronds de serviettes, presse-papier, encrier, groupes, etc. et qui ne manquent pas d'un certain cachet.

Les Mossi ont toujours un peu voyagé et allaient assez régulièrement à Tombouctou, mais grâce à la paix française, les voyages deviennent de plus en plus fréquents. Les Européens établis tant à Tenkodogo, qu'à Ouagadougou, Léo et Koudougou, les emploient comme boys et les emmènent jusqu'à Ségou, parfois Kayes et même Saint Louis. Au retour ces indigènes émerveillent leurs camarades et les excitent à entreprendre eux aussi de grands voyages.

Le recrutement des troupes noires a encore développé ce désir de voir de nouveaux pays. Plusieurs ont fait le voyage de Bandiagara pour s'engager comme tirailleurs, d'autres ont été à Kati et, trouvant les engagements suspendus, ont poussé jusqu'à Saint Louis.

Mais c'est surtout le commerce qui attire les Mossi pendant la saison sèche. En octobre-novembre, bien des jeunes gens qui ont pu se procurer un mouton ou deux ou des chèvres, les indigènes plus riches qui disposent de bœufs, pensent les vendre avec bénéfice sur les marchés éloignés, et les caravanes s'organisent. Autrefois, les Yarsé et les Haoussa avaient le monopole du commerce. Les Mossi leur font actuellement concurrence. C'est qu'aujourd'hui il faut trouver l'argent pour payer l'impôt au Blanc, la fameuse

pièce de 5 Fr. Et puis, les routes sont sûres. Il n'y a plus à craindre les voleurs de grands chemins, il n'y a plus à payer des droits de passage chaque fois que l'on arrive sur le territoire d'un nouveau chef et, à ce point de vue, mais à celui-là seulement, la paix française est appréciée des indigènes, et encore trouvent-ils bien onéreux de payer l'impôt, de faire des routes et des ponts et par-dessus le marché de payer un droit de douane en quittant le territoire français et en y rentrant. Mais quand donc un homme sera-t-il content quand on lui demande quelque chose, même pour son plus grand bien?

Seuls les marigots présentent quelques difficultés quand ils sont pleins d'eau. L'administration qui fait tout son possible pour favoriser le commerce, à beau faire construire des ponts; comme ils sont uniquement composés de matériaux que l'on trouve dans le pays, de bois fourchus et de poutres recouvertes de terre battue, une crue un peu violente emporte le tout et, après une forte pluie, il faut attendre que le niveau ait baissé et recourir aux passeurs qui, à juste titre, font payer leur travail.

Ils procèdent ainsi: l'individu est placé sur une grosse poutre, ou une calebasse ou une simple cruche en terre qui le soutient hors de l'eau; parfois ce sont deux gros bois glissés sous les aisselles qui font l'office de ceinture de natation; dans quelques rares endroits il y a des radeaux. Composés de bois reliés entre eux par des *séko* et sur lesquels on met un lit d'herbes sèches. Le passeur nage près de celui qui veut traverser et empêche le courant de l'emporter trop loin. En certains gués favorisés, près des postes français, on trouve des bacs. Le bétail traverse à la nage et le passeur à soin de tenir hors de l'eau le museau des bêtes afin qu'elles ne se noient pas. Ces traversées prennent beaucoup de temps, reviennent à la longue assez cher, et souvent des animaux sont entraînés par le courant ou happés par des caïmans. Malheur à qui veut se passer des riverains s'il ne connaît ni le fond de la rivière ni la force du courant! Il est bien souvent noyé sans que ceux dont il a dédaigné l'aide fassent rien pour le sauver. Mais d'autre part, si la caravane attend trop longtemps pour partir, les rivières seront à sec, l'herbe sera brûlée, et les animaux mourront de faim ou de soif ou bien arriveront exténués et maigres sur les marchés et se vendront mal.

Il y a donc, dans ces voyages, un certain nombre d'aléas à courir, d'autant plus que, si la marchandise importée se vend cher, la vie est non moins chère, et si l'on veut faire quelques profits, il ne faut pas compter engraisser en route: on se rattrapera au retour dans le village.

Un autre aléa est celui qui prévient de la nécessité de se servir d'intermédiaires et que le lieutenant Marc, qui était bien placé pour avoir des renseignements sur la question, puisqu'il a commandé à deux reprises le poste de Léo, décrit ainsi: «Le bétail arrivé à destination est acheté par des courtiers interprètes, intermédiaires entre les bouchers et les marchands de viande, à qui les caravaniers sont en quelque sorte forcés de s'adresser. Ces individus achètent aux indigènes de la forêt tout ce qu'ils apportent de kolas et ils sont les maîtres du cours sur le marché .... Il semble que ces courtiers-interprètes spéculent sur le bétail d'une façon extrêmement curieuse. Ils ont des pisteurs qui vont au devant des caravanes quelque fois à deux jours de

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Les Mossi.

En haut: Cuisson du Sarabo.
En bas: La cuisine en plein air.

En haut: Greniers à mil.
En bas: Un bœuf porteur.

[facing p. 60]

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marche vers le nord. Ceux-ci cherchent par des renseignements tendancieux à inquiéter les propriétaires du bétail et à les amener à céder leur troupeau à vil prix. Parfois, au plein de la saison des affaires, c'est-à-dire en janvier et février, les fluctuations du cours du bétail varient de cent pour cent en quelques semaines. Les Mandé-Dioulas font assaut d'éloquence, les Yarsé et les Mossi de politesse, les Haoussa de bonhomie. En réalité, il y a là, avec des méthodes exclusivement indigènes, tout un embryon de place de commerce, une véritable bourse[1]».

Les commerçants vont dans toutes les directions. Les routes les plus suivies sont celles qui de Ouagadougou, se rendent au sud, dans la Gold-Coast à Gambaga, Daboya, Salaga, Kintampo, Sékondi, ou partant de Léo, passent par Oua, Salaga, ou de Tenkodogo rejoignent la route de Cambaga, en passant par Bitou. Les communications avec le Togo allemand et les marchés de Sansané-Mango, voire de Lomé sur le bord de la mer sont moins fréquentes.

Ces deux colonies anglaises et allemandes sont ravitaillées par le Mossi en bétail et en étoffes indigènes. En effet, elles manquent complètement de viande de boucherie parce que la tsétsé ne permet pas aux animaux de vivre au delà de la grande forêt. D'autre part, les étoffes d'importation ne résistent pas à quelques lavages, de telle sorte que les bandes indigènes, bien que moins voyantes, sont plus recherchés des Gourounsi et des habitants de la forêt, qui autrefois ne portaient pour tout vêtement qu'une peau de chèvre ou de mouton mais qui apprécient mieux les habits depuis que les Européens ont pénétré dans leurs villages. Ils ne sont pas gênés entre eux par la légèreté de leur costume mais ont honte quand un Européen les aperçoit. Les Mossi rapportent de leur voyage des kolas qui forment le fond des importations; mais ils rapportent aussi du cuivre, des denrées européennes de toutes sortes, étoffes généralement de qualité inférieure, allumettes, parfums, perles, sucre, cuvettes de toutes sortes et de toutes grandeurs. Le commerce est très actif de ce côté, et le lieutenant Marc écrit à ce sujet: «L'administration de la Gold-Coast, qui dispose d'un réseau de postes plus serré que le nôtre, a enrégistré en 1904 et 1905 environ 16.000 bœufs et 75.000 moutons ou chèvres venant du Mossi. Etant donné que le Mossi approvisionne encore en partie les marchés du Togo et le marché de Boudoukou, on peut évaluer au bas mot l'exportation annuelle à 20.000 bœufs et 100.000 moutons. L'importation des kolas est d'au moins 500 tonnes[2].»

Et la preuve que le commerce tend à prendre une extension croissante chaque année, c'est la facilité avec laquelle les indigènes se procurent actuellement la pièce de 5 Fr., monnaie indispensable pour payer l'impôt. Les Européens qui séjournent au Mossi, y compris tous les tirailleurs et les gardes cercle, ne mettent pas sur le marché le quart des pièces de 5 Fr. qui sont demandées chaque année aux indigènes. Au début, les Mossi furent surpris et ils furent obligés de donner dix et même quinze mille cauris pour se pro-

[1] Marc, «Au pays des Mossi», p. 173.
[2] Ib., p. 178.

curer cette fameuse pièce, ce grisgris, qui devait les délivrer de toute difficulté avec le Blanc. Or la pièce vaut 5.000 cauris, taux officiel. Aujourd'hui, il est fort difficile de trouver un indigène qui consente à donner 5.000 cauris en échange d'une pièce. Le cours ordinaire est de 3.500 à 4.000: l'argent français est déprécié. D'où vient cela sinon de ce que les indigènes trouvent autre part, donc par le commerce, cette pièce si nécessaire? Ils ont vu que tous les ans il faudrait la verser pour l'impôt et au lieu d'attendre jusqu'au dernier moment, sitôt qu'ils ont amassé les cauris nécessaires, ils se la procurent auprès de ceux qui ont été la chercher au loin: les pièces affluent, le taux baisse.

Les relations sont actuellement moins actives vers le nord. Cela tient à ce qu'autrefois le Mossi fournissait d'esclaves Tombouctou, le désert et même le Maroc. Les Gourounsi et les Bousansé étaient fréquemment razziés dans le seul but de faire des esclaves. Les Mossi se vendaient même entre eux et avant l'occupation française, une femme, à plus forte raison une fillette ou un jeune garçon, ne se seraient guère hasardés à s'éloigner de leur village de quelques centaines de mètres; ils auraient eu trop peur de n'y plus rentrer. Les Mossi fournissaient même d'eunuques la cour de Constantinople, dit-on, et du temps où le grand cardinal Lavigerie dirigeait l'orphelinat arabe d'Algérie, des officiers lui amenèrent des petits enfants délivrés au désert. C'étaient de tout jeunes Mossi qui avaient été vendus à Saraféré ou à Tombouctou et que nos officiers avaient trouvés, enfermés dans des sacs sur le dos des chameaux d'une caravane arrêtée en cours de route par nos troupes. Ces enfants ont été élevés à Malte et sont revenus au Mossi où ils ont rendu de réels services. Mais l'établissement d'un centre administratif à Kaya, près du grand marché de Salmatenga, va, sans aucun doute, favoriser le commerce dans cette région du nord.

Actuellement le commerce entre Ouagadougou et Tenkodogo, d'une part, et Ouahigouya, qui est encore Mossi, Saraféré et Tombouctou ou Dori que les indigènes appellent Gyémaré, d'autre part, se réduisent à fort peu de chose. Les Mossi exportent des kolas qu'ils ont rapportées du sud, des bracelets, des bandes d'étoffe et importent du sel et des pioches. Souvent même les Mossi n'emportent rien que de l'argent et reviennent avec des barres de sel qui se vend sur le marché 1 Fr. à 1 Fr. 50, parfois jusqu'à 2 Fr. le kilo. Vers Fada N'Gourma (Binge pour les indigènes), Say et Niamey, le beurre de karité, la farine de *néré* et surtout les boules de *kalro*, sont les marchandises exportées tandis que les oignons, l'ail et parfois les chevaux sont articles d'importation. Il n'est pas question de commerce avec le Dahomey.

* * *

Les indigènes voyagent à petites étapes de 20, 25 au plus 30 *km* par jour. Ils partent à l'aurore ou quand la lune brille suffisamment et s'arrêtent quand le soleil devient trop chaud. Ils repartent quand le soleil baisse à l'horizon et s'arrêtent assez tôt pour avoir le temps de préparer la nourriture si leur femme les accompagne, ce qui est rare, d'acheter quelque chose à manger s'ils sont seuls. Ils passent la nuit chez un ami s'ils connaissent

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quelqu'un dans le village et font l'étape plus ou moins longue selon qu'ils espèrent rencontrer une connaissance dans tel ou tel village. Les bestiaux se nourrissent en marchant, les ânes portent les marchandises d'échange et surtout serviront à rapporter les kolas.

Presque tous les voyageurs portent sur leur tête une partie de leur bagage. Et puisque nous venons de parler de portage, qu'il nous soit permis à cette occasion de citer encore M. DELAFOSSE: «On a beaucoup médit du portage en France ces dernières années, on en a parlé comme d'une coutume barbare, comme d'une forme d'esclavage que nous aurions introduits en Afrique et imposée aux malheureux Nègres. Cela prouve simplement que l'on aime à parler en France de ce que l'on ne connaît pas. Les plus anciens géographes et voyageurs qui nous ont parlé des Nègres du Soudan — Hérodote chez les Grecs, El Bekri chez les Arabes — ont raconté que, une fois passé le Sahara, comme les chevaux et les chamaux ne résistaient pas au climat, les indigènes transportaient eux-mêmes leurs fardeaux sur leur tête et cela à de très longues distances[1].» Remarques absolument exactes. Là où il y a abus de notre part, c'est lorsque nous voulons forcer la marche et obliger les indigènes à courir ainsi chargés et par le plus fort soleil, ou encore lorsque nous dépassons le poids réglementaire. Mais si on reste dans des limites raisonnables, les Noirs habitués dès l'enfance à porter de lourdes charges sur la tête — et tout se porte sur la tête en ce pays — ne sont pas plus à plaindre que nos soldats qui font de longues étapes chargés de leur sac d'ordonnance, de leurs cartouchières pleines et de leur fusil. Et la preuve c'est qu'actuellement il est très facile de trouver des porteurs volontaires qui acceptent de porter à 200 et même 400 *km* et plus encore une caisse de 25 à 30 *kg*, moyennant Fr. —·50 par jour.

Les étoffes sont roulées en énormes roues pleines qui pendent de chaque côté de l'âne ou du bœuf porteur, ou bien, quand l'indigène les porte lui-même, pliées dans des paniers de 1·50 *m* à 2 *m* de long, faits de tiges de bambous coupées en deux dans leur longueur. Ces paniers ont une forme demi-cylindrique et serviront à porter les kòlas au retour. Au milieu du panier est attaché un petit coussinet, et quand le voyageur veut se reposer, il choisit un arbre touffu, appuie un des côtés du panier au croisement de deux branches et l'autre extrémité sur le bambou qui lui sert de bâton de voyage: il n'a de la sorte aucun effort à faire quand il veut partir pour soulever sa charge.

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Le retour au village se fait toujours de nuit pour éviter les indiscrets qui se précipiteraient pour voir les marchandises rapportées. Ces dernières sont soigneusement rangées, et le lendemain le voyageur se mêle aux gens du village comme s'il ne les avait jamais quittés. Ce n'est que peu à peu, à la veillée, qu'il raconte ses aventures de voyage. Mais à la première fête, il arbore des habits neufs, aux couleurs voyantes, une chéchia rouge, parfois des bas et des chaussures et se promène fièrement. Ceux qui ont goûté de

[1] DELAFOSSE, Le peuple Sièna, p. 53.

cette vie de voyage et d'aventure ne peuvent plus s'en passer et repartent chaque année. Quelques-uns même parmi les jeunes gens indépendants et insouciants, vivent pendant l'hivernage du profit de leur expédition lointaine et ne travaillent plus la terre au grand scandale des anciens, qui n'y comprennent rien ou plutôt s'aperçoivent que quelque chose est changée dans leur pays.

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Des Européens ont voulu, comme les indigènes, se livrer au commerce du bétail. Un Européen entreprenant et courageux s'était installé à Ouahigouya et un autre près de Mané; une maison de commerce avait envoyé un représentant à Ouagadougou; un Syrien s'y est installé. Il semble qu'aucun n'ait réussi. N'ayant pas leurs confidences il nous est difficile de dire pourquoi, mais ne serait-ce pas, du moins en grande partie, parce qu'un Européen se fera difficilement à la vie indigène? Et pourtant, si les Noirs font quelque profit, c'est qu'ils dépensent peu en voyage, vivent de rien, et au lieu d'avoir des porteurs, portent eux-mêmes une partie de leur marchandise. Et puis, les indigènes s'aident entre eux, et s'ils se font gruger parfois, trop souvent même par les intermédiaires, — et il semble que les différentes administrations européennes, quelque soit leur nationalité, devraient empêcher, dans leur intérêt bien compris, de pareilles spéculations — si les indigènes sont grugés, un Européen qui ignore tout des mœurs et de la langue, le sera à plus forte raison. Et qui surveillera ses troupeaux pendant son absence, et qui les conduira sur les marchés éloignés s'il reste au logis? Il est difficile de trouver un indigène en qui on puisse avoir pleine confiance. Pourtant le commerce du bétail est actuellement la seule source de profit possible ici.

Mais le chemin de fer qui approche, changera bientôt les conditions du commerce et favorisera par là même les Européens sans nuire aux indigènes. C'est à désirer, car le Mossi ne prendra toute son importance que le jour où il pourra écouler ses produits. Les indigènes ont été trop longtemps repliés sur eux-mêmes par suite des guerres incessantes qu'ils ont eu à soutenir; les *nabas*, il faut bien le dire, étaient trop portés à tout accaparer, pour que le commerce ait pu prendre un développement sérieux. La paix française, en donnant la sécurité aux routes, a déjà beaucoup fait pour ce pays, elle aura fait plus encore lorsque le chemin de fer traversant le Mossi de part en part, le réunira d'un côté à la côté d'Ivoire, de l'autre au Niger. Le commerce se fera alors non plus seulement avec les Allemands et les Anglais, mais avec les produits indigènes, ayant un écoulement certain, l'élévage et l'agriculture elle-même prendront une plus grande extension. Les Mossi ne sont pas réfractaires au commerce, il semble même qu'ils aient de vraies qualités de commerçants, ils n'ont pas eu jusqu'ici à les faire valoir, n'ont pas encore suffisamment saisi les avantages certains des transactions, et c'est pourquoi ils ont paru à certains n'avoir aucune disposition pour le commerce. Ils s'y feront et déjà s'y font.

Chapitre troisième. — **La hygiène, la maladie, la mort, la sépulture.**

Une partie de la vie surtout de la vie d'un Noir, se passe à dormir, et parfois des songes plus ou moins étranges viennent troubler le dormeur. Les songes sont attribués par les Mossi aux esprits, aux mânes des ancêtres ou aux génies. Ils disent aussi que c'est l'âme qui est sortie du corps pendant le sommeil et qui a fait ce que l'on a rêvé. C'est au sorcier qu'on s'adresse pour connaître l'origine des songes et ce qu'il faut faire pour conjurer les mauvais présages.

La vie se termine pour tout Mossi, comme pour tout homme, par la mort précédée ou non de maladie. Les Noirs ne savent pas prévenir les maladies et savent bien peu les combattre. L'hygiène est presque inconnue. Les cases sont mal aérées, les poules et en général tous les animaux de basse-cour se promènent partout et salissent tout. Sans doute, la cour est souvent balayée mais les moutons et les chèvres sont enfermés dans une case située au milieu des autres cases, le cheval est dans la *soukala* même, chacun satisfait ses besoins n'importe où, là où il trouve un endroit propice. Le fumier est sans doute réuni en un tas, mais tout près des cases, et cet ensemble dégage, surtout au commencement des pluies, une odeur nauséabonde et des miasmes délétères.

Le Mossi n'est pas sale, mais on ne peut pas non plus dire qu'il soit propre. Les habitants des villages qui ont en tout temps de l'eau en abondance sont les plus propres; les femmes qui vont puiser de l'eau tous les jours et ont par là-même l'occasion de se laver, sont en général plus propres que les hommes. Un Mossi ne passe jamais près d'une mare sans boire copieusement et sans se laver entièrement, et tout ces traits semblent prouver que ceux qui sont sales le sont malgré eux: ils n'ont pas d'eau à proximité et il faudrait faire un trop grand effort pour aller jusqu'à la rivière se laver. Les habits, surtout le pagne, sont parfois d'une saleté repoussante. Le lavage en effet use les habits et qui sait quand on pourra s'en procurer d'autres. Il n'est donc pas étonnant que la maladie ait une grande prise sur ces gens.

Les soins donnés aux enfants sont tout à fait élémentaires; quelques bains, des lavements deux ou trois fois par jour sans lesquels, paraît-il, ils ne pourraient aller à la selle, et c'est tout. A la moindre indisposition le sorcier est consulté ou l'enfant est laissé à lui-même: il guérira ou mourra: personne n'y fait rien. Aussi la mortalité enfantine est-elle fort grande. Ceux qui sont atteints de maladies contagieuses ne sont pas isolés. Un enfant sain couchera sur la même natte qu'un varioleux, un lépreux boit à la calebasse commune, à moins que ses lèvres ne soient couvertes de plaies. On hésite cependant à s'assoir où s'est assis un syphilitique qui a des plaies. L'éducation des Mossi, au point de vue de l'hygiène, est tout entière à faire.

La politesse mossi veut que, quand on rencontre quelqu'un, on lui demande des nouvelles de sa santé et de celle de tous les siens. La réponse invariable est celle-ci: «Il se porte bien», à quoi on répond: «Que Dieu augmente sa santé». Ce n'est qu'après un moment de conversation que l'on racontera qu'un tel ou une telle est malade ou va mieux. On ne dit pas de quelqu'un qu'il est mort, mais qu'il a manqué de force, qu'il a passé, qu'il nous a laissés ou quittés.

C'est que la maladie est généralement attribuée à un génie mauvais qu'il ne faut pas irriter en ayant l'air de se plaindre de lui. Pourtant dans le langage courant c'est Dieu qui est cause de tout, de la santé, comme de la mort. Ce sont les sorciers consultés qui indiquent lequel il faut apaiser, à qui il faut offrir des sacrifices; ou bien qui déclarent tout net que l'heure du malade est arrivée, qu'il a fini sa vie et va s'en aller rejoindre ses ancêtres, car souvent ce sont eux qui l'appellent et viennent le chercher. S'il s'agit d'un vieillard ou d'une vieille surtout, leur mort est considérée comme une mort naturelle. Il a donné le jour à beaucoup d'enfants qui pouvont lui faire de belles funérailles, il est temps qu'il laisse la place à son fils aîné. Si c'est un batailleur qui tombe malade, sa maladie est facilement attribuée à un mauvais sort que lui a jeté un ennemi. Lorsqu'un ancien va mourir ceux qui l'ont offensé viennent lui demander pardon et ne sont tranquilles que quand ils l'ont obtenu: le vieillard pourrait venir se venger. Une mort subite est généralement attribuée à un empoisonnement, et hélas! c'est souvent vrai; parfois aussi à un mauvais génie, surtout s'il s'agit d'un accident, d'une chûte, d'une morsure de serpent, etc.

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Malgré tout, l'instinct de conservation est si grand chez l'homme, que les Mossi, bien que lui attribuant une origine surhumaine, luttent contre la maladie. Il est vrai que dans tous leurs remèdes ils mêlent la partie médicale et la partie superstitieuse pour éloigner le mauvais génie et quelque soit le remède, remède véritable ou grisgris, c'est toujours un *tim*, il n'y a qu'un mot pour le désigner. Certains indigènes connaissent le remède pour telle ou telle maladie et on vient les consulter souvent de fort loin. Celui-ci a le remède contre les serpents et il le fabrique en grand secret à jour fixe; tel autre sait soigner les rhumes ou les bronchites, tel autre la dyssenterie, tel autre les plaies. Les rebouteurs sont parfois très adroits et sous la simple pression des doigts, remettent en place un membre luxé, une jambe cassée, et l'enferment en guise de gouttière, entre des tiges de mil fortement liées. Ces médecins indiquent les remèdes sans recourir aux sacrifices ni aux sorcelleries, parfois ils viennent habiter chez le malade et lui donnent leurs soins, évidemment contre rémunération, surtout si le malade guérit.

La variolisation est pratiquée, mais souvent trop tard, sur des sujets qui ont déjà le germe de la maladie; le vaccin est pris, sans aucune précaution antiseptique, sur un malade gravement atteint, de telle sorte que celui qui a été vacciné est généralement très malade et parfois en meurt. D'ailleurs, il est admis que la variole ne revient pas sur ses pas (évidemment quand elle a déjà tué tous ceux qui pouvaient l'être), et l'appréhension de gagner la maladie empêche bien des indigènes de recourir à ce procédé. L'administration rend de très grands services par les tournées de vaccinations qui auront d'autant plus de succès que les expériences faites par nos Pères, il y a quelques années, au moyen des tubes de vaccin que M. l'administrateur de Ouagadougou avait bien voulu leur envoyer, ont eu des résultats excellents et ont enrayé une épidémie qui décimait la population. Le varioleux est

soigné aussi bien que possible. Il est couché sur un lit de sable qui retient bien la chaleur. Quand les boutons sont mûrs ils sont percés au moyen d'une épine, le malade est ensuite frotté avec du sable. Les yeux sont lavés avec une décoction antiseptique et le malade se gargarise fréquemment avec de l'eau pimentée.

Les simples, les feuilles d'arbres, les écorces sont la base de tous les remèdes, qu'ils servent à faire des tisanes ou à confectionner des cataplasmes. Il serait sans doute intéressant, pour un spécialiste, d'étudier cette question. Mais les indigènes, détenteurs des secrets de fabrication, les livreraient-ils?

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Quand un ami est malade, même au loin, il est de bon ton d'aller le visiter, de lui offrir ses condoléances et, ce qui lui est plus sensible, quelque cadeaux. Les parents du malade vont consulter le sorcier, car il s'agit de savoir à qui attribuer la maladie. Il est fort rare qu'un sorcier indique un remède. Son rôle se borne à indiquer la partie malade et surtout le génie auquel il faut offrir le sacrifice. C'est un autre indigène, qui le plus souvent n'a rien d'un sorcier, qui connaît les remèdes. Quand les sacrifices indiqués ont été offerts, si le malade se porte mieux, c'est que le sorcier connaît bien son métier, sinon c'est qu'il a voulu tromper.

Tout sorcier qui se respecte doit imposer un traitement négatif en ce sens qu'il indique un certain nombre de choses que le malade ne doit pas manger. Tantôt la viande de chèvre ou de poule est défendue pour le temps de la maladie ou définitivement. Tantôt c'est telle ou telle espèce de sauce ou encore les beignets de mil ou de haricots. Comme, par ailleurs, les Mossi ne mangent pas d'œufs, surtout crus, et ne boivent guère de lait, ils soutiennent les malades en leur donnant à boire beaucoup de bière de mil et à manger une pâte peu apétissante de mil grossièrement écrasé, souvent mêlé de poudre de charbon. Le malade n'absorbe que difficilement une telle mixture et meurt parfois d'inanition. Le sorcier indique aussi parfois l'amulette qu'il faut se procurer. La feuille qui couvre une plaie doit être retenue par une cordelette de coton au bout de laquelle sont attachés trois cauris pour un garçon et quatre pour une fille. Une corde de chanvre, portant trois ou quatre nœuds et mise autour du cou ou du poignet ou de tout autre membre l'empêche d'enfler et est un remède souverain pour prévenir les vers de Guinée. Il arrive aussi qu'il est plus difficile de se procurer l'amulette designée, par exemple si c'est un bec ou des griffes d'épervier, la corne d'une biche, certaines parties d'un buffle ou d'un *koba*. Et le pauvre Mossi se met en quatre pour se procurer l'amulette indispensable.

Mais il a beau faire, un jour ou l'autre il faut mourir. Le vieillard sent sa fin prochaine. Il appelle les siens, leur fait ses dernières recommandations, il s'entretient avec son fils aîné, lui indique où sont ses bœufs, quelles sont ses cachettes, à qui il doit et qui a des dettes envers lui. Mais parfois la mort est plus rapide, elle vient à l'improviste, et le vieux n'a pas le temps de causer à son héritier; une grande partie de la fortune est alors perdue, car un Mossi en bonne santé n'indique jamais à personne, surtout à ses

enfants, à qui il a confié la garde de ses biens, et les détenteurs ne les restituent pas. Certains Peuls se sont fait ainsi assez de jolis profits.

La mort d'un jeune homme ou d'une jeune fille ou plus encore d'un petit enfant, est généralement attribuée à une vieille femme qui, dit-on, a mangé l'âme de l'enfant, et certaines vieilles prétendent avoir ce secret. Le sorcier désigne alors la coupable qui est saisie et mise à mort. Toute mort subite ou accidentelle est attribuée à un mauvais génie et les cérémonies funèbres s'en ressentent.

Le suicide est fort rare mais existe. Voire un cas de suicide dont nous connaissons les acteurs: Un individu s'était disputé avec sa femme. Plus forte que le mari, la femme avait terrassé son maître et les voisins en avaient fait des gorges chaudes; le lendemain, on trouva le mari pendu dans sa case. Un trou fut rapidement creusé dans son champ le plus rapproché et il y fut jeté tout nu sans autres cérémonies: le suicide est un acte criminel qui est puni jusque dans le cadavre du suicidé.

Tout Mossi, comme tout homme, craint la mort. Ne plus pouvoir manger de bouillie de mil ni boire du *dolo* lui semble le plus grand des malheurs. Pourtant, quand il la voit arriver il s'y résigne et l'accepte stoïquement. Sa tête repose sur les genoux de sa première femme, les autres l'entourent, les amis et les anciens du village sont assis devant la *soukala* et tous attendent en silence des heures et des heures que leur vieillard ait passé. Tout à coup un cri lugubre et strident poussé par la garde du malade traverse l'air et annonce à tous qu'une âme vient de quitter un corps et de paraître devant Dieu. Toutes les femmes répondent à cet appel, et pendant quelques minutes les lamentations les plus plaintives emplissent la *soukala* du mort.

Bientôt tout rentre dans le silence. Un des membres de la famille va chercher le fossoyeur, le *lada*, sans lequel il est impossible de procéder à la sépulture. Pendant ce temps, on arrache un des *séko* qui ferment la cour intérieure afin que l'âme puisse passer et laisse en paix les vivants. Une vieille femme et les enfants du défunt procèdent alors à la toilette funèbre et n'emploient pour cette besogne que la main gauche. Le corps est lavé à l'eau chaude et vigoureusement savonné, puis oint de beurre de karité. La tête est rasée et les cheveux sont enterrés, à moins que cette opération n'ait eu lieu avant que le mourant n'ait rendu le dernier soupir, auquel cas les cheveux sont jetés au vent. Quand le corps est bien lavé, le fossoyeur assouplit les articulations du cou, des bras et des jambes afin que le cadavre puisse facilement glisser dans la fosse, puis dépose le mort dans la case de sa première femme si elle vit encore, sinon dans la case même du défunt.

Le mort est couché sur une natte, sur le côté dans l'attitude d'un dormeur, les bras et les jambes repliés, et recouvert d'une couverture blanche. Quand le cadavre est en place, les cris lugubres se font entendre de nouveau, et les jeunes gens et les hommes vont creuser la fosse tandis que les femmes restent assises dans la cour et veillent le mort. Des amies et les voisines s'occupent à préparer à manger pour toute la famille qui a visitée la mort.

La tombe est creusée généralement dans le champ de la famille, là ou reposent déjà les ancêtres. Les villages n'ont pas de cimetières communs mais

chaque famille a le sien. Pourtant les environs des bois sacrés servent parfois de cimetière. Etre enterré loin des siens est un grand malheur et qui meurt loin de son village désire vivement que son corps y soit rapporté, et la famille satisfait toujours à ce dernier vœu quand la chose est possible. Sinon le mort est enterré au bord du chemin qui conduit à son village. Afin de dormir près des siens son dernier sommeil, un indigène, quand il sent ses forces diminuer: construira parfois ses cases en pleine brousse, au lieu où s'élevait autrefois le village, aujourd'hui abandonné, où vécurent ses ancêtres. Un vieillard estimé et aimé des siens aura sa tombe devant la *soukala* et c'est de règle pour les nabas.

Le fossoyeur indique la dimension à donner à la fosse et sa forme, mais tout le monde peut la creuser. Une tombe mossi se compose d'un trou rond de 1·50 *m* environ de diamètre et de 0·70 *m* de profondeur. Au fond de ce premier trou ou contre la parois, un second trou de 0·75 *m* de diamètre est creusé. Le fond de ce dernier trou est agrandi de manière à former comme une chambre de 1·50 *m* à 2 *m* de longueur et 0·75 *m* de profondeur. C'est dans cette chambre que le corps sera couché. Cette chambre est enduite de *néré* de façon à ce que la parois soit bien lisse.

Toute la nuit des jeunes gens sont occupés à ce travail tandis qu'à la maison mortuaire les amis et les parents absents sont accourus sitôt qu'ils ont eu connaissance du décès, les tambours, à l'affût de quelques cruches de bière à boire et de quelques cauris à gagner, sont aussi venus, et tout le monde danse et chante et s'amuse.

Les enfants et les frères puînés du mort sont revêtus des habits de deuil: vaste tablier et vaste poche, orné de banderolles de toile et de dessins variés sur fond rouge ou bleu; la tête est couverte par une petite calebasse, la figure est marquée par un cercle de cendre, une croix de cendre est faite sur le dos; les filles et les sœurs du mort ont en plus un bouquet de feuilles par derrière et des cordelettes de coton blanc autour du cou; le fils aîné porte une peau de mouton en sautoir. A l'aube, la bière de mil arrive, la bouillie de mil est prête, et on en porte à ceux qui ont creusé la fosse. Le fossoyeur jette un peu de bière sur la terre extraite de la tombe et la mêle à de la bouillie de mil. Puis les jeux cessent et tout le monde boit, mange et va se reposer. Parfois les danses recommencent vers midi. Quand le soleil baisse à l'horizon on procède à la sépulture.

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Une ouverture est pratiquée dans la case où repose le mort et c'est par cette ouverture que l'on passe le cadavre. Il est couché en travers, et tous ses enfants doivent passer par ce même trou et enjamber le corps de leur père. Le corps est alors déposé sur une civière mais non encore attaché; il est reporté dans la cour en passant par le *seko* arraché au moment de la mort. Le fils aîné s'approche alors avec une chèvre ou une poule selon ses ressources et la donne au fossoyeur qui l'offre au mort en l'avançant par trois fois et en disant: «Ton fils t'offre cette chèvre pour qu'elle t'enfante des chevreaux.» Les autres enfants peuvent faire aussi leurs offrandes ainsi que les amis et

le fossoyeur présente toutes au mort de la même manière. Les animaux ainsi donnés sont, en certains endroits, emportés par le fossoyeur et tués et mangés par lui sans que rien ne soit sacrifié sur place; tandis que dans d'autres endroits, les victimes sont immolées près du corps.

Quand la dernière poule à été offerte, le cadavre est entouré d'une natte très flexible et lié fortement sur la civière. Le cortège funèbre s'organise. Les femmes et les enfants marchent devant le corps, les amis et les gens du village suivent ainsi que les tambours. Si c'est un gros personnage, des cavaliers sont venus à l'enterrement, la poudre parle. Trois fois le cortège fait le tour de la *soukala* si c'est le maître de la *soukala* qui est mort. Les femmes, n'étant jamais chefs de case, sont privées de cet honneur. Le cortège se dirige alors vers la fosse, non sans faire des détours dans le village pour passer aux endroits préférés du défunt. On conduira ainsi une vieille femme au marigot où elle allait puiser de l'eau, au marché où elle allait vendre les grains. Les tambours battent avec fureur, tout le monde crie, chante, échange des injures si grossières que je n'ai pu obtenir d'aucun indigène qu'il me les répète. Trois fois le cortège s'arrête si c'est une vieille, deux fois si c'est un vieux, et les cris redoublent.

Arrivés près de la fosse, tout le monde s'arrête une dernière fois et se tait. La civière est abaissée, et les parents font entendre un chant doux et mélancolique: «Que le chef de la haine (celui qui a tué le mort) s'en aille!» Le corps est alors déposé près de la fosse. Un fossoyeur, car eux seuls peuvent enterrer quelqu'un mort de maladie, un fossoyeur est dans le premier trou et un autre dans la chambre funéraire pour recevoir le cadavre. Les liens qui attachient le corps à la civière sont coupés, la natte enlevée. Les fossoyeurs qui ne sont pas occupés prennent alors des couvertures et les tendent autour de la fosse pour cacher le cadavre aux spectateurs. Le fossoyeur du premier trou saisit le mort et le passe par l'ouverture de la chambre funéraire au second fossoyeur qui y est descendu et reçoit le corps dans ses bras, le couche sur une natte la tête au sud, sur le côté, le visage vers l'est pour un homme, vers l'ouest pour une femme, les bras et les jambes repliés.

Sitôt que le corps a disparu, les couvertures sont enlevées, et le fils aîné s'approche. Il offre au mort un tablier de deuil dans la poche duquel il a mis 444 cauris pour une femme et 333 pour un homme ou même 4444 ou 3333 cauris selon sa fortune, et le fossoyeur les offre au mort en disant que son fils aîné lui donne ces cauris pour acheter de l'eau pour boire (traduisez: de la bière). Il donne aussi des habits, deux pantalons, deux vestes, deux couvertures, un bonnet, pour un homme, s'il veut faire les choses grandement; et des couvertures s'il s'agit d'une femme, les unes pour se couvrir, les autres pour porter les cruches, d'autres pour aller au marché. A une femme on offre une calebasse pour cuire la sauce avec du piment, des épices de toutes sortes, du sel. On lui donne aussi son fuseau avec lequel elle filait le coton mais on brise la tige, comme d'ailleurs on détériore ou déchire tout ce qui est offert au mort. Les amis riches offrent aussi des habits et les autres jettent des cauris au mort. Mais les fossoyeurs ont bien soin de fermer le petit trou avec des couvertures afin d'empêcher les cauris

de tomber dans la fosse. De temps en temps, ils en font glisser quelques-uns, mais gardent pour eux le plus grand nombre. Quand tous ont jeté leur offrande, les fossoyeurs enlèvent un, deux, ou plusieurs habits, c'est leur part et ces pratiques sont reconnues par la coutume. Ils retirent aussi quelques poignées de cauris du tablier de deuil et vite quelqu'un se précipite pour les compter. Tous les regards sont anxieusement dirigés vers celui qui compte car c'est un homme ou une femme qui mourra bientôt selon que le nombre des cauris se rapproche plus de 333 ou de 444.

Enfin les fossoyeurs ferment la fosse. Si c'est une vieille, la petite ouverture est bouchée avec une des grosses cruches dans lesquelles elle faisait la bière de mil; si c'est un homme, avec une petite cruche, parfois, surtout si l'ouverture est plus grande, avec des morceaux de bois aussi rapprochés les uns des autres que possible. De la sorte, le corps est absolument isolé dans sa chambre funéraire. Le grand trou est ensuite bouché avec la terre enlevée de la fosse, et au sommet on dépose une cruche et un pot en terre pour cuire la sauce si c'est une femme, un pot en terre et une grosse pierre si c'est un homme.

Chacun alors se retire pour boire, manger et se reposer: cette nuit, il n'y a pas de danses. Mais on se rattrape le lendemain et même encore le surlendemain si la fortune du défunt le permet. Le surlendemain de l'enterrement, si c'est un homme âgé, le troisième jour, si c'est une vieille femme, les enfants et les frères plus jeunes du mort se rasent la tête, vont remercier ceux qui les ont aidés et déposent les habits de deuil. Il ne sera plus question du défunt avant la fête de l'anniversaire, le *kouré*.

Telles sont les cérémonies qui accompagnent généralement la mort et la sépulture d'un homme ou d'une femme mariés, qui ont des enfants. Nous disons «généralement», car toutes ces cérémonies compliquées peuvent être écourtées, plus ou moins modifiées, selon les régions et les coutumes particulières à telle ou telle famille.

La mort des nabas, avons-nous dit, est soigneusement cachée, d'autant plus soigneusement que le naba était plus puissant et cela par crainte des troubles que ne manqueraient pas de susciter ceux qui aspirent à la succession ou les vauriens qui profiteraient de l'absence de toute autorité pour se livrer à tous les actes de brigandage. A la mort du Moro-Naba, sa province était ravagée par des bandes armées et personne ne sortait sans armes. Le lendemain de la mort du Moro-Naba Sigri, nous eûmes à aller chercher du mil dans un village situé à quelques kilomètres de Ouagadougou. Tous les porteurs étaient armés d'arcs, de flèches et de lances. Le spectacle n'était pas banal au clair de lune.

Si donc un naba meurt — et malgré toutes leurs amulettes et tous leurs sacrifices, les nabas meurent tout comme leurs sujets —, ses parents creusent rapidement une fosse dans la case d'entrée de la *soukala* et y déposent le corps sans cérémonies. On dira désormais à qui veut voir le naba qu'il est souffrant. Le naba de Koupéla est même favorisé à cet égard. Il y a, dans sa *soukala*, près de la porte d'entrée, une case qui lui est réservée; c'est là qu'il sera enterré. Dans cette case, un trou a été creusé, et chaque

jour le gardien vient verser du *dolo* dans ce trou. Ce gardien ne doit pas avoir de femme, et s'il en avait une avant d'être promu à cette charge, le naba la lui prendrait. Par contre, il mange les mêmes mets que le naba et boit la même bière de mil. Inutile de dire que cet emploi n'est pas très recherché. Le naba ne peut entrer dans cette case et quand la toiture a besoin d'être refaite, les tambours sont convoqués et le naba doit s'enfuir: malheur à lui s'il entend le bruit des tambours, il mourra dans l'année. Quand le naba de Koupéla meurt, ses mains et ses pieds sont immédiatement percés avec de grosses épines afin qu'il ne puisse plus revenir et s'il s'avisait de vouloir saisir un des siens après sa mort, les épines le feraient tellement souffrir qu'il lâcherait immédiatement sa proie. Le cadavre est jeté dans la fosse et tombe comme il peut. Pleins d'égards pour leurs chefs de leur vivant, les Mossi se rattrappent à leur mort.

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Un jeune homme ou une jeune fille non mariés, sont enterrés avec une vieille de leur famille, morte précédemment, afin que quelqu'un prenne soin d'eux dans l'autre vie. Leur disparition est vraiment considérée comme un malheur et entouré de deuil. Aucune danse, aucune cérémonie. Le père, la mère et les frères puînés se rasent la tête le surlendemain ou le troisième jour après l'enterrement.

Un petit enfant est enterré sur le bord d'un chemin. Il reviendra bientôt car c'est lui que sa mère met au monde dans la personne du premier enfant dont la naissance suit cette mort.

Les suicidés sont enterrés comme des chiens chez nous — car ici, tous les chiens sont mangés; les lépreux, de nuit et sans réjouissances. La mort par accident, qu'elle soit occasionnée par une chûte, par une piqûre de serpent ou par toute autre cause, est attribuée à un mauvais génie qu'il ne faut pas irriter en rendant des honneurs funèbres à sa victime, sinon il reviendra tuer un autre membre de la famille. C'est pourquoi ceux qui meurent d'accident sont enterrés sans cérémonies, sans la présence des fossoyeurs; on ne leur rase pas la tête, car Dieu les a appelés avec leurs cheveux, disent les Mossi. On creuse la fosse et on les enterre, et tout est dit. Ils n'ont personne qui les représente; jusqu'au jour anniversaire de leur mort, jusqu'au *kouré*, ils n'ont pas de *kourita*.

C'est que tout Mossi mort de maladie, quelqu'il soit, homme, femme, enfant, naba, se survit dans la personne de la *kourita*. S'il s'agit d'un homme marié, la *kourita* ou *koutoarsa* (qui imite le mort) est une femme de la famille du défunt, généralement une des femmes d'un de ses plus jeunes frères, et qui a une certaine ressemblence avec celui qui n'est plus. Elle est choisie par la famille et parfois désignée par le mourant. Elle prend les habits du mort, sa veste, sa couverture, son chapeau, ses savates, ses bracelets et ses bagues, elle porte la ceinture et les couteaux du défunt, marche avec son bâton, sa pioche, son *doré*, elle porte sa lance, le fer dirigé vers la terre. Elle marche comme celui qu'elle représente et doit l'imiter en tout, elle le continue au milieu des siens. Si le mort était généralement accompagné d'un

enfant portant sa sacoche, la *kourita* aura son enfant qui la suivra avec cette même sacoche mais mise à l'envers. Si le défunt était lépreux et ne possédait plus de doigts, elle fera comme si elle n'en avait plus; s'il aimait à rire, elle rira; s'il était grognon et disputait tout le monde, elle ne décolerera pas. Les enfants du défunt l'appelleront leur père, les femmes la nommeront leur mari et lui prépareront la bouillie de mil. Si le mort était naba, on l'appellera naba; s'il ne l'était pas, on lui donnera le nom du mort.

Elle agira ainsi jusqu'au jour du *kouré*. Ce jour-là, elle se rase la tête comme les autres membres de la famille et son rôle est terminé. Elle garde cependant le nom de *kourita* et au jour du partage reçoit un habit en échange duquel elle rend les habits du mort, et si l'héritier est généreux, si l'héritage le permet, elle recevra quelques bestiaux, parfois un enfant. La *kourita* mourra plus tôt que si elle n'avait pas rempli ce rôle, dit-on, parce que les mânes des ancêtres viendront la chercher, aussi cette fonction est-elle peu recherchée.

A côté de cette *kourita*, la fille aînée du défunt lorsqu'il est chef de case, ou, à son défaut, sa petite fille, joue parfois un rôle et s'appellera aussi *kourita*; mais cette dernière coutume est moins générale. Son costume de deuil s'agrémentera de cordelettes de paille rouge *(bini)* autour du cou, des poignets, au-dessus du coude et à la cheville de chaque pied, 13 pour un homme et 14 pour une femme. Sa tête est entourée de fils de coton *(pana)* qui pendent sur le dos comme une longue queue terminée par un pompon. La première *kourita* dont nous avons parlé, porte parfois ces insignes. Cette dernière *kourita* n'a d'ailleurs qu'une chose à faire, c'est à planter du gros mil là où se trouvaient les cases de son père. Quand le mil est mûr, elle le met de côté et c'est elle qui fera la bière de mil le jour du *kouré*. Parfois son office dure trois ans, pendant qu'elle ne peut pas se raser. Par contre, c'est elle qui fait la bière le jour de la fête des morts *(basra)*. Au bout de trois ans, elle se rase et reprend la vie commune. Une vieille femme n'étant pas chef de case n'a pas cette dernière *kourita*.

La mère est *kourita* de son enfant mort avant d'être marié. Elle met à son pied une cordelette de coton à laquelle chaque jour elle fait un nœud tant que dure le deuil, 33 jours pour un garçon, 44 pour une fille.

Le Moro-Naba a sa *kourita* tout comme les autres Mossi, mais le jour du *kouré* on désigne un jeune garçon de sa famille qui, sa vie durant, représente le Moro-Naba défunt. Ce *kourita* prend le nom du naba décédé et pendant toute la saison sèche, se promène de canton en canton, ce que n'a pu faire le vrai Moro-Naba de son vivant. Partout il est reçu avec de grands honneurs et hébergé, il reçoit beaucoup de cadeaux et ses gens ne se privent pas de piller. Une seule localité lui est interdite c'est Ouagadougou, parce que c'est la résidence du successeur, et s'ils venaient à se rencontrer, l'un d'eux mourrait dans l'année. Actuellement, il y a au Mossi deux *kourita* de Moro-Naba, celui du naba Sanem qui reçut Binger et celui du naba Sigri, intrônisé lors de la conquête par Voulet et décédé en 1905. Naba Wobre, détrôné par nos troupes, n'a pas de *kourita* parce qu'il n'était plus Moro-Naba à sa mort: il avait manqué à la tradition en quittant Ouagadougou et par là même renoncé à ses droits de souverain.

Ces premières funérailles ne sont que provisoires, car le corps humain se décompose vite et il a fallu procéder rapidement à la sépulture avant que tous les amis et les parents n'aient pu être réunis. D'ailleurs, la mort à surpris, les cauris manquaient, les animaux n'avaient pu être rassemblés en nombre suffisant, bref il importe de rendre au défunt les honneurs dûs à son rang et de lui offrir de nombreuses victimes. C'est le *kouré*, ce que nous avons appelé l'anniversaire, faute d'un terme plus exact, bien que cette fête puisse se célébrer quelques jours après l'enterrement si tout est prêt.

Le *kouré* a toujours lieu un dimanche. La *kourita*, le fils aîné, ou le chef de la famille désigne une première fois le jour, mais ce n'est pas le jour véritable. Quelques jours plus tard, il indique à tous le vrai jour. Les parents et les amis se réunissent le samedi au grand diner de famille avec viande, sel, bière et *sarabo*. Le dimanche à l'aube, les femmes se lamentent, pleurent, crient, et à l'aurore, les membres de la famille du défunt se rasent la tête, se font les raies de cendre et revêtent les habits de deuil, exactement comme au jour de la mort. Vers midi, chacun des parents et amis amène sa victime pour l'offrir à celui qui n'est plus. C'est au fossoyeur *(lada)* à l'offrir au mort. Il prend donc d'abord le mouton donné par le fils aîné et se présente devant la porte de la case dans laquelle le vieillard a été couché après son trépas. Il lui offre trois fois le mouton en le faisant avancer et reculer tout en disant: «Ton fils te donne un mouton, prend-le et mange-le avec toute ta famille.» Il saisit alors le mouton et serre fortement ses mâchoires pour l'empêcher de bêler. Les assistants entraînent le mouton hors de la cour intérieure et l'égorgent. Une vieille femme vient recevoir le sang dans une calebasse. La viande est cuite à part, le sang mêlé à de la farine de mil est cuit avec les entrailles, le foie, le poumon et du sel. C'est le *semdlé* dont tous les membres de la famille doivent manger. C'est une des coutumes auxquelles les Mossi tiennent le plus. Tandis que le mouton du fils aîné est ainsi égorgé, chacun des enfants présente au fossoyeur sa victime, et celui-ci l'offre au défunt comme précédemment. Puis viennent les autres parents et les amis.

Quand tous les animaux sont offerts, le fossoyeur prend de la bière dans une cruche qui est restée au soleil et va vider une calebasse sur la tombe. Le reste de la cruche lui appartient. La fin du jour est occupée à égorger toutes ces victimes dont le nombre varie selon la richesse et la notoriété du défunt, à les faire cuire, à les manger et à boire. Le soir, une des filles du mort prend une calebasse pleine d'eau, la met sur sa tête sans coussinet et fait trois fois le tour de la *soukala* de son père en criant et en pleurant. Tout le monde la suit et mêle ses gémissements aux siens. Elle rentre alors dans la cour intérieure l'eau dans la marmite dans laquelle cuit la bouillie de mil. Si le maître du logis avait un chien, il est alors tué et mangé. Pendant toute la nuit, ce ne sont que danses et jeux sans fin.

Le lundi, on prépare la bière de mil pour le mercredi, et tout le monde continue à danser et à jouer; il en est de même du mardi. Ce jour là, toutes les femmes du défunt se sauvent parce qu'elles ne doivent pas assister à la cérémonie du lendemain, le battage de la tombe.

Le mercredi dans la matinée, toute la famille se rend à la tombe avec des battoirs et accompagnée par les tambours et le fossoyeur. Les femmes ont apporté de l'eau, et tout le monde bat la terre qui recouvre la tombe au sommet de laquelle on laisse un pot en terre pour une femme, une pierre pour un homme. Quand la tombe est bien battue, le fossoyeur tue une poule sur la pierre ou le pot et dit: «Reçois la poule du tombeau, prends-la pour la manger avec ta famille et laisse tes enfants en paix». Il prend ensuite une calebasse de bière et la répand sur la tombe. La poule est rôtie et mangée et la cruche de bière est bue sur place. Tout le monde retourne alors à la maison mortuaire, et le jeu et la danse recommencent de plus belle.

Le jeudi, toute la famille se rend au marché et va remercier les amis qui sont venus assister aux fêtes et les ont aidés.

Les funérailles sont complètement terminées, et il ne sera plus question du vieillard ou de la vieille que chaque année à la fête des morts.

Un jeune homme, une jeune fille, morts sans enfants, ont aussi leur *kouré*, très généralement le même jour qu'un vieux ou une vieille décédé précédemment. Si personne de la famille n'est mort, on fait le *kouré* des enfants sans cérémonie. Le père, la mère et ses plus jeunes frères se rasent, on construit une petite case qui représente celle du défunt et c'est là que lui sont offertes des poules, parfois une chèvre. La bière de mil est évidemment distribuée aux parents et amis qui sont venus, mais il n'y a ni danses ni battage de la tombe.

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La mort des naba est, en principe, ignorée, et le pauvre a été enterré sans cérémonie. Quand ses héritiers ont réuni ce qu'il faut pour faire à leur père des funérailles dignes de lui, ils font répandre partout, un samedi matin, la nouvelle que le naba est mort. Un mannequin, fait des habits du défunt, est déposé dans la case de sa première femme ou dans la sienne propre, et toutes les cérémonies se font le samedi soir comme pour un grand enterrement. Le mannequin est porté comme sont portés tous les morts et la terre qui recouvre la fosse est légèrement grattée et les habits sont enfouis. Le lendemain dimanche, ont lieu toutes les cérémonies du *kouré*, d'autant plus solennelles que le naba défunt était plus puissant.

Tout le monde a donc son *kouré*, les petits enfants morts à la mamelle qui reviendront bientôt, et les suicidés en sont seuls généralement privés.

Mais quand un chef de case meurt, il laisse un héritage plus ou moins important. Personne n'y a touché jusqu'au jour du *kouré*. Mais sitôt que les fêtes sont terminées, le fils aîné convoque le chef de la famille et tous ses oncles, ses frères et ses sœurs. Il faut procéder au partage. En principe, tout l'héritage, toutes les femmes, tous les bestiaux, tous les cauris appartiennent au fils aîné s'il est marié ou en âge de l'être. Si l'enfant est trop jeune, c'est un des frères plus jeunes du defunt qui est son tuteur et doit gérer la fortune et la passer à son neveu quand il sera en âge d'hériter de son père. Mais l'oncle dilapide évidemment les biens de son pupille. Si le défunt ne laisse pas d'héritier mâle, l'héritage revient à l'aînée de ses filles. S'il n'a pas d'en-

fant, c'est son frère plus jeune, ou, à son défaut, le fils de son frère aîné qui hérite, mais jamais son frère aîné lui-même à moins qu'il ne s'agisse d'un naba, auquel cas c'est le frère aîné qui, s'il n'y a pas d'autre héritier, rentre en possession de la fortune.

Mais si le fils aîné est, en principe, maître absolu de tous les biens de son père, en réalité il doit les partager en partie. S'il a des frères plus jeunes en âge d'être mariés, il leur donne une des femmes de son père. Celui qui en hérite doit raser lui-même la tête de sa nouvelle épouse. Si celle-ci refuse, c'est qu'elle ne veut pas de ce nouveau mari. Si les frères de l'héritier sont trop jeunes, celui-ci leur donne quelques bêtes, bœufs, moutons, chèvres. Si l'héritage le permet, les oncles auront aussi leur part. Mais personne ne peut obliger le fils aîné à procéder au partage. Il peut déclarer purement et simplement qu'il garde tout, mais il se créera des ennuis, se suscitera des ennemis, surtout si son père a dilapidé la fortune d'un neveu. A la mort de son oncle, le neveu, frustré de l'héritage paternel, le rapelle à son cousin et demande des indemnités qui sont généralement accordées sous forme de femmes ou de bestiaux.

Le nouvel héritier devient chef de case à son tour, et souvent il habite dans la *soukala* de son père, parfois il en fait construire une autre. Il est désormais son maître et ne dépend plus que du chef de mille tandis que ses sœurs non mariées et ses jeunes frères sont sous sa dépendance. Il a hérité des biens mais n'a pas hérité de la puissance, et si son père était naba et qu'il veuille lui succéder, il faut maintenant briguer la place auprès du naba plus puissant qui peut la donner.

Telle est la vie de famille des Mossi. En résumé, grande soumission vis à vis des nabas et des chefs de famille, grande indépendance vis à vis de ceux qui ne sont pas revêtus de l'autorité. Les femmes vivent les unes à côté des autres sous la direction de la première femme du mari; les filles ne s'appartiennent jamais, quelque soit leur âge, et sont ainsi dans un quasi esclavage. Les enfants eux-mêmes ne se fréquentent guère entre eux. Ils s'aiment assurément et savent se le prouver à l'occasion et leurs parents les aiment, mais il n'y a pas entre eux ce lien, cet esprit de famille que seul le christianisme pourra leur donner.

LIVRE QUATRIEME
Vie religieuse.

Chapitre premier. — Dogme et morale.

Jusqu'ici nous avons étudié les manifestations extérieures de la vie des Mossi: leur constitution politique avec toute sa hiérarchie, leur constitution familiale avec tout ce qui en dépend, mariage, naissance, vie et mort. Il nous faut faire un pas de plus et pénétrer dans l'intimité de ce peuple, analyser ses sentiments dans ce qu'ils ont de plus profond et de plus tenace. Et s'il est déjà très difficile de comprendre un individu et de saisir à quels motifs il obéit dans la conduite ordinaire de sa vie, que dire quand il s'agit d'un peuple — surtout quand ce peuple ne sait pas s'analyser soi-même, qu'on n'a pour se guider aucun écrit qui reflète son âme et qu'il faut la surprendre dans ses manifestations les plus spotanées, dans ses conversations les plus familières? Cependant nous ne saurions presque rien des Mossi si nous ne connaissions quelles idées ils se font de Dieu, du monde, des génies, des mânes, et quelles relations ils ont établies entre eux et ce monde invisible. La vie religieuse joue un très grand rôle dans la vie de tout peuple, serait-il exagéré de dire que son rôle est d'autant plus grand que ce peuple est plus primitif et, par conséquent, plus porté à attribuer à une intervention préternaturelle tout ce qu'il ne s'explique pas?

Ils n'aiment pourtant point à aborder ces questions avec des étrangers, surtout avec des Blancs, dont ils savent les croyances si différentes des leurs. Non seulement ils ont peur de déplaire à leurs génies en dévoilant des secrets, mais encore ils craignent le sourire moqueur. Il faut bien se garder de rire de leurs conceptions si enfantines qu'elles nous paraissent. En rire c'est le meilleur moyen de les froisser et de les fermer à jamais. D'ailleurs, toute croyance sincère n'est-elle pas digne d'un certain respect, même si à ce respect se mêle quelque pitié?

La difficulté est encore accrue par ce fait que les Mossi n'ont aucune théorie religieuse et n'ont pas l'habitude de raisonner leurs croyances. Ils restent interdits devant le plus simple des «pourquoi», le plus élémentaire des «comment cela se fait-il». Il a donc fallu, pour répondre au besoin d'ordre et de clarté de nos esprits européens, en mettre un peu dans les idées que nous avons recueillies de ci de là. C'est ici surtout que nous avons évité le plus qu'il nous a été possible tout esprit de système, et nous pouvons dire qu'il n'est rien de nous dans les deux chapitres qui vont suivre. Nous avons écouté les indigènes, provoqué des explications, posé des questions et pris note des réponses. Ce sont ces réponses que nous allons transcrire. Mais, évidemment, les réponses n'ont pas toujours concordées et il nous a fallu

faire un choix basé sur les témoignages qui nous ont paru les plus dignes de foi. Pourtant les divergences n'ont jamais porté que sur des détails et, dans l'ensemble, elles ont toujours été les mêmes sur les points les plus importants. D'ailleurs, quand il y aura un doute sérieux nous aurons soin de l'indiquer.

Comment le lieutenant MARC a-t-il pu écrire: «Nous ne pensons pas que les Mossi aient l'idée d'un Dieu unique et créateur[1]?» L'idée de Dieu est partout chez ce peuple. Le plus simple des souhaits, le moindre des bonjours, renferme le nom de Dieu. Quand quelqu'un s'en va, le partant et ceux qui restent se saluent réciproquement ainsi: «Que Dieu m'accompagne», dit le partant; «Que Dieu te reconduise! Que Dieu te fasse retourner! Que Dieu te lève la jambe!» répondent ceux qui restent.

Celui qui reçoit un cadeau, dit à son bienfaiteur: «Que Dieu vous garde! Que Dieu vous fasse rester longtemps (sur la terre)! Que Dieu vous récompense! Que Dieu vous le rende!»

Un ami a-t-il revêtu un habit neuf, c'est une nouvelle occasion de le saluer: «Dieu fasse que tu le retires usé!»

S'il mange, on lui dira: «Dieu fasse que cela te soit profitable!»

S'il vient annoncer la naissance d'un héritier: «Que Dieu te donne de le suspendre à ton epaule», lui dira-t-on.

Et s'il s'en va pour revenir dans la journée: «Que Dieu nous redonne le plaisir de causer ensemble!»

A la fin du jour, les Mossi se saluent réciproquement: «Que Dieu vous donne le lendemain!» A quoi il faut répondre: «Que Dieu vous ouvre un bon demain!»

Un jour de fête, tous les gens qui se rencontrent se disent: «Que Dieu vous fasse parvenir à l'an prochain! Que Dieu vous fasse voir une année nouvelle!»

Dieu donne la santé, l'entretient et la rend aux malades:

«Dieu te donne la santé!» se souhaitent-ils, Que Dieu t'augmente la santé! Que Dieu te rende heureux!»

A quelqu'un qui est en danger ou malade, on dit:

«Que Dieu te sauve du malheur! Que Dieu te rende la santé! Que Dieu vienne avec la santé et une brise rafraîchissante!»

Quand la mort a frappé quelqu'un, on offre ainsi ses condoléances à la famille:

«Que Dieu entrave le jour (de la mort)!»

A un cavalier qui arrive on dit: «Que Dieu te fasse descendre!» et à celui qui vient de perdre un cheval: «Que Dieu te rende un piquet!» (car on n'a de piquet pour attacher un cheval, que si on possède la bête elle-même.)

Si on demande à un Mossi: «Qui donne la puissance aux remèdes et aux amulettes?», il répond infailliblement que c'est Dieu.

Dieu sait tout, on le prend à témoin de ce que l'on dit: «De par Dieu!» Injustement condamné, le Mossi en appelle à Dieu: «Dieu connait mon intérieur,

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[1] MARC, Au pays des Mossi, p. 158.

dit-il, et il sait qu'il n'y a rien dedans!» — et si on ne sait pas le nom d'une chose, on ajoute aussitôt: «Mais Dieu le connaît.»

Dieu dispose de tout, et les Mossi se disent fréquement entre eux:

«Si Dieu me donne le jour d'après demain, je viendrai. Il allait tomber mais Dieu l'a secouru. Nous causons dès le matin et nous sollicitons la protection de Dieu.»

Dieu est partout, il est impossible de se cacher de Dieu. Dieu nous conserve, et un naba qui n'a aucune teinture d'islamisme, me disait: «Nous sommes dans la main de Dieu, nous sommes les brebis de Dieu qui nous garde, comme mon fils garde les miennes.» On croirait entendre un écho de l'Evangile: «Je suis le bon pasteur.» Et il nous serait facile de multiplier les exemples. Dieu est supérieur a tous les génies, c'est lui qui les a créés, c'est lui qui les envoie aux hommes, mais ce n'est pas lui qui les rend méchants. Pourtant Dieu peut nous aider à nous venger de nos ennemis et son nom sacré revient souvent dans les imprécations: «Que Dieu te suspende au cou le sac de la pauvreté! Que Dieu te détruise! Qu'il le détruise entièrement! Que Dieu le brûle dans le feu[1]!» Il n'est pas de sacrifice qui ne renferme une imprécation contre les ennemis.

Cependant aucune prière n'est adressée directement à Dieu en dehors des souhaits; aucun sacrifice qui lui soit offert sans qu'en même temps ne s'y mêle le nom des génies. Pourtant, nous le verrons au chapitre suivant, c'est surtout Dieu qui est invoqué dans la formule sacrificatoire, et quand le sacrifice est terminé tous ceux qui y ont participé, saluent le sacrificateur par cette formule: «Que Dieu accepte ton sacrifice; Que Dieu le reçoive!»

Mais ce Dieu quel est-il? Est-il un ou plusieurs? A-t-il un corps ou est-il esprit? Où réside-t-il? Autant de questions qu'un Mossi ne s'est jamais posées et qui le laissent un moment interdit. «Dieu est-il un ou plusieurs?» — «Je ne sais pas», telle est la réponse ordinaire. Si on insiste, ils disent qu'il est un. Mais une difficulté se présente: «Pourquoi alors, dans les sacrifices, faites-vous appel à Dieu roi-mâle, et à Dieu roi-femelle?» Nouveau: «Je ne sais pas, c'est comme cela que disaient nos pères.»

Dieu a-t-il un corps? Oui, assurément, car une intelligence très exercée peut seule concevoir un pur esprit. Mais comment est ce corps? «Je ne sais pas.» — Où est Dieu? — Partout. — Mais encore, occupe-t-il un lieu quelconque? — Dieu c'est le soleil.

Identifient-ils Dieu et le soleil? Il nous est difficile de nous faire une opinion ferme à ce sujet. Il semble bien qu'ils admettent l'identité, et dans les sacrifices — car enfin la formule du sacrifice doit bien correspondre à leur concept de la divinité — dans les sacrifices, ils offrent à Dieu de l'eau pour son lever et versent l'eau à l'est, pour son coucher, et la versent à l'ouest. Dans une dispute, le plus faible dira: «Dieu m'est témoin que je ne t'ai rien fait, Dieu te le rendra», et il montre le soleil. Les sacrifices ne sont jamais

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Nous devons à l'obligeance du R. P. THUEUX, l'Européen qui, sans contredit, possède le mieux la langue Mossi, la communication de toutes ces formules. Qu'il nous soit permis de l'en remercier ici très sincèrement.

offerts au milieu de la nuit; mais il est vrai qu'ils ne le sont pas non plus au milieu du jour et peuvent l'être le soir, même quand le soleil a déjà disparu à l'horizont. Pourtant, les noms de Dieu et du soleil sont différents. *Wendé* est le nom propre de Dieu; *Wennam* indique la puissance de Dieu *(Wendé nam)* et aucun de ces noms n'a de pluriel, ce qui est un indice de la croyance à l'unité de Dieu. Le soleil se dira *Winniga* et à midi, quand il brûle, *Wintoro (winniga toro)*. Mais il faut ajouter que, parfois, le soleil se dira *Na Wendé* — Dieu-roi. La nuit, Dieu est censé rentrer dans sa case puisque le soleil n'est plus visible et cependant il continue à être partout et «si tu commets une faute la nuit, Dieu le sait». Un Mossi dira fort bien quand le soleil est à son midi: «C'est Dieu qui fait que le soleil fait mal aujourd'hui.» Il semble donc bien qu'en pratique ils établissent une distinction entre Dieu et le soleil: le soleil est sa demeure mais n'est pas lui. Mais que d'incohérences en tout cela!

Les phénomènes de la nature sont parfois attribués à Dieu. La foudre tue ceux qui ont fait le mal, tue l'animal mal acquis par fraude ou volé, et c'est Dieu qui l'envoie pour punir . . . à moins que ce ne soit un ennemi. Les amulettes, les fétiches, tirent leur puissance de Dieu, avons-nous dit, et il en est de même des remèdes véritables. La maladie est généralement attribuée à un génie malfaisant qu'il faut apaiser, mais parfois aussi à Dieu. Il ne semble pas que les Mossi donnent une âme aux êtres inanimés, seuls les êtres animés en ont une, plantes, animaux, hommes. Mais le plus souvent les phénomènes inexplicables ou anormaux sont attribués aux génies, résidant dans un être inanimé.

Il y a trois espèces de génies: les *tisé* (pluriel de *tiga*, arbre), qui résident exclusivement dans les arbres; les *kikirsi* (pluriel de *kikiriga*), qui sont les génies proprement dits, et les *tangamma* (pluriel de *tangandé*), qui sont les génies protecteurs des villages et résident dans le bois sacré.

Les *tisé* résident donc dans les arbres, de préférence dans ceux qui entourent les cases; il y en a cependant dans la brousse. Ils affectionnent spécialement le tamarinier, le cailcédrat, mais n'aiment pas du tout le *doubalé* qui est un réceptacle de chauves-souris. La nuit, ils quittent leur habitacle et vont se promener dans les cases. Ils ont un corps à forme humaine, mais imperceptible au commun des mortels. Ils sont beaucoup plus grands et plus gros que les hommes; ils sont noirs et marchent les pieds en l'air et la tête en bas.

La nuit donc, ils se promènent, et leur présence est révélée par ce fait que l'entrée de la case est assombrie: ils sont si gros qu'ils interceptent la lumière. Malheur à celui qui n'a pas d'eau dans sa *soukala*, qui n'a pas laissé de bière de mil! Le *tiga* qui s'est présenté et qui n'a rien trouvé, lui jettera des boutons par tout le corps, c'est la maladie propre aux *tisé*. Mais heureux sera-t-il s'il s'en tire à aussi bon compte; car les *tisé* peuvent lui infliger beaucoup d'autres maladies, voire même le tuer. Si le *tiga* trouve le moyen de toucher quelqu'un, l'endroit touché enfle; si on fait du bruit dans la brousse sous certains gros arbres, les joues enflent. Les *tisé* parlent, même pendant le jour; ce sont eux qui causent quand le vent agite les feuilles. Nous avions

distribué tout autour de nous des graines de papayers. Elles avaient levé et parfaitement poussé; les fruits mûrissaient déjà. Un beau jour, plus de papayers à Koupéla! Le naba avait déclaré que c'était un arbre qui parle et qu'il donnerait des maladies à qui en aurait dans sa *soukala* . . . et les papayers avaient été coupés!

Heureusement, on peut se défendre des *tisé*. D'abord, on peut couper les arbres qui leur servent d'abri, ils iront ailleurs, et de très beaux arbres disparaissent ainsi dans les villages. Ils peuvent aussi être apaisés par des sacrifices. Donc culte des arbres, dendrolatrie! Oh que non! Les Mossi distinguent fort bien l'arbre et le génie qui l'habite, et sacrifient au génie. Parfois aussi, l'arbre a été planté sur la tombe d'un vieillard, fondateur du village et on sacrifie aux mânes de l'ancêtre, au pied de l'arbre. Enfin, il y a des fétiches plus puissants que les *tisé*. Il suffit pour cela de connaître les racines et les écorces que n'aiment pas les *tisé*, de les mettre à infuser dans l'eau et de déposer la marmite à la porte des cases. Le *tiga* qui voit ce fétiche se sauve infailliblement. Certains Peuls ont, paraît-il, le pouvoir de distinguer entre les arbres habités par des génies et ceux qui ne le sont pas et de tuer ceux qui servent de refuge aux génies, rien qu'en frottant le sus-dit arbre avec du beurre! Mais il y a la manière de s'en prendre.

Les *kikirsi* sont de petits diablotins tout noirs ou tout rouges, hauts de quelques centimètres seulement. Leur corps a la forme du notre mais est bien plus agile et plus subtil, c'est quelque chose d'éthéré, d'impalpable, seuls les sorciers peuvent les voir. Ils les appellent en sifflotant ou en agitant une calebasse d'une forme spéciale, représentant un manche terminé par une boule. La calebasse est séchée sans être ouverte et les graines sont réunies dans la boule. En agitant son instrument, le sorcier fait du bruit et les *kikirsi* accourent en chantant.

Il y a des *kikirsi* bons et des *kikirsi* méchants et les bons ne font du mal que si on les y force, par exemple si on met du piment dans leur sauce. Ils ont horreur du piment, par contre ils aiment beaucoup le miel et toute bonne ménagère qui veut conserver son miel, a bien soin de le couvrir de piment, sinon les *kikirsi* viendraient le manger. Ils raffolent du sésame et les gateaux de mil *(samsa)* font leurs délices, et c'est pourquoi toute faiseuse de ces gateaux leur en offre quelques uns. Quiconque en mange, en se promenant, a soin d'en laisser tomber quelques miettes. Au contraire, ils ne boivent pas de bière de mil fermentée, il faut la leur offrir avant de mettre la levure *(da'nodo)*. Ils ont donc leurs goûts tout comme le commun des mortels. Ils ont leurs haines, leurs jalousies et vont parfois jusqu'à s'entre tuer. De sexe différent, dit-on, ils s'unissent en mariage et procréent. Ils ont même la spécialité de mettre toujours au monde des jumeaux, et c'est purquoi les jumeaux portent leur nom et leur sont consacrés; on croit que des génies résident en eux.

La naissance des jumeaux crée à leur mère beaucoup d'embarras et au temps jadis, ils étaient parfois supprimés tous les deux, parfois un seul était tué. Quand donc une femme a donné le jour à des jumeaux, elle construit, à la porte de sa case, une petite case minuscule, c'est là qu'iront se réfugier

les génies qui habitent ses enfants. Troisfois par an si ses moyens le lui permettent, au printemps, à l'hiver et au milieu de la saison des pluies ou tout au moins une fois l'an, il leur faut offrir une pintade en sacrifice, car la pintade est le sacrifice exclusivement réservé aux *kikirsi* eux-mêmes. Il faudra aussi ce jour là leur offrir leur mets préférés et donc acheter du miel, du sésame, des gateaux de mil et faire de la bière et réserver une cruche dans laquelle on n'a pas mis du levain, cuire la bouillie de mil et surtout ne pas mettre de piment dans la sauce, sinon gare, le mari la femme ou les enfants seraient atteints d'une maladie d'yeux terrible car telle est la maladie que les *kikirsi* ont le pouvoir de donner aux mortels.

Quand ces enfants sont en bas âge, ils ne peuvent porter que le *kankabra*, habit fait de fils noirs et d'autres presque blancs-mélangés, c'est l'habit distinctif des *kikirsi*. Heureusement, plus tard, ils pourront s'habiller comme ils voudront. Ouand la mère vient à disparaître, ce sont les jumeaux eux-mêmes qui offrent les sacrifices, ce sont eux qui construisent la petite case qui sert de demeure à leur petit génie. Le dernier-né est considéré comme l'aîné. Tous les deux portent le même bracelet, ils partagent tout ce qu'on leur donne et il est de bon ton de ne pas faire de cadeau à l'un sans donner la même chose à l'autre. Ces contumes d'ailleurs se retrouvent de l'Afrique en pays bambaras jusqu'au Tanganika.

Mais revenons aux *kikirsi* eux-mêmes. Il y en a partout. Dans la brousse, ils affectionnent les petites termitières et les grosses; les endroits découverts; il y en a autour des villages, il y a des mares consacrées aux *kikirsi*, des puits qui leur appartiennent. Il y a des génies préposés à la garde de chaque champ, et avant de semer, comme avant de couper le mil, le maître du champ sacrifie une poule en son honneur, sur une pierre, au milieu du champ. Par contre, le *kikiriga* doit écarter tout ce qui peut nuire à la récolte, oiseaux, chenilles, voleurs et le reste et remplir de grains un grenier grand comme celui que l'on déssine à terre avec de la cendre au moment de la récolte, et si vraiment il a bien rempli son office, il aura encore une poule quand tout le grain sera réuni en tas. Les femmes enceintes sont sous la protection d'un *kikiriga* spécial et les petits enfants ont le leur qui écarte d'eux les maladies et les dangers. Ne disons-nous pas qu'il y a une Providence spéciale pour les tous petits?

D'ailleurs chacun a son *kikiriga*. Les uns l'ont méchant, ce sont ceux qui se disputent avec tout le monde, ceux auxquels rien ne réussit, ceux dont les animaux meurent, car ce sont souvent les *kikirsi* qui tuent chèvres, moutons, chevaux, qui meurent de maladie. D'autres ont un bon *kikiriga*, pour ceux là tout prospère; ils sont nés sous une bonne étoile. Ce sont les gens sympathiques, doux, qui ont un bon caractère, ceux qui s'enrichissent et ont beaucoup d'enfants. Pour dormir, un Mossi appuie sa tête dans sa case sur une pierre ou un petit tertre en terre battue. C'est le lieu où réside son *kikiriga*, et de temps à autre, surtout quand il éprouve le besoin d'une protection spéciale, il lui offre une pintade et parfois même une chèvre, en sacrifice, à charge à lui désormais de chasser ceux de ses compagnons qui voudraient nuire à son protégé, d'écarter de lui toute maladie, tout danger.

Le *tangandé* est un génie, revêtant la forme d'un animal et considéré comme protecteur d'un village, et, par extension, le lieu de sa résidence, le bois sacré, car le plus souvent cet animal-protecteur réside dans un bosquet, mais parfois dans une simple pierre ou même dans un endroit découvert. Le *tangandé* peut être un caiman, un boa, une panthère, une tortue, une biche, un lièvre, etc. C'est un animal sacré pour tout le village, il est défendu de le tuer dans le bois sacré, mais on peut le tuer ailleurs, même à peu de distance du bois sacré.

Le *tangandé* est un génie parce qu'il protège les hommes, envoie ses serviteurs qui accompagnent les gens du village en voyage, s'ils l'ont prié. Sans cesse, les indigènes recourent à sa protection; sans cesse, le sorcier consulté renvoie au *tangandé* pour obtenir la guérison et lui demander de délivrer l'âme captive d'un mauvais sorcier; si quelqu'un meurt, on lui sacrifie encore et on lui demande de protéger les survivants et d'écarter toute maladie. Quand les âmes quittent le corps pendant le sommeil, elles vont souvent au bois sacré. Tout le monde peut sacrifier au *tangandé* et dans le *tangandé*, mais le naba sacrifie plus que tout autre, et le jour de la fête des morts *(basra)*, il y sacrifie toujours et généralement les anciens du village l'accompagnent.

Un village peut avoir plusieurs *tangandé*, mais l'animal-protecteur ou les animaux protecteurs, car ils sont le plus souvent deux, sont les mêmes dans tous les bois sacrés répétés autant de fois qu'il y a de *tangandé*. On ne peut rien prendre dans le bois sacré, tout y est sacré. Défense d'y couper du bois, de ramasser même le bois mort qui est tombé de lui-même. A fortiori ne peut-on pas mettre le feu aux herbes sèches, même aux environs du bois sacré; mais si, les précautions ayant été prises, le feu se communique au bois sacré, il n'y a rien à faire, les gens du village n'y sont pour rien. Par contre, on empêchera tout étranger de prendre quoi que ce soit dans le bois sacré, fallut-il pour cela employer la force. Mais si c'est un puissant auquel il est impossible de résister, après son départ, des sacrifices expiatoires seront offerts.

Le *tangandé* est donc un animal-protecteur, et pourtant, certains *tangamma* ont mauvais caractère. Si on leur a manqué de quelque manière que ce soit, ils se vengent en envoyant des maladies au coupable. Si un des sorciers qui mangent les âmes *(seuya)*, lui offre des cadeaux, le *tangandé* lui viendra en aide et refusera de rendre l'âme qui lui aura éte confiée, à moins qu'on ne lui offre des cadeaux plus importants. On peut prier un *tangandé* et lui faire un vœu, par exemple lui promettre un bouc ou un mouton s'il tue l'ennemi qui lui est désigné. Le bouc est acheté et attend que l'ennemi soit mort. Le *tangandé* prend parfois son temps et fait attendre plusieurs années; on va le gourmander, lui dire de se hâter, et à la fin, il se décide à faire disparaître celui qui lui a été indiqué. Le bouc est alors immolé.

Tous les *tangamma* viennent, disent d'aucuns, de la région de Fadá N'Gourma, où se trouve le père de tous les *tangamma*. C'est au sorcier à indiquer quel est le *tangandé* et le lieu de sa résidence. Un village venait de se fonder. Les vieillards avaient trouvé un terrain favorable pour les cultures, à proximité d'un marigot; ils avaient construit leurs cases. Au début

de l'hivernage, quand l'époque des semailles fut arrivée, ils se partagèrent la brousse avoisinante et se mirent en devoir de préparer leurs champs. Un jour, une panthère, délegée de son répaire, prit la fuite devant eux et se réfugia dans un fourré. Appeler les gens, entourer le fourré, le fouiller de toute part fut bientôt fait. De panthère point. Le lendemain, la même scène se reproduisit au même endroit et cela par trois fois, et toujours il fut impossible de découvrir la panthère, devenue tout à coup invisible. Les anciens intrigués, en bons Mossi, allèrent consulter le sorcier, qui leur déclara que la panthère est leur *tangandé* et le fourré où elle s'est réfugiée, son bois sacré. Il indiqua de plus les sacrifices à faire.

Mais tandis que coulait le sang des victimes, les enfants aperçurent une tortue qui se dirigeait vers le bois sacré et voulurent la saisir. Les anciens les en empêchèrent et de nouveau recoururent aux lumières du sorcier pour savoir ce que cela pouvait bien signifier: une tortue entrant dans le bois sacré pendant le sacrifice au *tangandé*! Et le sorcier rendit cet oracle: la tortue est l'enfant du *tangandé* et, par conséquent, devient sacrée pour votre village. Et depuis cet époque, ce village a pour *tangandé* la panthère et la tortue.

Le *tangandé* peut à la vérité être une pierre, un arbre qui sont considérés comme protecteur du village, mais le cas est plus rare. On peut, peut-être, considérer le *tangandé* comme une sorte de totem du village. Si on définit le totem avec SALOMON REINACH: «L'animal, le végétal, ou plus rarement le minéral ou le corps céleste en qui le clan reconnaît un ancêtre, un protecteur et un signe de ralliement[1]», on voit que c'est généralement un animal, un animal-protecteur qui est considéré comme *tangandé*, mais il n'est pas considéré comme un ancêtre, il ne sert pas de signe de ralliement car plusieurs villages peuvent avoir le même *tangandé*, beaucoup ont le caïman et le boa, sans se considérer pour cela comme liés entre eux.

Monseigneur LE ROY de son côté définit ainsi le totémisme: «Une institution consistant essentiellement en un pacte magique, représentant et formant une parenté d'ordre mystique et supranaturel, par lequel, sous la forme visible d'un animal, et exceptionnellement, d'un corps végétal, minéral ou astral, un esprit invisible est associé à un individu, à une famille, à un clan, à une tribu, à une société secrète en vue d'une réciprocité de services[2]». Cette définition ne correspond pas non plus dans tous ses détails avec le *tangandé* parce que le village seul peut avoir un *tangandé*, et il ne semble pas qu'il y ait un pacte magique quelconque à moins que les sacrifices offerts ne soient considérés comme pacte magique, ce qui ne semble pas être. Jamais l'animal-*tangandé* n'est offert en sacrifice, il n'y a pas d'initiation spéciale.

Ce qui, chez les Mossi, se rapproche le plus du totem, semble-t-il, c'est la conception qu'ils se font de l'âme humaine et encore n'est-ce pas le totem proprement dit, tel que les auteurs cités l'entendent. Chaque homme, en effet, a une âme, une âme qui subsiste après la mort et prend le nom de *kyma*, tandis que tant qu'elle vit, elle s'appelle *siga*. Elle prend le nom de *toullé* à

[1] SALOMON REINACH, Cultes mythes et religion, p. 81.
[2] Mgr. LE ROY, La religion des primitifs, p. 132.

2: Mangin FA28 Mossi

Ouagadougou, *toundo* à Koupéla, peu avant la mort; mais *siga*, *toundo*, *kyma*, sont une seule et même chose, un seul et même principe. Cette âme, d'après les Mossi, est un animal, invisible bien entendu, un serpent, un caïman, une biche, un lièvre. L'âme est apparentée à cet animal, elle est de sa famille, si bien que tuer un serpent ou un caïman dans un village dont l'âme des habitants est un serpent ou un caïman, c'est tuer un habitant de ce village car tout individu apparenté au serpent a dans ce village un serpent qui le représente, et il mourra quand son animal-âme mourra.

Cependant, et voilà qui va contre les définitions du totémisme, il n'attend de cet animal aucun secours, il ne lui offre jamais de sacrifice, jamais il ne le tue lui-même pour renouveler le pacte d'union. Il est défendu à celui dont l'âme est un caïman, de tuer un caïman dans son village, mais il peut le tuer ailleurs bien qu'il ne puisse jamais en manger, tandis qu'il peut tuer l'animal *tangandé*, pourvu que ce soit en dehors du *tangandé*, et il peut toujours en manger. Certains, rencontrant mort près de leur village l'animal-âme de leur famille, lui rendent les honneurs funèbres, pleurent, et se lamentent, l'enterrent comme l'un des leurs, mais ne lui font aucun présent, ne font pas son *kouré*; la plupart se contentent de le couvrir de terre. Les plus répandus sont une sorte de couleuvre (*bosombodro*) et le caïman. Plusieurs familles peuvent avoir le même animal-âme, et les mariages, bien qu'exogamiques, ne sont pas interdits entre ces individus.

L'âme peut quitter le corps, et en fait le quitte souvent, surtout pendant la nuit. Des enfants se sont-ils bien amusés en un lieu, s'est-on plu chez un individu, l'âme y retourne la nuit, et c'est alors qu'il faut tout craindre des sorciers qui peuvent la saisir à l'improviste et le malheureux possesseur de cette âme mourra.

L'âme peut avertir en songe son propriétaire d'un danger qui le menace. Un jour, un indigène, dont on m'a cité le village et le nom, rêva que son ennemi lui offrait une noix de kola. A son réveil, grand émoi, car c'est le signe que l'âme emploie pour indiquer que l'on est menacé de mort par un ennemi. Dans une telle occurrence, il ne reste plus qu'un remède, c'est d'aller déposer quelques cauris sur une fourmilière de grosses fourmis rouges, afin qu'elles détournent ce malheur. Notre homme se dirigea aussitôt vers la fourmilière la plus rapprochée. Hélas, un serpent le mordit en route et il mourut avant d'avoir pu faire son offrande aux fourmis! De tels faits frappent évidemment beaucoup l'imagination des indigènes qui font immédiatement le sophisme: Post hoc, propter hoc. Il suffit de quelques faits de ce genre, et l'on m'en a cité d'innombrables, pour les ancrer à tout jamais dans leurs superstitions.

Si l'âme quitte le corps, il est donc possible de la saisir et de l'empêcher de rentrer dans son corps, et c'est pourquoi nos Noirs n'aiment pas à être photographiés. Ils disent que dans la boîte est un mauvais génie qui prend l'âme et la mange. La preuve c'est qu'ensuite on peut voir sur le papier l'individu ainsi saisi.

L'homme est malade quand son âme ne peut plus revenir dans son corps parce qu'elle est retenue prisonnière par un mauvais sorcier ou par un *kikiriga*, et il faut alors offrir bien des sacrifices pour obtenir sa délivrance

et son retour. C'est le *tangandé* qui est le plus souvent supplié dans ce cas parce qu'il est plus fort que tous les autres génies et que les sorciers mêmes et qu'il est, de par sa fonction, le protecteur du village.

Mais il arrive que l'âme a été si bien cachée, que le *tangandé* n'arrive pas à la découvrir, le sorcier l'a mangée de suite ou même le *tangandé* est de connivence ou bien ce sont les mânes qui appellent le malade ou enfin c'est Dieu qui a envoyé la maladie. Il n'y a plus rien à faire, l'homme meurt. Son âme change désormais de nom et s'appelle *kyma*. Elle quitte le corps au moment même de la mort. Si elle a été prise par un sorcier ou par les mânes d'un ancêtre, elle quitte le bois sacré où elle est détenue au moment de la mort et se rend au lieu des âmes d'où elle reviendra à la tombe chaque fois qu'on lui offrira des sacrifices, d'où elle reviendra encore quand elle voudra affliger les survivants de quelque maladie.

Est-elle punie du mal qu'elle a commis ici-bas et récompensée du bien qu'elle a fait? Les opinions sont partagées. Certains disent que si on fait l'aumône à un pauvre — et les Mossi la font fréquemment —, si l'on est généreux et hospitalier, Dieu reçoit tout ce que l'on donne et le met de côté et le rend à l'âme au moment de sa séparation d'avec le corps, d'où le souhait de remerciement: «Que Dieu te le rende!» Si le défunt a mené une mauvaise vie, s'il était batailleur, voleur, s'il a tué, il est condamné à passer sur des charbons ardents pour arriver jusqu'à Dieu; ou bien, si c'est un assassin, il ne peut s'approcher de Dieu qu'après avoir bu tout le sang qu'il a répandu et que Dieu a conservé pour le lui faire boire. Les grands coupables sont arrêtés par la cime des arbres et ne parviennent jamais au lieu des âmes. Mais il faut avouer que la plupart des Mossi ne se soucient guère des peines qui peuvent les attendre dans l'autre vie ou en nient l'existence.

Les âmes vont à Bourtenga, au «lieu de rassemblement des âmes», d'après l'étymologie du mot, lieu dont la situation géographique reste indéterminée, ou à Pilimpikou, montagne située dans le Kipirsi. Là, leur seule occupation est d'aller au marché la nuit, et c'est pourquoi, au jour de l'enterrement, on donne au mort des cauris pour qu'il puisse acheter de la bière de mil, des habits pour qu'il n'ait pas l'air d'un gueux.

Les âmes sont blanches mais pour tout le reste ressemblent aux hommes, bien que plus agiles et pouvant se transporter sans effort et avec une très grande rapidité d'un lieu dans un autre. Elles font tout à l'envers, mangent avec la main gauche et font avec cette main tout ce que nous faisons avec la droite et c'est pourquoi le cadavre est lavé avec la main gauche. Elles mettent leurs habits à l'envers et la poche du pagne en dedans; elles portent le fer de la lance en bas, marchent à reculons, dit-on, par ce que leurs yeux sont derrière la tête, et c'est pourquoi la *kourita* qui représente le mort, porte tout à l'envers.

L'âme de ce qui lui est offert sur la terre, va les rejoindre: poules, moutons, chèvres, bœufs etc., et ils peuvent faire bombance et appeler leurs amis et réunir leur parenté car on se retrouve là-haut, et si les nabas ne le sont plus, du moins ceux qui sur terre leur furent soumis, reconstituent leur cour, et c'est pourquoi encore on dit que les parents viennent chercher leurs enfants,

les nabas leurs pages et leurs épouses favorites, les amis, leurs amis, à moins que les vivants ne les traitent fort bien et ne leur donnent force victuailles.

En effet, les âmes des défunts reviennent sur la terre recevoir les présents qui leur sont offerts, boire le sang des victimes qui sont immolées en leur honneur, et la bière de mil qui leur a été préparée au jour de la fête annuelle des morts *(basra)*. C'est pourquoi tout Mossi fidèle à ces coutumes ne boira jamais de bière de mil sans en avoir d'abord versé un peu à terre; il verse encore ce qui reste au fond de la calebasse afin que les âmes puissent se réjouir avec lui. Et c'est un grand honneur qu'un naba fait à un ancien quand il lui dit de prendre un côté de la calebasse et de verser à terre avec lui.

Il ne faut pas rire des âmes des défunts et de leur venue sur la terre. Si vous doutez de leur retour, écoutez ce que me racontait un vieux naba: «Un jour, j'étais allé rendre visite à un naba, mon voisin et mon ami; nous nous étions donnés rendez-vous chez lui avec un autre chef des environs. Il nous reçut fort bien et la journée avait été des plus agréables. Nous reposions, la nuit, sous l'abri de sa *soukala* quand nous fûmes soudain réveillés par un bruit de grelots et de galop de chevaux. Le lendemain, nous quittâmes notre hôte. A peine nous étions partis, qu'il tomba malade. Huit jours plus tard, il n'était plus. Les âmes étaient venues le chercher. Oh! père, ne ris pas des âmes des défunts!» Et le bon vieux tremblait d'émotion. C'est qu'ils y croient, nos Mossi, à toutes ces histoires de revenants, ils y croient fermement.

Mais les âmes se réincarnent-elles? Pour les petits enfants morts avant l'âge de raison, il est admis que c'est eux qui reviennent dans la personne du premier enfant que la mère met au monde. C'est pourquoi, surtout si la même femme a perdu plusieurs enfants de suite, l'enfant, dès sa naissance, est marqué de signes distinctifs, spécialement de tatouages sur le ventre et sur le bas du dos; parfois, s'il meurt, on lui coupe un morceau du pavillon de l'oreille, ou on lui casse la phalange d'un doigt de la main ou du pied: et, paraît-il, celui qui naît ensuite, porte les mêmes marques, mais ce dont on n'a pu me citer aucun exemple actuellement en vie. Souvent après la mort de son bébé, la mère quitte la case où il est mort. Une vieille, le soir, répand des cendres devant la porte, et le lendemain matin, si on trouve des traces de petits pieds, c'est que l'enfant est revenu et désire rentrer dans le sein de sa mère.

Mais en dehors des petits enfants, la reviviscence n'est pas admise, même pour les jeunes gens non mariés. Ils restent au lieu des âmes des années et des années, sans qu'il soit possible d'en fixer le nombre, et aucune distinction n'est faite, de ce chef, entre les riches et les pauvres, les puissants et leurs sujets.

Les suicidés, maudits dans leur mort, le sont encore dans leur âme qui n'a généralement pas droit aux cérémonies funèbres et errent par le monde sans nuire à personne mais sans pouvoir trouver de repos.

La morale indigène est réduite à sa plus simple expression. Est mal tout ce qui nuit à autrui. Pense en ton cœur et désire tout ce que tu veux, pourvu que tu ne nuises pas au prochain, il n'y a pas de faute. Si la fornication et l'adultère sont des fautes, c'est quelles renferment une atteinte à la

justice. Je ne parle pas des fautes contre nature qui sont à peu près inconnues. Si le vol, l'assassinat, si même les injures, les coups et les blessures sont punies, c'est en tant qu'injustice. La calomnie est en horreur chez eux, et dire de quelqu'un qu'il a calomnié, c'est lui faire une très grosse injure. Une injure contre sa mère est une de celles qu'un Mossi ne pardonne pas parce que c'est nuire à l'honneur de la famille et lui causer un préjudice. Il est donc nécessaire de veiller à ne pas manquer à la justice dans les relations qu'on peut avoir avec les indigènes; ils y sont très sensibles, et s'ils reçoivent sans murmurer une punition juste parce que le délit est prouvé, ils repoussent avec indignation toute accusation dont on ne peut pas faire la preuve, même d'ailleurs si l'accusation est fondée.

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Mais à côté de cette morale générale, que de choses sont interdites non point parce qu'elles sont mauvaises, mais parce qu'elles entraînent des conséquences funestes! Les tabous (*kisgou* pour les Mossi, de *kisé* «défendre») sont presque innombrables. Ils peuvent se diviser en deux classes: les *kisgou* perpétuels, qui atteignent toute la famille; et les *kisgou* personnels et transitoires.

Les premiers consistent généralement dans l'interdiction de manger tel ou tel animal, ou de faire telle ou telle chose. C'est ainsi qu'il est défendu à certains nabas de se rencontrer, de se voir, et s'ils manquent à cette défense, l'un d'eux mourra dans l'année. Cette défense est facile à expliquer, si on se rappelle les guerres incessantes que se faisaient les grands chefs et la crainte qu'ils avaient d'être empoisonnés ou supprimés d'une manière quelconque par un de leurs adversaires. Ainsi encore, parti en guerre sur un fringant coursier, un Mossi a-t-il été obligé de fuir. Les ennemis allaient le saisir et il n'a dû son salut, le brave, qu'à la vitesse de son cheval. Rentré chez lui, il décrète que le cheval est un animal sacré pour lui et ses descendants et que, désormais, tous ses enfants et leurs enfants ont à bien traiter le cheval et à ne pas en manger la viande sous peine de devenir aveugles ou lépreux. Là d'ailleurs se borne l'interdiction. Le cheval n'est pas considéré comme un animal protecteur, aucun sacrifice ne lui est offert, et les Mossi ne l'appelleront ni *tangandé*, animal protecteur du village, ni *siga*, animal âme, mais *kisgou*, défense.

Le *kisgou* atteint parfois seulement certains membres de la famille. Un père a mangé du chien et a été malade et cela à deux ou trois reprises différentes; il consulte le sorcier et celui-ci déclare que le chien lui est interdit à lui et à ses enfants mais non aux autres membres de la famille. Ou bien encore, celui qui est né chez les Peuls, auxquels le chien est interdit, peut avoir le chien pour *kisgou*. Parfois, le *kisgou* n'atteint que lui, son fils, et son petit-fils, mais n'atteint pas ses autres descendants, parce que les premiers suivront son âme à lui, tandis que l'âme de ses autres descendants suivront l'âme de sa mère donc de leur arrière-grand'mère à qui le chien n'est pas interdit. Raison de sorcier contre laquelle il n'y a rien à dire.

Ce *kisgou* est le plus astreignant mais il peut cesser si celui qui l'a établi offre les sacrifices nécessaires ou par la volonté d'un des descendants qui s'en affranchit et en affranchit ses enfants. C'est ainsi que la famille du Saman-Naba, premier ministre à Koupéla, a le lièvre pour *kisgou*. Mais voyant ses frères et son fils chrétiens manger impunément du lièvre sans devenir ni aveugles ni lépreux, le naba s'est mis à en manger et ne s'en porte pas plus mal.

Les parents mettent les enfants au courant des différents *kisgou* de la famille et leur inspirent une crainte salutaire afin qu'ils n'en mangent pas. Si l'on vient à manquer involontairement à son *kisgou*, on peut tomber malade et le sorcier consulté dira ce qu'il y a à faire et quel sacrifice offrir au *tangandé* pour obtenir son pardon. Mais si on a fait exprès, s'il y a eu mépris, pas de pardon possible.

La seconde espèce de *kisgou* est toute particulière et personnelle. Ce sont les nombreuses défenses que le sorcier impose à un malade. Telle viande, telle sauce, lui est interdite, il ne peut boire de l'eau dans laquelle a été délayée de la farine de mil, il ne peut manger de gâteaux de mil ou de haricots. C'est ainsi qu'un pauvre enfant rachitique et atteint d'une maladie de cœur, s'est vu défendre ainsi successivement à peu près tout ce qui se mange. Ses parents avaient toutes les peines du monde pour trouver la nourriture qui ne lui était pas interdite, et finalement, il est mort d'inanition. Tous ces *kisgou* cessent évidemment avec la maladie qui les a fait imposer, à moins que la maladie, étant incurable, ne dure toute la vie du malade.

Chapitre Deuxième. — Culte.

Si l'on définit la religion, avec Mgr. Le Roy[1]: «L'ensemble des croyances, des obligations et des pratiques par lesquelles l'homme reconnaît le monde surnaturel, s'acquitte envers lui de ses devoirs et lui demande son assistance», après avoir étudié, dans le chapitre précédent, les croyances des Mossi sur le monde surnaturel, il reste à voir comment ils correspondent avec ce monde surnaturel, comment ils s'acquittent de leurs devoirs envers lui et lui demandent son assistance. C'est toute la question des sacrifices et des fêtes.

Mais à côté de ce culte, reconnu et raisonnable, il y en a un autre, la magie, qui est «l'art de réduire à son service, par certaines pratiques occultes et d'aspect plus ou moins religieux, les forces de la nature, ou de capter les influences du monde invisible[2]» et c'est toute la question des superstitions, des amulettes, fétiches, grisgris; c'est surtout celle des sorciers et de leur façon d'agir.

Le sacrifice est l'acte principal du culte dans toutes les religions et généralement le sacrifice est sanglant. D'où qu'ils tiennent leur origine, les Mossi ne manquent pas à cette règle générale qui domine le genre humain tout entier. Ils font des sacrifices sanglants et communient au sacrifice par la manducation de la victime à tel point que ceux même qui n'ont pas vu immoler l'animal peuvent en manger et sont dits avoir offert le sacrifice avec le sacrificateur.

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[1] Mgr. Le Roy, *l. c.*, p. 49.
[2] Id., p. 331.

Pour un oui, pour un non, le sang des poules, des chèvres, des moutons, des bœufs, coule; parfois, celui des ânes, des chevaux et jadis même des hommes. Un Mossi n'entreprend rien sans sacrifice à son *tangandé* (animal-protecteur) ou à ses *kikirsi* (génies). S'il ne sait à qui sacrifier, il consulte le sorcier.

Quelqu'un de la famille est-il malade, un sacrifice ou plusieurs sont offerts; quelqu'un part-il en voyage, va-t-il à la chasse ou à la pêche, il offrira des sacrifices. Sacrifices encore quand deux hommes se sont disputés et veulent se réconcilier, sans compter tous les sacrifices qui doivent être offerts à la suite des rêves, de mauvais pressentiments, de dangers qui semblent menaçants. On sacrifie pour se rendre les *kikirsi* ou les mânes favorables, pour demander la réussite d'une affaire, pour accomplir un vœu, pour écarter une maladie, pour nuire à un ennemi, pour apaiser un ancêtre irrité, les *tisé*, les *kikirsi*, les *tangamma* courroucés. Il n'est guère de remède qui ne soit préparé sans sacrifice, et le sacrifice fait partie de tous les sortilèges, de toutes les préparations qui doivent nuire à un ennemi. On sacrifie avant les semailles, avant la moisson. avant de construire une case pour sa femme. On sacrifie pour tout et pour tous et presque à tout.

On sacrifie partout. Le bois sacré est le lieu le plus souvent choisi, avec la pierre qui sert de demeure au *kikiriga* protecteur du logis. Mais on peut sacrifier dans les champs, dans les endroits découverts où rien ne pousse, sur le chemin qui conduit au *tangandé* soit du village que l'on habite, soit de son propre village quand on a entendu dire qu'il demande un sacrifice et que l'on ne peut s'y rendre soi-même.

Tout homme peut sacrifier quand il a atteint l'âge de raison, et l'on voit parfois des enfants d'une dizaine d'années, offrir leur sacrifice aussi sérieusement que les plus âgés. Les femmes ne peuvent sacrifier elles-mêmes, elles doivent avoir recours au ministère des hommes, mais elles peuvent donner la victime et participer à la manducation. Un naba, un homme un peu riche, a son ou ses sacrificateurs attitrés. La règle est obligatoire pour un chef de province qui ne sacrifie jamais lui-même dans les grandes circonstances, et bien rarement en son particulier.

* * *

Il y a plusieurs espèces de sacrifices que nous allons étudier les unes après les autres afin de mieux saisir la manière dont les Mossi communiquent avec le monde invisible.

Tout d'abord, le sacrifice type, celui qui sert de base à tous les autres, le *mand'zollé*.

Le sacrificateur, accompagné de son fils portant un coq aux plumes blanches, ou de toute autre couleur, et une calebasse dans laquelle se trouve de la farine de mil délayée dans de l'eau, se rend au lieu du sacrifice, par exemple au *tangandé*.

En arrivant il dit:

Kabré, Kabré. Pardon, excuse-moi.

Puis il s'asseoit, le visage tourné vers l'ouest et prend en main la victime et dit:

Na-Wend'daogo, sak'a tan!	Dieu-roi mâle, réponds trois fois!
Na-Wend'poko, sak'a nasé!	Dieu-roi femelle, réponds quatre fois!
Na-Wend'ka kou ned'yé, kon ky yé.	Si Dieu-roi ne tue pas, on ne meurt pas.
Na-Wendé ka léo, ned'kon lu'yé. — Pilimpik'dim n'yélé; lila kom'dim n'yélé t'eb y noara, ti no'pelra t'eb kis'tangandé t'a déé n'di né teng'-kikirsi lé teng'portapa.	Si Dieu-roi n'enchaîne pas, on n'est pas enchaîné. — Les papillons ont dit; les génies de l'eau ont dit de prendre un gallinacé que ce soit un coq blanc et de l'offrir au *tangandé* pour qu'il le prenne et le mange avec les *kikirsi* du village et leurs femmes.

Cette formule peut varier suivant les cas. Ici, le sacrificateur expose ce qu'il désire. Il raconte, par exemple, au *tangandé* que son fils est malade et que lui-même a été consulter le sorcier qui lui a dit de prendre un coq blanc pour l'offrir au *tangandé* avec de l'eau, pour que le *tangandé* rende la santé à son fils. Ensuite, il verse l'eau derrière lui, par conséquent à l'est, et dit:

Na-wendé, déé a ybou kom!	Dieu-roi, reçois l'eau de ton lever!

Puis il verse l'eau devant lui, à l'ouest en disant:

Na-wendé, déé a kyenbo kom!	Dieu-roi, reçois l'eau de ton coucher!

Enfin il verse l'eau sur la pierre du sacrifice ou devant ses pieds et dit:

Tangandé, yk'n'déé kom nyou la kwen la biga lafi!	*Tangandé*, lève-toi, reçois l'eau et bois-la et donne à mon fils la santé!
Nyé lé zouanga, nini ka yé.	Il est comme un aveugle, il n'a plus d'yeux.
Tangandé nyé youngo né wintoro la ko biga lafi.	Le *tangandé*, lui, voit la nuit et le jour et donne la santé à mon enfant.

Si le sacrifice comporte l'offrande de la bière de mil, il en verse sur la pierre du sacrifice en disant:

Na-Wendé ka nyou dam yé, la poré-dimma nyouda.	Dieu-roi ne boit pas de bière, mais sa suite en boit.

Il prend alors le coq de la main gauche, renverse la tête en tirant la crête et lui coupe le cou. Il fait couler le sang sur la pierre, là où il a versé l'eau, tout en disant:

Tangandé déé noara n'di, la kwen la biga lafi né sounoro!	*Tangandé*, reçois ce coq et mange-le, et donne à mon enfant la santé et la joie!

Il jette alors le coq devant lui en disant:

Noara bé Wennam, ba souk'ba'a.	Le coq est à Dieu, qu'il écarte la maladie.

Il envoie ensuite son enfant chercher le coq. L'enfant saisit la bête en choisissant le moment où elle est sur le dos et il l'aide au besoin à prendre

cette position. Il la traîne à terre par les pattes jusqu'auprès du sacrificateur qui dit:

T'a vouda bemdaoge. Traîne à terre mes ennemis.

Le sacrificateur prend alors la poule et la met sur ses pattes en tenant la tête droite:

T'a timma biga! Qu'il donne la santé à mon enfant!

Il retourne le coq, lui met la tête en bas et les pattes en l'air:

T'a terlda bema! Qu'il fasse mordre la poussière à mes ennemis!

De la main gauche, il arrache des plumes du cou, crache dessus et les colle sur la pierre ou par terre avec le sang de la victime et dit:

Yelbandé tou sébro! Que tout ce qu'il y a de mauvais s'en aille avec le vent!

Ta toubré oum! Que ses oreilles entendent (mes imprécations)!

Ta nif ka nya yé! Que son œil ne voie pas!

Il brise une patte du coq.

T'a kao bemdaogo karga! Brise la jambe de mes ennemis!

Il brise l'autre patte:

T'a kao bempoko karga! Brise la jambe de mes ennemies!

Et il rend la victime à l'enfant qui l'emporte. Le reste de l'eau et du dole est répandu au lieu même du sacrifice.

Le coq est plumé soit sur place, soit à la maison et rôti ou cuit à l'eau, selon le sacrifice. Le sacrificateur enlève les ongles des pattes, le bec, les ailerons et le foie, et les met dans la main gauche de son enfant qui va les déposer à quelque distance sur le bord du chemin en disant:

Mand'déé gobra, la kwen détogo nyé masem. Le sacrifice se reçoit de la main gauche, mais de la droite donne lui la santé.

Il revient au lieu où sont réunis les gens, et la victime est partagée entre toutes les personnes présentes. Quand toutes ont mangé ce qui leur revient elles se réunissent en groupe devant le sacrificateur et le saluent:

Wennam déé mando! Que Dieu recoive ton sacrifice!

Wennam tou taoré! Que Dieu l'accepte!

Le sacrifice est terminé.

Si c'est une chèvre ou un mouton ou un bœuf qui sont sacrifiés, au lieu des plumes du cou, on enlève des poils sur le sommet de la tête, on y ajoute un morçeau de la corde qui a servi à attacher la victime, et on colle le tout là où le sang a coulé; on ne brise pas leurs jambes.

Telle est la formule régulière du sacrifice, sauf évidemment les variantes qu'y peuvent introduire les particuliers ou la coutume de telle ou telle région. C'est le *mand'zallé.*

Le *mand'lingdem* ou *mand'dédem* que nous pourrions appeler «sacrifice caché», s'offre pour un malade qui est sur le point de mourir. Sa maladie tient à ce que son âme est sortie de son corps. Le sorcier a déclaré qu'elle se trouve au *tangandé*. A l'insu du malade, d'où le nom de «sacrifice caché», son père se rend au *tangandé*, accompagné d'un autre enfant qui porte la victime et l'eau, et de la mère du malade qui porte une grande calebasse à moitié remplie d'eau et dans laquelle elle place une calebasse plus petite.

Le sacrifice se fait comme précédemment, mais tandis que l'enfant fait rôtir la poule, le sacrificateur jette à terre trois cauris si c'est un garçon qui est malade, quatre si c'est une fille, et verse un peu d'eau, puis appelle le malade par son nom: «Bila, viens, réponds-moi.» Il appelle trois fois un garçon, quatre fois une fille. Puis il prend les cauris et une partie de la terre mêlée à l'eau et au sang de la victime. La femme soulève la petite calebasse qui nage dans l'eau, le sacrificateur met la boue et les cauris au fond de la grande calebasse et la femme met vivement la petite calebasse sur le tout et la maintient au fond de l'eau. Le même manège se répète trois et quatre fois selon le sexe du malade, puis la femme prend la route de la maison, tenant la calebasse d'une main et maintenant toujours la petite calebasse pour qu'elle ne surnage pas, tandis que le sacrificateur la suit, agitant son sabre ou sa lance derrière elle, afin d'écarter les mauvais génies. L'âme est au fond de l'eau, parmi la boue ensanglantée et les cauris, il faut à tout prix l'empêcher de se sauver de nouveau.

Quand le cortège est arrivé auprès du malade, on le fait asseoir, et la femme verse sur sa tête l'eau de la grande calebasse, toujours sans soulever la petite. Si le malade, surpris par cette aspersion qu'il n'attend pas, fait un sursaut, il est sauvé, son âme est rentrée dans son corps; sinon, il n'y a plus rien à faire qu'à l'abandonner à son malheureux sort, le *tangandé* n'a pas voulu rendre l'âme. Le sacrificateur et ses aides mangent alors la victime, mais le malade n'en mange pas.

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Le sacrifice muet, *mand'moukou*, appelé aussi sacrifice de l'œuf, *mand'gellé*, parce que c'est un œuf qui est offert, se fait dans les circonstances suivantes. Il est des maladies qui ont la triste propriété de parler comme des gens. Elles appellent un individu qui, croyant que c'est réellement quelqu'un qui l'appelle, répond à son nom. C'en est fait, il tombera malade et mourra.

Le sorcier a annoncé qu'une telle maladie menace le village et qu'il faut faire un sacrifice muet. Le naba et les anciens, en émoi, délèguent l'un d'eux pour offrir ce sacrifice. Le lendemain matin, le vieillard désigné prend un œuf, souvent aussi une noix de kola et des racines spéciales, et suit le chemin que devrait suivre la maladie si elle venait dans le village. Il garde le plus profond silence. Arrivé à une certaine distance, il approche l'œuf de ses lèvres et lui dit mystérieusement qu'une maladie menace leur village et que si elle veut suivre ce chemin, il a à l'arrêter. Puis, il dépose à terre ou enfouit l'œuf, la noix de kola et les racines et s'en retourne. L'œuf qui est

une poule future mais qui ne peut parler est choisi comme emblème du silence qu'il faut garder pour conjurer la maladie.

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Dans le sacrifice appelé «mauvais sacrifice», la victime n'est pas consommée par les assistants mais abandonnée sur place où elle pourrit ou sert à repaître les vautours ou les hyènes. Toutes les victimes peuvent être ainsi offertes. Le sorcier seul décide des cas où il faut faire un tel sacrifice; c'est généralement pour conjurer un malheur publique, par exemple pour éloigner une maladie contagieuse qui dévorera la victime et laissera les gens. La victime est parfois abandonnée vivante et chassée dans la brousse.

* * *

Tout peut être offert en sacrifice si le sorcier le dit. Les noix de kolas, les cauris, la cendre de certaines écorces ou de certaines racines, des pierres rouges, le fruit intérieur du *karité*, etc. Les poules sont la victime le plus généralement choisi mais les sacrifices de chèvres et de moutons ne sont pas rares. Nous avons vu que la pintade est le sacrifice préféré des *kikirsi*. Les nabas sont tenus de sacrifier parfois des bœufs et, dans certaines circonstances, des ânes. Quelques-uns peuvent sacrifier des chevaux mais pas tous. Enfin autrefois, même des hommes étaient offerts en sacrifice. Certains *tangamma* étaient avides de sacrifices humains, et les Peuls en faisaient souvent les frais. Les indigènes à teint clair, tirant sur le rouge, se rapprochant par conséquent de la couleur des mânes qui sont dites être blanches, étaient sacrifiés aux mânes de préférence à tous les autres. Mais ces sacrifices étaient rares et réservés aux plus grands chefs.

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Parfois, au lieu d'offrir tout de suite un sacrifice, on fait un vœu. C'est le *poulongo mando*. Par exemple, une maladie sévit dans le pays, ou bien on a une grave affaire sur les bras et on se demande comment les choses vont tourner, ou encore on veut se débarrasser d'un ennemi. Celui qui fait le vœu, se rend au *tangandé* ou à la pierre des *kikirsi*, portant une calebasse d'eau. Il verse l'eau en disant: «*Tangandé*, si cette maladie s'éloigne, ou bien si mon affaire réussit, ou encore si mon ennemi meurt, je te sacrifierai un bouc ou un bœuf.» Et pour témoigner de sa bonne volonté, celui qui fait le vœu, achète, à la première occasion, le bouc ou le bœuf promis. Si le *tangandé* ou les *kikirsi* répondent à sa demande, il accomplit son vœu et dans la formule du sacrifice, au lieu de dire que c'est le sorcier qui lui a dit d'offrir telle ou telle victime, il rappelle son vœu et souvent promet un autre sacrifice pour l'année suivante.

Les musulmans ont inventé un autre sacrifice non sanglant à leur usage. Voici la recette: «Si quelqu'un est malade, dans ta *soukala* prends une kola, du miel, des gâteaux de miel, des haricots, du maïs, des cauris et mélange le tout dans une calebasse remplie d'eau. Puis appelle un Musulman-Yarga ou Peul, pour faire la prière. Bien entendu, ce dernier ne se déplacera que

moyennant finance. Un mouton tout au moins doit accompagner la demande. Grave, majestueux et réservé comme tout bon musulman doit l'être, il s'assied dans la cour intérieure, près de la case où gît le malade, et tout le monde s'assied autour de lui, les deux mains ouvertes devant les yeux en forme de livre, les petits doigts réunis.» Le Musulman commence sa prière en mossi, répétant ce qu'on lui a demandé: la santé du malade. Quand il a terminé, il passe ses deux mains sur sa figure et toujours trois fois pour un garçon et quatre fois pour une fille, puis chacun reprend sa première position et notre homme baragouine n'importe quoi en arabe ou en peul. Quand il a fini, tout le monde se passe et se repasse les mains sur la figure, le maître du logis trempe sa main dans la calebasse qui renferme le mélange décrit plus haut et la porte à son front; les enfants emportent le tout et tous saluent le bon apôtre: «Que Dieu t'exauce!» Et notre homme reprend, toujours aussi grave, le chemin de sa demeure. L'eau servira à faire des ablutions sur le malade, on en mettra aussi quelque peu dans ce qu'il mangera. Ce n'est pas bien terrible, et si des malades guérissent par auto-suggestion, c'est tant mieux.

La bénédiction et la malédiction sont aussi en usage. Mais rentrent-elles dans le culte ou dans la magie? Quoiqu'il en soit, il y a des indigènes qui ont le pouvoir de tuer quiconque ils veulent, rien qu'en disant un mot, de faire sécher la récolte sur pied, de donner aux bestiaux la maladie qu'il leur plaît de donner. Il en est aussi qui peuvent bénir, rendre un voyage favorable, faire réussir une affaire, et si vous êtes blessés, recourrez à eux, ils vous mettront autour du membre blessé une corde graisseuse avec trois ou quatre nœuds selon votre sexe et le membre n'enflera pas, et la plaie sera très vite guérie.

Tels sont les principaux sacrifices et les actes du culte. Il n'a pas été question des sacrifices offerts aux mânes soit le jour de l'enterrement, soit le jour du *kouré*, car les animaux offerts alors ne sont pas, à proprement parler, sacrifiés, *kou mando*, mais offerts, donnés, *fabré*. Des sacrifices faits le jour de la fête des morts, nous allons parler à l'instant.

Les Mossi de Koupéla ont deux fêtes principales: la fête des morts ou *basra* et la fête musulmane du mouton, la *kibsa*, toutes deux fêtes intimes, fêtes familiales.

La *basra* est la fête des morts. Tout chef de famille doit, en ce jour, offrir des sacrifices aux mânes de ses ancêtres, lui seul peut sacrifier au tombeau; même si un membre de la famille est devenu puissant et riche, il ne se permettra pas d'offrir lui-même ce sacrifice qui revient de droit au chef de famille. Tous ceux de la famille qui veulent donc offrir un sacrifice au tombeau des ancêtres, doivent en ce jour passer par lui; mais les sacrifices offerts aux *kikirsi* et au *tangandé* — et presque tout le monde leur en offre en ce jour — peuvent être faits par n'importe qui. C'est en ce jour surtout qu'on peut voir des bambins immoler gravement leur poule à leurs *kikirsi* et au *tangandé*, et chacun tient à honneur d'offrir la sienne. Les coqs et les poules sont seuls sacrifiés en ce jour.

La *basra* n'est pas célébrée le même jour par toutes les familles. Les unes la célèbrent avant le chef de province, les autres après lui, la plupart le même jour.

Voici comment procède le naba de Koupéla, et les cérémonies sont les mêmes pour les particuliers à cela près que, moins riches, ils ne peuvent offrir autant de sacrifices. La *basra* est toujours célébrée par le naba un samedi. Dès le jeudi, il a pris de la bière non fermentée dans les cuves, et il est allé en verser sur la tombe de son père et de son grand-père. Il a aussi sacrifié une poule sur chacune des tombes. Partout où se trouve la tombe d'un de ses ancêtres, le gardien de la tombe y sacrifie une poule. Le vendredi soir, même cérémonie. Le sacrifice est le sacrifice ordinaire décrit plus haut, mais la formule d'invocation est remplacée par celle-ci: «Ame de mon père, étend la main et prend cette poule que je t'offre; fais que j'atteigne l'année prochaine en bonne santé, et je reviendrai te donner une poule.» La poule immolée au tombeau n'est pas grillée comme dans les autres sacrifices, mais cuite à l'eau.

En ces jours, il faut avoir bien soin de ne pas coucher dehors car les âmes viennent boire de la bière dans les cuves et malheur à qui se trouve sur leur chemin; elles le tueront ou tout au moins le rendront gravement malade.

Le jour même de la fête, s'ils ne sont pas venus la veille, tous ceux qui ont quelque obligation envers le naba, ou envers celui qui célèbre la fête, ceux auquels il a donné une femme, ou qui lui en ont demandé une, viennent le saluer avec un coq et des cauris. Beaucoup de ses administrés, surtout les chefs de cantons, viennent aussi offrir leur coq et leurs cauris. Par contre, si un visiteur de marque se présente ce jour-là, il est de la plus élémentaire politesse de lui offrir un coq.

Le jour même de la fête, il n'y a généralement pas de sacrifices sur les tombes. Les victimes sont offertes aux *kikirsi* protecteurs de la case, de la cour intérieure, de la cour extérieure, de la *soukala* toute entière. Les poules immolées sont d'autant plus nombreuses que les cadeaux ont été plus abondants. Quand les sacrifices sont terminés, le naba réunit ses gens, la bière est apportée et présentée au naba qui commence par en verser un peu à terre en offrande aux mânes, puis boit et fait partager les cruches entre ses gens. Si on a une affaire à traiter, ce n'est évidemment pas ce jour-là qu'il faut choisir, car, après midi, tous nos gens sont plus ou moins ivres.

Le lundi et le mercredi suivant, le naba se rend en grande pompe, au petit jour, dans deux villages voisins (Nakalbo et Sabré) afin d'y sacrifier un bœuf au *tangandé*. C'est grande fête ces jours-là dans ces villages; le naba y perd un bœuf mais y gagne force poules et quelques milliers de cauris. Il se rend aussi au village de Toulgou le jour où se célèbre la *basra* dans cette localité, parce que sa famille est originaire de Toulgou.

La *kibsa* est la fête musulmane du mouton et se célèbre quarante jours après la fin du grand jeûne. Tous les Mossi célèbrent cette fête en leur particulier, chaque famille a fait de la bière de mil et, en ce jour, la bouille de mil est remplacée par du riz et de la viande. C'est une fête encore plus intime que la précédante en ce sens qu'elle se célèbre partout le même jour et que les gens restent à peu près chez eux pour boire et pour manger. Ils se congratulent les jours suivants.

Le lendemain du jour où la lune a paru à l'horizon, c'est à dire neuf jours avant la fête même, le chef des Yarsé de Kalmodo vient solennellement

saluer le naba de Koupéla. Il porte à la main la lance du naba Silga, un des prédécesseurs du naba actuellement régnant, et tient à peu près ce petit discours: Naba Gado (le naba des Yarsé de Kalmodo) et le naba Silga étaient amis. L'esclave du naba Gado se sauva et ce dernier le chercha partout et ne le trouva pas. Naba Gado alla donc trouver naba Silga et lui dit: «Mon esclave s'est sauvé et je l'ai cherché partout mais en vain.» Naba Silga répondit: «Je ne l'ai pas vu non plus.» Et naba Gado continua à chercher son esclave. Enfin il le trouva et revint prévenir naba Silga qui le lui fit rendre. Pour prouver sa reconnaissance, naba Gado offrit au naba Silga la fête du feu. Mais naba Silga refusa en disant: «C'est du feu, et le feu brûle.» Naba Gado proposa alors le jeûne, le ramadan. Naba Silga refusa encore car le jeûne c'est la faim et la soif et un ami fait-il un tel présent à son ami? C'est alors que naba Gado proposa la *kibsa* mais à la condition que naba Silga lui préparerait tous les ans une nourriture abondante, pour lui et tous ses gens, et que tous viendraient célébrer la fête ici même et joueraient le cœur plein de joie. Naba Silga accepta avec empressement.

Quand le naba de Kalmodo a fini ce petit discours, la première femme du naba lui offre une calebasse d'eau, car les musulman ne boivent pas de bière fermentée, et le naba de Kalmodo chante les louanges de tous les prédécesseurs du naba actuel de Koupéla. Puis tout le monde fait du bruit et danse. Huit jours plus tard, il revient toujours avec la lance et le tambour de guerre. Le naba lui offre un bœuf que le naba de Kalmodo égorge. Il répand le sang sur la lance et dit: «Que Dieu donne la santé au naba et à ses ministres!» Le naba fait apporter les victuailles et quand tous sont repus, ils viennent saluer le naba: «Que Dieu t'accorde l'an prochain!», et ils se retirent.

Ces deux fêtes de la *basra* et de la *kibsa*, sont célébrées par tous les Mossi[1]. Il en est d'autres qui sont propres au naba de Koupéla, nous n'en dirons qu'un mot.

Le *naky* (*naba ky* «mil du naba») est la fête personnelle du naba. Elle est toujours célébrée le samedi — comme toutes les fêtes du naba d'ailleurs —. Vingt et un jour à l'avance, elle est annoncée au marché par le crieur public. Sept jours avant la fête, le naba sacrifie à l'aire une chèvre, la mange sur place après l'avoir fait griller, et les trois nabas préposés à la garde du mil du naba battent un peu de mil, et tous les jours ils reviendront ainsi à l'aire pour battre un peu de mil jusqu'au jour de la fête. La quantité de mil ainsi battue ne dépasse pas d'ailleurs deux paniers.

Le jour de la fête, de bonne heure, les grands ministres vont, avec leurs gens, saluer le naba: «Que Dieu t'accompagne; que Dieu te donne de voir toute cette année!» Le cortège se forme et se rend à l'aire du naba. Ses sœurs et ses femmes enlèvent une partie du mil battu les jours précédents et le portent

[1] Pour être exact, il faut avouer que le nom même de *basra* n'est pas employé partout au Mossi, mais il semble bien que la fête elle-même soit célébrée partout. A Bélousa, c'est la fête appelée *kytouara*. Le nom de la *kibsa*, au contraire, est connu partout, mais des circonstances particulières peuvent en empêcher la célébration. Ainsi les guerriers d'un canton ont été vaincus ce jour, la *kibsa* leur est néfaste et ils ne la célèbrent plus.

en criant et dansant jusqu'à un grenier situé en dehors de la *soukala* du naba. Puis tous boivent copieusement.

Le surlendemain, dans la soirée, nouvelle cérémonie. Les parents du naba se rendent à l'aire, mettent dans des tiges d'herbe le mil qui reste et en font un paquet que l'on porte au son des tambours et dansant, jouant, criant, comme au jour d'un enterrement. Ce mil est déposé dans le grenier avec celui qui a été porté le jour de la fête et un mouton et une poule sont sacrifiés auprès du grenier et partagés entre tous les assistants, mais le naba n'en mange pas, et pendant toute cette cérémonie il se cache, car s'il apercevait le cortège, il mourrait.

D'où vient cette coutume qui rappelle au naba que, si puissant soit-il, il est mortel comme tous ses sujets? D'où vient cette autre coutume que nous avons vu précédemment de construire à proximité de chez lui la case dans laquelle il sera enterré? Les Romains rappellaient au triomphateur qu'il n'était qu'un mortel. La pensée de la mort est saine et salutaire.

La fête des haricots est ainsi appelée parce que, en ce jour, le naba mange pour la première fois de l'année de la sauce faite avec des haricots.

La fête du piochage du naba *(na-kobo)* se célèbre vingt et un jour après la précédente et comme elle, comme le *naky*, toujours un samedi. Si le naba avait été solennellement intrônisé par le naba de Béiousa, il irait en grande pompe, avec un grand nombre de cavaliers, piocher un champ situé à quelque distance de Koupéla. Aujourd'hui, il se contente de piocher un sentier qui réunit ses cases à celles de ses deux premiers ministres. Il donne les premiers coups de pioche au son du tambour, et ses gens continuent. Si les Peuls et les cavaliers sont venus en nombre suffisant, ils font des courses, et comme toujours en ces circonstances, la bière coule à flots, et à la fin de la journée tout le monde est ivre. Ces fêtes ont surtout l'avantage de procurer au naba quelques milliers de cauris que ses administrés viennent lui offrir.

Ces fêtes *maky*, *nakobo*, ne sont-elles pas comme un hommage rendu à l'agriculture et ne rappellent-elles pas les mêmes fêtes célébrées jadis par les Romains et aujourd'hui encore par les Chinois?

Le marché qui suit chacune de ces fêtes, est toujours très fréquenté. On y tue plusieurs bœufs et quantité de moutons. Chacun tient à honneur de s'y rendre revêtu de ses plus beaux atours, et vraiment le spectacle de cette foule bigarée n'est pas banal.

Chapitre troisième. — **Magie.**

Mgr. LE ROY, avons-nous dit, définit la magie: «L'art de réduire à son service, par certaines pratiques occultes et d'aspect plus ou moins religieux, les forces de la nature, ou de capter les forces du monde invisible.» C'est elle que nous allons tâcher d'étudier et pour essayer de mettre de l'ordre dans un sujet qui en manque totalement dans l'esprit des indigènes, nous parlerons tout d'abord des superstitions, puis des sorciers.

Les Mossi, comme tous les primitifs d'ailleurs, qu'ils soient noirs ou blancs, sont très superstitieux. Nos pères ne l'étaient-ils pas au moyen-âge, et les croyances superstitieuses de treize à table, de la salière renversée, du

trèfle à quatre feuilles, du lièvre qui traverse la route, etc. ont-elles été complètement extirpées par la science?

Quoi qu'il en soit de nous, la superstition règne en maîtresse ici. Les amulettes et les talismans sont très recherchés. Tout peut servir à en fabriquer, depuis la tête de grue couronnée, très prisée, jusqu'à celle de l'épervier et du héron cendré. Il y a de tout dans les nombreux sachets qui pendent au cou des indigènes, depuis le chiffon de papier sur lequel sont griffonnés quelques mots d'arabe et que les marabouts répandent à profusion dans tout le Soudan, jusqu'à un cauri ou à la cendre de toutes les racines possibles et imaginables. Il y a les bracelets amulettes qui se portent au bras gauche et protègent des sorciers *seuya* (v. p. 215) si on a soin de les remonter précipitamment quand on se trouve en présence d'un de ces terribles mangeurs d'âmes. Il y a le bracelet qui protège dans les combats et l'anneau de fer qui protège contre la morsure des serpents. Voulez-vous que celui dont vous désirez la fille en mariage vous reçoive bien et agrée votre demande? Portez à votre bras droit un certain bracelet et vous serez heureux dans vos démarches.

Les amulettes se portent autour de la tête ou du cou au bras ou au poignet. On en coud à sa calotte ou à ses habits, on en met à sa ceinture, à sa pipe, à son bâton, n'importe où. Nous n'en finirions pas s'il nous fallait indiquer toutes les espèces d'amulettes. L'omoplate d'un bœuf, fichée au bout d'un bâton, une chaîne de fer tendue à l'entrée d'une *soukala*, protègent les habitants contre une foule de malheurs et de visites nocturnes fort désagréables, et il est heureux qu'il soit possible de se défendre à si bon compte de ces esprits malfaisants, de toutes ces mânes en quête de victimes.

Si vous avez des chiens, prenez garde à ce qu'ils font. S'oublient-ils jusqu'à se coucher dans un panier, à y déposer leurs ordures, ou à vomir dans la case, tuez-les au plus vite, sinon vous mourrez vous-même. Si votre chienne ne fait qu'un petit, exécutez-la sans pitié. Lorsque le héron cendré passe au-dessus des cases en riant, les mères frappent sur leurs cruches de peur que leurs enfants n'aient la diarrhée. Les chasseurs ne doivent pas manger de la viande de koba avant de s'être divertis, et s'ils veulent être adroits, ils doivent se procurer certaines racines et les cuire dans l'eau et se laver les mains avec cette mixture.

Le dimanche est le jour des mânes, c'est en ce jour que se célèbre le *kouré*. Ce jour est aussi favorable pour construire des cases. Le lundi n'a rien de spécial. Mais il faut se défier du mardi, on ne peut jamais savoir ce qu'il réserve. Le mercredi est franchement mauvais, et il faut se garder de commencer un travail ou de partir en voyage ce jour-là. Le jeudi et le vendredi sont très favorables au mariage, surtout le vendredi. Les sorciers font grève le samedi et suspendent leurs consultations en ce jour. D'ailleurs chaque particulier a son jour faste et son jour néfaste, c'est à lui à le connaître et à en tenir compte.

Certaines pierres sont dites tombées du ciel et le jour où elle sont tombées, le chef de village a immédiatement couvert toutes les cruches qui, dans sa case, renferment les grisgris. Si, dans sa précipitation, il en a renversé une, il mourra dans l'année. Cette pierre devient sacrée. Qui peut la soulever n'a

rien à craindre, mais qui ne peut y réussir mourra bientôt. On peut aussi l'interroger, et la réponse sera favorable ou non selon qu'on pourra la soulever ou qu'on ne le pourra pas. Les passants jettent dessus des tiges de mil, des brindilles coupées au passage, parfois des cauris pour obtenir d'elle que leurs affaires prospèrent.

Une comète est signe de guerre ou présage la mort d'un grand chef, et quand la comète de HALLEY fut visible à notre horizont, les poules, les chèvres et les moutons passèrent un mauvais quart d'heure. Il fallait détourner tous les malheurs qu'elle présageait. Il est vrai qu'elle fut superbe, et pendant plusieurs jours s'étendit presque d'une extrémité du ciel à l'autre ce qui était bien fait pour émotionner les indigènes: tant de gens, dit-on, ont été émus dans nos pays civilisés et ne l'ont pourtant pas vue dans tout son éclat. Malgré tous les sacrifices, le chef d'un des principaux cantons de la province, le naba de Pwitenga, est mort cette année là!

Mais il faut nous borner, et ces quelques exemples, qu'il nous serait facile de multiplier, suffisent pour faire comprendre le rôle que jouent les amulettes et les superstitions dans la vie de ce peuple.

Un mot cependant encore sur les superstitions. Le lecteur a pu remarquer que sans cesse les nombres trois et quatre et leurs composés revenaient sous notre plume, selon le sexe de la personne dont il s'agissait. Trois est réservé aux hommes et quatre aux femmes. Dans les sacrifices Dieu-roi mâle est appelé trois fois, Dieu-roi femelle, quatre fois. La corde du grisgris a trois ou quatre nœuds selon le sexe, une mère porte le deuil de ses enfants 33 ou 44 jours. Un mort reçoit 333 ou 3333 cauris; une morte 444 ou 4444, etc.

De même les cheveux doivent tomber chaque fois que l'indigène change d'état. Un enfant est rasé avant de recevoir un nom, une jeune fille avant de s'approcher de son mari et une femme quand elle passe à un autre par héritage, tandis que le mari n'est rasé que quand il reçoit sa première femme puisque de jeune homme il devient chef de case, mais il ne sera plus rasé quand il recevra de nouvelles épouses parce qu'alors il ne change pas d'état. Un indigène, élu naba, doit quitter ses cheveux de sujet qui ne conviennent plus à un chef. Un mort ne peut être enterré avec ses cheveux de vivant que s'il est mort d'accident, etc.

La croix joue aussi un rôle qu'il ne faut pas exagérer mais qui est réel. La poignée des sabres est en forme de croix, on oint souvent les pieds et les mains et la poitrine des malades avec du charbon, délayé dans de la graisse, et toujours en form de croix. La croix est le signe dont sont marqués la poitrine et le dos des habitants d'une *soukala* pour les préserver de la foudre. Les cases sont marquées de même, et la croix est tracée jusque dans la bouche du cheval et de l'âne. La croix marque la porte de la case d'un malade gravement atteint et doit écarter les mauvais génies. La croix de cendres sur la poitrine et le dos fait partie du costume de deuil.

D'où viennent ces coutumes? Les indigènes ne peuvent en rendre compte et répondent invariablement: «Nos pères faisaient ainsi.»

Mais à côté de ces pratiques superstitieuses qui n'engagent à rien et ne font de tort à personne, il en est d'autres qui peuvent être très utiles pour

ceux qui les emploient et d'autres qui semblent bien ressortir de la magie. Nous voulons parler de ce que les indigènes désignent sous le nom générique de *tim* sans mettre de différences entre les remèdes véritables qui relèvent de la médecine et les superstitions, ou les maléfices qui relèvent de la magie, et il nous est souvent bien difficile de distinguer entre les uns et les autres.

Les amulettes et les grisgris sont des *tim* pour les indigènes, au même titre que les remèdes que les spécialistes leur indiquent et qui semblent avoir une efficacité réelle. Nous avons brièvement parlé de ces derniers en parlant des maladies. Mais ce que nous n'avons pas assez dit alors, c'est qu'il est bien rare que quelque sorcellerie ne se mêle pas à la confection de ces remèdes, et tout au moins celui qui a été guéri, grâce à un remède, doit en conserver quelque peu dans un sachet et tous les ans lui offrir une poule en sacrifice. Tout se passe comme pour les sacrifices ordinaires, mais la formule imprécative est remplacée par celle-ci: «Dieu-*tim*, avance la main et prend cette poule. Dieu m'a donné un puissant remède. Que ce remède me garde la nuit, le matin, au milieu de la nuit et sur le sentier et là où l'on joue et dans les cases. Ferme la greule du serpent, pour que l'an prochain je sois encore en bonne santé, qu'il ne m'arrive rien de fâcheux, que mon cœur se réjouisse sans cesse. Je reviendrai alors avec une poule, pour que tu te réjouisses aussi et que tu continues à garder mes femmes et mes enfants.» Puis il finit le sacrifice. Cette formule indique bien que c'est à Dieu qu'est rapportée toute la puissance que renferme le remède.

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Certaines pratiques superstitieuses rentrant dans la catégorie des *tim*, sont employées pour des cas spéciaux. Voici, à titre de curiosité, ce qui se fait quand un indigène a tué une hyène, et pour préserver les cases de la foudre.

Quand un indigène a tué une hyène, il doit se hâter de recourir à un autre indigène qui en a tué une précédemment, sinon il deviendra fou furieux. Le chasseur va donc consulter celui qui connaît le remède contre cette folie furieuse et lui apporte une poule. L'indigène consulté indique quelles sont les racines qu'il faut ramasser, et le chasseur se met en devoir de les chercher dans la brousse. Il les coupe en morçeaux, puis les apporte à son médecin qui prend une cruche, saisit la poule, l'approche des racines et dit, en versant de l'eau dans la cruche: «Dieu-*tim* et son *kikiriga*, lève-toi, avance la main et prends de l'eau pour boire; prends cette poule pour la manger et fais que celui qui a tué l'hyène ne devienne pas fou furieux.» Il sacrifie la poule et verse le sang dans la marmite. Puis il met la moitié des racines dans la cruche et brûle l'autre partie et la réduit en cendres.

Le chasseur emporte le tout chez lui et pendant sept jours, il met dans sa bouillie de mil, de l'eau de son remède et mélange des cendres des racines à sa sauce.

Le septième jour, toute la famille se réunit et vient, avec les amis, saluer le chasseur. Chacun jette des cauris dans la calebasse qui renferme le remède, puis tous vont au marché en grande pompe. Le chasseur emmanche la tête de l'hyène au bout d'un bâton et la porte triomphalement au marché. Il a

droit de prendre gratis des pistaches, des haricots, du mil, des gâteaux, etc. tout ce qu'il veut. Quand il a fini sa provision, volant comme l'hyène, le cortège se réforme et se rend sous un gros arbre, à proximité du marché. Là, le chasseur enfonce son bâton en terre, et tous se mettent à danser autour de lui; puis chacun saisit une baguette et en frappe le chasseur qui se sauve vivement. Il est certain de ne pas devenir fou et de plus il peut désormais tuer sans crainte toutes les hyènes qu'il voudra.

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L'eau en général, la pluie en particulier, sont un grand bienfait en ce pays de soleil. Les caimans ont la réputation d'attirer l'eau dans les endroits où ils se trouvent et si tuer un caiman n'est pas toujours commettre un homicide, c'est au moins dessécher un marigot ou une mare, car les caimans quitteront ce lieu et l'eau s'en ira avec eux. Si la pluie tarde trop, les récoltes n'auront pas le temps de mûrir; si elle tombe trop abondante, surtout au début et à la fin de l'hivernage, les mauvaises herbes étoufferont le mil ou les fleurs tomberont avant que le fruit ne soit formé.

Aussi la pluie est-elle la désirée ou la redoutée selon les cas, et c'est au naba, le maître de la vie et de la mort de ses sujets, qu'est réservée la puissance de faire ou d'éloigner la pluie. En vérité, tout homme puissant est réputé avoir ce pouvoir et que de fois ne m'a-t-on pas demandé de faire la pluie! Les Blancs ne peuvent-ils tout ce qu'ils veulent, eux qui sont apparentés aux mânes, leur couleur en fait foi? Ne viennent-ils pas du pays de l'eau, ne sortent-ils pas eux-mêmes de l'eau? J'avais beau dire que Dieu seul peut faire la pluie, et qu'il fallait le prier pour l'obtenir, un sourire incrédule me prouvait que je n'étais pas cru.

Le naba a donc le grisgris, le talisman qui doit attirer la pluie et pour cela, il lui suffit, quand l'orage menace, de sortir de sa case une certaine cruche pleine de certaines racines et de la remplir d'eau à déborder. Si, au contraire, il veut chasser la pluie, il brûle d'autres racines et le vent emporte la fumée du côté où le naba veut envoyer les nuages; ou bien, il suspend par un fil, à un bâton, une queue de vache ou de cheval: le vent l'agite et par là chasse les nuages. C'est pourquoi, quand la saison des pluies approche, le naba envoie au marché un de ses gens, ramasser des fruits de *karité* qu'il prend à chacune des femmes qui en a apporté, car ces noyaux entrent dans la confection du grisgris et doivent avoir cette provenance. Si c'est un autre que le naba qui essaie d'attirer la pluie et s'il ne réussit pas, il attribuera son échec à un plus puissant que lui; si c'est le naba lui-même qui échoue, personne n'en parlera, ou bien on dira que le naba n'a pas voulu sérieusement attirer ou chasser la pluie, selon le cas.

La foudre accompagne tous les orages et tue souvent des gens dans ce pays où les orages sont si violents. Ses effets sont attribués à un génie malfaisant, à un ennemi qui peut envoyer la foudre contre son ennemi s'il connaît le *tim*, enfin à Dieu même. La foudre frappe un voleur, un assassin, et c'est un châtiment. Si elle ne le tue pas lui-même, elle tuera le produit de son vol, le cheval volé, les moutons volés, elle ne tue jamais personne sans raison.

Heureusement, il est possible de s'en préserver. Pour cela, il faut trouver dans la brousse un produit blanc, assez semblable à une crotte d'hyène et que les indigènes appellent: «crotte de la pluie» et certaines racines d'arbres. Une partie de ces racines est mise à infuser dans l'eau pendant trois jours, l'autre partie est réduite en cendres. Une poule est offerte au *tim* en sacrifice, puis l'eau dans laquelle les racines ont infusée est employée pour cuire la bouillie de mil et la sauce est faite avec des feuilles de baobab. Tous les habitants de la *soukala* doivent manger de cette bouillie de mil et chacun est marqué d'une croix sur le dos et la poitrine avec les cendres, mélangées à du beurre de *karité*. Le cheval et l'âne, et eux seuls parmi les animaux, sont marqués sur le dos, sur la poitrine et dans la bouche. Les cases sont marquées à l'est du côté d'ou vient la pluie et à l'entrée. Il n'y a plus rien à craindre. Nous pensons que le paratonnerre protège mieux.

Tous ces *tim*, remèdes véritables, amulettes, talismans, recettes superstitieuses, sont indiqués soit par des médecins veritables qui connaissent réellement les propriétés des simples et opèrent de véritables guérisons, soit par les sorciers. Les médecins sont souvent consultés, et comme ils sont spécialisés dans telle ou telle maladie, on n'a recours à eux que dans cette maladie. D'ailleurs, tout individu auquel un remède a réussi, l'indique volontiers à un ami qui a été saisi par la maladie. Les médecins sont nombreux comme sont nombreuses les maladies qui atteignent les hommes.

Certains ne se contentent pas d'être médecins, ils sont aussi empoisonneurs, et ceux-là sont très craints. Si l'on veut se débarrasser d'un ennemi, le plus sûr moyen est de s'adresser à eux, mais ils font payer cher. Ils ont des poisons lents qui minent peu à peu leur victime, ils en ont de foudroyants qui tuent en quelques heures. Ils les mettent dans la boisson, dans la bouillie de mil, plus souvent encore dans la noix de kola. Il y en a aussi, et ceux-ci sont plus sorciers que médecins, qui disent avoir le pouvoir de tuer à distance et qui savent pratiquer l'envoûtement. Leur prestige a baissé depuis l'occupation française, puis qu'ils n'ont pas pu tuer ainsi les Blancs qui se sont installés dans le pays; mais ils se défendent en disant que nos *tim* sont plus puissants que les leurs.

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Les sorciers sont nombreux eux aussi. Il y a ceux qui le deviennent de leur propre volonté et ceux qui naissent sorciers. Les premiers sont les *bagré* et les *seuya*; les autres sont les *tibo*, les *bartibo*, les *waongo* et enfin les *nyonnyonsé*. Qu'on excuse ces mots barbares, mais il est impossible de les traduire en français.

Le *bagré*, c'est le sorcier bon enfant, le sorcier à l'eau de rose, celui qui vient en aide au pauvre peuple moyennant une redevance d'un ou deux sous. On les consulte pour tout. Pour savoir l'avenir: le feu détruira-t-il mes cases ou ne les détruira-t-il pas? Mon voyage sera-t-il heureux ou non, etc. et si la réponse est défavorable, que faire pour conjurer le mauvais sort? On a recours à eux surtout en cas de maladie pour connaître le génie, cause de la maladie et pour savoir ce qu'il demande. Le rôle du sorcier est donc

principalement d'indiquer quel sacrifice il faut offrir et à qui l'offrir. Rarement ils indiquent un remède, et quand cela leur arrive on n'a guère confiance en ce remède; plus souvent, ils prescrivent un traitement négatif en disant ce qui est défendu au malade.

Pour connaître la maladie, ils procèdent par élimination. «Il a mal à la tête», déclare le sorcier. Si la réponse est négative, il indique un autre membre: «au ventre — non — au bras — non.» Il faut bien qu'il finisse par tomber juste. Si le malade guérit à la suite du sacrifice indiqué, le sorcier est déclaré habile, il est vraiment en relation avec les génies, et sa clientèle augmentera et par le fait même ses revenus. Si le malade ne guérit pas ou meurt, c'est que le sorcier a trompé ou qu'il ne voit pas. On recourt à un autre sorcier, espérant toujours trouver le vrai voyant.

Au reste les sorciers sont fidèlement écoutés et tout ce qu'ils prescrivent est fidèlement accompli. Comme le sorcier devine quelquefois juste, comme le plus souvent encore le malade guérit par auto-suggestion parce que le sorcier a déclaré qu'il guérirait, comme parmi ceux qui tombent malades, ceux qui guérissent sont, heureusement, plus nombreux que ceux qui meurent, leur prestige est grand et leur clientèle nombreuse, ce sont tous les Mossi. Mais les *bara* (pluriel de *bagré*) ne sont pas redoutés. En cas de non réussite, ils sont injuriés et jamais ils ne sont consultés dans les jugements pour connaître le nom d'un coupable.

Par contre, les particuliers leur demandent parfois qui a tué leur enfant, leur femme, leur bestiaux, et le *bagré* indique parfois à qui il faut s'en prendre, d'où inimitié entre la personne lésée et celle qui lui est signalée comme coupable. Souvent dans ce cas, l'accusé pour se défendre recourt à l'ordalie. Lui-même propose de boire un poison, d'être brûlé par un fer rouge ou étranglé au moyen de brins de paille entrelacés. S'il est innocent, le poison ne lui nuira pas, le feu ne le brûlera pas, les pailles se déferont d'elles-mêmes. Mais ne se soumettait à l'ordalie que celui qui le voulait bien et jamais les juges n'y recouraient. En jugement, il fallait apporter la preuve.

Tout le monde peut être sorcier, et ceux qui embrassent cette profession sont généralement de pauvres héros qui n'ont rien pour vivre, manquent de force pour piocher ou qui veulent simplement vivre sans travailler. Quand un individu entre dans la confrérie des *bara*, on dit de lui qu'il veut apprendre la paresse, et on en rit.

A la saison sèche, le pays est infesté par des bandes de Gourounsi et de Nankana, crasseux et loqueteux, qui font profession de tout savoir et d'avoir un grisgris pour tout, même pour faire pousser les arachides. Sous la conduite d'un chef qui baragouine plus ou moins mal le mossi, ils se promènent de village en village, dansant et chantant chez les nabas, comme les saltimbanques à la porte des roulettes des diseurs de bonne aventure pour attirer la clientèle... et ils sont consultés et ils s'en retournent dans leur pays bien nippés, grâce aux cauris que les badauds leur ont donnés.

* * *

Bien autrement redoutés sont les *seuya*, les mangeurs d'âmes. La mort d'un indigène, surtout d'un enfant, leur est très souvent attribuée. Ils ont le pouvoir de sortir du corps de l'homme qu'ils habitent et d'aller partout à la recherche d'une âme à manger. Le feu est leur véhicule, et ce sont eux qui passent, la nuit, sur les feux follets qui errent autour des cases, dans les champs. Ils peuvent s'arrêter dans les arbres, tomber à terre, et qui possède une amulette plus puissante qu'eux, peut les chasser.

Le *seuya* est extrêmement dangereux car il est impossible de se défendre complètement contre lui. C'est la nuit quil opère. L'âme de tout mortel sort souvent de son corps, la nuit, et va se promener partout. Malheur à elle si elle rencontre un *seuya*. Ce dernier se précipite sur elle ou la met sous une grosse pierre, et le malheureux corps, propriétaire de cette âme, tombe malade et finit par mourir. Le seul remède est de sacrifier au *tangandé* et l'animal protecteur du village se mettra en quête, jusqu'à ce qu'il ait retrouvé et délivré la malheureuse âme; il la fait alors rentrer dans son corps et le malade guérit. Mais si le *seuya* a mangé l'âme, s'il est d'accord avec le *tangandé*, il n'y a rien à faire, c'est la mort à bref délai.

Les sorciers *bagré* peuvent dire qui est *seuya* et qui ne l'est pas. D'aucuns ont un *tim* qui leur permet de distinguer les *seuya* dans une assemblée. Il leur suffit de fumer leur pipe; les yeux de l'homme mangeur d'âmes deviennent rouges et se remplissent de l'armes. Ceux qui sont accusés d'être *seuya* s'en défendent généralement et une des plus grosses injures est de traiter quelqu'un de *seuya*. Nous avons vu la mort atroce réservée à ces malheureux. Les vieilles femmes surtout sont accusées de manger l'âme des petits enfants, et j'en ai connu qui se vantaient d'avoir ce pouvoir!

* * *

Les *tibo* sont une famille de sorciers. On nait *tibo* et le village habité par eux s'appelle *tibin*. Le naba de ce village a la spécialité de connaître toutes sortes de choses, et particulièrement si on a un ennemi, rien qu'en regardant dans une calebasse pleine d'eau dans laquelle on a mis un certain grisgris. Une poule a été immolée au préalable sur la calebasse. Le naba, mais lui-seul, peut aussi tuer à distance. Pour obtenir sa protection, il faut lui apporter une chèvre, une poule, de la farine de mil délayée dans de l'eau et de la bière de mil. Tot ou tard, celui qui a été désigné, meurt! Mais si cela tarde trop, le sorcier trouve toujours une excuse.

A Tibin se trouve la case dans laquelle sont alignés les fétiches *tibo*. Ils se composent essentiellement d'une marmite en terre cuite qui contient de l'eau, des branches et des feuilles d'arbres. Elle est fermée par une calebasse en terre qui sert à faire cuire la sauce et sur laquelle les sacrifices sont offerts. Des serpents et des tortues sont, dit-on, dans la marmite, mais seuls les sorciers *tibo* peuvent les voir. Chaque village a sa cruche *tibo* qui se trouve chez le naba, à la porte de sa case ou suspendue à l'intérieur. Ces *tibo* sont la demeure de *kikirsi* puissants.

* * *

Les *bartibo* sont des danseurs de profession. Ils ont la faculté, tout en dansant, de découvrir ceux qui ont le pouvoir de tuer les gens, que ce soit les donneurs de poison ou les *seuya*. Eux-mêmes, prétendent-ils, ont le pouvoir de monter sur le vent et d'aller tuer quiconque ils veulent. Mais leur spécialité est le grisgris pour enfantement à l'usage des femmes stériles.

* * *

Les *waongo*, sont aussi une famille spéciale. On naît *tibo*, *bartibo*, *waongo* et *nyonnyonga*. Les *waongo* se revêtent, dans leurs cérémonies, d'habits faits avec l'écorce du baobab et qui les couvrent entièrement. Quand ils portent cet habit étrange, il est impossible de les voir. On distingue bien quelque chose qui marche, mais il est impossible de savoir qui c'est, et une maladie terrible atteindra celui qui les frappera. Aussi qui voit cette masse informe, se sauve au plus vite. Quand ils font le *kouré* (anniversaire de la mort) d'un des leurs, ils mettent un masque. Le vent leur sert de monture et ils peuvent infliger des maladies, voire même tuer s'ils le veulent.

* * *

Les *nyonnyonsé* chevauchent aussi sur le vent. Les membres de cette famille de sorciers tuent qui leur est désigné. Celui qui désire se défaire d'un ennemi, va trouver un *nyonnyonga* et lui demande ce qu'il veut pour tuer celui qui lui est indiqué. Le sorcier demande une vache, un mouton, n'importe quoi, et une poule. La poule est sacrifiée sur le manche d'une hachette dont l'extrémité, là où le fer est emmanché, est percée de trois trous et entourée de cordelettes. Après ce sacrifice, le sorcier s'endort et de jour ou de nuit, son âme s'en va sur le vent, la tête en bas, la hachette à la main. Quand elle rencontre l'âme de celui qu'elle doit tuer, elle la frappe avec sa hachette et la tue, puis retourne animer le corps de son propriétaire. Les femmes, paraît-il, sont les plus féroces!

Qui le veut, peut obtenir communication de ce pouvoir, mais il faut le payer. La vie de ces sorciers est d'autant plus longue qu'ils tuent plus de gens, aussi qui veut être initié doit donner, à celui qui l'initiera, la vie d'un de ses enfants ou tout au moins d'un parent car le sorcier ne se contente pas d'un étranger ou d'un esclave.

Il serait curieux de rechercher quels sont les sacrifices et les cérémonies qui accompagnent de telles initiations. Il semble bien qu'avec ces derniers sorciers, *tibo, waongo, nyonnyonsé,* nous soyons en pleine magie noire, car les indigènes racontent sur eux des histoires effrayantes et citent leurs victimes. Force nous est d'avouer que nous n'avons pu avoir plus de détails sérieux sur le compte de ces sorciers et que nous n'avons été personnellement en relation avec aucun d'eux, de telle sorte que nous n'avons pu contrôler tout ce qui nous a été raconté à leur sujet et c'est pourquoi nous n'en parlons pas plus longuement. D'ailleurs, eux-mêmes interrogés n'auraient rien dit, avant d'être convertis.

Mais ces familles de sorciers sont une infime minorité chez les Mossi, et si on peut dire que ce sont là des sectes fermées, des sociétés secrètes, ce

sont les seules qui existent à notre connaissance. Il n'y a donc pas au Mossi de sociétés secrètes proprement dites, rien qui ressemble à ce qui se voit en pays bambaras[1], et c'est heureux. Il n'y a pas non plus d'initiation, de culte caché et célébré la nuit, ni de doctrine ésotérique. N'est-ce pas par ce que les nabas, tenant à rester les maîtres, n'ont pas permis qu'à côté de leur pouvoir, s'élève une puissance plus formidable que la leur? Ou est-ce pour toute autre raison, peu importe.

Il semblerait qu'au milieu de tous ces génies qui envahissent l'air, la terre, le feu, les maisons, les champs, tout, et qui ne sont pas toujours d'humeur commode les Mossi devraient vivre dans des transes perpétuelles; ayant tout à craindre, le jour des empoisonneurs, la nuit des *seuya*. Pourtant il n'en est rien. C'est un peuple gai, qui aime à rire et n'a pas du tout l'air préoccupé. Comme j'en faisais la remarque à un vieillard, il me répondit: «Tout le monde n'a pas des ennemis. Et puis, pourquoi se tracasser de choses inévitables?» En effet, ces terribles sorciers ne sont guère à redouter que de ceux qui se connaissent un ennemi qui peut faire appel à leur puissance. Les génies s'apaisent par les sacrifices, et si l'âme a été prise la nuit par un *seuya*, qu'y faire sinon essayer de la délivrer si on le peut.

Au reste, comme tant d'autres, les Mossi, dans la pratique de la vie, oublient facilement toutes ces croyances et agissent comme s'ils étaient maîtres de leurs actes et assurés d'atteindre leur but. C'est en riant et comme en jouant qu'ils lancent des bâtons et des pierres aux tourbillons qui passent, soulevant la poussière et les feuilles mortes. Pourtant que de génies et de sorciers plus terribles les uns que les autres ne renferment-ils pas? Les plus fervents consultent les sorciers et offrent des sacrifices avant d'entreprendre quoi que ce soit; les autres ne s'occupent guère des sacrifices qu'à la fête des morts et quand le malheur vient les visiter. N'est-ce pas la souffrance qui ramène à la vie religieuse parce qu'elle nous rappelle notre dépendance d'un plus puissant que nous? Ici comme partout encore, il y a des fervents et des tièdes; des indifférents, il ne semble pas qu'il y en ait et l'athéisme est inconnu parmi eux. Ils ne sont pas encore assez civilisés pour avoir de telles conceptions!

Il semble que leur conversion au catholicisme n'est qu'une question de temps. «Messis quidem multa, operarii autem pauci.» Puisse le maître de la moisson envoyer en ce pays de nombreux ouvriers et hâter l'heure où ce peuple tout entier entre dans le divin bercail!

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[1] Abbé Henry, L'âme d'un peuple africain (Bibliothèque-«Anthropos», I, 2) — passim.

2: Mangin FA28 Mossi

Conclusion.

Nous sera-t-il permis, en guise de conclusion, d'essayer d'ébaucher à grands traits la silhouette morale d'un Mossi, tel que nous le comprenons?

Le Mossi est un mélange de défauts et de qualités. Le Mossi en général, n'est guère scrupuleux sur le vol et le mensonge, mais ces défauts ne sont pas tellement invétérés qu'une formation de la conscience plus délicate ne puisse les corriger. Le Mossi est voleur parce qu'il trouve souvent l'occasion de s'approprier le bien d'autrui, surtout les cauris, monnaie d'un maniement très compliqué. Il est si facile, tandis que l'on compte des cauris, d'en glisser quelques uns dans sa poche sans que le maître s'en aperçoive! Les voleurs de grands chemins existent, sont fort redoutés et plusieurs arrivent à une réelle habileté. Mais ils ne sont, bien entendu, qu'une infime minorité.

Les dettes fournissent l'occasion la plus fréquente de voler. Tout Mossi doit être débiteur et créancier à la fois, et quand il a emprunté, Dieu seul sait quand il rend. Quand quelqu'un a une dette envers lui, il emprunte en disant: «Un tel me doit tant, quand il m'aura rendu, je te paierai», et il trouve toujours quelqu'un pour lui prêter. Peut-on refuser un service à un ami? Pour se faire payer, il faudra faire démarches sur démarches, et bien heureux sera-t-on quand on pourra rentrer dans ses fonds. Ce défaut est si invétéré chez eux que les plus riches n'en sont pas exempts et, bien que pouvant rendre facilement ce qu'ils ont emprunté, ils ne le rendent pas.

* * *

Le Mossi est menteur, mais surtout il pratique la restriction mentale. Interrogé, il excelle à poser lui-même une autre question pour voir si son interlocuteur est réellement au courant des faits. S'il peut tromper, il trompera; mais s'il voit qu'il y a avantage à avouer, il avouera, même si ses aveux compromettent des complices; mais il faut alors qu'il soit bien sûr de s'en tirer indemne.

Il n'est pas fourbe ni dissimulé, mais souvent ne dit pas la vérité par crainte de déplaire à un plus puissant que lui. Il cherche qu'elle est la réponse que désire son interlocuteur, et il faut se défier quand on veut obtenir un renseignement précis. Il trompe encore en ne disant que la moitié de la vérité; interrogé, il répondra parfois à la question posée, mais taira tel ou tel détail qui modifierait la réponse ou mettrait sur la voie d'une autre question à faire.

Il est discret et sait garder un secret, surtout le secret du roi. Quand il ne veut rien dire, il répond: «Je ne sais pas», ce n'est pas compromettant et cela coupe court à toute question indiscrète.

* * *

Le Mossi a des passions, et ce sont les mêmes que les nôtres. L'ambition, la jalousie, la gourmandise, la paresse, la luxure, parfois même, mais plus rarement, l'avarice, règnent chez lui, et, comme il ne sait pas se dominer, ne sait pas résister à ses mauvais penchants, ses passions deviennent tyranniques avec l'âge. Les enfants sont généralement assez souples. L'esprit d'obéissance et de soumission complète aux parents leur est inculqué dès l'âge le plus tendre de telle sorte que, pris assez tôt, ils sont susceptibles de formation, et on peut obtenir d'eux de véritables actes de vertu qui leur coûtent. Mais laissés à eux-mêmes, ils s'écoutent en tout et recherchent ce qui peut leur apporter quelque satisfaction. C'est un peu la morale à l'usage de l'esclave qui ne craint que le bâton.

Le Mossi est vaniteux et susceptible. Un mot, même dit en riant, mais mal compris, le froisse facilement. La pratique de l'humilité est loin d'être passée dans ses habitudes. Le Mossi est batailleur, irascible, surtout quand il a bu un peu plus de bière de mil qu'il ne conviendrait. Il n'est pas de fête, guère de marché un peu important sans que quelques indigènes ne se prennent de querelle et souvent pour un rien, parce qu'en passant l'un a frôlé l'autre. La rixe commence par des injures, continue par des coups de bâton et se termine par des coups de couteau. Personne ne cèdera. Un Mossi qui cède dans une querelle, se croirait déshonoré; qui cède prouve par là-même qu'il est le plus faible et à la première occasion, un des témoins de la scène, injuriera à son tour celui qui a cédé: à quoi bon se gêner avec lui puisqu'il ne se défend pas? C'est pourquoi un Mossi injurié, surtout si c'est son père et sa mère qui sont injuriés — et toute injure en arrive vite là —, ne cèdera qu'à la dernière extrémité. Séparés, les adversaires continuent à s'invectiver à distance. Un Mossi en colère ne se possède plus. Quand la querelle est terminée, il en reste souvent quelque chose; il est vindicatif; surtout s'il s'est trouvé le plus faible, il cherche à se venger d'une façon ou d'une autre pour qu'il ne soit pas dit qu'il a eu le dessous.

* * *

Si le Mossi a ses passions comme nous, il a aussi son tempérament comme nous. Il y a des lymphatiques, mous, incapables d'efforts; il y a des nerveux qui sont toujours en mouvement, susceptibles à l'excès, ils pleurent à la moindre observation; il y a des taciturnes qui ne rient presque jamais, croient que personne ne les aime et que tout le monde cherche à leur nuire, ils aiment la solitude et parlent peu; il y a les bilieux, plus portés que les autres à la colère, plus rancuniers aussi, mais plus énergiques.

L'énergie n'est pourtant pas la qualité maîtresse de ce peuple, habitué par ses chefs à une obéissance aveugle et exacte. Atrophier la volonté, détruire l'esprit d'initiative, ce sont les grands méfaits de cette forte organisation que nous avons décrite. C'est sa rançon. Un Mossi ne sait pas résister à un plus puissant que lui. Mais souple, presque lâche en face d'un supérieur, il se rattrape avec ses inférieurs et est plein de morgue et de mépris pour celui qui est plus faible que lui.

* * *

Le Mossi ne sait pas vouloir, il ne sait pas réfléchir, non qu'il manque d'intelligence, mais parce qu'il n'a pas l'habitude de la réflexion, excepté si ses intérêts sont en jeu, car alors certains se montrent vraiment intelligents et diplomates.

Le Mossi ne sait pas rechercher le pourquoi des choses, et alors que les petits enfants de chez nous sont raisonneurs et nous embarrassent parfois par leurs questions, un Mossi ne se demandera jamais: Comment cela se fait-il? Pourquoi est-ce ainsi et pas autrement? La première réponse lui suffit.

Ce manque de réflexion est cause de son retard dans la civilisation, car si nous avançons sans cesse, n'est-ce pas parce que nous cherchons à nous rendre compte de tout? D'où encore manque d'idées. Les conversations ne roulent guère que sur les femmes, la nourriture et, dans la saison des pluies, les cultures. Leur cercle d'idées est fort restreint, mais il est susceptible de s'agrandir car le Mossi peut être considéré comme intelligent.

Et si les proverbes sont la sagesse des peuples, les Mossi ne manquent certes pas de sagesse et ils y joignent souvent une grande finesse. Qu'on nous permette, pour le prouver, de citer ici quelques proverbes, saisis au passage dans les conversations par le R. P. THUEUX, qui a bien voulu nous les communiquer et qu'il s'est fait expliquer car certains sont de veritables énigmes pour nos cerveaux européens.

1° *Kota ningri, ka kot' sen kong'ye.*
Donne en haut, ne donne pas qui manque.
Qui donne à plus puissant que soi, en retire toujours quelqu'avantage.

2° *Maokasankaré ñarda kon lo'é naobi taoré.*
Le talon s'il se presse ne passera pas le doigt de pied devant.
Ce n'est pas à la poule à chanter devant le coq.

3° *Pang'sen tu soré, bûm buta mo'en.*
La Force lorsque suit le chemin la Justice s'écarte dans la brousse.
La Force prime le Droit.

4° *Ka suét'nil ba'a, nan ñóka.*
Qui ne craint pas le nez du chien, il le saisira.
Ne ris pas, car il pourrait t'en cuire.

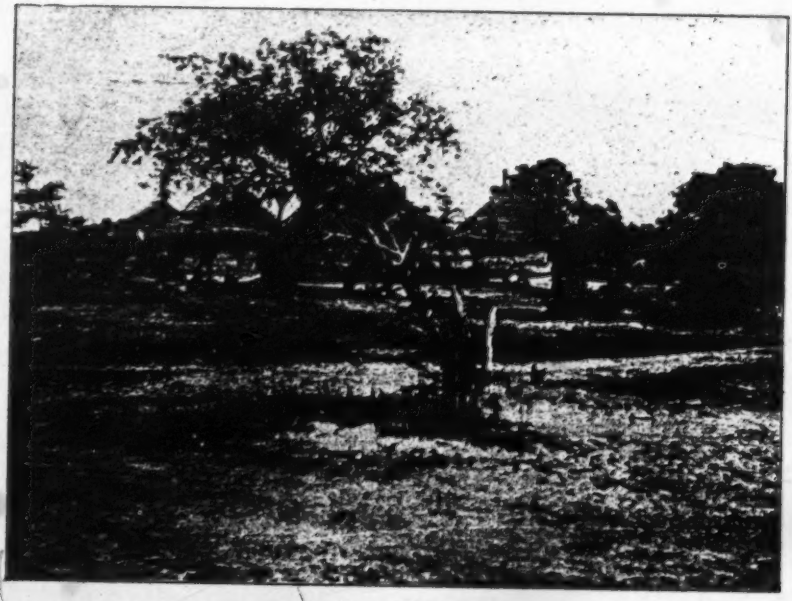
5° *Soam' garedga, mamma n' so.*
Un lièvre conteste, le maître de la chasse en est le maître.
Tout lièvre conteste, appartient au maître de la chasse.

6° *M'ba di sarabo, n' long'zom.*
Mon père a mangé la bouillée de mil, il va vers la farine.
Qui a bu, boira.

7° *Fo nan ka suk'korgo, l'e kurn sa'a*
Tu n'as pas encore louillé le sac, et tu pleures la foudre.
Tu cries avant d'être battu.

8° *Dunna benda, saon beo' kurga*
Aujourd'hui un caleçon, mieux que demain un pantalon.
Un tien vaut, se dit-on, mieux que deux tu l'auras.

9° *Kobré sen kyama, ya kob' kaodga.*
Un os qui (est) solide, c'est un os (qui) cassera.
Tes forces finiront par trahir ton courage.



Les Mossi. Anthropos X—XI.

En haut: L'ensemble de la Mission de Ouagadougou.
En bas: Un campement.

[facing p. 110]

10° *Sarab' ki n' beng' a menga.*
La bouillie qui n'est plus bonne se reduit en eau elle-même.
Il s'est fait tort a lui-même.

11° *Yind' kondro, ka bé sokr'ye.*
Une chanson vieille, elle n'est pas demande (on n'en demande pas le sens).
On ne demande pas l'explication de ce que l'on connait.

12° *Abra kud' ka leb n' tul' bé ias' yé.*
Une panthère vieille ne retourne pas là encore.
On ne retourne pas chez celui à qui on a fait quelque tort.

13° *Katré yi no'o, ka ginn' yé.*
La hyène a été bon, ne se détourne pas.
On retourne là où on été bien accueilit.

14° *F' sen ka nong' néda, a kurga ya yobro.*
Toi si tu n'aimes pas un homme, son pantalon c'est un sac.
Un ennemi fait tout mal.

15° *Sosra sen kaosda, wata ne korg' wenbsego.*
Un conversation qui dure, vient avec du sac le tâtement.
La familiarité engendre le mépris.

16° *Pu' pidya, bango luéya.*
Le ventre (est) plein, l'indiscrétion (est) liée.
Qui a besoin de vous est discret.

17° *Sad' no' o, yid noa' karga.*
Un rire bon, plus que d'une poule la cuisse.
Bon accueil vaut mieux que bon repas.

18° *Ned' kon wok' a bâka, ti pemsom yi ye.*
On n'ouvre pas son épaule, pour que le vent sorte.
On n'abandonne jamais un ami dans le malheur.

19° *Bunbundi ka dod' zaloin yé.*
Celui qui se donne de la peine ne se relève pas avec rien.
Travaillez, prenez de la peine, c'est le fonds qui manque le moins.

* * *

Le Mossi aime à causer, et si par lui-même il a peu de pensées, si on sait se servir de ce qu'il connait pour l'élever plus haut, il suit facilement un raisonnement, comprend assez vite ce qu'on lui dit, saisit l'enchainement des idées et même les nuances, en un mot a une facilité d'assimilation assez remarquable. Que de fois ne m'est-il pas arrivé de montrer á un chef le maniement d'un fusil, le mécanisme d'une montre ou d'une bicyclette dans ses grandes lignes. Survenait un étranger, le naba reprenait les explications pour montrer évidemment qu'il est intelligent et les a bien saisies, et vraiment j'ai été souvent étonné de voir que la plupart s'en tiraient tout à fait à leur avantage.

Ils aiment les images; au début, ils les regardent souvent à l'envers, mais il suffit généralement de quelques explications pour qu'ils en saisissent le sens. Ils reconnaissent d'abord ce qu'ils ont vu eux-mêmes, les hommes, les chevaux, les chiens, les arbres, et se l'expliquent mutuellement. Ils arrivent à saisir la scène représentée, la raison d'être de l'attitude de tel ou tel personnage.

Dans les conversations, s'ils ne sont pas gênés, ils sont vifs, gais, ils aiment à rire et c'est un compliment qu'ils font de quelqu'un quand ils disent qu'il rit volontiers. Ils font parfois de l'esprit, comprennent les allusions, mais savent garder les distances et ne pas se permettre de familiarités, même en paroles, vis-à-vis d'un supérieur.

Ils sont très capables d'instruction, et les petits esclaves, élevés à Malte, se sont très bien assimilés la langue française, et tous ceux qui les ont fréquentés les disent intelligents. Nous avons eu à l'école des enfants qui ont rapidement appris à écrire, à lire, à compter, et qui n'ont guère oublié quand, mariés, il leur a fallu quitter l'école pour reprendre la pioche. Lire reste pour eux une distraction et ils s'entretiennent dans la connaissance de notre langue. Nous n'avons pas remarqué parmi eux ce qui a été si souvent signalé chez les petits Arabes qui, en bas âge, promettent beaucoup, donnent des signes d'intelligence réelle et dont il n'y a plus moyen de rien tirer quand ils ont grandi. L'intelligence du Mossi se développe au contraire avec l'âge et il y a là un grand moyen d'influence sur eux. Mais il ne faudrait pas que l'instruction, en leur ouvrant l'esprit, leur fasse perdre leur sens religieux et ne mette rien à la place. Ce serait en quelque temps la démoralisation et la ruine de ce peuple, susceptible, semble-t-il de rapides progrès et ce serait dommage.

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Ils aiment raconter des fables, et il serait facile de faire tout un volume de littérature mossi en réunissant les légendes historiques, les proverbes et les fables qui ont cours parmi le peuple. Voici, à titre d'exemple, quelques histoires qui nous ont été racontées. Comme dans tous les contes primitifs, ce sont les animaux qui jouent le rôle de personnages intelligents: il y a longtemps que le roman de la rose nous a habitué à ce genre de littérature.

Le vautour chauve et l'épervier blanc.

Un vautour chauve se promenait de la brousse. Survint un épervier blanc qui dit au vautour: «Pourquoi n'as-tu rien à manger?» Le vautour répondit: «C'est vrai, je n'ai rien à manger. Dieu fasse que je trouve.» L'épervier dit: «Dieu ne peut pas donner assez à manger aux gens pour qu'ils soient rassasiés.» Le vautour répondit: «Si ce n'est pas Dieu qui me donne à manger, je ne mangerai pas.»

L'épervier blanc vit une colombe se poser sur un bois. L'épervier fondit sur elle mais le bois lui perça la poitrine et ressortit derrière la tête. Et le vautour vint et mangea l'épervier.

Le singe et la tortue.

Le singe dit à la tortue de l'accompagner dans sa promenade dans la brousse. Ils virent des fruits de *karité*, le singe monta dans l'arbre, le secoua et fit tomber tous les fruits. La tortue lui dit: «Singe, ce sont des fruits verts.» Le singe insulta la tortue parce qu'elle l'avait appelé par son nom et qu'il craint le chien. Enfin, la tortue appèle le singe qui descendit de l'arbre et celui-ci dit à la tortue d'aller chercher du feu afin de rôtir de la viande. La tortue

alla chercher du feu et trouva un chien couché près de l'âtre. Le chien interrogea la tortue: «Qui t'a envoyé chercher du feu?» La tortue répondit: «C'est le singe qui m'a envoyé chercher du feu.» Le chien lui dit: «Est-ce bien vrai?» La tortue lui dit: «C'est vrai.» Alors le chien fit le mort. La tortue le saisit par la queue, prit du feu et retourna dans la brousse.

Le singe interrogea: «Le chien est-il mort ou est-il vivant?» La tortue lui dit qu'il est mort. Le singe lui dit alors de l'apporter. Il saisit donc le chien par les jambes pour le soulever et prit une pierre pour lui casser les dents. Mais le chien ouvrit les yeux. Le singe dit alors à la tortue: «Viens prendre ce fils de chef pour que je puisse me lever.» La tortue répondit qu'elle ne viendrait pas. Le singe poussa le chien pour le faire tomber, se leva et se sauva. Mais le chien poursuivit le singe, l'attrapa, le tua et la tortue se sauva et se cacha.

Le bouc et l'hyène.

Un bouc était allé à Dori acheter du sel. L'hyène le rencontra et voulut prendre son sel. Sitôt donc qu'elle l'aperçut, elle fut saisie du foie et se mit à courir. Elle vit un lion couché parce qu'il avait mal au ventre et lui dit qu'elle connaît un homme qui a un remède contre les maux de ventre. L'hyène alla appeler le bouc. Le bouc vint, salua le lion et le lion lui raconta qu'il a mal au ventre et que l'hyène lui a dit que le bouc connaît un remède. Le bouc répondit: «En effet, j'ai un remède, mais on le confectionne avec du foie d'hyène.» Le lion dit à l'hyène: «Enlève toi un morçeau de viande et donne-le moi.» L'hyène s'enleva elle-même un morçeau de viande, la donne et le bouc prit la viande, la fit cuire avec du sel et la donna au lion. Le lion lui demanda: «Faut-il en ajouter?» Le bouc répondit: «Que l'hyène se donne elle-même toute entière.» Le lion dit à l'hyène d'enlever sa propre cuisse. L'hyène se mordit et cela lui fit mal et elle prit la fuite. Le lion saisit l'hyène et la tua. Le bouc se sauva avec son sel et retourna chez lui.

C'est pourquoi l'hyène prend les troupeaux. —

* * *

Le Mossi est poli. C'est une de ses qualités qui frappe dès l'abord tous ceux qui ont quelques rapports avec lui. Nous avons vu que les indigènes se saluent toujours entre eux. Craignant ses nabas, il se tient devant eux dans une posture respectueuse sinon presque humiliante; il est aux petits soins avec un étranger de marque, veille à ce que rien de ce qu'un indigène peut désirer ne lui manque: tabouret, natte, sont apportés, tout aussitôt ainsi que la boisson; la nourriture est abondante et généralement soignée et propre.

Le Mossi est très hospitalier et il fait volontiers l'aumône pour elle-même, c'est à dire à un pauvre qui ne pourra pas lui rendre. Il est généreux et partage toujours avec ses voisins, et quand il a de la bière de mil, il en distribue largement. Aucune faiseuse de bière ne laissera passer un étranger de quelque importance sans lui offrir une calebasse à boire et elle ne sera pas contente s'il refuse. Une chose offerte n'est pas reprise et il faut user de ruse pour obtenir que l'indigène reprenne, sous un prétexte quelconque, ce qu'il a une fois donné.

Il offre toujours de la main droite. Passer la calebasse ou de la prendre de la main gauche est une injure. Dans un groupe, l'aîné doit mettre le premier la main au plat et chacun le suivra par ordre d'ancienneté jusqu'au plus jeune. Par contre, l'aîné cesse de manger le premier et c'est le plus jeune qui finit la calebasse et la nettoie. Quand on boit cependant, c'est le plus digne qui doit boire la dernière gorgée.

Un enfant ne salue pas ses parents chez lui, parce qu'il est chez lui; mais si une fille bien élevée voit sa mère arriver avec une cruche pleine ou un panier, elle se précipitera pour la débarrasser, fût-ce à quelques mètres de la *soukala*. Il est de bon ton, quand une amie est venue en visite, de porter sa charge quelque temps quand elle s'en va. D'ailleurs, un visiteur est toujours reconduit souvent jusqu'à la sortie du village.

Le Mossi ne manque ne de tact, ni de délicatesse. S'il désire quelque chose, il enverra d'abord un ami avec un cadeau, puis fera dire qu'il a une petite affaire à traiter, parfois laissera entendre de quoi il s'agit et partira sans attendre la réponse. Ce n'est que quelque temps après qu'il enverra encore son ami solliciter ce que lui-même désire ou viendra lui-même le dire.

* * *

Sensible, capable d'attachement et même d'affection, le Mossi sait très bien reconnaître le bien qui lui a été fait et cherche à témoigner sa reconnaissance d'une façon ou d'une autre. S'il peut offrir un cadeau, œufs, mil, miel, poule, il l'offre discrètement: «Prends ce mil pour ton cheval; donne cette poule à ton enfant.» S'il n'a rien, il sera aux aguets pour éviter une peine, un travail quelconque à son bienfaiteur, prendra sa pioche pour nettoyer le champ à sa place, l'aidera à soulever un fardeau. Il témoigne sa reconnaissance comme il peut, moins par des paroles que par des actes.

* * *

Le Mossi n'est pas paresseux. On peut même dire qu'en général, il aime le travail et les paresseux sont montrés du doigt, on s'éloigne d'eux, on les méprise. A l'hivernage, tout le monde doit être aux champs depuis le matin jusqu'au soir, hommes, femmes, enfants, ne restent à la maison que ceux qui ne peuvent travailler ou qui y ont de la besogne. En cette saison, le Mossi travaille beaucoup. Pendant la saison sèche, au contraire, il a du loisir. Mais outre que la plupart tissent ou voyagent pour leur commerce, outre que les enfants ont encore à couper la paille pour couvrir les toits, qu'il y a tout le mil à battre, il faut avouer qu'il n'est pas possible de travailler en ces pays de soleil torride comme en nos pays tempérés d'Europe. Et puis, pourquoi travailler puisqu'il y a fort peu de débouchés? Depuis que la paix française assure les communications, le commerce a pris une grande extension. Les indigènes, certains de récolter le fruit de leur traveil, développent leurs cultures et tous les ans, les champs gagnent sur la brousse. Les villages les plus importants sont tout entourés de cultures à perte de vue. S'ils ne travaillent pas davantage, ce n'est donc pas par paresse, mais faute de

[facing p. 114]

Les Mossi.

Anthropos X–XI.

En haut: Clocher de l'église de Ouagadougou.
En bas: L'intérieur de l'église de Ouagadougou.

débouchés. Il semble bien que le pays se développera très rapidement sitôt que des voies de communications l'auront ouvert au commerce européen.

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Tels sont, très succinctement exposés en toute impartialité, les qualités et les défauts de ce peuple. Lesquels l'emportent? Le lecteur en jugera. A nos yeux, le Mossi est un peuple extrêmement intéressant et susceptible d'un brillant avenir mais à une condition, c'est de devenir chrétien. Ce qui frappe surtout en lui, nous l'avons dit et redit, c'est son sens religieux et sa soumission absolue à tout ce qui est revêtu d'autorité.

Evidemment, notre civilisation européenne battra tout d'abord en brèche ces deux tendances, et par quoi les remplacera-t-elle? Le jour où l'instruction sera assez développée pour faire douter les Mossi de l'existance de leurs génies, de la puissance de leurs sorciers; le jour où ils sentiront que leurs chefs n'ont plus d'autre autorité que celle qu'ils tiennent d'un Blanc qui réside souvent à plusieurs journées de marche mais auprès duquel il est toujours possible de réclamer et qui écoute volontiers les plaintes déposées contre les nabas, qu'on peut faire mettre ainsi son naba en prison ou tout au moins lui causer de graves ennuis: ce jour là, le Mossi relèvera la tête, et comme il ne laisse pas d'être indépendant quand il n'a pas peur, ses chefs n'auront plus aucune autorité; ce sera l'anarchie. Les croyances superstitieuses ayant perdu toute force, les indigènes deviendront sceptiques, et l'égoisme règnera en maître avec tout son cortège de vices.

Seul le christianisme peut empêcher cette décomposition morale en donnant à tous une juste notion de ce qu'est l'autorité et en remplaçant la crainte des génies et des sorciers par la crainte ou mieux par l'amour de Dieu. L'Eglise a toujours été la grande initiatrice de la civilisation car celle-ci ne consiste pas seulement dans un certain développement économique ni dans un bienêtre materiel plus grand, mais surtout dans l'élévation morale des pensées et des sentiments.

La conversion de ce peuple au catholicisme n'est d'ailleurs qu'une affaire de temps, de tact et de bonté de la part des missionnaires. Se faire aimer des indigènes; gagner sinon la confiance et l'affection des nabas, du moins leur estime et, si possible, leur sympathie en respectant tout ce qui en eux est respectable, en se montrant plein de déférence pour eux; expliquer à tous, grands et petits, ce que l'on attend d'eux, le leur faire bien comprendre, car ils sont capables de le saisir, mais avec ceux sur lesquels on a quelque autorité, savoir veiller à l'exécution de ce que l'on a commandé et être ferme au besoin, et on obtiendra tout des Mossi.

Mais les missionnaires sont, hélas! trop peu nombreux. Jusqu'ici, en effet, il n'y a que huit missionnaires et deux postes pour évangéliser 1,500.000 âmes. On ne peut donc que désirer voir leur nombre s'augmenter considérablement car les emplacements favorables à l'installation des missions ne manquent pas, et partout où les missionnaires pourront s'établir et dépenser leur zèle, ils sauront, en répendant la civilisation chrétienne, faire accepter, bien mieux faire aimer la domination de la France qui les envoie,

2: Mangin FA28 Mossi

au nom de Dieu. Mais il faut se hâter. L'Islamisme peut devenir un danger et, dans un avenir plus ou moins rapproché, de grandes voies de communications traverseront ce pays. Le chemin de fer s'approche rapidement, amenant avec lui le développement matériel mais aussi tous les déchets de notre civilisation. Puisse-t-il trouver le cœur de nos Mossi cuirassé contre tous les appâts du monde, prêt à s'ouvrir à tout ce qu'il y a de beau et de noble dans nos conceptions européennes, mais assez fort pour résister à leurs attraits dissolvants et corrupteurs.

Encore une fois, le christianisme seul peut les sauver d'un esclavage bien plus redoutable que celui du corps, l'esclavage de toutes les passions. Mais comment connaîtront-ils le christianisme si personne ne le leur enseigne? Qui le leur enseignera s'il n'y a pas de prédicateurs? Et comment les prédicateurs pourront-ils évangéliser s'ils n'ont pas de ressources? Oh! qui nous donnera le moyen d'inonder ce pays de missionnaires zélés? qui ajoutera, à la couronne royale du Christ ce beau fleuron que le Divin Maître a conquis au prix de son sang!

3:Tauxier G-4, 5 (1908-1923) 1924 FA28 Mossi FA28

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New Notes on the Mossi and the Gourounsi
/Nouvelles Notes sur le Mossi et le Gourounsi/

by

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/title page/

FIRST BOOK

Chapter 1

The Origins of the Mossi

174 Most of the people who have dealt with the history of the Mossi have said that they come from the southeast, from the region of Gambakha or Gambaga (Dagomba). From there they are said to have occupied successively, going toward the north, the regions of Fada-N'Gourma, Ouagadougou, and Ouahigouya.

But before that where did they come from?

Captain Lambert, who commanded the circle of Ouagadougou in 1906-07, has tried to find an answer to this question in his study of the Mossi country, published in the Bulletin de la Société de Géographie de l'Afrique Occidentale française /Bulletin of the Geographic Society of French West Africa/, 1908.

174 171 "South of Bornu, " he writes (op. cit. No. 7, page 166), "in the German Cameroons, people still exist who are known as Mossah and who, according to local tradition, were once master of the whole country. At present they are confined to a rather restricted area (the valley of Logone-Cameroons).

"The Mossah today bear such a striking physical resemblance to the Mossi that one could not have lived among them without recognizing the similarities; the tattooing is identical except for the circumflex accent which has been more recently acquired, as we shall demonstrate. The physical resemblance is almost total, and, besides, the Mossah have the same social organization as the Mossi, with all its characteristic hierarchy. In brief, /2/ there is no doubt as to the common origin of the two groups, and we can be certain that the presence of the Mossah in one part of Bornu and their traditional supremacy in the country in bygone days establish with certainty the habitat where the people we are dealing with must have been formed and developed. All this, of course, occurred during a period long before the events that allowed the Arab chroniclers to reveal their existence to us." (1)

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1. Actually, these "Arab chroniclers" is simply Es-Sadi, the author of Tarikh-es-Soudan /History of Sudan/, who wrote as late as the seventeenth century. As a matter of fact, it was the Portuguese writer, the great historian and geographer, Jean de Barros, author of l'Asia (1552-53), who was the first to reveal the existence of the Mossi in the sixteenth century. Léon, the African, did not know of them, nor did the Arab geographers and historians of the Middle Ages. Let us add that one should verify exactly in the area whether the Mossah resemble the Mossi other than by name. The matter has become relatively easy since the French occupation of the Cameroons.

171 Captain Lambert adds in a note:
174 "A new question arises here: can one consider the Mossi as being autochthonous to Bornu, or should their long stay in that region be considered as a step in the great migratory movement that, in successive phases, has brought them to the heart of the Niger estuary?

"In the present state of our knowledge, it would be unwise to take a firm position. We shall merely show that the feudal system that characterizes the political constitution of the Mossi can be compared to the system prevalent in Abyssinia. The hierarchical set-up seems to be identical in certain respects; leaders are appointed under analogous conditions, and the election of the Negus is accompanied by a period of anarchy which we also find here and which seems to go back to ancient traditions.

174 "It may well be that this goes beyond pure coincidence. While
197 we were in the process of editing a small dictionary of the Mossi language, we took the trouble to find out whether the dialects spoken in Abyssinia were likely to give us some clues on this point. We must admit, however, that the vocabularies of the Galla, Ahmaris /sic/, and Tigré languages that we consulted have not provided us /3/ with convincing arguments. But it is a proven fact today that, from the

174 viewpoint of ethnographic research, text similarities do not mean
197 very much, and idioms that are not fixed by writing may, within a few centuries, become deformed to the extent of being unrecognizable. While the value of grammatical comparisons is much more important, we have unfortunately had neither the time nor the means to make use of this method. We will, therefore, merely indicate this point of view which, in our opinion, could lead to fruitful observations. On
174 the other hand, missionaries have claimed that the Mossi traditionally would have preserved the symbolic notion of the Christian cross, a fact we have been unable to verify and which, without being impossible a priori, seems unlikely."

After this parenthesis about the distant origins of the Mossi, Captain Lambert continues:

"It is indeed highly probable, and here again, lacking written documents, we have only oral traditions to base our opinions on, that the Mossi people, split up by the impact of a Moslem invasion from the east, must have, through successive waves and losing ground in the opposite direction, spread further toward the west, so that the Mossi-bé (1), who still form several agglomerations in the western

1. Mossi-bé is simply the plural of the word Mossi in Peuhle /Peul/ language.

part of Sokoto and even in the Dounzou circle and who also show striking analogies with the Mossi proper, can also be used as a reference. (Captain Lambert adds in a note: "Among the Mossi-bé we
[304 find the circumflex accent which would complete the ethnic tatooing
171 of the Mossi as it is today. This mark rightly belongs to the natives
69] of the left bank of the Niger river up to the angle formed by the Dollol-Maouri.") These agglomerations indicate, in a very approximate fashion, the location of the Mossi empire at the historical period that evidently marks its apogee of power; toward 1350, as we saw /4/ in the Tarikh, Timbuktu was conquered by the sultan of Mossi."

174 The incident to which Captain Lambert refers here is the con-
114 quest of Timbuktu by the Mossi (in 1333 exactly, according to the most advanced calculations) (1), which is mentioned by Es-Sadi in

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1. See the book by Lieutenant Marc, Le Pays Mossi /The Land of the Mossi/, pp. 136-138. The author sets the date of the fall of Timbuktu to the Mossi at 1333 or 1334. Delafosse, in his book Haut-Sénegal-Niger /Upper Senegal and Niger/, took the date of 1333. Binger (op. cit. Vol. I, pp. 481, 482) gives the date of 1329 according to the Tarikh, but assumes it to be wrong and that it was in 1326 that the Mossi, who he says were then part of the kingdom of Mali, captured Timbuktu for the sake of and by the order of the Mali kings. We know now that this assumption is false, that the Mossi were never under the domination of Mali, and that they sacked Timbuktu on their own behalf in 1333. Besides, the Malinké recaptured Timbuktu fairly soon thereafter and held it until 1433, at which time the leader Targui Akil took possession. The Mossi expedition against Timbuktu was, everything considered, nothing more than a raid, perfectly executed, but without any follow-up.

the Tarikh-es-Soudan /History of Sudan/; but one cannot conclude, as Captain Lambert does, that in the fourteenth century the Mossi were still living on the east bank of the Niger River, in what today is Djerma, and that they had not yet reached, at that time, the Mossi of today, nor even the Dagomba, and that it was from Djerma that they conducted their triumphant raid on Timbuktu. If the Mossi really did come from Bornu and ended up in Dagomba, and, as is only natural, spread on to Haoussa and Djerma (2), they did so in the very

2. As a matter of fact, one can explain the Mossi colonies of Sokoto as having come from the regions of Ouagadougou, Yatenga, or Fada N'Gourma at a relatively recent date, the thirteenth, fourteenth, or fifteenth centuries.

114 distant past, since we must place Rawa, the first conqueror of
174 Ouagadougou and Ouahigouya (see further on), in the twelfth century A. D., and his parents came from Dagomba where it is clear the Mossi have lived for some time. The crossing of Haoussa and Djerma by the forefathers of the Dagomba Mossi takes us back to a period that obviously cannot be precisely established, but which is definitely earlier than the fourteenth century (when the Mossi conquered Timbuktu), and one must recognize, contrary to Captain Lambert's opinion, that the Mossi who took Timbuktu came from the south (probably from Ouahigouya) and not from the east (the Say region). We would like to point out /5/ also that they were a great deal closer to Timbuktu in Ouahigouya than in Say. Once this point has been cleared up and the ensuing mistakes corrected, the plausibility of the discovery of the road followed by the Mossi who came from Bornu (if they came from there), which was re-traced by Captain Lambert, is acceptable.

These observations also apply to the continuation of Captain Lambert's report. He says that the wars waged by the second Songhaï empire against the Mossi (sixteenth century) forced the latter to leave the Djerma country to go southwest toward Dagomba. Obviously, all of this is quite inaccurate, but, without accepting Captain Lambert's cause for the emigration and his establishing it further in the past, we can accept the route he traces.

174 "This movement," says Captain Lambert, speaking of the march from Djerma to Dagomba, "took place in a southerly direction, and the Mossi, after having followed the Niger River, crossed it at a point located between Say and Ilo, but much closer to Ilo.

"North of Ilo, the custom of shaving the heads of the chieftains'
[301] [302] wives still persists. These women also wear metal leggings (1), par-

[556] 1. Captain Lambert undoubtedly is referring to the beautiful copper leggings, about 20 centimeters high, worn by the rich Mossi women.

ticularly characteristic of the Mossi peoples and sometimes encountered among peoples who have been in contact with them.

"From this point, the migration, leaving the Bariba country on the left (2), went in a straight line through Gourma and the Pama region

174 2. One may wonder whether the Bariba were not part of this Mossi or pre-Mossi migration, since the Bariba have certain points of resemblance, from a sociological viewpoint, with the Mossi: like the Mossi, they are warrior-horsemen, pillagers, and courageous. On the other hand, Delafosse (Vocabulaires comparatifs /Comparative Vocabularies/) wonders, on page 224, if one should not connect the Bariba to the Mossi-Gourounsi, from a linguistic viewpoint.

173 Also, Captain Lambert says in a note on page 170: "The leader of Djougou (Dahomey) is of Mossi origin. Tradition claims that the inhabitants of this village, divided by internal strife brought about by the rivalry of several pretenders to power, offered the leadership to a weaver who had been living for a long time in Djougou where he most certainly kept out of local squabbles; the latter refused the offer. But the people of Djougou refused to give up and made him a prisoner in his hut. Having to choose between the disadvantages of power and his own captivity, the weaver could not but make a decision; at the end of the sixth day, he consented to take command. His descendants have succeeded him since that time without interruption, and, in memory of the incident described, a custom was set up which requires that the new leader remain enclosed in his hut for the six days following his election."

174 as far as Gambakha, the present-day capital of the northern territories /6/ of the English colony of the Gold Coast. This is where the leader who had organized the exodus chose his residence. We have no positive information about him as a person, but it is certain that the establishment of the Mampourssi and Dagomba kingdom can be traced to him or his immediate successors."

174 [114] Captain Lambert adds in a note: "According to Colonel M.-P. Northcott, the founder of the Gambakha dynasty was called Tosogo; but the information that he provides about him seems hardly in agreement with the tradition we are relying upon here." (See Report on the Northern Territories of the Gold-Coast, London, 1890).

Captain Lambert continues as follows:

"The creation of the actual Mossi empire came later; it is nevertheless safe to assert that from that period on, some of the new inhabitants of Mampoursi undertook to open a passage toward the north and achieved it in two different ways. One group, after leaving Gambakha, pushed the Boussanga back into the region they occupy today and reached Béloussa country where they spread toward the west and north, occupying a vast stretch of land which is today almost exclusively inhabited by the Mossi. The other group, blazing a path in Nankana country, went north of Tiébélé and pushed the Boussanga back from the opposite side, thus crushing them in a vice, so to speak, and spread out in the country circumscribed by the Red Volta, toward Ouagadougou.

"One has only to glance at a map of the Mossi country to recognize the direction of these two parallel movements which came together north of the present-day Boussangsé, an almost uninhabited region at the time of the great Mossi migration. It was there that the autochthonous Boussanga, who were then occupying the whole Tenkodogo country, were forced to find refuge and have since been just existing, hostile to any fusion with the invader."

173 Captain Lambert then goes on to the legend of the origins of the true Mossi empire:

"A naba of the Gambakha (the Gambakha, as we have seen, were directly descended from the leader who had led the great immigration to the Mampoursi River), having reached the end of his life without an heir, believed this fact to be a fulfillment of destiny. Nothing in this world is permanent, and doubtless his glorious dynasty had to make way for a new line of leaders. He was at least resigned to this, but his lonely old age was what saddened him above all else. He therefore implored the spirits to give him a child, pronouncing the solemn vow that he would dedicate it to virginity, whether it be a boy or girl. As if by a miracle, a girl was born to him at once. He called her Pogotoenga (woman of the tree) (1), considering her, therefore, from

173 1. Pogotoenga, or rather Pogotoéga, means "woman of the baobab, " and comes from pogo, meaning "woman, " and toéga, meaning "baobab" /a species of tree/. One may wonder what relation there is between this name and the fact that Pogotoenga was dedicated to virginity, if one ignores the customs of the Sudanese. A woman dedicated
568 to a baobab (a powerful vegetal divinity) is considered the spouse of the baobab. Therefore, she cannot enter into marriage with a man, which means forced celibacy. It is true that certain Blacks (for instance, the Dialonké of the Faranah circle, French Guinea) consider that a woman married to a spirit owes him only her spirit or spiritual form, and that her material body is free. From this arises the fact that with those Blacks, and some others as well, women-fetishes, women married to spirits or divinities, are actually prostitutes and practice
[786] prostitution. They are, besides, very rare. In short, they are allowed to prostitute themselves but not to marry. It is sacred prostitution, well known to the whole of oriental and Greco-Roman antiquity. Thus, virginity (sacred), on the one hand, and prostitution (sacred), on the other, are rather strangely derived from the same order of ideas.

173 her birth as being a stranger to her sex, and he had her given masculine clothes.

"Pogotoenga developed quickly. At the age of ten, she reached a degree of incomparable beauty, and at about the same period, torn by the ardors of puberty, she succeeded--despite the strict vigilance of the old man, anxious to remain faithful to his oath--in fleeing the paternal household.

Although pursued for a long time, she managed to evade all /8/ attempts at capturing her, until the day when, wandering in what is

173 today the Tenkodogo country, she met, in the midst of the bush, the elephant hunter Rialé, a lonely and violent man who seduced her. She had a son, Widiraogo, and a daughter, Wedaogo, by Rialé. (1)

1. In other legends (see my Noir du Yatenga /Blacks of Yatenga/, p. 58) Pogotoenga is called Yennenga, or simply Poko (woman). As far as the name Ouidiraogo or Widiraogo is concerned, it means male horse, stallion. I do not know exactly what the name Wedaogo or Ouédaogo means, but it seems to me to be unsuitable for a girl, since it contains the word daogo or raogo which means "male" in Mossi.

"In order that the quality of royal blood inherited by these children not be debased by exogamy, Rialé and Pogotoenga decided to marry them to each other, and from this marriage were born also a boy and a girl, Zunghrama (2) and Yuganemdo. For the same reason,

2. This is the Zoungourana of the Moulins-Carrier and Vadier legends (See my Noir du Yatenga, p. 60).

Zunghrama married his sister (3), and from this union, three sons

3. The unions of brothers and sisters are not indicated in the other variations of the legend.

were born: Oubri, Oubrogo, and Yampango. Oubri was to found the dynasty of Ouagadougou; Oubrogo, that of Tenkodogo; and Yampango, that of Gourma (4). Oubri's offspring were the most glorious and the

4. The Moulins-Carrier and Vadier variations present things somewhat differently. Zoungourana is supposed to have founded the Tenkodogo dynasty himself; his brother, Diaba, is supposed to

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have founded the Fada-N'Gourma dynasty; and Rawa, his eldest brother (in Mossi, "Rawa" means the courageous, the strong), is supposed to have founded the Rawatenga dynasty which has since become the Yatenga. As for the Ouagadougou dynasty, it was indeed Oubri, son of Zoungourana, who is said to have founded it. On this last point, all the traditions are in agreement, the one on which Captain Lambert bases his theories, as well as those of Moulins and Vadier.

[631] most powerful. The relations between the naba of Ouagadougou and those of Tenkodogo and Gourma, their cousins, were always those of a sovereign to his vassal (5).

5. It is unlikely that this situation prevailed from the beginning, since the higher authority should have been that of the Tenkodogo naba. But when the Mossi kingdom of Ouagadougou subsequently became the more powerful, it established its primacy over the neighboring, less powerful kingdoms of Tenkodogo and Fada-N'Gourma.

"Their common ancestor, Zunghrama, died in Komtoéga, where his grave is still shown."

174 In conclusion, Captain Lambert states:

1. That the Mossi come from south of Bornu, an area still inhabited by a people, the Mossah, who greatly resemble them. /9/

2. That the Mossi went through Haoussa and Djerma in order to come to Dagomba.

3. That the Mossi of today come from those of Dagomba.

He also states, but we can ignore this claim as being absolutely contrary to the facts known to us today, that the journey from Djerma to Dagomba was made during or after the sixteenth century A. D. and was occasioned by the crusades that the second Songhaï empire

174 led against the Mossi. In fact, the Mossi had left Dagomba long before the fourteenth century and occupied their present sites, including Yatenga.

173 Dr. Ruelle as well admits that the Mossi came from the east before settling in Dagomba. "The same tradition," he says (1), "has

1. L'Anthropologie /Anthropology/, Vol. XV (1904), p. 675. The tradition mentioned refers to the tradition of the old people.

it that warriors who came from the east defeated at Gambakha the Dagomba tribe who was them master of the land, and they set up their own leader. His daughter, Ouiaraouga, fell in love with an elephant hunter with whom she ran away, and, as her father tried to apprehend her, she took refuge in Tenkodogo. There she married the local chief, a Boussanga called Zangoumana, whose grave in Komterga is still a place of pilgrimage for the Mossi. Their son, Bougoum, after several expeditions in that region, conquered Koupéla. He, in turn, had three sons: Houbri, Nabakéré, and Kouda, all of whom made further conquests. The first pushed on as far as Yako, made Ouagadougou his capital, and forced his two brothers to recognize him as suzerain." (2).

2. I quote this version which is somewhat different from the others and which also has some mistakes since the name of "Ouiaraouga" (Ouidiraogo, "stallion, male horse") is given to the young girl whom the other traditions call Poko, Pokotoéga, Yennenga, etc. The name rightfully belongs to her son and not to her. It should be noted that Zoungourana (or Zangoumana) here becomes a Boussanga, the second husband of the ex-maiden, daughter of the king of Dagomba.

174 Lieutenant Marc also believes that the Mossi originated in the east. "Where did the Mossi come from when they arrived in the

174 country of Gambaga?" he asks (op. cit., p. 134). "It is rather difficult to /10/ speak authoritatively on this subject: probably from the central African Sudan, the region of the Chad. All Mossi traditions are unanimous in placing their country of origin very far in the east ..."

Lieutenant Marc had already said on page 130, "Local traditions have it that the Mossi come from very far in the east. Very long ago, they occupied a country located beyond the Niger River, whose capital was called Aliaman. This country is presently inhabited by the Songhaï. Then the Mossi came to live in Dagomba, defeated its inhabitants, and the leader of the Mossi settled in Gambaga." (1)

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1. There follows the legend of the daughter of the king of Gambakha. She is wrongly called Ouidiraogo, "stallion," as in Dr. Ruelle's version. Lieutenant Marc goes on to make another mistake by saying that Ouidiraogo means "hoof" (instead of male horse). Zoungourana (whom Lieutenant Marc calls Zoungourouma or Zougourouma) is presented here, as he was by Dr. Ruelle, as the second husband of the daughter of the king of Gambakha and as a Boussansé king. In Lieutenant Marc's version, he "waged war against his father-in-law and conquered the whole country from Gambaga to Koupéla." Then "Zougourouma had three sons: Séré, Oubri, and Couda. The first became naba of Boussouma; the second, Naba Oubri, conquered the country of Ouagadougou, set up his capital there, and took possession of Yatenga. Naba Oubri is considered by the Mossi as the first of the Moro-naba and founder of the present dynasty. His successors were his brother Couda, and then his son Nigamenda."

174 In this tradition reported by Lieutenant Marc, there is obviously an element of Moslem imaginations; Aliaman probably designates

174 Yemen. But the indication that this country is presently inhabited by the Songhay /sic/ certainly points to Djerma or Zaberma, slightly east of the Niger River in the Say and Dosso region. By dissociating the Moslem legend (undoubtedly created by some Yarse Moslem of the Mossi) from the rest of the tale, one still comes back to the temporary and distant occupation of Djerma by the ancestors of the Mossi.

174 Delafosse, on the other hand, contrary to Dr. Ruelle, Captain
114 Lambert, and Lieutenant Marc, although, like the others, he has the Mossi come from Dagomba to their present habitat (see Haut-Sénégal-Niger /Upper Senegal and Niger/, Vol. I, pp. 305-310), seems disinclined to accept the idea of an eastern origin. He says (page 310, in a note), "Lieutenant Marc seems to want to attribute an eastern
174 origin to the Mossi. To strengthen his hypothesis, he says that the
171 organization of the court of the Morho nâba (emperors of the Mossi)
644 is unique in western Africa, while there are /11/ equivalents in
114 Haoussa, Bornu, etc. I should like to point out that this argument is of little value, precisely because, contrary to Lieutenant Marc's theory, one finds in all ancient states of western Africa (Ghana, Mali, Tekrour, Gao, Dahomey, Benin, etc.) an organization absolutely analogous to that of the Mossi court (see part IV of this work and compare with the reports of Arab geographers and early European
174 travelers)." Of course I agree with Delafosse in not finding Lieutenant
114 Marc's argument very penetrating (1), but Ruelle, Lambert, and

1. Here is the argument as developed by Lieutenant Marc (op. cit., p. 134, 135):

"The feudal organization of the Mossi country, the court of the Moro-Naba, its pages, and its eunuchs, are all unique in western Africa. On the other hand, the black monarchs, as they are known in central Africa, seem to live in a setting that greatly resembles the one in which the Moro-Naba lives. The sultans of Zinder, Bornu, and Wadai have also a court, eunuchs, and pages. The little we know about the organization of their empires seems rather similar to what we have seen among the Mossi. But our

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> documentation on this matter is not extensive enough to enable us to attempt a comparative study."

Marc do not base themselves exclusively on this argument. They also use a tradition of the Mossi themselves, and it would doubtless be unwise to reject it without examining it further. An argument that could be cited in favor of a very ancient occupation of Djerma by the ancestors of the Mossi is Binger's following remark: "The Mossi must have remained in contact with the Touareg /Tuareg/ for a fairly long time (2) ... since they partially adopted their dress and use, as they do, the crutch-handled [poignée en croix] sabor."

[171 411]

> 2. In this quotation, I have omitted the word "after," since Binger assumes that the Mossi, after taking Timbuktu in 1326 by order of the Mali, remained there until 1433, having, therefore, one century of contact with the Touareg. In reality, the Mossi stayed in Timbuktu only a very short time, and this raid could not have given them a prolonged contact with the Touareg, from whom they were separated before the fall of Timbuktu, and again as soon as they left the town, by the entire Songhaï country stretching along the banks of the Niger River. On the contrary, if they had formerly occupied Djerma, before the Djermabé or the Songhaï, one can easily understand this contact with the Touareg as well as the existence of the sword with the short crutch-handle /poignée en croix (Binger wrongly calls this straight sword a saber). In addition, when Binger speaks of the Targui /Tuareg/ dress, adopted in part by the Mossi, he doubtless thinks of the lithâm (or face veil) which was then worn by the Mossi horsemen. At the present time, they are no longer worn, and I have never seen them among the Mossi, where I lived 1908-1909.

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174 do, the crutch-handled /poignée en croix/ saber."
114 Actually, we must admit that we know nothing certain about the Mossi outside of Dagomba. This is what I /12/ clearly stated in my Noir du Yatenga /Blacks of Yatenga/ (1917) (1). The move into

1. See pp. 57 and 58.

Djerma is conjectural, and the question concerning the Mossah would have to be settled by an inquiry made in the Cameroons. At one
174 time I was tempted to connect the Mossi with the races of the south,
197 the Agni-Achanti /Ashanti/, and it seems certain that close relationships exist (2) between the numerical vocabularies of the Voltaic

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2. See Appendix No. I. In addition, a woman called Aoura-Poko plays as important a part in the Baoulé historic tradition as in the Mossi historic tradition. And, although the word for woman is oba, eba, bla in Achanti, Abron, and Baoulé, the Baoulé heroine is called Poko, like Poko (woman) or Pokotoéga (woman of the baobab) of the Mossi tradition.

group and the Agni-Achanti group. But can one base a linguistic comparison on vocabulary alone? It would also have to be proven, grammatically speaking, that the Voltaic linguistic group is very close to the Agni-Achanti group. (3) And this has not yet been done.

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3. Delafosse says that there is no special relation between these two groups from a grammatical viewpoint. In a more general manner, Delafosse would now like to believe, as far as Mossi origins are concerned, that Mossi residence in their present country goes back far before the eleventh century A. D. Apparently only a band of pillagers and happy warriors, a princely dynasty came

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from Gambakha in the eleventh century to found small kingdoms in a country which had already been colonized by the Mossi. However, there is a drawback to this opinion: the existence among the Mossi of an autochthonous people (Nioniossé or Foulsé /Fulse/) still extant, who are far from having, always and everywhere, merged with the Mossi. According to my observations made in the area (I spent three years in Yatenga, from 1913 to 1916), there are still more Nioniossé than Mossi in Yatenga, 100, 000 as against 70, 000 (see my Noir du Yatenga, pages 665 and 666). The existence of this earlier people proves that the Mossi colonization is a relatively recent one. Also, the Mossi could not have penetrated and survived in an already inhabited region in any way other than by forming small, conquering military monarchies. I think therefore, that the Mossi came, with their chiefs, from Dagomba, and that they didn't reach the present Mossi country until ... But we are coming back to the chronological question which we will deal with later on.

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174 For the moment, then, we are still reduced to dealing with hypotheses insofar as the origins of the Mossi are concerned. We know that the Mossi come from Dagomba and that they probably entered the country as conquerors. But where did they come from then? From the north-east? From the south? From the east? We cannot yet answer with certainty, just as we cannot for so many other historical, philosophical, and scientific questions, alas!

Grammatici certant et adhuc sub judice lis est.

174 /13/ This lack of certainty concerning the origins of the Mossi
141 should not prevent us from treating the anthropological question of the Mossi. On the contrary, for it is quite evident that, while linguistics can give us valuable information about the origins and affinities of the Mossi, anthropology can give us even more valuable and far-reaching information since, as we know, it is obviously easier for a people to change its language than the form of its skull. Let us, therefore, look to anthropology and consult Dr. Ruelle to find out what the Mossi are from a somatic viewpoint.

14 Dr. Ruelle, in the work cited below (1), has worked with 100

[118]

1. L'Anthropologie, Vol. XV (1904), pp. 519-561 and 657-703.

Mossi men (unfortunately, he did not measure women, which is a regrettable shortcoming and can invalidate certain averages, for instance, the ones concerning stature). From the viewpoint of skin color, which he generally finds dark brown (not only for the Mossi but for the other tribes of the IInd military territory which he studied at the same time as the Mossi), he gives for the Mossi the following numbers on Broca's chromatic scale:

70 Mossi out of 100 have no. 42
14 Mossi out of 100 have no. 41
19 Mossi out of 100 have no. 37 (2)

[84]

2. Page 522.

For the horizontal cephalic index:

2 Mossi have 65	15 Mossi have 75
4 Mossi have 68	11 Mossi have 76
4 Mossi have 69	7 Mossi have 77
2 Mossi have 70	8 Mossi have 78
3 Mossi have 71	6 Mossi have 79
13 Mossi have 72	1 Mossi has 80
17 Mossi have 73	2 Mossi have 81 (3)
5 Mossi have 74	

141 /14/ 3. Page 524. If Dr. Ruelle had taken care to measure Mossi women, it is probable that the cephalic index would have been larger, since we know, for instance, that Lobi women have an average horizontal cephalic index of 75.89, while the men have only 74.36; Birifon women have 77.35, while the men have only 74.58; and finally, Dagari women have 72.32, while the men have only 72.09. This means that the women have a shorter skull than the men, yet it is no broader, that is to say, they have a smaller cerebral capacity. This also undoubtedly means that these women's ancestors probably belonged, more or less, to the pygmy or Negrito race whose unequivocal traces are still found on the Ivory Coast, a racial group with skulls shorter than those of the tall Negroes without being commensurately broader, quite the contrary.

We see, thus, that 12 Mossi out of 100 are ultradolichocephalic or hyperdolichocephalic, 53 are properly called dolichocephalic, 32 subdolichocephalic, and 3 are subbrachycephalic.

The average is 74.65, that is, clearly dolichocephalic. The extremes of the indices are: maximum, 81.76; minimum, 65.62. The spread is 16.14.

141 171 The peoples who most resemble the Mossi on Dr. Ruelle's table are:

the Ouangarbé or Yarsé	74.95	(average)
the Samo	74.90	"
the Nounouma	74.40	"
the Birifon	74.58	"
the Lobi	74.36	"

141 The nasal index for 100 Mossi is:

1 where the nasal index figures between 80 and 84.9

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2	where the nasal index figures	between 85 and 89.9
9	-	between 90 and 94.9
14	-	between 95 and 99.9
29	-	between 100 and 104.9
17	-	between 105 and 109.9
11	-	between 110 and 114.9
15	-	between 115 and 119.9
2	-	above 120

The average is 104.60. Considered in detail, we find one mesorrhine (up to 85), 23 platyrrhine (from 85 to 100) and 74 hyperplatyrrhine (from 100 to 120) (1).

1. Page 538.

[171] The Mossi is thus decidedly platyrrhine and even hyperplatyrrhine, although less so than the Bambara.

As far as height is concerned, the average of 94 Mossi men is 1.71 /15/ (exactly 1.712). But this average would be quite a bit lowered if Dr. Ruelle could have measured women (1).

[171]

1. Lobi women measure on the average 1.66, while the men measure 1.75; Birifon women measure 1.62, while the men measure 1.75; Dagari women are 1.59, while the men are 1.72 (p. 550).

141 In conclusion, Dr. Ruelle's study tells us that the Mossi are
144 dolichocephalic, platyrrhine, and tall. These are characteristics usually attributed to the Black race in general (tall Negroes, not Negritos). These traits do not differentiate the Mossi to any extent from the peoples surrounding them. In order to reach anthropological conclusions about the origin of the Mossi, more far-reaching somatic studies than those now in existence will need to be made on the Mossi themselves and on the hundreds of Negro tribes living in the Sudan, between Abyssinia and the Atlantic and between the Sahara and the Gulf of Guinea.

Chapter 2

Mossi Chronology

174 Mossi chronology is still a hypothetical construction, at least insofar as the beginnings of Mossi history are concerned. Since the beginning of the fifteenth century, historians are almost in agreement, and for the eighteenth century they have reached complete accord. Delafosse, in his Haut-Sénégal-Niger /Upper Senegal and Niger/ (1912), has given a complete chronology of the Mossi (the regions of Ouagadougou, Yatenga, and Fada-N'Gourma) (1), while I have traced

1. See Vol. I, pp. 306-312, and Vol. II, pp. 126, 139-140 and 149-150.

one myself in my Noir du Soudan: Pays Mossi et Gourounsi /Blacks of the Sudan: Country of the Mossi and Gourounsi/ (1912), for the naba of Ouagadougou (2). In 1917, I took up this question more

2. See pp. 458-462. In truth, these pages do not give an actual chronological list, but there are various indications from which one can deduce the dates referring to the kings of Ouagadougou which I have given on page 674 of my Noir du Yatenga /Blacks of Yatenga/, under the title : "Chronologie du Mossi (région de Ouagadougou /Chronology of the Mossi (region of Ouagadougou)/, from my Noir du Soudan /Blacks of the Sudan/, 1912" (Appendix No. V).

thoroughly in my Noir du Yatenga /Blacks of Yatenga/ (pp. 667-677). I give here these three different chronologies insofar as they concern Yatenga, that is, the northern kingdom of all the Mossi, which is the one that dealt with the Mali, the Songhaï, and the Bambara throughout the ages— which is the one, therefore, for which we have some points

174 of reference given us by the chroniclers of Timbuktu or by the Portuguese. Once these chronologies have been set down, we shall be able to discuss them again with the help of an important bit of information which is given by the Tarikh-el-Fettach /History of Fettac./

174 Mossi Kings 173	Delafosse's Chronology	Tauxier 1912	Tauxier 1917
Nédéga (Dagomba)	1000	"	1233
Riâlé	"	"	1253
Ouidiraogo	dead in 1050	"	1273 /17/
Rawa	11 century	"	1293
Oubri	1050-1090	1175-1199	1313
Ouemtanango	1130	"	1333
Yadega	1170	"	1353
Yaouloumfao	1200-1225	"	1360
Guéda	"	"	
Tounougoum	"	"	1360-1375
Possinga	"	"	
Nasségué	1320-1340	"	1375-1385
Somna	"	"	
Vanté-Baragouan	1350-1380	"	1385-1395
Bonga	1380-1410	"	1395-1415
Sougounoum	1410-1430	"	1415-1430
Kissoum	1430-1435	"	1430
Zangayella	1435-1460	"	1430-1450
Lanlasse	1460-1475	"	1450-1475
Nassodoba	1475-1500	"	1475-1505
Yamba	1500-1530	"	1505-1535
Niago	1530-1560	"	1535-1565
Parima	1560-1590	"	1565-1595
Koumpaougoum	1590-1620	"	1595-1625
Nabasséré	1620-1660	"	1625-1655
Toussourou	1660-1690	"	1655-1685
Sini	1690-1720	"	1685-1720
Pigo	1720-1739	"	1720-1739
Ouabégo	1739-1754	"	1739-1754
Kango	1754-1787	"	1754-1787
Sagha	1787-1803	"	1787-1803

174 173 Kaogo	1803-1806	"	1803-1306
Tougouri	1806-1822	"	1806-1822
Kom	1822-1825	"	1822-1825
Ragongo	1825-1831	"	1825-1831
Ridimba	1831	"	1831
Diogoré	1831-1834	"	1831-1834
Totébalobo	1834-1850	"	1834-1850
Yemdé	1850-1877	"	1850-1877
Sanoum	1877-1879	"	1877-1879
Noboga	1879-1884	"	1879-1884
Pigo II	1884-1885	"	1884-1885
Baogo	1885-1895	"	1885-1894
Bagaré	1895-1899	"	1894-1899
Liguidi	1899-1902	"	1899-1902
Koboga	since 1902	"	1902-1914

174 [174] First of all, we can note that there is, I think, a slight confusion in the beginning /18/ of Delafosse's chronology. As a matter of fact, he counts (Vol. I, page 306) 40 years per generation, and, on the other hand (Vol. II, page 126), he places Oubri approximately from 1050 to 1090. But Oubri was the son of Zoungourana, himself the son of Ouidiraogo, himself the son of the princess Yennenga, himself the son of Nédéga, the king who ruled in Dagomba. There are, then, four generations from Nédéga to Oubri, which must make 160 years, according to Delafosse's calculations, and, if Oubri is to be placed between 1050 and 1090, that would put his great-great-grandfather Nédéga at about 890, that is, at the end of the ninth century A. D., or at least in 910, that is, at the beginning of the tenth century (1).

1. I have already noted this in my Noir du Yatenga, p. 673 (Appendix No. IV).

In this last case, the approximate dates would be the following:

[173]

Nédéga.....about 910
Yennenga.....about 950
Ouidiraogo.....about 990
Zoungourana.....about 1030
Oubri..... between 1050 and 1090

174 This would definitely place Nédéga, the king of Dagomba, his daughter, Yennenga, and his grandson, Ouidiraogo, in the tenth century, then Zoungourana (with his brothers Rawa and Diaba) and Oubri in the eleventh century.

This said, the fact remains that the Mossi chronology of the tenth to the fourteenth century is not settled, and it would be interesting to find some information that would make possible a true approximation.

As it happens, there is an existing text of the second appendix of the Tarikh-el-Fettach /History of Fettach/ which can throw light on this darkness. In the name of a certain Songhaï king, Baraï, it is said, in fact, that the king of the Mossi waged war against him (2).

2. Tarikh-el-Fettach, Houdas translation, p. 333.

We do not know, however, which Mossi king, since the Tarikh-el-Fettach does not give his name, but before looking into the long list of Mossi kings to find out who this aggressor might have been, one would have to fix, at least approximately, the date of that Baraï.

This then forces us to establish the whole chronology /19/ of the Sonraï /sic/, also a very approximative chronology which varies according to whether we consult the Tarikh-es-Soudan /History of Sudan/ or the Tarikh-el-Fettach.

Let us see first how one could establish, even in a schematic and grossly approximative fashion, the chronology of the Songhaï princes according to the Tarikh-es-Soudan.

This chronicle gives only one date up to the time of Sonni-Ali-Ber: that of Kosoï, who was converted to Islam in the year 400 of the Hegira, that is, in 1009-10 A.D. (1), but it gives the dates of Sonni-

1. Tarikh-es-Soudan, Houdas translation, p. 5.

Ali-Ber and the Askias who succeeded him from 1464-65 to 1591, the period of the Moroccan conquest.

We can first point out that, for the princes for whom we have the exact dates (Sonni-Ali and the Askias), 126 or 127 years are given for ten reigns, which makes each reign approximately 13 years. We can apply this average to all the Songhay princes: thus, since

174 we are counting from Za Alayaman to Issihak II, 58 Songhay princes, this dates the beginning of these princes at about the year 837 A. D.

On the other hand, we must be aware of the fact that we have the approximate date of Ali Kolon's reign (or Ali Kolen, or Ali Golom, or Ali Kilnou), who freed the Songhay from the Mali suzerainty a little after the reign of Kankan-Moussa and during that temporary period of weakness which enabled the Mossi to raid Timbuktu (1333). Delafosse (2) puts the flight of Ali Kolen from the court of the Mali

2. Haut-Sénégal-Niger /Upper Senegal and Niger/, Vol. II, p. 73.

king and his victorious defense against the pursuing Mali people in the year 1335. Before him, Binger (3) had dated this flight in the year

3. Du Niger au golfe de Guinée /From the Niger to the Gulf of Guinea/, Vol. II, p. 368. See also page 371.

1331, during the reign of the weak Magha I, successor of Kankan-Moussa who reigned from 1331 to 1335. We can take 1333 as an average date, and it is conceivable that the fall of Timbuktu to the Mossi, which occurred in that year, helped in the restoration of Songhaï independence.

174 /20/ On the basis of this data, we have:
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1.	Za Alayaman	837-849
2.	Zakoï	849-861
3.	Takoï	861-873
4.	Akoï	873-885
5.	Kou	885-897
6.	Ali Faï	897-909
7.	Biyaï Komaï	909-921
8.	Biyaï	921-933
9.	Karaï	933-945
10.	Yama-Karaouï'a	945-957
11.	Yama	957-969
12.	Yama-Danka-Kibao	969-981

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13.	Koukoraï	981-993
14.	Kenken	993-1005
15.	Kosoï (about 1009-1010)	1005-1025
16.	Kosaï-Dariyâ	1025-1044
17.	Hen-Kon-Ouanko-Dam	1044-1063
18.	Biyaï-Koï-Kimi	1063-1082
19.	Nintâsanaï	1082-1101
20.	Biyaï-Kaïna-Kimba	1101-1120
21.	Kaïna-Chinyounbo	1120-1139
22.	Tib	1139-1158
23.	Yama-Dao	1158-1177
24.	Fadazou	1177-1196
25.	Ali-Koro	1196-1215
26.	Bir-Foloko	1215-1235
27.	Yasiboï	1235-1255
28.	Douro	1255-1275
29.	Zenko-Bâro	1275-1295
30.	Bisi-Bâro	1295-1315
31.	Bada	1325-1332
32.	Ali-Kolon (about 1333)	1333-1340
33.	Selman-Nâri	1340-1347
34.	Ibrahim Kabaï	1347-1354
35.	Otsmân Kanafa	1354-1362
36.	Bar-Kaïna-Ankabi	1362-1370
37.	Mousa	1370-1378
38.	Bokar-Zonka	1378-1386
39.	Bokar-Dalla-Boyonbo	1386-1394
40.	Mar Kiraï	1394-1402
41.	Mohammed Dâo	1402-1410
42.	Mohammed Koukiya	1410-1418
43.	Mohammed Fâr	1418-1426
44.	Karbifô	1426-1434
45.	Mar-Fâï-Kolli-Djimo	1434-1442
46.	Mar Arkena	1442-1449
47.	Mar Arandan	1449-1456
48.	Selimân Dam	1456-1464

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49.	Sonni Ali Ber	1464-1492
50.	Askia El-Hadj Mohammed	1493-1528
51.	Askia Moussa	1528-1531
52.	Askia Mohammed II	1531-1537
53.	Askia Ismaïl	1537-1539
54.	Askia Issihak I	1539-1549
55.	Askia Daoud	1549-1582
56.	Askia Mohammed III	1582-1586
57.	Askia Mohammed Bani	1586-1588
58.	Askia Issihak II	1588-1591

I underlined in this list the name of Bir Foloko (1215-1235), because he is the king of the Tarikh-es-Soudan list who corresponds to the Baraï' of the Tarikh-el-Fettach list.

174 Concerning the dates which one can get from the Tarikh-el-Fettach, they consist of three notations:

1) A giant, originally from Yemen, who lived toward the middle of the fourth century of the Hegira (1), that is, counting 350 years

1. Tarikh-el-Fettach, Houdas and Delafosse translation, p. 329.

from the Hegira, around 961 A. D.

2) The date of conversion to Islam of the people of Gao which took place, according to El-Motaouakkel Kâti, between 471 and 475 of the Hegira, that is, between 1079 and 1082 A. D. (2)

2. Ibid., pp. 332-333.

3) And the date of Mâkara-Komsoû, who was contemporary with Kankan-Moussa's pilgrimage to Mecca in the year 720 of the Hegira, or 1321-22 A. D. (3) This Mâkara-Komsoû was the 33rd king of

3. Ibid., p. 335.

Songhay, according to the list given by Mahmoud Kâti.

174 On the basis of these three notations, a chronological list of the Songhay princes can be established in accordance with the Tarikh-el-Fettach, making a note of the fact that 360 years (961 to 1321) are given for 33 princes, which makes an average of approximately 11 years per prince. On the other hand, one is led to think that the date of the conversion to Islam of the people of Gao gives the date of Kotso-Moslem (Kotso the Mussulman) and that, therefore, we can place this prince at about 1079-82, that is, at approximately 1080. /22/ True, the Tarikh says that it was not Kotso-Moslem who converted the people of Gao to Islam and that the widespread general opinion about this matter is false, but Mahmoûd Kâti seems to mumble strangely (may I be forgiven the word) about the subject (1), and one

1. See the note of Houdas-Delafosse, p. 333.

can, despite his authority and following the general opinion he rejects, admit the fact that it was Kotso who Islamized both Gao and the Songhay kingdom. We thus arrive at the year 1080 for his period, which gives his predecessors nine years on the average until the giant from Yemen. Moreover, there and now, we can indicate all our reservations about this far too recent beginning of the Songhay empire. The date one obtains from the Tarikh-es-Soudan (837 A. D.) seems preferable by far to the date of 961, obtained from the Tarikh-el-Fettach.

174 173 Regardless of how the matter stands concerning this last topic, we have then:

1.	Giant from Yemen	961
2.	Ouaaï	970
3.	Kaïen	979
4.	Takaï	988
5.	Mata-Kaï	997
6.	Mali Biyaï	1006
7.	Bayaï Kima	1015
8.	Beï	1024
9.	Kiraï	1033
10.	Yama Kalaouaï	1042

174	11.	Yama-Dombo	1051
173	12.	Yama-Diamaa	1060
	13.	Diatakoré	1070
	14.	Koto-Moslem	1080
	15.	Kotso-Dariâ	1093
	16.	Hounabououa	1106
	17.	Yama-Kitsi	1119
	18.	Baraï	1132
	19.	Bibaï-Kaïna	1145
	20.	Sémanbao	1158
	21.	Fanda Diaoro	1171
	22.	Yama-Daa	1184
	23.	Arkour-Dioua	1197
	24.	Baraï (war with the Mossi)	1210
	25.	Yassi Bo'o	1223 /23/
	26.	Baro	1236
	27.	Douro	1249
	28.	Bitsi-Baro	1262
	29.	Ali Golom	1275
	30.	Silman Nari	1288
	31.	Ibrahim Kabayao	1301
	32.	Ousman Guifo	1311
	33.	Mâkara Komsôu	1321-1322
	34.	Boubakar	1335-1349
	35.	Ankada	1349-1363
	36.	Kimi-Yankoï	1363-1377
	37.	Baro del Yombo	1377-1390
	38.	Madao	1390-1405
	39.	Mohammed Koukiya	1405-1420
	40.	Mohammed Fari	1420-1435
	41.	Balam	1435-1450
	42.	Souleïman-Dama	1450-1465
	43.	Sonni-Ali-Ber	1465-1492

174 What is noticeable on this list (apart from the fact that this chronology brings the beginnings of the Songhaï kingdom much too close to our time and that, on this point, the chronology drawn from the Tarikh-es-Soudan is preferable) is that Kotso-Moslem is placed

174 here at about 1080, while the same king (called Kosoï, by Es'Sadi) is placed at about 1010 by the latter. On this point, the date of the Tarikh-el-Fettach seems preferable to us, for, if we think about the events of the eleventh century that might have brought about this conversion to Islam, we think, first of all, of the conquest of Ghana, at about 1076, by the Almoravide. We are, therefore, inclined to prefer the date drawn from the Tarikh-el-Fettach, without our reason being absolutely conclusive. For it is possible that either another cause besides the pressure of the Almoravide brought about the conversion to Islam by the Songhay king of that period, or even that that pressure made itself felt in the region at a period other than the precise time of the capture of Ghana. Yet it seems logical to think that it was this event which led the Songhaï toward Islam, and, therefore, Kotso-Moslem, or Kosoï the Mussulman, must be placed at about 1080, rather than at about 1010.

But there is yet a stronger contradiction than the above /24/ between the Tarikh-el-Fettach and the Tarikh-es-Soudan. The Tarikh-es-Soudan states explicitly that Kankan-Moussa was the first of the Mali kings to conquer Songhay. (1) From this the logical result is

1. Houdas translation, pp. 12, 13.

that Ali Kolon and his quest for liberation must be placed after Kankan-Moussa. According to the Tarikh-el-Fettach, Ali Kolon (called Ali Golom) did indeed free the Songhaï or, more precisely, "abandoned king of the Malli for reasons too long to give here and which do not enter into our plan," the author calmly states. (2) But, after him,

2. Houdas and Delafosse translation, p. 334.

Silman-Nâri reigned, then Ibrahim-Kabayao, then Ousman-Guifo, then Mâkara-Komsoû, and it was in the latter's reign that Kankan-Moussa went into the Songhay country on a pilgrimage to Mecca. (3)

3. Ibid., p. 335.

We must thus acknowledge, according to this account, that Ali Golom or Ali Kolon precedes Kankan-Moussa, that he lived about the year

174 1275, and, if he freed the country from the Mali yoke, he did so under the direct successors of Soundiata, alias Mari-Diata. Then, at the time of Kankan-Moussa, the most famous of the Mali kings after Soundiata, the Songhaï country probably again fell under Mali suzerainty for an undeterminable length of time.

It is difficult to approach the question as to which is right, in that respect, the Tarikh-es-Soudan or the Tarikh-el-Fettach. Besides, for the question we are particularly interested in (the date of Baraï or Bir-Foloko), it is not essential to find a solution to it here. Let us simply point out that the chronology we took from the Tarikh-es-Soudan puts Bir-Foloko between 1215 and 1235, and the chronology of the Tarikh-el-Fettach puts him at about 1210. On the other hand, Binger places "Za-Birou or Bayarou Falaka" as corresponding to the reign of Mansa Wali I (1260-76) (4). Delafosse, in his study, (5) does not give the

4. Binger, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 368, 369.

5. Haut-Sénégal-Niger /Upper Senegal and Niger/, Vol. II, p. 65.

actual date for "Beïra-Foloko," but, according to the two outside dates he gives /25/ for the Dia in Gao (1010 to 1335), and considering the place of Beïra-Foloko between his predecessors and successors, he should be placed at about 1275-1300. In conclusion, I think that Baraï belongs to the first half of the thirteenth century and that the first war of the Songhaï and the Mossi took place at that time.

Here are the details given about this war in the Tarikh-el-Fettach (page 333): "Then /came/ the diaoua Baraï, against whom the king of the Mossi waged war. The campaign lasted four months, at the end of which time the king of the Mossi was beaten and his army routed and annihilated." The Mossi seem thus to have been the aggressors, but in the end they appear to have been beaten and pushed back.

The question now is to determine which king of the Mossi undertook this campaign, and, on this point, we must admit that we have no indication. We must naturally eliminate Nédéga, the king of Dagomba, his daughter Yennenga or Pokotoéga, and his grandson

174 Ouidiraogo, but one might hesitate between Rawa and Ouemtanango. If one chose the former, he would then have lived from 1200 to 1250 (which would indicate that my date of 1293 for this naba is too recent, and that Delafosse's date, the beginning of the eleventh century, is too early). If one chose Ouemtanango, the same would still apply: my date of 1333 for this naba would be a century too recent, and Delafosse's date would be some fifty years too early (1). In conclusion,

1. Delafosse places Ouemtanango at about 1170. One can deduce this from two passages of his Vol. II, pp. 126 and 139. In the last passage, he speaks of Ouemtanango himself and, in the first, of his father and uncles.

it is impossible for us to say exactly which naba was the first to wage war against the north, but, whether it was Rawa or Ouemtanango, it seems clear that since the beginning of the thirteenth century the Mossi were settled in their present territories, including Yatenga, and, therefore, we must conclude that they came there during the twelfth century. My 1917 Mossi chronology would, therefore, need some revision, since it brings the origins of Mossi history too close to our time. On the other hand, Delafosse's chronology also would seem to need some correction, since it exaggerates in the opposite direction. It would not be the first time that the truth should be found, as often happens, between two extreme opinions. /26/

Chapter 3

Mossi and Bambara

174 114 We know that the Bambara king, N'Golo, and the Mossi king, Kango, waged war against each other toward the end of the eighteenth century. Yatenga traditions preserve in detail the memory, embellished with somewhat burlesque variations, of the events that precipitated this war (see my Noir du Yatenga /Blacks of Yatenga/, 1917, pp. 88-91), but they say nothing of the war itself. Delafosse, in his

174 Haut-Sénégal-Niger /Upper Senegal and Niger/ (1912), starts out by
114 relating, according to Bambara traditions, the same stories of the causes that brought about the war (1), but he does not say much about

1. Vol. II, pp. 143, 144.

the war itself. After speaking of Kango's cruel extermination of the Bambara auxiliaries whom he had formerly needed and who had been lent to him, Delafosse adds (2): "It took place about 1760: Ngolo

2. Page 144.

Diara, then emperor of Ségou, wanted to avenge his compatriots and waged war against Yatenga, but he was driven back by Kango. Later, following a kind of civil war that broke out in Ségou, the Dioula merchants of the town fled and took refuge in Yatenga. Ngolo asked Kango to send them back to him and, upon his refusal, led for the third time an expedition against the Ouahigouya empire. This expedition had no more success than the preceding one, and Ngolo died during it, followed in death shortly thereafter by his opponent (1787)."

Further on, Delafosse says (3): "Ngolo led two expeditions against
/27/

3. Same work, Vol. II, pp. 289, 290 (chapter on the history of the Bambara of Ségou).

the Mossi of Yatenga, whose emperor, Kango, had cruelly put to death some Banmana /Bambara/ warriors, who had been previously put at his disposal by Denkoro or by Ton-Mansa. Driven back after his first expedition (about 1760), Ngolo later returned to Yatenga in order to get back from Kango some Dioula merchants who had fled Ségou following a kind of civil war and whom the Yatenga emperor refused to send home. It would seem that this second expedition was no more successful than the first; in any case, in the course of this campaign, Ngolo contracted a disease from which he died before he could return to his capital (1787)."

All this is very scanty, and we would know little more about it (1) were it not for a very curious passage by Mungo-Park, which no

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1. Monteil, in his recent book, Bambara de Ségou et du Kaarta /Bambara of Ségou and Kaarta/ (1924), says nothing about these wars. He only alludes to them in a short note on page 76.

one has yet pointed out to my knowledge and which tells us of a very important event in this war: the capture of the town of Dienné by Kango, a feat of arms worthy of the ancient Mossi conquerors, Rawa, Ouemtanango, Nassodoba, etc., which assured a conclusive victory of the Mossi naba over the Bambara fama.

174 I have copied the following passage word for word from Mungo-Park (translation by the Abbé of Voisin, 1800, Vol. II, pp. 45 and 46):

"In the south of Jimbala is the Negro kingdom of Gotto (2) that

[114]

2. Djimbala (which in Mandé means country of the great water, from gui, "water," ba, "great," and la, a suffix indicating the country or region) is the region north of Lake Débo. As for "Gotto," a name that Mungo-Park gives here to all the countries of the southeast and south (Mossi, Kong, Bondoukou, etc.), it is undoubtedly the word "Gottogo," the Sudanese and Mandé name for Bondoukou, which is given in error to everything southeast and south of Djimbala or Guimbala.

is said to be very large. In the past, it was divided into a large number of small states, governed by different chiefs whose continual wars incited neighboring countries to invade the land. One of these chiefs, called Moossie, was politic and shrewd enough to get all the others to declare war on the king of Bambarra /sic/, and to have himself unanimously named generalissimo. /28/ From the shores of Lake Debbie (1), on the upper Niger, Moossie sent a large number of

1. This refers to Lake Débo.

boats filled with provisions toward Yenné; and with his entire army

174 he entered into Bambarra. The inhabitants of Yenné saw him on the opposite shore of the Niger (2) before they had been told of his march.

2. Djenné is not right on the Niger nor on the Bani, but at a certain distance between the two rivers.

His flotilla joined him that same day, and, after having unloaded his provisions, he crossed the river with one part of his army and took Yenné by assault during the night. This exploit so frightened the Bambarra king that he asked for peace. He agreed to pay the victor an annual tribute of a certain number of slaves and to give back to the Gotto inhabitants all that had been taken away from them. (3)

[521 648]

3. This passage would indicate that the Dyoula of Gottogo (or Bondoukou), having some grievances against the Bambara of the Ségou region (assaulted peddlers, unpaid debts, etc.), went to the king of the Mossi to obtain justice, and that this might have been one of the causes of the war. There doubtless existed reciprocal grievances between Bambara and Mossi or between their natural allies.

Moussee /sic/ returned to Gotto in triumph, and he was proclaimed king. He gave his name to the capital."

As one can see, the important and valuable fact that must be extracted from this thick forest is the capture of Dienné by the king of the northern Mossi, the king of Yatenga (who at that time was Kango), during his struggles with the Bambara, that is, with Ngolo who was his contemporary. Because of his informants, who obviously did not inform him with absolute precision and thus made him commit many small errors or miscalculations, Mungo-Park embellished the true fact with imaginary details. First of all, there is the name of Kango, Moossie, Moussie /sic/, which is the name of the conqueror's country and not his own name. Then, the name of Gotto is given to the Mossi country, undoubtedly because of a confusion, either in the minds of the Blacks who informed Mungo-Park or in the mind of the great

174 114

174 traveler himself, between the people of Gotto who were mixed in this
114 affair and the Mossi of Yatenga who made the expedition. Finally, Naba Kango, although he brought great glory /29/ in the eighteenth century to the Mossi dynasty of Yatenga, obviously did not find, at the beginning of his reign, an absolute fragmentation of small countries which he would have gathered under single authority. He doubtless limited himself to restoring a kingdom that had formerly been powerful and centralized, and which he made so again through his personal prestige. In any case, he did not give his name to the Mossi (it is, on the contrary, the Mossi who, in Mungo-Park's description, give him his name), any more than to the capital which he indeed founded and which he called Ouahigouya. All these details are thus false or imaginary, but the principal fact remains and is very interesting. Mungo-Park arrived in Ségou just in time, in 1796, to
[153] record it before the weak memories of the Mossi and Bambara Negroes would have condemned it to hopeless oblivion. /30/

Chapter 4

The Cult of the Sun Among the Mossi

794 Do the Mossi adore the sun? And is their great god Ouendé partly or wholly a sun god?

Binger was the first to state that the Mossi adored the sun. "They are fetishists," he says (1), "but they have a cult of the sun, which

1. Du Niger au golfe de Guinée
/From the Niger to the Gulf of Guinea/,
Vol. I, p. 492.

still today bears the same name as God; they call it Wouidi."

In turn, Lieutenant Desplagnes, in his Plateau Central Nigérien /Central Nigerian Plateau/ (pp. 275, 276) said in 1907:

"The Hougho-Ouango of Mossi (these priests live in Mossi in the villages of Boujema, Mani, Kondogho, Yolo, Tio) make sacrifices to the sun in order to bind it to the earth, morning and evening, at

794 sunrise and at sunset, during the first week of the winter season, then, later, only every six days, in the morning at sunrise. They go to the [778] altars, formed by three conical stones, to offer sacrifices and libations, always surrounded by all the people, the heads of families, tom-tom players, and family masks (Ouango).

"During the entire year, in a highly decorated niche dug into a [372] wall of their houses, the priests watch the sacred fire with which, at the end of the rainy season, they must light the great purifying brush fires."

Lieutenant Desplagnes adds in a note:

"They make sacrifices at each new moon, and then have seven great feasts each year for the divinity. Finally, during the sun festivals, [287] they use a cow's tail to tie the sun to the earth and assure its fertilizing warmth." /31/

794 171 In my book Noir du Soudan, Pays Mossi et Gourounsi /Blacks of the Sudan, Country of the Mossi and Gourounsi/ (1912), I reproduced this page of Lieutenant Desplagnes without comment (page 590). In addition, I described the cult of the sun among the Gourounsi, who, like the Mossi, are part of the Voltaic family. Thus, on page 241, I wrote:

"The Kassonfra, like the Nounouma and the Menkiéra, say that they offer no sacrifice either to the moon or to the sun. However, I found an exception in the village of Nitiédougou (canton of Sia). It would seem that here, in the early mornings when the sun rises and begins to leave the horizon, people offer it a chicken or whatever else they wish to offer. Moreover, this sacrifice is only made when the voro (1) says it should be made.

1. Soothsayer.

"My informant claims that this same procedure is followed, not only in Nitiédougou and in the little canton of Sia, but also in all of the Kasouna (Kassonfra and Kassonboura) country. He must be mistaken (2) since my previous informants and my interpreter, who is

2. Today, on the other hand, I tend to think he was right.

Kassonboura, have neither seen nor heard of anything like it."

794 Later, in 1917, in my book Noir du Yatenga /Blacks of Yatenga/, since the few attempts that I had made in Yatenga to find this cult of the sun had given no results, I wrote (page 277):

"The sun is called ouindigho or ouindigha in Mossi (tili in Bambara). The word has a certain relationship with Ouendé, and the word Ouendé seems to be part of the construction of the word ouindigho. In any case, the Mossi and the Foulsé of Yatenga make no sacrifices to the sun. I interrogated in vain several important people about the details given by Lieutenant Desplagnes, pages 275 and 276 of his work, Plateau Central Nigérien about a cult of the sun in Mossi. It is true that these details concern the religious society of the Ouango and the villages where the members of this society would be operating: this would apply to villages of the Residency of Kaya (such as, Mané, Boujéma, etc.). One could thus pursue the studies in Kaya. /32/ In any case, the cult of the sun is totally unknown in Yatenga."

In my conclusion, I denied that there was a cult of the sun among the Mossi of Yatenga, while I admitted that one might be able to find this cult in other parts of Mossi country, particularly in the Residency (today, the circle) of Kaya.

794 114 The question was at that point when Father Eugène Mangin published a study on the Mossi in Anthropos ("Les Mossi. Essai sur les us et coutumes du Soudan Occidental" /The Mossi, an Essay on the Usages and Customs of Western Sudan/, Vienna, 1916), a study in which the author, who lived for a long time in Ouagadougou among the central Mossi, brought most of his effort to bear on a study of the religious life of his charges. It may well be that Father Mangin's observations touch upon the question of sun worship in that country in a definitive manner, better than Binger and Desplagnes had done.

794 The Mossi, says Father Mangin, in their sacrifices to Ouendé, offer water for his rising and pour it to the east, and offer water for his setting and pour it to the west. In an argument, the weakest will also say: "God (Ouendé) is my witness that I have done you no harm, God [796] will give it back to you," and he will point to the sun. Thus, Ouendé, the principal god of the Mossi, is indeed a sun god, and indeed the Mossi worship, in him, the sun.

Does this mean that Ouendé cannot also be a god of the sky or of the atmosphere, as I maintained in my Noir du Yatenga? Certainly not, and indeed Father Mangin mentions that Ouendé commands

794 lightning as well, which he can do only if he is the Sky-Atmosphere.
[82] "The natural phenomena," he says, "are sometimes attributed to God. Lightning kills those who have done evil, it kills the animal ill-gotten through fraud or theft, and it is God who sends lightning as a punishment..." Thus, Ouendé, while being the sun, is also the Sky-Atmosphere, and other things too, for he has characteristics that go
[797] beyond the sun divinity and the sky divinity. We must not forget here that the Allah of the Moslems is well known among the Mossi and has his established representatives there (Yarsé of Mandé origin, Peul, etc.), or temporary ones (merchants who have come from the north or south, Soninnké /Soninke/, Songhay, Dyoula). Thus, for a long time, /33/ the Moslem conception of god could and has, in effect, rubbed off on the sun-atmosphere-god of the Mossi. The latter might have waged war on the Songhay sultans who led religious crusades against them, yet it is also true that they were content to bestow upon their most important god the remarkable characteristics that struck them and that they admired in the Moslem god. Thus, Ouendé gradually became more and more a supreme god, although it would seem that in the beginning, he was only a sun god and an atmosphere god, first separated, later fused with a predominance of the sun god element.

To summarize, it has been well established that one finds the cult of the sun among the Mossi, along with many other elements as
[77] we have just shown. I have since found this cult among the Dorhosié (1922) and the Gouro (1923). However, among the Gouro, it is relegated to a few fetishists and does not interest the bulk of the population. Among the Dorhosié, on the contrary, it interests the vast multitude and occasions a solemn sacrifice made in the winter, at the end of the old year and the beginning of the new. Among these people, however, the sun divinity has not become a leading divinity as it has among the Mossi. It is one divinity among several and is rather subordinate to the cult of the Earth-brush and that of the Sky-atmosphere. Moreover, I am persuaded that more far-reaching studies among all the branches of the Voltaic population would uncover, here and there, the cult of the sun, as among the Mossi, the Gourounsi, the Dorhosié, etc.

[pp. 34 ff. not processed]

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ÉTUDES SOUDANAISES

Nouvelles Notes

sur

le Mossi et le Gourounsi

PAR

L. TAUXIER
ADMINISTRATEUR DES COLONIES

[title page]

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NOUVELLES NOTES

sur

LE MOSSI ET LE GOUROUNSI

[title page A]

[i]

PRÉFACE

L'auteur de ces notes a publié, jadis, deux volumes sur le Mossi et le Gourounsi, l'un, Le Noir du Soudan, Pays Mossi et Gourounsi (*Paris, Larose,* 1912), *l'autre,* Le Noir du Yatenga (*Paris, Larose,* 1917). *Ayant eu l'occasion depuis* (1) *de rassembler de nouveaux documents sur ces populations peu connues, particulièrement sur la langue gourounsi, il les publie ici pour compléter ses précédents volumes et pour augmenter le petit trésor d'informations que nous nous trouvons déjà posséder sur ces races semi-primitives.*

Cette contribution se divisera, naturellement, en deux parties :

Livre I : Mossi ;

Livre II : Gourounsi.

Les questions abordées seront, pour les Mossi :

Chapitre Ier : Les origines et l'anthropologie.

Chapitre II : La chronologie.

Chapitre III : Les guerres entre Mossi et Bambara.

Chapitre IV : Le culte du soleil au Mossi.

Pour les Gourounsi, ce sera :

Chapitre unique : La question Gourounsi.

De nombreux appendices, comprenant entre autres d'importants vocabulaires Nounouma, Tondioulé, Larhama et Kiansi, et des notices sur les Ko, les Lélésé, les Gourounmossi et les Boussansé, compléteront ce petit ouvrage.

Adamville, le 1er *octobre* 1924.

L. TAUXIER.

[p ii contains no text.- Analyst]

(1) A Bondoukou, en 1919.

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LIVRE PREMIER

CHAPITRE Ier

LES ORIGINES MOSSI

La plupart des personnes qui se sont occupées de l'histoire Mossi disent que les Mossi viennent du sud-est, de la région de Gambakha ou Gambaga (Dagomba). C'est de là qu'ils auraient occupé successivement, se dirigeant vers le Nord, les régions de Fada-N'Gourma, Ouagadougou, Ouahigouya.

Mais d'où venaient-ils auparavant?

M. le capitaine Lambert, qui a commandé le cercle de Ouagadougou vers 1906-1907, a tenté de donner une réponse à cette question dans l'étude sur le pays Mossi qu'il a publiée dans le *Bulletin de la Société de Géographie de l'Afrique Occidentale française*, en 1908.

« Il existe encore au sud du Bornou, dit-il (*op. cit.*, n° 7, page 166), dans le Cameroun allemand, une race qui porte le nom de Mossah et aurait été autrefois, selon la tradition locale, maîtresse du pays entier. Elle se trouve actuellement confinée en une portion de territoire assez restreinte (vallée du Logone-Cameroun).

Ses représentants actuels offrent avec les Mossi des ressemblances physiques tellement frappantes qu'il est impossible d'avoir vécu parmi eux sans les reconnaître dans ces derniers : le tatouage est identique, sauf en ce qui concerne l'accent circonflexe, d'acquisition plus récente, comme nous le montrerons. La similitude est presque complète et, d'autre part, l'organisation sociale des Mossi, avec toute sa hiérarchie si caractéristique, se retrouve chez les Mossahs. En un mot,

l'identité d'origine des deux groupes ne fait pas de doute et nous pouvons affirmer que l'existence des Mossahs dans une partie du Bornou et la suprématie que la tradition leur attribue dans le pays à une époque reculée fixent d'une façon certaine l'habitat où a dû croître et se former la race qui nous occupe ; cela, bien entendu, au cours d'une période assurément fort antérieure aux événements qui fourniront aux chroniqueurs arabes l'occasion de nous révéler leur existence (1). »

Le capitaine Lambert ajoute en note :

« Ici, une nouvelle question se pose : les Mossis peuvent-ils être considérés comme autochtones du Bornou, ou bien leur long séjour dans cette contrée doit-il être regardé comme une étape dans le grand mouvement migrateur qui, par bonds successifs, les a amenés au cœur de la boucle du Niger?

En l'état actuel de nos connaissances, il serait imprudent de rien affirmer ; nous indiquerons simplement que le système féodal, qui caractérise la constitution politique du Mossi, peut être rapproché de celui dont l'Abyssinie nous donne le spectacle ; l'organisation hiérarchique paraît être, sous certains rapports, identique ; la désignation des chefs s'y fait dans des conditions analogues, l'élection du négus s'y accompagne d'une période d'anarchie que nous retrouvons ici et qui paraît se rattacher à des traditions anciennes.

Il se peut qu'il y ait là autre chose que de pures coïncidences. Tout en travaillant à la rédaction d'un petit dictionnaire de l'idiome Mossi, nous nous sommes préoccupé de savoir si les dialectes parlés en Abyssinie étaient susceptibles de nous donner sur ce point quelques indications ; nous devons cependant reconnaître que les vocabulaires des langues Galla, Ahmarique et Tigré, que nous avons consultés, ne nous ont pas fourni

(1) En réalité, ces chroniqueurs arabes, c'est Es-Sadi, l'auteur du *Tarikh-es-Soudan*, qui écrivait seulement au XVIIe siècle. — De fait, c'est l'auteur portugais, le grand historien et géographe Jean de Barros, l'auteur de *l'Asia* (1552-1553), qui a le premier révélé l'existence des Mossi, au XVIe siècle. Léon l'Africain ne les connaît pas, pas plus que les géographes et historiens arabes du moyen-âge. Disons de plus qu'il faudrait vérifier exactement sur place si les Mossahs ressemblent aux Mossi autrement que par le nom. La chose est devenue relativement facile depuis que les Français occupent le Cameroun.

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d'arguments probants. Mais il est aujourd'hui démontré qu'au point de vue des recherches ethnographiques, les similitudes texiques ne signifient pas grand'chose et que les idiomes que l'écriture n'a pas fixés peuvent, en quelques siècles, se déformer au point d'être rendus méconnaissables. La valeur des rapprochements grammaticaux est autrement importante, nous n'avons eu, malheureusement, ni le temps, ni les moyens de les rechercher. Nous nous contentons donc d'indiquer ce point de vue d'où pourraient sortir, à notre avis, des observations fécondes. Des missionnaires ont affirmé, d'autre part, que les Mossi auraient conservé traditionnellement la notion symbolique de la croix chrétienne, fait que nous n'avons pas pu vérifier et qui, sans être impossible *a priori*, paraît peu probable. »

Après cette parenthèse sur les origines éloignées des Mossi, le capitaine Lambert reprend :

« Il est, en effet, de toute probabilité, et là encore faute de documents écrits nous n'avons pour nous appuyer que les traditions orales, que le peuple Mossi, ébranlé par la poussée d'une invasion musulmane venue de l'Est, a dû, par oscillations successives et en perdant du terrain en sens opposé, s'étendre plus avant vers l'Occident, de telle sorte que les Mossi-bé (1) que l'on rencontre formant encore plusieurs agglomérations dans la partie occidentale du Sokoto et jusque dans le cercle de Dounzou, montrant, eux aussi, de frappantes analogies avec les Mossi proprement dits, peuvent, à leur tour, nous servir de repère. (Le capitaine Lambert ajoute en note : « Nous nous trouvons, avec les Mossi-bé, en présence de l'accent circonflexe qui devait compléter le tatouage ethnique des Mossi tel qu'il est aujourd'hui. Cette marque appartient en propre aux populations de la rive gauche du Niger jusqu'à l'angle du Dollol-Maouri »). Ces agglomérations indiquent, d'une façon très approximative, la position de l'empire Mossi à l'époque historique, époque qui marque évidemment l'apogée de puissance de cet empire : vers 1850, nous l'avons vu

(1) Mossi-bé est tout simplement le pluriel du mot Mossi en langue peuhle.

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dans le *Tarikh*, Tombouctou est conquise par le sultan du Mossi. »

L'événement auquel se réfère ici le capitaine Lambert est la prise de Tombouctou par les Mossi (en 1333 exactement, d'après les calculs les plus poussés) (1) dont parle Es-Sadi dans le *Tarikh-es-Soudan*; mais il est impossible d'admettre, suivant le système du capitaine Lambert, qu'au XIVe siècle, les Mossi étaient encore installés sur la rive orientale du Niger, dans le Djerma actuel, qu'ils n'étaient pas encore arrivés, à cette époque, dans le Mossi actuel, ni même dans le Dagomba, et que c'est du Djerma qu'ils dirigèrent leur razzia triomphante sur Tombouctou. Si vraiment les Mossi sont venus du Bornou pour aboutir dans le Dagomba et ont passé, comme c'est naturel alors, dans le Haoussa et le Djerma (2), ils l'ont fait à une époque très reculée puisqu'il faut placer Rawa, le premier conquérant du pays de Ouagadougou et de Ouahigouya (voir la suite de cette étude), au XIIe siècle de notre ère, et puisque ses parents venaient du Dagomba, où on doit admettre que les Mossi ont séjourné un certain temps. La traversée du Haoussa et du Djerma par les ancêtres des Mossi du Dagomba nous reporte donc à une époque qu'on ne peut fixer évidemment, mais qui est très antérieure au XIVe siècle (époque où les Mossi prirent Tombouctou) et on doit admettre, contre l'opinion du capitaine Lambert, que les Mossi qui prirent Tombouctou venaient du Sud (de Ouahigouya probablement) et non de l'Est (région de Say) et nous ferons remarquer, au

(1) Voir le lieutenant Marc: *Le Pays Mossi*, pp. 136 à 138. Celui-ci fixe à 1333 ou 1334 la prise de Tombouctou par les Mossi. M. Delafosse a adopté, dans son *Haut-Sénégal-Niger*, la date de 1333. Binger (*op. cit.*, tome I, pp. 481, 482) donne la date de 1329, d'après le *Tarikh*, mais suppose qu'elle est fausse et que c'est en 1336 que les Mossi, faisant alors partie, dit-il, du royaume de Mali, s'emparèrent de Tombouctou pour le compte et sous la direction des rois de Mali. Nous savons maintenant que cette hypothèse est fausse, que les Mossi ne furent jamais sous la domination du Mali et qu'ils vinrent piller Tombouctou, pour leur propre compte, en 1333. Du reste, les Malinké reprirent assez vite Tombouctou et la possédèrent jusqu'en 1433, époque où le chef Targui Akil s'en empara. L'expédition des Mossi sur Tombouctou ne fut, en fin de compte, qu'une razzia qui réussit parfaitement, mais qui n'eut pas de suites.

(2) On peut, à la vérité, expliquer les colonies Mossi du Sokoto comme venues des pays de Ouagadougou, du Yatenga ou de Fada N'Gourma, à une époque relativement récente, XIIIe, XIVe ou XVe siècle.

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surplus, qu'ils étaient beaucoup plus proches de Tombouctou à Ouahigouya qu'à Say. Ce point élucidé et cette erreur dissipée, nous pourrons admettre que l'exposé de la route à suivre par les Mossi venus du Bornou (s'ils en viennent) et retracée par le capitaine Lambert est plausible.

Ces réflexions s'appliquent de même à la suite du récit du capitaine Lambert. Il dit que les guerres dirigées par le second empire Songhaï contre les Mossi (XVIe siècle) les obligèrent à quitter le pays Djerma pour se diriger, au Sud-Ouest, vers le Dagomba. Evidemment, ceci est tout à fait inexact, mais enlevant la cause que donne le capitaine Lambert et reportant l'émigration dans le passé, nous pouvons admettre la route qu'il trace.

« Ce mouvement, dit le capitaine Lambert, parlant de la marche du Djerma au Dagomba, s'est accompli dans la direction du Sud, et les Mossi, après avoir côtoyé le Niger, l'ont traversé en un point situé entre Say et Ilo, mais beaucoup plus près de ce dernier.

On retrouve encore, au nord de Ilo, la coutume qui consiste à raser la tête des femmes de chefs. Celles-ci portent en outre des houseaux (1) de métal, caractéristiques particulières à la race Mossi et que l'on rencontre occasionnellement chez les peuples qui ont été en contact avec elle.

De là, l'émigration, laissant sur la gauche le pays Bariba (2), s'est dirigée en ligne droite à travers le Gourma et la région de Pama, jusqu'à Gambakha, chef-lieu actuel des territoires

(1) Le capitaine Lambert désigne sans doute ainsi les belles jambières de cuivre, de 20 centimètres de haut environ, que portent les femmes mossi riches.

(2) On peut se demander si les Bariba n'auraient pas fait partie de cette émigration Mossi ou Proto-Mossi, car les Bariba ont des points de ressemblance certains, au point de vue sociologique, avec les Mossi : ce sont, comme eux, des cavaliers guerriers, pillards, courageux. D'autre part, M. Delafosse (*Vocabulaires comparatifs*) se demande, page 234, s'il ne faut pas rattacher, au point de vue linguistique, les Bariba aux Mossi-Gourounsi.

Notons aussi que le capitaine Lambert dit, en note, page 170 : « Le chef de Djougou (Dahomey) est d'origine mossi. La tradition veut que les habitants de ce village, divisés par des luttes intestines qu'entretenait la rivalité de plusieurs prétendants se disputant le pouvoir, aient offert celui-ci à un tisserand établi depuis longtemps à Djougou, où il s'était certainement tenu en dehors des discordes locales ; celui-ci refusa l'offre qui lui était faite. Mais les gens de Djougou n'en voulurent pas démordre et l'enfermèrent dans sa case. Ayant à choisir

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nord de la colonie anglaise de la Gold-Coast. C'est ce point que choisit pour sa résidence le chef qui avait dirigé l'exode. Nous n'avons aucun renseignement positif sur sa personnalité, mais il est certain que c'est de lui ou de ses successeurs immédiats que la création du royaume Mampoursi et Dagomba tire son origine ».

Le capitaine Lambert ajoute en note : « Selon le colonel M.-P. Northcott, le fondateur de la dynastie de Gambakha se nommerait Tosogo ; mais les renseignements qu'il fournit à son sujet paraissent difficilement conciliables avec la tradition sur laquelle nous nous appuyons ici. » (Cf. *Report on the northern territories of the Gold-Coast*, Londres, 1890).

Le capitaine Lambert continue ainsi :

« La formation de l'empire Mossi proprement dit est postérieure ; on est cependant fondé à affirmer que, dès cette époque, une partie d'entre les nouveaux occupants du Mampoursi entreprit de se frayer un passage vers le Nord et y parvint par deux voies différentes ; nous nous trouvons, en effet, en présence d'un courant qui, parti de Gambakha, rejeta les Boussangas dans la région que ceux-ci occupent actuellement, et atteignit le pays de Béloussa où il s'épanouit vers l'Ouest et le Nord, occupant une vaste périphérie de territoire, aujourd'hui presque exclusivement peuplée par des Mossi. L'autre courant, se frayant une voie en pays Nankana, se dirigea au nord de Tiébélé, refoula du côté opposé les Boussangas, enserrés ainsi comme dans un étau, et se développa dans le pays que limite la Volta rouge, vers Ouagadougou.

On n'a qu'à jeter les yeux sur une carte du pays Mossi pour reconnaître la direction de ces deux courants parallèles venant se rejoindre au nord du Boussangsé actuel, région presque inhabitée à l'époque de la grande migration Mossi et au sein de laquelle les autochtones Boussangas, qui occupaient alors

entre les inconvénients du pouvoir et la captivité, le tisserand ne put faire moins que de se décider ; au bout du sixième jour, il consentit à prendre le commandement. Ses descendants lui ont succédé depuis sans interruption et, en souvenir de l'épisode que nous avons rapporté, une coutume s'est établie en vertu de laquelle le nouveau chef demeure enfermé dans sa case pendant les six jours qui suivent son élection. »

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tout le pays de Tenkodogo, ont été contraints de chercher un refuge et végètent depuis, réfractaires à toute fusion avec l'élément envahisseur. »

Le capitaine Lambert passe ensuite à la légende des origines du véritable empire Mossi :

« Un naba de Gambakha (ces derniers, nous l'avons vu, descendaient en ligne directe du chef qui avait guidé jusqu'au Mampoursi la grande immigration), arrivé au déclin de la vie, sans progéniture, crut voir dans ce fait l'accomplissement d'un décret de la destinée. Rien n'est immuable ici-bas et, sans doute, sa glorieuse dynastie devait-elle faire place à une nouvelle lignée de chefs. A ceci il se résignait encore, mais ce qui l'affligeait par dessus tout, c'était sa vieillesse solitaire. Il supplia donc les génies de lui donner un enfant, prenant l'engagement solennel de le vouer — garçon ou fille — à la virginité. Comme par miracle, une fille lui naquit aussitôt. Il l'appela Pogotoenga (femme à l'arbre) (1), la considérant ainsi, dès sa naissance, comme étrangère à son sexe, et lui fit donner des vêtements masculins.

Pogotoenga se développa vite ; elle atteignit, dès l'âge de dix ans, un degré de beauté incomparable et, vers la même époque, travaillée par les ardeurs de la puberté, elle réussit — malgré la surveillance étroite dont l'entourait le vieillard, jaloux de demeurer fidèle à son serment — à s'enfuir de la maison paternelle.

Longtemps poursuivie, elle put se soustraire à toutes les

(1) Pogotoenga, ou mieux Pogotoéga, veut dire la « femme au baobab » exactement, de pogo = femme et toéga = baobab. On peut se demander quel rapport a ce surnom avec le fait, pour Pogotoenga, d'être vouée à la virginité, si on ignore les coutumes des Soudanais. Une femme vouée à un baobab (divinité végétale puissante) est censée être l'épouse de ce baobab. De là, impossibilité pour elle de contracter un mariage avec un homme, et célibat forcé. Il est vrai que certains noirs (par exemple les Diakonkés du cercle de Faranah, Guinée française) estiment qu'une femme mariée à un esprit ne lui doit que son esprit ou sa forme spirituelle, et que son corps matériel est libre. De là vient ce fait que chez ces nègres, et d'autres encore, les femmes-fétiches, les femmes mariées à des esprits ou divinités sont en fait des prostituées et se livrent à la prostitution. Elles sont très rares d'ailleurs. En définitive, il leur est permis de se prostituer, mais non pas de se marier. C'est la prostitution sacrée bien connue de toute l'antiquité orientale et gréco-romaine. Ainsi la virginité (sacrée) d'une part, la prostitution (sacrée) de l'autre, se trouvent dériver assez étrangement d'un même ordre d'idées.

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recherches jusqu'à ce qu'un jour, errant dans le pays actuel de Tenkodogo, elle rencontra, en pleine brousse, le chasseur d'éléphants Rialé, homme solitaire et violent, qui la séduisit. Elle eut de Rialé un fils, Widiraogo, et une fille, Wedaogo (1).

Afin de ne pas altérer par l'exogamie la vertu du sang royal, dont ces enfants étaient les héritiers, Rialé et Pogotoenga résolurent de les marier ensemble et, de ce mariage, naquirent aussi un garçon et une fille, Zunghrama (2) et Yuganemdo. Obéissant à la même préoccupation, Zunghrama épousa sa sœur (3) et, de cette union, naquirent trois fils : Oubri, Oubrogo et Yampango : Oubri devait fonder la dynastie de Ouagadougou ; Oubrogo, celle de Tenkodogo ; Yampango, celle du Gourma (4). La postérité d'Oubri fut la plus glorieuse et la plus puissante : les rapports des nabas de Ouagadougou avec ceux de Tenkodogo et du Gourma, leurs cousins, furent toujours des rapports de suzerain à vassal (5).

L'ancêtre commun, Zunghrama, mourut à Komtoéga, où l'on montre encore son tombeau. »

En résumé, le capitaine Lambert affirme :

1° Que les Mossi viennent du sud du Bornou, où il y aurait encore une race, les Mossah, qui leur ressemblerait fort ;

(1) Pogotoenga est appelée, dans d'autres légendes (voir mon *Noir du Yatenga* page 58), Yennenga, ou simplement Poko (la femme). Quant à Ouidiraogo ou Widiraogo, ce nom veut dire cheval mâle, étalon. Pour le nom de Wedaogo ou Ouédaogo, je ne sais ce qu'il veut dire exactement, mais il me semble mal convenir à une fille, puisqu'il contient le mot daogo ou raogo qui veut dire mâle en Mossi.

(2) C'est le Zoungourana des légendes Moulins-Carrier et Vadier. (Voir mon *Noir du Yatenga*, page 60).

(3) Les unions de sœurs et de frères ne sont pas indiquées dans les autres variantes de la légende.

(4) Les variantes Moulins-Carrier et Vadier présentent les choses un peu autrement. C'est Zoungourana lui-même qui aurait fondé la dynastie de Tenkodogo, son frère Diaba qui aurait fondé celle de Fada-N'Gourma, et Rawa, son frère aîné (Rawa veut dire le brave, le fort en Mossi), qui aurait fondé celle du Rawatenga, devenu depuis le Yatenga. Quant à celle de Ouagadougou, ce serait bien Oubri, fils de Zoungourana, qui l'aurait fondée : sur ce dernier point toutes les traditions, celle dont s'inspire ici le capitaine Lambert, comme celles de Moulins et de Vadier, sont d'accord.

(5) Il n'est pas probable qu'il en fût ainsi dès le commencement, l'autorité supérieure devant appartenir au naba de Tenkodogo. Mais le royaume Mossi de Ouagadougou étant devenu, par la suite, le plus puissant, la primauté lui revint sur les royaumes voisins, moins puissants, de Tenkodogo et de Fada-N'Gourma.

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2° Que les Mossi ont passé par le Haoussa et le Djerma pour venir dans le Dagomba ;

3° Que c'est du Dagomba que les Mossi sont venus dans le Mossi actuel.

Il affirme aussi, mais nous pouvons négliger cette assertion comme absolument contraire aux faits que nous connaissons actuellement, que la marche du Djerma au Dagomba s'est faite pendant ou après le XVIe siècle de notre ère et est due aux croisades dirigées par le second empire Songhaï contre les Mossi. En réalité, au XIVe siècle, les Mossi avaient déjà quitté le Dagomba depuis longtemps et ils occupaient leurs emplacements actuels, y compris le Yatenga.

Le Dr Ruelle admet, lui aussi, que les Mossi vinrent de l'Est avant de s'installer dans le Dagomba. « La même tradition, dit-il (1), raconte que des guerriers venus de l'Est battirent, à Gambakha, les Dagomba, maîtres du pays, et y installèrent leur chef. Sa fille, Ouiaraouga, s'éprit d'un chasseur d'éléphants avec lequel elle s'enfuit, et, comme son père la faisait rechercher, elle se réfugia à Tenkodogo ; elle y épousa le chef du pays, un Boussanga nommé Zangoumana, dont le tombeau est encore, à Komterga, un lieu de pèlerinage pour les Mossi. Leur fils, Bougoum, après plusieurs expéditions dans la région, s'empara de Koupéla. Il eut, à son tour, trois fils : Houbri, Nabakéré et Kouda, qui étendirent leurs conquêtes. Le premier, qui les poussa jusqu'à Yako, fit de Ouagadougou sa capitale et força ses deux frères à le reconnaître comme suzerain (2). »

Le lieutenant Marc place aussi l'origine des Mossi dans l'Est. « D'où venaient les Mossi lorsqu'ils arrivèrent dans le pays de Gambaga? dit-il (*op. cit.*, page 184). Il est assez difficile de se

(1) *L'Anthropologie*, tome XV, année 1904, page 875. Il s'agit de la tradition des vieillards.

(2) Je cite cette version un peu différente des autres et qui contient du reste des erreurs puisque le nom de « Ouiaraouga » (Ouidiraogo, étalon, cheval mâle) est donné à la jeune fille, que les autres traditions appellent Poko, Pokotoéga, Yennenga, etc. Le nom revient de droit à son fils et non à elle. A remarquer que Zoungourana (ou Zangoumana) devient ici un Boussanga, second époux de l'ex-jeune fille, fille du roi du Dagomba.

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prononcer à ce sujet : probablement du Soudan centre-africain, de la région du Tchad. Toutes les traditions des Mossi sont unanimes à placer très loin dans l'Est leur pays d'origine... »

Le lieutenant Marc avait déjà dit, page 130 : « Les traditions locales rapportent que les Mossi viennent de très loin dans l'Est. Il y a fort longtemps, ils occupaient un pays situé au delà du Niger, dont la capitale s'appelait Aliaman. Ce pays serait actuellement occupé par des Songhaï. Puis les Mossi vinrent occuper le Dagomba, ils battirent les habitants de ce pays, et le chef des Mossi s'installa à Gambaga (1). »

Dans cette tradition que rapporte le lieutenant Marc, il y a évidemment une part de fantaisie musulmane : Aliaman est probablement le Yémen. Mais la notation que ce pays serait actuellement occupé par des Songhay désigne bien le Djerma ou Zaberma, un peu à l'est du Niger, dans la région de Say et de Dosso. En dissociant la légende musulmanique (créée sans doute par quelque Yarsé musulman du Mossi) du reste du récit, on en revient toujours à une occupation momentanée et lointaine du Djerma par les ancêtres des Mossi.

M. Delafosse, au contraire, à l'inverse du Dr Ruelle, du capitaine Lambert, du lieutenant Marc, fait bien venir comme tout le monde les Mossi du Dagomba dans leur habitat actuel (voir *Haut-Sénégal-Niger*, tome I, p. 305 à 310), mais se montre peu favorable à l'idée d'une origine orientale. Il dit (p. 310, en note) : « Le lieutenant Marc semble vouloir attribuer aux Mossi une origine orientale ; à l'appui de son hypothèse, il dit que l'organisation de la cour des Morho nâba (empereurs des Mossi) est unique en Afrique occidentale, tandis qu'elle a des

(1) Suit la légende de la fille du roi de Gambakha, qui est appelée à tort Ouidirsogo (étalon), comme dans la version du Dr Ruelle. Le lieutenant Marc commet en plus erreur sur erreur en disant que Ouidirsogo signifie « pied de cheval » (au lieu de cheval mâle). Enfin Zoungourana (que le lieutenant Marc appelle Zoungourouma ou Zougourouma) est présenté ici, de même que chez Ruelle, comme le second époux de la fille du roi de Gambakha et pour un roi Boussansé. Dans la version du lieutenant Marc, il « fit la guerre à son beau-père et conquit tout le pays de Gambaga à Koupéla ». Puis « Zougourouma eut trois fils : Séré, Oubri et Couda. Le premier devint naba de Boussouma ; le second, Naba Oubri, conquit le pays de Ouagadougou, y installa sa capitale et s'empara du Yatenga. C'est Naba Oubri qui est considéré par les Mossi comme le premier des Moronabas et le fondateur de la dynastie actuelle. Il eut pour successeurs son frère Couda, puis son fils Nigansenda ».

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équivalents au Haoussa, au Bornou, etc. Je me permettrai de faire observer que cet argument a peu de valeur, précisément parce que, contrairement à ce qu'avance le lieutenant Marc, on retrouve dans tous les anciens états de l'Afrique occidentale (Ghana, Mali, Tekrour, Gao, Dahomey, Bénin, etc.) une organisation absolument analogue à celle de la cour du Mossi (voir la IVe partie de cet ouvrage et se reporter aux récits des géographes arabes et des vieux voyageurs européens). » Certes je crois, comme M. Delafosse lui-même, que l'argument du lieutenant Marc est peu probant (1), mais ce n'est pas sur cet argument seulement que se basent Ruelle, Lambert et Marc, c'est sur une tradition même des Mossi, et il serait sans doute imprudent de la rejeter sans autre examen. Un argument qu'on pourrait citer en faveur d'une très ancienne occupation du Djerma par les ancêtres des Mossi est cette notation de Binger : « Les Mossi ont dû rester assez longtemps (2)... en contact avec les Touareg, puisqu'ils ont adopté en partie leur costume et qu'ils se servent, comme eux, du sabre à poignée en croix. »

En fait, il faut avouer cependant que nous ne savons rien de certain sur les Mossi au delà du Dagomba. C'est ce que je

(1) Voici cet argument tel que le développe le lieutenant Marc (ouvrage cité, pages 134 et 135) :

« L'organisation féodale du pays mossi, la cour du Moro-Naba, ses pages, ses eunuques sont uniques en Afrique occidentale ; au contraire, les monarques noirs que l'on connaît en Afrique centrale paraissent vivre dans un cadre qui ressemble par beaucoup de points à celui qui entoure les Moronabas. Les sultans du Zinder, du Bornou, du Ouadaï ont, eux aussi, une cour, des eunuques et des pages. Le peu que nous savons de l'organisation de leurs empires nous paraît assez comparable à ce que nous avons vu au Mossi. Mais notre documentation sur cette question est trop peu de chose pour que nous puissions essayer une étude comparative. »

(2) J'ai supprimé, dans cette citation, le mot « après », car Binger suppose que les Mossi ayant pris, en 1326, Tombouctou, sur l'ordre du Mali, y sont restés jusqu'en 1433, *donc un siècle en contact avec les Touareg*. En réalité, les Mossi ne sont restés que fort peu de temps à Tombouctou et ce n'est pas lors de cette razzia qu'ils ont pu avoir un contact prolongé avec les Touareg, d'où les séparaient, avant qu'ils prissent Tombouctou et dès qu'ils quittèrent la ville, tout le pays songhaï étendu le long des bords du Niger. Au contraire, s'ils ont occupé le Djerma jadis, avant les Djermabé ou Songhaï, on s'explique aisément ce contact avec les Touareg et l'épée avec courte poignée en croix (Binger appelle à tort cette épée droite un sabre). Ajoutons que quand Binger parle du costume Targui, en partie adopté par les Mossi, il a sans doute en vue le lithâm (ou voile de bouche) porté alors par les cavaliers Mossi. Actuellement ceux-ci ne le portent plus et je ne l'ai jamais vu dans le Mossi, où j'ai résidé en 1908-1909.

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disais d'une façon nette dans mon *Noir du Yatenga* (1917) (1). Le passage dans le Djerma est hypothétique et la question des Mossah demanderait à être réglée par une enquête sur place dans le Cameroun. J'ai été tenté, à une époque, de rattacher les Mossi à des races du Sud, aux Agni-Achanti, et il est certain qu'il semble y avoir une étroite parenté (2) entre le vocabulaire numérique du groupe Voltaïque et celui du groupe Agni-Achanti. Mais peut-on baser un rapprochement linguistique sur le vocabulaire seul? Il faudrait qu'il fût aussi démontré que, grammaticalement parlant, le groupe linguistique Voltaïque est fort près du groupe Agni-Achanti (3). Et c'est ce qui n'a pas encore été fait.

Pour le moment, nous en sommes donc encore réduits aux hypothèses en ce qui concerne les origines Mossi. Nous savons que les Mossi viennent du Dagomba et qu'ils entrèrent même probablement dans ce pays en conquérants. Mais d'où venaient-ils alors? du Nord-Est? du Sud? de l'Est? Nous ne pouvons pas encore répondre d'une façon certaine, comme pour beaucoup d'autres questions historiques, scientifiques, philosophiques, hélas !

Grammatici certant et adhuc sub judice lis est.

(1) Voir pages 57 et 58.

(2) Voir Apepndice n° I. De même, c'est une femme Aoura-Poko qui joue le grand rôle dans la tradition historique Baoulé comme dans la tradition historique Mossi. Et quoique femme se dise oba, eba, bla en Achanti, en Abron, en Baoulé, l'héroïne Baoulé se nomme Poko, comme la Poko (femme) ou Pokotoéga (femme du baobab) de la tradition Mossi.

(3) M. Delafosse dit qu'il n'y a pas de rapport particulier entre ces deux groupes au point de vue grammatical. D'une façon plus générale, M. Delafosse est tenté de croire actuellement, en ce qui concerne les origines Mossi, que le séjour des Mossi dans leur pays actuel est bien antérieur au XIe siècle de notre ère. Ce ne serait qu'une bande de pillards, de soldats heureux, une dynastie princière qui serait venue de Gambakha, au XIe siècle, pour fonder de petits royaumes dans un pays déjà colonisé antérieurement par les Mossi. Cependant, il y a une difficulté à cette opinion : c'est l'existence dans le Mossi d'une race autochtone encore existante (Nioniossé ou Foulsé) qui est loin de s'être fondue toujours et partout dans la race Mossi. D'après mes observations faites sur place (je suis resté trois ans dans le Yatenga, de 1913 à 1916), il y a encore plus de Nioniossé que de Mossi dans le Yatenga, 100.000 contre 70.000. (Voir mon *Noir du Yatenga*, pages 665 et 666). L'existence de cette race antérieure prouve que la colonisation Mossi est *relativement* récente et, d'autre part, les Mossi n'ont pu pénétrer et se maintenir dans une région déjà occupée que comme formant de petites monarchies militaires conquérantes. Je pense donc que les Mossi sont venus, *avec leurs chefs*, du Dagomba, et qu'ils ne sont venus dans le Mossi actuel qu'au..... Mais nous retombons ici dans la question chronologique, que nous allons traiter tout à l'heure.

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Cette incertitude au sujet des origines Mossi ne doit pas nous empêcher de traiter la question anthropologique Mossi. Au contraire, car il est bien évident que, si la linguistique peut nous donner des renseignements précieux sur les origines et affinités Mossi, l'anthropologie peut nous en donner de plus précieux et de plus profonds encore, car il est plus facile, évidemment, pour un peuple, comme on l'a dit, de changer sa langue que la forme de son crâne. Adressons-nous donc à l'anthropologie et consultons le Dr Ruelle pour savoir ce que sont les Mossi au point de vue somatique.

Le Dr Ruelle, dans le travail cité (1), a travaillé sur 100 Mossi hommes (malheureusement, il n'a pas mensuré de femmes, ce qui est une lacune regrettable et peut vicier certaines moyennes, par exemple celles de la taille). Au point de vue de la coloration de la peau, qu'il trouve brun-foncé en général (non seulement pour les Mossi mais pour les autres races du IIe territoire militaire qu'il étudie en même temps qu'eux), il donne pour les Mossi les numéros suivants de l'échelle chromatique de Broca :

70 Mossi sur 100 ont le n° 42
14 Mossi sur 100 ont le n° 41
19 Mossi sur 100 ont le n° 37 (2)

Pour l'indice céphalique horizontal :

2 Mossi ont 65	15 Mossi ont 75
4 Mossi ont 68	11 Mossi ont 76
4 Mossi ont 69	7 Mossi ont 77
2 Mossi ont 70	8 Mossi ont 78
3 Mossi ont 71	6 Mossi ont 79
13 Mossi ont 72	1 Mossi a 80
17 Mossi ont 73	2 Mossi ont 81 (3)
5 Mossi ont 74	

(1) *L'Anthropologie*, année 1904, tome XV, pp. 519-561 et 657 à 703.

(2) Page 522.

(3) Page 524. Il est probable que si le Dr Ruelle avait eu le soin de mensurer des femmes Mossi, l'indice céphalique se serait élevé, car on voit, par exemple, les femmes Lobi avoir 75,89 d'indice céphalique horizontal moyen, tandis que

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On voit donc que 12 Mossi sur 100 sont ultra-dolichocéphales ou hyperdolichocéphales, 53 dolichocéphales proprement dits, 32 sous-dolichocéphales, 3 enfin sous-brachycéphales.

La moyenne est de 74,65, c'est-à-dire nettement dolichocéphale. Les indices extrêmes sont : maximum, 81,76 ; minimum, 65,62. L'écart est de 16,14.

Las races qui se rapprochent le plus des Mossi dans le tableau du Dr Ruelle sont :

Les Ouangarbé ou Yarsé	74.95	(moyenne)
Les Samo	74.90	—
Les Nounouma	74.40	—
Les Birifon	74.58	—
Les Lobi	74.36	—

L'indice nasal donne, pour les 100 Mossi :

1	dont l'indice nasal est compris	entre 80 et 84.9
2	—	entre 85 et 89.9
9	—	entre 90 et 94.9
14	—	entre 95 et 99.9
29	—	entre 100 et 104.9
17	—	entre 105 et 109.9
11	—	entre 110 et 114.9
15	—	entre 115 et 119.9
2	—	au-dessus de 120

La moyenne est de 104,60. Nous avons, en détail, un mésorhinien (jusqu'à 85), 28 platyrhiniens (de 85 à 100) et 74 hyperplatyrhiniens (de 100 à 120) (1).

Le Mossi est donc très franchement platyrhinien et même hyper-platyrhinien, quoi qu'il le soit moins que le Bambara.

Pour la taille, la moyenne de 94 Mossi hommes fait 1m,71

les hommes n'ont que 74,28 ; les femmes Birifon avoir 77,35, tandis que les hommes n'ont que 74,58 ; enfin les femmes Dagari avoir 72,22, tandis que les hommes n'ont que 72,09 Cela signifie que les femmes ont le crâne plus court que les hommes tout en ne l'ayant pas plus large, c'est-à-dire ont une moindre capacité cérébrale. Cela signifie sans doute aussi que des ancêtres de ces femmes ont probablement appartenu, plus ou moins, à la race pygmée ou négrille dont on trouve encore des traces non équivoques en Côte d'Ivoire, race dont le crâne est plus court que celui des grands nègres, sans être pour cela plus large, au contraire.

(1) Page 588.

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(exactement 1m,712). Mais cette moyenne serait bien abaissée si le Dr Ruelle avait pu mesurer des femmes (1).

En résumé, l'étude du Dr Ruelle nous apprend que les Mossi sont dolichocéphales, platyrhiniens et grands. Ce sont là les caractéristiques habituellement attribuées à la race noire en général (aux grands noirs, pas aux négrilles). Elles ne différencient pas sensiblement les Mossi des races qui les entourent. Pour arriver à des conclusions anthropologiques sur l'origine des Mossi, il faudra des études somatiques beaucoup plus poussées qu'il n'en existe actuellement sur les Mossi même et sur les centaines de peuplades nègres que renferme le Soudan entre l'Abyssinie et l'Atlantique et entre le Sahara et le golfe de Guinée.

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(1) Les femmes Lobi ont en moyenne 1m,66, tandis que les hommes ont 1m,75 ; les femmes Birifon 1m,62, tandis que les hommes ont 1m,75 ; les femmes Dagari 1m,59, tandis que les hommes ont 1m,72 (p. 550).

[p.16]

CHAPITRE II

LA CHRONOLOGIE MOSSI

La chronologie Mossi est encore une construction hypothétique, du moins pour les débuts de l'histoire Mossi, car, dès le commencement du XVe siècle, on est à peu près d'accord, et tout à fait au XVIIIe siècle. M. Delafosse, dans son *Haut-Sénégal-Niger* (1912), a donné une chronologie complète du Mossi (pays de Ouagadougou, Yatenga, pays de Fada-N'Gourma) (1), tandis que j'en ébauchais une dans mon *Noir du Soudan: Pays Mossi et Gourounsi* (1912), pour les nabas de Ouagadougou (2). En 1917, j'ai repris cette question d'une façon plus poussée dans mon *Noir du Yatenga* (pp. 667 à 677). Je donne ici ces trois chronologies différentes en ce qui concerne le Yatenga, c'est-à-dire le royaume nord de tout le Mossi, qui est celui qui a eu affaire au Mali, au Songhaï et au Bambara au cours des âges — qui est celui, en conséquence, pour lequel nous avons quelques points de repère fournis par les chroniqueurs de Tombouctou ou par les Portugais. Une fois ces chronologies données, nous pourrons les discuter à nouveau à l'aide d'une indication importante que donne le *Tarikh-el- Fettach* :

Rois Mossi	*Chronologie Delafosse*	*Tauxier* 1912	*Tauxier* 1917
—	—	—	—
Nédéga (Dagomba) .	1000	»	1233
Riélé	»	»	1253
Ouidirsogo	mort en 1050	»	1273

(1) Voir tome Ier, pages 306 à 312, et tome II, pages 126, 139 à 140 et 149 à 150.

(2) Voir pages 458 à 462. A la vérité il n'y a pas dans ces pages de liste chronologique proprement dite, mais il y a des indications diverses d'où l'on peut déduire les dates du tableau concernant les rois de Ouagadougou que j'ai donné, page 674, de mon *Noir du Yatenga*, sous ce titre : « Chrono ogie du Mossi (région de Ouagadougou), d'après mon *Noir du Soudan*, 1912 » (Appendice n° V).

Rois Mossi	*Chronologie Delafosse*	*Tauxier* 1912	*Tauxier* 1917
—	—	—	—
Rawa	XIe siècle	»	1293
Oubri	1050-1090	1175-1199	1313
Ouemtanango	1130	»	1333
Yadega	1170	»	1353
Yaouloumfao	1200-1225	»	1360
Guéda	»	»	1360-1375
Tounougoum	»	»	
Possinga	»	»	1375-1385
Nasségué	1320-1340	»	
Somna	»	»	1385-1395
Vanté-Baragouan	1350-1380	»	
Bonga	1380-1410	»	1395-1415
Sougounoum	1410-1430	»	1415-1430
Kissoum	1430-1435	»	1430
Zangayella	1435-1460	»	1430-1450
Lanlassé	1460-1475	»	1450-1475
Nassodoba	1475-1500	»	1475-1505
Yamba	1500-1530	»	1505-1535
Niago	1530 1560	»	1535-1565
Parima	1560-1590	»	1565-1595
Koumpaougoum	1590-1620	»	1595-1625
Nabasséré	1620-1660	»	1625-1655
Toussourou	1660-1690	»	1655-1685
Sini	1690-1720	»	1685-1720
Pigo	1720-1739	»	1720-1739
Ouabégo	1739-1754	»	1739-1754
Kango	1754-1787	»	1754-1787
Sagha	1787-1803	»	1787-1803
Kaogo	1803-1806	»	1803-1806
Tougouri	1806-1822	»	1806-1822
Kom	1822-1825	»	1822-1825
Ragongo	1825-1831	»	1825-1831
Ridimba	1831	»	1831
Diogoré	1831-1834	»	1831-1834
Totébalobo	1834-1850	»	1834-1850
Yemdé	1850-1877	»	1850-1877
Sanoum	1877-1879	»	1877-1879
Nobogo	1879-1884	»	1879-1884
Pigo II	1884-1885	»	1884-1885
Baogo	1885-1895	»	1885-1894
Bagaré	1895-1899	»	1894-1899
Liguidi	1899-1902	»	1899-1902
Kobogo	depuis 1902	»	1902-1914

Nous pouvons remarquer d'abord qu'il y a, je crois, une

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légère confusion dans la chronologie de début de M. Delafosse. Il compte, en effet (tome Ier, page 306), 40 ans par génération, et, d'autre part (tome II, page 126), il place approximativement Oubri de 1050 à 1090. Or, Oubri était le fils de Zoungourana, fils lui-même de Ouidiraogo, fils lui-même de la princesse Yennenga, fils lui-même de Nédéga, le roi qui régnait dans le Dagomba. Il y a donc quatre générations de Nédéga à Oubri, ce qui doit faire 160 ans, d'après le calcul de M. Delafosse, et si Oubri doit être placé entre 1050 et 1090, cela reporte son trisaïeul Nédéga vers 890, c'est-à-dire à la fin du IXe siècle de notre ère ou, tout au moins, en 910, c'est-à-dire au commencement du Xe siècle (1). En ce dernier cas, les dates approximatives seraient les suivantes :

Nédéga	vers 910
Yennenga	vers 950
Ouidiraogo	vers 990
Zoungourana	vers 1030
Oubri	entre 1050 et 1090

Cela mettrait, en définitive, Nédéga, le roi Dagomba, sa fille, Yennenga, et son petit-fils, Ouidiraogo, au Xe siècle, puis Zoungourana (avec ses frères Rawa et Diaba) et Oubri, au XIe siècle.

Ceci dit, il reste que la chronologie Mossi du Xe au XIVe siècle n'est pas fixée et qu'il serait intéressant de trouver quelque indication qui permit une approximation sérieuse.

Justement, il existe un texte du deuxième appendice du *Tarikh-el-Fettach* qui peut jeter une lueur dans cette obscurité. Au nom d'un certain roi Songhaï appelé Baraï, il est dit, en effet, que le roi des Mossi guerroya contre lui (2). Nous ne savons pas quel roi Mossi, du reste, car le *Tarikh-el-Fettach* ne donne pas son nom, mais, avant de rechercher dans la longue liste des rois Mossi quel put être cet agresseur, il faudrait avoir fixé, au moins approximativement, la date de ce Baraï.

Mais cela nous force justement à établir toute la chronologie

(1) C'est ce que j'ai noté déjà dans mon *Noir du Yatenga*, page 673 (Appendice n° IV).

(2) *Tarikh-el-Fettach*, traduction Houdas, page 333.

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Sonraï, une chronologie très approximative aussi et qui varie suivant que nous consultons le *Tarikh-es-Soudan* ou le *Tarikh-el-Fettach*.

Voici d'abord comment on pourrait établir, d'une façon du reste schématique et grossièrement approximative, la chronologie des princes Songhaï d'après le *Tarikh-es-Soudan*.

Cette chronique ne donne qu'une date jusqu'à Sonni-Ali-Ber : celle de Kosoï, qui se convertit à l'islamisme en l'an 400 de l'hégire, donc en 1009-1010 de notre ère (1), mais elle donne les dates de Sonni-Ali-Ber et des Askias qui lui succèdèrent, de 1464-1465 à 1591, époque de la conquête marocaine.

Nous pouvons d'abord remarquer que, pour les princes pour lesquels nous avons des dates exactes (Sonni-Ali et les Askias), il y a 126 ou 127 ans pour dix règnes, ce qui donne environ 13 ans par règne. Nous pouvons appliquer cette moyenne à l'ensemble des princes Songhay : ainsi, puisque nous comptons, depuis Za Alayaman jusqu'à Issihak II, 58 princes Songhay, cela place le commencement de ces princes vers l'an 887 de notre ère.

D'autre part, il nous faut tenir compte de ce fait que nous avons la date approximative du règne de Ali Kolon (ou Ali Kolen, ou Ali Golom, ou Ali Kilnou), qui délivra le Songhay de la suzeraineté du Mali un peu après le règne de Kankan-Moussa et pendant cette époque momentanée de faiblesse qui permit aux Mossi de razzier Tombouctou (1333). M. Delafosse (2) place la fuite d'Ali Kolen de la cour du roi de Mali et sa défense victorieuse contre les gens de Mali qui le poursuivaient, en 1335. Avant lui, Binger (3) avait placé cette fuite en 1331, sous le règne du faible Magha Ier, successeur de Kankan-Moussa qui régna de 1331 à 1335. Nous pouvons prendre 1333 comme date moyenne et on pourrait penser que la prise de Tombouctou par les Mossi, qui se produisit cette année-là, ne fut pas sans favoriser la restauration de l'indépendance du Songhaï.

(1) *Tarikh-es-Soudan*, traduction Houdas, page 5.
(2) *Haut-Sénégal-Niger*, tome II, page 73.
(3) *Du Niger au golfe de Guinée*, tome II, page 368. Voir aussi page 371.

En se basant sur ces données, nous avons :

1.	Za Alayaman	837–849
2.	Zakoï	849–861
3.	Takoï	861–873
4.	Akoï	873–885
5.	Kou	885–897
6.	Ali Faï	897–909
7.	Biyaï Komaï	909–921
8.	Biyaï	921–933
9.	Karaï	933–945
10.	Yama-Karaouïa	945–957
11.	Yama	957–969
12.	Yama-Danka-Kibao	969–981
13.	Koukoraï	981-993
14.	Kenken	993–1005
15.	Kosoï (vers 1009-1010)	1005–1025
16.	Kosaï-Dariyâ	1025–1044
17.	Hen-Kon-Ouanko-Dam	1044–1063
18.	Biyaï-Koï-Kimi	1063–1082
19.	Nintâsanaï	1082–1101
20.	Biyaï-Kaïna-Kimba	1101–1120
21.	Kaïna-Chinyounbo	1120–1139
22.	Tib	1139–1158
23.	Yama-Dao	1158–1177
24.	Fadazou	1177–1196
25.	Ali-Koro	1196–1215
26.	*Bir-Foloko*	1215–1235
27.	Yasiboï	1235–1255
28.	Douro	1255–1275
29.	Zenko-Bâro	1275–1295
30.	Bisi-Bâro	1295–1315
31.	Bada	1325–1332
32.	Ali-Kolon (vers 1333)	1333–1340
33.	Selman-Nâri	1340–1347
34.	Ibrahim Kabaï	1347–1354
35.	Otamân Kanafa	1354–1362
36.	Bar-Kaïna-Ankabi	1362–1370
37.	Mousa	1370–1378
38.	Bokar-Zonko	1378–1386
39.	Bokar-Dalla-Boyonbo	1386-1394
40.	Mar Kiraï	1394–1402
41.	Mohammed Dâo	1402–1410
42.	Mohammed Koukiya	1410–1418
43.	Mohammed Fâr	1418–1426
44.	Karbifô	1426–1434
45.	Mar-Faï-Kolli-Djimo	1434–1442
46.	Mar Arkena	1442–1449

47.	Mar Arandan	1449–1456
48.	Selimân Dam	1456–1464
49.	*Sonni Ali Ber*	1464–1492
50.	*Askia El-Hadj Mohammed*	1493–1528
51.	Askia Moussa	1528–1531
52.	Askia Mohammed II	1531–1537
53.	Askia Ismaïl	1537–1539
54.	Askia Issihak I	1539–1549
55.	Askia Daoud	1549–1582
56.	Askia Mohammed III	1582–1586
57.	Askia Mohammed Bani	1586–1588
58.	Askia Issihak II	1588–1591

J'ai souligné dans cette liste le nom de Bir-Foloko (1215-1235) parce que c'est le roi de la liste du *Tarikh-es-Soudan* qui correspond au Baraï de la liste du *Tarikh-el-Fettach*.

Quant aux dates que l'on peut tirer du *Tarikh-el-Fettach*, elles consistent en trois notations :

1° Un géant venu du Yemen, qui vivait vers le milieu du IVe siècle de l'hégire (1), c'est-à-dire, en comptant 350 ans depuis l'hégire, vers 961 après Jésus-Christ ;

2° La date de l'islamisation des gens de Gao qui eut lieu, d'après El-Motaouakkel Kâti, entre 471 et 475 de l'hégire, c'est-à-dire entre 1079 et 1082 de notre ère (2) ;

3° Et la date de Mâkara-Komsoû, qui était contemporain du pèlerinage de Kankan-Moussa à La Mecque, en l'année 720 de l'hégire, soit 1321-1322 de notre ère (3). Ce Mâkara-Komsoû était le trente-troisième roi du Songhay, d'après la liste donnée par Mahmoud Kâti.

On peut, sur ces trois notations, établir une liste chronologique des princes du Songhay d'après le *Tarikh-el-Fettach*, en remarquant que 360 ans (961 à 1321) sont donnés pour trente-trois princes, ce qui fait une moyenne de 11 ans à peu près par prince. D'autre part, on peut penser que la date de l'islamisation des gens de Gao donne la date de Kotso-Moslem (Kotso le Musulman) et que, par conséquent, nous pouvons mettre ce prince vers 1079-1082, c'est-à-dire vers 1080 approxi-

(1) *Tarikh-el-Fettach*, traduction Houdas et Delafosse, page 329.
(2) *Ibidem*, pages 332, 333.
(3) *Ibidem*, page 335.

mativement. Le *Tarikh*, il est vrai, dit que ce ne fut pas Kotso-Moslem qui islamisa les gens de Gao et que l'opinion courante répandue à ce sujet est fausse, mais Mahmoûd Kâti semble bafouiller singulièrement (que l'on me passe le mot) à ce sujet (1) et l'on peut, malgré son autorité et en se basant sur l'opinion courante qu'il rejette, admettre que ce fut Kotso qui islamisa et Gao et le royaume Songhay. On a donc 1080 pour son époque, ce qui donne neuf ans en moyenne pour ses prédécesseurs jusqu'au géant venu du Yémen. Nous pouvons, du reste, d'ores et déjà, faire toutes nos réserves sur ce commencement, beaucoup trop rapproché, de l'empire Songhay. La date que l'on tire du *Tarikh-es-Soudan* (837 après Jésus-Christ) semble bien préférable à cette date de 961, tirée du *Tarikh-el-Fettach*.

Quoi qu'il en soit à ce dernier sujet, nous avons donc :

1. Géant venu du Yemen	961
2. Ouaaï	970
3. Kaïen	979
4. Takaï	988
5. Mata-Kaï	997
6. Mali Biyaï	1006
7. Bayaï Kima	1015
8. Beï	1024
9. Kiraï	1033
10. Yama Kalaouaï	1042
11. Yama-Dombo	1051
12. Yama-Diamaa	1060
13. Diatakoré	1070
14. *Koto-Moslem*	1080
15. Kotso-Dariâ	1093
16. Hounabououa	1106
17. Yama-Kitsi	1119
18. Baraï	1132
19. Bibaï-Kaïna	1145
20. Sémanbao	1158
21. Fanda Diaoro	1171
22. Yama-Daa	1184
23. Arkour-Diouna	1197
24. *Baroï* (guerre avec les Mossi)	1210
25. Yassi Bo'o	1223

(1) Voir la note de MM. Houdas-Delafosse, page 332.

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26. Baro	1236
27. Douro	1249
28. Bitsi-Baro	1262
29. *Ali Golom*	1275
30. Silman Nari	1288
31. Ibrahim Kabayao	1301
32. Ousman Guifo	1311
33. *Mâkara Komsôu*	1321–1322
34. Boubakar	1335–1340
35. Ankada	1349–1363
36. Kimi-Yankoï	1363–1377
37. Baro del Yombo	1377–1390
38. Madao	1390–1405
39. Mohammed Koukiya	1405–1420
40. Mohammed Fari	1420–1435
41. Balam	1435–1450
42. Souleïman-Dama	1450–1465
43. Sonni-Ali-Ber	1465–1492

Ce que l'on peut remarquer dans cette liste, c'est (à part le fait qu'elle rapproche beaucoup trop de nous les commencements du royaume Songhaï et que, sur ce point, la chronologie qu'on tire du *Tarikh-es-Soudan* lui est préférable) que Kotso-Moslem est placé ici vers 1080, tandis que le même (appelé Kosoï, par Es'Sadi) est placé vers 1010 par celui-ci. Sur ce point, la date du *Tarikh-el-Fettach* nous paraît préférable car, si nous réfléchissons aux événements du XIe siècle qui ont pu amener cette conversion à l'Islam, nous songeons, tout d'abord, à la prise de Ghana, vers 1076, par les Almoravides. Nous serions donc porté à préférer la date que l'on tire du *Tarikh-el-Fettach*, sans cependant que la raison soit absolument concluante, car il peut se faire ou bien que ce soit une autre cause que la pression des Almoravides qui ait amené la conversion à l'Islam du roi Songhay de l'époque, ou bien même que cette pression ait pu se faire sentir de ce côté à une autre époque qu'à l'époque même de la prise de Ghana. Cependant il est raisonnable de penser que c'est cet événement qui a amené les Songhaï à l'Islam, et donc Kotso-Moslem, ou Kosoï le Musulman, doit être placé vers 1080 plutôt que vers 1010.

Mais il y a une contradiction encore plus forte que celle-ci

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entre le *Tarikh-el-Fettach* et le *Tarikh-es-Soudan*. Le *Tarikh-es-Soudan* dit explicitement que ce fut Kankan-Moussa qui fut le premier des rois de Mali qui s'empara du Songhay (1). De là, il résulte logiquement que Ali Kolon et son aventure de libération doivent être placés après Kankan-Moussa. Or, d'après le *Tarikh-el-Fettach*, Ali Kolon (qu'il appelle Ali Golom) délivra bien le Songhaï ou, plus exactement, « abandonna le roi du Malli pour des causes qu'il serait trop long de rapporter ici et dont l'exposé ne rentre point dans notre cadre », déclare imperturbablement l'auteur (2). Mais, après lui, régna Silman-Nâri, puis Ibrahim-Kabayao, puis Ousman-Guifo, puis Mâkara-Komsoû, et ce fut sous ce dernier que Kankan-Moussa passa dans le pays Songhay, se rendant en pélerinage à La Mecque (3). Il faut donc admettre, d'après cet exposé, que Ali Golom ou Ali Kolon est antérieur à Kankan-Moussa, vécut vers 1275 et, s'il délivra le pays du joug du Mali, le fit sous les successeurs directs de Soundiata alias Mari-Diata. Puis, à l'époque de Kankan-Moussa, le plus célèbre des rois du Mali après Soundiata, le pays Songhaï serait retombé, pour un temps qu'il est impossible de fixer, sous la suzeraineté du Mali.

Il est difficile de trancher la question de savoir qui a raison, sous ce rapport, du *Tarikh-es-Soudan* ou du *Tarikh-el-Fettach*. Du reste, pour la question qui nous occupe particulièrement (la date de Baraï ou Bir-Foloko), il n'est pas essentiel de lui donner ici une solution. Remarquons simplement que la chronologie que nous avons tirée du *Tarikh-es-Soudan* met Bir-Foloko entre 1215 et 1235 et que celle que nous avons tirée du *Tarikh-el-Fettach* le met vers 1210. D'autre part, Binger place « Za-Birou ou Bayarou Falaka » comme correspondant au règne de Mansa Wali Ier (1260-1276) (4). M. Delafosse, de son côté (5), ne donne pas la date propre à « Beïra-Foloko », mais, d'après les deux dates extrêmes qu'il donne

(1) Traduction Houdas, pages 12 et 13.
(2) Traduction Houdas et Delafosse, page 234.
(3) *Ibidem*, page 235.
(4) Binger, ouvrage cité, tome II, pages 358 et 359.
(5) *Haut-Sénégal-Niger*, tome II, page 65.

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pour les Dia à Gao (1010 à 1335) et d'après la place de Beïra-Foloko entre ses prédécesseurs et successeurs, il faudrait le placer vers 1275-1300 environ. En résumé, je pense que Baraï est de la première moitié du XIIIe siècle et que la première guerre des Songhaï et des Mossi se fit à cette époque.

Voici les détails que donne, sur cette guerre, le *Tarikh-el-Fettach* (page 333) : « Puis [vint] le diaoua Baraï, contre lequel guerroya le roi des Mossi ; la campagne dura quatre mois, à la suite desquels le roi des Mossi fut vaincu et son armée mise en déroute et anéantie ». Ainsi les Mossi auraient été les agresseurs, mais auraient été, finalement, vaincus et repoussés.

Il s'agit maintenant de rechercher quel est le roi Mossi qui entreprit cette campagne et, sur ce point, il faut l'avouer, nous n'avons aucune indication : il faut naturellement écarter Nédéga, le roi du Dagomba, sa fille Yennenga ou Pokotoéga, son petit-fils Ouidiraogo, mais on peut hésiter entre Rawa et Ouemtanango. Si l'on choisit le premier, il aurait donc vécu de 1200 à 1250 (ce qui montrerait que ma date de 1293, pour ce naba, est trop récente, et la date de M. Delafosse — début du XIe siècle — trop ancienne). Si l'on choisit Ouemtanango, il en est encore de même : ma date de 1333, pour ce naba, serait trop récente d'un siècle, et la date de M. Delafosse un peu trop ancienne d'un demi-siècle (1). En résumé, il nous est impossible de dire exactement quel est le naba qui porta le premier la guerre vers le Nord, mais que ce soit Rawa ou Ouemtanango, il semble bien que, dès le début du XIIIe siècle, les Mossi étaient installés dans leurs territoires actuels, y compris le Yatenga, et, par conséquent, il faut en déduire que ce fut au XIIe siècle qu'ils y vinrent. Ma chronologie Mossi de 1917 semble donc à réviser comme rapprochant trop de nous les origines de l'histoire Mossi, et, d'autre part, celle de M. Delafosse semble aussi à retoucher comme tombant dans l'excès contraire. Ce ne serait pas la première fois que la vérité serait placée, comme il arrive souvent, entre deux opinions extrêmes.

(1) M. Delafosse place Ouemtanango vers 1170 environ. On peut le déduire de deux passages de son tome II, pages 126 et 139. Dans le dernier, il parle de Ouemtanango lui-même et, dans le premier, de son père et de ses oncles.

[p. 26]

CHAPITRE III

MOSSI ET BAMBARA

On sait que le roi Bambara N'Golo et le roi Mossi Kango se firent la guerre vers la fin du XVIIIe siècle. Les traditions du Yatenga conservent bien le souvenir, brodé de variations plus ou moins burlesques, des événements qui amenèrent cette guerre (voir mon *Noir du Yatenga*, 1917, pages 88 à 91), mais ils ne disent rien sur la guerre elle-même. M. Delafosse, dans son *Haut-Sénégal-Niger* (1912), commence par rapporter, d'après des traditions Bambara, les mêmes récits sur les causes qui amenèrent la guerre (1), mais il ne dit pas grand'-chose sur la guerre elle-même. Après avoir parlé de l'extermination cruelle, par Kango, des auxiliaires Bambara dont il avait eu jadis besoin et qui lui avaient été prêtés, il ajoute (2) : « Cela se passait vers 1760 : Ngolo Diara, alors empereur de Ségou, voulut venger ses compatriotes et partit en guerre contre le Yatenga, mais il fut repoussé par Kango. Plus tard, à la suite d'une sorte de guerre civile qui éclata à Ségou, les commerçants dioula de cette ville s'enfuirent et se réfugièrent au Yatenga ; Ngolo demanda à Kango de les lui renvoyer et, sur son refus, dirigea, pour la troisième fois, une colonne contre l'empire de Ouahigouya ; cette colonne n'eut pas plus de succès que la précédente et Ngolo mourut pendant cette expédition, suivi de près dans la tombe par son adversaire (1787). »

M. Delafosse dit encore plus loin (3) : « Ngolo fit deux expé-

(1) Tome II, pages 143 et 144.
(2) Page 144.
(3) Même ouvrage, tome II, pages 289, 290 (chapitre sur l'histoire des Bambara de Ségou).

3: Tauxier FA28 Mossi

ditions contre les Mossi du Yatenga, dont l'empereur, Kango, avait fait périr cruellement des guerriers banmana mis à sa disposition précédemment par Denkoro ou par Ton-Mansa. Repoussé lors de la première expédition (vers 1760), Ngolo retourna plus tard au Yatenga, pour réclamer à Kango des commerçants dioula qui avaient fui de Ségou à la suite d'une sorte de guerre civile et que l'empereur du Yatenga refusait de renvoyer chez eux ; il semble que cette seconde expédition ne fut pas plus heureuse que la première ; en tout cas, Ngolo contracta, au cours de cette colonne, une maladie dont il mourut avant d'avoir pu rejoindre sa capitale (1787). »

Tout ceci est bien maigre et nous n'en saurions guère plus là-dessus (1) si un passage très curieux de Mungo-Park que personne encore n'a relevé, à ma connaissance, ne nous apprenait un événement très important de cette guerre : la prise d'assaut de la ville de Dienné par Kango, fait d'armes digne des anciens conquérants Mossi, Rawa, Ouemtanango, Nassodoba, etc., et qui assura la victoire définitive du naba Mossi sur le fama Bambara.

Voici ce passage, que je copie textuellement dans Mungo-Park (traduction de l'abbé du Voisin, 1800, tome II, pp. 45 et 46) :

« Au sud de Jimbala se trouve le royaume nègre de Gotto (2), que l'on dit très étendu. Il était divisé, autrefois, en un grand nombre de petits états gouvernés par différents chefs, dont les guerres continuelles incitaient les nations voisines à envahir le pays. Un de ces chefs, nommé Moossie, eut assez de politique et d'adresse pour engager tous les autres à déclarer la guerre au roi de Bambarra, et à se faire nommer généralissime d'une

(1) M. Monteil, dans son livre récent sur les *Bambara de Ségou et du Kaarta* (1924), ne dit rien de ces guerres. Il n'y fait allusion que dans une courte note de la page 78.

(2) Le Djimbala (qui veut dire en Mandé le pays de la grande eau, de gui = eau, ba = grand, grande et la = suffixe indiquant le pays ou la région) est la région située au nord du lac Débo. Quant au « Gotto », nom que Mungo-Park donne ici à tous les pays du Sud-Est et du Sud (Mossi, Kong, Bondoukou, etc.), c'est sans doute le mot de Gottogo qui est le nom soudanais et mandé de Bondoukou et qui est donné par confusion à tout ce qui est au sud-est et au sud du Djimbala ou Guimbala.

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commune voix. Des bords du lac Debbie (1), sur le Haut-Niger, Moossie envoya un grand nombre de canots chargés de provisions vers Yenné ; et, avec toute son armée, il entra dans le Bambarra. Les habitants de Yenné le virent sur le bord opposé du Niger (2) avant d'avoir été instruits de sa marche. Sa flotte le joignit le même jour et, après avoir débarqué ses provisions, il passa ce fleuve avec une partie de son armée et prit Yenné d'assaut dans la nuit. Cet exploit épouvanta tellement le roi de Bambarra qu'il envoya demander la paix. Il se soumit à payer au vainqueur un tribut annuel d'un certain nombre d'esclaves et à rendre aux habitants de Gotto tout ce qu'on aurait pu leur enlever (3). Moussee rentra en triomphe dans le Gotto, où il fut proclamé roi. Il a donné son nom à la capitale. »

Comme on le voit, le fait important et précieux qui est à dégager de cette gangue épaisse, est la prise de Dienné par le roi du Mossi nord, par le roi du Yatenga (qui était, à cette époque, Kango), au cours de ses luttes avec le Bambara, c'est-à-dire avec Ngolo, qui était son contemporain. Par la faute de ses interlocuteurs qui ne l'ont pas renseigné évidemment avec toute la précision désirable et lui ont fait commettre de nombreuses petites erreurs ou confusions, Mungo-Park a enguirlandé le fait vrai de détails fantaisistes : c'est d'abord le nom de Kango *Moossie*, *Moussie*, qui est le nom du pays du conquérant et non pas son nom propre. C'est, ensuite, le nom de Gotto donné au pays Mossi, sans doute par une confusion soit dans l'esprit des noirs qui renseignèrent Mungo-Park, soit dans l'esprit du grand voyageur lui-même, entre les gens de Gotto mêlés à cette affaire et les Mossi du Yatenga qui firent cette expédition. Enfin, naba Kango, quoi qu'il ait rendu un grand éclat, au

(1) Il s'agit du lac Débo.

(2) Djenné n'est pas tout à fait sur le Niger ni sur le Bani, mais à une certaine distance entre ces deux fleuves.

(3) Ce passage ferait supposer que les Dyoula de Gottogo (ou Bondoukou) ayant des griefs contre les Bambara de la région de Ségou (colporteurs pillés, dettes non payées, etc.) se seraient adressés au roi du Mossi pour obtenir justice et que c'est cela qui aurait été une des causes de la guerre. Il y avait sans doute des griefs réciproques entre Bambara et Mossi ou entre leurs alliés naturels.

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XVIIIe siècle, à la dynastie Mossi du Yatenga, n'a pas trouvé, évidemment, à son avènement un morcellement absolu de petits pays qu'il aurait rassemblés sous une autorité unique. Il se contenta de restaurer, sans doute, un royaume jadis puissant et centralisé qu'il refit tel par son prestige personnel. Enfin, il n'a pas donné son nom au Mossi (c'est, au contraire, le Mossi qui, dans le récit de Mungo-Park, lui donne son nom), pas plus qu'à la capitale, qu'il créa réellement, elle, et qu'il appela Ouahigouya. Tous ces détails sont donc faux ou fantaisistes, mais le fait principal reste, très intéressant, et Mungo-Park arriva juste à temps, en 1796, à Ségou, pour en recueillir le souvenir, avant que, de la mémoire oublieuse des nègres du Mossi et du Bambara, il retombât dans un irréparable oubli.

[p.30]

CHAPITRE IV

LE CULTE DU SOLEIL AU MOSSI

Les Mossi adorent-ils le soleil ? Et leur grand dieu Ouendé est-il, pour tout ou pour partie, un dieu soleil ?

C'est Binger, le premier, qui affirma que les Mossi adoraient le soleil. « Ils sont fétichistes, dit-il (1), mais ils ont pour culte le soleil, qui porte encore aujourd'hui le même nom que Dieu : ils l'appellent Wouidi. »

Le lieutenant Desplagnes, dans son *Plateau Central Nigérien* (p. 275, 276), dit, à son tour, en 1907 :

« Les Hougho-Ouango du Mossi (ces prêtres résident au Mossi dans les villages de Boujema, Mani, Kondogho, Yolo, Tio) sacrifient au soleil, pour l'attacher à la terre, matin et soir, à son lever et à son coucher, pendant la première semaine de l'hivernage, puis, dans la suite, seulement tous les six jours, le matin au soleil levant. Ils se rendent aux autels, formés des trois pierres coniques, pour offrir les sacrifices et les libations, toujours entourés de tout le peuple, des chefs de famille, des joueurs de tam-tam et des masques familiaux (Ouango).

« Ces prêtres gardent, pendant toute l'année, dans une petite niche très décorée, creusée dans un mur de leur maison, le feu sacré avec lequel, à la fin de la saison des pluies, ils devront allumer les grands feux de brousse purificateurs. »

Le lieutenant Desplagnes ajoute en note :

« Ils sacrifient à chaque lune nouvelle, puis ont sept grandes fêtes par an pour la divinité. Enfin, pendant les fêtes du soleil, ils se servent d'une queue de vache pour l'attacher à la terre et lier sa chaleur fécondante. »

(1) *Du Niger au golfe de Guinée*, tome I, page 402.

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Dans mon *Noir du Soudan, Pays Mossi et Gourounsi* (1912), je reproduisais, sans commentaires, cette page du lieutenant Desplagnes (page 590). De plus, je signalais le culte du soleil chez les Gourounsi qui font partie, comme les Mossi, de la famille Voltaïque. Ainsi, page 241, j'écrivais :

« Les Kassonfras, comme les Nounoumas et les Menkiéras, disent n'offrir aucun sacrifice à la lune, ni au soleil. Pourtant, j'ai trouvé une exception au village de Nitiédougou (canton de Sia). Il paraît qu'ici, le matin, de bonne heure, quand le soleil se lève et commence à se détacher sur l'horizon, les gens lui offrent un poulet ou ce qu'ils veulent. On ne fait, du reste, ce sacrifice que quand le voro (1) a dit de le faire.

« Mon interlocuteur prétend qu'on fait de même, non seulement à Nitiédougou et dans le petit canton de Sia, mais encore dans tout le pays Kasouna (Kassonfras et Kassonbouras). Il doit se tromper (2), car mes interlocuteurs précédents et mon interprète, qui est Kassonboura, n'ont jamais vu ni entendu parler de rien de tel. »

Plus tard, en 1917, dans mon *Noir du Yatenga*, les quelques tentatives que j'avais faites dans le Yatenga pour retrouver ce culte du soleil n'ayant pas donné de résultats, j'écrivais (page 277) :

« Soleil se dit ouindigho ou ouindigha en Mossi (tili en Bambara). Le mot a une parenté certaine avec Ouendé et le mot Ouendé semble entrer dans la composition du mot ouindigho. Les Mossis et Foulsés du Yatenga, en tout cas, ne font pas de sacrifices au soleil. J'ai interrogé en vain différents grands personnages sur les détails donnés par le lieutenant Desplagnes, pages 275 et 276 de son ouvrage sur le *Plateau Central Nigérien*, sur un culte du soleil dans le Mossi. Ces détails visent, il est vrai, la société religieuse des Ouangos et les villages où les membres de cette société opéreraient : ainsi seraient des villages de la Résidence de Kaya (ainsi Mané, Boujéma, etc.). On pourrait donc poursuivre les recherches à Kaya. En tout

(1) Devin.
(2) Je tendrais à penser aujourd'hui, au contraire, qu'il avait raison.

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cas, ce culte du soleil est totalement inconnu dans le Yatenga. »

En résumé je niais le culte du soleil chez les Mossi *du Yatenga*, en admettant qu'on pouvait retrouver ce culte dans d'autres endroits du pays Mossi, particulièrement dans la Résidence (aujourd'hui cercle) de Kaya.

La question en était là quand le Père Eugène Mangin publia, dans l'*Anthropos*, une étude sur les Mossi (*Les Mossi. Essai sur les us et coutumes du Soudan Occidental*, Vienne, 1916), étude dans laquelle l'auteur, qui a longtemps résidé à Ouagadougou, dans le Mossi central, a porté son principal effort sur l'étude de la vie religieuse de ses ouailles. Or il semble bien que les observations du Père Mangin tranchent d'une façon définitive, à l'avantage de Binger et de Desplagnes, la question du culte du soleil dans le pays. Les Mossi, dit le Père Mangin, dans leurs sacrifices, offrent à Ouendé de l'eau pour son lever et *la versent à l'Est*, offrent à Ouendé de l'eau pour son coucher et *la versent à l'Ouest*. Dans une dispute, le plus faible dira aussi : « Dieu (Ouendé) m'est témoin que je ne t'ai rien fait, Dieu te le rendra », *et il montrera le soleil*. Ainsi Ouendé, le dieu principal des Mossi, serait bien un dieu-soleil, et les Mossi adoreraient bien, en lui, le soleil.

Cela veut-il dire que Ouendé ne soit pas aussi un dieu-ciel ou atmosphère, comme je le soutenais dans mon *Noir du Yatenga* ? Certes non, et le Père Mangin note, en effet, aussi que Ouendé dispose de la foudre — ce qu'il ne peut faire que s'il est le Ciel-atmosphère. « Les phénomènes de la nature, dit-il, sont parfois attribués à Dieu. La foudre tue ceux qui ont fait le mal, tue l'animal mal acquis par fraude ou volé, et c'est Dieu qui l'envoie pour le punir... ». Ainsi Ouendé, tout en étant le soleil, est aussi le Ciel-atmosphère, et autre chose encore, car il a des caractéristiques qui dépassent la divinité-soleil et la divinité-ciel. Ici il ne faut pas oublier que l'Allah des musulmans est bien connu dans le Mossi et y a ses représentants établis (Yarsé d'origine Mandé, Peul, etc.) ou passagers (commerçants venus du Nord ou du Sud, Soninké, Songhay, Dyoula). Il y a donc bien longtemps que la con-

ception musulmane de Dieu a pu déteindre et a déteint, en effet, sur le dieu-soleil-atmosphère des Mossi. Ceux-ci ont pu faire la guerre aux sultans Songhay qui dirigeaient contre eux des croisades religieuses, il n'en est pas moins vrai qu'ils ont été heureux de parer leur dieu le plus important des caractéristiques remarquables qui les frappaient et qu'ils admiraient chez le dieu musulman. C'est ainsi que, peu à peu, Ouendé est devenu de plus en plus un dieu suprême, quoi qu'il semble n'avoir été, au début, qu'un dieu-soleil et un dieu-atmosphère d'abord séparés, puis qui fusionnèrent, avec prédominance de l'élément divinité-soleil.

Pour nous résumer, il est bien acquis que l'on trouve chez les Mossi le culte du soleil, avec beaucoup d'autres éléments, comme on vient de le voir : ce culte, je l'ai retrouvé depuis chez les Dorhosié (1922) et chez les Gouro (1928). Mais, chez les Gouro, il est spécial à quelques féticheurs et n'intéresse pas la masse de la population. Chez les Dorhosié, au contraire, il intéresse toute cette masse et donne lieu à un sacrifice solennel fait en hiver, à la fin de l'ancienne année, au commencement de la nouvelle. Mais, chez ces gens, la divinité-soleil n'est pas devenue une divinité prépondérante comme chez les Mossi. Elle est une divinité entre plusieurs et est plutôt primée par le culte de la Terre-brousse et celui du Ciel-atmosphère. Je suis du reste persuadé que des recherches approfondies chez toutes les branches de la population voltaïque décéleraient, çà et là, le culte du soleil, comme chez les Mossi, les Gourounsi, les Dorhosié, etc.

[p. 34 contains no text]

LIVRE II

[p.35]

LA QUESTION GOUROUNSI

On sait que les Gourounsi sont une population nègre qui habite à moitié dans la Haute-Volta française et à moitié dans la Gold-Coast anglaise, vers les 10e, 11e et 12e degrés de latitude Nord et, environ, entre les 3e et 5e degrés de longitude Ouest. Les Kipirsi vont même du 12e au 12e degré 1/2 de latitude Nord et, si l'on rattache aux Gourounsi des parents un peu plus éloignés, comme les Nioniossé, les Ko, les Siti, les Dégha, etc., on a une extension dans l'espace encore bien plus vaste. Mais nous ne proposons pas, ici, de fixer les limites précises du territoire Gourounsi, ce qui est difficile à faire, surtout pour la Gold-Coast. Nous voudrions simplement donner une énumération et un classement aussi exacts que possible des différentes tribus que l'on désigne sous le nom de Gourounsi.

Comme ce classement est très délicat et très difficile à faire encore maintenant (*et nous n'espérons pas, du reste, dans les pages qui suivent, procéder à un classement définitif et ne varietur, mais seulement mettre au point de nos connaissances actuelles le classement des Gourounsi*), nous passerons d'abord en revue les différentes tentatives de nos devanciers pour donner un tableau plus ou moins complet des populations désignées sous ce nom. Nous dirons d'abord pour le mot « Gourounsi » lui-même, que ce n'est pas justement un mot Gourounsi. C'est un mot Mossi donnant Gourounga au singulier et Gourounsi au pluriel. Le lieutenant Marc suppose (1)

(1) *Le Pays Mossi*, page 122, *in fine*.

que ce mot viendrait du mot Songhaï « Grounga », qui voudrait dire « incirconcis ». Malheureusement, il appert de recherches faites pour vérifier cette hypothèse, que le mot « Grounga » est inconnu en Songhay. De plus, le mot Gourounga-Gourounsi paraît fort ancien chez les Mossi (qui vivent en contact avec ces populations depuis le XIIe siècle sans doute). Et les Mossi n'ont pas attendu l'arrivée des pillards Zaberma dans le Gourounsi, qui ne s'est produite que dans la seconde moitié du XIXe siècle, pour donner un nom à ces populations. L'hypothèse du lieutenant Marc doit donc être rejetée. M. Delafosse croit que ce mot Gourounga pourrait venir du mot Kourouma (qu'on retrouve revendiqué par les Nioniossé du cercle du Yatenga), ou du mot Gourma (qu'on retrouve dans la région de Fada-N'Gourma, chez les Gourmantché, et, d'une façon plus générale, pour désigner l'intérieur de la boucle du Niger) (1). Ce mot Kourouma ou Gourma aurait donné, par corruption, et par juxtaposition des désinences Mossi qui désignent le singulier et le pluriel : Gourounga ou Gourounsi, mais ce n'est là qu'une hypothèse.

Les Gourounsi sont restés inconnus aux auteurs arabes du moyen-âge, depuis Masoudi et Ibn-Haukal jusqu'à Léon l'Africain (X^e au XVIe siècle). Ces auteurs ne connaissaient que le nord du Soudan, le cours moyen et inférieur du Sénégal, le cours moyen du Niger. Le *Tarikh-el-Fettach* et le *Tarikh-es-Soudan* (XVIIe siècle) n'ignorent pas le Gourma mais ignorent les Gourounsi. De même les voyageurs portugais, hollandais, français, anglais du XVe au XVIIe siècle ne disent mot de nos gens. On connaît le Mossi, mais non cette annexe insignifiante

(1) On sait que la rive droite du Niger est désignée sous le nom de Gourma par les riverains et la rive gauche sous le nom de Haoussa. Cela met tous les pays de la boucle du Niger dans le « Gourma » et tous les pays hors de la boucle du Niger dans le « Haoussa », qu'ils soient à l'ouest, au nord ou à l'est du Niger Il est inutile de faire remarquer que le pays proprement Haoussa ne coïncide pas ou du moins ne coïncide qu'en partie avec l'énorme extension géographique que prend ici le mot Haoussa désignant tous les pays de la rive gauche du Niger à quel que point que l'on se place sur le fleuve et englobant aussi bien le Sénégal ou le Sahara que le Haoussa proprement dit. On ne sait pas d'où proviennent ces expressions. D'autre part, on sait que les mots : « Gourmantché » et « Fada N'Gourma » sont des mots Haoussa pour désigner la population et la place principale du pays Gourma réduit à l'acception de pays « Gourmantché ».

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du Mossi composée de populations sauvages situées au sud de celui-ci. Enfin les voyageurs anglais et français de la fin du XVIIIe siècle et du commencement du XIXe siècle, depuis Mungo-Park jusqu'à Caillié et aux frères Lander, ne les connaissent pas non plus. Ce sont deux Anglais, Clarke (1849) et Koelle (1854), qui les rencontrent enfin pour la première fois sur leur route, au milieu du XIXe siècle, en recueillant le plus possible de vocabulaires nègres en Sierra-Leone. Clarke, dans ses *Spécimens de dialectes, courts vocabulaires de langues et notes sur les pays et coutumes d'Afrique* (Londres, 1849, in-8°), donne des mots Kiansi sous les noms de Nibulu et de Tschamba (prononcer Kiamba). Koelle, dans ses « *Polyglotta africana ou Vocabulaires comparatifs de près de trois cents mots et phrases en plus de cent langues africaines distinctes* » (1854), donne tout un ensemble de vocabulaires Mossi-Gourounsi où dominent les vocabulaires Gourounsi. Il donne du Nounouma sous le nom de Yula (Kialo, Akulo, nom que donnent aux Nounouma les populations du Sud), du Kassouna ou Kasséna (sous le nom de Kasm ou Kasem ; c'est ce dernier nom qui figure dans sa carte), du Sissala ou Gourounsi du Sud sous les noms de Guresa, Koama et Bagbalan, enfin divers autres dialectes Gourounsi sous les noms de Dselana (ou Kielana), Gourma et Kiamba. De plus, il donne des indications géographiques sur la place de ces différents groupes nègres, indications où il y a évidemment de graves erreurs dues aux interlocuteurs de Koelle (ainsi le Gourounsi placé sous le nom de Yulaï, Bagbalan et Kasem, au nord du Mossi), mais où on peut aussi trouver quelques indications exactes, maintenant que le pays est occupé par les Européens (ainsi le Kasem placé au sud-est du Yulaï). Bref Koelle donne, sur les Gourounsi, un ensemble de notions linguistiques qui étaient merveilleuses pour l'époque. Nous renvoyons le lecteur aux Appendices XVI et suivants pour une étude plus approfondie des renseignements donnés par Koelle et aussi par Clarke.

De ces deux auteurs — Clarke et Koelle — qui ont été vraiment les découvreurs de l'existence d'un peuple et d'une langue Gourounsi, il faut sauter à Binger qui parcourut, lui

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premier des Européens, le pays Gourounsi. Il passa par deux fois dans la contrée, en allant de Boromo à Ouagadougou par le pays Nounouma, et en revenant de Ouagadougou à Oual-Oualé (mai à août 1888), et il donne des renseignements précieux de toutes sortes sur ces populations assez peu civilisées et sur l'établissement qu'étaient en train d'y faire les Songhaï Zaberma. Il faut lire tout le récit de son voyage, depuis Boromo jusqu'à Banéma, village mossi de Boukary-Naba (26 mai au 8 juin 1888, tome Ier, pages 427 à 448), et depuis ce même Banéma, quand il revient de Ouagadougou, jusqu'à Oual-Oualé (22 juillet au 10 août 1888, pages 476 à 506 du tome Ier et pages 1 à 37 du tome II). Binger termine ces notes de voyage chez les Gourounsi par un tableau général du Gourounsi (pages 34 à 37 du tome II), où certaines erreurs se mêlent forcément à des renseignements intéressants et précieux. Voici comment Binger classe les différentes tribus Gourounsi :

« La région nord-ouest du Gourounsi est habitée, dit-il, par un peuple qui nous a paru avoir beaucoup d'analogie avec les Niéniégué (1). Dans le Dafina, on le nomme Nonouma, mais, parmi les autres Gouroungа et dans le Mossi, on désigne les Nonouma par un autre nom qui nous a échappé. A propos de notre passage de Boromo à Bouganiéna, nous avons eu l'occasion de décrire la façon dont les Nonouma s'excisent les joues et se tatouent, nous n'y reviendrons pas dans ce chapitre. Leurs principaux centres sont : Baporo, Poura et Ladio.

A côté des Nonouma, mais plus à l'Est, vers Dallou, Sapouy, Baouér'a et Pouna et jusque vers le Kipirsi, habite une autre fraction des Gouroungа, celle des Youlsi, ou Tiollé. La majeure partie de cette fraction n'a pas de marques ni de tatouages, quelques-unes de leurs familles ont cependant les deux marques caractéristiques du Mossi (l'entaille partant de chaque côté du nez pour venir mourir à la hauteur de la deuxième molaire, et deux entailles partant de chaque côté de la bouche

(1) A comparer l'opinion récente de M. Chéron (*Revue d'Ethnographie et des Traditions populaires*, 3e trimestre 1923, page 241), qui classe les Niénégué parmi les populations Gourounsi et les apparente aux Lilié. Il faut dire cependant que les Niénégué ont une langue nettement Bobo.

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pour venir mourir près de l'oreille ; ces entailles sont semblables à celles des Mandé-Dyoula, mais au nombre de deux entailles seulement sur chaque joue).

A l'ouest des Youlsi et entre eux et les Kassanga de Sati, habite la fraction des Talensi ; ils se distinguent de leurs voisins par un tatouage bien original. Sur chaque joue, à l'aide de toutes petites incisions disposées sur trois rangées parallèles, ils forment un Z majuscule vu à l'envers (1).

Plus au sud et à l'ouest de Oual-Oualé habite la fraction des Tiansi, ou Boulsi, qui se tatouent de trois façons différentes. Ils offrent cela de singulier que deux des tatouages ont la particularité suivante, que je n'avais pas remarquée : les yeux eux-mêmes sont environnés de six petites entailles.

Encore plus au Sud, on trouve les Nakaransi ; ils se distinguent des autres Gourounga par une incision qui part de la naissance des cheveux, fend le front et le nez en deux parties égales. Perpendiculairement à cette incision longitudinale, il en part, chez certains types, une de chaque côté du nez, ou bien encore chez les uns à droite du nez, chez les autres à gauche.

Entre les Tiansi et les Nakaransi et la Volta occidentale habitent les Lama, ou Lakhama, ou Nakhalakha, Nokhorissé, ou encore Nokhodossi. Ces tribus sont rarement tatouées. J'ai cependant vu quelques sujets ayant de chaque côté de la bouche deux incisions semblables à celles des Mandé-Dioula de Kong, mais moins longues.

De l'autre côté du fleuve, ils ont pour voisins les Dagari et Dagabakha, qui me paraissent être un seul et même peuple. J'en ai vu à plusieurs reprises : ils ne sont point tatoués. On rencontre chez eux des couleurs de peau très foncées, approchant du noir des Wolof ; ils se prolongent jusque sur la rive gauche de la Volta occidentale et forment une importante colonie, qui, mélangée avec des Mandé-Dioula, forme le fond de la population de Oua.

(1) Pour bien comprendre ce que Binger veut dire ici, il faut se reporter à son tableau des tatouages Gourounsi, page 409 de son tome II. (Voir le tatouage Talensi).

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Les Oulé, autre fraction des Gourounga, semblent être apparentés aux Lakhama ; ils habitent au nord des Dagari et Dagabakha, et entre leur territoire et celui des Bougouri. Les gens du Dafina classent les Bougouri dans la famille des Niéniégué et des Nonouma. » (*Op. cit.*, tome II, pages 35 et 36.)

Tel est le tableau que Binger donne de l'ensemble des populations Gourounsi (1).

Comme on le voit, notre auteur distingue parmi les Gourounsi :

1° Les Nounouma.

2° Les Youlsi, ou Tiollé, qui sont probablement les Lélésé, ou Lilsi du Kipirsi. Binger les identifie aux Kassanga, c'est-à-dire aux Kassouna, qu'il place à Sati d'après un renseignement faux. Il peut se faire qu'il y ait eu à Sati, à cette époque, et même qu'il y ait encore maintenant à Sati un groupe Kassouna, mais Sati est dans la zone Sissala et la masse des Kassouna habite, assez loin de là (au Nord-Est et à l'Est), un territoire étendu et important — puisqu'ils sont 30.000 — et non pas un simple village. Quant à l'identification des Youlsi, ou Tiollé, avec les Kassouna, ou Kassanga, elle reste un problème à résoudre dont la solution doit, sans doute, être cherchée dans le fait que les Gourounsi du Nord (Lélésé, Nounouma et Kassouna) sont très proches les uns des autres et presque identiques pour la langue, les mœurs et les traditions (2). Cependant, comme Lélésé (ou Lilsé, ou Youlsé, ou Tiollé), Nounouma et Kassouna portent trois noms différents et désignent des populations voisines et se touchant mais ne

(1) Avant de donner ce tableau, Binger dit : « Mon hôte El-Hadi Touré (El-Hadi veut dire dimanche) me fit faire connaissance avec trois jeunes gens de ses amis nommés Alfa Boukary Touré, Tahéri Touré et Kalifa Sissé. Les deux premiers sont Dagomba ; l'autre, d'origine mandé, est fixé ici depuis une vingtaine d'années. Après leur avoir fait quelques cadeaux et rendu de nombreuses visites, nous sommes arrivés à être d'excellents amis. C'est grâce à leur complaisance et en échange de renseignements sur l'Europe et les coutumes européennes, que j'ai obtenu quelques renseignements sur le Gourounsi, le Mampoursi et le Dagomba. » (*Op. cit.*, tome II, page 34).

(2) « Les Lilsé, dit le lieutenant Marc (*op. cit.*, pages 122 et 123), ne diffèrent en rien des Nounouma. Ils ont même langue, mêmes mœurs, mêmes traditions. Ils ne sont qu'une branche de la famille des Nounouma, et nous ne pensons pas qu'il y ait lieu de les en séparer. »

3: Tauxier FA28 Mossi

se confondant ni au point de vue géographique, ni au point de vue du nom, nous les tiendrons nous-mêmes pour trois branches de Gourounsi, très voisines il est vrai, et formant un bloc que l'on peut opposer aux Gourounsi du Sud.

3° Les Talensi, qui sont difficiles à identifier. Le plus probable est qu'ils sont un sous-groupe Kassouna, ou peut-être un sous-groupe plus général des Gourounsi du Nord. Je dois dire, en effet, que mes informateurs de Bondoukou (Gourounsi musulmanisés, anciens captifs de guerre gourounsi vendus dans le pays par les Zaberma) m'ont signalé un groupe Gourounsi dit « Taoulensé » dans le Kipirsi. Ce sont probablement les Talensi de Binger.

4° Les Tiansi, ou Boulsi. Ceux-ci sont bien connus : ce sont des Gourounsi du Sud, de Gold-Coast, habitant auprès de la Volta Blanche, entre la Volta Blanche et les Larhama à l'Ouest et Oual-Oualé à l'Est. Nous aurons l'occasion de revenir sur eux sous le nom de Kiansi.

5° Les Nakaransi. Ceux-ci, que Binger place *au sud des Kiansi*, sont-ils les Nankana? S'ils le sont, il y a une forte erreur de position, semble-t-il, commise par Binger ou par ses interlocuteurs, car les Nankana, groupe croisé, à ce qu'on peut penser, de Boura et de Mossi (ou Dagomba), qui habite à cheval sur le territoire français et sur le territoire anglais (11e degré de latitude Nord) est plus au Nord que les Kiansi. Il est vrai que les Nankana se continuent au Sud par les Boura, mais ceux-ci, que les cartes placent au-dessus du coude de la Volta Blanche, à l'ouest de la basse Volta Rouge, semblent bien encore être au nord des Kiansi. Peut-être envoient-ils quelques ramifications encore plus bas, dans la direction de Liarba et de Daboya, ce qui leur permettrait d'avoir quelques gens placés plus au Sud que les Kiansi et ce qui expliquerait l'affirmation de Binger, basée sur la notation d'un de ses interlocuteurs qui aurait rencontré « les Nakaransi » (ou quelques Nakaransi) dans une région qu'il situait plus au Sud que les Kiansi (plus ou moins exactement, sans doute).

6° Les Lama, ou Lakhama, qui sont les Larhama dont j'ai pris un vocabulaire qu'on trouvera plus loin, groupe Gou-

3: Tauxier FA28 Mossi

rounsi du Sud, habitant en Gold-Coast, entre Oua, à l'Ouest, et les Tiansi, ou Kiansi, à l'Est.

Cela forme six groupes Gourounsi, car il faut mettre de côté les Dagari qui, linguistiquement parlant, appartiennent au groupe Mossi et non au groupe Gourounsi, comme les Nankana. Il est vrai que, par leur mode d'habitation, ils appartiennent au groupe Gourounsi ou au groupe Lobi et, par leur sauvagerie anarchique, au groupe Lobi. De même, il faut écarter les Oulé, qui sont sans doute les Dagari-Oulé, et les Bougouri, ou Pougouli, groupe que l'on rattache généralement au groupe Lobi.

Comme on le voit, l'esquisse de nomenclature des peuplades Gourounsi tracée par Binger a la vigueur et la fermeté de touche qui sont une des caractéristiques du célèbre voyageur. De plus cette nomenclature, malgré ses imperfections, est poussée à un point de détail que l'on ne retrouvera plus que bien longtemps après lui. Le principal reproche qu'on puisse lui faire est de ne pas avoir nommé les Sissala, ou Hisala. En fait, Binger a énuméré les Lilsé (Youlsi, ou Tiollé), les Nounouma, les Kassouna (Kassanga), les Lakhama, les Kiansi. Un voyageur de passage ne pouvait faire mieux et porter la précision plus loin qu'il ne l'a fait.

Le lieutenant Voulet, dans sa conférence de 1897, à la Société de géographie de Lille, ne donne aucun renseignement sur les différentes peuplades Gourounsi.

En 1904, M. Delafosse, dans ses *Vocabulaires comparatifs*, reprenait la question Gourounsi au point de vue linguistique ou, plus exactement, dans son chapitre VII (Langues Mossi et Gourounsi, pages 218 et suivantes), traçait un tableau général du groupe Mossi-Gourounsi.

Ce tableau montre admirablement par quels tâtonnements on est souvent obligé de passer en ces matières ouest-africaines avant d'arriver à des données à peu près définitives (?).

M. Delafosse divise sa famille Mossi-Gourounsi en cinq groupes :

Le premier, c'est le groupe Mossi : M. Delafosse y place les Gourma (ou Gourmantché), les Mossi, les Dagari, les Dagari-

Oulé, les Birifon, les Gbanian, les Dagomba, les Samo, les Kipirsi et les Nounouma.

Evidemment, les Kipirsi et les Nounouma n'étaient pas à leur place dans ce groupe, pas plus du reste que les Samo.

Le deuxième, c'est le groupe Gourounsi : il se compose des Gourounsi, des Siti, des Dégha — peut-être, dit M. Delafosse, des Bariba, Kauri, Mampoursi, Kiansi, Boussansé et Kyalo, ou Akyulo.

Ce groupe contient, à juste raison, Siti, Dégha, Kia si, Akyulo (qui sont, en réalité, des Nonnouma) (1), mais il a en trop Boussansé, Kauri, Mampoursi et, en moins, Kipirsi et Nounouma, qui devraient être dans ce groupe au lieu d'être dans le groupe précédent.

Le troisième groupe est le groupe Lobi : M. Delafosse y range les Lobi proprement dits, les Pougouli ou Bougouri, les Dian, les Gan et — peut-être — les Myorou, les Tiéfo, les Dorhosié et les Karaboro (2).

Le quatrième groupe est celui des Bobo, le cinquième celui des Koulango. Ce dernier ne semble pas appartenir, en réalité, à la famille générale Mossi-Gourounsi ou Voltaïque.

Bref ce classement était peu satisfaisant. En particulier,

(1) Le mot Kyalo ou Akyulo est une expression qu'il faut faire disparaître de la nomenclature des populations Gourounsi. Je me suis, en effet, rendu compte, à Boudoukou (en 1919), que les gens de Boudoukou (Dyoula, Ahron, Koulango) ont trois noms pour désigner les Gourounsi : ils appellent les Gourounsi du Nord (Léléré, Nounouma, Kassouna, etc.) « Akulo », et ils appellent les Gourounsi du Sud-Ouest (Siessala, Tondioulé, Larhama) « Gouressi » (ce qui est le mot Mossi quelque peu défiguré). Ils connaissent, de plus, les Kyansi et les mettent à part des deux groupes précédents. Cela fait donc trois groupes : Gourounsi du Nord (Akulo), Gourounsi du Sud-Ouest (Gouressi) et, enfin, Gourounsi du Sud-Est (Kyansi). Il ne faut voir du reste dans cela aucune systématisation, aucune classification voulue. Le mot « Akulo » est sans doute d'origine Abron ou Agni-Achanti. Le mot « Gouressi » est le mot Mossi recueilli par les Dyoula et quelque peu défiguré. En fait, ces deux noms (Akulo et Gouressi) ont dû être synonymes à l'origine, pour les gens de Bondoukou, l'un employé par les Abron et Agni, l'autre par les Dyoula, pour désigner chacun *la totalité des Gourounsi*, puis, à force de les employer dans ce sens total et vague, on aura fini par accrocher plus particulièrement telle ou telle partie du Gourounsi à l'un de ces deux noms et telle ou telle autre partie à l'autre. En tout cas il faut rayer les Akulo, ou Akyulo, ou Kyalo de la terminologie des tribus Gourounsi : M. Delafosse place, page 234 de ses *Vocabulaires comparatifs*, des « Akyulo » près de Léo. Ce sont tout simplement des Nounouma, car ce sont des Nounouma qui habitent Léo (peut-être un clan des Nounouma qui s'appelle les Lé, d'où le nom de Léo).

(2) Les Karaboro sont, en réalité, des Sénoufo quelque peu métissés par les Gouin.

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pour les Gourounsi, il séparait des peuplades qui étaient à mettre ensemble et, d'autre part, introduisait des Gourounsi fictifs (Gouressi) comme tribu particulière du Gourounsi et des Akyulo non moins inexistants.

A la même époque, le Dr Ruelle (1904), dans son travail anthropologique sur le IIe Territoire militaire du Sud, distinguait des Gourounsi, mis d'un côté, des Nounouma (ou Nourma) mis de l'autre et placés dans le groupe Bobo. Bref, on tâtonnait encore d'une façon marquée en 1904 et, sous bien des rapports, on était plus loin de la vérité qu'au temps de Binger.

En 1909, le lieutenant Marc, dans une esquisse sur les Gourounsi (pages 122 à 127 de son *Pays Mossi*), distinguait les Lilsé ou Youlsé du Kipirsi, les Nounouma et les Sissala. Il faisait remarquer, comme nous l'avons vu plus haut, que les Youlsé, ou Lilsé, ne différaient en rien des Nounouma, et que la différence était entre les Gourounsi du Nord et les Sissala ou Gourounsi du Sud (pages 122, 128). Je crois bien que c'est le lieutenant Marc qui a prononcé le premier le nom des Sissala.

En 1912, dans son *Haut-Sénégal-Niger*, M. Delafosse avait à revenir sur la question du groupe Mossi-Gourounsi en général et du sous-groupe Gourounsi. Il applique au groupe Mossi-Gourounsi la qualification de famille Voltaïque et distingue dans cette famille :

1° Le groupe Tombo, divisé en Tombo proprement dits, Dogom et Déforo ;

2° Le groupe Mossi, divisé en Mossi, Yansi, Gourmantché, Nankana, Dagari, Birifo ;

3° Le groupe Gourounsi, divisé en Nioniossé, Nounouma, Sissala et Boussansé ;

4° Le groupe Bobo, divisé en Kian, Tara, Boua et Niénigué ;

5° Le groupe Lobi, divisé en Lobi, Dian, Pougouli et Gan ;

6° Le groupe Koulango, divisé en Lorho et Koulango ;

7° Le groupe Bariba, divisé en Bariba et Soumba.

Cette nouvelle classification constituait un grand progrès sur celle de 1904, mais elle était encore un peu simpliste pour le groupe Gourounsi, plus compliqué et plus riche en réalité

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que ne le laissait transparaître cette nomenclature quelque peu sommaire. De plus les Boussansé ne font pas partie, comme nous le verrons plus loin, du groupe Gourounsi.

En même temps que paraissait le *Haut-Sénégal-Niger* de M. Delafosse, en 1912, l'auteur de ces lignes publiait son *Noir du Soudan, Pays Mossi et Gourounsi*, fruit d'un séjour de deux ans dans ces deux derniers pays (1909-1910).

Il y divisait les Gourounsi en quatre groupes principaux :

1° Nounouma (avec un sous-groupe appelé Menkiéra) ;

2° Kassouna (divisé en deux sous-groupes : Kassouna-Boura et Kassouna-Fra) ;

3° Sissala ;

4° Boura (en territoire anglais).

Cette classification n'était pas complète en ce qu'elle ne nommait pas les Kipirsi (sur lesquels j'avais pourtant recueilli des notes) et les populations Gourounsi de Gold-Coast (Larhama, Kiansi, etc.).

On ne peut pas tirer de classification des Gourounsi de l'ouvrage de Migeod sur les *Langages de l'Ouest-Africain* (1911-1913), L'auteur se contente de donner trois numérations, « Isala », « Ajolo », et indéterminée, et deux vocabulaires, « Isala » et « Ajolo ». La numération « Isala » (1) ressemble plus à du Bobo qu'à du Gourounsi, ou plutôt semble un mélange de Bobo et de Sissala où l'élément Bobo l'emporterait plutôt. Quant à « l'Ajolo », c'est sans doute de l'Akulo, c'est-à-dire du Nounouma pur.

Enfin, tout récemment, M. Delafosse, dans son introduction à la *Grammaire de la langue Kasséna ou Kasséné*, du Dr Cremer (2), divise les Gourounsi, en se plaçant du reste à un point de vue tout linguistique, en huit groupes, qui sont :

1° Les Nounouma ;

2° Les Fra ;

3° Les Kaséna (ou Kassouna) ;

(1) Tome I, page 144.

(2) Dr Jean Cremer. *Matériaux d'ethnographie et de linguistique soudanaises*, tome. II *Grammaire de la langue Kasséna ou Kasséné parlée au pays des Gourounsi*. Avec une introduction et des notes de M. Maurice Delafosse. Opuscule de 64 pages, chez Geuthner, Paris, 1924.

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4° Les Sissala (ou Sissala, ou Issala);
5° Les Kourouma (ou Nioniossé, ou Foulsé);
6° Les Ko;
7° Les Siti;
8° Les Dégha (ou Diamou) (1).

Actuellement, en tenant compte de toutes ces données, et avec les renseignements que j'ai recueillis à Bondoukou, en 1919, je crois qu'il est possible de donner un tableau plus complet des populations Gouroumsi qu'on ne l'a fait jusqu'à présent. Essayons donc cette classification qui n'est, je le répète, nullement définitive, mais qui aura l'avantage de mettre la question au point exact de nos connaissances actuelles.

Nous distinguerons, d'abord, parmi les Gourounsi, deux grands groupes : les Gourounsi proprement dits (Kipirsi, Noumouma, Kassouna, Sissala, etc., etc.), puis leurs parents un peu plus éloignés (Nioniossé, Ko, Siti, Dégha, etc.).

Dans le premier groupe, nous placerons :

1° Les « Kipirsi », ou habitant du Kipirsi, qui sont des Gourounsi. Kipirsi est le pluriel du mot mossi Kipirga et désigne, pour les Mossi, les habitants de cette contrée quelque peu montagneuse située dans l'ouest de la région de Ouagadougou, entre le village de Conkizitenga (en gros) et la Volta Noire. On peut se demander d'où vient ce mot Kipirga, et il ne serait pas impossible que ce soit le mot mossi « Kiperga », qui veut dire piment. Les Mossi auraient désigné de ce nom, ou plutôt de ce surnom, les Gourounsi du Kipirsi à cause de leurs mœurs sauvages, pillardes et anarchistes. De même, par exemple, la tribu Baoulé des Sa s'appelle les « Gingembre » ou « les Graines de gingembre », parce que, quand ils palabrent, ils en arrivent tout de suite aux coups (2). Quoi qu'il en soit de ce nom ou de ce surnom, il faut distinguer, parmi les Kipirsi eux-mêmes, trois éléments : 1° les Gourounmossi, qui habitent l'est de ce

(1) Les Fra sont ce groupe Gourounsi que j'ai désigné dans mon *Noir du Soudan* (1912), sous le nom de Kassouna-Fra. Par conséquent, les Kaséna ou Kassouna de M. Delafosse ne correspondent qu'à mes Kassouna-Boura, le groupe le plus important du reste des deux que j'avais réunis sous la dénomination générale de Kassouna.

(2) Voir M. Delafosse : *Essai de manuel de la langue Agni*, page 163.

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pays. Ils ont subi l'influence des Mossi et aussi la pénétration des cultivateurs Mossi eux-mêmes et sont en définitive, suivant les endroits, soit des Gourounsi mossisés, soit même des Gourounsi mélangés d'éléments Mossi. Nous leur consacrons, plus loin, une notice qu'on trouvera à l'Appendice XIII ; 2° les Lélésé, ou Lilsé (au singulier Lélégn, ou Lilga), qui habitent dans la région de Réo et qui sont les Youlsi ou Tiollé de Binger ; 3° quelques Nounouma du Nord qui habitent surtout le sud et l'ouest du Kipirsi. Comme on le voit, la population du Kipirsi n'est pas complètement une, ou, du moins, si elle est une en son fonds fondamental, en ce qu'elle se compose de Gourounsi, elle n'est plus une, en ce qu'elle se compose de diverses branches Gourounsi (Gourounmossi, Lélésé, Nounouma, etc.).

Il serait à souhaiter qu'une étude sérieuse du Kipirsi fut effectuée tant au point de vue ethnographique et sociologique qu'au point de vue linguistique, mais cette étude n'a pas encore été tentée.

2° Les Nounouma (appelés encore Nonouma, Nourouma, ou Nourma : on peut écrire leur nom de toutes ces façons). Comme nous venons de le voir, il y a des Nounouma dans le sud du Kipirsi. Ce sont les Nounouma du Nord-Ouest. Il y a aussi des Nounouma dans la Résidence de Boromo, à l'ouest de la Volta Noire. Ce sont les Nounouma de l'Ouest. Enfin la plus grande partie des Nounouma se trouve dans l'ouest de la Résidence de Léo, du Nord au Sud (ce sont, comparativement aux précédents, les Nounouma du Sud-Est).

M. Delafosse, dans son *Haut-Sénégal-Niger* (tome Ier, page 155), en compte 78.000 en tout, soit 58.000 dans la Résidence de Léo et 15.000 dans le Cercle de Koury (devenu, depuis, Cercle de Dédougou), d'où dépend la Résidence de Boromo où ils habitent, mais ces chiffres ne peuvent être tenus pour exacts, car : 1° les 58.000 Nounouma qui sont comptés pour la Résidence de Léo comprennent Nounouma et Kassouna mélangés et doivent, d'après les chiffres que j'ai pris sur place, en 1909-1910, être ramenés à 27.000 ; 2° parce que les Nounouma du Kipirsi, en revanche, ne sont pas comptés ou, plus

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exactement, sont englobés parmi les Mossi dans les statistiques que M. Delafosse a eues à sa disposition ; 3° parce que les Nounouma de Boromo sont comptés pour 15.000, alors que, comme nous aurons l'occasion de le voir tout à l'heure, ils ne sont que 5.000, les 10.000 autres étant des Ko, population probablement Gourounsi, mais non Nounouma, que des statistiques trop expéditives ont englobée parmi les Nounouma de Boromo.

En fait il y a donc 27.000 Nounouma dans la Résidence de Léo, 5.000 Nounouma dans la Résidence de Boromo (1) et un nombre de Nounouma difficile à évaluer dans le Kipirsi.

Ajoutons que, parmi les Nounouma, il faut distinguer une sous-branche appelée Menkiéra à laquelle j'ai consacré un chapitre à part dans mon *Noir du Soudan, Pays Mossi et Gourounsi* (1912). La famille, en effet, semble y présenter certains détails d'intégration plus accentués que chez le reste des Nounouma.

3° Les Fra, ou Kassouna-Fra. J'ai englobé ce groupe, dans mon *Noir du Soudan* (1912), suivant en cela les renseignements qui m'étaient donnés par les indigènes, parmi les Kassouna en général, sous le nom de Kassouna-Fra, tout en constatant entre eux et les Kassouna-Boura certaines différences de mœurs : moins de bétail, famille plus intégrée, aspect sociologique les rapprochant plus des Nounouma que des Kassouna-Boura, etc. Actuellement, et en attendant que leurs rapports ethniques avec les Kassouna-Boura soient définitivement établis, j'en fais une branche Gourounsi à part pour ne rien préjuger des résultats des recherches qui pourront avoir lieu.

4° Les Kassouna proprement dits (appelés encore Kasm (2), Kasséna, ou Kassené, ou Kaséné, ou Kasem (3), Kassouma ou Kassanga). D'après M. Delafosse (4), les Mossi les appelleraient, lorsqu'ils veulent les distinguer des autres Gourounsi, Kâsomsé, au pluriel, Kâsomga, au singulier, ce qui donne une racine Kâsom. D'après le même, « il résulte de ce qu'expose le

(1) Ce sont là des chiffres de 1910, que je ne donne que parce que des évaluations plus récentes font défaut.
(2) Par Koelle.
(3) Par le Dr Cremer.
(4) *Grammaire de la langue Kasséna ou Kassené*. Introduction, page III.

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Dr Cremer, au sujet des noms de la cinquième classe (page 13), que l'on doit dire un Kaséné ou Kasem et des Kâsena » (1). Ils sont notés par Binger sous le nom de Kassanga et identifiés par lui aux Youlsi ou Tiollé du Kipirsi. Le même auteur les place à Sati, où, sans doute, on lui en aura signalé un groupe. Les Kassouna, en réalité, forment une puissante population située à l'est des Nounouma et ayant pour centre principal le gros village de Pô. Il y en a aussi dans la Gold-Coast, dans le district de Navaro. Laissant de côté les Kassouna-Fra, ou Fra, qui ne sont peut-être pas de vrais Kassouna (voir ce que je viens de dire plus haut au sujet de ces derniers), on comptait 22.000 Kassouna-Boura, en 1910, dans la Résidence de Léo, c'est-à-dire en territoire français. Actuellement, ils sont, sans doute, un peu plus nombreux (2).

5° Les Sissala, ou mieux, Hissala ou Hisala, *avec un h aspiré*. C'est ce qui explique que, dans les cercles administratifs français, on ait pris l'habitude d'orthographier leur nom avec un s : Sissala. Mais, en réalité, ils disent eux-mêmes Hissala ou Hisala, c'est ainsi que leur nom devrait être prononcé et écrit. Les Anglais écrivent : Isala (3). Ils habitent au sud-ouest des Nounouma, à l'ouest de Léo, dans la partie de la Résidence de Léo qui va en gros de Léo à la Volta Noire. Mais ils ne touchent pas, à l'Est, à Léo même, ni, à l'Ouest, à la Volta Noire. Du côté de cette grande rivière, ils sont séparés d'elle par un groupe de 4.000 Dagari (chiffres de 1910) qui tiennent l'extrême coin sud-ouest de la Résidence de Léo et ont pour village principal Ouassa. En revanche les Sissala se prolongent dans le Sud en Gold-Coast, à une profondeur que nous ne pouvons déterminer exactement.

Au point de vue sociologique, l'on trouve, chez les Sissala,

(1) *Ibidem*, page III.

(2) M. Delafosse dit (*Ibidem*, page I) qu'il y a 38.000 Kassouna à l'heure actuelle d'après des renseignements fournis par M. Hesling, lieutenant-gouverneur de la Haute-Volta, et M. Boussae, chef de subdivision de Léo, mais ce chiffre de 38.000 (cantons de Koumbili, Guiara, Sia, d'une part, et Kampala, Pô, Tiébélé, de l'autre), semble s'appliquer au total des Kassouna-Fra et des Kassouna-Boura qui étaient 30.000 en 1910. Il faudrait compter approximativement, à l'heure actuelle, 28.000 Kassouna-Boura et 10.000 Kassouna-Fra, soit en tout 38.000.

(3) Ainsi Migeod, *op. cit.*, page 144.

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une influence matriarcale assez légère, du reste, mais qui fait d'eux des communautaires teintés de matriarcalisme, ce qui la différencie nettement des Lélésé, des Nounouma et des Kassouna qui sont, eux, des communautaires patriarcaux plus ou moins intégrés.

M. Delafosse (*op. cit.*, p. 155) compte 7.000 Sissala en territoire français. D'après des renseignements pris sur place, j'en comptais 5.000 à la même époque pour ce territoire (Résidence de Léo). La différence est insignifiante.

Au point de vue linguistique, le dialecte Sissala est nettement distinct du dialecte Nounouma. « Ils paraissent, dit le lieutenant Marc en parlant des Sissala, par leurs coutumes, être assez proches parents des Nounouma, mais leur langue est assez différente pour qu'un Sissala et un Nounouma ne puissent se comprendre » (1). En fait un problème se pose au sujet de la langue Sissala. On verra plus loin, en lisant les vocabulaires et fragments de vocabulaires (voir surtout l'Appendice VI), qu'il semble y avoir deux dialectes bien distincts chez les Sissala. Quelle est la vraie langue Sissala? C'est ce que nous ne pouvons dire dans l'état de nos renseignements actuels.

6° Les Larhama. Ces derniers, qui habitent dans le nord de la Gold-Coast, au sud des Sissala, sont certainement le groupe que Binger, dans son tableau général des tribus Gourounsi (2), désigne sous le nom de « Lama, ou Lakhama, ou Nakhalakha, ou Nokhorissé, ou encore Nokhodossi ». C'est un groupe Gourounsi dont il faut rapprocher les Tondioulé dont j'ai pris un vocabulaire que l'on parcourra plus loin. Les deux vocabulaires Larhama et Tondioulé sont, pour ainsi dire, identiques et, par conséquent, nous pouvons penser que les Tondioulé sont une sous-branche des Larhama. Quant à savoir quel rapport ces Gourounsi du Sud soutiennent avec les Sissala, qui sont également des Gouroumsi du Sud, cette question ne pourra être tranchée que quand la langue Sissala sera parfai-

(1) *Op. cit.*, page 123.

(2) Ouvrage cité, tome II, page 86. Voir aussi la planche des tatouages Gourounsi, tome II, page 400.

3: Tauxier FA28 Mossi

tement connue et cela ne pourra être fait que quand on en aura plusieurs vocabulaires complets, à cause de la dualité linguistique qui existe actuellement dans les numérations qu'on possède du Sissala.

7° Les Kiansi ou Kyansi (1), de leur vrai nom Kanguia, ou Kandia (au pluriel Kandiarasi ou Kanguiarasi), race Gourounsi très primitive, habitent à l'ouest de Oual-Oualé, en Gold-Coast, auprès de la Volta Blanche. Ils sont donc situés entre les Larhama, à l'ouest et Oual-Oualé à l'Est. Bingêr le nomme Tiansi ou Boulsi. Les Boulsi sont, sans doute, une fraction des Kiansi, peut-être les habitants d'un village important du pays. De même les Tiapalasi ou Kiapalasi sont, ou quelque fraction des Kiansi, ou les Kiansi eux-mêmes dont le nom se trouve prononcé un peu autrement.

Nous limiterons ici la liste des tribus Gourounsi proprement dites (2). Mais à ces populations proprement Gourounsi, il faut joindre, d'une façon un peu plus générale :

1° Les Nioniossé ou Foulsé, anciens habitants du Mossi, frères de race des Gourounsi. Il y a une ressemblance frappante, du reste, entre le mot Youlsé (ou Lilsé, ou Lélésé) et le mot Foulsé. La langue Foulsé, dont j'ai donné un vocabulaire

(1) Le mot Kiansi, ou Kyansi, ou Tiansi est probablement le nom que les Dagomba leur ont donné (au singulier Kiamba, ou Kyamba, ou Tiamba, au pluriel Kiansi, ou Kyansi, ou Tiansi). C'est sous le nom de Kiansi qu'on les connaît à Bondoukou et dans les environs, où il y en a beaucoup actuellement, anciens esclaves vendus par les Zaberma dans la région et devenus aujourd'hui de parfaits Dyoula à ne regarder que l'extérieur, l'habillement, le langage, le musulmanisme, etc.

(2) La question se pose de savoir s'il ne faudrait pas joindre à cette liste d'autres populations : ainsi les « Tampoulouma », qui semblent une population Gourounsi située au sud des Larhama et au sud-ouest des Kyansi. D'après des renseignements que l'on m'a donnés à Bondoukou, il faudrait traverser le pays des Tampoulouma pour aller de Bondoukou chez les Kiansi. Je n'ai pas d'autres renseignements sur ces Gourounsi (???) de l'extrême-sud qui toucheraient au pays Gondja.

De même, les Boura sont-ils des Gourounsi? D'après la numération de 1 à 10 des Boura que j'ai donnée, page 464 de mon *Noir du Soudan, pays Mossi et Gourounsi*, la langue Boura appartiendrait au groupe des langues Mossi et non pas au groupe des langues Gourounsi. Mais il faudrait avoir davantage sur cette langue pour la classer définitivement dans le groupe Mossi et, par exemple, le Dégha, que M. Delafosse classe dans le groupe Gourounsi, a bien une numération qui le classerait nettement — si nous l'avions seule — dans le groupe Mossi-Dagari. Il faut donc attendre des renseignements plus approfondis sur les Boura pour savoir ce qu'ils sont réellement.

De même les Frafra. Que sont d'abord, au juste, les Frafra? Se confondent-ils

étendu dans mon *Noir du Yatenga* (1917) (1), est une langue Gourounsi au fond (2), quoique la numération en soit empruntée au Mossi ou au groupe Mossi (3). Les Nioniossé ou Foulsé ont continué à vivre à côté et sous la coupe des Mossi conquérants du pays. M. Delafosse, en 1912 (4), en comptait 78.886, se répartissant ainsi :

Cercle de Ouagadougou	34.266
Cercle de Ouahigouya	33.425
Cercle de Koury	10.335
TOTAL	78.386

En réalité, il y en a beaucoup plus dans le cercle de Ouahigouya ou du Yatenga, environ 100.000 (5). Des recherches approfondies dans le cercle de Ouagadougou en augmenteraient sans doute aussi le nombre. En tout cas, l'on peut compter au moins 145.000 Nioniossé ou Foulsé dans le pays Mossi en général. Les Nioniossé sont aussi appelés « Nimsi » (*Monographie de Ouagadougou*), ou « Menessi » par le docteur Ruelle (6). Ces mots : Nimsi, Menessi, ne sont que des façons autres de prononcer (ou plutôt d'entendre et de reproduire) le mot Nioniossé.

2° Les Ko ou Koo. Ceux-ci sont une petite population d'environ 10.000 âmes appartenant à la Résidence de Boromo (cercle de Koury ou Dédougou). Comme j'ai eu l'occasion de

avec les Boura ou forment-ils, comme c'est plus probable, une population distincte mais voisine de ceux-ci? M. Migeod donne, page 145 de son tome Ier, une numération Fra-Fra de 1 à 10, qui classe le Fra-Fra dans le groupe des langues Mossi. Mais les réflexions faites plus haut sur la langue Boura s'appliquent aussi au Fra-Fra. Il faut donc attendre, pour classer définitivement les Fra-Fra en dehors des Gourounsi, des renseignements que nous n'avons pas encore. Les Anglais semblent placer vaguement les Fra-Fra parmi les populations Gourounsi. D'autre part, quel rapport les Fra-Fra soutiennent-ils avec les Kassouna-Fra ou Kassonfra que nous connaissons? Peut-être le même rapport que les Boura de Gold-Coast soutiennent avec les Kassouna-Boura? Toutes ces questions demanderaient à être tranchées définitivement par une enquête approfondie, menée sur place, en territoire français et en territoire anglais, par une personne connaissant à fond la question Gourounsi.

(1) Pages 746 à 782.
(2) D'après M. Delafosse.
(3) *Ibidem*, pages 782, 783.
(4) *Haut-Sénégal-Niger*, page 155.
(5) Voir dans mon *Noir du Yatenga*, pages 665 et 666.
(6) *Op. cit.*, page 675.

3: Tauxier FA28 Mossi

le dire plus haut, ils ont été englobés dans les statistiques utilisées par M. Delafosse (1), dans les Nounouma de la région. En réalité il y a 10.000 Ko et 5.000 Nounouma seulement dans la Résidence de Boromo, d'après les statistiques mêmes de la Résidence (2) que j'ai pu consulter sur place en 1910. Les Ko ou Koo, appelés « Kona » par les Nounouma, « Koko », par les Peuls, sont probablement une population Gourounsi, du moins au point de vue linguistique, comme on peut le conjecturer d'après un court vocabulaire que j'ai pris à mon passage dans le poste de Boromo et que je donne dans la Notice consacrée, plus loin, à cette petite race. Ils disent, d'ailleurs, être venus du pays occupé maintenant par les Nounouma, dans le Nord de la Résidence de Léo. Je donne également, dans la notice qui leur est consacrée, une courte esquisse de leurs mœurs, d'après les notes prises à mon passage dans le poste de Boromo, en février 1909.

3° Les Dégha ou Diammou. Ceux-ci sont une petite population d'environ 800 âmes (3), éclaboussure extrême-sud des Gourounsi, habitant à l'est de Bondoukou, en territoire français et en territoire anglais. Leur langue est, en gros, une langue Gourounsi, sauf pour la numération qui est empruntée au groupe Mossi, sans doute aux Dagari qui habitent non loin des Dégha.

4° Les Siti. Ceux-ci sont une population encore plus petite que les Dégha, puisqu'ils n'habitent plus actuellement que dans un seul village, celui de Vonkoro, situé sur les bords de la Volta Noire (Résidence de Bouna) et qui ne compte que

(1) *Haut-Sénégal-Niger*, tome I, page 155.

(2) Voici cette statistique complète des populations de la résidence de Boromo, en 1910, d'après les derniers recensements effectués à cette époque :

Bobo	17.615	habitants
Ko	10.412	—
Marka	6.900	—
Nounouma	5.000	—
Peul	2.800	—
Mossi	1.600	—
Dagari	1.000	—
TOTAL	45.327	habitants

(3) Du moins dans le cercle de Bondoukou, car il y en a encore quelques-uns en territoire anglais.

3: Tauxier FA28 Mossi

90 habitants. Leur vrai nom serait Kira et ce seraient les Koulango qui les désigneraient sous le nom de Siti (1). La langue Siti offre surtout des ressemblances avec le Gourounsi, excepté pour les noms de nombre où la ressemblance est avec le Dagari. Comme les Dégha, les Siti ont donc été influencés linguistiquement par le groupe Mossi.

Voilà le tableau systématique que l'on peut donner actuellement des populations Gourounsi et des populations qui se rattachent étroitement aux Gourounsi. Je ne doute pas que l'on ne puisse y apporter des remaniements et des compléments quand un homme compétent aura étudié sur place les populations Gourounsi du territoire français et du territoire anglais. Car, justement, le partage des Gourounsi entre Français et Anglais est l'une des causes qui s'oppose à ce qu'ils soient étudiés en entier, complètement et, par conséquent, *bien*. Une étude définitive de cette population demanderait une enquête menée à la fois dans les deux territoires par un homme bien préparé à cette tâche, ce qui est assez difficile à réaliser. Les Pères établis à Navaro seraient sans doute à même, eux qui sont établis à cheval sur le territoire français et sur le territoire anglais, de nous donner cette étude, aidés par les Pères de Réo (Kipirsi) en ce qui concerne les Lélésé et les Gourounsi du Nord. J'ai fait de mon mieux ici pour mettre la question à son point actuel de développement et préparer cette étude définitive (2).

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(1) Voir mon *Noir de Bendoukou*, pages 410 à 415.

(2) Quelques lecteurs, au courant de ces questions, seront peut-être étonnés de ne pas voir figurer ici, parmi le groupe Gourounsi pris au sens large, les Boussansé du sud de Tenkodogo, qui habitent aussi à l'extrême nord-est de la Gold-Coast, vers Sapelinga, et au nord du Togo. Mais les Boussansé, justement, comme on le verra plus loin, parlent une langue Dan-Gouro, ou si l'on veut Mandé-Bou, et cette langue se prolonge encore plus loin, jusque chez les gens de Bousse (Boko de Koelle). Les Boussansé appartiennent donc aux Mandé du Sud et donc aux Mandé en général (linguistiquement parlant), et non à la branche Voltaïque ou Mossi-Gourounsi dont font partie les Gourounsi. (Voir, pour les détails, la notice sur les Boussansé et aussi l'Appendice concernant l'ouvrage de Clarke).

APPENDICE I

Comparaison des langues Agni-Achanti et Voltaïque par le vocabulaire numérique

NOMS DE NOMBRE

Français	*Baoulé*	*Abron*	*Béri*	*Ntà* (Gondja)	*Gbanyé* (Salaga)	*Dagari*	*Dagomba*	*Mossi*
—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1	Kô	Ekon	Eko (ou kako)	Koko	Ouli	Yéni	Yé	Yémeri
2	Nyo	Enyo	Anion	Anyou	Anyou	Ayi	Ayi	Yibou
3	Nsa	Éson	Asa	Asa	Asa	Ata	Ata	Tabo
4	Na	Éna	Ana	Ana	Ana	Anaré	Anahé	Nasé
5	Nou	Énou	Anou	Anou	Anou	Anou	Anou	Nou
6	N'yi	Ensyi	Asié	Asi	Atjé	Ayoué	Ayobou	Ayobé
7	N'so	Ensô	Asounou	Asouno	Atjino	Ayopoué	Apoué	Yopoi
8	Mokué	Moqué	Abourouga	Adoubroua	Abroua	Ani	Ani	Ani
9	Ogoro	Enkounou	Akono	Akounou	Okpana	Awaé	Awéi	Aoué
10	Bourou	Édou	Koudou	Koudou	Koudou	Pié	Piya	Pigo

[p. 56]

APPENDICE II

Vocabulaire Nounouma (1)

NOMS DE NOMBRE

Français	*Nounouma*	*Pris par moi en 1909-1910*	*Autre renseignement* (2)
1	Nodo	Nodo	N'do
2	Bèlè	Bellè	Bèlè
3	Batua	Bato	Bato
4	Banien	Banien	Bana
5	Bènou	Bènou	Bènou
6	Bardo	Bardo	Bardo
7	Barpa	Barpè	Barpè
8	Nana	Nana	Nana
9	Noro	Noko	Nogo
10	Fo[illegible]	Fouga	Fouga

Français	*Nounouma*	*Français*	*Nounouma*
11	Foua-nè-nodo	22	Sapoua-di-bellè
12	Foua-di-bèlè	23	Sapoua-di-batua
13	Foua-di-batua	24	Sapoua-di-bennè
14	Foua-di-bennè	25	Sapoua-di-bennou
15	Foua-di-bennou	26	Sapoua-di-bardo
16	Foua-di-bardo	27	Sapoua-di-barpa
17	Foua-di-barpa	28	Sapoua-di-nana
18	Foua-di-nana	29	Sapoua-di-noro
19	Foua-di-noro	30	Sapoua-nou-foua
20	Sapoua	31	Sapoua-nou-foua-di-nodo
21	Sapoua-m'nodo	32	Sapoua-nou-foua-di-bellè

(1) Ce vocabulaire de 760 mots, ou expressions environ, a été pris, en 1919, à Bondoukou, auprès d'un nommé Vabaraga Ouatara (de son nom Dyoula, de son vrai nom Bamô ou Bamou). Cet homme était du village de Kasso, à trois jours de marche de Léo. Ayant quitté son pays il y a vingt ans, au moment de l'occupation française, il n'y est jamais retourné. Il est devenu, extérieurement parlant, un parfait Dyoula.

(2) Pris en 1919

Français	*Nounouma*
33	Sapoua-nou-foua-di-batua
34	Sapoua-nou-foua-di-bennè
35	Sapoua-nou-foua-di-bènou
36	Sapoua-nou-foua-di-bardo
37	Sapoua-nou-foua-di-barpa
38	Sapoua-nou-foua-di-nana
39	Sapoua-nou-foua-di-noro
40	Sapou-sila
41	Sapou-sila-di-nodo
42	Sapou-sila-di-bellè
43	Sapou-sila-di-batua
44	Sapou-sila-di-banain
45	Sapou-sila-di-bènou
46	Sapou-sila-di-bardo
47	Sapou-sila-di-barpa
48	Sapou-sila-di-nana
49	Sapou-sila-di-noro
50	Finou
51	Finou-di-nodo
52	Finou-di-bellè
53	Finou-di-batua
54	Finou-di-banè
55	Finou-di-bènou
56	Finou-di-bardo
57	Finou-di-barpa
58	Finou-di-nana
59	Finou-di-noro
60	Sapositua
61	Sapositua-di-nodo
62	Sapositua-di-bellè
63	Sapositua-di-batua
64	Sapositua-di-banè
65	Sapositua-di-bènou
66	Sapositua-di-bardo
67	Sapositua-di-barpa
68	Sapositua-di-nana
69	Sapositua-di-noro
70	Sapositua-di-foua
71	Sapositua-di-foua-di-nodo
72	Sapositua-di-foua-di-bellè
73	Sapositua-di-foua-di-batua
74	Sapositua-di-foua-di-banien
75	Sapositua-di-foua-di-bènou
76	Sapositua-di-foua-di-bardo
77	Sapositua-di-foua-di-barpa
78	Sapositua-di-foua-di-nana
79	Sapositua-di-foua-di-nogo
80	Saposinè
81	Saposinè-di-nodo
82	Saposinè-di-bellè
83	Saposinè-di-batua
84	Saposinè-di-banien
85	Saposinè-di-bennou
86	Saposinè-di-bardo
87	Saposinè-di-barpa
88	Saposinè-di-nana
89	Saposiné-di-nogo
90	Saposinè-di-foua
91	Saposinè-di-foua-di-nodo
92	Saposinè-di-foua-di-bellè
93	Saposinè-di-foua-di-batua
94	Saposinè-di-foua-di-banien
95	Saposinè-di-foua-di-bennou
96	Saposinè-di-foua-di-bardo
97	Saposinè-di-foua-di-barpa
98	Saposinè-di-foua-di-nana
99	Saposinè-di-foua-di-noro
100	Bi
200	Bielè (pour Bi-Bellè)
1000	Moro
2000	Moro-bellè

CULTURE

Arachide	Siè	Haricot	Soné (ou sné)
Champ	Kara	Houe	Varo
Coton	Gounou	Igname	Pia
Cotonnier	Gounou-dao (ou gounoudo)	Ignamier	Pia-dao
		Indigo	Garé
Gombo	Pori	Maïs	Pamina
Hache	Doro	Manioc	Pafofoua

Français	*Nounouma*	*Français*	*Nounouma*
Sorgho blanc	Ninnso	Piment	Namouridio
Sorgho rouge	Kada	Pois souterrain	Sié
Millet	Mina	Riz	Moui
Oseille	Bio	Tabac	Sara
Oignon	(Inconnu)	Taro	(Inconnu)
Patate	Nagviri	Tomate	Tambia

ANIMAUX DOMESTIQUES

Ane	Béna	— Chevreau	Bonbio
Bœuf	No (ou Nao)	Chien	Koura (ou Kourou)
— Taureau	Nabia	— Mâle	Kouroubia
— Vache	Nakain	— Femelle	Kouroukain
— Veau	Naobio	Mouton	Pio
Chat	Kélio	— Bélier	Piobia
Cheval	Nésan	— Brebis	Piokain
— Etalon	Nésanbara	— Agneau	Piobio
— Jument	Nésankain	Poulet	Tiro
— Poulain	Nésanbio	— Coq	Tiabia
Chèvre	Bon	— Poule	Tiakain
— Bouc	Bétolo	— Poussin	Tiabio
— Chèvre	Bonkain		

ANIMAUX SAUVAGES

Abeille	N'tué (ou N'tua ou N'tui)	Lièvre	N'zonngo
		Lion	Gaonion (2)
Aigle	Zambou	Magnan	Banikala
Araignée	Nénain	Margouillat	Kilo (ou Killo)
Buffle	Gaondo	Mouche	Nandoua
Biche rayée	Kouon (ou Kouain ou Ourou)	Moustique	Bouna
		Oiseau	N'zinngo
Criquet	Kahira	Papillon	Sissara
Crocodile	Niao	Perdrix	Leuô
Eléphant	Tou	Phacochère	Tô
Escargot	Kokolo	Potamochère	Tésion
Grenouille	Kiari	Pigeon (sauvage)	Kamponi
Hibou	M'vio	Pigeon vert	Kamposonou
Hippopotame	Bouano (1)	Pintade	Sou
Hyène	Bihirou	Poisson	Filé ou Fili
Iule	Demmbakolo	Poisson-chien	Kourofili
Koba	Siga (ou Ksiga)	Porc-épic	Séné (ou Senngué)
Léopard	Kilio	Rat (de Gambie)	Hyé

(1) C'est-à-dire : bœuf de marigot.
(2) C'est-à-dire : propriétaire de la brousse.

Français	*Nounouma*	*Français*	*Nounouma*
Rat (aulacode)	Niani	Singe vert	Kalagatui
Scorpion	Nô	Singe cynocéphale	Kô
Sénégali	N'zammisinnga	Singe noir	Kalazoni
Serpent	Dain	Souris	Totouè
Serpent cracheur	Doudourou	Termite	Kyou
Serpent python	Dibio (ou Dibion)	Termitière	Kyoudyo
Serpent d'eau	Dibiséli	Tortue	Katemmboua
Silure	Kagbamina	Tourterelle	Kampokané
Singe	Kilia (ou Kilio ou Kalà)	Varan (ou iguane)	Boa
		Vautour	Doulou
Singe rouge	Kalasion	Ver (de terre)	Kantinntanwo

FLORE SAUVAGE

Arbre	Dao (ou Do)	Herbe	Gao (1)
Bambou	M'biho (ou Ti-hou)	Karité	Dao (2)
Baobab	Kounou	Karité (beurre de)	Noua
Branche	Dova (ou Doba)	Kola	Ouolo
Brousse	Gao (ou Go)		N'gouré
Champignon	Dyalé	Kolatier	Ouolo-dao
Ecorce	Daovoro	Néré	Seingo
Epine	So	Néré (farine de)	Simô
Feuille	Voro	Palmier à huile	Gouan
Fleur	Pôn		Koura
Fromager	Gou	Racine	Daona
Fruit	Daobiè	Tamarinier	Dao (3)

PARTIES DU CORPS

Barbe	Pain	Dent	Yéli
Bouche	Ni	Derrière	Demm
Boyaux	Loro	Doigt	Guianbiè
Bras	Van (ou N'van)	Dos	Tan
Cervelle	Youkonoua	Épaule	Van (ou Gaignavan)
Cheveux	Koumvi		
Cœur	Kénio (ou Kenndio)	Face	Ya
		Front	Tiri
Corps	Hira	Jambe	Ma
Cou	Bien	Joue	Zépan
Crâne	Nyoutan (ou Youtano)	Langue	Didali
		Larme	Yénya
Cuisse	Ki	Lèvre	Ni

(1) Comme brousse.
(2) Arbre.
(3) Arbre.

Français	*Nounouma*	*Français*	*Nounouma*
Main	Guina	Poitrine	Niouné
Menton	Toni	Pouce	Diéfoubio
Nez	Mi	Salive	Ninia
Nombril	Ouri	Sang	Diana
Œil	Yil	Sein	Yélé
Ongle	Guiéporo	Sueur	Télon
Oreille	N'zi	Tempe	Zébô
Os	Kou	Testicule	Mainkiala
Peau	Hiratano	Vagin	Mani
Pied	Naï	Ventre	Fouo
Poil	Hirakoro		
Poing	Youbili (ou Guibouli)	Verge	Péni

FAMILLE ET VILLAGE

Ancêtre	Kirou	Héritier	Didirou
Canton	Lo	Hôte (qui reçoit)	Diatyo
Case (à toit en terre)	Diyo	Hôte (qui est reçu)	M'véro
		Mari	Kassounoubalé
Célibataire	Bédénou	Mariage	Katarou
Chef	Pyo	Mère	Anou (ou Nou)
Chef de village	Tiéotio	Neveu (fils de sœur)	Anakombio
Chef de famille	Santyo		
Chef de canton	Pyokoualia	Neveu (fils de frère)	Aniombio
Dot	Nétérou		
Enfant	Byo	Noble	Piéobio
Épouse	Kasoungo	Notable	Liritohirina
Femme	Kain	Oncle (frère de père)	Anyéna-niann
Homme	Bara, Baro		
Esclave	Hyo	Oncle (frère de mère)	Anébaï
Esclave de case	Yombyo		
Famille	Ninabya	Pays	Lo
Fille	Bisimakain	Père	Anyna
Fille (jeune fille)	Kabyo	Quartier	Sanntien
Fils	Bisimmbara	Race	Dui
Frère (grand)	Asounou	Toit (plat, en terre)	Dio
Frère (petit)	Nyanou		
Frère (de père)	Nouhio	Toit (en paille)	Gaoudio
Frère (de mère)	Ninabio	Veuve	Kédennou
Garçon	Bisimmbara	Vieillard	Basouna
Grand'père	Anyabè	Village	Tyo
Grand'mère	Aniké	Voisin	Adiokouolia
Gendre	Atemmbè		

Français	*Noumouma*	*Français*	*Nounouma*

NOURRITURE, BOISSON

Bière de mil	Nyousosana	Œuf	Kiali (ou Kialé)
Bière de maïs	Paminasana	Œuf de poule	Kiéroukialé (ou Tirotialé)
Farine	Mou		
Farine de baobab	Kounou-mou	Sauce	N'duè
Graisse	Noua	Sel	Nikouan
Hydromel	Torosana	Soumbara	Kna
Lait	Nahila	Tô	Mié (ou M'bie)
Miel	Toro	Viande	Non (ou Naon)

MOBILIER ET HABILLEMENT

Allumette	Folémi	Javelot	Fi
Arc	Tuin	Lampe (indigène)	Kyanon
Bague (en fer)	Dinngavalé	Lance	Fi (ou Finn)
Bâton	Dabia	Livre	Yérétanou
Boubou	Gannzio	Manche	Dao
Bracelet	Dinnganouhou	Manche (de houe)	Waridao
Criquet	Konngo	Métier (à tisser)	Ganndè
Caisse	Kounndou	Mortier	N'zo
Calebasse	N'zouin	Natte	Sara
Caleçon	Diao	Oreiller	Gammpouri
Canari, pot, vase	Nikana	Pagne	Nahyo (ou nahi-ouon)
Carquois	Kienndyo		
Cauri	Sibia	Pagne (de femme)	Kainganou
Chaîne	Lourou	Pilon	N'zoleyo
Chaise	Dyo	Pipe	N'zoua
Charbon de bois	Kassinmini	Pirogue	Bourou
Collier (en verroterie)	Biennzôn	Poignard	N'zanou
		Rasoir	Nyifina
Corbeille	Fihyo	Sabre	Sila
Corde, ficelle	Mouana	Sandale	Natoura
Couteau	Sio	Sandale (pour femme)	Kain-natoura
Cravache	Dammpéré	— Chausson	Natourollya
Culotte	Namann	Savon	Safini
Fagot	Davoué	Selle	Nisaindo
Filet (de pêche)	Gagnon	Tambour (tam-tam)	Goulou
Panier (de pêche)	Nzi		Goulounfaro
Flèche	Tyen	Tambour (de chef)	Gourègourè
Flûte	Houo		
Fourreau, gaine	Pio	Tambour (calebasse)	Nammkoli
Fronde	Kapadoro		
Fusil	Pinn ou Pého	Tambour (sablier)	Oubain
Hameçon	Fikiènn		

3: Tauxier FA28 Mossi

Français	*Nounouma*	*Français*	*Nounouma*
Tabatière	Kounkoli	Trompe	Nabono
Tabouret	Kanguion (ou Kann'guion)		

MÉTIERS

Chasseur	Gaotano	Griot (musicien)	Bouara
Colporteur	Yolou	Maçon	Lioutou-luiégui
Cultivateur	Vala	Palfrenier	Sisénouna
Cordonnier-peaussier	Liétonian-natoura	Pêcheur	Fidiana
Forgeron	Hiaro	Porteur	Liètou-nannzan-zila
Bijoutier	Hiaro	Tisserand	Gannsoro
Fossoyeur	Boukoura	Tailleur	Ganyenno

NOMS DE RACES

Blanc	Fola	Sissala	Nisao
Nègre	Lèzuin	Boussanga	Boussanga
Musulman	Yaré (ou Yara)	Kyansi	Kyansi
Lobi	Kuré	Mossi	Mossi
Dyoula	Yaré (ou Yara)	Achanti	Kamboë
Dagari	Dagari	Bambara	Filapoun
Nounouma	Nonoma		

MÉTAUX

Or	Sanimm (1)	Cire	Maro
Argent	Waro (2)	Ivoire	Touyéli
Cuivre	Nala	Plomb	Kommbo
Fer	Lou	Cuir	Tanou
Argile	Nakananntéré	Poudre (à fusil)	Liro Marfaliro

NATURE

Arc-en-ciel	Ouésyo	Colline, montagne	Pân
Brousse	Gao	Eau	Nien
Caillou	Kafini	Eclair	Douatimmba
Caverne	Bouan	Etoile	Siamakuè
Ciel-atmosphère	Oué (ou Yii)	Feu	Niémm
Ciel (voûte bleue)	Ouédion (ou Yii-dion, ou Ouétanou)	Fleuve	Mo
		Foudre	Ouibio (3) Dakouyo

(1) Emprunté au Mandé.
(2) *Idem.*
(3) Fils du Ciel-Atmosphère.

Français	*Nounouma*	*Français*	*Nounouma*
Grêle	Didangawèlé	Soleil	Oué
Lune	Kiana	Terre	Tya
Marigot	Bouô	Tonnerre	Douabara
Monde	Lô	Tornade, orage	Davoû
Nuage	Dammakolo	Tourbillon (de vent)	M'vô
Pierre	Kapain	Trou	Gouan / M'bô
Pierre (de la foudre)	Kori	Vent	M'vô
Pluie	Dyoua	Est	Ouédè (1)
Poussière	Pourou	Ouest	Ouézi (2)
Rocher	Kepandafaro	Nord	Vankota (3)
Route	Tionnéfaro	Sud	Guézan (4)
Sable	Kafono		
Sentier	Tion		

TEMPS

Jour	Di	Hier	Diéna (ou Dyina)
Semaine	Yônidou	Demain	Duin
Mois	Kiana	Maintenant	Sinnkota
Année	Béni	Jadis	Dya (ou Diha)
Siècle	Bi	Plus tard	Guilado
Jour	Ikiaro	Quelquefois	Makado
Nuit	Néti	Souvent	Akélélala
Matin	Nédyou	Toujours	Diama
Soir	Midérina	Jamais	Aouasè
Midi	Ikiaro	Longtemps	Adia
Minuit	Tyakoun	Rapidement	Vélala
Aujourd'hui	N'zan		

RELIGION

Ame (ombre) (5)	Yora	— Nain (de la brousse)	Tougouro (ou Tougoura)
Souffle	Kirou	Fête	Binifaré
Cadavre	Téré	Fétiche (grand) (6)	Tyounoufaro
Ciel (dieu du)	Oué	Fétiche (petit) (7)	Tyounimmba
Devin	Voro	Fétiche	Tyou
Esprit de la brousse	Kilio (Kikirou au pluriel) / Gaokilio (Gaokikirou au pluriel)	Féticheur	Lésumanenn-tyou
		Féticheur (pour la pluie)	Litoumbanvoui / Litounlorovoué

(1) Le soleil se lève.
(2) Le soleil se couche.
(3) A gauche.
(4) A droite.
(5) Dia en Mandé.
(6) Dio-ba en Mandé.
(7) Dio-fitini en Mandé.

3: Tauxier FA28 Mossi

Français	*Nounouma*	*Français*	*Nounouma*
Féticheur (fabricant de gris-gris)	Litoukouanenntimm	Médicament	Tiéou (ou tyo ou tyou)
		Médecin	Tiritiou
Fossoyeur	Békanatiga	Mosquée, makam	Iguionndio
Funérailles	Bakèluo	Poison	Potyo
Gris-gris	Tyo (ou tyou)	Poison volatil	Doula (ou Dira)
Gris-gris (fab. de)	Tyéotyo	Sacrifice	Bangwouani
Gris-gris (contre la pluie)	Dakona		Bawouinngué
			Tiéoutiou
Gris-gris (qui attache)	M'volo (ou M'vôni)	Sacrificateur	Kiengwani-tiéoutiou
Gris-gris (contre les serpents)	Denntyo	Terre	Tia
		Tombe	Téguébo
Gris-gris (contre les sorciers malfaisants)	Kiétyo	Sorcier malfaisant	Tiéro
		— Loup-garou	Ko
Marabout	Voro		

VERBES

Acheter	Yo	Jeter	Doulo
Attraper	Dia	Jouer	Bouana
Boire	Nio	Jurer	Adoua
Chanter	Nouan	Lancer	Doulo
Chasser	Daguiné	Laver	Si
Cueillir	Koua	Laver (se)	Suè (ou Soè)
Danser	Sio	Lutter	Dian
Demander	M'boï	Manger	Adivouadio
Dire	Sué	Marcher	Vèli
Disputer (se)	Toutouna	Marier (se)	Koïbaro
Donner	Dion	Mener	Nouin
Dormir	Duann (ou Duain)	Mentir	Okouna
Écouter	Nì	Moquer (se)	Bekvévoua
Empoisonner	Foro	Moucher (se)	Fimî
Faire l'amour	Dékain (ou Dikain)	Mourir	Tian
		Nager	Hyé (ou Hyénou)
Frapper	M'ba	Noyer (se)	Bouagui
Fuir	Dourou	Obéir	Diowa
Gratter (se)	N'za	Oublier	Asué
Grimper	Dè	Parler	Yatara
Habiller (s')	N'zo		So
Hennir	Koïri	Partir	Mvè
Imiter	Akouéliou	Pêcher	Diékélé (ou diéfélé)
Incendier	Menndi		
Insulter	Toro	Piler	N'zoua
Interroger	Boï	Pleurer	Koui

Français	*Nounouma*	*Français*	*Nounouma*
Porter (sur la tête)	Nzan	Rire	Môn
		Sauver (se)	Douro
Porter (avec les bras)	Diannzivoua	Taire (se)	Yéné
		Tisser	Badoula
Poser	Nzégué	Travailler	Tountouna
Poursuivre	Badani	Tuer	Tien
Prendre	Koï	Vaincre	Dantyo
Promener (se)	Guinou	Vendre	Nioulou
Questionner	M'boï	venger (se)	Diétibana
Raconter	M'boï	Venir	Ba
Réfléchir	Abouin	Voir	Ana
Répondre	Aseï	Voler	Mouiro
Reposer (se)	Diési	Voler (dans l'air)	N'zan
Rêver	Douhè	Voyager	Yolou

ADJECTIFS

Beau	Kouzè	Jaune	Houro
Bête	Okniôn	Jeune	Nimmba
Bleu (foncé)	Nisôno	Joli	Kouzè
Blanc	Ouloupon / Nipôn	Joyeux	Apoïga
		Lâche	Diafôn
Bon	Kouzè	Laid	Koubazien
Brave	Babia	Large	Koua
Chaud	Kyé / Lôn	Lépreux	Nayaro (ou Nadiaro)
Circoncis	M'bouémpéni	Lourd	Dô
Faible	M'bona	Maigre	Bouani
Fort	Bien	Malade	Ovoué
Fou	Nignion	Malheureux	Awouanntioro
Froid	Ouoro	Mauvais	Oubazien (ou Oubazé ou Koubazien)
Galeux	Nizara		
Gourmand	Oudinnfaro		
Grand	Nidarou	Méchant	Oubazien
Gros	Nifaro	Menteur	Kouloupon
Heureux	Afoïra	Mince	Nimmba
Imbécile	Lévouon	Mort	Tyen (ou Tyan)
Impoli	Ousônntien (ou Oussotyen)	Neuf	Nidôn
		Noir	Nisono (ou Nisônou ou Ouazounou)
Impossible	Kouda		
Incirconcis	Papanantiou		
Indigent	Nilôn	Nu	Lèvoli
Insensé	Niniôn (ou nignion)	Orgueilleux	Oudiotibaba
		Paresseux	Yaséné
Intelligent	Dyasuin	Pauvre	Nâlon
Ivre, ivrogne	San-nyoro	Petit	Oukouo

Français	*Noumouma*	*Français*	*Noumouma*
Peureux	Oudyâfon	Sourd	Obésoonè
Poli	Lézanngou	Stupide	Oukiôn / Laokiôn
Profond	Kozoua		
Puissant	Dâ	Travailleur	Totonon
Riche	Sobiètyô	Vaillant	Labia
Rond	Ouakékila	Vert	Ouasounou (1)
Rouge	Nisain	Vieux	Kokoui
Savant	Oûyè (ou Ouyèn-nala)	Vivant	Mi (ou Oudyami)
		Voleur	Mounien
Sec	Koukoua	Vrai	Yabien

SUBSTANTIFS DIVERS

Ami	Adibè	Incendie	Minndio
Cadeau	Pina	Gale	Nizara
Camarade	Adibè	Lèpre	Nayaro
Chanson	Nouen	Maladie	Yaouyo
Chanteur	Go	Milieu	Niteï
Conte, fable	Sissaré	Moitié	Poeï
Coutume	Fouin	Mot	Nésui / So
Dette	Dui		
Débiteur	Duintyou	Mur	Bouro
Créancier	Sibyétiou	Nid	Zimmpolé
Faim, famine	Nyen	Parole	Yô
fumée	Nui (ou Nué)	Variole	Yapara
Guerre	Kouo	Vérole	Sangkoro

ADVERBES, PRÉPOSITIONS, etc.

Doucement	Nimmbanimmba	Dehors	Karawa
Vite	Akinalala	Auprès	Oukouo
Ici	Yo	Loin	Koudara
Là-bas	Yombè	Tout près	Nelda
Partout	Bolima	Pourquoi?	Bakoum?
Nulle part	Bolidado	Encore	Sina

PETITES PHRASES

Français	*Noumouma*
Comment t'appelles-tu?	Hirimimm bakon?
De quel village es-tu?	Atioumou bakon? (ou Téyouhiri bakon?)

(1) C'est-à-dire : noir.

Français	*Nounouma*
D'où viens-tu?	Nayé?
Où vas-tu?	M'véléyé? (ou M'vèya?)
De quelle race es-tu?	Nédiou kouatyo?
Es-tu Sissala?	Nissao nigaman? Niénessao? Ninésao?
Es-tu Nounouma?	Ménnouno?
Es-tu content?	Asuè?
Es-tu fatigué?	Agori? — Agora? — Aga?
Comment vas-tu?	I n'zain-ain?
Je te donne un cadeau.	Abépèmoro.
Es-tu musulman?	Ayéyara? — Yaraléyamon?
Es-tu fétichiste?	Aboyouïbina? — M'binawé?
Moi, je vais au village.	Abétioontévoua.
Toi, tu vas au village.	Amorobésannvoua.
Ce n'est pas fini.	Kouazuoï.
C'est fini.	Kouazouei (ou Kozuei).

FORMATION DU PLURIEL

Français	*Nounouma*	*Français*	*Nounouma*
Chien	Kouro	Champignon	Dyalé
Chiens	Koukouti	Champignons	Dyala
Poisson	Fili	Néré	Seinngo
Poissons	Filé	Nérés	Sono
Serpent	Dain	Chèvre	Bôn
Serpents	Dina	Chèvres	Bohè
Poulet	Koérou (ou Tiro)	Mouton	Pyo
Poulets	Kien	Moutons	Pei
Musulman	Yara	Cheval	Nésan
Musulmans	Yarésé	Chevaux	Niseï
Arbre	Dao	Bœuf	Nô
Arbres	Daro	Bœufs	Nien
Feuille	M'vo	Chat	Kélio
Feuilles	M'voro	Chats	Kéli
Ane	Benna	Abeille	N'tua
Anes	Benneï	Abeilles	N'tui
Fromager	Goû	Aigle	Zambou
Fromagers	Goûnou	Aigles	Zampourou

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APPENDICE III

Fragments de vocabulaires

Français	*Kassouna* (1)	*Village de Kobélé* (2)	*Français*	*Kassouna*	*Village de Kobélé*
1	Noundo	Kalo	11	»	Fouga-lo
2	Bélé	Lé	12	»	Fouga-bélé
3	Bato	N'to	13	»	Fouga-bèto
4	Banien	Nina (ou Inna)	14	»	Fouga-béna
5	Banou	Nou	15	»	Fouga-bénou
6	Bardo	Barédo	16	»	Fouga-barédo
7	Barpa	Barpè	17	»	Fouga-barpè
8	Nana	Nana	18	»	Fouga-nana
9	Noro	Nogo	19	»	Fouga-nogo
10	Fougo	Fouga	20	»	Fennlé

(1) Vocabulaire pris d'un ancien captif Kassouna habitant à Bondoukou. Enlevé tout jeune de son village, il ne se rappelle plus rien au delà de ces dix nombres.

(2) Donné par le nommé Tiésongo Kansola, ancien captif gourounsi, habitant, en 1919, à Bondoukou.

APPENDICE IV

[p.69]

Vocabulaire Tondioulé (1)

NOMS DE NOMBRE

Français	*Sissala-Tondioulé*	*Français*	*Sissala-Tondioulé*
1	Bidon (ou Bédon ou Bidoum)	25	Méré-ba-bomon
2	Bellé (ou Bellè)	26	Méré-ba-boldo
3	Botoro	27	Méré-ba-balpè
4	Banâ	28	Méré-ba-kieuri
5	Bomon (ou Banion)	29	Méré-ba-nivi
6	Boldo (ou Bolbo ou Boloubo)	30	Méré-ba-fi
7	Balpè (ou Bolpè)	31	Méré-ba-fi-la-bédon
8	Kieuri (ou Tieuri)	32	Méré-ba-fi-la-bellé
9	Nivi	33	Méré-ba-fi-la-botoro
10	Fi	34	Méré-ba-fi-la-bana
11	Fi-la-bidoum	35	Méré-ba-fi-la-bomon
12	Fi-la-bellé	36	Méré-ba-fi-la-boldo
13	Fi-la-botoro	37	Méré-ba-fi-la-barpè
14	Fi-la-bana	38	Méré-ba-fi-la-kieuri
15	Fi-la-bomon	39	Méré-si-bellé-bédonto
16	Fi-la-boldo	40	Mérésibellè (ou Mèsibellè)
17	Fi-la-balpè	41	Mérésibellè-ba-bédon
18	Fi-la-kieuri	42	Mérésibellè-ba-bellè
19	Mérébédonto	43	Mérésibellè-ba-botoro
20	Méré	44	Mérésibellè-ba-bana
21	Méré-ala-bidoun	45	Mérésibellè-ba-bomon
22	Méré-ba-bellé	46	Mérésibellè-ba-boldo
23	Méré-ba-botoro	47	Mérésibellè-ba-balpè
24	Méré-ba-bana	48	Mérésibellè-ba-kieuri
		49	Mérésibellè-ba-nivi
		50	Mérésibellè-ba-fi

(1) Ou Tondioulo en Tonioulé. Ce vocabulaire, de 735 mots ou expressions diverses, m'a été donné, en 1919, à Bondoukou, par Badéré Ouatara (ce qui est son nom Dyoula, de son vrai nom Nikanira Niyara). C'est un Gourounsi qui a quitté depuis vingt ans son village, appelé Koro, situé à trois jours de marche de Léo. Il s'est installé définitivement à Bondoukou, où il s'est complètement « dyoulalsé », mais il parle encore parfaitement sa langue maternelle.

Français	*Sissala-Tondioulé*	*Français*	*Sissala-Tondioulé*
51	Mérésibellè-ba-fi-ba-bédo	79	Mésibotoro-ba-fi-ba-bèdonto
52	Mérésibellè-ba-fi-ba-bellè	80	Mèsibana
53	Mérésibellè-ba-fi-ba-botoro	81	Mèsibana-ba-bedoun
54	Mérésibellè-ba-fi-ba-bana	82	Mèsibana-ba-bellè
55	Mérésibellè-ba-fi-ba-bomon	83	Mèsibana-ba-botoro
56	Mérésibellè-ba-fi-ba-boldo	84	Mèsibana-ba-bana
57	Mérésibellé-ba-fi-ba-balpé	85	Mèsibana-ba-bomon
58	Mérésibellè-ba-fi-ba-kieuri	86	Mèsibana-ba-boldo
59	Mésibotoro-bédonto	87	Mèsibana-ba-balpè
60	Mésibotoro	88	Mèsibana-ba-kieuri
61	Mésibotoro-ba-bidon	89	Mèsibana-ba-nivi
62	Mésibotoro-ba-bellè	90	Mèsibana-aba-fi
63	Mésibotoro-ba-botoro	91	Mèsibana-aba-fi-ba-bèdon
64	Mésibotoro-ba-bana	92	Mèsibana-aba-fi-ba bellè
65	Mésibotoro-ba-bomon	93	Mèsibana-aba-fi-ba-botoro
66	Mésibotoro-ba-boldo	94	Mèsibana-aba-fi-aba-bana
67	Mésibotoro-ba-balpè	95	Mèsibana-aba-fi-ba-bomon
68	Mésibotoro-ba-kieuri	96	Mèsibana-aba-fi-ba-boldo
69	Mésibotoro-bi-donto	97	Mèsibana-aba-fi-ba-balpè
70	Mésibotoro-bè-fi	98	Mèsibana-aba-fi-aba-kieuri
71	Mésibotoro-bè-fi-aba-bèdon	99	Mèsibana-aba-fi-bèdonto
72	Mésibotoro-bè-fi-ba-bellè	100	Zolo (ou Nzolo)
73	Mésibotoro-bè-fi-ba-botoro	200	Zolo-bellè
74	Mésibotoro-bè-fi-ba-bana	300	Zo-botoro
75	Mésibotoro-bè-fi-ba-bomon	400	Zo-bana
76	Mésibotoro-bè-fi-ba-boldo	500	Zo-bomon
77	Mésibotoro-bè-fi-ba-balpè	600	Zo-boldo
78	Mésibotoro-bè-fi-ba-kieuri	700	Zo-balpè
		800	Zolo-kieuri
		900	Zolo-nivi
		1.000	Zolofi

CULTURE

Arachide	Soukan	Coton	Konkon
Champ	Bara	Cotonnier	Konkonda

Français	*Sissala-Tondioulé*	*Français*	*Sissala-Tondioulé*
Fonio	Dibié	Sorgho (ou gros mil)	Memmpè
Gombo	Mana	Oseille	Vigné
Hache	Sa	Oignon	(Inconnu)
Haricot	Soana	Patate	Nâniou
Houe	Pi	Piment	Nambasougué
Igname	Piè	Pois souterrain	Sibié
Ignamier	Pièdala	Riz	Moui
Indigo	Biro	Tabac (à fumer)	Tawa
Indigotier	Biridala	Tabac (à priser)	N'tominou
Maïs	Mié	Taro	(Inconnu)
Manioc	Bombo	Tomate	Kérembé
Millet (ou petit mil)	Mopouma		

FLORE NATURELLE

Arbre	Dala	Karité	Soana
Bambou	Moula	Karité (fruit du)	Soanabilo
Baobab	Nzenngo	Karité (beurre de)	Noûla
Baobab (fruit du)	Kellé	Kola	Gouro
Branche	Nésè	Kolatier	Gourouda
Brousse	Bara	Minnko	Kalla
Ecorce	Daparala	Minnko (fruit du)	Kallabié
Epine	Solo	Néré	Soulo
Feuille	Paro	Néré (gousse du)	Soulobié
Fleur	Kéla	Palmier	Moûla
Fromager	Kokono	Racine	Dalougué
Fruit	Dalaobié	Tamarinier	Ômmisôdala
Berbe	Niolo	Tamarinier (fruit)	Ômmisô

ANIMAUX DOMESTIQUES

Ane	Kokoumô	Chèvre	Bôno
Bœuf	Nolo	Chien	Vâ (ou vaa)
— Taureau	No-balo	Mouton	Piéso
— Vache	No-halo	— Bélier	Pié-balo
— Veau	No-bié	— Brebis	Pié-halo
Chat	Béli	— Agneau	Pié-o-bié
Cheval	N'zara	Poulet	N'zimi
— Etalon	N'za-balo	— Coq	N'zimi-balo
— Jument	N'za-halo	— Poule	Nzi-halo
— Poulain	N'za-bié	— Poussin	Nzi-bié
— Pouliche	N'za-halobié		

ANIMAUX SAUVAGES

Abeille	Toubié	Buffle	Nionolo
Aigle	Dibié	Biche rayée	Kankoné

Français	*Sissala-Tondioulé*	*Français*	*Sissala-Tondioulé*
Crocodile	Niôla	Pintade	Soûlo
Crapaud	Nionhé (ou Niongué)	Poisson	Nan-holè
Eléphant	Bâtou	Poisson-chien	Vanahoulè
Grenouille	Niongué	Python	Doûlo
Hibou	Douni	Rat (de Gambie)	Déyougué
Hippopotame	Mounolo	Rat (aulacode)	Kélo
Hyène	Bélo	Sauterelle (criquet)	Tinntimé
Iule	Gongoula	Scorpion	Nouana
Léopard	Bé	Sénégali	Dibié
Lièvre	Kiounou	Serpent	Douna
Lion	Birini	Silure	Nanholè-binndo(1)
Mouche	Nantio	Singe	Hona
Moustique	Bousè	Singe rouge	Honfièna
Mulot	Holla	Singe noir	Hombino
Oiseau	Dibié	Souris	Daté (ou datui)
Papillon	Tinntimé (ou Tinntimi)	Termite	N'zéna
Phacochère	Bélo	Termitière	N'zénabélo
Potamochère	Bélo	Tortue	Gongolla
		Vautour	Dounou

PARTIES DU CORPS

Barbe	Tomon	Nez	Misè
Bouche	Nouon	Nombril	Nio (ou Nion)
Boyaux	Lobié	Œil	Sibié
Bras	Nèsè	Ongle	Napara
Cervelle	Nioudala	Oreille	Dellè
Cheveux	Nioupouna	Os	Fengbélé
Corps	Déna	Peau	Kéna
Cou	Banga	Pied	Nasè
Crâne	Nioulo	Poing	Nèboullè
Cuisse	Nala	Poitrine	Bankila
Dent	Niéla	Pouce	Nébiébizinou
Doigt	Nébié	Salive	Mountuara
Dos	Harra	Sang	Kella
Epaule	Vara	Sein	Héla
Front	Tulé	Sueur	Loumè
Joue	Tambélè	Tempe	Tambélè
Langue	Nandulé	Tête	Nioulo
Lèvre	Niokanna	Ventre	Lourou
Main	Nèsè		

(1) C'est-à-dire : poisson noir.

Français	*Sissala-Tondioulé*	*Français*	*Sissala-Tondioulé*

FAMILLE, VILLAGE, PAYS

Ancêtre	Sôla	Grand'mère	Niala
Canton	(Pas de mot)	Gendre	Douhalo
Case (en terre, à toit plat)	Diâ	Héritier	M'bouradié
		Homme	Néna
Case (hutte ronde à toit en paille)	Niodiâ	— Jeune homme	Bapoli
		Hôte (qui reçoit)	Diatina
Chef	Kôrou	Hôte (qui est reçu)	Nihora
Chef de village	Tôlô-kôrô	Mari	Doubalo
Chef de famille (ou de groupe familial)	Diétina	Mariage	Abovouè
		Mère	Ma
		Neveu (fils de sœur)	Niarabié
Chef (de ménage)	Diétinabié		
Dot	Mèsébellè	Neveu (fils de frère)	Bié
Enfant	Bié		
Epouse	Halo	Noble	Kouroubié
Captif	Yomon	Notable	Nisimi
Captif de case	Yobié	Oncle (maternel)	Niarabibié
Famille (ou groupe familial)	Mabélè	Oncle (paternel)	Niara
		Pays	Tôlô
— Ménage	Mabié	Père	Nana (ou Innhana)
Fille	Bi-halo		
Fils	Bi-balo	Quartier	Nzo
— Jeune fille	Koutouloubié	Race	Adouo
Frère	Mabié	Veuve	Youhalo (ou Niouhalo)
Frère de mère	Mabié		
— Frère de père seulement	Namabié	Vieillard	Bayéon
		Village	Tôlô
Grand-père	Na-balo	Voisin	Apéguémé

NOURRITURE ET BOISSON

Bière de mil	Sain	Œuf	Diala
Farine	Mi	Sauce	Disè
Farine de mil	Mempémi	Sel	Diésè
Farine de maïs	Lèmimi	Soumbara	Tiô
Farine d'igname	Pémi	Tô	Koulla (ou Koula)
Farine de fruit de baobab	Kalimi	Tô de farine de mil	Mempèkoula
		Tô de farine de maïs	Mompoumakoula
Graisse, huile	Non		
Hydromel	Tohella	Tô de farine d'igname	Pèkoula
Lait	Nohell		
Miel	Tô	Vin de palme	Sinn

Français	*Sissala-Tondioulé*	*Français*	*Sissala-Tondioulé*

MOBILIER, HABILLEMENT, etc.

Arc	Tô	Gaîne	Sidabié
Bague	Holo	Hamac	Lana
Bâton	Dala	Lampe (indigène)	Tianè
Bois	Dala	Lance	Hodala
Boubou	Gerra	Manche	Dala
Bracelet	Néholo	Manche de houe	Pidala
Briquet	Nihollo	Mortier	Touala
Calebasse	Bainra (ou banga)	Natte	Basa
Caleçon	Tinntolo	Oreiller	Niouborè
Canari, pot	Vié	Pagaie	Moudala
Carquois	Loro	Pagne (de femme)	Haguéla (1)
Cauri	Miébié	Pagne (d'homme) (2)	Diébasa
Ceinture	Kéna		
Chaîne	Hôlô	Pilon	Todala
Chaise	Basa	Pipe	Tovi
Charbon (de bois)	Holo	Pirogue	Daboré (ou Dabori)
Collier	Bonsiè		
Corbeille	Bébé	Poignard	Hotiorè (h aspiré)
Corde	Mèna	Rasoir	Nioupiré
Couteau	Sié	Sabre	Siunzénon
Cravache	Kasè	Sandale	Natawa
Culotte	Kouna	Savon	Fanfani
Fagot	Davovouè	Selle	Basa
Ficelle	Mèbié	Tambour	Gogono
Flèche	Hèna	Tabatière	Tababèlé
Flûte	Moulé	Tabouret	Halotasa (3)
Fourreau	Sidala	Trompe	Niéla
Fronde	Painkou	Van	Bésé
Fusil	Bougoudala		

NOMS DE MÉTIERS

Chasseur	Nambaraka	Griot	Gorè
Colporteur	Bayèlé	Instituteur	Karama (4)
Cultivateur	Laparra	Interprète	Ouiboulè
Cordonnier	Kénierra	Maçon	Malè
Forgeron	Lougouré	Marchand	Oyellè (5)

(1) Avec un h aspiré.
(2) En réalité, c'est une espèce de couverture où l'on se drape.
(3) C'est-à-dire : siège de femme.
(4) Sans doute du Dyoula Karamorho ou Karamokho.
(5) Sans doute même mot que bayèlé (colporteur) vu plus haut.

3: Taüxier FA28 Mossi

Français	*Sissala-Tondioulé*	*Français*	*Sissala-Tondioulé*
Palefrenier	N'zoniantogué	Tisserand	Pèsolè
Porteur	Honkinè	Tailleur	Pènièrè

NOMS DE RACE

Blanc	Bapoula	Nounouma	Aouma
Nègre	Nibino	Kassouna	Kassouma
Musulman	Méyèlè	Sissala	Tondioulé (ou Tonioulé)
Lobi	Kiélé		
Dioula	Méyèlè	Mossi	Mossi
Dagari	Kélé		

MÉTAUX ET SUBSTANCES DIVERSES

Argent	(Pas de nom)	Fer	Holo (ou Hollo)
Argile	Viténa	Ivoire	Niéla
Cire	Kélo	Or	Salama
Cuir	Kéna	Poudre (à fusil)	Marfami
Cuivre	Opouma (ou Apouma)		

NATURE

Arc-en-ciel	Dônsi	Nuage	Douon
Brousse	Bara	Pierre	Daboui (ou Dabi)
Caillou	Daboui	Pluie	Douon
Caverne	Bouanéra	Poussière	Temmi
Ciel	Dônô	Rocher	Dabizénou (2)
Colline	Bala	Route	Main-zénou
Eau	Nila (ou Nyila)	Sable	Temmi
Eclair	Pôlô	Sentier	Mainna
Esprit	Doulé	Soleil	Ouisè
Etoile	Kiambié	Terre	Téna
Feu	Ni	Tonnerre	Bana
Fleuve	Môla	Tornade	Douon
Foudre	Dabila (1)	Trou	Boua (ou Bouo)
Grêle	Doundaboï (ou Doundaboua)	Vent	Pôlo
		Est	Ouilili (3)
Lune	Kéninn	Ouest	Ouizoulè (4)
Marigot	Fôlô	Nord	Nèbouo
Monde	Bahouo	Sud	Nèdou (ou Nédonou)
Montagne	Palla		

(1) Il s'agit sans doute ici de la pierre cassée projetée par la foudre.
(2) Grosse pierre, forte pierre, de dabi = pierre, et zénou = gros.
(3) Exactement : le soleil se lève ou lever du soleil.
(4) De même : le soleil se couche ou coucher du soleil.

Français	*Sissala-Tondioulé*	*Français*	*Sissala-Tondioulé*

TEMPS

Jour	Tapoula	Aujourd'hui	Za
Mois	Kiéna	Demain	Kié
Année	Bina	Maintenant	Lara
Jour (par opposition à nuit)	Ouisè	Autrefois	Dôlé
		Plus tard	Binamé
Nuit	Titanga	Quelquefois	Hoha
Matin	Titouala	Souvent	Pèguémè
Soir	Baña	Toujours	Bahouo
Midi	Ouiholo	Jamais	Nouobé
Minuit	Titaniasé	Longtemps	Ondèno
Hier	Dié	Rapidement	[illegible]

RELIGION

Ame	N'don	Fétiche, divinité	Vé
— Ombre	Douma	Fétiche (grand)	Vé-zénou
— Souffle	Iniésé (ou N'yésé)	Féticheur	Vé-nonnéra
— Intelligence	Lé (ou Léna)	Féticheur (pour la pluie)	Don-hirra
Cadavre	Souhou		
Ciel (dieu du)	Ouisè	Fossoyeur	Bô-hourré
Devin	Vougoura – Voro	Fossoyeurs (chef des)	Bô-hourré-koro
Devin (lisant dans la poussière)	Téna	Funérailles	
		— Enterrement	Abôyôri
Esprit de la brousse	Kantoma	— Commémoration	Yô
Fête (grande)	Tapolizénou		

Français	*Sissala-Tondioulé*
Gris-gris	Louri
Gris-gris (contre les serpents)	Dounlouri
Gris-gris (contre la pluie	Donnkôlé
Gris-gris (contre les sorciers)	Hellalourou
Gris-gris (qui attache, ferme)	Nouvavouè
Gris-gris (fabricant de)	Louroutina (ou loutina)
Médicament	Louri (ou Louro)
Médicaments (fabricant de)	Louroutina (ou loutina)
Marabout	Karama
Médecin	Louroutina
Mosquée (ou Makam)	Ouitioladya
Musulman	Mayélé (ou méyélé)

3: Tauxier FA28 Mossi

Français	*Sissala-Tondioulé*
Ombre	Douma
Poison	Bitiésé
Poison volatil	Hélouré
Sacrifice	Lèsévoué
Terre	Téna
Terre (divinité de la)	Téna
Tombe	Nésovouéboua
Sorcier (mangeur d'âmes)	Hella
Sorcier (loup-garou)	Nibérémè

SUBSTANTIFS DIVERS

Français	*Sissala-Tondioulé*	*Français*	*Sissala-Tondioulé*
Ami	Nitiolé	Nid	Hôdia
Cadeau	M'panara (ou M'pandara)	Non	Ouiséguè
		Oui	Léo
Camarade	Nandon	Parole	Ouiboulè
Chanson	Yélé	Pointe	Bié
Chanteur	Yélétina	Porte (ouverture)	Dinnohan
Conte	Yélé (1)	Porte (en bois)	Daboré
Coutume	Ouébina	Puits	Dono
Danse	Gôlè	Poteau	Dalougué
Danseur	Egigon	Poulailler,	Zidia
Dette	Kenna	Promenade	Agoro
Débiteur	N'kétina	Querelle	Nipihélé
Famine	Soumé	Question	Ouibouls (ou Ouiboulè)
Fumée	Niô		
Géant	Nidôlé	Questionneur	Ouiboulatina
Guerre	Héna	Réflexion	M'binô
Incendie	Nidinion	Réponse	Ouiséngo
Maladie	Ouila	Rêve	N'dôlo
Malheur	N'kièsoro	Richesse	Mèbié
Mensonge	Niéro	Tas	Alengo
Mot	Ouiboulè	Vérole	Sankourè
Mur	Zenngo	Voyage	Yéli

ADJECTIFS

Beau	Ovouéri, Vouéro	Bon (très)	Ouérékouka
Bête	Nio (ou Nihô)	Brave	Bâlo
Bleu	Ombinon	Chaud	Lôna
Blanc	Ompouma	Circoncis	Pennkosié
Bon	Ouéro	Courageux	Lara

(1) Même mot que chanson.

Français	*Sissala-Tondioulé*	*Français*	*Sissala-Tondioulé*
Faible	Pouala	Menteur	Niérotina (ou Niérétina)
Fort	Dué	Mince	Ouhouzimi
Fou	Guinngaso	Mort	Isoho
Froid	Ouaro	Neuf	Omfèlè
Gourmand	Hondilé	Noir	Bibinno (ou Ombinon)
Grand	Nidé	Nu	Tiéyo
Gras	Vouo (ou Ovouo)	Orgueilleux	Itioti
Gros	N'zénou (ou N'zéno)	Pareseux	Dinnvouéla
Heureux	Isiatoro	Petit	Biblé
Imbécile	Niyo	Peureux	N'vi
Impoli	Nivouéri	Poli	Ouéri
Incirconcis	Pennpoutina	Profond	Oulinngo
Indigent	Souné	Puissant	Hivouolo
Insensé	Guinngaso	Riche	Mébiétina
Insolent	Nibon	Rond	Ongoulé
Intelligent	Kékellé	Rouge	Onsien
Ivrogne	Niyo	Savant	Ouisimè
Jaune	Hômôli	Sec	Ohilo
Jeune	Hemmbié	Sourd	Nikiolè
Joli	Ouéro	Stupide	Niyo
Joyeux	N'siérétoro	Travailleur	Toutoumétina
Lâche	Abinntina	Vaillant	Dinnhuila
Laid	Ombomon (ou Hébomon)	Vainqueur	Nèsè (ou Lala)
Large	Oyèlo	Vert	Môli
Lourd	Ouzimon	Vieux	Bayon
Maigre	Oubéno	Vivant	Ninyéso
Malade	Ivilo	Voleur	Garo
Malheureux	Ninnsiérésoro	Voyageur	Bayéli
Mauvais	Ouloro	Vrai	Ouitara
Méchant	Hébomon		

VERBES

Acheter	Nioho	Dormir	N'pidon
Attraper	La	Ecouter	Nion
Boire	Nio	Empoisonner	Ninnpirimè
Chanter	Niélé	Ensemencer	Ninndouo
Chasser	Nambarala	Faire l'amour	N'dia
Cueillir	Ninntioro	Frapper	M'movono
Danser	Agô	Fuir	M'fô
Demander	M'boso	Gratter (se)	N'loro
Dire	M'boulo	Grimper	N'zido
Disputer (se)	Ouibélédama	Habiller (s')	Moholennti
Donner	Kinnto	Hennir	N'zavilé

Français	*Sissala-Tondioulé*	*Français*	*Sissala-Tondioulé*
Imiter	Hadongui (ou Hadongué)	Porter (avec les bras)	Nésè
Insulter	Etorosain	Poser	M'bilo
Interroger	M'boso	Poursuivre	N'tinngo
Jeter	Nioso	Prendre	M'pio
Jouer	Agbé	Promener (se)	N'goro
Jurer	Agmienso	Quereller (se)	Nèsè
Lancer	Ayo	Questionner	M'boso
Laver	Afô	Raconter	Ouiboulè
Lutter	Hallowi	Réfléchir	Dian
Manger	Adi	Répondre	Ouisenngo
Marcher	Valè	Reposer (se)	N'niéso
Marier (se)	Adiâ	Rêver	N'douso
Mener	Nambarala	Rire	Momon
Mentir	Niéro	Sacrifier	M'péo
Moquer (se)	Nipihérou	Sauver (se)	Innféo
Moucher (se)	Fisinisa	Taire (se)	N'tenngo
Mourir	M'boé (ou M'bohi)	Tisser	N'so (ou Innso)
		Travailler	Toutoumè
Nager	Léno	Tuer	Souè
Noyer (se)	Niladi	Vaincre	Mètiougué
Obéir	Ninnkué	Vendre	Niélo
Oublier	Ousolo	Venger (se)	Maréniti
Parler	M'boulo	Venir	Ikiko
Partir	Mon	Voir	M'bélo
Pêcher	Nandousé	Voler	N'garo
Piler	Atougué	Voler (dans l'air)	Nisou (ou Niésou)
Pleurer	M'vi	Voyager	Bayéli
Porter (sur la tête)	Akiéno		

ADVERBES, PRÉPOSITIONS, etc.

Doucement	Sonson	Dans	Siéra
Lentement	Sonson	En dehors	Niana
Vite	Lara	Auprès	Lara
Ici	N'dè	Loin	Disiè
Là-bas	Olio	Pourquoi?	Hounda?
Partout	Bahourou	Encore !	Boll !
Nulle part	Kennkerro		

PETITES PHRASES

Français	*Sissala-Tondioulé*
Comment t'appelles-tu?	Hèhirra nikabé?
De quel village es-tu?	Hénn tolo minè?

Français	*Sissala-Tondioulé*
D'où viens-tu?	Hèlènien?
Où vas-tu ?	Hèmouné?
De quelle race es-tu?	Hèkanidiobiré?
Es-tu Sissala?	Hèka Issalo réa?
	Hèka Issalo rè ?
Es-tu Lobi?	Hèka Lobi tina réè?
	Hèka Lobi tina ouaria?
Es-tu musulman?	Hèka Méyèlo?
Es-tu fétichiste?	Onvénipa?
Es-tu content?	Hèkuétolo?
Es-tu fatigué?	Hibolo?
Comment vas-tu?	M'dogo?
Ce n'est pas fini.	Ouiténé.
	Outéné.
C'est fini.	N'ténou
	N'téno.

FORMATION DU PLURIEL

Français	*Sissala-Tondioulé*	*Français*	*Sissala-Tondioulé*
Chien	Vaha	Poulet	Zimi
Chiens	Vasè	Poulets	Zimivoua
Poisson	Nanholè	Musuman	Mayélè
Poissons	Nanholèvoua	Musulmans	Mayélèvoua
Serpent	Douna	Lobi	Kiélé
Serpents	Dounavoua	Lobis	Kiélévoua

APPENDICE V

[p. 81]

Vocabulaire Larhama (1)

NOMS DE NOMBRE

Français	*Larhama*	*Français*	*Larhama*
1	Kobala	28	Mara kieuri
2	Bellè	29	Fikobalato
3	Botoro	30	Mara-ni-fi
4	Banasi	31	Mara-ni-fi kobala
5	Bomouin	32	Mara-ni-fi abè-balia
6	Balabo	33	Mara-ni-fi bato
7	Balpè	34	Mara-ni-fi banasé
8	Kiori	35	Mara-ni-fi banon
9	Némè	36	Mara-ni-fi bardo
10	Fi	37	Mari-ni-fi barpè
11	Fi ri kobala	38	Mara-ni-fi kieuri
12	Fi ri balia	39	Mara-ni-fi nivi
13	Fi ri bèto	40	Marsibalia
14	Fi ri banasi	41	Marsibalia abé kobala
15	Fi ri banon	42	Marsibalia abé balia
16	Fi ri bardo	43	Marsibalia abé bato
17	Fi ri barpè	44	Marsibalia abé banasi
18	Fi ri kieuri	45	Marsibalia abé banon
19	Fi ri nivi	46	Marsibalia abé bardo
20	Mara	47	Marsibalia abé barpè
21	Mara koubala	48	Marsibalia abé kieuri
22	Mara lè-balia	49	Marsibalia abé nivi
23	Mara bato	50	Marsibalia abé fi
24	Mara banasé	51	Marsibalia abé fi kobala
25	Mara banon	52	Marsibalia abé fi bé balia
26	Mara bardo	53	Marsibalia abé fi bé bato
27	Mara barpè	54	Marsibalia abé fi bé bana

(1) Ce vocabulaire, de 755 mots ou expressions diverses, m'a été donné par le nommé Nabo Ouatara (nom Dyoula), d'origine Gourounsi-Larhama.

Franç.	Larhama
55	Marsibalia abé fi bé banon
56	Marsibalia abé fi bé bardo
57	Marsibalia abé fi bé barpè
58	Marsibalia abé fi abé kieuri
59	Marsibalia abé fi abé nivi
60	Marsibèto
61	Marsibèto bè kobala
62	Marsibèto bè balia
63	Marsibèto bè bèto
64	Marsibèto abé bana
65	Marsibéto abé banon
66	Marsibéto abé bardo
67	Marsibèto abé barpè
68	Marsibèto abé kieuri
69	Marsibèto abé nivi
70	Marsibéto abé fi
71	Marsibèto abé fi kobala
72	Marsibèto abé fi abé balia
73	Marsibèto abé fi abé béto
74	Marsibèto abé fi abé bana
75	Marsibèto abé fi abé banon
76	Marsibèto abé fi abé bardo
77	Marsibèto abé fi abé barpè
78	Marsibèto abé fi abé kieuri
79	Marsibèto abé fi abé nivi
80	Marsibana
81	Marsibana abé kobala
82	Marsibana abé balia
83	Marsibana abé béto
84	Marsibana abe bana
85	Marsibana abé banon
86	Marsibana abé bardo
87	Marsibana abé barpè
88	Marsibana abé kieuri
89	Marsibana abé nivi
90	Marsibana abé fi
91	Marsibana abé fi abé kobala
92	Marsibana abé fi abé balia
93	Marsibana abé fi abé bèto
94	Marsibana abé fi abé bana
95	Marsibana abé fi abé banon
96	Marsibana abé fi abé bardo
97	Marsibana abe fi abé barpè
98	Marsibana abé fi abé kieuri
99	Marsibana abé fi abé nivi
100	Koroba
1.000	Tousi
2.000	Tousi-balia
3.000	Tousi-batoro
4.000	Tousi-bana
5.000	Tousi-banon
6.000	Tousi-bardo
7.000	Tousi-barpè
8.000	Tousi-kieuri
9.000	Tousi-nivi
10.000	Tousi-fi

CULTURE

Français	Larhama	Français	Larhama
Arachide	Simpan	Manioc	Pompo
Champ	Bara	Mil (petit)	Mopoloma
Coton	Konkon (ou Kounkoum)	Mil (gros rouge)	Mapè
		Mil (gros blanc)	Bovo
Cotonnier	Kounkounda	Patate	Naniori
Gombo	Mana	Piment	Nandio
Hache	Sâ	Pois souterrain	Sibiè
Haricot	Sono	Riz	Niri
Houe	Pari	Tabac (à fumer)	Taba
Igname	Pia (ou Pié)	Tabac (à priser)	Sara
Ignamier	Piédasi	Tomate	Kômbié
Maïs	Mia		

Français	*Larhama*	*Français*	*Larhama*

FLORE SPONTANÉE

Arbre	Tia	Karité	Nou
Bambou	Moui	Karité (beurre de)	Nou
Baobab	Téri	Kola	Gouro
Baobab (fruit du)	Télébi	Kolatier	Gouroutia
Branche	Tianasan	Néré	Sola
Brousse	Bara	Néré (gousse de)	Sôbié
Ecorce	Tiéparasi	Papaye	Korobabila
Epine	Soma	Papayer	Korobabilada
Feuille	Paré	Racine	Dalousi
Fromager	Komé	Rônier	Pouroutia
Fruit	Tiébisi	Rônier (fruit du)	Pouroutiabi
Herbe	Yan	Tamarinier	Sonson

ANIMAUX DOMESTIQUES

Ane	Kakouma	Chèvre	Bounou
Bœuf	Nan (ou Nou-hou)	Chien	Vaa
		Mouton	Piésé
— Taureau	Na-bari	— Bélier	Pié-balo (ou Pi-balo)
— Vache	Na-ni		
— Veau	Na-bié	— Brebis	Pié-ni
Chat	Gali	— Agneau	Pi-bié
Cheval	Diaro	Poulet	Guimi
— Etalon	Dia-bari	— Coq	Guibalo
— Jument	Dia-ni	— Poule	Guini
— Poulain	Dia-bié	— Poussin	Guibié
— Pouliche	Dianibié		

ANIMAUX SAUVAGES

Abeille	Toubi	Léopard	Péi
Aigle	Atiou	Lièvre	Kiôma
Buffle	Môna	Lion	Hannwo
Crocodile	Niba	Magnan	Tifièma
Crapaud	Yébé	Margouillat	Géri
Eléphant	Batou	Mouche	Nantiosi
Grenouille	Yibida	Moustique	Dèsi
Hibou	Badoulou	Mulot	Naré
Hippopotame	N!na (ou Lénoro)	Oiseau	Diwa
Hyène	Boho	Papillon	Guinngalimé
Iule	Kolokorolé	Perdrix	Yoho
Koba	Ko	Phacochère	Tô

Français	*Larhama*	*Français*	*Larhama*
Potamochère	Gbi	Serpent cracheur	Basimmpia
Pigeon (domestique)	Kakoumé	Serpent python	Dor
		Serpent d'eau	Pilé
Pigeon (sauvage)	Sani	Silure	Nimmbisi
Pigeon (vert)	Yopouré	Singe	Mama
Pintade	Sou	Singe rouge	Mafièma
Poisson	Nianhoullè	Singe vert	Mampoulouma
Poisson-chien	Guima	Singe cynocéphale	Fon
Poisson (capitaine)	Bôri	Souris	Tati
Porc-épic	Soma	Termite	Filé
Rat (de Gambie)	Sayou	Termitière	Tinn
Rat (aulacode)	N'gâré	Tortue	Gorombolé
Sauterelle	Ho	Tourterelle	Kakobini
Scorpion	Nôma	Vautour	Dôri (ou Dôhi)
Sénégali	Kiô	Varan (iguane)	Oço
Serpent	Denn	Ver	Vari

PARTIES DU CORPS

Barbe	Toma	Menton	Nibara
Bouche	Ni	Nez	Misé
Boyaux	Loubié	Nombril	Kaoulé
Bras	Nèsé	Œil	Si
Cervelle	Nioukoro	Ongle	Niparasi
Cheveux	Niouposon	Oreille	Diguila
Cœur	Bohi	Os	Hanguélé
Corps	Yara	Peau	Tain
Cou	Bara (ou Barain)	Pied	Nasi
Crâne	Noutan	Poil	Pouna
Cuisse	Koui	Poing	Nakoulouma
Dent	Nila (ou Niéla)	Poitrine	Nié
Derrière	Tinnga	Pouce	Nanidié
Doigt	Nani	Salive	Nitioro
Dos	Hara	Sang	Kialé
Epaule	Vaha	Sein	Hila
Front	Tulé	Sueur	Toulo
Jambe	Naparason	Tempe	Para
Joue	Sien	Testicules	Panbié
Langue	Nandolo	Vagin	Main
Larme	Siléré	Ventre	Leurou
Lèvre	Nitan	Verge	Pan
Main	Nésé		

Français	*Larhama*
—	—
FAMILLE, VILLAGE, PAYS	
Ancêtre	Souhou
Canton	Tan
Case (en terre)	Diâ
Case (hutte ronde à toit en paille)	Kapilé
Célibataire	Bakôra
Chef	Korou
Chef de village	Diantina
Chef de famille (ou groupe familial)	Diâtina
Chef de ménage	Byétina
Dot	Adiamobié
Enfant	Bié
Epouse	Avôra
Esclave	Yo
Famille (ou groupe familial)	Miniré
Femme	Halo
Fille	Hambié
Fils	Babolodié
Fille	Atoulé
Frère	N'gana (ou Nâbié)
Frère de mère	Nâbié
Frère de père	Minimabié
Grand-père	Nabal
Grand'mère	Naba (ou Nahain)
Gendre	Méniré
Homme	Ball (ou Bali, ou bala)
Hôte (qui reçoit)	Diâtina
Hôte (qui est reçu)	Naboro
Mari	Bala
Mère	Na
Neveu (fils de sœur)	Miniré
Neveu (fils de frère)	Minnganadé
Noble	Kôribié
Notable	Yérétina
Oncle (maternel)	Minira
Oncle (paternel	Minimagana
Pays	Palo
Père	Minima (ou Mignima) — N'ko
Race	Niadama (ou Niadamain)
Toit (en paille)	Kampilé (ou Kabilé)
Toit (en terre)	Guié
Veuve	Youhala

Français	*Larhama*
Vieillard	Nihien
Village	Dian
Voisin	Mésiné

NOURRITURE, BOISSON

Français	*Larhama*	*Français*	*Larhama*
Bière (de mil)	Sain	Œuf	Hala
Farine	Mou	Sauce	Disé (ou Disi)
Farine de baobab	Télémou	Sel	Yasé
Huile	Nô (ou Nou)	Soumbara	Kio
Hydromel	Biason	Tô	Kolon
Lait	Nahiri	Viande	Namien
Miel	Toho (ou Toû)		

MOBILIER, HABILLEMENT, etc.

Are	Ton (ou Touhon)	Flèche	Hama
Bâton	Dâ	Flûte	M'mélé
Boubou	Gari	Fourreau	Siatoula
Bracelet	Biti	Fronde	Pouali (ou Poualé)
Briquet	Kieursi	Fusil	Marfa (1)
Calebasse	Banga	Gaine	Siatoula
Caleçon	Diapalo (ou diapal)	Hameçon	Pôtoula
		Javelot	Timmbié
Canari, pot	Poupoué	Lampe	Tiano
Carquois	Touain	Lance	Timé
Cauri	Morbié	Livre	Karamorota
Ceinture	Garfoua	Manche	Sainto
Chaîne	Kioroma	Métier (à tisser)	Galésora
Chaise	Pasa	Mortier	Toro
Charbon (de bois)	Niéfilé	Natte	Bosa
Collier	Louroumbié	Oreiller	Kapoti
Corbeille	Siné	Pagaie	Dabourouda
Corde	Main	Pagne (de femme)	Harougaro
Couteau	Sia	Pagne (d'homme)	Balgabosa
Cravache	Pasa	Pilon	Tinnda
Culotte	Koursi	Pipe	Taodana
Fagot	Dagova	Pirogue	Dabouro
Ficelle	Nambisi	Poignard	Sia
Filet (de pêche)	Koukoutibié	Rasoir	Niéfouma

(1) Mot Mandé, comme koursi (culotte), etc.

3: Tauxier FA28 Mossi

Français	*Larhama*	*Français*	*Larhama*
Sandale	Natawa	Tambour (fait d'une calebasse)	Pandéri
Savon	Fafani	Tambour (de chef)	Tapani
Selle	Diapasa	Tabatière	Péré
Tambour (gros)	Goulou	Tabouret	Paaa
Tambour (petit)	Sinnsiné	Trompe	Bâbilé

NOMS DE MÉTIERS

Chasseur	Nambarala	Juge	Yâtina
Colporteur	Gougalé	Maçon	Disara
Cultivateur	Baratina	Marchand	Iyawara
	Baradaré	Mendiant	Sola
Cordonnier	Yerra	Palefrenier	Diédara
Forgeron	Libé	Pêcheur	Nianholisiré
Bijoutier	Libé	Porteur	Titina
Griot	Gora (ou Gorra, ou Gowa)	Pileuse	Toutougouri
		Tailleur	Gayarra
Instituteur	Karamorokori	Tisserand	Sousora
Interprète	Nibolatina		

MÉTAUX, SUBSTANCES DIVERSES

Argent	Viti	Fer	Ho (o très bref)
Argile	Tiori	Ivoire	Batsinguili
Cire	Kéli	Plomb	Pana
Cuir	Tan (ou Taan)	Or	Salama
Cuivre	Koli	Poudre (à fusil)	Marfalourou

NOMS DE RACE

Blanc	Fôli	Kassouna	Kassouma
Nègre	Nibisi	Kyansi	Kyansi
Musulman	Kasoro	Achanti	Kambosi
Dyoula	Mayara	Issala	Nando
Dagari	Dagawa		

NATURE

Arc-en-ciel	Isia	Eau	Li
Brousse	Baralo	Eclair	Honguirisé
Caillou	Bobisi	Etoile	Kinkiaholia
Caverne	Boua	Feu	Ni
Ciel	Yâ	Fleuve	Lidié
Ciel (voûte du)	Tanyou	Foudre	Yâsa
Colline	Boudié	Lune	Kiana

Français	*Larhama*	*Français*	*Larhama*
Marigot	Fouô	Soleil	Yâ (ou Hyâ)
Monde	Tan	Terre	Tinnté
Nuage	Obiré	Tonnerre	Odoné
Pierre	Boubié	Tornade	Ounmouinsi
Pierre (du tonnerre)	Yâsa (ou Yésa)	Tourbillon (de vent)	Vilimmvilé
Pluie	N'douo	Trou	Boua
Poussière	Poulouma	Vent	Ouani
Rocher	Koumé	Est	Tangan
Route	Ouan	Ouest	Taniou
Sable	Boumbougoulé	Nord	Nago
Sentier	Ouambié	Sud	Nédi

TEMPS

Jour	Dia	Aujourd'hui	Guinn
Semaine	Kuabaldo	Demain	Kié
Mois	Tiana	Maintenant	Titiofiala
Année	Guina	Jadis	Dôri
Jour	Yâ	Plus tard	Kièkobala
Nuit	Titan	Quelquefois	Tiala
Matin	Titoua	Jamais	Ouhouhou
Soir	Didani	Longtemps	Oudana
Midi	Mi-haya	Rapidement	Lélébira
Minuit	Tabisiésé		

RELIGION

Ame	Doso	Fétiche (petit)	Saba
— Ombre	Déviné (ou Daliné)	Féticheur	Tangbankoudié
— Souffle	Niésé	Féticheur (faisant tomber la pluie)	Don-hirra
— Intelligence	Dignia	Gris-gris	Lourou (ou Louré)
Cadavre	Soho	Gris-gris (fab. de)	Louroutina
Ciel (dieu du)	Yâ (ou Hyâ)	Médicament	Louré
Cimetière	Diatouen	Médecin	Tiba (ou Tiwa)
Danse	Gouala	Mosquée	Ituodya
Danseur	Gouartouma	Musulman	Mayèlé – Yarsain
Devin	Voûra	Ombre	Daliné
Devin (se servant d'eau)	Lîbenndé	Poison	Dalèsou (ou Dalèzou)
Esprit (de la brousse)	Katoma	Poison (volatil)	Koroto (1)
Fête	Guinakoudié	Sacrifice	Homouparé
Fétiche (ou divinité)	Tângban	Sacrifier	Omouin

(1) Mot Mandé (korti ou koroti).

Français	*Larhama*	*Français*	*Larhama*
Sacrificateur	Vouatina	Tombe	Vahain
Terre	Tahain	Sorcier malfaisant	Holl
Terre (divinité)	Tahain	Sorcier loup-garou	Nébrain

SUBSTANTIFS DIVERS

Ami	Tiobé	Mot	Oboula
Cadeau	Opo	Mur	Dié
Camarade	N'kiana	Nid	Diodia
Chaleur	Lôn	Non	M'via
Chanson	Hiila	Noyau	Ohétoua
Chanteur	Hiilatina	Oui	Lâ (ou Laa)
Chasse	Nembaral	Parc (à bœufs)	Naganga
Conte	Bina	Parole	Oboula
Coutume	Ousébina	Pointe	Opolosa
Dette	Kiémé	Pont	Da
Débiteur	Kiemmtina	Porte (ouverture)	Dini
Famine	Oyenn	Porte (en bois)	Bori
Froidure	Ouafo	Puits	Boua
Fumée	Niô	Poteau	Nisi
Géant	Kondolé	Poulailler	Ditougo
Guerre	Yosi	Promenade	Monbolé
Incendie	Nidié	Querelle	Nitouasi
Jeûne	Nivo	Question	Oboula
Jugement	Ôtiré	Questionneur	Oboulatina
Lèpre	Dayalo	Réflexion	Bina
Maladie	Nianiani	Réponse	Ousé
Milieu	Titivi	Rêve	Doso
Moitié	Titivi	Tas	Okoumé - Outiora

ADJECTIFS

Beau	Vouori	Gourmand	Odikounga
Bête	Tara	Grand	Nidoli
Bleu	Biné	Gras	Pousa
Blanc	Poula	Gros	Nidié
Brave	Bâlo	Heureux	Nisouma
Chaud	Louma	Imbécile	Niya
Circoncis	Kakéri	Impoli	Nivouori
Courageux	Lara	Impossible	Oudolé
Courageux (très)	Laralara	Incirconcis	Pampourou
Faible	Koré	Indigent	Soulla
Fort	Kadiolo	Insensé	Nioutiogo
Fou	Yâtina	Insolent	Nébo
Froid	Ouari	Intelligent	Diyya

Français	*Larhama*	*Français*	*Larhama*
Ivrogne	Siniori (ou Sinioro)	Nouveau	Koufalé
Jaune	Séguéti	Nu	Yarsoul
Jeune	Koubié	Orgueilleux	Outioti
Joli	Vouéré (ou Vouori)	Petit	Koubié
Joyeux	Okio	Peureux	Faoul
Lâche	Ouoll	Poli	Séfélétina
Laid	Loro	Profond	Ouloungué
Large	Pollé	Puissant	Houyouvua
Lépreux	Yalamou (ou Dayalamou)	Riche	Kistina
Lourd	Youngué	Rond	Otouré
Maigre	Bana	Rouge	Kofiama
Malade	Niania	Savant	Oguima
Mauvais	Oullora	Sec	Ohola
Méchant	Koûbon (ou Koûbomm)	Sourd	Palma
Menteur	Ounien	Stupide	Yari
Mince	Oubana	Travailleur	Vouaratou
Mort	Ousouba	Vaillant	Ball
Neuf	Koufalé	Vert	Kobiné (1)
Noir	Biné (ou Kobiné)	Victorieux	Larètina
		Vieux	Kohinien
		Vivant	Ouoyé
		Vrai	Oti

VERBES

Acheter	Yo	Gratter (se)	Tia
Attraper	Kan	Grimper	N'gali
Boire	Nio	Habiller (s')	Yari
Chanter	Hila	Hennir	Houyéli
Chasser	Bara	Imiter	Itoson
Cueillir	Kéri	Incendier	Ninndié
Danser	Goua	Insulter	Outoso
Demander	Piasé	Interroger	Piasou
Dire	M'bori	Jeter	Vouhota
Disputer (se)	Tousi	Jouer	Banga
Donner	Po	Jurer	Ougmiasan
Dormir	Piundo	Lancer	You
Ecouter	Oui	Laver	Kiési
Empoisonner	Koullori	Lutter	Lô
Ensemencer	Moudou	Manger	Di
Faire l'amour	Moto	Marcher	Mon
Frapper	Bo	Marier (se)	Dia
Fuir	Fa	Mener	Bé

(1) C'est-à-dire : noir.

Français	*Larhama*	*Français*	*Larhama*
Mentir	Nien	Raconter	Bori
Moquer (se)	Miminn	Réfléchir	Bina
Moucher (se)	Mési	Répondre	Sé
Mourir	Po	Reposer (se)	Yési
Nager	Dosi	Rêver	Dosi
Obéir	Kio	Rire	Mon
Oublier	Sori	Sauver (se)	Fa
Parler	Bori	Taire (se)	Taré
Partir	Mon (ou Mo)	Tisser	Soa
Pêcher	Nibi	Travailler	Touima
Piler	Tougouhi	Tuer	Po
Pleurer	Yéli	Vaincre	Houo
Porter	Kiorosé	Vendre	Yawa
Poser	Hain (h aspiré)	Venger (se)	Oukioti
Poursuivre	To	Venir	Koua
Prendre	Dio	Voir	Hono
Promener (se)	Gori	Voler	Mouari
Quereller (se)	Diosi (ou Yosi)	Voler (dans l'air)	Fil
Questionner	Piaso	Voyager	Golé

ADVERBES, PRÉPOSITIONS, etc,

Français	*Larhama*	*Français*	*Larhama*
Doucement	Momo (ou Momon)	Partout	Dakala
Fortement	Oudiogo	Dans	Ouherra
Lentement	Momo (ou Momon)	Hors	Ara
Vite	Laralé	Auprès	Té (ou Téé)
Ici	N'da	Loin	Boli
Là-bas	Olio	Tout près	Dipara
		Pourquoi?	Béyien?
		Encore	Bila (ou Béla)

PETITES PHRASES

Français	*Larhama*
Comment t'appelles-tu?	Hi herri ni bé?
De quel village es-tu?	N'dian henni? / Ebo henni a?
D'où viens-tu?	N'nini?
Où vas-tu?	M'moni?
De quelle race es-tu?	N'nitina?
Es-tu Sissala?	N'gan Issala?
Es-tu Lobi?	N'gan Lobi tina?

Français	*Larhama*
Es-tu musulman?	N'gan Yara ni?
Es-tu fétichiste?	Ngan Kiéfirou?
Es-tu content?	N'kio?
Es-tu fatigué?	Mpoula?
Comment vas-tu?	N'niané?
Je te donne un cadeau	Nimm pain
Je vais au village	Mimoudian
Ce n'est pas fini.	Babitiré
C'est fini.	Batiré (ou Badara).

FORMATION DU PLURIEL

Français	*Larhama*	*Français*	*Larhama*
Chien	Vaha	Bœufs	Nasinn
Chiens	Vasé	Chèvre	Bôn
Serpent	Di	Chèvres	Bôna
Serpents	Dima	Léopard	Peï
Poulet	Guimi	Léopards	Peïkokana
Poulets	Guimié	Python	Dôri
Musulman	Yara	Pythons	Doûla
Musulmans	Yarasinn	Crapaud	Ibi
Lion	Anwo (ou Boho)	Crapauds	Ibia
Lions	Anwoumba (ou Bosouma)	Sauterelle	Ho
		Sauterelles	Hôsi
Eléphant	Batou	Arachide	Simpan
Eléphants	Batousinn	Arachides	Simpanba
Perdrix	Yo	Sissala	Nando
Perdrix	Yosinn	Sissalas	Nandawata
Bœuf	Naou		

APPENDICE VI

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Fragments de vocabulaires Gourounsi

NOMS DE NOMBRE

Français	*Sissala* (1)	*Sissala* (2)	*Sissala* (3)	*Sissala* (4)	*Sissala* (5)
1	Kobala	Kobala	Dinng	Ding	Kobala
2	Balè	Balia	Lè	Lia	Bellé
3	Batoro	Batori	To	Tuo	Botoro
4	Banasé	Banasi	Na	Nâ	Banasé
5	Ouanon	Banon	Non	Nô	Bonon
6	Oueldo	Bardo	Bardo	Do	Boldo
7	Oualpè	Barpè	Barpè	Pe	Balépé
8	Téri	Kieuri	Kieuri	Kuri	Tiori
9	Nomè	Nivi	Figuibalato	Nyuwi	Nibi
10	Fi	Fi	Fi	Fi	Fi

(1) Donné dans mon *Noir du Soudan. Pays Mossi et Gourounsi.* 1912, p. 86.

(2) Du village de Po. Recueilli, en 1919, à Bondoukou, d'un Gourounsi « dyoulisé » du nom de Nabaraga Ouatara.

(3) Recueilli, en 1919, à Bondoukou, d'un Sissala de Nabulo, Kolalama Kamaraté, de son nom Dyoula.

(4) Donné par Migrod dans les *Langages de l'Ouest africain*, tome I, page 144, sous le nom de « Isala ».

(5) Recueilli, en 1919, à Bondoukou, auprès d'un Gourounsi-Sissala, du village de Dasémé, s'appelant Bossi-oulo Longoula.

[p. 94]

APPENDICE VII

Vocabulaire Kiansi (1)

NOMS DE NOMBRE

Français	*Kiansi*	*Français*	*Kiansi*
1	Ouégni (ou Bougni)	23	Pisyé-lé-bata
2	Bahié (ou Bayi ou Banié)	24	Pisyé-lé-banasé
3	Bata (ou Bouta)	25	Pisyé-lé-banou
4	Banâsé (ou Banasi)	26	Pisyé-lé-bansanta
5	Banou	27	Pisyé-lé-bantanasé
6	Bansanta (ou Batanta)	28	Pisyé-lé-nani
7	Bantanasi (ou Batanasi)	29	Pisyé-lé-nô
8	Nani (ou Nanou)	30	Pisyé-lé-pi (ou Pisita)
9	Nô	31	Pisita-lé-ouégni
10	Pi	32	Pisita-lé-bayé
11	Pi-lo ouégni	33	Pisita-lé-bata
12	Pi-lo bahié	34	Pisita-lé-banasé
13	Pi-lo bata	35	Pisita-lé-bénou
14	Pi-lo banasé	36	Pisita-lé-bansanta
15	Pi-lo banou	37	Pisita-lé-bantanasé
16	Pi-lo bansanta	38	Pisita-lé-nani
17	Pi-lo bantanasé	39	Pisita-lé-nô
18	Pi-lo nani	40	Pisinasi (ou Pisinasé)
19	Pi-lo nô	41	Pisinasi-lé-ouégni
20	Pisyé	42	Pisinasi-lé-bayé
21	Pisyé-ouégni	43	Pisinasi-lé-bouta
22	Pisyé-lé-bahié	44	Pisinasi-lé-banasi

(1) Ce vocabulaire, de 550 mots ou expressions diverses, a été recueilli par moi, en 1919, à Bondoukou, auprès de la femme Sibidoua Nouma (de son vrai nom Aouarbihi Aouori), d'origine Kiansi et du village de Pisi, dans le pays Kiansi. Elle fut enlevée par les Zabermas, avant l'arrivée des colonnes françaises dans le pays, et vendue à Bôlé, où elle arriva après trois jours de marche forcée. Vendue à Bondoukou, elle alla ensuite, avec sa maîtresse, habiter dans le Nasian. Quand celle-ci fut morte, elle revint habiter Bondoukou, puis se maria au village de Dara-Sakaye. Actuellement, c'est une vieille femme petite, bien conservée, consciencieuse, mais timorée, et un peu sourde.

3: Tauxier FA28 Mossi

Franç.	*Kiansi*
45	Pisinasi-lé-banou
46	Pisinasi-lé-bansanta
47	Pisinasi-bantanasé
48	Pisinasi-nani
49	Pisinasi-lenndô
50	Pisinou
51	Pisinou-lé-ouégni
52	Pisinou-lé-bayé
53	Pisinou-lé-bata
54	Pisinou-lé-banasé
55	Pisinou-lé-banou
56	Pisinou-lé-bansanta
57	Pisinou-lé-bantanasé
58	Pisinou-lé-nani
59	Pisinou-lé-nô
60	Pinntanta (ou Pisinou-lé-pi)
61	Pinntanta-lé-ouégni
62	Pinntanta-lé-bayé
63	Pinntanta-lé-bata
64	Pinntanta-lé-banasé
65	Pinntanta-lé-banou
66	Pinntanta-lé-bansanta
67	Pinntanta-lé-bantanasé
68	Pinntanta-lé-bantanani
69	Pinntanta-lé-nô
70	Pinntanta-lé-pi
71	Pinntanta-lé-pi-ouégni
72	Pinntanta-lé-pi-lé-béyé
73	Pinntanta-lé-pi-lé-bata
74	Pinntanta-lé-pi-lé-banasé
75	Pinntanta-lé-pi-lé-bénou
76	Pinntanta-lé-pi-lé-bannsanta
77	Pinntanta-lé-pi-lé-bantanasi
78	Pinntanta-lé-pi-lé-nani
79	Pinntanta-lé-pi-lé-nô
80	Pinanou
81	Pinanou-lé-ouégni
82	Pinanou-lé-béyé
83	Pinanou-lé-bata
84	Pinanou-lé-banasé
85	Pinanou-lé-banou
86	Pinanou-lé-binntanta
87	Pinanou-lé-bantanasé
88	Pinanou-lé-nâni
89	Pinanou-lé-noû
90	Pinanou-lé-pi
91	Pinanou-lé-pi-lé-oüégni
92	Pinanou-lé-pi-lé-bayé
93	Pinanou-lé-pi-lé-bata
94	Pinanou-lé-pi-lé-banasé
95	Pinanou-lé-pi-lé-banou
96	Pinanou-lé-pi-lé-bansanta
97	Pinanou-lé-pi-lé-bantanasé
98	Pinanou-lé-pi-lé-nâni
99	Pinanou-lé-pi-lé-nô
100	Kouo
1.000	Tousapi

CULTURE

Arachide	Simpain	Mil (gros rouge)	N'za
Champ	Télimm	Mil (gros blanc)	Mankari
Coton	Gounkouti	Mil (petit)	N'zapèla
Fonio	(Inconnu)	Oseille	Huiga (ou Yuga)
Gombo	Mouana (ou Mana)	Oignon	(Inconnu)
Hache	Lia	Patate	Nabanoulé
Haricot	Tué	Piment	Marabazô
Houe (grande)	Koûri	Pois souterrain	Souma
Houe (petite)	Tiâpâ	Riz	Mouin
Igname	Niri	Tabac	Sara
Maïs	Kimmbéné	Taro	(Inconnu)
		Tomate	Koûmé

Français	*Kiansi*	*Français*	*Kiansi*

FLORE SPONTANÉE

Arbre	Tî-hou	Herbe	Oûti
Baobab	Tui	Karité	Tiamm
Brousse	Hoû (ou hou-ou)	Karité (beurre de)	Pain
Champignon	Pimm	Kola	Goûra
Ecorce	Taparè	Néré	N'duyo — N'duo
Epine	Moui	Néré (farine de)	N'douboulo
Feuille	M'vio	Racine	Tinamm
Fleur	Tu (ou tu-u)	Tamarinier	Poûsi
Fromager	Gômm — Toubiri (ou Toubri)		

ANIMAUX DOMESTIQUES

Ane	Boni	— Chevreau	Boukobi
Bœuf	Naou	Chien	Bia
— Taureau	N'vara	Mouton	Posou
— Vache	Naporo	— Bélier	Posounoudoua
— Veau	Nabi	— Brebis	Posouporo
Canard	Kônzo	— Agneau	Pousoukobi
Chat	Dorobya	Poulet	Pia
Cheval	Ouosimm	— Coq	Padia (ou Piadia)
Chèvre	Bou	— Poule	Piaporo
— Boue	Boudou	— Poussin	Piai
— Chèvre	Bouporo		

ANIMAUX SAUVAGES

Abeille	Siri	Mulot	Sua
Araignée	Nâré	Oiseau	Nû (ou Nuu)
Buffle	Banndao	Pigeon	Nangban
Crapaud	Bonntoua	Pintade	Pôn
Crocodile	N'gao	Poisson	Youm
Eléphant	Yao	Rat (de Gambie)	Dayou
Escargot	Gannga	Sauterelle (criquet)	Nakionti
Grenouille	Sennsa		
Hippopotame	Ninien (ou Niénié)	Scorpion	Nyo (ou Nuo)
Hyène	Pîhou	Sénégali	Nui
Léopard	Gobia	Serpent	Ouâ
Lièvre	Syo	— Python	Ouâpio
Lion	Benngué	Silure	Diounngolo
Margouillat	Ban	Singe	Ouamm
Mouche	Natioum	Souris	N'gô
Moustique	Dunnsi	Termite	Miari

Français	*Kiansi*	*Français*	*Kiansi*
Tourterelle	Nangban (ou Nangbamm)	Varan (iguane)	Hu (ou Hu-u)
		Vautour	Pano

PARTIES DU CORPS

Barbe	Tyè	Mollet	Napou
Bouche	Nangbainn	Nez	N'gueuri (ou N'gueuré)
Boyaux	Pouhou		
Bras	Nisi	Nombril	Su (ou Sui)
Cervelle	Zoupouti	Œil	Nimmbéré
Cheveux	Zuèsi	Ongle	Ninié
Corps	Nimm	Oreille	Turi (ou Touri)
Cou	N'guiri	Os	Kobi
Crâne	Zoumbainn	Peau	Baignn (ou Bagnn)
Cuisse	Kôsô		
Dent	Gni	Pied	Nantara
Derrière	Takoli	Poil	Finiokouabiti
Doigt	Nandô	Poing	Nikouli
Dos	N'gan (ou N'gan-hi)	Poitrine	Kousi
		Pouce	Nadoubé-oualè
Front	N'diri	Salive	Tuenntuéli
Jambe	Namm	Sang	Zi
Joue	Tapia	Sein	Bisi
Langue	Dennguélô	Sueur	Ouili
Larme	Ninia	Tête	Zou
Lèvre	N'dora	Ventre	Pouï
Main	Nési	Visage	Nemmbié
Menton	Takourou		

FAMILLE, VILLAGE ET PAYS

Ancêtre	Piou	Fils	Nidobi
Canton	Yè	Fille	Niporobi
Case (en terre)	Doro	Frère (grand)	Ma
Case (à toit en paille)	Dakiri	Frère (petit)	Nua
	Dakiri	Grand-père	Nokopoué
Célibataire	Dako	Grand'mère	Mapien
Chef (de village)	Nao	Homme	Nouro (ou Nédoua)
Chef (de maison)	Nisouma (ou Nésouma)		
		Hôte (qui est reçu)	Nityanou
Enfant	Biga		
Epouse	Nipoura	Jeune fille	Niporolia
Captif	Yoma	Mère	M'ma
Captif (de case)	Yommbi	Neveu (fils de sœur)	N'tobi
Femme	Nipoura		

Français	*Kiansi*	*Français*	*Kiansi*
Noble	Nâbi	Veuve	Boukouin
Notable	N'gatiniono	Vieillard	Nisoma
Père	N'ko	Village	Yé

NOURRITURE ET BOISSON

Bière de mil	Damm	Miel	Yé
Boisson	Damm	Œuf (de poule)	Paguié ou (Piaguié)
Farine	N'zo	Sauce	Mâna
Farine (de fruit de baobab)	Finnzo	Sel	Yési
		Soumbara	Diomm
Graisse	Pan (ou Pain)	Tô	Sao
Lait	Nabisimm	Viande	Lamm

MOBILIER, VÊTEMENT, ARMES, etc.

Arc	Penn	Lance	Pain-hi
Bâton	Tèdou	Mortier	Tu
Boubou	Garéhi	Pagaie	Duo
Bracelet	Koutou	Paille	Tia
Calebasse	Ki	Pagne (de femme)	Garo
Canari, pot	Samani	Panier (de pêche)	Sowoué (ou Sowi)
Cauri	Liguira	Pilon	Tandoum
Chaîne	Kieuré	Pipe	Tékienn
Chaise	Zouparalé	Pirogue	Boûri
Charbon (de bois)	Nuisi	Rasoir	Poni
Corbeille	Bousi	Sandale	N'duési
Corde, ficelle	Mi	Savon	Kianfantou
Couteau	N'guébé	Tambour	N'gori
Fagot	N'dâti	Tambour (gros, pour la danse)	Gangamm
Filet (de pêche)	Nibou		
Flèche	Pei	— Calebasse	Goé
Flûte	Hiu-u	— Sablier	Doundouni
Fronde	Vamm	Trompe	Namouni
Fusil	Kammondio		

NOMS DE MÉTIERS

Colporteur	Ougagnié	Maçon	Ouosérédo
Cultivateur	Ouafa	Travailleur (du bois)	Ouâpisi
Forgeron	Tio		

Français	*Kiansi*	*Français*	*Kiansi*

NOMS DE RACE

Nègre	N'douro	Dioula	Yarasé
Musulman	Yarasé	Dagari	Komm

MÉTAUX ET SUBSTANCES DIVERSES

Or	Koutimouna	Ivoire	Yaouni
Cuivre	Sali	Cuir	Bagnn (ou Bainn)
Fer	Koutou	Pierre	Binntagnn
Argile	Ya	Poudre (à fusil)	Kamboutié

NATURE

Brousse	Hoû (ou Hou-ou)	Pierre	Binntaï (ou Binntagnn)
Caillou	Binntagnn		
Caverne	Vorou	Pluie	M'boro
Ciel	Ouoni – Oué	Poussière	Temmougoulé
Colline	Pimm	Rocher	Pimm
Eau	Nien	Sable	Tammouso
Eclair	Kouasiguizi	Sentier	Suyo
Etoile	Mara	Soleil	Ouombiri
Feu	Bouélé	Terre	Temm
Foudre	Ouoni	Tonnerre	Nampani
Grêle	Marabinntainn	Trou	Barou
Lune	Ki	Vent	Vio
Marigot	Bélé	Est	Kori
Monde	Temmpihain	Ouest	Ni
Nuage	M'boro	Nord	Galanisi (1)
		Sud	Diougouhi (2)

TEMPS

Jour	Dari	Midi	Ouombya
Semaine	M'von	Aujourd'hui	Guinnla
Mois	Ki	Hier	Diéhou (ou Dimm)
Année	Bé	Demain	Kuimm
Jour	Ouombiri	Maintenant	Napouré
Nuit	Yo	Souvent	Kiennkaoulé
Matin	Saliou	Longtemps	Ouôdalé
Soir	Dunnda	Rapidement	Oulé

(1) C'est-à-dire : (à gauche en regardant à l'Est).
(2) A droite (en regardant à l'Est).

Français	*Kiansi*	*Français*	*Kiansi*

RELIGION

Ame		Commémoration	Lapisibousou
— Ombre	Yésimm	Gris-gris	Timm
— Souffle	Vouavousi	Gris-gris (qui lie)	Ohobi
Cadavre	Pihou	Gris-gris (contre les serpents)	Ouâti
Devin	Bânô		
Esprit (de la brousse)	Guhi	Gris-gris (contre les sorciers)	Saparati Saparatimm
Fête	Dagpain	Masque (religieux)	Momm
Fétiche (divinité)	Bogolo Borolo	Poison	Potimm
Féticheur	Pégniniono Bogolokouniono	Poison (volatil)	Baro
Féticheur (faisant tomber la pluie)	Vouavoumboro	Sorcier (malfaisant)	Sagpa (ou Sapa)
Enterrement	Bagagou	Tam-tam	Dinnti
		Tombe	Bousou

SUBSTANTIFS DIVERS

Ami	Ayâlé	Maladie	Tuo
Camarade	N'dua	Malade	Nidoma
Chanson	Yihili	Milieu	Sounsoum
Fable	Sunnsio	Moitié	Bâni
Dette	Pami	Mot	Ouabisi — Babisi
Famine	Sisarati	Mur	Sya
Fumée	Nyousi	Parc à bœufs	Napiè
Guerre	Tomm	Porte (ouverture)	Nansuo – Nansyo
Géant	Diévouon	Poteau	Dyo
Incendie	Babiéou	Poulailler	Kouri
Gale	Sampani	Rêve	Ouadasi
Lèpre	Oué	Richesse	N'gati
Lépreux	Ouomann		

ADJECTIFS

Beau	Dandialon (ou Diandalo)	Faible	Diavalo
		Fort	Oparara
Bête	Yaralo	Fou	Yésinn
Blanc	Piélo	Froid	N'gôti
Bon	Diandalo	Gourmand	Ouadéga
Brave	Ouoto	Grand	Diavouon
Chaud	Otélé	Gros	Diagpion
Circoncis	Langaré	Indigent	Silinien

Français	*Kiansi*	*Français*	*Kiansi*
Insolent	Wayaodé	Nouveau	Yâpâli
Intelligent	Otaya	Noir	Saoule — Savali
Ivrogne	N'damm	Petit	Guélé
Lâche	Oyéroyè	Puissant	Pagaro
Laid	Boullorou	Riche	N'gatiniono
Lourd	Odougouré	Rouge	Mani
Malade	Ninntuila	Sec	Okoya
Malheureux	Ousuiti	Sourd	Gamm
Mauvais	Boulo	Vantard	Ouayaodé
Méchant	Boulo	Vieux	Nisoma
Menteur	Okié	Voleur	Zio (ou Zuo)

VERBES

Acheter	Gada	Obéir	To
Attraper	N'guéyouwa	Oublier	Barainyé
Boire	Honiou	Parler	Inngwo
Chanter	Vouayéréhili	Partir	Kiengué (ou Kiemm)
Cueillir	N'gagosi		
Couper	Gakié	Pêcher	Dioum
Danser	Ougagoua	Piler	Ouakourou
Demander	Gabéoua	Pleurer	Kioumkém
Dire	Yéo	Poser	N'zani
Disputer (se)	Naparinnta	Poursuivre	Tialikamm
Donner	Patoua	Prendre	Pari
Dormir	Vodouagba	Promener (se)	Gnié
Ecouter	Vouavô	Questionner	Babé (ou Babo)
Frapper	Navouakam	Réfléchir	Kiemm
Fuir	Kia	Reposer (se)	Bourousi
Gratter (se)	Ngomisi	Rêver	Basi (ou Basé ou Basia)
Grimper	Aguioli		
Interroger	Ogabé	Rire	La (ou Lala)
Jouer	Bâdini	Sauver (se)	Kiali
Jurer	Péya	Semer	Lébouré
Lancer	Niougui	Taire (se)	Opé
Laver	Gâsouré	Travailler	Tountoum
Laver (se)	Lèsou	Tuer	Kouam
Manger	Dé	Vaincre	Pagaro
Marcher	Kiékamm	Vendre	Da (ou Daya)
Mentir	Kélé	Venir	Dyandé
Moquer (se)	Zougonga	Voir	Nyè
Moucher (se)	Finnguiri	Voler	Zuo
Mourir	Pi	Voler (dans l'air)	Ofyiti
Nager	Légnienko	Voyager	Laoro
Noyer (se)	Nienbiri		

Français	*Kiansi*	*Français*	*Kiansi*

ADVERBES, PRÉPOSITIONS, etc.

Doucement	Ouasi	Là-bas	Vouaké
Vite	N'wouli (ou N'woulé)	Partout	Tonkaminiéna
		Pourquoi?	Banvouara?
Ici	N'diwa	Encore !	Magnitémm !

PETITES PHRASES

Français	*Kiansi*
Comment t'appelles-tu?	Iféyoloba?
De quel village es-tu?	Finyimm bé?
D'où viens-tu?	Fakiemm bé?
Où vas-tu?	Fakarabé?
De quelle race es-tu?	Bègandoûra?
Es-tu content?	Lamasa oguiri?
Es-tu fatigué?	Odiaya?
Je suis fatigué.	Ogiaĩ.
Je ne suis pas fatigué.	Mamgiaé.
Je te donne un cadeau.	N'patoa.
Ce n'est pas fini.	Mandioyé.
C'est fini.	Oniéya (ou Ondouya)

FORMATION DU PLURIEL

Chien	Bya	Nérés	Dioti
Chiens	Byasi	Chèvre	Bou
Poisson	Dioum	Chèvres	Boûti
Poissons	Diouma	Mouton	Posou
Serpent	Wa	Moutons	Positi
Serpents	Wati	Cheval	Ouosimm
Poulet	Pia	Chevaux	Ouosima
Poulets	Pésé	Bœuf	Na
Arbre	Tibou	Bœufs	Niga
Arbres	Titi	Chat	Dorobya
Feuille	M'viô	Chats	Dorobyasi
Feuilles	M'vîâti	Abeille	Siri
Ane	Boni	Abeilles	Sié
Anes	Boïnnsi	Sauterelle	Nankion
Fromager	N'go	Sauterelles	Nankionti
Fromagers	N'gonsi	Arachide	Simmpain
Champignon	Goû	Arachides	Simmpainti
Champignons	Gounti	Kiansi	Kanguia
Néré	Dio	Kiansis	Kanguiarasi

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APPENDICE VIII

Vocabulaire général et comparé des Gourounsi (1)

NOMS DE NOMBRE

Français	*Nounouma*	*Tondioulé*	*Larhama*	*Kiansi*	*Gouressi* (Delafosse)
—	—	—	—	—	—
1	Nodo	Bidon	Kobala	Bougni	Nido
2	Belè	Bellè	Balia	Bahié	Bale
3	Batua	Botoro	Batori	Bata	Batoro
4	Banien	Bana	Banasi	Bouâsé	Bana
5	Bénou	Bomon	Banon	Banou	Banu
6	Bardo	Boldo	Bardo	Bansanta	Bazido
7	Barpa	Bolpè	Barpè	Bantanasi	Balepè
8	Nana	Kieuri	Kieuri	Nani	Neué
9	Noro	Nivi	Nivi	Nô	Nivi
10	Foua	Fi	Fi	Pi	Fi
20	Sapoua	Mérè	Mara	Piayé	»
40	Sapousila	Mérèsibellè	Marasibolia	Pisinasi	»
60	Sapositua	Mèsibotoro	Marasibéto	Pinntanta	»
80	Saposinè	Mèsibana	Marasibana	Pinanou	»
100	Bi	Zolo	Koroba	Kouo	»
1.000	Moro	Zolofi	Tousi	Tousapi	»

(1) J'ai réuni, dans ce vocabulaire, pour les comparaisons à faire, mes vocabulaires Nounouma, Tondioulé, Larhama, Kiansi, auxquels j'ai ajouté le « Gouressi » de M. Delafosse.

CULTURE

Français	*Nounouma*	*Tondioulé*	*Larhama*	*Kiansi*	*Gouressi* (Delafosse)
—	—	—	—	—	—
Arachide	Sié	Soukan	Simmpan	Simmpain	»
Champ	Kara	Bara	Bara	Télimm	Tala
Coton	Gounou	Konkon	Konkon	Gounkouti	»
Cotonnier	Gounoudao	Konkonda	Konkonda	»	»
Gombo	Pari	Mana	Mana	Mana	»
Hache	Doro	Sa	Sâ	Lia	»
Haricot	Siné	Soana	Sono	Tué	»
Houe	Varo	Pi	Pari	Koûri	»
Igname	Pia	Piè	Pia	Niri	»
Ignamier	Piadao	Pièdala	Piédasi	»	»
Indigo	Garé	Biro	»	»	»
Maïs	Pamina	Mié	Mia	Kimmbèné	»
Manioc	Pafofona	Bombo	Pompo	»	»
Sorgho blanc	Minnso	Niempè	Bovo	Mankari	»
Sorgho rouge	Kada	»	Mapè	N'za	»
Millet	Mina	Mopouma	Mopoloma	N'zapèla	»
Oseille	Bio	Vigné	»	Huiga	»
Patate	Nagniri	Nâniou	Naniori	Nabanoulé	»
Piment	Namouridio	Nambasougué	Nandio	Marabazô	»
Pois de terre	Sié	Siblé	Siblé	Souma	»
Riz	Moui	Moui	Niri	Mouin	»
Tabac (à fumer)	Sara	Tawa	Taba	Sara	»

Français	*Nounouma*	*Tondioulé*	*Larhama*	*Kiansi*	*Gouressi* (Delafosse)
—	—	—	—	—	—
Tabac (à priser)	Sara	Ntominou	Sara	»	»
Tomate	Tambla	Kérembé	Kômbié	Koûmé	»
		VÉGÉTATION SPONTANÉE			
Arbre	Dao	Dala	Tia	Ti-hou	Dao
Bambou	M'biho	Moula	Moui	»	»
Baobab	Kounou	N'zanngo	Téri	Tui	»
Baobab (fruit du)	»	Kellé	Télébi	»	»
Branche	Dova	Nésè	Tiannasan	»	»
Brousse	Go	Bara	Bara	Hoû	»
Champignon	Dyalé	»	»	Pimm	»
Ecorce	Daovaro	Daparala	Tièparasi	Taparè	»
Epine	So	Solo	Soma	Moui	»
Feuille	Voro	Paro	Paré	M'vio	»
Fleur	Pôn	Kéla	»	Tu-u	»
Fromager	Gou	Kokono	Komé	Gômm	»
Fruit	Daobié	Dalaobié	Tiébisi	»	»
Herbe	N'gao	Niolo	Yan	Oûti	»
Karité	Dao	Soana	Nou	Tiamm	»
Karité (fruit du)	»	Soanabilo	»	»	»
Karité (beurre de)	Noua	Noûla	Nou	Pain	»
Kola	Ouolo	Gouro	Gouro	Goûra	»
Kolatier	Oualo-dao	Gourouda	»	»	»

Français	*Noumouma*	*Tondioulé*	*Larhama*	*Kiansi*	*Gouressi* (Delafosse)
—	—	—	—	—	—
Néré	Seinngo	Soulo	Sola	N'duo	»
Néré (fruit du)	»	Soulobié	Sôbié	»	»
Néré (farine de)	Simô	»	»	N'douboulo	»
Racine	Daona	Dalougué	Dalousi	Tinamm	»
Tamarinier	Dao	Ômmisôdala	Sonson	Poûsi	»
		ANIMAUX DOMESTIQUES			
Ane	Béna	Kokoumô	Kakouma	Boni	»
Bœuf	No (ou Nao)	Nolo	Nan	Naou	»
— Taureau	Nabia	Nobalo	Nabari	N'vara	»
— Vache	Nakain	Nohalo	Nani	Naporo	»
— Veau	Naobio	Nobié	Nabié	Nabi	»
Chat	Kéllo	Béli	Gali	Dorobya	»
Cheval	Nèsan	N'zara	Diaro	Ouosimm	»
— Etalon	Nèsambara	N'zabalo	Diabari	»	»
— Jument	Nèsankain	N'zahalo	Diani	»	»
— Poulain	Nèsambio	N'zabié	Diabié	»	»
Chèvre	Bon	Bôno	Bounou	Bou	Buo
— Bouc	Bétolo	»	»	Boudou	»
— Chèvre	Bonkain	»	»	Bouporo	»
— Chevreau	Bonbyo	»	»	Boukobi	»
Chien	Koura	Vaa	Vaa	Bia	»
Mouton	Pio	Pièso	Pièsé	Posou	»

Français	*Nosmouma*	*Tondioulé*	*Larhama*	*Kiansi*	*Gouressi* (Delafosse)
—	—	—	—	—	—
— Bélier	Piobia	Piébalo	Piébalo	Posounoudoua	»
— Brebis	Piokain	Piéhalo	Piéni	Posouporo	»
— Agneau	Piobio	Piéobié	Piébié	Pousoukobi	»
Poulet	Tiro	N'zimi	Guimi	Pia	Gbala
— Coq	Tiabia	N'zimmbalo	Guibalo	Piadia	»
— Poule	Tiakain	N'zihalo	Guini	Piaporo	»
— Poussin	Tiabio	N'zibié	Guibié	Pisi	»
		ANIMAUX SAUVAGES			
Abeille	N'tua	Toubié	Toubi	Siri	»
Aigle	Zambou	Dibié	Atiou	»	»
Animal	»	»	»	»	Lam
Araignée	Nénain	»	»	Nâré	»
Autruche	Nambyo	»	»	»	»
Buffle	Gaonndo	Niénolo	Môna	Bandao	»
Biche (rayée)	Kouon	Kankané	»	»	»
Crapaud	»	Niongué	Yébé	Bountoua	»
Crocodile	Niao	Niôla	Niba	N'gao	»
Eléphant	Tou	Bâtou	Batou	Yao	»
Escargot	Kokolo	»	»	Gannga	»
Grenouille	Kiari	Niongué	Yibida	Sennsa	»
Hibou	M'vio	Douni	Badoulou	»	»
Hippopotame	Bouano	Mounolo	Lénoro	Ninien	»

Français	*Nounouma*	*Tondioulé*	*Larhama*	*Kiansi*	*Gouressi* (Delafosse)
—	—	—	—	—	—
Hyène	Bihirou	Bélo	Boho	Pihou	»
Iguane (varan)	Boa	»	Oso	Hu	»
Koba	Siga	»	Ko	»	»
Léopard	Kilio	Bé	Pei	Gobia	»
Lièvre	N'zoungo	Kieunou	Kiôma	Syo	»
Lion	Gaonion	Birini	Anwo	Benngué	»
Magnan	Banikala	»	Tifièma	»	»
Margouillat	Kilo	»	Guéri	Ban	»
Mouche	Nandoua	Nantio	Nantiosi	Natioum	»
Moustique	Bouna	Bousè	Dèsi	Dunnsi	»
Mulot	»	Holla	»	Sua	»
Oiseau	N'zinngo	Dibiè	Diwa	Nuu	»
Papillon	Sissara	Tinntimi	Guinngalimé	»	»
Perdrix	Louô	»	Yoho	»	»
Phacochère	Tô	Bèlo	Tô	»	»
Potamochère	Tèsion	Bèlo	Gbi	»	»
Pigeon (sauvage)	Kamponi	»	Sani	Nangban	»
Pigeon (vert)	Kamposonou	»	Yopouré	»	»
Pintade	Sou	Soûlo	Sou	Pôn	»
Poisson	Filé	Nanholè	Nianhoulè	Youm	»
Poisson-chien	Kourofili	Vanahoulè	Guima	»	»
Porc-épic	Senngué	»	Soma	»	»
Rat (de Gambie)	Hyé	Déyougué	Sayou	Dayou	»
Rat (aulacode)	Niani	Kèlo	N'gâré	»	»

Français	*Noumouma*	*Tondioulé*	*Larhama*	*Kiansi*	*Gouressi* (Delafosse)
—	—	—	—	—	—
Sauterelle (criquet)	Kahira	Tinntimé	Hokoudiéni	Nakionti	»
Scorpion	Nô	Nouana	Nôma	»	»
Sénégali	N'zammisinnga	Dibié	Kiô	Nui	»
Serpent	Dain	Douna	Dénn	Ouâ	»
Serpent cracheur	Dioudourou	»	Basimmpia	»	»
Serpent python	Dibion	Doûlo	Dor	Ouapio	»
Serpent d'eau	Dibiséli	»	Pilé	»	»
Silure	Kagbamina	Nanholè-binndo	Nimmbisi	Dioungolo	»
Singe	Kilia	Hona	Mama	Ouamm	»
Singe rouge	Kalasion	Honfièna	Mafiéma	»	»
Singe vert	Kalagatui	»	Mampoulouma	»	»
Singe cynocéphale	Kô	»	Fon	»	»
Singe noir	Kalazoni	Honbinno	»	»	»
Souris	Totouè	Daté	Tati	N'gô	»
Termite	Kyou	N'zéna	Filé	Miari	»
Termitière	Kyoudio	N'zénabélo	Tinn	»	»
Tourterelle	Kampokané	»	Kakobini	Nangban	»
Tortue	Katemmboua	Gongolla	Gorombolé	»	»
Vautour	Doulou	Dounou	Dôhi	Pano	»
Ver	Kantinntanwo	»	Vâri	»	»
		PARTIES DU CORPS			
Barbe	Pain	Tomon	Toma	Tyè	»
Bouche	Ni	Nouon	Ni	Nangbainn	Nohâ

Français	*Nounouma*	*Tondioulé*	*Larhama*	*Kiansi*	*Gouressi* (Delafosse)
—	—	—	—	—	—
Boyaux	Loro	Lobié	Loubié	Pouhou	»
Bras	Van	Nèsè	Nésé	Nisi	»
Cervelle	Youkonoua	Nioudala	Nioukoro	Zoupouti	»
Cheveux	Koumvi	Nioupouna	Niouposon	Zuési	»
Cœur	Kénio	»	Bohi	»	»
Corps	Hira	Déna	Yara	Nimm	»
Cou	Bien	Banga	Bara	N'guiri	Bongo
Crâne	Nyoutan	Nioulo	Noutan	Zoumbaïnn	»
Cuisse	Ki	Nala	Koui	Kôsô	»
Dent	Yéli	Niéla	Niéla	Gni	Nina
Derrière	Demm	»	Tinga	Takôli	»
Doigt	Guianbiè	Nébié	Nani	Nandô	»
Dos	Tan	Harra	Hara	N'gan	»
Epaule	Van	Vara	Vaha	»	»
Front	Tiri	Tulé	Tulé	N'diri	»
Jambe	Na	»	Naparason	Namm	»
Joue	Zépan	Tambélè	Sien	Tapia	»
Langue	Didali	Nandulè	Nandolo	Dennguèlô	Gingélé
Larme	Yénya	»	Siléré	Ninia	»
Lèvre	Ni	Niokanna	Nitan	N'dora	»
Main	Guina	Nésè	Nésé	Nési	Nonge
Menton	Toni	»	Nibara	Takourou	»
Nez	Mi	Misè	Misé	N'gueuri	Nyu
Nombril	Ouri	Nion	Kaoulé	Su (ou Sui)	»

Français	*Nounouma*	*Tondioulé*	*Larhama*	*Kiansi*	*Gouressi* (Delafosse)
Œil	Yil	Sibié	Si	Nimmbéré	Sina
Ongle	Guéporo	Napara	Niparasi	Ninié	»
Oreille	N'zi	Dellè	Diguila	Turi	Towi
Os	Kou	Fengbélé	Hanguélé	Kobi	»
Peau	Hiratano	Kéna	Tain	Baignn	Nyine
Pied	Naï	Nasè	Nasi	Nantara	Nâne
Poil	Kirakoro	»	Pouna	Finiokouabiti	»
Poing	Guibouli	Nèboullè	Nakoulouma	Nikouli	»
Poitrine	Niouné	Bankila	Nié	Kousi	Bigya
Pouce	Diéfoubio	Nébiébizinou	Nanidié	Nadoubé-oualè	»
Salive	Ninia	Mountuara	Nitioro	Tuentuéli	»
Sang	Diana	Kella	Kialé	Zi	»
Sein	Yélé	Héla	Hila	Bisi	»
Sueur	Télon	Loumè	Toulo	Ouili	»
Tempe	Zébô	Tambélè	Para	»	»
Testicule	Mainkiala	»	Panbiè	»	»
Tête	»	Nioulo	»	Zou	Zu
Vagin	Mani	»	Main	»	»
Ventre	Pouo	Lourou	Lourou	Poui	Loya

FAMILLE, VILLAGE ET PAYS

Ancêtre	Kirou	Sôla	Souhou	Piou	»
Canton	Lo	»	Tan	Yè	»

Français	*Nounouma*	*Tondioulé*	*Larhama*	*Kiansi*	*Gouressi* (Delafosse)
—	—	—	—	—	—
Case (en terre, à toit plat)	Diyo	Diâ	Diâ	Doro	Gyâ
Case (hutte à toit en paille)	»	Niodia	Kapilé	Dakiri	»
Célibataire	Bédénou	»	Bakôra	Dako	»
Chef	Pyo	Kôrou	Korou	Nao	Naba
Chef de canton	Pyokoualia	»	»	»	»
Chef de village	Tiéotio	Tolokoro	Diantina	Nao	»
Chef de famille ou groupe	Santyo	Diétina	Diatina	Nisouma	»
Chef de ménage	»	Diétinabié	Byétina	»	»
Dot	Nétérou	Mèsèbellè	Adiamobié	»	»
Enfant	Byo	Bié	Bié	Bi (ou bié)	»
Epouse	Kasonngo	»	Avôra	Nipoura	»
Esclave	Hyo	Yomon	Yo	Yoma	Nyômô
Esclave de traite	Hyo	Yomon	Yo	»	»
Esclave de case	Yombyo	Yobié	»	Yommbi	»
Famille (totale)	Ninabya	Mabélè	Miniré	»	»
Famille (groupe de ménages)	»	Mabélè	»	»	»
Famille (ménage)	»	Mabié	Miniré	»	»
Femme	Kain	Halo	Halo	Nipoura (ou Poro)	Halô
Femelle	Kain	Halo	Halo	Poro	»
Fille	Bisimakain	Bihâlo	Hambié	Niporobi	Ambye

Français	*Nounouma*	*Tondioulé*	*Larhama*	*Kiansi*	*Gouressi* (Delafosse)
—	—	—	—	—	—
Fille (jeune)	Kabyo	Koutouloublé	Atoulé	Niporolia	»
Fils	Bisimabara	Bibalo	Babolodié	Nidobi	Ambye
Frère	»	Mabié	Ngana	»	»
Frère (de mère)	Ninabio	Mabié	Nâbié	»	»
Frère (de père)	Noubio	Namabié	Minimabié	»	»
Frère (grand)	Azounou	»	»	Ma	»
Frère (petit)	Nyanou	»	»	Nua	»
Garçon (grand)	Bisimabara	Bapoli	»	»	»
Grand-père	Anyabè	Nabalo	Nabal	»	»
Grand'mère	Anikéné	Niala	Naba	»	»
Gendre	Atemmbè	Douhalo	Méniré	»	»
Héritier	Didirou	M'bouradié	»	»	»
Homme (en général)	»	»	»	»	»
Homme (mâle)	Baro	Balo	Ball	Nédoua	Bara
Hôte (qui reçoit)	Diatyo	Diatina	Diâtina	»	»
Hôte (qui est reçu)	M'véro	Nihora	Nahoro	Nityanou	»
Mari	Kassounoubalé	Doubalo	M'bala	»	»
Mariage	Katarou	Abovouè	»	»	»
Mère	Nou	Ma	Na	M'ma	Ma
Neveu (fils de frère)	Aniombio	M'bié	Minnganadé	»	»
Neveu (fils de sœur)	Anakombio	Niarabié	Miniré	N'tobi	»
Noble (fils de chef)	Piéobio	Kouroubié	Kôribié	Nâbi	»
Notable	Liritohirina	Nisimi	Yérétina	N'gatiniono	»
Oncle (paternel)	Anyénaniann	Niara	Minimagana	»	»

Français	*Nounouma*	*Tondioulé*	*Larhama*	*Kiansi*	*Gouressi* (Delafosse)
—	—	—	—	—	—
Oncle (maternel)	Anébal	Niarabibié	Minjra	»	»
Pays	Lo	Tôlô	Palo	»	»
Père	Anyna	Nana	Minima N'ko	N'ko	Ko
Quartier	Sanntion	N'zo	»	»	»
Race	Dul	Adouo	Niadamain	»	»
Toit (plat, en terre)	Dio	»	Gulé	»	»
Toit (en paille)	Gaoudio	»	Kampilé	»	»
Veuve	Kodennou	Niouhalo	Youhala	Boukouin	»
Vieillard	Basouna	Bayéon	Nibien	Nisoma	»
Village	Tyo	Tolo	Dian	Yé	Tenga
Voisin	Adiokouolla	Aféguémé	Mésiné	»	»

NOURRITURE ET BOISSON

Boisson	Sana	Sain	Sain	Damm	»
Bière de mil	Nyousesana	Sain	Sain	Damm	»
Bière de maïs	Faminasana	Sain	»	»	»
Bière-hydromel	»	»	Biason	»	»
Farine	Mou	Mî	Mou	N'zo	»
Farine de mil	»	Mempémi	Mou	»	»
Farine de maïs	»	Lèmimi	Mou	»	»
Farine d'igname	»	Pèmi	»	»	»
Farine de baobab	Kounoumou	Kalimi	Télémou	Tinnzo	»

Français	*Nouwouma*	*Tondioulé*	*Larhama*	*Kiansi*	*Gouressi* (Delafosse)
—	—	—	—	—	—
Graisse, huile	Noua	Non	Nô (ou Nou)	Pan (ou Pain)	»
Hydromel	Torosana	Tohella	»	»	»
Lait	Nahfla	Nohell	Nahiri	Nabisimm	»
Miel	Toro	Tô	Toho (ou Tou)	Yé	»
Œuf	Kiali (ou Kialé)	Diala	Hala	Guié	»
Œuf de poule	Kiéroukialé	»	»	Piaguié	»
Sauce	N'duè	Disè	Disé (ou Disi)	Mâna	»
Sel	Nikouan	Diésè	Yasé	Yési	Yésa
Soumbara	Kua	Tiô	Kio	Diomm	»
Tô	M'bié (ou Miè)	Koulla	Kolon	Sao	Kôri
Tô (de farine de mil)	»	Mempékoulè	»	»	»
Tô (de farine de maïs)	»	Mompoumakoula	»	»	»
Tô (de farine d'igname)	»	Pèkoula	»	»	»
Viande	Non (ou Naon)	»	Namien	Lamm	Lam
Vin de palme	»	Sinn	»	»	»

MOBILIER, VÊTEMENT, etc.

Allumette	Folèmi	»	»	»	»
Arc	Tuin	Tô	Ton	Penn	»
Bague	»	Holo	»	»	»
Bague en fer	Dinngavalé	»	»	»	»
Bâton	Dabia	Dala	Dâ	Tèdou	»

Français	*Nounouma*	*Tondioulé*	*Larhama*	*Kiansi*	*Gouressi* (Delafosse)
—	—	—	—	—	—
Bois (à brûler)	»	»	»	»	Da
Boubou	Gannsio	Guerra	Gari	Garéhi	»
Bracelet	Dinnganoubou	Néholo	Biti	Koutou	»
Briquet	Konngo	Nihollo	Kieursi	»	»
Calebasse	N'souin	Banga	Banga	Ki	»
Caleçon indigène	Diao	Tinntilo	Diapalo	Kourousi	»
Canari, pot	Nikana	Vié	Poupoué	Samani	»
Carquois	Kionndyo	Loro	Touain (?)	»	»
Cauri	Sibia	Miébié	Morbié	Liguira	»
Ceinture	»	Kéna	Garfoua	»	»
Chaîne	Lourou	Hôlô	Kioroma	Kieuré	»
Chaise	Dyo	Basa	Pasa	Zouparalé	»
Charbon (de bois)	Kassimmini	Holo	Niéfilé	Nuisi	»
Clef	Bourouubyo	»	»	»	»
Collier (verroterie)	Biennsôn	Bonsiè	Louroumbié	»	»
Corbeille	Fihyo	Bébé	Siné	Bousi	»
Corde	Mouana	Ména	Main	Mi	»
Couteau	Sio	Sié	Sia	N'guébé	»
Cravache	Dammpéré	Kasè	Pasa	N'dâti	»
Culotte	Namann	Kouna	Koursi	»	»
Fagot	Davoué	Davovouè	Dagova	»	»
Ficelle	»	Mébié	Mambisi	»	»
Filet (de pêche)	Gaganon	»	Koukoutibié	Nibou	»
Flèche	Tyen	Hèna	Hama	Pei	»

Français	*Nounouma*	*Tondioulé*	*Larhama*	*Kiansi*	*Gouressi* (Delafosse)
—	—	—	—	—	—
Flûte	Houo	Moulé	M'mélé	Hiu-u	»
Fourreau	Pio	Sidala	Siatoula	»	»
Fronde	Kapadoro	Painkou	Pouali (ou Poualé)	Vamm	»
Fusil	Pinn (ou Pého)	Bougoudala	Marfa	Kammondio	»
Hamac	»	Bua	»	»	»
Hameçon	Pikiènn	»	Pôtouda	»	»
Javelot, lance	Fi (ou Finn)	Hodala	Timmbié	Pain-hi	»
Lampe (indigène)	Kyanon	Tianè	Tiâno	»	»
Lit (indigène)	»	»	»	»	»
Livre	Yérétanou	»	Karamorotâ	»	»
Malle	Kounndou	»	»	»	»
Manche	Dao	Pidala	Sainto	»	»
Manche de houe	Waridao	»	Sainto	»	»
Métier (à tisser)	Ganndè	»	Galésora	»	»
Mortier	N'zo	Touala	Toro	Tu	»
Natte	Sara	Basa	Bosa	»	»
Oreiller	Gammpouri	Niouborè	Kapoti	»	»
Pagaie	Nahyo	Moudala	Dabourouda	Duo	»
Pagne (de femme)	Kainganou	Hagueia (h aspiré)	Harougaro	Garo	»
Panier (de pêche)	N'zi	»	»	Sowoué (ou Sowi)	»
Pilon	N'zoleyo	Todala	Tinnda	Tandoum	»
Pipe	N'zoua	Tovi	Taodana	Tékienn	»
Pirogue	Bourou	Daboré (ou Dabori)	Dabouro	Boûri	»
Poignard	N'zanou	»	Sia	»	»

Français	*Nounouma*	*Toudiouli*	*Larhama*	*Kiansi*	*Gouressi* (Delafosse)
—	—	—	—	—	—
Rasoir	Nyifina	Nioupiré	Niéfouma	Poni	»
Sabre	Sila	Sinnzènon	Tokobi (1)	»	»
Sandale	Natoura	Natawa	Natawa	N'duési	»
Sandale (p. femme)	Kénatoura	Natawa	Natawa	»	»
— Chausson	Natourollya	»	»	»	»
Savon	Safini	Fanfani	Fafani	Kianfantou	»
Selle	Nisaindo	Basa	Diapasa	»	»
Tambour	»	Gogono	»	N'gori	»
— Gros tam-tam cylindrique	Goulou	»	Goulou	Gangamm	»
— de village	Gourègouré	»	Tapani	»	»
— Calebasse	Mammkoli	»	Pandéri	Goé	»
— Sablier	Oubain	»	Sinnsiné	Doundouni	»
Tabatière	Kounkoli	Tababélé	Péré	»	»
Tabouret	Kannguion	Halobasa (2)	Pasa	»	»
Trompe	Nabono	Niéla	Hâbilé	Namouni	»
Van	»	Bésé	»	»	»
		NOMS DE MÉTIERS			
Bijoutier	Hiaro	»	Libé	»	»
Chasseur	Gaotano	Nambarala	Nambarala	»	»
Colporteur	Yolou	Bayèlé	Gougalé	Ougagnié	»

(1) Mot Maridé. (2) C'est-à-dire : chaise de femme.

Français	*Nounouma*	*Tondioulé*	*Larhama*	*Kiansi*	*Gouresei* (Delafosse)
—	—	—	—	—	—
Cultivateur	Vala	Baparra	Baratina Baradéré	Ouafa	»
Cordonnier	Liètonianatoura	Kénierra	Yerra	»	»
Forgeron	Hiaro	Lougouré	Libé	Tio	»
Fossoyeur	Boukoura	»	»	»	»
Griot	Bouara	Gorè	Gora (ou Gowa)	»	»
Instituteur	»	Karama	Karamorokori	»	»
Interprète	»	Ouiboulè	Nibolatina	»	»
Juge	»	»	Yâtina	»	»
Maçon	Lioutouluiégui	Malè	Disara	Ouosérédo	»
Palefrenier	Sisénouna	N'soniantogné	Diédara	»	»
Pêcheur	Fidiana	Nanholèsiré	Nianholèsiré	»	»
Pileuse	»	»	Toutougouri	»	»
Porteur	Liétounannzanzila	Honkinè	Titina	»	»
Tisserand	Gannsoro	Pèsolè	Sousora	»	»
Tailleur	Ganyenno	Pènierè	Gayarra	»	»
		NOMS DE RACES			
Blanc	Fola	Bapoula:	Fôli	»	»
Nègre	Lèzuin	Nibino	Nibisi	N'douro	»
Musulman					
— (singulier)	Yaré	Mèyèlè	Kosoro	»	
— (pluriel)	Yasira	»	»	Yarasé	»

Français	*Nounouma*	*Tondioulé*	*Larhama*	*Kiansi*	*Gouressi* (Delafosse)
—	—	—	—	—	—
Dyoula					
— (singulier)	Yaré	Méyélè	Mayara	»	»
— (pluriel)	Yasira	»	»	»	»
Nounouma	Nonoma	Aouna	»	»	»
Kassouna	»	Kassouma	Kassouma	»	»
Sissala	Nisao (ou Issao)	Tondioulé	Nando	»	»
Kyansi	Kyansi	»	Kyansi	»	»
Boussansé	Boussanga	»	»	»	»
Mossi	Mossi	Mossi	Mossitima	»	»
Dagari	Dagari	Kélé	Dagawa	Komm	»
Lobi	Kuré	Kiélé	Lobi	»	»
Achanti	Kamboë	»	Kambosi	»	»
		MÉTAUX ET SUBSTANCES DIVERSES			
Or	Sanimm	Salama	Salama	Koutimouna	»
Argent	Waro	»	Viti	»	»
Cuivre	Vala	Opouma	Koli	Sali	»
Fer	Lou	Holo	Ho	Koutou	Kuru
Argile	Nikananntéré	Viténa	Tiori	Ya	»
Cire	Maro	Kèlo	Kéli	»	»
Ivoire	Touyéli	Niéla	Batinnguili	Yaouni	»
Plomb	Kommbo	»	Pana	»	»
Cuir	Tanou	Kéna	Tàn	Bagnn (ou Bainn)	»
Poudre (à fusil)	Liro — Marfaliro	Marfami	Marfalourou	Kamboutié	»

Français	*Nounouma*	*Tondioulé*	*Larhama*	*Kiansi*	*Gouressi* (Delafosse)
—	—	—	—	—	—
		NATURE			
Arc-en-ciel	Ouésyo	Dônsi	Isia	»	»
Brousse	Gao	Bara	Baralo	Hoû	»
Caillou	Kafini	Daboui	Bobisi	Binntagn	»
Caverne	Bouan	Bouanéra	Boua	Vorou	»
Ciel (atmosphère)	Oué (ou yii)	Dônô	Yâ	Oué (ou Ouoni)	»
— (Voûte)	Ouédion	Douô	Tanyou	»	»
Colline	Pân	Palla (ou Bala)	Boudié	Pimm	»
Eau	Nien	Nila	Li	Nien	Lé
Éclair	Douatimmba	Pôlô	Honguirisé	Kousiguizi	»
Etoile	Siamakuè	Kiambié	Kinnkiahoa	Mara	»
Feu	Memm	Ni	Ni	Bouélé	Mini
Fleuve	Mo	Môla	Lidié	»	Môrhe
Foudre	Dakouyo	Dabila	Yasa	Ouoni	»
Grêle	Didangawélé	Doundaboua	»	Narabinntain	»
Lune	Kiana	Kéninn	Kiana	Ki	»
Marigot	Bouô	Fôlô	Fouo	Bélé	Fuo
Monde	Lô	Bahouô	Tân	Temmpihain	»
Nuage	Dammakolo-	Douon	Obiré	M'boro	»
Pierre	Kapain	Daboui	Boubié	Binntai	Daboy
Pierre (de la foudre)	Kori	»	Yasa	»	»
Pluie	Dyoua	Douon	N'douo	M'boro	»

Français	*Noumouma*	*Tondioulé*	*Larhama*	*Kiansi*	*Gouressi* (Delafosse)
—	—	—	—	—	—
Poussière	Pourou	Temmi	Poulouma	Temmougoulé	»
Rocher	Kapandafaro	Dabizènou	Koumé	Pimm	»
Route	Tion-néfaro	Menn-zénou	Ouan	»	»
Sable	Kafono	Temmi	Boumbougoulé	Tammouso	»
Sentier	Tion	Menna	Ouambié	Suyo	»
Soleil	Oué	Ouisè	Hya	Ouombiri	»
Terre	Tya	Téna	Tinnté	Temm	Tinkye
Tonnerre	Douabara	Bana	Odoné	Nampani	»
Tornade	Davoû	Douon	Ounmouinsi	»	»
Tourbillon (de vent)	M'vô	Pôlô	Vilimmvilé	»	»
Trou	Gouan (ou M'bô)	Boua (ou Bouo)	Boua	Barou	»
Vent	M'vô	Pôlô	Ouani	Vio	»
Est	Ouidè	Ouibili	Tangan	Kori	»
Ouest	Ouèzi	Ouizoulè	Taniou	Ni	»
Nord	Vankota	Nèbouo	Nago	Galanisi	»
Sud	Guézan	Nèdouou	Nédi	Diougouhi	»
			TEMPS		
Jour	Di	Tapoula	Dia	Dari	»
Semaine	Yônidou	»	Kuabaldo	M'von	»
Mois	Kiana	Kiéna	Tiana	Ki	»
Année	Béni	Bina	Guina	Bé	»
Siècle	Bi	»	Bisikoroba	»	»

Français	*Noumouma*	*Tondiouli*	*Larhama*	*Kiansi*	*Gourossi* (Delafosse)
—	—	—	—	—	—
Jour	Ikiaro	Ouisè	Yà	Ouombiri	»
Nuit	Méti	Titanga	Titan	Yo	»
Matin	Nédyou	Titouala	Titoua	Saliou	»
Soir	Midérina	Bana	Didani	Dunnda	»
Midi	Ikiaro	Ouiholo	Mi-aya	Ouombya	»
Minuit	Tyakoun	Titaniasé	Tabislésé	»	»
Aujourd'hui	Naan	Za	Guinn	Guinnla	»
Hier	Diéna	Dié	Diya	Diéhou	»
Demain	Duin	Kié	Kié	Kuimm	»
Maintenant	Sinnkota	Lara	Titiofiala	Napouré	»
Jadis	Dya	Dôlé	Dôri	»	»
Plus tard	Guilado	Binamé	Kiékobala	»	»
Quelquefois	Makado	Hoha	Tiala	»	»
Souvent	Akéléiala	Pèguémè	»	Kiennkaoulé	»
Toujours	Diama	Bahouo	»	»	»
Jamais	Aouasè	Nouohé	Oulouhou	»	»
Longtemps	Adia	Oudèno	Oudana	Ouôdalé	»
Rapidement	Vélala	Lara	Lélébira	Oulé	»
		RELIGION			
Ame	»	N'don	Doso	»	»
— Ombre	Yora	Douma	Déviné (ou Daliné)	Yésimm	»
— Souffle	Kirou	Nyésé	Niésé	Vouavousi	»

Français	*Nounouma*	*Tondioulé*	*Larhama*	*Kiansi*	*Gouressi* (Delafosse)
—	—	—	—	—	—
Cadavre	Téré	Souhou	Soho	Pihou	»
Ciel (dieu du)	Oué	Ouisè	Hyâ	»	»
Devin	Voro	Voro (ou Vougoura)	Voûra	Bânô	»
Esprit (de la brousse)	Gao-kylio	Kantoma	Katoma	Guhi	»
Fête	Binifasé	Tapoli-zéno	Guinakoudié	Dagpain	»
Fétiche (divinité)	Tyou	Vé	»	Bagolo	»
Fétiche (grand)	Tyounoufaro	Vézéno	Tangban	»	»
Fétiche (petit)	Tyounimmba	Kéna	Saba	»	»
Féticheur	Tiéoutiou	Vezénonnèra	Tangbankoudié	Bagolokouniono	»
Féticheur (p. la pluie)	Litounlorowé	Douon-hirra	Douon-hirra	Vouavoumbaro	»
Fossoyeur	Bèkanatiga	Bôhourrè	»	»	»
Funérailles	»	»	»	»	»
— Enterrement	Bakétégué	Abôyôri	»	Bagagou	»
— Commémoration	Bakèluo	Yô	»	Lapisibousou	»
Gris-gris	Tyo	Louri	Lourou	Timm	»
Gris-gris (fab. de)	Tyéotio	Louroutina	Louroutina	»	»
Gris-gris (contre la pluie)	Dakona	Dankôlé	»	»	»
Gris-gris (pour lier)	M'volo (ou M'vôni)	Nouvavouè	»	Ohobi	»
Gris-gris (contre les serpents)	Dainntyo	Dounlouri	»	Ouâti	»
Gris-gris (contre les sorciers malfaisants)	Kiétyo	Hollalourou	»	Saparatimmm	»
Marabout	Voro	Karama	»	»	»

Français	*Nounouma*	*Tondioulé*	*Larhama*	*Kiansi*	*Gouressi* (Delafosse)
—	—	—	—	—	—
Médicament	Tiéou	Louro	Louré	»	»
Médecin	Tiritiou	Louroutina	Tiba (ou Tiwa)	»	»
Mosquée, makam	Igulonndio	Ouétioladya	Ituodya	»	»
Nain (mythique de la brousse)	Tougouro	»	»	»	»
Ombre	Yora	Douma	»	»	»
Poison	Potyo	»	Dalézou	Potimm	»
Poison volatil	Doula	Bitiésé	Koroto (1)	Baro	»
Sacrifice	Bangwouani	Lésévoué	Homouparé	»	»
Sacrifier	Banwouani-niongui	In-ha	Omouin	»	»
Sacrificateur	Tiéoutiou	Néna	Vouatina	»	»
Sorcier (malfaisant)	Kiéro (ou Tiéro)	Hella	Holl	Sagpa	»
Sorcier (loup-garou)	Ko	Nibérémè	Nébrain	»	»
Terre	Tia	Téna	Tahain	Temm	»
Tombe	Téguébo	Nésovouéboua	Vahain	Bousou	»

SUBSTANTIFS DIVERS

Ami	Adibè	Nitiolé	Tiobé	Ayâlé	»
Cadeau	Pina	M'pandara	Opo	»	»
Chanson	Nouon	Yélé	Lôn (ou Hiila)	Yihili	»

(1) C'est le mot Mandé *korti*.

Français	*Nounouma*	*Tondioulé*	*Larhama*	*Kiansi*	*Gouressi* (Delafosse)
—	—	—	—	—	—
Chanteur	Go	Yélétina	Hiilatina	»	»
Conte, fable	Sissaré	Yélé	Bina	Sunnsio	»
Coutume	Fouin	Ouébina	Ousébina	»	»
Dette	Dui	Kenna	Kiémé	Pami	»
— Débiteur	Sibyétiou	»	»	»	»
— Créancier	Duynntiou	N'kétina	Kiemtina	»	»
Famine	Nyen	Soumé	Oyenn	Sisarati	»
Froidure	»	»	Ouaro	»	»
Fumée	Nui (ou Nué)	Nio	Nio	Nyousi	»
Géant	»	Nidôlé	Koudolé	»	»
Guerre	Kouo	Héna	Yosi	Tomm	»
Incendie	Minndio	Nidinion	Nidié	Diévouon	»
Gale	Nizara	»	»	Sampani	»
Intelligence	»	Lé (ou Léna)	Dignia	»	»
Lèpre	Nayaro	»	Dayalo	Oué	»
Maladie	Yaouyo	Ouila	Nianiani	Tuo	»
Milieu	Nital	»	Titivi	Sounsoun	»
Moitié	Poel	»	Titivi	Bâni	»
Mot	Nèsui (ou So)	Ouiboulè	Oboula	Ouabisi	»
Mur	Bouro	Zenngo	Dié	Sya	»
Nid	Zimmpolé	Hôdia	Diodia	»	»
Non	Hon-hon	Ouiséguè	M'vie	»	»
Noyau	»	»	Ohétoua	»	»
Oui	Hon-hon	Léo	Lâ (ou Laa)	»	»

Français	*Nounouma*	*Tondioulé*	*Larhama*	*Kiansi*	*Gouressi* (Delafosse)
—	—	—	—	—	—
Parc à bœufs	»	»	Naganga	Napiè	»
Parole	Yô	Ouiboulè	Oboula	»	»
Pointe	»	Blé	Opolosa	»	»
Pont	»	»	Da	»	»
Porte (ouverture)	»	Dinnohan	Dini	Nansuo	»
Porte (en bois)	»	Daboré	Bori	»	»
Puits	»	Dono	Boua	»	»
Poteau	»	Dalougué	Nisi	Dyo	»
Poulailler	»	Zidia	Ditougo	Kouri	»
Promenade	»	Agoro	Monbolé	»	»
Querelle	»	Nipihélé	Nitouasi	»	»
Question	»	Ouiboula	Oboula	»	»
Questionneur	»	Ouiboulatina	Oboulatina	»	»
Réflexion	»	M'binô	Bina	»	»
Réponse	»	Ouiséننgo	Ousé	»	»
Rêve	»	N'dolo	Doso	Ouadasi	»
Richesse	»	Mèbiè	»	N'gati	»
Tas	»	Alengo	Okoumé	»	»
Variole	Yapara	»	»	»	»
Vérole	Sangkoro	Sankourè	»	»	»
Voleur	Mounien	Garo	»	»	»
Voyage	»	Yéli	»	»	»
Voyageur	»	Bayéli	»	»	»

Français	*Nounouma*	*Tondioulé*	*Larhama*	*Kiansi*	*Gouressi* (Delafosse)
—	—	—	—	—	—
		ADJECTIFS			
Beau	Kouzè	Vouéro	Vouori	Diandalon	»
Bête	Okniôn	Nlô	Tara	Yaralo	»
Bleu	Nisôno	Ombinon	Biné	»	»
Blanc	Ouloupon	Ompouma	Poula	Piélo	Dapélé
Bon	Kouzè	Ouéro	Vouori	Diandalo	Woutré
Bon (très)	»	Ouèrèkonka	Kôza	»	»
Brave	Babia	Bâlo	Balo	Ouoto	»
Chaud	Lôn	Lôna	Louma	Otélé	»
Circoncis	N'bouèmpéni	Poukosié	Kakéri	Langaré	»
Faible	M'bona	Pouala	Korè	Diavalo	»
Fort	Bien	Dué	Kadiolo	Oparara	»
Fou	Ninion	Guinngaso	Yâtina	Yèsinn	»
Froid	Ouoro	Ouaro	Ouari	N'gôti	»
Galeux	Nizara	»	»	»	»
Gourmand	Oudinnfaro	Hondilé	Odikounga	Ouadéga	»
Grand	Nidarou	Nidé	Nidoli	Diavouon	»
Gras	»	Vouo	Vousa	»	»
Gros	Nifaro	Ouzéno	Nidié	Diagpion	»
Heureux	Apoïra	Siatoro	Nisouma	»	»
Imbécile	Lévouon	Niyo	Niya	»	»
Impoli	Ousônntien	Nivouéri	Nivouori	»	»

Français	*Nounouma*	*Tondioulé*	*Larhama*	*Kiansi*	*Gouressi* (Delafosse)
—	—	—	—	—	—
Impossible	Kouda	»	Oudolé	»	»
Incirconcis	Papanantiou	Pennpoutina	Pampourou	»	»
Indigent	Nilôn	Souné	Soulla	Silinien	»
Insensé	»	Guingaso	Nioutiougo	»	»
Insolent	Houssotyen	Nibon	Nébo	Wayaodé	»
Intelligent	Dyasuin	Kékellé	Diyya	Otaya	»
Ivre	Sannyoro	»	Siniori	»	»
Ivrogne	Sannyoro	Niyo	Iniasa	Ndamm	»
Jaune	Houro	Hômôli	Séguéti	»	»
Jeune	Nimmba	Hemmbié	Koubié	»	»
Joli	Kouzè	Ouéro	Vouéré	»	»
Joyeux	Apolya	N'siérétoro	Okio	»	»
Lâche	Diafôn	Habinntina	Ouoll	Oyéroyè	»
Laid	Koubazien	Hombomon	Loro	Boullorou	»
Large	Koua	Oyélo	Pollé	»	»
Lépreux	Nayaro	»	Yalamou	»	»
Lourd	Dô	Ouzimon	Youngué	Odougouré	»
Maigre	Bouani	Oubéno	Bana	»	»
Malade	Ovoué	Ivilo	Niania	Ninntufia	»
Malheureux	Awouanntioro	Ninnsiérézoro	»	Ousuiti	»
Mauvais	Oubazien	Ouloro	Oullora	Boulo	»
Méchant	Oubazé	Hébomon	Koubôn	»	»
Menteur	Kouloupon	Niérétina	Ounien	Okié	»
Mince	Nimmba	Ouhouzimi	Oubana	»	»

Français	*Nounouma*	*Tondioulé*	*Larhama*	*Kiansi*	*Gouressi* (Delafosse)
—	—	—	—	—	—
Mort	Tyen	Isoho	Ousouba	»	»
Neuf	Nidôn	Omfèlè	Koufalé	Yâpâli	»
Noir	Nisônou (ou Ouasounou)	Ombinnon	Kobiné	Saoulé (ou Savali)	Dabilé
Nu	Lèvoli	Kèyo	Yarsoul	»	»
Orgueilleux	Oudiotibana	Itioti	Outioti	»	»
Paresseux	Yaséné	Dinavouéla	»	»	»
Pauvre	Nâlon	»	»	»	»
Petit	Oukouo	Bibié	Koubié	Guélé	»
Peureux	Oudyâfon	N'vi	Faoul	»	»
Poli	Lèsanngou	Vouéri	Séfélétina	»	»
Profond	Hosoua	Oulinngo	Ouloungué	»	»
Puissant	Dâ	Hivouolo	Houyouvua	Pagaro	»
Riche	Sobiètyô	Mébiétina	Kiatina	N'gatiniono	»
Rond	Ouakékila	Ougoulé	Otouré	»	»
Rouge	Nisain	Ousien	Kofiama	Mani	Dasolé
Savant	Oûyennala	Ouisimè	Oguima	»	»
Sec	Koukoua	Hohilo	Hohola	Okoya	»
Sourd	Obèsoonè	Nikiolè	Palma	Gamm	»
Stupide	Oukiôn	Niyo	Yari	»	»
Travailleur	Totonon	Toutoumétina	Vouaratou	»	»
Vaillant	Babia	Dinnhuila	Bali	»	»
Vert	Ouasounou	Môli	Kobiné	»	»
Victorieux	»	Lala	Larètina	»	»

Français	*Nounouma*	*Tondioulé*	*Larhama*	*Kiansi*	*Gouressi* (Delafosse)
—	—	—	—	—	—
Vieux	Kokoui	Bâyon	Kohinien	Nisoma	»
Vivant	Nû	Ninyéso	Ouoyé	»	»
Vrai	Yabien	Ouitara	Oti	»	»
		VERBES			
Aller	»	»	»	»	Mô
Acheter	Yo	Nioho	Yo	Gada	»
Asseoir (s')	»	»	»	»	Honô
Attraper	Dia	La	Kan	N'guéyou	»
Arrêter (s')	»	»	»	»	Kinâ
Boire	Nio	Nio	Nio	Honiou	Nyo
Chanter	Nouan	Niélé	Hila	Vouayéréhili	»
Chasser	Daguiné	Nambarala	Bara	»	»
Comprendre	»	»	»	»	Nyé
Cueillir	Koua	Ninntioro	Kéri	N'gagosi	»
Danser	Sio	Agô	Goua	Ougagoua	»
Demander	M'boi	M'boso	Piasé	Gabéoua	»
Dire	Sué	M'boulo	M'bori	Yéo	»
Disputer (se)	Toutouna	Ouibélèdama	Touosi	Naparinnta	»
Donner	Dion	Hinnto	Po	Patoua	»
Dormir	Duain	N'pidon	Pinndo	Vodouagba	»
Ecouter	Ni	Nion	Oni	Vouavô	»
Empoisonner	Foro	Nimmpirimè	Koullori	»	»

Français	*Nounouma*	*Tondioulé*	*Larhama*	*Kiansi*	*Gouressi* (Delafosse)
—	—	—	—	—	—
Faire l'amour	Dékain	N'dia	Moto	»	»
Frapper	M'ba	M'vovouo	Bo	Navouakam	»
Fuir	Dourou	M'fô	Fa	Kia	»
Gratter (se)	N'za	N'loro	Tia	Ngomisi	»
Grimper	Dè	N'zido	N'gali	Aguioli	»
Habiller (s')	N'so	Mohelonti	Yari	»	»
Hennir	Koui	N'zavilé	Houyéli	»	»
Imiter	Akouéliou	Hadongui	Itoson	»	»
Incendier	Menndi	»	Ninndié	»	»
Insulter	Toro	Hétérosain	Outoso	»	»
Interroger	Boi	M'boso	Piasou	Ogabé	»
Jeter	Doulo	Nioso	Vouhota	»	»
Jouer	Bouana	Agbé	Banga	Bâdini	»
Jurer	Adoua	Agmienso	Ougniasan	Péya	»
Lancer	Doulo	Ayo	You	Niougui	»
Laver	Si	Afô	Kiési	Gôsouré	»
Laver (se)	Suè	»	»	Lèsou	»
Lever (se)	»	»	»	»	Si
Lutter	Dian	Hallovi	Lô	»	»
Manger	Adivouadio	Adi	Di	Dé	Di
Marcher	Vèli	Valè	Mon	Kiékamm	»
Marier (se)	Koibaro	Adia	Dia	»	»
Mener	Okouna	Nambarala	Bé	»	»
Menth	»	Niéro	Nien	Kélé	»

Française	Nounouma	Tondioulé	Larhama	Kiansi	Gouresai (Delafosse)
—	—	—	—	—	—
Moquer (se)	Béklévoua	Niplhérou	Mimain	Zougonga	»
Moucher (se)	Fimi	Fisiniss	Mèsi	Finnguiri	»
Mourir	Tian	M'boé	Po	Pi	Suati
Nager	Hyè	Léno	Dosi	Légnienko	»
Noyer (se)	Bouagui	Niladi	»	Nienhiri	»
Obéir	Diowa	Ninnkué	Kio	To	»
Oublier	Asu	Ousolo	Sori	Barainyé	»
Parler	Yatara	M'boulo	Bori	Inngwo	»
Partir	M'vè	Mon	Mon	Kiengué	Kyalé
Pêcher	Dièkélé	Nandousé	Nibi	Dioum	»
Piler	N'zoua	Atougué	Tougouhi	Ouakourou	»
Pleurer	Koui	M'vi	Yéli	Koumikém	»
Porter (sur la tête)	N'zan	Akiéno	Kiorosé	»	»
Porter (avec les bras)	Dianziwoua	Nèsè	Kani	»	»
Poser	N'zégué	M'bilo	Hain	N'zani	»
Poursuivre	Badani	N'tinngo	To	Tialikamm	»
Prendre	Koi	M'pio	Dio	Pari	»
Promener (se)	Guinou	N'goro	Gori	Gnié	»
Quereller (se)	»	Nèsè	Yosi	»	»
Questionner	M'boi	M'boso	Piaso	Babo	»
Raconter	M'boi	Ouiboulè	Bori	»	»
Réfléchir	Abouin	Dian	Bina	Kiemm	»
Répondre	Asei	Ouisénngo	Sé	»	»
Reposer (se)	Diési	N'niéso	Yési	Bourousi	»

Français	*Nounouma*	*Tondioulé*	*Larhama*	*Kiansi*	*Gouressi* (Delafosse)
—	—	—	—	—	—
Rêver	Douhè	N'douso	Dosi	Basi	»
Rire	Moumón (ou Món)	Momon	Mon	La	»
Semer	»	»	»	Lébouré	»
Taire (se)	Yéné	N'tengo	Taré	Opé	»
Tisser	Badoula	N'so	Soa	»	»
Travailler	Tountouna	Toutoumè	Touma	Tountoum	»
Tuer	Tien	Souè	Po	Koum	Sua
Vaincre	Dantyo	Mètiougué	Houo	Pagaro	»
Vendre	Nioulou	Niélo	Yawa	Da	»
Venger (se)	Diotibana	Maréniti	Oukioti	»	»
Venir	Ba	Ikiko	Koua	Dyandé	La
Voir	Ana	M'bélo	Hono	Nyè	»
Voler	Mouiro	N'garo	Mouari	Zuo	»
Voler (dans l'air)	N'zan	Niésou	Fil	Olyiti	»
Voyager	Yobou	Bayéli	Golé	Laoro	»

ADVERBES, PRÉPOSITIONS, MOTS DIVERS

Doucement	Nimmbanimmba	Sonson	Momon	Ouasi	»
Vite	Akinalala	Lará	Laralé	M'wouli	»
Ici	Yo	N'dè	N'da	N'diwa	»
Là-bas	Yombè	Olio	Olio	Vouaké	»
Partout	Bolima	Bahourou	Dahala	Toukaminiéna	»

Français	*Nounouma*	*Tondioulé*	*Larhama*	*Kiansi*	*Gouresi* (Delafosse)
—	—	—	—	—	—
Nulle part	Bolidado	Kenkerro	»	»	»
Dans	»	Siéra	Ouhorra	»	»
En dehors	Karawa	Niana	Ara	»	»
Auprès	Oukouo	Lara	Téé	»	»
Loin	Kondara	Disiè	Boli	»	»
Tout près	Neida	Lara	Dipara	»	»
Pourquoi?	Bakoum?	Hounda?	Béyien?	Banvouara?	»
Encore	Sina	Boli	Bila	Magnitémm	»

PETITES PHRASES

Comment t'appelles-tu?	Hériminn bakou?	Héhirra nikabè?	Hi berri ni bé?	Iféyoloba?	»
De quel village es-tu?	Atioumou ba kon?	Hènn tolo minè?	N'dian henni?	Finyimmbé?	»
D'où viens-tu?	Nayè?	Hèbènien?	N'nini?	Fakiorbè?	»
Où vas-tu?	M'vèya?	Hémouné?	M'moni?	Fakarabé?	»
De quelle race es-tu?	N'natikoua?	Hékanidiobiré?	N'nitina?	Bègandoura?	»
Es-tu musulman?	Yaralé yamon?	Hèka Méyélo?	N'gan Yara ni?	»	»
Es-tu fétichiste?	Aboyouibina? / M'binawè?	Onvénipa?	N'gan kièfir ou?	»	»
Es-tu Lobi?	»	Héka Lobi tina ouaria?	N'gan Lobi tina?	»	»
Es-tu Sissala?	Ninèsao?	Hèka Hissalo rè?	N'gan Hissala?	»	»
Es-tu content?	Asuè?	Hékuétolo?	N'kio?	Lomasa oguiri?	»
Es-tu fatigué?	Agori?	Hibolo?	M'poula?	Odiaya?	»
Comment vas-tu?	In'zain-ain?	N'dogo?	N'niané?	»	»

Français	*Noumouma*	*Tondioulé*	*Larhama*	*Kiansi*	*Gourcesi* (Delafosse)
—	—	—	—	—	—
Ce n'est pas fini.	Kouasuol	Ouiténé.	Babitiré.	Mandioyé.	A syélé.
C'est fini.	Kosuel.	N'ténou.	Badara.	Ondouya.	A vyèlè.
		FORMATION DU PLURIEL			
Chien	Kouro	Vaha	Vaha	Bya	»
Chiens	Koukouri	Vasè	Vasè	Byasi	»
Poisson	Fili	Nanholè	»	Dioum	»
Poissons	Filé	Nanholèvoua	»	Diouma	»
Serpent	Dain	Douna	Di	Wa	»
Serpents	Dina	Dounavoua	Dima	Wati	»
Poulet	Koérou	Zimé	Guimi	Pia	»
Poulets	Kien	Zimivoua	Guimié	Pésé	»
Musulman	Yara	Mayélé	Yara	»	»
Musulmans	Yarésé	Mayélévoua	Yarasinn	»	»
Arbre	Dao	»	»	Tihou	»
Arbres	Daro	»	»	Titi	»
Feuille	M'vo	»	»	M'vio	»
Feuilles	M'voro	»	»	M'vâti	»
Ane	Benna	»	»	Boni	»
Anes	Bennel	»	»	Boinnsi	»
Fromager	Goû	»	»	N'go	»
Fromagers	Gounou	»	»	N'gousi	»
Champignon	Dyalé	»	»	Goû	»

Français	*Nounouma*	*Tondioulé*	*Larhama*	*Kiansi*	*Goureesi* (Delafosse)
—	—	—	—	—	—
Champignons	Dyala	»	»	Gounti	»
Néré	Seinngo	»	»	Dio	»
Nérés	Sono	»	»	Dioti	»
Chèvre	Bôn	»	Bôn	Bou	»
Chèvres	Bohè	»	Bôna	Bouti	»
Moutón	Pyo	»	»	Posou	»
Moutons	Pei	»	»	Positi	»
Cheval	Nèsan	»	»	Ouosimm	»
Chevaux	Nisei	»	»	Ouosima	»
Bœuf	Nô	»	Naou	Na	»
Bœufs	Nien	»	Nasinn	Niga	»
Chat	Kélio	»	»	Dorobya	»
Chats	Kéli	»	»	Dorobyasi	»
Abeille	N'tua	»	»	Siri	»
Abeilles	N'tui	»	»	Sié	»
Aigle	Zambou	»	»	»	»
Aigles	Zambourou	»	»	»	»
Lobi	»	Kiélé	»	»	»
Lobis	»	Kiélévoua	»	»	»
Lion	»	»	Boho	»	»
Lions	»	»	Bosouma	»	»
Eléphant	»	»	Batou	»	»
Eléphants	»	»	Batousinn	»	»
Perdrix	»	»	Yo	»	»

Français	*Nounouma*	*Tondioulé*	*Larhama*	*Kiansi*	*Gouressi* (Delafosse)
—	—	—	—	—	—
Perdrix	»	»	Yosinn	»	»
Léopard	»	»	Pel	»	»
Léopards	»	»	Pelkokana	»	»
Python	»	»	Dôri	»	»
Pythons	»	»	Doûla	»	»
Crapaud	»	»	Ibi	»	»
Crapauds	»	»	Ibia	»	»
Sauterelle	»	»	Hô	Nankion	»
Sauterelles	»	»	Hôsi	Nankionti	»
Arachide	»	»	Simmpan	Simmpain	»
Arachides	»	»	Simmpanba	Simmpainti	»
Sissala	»	»	Nando	»	»
Sissalas	»	»	Nandawata	»	»
Kiansi	»	»	»	Kanguia	»
Kiansis	»	»	»	Kanguiarasi	»

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APPENDICE IX

Comparaison du Gourounsi et du Dagari

NOMS DE NOMBRE

Français	*Dagari* (1)	*Kiansi*	*Noumouma*	*Tondioulé*
1	Yeni	Bougni	Nodo	Bidon
2	Ayi	Bahié	Belè	Bellè
3	Ata	Bata	Batun	Botoro
4	Anâre	Bouâsé	Banien	Bana
5	Anu	Banou	Bénou	Bonon
6	Ayoûe	Bansenta	Bardo	Boldo
7	Ayôpwe	Bantanasi	Barpa	Bolpè
8	Anî	Nanî	Nana	Kieuri
9	Awae	No	Noro	Nivi
10	Pie	Pi	Foua	Fi

CULTURE

Mil (sorgho)	Ki	N'sa	Ninnso	Niempè
Maïs	Kamani	Kimmbéné	Pamina	Mié
Igname	*Nyâri*	Niri	Pia	Pié
Arachides	Symbie	Simmpain	Sié	Sonkan
Houe	Kari	Koûri	Varo	Pi
Champ	Pwo	Télimm	Kara	Bara

FLORE SPONTANÉE

Arbre	Gomô	Ti-hou	Dao	Dala
Herbe	Mwo	Oôti	N'gao	Niolo

(1) Les mots Dagari sont empruntés aux *Vocabulaires comparatifs* de M. Delafosse, chap. VII, p. 229 à 245. Les mots Gourounsi sont empruntés à mes vocabulaires précédents.

Français	*Dagari*	*Kiansi*	*Nounouma*	*Tondioulé*
—	—	—	—	—
		ANIMAUX DOMESTIQUES		
Animal	Neni	»	»	»
Petit	Bye	Bi	Bio	Bié
Cheval	Wiri	Ouosimm	Nésan	Nzara
Bœuf	Na-o	Naou	Nao	Nolo
Mouton	Pere	Posou	Pio	Piéso
Chèvre	Bwa	Bou	Bon	Bôno
Poulet	Nwa	Pia	Tiro	N'zimi
		ANIMAUX SAUVAGES		
Hyène	Bumbori	Pihou	Bihirou	Bélo
Singe	Mâho	Ouamm	Kilia	Hona
Pintade	Pini	Pôn	Sou	Soûlo
Serpent	Wofu	Ouâ	Dain	Douna
		PARTIES DU CORPS		
Tête	Zu	Zou	»	»
Cheveux	Zu koba	Zuési	Koumvi	Nioupouna
Yeux	Nine	Nimmbéré	Yii	Sibié
Visage	Nine-za	»	»	»
Nez	Nyi	N'gueuri	Mi	Misè
Oreille	Tobri	Turi	N'zi	Dellè
Bouche	Nwani	Nangbainn	Ni	Nouon
Dents	Nina	Gni	Yéli	Niéla
Langue	Zelene	Dennguélô	Didali	Nandulé
Cou	Gbori	N'guiri	Bien	Banga
Ventre	Pwô	Poui	Pouo	Lourou
Dos	Pôri	N'gan	Tan	Harra
Main	Nu	Nési	Guina	Nésè
Pied	Naba	Nantara	Nal	Nasè
		FAMILLE, VILLAGE ET PAYS		
Etre humain	Ne-re	»	»	»
Homme	Dawa	Nédoua	Baro	Balo
Femme	Porho	Poro	Kain	Halo
Enfant	Be-bile	Bi	Byo	Bié
Père	Sa	N'ko	Anyna	Nana
Mère	Ma	M'ma	Nou	Ma
Fils	Bi	Nidobi	Bisimabara	Bibalo
Fille	Bye	Niporobi	Bisimakain	Bihâlo
Chef	Dâna	Nao	Pyo	Kôrou

Français	*Dagari*	*Kiensi*	*Noumouma*	*Tondioulé*
—	—	—	—	—
Terre, pays	Tene	Temm	Tya	Téna
Village	Tene	Yé	Tyo	Tolo
Maison	Dyo, Dye	Doro	Diyo	Diâ
Chemin	Sô-re	Suyo	Tion	Menna
		NOURRITURE ET BOISSON		
Pain indigène	Sâ-o	Sao	Mié	Koulla
Sauce	Zyeri	Mâna	N'duè	Disè
Bière de mil	Dâ	Danm	Nyousosana	Sain
Sel	Yârô	Yési	Nikouan	Diésè
Viande	Neni	Lamm	Non	»
		MOBILIER, etc.		
Tissu	Kangya	Garo	Ganou	Gueln
Couteau	Nela	N'guébé	Sio	Sié
Arc	Ta-mô	Penn	Tuin	Tô
Flèche	Pi	Pei	Tyen	Hèna
Pot à poisson	Loui	»	»	»
Jarre	Dorbo	Samani	Nikana	Wé
Calebasse	Mani	Ki	N'zouin	Banga
		NATURE		
Eau	Ko-o	Nien	Nien	Nila
Rivière	Kola	Bélé	Bouô	Fôlô
Fleuve	Mâne	»	Mo	Môla
Feu	Vu, bugu	Bouélé	Memm	Ni
Montagne	Tana	Pimm	Pân	Palla
Pierre	Kûri	Binntagn	Kafini	Daboui
Bois à brûler	Da	»	»	»
Soleil	Muna	Ouombiri	Oué	Ouisè
Lune	Kyu	Ki	Kiana	Kéninn
		ADJECTIFS		
Blanc	Bo	Piélo	Ouloupon	Ompouma
Rouge	Gye	Mani	Nisain	Ousien
Noir	Ble	Saoulé	Nisônou	Ombinnon
Bon	Vyelę	Diandalo	Kousè	Ouéro
		VERBES		
Aller	Gere	»	»	»
Partir	Gere, kyeni	Klengué	Nivè	Mon

Français	*Dagari*	*Kiansi*	*Nounouma*	*Tondioule*
Venir	Wa	Dyandé	Ba	Ikiko
Venir de	Iri	»	»	»
S'arrêter	Zini	»	»	»
Se lever	Is, iri	»	»	»
S'asseoir	Zini	»	»	»
Se coucher	Gâ	»	»	»
Dormir	Gbiri	Vodouagba	Duain	N'pidon
Mourir	Kyi	Pi	Tian	M'boé
Etre fini	Base	»	»	»
Etre bon	Vyele	»	»	»
Comprendre	Wa	»	»	»
Tuer	Ku	Kouin	Tien	Souè
Manger	Di	Dé	Adivouadio	Adi
Boire	Nyu	Honiou	Nio	Nio
Appeler	Yülè	»	»	»

PETITES PHRASES

C'est fini.	A bas'ya.	Ondouya.	Kozeï.	N'ténou.
Ce n'est pas fini.	A ba base.	Mandioyé.	Kouazuoï.	Ouiténé.
Quel est ton nom?	E yülè ola?	Iféyoloba?	Hériminn bakon?	Héhirra nikabé?

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APPENDICE X

Notice sur les Kiansi

Binger nous dit (tome II, page 36) :

« Plus au sud et à l'ouest de Oual-Oualé, habite la fraction des Tiansi ou Boulsi, qui se tatouent de trois façons différentes. Ils offrent cela de singulier, c'est que deux des tatouages ont la particularité suivante, que je n'avais pas remarquée : les yeux eux-mêmes sont environnés de six petites entailles. »

M. Delafosse, de son côté, dit dans ses *Vocabulaires comparatifs* (1904), page 224 :

« Les Mâpoursi ou Mampourga et les Kyâsi ou Kiamba habitent la région de Gambagha, à l'est du Gourounsi et au nord du Dagomba. »

La femme Sibidous Nouma, qui m'a donné le vocabulaire Kyansi vu plus haut, a le tatouage facial suivant :

D'autre part, voici d'autres marques de Kiansi recueillies chez divers Kyansi de Houdoukou :

(*Voir la figure au verso*)

Il semble bien que ce qui caractérise le tatouage facial Kiansi c'est l'x tracé sur chaque joue. On pourra comparer ces tatouages à ceux que donne Binger, page 409 de son tome II. Il en donne quatre pour les « Tiansi ou Boulsi », dont deux présentent l'x simple ou double et deux autres qui n'ont pas l'x et sont caractérisés simplement par deux grandes lignes allant, sur chaque joue, des coins de la bouche vers les oreilles.

D'autre part, un Dyoula, représentant de l'almamy de Bondoukou, me donne sur les Kiansi les renseignements suivants :

Les Kiansi s'appelleraient encore Kiapalasi ou Tiapalasi.

Pour aller de Bouna (situé à 150 kilomètres au nord de Bondoukou) chez les Kiansi, on traverserait le territoire des Lobi qui tiennent les deux bords de la Volta noire, puis le territoire des Larhama, puis on arriverait chez les Kiansi.

Pour aller de Bondoukou chez les Kiansi, on traverserait le territoire des Tampoulouma (qui seraient donc au sud des Larhama), puis on arriverait chez les Kiansi.

Les Kiansi ne font pas partie de la région de l'igname : ils cultivent le sorgho et le millet avant tout (et surtout le sorgho rouge).

Ils possèdent beaucoup de bestiaux, surtout des bœufs.

Les femmes portent deux bouquets de feuilles pour tout vêtement, mais seulement quand elles sont mariées. Les hommes se suspendent une peau de chèvre par devant.

Les Kiansi ne cultivent pas le coton. Leurs femmes ne savent pas le filer ni eux le tisser.

L'héritage ne va pas aux neveux fils de sœur mais aux frères, puis aux fils ou fils de frères.

Les Kiansi connaissent les Dagari qu'ils appellent Kouma ou Koma, et qui sont méchants, disent-ils. Ils connaissent aussi les Gourounsi du Nord (Nouneuma, Kassouna, etc.), qu'ils désignent sous le nom d'Akulo.

Les Kiansi ne dépassent pas à l'Ouest la Volta blanche, qui semble les séparer des Larhama et autres Gourounsi.

APPENDICE XI

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Notice sur les Ko

Les Ko sont une petite population nègre située dans la Résidence de Boromo (cercle de Koury ou Dédougou) entre le 11° et le 12° degré de latitude Nord et le 8° et le 6° degré de longitude occidentale. Nous avons dit plus haut que les Nounouma les nommaient Kona et les Peul Koko et qu'ils sont au nombre de 10.000 environ (chiffres de 1909).

Donnons d'abord les quelques mots du vocabulaire Ko, que j'ai pris en février 1910, en passant à Boromo. Je les accompagne, pour les comparaisons qui peuvent être faites, de mots Nounouma, Sémou (1) et Bobo-Niénégué :

Français	*Ko*	*Nounouma*	*Sémou*	*Niénégué*
1	Sèto	Ndo	Mombé	Do
2	Magnié	Balè	Moni	Nyo
3	Mato	Bato	Mentiéré	Té
4	Manar	Bana	Monyourou	Nan
5	Mangon	Banou	Mongouen	Onou
6	Malogo (ou Malègo)	Bardo	Monkoun	Odé
7	Malopié	Barpè	Monti	Omôn
8	Malèpo	Nana	Monkoré	Oti
9	Mallevè	Nogo	Monki	Dènou
10	Fou	Fouga	Monfou	Pirou
Gros mil blanc	Baninnga	Ninnso	Kongolo	Ouéni
Courge	Yorolé	»	»	»
Ciel	Ouo	Oué-dion	Dionoso	Dofini
Devin	Vogo	Voro	Siennsanatôn	Tirô
Fabricant de gris-gris	Louo	Tycotio	Kâré	Kanamouné
Danseur masqué	Ouon	»	Lo	Mouamba

Je pense que le Ko est une langue Gourounsi et que les ressemblances (?)

(1) Les mots Sémou sont tirés d'un vocabulaire Sémou complet qui fait partie de mes *Etats de Kong*, ouvrage non encore publié.

3: Tauxier FA28 Mossi

avec le Sémou sont purement extérieures. Cependant j'avoue qu'il serait bien nécessaire qu'un vocabulaire Ko complet fut pris sur place pour qu'on puisse classer définitivement la langue Ko.

Ceci dit, donnons quelques notes sur le travail, la famille, les pouvoirs publics et la religion des Ko.

Les Ko sont surtout des cultivateurs.

Ils font avant tout du millet, puis du sorgho blanc, puis du sorgho rouge, celui-ci principalement pour fabriquer de la bière de mil.

Ils font aussi du maïs autour de leurs habitations et aussi dans la brousse.

Ajoutez beaucoup de fonio, beaucoup d'arachides et de pois souterrains, des haricots qu'ils sèment dans le mil, beaucoup d'ignames, un peu de riz, des patates, du gombo, des tomates, du piment, des courges, etc.

Ils cultivent aussi un peu de coton, sèment quelques pieds de chanvre dans le maïs autour de leurs cases, ne font pas de tabac.

Ils ne font pas d'arboriculture et ne plantent ni bananiers, ni papayers, mais ils font de la cueillette dont les éléments principaux leur sont fournis par les karités, les nérés, les baobabs, etc.

En fait d'animaux domestiques, les Ko ont surtout des chèvres naines, puis des moutons, puis des bœufs. Ils possèdent aussi quelques ânes et une trentaine de chevaux dans tout le pays. Ajoutez des poulets et des pintades. Ils pratiquent aussi l'apiculture et placent des ruches allongées en paille dans les arbres pour recueillir le miel des abeilles.

Les Ko font aussi de la chasse collective à la saison sèche, où ils se réunissent à plusieurs villages pour explorer la brousse. Ils n'ont pas de chasseurs spécialisés, sauf un seul chasseur d'éléphants dans tout le pays.

La pêche se fait à la fin de la saison sèche (avril) et l'on se met à plusieurs villages pour pêcher dans la Volta noire (les Ko, on le sait, habitent à l'ouest de ce fleuve). L'on attrape ainsi beaucoup de poisson, mais il n'y a pas de pêcheurs de métier.

Les Ko ne font pas le métier de colporteurs (1). Ils achètent leur sel et leurs kolas, des cotonnades et des vêtements aux Dafinng qui exploitent leur pays commercialement. Ils achètent aussi des bestiaux aux Poullo du voisinage. Pour acheter tout cela, ils vendent ce qu'ils ont en excédent, du mil, des arachides, des pois de terre, etc.

Les Ko vivent par petits groupes de ménages, car les fils même mariés travaillent pour leur père et avec leur père tant qu'il vit. Mais, quand le père meurt, chaque frère travaille à part avec ses enfants à lui. Cependant on continue à habiter ensemble.

Le père, chef de groupe, nourrit et entretient ses fils tout le temps.

Pour le mariage des filles, ce sont leurs pères eux-mêmes qui les marient. La dot est actuellement de 40.000 cauris (40 francs). Elle était jadis de quatre têtes de gros bétail.

Quand un père, chef de petit groupe, meurt, ses champs sont pour l'aîné de ses fils. De même les bestiaux, les cauris, les captifs, les vêtements, les

(1) Ces notes remontent à 1910.

3: Tauxier FA28 Mossi

bijoux et les armes. Quant aux femmes du défunt, elles choisissent elles-mêmes leur mari mais dans le cercle de la famille (1).

Pour la famille totale, qui comprend de nombreux petits groupes père-fils, le chef, qui a des pouvoirs religieux et de justice sur toute la famille (assisté pour ces derniers du conseil de famille), est remplacé, quand il meurt, par son frère puîné pour le commandement de toute la famille.

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Les Ko, qui sont au nombre de 10.000 environ, comme nous le savons, ne se disent pas autochtones de leur pays actuel. Ils disent venir du pays Nounouma (région de Zavara et Bouli). Après leur exode ils vécurent longtemps indépendants dans leur pays actuel dans lequel ils furent rejoints du reste par des Nounouma qui s'établirent dans la région de Boromo. Néanmoins les Ko conservèrent leur indépendance jusqu'au commencement du XIXe siècle. A cette époque arriva dans la région de Boromo Sidi Mamadou Karantao, chassé de son village Kouiman, dans le Saro, par Ahmadou, le fondateur de la dynastie des Bari dans le Macina, lorsque celui-ci ravagea les environs de Dienné (entre 1810 et 1815).

Sidi Mamadou (2) s'établit à Douroula (environs de Safané), où il eut un fils, Mamadou Karantao, qui partit à La Mecque. Il revint cinq ans après et prit le titre d'El-Hadj (le Pèlerin) que lui conférait son voyage. Son père étant mort pendant son absence, il prit sa succession et resta quelques années à Douroula, où il eut un fils, Karamokho Moktar Karantao (qui réside actuellement à Ouahabou). Il vint ensuite s'établir à Donmakoro (village aujourd'hui disparu qui se trouvait à 10 kilomètres au sud-est de Boromo), où il créa une école maraboutique. Il vivait paisiblement dans ce village, ne s'occupant que de faire des adeptes, quand les Ko, qui habitaient alors Boromo, résolurent de l'en chasser. Il fit alors venir des Marka de Dienné et réunit ceux qui avaient suivi son père. Des Mossi, venus de Ouagadougou et des Dagari-Dioula des environs de Oua s'unirent à lui (1840).

Lorsqu'il se sentit assez fort, il mit ses forces en mouvement, chassa les Ko de Boromo et installa à leur place les Mossi et les Dagari de sa troupe. Il ne s'arrêta pas à ce premier succès et marcha résolument à la conquête

(1) Quelquefois, après la mort du père, les frères continuent à travailler ensemble sous le commandement de l'aîné. Mais généralement ces petites communautés de travail subsistantes après la mort du père ne durent pas, à cause des femmes, paraît-il. Les femmes des frères puînés se plaignent de ne pas recevoir autant de mil lors de la distribution journalière que la femme du frère aîné et, alors, pour arrêter ces récriminations et ces disputes, les frères se décident enfin à travailler chacun à part avec leurs enfants.

(2) Tout ceci est emprunté à la *Monographie de la Résidence de Boromo* que j'ai eue entre les mains en 1910. Comparez cette histoire à celle que donne Binger pour les mêmes marabouts, tome I, page 416, à propos de son passage à Ouahabou. Je dois dire que j'ai corrigé les dates données par cette monographie, dates qui ne cadrent pas avec ce que nous savons de l'époque où Ahmadou Cheikou établit son pouvoir dans le Macina.

de la boucle de la Volta. Il suivit la région avoisinant ce fleuve, s'empara de tous les villages qu'il rencontra sur son passage, les détruisit et ne s'arrêta qu'à Mazala d'où il retourna sur ses pas.

La deuxième phase de la conquête ne fut pas aussi triomphale. Après avoir eu à vaincre quelques résistances à Passakongo, il dut faire un siège de neuf mois avant de pouvoir s'emparer de Sokongo qui ne céda qu'à la famine.

Il revint alors vers Boromo, chassa les Bobo de M'pehoum (Ouahabou) et s'installa à leur place avec sa troupe.

El-Hadj Mamadou Karantao ne laissa pas longtemps celle-ci inoccupée. A deux reprises différentes, il essaya, sans y parvenir, de s'emparer de Bangassi et mourut à Kaou, au moment où, pour la troisième fois, il tentait de s'emparer de ce village.

Il avait régné sur Boromo, Ouahabou et sur quelques petits villages des environs. Il fut inhumé dans la mosquée de Ouahabou, où ses cendres sont toujours très vénérées.

Karamokho Moktar Karantao succéda à son père. Il essaya d'abord de conquérir le pays Oulé et s'avança au Sud jusque dans les environs de Diébougou, mais ne pouvant vaincre les Dagari-Djoula et les Pougouli, qui s'étaient unis, il revint à Ouahabou. Un an après, ne se sentant pas assez fort pour s'emparer seul de la boucle, il envoie son frère Suleyman demander l'aide de Babato le Zaberma qui opérait dans la circonscription de Léo.

Babato vint avec sa troupe, composée de 5.000 hommes environ, dont 1.000 cavaliers, ce qui porta à 6.000 hommes l'effectif des forces de Karamokho. Partis de Bitiako, les deux chefs détruisirent tous les villages qu'ils rencontrèrent, mais furent arrêtés à Safané par la coalition des Bobo, Ko et Noumoumé, qui s'étaient réunis. Ils subirent de grandes pertes dans ce village et Babato, n'y voulant pas laisser tout son monde, repassa la Volta noire pendant la nuit et retourna chez lui.

Karamokho revint alors vers Ouahabou, mais les Marka de Da, excités par Bancou Dé, marabout de Dissakongo, qui était jaloux de son influence, le surprirent dans les environs de ce village et achevèrent sa défaite. Il revint alors à Ouahabou où il vécut tranquillement jusqu'à notre arrivée.

Le premier Français qui soit venu dans la région paraît avoir été Binger, qui traversa le pays en 1888.

Le deuxième est le capitaine Casemajou, qui resta quelques jours à Ouahabou et signa, le 22 avril 1897, avec Karamokho, un traité mettant ses états sous le protectorat de la France. Enfin, en juillet 1897, le pays est définitivement occupé par la colonne du commandant Caudrelier qui établit le poste de Boromo.

Avant notre arrivée, le pays vivait dans une anarchie complète. Pour les motifs les plus futiles, les villages en venaient aux coups et souvent même des batailles se livraient entre habitants d'un même village. Chaque village était indépendant, sauf dans le petit état créé par El-Hadj Mamadou et Karamokho.

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3: Tauxier FA28 Mossi

Les Ko sont fétichistes.

Ils n'ont pas de fête annuelle pour leurs ancêtres, mais ils leur offrent des sacrifices quand les devins leur indiquent de le faire.

Quelques-uns font des sacrifices pour les semailles, les autres non. Les premiers, en ce cas, offrent un sacrifice à leurs ancêtres ou bien on en offre aux caméléons. Quand on en a aperçu un couple faisant l'amour, on fait fabriquer un petit caméléon de cuivre et on lui offre un sacrifice. Il faut avoir aperçu deux caméléons faisant l'amour.

Pour la récolte, les chefs de famille ou de petit groupe familial ne font pas de sacrifices, mais le chef de la Terre, qui est également chef de village chez eux, prend quelques épis de mil nouveau, les grille au feu et jette les grains à terre. Il les offre à la Terre pour la remercier d'avoir accordé une bonne récolte.

Les Ko font des sacrifices à certains arbres, quand le devin le leur a indiqué : ainsi à des calloédrata, à des lingsé, à des baobabs, sousoun, tamarins, etc. Ils en offrent aussi aux marigots, à la Volta, à des rochers, à des cailloux ronds et blancs, aux collines.

Pour les crocodiles, on ne leur offre pas de sacrifices, mais les uns les mangent, les autres n'y touchent pas.

Les Ko ne font pas de sacrifices aux serpents : ils les mangent, au contraire des Bobo-Oulé qui n'y touchent pas et leur offrent des sacrifices.

On fait des sacrifices aux caméléons dans le cas que nous avons vu plus haut.

On fait des sacrifices à la Terre au sujet de la récolte, comme nous l'avons vu plus haut, et aussi à la Brousse quand on va faire la chasse.

On fait aussi des sacrifices au Ciel qui est leur dieu, leur bon dieu. Ils l'appellent Ouo. Quand la pluie ne tombe pas, ils lui offrent des sacrifices pour qu'il la fasse tomber. Quand il tonne, c'est Ouo qui gronde. Les éclairs et la foudre, c'est le sabre de Ouo.

Les Ko possèdent, nous le savons, des devins qu'ils appellent « vogo » (comme les Gourounsi) et des fabricants de gris-gris qu'ils appellent « loso ».

Ils ont aussi des sociétés religieuses demi-secrètes et des adeptes de ces sociétés qui dansent avec des masques en bois sur la figure. Ce sont les Ouon. Ceux-ci dansent seulement pendant la saison sèche, non pendant la saison des pluies et du mil car ils font venir, en dansant, un grand vent qui abîmerait le mil s'il était semé. Les Ouon viennent de la brousse et représentent celle-ci avec ce qu'elle a de mauvais ou plutôt de redoutable.

Les Ouon sont sans doute apparentés aux Ouango Mossi, aux Dou Bobo, etc.

N'oublions pas le culte des esprits de la brousse qui se confond plus ou moins avec le culte de la brousse elle-même. Les animaux sauvages sont censés appartenir à ces esprits redoutables. Quand on va à la chasse, on leur offre donc des sacrifices pour qu'ils n'empêchent pas qu'on tue leurs animaux. Les lions et les léopards sont leurs chiens et on n'a pas le droit d'attaquer ces fauves sans motif, mais, s'ils vous attaquent, on peut se défendre et au besoin les tuer.

[p.150]

APPENDICE XII

Notice sur les Lélésé de Réo

Les *Lélésé* sont, comme nous le savons, une population Gourounsi du Kipirsi située entre le 12° et le 13° degré de latitude Nord (plus près du 12° que du 13°) et entre le 5° et 6° degré de longitude Ouest (plus près du 5° que du 6°). *Lélésé* ou *Lilsé* est le pluriel (en langue Mossi) de *Léléga* ou *Lilga* (au singulier).

Les *Lélésé* de Réo sont des cultivateurs et des éleveurs surtout. Ils cultivent le millet, le sorgho blanc, un peu de sorgho rouge. Millet et sorgho constituent leur culture principale.

Ils font beaucoup de maïs autour de leurs cases, pas de fonio, beaucoup d'arachides et de pois souterrains. Ils mettent des haricots dans leurs champs de mil.

Ils ne font pas de riz, sauf les chefs qui ont plus de bras à leur disposition que les autres chefs de famille. Ajoutez des patates, un peu d'ousouni-finng, pas d'ignames et de manioc.

Ils plantent quelques pieds de gombo (ce sont les vieilles femmes qui le sèment dans le maïs), un peu d'oseille, de piment et de tomates.

Ajoutez beaucoup de tabac, ni coton, ni indigo en revanche et quelques pieds de chanvre indigène, dans le maïs, autour de la maison.

Pour l'élevage, les *Lélésé* ont beaucoup de bestiaux : d'abord les bœufs du pays, sans bosse, puis les moutons, puis les chèvres. Ils possèdent quelques ânes mais pas de chevaux, sauf le chef de Réo qui en a dix à lui tout seul. Ils ont des chiens, surtout pour la consommation, beaucoup de poulets et de pintades.

Ils se livrent à l'apiculture et mettent leurs ruches allongées, en forme de tam-tam, dans certains arbres.

Les *Lélésé* ne semblent pas faire beaucoup de chasse.

Pour la pêche, chaque village va curer son petit ruisseau à la saison des basses eaux (mars). On pêche une seule fois, pendant tout un jour.

En fait de cueillette, il y a l'exploitation des arbres spontanés de la région qui sont surtout des nérés, des karités, des baobabs, des tamarins. Il y a aussi des rôniers mais ils ne semble pas qu'on les utilise. L'arboriculture n'existe pas et ce sont les Français qui ont fait planter quelques bananiers.

En fait d'industrie, il faut signaler chez les *Lélésé* des forgerons qui sont

3: Tauxier FA28 Mossi

gens de caste : ils fondent le minerai de fer et forgent ensuite des armes et instruments. Ils ne sont pas spécialisés dans leur métier de mineurs-forgerons et font aussi de la culture.

Il y en plus des bijoutiers ou forgerons en cuivre : ceux-ci achètent le cuivre aux Dioula venant de Gold-Coast qui le tiennent eux-mêmes du commerce anglais. Avec ce cuivre ils fabriquent des bracelets et autres ornements. Ils ne sont pas spécialisés non plus absolument dans leur métier et font aussi de la culture. Comme les forgerons proprement dits ils sont gens de caste.

Les peaussiers et fabricants d'objets en cuir ne sont pas « castés » ici, en revanche. On peut contracter alliance avec eux. Ils fabriquent tous les objets qu'on leur demande : outres, sandales, enveloppes de gris-gris, etc. Ils font aussi de la culture pour joindre les deux bouts.

Les maçons sont des cultivateurs faisant leur métier de maçons en surplus. Ils se mettent à deux pour exercer et se font aider par les gens de la famille dont ils construisent ou réparent l'habitation et qui leur préparent la terre. On les nourrit abondamment pendant tout leur travail et, celui-ci terminé, on leur donne un cadeau de 1.000 cauris (1 franc).

Les fossoyeurs sont aussi des cultivateurs faisant leur métier en surplus. Ils se mettent aussi à deux pour mettre le mort en terre, car c'est la famille du mort, aisée des voisins, qui creuse la tombe. Eux ils prennent et transportent le mort, ce qu'ils ont seuls le droit de faire, et le déposent dans sa demeure dernière. Ils reçoivent chacun un mouton pour paiement.

La poterie est faite par les femmes des forgerons qui la fabriquent et qui la vendent.

Les travailleurs du bois (voguésara) fabriquent les mortiers, les pilons, les manches des houes et des haches. Ils font aussi des champs qui leur rapportent plus que leur métier.

Les travailleurs de la pierre (nanlora) ne se trouvent pas à Réo même. On achète les pierres à écraser aux Lélésé de Poua. Ceux-ci possèdent des nanlora qui vendent leurs pierres travaillées 200 cauris l'une (soit 0 fr. 20). Ces travailleurs de la pierre sont aussi des cultivateurs.

Il y a aussi d'autres cultivateurs qui pendant la saison sèche font les uns des arcs (ce sont les « tassara ») les autres des pipes (ce sont les « tadomara »), les autres des tambours (« ganganpèsa » en Léléga). Ceux-ci vendent leurs tambours « tam-tam » aux griots qui ne les fabriquent pas eux-mêmes. Ces griots (musiciens) ne sont pas gens de caste chez les Lélésé. En dehors des tambours, ils ont des trompes faites de cornes de koba qu'ils fabriquent eux-mêmes. Ils vont jouer aux enterrements, aux mariages et de temps en temps chez les gens riches. On leur donne des cadeaux, des cauris, ce qui ne les empêche pas de faire aussi quelque culture.

Les nattes sont aussi fabriquées par certains cultivateurs pendant la saison sèche. Les corbeilles sont faites par les femmes pour leur ménage ou pour la vente.

Au sujet du commerce, les Lélésé ne faisaient pas du tout jadis les col-

porteurs. Actuellement encore (1), ils vendent leurs produits en excédent sur place et ne les transportent pas au loin, mais cette vente s'est intensifiée à cause de l'impôt à payer aux Français.

Le sel, ils l'achètent aux Yarsé qui visitent le pays. Les kolas (jadis ils ne les connaissaient pas et maintenant encore ils n'en consomment pas beaucoup), aux mêmes.

Ils ne vendaient pas jadis de grains. Mais depuis un an (1908), les Yarsé du Mossi commencent à venir leur acheter des arachides.

Ils vendent des bestiaux et en ont toujours vendu, en ayant plus qu'il ne leur est nécessaire.

Ils commencent à acheter des cotonnades de provenance européenne, ne cultivant pas eux-mêmes le coton. Les femmes, il est vrai, s'habillent comme les autres femmes Gourounsi avec un bouquet de feuilles par devant et un bouquet de feuilles par derrière, soutenus tous deux par une ceinture-ficelle, mais quelques-unes, les femmes riches, commencent à mettre des pagnes. Les hommes surtout commencent à porter le boubou les jours de fête.

Nos *Lélésé* vendent aussi du soumbara aux Yarsé et aux Mossi. Somme toute, ils vendent surtout des produits d'élevage, puis de cueillette, puis de culture, pour acheter du sel, des cotonnades, quelques kolas.

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Les *Lélésé* construisent et habitent, comme les autres Gourounsi, de grandes cases en terre, quadrangulaires, en forme de citadelles. Ce n'est pas un seul ménage, mais tout un groupe de ménages qui habite dans ces grandes maisons.

Voici un exemple de ces groupes :

Le chef de groupe de mon interlocuteur s'appelle Manébaré. Il a cinq femmes et cinq enfants non mariés. Son frère puîné, Paguidiguiba, qui habite avec lui, a une femme et pas d'enfants ; puis vient un autre frère, Bambéla, qui a deux femmes et un enfant, puis un autre frère, Moya, qui a deux femmes et deux enfants. Cela fait en tout quatre ménages et vingt-deux personnes.

Ces groupes de ménages n'épuisent donc pas la famille totale, pas plus que chez les autres Gourounsi.

Le chef du groupe fait travailler les gens du groupe sur ses champs à lui (qui sont aussi les champs collectifs du groupe) pendant la plus grande partie de la saison des pluies. Cependant chaque ménage a aussi son petit champ particulier qu'il cultive pendant la même saison et, pendant la saison sèche, à part les travaux communs ordonnés par le chef de groupe (réparation des cases, etc.), chaque ménage travaille pour lui-même. Les gens vont chercher des termitières dans la brousse pour engraisser leurs poulets. Avec ces poulets ils finissent par acheter des chèvres (dix poulets valent une chèvre) et, quand ils ont du petit bétail, ils cherchent à s'en procurer du gros.

(1) Ces observations remontent à 1909.

3: Tauxier FA28 Mossi

C'est le chef du groupe qui nourrit les gens du groupe. Il paye une femme, la première, aux jeunes gens de la maison en âge de se marier. Pour les suivantes, à chacun de se débrouiller. En revanche, il marie aussi les filles du groupe et touche la dot qui est de 13.000 cauris généralement (13 francs). Les gens riches donnent 15.000 cauris (15 francs). En plus, il y a les cadeaux : on tue un bouc châtré (qui vaut 5.000 cauris, 5 francs, dans le pays), ou un bélier, pour le chef de groupe de la jeune fille.

Le jour du mariage, on célèbre une petite fête, qui dure un jour, dans la maison du mari. On fait venir les griots qui font de la musique, on leur donne un mouton et une chèvre, on danse, on chante, on boit de la bière de mil, etc.

Les filles sont très libres chez les Lélésé. On ne s'occupe guère, quand on les épouse, de savoir si elles sont vierges ou non.

Une fois mariée la femme doit cependant fidélité à son mari. Si elle a un amant, le mari la frappe, elle, toujours, et l'amant, s'il le peut. Il ne lui fait cependant rien payer, paraît-il. Quant à la femme on ne la renvoie jamais pour si peu. Mais on ne lui donne jamais non plus l'autorisation d'avoir un amant reconnu par le mari, comme le font par exemple les Nounouma.

Quand il y a affaire entre deux maisons ou entre deux familles à propos de femmes, ce sont les chefs de groupe ou de famille intéressés qui l'arrangent et non pas le ou les chefs de village.

Les femmes ont le droit de divorcer et la famille ne rend pas la dot, en aucun cas. Mais les enfants, en cas de divorce, restent toujours au mari. Les maris, eux, ne renvoient jamais leurs femmes.

Les femmes, chez les Lélésé, travaillent peu la terre : elles ne défrichent pas, ne sèment pas, ne nettoient pas les champs. Elles les gardent seulement contre les oiseaux, éloignant ceux-ci à coup de pierres, et aident pour la récolte : elles coupent au pied les tiges de mil et de maïs, puis sectionnent les épis et, une fois ceux-ci détachés, vont les entasser à l'endroit du champ où les hommes les battront. Une fois battus, les femmes transportent le grain à la maison. Elles ne font pas de petits champs particuliers : seules les vieilles femmes sèment les pieds de gombo (*hibiscus esculentus*) dans le maïs, autour de la maison-citadelle. Les femmes écrasent les grains et font la cuisine. Elles vont chercher le bois et l'eau, nettoient, blanchissent, s'occupent des jeunes enfants, fabriquent les corbeilles, cueillent, comme les autres négresses, les fruits du karité, du néré, du baobab, du tamarin, etc., etc., fabriquent la farine de néré, le soumbara, le beurre de karité, etc.

Elles sont nourries, comme leur mari, par le chef de groupe. Elles s'habillent, sans dépense aucune, nous le savons, avec deux paquets de feuilles facilement renouvelables et une ceinture qu'elles fabriquent elles-mêmes et où se suspendent les deux bouquets de feuilles. Leurs bijoux (en verroterie, fer ou cuivre) sont achetés par leur mari.

Ce sont les femmes qui achètent elles-mêmes les pilons et mortiers, calebasses et canaris qu'il leur faut pour la cuisine et le ménage, mais elles

3: Tauxier FA28 Mossi

effectuent ces achats avec le produit de la vente des arachides du petit champ particulier du mari, qu'elles vendent au marché. C'est donc le mari qui paye.

Dans chaque maison-citadelle la cuisine est faite par ménage et non par groupe. Néanmoins, on ne mange pas par ménage mais tout le groupe forme quatre soupers particuliers : l'un qui comprend le chef du groupe et les jeunes bambins, le second les hommes mariés, le troisième les jeunes gens, le quatrième les femmes, les jeunes filles et les enfants à la mamelle.

Quand une femme meurt, c'est son fils aîné qui hérite de ce qu'elle laisse, à défaut d'enfants c'est sa famille. Le mari n'hérite pas.

Actuellement les Lélésé n'ont plus d'esclaves, mais, avant l'occupation française, ils en possédaient quelques-uns. Le chef de groupe seul pouvait en posséder ; les esclaves habitaient dans la maison commune du groupe.

Ils travaillaient comme les autres gens de la famille pour le chef de groupe, mais ils ne possédaient pas de petits champs particuliers. Pourtant, pendant la saison sèche, ils pouvaient travailler pour eux-mêmes pendant leurs loisirs.

Ils étaient nourris et habillés par le chef de groupe qui payait, en outre, une femme aux jeunes esclaves mâles en âge de se marier. Si c'était des esclaves filles il en disposait en revanche, les mariant soit dans l'habitation, soit au dehors.

Quand un esclave mourait, son héritage était pour le chef de groupe qui faisait quelque cadeau là-dessus au fils de l'esclave.

Les captifs de traite pouvaient être rachetés par leur famille ou revendus par leur maître. Il en était de même, paraît-il, des captifs de case (ou fils de captifs de traite), ce qui paraît assez extraordinaire.

Ajoutons un mot sur l'héritage.

Quand un chef de groupe meurt, chez les Lélésé de Réo, c'est son frère puîné qui le remplace et prend le commandement du groupe. Il prend également les biens familiaux gérés par le défunt et ses biens particuliers, sauf les femmes qui sont partagées aussi également que possible entre tous les frères.

Quand la ligne des frères est épuisée, le commandement et l'héritage vont au plus âgé de la ligne des fils de la maison — soit fils, soit neveu de frère du défunt.

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Les Lélésé ont des chefs de la Terre qui sont également chefs de village. Quand un de ces chefs Terre-village meurt, il est remplacé par son héritier familial.

Avant les Français, Réo dépendait des Mossi, du Lélé-Naba, ministre Mossi auprès du roi de Ouagadougou et également chef de province. Réo et ses Kipirsi-Lélésé étaient rattachés à celle-ci.

Il n'y avait pas d'impôt régulièrement fixé par les Mossi. Mais, quand le Lélé-Naba avait besoin de quelque chose, soit pour lui, soit pour le

3: Tauxier FA28 Mossi

Moro-Naba de Ouagadougou, il le faisait demander au chef de Réo qui le faisait demander à son tour aux habitants du village. C'étaient surtout des demandes de bétail.

La suzeraineté des Mossi sur Réo n'empêchait pas le pays (surtout à l'ouest de Réo car, à l'est, le pays commençait à se mossiser) d'être livré à l'anarchie. Les chefs de justice, il est vrai, existaient : c'étaient les chefs de famille totale (placés au-dessus des chefs de maisons ou petits groupes familiaux et assistés du conseil de la famille totale), les chefs de la Terre-village, les chefs de petits cantons tels que Réo. Mais ces chefs de famille, de village ou de canton ne jouissaient pas d'une autorité suffisante pour faire régner bonne et prompte justice. Ainsi on enlevait des femmes de village à village ou du bétail. Le mari privé de sa femme allait tirer des flèches au suborneur auprès de son village, il le blessait ou le tuait, puis s'enfuyait. Alors le village du blessé ou du tué prenait fait et cause pour celui-ci et ses jeunes gens allaient attaquer le village du mari qui s'était vengé.

Comme preuve de cette anarchie, je copie dans le Registre des rapports du cercle de Ouagadougou (1) les passages suivants :

« Un chef de canton du Kipirsi, cité devant le tribunal de province, dit qu'il est d'usage dans le Kipirsi que les chefs fassent la guerre aux régions voisines, les pillent et y enlèvent des femmes. Il a ainsi enlevé deux femmes au chef de canton voisin. Le tribunal le condamne à de la prison. »

Ceci encore :

« Les vols et les pillages sont encore fréquents au Kipirsi et les colporteurs ne peuvent y circuler sans danger pour eux et pour leurs marchandises. Ne pouvant supporter aucune autorité et ayant de tout temps refusé d'obéir à un chef quelconque, les habitants de ces villages acceptent difficilement d'exécuter les ordres qui leur sont donnés. »

Ceci encore, d'août 1905 :

« Une véritable anarchie règne encore dans le Kipirsi. Pour des futilités les villages prennent les armes et se battent les uns avec les autres. Ils se pillent réciproquement, se prennent leurs femmes et n'obéissent à personne. Les nabas (chefs Mossi, chefs de province, ministres), de qui les villages dépendent, expédient de temps en temps des envoyés pour rétablir l'ordre. Mais ceux-ci se hâtent de rentrer quand leur tâche est terminée et ne font chez les gens du Kipirsi qu'une apparition rapide sans portée sérieuse.

« Les mêmes gens font du reste bon accueil à l'Européen qui passe et qui ne demande rien, mais il faut qu'il soit toujours bien escorté quand il va réclamer l'impôt dont la légitimité est loin d'être acceptée dans ces parages. »

Pour en revenir aux affaires de justice, leur principe était la composition, le dédommagement de la personne ou du groupe lésé, quand elles se réglaient régulièrement. Ainsi pour les vols, le voleur ou sa famille devaient

(1) Dépouillé par moi en 1908-1909.

restituer les objets volés ou leur valeur. Il n'y avait pas d'autre peine. Quand on avait affaire à un récidiviste, on finissait par l'expulser du village.

Pour les affaires de coups et de blessures, le chef de la Terre-village faisait payer au coupable un mouton ou un bœuf, suivant sa richesse. Avec cette bête le même chef offrait un sacrifice à la Terre. La viande en était ensuite partagée entre lui-même et les anciens du village. On ne donnait rien au blessé comme dédommagement particulier mais sa famille avait une part de la bête, tandis que la famille du coupable était exclue de la distribution.

Pour les affaires de meurtre (toujours quand on pouvait régler régulièrement ces affaires et que la vendetta n'intervenait pas) le meurtrier payait au chef de la Terre-village trois bœufs. Celui-ci convoquait tous les anciens du village et offrait devant eux un sacrifice à la Terre avec ces trois bêtes. Puis on en partageait les morceaux, comme précédemment, entre le chef et les anciens. La poitrine des bêtes tuées et leur peau était pour le chef. Les parents de la victime avaient aussi leur part. Ceux du meurtrier ne recevaient rien. Ceci fait l'affaire était considérée comme finie et l'on ne tuait ni n'exilait le coupable.

Ajoutons que les gens du Kipirsi avaient jadis des arbres à poison (yabogo, sans doute des *Strophantus*) pour empoisonner leurs flèches, mais le capitaine Lambert, qui commanda le cercle de Ouagadougou de 1905 à 1907, les fit couper et détruire autour des villages du Kipirsi.

Les gens du Kipirsi furent attaqués deux fois par les Zaberma ou Songhaï avant notre installation dans le pays (1897). Naturellement les Zaberma, ayant affaire à des gens aussi incapables de se grouper et d'obéir, en eurent raison et les pillèrent, au moins un certain temps. Les Mossi dont ils dépendaient, au moins nominalement, ne leur portèrent aucun secours.

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Les Lélésé du Réo enterrent leurs morts dans le champ de maïs qui entoure, à la saison des pluies, la maison-citadelle. Quand un homme meurt, ses frères, fils et filles lavent son corps puis revêtent celui-ci d'un costume de cérémonie : boubou blanc, culotte blanche, bonnet blanc. Puis la famille rouvre la dernière tombe car on enterre plusieurs personnes dans chaque tombe (composée sans doute d'un puits vertical et de diverses excavations latérales se greffant sur le puits central). On envoie chercher les fossoyeurs tandis que les griots arrivent avec les parents et les gens du village. On chante des chants funèbres, on danse, on boit du dolo. Lorsque les fossoyeurs sont arrivés, on leur donne leur paie : deux moutons et deux chèvres. Ils saisissent alors le corps et on va le porter en terre. La cérémonie ne dure qu'un jour et l'on n'offre aucun sacrifice à ce moment là.

Mais, cinq ou sept jours plus tard, a lieu une seconde cérémonie : la maisonnée du défunt a préparé beaucoup de dolo et réuni du petit bétail (par exemple 10 boucs et 10 béliers). La famille du défunt et les voisins

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ont été convoqués. Quand tout le monde est là, on égorge les boucs et les béliers devant la porte de la chambre du mort en les offrant à l'âme de celui-ci. Ces bêtes sont tuées par celui qui les offre, soit par l'héritier, soit par les fils ou les neveux du mort. Les griots sont là faisant de la musique et la viande des bêtes sacrifiées est en partie pour eux. On mange, on boit du dolo, on danse. Cette seconde cérémonie dure deux jours et constitue ce qui répond à la commémoration (sangha) des Mandé. Quand elle est finie, on ne fait plus de sacrifices au mort que quand le devin (barabagoro), interrogé sur quelque événement, rêve ou autre, indique qu'il y a lieu d'en offrir un.

Les Lélésé ont auprès de chaque habitation une petite case en terre battue, haute de 25 centimètres environ, où sont censées loger les âmes des ancêtres. C'est sur cette petite case que l'on offre les sacrifices aux morts pour lesquels, du reste, il n'y a pas de fête périodique annuelle.

Pour les semailles, on offre quelquefois des sacrifices, ceux du moins à qui le devin consulté a dit d'en faire.

Pour la récolte, le jour où les femmes ont fini d'apporter le grain à l'habitation, le chef de groupe fait un sacrifice aux ancêtres avant que le mil soit engrangé dans les petites cases spéciales, ceci pour les remercier de la récolte. Ce sacrifice est offert sur la petite case ancestrale.

Les Lélésé sacrifient aux marigots. Quand le « barabagoro » a indiqué un sacrifice à faire au marigot du village, le chef de la Terre-village offre ce sacrifice.

On fait des sacrifices à la Terre quand la pluie ne tombe pas, par exemple, ou pour les meurtres ou les blessures (voir plus haut). Quand la pluie ne tombe pas, on va d'abord consulter le barabogoro qui indique le sacrifice à offrir, puis celui-ci est offert par le chef de la Terre-village, assisté des anciens, à un endroit consacré sur la place du village. Cet endroit est marqué par une pierre sur laquelle on offre le sacrifice.

On croit aux esprits redoutables de la brousse mais on ne leur offre pas, paraît-il, de sacrifices. Les femmes ont quelquefois des enfants de ces mauvais esprits, par exemple les jumeaux. Chez eux on ne tuerait pas ces enfants, au contraire de ce qui se fait généralement chez les Gourounsi.

Les devins des Lélésé de Réo sont, nous le savons, les « barabogoro ». Ils tracent des signes dans le sable avec leurs doigts quand ils sont dans un certain état spécial. Ensuite, réveillés, ils interprètent ces signes. Ou bien ils agitent six petits cailloux entre leurs mains jointes. Ils regardent ensuite la position des cailloux. Les barabogoros se font payer 50 ou 100 cauris (un ou deux sous) par consultation. Ils travaillent du reste la terre comme les autres Lélésé, leur spécialité ne leur suffisant pas pour vivre.

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APPENDICE XIII

Notice sur les Gourounmossi

Les « Gourounmossi » sont les indigènes qui se trouvent dans l'est du Kipirsi et qui, d'origine Gourounsi, ont subi peu à peu l'influence Mossi. Le lieutenant Marc, pages 128 à 130 de son *Pays Mossi*, a donné un croquis extrêmement net de la façon dont s'opérait peu à peu cette « mossisation ». Nous allons d'abord le citer puis nous donnerons quelques notes recueillies par nous, en 1909, sur ces Gourounsi mossisés ou « Gourounmossi » d'après le nom que leur donnent les Mossi.

« Avec leurs frontières actuelles, dit le lieutenant Marc, les Mossi sont presque partout séparés de leurs voisins par des bandes de savane inculte de 20 à 30 kilomètres de largeur. Sur un seul point, ils sont en contact permanent avec les primitifs : c'est au Kipirsi, dans la partie ouest du Mossi. Dans toute cette région, nous avons fait en 1902 et 1903 un grand nombre de tournées et il n'est pas un seul village que nous n'ayons visité. Nous avons observé avec la plus grande netteté le fait suivant : en bordure de la bande inhabitée que traverse la Volta noire, et dans la partie la plus accidentée du Kirpisi, se trouve un noyau de population Gourounsi ayant conservé les mœurs, la langue, le type de construction, le costume des Gourounsi que l'on trouve au sud de la Volta rouge. La limite de ce noyau est exactement formée par les villages de Gorsi, Pouni, Réo, Tion et Tialgo. A une distance d'environ quarante kilomètres, une limite parallèle à celle que nous venons d'indiquer marque le commencement du pays entièrement Mossi, limite que jalonnent les villages de Niouma, Titao, Conkizitenga, Saodoro, Poua et Sabou.

« Entre ces deux limites (1), la transition du Gourounmossi au Mossi se fait d'une façon qui est partout la même, et nous avons observé là nettement trois zones concentriques qui indiquent les différentes étapes intermédiaires.

« Dans le cœur du Kipirsi, l'on se trouve en présence d'une organisation sociale extrêmement rudimentaire ; les indigènes, incirconcis, parlent Gourounsi et construisent des cases à terrasses. A douze kilomètres à l'est du village Gourounsi de Réo, on trouve la langue Mossi et la case

(1) Ces deux limites enveloppent à droite et à gauche le territoire des Gourounmossi.

3: Tauxier FA28 Mossi

ronde du Mossi avec son toit en paille à Koudougou. Mais les indigènes de ce village vivent dans la même anarchie que leurs voisins de l'Ouest. A quinze kilomètres à l'Est, on trouve un naba Mossi à Doulou et une population commençant déjà à respecter un chef héréditaire. Un peu plus loin, à Nanguiola, l'aspect du village, le costume des habitants, la soumission au naba font penser que l'on se trouve déjà en plein pays Mossi. Mais les indigènes ne sont par circoncis. Ce n'est qu'à Saodoro, à douze kilomètres à l'Est, que l'on se trouve en pays complètement mossisé et en tous points semblable à celui qui s'étend vers Ouagadougou. Cette sorte de coupe théorique que donne l'itinéraire de Réo à Saodoro s'observe avec la plus grande netteté tout autour du Kipirsi ; les points de repère qui marquent les progrès de la mossisation du pays se retrouvent dans le même ordre en zones concentriques, tout autour du petit canton où se maintiennent les Gourounsi (1).

« Au moment de notre pénétration dans le pays, les Mossi étaient en train de conquérir le Kipirsi. Ils avaient partagé le pays en larges bandes sur lesquelles les nabas de Lallé, de Conkizitenga et de Yaco s'étaient réservé des droits. Souvent ils envoyaient des expéditions de pillage dans cette direction. Mais, en même temps, une lente poussée portait chaque année les cultures et les villages Mossi vers l'Ouest, et les mœurs Mossi se substituaient peu à peu aux mœurs des autochtones.

« L'extrême régularité avec laquelle cette substitution s'opère peu à peu sur toute la partie ouest du Mossi nous a amené à penser que nous étions en présence d'un phénomène continu, se produisant depuis longtemps et ayant un processus invariable. »

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Les Gourounmossi sont surtout des cultivateurs : ils cultivent le millet et faisaient, il n'y a pas encore longtemps, du sorgho blanc et du sorgho rouge. Mais le « kassido » s'étant mis sur ces deux espèces végétales, on ne fait plus, depuis trois ans, de gros mil blanc ni de gros mil rouge (2).

Le maïs est cultivé autour des cases. On fait aussi du tabac, mais ni coton, ni indigo.

Avant les Zaberma, nos gens possédaient beaucoup de bestiaux, bœufs, moutons, chèvres, mais le nombre en a fort diminué depuis les ravages de ceux-ci.

La cueillette porte sur les arbres habituels de la régions : nérés, karités, baobabs, tamarins, etc. On ne fait pas d'arboriculture mais de la pêche et un peu de chasse.

L'industrie compte des forgerons et des peaussiers fabricants d'objets en cuir. La poterie est faite par les vieilles femmes.

(1) Ces Gourounsi sont les Lélésé étudiés dans la notice précédente et un certain nombre de Nounouma.

(2) A Yalo (canton de Kayo, province de Gounga), village de celui qui me renseigne, le nommé Tenga.

La famille se compose de petits groupes de ménages constitués soit par un père et ses fils mariés soit même par le frère aîné et ses frères plus jeunes mariés. Au-dessus de ces petits groupes est la famille totale dont le chef, assisté du conseil de famille, a des droits justiciers et religieux sur tous les membres de la famille.

Pendant la saison des pluies ou des cultures, les membres d'un petit groupe de travail travaillent d'abord sur les champs du chef de groupe, jusqu'à ce qu'ils soient en état, puis on travaille sur le champ du plus ancien après lui dans le groupe, puis sur celui du suivant et ainsi de suite jusqu'à ce que tous les champs soient préparés. Les champs du chef de groupe sont, pour ainsi dire, les champs collectifs du groupe et les autres champs sont les champs particuliers.

Le chef de groupe nourrit bien ses gens pendant l'hivernage ou saison des cultures, mais, pendant la saison sèche, il ne les nourrit plus qu'un jour sur trois. Ils se nourrissent alors avec les produits de leur champ particulier. De même il ne les habille pas.

C'est le chef de groupe qui marie les filles du groupe et, en revanche, procure sa première femme à tout jeune homme du petit groupe en âge de mariage.

Les jeunes filles sont le plus souvent fiancées ou promises dès leur plus jeune âge. Quelquefois, c'est le jeune homme lui-même qui choisit sa femme. Un ami commun l'introduit dans la famille de celle-ci pour qu'il puisse la demander. La dot était jadis (avant les Zaberma) de cinq bœufs pour une fille. Si l'on épousait ensuite sa jeune sœur, la dot n'était plus que de quatre bœufs et, si l'on prenait ensuite une sœur encore plus jeune, la dot n'était plus que de trois bœufs. Actuellement, avec le manque relatif de bétail amené par les déprédations des Zaberma, l'on ne peut plus payer de telles dots et il a été convenu que 5.000 cauris (5 francs) remplacerait une vache, 4.000 (4 francs) une génisse, 3.000 (3 francs) un taureau. Ainsi, actuellement, on paye en moyenne 15.000 cauris pour une fille. Il y a de plus les cadeaux : l'on tue 10 pintades et on les offre au père de la jeune fille avec 1.000 cauris (1 franc) de sel. La dot payée la jeune fille est amenée dans la maison du jeune homme. La famille de celui-ci tue un mouton et l'on fait la fête.

C'est le chef du petit groupe qui perçoit la dot payée pour les filles du groupe.

Quand il meurt, c'est son frère puîné (s'il travaille avec lui) qui prend le commandement du groupe et son héritage, sauf les femmes du défunt qui doivent rester dans la maisonnée mais y choisissent leur nouveau mari.

A défaut de frères, le fils le plus âgé de tout le groupe hérite et prend le commendement de ceux qui restent avec lui.

Nos gens enterrent les chefs (de village, de famille totale, de groupe) soit dans la cour de la maison, soit en dehors de celle-ci mais non loin de la porte. Ils mettent sur la tombe une pierre ou une marmite pour en marquer l'emplacement. Ces tombes servent à plusieurs personnes et on ne les abandonne que quand elles sont pleines ou abîmées. Le jour de l'en-

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terrement, l'on fait des sacrifices pour le mort, puis on offre, une dernière fois, un sacrifice sur sa tombe quand elle est close.

Les Gourounmossi offrent des sacrifices aux arbres (ainsi au kankalra, nom Mossi, sana en Mandé, *Daniella thurifera*). On l'invoque pour avoir des enfants.

On fait de même pour le tamarinier (koussouga ou poussouga en Mossi). Quand quelqu'un n'a pas de fils et trouve un grand tamarinier dans la brousse il l'invoque, ainsi que Naba-Tenga (mot à mot le chef Terre, notre maître ou notre maîtresse la Terre) et Naba-Ouendé (mot à mot le chef Soleil ou le chef Ciel, notre maître le Soleil ou le Ciel) pour que l'arbre et toutes ces divinités lui fassent « gagner » un fils et il leur promet, en cas de succès, un poulet et du tô de farine de mil. Si le fils vient, on exécute la promesse faite.

On offre aussi des sacrifices aux eaux. Le marigot qui coule auprès du village de Yalo s'appelle Tapoï ou Dakoï. On lui donne des poulets en sacrifice pour qu'il guérisse les gens de telle ou telle maladie ou bien pour qu'il les préserve des vers de Guinée. En ce cas on se frotte avec de la boue du marigot puisé à un certain endroit consacré.

On offre des sacrifices aux pierres aussi, ainsi à une certaine pierre par exemple sise auprès du marigot de Yalo et à laquelle les femmes offrent particulièrement des poulets, du mil, pour avoir un enfant.

Les grands dieux sont, comme nous venons de le voir, Naba-Tenga et Naba-Ouendé, c'est-à-dire la Terre et le Soleil-Ciel. Sous le rapport religieux donc nos gens semblent bien « mossisés ».

L'on offre des sacrifices pour les semailles : à cette occasion, l'on tue, à côté du champ où l'on va ensemencer, un poulet et l'on offre aussi de la farine de mil pour que les semailles viennent à bien. Les sacrifices d'offrande sont offerts aux morts ou ancêtres (kimmsé), à Naba-Tenga (la Terre) et à Naba-Ouendé (le Soleil).

Après la récolte, si celle-ci a été bonne, l'on offre aux mêmes des poulets et les gâteaux mous du tô pour les remercier.

Nos Gourounmossi ont des devins (bara en Mossi) qui conseillent, au point de vue religieux, le chef de village. Ainsi, un peu avant la récolte du mil (qui a lieu en novembre), le chef de la Terre-village va consulter le « bara » avec les 20 cauris traditionnels, pour savoir si la saison froide qui va s'ouvrir (fin novembre) — la saison des « vents froids » — très redoutée des Mossi parce qu'elle « exécute » leurs cagrotants, leurs malades, tandis qu'elle ranime l'Européen, n'amènera pas des maladies ou des calamités diverses sur le village. Le devin lit dans le sable ce qui doit arriver et ce qu'il faut faire pour l'éviter, et ordonne généralement un sacrifice général pour tout le village. Le chef de village rassemble les vieillards du lieu, leur fait part de ce que le devin lui a dit et l'on offre le sacrifice d'une façon solennelle. C'est le chef de la Terre-village qui le fait entouré des anciens. Quelquefois le sacrifice est offert personnellement par le chef de village dans sa maison.

[p.162]

APPENDICE XIV

Notice sur les Boussansé (1)

(Résidence de Tenkodogo)

La population de la Résidence de Tenkodogo, dépendant du cercle de Ouagadougou, se répartit ainsi :

	Mossi	*Boussansé*	*Yarsé*	*Poullo*
Province de Tenkodogo	20.000	40.000	2.000	5.000
Province de Koupéla..	54.000	»	4.000	3.000
Yanga	44.000	»	2.000	»
Léré et Kousacé.....	»	30.000	»	»
Cantons indépendants de l'Ouest.....	4.000	65.000	»	»
TOTAUX.....	122.000	135.000	8.000	8.000

Il y a donc dans la résidence :

Boussansé.....	135.000
Mossi.....	122.000
Yarsé.....	8.000
Poullo.....	8.000
TOTAL.....	273.000 habitants (2)

Là-dessus il n'y a comme musulmans que les 8.000 Yarsé, les 8.000 Poullo et un millier de Mossi, soit 17.000 musulmanisés. Le reste de la population (soit 256.000 âmes) est fétichiste.

Pour les langues, le Mossi est parlé par 152.000 habitants environ (donc par tous les Mossi, les Yarsé et un certain nombre de Boussansé). Le Bous-

(1) Cette notice a été composée avec des notes prises sur la *Codification des coutumes indigènes des Boussansé*, de M. FROGER (1909), travail resté inédit et faisant partie des Archives du cercle de Ouagadougou, et avec des notes prises par moi, par interrogation, auprès de quelques Boussansé, en 1909.

(2) Chiffres de 1909. M. Delafosse donne 105.318 Boussansé dans son *H. S. N.*, tome I, page 155, mais il doit y avoir erreur.

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sanga est parlé par 10.000 personnes et le Kousanga (langue des Kousacé, qui constitue une langue à part du Boussanga) par 13.000 âmes. Le Foulfouldé est parlé par les 8.000 Poullo.

D'après les renseignements pris par M. Froger, ce seraient des « Bonbonsé » qui auraient d'abord habité le pays. Quand les Mossi-Dagomba y arrivèrent, les Bonbonsé se seraient enfuis de la circonscription de Tenkodogo, auraient gagné les rives de la Volta rouge, se seraient installés au delà et auraient créé la race Nankana (???). Les Mossi envahisseurs auraient fait appel aux Boussansé pour repeupler la région. Ceux-ci arrivèrent, mais lassés de la domination Mossi, ils émigrèrent au Sud (Léré-Kousacé), puis à l'Ouest (Boussouma).

« Les Mossi de Tenkodogo, alliés à ceux de Ouagadougou, ne pouvaient pas laisser nos Boussansé tranquilles. Vers 1500, ils font une grande expédition contre eux mais se font battre à Komtoéga, bataille où le Moro-Naba de Ouagadougou fut tué. Une nouvelle tentative eut lieu vers 1600, mais les Mossi échouèrent contre Garanga, point fortifié des Boussansé de l'Ouest. Cependant les Mossi s'étaient établis à Koupéla et en avaient fait une province importante vers 1550.

Pendant ce temps-là, les Boussansé du Sud — ceux du Léré et du Kousacé — se battaient, se volaient, se pillaient entre eux.

Les Boussansé de l'Ouest finirent par remettre à leur tête un Mossi et il y eut des luttes entre les nabas Mossi pour la possession de la royauté sur les Boussansé. »

Bref les Boussansé n'étaient pas de force contre les Mossi centralisés et, malgré des succès partiels, furent en partie soumis par les Mossi. Seuls, les plus éloignés des nabas Mossi, conservèrent leur pleine indépendance et restèrent dans leur situation anarchique.

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La culture porte sur le millet, le sorgho blanc qui sert à la nourriture des chevaux, le sorgho rouge qui sert surtout à fabriquer la bière de mil.

Bien que la culture augmente chaque année, les habitants sont loin de faire assez de mil pour atteindre le récolte suivante.

Le maïs est cultivé partout autour des maisons mais en petite quantité. C'est une récolte très précoce qui sert à la nourriture des habitants en attendant la récolte du mil (le mil se récolte en novembre, le maïs en août).

Le riz est cultivé en assez faible quantité aux environs des marigots. Il était considéré autrefois comme une nourriture réservée pour les chefs. La culture du riz tend à se développer.

Les arachides se cultivent partout, mais seulement pour les besoins des habitants.

Les sésames sont cultivées un peu partout, surtout dans la province du Yanga. Les indigènes en font de l'huile et s'en servent comme assaisonnement de leurs aliments.

Ils cultivent encore le gombo, le kiperga ou petit piment rouge, le kouina, sorte de tomate indigène, le bouloaka et le yaoghlé, courges du pays, le tounga, courge non comestible dont on fait les calebasses (1).

On fait aussi du coton, culture très répandue dans toute la circonscription, de l'indigo cultivé presque partout mais en très petite quantité et qui sert à la teinture des étoffes indigènes, du bérenga (en Mossi, chanvre indigène) dont les feuilles servent de condiment et dont la tige donne des fibres qui servent à fabriquer la corde du pays.

En ce qui concerne l'élevage, il y a dans la Résidence de Tenkodogo 53.000 chèvres, 26.000 moutons, 33.000 bovidés (9.000 taureaux et 24.000 vaches), d'après le recensement d'août 1908. Les Peul ou Poullo sont employés comme bergers par les habitants du pays et possèdent la moitié de chaque troupeau. Les bœufs à bosse sont rares, les ânes nombreux et servent à porter (dans la partie mossi du pays), les chevaux sont des animaux de luxe, assez nombreux chez les Mossi de Tenkodogo.

Les indigènes ne se préoccupent pas de fourrage pour la saison sèche. Durant cette période les troupeaux circulent le long des marigots et des points d'eau où ils rencontrent toujours un peu d'herbe. Durant les deux autres tiers de l'année l'herbe comestible existe en abondance et procure au bétail une nourriture largement suffisante.

L'apiculture est pratiquée par les Boussansé de Tenkodogo.

La chasse également : il y a des chasseurs d'éléphants qui, paraît-il, chassent l'éléphant seuls et avec la lance empoisonnée, munis naturellement d'un gris-gris protecteur. En dehors de cela on fait des battues collectives dans la brousse pendant la saison sèche.

Bien que le poisson soit assez abondant dans les grands marigots qui ont de l'eau en permanence, les indigènes s'occupent rarement de pêche et ne paraissent même pas y voir une ressource sérieuse. Les riverains seuls pêchent quelquefois mais uniquement pour varier leur nourriture. Ils ne font aucun commerce de poisson.

La cueillette est pratiquée comme partout chez les nègres : le pays possède le karité, le néré, le baobab, le tamarin dont les produits sont utilisés comme dans les régions avoisinantes. Le kapokier existe aussi (mais on ne fait rien du kapok) ainsi que deux arbres à gomme (non utilisés non plus). Il y a aussi le « bitto » et le « kilbédo » dont les feuilles et les fruits servent d'assaisonnement, soit frais, soit séchés au soleil et conservés.

Le yabga (nom Mossi, sans doute un Strophantus) est un arbuste assez fort mais bas dont la gousse donne une graine de laquelle les indigènes extraient le suc pour empoisonner la pointe de leurs flèches et de leurs lances.

Le « souklé » est une herbe vénéneuse qui, prise à petite dose, sert pour les avortements et, à dose plus forte, pour empoisonner les gens.

En ce qui concerne l'Industrie, disons que les forgerons se rencontrent un peu partout : ils extraient le fer pour en confectionner des instruments agricoles et guerriers. Ils travaillent aussi le cuivre importé de la Gold-

(1) Tous ces noms indigènes sont Mossi et non Boussansé.

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Coast et provenant des factoreries anglaises. Ils ont la spécialité de pouvoir seuls abattre les arbres.

Les peaussiers et fabricants d'objets en cuir sont peu nombreux : chez les Boussansé, ce sont des cultivateurs qui exercent ce métier pendant la saison sèche pour s'aider à vivre, mais leurs champs leur rapportent davantage.

Le tissage est exercé aussi pendant la saison sèche : on fabrique des bandes de cotonnade larges de 10 centimètres, de couleur blanche ou bleu-noir.

Il n'y a presque pas de tailleurs. Sous ce rapport, chaque habitant se suffit dans la plupart des endroits.

On fait beaucoup de poterie : les Boussansé, hommes et femmes, la fabriquent, les hommes comme métier de saison sèche.

On fait un peu de vannerie : les nattes et les corbeilles sont fabriquées par les femmes qui les font soit pour elles-mêmes, soit pour la vente au marché. Les plats en paille et les chapeaux en paille sont fait par les hommes, soit pour eux, soit pour la vente.

En ce qui concerne le Commerce, les Boussansé ne s'y livrent pas encore sans répugnance. Autrefois, ils ne faisaient pas du tout de colportage, maintenant ils en font un peu pour se procurer l'argent de l'impôt qu'ils ont à nous payer.

Les gens qui font vraiment du commerce, qui exercent le colportage dans la circonscription de Tenkodogo, comme dans le Mossi et le Gourounsi, sont les Yarsé : ceux-ci ont établi de gros marchés, entre autres celui de Pouitenga, le plus important de toute la circonscription de Tenkodogo.

Il y a aussi des Haoussa venant en caravane de Dori ou de Niamey et gagnant la Gold-Coast. Ils font le commerce du bétail.

Les Yarsé et les Haoussa importent dans la circonscription, lorsqu'ils viennent du Nord, du sel et du bétail, et, lorsqu'ils reviennent du Sud, des kolas, des cotonnades européennes, de la verroterie et du cuivre.

Les Boussansé vendent sur place du mil, du petit bétail et des produits de cueillette pour se procurer du sel, des kolas et du gros bétail.

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Au point de vue familial, la famille Boussansé semble désintégrée dans la partie du pays qui a été « mossisée » et intégrée dans la partie du pays qui est restée isolée et indépendante.

Chez les Boussansé « mossisés », chaque ménage vit à part, dans son habitation et subvient seul, et sans s'associer à d'autres ménages parents, au problème du pain quotidien. Il est vrai que la famille totale subsiste au-dessus des ménages indépendants avec son chef et son conseil de famille, mais cette famille totale n'est pas un organisme économique et ne répond qu'à des besoins de justice et de religion. Elle est responsable au dehors pour les membres de la famille et son chef exerce le culte familial

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commun ; mais les membres de cette grande famille ne travaillent pas ensemble. Donc, chez les Boussansé dont nous parlons, l'organisme économique se réduit au simple ménage.

Dès que quelqu'un se marie, il quitte l'habitation de ses parents pour s'établir dans une habitation à part.

Une fois installé avec sa femme, notre homme travaille ses champs, se nourrit, s'entretient (1). Il marie même ses enfants tout en prenant soin d'avertir le chef de famille. Mais c'est le père qui paye ou qui reçoit la dot.

« Le chef de ménage, dit M. Froger, a sur les membres de son ménage un droit de correction qui peut aller assez loin puisqu'il peut même couper une oreille à sa femme, mais il n'a ni le droit de mort, ni le droit de vente. Il ne peut chasser ses enfants non mariés de la maison, sauf les célibataires, c'est-à-dire sauf ceux qui devenus grands devraient être mariés et par conséquent ne pas habiter chez lui.

Les garçons n'ont aucun droit jusqu'à 7 ans environ (2), époque qui leur permet de quitter la maison paternelle pour se placer comme « dakonré ». Jusqu'à ce moment-là, ils doivent obéissance à leur père qui peut les utiliser aux travaux des champs ou à la garde des bestiaux.

Le dakonré est donc un célibataire, homme fait, jeune homme ou même enfant qui, pour une cause quelconque, caprice, mauvais traitement, etc., a quitté la case de son père et est allé se placer comme domestique chez un autre individu.

Le mariage de la jeune fille dépend de la volonté de son père qui la marie à son gré sans qu'elle puisse protester quand le parti ne lui plaît pas.

Le père du jeune homme va rendre visite au père de la fille et lui fait la demande. Si le père accepte, il reçoit du père du jeune homme un cadeau en cauris s'élevant ordinairement de 10.000 à 20.000 (10 à 20 fr.). Ce cadeau constitue la première partie de la dot. La fille promise peut avoir n'importe quel âge. Tant qu'elle n'a pas 12 ans, elle habite chez son père. Il peut donc y avoir un intervalle de douze ans et plus entre le jour de la promesse et le jour de la célébration du mariage. Si le père de la jeune fille refuse plus tard de donner celle-ci, le père du jeune homme ou, à son défaut, le jeune homme lui-même a recours au chef du village qui oblige ou de rendre la première partie de la dot ou de donner la fille. Si le père de la jeune fille continue à refuser et le mariage et la restitution de la dot, il peut être mis aux fers jusqu'à ce qu'il se soit exécuté.

Le mariage ne peut être réalisé si la jeune fille a moins de 12 ans et le jeune homme moins de 15 ans.

Le jour du mariage le père du jeune homme remet au père de la jeune

(1) Cela ne veut pas dire que nos Boussansé vivant en simple ménage ignorent les commodités et l'agrément de l'entr'aide mutuelle. Si parfois ils ont besoin d'aide, ils font appel à leurs parents, à leurs voisins, ou à des gens de bonne volonté. En ce cas, ils les paient en cidre de mil, c'est-à-dire en les faisant bien boire. C'est là ce que Le Play appelait des corvées récréatives. Elles sont très en faveur chez les nègres et, d'une façon plus générale, chez les primitifs et les semi-primitifs.

(2) Rappelons-nous que les noirs ne savent pas compter leur âge.

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fille la deuxième partie de la dot qui consiste en 20.000 cauris au moins et plusieurs têtes de bétail (trois ou quatre bœufs d'ordinaire) (1). Il n'y a aucune cérémonie pour le mariage. Le père du jeune homme se rend avec son fils dans la maison du père de la jeune fille et s'entend sur la deuxième partie de la dot, puis on fait venir la promise que son père donne au jeune homme avec quelques bonnes paroles. Les nouveaux époux rentrent chez eux, mais restent quatre jours au moins, six jours au plus, sans avoir de rapports sexuels. Le septième jour seulement de cohabitation le mariage est consommé (2).

Quand la jeune fille a été donnée à son époux, la remise de la deuxième partie de la dot est faite au père de la jeune fille. La grosse dot étant versée au père et pour son profit constitue un achat de la jeune fille.

Le ménage peut être dissous par la fuite prolongée de la femme du domicile conjugal. Quand la femme n'a fait qu'une fugue d'un jour, le mari peut être invité par le chef de village à ne pas renvoyer sa femme. Le chef de village n'intervient pas cependant si la femme reconnaît s'être rendue coupable d'adultère pendant cette fugue. Le mari peut toujours garder sa femme après une fugue prolongée du domicile conjugal mais d'habitude il la renvoie pour échapper à la déconsidération des gens du village (3).

La femme, en cas de renvoi pour fugue, doit retourner chez son père, mais le plus souvent elle va cohabiter avec son amant, même s'il est marié.

(1) Je copie dans mes notes personnelles : au village de Louga, la dot est de deux ou trois bœufs. De plus, il y a des cadeaux : un mouton ou des cauris.

Les gens peu riches donnent seulement un bœuf comme dot et, en plus, des cadeaux.

On fiance les enfants jeunes et, dès la conclusion du mariage futur, le père du fiancé verse une partie de la dot, puis, au fur et à mesure de ses besoins, le père de la fille va demander au père du fiancé de lui verser une nouvelle partie de la dot. Néanmoins la jeune fille est donnée à son mari généralement avant que toute la dot soit versée.

(2) Je copie dans mes notes : Quand une fille est trouvée non vierge par le mari, celui-ci peut la battre, la mettre aux fers et lui faire donner le nom de son amant. Ainsi renseigné il va trouver le chef de village qui fait payer une amende à l'amant. Cette amende est, du reste, pour le chef et non pour le fiancé malheureux.

(3) Dans mes notes, je relève, au contraire : Quand une femme trompe son mari, il se contente de la battre et c'est tout. Il ne s'adresse pas au chef de village et ne fait rien payer à l'amant.

Les femmes peuvent divorcer. Quand une femme quitte son mari pour se réfugier chez ses parents, le mari se plaint au chef de village. Alors le père doit rendre la femme ou la dot. Les enfants sont pour le mari. Si la femme est allée chez son amant, le chef de village la fait prendre et rendre à son mari. Si la femme est allée dans un autre village, on s'entend avec ce chef de village pour qu'il rende la femme. Mais, s'il ne le voulait pas ou ne le pouvait pas, il n'y avait rien à faire, car on n'allait pas, pour les histoires de femmes, jusqu'au naba Mossi de Tenkodogo.

Les maris ne renvoient jamais leurs femmes.

Si un mari maltraite sa femme et lui casse un membre, le père de la femme reprend sa fille et rend la dot au mari. Mais les enfants restent au père, comme il est d'usage.

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En ce cas, elle emmène les filles qu'elle a eues avec son mari et peut procéder à un second mariage avec son amant qui reçoit chez lui les filles.

En revanche, la femme battue sans motif peut retourner chez son père qui se plaint pour elle au chef de village et peut obtenir le divorce.

La femme ne peut être renvoyée sans motif par son mari. Son père, en ce cas, a recours au chef du village.

Dans le cas de dissolution de mariage par suite de fugue prolongée de la femme hors du domicile conjugal, la mari peut réclamer au père la petite dot et avoir aussi recours au chef de village, mais, si le père de la femme est dans l'impossibilité de restituer au moment de la réclamation, tout est fini.

Dans tous les autres cas de dissolution de mariage, le mari ne peut rien exiger de la part du père de la femme.

Les filles suivent toujours la mère. »

Au sujet de l'héritage, M. Froger s'exprime ainsi :

« A la mort du père, le fils aîné hérite de tous les biens, mais il doit partager avec ses frères cadets, auxquels il laisse la moitié de l'héritage. Les femmes passent au frère puîné du défunt ou recouvrent leur liberté.

« Le fils aîné hérite de son père avec ses frères. Il réunit ceux-ci après l'inhumation, puis fait le partage de tous les biens s'attribuant la moitié et divisant l'autre moitié en parts égales qu'il donne à chacun de ses frères cadets.

« Les femmes du mari reviennent, ainsi que les filles non mariées, au frère du décédé qui les épouse ou leur trouve d'autres maris. De même l'oncle doit marier ses nièces.

« Quand le père meurt sans laisser de fils, tous ses biens reviennent à son frère le plus âgé.

« Le frère n'a aucun droit à la succession de son frère quand celui-ci laisse un fils âgé d'au moins de 10 ans (1).

« Si le fils du décédé a moins de 10 ans, le frère du décédé hérite de tout mais avec obligation de donner une part fixée d'avance, dès que le fils aura atteint sa dixième année.

« Le frère (aîné ou puîné) hérite de tous les biens de son frère qui meurt sans rejetons. Les femmes du frère décédé reviennent au frère survivant.

« Si un défunt n'a ni fils, ni frères, les biens vont à son père, sinon à son grand-père (à condition bien entendu que l'un et l'autre vivent encore, ce qui n'arrive pas souvent).

« Le neveu hérite de son oncle quand ce dernier n'a ni fils, ni frères, ni père, ni grand-père encore existants.

« Les filles (2) héritent du père à défaut de mâles (fils, frères, neveux).

(1) Même remarque que ci-dessus au sujet des 10 ans. Les noirs ne savent pas compter leur âge.

(2) Et sans doute aussi les sœurs.

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« Le chef du village a droit à tout héritage qui n'est pas recueilli.

« Quand le décédé ne laisse pas d'héritier, le chef de village fait enlever les biens immédiatement après l'inhumation. Dans l'autre cas on attend deux ou trois jours après le décès. Pendant cet intervalle les femmes sont chargées de mettre en réserve tous les biens et de les garder. Puis une sorte de conseil des anciens du village se réunit à la maison du défunt. Les femmes, en leur présence, placent tous les biens recueillis (vêtements, armes, cauris, etc.) en face de l'héritier. Cela fait, celui-ci prend le tout sans qu'on l'y invite par aucune parole ; les anciens ne sont présents qu'à titre de témoins.

« La veuve ne peut se remarier que six mois au moins après le décès du mari. Le plus souvent elle attend un an, mais par pure convenance. Les filles du défunt doivent attendre un an pour se marier. Les fils ne sont tenus d'attendre que six mois.

« Quand un chef de ménage a vendu ses biens, son héritier légal a le droit de les réclamer, mais après le décès de celui-ci. De plus il appartient à l'héritier de retrouver les acheteurs de ces biens. S'il les retrouve, l'héritier a recours au chef de village pour se faire remettre les biens encore existants, sans que les acheteurs dépouillés puissent demander aucun remboursement. »

Telle est la famille Boussansé mossisée, mais elle ne présente pas le même aspect chez les Boussansé primitifs, chez lesquels on ne travaille pas par ménage isolé mais par groupes de ménages.

Voici un exemple de ces groupes : Kivsa, demeurant au village de Noirbou, possède quatre femmes et trois enfants non mariés. Habitent et travaillent avec lui Ségué, son frère puîné qui a deux femmes et deux enfants non mariés, Raoko autre parent qui a deux femmes et un enfant non marié, enfin Rouko qui a deux femmes et deux enfants non mariés. Cela fait un groupe de quatre ménages et de 22 personnes.

Les gens de ces groupes habitent ensemble et travaillent principalement pour le chef de groupe pendant la saison des pluies ou des cultures. Ils ont aussi une petite plantation particulière où leur femme (qui n'est pas astreinte à travailler pour le chef de groupe) va cultiver et où ils vont l'aider les jours où ils sont libres. De plus, pendant la saison sèche, ils ont à eux la plus grande partie de leur temps et en profitent pour exercer un métier pour gagner un peu d'argent personnel.

Le chef de groupe nourrit tous ses gens tout le temps et même les habille, du moins dans les grandes circonstances.

Le même chef achète leur première femme aux jeunes gens du groupe en âge de se marier. Une fille, chez eux, coûte quatre bœufs, plus les cadeaux en mil et en dolo donnés de temps en temps à la mère de celle-ci. Les jeunes filles, qui semblent très libres et qu'on ne promet pas dès leur enfance, refusent toujours le premier fiancé qu'on leur propose et se sauvent dans la maison de l'homme qu'elles ont choisi. Alors le chef du groupe familial de la fille vient réclamer la dot au chef du groupe du mari qui lui paye toujours exactement quatre bœufs.

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Quand un chef de groupe meurt, c'est son frère aîné qui prend le commandement du groupe et les biens familiaux du défunt. Mais les biens particuliers de celui-ci, beaucoup moins importants du reste, sont pour le fils aîné. A défaut de frère, c'est le plus âgé du groupe qui hérite.

Notons que les femmes, libres comme jeunes filles, comme nous venons de le voir, semblent conserver en partie la même liberté après leur mariage. Quand elles ne sont pas contentes de leur mari, elles s'enfuient dans leur famille et de là chez un amant, en emmenant avec elles leurs enfants en bas âge. Mais ces enfants sont rendus par la famille de la femme au mari. Cela fait, il n'est pas question de restituer de dot.

Si une femme s'enfuit de chez son mari sans lui avoir donné d'enfants, l'amant ou nouveau mari restitue à l'ancien ce que celui-ci a payé pour la dot. S'il ne peut le faire, la coutume l'oblige à rendre la femme.

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Avant les Français, les Boussansé indépendants formaient des villages et de petits cantons indépendants. Ainsi le Léré avait un chef suprême qui commandait à 17.000 âmes environ et qui interdisait aux villages de son obéissance de se battre ou décidait, en cas de combat incertain entre deux villages, qui était vainqueur, qui était vaincu. Les Boussansé partagés en cantons indépendants étaient en tout 78.000. Mais il y avait 40.000 Boussansé dans le royaume de Tenkodogo qui n'étaient plus indépendants et obéissaient au naba Mossi de Tenkodogo. Celui-ci commandait en tout à 60.000 âmes (20.000 Mossi et 40.000 Boussansé). Ce petit royaume reconnaissait la suzeraineté de Ouagadougou. Il en était de même de la province ou du petit royaume de Koupéla peuplé seulement de Mossi, de Yarsé et de Poullo, et de la province ou petit royaume du Yanga peuplée de Mossi dits Yansi et de Yarsé.

Le naba de Koupéla, dit Froger, descendant direct d'un ancien roi de Ouagadougou, ne manquait pas chaque année de venir saluer son parent, le Moro-Naba de Ouagadougou et de lui apporter quelques cadeaux. Le naba du Yanga, le plus éloigné de la branche des rois Mossi de Ouagadougou, n'hésita pas cependant, après un appui que lui prêta son parent, le naba de Tenkodogo, dans une affaire où il risqua sa royauté, à se faire par reconnaissance le vassal de ce dernier. Du même coup le naba du Yanga rattacha son royaume-province à l'empire Mossi.

Les trois grands chefs de la circonscription actuelle de Tenkodogo (Tenkodogo, Koupéla, le Yanga) reconnaissaient donc la suzeraineté de Ouagadougou mais étaient en fait indépendants chez eux. Ils faisaient la guerre comme bon leur semblait.

Ces nabas avaient leur gounga-naba (chef de guerre), leur ouidi-naba (chef des chevaux, de la cavalerie), leur baloum-naba (chef des femmes et des soronés ou jeunes esclaves), leur daporé-naba (chef des captifs), leur samandé-naba (chef des cases, des travaux).

Au-dessous de ces nabas et de leurs ministres étaient les chefs de canton et au-dessous les chefs de village.

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Les chefs de village (1) avaient droit de la part des habitants du village à un tribut annuel qui consistait en bestiaux ou en cauris. Ce chiffre n'était pas fixé, mais le chef de case, qui versait pour tous ses gens, pouvait supporter les conséquences d'un versement trop insignifiant. Le chef de canton avait droit de la part de tous ses villages à un tribut annuel pour le versement duquel le chef de village était rendu responsable. Et il en était de même du canton vis-à-vis du roi de chaque petit royaume.

Le petit roi du Léré (royaume-canton Boussansé) avait droit annuellement et à certaines fêtes à des tributs que lui versaient les chefs de village de tout son royaume.

La justice était ainsi réglée dans ses grandes lignes à Tenkodogo, Koupéla et dans le Yaaga :

Pour la responsabilité : les petits enfants étaient irresponsables. Le chef de village n'était responsable d'aucun crime ou délit commis par lui. La fuite de l'individu reconnu coupable d'un crime entraînait l'exécution capitale d'un de ses proches.

Pour les dettes, si l'emprunteur ne rendait pas à la date fixée, le prêteur avait recours au chef du village qui mettait aux fers l'emprunteur jusqu'à ce qu'il eût remboursé la totalité du prêt. Le prêt à intérêts n'existait pas.

Quand le débiteur ne pouvait s'acquitter au terme fixé, il pouvait offrir une de ses filles en mariage à son créancier. Si le créancier acceptait la dette se trouvait éteinte par le mariage pour lequel le débiteur recevait de son créancier les cadeaux et la dot d'usage.

La prescription pour dettes n'existait pas.

L'héritier légal avait toujours la ressource d'échapper au règlement des dettes de celui dont il héritait en n'acceptant pas la succession.

Pour les coups et blessures, il n'y avait pas de sanction : quiconque était reconnu coupable de coups et blessures n'ayant pas entraîné la mort restait impuni. En revanche, quiconque avait violé une fille non pubère était condamné à des dommages et intérêts dont le chiffre était fixé par le père ou un des parents de la victime.

Le voleur était condamné à restituer la chose volée : tout individu qui était reconnu coupable de vol et ne pouvait restituer était mis aux fers par le chef de village jusqu'à remboursement par sa famille de la valeur de l'objet volé. Tout individu mis aux fers pour ne pas avoir payé le prix de l'objet volé et qui était reconnu coupable de nombreux vols antérieurs pour lesquels il n'avait pas pu être puni, était étranglé par ordre du chef de village.

Pour le meurtre, quiconque, n'étant plus en bas âge, avait tué une personne volontairement ou non, sauf le cas de légitime défense, était étranglé (2).

Tout meurtre commis par un enfant en bas âge entraînait la mise aux

(1) Inutile de faire remarquer qu'il s'agit ici de l'organisation des petits royaume Mossi du cercle de Tenkodogo, où se trouvaient compris, il est vrai, des Boussansé (40.000 à Tenkodogo), mais il ne s'agit pas de la véritable organisation Boussansé pure, beaucoup plus primitive et anarchique.

(2) On reconnaît là la justice relativement sévère des Mossi, fort opposée à l'esprit des Boussansé primitifs, pour qui tout se règle par dédommagement et compositions, ou bien par vendetta.

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fers de son chef de maison ou d'une personne de la famille habitant la maison jusqu'au paiement d'un chiffre de cauris dont le taux était fixé par le chef de village.

La femme coupable de meurtre reconnu était étranglée. Si la femme criminelle avait un enfant au sein celui-ci était confié à une autre femme. Mais le chef de village pouvait surseoir à l'exécution de la mère qui était surveillée et étranglée dès que l'enfant était sevré.

Tout individu reconnu coupable de meurtre et qui prenait la fuite entraînait de ce fait la mise à mort d'un de ses plus proches parents.

Quiconque avait porté des coups et fait des blessures mortelles à une personne, sauf le cas de légitime défense, était étranglé.

Au sujet de la substitution des peines, disons que le chef de village pouvait substituer à la mise aux fers un versement de cauris dont il s'attribuait la plus forte partie et dont il remettait le reste à la personne lésée.

Pour l'application des peines, les parents du condamné à mort pour meurtre se chargeaient eux-mêmes de l'exécution.

Le chef de village faisait étrangler le coupable quand il n'avait pas de parents.

La mise aux fers était appliquée par le chef de village, parfois par les particuliers eux-mêmes (chef de famille totale).

Tout cela, c'était la justice Mossi en pays Boussansé, mais non la véritable justice Boussansé. Pour faire apprécier à quel point le droit primitif Boussansé différait du droit Mossi « plus civilisé », disons que chez les Boussansé primitifs, quand quelqu'un avait commis un meurtre, il pouvait se racheter en donnant sa sœur ou sa fille ou une femme quelconque de sa famille. On la donnait comme femme à l'un des frères de la victime et l'enfant qu'elle mettait au monde était censé remplacer le disparu (dont l'esprit s'était peut-être réincarné en lui du reste, suivant les croyances de nos gens que ce sont les morts qui se réincarnent au sein des femmes pour continuer la race). Une fois la femme donnée le meurtrier, mis d'abord aux fers, était relâché.

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M. Froger décrit ainsi les funérailles d'un chef de famille ou d'un chef de groupe familial ou d'un chef de ménage :

« Le jour même du décès, l'on fait de larges libations de dolo, l'on prépare du couscous (1), l'on danse au son des tam-tams jusqu'au lendemain matin.

« L'inhumation n'a lieu que trois jours pleins (de 24 heures) après le décès. Le défunt est enterré devant l'entrée de sa case.

« Six mois ou un an après le décès, l'on recommence la fête durant un seul jour. A des intervalles de temps de plus en plus grands, l'on fait des sacrifices de poulets ou de moutons, suivant la fortune de la famille du chef de famille décédé.

(1) Il s'agit probablement de tô et non pas de couscous proprement dit.

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« Pour les funérailles d'un chef de village, on procède à l'inhumation immédiatement. Le chef est enterré au sein même de la case qu'il habitait.

« Puis commence la grande fête : on tire des coups de fusil dont le but est de faire savoir aux habitants les plus éloignés que le chef de village est décédé. On fait des libations de dolo, on fait du couscous (1) et l'on se réjouit en l'honneur du défunt par de bruyants et continuels tam-tams. Les vieilles femmes du chef décédé doivent figurer dans une danse de caractère.

« De nombreux cavaliers arrivent et se livrent à des exercices hippiques et à des fantasias.

« Les fêtes se prolongent jusqu'au septième jour qui suit le décès.

« Elles se renouvellent avec autant d'éclat six mois ou un an au plus tard, selon le désir de la famille. C'est alors que sont faits les premiers sacrifices où l'on immole des poulets, des moutons et des bœufs. Ces sacrifices se renouvellent dans la suite le plus souvent possible. »

Pour les funérailles d'une femme, « l'inhumation a lieu un jour plein après le décès, en un endroit assez éloigné de la case et sans aucune fête ni cérémonie.

Une année plus tard, on fait un jour de fête. On boit, on mange, on sacrifie quelques poulets mais sans tam-tam. On ne fait jamais plus de sacrifices dans la suite ».

Pour un enfant, « l'enterrement se fait dans la brousse et aussitôt le décès. Il n'y a pas de fête (2). »

Tous les ans, les Boussansé font un sacrifice pour leurs morts et ancêtres au commencement du froid (fin Novembre). Ce sont les chefs de famille totale qui offrent ce sacrifice et non les simples chefs de ménage. Ceux-ci apportent à leur chef de famille des poulets, du mil et du dolo et celui-ci offre le tout, devant la case de sa première femme, sur un tas de cailloux. Il tue les poulets, verse sur les cailloux la farine de mil délayée dans l'eau et le dolo. Le sacrifice est offert aux morts et ancêtres de la famille, à la Terre et au grand Dieu (3).

Pour les semailles on offre aussi des sacrifices, pas partout du reste. Ce sont les chefs de ménage indépendant ou les chefs de groupes de ménages qui offrent ce sacrifice pour leurs champs, à la porte de la hutte de leur première femme et il consiste toujours en poulet, farine de mil

(1) Même remarque que plus haut.

(2) Comparer les détails suivants que j'extrais de mes notes et qui concernent les Boussansé mossiés du village de Longa : « Chaque chef de ménage est enterré à la porte de sa case, au dehors, sous le petit hangar de l'entrée. Les autres personnes sont enterrées autour de la case.

« Pour le chef de ménage, à plus forte raison pour un chef de famille totale ou de village, on offre un mouton avant de commencer à creuser la tombe. Une fois la tombe creusée, les gens de la famille offrent des cauris. On en met la moitié dans la tombe et l'on donne l'autre moitié au fossoyeur. On offre aussi du sel pour le mort, puis la tombe est fermée. Alors, si la personne enterrée est un chef de ménage, de famille, de village, ou simplement même un vieux ou une vieille, l'on mange, l'on boit du cidre de mil, l'on chante, l'on danse pendant trois jours. Si c'est un jeune homme, ou une jeune femme, ou un enfant, l'on ne fait rien. »

(3) Sans doute le dieu du soleil et du ciel.

3: Tauxier FA28 Mossi

délayée dans l'eau, etc. C'est offert aux morts, à la Terre et au grand Dieu pour que la récolte soit excellente.

Nos mêmes gens font aussi un sacrifice pour la récolte (si celle-ci est bonne) dans le champ même, le jour où l'on commence à la recueillir. C'est offert à la Terre (tala en Boussanga) et aux autres divinités susnommées. Le sacrifice consiste également en poulet ou pintade, bière de mil, farine de mil.

Les Boussansé offrent aussi des sacrifices aux arbres : au village de Longa, ils ont un arbre protecteur (sounsoun en Mandé, ganra en Mossi) auquel on offre un sacrifice annuel au commencement de la saison des pluies. Tout le monde, y compris les esclaves, assiste à ce sacrifice. On apporte des poulets, du tô (sarabou en Mossi) et tout cela est offert à l'arbre sacré par l'homme le plus vieux du village. Puis les assistants mangent en chœur ce qui a été offert. Ce sacrifice est fait pour que les pluies soient abondantes. Si l'eau ne tombe pas pendant l'hivernage, on fait un nouveau sacrifice à l'arbre et la pluie tombe toujours. De même, au village de Noirbou, il y a un konkouira et un ganra (noms Mossi) au milieu du village. Tous les ans, quand on commence à manger le gros mil rouge nouveau, le chef de village donne un poulet, une pintade, de la farine de mil, du dolo à un certain chef de famille qui va offrir tout cela au koukouira et au ganra sacrés. Puis on grille le poulet et la pintade et tous les assistants mangent l'offrande.

Les Boussansé font aussi des sacrifices aux esprits de la brousse. Ils coupent de grosses branches à fourche triple et les plantent en terre devant leurs cases. Dans la fourche, ils placent une marmite qui sert de demeure à ces esprits. Ce sont les devins qui, à la suite d'une consultation, indiquent ce rite pour que ces esprits deviennent favorables et ne nuisent plus. Après la récolte généralement on leur offre un sacrifice, un poulet, du lait, de la farine de mil délayée dans de l'eau, des sésames, des œufs, etc., pour qu'ils n'amènent pas de morts ou de maladies dans la maison pendant la saison du froid qui s'approche.

On fait de même quand une femme accouche de jumeaux.

Nous savons que les devins existent chez les Boussansé. Ils fabriquent aussi des gris-gris, sont médecins, etc. On va les consulter très souvent pour savoir si tel malade guérira et ce qu'il faut faire pour qu'il guérisse, si l'on fait bien de partir en voyage, etc. Ces devins prennent dix cauris par consultation ou bien un cadeau en mil. Aussi leur métier ne suffit-il pas à les nourrir et font-ils de la culture comme les autres Boussansé.

Ajoutons que les Boussansé non influencés par les Mossi ne pratiquent ni la circoncision des garçons ni l'excision des filles.

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Jusqu'à ces derniers temps, on était porté à considérer les Boussansé comme une branche des Gourounsi. On ne possédait rien sur leur langue et on supposait que c'étaient des Gourounsi. Ainsi, M. Delafosse, en 1912, représentant sur ce point l'opinion générale, classe les Boussansé parmi les

Gourounsi (1). Mais, depuis, et tout récemment, la vérité s'est fait jour. Déjà, en 1889, l'Allemand Christaller, dans ses *Sprachproben aus dem Sudan* (*Zeitschrift für Afrikanische sprachen*, III, Berlin, 1889), avait donné une numération « Mozansé » (2) de un à dix qui était du Boussansé, mais cela avait passé inaperçu. Quant au linguiste et voyageur allemand Krause, qui avait parcouru trois ans avant Binger la boucle du Niger, dans des conditions terriblement dures et défavorables, il avait ramené de là-bas, entre autres choses, un vocabulaire Boussansé tout entier mais ne l'avait pas publié en 1887 comme il le fit pour quelques-unes de ses notes (voir Petermann's mitteilungen, 1887-1888). Récemment, en 1923, le vieux voyageur entré en relations épistolaires avec M. Delafosse et discutant l'affirmation de celui-ci que les Boko de Koelle devaient se situer géographiquement, à cause de leur langue en réalité Mandé-Bou ou, si l'on veut, Dan-Gouro, du côté des Guerzé et de la région de Man, faisait remarquer que les Boko de Koelle étaient bien en réalité de la région de Boussa sur le Bas-Niger et il citait, dans une lettre du 17 avril 1923, un vocabulaire pris par lui-même à Boussa qui est identique au Boko de Koelle. On peut le consulter à l'Appendice qui suit.

Poussant plus loin ses assimilations, M. Krause faisait remarquer que la langue Boko ou mieux langue de Boussa (ces gens, appelés au singulier Babuse, au pluriel Busawa par les Haoussa, se dénomment eux-mêmes Bisâgbê ou même Bousâgbê) est la même que la langue des Boussansé de Tenkodogo et du Haut-Togo (3) et il en donnait pour preuve la numération suivante de un à dix en Boussansé, que voici (nous mettons en regard le Boko de Koelle et le Bisâgbê ou Bousâgbê ou langue de Boussa de Krause) :

Français	*Boussansé*	*Langue de Boussa*	*Boko*
1	Dini	Do	Do
2	Hera	Pla	Plâ
3	Kargo	Ako	Avo
4	Si	Siku	Sivo
5	Sûrû	Soro	Solo
6	Sodo	Sodo	Solo-do
7	Sapara	So-pla	Solo-pla
8	Sina	Sor-ako	Solo-avo
9	Neho	Kenne	Solo-si
10	Bu	Kuri	Kulî

(1) Voir *Haut-Sénégal-Niger*, tome I, pages 155 et plus loin 315.

(2) Prononcez Motsansé, ce qui se rapproche plus de Boussansé.

(3) En réalité, depuis 1913, on aurait pu constater indiscutablement que le Boko de Koelle était bien situé sur le Bas-Niger, dans la région de Boussa, comme du reste ses indications géographiques si précises le démontraient suffisamment, puisque l'Allemand Fancke, dans ses *Die Sprache von Busa aus Niger* (*Mitteilungen der Seminar für orientalische sprachen*, Berlin, 1913), avait étudié la langue de Boussa et qu'elle apparaissait bien évidemment identique au Boko de Koelle. Mais ceci ne renseignait pas sur la langue des Boussansé de Tenkodogo.

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En résumé, Boko et gens de Boussa (ou tout au moins d'une partie de la région de Boussa, Bisâgbê ou Bousâgbê, d'après M. Krause) sont la même race et parlent la même langue et, en même temps, ils paraissent étroitement apparentés (par le nom comme par la langue) aux Boussansé de la région du sud de Tenkodogo et du nord-ouest de Sansanné-Mango. Ainsi les uns et les autres, les Boussansé de Tenkodogo (plus à l'Ouest) et les Bousâgbê ou Boko (plus à l'Est) semblent un prolongement vers l'Est des races Mandé-Bou ou Dan-Gouro que l'on retrouve depuis l'extrême sud-est de la Guinée française à travers tout le nord de la Côte d'Ivoire (Manon, Dan, Toura, Gouro, et, parlant la même langue, Gagou du cercle des Gouro, Gan ou Gbelung de l'Anno, Gbin du cercle de Bondoukou, etc., etc.).

En résumé, toutes ces races *semblent suivre le nord de la région des colas* et il semble même que leur langue Mandé-Bou ou Mandé du Sud ou Dan-Gouro se prolonge encore plus loin jusqu'au nord du Cameroun et jusqu'à l'Adamaoua, comme nous le verrons en étudiant plus loin les données linguistiques contenues dans le petit livre du missionnaire Clarke (1849).

Quoi qu'il en soit de ce dernier point, on sait maintenant, *grâce au voyageur et linguiste Krause* (1923), que les Boussansé sont, au moins linguistiquement parlant, une race Mandé-Bou se reliant à l'Ouest aux Dan-Gouro de la Côte d'Ivoire, et à l'Est aux Boko-Bousâgbê de la région de Boussa (sur le Bas-Niger). Et ainsi on s'explique mieux une notation, au premier abord singulière, du travail de M. Froger sur les Boussansé de Tenkodogo. Il dit que les gens qui habitaient dans la région au moment où les Mossi y pénétrèrent (venant du Dagomba) étaient, non pas des Boussansé, mais des Bonbonsé qui s'enfuirent dans la région actuelle des Nankana et donnèrent naissance (au moins pour partie) au peuple Nankana. Alors, continue-t-il, les Mossi pour repeupler le pays, firent appel aux Boussansé qui vinrent l'occuper. Maintenant que l'on sait que ces Boussansé sont des Mandé-Bou, qui habitaient sans doute plus au Sud antérieurement, l'on s'explique mieux qu'ils soient venus là appelés par les Mossi après la fuite des Bonbonsé (qui, eux, étaient sans doute étroitement apparentés aux Gourounsi) et on s'explique ainsi que ces populations sauvages et brutales n'aient pas vécu longtemps en bonne intelligence avec ceux qui les avaient fait venir plus au Nord. Les Mossi, en effet, ne parvinrent à en subjuguer et à en assimiler qu'un petit nombre et ceux du Sud, comme on l'a vu à l'historique des Boussansé, restèrent indépendants.

En résumé les Boussansé sont des Mandé-Bou et non pas des Gourounsi, comme on pouvait le croire jusqu'à présent avec de grandes apparences de probabilité (1).

(1) Par là s'explique un renseignement que m'a donné M. Chéron, administrateur des colonies (1924) : C'est que les Samo — également des Mandé-Bou — comprennent assez facilement le Boussanga. — D'autre part, il resterait une question à trancher : M. Froger, dans son *Coutumier Boussanga*, dit plus haut que le Kousacé (ou Kousanga, forme Mossi singulière) forme une langue à part du Boussansé. Il y aurait lieu d'étudier ce Kousanga ou Kousacé pour savoir s'il

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constitue seulement un dialecte Mandé-Bou différent du Boussanga ordinaire, ou si ce ne serait pas un dialecte Gourounsi qui se serait maintenu au milieu des Boussansé envahisseurs, car il est difficile de croire, en y réfléchissant, que les Bonbonsé (au singulier Bonbonga) aient tous fui en masse du pays quand il fut envahi par les Mossi. De tels exodes absolus et complets ne se produisent généralement pas dans l'histoire et ne se sont pas produits dans le Mossi particulièrement où, sous la couche, plus ou moins dense, des envahisseurs Mossi, on retrouve un peu partout, particulièrement dans le Yatenga, les populations Nioniossé ou Fouisé originelles.

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APPENDICE XV

Comparaison de la langue de Boussa et du Boko de Koelle (1)

Français	*Boko*	*Langue de Boussa ou Bisdgbé*
Vingt	Baru	Baro
Eau	î	î
Je bois de l'eau	Ma î mi	Ma î mi
Lait (eau de vache)	Zûî	Zûî
Main	O	O
Beurre	Zu-i-ozi	Zu-nusi
Voir	E	E
Roi	Ki	Ki
Esclave	Zo	Zo
Enfant	Ne	Ne
Tête	Mi	Mi
Bouche	Le	Le
Pied	Gba	Gba
Os	Wa	Wa
Arc	Sa	Sâ
Arbre	Li	Li
Feu	Te	Te
Fer	Mo	Mo
Arachide	Si	Si
Mouton (brebis)	Sâ	Sâ
Cheveu	Kâ	Gâ
Nez	Nyî	Ni
Cheval	Sô	Sô
Poisson	Gbo	Gbo
Père	De	De
Mon père	Ma-de	Ma-de

(1) Cette comparaison est empruntée, comme je l'ai dit plus haut, à une lettre du 17 avril 1923, adressée par M. Krause à M. Delafosse. Je laisse de côté, dans ce court vocabulaire, les nombres de 1 à 10 donnés dans l'Appendice précédent.

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Français	*Boko*	*Langue de Boussa ou Bisâgbé*
—	—	—
Ton père	N-de	N-de
Haricot	Bla	Bia
Deux	Pla	Pla (et Pia)
Chèvre	Ble	Bé
Manger	Ble	Be
Homme, personne	Gmé	Gbê
Frapper	Gmé	Gbê
Chien	Gmé	Gbê
Aujourd'hui	Gma	Gbâ
Donner	Gba	Kpa, Ko
Pierre	Gbele	Gbe
Oreille	Zoa	Soa
Médecine	Eze	Eze
Pot	Oro	Oro
Marché	Ere	Ete
Carquois	Gbara	Gbata
Ville	Nuote	Nwaté
Viande	Nowo	Nowo
Sel	Wusi	Wusi
Langue (organe)	Nene	Lene
Noir	Sira	Sira
Aller	Ga	Ge
Venir	Mo	Mo
Mourir	Ga	Ga
Demain	Tsira	Sira
Ventre	Nose	Nosoe
Couteau	Fure	Fene
Blanc	Pura	Pura
Calebasse	Gbere	Gbere
Plat en terre	Gbere	Gbere
Dieu	Loda	Loa
Mil	Ese	Ise
Soleil	Usante	Isana
Œil	Wole	We
Je danse	Ma ga na	Ma be
Je ne danse pas	Mela na ro	Ma be ro
Enfant	»	Ne
Enfants	»	Ne-no
Arbre	»	Li
Arbres	»	Li-no
Femme	»	Nagbê
Femmes	»	Nagbêno
Nom	»	To
Noms	»	Tono

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Français	*Boko*	*Langue de Boussa ou Bisdgbê*
—	—	—
Homme	»	Bisansina
Hommes	»	Bisansinano (ou Bisansinanu)
Cœur	»	Zu
Cœurs	»	Zulu

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APPENDICE XVI

Note sur l'anthropologie Gourounsi

Au sujet de celle-ci, nous ne possédons que les observations du docteur Ruelle (ouvrage déjà cité : *Anthropologie*, année 1904, tome XV, pages 520 et 657). Cet auteur met les Nounouma, les « Nourma » comme il les appelle, à part des Gourounsi et les rattache, avec les Ko ou Koo, au groupe Bobo. C'est là une erreur certaine, au moins pour les Nounouma qui sont authentiquement des Gourounsi. Nous devons donc joindre les 21 observations qu'il a prises sur les Nounouma aux 53 observations qu'il a prises sur les Gourounsi (sans spécifier du reste sur quelle tribu Gourounsi).

Au point de vue de l'indice céphalique, nous avons :

Indice céphalique	*Gourounsi*	*Nounouma*	*Total* (1)
68	3	1	4
69	1	1	2
70	2	»	2
71	3	2	5
72	4	4	8
73	7	4	11
74	6	1	7
75	3	»	3
76	9	1	10
77	6	3	9
78	2	4	6
79	2	»	2
81	1	»	1
82	2	»	2
83	1	»	1
85	1	»	1
	53	21	74

L'indice céphalique moyen se trouve donc être (d'après les calculs du Dr Ruelle) de 75-33 pour les Gourounsi et de 74-40 pour les Nounouma.

(1) Voir page 324.

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Si nous prenons la moyenne de ces deux indices, nous avons 74-36 pour tous nos Gourounsi, ce qui est un indice franchement dolichocéphale.

Il faut remarquer en plus que, sur ces 74 indices, nous avons 8 hyperdolichocéphales, 34 dolichocéphales, 19 sous-dolichocéphales, 8 mésaticéphales et 5 brachycéphales.

Le Dr Ruelle compte de son côté (p. 525) :

52 dolichocéphales ;
16 sous-dolichocéphales ;
2 mésaticéphales ;
3 sous-brachycéphales ;
et 1 brachycéphale.

De plus, il donne pour les Gourounsi :

Indice extrême minimum	68.72
Indice extrême maximum	85.63
Ecart	16.91

et pour les « Nourma » :

Indice extrême minimum	68.91
Indice extrême maximum	78.45
Ecart	9.54

En ce qui concerne l'indice nasal, le Dr Ruelle donne 103.61 de moyenne pour les Gourounsi et 101.68 pour les Nounouma. En prenant la moyenne, nous avons 102.64, ce qui est bien un indice platyrhinien ou même hyperplatyrhinien. Cependant le Dr Ruelle fait remarquer avec raison qu'il n'a que très rarement rencontré « l'affreux appendice » large et écrasé « que le Dr Girard décrit très justement chez les Malinké et les Bambara. Bien que tous les profils puissent être rapportés en général au type 7 de Topinard, nous avons malgré tout observé que... le nez est plus élégant que grossier ». La remarque du Dr Ruelle s'applique, il est vrai, en général aux nègres du 2e territoire militaire et particulièrement aux Birifon et aux Lobi. Cependant elle vaut aussi pour les Gourounsi en général qui n'ont pas le nez affreusement large et écrasé de certains Bambara.

Pour la taille moyenne, le Dr Ruelle donne 1m,693 pour 50 Gourounsi et 1m,706 pour 18 Nounouma. La moyenne est de 1m,70 et nous savons, d'autre part, que les Gourounsi sont plutôt grands.

Il est dommage que le Dr Ruelle n'ait pas fait porter ses observations sur quelques femmes Gourounsi ou Nourma et qu'il ne nous ait pas donné aussi, pour l'indice céphalique, les mesures brutes (hauteur, largeur, longueur du crâne). L'indice céphalique horizontal qui n'est qu'une relation de longueur à largeur ne donne pas une idée exacte de la capacité crânienne des diverses races. Un cerveau très large mais encore bien plus long peut être dolichocéphale aussi bien qu'un cerveau très peu large et plus long que large. Les crânes nègres, en général, rentrent plutôt dans cette dernière catégorie que dans la première.

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APPENDICE XVII

Koelle et le Gourounsi

Dans ses *Polyglotta Africana*, le révérend S. W. Koelle, missionnaire de la Société des Missionnaires de l'Eglise anglicane, donne d'abord un classement général des langues africaines. Il distingue douze grandes familles qui sont les suivantes :

1° La famille Nord-Ouest atlantique :

A. *Premier groupe :*

1. Fulup (Feloup).
2. Filham ou Filhol.

B. *Second groupe :*

1. Bola.
2. Sarar (Sérère).
3. Pepel (Papel).

C. *Troisième groupe :*

1. Biafada (Biafade).
2. Padsade.

D. *Quatrième groupe :*

1. Baga.
2. Timne (Timéné).
3. Bulom.
4. Mampua.
5. Kisi.

2° La famille Nord-Ouest du Haut-Soudan ou groupe Mandingue :

1. *a.* Mandé ou Mandenga.
   b. Kabunga ou Mandé du Kabou (Gabou).
   c. Toronka ou Mandé du Toron.
   d. Dsalunka ou Mandé tel qu'il est parlé au Fouta-Djallon.
   e. Kankanka ou Mandé tel qu'il est parlé à Kankan.

2. Bambara.
3. Kono.
4. Vei.
5. Soso.
6. Téné.
7. Gbandi.
8. Landoro.
9. Mendé.
10. Gbésé.
11. Toma.
12. Manon.
13. Gio.

3° Famille de langages du milieu de la côte de Guinée :

A. *Langages Krou ou Libériens :*

1. Dewoi.
2. Basa.
3. Kra.
4. Krobo.
5. Gbéi.

B. *Langages Dahoméens :*

1. Adampe.
2. Anfue.
3. Hwida.
4. Dahome.
5. Mahi.

C. *Aku-Igala langages :*

I. Aku dialectes.

a. Ota.
b. Egba.
c. Idésa.
d. Yoruba.
e. Yaba.
f. Ki.
g. Dsumu.
h. Oworo.
i. Dsébu.
k. Ife.
l. Ondo.
m. Dsékiri.

II. Igala dialectes.

Igala.

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4° Familles des langages du Nord-Est du Haut-Soudan :

A. *Premier groupe :*

1. Mossi.
2. Dsélana.
3. Guren (ou Gurésa).
4. Gourma.

B. *Second groupe :*

1. Legba.
2. Kaure.
3. Kiamba ou Dsamba.

C. *Troisième groupe :*

1. Koama.
2. Bagbalan.

D. *Quatrième groupe :*

1. Kasm.
2. Yula.

5° Familles des langages du delta du Niger :

A. *Premier groupe. Dialectes Ibo :*

a. Isoama.
b. Isiele.
c. Abudsa.
d. Aro.
e. Mbofia.

B. *Second groupe :*

1. Sobo.
2. Egbélé.
3. Bini.
4. Ihewe ou Isewe.
5. Oloma.

C. *Troisième groupe :*

1. Okuloma.
2. Udso.

6° Langages du Niger-Tchad ou famille Nupe :

1. Nupe.
2. Kupa.

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3. Esitako.
4. Musu.
5. Goali.
6. Basa.
7. Ebe.
8. Opanda.
9. Egbira-Hima.

7° Langages de l'Afrique centrale :

A. *Premier groupe. Langages du Tchad :*

1. Buduma.
2. Bornou.
   — Kanouri.
   — Munio ou Manga.
   — Nguru.
   — Kanem.

B. *Second groupe :*

1. Pika.
2. Karekare.
3. Bode.
   — Bode.
   — Ngodsin.
   — Doei.

DEUXIÈME PARTIE

Langages du Sud Africain

8° Langages Atam :

A. *Premier groupe :*

1. Ekamtulufu.
2. Udom.
3. Mbofon.
4. Eafen.

B. *Second groupe :*

1. Basa.
2. Kamuku.

9° Langages Moko :

A. *Premier groupe :*

1. Tsuwu.
2. Diwala.

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3. Orungu.
4. Bayon.
5. Kum ou Bakum.
6. Bagba.
7. Balu.
8. Bom ou Bamon.
9. Ngoala.
10. Momenya.
11. Papiah.
12. Param.

B. *Second groupe :*

1. Ngotèn.
2. Mélon.
3. Nhalemoe.
4. Seke.

10° Langages du Congo et de l'Angola :

A. *Premier groupe :*

1. Kabenda.
2. Mimboma.
3. Musentandu.
4. Mbamba.
5. Kangika.
6. Ntérê.
7. Mutsaya.

B. *Second groupe :*

1. Babuma.
2. Bumbete.
3. Kasands.
4. Nyombe.
5. Sande.

C. *Troisième groupe :*

1. Ngola.
2. Pangela.
3. Lubalo.
4. Ruunda.
5. Songo.
6. Kisama.

11° Langages du Sud-Est africain :

1. Muntu.
2. Kiriman.
3. Marawi.

4. Méto.
5. Matatan.
6. Niamban.

12° LANGAGES NON CLASSÉS ET ISOLÉS :

A. *Langages non classés de l'Ouest-Atlantique :*

a. Avec inflexion finale.

1. Wolof.
2. Bidsago ou Bidsaro (Bissago).
3. Gadsaga (Soninnké).
4. Gura ou Gola.

b. Avec inflexion initiale.

1. Banyun (Bagnoun).
2. Nalu (Nalou).
3. Bulanda.
4. Limba.
5. Landoma.

B. *Langages non classés du Haut-Soudan :*

1. Asanta (Achanti).
2. Barba (Bariba).
3. Boko.

C. *Langages non classés du Centre africain :*

1. Kandin.
2. Tumbuktu.
3. Baghirmi.
4. Housa (ou Haousa).
5. Pulo (ou Peul).

D. *Langages non classés du Delta du Niger :*

Yala.

E. *Langages non classés du Sud africain :*

1. Anan.
2. Dsarawa.
3. Koro.
4. Ham.
5. Akurakura.
6. Okam.
7. Yasgua.
8. Nki.
9. Kambali.
10. Alege.
11. Penin.

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12. Bute.
13. Murundo.
14. Undaza.
15. Ndob.
16. Nkele.
17. Kanguan.
18. Mbarike.
19. Tiwi.
20. Boritsu.
21. Afudu.
22. Mfut.
23. Mbé.
24. Nso.

F. *Arabe d'Afrique :*

1. L'arabe tel qu'il est parlé au Wadaï.
2. L'arabe tel qu'il est parlé dans l'Adrar.
3. L'arabe tel qu'il est parlé dans le Béran.

Dans l'ensemble de ces langues, ce qui doit nous attirer surtout c'est le groupe 4 : *Famille des langages du nord-est du Haut-Soudan*, qui contient ce que nous appellerions aujourd'hui le groupe Mossi-Gourounsi ou groupe des langues Voltaïques.

Voici les renseignements que Koelle donne sur ce groupe dans son introduction (*Remarques introductives*, pages 6 et 7) :

« LANGAGES DU HAUT-NORD-EST SOUDANAIS.

A. *Premier groupe :*

Mose (Mossi).

Appelé Gourmanké par les Silmiga (1) ou Foula et Bemba par les Gourma. Donné par Sombenya (veut dire : bon ou bien : un ami vient à moi) ou Andrew Dixon, né dans le village de Koupéla, marié. Il avait un enfant qui n'avait pas encore été sevré quand il fut fait prisonnier dans une guerre contre les Gelbofse (2) qui sont noirs, grands, parlant un langage différent de celui de sa nation et qui le vendirent à Popo. Il est depuis vingt-deux ans au Sierra-Léone et est le seul représentant de sa tribu.

Remarques : Le Mossi est à l'ouest du Gourma, à l'est de l'Andemtenga où un langage différent est parlé. Le Mossi est aussi à deux jours des Bulmera où le même langage est parlé ; à quatre jours des Bulesa où le langage est encore le même et qui sont alliés avec les Kambonsé, c'est-à-dire les Asante (Achanti) ; à deux jours de Yaqugo où on parle encore le même langage ; à six jours des Bosansé qui sont en grande inimitié avec les

(1) Silmiga veut dire Peul en Mossi. Silmisi au pluriel.
(2) Sont-ce les Dahoméens? les Bariba? Ce serait à voir.

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Mossi et où les gens percent leurs lèvres et les attachent avec des herbes et dont le langage est différent de celui des Mossi ; à quatre jours de Busma, où on parle aussi une autre langue et dans laquelle contrée il y a une haute montagne (*id est tenga*) de laquelle ceux qui y montent ne reviennent jamais ; à trois ou quatre semaines de marche des Kambonse ou Asante (Achanti). Koupéla est à quatre journées de marche de Wardugo (Ouagadougou), capitale du Mossi, où le roi des Asante envoie souvent des présents, et à un mois de Salak (1), une ville Achanti d'où ils exportent leurs noix de kolas. »

Au sujet de cette esquisse géographique du Mossi, tracée d'après des renseignements d'un natif de Koupéla, disons que Bulesa est probablement Béloussa, ville importante du Mossi placée à l'est-nord-est de Ouagadougou. Les Bosansé sont sans doute les Boussansé et « Busma », Boussouma (auprès de Kaya, au nord-est de Ouagadougou). Boussouma est Mossi. Aussi est-on étonné de voir le renseigneur de Koelle dire qu'on y parle une autre langue que le Mossi. A la réflexion, il peut s'agir du Nioniossé ou Foulsé, parlé aussi, nous le savons, dans une grande partie du Yatenga.

Koelle continue ainsi :

« 2. Dselana.

De Woru ou Abraham Macaulay de Kissy, né dans le village de Funa d'où il fut volé il y a cinq ans quand son premier né venait d'atteindre ses sept ans. Il a seulement quatre compatriotes dans cette colonie.

Remarques : Dselana est à l'ouest de Bout, à l'est de Kouaré ; de même près de Mament, Keount, Gbengbirant, Botunt, Baré, Serah, Dewr, Kamur, Sansani, Marsar, Jansar, Kusar, Baru id est Barba (Bariba). »

Dans sa carte, Koelle place le Dsélana (prononcez Kiélana ou Tiélana) entre le Mossi et le Bariba. Quant à la langue Dsélana, elle semble bien authentiquement une langue Gourounsi.

Ensuite Koelle passe au Guresa :

« Guren, dit-il, au pluriel Guresa, soit le langage Guren, soit le langage des Guresa.

Donné par Atim ou Sam Wood de York (Sierra-Léone), né dans le district de Kandsare où il vécut jusqu'à sa dix-huitième année. Il est maintenant âgé de 24 ans. Et donné par Adsumano ou Jacob Mac-Cormack de Freetown, né dans le village de Nyasa, la capitale du district de Kansdare, où il fut volé il y a cinq ans.

Remarques : Le Gurenten, ou pays des Guresa, est situé à l'ouest des Ton ou Wolawola, au nord-ouest de Kumbuna un pays mahométan qui est à l'est du Bagbalan, qui est lui-même à l'est du Yulug ou Yuleza et à un voyage d'un mois du Gourma. Beaucoup de gens vont nus dans le Gurenten, les femmes ne se couvrant que faiblement avec de petites tiges feuillues. Le pays contient les districts suivants outre Kandsare : Simbisa, Sandem, Donen, Sinesa, Kubusa, Nyandem, Kalasa, Wiasa, Wiar,

(1) Sans doute Salaga.

3: Tauxier FA28 Mossi

Bakesa. Il y a une rivière dans la contrée appelée More ou Moya (c'est-à-dire grande eau) sur laquelle on a des canots et qui peut être passée à pied en certaines places pendant la saison sèche. La même rivière touche le Yoruba et le Kubar. Les tribus voisines parlant différents langages sont les Yoruba, Ton, Wolawola, Bayan, Zangwéda, c'est-à-dire Haoussa, Kambunana, c'est-à-dire Phoula [Peul]. Les Kambon ou Kambenza (c'est-à-dire mousquetaires, du mot kambondo=mousquet, fusil) ou Asantes (1) vont à la guerre avec les Guresa. »

Dans sa carte, Koelle place le « Gurenten » au nord du Dsélana, entre le Mossi d'une part, les Bariba et Legba de l'autre. La langue semble bien une langue Gourounsi et Gourounsi du Sud. La description des mœurs, femmes portant des bouquets de feuilles, correspond bien au Gourounsi.

Je ne vois pas pourquoi M. Delafosse se refuse à voir dans les Guresa de Koelle des Gourounsi (2). Est-ce à cause des renseignements géographiques donnés par Koelle sur la foi de ses interlocuteurs? Mais ils sont tellement fallacieux et contradictoires qu'il ne faut faire aucun fond sur eux. De tous les renseignements que peut donner un noir, les renseignements géographiques sont certainement les plus mauvais et les plus faux ; même s'il s'agit d'un noir connaissant son pays, de tels renseignements ne peuvent être compris et bien interprétés par l'Européen *que s'il connaît lui-même à fond la géographie de la région*, ce qui n'était certes pas le cas pour Koelle qui ne connaissait pas plus le Gourounsi, le Mossi et le Gourma, où il n'avait jamais été, que la Chine. Il faut donc faire absolument abstraction des données géographiques consignées par Koelle sur la foi de ses renseigneurs indigènes (à moins qu'elles n'aient un caractère évident de précision et de non-contradiction) pour ne considérer que la langue donnée. Or, la langue ou plutôt les deux langues Guresa (deux au moins en partie) données par Koelle sont bien des langues Gourounsi et même Gourounsi du Sud (Sissala semble-t-il). Nous devons donc identifier le Gurenten de Koelle au Gourounsi actuel.

Koelle continue ainsi :

« 4. Gourma.

Donné par Adsima ou John Wilhelm, né dans le Bangu, et amené à Datanu, autre ville du Gourma, où il vécut jusqu'à sa vingt-quatrième année. Trois ans après, il fut volé et vendu à des Spaniards (3) dans l'Achanti. Il a été à Sierra-Léone six années, avec quatre gens de son pays qui, au reste, sont fort vieux et ont oublié beaucoup de leur langue maternelle.

Remarques : Bungu est à six jours de marche de Sokoto. Le Gourma est à l'ouest du Haoussa duquel il est séparé par la Kouara (4), et à l'est du

(1) Achanti.
(2) Introduction à la *Grammaire de la langue Kassena*, du Dr Cremer, page VI.
(3) Sans doute des négriers espagnols.
(4) Niger, Bas-Niger.

Mossi. Comme pays voisins, il y a Sansani (1), Yandi (2), Salega (3), Pholain, c'est-à-dire Phula (4), Barba (5), Kotakoli (6). »

Comme on le voit, le Gourma défini ici par Koelle correspond assez exactement au cercle actuel de Fada N'Gourma. Quant à la langue donnée par Koelle, elle est très intéressante en *ce qu'elle ne semble pas être le dialecte Mossi du Gourma*, appelé souvent quoique à tort Gourmantché, *mais une langue Gourounsi*, ce qui prouverait que le fond de la population du Gourma (cercle de Fada-N'gourma) est Gourounsi, comme le fond de la population du Yatenga est Foulsé ou Nioniossé.

Koelle continue ainsi :

« SECOND GROUPE :

1. *Legba :*

Donné par Darba ou James Macaulay, de Kissi (Sierra-Léone), né dans la ville de Kumde, où il avait trois épouses. Son premier enfant venait d'avoir sept ans environ lorsqu'il fut volé et amené en Sierra-Léone, où il est depuis cinq ans avec deux de ses compatriotes seulement.

Remarques : Le même langage est aussi parlé à Koure, Séka, Sumure-Tes. Les Legba sont à l'ouest des Kumerida et les Lama à l'est des Dselana. De plus, sont près de là : Fundode, Badsode, Seradera, Barba, Serado, Boro et Samera.

2. *Kaure :*

Donné par Sem ou Péter Kondo de Gloucester, né dans le village de Wuram ; il avait plus de trente ans probablement quand il fut volé dans le pays Basare, où il avait été vendre du blé de Guinée (7). Il fut immédiatement emmené jusqu'à la mer et est maintenant au Sierra-Léone depuis plus de trente ans, où il se trouve actuellement avec sept de ses compatriotes.

Remarques : Wuram est à quatre jours de Lama capitale du pays Kaure et près de trois montagnes (puro) ; Edo, Kalungbara et Kumade. Le pays Basare est à deux journées du pays Kaure et possède un langage différent. Le pays Kaure est situé à l'ouest du Legba, à l'est de Tem où un langage différent est parlé ; de même à une demi-journée de Kirena où on parle un langage apparenté, à quatre jours d'Agiai ou Adsai, où règne un langage différent. En venant vers la mer, les gens de Sem passent successivement par les régions de Tadsan, Malo, Atagbama, Gbési, Ege sur la côte, auprès de Popo. »

(1) Sansanné-Mango.
(2) Le Yandi.
(3) Salaga.
(4) Des Foula, des Peul.
(5) Les Bariba.
(6) Ou Kotokoli (dans le Haut-Dahomey).
(7) Koelle désigne sous ce nom le mil en général, soit millet ou petit mil, soit sorgho ou gros mil, comme on peut le voir par les traductions qu'il en donne en Mandé : sanio (millet) ou bimbiri (gros mil blanc).

3: Tauxier FA28 Mossi

Il est inutile de dire que le Legba et le Kaure (ou Kaouri) ne sont pas des langages Gourounsi. Ils appartiennent probablement à la section Bariba des langues Voltaïques ou Mossi-Gourounsi.

Koelle continue ainsi :

« 3. *Kiamba* ou *Dsamba*, appelé Tem par les Kaure qui leur sont soumis, et par les Asindse, c'est-à-dire par les Haoussa. Donné par Banena ou Andrew George de Gloucester (Sierra-Léone), né dans la ville de Kiafado, où il était établi, marié et avait un enfant âgé de 14 ans environ quand il fut saisi pour le non-paiement d'une dette et vendu aux Gbési, qui l'emmenèrent jusqu'à la mer par la voie du Dahomey. Il vit au Sierra-Léone depuis vingt-trois ans où il est avec quelques compatriotes et deux femmes de son pays.

Remarques : Kiafado est la capitale du Kiamba et est situé à un jour de voyage de la rivière Mo, laquelle peut être passée à gué dans la saison des pluies, mais dans la saison sèche s'étend au loin, et a sa source dans le pays de Kigbafulu, une dépendance du Kiamba auprès du village de Badire et coulant de l'Est à l'Ouest arrose le pays Gbandsa une dépendance de l'Asante (1), d'où les Haoussa emportent leurs noix de kola. »

Au sujet de ce Dsamba, ou mieux Kiamba, une foule de questions se posent. La langue elle-même semble bien une langue Gourounsi, mais, d'autre part, il est évidemment absurde que les Kaure ou Kaouri du Haut-Dahomey aient été jamais soumis à une petite peuplade Gourounsi. Je penserais assez que le pays désigné ici sous le nom de Kiamba ou Tem désigne tout le Dagomba (Koelle place justement sur sa carte le Kiamba au sud-est du Mossi, ce qui est exactement la position du Dagomba) et Kiafado « capitale du Kiamba » serait, si cette hypothèse est juste, Gambaga situé près du coude sud-est de la Volta blanche justement au moment où cette rivière se dirige de l'Est à l'Ouest. Quant au pays de « Gbandsa », c'est peut-être le Banda, situé à l'est de Bondoukou, peuplé de Nafana, de Ligbi, etc., et conquis, en effet, par l'Achanti au cours du XVIIIe siècle. En ce cas, il y aurait confusion, sous le nom de rivière Mo, entre la Volta blanche et la Volta noire qui, elle, arrose en effet le pays Banda ou Gbanda, au moment où elle fait son coude de l'Ouest à l'Est vers Kintampo et Salaga. Si cette hypothèse est juste, on s'explique que les Kaouri du Haut-Dahomey puissent se dire soumis, c'est-à-dire plus ou moins vassaux du Kiamba, c'est-à-dire du Dagomba. D'autre part, la vraie langue Dagomba est une langue Mossi, mais on sait que les Mossi s'établirent en conquérants dans le pays appelé aujourd'hui Dagomba et que des populations, qui semblent bien Gourounsi, habitaient avant eux. Notamment les Kiamba semblent une de ces populations Gourounsi. Ainsi tout s'explique : le Kiamba de Koelle est toute la région Dagomba-Mampoursi, mais la langue qu'il donne est celle d'un des restes Gourounsi qu'elle contient. D'autre part, il faut noter que le langage « Kiamba » de Koelle n'est pas identique au Kiansi que j'ai donné plus haut à l'Appendice VII : ce semblent bien être deux

(1) Achanti.

langues Gourounsi l'une et l'autre, mais fort différentes. Cela s'explique encore si le mot Kiamba de Koelle, comme tout le fait croire, désigne non pas une certaine peuplade Gourounsi, mais toute la région Dagomba-Gourounsi où, en dehors de la langue Dagomba-Mossi, il peut subsister plusieurs peuplades et plusieurs dialectes Gourounsi divers.

Ceci dit, passons au *Troisième groupe* (C) de Koelle.

Il comprend :

« 1. *Koama.* Donné par Mapula ou Peter Johnson, de York (Sierra-Léone), né dans la ville de Gmano, où il vécut jusqu'à sa dix-huitième année après laquelle il fut volé et resta dix mois en chemin jusqu'à Bight, distance qui pourrait être parcourue normalement en deux ou trois mois. Il est au Sierra-Léone depuis trois ans avec seulement deux de ses compatriotes.

Remarques : Koama est à l'ouest de Gmandoan, à l'est de Dsana, au nord de Diivéza. Dans le pays de Koama les gens vont entièrement nus et les femmes ont un tablier de tiges feuillues par devant et par derrière.

2. *Bagbalan*, pluriel Bagbalense (cette dernière forme est aussi employée pour désigner le pays). De Badsoroso ou Richard Laudmann, habitant maintenant dans les casernes de Freetown. Comme il était le seul représentant de sa tribu au Sierra-Léone, il fut gracieusement mis à ma disposition par le major O'Connor. Il est né dans le village de Gungonima où il était établi et marié avec trois femmes et possédait un enfant âgé d'environ cinq ans quand il fut enlevé à l'instigation de son beau-frère et vendu à des propriétaires variés jusqu'à ce qu'au bout de deux ans il atteignit la mer. Il est au Sierra-Léone depuis deux ans et huit mois.

Remarques : Gungonima est environ à une journée et demi de marche de Girewara, la capitale du Bagbalan, et à la moitié d'une journée de la large rivière Mora, qui n'est pas passable même pendant la saison sèche. La Mora coule du Dagbana et du Gurenze et descend dans les pays Var et Nyiporonze. Bagbalenze est situé au nord-ouest des Gurenze, où un langage différent est parlé, et des Koama, où le langage est apparenté de fort près ; à l'ouest des Bakionze, où le même langage est parlé et à l'est duquel s'étendent les Nyambima où la population parle comme les Guresa ; à l'est des Badunze, où un langage différent est parlé ; au nord des Manunia (pluriel Basunnina), où un langage parent est parlé ; au sud des Var (singulier Vantina), qui parlent un langage différent. Sur le chemin jusqu'à la mer Laudmann a passé à travers le Kananze, où règne le même langage, le Kandsar, avec un langage comme celui des Gurenze, Yaruwa, où la langue est différente, Kumbun, Dsalugbana, Kokurinzi, Gbese et le Dahomey, toutes contrées où on parle également des langues différentes. »

Au sujet de ces Koama et Bagbalan, il faut noter que la langue que donne Koelle sous le nom de Koama semble une de ces langues Gourounsi qui se rapprochent fort du Bobo et font la transition avec le Bobo. C'est la même langue, semble-t-il, que celle que donne Migeod (tome 1er, page

3: Tauxier FA28 Mossi

144 de ses *Langages de l'Ouest africain*) comme du Gourounsi-Sissala (Grunshi-Isala).

Les gens y vont entièrement nus, dit Koelle sur la foi de son renseigneur, et les femmes ont les deux bouquets de feuilles, par devant et par derrière. Cela s'applique aussi bien aux Gourounsi qu'aux Bobo, aux Bobo qu'aux Gourounsi.

Sur la carte de Koelle, le Koama est placé avec un point d'interrogation à l'est du Kiamba, ce qui est évidemment une position très défectueuse, les Koama semblant au premier chef des Gourounsi de l'Ouest touchant aux Bobo.

Remarquons que le mot Koama fait penser aux Ko dont nous avons parlé (Appendice XI), mais la langue Koama semble bien différente de la langue Ko, si nous en jugeons par les quelques mots Ko que j'ai recueillis, quoique toutes deux (Koama et Ko) semblent bien être au reste des langues Gourounsi.

Quant à la langue Bagbalan ou Bagbalenze, que donne Koelle, c'est le même langage exactement que le Koama. Koelle, sur sa carte, a mis le Bagbalenze au sud du Yulaï (Akulo = Nounouma) et au nord du Kasem (Kassouna), mais les renseignements assez nets que lui a donnés son interlocuteur Richard Laudman permettent de mieux préciser cette position : le Bagbalan semble être le pays de Boromo actuel et Girawara est peut-être Boromo. La large rivière Mora qui coule dans les environs serait la Volta noire. Les Bagbalenze seraient ainsi, en effet, au nord-ouest des « Guresa », ou Gourounsi du Sud, auquel ils seraient reliés par les Koama. Bref il semble qu'on doive chercher le Bagbalenze, dans l'extrême Ouest du Gourounsi, sur les bords soit orientaux soit plutôt même occidentaux de la Volta noire. Les recherches devraient porter sur le sud de la circonscription de Boromo.

Koelle passe ensuite au *Quatrième groupe* (D). Ici, nous allons nous trouver tout à fait en pays de connaissance.

« 1. *Kasm.*

Donné par Bagolomo, ou James Thomas de York (Sierra-Léone), né dans le village de Kapou ; il a mis deux mois à voyager jusqu'à la mer et est actuellement âgé de vingt-deux ans. Il est au Sierra-Léone depuis deux ans et demi et est le seul individu parlant cette langue.

Remarques : Le Kasm est à l'est du Kundsoro, à l'ouest des Guresa, appelés aussi Dsindsinsin, à cause de leur chant.

2. *Yula*, pluriel Yulexi. — Pareillement de Laudmann, étant le seul individu du Sierra-Léone qui parle ce langage. Sa mère était d'origine Yula et la sœur de celle-ci vint pour prendre soin de lui quand il était encore petit garçon. C'est d'elle qu'il apprit à parler le Yula jusqu'à ce qu'il allât au pays de sa mère, ce qu'il a souvent fait depuis sa quinzième année, y restant quelquefois un mois entier.

Remarques : Les Yula confinent au Bagbalan, vers le Nord-Ouest, et on arrive chez eux de Gungonima en un jour. »

Les Kasm (dans sa carte Koelle orthographie Kasem) sont certainement les Kassouna ou Kasséna que nous connaissons bien, peuplade Gourounsi importante située à l'est des Nounouma. Dans sa carte Koelle place les Kasm ou Kasem au sud-est des Yulaï (=Kiâlo ou Akulo=Nounouma) ce qui n'est pas mal placé, mise de côté l'erreur générale qui indique ces deux peuples au nord du Mossi.

Quant aux Yula (Akulo, Kialo=Gourounsi du Nord, Nounouma), ce sont les Nounouma eux-mêmes et la langue donnée par Koelle est la langue Nounouma dont le vocabulaire paraît très semblable au vocabulaire Kasséna.

Comme on le voit Koelle a pénétré profondément, au point de vue linguistique, parmi les Gourounsi. Il a connu, linguistiquement parlant :

1° Les Nounouma (ou Yula ou Akulo) ;

2° Les Kassouna (Kasm ou Kasem) ;

3° Les Sissala (ou Guresa) ;

4° Les Gourounsi de l'extrême Ouest, qu'on pourrait peut-être appeler les Gourounsi-Bobo ou les Sissala-Bobo et qui sont peut-être les Ko ou des populations attenantes (Koama et Bagbalan) ;

5° Les habitants du Gourma (ou autochtones du pays Gourmantché, conquis vers le XII° siècle de notre ère par les Mossi) (1) ;

6° Les Gourounsi de l'extrême Sud-Est, situés dans les territoires anglais actuels du côté du Dagomba et du Mampoursi (à savoir les Dsélana ou Kielana et les Kiamba).

Comme on le voit, c'était assez bien pour l'époque où écrivait Koelle.

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(1) Il faut dire que, d'une façon générale, le Gourmantché actuel est une langue du groupe Mossi et non du groupe Gourounsi. Il reste cependant que ce dialecte a retenu quelque chose du Gourounsi, puisque la numération en est évidemment Gourounsi.

[p.197]

APPENDICE XVIII

Clarke et le Gourounsi et les langues Mandé-Bou

Le missionnaire John Clarke publia, en 1849, à Londres, un petit volume sur les langues africaines, particulièrement sur celles de l'Ouest africain (1). Dans ce volume, il donne trois numérations qui sont du Gourounsi (sous les nos 25, 43 et 383). Il appelle les deux premières Tshamba et la troisième Nibulu. Le mot Tshamba est probablement le mot Kiamba et il faut sans doute le prononcer de cette manière. On aurait donc affaire à du Kiansi. Cependant ces numérations se rapprochent plutôt du Larhama ou du Sissala que du Kiansi (voir Appendices V, VI et VII). En tout cas, on a affaire en ce Tshamba et Nibulu à du Gourounsi du Sud. Voici, du reste, les trois numérations :

Français	*Tshamba* No 25 (2) (de Clarke lui-même)	*Tschamba* No 43 (3) (de Clarke lui-même)	*Nibulu* (4) No 383 (de Clarke lui-même)
—	—	—	—
1	Kalo	Koballa	Kobala
2	Rinio	Balya	Balya
3	Inta	Betwu	Betwu
4	Bannaansi	Banna	Banna
5	Binnu	Bannuh	Banu
6	Bantanta	Barradu	Baradu
7	Bantan a nasi	Balfa	Ba'fa
8	Nena	Tshwri	Churi
9	Nowo	N'na	Nua
10	Pi	Fih	Fih

(1) *Specimens of dialects : short vocabularies of languages and notes of countries and customs in Africa by John Clarke, missionary.* London, Published by B.-L. Green, Paternoster row, 1849. Petit volume de 104 pages. — John Clarke a publié aussi une *Introduction to the Fernandian tongue* (langue de Fernando-Po), la même année et chez le même libraire.

(2) Page 16.

(3) Page 16.

(4) Page 30.

A cela il faut ajouter (page 8) quelques mots en Tshamba et (page 5) quelques mots en Nibulu. Les voici :

Français	*Tshamba*	*Français*	*Nibulu*
Homme	Gongsa	Dieu	Oisa
Femme	Norruwa	Soleil	Wisi
Père	Diangsa	Lune	Tshina (1)
Mère	Enniwa	Etoile	Tshemwali (2)
Feu	Iza	Homme	Baal
Eau	Nsu	Femme	Hoaro
Volaille	Okoko	Feu	Nini
		Eau	Lia
		Gum (?)	Malifa
		Tigre (léopard)	Piy
		Lion	Dia
		Vache	Moho
		Sanglier	Toow
		Chien	Vaha
		Chat	Nibia
		Singe	Maang

Le petit vocabulaire Nibulu se rapproche beaucoup du Tondioulé et surtout du Larhama (voir Appendices IV et V).

Dans les notes sur les contrées et coutumes d'Afrique qui terminent le volume, on peut lire, page 92 :

« *Nibulu*. Dans le pays des Tshamba »

et page 96 :

« *Tshamba*. Il y a trois ou plus de pays de ce nom : 1° auprès d'Igarra, sur la rivière Odu ; 2° entre le Manding et les montagnes de Kong ; 3° auprès de la baie de Corisco, à Nibulu. Tshamba est le mot de salutation à cette place. »

Enfin, à l'énumération des langages d'Afrique empruntée au Dr Pritchard (*Recherches sur l'histoire physique de la race humaine*), on lit page 102, n° 92 : « *Tshamba*. Quelques dialectes de l'intérieur sont appelés de ce nom. »

En résumé le missionnaire Clarke a connu les Gourounsi du Sud, linguistiquement parlant, sans pouvoir du reste les situer géographiquement d'une autre manière que d'une façon très approximative entre le « Manding et les montagnes de Kong ».

Mais ce qu'il faut noter c'est qu'il a également connu les langues Dan-Gouro ou, d'une façon plus générale, Mandé-Bou. Il donne, en effet, trois

(1) Prononcez : Kiina.
(2) Prononcez : Kiemwali.

3: Tauxier FA28 Mossi

numérations appelées Lorangga (N° 179, prise par Clarke lui-même), Kangga (N° 207, *idem*), Bendov (N° 208, *idem*) qui sont évidemment du Dan-Gouro ou du Mandé-Bou. Les voici :

Français	*Lorangga*	*Kangga*	*Bendov*
—	—	—	—
1	Dudin	Dudin	M'bo
2	Pali	Pali	Be
3	Yaka	Yaka	Le
4	Ise	Ise	Ni
5	Sali	Sali	Shan
6	Surada	Surada	Surada
7	Surako	Sura pali	Sura pali
8	Surayaka	Sura yaka	Sura yaka
9	Sura-ise	Sura-ise	Sura-ise
10	Voom	Voom	Voom

Si nous nous reportons aux notes, nous lisons : « *Lorangga*. Dans Biafra auprès de Bo (1) ; une contrée appelée Ngalimbi est à un voyage d'un mois à l'orient. A partir de cet endroit de l'intérieur, ils ont des routes vers Bidji dans le Yoruba, vers Ibo, vers Epik, vers Diwalla, vers Bungi et vers Balung. Les Mkose et les Bafalowel sont auprès du Ngalimbi » (page 90).

Il semble résulter de cette courte notice que le pays des Lorangga, qui est le Ngalimbi, est peut-être situé au nord-est de Biafra, dans le nord du Cameroun. En ce cas cette population continuerait jusque dans l'Adamoua la ligne des races « du kola » commençant approximativement avec les Guerzé et les Manon et continuant à l'Est par les Dan-Gouro, les Boussansé de Tenkodogo et les Boussansé de Boussa sur le Niger.

Au mot Kangga (page 88), Clarke dit :

« *Kangga*. Il y a ici un grand pays nommé Kangga, auprès de Sierra-Léone et de Cape Mount, dans lequel on trouve les Mendi, les Kossa, les Pessa et autres tribus ; et du côté du midi, derrière la côte de Krou, il y a un second pays Kanga où prévaut le langage de Krou. Un troisième pays Kanga est auprès du Dewe et du Kauri, près d'Ibo et de Moko ; et un quatrième district de ce nom est dans Biafra, auprès de la contrée appelée Bo. »

Comme on le voit, dans cette courte note, Clarke semble avoir ici pressenti tout le développement géographique des pays dans lesquels on trouve des Mandé-Bou. Il note à l'extrême Ouest le pays des Pessa (ou Pessy, que nous appelons actuellement Guerzé) puis au midi de celui-là *ou plus exactement le continuant vers le Sud-Est*, un second pays « Kangga » où prévaut le langage des Krou. Il n'est plus difficile actuellement, maintenant que les Français l'occupent, de reconnaître, dans ce second pays Kangga, la région de Man où se trouvent, en effet, des Dan et des Toura

(1) Sans doute cela veut dire : Vocabulaire pris à Biafra, auprès de Bo.

3: Tauxier FA28 Mossi

en même temps que des populations de langue Krou ou Bakoué (Ouobé Guéré, etc.). C'est ce qui lui fait dire « que le langage de Krou y prévaut ». Plus loin, il note un troisième pays Kanga vers le Kauri ou Kaouri, (région de l'Atakora, Haut-Dahomey), qui est à égale distance, en effet, ou à peu près, des Boussansé de Tenkodogo, à l'Ouest, et des Boussansé et Boko de Boussa, à l'Est. Enfin, il note un quatrième pays Kanga qui serait dans le Biafra, c'est-à-dire plus exactement au nord-est de Biafra, dans l'Adamaoua. On ne peut guère noter, je dirais même plutôt « flairer », d'une façon plus précise pour l'époque, et en n'ayant à sa disposition que des renseignements linguistiques, et nuls renseignements géographiques détaillés et exacts, la ligne de dispersion de l'Est à l'Ouest des populations Mandé-Bou.

Maintenant, pourquoi Clarke les appelle-t-il Kangga? Je croirais assez que c'est le mot Baoulé « kanga » qui veut dire esclave. Les Baoulé désignent, en effet, par cette expression méprisante toutes les races qui les entourent, que ce soient les Sénoufo au Nord, les Gouro, les Toura, les Dan, les Ouobé ou les Guéré à l'Ouest. Il est probable que ce nom de Kanga fut donné à Clarke comme le leur par ceux qu'il interrogeait ou par leurs compagnons alors qu'ils étaient en fait des Gouro, des Toura ou des Dan, peut-être même des Kanga-Bonou (tribu Gouro entourée et asservie par la tribu Baoulé des Yohouré) (1), bref qu'ils appartenaient au groupe Mandé-Bou qui va du pays des Manon à celui des Gouro dans le sud-est de la Guinée française et l'ouest de la Côte d'Ivoire. Clarke aurait ensuite étendu ce nom de Kanga à toutes les populations jusqu'au Cameroun chez lesquelles il constatait une langue analogue.

Quant aux Bendov, il leur consacre un assez long article que voici :

« *Bendov*. A l'intérieur, au delà du Bayung.

Le peuple, dans ce pays, se sert d'arc et de flèches et combat avec une tribu Foula qui se porte contre eux. Un chef de village, dans le Bendov, est nommé Fatiah et un autre Lamba, et les contrées qui sont auprès sont le Bamu et le Bapo. Le sud du Bendov est une haute contrée montagneuse habitée par des bêtes féroces, mais le district connu sous ce nom est une plaine. Un homme de ce pays m'informe qu'il y a six jours de voyage sans s'arrêter du Bendov à la rivière du Cameroun (Cameroons river) et que la partie la plus proche du pays Bayung est seulement à deux semaines de voyage de la mer. Le peuple Battok vient au Bendov, comme les marchands de l'Est, et ils apportent avec eux du sel, des vêtements de coton, de l'huile de palme pour les changer contre de l'ivoire et des esclaves. Les Lantshi sont un autre peuple du Bendov et, à l'Est, sont les tribus Lumbungi. De petites cordes servent de pont sur les rivières et il n'y a pas de lacs dans ce pays. La terre y produit des ignames, du maïs, du millet, des arachides ,etc. Quelquefois les gens du Bendov ont la guerre avec les Battok, aussi bien qu'avec les Foula, et de nombreux esclaves sont expédiés de la contrée. Le peuple rend un culte aux idoles, offre du sang, boit des

(1) Voir mon ouvrage : *Nègres Gouro et Gagou*. Paris, Geuthner, 1924. *Passim*.

boissons d'épreuve, punit de mort ou d'esclavage l'adultère, et les mères menacent leurs enfants, quand ils les ont offensées, d'une punition du « Bunjo » (1) ou leur disent qu'ils seront brûlés dans le « Wun ». Dans le Bendov, chaque village a son propre chef (est indépendant) et il ne semble pas qu'il y ait de royaume un peu étendu dans cette partie de l'Afrique intérieure » (page 77).

En définitive il semble qu'il faille chercher le Bendov de Clarke, comme le Lorangga, au nord de l'Adamaoua, donc au nord du Cameroun ou à l'est de la Nigeria. On trouverait donc des populations Mandé-Bou jusque dans la Haute-Bénoué et au sud du Tchad.

En résumé, Clarke connaît, au moins linguistiquement, les Gourounsi du Sud sous le nom de Tschamba (ou Kiamba) et de Nibulu. Il connaît aussi les populations Mandé-Bou qu'il situe assez exactement, sous le nom de Kanga, depuis le pays des Pessa (Guerzé) en passant par la région de Man (peuplades Dan-Gouro) et par la région de l'Atakora (Boussansé de Tenkodogo et de Boussa) jusque plus à l'Est encore. Enfin il a le mérite de nous révéler, par ses renseignements linguistiques, dans le sud-est du Tchad, vers l'Adamaoua, une série de populations de langue Mandé-Bou, semble-t-il, qui seraient l'aboutissement extrême-oriental de toute cette série raciale et linguistique. Il serait extrêmement intéressant, maintenant que les Européens occupent ces régions, d'avoir des renseignements précis sur ces populations Mandé-Bou de l'extrême Est.

Ajoutons, en terminant, que Clarke donne aussi des vocabulaires numériques appartenant à des langues incontestablement Bantou et qu'un certain nombre de ces vocabulaires offre, semble-t-il, des affinités avec le groupe Gourounsi comme avec le groupe Mandé-Bou. Nous citerons comme tels les vocabulaires de un à dix donnés sous les noms de « Sego », de « Mondongo », de « Mandango », de « Sundi », de « Bayaka » et de « Bongo ». Voici ces vocabulaires :

Français	*Sego* N° 54 (De Clarke lui-même)	*Mondongo* N° 335 (*Idem*)	*Mandango* N° 326 (*Idem*)	*Sundi* N° 343 (*Idem*)	*Bayaka* N° 378 (*Idem*)
1	Omo	Umo	Omo	Mosi	Mosi
2	Bol	Buälli	Boëlli	Ioli	Irioli
3	Battat	Atri	Batani	Bitatu	Ilalu
4	Banna	Anna	Bana	Maya	N'na
5	Battani	Attani	Batanu	Matanu	Itanu
6	Basaani	Assingiri	Basanu	Masamanu	Isamadu
7	Ntschani	Sondi	Ntschumi	Sambuadi	Sambuali
8	Mpomo	Pomo	Mpoomo	Nana	Nana
9	Uwa	Nanti	Kifa	Vua	Ibua
10	Kumi	Sample	Kumi	Kumi	Kumi

(1) Sans doute société à demi-secrète analogue au Komo, au Nama, au Momo-Diombo, au Pourah, au Simo, au Do, etc., etc. Quant au Wun brûlant, ce doit être une influence islamique et désigne sans doute la gehenne.

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Quant au Bongo, le voici :

Français	*Bongo*	*Français*	*Bongo*
1	Notu	6	Batan a nota
2	Baba	7	Batan a baba
3	Balali	8	Batan a bala
4	Banaï	9	Batan a banaï
5	Batan	10	Dium

Comme on le voit, il y a des ressemblances entre ces vocabulaires et les vocabulaires correspondants Gourounsi et Mandé-Bou, particulièrement le dix du Bongo qui fait « dium », ce qui se rapproche singulièrement du « bou » ou « vou » ou « voum » du Mandé-Bou. De même on peut rapprocher le « kumi » ou « koumi » (dix) du Sego, Mandango, Sundi, Bayaka, du « kuri » ou « kouri » ou « kuli » ou « kouli » du Boussansé de Boussa. Enfin, les formes en b du Sego, Mondongo, Mandango, Sundi, Bayaka et Bongo : « Battat, banna, battani, bassani » ou « baba, balali, banaï, batan, batan a nota, batan a baba, batan a bala, batan a banaï » etc., rappellent singulièrement les formes du Gourounsi correspondantes. Nous ne voulons, du reste, tirer aucune conclusion de ces rapprochements. Nous nous contentons de signaler ces similitudes, plus ou moins significatives, aux linguistes spécialisés dans l'étude des langues africaines.

Ajoutons que le langage de « Sego » dont parle ici Clarke est une langue bantoue et que, par conséquent, le « Sego » dont provient ce langage ne doit pas être confondu avec Ségou, capitale des Bambara, ville située sur le Niger. C'est pourtant ce que fait Clarke (page 75). Aussi ne s'explique-t-il pas du tout combien ce langage est différent du Bambara ou du Songhaï (Kissour). Il place mieux les autres populations Bantou dont il parle. Ainsi pour le Mandonga, il dit :

« *Mandonga.* Derrière le Balimba et le Kongo. Les Bayaka, Kalangga, Baquini, Bavili, Bawayo sont tous dans ce pays. »

Et « *Mandongo.* Dans le Mongola, derrière le Kongo. »

De même pour les Sundi (page 96) :

« *Sundi.* Dans le Kongo. Les Monowembe, les Leemba, les Singili et les Kingwanggabudi sont près de là. »

De même pour les Bayaka (page 76) :

« *Bayaka.* Dans la contrée du Kongo, à l'intérieur et près du Mundungu et du Mpumbu. »

Enfin pour les Bongo, il dit (page 79) :

« *Bongo ou Rongo.* Près de l'Orungu et du Gabon. »

Ces Bongo, du nord du Gabon, ne doivent pas être confondus avec la population du même nom qui habite sur le Haut-Nil blanc, vers le 6e ou 7e degré de latitude Nord et vers le 26e ou 27e degré de longitude Est,

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à côté des Dinka. Nous avons donc affaire à un groupe de populations Bantou du Nord dont le vocabulaire numérique semble offrir des liaisons avec le vocabulaire numérique de certains groupes Soudanais du Sud (Mandé-Bou et Gourounsi).

FIN

[p. 204 contains no text]

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ERRATA

Page III. Ligne 4.

Lire : « Descripcion general »
au lieu de : « Descripcion genaral »

Page IV. Ligne 28.

Lire : « Mitteilungen »
au lieu de : « Mittheilungen »

Page V. Ligne 28.

Lire : « Notes on »
au lieu de : « Notes ou »

Page VI. Ligne 2,

Lire : « with a vocabulary »
au lieu de : « vvith a vocabulary »

Page VII. Ligne 27.

Lire : « un vocabulaire Gourounsi »
au lieu de : « un vocabulaire Nounouma »

Page 12. Note 2.

Lire : « Voir Appendice »
au lieu de : « Voir Apepndice »

Page 17. Ligne 19.

Lire : « Niogo »
au lieu de : « Niago »

Page 48. Ligne 9.

Lire : « Kiansi »
au lieu de : « Kia si »

Même page. Ligne 10.

Lire : « Nounouma »
au lieu de : « Nonnouma »

Page 56. Nombre 21.

Lire : « Sapoua ni nodo »
au lieu de : « Sapoua m'nodo »

Page 61. Ligne 7 du Mobilier et Habillement.

Lire : « Briquet »
au lieu de : « Criquet »

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ERRATA

Page 66. Substantifs divers, ligne 12.
Lire : « Fumée »
au lieu de : « fumée »

Page 70. Culture, ligne 1.
Lire : « Arachide Sonkan »
au lieu de : « Arachide Soukan »

Page 71. Flore naturelle, ligne 18, 1re colonne.
Lire : « Herbe »
au lieu de : « Berbe »

Page 99. Note 1.
Lire : « c'est-à-dire : à gauche (en regardant à l'Est) »
au lieu de : « c'est-à-dire : (à gauche en regardant à l'Est) »

Page 104. Ligne 1,
Lire : « Arachide Sonkan »
au lieu de : « Arachide Soukan »

Page 114. Nourriture et Boisson, ligne 3.
Lire : « Paminasana »
au lieu de : « Faminasana »

Page 118. Ligne 1.
Lire : « Tondioulé »
au lieu de : « Toudioulé »

Page 131. Ligne 2.
Lire : « Vivant Mi »
au lieu de : « Vivant Nû »

Page 135. Petites phrases, colonne 5, ligne 3.
Lire : « Fakiembè ? »
au lieu de : « Fakiombè ? »

Page 138. Kiansi, nombre 4.
Lire : « Banâsé »
au lieu de : « Bouâsé »

Même page. Tondioulé, nombre 5.
Lire : « Bomon »
au lieu de : « Bonon »

Page 175. Boussansé, nombre 7.
Lire : « Sâpara »
au lieu de : « Sapara »

Page 198. Vocabulaire Français-Nibulu.
Lire : « gun (fusil) = malifa »
au lieu de : « gum ? = malifa »

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AN ANALYSIS OF THE POLITICAL ORGANIZATION OF THE MOSSI PEOPLE

By

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[Title page]

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SECTION OF ANTHROPOLOGY

AN ANALYSIS OF THE POLITICAL ORGANIZATION OF THE MOSSI PEOPLE*

By Elliott Percival Skinner**

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121 The African Sudanic states were the subject of a discussion presented before The New York Academy of Sciences in 1949. At that time Joseph Greenberg discussed the rise of these states and evaluated the theories assigning the predominant part in their formation to Caucasian influences. However, the Negro genesis of the Mossi Sudanic state never has been seriously questioned.[1] In this paper I propose to analyze the political system of the Mossi in the light of such questions as: the power structure of the African state; the conquest theory of state formation; and the presence of feudalism or feudal-type states in the Sudan.

105 The one and one-half million Mossi represent the largest population aggregate in what is now known as French West Africa. They inhabit an arid 125,000 square miles of sub-Saharan area drained by the Black, Red, and White Voltas and their tributaries. The Mossi are described physically as "true" Negroes as distinguished from the other Sudanic types. Their language belongs to the Mossi-Grunshi groups of the Niger-Congo family of African languages. In many respects their culture is similar to those of such Voltaic groups as the Tallensi, Dagomba, and Mamprussi peoples of the Northern Gold Coast (Ghana). The people in this Voltaic region are mainly agriculturalists who grow several varieties of millet and sorghum. They rear some cattle, sheep, and goats, but do little fishing or hunting. Their kinship systems are based on patrilineal segmented lineages. Throughout this entire region we find the institution of earth priests who are ritual owners of the land, but political organization is highly segmented and acephalous, with the exception of the centrally organized systems of the Dagomba, Mossi, and Mamprussi.

175 The *Tarikh es Soudan*, a chronicle written by Es Sadi, who lived in Timbuktu during the early seventeenth century, records that the Mossi first appeared on the historical scene about 1328. Between the years 1328 and 1477 the Mossi of the northern kingdom of Yatenga attacked and conquered Timbuktu, sacked Macina, and raided the towns of Bagana and Walata held by the Songhoi. In turn they were defeated by Sonni-Ali, the famous Songhoi ruler, who even invaded their territory, capturing slaves and booty. Askia El Hadj Mohamed, ruler of the Songhoi, raised a holy war

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**The author accepts sole responsibility for the contents of this paper.

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against the Mossi in 1497 and defeated them, but he failed to make them embrace Islam. The Mossi and Songhoi fought several other wars until Songhoi power was broken by the Moroccans, who captured Timbuktu in 1590.[2] 175

The Mossi first came to the attention of the Europeans during the travels of Heinrich Barth, J. Dupuis, and Edward Bowdich, but the first European, G. A. Krause, did not enter Mossi country until 1888. Krause was followed six months later by Louis G. Binger, but the Mossi became suspicious and closed their territory to other Europeans. About 1894, one Ferguson, a British mulatto, safely arrived at Ouagadougou, the Mossi capital, and signed a treaty with the supreme Mossi ruler placing the area under British protection. The French arrived in the country in September 1896 and, refusing to honor the British treaty, conquered the Mossi and secured control of the country.

The Mossi traditional history goes back to about the eleventh century and is part of a tradition relating the origin of the Dagomba, Mamprussi, and Mossi peoples. The Mossi claim descent from Nyennega, the daughter of a Dagomba ruler, who fled from her father's home to marry a hunter by the name of Riallé. This man had left his father's country and was living in exile as a result of a quarrel over the chieftainship. The product of the union between Riallé and Nyennega was a son called Wedraogo in honor of the stallion that carried his mother to the north. At the age of fifteen the boy Wedraogo went back to the Dagomba to visit his grandfather and was given 4 horses and 50 cows. According to tradition, when Wedraogo left the Dagomba country to return north many Dagomba horsemen followed him, because their country was overcrowded. Wedraogo and his followers rode northward and conquered his father's people, the Boussansi, and decided to live in a place called Tankurn (Tengdodogo—old country). Here Wedraogo married a Boussansi woman called Pouiriketa, who bore him three sons. Diaba Lompo, the eldest, was sent out to rule Fada N'Gourma; another, called Rawa, was sent to rule a place called Zondema (now part of Yatenga); the youngest, Zoungrana, remained with his father at Tengkodogo. 173

Tradition states that the Boussansi were only one of a group of small but warlike peoples who inhabited this region. The others were the Ninisis, the Kibissi, and the Gourounsi. These groups were constantly at war with one another and they made frequent alliances with stronger peoples to fight their enemies. A Ninisi chief visited Tengkodogo and, seeing the strength of the Dagomba, sought an alliance with Wedraogo. The Ninisi chief sent Wedraogo a woman called Pouitenga as a wife for Zoungrana, Wedraogo's son. A few years later the Ninisi asked Wedraogo to come and rule their country, but he died at a place called Sagabtenga before he could establish complete control of their territory. Zoungrana succeeded his father as head of the Mossi (a new tribe resulting from the union of the Dagomba and the local inhabitants) but, wishing to remain at Tengkodogo, he sent his son Oubri to complete the conquest of the

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173 country. The Ninisi were happy to have Oubri as their sovereign since he was related to them through his mother. Oubri made war on the local inhabitants and subjugated or drove away those Ninisi, Kibissi, and Gourounsi who did not accept his rule.

Naba Oubri is regarded as the founder of the Ouagadougou dynasty, the most important of the dynasties issuing from the original Dagomba conquerer, Wedraogo. The Mossi rulers who succeeded him spent most of their lives subjugating the rest of the country; the sites of their graves are markers along the road of Mossi conquests. It was only after the reign of Naba Coibga, the fourteenth ruler, that the Mossi rulers were able to confine their activities to the capital at Ouagadougou. By the reign of Naba Warga, the twentieth ruler, ritual prevented the leader from leaving his capital. The country had become so centralized at this time that it was feared that civil strife would erupt if the sovereign left his capital.

The consolidation of the Mossi state seemed to have been a difficult task, and at various periods in its history some decentralization took place. During the reign of Komdimie, the fifth ruler, two of his relatives broke away from his control and formed principalities. The northern kingdom of Yatenga was created by a man called Yadiga, and the state of Riziam was founded by Kouda. Despite opposition and constant attacks by Komdimie the new states remained independent and Yatenga absorbed Zondema, the fief of Wedraogo's son. At this same period Komdimie allegedly gave the provinces of Boussouma, Yako, Conquisitenga, and La to his sons, who called themselves Dima, meaning "Submit only to God." Another province called Kayao broke away from Komdimie's control, and its sovereign took the title of Dima when the supreme ruler was unable to conquer him. Most of the Dimas established courts similar to that of the supreme ruler and performed similar functions, but they still recognized the supremacy of the Ouagadougou dynasty. Besides these small independent states ruled by the Dimas, there were the important independent entities of Tengkodogo, Fada N'Gourma, and Yatenga. The first two claimed independence from Ouagadougou because they were founded by the sons of Wedraogo, while Yatenga claimed independence by the right of revolt and by the subsequent absorption of Zondema. The rulers of these states were forbidden to see each other, or to see the Ouagadougou ruler on pain of death inflicted by their ancestors.

The traditions that describe how the Mossi rulers subjugated and controlled the country differ little from region to region. As the rulers conquered new areas they sent their sons, in company with the sons of their ministers, to command the new districts. When the country was finally conquered the new rulers sent their sons to rule districts taken away from the heirs of former rulers.

The people of Nobéré, the district in which this study was carried out, say that their first sovereign, Biligo, was heir to Oubri, but that he did not wish to rule over the Mossi. Biligo left Ouagadougou on a hunting expedi-

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tion and, when he arrived at the sparsely settled Ninisi village of Nobéré, 173
he decided to stay and make it his home. The Ninisi ran away when they saw Biligo coming, but he persuaded them to return and live in peace under his command. The Tengsoba, or earth priest, of the village refused to return, and Biligo went into the bush and captured him so that the sacrifices to the earth shrines could continue as before. Biligo married a local woman and, when she bore him sons, he sent them to rule those villages not inhabited by the earth priests. These sons and their families formed the noble classes in the district.

About one hundred years ago a district chief called Peka supported the 173
loser in a fight for the supreme chieftainship and was killed when the 565
victorious pretender was installed as chief in Ouagadougou. The victor 631
sent his son, Ngado, to rule over Nobéré and, although the relatives of Peka were scattered, the village chiefs were allowed to retain their posts. These chiefs did lose their noble status, however, because Ngado's sons who went to live in the villages formed the new nobility. The chiefs and their families were submerged into the commoner class. The history of Nobéré is typical of that of most of the Mossi districts and, today, one finds the remnants of many former ruling lineages scattered around the country.

The supreme ruler of the Mossi was called the Moro-naba. He possessed 643
the *nam* which is the symbol of power, and because of this power he had the right of life and death over all his subjects. He also had a religious role in the country because it was his duty to initiate the yearly rites dedicated to the ancestors so that the country would have good crops, and so that the people would be happy and multiply. The Moro-naba was aided in [645]
his rule over the Mossi by five ministers who were responsible for the five provinces grouping 333 villages that made up the territory of the state. These ministers were responsible for the proper administration of the state, and they nominally elected the new Moro-naba.

As soon as the death of the ruler was announced, civil disorder broke out throughout the country and continued until the five ministers and the minister for war took fictive control of the country. When the funeral of the late chief was completed the chief minister, the Ouidi-naba, summoned the lesser ministers to a conference and told them that the country had no chief "because the fire had gone out" and that it now required one. He advised them to consider the qualifications of the late chief's son and of all the other pretenders, and to choose the most worthy individual. The lesser ministers refused to do this, saying: "You are our superior, and the right to make the choice rests on you alone."

The eldest son of the former ruler was usually elected Moro-naba but, as any member of the royal lineage up to the third degree was eligible, many persons tried to bribe the elector. When the Ouidi-naba made his choice he told the minister of war: "My mind is not at ease because I fear that those whose hopes have not been fulfilled will resort to violence."

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643 The war minister replied, "That will be against tradition and justice to the dead ruler. Do not fear; I am here with my arms to see that your decision is respected" (this was not always an empty gesture, for one man, Wobogo, forced a Ouidi-naba to elect him).[3] When the lesser ministers were notified as to the choice of the new sovereign they said: "You have expressed our will and the will of all the people." The elector then secretly called the new ruler and, taking off the man's goat's skin (the symbol of those seeking the chieftainship) told him: "I am giving you the house of your father and of your grandfather." Then the ministers and the chief musician escorted the new ruler before his subjects, and the Ouidi-naba shouted: "Here is he who has the power of life and death over you." The following day all the members of the ruling lineage and sublineages swore not to betray their new ruler. The minister of war then swore, in the name of all the people, to protect the new ruler with his life if the need ever arose. Next followed ceremonies during which a descendant of the original Ninisi inhabitants made sacrifices, in the name of the new sovereign, to his ancient ancestors.

643 642 [778] In analyzing the power of the Moro-naba we must take into consideration the concept of *nam* which is described as "power" or "the force of God." It is this force of God that enables one man to control another, and gives the sovereign the power of life and death over his subjects. Moreover, once a man had "eaten the *nam*," the Mossi constitution had no provisions for deposing him. The Mossi generally claim that only one of their thirty-three rulers was ever deposed, and that he was the ruler who ran away from the French. However, there is another tradition that states that one sovereign, Karfo, was forced to commit suicide by his Ouidi-naba.

According to the Mossi constitution, the Moro-naba had complete control over the lands of the state, and was the only one empowered to distribute these lands as fiefs. Any attack on the lands of the state was an attack on the Moro-naba and thus a cause for war. The Moro-naba alone had the right to make war, and in this he was helped by his vassals, the district chiefs, and their armies. He was court of final appeal for crimes that carried the death penalty and, theoretically, only he had the right to condemn a nobleman to death.

651 686 Every year the district chiefs under the command of their ministers went to the capital to pay allegiance to the Moro-naba with gifts of cows, goats, sheep, cowries, and grain. The animals were presents from the stock of the district chiefs, but the cowries and grain were collected from the villagers of the districts. The people of the several wards in the capital furnished labor for the cultivation of the sovereign's fields and for the upkeep of his houses. The Moro-naba received substantial sums of money from taxes on the sale of slaves or other merchandise in the Ouagadougou market. He also received presents of slaves when his vassals raided the surrounding countries. If a district chief failed to fulfill all of these

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obligations to the Moro-naba, his lands were raided, his women seized and, if he were caught, he was killed.

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It is difficult to ascertain how the institution of provincial administrators arose among the Mossi. Some of the people still believe that the ministers were formerly slaves of the Moro-naba, but Delobsom claims that the first ministers were warrior companions of Naba Oubri, the founder of the Ouagadougou dynasty.[4] These men were not members of the royal lineage and thus were inferior in status to the members of the royal lineage and sublineages under their supervision. However, as emissaries of the Moro-naba, these ministers were entitled to respect by all the people. The ministers recommended successors to vacant district chieftainships; thus it was incumbent upon a district chief to be friendly with his minister if he wished succession to go to his eldest son.

The minister was the person who carried orders from the Moro-naba to the district chiefs, and he reported back to the Moro-naba on conditions in the district he visited. However, the minister could not interfere in the internal affairs of a district, nor could the district chief complain to the Moro-naba about a minister. Everyone was required to observe the strict hierarchy; the only sanction that the district chief exercised over his minister was to appeal to another minister in the hope that the Moro-naba would come to his aid.

The districts that comprised the provinces of the ministers were scattered around the country and were not equal in size or importance. One minister, the Baloum-naba, controlled the districts ruled over by those chiefs who were the sons of recent rulers. Another, the Kamsoro-naba, a eunuch, had control of the largest and wealthiest districts, but he, in contrast to the other ministers, was not succeeded by sons and, when he died, the Moro-naba inherited all of his property. The ministers frequently became very wealthy because they received gifts whenever their charges went to Ouagadougou to pay homage to the ruler. The people from the districts under their control provided labor for their fields and for the upkeep of their houses. The ministers also received bribes from persons seeking vacant district chieftainships.

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When a district chief or Koubéré died, his heirs sent a horse or a sheep with leaves on its tail to notify the ruler of the death. The Moro-naba always questioned the envoys, and when he was satisfied that his man had not met with foul play, he sent the animal to his chief minister. The Moro-naba then sent his own envoys to the late chief's house with offerings for sacrifices to their common ancestors, and also instructed the envoys to collect the death offerings from the chief's relatives. After the funeral the eldest son of the dead chief and the other pretenders went to Ouagadougou bearing gifts to the district minister and the other important men surrounding the ruler. When the time came to name the new district chief, the Moro-naba called his ministers together and asked them: "Which one of the candidates is really capable of succeeding the late chief?"

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635 The Ouidi-naba answered: "Naba, you may do as you desire." The ruler
631 then said, "Under these conditions I will designate the eldest son of the late chief as the new Kombéré because his father has never forgotten me, or gave me any trouble when he was alive. It will not be good to reject his son." The ministers then called the heir and put the following question to him three times: "Before his death, did your father designate anyone to replace him as chief?" The heir replied three times: "No! My father did not designate anyone. You may name anyone you wish; even if he is a blind man or a leper." The heir was then given a bonnet, the symbol of
[778] the *nam*, and made to swear on drinking the Tibo, a ritual potion, that if he ever betrayed the ruler, may the Tibo kill him. Thereafter, all the members of the new chief's lineage swore to respect and obey him.

The power and function of the Kombéré were similar to those of the
635 Moro-naba, but on a much reduced scale. As the person who had received
631 the *nam* from the Moro-naba, he was supreme in his district, subject only
578 to his obligation to the head ruler. These obligations included the customary gifts and aid in warfare. There is some evidence that many of the Kombérés were lax in paying this tribute and rendering homage to the Moro-naba and consequently were punished or killed. Naba Warga fought a five-year-long civil war against a rebellious vassal before the rebel was killed, and Naba Wobogo was engaged in a three-year civil war with one of his vassals when the French arrived in the country. It is not clear whether the Moro-naba was able to prevent or stop war between his vassals over strayed cattle or stolen women. The Mossi in the district of Nobéré said that the Moro-naba did not often know when neighboring villages were at war. These wars did not involve the loss of territories by the districts, since it was ritually forbidden for one district chief to take lands from another.

631 The district chiefs had ministers who helped them administer the districts. These ministers were descendants of the sons of the Moro-naba's ministers who accompanied the first district chief when he took up his fief. They had control of several villages and they channeled goods and services from the villages to the district heads. The hierarchy of command was also strictly observed on this level, and a village chief who had disputes with other village chiefs, or who had important cases to be judged, was required always to be accompanied by his minister when he
[681 visited the district chief. This official could put any man into stocks for serious crimes, but he could authorize the death only of commoners. It
565] must be pointed out, however, that in many cases the district chief usurped the rights of the Moro-naba, and had a troublesome noble secretly strangled. The district chief, like the Moro-naba, could not be deposed; he was often forced to commit suicide or met death by foul play or in open civil war. The people in the district reacted to an unjust ruler by leaving his territories.

The village chiefs held their fiefs directly from the district chiefs, and

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The village chiefs held their fiefs directly from the district chiefs, and were enfeoffed through the principle of primogeniture on the advice of district chiefs' ministers. They paid homage, and owed fealty, to their district chiefs, although part of their tribute always was sent to the Moro-naba. In the event of war they followed their district chief when he went to serve the Moro-naba. The village chiefs received presents from the heads of the families in the village and settled any local court cases in their villages. They did not have the right, however, either to put men into stocks or to have them executed. They were aided in the administration of the villages by the heads of families. 631 622

Almost every Mossi village had sections in which the nobles lived. As stated above, these people were the relatives or descendants of the district heads, and they lived in a semiparasitic condition upon the commoners in the village. Most of them owned horses and, in addition to furnishing the cavalry for the district chief's contingent during war, they raided and attacked caravans passing through the country. The nobles were subject to the control of the village chiefs, and it was not unusual for them to be under the jurisdiction of chiefs who were members of the commoner class. In such cases the district chiefs had a great deal of difficulty resolving the problems between their vassals and their kinsmen. The nobles could steal the wives and daughters of the commoners, but if a commoner tried to steal the wife of a noble he and the woman were both killed. Whenever a noble threatened to disrupt the life of a district he was secretly strangled by the district chief's men. 565 631

The above is a brief account of the origin and structure of the Mossi political system. Most of the myths regarding the origin of this system seem to suggest that here is a classic conquest state, but one neither founded by Caucasians nor extraordinarily influenced by them. The Mossi state is homogeneous in race, language, and culture, a feature not found in most of the other Sudanic states. This fact is not interesting in itself until we note that the Mossi share many cultural traits with the Voltaic peoples. Marc believes that this cultural homogeneity is the result of the Mossi invasion of the area during which they imposed their languages and customs on the indigenous populations. Apparently not believing the traditions about the Dagomba origin of the Mossi, he explains the fact that such non-Mossi groups as the Nankana, Wala, and Dagari speak Mossi dialects as proof that the Mossi were politically more powerful in ancient times, but "the feudal regime disappeared little by little.... The Mossi language was kept; [it is] the only actual witness of the ancient power of the Mossi" (author's translation).[5] We know, however, that the Mossi were still encroaching on the territories of their neighbors when the French arrived in 1896.[6] 631 642 174 114

Rattray believes that the inhabitants of Mamprussi, Dagomba, and Mossi territories are the same now as they were "centuries before the ancestors of those who are now their rulers appeared on the scene."[7] He states that

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631 642 174 114 these conquerors even adopted the language and culture of the indigenous populations, but introduced an "administrative machinery" that welded scattered local groups into loose confederacies without affecting in any great degree the inner life of these groups.[8] Rattray's hypothesis appears to explain quite adequately the reasons for the cultural homogeneity of the Mossi and the other Voltaic peoples. It also conforms to what we know from recent historical times of the organizing and conquering abilities of such figures as Samory and El Hadj Omar. These men carved out veritable empires in this area in remarkably short periods. However, we need not accept Rattray's hypothesis that foreigners were the ones who instituted "administrative machinery" among the Mossi. It is highly possible that the Mossi state might have been the result of internal Voltaic development when one Dagomba lineage established its hegemony over scattered local people in this area. There is some evidence here that the Mossi state had many of the features of the widespread Negro pattern of political structure so common to the other Sudanic states, and this fits in very well with what Professor Greenberg reports about the basic African nature of these states.[9]

631 642 121 171 It is clear that the Mossi state was a complex entity and many persons cannot describe it without calling it feudal.[10] However, the question of feudalism itself is a vexing one, and many scholars limit the use of this term to describe the political system of medieval France and possibly Japan. In fact, not many people would admit the presence of feudal states in Africa although some, such as S. F. Nadel, who worked among the Nupe, call the Sudanic states feudal and talk about fiefs and vassalage. It is now generally agreed that feudalism, despite its other aspects, is basically a form of government. Stephenson gives the classic features of a feudal state as: (1) fief-holding with vassalage; (2) homage and fealty; (3) mutual obligations between lords and vassals; (4) military service from the vassals; (5) inheritance of fiefs by heirs of vassals, usually by primogeniture; (6) subinfeudation; (7) attendance at court; and (8) wardship and marriage arrangements by which fiefs could be held in trust for minors and, in the case of female heirs, husbands who can render homage for them.[11]

An examination of the Mossi political system in terms of the first six characteristics of feudalism shows that this system conforms very well to the specifications for a feudal system. The Mossi did not have an elaborate court structure on the European model and, since only mature males could inherit fiefs, no arrangements for wardships and marriages were necessary. Furthermore, I do not think that these two traits are necessary for feudalism, and they can be considered as cultural content that need not be present in all social processes with similar functions.

Mossi-like societies present a special problem to political theorists because of the importance of kinship in their political systems. Coulborn[12] strongly insists that "A feudal society . . . is based on contract. It is not

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based on kinship." He contrasts the Geselschaft feudal system with the tribal Gemeinschaft, and recognizes the possible transition from Gemeinschaft relationships to Geselschaft relationships in the evolution of culture. However, this admission places Coulborn on the horns of a dilemma as he does not accept feudalism as a step in the evolution of the state, but as a form of government that develops after the breakdown of a state and is used for state restoration. He states that "The place of feudalism in the rise of civilized societies is not yet complete, but we must pause to notice the profound importance of the substitution of something different for kinship relations."[13] We see from the Mossi data that they used kin bonds instead of warrior-band bonds as the basis for delimiting the persons chosen for government. The warrior-band members were rewarded with hereditary administrative positions. It must be emphasized, however, that despite kinship bonds, it was the loyalty of a man that determined whether his heirs received his fief.... These new vassals were required to renew pledges of allegiance to a ruler sometimes very remotely related. It must be borne in mind that kinship does play a part in political systems that range from feudalism to twentieth century Western democracy.

We cannot fail to observe that it was in regard to the society of the Chou period in China, one similar to that of the Mossi, that Coulborn was compelled to withhold judgment as to the nature of its political system. Shang society seemed to have had many of the tribal characteristics of the people found in the pre-Mossi Voltaic area. Chou had to face the problems of ancestor veneration associated with the tribal lands, and used some of the same techniques as the Mossi. Coulborn found many of these features "foreign to a tribal society" and finally decided to "leave open the decision as to whether Chou China developed a feudal system or a system of city states as its first enduring polity."[14]

In conclusion I shall say that the political system of the Mossi had definite feudal characteristics. These feudal characteristics did not come as a result of the breakdown of a pre-existing state, but served as techniques for building a state from small scattered groups. I should certainly like to keep open the whole question of feudalism, especially as it applies to the question of the origin of the pristine state, until more comparative data from Africa can shed additional light on this important subject.

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CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN AFRICAN CULTURES

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PETER B. HAMMOND

13. *Economic Change and Mossi Acculturation*

121 Some five thousand Mossi from the kingdom of Yatenga in the Upper
178 Volta have been resettled on the newly developed lands of the Niger
[177] Irrigation Project in the French Sudan. Removed from a cultural setting
which has been relatively undisturbed by the influence of European
[166] civilization, they are required to adapt themselves rapidly to an economic situation structured and directed by Europeans. Economic organization being the variable involved, a study of their adjustment provides an opportunity to examine some of the cultural problems and processes related to economic development in underdeveloped areas.

131 Yatenga is the northernmost of four Mossi kingdoms located in the
101 Upper Volta. It is a sub-Saharan savanna land of red earth, low rainfall, gently rolling plains, and low hills. Ouahigouya, the capital, gives its name to the French administrative unit, the Cercle de Ouahigouya, which has governed the kingdom from its headquarters in this ancient city since its conquest in 1895.[1]

101 To distinguish themselves from the people of the neighboring king-
doms of Ouagadougou, Fada-N'Gourma, and Tenkodogo, the Mossi of
173 the Yatenga sometimes speak of themselves as "Yadise" (those of Yadiga). This name refers to the fact that they regard themselves as being descended, as a nation, from Naba Yadiga, the half-mythical warrior-prince from Ouagadougou who broke away from his father's dynasty to form the separate political entity, Yatenga, which bears his name (*ya* for "Yadiga" and *tenga* for "country"). The Mossi have not always been numerically and culturally dominant in the Yatenga, as they are today. They recognize that their ancestors came from the south, from Mamprusi and Dagomba in the northern territories of Ghana.

171 Highly organized politico-religious states representing the cultural amalgamation of native and foreign populations and institutions are characteristic of the Voltaic region of West Africa. Acknowledging that we "owe to Rattray the discovery that these central Voltaic tribes are

[1] Capitaine Noire, *Monographie du Cercle de Ouahigouya* (Ouahigouya, 1904), p. 15.

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composed of two major groups of communities," Fortes goes on to describe this pattern succinctly: 171

> On the one side are those that claim to be descendants of immigrants from parts of the country other than their present habitats. On the other side are communities that claim to be the autochthonous inhabitants. . . . Many of the immigrant communities claim descent from forbears of the Mampuru ruling stock. Though now wholly amalgamated with the alleged aboriginal inhabitants, they have certain ritual observances and a system of chieftainship similar to those of the Mamprusi. . . . The institution distinctive of the autochthonous communities is the office of "Custodian of the Earth." This ritual office, involving priestly functions in connection with the cult of the Earth, is found among many West African peoples from the Senegal to the mouth of the Niger. In the Voltaic region it is the exclusive prerogative of the autochthonous communities.[1] [793]

The inhabitants of the Yatenga at the time of the arrival of the Mossi were the Kurumankobe, or Fulse, as they are called by the Mossi. Their descendants recognize their indigenous origin but have become almost wholly acculturated to the Mossi. While most Mossi bear the sib name Wedraogo and maintain political control in the Yatenga, the descendants of the Kurumankobe usually have the sib name Savadogo and are excluded from the exercise of political authority. They have retained the custodianship of the earth, and the elders of their lineages and sibs are the Mossi's *Tenga Soba namba*, their "earth custodians," charged with propitiating the supernatural forces of nature. 173 563 614 [793]

POLITICAL AND SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

The present king of the Yatenga, the *Yatenga Naba*, is a lineal descendant of the first ruler, Naba Yadiga. The members of the lineage of the king are called "those who maintain themselves upon us" (*riim namba*). Directly subordinate to the authority of the Yatenga Naba are his four grand ministers, each of whom has authority over a particular province (*solum*) of the Yatenga.[2] 631 [644] [635]

The province over which each of the grand ministers presides as lord is divided up into a number of cantons (*tense*), each of which is ruled by a chief who is the central political authority both of the village in which he resides and of the villages within the canton. Like the province, the concept of the canton is not precisely territorial. Some villages may owe 631 634

[1] Meyer Fortes, *The Dynamics of Clanship among the Tallensi* (London: Oxford University Press, 1945), p. 6.

[2] These provinces refer not only to geographical areas of the kingdom but to particular categories of the population. For example, the *Balum Naba* has direct authority over the southern regions of the Yatenga and indirect authority over the cantons of Riziam and Zittenga, political entities which have never fully recognized the central authority of the *Yatenga Naba*. This same minister is also especially charged with maintaining liaison with certain of the more important earth custodians throughout the Yatenga.

631 their allegiance directly to the *Yatenga Naba* for historical reasons or
634 because their chiefs are related to the royal lineage and superior within the social hierarchy to the local nobility (*nakomse*) to which the canton chiefs belong.

631 Subordinate, in turn, to the canton chief, is the village chief (*Tenga Naba*), who is the central authority in the aggregation of "quarters"
622 (*sakse*) of which a Mossi village is composed. These quarters are the dwellings of patrilineal extended families and lineages (*boodoose*). Such
592 a residence is called a *saka* if it contains the house of the lineage elder (*sak kasama*) or a *yiri* if it represents only a junior segment. In either case the dwelling of the oldest male in the group is surrounded by the separate houses of his wives, his younger brothers and their wives, and his sons, nephews, cousins, and their wives and children. Each adult individual has a separate house within the *saka*.

The smallest unit within the residence of the lineage is the nuclear
595 family (*zaka*) composed of a man, his wife, and their children. If a man has more than one wife, the term *zaka pedere* (*zaka* half) may be used when the man's relationship with one of his several wives is being considered. He himself is called *zaka soba*. As a young man's family grows, each of his new wives is provided with a house adjoining his. In addition to his house and the houses of his wives, each man's household contains several granaries used to store the produce from the millet fields he has been assigned by his lineage. It is with the members of his own household that a man is in most frequent social and economic interaction. The fields he works with their assistance are the principal source of the food supply for the nuclear family unit.

The *yiri* is the next largest social unit within the *saka*. The term
596 refers to the extended family dwelling inhabited by a man, his wives, his male children, and their wives and children. It may be composed of as many as fifteen separate nuclear families. While its inhabitants usually consist of the married sons of an older man and their nuclear families, it may also be composed of a man, his wife and children, and his younger brothers and their wives and children. Since its members are closely related within the lineage, there is greater social and economic interaction among them than there is with the other lineage members. As the *zaka soba* is the principal and final authority within the *zaka*, the *yiri soba* is most important within the *yiri*.

Composed of the nuclear and extended family dwellings of its mem-
[592] bers, the Mossi residential unit is typically inhabited by all of the local representatives of the sib. In addition to the dwelling of the lineage elder, it contains the altar (*kiemserogo*) where the ancestral spirits of the lineage are worshiped. The lineage elder has authority over everyone living within his *saka*. As counselor to the village chief and intermediary with

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the ancestral spirits, he is the principal political and religious authority 596
within his lineage.

The single term *boodoo* is used to refer to three separate groups: the 562
sib, the lineage, and the local residential kin group described above.
Aside from formalized recognition of patrilineal descent and inheritance, 613
the lineage functions most significantly as a local residential kin group in which the economic and social participation of the female non-members is as important as that of the men. Although the men are most prominent in the direction of its affairs, their wives have a considerable, if somewhat indirect, effect upon decisions made. Even in the relationship of the members of the lineage to their ancestral spirits (*kiemse*), the women play an important part in preparing the food and the libations to be offered. They give birth to the members of the lineage, nourish them until weaning (usually at the age of two), and provide them with guidance and training for their ascribed roles. In the education of the female members of the lineage the wives play a more important part than the men. But it is in their economic activities that the significance of the women's role is best seen. In addition to their farm work, they co-operate fully in repairing roofs, flooring the courtyards, and even assisting in the brick-making which precedes house-building. The economic and social contribution of the wives is of equal importance with that of the husbands and sons, and it is more important than that of the daughters, since females born into the lineage marry and leave just as they become fully productive members of their fathers' households.

Daughters, however, serve their lineage in a different way. As they [602]
are successful in winning for themselves a good name in the households of their husbands, so the bond of economic and social co-operation established between the two lineages at the time of marriage is strengthened. When they mature, they return to assist the members of their lineage with ritual obligations to the ancestors. If they are left childless at their husband's death, they may return to their father's household to reside.

Separated from one another by millet fields and the public way, the 592
dwelling of each Mossi kin group has the appearance of a small walled 342
village. Each round mud house with its thatched roof has a separate courtyard which is usually contiguous to the courtyards of the other houses in the residential unit of which it is a part. The individual dwellings are constructed in such a way—the wall of each house or courtyard being contiguous to that of the nearest neighbor—as to form a circular wall whose exterior is closed at all but two points. The dwelling of each kin group has a small exit and a large open entrance way just within [343]
which is located a thatch-covered sun shelter (*zande*) where the men of the lineage gather to rest, to work at small crafts, and to talk. Guests are

342 received, gossip exchanged, and social and ceremonial obligations dis-
592 cussed in its shade. Here, also, the men of the lineage take their meals,
brought out to them from the kitchens of their wives and set before them
[264] by their sons, who first attend their fathers and then dine on what remains.

592 A few paces away is the grinding platform (*nere*) where the women
252 gather to prepare the grain for their families' meals. This great circular mud table, some twenty feet in diameter, is raised about three feet from the ground. Its surface is beaten hard and worked over with cinders and manure to make it rainproof. Each woman has her assigned place at this
[512] platform where she keeps her pestle and where she stations herself at dawn and again at dusk to grind her millet and learn the news of the day.

Frequently found at the outer perimeter of the dwelling of the Mossi
592 kin group is the house of the son of a lineage woman who has returned from his father's household to live in the benevolent presence of his mother's family, with whom he enjoys an especially permissive relationship. The house set aside for the residence of the young unmarried men of the lineage is also located on the outer edge of the compound dwelling.

A recent addition to the traditional pattern of village organization
555 described above is the independent households of socially ambitious
184 individuals who have chosen to separate themselves from the residences of their lineages in order to profit from their own economic or religious enterprises. Many have become independently wealthy through successful commercial ventures; others, as a result of conversion to Islam, have gained prestige through religious authority and wealth through the tuition and services provided by the Koranic students. Often these people are much younger than their lineage elders, not in line for the inheritance of political or religious authority through traditional channels, and unwilling either to accept the authority of their seniors or to share economically with the less prosperous members of their lineages. They are deviants, in conflict with the communal patterns of consumption and with the emphasis on accepting established authority which characterizes the traditional social organization of the Mossi.

THE TRADITIONAL ECONOMY

613 Much agricultural endeavor is necessarily co-operative. Each farmer
476 is dependent on the assistance of his kinsmen to get his fields seeded, cultivated, and harvested in the short time during which each of these
243 operations must take place. However, the yield from his field remains his own, to be shared only with his own wives and children. Members of the lineage also work in the fields under the specific control of the lineage elder. Although the harvest from these fields is stored in the granary
242 [i.e. at a sun shelter in the entrance-way. — Analyst]

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belonging to him, he can be relied upon to share with the members of the lineage if this should be necessary.

Capital goods in the form of houses, granaries, and fields are the property of the lineage. Individual rights are limited to temporary use and custodianship but are passed on to others when a general shift in residence and role follows the death of a senior member of the lineage. Although property is passed on in accordance with the rules of descent in the lineage, part of the property redistributed represents the product of the labor of the lineage as a consanguineal kin group. For, as has been indicated, the labor of the wives, who are not lineage members, is as important as that of their husbands and children.

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The lineage head discusses the coming year with the other elders, and an over-all production plan is made out. They decide what fields are to be left fallow, what ones are to be planted to cotton and the varieties of millet, what lands may be used by individuals desiring to plant a cash crop, and what, if any, land may be loaned to neighboring lineages or to in-laws. With the approach of the first rains, all economically active men and women go to their fields to prepare them for planting, leaving behind in the village only the old people and the children who are still too small to assist in the fields or tend their fathers' animals.

241 613

A considerable portion of the land within the limits of a Mossi village is under the direct control of the village chief (*Tenga Naba*) and the earth custodian (*Tenga Soba*), the local representatives of political and supernatural authority. This land is used for the public way, for the market place, and for burial grounds and latrines. Except for that which is too poor for any purpose, all available land within several miles of a village is put under cultivation.

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Ki is the generic name which the Mossi give to the millet, which is the basic product in their economy and which receives the largest single allocation of land and labor of any Mossi economic activity. Two kinds of millet are planted, a large-grained variety (*kenda*) and a small-grained variety (*bazua*). Millet is the first crop to be planted after the rains have begun. Small- and large-grained millet seeds are frequently mixed and sown in the same field. Small-grained millet may also be sown in the same field with a white bean (*benga*). A "tired" field may be left fallow for five, ten, or fifteen years. When it is first replanted, it will be seeded to millet for the first three years. The fourth year it may again be put into millet, but if the previous crop was not good, cotton will be planted. Usually, a Mossi farmer plants cotton for two years, millet for three, then groundnuts, more cotton, then two more years of millet. It is believed that cotton renews the soil because of the intensive cultivation required: the earth is brought up into hillocks and turned over; after picking, the plant may be turned under and left to enrich the soil.

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241 picking, the plant may be turned under and left to enrich the soil.

241 Apart from the co-operative cultivation of fields under the proprietor-
476 ship of the lineage elder, each farmer works for himself. He aids his relatives, and they in turn assist him with his work, but the results of their communal effort are not shared. This applies not only to the work of planting but also to cultivation and harvest. The decision about what is to be planted in a particular field and how it shall be cultivated rests finally with the individual farmer.

Communal or co-operative effort is much more characteristic of the work of cultivation than of the planting period, when everyone is in a hurry to get his own seeds into the ground and requests for assistance are not welcomed. A strong note of competition is evident at this time. A [461] man takes pride in his efficiency as a farmer, and there is a race to see who can get farthest along with his work. In the earliest phase of prepa- [572] rations for the approaching rainy season it is the individual's best friend upon whom he relies most for assistance. He is the first person to be called on for assistance in clearing the field for planting. If a Mossi farmer is unmarried, he may also ask the other unmarried men of his lineage for help. If a long day must be spent in the field in order to clear and clean it properly, his mother will offer the helpers the midday meal, which is carried out to them as they work.

622 *Naba koba* (chief's cultivation) is the name given to the work which the
651 villagers do in the fields belonging to the village chief. A village elder is
241 charged with announcing when and where work in the chief's fields is to be done, and each lineage head relays the news to his kinsmen. This contribution of labor is no longer obligatory, as it was formerly, but only [626] a question of social pressure and recognition that individual well-being and the welfare of the village "depend on the chief."

241 Every Mossi is an agriculturist. Although agriculture is the principal
463 source of income, everyone also engages in crafts, particularly during the dry season when the work in the fields is finished. However, there are no full-time crafts specialists. Even the African functionaries in the European administration and the teachers, clerks, and merchants all work in their fields part of the time during the rainy season. The activities of the blacksmiths, leather workers, butchers, wood workers, herbalists, and small merchants are carried out on a much smaller scale and are fitted into the routine established by the rains and the growth of their millet. Only elders whose age keeps them from the fields might be thought of as specialists who do not participate in agriculture, but their land is worked by younger members of the family, and they take a keen interest in the course of its cultivation. The village chief, the earth custodian, and certain other elderly and important members of the community do not cultivate; this is because of their position and age rather than because

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they are so exclusively occupied with political or religious duties. In every case, they own fields and are dependent upon their produce for an important part of their subsistence.

Each Mossi village in the Yatenga holds a market every third day; markets operate in nearby villages on the intermediate days. There are few full-time merchants; men usually market their wares themselves and trade in items of European manufacture. Except for the sale of meat, it is a man's wives who sell farm produce. For marketing her husband's surplus millet, a woman receives a gift when the market closes.

Markets are most active in the early hours of the morning when meat and farm produce are fresh. By afternoon only a few merchants stay on, trying to sell their remaining produce to late-comers at greatly reduced prices. Social satisfactions derived from participation in the market are greatly valued; it provides an opportunity for meeting friends and kinsmen and for exchanging gossip and observations on one another's dress, the crops, and current political developments. The market is a place for making loans and receiving small gifts from kinsmen and friends, for flirtations and the arrangement of rendezvous, and for that casual sort of social interaction which is one of the principal pleasures of life in the Yatenga.

The Mossi farmer is dependent on the co-operation of the members of his lineage both for the success of his individual economic endeavor and for their support if his crop should fail. To be assured of this support, he must contribute generously to the maintenance of his position in the intricate network of rights and obligations which describes the relationship of the individual to his kin group. A constant exchange of visits and presents, ceremonial and economic assistance, and presence and participation in the affairs of the lineage are necessary to maintain his status within this group.

The nature of the social, economic, and emotional dependence of the individual on his kinsmen, his affinal relations, and his neighbors is such that his social well-being and economic success may properly be regarded as depending as much on his skill in manipulating this complex web of relationships as on his specifically economic endeavors. When a man decides to forego a second weeding of his fields in order to prepare presents and make the journey to the funeral of a kinsman, he is making a choice which, considered in the total context of the culture, is realistically in accord with his own economic best interest.

The farmer feels equally dependent on the deceased members of his lineage, the ancestral spirits (*kiemse*). If he feeds them a chicken, they may steal the soul from a neighboring stand of millet and bring it to enrich his own field. If properly treated, they can be depended upon to protect his shea nut trees from the high winds which might otherwise

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769 destroy the yield. And, depending on his attentions to them, they can give or take away the good health necessary to carry him through the arduous activity of the rainy season when work is hardest, the granaries nearly empty, and food in short supply. Separate ancestral spirits look out for different aspects of the well-being of the individual. Satisfying their various sacrificial requirements is both expensive and time-consuming, but their good will is essential to the success of the farmer, and it is in his own best interest to be attentive to their needs.

THE EARTH CUSTODIANS

793 A close relationship exists between the control of the water supply
776 upon which the agricultural economy depends and the authority of the earth custodians in their role as intermediaries with the several manifestations of Wennam, the Mossi deity. The deity itself is somewhat aloof from the affairs of men, but through his specific manifestations and with the intercession of the earth custodians (*Tenga Soba namba*), descendants of the indigenous inhabitants of the Yatenga, the individual propitiates Wennam in order to control the various forces of the natural and supernatural environment upon which the success of his economic or social endeavor is dependent. Tenga Wende, his terrestrial manifestation, and Tido Wende, which gives life to the vegetable kingdom, are the aspects of Wennam which are most frequently evoked; but Siguiri Wende, the deified first ancestor of the Mossi; Ki Wende, the millet god; and Saga Wende, the rain deity, are also frequently called upon for help.

Each Mossi village in the Yatenga is divided into one or more areas,
793 each of which is in the "command" of one of the village earth custodians.
[36] Each of these areas contains both the dwelling of the Savadogo lineage of the earth custodian and the residence and farmlands of various "true" Mossi lineages. The head of each lineage maintains the good will of the terrestrial manifestation of the deity through the intercession of the earth custodian who "commands" his land. In some instances a lineage may own land under the authority of two different earth custodians; in this case offerings must be made at the shrine (*tenga*) of each.

793 The good fortune which may be secured through obeisance to the
782 terrestrial manifestation of the deity (Tenga Wende) involves both sacrifices and gifts of money to the earth custodian and abstention from acts offensive to the earth. For example, sexual intercourse may take
[833 place only in a private courtyard or within the house. Violation of this
783] rule defiles the land and must be expiated through a special sacrifice and the payment of a fine to the earth custodian. Any lost object found in the
778 public way or in the bush is in the custody of the earth deity and must be turned over to the earth custodian to await the inquiry of the proper owners. If such objects are unclaimed, they are given to Tenga Wende

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by being placed on his altar, where they become part of the earth symbols (*tiinse*). As a result, these altars are piled high with old sardine cans, bicycle parts, remnants of clothing, unusual stones and scraps of metal, baskets, wooden implements, and weapons, which are left there to decompose slowly and return to the earth. Travelers in a strange village need never fear that their property will be stolen if they deposit it near the altar of the earth custodian. 778

When a farmer wishes to clear a part of the bush which has previously been unused, he must first ask permission of the earth custodian and make a present to the earth deity. If he wishes to use the land again the following year, the request and the gift must be repeated. Such a field may be passed on to his descendants, who have a right to the land so long as they acknowledge each year the authority of the earth custodian. If a new well is to be dug, his authorization must be requested, and his advice may also be asked for the proper place to seek water. The wise Mossi farmer consults the earth custodian frequently about his agricultural activities. He also reports anything that he may have done to alter the condition of his farmlands or the surrounding bush, not because each individual act is of such great importance, but because maintaining good relations with the custodian of the earth is in the interest of his own economic security. 241 782 793

OTHER ASPECTS OF RELIGION

Other descendants of the original inhabitants of the Yatenga, the Bogoba, are especially charged with the propitiation of Tido Wendé, the vegetal manifestation of Wennam. In addition to the many manifestations of Wennam and the complex organization of priests and ceremonial designed for his propitiation, many other forces inhabit the unseen world of the Mossi. Indeed, to the observer their number and variety might at first seem to be almost as great as the number of Mossi with whom he may discuss these beings. Each man's description of these supernatural beings varies in terms of his subjective reaction resulting either from direct experience of them or from stories he has heard concerning their behavior. In contrast to Wennam, whose disposition is essentially benevolent so long as he is properly propitiated, these lesser supernatural beings are more frequently malicious and always more difficult to control. Perhaps for these reasons they are not worshiped. The Mossi's concern is not to propitiate them but to neutralize their evil intentions by the use of protective charms (*tim*). 776

The "bush," the unused land lying beyond the farms, is the least-known aspect of the Mossi natural environment. This is especially true of those far areas of the bush where even the authority of the earth custodians does not extend and where unknown spirits dwell. For although the 776 823

776 bush is included in the orderly universe which the Mossi have fabri-
823 cated, it exists at the periphery and is a thing to be feared. The name of this unknown and unowned part of the bush is synonymous with fear. Dreams in which an individual sees frightening images are called "bush
[828] creeping up" (*weogo doore*) or "bush traps you" (*weogo n'yoko fo*). These phrases are also used to describe the emotional shock, the feeling of fear, elicited by the unexpected sight of a frightening object like a corpse or a lion.

Most important among the supernatural beings inhabiting the bush are the twin spirits (*kikirdisi*). Living in pairs or in larger groups, they inhabit the bush, caves, baobab trees, and certain dense thickets of underbrush. While specific details vary, it is generally conceded that they are small, about a foot tall, black like the Mossi, and of both sexes. Their social organization is like that of men: each group is ruled over by a twin spirit-chief (*Kikirdisi Naba*).

845 Twin children are always regarded as the emissaries of the twin spirits.
Shortly after the birth of twins their mother takes a present of food to a
776 place where the twin spirits are known to dwell. Leaving the gift and expressing her thanks, she also makes it clear to the twin spirits that if they have any sort of malicious intent in sending her their children they might as well take them back immediately, since she will tolerate no foolishness. If, through her new children, they plan to torment her, they should save their efforts and desist at once. While the twin spirits are frequently mischief-makers, they are more frivolous than malicious and essentially neither good nor evil. The death of newborn twins is accepted with relief, for it is believed certain that the twin spirits have been thwarted in their mischievous intent and have conceded defeat.

THE ECONOMIC AND CEREMONIAL CYCLE

796 A brief description of the economic cycle and the ceremonials which
221 mark its phases will serve to illustrate the way the Mossi perceive their relationship to the forces of their natural, supernatural, and social milieux and the methods by which they seek to assure their well-being through control of these forces. The year is usually divided into twelve
[805] moons whose names refer either to the principal economic activity of the season or to a ceremonial which accompanies it.

The first moon of the Mossi year is called "Gambo" after the name of the village which celebrates its first rain-making ceremony (*Tengana*) at this time. Although the rains are still five or six months away, this ritual marks the beginning of the new economic cycle. Each household which possesses land controlled by the earth custodian sends one of its young girls with an offering of millet gruel to place at the altar of Tenga Wende, the terrestrial manifestation of the deity. The earth custodian advises

Tenga Wende of the desire for a good growing year and gives each girl a small part of the wet earth near the shrine; this represents the now sanctified soul (*shiga*) and is placed under the granary from which the millet seeds for the new crop will be taken. 796 221

Then those who possess land controlled by the earth custodian organize a hunt for his benefit. The following day, the earth custodian visits each lineage which possesses fields in areas of the bush under his custodianship. He is given calabashes filled with millet gruel, which he pours as a libation on the earth, asking Tenga Wende to grant good health, heavy rains, and a successful harvest to the household. As the libation is poured, the women try to catch a little in their own calabashes of gruel, which they then pour as their sacrifice. Because the millet from the granaries of good harvests is lucky, other women want to try to catch a little of it in their own offerings; thus the libations spill from one calabash into another as they fall on the earth. [782] [777]

The second moon is called "Bega" after the ceremonial which coincides with the first labor in the fields, the clearing and burning which precedes planting. After making a sacrifice at his own altar, the earth custodian goes to the residence of the neighboring priest (*Boga*) specifically charged with the propitiation of the vegetal manifestation of the deity. This visit symbolizes the interdependent relationship of the two priests and the supernatural powers which they control. The *Boga* then repeats the libations made during the previous ritual, but this time the offerings of millet gruel are made to Tido Wende, the force which gives life to the plants, rather than to the earth. [793]

A sacrifice to Pogo Wende, the specific manifestation of Tenga Wende which guards a farmer's fields, is usually made after they have been cleared and prepared for planting. Either before or after the sowing of the first seeds, the farmer asks the earth custodian to sacrifice a sheep or a goat to the field deity, requesting good health, heavy rains, and a rich harvest. This sacrifice (*Pogo Mande*) is the final aspect of the ceremonial preparations for the new economic cycle. It is designed to enlist the benevolence not only of Pogo Wende but also of the twin spirits which inhabit the field. If the twins are well disposed toward the farmer, they will protect the soul (*ki shiga*) of his millet stand from the twin spirits from neighboring fields who might try to steal it. Like the ancestral spirits, the twin spirits send a high wind into a field, blowing the ripening grains from the stalk and liberating their "souls" (*shiise*), which are then captured to enrich the spirits' own fields. [776] [782] [774]

The third moon of the year is called "Cundiba Bega." The fourth, which usually corresponds with the European month of June, is called "unaccompanied" (Quizale), referring to the fact that no ceremonial is observed during its phase. The hard work in the fields is begun at this

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221 796 time. "Waraga," which means "first cultivation," is the name given to the fifth. The sixth, which appears in early September or late August, is called "Baca," meaning "second cultivation."

If the millet is not yet ripe for harvest at the appearance of the seventh moon, it is also called "Baca," since the work of cultivation must continue. This choice rests with the chief of the village of Room. The entire Mossi kingdom waits for his decision to know whether the ceremonial cycle called "Basga," which closes the economic year, is to begin or whether the harvest and its attendant ceremonies are to be put off for another month. Just behind his residence is a sacred millet field whose [774 824] grains, as they mature, contain an aspect of the souls (*riim shiise*) of the dead kings of the Yatenga. When the millet in this field is ready to be cut, the next moon to appear is called "Yalem," and the ceremonial cycle which closes the economic year is begun. In the early days of the Yatenga [769] dynasty millet from this field was used to prepare a sacrificial gruel to propitiate the deceased rulers of the newly established kingdom. When it is cut today, a first portion is taken to the altar at Room dedicated to the souls of these early kings. Two other bundles of millet are prepared from the same field. One is sent to the *Yatenga Naba* at Ouahigouya, who is the living descendant of the dead kings. The other is sent to the village of Gourcy, the former capital and the first residence of the founder of the Yatenga dynasty, Naba Yadiga.

The emissaries to the two political centers are accompanied by young people who break off stalks of millet from the fields along their way, adding these to the bundles of grain so as to include all of the farmers of the [769] Yatenga in this offering which symbolizes the dependence of the Mossi on the benevolence of the souls of the dead kings and their living descendant. The millet taken to Ouahigouya is sacrificed at the palace altar of the former rulers. Part of the millet sent to Gourcy is sacrificed at the altar of the spirits of the former village chiefs (*nakom shiise*); the other part is sacrificed at the shrine of the former kings. At Ouahigouya and Gourcy a portion of each sacrificial offering of millet is returned to Room [182] with stalks from the local crop at each place. These are used to make a final sacrifice symbolizing the interdependent relationship of Mossi religious, economic, and political organizations. The ceremonial cycle serves to demonstrate the reliance of the people on the benevolence of the spirits of their former kings for their social, economic, and supernatural well-being.

A ceremony called "Kom Filiga" follows. Meaning "water thanksgiving," it is the occasion for thanking the Mossi ruler, the *Yatenga Naba*, for the wise direction of affairs which has permitted the farmers to cultivate their fields in peace. All village and canton chiefs travel to Ouahigouya to salute their king and rededicate themselves to his service.

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The next moon, called "Tido," is the occasion for a ceremony thanking Wennam, through his terrestrial and vegetal manifestations, for his support during the growing season and for the rich harvests that have been received. Though it is directed by the custodians of the earth, it is their auxiliaries, the Bogaba, who officiate and who sacrifice at the altars to Tido Wende. After they have finished, others may offer a chicken as thanks for successful harvests or for the birth of a child.

At the appearance of the next moon the ceremony called "Filiga" is celebrated, thanking the ancestors of each lineage for their protection during the hard months of the rainy season. The initial sacrifices are made by the village chief both at the shrine to the spirits of the former chiefs and at the ancestral shrine of his lineage. Because their offerings are made to powerful spirits, it is wiser not to refer directly to them by name. They are called *Kikirigo Na Maore*, which means "twin dance." The twin spirits, like the ancestral spirits (*kiense*), give children. Thus, through indirection a "charged" word is avoided by calling the sacrifice after an analogous but less powerful force. The specific purpose of the first sacrifice is to ask the protection and the assistance of the spirits of the former chiefs during the dangerous period which is to follow. The ancestral spirits of the villagers are then propitiated, and individuals who fail to perform the sacrifices properly may be punished by their ancestors. It is also believed that the ancestors may try to call some of the members of the lineage to join them at this time.

The sacrifices are made by the children of the daughters of the lineage (*Yasenamba*), whose permissive relationship with their mother's kinsmen is paralleled by their relationship to the ancestral spirits of their lineage. The lineage head presents the first chicken for sacrifice. Its throat is slowly cut as it is offered to the "twin" (*kikirigo*), as the "first ancestor" of the lineage is called—again through indirection, for even if the name of the first ancestor were known, it would be presumptuous of his descendants to call him by name. A chicken is then sacrificed to the "old ancestors" of the great-grandfather's generation, to the ancestors of the grandfather's generation, and to those of the fathers' generation who are deceased. As each chicken's throat is cut, the ancestors are thanked for their protection throughout the rainy season and requested to continue to look out for the welfare of their descendants during the months of the dry season which follow. Other men of the lineage may then give chickens to be sacrificed.

The final aspect of the ritual closing of the economic year is the ceremony called "Na Poosum," or "chief's salutation." It is essentially a social occasion. The homage to the central political authority made at Kom Filiga is now complemented on the village level. The elders of each lineage go to the village chief with presents of millet and assurances of

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221 796 their continued reliance upon his political power and intercession with his noble ancestors, in order that the village may enjoy peace through the coming months of the dry season and early rains at the beginning of the next economic cycle.

With this observance all of the sources of power—both social and supernatural—upon which the Mossis' well-being is dependent have been thanked for their support throughout the year just ended and have been encouraged, by the generosity of their supplicants, to continue their benevolence for the year to come. The Mossi understand the nature of these forces and the manner in which they can be controlled. They know them as manifestations of a deity who will reward their observance of ceremonial obligations with the soft winds and heavy rains that bring a rich harvest. The individual is intellectually and emotionally absorbed in maintaining a balance in his relationship to a world he understands. His efforts to maintain this balance are occasionally frustrated by sorcery or the contrary will of his deity, but he enjoys, nonetheless, a very real security.

CULTURAL ADJUSTMENTS AT THE NIGER IRRIGATION PROJECT

177 241 Given the nature of these interrelationships between the organization of economic activity and the social and religious institutions of their culture, the adjustment of the Mossi who have been resettled at the Niger Irrigation Project has implications which go beyond mere technological adaptation. The settlers must, in fact, adjust to a totally changed cultural setting.

Arriving at the Niger project, they fail to find the institutions upon which they have always depended for their security; they find instead a natural environment governed by forces they do not know. Their water supply is no longer dependent on the supernatural controls of the earth custodians but comes from a dam built by Europeans. They are socially isolated from their kinsmen and their ancestral spirits in the Yatenga, and they derive little comfort from the presence of fellow Mossi with whom they have neither consanguineal nor affinal relationship.

[466] Settlers were forcibly recruited for the Niger Irrigation Project until 1944, when forced labor was abolished throughout the French Union. Now a recruitment program brings Mossi families to the project each year; every family head receives a house, oxen, a plow, and a plot of land proportionate to the number of active workers accompanying him. Under the supervision of European agronomists, they apply modern methods to the production of rice and cotton. The project administration buys their crop for cash after deducting fees for seed, irrigation, mechanized cultivation, transportation, and processing. In theory, ten years of

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debt-free cultivation entitle the settler to permanent residence on the land he has been loaned. 177 241

Adaptation to the conditions of the new geographical setting in which the Mossi find themselves has been relatively rapid and easy. The Yatenga and the Niger project lie within the same climatic zone; the only important ecological difference between the two areas is the increased water supply resulting from irrigation. This change in the origin of the water supply, control of which provides a basic sanction of Mossi religion, was less disturbing to traditional belief than might have been anticipated.

Rather than diminishing their belief in their own religion, it only convinces the Mossi colonists that the forces of the natural order are different in their new habitat and accordingly must be controlled in a different way. Finding the indigenous inhabitants of the French Sudan, the Bambara, to be zealous Moslems, the Mossi settlers have accepted Islam as the religion of their new country. Confident that their religious obligations in the Yatenga will be taken care of by the elders who have remained behind, and with some pressure from those who have already become Moslemized, new arrivals rapidly embrace Islam as the system by which the supernatural forces governing their new environment can be manipulated. 797 177

Their acceptance of Islam has been as superficial as it has been rapid. There is time neither for the study of Moslem theology nor for the soul-searching which must precede the rejection of previously held religious beliefs. With a tradition which emphasizes the observance of religious form rather than intense emotional participation in ceremonial, their observance of the five daily prayers, taking of a Moslem name, deference to the marabout, and casual attention to certain dietary prohibitions should be viewed as their rational reaction to the fact of being in a strange land with an obviously different supernatural order which must be dealt with in a new way. Desire for a measure of control over this new supernatural order, pressure for conformity to the religious norms of their new social setting, and—perhaps most significantly—the permissiveness which characterizes the West African's acceptance of the existence of new supernatural forces, makes Islamization possible without the rejection of previously held religious ideas or practices. [157]

In contrast to the relative ease of their adaptation to the natural and supernatural aspects of their new environment, their adjustment to the social situations which result from the change in economic organization has been most difficult. They must, of course, learn a new technology: the cultivation of rice and cotton by modern methods. Since the machines used for clearing the land and for the harvest are operated by 177 241

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177 specially trained non-Mossi personnel, the use of irrigation, fertilizer,
241 and the plow are their most important technological innovations. Despite their difficulty in communicating with the European agronomists under whose direction they work, they soon master these agricultural techniques. Patterns of consumption are also altered, rice taking the
[261] place of millet as the staple in their diet. After some initial illness they become accustomed to rice but suspect that it is less nourishing than their traditional diet.

177 Far more difficult than adjusting to either the new technology or the
182 diet is adaptation to the changed social organization. Trying to ease this adjustment but with an imperfect understanding of traditional Mossi institutions, the project administration has tried to re-create their forms in the area of resettlement.

Despite this, the new colonist finds himself isolated among social forces he does not understand. The attempt to reproduce the traditional pattern of residential grouping is meaningless in the absence of the lineage. Separated from his kinsmen and his community, the colonist is confused by social institutions whose resemblance to those he has known in the Yatenga exists only on the level of form. He does not like or understand being housed with strangers as if they were his kinsmen. Equally incomprehensible is an approximation of the familiar political organization which, ignoring the traditional sanctions of chieftainship, has a former earth custodian, whose supernatural role has traditionally precluded the exercise of political authority, as paramount chief.

Despite the efforts of the European administration to reproduce their structural appearance, the institutions of Mossi society are so interrelated that the change in the organization of economic activity has created new needs which make alterations in traditional institutions inevitable. Rather than permitting the colonists to modify their indigenous social organization to fit these new needs, the social structure rigidly imposed by the Europeans has impeded the Mossi in their efforts to adjust their institutions to the changed situation. The delegation of authority to inept administrative appointees thinly disguised as chiefs and to the older, least adaptive members of the settler communities only complicates the problem of adjustment.

Isolated from their kinsmen and the protection of their ancestral spirits, the colonists miss the emotional and social satisfactions of extended family living as well as the security of an established position in the community in which they were born. Adherence to the traditional kinship organization, with its emphasis on obedience to the elders who
[582] have remained behind in the Yatenga, makes marriage at the Niger project almost impossible.

The young men born and raised at the project resent the tradition

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which requires sharing and compliance with the authority of kinsmen in the Yatenga whom they have never known. Forced to return to the Yatenga to assist the extended family there, they are frustrated in their efforts to form a permanent identification with their residence at the irrigation project. More efficient than their elders in communicating with the Europeans and in learning their techniques, they are thwarted by a social organization which denies expression to their initiative. The older men, given no share in the administration of the project and with little understanding of its objectives, believe that they are being exploited by the Europeans and that they would be more successful if they were to follow their own system of production and marketing. 177 182

The Mossi have learned that the official policy of the Niger Irrigation Project specifies their participation in administration through "indigenous agricultural associations," and even through their "collaboration" within the board of directors; but they do not actually participate in either of these. Possibly the fact that the Mossi have had no previous experience of participation in democratic forms discouraged the Europeans in their early efforts to include them in the administration of the project, but such participation implies a profound cultural adjustment and would require patience on the part of the Europeans. Whatever the case, the fact that the colonists know they have a right to participate in the administration and yet are denied it only serves to increase their conviction that they are being exploited.

Unsure of their rights to the land, unaware of the goals of the project, and inhibited by their artificially maintained tradition from forming meaningful social relationships in the area of resettlement, the Mossi make little permanent identification with the Niger project and its objectives. They say that it is like the hut a man builds in his fields during the rainy season; when the crop is harvested, he will return to the house of his fathers.

The relatively rapid and easy adaptation to the new natural setting and the supernatural forces which govern it is probably due both to the lack of European interference in this aspect of the colonists' lives and to the traditional permissiveness of West African religions. On the other hand, the greatest obstacle to adjustment seems to be just that aspect of the changed situation which was designed to facilitate it: the reconstruction and artificial maintenance of a social structure which cannot be efficiently integrated with the new economic organization. This structure has been maintained with such rigidity that it actually impedes Mossi efforts to reinterpret their institutions in terms of their new situation.

The Mossi who have returned from the Niger project have had little effect on their kinsmen in the Yatenga. Islamized colonists are often [561]

5: Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1959
FA28 Mossi FA28

177 too young to be listened to seriously by their elders. If they are returning
as senior members of their lineages, and since their power and prestige
182 are dependent on the maintenance of the socio-religious status quo, they
561 are unlikely to be innovators. For these same reasons the few changes in the social organization which have occurred at the Niger project have had little effect on the social environment of the Yatenga.

177 Most of the agricultural techniques acquired in the Sudan are useless in the Yatenga because of the absence of irrigation. Even were this not
241 so, the rationale of the modern agricultural methods employed at the Niger project is not explained to the settlers; they are required to follow the instructions of the European agronomists or be penalized. As a result, the improved agricultural techniques of the Europeans are regarded as just another of the white man's incomprehensible ways and are quickly forgotten.

177 The response of the Mossi to resettlement at the Niger Irrigation Project shows that in a situation of rapid cultural change, retentions or
182 changes on the superficial level of form are misleading; nor is a brief statement of the functional interrelationship between institutions sufficient. The final reality of an institution lies in its meaning for the members of the society in which it exists, and its final evaluation must be based on its capacity to fulfil the changing needs of individuals. This concept is essential to an understanding of the colonists' dissatisfaction with the effort of the Niger project administration to reproduce artificially a static model of their traditional social structure. This can also be seen in their reaction to a changed supernatural order; an analysis which failed to descend beneath the level of form would miss the significant fact that their psychological response to religion and the basic premises of their theology have remained unaffected by an "Islamization" which amounts to little more than adopting certain new propitiatory usages.

Apparently not understanding the interrelationship of cultural institutions and the sanctions which give them meaning, the administration of the Niger Irrigation Project sought to modify the Mossi organization of economic activity without referring to the traditional values to which it is vitally related. Seeming to regard the indigenous culture as little more than a compendium of savage rites upon which superior European usages need only be imposed in order to prevail, such an approach reveals a failure to comprehend both the complexity and the tenacity of the Mossi cultural heritage.

6: Tauxier G-4,5 (ca. 1908) 1912 FA28 Mossi FA28

ODD

The Black Populations of the Sudan
Mossi and Gourounsi Country
(Le Noir du Soudan
Pays Mossi et Gourounsi)

by Louis Tauxier

Paris, 1912
Émile Larose

Translated from the French by Ariane Brunel

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[Title page]

/451/ Book Four

Black Warriors and Conquerors

Chapter I

The Mossi -- Occupations

101 The Mossi are settled between the twelfth and fourteenth de-
131 grees of north latitude, and between the second and fifth degrees of west longitude. To the south, they extend slightly beyond the twelfth degree of latitude. They are indeed to be found in Saraboutenga, Rakaye, Béré, and Tenkodogo, but this does not bring them too far south of the twelfth degree. To the north, on the other hand, they do not quite reach the fourteenth degree.

161 The Mossi form a rather large group which occupies, in the center of the area, the circle /an administrative division/ of
563 Ouagadougou; to the northwest, the circle of Ouahigouya; to the southeast, the residency /administrative center/ of Tenkodogo; and to the east of the latter, the circle of Fada N'Gourma. Of course, the Mossi do not make up the total population of these four districts. In the Ouahigouya circle, there are the Habé /Habe/ and Houmbébé /Humbe/ to the northwest, and the Samoro /Samo/ to the south. In the Ouagadougou circle, which may be regarded as the center of Mossi territory, there are the Kipirsi to the east. In the Tenkodogo residency there are the Boussansé /Busansi/ to the south and in the circle of Fada N'Gourma the Gourmantché or Gourmanké /Gurma/ to the east. The Mossi, however, make up
161 the /452/ greater part of the total population in all four areas. In the circle of Ouagadougou, they number 750,000, in the residency of Tenkodogo, 122,000, in the residency of Leo, 1,000. This adds up to 873,000 for the circle of Ouagadougou as a whole. Assuming that there are 200,000 Mossi in the circles of Ouahigouya and Fada N'Gourma (a very approximate figure), a total of 1,073,000 Mossi is obtained. This makes them by far the most numerous group in all of French West Africa. The whole of our Dahomey, for example,

161 has but 655,000 inhabitants, while our French Guinea has 1,400,000, the Yolof /Wolof/ group of the Senegal numbers only 400,000, etc.

144 At present the Mossi are a completely homogeneous group in terms of custom and language, but this homogeneity is a mere end result. The Mossi population of today derives from the fusion of a conquering group (the Mossi proper) with a conquered group that was probably related closely to the Habé, Kipirsi, Gourounsi /Grunshi/, Boussansé, etc.

173 Lieutenant Marc, who lived for many years among the Mossi and who published a book /Le pays Mossi (Mossi Country)/ on the region in 1909, which I have already mentioned /in section not translated/, has the following to say on the subject:

"Local traditions claim that the Mossi come from far to the east. A long time ago, they occupied a territory located beyond the Niger, whose capital was called Aliaman. It is said that this land is now occupied by a Songhay /Songhai/ population. Then the Mossi came and occupied Dagomba /Tamale/. They defeated the inhabitants of that land, and the chief of the Mossi settled in Gambaga. The daughter of the king of Gambaga, Ouldiraogo ("male horse" in Mossi), had an affair in the bush with a Dagomba elephant hunter called Samba. She became pregnant, and as her father wanted to have her put to death, she took refuge in Tenkodogo. There she married the king of the land, a Boussangçé named Zoungourouma, who waged war on his father-in-law and conquered the entire region from Gambaga to Koupéla. Zoungourouma had three sons, Séré, Oubri, and Kouda. The first became naba of Boussouma. The second, Naba Oubri, conquered the region of Ouagadougou, built his capital there, and seized the Yatenga territory. Naba Oubri is regarded by the /453/ Mossi as the first Moro Naba and the founder of the present dynasty. He was succeeded by his brother Couda, and then by his son Nigamenda. The Mossi trace back to Naba Oubri the present organization of Mossi country and attribute to him the division of the land into fiefs governed by his brothers and relatives. At present members of the royal families of Ouagadougou, Boussouma, Tenkodogo, Fada N'Gourma, and Gambaga are regarded as direct descendants of Naba Oubri and his brothers.

173 "The Mossi say that at the time of their arrival the land was occupied by savages who went naked and bore tattooings on their bellies. Those natives were named Suida. The Mossi claim that they chased the Habé into the mountains of Bandiagara and that the Habé, Kipirsi, and Boussangçé are the survivors of this autochtonous Suida group . . . .

"The traditions of the primitive groups driven off by the invaders agree rather closely with Mossi traditions. . . .

174 "In view of these traditions, it seems to us that the Mossi, coming from far to the east, occupied those lands which are now Mampoursi /Mamprusi/ and Dagomba territories, with Gambaga as their capital, and then, from Gambaga, set out for the northwest and came to settle in the vast plains of the White Volta basin, where they still live. At the time of their arrival, the present Mossi country was inhabited by tribes which are now represented by the Boussangçé, the Gourounsi, and the Habé.

"It is probable that the Mossi owed part of their success to their cavalry. We believe that the Mossi were responsible for introducing the types of horses found at the present day in the Volta basin. Even today, all the Mossi love horses and are proud to own them, and no naba would deign to appear in public except on horseback. The Gourounsi, on the other hand, care little for horses. . . .

"Only part of the autochtonous inhabitants took refuge in the mountains or beyond the Red Volta. The remaining group was conquered and incorporated into the Mossi group, and adopted the Mossi language and customs /454/. This autochtonous population did not vanish without traces. In our opinion, it is to be credited with the religious organization of the Mossi." (Pages 130 to 134.)

173 Moulins, on the other hand, an official in charge of native affairs who lived among the Mossi from 1907 to 1909 and who wrote the Monographie /Monograph/ of the Ouagadougou circle in 1909, tells the story as follows:

"Tradition has it that some thirty-five generations ago, the king of Dagomba who lived in Gambakha had a daughter named Poko whom he allowed to grow in years and in beauty without attempting to find her a husband. This made the young girl so angry that she did not hesitate to run away from her paternal home on a horse she had found.

[These passages are quoted from "Le Pays Mossi" of Lt. Mart, see p 2 — Analyst.]

173 "She reached the area of present-day Yanga (Tenkodogo district), which was then occupied by a sparse group of Boussansé, and fell in love with an elephant hunter named Riare, by whom she had a son called Ouidiraogo (possibly in memory of the house on which Poko had fled Gambakha, for ouidiraogo means "male horse").

"When Ouidiraogo was about fifteen years old, Poko sent a messenger to Gambakha with the mission of telling the king of the Dagomba, "You did not want to give me in marriage, but God gave me a son whom I beg you to help." Then she sent Ouidiraogo to his grandfather, and the latter welcomed him and presented him with four horses and fifty head of cattle.

"At that time, the kingdom of the Dagomba was overpopulated. When Ouidiraogo returned to the Tenkodogo area, therefore, a large number of Dagomba threw in their lot with him and followed him. With this group, he founded a village which he named Tankourou on a site the Boussansé had abandoned when they saw him coming. This is present-day Tenkodogo.

"From that time onward, Ouidiraogo's power grew with the endless stream of Dagomba who came and gathered under his rule. The neighboring populations, on the other hand, were quite sparse and highly divided, and he was able to impose his authority upon them.

/455/ "Meanwhile, Ouidirago had married and given birth to numerous sons. When his boys grew up, he installed them as chiefs in the neighboring areas, especially in Fada N'Gourma, forcing his will by strength of arms upon those who were unwilling to submit.

"The area forming the present-day district of Ouagadougou was occupied at the time by Nymsi /Nioniosse/ and Gourounsi who lived side by side in a state of complete anarchy. The various villages acknowledged to a greater or lesser extent the authority of their chief, but although they were sometimes federated into cantons of a sort, they did not submit to any central power. As a result, incessant warfare and pillage prevailed among the villages.

"The chief of a group of Nymsi or Nioniossé which consisted of seven villages, the approximate equivalent of the present canton of Oubrytenga, dispatched a delegation to Ouidiraogo offering him one of his daughters in marriage. Ouidiraogo accepted the offer and

173 gave the girl to his son Zoungourana, who had by her a child named Oubry.

"A few years later a new delegation of Nioniossé came to greet Ouidiraogo and to ask him to take their country under his protection by placing it under the command of one of his sons. Ouidiraogo set out to the land of the Nioniossé to take possession of it, but in the course of this reconnaissance he died in the village of Saraboutenga. His son Zoungourana succeeded him and dispatched Oubry, who was about twelve years old at the time, to assume command of the Nioniossé. Oubry settled with his retinue in a village that took the name of Oubrytenga.

"During the initial years of his reign, on account of his youth, Oubry merely governed the region which had called upon him as its ruler. When he reached manhood, however, he prepared to extend the boundaries of his rule.

"A first detachment, sent to Gangado and Loumbila-Poko, procured the submission of the Boussouma and Béloussa regions. A second expedition, conducted to La, established Oubry's sovereignty in the Yako area.

/456/ "At that time, Zoungourana died. Oubry was his legitimate heir. Under the name of Moro Naba, he thus became chief of the Mossi and head of all branches of the reigning family. He left the administration of the Tenkodogo region to one of his brothers, but retained over it rights of suzerainty which subsisted until the time of the French occupation.

"Oubry's final expedition was aimed at Ouagadougou, where he waged a battle that lasted for five days. As a result, his authority was acknowledged as far as the Kipirsi. The Mossi empire was now established.

"Oubry died soon afterwards at Koudougou (Kipirsi) in the course of a journey through his new lands.

"When he died, not only had the conquest been carried out, but the political organization of the territory had already been firmly outlined. In order to facilitate the administration of his vast empire, Oubry had divided it into provinces, which were in turn subdivided into cantons, each of which contained a number of villages. A strong hierarchy prevailed among the various chiefs and converged on the Moro Naba, who thus centralized a considerable amount of power.

173 "This does not mean that nothing remained to be done by Oubry's successors. The land had been conquered, but remained to be explored and incorporated. The political organization had been outlined, but remained to be strengthened and completed.

"Up to the reign of Naba Kobra, fourteenth successor of Oubry, the Moro Nabas settled successively at various points of the empire instead of living generation after generation at Ouagadougou as they have done ever since. It would seem that in so doing they were attempting to strengthen their authority in regions where it was as yet insufficiently acknowledged.

"Whenever a territorial command became vacant, on the other hand, the Moro Nabas systematically filled it with a member of their own family. As a result, the whole land was soon in the hands of individuals who were united by bonds /457/ of kinship and who acknowledged the Moro Naba as the head of their family.

"Finally, thanks to marriages between Mossi, Nymsi, and Gourounsi individuals, the conquering element fused slowly with the initial population and eventually absorbed it almost completely.

174 "We have already seen that at the time of the Dagomba invasion the territory that makes up the present district of Tenkodogo was inhabited by a Boussansé population, while the area covered by the present district of Ouagadougou was settled by Gourounsi and Nymsi or Nioniossé.

"The mixture of Dagomba with Boussansé, Nymsi and Gourounsi resulted in the Mossi element, which soon became the most important part of the population. As conquerors, indeed, the Dagomba married several women each, and the prohibitions governing kin marriages led them to seek their wives among the Boussansé, Nioniossé, and Gourounsi families. This is how they soon came to absorb the Autochtonous element, or at least the element that was already established in the area when they arrived.

"A few Nymsi families among the Mossi have avoided all intermixture, but their continuous contact with the Mossi has led them to adopt the latter's language and customs, and from a political standpoint there is no difference between the two groups."

174 From the two accounts of Marc and Moulins, the following broad facts may be gathered:

1. The Mossi, coming from the northwest, conquered the Dagomba at a time which is difficult to determine exactly, but which must not have long antedated their conquest of Mossi territory.

[Passages quoted from the "Monograph of the Ouagadougou circle in 1909" by Moulins. — Analyst.]

174 2. They set out from Dagomba to conquer the present Mossi territory, beginning with Tenkodogo and ending with Ouahigouya, that is, proceeding from southeast to northwest. Moulins' account is preferable to Marc's, as concerns the details of this conquest, for the items are better documented, more credible, and more accurate (for example, /458/ Marc says that Ouidiraogo was the daughter of the king of Dagomba. Yet Ouidiraogo means "male horse" in Mossi, and consequently could not be a girl's name, while Poko is a female name common among the Mossi, and in fact simply means "woman." Likewise, if Marc's account were to be taken literally Zougourana would be a Boussansé, while he is a Mossi, father of Oubry the conqueror, etc.).

3. They found there an autochtonous group closely related to the Kipirsi, Gourounsi, Habé, and Boussansé of today, and they mixed with it. From previous study we are already familiar with the Gourounsi, who are communal cultivators. The Kipirsi, Boussansé, and Habé are of similar social type. It was the conquering Mossi who injected into the resulting mixture a superior, decommunalizing element.

Something must now be added to Moulins' account. He seems to believe that the Mossi reached their greatest conquering expansion in Oubry's reign, and that once they had seized the present Mossi territory, from the time of Oubry onward, they concerned themselves merely with the administration and consolidation of the lands they had conquered. This, however, does not agree with the account of the Tarikh-es-Soudan /History of the Sudan/ from which Marc borrowed so fruitfully.

The Tarikh tells us that the Mossi seized Timbuktu in the fourteenth century, and Marc, very logically it seems sets the seizure of Timbuktu around 1333 or 1334 (for a discussion of this topic see pages 136-138 of his book, mentioned above). In 1336 or 1337, however, Mali forces re-occupied Timbuktu. The Mossi, therefore, reached much farther north than Moulins indicates right from their first conquering thrust. The reign of Oubry, conqueror of Ouagadougou, may be set in the twelfth century A.D. His successors continued the drive toward the northwest. They occupied Ouahigouya, drove back the Habé just beyond the village, and pushed on toward the river /Niger/ to attack Timbuktu for the first time in 1333 or 1334. They seized the town, but Mansa Sliman,

174 chief of the Mali empire, recaptured it a few years later.

/459/ Mossi expansion toward the south may no doubt be set at that time. This expansion is a fact. We have already verified, in mentioning the Dagari, that an important Mossi group came and settled in Dagari country, fusing with the autochtonous inhabitants and forming the present-day Dagari who speak a language derived from Mossi and very closely related to it. The Dagari live in the extreme south of the Leo district and in the north of the British Gold Coast. In other words they are settled, as we already know, on the tenth and eleventh parallels.

Marc, incidentally, acknowledges the fact that the Mossi went as far as the ninth degree south. "In the east," he says on page 138, "they occupied all of Gourma /Gurma/ territory and, to the southeast of Dori, Yaga territory. To the south, in the valley of the White Volta, they pushed on to the ninth parallel, and in the valley of the Black Volta they reached the tenth parallel near Oua. These southern boundaries are roughly the extreme frontiers which may be reached on horseback, and since the Mossi, as we have already mentioned, are basically horsemen, it is probable that they did not attempt to come any closer to the great forest."

Marc sets the conquering Mossi thrust toward the east (Gourma, Yanga, etc.) and toward the south (Nounouma /Nunuma/, Sissala /Isala/, Dagari, Kassouna /Kasena/, Boura /Builsa/, etc.) in the fifteenth century. I myself would rather place it in the second half of the fourteenth century, for at the time when the Mossi seized Timbuktu (1333 or 1334) they were certainly propelled by a powerful drive of conquest and expansion. Yet we know that Mansa Sliman, sultan of the Mali empire, recaptured Timbuktu a few years later. This of course could not be done without pushing back the Mossi toward the southeast, toward Ouahigouya or Ouagadougou, but it is most likely that this temporary setback did not stem their expanding drive. Rather, it would be logical and consistent with the broad trends of history to assume that it was merely deflected in another direction. It was no doubt shortly after the recapture of Timbuktu by the Mandé, therefore, that the Mossi turned south and pushed on as conquerors to Oua. It is probable that the whole second half of the fourteenth century, as well as the first few years of the fifteenth, were given to this task.

174 /460/ This Mossi expansion toward the south served, incidentally, to swell the forces of the empire. It is hardly surprising, therefore, to find the Mossi heading north again at a later time. The Tarikh-es-Soudan relates that in 1432 and 1480 they led victorious expeditions against Timbuktu and successfully attacked the Macina.

In my opinion, it was at that time, toward the middle of the fifteenth century, that the Mossi empire reached its zenith. It ruled over the whole bend of the Niger, from Oua and Gambakha /sic/ in the south to near Timbuktu in the north, and roughly from the eastern to the western Niger /River/.

This position of dominance, however, was soon to be lost. In 1483, the Mossi invaded territories which the founder of the second Songhay empire had just won from the Mali empire. The forces of the latter advanced on the Mossi, inflicted upon them a bloody defeat, and pursued them right into their own territory.

In 1497, Askia El-Hadj-Mohammed unleashed the holy war against the Mossi. In 1549 and 1561, Askia Daoud made brilliant forays into Mossi territory. In short, the second Songhay empire took the upper hand, checked Mossi attacks to the north, and went so far as to pursue them into their own lands. It was at that time, no doubt, that the Mossi were forced to abandon permanently those territories located beyond Ouahigouya, both to the northwest and to the north. It was probably at that time also that the Mossi wave which had advanced toward the south drew back within its present boundaries, abandoning the Dagari and Gourounsi lands, etc., although not without leaving some traces.

In 1591, a Moroccan detachment brought the second Songhay empire to an end and captured Timbuktu. Now the Mossi had nothing to fear from the north, since their great enemy, the Songhay empire, had been destroyed, while the Moroccan empire of Timbuktu was soon to decay. Nevertheless, the Mossi had suffered too many reverses in the sixteenth century to recover from the blows inflicted by the Songhay, and they too were well on their way to decadence. It was at that time, no doubt, that the Ouahigouya Mossi broke all the bonds that tied them to Ouagadougou. /461/ The Gourma region probably did the same. In short, in the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Mossi empire shrank to the dimensions it possessed when we conquered it in 1896.

174 It must be said, however, as Marc points out, that the Mossi empire enjoyed a peaceful old age in the nineteenth century. The Toucouleur /Tukulor/ who conquered the Haoussa /Hausa/ territory with Othman /Usuman/ dan Fodio did not touch Mossi lands, and neither did El-Hadj-Omar who was detained in Macina territory by the Foulah /Fulani/. Toward the south, Samory went no farther than Boromo after conquering the Sudanese Ivory Coast. As for the forces of Djerma or Zaberma /Zerma/, they suffered a defeat in Kipirsi lands after their conquest of Gourounsi territories, that checked temporarily their march toward the north. They might later have nibbled at Mossi lands, but the French arrived precisely at that time. In short, the Mossi empire remained intact throughout the nineteenth century, though none the stronger for it, and crumbled at one blow in 1896 at the hand of a small French detachment.

173 174 We must add to this brief historical outline a list of the Moro Nabas who have succeeded one another since the time of Oubry. This list was borrowed from Moulins' Monographie du cercle de Ouagadougou /Monograph of the Ouagadougou Circle/.

1. Oubry, son of Zoungourana, grandson of Ouidiraogo, great-grandson of Poko. He lived at Oubrytenga.
2. Sorba, son of Oubry, who lived at Lougousi.
3. Nassekiemdé, brother of Sorba.
4. Nassébiri, brother of Sorba. He lived at La.
5. Ningnom, brother of the preceding.
6. Koundoumié, son of the preceding. He lived at Tiou.
7. Kouda, son of the preceding. He lived at Saponé.
8. Dawoéma, son of the preceding. He lived at Loumbila.
9. Zettembousma, brother of the preceding.
10. Nandieffo, son of the preceding. He lived at Ouagadougou.

If the reign of Naba Oubry is set around 1175 A.D., a period of 721 years is obtained up to the time of Bokary Koutou, thirtieth Moro Naba, who ruled in 1896. This yields an average reign of 24 years for each Moro Naba. If these figures are applied to the first ten Moro Nabas, it means that Kida would have reigned from 1463 /462/ to 1487. He would have been the one to invade the second Songhay empire in 1483 and to be driven back by Sonni-Ali.

173 11. Nattia, son of the preceding. He lived at Dazouli.
174 12. Namoëro, son of the preceding.
13. Kida, brother of Nattia. He lived at Ouagadougou.
14. Kimba, brother of the preceding. He lived at the same place.
15. Kobra, son of the preceding. He lived at Uougandé.
16. Sana, son of the preceding. He lived at Ouagadougou, where all his successors resided up to the present day.
17. Guiliga, son of the preceding.
18. Oubia, brother of the preceding.
19. Mottaba, son of the preceding.
20. Ouarga, brother of the preceding.
21. Zombéré, son of the preceding.
22. Kom, son of the preceding.
23. Sagha, son of the preceding.
24. Koulougou, son of the preceding.
25. Savadoro, son of the preceding.
26. Karfo, son of Savadoro.
27. Baoro, brother of Savadoro.
28. Koutou, son of the preceding.
29. Sanom, son of Koutou.
30. Boukary /sic/ Koutou, son of Koutou.
It was Bokary Koutou who was dethroned by Lt. Voulet in 1896.
31. Kouka (Siguiri) with whom Lt. Voulet signed a treaty whereby Mossi territory was placed under the suzerainty of France
32. Kom, the present Moro Naba (1910).

648 As may be seen, therefore, the Moro Nabas continue to exist among the Mossi. France even provides them with a pension, which first amounted to 25,000 francs a year and has since been lowered to 18,000 francs. They no longer hold any powers, however, and they do nothing whatever.

175 I have found in the Monographie of the circle some interesting data on expeditions led by the Moro Nabas into Kipirsi territory, which always resisted Mossi conquest. Naba Koundoumié, sixth successor of Oubry, /463/ first led a bloody expedition to Kayao and Tiou. Naba Dawoéma, eighth successor of Oubry, waged war to the north of Yako. Naba Ouarga, twentieth successor of Oubry, settled

175 at La and waged a series of battles in the Yako region. Naba Koutou, twenty-eighth successor of Oubry, fought in the Sourgou region (Kipirsi). And finally, during the last few years preceding our occupation, Naba Sanom and Bokary Koutou attacked the village of Lallé.

643 631 According to Moulins' data, it was Naba Koundoumié, sixth successor of Oubry, who set three of his sons as heads of the Boussouma, Béloussa and Yako provinces. He made them veritable monarchs who were united to the Moro Naba by a mere bond of vassalage, as was already the case with the chief of Tenkodogo.

Moulins adds, "As a rule, the chiefs of vassal provinces do not seem to have given much thought to enfranchisement from the Moro Naba's suzerainty, which actually did not weigh heavily upon them. We must come all the way to modern times, to Sanom's reign, to find signs of a struggle between the sovereign and the chiefs of Boussouma and Béloussa.

"On the other hand, the important vassals sometimes resorted to the Moro Naba's support to strengthen their authority within their own provinces. We have just mentioned the expeditions directed against Yako. Tradition has also preserved the memory of a series of battles waged by Dawoéma, eighth successor of Oubry, against the Boussansé of Garango who attempted to free themselves from Tenkodogo Naba."

174 Following this brief glance at the history of the Mossi empire, there remain, or should remain, three questions to investigate.

1. The remote origins of the Mossi proper, the conquering Mossi who came from Dagomba to Tenkodogo and then to Ouagadougou. At the present day, however, these origins are unknown. They might be uncovered by studying the Mossi language and comparing it systematically with the ancient or present tongues of north, east, and west Africa. I do not believe that such a piece of research is forthcoming, however. /464/ The Mossi might also be studied from the standpoint of physical anthropology, in which case two distinct studies ought to be made, one of the chiefs and nobles, another of the bulk of the Mossi population. The results would then be compared with those obtained for other populations of north and west Africa. Like the one previously mentioned, however, this would be a tremendous project which is not likely to be undertaken in the near future.

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In connection with this problem, I shall enumerate below the digits from one to ten in Mossi, in closely related languages (Dagomba, Nankana /Nankanse/), and in derivative tongues (Dagari, Boura, Gourma).

	Mossi	Dagomba	Nankana	Dagari	Boura	Gourma
Un . .	Yémeri	N'Dan	Yendé	Yen	Gni	Iendi
Deux .	Yibou	Niyi	Yi	Ayi	Niyé	Lié
Trois .	Tabo	Nta	Ntan	Ata	Ngata	Ita
Quatre	Nasé	Nahé	Anasé	Ana	Anasi	Ina
Cinq .	Nou	Anou	Anou	Anou	Nganou	Imou
Six . .	Ayobé	Ayobo	Ayobé	Ayobe	Vendenta	Ilouoba
Sept .	Yopoï	Ayopoué	Ayopoué	Ayopoué	Nantanasé	Illélé
Huit .	Ani	Ani	Ani	Ani	Nané (ou Nani)	Ni
Neuf .	Aoué	Aoué	Aoué	Voué	Noo	Ia
Dix . .	Piga	Pia	Pia	Pié	Pi	Piga

174 2. The second question is a priori less difficult to solve. It concerns the time when the Yarsé or Ouangarbé settled in Mossi territory.

Marc and Moulins do not agree on this score.

Speaking of Mossi territory, Marc says (op. cit., p. 142), "It was most probably its reputation as a peaceful land that lured the Mandé-Dioula /Diula/ or present-day Yarsé about the middle of the eighteenth century. According to the native traditions summarized by Binger, some Mandé-Dioula who were established in Ségou and who had taken a stand against N'Golo, victor over Sogoné, fled in fear of retaliation after the death of Sogoné in 1754 and came to settle among the Mossi. N'Golo attempted to pursue them, and twice came and attacked the Mossi. Both expeditions failed, and N'Golo died in the course of the second one in 1787."

/465/ According to Marc, the Yarsé would thus be Mandé-Dyoula /sic/ from Ségou who settled in Mossi territory in the eighteenth century. Moulins has quite a different idea.

174 "The Yarsé or Ouangarbé," he says in the Monographie of the Ouagadougou circle, "entered the territory during the reign of Koundoumié, sixth Moro Naba.

"At that time, as tradition has it, seven Mandé traders named respectively Bolle, Rambéré, Séré, Pallom, Morebanom, Parirabo, and Mari Konda, were traveling through Mossi territory with their merchandise. They called upon the Moro Naba, and the latter, impressed by their intelligence, conceived the thought of keeping those superior individuals in his own employ. He plied them with gifts, offered them wives, and installed them nearby in a quarter that was given the name of Zoroné. According to this account, the descendants of these men gave rise to the various Yarsé communities which are found today throughout the circle."

According to Moulins, therefore, the Yarsé would have entered Mossi territory toward the end of the thirteenth century or the beginning of the fourteenth, since Naba Koundoumié's time may be set around 1300. I believe that this opinion is more accurate than Marc's, in view of the fact that the Yarsé no longer know the Mandé language and speak only Mossi. It would be surprising if these Mandé had come to forget their mother tongue within a century and a half, although this might occur in five centuries. Nevertheless, one detail disturbs me in the Moulins version: the seven Mandé traders bear Mossi names, Bolle, Rambéré, Pallom, etc., instead of Mandé names as would be natural. No matter what the truth may be, it is more probable that the Yarsé settled in Mossi territory during the thirteenth or fourteenth century A.D. than in the eighteenth century.

174 3. The same problem of a date of settlement applies to the
563 Foulbé /Fulani/, and there again Marc and Moulins are in complete disagreement.

"The Peul probably came to Mossi territory in the footsteps of the Mandé-Dioula," says Marc, page 143. Moulins has a different opinion. /466/ "The Peuhl, he says, "must have settled in the Mossi area at a very remote time. It even seems that they had long been there at the time of the Dagomba invasion." This would take us beyond the twelfth century A.D. In any case, it is probable that the Foulbé were established in Mossi territory in small groups, as they are still today, well before the eighteenth century.

144 This is all we shall say by way of introduction to our study of Mossi customs. The main point to be remembered is that the bulk of the present Mossi population is not of "pure" origin, but results from a mixture between the Mossi conquerors and antecedent primitive groups.

000 Let us now turn our attention to work, and first of all to cultivation. We shall study the various types of labor in greater detail than we did so far in relation to the populations previously studied, and the reader will get a better idea of the work performed by the Blacks in these regions.

243 Millet is the most important item of cultivation among the Mossi, who call it ki. They cultivate various kinds of millet, and we shall take them up one by one.

First of all, the ordinary small millet, which is most widely cultivated. It is the Bambara sanio or Mossi kasui. It requires good black soil with low sand content.

243 242 Let us make the general statement that the Mossi, whenever they can, change plots every four years. That is, they clear a new field or take over an old one which has lain fallow. If they have little land, they cultivate the same plot indefinitely. In other words, they may till the same field for some twenty years.

243 When a new plot is cleared, the clearing is done in March or April. The head of the soukala goes to work with all his men. Daba /hoe/ and hatchets are used to cut down the trees. The women come along, but only to serve drink to the men, because they do not take part in the clearing.

[461 512] The workers go into the bush in the morning and remain there all day. They rest around the middle of the day (from noon to /467/ two or three o'clock), and then take up their work again until sundown. The women return home first to prepare dinner, and then the men follow. After the clearing proper has been completed, all that was torn up from the ground is gathered in a heap and set afire. The ashes are left on the soil to fertilize it. It should be noted that the roots of the trees are not removed. The trees, in fact, are merely cut about one meter from the ground, so that the field is dotted with stumps. Sometimes, instead of cutting down a tree, a small fire of branches and dry leaves is lit at its base and the

243 tree set to fire. It burns slowly, and only a slight effort is needed to cut it or topple it down.

When plots are being cleared, useful trees such as karité /shea
[423] butter/ or néré /locust bean/ are spared. They remain in the field and revert to the man who is doing the clearing, the owner of the plot.

One awaits the rains before sowing, but one does not sow when the first rains fall in April. It is only in May, when the rains are frequent and the storms heavy, that the sowing is done.

A previously cultivated field is merely cleaned before sowing. While only men, as we have already seen, may clear a new plot, Mossi women as well as men share in the cleaning of a field that was cultivated on preceding years, and in the sowing as well.

The sowing is done as follows: The koutiaga (a kind of daba) is held in the left hand, while a small gourd containing millet is held in the right hand. The man or woman, squatting, makes a hole with the koutiaga with the left hand, and drops the millet into the hole with the right hand. Then some earth is replaced with the left hand.

Now the millet is allowed to grow. When it has emerged from the ground and shot about 20 centimeters, people go with the ouaka (another kind of daba) to remove the weeds growing among the millet shoots. In some areas everyone cleans up, men, women, and children. In other areas, as a rule, it is the men who carry out this task, /468/ but when they are too few the women help out. The weeding is done every morning.

Among the Mossi fields are cleaned three times between sowing and harvesting. We have already seen that the Gourounsi only do this twice.

When the millet has grown tall and the birds might peck at it, the women and children are sent to the fields to frighten the birds away.

The small millet is harvested around mid-November. When it
243 is ripe, the stalks, 2 or 3 meters high, are cut down. They are laid
343 upon the ground, and the heads are cut with a knife. The heads might be likened to the tip of those water reeds which bear a kind of brown velvety stem, some 30 centimeters long, rounded and about the thickness of two fingers. Once the heads have been cut off, they

243
343 are tied, placed in baskets, and carried to special huts. These are small straw huts built on stakes, that is, raised on thick pieces of wood, which stand in a long curved line by the fields. About twenty such huts often stand side by side. Both men and women share in the harvesting.

243 Whenever the millet is to be eaten, the heads are taken from these straw huts and threshed with a stick to set the grain loose. This threshing is done by the men.

Aside from the ordinary small millet, it is the large red millet that is grown most extensively, as a rule, among the Mossi. They [194] call it kaziéra or kaziéga (we know that the r and g are interchangeable in Mossi; people will say, for example, either nora or noga to mean "chicken") and the Bambara call it niooulé. The large red millet is the kind used chiefly for dolo.

This is the millet that is planted before any other, as soon as the first rains begin to fall. The ouaka is used to remove the weeds which have grown in the fields, then the weeds are burned and the large red millet is sowed at the time of the first storms (April). It is sowed in the same fashion as the small millet, by holding the koutiaga in one hand and the small gourd containing grain in the other.

When the millet has come out of the ground, a fortnight /469/ is allowed to elapse and then the weeds are cleared with the ouaka. When the millet is grown, the women and children are sent out to protect it against birds. The millet is ripe around September 1.

The bulk of the harvesting work is done by the men. The stalks, which are usually 3 meters high and which may even reach 4 are cut down at the base. Once they have been dug out and laid down, the heads, which are thick and tuftlike with red flowers, are cut with a knife and carried to the soukala. The women do the carrying as they do for other kinds of millet. The large red millet is threshed only as it is needed. The threshing is done by the men with a stick.

Let us note that when a new piece of land is cleared, the large red millet is sown first to find out if the soil is good. It is only in the following year, when this has been ascertained, that the small millet is sown.

The red millet is also cultivated around the soukala, like maize.
[273] As a rule the Mossi use the large red millet only to make dolo
231 (dama in Mossi). They may also give it to horses, but some horses
262

231 will not take it. The Mossi only eat it themselves if there is no
262 other kind of millet available, or in times of famine. In any case,
[751] the red millet has a constipating effect, and when people suffer from colic they are given a to /mush/ of red millet to check the attack.

243 The Mossi also grow the ordinary large white millet, which is the kind grown most extensively, aside from sanio, throughout the Sudan. The Mossi call it baninga, the Bambara kéningué or guessékélé. It is called kéningué around Ségou, and guessékélé around Nioro. The Nounouma call it nienso, and so do the Kassonfra /Awuna/. The Kassonboura /Kasena/ call it béninga, that is to say, they have adopted the Mossi word and slightly altered it. (We saw, in fact, that some Kassouna-Boura, at least those of Po and Tiahané, are Kassouna-Mossi rather than Kassouna-Boura.)

Europeans often give this kind of millet the name of "pearly millet" /mil nacré/ or "horse millet," because it is tender and easy to crush.

/470/ This millet is not grown by every Mossi. Those who do grow the large white millet eat it themselves. They also give it to
[231] their horses. It is cultivated exactly in the same fashion as the small millet, that is to say, it is sown and harvested at the same time.

The Mossi also grow the kipéléro or kipélégo (from ki, "millet," and péléro or pélégo, "white"). This is the yaro or yara of the Gourounsi, and probably the n'guéné or n'kendé of the Bambara and Malinké, a kind of millet intermediate between the small and large white varieties. Actually, one of my informants told me that the kipéléro is sown along with the ordinary small millet, that no distinction is made between the two, and that they are used for the same purposes, while another informant maintained that it is a kind of large white millet.

The Mossi also grow some gadiaba. This is a kind of large millet which is either white or red. The Bambara call it gadiabadié when it is white, hamadiboubou when it is red. The Mossi refer to the gadiabadié as noira. They cultivate it only in Boussouma province. As for hamadiboubou, it is not to be found among the Mossi.

As far as the early millet /mil précoce/ is concerned, the Mossi are familiar with it and call it nado, but they do not cultivate it. This is the souna of the Bambara, the tiara of the Nounouma and

243 Kassouna. We have already seen that the Kassonboura once grew it extensively. The Boussansé also cultivate it.

On the other hand, the Mossi grow a little sweet millet (or tiokandé). They call it mobinoro. This is the sampa of the Bambara, the gamba of the Kassonboura. The Mossi, like the Kassonboura and Bambara, sow this millet in small quantities in the maize fields that surround the soukala. The Nounouma, Kassonfra, and Sissala do not cultivate it.

222 Aside from cultivated millet, the Mossi are familiar with the bakat or wild millet, also called "bird's millet." They call it nadanga. This is the bouaboua of the Bambara, the mintoro of the Kassouna. Among the Mossi, in times of famine, the women go and cut it down, lay it in the sun to dry and crush it, for it contains a small edible grain. There is little to be found in Gourounga territory, although some of it does grow by the watercourses /marigots/ and could be utilized in times of famine.

243 /471/ Aside from millet, the food crop most extensively cultivated by the Mossi is maize, which they call kamana. Maize is grown around the soukala itself rather than in the bush. It is sown at the beginning of the rainy season. First the soil is turned up with the ouaka, and then holes are made with a koutiaga or hatchet. Two or three grains of maize are placed in each hole, and then covered up. Once this has been done the millet is allowed to grow, and when the stalk has come out of the ground the weeds are cleared with the ouaka. After this it takes two months and ten days for the maize to ripen. It is harvested in August, first among the grains. The stalks are dug out or cut down with a daba, or else they are simply broken by hand.

Once the stalks have been laid down, the ears are cut off. They are left to dry in the sun on the roofs, where they are suspended in [251] clusters. Then they are stored in the grain hut, from which they are removed when the kernels are to be made into flour.

252 It often happens that instead of being left to dry, the ears of maize are eaten green, roasted on the embers.

After the maize has been stored and allowed to dry, the women pound the kernels into flour. This flour is placed in boiling water to make soft cakes which are eaten immediately.

243 Maize, let us point out, is one of those crops that are harvested early. The Mossi, and as we know all black populations of West

243 Africa as well, have two harvests, one in August and the other in November-December. The latter is by far the more important, but in order to prevent famine while waiting for it, these peoples also have early, quick-growing crops that yield from the second half of July, in August primarily, up to the middle of September. Among these crops, the most important may well be the maize sown in April and harvested in August, but there are others, such as the early millet mentioned above and also the large red millet. The most important crops (small millet, large white millet), on the other hand, are sown in May or earlier, or sometimes not until July, and harvested in November and December.

/472/ The Mossi also grow a little rice (mol in Mossi). The kind they cultivate is water rice /riz d'eau/. It is sown along watercourses and ponds. This is the most difficult crop to cultivate, according to the old men.

At the present day poor people grow a little rice. In former [554] times they did not grow it at all, and chiefs alone cultivated it. Even now, it is largely grown by chiefs.

Rice is sown in May after millet. The field is worked with a special daba, the souga, which is used to turn up the soil. Little holes are made with a koutiaga, and from seven to ten grains of rice are placed in each hole and covered with a little soil. Then, the rice is left to grow. It comes out of the ground at the end of seventeen days. During the rainy season, the waters of the watercourse or pond cover the small rice field. Weeds are removed, inside the water, with the ouaka. The harvesting is done during the second half of October, before the small millet and large white millet are gathered. The rice stalks are cut down with a kind of scythe and spread upon the ground to dry in the sun. Then, both men and women thresh it with sticks. Sometimes the stalks are taken into the soukala instead, left to dry for three days in the courtyard, and then threshed. The straw is discarded. When there is only a little rice, it is kept in [351] a canari. When there is a lot, it is stored in baskets which in turn are placed in little straw huts raised on stakes.

262 The Mossi, who in short grow very little rice, claim that they 252 prefer millet to rice. Millet, they say, provides more energy. Rice is eaten boiled, with meat if possible, and the whole thing is served with peanut or gombo /Tr. okra/ sauce.

244 The Mossi grow considerable quantities of peanuts (nangouri in Mossi, n'tiga in Bambara, gherté in Peuhl and Toucouleur).

No earth mounds are made for the cultivation of peanuts among the Mossi. The peanuts are sown five or six days after the millet. Holes are made with a koutiaga, one or two peanuts are placed in each hole and then covered up. When the shoots appear, the weeds are removed with the ouaka. When the peanuts are ripe (end of October), the pods are dug up with the ouaka. /473/ They are left
251 to dry in the sun for three or four days, and then they are taken to the village in baskets. Again the peanuts are left to dry on the clay roofs of the huts, and then placed in the little straw huts already mentioned from which they are removed only to be eaten. The
252 peanuts are roasted. They are also used, although not very often, to prepare sauces eaten with millet.

231 The greens of the plant do not go to waste. They are gathered and given to horses, and make excellent fodder for them.

In addition to peanuts, the Mossi grow considerable quantities
244 of underground peas. Not everyone grows them, however. The underground peas are sown after all the other grains and tubercles.

The grass is cut on the spot where the peas are to be grown, but it is left there to serve as fertilizer. Then, holes are made into the ground with the koutiaga, and the sowing is done. When the plant begins to shoot, the weeds are pulled out by hand rather than with the ouaka, since the latter would remove everything. The underground peas ripen in three months. They are gathered at the same time as the peanuts, that is to say, in October. The peas are dug
251 out of the soil with the ouaka. They are cleaned, left to dry, placed
252 in baskets, and carried to the little straw huts. They are eaten boiled.

244 The Mossi also grow sesame, which they call sili. They cultivate it in small bush plots. Sesame is sown at the height of the winter season, three months after the first rains. The soil is scraped with the ouaka, and the grains carried in a little gourd are spread upon the ground. The sesame emerges from the ground ten days later. Men, women, and children pull out the weeds by hand. The harvesting is done when the stalks have reached 1.50 meters in height (immediately following the harvest of the small millet). The stalks are severed at mid-height with a knife and then laid out on

244 mats in the sun to dry. Finally, the sesame seeds are beaten loose with a piece of wood.

252 The Mossi ordinarily use these seeds in the sauce. The women crush them on a stone, boil them, and add salt and soumbara /néré seeds/. This sauce is eaten with millet, /474/ maize, etc. Sometimes the fresh seeds are also eaten after roasting on the fire.

244 The Mossi also grow some beans (benna or binga in Mossi, soso in Mandé, niébé in Peuhl). They do not cultivate them in separate plots, but sow them in the millet fields along with the millet. The stalks creep along the ground. The beans are ripe before the millet.

It is the women and children, equipped with baskets, who do the harvesting (November). Then the pods are laid out on the ground and threshed by the men with sticks. The beans are picked
[252] and placed in the straw huts. To eat them, one simply boils them and adds salt.

The Mossi grow some sweet potatoes (nanioua in Mossi, nanioura
[184] in Nounouma). The Mossi who live around Ouagadougou do not grow any. Those who live around Kombisiguiri grow some. A few Tenkodogo Mossi also cultivate them. The potatoes are planted along the watercourses around July 15, that is to say, at the height of the rainy season. Small earth mounds are built, with holes at the top. Potato slices are placed in these holes and covered with earth. When the sowing is done, the work is over. No attempt is made to pull out the weeds. The harvesting is done at the end of three months, consequently around October 15. The potatoes are dug out
[252] with the ouaka, carried to the huts, and eaten boiled in water.

The Mossi grow some ozonifie /a potato-like plant/ (pèsa in Mossi, kayya in Nounouma and Kassouna, fabirama in Mandé) around the soukala or in the bush. They build small earth mounds with the ouaka, then make holes in these mounds with the koutiaga, and place one tubercle in each hole. They cover up the holes and spread the ground with fertilizer consisting of straw and grass, refuse taken from the soukala or gathered around it. The harvesting is done in November. At that time, the ozonifie are dug out with the ouaka. They are placed in a canari pending their consumption. They are
[252] eaten boiled.

2444 All Mossi grow ozonifie. They like it, but do not cultivate it in large quantities. It has to be planted in damp places. Some people plant it in the bush, others in the villages, but always near a spot where there is water.

[184] /475/ The Mossi hardly grow any yams (nioua or niouya in Mossi, pia in Nounouma, kou in Mandé). The southern Mossi alone cultivate it, and very little at that, in Kombisiguiri for example.

Here yams are sown in November along watercourses. Earth mounds 50 centimeters high and correspondingly wide are built with the ouaka. Then holes are made with a stick at the top of these little pyramids. Yam slices are cut, buried in these holes, and covered with earth. Then a prop is driven into the ground. The stem of the yam plant emerges from the ground and climbs along the prop. Seven months are required for the root, the yam itself, to reach its proper thickness and ripeness. During the month of April, therefore, a certain number of yams are dug out of the ground with the ouaka. The greatest number are left there, however, the soil is replaced, and the major harvest, the total harvest, is only taken in November, that is to say, a year after sowing.

[252] To eat yams, one cuts them into pieces and boils them in water.

[177] As for manioc (boumboro in Nounouma), it was unknown to the Mossi until the arrival of the French. The latter brought a few stalks, but the natives do not cultivate it as yet.

As far as diabéré is concerned (kousoubadé in Mossi, diabéré in Mandé), the Mossi grow a little of it. It is sown at the time of the first rains in the fields of maize or large red millet, that is to say, around the soukala. Holes are made with the koutiaga, and small tubercles are placed within them. The plant is harvested one month after maize, that is, in September.

In Mossi territory, it is cultivated chiefly by the Yarsé, for example those of Rakaye and Saraboutenga.

The Mossi themselves cultivate it little, and the same applies to the Bambara. The Gourounsi and Boussansé do not grow it at all.

[252] The diabéré is cooked in water, peeled, and eaten as it is.

According to Guebhardt (Au Gouta-Djallon /In the Fouta Djallon/, 1910), the diabéré (the Poullo /Fulani/ name) is really taro (Caladium antiquorum or esculentum).

244 /476/ André Rançon (Dans la Haute-Gambie /In the Upper
137 Gambia/ 1895) describes it in detail as follows:

"The Bambara and Sarracolé /Soninke/ call it diabéré, the Malinké diabéro, and the Peuhl oussoudié. It is a magnificent aroid of the Arum genus. It grows chiefly in damp places sheltered from the sun, and it favors soil which is rich in humus. This is why the lougan /frameworks/ for diabéré are always located in the shade of large trees where the ground is cooler, sheltered from the sun, and richer in humus because of the mold formed by the rotting leaves. It is a hardy plant, and its underground stem consists of a tubercle. The leaves have long petioles and may be as high as 2 meters. They are strongly ensheathed at the base, peltate, and the broad part of the leaf is sometimes of enormous size. They exhibit at the lower edge a rather deep indentation which runs up to a few centimeters from the spot where the stem radiates into three main nerves. These three are larger than the others and easy to recognize for they are quite obvious. From them radiate secondary nerves which also stand out strongly.

"These leaves are very thick. The three main nerves are never absent. The secondary nerves vary in number according to the age of the plant, and especially the size of the leaves. The secondary nerves radiate in turn into a large number of filaments which are quite easy to recognize and which crisscross the parenchyma of the leaf and reach the edges almost in a straight line. The upper face of the leaf is of a vivid dark green and somewhat velvety. Finally, the petioles are greenish brown at the base and a tender green at the top.

"The flowers are unisexual, clustered on a single spadix, with the females at the base and the males above, and without a perianth. They are surrounded by a spathe which is rather closed, rolled up like a horn, and of a slightly yellowish white. The fruit is a globular berry, unilocular, and containing from two to eight /477/ seeds. I dedicate this new plant to Professor Heckel and name it Arum heckeli.

"The root is a tubercle, about the thickness of a fist, blackish brown, and somewhat like a slightly elongated onion in shape. When the plant ripens, about twelve or fifteen turions grow on this tubercle, the largest of them the size of an egg at most. They make up the edible part, which is also used for reproduction. Their shape is the

244 same as that of the tubercle, to which they adhere strongly. Their
137 color is also the same. The flesh of these turions is white, highly aqueous, and compact. It recalls that of the potato, or rather that of the sweet potato. The odor is slightly noxious.

"The diabéré are sown in June and July. It is sufficient to
244 place the turions in a hole dug into the ground to a depth of 10 or 15 centimeters. The harvesting is done in December. Around the end of October or beginning of November, the inhabitants of the Sandougou (Upper Gambia) are in the habit of cutting the leaves to a height of about 10 centimeters from the ground, in order to make the turions grow bigger.

"The diabéré is not a vegetable to be scorned even by the deli-
252 cate palate of the Europeans. When boiled or fried in the pan, it makes a dish of pleasant taste. I recall eating it with pleasure in a mutton stew. The natives prefer it boiled, and in certain areas, for example the Diaka, Sandougou, and Tenda, they eat it in large quantities. In the latter region especially it is consumed intensively, and the natives of neighboring territories attribute the
[164] skin disease and numerous goiters of the Tenda inhabitants to their over-indulgence in this food." (Pages 83 to 85.)

246 The Mossi also cultivate karyanga or karnyanga. "This gramineous plant," says the Cahier des rapports /Production Report) of the Ouagadougou circle, "grows wild along watercourses, but the natives also cultivate it around the edges of their millet fields. The stalk, hairy and rough, reaches a /478/ height of 0.80 meter when full grown. It expands into a sheaf near the tip. The leaves, about 3 centimeters wide, are shaped like very elongated spearheads. When still green, they are severed about 20 centimeters from the ground. Then they are left to dry in the sun and stored for consumption during the dry season. The karyanga serves as fodder for livestock and horses. This plant is quite widespread in the eastern and southeastern parts of Mossi territory (Béloussa and Tenkodogo)."

As we can see, karyanga is a grass that grows in the bush along watercourses and that is cut down and fed to horses. Some horse owners cut it down and replant it in their maize field. In the

246 following year seeds fall to the ground and the grass grows back once more. It is cut down, but not at ground level, so that it will perpetuate itself.

The Gourounsi call it keulo. They merely cut it down in the bush, and do not replant it among the maize. It grows in sufficient quantities in the open bush of Gourounsi territory, which is more extensive than that of Mossi country, to preclude the need of replanting.

244 The Mossi cultivate gombo (mana in Mossi, pora in Nounouma and Kassouna, gouan in Mandé). Every Mossi grows some for the sauce.

They sow it during the damp season at the same time as the millet, in small separate plots. They turn up the soil a little with the ouaka, make holes with the koutiaga, put in gombo seeds, and cover up the holes. One allows the plant to grow, digs out the weeds with the ouaka, and then waits for two months. At that time the enormous gombo stalk, which is even higher and sturdier than maize, has grown out and borne its greenish, slightly elongated and ribbed pods. Then, the ripest pods are gathered and cut up for the sauce. The harvesting is done gradually, from September 15 until the end of December.

252 To prepare gombo, one cuts the pods into pieces and leaves them to dry. When some gombo is needed, these pieces are crushed /479/ and reduced to a sort of powder which is boiled in water. The fresh gombo pods may also be utilized. They are cut into pieces and boiled in the same fashion. Salt and soumbara are added. This makes a sort of paste, greenish and sticky, which is highly prized by the natives.

244 We stated above that the Mossi grow gombo in small isolated plots along the watercourses. This does happen, but often, like other Blacks, they merely sow a few stalks of gombo among their maize.

438 The gombo is sold in dried pieces at Mossi markets.

252 Let us add that gombo leaves, when tender, are also used in sauce.

244 The Mossi also grow sorrel.

They have two kinds, the dakissé sorrel and the dangono sorrel. These are Bambara names. In Mossi, dakissé is called bi and dangono is called ouéréda.

The Mossi plant bi around the millet fields at the same time as millet, at the beginning of the winter season. Holes are made with a koutiaga for the seeds, which are put in by hand and covered with earth. Then the plants are allowed to grow. After three months, the sorrel is ripe. The leaves are then removed to be used in the sauce, and the stalk is cut at mid-height to get the seeds, which are also used in the sauce.

[71] Like the Bambara, the Mossi sometimes plant both kinds of sorrel in the peanut and underground pea lougan, and sow them along with these plants when the first rains begin to fall. The sorrel is gathered eight days after the peanuts and underground peas.

252 The Mossi cook dakissé seeds in a canari full of water. Then they remove the jar from the fire and top it with another one that covers the mouth of the first jar completely. This is allowed to sit for four or five days, and then the dakissé seeds are removed and ground in a small mortar to make flour.

Then the ashes of burnt wood are placed with water in a perforated gourd that serves as a filter. /480/ The ashes are filtrated into a canari that stands underneath. They are then mixed with dakissé flour and transferred to a canari that is left covered for five or six days. When these are over, the mixture is cooked for the last time. It is placed in a gourd that is perforated and that sits on a canari full of water. The water is heated, and the vapor comes in through the small holes in the upper gourd and steams the dakissé for an hour. The paste thus obtained is dried in the sun for a whole day, and then placed in a canari where it is sought as the need arises.

Like the Bambara the Mossi sometimes take the dakissé seeds, mix them with millet grains, boil the whole thing, and then eat it.

As for the leaves, they are cooked by being placed in water and boiled with salt.

As far as dangono or ouéréda is concerned, the Mossi, like the Bambara, remove the bark. They allow this bark to cook in water, and add crushed peanuts and salt. The sauce thus obtained is called ziédo by the Mossi and na by the Bambara.

252 The ouéréda is also used as a substitute for tamarind fruit in the preparation of to sauce. The ouéréda bark is boiled, and millet flour is tossed into the water when the latter comes to a boil. Now the to need only be stirred and then transferred with huge wooden spoons to the gourd where it will be eaten.

Those who like ouéréda with meat, or who wish to cure a cold, boil the bark along with meat and eat it in this fashion.

As for ouéréda seeds, they are prepared exactly in the same manner as the bi seeds, and that is rather involved.

2444 We have stated that the Mossi sow bi and ouéréda along the edges of millet fields, or even cultivate it in small separate plots. Let us add that the latter are tended by the women. The soukala heads merely sow both kinds of sorrel along the edges of their millet fields. In any case, when the Mossi have just cleared a plot, they often sow it with beans, sesame, bi, and ouéréda in the first /481/ year. It is only in the following year that they sow it with millet.

The Mossi also grow tomatoes.

There are many kinds in their territory, as among the Bambara.

The tomato is called koumba in Mossi. The bitter tomato is called koumba-gara or koumgara. The red tomato is called koumba-migou or kommigou. The white tomato is called koumba-pelra or koumpelra. In Bambara, the bitter tomato is called n'koyo ninkouna, the red tomato or cherry-tomato is called n'koyo bilé, and the white tomato is called n'koyo dié.

Like the Bambara, the Mossi, both men and women, grow tomatoes in separate plots. They first sow the seeds in a small space, no larger than a handkerchief, which they fertilize with wood ashes and sheep or goat dung. At the end of thirty days, when the plant has reached a few centimeters in height, they take it out and plant it in its permanent spot, again near the soukala, which they fertilize in the same manner as before. The tomatoes are ripe two months after sowing. If they are poorly tended, they only reach maturity at the time of the maize harvest (August). The green tomatoes are [252] eaten as fruit. The ripe tomatoes are cooked and mashed in the sauce. When the maize is harvested, all remaining tomatoes are removed.

244 Some people, before they sow millet, lay out small plots of tomatoes in the fields reserved for millet, and water them morning and evening. They do this when the field is cleared just before sowing. Then they dig up the seedlings at the first rainfall and plant them elsewhere. Their tomatoes are ripe before the maize.

The three other kinds of tomatoes are cultivated in the same fashion.

The Mossi are familiar with the native eggplant. It is called boyo in Mossi, baulo in Nounouma, bio in Kassouna, boroma /482/ in Sissala. These eggplants are planted when the large red millet is sown. They are placed around the soukala, or in the bush near the watercourses. They are harvested in September at the same time as the large red millet.

The Mossi also cultivate pimentos (kiparé).

The seeds are sown near the soukala, without any preparatory work, at the beginning of the winter season. The weeds are removed after fifteen or twenty days. Two months after sowing, the young shoot produces offspring. The pimento may be gathered at that time. They are removed as the need arises and added to the sauce.

[438] The Mossi are fond of pimento. Those who grow it in large quantities sell the surplus at market.

249 415 As for gourds and calabashes, the Mossi have three kinds as listed below:

1. The ordinary calabash, which is very large and which is cut in two to make household calabashes. They call it vandé.

The Mossi plant it at the beginning of the winter season, in patches of good soil near the huts, or in similar spots in the bush. Holes are made in the ground with the koutiaga, in which seeds are placed and then covered up. The calabashes only ripen at the end of six or seven months, that is to say, when the winter season is over. Then they are cut in two, and the inner part is removed. This is how the household calabashes are fashioned.

2. The drinking calabash. This one has the natural shape of a swollen gourd with a neck widening toward the top. The Mossi call it binga. It is sown by the huts and made to climb upon the roofs.

249 It is gathered when the winter season is over. The upper tip is cut
415 horizontally to create an opening, and water is poured inside to rot the fibrous inner part. When this is accomplished, the calabash is filled with pebbles and shaken until the torn fibers are removed. Once this has been done, the binga is ready to use. When they go
[482] on a trip, the Mossi carry it suspended from the shoulder as a drinking gourd, like all Blacks of West Africa. /483/ They use a cork of green leaves to prevent the water from escaping.

3. The green gourds properly so called (kamboudou in Mossi) which are made to grow on the roofs. The Mossi do not eat them any more than they eat the two previous species. They cut them in two and fashion them into small household calabashes.

249 Calabashes are not cultivated as a food crop, therefore, but as a crop ranking with karnyanga, cotton, tobacco, hemp, indigo, etc.

244 The Mossi also grow a kind of large cucumber, yorolé. The Gourounsi call it gango and the Bambara dié.

At the beginning of the winter season, yorolé are planted around the soukala where the household refuse is discarded. Yorolé are planted by the women. Weeds, when they come out, are cleared with the ouaka. The yorolé are harvested immediately
[252] after the millet and stored in the huts. They are cooked in water and eaten as they are, without seasoning or salt.

As for niri (the Mossi word) or yergan (the Nounouma word), it is a small gourd the size of an orange, green or yellowish green, that grows in the fields along the ground. The yergan are gathered when they are ripe, placed in a hole in the ground where they are left to rot, and then washed. Then the seeds are removed and used
[252] in the sauce, or else they are eaten roasted and seasoned with salt. One does not eat the yergan themselves, therefore, but only their seeds.

The Mossi grow them in the south, at Nobéré and Rakaye. The yergan are sown at the same time as millet, around the soukala, in the fields of maize and large red millet. They are gathered during the first half of October.

439 As far as onions are concerned, the Mossi are familiar with
262 them and call them albasalé, but do not cultivate them. It is the Haoussa, on their way in from Bandiagara, who buy them from the Habé and bring them to the Mossi. The growers themselves sometimes come in large caravans and sell them at Ouagadougou.

248 /484/ We are now finished with the Mossi food crops. Let us proceed to other crops.

Cotton (lamdo or lango in Mossi) is a dry-season crop here rather than a rainy-season crop.

It is planted near the soukala, or else in the bush along the watercourses.

During the winter season, grass along watercourses is cut down and left lying there to fertilize the ground. Then cotton is planted at the end of the rainy season. Holes are made into the earth with the koutiaga, three or four cotton seeds are placed in each hole and then covered up. The cotton emerges from the ground at the end of five or six days. Weeds are pulled out every fortnight. The cotton ripens at the end of 100 days. The stem may reach 75 centimeters or 1.50 meters in height, depending on the quality of the soil. Then comes the harvesting, which extends over a period of thirty or forty days, because one must wait for the pod to burst and the boll to appear before plucking. The women, girls, and small boys do this plucking.

The Mossi grow a considerable amount of cotton and take very good care of their fields. In any case, the soil and climate of the region are rather propitious to this crop. The harvesting is done in February and March. The average local price of cotton is one franc
[435] a kilogram.

249 Tobacco is also partly a dry-season crop. At least its cultivation begins during the rainy season, extends into the dry season, and ends only in the latter. Tobacco is grown near the soukala like maize, large red millet, hemp, etc.

Tobacco is sown during the rainy season near the soukala. Twenty-five days are allowed to elapse, and then the plants are dug out and transplanted to another spot near the soukala. When the

249 rainy season ends, the tobacco has already grown tall. In the month of December, one begins to gather the leaves, taking first the lowest ones which are the first to ripen. One keeps plucking up the stem and gathering leaves until the end /485/ of January. Then the tobacco stems are cut down to get the seeds.

276 In order to make tobacco, the leaves are left to dry in the sun, and then, when they are dry, the men crush them in small mortars. They add a little water, stir, and make tobacco balls, or rather small elongated loaves worth one sou apiece. These loaves are entrusted to the women to be sold at market.

249 The Mossi also grow indigo (gara in Mossi, as in Bambara). During the rainy season, indigo is sown in separate plots. First the grass is removed, and then the ground is struck here and there with the koutiaga. Then indigo seeds are broadcast, and the soil is moved with the ouaka to cover the seeds so that the birds will not eat them. At the end of a fortnight, the indigo begins to shoot. The weeds are removed by hand. The leaves may be gathered forty days later. They are gathered by hand and given to the women, who press them into flat loaves.

248 As for hemp (berenga in Mossi, pepan in Nounouma, kanzé in Kassouna, dafou in Mandé), it is sown among the maize that surrounds the soukala as soon as the latter has put forth shoots. The barenga has a long stalk similar to maize and hard to distinguish from the latter, but while maize is harvested in August, berenga stalks are left standing until October or November.

262 Its leaves are used for sauces.

241 Hemp closes our list of food crops and other crops in Mossi territory. Let us close with a few words on agricultural tools.

The basic tool of cultivation, here as in all other parts of West Africa, is the daba. The Mossi have two kinds:

1. The ouaka, a kind of daba with a broad, thin blade. It is used to turn up the soil.

/486/ 2. The koutiaga, koutiara or koutiaba. This is a kind of small hoe which is used to make holes when sowing grain or seeds.

The Mossi also have the following accessory tools:

1. The laré. This is an axe used to cut stumps when a plot is cleared.

241 2. The sououga, a knife used to cut down the heads of millet.

3. The gouégo, a curved knife, a kind of scythe which is used to cut straw, for example when preparing thatch for hut roofs.

To summarize, cultivation is the most important pursuit among the Mossi. It insures the subsistence of this population which is [161] relatively dense, since there are 25 inhabitants per square kilometer, a very high figure unusual for West Africa. The species of cultivated plants are as numerous as anywhere else, and the agricultural tools tend to be superior. In spite of all this, the Mossi are not very good cultivators, and in this respect I believe that they must be placed beneath the Bobo, Gourounsi, Habé, Bambara, etc. One senses that the Mossi descend at least in part from people who were once familiar with easier and more fruitful ways of procuring food (such as war and attendant loot) or, to put it another way, one senses the meeting of two groups, one of which was truly adept at cultivation while the other was less so. Thus, although the Mossi are cultivators first and foremost and actually subsist on cultivation, the latter is not as basic to them as it is to the Bobo, the Gourounsi, etc. They do practice cultivation, this is even by far their chief subsistence activity, and yet one cannot say that they are, in all respects, good cultivators.

231 Are they at least noteworthy stockbreeders?

To this we may give forthwith a negative answer. The Mossi are very mediocre, not to say worthless breeders. This is not to mean, incidentally, that there is no cattle in Mossi territory. There [563] is a great deal, on the contrary, and this stems from the presence of the Foulbé, who are cattle herders, as much as from the presence of the Yarsé, who /487/ have always owned considerable quantities of cattle, and from the density of the Mossi population. The Mossi themselves, nevertheless, own little cattle. To be more exact, they have a low per capita average of cattle.

We might list over-all or partial figures, but those most recently 231 compiled are vitiated by the fact that Mossi territory lost part of 563 its cattle in recent years due to repeated famines around 1906-1908 and to an overly rigorous tax system that went into effect a little later. We shall, therefore, merely validate our statement that the

231 Mossi are very mediocre breeders by describing their manner of
563 caring for their animals. Instead of tending them or having this done by their young men, they nearly always hand them over to the Foulbé for herding. This is also done whenever possible by the Bobo, Nounouma, and Sissala in the Leo residency, but it is not done by the Kassonboura, Nankana, or Dagari. If the head of a Mossi
231 soukala is wealthy, he employs his own private Peuhl herder. If he
563 is of average means or poor, he makes an arrangement with other
464 Mossi in the same circumstances, and they all get together to pay a single herder for their cattle. It is the poorer Foulbé, for their part, who agree to herd Mossi cattle in this fashion.

The agreement that binds both parties grants the milk and butter to the Peuhl, but the increase of the herd devolves to the owner. This agreement is made without any definite time limits, and it is only broken if the herder fails to tend the animals properly. If he does his job well, on the other hand, he herds them indefinitely, and when he dies his son succeeds him. By the same token, when the Mossi owner dies, his son leaves the animals in the hands of the same Peuhl.

The Foulbé in charge of tending the herds live in low, conical straw huts at the back of the Mossi villages that own the herds. Not far from their huts, they build an enclosure where they leave the cattle during the night. They take the animals to graze in the bush in the morning, and bring them back in the evening. Whenever one of the Mossi owners wants milk or butter, he buys it from the Peuhl. Sometimes the latter offers him milk as a gift.

We shall see later, when we discuss the Foulbé, that in former
[567] times the Mossi often enslaved the small Foulbé bands that /488/ came with the intention of settling in Mossi territory. The Mossi chiefs would confiscate the herds, and then, since they were unwilling to care for them themselves, they would return them to the dispossessed Foulbé in usufruct and in accordance with the agreement we have just described. It must nevertheless be said that all
563 Foulbé in Mossi territory were not subjected to this high-handed procedure. When we occupied Mossi territory, there were some free and wealthy Foulbé, some Foulbé villages with chiefs of their own. Actually, those Foulbé were by far the more numerous.

563 From a political standpoint, they were subject to the high Mossi powers just like the Yarsé, but like the latter and aside from this, they had preserved all their personal and economic freedom.

Let us add a few words about the various races of livestock
231 which are to be found in Mossi territory.

As far as cattle is concerned, there are three races in the Ouagadougou circle:

1. Humped cattle, which is found mostly in the northern and eastern parts of the circle. This beef is tall, with a short dewlap and large horns. It is well suited to porterage, and furnishes excellent butcher's meat. There are some 5,000 head of humped cattle in the circle, 2,000 males and 3,000 females.

2. Humpless or local cattle. This beef has small horns, is found chiefly in the western and southwestern regions, and is usually designated by the name of Kipirsi cattle. It is not suited to porterage and yields inferior meat, but it is much stronger than the humped beef and better adapted to the climate.

3. Ordinary cattle, the result of a cross between the two preceding species. This beef has the strength of the Kipirsi cattle and is considerably taller. It is, furthermore, capable of being fattened, and can thus furnish meat of very good quality. This type predominates among the Tenkodogo Mossi. It comprises about 20,000 head, 8,000 males and 12,000 females.

It is therefore the local cattle (71,000 head), which is most
[435] numerous. The humped beeves are worth from 40 to 100 francs,
/489/ and the humpless beeves from 30 to 40 francs. The natives
[232] are familiar with castration but practice it at random on any subject that comes to hand.

Prior to the arrival of the French, the Mossi used their cattle for
231 meat and for sacrifices, but the two uses really amounted to one
782 (the former) since the animals offered to a dead person are always
651 eaten by the living. Nowadays, the Mossi sell their cattle to pay their tax. They still eat meat, although apparently not as much as before. The need to pay a tax which has been understood imperfectly, raised too rapidly and levied too harshly over the past few years, has forced them to save their cattle in order to sell it on the southern kola markets.

231 While the Mossi entrust their cattle to the Foulbé, as we have seen earlier, they do no such thing with their sheep which are kept with the goats. They are handed over to the young boys to care for during the winter and the dry season.

231 As almost everywhere in West Africa, the flesh of the sheep is
262 of mediocre quality and smells of suint. The natives nevertheless like it very much.

231 The sheep have short hair and yield no wool. Actually, in all of West Africa, only the Macina sheep yield some.

"The Mossi sheep," says the Cahier des Rapports of the /Ouagadougou/ circle, "differs basically from the Macina sheep. While the latter are rather large, with very thick hair, the Ouagadougou sheep are small with short hair. The males have horns, and usually long manes.

"The sheep race of the Macina does not in fact exist among the Mossi, for the climate of the region does not permit it. In the northern part of the circle one may find, though rarely, some sheep belonging to that breed brought by the Dioula and destined for slaughter, but nowhere is that race raised /among the Mossi/.

"Although the Mossi sheep cannot be exploited in any way as far as their hair is concerned, they nevertheless constitute a source of income of some importance to the natives. /490/ Sheep are indeed quite numerous throughout the circle. They are chiefly consumed locally. A few flocks, however, are led to the markets of the Gold Coast."

[77] Let us note further the existence of so-called "house sheep," raised individually in the household in accordance with a custom introduced among the Mossi by the Yarsé, and fattened carefully to be slaughtered on festive occasions.

Goats are not entrusted to the Foulbé either, and the latter, incidentally, would not want them. During the winter season, they are herded by children who prevent them from eating the millet. During the dry season they are not herded, and they may wander about as they please.

The majority of Mossi goats are of dwarf species. Yet goats of usual size, large goats which are no doubt of Maure /Moorish/ origin, are also to be found in small numbers.

231 Donkeys are relatively numerous in Mossi territory. They are light grey in color, with a handsome black strip on the withers which extends down the right and left sides. The Mossi are very fond of [492] riding them. They do this, incidentally, all the way back, sitting on the donkey's rump, and it is a rather comical sight. They are beginning to use their donkeys in trading. Formerly they did not do this, since they did not engage in trading.

[435] The average price of a donkey is 25 francs.

Mule breeding is unknown among the Mossi. It is practiced in [492 439] Sokoto lands among the Haoussa, who sometimes bring mules into /Mossi/ territory.

As for horses, the Mossi have three races.

1. In the northeast there is a horse of rather large stature, from 1.50 to 1.60 meters in height, elegant, with delicate joints and lines recalling the true Arab horse. These horses, ridden too early and too recklessly by the natives, are soon worn out.

2. The southern horse, which is to be found in the southern part of the Ouagadougou circle and in the Tenkodogo residency. It is small in stature, thin, rather stocky. Better adapted to /491/ the Sudanese climate than the large northern horse, it possesses greater strength and endurance.

3. The Mossi horse proper, which seems to derive from a cross between the northern and southern races. It is small in stature, but strong-backed, vigorous, tough, and frugal. It is less handsome than the northern horse, but more attractive than the Boussansé horse. On the other hand, it endures the climate better than the former, less well than the latter.

231 435 A southern horse is worth from 80 to 100 francs, a Mossi horse is worth about 150 francs, and finally, a northern horse is worth from 200 to 400 francs. There are about 7,000 horses in the Ouagadougou circle.

231 The horses are kept in the villages during the dry season. They are given millet and peanut greens to eat. Grass is cut down in the bush and given to them when it dries. During the rainy season, the [554] horses are usually taken to the bush. Only the chiefs keep their horses in the soukala, where the animals are brought fresh grass, millet, water and salt. Other people take their horses to the bush and tie them beside their field so they may browse on the grass.

231 We mentioned earlier the karyanga, which is gathered wild or cultivated for horses. It is given to them at the height of the winter season.

Many Mossi own dogs. They use them to guard the soukala, to hunt in the bush, or for consumption. In the latter case, the [262 animal is fattened. Dog meat was sold on Mossi markets in the 435] old days, but the Yarsé, who are Moslems as we know, found it improper to exhibit dog meat alongside mutton or beef, and the custom was abandoned. Dogs are still killed inside the soukala, however, for consumption purposes.

[435] A dog is worth from 2 to 5 francs.

The Mossi have chickens and guinea fowl. The chickens are 235 worth 250 cowries. The eggs are not sold.

It is the men who care for the chickens. They /492/ look in the bush for termite nests which they break to pieces so that the chickens may eat the termites. Sometimes, instead of one ration only, the chickens are issued two a day, one in the morning and one in the evening.

The guinea fowl are less numerous than the chickens. Accord- [435 ing to their weight, they are worth from 250 to 300 cowries. Their 462] eggs are eaten. It is the men who care for the guinea fowl as for the chickens.

231 The Mossi place beehives in the trees. The hives consist of elongated straw cylinders shaped like a tom-tom. One of the sides is completely closed, while the other is perforated to allow the bees to come and go.

231 These hives are placed in the trees at the time when the warm 237 season begins (March), and then the honey is gathered every month except at the height of the rainy season, when the downpours are toc heavy. The children are in charge of this. They climb the tree with a straw torch on fire, and frighten the bees away. Then they take the honey and come down. In order to separate the honey from the wax, the honeycombs are placed in a large canari full of water. Another canari is heated intensely, and its burning-hot base is brought close to the surface of the jar where the combs are floating. The wax melts and sinks to the bottom, while the honey floats. The wax is sold to jewelers, who use it in the [306] manufacture of copper objects made by the lost-wax process. It is

231 also sold to shoemakers, who need it to rub and soften their hides.
237 In former days wax was given rather than sold. Nowadays it is sold because of the need for cash occasioned by the tax. As for honey,
[762] it is eaten pure, or with milk, or mixed with sarabout. It is also
272 made into a drink called bésou, béci, or bici, which is no other than hydromel. The latter is known, incidentally, throughout West Africa.

The Nounouma call it torosana, from sana, "drink" and toro, "honey." The Kassouna call it by the same name.

The women make hydromel as follows. They boil water, pour the honey into it, and stir. Then they add small-millet flour. The mixture is stirred with a piece of wood and then strained to rid the drink of /493/ all impurities. It is poured into a clean canari, which is carefully covered. At the end of two days, one has a
[435] yellowish drink which is worth 400 cowries or 0.40 franc a liter at Ouagadougou. Among the Nounouma, where honey is more abundant than among the Mossi, the liter is worth 0.20 franc (at Leo, for example). Hydromel is stronger and more potent than dolo, and one must be careful not to drink too much.

252 The Mossi also make little cakes with honey and millet flour. They call them baradaré. These cakes are not made by the Gourounsi.

231 This concludes our review of Mossi stockbreeding. Generally speaking, as we have seen, it is quite mediocre with the exception of two specialities, donkeys and horses. As far as donkeys are concerned, although the Mossi are no traders and have only begun to do a little trading since we occupied their territory, they have always liked the animals and used them either for their own transport or to carry grain. They have an average of one donkey per 42 inhabitants, while the Dagari only have one per 1,000, the Nounouma one per 166, the Sissala one per 55, the Kassonboura one per 50. In this respect, the Mossi run second only to the traders, the Yarsé, who have a pressing need for donkeys in connection with their trade and who have one per 23 inhabitants.

As for horse raising, the Mossi have left it to the Foulbé of Mossi territory. The Mossi nevertheless have an average of one horse per 166 inhabitants among the common people, and one per

231 64 inhabitants among the nakomsé (nobles, descendants of chiefs, true Mossi). The Dagari and Nounouma, on the other hand, have one horse per 1,000 inhabitants, the Sissala one per 400, the Kassonboura one per 300. The Yarsé, who are in better circumstances than the common Mossi but less fond of horses than the nakomsé, have one horse per 100 people. Finally, the Foulbé of Mossi territory, who raise horses, have one for every 26 people.

To summarize, Mossi stockbreeding is mediocre except for donkeys and horses. Let us proceed to the hunt.

224 First of all, like the Gourounsi and all other populations of West Africa, the Mossi hunt collectively during the dry, warm season.

/494/ This collective endeavor is their chief hunting method. Aside from this, the cultivators hunt individually with bow and arrow, chiefly during the dry season although sometimes also during the damp season.

Finally, there are a few elephant hunters in the southern regions. They are to be found only in the south, for in Mossi territory proper the relative density of the population and resulting extent of cultivated land make for a nearly total absence of elephants. Gourounsi and Boussansé lands, on the other hand, which are much less densely populated, include some deserted areas where elephants may be found. Mossi hunters, therefore, have settled in the southern part of the territory, on the borders of Gourounsi and Boussansé lands, to scour both regions /for elephants/.

At Kombisiguiri, for example, there are ten of them, ten soukala heads. They kill one or two elephants a year on the average. They sell the meat to the village that stands nearest to the spot where the animal was killed. This nets them about 50,000 cowries. [435] As for the tusks, they sell them for 120,000 or 140,000 cowries, sometimes 200,000. They always give a piece of the meat to the chief of the canton where the animal was killed. They hunt with [411] guns, while in the old days they hunted with poisoned spears but on the same individual basis as they do now.

[463] Elephant hunters do not cultivate the soil during the winter season, but their wives and children do.

224 435 At Kombisiguiri, as we have just seen, there are 10 elephant hunters out of about 70 chiefs of compounds. Among the latter there are also some 20 men who hunt other animals, but they are cultivators who hunt on the side. They seek buffalo. When they kill one, they sell the meat to the village that stands nearest to the spot of the kill for 35,000 cowries. They also hunt the koba antelope, whose meat is worth from 20,000 cowries, the striped deer worth 6,500, the pig deer worth 5,000, the wart hog worth 10,000. They also hunt hares, bustards, guinea fowl, partridges, turtledoves, etc.

224 262 The Mossi do not hunt monkeys and do not eat them. /495/ Actually, there are very few in Mossi territory, except for the red-haired monkeys who are great lovers of millet and maize.

224 825 778 The Mossi do not hunt crocodiles because the latter are held sacred. If one were to kill a crocodile, one would become ill, one's head would swell and one's teeth would fall out. Snakes, on the other hand, are killed and eaten, but in Mossi territory proper there are few large ones (pythons, boas) because the climate is not sufficiently humid. They are more numerous in Boussansé and Gourounsi lands.

226 Fishing is less important than hunting among the Mossi, for the simple reason that the land, with its low rainfall, only has muddy ponds during the dry season (on this subject, see our Introduction /not translated/). Thus, not only do the Mossi lack professional fishermen, but the villages do not even undertake collective fishing during the dry season (with the exception of some southern localities, in Kombisiguiri for example). Only children attempt to catch the mudfish which are always present in large quantities in small ponds, even when they are nearly dry.

222 Gathering, on the other hand, plays the same role among the Mossi as among the other Sudanese Blacks, and we shall study it here in some detail, since we have only described it in broad outline so far.

222 137 The tree most widespread throughout Mossi territory, and which grows wild, is the karité. Its leaves are a pleasant green, and it is somewhat similar to our Normandy apple tree. Its bark is whitish and made of small juxtaposed quadrilaterals. It is the karité which

222 predominates in the bush of the territory and which, owing to its
137 abundance, lends the bush its particular character.

The karité fruit is an egg-shaped, elongated chestnut, smaller than the fruit of the European chestnut tree. It is distinguished from it even more clearly by its fleshy covering with its greenish skin. This flesh is soft, quite thick, and tastes delicious, like a very ripe, even overripe pear.

222 It is the women who gather the karité when the fruit is ripe,
252 before the rainy season, at the beginning of April. First, the flesh surrounding the chestnut is eaten /496/. Then, after breaking the brown shell, the inner part is used to make the famous karité butter.

252 As everywhere else, it is the women who do this among the Mossi. They remove the shell of the chestnut, and then mash the sticky and whitish substance which is found inside. It is pounded on crushing stones with a little wooden pestle. Once this is done, the substance is cooked in a canari and then mashed again, this time in the large wooden mortars, until the paste acquires the consistency of butter. Then it is pounded once more between crushing stones. When this is over, the paste is placed in a canari with lukewarm water, and then stirred and manipulated by hand. This produces a sort of dirty-white cream, somewhat similar to beaten egg whites, but firmer. Then this cream is boiled until it changes into oil. The impurities drop to the bottom of the canari, and the oil floats. The latter is gathered, placed in a clean gourd, and allowed to cool. The result is a pale yellow butter. At first sight it looks like real butter, but when sniffed it reveals a characteristic odor which is unpleasant to Europeans.

Gourounsi women prepare karité butter in the same manner as Mossi women.

302 This butter is put to various uses. First of all, it is utilized for grooming purposes. The women especially rub it into their hair in copious quantities, not only among the Mossi but throughout the Sudan as well. This, naturally enough, lends them an aroma which
[388] is not very pleasant to European noses. Karité butter is also made into soap when certain ashes are added. Finally, it is used in cooking.

423 The karité trees standing in a field belong to the owner of the field. Those which stand in the bush belong to the people of the

423 village in whose territory the bush is located. They belong to all the people of the village, for Mossi chiefs have not set those trees aside for themselves as they did with the néré trees.

222 137 The néré are found in large numbers in Mossi territory, although they are far less numerous than the karité, which literally fill the bush. The ratio must be something like one /497/ néré for every fifteen karité. The néré is nevertheless far from rare, and sometimes ten or fifteen are to be found together, standing not far apart. The néré is easily distinguished by its branches which expand in a fanlike arrangement from a short but elegant trunk. The branches spread out very prettily, in triangular fashion, so the néré blossoms out like a shower of fireworks. Its leaves are no less characteristic than its shape. They are of a dark, oxydized green which contrasts with the superb brilliant green of the karité. The néré leaves are similar to those of the acacia.

The néré is called roga or goaga, doga or doaga in Mossi. It is called soungou in Nounouma and Kassouna, sǒla in Sissala. The Nankana call it roga or doga like the Mossi.

The fruits of the néré are long brown pods that grow in clusters on the tree and that contain a yellow substance, sweet to the taste, packed around a sort of very elongated pit. The women gather these 222 423 fruits approximately from March 15 to April 15. The neré trees standing in a field belong to the owner of the field, but the Mossi village chiefs claim ownership to those that stand in the uncultivated bush.

Among the Gourounsi, as we know, the néré that stand in a field, even if the latter is not being cultivated at the moment, belong to the owner of the field, while those that stand in the uncultivated bush surrounding the village belong to all the people of the village.

This points up the difference between a centralized kingdom where the authority of the chiefs is strong, and small independent cantons or villages where it is not.

252 261 Néré is put to many uses. First of all, the yellow meal, including the more solid central part that runs from one end of the pod to the other like a pit, is mashed by the women in millet mortars or in wooden gourds. Once mashed, it is thinned with

252 boiling water and eaten in this fashion. This is an important source
261 of food in times of famine which, when they come among the Blacks, usually come in May, June, and the first half of July. The néré gathered in March and April comes just in time to combat the famine.

/498/ As for the seeds of the fruit, they are removed and set
252 aside before the sweet meal is mashed. They are preserved to make
263 kologo (the Mossi name) or soumbara (the Mandé name), a pungent condiment highly prized by the Blacks. In order to make this, the women boil the seeds, allow them to cool, stamp on them to remove the skin, and wash them carefully at the watercourse. Sometimes the skin is removed by hand. Then they are cooked for 24 hours, and steeped in water for another 48 in a well-covered canari, in the shade, in a damp spot, to rot the seeds. Then they are laid to dry in the sun on a mat for two days, and pressed with the hands into balls of varying size. It is in this shape that the soumbara is utilized or sold. In Mossi territory, small balls are
[435] worth 100 cowries apiece and large ones 300. At Leo, in Nounouma territory, all balls are the same size and worth 100 cowries. In appearance, the kologo is rather similar to that black coloring matter used by French housewives to add substance to the broth. Whenever a woman wants to use some kologo, to add some to the sauce, she pries loose a small piece from the ball with the tip of a knife and mashes it with the crushing stone. She pours the resulting powder into the sauce.

356 Let us note further that the bark of the néré pod is also used, although not for eating purposes. The Mossi and Gourounsi use it to blacken and polish the floor of their huts and clay roofs. The néré bark is seeped in water for one day, and then the water is tossed on the surface to be polished, that has been tamped down carefully first. The floor is tamped again with the water, and then allowed to dry. This is done three or four times, and in the end the clay surface acquires a handsome black or grey polish. It almost becomes a mirror if the procedure is carried out properly.

284 Finally, to close our list of the uses to which néré is put, we
291 have seen that the brown filaments that grow on the bark of the néré pod are used among the Gourounsi to make belts for /499/ the women, or rather cords to hold up the bunches of leaves that constitute the sole garment of local ladies.

222 Let us now proceed to the baobab.
137 It is called touéra or touéga in Mossi (sira or izira in Bambara). It is to be found most everywhere in the Mossi bush, and especially in rocky, hilly spots near large streams.

The fruit of the baobab is gathered from December to April. It is a sort of huge green almond hanging from a stem that often
252 reaches 25 or 30 centimeters in length. One breaks the shell, removes the flesh, and mashes it in the mortar (this, of course, is done by the women). Once this is done, the resulting meal is strained through a straw strainer. It is now ready to eat.

This is called tofdésoum in Mossi, tiondé-boé in Peuhl, siramogou in Mandé (from sira, "baobab" and mogou, "flour").
[438] Colloquially, Europeans call it "monkey bread." It is sold on Mossi markets as on the markets of Bambara country.

To prepare it for consumption, this meal is thinned with milk, or water if there is no milk, or else mixed with millet flour. The latter mixture is called sangaré ni siramogou in Bambara ("millet flour and baobab flour"). The meal may also be mixed with néré flour.

It is not only the fruit of the baobab, however, that is utilized. The fresh green leaves are used as a sauce ingredient. The dried leaves are used to make tonéra (lalo in Foutanké /Futajalonke?/, namourou or namougou in Bambara, oro in Peuhl). The leaves are dried and crushed in a mortar to make a powder that is added to sauce.

283 Finally, let us add that the bark of the baobab is used to make rope.

222 After the karité, néré, and baobab, we must list the tamarind
137 tree (Tamarindus indica), koussouga or poussouga in Mossi, n'tomi in Bambara.

222 The fruit of the tamarind is a pod, longer than a finger /500/
137 and about the same thickness, that ripens between January and April.
263 It is a yellow-green brown. When cut along its length, it is found to contain some ten little round fruits, the size of half a hazelnut, lying in a row within the greenish pulp. Only the dried pod is used, after removing the little fruits which have a rather pleasing taste when fresh, something between the kola nut and the hazelnut. When the pod is dry, however, the fruits are also dried out and hard, and they are discarded.

222 These pods, of course, are not eaten. They merely serve to
263 make the tô sauce fresh and sour, as the Blacks like it.

[261] The pods[1] themselves are only eaten in times of famine, because they give colic. In addition, they harm the mouth, tongue, and teeth (gingivitis).

In ordinary times, the natives use them medically as a fever remedy. They boil them with pimento and drink the decoction. This is done by the Mossi as well as by the Gourounsi, Bambara, etc.

Tamarind pods are also made into dry balls which are sold at market. They are crudely mashed with a pestle, and then pressed together in cold water into balls of varying size. Whenever one wishes to give the to a tamarind taste, one pries loose a small piece of the ball with a knife and places it in the canari of boiling water where millet flour will be added.

278 Like the Bambara, the Mossi prepare a purging drink with the
757 tamarind pod, either fresh or dried. It is boiled in water, a tiny bit of millet flour is added, and the drink is consumed when slightly warm. This decoction has laxative properties. The Haoussa are also familiar with it, but the Gourounsi are not.

222 To summarize, the tamarind pod has two chief uses among the
137 Mossi and other Blacks of West Africa. It serves to sour and freshen the tô, and it also serves as a purgative.

272 Let us add that Dr. Rançon, in the account of his /501/ trip through Upper Gambia, described the preparation of a tamarind drink for European consumption. The pod is left to dissolve in cold water for three hours, sugar is added, and a sort of lemonade results.

222 The Mossi have rônier in every village. This, as we know, is a
137 variety of palm tree.

"It is the largest palm tree, Borassus flabelliformis," says Dr. Rançon (Dans la Haute-Gambie, pages 139 to 141). "It is easy to recognize owing to its height and characteristic appearance. Its trunk is very long and may sometimes reach 25 or 30 meters. It is swollen in the middle, and its lower and upper parts are much less thick, much more slender. The bark is blackish and bears scars of the wounds left by fallen leaves. The wood, although it looks spongy, is quite tough and hard to dent with a saw. Rônier logs are heavier than water. This is one of the rare woods that do not float. The leaves of a grown rônier are clustered in a thick bunch at the

[1] [i.e. tamarind pods — Analyst]

222 137 top of the trunk, and they are deeply indented. The trunk never bears leaves except when it is young. The dark green of the leaves and their toughness makes /sic/ them look from afar like the artificial zinc leaves of some theatrical backdrops or weather vanes. The youngest leaves at the top are strongly imbricated and ensheathed, and ivory white in color. They are very tender and yield palm cabbage. The leaves of the rônier only fall off when completely dry.

"The fruits, which are called rône, come in clusters of about forty or fifty. They are the size of a medium-sized melon and very heavy. Their covering is green when they are young, orange-yellow when they are ripe. The large seeds, which are blackish and disc-shaped, or like spheres flattened at the poles, are surrounded with a fibrous, gold-yellow meat which is very watery and very fragrant. Its taste is pleasant, although slightly tinged with turpentine. The [261] natives eat large quantities of it, especially in times of scarcity.

313 137 "Rônier wood is dense, long lasting, and remarkably tough. 502/ Immune to insects and humidity, it is excellently suited to the manufacture of piles, and often used in the construction of bridges and wharves. The male trees alone are used. The female trees can only be used for fencing, for they are hollow and lacking in strength....

222 137 262 "In addition to the fruit, the Blacks also eat the roots of the young shoots, the taste of which is slightly astringent and rather unpleasant. They are eaten raw. The terminal buds of the palms are very tender. They are palm cabbages, less tasty to be sure than those of Oreodoxa oleracea, but nevertheless deserving of recognition. When cut into small pieces 2 centimeters square and well seasoned with oil, vinegar, salt and pepper, they make a very good salad, especially if they were previously soaked for twenty-four hours. This dish is highly prized by Europeans who live in the Sudan. Finally, [263] the rônier yields a fairly abundant sap from which sugar might be 273 extracted. When fermented, it produces a palm wine of inferior quality."

It must be added that the fibers of the rônier leaves are also 137 [285] utilized. The West African Blacks use them to make baskets (as for example in Mossi territory) or cords (as for instance in Upper Gambia).

137 They are 7 or 8 meters tall, 10 meters at most, and their huge fruits are bunched in clusters of five or six rather than forty or fifty.

There are no rônier in the Mossi bush itself, but there are some 137 in every Mossi village. They originated from seeds tossed at random 229 after eating the fruits, or from an ancient cultivation of the tree. The rônier, therefore, is not a natural product of Mossi territory and should not, in all exactitude, be listed among the gathering crops. On the other hand, can it be listed with the cultivated crops at the present day, and can we call cultivation the act of tossing seeds to the ground in order to get rid of them? No matter what the truth may be, the Mossi eat /503/ the fruits of their rônier but do not extract any palm wine. As we have just said, they use the fibers of the leaves for their wickerwork.

137 While the rônier occur in Mossi territory, there are, on the other hand, no palm-oil trees and palmier-ban /?/. Those begin to appear only in Gourounsi territory, to the south of the Mossi.

229 We have just reviewed the most important gathering trees in 137 the area, but the Mossi bush contains many others, less important to be sure but nevertheless useful, which we shall now mention.

First, there is the ganra or ganga (sounsoun in Mandé, diomba in Peuhl and Sarakolé). This is the medlar tree of West Africa. In appearance, it is a big tree similar to the karité but even bigger, with a thicker and more powerful trunk.

The fruit is a medlar, smaller than the European one. When green, it has the same acrid taste and numbs the mouth. When ripe, it is such as we eat it in Europe. The natives begin to eat it during the rainy season and consume it until January.

386 The wives of Bambara blacksmiths make a varnish for pots and canari with the bark of the sounsoun. As for the wives of Mossi 171 blacksmiths, they prefer to use for this purpose the bark of two trees we shall mention later, the nobora and the sibi. In Gourounsi territory, on the other hand, the women who make pottery pluck the medlars while still green and crush them. They add water, thus making a sort of varnish which they use on the canari after they are fired. The ganra is called kano in Nounouma, kakano in Kassouna, kalo in Sissala, and ganra or ganga in Nankana and Mossi.

125 Let us add that among the Mossi, as in all of West Africa, the ganra tree is closely related to fetishistic superstitions, and will be mentioned again in a later chapter on religion.

222 137 Now for the kankanga (plural kankansé; the Bambara and Malinké call it n'toro, the Foulbé guip-bi, and the Nounouma /504/ kaporo). The kankanga is the native fig tree of West Africa. Its fruits are none other than figs, not as good to be sure as those eaten in Europe, but figs nevertheless. The Mossi, as well as the Gourounsi, Bambara, etc., usually eat these figs as they are. There are ripe ones to be found at all times of the year, and one plucks them at will. 252 261 In times of famine, instead of eating them in this fashion, one allows them to dry in the sun and then mashes them on crushing stones (among the Mossi) or in small mortars (among the Bambara). They are thus made into a sort of meal which is boiled and which serves as a substitute for millet flour. At such times the Mossi also eat the leaves of the kankanga. They cook them in boiling water and add salt.

252 As for the Gourounsi, sometimes they eat the figs fresh, and sometimes they prepare them for their sauces. In the latter case they boil them, cut them to pieces, and dry them in the sun. When the pieces are quite dry they are laid aside, and whenever needed one of them is mashed, reduced to powder, and added to the sauce.

222 137 Now for nobora or noboga (n'kouna in Mandé, kountan in Khassonké /Kasonke/, hèdè in Foulbé and Toucouleur, kounguié in Sarakòlé, salo in Nounouma, kansalo in Kassouna).

The nobora is a kind of wild plum tree. Its fruits ripen from the time when millet is sown until the time when it reaches a height of 80 centimeters, that is to say, between May and July.

273 The fruits of the n'kouna are either eaten fresh or made into a sort of drink called noborame in Mossi, n'kounangui in Mandé, n'diam hèdam in Foulbé. In all three tongues, this means "nobora (or n'kouna) water." This drink is known throughout the Sudan.

In order to prepare this drink, the fruits are placed in water after being pricked with a small piece of wood to let the juice run, and they are left there for twelve hours. At the end of this period of time, they are removed and the water is boiled for a /505/ quarter of an hour. Once this is done, one takes some of the residue left at the bottom of the canari in which dolo is made, and puts it in the jar containing n'kounangui. The liquid is allowed to rest for one night. In the morning, the drink is gaseous and ready for consumption. It is not as strong as dolo.

273 The Mossi make n'kounangui, like the Bambara, but the Toucouleur and Foulah do not because they are Moslems. The latter's slaves alone, being fetishists make some. The Gourounsi do not make it either, but this is because n'kouna is scarce in Gourounga country. The Gourounsi claim that this tree keeps hyenas away, and when someone dies in the bush and is buried on the spot, a branch of n'kouna is planted where he was buried. It is said that the hyenas will wander about at a distance, but will never dare come close and dig up the body. The Gourounsi claim that this is a matter of common knowledge.

222 137 The léla is another kind of wild plum tree. It is called séno in Bambara and Malinké, filina in Nounouma, mia in Kassouna, mellemoila in Sissala. Its plums are tiny. They are yellow before they ripen, and red when completely ripe (March-May). They are no larger than the tip of the finger, and they are eaten as they are. The almond is not eaten. Children sometimes munch on it, but when eaten in large quantities it causes colic.

The sibi, another tree found in the Mossi bush, is called n'pékou in Bambara and Peuhl, bembé in Sarakolé. The Nounouma called it kakian, the Kassouna kakiéno, the Nankana sibi like the Mossi. The fruit is tiny and sometimes causes colic. It ripens during the dry and warm season, and it is eaten as it comes. The [27a] Habé prepare a drink from it which is called diam-n'pékoudian ("n'pékou water") by the local Foulbé and Toucouleur. The Mossi, Gourounsi, and Bambara do not make this drink.

Let us cite also the tiarala (tiaralsé or tiaralésé in the plural, n'ségué in Bambara, saô in Nounouma). The Mossi are very fond of [27b] the tiarala fruit, which is highly aromatic and which is used /506/ to lend fragrance to native tobacco. They also eat the leaves.

Let us proceed to kara (or kaka). This is the Mandé n'taba. It is the Mandé n'taba. It is called dankola in Nounouma and Sissala, kalankola in Kassonboura.

"The n'taba," says André Rançon (Dans la Haute-Gambie, page 35), "is a malvoidea /?/ of the Sterculiacea family. It is the Sterculia cordifolia Cav., thus named because its leaves are heart-shaped. It is one of the most beautiful plants of tropical African regions. It is easily recognized by its enormous trunk, huge leaves,

222 and very peculiar fruit. The latter, which grows at the tip of
137 young boughs, is shaped like a huge pod whose pulpy valves open when pressure is exercised along the convex ridge. Its free tip is equipped with a sort of pulpy appendage shaped like a thorn, about 0.06 meter in length. When ripe, the fruit is of a distinctive light-red color. It contains a dozen polyhedral seeds immersed in a yellowish flesh which is tasty and highly fragrant. It is one of the best desserts I came across in the Sudan, and we often feasted on it. The fruits are clustered in bunches of three, five, or seven, and strongly fastened to the peduncle and stem that hold them. They rarely fall, and in order to gather them one must break the bough that bears them."

André Rançon adds (page 36) that the n'taba is related to the kola nut. It is apparently a sort of false kola tree.

The n'taba fruits ripen from December to April. The Mossi and Gourounsi eat them when they have dried out on the tree, or
65 else as they come /fresh/, or after boiling them for a quarter of an
435 hour. They are sold on Mossi markets at the price of three for 1 cowrie, six for 2 cowries, etc., that is to say, 150 for 1 sou.

272 These fruits are also used to prepare a drink among the Mossi and Gourounsi. They are boiled, mashed, placed in a canari filter, that is, a canari perforated at the bottom which is placed on top of another canari. Water is poured upon the fruits /507/, becomes permeated with the juice, and passes on to the bottom canari. This drink is sweet and tastes like honey.

222 Let us cite also the kamsoro (n'kodo in Bambara). It is a very
137 big, thickset tree, with characteristic leaves. The latter are very tough, very large, very thick, their shape ovoidal or rather a little more elongated than an egg, and their color a brilliant green.

The fruits of this tree are eaten throughout the year, especially by children, because ripe ones are to be found at all times.

There are no kamsoro in Gourounga territory.

Let us also cite the véda or ouéda, the caoutchouc liana, called n'saba in Mandé, fôgui in Peuhl, fittigné in Sarakolé, which is also called laré and Vahea senegalensis. This liana bears fruits that ripen in March and April. They might best be compared to oranges. They are green before they ripen and orange-yellow when ripe. Rançon claims that they are delicious. These fruits are eaten as they

222 137 come, and they are not used to prepare any sort of drink.

The n'saba is found almost everywhere in West Africa, but grows scarcer toward the north. It is found in Mossi and Gourounsi territories in very small numbers.

314 The Dagari, who live farther south than the Gourounsi, gather the caoutchouc from the n'saba lianas and make wads with it for the tip of the sticks used to beat their tom-toms. The Gourounsi griot purchase these sticks from the Dagari. The Mossi and Gourounsi do not themselves gather the n'saba caoutchouc.

In the south this liana is used to make cords, but this is not done among the Mossi or Gourounsi.

222 137 261 252 In addition to the plants we have just mentioned and which are utilized at all times, there are others whose products are used almost exclusively in times of famine. Such are the konkouira, sabatouli, silikoré, etc.

The konkouira is a big tree whose Mandé name is n'zéfé. Its leaves are gathered when they are beginning to grow when they are still quite tender. They are mashed in a small mortar with a pestle, and then placed in water for two hours. Then they are worked into balls, with the addition of millet flour. A canari is filled with water and put on the fire /508/, and then twigs are laid across its mouth, parallel to each other, to form a grill on which the konkouira balls are placed. In order to ensure thorough cooking, the balls are covered with an overturned gourd which encloses them and prevents the steam from escaping too rapidly. The balls are steamed in this fashion for one hour, and then they are ready to eat.

These leaves are never eaten straight but always with millet flour, and they really serve to stretch the flour supply. If they were eaten straight, they would cause colic. In any case they cause hiccups (gounsounkouira in Mossi). They are therefore more a food for times of famine.

The silikoré or kalanianga (both are Mossi names) is a small thorny bush that grows around trees and bears very small fruits. The women gather those fruits during the rainy season. They mash them in a small trough and then boil them in a canari. This first water is discarded, and the fruits boiled a second time. Again the water is discarded, and the fruits are washed in cold water. Karité butter and salt are added, and the mixture is eaten. The silikoré are used

222 chiefly in times of famine, but occasionally at other times also.
137 The silikoré fruits are not eaten among the Gourounsi and Bam-
261 bara.
252 Gonsé is called sofarangoni in Bambara. It is a shrub, the height of a man, that yields kéména. The latter is a pod containing small flat beans of a sort, very thin, that ripen at the time of the millet harvest. These /beans/ are boiled twice, and the water is discarded both times. Then they are washed in cold water and boiled again, for the last time, in a canari covered with a straw lid. Once this is done karité butter is added, and the mixture is eaten. Kéména
[435] is sold at market ready made. A handful is worth 5 cowries (1/2 centime). Kéména is also mixed with /true/ beans and either eaten or sold in this fashion.

Lamboye is called béré in Bambara, guidili in Peuhl. It is found almost everywhere in the Sudan. Its fruits, or rather seeds, are eaten only in times of famine. They are round, very /509/ tiny, and they ripen during the dry and warm season. They are gathered, laid out in the sun, and then crushed in a small mortar to break the outer membrane. Once this is done, they are soaked in water for eight days. This water is discarded, and the seeds are washed twice. Then they are boiled, salt is added, and they are eaten. This is done only in times of famine. These seeds are poisonous, as we can see, and would be toxic if they were not submitted to these various processes.

222 Sabatouli (bembé in Bambara and Sôninké) is a tree whose fruits
137 ripen one month after the first rains (that is, in May). The fruit is very tiny, no larger than a grain of maize. One eats it as it comes, when passing by or clearing land in the bush, or else one takes it to the village children. Nothing else is done with it. Sabatouli is found almost everywhere in the Sudan.

Vâka is a tree which is called goumou or goumbou in Bambara. The flowers of this tree, which are red, are used to make sauce when there is no gombo left. It is called fofo in Nounouma and Sissala, kafro in Kassouna. Its fruits are not eaten.

We overlooked the jujube tree above. It is called mourouga in Mossi, n'tomono in Bambara, gouésso in Nounouma and Kassouna. The Mossi eat the fruits only when traveling through the bush. The Gourounsi do not eat them at all.

222 137 Let us mention also kankalra (lenga in Mandé), whose leaves are eaten by the Mossi.

We have just reviewed the trees and shrubs whose produce is utilized by the Mossi. We must still say a word about mushrooms, wild roots, and wild fodder.

Mushrooms are called goudou in Mossi, dakon in Nounouma and Kassouna, kon in Sissala. They grow in the Mossi bush during the winter season, as they do in Gourounsi territory and incidentally throughout West Africa, and they are gathered by the women. Two kinds are distinguished, the /510/ termite-nest mushrooms (yaoré-goudou in Mossi, from yaoré, "termite nest," and goûdou, "mushroom") and the mushrooms that grow among refuse. The latter are called niandara-goûdou, meaning "straw mushrooms," because they grow chiefly under old discarded roof thatch. These mushrooms taste better, but those on termite nests are bigger.

252 The Mossi cook mushrooms in karité butter, mash them in the butter, and eat them. They also use them to make a sauce for the sarabout to which body is added with beans, cooked separately and also mashed. The sarabout (Mossi name for tô) is eaten after dipping in the bean-and-mushroom sauce.

Gourounsi women boil the mushrooms and then leave them to dry on the soukala roofs. They take a handful or two a day for their sauces. To this end, they boil the mushrooms again without mashing them and add soumbara and salt. Mushrooms are never served as a separate dish among the Gourounsi.

222 137 Let us proceed to edible roots.

Vidiba is a sort of wild onion called fanto by the Bambara, Sarakolé, and Foulbé.

261 252 The Bambara use vidiba leaves to make sauce, but they do not eat the onion itself because it is poisonous. The Mossi do likewise, except in times of famine. At such times, the onion is rubbed with sand until the black membrane is removed, and then it is copiously washed. Then it is boiled in a canari filled with water to the brim and covered, and the cooking is maintained until all the water has evaporated. Then ashes are gathered, strained, and added to the contents of the gourd. The mixture is stirred with a piece of wood, and then the vidiba is removed, cut to pieces, and eaten.

222 137 261 Séba is a kind of long, poisonous, black turnip which is eaten only in times of famine and after protracted cooking.

Seba and vidiba caused the death of many people during the last Mossi famine by giving them dysentery.

137 231 /511/ As for wild fodder found in Mossi territory, there is first of all kénibédo, that grows in bunches 30 centimeters high in damp hollows. Its leaves are rudimentary. It is severed 20 centimeters from the ground and stored during the dry season.

Then there are the fodder plants belonging to the papilionaceous family, densa and youbenga. The tiny stem of densa or youbenga is not severed from the plant itself, which reaches a height of 0.30 or 0.40 meter in both cases. Horses eat them either green or dry, indiscriminately.

137 314 283 Finally, let us say a word about souga, a sort of wild hemp called thus by the Mossi. The Nounouma call it boupo, and the Kassouna bénédévio. It is found only in certain parts of Mossi territory, but it grows throughout Gourounsi lands. Its bark yields very tough white fibers which the natives use in the manufacture of rope, string or thread for fishing implements. The bark does not keep through the dry season, so it is reduced to fibers during the rainy season. The fibers, on the other hand, can take the most intensive dryness without deteriorating. Souga is not cultivated.

222 433 We are now finished with Mossi gathering activities. They have a certain importance, as we have just seen, the same one on the whole as in other Sudanese populations. They are infinitely less important than cultivation, of course, but only slightly less so than stockbreeding, and they must be placed on the same level as the hunt. They are far more important than fishing or arboriculture.

245 433 The latter deserves no real mention. It hardly exists among the Mossi. It is limited to what we described earlier about the rónier and to the planting, here and there, of a few papaw trees.

433 In short, cultivation comes first, with stockbreeding trailing far behind, then gathering and hunting on the same level, then fishing and finally arboriculture.

010 /512/ Industries flourish among the Mossi. We shall review one by one, in detail, the various trades they exercise.

326 First, there is that of the blacksmith (saba or sahaba in the local tongue). Two kinds of blacksmiths may be distinguished among the Mossi. First, the blacksmiths who are gathered into separate villages or in large special quarters within the village, both cases being frequent in the northern part of Mossi territory, and secondly the isolated blacksmiths, such as those of Ouagadougou for example.

325 326 The blacksmiths who live in separate villages or quarters smelt the iron ore in large furnaces in the bush. They do this once a year, during the dry season, and the process takes one month.

The whole blacksmith village sets down to the task and builds a certain number of blast furnaces, at the ratio of one for every two blacksmiths.

The furnaces are built of red earth near the hills that contain iron ore, and it takes five days to build one of them. Once this is done each blacksmith pair takes over a furnace and uses it. The smiths do not use it together, incidentally, but each one in turn.

Our blacksmiths break up the soil with a soumbéré or taré. They break up pieces of ore and pile them near the furnace. They spread out a layer of dry wood at the bottom of the furnace, then a layer of ore, then another layer of wood, another layer of ore, etc., up to the top. Then the fire is lit.

The fire is stirred with bellows and kept up for three days. At the end of this period of time, the doors made at the bottom of the blast furnace are opened. The iron escapes through these special openings, which are distinct from the permanently open doors through which the slag runs out. On the fourth day the iron has cooled off, and it is removed from the little pits into which it has flowed. It is broken with an iron mallet and returned to the furnace.

The total labor lasts one month. Every evening our blacksmiths return to the village. Some of them produce ten loads of iron /513/ (about 300 kilograms), others only two or three (60 or 90 kilograms).

326 135 423 As for isolated blacksmiths, they do not smelt iron. They buy it from the blacksmiths of the Yatenga (Ouahigouya circle) who are great iron smelters and who own small, famed ferruginous hills around Ouahigouya.

326 Mossi blacksmiths make ouaka, koutiaga, axes, knives, daggers, swords, spearheads, arrowheads, razors, iron bracelets for women, men, nobles, spoons, horse bits, stirrups, spurs, etc. They also make needles of considerable thickness which are worth [435] 10 cowries apiece, or five for 1 sou.

During the winter season, they hardly make anything beside ouaka.* During the dry season, they make all the other items.

411 They also make zandé, or clubs with iron tips. Let us say
326 a word about clubs, which are in a way the Mossi national weapon. A Mossi would believe himself dishonored if he were not to bear a club solemnly on his right shoulder wherever he goes. Even small boys carry them, proportioned to size, and they do this with no less solemnity than their elders.

Mossi clubs are of three kinds:

1. Some made wholly of wood, handle and body both, and carved all of one piece. They are called dori.

2. Others whose handle is made of wood, but whose head consists of a large round stone imbedded at the tip of the handle. These clubs are called gougou.

3. Finally, the clubs with a wooden handle and an iron mallet inserted perpendicularly at the tip of the handle. These are the zandé or zann'dé. Sometimes the handle is covered with hide, and this makes it richer and more handsome.

326 Blacksmiths make only the iron part of the zandé. The other kinds of clubs are made by the owners themselves.

Blacksmiths only make zandé on order. While they make ouaka and koutiaga in advance and have them taken /514/ to market in quantities, they only make zandé when someone comes and asks for one.

The Mossi blacksmiths, therefore, work sometimes on order and sometimes to build up their stock. They sell this stock at market through their children, just as their wives go there to sell the pottery they manufacture.

325 The tools used by Mossi blacksmiths are as follows:
413 1. A small anvil called kissiguiré, with a pointed iron piece underneath, which can be held in the hand or thrust into the ground.

* [i.e. A kind of large hoe, see p. 32. —Analyst]

325 413 2. An iron mallet called zinré which is used as a hammer to strike the above-mentioned anvil. These items are very small. The anvil is held in one hand and the mallet in the other.

3. A pair of tongs (iéougo) to pick the iron from the fire and put it on the anvil.

4. A hammer called kouadara, made of a thick, short, and solid wooden handle into which a long and narrow iron mallet has been driven to make a hammer.

5. A rasp (sodara or chandara), slightly curved, and hafted to a wooden handle.

6. A sort of small wedge to cut the iron (kitéga). This wedge is placed on the piece of iron to be cut, and it is hit with the mallet.

7. A small-sized tool called karé that consists of a curved blade, 3 centimeters long by 2 wide, hafted to a short piece of wood. The karé is used to sharpen knives.

8. The goatskin bellows (zougoudou).

Such are the tools of the Mossi blacksmith which, incidentally, he makes himself.

325 435

The mallet is worth	5,000	cowries	(5 francs)
The anvil	10,000	"	(10 francs)
The hammer	1,000	"	(1 franc)
The nippers	700	"	(0.70 francs)
The rasp	500	"	(0.50 francs)
The iron wedge	200	"	(0.20 francs)
The sharpener	200	"	(0.20 francs)

323 The wives of Mossi blacksmiths make pottery. They are not the only ones to do this, as we shall see later, but they do it, at least in the special blacksmith's villages and quarters.

They make pottery with bérédo, that special black earth, a kind of clay we have already mentioned/in a previous chapter, not translated/. They crush and mash old canari and add this powder to the bérédo. This makes the pots stronger than if fresh bérédo were used. When the pots have been fashioned, the women leave them to dry in the sun for six or seven days. While this drying process is taking place, they gather firewood in the bush. Then they place a layer of wood in a round oven (about 1 1/2 meters high, very

323 wide, 2 meters in diameter, and open at the top), then some straw on which the pots are laid, and then more straw and firewood. They set this afire and keep it burning for twelve hours.

In order to polish their pots, the women take the bark of the [314] nobora or n'kouna. They soak it in huge canari for a whole day. The water acquires a reddish hue. The fired and cooled pots are immersed in these canari for a while, and then allowed to dry in the open air. When this is over, the pots may be taken to market and sold.

The blacksmiths' wives make their pottery during the dry season. During the winter season, they work in their husbands' fields.

326 241 During the winter season, Mossi blacksmiths work both at cultivation and at their trade, but mostly at cultivation. During the dry season, on the other hand, they work only at the blacksmith's trade.

As far as cultivation is concerned, they mostly grow small millet, followed by large white millet and large red millet, maize, peanuts, underground peas, sesame, and beans. They cultivate cotton and tobacco, but no indigo. Their wives sow gombo, etc.

326 231 /516/ They own livestock which their children herd. As a rule, they have a little more livestock than other Mossi, except for goats and donkeys. This, incidentally, should not surprise us, for the Negro blacksmiths of West Africa often display an ability for stockbreeding and especially for horse trading. Among the Mossi, however, this is not very pronounced.

326 The blacksmiths neither hunt nor fish, but they do engage in gathering activities like other Mossi. They exercise no industries other than those of iron and pottery. They do not work copper, silver, or gold. They do not work as weavers, either. They entrust their wives with the task of gathering and spinning whatever cotton they grow, and then they hand it over to the weavers.

326 438 They do undertake a little trading, slightly more in fact than the average Mossi. When a blacksmith has smelted a large quantity of iron, he sometimes purchases some livestock, leads it to Ouanké, buys kola nuts which he takes to Saraféré, and brings back salt from that locality. This is not done very frequently, however.

326 In short, the blacksmith's profession is of greater consequence to him than anything else, although he avails himself of several other occupations.

[564] Mossi blacksmiths do not form a caste. That is to say, anyone can marry among them.

306 439 Let us proceed to the jewelers or copper workers (niaka in Mossi). The Mossi have been familiar with copper for a long time, although West Africa does not produce it. The Yarsé have sought it at Ouanké, Kintampo, and even Kumasi from times immemorial. It comes from the coastal area, where it is brought by the Whites in the form of brass rods 30 or 40 centimeters long (like curtain rods). Nowadays, it is the British who supply the Gold Coast with copper, no doubt in the wake of the Portuguese and Dutch.

306 301 The niaka earns more money than the blacksmith. He buys the copper rods from the Dioula and makes them into various items /517/ such as women's copper leggings adorned with crocodiles, and thick copper bracelets worn at the wrists and ankles by women and soroné (pages). Depending on their thickness, these bracelets sell for 2,500 [435] to 20,000 cowries. He also makes women's copper hairpins, and low-price rings worth from 100 to 200 cowries.

306 532 Prior to the arrival of the French, these jewelers also made copper objects depicting everyday scenes, landscapes, huts. The chiefs bought them, but now these objects, at least the more ancient ones, have become very difficult to obtain. It seems that the German physician Frobenius, when he passed through Mossi territory at the end of 1908, acquired some very beautiful specimens of ancient Mossi manufacture for an exorbitant price. Nowadays, one [439] can imagine what the old industry was like by looking at the small items made at Ouagadougou by a few Europeanized Mossi who sell them on the spot for the benefit of local Whites. It might almost be said, therefore, that they manufacture them for export purposes. These items, made by the lost-wax process, are rather interesting and quite artistic for Blacks.

325 306 4B The tools of the niaka are about the same as those of the blacksmith:

1. The small portable anvil or kissiguiré.
2. The hammer or kouadara.
3. Shears (niougou) to pick copper pieces from the fire.

325 4. The iron rasp or sodara.
306 5. The sharpening tool or karé.
413 6. The iron wedge to cut copper (kétouga).
7. Shears to cut copper (mankasaga).
8. A few very primitive goatskin bellows.

306 As an example of a jeweler, may I present Sulémani Déréma, an inhabitant of Ouagadougou. He lives with his older brother, who is the head of the soukala and who has a wife and child. Sulémani himself has two wives and two children. A younger brother lives with them with his wife and child. Finally, there are other brothers in the soukala but they are not married (let us note in passing [592] that this soukala is exceptional, for the general rule among the /518/ Mossi is for every household to live separately; here, although they still live together, every household works separately).

Sulémani Déréma buys his copper at market, or else he works the copper furnished by his customers to order. He makes bracelets, rings, copper stirrups, etc.

306 He also works in the fields during the winter season, and like 241 the other households in the soukala, he does this on his own. Sulémani has two fields in the bush, one of small millet and another of large white millet, and in addition he grows maize around the soukala on the stretch of ground allotted him by the head of the soukala.

He owns neither large nor small livestock, not even chickens, He neither hunts nor fishes.

His jeweler's trade nets him more than his fields.

324 The blacksmith and niaka are representatives of metalworking. 316 Let us now proceed to stonework.

The makers of crushing-stones are called nanlora in Mossi, from nan, "crushing stone" and lora, "to shatter."

Our quarrymen look in the bush for large stone slabs resting on the ground, and whenever possible raised in some manner above it. They draw lines on these large flat stones with karité and soumbara, the size of the crushing stones they wish to extract, and then they gather wood under the slab and set it afire. They allow the fire

324 to burn for one day. Then, with the aid of a large, sharp stone,
316 they strike the spots where the lines were drawn. The stone breaks at those spots, and they take the pieces and sell them at Mossi markets.

This thankless trade does not pay much, and those who exercise it do so only during the dry season. During the winter season they work in the fields, and this brings them much larger returns than their quarrymen's trade.

323 After stonework comes work with earth. It is represented among the Mossi by the potter, the pipe maker, and the bricklayer. Let us begin with the first.

/519/ Here and there among the Mossi, pottery has remained a family occupation performed by all the women. This might be called the initial level of the craft. Yet we saw earlier that the wives of those blacksmiths who live in /special/ quarters or villages make pottery in abundance. This is the second level of the craft, that of incipient specialization. Finally, there are professional potters to be found among the Mossi, and this is the third level of the craft, that of more pronounced specialization. There would remain a fourth level to attain, where potters would exercise this trade exclusively and would be completely specialized. This level, however, has not been reached among the Mossi. The potters here are potters only halfway, and they work as much in the fields as they do at their craft. We have here, nevertheless, an initial effort toward clay-work specialization, and this is by no means the case in every Black population.

As an example, here is a potter from Dassasogo, a small village located 8 kilometers from Ouagadougou.

During the rainy season, he works only in the fields. He exercises his potter's trade only during the dry season. His fields bring him the larger returns.

He has a field of small millet in the bush, and he grows maize around his soukala which consists of two huts only. He has a wife and a young child. His work tools are as follows:

323 1. A kind of crude basin, very thick, heavy brimmed, quite
413 shallow, and made of earth.

413
323 In order to make this basin the potter takes a kind of earth
[317] called yaoré (the kind from large brown or greyish termite nests). He mixes it with straw and makes this kind of basin, this kind of primitive potter's wheel, called tébélé in Mossi.

2. A kind of short earth pestle, which is held in the fist and called toudoubila.

323 In order to make his canari our potter takes some yarado. To
[428] obtain this kind of clay one must dig at certain spots which are handed down traditionally from father to son. He crushes it with /520/ his pestle in the basin, and then wets it and builds his canari with it, raising the canari like a house wall and making it revolve slowly before him. Incidentally, he only knows how to make small canari.

Those potters who make big jars excavate a sort of large basin in the ground. They use the same short and compact little pestle to work the clay of the canari they are building, but they use a different kind of yarado, the red or reddish kind.

Our potter sells his small canari for 80 to 120 cowries apiece.
[435] He makes them in quantities. People come to him to purchase them, or else he has his wife take them to market.

Skillful potters make four canari a day. Beginners only make two or three.

[435] Large canari are worth 300 cowries apiece.

Those potters who make small canari often make nothing else. Similarly, those who make large canari do not usually make any others. There are some potters who make both kinds, however, for example at Kombisiguiri.

In order to fire the pots, Mossi potters have large round ovens which I have already described. They are completely open at the top, like circular walls 1.50 meters high, with four holes at the bottom. The potters heap up millet stalks within, and lay four canari on top. Upon each of these canari they place others, until the pile reaches the top of the wall. Then they set the millet stalks afire and allow everything to cool off until the following morning.

Every potter does not have his own oven. There is only one
323 oven per quarter. The potters in each quarter get together to build
467 a common oven behind the several soukala. If there are five potters,

323 467 the oven is built in one day. All those who cooperated in building it have the right to use it.

323 At Kombisiguiri, some potters have no ovens. They merely spread out millet stalks on the ground and place the canari on top. They light the millet, and the pots are fired in this fashion.

/521/ It is the potter himself who makes his tools, his crude basin, and his pestle.

Let us point out that the baouré, huge jars where the threshed millet is stored and which are about 2.50 meters high and proportionately wide, which look like enormous sandstone ink bottles and which I saw in the northern part of Mossi territory, are not made by the potters. They are built in each soukala by the inhabitants.

After the potters come the pipe makers. It is the old women who make pipes among the Mossi. They fetch the appropriate clay, [435] fashion the bowl of the pipe, and fire it. They sell it for 5 cowries.

333 Let us not forget the bricklayers, who are called tammétéba in Mossi. Like Gourounsi bricklayers, Mossi ones are primarily cultivators, and their fields net them much more than their trade. As among the Gourounsi, the bricklayers are not paid. They are merely fed for the duration of their work.

322 Following work with earth and clay, let us proceed to woodworking. It is represented among the Mossi by the koukouperséba and séta.

Among certain populations of West Africa, the woodworker's trade is exercised by the blacksmiths (for example, among the Malinké, Dialonké, etc.). Among the Mossi, as among the Gourounsi, it is sharply distinct from the blacksmith's trade and exercised by the koukouperséba, who are counterparts of the Gourounsi voguésara and Mandé debakala-lésemba. The koukouperséba make daba handles, axe handles, small chairs which are very nicely tooled with a hot iron and which represent a horse's back with two crude heads, two outlines of a head, on either side.

Actually, the koukouperséba are primarily cultivators. They work the soil during the rainy season. During the dry season, they make the various items just mentioned.

322 563 In addition to these people, there are the Laobé among the Mossi, that is to say, /522/ those men who are employed by the

322 563 Foulbé as makers of wooden gourds and other items of a similar nature. The Mossi call them séta. Since there are many Foulbé in Mossi territory, there are Laobé also. Some of them have left their masters to settle independently, and they are now free.

May we present one, by the name of Louri. During the winter season he works the soil, although very slightly like all other Laobé and Foulbé, and he also makes wooden gourds. During the dry season, he only makes gourds. Owing to his very mediocre cultivating abilities, his trade nets him more than his fields.

His tools are as follows:

322 413 1. First, a large ax called diendé, which he uses to cut heavy timber.

2. The saotaré, a kind of well-sharpened hoe with a very short handle, which is used to fashion the gourd on the outside.

3. The tépotondé, a kind of hoe with a very short handle and a very sharp blade, which is used to hollow out the gourd.

4. The menkéré, which is also used to hollow out the inside of the gourd.

5. The kéfirga, a long-handled tool with a curved, sharp blade, which is used for the same purpose as the two preceding tools.

It is the blacksmith who makes the iron parts of these tools.

322 563 435 Their value is as follows:

The axe is worth	2,000	cowries
The saotaré is worth	500	"
The tépotondé is worth	500	"
The menkéré is worth	1,500	"
The kéfirga is worth	200	"

322 563 In order to make his gourds, our Laobé uses the wood of the following trees: hèdè, bouagaï, saboutoungaï, and bembé.

This Laobé comes from Badongo (a village located 31 kilometers from /523/ Ouagadougou). He has a wife and two children. [567] He is a former slave, a captive from Laobé, whose masters had settled at Badongo. The master left, and now he is free. Formerly he worked for his master, and now he works for himself. He makes gourds in advance and has them sold at market by his wife. He [435] sells the small ones for 100 cowries, the medium ones for 300, the large ones for 500 (0.10, 0.30, 0.50 franc).

322 As for plots, he cultivates a field of small millet, a little
563 maize around his hut, a few peanuts and underground peas.

His soukala consists of a single and lone hut where he lives with his wife and two children.

Here is another example of a Laobé or séta, this one living at Kombisiguiri. He has left the Foulbé to settle among the Mossi.

[413] His woodworking tools are the same as those we mentioned above: diendé, tépotondé, menkéré, saotaré, and kéfirga.

[313] To make his gourds, he cuts down a whole tree, either hèdè or n'kouna, which yields the best wood, or bembé, sibi, or n'pékou, or else saboutoungaï, sanktougaï, or satantouloungaï, or finally bouagaï, which is less good. Gourds made of hèdè wood sell for more than others.

[435] He makes two kinds of gourds, small ones worth 50 cowries and large ones, some of which sell for up to 1,000 cowries. He makes his gourds without waiting for an order and has them taken to market by his wives.

Our Laobé does not work in the fields at all. From one end of the year to another, he makes his wooden gourds and they bring him enough to live on.

322 In addition, he makes mortars and pestles to crush grain. A
563 small mortar and pestle is worth 1,000 cowries, a large mortar
435 and pestle 2,000. He also makes large wooden spoons which he sells for 50 cowries, and clogs or wooden sandals of a sort which are worn during the rainy season and which he sells for 100 cowries.

/524/ There are eight people in his soukala, himself, his two wives, and his five children.

322 Let us add that a few, a very few, Mossi have begun to make wooden gourds like the Laobé, but contrary to the habits of the latter, they spend more time in the fields than at their trade. There are a few at Polsogo, a village located 12 kilometers from Ouagadougou. They must not be confused with the koukouperséba mentioned above.

There are also bow makers among the Mossi. They are called tempéséda. They are primarily cultivators, and their fields net them much more than their trade. They exercise the latter only for the purpose of getting a few cowries to buy condiments such as

322 [435] salt, etc. Small bows are worth 20 cowries, medium ones 70, and large ones 100.

285 We have just reviewed woodworking. Let us proceed to basketry. Here the latter gives rise to two major trades, the basket maker's and the hat maker's. Let us study them in turn.

As an example, here is Niandé Zango, a basket maker and head of a soukala. He has two wives and three children. His soukala numbers five huts.

He works in the fields during the winter season, and at his trade during the dry season. His fields bring him the larger returns.

He makes his baskets at home without waiting for an order, and he has his wives sell them at market.

He gets doudouma straw in the bush and cultivates mono in his maize field.

[314] Doudouma is a tall grass that is left to dry and that furnishes excellent straw for the manufacture of baskets and trays.

Doudoumidou is doudouma straw dyed red with mono.

249 386 285 Mono (faraoro in Bambara) is a plant grown by the Mossi in their maize fields, around the soukala. It looks a great deal like large red millet, but it is /525/ not the same thing. It is probably a variety of large millet, however. Mono is sown along with maize when the first rains begin to fall. Holes are made with the koutiaga, mono grains placed within and covered up. When mono has emerged from the ground, the weeds are pulled out. The harvesting is done about two and a half months after sowing. The stalks are severed at the base and left to dry in the sun, and then the sheaths and culms are torn off. The latter are the parts used to dye the straw red.

The sheaths and culms are crushed by rubbing them by hand in a canari full of water. Then the doudouma straw is left to soak in this canari. The canari is placed on the fire, where it is kept for six hours. When this is over, the straw, now dyed red, is removed.

386 285 Doudousabalé is doudouma straw dyed black by immersion in bérédo. The straw is gathered, taken to a watercourse, and buried in bérédo. It is left there for a whole day, and this gives it a shiny grey hue.

285 314 Gansacé is a gramineous plant that grows wild along the banks of watercourses. The natives do not cultivate it. Dried gansacé provides a kind of straw that is used in the manufacture of straw trays. The Foulbé settled in the area also use it in the manufacture of hats.

Boulouvaka is a shrub that grows along watercourses. The boulouvaka stem is sectioned in two or four, yielding small flexible twigs that are dyed black by immersion in bérédo. Once dyed, these twigs are used in the manufacture of Mossi baskets.

Koué is a tall gramineous plant that provides straw used in the manufacture of certain baskets. Koué grows wild all over the bush, in dry spots as well as watered areas.

Dana is a shrub the wood of which is used in the manufacture of the Mossi baskets made of koué straw. It grows everywhere in the bush.

Sepso, semso, semsoro or semsogo is the Mossi name for the bark filaments taken from the néré pods. /526/ They are used in making straw trays. Sepso may be dyed red with mono, or black with bérédo.

All these elements are used by basket makers in the manufacture of their baskets and straw trays.

285 435 Now, here are some samples of Mossi basketry:

1. Large yellow baskets made of koué straw. The rims are made of dana stalks. These baskets are sold at local markets for 250 cowries apiece. They are crude baskets used to carry millet or to bring it to horses. They are quadrangular and shaped like upside-down pyramids sectioned at the base.

2. Large deluxe baskets shaped like the above but distinct in that instead of being solid yellow, straw- yellow, they are multi-colored. They are made of koué straw (yellow), doudoumidou straw (red), and boulouvaka straw (black). They are worth about 1,500 cowries apiece.

3. Straw trays, straw dishes of a sort, made with doudouma (yellow) and doudoumidou (red). They sell for 250 cowries when small, 300 when large.

4. Ordinary straw dishes made with doudouma only (undyed straw). They are worth 150 cowries.

285 5. Straw dishes made with doudouma (yellow), doudoumidou
435 (red), and doudousabalé (shiny grey). They are worth 300 cowries.

6. Dishes made of gansacé straw (yellow) and doudoumidou straw (red) worth 250 cowries.

7. Dishes made of gansacé and sepso straw (sepso is dyed red with mono). The larger ones are worth 350 cowries, the smaller ones 250.

There are no basket makers at Ouagadougou proper, but there are many people in neighboring villages who work at this trade.

The basket maker's only tool is the lépéré-pime, a thick iron needle hooked at the head and adorned with small stripes, /527/ which serves to stitch the straw used for baskets and trays. The lépéré-pime is made by the blacksmith, and it is worth 50 cowries.

Gansacé is also used in the manufacture of bracelets, cords, and lids.

285 The maker of straw hats must be included with the basket
294 maker. Both trades belong together.

To present one of them, here is Tenda Ouidiraogo, a Mossi. He tills the soil during the rainy season, and he makes straw hats during the dry season.

Hats are made with kansé, a gramineous plant that grows along watercourses and ponds.

283 This grass is made into string. First it is placed in water to be
285 softened, and then it is sectioned into two sprigs which are also im-
294 mersed in water. They are rubbed and twisted by hand upon the thigh. The two sprigs coil together and make string that is fairly strong, although breakable by hand.

First, enough of this string is prepared for the manufacture of a hat.

The hat makers have a sort of block called dogoma, made of
285 a tripod stick with a vertical stem. They use it to make their hats,
294 which are the ordinary pointed straw hats common to all of West Africa, and which are found in the Sudan as well as in Guinea. These hats come way down on the back of the neck and make their wearers look like Calabrian bandits. It must be said, however, that among the Mossi there is another type of straw hat, which is swollen, rounded, and partly covered with leather patches. It is

285 294 closer to our European hats and vaguely recalls a very fat and swollen straw bowler with wide rims.

In order to make the former kind, our hat maker begins by bringing together a hundred strings. He ties them at one end, an end left in its original straw state, and thus fashions the tip of the hat. Then he interlaces these strings by hand with bits of unmodified kansé straw. The strings hang vertically, the straw pieces are interlaced horizontally, and this makes up the web of the hat.

[386] /528/ The bits of kansé are often dyed black beforehand by immersion in the mud of a watercourse. This is how black lines and designs are obtained in certain parts of the hat.

[435] Six days are needed to make a hat. It is sold for 1,000 cowries, of course without the ornaments, straps, and strips of leather that will be added by the shoemaker.

Hat makers fashion these hats in advance and have their wives well them at market.

248 Bérenga or hemp (also called tamora among the Mossi) goes into the manufacture of straw hats as well. We saw above, when discussing cultivation, how bérenga is grown. It is sown either among maize or among large red millet, that is to say around the soukala, or even in fields in the bush among small millet or large white millet. If sown among maize, it is sown three days afterwards; if among large red millet, four days later; if among large white millet, ten days later; and if among small millet, ten or twelve days afterward.

Bérenga is harvested ten or twenty days after maize, if it stands in a maize field. If it has been sown among millet, it is harvested seven days afterwards. Bérenga stalks are severed at the base, and the fibrous bark is removed and dried. Bérenga is green when fresh and reddish brown when dry. It is usually made into strings and cords. It is also used for the thatch roofing of huts. When it is to go into 285 294 the making of a hat, it is dyed black by immersion in bérédo and used along with kansé to furnish the black lines of the hats.

Here are some sample products of the Mossi hat-making industry:

1. Pointed straw hats made of kansé (yellow) and bérenga (black). They sport leather ornaments and straps added by the [435] shoemaker. They are worth 2,500 cowries.

285 294 435 2. Similar but smaller hats, worth from 1,000 to 1,500 cowries.

/529/ 3. Round straw hats with wide prims, mentioned above. These are worth 1,700 cowries.

285 All the leather parts on those hats are added by the shoemaker.

294 241 We have already mentioned that our hat makers are not exclusively manufacturers, that they also till the soil. It must be added that the latter activity nets them more than their trade. The man I mentioned cultivates a field of small millet and one of large red millet in the bush. He also grows maize, peanuts, and underground peas around his soukala. He owns neither large nor small livestock, but only chickens.

285 294 592 In his soukala he has two wives, four children, two married brothers who have one wife apiece but no children, and two unmarried brothers, as well as a father. They all make hats.

He lives at Saponé, where there are many hat manufacturers.

282 294 [564] After straw work, let us mention leatherwork.

Mossi shoemakers do not form a caste. Anyone who wants to may marry among them, and anyone who wishes to do so may exercise their trade.

[592] As an example, here is Kinoga Kologo, a Mossi, and the head of a soukala. He lives with two wives, two children, and an unmarried brother. His soukala consists of three huts.

His tools are as follows:

282 294 413 1. The pongo, a kind of broad little knife with a flaring blade hafted to a very short handle. It is used to cut hide.

2. The gansiouba, a wooden knife used to scrape and rub hides, clean them and smooth them.

3. The désara, a small tool with a wooden handle and a curved iron stem. It is used red hot to trace designs on hides.

4. The pime, a small awl used to sew hides.

5. The large tirisiga. This is an iron seal used to imprint hides with small circles.

6. The small tirisiga. This is a smaller seal, /530/ an iron rod whose tip makes a very tiny seal.

282 294 435 As among nearly all Blacks, the Mossi shoemaker is his own tanner. He buys sheepskins and goatskins at market (small ones

282 sell for 200 cowries, large ones for 400). He leaves them to soak
294 in a large canari with yogré seeds for twelve hours. Then he re-
435 moves the hair by hand, washes the skin thoroughly, and places it again in a canari with seeds of pélanaga (a tree that grows in the bush). He washes and rubs the hide with these seeds. Then he leaves it to dry in the sun after covering it with butter, real butter rather than karité butter. The skin may then be used to make various items.

Kinoga also buys cowhide at market to make sandals. One cowhide is worth 3,000 cowries. He puts it in a large canari where he leaves it soaking for three days, then he takes it out, removes the hair with a knife, and strikes the skin with a small stick to soften it. Whatever amount of leather is needed to make sandals is then removed from the hide, which is used up gradually as the need arises.

The shoemaker's tools are made by the blacksmith. These tools are worth 100 cowries apiece, except for the awl that is worth 20 and the wooden knife that is made by the shoemaker himself and worth 50. All of the shoemaker's tools taken together are thus worth 470 cowries, or only 50 centimes.

Our shoemaker makes the following items:

1. Sandals, first and foremost. The most expensive ones are worth 2,500 cowries a pair, the less expensive ones 1,500 cowries.

2. Leather grigris, bracelets, pouches, etc. The pouches are worth 100 cowries, the bracelets 50. He only makes them on order. It must be said that other shoemakers stock them up beforehand and have them taken to market.

Of course, what the shoemaker prepares is the physical part of the grigri, its outer covering. It is not he who gives the grigri its power, its soul.

3. Kinoga does not make satchels, goatskin bags, but other shoemakers do.

[415] /531/ There are goatskins used to store millet. Large ones are worth 1 franc and small ones 0.50 franc. Then, there are goatskins used to hold water. They are worth from 0.30 to 1 franc. Finally, there are small goatskins used as purses or coin bags and worth 0.20 franc.

[372] 4. Shoemakers also make leather cases for strike-a-light steel
(200 cowries) and for needles (50 cowries). Both strike-a-light steel
[326] and needles are made by blacksmiths.

282 294 435 and needles are made by blacksmiths. A strike-a-light steel is worth 200 cowries.

5. They make sheaths for knives and swords. Knife sheaths are worth 200 cowries, sword sheaths 3,000.

6. Bridles and saddles. Saddles are worth 3,000 cowries, bridles 5,000.

Shoemakers also work with deerskin and leopardskin. They adorn Mossi truncheons or clubs with leopardskin. They also adorn spears with it. The leopardskin is provided by the customer. The shoemaker does not purchase it directly.

Leopardskin is sold at market in small pieces worth 100 cowries. A large leopardskin is worth 10 francs, a small one 7 francs.

Crocodile skin is also used by shoemakers. People who have killed a crocodile go and sell its skin at market, or else someone purchases the skin from the hunter and retails it at market. The skin of a small crocodile (hardly any but these are to be found in Mossi territory, owing to the scarcity of water) is worth 1,000 cowries. People who wish the shoemaker to work one of these skins purchase it at market and take it to him.

282 294 There are no hippopotamus skins in Mossi territory, because water is scarce and watercourses are small. As for elephant skin, it is too tough to be worked and remains unused.

282 294 241 The shoemaker I am describing exercises his trade only during the dry season. During the rainy season he tills the soil, and this nets him more than his trade. /532/ The same thing applies, incidentally, to all Mossi shoemakers. During the winter season, our man cultivates a field of small millet and one of large red millet, a small rice field, and a little maize around his soukala. He plants beans in his two millet fields. He owns neither large nor small livestock, not even a chicken or a dog.

There are no makers of headcrests among the Mossi, and the Boussouma chief I questioned about it told me there never were any.

286 Let us now proceed to the cotton industry, and study in turn the weaver's, tailor's and dyer's trades.

The Mossi weaver (soulouga) is a weaver-cultivator. He tills the soil during the rainy season and exercises his trade during the dry season. In fact he is primarily a cultivator, for cultivation rather than weaving comes first and foremost to him.

286 There may be five weaver-cultivators in a small village, or fifteen in a large one.

286 283 Customers bring the weaver the cotton thread spun by their wives, for spinning is a family affair. The women spread out the tufts of raw cotton on a small board and extract the seeds by pressing upon them. Then they spin small quantities of cotton between their fingers and thus make it into threads which they coil around a twig. The threads are handed to the weaver in this form.

286 The weaver uncoils the threads and sets them on his loom, which is very primitive. It is the same one used throughout West Africa, and it is called niri in Mossi. The cotton strips are usually from 8 to 10 centimeters wide. Their length, which is quite variable, may reach 50 meters. The weaver makes his loom himself.

Let us present an Ouagadougou weaver, Beïdou Ninkéma, the head of a soukala. He has two wives and no children. He tills the soil during the rainy season and weaves during the dry season. His fields net him more than his trade, because the Yarsé also work at the weaver's trade, and since they are more skillful at it than the Mossi their competition is formidable. /533/ The customers bring him thread, and he makes it into cotton strips. He is paid 500 [435] cowries to make the strips needed for a skirt. Sixty strips are needed to make one skirt.

[294] Our weaver is also a tailor, but only on occasion, and incidentally a tailor of the lowest order for he can only make skirts and cloaks. [435] He cannot make trousers. He makes a cloak for 0.50 franc, a skirt for 0.20 franc, with the fabric supplied, of course.

286 857 291 Let us add that child-weavers are also to be found among the Mossi. They make pétala.

"Pétala," says the Cahier des Rapports of the circle /of Ouagadougou/, "are small, very narrow strips, from 10 to 25 millimeters wide, made of multicolored threads, yellow, red, blue, green, etc., dyed in the territory and woven by children on simplified looms.

"Those strips, which are very strong, are used as trouser belts.

[435] "Pétala is worth a little under 0.10 franc a meter, and its sale nets a small profit to the children who make it and who sell it themselves on Mossi markets.

286 291 "This kind of braiding is not exported."

294 563 There are tailors as well as weavers among the Mossi. The tailor's trade, incidentally, is exercised in Mossi lands not only by the Mossi but also by the Yarsé and by some of the Haoussa who are settled in the territory.

294 Mossi tailors till the soil during the winter season and work as tailors during the dry season. Their fields net them more than their trade.

Most Mossi tailors do custom work. Cotton strips are brought to them, and they sew them into the required garment. Others purchase cotton strips, make them into various garments (skirts, cloaks, trousers, caps) and have their wives sell them at market. Those, however, are in the minority.

A cloak is called fougou in Mossi, a skirt fougoupoko from poko, "woman" and fougou, "cloak." Trousers are called koulouga.

/534/ Let us add that garment manufacture has remained a family industry in much of Mossi territory. Many Mossi can sew, and they make their own clothes by sewing up cotton strips. Let [462] us note here that as in nearly all of West Africa, it is the men who sew rather than the women. In this area of Africa, indeed, sewing is essentially a male occupation rather than a female one.

Now to present a Ouagadougou tailor, Mohammadi Bagaré.

He tills the soil and does nothing else during the winter season. He exercises his tailor's trade during the dry season.

He does custom work. Those who want a garment bring him cotton strips in sufficient numbers, and he makes the requested gar- [435] ment. He asks 1,000 cowries to make a large cloak, 500 for a small one, 200 for a skirt. To make a cap he asks only for one kola nut, which is worth 50 cowries at Ouagadougou. He takes 200 cowries for a pair of trousers.

It takes him five days' work to make a large cloak, two days for a small one, one day for a skirt, two days for a pair of trousers, one hour for a cap.

[412 439] His only working tool is the needle. Mohammadi uses European needles.

386 177 There are dyers as well as weavers and tailors among the Mossi. "Dyer" is garalosadaba in Mossi, from gara, "indigo" and sadaba, "maker." There are no dyers in the southern part of Mossi territory but only in the north, from Ouagadougou upward. This would tend to prove that just as the Mossi probably learned cotton weaving from the Yarsé, they must have learned the dyer's craft from the Songhay, with whom they have had contact toward the north. Actually, Songhay emigrants have established villages in the northern part of the Ouagadougou circle, and the dyer's craft is their chief industry. This strongly corroborates our theory. Let us add that /535/ the Mossi practice dyeing in certain places, at certain spots, so to speak. One may not find a single dyer in a large number of Mossi villages, and then all at once come upon a locality with thirty dyers' wells, such as Yakki for example.

386 249 To present a Ouagadougou dyer, here is a Mossi by the name of Gomdounguiba Nangakoré. He does not himself cultivate indigo. He buys it at market in loaves or balls. Anyone may grow indigo among the Mossi (see the section on cultivation above). When it is ripe, the leaves are gathered, heaped in a wooden gourd, and [435] pressed to make loaves worth 50, 100, or 500 cowries. The dyer buys the loaves at market.

386 He dyes either cotton threads or strips, or even garments (cloaks, etc.). The item to be dyed is brought to him. In short, he usually does custom work.

Sometimes, nevertheless, he buys thread, strips, cloaks, or skirts, dyes them, and has them sold at market by his wife or wives.

Every dyer sinks a dyeing well outside, but right beside, his soukala. He makes a neatly squared hole, quadrangular, about 60 centimeters long by 60 wide and 1 meter deep. This hole is tamped carefully several times, and the clay walls are polished with water prepared with néré bark. Finally, water is poured in to see whether it is watertight. About three days are needed to make one of those wells. Every dyer has one.

In order to dye thread, strips or garments, millet-stalk ashes are placed in water, strained, and tossed to the bottom of the dyeing hole. Then come the ashes of a tree called gouara by the Mossi (the ashes themselves are called zato or iato). They are laid

386 at the bottom of the hole. A loaf of indigo is added, and then water. The ingredients are left to blend for three days, and then the thread, strips, etc., may be immersed.

The coloring mixture is replaced every twenty days. It leaves at the bottom of the dyeing well a sort of yellow-grey crust which is removed and allowed to dry in the sun. Once dry, it /536/ is reduced to powder and added to the next mixture.

Cotton threads, in order to be dyed, are immersed in the mixture and crumpled with the fingers. At nighttime they are removed and left to dry on the hut roof. The dyeing is resumed on the morrow. At the end of three days, the threads are black. Only two days are needed to obtain dark-blue threads, and one day is sufficient for light-blue threads. The same applies to cotton strips and garments.

Our dyer does not exercise his trade during the winter season. At that time, he undertakes nothing but cultivation. It is during the dry season that he is a dyer. He claims, however, that his trade nets him more than his fields.

386 435 To dye cotton threads he asks 200 cowries to dye a bundle black, from 60 to 100 to dye it dark blue, or 50 cowries to dye it light blue.

When he buys a cloak to dye it (he buys it for 1,500 cowries, for example) he resells it dyed black for 3,000 cowries, dark blue for 2,000, or light blue for 1,700.

Mossi fabrics are as follows:

286 435 1. White or off-white fabric, undyed. It is called pempéla. It is worth 25 cowries a cubit, that is, the length from the elbow to the tip of the fingers.

2. The white fabric with blue strips called nakoré. It is made of white threads and threads dyed blue. It is worth 50 cowries a cubit.

3. The fabric with small blue and white checks called arkilla. It is worth 50 cowries a cubit.

4. The dark-blue fabric with scattered white stripes. It is called ganga, and it is worth 50 cowries a cubit.

5. Finally, the blue fabric with blue and white stripes called oulambala or oulambalé, which costs 75 cowries or one sou and a half a cubit.

000 We are now finished with Mossi industries, not because this work is complete or definitive of course, nor because I have listed and thoroughly studied all this people's trades. I have said enough, however, to draw a significant outline /537/ of these industries and to show that they are flourishing. We may now proceed to trading.

438 Among the Mossi, as everywhere else in West Africa, one must distinguish the internal trade of the territory from its external trade.
443 As among other Blacks, the internal trade formerly was, and still is, ensured by village markets which are held at the most important localities on set days, for example every three days, every five days, etc. Thus at Ouagadougou, before the arrival of the Whites, the market was held every three days. Now it is a daily affair.

443 At every village where a market was held, there was a "mar-
782 ket chief" named by the village chief. The market chief performed a sacrifice for the market. On a large consecrated stone he killed a chicken, a goat, or a sheep which he provided himself.
[776] The animal was offered to the sky divinity (Ounam) to preclude fights on the market place. When this was over, our chief gave a hand to Ounam in his pacifying role, with the aid of a club if necessary.

443 All internal and external products of the territory were retailed at those markets, largely by women whom the Blacks, as we know, are in the habit of sending to market with surplus goods to sell. We shall not dwell on the internal Mossi trade, which is the same as in all black countries, a small retail trade nourished and vitalized by the external trade. Let us, therefore, proceed to the latter.

439 The external Mossi trade is the usual trade of the Sudan, which we have already described and which operates from north to south and south to north. Livestock is led toward the south, kola nuts are brought toward the north, salt is brought back toward the south, etc. We should add to this the cotton strips which constitute one of the important Mossi products (they are made by the Yarsé and by the Mossi themselves, as we saw). Those cotton strips, like livestock, are taken south where cotton is poorly grown.

439 We must add without further delay, however, that it is not the Mossi who do this trading but the Yarsé we know so /538/ well, and the Haoussa settled in Mossi territory. Mossi trade, therefore, is not really Mossi, or at least it was not in the past. If it has now begun to be to some extent, it is thanks to French settlement in the territory.

439 After conquering Mossi lands (1896), indeed, we levied a tax
651 on the population. This tax, low at first, rose rapidly over the last few years. In 1906 it amounted to 311,000 francs in the Ouagadougou circle itself, for a population of 861,000 inhabitants. In 1907 it rose to 366,000 francs, in 1909 to 555,000 francs, in 1910 to 656,000 francs. Furthermore, beginning in 1908, it was exacted with so much strictness and on such short notice that it was exactly as though its amount had been increased threefold. Under the circumstances, the Mossi were forced to take to trading in order to secure the French money they did not have, since the local
[436] currency is the cowrie and the French administration will not take it. They were forced to go and sell their oxen, even their cows, something the Black will only consent to do when hard pressed and in the direst need. In short, the Mossi now organize small caravans on a village basis. Local young men are sent in groups to Ouanké to
[484] sell cattle, sheep, goats, donkeys, local horses, and cotton strips. They bring back either French currency or kola nuts. When they bring nuts, they go and sell them at Saraféré or Sofara and get salt or 5-franc pieces. In other words, the Mossi are taking to trade, owing to a pressing need.

439 The Mossi, nevertheless, may hardly be regarded as a trader. He has been one for an extremely short time, and he is not much of a trader yet.

To summarize, there is a strong current of exchange trading in Mossi territory from north to south and south to north. There are also important market towns in the territory, or rather large market villages, as we already know. This exchange trading and those important markets, however, are the creation and achievement of the Yarsé and of a small number of Haoussa. The Mossi themselves, in the past, had no part in all this, except /539/ for the fact that the

M 439 centralized structure of the Mossi empire ensured the necessary safety for exchanges and trade. Nowadays they still have a very small part in it, and only when forced and pressed by the need to pay taxes.

M 439 183 To corroborate this Mossi incapacity for trade, I need only select from my field notes of December, 1908. Here is a significant one concerning a Mossi village in the northern part of the /Ouagadougou/ circle, "No trade in this village. It is the Yarsé from Téma who come and buy the cotton bands dyed blue and sell them at Salaga (Gold Coast). Our Mossi would profit by doing this themselves. They agree but nevertheless fail to do it, saying that their forebears did not do it either. They do no trading, therefore." In another village, Yakki, where industries flourish, I made the following note, "Trade, on the other hand, is nil, as among all Mossi."

M H 441 439 I stated above that higher trade among the Mossi was confined to a few Haoussa colonies. Concerning this, and in order to give an idea of this trading, I shall record here a short profile of a Haoussa trader from Ouagadougou, Maïguisiri Dangaori, who has been there for fifteen years although his family lives at Iko in Haoussa territory.

He has no fields, of course. He does nothing but trade.

He buys cattle and sheep locally. He takes them to Kumasi on the Gold Coast (this is not usually done by the Yarsé, who do not go so far south). He sells them there, and with the returns he buys kola nuts, European fabrics, glass trinkets, sugar, cast-iron pots, etc. On the way back, he hires needy Haoussa who live on the Gold Coast as bearers and takes them to Ouagadougou. Each bearer is paid 35 francs on arrival for the fifty days of travel. In addition, he feeds them along the way. Their food costs him 300 cowries a day.

H [482 465] He sells the goods he brought back, or rather has them sold at the Ouagadougou market, for he has an employee who /540/ sells for him at market. This employee is not a member of his family. He is a Haoussa, to whom he gives 5 percent of the sales. That is all. Beyond this he gives him nothing, not even food.

Our trader usually waits until everything is sold before returning to the Gold Coast. If the merchandise does not sell quickly enough, he picks up what is left and disposes of it on the way back.

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The journey takes six months from the time he leaves Ouagadougou to the time he returns. On his way to the Gold Coast he needs no bearers. He merely takes a Peuhl to herd the cattle, and provides him with food and 300 cowries a day, plus 1 franc on arrival per head of cattle herded.

Our trader stays with another Haoussa from Ouagadougou, another trader of course, who is wealthier than he. He does not pay rent, but offers him gifts from time to time in return for his hospitality.

His family lives at Iko in Haoussa territory, and consists of three wives and three children. He goes and sees them every two years.

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We can see that the Haoussa do their trading in grander and more forceful fashion than the Yarsé. They do not hesitate to expatriate themselves in order to carry out their trade, and in this fashion they have actually colonized southern Nigeria, Dahomey, Togoland, the Gold Coast, Mossi country, etc. Once settled there, they carry their trading operations farther than local merchants, and they hardly do anything else. While the Yarsé is an example of cultivator-trader, the Haoussa of Mossi territory is in most cases an example of pure trader who specializes completely in trading. This is why he towers above the whole trading structure of the country. Bent on gain, a speculator in cowries and French currency, more intelligent than the Mossi and Yarsé, he amasses large fortunes.

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In order to be quite thorough on the subject of present and past trading in Mossi territory, it should be added that formerly the slave trade was carried out alongside that in livestock, cotton fabric, kola nut, and salt. The slaves came chiefly from Gourounsi, /541/, Boussansé, and Kipirsi lands. The Djermabé /Zerma?/, especially, sold slaves to the Mossi in very large numbers when they pillaged Gourounsi territory. This trade, like the others, was in the hands of the Yarsé and Haoussa.

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Let us also add a word about the now-abolished eunuch trade. Formerly, the Mossi furnished some to the Haoussa, who forwarded them to Turkey via Egypt. The operated men were Gourounsi sold to the Mossi by the Zaberma and by their chief Baba-Tô. Some Mossi villages specialized in this kind of work. The village of Koubry,

839 especially, subsisted upon it. The victims, children from twelve
439 to fifteen years old, were provided by the Moro Naba, who kept
304 them afterward or sold them to the Haoussa.

In 1900 our ambassador to Turkey learned that a shipment of eunuchs which had reached Constantinople had originated in Mossi territory, which we had occupied since 1896. He warned the Minister of Foreign Affairs, who notified his colleague the Minister of the Colonies. Strict orders were issued to put an end to this Mossi industry, which has since ceased to exist.

439 Let us finally add the grain trade, which is unusual in Mossi territory. In the years 1906, 1907, and 1908 which saw poor harvests, however, the Mossi were forced to acquire grain in Yatenga (Ouahigouya circle) and in Gourounsi territory by selling livestock.

We have now concluded our discussion of Mossi occupations. Let us proceed to a study of the family and the superposed social organisms.

Chapter II

The Mossi: The Family, Public Powers, and Religion

593 We must state first that the Mossi family is a partly decommunalized family. This may come as a surprise in view of the foregoing section on work (cultivation predominates, stockbreeding is poor, industries flourish, trade is nonexistent), which had led us to expect something altogether different. Nevertheless, this is a fact.

The family is even highly decommunalized, although not everywhere to the same degree. In this respect, five different family types are to be found.

596 The first two are quite rare. They would seem to be witnesses
326 to an ancient state of affairs which has now vanished. Thus, one finds the common patriarchal type among those blacksmiths who are gathered into /special/ quarters or even villages and whom we mentioned in the section on industries. This type is found only among them and not among isolated blacksmiths, where only the common Mossi family type occurs.

596 326 Are those blacksmiths who live in groups unaltered remnants of the ancient population as it existed prior to the Dagomba invasion? Are they autochthonous? Should their statement that they are not Mossi be interpreted in this light? This is probable, although by no means certain. In any case, the family among them is of the purest patriarchal cast.

596 326 592 Among them, all households belonging to a family occupy the same soukala. When a young man marries, he remains in the family soukala.

/543/ During the winter season, the occupants of the soukala work in the fields of the head of the soukala from six in the morning until three in the afternoon. From three o'clock on, they till their own little individual plots.

During the dry season, they all work together at the blacksmith's trade with the head of the soukala, and all profits devolve to the latter. They work from sunrise to sunset.

The head of the soukala provides them with food throughout the year. As for their clothing, they procure it themselves with the returns from their little plots. The same applies to bracelets, jewels, etc. (as for grigris, they do not like them).

The head of the soukala buys each man his first wife, and in return gives in marriage all the daughters of the soukala.

596 428 326 When the head of a soukala dies, it is his younger brother who takes command of the soukala. He also takes all the goods, fields, livestock, slaves, cowries, and the tools used to extract and work the iron. The sons get nothing. Everyone remains in the soukala.

When the supply of brothers has been exhausted, the oldest son in the whole soukala receives the inheritance.

If no males remain in the soukala, the sisters come first in line before the daughters if they have the same father and mother as the deceased, but after /them/ if they were born of the same father only. They take half of the movable property and give half to the daughters. They apportion their share evenly among themselves. The soukala and fields go to the village chief. If there are no sisters born of the same father and mother, the inheritance goes to the daughters, and next in line to the sisters born of the same father as the deceased. If there are neither sisters nor daughters, the whole estate goes to the village chief.

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326 As we can see, the common patriarchal family is found among those blacksmiths who live in groups.

The second Mossi family type is one we had occasion to men-
592 tion here and there in the section on work. Contrary to the first
596 type, which is found only in a special section of the population, this one occurs throughout the Mossi but as a rare /544/ and exceptional case. All the households in the family still live together, but every household works for itself. This is the type we studied among the Nankana and other groups of cultivator-breeders under the name of Nankana type No. 3 /not translated/.

593 We come now to those Mossi family types which are wide-
592 spread rather than exceptional. They correspond to the Nankana type No. 4 (every household lives separately and works separately), or rather they depart from it in the direction of even greater decommunalization. There are three variants, namely, one that corresponds to the pure Nankana type No. 4, and two where decommunalization is more accentuated. Let us describe them in turn.

Here is the first variant:

593 1. The households live separately. As soon as a young man
592 marries, he settles on his own with the help of his family.
596 When a family head gives one of the family's sons a wife, he uses a vacant soukala if there is one available. If there is none, the son builds a new soukala with the help of his father and of the family head.

2. Every household works separately (except for the clearing of family fields), procures its own food, clothing, and subsistence. The married son, however, comes and helps his father a little now and then. During the dry season, for example, he helps him repair the soukala. Or else he offers him small gifts from time to time.

When someone, on marrying, settles separately, the head of the family usually gives him some family field that was once cleared and cultivated and has since lain fallow.

3. Although households work separately, the children of the households are not given in marriage by their father and mother, but by the head of the family. The latter buys wives for the boys,
[583] but he also gives the daughters in marriage and receives the bride price.

584 To arrange a marriage, one offers gifts to the girl's family on
596 festive days. The gift grows more sizable from year to year. Finally, at the time of marriage, one offers 25 or 30 francs as a bride price.

Girls are also exchanged among families. /545/ One family may pledge one of its daughters to another family for one of its young men, while the second family provides a girl for a boy of the first family.

Even if a man buys a wife at market and has children by her, it is not he but his family head who gives those children in marriage.

If a young man goes himself to a family head, asks for a wife, and obtains her without any payment, without any bride price, it is the girl's father who disposes of the first daughter born of the union. He is entitled to take her with him as soon as she is no longer at the breast, and he will later give her in marriage. The other children are given in marriage by their father's family head.

596 4. The head of the family performs religious sacrifices for the
782 whole family, and acts as its judge.

5. When a family head dies, the headship of the family goes
596 to his younger brother along with the family property, that is,
428 his soukala if it is a family one (built by the family or with the help of the family), the available family fields, the movable family property (livestock, slaves, cowries, clothing, family jewels, etc.). The movable private property of the deceased, on the other hand (livestock, slaves, cowries, clothing, private jewels, etc.) go to the oldest son along with the fields cultivated by the deceased and by his household, that is, the private property of the deceased. Finally, the soukala, if it was built by the deceased all by himself and without the aid of his family, goes to his oldest son as well since it is private property.

The brother who inherits gives some of the movable family property to the other brothers, but only if he feels like doing so.

Here, family property is by far the most important.

Such is the oldest variant of the Mossi family type that prevails at the present day. Actually, this variant still persists in quite a few Mossi localities.

Now, here is the second variant:

592 1. Every household lives separately, works separately (except
596 for the clearing of the family fields), and sees to its own subsistence.

592 People who are thus settled on their own work for themselves and no
596 longer for /546/ their father, with whom they lived and for whom they worked prior to marriage. They nevertheless offer gifts to their father from time to time.

592 2. As far as the marriage of children belonging to those house-
596 holds is concerned, a distinction must be made among the following
584 possibilities. When they are the children of wives bought by the family head, it is the latter who gives them in marriage. When they are the children of wives obtained by the husband himself, it is the latter who gives them in marriage.

Or else a rough compromise is made (in Boussouma province, for example). The first son and first daughter of the union are given in marriage by the family head, while the other children are given in marriage by the household.

596 3. It is the head of the family, however, who alone is entitled
782 to offer religious sacrifices for the whole family, and who always acts as its judge.

596 4. When the head of the family dies, the headship is trans-
428 mitted to his younger brother along with the family property. The private property of the deceased goes to all his sons, but the oldest son is favored. This actually constitutes the difference between this family type and the preceding one as far as inheritance is concerned. While in the preceding type the oldest son alone inherited, in this type all sons inherit but the eldest is heavily favored.

Thus, if the soukala was the private property of the deceased, it goes to the eldest son. If he is able to cultivate them all, the latter also keeps all the fields cultivated by the deceased. If he is not able to do so, he gives the surplus to his brothers.

As for livestock, if there are ten head that belonged privately to the deceased, and if there are three sons and two daughters, the oldest son will get four, each other son will get two, and each daughter will get one.

[567] As for slaves, if the situation is the same, the oldest son will take five out of ten, the second son three, the third son two, and the daughters will get none.

Cowries and grain are apportioned in the same manner.

In addition to these shares given to the younger sons and to the daughters, it must be noted that private property has acquired greater

596 428 significance vis-à-vis family property in this second Mossi family type. /547/ Thus, my informant stresses that here family property still has greater significance than private property, but at the same time he adds that in every inheritance he witnessed, the soukala always went to the oldest son, no matter what its origin. He corroborates this with information about his own family, as follows:

He lives, he says, with five wives, two daughters, two unmarried cousins who are the sons of one of his father's brothers, an unmarried cousin who is the son of one of his father's sisters, a nephew who is the son of his own sister, in short, twelve persons including him.

The soukala where he lives once belonged to his father and was built by the latter alone. He has thus inherited it, even though his father had a younger brother.

Incidentally, the brother got nothing, since my informant's father left nothing beside the soukala, no family property or private worth much.

To whom will the soukala go when he dies? Since he has no son, he replies, it will go to his younger brother (he has a younger brother who lives in a separate soukala). Supposing he had a son, however? Then it would go to his son.

I counter that it should go to his brother, since he did not build it himself but inherited it from his father (that is, from his own and his brother's common father), in accordance with the rule he mentioned earlier. He nevertheless holds, however, that it is not so, that younger brothers never did inherit a soukala, I cannot make him alter his position.

596 423 178 This gives us a living example of how the Mossi family has changed. In the old days, family property went along with the family headship to the younger brother. The soukala, for example, figured in almost every case among the family property, either because the family had given it ready made to the young man, or simply because the family had helped him build it. A soukala was private property only when the young man had built it altogether by himself (a very unusual case). Later, the soukala came to be considered private property when it had been built by the young man

596 with the help of his father and family head (which is by far the
423 most frequent occurrence), /548/ while in such a case it had for-
178 merly been considered family property. Finally, the soukala came to be regarded in every case as personal property and to be transmitted for that reason to the oldest son. This, incidentally, is the same evolution that applied to property in general, as we shall see shortly.

593 Now, here is the third and last variant of the prevailing Mossi family type. Nowadays, this variant is by far the most widespread.

1. Every household lives separately, works separately, and procures its own food and subsistence. The help of neighbors is enlisted to clear the fields.

584 2. Every household gives its own children in marriage. The family head no longer does so.

593 As soon as a man has a son, he chooses a little girl who will go to the boy when he reaches puberty. He visits the girl's relatives from time to time and offers them gifts.

584 When the girl is old enough to be married, he takes 50,000
583 cowries (if he is wealthy), skirt cloths, salt, kola nuts, and gives it
593 all to the relatives. Then, the old women in the daughter's family lead her to the home of the betrothed man's relatives. The father kills a sheep, makes a lot of couscous, buys dolo to celebrate her arrival. Then he offers the girl six or seven baskets containing respectively 1,000, 2,000, 3,000, 4,000, 5,000, 6,000, and 7,000 cowries. The young man himself gives his betrothed four or five skirts. If he is very wealthy, he gives her one or two little girls as slaves.

585 On the evening when the wedding is celebrated, the father asks
[426] one of his neighbors to lend him a hut, and the young married pair are sent there all alone (they will remain there as long as their soukala is not built). On the morrow, the feasting begins. People dance and feast for seven days at the gates of the father's soukala, at least when the girl is a virgin. If she is not, the feasting is curtailed but nevertheless lasts for another three days.

583 When the father is poor, he offers a few kola nuts to the girl's
591 /549/ father (six or ten). He gives the father and mother some firewood he gathered in the bush, straw to make séko /Tr.: mats/ for door, 2,000 cowries, a skirt cloth. He kills a sheep to make

583 couscous, which he offers to the relatives. Then he takes the girl
591 away. He asks a neighbor for a hut to harbor the young couple on their wedding night and over the next few weeks. They stay there for only a month or two, until their soukala is built.

583 The bride price actually varies from region to region among the Mossi. We have just seen it range from 2,000 to 50,000 cowries. Earlier, we saw it set at 25,000. At Kombisiguiri it amounts to a mere 1,000. The young man's father visits the young girl's father with a chicken and 500 cowries; then he comes to see him a second time, again with a chicken and 500 cowries. There is no other bride price. Those who do not have a chicken to offer replace it with a bundle of firewood or a straw séko. In short, a girl here is worth 30 sous (the two chickens being worth 0.50 franc between them, and the 1,000 cowries amounting to one franc).

591 Among rich people the young couple may remain seven, nine, or even twelve months in their neighbors' house. They present the
[431] latter with gifts, and during this period of time they proceed to build a soukala, or rather to have one built. The young man's father helps his son in this undertaking.

593 The young husband, now settled on his own, will henceforth work on his own account. He has become in turn the head of a
431 soukala, but if he obtains a lot of millet or other grain he offers
626 gifts to his father. If he becomes wealthy and makes no such gifts, the neighbors will insult him. He always makes gifts, therefore, for fear of being insulted. A son who marries, as a rule, builds his soukala as near as possible to that of his father.

593 Finally, let us add that the father usually buys his son's kitchen utensils when the boy settles on his own.

3. When the head of a family dies, the younger brother inevi-
428 tably takes command of the family, but all the property, whatever
593 its nature, goes to the children of the deceased and more especially to his oldest son. There is no longer any family real estate or movable property, or else nothing is regarded as such any longer.

/550/ The eldest son takes his father's soukala and everything that goes with it, fields, slaves, livestock, father's wives. He shares them, however, with his brothers and even with his sisters.

428 As for the soukala itself, he keeps it. He leaves his own
593 soukala, along with everything he owns, to come and live in the soukala of the deceased. In order to put the soukala he is leaving to some use, however, he sends one of his unmarried brothers (that is to say, one who lived up to that time with the deceased) to settle there. He immediately gives this brother one of his father's wives, one of the wives in the estate, and sends him, thus married, to settle in the soukala he is leaving.

593 I asked my informant why the father does not keep his oldest
578 married son with him instead of having him build a new soukala on the outside, since the son returns to the paternal soukala anyway when the father dies. The Mossi chief I was questioning replied that if the father kept his oldest son by his side, the latter, when married and growing older, would wish for his father's death in order to become independent. Wishing for his father's death, he might be tempted to bring it about. If settled in his own soukala, on the other hand, the head of a household and independent, he would nurture no ill thoughts against his father.

593 We shall see later that this feeling of fear and suspicion toward
578 the eldest son is carried to an extreme among the Moro Nabas. This
644 is understandable, since kingship is inherited. Once married, therefore, the eldest son of the prince went far from his father, to a soukala of his own and remained there until the Moro Naba's death.

428 As for the father's fields, the eldest son keeps them all if he is
593 able to work them all. If he is not able to do so, he gives the surplus over and above what he can work to his brothers.

As far as livestock is concerned, the eldest son gives some to his younger brothers and even to his sisters.

The same applies to slaves and cowries.

428 As for wives, if there are many, he gives some to his younger
593 brothers. Thus, for example, if there are ten wives and he has two
587 brothers, he gives two wives to each /551/ brother and keeps six for himself (let us add that the deceased, before dying, often gives a wife to his younger brother or brothers).

428 To summarize, the eldest son gets the soukala and the fields.
593 As for movable property, he takes about 50 percent and leaves the other half to the younger sons and to the daughters. There is a sharing, therefore, although a very uneven one.

428 Actually, those shares vary from region to region among the
593 Mossi. Thus, in certain areas, the oldest son gets the soukala, the
184 fields, two thirds of the livestock, cowries, and money, all the slaves and grain, as well as clothing, jewelry, weapons, horses, etc. The other sons get the remaining goods. The daughters get nothing. As for the wives, the oldest son takes three quarters and the other sons one quarter. In such cases, the eldest son is much more heavily favored than in the cases mentioned earlier.

At Kombisiguiri, this is even more accentuated. The oldest son may keep everything if he wishes. He may also give something to the other sons of the deceased or to the latter's brothers.

In short, at the stage /of evolution/ with which we are dealing, the transmission of property ranges from a complete and absolute law of primogeniture to an uneven sharing heavily tipped toward the eldest son.

593 Let us add that when the eldest son receives an estate, if his
736 brothers are not yet of an age to be married, he keeps them at his home, in his own household (this is why, although Mossi households in principle include only a husband, his wives, children, and slaves, sometimes they also contain young unmarried brothers). In the morning they work for him, and in the afternoon they work their own little plots. The older brother provides them with food at all times, but not with clothes. They must procure their clothing with the returns from their own little plots. When they reach marriageable age, the older brother buys them a wife and helps them settle on their own.

429 When the head of a soukala dies leaving only small sons, his
593 younger brother takes all the property for the time being but saves it for the legitimate heirs. When the eldest son of the deceased has grown up, the brother leaves the soukala and returns to his own former one, taking only his own belongings. /552/ At that time, all the real estate and movable property devolve to the oldest son and partly to the other sons.

If the head of a soukala leaves no sons but only brothers and
428 daughters, the inheritance is shared between his younger brother and
593 his daughters. The younger brother takes the soukala, the fields, and the wives. He leaves his own soukala and settles in that of the deceased, where he brings all his belongings. He puts up either a

478 son or a young brother of marriageable age in his former soukala.
593 The daughters, however, get the movable property such as slaves, livestock, grain, cowries, etc. (with the exception of wives).

The oldest daughter takes the largest share. Out of ten beeves she will take six (if there are three daughters, for example) and the two younger daughters will take two each. Out of four slaves she will take two, and the two younger daughters will take one each. Out of 1,000 cowries, the oldest will take 600, the other two 200 each.

The same thing applies if there are no brothers but only daughters and brothers' sons, since the latter have the same rights as their fathers. Thus, it is the eldest son of the younger brother who inherits along with the daughters of the deceased.

593 In this third variant of the Mossi family, in short, the bonds that connect the various households in the family are now of two kinds only:

1. There are the religious bonds, since the head of the entire family remains the high priest of this collectivity.

593 2. There are also the judicial bonds (collective responsibility
672 of the family in case of injury done to other people).

"If a man is in debt," says Moulins, p. 34, op. cit. /Monographie du cercle de Ouagadougou/, "his family is held responsible for payment. If he commits a misdemeanor, his family is held responsible for financial reparation.

"If he commits a crime of murder, one of his relatives will be put to death in his place if he has not himself been seized (at least, this is what happened prior to our occupation).

"When the head of the family is served a complaint against one of the individuals under his authority, he appeals first, of course, to the guilty party himself if the latter owns /553/ any property, then to the soukala to which the man belongs, then to the one headed by his nearest relative, etc. Vis-à-vis third parties, however, the family itself, as a whole, is held responsible for reparation.

"The formidable responsibility devolving to the family entails, as its logical counterpart, putting at its disposal, powers sufficient

593 672 to guard against dangers resulting from the obligation to make reparation for injuries committed by one of its members. This has led naturally to a recognition of the family's right, in the person of its head, to take whatever measures are necessary for the preservation of its common interests. Prior to our occupation, such measures could go as far as putting in irons or even putting to death an individual who called upon the collective responsibility of the family too frequently or too onerously, and thus threatened to endanger its equilibrium. The decision of a family head involving the [643] death sentence or putting in irons for life for one of his people, however, only became final with the naba's approval. The latter could oppose it by assuming financial responsibility, in the family's stead, for all future misdemeanors committed by the person he had pardoned."

593 174 We come now to an interesting although extremely ticklish subject, namely, the causes of the partial decommunalization of the Mossi family.

If we look at the present workaday life of these people, their decommunalization seems inexplicable in view of the fact that we are dealing with a group of cultivators, somewhat indolent to be sure, but nevertheless cultivators first and foremost. The Mossi, on the other hand, are not herdsmen. They are very mediocre stock-breeders. Among them as among other Blacks of West Africa, hunting merely accounts for a small percentage of their total food-producing activities. They are not traders, either. We see nothing here, therefore, that might explain the decommunalization of the family, and we must refer back to the previous workaday life of this people. We saw earlier, however, that while the present Mossi population originated /554/ from the fusion of two disparate elements, one of those elements was similar to the Bobo, Gourounsi, Habé, Kipirsi, etc., and thus deeply communal and patriarchal. It is obviously not from this element that the present decommunalization might stem.

Fortunately, there exists another and very different element. The Mossi who came from the Dagomba were, as we know, Blacks who were 1) warriors and conquerors, 2) breeders of horses, no doubt,

593 and very probably of large and small livestock as well. In this
174 respect they must have been strikingly similar to the present-day Toucouleur, who conquered part of West Africa in the nineteenth century and who are, like the Foulah of Guinea, half stockbreeders, half cultivators. (We shall review briefly those very Toucouleur in Chapter 4 of this book, to give the reader an idea of the Black conqueror on the active rather than the potential level, in a "pure state" rather than already fused into a heterogeneous conquered population /not translated/). Now war with its attendant loot, like stockbreeding, augments private property and allows individuals and households to secede from the family, at least to the extent permitted by the problems of cultivation and especially of field clearing. It is a fact that among the Toucouleur and Foulah, as among the Dagomba and Mossi, every household lives separately and works separately (except for that most difficult of all tasks to the Blacks, the clearing of fields). Thus, it must be concluded that the decommunalization of the present-day Mossi family derives from the ancient workaday life of the conquering segment of the population, which imposed its own customs on the conquered group. This workaday life consisted half of stockbreeding, half of cultivation as among the present-day Toucouleur and Foulah, with war and looting in addition as among the same groups up to quite recently.

Of course, we learn nothing that might shed light on the subject by questioning the Mossi themselves. My informants, for example, tell me that the various soukala in a family actually constitute but one family. I ask them why, then, do they not live together and do all their tilling together, like /555/ the Bobo, Gourounsi, Bambara, etc.? Because the women quarrel, they tell me. Those quarrels caused other fights among the men, and people ended up living separately. Of course, this could only have been a pretext for secession, and the true cause which made this secession possible, namely, the increasing individual wealth of the households, was something else again.

592 We shall close with a few details concerning the internal structure of the Mossi household. The latter includes, as we have stated above, the following members:

592 1. Husband.
2. Wife or wives.
3. Unmarried children, sons or daughters.
4. Slaves.

Sometimes, it also includes young unmarried brothers (see above).

592 As a rule, every soukala-household has only one large bush
241 field in addition to the garden plot surrounding the soukala (where
461 maize and large red millet are grown during the rainy season, tobacco and cotton during the dry season).

The head of the household, his unmarried sons and unmarried brothers, work on those fields during the rainy season from six in the morning to three in the afternoon, with a long rest period around noon. The women work there also, but their hours are different owing to their household tasks.

The unmarried sons and brothers also have small individual plots of cotton and large red millet. They work them in the afternoon after three o'clock. During the rainy season, as a rule, there are no rest days. A few Mossi, however, have adopted the customs [527] of their Yarsé neighbors and rest on Friday. Others, who are Moslemized, and incidentally very few, rest both on Friday and on Monday.

During the dry season the members of the household repair hut roofs, go hunting, or else participate in the clearing of family fields, etc. In addition to this they work for themselves, as weavers for example. The money earned in this fashion goes to them and not to the soukala head.

/556/ It is the head of the soukala-household, the husband
592 and father, who provides all occupants of the soukala with food throughout the year, morning and evening. He also provides clothing for those who cannot provide their own, but those who can do so procure it themselves.

We know that it is sometimes the head of the family and some-
592 times the head of the household who gives the children of the house-
584 hold in marriage. It sometimes happens, however, that a son
464 leaves the soukala without his father's permission. He usually does
565 this in order to win a wife, when the head of the family or the

592 father cannot procure one or delays too long in doing so. The son
584 who secedes in this fashion goes to work for a chief or noble who
464 will later give him a wife as a reward. The first male child and the
565 first female child born of this union, however, will devolve to the chief or noble who gave the wife. He will use the male child as a servant, and the girl to be handed out as a reward to someone working for him. This is a side effect of the political organization on the family. This secession on the part of sons can only occur, indeed, thanks to the existence of chiefs and nobles in sufficient numbers to permit the secessionists to find work and employment among them without difficulty. Among the Bobo and Nounouma, such a situation could not exist.

Let us note that this institution, while restricting the authority of the family head or household head, has strengthened the power of the Mossi aristocracy.

592 In closing, let us note a few details about the Mossi soukala
361 from a physical standpoint. It is a cluster of round huts, about five or six of them, usually built of red earth with a straw roof and connected to each other by a concave wall made likewise of red earth. The soukala is thus fortified, as it were, and sheltered from the outside.

592 The Mossi soukala is quite similar to the Malinké or Dialonké
361 "compound" /literally, "square"/, which also consists of a cluster of clay huts with straw roofs. Among the Malinké and Dialonké,
171 however, the huts are often connected by a palisade or a mere séko instead of a red earth wall as they are here. Another difference is /557/ that the doors of the huts of the Mossi soukala are so low that one must often creep in on all fours. Furthermore, there are no porches such as are found among the Malinké and Dialonké. In spite of those differences, however, the Mossi soukala bear a general resemblance to the Guinean soukala, while they are in no way related to the massive citadels of the Gourounsi and Kipirsi.

The Mossi soukala, on the other hand, are set about 50 meters apart. The maize plot surrounding the soukala lies directly around it, as among the Bobo, Gourounsi, Kipirsi, etc., while among the Malinké and Dialonké of Guinea the garden plot of each compound is located outside the village boundaries, since the compounds stand

592 only one or two meters apart, close together. It is true that there
361 is sometimes a small plot within the séko....
171 The soukala or compound is called iri in Mossi, the hut rogo or dogo, and the soukala head irisoba (from soba, "chief" and iri, "compound").

462 We shall close this analysis of the Mossi family with a few notes
562 on the status of women and that of slaves.

First of all, Mossi women help with the tilling. They do not clear the fields, it is true, but they participate in all other field tasks along with the men. They do this only in the morning, however, since they spend the afternoon on household tasks or on their little individual plots, for they have small fields of large white millet, underground peas, beans, or peanuts.

They also do household tasks: they pound and crush the grain. Large millet or sorghum is, as we know, pounded first and then crushed, while small millet is crushed after being threshed.

462 The Mossi set their crushing stones in huge round clay /banco/
252 tables which are built outside the soukala and which are used by
412 the whole quarter. This is a strictly Mossi characteristic which is not found among the /558/ Bobo, Gouroussi, etc., in short, among any of the other groups who nevertheless use the same stones. Those large round tables are not high. They are about 1 or 1.20 meters in height and approximately 6 meters in diameter, with a correspondingly large circumference. The Mossi set in their crushing stones all around the circumference, and each table can thus hold ten, twelve, or even more. Every evening at nightfall the women of the soukala which are around it, women, young girls, etc., come together to crush their grain. They are usually in the simplest of garb, bare as the back of my hand, for the work is hard and demands a continuous back-and-forth motion of the arms, the upper part of the body, and the body as a whole.

To make those tables, they first build a circular wall to the desired height of the table, and then the whole inner space is filled up with earth almost to the top. This earth is pounded thoroughly, and then well-tamped casings are fashioned on the horizontal circumference in which are set the stones on which the crushing is done. The stones are firmly ensheathed in the clay, which is then allowed to dry.

462 Those large tables are called niénouga in Mossi, the stones on
252 which the crushing is done are called néré, and the movable stones
442 used for crushing are called nérébila "little néré"/.

171 We stated above that those large clay tables are peculiarly
252 Mossi and are not to be found among the Bobo, Habé, or Gourounsi.
442 Actually the latter, as we saw earlier, set their stones in small clay tables which are only 1 meter high and 1 meter in diameter and thus quite small, and which stand in every soukala inside each woman's room. They also make slightly larger tables, long ones that look like large earthen bathtubs of a sort or that even bear a certain resemblance to crude sarcophagi, and into which the stones are set. Those, too, stand within the soukala, in dark, dirty rooms. Sometimes, the Gourounsi merely set down their crushing stones under a shelter covered with wood and straw, built at the gate of their citadel-soukala. Three or four stones are placed upon two thick and solid parallel sticks which in turn are held /559/ about 50 centimeters from the ground on four solid forks thrust into the ground. In this case the woman must kneel down in order to crush the grain. I have observed this method chiefly among the Menkiéra, that is to say, in the northern part of the Leo residency.

462 To go back to female work among the Mossi. Along with the crushing of grain, they do the cooking, fetch firewood and water, do the gathering, prepare the products derived from gathering, etc. We saw earlier how those products are made, and we shall not go over it again.

252 Among the Mossi, the only known millet dishes are sarabout
171 and vessala. Couscous is unknown. This is rather strange, since the dish thus called is known practically throughout West Africa.

Sarabout (the Mossi word) is what the Malinké and Bambara call tô, the Foulbé, Toucouleur, and Foulah niri, the Sarakolé souré, the Maure /Moors/ lisi.

As for couscous, the Malinké and Bambara call it baci, the Foulbé, Toucouleur, and Foulah lakiri, the Sarakole fouto, the Moors and Arabs couscous.

To or sarabout is prepared for immediate consumption. Couscous is prepared for relatively long storage.

252 This is how their methods of preparation differ. To make to or sarabout, one simply leaves the millet flour to cook in boiling water, stirring occasionally with a piece of wood or a spoon. To make couscous, on the other hand, one takes a canari, fills it with water, sets it to boil on the fire, and then puts the millet into a gourd which is perforated at the bottom and thus makes a sort of strainer. This gourd is placed over the canari where the water is boiling, and covered with a straw dish. The steam emanating from the canari comes through the holes into the gourd, and since the latter is covered the steam remains there a long time. The millet flour is thus cooked by steaming. At the end of a period of time, the gourd is removed and its contents are left to cool and to dry in the sun. Once the millet flour has thus been cooked and dried, it will keep /560/ almost indefinitely. It is eaten either with water or with milk, which is better, or else, if one has some meat, by boiling the latter and pouring the sarabout into the pot.

The Mossi may not be familiar with couscous, but they are familiar with vessala. This method of preparing millet consists of boiling the flour as it is boiled for sarabout. The difference lies in the amount of flour used. When the mush has been cooked it is allowed to cool, and then fresh or curdled milk is bought and mixed in with it. This kind of mush is made only for the purpose of mixing [171] it with milk. The Bambara are familiar with vessala and call it by name of fisan or finsan.

484 The Mossi, when they are traveling, often cook millet grains 252 which have not been reduced to flour. This is called honandourou-ki 171 ("cooked millet"). The Bambara call it niobalabala, the Foulbe m'baña-gaouri, the Sarakolé ilé-n'kioro, and all these words have the same meaning. This method of preparing millet is quite unusual, and is resorted to only when the time or means to reduce millet grains to flour are lacking.

[462] Mossi women also make dolo (dama). To do this, they soak the 273 grains of large red millet in water for two days, and then expose them to the sun and crush them. The flour is boiled for two hours, and then strained and boiled in the necessary amount of water for a whole day. This is transferred to another canari and allowed to cool.

462 Beside cooking tasks, Mossi women have cleaning tasks. They
356 sweep the huts and soukala with handfuls of straw, small primitive brooms 30 or 40 centimeters long. They wash and bleach clothes and make soap. Finally, it is the women who spin cotton and tamp the floor of the huts.

356 This tamping is done as follows. "The natives spread on the surface to be tamped a layer, 10 centimeters thick, of a special black earth that consists chiefly /561/ of ashes and humus resulting from the decomposition of plants and household refuse.

"Above this, the Mossi spread a second layer consisting of clayey ferruginous gravel, from 3 to 5 centimeters thick. The small pebbles are subsequently reduced by heavy tamping to very fine material. Then, the natives spread a little water over this material and tamp again. Once this is done, they allow the floor to dry.

"This procedure is repeated several times, but ordinary water is replaced with néré water (the latter resulting from the infusion in hot water of the fragments of néré fruit, dondo in Mossi) or water into which cow dung has been mixed. When the last tamping and the last drying have been completed, the natives pour néré water in large quantities onto the new floor.

"Finally, the last procedure consists of polishing the surface with flat stones." (Cahier des rapports of the Ouagadougou circle).

593 The duties of Mossi women toward their husband are as follows:
833 1. The fulfillment of the conjugal duty.
562 "The wife," says Moulins, "must never shirk her conjugal duty except when she is pregnant or nursing.

"Should a woman evade her husband from newlywed shyness or for any other reason, he would use at first all means of persuasion within his command, and especially beg the wife's relatives to have a word with her. Should their exhortations prove vain, coercion would be used by beating the woman or putting her in irons. Finally, should those means fail to bring the wife to compliance, she could be turned out by her husband."

593 2. Faithfulness.
562 "The wife must live with her husband. If she abandons the conjugal domicile, her spouse has the absolute right to force her to return. /562/ If she takes refuge with her relatives, the latter must

593 562 not shelter her but must on the contrary return her to her husband. If difficulties arise, the husband appeals to the naba, who forces the wife to return to her husband, at whose hands she will get a beating when she arrives....

593 837 684 "...The powers of a deceived husband over his wife's lover were quite fearsome prior to our occupation. He could, at will, either deal with the culprit himself or defer his complaint to the naba. If he dealt himself with his rival and killed him, he handed out the adulterous woman to the Moro Naba and did not have to answer for his crime. If he merely wounded the man, no matter how seriously, he was regarded as having acted in the fullness of his rights as an injured husband, and he kept the wife and gave her a beating. If he appealed to the naba, the guilty pair were punished by being put in irons for a variable period of time. Furthermore, if the adultery had been committed with the wife of a dapouy naba of the Moro Naba (that is to say, a man to whom the Moro Naba had himself given some girl in marriage), the accomplice was compelled to pay the deceived husband a fine of 100,000 cowries.

"Finally, in case of adultery with a chief's wife, both culprits were put to death."

On this subject I find in my notes that prior to our occupation, when a naba was deceived by one of his wives, he killed her with [762] poison and ordered the wife's lover to commit suicide. The latter did this by plunging the head of a poisoned arrow into the calf of his leg.

"It is plain," the author of the Monographie goes on to say, "that the lover was dealt with in the most rigorous manner of all. He could be put to death by the deceived husband in every case, while the wives of a chief were alone liable to supreme punishment. The lover could also be punished with a fine, in a single case anticipated by custom. Finally, he was invariably put in irons on the naba's orders if the deceived husband placed a complaint against him.

"As for the adulterous wife, except when she was /563/ handed over to the Moro Naba by her husband as reparation for the murder of her partner, punishment for her misdemeanor amounted merely to a more or less rigorous beating or to irons for a short period of time. She could, it is true, be turned out by her husband, but the latter

593 837 684 made use of this right quite rarely. The woman has productive value in terms of children and labor. And then, in the majority of cases, the husband would merely fulfill the dearest of his wife's desires by doing so."

593 586 While the Mossi wife has duties toward her husband, the latter also has obligations toward his wives.

"A wife," says the Monographie, "has the right to demand from her husband more than mere platonic relations.

"Should the latter prevail, however, owing to the husband's impotence or illness, or simply as a result of ill will, the neglected wife would communicate the situation to the first wife of the family head, who would in turn inform her spouse.

"Should the husband's behavior be caused by physical incapacity, the woman would be taken from him and given to one of his brothers, or if there were none to his nearest relative, his sons excepted. Should his behavior be due merely to ill will, however, remonstrances would be made to him, and should these prove fruitless at the end of a few days, the woman would be considered free to return to her family."

593 837 Just as the husband owes his wives fulfillment of the conjugal duty, he also owes them relative faithfulness.

"The husband has an obligation of relative faithfulness toward his wives, that of not keeping a concubine at the conjugal domicile. [586] Should he transgress this rule, his wives would be fully entitled to obtain a divorce from him, unless he should agree to turn out his partner as a result of his wives' complaint or the intervention of the family head.

"This rule is strictly obeyed, except for the Mossi of the Kipirsi who allow the presence of the husband's concubines among his legitimate wives, and who have rules governing their respective positions.

"In any case the husband is everywhere allowed to /564/ deceive his wives as he pleases outside the conjugal domicile, and they are not entitled to complain about this in any way. Nevertheless, they nearly always have at their disposal a practically infallible although circuitous means of causing the greatest inconvenience to the fickle husband and his partner. As a result of the custom that pledges girls in marriage at a very early age, a husband can hardly commit

593 adultery except with a woman who is already married. A deceived
837 wife who wishes to take her revenge need only reveal to the spouse of her husband's partner the criminal relations that victimize them both."

593 Let us add that another of the husband's duties is to render help
602 to his wives' relatives if the latter are in needy circumstances.

Of course, the failure to fulfill these obligations could cause
593 the wife to request a divorce. Divorce thus exists among the Mossi,
586 although women rarely resort to it. The bride price is never claimed back by the husband, even if the woman has remained sterile. The children always devolve to the husband.

The husband, on the other hand, may turn out his wife, but Mossi husbands do not usually make use of this right.

585 Let us add that the matter of the girl's virginity at marriage
836 is settled by the Mossi as by most other Blacks. If a girl is bought or betrothed from a very young age, she must preserve herself intact for her future husband. An unbetrothed girl, however, is free to use her own body when she reaches puberty, and if she marries later she cannot be reprimanded for having become a woman prior to her wedding.

567 Let us now proceed to the status of slaves.

Two kinds of slaves are distinguished among the Mossi, aside from the usual distinction between trade slaves and house slaves.

1. The daparé (etymologically, "followers," "men who walk behind their master," from da, "man" and paré, "behind"). They are unmarried slaves.

2. The bagaré ("men of the enclosure"). Those are married captives.

/565/ The daparé live with their master and always remain at his disposal for any work that may come up. They have no small individual plots, therefore, and their master provides them with food and clothing at all times. When they reach marriageable age, their master buys them a wife (or at least it was so in the old days; she would cost the master about 60,000 or 70,000 cowries), and then they settle on their own.

567 As for the bagaré, they live separately, work for themselves, see to their own subsistence, etc.

Their duties are as follows:

1. To come and work one day a week on their master's field (on that day, as on other days, they provide their own food).

2. To come and work for their master in exceptional circumstances, such as for example when the master gathers all his neighbors to work on his field.

3. To come and greet their master every year after the harvest. They give him a basketful of millet. When the harvest has been poor, they are exempted from this gift.

4. The master may request from his slave chickens, sheep, an ox or a cow. Chickens may not be denied under any circumstances. As for sheep or beeves, the slave may refuse to provide the animal requested, but then he is expected to go and sell it at market right away, and to give half the money to his master. If the slave refuses to go and sell the animal at market, the master has the right to seize his movable property and sell it.

[426] 5. When the master has debts, the bagaré must help him pay them.

428 567 As for inheritance, when a bagaré died his master left all the property to the children. The oldest son of the bagaré inherited, but he gave something to the other sons. If there was no son, the younger brother inherited. If the sons were children the younger brother also inherited, at least temporarily. If there were no male heirs, the master inherited the property but gave some to the daughters.

567 In short, the position of the bagaré is more similar to that of /566/ serfs than to that of slaves proper. In this respect, their status is a far cry from the familial status of the slaves we have described up to now, and it is much closer to the status of the Dialonké, [171] Soussou /Susu/, and Foulah slaves of Guinea who are also serfs, work three days a week for their master (six hours a day), and are free the rest of the time on condition of seeing to their own subsistence.

567 Let us add that since the arrival of the French among the Mossi, the bagaré have gained a considerable amount of freedom. Nowa-178 days, most of them will not give any of their crops to their master.

567 When a master wants one of the sheep or beeves belonging to his
178 bagaré, the latter refuses to give it, or if he consents to sell the animal at market he gives his master but one-tenth of the cowries paid by the buyer. Nowadays, as a rule, the bagaré only "go
[426] along" when their master's debts are involved, and yet some of them run away with their belongings rather than pay those debts.

567 Let us also add that these slaves, who were mostly of Gourounsi
167 or Boussansé origin, now want to return to their own land, and there is a continuous exodus, slow but sure, of Mossi slaves toward the south. Since the French have strictly forbidden the purchase and sale of slaves, on the other hand, the sources of supply have dried out. All this makes it clear why among the Mossi, as incidentally throughout West Africa, we are progressing toward a slow but certain suppression of slavery and serfdom.

326 In closing, let us say that among the Mossi blacksmiths who
567 live in /special/ quarters or villages and whom we have already mentioned with regard to their patriarchal and nondecommunalized family type, we find true slaves of the common familial type such as we have described up to now, rather than serfs like the bagaré.

These slaves live in the same soukala as their master, whether married or unmarried, trade or house slaves. During the winter season, they all work on the fields of the soukala head from six in the morning to three in the afternoon, with the usual luncheon break. They have small individual plots, which they may work after three o'clock. During /567/ the dry season, they work all day at the blacksmith's trade with their master.

They are provided with food throughout the year by the head of the soukala, but they procure their own clothing, jewelry, grigri, etc. The soukala head buys the first wife for them and disposes of their daughters in return.

567 The estate of a deceased slave goes to his master and to his sons.
428 As far as livestock and cowries are concerned, the master takes half
326 and gives half to the son or sons. As for clothing, bracelets, etc., everything goes to the children. The latter share equally the part of their father's estate that devolves to them.

567 We can see that just as the family type of Mossi blacksmiths
326 bears witness to an older state of affairs, the status of slaves among them also bears witness to the ancient local conditions prior to

567 Dagomba conquest. Both family type and slave status, indeed, re-
326 fer back to the Bobo, Gourounsi, etc.

000 We come now to public powers. We refer the reader to Appendix 32 /not translated/ for a study of property regulations and neighborhood relations, and plunge forthwith into the study of public powers.

631 We already know that the Mossi political organization is centralized. The villages belong to cantons, which are in turn gathered into provinces under direct administration or into mere vassal provinces. At the summit of the hierarchy stands the king, the Moro Naba, the supreme chief of the Mossi, who lives at Ouagadougou. To give an idea of the former importance, or at least relative importance, of this empire, we shall state that in the Ouagadougou
[162] circle alone there were eight provinces including among them 300 cantons, 5,000 villages or small towns, and 861,700 inhabitants.

643 Let us begin our description of this political organism with the head, that is, with the Moro Naba.

Moro Naba means "chief of the Mossi," from naba, "chief" and Moro or Mora which means Mossi in the singular. Moro yields Mossi or Mossé in the plural. (The French have grown accustomed to saying "one Mossi, several Mossi," but this is a barbarism and one should /568/ actually say, "one Moro, several Mossi," just as one says, "one Gourounga, several Gourounsi," "one Kipirga, several Kipirsi," etc.). As for the word for "chief," it is both naba and soba in Mossi. Naba seems to be the word brought by the con-
[192] quering Mossi-Dagomba group, while soba is probably the word that was used by the autochtonous population to designate chiefs.

645 Prior to the French conquest, the Moro Naba was surrounded by a certain number of ministers or eminent dignitaries who were given 1) specific duties /at court/, 2) in addition, part of the territory to govern. This is what accounted for provinces over and above the cantons, at least in those areas that were administered directly, but the heads of those provinces did not reside there. They lived at Ouagadougou, and were first and foremost ministers of the Moro Naba.

They were:

645 1. The Kamsoro Naba, chief of the eunuchs and prime minister, a sort of minister of the interior.

2. The Ouidi Naba, chief of the cavalry.

3. The Gounga Naba, chief of the infantry.

4. The Laralé Naba, guardian of the tombs of the Moro Nabas.

5. The Baloum Naba, major-domo and chief of the soroné (pages). He might be said to rule over the interior of the palace.

Those five ministers ruled over the five Mossi provinces that
645 were administered directly: Kamsoro, Ouidi, Gounga, Laralé,
635 and Baloum. As we can see, those provinces had no proper names, no names of their own, and each took the name of the dignitary who governed it. Thus, they were not true geographical or ethnic provinces, but artificial districts lifted out of an area that was both too extensively parceled out and too homogeneous to yield spontaneously anything but villages and cantons.

644 In addition to those five ministers, among which the Kamsoro Naba and Baloum Naba seem to have been the most important, there were other dignitaries and servitors, as follows: /569/

1. The Tamsaba or Kinsaba, high chief of the bodyguards.
2. The Samandé Naba, chief of the bodyguards.
3. The Pouy Naba, chief of the fetisheers.
4. The Gandé Naba, high priest and sacrificer.
5. The Dapouy Naba, chief of the servitors.
6. The Kambo Naba, subchief of the servitors.
7. The Bindé Naba, chief of the Moro Naba's drummers.
8. The Ouidianga Naba, chief of the grooms.
9. The Mendo Naba, chief or representative of the butchers.
10. The Dara Haba, chief of the markets.
11. The Kamboué Naba, executioner.
12. Finally, the Yarsé Naba, chief or representative of the Yarsé settled among the Mossi. The prestige he enjoyed actually ranked him immediately beneath the five ministers and the Tamsaba.

"The various functions at the court of the Moro Naba," says
[534] Moulins, "are hereditary in the sense that their holders are always chosen by the sovereign among close relatives of the previous occupant in office.

644 "In addition to these dignitaries, the Moro Naba is surrounded with a veritable army of soroné (pages), samandé (bodyguards), ourkima (grooms), and jussaba (eunuchs)."

Some explanations are in order concerning the soroné. They are young boys or adolescents, from seven or eight to fifteen years old, who are to be found not only around the Moro Naba but around all Mossi chiefs, no matter who they may be, ministers, dignitaries, canton chiefs, and even village chiefs. These chiefs obtain them, as we saw earlier, by claiming the first-born son as well as the first-born daughter of all the men to whom they give a wife. The boy is made into a soroné, and the girl used to perpetuate the recruitment of soroné and servitors by giving her in marriage to one of them.

644 The soroné wear their hair like women. Like them, they wear heavy copper bracelets at the wrists and ankles, and if rumor is to 838 be credited, they not only /570/ bear the attributes of women but also substitute for them occasionally. It seems that the Mossi must 834 not have carnal relations with their wives on Friday. This is a religious ordinance meant to ingratiate the divinities, but it overlooked the soroné.... In any case this corruption does not reach the common masses of the Mossi, who do not have the means to employ soroné. Thus it applies only to chiefs.

644 No matter what the case may be, the soroné are usually selected among the most attractive boys, and some of them have great beauty with their woman's hairdo.

Another duty of their position is to remain virgins... as far as women are concerned.

644 "Every year," says Moulins, "the chastity of the Moro Naba's 787 soroné is put to a test. They are requested by the Pouy Naba to cast their 684 reflection into a gourd full of water, and according to the manner in which the reflection is cast, they are proclaimed free from stain or convicted of carnal relations, in which case, prior to our occupation, they were put to death without further delay. This is because the soroné, as confidants of the Naba, are often entrusted with state secrets and could only maintain the discretion required by their position if they were to avoid the entreaties of love.

644 "When the soroné reach manhood, the Naba gives them a wife and sends them away. The first child born of the union between a soroné and the wife given him by the Naba devolves to the latter,

644 who will make him into a soroné if he is a boy, or alone have the right to give her in marriage if she is a girl."

643 Moulins also provides interesting details on the manner in which the Moro Naba spends his days, or rather spent them in the past, for this description refers to the state of affairs prior to the French occupation.

"From Ouarga's reign onward, the Moro Nabas, who had previously resided successively in various parts of the empire, settled at Ouagadougou where they have lived ever since. Custom constrains them never to leave /571/ the capital except in unusually serious circumstances. This is because the land falls into anarchy [674 when the sovereign is absent from Ouagadougou. All theft, pillage, 696] and murder committed at that time remain unprosecuted.

644 "Every morning at seven, the Moro Naba emerges from his hut. 173 His saddled horse waits before the door. He mounts it and pretends to set out on his way, but after riding around his hut he dismounts and goes back into his hut only to come out again immediately.

"This formality of the protocol has the following origin. A long time ago the favorite wife of the Moro Naba having fled to La, the sovereign wished to go and fetch her himself. He mounted his horse and was about to leave when all the court dignitaries rushed to him, admonishing him not to carry out his project, for his absence from Ouagadougou could only result in anarchy. The monarch gave way, and soon afterwards his wife returned of her own accord. It is in memory of the magnanimity of this sovereign, who sacrificed himself in the interests of his people, that every morning since that time the Moro Naba has pretended to prepare for departure and to then give up his plan.

644 "Following this ceremony, the Moro Naba settles himself in a recess sunk into the wall that surrounds his residence, and then, to the strains of abundant music, the whole court comes to the sovereign and prostrates itself before him, brow in the dust, forearms striking the ground in rhythm with a great clicking of bracelets. Then business is attended to.

"First, the five province chiefs come forward in order of precedence, relate to the Moro Naba those events which have taken place since the preceding day, and receive his instructions for the day. Then they present to him the canton and village chiefs and the common natives who wish for an audience.

644 "The Moro Naba, assisted by his ministers and with the help of frequent libations of dolo, listens to the requests which are made /572/ to him and passes sentence on the trials which are referred to him.

"Around eleven o'clock he withdraws into his hut and rests until three o'clock, at which time he comes and seats himself on his throne again.

"The Moro Naba's every gesture is prescribed by a minute protocol and accompanied by flute and drum music and finger snappings by his entourage.

"Is he riding out for a short stroll around Ouagadougou? The whole court follows him, either on foot or on horseback. His griot make the air re-echo with their shouts, to the accompaniment of drums and flutes. A groom leads his horse by the rein, while two soronê hold his stirrups and a third one, on horseback by his side, shelters him with a huge umbrella. Other pages follow carrying his pillow, his sword, and canari of dolo from which the sovereign draws frequent and abundant libations along the way.

"At night the Moro Naba, in disguise and accompanied by a single soronê, wanders incognito through the various village quarters in order to find out what is going on without being recognized.

"On certain set dates, he goes to localities named Sabaye and [782] Saraboutenga, not far from Ouagadougou, where he sacrifices beeves, sheep, and chickens.

644 595 "The Moro Naba has very numerous wives. In addition to those he marries himself, there are those of his predecessor and all those that devolve to him in the course of his reign, among them, in certain cases, the adulterous wives of his subjects.

644 595 684 "The sovereign's wives do not all live with him. They are settled in villages ruled by eunuchs and near which no one could come, on pain of death, prior to our occupation. Every year the faithfulness of the Moro Naba's wives is checked by submitting them to the same test as the soronê. Adultery is punished by death for the wife as well as her partner. It even seems that adultery with one of the sovereign's wives is regarded /573/ as the least pardonable crime a man can commit. In fact, the nakomsê or sons of chiefs are liable to the death penalty only in this case.

664 "The wives of the Moro Haba never give birth or raise their
554 children at his own place of residence, but only in one of the eunuch villages. In theory they do not stand above the wives of common natives, but in practice they enjoy high consideration among the Mossi, like all that is connected with the Moro Naba.

"The sons of the sovereign, once weaned, are entrusted to a province or canton chief who is put in charge of their education.
[582] At the age of ten they are married and settled in a village, where they live, surrounded by a court, but without necessarily being given a territorial command.

"The prerogatives attached to the title of Moro Naba's son are vast as long as the monarch is alive. They grant the right to steal, to loot, and even to kill with impunity.

"Upon the death of the Moro Naba, his sons become mere nakomsé (sons of chiefs) whose position nevertheless remains quite privileged.

643 "One of the sons of the deceased sovereign, however, is granted
644 special privileges. At the death of the Moro Naba, the latter's wives elect one of his young sons who adopts his name and, so to
554 speak, perpetuates him. He has no /territorial/ command, but he is surrounded by a court similar to that of the Moro Naba, he enjoys respect almost equal to that paid to the latter, and he is a sacred figure. No one has the right to contradict him or to harm him.

644 "As for the Moro Naba's daughters, although in principle they
554 do not stand above ordinary Mossi girls, in practice they are treated with the strictest respect by all natives. Once married, they have almost complete freedom of action vis-à-vis their husband, and they often take advantage of this to lead a most unruly existence.

643 "When the Moro Naba's death has been verified, his burial is
766 carried out and followed by the funeral ceremonies, which are held in the same fashion as for a common native, with the sole difference /574/ that they have more brilliance and that the sacrifices are more sizable.

642 "For the whole duration of the interregnum, the land falls into
672 a state of complete anarchy. Everyone has the right to kill, loot, and steal as he pleases. Convicts who are serving sentence are fully pardoned and set free.

643 "Following the funeral ceremony, an electoral college consisting of the Ouidi Naba as president, assisted by the Gounga Naba, Laralé Naba, and Tamsaba, assembles in the greatest mystery and holds its meetings in a spot as withdrawn or inconspicuous as possible. Owing to the reigning state of anarchy, indeed, the followers of the various candidates would not fail to disturb the deliberations of the electoral college if they were to find out where it is meeting, and to support the candidacy of their respective favorites with arrow shots.

"When the members of the college have come to an agreement on the choice of the new sovereign (who can only be selected among the direct descendants of Oubry, founder of the empire) they secretly warn the chosen man, who also comes to them in secret. Then each of the four electors convokes his warriors, who come and gather around them and the new Moro Naba. On the following morning the informed populace flocks in, and the sovereign is proclaimed king.

"The disturbances of the interregnum come to an end from that moment.

"The Moro Naba, followed by the high dignitaries and the multitude, goes to Tamvilli (a quarter of Ouagadougou), where he spends the first day of his reign. When evening comes, he goes to the chief of the village of Ouagadougou where he spends the night. On the following morning he goes to Paspanga (a quarter of Ouagadougou) where, on the spot where the dwelling of Naba Kom once stood, he receives the canton chiefs and nakomsé, who come and render their oath of fealty. Finally, when this last formality is over, the members of the electoral college depart, and he proceeds along with the Baloum Naba, Kamsoro Naba, and Jussaba Naba to the royal residence.

"The unlucky /575/ pretenders are subjected to the most cruel banter throughout the coronation ceremonies, but once these are over they become kourita, or in other words the highest-ranking nakomsé.

643 669 "We have already stated that as soon as the Moro Naba is proclaimed sovereign, the disturbances of the interregnum come to an end. Mossi history records but a single case where the decision

643 of the electoral college was not accepted by the populace and dis-
669 turbances occurred in spite of the proclamation of the king-elect. This was when Naba Sagha, the son of Naba Kom, was chosen. The people would have liked to see Kaoko, son of Naba Zombéré, nominated. Dissatisfied because the sovereign of their choice had not reached the throne, they would not acknowledge the man chosen by the college. The new monarch managed to take over the throne only after waging a bloody battle at the head of his followers against his unlucky rival.

645 The province chiefs who are ministers are nominated by the
635 Moro Naba, who selects the man most deserving of the succession among the closest relatives of the chief to be replaced. Province chiefs enjoy considerable power in the administration of their provinces, they are surrounded with a large court, but they stand under the direct control of the Moro Naba.

635 It must be added that aside from the five provinces lying under the direct rule of the Moro Naba of Ouagadougou, there were four others (Boussouma and Béloussa to the northeast, Yako to the northwest, Tenkodogo to the southeast) that were mere vassal provinces and that actually enjoyed nearly complete autonomy prior to our occupation. Tenkodogo province was especially important.

The chiefs of these /latter/ provinces were true monarchs selected in the same fashion as the Moro Naba by the electoral college of their province. Once elected, they enjoyed all the prerogatives of sovereignty, nominating the canton chiefs and administering their provinces as they saw fit.

Their power was as absolute in their own sphere as that of the Moro Naba over the whole of his subject provinces, but they ac-
[631] knowledged his sovereignty and offered him a gift as a token of their vassalage at the time when their powers were handed over to them.

/576/ Within the subject provinces, the canton chiefs were
634 nominated by the Moro Naba on the basis of an introduction by the
621 province chief. They were always selected among the closest relatives of the chief they were to replace, always descendants of Oubry, the first Moro Naba. They stood under the direct orders of the province chief, whom they had to use as an intermediary to communicate with the Moro Naba. It was their task to proceed with

634 the nomination of the village chiefs, who were always selected
621 from the family of the preceding chief.

Let us add that in principle, and all other things being equal,
428 it was the eldest son of the deceased chief who was supposed to suc-
631 ceed his father, and this applied to village chiefs as well as to canton chiefs, province chiefs, and the Moro Naba. This principle ran counter to the true patriarchal principle where the younger brother is always the natural and legitimate heir of the deceased brother. The requirements of a warlike existence had probably forced it upon the Mossi at the time of their conquest of the Dagomba and Mossi territories.

This principle of direct inheritance (rather than collateral inheritance) had been restricted, however, by the powers of higher authorities represented by canton chiefs vis-à-vis village chiefs, province chiefs vis-à-vis canton chiefs, the Moro Naba vis-à-vis the province chiefs, and the electoral college of the high dignitaries vis-à-vis the future Moro Naba. In short, the warriors' principle of inheritance from father to eldest son ruled among the Mossi in the power sphere, but had to give way to the exigencies of government whenever necessary.

631 Let us not believe that the third principle, namely the consent of the people involved, was altogether unknown among the Mossi (the consent of the village inhabitants in the case of a village chief, of the canton notables in the case of a canton chief, of the province notables in the case of a province chief, etc.) This third principle, however, was the least important, the least taken into account, the least actualized from a mere potential. /577/ Whenever it clashed with the others, it had to give way.

635 Let us add that the majority of Mossi chiefs were aided by rep-
634 resentatives called baloum.

"The province chiefs," says the Monographie, "the majority of
624 canton chiefs, and even the chiefs of a few important villages, are aided by one or several baloum or palace masters, whom they choose freely. These are sometimes former captives, but most frequently they are common natives or former soroné, and they are never nakomsé. Their function is not hereditary. It grants them the right to substitute for the naba, to speak and act in his name."

687 631 Moulins adds, "Custom does not anticipate the possibility of a chief being, properly speaking, stripped of his rule. A naba who gives the sovereign reasons for complaint is summoned under a pretext of some sort and put to death without further ceremony at the close of the audience granted to him. If the chief, guessing at the true purpose of the Moro Naba's invitation, demurs at going, a column is sent into the region over which he rules with the mission of seizing him and taking him to the Moro Naba, who has him put to death by his pages."

622 Let us add that in the Mossi /language/ a village chief is called tengasoba or tenganaba, from tenga, "earth, place, spot" and by extension "village," and from naba or soba, "chief." There are also chiefs of quarters called sakanaba, sakasoba, or sakakasaman, from saka, "quarter," and naba, soba, or kasaman, "chief." Mossi villages are indeed divided into quarters located some 200, 300, 400, or 500 meters apart and consisting of several soukala which usually stand, as we know, 40 or 50 meters apart. When the head of a quarter dies, it is the oldest soukala chief in the quarter who replaces him.

565 Below the Moro Naba and the chiefs of provinces, cantons, and villages, there existed among the Mossi a true aristocracy, a genuine nobility, the nakomsé, or sons of chiefs. "They were granted," says Moulins, "important privileges. They had the right to loot passing caravans and to demand from the common natives gifts of cowries, livestock, grain, etc., which the latter could not deny them. They were forbidden to kill, but if they committed murder, instead of being put to death, they were merely put in irons for a short period of time. Furthermore, they were granted the privilege of being tried only by the Moro Naba, head of their house, for all their crimes and misdemeanors." They are all descended, or supposed to be descended, from Moro Naba Oubry, conqueror of Mossi territory.

565 171 The existence of this aristocracy among the Mossi must be carefully noted, for it distinguishes them sharply from the populations we have studied up to now, Bobo, Nounouma, Kassouna, Sissala, Dagari, etc. Nobles are not found often among the Blacks of West Africa, and they are found only among groups that are, or formerly

565 171 were, conquerors. This represents a higher level of social complexity and development, in short, a higher level of civilization.

565 556 The nakomsé were and still are gathered in separate villages scattered throughout the territory. They did the same work as other Mossi, but prior to the French occupation they also practiced looting, which was their chief expedient, their major source of wealth. True, this manner of acquiring wealth had lent them improvident habits. Nowadays they own no more small livestock than the Mossi populace, and only a little more large livestock, while they should own much more in view of their former opportunities to acquire wealth. They immediately "ate up" what they looted, however, counting on future pillage. Nowadays they no longer loot, but they seem to have preserved their former improvident habits. It should be noted, however, that they own considerably more horses than other Mossi.

565 142 I saw at Pirigui, in January, 1909, one of those villages of chiefs' sons. There were altogether 841 inhabitants of the nobility with their families and their slaves. Those people would be interesting to study from the point of view of physical anthropology. There were faces totally at variance with Negro faces, truly distinguished physiognomies, oriental and semitic casts of features, in short, enough /579/ to strike an observer even though unfamiliar with physical anthropology.

642 The superstructure of the Mossi state thus consisted of a supreme chief, a carefully established hierarchy of chiefs, and a class of nobles to whom important privileges were granted.

651 As for taxes, "every year at the end of the winter season, prior to our occupation," says Moulins, "the canton chiefs had to come, greet the Moro Naba, and offer him certain gifts (beeves, sheep, millet) which constituted a sort of fixed due." This was the common tax levied after each harvest.

"In addition, whenever the sovereign needed anything whatever, he requested the province chiefs to secure it for him. They summoned the canton chiefs, who in turn gathered the village chiefs, who secured through the soukala chiefs the animals, grain, cowries, and other items requested.

[431] "Finally, whenever a native, chief or common man, came to the Moro Naba, he offered a present to the latter.

651 "Market-place dues were levied by the Dara Haba, for the sovereign's account, on the markets surrounding Ouagadougou. The Moro Naba also got the tusks of elephants and one haunch of every buffalo or koba killed by hunters.

643 651 425 "Furthermore, the right of confiscation which the sovereign could use for his own benefit without any precise rule imperatively limiting the conditions under which he could exercise it, permitted him to augment, whenever needed, the revenue derived from his usual sources.

651 "Province chiefs, in turn, had the right to demand, through the canton chiefs, whatever they needed for the support of their families and retinues. Canton chiefs held the same rights over the villages within their rule. The village chiefs themselves received from their subjects a certain number of gifts."

692 Justice was rendered as follows: /580/

1. By the family heads, aided by the family elders.
2. By the village chiefs, aided by the village elders.
3. By the canton chiefs, aided by the elders of their own quarter.
4. By the province chiefs, aided by the elders of their own quarter and by the dignitaries of their entourage.
5. By the Moro Naba, aided by his ministers and the dignitaries of his entourage.

"The respective competence /legal authority/ of those various jurisdictions," says Moulins, "were in no way clearly determined or defined. The deed and the circumstances alone were taken into account in bringing up before a certain authority a matter which the lower jurisdiction had proved unable to resolve. A matter which the family council had been unable to solve was brought before the village chief, then the canton chief, the province chief, and finally the Moro Naba.

694 "Justice was free of charge in the sense that procedural expenses were unknown, but custom demanded that a litigant should never appear before a judge empty handed. He had to offer him at least a white chicken. The outcome of a trial must often have depended on the greater or lesser generosity displayed by the respective sides."

681 As far as penalties were concerned, Mossi justice was stern and thus ran counter to the "patriarchal" justice of the Bobo, Gourounsi, etc. Murder was always punished by death (except in the case of nobles). As for thefts, physical aggression, and matters involving debts, they were adjusted in the manner described when we discussed the Yarsé, who were subject to Mossi justice since they were settled in their territory /not translated/. [754] We shall not, therefore, go over this again. Let us merely note that the Mossi, being fetishists, were familiar with matters of sorcery.

695 754 At Dembo, in the Yatenga area, when a young person died suddenly, "red powder" would be mixed in water and everyone would drink of it while swearing by Tensé /Tr.: the earth deities/ that he was innocent. The culprits would die. In other villages of the Yatenga area, people suspected of dealing in sorcery had to drink earth taken from the spot where sacrifices were performed and diluted in water. Those /581/ who refused to drink and swear were killed. At Kabayoro, a Mossi village located in the canton of Koumbili, if a man or woman suddendly ill, it was said that it was So-and-So, a sorcerer, who had eaten the soul. If the sick person died, his hands were washed with water and the liquid was given to the sorcerer to drink. He had to swear his innocence and invoke death unto himself if he should lie. If guilty he died; if innocent the water did him no harm. If he refused to swear and drink, he was put in irons and left there to die of hunger and thirst. The bara /soothsayer/ played no role in such occurrences. It was the sick person who pointed out the sorcerer. If the patient failed to designate someone, however, this meant that he was simply dying of illness. [761]

701 Now for the army and police. "In case of war," says Moulins, "the province chiefs summoned the canton chiefs, who hastened forth with all their able-bodied men. They all gathered behind the Tamsaba and followed him.

625 "As for policing, it was taken care of by village and canton chiefs, who arrested culprits with the help of their own followers, or, if necessary, by summoning the whole male population of the village."

161 How many inhabitants did this Mossi empire number, with its careful centralization, its hierarchy of chiefs, and its class of nobles, at the time of the French occupation (1896)?

In 1909 the census yielded 861,700 souls in the circle of Ouagadougou itself and 273,000 in the Tenkodogo residency, or a total of 1,135,000 inhabitants. From this figure, however, we must deduct the independent Boussansé (99,000 in the Tenkodogo residency) and also the people of the Kipirsi (Ouagadougou circle; in theory they are ruled by the Mossi, in fact they are independent; they may be estimated at 40,000). This leaves, for the five subject provinces and the four vassal provinces, about 996,000 inhabitants. It may thus be said that the Moro Naba of Ouagadougou ruled over a population of about a million men.

161 563 Out of this million men, there were roughly /583/ 850,000 Mossi, 40,000 Boussansé, 69,000 Yarsé, 32,000 Foulbé, 5,000 Silmi-Mossi, 1,000 Songhay (in the northern part of the Ouagadougou circle), and 1,000 Haoussa scattered here and there in the same fashion as the Yarsé and Foulbé.

161 We already know that this Ouagadougou empire did not make up the whole Mossi population. There stood alongside it two other kingdoms which must formerly have been subject to Ouagadougou but which had gained their independence long before our occupation. One of them, Yatenga, with Ouahigouya as its capital, was located to the northwest of the Ouagadougou empire. The other one, Gourma, with Fada N'Gourma as its capital, was located to the east. Those two kingdoms may have added up between them to a population of 450,000 in which the Mossi element predominated, with Habé and Samo elements in the Ouahigouya circle, and Gourmanké elements in the circle of Fada N'Gourma.

In short, about a million and a half inhabitants were divided among the Mossi kingdoms in the bend of the Niger, with one million in the most important of those kingdoms, that of Ouagadougou.

161 642 648 The population of the Mossi was, and still is, extraordinarily dense as compared with the over-all population density of West Africa. Among the Mossi, indeed, there are about 25 inhabitants per square kilometer, while in French Guinea, for example, there is an average of 6 inhabitants per square kilometer. This stems

[161] 642 648

from the fact that the Mossi empire was centralized. The internal struggles which often occur among primitive Blacks (Bobo, Gourounsi, Boussansé, Kipirsi, etc.) between villages, quarters, or even soukala, did not exist among the Mossi. Internal peace and security prevailed. In addition, the same centralized power that prevented Negro anarchy also prevented the territory from being devastated by chance conquerors, founders of empires. Thus, while the Djermabé Songhay devastated Gourounsi territory, a land of independent villages or small cantons, and cast it into a kingdom by force of arms, they did not dare attack their Mossi neighbors for fear of the Moro Naba's ten thousand horsemen. /583/ Thus, both internal and external peace were insured thanks to a centralized power. Hence, the impression made by the territory on various travelers between the time of Barth's trip (he did not see Mossi itself, but followed its northern border) and the French occupation. "Mossi territory is regarded as being untouchable," says Marc (op. cit., p. 28). "No doubt, at that time (the time of Barth's trip), as Crozat verified forty years later, one was struck on entering Mossi territory by the complete safety in which the people lived, while everywhere else war and the hunt for slaves devastated the villages. And one mentioned enviously the Mossi peasants who walked singly to their fields, hoe on shoulder, while everywhere else the head of the family had to keep his weapons at hand night and day."

Marc attributes this safety to the Mossi fear of fetishes. He thus looks far afield for an obvious explanation. The Gourounsi, too, had fetishes, and yet the Djermabé did not spare them and treated them more or less as cranes would treat frogs. The Mossi were spared because they lived in a centralized and thus powerful empire, in spite of Marc's assertion that this power was nil since it could not resist Lt. Voulet's handful of riflemen. Indeed, it was nil against power displayed in European fashion, just as Achanti /Ashanti/ power was nil against British strength, and Toucouleur power could not prevail against the forces of Col. Archinard. This Mossi power was nevertheless considerable within its own sphere, that is to say, in West Africa and against other Blacks. It sufficed to give the Mossi an advantage over the Kipirsi, Gourounsi, Boussansé, etc. It sufficed to prevent Toucouleur or Djermabé attack.

642 In short, the Mossi enjoyed the benefits of a strong and cen-
648 tralized government, established no doubt in former times at the price of large-scale massacres and exterminations. And this is what makes us ponder and what is, so to speak, the reverse side of the Black conquerors' coin. It is probable that Oubry, the founder of the Mossi empire in /584/ the twelfth century, was in his time something of a Samory or a Rabah. He probably managed to establish his empire only through the crushing, pillage, and massacre of a tremendous number of small, independent Black villages or small Lélésé, Nounouma, Boussansé, and Habé cantons. Yet in the nineteenth century, on the soil of this empire established at such a price, there were 25 inhabitants per square kilometer, while among the neighboring Gourounsi who have retained their freedom there are the 5 or 6 inhabitants per square kilometer common to West Africa as a whole. In addition, while the Gourounsi were prey to the Songhay, the Habé to the Toucouleur, and the Malinké and Bambara to Samory, our Mossi lived in safety. They had less independence and anarchistic freedom, but they had internal peace and external security. They had to obey their chiefs, but they knew no domestic struggles, no crushing by foreign pillagers. In short, the Mossi had entered upon the course of orderly government, and represented a superior state of civilization.

771 Now, we need only furnish a few details on Mossi religion. The majority of the Mossi population has remained fetishistic.
771 We saw above that the Mossi, at the time of their great ex-
648 pansion in the bend of the Niger, came into conflict with a Moslemized empire, the Mali empire, and that the second Songhay empire also led redoutable religious crusades against the Mossi. Under such circumstances the Mossi were bound to regard Islam as a foe. It is true that later the destruction of the second Songhay empire by the Moroccans (1591) brought peace to the Mossi on their northern frontier and freed them from the fear of Moslem invasion. The Yarsé settled in turn among the Mossi, and owing to their intelligence, industry, and capacity for trade, created for themselves a well-respected position. This was bound to incline the Mossi favorably toward Islam, or at least to lessen their prejudices and

771 their traditional fear. Nevertheless, Captain Lambert says that
648 prior to the French occupation, Moslems were forbidden by the
[798] Moro Naba to /585/ say their prayers (kella) publicly. They merely recited their rosary (séki) silently.

797 Since the French occupation, the Mossi have lost all their prejudices against Islam, because they have been conquered by a different foe. In addition the Moslems tell them, as they do everywhere else in West Africa, that the Whites will only be vanquished and will only leave the country when everyone has become a Moslem. This leads the Mossi to start salaaming, and actually it is probable that there have been more conversions to Islam among the Mossi since our occupation than prior to it. This result, which may appear strange at first, is indubitable. Actually these conversions, although more numerous than they used to be, are still rare if we consider that the enormous majority of the Mossi population and the territory as a whole remains fetishistic.

Let us proceed to a description of Mossi religious customs.
781 First, the funeral ceremonies.
755 When a Mossi is ill he summons a soothsayer (bara in Mossi). The latter takes some earth and looks at it to see what will happen to the sick man. Then he states either that the latter will get well, on condition of obliging with a sheep and a chicken, or else that he will die. In the first case the requested chicken and sheep are brought to the bara, and then, if the sick person gets well, he gets something else, a sheep or 5,000 cowries. If the sick person dies, contrary to prediction, the family merely says that the bara was a liar and nothing else happens.

764 If the deceased is a man, it is the family elders who care for him. They stretch his limbs and even his fingers so he will not turn rigid immediately, and they close his eyes. Then one of the elders washes the corpse with cold water in the presence of the whole family. After this, the elders sew a shroud with cotton bands to wrap around the deceased, and then he is rolled up in a mat.

The soukala chiefs (we know that among the Mossi every household head is the head of a soukala) are buried in the courtyard /586/ of their soukala, or else before its gate. The grave diggers are fetched, and they dig a hole the size of a man, lay the corpse at the bottom, and place boards above it to prevent the soil from weighing

764 down on the chest of the deceased. Then they spread out on the boards a layer of clay, and add earth until the hole is filled. A small canari is placed on the grave to mark its location.

Other members of the soukala are buried around it in the maize field. A canari is also placed upon the grave. The same applies to slaves. Only people stricken with sleeping sickness are buried [766] in the bush, to prevent the spread of the disease.

The deceased is buried on the morning following the day of his death. The heir of the deceased soukala chief and the family elders kill chickens upon the grave. They take the animals by the legs and crush their skull on the floor of the grave. This is the liturgical procedure for such killings. Nine chickens are thus killed [536] in succession and set aside to be eaten. If the soukala is wealthy, sheep are killed instead of chickens. They are seized by their hind legs and their head is struck three times on the floor of the grave, then their throat is cut with a knife. The souls of all those animals go to the deceased.

On the night following the burial, people people play drums, shriek, dance, shoot guns. When day breaks everyone returns home to wash, rest, and eat. Then they return when the sun sets, and this goes on for three successive nights.

765 When the ceremony is over, the date of a new reunion is set for 30, 40, 60 days or even a year later. This second ceremony is often made to coincide with the time of the millet harvest. The children of the deceased have their heads shaved. Much to is prepared. The sisters and daughters who have married away come on the date set, bringing sheep and dolo. The family and the whole village come to greet the successor of the deceased soukala head, to drink and to eat. The griot and large drums are sent for. People make music, dance, sing, and drink for two days, and /587/ this time there is no weeping. This second reunion ends the funeral ceremonies occasioned by someone's death.

769 The Mossi have a yearly feast for their dead and their ancestors. It is the Tiougou or Bassara, which is also called Péléga in other areas. This feast is celebrated in December, when all the millet has been harvested and the cold weather has come. The family and soukala heads have much dolo prepared and pour it onto the graves

769 along with millet flour mixed in water. A few chickens are also killed. No one works on that day, but people eat, drink, and rest. There is no drumming or dancing, however.

Other Mossi (at Yakki, for example) make offerings to the ancestors in the hut of their first wife rather than on the graves.

Another feast comes at sowing time and is called Tengana. Certain leaves are sought in the bush, cooked with beans and underground peas, and eaten. Much dolo is also preapred.

241 On the first day of sowing, one goes to the fields and offers a
776 chicken, millet flour, and dolo to the field stones (tenkougouri) and to the earth (tenga or tempeloun), so the sowing will go well, so there will be a good harvest, and so everyone will be in good health.

There is also an earth feast or Tensé (plural of tenga), which is celebrated once a year during the rainy season. It is the Moro Naba who sets the exact date of the Tensé. Every soukala head
[782] kills a beef, a sheep, or a chicken. The young men collect the blood of the sacrificed animals in gourds and pour some upon the ground (to the Earth) in order to secure a good crop. The remainder is mixed with the flour of large white millet and eaten. Much dolo is consumed. The earth feast is the special festivity of those people who are called Tenga (earth), Tembila, Tenfisi, etc., and of those who were born on the day of the Tensé.

On that day sacrifices are also offered to Naba Ouondé (the Chief God).

/588/ On years when the previous millet harvest was bad, the Tensé is not celebrated.

The Mossi have no special harvesting feast. Actually, it is the Tiougou or Bassara (celebrated when the millet has been harvested) that is the harvesting feast as well as the feast of the ancestors.

782 The Mossi do not offer sacrifices to isolated trees, but they do
778 to sacred groves or woods.

At Ouagadougou, at the spot where the White Fathers now live, there once stood a small sacred wood made up of large trees and thorny bushes, where sacrifices were offered before the French tore it down.

Every year the Moro Naba offered a sheep and a chicken to this sacred grove through the head of the Sékou quarter. He also offered

782 dolo and millet flour. There was no set time for this. The flesh
778 of the sacrificed animals devolved to the sacrificer, the head of Sékou.

At present day sacred groves are still to be found in various Mossi villages. Thus, for example, there are three at Kabayoro, two of which belong to individuals and one to the village. The Earth chief /Tr.: Tengsoba/ of Kabayoro offers sacrifices to the village grove whenever the bara says so.

The Mossi also make sacrifices to the hills.

At Sabtinga, about 17 kilometers northwest of Ouagadougou, there is a rise in the ground called Tantiibo where the Moro Naba used to go once a year with the Baloum Naba, many chiefs and people at the time when the weather begins to grow cold. He ordered a beef, a chicken, millet flour, and a gourd of dolo to be taken along, and they were handed over to the head of the quarter where the hillock stood. This chief performed the sacrifice and begged the piece of ground to grant good health to the Moro Naba. Only
[839] the Moro Naba, the Balou, the sacred people (eunuchs), and the soroné were present at the sacrifice, Other people who had come to Sabtinga remained in the village, whence the Moro Naba set out on foot to the spot of the sacrifice.

At Kombé-Padanda, a small hillock located in a /589/ Ouagadougou quarter, the same sacrifice was offered in the same fashion and at the same time of year.

326 Let us add that when Mossi blacksmiths go and smelt iron ore
782 in the bush, they kill chickens and offer millet flour on the spot where they extract the ore. The sacrifice is offered to the spirits of the hill, as well as to the Earth and to Naba Ouondé.

778 Sacrifices are made to watercourses as well as to hills, either
782 at fishing time or whenever the bara indicate that a certain stream requires a certain sacrifice.

825 As far as crocodiles are concerned, some of them are held
262 sacred by the Mossi. As for snakes, they are killed and usually eaten, but not everyone eats them. Some people abstain.

778 As for the Earth, the Moro Naba had sheep, chickens, millet
782 flour, and dolo handed over to the Baloum Naba through eunuchs several times a year, whenever a bara told him to do so. The Baloum Naba handed these gifts in person to the chief of Ouagadougou,

778 whose ancestors had ruled the soil of the territory. In the name of
782 the Moro Naba, he entrusted him with the task of offering all those gifts to the Earth so that the latter might favor the sovereign. Ouagadougou Naba performed the sacrifice before the door of his soukala.

When the Moro Naba went to war, he also ordered the chief
[72] of Ougadougou to perform a sacrifice to the Earth. The bara indicated what should be sacrificed in order to insure victory, to "break" the villages that were to be attacked.

782 When rain failed to come, the Moro Naba would go to the hillock at Koumbé /sic/-Padanda, and have the head of the quarter offer a sacrifice (beef, sheep, chicken) to secure rain. If rain refused to come, the bara were consulted once more, and sacrifices were offered until it came.

776 The Mossi also have a sky god whom they call Ounam as well
782 as Naba Ouendé or Naba Ouondé, meaning "Sun Chief." This is a
794 trace of the sun cult, which is unusual in Black West Africa, all opinions to the contrary notwithstanding. /590/ The majority of the Mossi sacrifice much more to ancestors and to the Earth than to Naba Ouondé, who is to them a somewhat remote god.

794 It must be added that Lieutenant Desplagnes found among the
782 Mossi an esoteric cult of the sun, moon, and fire, which is peculiar to religious initiates (Ouango) whom we shall mention later.

"The Hougho-Ouango of the Mossi (among the Mossi, those priests reside in the villages of Boujema, Mani, Kondogho, Yolo, and Tio) sacrifice to the sun in order to bind it to the Earth. They do this morning and evening, sunrise and sunset, during the first week of the winter season, and every six days in the morning at sunrise thereafter.
[778] They also go to altars made of three conical stones and offer sacrifices and libations, always surrounded by the populace, family heads, drummers, and familial masks (ouango).

794 "Those priests tend the sacred fire throughout the year in a
372 small, highly adorned recess dug into one of their house walls. At
783 the end of the rainy season they will use it to light the great purifying bush fires.

794 "They perform sacrifices at every new moon, and they have
782 seven important feasts a year for their divinity. Finally, during the solar festivities, they use a cow's tail to tie down the sun to the earth and to bind its life-giving heat." (Le Plateau central nigérien /The Central Nigerian Plateau/, pages 275 and 276.)

900 nigérien /The Central Nigerian Plateau/, pages 275 and 276.)

782 776 The Mossi sacrifice to evil spirits (kinkirga in the singular, kinkirsi in the plural). In Mossi villages, when the cold weather begins, the oldest man in the village performs a sacrifice to avert the wrath of évil spirits. These are indeed fearsome, for among other things they cause the storms, the fierce winds that lay flat the millet and maize. Those spirits usually live in the bush and inhabit [824] in particular the kankalra trees (lenga in Mandé), to which the Mossi offer sacrifices but whose leaves they nevertheless eat. There are Mossi who can see the kinkirsi and who have fights with them.

791 Now, let us say a word about the priestly organization of the Mossi.

/591/ First of all, among the Mossi as among other Blacks, there are soothsayers and makers of grigris. The soothsayers are called bara and the grigri makers timisoba, meaning "grigri chiefs," from timi, "grigri" and soba, "chief." This is exactly the same word formation as that of basitigui in Bambara.

Prior to the French occupation there were considerable numbers of bara among the Mossi, at least one for every village. Since the arrival of the Whites, however, they are much fewer. The bara dis- [787] close things with the aid of some earth. Since they only charge a few cowries for a consultation, they till the soil during the winter season and even work at a trade during the dry season, for example at shoemaking or weaving. They teach the bara's calling to their children.

791 The timisoba, although less numerous than the bara, do not make a living by making grigris either. They, too, till the soil and work 789 at a trade. They only make grigris on order and do not make them up in advance.

The timisoba goes into the bush and cuts out the roots of certain trees. He burns them and puts the charcoal in bags which he hangs either inside or outside his hut. This charcoal is or becomes grigri. In order to make other objects into grigris, he reduces the charcoal to powder, mixes it with karité butter, and marks with it all the objects he wishes to make into grigris, such as cow's tails, deer horns, sheep horns, etc. This charcoal powder is put to all sorts of uses. The timisoba even mixes it with his millet flour and eats it.

789 A number of grigris made by Mossi timisoba have passed
791 through my hands. I shall list them and briefly describe them below.

1. A cow's tail at the tip of a wooden handle. When one is traveling during the winter season and a storm threatens, one need only wave the cow's tail and the storm does not burst. Once in the village, one stops waving it and the rain comes.

2. A hollow koba horn in which tamarind leaves, peanuts, and
[751] gum have been placed. In case of headache one opens the horn by its small upper lid, takes /592/ a pinch of the mixture, and swallows it. Then one does this again and also rubs a little on the forehead.

3. A small hoe with a chicken's head fastened to the handle. When during a dance one wishes to silence a singer who has been singing too long in order to sing oneself, one grips the hoe and covers the chicken's mouth. The singer is silenced, and in addition one sings perfectly.

4. A small hoe covered with leopardskin at the bend. If one is
[752] bitten by a snake, one cuts off a very small piece of the skin and puts it in a canari full of water. Then one rubs the bite with this water.

5. A deer horn with a fine red cord wrapped around it. Inside the horn there are tiégélara and karité seeds. The opening of the horn is closed with a wad of cotton.

If an enemy comes looking for a fight, one places some of the contents of the horn on a leather bracelet which is slipped on the left wrist. No harm can come to you, and the quarrel will immediately come to an end.

6. A deer horn containing crushed scorpions and pimento. If one wishes to become an indefatigable dancer, one need only rub one's back with the mixture.

7. Leather bracelets with powdered rice inside. People who wear one of those bracelets on the arm can be sure that the stick or sword which their enemy may attempt to use against them will break in his hands.

8. Iron bracelets covered with crocodile skin. Same purpose.

9. Cotton bracelets with honey and salt inside. If your wife
[842] is sterile, it is sufficient to put the bracelet in water in order to make her fertile.

789 10. A deer horn covered with leather and containing millet and
791 pounded-bean flour. On the outside there is a hooked piece of iron.
777

789 If someone tells you that you own many animals, or that they are
791 very handsome, this gives bad luck, as you know. So, to ward it off,
777 /593/ you grasp your grigri by slipping two fingers into the iron hook and two others into the curve of the horn, and then you hang it in your hut, or better still, you hang it from the neck of one of the threatened animals.

789 11. A small turtle completely enclosed in a small leather bag
791 along with a powdered aquatic leaf called kouri. If you have a
755 stomach-ache, you cover the flat side of the object with butter and rub your stomach with it.

789 12. A small piece of wood covered with lizardskin in the middle
791 and leather at the ends and prolonged at one end by an iron tip.
832 If one wishes for the favors of a woman who refuses to grant them, one comes near the cruel woman while gripping the grigri in the left fist, its tip pointing up. At the same time, one presses the woman's hand tightly with the right hand. This method of seduction is claimed to be infallible.

789 13. A koba horn covered with leather and prolonged at the broad
791 end with a chicken foot. Inside, the horn contains rice, salt, and
754 soumbara. If you were threatened by a spell performed against you, you would slip the horn upon your head, with the thick end between the eyes and the pointed end behind the head. Then you would have nothing to fear.

14. A deer horn containing barkoundi leaves and closed with a lid adorned with a cowrie.

To prevent a sorcerer from eating the soul of a third party, you lift the lid with the aid of a knife covered with karité butter, you take with this knife a little of the contents of the horn, and you spread it on your forehead.

535 In addition to the bara and timisoba, the Mossi also have ouango.
532 "The ouango," says Marc (op. cit., pages 152 and 155), "are
575 dancers whose costume consists of a huge liana robe which covers the entire body and which is surmounted by a wooden mask painted red and black and usually representing /594/ the head of an animal. The ouango are members of a rather mysterious brotherhood. They have a special language, and the Mossi believe that anyone who says a word

535 while the ouango are singing will surely die within the year. (The
532 ouango sing at the funeral ceremonies of important personages, at the
575 second ceremony performed a month or a year after the burial).
The masks of the ouango are made in the greatest secrecy. They have to be carved out of a single piece of wood, and the man who is making one must not be seen as long as his task has not been completed.

535 "In our opinion it would be most interesting to try and study
the ouango and their customs more closely than we succeeded in
575 doing. We believe, indeed, that theirs is a very old institution
171 antedating the arrival of the Mossi in the Volta basin, an institu-
174 tion which they found among the peoples they conquered and which they preserved, no doubt because they did not dare fight it. Ouango are to be found throughout Gourounsi territory, and the dou noticed by Binger among the Bobo would seem to have the same origin. The dancers with totemic masks who appear in some of Desplagnes' photographs are quite similar to the Mossi ouango."

The Mossi ouango are thus no different from the Bobo dou, the Khassonké mamadiombo, the Habé and Bambara namakoro, the Malinké dokho, the Landouman /Landuma/ simo, etc.

793 The Earth chief or Tensoba is also part of the Mossi priestly
174 organization. We are already familiar with Earth chiefs, whom we encountered among the Gourounsi. They exercise no political authority in the village, but they are entrusted with the performance of sacrifices to the Earth and to other local divinities.

The presence of those Earth chiefs among the Mossi is no doubt to be explained by the superposition of the conquering group over the conquered group. When the Mossi invaded and conquered the country, they placed their own men at the head of all the villages and all the cantons in the course of conquest, /595/ to ensure the submission of the vanquished population. They never felt, however, (and they hold this in common with the rest of West Africa) that they were themselves qualified to offer sacrifices to the Earth and other divinities of the place. Only the vanquished, former owners of the latter and on good terms with it, were qualified to do this. The former autochtonous political chief thus naturally became a religious chief under Mossi authority. We have already seen that the Moro Naba

793 never offers sacrifices himself to the Earth at Ouagadougou, nor does
174 he have them offered by the Gandé Naba, his minister of religion. He entrusts with this task the Ouagadougou Naba, who is a grandson of the autochtonous inhabitants and thus favorably regarded by the local divinities. Similarly, when the Moro Naba sacrifices to the hillocks surrounding Ouagadougou, he entrusts the local chief with the offerings and the physical sacrifice. Now, what the Moro Naba still does at Ouagadougou was no doubt done by other Mossi chiefs throughout the land after conquest, once the submission of the autochtonous inhabitants had been ensured by force of arms. Hence, the institution of the Tensoba.

One might object that Earth chiefs are also to be found in Gourounsi territory, although the Gourounsi are independent. We know, however, that the present-day Gourounsi cantons were not the achievement of the Gourounsi themselves but of minor Mossi dynasties established in the territory. Under the circumstances, the same substitution of conquering chiefs for conquered chiefs has occurred there as in Mossi territory, with the same consequences.

"The Tensoba," says Marc, p. 157, "whose title means 'Master
793 of the Earth,' stands in opposition to the naba who is a military chief....

"The Tensoba is the indispensable mediator between the ancestors and their living descendants. It is he who conducts the funeral ceremonies and who decides on the honors to be rendered on the Day of the Dead. It is to him that one appeals in case of an epidemic or any public misfortune, since misfortunes are always due to the evil inclinations of ancestors that must be allayed."

/596/ Actually, the institution of the Earth chief does not strip
793 the village and canton chiefs of all religious powers. In some areas,
643 as Marc pointed out, the Earth chiefs have gradually vanished, and
839 the political chiefs have become religious chiefs as well. They per-
778 form sacrifices on the bara's advice, without failing to make a gift
[431] of some sort (100 or 1,000 cowries) to the latter also. By the same token and up to a point, the Moro Naba is invested with a religious character and with religious attributes. It is he, as we have already seen, who orders the performance of sacrifices to the Earth, to the hills. Every year during the dry season, he has a donkey sacrificed to Naba Koutou, a former Moro Naba, in the hut where the latter is buried. Prior to our occupation it was a eunuch who performed

793 the sacrifice and killed the donkey. He also slit the throat of a
643 horse, a beef, and a sheep. (This eunuch in charge of guarding the
839 tomb was called by the name of Naba Koutou, and in a way per-
778 petuated the deceased Moro Naba. He was granted special privi-
leges. If a man who was condemned to death ran away and reached
the tomb, he was safe but became the eunuch's slave. Similarly,
[567] a captive who ran away from his master gained his freedom from the
latter if he reached the grave, but became the slave of Naba Koutou.
Finally, at that time, it was forbidden to ride by the hut on a donkey.
Naba Koutou would seize the donkey, or at least demand a ransom
in cowries before returning it. This applied to any animals who ran
astray near the tomb. The tomb still exists nowadays, along with
the Naba Koutou who watches over it, but the latter no longer enjoys
the same privileges.)

793 We saw earlier that the Moro Naba had a sort of minister of the
645 cult in the person of the Gandé Naba, high priest and sacrificer.
There was also the Pouy Naba, or chief of the fetisheers, whose
function was probably to mediate between the Mossi bara and
timisoba as a whole and the central authorities.

782 Let us close this study of Mossi religion, which incidentally is
quite incomplete and a mere outline, with a few words on the human
sacrifices that were performed /597/ in the territory prior to our
occupation, and a few words on circumcision as well.

782 "Human sacrifices," says Marc., p. 156, "definitely took place
766 among the Mossi up to the time when we occupied the territory.
Whenever a Moro Naba died at Ouagadougou, one of his wives and
one of his horses were sent to Gambaga in order to be sacrificed on
the tomb of Ouidiraogo (?) who is regarded as the mother of the first
Moro Naba. Soon after the occupation of Ouagadougou by the French,
782 the dethroned Moro Naba, Boukary Koutou, ordered the sacrifice of a
754 black rooster, a black goat, a black donkey, a black beef, and a
black slave on one of the mountains overlooking the White Volta.
This, it seems, was bound to cause the immediate death of the new
Moro Naba enthroned by Voulet."

304 As for circumcision, the Mossi circumcise boys and excise girls.
Boys are circumcised when they are from eight to twelve years
old, and thirty or forty of them are circumcised at one time. The

304 occasion calls for festivities that last for one month, and it is repeated every seven or eight years in each village.

As for girls, they undergo the barbarous operation of excision when they are from eight to twelve years old. The girls' excision is not performed at the same time as the boys' circumcision, but in another year. The attendant festivities also last for one month.

The girls are operated on by a woman, the boys by a man.

It is not the labia of the girls that are severed, but the clitoris itself. Why do this? My informants did not know. Is it to make the weaker sex less susceptible to sensual pleasures? No. It would rather be, my informants tell me, to facilitate the physical union of men and women. This would also be the aim of the boys' circumcision. But my informants were not sure.

881 304 171 We might note that among the Mossi, as in certain other parts of West Africa, for example in Guinea (but not among the Gourounsi, where boys are not circumcised /598/ and girls are often excised at birth), circumcision and excision are combined with an initiation, that is to say, are closely connected with the education and instruction of young men and girls. One takes advantage of the circumcision or excision to complete, so to speak, the instruction and education of youth.

881 304 Marc has the following to say about the subject (op. cit., p. 150). "The circumcision of boys takes place around the age of twelve and occasions important festivities. There seems to be a sort of initiation ceremony, which is performed in rather mysterious circumstances. Unfortunately, it is difficult to find out exactly what does take place."

000 We close our survey of Mossi religion by referring the reader to Appendix 33 /not translated/ for a few complementary details on the Moslem question in the territory. We have also concluded our description of Mossi society as a whole. In order to gain a deeper understanding of its origins as far as the conquering population is concerned, we shall now have a glance at the Foutanké social type in the following chapter /not translated/.

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Louis TAUXIER

Le Noir du Soudan

Pays Mossi et Gourounsi

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LIVRE QUATRIÈME

NOIRS GUERRIERS ET CONQUÉRANTS

CHAPITRE PREMIER

LES MOSSI. — LE TRAVAIL

Les Mossi sont établis entre le 12e et le 14e degrés de latitude nord et entre le 2e et le 5e degrés de longitude ouest. Au sud ils débordent un petit peu le 12e degré de latitude. Ainsi on les trouve à Saraboutenga, Rakaye, Béré, Tenkodogo, mais cela ne les met pas très au sud du 12e degré. En revanche, au nord, ils ne vont pas tout à fait jusqu'au 14e degré.

Les Mossi forment une masse considérable occupant au centre le cercle de Ouagadougou, au nord-ouest celui de Ouahigouya, au sud-est la résidence de Tenkodogo et encore à l'est de cette dernière le cercle de Fada-N'Gourma. Evidemment les Mossi ne forment pas la population totale de ces quatre circonscriptions. Dans le cercle de Ouahigouya ils ont au nord-ouest des Habé et des Houmbébés, au sud des Samoros. Dans le cercle de Ouagadougou qui peut être considéré comme leur centre ils ont les Kipirsi à l'est. Dans la résidence de Tenkodogo ils ont les Boussansé au sud et dans le cercle de Fada N'Gourma ils ont les Gourmantchés ou Gourmankés à l'est, mais ils forment la

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partie la plus considérable de la population totale de ces quatre endroits. Dans le cercle de Ouagadougou ils sont 750.000, dans la résidence de Tenkodogo 122.000, dans la résidence de Léo 1.000, ce qui fait 873.000 pour le cercle de Ouagadougou considéré dans son ensemble. En admettant qu'il y ait 200.000 Mossi dans les cercles de Ouahigouya et de Fada-N'Gourma (chiffre très approximatif), on arrive à un total de 1.073.000 Mossi ce qui fait d'eux la population de beaucoup la plus nombreuse de toute l'Afrique occidentale Française, si l'on songe par exemple que notre Dahomey tout entier ne contient que 655.000 habitants, notre Guinée française 1.400.000, que les Yolofs du Sénégal sont juste 400.000, etc.

Les Mossi forment actuellement une race parfaitement homogène dans ses coutumes et sa langue, mais cette homogénéité n'est qu'un résultat. La masse mossi actuelle résulte de la fusion d'une population conquérante (les Mossi proprement dits) avec une population conquise qui était probablement apparentée de fort près aux Habé, Kipirsi, Gourounsi, Boussansé, etc.

Le lieutenant Marc, qui a séjourné plusieurs années au Mossi et qui a publié en 1909 sur le pays un livre dont j'ai déjà parlé, dit à ce sujet :

« Les traditions locales rapportent que les Mossi viennent de très loin dans l'est. Il y a fort longtemps ils occupaient un pays situé au delà du Niger dont la capitale s'appelait Aliaman. Ce pays serait actuellement occupé par des Songhay. Puis les Mossi vinrent occuper le Dagomba, ils battirent les habitants de ce pays et le chef des Mossi s'installa à Gambaga. La fille du roi de Gambaga, Ouidiraogo (cheval mâle en Mossi), eut une aventure dans la brousse avec un chasseur d'éléphants de race Dagomba nommé Samba. Elle devint enceinte ; son père voulant la faire tuer elle se réfugia à Tenkodogo. Là, elle épousa le roi du pays, un Boussangçé nommé Zoungourouma qui fit la guerre à son beau-père et conquit tout le pays de Gambaga à Koupéla. Zoungourouma eut trois fils : Séré, Oubri et Kouda. Le premier devint naba de Boussouma, le second, naba Oubri, conquit le pays de Ouagadougou, y installa sa capitale et s'empara du Yatenga. C'est naba Oubri qui est considéré par les

Mossi comme le premier des Moronabas et le fondateur de la dynastie actuelle Il eut pour successeur son frère Couda, puis son fils Nigamenda. Les Mossi font remonter à Naba Oubri l'organisation actuelle du pays mossi et lui attribuent le partage du pays en fiefs gouvernés par ses frères et ses parents. Actuellement on considère comme descendants directs de Naba Oubri ou de ses frères les représentants des familles royales de Ouagadougou, de Boussouma, de Tenkodogo, de Fada N'gourma et de Gambaga.

» Les Mossi disent qu'au moment de leur arrivée le pays était occupé par des sauvages vivant nus et tatoués sur le ventre. Ces indigènes se nommaient Suida. Les Mossi prétendent que c'est devant eux que les Habé se sont enfuis dans les montagnes de Bandiagara et que les Habé, les Kipirsi et les Boussangçé sont les survivants de cette race autochtone des Suida.....

» Les traditions des primitifs repoussés par les envahisseurs concordent assez bien avec les traditions des Mossi.....

» Il nous paraît résulter de ces traditions que les Mossi, venant de fort loin dans l'est, sont venus occuper les pays qui sont actuellement le Mampoursi et le Dagomba avec Gambaga pour capitale, puis que, partant de Gambaga, ils se sont dirigés vers le nord-ouest et sont venus s'installer dans les vastes plaines du bassin de la Volta Blanche où ils sont encore. Au moment de leur arrivée, ce qui est actuellement le pays Mossi était peuplé par des tribus dont les Boussangçé, les Gourounsi et les Habé sont actuellement les témoins.

» Il est probable que les Mossi durent une partie de leur succès à leur cavalerie. Nous pensons que ce sont les Mossi qui ont introduit les races de chevaux que l'on trouve actuellement dans le bassin de la Volta. Actuellement encore tous les Mossi aiment les chevaux et sont fiers d'en posséder et aucun naba ne consentirait à se montrer en public autrement qu'à cheval. Au contraire les Gourounsi ne se soucient guère des chevaux.....

» Une partie seulement des autochtones se réfugièrent dans les montagnes ou derrière la Volta Rouge ; le reste fut conquis, se fondit dans la masse Mossi et accepta la langue et les mœurs

Mossi. Cette population autochtone n'a pas disparu sans laisser de traces. A notre avis c'est à elle qu'il faut attribuer l'organisation religieuse du pays Mossi » (pages 130 à 134).

De son côté M. Moulins, agent des affaires indigènes, qui a résidé de 1907 à 1909 au Mossi et qui a écrit la Monographie du cercle de Ouagadougou en 1909, dit :

« La tradition rapporte qu'il y a environ trente-cinq générations, le roi des Dagombas qui résidait à Gambakha avait une fille du nom de Poko qu'il laissait croître en âge et en beauté sans se préoccuper de la pourvoir d'un mari. La jeune fille en éprouva un si vif mécontentement qu'elle n'hésita pas à s'enfuir de la maison paternelle montée sur un cheval dont elle s'était emparé.

» Elle parvint dans la région du Yanga actuel (circonscription de Tenkodogo) alors occupée par une population très peu dense de Boussansé et s'éprit d'un chasseur d'éléphants nommé Riare dont elle eut un fils qui fut appelé Ouidiraogo (peut-être en souvenir du cheval ayant servi à Poko à s'enfuir de Gambakha, car ouidiraogo signifie cheval mâle).

» Quand Ouidiraogo eut atteint une quinzaine d'années Poko dépêcha un messager à Gambakha avec mission de dire au roi des Dagombas « Vous n'avez pas voulu me marier, mais Dieu m'a donné un fils auquel je vous demande de venir en aide ». Puis elle envoya Ouidiraogo se présenter à son grand-père qui le reçut fort bien et lui fit présent de quatre chevaux et cinquante bœufs.

» Le royaume des Dagombas était alors surpeuplé. Aussi quand Ouidiraogo s'en retourna dans la région de Tenkodogo un grand nombre de Dagombas s'attachèrent à sa fortune et le suivirent. Il fonda avec sa bande, sur un emplacement abandonné par les Boussansé à son approche, un village qu'il nomma Tankourou et qui est le Tenkodogo actuel.

» A partir de ce moment, sa puissance ne cessa de s'accroître par l'arrivée continuelle de Dagombas qui venaient en foule se grouper sous son autorité. D'autre part les populations voisines étaient très peu denses et très divisées. Aussi parvint-il à leur faire reconnaître sa domination.

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» Entre temps Ouidiraogo s'était marié et avait eu de nombreux fils : lorsque ceux-ci furent grands, il les installa en qualité de chefs dans les régions voisines, notamment à Fada N'Gourma, imposant par la force des armes sa volonté à ceux qui ne voulaient pas se soumettre.

» Le territoire constituant la circonscription actuelle de Ouagadougou était alors occupé par des Nymsis et des Gourounsi qui vivaient les uns à côté des autres dans un état d'anarchie absolu. Les différents villages reconnaissaient plus ou moins l'autorité de leur chef, mais bien que parfois fédérés en sortes de cantons, n'obéissaient à aucun pouvoir central. Aussi les guerres et les pillages étaient-ils incessants d'un village à l'autre.

» Le chef d'une agglomération de Nymsis ou Nioniossés comprenant sept villages formant à peu près le canton actuel d'Oubrytenga, envoya une députation à Ouidiraogo pour lui offrir une de ses filles en mariage. Ouidiraogo accepta et donna cette fille à son fils Zoungourana qui en eut un enfant nommé Oubry.

» Quelques années plus tard une nouvelle députation de Nioniossés revint saluer Ouidiraogo et lui demanda de prendre le pays sous sa protection, en en donnant le commandement à un de ses fils. Ouidiraogo se rendit chez les Nioniossés pour prendre possession du pays, mais mourut au cours de cette reconnaissance au village de Saraboutenga. Son fils Zoungourana lui succéda et envoya Oubry, alors âgé d'une douzaine d'années, prendre le commandement des Nioniossés. Ce dernier s'installa avec sa suite dans un village qui prit le nom d'Oubrytenga.

» Pendant les premières anuées de son règne, Oubry, à raison de son jeune âge, se contenta de gouverner la région qui l'avait appelé comme chef, mais parvenu à l'âge d'homme, ils se préoccupa d'étendre les limites de son commandement.

» Une première colonne dirigée sur Gangado et Loumbila-Poko amena la soumission des régions de Boussouma et de Béloussa ; une seconde expédition conduite jusqu'à La fit reconnaître la souveraineté d'Oubry dans la région de Yako.

» A cette époque, Zoungourana mourut. Oubry était son héritier légitime. Il devint donc, sous le nom de Moro-Naba, chef des Mossi, le chef de toutes les branches de la famille régnante. Il laissa l'administration de la région de Tenkodogo à un de ses frères, mais garda sur celle-ci un droit de suzeraineté qui a subsisté jusqu'à l'occupation française.

» La dernière expédition d'Oubry fut celle qu'il dirigea sur Ouagadougou où il livra une bataille qui dura cinq jours et à l'issue de laquelle sa domination fut reconnue jusqu'au Kipirsi. Dès lors, l'empire Mossi était constitué.

» Oubry mourut peu après à Koudougou (Kipirsi) au cours d'une tournée qu'il effectuait dans ses nouvelles possessions.

» A sa mort, non seulement la conquête était terminée, mais encore l'organisation politique était ébauchée sur des bases solides. Pour faciliter l'administration de son vaste empire, Oubry l'avait en effet divisé en provinces qui se subdivisaient elles-mêmes en cantons comprenant chacun un certain nombre de villages. Une hiérarchie puissante existait entre les différents chefs et aboutissait au Moro-Naba qui centralisait ainsi un pouvoir considérable.

» Ce n'est pas à dire qu'il ne soit rien resté à faire aux successeurs d'Oubry ; le pays était conquis, mais il restait à le pénétrer et à l'assimiler. L'organisation politique était ébauchée, mais il restait à la fortifier et à la compléter.

» Jusqu'au règne du naba Kobra, quatorzième successeur d'Oubry, les Moro-Nabas, au lieu de résider de génération en génération à Ouagadougou, comme cela a toujours eu lieu depuis cette époque, s'installèrent au contraire successivement sur les différents points de leur empire. Il semble bien qu'ils aient obéi, en agissant ainsi, au souci d'affermir leur autorité dans les régions où celle-ci n'était pas encore suffisamment reconnue.

» D'autre part, chaque fois qu'un commandement territorial se trouvait vacant, les Moro-Nabas y nommaient systématiquement un membre de leur famille : le pays entier se trouva ainsi bientôt entre les mains d'individus unis entre eux par des liens

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de parenté et reconnaissant dans la personne du Moro-Naba, le chef de leur famille.

» Enfin grâce aux mariages entre Mossi, Nymsis et Gourounsi, l'élément envahisseur pénétra peu à peu la population antérieure et finit par l'absorber presque entièrement...

» Nous avons vu qu'au moment de l'invasion des Dagombas, le territoire formant la circonscription actuelle de Tenkodogo était peuplé de Boussansé et ceux formant la circonscription actuelle de Ouagadougou, de Gourounsi et de Nymsis ou Nioniossés.

» Le métissage des Dagombas avec les Boussansé, Nymsis et Gourounsi a produit la race Mossi qui de bonne heure a constitué l'élément le plus important de la population. En leur qualité de conquérants, en effet, les Dagombas épousèrent chacun un nombre considérable de femmes que l'interdiction des mariages entre parents les conduisait à chercher dans les familles Boussansé, Nioniossés et Gourounsi. C'est ainsi qu'ils en vinrent à absorber assez rapidement l'élément autochtone ou du moins l'élément qui était déjà installé dans le pays lors de leur arrivée.

» Au milieu des Mossi, quelques familles Nymsis se sont gardées de tout mélange, mais le contact perpétuel avec les Mossi les a conduites à adopter le langage et les mœurs de ceux-ci dont, au point de vue politique, ils ne se différencient pas. »

Des deux récits du lieutenant Marc et de M. Moulins, il faut retenir en gros :

1° Que les Mossi, venus du nord-est, conquirent le Dagomba à une époque qu'il est difficile de déterminer avec exactitude, mais qui ne doit pas être très antérieure à leur conquête du Mossi ;

2° Qu'ils partirent de là pour conquérir le Mossi actuel en commençant par Tenkodogo et en aboutissant à Ouahigouya, c'est-à-dire en marchant du sud-est au nord-ouest. Et pour les détails de cette conquête, le récit de M. Moulins doit être préféré à celui du lieutenant Marc, les détails en étant plus circonstanciés, plus vraisemblables et plus exacts (par exemple, le

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lieutenant Marc appelle Ouidiraogo la fille du roi Dagomba. Or Ouidiraogo signifie cheval mâle en mossi et par conséquent ne peut être un nom de fille, tandis que Poko est un nom féminin usuel au Mossi et du reste signifie simplement femme. De même, à prendre le récit du lieutenant Marc au pied de la lettre, Zoungourana serait un Boussansé, alors que c'est un Mossi, père du conquérant Oubry etc.) ;

3° Qu'ils rencontrèrent là une race autochtone proche parente des Kipirsi, Gourounsi, Habé, Boussansé actuels et qu'ils se fondirent avec elle. Nous savons, pour les avoir étudiés précédemment, ce que sont les Gourounsi, cultivateurs et communautaires. Les Kipirsi, Boussansé et Habé sont du même type social. C'est l'élément mossi envahisseur qui représenta, dans le mélange formé, l'élément supérieur et l'élément décommunautarisant.

Disons maintenant qu'il y a quelque chose à ajouter au récit de Moulins. Celui-ci semble considérer que les Mossi atteignirent toute leur expansion conquérante dès le règne d'Oubry et qu'ayant conquis le Mossi actuel ils ne s'occupèrent plus, dès Oubry même, qu'à administrer et à consolider leur conquête. Mais ce n'est pas ainsi que se passèrent les choses si l'on consulte le Tarikh-es-Soudan que le lieutenant Marc a mis si heureusement à contribution.

Le Tarikh nous apprend en effet que les Mossi prirent Tombouctou au XIVe siècle et le lieutenant Marc place, très logiquement, semble-t-il, cette prise de Tombouctou vers 1333 ou 1334 (voir pour la discussion pages 136 à 138 de l'ouvrage cité). Mais en 1336 ou 1337 les gens de Mali réoccupèrent Tombouctou. Donc, dès leur première poussée, les Mossi allèrent beaucoup plus vers le nord que Moulins ne l'indique. On peut placer le règne d'Oubry conquérant de Ouagadougou au XIIe siècle de notre ère. Ses successeurs continuèrent le mouvement vers le nord-ouest. Ils occupèrent Ouahigouya, refoulèrent les Habé juste au delà de ce village et continuant dans la direction du fleuve attaquèrent une première fois Tombouctou en 1333 ou 1334. Ils enlevèrent la ville. Mansa Sliman chef de l'empire de Mali la leur reprit quelques années après.

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C'est à ce moment-là qu'on peut placer sans doute l'expansion des Mossi vers le sud. Cette expansion est un fait, puisque nous avons déjà vu en parlant des Dagaris, qu'une grosse colonne mossi vint s'établir dans le pays Dagari et se fondit avec les autochtones pour donner les Dagaris actuels qui parlent une langue dérivée du Mossi et apparentée de très près à celui-ci. Or les Dagaris occupent l'extrême sud de la circonscription de Léo et le nord de la Gold-Coast anglaise c'est-à-dire qu'ils sont, comme nous le savons, sur les 10e et 11e parallèles.

Le lieutenant Marc admet du reste que les Mossi poussèrent jusqu'au 9e degré vers le sud. « Ils occupèrent dans l'est, dit-il page 138, tout le Gourma et, au sud-est de Dori, le Yaga. Au sud, dans la vallée de la Volta Blanche ils se sont avancés jusqu'au 9e parallèle et dans la vallée de la Volta Noire jusqu'au 10e vers Ouâ. Les limites sud sont à peu près les limites extrêmes jusqu'où l'on peut pousser avec des chevaux et il est probable que les Mossi qui, comme nous l'avons dit, sont essentiellement un peuple de cavaliers, n'ont pas dû tenter de se rapprocher davantage de la grande forêt ».

Le mouvement de conquête mossi vers l'est (Gourma, Yanga etc.) et vers le sud (pays Nounouma, Sissala, Dagari, Kassouna, Boura etc) le lieutenant Marc le place au xve siècle. Pour moi je le placerais plutôt dans la seconde moitié du xive siècle, car au moment où les Mossi prirent Tombouctou (1333 ou 1334) ils étaient certainement animés d'un puissant mouvement d'expansion conquérante. Or nous savons que Mansa Sliman, sultan de l'empire de Mali, leur reprit Tombouctou quelques années après. Cela n'alla pas évidemment sans un refoulement des Mossi vers le sud-est, vers Ouahigouya ou Ouagadougou, mais ce refoulement momentané n'abolit pas sans doute leur force d'expansion et il est logique et conforme aux données générales de l'histoire de supposer qu'elle ne fit que la rejeter d'un autre côté. C'est donc sans doute après la reprise de Tombouctou par les Mandé que les Mossi se tournèrent vers le sud et poussèrent leurs conquêtes jusqu'à Oua. Toute la seconde moitié du xive siècle et les premières années du xve furent probablement employées à cela.

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Du reste cette expansion des Mossi vers le sud devait augmenter les forces de l'empire. Aussi voyons-nous sans surprise nos gens reprendre à un moment donné le chemin du nord. Le Tarikh-es-Soudan nous apprend en effet qu'en 1432 et 1480 ils dirigèrent des expéditions victorieuses contre Tombouctou et s'attaquèrent avec succès au Macina.

C'est à ce moment-là, vers le milieu du xve siècle, qu'il faut, à mon avis, placer l'apogée de l'empire mossi. Il domine alors toute la boucle du Niger, de Oua et Gambakha au sud presque jusqu'à Tombouctou au nord et, en gros, du Niger Oriental au Niger Occidental.

Mais cette situation prépondérante va cesser bien vite. En 1483 en effet les Mossi envahissent les territoires que le fondateur du deuxième empire Songhay vient de conquérir sur l'empire de Mali. Celui-ci marche sur les Mossi, leur inflige une sanglante défaite et les poursuit jusque sur leur territoire.

En 1497, Askia El-Hadj Mohammed déclare contre eux la guerre sainte. En 1549 et en 1561 Askia Daoud fait au Mossi des expéditions brillantes. Bref, le second empire Songhay prit le dessus sur les Mossi, fit cesser leurs attaques contre le nord et au contraire les poursuivit chez eux. C'est alors sans doute que les Mossi durent abandonner définitivement les territoires situés au delà de Ouahigouya, soit au nord-ouest, soit au nord. C'est probablement aussi à la même époque que le flux Mossi qui avait débordé sur le sud se retira pour rentrer dans ses limites actuelles, abandonna le Dagari, le Gourounsi etc, mais non sans laisser de traces.

En 1591 une colonne marocaine met fin au second empire Songhay et conquiert Tombouctou De ce fait les Mossi n'eurent plus rien à craindre du côté du nord car leur grand ennemi, l'empire Songhay, était détruit et d'autre part l'empire marocain de Tombouctou connut bien vite la décadence. Néanmoins les Mossi avaient été trop frappés au xvie siècle pour se relever des coups que leur avaient porté les Songhay et ils étaient entrés définitivement dans la voie de la décadence, eux aussi. C'est à ce moment-là sans doute que les Mossi de Ouahigouya rompirent tout lien de dépendance vis-à-vis de Ouagadougou.

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Le Gourma fit sans doute de même. Bref, au cours des XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles, l'empire mossi se réduisit à ce qu'il était quand nous le conquîmes en 1896.

Il faut avouer cependant, comme le fait remarquer le lieutenant Marc, qu'il eut au XIXe siècle une paisible vieillesse. Ainsi les Toucouleurs conquérants du pays Haoussa avec Othman dan Fodio ne touchèrent pas au Mossi, ni El-Hadj-Omar arrêté au Macina par les Foulahs. Par le sud, Samory après avoir conquis la Côte-d'Ivoire soudanaise n'alla pas plus loin que Boromo. Quant aux hommes du Djerma ou Zaberma, après avoir conquis le Gourounsi, ils subirent dans le Kipirsi une défaite qui les arrêta momentanément dans leur marche vers le nord. Peut-être auraient-ils entamé plus tard le Mossi mais les Français arrivaient à ce moment-là. Bref l'empire mossi resta intact pendant tout le XIXe siècle, mais il n'en était pas plus fort pour cela et s'écroula d'un seul coup, en 1896, devant une petite colonne française.

Il faut ajouter à cet historique rapide la liste des Moro-Nabas qui se sont succédé depuis Oubry, liste que nous empruntons à la Monographie du cercle de Ouagadougou de Moulins.

1° Oubry, fils de Zoungourana, petit-fils de Ouidiraogo, arrière-petit-fils de Poko. Il résida à Oubrytenga.

2° Sorba, fils d'Oubry, qui résida à Lougousi.

3° Nassekiemdé, frère de Sorba.

4° Nassébiri, frère de Sorba. Il résida à La.

5° Ningnom, frère du précédent.

6° Koundoumié, fils du précédent. Il habita Tiou.

7° Kouda, fils du précédent. Il habita Saponé.

8° Dawoéma, fils du précédent. Il habita Loumbila.

9° Zettembousma, frère du précédent.

10° Nandieffo, fils du précédent. Il habita Ouagadougou.

Si l'on place le règne d'Oubry vers 1175 de notre ère, on a, jusqu'à Bokary Koutou trentième Moro-Naba qui régnait en 1896, une période de 721 ans, ce qui fait une moyenne, pour chaque Moro-Naba de 24 ans de règne. Si l'on applique ces chiffres aux dix premiers Moro-Nabas, Kida aurait régné de 1463

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à 1487. C'est lui qui aurait envahi en 1483 le second empire Songhay et qui aurait été repoussé par Sonni-Ali.

11° Nattia, fils du précédent. Il habita Dazouli.

12° Namoëro, fils du précédent.

13° Kida, frère de Nattia. Il habita Ouagadougou.

14° Kimba, frère du précédent. Il habita au même endroit

15° Kobra, fils du précédent. Il habita Uougandé.

16° Sana, fils du précédent qui habita Ouagadougou où résidèrent tous ses successeurs jusqu'à aujourd'hui.

17° Guiliga, fils du précédent.

18° Oubia, frère du précédent.

19° Mottaba, fils du précédent.

20° Ouarga, frère du précédent.

21° Zombéré, fils du précédent.

22° Kom, fils du précédent.

23° Sagha, fils du précédent.

24° Koulougou, fils du précédent.

25° Savadoro, fils du précédent.

26° Karfo, fils de Savadoro.

27° Baoro, frère de Savadoro.

28° Koutou, fils du précédent.

29° Sanom, fils de Koutou.

30° Boukary Koutou, fils de Koutou.

Ce fut Bokary Koutou qui fut détrôné par le lieutenant Voulet (1896).

31° Kouka (Siguiri) avec qui le lieutenant Voulet signa un traité mettant le Mossi sous la suzeraineté de la France.

32° Kom, Moro-Naba actuel (1910).

Les Moro-Nabas subsistent donc toujours au Mossi, comme on le voit. La France leur fait même une pension qui a été d'abord de 25.000 francs par an et qui depuis a été réduite à 18.000 francs Mais ils n'ont plus aucun pouvoir et ne font plus rien.

Je trouve dans la Monographie du Cercle des renseignements intéressants sur les expéditions dirigées par les Moro-Nabas dans le Kipirsi qui fut toujours réfractaire à la conquête mossi : c'est d'abord le naba Koundoumié, sixième successeur d'Oubry

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qui dirigea une expédition sanglante vers Kayao et Tiou, puis le naba Dawoéma, huitième successeur d'Oubry qui guerroya au nord de Yako, le naba Ouarga, vingtième successeur d'Oubry qui s'installa à La et livra une série de batailles dans la région de Yako, le naba Koutou, vingt-huitième successeur d'Oubry qui lutta contre la région de Sourgou (Kipirsi). Enfin, ce sont dans les dernières années qui ont précédé notre occupation le naba Sanom et Bokary Koutou qui firent colonne contre le village de Lallé.

D'après les renseignements de Moulins, ce serait le naba Koundoumié, sixième successeur d'Oubry, qui aurait mis à la tête des provinces de Boussouma, Béloussa et Yako trois de ses fils dont il fit de véritables monarques unis seulement par un lien de vassalité au Moro-Naba dans les mêmes conditions où l'était déjà le chef de Tenkodogo.

Moulins ajoute : « D'une façon générale les chefs des provinces vassales semblent n'avoir guère songé à s'affranchir de la suzeraineté du Moro-Naba qui d'ailleurs ne pesait pas lourdement sur eux. Il faut arriver à l'époque contemporaine pour trouver trace sous le règne de Sanom d'une lutte entre le souverain et les chefs de Boussouma et de Béloussa.

» Par contre les grands vassaux eurent parfois recours à l'appui du Moro-Naba pour affermir leur autorité dans leurs provinces. Nous venons de parler des expéditions dirigées à Yako. La tradition a gardé en outre le souvenir d'une série de combats livrés par Dawoéma, huitième successeur d'Oubry contre les Boussansé de Garango qui voulurent se rendre indépendants de Tenkodogo-Naba ».

Après ce coup d'œil rapide sur l'histoire de l'empire mossi, il nous reste ou il nous resterait trois questions à examiner : 1° celle de l'origine lointaine des Mossi proprement dits, des Mossi conquérants qui vinrent du Dagomba à Tenkodogo, puis à Ouagadagou. Mais cette origine est actuellement inconnue. On pourrait l'élucider par l'étude de la langue mossi et par sa comparaison systématique avec les idiomes anciens ou actuels du nord de l'Afrique, de l'Afrique orientale et de l'Afrique occidentale. Mais je ne pense pas que ce travail soit sur le

point d'être fait. On pourrait aussi étudier les Mossi au point de vue anthropologique, en ayant soin de faire deux séries distinctes, l'une concernant les chefs et les nobles, l'autre la masse du peuple mossi — et l'on comparerait les résultats obtenus avec ceux concernant les autres populations de l'Afrique du nord et de l'ouest, mais, comme le précédent, ce serait là un immense travail qui ne semble pas sur le point d'être entrepris.

A ce sujet je donnerai ici la numération de un à dix en Mossi et dans les langues proches parentes (Dagomba, Nankana) ou qui en dérivent (Dagari, Boura, Gourma).

	Mossi	Dagomba	Nankana	Dagari	Boura	Gourma
	—	—	—	—	—	—
Un . .	Yémeri	N'Dan	Yendé	Yen	Gni	Iendi
Deux .	Yibou	Niyi	Yi	Ayi	Niyé	Lié
Trois .	Tabo	Nta	Ntan	Ata	Ngata	Ita
Quatre	Nasé	Nahé	Anasé	Ana	Anasi	Ina
Cinq .	Nou	Anou	Anou	Anou	Nganou	Imou
Six . .	Ayobé	Ayobo	Ayobé	Ayobe	Vendenta	Ilouoba
Sept .	Yopoï	Ayopoué	Ayopoué	Ayopoué	Nantanasé	Illélé
Huit .	Ani	Ani	Ani	Ani	Nané (ou Nani)	Ni
Neuf .	Aoué	Aoué	Aoué	Voué	Noo	Ia
Dix . .	Piga	Pia	Pia	Pié	Pi	Piga

2° La seconde question est *a priori* moins difficile à résoudre : c'est celle de l'époque de l'établissement des Yarsé ou Ouangarbé dans le Mossi.

Sur cette question le lieutenant Marc et Moulins ne sont pas d'accord.

Le lieutenant Marc dit (ouvrage cité, page 142) en parlant du Mossi : « C est très probablement sa réputation de pays paisible qui lui attira vers le milieu du XVIIIe siècle les Mandé-Dioulas qui sont aujourd'hui les Yarsé. D'après les traditions indigènes résumées par Binger, après la mort de Sagoné en 1754, des Mandé-Dioulas établis dans le pays de Ségou qui avaient pris parti contre N'Golo vainqueur de Sagoné, s'enfuirent de crainte de représailles et vinrent s'installer au Mossi. N'Golo essaya de les poursuivre et vint à deux reprises attaquer le Mossi. Les deux expéditions échouèrent et au cours de la seconde en 1787 N'Golo mourût ».

D'après le lieutenant Marc, les Yarsé seraient donc des Mandé-Dyoulas du pays de Ségou qui se seraient établis au cours du XVIIIe siècle dans le Mossi. Toute autre est l'opinion de M. Moulins.

« Les Yarsé ou Ouangarbés, dit-il dans la Monographie du cercle de Ouagadougou, se sont introduits dans le pays sous le règne de Koundoumié, sixième Moro-Naba.

» A cette époque, dit la tradition, sept négociants Mandés nommés respectivement Bolle, Rambéré, Séré, Pallom, Morebanom, Parirabo et Mari Konda traversaient le Mossi avec des marchandises. Ils se présentèrent au Moro-Naba qui, frappé de leur intelligence, conçut le désir de s'attacher des individus aussi supérieurs. Il les combla de cadeaux, leur donna des femmes et les installa auprès de lui dans un quartier qui reçut le nom de Zoroné. C'est la postérité de ces hommes qui aurait donné naissance aux différents groupements Yarsé qui existent aujourd'hui un peu partout dans le cercle. »

D'après M. Moulins l'entrée des Yarsé dans le Mossi remonterait donc à la fin du XIIIe siècle ou au commencement du XIVe, puisqu'on peut fixer environ l'époque du naba Koundoumié à 1300. Je crois cette opinion plus juste que celle du lieutenant Marc, étant donné que les Yarsé ne connaissent plus le Mandé et ne parlent plus que le Mossi. Il serait étonnant que ces Mandé aient oublié leur langue maternelle en un siècle et demi, tandis qu'en cinq siècles cela peut se faire. Pourtant il ya un détail qui me gêne dans la version Moulins : c'est que les sept négociants mandé y portent des noms mossi : Bolle, Rambéré, Pallom, etc., au lieu d'y porter des noms mandé comme il serait assez naturel. Quoi qu'il en soit, il est plus probable que les Yarsé se sont établis au Mossi au XIIIe ou au XIVe siècle de notre ère qu'au XVIIIe siècle.

3° La même question de la date d'installation se pose au sujet des Foulbé. — Là encore le lieutenant Marc et M. Moulins sont en complet désaccord.

« C'est probablement à la suite des Mandé-Dioulas que les Peuls firent à leur tour leur apparition dans le pays Mossi » dit le lieutenant Marc, page 143. M. Moulins est d'un autre avis :

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« Les Peuhls, dit-il, ont dû s'installer dans la région du Mossi à une date fort éloignée. Il semble même qu'ils s'y trouvaient déjà depuis longtemps au moment de l'invasion Dagomba ». Ceci nous reporterait au delà du XIIe siècle de notre ère. En tout cas, il est probable que les Foulbé étaient établis dans le Mossi, par petits groupes, comme ils le sont encore maintenant, bien avant le XVIIIe siècle.

Nous en avons fini avec cette introduction à l'étude des coutumes mossi. Nous en retiendrons surtout que la masse mossi actuelle n'est pas d'origine pure, mais provient d'un mélange de Mossi conquérants avec un fond de populations primitives.

Abordons maintenant le travail et d'abord la culture. Nous nous étendrons plus longuement sur les détails des différents travaux que nous ne l'avons fait jusqu'ici pour les populations antérieurement étudiées et le lecteur pourra mieux voir dans le détail ce qu'est le travail du noir de ces régions.

C'est le mil qui est la grande culture du Mossi. Les Mossi l'appellent ki. Ils en cultivent plusieurs espèces dont nous allons nous occuper tour à tour.

D'abord le petit mil ordinaire, celui qu'ils font le plus. C'est le sanio bambara, le kasui mossi. Il lui faut de la bonne terre noire, peu de sable.

Disons d'une façon générale que les Mossi changent, quand ils le peuvent, de terrain tous les quatre ans, c'est-à-dire débroussaillent un nouveau terrain ou en reprennent un ancien qui se reposait. S'ils ont peu de place ils cultivent indéfiniment au même endroit, c'est-à-dire qu'ils cultivent pendant des vingt ans de suite sans changer de place.

Quand on débroussaille un nouveau terrain, on fait ce débroussaillement en mars et en avril. Le chef de soukala y procède avec tous ses gens. On emploie les dabas et les matchettes pour couper les arbres. Les femmes y vont aussi, mais seulement pour donner à boire aux hommes, car elles ne débroussaillent pas.

Les travailleurs vont le matin dans la brousse et y restent toute la journée. On se repose vers le milieu du jour, (de midi à

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deux ou trois heures), puis on recommence le travail jusqu'au coucher du soleil. Les femmes rentrent d'abord pour préparer le dîner, puis les hommes. Après le débroussaillement proprement dit, on réunit en tas tout ce qui a été arraché de terre et on y met le feu. On laisse les cendres sur le sol pour fumer celui-ci. Il faut noter qu'on n'enlève pas les racines des arbres. On ne coupe même ceux-ci qu'à un mètre au-dessus du sol et le champ est ainsi parsemé de souches. Quelquefois, au lieu de couper les arbres, on amasse un petit foyer de branches et de feuilles sèches à leur base et on y met le feu. L'arbre est ainsi brûlé à petit feu et on n'a plus besoin que d'un léger effort pour le couper ou le renverser.

On respecte, dans les endroits qu'on débroussaille, les arbres utiles, karités, nérés, etc. ; ils resteront donc dans le champ et appartiendront au défricheur, au propriétaire du champ.

On attend les pluies pour faire les semailles, mais on ne sème pas aux premières pluies qui tombent en avril. On attend mai pour semer, mai où les pluies sont abondantes et les tornades bien fournies.

Quand on sème dans un champ en cours de culture, on fait précéder les semailles d'un nettoyage de ce champ seulement. Tandis que les hommes seuls, comme nous l'avons vu, travaillent au défrichement d'un nouveau champ, les hommes et les femmes mossi travaillent au nettoyage d'un champ cultivé les années précédentes et aux semailles.

Pour celles-ci voici comment on procède : on tient le koutiaga (sorte de daba) de la main gauche et, de la main droite, une petite calebasse dans laquelle il y a du mil. L'homme ou la femme, accroupis, font un trou avec le koutiaga de la main gauche et versent, de la main droite, les grains de mil dans le trou. Puis, de la main gauche, on remet de la terre dessus.

Alors on laisse pousser. Puis, quand le mil est sorti de terre et a atteint une vingtaine de centimètres de hauteur, on va avec le ouaka (autre sorte de daba) enlever les mauvaises herbes qui poussent entre les tiges de mil. Dans certains endroits, tout le monde nettoie, hommes, femmes et enfants. Dans d'autres endroits, ce sont les hommes qui font cet ouvrage ordinai-

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rement, mais, quand ils sont trop peu, les femmes les aident. Tous les matins on enlève ainsi les mauvaises herbes.

On nettoie trois fois les champs chez les Mossi entre les semailles et la récolte. Nous savons que chez les Gourounsi on ne fait ce nettoyage que deux fois.

Quand les tiges de mil sont déjà grandes et que les oiseaux peuvent becqueter l'épi, on met les femmes et les enfants dans les champs pour chasser les oiseaux.

On récolte le petit mil vers la mi-novembre. Quand il est mûr, on coupe les tiges, qui ont deux ou trois mètres de haut. On les couche par terre et, avec le couteau, on tranche les épis que je ne saurais mieux comparer qu'à l'extrémité de ces roseaux d'eau qui ont une sorte de tige en velours brun longue de 30 centimètres environ, ronde et épaisse de deux doigts. Une fois les épis coupés, on les attache, on les met dans des paniers et on porte le tout dans des cases *ad hoc*. Ce sont de petites cases en paille établies sur pilotis, c'est-à-dire portées sur de gros morceaux de bois, et qui sont disposées en longue ligne courbe près du champ lui-même. Souvent il y a une vingtaine de ces cases placées ainsi les unes à côté des autres. Hommes et femmes participent à la récolte.

Quand on veut consommer le mil, on sort les épis de ces cases en paille et on les bat avec le bâton pour détacher les grains. Ce sont les hommes qui font ce battage.

Après le petit mil ordinaire, celui que les Mossi font généralement le plus c'est le gros mil rouge qu'ils appellent kaziéra ou kaziéga (on sait qu'en Mossi l'*r* et le *g* s'équivalent. On dira par exemple indifféremment nora ou noga, qui veut dire poulet) et que les Bambaras appellent niooulé. Le gros mil rouge est le mil à dolo par excellence.

C'est ce mil qu'on plante le premier de tous, dès les premières pluies. On prend le ouaka pour enlever l'herbe qui a poussé dans les champs, ensuite on la brûle, puis, aux premières tornades, on sème le gros mil rouge (avril). On le sème comme le petit mil, en tenant d'une main le koutiaga et de l'autre la petite calebasse qui contient les grains.

Quand il est sorti de terre, on attend quinze jours, puis on

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enlève la mauvaise herbe avec les ouakas. Quand il a poussé, on envoie les femmes et les enfants le protéger contre les oiseaux. Il est mûr vers le 1er septembre.

Ce sont les hommes qui font la grosse besogne de la récolte. Ils coupent au pied la tige qui a généralement 3 mètres de haut et va même jusqu'à 4 mètres. Une fois celle-ci déterrée et jetée bas, on coupe l'épi au couteau, un gros épi en forme de panache, à fleurs rouges, et on le transporte dans la soukala. Ce sont les femmes qui assurent ce transport comme celui des autres mils. Le gros mil rouge n'est battu qu'à mesure qu'on en a besoin. Ce sont les hommes qui le battent au bâton.

Notons que, quand on défriche un terrain nouveau, on met d'abord du gros mil rouge pour savoir si on a de la bonne terre et c'est l'année suivante seulement, quand on s'est assuré de ce point, qu'on sème du petit mil.

On cultive aussi le mil rouge autour des soukalas comme le maïs.

Les Mossi ne se servent généralement du gros mil rouge que pour faire du dolo (dama en Mossi). Ils le donnent pourtant aussi aux chevaux, mais il y a des chevaux qui n'en veulent pas. Les Mossi ne le consomment eux-mêmes qu'à défaut d'autre mil et en cas de famine. Du reste le mil rouge resserre et, quand quelqu'un a des coliques, on lui fait du to au mil rouge pour les arrêter.

Les Mossi font aussi du gros mil blanc ordinaire, mil que, dans l'ensemble du Soudan, on fait le plus après le sanio. Les Mossi l'appellent baninga, les Bambaras kéningué ou guessékélé. On dit kéningué du côté de Ségou et guessékélé du côté de Nioro. Les Nounoumas l'appellent nienso ainsi que les Kassonfras. Les Kassonbouras l'appellent béninga, c'est-à-dire qu'ils ont pris le mot mossi en le déformant légèrement (Du reste nous avons vu que certains Kassounas-Bouras, ceux du moins de Pô et de Tiakané, sont plutôt des Kassounas-Mossi que des Kassounas-Bouras).

Ce mil est souvent désigné par les Européens sous le nom de mil nacré ou de mil à chevaux parce qu'il est tendre et se broie facilement.

Tous les Mossi n'en font pas. Ceux qui en font consomment eux-mêmes le gros mil blanc. Ils en donnent aussi à leurs chevaux. On le cultive exactement comme le petit mil, c'est-à-dire qu'il est semé et récolté à la même époque.

Les Mossi font encore du kipéléro ou kipélégo (de ki mil et péléro ou pélégo blanc). C'est le yaro ou yara des Gourounsi, probablement le n'guéné ou n'kendé Bambara et Malinké, sorte de mil intermédiaire entre le petit mil et le gros mil blanc. En effet, un de mes interlocuteurs me dit que le kipéléro se sème avec le petit mil ordinaire dont on ne le distingue pas et sert aux mêmes usages, tandis qu'un autre m'affirme que c'est une espèce de gros mil blanc.

Les Mossi font aussi un peu de gadiaba. C'est une espèce de gros mil qui est blanc ou rouge. Les Bambaras l'appellent gadiabadié quand il est blanc, hamadiboubou quand il est rouge. Les Mossi désignent le gadiabadié sous le nom de noira. Ils ne le cultivent que dans la province de Boussouma. Quant à l'hamadiboubou il n'y en a pas dans le Mossi.

Quant au mil précoce les Mossi le connaissent et l'appellent nado, mais ils ne le cultivent pas. C'est le souna Bambara, le tiara des Nounoumas et des Kassounas. Nous avons vu que les Kassonbouras en faisaient beaucoup. Les Boussansé aussi le cultivent.

En revanche les Mossi font un peu de mil sucré (ou tiokandé). Ils l'appellent mobinoro. C'est le sampa Bambara, le gamba Kassonboura. Les Mossi, comme les Kassonbouras et les Bambaras, sèment ce mil en petite quantité dans les champs de maï autour de la soukala. Les Nounoumas, Kassonfras et Sissalas n'en font pas.

En dehors des mils cultivés, les Mossi connaissent aussi le bakat ou mil sauvage ou mil des oiseaux. Ils l'appellent nadanga. C'est le bouabona des Bambaras, le mintoro des Kassounas. Chez les Mossi, quand il y a famine, les femmes vont le couper, le mettent sécher au soleil et l'écrasent car il contient une petite graine comestible. Dans le pays gourounga il y en a peu. On en trouve pourtant au bord des marigots et on pourrait l'utiliser aussi en cas de famine.

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Après le mil, ce que les Mossi font le plus comme culture alimentaire, c'est le maïs, qu'ils appellent kamana. Le maïs se cultive autour de la soukala même et non dans la brousse. On le sème au commencement de la saison des pluies. On remue d'abord la terre avec le ouaka, puis on fait des trous avec le koutiaga ou la hachette. On met deux ou trois grains de maïs dans chaque trou et on rebouche. Cela fait, on laisse le maïs pousser et, quand la tige est sortie de terre, on arrache la mauvaise herbe avec le ouaka. Il faut deux mois et dix jours après cela pour que le maïs soit mûr. On le récolte, le premier de tous les grains, au mois d'août. On déterre ou on coupe la tige avec le daba ou bien on se contente de briser les tiges à la main.

Quand la tige est abattue, on coupe les têtes de maïs. On les fait sécher sur les toits au soleil où on les suspend en grappes, puis on les met dans la case aux grains d'où on les tire pour réduire les grains de maïs en farine.

Souvent, au lieu de faire sécher les têtes, les épis de maïs, on les mange verts, grillés sur les charbons.

Quand on conserve le maïs et qu'on le fait sécher, les femmes en écrasent les grains pour en faire de la farine. On met cette farine dans l'eau bouillante et on en fait des gâteaux mous qu'on mange immédiatement.

Remarquons que le maïs est une de ces cultures dont on fait la récolte prématurément. Les Mossi, et, comme nous le savons, tous les noirs de l'Afrique occidentale, ont deux récoltes : l'une au mois d'août et l'autre en novembre-décembre. C'est cette dernière qui est la plus importante de beaucoup, mais pour pouvoir l'attendre sans famine, les populations ont des cultures précoces, hâtives, qui commencent à donner dans la seconde quinzaine de juillet, en août principalement et jusqu'à la mi-septembre. De ces cultures la principale peut-être est celle du maïs semé en avril, récolté en août, mais il y en a d'autres, ainsi le mil précoce que nous avons vu plus haut. De même le gros mil rouge. Au contraire, les cultures les plus importantes (petit mil, gros mil blanc) on les fait en mai au plus tôt et on attend même souvent jusqu'en juillet pour les faire, et leur récolte est de novembre et décembre.

Les Mossi font aussi un peu de riz (moï en mossi). L'espèce qu'ils font est le riz d'eau. On le sème à côté des marigots et des mares. C'est la culture la plus difficile de toutes, disent les vieillards.

Actuellement les pauvres en font un peu. Anciennement ils n'en faisaient pas du tout et c'étaient les chefs seuls qui en faisaient. Aujourd'hui encore ce sont ceux-ci qui en font le plus.

Le riz est semé après le mil, en mai. On travaille la terre du champ avec un daba spécial, le souga, avec lequel on la retourne. Ensuite, avec le koutiaga, on fait de petits trous et on met dans chacun de 7 à 10 grains de riz, puis on rebouche avec un peu de terre. On attend alors que le riz pousse. Au bout de dix-sept jours il sort de terre. Pendant la saison des pluies l'eau du marigot ou de la mare recouvre le petit champ de riz. On arrache les mauvaises herbes dans l'eau même avec le ouaka. La récolte se fait dans la seconde quinzaine d'octobre avant le petit mil et le gros mil blanc. On coupe les tiges du riz avec des espèces de faucilles et on les étend par terre pour les faire sécher au soleil. Puis hommes et femmes les battent au bâton. D'autres emportent les tiges dans la soukala, les font sécher pendant trois jours dans la cour de celle-ci, puis les battent. On jette la paille. Quand on a peu de riz on le met dans un canari. Quand on en a beaucoup on le met dans des paniers et les paniers dans les petites cases en paille portées sur pilotis.

Les Mossi, qui ne font somme toute que très peu de riz, disent qu'ils aiment mieux le mil que le riz. Le mil, disent-ils, donne plus de force. Le riz se mange bouilli avec de la viande si l'on peut. On accompagne le tout d'une sauce d'arachides ou de gombo.

Les Mossi font assez d'arachides (nangouri en Mossi, n'tiga en Bambara, gherté en Peuhl et en Toucouleur).

On ne fait pas de buttes en terre pour la culture de l'arachide dans le Mossi. On les sème cinq ou six jours après le mil. On fait des trous avec le koutiaga, on met une arachide ou deux dedans et on rebouche le trou. Quand c'est poussé on arrache les mauvaises herbes avec le ouaka. Quand l'arachide est mûre (fin octobre), on prend le ouaka pour déterrer les coques

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d'arachides. On les met sécher au soleil pendant trois ou quatre jours, puis on les porte au village dans des corbeilles. On fait de nouveau sécher les arachides sur les argamasses des cases, puis on les met dans les petites cases en paille que nous savons, d'où on ne les sort que pour la consommation. On fait griller l'arachide. On en fait aussi des sauces pour manger avec le mil, mais pas très souvent.

Quant au fourrage fourni par la plante on ne le laisse pas perdre. On le récolte et on le donne aux chevaux pour qui c'est une excellente nourriture.

Avec les arachides, les Mossi font assez de pois souterrains. Tout le monde cependant n'en fait pas. Les pois souterrains se sèment après tous les autres grains ou tubercules.

On coupe l'herbe à l'endroit où on veut les cultiver, mais on la laisse sur place comme fumier. Ensuite on fait des trous dans la terre avec le koutiaga. On sème. Quand la plante commence à pousser, on arrache les mauvaises herbes à la main et non avec le ouaka parce qu'avec celui-ci on enlèverait tout. En trois mois les pois souterrains arrivent à maturité. On les récolte avec l'arachide, c'est-à-dire en octobre. On arrache les pois de terre avec le ouaka. On les nettoie, on les fait sécher, on les met dans des corbeilles et on les porte dans les petites cases en paille. Pour les consommer on les fait bouillir.

Les Mossi cultivent aussi les sésames qu'ils appellent sili. Ils en font de petits champs dans la brousse. On sème les sésames au milieu de l'hivernage, trois mois après que les premières pluies sont tombées. On gratte la terre avec le ouaka et on répand sur le sol les graines qu'on a dans une petite calebasse. En dix jours les sésames sortent de terre. Hommes, femmes, enfants arrachent les mauvaises herbes à la main. Quand la tige a atteint 1 m. 50 de haut on fait la récolte (elle se fait immédiatement après celle du petit mil). On coupe la tige à mi-hauteur avec un couteau, puis on fait sécher au soleil sur des nattes. Enfin on détache les sésames en frappant avec un morceau de bois.

Les Mossi les emploient généralement pour leurs sauces. Les femmes les écrasent sur la pierre, font bouillir, ajoutent du sel et du soumbara. Avec cette sauce on mange le mil, le

mais, etc. On consomme aussi quelquefois les sésames fraîches en les faisant griller sur le feu.

Les Mossi font aussi un peu de haricots (benna ou binga en Mossi, soso en Mandé, niébé en Peuhl). Ils n'en font pas de champs à part, mais les sèment dans les champs de mil en même temps que celui-ci. La tige rampe à terre. Le haricot est mûr avant le mil.

Ce sont les femmes et les enfants, munis de corbeilles, qui font la récolte (novembre). Ensuite on met les gousses à terre et les hommes les battent au bâton. On ramasse les haricots et on les met dans les cases en paille. Pour les consommer on fait simplement bouillir en ajoutant du sel.

Les Mossi font peu de patates (nanioua en Mossi et nanioura en Nounouma). Les Mossi qui habitent du côté de Ouagadougou n'en font pas. Ceux qui sont du côté de Kombisiguiri en font un peu. Quelques Mossi de Tenkodogo en font. On plante les patates, à côté des marigots, vers le 15 juillet, donc au milieu de la saison des pluies. On fait de petits monticules de terre au sommet desquels on pratique des trous. On y introduit des tranches de patates et on recouvre avec de la terre. Les semailles faites, le travail est fini. On ne s'occupe pas d'enlever les mauvaises herbes. On récolte au bout de trois mois — donc vers le 15 octobre. On déterre les patates avec les ouakas, on les porte dans les cases, on les mange bouillies dans l'eau.

Les Mossi font un peu d'ozonifies (pèsa en Mossi, kayya en Nounouma et en Kassouna, fabirama en Mandé) autour des soukalas ou dans la brousse. Ils font de petites buttes en terre avec le ouaka, puis on y pratique des trous avec le koutiaga et on met dans chaque trou un tubercule. On rebouche et on met du fumier, pailles et herbes, détritus de la soukala ou ramassés autour. On fait la récolte au mois de novembre. Alors on arrache les ozonifies avec le ouaka. On les met dans un canari jusqu'à ce qu'on les consomme. On les mange bouillis.

Tous les Mossi font des ozonifies. Ils les aiment, mais n'en font pas beaucoup. Il faut les planter dans des endroits humides. Les uns le font dans la brousse, les autres dans le village, mais tous auprès d'un endroit où il y a de l'eau.

Les Mossi font très peu d'ignames (nioua ou niouya en Mossi, pia en Nounouma, kou en mandé). Seuls les Mossi du sud en font et encore peu, par exemple à Kombisiguiri.

L'igname ici se sème en novembre au bord des marigots. On fait des tas de terre de 50 centimètres de haut et larges à proportion à l'aide du ouaka. Puis au sommet de ces petites pyramides on fait des trous avec un bâton. On coupe des tranches d'ignames, on les enfouit dans ces trous et on met de la terre par-dessus. On plante alors un tuteur. Le tronc de l'ignamier sort de terre et grimpe à côté du tuteur. Il faut sept mois pour que la racine, l'igname même soit arrivée à son point de grosseur et de maturité. Au mois d'avril on arrache donc un certain nombre d'ignames de terre à l'aide des ouakas, mais on laisse la plupart d'entre elles, on remet de la terre et on ne fait la grande récolte, la récolte totale qu'au mois de novembre, c'est-à-dire un an après les semailles.

Pour manger l'igname on la coupe en morceaux qu'on fait bouillir dans l'eau.

Pour le manioc (boumboro en Nounouma) il était inconnu au Mossi avant les Français. Ceux-ci en ont importé quelques pieds, mais les indigènes ne le cultivent pas encore.

Pour le diabéré (koudoubadé en Mossi, diabéré en Mandé) les Mossi en font un peu. On le sème aux premières pluies dans les champs de maïs ou de gros mil rouge, c'est-à-dire autour des soukalas. On fait des trous avec le koutiaga et on y met de petits tubercules. On récolte un mois après le maïs, c'est-à-dire en septembre.

Dans le pays mossi ce sont surtout les Yarsé qui en font, par exemple ceux de Rakaye et de Saraboutenga.

Les Mossi proprement dits en font peu, de même que les Bambaras. Les Gourounsi et les Boussansé n'en font pas du tout.

On fait cuire le diabéré dans l'eau, on le pèle et on le mange tel quel.

D'après M. Guebhardt (Au Fouta-Djallon, 1910) le diabéré (nom Poullo) serait le taro (*Caladium antiquorum* ou *escuientum*).

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M. André Rançon (Dans la Haute-Gambie, 1895) en donne une description détaillée :

« Les Bambaras et les Sarracolés le nomment diabéré, les Malinkés diabéro et les Peuhls oussoudié. C'est une superbe aroïdée du genre Arum. Elle croît, de préférence, dans les endroits humides et à l'abri des rayons du soleil. Elle aime une terre riche en humus. C'est pourquoi les lougans de diabérés sont toujours situés à l'ombre des grands arbres où la terre est plus fraîche, à l'abri du soleil, et plus riche en humus, du fait même du terreau que forment les feuilles en y pourrissant. C'est une plante vivace dont la tige s uterraine est constituée par un tubercule. Feuilles longuement pétiolées et pouvant atteindre jusqu'à deux mètres de hauteur, fortement engaînantes à la base, peltées et dont le limbe atteint parfois des dimensions énormes. Elles présentent une échancrure assez profonde à leur partie inférieure, échancrure qui s'avance jusqu'à quelques centimètres de l'épanouissement du pétiole. Celui-ci s'épanouit en trois nervures principales plus volumineuses que les autres et facilement reconnaissables, car elles sont très apparentes. De ces trois nervures partent les nervures secondaires fortement accentuées aussi.

» Ces feuilles sont très épaisses. Les trois nervures principales ne font jamais défaut. Les nervures secondaires sont en nombre variable suivant l'âge du végétal et surtout les dimensions des feuilles. Les nervures secondaires émettent elles-mêmes un grand nombre de filaments fort apparents et qui sillonnent le parenchyme de la feuille en venant aboutir presque en droite ligne aux bords. La face supérieure a une couleur verte-foncée très prononcée. Elle est légèrement veloutée. Enfin le pétiole d'un brun verdâtre à la base est d'un vert tendre à son sommet.

» Les fleurs sont unisexuées, réunies sur un même spadice, les femelles à la base, les mâles au-dessus, non périanthées. Elles sont enveloppées dans une spathe peu ouverte, roulée en cornet et de couleur blanche légèrement jaunâtre. Le fruit est une baie globuleuse, uniloculaire, renfermant de deux à huit

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graines. Je dédie cette plante nouvelle à M. le professeur Heckel en la nommant *Arum Heckeli*.

» La racine est un tubercule de la grosseur du poing environ, d'un brun noirâtre et ayant un peu la forme d'un oignon légèrement allongé. Sur ce tubercule viennent, quand la plante arrive à maturité, douze ou quinze turions environ dont les plus volumineux atteignent tout au plus la grosseur d'un œuf. C'est la partie comestible et qui sert à la reproduction. Leur forme est celle du tubercule auquel ils adhèrent fortement. Leur couleur est aussi la même. La chair de ces turions est blanche, fortement aqueuse et compacte. Elle rappelle celle de la pomme de terre ou plutôt de la patate. Leur odeur est légèrement vireuse.

» Les semis de diabéré se font en juin et en juillet. Il suffit pour cela de placer les turions dans un trou creusé dans la terre à une profondeur d'environ 10 à 15 centimètres. La récolte se fait en décembre. Vers la fin d'octobre ou au commencement de novembre, les habitants du Sandougou (Haute-Gambie) ont l'habitude de couper les feuilles à une hauteur de 10 centimètres du sol environ pour faire grossir davantage les turions.

» Le diabéré est un légume qui n'est pas à dédaigner, même pour le palais délicat des Européens. Bouilli ou frit à la poêle, il contitue un aliment d'un goût agréable. Je me souviens en avoir mangé avec plaisir en ragoût avec du mouton. Les indigènes le préfèrent bouilli et dans certaines régions, le Diaka, le Sandougou, le Tenda par exemple, ils en font une grande consommation. Dans ces derniers pays surtout on en consomme beaucoup et les indigènes des pays voisins attribuent à l'abus qu'ils en font la maladie de peau et les nombreux goîtres dont sont atteints les habitants du Tenda » (pages 83 à 85).

Les Mossi font aussi font aussi du karyanga ou karnyanga. « Cette graminée, dit le Cahier des Rapports du cercle de Ouagadougou, croît à l'état spontané sur les berges des marigots, mais les indigènes la cultivent aussi en bordure de leurs champs de mil. La tige, velue et rugueuse, atteint une hau-

teur de 0 m. 80 à son complet développement. Vers son extrémité elle se répand en gerbe. Sa feuille, large de 3 centimètres environ, affecte la forme d'un fer de lance très allongé. Elle est coupée encore verte à 20 centimètres du sol, séchée au soleil et emmagasinée pour être consommée pendant la saison sèche. Le Karyanga est du fourrage pour le bétail et les chevaux. Cette plante est très répandue dans l'est et le sud-est du Mossi (Béloussa et Tenkodogo) ».

Le karyanga est, comme on le voit, une herbe qui pousse dans la brousse le long des marigots et que l'on coupe pour donner aux chevaux. Quelques possesseurs de chevaux la coupent, puis la replantent dans leur champ de maïs. L'année suivante la graine tombe à terre et l'herbe repousse encore. On la coupe, mais pas au pied, de façon à ce qu'elle s'entretienne elle-même.

Les Gourounsi l'appellent keulo. Ceux-ci se contentent de la couper dans la brousse et ne la replantent pas dans le maïs : il y en a assez dans la brousse libre du pays Gourounsi, brousse libre plus étendue qu'au Mossi, pour qu'on n'ait pas besoin de la replanter.

Les Mossi font du gombo (mana en Mossi, pora en Nounouma et Kassouna, gouan en Mandé). Tous les Mossi en font pour leurs sauces.

Ils le sèment à la saison humide en même temps que le mil. Ils en font de petits champs à part. Ils retournent un peu la terre avec le ouaka, font des trous avec le koutiaga, y mettent des graines de gombo et rebouchent. On laisse pousser, on arrache les mauvaises herbes avec le ouaka et puis on attend deux mois. A ce moment-là, l'immense tige du gombo, plus haute et plus forte encore que celle du maïs, est poussée et porte ses gousses verdâtres légèrement allongées et côtelées. Alors on prend les gousses les plus mûres et on les coupe pour faire de la sauce. La récolte se fait donc peu à peu, depuis le 15 septembre jusqu'à la fin de décembre.

Pour préparer le gombo, on coupe la gousse en morceaux et on la fait sécher. Quand on a besoin de gombo on pile ces mor-

ceaux et on les réduit en une sorte de poudre qu'on fait bouillir dans l'eau. On peut employer aussi la gousse de gombo fraîche. On la coupe en morceaux et on la fait bouillir de même. On ajoute du sel et du soumbara. Cela donne une sorte de pâte verdâtre et gluante qu'aiment fort les indigènes.

Nous avons dit plus haut que les Mossi faisaient de petits champs de gombo à part, au bord des marigots. Cela leur arrive, mais souvent aussi ils sèment simplement quelques tiges de gombo dans leur maïs, comme les autres noirs.

Sur les marchés du Mossi on vend le gombo sec en morceaux.

Ajoutons qu'on se sert aussi des feuilles du gombo, quand elles sont tendres, pour les sauces.

Les Mossi font aussi de l'oseille.

Il y en a deux espèces : l'oseille dakissé et l'oseille dangono. Ce sont là les noms Bambaras. En Mossi, dakissé se dit bi et dangono se dit ouéréda.

Les Mossi plantent le bi autour du mil, en même temps que celui-ci, au commencement de l'hivernage. On fait des trous avec le koutiaga pour mettre la graine, on la met à la main et on remet de la terre dessus. Ensuite on laisse pousser. En trois mois l'oseille est mûre. On enlève alors les feuilles qui servent pour les sauces, puis on coupe la tige à mi-hauteur pour avoir les graines dont on se sert aussi pour celles-ci.

Les Mossi, comme les Bambaras, mettent aussi les deux espèces d'oseille dans les lougans d'arachides et de pois souterrains et ils les sèment, en même temps que ceux-ci, aux premières pluies. On récolte l'oseille huit jours après les arachides ou les pois souterrains.

Les Mossi font cuire les graines de dakissé dans un canari plein d'eau, puis ils le retirent du feu et en mettent dessus un autre qui bouche complètement le premier. On laisse ainsi pendant quatre ou cinq jours, puis on retire les graines de dakissé et on les pile dans un petit mortier pour en faire de la farine.

Ensuite on prend de la cendre de bois brûlé et on met cette cendre avec de l'eau dans une calebasse percée formant filtre.

La cendre filtre ainsi dans un canari placé au-dessous. Alors on mélange avec la farine de dakissé et on met le tout dans un canari bouché pendant cinq ou six jours. Cela fait, on fait cuire définitivement le mélange en le mettant dans une calebasse percée de petits trous placée au-dessus d'un canari plein d'eau qu'on fait chauffer. La vapeur d'eau pénètre par les petits trous dans la calebasse supérieure et fait cuire ainsi le dakissé à l'étuvée pendant une heure. Alors on fait sécher la pâte ainsi obtenue au soleil, pendant toute une journée, puis on la met dans un canari où on la prend au fur et à mesure des besoins.

Les Mossi, comme les Bambaras, prennent encore les graines de dakissé, les mêlent avec des grains de mil, font bouillir le tout et le mangent.

Quant aux feuilles, la préparation culinaire consiste à mettre les feuilles dans l'eau et à faire cuire en ajoutant du sel.

Pour le dangono ou ouéréda, les Mossi, comme les Bambaras, prennent l'écorce. Ils font cuire cette écorce dans l'eau. Ils y ajoutent des arachides écrasées et du sel. La sauce ainsi obtenue est appelée ziédo par les Mossi et na par les Bambaras.

Le ouéréda remplace encore les fruits du tamarin pour préparer la sauce du to : on fait bouillir l'écorce du ouéréda et quand l'eau est bouillante on y jette la farine de mil. Il ne reste plus qu'à tourner et à mettre le to, à l'aide de grandes cuillers en bois, dans la calebasse où il doit être mangé.

Ceux qui aiment le ouéréda avec de la viande, ou veulent se guérir d'un rhume, en font bouillir l'écorce avec de la viande et la mangent telle.

Pour les graines du ouéréda, on les prépare exactement comme celles du bi, ce qui n'est pas peu compliqué.

Nous avons dit que les Mossi sèment le bi et le ouéréda sur le bord des champs de mil ou même en font de petits champs à part. Ajoutons que ce sont les femmes qui font ceux-ci. Les chefs de soukala se contentent de semer les deux espèces d'oseille sur les bords de leurs champs de mil. Du reste les Mossi, quand ils viennent de défricher un champ, y mettent souvent des haricots, des sésames, du bi et du ouéréda la pre-

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mière année. C'est seulement l'année suivante qu'ils y mettent du mil.

Les Mossi font aussi des tomates.

Il y en a plusieurs espèces chez eux, comme chez les Bambaras.

En Mossi, la tomate s'appelle koumba. La tomate amère s'appelle koumba-gara ou koumgara. La tomate rouge s'appelle koumba-migou ou kommigou. La tomate blanche s'appelle koumba-pelra ou koumpelra. En Bambara, la tomate amère se dit n'koyo ninkouna, la tomate rouge ou tomate-cerise se dit n'koyo bilé et la tomate blanche se dit n'koyo dié.

Les Mossi, comme les Bambaras, en font des champs à part, hommes et femmes. Ils commencent à semer les graines dans un petit espace pas plus grand qu'un mouchoir qu'ils fument avec des cendres de bois et du fumier de mouton ou de chèvre. Au bout de trente jours, quand la plante a atteint quelques centimètres, ils la dépiquent pour aller la repiquer dans son emplacement définitif, toujours autour de la soukala du reste, emplacement qu'ils fument de la même manière que le précédent. Les tomates sont mûres deux mois après les semailles. Quand elles sont mal soignées, elles n'arrivent à maturité qu'au moment de la récolte du maïs (août). Les tomates vertes sont mangées comme un fruit. Les tomates mûres sont cuites et écrasées dans les sauces. Quand la récolte du maïs se fait, on enlève toutes les tomates qui restent.

D'autres, avant de semer le mil, font de petites plantations de tomates dans les champs destinés au mil et les arrosent matin et soir. Ils font cela au moment du nettoyage du champ qui précède les semailles. Puis ils dépiquent aux premières pluies et repiquent autre part. Leurs tomates sont mûres avant le maïs.

Les trois espèces de tomates se cultivent de la même manière.

Les Mossi connaissent les aubergines indigènes. On les appelle boyo en Mossi, baulo en Nounouma, bio en Kassouna, boroma

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en Sissala. On plante ces aubergines en même temps qu'on sème le gros mil rouge. On les met autour des soukalas ou dans la brousse auprès des marigots. On les récolte en septembre en même temps que le gros mil rouge.

Les Mossi cultivent aussi le piment (kiparé).

On sème les graines à côté de la soukala, sans travail préparatoire, au début de l'hivernage. Au bout de quinze ou vingt jours on enlève la mauvaise herbe. Deux mois après les semailles, la pousse produit ses rejetons. A ce moment-là on peut cueillir les piments. On les prend au fur et à mesure des besoins pour les mettre dans les sauces.

Les Mossi aiment le piment. Ceux qui en font beaucoup vont vendre le surplus au marché.

Quant aux courges et aux calebasses, les Mossi en ont trois sortes :

1° La calebasse ordinaire, très grosse, qu'on coupe en deux pour faire la calebasse de ménage. Ils l'appellent vandé.

Les Mossi la plantent au début de l'hivernage, autour des cases, dans un endroit où il y a de la bonne terre, ou dans la brousse dans les mêmes conditions. On fait des trous avec le koutiaga, on y met des pépins et on rebouche. Les calebasses ne sont mûres qu'au bout de six ou sept mois, c'est-à-dire après l'hivernage. Alors on les coupe en deux. On enlève ce qu'il y a à l'intérieur et on fabrique ainsi la calebasse de ménage.

2° La calebasse pour boire. Celle-ci affecte d'elle-même la forme d'une gourde renflée avec un col qui s'évase par en haut. Les Mossi l'appellent binga. On la sème à côté des cases et on la fait monter sur les toits. Après l'hivernage on la cueille. On coupe l'extrémité supérieure horizontalement pour ouvrir le goulot et on met de l'eau dedans. Cette eau est destinée à faire pourrir la matière fibreuse intérieure. Quand c'est fait, on met des cailloux dans la calebasse et on agite jusqu'à ce que la fibre, déchirée, s'en aille. Cela fait, on peut se servir de la binga. Les Mossi, quand ils voyagent, l'emportent pour boire, suspendue à l'épaule, comme tous les noirs de l'Afrique occi-

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dentale du reste. Pour que l'eau ne s'en aille pas ils mettent un bouchon de feuilles vertes.

3° Les courges vertes proprement dites (kamboudou en Mossi) qu'on fait pousser sur les toits. Les Mossi ne les mangent pas, pas plus que les deux espèces précédentes. Ils les coupent en deux pour en fabriquer de petites calebasses de ménage.

La culture des calebasses n'est donc pas une culture vivrière, mais une culture à ranger à côté de celles du karnyanga, du coton, du tabac, du chanvre, de l'indigo, etc.

Les Mossi font aussi une espèce de gros concombre, le yorolé. Les Gourounsi l'appellent gango et les Bambaras dié.

Au commencement de l'hivernage, on plante le yorolé autour des soukalas, à l'endroit où l'on jette les ordures ménagères. Ce sont les femmes qui plantent le yorolé. Quand les mauvaises herbes poussent, on les arrache avec le ouaka. On récolte les yorolés tout de suite après le mil et on les met dans les cases. On fait cuire le yorolé dans l'eau et on le mange tel quel, sans assaisonnement, sans sel.

Quant au niri (mot Mossi) ou yergan (mot Nounouma), c'est une petite courge de la grosseur d'une orange, verte ou vert-jaune qui pousse par terre dans les champs. On ramasse les yergans quand ils sont mûrs, on les met dans un trou en terre, on les y laisse pourrir puis on les lave. Alors on prend les grains, on les utilise dans les sauces ou bien on les mange grillés assaisonnés de sel. On ne mange donc pas le yergan lui-même, mais seulement les grains.

Les Mossi en font dans le sud à Nobéré et à Rakaye. Le yergan se sème à l'époque du mil, autour des soukalas, dans le champ de maïs et de gros mil rouge. On le récolte dans la première quinzaine d'octobre.

Pour les oignons les Mossi les connaissent et les appellent albasalé, mais il ne les cultivent pas. Ce sont des Haoussas venant de Bandiagara qui les achètent aux Habé et les apportent aux Mossi. Les producteurs eux-mêmes viennent quelquefois, en caravanes nombreuses, les vendre à Ouagadougou.

Nous en avons fini avec les cultures vivrières du Mossi. Passons maintenant aux cultures non vivrières.

Le coton (lamdo ou lango en Mossi) est ici plutôt une culture de saison sèche qu'une culture de saison des pluies.

On le plante à côté des soukalas, ou à côté des marigots dans la brousse.

Pendant l'hivernage on coupe l'herbe à côté des marigots et on la laisse couchée ce qui engraisse le terrain. Puis, à la fin de la saison des pluies, on plante le coton. Avec le koutiaga on fait des trous dans la terre, on met trois ou quatre graines de coton dans chaque trou, puis on rebouche. Au bout de cinq ou six jours le coton sort de terre. Toutes les quinzaines on arrache les mauvaises herbes. Au bout de cent jours le coton arrive à maturité. La tige atteint 75 centimètres ou 1 m. 50 de haut d'après la qualité du terrain. Alors on fait la récolte qui se prolonge pendant 30 ou 40 jours parce qu'on attend que la cosse éclate et que le coton apparaisse, pour enlever le tout. Ce sont les femmes, les filles et les petits enfants qui font cette cueillette.

Les Mossi font assez de coton et prennent grand soin de leurs champs. Les terrains et le climat du pays sont d'ailleurs assez favorables à cette culture. La récolte a lieu en février et en mars. Le prix moyen sur place du coton est de un franc le kilo.

Le tabac est aussi une culture moitié de saison sèche ou, du moins, sa culture commencée pendant la saison des pluies se continue pendant la saison sèche et se termine seulement pendant celle-ci. On le cultive auprès des soukalas comme le maïs, le gros mil rouge, le chanvre, etc.

On sème le tabac pendant la saison des pluies auprès de la soukala. On attend alors 25 jours, puis on le dépique et on va le repiquer à un autre endroit, toujours auprès de la soukala. L'hivernage fini le tabac est déjà grand. Au mois de décembre on commence à cueillir les feuilles, en prenant d'abord les plus basses qui les premières arrivent à maturité. Puis on continue en remontant et on cueille les feuilles jusqu'à la fin de

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janvier. On coupe alors les tiges de tabac pour avoir les graines.

Pour faire le tabac, on met les feuilles à sécher au soleil, puis, quand elles sont sèches, les hommes les pilent dans de petits mortiers. On ajoute un peu d'eau, on remue et on fait des boules de tabac ou plutôt de petits pains allongés valant un sou chacun. On donne aux femmes ces pains pour les vendre au marché.

Les Mossi font aussi de l'indigo (gara en Mossi comme en Bambara).

Pendant la saison des pluies on sème l'indigo dans des champs à part ; on enlève d'abord l'herbe, puis on donne çà et là des coups de koutiaga sur le sol. Ensuite on sème à la volée les graines d'indigo et on remue la terre avec le ouaka pour qu'elles soient couvertes et que les oiseaux ne les mangent pas. Au bout de quinze jours l'indigo commence à pousser. On enlève les mauvaises herbes à la main. Quarante jours après on peut enlever les feuilles. C'est à la main qu'on les cueille. On les donne aux femmes qui en les pressant en font des sortes de pains aplatis.

Quant au chanvre (berenga en Mossi, pepan en Nounouma, kanzé en Kassouna, dafou en Mandé), il se sème dans le maïs qui entoure la soukala, aussitôt que ce dernier est poussé. Le berenga a une longue tige semblable à celle du maïs et qui ne se distingue guère de celle-ci, mais on récolte le maïs en août alors qu'on laisse debout les tiges du berenga jusqu'en octobre ou en novembre.

On se sert des feuilles pour les sauces.

Avec le chanvre, nous avons fini d'énumérer les cultures vivrières et non vivrières du pays mossi. Terminons en disant un mot des instruments agricoles.

L'instrument essentiel pour la culture est ici, comme dans tout le reste de l'Afrique occidentale, le daba. Les Mossi en ont de deux sortes :

1° Le ouaka, sorte de daba à fer large et mince. Il sert à retourner la terre.

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2° Le koutiaga ou koutiara ou koutiaba. C'est une espèce de petite pioche qui sert à faire les trous pour semer les graines.

Comme instruments accessoires les Mossi ont :

1° le laré. C'est une hache qui sert à couper les souches quand on défriche un terrain ;

2° le sououga, couteau qui sert à couper les épis de mil ;

3° le gouégo, couteau recourbé, sorte de faucille, qui sert à couper la paille, quand on fait les toitures de cases par exemple.

En résumé, la culture est ce qu'il y a de plus important chez les Mossi. C'est ce qui fait vivre cette population relativement agglomérée, puisqu'il y a vingt-cinq habitants ici par kilomètre carré, chiffre très élevé et rare pour l'Afrique occidentale. Les espèces de plantes cultivées sont aussi nombreuses que partout ailleurs et l'outillage agricole est plutôt supérieur. Avec tout cela le Mossi n'est pas un très bon cultivateur et sur ce point je crois qu'il faut le mettre au-dessous du Bobo, du Gourounsi, du Habé, du Bambara, etc. On sent chez lui l'hérédité, au moins partielle, de gens qui ont connu jadis une manière plus facile et plus fructueuse de se procurer leur nourriture (ainsi la guerre et le pillage qui en résulte) ou, pour nous exprimer autrement, la rencontre de deux races dont l'une à vrai dire, était bonne cultivatrice mais dont l'autre l'était moins. Ainsi, quoique cultivateurs avant tout et vivant en somme de la culture, les Mossi ne le sont pas aussi fondamentalement que les Bobos, les Gourounsi, etc. Ils font de la culture, et c'est même de très loin leur art vivrier principal, et pourtant on ne peut pas dire que ce soient, de tout point, de très bons cultivateurs.

Sont-ce au moins des éleveurs remarquables ?

Nous pouvons tout de suite répondre que non. Le Mossi est un éleveur très médiocre pour ne pas dire nul. Cela ne veut pas dire du reste qu'il n'y ait pas de bétail dans le Mossi. Au contraire il y en a beaucoup, tant du fait de la présence des Foulbé qui sont des pasteurs vachers que de la présence des Yarsé qui

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ont toujours assez de bétail, tant enfin du fait de la densité de la population mossi. Mais dans tout cela les Mossi eux-mêmes ont peu de bétail ou plus exactement un pour cent peu élevé de bétail.

Nous pourrions citer des statistiques totales ou partielles, mais les plus récentes sont viciées par ce fait que des famines répétées vers 1906-1908 et un système d'impôt trop rigoureux un peu plus tard ont vidé ces dernières années le Mossi d'une partie de son bétail. Nous confirmerons donc seulement notre assertion que les Mossi sont de très médiocres éleveurs en notant la façon dont ils s'occupent de leurs bestiaux. Presque toujours au lieu de les soigner eux-mêmes ou de le faire faire par les jeunes gens, ils les donnent à garder aux Foulbé, ce que font aussi quand ils le peuvent les Bobos, les Nounoumas et les Sissalas, dans la résidence de Léo, mais ce que ne font ni les Kassonbouras, ni les Nankanas, ni les Dagaris. Si le chef de soukala mossi est riche, il a son gardien peuhl particulier. S'il est de richesse moyenne ou pauvre il s'entend avec d'autres Mossi placés dans la même situation et tous ensemble payent un seul gardien pour leur bétail. Ce sont de leur côté les Foulbé pauvres qui se chargent de garder ainsi les bestiaux des Mossi.

La convention qui lie les deux parties donne le lait et le beurre au Peuhl. Mais le croît du troupeau est pour le propriétaire. La convention est faite sans terme fixé et ne se rompt qu'en cas où le gardien ne soigne pas bien les bêtes. S'il fait bien son métier, il les garde indéfiniment et quand il meurt son fils prend la suite. De même quand le Mossi propriétaire meurt, son fils laisse le bétail au même Peuhl.

Les Foulbé chargés de la garde des troupeaux habitent derrière le village mossi propriétaire dans leurs cases de paille coniques et basses. Non loin de celles-ci ils construisent un parc où ils rentrent les bœufs pour la nuit. Le matin ils les mènent paître dans la brousse et les ramènent le soir. Si un des Mossi propriétaires veut du lait ou du beurre il l'achète au Peuhl. Quelquefois celui-ci lui offre du lait en cadeau.

Nous verrons plus loin, en parlant des Foulbé, que jadis les Mossi esclavagisèrent souvent les petites bandes foulbé qui

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venaient pour s'établir en territoire mossi. Les chefs mossi confisquaient les troupeaux, puis, ne voulant pas les garder eux-mêmes, les restituaient en forme d'usufruit et sous mode du contrat que nous venons de voir, aux Foulbé dépouillés. Cependant il faut dire que tous les Foulbé du Mossi ne furent pas soumis à ce régime de conquête et, quand nous arrivâmes dans le Mossi, il existait des Foulbé riches et libres, des villages foulbé ayant leurs chefs propres, sur le territoire mossi. C'étaient même de beaucoup les plus nombreux. Ces Foulbé relevaient au point de vue politique de la haute autorité mossi comme les Yarsé eux-mêmes, mais avaient, comme ceux-ci et en dehors de cela, gardé toute leur indépendance personnelle et économique.

Ajoutons quelques notes sur les différentes races de bétail qui existent dans le Mossi.

Pour les bœufs, il y en a trois races dans le cercle de Ouagadougou.

1° le bœuf à bosse, qui vit principalement dans le nord et l'est du cercle. Il a la taille haute, le fanon court, les cornes développées. Il est apte au portage et fournit une viande de boucherie excellente. Il y a environ 5.000 bœufs à bosse dans le cercle, 2.000 mâles et 3.000 femelles ;

2° le bœuf sans bosse ou bœuf du pays. Il a de petites cornes, il habite surtout les régions de l'ouest et du sud-ouest et est désigné communément sous le nom de bœuf du Kipirsi. Inapte au portage, il fournit une viande de qualité inférieure, mais est beaucoup plus résistant que le bœuf à bosse et mieux adapté au climat ;

3° le bœuf commun qui provient du croisement des espèces précédentes. Il a les qualités de résistance du bœuf du Kipirsi et sa taille est sensiblement plus élevée que celle de ce dernier. Il est en outre susceptible d'être engraissé, ce qui le rend propre à fournir une viande de très bonne qualité. Cette variété domine chez les Mossi de Tenkodogo. Elle comprend environ 20.000 individus, 8.000 bœufs et 12.000 vaches.

Ce sont donc les bœufs du pays (71.000 individus) qui sont les plus nombreux. Les bœufs à bosse valent de 40 à 100 francs

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et les bœufs sans bosse de 30 à 40 francs. La castration est connue des indigènes, mais pratiquée par eux indifféremment sur des sujets quelconques.

Avant les Français, les Mossi utilisaient leurs bœufs pour la consommation de la viande et pour les sacrifices, mais les deux usages se réduisaient au fond à un seul, au premier, puisque les animaux offerts à un mort sont toujours consommés par les vivants. Actuellement les Mossi vendent leurs bœufs pour payer l'impôt. Ils mangent toujours de la viande, mais pas, paraît-il, autant qu'auparavant. La nécessité de payer un impôt qui pendant ces dernières années a été mal compris, élevé trop rapiment et perçu trop durement, les force à conserver leurs bœufs pour aller les vendre sur les marchés à kolas du sud.

Si les Mossi confient leurs bœufs aux Foulbé, comme nous l'avons vu plus haut, ils n'en font pas de même des moutons que l'on met avec les chèvres. On les fait garder par les jeunes garçons hivernage et saison sèche.

La chair du mouton, comme presque partout en Afrique occidentale, est de qualité médiocre et sent le suint. Néanmoins les indigènes l'aiment beaucoup.

Le mouton est à poil ras et ne donne pas de laine. Seul, du reste, dans toute l'Afrique occidentale, le mouton du Macina possède de la laine.

« Le mouton du Mossi, dit le Cahier des Rapports du cercle, diffère essentiellement de celui du Macina. Alors que celui-ci est de taille assez forte et que sa toison est très épaisse, le mouton de Ouagadougou est petit et à poil ras. Le mâle porte des cornes et possède généralement une longue crinière.

» La race ovine du Macina n'existe d'ailleurs pas au Mossi, les conditions climatériques de cette région ne lui permettant pas d'y vivre. Dans le nord du cercle on rencontre cependant, mais bien rarement, des moutons appartenant à cette espèce amenés par des dioulas et destinés à la boucherie, mais nulle part on n'en effectue l'élevage.

» Si le mouton du Mossi ne peut donner lieu à aucune exploitation en ce qui concerne sa toison, il n'en constitue pas moins une source de revenus assez appréciable pour les indigènes.

Les moutons sont, en effet, assez nombreux dans tout le cercle. Ils sont en grande partie consommés sur place. Cependant quelques troupeaux sont conduits sur les marchés de la Gold-Coast. »

Notons encore l'existence des moutons dits « de case » élevés isolément dans les familles, suivant l'usage introduit au Mossi par les Yarsé, et engraissés avec soin pour être abattus aux époques de fête.

Pour les chèvres on ne les confie pas non plus aux Foulbé qui, du reste, n'en voudraient pas. Pendant l'hivernage on les fait garder par les enfants pour qu'elles n'aillent pas manger le mil. Pendant la saison sèche on ne les garde pas et elles peuvent errer ça et là à leur aise.

La plupart des chèvres du Mossi sont de l'espèce naine. Cependant les chèvres de taille ordinaire, de grande taille, d'origine maure sans doute, existent aussi en petit nombre.

Les ânes du Mossi sont relativement en grand nombre. Ce sont des ânes gris-clair avec une jolie bande noire sur le garrot descendant à droite et à gauche. Les Mossi aiment beaucoup à les monter. Ils le font d'ailleurs tout à fait en arrière, assis sur la croupe de l'âne, ce qui leur donne une allure quelque peu comique. Nos gens commencent à se servir de leurs ânes pour le commerce. Autrefois ils ne le faisaient pas, ne faisant pas de commerce.

Le prix moyen d'un âne est de 25 francs.

L'industrie mulassière est ignorée chez les Mossi. Elle existe au Sokoto chez les Haoussas qui amènent quelquefois des mulets dans le pays.

Pour les chevaux, les Mossi en ont trois races :

1° Dans le nord-est il y a un cheval d'assez grande taille, 1 m. 50 à 1 m. 60, élégant, aux attaches fines, aux lignes rappelant le véritable arabe. Ces chevaux montés de trop bonne heure, sans aucun ménagement, par les indigènes, sont vite usés.

2° Le cheval du sud — qui se trouve dans la partie méridionale du cercle de Ouagadougou et dans la résidence de Tenkodogo. Il est de petite taille, maigre, plutôt trapu. Mieux fait au

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climat soudanais que le grand cheval du nord, il est plus endurant et plus résistant.

3° Le cheval mossi proprement dit qui semble provenir du croisement de la race du nord avec la race du sud. Il est de petite taille, mais râblé, vigoureux, résistant et sobre. Il est moins beau que le cheval du nord, mais plus beau que le cheval boussansé. En revanche, plus résistant au climat que le premier, il l'est moins que le second.

Un cheval du sud vaut de 80 à 100 francs, un cheval mossi vaut environ 150 francs, enfin le cheval du nord vaut de 200 francs à 400 francs. Il y a environ 7.000 chevaux dans la circonscription même de Ouagadougou.

Pendant la saison sèche on garde les chevaux au village. On leur donne du mil et du fourrage d'arachides à manger. On coupe de l'herbe dans la brousse et on la leur donne quand elle est sèche. Pendant la saison des pluies on mène les chevaux généralement dans la brousse. Les chefs seuls gardent les leurs dans leur soukala où on leur apporte de l'herbe fraîche, du mil, de l'eau et du sel. Les autres gens emmènent leurs chevaux dans la brousse et les attachent à côté de leur champ pour qu'ils broutent l'herbe.

Nous avons parlé plus haut du karyanga qu'on récolte à l'état spontané ou qu'on cultive pour les chevaux. On le donne à ceux-ci au milieu de l'hivernage.

Beaucoup de Mossi possèdent des chiens. Ils s'en servent pour garder leurs soukalas, pour chasser dans la brousse et pour la consommation. En ce cas on engraisse l'animal. Jadis sur les marchés mossi on vendait de la viande de chien, mais les Yarsé, musulmans comme on le sait, ont trouvé inconvenant de voir de la viande de chien exposée à côté de la viande de mouton ou à côté de la viande de bœuf et on a renoncé à cet usage, mais on continue toujours à tuer des chiens à l'intérieur des soukalas pour la consommation.

Un chien vaut de 2 à 5 francs.

Les Mossi ont des poulets et des pintades. Les poulets valent 250 cauris. Les œufs ne se vendent pas.

Ce sont les hommes qui s'occupent des poulets. Ce sont eux

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qui vont chercher dans la brousse les termitières qu'ils brisent en morceaux pour que les poulets mangent les termites. Quelquefois, au lieu d'une seule distribution, on leur en fait deux dans une journée, une le matin et une le soir.

Les pintades sont moins nombreuses que les poulets. Elles valent, suivant leur grosseur, de 250 à 300 cauris. On mange les œufs des pintades. Ce sont les hommes qui s'occupent de celles-ci comme des poulets.

Les Mossi mettent des ruches dans les arbres. Ce sont des cylindres allongés en paille de la forme d'un tamtam. Un des côtés est complètement bouché et dans l'autre on a pratiqué des trous pour que les abeilles puissent entrer et sortir.

On place ces ruches dans les arbres au moment où commence la saison chaude (mars), puis chaque mois on va récolter le miel sauf au milieu de la saison des pluies quand il tombe trop d'eau. Ce sont les enfants qui font cela. Ils montent dans l'arbre avec une torche de paille allumée et chassent les abeilles. Puis ils prennent le miel et descendent. Pour séparer le miel de la cire, on place les rayons dans un grand canari plein d'eau, on fait chauffer fortement un autre canari et on en approche le fond brûlant de la surface de celui où flottent les rayons. La cire fond et coule au fond de l'eau. Le miel surnage. On vend la cire aux bijoutiers qui s'en servent pour la confection des objets en cuivre, faits à cire perdue. On la vend aussi aux cordonniers qui, eux, en ont besoin pour frotter et assouplir leurs peaux. Jadis la cire se donnait et ne se vendait pas. Maintenant on la vend à cause du besoin d'argent qu'a amené l'impôt. Quant au miel on le consomme soit pur, soit avec du lait, soit mélangé au sarabout. On en fait aussi une boisson appelée bésou ou béci ou bici et qui n'est pas autre chose que l'hydromel, connu, du reste, dans toute l'Afrique occidentale.

Les Nounoumas l'appellent torosana de sana boisson et toro miel. Les Kassounas l'appellent de même.

Voici comment les femmes fabriquent l'hydromel : elles font bouillir de l'eau, versent le miel dedans et mélangent. Puis elles ajoutent de la farine de petit mil. Le tout est remué avec un morceau de bois, puis passé pour débarrasser la boisson de

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toute impureté. On la verse dans un canari bien propre qu'on bouche soigneusement. Au bout de deux jours on a une boisson jaunâtre dont le litre vaut 400 cauris ou 0 fr. 40 à Ouagadougou. Chez les Nounoumas où le miel est plus abondant qu'au Mossi le litre vaut 0 fr. 20 (à Léo, par exemple). L'hydromel est plus capiteux et plus fort que le dolo et il ne faut pas en boire trop.

Les Mossi fabriquent aussi de petits gâteaux avec du miel et de la farine de mil. Il les appellent baradaré. On n'en fait pas dans le Gourounsi.

Nous en avons fini avec l'élevage mossi. Il est très médiocre en général comme nous venons de le voir, sauf deux spécialités les ânes et les chevaux. Pour les ânes, les Mossi quoiqu'ils ne soient pas commerçants du tout et ne se soient mis à faire un peu de commerce que depuis notre occupation du pays, les ont toujours aimés et employés soit pour se transporter eux-mêmes, soit pour le transport des grains. Ils en ont un en moyenne par 42 habitants tandis que les Dagaris en ont un seulement par 1.000, les Nounoumas un par 166, les Sissalas un par 55, les Kassonbouras un par 50. Ils ne le cèdent sous ce rapport qu'aux commerçants, aux Yarsé, qui, eux, ayant un pressant besoin d'ânes pour leur commerce, en ont un par 23 habitants.

Pour les chevaux, les Mossi en ont abandonné l'élevage aux Foulbé du Mossi. Ils ont cependant un cheval en moyenne par 166 habitants dans la masse mossi, et un cheval par 64 habitants parmi les Nakomsé (nobles, fils de chefs, vrais Mossi). Les Dagaris et les Nounoumas au contraire ont un cheval par 1.000 habitants, les Sissalas un par 400, les Kassonbouras un par 300. Les Yarsé, plus riches que la masse mossi, mais moins attachés aux chevaux que les Nakomsé, ont un cheval par 100 personnes. Enfin les Foulbé du Mossi — qui en font l'élevage — en ont un par 26 personnes.

En résumé, élevage médiocre, sauf pour les ânes et pour les chevaux. Passons à la chasse.

Les Mossi font d'abord, comme les Gourounsi et comme toutes les populations de l'Afrique occidentale en général, la chasse collective pendant la saison sèche et chaude.

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Ce phénomène collectif est ce qu'il y a de plus important en fait de chasse.

En dehors de cela, les cultivateurs font la chasse individuellement, pendant la saison sèche surtout, quelquefois pendant la saison humide, avec l'arc et les flèches.

Enfin, dans le sud, il y a quelques chasseurs d'éléphants, dans le sud seulement, car dans le Mossi même la densité relative de la population et par conséquent la superficie des cultures font qu'on n'y voit pour ainsi dire pas d'éléphants. Au contraire, le Gourounsi et le Boussansé, où la population est beaucoup moins dense, offrent quelques espaces désertiques où on trouve des éléphants. Des chasseurs mossi se sont donc établis dans le sud du pays, aux confins du Gourounsi et du Boussansé pour écumer ces deux régions.

A Kombisiguiri par exemple, il y en a dix, dix chefs de soukala. Ils tuent en moyenne un ou deux éléphants par an. Ils en vendent la viande au village le plus voisin de l'endroit où la bête a été tuée. Ils en retirent environ 50.000 cauris. Quant aux défenses, ils les vendent 120.000 ou 140.000 cauris, quelquefois 200.000. Ils donnent toujours un morceau de viande au chef du canton où la bête a été tuée. Ils chassent au fusil, jadis ils chassaient avec des lances empoisonnées, individuellement comme maintenant.

Les chasseurs d'éléphants ne cultivent pas pendant l'hivernage, mais leurs femmes et leurs enfants le font.

A Kombisiguiri il y a, nous venons de le voir, 10 chasseurs d'éléphants sur 70 chefs de carrée environ. Sur ces derniers il y a aussi une vingtaine de chasseurs d'autres bêtes, mais ceux-ci sont des cultivateurs ne faisant la chasse qu'en surplus de la culture. Ils poursuivent le buffle. S'ils en tuent un ils vendent sa viande au village le plus voisin de l'endroit où ils l'ont tué pour 35.000 cauris. Ils chassent aussi l'antilope koba dont la viande vaut de 20.000 à 25.000 cauris, la biche rayée qui en vaut 6.500, la biche-cochon 5.000, le phacochère 10.000. Ils chassent aussi les lièvres, les outardes, les pintades, les perdrix, les tourterelles, etc.

Les Mossi ne chassent pas les singes, ne les mangeant pas.

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Du reste il n'y en a guère dans le Mossi, sauf les singes rouges grands amateurs de mil et de maïs.

Les Mossi ne chassent pas les caïmans, parce qu'ils sont sacrés. Si on en tuait un on attraperait une maladie, la tête enflerait et les dents vous sortiraient de la bouche. En revanche on tue et on mange les serpents, mais dans le Mossi même il y en a peu de gros (pythons, boas) le climat n'étant pas assez humide. Il y en a plus dans le Boussansé et dans le Gourounsi.

La pêche est moins importante au Mossi que la chasse pour la bonne raison que le Mossi peu arrosé n'a que des mares boueuses pendant la saison sèche (voir à ce sujet notre Introduction). Ainsi non seulement les Mossi n'ont pas de pêcheurs de profession, mais les villages ne font même pas (sauf exception dans le sud, par exemple à Kombisiguiri) de pêche collective à la saison sèche. Seuls les enfants se livrent à la pêche du poisson de vase qui abonde toujours dans les petites mares, même quand elles sont presque desséchées.

En revanche, la cueillette joue le même rôle chez les Mossi que chez les autres noirs soudanais, et ici nous l'étudierons avec quelque détail, ne l'ayant décrite jusqu'à présent que d'une façon toute schématique et dans ses grandes lignes seulement.

L'arbre le plus répandu dans tout le Mossi et qui y vient spontanément, c'est le karité. C'est un arbre au feuillage d'un beau vert, ressemblant assez à nos pommiers de Normandie. Son écorce est blanchâtre et faite de petits quadrilatères juxtaposés. C'est le karité qui domine dans la brousse du pays et qui, à cause de son abondance, lui donne son caractère général.

Le fruit de karité est un marron ovoïde, allongé, plus petit que le marron du marronier d'Europe. Ce qui le distingue encore plus de celui-ci c'est qu'il est recouvert d'une pulpe à peau verdâtre. Cette pulpe est molle, assez épaisse et d'un goût délicieux, un goût de poire très mûre, trop mûre même.

Ce sont les femmes qui cueillent le karité lorsque les fruits sont mûrs, avant la saison des pluies, au commencement d'avril. On commence par manger la pulpe qui est autour du marron,

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puis on fabrique avec l'intérieur, en cassant l'écorce brune, le fameux beurre de karité.

Ce sont les femmes qui le font au Mossi comme partout. Elles enlèvent l'écorce du marron, puis pilent le contenu poisseux et blanchâtre qui se trouve à l'intérieur. On le pile sur les pierres à écraser avec un petit pilon en bois. Dès que c'est fait on fait cuire dans un canari, puis on pile encore, cette fois dans les grands mortiers en bois, jusqu'à ce que la pâte ait été amenée à la consistance du beurre. Ensuite on lui fait encore subir un écrasage entre les pierres à écraser. Quand c'est fini on met le tout dans un canari avec de l'eau tiède et on remue, on manipule la pâte avec les mains, ce qui donne une sorte de crème d'un blanc sale, un peu comme celle des œufs à la neige, mais plus solide. On prend alors cette crème et on la fait bouillir jusqu'à ce qu'elle se transforme en huile. Les impuretés vont au fond du canari et l'huile surnage. On recueille celle-ci, on la met dans une calebasse propre et on laisse refroidir : on obtient ainsi un beurre d'un jaune pâle. A le voir on dirait du vrai beurre, mais, si on le sent, on perçoit une odeur caractéristique, désagréable pour l'Européen.

Les femmes gourounsi préparent le beurre de karité de la même façon que les femmes mossi.

Ce beurre sert à différents usages : d'abord à des usages de toilette. Particulièrement les femmes s'en oignent copieusement la chevelure, non seulement dans le Mossi, mais encore dans tout le Soudan, ce qui leur donne naturellement un parfum peu agréable pour des narines européennes. On en fait aussi, en y ajoutant certaines cendres, du savon. Enfin le beurre de karité est utilisé pour la cuisine.

Les karités qui sont dans un champ appartiennent au propriétaire du champ. Ceux qui sont dans la brousse appartiennent aux gens du village qui a cette brousse dans son territoire, à tous les gens du village, car les chefs mossi ne s'en sont pas réservé la propriété comme pour les nérés.

Les nérés se trouvent en grand nombre au Mossi, quoique infiniment moins nombreux que les karités qui, eux, couvrent littéralement la brousse. La proportion peut être environ d'un

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néré contre quinze karités. Néanmoins ce dernier est loin d'être rare et on rencontre quelquefois dix ou quinze nérés groupés à petite distance les uns des autres. Le néré est reconnaissable à ce que les branches s'élancent en éventail d'un tronc court quoique élégant. Elles divergent très joliment, d'une façon triangulaire et le néré s'épanouit un peu comme une gerbe de feu d'artifice. Son feuillage n'est pas moins caractéristique que sa forme : il est d'un vert sombre, oxydé, qui contraste avec le vert éclatant et magnifique du karité. Les feuilles du néré sont dans le genre de celles de l'acacia.

Le néré se dit roga ou roaga, doga ou doaga en Mossi. Il se dit soungou en Nounouma et en Kassouna, sôla en Sissala. Les Nankanas l'appellent roga ou doga comme les Mossi.

Les fruits du néré sont de longues gousses brunes que l'on trouve en grappes sur l'arbre et qui contiennent une substance jaune d'un goût sucré serrée autour d'un espèce de noyau très allongé. Les femmes font la cueillette de ces fruits du 15 mars au 15 avril environ. Les nérés qui sont compris dans un champ appartiennent au propriétaire de ce champ mais les nérés qui sont dans la brousse inculte, les chefs de village mossi s'en sont réservé la propriété.

Chez les Gourounsi, comme nous le savons, les nérés qui sont dans un champ même non cultivé pour le moment, appartiennent au propriétaire, et ceux qui sont dans la brousse inculte du village appartiennent à tous les gens du village.

Nous touchons ici la différence d'un royaume centralisé où les chefs ont de l'autorité et de petits cantons ou villages indépendants où ils en ont peu.

Le néré sert à beaucoup d'usages. D'abord la farine jaune, y compris la partie centrale plus consistante qui sert de noyau d'un bout à l'autre de la gousse, est pilée par les femmes dans les mortiers à mil ou dans des calebasses en bois. Une fois pilée, on la délaye dans de l'eau bouillante et on la mange ainsi. C'est une grande ressource pour les temps de famine qui, lorsqu'ils sévissent chez les noirs, sévissent surtout en mai, juin, première quinzaine de juillet. Le néré récolté en mars et avril vient à point pour combattre la famine.

Quant aux graines du fruit, on les a retirées et mises de côté avant de piler la matière sucrée. Elles sont gardées pour faire le kologo (nom mossi) ou soumbara (nom mandé) condiment de haut goût très aimé des noirs. — Pour la fabrication de celui-ci, les femmes font bouillir les graines, les laissent refroidir, les piétinent pour enlever la peau et vont les laver soigneusement au marigot. Parfois on enlève les pellicules à la main. On fait cuire ensuite pendant 24 heures, puis on met dans l'eau pendant 48 heures, dans un canari bien couvert, à l'ombre, dans un endroit humide, pour que les graines pourissent. On les met alors sécher au soleil sur une natte pendant deux jours, puis on les serre en boules plus ou moins grosses avec les mains. C'est sous cette forme que le soumbara est utilisé ou est vendu. Les petites boules valent dans le Mossi 100 cauris pièce et les grosses 300. A Léo, dans le pays Nounouma, il n'y a de boules que d'une seule taille valant 100 cauris. Comme aspect le kologo rappelle assez bien ce colorant noir dont se servent les ménagères françaises pour donner de l'œil à leur bouillon. Quand une femme veut se servir du kologo, en mettre dans une sauce, elle détache de la boule avec la pointe d'un couteau le petit morceau qu'il lui faut et l'écrase avec la pierre à écraser. Elle verse la poudre ainsi obtenue dans la sauce.

Signalons encore que l'écorce même de la gousse du néré est utilisée, mais pas pour un usage alimentaire. Les Mossi et les Gourounsi s'en servent pour noircir et polir le sol des cases et celui des toits en banko. On fait tremper l'écorce du néré dans l'eau pendant un jour, puis on jette cette eau sur la surface à polir qui a été damée consciencieusement d'abord. On dame de nouveau avec l'eau, puis on laisse sécher. Cette opération est refaite trois ou quatre fois et en fin de compte la surface en banko prend un aspect d'un beau noir poli ou d'un beau gris poli. On peut presque s'y mirer quand l'opération a été bien faite.

Enfin, et pour en finir avec les usages du néré, nous avons vu que, dans le pays gourounsi, les filaments bruns qui sont sur l'écorce de la gousse du néré servent à faire des ceintures pour

les femmes, des ceintures-ficelles qui sont destinées à soutenir les bouquets de feuilles qui servent de seul vêtement aux dames du pays.

Venons en maintenant au *baobab*.

On l'appelle touéra ou touéga en Mossi (sira ou izira en Bambara). Il y en a un peu partout dans la brousse du Mossi et principalement dans les endroits pierreux, collineux et à proximité des grands cours d'eau.

Le fruit du baobab se cueille de décembre à avril. C'est une sorte d'énorme amande verte qui est suspendue au bout d'une tige qui atteint souvent de 25 à 30 centimètres de longueur. On brise la coque, on en retire la pulpe et on la pile dans le mortier (ce sont les femmes naturellement qui font cela). Une fois que c'est fait, on passe la farine obtenue dans une passoire en paille. Elle est prête à être consommée.

On l'appelle toïdésoum en Mossi, tiondé-boé en Peuhl, siramogou en Mandé (sira baobab et mogou farine). Les Européens la désignent vulgairement sous le nom de pain de singe. On en vend sur les marchés mossi comme sur les marchés des pays bambaras.

Pour consommer cette farine on la délaie dans du lait, ou dans de l'eau, à défaut de lait, ou bien encore on la mélange avec de la farine de mil, mélange qui s'appelle en Bambara sangaré ni siramogou (farine de mil et farine de baobab). On peut la mélanger aussi avec de la farine de néré.

Mais il n'y a pas que le fruit du baobab qui soit utilisé. Les feuilles fraîches et vertes entrent dans la confection des sauces. Les feuilles sèches servent à faire le tonéra (lalo en Foutanké, namourou ou namougou en Bambara, oro en Peuhl). On fait sécher les feuilles et on les pile dans un mortier de façon à en faire de la poudre qui se met dans les sauces.

Enfin ajoutons que l'écorce du baobab sert à faire des cordes.

Après le karité, le néré et le baobab il faut citer le *tamarin* ou tamarinier (Tamarindus Indica), en Mossi koussouga ou poussouga et en Bambara n'tomi.

Le fruit du tamarin est une gousse plus longue que le doigt

et à peu près de sa grosseur qui arrive à maturité entre janvier et avril. Elle est d'un brun vert-jaune. Si on la sectionne dans sa longueur on voit qu'elle contient une dizaine de petits fruits ronds, de la grosseur d'une demi-noisette, qui sont logés à la file dans le tissu verdâtre. On n'utilise que la gousse sèche après avoir enlevé les petits fruits qu'elle contient et qui ont, quand ils sont frais, un goût assez agréable rappelant à la fois le kola et la noisette. Mais, quand la gousse est sèche, ils sont eux-mêmes desséchés et durs et on les enlève.

Naturellement ces gousses ne se mangent pas. Elles servent seulement à rendre la sauce du to fraîche et aigre, ce que les noirs en général aiment beaucoup.

On ne consomme les gousses elles-mêmes qu'en cas de famine, car elles donnent la colique. De plus elles font mal à la bouche, à la langue et aux dents (gingivite).

En temps ordinaire les indigènes les utilisent encore médicalement contre la fièvre : pour cela ils les font bouillir avec du piment et absorbent la boisson ainsi préparée. Ainsi font les Mossi, de même que les Gourounsi, les Bambaras, etc.

On fait encore, avec les gousses du tamarin, des boules sèches qui sont vendues sur les marchés. On les écrase grossièrement avec un pilon, puis on les presse les unes contre les autres dans l'eau froide de façon à les agglutiner et à en former des boules de différentes grosseurs. Quand on veut donner au to le goût du tamarin, on détache avec un couteau un petit morceau de la boule qu'on met dans l'eau bouillante du canari où on va verser la farine du mil.

Les Mossi, comme les Bambaras, font encore une boisson purgative avec la gousse du tamarin soit fraîche soit sèche. On la fait bouillir dans l'eau, on ajoute un tout petit peu de farine de mil et on boit légèrement chaud. Cette boisson est laxative. Les Haoussas la connaissent aussi, mais non les Gourounsi.

En résumé la gousse du tamarinier a deux usages principaux chez les Mossi et les autres noirs d'Afrique Occidentale : elle sert à aigrir et à rafraîchir le tô et elle sert aussi pour se purger.

Ajoutons que le Dr Rançon, dans la relation de son

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voyage dans la Haute-Gambie, indique la façon de préparer une boisson de tamarin à l'usage des Européens. On laisse dissoudre la gousse pendant 3 heures dans l'eau froide et, en ajoutant du sucre, on obtient une espèce de limonade.

Dans tous leurs villages, les Mossi ont des *rôniers*. Le rônier est, comme on le sait, une espèce de palmier :

« C'est le plus grand des palmiers, le *Borassus flabelliformis*, dit le Dr Rançon (Dans la Haute-Gambie, pages 139 à 141). Il est facilement reconnaissable à son port élevé et caractéristique. Sa tige est très grande et peut atteindre parfois jusqu'à 25 et 30 mètres. Elle est renflée au milieu et ses parties inférieures et supérieures sont bien moins volumineuses et bien plus effilées. Son écorce est noirâtre et porte les cicatrices des blessures qu'y font les feuilles en tombant. Le bois, bien qu'il ait l'aspect spongieux, est très dur et difficilement attaquable par la scie. Les billes de rôniers sont plus lourdes que l'eau. C'est un des rares bois qui ne flotte pas. Les feuilles d'un rônier adulte sont groupées en un bouquet volumineux situé au faîte de la tige et présentent de profondes découpures. Le tronc n'en porte jamais, sauf quand il est jeune. Leur couleur vert foncé et leur résistance rappelle de loin les feuilles artificielles en zinc de certains décors de théâtre ou de girouettes. Les plus jeunes, fortement imbriquées et engaînantes au sommet du végétal, sont d'un blanc d'ivoire. Très tendres elles forment le chou palmiste. Les feuilles du rônier ne tombent qu'après dessiccation complète.

» Les fruits, désignés sous le nom de rônes, sont disposés en grappes de quarante ou cinquante environ. Ils sont de la grosseur d'un melon de moyenne taille et très lourds. L'enveloppe en est verte quand ils sont jeunes ; à maturité elle est jaune-orange. Les graines volumineuses, noirâtres, discoïdes ou en forme de sphères aplaties aux deux pôles, sont enveloppées d'une pulpe jaune d'or filamenteuse, très aqueuse, très odorante et d'un goût agréable mais légèrement térébenthiné. Les indigènes en font une grande consommation, surtout en temps de disette.

» Le rônier est un bois plein, de longue durée et d'une soli-

dité remarquable. Inattaquable par les insectes et par l'humidité, il est excellent pour les pilotis et l'on s'en sert couramment dans la construction des ponts et appontements. Les arbres mâles sont seuls employés ; les arbres femelles ne peuvent servir qu'à des palissades car ils sont creux et peu résistants...

» Outre le fruit, les Noirs mangent encore les racines des jeunes pousses. Elles ont un goût légèrement astringent et assez déplaisant. On les mange crues. Le bourgeon terminal est très tendre. C'est un chou-palmiste, moins savoureux assurément que celui de l'*Oreodoxa oleracea*, mais qui mérite cependant d'être apprécié. Coupé en petits fragments de deux centimètres carrés et bien assaisonné d'huile, de vinaigre, sel et poivre, on en fait une très bonne salade, surtout si on a eu la précaution de le faire macérer pendant vingt-quatre heures. Ce plat est très apprécié des Européens appelés à résider au Soudan. Enfin le rônier fournit une sève relativement abondante dont on pourrait extraire du sucre et qui donne, par fermentation, un vin de palme de qualité inférieure. »

Il faut ajouter que l'on utilise les feuilles des rôniers pour leurs fibres. Le noir d'Afrique occidentale en fait des corbeilles (comme au Mossi), des liens (comme dans la Haute-Gambie).

Les rôniers du pays mossi n'atteignent pas la taille gigantesque ni la force de ceux de la Haute-Gambie. Ils ont sept ou huit mètres de haut, dix mètres tout au plus et leurs énormes fruits sont groupés par cinq ou six et non par quarante ou cinquante.

Il n'y a pas de rôniers dans la brousse mossi elle-même, mais il y en a dans tous les villages mossi. Ces rôniers proviennent de graines jetées par terre, au hasard après la consommation du fruit, ou d'une aucienne arboriculture de l'arbre. Le rônier n'est donc pas un produit spontané du pays mossi et régulièrement ne devrait pas figurer dans la cueillette. D'autre part peut-on le mettre dans l'arboriculture actuellement et peut-on appeler arboriculture le fait de jeter des graines par terre pour s'en débarrasser ? Quoiqu'il en soit, les Mossi man-

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gent les fruits de leurs rôniers, mais ils n'en tirent pas de vin de palme. Comme nous venons de le dire, ils utilisent les fibres des feuilles pour leurs ouvrages de vannerie.

S'il y a des rôniers dans le Mossi, par contre il n'y a pas de palmiers à huile, ni de palmiers-bans. On ne commence à voir quelques-uns de ceux-ci que dans le Gourounsi, situé au sud du Mossi.

Nous venons de passer en revue les arbres les plus importants de la cueillette dans la région, mais la brousse mossi en renferme bien d'autres, jouant un moindre rôle il est vrai, mais ayant toutefois leur utilité, dont nous devons dire un mot.

Il y a d'abord le *ganra* ou *ganga* (en Mandé sounsoun, en Peuhl et en Sarakolé diomba). C'est le néflier d'Afrique occidentale. Comme port, c'est un gros arbre dans le genre du karité, plutôt plus gros, avec un tronc plus épais et plus puissant.

Le fruit est une nèfle, moins grosse que la nèfle européenne. Pas mûre, elle a la saveur âcre de celle-ci et engourdit la bouche. Mûre, c'est la nèfle telle que nous la mangeons en Europe. Les indigènes commencent à la consommer pendant la saison des pluies et la mangent jusqu'à janvier.

Avec l'écorce du sounsoun, les femmes des forgerons bambaras font un vernis pour les poteries, les canaris. Les femmes des forgerons mossi, elles, préfèrent pour le même usage l'écorce de deux arbres que nous verrons plus loin, le nobora et le sibi. En revanche, dans le Gourounsi, les femmes qui font la poterie prennent les nèfles encore vertes et les pilent. Elles ajoutent de l'eau et font ainsi une espèce de vernis dont elles se servent pour vernir les canaris une fois cuits. En Nounouma le ganra s'appelle kano, en Kassouna kakano, en Sissala kalo et en Nankana ganra ou ganga comme en Mossi.

Ajoutons que le ganra est au Mossi, comme dans toute l'Afrique occidentale, un arbre particulièrement associé aux superstitions fétichistes et dont nous aurons à parler au chapitre Religion.

Ensuite *le kankanga* (au pluriel kankansé. Les Bambaras et les Malinkés l'appellent n'toro, les Foulbé guip-bi et les Nou-

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noumas kaporo). Le kankanga est le figuier indigène de l'Afrique occidentale. Ses fruits ne sont pas autre chose que des figues, assurément moins bonnes que celles que l'on mange en Europe, mais des figues tout de même. Les Mossi comme les Gourounsi, les Bambaras, etc., mangent généralement ces figues telles quelles. Il y en a de mûres à toutes les époques de l'année et on va en cueillir quand on veut. Quand il y a famine, au lieu de les consommer ainsi, on les fait sécher au soleil puis on les écrase sur les pierres à écraser (en pays mossi), ou bien on les pile dans un petit mortier (en pays bambara). On les transforme ainsi en une sorte de farine qu'on fait bouillir et qui remplace la farine de mil. Dans les mêmes circonstances les Mossi mangent les feuilles du kankanga. Ils les font cuire dans l'eau bouillante en ajoutant du sel.

Les Gourounsi, eux, tantôt mangent les figues fraiches et tantôt les préparent pour leurs sauces. Dans ce dernier cas ils les font bouillir, les coupent en morceaux et font sécher ceux-ci au soleil. Quand ils sont bien secs on les met de côté et quand on en a besoin, on en écrase un, on le réduit en poudre et on met cette poudre dans la sauce.

Ensuite la *nobora ou noboga* (en Mandé n'kouna, en Khassonké kountan, en Foulbé et en Toucouleur Hèdè, en Sarakolé kounguié, en Nounouma salo et en Kassouna kansalo).

Le nobora est une espèce de prunier sauvage. Les fruits en arrivent à maturité depuis le moment où l'on sème le mil jusqu'au moment où celui-ci atteint 80 centimètres de haut, c'est-à-dire entre mai et juillet.

Ou bien on mange les fruits du n'kouna frais ou bien on en fait une espèce de boisson appelée noborame en Mossi, n'kounangui en Mandé, n'diam hèdam en Foulbé. Dans les trois langues cela veut dire eau de nobora ou de n'kouna. Cette boisson est connue dans tout le Soudan.

Pour la fabriquer, on met les fruits dans l'eau, après les avoir percés avec un petit morceau de bois, pour que le jus puisse en sortir et on laisse ainsi pendant douze heures. Au bout de ce laps de temps on les retire et on fait bouillir l'eau pendant un

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quart d'heure. Cela fait, on prend de ce résidu qui reste au fond des canaris où se fabrique le dolo, et on en met dans le vase qui contient le n'kounangui. On laisse reposer pendant une nuit. Le matin la boisson est gazeuse et on peut la consommer. Elle est moins forte que le dolo.

Les Mossi, comme les Bambaras, font du n'kounangui, mais non les Toucouleurs et les Foulahs parce qu'ils sont musulmans. Seuls les esclaves de ceux-ci, étant fétichistes, en fabriquent. Les Gourounsi n'en font pas non plus, mais cela provient chez eux de ce que le n'kouna est rare en pays gourounga. Au sujet de cet arbre les Gourounsi prétendent qu'il éloigne la hyène et, quand quelqu'un est mort dans la brousse et qu'ils l'enterrent sur place, ils cherchent une branche de n'kouna et vont la planter à l'endroit où il a été enterré. Ils disent que la hyène tournera à une certaine distance, mais n'osera jamais s'approcher et déterrer le mort. Le fait, prétendent-ils, est de notoriété publique chez eux.

Le *léla* est une autre espèce de prunier sauvage. En Bambara et en Malinké on l'appelle séno, en Nounouma filina, en Kassouna mia, en Sissala mellemoila. Ses prunes sont minuscules. Elles sont jaunes avant la maturité et rouges quand elles sont complètement mûres (mars-mai). Elles ne sont pas plus grosses que le bout du doigt. On les consomme telles quelles. L'amande ne se mange pas. Les enfants la croquent quelquefois, mais, quand on en mange trop, elle donne la colique.

Le *sibi* autre arbre que l'on trouve dans la brousse mossi s'appelle n'pékou en Bambara et en Peuhl, bembé en Sarakolé. Les Nounoumas l'appellent kakian, les Kassounas kakiéno, les Nankanas sibi comme les Mossi. Le fruit est minuscule et donne quelquefois des coliques. Il est mûr à la saison sèche et chaude. On le mange tel quel. Les Habé en font une boisson que les Foulbé et les Toucouleurs du pays désignent sous le nom de diam-n'pékoudiam (eau de n'pékou). Les Mossi, les Gourounsi, les Bambaras ne fabriquent pas cette boisson.

Citons encore le *tiarala* (au pluriel tiaralsé ou tiaralésé, n'ségué en Bambara, saô en Nounouma). Les Mossi aiment beaucoup le fruit du tiarala qui est très parfumé et dont on se

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sert pour donner une bonne odeur au tabac indigène. Ils en mangent aussi les feuilles.

Venons-en au *kara* (ou kaka). C'est le n'taba mandé. Il s'appelle dankola en Nounouma et en Sissala, kalankola en Kassonboura.

« Le n'taba, dit André Rançon, (Dans la Haute-Gambie, page 35), est une malvoïdée de la famille des sterculiacées. C'est le « *Sterculia cordifolia Cav.* » ainsi nommé parce que ses feuilles sont en forme de cœur. C'est un des plus beaux végétaux des régions de l'Afrique tropicale. On le reconnaît aisément à son tronc énorme, à ses feuilles excessivement larges et à son fruit absolument caractéristique. Ce fruit qui vient à l'extrémité des jeunes rameaux a la forme d'une gousse volumineuse dont les valves charnues s'ouvrent à la pression par son arête convexe. Son extrémité libre est munie d'une sorte d'appendice charnu en forme d'aiguillon, de 0 m. 06 environ de longueur. Quand il est mûr, il a une couleur rouge clair qui ne peut laisser aucun doute. Il renferme une douzaine de graines polyédriques noyées dans une pulpe jaunâtre, savoureuse et excessivement parfumée. C'est un des meilleurs desserts que j'aie rencontrés au Soudan et souvent nous nous en sommes régalés. Les fruits sont accouplés au nombre de trois, cinq, sept en faisceaux et adhèrent fortement au pédoncule et à la tige qui les porte. Ils tombent rarement et pour les cueillir on est obligé de sectionner le rameau qui les porte. »

M. André Rançon ajoute (page 36) que le n'taba est le congénère du kola. Ce serait une sorte de faux kolatier.

Le fruit du n'taba est mûr de décembre à avril. Les Mossi et les Gourounsi le mangent quand il a séché sur l'arbre même ou bien tel quel, ou bien après l'avoir fait bouillir pendant un quart d'heure. On le vend sur les marchés mossi au prix de trois pour un cauri, de six pour deux cauris, etc., c'est-à-dire au prix de cent cinquante pour un sou.

On en fait aussi une boisson chez les Mossi et les Gourounsi. On fait bouillir le fruit, on le pile, on le met dans un canari-filtre, c'est-à-dire dans un canari percé à sa partie inférieure, qu'on place sur un autre canari. On verse sur les fruits de l'eau

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qui s'imbibe de leur jus et qui tombe dans le canari de dessous. La boisson est sucrée et a un goût de miel.

Citons encore le *kamsoro* (n'kodo en Bambara). C'est un fort gros arbre, trapu, dont les feuilles sont caractéristiques. Elles sont très fortes, très larges, très grosses, de forme ovoïde ou plutôt un peu plus allongée que celle de l'œuf et d'un vert éclatant.

On en mange les fruits, principalement les enfants, au cours de l'année entière, car tout le temps il y en a de mûrs.

On ne trouve pas de kamsoros en pays gourounga.

Citons aussi le *véda* ou ouéda, liane à caoutchouc, en Mandé n'saba, en Peuhl fôgui, en Sarakolé fittigné, dite encore laré et *Vahea Senegalensis*. Cette liane porte des fruits qui sont mûrs en mars et en avril. On ne peut mieux les comparer qu'à des oranges. Ils sont d'une couleur verte avant la maturité et jaune-rouge quand ils sont mûrs. Le Dr Rançon les déclare délicieux. On mange ces fruits tels quels, on n'en fait pas de boisson.

Le n'saba se trouve dans presque toute l'Afrique occidentale, mais se fait rare à mesure qu'on va vers le nord. Il existe en très petite quantité dans le Mossi et le Gourounsi.

Les Dagaris, qui sont plus au sud que les Gourounsi, recueillent le caoutchouc des lianes n'saba pour en garnir, en forme de tampon, le bout des baguettes avec lesquelles ils frappent sur leurs tamtams. Les griots gourounsi achètent ces baguettes chez les Dagaris. Ni les Mossi, ni les Gourounsi ne recueillent eux-mêmes le caoutchouc du n'saba.

Dans le sud on se sert de cette liane pour faire des liens, mais cela ne se pratique ni au Mossi, ni au Gourounsi.

En dehors des plantes dont nous venons de parler et dont on utilise les ressources en tout temps, il y en a d'autres aux produits desquels on ne recourt guère qu'en temps de famine. Ce sont le konkouira, le sabatouli, le silikoré, etc.

Le *konkouira* est un gros arbre dont le nom mandé est n'zéré. On prend ses feuilles lorsqu'elles commencent à pousser, quand elles sont encore tout à fait tendres. On les écrase dans un petit mortier avec un pilon, puis on les met dans l'eau pendant deux heures. Alors on en confectionne des boules, en ajoutant de la farine de mil. Après avoir rempli un canari d'eau et l'avoir posé

sur le feu, on place sur son ouverture des baguettes parallèles pour former gril et sur ce gril on dispose nos boules de konkouira. Pour qu'elles cuisent mieux, on place au-dessus d'elles une calebasse renversée qui bouche le tout et empêche la vapeur d'eau de sortir trop vite. Les boules cuisent donc ainsi à l'étuvée pendant une heure. Après on peut les consommer.

On ne consomme jamais ces feuilles toutes seules mais toujours avec de la farine de mil et elles servent en définitive à ménager celle-ci. Si on les mangeait tout seules elles donneraient la colique. En tout cas elles donnent le hoquet (gounsounkouira en Mossi). C'est donc plutôt un aliment pour les cas de famine.

Le *silikoré* ou *kalanianga* (les deux noms sont mossi) est un petit buisson épineux qui croit autour des arbres et a des fruits très petits. Pendant la saison des pluies, les femmes vont cueillir ces fruits. Elles les écrasent dans une petite auge, puis les font bouillir dans un canari. On jette cette première eau et on fait bouillir une seconde fois. On jette encore l'eau et on lave à l'eau froide. On ajoute du beurre de karité et du sel et l'on consomme. On mange surtout le silikoré pendant les périodes de famine, mais quelquefois même en dehors.

Chez les Gourounsi on ne mange pas les fruits du silikoré, chez les Bambaras non plus.

Le *gonsé* s'appelle en Bambara *sofarangoni*. C'est un arbuste de la hauteur d'un homme qui produit le kéména. Celui-ci est une gousse qui contient une sorte de petits haricots plats, tout minces, mûrs au moment de la récolte du mil. On les fait bouillir deux fois et on jette l'eau ces deux fois. Puis on lave à l'eau froide et l'on fait de nouveau bouillir, cette fois définitivement, en couvrant le canari avec un couvercle de paille. Quand c'est fait, l'on ajoute du beurre de karité et l'on mange. On vend le kéména tout préparé dans les marchés ; une poignée vaut 5 cauris (1/2 centime). On mélange aussi le kéména avec les haricots pour consommer ceux-ci ou pour les vendre.

Le *lamboye* se dit béré en Bambara, guidili en Peuhl. Il y en a dans presque tout le Soudan. On n'en mange les fruits ou plutôt les graines que pendant les famines. Elles sont rondes, exces-

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sivement petites et arrivent à maturité pendant la saison sèche et chaude. On les cueille, on les expose au soleil puis on les pile dans un petit mortier pour briser l'enveloppe. Cela fait on les met tremper dans l'eau pendant huit jours. On jette cette eau là et on lave deux fois les graines. Alors on les fait bouillir, on ajoute du sel et on consomme. On ne fait pas cela en dehors des temps de famine. Ces graines, comme on le voit, sont vénéneuses et empoisonneraient si on ne leur faisait subir toutes ces opérations.

Le *sabatouli* (bembé en Bambara et en Sôninké) est un arbre dont les fruits sont mûrs un mois après le commencement des pluies (donc en mai). Le fruit est excessivement petit, pas plus gros qu'un grain de maïs. On le mange tel quel, en passant, ou en faisant des travaux de défrichement dans la brousse, ou bien encore on le porte aux enfants du village. On n'en fait rien autre chose. Le sabatouli se trouve dans presque tout le Soudan.

Le *vâka* est un arbre qui s'appelle goumou ou goumbou en Bambara. On prend les fleurs de cet arbre qui sont rouges pour en faire de la sauce, quand on n'a plus de gombo. On l'appelle fofo en Nounouma et en Sissala, kafro en Kassouna. On n'en mange pas les fruits.

Nous avons oublié plus haut de parler du *jujubier*. On l'appelle mourouga en Mossi, n'tomono en Bambara, gouésso en Nounouma et en Kassouna. Les Mossi en mangent les fruits seulement quand ils sont en voyage dans la brousse. Les Gourounsi ne les mangent pas du tout.

Signalons encore le *Kankalra* (lenga en Mandé) dont les Mossi mangent les feuilles

Nous venons de voir les arbres et les arbustes dont les Mossi utilisent les produits. Il nous reste à dire un mot des champignons, des racines sauvages et des fourrages naturels.

Les *champignons* s'appellent goudou en Mossi, dakon en Nounouma et en Kassouna, kon en Sissala. Il y en a dans la brousse, pendant l'hivernage, dans le Mossi comme dans le Gourounsi et comme dans toute l'Afrique occidentale du reste, et les femmes vont les cueillir ; on en distingue deux espèces : les

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champignons de termitière (yaoré-goudou en Mossi, de yaoré termitière et goûdou champignon) et les champignons qui poussent dans les ordures. On appelle ces derniers niandara-goûdou c'est-à-dire champignons de la paille parce qu'ils poussent surtout sous les vieux toits de case en paille qu'on a jetés. Ceux-ci sont les meilleurs, mais les champignons de termitière sont les plus gros.

Les Mossi font cuire les champignons dans le beurre de karité et les y écrasent et les mangent tels quels, ou bien ils en font une sauce pour le sarabout qu'on corse en y ajoutant des haricots cuits de leur côté et également écrasés. On prend le sarabout (nom mossi du to) et on le mange en le trempant dans la sauce aux haricots et aux champignons.

Les femmes gourounsi font bouillir les champignons, puis les font sécher sur les toits des soukalas. Ensuite elles en prennent une ou deux poignées par jour, pour faire leurs sauces. Pour cela elles font bouillir de nouveau ces champignons sans les écraser et y ajoutent du soumbara et du sel. Chez les Gourounsi, les champignons ne servent pas à faire de plat à part.

Passons aux racines comestibles.

Le *vidiba* est une espèce d'oignon sauvage appelé fanto par les Bambaras, les Sarakolés et les Foulbé.

Les Bambaras se servent des feuilles du vidiba pour faire de la sauce, mais ne mangent pas l'oignon lui-même, parce qu'il est vénéneux. Les Mossi font de même, sauf en temps de famine. Alors on frotte l'oignon avec du sable, jusqu'à ce que la peau noire soit enlevée, puis on lave à grande eau. Ensuite on le met bouillir dans un canari plein d'eau jusqu'au bord et couvert et on continue la cuisson jusqu'à ce que toute l'eau se soit évaporée. Alors on prend des cendres, on les passe et on les ajoute dans la calebasse. On remue avec un morceau de bois, puis on retire le vidiba, on le coupe en morceaux et on le mange.

Le *séba* est une espèce de long navet noir vénéneux qu'on ne mange qu'en temps de famine et après l'avoir fait cuire longtemps.

Le séba et le vidiba ont fait mourir beaucoup de gens pendant la dernière famine du Mossi en leur donnant la dyssenterie.

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Comme fourrages naturels existant au Mossi il y a d'abord le *kénibédo* qui pousse en touffes de 30 centimètres de haut dans les bas-fonds humides. Sa feuille est peu développée. On le coupe à 20 centimètres du sol et on l'emmagasine pendant la saison sèche.

Puis il y a les fourrages appartenant à la famille des papilionacées : le densa, le youbenga. Le densa et le youbenga donnent une tige minuscule que l'on ne sépare pas de la plante qui atteint une hauteur de 0 m. 30 à 0 m. 40 dans les deux variétés. Elles sont consommées indifféremment par le cheval à l'état vert ou sec.

Disons un mot pour finir du *souga* espèce de chanvre sauvage que les Mossi dénomment ainsi. Les Nounoumas l'appellent boupo et les Kassounas bénédévio. On ne le trouve que dans certaines parties du Mossi, mais, en revanche, dans tout le pays gourounsi. Son écorce donne des fibres blanches très résistantes que les indigènes emploient pour la confection de cordes, de ficelles ou de fils pour engins de pêche. Ne se conservant pas pendant la saison sèche, son écorce est réduite en fibres pendant la saison des pluies. Ces fibres par contre peuvent supporter les plus grandes sécheresses sans s'altérer. On ne cultive pas le souga.

Nous en avons fini avec la cueillette en pays mossi. Elle a une certaine importance, comme nous venons de le voir, la même en gros que chez les autres populations soudanaises. Cette importance est infiniment moindre que celle de la culture évidemment, mais le cède de peu seulement à celle de l'élevage et doit être mise sur le même rang que celle de la chasse. Elle est très supérieure à celle de la pêche et à celle de l'arboriculture.

Pour cette dernière, nous n'avons pour ainsi dire pas à en parler. Elle existe à peine dans le Mossi. Elle se réduit à ce que nous avons dit plus haut des rôniers et à la plantation çà et là de quelques rares papayers.

En définitive vient d'abord la culture, puis très loin après l'élevage, puis la cueillette et la chasse sur le même rang, puis la pêche, puis l'arboriculture.

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L'Industrie est florissante chez les Mossi. Nous allons passer en revue, tour à tour, en détail, les différents métiers qu'ils exercent.

Il y a d'abord celui du forgeron (saba ou sahaba dans la langue du pays). Chez les Mossi on peut distinguer deux espèces de forgerons : d'abord les forgerons groupés formant des villages à part ou de gros quartiers spéciaux dans les villages, villages ou quartiers qu'on rencontre fréquemment dans le nord du Mossi, ensuite les forgerons isolés comme il y en a par exemple à Ouagadougou.

Les forgerons des villages ou des quartiers à part fondent le minerai de fer dans la brousse dans de grands fourneaux. Ils font cela une fois par an, au moment de la saison sèche, et l'opération dure un mois.

Tout le village des forgerons s'y met et construit un certain nombre de hauts-fourneaux, à raison d'un par deux forgerons.

Les fourneaux sont construits en terre rouge à côté des collines où se trouve le minerai de fer et on met cinq jours à en construire un. Une fois que c'est fait, chaque couple de forgerons prend possession de son fourneau et l'utilise, pas en même temps du reste mais chaque forgeron à son tour.

Nos forgerons entament le sol avec le soumbéré ou le taré. Ils cassent ainsi les morceaux de minerai et les entassent auprès du fourneau. Ils mettent au fond de celui-ci une couche de bois sec, puis une couche de minerai par-dessus, puis une autre couche de bois, puis une autre couche de minerai, etc., jusqu'en haut. Ensuite on met le feu.

On l'active avec le soufflet et on l'entretient pendant trois jours. Au bout de ce temps on ouvre les portes ménagées au bas du haut-fourneau. Le fer coule par ces portes spéciales distinctes des ouvertures toujours ouvertes par où s'en vont les scories. Le quatrième jour le fer est refroidi et on le retire des petites fosses où il a coulé. On le casse à coups de masses de fer et on le remet de nouveau à la fonte.

Le travail total dure un mois. Tous les soirs nos forgerons rentrent au village. Quelques-uns font dix charges de fer

(dans les 300 kilos), d'autres deux ou trois seulement (60 ou 90 kilos).

Les forgerons isolés, eux, ne fondent pas le fer. Ils l'achètent aux forgerons du Yatenga (cercle de Ouahigouya) qui sont de grands fondeurs de fer et qui possèdent de petites collines ferrugineuses renommées, autour de Ouahigouya.

Les forgerons mossi font des ouakas, des koutiagas, des haches, des couteaux, des poignards, des sabres, des fers de lance, des pointes de flèche, des rasoirs, des bracelets en fer pour femmes, pour hommes, pour nobles, des cuillers, des mors, des étriers, des éperons, etc. Ils font aussi des aiguilles assez grosses valant dix cauris l'une, c'est-à-dire cinq pour un sou.

Pendant l'hivernage ils ne font guère que des ouakas. Pendant la saison sèche ils font tout le reste.

Ils font aussi des zandés ou massues à tête en fer. Disons ici un mot des massues, qui sont comme l'arme nationale mossi. Un Mossi se croirait déshonoré si, quelque part qu'il aille, il ne portait pas gravement une massue sur son épaule droite. Même les petits enfants en ont, proportionnées à leur taille, et ce ne sont pas eux qui les portent le moins dignement.

Les massues mossi sont de trois sortes :

1° Les unes complètement en bois, manche et masse, et taillées d'un seul bloc. Elles s'appellent dori.

2° Les secondes dont le manche est en bois, mais dont la tête est formée par une grosse pierre ronde encastrée à l'extrémité de celui-ci. La massue s'appelle alors gougou.

3° Enfin les massues au manche en bois et au marteau en fer inséré perpendiculairement à l'extrémité du manche. C'est le zandé ou zann'dé. Quelquefois le manche est recouvert de peau de bête, ce qui le rend plus riche et plus beau.

Les forgerons ne fabriquent dans le zandé que la partie en fer. Quant aux autres massues elles sont fabriquées par les possesseurs eux-mêmes.

Un forgeron ne fabrique un zandé que sur commande. Tandis qu'il fait d'avance les ouakas et les koutiagas et les fait por-

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ter en masse au marché, il ne fabrique les zandés que quand on vient lui en demander un.

Ainsi le forgeron mossi travaille tantôt à façon et tantôt en vue du stock. Ce stock, il le fait écouler au marché par ses enfants, en même temps que sa femme va y vendre la poterie qu'elle fabrique.

Les instruments dont se sert le forgeron mossi sont :

1° Une petite enclume appelée kissiguiré, avec une partie pointue en fer par-dessous, par laquelle on la tient en main ou qui sert à l'enfoncer dans le sol.

2° Une masse en fer appelée zinré qui sert de marteau pour frapper sur l'enclume dont nous venons de parler : tout cela est fort petit. On tient l'enclume d'une main et la masse de l'autre.

3° Des tenailles (iéougo) pour saisir le fer quand il est dans le feu et pour le placer sur l'enclume.

4° Un marteau appelé kouadara fait d'un gros manche en bois, court et massif, dans lequel est enfoncé une masse de fer longue et peu large servant de marteau.

5° Une lime (sodara ou chandara) un peu courbe, emmanchée dans un manche en bois.

6° Une sorte de petit coin pour couper le fer (kitéga). On met ce coin sur le morceau de fer à couper et on frappe avec la masse.

7° Un instrument de petite dimension appelé karé qui est composé d'une lame courbe de trois centimètres de long sur deux de large emmanchée dans un court morceau de bois. Le karé sert à aiguiser les couteaux ;

8° Les soufflets en peau de chèvre (zougoudou).

Tels sont les instruments du forgeron mossi, qu'il fabrique lui-même du reste.

La masse vaut . . .	5.000	cauris	(5 fr. »)
L'enclume	10.000	—	(10 fr. »)
Le marteau	1.000	—	(1 fr. »)
Les cisailles	700	—	(0 fr. 70)
La lime	500	—	(0 fr. 50)

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Le coin en fer. . . .	500 cauris	(0 fr. 50)
L'aiguisaille	200 —	(0 fr. 20)

Les femmes des forgerons mossi fabriquent la poterie. Elles ne sont pas les seules à le faire, comme nous le verrons plus loin, mais elles le font, au moins dans les villages et quartiers spéciaux de forgerons.

Elles la fabriquent avec le bérédo, cette terre noire spéciale, espèce d'argile, dont nous avons déjà parlé. Elles pilent, écrasent de vieux canaris et ajoutent cette poudre au bérédo. Ainsi la poterie tient mieux que si on employait le bérédo frais tout seul. Une fois la poterie faite, elles la mettent sécher au soleil pendant six ou sept jours. Pendant le temps que dure ce séchage elles vont dans la brousse chercher du bois, puis dans un four rond d'un mètre et demi de haut environ, très large, de deux mètres de diamètre, ouvert en haut, elles mettent une couche de bois, de la paille, puis la poterie dessus, puis encore de la paille et du bois. Elles allument et font cuire pendant douze heures.

Pour vernir leur poterie elles prennent l'écorce du nobora ou n'kouna. Elles la mettent tremper dans d'immenses canaris pendant toute une journée. L'eau se colore en rouge. La poterie cuite et refroidie est placée dans ces canaris pendant un certain temps, puis on la fait sécher au grand air. Cela fait on peut la porter au marché pour la vente.

Les femmes des forgerons font leur poterie pendant la saison sèche. Pendant l'hivernage elles travaillent aux champs de leurs maris.

Les forgerons mossi pendant l'hivernage font à la fois de la culture et leur métier de forgeron, mais ce qu'ils font le plus c'est la culture. Pendant la saison sèche, au contraire, ils ne font que leur métier de forgeron.

Comme culture ils font avant tout du petit mil, puis du gros mil blanc et du gros mil rouge, du maïs, des arachides, des pois souterrains, des sésames et des haricots. Ils font du coton et du tabac, mais pas d'indigo. Leurs femmes sèment du gombo, etc.

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Ils ont des bestiaux qu'ils font garder par leurs enfants et, en général, ils en ont un peu plus que les autres Mossi, sauf les chèvres et les ânes. Cela du reste ne doit pas nous étonner car le forgeron nègre d'Afrique occidentale montre souvent des aptitudes à l'élevage des animaux et surtout au maquignonnage du cheval. En tout cas, au Mossi, c'est très peu accentué.

Les forgerons ne font pas de chasse ni de pêche. Ils font de la cueillette comme les autres Mossi. Comme industrie ils n'en ont pas d'autre que celle du fer et de la poterie. Ils ne travaillent ni le cuivre, ni l'argent, ni l'or. Ils ne font pas non plus les tisserands. Le coton qu'ils cultivent, ils le font cueillir et filer par leurs femmes, puis ils le donnent à tisser aux tisserands.

Comme commerce, ils en font quelque peu, plutôt un peu plus que la masse mossi. Quand un forgeron a fondu beaucoup de fer, il achète quelquefois des bestiaux, va les conduire à Ouanké, y achète des kolas, les emmène à Saraféré et en rapporte du sel. Mais ce n'est pas très fréquent.

En définitive, le métier de forgeron a plus d'importance que tout le reste, quoique le forgeron s'aide de pas mal de travaux accessoires.

Les forgerons mossi ne forment pas caste, en ce sens que tout le monde peut se marier avec eux.

Passons maintenant au bijoutier ou travailleur en cuivre (niaka en Mossi).

Les Mossi connaissent le cuivre depuis très longtemps, quoique l'Afrique occidentale n'en produise pas. Les Yarsé, de temps immémorial, ont été en chercher à Ouanké, Kintampo, même jusqu'à Koumassie. Il vient de la côte où il est apporté par les blancs sous forme de tringles de laiton de 30 ou 40 centimètres de long (comme des tringles de rideaux). Actuellement ce sont les Anglais qui approvisionnent la Gold-Coast de cuivre, après sans doute les Portugais et les Hollandais.

Le niaka gagne plus d'argent que le forgeron. Il achète le cuivre en tringles aux dioulas et le transforme en divers objets

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tels que les jambières de cuivre, ornées d'un crocodile, pour les femmes, tels que les gros bracelets de cuivre que les femmes et les soronés (pages) portent aux poignets et aux chevilles. Ces bracelets valent, suivant leur grosseur, de 2.500 à 20.000 cauris. Il fait aussi des épingles en cuivre pour la chevelure des femmes et des bagues de petite valeur de 100 à 200 cauris.

Ces bijoutiers faisaient aussi jadis des objets en cuivre représentant des scènes, des paysages, des cases, avant l'arrivée des Français. Les chefs les achetaient, mais ces objets, du moins les anciens, sont devenus très difficiles à se procurer. Le docteur allemand Frobenius, en passant par le Mossi, à la fin de 1908, en a, paraît-il, acquis de très beaux d'ancienne fabrication mossi, mais à prix d'or. Actuellement on peut se faire une idée de cette ancienne industrie par les petits objets que font quelques Mossi européanisés de Ouagadougou et qu'ils vendent sur place à l'usage des blancs de l'endroit, on pourrait donc presque dire qu'ils fabriquent pour l'exportation. Ces objets, faits à cire perdue, sont assez curieux et très artistiques pour des noirs.

Les instruments du niaka sont à peu près ceux du forgeron :

1° La petite enclume portative ou kissiguiré.

2° Le marteau ou kouadara.

3° Des ciseaux (niougou) pour saisir les morceaux de cuivre sur le feu.

4° La lime en fer ou sodara.

5° L'instrument pour aiguiser ou karé.

6° Le coin en fer pour couper le cuivre (kétouga).

7° Des ciseaux pour couper le cuivre (mankasaga).

8° Quelques soufflets en peau de chèvre, très primitifs.

Comme type de bijoutier, voici Sulémani Déréma, demeurant à Ouagadougou. Il habite avec son grand frère qui commande la soukala et a une femme et un enfant. Lui-même a deux femmes et deux enfants. Un frère cadet ayant une femme et un enfant habite avec eux. Enfin, il y a d'autres frères dans la soukala, mais non mariés (remarquons en passant que cette soukala est exceptionnelle, la règle générale étant chez les

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Mossi que chaque ménage habite à part ; mais, ici, si on habite encore ensemble, chaque ménage travaille à part).

Sulémani Déréma achète son cuivre sur le marché ou bien il travaille à façon le cuivre que le client lui fournit. Il fait des bracelets, des bagues, des étriers en cuivre, etc.

Il fait aussi de la culture pendant l'hivernage, à part comme les autres ménages de la soukala. Sulémani a deux champs dans la brousse, un de petit mil, un autre de gros mil blanc et de plus il fait du maïs autour de la soukala, sur la partie du terrain qui lui est allouée par le chef de soukala.

Il n'a ni gros, ni petit bétail, pas même de poulets. Il ne fait ni chasse, ni pêche.

Son métier de niaka lui rapporte plus que ses champs.

Le forgeron et le niaka représentent le travail du métal, passons maintenant à celui de la pierre.

Les fabricants de pierres à écraser s'appellent nanloras en Mossi, de nan, qui veut dire pierre à écraser, et de lora, qui brise.

Nos carriers cherchent dans la brousse de grandes tables de pierre reposant à la surface du sol et autant que possible surélevées par quelque chose au-dessus de celui-ci. Sur ces grandes roches plates, ils tracent des lignes avec du karité et du soumbara, d'après la grandeur des pierres à écraser qu'ils veulent en extraire, puis ils amassent du bois sous la roche et y mettent le feu. Ils font brûler pendant un jour, puis, à l'aide d'une grosse pierre tranchante, ils frappent à l'endroit où il sont marqué les traits. La pierre se brise à ces endroits-là et ils en enlèvent les morceaux qu'ils vont vendre sur les marchés mossi.

Ce métier ingrat rapporte assez peu et ceux qui l'exercent ne le font que pendant la saison sèche. Pendant l'hivernage, ils font de la culture qui leur rapporte beaucoup plus que leur métier de carrier.

Après le travail de la pierre, le travail de la terre. Il est représenté chez les Mossi par le potier, le fabricant de pipes et le maçon. Commençons par le premier.

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La poterie, chez les Mossi, est restée, çà et là, une fabrication familiale exercée par toutes les femmes, ce qui est comme le premier degré de cette fabrication. Néanmoins, nous avons vu aussi plus haut que les femmes des forgerons groupés en quartiers ou en villages fabriquaient en abondance la poterie. C'est le second degré de la fabrication, celui de la spécialisation commençante. Enfin, on trouve chez les Mossi des potiers de métier, ce qui est le troisième degré de la fabrication et celui de la spécialisation déjà plus accentuée. Il resterait un quatrième degré à atteindre : ce serait celui où les potiers ne feraient que ce métier et y seraient absolument spécialisés. Mais ce degré n'est pas atteint au Mossi. Les potiers n'y sont que des potiers à demi et font autant de culture que de fabrication. Néanmoins, nous avons là un premier effort vers la spécialisation du travail de l'argile qui n'existe pas, loin de là, chez toutes les populations noires.

Voici, par exemple, un potier de Dassasogo, petit village situé à 8 kilomètres de Ouagadougou.

Pendant la saison des pluies, il ne fait que de la culture. Pendant la saison sèche seulement, il exerce son métier de potier. Ce sont ses champs qui lui rapportent le plus.

Il a un champ de petit mil dans la brousse et il fait du maïs autour de sa soukala qui se compose de deux cases seulement. Il a une femme et un jeune enfant. Ses instruments de travail sont :

1° Une sorte de cuvette grossière, très épaisse, à gros bords et très peu profonde, en terre.

Pour la confectionner, le potier prend une terre appelée yaoré (c'est celle des grosses termitières brunes ou grisâtres). Il la mélange avec de la paille et fabrique cette espèce de cuvette, cette espèce de tour primitif, appelé en Mossi tébélé.

2° Une sorte de pilon court, en terre, à tenir à pleine main qu'on appelle toudoubila.

Pour faire ses canaris, notre potier prend du yarado. Pour avoir cette espèce d'argile, il faut creuser à certains endroits qui sont transmis par tradition de père en fils. Il l'écrase avec

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son pilon dans sa cuvette, puis il la mouille et construit, avec celle-ci, son canari en l'élevant comme un mur de maison et en le faisant tourner peu à peu devant lui. Il ne sait du reste faire que de petits canaris.

Les potiers qui en font de grands creusent une espèce de grande cuvette dans le sol. Ils se servent du même petit pilon court et massif pour masser la terre du canari qu'ils construisent, mais ils se servent d'une autre variété de yarado, de celle qui est rouge ou rougeâtre.

Notre potier vend ses petits canaris de 80 à 120 cauris chaque. Il les fait en stock. On vient les acheter chez lui ou bien il les envoie porter au marché par sa femme.

Les potiers habiles en font dans les quatre par jour. Les débutants n'en font que deux ou trois.

Les gros canaris valent 300 cauris l'un.

Les potiers qui font de petits canaris ne font souvent que ceux-là. De même ceux qui font de gros canaris n'en font, la plupart du temps, pas d'autres. Cependant on trouve des potiers qui font à la fois les uns et les autres, par exemple à Kombisiguiri.

Pour cuire la poterie, les potiers mossi ont de grands fours ronds que j'ai déjà décrits, ouverts complètement par le haut, sortes de murs circulaires de 1 m. 50 de hauteur, percés de quatre trous dans le bas. Ils y entassent des tiges de mil, puis mettent quatre canaris dessus. Sur chacun de ces canaris ils en posent d'autres jusqu'à ce que la pile atteigne le niveau du haut du mur, puis ils mettent le feu aux tiges de mil et laissent refroidir jusqu'au lendemain matin.

Chaque potier n'a pas son four à lui. Il n'y en a qu'un par quartier. — Les potiers de chaque quartier se réunissent donc pour construire un four commun derrière les soukalas. S'ils sont cinq potiers le four est construit en un jour. Tous ceux qui y ont coopéré ont le droit de s'en servir.

A Kombisiguiri, quelques potiers n'ont pas de fours. Ils étalent simplement des tiges de mil sur le sol et placent dessus leurs canaris. Ils mettent le feu et les vases cuisent ainsi.

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C'est le potier lui-même qui fabrique ses instruments, sa grossière cuvette et son pilon.

Notons que les baourés, grands vases immenses à mettre le mil décortiqué, qui ont dans les 2 m. 50 de haut et une largeur en proportion et qui ressemblent à d'énormes bouteilles d'encre en grès, vases que j'ai vus dans le nord du Mossi, ne sont pas faits par les potiers. Ils sont construits dans chaque soukala par les habitants de celle-ci.

Après les potiers, les fabricants de pipes. Ce sont les vieilles femmes qui fabriquent les pipes au Mossi. Elles vont chercher l'argile qui convient, façonnent le fourneau de la pipe et le font cuire. Elles le vendent cinq cauris.

N'oublions pas les maçons : maçon se dit tammétéba en Mossi. Comme les maçons gourounsi, les maçons mossi sont surtout des cultivateurs et leurs champs leur rapportent beaucoup plus que leur métier. De même, comme dans le Gourounsi, on ne paie pas les maçons : on les nourrit seulement pendant toute la durée de leur labeur.

Après le travail de la terre et de l'argile, passons au travail du bois. Il est représenté au Mossi par les koukoupersébas et par les sétas.

Le métier de travailleur sur bois chez certaines populations de l'Afrique occidentale est exercé par les forgerons (par exemple chez les Malinkés, Dialonkés, etc.). Chez les Mossi, comme chez les Gourounsi, il est au contraire nettement séparé de celui du forgeron : ce sont les koukoupersébas qui l'exercent, analogues aux voguésaras gourounsi et aux dabakalas-lésembas mandés. Ils fabriquent des manches de dabas, des manches de haches, de petites chaises fort joliment travaillées au fer chaud et représentant un dos de cheval avec deux têtes grossières, deux indications de tête, de chaque côté.

Les koukoupersébas sont du reste avant tout des cultivateurs. Ils cultivent pendant la saison des pluies. Pendant la saison sèche ils fabriquent les différents objets dont nous venons de parler.

A côté de ceux-ci, il y a dans le Mossi des Laobés, c'est-à-dire

de ces gens qui sont attachés aux Foulbé en qualité de fabricants de calebasses en bois et d'autres objets de même nature. Les Mossi les nomment sétas. Comme il y a de nombreux Foulbé dans le Mossi il y a aussi des Laobés et quelques-uns ont quitté leurs maîtres pour se fixer à part, désormais indépendants.

En voici un qui s'appelle Louri. Pendant l'hivernage il fait de la culture, mais très peu, comme tous les autres Laobés et Foulbé du reste, et il fabrique aussi ses calebasses en bois. Pendant la saison sèche il ne fait que ses calebasses. A cause de ses plus que médiocres aptitudes culturales, son métier lui rapporte plus que ses champs.

Ses instruments sont :

1° D'abord une grande hache appelée diendé qui lui sert à couper le gros bois.

2° Le saotaré, espèce de pioche bien aiguisée, à manche très court, qui sert à façonner la calebasse à l'extérieur.

3° Le tépotondé, espèce de pioche à manche très court, à fer très tranchant, qui sert à creuser la calebasse.

4° Le menkéré, qui sert encore à creuser l'intérieur de la calebasse.

5° Le kéfirga, instrument à long manche, à fer recourbé et tranchant, qui a le même usage que les deux outils précédents.

C'est le forgeron qui fabrique les parties en fer de ces instruments.

Leur valeur est la suivante :

la hache	vaut	2.000	cauris
le saotaré	—	500	—
le tépotondé	—	500	—
le menkéré	—	1.500	—
le kéfirga	—	200	—

Pour faire ses calebasses notre Laobé prend le bois des arbres suivants : le hèdè, le bouagaï, le saboutoungaï et le bembé.

Ce Laobé vient de Badongo (village situé à 31 kilomètres de

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Ouagadougou). Il a une femme et deux enfants. C'est un ancien esclave, captif de Laobé, dont le maître s'était établi à Badongo. Celui-ci s'en est allé et maintenant il est libre. Autrefois il travaillait pour son maître, maintenant il travaille pour lui. Il fait des calebasses d'avance et les fait vendre au marché par sa femme. Il vend les petites 100 cauris, les moyennes 300, les grosses 500 (0 fr. 10, 0 fr. 30, 0 fr. 50).

Comme lougans, il cultive un champ de petit mil, un peu de maïs autour de sa case, un peu d'arachides et de pois souterrains.

Sa soukala se compose d'une seule et unique case où il vit avec sa femme et ses deux enfants.

Voici un autre type de Laobé ou séta, demeurant cette fois à Kombisiguiri. Il a lâché les Foulbé pour se fixer parmi les Mossi.

Ses instruments pour travailler le bois sont les mêmes que ceux que nous avons vu plus haut : le diendé, le tépotondé, le menkéré, le saotaré et le kéfirga.

Il coupe tout un arbre pour y faire ses calebasses : soit le hèdè ou n'kouna qui fournit le bois le meilleur, soit le bembé ou sibi ou n'pékou, soit le saboutoungaï ou sanktougaï ou satantouloungaï, soit enfin le bouagaï qui est le moins bon. Les calebasses faites en bois de hèdè se vendent plus cher que les autres.

Il fait deux espèces de calebasses, des petites valant 50 cauris et des grandes dont quelques-unes se vendent jusqu'à 1.000 cauris. Il fait ces calebasses sans attendre la commande et les fait porter par ses femmes au marché.

Notre Laobé ne fait pas du tout de culture. D'un bout à l'autre de l'année il fait ses calebasses en bois et cela lui rapporte assez pour vivre.

Il fait en plus des mortiers et des pilons pour le pilage des grains. Un petit mortier et son pilon valent 1.000 cauris, un grand mortier et son pilon 2.000. Il fait aussi de grandes cuillers en bois qu'il vend 50 cauris et des espèces de sabots, des sandales en bois, dont on se sert pendant la saison des pluies et qu'il vend 100 cauris.

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Il a dans sa soukala huit personnes y compris lui-même à savoir ses deux femmes et ses cinq enfants.

Ajoutons que quelques Mossi, mais rares, se sont mis à fabriquer des calebasses en bois, comme les Laobés, mais ces Mossi, au contraire de ces derniers, font plus de culture qu'ils ne travaillent à leur métier. A Polsogo, village situé à douze kilomètres de Ouagadougou, il y en a quelques-uns. Il ne faut pas les confondre avec les koukoupersébas dont nous avons parlé plus haut.

Il y aussi des fabricants d'arc au Mossi. On les appelle tempésédas. Ce sont avant tout des cultivateurs et leurs champs leur rapportent beaucoup plus que leur métier. Ils n'exercent celui-ci que pour avoir quelques cauris pour acheter des condiments : sel, etc. Les petits arcs valent 20 cauris, les moyens 70 et les grands 100.

Nous venons de voir le travail du bois. Passons à la vannerie. Elle donne lieu ici à deux métiers principaux, celui du vannier proprement dit et celui du fabricant de chapeaux. Examinons-les tour-à-tour.

Voici Niandé Zango, fabricant de corbeilles, chef de soukala. Il a deux femmes et trois enfants. Sa soukala compte cinq cases.

Il fait de la culture pendant l'hivernage et exerce son métier pendant la saison sèche. C'est sa culture qui lui rapporte le plus.

Il fabrique ses corbeilles chez lui sans attendre la commande et envoie ses femmes les vendre au marché.

Il va chercher la paille doudouma dans la brousse et cultive du mono dans son champ de maïs.

Le doudouma est une herbe haute que l'on fait sécher et qui donne une paille excellente pour la fabrication des corbeilles et des plats.

Le doudoumidou est de la paille de doudouma teinte en rouge avec du mono.

Le mono (faraoro en Bambara) est une plante que les Mossi font pousser dans leurs champs de maïs, autour de leurs soukalas. Elle ressemble beaucoup au gros mil rouge, mais ce n'en

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est pas. C'est probablement pourtant une variété de gros mil. On sème le mono en même temps que le maïs aux premières pluies. On fait des trous avec le koutiaga, on y met des graines de mono et on rebouche. Quand le mono est sorti de terre on arrache les mauvaises herbes et on fait la récolte deux mois et demi environ après les semailles. On coupe les tiges au pied, on les fait sécher au soleil, puis on arrache les gaînes et les chaumes. Ce sont celles-ci qui servent à teindre la paille en rouge.

On écrase gaînes et chaumes en les frottant avec les mains dans un canari plein d'eau. On met ensuite tremper dans ce canari la paille de doudouma. On place le canari sur le feu et on l'y maintient pendant six heures. Cela fait on retire la paille qui se trouve alors teinte en rouge.

Le doudousabalé est de la paille de doudouma teinte en noir en la plongeant dans le bérédo. On prend la paille, on l'apporte au marigot et on l'enterre dans le bérédo. On la laisse ainsi pendant tont un jour et cela lui donne une couleur grise brillante.

Le gansacé est une graminée poussant naturellement au bord des marigots. Les indigènes ne la cultivent pas. Le gansacé séché donne une paille qui entre dans la fabrication des plats en paille. Les Foulbé établis dans la région s'en servent aussi pour la fabrication de leurs chapeaux.

Le boulouvaka est un arbuste qui pousse le long des marigots. On prend la tige du boulouvaka, on la sectionne en deux ou en quatre et on obtient ainsi de petites baguettes flexibles qu'on teint en noir en les trempant dans le bérédo. Ainsi teintes, elles sont employées dans la fabrication des corbeilles mossi.

Le koué est une grande graminée donnant de la paille qui entre dans la fabrication de certaines corbeilles. Le koué pousse spontanément dans toute la brousse, dans les endroits secs comme dans les endroits arrosés.

Le dana est un arbuste dont le bois entre dans la fabrication des corbeilles mossi faites en paille de koué. Le dana pousse dans la brousse n'importe où.

Le sepso ou semso ou semsoro ou semsogo est le nom mossi désignant les filaments d'écorce enlevés à la gousse du néré.

Ils entrent dans la fabrication des plats en paille. Le sepso peut être teint en rouge avec du mono et en noir avec du bérédo.

Tous ces éléments sont utilisés par les vanniers pour la fabrication de leurs corbeilles et de leurs plats en paille.

Voici maintenant quelques échantillons des travaux des vanniers mossi :

1° De grandes corbeilles jaunes faites en paille de koué. Les rebords sont en tige de dana. Ces corbeilles sont vendues sur les marchés du pays 250 cauris pièce. Ce sont des corbeilles vulgaires qui servent à transporter le mil ou à l'apporter aux chevaux. Elles sont quadrangulaires, en forme de pyramide renversée et sectionnée à la base.

2° De grandes corbeilles de luxe, de même forme que les précédentes, mais s'en distinguant en ce que, au lieu d'être tout uniment jaunes, jaune paille, elles sont de plusieurs couleurs. Elles sont faites en paille koué (jaune), doudoumidou (rouge) et en boulouvaka (noir). Elles valent en moyenne 1.500 cauris.

3° Des plats en paille, des espèces d'assiettes en paille, faites avec du doudouma (jaune) et du doudoumidou (rouge). Elles sont vendues les petites 250 cauris, les grandes 300.

4° Des assiettes en paille commune faites avec du doudouma seulement (paille non teinte). Elles valent 150 cauris.

5° Des assiettes en paille faites avec du doudouma (jaune), du doudoumidou (rouge) et du doudousabalé (gris brillant). Elles valent 300 cauris.

6° Des assiettes en paille gansacé (jaune) et doudoumidou (rouge) valant 250 cauris.

7° Des assiettes en paille gansacé et sepso (le sepso est coloré en rouge au mono). Les plus grandes valent 350, les plus petites 250 cauris.

A Ouagadougou même il n'y a pas de vanniers, mais dans les villages proches il y a beaucoup de gens qui exercent ce métier.

Le vannier a comme seul instrument le lépéré-pime, grosse aiguille en fer à tête roulée en crosse et ornée de petites raies,

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qui sert à piquer la paille destinée aux corbeilles et aux plats. Le lépéré-pime est fait par le forgeron et vaut 50 cauris.

On fait aussi des bracelets, des liens et des couvercles en gansacé.

Avec le vannier proprement dit il faut mettre le fabricant de chapeaux de paille. Les deux métiers vont ensemble.

En voici un, Tenda Ouidiraogo, Mossi. Il fait de la culture pendant la saison des pluies et ses chapeaux en paille pendant la saison sèche.

On fait les chapeaux avec le kansé, une graminée qui pousse auprès des marigots et des mares.

On transforme cette herbe en ficelle. On la met d'abord dans l'eau pour l'assouplir, puis on la divise en deux brins que l'on trempe également dans l'eau. Puis on les tourne sur la cuisse en les frottant avec la main. Les deux brins s'enroulent et donnent une ficelle assez solide, brisable cependant à la main.

On commence par fabriquer assez de cette ficelle pour la confection d'un chapeau.

Les faiseurs de chapeaux ont une espèce de forme appelée dogrome, composée d'un chatton faisant dépiau'et d'une tige verticale. Ils s'en aident pour construire leur chapeau qui est le chapeau de paille pointu ordinaire de toute l'Afrique occidentale, celui qu'on retrouve au Soudan aussi bien qu'en Guinée, descendant très bas sur la nuque et les yeux et qui donne un air de brigands calabrais à ceux qui le portent. Pourtant il faut dire que dans le Mossi existe un autre chapeau de paille renflé et arrondi et couvert par endroits de plaques de cuir. Celui-ci se rapproche plus de nos chapeaux européens et évoque un peu l'idée d'un chapeau « melon » très gros et très renflé et à larges bords, qui serait en paille.

Pour la confection du premier notre fabricant commence donc par réunir cent ficelles, puis il attache le bout de ces ficelles, bout laissé à l'état de paille, et il en forme la pointe de son chapeau. Puis il entremêle ces ficelles, à la main, de brins de paille de kansé non transformés. Les ficelles pendent verticalement, les brins de paille y sont entremêlés horizontalement et cela forme la trame du chapeau.

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Les brins de kansé ont été souvent préalablement teints en noir, en les mettant tremper dans la boue du marigot. On obtient ainsi des lignes noires, des dessins en noir, à certains endroits du chapeau.

Il faut six jours pour confectionner un chapeau. Il est vendu 1.000 cauris, naturellement sans les ornements, brides et pendeloques en cuir qu'aura à y rajouter le cordonnier.

Les fabricants font ces chapeaux d'avance et ils les envoient vendre au marché par leurs femmes.

Le bérenga (qu'on appelle aussi taïmora en Mossi) ou chanvre, entre aussi dans la fabrication des chapeaux de paille. Nous avons vu plus haut, à la culture, comment le berenga est cultivé : on le sème soit avec le maïs, soit avec le gros mil rouge, c'est-à-dire autour de la sonkala, ou bien même dans les champs de brousse avec le petit mil ou le gros mil blanc. Quand on le sème dans le maïs, on le sème trois jours après ce dernier. Quand on le sème avec le gros mil rouge, c'est quatre jours après. Quand on le sème avec le gros mil blanc, c'est dix jours après et, avec le petit mil, c'est dix ou douze jours après.

Le bérenga se récolte dix ou vingt jours après le maïs quand il est dans un champ de maïs. Quand il a été semé avec le mil, on le récolte sept jours après celui-ci. On coupe les tiges de bérenga au pied, on enlève l'écorce filamenteuse et on la fait sécher. Le bérenga est de couleur verte quand il est frais et d'un brun-rouge quand il est sec. On en fait généralement des ficelles et des cordes. On l'utilise aussi dans la toiture en paille des cases. Quand on veut le faire entrer dans la confection d'un chapeau, on le teint en noir en le plongeant dans le bérédo et on s'en sert pour faire les lignes noires des chapeaux concurremment avec le kansé.

Voici quelques échantillons de l'industrie des faiseurs de chapeaux mossi :

1° Les chapeaux en paille pointus faits en kansé (jaune) et en bérenga (noir). Ils ont des ornements et des brides en cuir ajoutées par le cordonnier. Ils valent 2.500 cauris.

2° Des chapeaux semblables mais plus petits valant de 1.000 à 1.500 cauris.

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3° Les chapeaux en paille ronds, à larges bords, dont j'ai parlé plus haut. Ceux-ci valent 1.700 cauris.

Tout ce qui est cuir sur ces chapeaux est ajouté par le cordonnier.

Nous avons dit que nos fabricants de chapeaux n'étaient pas exclusivement fabricants et faisaient aussi de la culture. Il faut ajouter que celle-ci leur rapporte plus que leur métier. Celui que j'ai cité fait un champ de petit mil et un de gros mil rouge dans la brousse. Il fait aussi du maïs, des arachides, des pois souterrains autour de sa soukala. Il ne possède ni gros ni petit bétail, mais seulement des poules.

Il a dans sa soukala deux femmes, quatre enfants, deux frères mariés ayant chacun une femme mais sans enfants et deux frères non mariés, plus son père. Tous fabriquent des chapeaux.

Il demeure à Saponé où il y a beaucoup de fabricants de chapeaux.

Après le travail de la paille celui du cuir.

Les cordonniers mossi ne forment pas caste. Tous ceux qui veulent s'allier avec eux peuvent le faire et tous ceux qui veulent exercer ce métier peuvent se mettre cordonniers.

Voici Kinoga Kologo, Mossi, chef de soukala. Il a chez lui deux femmes, deux enfants et un frère non marié. Sa soukala se compose de trois cases.

Ses instruments sont :

1° Le *pongo*, sorte de petit couteau large et évasé, emmanché dans un manche très court. Il sert à couper les peaux.

2° Le *gansiouba*, couteau en bois pour gratter et frotter les peaux, les nettoyer, les repasser.

3° Le *désara*, petit instrument à manche en bois, à tige recourbée en fer. Il sert, rougi au feu, à tracer des dessins sur les peaux.

4° Le *pime*, petit poinçon qui sert à coudre les peaux.

5° Le grand *tirisiga*. C'est un cachet en fer pour marquer les peaux, y imprimer un petit cercle.

6° Le petit *tirisiga*. C'est un cachet encore moins large,

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une tige de fer dont le bout forme un cachet extrêmement petit.

Le cordonnier mossi est en même temps tanneur, comme chez presque tous les noirs. Il achète au marché des peaux de moutons et de chèvres (les petites 200 cauris, les grandes 400). Il les met tremper dans un grand canari avec des graines de yogré, cela pendant douze heures. Ensuite il enlève les poils à la main, lave bien la peau, puis la remet dans un canari avec des graines de pélanaga (arbre de la brousse). Il lave et frotte la peau avec ces graines. Ensuite il la met sécher au soleil en l'enduisant avec du beurre, du vrai beurre, pas du beurre de karité. On peut alors employer la peau pour la confection de différents objets.

Kinoga achète aussi des peaux de bœufs sur le marché pour faire des sandales. Une peau de bœuf vaut 3.000 cauris. Il la met dans un grand canari où il la laisse tremper pendant trois jours, puis il la sort, enlève les poils avec un couteau, frappe sur la peau avec un petit bâton pour l'assouplir. On coupe alors dans la peau ce qu'il faut pour faire des sandales et on l'utilise ainsi au fur et à mesure des besoins.

Ce sont les forgerons qui fabriquent les instruments des cordonniers. Tous valent 100 cauris, sauf le poinçon qui en vaut 20 et le couteau en bois que le cordonnier fait lui-même et qui en vaut 50. Tout l'outillage réuni du cordonnier vaut donc en bloc 470 cauris, c'est-à-dire à peine 50 centimes.

Notre cordonnier fabrique :

1° D'abord et surtout des sandales. Les plus chères valent 2.500 cauris la paire et les moins chères 1.500 cauris.

2° Des grigris en cuir, bracelets, sachets, etc. Les sachets valent 100 cauris, les bracelets 50. Il n'en fait du reste que sur commande. Il faut dire que d'autres cordonniers les font d'avance en stock et les font porter au marché.

Naturellement ce que le cordonnier fabrique est le grigri matériel, le grigri enveloppe. Ce n'est pas lui qui donne sa puissance, son âme, au grigri.

3° Kinoga ne fait pas lui-même de sacoches, de sacs en peau de bouc, mais les autres cordonniers en font.

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Il y a les peaux de boucs pour mettre du mil. Les grandes valent 1 franc et les petites 0 fr. 50 — ensuite les peaux de bouc pour mettre de l'eau. Elles valent de 0 fr. 30 à 1 franc — enfin il y a les petites peaux de boucs qui servent de sac à main, de porte-monnaie et qui valent 0 fr. 20.

4° Les cordonniers font encore des étuis en cuir pour mettre les briquets (200 cauris), pour mettre des aiguilles (50 cauris). Briquets et aiguilles sont fabriqués par le forgeron. Un briquet vaut 200 cauris.

5° Ils font des gaînes pour les couteaux et des fourreaux pour les sabres. Les gaînes valent 200 cauris, les fourreaux 3.000.

6° Des brides et des selles. Les selles valent 3.000 cauris et les brides 5.000.

Les cordonniers travaillent aussi la peau de biche, la peau de panthère. Ils mettent de la peau de panthère sur les casse-tête, les massues mossi. Ils en mettent aussi sur les lances. Cette peau de panthère est fournie par le client. Le cordonnier ne l'achète pas directement.

On vend sur le marché la peau de panthère par petits morceaux valant 100 cauris. Une grande peau de panthère vaut 10 francs, une petite 7 francs.

La peau de caïman est aussi travaillée par les cordonniers. Ceux qui ont tué un caïman viennent en vendre la peau sur le marché ou bien quelqu'un va acheter cette peau au chasseur et la revend sur le marché en détail. Une peau de petit caïman (on ne trouve guère que ceux-là dans le Mossi à cause du peu d'eau) vaut dans les 1.000 cauris. Celui qui veut faire travailler de la peau de caïman au cordonnier l'achète sur le marché et la porte à celui-ci.

On ne trouve pas de peau d'hippopotame au Mossi par suite de la rareté de l'eau et de la médiocrité des marigots. Quant à la peau d'éléphant elle est trop dure pour être travaillée et elle ne sert à rien.

Le cordonnier que j'interroge n'exerce son métier que pendant la saison sèche. Pendant la saison des pluies il fait de la culture et celle-ci lui rapporte plus que son métier de cordon-

nier. Tous les cordonniers du Mossi du reste en sont là. Notre homme fait pendant l'hivernage un champ de petit mil et un champ de gros mil rouge, un petit champ de riz et un peu de maïs autour de sa soukala. Il met des haricots dans ses deux champs de mil. Il n'a ni gros, ni petit bétail, pas même un poulet ni un chien.

Les Mossi n'ont pas de fabricants de casques et le chef de Boussouma que j'interroge à ce sujet me dit qu'ils n'en ont jamais eus.

Passons maintenant au travail du coton et voyons tour à tour les métiers de tisserand, de tailleur et de teinturier.

Le tisserand mossi (soulouga) est un tisserand cultivateur. Il fait de la culture pendant la saison des pluies et son métier pendant la saison sèche. C'est même un cultivateur avant tout, car le principal pour lui c'est la culture et non pas le tissage.

On peut trouver cinq tisserands cultivateurs dans un petit village et quinze dans un gros.

Le client apporte au tisserand le fil de coton filé par ses femmes, car le filage se fait familialement. Les femmes étendent les touffes de coton brut sur une planchette et par pression en font sortir les noyaux, puis, par petites quantités, elles tournent le coton entre leurs doigts et le transforment ainsi en fils qu'elles enroulent sur une baguette. On les donne ainsi au tisserand.

Le tisserand déroule ces fils et les met sur son métier qui est très rudimentaire. C'est celui qui est en usage dans toute l'Afrique occidentale. Il s'appelle niri en Mossi. Les bandes de coton ont habituellement 8 à 10 centimètres de largeur. Leur longueur, très variable, peut atteindre jusqu'à 50 mètres. C'est le tisserand lui-même qui fabrique son métier.

Voici un tisserand de Ouagadougou, Beïdou Ninkéma, chef de soukala. Il a deux femmes, pas d'enfants. Il fait de la culture pendant la saison des pluies et du tissage pendant la saison sèche. Ses champs lui rapportent plus que son métier, car les Yarsé font aussi les tisserands et, comme ils sont plus habiles tisserands que les Mossi, ils leur font une concurrence écra-

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sante. Les clients lui apportent le fil et il le transforme en bandes de coton. On lui donne 500 cauris pour la fabrication des bandes nécessaires à la confection d'un pagne. Il faut soixante bandes pour en faire un.

Notre tisserand est aussi tailleur, mais exceptionnellement, et tailleur de dernier ordre du reste, car il ne sait faire que les pagnes et les boubous. Il ne sait pas faire les culottes. Il confectionne un boubou pour 0 fr. 50 et un pagne pour 0 fr. 20, si on lui fournit l'étoffe bien entendu.

Ajoutons que dans le Mossi il y a aussi des tisseurs parmi les enfants. Ce sont ceux qui fabriquent les pétalas.

« Les pétalas, dit le Cahier des Rapports du Cercle, sont de petites bandes très étroites de 10 à 25 millimètres de largeur, formées de fils multicolores jaunes, rouges, bleus, verts, etc., teints dans le pays et tissés par les enfants sur des métiers simplifiés.

» Très résistantes ces bandes sont employées comme ceintures de pantalon.

» Le pétala vaut un peu moins de 0 fr. 10 le mètre et sa vente constitue un petit bénéfice pour les enfants qui le fabriquent et le vendent eux-mêmes sur les marchés du Mossi.

» Ces sortes de galons ne sont pas exportés. »

De même qu'ils ont des tisserands, les Mossi ont des tailleurs. Le métier de tailleur est d'ailleurs exercé, dans le Mossi, non seulement par des Mossi, mais encore par les Yarsé et aussi par certains des Haoussas établis dans le pays.

Les tailleurs mossi cultivent pendant l'hivernage et exercent leur métier de tailleur pendant la saison sèche. Leurs champs leur rapportent plus que leur métier.

La plupart des tailleurs mossi travaillent à façon. On leur apporte les bandes de coton et ils les cousent pour en faire le vêtement demandé. D'autres achètent les bandes de coton, en fabriquent différents vêtements (pagnes, boubous, culottes, bonnets) et envoient leurs femmes vendre ceux-ci au marché. Mais ce sont les moins nombreux.

Boubou se dit fougou en Mossi et pagne fougoupoko, de poko femme et fougou boubou. Culotte se dit koulouga.

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Ajoutons que la confection des vêtements est restée une industrie familiale dans une grande partie du Mossi. Beaucoup de Mossi savent coudre et, cousant les bandes de coton, confectionnent leurs vêtements eux-mêmes. Remarquons ici que, comme dans presque toute l'Afrique occidentale, ce sont les hommes qui cousent et non les femmes. Dans cette partie de l'Afrique en effet la couture est une occupation masculine au premier chef et non une occupation féminine.

Voici un type de tailleur de Ouagadougou, Mohammadi Bagaré.

Il cultive pendant l'hivernage et ne fait que cela. Il exerce son métier de tailleur pendant la saison sèche.

Il travaille à façon : ceux qui veulent un vêtement lui apportent les bandes de coton en nombre nécessaire et il fait le vêtement demandé. Pour la confection d'un grand boubou il demande 1.000 cauris, pour la confection d'un petit 500, pour la confection d'un pagne 200. Pour la confection d'un bonnet il ne demande qu'un kola ce qui représente encore à Ouagadougou la valeur de 50 cauris. Pour une culotte il prend 200 cauris.

Pour faire un grand boubou il lui faut cinq jours de travail, pour faire un petit boubou il lui faut deux jours, pour un pagne un jour, pour une culotte deux jours, pour un bonnet une heure.

Son seul instrument de travail est l'aiguille. Mohammadi emploie des aiguilles européennes.

Les Mossi ont des teinturiers, comme des tisserands et des tailleurs.

Teinturier se dit en Mossi garalosadaba, de gara indigo et sadaba fabricant. Il n'y en a pas dans le sud du Mossi, mais seulement dans le nord, à partir de Ouagadougou, ce qui tendrait à prouver que de même que les Mossi ont probablement appris des Yarsé le tissage du coton, ils ont dû apprendre l'art de la teinture des Songhay avec lesquels ils ont été en contact par le nord. Du reste des émigrants songhay sont venus fonder des villages dans le nord du cercle de Ouagadougou et ils *exercent justement l'art de la teinture comme industrie principale*. Ceci corrobore notre opinion d'une façon très forte. Ajoutons que les

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Mossi font de la teinture par places, par endroits, pour ainsi dire. On ne trouvera pas de teinturiers dans un grand nombre de villages mossi, puis tout à coup on tombera sur une localité qui aura trente puits de teinture, comme à Yakki par exemple.

Voici un teinturier de Ouagadougou, Mossi, qui s'appelle Gomdounguiba Nangakoré. Il ne cultive pas lui-même l'indigo. Il l'achète au marché en pains ou boules. N'importe qui au Mossi cultive l'indigo (voir plus haut à la culture). Quand il est mûr, on cueille les feuilles, on les empile dans une calebasse en bois et on les comprime pour faire des pains valant 50, 100 ou 500 cauris. Le teinturier achète ces pains au marché.

Il teint soit des fils de coton, soit des bandes, soit des vêtements (boubous, etc.). On lui apporte ce qu'il doit teindre. Bref il travaille généralement à façon.

Quelquefois cependant il achète des fils, des bandes, des boubous, des pagnes, les teint et les fait vendre au marché par sa femme ou par ses femmes.

Chaque teinturier fait son puits de teinture en dehors mais à côté de sa soukala. Il fait un trou bien carré, quadrangulaire, ayant dans les 60 centimètres de long sur 60 de large et un mètre de profondeur environ. Ce trou est damé soigneusement à plusieurs reprises et les parois en banko en sont vernies avec de l'eau préparée à l'écorce de néré. Enfin on verse de l'eau dedans pour voir s'il est bien étanche. Il faut environ trois jours pour en établir un. Chaque teinturier a le sien.

Pour teindre les fils, bandes ou vêtements, on prend des cendres de tige de mil, on les met dans l'eau, on les passe et on les jette au fond du trou à teinture. On prend ensuite les cendres d'un arbre que les Mossi appellent gouara (les cendres elles-même s'appellent zato ou iato). On les met au fond du trou. On y joint un pain d'indigo et on ajoute de l'eau. On laisse se faire ce mélange pendant trois jours et, au bout de ce temps, on peut mettre tremper les fils, bandes, etc.

On remplace le mélange colorant tous les vingt jours. Il laisse alors au fonds du puits à teinture une espèce de croûte jaune-gris qu'on enlève et qu'on met sécher au soleil. Une fois séchée on

la réduit en poudre et on ajoute cette poudre au mélange suivant.

Pour la teinture des fils de coton, on les met dans le mélange en les froissant avec les doigts. Pendant la nuit on les enlève et on les met sécher sur le toit de la case. Le lendemain on recommence. Au bout de trois jours on a des fils noirs. Pour obtenir des fils bleu sombre il faut simplement deux jours. Pour obtenir des fils bleu-clair un jour suffit. Pour les bandes de coton et les vêtements c'est la même chose.

Notre teinturier n'exerce pas son métier pendant l'hivernage. A cette époque il ne fait que cultiver. C'est pendant la saison sèche qu'il est teinturier. Cependant il dit que son métier lui rapporte plus que ses champs.

Pour teindre des fils de coton, il prend 200 cauris pour en teindre un paquet en noir, 60 à 100 cauris pour le teindre en bleu foncé et 50 cauris pour le teindre en bleu clair.

Quand il achète un boubou pour le teindre (il l'achète 1.500 cauris par exemple) il le revend teint en noir 3.000 cauris, en bleu foncé 2.000 et en bleu-clair 1.700.

Les étoffes mossi sont les suivantes :

1° L'étoffe blanche, écrue, non teinte. Elle s'appelle pempéla. Elle vaut 25 cauris la coudée, c'est-à-dire la longueur qui va du coude au bout de la main.

2° L'étoffe blanche à raies bleues, dite nakoré. Elle est faite de fils blancs et de fils teints en bleu. Elle vaut 50 cauris la coudée.

3° L'étoffe à petits carreaux bleus et blancs, dite arkilla. Elle vaut 50 cauris la coudée.

4° L'étoffe bleu-foncé avec raies blanches çà et là. Elle s'appelle ganga et vaut 50 cauris la coudée.

5° Enfin l'étoffe bleue à raies bleu-blanc dite oulambala ou oulambalé et coûtant 75 cauris ou un sou et demi la coudée.

Nous en avons fini avec l'Industrie Mossi, non pas évidemment que ce travail soit complet et définitif, non pas que j'aie énuméré et étudié à fond tous les métiers de la population. Cependant j'en ai dit assez pour tracer une esquisse importante

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de cette industrie et pour montrer qu'elle était florissante. Nous pouvons passer maintenant au Commerce.

Il faut distinguer au Mossi, comme partout ailleurs en Afrique occidentale, le commerce intérieur du pays et le commerce extérieur.

Le commerce intérieur était jadis et est encore assuré, comme chez les autres noirs, par des marchés de village, marchés se tenant dans les principaux bourgs à jour fixe, par exemple tous les trois jours, tous les cinq jours, etc. Ainsi, à Ouagadougou, le marché, avant les blancs, avait lieu tous les trois jours. Maintenant il est quotidien.

Dans chaque village où il y avait un marché, il y avait un chef de marché nommé par le chef du village. Le chef de marché faisait le sacrifice pour le marché : sur une grosse pierre consacrée il tuait soit un poulet, soit une chèvre, soit un mouton qu'il fournissait lui-même. La bête était offerte à la divinité du ciel (Ounam) pour qu'il n'y eût pas de disputes dans le marché. Cela fait, notre chef aidait Ounam dans cet office de pacificateur, à coups de bâton même s'il en était besoin

Tous les produits intérieurs et extérieurs du pays étaient vendus en détail à ces marchés, principalement par les femmes que les noirs, comme on le sait, ont l'habitude d'envoyer vendre au marché les produits en excédent. Nous n'insisterons pas sur le commerce intérieur du Mossi qui est tel qu'en tout pays noir : un petit commerce de détail, alimenté, vivifié par le commerce extérieur. Passons donc à celui-ci.

Le commerce extérieur du Mossi, c'est le commerce ordinaire du Soudan, que nous avons déjà décrit, s'exerçant du nord au sud et du sud au nord : bestiaux transportés vers le sud, kolas ramenés vers le nord, sel ramené vers le sud, etc. Ajoutez-y les bandes de coton qui sont un des grands produits du Mossi (fabriquées par les Yarsé et par les Mossi eux-mêmes, comme nous l'avons vu). Ces bandes de coton sont, avec les bestiaux, transportées au sud où le coton est mal cultivé.

Mais il faut tout de suite ajouter ceci : ce ne sont pas les Mossi qui font ce commerce, mais les Yarsé que nous connaissons

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bien et les Haoussas établis au Mossi. Le commerce mossi n'est donc pas mossi ou, du moins, il ne l'était pas du tout jadis. Si maintenant il commence à l'être un peu, cela tient à l'établissement des Français dans le pays.

En effet, après avoir conquis le Mossi (1896), nous avons mis un impôt sur le pays. Cet impôt, d'abord léger, a cru rapidement ces dernières années. En 1906 il était de 311.000 francs, dans le cercle même de Ouagadougou, pour une population de 861.000 habitants. En 1907, il est monté à 366.000 francs; en 1909, à 555.000 fronces; en 1910, à 656.000 francs. De plus, il a été exigé, à partir de 1908, avec une telle rigueur et dans un temps si court que c'est exactement comme si on avait triplé le chiffre de cet impôt. Dans ces conditions, les Mossi ont bien été obligés de se mettre au commerce pour se procurer l'argent français qu'ils n'avaient pas, puisque la monnaie du pays est le cauri et que l'Administration française ne veut pas le recevoir. Ils ont été obligés d'aller vendre leurs bœufs, même leurs vaches, ce à quoi le noir ne se résout qu'avec la plus grande peine et dans le cas de la plus extrême nécessité. Bref, les Mossi organisent actuellement de petites caravanes par village. On envoie les jeunes gens de l'endroit vendre ensemble à Ouanké les bœufs, moutons, chèvres, ânes, chevaux du pays et les bandes de coton. Ils en ramènent ou de l'argent français ou des kolas. Quand ils en ramènent des kolas, ils vont les vendre à Saraféré ou à Sofara et en rapportent du sel ou des pièce de cent sous. En un mot, les Mossi se mettent en ce moment au commerce sous le coup d'une pressante nécessité.

Néanmoins, on ne peut guère considérer le Mossi comme un commerçant. Il l'est depuis infiniment peu de temps et excessivement peu encore.

En un mot, il y a dans le Mossi un gros courant d'échanges commerciaux qui se fait du nord au sud et du sud au nord. Il y a aussi dans le pays d'importantes villes de marché ou plutôt de gros villages de marché, comme nous le savons. Mais ces échanges commerciaux et ces gros marchés sont le fait ou la création des Yarsé et d'un petit nombre de Haoussas. Les Mossi eux-mêmes n'étaient jadis pour rien dans tout cela, sauf

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que l'organisation centralisée de l'empire mossi avait assuré la sécurité aux échanges et au commerce. Actuellement ils n'y sont encore que pour très peu de chose et contraints et forcés par la nécessité de payer l'impôt.

Pour corroborer cette inaptitude du Mossi au commerce, je n'ai qu'à choisir dans mes notes de tournée de décembre 1908. En voici une, significative, sur un village mossi du nord du Cercle : « Pas de commerce dans ce village. Ce sont les Yarsé de Téma qui viennent leur acheter leurs bandes de coton teintes en bleu et vont les vendre à Salaga (Gold-Coast). Nos Mossi auraient avantage à faire eux-mêmes ce trafic. Ils en conviennent, mais ne le font pas cependant, disant que leurs grands-pères ne le faisaient pas. Ils ne font donc aucun commerce ». Dans un autre village, Yakki, où l'industrie est florissante, je note : « Le commerce en revanche est nul comme chez tous les Mossi ».

J'ai dit plus haut que le commerce supérieur dans le pays mossi était représenté par quelques colonies haoussas peu nombreuses. A ce sujet, et pour donner une idée de ce commerce, je peux transcrire ici la courte monographie d'un commerçant haoussa de Ouagadougou, Maïguisiri Dangaori, qui est là depuis quinze ans, quoiqu'il ait sa famille à Iko, dans le pays haoussa.

Naturellement il n'a pas de champs. Il ne fait que du commerce.

Il achète des bœufs et des moutons sur place. Il les emmène en Gold-Coast jusqu'à Koumassie (ce que ne font généralement pas les Yarsé qui ne vont pas si au sud). Il les vend là-bas et avec le produit de leur vente il achète des kolas, des étoffes européennes, de la verroterie, du sucre, des marmites en fonte, etc. Il prend comme porteurs, pour revenir, des Haoussas pauvres habitant en Gold-Coast et qu'il emmène jusqu'à Ouagadougou. Chaque porteur, à l'arrivée, est payé 35 francs pour les 50 jours de voyage. De plus, il les nourrit pendant la route. Leur nourriture lui coûte 300 cauris par jour.

Il vend ou plutôt fait vendre les marchandises rapportées sur le marché de Ouagadougou, car il a un employé qui

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vend pour lui au marché. Cet employé n'est pas de sa famille. C'est un Haoussa auquel il donne 5 0/0 sur la vente. C'est tout. En dehors de cela, il ne lui donne rien, pas même la nourriture.

Notre commerçant attend généralement pour retourner en Gold-Coast que tout soit vendu. Si ce n'est pas vendu assez vite il ramasse ce qui reste et l'écoule sur la route en retournant là-bas.

Le voyage dure six mois depuis le moment où il part de Ouagadougou jusqu'au moment où il revient. Pour aller en Gold-Coast, il n'a pas besoin de porteurs. Il prend simplement un Peuhl pour conduire les bœufs. Il lui paye sa nourriture, 300 cauris par jour, et de plus, à l'arrivée, il lui donne 1 franc par bœuf conduit.

Notre commerçant loge chez un autre Haoussa de Ouagadougou, également commerçant bien entendu, qui est plus riche que lui. Il ne lui paye pas de location, mais il lui fait des cadeaux de temps en temps pour reconnaître son hospitalité.

Il a sa famille à Iko dans le pays haoussa. Elle se compose de trois femmes et de trois enfants. Tous les deux ans, il va la voir.

On voit que les Haoussas pratiquent le commerce avec plus de puissance et plus d'ampleur que les Yarsé. Ils n'hésitent pas à s'expatrier pour pratiquer ce commerce et de fait ils ont colonisé de cette manière la Nigéria du Sud, le Dahomey, le Togo, la Gold-Coast, le Mossi, etc. Une fois implantés là, ils poussent leurs opérations commerciales plus loin que les marchands du pays et ils ne font guère que cela. Tandis que le type yarsé est un type de cultivateur-commerçant, le Haoussa du Mossi est la plupart du temps un type de commerçant pur, absolument spécialisé dans le commerce. Aussi domine-t-il tout l'édifice commercial du pays. Apre au gain, spéculant sur les cauris et sur l'argent français, plus intelligent que le Mossi et le Yarsé, il réalise de grosses fortunes.

Pour être à peu près complets sur le commerce qui se fait ou qui se faisait au Mossi, il faudrait ajouter que jadis celui des esclaves s'exerçait à côté de celui du bétail, des cotonnades, des kolas et du sel. Ces esclaves venaient surtout du Gou-

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rounsi, du Boussansé, du Kipirsi. Particulièrement quand les Djermabés dévastèrent le Gourounsi, ils vendirent énormément d'esclaves aux Mossi. Ce commerce était, comme les autres, entre les mains des Yarsé et des Haoussas.

Disons aussi un mot du commerce désormais aboli des eunuques. Les Mossi, jadis, en fournissaient aux Haoussas, lesquels les faisaient parvenir par l'Egypte en Turquie. Les opérés étaient des Gourounsi vendus aux Mossi par les Zabermas et par leur chef Baba-Tô. Des villages mossi s'étaient spécialisés dans ce genre de travail. Celui de Koubry notamment en vivait. Les victimes, des enfants de douze à quinze ans, étaient fournies par le Moro-Naba qui les gardait ensuite ou les vendait aux Haoussas.

En 1900, notre ambassadeur en Turquie sut qu'un convoi d'eunuques arrivé à Constantinople était originaire du Mossi, que nous occupions depuis 1896. Il avertit le ministre des Affaires étrangères qui prévint son collègue des Colonies. Des ordres sévères furent donnés pour qu'on mit fin à cette industrie mossi qui depuis n'existe plus.

Ajoutons enfin le trafic des grains, exceptionnel du reste au Mossi, mais les années 1906, 1907 et 1908 ayant été mauvaises au point de vue de la récolte, les Mossi ont dû s'approvisionner de grains, en vendant des bestiaux, dans le Yatenga (cercle de Ouahigouya) et dans le Gourounsi.

Nous en avons fini avec le travail mossi. Passons maintenant à l'étude de la famille et des organismes sociaux superposés.

CHAPITRE II

LES MOSSI : FAMILLE, POUVOIRS PUBLICS ET RELIGION

La famille mossi est une famille décommunautarisée en partie, voilà la première constatation que nous avons à faire. Cela peut étonner vu que le travail que nous venons de voir (culture dominante, élevage médiocre, industrie florissante, pas de commerce) nous avait préparé à toute autre chose. Néanmoins le fait est là.

Cette famille est même très décommunautarisée mais pas partout de même. Sous ce rapport elle offre cinq types familiaux différents.

Les deux premiers sont très peu répandus : on dirait qu'ils sont les témoins d'un état de choses ancien actuellement disparu. Ainsi on trouve le type patriarcal ordinaire chez ces forgerons groupés en quartiers ou même en villages dont nous avons parlé à l'Industrie, et chez eux seulement, car chez les forgerons isolés on ne le trouve plus, mais seulement le type ordinaire mossi.

Ces forgerons groupés sont-ils des débris restés purs de l'ancienne population, telle qu'elle existait avant l'invasion dagomba ? sont-ce des autochtones ? Est-ce en ce sens qu'il faut entendre leur affirmation qu'ils ne sont pas des Mossi ? C'est probable, non sûr cependant. En tout cas la famille chez eux est du type patriarcal le plus pur.

Chez eux tous les ménages d'une famille habitent la même soukala. Quand un garçon se marie il reste dans la soukala familiale.

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Pendant l'hivernage les gens de la soukala travaillent sur les champs du chef de soukala de 6 heures du matin à 3 heures de l'après-midi. A partir de 3 heures ils vont travailler sur leurs petits champs particuliers.

Pendant la saison sèche, ils travaillent tous ensemble au métier de forgeron avec le chef de soukala et tout le gain est pour celui-ci. Ils travaillent du soleil levant au coucher du soleil.

Le chef de soukala les nourrit toute l'année. Leur habillement ils se le procurent eux-mêmes avec le produit de leurs petits champs. De même bracelets, bijoux, etc. (pour les grigris ils ne les aiment pas).

Le chef de soukala leur achète la première femme et marie en revanche toutes les filles de la soukala.

Quand un chef de soukala meurt, c'est son frère puîné qui prend le commandement de la soukala. Il prend également tous les biens, champs, bétail, esclaves, cauris, instruments pour extraire et travailler le fer. Les fils n'ont rien. Tout le monde reste dans la soukala.

Quand la ligne des frères est épuisée, c'est le fils le plus âgé de toute la soukala qui hérite.

S'il n'y a plus de mâles dans une soukala, les sœurs viennent avant les filles, si elles sont de même père et de même mère que le défunt, mais viennent après si elles ne sont que de même père. Elles prennent la moitié des biens mobiliers et en donnent la moitié aux filles. Entre elles, elles se partagent également leur part. La soukala et les champs sont pour le chef du village. A défaut de sœurs de même père et de même mère, l'héritage va aux filles, puis aux sœurs de même père seulement que le défunt. S'il n'y a ni sœurs, ni filles, l'héritage tout entier est pour le chef de village.

Comme on le voit, nous trouvons, chez les forgerons groupés, la famille patriarcale ordinaire.

Le second type mossi est celui que nous avons eu l'occasion de signaler ça et là au travail. Au contraire du précédent qui ne se trouve que dans un groupe spécial de la population, on le trouve lui dans tout l'ensemble de la masse mossi mais rare

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et exceptionnel. Tous les ménages de la famille habitent encore ensemble, mais chaque ménage travaille à part. C'est le type que nous avons étudié chez les Nankanas et autres populations de cultivateurs-éleveurs sous le nom de type Nankana n° 3

Nous en arrivons maintenant aux types mossi non plus exceptionnels mais répandus. Ils correspondent au type Nankana n° 4 (habitation à part, travail à part de chaque ménage) ou plutôt ils partent de ce type pour se décommunautariser encore plus. Il y a trois variétés en effet, l'une qui correspond au type Nankana n° 4 pur, les deux autres chez lesquels la décommunautarisation s'accentue. Décrivons les tour à tour.

Voici la première des variétés :

1° Les ménages sont établis à part. Dès qu'un jeune homme se marie il s'établit à part avec l'appui de sa famille.

Quand un chef de famille marie un des fils de la famille, il utilise, s'il en a une, une soukala vacante. S'il n'en a pas, alors le fils se construit, du reste aidé par son père et par son chef de famille, une soukala neuve.

2° Chaque ménage travaille à part (sauf les défrichements familiaux), se nourrit, s'habille, s'entretient lui-même. Cependant le fils marié vient donner de menus coups de main à son père de temps en temps. Il l'aide, par exemple, pendant la saison sèche, à arranger sa soukala. Ou bien il lui fait de temps en temps de petits cadeaux.

Quand quelqu'un en se mariant s'établit à part, le chef de famille lui donne généralement quelque champ de famille qui a été défriché et cultivé jadis et s'est reposé depuis.

3° Quoique les ménages travaillent à part, les enfants de ces ménages ne sont pas mariés par le père et la mère, mais par le chef de famille. Celui-ci achète des femmes aux garçons, mais marie aussi les filles et reçoit la dot.

Pour le mariage, on offre des cadeaux à la famille de la jeune fille les jours de fête. D'année en année on offre un cadeau plus considérable. Enfin au moment du mariage on donne 25 ou 30 francs de dot.

On pratique aussi le troc des jeunes filles entre les familles.

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Une famille promet une de ses filles à une autre famille pour un de ses jeunes gens et celle-ci, en revanche, fournit une jeune fille pour un garçon de la première famille.

Si même un mari achète une femme au marché et en a des enfants, ce n'est pas lui, c'est son chef de famille qui marie ces enfants.

Si un jeune homme est allé demander lui-même une femme à un chef de famille et l'a obtenue sans rien payer, sans dot, c'est le père de la fille qui dispose de la première fille née, a le droit de l'emmener chez lui dès qu'elle ne tette plus et la mariera plus tard. Les autres enfants c'est le chef de famille de notre homme qui les marie.

4° Le chef de famille fait les sacrifices religieux pour toute la famille et en est le juge.

5° Quand un chef de famille meurt, le commandement de la famille passe au frère puîné, les biens familiaux aussi, c'est-à-dire sa soukala, si elle est familiale (c'est-à-dire construite par la famille ou avec l'aide de la famille), les champs familiaux disponibles, les biens mobiliers familiaux (bestiaux, esclaves, cauris, vêtements, bijoux familiaux, etc.). Mais les biens mobiliers particuliers du défunt (bestiaux, esclaves, cauris, vêtements, bijoux particuliers, etc.), passent au fils aîné, de même les champs cultivés par le défunt et son ménage, c'est-à-dire biens particuliers de celui-ci. Enfin la soukala, si elle a été construite par le défunt lui-même tout seul et non aidé par sa famille, passe aussi à son fils aîné, étant bien particulier.

Le frère héritier donne quelque chose aux autres frères sur les biens familiaux mobiliers, mais s'il le veut bien cependant.

Les biens de famille sont de beaucoup les plus importants ici.

Telle est la plus ancienne variété du type mossi général actuel. En fait elle subsiste encore en pas mal d'endroits du Mossi.

Voici maintenant la seconde variété :

1° Chaque ménage est établi à part, travaille à part (sauf les défrichements familiaux) et s'entretient lui-même. Les gens ainsi établis à part travaillent pour eux-mêmes et non plus pour

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leur père chez qui ils habitaient et pour qui ils travaillaient avant leur mariage. Cependant ils offrent des cadeaux au père de temps en temps.

2° Pour le mariage des enfants de ces ménages il faut distinguer : quand ce sont des enfants de femmes payées par le chef de famille c'est celui-ci qui les marie. Quand ce sont des enfants de femmes que le mari s'est procurées lui-même c'est ce dernier qui les marie.

Ou bien on fait une cote mal taillée (ainsi dans la province de Boussouma). Le premier fils et la première fille du mariage sont mariés par le chef de famille, les autres enfants par le ménage lui-même.

3° Cependant le chef de famille a toujours seul le droit d'offrir les sacrifices religieux pour toute la famille et il en est toujours le juge.

4° Quand un chef de famille meurt, le commandement de la famille passe au frère puîné. Les biens familiaux aussi. Les biens particuliers du défunt passent à tous les fils de celui-ci mais en avantageant l'aîné Au fond c'est, pour l'héritage, la différence de ce type familial avec le type précédent. Tandis que dans le type précédent le fils aîné venait seul, dans celui-ci tous les fils viennent, avec cependant un gros avantage à l'aîné.

Ainsi la soukala, si elle est bien particulier du défunt, passe au fils aîné. Les champs cultivés par le défunt, le fils aîné les garde tous s'il peut tout cultiver. S'il ne le peut pas, il passe le surplus à ses frères.

Pour le bétail, s'il y a dix têtes, bien particulier du défunt, et d'autre part trois fils et deux filles, l'aîné en aura quatre, les deux cadets chacun deux, les deux filles chacune une.

Pour les esclaves, dans le même cas, le fils aîné en prendra cinq sur dix, le second fils trois, le troisième deux, les filles n'auront rien.

Les cauris et les grains seront partagés de la même manière.

En dehors de cette part faite aux fils cadets et aux filles, il faut signaler que dans ce second type de famille mossi les biens particuliers gagnent en importance sur les biens familiaux.

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Ainsi mon interlocuteur me dit bien que les biens familiaux ont encore en général plus d'importance que les biens particuliers ici, mais il ajoute en même temps que, dans tous les héritages qu'il a vus, les soukalas passaient *toujours* au fils aîné, quelle que fut l'origine de ces soukalas. Et il confirme ceci en me donnant des renseignements sur sa propre famille :

Il a chez lui, dit-il, cinq femmes, deux filles, deux cousins non mariés fils d'un frère de son père, un cousin non marié fils d'une sœur de son père, un neveu fils de sa sœur à lui, en tout douze personnes en le comptant.

La soukala où il habite appartenait à son père et avait été construite par celui-ci lui-même. Il en a donc hérité, malgré l'existence d'un frère puîné de son père.

Du reste le frère n'a rien eu, le père de mon interlocuteur n'ayant rien laissé, sauf cette soukala, ni biens de famille, ni biens particuliers ayant grande valeur.

A qui ira cette soukala à sa mort ? N'ayant pas de fils, me répond-il, elle ira à son frère puîné (il a un frère puîné établi dans une soukala à part). Mais s'il avait un fils ? — Elle irait à son fils.

Je lui objecte qu'elle devrait aller à son frère puisqu'il ne l'a pas construite lui-même, mais en a hérité de son père (c'est-à-dire du père commun de lui-même et de son frère), cela d'après la règle même qu'il m'a exposée plus haut. Mais il soutient néanmoins que non et qu'on n'a jamais vu de frères puînés hériter des soukalas. Je ne peux pas le faire sortir de là.

Ici nous saisissons sur le vif comment la famille mossi s'est transformée : jadis on donnait les biens de famille avec le commandement de la famille au frère puîné et pour la soukala par exemple elle était presque toujours dans les biens de famille, soit que la famille l'eût donnée toute faite au jeune homme, soit simplement qu'elle l'eût aidé à la construire. N'était soukala bien particulier que celle que le jeune homme avait construite avec ses seuls moyens à lui absolument (cas excessivement rare). Puis on en est venu à considérer comme bien particulier la soukala construite par le jeune homme à l'aide de son père et du chef de famille (ce qui est le cas de beau-

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coup le plus fréquent), soukala considérée auparavant comme bien familial. Enfin on en est venu à considérer toujours la soukala comme bien particulier et à la faire passer à ce titre au fils aîné. C'est du reste la même évolution qui s'est produite pour les biens en général, comme nous allons le voir tout à l'heure.

Voici maintenant la troisième et dernière variété du type général de la famille mossi, l'état de choses de beaucoup le plus répandu maintenant :

1° Chaque ménage habite à part, travaille à part, se nourrit, s'entretient lui-même. Pour les défrichements on se fait aider par ses voisins.

2° Chaque ménage marie lui-même ses enfants. Ce n'est plus le chef de famille qui le fait.

Le père choisit une petite fille, dès qu'il a un fils, pour ce fils quand il sera pubère. Il va faire de temps en temps des visites et donner des cadeaux aux parents de la fille.

Quand elle est assez grande pour être mariée, il prend 50.000 cauris (s'il est riche), des pagnes, du sel, des kolas et va donner cela aux parents. Alors les vieilles femmes de la famille de la fille conduisent celle-ci dans la demeure des parents du futur. Le père tue un mouton, fait beaucoup de couscous, achète du dolo pour fêter cette arrivée. Puis il donne à la jeune fille six ou sept paniers contenant respectivement 1.000, 2.000, 3.000, 4.000, 5.000, 6.000 et 7.000 cauris. Le jeune homme offre lui-même quatre ou cinq pagnes à sa fiancée. S'il est très riche, il lui donne une ou deux petites filles comme esclaves.

Le soir où on célèbre le mariage, le père demande à un de ses voisins de lui prêter une case et on y envoie les deux jeunes mariés tout seuls (ils vont y rester tant que leur soukala ne sera pas construite). Le lendemain du mariage on fait la fête. On danse et on noce pendant sept jours à la porte de la soukala du père — du moins quand la jeune fille est vierge — car, si elle ne l'est pas, on écourte les réjouissances. Elles durent cependant trois jours encore.

Quand le père est pauvre, il offre quelques kolas au père de

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la fille (six ou dix). Il donne au père et à la mère du bois à brûler coupé dans la brousse, de la paille pour faire les sékos des portes, 2.000 cauris, un pagne. Il tue un mouton pour faire du couscous qu'il offre aux parents. Il emmène la jeune fille. Il demande une case à un voisin pour y loger les jeunes gens pour leur nuit de noce et les semaines suivantes. Ils n'y restent qu'un ou deux mois, le temps de se construire une soukala.

Du reste la dot varie suivant les régions du Mossi. Nous venons de la voir osciller entre 2.000 et 50.000 cauris. Plus haut nous l'avons vue fixée à 25 000. A Kombisiguiri elle est de 1.000 seulement. En effet le père du jeune homme va saluer avec un coq et 500 cauris le père de la jeune fille, puis il retourne le voir une seconde fois, toujours avec un coq et 500 cauris. Il n'y a pas d'autre dot. Ceux qui n'ont pas un coq à offrir le remplacent par un fagot de bois ou par un séko de paille. En résumé, une fille coûte ici 30 sous (les deux coqs valant 0 fr. 50 à eux deux et les 1.000 cauris faisant un franc).

Chez les gens riches, les jeunes gens peuvent rester sept, neuf et même douze mois chez les voisins. Ils donnent des cadeaux à ceux-ci et, pendant ce temps, ils s'occupent à construire ou plutôt à se faire construire une soukala. Le père du jeune homme aide son fils pour cela.

Le jeune marié, ainsi établi à part, travaille désormais à son compte. Il est devenu à son tour chef de soukala, mais s'il gagne beaucoup de mil ou d'autres grains, il fait des cadeaux à son père. S'il s'enrichit et s'il n'en fait pas les voisins l'insultent et, par crainte de ces affronts, il en fait toujours. Un fils qui se marie établit généralement sa soukala le moins loin possible de celle de son père.

Enfin ajoutons que le père achète généralement à son fils ses ustensiles de cuisine quand il s'établit au dehors.

3° Quand un chef de famille meurt, c'est le frère puîné qui prend toujours le commandement de la famille, mais tous les biens quels qu'ils soient, vont aux enfants du défunt, surtout à son fils aîné. Il n'y a plus de biens de famille immobiliers ni mobiliers ou bien on n'en considère plus comme tels.

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Le fils aîné prend la soukala de son père et tout ce qui l'accompagne, champs, esclaves, bestiaux, femmes de son père. Seulement il partage avec ses frères et même avec ses sœurs.

Pour la soukala même, il la garde. Il quitte sa soukala à lui, avec tout ce qu'il possède, pour venir habiter la soukala du défunt, mais, pour que la soukala qu'il abandonne serve à quelque chose, il envoie un de ses frères non mariés (c'est-à-dire habitant jusque-là avec le défunt) habiter celle-ci. Il le marie immédiatement avec une des femmes de son père, une des femmes de l'héritage, et l'envoie, ainsi marié, habiter la soukala qu'il abandonne.

Je demande à mon interlocuteur pourquoi le père ne conserve pas auprès de lui son fils aîné marié et l'envoie fonder une soukala au dehors, puisque quand il meurt, ce fils revient s'installer dans la soukala paternelle. Le chef mossi que j'interroge me répond que, si le père conservait auprès de lui son fils aîné, celui-ci marié et vieillissant souhaiterait sa mort pour pouvoir être à son tour indépendant. Souhaitant la mort de son père il serait tenté de l'avancer. Au contraire, installé dans sa soukala à lui, chef de ménage, indépendant, il ne nourrira pas de mauvaises pensées contre son père.

Nous retrouverons plus loin ce sentiment de crainte et de défiance envers le fils aîné poussé à l'extrême chez les Moro-Nabas et cela se comprend, la royauté étant dans l'héritage. Aussi le fils aîné du prince, une fois marié, allait-il loin de son père dans sa soukala à lui et restait là jusqu'à la mort du moronaba.

Quand aux champs du père, le fils aîné, s'il peut les travailler tous, les garde pour lui. S'il ne le peut pas, il donne le surplus de ce qu'il peut travailler à ses frères.

Pour les bestiaux, le fils aîné donne une part à ses frères cadets et même à ses sœurs.

Pour les esclaves et pour les cauris il en est de même.

Pour les femmes, s'il y en a beaucoup, il en donne quelques-unes à ses frères cadets. Ainsi, par exemple, s'il y a dix femmes et s'il a deux frères il donnera deux femmes à chacun de

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ceux-ci et en conservera six pour lui (ajoutons que le défunt, avant de mourir, a souvent donné une femme à son frère puîné ou à ses frères puînés).

En résumé, le fils aîné a la soukala et les champs. Pour les biens mobiliers il en prend environ 50 0/0 et laisse l'autre moitié aux fils cadets et aux filles. Il y a donc partage mais très inégalitaire.

Du reste ce partage varie suivant les régions du Mossi. Ainsi à certains endroits le fils aîné prend la soukala, les champs, les deux tiers des bestiaux, des cauris et de l'argent, tous les esclaves et tous les grains, l'habillement, les bijoux, les armes, les chevaux, etc. Les autres fils prennent le restant. Les filles n'ont rien. Pour les femmes, le fils aîné en prend les trois quarts, les autres fils un quart. Ici le fils aîné est bien plus puissamment avantagé encore que ci-dessus.

A Kombisiguiri, c'est encore mieux. Le fils aîné peut tout garder s'il le veut. Il peut aussi donner quelque chose aux autres fils du défunt ou à ses frères.

En résumé, la dévolution de l'héritage, dans le stade qui nous occupe, va du droit d'aînesse complet, total, au partage inégalitaire avec gros avantage à l'aîné.

Ajoutons que quand le fils aîné hérite, si ses frères ne sont pas encore en âge d'être mariés, il les conserve chez lui, dans son ménage (de là vient que, quoique le ménage mossi en principe ne compte que le mari, les femmes, les enfants et les esclaves, il y ait aussi quelquefois chez le mari des jeunes frères non mariés). Le matin ils travaillent pour lui, l'après-midi ils travaillent sur leurs petits champs. Le frère aîné les nourrit tout le temps, mais ne les habille pas. Ils doivent s'habiller eux-mêmes sur le produit de leurs petits champs. Quand ils sont en âge d'être mariés le frère aîné leur paye une femme et les aide à s'établir au dehors.

Quand un chef de soukala meurt, ne laissant que des fils en bas-âge, le frère puîné prend tout pour le moment, mais le garde pour les véritables héritiers. Quand le fils aîné du défunt est devenu grand, le frère quitte la soukala et revient dans son ancienne soukala, emmenant seulement ce qui lui appartient.

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Tous les biens, immobiliers et mobiliers, reviennent alors au fils aîné et aux autres fils pour leur part.

Si un chef de soukala ne laisse pas de fils, mais seulement des frères et des filles, l'héritage est partagé entre le frère puîné et les filles : le frère puîné prendra la soukala, les champs et les femmes. Il quittera sa propre soukala pour venir s'établir dans celle du défunt, y emmenant tout ce qu'il possède. Dans son ancienne soukala il loge soit un fils, soit un jeune frère en âge de se marier, mais les filles prennent les biens mobiliers : esclaves, bestiaux, grains, cauris, etc. (sauf les femmes).

La fille aînée prend le plus : sur dix bœufs elle en prendra six (si elles sont trois par exemple) et les deux cadettes deux chacune. Sur quatre esclaves elle en prendra deux, les deux cadettes un chacune. Sur 1.000 cauris, l'aînée en prend 600, les deux autres 200 chacune.

S'il n'y a pas de frères, mais seulement des filles et des fils de frères, il en est de même que précédemment, les fils de frères ayant les droits de leur père. C'est donc le fils aîné du frère puîné et les filles qui héritent.

En résumé, dans cette troisième variété de la famille mossi, les liens qui subsistent entre les différents ménages de la famille ne sont plus que de deux sortes :

1° Il y a les liens religieux, le chef de la famille globale restant le grand-prêtre de cette collectivité.

2° Il y a ensuite les liens juridiques (responsabilité collective de la famille en cas de dommage causé à autrui).

« Qu'un homme ait des dettes — dit Moulins, p. 34, *op. cit.* — sa famille est tenue du paiement. Qu'il commette un délit, sa famille est tenue de le réparer pécuniairement.

» Qu'il commette un crime de meurtre et l'un de ses parents sera mis à mort à sa place s'il n'a pu lui-même être arrêté ; (c'est du moins ce qui se passait avant notre occupation).

» Lorsque le chef de famille est saisi d'une réclamation contre un des individus sous sa puissance, il met naturellement en cause d'abord le coupable lui-même si celui-ci possède des

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biens, puis la soukala à laquelle il appartient, puis celle dirigée par son plus proche parent, etc. Mais, vis-à-vis des tiers, c'est la famille elle-même dans son ensemble qui est tenue de la réparation.

» La responsabilité redoutable incombant à la famille entraîne comme contre-partie logique la mise à la disposition de celle-ci de pouvoirs suffisants pour se prémunir contre les dangers résultant de l'obligation de réparer le dommage causé par un seul de ses membres. Aussi en arrive-t-on naturellement à reconnaître à la famille, en la personne de son chef, le droit de prendre les mesures nécessaires à la préservation des intérêts communs. Ces mesures pouvaient, avant notre occupation, aller jusqu'à mettre aux fers ou même à mettre à mort l'individu qui donnait trop fréquemment ou trop lourdement lieu à la mise en jeu de la responsabilité collective de la famille et menaçait de compromettre l'équilibre de celle-ci. Toutefois une décision du chef de famille ordonnant la mise à mort ou aux fers à perpétuité d'un des siens ne devenait définitive qu'avec l'agrément du naba qui pouvait s'opposer à son exécution à charge d'endosser dans l'avenir, aux lieu et place du groupe familial, la responsabilité pécuniaire de tous les méfaits commis par celui qu'il avait gracié. »

Nous en arrivons maintenant à un sujet intéressant, mais extrêmement délicat, à savoir quelles sont les causes de la décommunautarisation partielle de la famille mossi.

Si nous interrogeons le travail actuel de la race, cette décommunautarisation semble inexplicable : nous avons affaire en effet à une race de cultivateurs un peu indolents à la vérité, mais enfin cultivateurs par-dessus tout. D'autre part les Mossi ne sont pas des pasteurs. Ce sont de très médiocres éleveurs. La chasse représente seulement chez eux, comme chez les autres noirs de l'Afrique occidentale, un petit pour cent de l'art nourricier total. Ce ne sont pas des commerçants. Nous ne voyons donc rien ici qui explique la décommunautarisation de la famille. Il nous faut donc recourir au travail antérieur de la race. Mais nous avons vu plus haut que si la race mossi actuelle venait

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de la fusion de deux éléments disparates, l'un de ces éléments était semblable aux Bobos, Gouroumsi, Habé, Kipirsi, etc., donc profondément communautaire et patriarcal. Ce n'est pas évidemment de cet élément que peut venir la décommunautarisation actuelle.

Heureusement que nous en avons un autre et celui-ci fort différent du premier : les Mossi venus du Dagomba étaient, comme nous le savons, des noirs 1° guerriers, conquérants ; 2° éleveurs de chevaux certainement et très probablement de gros et de petit bétail en général. Ils devaient ressembler étonnamment sous ce rapport aux Toucouleurs actuels, ces conquérants au XIX° siècle d'une partie de l'Afrique occidentale, et qui sont, comme les Foulahs de Guinée, des demi-éleveurs, demi-cultivateurs. (Ces Toucouleurs justement nous les étudierons rapidement au chapitre IV de ce livre pour donner au lecteur l'impression de ce qu'est le noir conquérant non plus en puissance mais en activité, non plus fondu dans une masse hétérogène conquise mais encore à l'état pur). Or la guerre avec son pillage, aussi bien que l'élevage, multiplie les biens particuliers et permet aux individus et aux ménages de sécessionner de la famille, autant du moins que le permet la difficulté de la culture et surtout du défrichement. Et c'est un fait que chez les Toucouleurs et les Foulahs, comme chez les Dagombas et les Mossi, tout ménage habite à part et fait son travail à part (sauf ce qu'il y a de plus difficile pour les noirs, les défrichements). Aussi faut-il conclure que la décommunautarisation de la famille mossi actuelle vient du travail antérieur de la partie conquérante de la race qui, elle, imposa ses coutumes à la partie vaincue : travail de demi-élevage demi-culture comme chez les Toucouleurs et les Foulahs actuels, travail de guerre et de pillage comme chez les mêmes encore tout récemment.

Bien entendu, si nous interrogeons les Mossi eux-mêmes, nous n'apprenons rien qui nous éclaire à ce sujet. Mes interlocuteurs par exemple me déclarent que les diverses soukalas d'une famille ne forment en réalité qu'une seule famille. Je leur demande alors pourquoi ils n'habitent pas ensemble et n'exécutent pas tous les travaux des champs ensemble comme le font

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les Bobos, les Gourounsi, les Bambaras, etc. A cause des disputes de femmes, me répondent-ils. Ces disputes en amenant d'autres entre les hommes, on a fini par habiter à part. Bien évidemment il n'a pu y avoir là qu'une occasion de sécession et la vraie cause, celle qui permettait les sécessions, à savoir l'enrichissement des ménages, est autre.

Nous terminerons en donnant quelques détails sur l'organisation intérieure du ménage mossi. Celui-ci comprend avons-nous dit :

1° Le mari.

2° La ou les femmes.

3° Les enfants non mariés, fils ou filles.

4° Les esclaves.

Il comprend aussi quelquefois (voir plus haut) de jeunes frères non mariés.

Dans chaque soukala-ménage on n'a généralement qu'un grand champ de brousse, plus le champ-jardin autour de la soukala (où l'on cultive le maïs, le gros mil rouge pendant la saison des pluies, le tabac, le coton pendant la saison sèche).

Le chef de ménage, ses fils non mariés, ses frères non mariés travaillent pendant la saison des pluies sur ces champs de 6 heures du matin à 3 heures de l'après-midi avec un long intervalle de repos vers midi. Les femmes y travaillent aussi mais ont d'autres heures à cause de leur travail ménager.

Les fils et les frères non mariés ont aussi de petits champs particuliers de coton et de gros mil rouge. Ils y travaillent à partir de 3 heures de l'après-midi. Pendant la saison des pluies, il n'y a pas généralement de jour de repos. Cependant quelques Mossi ont pris, sur ce point, les coutumes de leurs voisins yarsé et se reposent le vendredi. D'autres, musulmanisés, rares du reste, se reposent le vendredi et le lundi.

Pendant la saison sèche, les gens du ménage arrangent les toits des cases, font la chasse ou bien vont aux défrichements familiaux, etc. En dehors de cela ils travaillent pour eux-mêmes, font les tisserands par exemple. Cet argent ainsi gagné est pour eux-mêmes et non pour le chef de la soukala.

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C'est le chef de la soukala-ménage, le mari-père qui nourrit tous les gens de la soukala toute l'année, matin et soir. Il habille aussi ceux qui ne peuvent pas s'habiller, mais ceux qui peuvent s'habiller s'habillent eux-mêmes.

Nous savons que c'est tantôt le chef de famille, tantôt le chef de ménage qui marient les enfants du ménage. Pourtant il arrive quelquefois qu'un fils quitte la soukala sans l'autorisation de son père. On fait cela généralement pour gagner une femme si le chef de famille ou le père ne peuvent vous en procurer une ou tardent trop à le faire. Le fils qui sécessionne ainsi ira travailler chez un chef ou un noble qui lui donnera plus tard pour rien une femme en récompense. Mais le premier enfant mâle et le premier enfant femelle qui naîtront de ce mariage appartiendront au chef ou au noble qui a donné la femme. Celui-ci disposera de l'enfant mâle pour s'en faire servir et de la fille pour la donner en récompense à qui travaillera chez lui. Ceci est une répercussion de l'organisation d'Etat sur la famille. Cette sécession des fils, en effet, ne peut avoir lieu que grâce à l'existence de chefs et de nobles assez nombreux pour que les sécessionnistes puissent trouver facilement chez eux emploi et travail. Chez les Bobos ou les Nounoumas un tel phénomène ne pourrait pas exister.

Notons que cette institution, en même temps qu'elle restreignait l'autorité du chef de famille ou du chef de ménage, enracinait la puissance de l'aristocratie mossi.

Pour terminer donnons quelques détails sur la soukala mossi au point de vue matériel : c'est un ensemble de cases rondes, cinq ou six, plus ou moins, construites généralement en terre rouge, avec un toit en paille, et reliées les unes aux autres par un mur concave également en terre rouge. La soukala se trouve donc être comme fortifiée et à l'abri de l'extérieur.

Les soukalas mossi sont assez semblables aux « carrées » malinkées et dialonkées, qui, elles aussi, se composent d'un ensemble de cases en banko avec toit en paille. Seulement chez les Malinkés et les Dialonkés, c'est souvent une palissade ou un simple séko qui relie les cases entre elles au lieu d'être comme ici un mur en terre rouge. Une autre différence c'est

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que les cases des soukalas mossi ont des portes très basses si bien qu'il faut se mettre souvent à quatre pattes pour y entrer. De même il n'y a pas de vérandahs comme on en trouve chez les Malinkés et les Dialonkés. Avec ces différences, les soukalas mossi ont pourtant un air de ressemblance général avec les soukalas guinéennes tandis qu'elles n'ont aucun rapport avec les citadelles massives du Gourounsi et du Kipirsi.

En revanche, les soukalas chez les Mossi se trouvent à une cinquantaine de mètres les unes des autres. Le champ de maïs qui entoure la soukala est donc immédiatement autour d'elle comme chez les Bobos, Gourounsi, Kipirsi, etc., tandis que chez les Malinkés, Dialonkés de Guinée le champ-jardin de chaque carrée est en dehors de l'enceinte du village, les carrées étant, à un ou deux mètres près, serrées les unes contre les autres. Il est vrai qu'elles ont quelquefois un petit jardinet à l'intérieur même du séko.....

En Mossi, soukala, carrée se dit iri ; case se dit rogo ou dogo ; chef de soukala se dit irisoba (de soba : chef et iri : carrée).

Nous compléterons cette analyse de la famille mossi par quelques notes sur le statut des femmes et sur celui des esclaves.

Les femmes mossi aident d'abord à la culture. Elles ne défrichent pas, il est vrai, mais elles font tous les autres travaux de culture, en concurrence avec les hommes, le matin seulement d'ailleurs, l'après-midi étant pour les travaux ménagers ou pour leurs petites cultures particulières, car elles ont de petits champs de gros mil blanc, de pois souterrains, de haricots ou d'arachides.

Elles exécutent ensuite les travaux ménagers : elles pilent et écrasent les grains. Le gros mil ou sorgho est, comme on le sait, pilé d'abord puis écrasé ensuite, le petit mil ou millet est écrasé directement après avoir été battu.

Pour se servir des pierres à écraser les Mossi les encastrent dans d'énormes tables rondes en banko construites en dehors des soukalas et qui servent à tout un quartier. C'est là une caractéristique absolument mossi et qui ne se retrouve pas chez les

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Bobos, Gourounsi, etc., bref chez les autres populations qui se servent pourtant des mêmes pierres. Ces grandes tables rondes ne sont pas hautes : elles ont 1 mètre ou 1 m. 20 de hauteur environ, avec 6 mètres de diamètre à peu près, et une circonférence en conséquence. Les Mossi placent leurs pierres à écraser sur tout le pourtour et chaque table peut en porter ainsi dix, douze ou plus. Tous les soirs, à la nuit tombante, les femmes des soukalas qui sont à l'entour viennent ensemble y écraser leurs grains, femmes, jeunes filles, etc., et la plupart du temps dans le plus simple appareil, nues comme la main, la besogne étant dure et exigeant un mouvement continu en avant et en arrière des bras, du buste et de tout le corps.

Pour construire ces tables, on fait d'abord un mur circulaire de la hauteur qu'on veut donner à la table, puis on emplit tout l'intérieur de terre presque jusqu'à niveau. On pile bien cette terre, puis on fait sur le pourtour horizontal des revêtements en banko bien damés dans lesquels on fixe les pierres sur lesquelles on doit écraser. On encastre solidement ces pierres dans le banko, puis on laisse sécher.

Ces grandes tables se nomment niénouga en Mossi, les pierres sur lesquelles on écrase néré et les pierres mobiles avec lesquelles on écrase nérébila.

Nous disions tout à l'heure que ces grandes tables en banko étaient spécialement mossi et n'existaient ni chez les Bobos, ni chez les Habé, ni chez les Gourounsi. Ces derniers, en effet, comme nous l'avons vu, encastrent leurs pierres sur de petites tables en banko d'un mètre de haut et d'un mètre de diamètre seulement, donc tout petites, qui sont dans chaque soukala à l'intérieur de la chambre de chaque femme, ou bien ils font des tables un peu plus grandes, longues, qui ont l'air d'espèces de grandes baignoires en terre ou même ont un faux air de sarcophages grossiers, sur lesquelles ces pierres sont encastrées, et toujours à l'intérieur des soukalas, dans des chambres sales et obscures. Quelquefois ils se contentent de poser sous quelque auvent couvert en bois et en paille, construit à la porte de leurs soukalas-citadelles, les pierres à écraser, trois ou quatre sur deux grosses et solides perches parallèles qui sont soutenues

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elles-mêmes à une hauteur de 50 centimètres du sol environ par quatre fourches solides enfoncées dans la terre. Dans ce cas la femme doit se mettre à genoux pour écraser ses grains. J'ai vu ce système surtout chez les Menkiéras, c'est-à-dire dans le nord de la résidence de Léo.

Mais revenons aux travaux des femmes mossi : avec l'écrasage des grains, elles font la cuisine, vont chercher le bois et l'eau, font la cueillette, préparent les produits de cueillette, etc. Nous avons vu plus haut comment ces produits se fabriquent, nous n'y reviendrons donc pas ici.

Chez les Mossi on ne connaît comme préparation du mil que le sarabout et le vessala. On ne connaît pas le couscous. C'est assez curieux, vu que la préparation ainsi dénommée est connue à peu près dans toute l'Afrique occidentale.

Le sarabout (mot mossi) est ce que les Malinkés et les Bambaras appellent tô, les Foulbé, Toucouleurs et Foulahs niri, les Sarakolés souré, les Maures lisi.

Pour le couscous, les Malinkés et les Bambaras disent baci, les Foulbé, Toucouleurs, Foulahs disent lakiri, les Sarakolés fouto, les Maures et Arabes couscous.

Le to ou sarabout est fait pour être consommé tout de suite. Le couscous est fait pour être conservé relativement longtemps.

Voici la différence de préparation : pour le to ou sarabout on met simplement cuire la farine de mil dans l'eau bouillante, en tournant de temps en temps avec un morceau de bois ou une cuiller. Pour le couscous au contraire, on prend un canari, on le remplit d'eau et on le met bouillir sur le feu, puis on prend une calebasse percée de trous par-dessous et formant ainsi une espèce de passoire et on y met de la farine de mil. On place cette calebasse sur le canari où l'eau bout et on la couvre avec un plat en paille. La vapeur d'eau venant du canari pénètre par les trous dans la calebasse, et comme celle-ci est couverte, y séjourne longtemps. Cette vapeur d'eau cuit ainsi, à l'étuvée, la farine de mil. Au bout d'un certain temps on enlève la calebasse, on laisse refroidir et on fait sécher au soleil. Quand la farine de mil a été ainsi cuite et séchée elle peut être conservée

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presque indéfiniment. On la mange soit dans de l'eau, soit dans du lait, ce qui est meilleur, soit, si on a de la viande, en faisant bouillir celle-ci et en versant le sarabout dans la marmite.

Si les Mossi ne connaissent pas le couscous ils connaissent le vessala. C'est une préparation qui consiste à faire bouillir la farine de mil comme on fait pour le sarabout. La différence consiste dans la quantité de farine employée. Quand la pâte est cuite on laisse refroidir, puis on achète du lait frais ou caillé et on mélange avec. On ne fait cette préparation qu'en vue du mélange avec le lait. Les Bambaras connaissent le vessala et le désignent sous le nom de fisan ou finsan.

Les Mossi quand ils voyagent font souvent cuire les grains de mil sans qu'ils aient été réduits en farine. On appelle cela honandourou-ki (mil cuit). Les Bambaras disent niobalabaia, les Foulbé m'baina-gaouri, les Sarakolés ilé-n'kioro, ce qui veut dire la même chose. Cette préparation est toute exceptionnelle et on ne l'emploie que quand on n'a pas le temps ou les moyens de réduire les grains de mil en farine.

Les femmes mossi font aussi le dolo (dama). Pour cela elles mettent tremper dans l'eau pendant deux jours les grains de gros mil rouge, puis les exposent au soleil et les écrasent. On met la farine bouillir pendant deux heures, puis on la passe et on fait bouillir de nouveau dans la quantité d'eau qu'il faut pendant toute une journée. On transvase dans un autre canari et on laisse refroidir.

En dehors des travaux de cuisine, les femmes mossi ont les travaux de nettoyage. Elles balaient les cases et les soukalas avec des poignées de paille, de petits balais primitifs de 30 ou 40 centimètres de long. Elles lavent, blanchissent les vêtements, fabriquent le savon. Enfin ce sont elles qui filent le coton et dament le sol des cases.

Voici comment s'opère ce damage : « Au-dessus de la surface à damer les indigènes étendent une couche de 10 centimètres d'épaisseur d'une terre noire spéciale composée princi-

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palement de cendre et d'humus provenant de la décomposition de végétaux et d'ordures ménagères.

» Au-dessus les Mossi mettent une seconde couche composée de graviers argilo-ferrugineux sur une épaisseur de 3 à 5 centimètres. Par un fort damage ces petits cailloux sont ensuite réduits en éléments très fins. Les indigènes répandent alors un peu d'eau sur ces derniers et effectuent un deuxième damage. Celui-ci terminé ils laissent sécher le plancher.

» Cette opération est répétée plusieurs fois de suite, mais l'eau ordinaire est remplacée par de l'eau de néré (cette dernière provient de l'infusion dans de l'eau chaude de débris du fruit du néré, dondo en Mossi) ou de l'eau dans laquelle on a délayé de la bouse de vache. Quand le dernier damage et le dernier séchage sont finis, les indigènes répandent alors en grande quantité sur le nouveau plancher de l'eau de néré.

» Enfin la dernière opération consiste à polir la surface avec des pierres plates ». (Cahier des Rapports du cercle de Ouagadougou).

Les devoirs des femmes mossi envers leur mari sont les suivants :

1° L'accomplissement du devoir conjugal.

« La femme, dit Moulins, ne doit jamais se refuser à l'accomplissement du devoir conjugal, exception faite cependant si elle est enceinte ou si elle allaite.

» Si par pudeur de jeune épousée ou pour tout autre motif une femme se refusait à son mari, celui-ci userait d'abord de tous les moyens de persuasion en son pouvoir, priant notamment les parents de la femme d'intervenir auprès de celle-ci. Si les exhortations de ces derniers restaient vaines, on userait de contrainte en infligeant une correction à la femme ou en la mettant aux fers. Enfin si ces mesures ne parvenaient pas à amener l'épouse à composition, celle-ci pourrait être chassée par le mari. »

2° La fidélité.

« La femme doit habiter chez son mari. Si elle déserte le domicile conjugal, son époux a le droit absolu de le lui faire

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réintégrer. Si elle s'est réfugiée chez ses parents, ceux-ci ne doivent pas lui donner asile, mais au contraire la rendre au mari. En cas de difficultés, celui-ci s'adresse au naba qui contraint la femme à retourner chez son conjoint où elle est en outre l'objet d'une mesure de correction de la part de ce dernier...

» ... Les pouvoirs de l'époux trompé sur l'amant de sa conjointe étaient, avant notre occupation, des plus redoutables. Il pouvait à son choix se faire justice lui-même ou porter plainte entre les mains du naba. Si en se faisant justice lui-même il tuait son rival, il remettait la femme adultère au Moro-Naba et alors n'était pas inquiété pour son crime. S'il le blessait seulement, si gravement d'ailleurs que ce fût, il était considéré comme ayant agi dans la plénitude de ses droits de mari outragé et gardait sa femme à qui il infligeait une correction. S'il portait plainte au naba, les deux coupables étaient punis des fers pour un temps plus ou moins long. En outre si l'adultère avait été commis avec la femme d'un dapouy-naba du Moro-Naba (c'est-à-dire d'un homme à qui le Moro-Naba avait lui-même donné une fille quelconque en mariage) le complice était tenu d'acquitter entre les mains du mari trompé une amende de 100.000 cauris.

» Enfin, en cas d'adultère avec une femme de chef, les deux complices étaient mis à mort. »

A ce sujet je relève dans mes notes que les nabas, quand ils étaient trompés par une de leurs femmes, avant notre occupation, la tuaient par le poison et ordonnaient le suicide à l'amant de la femme, suicide que celui-ci s'infligeait en s'enfonçant dans le mollet la pointe d'une flèche empoisonnée.

« On voit, continue l'auteur de la Monographie, que le traitement le plus rigoureux était celui infligé à l'amant. Celui-ci, en effet, pouvait dans tous les cas être mis à mort par l'époux trompé alors que seules les femmes d'un chef encouraient le châtiment suprême. Il pouvait aussi, dans le seul cas où la coutume le prévoyait, être puni d'une amende. Enfin il était toujours mis aux fers par ordre du naba sur la plainte du mari trompé.

» Quant à la femme adultère, en dehors du cas où elle était

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remise au Moro-Naba par son mari en réparation du meurtre du complice, la sanction de son inconduite résidait uniquement dans une correction plus ou moins vigoureuse ou une mise aux fers de peu de durée. Elle pouvait, il est vrai, être chassée par son mari, mais celui-ci usait rarement de ce droit. La femme, en effet, est une valeur productive d'enfants et de travail. D'ailleurs son mari aurait comblé le plus souvent, en agissant ainsi, le plus cher de ses désirs. »

Si la femme mossi a des devoirs envers son mari, celui-ci a également des obligations envers ses femmes :

« La femme, dit la Monographie, a le droit d'exiger que son mari ne se contente pas d'entretenir avec elle des relations platoniques.

» Si cependant il en était ainsi par suite d'impuissance ou de maladie du mari ou simplement par suite de sa mauvaise volonté, l'épouse délaissée ferait part de la situation à la première femme du chef de famille qui en informerait ce dernier.

» Si la conduite du mari était causée par son inaptitude physique, la femme lui serait retirée et serait remise à un de ses frères ou à défaut à son parent le plus proche, exception faite de ses fils. Si elle était due seulement à son mauvais vouloir, des représentations lui seraient faites et si, au bout de quelques jours, on se rendait compte qu'elles sont infructueuses, la femme serait rendue libre de rentrer dans sa famille. »

De même que le mari doit à ses femmes le service conjugal, il leur doit une fidélité relative.

« Le mari a vis-à-vis de ses femmes une obligation relative de fidélité : celle de ne pas entretenir de concubine au domicile conjugal. S'il y contrevenait ses épouses obtiendraient de plein droit le divorce d'avec lui, à moins que sur leur réclamation ou sur l'intervention du chef de famille, il ne consentît à expulser sa complice.

» Cette règle est suivie d'une manière absolue, sauf par les Mossi du Kipirsi qui admettent la présence des concubines du mari au milieu des femmes légitimes de celui-ci et réglementent la situation respective des unes et des autres.

» En tout cas, partout, en dehors du domicile conjugal, le

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mari peut tromper ses épouses comme bon lui semble et sans que celles-ci puissent élever la moindre protestation de ce fait. Mais elles disposent presque toujours d'un moyen à peu près infaillible quoique détourné d'attirer les pires désagréments sur la tête de l'époux volage et de sa complice. L'usage de marier les filles de très bonne heure a, en effet, pour conséquence que le mari ne peut guère commettre l'adultère qu'avec une femme déjà en puissance d'époux. La femme trompée qui veut tirer vengeance de l'infidèle n'a donc qu'à dénoncer au conjoint de la complice de son mari le commerce criminel dont ils sont l'un et l'autre victimes. »

Ajoutons qu'un autre devoir du mari est de porter secours aux parents de ses femmes, en cas de misère de ceux-ci.

Naturellement l'inexécution de ces différentes obligations pouvait amener une demande en divorce. Le divorce existe donc chez les Mossi, quoique les femmes y recourent rarement. La dot n'est jamais réclamée par le mari, même quand la femme est restée stérile. Les enfants sont toujours pour le mari.

Le mari, en revanche, peut aussi renvoyer sa femme, mais les maris mossi n'usent pas généralement de ce droit.

Ajoutons que la question de la virginité de la fille lors du mariage est réglée par les Mossi comme par la plupart des autres noirs : quand une fille est achetée ou fiancée dès son plus jeune âge, elle doit se garder intacte pour son futur mari, mais une fille libre peut disposer de son corps quand elle est nubile et, si elle est épousée par la suite, on ne peut lui reprocher d'être déjà femme avant les noces.

Passons maintenant au statut des esclaves.

Chez les Mossi on distingue deux sortes d'esclaves, en dehors de la distinction ordinaire des captifs de traite et des captifs de case :

1° Les daparés (étymologiquement hommes de la suite, hommes qui marchent derrière le maître, de da : homme et paré : par derrière). Ce sont les esclaves non mariés.

2° Les bagarés (hommes de l'enclos). Ce sont les captifs mariés.

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Les daparés habitent avec le maître et sont perpétuellement à sa disposition pour tout travail qui peut se présenter. Aussi n'ont-ils pas de petits champs particuliers et le maître les nourrit-il et les habille-t-il tout le temps. Quand ils sont en âge d'être mariés le maître leur paye une femme (du moins jadis en était-il ainsi : elle coûtait au maître dans les 60.000 ou 70.000 cauris) et alors ils s'installent à part.

Quant aux bagarés ils habitent à part, travaillent pour eux-mêmes, s'entretiennent eux-mêmes, etc.

Leurs obligations sont :

1° De venir travailler un jour par semaine sur le champ du maître (ils se nourrissent eux-mêmes ce jour-là comme les autres jours).

2° De venir travailler pour le maître dans les circonstances exceptionnelles, par exemple quand le maître réunit tous ses voisins pour venir travailler sur son champ.

3° De venir saluer tous les ans leur maître après la récolte. Ils lui donnent un panier de mil. Quand l'année a été mauvaise ils sont dispensés de ce don.

4° Le maître peut demander à son esclave des poulets, des moutons, un bœuf, une vache. Les poulets ne peuvent être refusés sous aucun prétexte. Quant aux moutons ou aux bœufs l'esclave peut refuser de donner la bête demandée, mais alors il est tenu d'aller la vendre immédiatement au marché et de donner la moitié du prix obtenu à son maître. Si l'esclave refuse d'aller vendre la bête au marché, le maître a le droit de prendre ses biens mobiliers et de les vendre.

5° Quand le maître a des dettes, le bagaré doit l'aider à les payer.

Quant à l'héritage, lorsqu'un bagaré mourait, le maître laissait tous les biens aux enfants. Le fils aîné du bagaré héritait, mais il donnait quelque chose aux autres fils. A défaut de fils le frère puîné héritait. Si les fils étaient petits, le frère puîné héritait encore, au moins momentanément. A défaut d'héritiers mâles le maître héritait, mais il donnait quelque chose sur les biens aux filles.

En résumé la condition des bagarés en fait bien plutôt des

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serfs que des esclaves proprement dits. Sous ce rapport leur statut est loin du statut familial des esclaves que nous avons vus jusqu'ici, et doit bien plutôt être comparé au statut des esclaves Dialonkés, Soussous, Foulahs de Guinée qui, eux aussi, sont des serfs, travaillent trois jours par semaine pour le maître (6 heures par jour), et sont libres le reste du temps, à condition de s'entretenir eux-mêmes.

Ajoutons que depuis la présence des Français au Mossi les bagarés se sont beaucoup émancipé : la plupart ne donnent plus rien actuellement sur leur récolte à leur maître. Quand un maître veut prendre un mouton ou un bœuf sur l'avoir de son bagaré, celui-ci refuse ou s'il consent à vendre la bête au marché, il ne donne à son maître qu'un dixième des cauris versés par l'acheteur. Les bagarés ne « marchent » plus guère qu'en cas de dette du maître et encore il y en a qui se sauvent, avec ce qu'ils possèdent, pour ne pas payer ses dettes.

Ajoutons encore que ces captifs, qui étaient pour la plupart d'origine gourounsi ou boussansé, veulent retourner maintenant dans leur pays et qu'il y a un exode incessant, lent mais continu, d'esclaves du Mossi vers le sud. D'autre part les Français ayant défendu sévèrement l'achat et la vente des esclaves, la source de leur recrutement est tarie. Avec tout cela nous comprendrons qu'au Mossi, comme dans toute l'Afrique occidentale du reste, nous marchions vers une suppression lente mais certaine de l'esclavage et du servage.

En terminant disons qu'au Mossi on trouve chez les forgerons groupés en quartiers ou en villages dont nous avons déjà parlé à cause de leur type familial patriarcal non décommunautarisé, non plus des serfs comme les bagarés, mais de vrais esclaves du type familial ordinaire comme nous en avons vus jusqu'ici.

Ces esclaves habitent dans la même soukala que leur maître, mariés ou non mariés, captifs de traite ou captifs de case. Pendant l'hivernage tous travaillent sur les champs du chef de soukala, de 6 heures du matin à 3 heures de l'après-midi, avec le repos ordinaire pour le déjeuner. Ils ont de petits champs à eux auxquels ils peuvent travailler à partir de 3 heures. Pen-

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dant la saison sèche ils travaillent au métier de forgeron avec leur maître toute la journée.

Ils sont nourris toute l'année par le chef de soukala. Ils se procurent en revanche leurs habits eux-mêmes, leurs bijoux, grigris, etc. Le chef de soukala leur achète la première femme et en revanche dispose de leurs filles.

L'héritage d'un esclave défunt va à son maître et à ses fils. Pour les bestiaux et les cauris le maître prend la moitié et donne la moitié au fils ou aux fils. Pour les vêtements, bracelets etc., tout cela est pour les enfants. Ceux-ci se partagent d'une façon égale ce qui leur revient sur la succession de leur père.

On voit que de même que la famille des forgerons est au Mossi un témoin d'un ancien état de choses, le statut des captifs chez eux est aussi un témoignage du Mossi antique avant le Mossi des Dagombas conquérants. Famille et statut des esclaves nous reportent en effet aux Bobos, aux Gourounsi, etc.

Nous en arrivons maintenant aux pouvoirs publics. Nous renvoyons pour le statut de la propriété et les rapports de voisinage à l'Appendice n° 32 et nous entrons tout de suite dans l'étude des pouvoirs politiques.

Nous savons déjà que l'organisation politique mossi est centralisée : les villages dépendent de cantons qui sont eux-mêmes groupés en provinces d'administration directe ou en provinces simplement vassales. Au sommet de la hiérarchie est le roi, le Moro-Naba, chef suprême du Mossi, résidant à Ouagadougou. Pour donner une idée de l'importance, au moins relative, qu'avait cet empire, nous dirons que dans le cercle même de Ouagadougou, sans aller plus loin, il y avait huit provinces se partageant 300 cantons, 5.000 villages ou bourgs et 861.700 habitants.

Commençons la description de cet organisme politique par la tête, c'est-à-dire par le Moro-Naba.

Moro-Naba veut dire chef du Mossi, de naba chef et Moro ou Mora qui veut dire Mossi, au singulier. Au pluriel Moro donne Mossi ou Mossé. (Les Français ont pris l'habitude de dire un Mossi, des Mossi, mais c'est là un barbarisme et régu-

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lièrement on devrait dire un Moro, des Mossi, comme on dit un Gourounga, des Gourounsi, un Kipirga, des Kipirsi, etc.). Quant au mot chef il se dit en Mossi naba et soba. Naba semble être le mot qui a été apporté par la race conquérante Mossi-Dagomba, tandis que soba est probablement le vocable par lequel les autochtones désignaient le chef.

Le Moro-Naba, avant la conquête française, avait autour de lui un certain nombre de ministres ou d'éminents dignitaires qui avaient : 1° une attribution propre ; 2° en plus une circonscription du pays à gouverner. C'est cela qui constituait des provinces au-dessus des cantons, du moins dans le pays d'administration directe, mais les chefs de ces provinces n'y résidaient pas. Ils résidaient à Ouagadougou même et étaient avant tout ministres du Moro-Naba.

C'étaient :

1° Le Kamsoro-Naba, chef des eunuques et premier ministre, sorte de ministre de l'intérieur.

2° Le Ouidi-Naba, chef de la cavalerie.

3° Le Gounga-Naba, chef des fantassins.

4° Le Laralé-Naba, chef des sépultures des Moro-Nabas ;

5° Le Baloum-Naba, grand intendant et chef des soronés (pages). C'était une espèce de commandant de l'intérieur du palais.

C'étaient ces cinq ministres qui avaient le commandement des cinq provinces du Mossi d'administration directe : le Kamsoro, le Ouidi, le Gounga, le Laralé et le Baloum. Comme on le voit, ces provinces n'avaient pas de nom propre, de nom à elles et prenaient le nom des dignitaires qui les gouvernaient, Ce n'étaient donc pas de vraies provinces géographiques ou ethniques, mais des circonscriptions artificielles découpées dans un milieu à la fois trop morcelé et trop homogène pour donner autre chose naturellement que des villages et des cantons.

En dehors de ces cinq ministres, parmi lesquels le Kamsoro-Naba et le Baloum-Naba paraissent avoir été les plus importants, il y avait d'autres dignitaires ou employés dont voici la liste :

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1° Le Tamsaba ou Kinsaba, grand chef de guerre.
2° Le Samandé-Naba, chef des gardes du corps.
3° Le Pouy-Naba, chef des féticheurs.
4° Le Gandé-Naba, grand prêtre et sacrificateur.
5° Le Dapouy-Naba, chef des serviteurs.
6° Le Kambo-Naba, sous-chef des serviteurs.
7° Le Bindé-Naba, chef du tamtam du Moro-Naba.
8° Le Ouidianga-Naba, chef des palfreniers.
9° Le Mendo-Naba, chef ou représentant des bouchers.
10° Le Dara-Naba, chef des marchés.
11° Le Kamboué-Naba, exécuteur des hautes-œuvres.
12° Enfin le Yarsé-Naba, chef ou représentant des Yarsé établis dans le Mossi. Il jouissait en fait d'une considération qui lui faisait prendre rang immédiatement après les cinq ministres et le tamsaba.

« Les différentes charges de la cour du Moro-Naba, dit Moulins, sont héréditaires en ce sens que les titulaires sont toujours choisis par le souverain dans la proche parenté du détenteur précédent de l'emploi.

» En outre des dignitaires, le Moro-Naba est entouré d'une véritable armée de soronés (pages), de samandés (gardes du corps), d'ourkimas (palfreniers) et de jussabas (eunuques). »

Pour les soronés, il y a quelques explications à donner. Ce sont de jeunes enfants ou des adolescents, ayant de sept ou huit à quinze ans, que l'on trouve non seulement auprès du Moro-Naba, mais encore auprès de tous les chefs mossi, quels qu'ils soient, ministres, dignitaires, chefs de cantons, chefs de village même. Ces chefs se les procurent, comme nous l'avons vu plus haut, en se réservant le premier-né garçon comme le premier-né fille de tous les gens auxquels ils ont procuré une femme. Du garçon, ils font un soroné et quant à la fille ils s'en serviront pour perpétuer, en la donnant en mariage à quelqu'un, le recrutement des soronés et des serviteurs.

Les soronés sont coiffés comme les femmes. Comme elles, ils portent de lourds bracelets de cuivre aux poignets et aux chevilles, et s'il faut en croire ce qu'on dit, non seulement ils ont

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les attributs des femmes, mais ils en jouent encore quelquefois le rôle. Il paraît que les Mossi doivent, le vendredi, ne pas commettre œuvre de chair avec leurs femmes. C'est là une prescription religieuse destinée à se faire bien venir des divinités, mais cette prescription a oublié de prévoir les soronés... Cette corruption, en tout cas, n'atteint pas la masse du peuple mossi qui, elle, n'a pas le moyen d'avoir des soronés à son service, et elle ne concerne que les chefs.

Quoi qu'il en soit de cela, les soronés sont choisis généralement parmi les plus jolis enfants, et avec leur coiffure de femme sont quelquefois d'une extrême beauté.

Une autre obligation de leur emploi est de rester vierges... vis-à-vis des femmes.

« Il est procédé chaque année, dit Moulins, à la vérification de la chasteté des soronés du Moro-Naba. Ceux-ci sont invités par le Pouy-Naba à se mirer dans une calebasse pleine d'eau et, suivant la manière dont leur image est reflétée, sont proclamés purs de toute souillure ou, au contraire, sont convaincus d'avoir commis l'œuvre de chair, auquel cas ils étaient, avant notre occupation, mis à mort séance tenante. C'est que les soronés, confidents du Naba, sont souvent dépositaires de secrets d'Etat et qu'ils ne sauraient faire preuve de la discrétion commandée par leur situation qu'à condition de fuir les sollicitations de l'amour.

» Lorsque les soronés atteignent l'âge d'homme, le Naba leur donne une femme et les renvoie. Le premier-né de l'union d'un soroné avec la femme que lui a donné le Naba appartient à ce dernier qui en fera un soroné si c'est un garçon et aura seul le droit d'en disposer en mariage si c'est une fille. »

Moulins donne encore d'intéressants détails sur la façon dont le Moro-Naba passe ses journées ou plutôt les passait jadis, car cette description se réfère à l'état de choses qui existait avant l'occupation française.

« A partir du règne de Ouarga, les Moro-Nabas qui jusque-là avaient résidé successivement dans les différentes régions de l'empire, se fixèrent à Ouagadougou où ils résident depuis cette époque. La coutume leur fait une obligation de ne jamais s'éloi-

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gner de la capitale, à moins de circonstances exceptionnellement graves. C'est qu'en effet, lorsque le souverain est absent de Ouagadougou, le pays est livré à l'anarchie. Les vols, les pillages et les meurtres qui viennent à être commis ne peuvent donner lieu à aucune poursuite contre leurs auteurs.

» Chaque matin, vers 7 heures, le Moro-Naba sort de sa case. Son cheval sellé l'attend devant la porte. Il le monte et fait le simulacre de se mettre en route, mais après avoir fait le tour de sa case, il met pied à terre et rentre chez lui pour ressortir aussitôt.

» La source de cette formalité du protocole est la suivante. Il y a fort longtemps la femme préférée du Moro-Naba s'étant sauvée à La, le souverain voulut aller la chercher lui-même. Il monta à cheval et se disposait à partir lorsque tous les dignitaires de la cour se précipitèrent au-devant de lui, le conjurant de ne pas donner suite à son projet, son absence de Ouagadougou devant avoir pour conséquence de faire régner l'anarchie. Le monarque céda et, peu après, son épouse revenait d'elle-même auprès de lui. C'est en souvenir de la magnanimité de ce souverain qui s'est sacrifié à l'intérêt de son peuple que, chaque matin, depuis cette époque, les Moro-Naba feignent de se préparer au départ et de renoncer ensuite à leur projet.

» Après cette cérémonie, le Maro-Naba s'installe dans une niche disposée dans le mur d'enceinte de son habitation, puis, au milieu d'une musique copieuse, toute la cour s'approche du souverain et se prosterne devant lui, le front dans la poussière, les avant-bras frappant le sol en cadence, dans un grand cliquetis de bracelets. On procède ensuite à l'expédition des affaires.

» Les cinq chefs de province se présentent les premiers dans leur ordre de préséance, rendent compte au Moro-Naba des événements qui se sont produits depuis la veille, et prennent ses instructions pour la journée. Puis, ils lui présentent les chefs de canton et de village et les simples indigènes qui sollicitent une audience.

» Le Moro-Naba, assisté de ses ministres, et se livrant à de fréquentes libations de dolo, écoute les requêtes qui lui sont

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présentées et rend sa sentence dans les procès qui lui sont soumis.

» Vers onze heures, il se retire dans sa case et se repose jusqu'à trois heures, moment où il vient de nouveau prendre place sur son trône.

» Chaque geste du Moro-Naba est réglé par un protocole minutieux et est accompagné d'airs de flûte et de tambourin et de claquements de doigts par tous ceux qui l'entourent.

» Sort-il à cheval pour une courte promenade autour de Ouagadougou? Toute la cour le suit, qui à pied, qui à cheval. Ses griots font retentir l'air de vociférations avec accompagnement de tambour et de flûte. Un palfrenier conduit sa monture à la longe, tandis que deux soronés tiennent chacun un de ses étriers et qu'un troisième, à cheval à côté de lui, l'abrite d'un vaste parapluie. D'autres pages suivent, porteurs de son coussin, de son épée et de canaris de dolo où le souverain puise en cours de route de copieuses et fréquentes libations.

» La nuit, le Moro-Naba vêtu d'un déguisement et accompagné d'un seul soroné, parcourt *incognito* les différents quartiers du village dans le but de se renseigner sur ce qui se passe sans être reconnu.

» A dates fixes, il se rend à proximité de Ouagadougou en des lieux nommés, l'un Sabaye, l'autre Saraboutenga où il procède à des sacrifices de bœufs, moutons et poulets.

» Le Moro-Naba a de très nombreuses femmes. A celles qu'il épouse lui-même s'ajoutent en effet celles de son prédécesseur et toutes celles qui lui adviennent au cours de son règne, notamment dans certains cas les épouses adultères de ses sujets.

» Les femmes du souverain n'habitent pas toutes chez lui. Elles sont installées dans des villages commandés par des eunuques et dont nul n'avait, avant notre occupation, le droit de s'approcher sous peine de mort. Tous les ans on s'assure de la fidélité des femmes du Moro-Naba en leur faisant subir la même épreuve qu'aux soronés. L'adultère est puni de mort tant pour la femme que pour son complice. Il semble même que l'adultère avec une femme du souverain soit considéré

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comme le crime le moins excusable qu'un homme puisse commettre. En effet les nakomsé ou fils de chefs ne sont passibles de la peine de mort que dans ce cas.

» Les femmes du Moro-Naba ne font jamais leurs couches et n'élèvent pas leurs enfants dans la demeure de celui-ci, mais dans un des villages d'eunuques. Théoriquement elles ne sont rien de plus que les femmes des simples indigènes, mais en fait elles jouissent d'une grosse considération auprès des Mossi, comme tout ce qui touche au Moro-Naba.

» Les fils du souverain sont confiés, une fois sevrés, à un chef de province ou de canton qui est chargé de leur éducation. A l'âge de dix ans ils sont mariés et installés dans un village où ils vivent, entourés d'une cour, mais sans avoir forcément de commandement territorial.

» Les prérogatives qui s'attachent au titre de fils de Moro-Naba sont énormes tant que vit le monarque ; elles confèrent le droit de voler, de piller et même de tuer sans être inquiété.

» A la mort du Moro-Naba les fils de celui-ci deviennent de simples nakomsé (fils de chefs) dont la situation est encore fort privilégiée.

» Toutefois un des fils du souverain défunt est l'objet d'avantages spéciaux. Les femmes du Moro-Naba élisent en effet, à la mort de celui-ci, un de ses jeunes fils qui prend son nom et continue en quelque sorte sa personne. Il n'a aucun commandement mais est entouré d'une cour semblable à celle du Moro-Naba, jouit d'une considération presque égale à celle de ce dernier et est personnage sacré. Nul n'a le droit de lui résister, ni de lui faire du mal.

» Quant aux filles du Moro-Naba, bien qu'en principe elles ne soient rien de plus que des filles mossi quelconques, elles jouissent en pratique du respect le plus absolu de tous les indigènes. Une fois mariées elles sont dans une indépendance de fait à peu près complète vis-à-vis de leur mari et en profitent fréquemment pour mener l'existence la plus déréglée.

» Quand le décès du Moro-Naba est constaté, on procède à son inhumation, puis à la fête des funérailles dans la même forme que pour un simple indigène avec cette seule différence

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que les cérémonies ont plus d'éclat et que les sacrifices auxquels il est procédé sont plus considérables.

» Pendant tout le temps que dure l'interrègne, le pays vit dans l'état le plus absolu d'anarchie. Chacun a le droit de tuer, de piller et de voler à sa guise. Les condamnés en cours de peine sont de plein droit grâciés et remis en liberté.

» Après la fête des funérailles, un collège électoral composé du Ouidi-Naba, président, assisté du Gounga-Naba, du Laralé-Naba et du Tamsaba se réunit dans le plus grand mystère et tient ses assemblées dans un lieu aussi retiré ou discret que possible. Par suite en effet de l'état d'anarchie qui règne, les partisans des différents compétiteurs ne manqueraient pas de troubler les travaux du collège électoral, s'ils savaient où ils ont lieu, en appuyant à coup de flèches la candidature de leurs favoris respectifs.

» Lorsque les membres du collège se sont mis d'accord sur le choix du nouveau souverain (qui ne peut être choisi que dans la descendance directe d'Oubry, fondateur de l'empire), ils préviennent mystérieusement l'élu qui en se cachant lui-même vient les retrouver. Puis les quatre électeurs convoquent chacun leurs guerriers qui viennent se grouper autour d'eux et du nouveau Moro-Naba. Le lendemain matin le peuple prévenu accourt et le souverain est proclamé.

» A partir de ce moment les troubles de l'interrègne prennent fin.

» Le Moro-Naba suivi des grands dignitaires et de la foule se rend à Tamvilli (quartier de Ouagadougou), où il passe la première journée de son règne. Le soir venu il se rend chez le chef du village de Ouagadougou, pour y passer la nuit. Le lendemain matin il va à Paspanga (quartier de Ouagadougou), où, sur l'emplacement de l'ancienne demeure du Naba Kom, il reçoit les chefs de canton et les Nakomcé, qui viennent lui prêter le serment de fidélité. Enfin, après cette dernière formalité, il est quitté par les membres du collège électoral et se rend en compagnie des Baloum-Naba, Kamsoro-Naba et Jussaba-Naba dans la résidence royale.

» Tant que durent les fêtes du couronnement, les compéti-

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teurs malheureux sont l'objet des plus cruelles railleries, mais une fois les cérémonies terminées, ils deviennent *Kourita*, c'est-à-dire les premiers des Nakomsé.

» Nous avons dit qu'aussitôt le Moro-Naba proclamé, les désordres de l'interrègne prennent fin. L'histoire Mossi n'enregistre qu'un seul cas où la décision du collège électoral n'ayant pas été acceptée par le peuple, des désordres se sont produits malgré la proclamation du souverain. C'est lors de l'élection du Naba Sagha, fils du Naba Kom. Le peuple aurait voulu voir nommer Kaoko, fils du Naba Zombéré et, mécontent de voir le trône échapper au souverain de son choix, ne voulut pas reconnaître l'élu du collège. Le nouveau monarque ne put prendre possession de son trône qu'après avoir livré à la tête de ses partisans une sanglante bataille à son rival malheureux. »

Les chefs de province ministres sont nommés par le Moro-Naba qui choisit dans la plus proche parenté du naba à remplacer le plus digne de lui succéder. Ils jouissent de pouvoirs considérables dans le commandement de leurs provinces, sont entourés d'une cour nombreuse, mais sont sous le contrôle direct du Moro-Naba.

Il faut ajouter qu'en dehors des cinq provinces directement sous l'autorité du Moro-Naba de Ouagadougou il y en avait quatre autres (Boussouma et Béloussa au nord-est, Yako au nord-ouest, Tenkodogo au sud-est) qui étaient simplement vassales et en fait jouissaient d'une autonomie à peu près complète avant notre occupation. Celle de Tenkodogo surtout était importante.

Les chefs de ces provinces étaient de véritables monarques nommés dans les mêmes conditions que le Moro-Naba par le collège électoral de leur province. Une fois élus, ils jouissaient de toutes les prérogatives de la souveraineté, nommant les chefs de canton et administrant leurs provinces à leur guise.

Leur pouvoir était aussi absolu chez eux que celui du Moro-Naba dans son ensemble de provinces sujettes, mais ils reconnaissaient sa suzeraineté et, quand il y avait transmission de pouvoirs, ils lui faisaient un cadeau en signe de vassalité.

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Dans les provinces sujettes, les chefs de canton étaient nommés par le Moro-Naba sur présentation du chef de province. Ils étaient toujours pris dans la plus proche parenté du chef en remplacement duquel ils étaient nommés, tous descendants d'Oubry premier Moro-Naba. Ils étaient sous les ordres directs du chef de province par l'intermédiaire duquel ils passaient pour s'adresser au Moro-Naba. C'était à eux qu'il appartenait de procéder à la nomination des chefs de village toujours pris dans la famille du chef précédent.

Ajoutons qu'en principe et toutes choses étant égales d'ailleurs, c'était le fils aîné du chef défunt qui devait succéder à son père, cela aussi bien pour les chefs de village que pour les chefs de canton, pour les chefs de canton que pour les chefs de province et pour les chefs de province que pour le Moro-Naba. Ce principe était un principe contraire au vrai principe patriarcal où c'est le frère puîné qui est toujours l'héritier naturel et légitime du frère défunt. Mais les nécessités guerrières l'avaient probablement imposé aux Mossi lors de leur conquête du Dagomba et du Mossi.

Mais, à son tour, ce principe héréditaire direct (et non plus héréditaire collatéral) avait été limité par les droits de l'autorité supérieure, représentée par les chefs de canton vis-à-vis des chefs de village, par les chefs de province vis-à-vis des chefs de canton, par le Moro-Naba vis-à-vis des chefs de province et par le collège électoral des grands dignitaires vis-à-vis du futur Moro-Naba. En un mot l'hérédité guerrière de père à fils aîné était de principe dans le Mossi pour le pouvoir, mais cédait elle-même aux nécessités gouvernementales quand il s'en présentait.

Il ne faudrait pas croire que le troisième principe, à savoir l'assentiment des intéressés, fut complètement méconnu dans le Mossi : celui des habitants du village quand il s'agissait d'un chef de village, celui des notables du canton quand il s'agissait d'un chef de canton, celui des notables de la province quand il s'agissait d'un chef de province, etc. Mais ce troisième principe était celui qui avait le moins d'importance ici, celui dont il était le moins tenu compte, celui qui sortait enfin le moins de l'état

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potentiel. Et quand il était en opposition avec les autres il devait céder.

Ajoutons que la plupart des chefs mossi étaient assistés de représentants appelés baloums :

« Les chefs de province, dit la Monographie, le plus grand nombre des chefs de canton et même les chefs de quelques gros villages sont assistés d'un ou plusieurs baloums ou maîtres du palais qu'ils se choisissent librement. Ceux-ci sont parfois d'anciens captifs, le plus souvent de simples indigènes ou d'anciens soronés, jamais des nakomsé. Leur charge n'est pas héréditaire. Elle confère le pouvoir de se substituer au naba, de parler et d'agir en son nom ».

Moulins ajoute : « La coutume ne prévoit pas qu'un chef puisse à proprement parler être destitué de ses fonctions. Un naba qui donne des sujets de plainte au souverain est convoqué par celui-ci sous un prétexte quelconque et mis à mort sans autre forme de procès à la fin de l'audience qui lui a été accordée. Si, soupçonnant le véritable objet de l'invitation du Moro-Naba, il ne s'y rend pas de bonne grâce, une colonne est envoyée dans la région qu'il administre avec mission de s'emparer de sa personne et de le conduire au Moro-Naba qui le fait mettre à mort par ses pages ».

Ajoutons qu'en mossi chef de village se dit tengasoba ou tenganaba, de tenga qui veut dire terre, endroit, lieu, et, par extension, village, et de naba ou soba qui veut dire chef. Il y a aussi des chefs de quartier, sakanabas ou sakasobas ou encore sakakasamans, de saka qui veut dire quartier et naba, soba ou kasaman, chef. Les villages mossi sont en effet divisés en quartiers séparés les uns des autres par 200, 300, 400 ou 500 mètres et composés de soukalas qui se trouvent généralement, comme nous le savons, à 40 ou 50 mètres les unes des autres. Quand un chef de quartier meurt, c'est le plus ancien chef de soukala du quartier qui le remplace.

Au-dessous du Moro-Naba, des chefs de province, de canton et de village, il existait au Mossi une véritable aristocratie, une véritable noblesse, les nakomsé ou fils de chefs. « Ils jouissaient — dit Moulins — de privilèges importants. Ils avaient le droit

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de piller les caravanes de passage et de se faire remettre par les simples indigènes des cadeaux en cauris, bétail, grains, etc., que ceux-ci ne pouvaient leur refuser. Il leur était interdit de tuer, mais le meurtre commis par eux entraînait, au lieu de leur mise à mort, une simple mise aux fers de peu de durée. En outre ils avaient le privilège pour tous leurs crimes ou délits de ne pouvoir être jugés que par le Moro-Naba chef de leur maison ». En effet ils descendent tous, ou sont censés descendre, du Moro-Naba Oubry conquérant du Mossi.

Il faut noter soigneusement cette existence d'une aristocratie dans le Mossi : cela différencie de beaucoup les Mossi des populations que nous avons vues jusqu'ici : Bobos, Nounoumas, Kassounas, Sissalas, Dagaris, etc. On ne trouve pas souvent de nobles chez le noir d'Afrique occidentale, seulement dans les populations actuellement ou anciennement conquérantes. Il y a un degré de complication et de développement social supérieur ici, en un mot un degré supérieur de civilisation.

Les Nakomsé formaient et forment encore des villages à part, épars dans le Mossi. Ils se livraient aux mêmes travaux que les autres Mossi mais, avant l'occupation française, ils y joignaient le pillage qui était leur grande ressource, leur grand facteur d'enrichissement. Il est vrai que cette manière de s'enrichir leur avait donné des habitudes d'imprévoyance. Actuellement ils ne possèdent pas plus de petit bétail que la masse mossi et seulement un peu plus de gros, alors qu'avec leurs occasions anciennes de s'enrichir, ils devraient en posséder beaucoup plus. Mais ils « mangeaient » immédiatement ce qu'ils pillaient, comptant sur les pillages à venir. Actuellement ils ne pillent plus, mais ils semblent avoir gardé les habitudes d'imprévoyance de jadis. Ils faut noter cependant qu'ils possèdent sensiblement plus de chevaux que les autres Mossi.

J'ai vu à Pirigui, en janvier 1909, un de ces villages de fils de chefs. Ils étaient là en tout 841 habitants nobles, leurs familles et leurs captifs. Ces gens-là seraient curieux à étudier au point de vue anthropologique. Il y avait là des physionomies totalement différentes des physionomies nègres, des physionomies vraiment distinguées, des faciès orientaux, sémitiques, bref de

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quoi frapper un observateur même non versé dans les questions d'anthropologie.

Ainsi, un chef suprême, une hiérarchie de chefs soigneusement établie, une classe de nobles jouissant de grands privilèges, telle était la superstructure constituée par l'Etat mossi.

Pour les impôts « à la fin de chaque hivernage, les chefs de canton — dit Moulins — avaient, avant notre occupation, le devoir de venir saluer le Moro-Naba et de lui remettre à cette occasion certains présents (bœufs, moutons, mil) qui constituaient une sorte de redevance fixe ». C'était l'impôt ordinaire perçu après chaque récolte.

« En outre, chaque fois que le souverain avait besoin de quoi que ce soit, il chargeait les chefs de province de le lui procurer. Ceux-ci convoquaient les chefs de canton qui, à leur tour, réunissaient les chefs de village, qui se procuraient, par l'intermédiaire des chefs de soukala, les animaux, grains, cauris et autres choses demandées.

» Enfin, chaque fois qu'un indigène, chef ou particulier, se présentait au Moro-Naba, il remettait un présent à celui-ci.

» Des droits de place étaient perçus par le Dara-Naba, pour le compte du souverain, sur les marchés environnant Ouagadougou. Le Moro-Naba avait aussi droit aux défenses des éléphants et à un quartier des buffles et des kobas tués par les chasseurs.

» De plus le droit de confiscation dont le souverain pouvait user à son profit sans qu'aucune règle précise limitât impérativement les conditions dans lesquelles il pouvait l'exercer, lui permettait d'accroître, en cas de besoin, les revenus tirés de ses ressources ordinaires.

» Les chefs de province de leur côté avaient le droit de se faire remettre par l'intermédiaire des chefs de canton tout ce dont ils pouvaient avoir besoin pour l'entretien de leur famille et de leur suite. Les chefs de canton avaient les mêmes privilèges sur les villages relevant de leur autorité. Les chefs de village recevaient eux-mêmes de leurs administrés un certain nombre de cadeaux. »

Pour la justice elle était rendue :

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1° Par les chef de famille assistés des anciens de la famille.

2° Par les chefs de village assistés des anciens du village.

3° Par les chefs de canton assistés des anciens de leur quartier.

4° Par les chefs de province assistés par les vieillards de leur quartier et par les dignitaires de leur entourage.

5° Par le Moro-Naba assisté de ses ministres et des dignitaires de son entourage.

« La compétence respective de ces différentes juridictions — dit Moulins — n'avait rien de nettement déterminé ou défini. On se basait uniquement sur une question de fait et de circonstance pour faire régler par telle autorité une affaire que la juridiction inférieure s'était déclarée impuissante à solutionner. Une affaire que le conseil de famille n'avait pu régler était portée à la connaissance du chef de village, puis du chef de canton, du chef de province et enfin du Moro-Naba.

» La justice était gratuite en ce sens que les frais de procédure étaient inconnus, mais l'usage voulait qu'un plaideur ne se présentât jamais les mains vides devant le juge. Il devait tout au moins faire présent à ce dernier d'un poulet blanc. L'issue d'un procès devait dépendre souvent du plus ou moins de générosité de chacune des parties en présence. »

Au sujet des peines, la justice mossi était sévère, en quoi elle s'opposait à la justice « patriarcale » des Bobos, des Gourounsi, etc. Le meurtre était toujours puni de mort (sauf quand il s'agissait de nobles). Pour les vols, les coups et blessures et les affaires de dettes, elles étaient réglées comme nous l'avons vu en parlant des Yarsé qui, étant établis dans le Mossi, étaient soumis en conséquence à la justice mossi. Nous n'y reviendrons donc pas. Notons seulement que les Mossi, étant fétichistes, connaissaient les affaires de sorcellerie.

A Dembo, dans le Yatenga, quand quelqu'un de jeune mourait inopinément on mettait de la « poudre rouge » dans l'eau et tout le monde en buvait en jurant par « Tensé » qu'il était innocent. Les coupables mouraient. Dans d'autres villages du Yatenga, les gens soupçonnés de sorcellerie devaient boire de la terre prise à l'endroit des sacrifices et délayée dans l'eau. Ceux

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qui refusaient de boire et de jurer étaient tués. A Kabayoro, village mossi établi dans le canton de Koumbili, si un homme ou une femme tombaient inopinément malades, on disait que c'était un tel, sorcier, qui mangeait leur esprit. Si le malade mourait on lavait les mains du mort avec de l'eau et on donnait cette boisson à avaler au sorcier. Il devait jurer son innocence et appeler la mort sur sa tête s'il mentait. Coupable il mourait, innocent l'eau ne lui causait aucun mal. S'il refusait de jurer et de boire, on le mettait aux fers et on l'y laissait mourir de faim et de soif. Les baras ne jouaient aucun rôle dans ces affaires. C'était le malade qui désignait le sorcier. Quand il ne désignait personne, c'est qu'il mourait simplement de maladie.

Pour l'armée et la police « en cas de guerre, dit Moulins, les chefs de province convoquaient les chefs de canton qui accouraient avec tous les hommes valides. Tous se groupaient derrière le Tamsaba et le suivaient.

» Quant à la police, elle était assurée par les soins des chefs de village et des chefs de canton qui arrêtaient les coupables avec l'aide de leurs gens à eux ou, au besoin, en convoquant toute la population mâle du village ».

Que comptait cet empire mossi, soigneusement centralisé, avec toute sa hiérarchie de chefs et sa classe de nobles, au moment de l'occupation française (1896)?

En 1909 le recensement accusait 861.700 âmes dans le cercle de Ouagadougou même et 273.000 dans la résidence de Tenkodogo ce qui donne 1.135.000 habitants en tout. Mais de ce chiffre il faut déduire les Boussansé indépendants (99.000, dans la résidence de Tenkodogo) et aussi les gens du Kipirsi (cercle de Ouagadougou même, dépendant nominalement des Mossi, en fait indépendants, mettons 40.000). Il reste donc pour les cinq provinces sujettes et les quatre provinces vassales 996.000 habitants environ. On peut donc dire que le Moro-Naba de Ouagadougou commandait à une masse d'un million d'hommes environ.

Sur ce million d'hommes il fallait compter en gros

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850.000 Mossi, 40.000 Boussansé, 69.000 Yarsé, 32.000 Foulbé, 5.000 Silmi-Mossi, 1.000 Songhay (dans le nord du cercle de Ouagadougou), 1.000 Haoussas répandus ça et là comme les Yarsé et les Foulbé.

Du reste nous savons déjà que cet empire de Ouagadougou ne constituait pas le total de la population mossi. En effet il existait à côté deux autres royaumes qui jadis avaient dû relever de Ouagadougou, mais qui en étaient devenus indépendants bien avant même notre occupation : l'un, celui du Yatenga, avec Ouahigouya pour capitale, situé au nord-ouest de l'empire de Ouagadougou, l'autre celui du Gourma, avec Fada-N'gourma pour capitale, situé au contraire à l'est. Ces deux royaumes pouvaient grouper à eux deux une population de 450.000 habitants où l'élément Mossi dominait, avec des éléments Habé et Samos dans le cercle de Ouahigouya et des éléments Gourmankés dans le cercle de Fada N'gourma.

En résumé il y avait donc un million et demi environ d'habitants groupés par les royaumes mossi de la boucle du Niger et un million par le plus important d'entre eux, celui de Ouagadougou.

La population du Mossi était — et est encore — extraordinairement dense par rapport à la densité générale de la population en Afrique occidentale : au Mossi il y a en effet environ 25 habitants par kilomètre carré tandis qu'en Guinée Française, par exemple, il y a six habitants en moyenne par kilomètre carré. Cela vient de ce que l'empire mossi était centralisé. Les luttes intestines qui ont souvent lieu chez les noirs primitifs (Bobos, Gourounsi, Boussansé, Kipirsi, etc.) de village à village, de quartier à quartier, ou même de soukala à soukala n'existaient pas au Mossi. Il y avait donc paix et sécurité intérieure. De plus le même pouvoir centralisé qui empêchait l'anarchie nègre empêchait le pays d'être dévasté par des conquérants de fortune, par des fondateurs d'empire. Ainsi, tandis que les Songhay Djermabés dévastaient le Gourounsi pays de villages indépendants ou de petits cantons et y fondaient par le fer et par le feu un royaume, ils n'osaient pas s'attaquer au Mossi dont ils étaient pourtant voisins, redoutant les dix mille cava-

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liers du Moro-Naba. Ainsi tranquillité intérieure, tranquillité extérieure, tout cela était assuré ici grâce à un pouvoir centralisé. De là l'impression que fit le pays à différents voyageurs entre le voyage de Barth (qui ne vit pas le Mossi lui-même, mais le longea par le nord) et l'occupation française : « Le Mossi était considéré comme intangible, dit le lieutenant Marc (*op. cit.*, p. 28). Sans aucun doute à cette époque (celle du voyage de Barth) ainsi que Crozat le constatera quarante ans plus tard, on était frappé en entrant en pays Mossi de l'absolue sécurité dans laquelle vivait la population, alors que partout ailleurs la guerre et la chasse aux esclaves désolaient les villages. Et l'on citait avec envie les paysans Mossi se rendant isolément à leur champ la pioche sur l'épaule, alors que partout ailleurs le chef de famille devait avoir nuit et jour ses armes à portée de la main ».

Le lieutenant Marc attribue cette sécurité à la crainte des fétiches du Mossi. Il va chercher bien loin une explication qui va de soi. Les Gourounsi eux aussi avaient des fétiches et pourtant les Djermabés ne les respectèrent aucunement et les traitèrent à peu près comme des grues traitent des grenouilles. On respectait les Mossi parce que c'était un empire centralisé et par conséquent puissant. Le lieutenant Marc a beau dire que cette force n'était rien puisqu'elle n'a pas tenu devant la poignée de tirailleurs du lieutenant Voulet. Assurément elle n'était rien contre une force dressée à l'européenne, pas plus que la force Achantie ne fut rien contre la force anglaise et la force Toucouleure contre les troupes du colonel Archinard. N'empêche que cette force mossi était grande dans son milieu, c'est-à-dire dans l'Afrique occidentale et contre d'autres noirs. Elle suffisait à donner l'avantage aux Mossi sur les Kipirsi, les Gourounsi, les Boussansé, etc. Elle suffisait pour que les Mossi ne fussent pas attaqués par les Toucouleurs, ni par les Djermabés.

En résumé, le Mossi jouissait des avantages d'un gouvernement fort et centralisé établi sans doute jadis au prix de grands massacres et d'exterminations. Et c'est cela qui fait rêver et qui est, pour ainsi dire, la face de la médaille des conquérants noirs. Il est probable qu'Oubry, le fondateur de l'empire mossi au

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XIIe siècle, fut de son temps quelque chose comme un Samory ou un Rabah. Il ne fonda probablement son empire que sur l'écrasement, le pillage et le massacre d'un nombre énorme de petits villages noirs indépendants ou de petits cantons Lélésé, Nounoumas, Boussansé et Habé. N'empêche qu'au XIXe siècle sur le territoire de cet empire établi au prix de tels moyens il y avait 25 habitants par kilomètre carré tandis que chez les Gourounsi voisins restés libres il y a les 5 ou 6 habitants par kilomètre carré de l'Afrique occidentale en général. De plus tandis que les Gourounsi étaient en proie aux Songhay, les Habé aux Toucouleurs, les Malinkés et les Bambaras à Samory, nos Mossi vivaient eux dans la sécurité. Moins d'indépendance, de liberté anarchique, mais la tranquillité intérieure, la sécurité extérieure. Nécessité d'obéir aux chefs, mais pas de luttes entre soi, pas d'écrasement par des pillards étrangers. Somme toute les Mossi étaient entrés dans la voie des états policés et représentaient un état supérieur de civilisation.

Il ne nous reste plus maintenant qu'à donner quelques détails sur la religion mossi.

La grande masse mossi est restée fétichiste.

Nous avons vu plus haut que les Mossi au moment de leur grande expansion dans la boucle du Niger se heurtèrent à un empire musulmanisé, l'empire de Mali, puis que le second empire songhay dirigea de redoutables croisades religieuses contre le Mossi. Dans ces conditions celui-ci devait fatalement considérer l'Islam comme un ennemi. Il est vrai qu'ensuite la destruction du second empire songhay par les Marocains (1591) donna la paix au Mossi sur sa frontière nord et le délivra de la crainte des invasions musulmanes. De leur côté les Yarsé vinrent s'établir dans le Mossi et à cause de leur intelligence, de leur activité, de leur aptitude au commerce s'y firent une place respectée. Cela devait incliner les Mossi vers l'Islamisme ou du moins diminuer leurs préjugés et leur crainte traditionnelle. Néanmoins avant l'occupation française, dit le capitaine Lambert, il était interdit aux Musulmans, par le Moro-Naba, de se

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livrer publiquement à la prière (kella). Ils se contentaient de réciter secrètement leur chapelet (séki).

Depuis l'occupation française, les Mossi ont perdu tout préjugé contre l'Islam, ayant été conquis par un bien autre ennemi. De plus les Musulmans leur racontent, comme partout en Afrique occidentale du reste, que les blancs ne seront vaincus et ne quitteront le pays que quand tout le monde se sera fait musulman. Cela engage les Mossi à se mettre à faire salam et, de fait, il est probable qu'il y a plus de conversions à l'Islam dans le Mossi depuis notre occupation qu'il n'y en avait auparavant. Ce résultat, bizarre au premier abord, est certain. Mais en réalité ces conversions, quoique plus nombreuses qu'autrefois, sont encore rares si l'on considère l'ensemble de la masse mossi et le pays, à le prendre en gros, est encore fétichiste dans son immense majorité.

Passons donc à la description des coutumes religieuses du Mossi.

D'abord les cérémonies mortuaires.

Lorsqu'un Mossi est malade, il fait appeler le diseur de choses cachées (bara en Mossi). Celui-ci prend de la terre et y regarde ce qui doit advenir au malade. Alors il déclare tantôt que celui-ci guérira à condition de faire la charité avec un mouton et un poulet, tantôt qu'il mourra. Dans le premier cas on apporte au bara le poulet et le mouton demandés, puis, si le malade guérit, on lui envoie encore quelque chose, un mouton ou 5.000 cauris. Si le malade meurt contrairement à la prédiction, la famille se contente de dire que le bara était un menteur et il n'en est rien autre chose.

Quand le défunt est un homme, ce sont les vieux de la famille qui s'occupent de lui. Ils lui étirent les membres et même les doigts des mains pour qu'il ne devienne pas rigide tout de suite et ils lui ferment les yeux. Puis un des vieillards lave le cadavre à l'eau froide devant toute la famille. Après quoi les vieillards cousent un linceul avec des bandes de coton pour envelopper le mort, puis on le roulè dans une natte.

Les chefs de soukala (nous savons que chez les Mossi tout chef de ménage est chef de soukala) sont enterrés dans la cour

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de leur soukala ou bien devant la porte de celle-ci. On va chercher les fossoyeurs qui creusent un trou de la grandeur d'un homme, placent le cadavre au fond, puis mettent des planches au-dessus pour empêcher la terre d'oppresser la poitrine du mort. Ensuite ils étendent sur les planches une couche de banko, puis mettent de la terre jusqu'à ce que le trou soit comblé. On met un petit canari sur la tombe pour indiquer son emplacement.

Les autres personnes de la soukala sont enterrées autour de celle-ci dans le champ de maïs. On met également un canari sur la tombe. Il en est de même des esclaves. On n'enterre dans la brousse que les gens atteints de la maladie du sommeil, pour empêcher la propagation de la maladie.

C'est le lendemain matin du jour du décès qu'on enterre le mort. L'héritier du chef de soukala défunt et les anciens de la famille tuent des poulets sur la tombe. Ils prennent les bêtes par les pattes et leur fracassent la tête sur le sol de la sépulture. C'est la manière liturgique de les tuer. On en tue ainsi neuf à la suite qui sont mis de côté pour être mangés. Si la soukala est riche on tue des moutons au lieu de poulets. On les prend par les pattes de derrière et on leur frappe trois fois la tête sur le sol de la tombe, puis on leur coupe la gorge au couteau. L'âme de toutes ces bêtes tuées est pour le mort.

La nuit qui suit la mise en terre on fait tamtam, on crie, on danse, on tire des coups de fusil. Le jour venu chacun retourne chez soi se laver, se reposer et manger. Puis on revient quand le soleil est couché et ainsi pendant trois nuits de suite.

La cérémonie terminée, on prend rendez-vous pour 30, 40, 60 jours ou même un an après. On fait souvent coïncider cette cérémonie avec l'époque de la récolte du mil. On rase la tête des enfants du mort. On fait beaucoup de to. Les sœurs, les filles mariées au loin viennent au jour fixé en apportant des moutons, du dolo. La famille et le village tout entier viennent saluer le successeur du chef de soukala défunt, boire et manger. On fait venir les griots et les grands tamtams : on fait de la musique, on danse, on chante, on boit pendant deux jours et

cette fois on ne pleure pas. Cette seconde réunion termine les cérémonies funèbres auxquelles donne lieu la mort de quelqu'un.

Les Mossi ont une fête annuelle pour leurs morts et Ancêtres. C'est le tiougou ou bassara qu'ils appellent encore péléga en d'autres endroits. Cette fête se célèbre en décembre quand le mil est complètement rentré et quand le froid est venu. Les chefs de famille et de soukala font faire beaucoup de dolo et en versent sur les tombes avec de la farine de mil délayée dans de l'eau. On tue aussi quelques poulets. Personne ne travaille ce jour-là ; on mange, on boit, on se repose. Cependant on ne fait pas de tamtam et on ne danse pas.

D'autres Mossi font les offrandes aux Ancêtres dans la case de leur première femme et non pas sur les tombes (ainsi à Yakki).

Une autre fête est celle qui se fait aux semailles et qu'on appelle tengana. On va chercher certaines feuilles dans la brousse, on les cuit avec des haricots et des pois souterrains et on les mange. On fait aussi beaucoup de dolo.

Le premier jour des semailles on va dans ses champs offrir un poulet, de la farine de mil, du dolo aux pierres du champ (tenkougouri) et à la Terre (Tenga ou Tempeloun) pour que les semailles viennent à bien, produisent une bonne récolte et pour que tout le monde se porte bien.

Il y a aussi une fête des Terres ou Tensé (pluriel de Tenga) qui se célèbre pendant la saison des pluies, une fois l'an. C'est le Moro-Naba qui fixe le jour exact du Tensé. Chaque chef de soukala tue qui un bœuf, qui un mouton, qui un poulet. Les jeunes gens recueillent le sang des animaux sacrifiés dans des calebasses et en versent une partie à terre (à la Terre) pour obtenir une bonne récolte. Le reste est mélangé avec de la farine de gros mil blanc et mangé. On boit beaucoup de dolo. La fête des Terres est particulièrement la fête des gens qui s'appellent Tenga (terre), Tembila, Tenfisi, etc. et de ceux qui sont nés le jour du Tensé.

On offre aussi ce jour là des sacrifices à Naba-Ouondé (le Dieu Chef).

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Les années où la récolte antécédente de mil n'a pas été bonne on ne célèbre pas le Tensé.

Les Mossi n'ont pas de fête spéciale pour la récolte. Au fond c'est le tiougou ou bassara (qui se fait quand le mil a été rentré) qui est la fête de la récolte en même temps qu'il est la fête des Ancêtres.

Les Mossi n'offrent pas de sacrifices aux arbres isolés mais ils en font aux bois ou bosquets sacrés.

A Ouagadougou, à l'endroit où les Pères Blancs habitent actuellement, il y avait un petit bois sacré composé de grands arbres et de buissons épineux où l'on offrait des sacrifices avant que les Français l'aient rasé.

Le Moro-Naba chaque année offrait un mouton et un poulet à ce bois sacré par l'intermédiaire du chef du quartier de Sékou. Il offrait aussi du dolo et de la farine de mil. Il n'y avait pas d'époque fixée pour cela. La chair des bêtes sacrifiées était pour le chef de Sékou sacrificateur.

Il existe encore actuellement des bosquets sacrés dans différents villages mossi : ainsi à Kabayoro il y en a trois : deux appartiennent à des particuliers et un au village. Le chef de la Terre de Kabayoro offre les sacrifices à ce dernier quand le bara dit d'en faire.

Les Mossi font aussi des sacrifices aux collines.

A Sabtinga, à 17 kilomètres environ au nord-ouest de Ouagadougou, il y a une élévation de terrain appelée Tantiibo où le Moro-Naba allait jadis une fois par an à l'époque du commencement du froid accompagné du Baloum-Naba, de beaucoup de chefs et de peuple. Il faisait emmener un bœuf, un poulet, de la farine de mil et une calebasse de dolo qui étaient remis au chef du quartier où se trouve l'élévation du terrain. Celui-ci faisait le sacrifice et demandait au terrain que le Moro-Naba se portât bien. N'assistaient au sacrifice que le Moro-Naba, le Baloum, les gens sacrés (eunuques) et les soronés. Les autres personnes venues à Sabtinga restaient au village d'où le Moro-Naba partait à pied pour le lieu du sacrifice.

A Kombé-Padanda, petite élévation de terrain située dans un

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quartier de Ouagadougou, le même sacrifice était offert à la même époque dans la même forme.

Ajoutons que lorsque les forgerons mossi vont fondre le minerai de fer dans la brousse, ils tuent des poulets et offrent de la farine de mil à l'endroit où ils prennent le minerai. Le sacrifice est offert aux esprits de la colline, ainsi qu'à la Terre et à Naba-Ouondé.

De même qu'aux collines, on fait des sacrifices aux marigots, soit au moment de la pêche, soit quand les baras indiquent que telle rivière demande tel sacrifice.

Pour les caïmans, il y a des caïmans sacrés dans le Mossi. Quant aux serpents on les tue et on les mange généralement, mais pas tout le monde. Quelques-uns les respectent.

Pour la Terre, plusieurs fois par an, chaque fois qu'un bara lui disait de le faire, le Moro-Naba faisait remettre au Baloum-Naba par les ennuques des moutons, des poulets, de la farine de mil et du dolo. Le Baloum-Naba remettait lui-même ces présents au chef de Ouagadougou dont les ancêtres avaient commandé la terre du pays. Il le chargeait, au nom du Moro Naba, d'offrir tout cela à la Terre pour qu'elle lui fût favorable. Ouagadougou-Naba faisait le sacrifice devant la porte de sa soukala.

Si le Moro-Naba allait en guerre, il faisait aussi offrir un sacrifice par le chef de Ouagadougou à la Terre. C'étaient les baras qui indiquaient ce qu'il fallait sacrifier pour obtenir la victoire, pour « casser » les villages qu'ont allait attaquer.

Si la pluie ne tombait pas, le Moro-Naba allait à l'élévation de terrain de Koumbé-Padanda faire offrir un sacrifice par le chef du quartier (bœuf, mouton, poulet) pour obtenir de l'eau. Si celle-ci s'obstinait à ne pas tomber, on consultait de nouveau les baras et on offrait des sacrifices jusqu'à ce qu'elle tombât.

Les Mossi connaissent aussi le dieu du ciel qu'ils appellent Ounam et aussi Naba-Ouendé ou Naba-Ouondé ce qui veut dire le chef soleil. On trouve ici une trace de ce culte du soleil, rare, quoiqu'on en ait dit, dans l'Afrique occidentale noire. La

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masse mossi sacrifie beaucoup plus à ses Ancêtres et à la Terre qu'à Naba-Ouondé qui est pour elle un dieu un peu éloigné.

Il faut ajouter que le lieutenant Desplagnes a découvert au Mossi un culte ésotérique du soleil, de la lune et du feu, particulier aux initiés religieux (Ouangos) dont nous parlerons plus loin.

« Les Hougho-Ouango du Mossi (ces prêtres résident au Mossi dans les villages de Boujema, Mani, Kondogho, Yolo, Tio) sacrifient au soleil pour l'attacher à la Terre, matin et soir, à son lever et à son coucher, pendant la première semaine de l'hivernage, puis dans la suite seulement tous les six jours le matin au soleil levant. Ils se rendent aux autels formés de trois pierres coniques pour offrir les sacrifices et les libations, toujours entourés de tout le peuple, des chefs de famille, des joueurs de tamtam et des masques familiaux (Ouango).

» Ces prêtres gardent pendant toute l'année dans une petite niche très décorée, creusée dans un mur de leur maison, le feu sacré, avec lequel, à la fin de la saison des pluies, ils devront allumer les grands feux de brousse purificateurs.

» Ils sacrifient à chaque lune nouvelle, puis ont sept grandes fêtes par an pour la divinité. Enfin pendant les fêtes du soleil ils se servent d'une queue de vache pour l'attacher à la terre et lier sa chaleur fécondante » (*Le Plateau central nigérien*, pages 275 et 276).

Les Mossi sacrifient aux mauvais esprits (kinkirga au singulier, kinkirsi au pluriel). Au commencement du froid, dans les villages mossi, l'homme le plus vieux du village fait un sacrifice pour détourner la colère des mauvais esprits. Ils sont en effet redoutables : ce sont ceux qui causent, entre autres choses, les tornades, le grand vent qui abat le mil et le maïs. Ils se tiennent généralement dans la brousse et habitent particulièrement les kankalras (lenga en Mandé), arbres auxquels les Mossi sacrifient et dont ils mangent les feuilles pourtant. Il y a des Mossi qui voient les kinkirsi et qui se battent avec eux.

Disons maintenant un mot de l'organisation sacerdotale au Mossi.

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Il y a d'abord chez les Mossi, comme chez les autres noirs des diseurs de choses cachées et des fabricants de grigris. Les diseurs de choses cachées s'appellent baras, et les fabricants de grigris timisobas, c'est-à-dire chefs des grigris de timi : grigri et soba : chef. C'est exactement la même formation de mot que celle de basitigui en Bambara.

Avant l'occupation française il y avait un assez grand nombre de baras dans le Mossi, au moins un par village. Mais, depuis les blancs, il y en a beaucoup moins. Les baras disent les choses cachées à l'aide de la terre. Comme ils ne prennent que quelques cauris par consultation ils cultivent pendant l'hivernage et exercent même quelque métier pendant la saison sèche, par exemple celui de cordonnier ou de tisserand. Ils apprennent leur métier de bara à leurs enfants.

Les timisobas non plus, quoique moins nombreux que les baras, ne gagnent pas leur vie avec leur fabrication de grigris. Eux aussi ils cultivent et exercent un métier. Ils ne font leurs grigris que sur commande et n'en fabriquent pas d'avance.

Le timisoba va dans la brousse couper les racines de certains arbres. Il les fait brûler et met ce charbon dans des sacs qu'il suspend soit dans sa case, soit en dehors de celle-ci. Ce charbon est ou devient grigri. Pour rendre d'autres objets grigris il le réduit en poudre et le mêle à du beurre de karité avec lequel il fait une marque sur tous les objets dont il veut faire des grigris, queues de bœufs, cornes de biches, cornes de moutons, etc. Cette poudre de charbon sert un peu à tout. Le timisoba en mélange même à sa farine de mil pour la manger.

J'ai eu entre les mains un certain nombre de grigris, œuvre des timisobas mossi. En voici l'énumération et la description succinctes :

1° Queue de bœuf au bout d'un manche en bois. Lorsqu'on est en route en hivernage et qu'une tornade menace on n'a qu'à agiter la queue de bœuf. La tornade ne tombe pas. Arrivé au village on cesse de l'agiter et la pluie tombe.

2° Corne de koba creusée dans laquelle on a mis des feuilles de tamarin, des arachides et de la gomme. En cas de mal de tête, on ouvre la corne par le petit couvercle du haut, on prend

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une pincée de la mixture et on l'avale ; on recommence et on s'en frotte aussi le front.

3° Petite pioche avec une tête de coq fixée au manche. Lorsque dans un tamtam on veut imposer silence à un chanteur qui chante trop longtemps, afin de pouvoir soi-même chanter, on empoigne à pleine main la pioche en couvrant la bouche du coq. On obtient ainsi le silence du chanteur et de plus on chante soi-même parfaitement.

4° Petite pioche recouverte au coude de peau de panthère. Si on est mordu par un serpent, on coupe un très petit bout de la peau et on la met dans un canari plein d'eau. On frotte ensuite l'endroit mordu avec cette eau.

5° Corne de biche avec une cordelette rouge enroulée autour. A l'intérieur de la corne il y a des graines de tiégélara et de karité. L'ouverture de la corne est bouchée avec un tampon de coton.

Si un ennemi vient vous chercher querelle on met sur un bracelet de cuir qu'on se passe au poignet gauche un peu du contenu de cette corne. Aucun mal ne peut vous être fait et la dispute cesse instantanément.

6° Corne de biche contenant du piment et du scorpion pilés. Si l'on veut devenir un infatigable danseur on n'a qu'à se frotter le dos avec cette mixture.

7° Bracelets de cuir contenant intérieurement du riz réduit en poudre. Celui qui porte au bras un de ces bracelets est assuré de voir se casser entre les mains de son ennemi le bâton ou le sabre dont celui-ci essaie de le frapper.

8° Bracelets de fer recouverts de peau de caïman : même destination.

9° Bracelets en coton contenant intérieurement du miel et du sel. Si votre femme est stérile, il suffit de mettre ce bracelet dans l'eau pour la rendre féconde.

10° Corne de biche couverte de cuir et contenant de la farine de mil et de haricots pilés. A l'extérieur se trouve un morceau de fer courbe. Si quelqu'un vous fait la remarque que vous possédez beaucoup d'animaux ou qu'ils sont très beaux, cela porte malheur, comme vous le savez. Aussi, pour prévenir celui-ci,

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vous saisissez votre grigri en engageant deux doigts dans la courbure du fer et deux autres dans la courbure de la corne, puis vous suspendez le grigri dans votre case ou, ce qui est encore mieux, vous le pendez au cou d'un des animaux menacés.

11° Petite tortue entière enfermée dans un sachet de cuir avec de la poudre d'une feuille aquatique appelée kouri. En cas de mal au ventre, vous enduisez de beurre la partie plate de l'objet et vous vous en frottez le ventre.

12° Petit bout de bois recouvert en son milieu de peau d'iguane, à chaque extrémité de cuir, et prolongé à l'une par une pointe en fer. Lorsqu'on désire jouir des faveurs d'une femme qui vous les refuse, s'approcher de l'inhumaine en empoignant le grigri à pleine main, de la main gauche, la pointe relevée. Serrer vigoureusement en même temps, de la main droite, la main de la femme. Ce moyen de séduction est, paraît-il, infaillible.

13° Corne de koba couverte de cuir et prolongée au gros bout par une patte de poulet. L'intérieur de la corne contient du riz, du sel et du soumbara. En cas où vous seriez menacé par un grigri fait contre vous, vous assujettissez cette corne sur votre tête, le gros bout descendant entre les deux yeux et la pointe se dirigeant derrière la tête. Alors vous n'avez plus rien à craindre.

14° Corne de biche munie intérieurement de feuilles de barkoundi et fermée par un couvercle orné d'un cauri.

Pour empêcher un sorcier de manger l'âme d'un tiers, vous soulevez le couvercle à l'aide d'un couteau enduit de beurre de karité, vous prenez avec ce couteau un peu du contenu de la corne et vous vous en enduisez le front.

En plus des baras et des timisobas les Mossi possèdent des ouangos :

« Les Ouangos, dit le lieutenant Marc (*op. cit.*, pages 152 et 155) sont des danseurs dont le costume se compose d'une immense robe de lianes couvrant tout le corps et surmontée d'un masque en bois peint en rouge et en noir et représentant

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le plus souvent la tête d'un animal. Les Ouangos forment une confrérie assez mystérieuse. Ils ont un langage spécial et pendant qu'ils chantent (aux cérémonies funèbres des personnages importants, à la seconde, celle qu'on fait un mois ou un an après l'inhumation), les Mossi croient que celui qui prononce une parole est certain de mourir dans l'année. Les masques des Ouangos sont fabriqués dans le plus grand secret. Ils doivent être faits d'une seule pièce de bois et celui qui y travaille ne doit pas être vu tant que son ouvrage n'est pas terminé.

» Il serait à notre avis tout à fait intéressant d'essayer d'étudier de plus près que nous n'avons pu le faire les Ouangos et leurs coutumes. Nous pensons en effet qu'il s'agit d'une institution fort ancienne, antérieure à l'arrivée des Mossi dans le bassin de la Volta et que ceux-ci ont trouvée chez les peuples qu'ils ont conquis et qu'ils ont conservée n'osant pas sans doute essayer de lutter contre elle. On trouve en effet des Ouangos dans tout le Gourounsi et les dou observés par Binger chez les Bobos nous paraissent être de même origine. Les danseurs porteurs de masques totémiques que montrent certaines photographies de Desplagnes rappellent tout à fait les Ouangos du Mossi. »

Ainsi les Ouangos mossi ne sont pas autre chose que les dous Bobos, les mamadiombos Khassonkés, les namakoros Habé et Bambara, les dokhos Malinkés, les simo Landoumans, etc.

Une autre pièce de l'organisation sacerdotale mossi est le chef de la Terre ou Tensoba. Nous connaissons bien les chefs de la Terre pour les avoir déjà rencontrés chez les Gourounsi. Sans commandement politique dans le village, ils sont chargés d'offrir les sacrifices à la Terre et aux autres divinités du lieu.

L'existence de ces chefs de la Terre chez les Mossi s'explique très probablement par la superposition de la race conquérante à la race vaincue. Quand les Mossi envahirent et conquirent le pays, ils mirent, au fur et à mesure de la conquête, à la tête de tous les villages et de tous les cantons, des hommes de

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leur race, pour s'assurer la soumission de la population vaincue, mais ils ne pensèrent jamais (et c'est là un sentiment qu'on retrouve dans toute l'Afrique occidentale) qu'ils fussent qualifiés pour offrir des sacrifices à la Terre de l'endroit et aux divinités du lieu. C'étaient les vaincus seuls, anciens possesseurs de celui-ci et en bon rapport avec lui, qui restaient qualifiés pour cela. L'ancien chef politique autochtone devenait donc naturellement un chef religieux sous le commandement des Mossi. Ainsi nous avons vu que le Moro-Naba n'offre jamais lui-même, ni ne fait offrir par le Gandé-Naba, son ministre de la religion, les sacrifices à la Terre à Ouagadougou. Il en charge le Ouagadougou-Naba petit fils des autochtones et vu favorablement par conséquent par les divinités du lieu. De même quand il sacrifie aux petites élévations de terrain aux environs de Ouagadagou, il charge de ses offrandes et du sacrifice matériel le chef de l'endroit. Or ce que le Moro-Naba fait encore actuellement à Ouagadougou, les naba mossi, une fois la soumission des autochtones assurée par la force, le firent sans doute un peu partout après la conquête. De là l'institution des Tensoba.

On objectera peut-être que les chefs de la Terre existent aussi dans le Gourounsi et que pourtant les Gourounsi sont indépendants. Mais nous savons que les cantons gourounsi actuels ne sont pas l'œuvre des Gourounsi eux-mêmes mais de petites dynasties mossi établies dans le pays. Dans ces conditions la même superposition de chefs vainqueurs à des chefs vaincus s'est opérée là que dans le Mossi amenant les mêmes conséquences.

« Le Tensoba, dit le lieutenant Marc, page 157, dont le titre signifie maître de la Terre, s'oppose au Naba chef militaire...

Le Tensoba est l'intermédiaire obligé entre les Ancêtres et leurs descendants vivants. C'est lui qui procède aux cérémonies des funérailles et qui décide les honneurs à rendre le jour de la fête des morts. C'est à lui qu'on s'adresse en cas d'épidémie ou d'une façon générale dans le cas d'un malheur public, les malheurs étant toujours dus aux mauvaises dispositions des Ancêtres qu'il y a lieu d'apaiser ».

Du reste, l'institution des chefs de la Terre n'enlève pas tout caractère religieux aux chefs de village et aux chefs de canton. Dans quelques endroits, comme le lieutenant Marc l'a indiqué, les chefs de la Terre ont disparu avec le temps et les chefs politiques sont devenus chefs religieux en même temps que chefs politiques. Sur les indications des baras ils offrent des sacrifices en n'oubliant pas de faire quelque présent (100, 1.000 cauris) à ceux-ci. De même le Moro-Naba a jusqu'à un certain point un caractère religieux et des attributions religieuses. C'est lui, nous l'avons vu, qui ordonne les sacrifices à la Terre, aux collines. Tous les ans à la saison sèche il fait sacrifier un âne à Naba-Koutou, ancien Moro-Naba, dans la case où est enterré celui-ci. Avant notre occupation c'était un eunuque qui offrait ce sacrifice et tuait l'âne. Il égorgeait aussi un cheval, un bœuf et un mouton. (Cet eunuque chargé de l'entretien de la tombe était désigné sous le nom de Naba-Koutou et continuait pour ainsi dire le Moro-Naba défunt. Il jouissait de privilèges spéciaux : si quelque condamné à mort s'échappait et arrivait jusqu'à la tombe il était sauvé mais lui appartenait comme esclave. De même les captifs qui se sauvaient de chez leur maître, s'ils arrivaient à la tombe, étaient libres de celui-ci mais appartenaient au Naba-Koutou. Enfin, à cette époque, on ne pouvait pas passer devant la case monté sur un âne : Naba-Koutou confisquait l'âne ou, tout au moins, pour vous le rendre, vous faisait payer une rançon en cauris. De même pour les animaux qui s'égaraient auprès de la tombe. Actuellement le tombeau existe toujours et le Naba-Koutou qui le garde aussi, mais il ne jouit plus de ces privilèges).

Nous avons vu plus haut que le Moro-Naba avait une espèce de ministre du culte en la personne du Gandé-Naba grand-prêtre et sacrificateur. Il y avait aussi le Pouy-Naba ou chef des féticheurs préposé sans doute aux rapports de l'ensemble des baras et des timisobas du Mossi avec le pouvoir central.

Terminons cette étude, du reste très incomplète et indiquée seulement dans ses grandes lignes, de la religion au Mossi, en disant quelques mots des sacrifices humains qui avaient lieu

dans le pays avant notre occupation et quelques mots aussi de la circoncision.

« Les sacrifices humains, dit le lieutenant Marc, page 156, ont certainement existé au Mossi jusqu'à l'époque de notre occupation du pays. Toutes les fois que mourait un Moro-Naba à Ouagadougou, une de ses femmes et un de ses chevaux étaient envoyés à Gambaga pour être sacrifiés sur la tombe de Ouidiraogo (?) qui est considérée comme la mère du premier des Moro-Nabas. Peu après l'occupation de Ouagadougou par les Français, le Moronaba détrôné Boukary Koutou fit sacrifier sur une des montagnes qui dominent la Volta Blanche un coq noir, un bouc noir, un âne noir, un bœuf noir et un esclave noir ce qui devait, paraît-il, entraîner immédiatement la mort du nouveau Moronaba intronisé par Voulet. »

Quant à la circoncision, les Mossi circoncisent les garçons et excisent les filles.

On circoncit les garçons quand ils ont de huit à douze ans, à trente ou quarante ensemble. Il y a une fête pour cela qui dure un mois. On la renouvelle tous les sept ou huit ans dans chaque village.

Quant aux filles on leur fait subir l'opération barbare de l'excision quand elles ont de huit à douze ans. On ne fait pas l'excision des filles en même temps que la circoncision des garçons mais une autre année. Il y a également une fête qui dure un mois.

C'est une femme qui opère les filles et un homme qui opère les garçons.

Pour les filles on sectionne non pas les lèvres, mais le clitoris lui-même. Pourquoi fait-on cela ? Mes interlocuteurs n'en savent rien. Est-ce pour rendre le sexe faible moins porté aux plaisirs sensuels ? Non. Ce serait plutôt, me disent mes interlocuteurs, pour faciliter la conjonction physique de l'homme et de la femme. Ce serait aussi dans le même but qu'on circoncirait les garçons. Mais mes gens n'en sont pas sûrs.

Nous pouvons noter que chez les Mossi, comme en certains autres points de l'Afrique occidentale, par exemple en Guinée, (mais pas comme au Gourounsi où on ne circoncit pas les gar-

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çons et où les filles sont souvent excisées à leur naissance), la circoncision et l'excision sont liées à une initiation, c'est-à-dire ont un rapport étroit avec l'éducation et l'instruction des jeunes gens et des jeunes filles. On profite de la circoncision et de l'excision pour parachever, pour ainsi dire, l'instruction et l'éducation de la jeunesse.

Le lieutenant Marc dit à ce sujet (*op. cit.*, p 150) : « La circoncision des garçons a lieu vers douze ans et est l'occasion d'une grande fête. Il semble qu'il y ait une sorte de cérémonie d'initiation qui se fait de façon assez mystérieuse. Malheureusement il est difficile de savoir exactement à quoi s'en tenir à ce sujet ».

Nous terminerons notre étude sur la religion mossi, en renvoyant à l'Appendice n° 33 pour quelques détails complémentaires sur la question musulmane dans le pays. Nous en avons fini également avec la description de la société mossi tout entière. Il nous reste, pour comprendre à fond ses origines du côté de la masse conquérante, à jeter un coup d'œil sur le type social foutanké. C'est ce que nous ferons dans le chapitre suivant.

7:Tauxier—' G-5 (1913-1916) 1917 FA28 Mossi FA28

The Black Population of Yatenga
/Le Noir du Yatenga/

(Book IV. The Family)

L. Tauxier

Paris: 1917
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BOOK IV

The Family

596 We shall divide this study of the family among the Mossi of Yatenga into several subdivisions.

1. Generalities on the family.
2. Groupings larger than the single household.
3. Women and the household.
4. Children and education.
5. Apendages of the family.
6. Family property.
7. Transmission of family property or inheritance.

First, let us look at the generalities which include in turn the following subdivisions.

1. The composition of the family.
2. Its name.
3. Its nature.
4. Examples.

The Mossi family of Yatenga is one of several layers, if I can thus describe it. First, one may consider the total family, the family in its fullest extension, which usually includes from 100 to 150 persons and several separate compounds. The compounds themselves usually [592] include several households. Each compound does not form a tight economic entity, as many other Sudanese compounds do. On the [571] contrary, it is divided into two or more work groups according to its numerical size. Finally, below the work group there is the single household (father, mother or mothers, and unmarried children). We shall examine these groupings one by one.

Name. —The family in its fullest extension, the total family, is called boudou in Yatenga Mossi. The compound is called zaka. The word iri, used especially by the Mossi of Ouagadougou, is also employed, while the word zaka is used chiefly in Yatenga. Finally, [571] there is no word to designate the household, nor is there a word to designate the work group. One says: "the people of So-and-So (the name of the head of the group)." /224/

Nature of the family. —In the first place, the family is communal up to a certain point. The whole family does not work together nor

596 even the compound. As a rule, the work group is not composed of a single household but of two or more. We are dealing here, therefore, with a highly disintegrated communal family. Let us state immediately that the family among the Foulsé /Fulse/ and Yarsé /Yarse/, which we shall describe later /not translated/, is less disintegrated than the Mossi family, while the Samo family is even less so than the Foulsé and Yarsé families.

[611] As far as matriarchy and patriarchy are concerned, the Mossi family of Yatenga is patriarchal, that is to say, the family revolves around the man rather than the woman. This is a clearly documented fact. There are, however, some indications, as we shall see, that permit us to inquire whether once upon a time, very long ago, the Mossi family was not matriarchal. In our Noir du Soudan /The Black Population of the Sudan/ we pointed out various indications of the same sort about the Gourounsi /Grunshi/.

In sum, the Mossi family of Yatenga is (1) communal and quite disintegrated and (2) patriarchal.

592 596 162 Examples. —Let us first list some statistical figures. Here is a table summarizing some important censuses taken among the Mossi of Yatenga.

Localities	Families	Compounds	Number of Persons
Diogoré and Lako (small cantons)	25	78	3, 165
Small canton of Tangay	11	51	1, 241
Village of Dio	7	50	842
Totals	43	179	5, 248

This set of figures yields an average of 122 persons per family, four compounds or iri or zaka per family, and 29 persons per compound.

Now for some details.

In the village of Tangay (canton of Tangay) there are 11 Mossi families. Here are the figures for the persons who compose them and the compounds where they live.

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Families	Compounds	Number of Persons
1st family	1	51
2nd family	6	132
3rd family	2	23
4th family	6	160
5th family	3	59
6th family	5	50
/225/ 7th family	9	136
8th family	3	79
9th family	8	242
10th family	4	158
11th family	4	151
	51	1, 241

592 This gives us an average of 113 persons per family, 5 compounds
596 per family, and 24 persons per compound.
162 Now, here are the villages in the little canton of Lako or Lago.
621

Villages	Families	Compounds	Number of Persons
Bô	2	3	89
Boulounsi	1	3	137
Ninga	2	12	146
Piga-Sorodé	1	2	35
Réga	4	17	484
Viré-Sorodé	3	4	242
Diogoré	1	8	352
Lako	7	25	1, 457
Touba	3	3	216
Nango-Yarsé (Mossi of the village)	1	1	7
Totals	25	78	3, 165

592 This gives us an average of 126 or 127 persons per family, 3 com-
596 pounds per family, and 40 or 41 people per compound.
162 Now, here are some other statistics.
621

Villages	Families	Compounds	Households	Number of Persons
Lougouri	2	4	48	157
Oula	2	5	43	149
Réka	1	2	3	46
Noungou	2	14	46	233
Zíré	1	3	36	197
Kindiba	7	35	149	736
Diessiré	5	15	49	286
Bissigaï	4	17	100	510
Bougounam	8	32	151	999
Totals	32	127	625	3,313

/226/ On an average, this gives us 103 or 104 persons per family, 26 persons per compound, 5 persons per household, 4 compounds or soukala per family.

Here are some statistics collected in the canton of Koussouka and covering those villages which are entirely Mossi as well as those which are predominantly Mossi.

Villages	Families	Compounds	Households	Population
Rondo	7	72	148	975
Bouga-Mossi	1	11	23	152
Sékéba	1	9	28	183
Zandoma	3	24	62	344
Tangué	7	26	67	439
Konga-Mossi	3	23	72	483
Iroum	2	63	159	880
Totals	24	228	559	3,456

592 Here we get an average of 144 persons per family, 15 persons per
596 compound, and 6 persons per household. This gives 2 or 3 households
162 per compound and 9 to 10 compounds per family.
261 Finally, here are some figures obtained among the Mossi in the northern part of the /Ouahigouya/ circle /a circle is an administrative district/.

Villages	Compounds	Persons	Average per Compound	Observations
Boulzoma	1	39 (1)	39	(1) 7 households
Aorema	50	672	13	
Bogoya	29	379 (2)	13	(2) 64 households
Yabonsoro	37	494 (3)	13	(3) 74 households
Bagayaloro	14	290	21	
Barélogo	17	317	19	
Lilligondé	12	177	15	
Rikou	33	486	15	
Dinghiri	59	725	12	
Dinghila	44	362	8	
Irigué	17	94	6	
Bahn (Mossi)	3	54	18	
Pogoro	38	334	8	
Ninighé	7	75	11	
Séghé	8	111	14	
Tibo	19	228	12	
Totals	388	4,837	12 to 13	

Here we have only 12 or 13 persons per compound (and 6 per household). This shows an evolution of the Mossi family of Yatenga toward /227/ a more disintegrated form, which we shall discuss later when we mention the exceptions.

If we summarize the preceding statistics, we obtain the following table.

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Locations	Families	Compounds	Persons
Diogoré, etc.	43	179	5, 248
Oula, etc.	32	127	3, 313
Koussouka	24	228	3, 456
Northern part	?	369	4, 609
	?	903	16, 626

This gives us on an average 18 to 19 persons per compound and 121 persons per family (1).

1. This figure of 18 to 19 persons is an average one. Actually, there are some Mossi compounds which contain only 3 persons and others which boast as many as 100. To give a better idea of the matter, I shall provide below a numerical breakdown of the village of Diessiré (canton of Léba) where there are 286 persons and 15 compounds, or an average of 19 persons per compound. In reality, no one compound holds exactly 19 people.

Compounds	Households	Persons
First compound	4	24
Second compound	3	18
Third compound	1	6
Fourth compound	2	11
Fifth compound	4	23
Sixth compound	3	17
Seventh compound	1	5
Eighth compound	2	12
Ninth compound	2	12
Tenth compound	1	6
Eleventh compound	2	12
Twelfth compound	14	81
Thirteenth compound	3	18

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Fourteenth compound	6	36
Fifteenth compound	1	5
	49	286

This gives us, therefore:

Compounds with several households (more than two)..	7
Compounds with several households (two)	4
Compounds with a single household	4
	15

Now that these statistics have been listed, let us examine in detail the groupings larger than the single household, which may be categorized as follows: (1) the total family; (2) the compound; (3) the work group.

596 The total family. —As we stated earlier, the total family /228/ does not occupy one and the same compound. It is divided into a number of zaka or iri of varying size (the average number given by the above statistics is five). One of these compounds is that of the boudoukasaman or head of the family, who governs the whole family and is at the same time the head of his own zaka and head of his work group. As head of the family, he holds definitively only three types of powers: (1) religious powers; (2) judicial powers; (3) the right to give the daughters of the whole family in marriage.

As head of the family, he has no economic powers.

We shall study the religious powers of the boudoukasaman in detail under "Religion (Sacerdotal Organization)" /not translated/. Let us [592] simply state here that although the head of the total family holds the highest religious powers, the zakasoba or heads of compounds are not totally deprived of them, and this contributes to the greater autonomy of these subfamilies.

I am borrowing the following particulars on the family head and the family council which assists him from Vadier's excellent monograph, here and there correcting some inexact details.

"The head of the family, or patriarch, " says Vadier, "is the oldest member of the family. It is he who is the head of it.

"He enjoys great authority over all family members, but exclusively in regard to personal matters. To him alone, after obtaining the consent of the fathers, belongs the right to give the young girls of the

596 family in marriage. Likewise, the head of the family, assisted by the family council, settles all the little differences which arise between relatives. He also intervenes when a father fails to secure the obedience of one of his children or cannot manage to discipline him.

"It is he alone who must sacrifice animals for the benefit of the whole family when his relatives bring them to him on the occasion of family feasts.

"All the members of the family owe obedience to the family head. Likewise, they must show him the greatest respect.

"When the family elder dies, his younger brother becomes head of the family. When all his brothers have successively held this office, the eldest son of the eldest brother becomes the family head after the brothers, etc.

"Sometimes the head of the family does not live in the same village as the rest of the family. He may very well live with some of his sons or brothers, away from his other relatives, but his powers remain unchanged.

"In addition to the family head, there is the family council which is made up of all the men and old women of the family. This body has no well-defined role. It meets under the leadership of the family head to settle all matters concerning the family. The council would decide, for example, as to whether an incorrigible child should be sent to a naba /ruler/, as to who should intervene /229/ in case of a quarrel over an inheritance, who should seize the goods of a spendthrift in order to dole them out to him in proportion to his needs, etc."

592 351 The compound. —The Mossi compound consists of a certain number of round earthen huts or cabins surmounted by thatched roofs and huts for millet, all crowded into a rather narrow space cut by passages, hallways, small courtyards, etc. This complex is surrounded by a moderately high earth wall (two meters) which encircles the huts or cabins and encloses the compound.

592 361 The compounds are scattered over the plain, 50 or 100 meters apart. Some are larger than others: some have 15 or 20 huts or even more; others have but four or five (2).

192 2. To designate these compounds, the word soukala or sokala is often used. This word is hallowed by custom in Yatenga, in the Ouagadougou area, in the Léo area, etc., in short, in all Mossi lands and their

192 dependencies, as well as in the language of the European officials who inhabit the territory. Actually, the word sokala is not Mossi but Mandé /Mande/. In Bambara the hut is called so, in Malinké /Malinke/ sou. Soukala or sokala means exactly "the walls of the hut" (from kala, which means "bone" and by extension all elongated things, walls among them, and from so or sou, whose meaning we have learned already). This word was brought here from the shores of the Niger at the time of conquest. It is to some extent equivocal, for although it is usually given the meaning of "compound," some Europeans also use it to designate a whole quarter /a village subdivision including several compounds/. This is the meaning given to it by Delafosse (Le Haut-Sénégal-Niger /Upper Senegal-Niger/, Vol. 3, p. 126). As for myself, I always gave it the meaning of "compound" in my Noir du Soudan, that is to say, the meaning which I gave to the term carré or carrée in my monograph on the Noir de Guinée /The Black Population of (French) Guinea/. This word, however, and analogous words which are not strictly native to the region or whose French meaning is not absolutely clear lead to some confusion. We shall return to this subject later.

592 Let us add that the head of the compound is called zakasoba or irisoba (from zaka or iri, "compound," and soba, "chief, master"). Vadier incorrectly designated the head of the total family as zakasoba [596] in his monograph. The head of the total family is the boudoukasaman. The zakasoba is the head of a compound, of a home, of that cluster of huts and millet granaries encircled by a red wall which makes such a distinct and isolated unit on the Mossi plains.

This compound accommodates varying numbers of people, 18 or 19 being the average (with exceptions), as we have seen above.

592 The compound, from an intellectual point of view, is a kind of subfamily. It is not the whole family; it is not the equivalent of the total family. It is, however, quite superior to the single household.

592 If the Mossi family of Yatenga were completely communal and
182 perfectly integrated, the 100 or 125 persons or so who make up a
571 Mossi family would live and work together. A less marked but still quite appreciable degree of community would exist if the compound were a tight economic unit (this does occur among many blacks of the /French/ Sudan, especially among the Bobo /230/ of the Residency of Léo, the Menkiéra, the Nounouma /Nunuma/, the Kassonfra /Awuna/, etc., and also among the Samo of Yatenga as we shall see later), with all the people who live in it working and consuming together under the authority and guidance of the head of the home. Actually, there is even more disintegration of the family among our Mossi of Yatenga. In each home there are work groups which vary in number according to the importance of the compound and the number of its occupants.

592 Work groups. —We must proceed to the work group, then, in order
571 to deal with the actual economic unit. This group has the communal
241 fields which are not, therefore, properly speaking, familial fields or even subfamilial fields. They belong to a subordinate unit. It is the head of the work group who supplies food for all the people in his group during the greater part of the year (seven months out of twelve). In return, they owe him the larger part of their time during the rainy season (two days out of three) but little work during the dry season. Each member of the group also has his own little field which he cultivates on the third day, as we shall see later on.

592 Consumption. Meals. —People do not assemble for meals in the
264 same fashion during the rainy season as during the dry season.

During the rainy season the members of each work group eat together at noon in the fields, but men and women are always apart. The boys eat with the men, the girls and small children with the women. In the evening they gather for meals in the same manner as during the dry season.

During the dry season the members of each compound, the whole zaka, eat together, but they are divided into several groups. First, there is the basic division between men and women. Then, if the compound is a large one, there are on the male side the groupings of old men, married men, and young unmarried men. There are also three groups on the female side: old women, married women,

592 and young girls. Thus, there are six groups altogether, but we must
264 add that when the women do not get along well, each one eats in her own hut with her own children. In the smaller compounds, there cannot be six groups; there are only two basic ones, that of the men and that of the women.

592 For the preparation of food during the seven months when millet
252 furnished by the head of the work group is eaten, or in other words the millet from the communal fields (roughly from April to October), each woman is "on duty" for 24 hours and cooks for the whole group. The other women help her, of course, by fetching water, pounding millet for her, etc. During the five months when the millet from the small private fields is eaten (November-March), each woman prepares her husband's food. When a husband has several wives, they take turns preparing the food.

592 /231/ As we can see, the manner of preparing meals follows the
252 schedule of millet consumption. While the communal grain distributed
264 by the head of the work group or under his supervision is being consumed, cooking is done on a work group basis. During the time when the millet from household fields is being consumed, the preparation of meals is on a household basis. The actual consumption of the meals, however (except when people are working in the fields) involves a larger community, that of the compound. There remains, however, the basic division between men and women, who must not eat together and who always split into two groups at mealtime. In the larger compounds, moreover, each of these two major groups is further divided into subgroups according to natural age lines. Finally, to cap it all, the female spirit of anarchy sometimes causes some of the women to withdraw. Hence, for the consumption and preparation of food as well as for its production, there exists only this very unstable community which is characteristic of the family we are studying.

592 Exceptions. —We come now to the Mossi household, which we
182 shall discuss at some length. Before doing so, however, it must be stated that the family as we have just described it has its exceptions here and there.

First, there are exceptions in the sense of community, in the sense of integration; above all, there are exceptions in the sense of greater disintegration.

596 In the sense of integration, we must mention primarily the families
592 of great chiefs. For example, there is the family of Gombiraogo, a
182 former Baloum Naba, a very wealthy and important personage. He
571 has five brothers. Two of them live together in the village of Kalo and another two, similarly, in the village of Bembéla. Gombiraogo lives in Ouahigouya with the fifth brother. With this brother he has three zaka where 70 or 80 people live, all of whom work for him and form a single work group under his direction (that is to say, during the rainy season they work for him two days out of three, and during the dry season they do so only when he has exceptional need of them; in return, he provides them with food seven months out of twelve, according to custom, and does not provide them with clothes unless they are unmarried).

What should be noted here is the strength of this work group (70 to 80 people). As a result, it includes several compounds, while it is the compound as a rule that contains several or at least two work groups.

[145] The present Baloum Naba, the prime minister, likewise has two zaka working for him. Moreover, the total family of the Baloum Naba is not assembled in Ouahigouya but scattered throughout Yatenga.

[143] In the same connection, the Rassam Naba has a zaka of 157 people who form a single work group under his direction. In return, he provides them with food all year.

/232/ Again, there is a zaka of shoemakers at Ouahigouya which
294 includes nearly 100 people altogether, among them 15 or 20 full-
592 grown men, all of them shoemakers. They all work for the zakasoba,
182 who provides them all with food. This zaka, of exceptional numerical strength, is at the same time completely integrated.

596 At the other end of the scale, we find the Mossi family of Yatenga
182 evolving toward complete disintegration in certain parts of the terri-
592 tory, that is to say, evolving toward a state of affairs where nothing remains except the total family on the one hand and the single household on the other (that is, the compound has only a single household).

Thus, in the course of a journey through the canton of Ratenga, I noted in the village of Tangué a family of 110 persons distributed among 14 homes. This gives an average of only seven or eight persons per home. In Kargo (another village) there are five Mossi families for 22 homes sheltering 181 persons, or only eight persons per home.

596 Here the zaka is quite clearly reduced to the single household,
182 which becomes identified at the same time with the compound and
592 with the work group. Let us state, however, that in the whole of Ratenga there are 4, 637 Mossi for 458 compounds, or ten persons per compound. An average of ten people per compound represents slightly more than a single household (which averages six persons in Yatenga), but not as much as two households. This means that the compounds sometimes contain two households, sometimes only one. Thus, since there are only a few people in each zaka, there is but a single work group.

162 Here is a complete numerical breakdown of the canton of Ratenga.
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Villages	Inhabitants	Compounds	Average per Compound
Napalra	254	20	13
Ouembatenga	61	5	12
Alaga	335	22	15
Boulounga	197	23	9
Bani	387	30	13
Singuitenga	248	18	14
Boudé	69	11	6
Foulgo-Koquin	22	5	4
Zomkalga	88	12	7
Momoné	86	10	9
Toïsi	100	13	8
Denian	4	1	4
Pinsi	145	13	11
Dologa	110	15	7
Kiédéwendé	103	10	10
/233/ Koundi-Bittou	63	9	7
Yalka	56	4	14
Koumbango	221	19	12
Kourpellé	167	15	11
Zimtenga	307	39	8
Battenga	94	11	9
Badnoro	83	10	8
Douré	96	6	16
Yalgatenga	45	8	6

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Villages	Inhabitants	Compounds	Average per Compound
Bargo	77	8	10
Lo	127	14	9
Rakoéga-Tenga	33	4	8
Moro-Koquin	37	7	5
Dougouré	41	7	6
Bama	82	7	12
Kora	99	9	11
Tangué	110	14	8
Minima	113	12	9
Kanion	76	10	7
Toukoulounga	124	4	31
Tempelra	35	6	6
Bauda	162	5	32
Kargo-Mossi	181	22	8
	4,637	458	10

The same applies to the Mossi of the canton of Tougo, located south-southeast of Yatenga. Here are the figures concerning the number of compounds and the number of people in the canton.

Villages	Compounds	Persons	Average per Compound
Tibtenga	9	102	11
Béma	96	792	8
Ouembatenga	9	76	8
Rima	63	347	5 to 6
Tougo	69	937	13 to 14
Lébenga	4	40	10
Danaoua	22	229	10
Rasoumdé	27	189	7
Mangoulouma	2	28	14
Rikéba	52	545	10 to 11
Totals	353	3,285	9 to 10

596 /234/ The kind of family found in the cantons of Ratenga and
592 Tougo is quite similar in type to the family among the Mossi of
182 Ouagadougou, or in its common types (3) which are characterized by

3. See my Noir du Soudan, pp. 544-553.

the fact that the zaka is identified with the single household, and only the total family and the single household remain.

This leads us to note that the average Mossi family of Yatenga, as we have described it above, is more compact, more communal, more integrated than the Mossi family of Ouagadougou.

182 This results, I believe, from the fact that the primitive element
563 of the population, the Foulsé (the basic element, let us not forget,
592 at Ouagadougou as well as in Yatenga), who are more communal than
596 the Mossi, are still much more numerous in Yatenga than in the Ouagadougou region. While in the latter area the Foulsé blended almost completely with the mass of invaders, in Yatenga they resisted more successfully, did not blend with them, and continued to make up the greater part of the population. In view of these circumstances, they probably exercised considerable influence on the morphology of the Mossi family, just as they gave it their prejudices against the ownership of cattle, etc.

This high proportion of the primitive communal element no doubt caused the structural differences between the Mossi family of the Ouagadougou region and that of Yatenga.

000 Women and the household. —We shall deal now with women and the household. We shall subdivide this section into a number of headings as follows.

1. Promise of marriage.
2. Persons whose consent is required to validate the promise of marriage.
3. Gifts.
4. Celebration and consummation of marriage.
5. Impediments to marriage.
6. Question of virginity.
7. Rights and duties of the husband and wife.
8. Polygamy.
9. Organization of the polygamous household.
10. Women's tasks.
11. The conjugal duty.

000 12. Women's property.
13. Adultery.
14. Divorce.
15. Formalities of divorce.
16. Consequences of divorce. /235/
17. Psychology of women. The woman as lover and mother.

584 First, let us study the promise of marriage.

Promise of marriage. —"It is customary," says Vadier, "for a father to present his son with a first wife. It is the father who takes the first steps and offers the first required gifts. If the son is at least 17 or 18 years old, however, or if he is already married, he fulfills the necessary obligations himself.

"In practice the son always consults his father and marries a woman he has chosen only after he has obtained paternal consent. In theory, the consent of the father is not necessary to validate the marriage. If the son fails to obtain his father's permission, however, the latter drives him out of his soukala (compound), but the marriage nevertheless goes fully into effect.

"The marriage proposal is made without consideration of the girl's age. She is usually six or seven years old when she is asked for, but it frequently happens that she is still at her mother's breast when she is promised to a man. We can see, therefore, that a long period of time inevitably elapses between the marriage proposal and the marriage itself.

"Let us study first those formalities which attend a marriage proposal.

"The Mossi who has an eye on a young girl, either for himself or for his son, pays a visit to the head of the child's family and, according to his means, offers him a gift of a chicken, a mat, a small amount of salt, or merely a bundle of firewood. He makes known to him the object of his visit, taking great care not to mention the name of the young girl he wants. Regarding this, he was careful previously to send a mutual friend to the head of the family, to notify him of the approaching visit and to point out the name of the girl who would be asked for. The head of the family, if he does not wish to comply with this request, declares that he has no daughter to give in marriage. On the other hand, if he agrees, he tells the suitor to return at a later date, which he sets and at which time he will pledge the young girl to him. The suitor returns on the appointed day with several friends

584 bearing dolo /millet beer/; they will serve as witnesses. In their presence, the head of the family mentions by name to the suitor the girl he is granting to him and who will be delivered to him as a wife later when she is old enough to take a husband.

"Then the betrothed man with the friends he brought goes to visit every soukala head in the village, greets them in accordance with Mossi custom, and announces to them that such-and-such a family head has promised him a young girl in marriage. The whole village is thus made witnesses."

Persons whose consent is required to validate a promise of marriage.

[562] —"The consent of the young girl," says Vadier, "is by no means required. In fact, she is disposed of without being consulted, and she is always forced to become the wife of the man to whom she has been promised, except if her future husband is a leper or blind. The /236/ young girl is actually supposed to be unacquainted with the name of her prospective husband until she is taken to him.

"To validate the marriage, the following people must express their consent.

"1. The future husband. His consent follows from the transactions undertaken by his father or by himself with the family of his future wife.

"2. The girl's father. When a Mossi has one or several daughters and when he thinks the moment has come for the head of the family to dispose of them, he tells the latter that he can promise them in marriage. In spite of his powers, the head of the family could not betroth a young girl unless her father had told him that he could give her in marriage.

"When he has chosen a husband, he goes to see the father of the girl and makes known to him the offer he has received. The father can accept or refuse as he sees fit. His consent is absolutely indispensable, and the head of the family cannot ignore it.

"The father cannot dispose of his daughter without the consent of the family head, except in circumstances we shall examine later.

584 "3. The head of the family. The consent of the head of the family
596 is inevitably required, since it is he alone who has the power to promise the young girls of his family in marriage under the terms described above. Three cases where the consent of the family head is not indispensable are as follows: (1) when the father of the young girl is at odds with the head of the family, the father alone may dispose of his

584 daughter; (2) when the father is in extreme penury, he gives his still
596 unpromised daughter to some rich native who, with the customary gifts, will help him in his need, since the gifts of the fiancé go to the man who promised the young girl; (3) the first daughter in a household,
[603] whether or not she is the only daughter, must be promised by her maternal grandfather and not by the head of the family."

This constitutes, I believe, a curious vestige of matriarchy which doubtless refers to those very distant times when the Mossi family revolved around the maternal rather than the paternal line.

4. The mother of the young girl. "The girl's mother," says Vadier, "is sometimes consulted. Her husband merely asks her if she is satisfied with the choice he has made in agreement with the head of the family. Her answer, however, is given no weight whatever.

"The fiancé's mother is not even consulted."

Such at least is the theory. In reality, no doubt, the mother of the young girl often has more authority than the theory supposes.

431 Gifts.—Bride price is nonexistent in Mossi marriage. This is a very
583 important point which differentiates the Mossi and even, I believe,
[71] the Voltaic /237/ tribes in general, from the Mandé groups, such as the Bambara and Malinké, where bride price does exist and is actually quite high (I say quite high, considering the general poverty of the Sudanese). I did not emphasize this sufficiently in my Noir du Soudan in the chapter concerning the Mossi family, pages 548 and 549. I did mention that the price paid to win a Mossi girl of the Ouagadougou region ranged from 1, 500 cowries (1. 50 francs) to 50, 000 cowries (50 francs). In fact, these are gifts rather than bride price.

Although there is no bride price, properly speaking, the gifts have an important role.

"After the promise of marriage," says Vadier, "the future husband must come every year, after the filikienga /a feast/, to bring a few small gifts to the head of the family and to the girl's mother. These consist as a rule of a little millet, salt, a few hundred cowries, a mat, or two or three crudely made séko /coarse matting/.

"As for the father, he receives no gifts, which does not mean that he does not benefit from those received by his wife or by the head of the family.

"Likewise, the girl receives no gifts. Moreover, she may not utilize the commodities or foodstuffs given to her mother.

"The gifts offered during the long betrothal period cannot be of great value. A prospective husband who should bring 5, 000 or 6, 000

431 cowries to the head of the family would be rejected. The head of the
583 family would certainly not fail to tell him that in promising a girl he intended to give her as a bride and not to sell her. Should the husband insist, he would simply be driven away."

581 Marriage, therefore, is not regarded as purchase among the Mossi, contrary to Malinké and Bambara practices, and in this sense it is
586 imbued among them with greater dignity. Unfortunately, this absence of a bride price permits an easy rupture of the marriage ties, while this is not the case among the Bambara and Malinké where the woman is bound more firmly to her duties. The household, therefore, is less securely grounded among the Mossi than among the Mandé, and thus evil results from good.

581 As a rule, the marriage bond is much looser and more fragile among the Voltaic tribes (Bobo, Gourounsi, Mossi, Habbé/Habe/, etc.)
583 than among the Mandé groups (Bambara, Malinké, etc.), and this is related to the lack of a real bride price. Where there is a bride price, the young girl is sold. If she wishes to leave her husband once she is married, however, considering that a bride price of some importance is difficult to refund (since improvident family heads immediately set out to squander it, while more serious people use it right away to buy a girl for some young man of the family), it has become customary to oppose categorically any demands to break the marriage bond. Thus, while betrothal has greater dignity among the Voltaic tribes, marriage itself has more staying power and more seriousness among the Mandé, and the household has greater soundness. /238/

Now to return to the Mossi.

431 Let us note first that the offering of gifts allows for some flexibility.
583 A rich young man will make much more important gifts than a poor
556 man. He will not give a large sum of cowries, but he may give significant amounts of clothing, foodstuffs (salt, etc.), and animals to the head of his fiancée's family or to her mother. On the other hand, a poor man will give a bundle of firewood which he has just gathered in the bush and a chicken, and this payment will be considered sufficient.

431 Although the girl is not sold, her fiancé or his father are required to make the gifts prescribed by custom.
583 "The failure to make those gifts prescribed by custom," says Vadier, "has serious consequences. Let us examine the various situations which might arise.

431 "I. If by negligence, forgetfulness, or because of an absence
583 (journey), the prospective husband does not make the annual gifts, he will be refused the girl on the day when he comes to have her taken to his home, and he will lose all his rights over her.

"Nevertheless, he will regain all his privileges if in one installment he pays to the head of the girl's family and to her mother all the gifts which he ought to have made during the period of his absence or forgetfulness.

"The head of the family cannot refuse this collective gift and thereby oppose the marriage.

"II. The husband has forgotten to make the gifts and does not come to the home of the family head when the young girl has reached puberty.

"A. If he lives in the area, the failure to call on the head of the family at the required time is regarded as a relinquishment of his rights over the girl. The head of the family may then dispose of her again.

"B. The fiancé has been away on a journey for a long time and is still absent when the girl reaches puberty.

"The head of the family has the fiancé's brother called to him. He offers the girl to him as his bride. The brother is not required to accept, and if he does not, the head of the family recovers all his rights over the girl."

582 Celebration of the marriage. Consummation. —"The girl must have reached puberty (15 or 16 years) in order to be taken to her husband's hut. It is even customary to wait six months or a year after she was first in a state of zim (zim means "blood" in Mossi).

As for the husband, it is equally necessary that he must have attained the age of 17 or 18.

585 The formalities of the marriage ceremony are very simple in Yatenga.

When the betrothed girl has reached puberty, the husband calls on the family head to ask for her. The family head can tell him /239/ to wait six months or a year at most, a delay which the fiancé is required to observe, but usually the head of the family replies that his
[431 future wife may be fetched in a few days. The fiancé then hands him
273] a bag and two goatskins full of millet and withdraws. This grain is used to make dolo which is drunk by the girl's entire family.

585 Each woman living in the same soukala makes a gift of one or two
431 gourds to the girl's mother. The father and the head of the family give her two large baskets. These objects will make up the bride's trousseau.

585 On the appointed day the fiancé sends two men of his family, one of whom is usually his brother, to fetch his bride. These two natives [431] come to the home of the family head with 13 canari /jars/ of dolo. Then the feasting begins.

The father takes his daughter to the hut of the ancestors, cuts the [782] throat of a chicken on the fetish stone so the future marriage will be happy, and discloses to her the name of her husband.

The young fiancée, escorted by two old women of her family and the two emissaries of her fiancé, proceeds to the latter's home.

For four days the young bride will stay in a hut alone with the old women. During this period, the old women give her all the customary advice and show her the course of behavior she must follow to please her future spouse.

The bridegroom comes every day to greet the old women, but during this interview the young girl takes great care to hide her face from him.

On the third day, in the evening, the husband has a sheep and goat slaughtered. He chooses a leg of mutton which he puts aside with the [252] animal's skin, and he has a large quantity of sarabou /millet mush/ cooked along with the remaining meat. He takes the whole thing to the old women. They distribute the sarabou among all the members of the family and carefully put aside the leg of mutton and the skin which they will take on the following day to the girl's mother to show her that her daughter has indeed been delivered to her husband.

Then the husband has his bride brought to his hut where the marriage is consummated.

There is nothing compulsory about this four-day waiting period. It happens frequently that the consummation of the marriage takes place on the day following the young girl's arrival. Occasionally it is delayed for several days when, as sometimes happens, an elderly fiancé gives the bride who was originally intended for him to his son or to some other member of the family.

The marriage is valid from the day of the departure of the old women who brought the girl to her husband's soukala.

The consummation of the marriage is by no means necessary to validate the union. If the husband neglects his new bride for too long, however (a year, for example), she may demand explanations." /240/

582 Impediments to marriage. —"The impediments to marriage," says Vadier, "are as follows.

582 I. Differences of tribe or caste. The Mossi may not contract
326 marriage with blacksmiths. This is absolutely forbidden. However,
564 they may marry among the Foulsé, Samo, Peul, Yarsé, etc."

This calls for several remarks. The blacksmiths of Yatenga are Foulsé and not Mossi. However, it is not a tribal difference which dictates the prohibition under discussion, since the Mossi can marry among the Foulsé as a whole. It is rather a difference in caste. It must be noted, as we said above /not translated/, that the common Foulsé cannot marry blacksmiths either.

[171] Here, as in all of the /French/ Sudan, blacksmiths are both feared and scorned. Basically, they are regarded as fearful sorcerers.

582 II. Kinship. There must be a lapse of 200 years between the time of the betrothed couple and the time when their common ancestor lived. This is likewise an absolute impediment.

III. If a Mossi has relations with a young girl or woman belonging to his fiancée's soukala during the period of his engagement, the marriage cannot take place.

This impediment, however, is not absolute. If the guilty man begs for the forgiveness of the family head and the latter accords it, the union may be effected later."

582 IV. Unnatural practices. The marriage cannot take place: (1) if
839 the betrothed man has been caught in the act of sexual intercourse with a she-ass (a phenomenon none too rare in Yatenga); and (2) if the betrothed girl has relations with a native who had sexual intercourse with a she-ass. These impediments are absolute.

This is why the inhabitants of a Yatenga village (Dénia) who are reputed to have had relations with asses in former times may not marry outside their locality.

582 V. Infirmities. If the fiancé is blind, the marriage may not take
[132] place unless the girl consents to it. No one can constrain her to do so.

VI. Leprosy. The same applies when the fiancé has leprosy.

VII. Impuberty of the betrothed pair. The marriage cannot take place unless both parties are nubile. This is an absolute impediment, but in practice the problem rarely arises.

VIII. Insanity of one of the betrothed."

582 Question of virginity. The girl's virginity is not very important
836 here and, it must be pointed out, far less so than among the Bambara. This is, incidentally, connected with the fact that the marriage bond is less sound and the separation of the spouses easier to obtain. A combination of related facts makes the institution of marriage and

582 the household a more serious and more binding affair among the
836 Bambara than in this particular region. /241/

Vadier says on the subject, "The fact that a young girl has had relations with a native other than her husband prior to marriage is by no means an impediment to the marriage,

"Many betrothed girls have lovers. It even happens quite frequently that their fathers are forced to go in search of them at the homes of the young men with whom they have run away. Actually, this matter is of no concern to the husband. As long as he gets the woman, the rest matters little to him. It is not unusual for a girl to bring a child
[848] which she had by another man into her husband's home. This child eventually returns to its natural father."

582 This picture is painted in rather bleak colors. In reality, fathers
836 and mothers do try, as best they can, to prevent their daughters from
585 taking lovers. They do not like to see them go to the "tom-tom,"
626 but they can scarcely keep them from going, and often the "tom-tom,"
684 like our own country dances, plays havoc with a young girl's virtue. If the girl says nothing, everything goes well. Since among the Mossi there is no exhibition of the skirt cloth following the consummation of the marriage, there is no evidence. Even if the husband knows ahead of time or finds out at the last moment, he says nothing out of shame, to avoid being scorned. When the father leads his daughter to the hut of the ancestors before sending her to her fiancé, however, she often does not dare enter the hut. Having lost her virginity and fearing that she might be killed by the ancestors, she admits her wrongdoing to her father. Sometimes she may have the courage or the effrontery to enter the ancestral hut, but later, if she falls ill in her husband's hut, she will interpret her condition as the ancestors' vengeance for the sort of moral perjury she committed by entering their hut in a state of transgression, and she will confess to her husband what she has done. In both cases the lover is confronted, in the first instance by the father, in the second by the husband, and a goat, two canari of dolo, and a chicken are demanded from him. A sacrifice will be offered to the ancestors with these various items to ask their forgiveness, they will pardon the wife and the lover, and order will be restored.

848 Sometimes, as mentioned earlier, a child is the fruit of a girl's passion. The lover having made reparation and the ancestors being satisfied, the husband will accept the child along with the girl, but

848 as soon as the baby is old enough to leave its mother, the husband, not wishing to keep it with him, will return the child to its natural father.

582 171 In short, virginity is not rigidly demanded of the girl, although it is considered better and more respectable than non-virginity. The Mossi are not as demanding on this point as the Bambara, and in this, according to my data, they are like all other Voltaic peoples.

684 Let us note one further detail. If the lover from whom reparation is demanded for the damage caused, that is to say, the payment of the goat, chicken, and two canari of dolo, does not want to give them, the husband would formerly appeal /242/ to the Moro Naba, who forced the lover to pay what he owed and in addition confiscated for himself a part of his goods for his salary as a judge. If the lover owned nothing, his family paid for him. Nowadays, the village or canton chiefs are still approached about such matters, and they force the lover to make the customary payment.

593 Rights and duties of the husband and wife.—The husband owes assistance and help to his wife. He must protect her and come to her aid whenever necessary.

The husband must support his wife. To secure food, he usually belongs to a work group, as we have seen earlier. The work group sustains the husband and wife for seven months out of twelve. The rest of the time, the husband maintains the wife with the produce of his small fields. The wife also has her own little patches of cultivated land (as big as a handkerchief), but they are not used to procure food for the household unless the husband is completely destitute. Hence, the produce from these little patches of soil usually goes to the wife herself.

In any case, it is the husband and not the group who must provide clothing for his wife. He does this with the earnings from his small fields.

593 586 If the husband should refuse to support his wife, although able to do so, she would take her complaint to the head of her spouse's family. If the husband still refused to support her after the intervention of the family head, the woman would regain her freedom and could return to her family.

593 The husband must see to his ailing or invalid wife's upkeep until her death.

593 The wife must obey her husband. The latter has the right to strike
562 her in case of disobedience, adultery, etc. He cannot break one of her limbs, or kill her.

595 Polygamy. —Polygamy is the general rule, at least theoretically. That is to say, the Mossi may have as many spouses as he wishes as long as he can minister to their needs.

595 In actual fact, only rich people have several wives. The majority
589 are monogamous by necessity, and there are even bachelors. As a passing remark, this applies to the Sudanese Negroes in general, for everywhere nature creates approximately as many men as women, and it is hard to visualize how in any one region each man could have several wives. However, in spite of the occurrence of bachelors and a large number of truly monogamous people, the question still stands. It is solved if we bear in mind that girls are married much earlier than men. This results in a much larger number of women than men "in active service," if I may be permitted to say so. Undoubtedly, this (along with the occurrence of bachelors and a considerable number of monogamists), takes care of the objection which naturally arises when we speak of polygamy. /243/

163 It may be, let us add, that the number of girls born here is a little higher than that of boys, as has been noted in England, for example.

595 By way of figures on polygamy, let us state that the Moro Naba
643 Bango, the last one who reigned before the arrival of the French, had
645 about 80 wives. The Naba Koboga, who ruled from 1902 to 1914, had 30 or 40. The present Rassam Naba, one of the ministers of the Moro Naba, has 30 or 35 wives. These are, of course, exceptional figures if the total population of Yatenga is taken into account. In any case, the rich men, notables, and men in easy circumstances always have several wives.

595 Organization of the polygamous household. —"The first wife," says Vadier, "enjoys a certain authority over the others. It is she who transmits her husband's orders to the other wives and who notifies him of their wants, who supervises the preparation of meals and apportions the food. In addition, it is she who comes and tells the
[841] husband that such-and-such a wife is no longer in a state of zim and can now fulfill her conjugal duties.

"Aside from this special prerogative enjoyed by the first wife, all wives have the same rights and duties. In principle, each wife must share in turn her husband's bed. Nevertheless, he is free to summon his favorite wife during the day."

462 Women's tasks. —First of all, Mossi women help with the cultivation of the soil. They do not clear land for tillage, but during the winter season they do all the other agricultural tasks in competition with the men. Since they must also pound the grain, cook, and do other household tasks, however, they cannot work in the fields as long as the men. When there are several wives, they share the labor. Some devote themselves to housework while others work in the fields. When there are not enough of them to permit such a division of labor, they allow the men to leave in the morning and do not join them with the food until about 10 or 11 o'clock. After the meal and the noonday rest, they work with the men, but they leave the fields earlier to prepare the evening meal. Before returning to the village, however, the women work on their little individual plots, but only for a short time, while the men, after leaving the communal fields, linger in their own small fields until nightfall.

Besides working in the fields, the women do household chores. [252] They pound the grain in mortars and crush it on the crushing stones. We shall speak again about these mortars, pestles, and stones under "The Mode of Subsistence" /not translated/.

They do the cooking and prepare the various Mossi dishes which we shall describe later /not translated/. They go to get wood in the bush and water at the wells. /244/

Let us add that it is the women who pick the karite /shea/ nuts during the rainy season and the pods of the néré /locust bean/ in the spring (end of March, April). They, too, prepare the karite butter and the néré flour. They also brew dolo and, if need be, the various other drinks of which we have already spoken in the section on crops /not translated/ and to which we shall return under "The Mode of Subsistence" /not translated/.

In addition to their cooking tasks, the Mossi women of Yatenga must perform cleaning chores. They sweep the huts and the whole [256] establishment with bunches of straw tied in the middle with a rope. [412] This makes a small primitive broom without a handle, 30 or 40 centimeters long. They launder the clothes and make soap. They spin the cotton, whereas the men weave it. Finally, it is they who tamp the earthen floors and walls of the huts with wooden clappers (in Mossi, silimpandé in the singular, silimpama in the plural) after adding néré water. We shall see later in "Mode of Subsistence (construction of the compound)" how this is done.

833 The conjugal duty. —The wife owes her husband the fulfillment of the conjugal duty.

The wife must never evade it except when she is unwell, pregnant, or when she is nursing. We can see, therefore, that among the Mossi in particular and among the Sudanese in general (for the same customs prevail in this area among all Sudanese Negroes) there is great tactfulness. One appreciates this all the more if one bears in mind that [853] here the women suckle their children for two or three years.

"If, " says Vadier, "a woman should evade her husband from newlywed shyness or from any other motive, he would first use all the means of persuasion at his command and, especially, beg the wife's relatives to speak to her. Should their exhortations prove vain, constraint [573] would be used by giving the wife a beating or putting her in irons. Finally, should these measures fail to bring the spouse to compliance, [586] she could be turned out by her husband.

"In return, the husband owes the wife the same conjugal duty which he has the right to demand from her.

"Should the husband fail to fulfill it because of impotence, sickness, or simply from ill will, the neglected wife would mention the matter to the family head's first wife, who would in turn notify him.

833 "Should the husband's behavior be caused by physical incapacity, 586 the wife would be taken from him and given to one of his brothers or, if there were none, to his closest male relative, but never to one of his sons. Should it be due merely to ill-feeling, a protest would be made, and should this fail to have any effect after several days, the wife would be allowed to return to her family." /245/

Let us state immediately that these contingencies almost never arise or are so rare as to be practically nonexistent. Custom anticipates them, however, and we have just described what happens when perchance they do arise.

562 Women's property. —Women may own individual property, as we 422 already know, goods which are not shared communally and which belong wholly to them. These goods come from various sources, sometimes the women's small plots of land, sometimes a surplus from the grain they are given to prepare food and which, once made into dolo, is sold for cowries. Sometimes also, the husband's munificence provides them with bracelets and other jewelry. Once given, this jewelry is wholly theirs, and it is added to the trinkets they procure with their own resources.

562 When she dies, a woman's property goes to her children. The
428 objects used by women go to the daughters (bracelets, skirt cloths), while other items (animals, etc.) go to the sons. More exactly, the first-born is favored among the sons and the oldest girl among the daughters. If there are no children, the husband does not take anything, and whatever the wife leaves goes to her family, to her sisters and brothers in the first line of descent. Not having had any children by the deceased, the husband would be ashamed to take what she left.

837 Adultery. —The wife owes faithfulness to her spouse. Unfaithfulness, however, is not very important, for unless it occurs repeatedly, it does not usually result in a break. The husband merely beats his wife and scolds her.

837 When the wife has fled to a lover, her husband goes in search of
684 her. The lover will have to provide a sheep (the sheep may be replaced by a goat), a chicken, and two canari of dolo, all of which
782 are to be sacrificed to the ancestors so they will forgive the woman.
769 She cannot re-enter her house until the sacrifice has been performed; without it the ancestors would kill her. They are unbending, more so than the husband to be sure, about the latter's honor. Should a husband know his wife to be guilty and do nothing about it, the ancestors would be furious and they would kill him, hence the necessity for action on the husband's part.

837 If the husband cannot find his runaway wife, the duty of searching
684 for her and bringing her back to him falls to his father-in-law.

Formerly, before the French occupation, if the lover did not want to return the woman, her father appealed to the naba, that is, the chief of the village or canton, or even to the Moro Naba, who sent horsemen to arrest the guilty pair. He restored the wife to her husband and confiscated for his own benefit the lover's animals and millet granaries.

Nowadays, since the French occupation, one appeals to the commanding officer of the circle and to the native provincial court for the wife's return.

684 Sometimes, in the past, the husband killed his wife's lover when
643 he caught him flagrante delicto. He had the right to do so, but this caused him to lose his /246/ wife who became the property of the Moro Naba. The lover's property likewise reverted to the Moro Naba.

684 In any event, the husband did not have the right to kill his wife
643 except when she was caught flagrante delicto, unless he was the
565

684 Moro Naba or a member of the aristocracy. When one of his wives
643 deceived him, the Moro Naba had her killed along with her lover.
565 The guilty pair were strangled with cotton bands. Concerning the nakomsé /descendants of nabas/, the true nakomsé (for the descendants of Naba Rawa and Naba Yadega are no longer considered nakomsé at the present day and have reverted to the mass of the common people), the true nakomsé related to royalty since the time of Naba Nabacéré (1625-1655) and his descendants, Pigo (1720-1739) and Kango (1754-1787), when one of their wives had deceived them, they appealed first to the Basi Naba, head of the nakomsé, and presented the guilty pair to him. The Basi Naba sent them on to the Moro Naba, who had the woman and her lover strangled. The lover's property went to the Rassam Naba, chief of the people of Bingo who were in charge of the execution. The same procedure applied when the people of Bingo (house slaves of the Moro Naba) executed the wife of a Moro Naba and her lover. The property, which could not with decency revert to the deceived Moro Naba, went to the Rassam Naba, chief of Bingo.

837 Just as the wife owes faithfulness to her husband, the husband owes
684 faithfulness to his wife or wives. Violations of this rule are frequent, however, and the husband's escapades are far less important than those of the wife. In all events, the husband's infidelity never entails annulment of the marriage. Although the wives do not have the right to say much when their husband deceives them (provided he does not install his concubine in the conjugal household, and this in fact never happens), they do have two possibilities of revenge. The first is very rarely used by the Mossi women of Yatenga. It consists of notifying the husband of the woman with whom their husband is deceiving them. This results in more or less serious trouble for their husband. If their husband ventures to take into his hut for awhile a woman who does not belong to him, it may happen (and this occurs more frequently) that his wives will gather, wait for the guilty woman at the door of the soukala, and give her a good thrashing when she comes out. The husband cannot say anything to them. He himself is protected, so to speak, by his status as a husband and left outside the argument, but revenge is taken on his unlucky accomplice, and while nothing is said to him, he can do nothing to protect her.

58% Divorce. —Divorce occurs in Yatenga more frequently than among the Bambara for reasons which were explained above. Here are the

586 principal theoretical cases which may arise concerning divorce. I borrow them from Vadier.

"Divorce occurs in the following cases.

1. By mutual consent. Spouses may separate if they do not get along. This is very unusual, however, and occurs only after the family heads of both spouses intervene amicably. The /247/ wife keeps whatever gifts her husband may have offered her if it was he who first requested a divorce. On the other hand, she leaves them behind if it was she who asked to leave.

2. Insults. Insults addressed to the husband by the wife, or vice versa, are not grounds for divorce. If the husband insults his wife's relatives, divorce does follow. The wife keeps the gifts.

3. Maltreatment. It is acknowledged that the husband may beat his wife in order to discipline her. If the injuries are serious, however, or if the husband continually beats his wife, she becomes free, but the gifts, sheep, goats, bracélets, etc., which she received from her husband remain in his possession.

4. Nonfulfillment of the conjugal duty. (1) On the husband's part. If the husband does not cohabit with his wife, she cannot say anything, but she is free to have lovers outside of her husband's soukala. If the latter complains, the wife leaves him.

[164] If the husband is infected with a venereal disease, a period of three years is granted him for a cure. If he does not get well after this lapse of time, the wife becomes free.

Verification by the naba takes place, as in the preceding case, if the husband is impotent, and likewise the wife returns to her family. The wife retains the gifts in all three cases.

(2) On the wife's part. If the wife refuses to fulfill her conjugal duty, the husband can turn her out and keep the gifts which he gave to her.

If the wife has a venereal disease, the husband cannot take her back.

5. Infidelity. The husband's infidelity is not grounds for divorce. The infidelity of the wife, however, is sufficient reason to terminate the marriage. The gifts remain with the husband.

6. Lack of support. If the husband refuses to provide food and support for his wife, she may request a divorce, but she must leave to her husband the gifts she received from him.

[839] 7. Guilty relations of one of the spouses with animals or with a person accused of having had intercourse with a she-ass.

586 8. Incest. In case incest is committed by one of the spouses, the other has the right to request a divorce. The gifts remain in the husband's possession if the wife is guilty, or revert to her if it was the husband who commited incest."

Such are the major theoretical cases which may result in divorce. Let us first return to one of them: nonfulfillment of the conjugal duty on the husband's part. The results noted by Vadier seem contradictory to those which we mentioned above (under "conjugal duty"). Actually, no contradiction is involved. When a husband does not fulfill his conjugal duty toward his wife (this, incidentally, occurs quite rarely), either the woman has only praise for her husband in all /248/ other respects, or he is cruel and mean and she is dissatisfied with him on other counts. In the first instance, she takes a lover outside her husband's compound, a liaison to which he voluntarily shuts his eyes, and she does not request a divorce. In the second case, she does request one. That is how the situation is actually resolved. [837]

586 837 Among the instances of divorce enumerated by Vadier, the most frequent, or rather the least rare, are as follows. (1) Continual infidelity on the part of the wife. I say "continual," for as we have already noted, while in principle a single infidelity on the woman's part enables the husband to ask for a divorce, in actual fact a wife is never sent back for a single breach of the marriage contract. Instead, she is merely beaten. If the woman persists in betraying her husband, however, he eventually sends her away. (2) Insults passed between each other by the husband and wife in a moment of anger do not count, but insults by the husband about his wife's relatives or by a wife about the husband's relatives are serious. (Incidentally, this sensitivity on the subject of relatives is not peculiar to the Mossi. It is common to all the Sudanese Negroes I have seen, Bambara, Malinké, etc.) Thus, if the husband insults his wife's relatives, she may request a divorce. Actually, a woman who loves her husband does not tell her relatives about insults which he may have aimed at them in a moment of anger. She says nothing and does not ask for a divorce. If she holds other grudges against her husband, however, or secretly wishes for a separation, she will eagerly take advantage of this motive which is considered to be serious. As regards the wife's insults against her husband's relatives (like the preceding, an unusual case among the Mossi), the same thing applies. Either the husband loves his wife and says nothing, or he does not love her and takes this opportunity to get rid of her. 586 578 602 [171]

586 As for the other causes of divorce, they occur very rarely, more rarely than the above.

Formalities of divorce. —"There are none," says Vadier. "The husband informs the head of his family and his wife's father of the decision he has taken. Likewise, the wife tells her father and the head of her family.

"If the divorce is contested and things do not work out amicably, the naba intervenes and remains the supreme judge."

Consequences of divorce. —1. Concerning property. "Each spouse," says Vadier, "keeps his or her own property." We have seen in the preceding paragraphs what happened in each case to the gifts given to the wife by her husband.

"As concerns the gifts given by the husband to the girl's family head or mother, there is no possibility of their return under any circumstances.

"2. Concerning the spouses. The spouses are completely freed by the divorce. They no longer have any obligations toward each other. /249/

"They may later marry each other again.

"3. Concerning the children. An important principle settles this question. The children belong to their father and consequently must remain with him.

"Small children accompany the mother, but they must return and live with their father when they reach the age of three (for boys) or six or seven (for girls).

"The divorced woman cannot return to her husband's hut to see her children. She may, however, go to the home of the head of her husband's family where her children may meet her with her husband's permission. The naba can override the father's authorization.

"With paternal consent, the children may go and see their mother at her home."

As Vadier has stated, an important principle governs the consequences of divorce as far as the children are concerned. As among most Sudanese populations, they revert to the father. He married in order to have children. The wife may go away and escape her basic function as generatrix for the husband, as generatrix for the husband's benefit, but the children remain with him. This matter is very important and deserves to be duly noted.

152 Psychology of the women. The woman as lover and as mother. —Mossi women love their children better than their husband. As for

152 their family, they love it very much, but they love their husband just as much if they love him at all. If they do not love their husband, naturally they love their family infinitely more.

304 When we study the children's life, we shall see that Mossi girls are
833 excised at the age of nine or ten. This barbarous operation naturally removes an important part of a woman's sensual sensitiveness. The Negress is thus a generatrix rather than a lover. One cannot say of her as of the Latin poet's mistress: crispum ... docta movere latus /gracefully moving her slender body/. She is passive in love and content to give herself without resistance to the man's passion.

831 The morality of Mossi women is certainly laxer than that of
577 European women. (Naturally, I compare the Mossi woman to the respectable woman of our occidental societies.) We saw earlier that the breach of virginity prior to marriage was not unusual and was tolerated with considerable leniency by custom. Adultery is also frequent and is punished in crude and rustic fashion. The woman is beaten and then forgiven. In short, morals are certainly less rigid
[548] than in our own countries. On the other hand, prostitution does not exist, and this is a great moral advantage. Briefly, the division of labor in the sexual domain, as in other domains, is far less developed among the Mossi of Yatenga than among the highly evolved civilizations of our European and occidental countries. The same applies to the other Sudanese populations.

000 Now we turn to Children and Education. We shall discuss these matters in the following order. /250/

1. Filiation.
2. Theory of birth.
3. How children are welcomed.
4. Abortion.
5. Childbirth.
6. Baptism.
7. Freaks. Twins.
8. Nursing.
9. Charms for children and tattooings.
10. Children's games.
11. Familial education.
12. Education of children among themselves. Societies.
13. Young people's tasks.
14. Rights and duties of parents toward their children.
15. Duties of children toward their parents.

000 16. Circumcision.
17. Excision.
18. After the circumcision.
19. Emancipation and coming of age.
20. Guardianship.
21. Adoption.
22. Interdiction.

Let us begin with filiation.

848 Filiation. —"The Mossi," says Vadier, "distinguish three types of filiation: (1) legitimate filiation; (2) natural filiation; and (3) filiation from incest.

As for filiation from adultery, it is regarded exactly in the same manner as natural filiation.

[843] The period of gestation is believed to be from seven to twelve months. A child conceived outside this lapse of time is regarded as a natural child. Moreover, a woman need only tell her husband that the child she is carrying in her womb is not his and he will disown it.

When the illegitimate child or one born of adultery reaches the age of three or six (depending on its sex), it is entrusted to its natural father. In spite of this separation, the child retains its rights of inheritance from its mother.

848 Filiation from incest does not exist, or rather there is not enough
847 time for obligations and rights to be created. Indeed, according to a barbarous custom, the child born of incest is put to death immediately after birth by the women who assisted with the delivery.

835 Incest rules apply between kin of any degree in the ascending and descending lines: sister and brother, uncle and niece, nephew and aunt, and all their relatives in the direct ascending and descending lines; father-in-law and daughter-in-law; son-in-law and mother-in-law. /251/

684 When incest occurs, the guilty pair are driven from their families and from Yatenga, and the naba confiscates all their property."

843 Theory of birth. —The Mossi believe that when a woman is
115 pregnant, the soul of an ancestor has returned within her. We shall speak of this animistic explanation of birth later under "Religion" /not translated/.

In fact, resemblances between the child and some previously known ancestor are pointed out as often as possible, and it is said that this particular ancestor was reincarnated within the woman.

842 How children are welcomed. —The Mossi are very happy to have children and want by all means to have some. This is indeed to their full advantage, since children work from the age of seven or eight, since they make sacrifices for their parents when the latter are dead, and since the daughters, by marrying, bring in gifts for the family. The more children one has, the happier one is.

842 789 "Under these circumstances," says Vadier, "a barren woman is very poorly regarded by her husband and not greatly esteemed by her neighbors. To overcome this sterility when it occurs, both spouses appeal to the gods. They both go to the tengasoba, the religious chief of the village, with a chicken, a goat, or a sheep, according to their means. The tengasoba cuts the animal's throat on a special stone, collects its blood, and boils it in a vessel along with various tree barks which have certain properties.

"This concoction is then given to the woman, who must mix it with her sarabou. If the spouses later have a child, they must, under threat of calling forth the vengeance of the divinity (the Earth, in [431] this case), offer the tengasoba a gift of 3, 000 cowries if they had a boy or 4, 000 cowries if they had a girl.

"The tengasoba also overcome sterility by cutting the animal's throat in the sacred grove (kango)."

847 Abortions. —Abortions nevertheless occur. Sometimes Mossi women cause an abortion in the event of an illegitimate pregnancy which occurred in the husband's absence. In addition, abortions are rather frequent among unmarried mothers. To conceal their lapse, [791] they appeal to the tipa or timisoba (makers of charms, medicines, and poisons) who give them a special brew of which they hold the secret.

[586] These practices are, of course, very poorly regarded by the Mossi. Married women who resort to them are turned out by their husband's. In addition, if a woman dies as the result of an abortion, her husband is likely to manifest joy and to state that the woman received a just punishment for her transgression. Finally, in former times after the [684] death of the guilty woman, the husband would go to the Moro Naba and denounce her lover to him. The naba confiscated all the lover's property.

843 Childbirth. —Among wealthy Mossi, the pregnant woman is treated with a certain regard. She does not work after the third month /252/ of pregnancy if this is her first, or after the sixth month if she has

843 already borne children. Among the common people, the woman works up to the time of her delivery. Like other Sudanese women, the Mossi woman is inured to the pains of childbirth and devoid of any nervousness.

843 787 When their wives are pregnant, the Mossi often go to consult the baga /sorcerer/ to find out what sacrifices should be made so the event will turn out well. As he is wont to do, the baga indicates such-and-such a sacrifice. He also prognosticates on request whether to expect a boy or a girl.

843 755 If the pregnant woman has been frightened by an evil spirit (kinkirga), she summons the tipa who washes her body with a specially prepared liquid or merely administers violent blows on her head with tarakanré (cowhide sandals of which we spoke earlier /not translated/) to drive out the evil spirit.

844 The Mossi woman may give birth only in her own hut. She would consider it a shameful thing if the child were born in her husband's private hut.

When a woman gives birth, she makes a confession to the old women who assist her, because she fears too much suffering or an unsuccessful delivery if she does not confess the faults she has committed. The old women go and repeat them to the husband, who says, "That's all right, I knew it all," and forgives her. In short, the torments of childbirth are put to use by the old women to procure a confession.

There are midwives among the Mossi (in Mossi, pougourorosa). They are paid by the husband. However, they do not receive a [431] salary, properly speaking, but rather a gift (a piece of salt, a skirt cloth, etc.). If nothing is given to them, they cannot and do not make any demands.

In addition to the midwife, the old women of the compound, quarter, or village come and help the patient.

844 576 For the delivery itself, the Mossi woman goes down on hands and knees, her arms stretched out upon the ground, her body slightly inclined from head to hips, in the posture ordinarily used to salute or to remain before a chief. The midwife stays behind her.

844 When the child is born, the women present heat up a very strong concoction with red pepper, soumbara /locust bean/, etc. The woman is made to swallow this, and it is supposed to foster the emission of blood and all other impure matter. Then she is washed with warm water. Her loins are also rubbed vigorously so that the strain undergone in childbirth will not be felt there later. Likewise,

844 the child is washed in warm water and then placed on a mat in a sort of nest made with old skirt cloths and various bits of fabric. Then the woman is placed on the mat next to the child which can now be suckled. Let us note, however, one final ceremony. Before the
844 woman gives the breast, the child is washed in dolo, especially the
853 inside /253/ of the nose and the genitalia, for the Mossi, like the
826 Bambara, are convinced that mother's milk has an injurious effect on these two parts of a child's anatomy. If the child, while suckling, should breathe in some milk through its nose, this would, it is said, cause the interior of the organ to rot. Likewise, were a few drops to fall on its genitalia, that part would suffer from it. The dolo prevents such lamentable accidents.

846 At the end of three days, the woman leaves the compound and goes to pay a call on the old women who helped her and to thank them. After two weeks or a month, she takes up her usual tasks.

The Mossi and Foulsé women of Yatenga carry their children on
854 the back after the fashion of other Sudanese women, holding them in a skirt cloth which they tie and knot up in front over the breasts.

851 Baptism. —No celebration takes place at birth. The child is bap-
553 tized about a month later. One of the older members of the family, other than the mother and father, chooses the name. In selecting it, the sponsor takes some event into account, whether important or unimportant, which occurred during the mother's pregnancy. If she was frightened by a horse, the child is named Oueyfo. If, by accident, she crushed a chicken to death, the newborn is called Noga. If a sacrifice was made for the expected child on a hill, he is named Tenga; if the sacrifice was made to a bastard mahogany tree, the child is called Kouka, etc.

551 Let us note that most Mossi proper names, male or female, are the names of vegetables, trees, animals, etc., that is, precisely those names with which an attempt was made to replace the traditional proper names in France in 1793.

Curiously enough, there are no family names. When one wants to pinpoint someone's individuality, one says, "So-and-So (here, the proper name), son of So-and-So (here, the father's proper name)." If there are two men with the same name in one compound, an agnomen will be used to distinguish them, for example, "Tenga the Big and Tenga the Small." As for the Mossi sondogo (pl., sondéré), which is the same as the Bambara diamou, this is a clan name (we shall return

551 to the clan later) and not a family name. Ouidiraogo, for example, which is the most widespread clan name among the Mossi, is common to innumerable families.

As for the personal name, proper to the individual, it is quite changeable and variable, for often an individual does not answer to a single name but to two or three: the name his sponsor gave him, the name his mother gives him, the name given him by his friends, and the name given him by his neighbors. On the one hand, the Black likes to conceal his name, while on the other hand he changes it or seems to change it with the greatest ease. We have already seen /in a section not translated/ that the Moro Naba, when ascending the throne, change their proper name to an official name, and from that day forward the former name may never be pronounced. The Mossi who enlist as riflemen (and this is true of all Sudanese men) tend never to sign up under their real name /254/, and this has nothing to do with thoughts of desertion. They give the name of their village or that of their tribe or of a neighboring tribe, or just any name they please. In a word, one cannot look for the same conception of names among the Blacks as is found among Europeans. The European has a name (proper name, family name), and that is the end of it. He is listed, labeled, classified. He cannot do away with it. His name is one with him. The Black is too primitive to have reached this kind of social discipline. He conceals his true personality under the changing names to which he does not want to be linked.

To summarize, the Mossi and Foulsé of Yatenga have (1) a personal name, a first name or proper name as we say in French, along with a certain number of names or agnomina which are used in addition. (2) One says, "So-and-So, son of So-and-So," when wishing to designate someone without confusing him with another person who carries the same name. These two designations provide the proper name and the father's name, but not, properly speaking, the family name. As we already know, the family extends well beyond the household. (3) Although no family names exist, there is the name of the clan, which in turn extends far beyond the family. There is, therefore, both more and less than a family name, but no exact equivalent to it.

845 Freaks. Twins. —Abnormal children frighten the Mossi. Their mothers do not suckle them and thus condemn them to a speedy death.
847 Children born of incest are put to death.

845 The birth of twins is a good omen when they are of different sex.
787 If they are of the same sex, however, it is a sign of approaching death for the father if they are girls, or for the mother if they are of the male sex. To conjure away this fate, a chicken is sacrificed.

853 Nursing. —When a woman is unable to nurse her child, another woman of the family is called in as a wet nurse, or, more simply, a goat is made to suckle the child. Both cases, however, are quite unusual.

854 Charms for children and tattooing. To protect the child from ill-
751 ness or accidents, a necklace with a charm containing the ashes of various shrubs is placed around its neck about two months after birth.

304 The child is tattooed two and a half or three years after birth. Old women are in charge of this operation. They trace out the lines for the scars on the child's face with a sharp little knife which is bent at the tip. Then they put a mixture of karite butter and powdered charcoal on the wounds to stop the flow of blood.

Tattooing is the same for all the Mossi of Yatenga without distinction of rank. It consists of three vertical scars on each cheek, an oblique one on either side of the face from the corner between the eye and nose to the base of the cheek, and two or three little ones in the middle of the forehead. /255/

854 The very young child. —As in all of the /French/ Sudan, the mother carries the child on her back, wrapped in a cloth that is knotted in front over or under the breasts. She goes thus everywhere, works, pounds millet, etc., with the child on her back.

853 When she wants to suckle it, she brings it to her side, astraddle one hip, and supports it with one arm. She does not put it on the ground unless she is in her hut or teaching it how to walk.

When the child is two or three, it stops nursing and is put on the ground.

857 Until they are four or five, the children run about the compound and around it. At that age, they begin to go out into the bush all by themselves and to play with the other little boys.

Children's games. —We shall deal with this subject under "Mode of Subsistence (hygiene, games, play)."

857 Familial education. —The boys, as soon as they reach the age of five or six, go with their big brother and tend the goats in the bush.
868 They also go and fetch firewood, straw, etc. When they are nine or ten, they begin to handle the daba /a field implement/. At eleven or twelve they are already doing men's work.

859 The girls remain by their mother's side. They fetch water with
868 her, learn how to pound millet, how to cook, etc. When they are eight or nine, they are taught how to spin cotton.

513 The boys sleep in their mother's hut until they are circumcised,
882 that is, until they are about thirteen years old. Thereafter, they sleep in a special hut, kombarogo, with all the other circumcised boys of the compound. The girls sleep in their mother's hut until they are married.

561 Little boys are called kondibili kirisé, biribili kirisé, or komkirisé (komkiriga in the singular). Little girls are called kompougouli kirisé or bipougouli kirisé. The older girls are kompougouli beda or bipougouli beda. The older boys or young men (they are considered as such once they are circumcised) are rasamba (rasanga in the singular). Young girls are called pourousada or pougousada (pourousadaba in the plural).

Education of children among themselves. Societies. —Mossi
859 children form societies among themselves. These are called nam
575 (they are the same as the Bambara ton or flambolo). There is a society for boys and one for girls in the small villages. In the large villages, as in Ouahigouya, for example, these societies are formed by village quarters.

Each society has its chief and its high dignitaries: its Moro Naba who rules over it with his four ministers. The girls also have their Pourousada Moro Naba and four female ministers. These societies are devoted to play, drinking, tom-tom playing, and dancing.

Each member must furnish a certain number of cowries: the chiefs /256/ give 200 or 300; the mere rasamba, 100; the kondibili, 50; the kondibili-kirise, 30. The Moro Naba of the society collects the dues, and he is also the treasurer.

Another source of income for the society derives from work performed for the people of the village, the owners of fields. The boys do not merely go and offer their services. When someone needs a helping hand with his field, he goes to the Moro Naba of the society who places the whole group at his disposal for a fee. Payment is made in millet which the society uses to make dolo for its celebrations.

Another source of income derives from fining members for lapses in their duties to the society. The Moro Naba of the nam fines those who arrive late when called for work on someone's field or those who go on an errand or a short trip without notifying him in advance.

857 The people fined must give three or four canari of dolo (the usual
575 canari of dolo is worth 150 cowries, or three sous).

The members assemble to eat, to drink dolo, and to dance to the sound of the tom-tom at the compound belonging to the father of the society's Moro Naba. The girls are invited to come and dance.

[171] Among the Mossi of Yatenga, the nam do not have their own huts as do the Bambara ton and flambolo.

Little mock weddings are performed in the societies between the girls and boys. The young spouses offer each other small gifts of cowries, peanuts, cotton, etc.

Once married, the young girls withdraw from their society on account of their husband's jealousy. Married men, on the other hand, may remain in theirs and quite frequently do while they are young. Old men, however, are no longer members of the nam.

883 Young people's tasks. —Young men, after they are circumcised (at the age of 13 or 14), work in the compound or rather in the work group to which they belong on the same days and at the same hours as other members of the group.

They are provided with food by the head of the group seven months out of twelve and by their father five months out of twelve, and they are clothed by the latter.

They have their own little plots, but the produce does not belong exclusively to them. Their father and mother take what they need to feed or clothe the youth. The remainder is his. Boys can thus accumulate a little property of their own before they marry.

Young girls have no little plots of their own to cultivate. They learn how to till the soil by working with their mother in the fields of the work group and in the mother's little private plots. Hence, they are fed by the group seven months out of twelve and by their father and mother for five months, and they are clothed by their parents. The individual property they own consists mostly of trifling jewels usually received as gifts. /257/

593 Rights and duties of parents toward their children. —Paternal authority rests largely with the father of the child, but also partly with the head of the work group, the head of the compound, and the family head. This is understandable, since the child's support is ensured for the greater part of the time, except for clothing, by the work group and since lodging is ensured by the compound.

593 861 858 The right to discipline a child belongs principally to the father (but also to the heads of work group, compound, and family) or to the mother, depending on the age of the child.

"The mother," says Vadier, "has the right to discipline boys until they are circumcised, girls until they marry. This does not mean that the father cannot intervene during that time to reprimand or chastise one of his children, but that he nearly always leaves it to the mother.

"After the boy's circumcision and the girl's marriage, the right to punish belongs to the father and no longer to the mother."

593 858 672 The duty of surveillance belongs principally to the father, and secondly to the heads of the work group, compound, and family. One of its consequences is financial liability. If a child steals or commits some reprehensible act which may call for compensation, the father is primarily responsible and must indemnify the injured parties, after seizing whatever property the child may own.

593 858 443 Formerly, when a native could not manage to discipline a son or daughter whose behavior was very bad, he would hand the child over to the Moro Naba after consulting the family head and the family council. From that day forward he would give up his paternal authority, and the Moro Naba alone would hold it with broader prerogatives. If the child continued to commit extortion, the Moro Naba had the right to have him put to death. When it was a girl who was handed to the naba, the latter would give the father a woman of his own household in exchange if he happened to be favorably disposed toward him.

Now, since the French occupation, this is no longer done. In such cases, nowadays, the child is simply expelled from the compound and from the household.

858 593 A father could not give his child as security, nor could he pawn him temporarily as a slave.

593 429 858 Paternal authority is relinquished in two cases, actually very infrequent: (1) when the father goes insane; and (2) when he has committed incest.

In such a case, paternal authority passes to his oldest living brother, or, if there is no brother, to the oldest son. This guardian has exactly the same powers over the child as the father had.

858 In case of insanity, the children are required to help their father and mother /258/ and to attend to their needs. In case of incest, they have no obligations toward the guilty party.

593 The Moro Naba, after he has been notified by the family council,
684 pronounces the forfeiture of paternal authority. In case of incest, the guilty party was driven out of the territory.

593 Duties of children toward their parents. —The children owe obedience to their father and mother. They also owe them respect.

Their labor obligations are distributed among the fields of the work group, the father's private fields, the mother's small private plots, and their own little plots. Naturally they work most on the large fields belonging to the work group.

304 Circumcision. —Circumcision is performed at the age of 13 or 14.
881 It takes place in the month of December, hence during the dry, cool season. At this time the children are not needed to help in the fields, as they are in the winter season. This is also the case in the hot, dry season, but at that time the wounds would heal less quickly. This leaves the dry, cold season, which is excellently suited to the treatment of the circumcised, a time when the children have nothing whatever to do and the grown-ups very little.

304 Circumcision is performed on a certain number of children at the
621 same time. When a small village is involved, all the children in the
593 village are circumcised at once. When a large village is involved,
881 the children in each quarter are circumcised together. The children themselves ask their big brother if they may be circumcised when they feel that they have reached a suitable age for this operation. The big brother decides and says yes or no.

304 The children also set the exact date for the circumcision and go to
326 the man who has charge of the operation to make the arrangements.
881 In Yatenga, as a rule, he is a blacksmith (at Ouahigouya, for example, from the quarter of the Baloum-Naba). Sometimes, however, non-blacksmiths, either Foulsé or Mossi, perform the operation. When a performer of operations dies, he is replaced by someone who knows how to circumcise, either a brother or a son of the deceased or someone from another family.

304 Circumcision is not performed in the evening or at night, as happens
881 among other Blacks of West Africa, but at six o'clock in the morning. A particularly kind man among the people of the quarter or of the village has been chosen by the children who are to be circumcised. He wakes them up on that morning and takes them to the man who is to perform the operation. Big brothers accompany their younger brothers, but the father and mother do not witness the operation and are not even

304 notified, nor are the family heads. The women, girls, and other
881 boys (those who are not to be circumcised) cannot witness the operation, and this is actually forbidden to them. Circumcision is performed in the bush, 500 meters from the village, in the open air by the side of a tree. There is no location determined by custom, however, and a spot is chosen each year at will.

The man who is performing the operation ties the tip of the patient's prepuce with a string /259/, and the boy squats down. A small block of wood is placed under the penis, and the tip of the penis rests upon it. The man places a small iron cleaver on the spot marked by the string, and deals it a sharp, neat blow with a stone, so the blade will
[752] make a clean cut. Naturally, a copious hemorrhage ensues. It is first allowed to take its course for a while, and then the man stanches it by putting dust upon the wound. Each child is circumcised in turn. When the operations are over, the man who was chosen, the nané, leads the circumcised boys to another spot, 500 meters from the village, under a tree. He has the heads of the children's families notified (and they notify in turn the children's parents) that the boys have just been circumcised and beg forgiveness for having done this without telling them. Family heads, fathers, and mothers naturally forgive in accordance with custom. Meanwhile, the boys are taking care of themselves. By tying a string around the body, they lift the penis so its tip will not rub against the thighs. The string holds another cord which lifts the penis in a horizontal position. To maintain it in this position, they also place under the penis a little piece of forked wood, the tip of which rests on the testicles. They do not dress the wounds as yet. This will not be done until three days have passed.

304 Meanwhile, the men of the circumcised boys' compounds build
342 two sheds in Mossi style (low, on forks, with a thick straw roof), one
881 outside the village where the young men are, the other inside the village in front of the compound of the nané. Food for the circumcised boys is provided by their families. Each mother makes sarabou for her son, but the mothers do not bring it themselves, for, being women, they are not permitted to see the newly-circumcised boys. They send the sarabou through some boy who has already been circumcised. In the evening when it is quite dark, around seven o'clock, the nané brings the children to sleep under the shed erected in the village. Before daybreak in the morning they will, like shadows, leave again for the bush.

304 824 752 881 At the end of three days, the nané sends a few circumcised boys of preceding years, rasamba, to look in the bush for bark of the néré, karite, n'pékou, and the n'kouna trees. He has them boiled in a large canari and then allows the water to cool until it is lukewarm. Then he calls the bankonsé (this is the name of the newly circumcised boys in Mossi, bankonka in the singular, bankonsé in the plural) and orders them to wash their penes in this water. At the same time he has the leaves of the kantoboga boiled. This is an aloe-type plant of which we have already spoken /not translated/. When this washing is done, the bankonsé smear their penes with cow butter (karite butter is avoided because it is believed to soften the penis and to make it less virile), and then, after cutting kantoboga leaves into pieces, they wrap them around the member, forming a sort of sheath. These leaves are wrapped with cotton thread so they will stay in place. /260/

From then on, the same procedure is repeated every morning and every evening. The bankonsé undo the bandage, wash with néré or karite water, apply fresh butter and new kantoboga leaves. This is done until the wounds are healed.

Néré water, once prepared, keeps for seven days. The supply of kantoboga leaves is renewed only when there are no more on hand.

304 883 881 The bankonsé do not stir for the first three days. From the third to the tenth day, they begin to take a little exercise. For example, they fetch whatever water they need. At the end of ten days, they walk about in the bush, fetch firewood which they stack in piles, and do the same with straw. In the open country they chase hares, rats, and snakes with sticks, in short, all the small game which is to be found there. When there is water in the vicinity, they fish for frogs and fish. They also pick berries from bushes, etc.

[292] Their clothing consists of a kind of skirt which goes down to their ankles and which is made of old garments torn to shreds, of frayed cotton bands.

In the evening from time to time the bankonsé have tom-tom sessions near the shed where they sleep in the village. The griot /drummers, minstrels/ come and play on their instruments. Since this is done at night, men, women, and children may attend.

304 435 881 The bankonsé are entitled to ransack the bush and to take everything they find: chickens, goats, sheep, cotton, etc. The owners have no right to object, but this applies only to small livestock. The bankonsé have no right to larger animals and horses.

881 It seems that among the Mossi and Foulsé, the nané does not give
304 moral lessons to the bankonsé, contrary to the procedure among the Bambara where the custom has been preserved.

At the end of a month, the bankonsé are healed. The families are notified, and each household prepares a new pair of breeches and a boubou /robe/ for the young circumcised boys.

On the evening preceding the day when they make their reappearance in the village, around seven o'clock, the skirts of the circumcised boys are heaped into a pile and burned. The following morning the nané leads the bankonsé to the well to wash from head to toe before donning their new clothes. Before leaving camp, the firewood gathered by the boys is distributed among their mothers and the straw among their family heads. The nané also keeps a certain amount for himself. This is his allowance, aside from his being provided with food throughout the month, along with the circumcised boys, by the latter's
[833] relatives. (On the other hand, he had to remain separated from his wife, for there is a superstition that should he approach her, the bankonsé would fail to heal.) When the distribution of straw and firewood has been completed, our circumcised boys make their triumphal entry into the village at seven o'clock in the morning in their /261/ beautiful new garments. To the sound of the tom-tom, they visit
[431] all the compounds, calling on everyone. Gifts are offered to them (kola nuts, cowries, peanuts, cotton, dolo, etc.). When the visits are completed, the celebration is over, and the bankonsé return home.
[551] They may henceforth be called by name again; this could not be done during their retreat.

Excision. ——Girls are excised when they are eight, nine, or ten, depending on how mature they are. As with the boys, this is done during the month of December, but instead of being carried out on a village or quarter basis, it is done on a compound basis. The operation itself is performed by an old woman who knows how to do it. It is not she, however, who watches over the girls afterwards, but an old woman of the compound who has them under her supervision for twenty-five or thirty days. During that time, the girls are kept apart, sleeping in their guardian's hut and taking care of themselves. As soon as they can walk, they go and gather wood in the bush for her, they fetch water, spin cotton, etc. At nightfall, they sing in chorus, clapping their hands in rhythm.

When they are healed, they deck themselves with all the bracelets and jewelry they can find in the compound. Thus dressed up and

881 adorned, they go in a group to greet the mother of each one in turn,
304 but they do not go out into the village like the boys.

In short, among the Mossi and Foulsé of Yatenga, circumcision and excision are not characterized by the intervention of any powerful religious society like the komo among the Bambara and among the Mandé in general. Nor do we find here those picturesque details which are so strikingly present among the Malinké of Upper Guinea and even more so among the tribes of Lower Guinea (Soussou /Susu/, Landouman /Landuma/, etc.) (3). Nevertheless, circumcision is

3. On this topic, see André Arcin, La Guinée française /French Guinea/, pp. 438-446, and Noirot, A travers le Foutah-Djallon et le Bambouk /Across the Fouta Djallon and Bambouk/, concerning the Landouman.

important in the lives of the Mossi and Foulsé of Yatenga, because it transforms the child into a young man.

591 After circumcision. —Following circumcision or excision, only marriage remains. When a girl married, as we have seen above, she leaves her compound and goes to her husband's residence. The young man, however, remains in his own compound. He is given a cabin, a hut, for himself and his bride if there is one available and empty, or a new one is built for him. When he has a child, he builds a hut near his own for the young mother and son, unless he is given another one which is available.

884 Emancipation and coming of age. —One can scarcely speak of emancipation and coming of age among the Mossi. A man comes of age when he marries, but he always remains a minor to some extent vis-à-vis his work group, his compound, and his family. Emancipation /262/ and coming of age are French concepts which have no equivalent among the Mossi in particular and the Sudanese in general. One might acknowledge, however, as does Vadier in his monograph on Yatenga, a sort of coming of age around the age of 17 or 18 for purposes of buying and selling.

429 Guardianship. —When a Mossi dies, his wives and children revert to his oldest brother. If there are many wives and children, they are apportioned among the brothers of the deceased. The head of the family presides over the distribution.

429 If the deceased has no brother or grown son, the family head apportions the children among various members of the family.

The guardian has the same obligations toward his ward and enjoys the same rights over them as did their deceased father. By the same token, the wards have the same duties toward their guardian as they did toward their father.

The child inherits from his guardian just like the latter's legitimate children.

[672] Like the father, the guardian is liable for damages caused by his ward.

591 Adoption. —Adoption occurs in Yatenga.

When two spouses have no progeny (this is quite unusual) or simply fail to have any right away, they sometimes adopt a child. The child must be taken into their family. Adoption does not require any formalities.

The child, adopted at a very young age, is never consulted.

The matter is adjusted between the adoptive father, the child's father, and the family head.

Either a girl or boy may be adopted, but actually boys are adopted for the most part.

From the day of his adoption the child enters the household of his adoptive father and mother as a legitimate child.

Actually, this manner of adoption differs from the French one in that it is limited to the family, to the total family.

In addition to this method of adoption and pertaining to the same category, let us point out a curious custom among the Mossi.

The oldest son, according to custom, must not be brought up by his father. As soon as he leaves his mother's breast or sometimes following circumcision, he is handed over to the /father's/ younger or older brother, who raises him and gives him a wife. Upon the death of his father, however, he comes into the latter's inheritance and thus does not really leave the household to which he was born.

672 Interdiction. —"Only the insane are subject to interdiction," says Vadier.

"When a native is afflicted with insanity, the family head and other members of the family meet to discuss the case of the sick person. If he is recognized as irresponsible, the head of the family has all the inhabitants of the village warned to have no dealings with him. Indeed, according to custom, no one /263/ could be held civilly liable for agreements made by a native afflicted with insanity.

672 "If the insane person still has a father, it is his duty to warn the people of the neighborhood.

"All the deeds made, the debts contracted, and the commercial transactions effected by the insane person are declared void. No third parties may appeal against members of the insane person's family."

000 Now let us deal with the appendages of the family.

We shall divide this section into the following headings.

1. Clients.
2. Domestic servants.
3. Slaves. Their origins.
4. Slaves. Name.
5. Slaves. Kinds of slaves.
6. Serfs.

Let us begin with the clients.

464 1. Clients. The usual clientage involving a household which requests support, protection, food, and shelter from a rich family, in return for which the household will labor for the family and live with it, is not to be found among the Mossi and Foulsé of Yatenga. It does happen, however, that a young man who desires to acquire quickly a wife, a horse, some property, or an amount of authority which does not usually revert to young men decides to leave his family and his compound to place himself in the service of some chief (Moro Naba, canton chief, village chief, tengasoba, etc.). It is the young men, rasamba, who make such decisions. Once they have won what they sought to obtain, however, they return to their families. When one goes to a tengasoba, he usually expects only a wife from him, and he does not leave until the tengasoba dies. Then, provided with a wife, he returns to his family. Naturally, these "temporary volunteers" preserve all their rights in their respective families.

464 Let us note further that during times of famine some Mossi request
731 work from people of better means. The duration of their work is usually very short, scarcely more than a few days (two or three days, for example).

464 The employee and employer (if these terms may be used here) are in no way bound to each other. The former may leave whenever he wishes, and the latter may dismiss him as he pleases. He must, however, pay for the employee's work days in full. The daily

464 salary consists either of 100 cowries (10 centimes) or a basket of unthreshed millet. In addition to this, the employer feeds the employee. This is limited, I repeat, to times of famine.

/264/ True clientage, such as we described among the Malinké, does not occur among the Mossi.

2. Domestic servants. The domestic servant, such as exists in
356 France and other civilized socieites, does not and never did exist among the Mossi. Actually, domestic tasks (cleaning, cooking, and washing) are performed by the women in Yatenga society. For a corroboration of this, we refer the reader to what we said above about women's tasks.

567 3. Slaves. Origins. The Mossi owned slaves prior to the French occupation. They still own some nowadays, although far fewer, only those, in fact, who did not run away. Since recruitment dried up at its source through the prohibition bearing on the purchase and sale of slaves, reinforced by severe penalties, the number of captives has dwindled day by day, and it is obvious that eventually they will disappear completely. At present, this has not yet come to pass.

[727] The Mossi used to obtain their slaves through raids on the Samo, Bobo, Kipirsi, Gourounsi, Habbé, and Rimaï be /slaves of the Peul/. The Yarsé also brought some from the southern markets (Sikasso, Samory states, etc.) and sold them all over Yatenga. They kept many for their own benefit, and they possessed more slaves than the Mossi (as merchants, indeed, they always owned more slaves than the Mossi). The Peul of Yatenga also had many slaves, more than the Mossi, which they obtained through raid or purchase.

Voluntary slavery and debt slavery provided no captives, since these two kinds of slavery never existed in the region.

The Mossi of Yatenga themselves did not constitute a source of slaves for other Mossi of Yatenga. One Mossi of the region could not be the slave of another Mossi. Only members of the alien groups listed above could be enslaved (including the Mossi of Ouagadougou). The Peul were not enslaved, but only held for ransom, since they were both rich (in cattle) and lazy. Their Rimaï'be, however, as we have said, were taken as captives (a Peul would certainly not be willing to pay any ransom for them).

727 When two factions were at war in Yatenga, the Mossi who were made prisoners were killed immediately, including small children of the male sex, even those who were still at their mother's breast.

727 Only the sons of the two warring chiefs were spared. They were returned to their families for ransom. The women were also spared and returned to their husbands in exchange for other women or livestock. If their husbands did not come and claim them, the conquerors took them as wives and not as slaves.

567 435 Let us say a few words about the price of a slave. A man was worth 40, 000 cowries; a woman, 50, 000 or 60, 000; a young man, 50, 000; a young girl, 80, 000. We can see that the qualities most valued were, on the one hand, membership in the female sex and, on the other hand, youth.

567 4. Name. A slave is called yemba in Mossi (pl., yembésé) when no distinction is made between the sexes. When a male slave is meant, /265/ the word yembraogo is used (yembraodo or yembrâdo in the plural). For a female slave, one uses yempoka (yempokosé in the plural).

5. Kinds of slaves. The yembraogo, once bought or captured, was placed in irons, or to put it more precisely, irons were fastened to his feet in order to prevent him from escaping, but leaving him free to work. These irons were left on him for two or three years. When it was certain that he would not run away, the irons were removed. He spent all his time working for his master during the cultivating season, or he worked the small private fields belonging to his master's wives. In return, he was clothed and fed at all times. He could be resold, and this was done if there was dissatisfaction with him or his work.

If the master was satisfied with him, he bought him a wife. Then the slave became a bingo man, a "bingo," and was no longer a yembraogo. He passed from the status of a captive by trade or war to that of a house slave. Bingo is the name given to house slaves among the Mossi of Yatenga. At Ouagadougou they are called dapare or deporé (poré or paré meaning "back"); the daparé or daporé is the man who walks behind his master, the attendant, the slave. The bingo could not be resold except in unusual circumstances, such as when he committed fornication with his master's wife.

[592] When the master had but a few of them, the bingo lived in the same compound, with a door of their own leading outside. When there was a number of them, they had a small compound next to the one of the family.

During the season of cultivation, the bingo worked for his master two days out of three. During the dry season, he also worked for him

567 whenever the master had work to give him. He worked for himself the rest of the time, that is to say, one day out of three during the cultivation period and throughout the dry season when he was not "on duty."

He was fed by the master when he worked for him. When he worked for himself, he procured his own food.

The bingo provided his own clothing, except when he was absolutely incapable of doing so. Then he appealed to his master.

The bingo's daughters were given in marriage by the master, who took them for himself or gave them to his sons, to his brothers, etc. In return, the bingo's sons had to be provided with wives by their master and not by their father. In any case, they worked for him, like their father, and could no more be sold than he could, unless they betrayed the master with his wives.

567 428 The bingo could own property since he had time to work for himself. At his death, his inheritance went not to his master but to his oldest son (unless he had an enslaved brother nearby, but I am considering the case of a former yembraogo, bought by the master, given a wife by him, and thus becoming a bingo, and then having children). At the death of his eldest son /266/ the inheritance went to his younger brother, etc. The master came into the inheritance only when there were no heirs.

567 On the other hand, the master could request from his slave whatever he wished, a chicken, a goat, a beef. The slave could not refuse, since everything belonged to the master on principle, the slave being his also.

The bingo could never free himself or be freed by his master. The number of generations which had elapsed made no difference.

The bingo could belong to the head of a family, the head of a compound, the head of a work group, or to a mere household head. They were owned on an individual basis. When a man who owned a bingo or yembraogo owed labor to another man, for example, to the head of his work group, the bingo or yembraogo likewise owed labor to this man and went to work with his master.

567 644 It must be noted that the bingo of the Moro Naba, that is, the "Crown bingo," were in a special position from every point of view. As we shall see later under "Public Administration" /not translated/, they came under the authority of the Rassam Naba or Rassoum Naba, one of the four ministers, who was sometimes called Bingo Naba for

567 this reason. They did not work for the Moro Naba except seven or
644 eight days a year when they were called along with all the other inhabitants of Ouahigouya, without exception, to the Moro Naba's fields. Actually, they were thus free men as far as work was concerned. Half their daughters, however, reverted to the Moro Naba, who took them for himself or for his close relatives. On the other hand, they supported themselves completely (food, clothing, etc.). The Moro Naba gave them no assistance whatever in this respect.

Let us add that the ordinary captives, the bingo of the common Mossi, found a safe retreat at the court of the Moro Naba. If a slave was dissatisfied with his master, he would run away and take asylum with the chief of Yatenga. The latter handed him to the Rassam Naba, who saw to it that a hut and a field were given to him (if he was married) and a wife as well (if he did not have any). As long as he was not married, he would cultivate the fields of the Moro Naba's wives, who provided him with food in return. Once married, he would work the soil, labor for himself and his wife, and have no obligations other than the general duties of the bingo who belonged to the Moro Naba, as we have seen above. In short, he would acquire the general status of a Crown slave.

Let us add, however, that if the master came and claimed his slave from the Moro Naba, the captive was sometimes returned. This depended on the fairness of the master's case (he had never mistreated his slave, had always been good to him, etc.) and also on the more or less sizable gift which he presented to the Moro Naba in order to gain his good graces.

The bingo of the Riziam Naba, an independent king as we have already noted /not translated/, were in the same position as the bingo of the Moro Naba and not in the position of ordinary bingo. The same applied to the bingo of the three great chiefs /267/ of the canton, the Zitenga Naba, Ratenga Naba, and Roussoum Naba.

566 6. Serfs. In Yatenga, there were serfs of a sort, the bagaré, to use the Mossi term. The only ones who had them, however, were the Moro Naba of Yatenga, the Moro Naba of Riziam, and a few great canton chiefs, such as the Zitenga Naba and the Ratenga Naba. Not even the Moro Naba's ministers were entitled to own them, much less the common Mossi. The bagaré was a Peul slave, a dimadio (rimaïbé in the plural) who had been captured from the Peul or who had fled from them to the Mossi, in short, a former rimaïbé who had

566 gone into Mossi hands. The bagaré did not till the soil. They simply minded their master's herds. As for other work, they also built the straw huts where the Moro Naba of Yatenga, the Riziam Naba, and other chiefs slept at the New Year (we shall see under "Religion" /not translated/ to what purpose).

The bagaré saw to their own support (food and clothing). The multiplying herd belonged to the naba, but its yield (milk and butter) went to the bagaré. Out of this yield, however, they gave the naba whatever he needed of milk and butter.

567 In short, we can see that among the Mossi and Foulsé there exist, or rather existed, the two kinds of slaves known throughout the /French/ Sudan, the trade slaves and the house slaves, the former being salable and the latter a part of the family. Nowadays, as a result of the prohibition against their purchase and sale, there remains but a dwindling number of house slaves.

421 Now we come to family property and its transmission.

596 Family property, properly so-called. —There is no family property among our Mossi, since no work is done in common by the whole family. The family property is limited to family charms owned by the boudoukasaman.

423 Property of the compound, or subfamily property. —This does not

592 exist either, for the same reason, except for the compound itself which is the communal property of the zaka group. While each household has huts of its own, these huts are a usufructuary possession which is in accordance with the full ownership of the zaka group. Now, if some household chief wishes to build a new hut, he notifies the zakasoba, who, incidentally, always grants permission. Once the hut is built, the builder may destroy it if he wishes, which goes to prove that he has full ownership over it, having made it. He cannot, however, destroy the hut where he lives which he did not build as it actually belongs to the zaka. In short, there may be in the compound a mixture of communal property (belonging to the zaka) and individual property (hut built by a household or by an individual, millet granary erected in the same circumstances, etc.), but the communal property prevails by far.

423 Property of the work group. —Here, communal property is impor-

571 tant. /268/ It is from the group fields that the group derives most of its sustenance (seven months out of twelve). The work implements

423 also belong to the group, as we shall see later. The group, however,
571 owns neither slaves nor livestock.

Household property. —As we know, during the rainy or cultivating
421 season, the husband works two days out of three for his work group.
571 The third day is his. On that day he works in his small field, helped
592 by his wife or wives. During the dry season, the husband does not work for the group but for himself alone, except for repair work on the compound huts.

571 The household is provided with food by the work group seven months
592 out of twelve and is fed with the produce of its own field for five months.

592 The primary possession of the household, therefore, is its private
423 field.

The field belonging to the household of the head of the work group is marked by a special characteristic. Since the head of the group is busy at all times with the communal field, even on the third day, his small plot is cultivated exclusively by his wives (and by his slaves, if he has any). Hence, his food is procured by his wives five months out of twelve. This only applies, however, to the heads of work groups (as well as zaka and family heads who are necessarily heads of work groups also).

423 Individual property. —Mossi women have tiny cultivated patches
562 which are wholly theirs, which do not belong to the work group or to
422 the household and which they work after five o'clock in the evening whenever possible. This is private property. Clothing, women's jewelry, etc., are also individually owned.

The husband and children also own private property. Actually,
423 the better to distinguish between individual and communal property (whether belonging to the household, the work group, the compound, or the family), we shall review below each type of property in turn.

Fields. —The fields belong primarily to the work group. (They belong only exceptionally to the compound, when it is so small that there is only one work group.) In addition to the fields of the work group, there is the household field. Finally, beside the household field, there are the private plots, for example, the little patches of the women and young men.

Work implements. —These tools (daba, axes, etc.) belong to the
422 work group. To work their small fields (both household and private),
571 men and women use the daba of their work group, but if they damage

422 591 them, they must repair them at their own expense. Those implements which are worn out are replaced by the head of the work group.

Domestic animals. —Chickens, goats, sheep, donkeys, etc., are 422 231 all fully owned on an individual basis and not by the group or even by the household. The animal is owned by the man or woman who bought /269/ it. Nevertheless, all the goats and sheep in a compound are gathered together, they sleep in the same place, and they are led to the bush in a flock by the little boys of the compound. The animals of the total family or of the village, on the other hand, are never gathered together.

Wives. —I need not emphasize that wives are obviously private 562 property. There are no wives owned in common by the village, the family, the compound, or the work group. The wife, however, is in some measure considered to belong to the compound or even to the family in the sense that a man's wives always go to his brother when he dies.

The compound. —We saw earlier what applies here. The compound 423 belongs to the zakasoba, but only as a representative of the zaka, as 592 a manager of the property of this subfamilial group. It does not belong to him as private property, in the Roman sense of jus utendi et abutendi /right of use and abuse/. It belongs, ultimately, to the zaka itself.

If this is so, it is not less true that those habitable portions of the zaka, the cabins or huts, are definitely allocated to specific households which have rights of usufruct over them. Thus, the ownership belongs to the zaka, as represented by its head. The usufruct belongs to the households or individuals.

Finally, we may note, as we did earlier, that a hut built exclusively by a household with its own labor or by a single individual of the zaka may be torn down and destroyed by him since it is household or private property set up on subfamilial property. This case, however, is quite exceptional.

The large cabins or huts for millet belong to the cultivating groups. There are also huts for millet belonging to the household, where the husband stores the harvest from the household field. Finally, the 422 large earthen vases, the jars which stand in the huts, lead us from the compound to the subject of furniture. These jars are made by the women and belong individually to specific women.

Furniture. —The furniture, which we shall study in greater detail under "Mode of Subsistence" /not translated/, is very scanty and crude. It is owned privately.

422 415 Household utensils. —The large earthen slabs set up to crush the grain belong to the compound, but the rectangular granitic stones set into the slabs are owned by individual women, as are the movable pestles used to pound grain on the stones.

422 412 592 571 The wooden mortars and pestles, which are very useful and, besides, are heavy, cumbersome, and difficult to destroy, belong to the compound and sometimes to the head of the work group, in other words, to the group itself. In fact, the head of the work group provides part of these implements when the ones purchased by the zakasoba are insufficient.

422 415 592 As for the canari, the largest, which are like small vats and may be as high as one or one and a half meters, are used to hold the dolo /270/ made by the women. They belong to the compound, and they are bought by the compound head. The ordinary canari (25 to 30 centimeters high and used to fetch water or to cook) belong privately to each woman of the compound. The same applies to gourds. The women often buy their canari or gourds with their husband's cowries, but the object, once bought, belongs to them.

422 Clothing. —Clothes are owned fully on a private basis, no matter what their origin. Thus, the skirt cloth bought by the husband for his wife belongs to her.

Ornaments and jewelry. —These are also owned privately, no matter what their origin. Hence, they belong to each man, each woman, each child.

Weapons. —They are likewise owned privately.

Amulets, charms. —The case is the same as for weapons. If, however, we use the word "charm" in its broadest sense, as any object pertaining to the cult, there are family charms which are owned by the family.

Cowries, metal coins, etc. —These are likewise private property.

421 In short, property belonging to the total family is practically nonexistent among the Mossi of Yatenga. There is subfamilial (compound) property and the property of that economic section of the subfamily which is called a work group. In addition to this communal property, there are household property and strictly private property.

428 Now let us deal with the transmission of property or inheritance.

596 Transmission of the property of the total family. —Since such property does not exist, it is not transmitted, except the family charms. The status of family head, however, is transmitted. When a family head dies, it is the oldest remaining man of the family (sometimes his brother, sometimes his cousin, etc.) who takes command of the family.

428 Transmission of the compound and its property. —When the head of a compound dies, it is the oldest man in the compound (brother, 592 cousin, etc.) who takes command of it. At the same time he takes over the management of the property communally owned by the whole compound.

428 Transmission of the property of the work group. —When the head of a work group dies, it is likewise the oldest man in the group (usually 571 the younger brother of the deceased) who assumes leadership and the management of the group's property (fields, work implements, etc.)

Let us note that in all these transmissions, when there are no longer any men of the same generation, then the sons of all the brothers, cousins, etc., are chosen, beginning with the eldest. That is to say, when one generation is exhausted, the next generation is tapped.

428 Transmission of household property. —When a married Mossi who has /271/ children dies, his eldest brother (born of the same father and mother or only of the same father) receives the inheritance. He does not take everything, however. He is expected to share, up to a point, with the other brothers (born of the same father and mother or only of the same father) and with the sons if they are old enough.

The oldest brother takes the huts and the field. The wives, on the other hand, are divided among the brothers and even among the sons if the latter are grown. If the wives are not numerous, the oldest brother does not get any more of them than the other sharers. The livestock is divided among the same people, but this time the largest share goes not to the brother who is unqualifiedly the oldest, but to the oldest brother born of the same father and mother. The cowries, coins, movable property, and jewelry are divided in the same manner. Weapons are apportioned, but the largest share goes to the brother who is unqualifiedly the oldest. The latter takes the dead man's bow and quiver, while dividing the arrows among the brothers and sons without bypassing himself.

As we can see, sharing does take place and is actually quite a complex matter, since it is sometimes the eldest of all the brothers

428 (whether born of the same father and mother or only of the same father) who benefits, and sometimes the eldest brother among those who were born of the same father and mother, but this sharing is very uneven. The two brothers who are the eldest in the senses just described get considerably more than the other cosharers.

428 After the distribution, the men usually remain in the same com-
571 pound and also in the same work group as before. Upon the death of household heads, however, and especially of heads of work groups, the work groups (which have expanded gradually with new births) alter their constitution and divide. These work groups indeed grow constantly (by the natural process of birth) and also dwindle constantly (by the natural process of death and new divisions). As for the zaka, they are not completely stable either since new ones are established as time goes by in proportion to the growth of population.

428 Let us add a few details on inheritance.

Small male children do inherit, but their share is not handed to them. It is handed to the brother who inherits the mother of these children. When they are grown, their mother's new husband will deliver it to them.

[562] Daughters do not inherit.

Women never inherit. On the other hand people do inherit from them.

Transmission of specifically private property. —A case of this type is the inheritance of a wife. As we have seen earlier, the goods of a deceased woman go to her children, sons or daughters. Boys' things go to the boys, girls' things to the girls. All the boys get something, but the oldest son is very much favored. All the girls get something, but the oldest daughter is very much favored. When there are no children, the woman's inheritance goes to her own family and not to her husband or to her husband's family. /272/

Another case of this type is the death of a boy or young man. If he has a brother, the latter inherits. If he has no brother, his father does. Sometimes the father entrusts the goods to the mother to be given to a future child.

In the event of a young girl's death, her sister inherits. If she has no sister, the mother inherits. If the mother died first, her family inherits (that is, the mother's younger sister).

Finally, another case in point is the death of a Mossi bachelor. His brother who inherits or, lacking one, his brother's son.

428 Let us finally add some miscellaneous remarks about inheritance.
848 Concerning the natural child. —"The natural child," says Vadier, "has exactly the same rights as the legitimate child. He inherits from his father or mother concurrently with his brothers and in accordance with the rules we discussed previously." This is correct, but let us not forget that the natural child was sent back to its real father by the legitimate husband as soon as it could leave its mother. Hence, he has all these rights in the household of his actual father and not in that of his mother's husband.

428 Concerning the child in utero. —According to Mossi custom, the child in utero inherits property and is regarded as though it had already left its mother's womb.

Disqualification. —There is cause for disqualification, excluding one from the inheritance. If the deceased was killed, the man who killed him is declared disqualified, but this disqualification does not extend to his children.

Objections to an inheritance. —In cases of ordinary inheritance, if the oldest son is not satisfied with what he received, he may take his grievance to the head of the family who tries to settle the matter. In the event that he does not succeed, the naba intervenes. Such an objection on the part of the eldest son is very unusual. The brothers of the deceased and the other sons cannot object, for only the eldest son has the right to do this.

Wills. —No wills are made, either in theory or in practice. Custom reigns supreme. Sometimes a brother who has some grievance against his brothers decides solemnly before he dies that all his property will go to his sons, but this is a purely platonic manifestation. The dying man is allowed to speak as he pleases, and then, once he is dead and buried, nothing is done about it. One acts in accordance with tradition which asserts itself upon all concerned and overrules, by its own dictates, the special wishes of the deceased.

Acceptance and waiver. —They do not exist here. Custom does not allow people to shirk the exercise of their rights, which are at the same time duties.

428 Restorations. A Mossi is free to dispose of his own property as he
431 sees fit while he is alive, but it is understood that he must give the item before his death for the gift to be effective and acknowledged as such.

428 As a result, an heir may come into his share of the inheritance through a gift received during the lifetime of the deceased.

431 /273/ Gifts inter vivos. —A Mossi may, while alive, give away whatever he pleases of his own property.

Since he is absolute master of these goods and thus entitled to use them as he sees fit, no one has the right to question the gifts he makes.

421 Incidentally, let us recall that heads of families, compounds, work groups, and households are only the managers and not the owners, in the Roman sense, of the family, zaka, work group, or household property, respectively. As for private, individual goods on which the jus utendi et abutendi may be exercised, we know what they amount to among the Mossi. In practice, moreover, the Mossi are far from taking much advantage of this theoretical right. Here, nevertheless, we are concerned with theory, and the following rules pertain to it.

431 A gift made inter vivos must be made before several witnesses in order to be valid.

No special status is required in order to receive a gift.

The wife possesses the same rights as the husband. The gift will [837] nevertheless be worthless if it is proved that the beneficiary is or was her lover.

596 We are now finished with the Mossi family.

To summarize, as we already stated earlier, this family is communal and patriarchal.

Its communalism, however, is quite unstable. People live, not in family groups, but in family subgroups (the zaka). They work, not in family subgroups, but in sub-subgroups (the work groups). In former times, the zaka may have been a community of labor as well as a community of habitation. As we shall see later /not translated/, this is now the case among the Foulsé or Nioniossé /Nyonyose/, where sometimes it is the zaka that constitutes the community of labor and sometimes it is the work group, and where there seems to be an evolution from the former state of affairs to the latter.

As for patriarchy, it is very clearly defined and established. The family revolves around the man and not around the woman. As I have stated, certain signs induce us to believe that the Mossi family, like the Sudanese family in general, was once matriarchal in the very distant past. At all events, this has long ceased to be the case, and we are dealing now with an unstable communalism paired with clearly defined patriarchy.

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ÉTUDES SOUDANAISES

Le Noir du Yatenga

Mossis — Nioniossés — Samos
Yarsés — Silmi-Mossis — Peuls

PAR

L. TAUXIER
ADMINISTRATEUR DES COLONIES

[title page]

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LIVRE IV

La famille

Nous diviserons l'étude de la famille des Mossis du Yatenga en plusieurs subdivisions :

1° Généralités sur la famille ;
2° Groupements supérieurs au simple ménage ;
3° Le Ménage et la Femme ;
4° Les Enfants et l'Éducation ;
5° Les annexes de la famille ;
6° Les Biens de famille ;
7° La Transmission des biens de famille ou Héritage.

D'abord voyons les Généralités qui comprennent à leur tour :
1° la composition de cette famille ;
2° Le nom ;
3° La nature ;
4° Exemples.

La famille mossi du Yatenga est une famille à plusieurs étages, si j'ose ainsi dire. On peut envisager d'abord la famille totale, la famille dans toute son extension qui comprend généralement 100 à 150 personnes et plusieurs habitations séparées. Les habitations elles-mêmes comprennent généralement plusieurs ménages. Chaque habitation ne forme pas un tout compact économique, comme le font au contraire bien d'autres habitations soudanaises, et sont divisées en deux ou plusieurs groupes de travail suivant leur extension numérique. Enfin, au-dessous du groupe de travail, se trouve le simple ménage (père, mère ou mères et enfants non mariés). Nous examinerons tour à tour ces groupements.

Nom. — La famille dans sa complète extension, la famille totale se dit boudou en mossi du Yatenga. L'habitation se dit zaka. On emploie aussi pour celle-ci le mot iri qui est surtout employé chez les Mossis de Ouagadougou tandis que le mot zaka est surtout employé au Yatenga. Enfin, pour le ménage, il n'y a pas de mot pour le désigner. Il n'y a pas de mot non plus pour désigner le groupe de travail. On dit : les gens d'un tel (ici le nom du chef de ce groupe).

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Nature de la famille. — La famille d'abord est communautaire jusqu'à un certain point. Toute la famille ne travaille pas ensemble, ni même l'habitation. Cependant le groupe de travail ne se compose pas, généralement parlant, d'un seul ménage, mais de deux ou plusieurs. Nous avons donc affaire à une famille communautaire bien désintégrée. Disons tout de suite que la famille foulsé et la famille yarsé que nous décrirons par la suite le sont moins que la famille mossi et que la famille samo l'est encore moins que les familles foulsé et yarsé.

Au point de vue patriarcalité ou matriarcalité, la famille mossi du Yatenga est patriarcale, c'est-à-dire que c'est autour de l'homme que tourne la famille et non autour de la femme. Cela est d'une évidence et d'une netteté absolues. Mais quelques indices que nous verrons permettent de se demander si jadis, il y a infiniment longtemps, la famille mossi n'était pas matriarcale. Nous avons relevé dans notre *Noir du Soudan* au sujet des Gourounsi quelques indices de même genre.

En résumé la famille mossi du Yatenga est : 1° communautaire, très désintégrée ; 2° patriarcale.

Exemples. — Donnons d'abord quelques chiffres statistiques. Voici un tableau résumé de recensements sérieux faits parmi les Mossis du Yatenga :

Localités	Familles	Habitations	Nombre de personnes
Diogoré et Lako (petits cantons).	25	78	3.165
Petit canton de Tangay	11	51	1.241
Village de Dio	7	50	842
Totaux. .	43	179	5.248

Cette statistique donne en moyenne 122 personnes par famille, quatre habitations ou iris ou zakas par famille et 29 personnes par habitation.

Voici maintenant quelques détails :

Dans le village de Tangay (canton de Tangay) il y a 11 familles mossis. Voici les chiffres pour les personnes qui les composent et les habitations où elles sont :

Familles	Habitations	Nombre de personnes
1re famille . . .	1	51
2e famille . . .	6	132
3e famille . . .	2	23
4e famille . . .	6	160
5e famille . . .	3	59
6e famille . . .	5	50
A reporter	13	475

Familles	Habitations	Nombre de personnes
Report	23	475
7e famille . . .	9	136
8e famille . . .	3	79
9e famille . . .	8	242
10e famille . . .	4	158
11e famille . . .	4	151
	51	1.241

Cela nous donne une moyenne de 113 personnes par famille, de 5 habitations par famille, de 24 personnes par habitation.

Voici maintenant les villages du petit canton de Lako ou Lago :

Villages	Familles	Habitations	Nombre de personnes
Bô.	2	3	89
Boulounsi	1	3	137
Ninga	2	12	146
Piga-Sorodé . . .	1	2	35
Réga	4	17	484
Viré-Sorodé . . .	3	4	242
Diogoré	1	8	352
Lako	7	25	1.457
Touba	3	3	216
Nango-Yarsés (Mossis du village) . .	1	1	7
Totaux. .	25	78	3.165

Cela nous donne en moyenne 126 ou 127 personnes par famille, 3 habitations par famille et 40 à 41 personnes par habitation.

Voici maintenant d'autres statistiques :

Villages	Familles	Habitations	Ménages	Nombre de personnes
Lougouri	2	4	48	157
Oula.	2	5	43	149
Réka.	1	2	3	46
Noungou	2	14	46	233
Ziré	1	3	36	197
Kindiba.	7	35	149	736
Diessiré.	5	15	49	286
Bissigaï.	4	17	100	510
Bougounam . . .	8	32	151	999
Totaux	32	127	625	3.313

Cela nous donne en moyenne 103 à 104 personnes par famille, 26 personnes par habitation, 5 personnes par ménage, 4 habitations ou soukalas par famille.

Voici une statistique faite dans le canton de Koussouka et comprenant les villages purement mossis ainsi que ceux qui sont surtout mossis :

Villages	Familles	Habitations	Ménages	Population
Rondo	7	72	148	975
Bouga-Mossis	1	11	23	152
Sékéba	1	9	28	183
Zandoma	3	24	62	344
Tangué	7	26	67	439
Konga-Mossis	3	23	72	483
Iroum	2	63	159	880
Totaux	24	228	559	3.456

Ici l'on compte 144 personnes en moyenne par famille, 15 personnes par habitation et 6 personnes par ménage. Cela fait 2 ou 3 ménages par habitation et 9 à 10 habitations par famille.

Enfin voici une statistique faite chez les Mossis du nord du cercle :

Villages	Habitations	Personnes	Moyenne par habitation	Observations
Boulzoma	1	39 (1)	39	(1) 7 ménages
Aoréma	50	672	13	
Bogoya	29	379 (2)	13	(2) 64 ménages
Yabonsoro	37	494 (3)	13	(3) 74 ménages
Bagayaloro	14	290	21	
Barélogo	17	317	19	
Lilligondé	12	177	15	
Rikou	33	486	15	
Dinghiri	59	725	12	
Dinghila	44	362	8	
Irigué	17	94	6	
Bahn (Mossis)	3	54	18	
Pogoro	38	334	8	
Ninighé	7	75	11	
Séghé	8	111	14	
Tibo	19	228	12	
Totaux	388	4.837	12 à 13	

Ici nous avons 12 à 13 personnes seulement par habitation (et 6 par ménage). Il y a ici une évolution de la famille mossi du Yatenga vers

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une forme plus désintégrée et dont nous parlerons plus loin aux exceptions.

Si nous faisons la synthèse des statistiques données, nous avons le tableau suivant :

Lieux	Familles	Habitations	Personnes
Diogoré, etc.	43	179	5.248
Oula, etc.	32	127	3.313
Koussouka	24	228	3.456
Nord	?	369	4.609
	»	903	15.626

Cela nous donne en moyenne 18 à 19 personnes par habitation et 121 personnes par famille (1).

Ces renseignements statistiques donnés, examinons en détail les groupements supérieurs au simple ménage qui se divisent en :

1° la famille totale ;

2° l'habitation ;

3° le groupe de travail.

La famille totale. — Comme nous l'avons dit plus haut, la famille

(1) Ce chiffre de 18 à 19 personnes est un chiffre *moyen*. En fait il y a des habitations mossi qui ne comprennent que 3 personnes et d'autres qui vont jusqu'à 100. Pour qu'on puisse mieux se représenter ce qui en est à ce sujet, je donne ci-dessous l'analyse du village de Diessiré (canton de Léba) où il y a 286 personnes et 15 habitations ce qui fait bien en moyenne 19 personnes par habitation. En fait aucune habitation ne contient exactement 19 personnes.

Habitations	Ménages	Personnes
Première habitation.	4	24
Deuxième habitation	3	18
Troisième habitation	1	6
Quatrième habitation	2	11
Cinquième habitation	4	23
Sixième habitation	3	17
Septième habitation	1	5
Huitième habitation.	2	12
Neuvième habitation	2	12
Dixième habitation	1	6
Onzième habitation.	2	12
Douzième habitation	14	81
Treizième habitation	3	18
Quatorzième habitation	6	36
Quinzième habitation	1	5
	49	286

Ainsi nous avons ici :

Habitations à plusieurs ménages (au-dessus de 2)	7
Habitations à plusieurs ménages (deux)	4
Habitations à un seul ménage	4
	15

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totale n'habite pas dans la même habitation. Elle est scindée en un certain nombre de zakas ou iris plus ou moins grand (la moyenne des statistiques citées plus haut donne 5). Une de ces habitations est celle du boudoukasaman ou chef de famille qui commande à toute la famille et est en même temps chef de sa zaka propre et chef de son groupe de travail. Comme chef de famille il n'a en définitive que trois attributions :

1° Les attributions religieuses ;

2° Les attributions justicières ;

3° Le droit de marier les filles de toute la famille,

En tant que chef de famille il n'a pas d'attributions économiques.

Pour les attributions religieuses du boudoukasaman nous les verrons en détail à la Religion (Organisation Sacerdotale). Disons simplement ici que, si c'est le chef de la famille totale qui a les plus grands pouvoirs religieux, les zakasobas ou chefs d'habitation n'en sont pas dépourvus non plus, ce qui contribue à donner une plus grande autonomie à ces sous-familles.

J'emprunte à l'excellente Monographie de Vadier les détails suivants sur le chef de famille et le conseil de famille qui l'assiste, en corrigeant ici et là quelques traits inexacts.

« Le chef de famille ou patriarche, dit Vadier, est la personne la plus âgée de la famille. C'est lui qui en est le chef.

« Il jouit d'une grande autorité sur tous mais exclusivement en ce qui concerne les personnes. C'est à lui seul qu'appartient, après avoir eu le consentement des pères de famille, de donner en mariage les jeunes filles de la famille. C'est également le chef de famille qui règle, assisté du conseil de famille, toutes les petites difficultés qui surgissent entre parents, qui est chargé d'intervenir quand un père ne peut pas se faire obéir d'un de ses enfants ou qu'il ne peut pas parvenir à le corriger.

« C'est lui seul qui doit, au moment des fêtes de famille, sacrifier, pour le bonheur de tous, les animaux que lui apportent ses parents.

« Tous les membres de la famille doivent obéissance au chef de famille. Ils sont tenus également de lui témoigner le plus grand respect.

« Quand l'aîné de la famille meurt, c'est son frère cadet qui devient chef de famille. Quand tous ses frères ont successivement occupé cette fonction, c'est le fils aîné du frère aîné qui est chef de famille après les frères, etc.

« Le chef de famille peut ne pas habiter le même village que toute la famille. Il peut fort bien vivre avec quelques-uns de ses fils ou de ses frères, loin des autres parents, mais ses pouvoirs sont toujours les mêmes.

« A côté du chef de famille, nous avons le conseil de famille qui est formé par tous les hommes et les femmes âgées de la famille. Ce corps n'a aucun rôle bien défini. Il se réunit sous la présidence du chef de famille pour régler toutes les questions de famille. C'est lui qui décidera par exemple s'il y a lieu d'envoyer chez un naba l'enfant incorrigible, qui

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interviendra en cas de différends pour une succession, qui s'emparera des biens du prodigue pour ne les lui rendre qu'au fur et à mesure de ses besoins, etc. »

L'habitation. — L'habitation mossi se compose d'un certain nombre de cases ou huttes rondes en terre surmontées d'un toit en paille, et de cases à mil, le tout resserré dans un espace assez étroit avec des couloirs, des corridors, de petites cours, etc. Cet ensemble est entouré d'un mur en terre assez haut (2 mètres) qui fait le tour des huttes ou cases et clôt l'habitation.

Les habitations sont éparses dans la plaine et éloignées les unes des autres de 50 ou 100 mètres. Il y en a de plus ou de moins grandes : les unes de 15 ou 20 huttes et même plus, les autres réduites à 4 ou 5 huttes (1).

Ajoutons que le chef d'habitation se dit zakasoba ou irisoba (de zaka ou iri : habitation et soba : chef, maître). Vadier s'est trompé dans sa Monographie en désignant le chef de la famille totale sous le nom de zakasoba. Le chef de la famille totale est le boudoukasaman. Quant au zakasoba c'est le chef d'une habitation, d'une maison, de ce groupe de huttes et de greniers à mil entouré d'un mur rouge qui constitue un ensemble profondément distinct et isolé dans la plaine mossi.

Cette habitation groupe plus ou moins de personnes, 18 ou 19 en moyenne (sauf exceptions) comme nous l'avons vu plus haut.

L'habitation, au point de vue moral, est une sorte de sous-famille. Ce n'est pas la famille entière, elle ne correspond pas à la famille totale. Cependant elle est très supérieure au simple ménage.

Si la famille mossi du Yatenga était absolument communautaire et parfaitement intégrée, les 100 ou 125 personnes que compte environ une famille mossi habiteraient et travailleraient ensemble. Un degré de communauté moins accentué mais encore très appréciable serait que l'habitation formât un groupement économique compact (et c'est ce qui a lieu chez beaucoup de noirs du Soudan, particulièrement chez les Bobos de

(1) Pour désigner ces habitations on emploie souvent le mot soukala ou sokala qui est consacré par l'usage au Yatenga, dans la région de Ouagadougou, dans celle de Léo, etc., bref dans tout le Mossi et ses dépendances, dans la langue des européens, des fonctionnaires qui habitent le pays. En fait le mot soukala n'est pas mossi, mais mandé. En bambara la hutte se dit so, en malinké sou, et soukala ou sokala veut dire exactement : les murs de la hutte (de kala qui veut dire os et par extension tout ce qui est allongé et entre autre chose les murs, et de so ou sou dont nous venons de voir la signification). Ce mot a été importé ici des bords du Niger à l'époque de la conquête. Il est équivoque jusqu'à un certain point, car si, la plupart du temps, on lui donne le sens d'habitation, des Européens s'en servent aussi pour désigner tout un quartier. C'est ce sens que lui donne Delafosse, *op. cit.*, t. III, p. 126. Quant à moi, dans mon *Noir du Soudan*, je lui ai toujours donné le sens d'habitation, c'est-à-dire le sens que j'ai donné au terme *carré* ou *carrée* dans ma Monographie du *Noir de Guinée*. Mais ce mot et les mots analogues qui ne sont pas strictement du pays ou qui n'ont pas une signification absolument nette en français, prêtent à confusion. Nous aurons à revenir là-dessus plus tard.

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la Résidence de Léo, les Menkiéras, les Nounoumas, les Kassonfras, etc., et encore chez les Samos du Yatenga comme nous le verrons plus loin) toutes les personnes qui l'habitent travaillant et consommant ensemble sous l'autorité et la direction du chef de maison. En fait, chez nos Mossis du Yatenga, il y a une désintégration plus avancée de la famille. Dans chaque maison il y a des groupes de travail qui varient en nombre d'après l'importance de cette maison, d'après le nombre de ses habitants.

Groupes de travail. — Il faut donc en venir au groupe de travail pour avoir ici le groupement économique réel. C'est ce groupe qui possède les champs communs. Ce ne sont donc pas à proprement parler des champs familiaux ni même des champs sous-familiaux. Ils appartiennent à un groupement inférieur. C'est le chef du groupe de travail qui nourrit tous les gens du groupe la plus grande partie de l'année (sept mois sur douze). En revanche ils lui doivent le plus clair de leur temps pendant la saison des pluies (deux jours sur trois) mais peu de travail pendant la saison sèche. Chaque membre du groupe a aussi son petit champ particulier qu'il cultive le troisième jour, comme nous le verrons plus loin.

Consommation. Repas. — On ne se groupe pas de la même manière pour les repas pendant la saison des pluies et la saison sèche.

Pendant la première, à midi, on mange dans les champs par groupes de travail, mais les hommes et les femmes toujours séparés. Les garçons mangent avec les hommes, les filles et les petits enfants avec les femmes. Le soir on se groupe pour les repas comme pendant la saison sèche.

Pendant la saison sèche, on mange par habitation, par zaka entière, mais en se divisant par groupes : d'abord il y a la grande distinction des hommes et des femmes, puis, si l'habitation est grande, il y a, du côté des hommes, le groupe des vieillards, celui des gens mariés, celui des jeunes gens non mariés. Du côté des femmes il y a aussi trois groupes : les vieilles femmes — les femmes mariées — les jeunes filles. Cela fait donc six groupes, mais il faut ajouter que quand les femmes ne sont pas bien ensemble, chacune mange avec ses enfants dans sa hutte, dans sa case à elle. Dans les petites habitations il ne peut y avoir six groupes : il y a seulement les deux groupes fondamentaux, celui des hommes et celui des femmes.

Pour la préparation de la cuisine, pendant les sept mois où l'on mange le mil du chef du groupe de travail, c'est-à-dire le mil des champs communs (en gros d'avril à octobre), une femme, qui est « de service » pour vingt-quatre heures, prépare la cuisine pour tout le groupe, les autres l'aidant bien entendu, en allant chercher l'eau, en lui pilant le mil, etc. Pendant les cinq mois où l'on mange le mil des petits champs particuliers (novembre-mars) chaque femme prépare la cuisine de son mari. Quand un mari a plusieurs femmes elles ont un tour de roulement pour la préparation de la cuisine.

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Comme on le voit, le mode de préparation des repas suit l'ordre de consommation du mil : lorsqu'on consomme le mil commun distribué par le chef de groupe ou par ses soins, on prépare la cuisine par groupe. Pendant le temps où l'on consomme le mil des champs ménagers, la préparation des repas a lieu par ménage. Mais pour la consommation des repas elle se réfère (sauf quand on est dans les champs pour le travail) à une communauté plus large, celle de l'habitation. Mais il y a ici la distinction fondamentale des hommes et des femmes qui ne doivent pas consommer ensemble et qui forment toujours deux groupes pour les repas. De plus, dans les grandes habitations, chacun de ces deux grands groupes se divise en sous-groupes, d'après les affinités naturelles de l'âge. Enfin, pour brocher sur le tout, survient quelquefois l'esprit d'anarchie des femmes qui les mène à sécessionner. On n'a donc pour la consommation comme pour la préparation et comme pour la production que cette communauté très ébranlée qui est la caractéristique de la famille que nous étudions en ce moment.

Exceptions. — Nous en arrivons maintenant au ménage mossi sur lequel nous avons à nous étendre. Mais avant de le faire, il faut dire que la famille telle que nous venons de la décrire souffre des exceptions ici et là.

Il y a d'abord des exceptions dans le sens communautaire, dans le sens de l'intégration, il y a surtout des exceptions dans le sens de la désingration plus poussée.

Dans le sens de l'intégration ce sont surtout des familles de grands chefs qu'il faut citer : ainsi voici la famille de Gombiraogo, ex-baloum naba, personnage très riche et très important. Il a cinq frères : deux habitent ensemble au village de Kalo, deux de même au village de Bembéla. Gombiraogo habite à Ouahigouya avec le cinquième. Il possède avec celui-ci 3 zakas où habitent environ 70 ou 80 personnes qui toutes travaillent pour lui, formant un seul groupe de travail sous sa direction (c'est-à-dire que pendant la saison des pluies elles travaillent deux jours sur trois pour lui et pendant la saison sèche exceptionnellement, seulement quand il en a besoin. En revanche il les nourrit selon la coutume sept mois sur douze et ne les habille pas sauf les non mariés).

Ce qu'il y a à remarquer ici c'est la puissance du groupement de travail (70 à 80 personnes) qui fait que celui-ci comprend plusieurs habitations alors qu'en général c'est l'habitation qui comprend une pluralité, une dualité tout au moins de groupements de travail.

Le Baloum-naba actuel, grand ministre, a également deux zakas travaillant pour lui. La famille totale du Baloum-naba n'est d'ailleurs pas groupée à Ouahigouya, mais dispersée dans le Yatenga.

Dans le même sens, le Rassam-naba a une zaka de 157 personnes qui forment un unique groupe de travail sous sa direction. En revanche il les nourrit toute l'année.

Voici encore une zaka de cordonniers de Ouahigouya, comptant environ 100 personnes en tout et 15 ou 20 hommes faits, tous cordonniers. Ils travaillent tous pour le zakasoba qui les nourrit tous. Cette zaka, d'une puissance numérique exceptionnelle, est en même temps absolument intégrée.

Dans le sens opposé nous trouvons dans certaines parties du pays la famille mossi du Yatenga évoluant vers la désintégration complète, c'est-à-dire vers cet état de choses où il n'y a plus en présence que la famille totale d'une part et d'autre part le simple ménage (c'est-à-dire l'habitation ne comprenant plus qu'un seul ménage).

Ainsi dans une tournée dans le canton du Ratenga je note dans le village de Tangué une famille comprenant 110 personnes réparties en 14 maisons ce qui ne fait que 7 à 8 personnes en moyenne par maison. A Kargo (autre village) il y a 5 familles mossi comprenant 22 maisons abritant 181 personnes ce qui fait 8 personnes seulement par maison.

Ici bien évidemment la zaka est réduite au simple ménage qui s'identifie à la fois à l'habitation et au groupe de travail.

Disons cependant que dans tout le Ratenga il y a 4.637 mossis pour 458 habitations, ce qui fait 10 personnes par habitation. 10 personnes par habitation en moyenne, c'est un peu plus que le simple ménage (qui compte moyennement 6 personnes dans le Yatenga) mais ce n'est pas deux ménages. Cela veut dire que les habitations comptent tantôt deux ménages, tantôt un seul. Comme on est ainsi très peu nombreux dans chaque zaka, il n'y a qu'un seul groupe de travail.

Du reste voici l'analyse complète du canton du Ratenga :

Villages	Habitants	Habitations	Moyenne par habitation
Napalra . . .	254	20	13
Ouembatenga .	61	5	12
Alaga. . . .	335	22	15
Bouloungа . .	197	23	9
Bani	387	30	13
Singuitenga. .	248	18	14
Boudé . . .	69	11	6
Foulgo-Koquin.	22	5	4
Zomkalga . .	88	12	7
Momoné . . .	86	10	9
Toïsi	100	13	8
Denian . . .	4	1	4
Pinsi	145	13	11
Dologa. . . .	110	15	7
Kiédéwendé. .	103	10	10
A reporter . . .	2.209	208	142

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Villages	Habitants	Habitations	Moyenne par habitation
Report	2.209	208	142
Koundi-Bittou.	63	9	7
Yalka	56	4	14
Koumbango. .	221	19	12
Kourpellé . .	167	15	11
Zimtenga . .	307	39	8
Battenga. . .	94	11	9
Badnoro . . .	83	10	8
Douré. . . .	96	6	16
Yalgatenga . .	45	8	6
Bargo. . . .	77	8	10
Lo	127	14	9
Rakcéga-Tenga	33	4	8
Moro-Koquin .	37	7	5
Dougouré . .	41	7	6
Bama. . . .	82	7	12
Kora	99	9	11
Tangué . . .	110	14	8
Minima . . .	113	12	9
Kanion . . .	75	10	7
Toukouloungа .	124	4	31
Tempelra . .	35	6	6
Bauda . . .	162	5	32
Kargo-Mossi .	181	22	8
	4.637	458	10

Il en est de même chez les Mossis du canton de Tougo, canton situé au sud-sud-est du Yatenga. Voici en effet la statistique de ce canton pour le nombre d'habitations et le nombre de personnes :

Villages	Habitations	Personnes	Moyenne par habitation
Tibtenga	9	102	11
Béma	96	792	8
Ouembatenga. . .	9	76	8
Rima	63	347	5 à 6
Tougo.	69	937	13 à 14
Lébenga	4	40	10
Danaoua	22	229	10
Rasoumdé. . . .	27	189	7
Mangoulouma . .	2	28	14
Rikéba	52	545	10 à 11
Totaux . . .	353	3.285	9 à 10

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Ce genre de famille des cantons du Ratenga et de Tougo se rapproche beaucoup de la famille mossi de Ouagadougou dans son type ou ses types ordinaires (1) qui sont caractérisés par ce fait que la zaka se confond avec le simple ménage et qu'il n'y a plus en présence que la famille totale et celui-ci.

Ceci nous amène à constater que la famille mossi du Yatenga dans son type moyen, tel que nous l'avons décrit plus haut, est plus massive, plus communautaire, plus intégrée que la famille mossi de Ouagadougou.

Cela tient, je pense, à ce que les éléments primitifs de la population, les Foulsés (éléments premiers, ne l'oublions pas, à Ouagadougou comme au Yatenga) et plus communautaires que les Mossis, sont restés beaucoup plus forts dans le Yatenga que dans la région de Ouagadougou. Tandis qu'en ce dernier lieu les Foulsés se fondaient à peu près complètement dans la masse des envahisseurs, au Yatenga ils résistaient beaucoup mieux, ne se fondaient pas avec eux et continuaient à constituer la plus grande partie de la population. Ils ont, dans ces conditions, probablement très influencé la morphologie de la famille mossi, de même qu'ils lui ont donné ses préjugés contre la possession du bétail, etc.

De cette proportion supérieure des éléments communautaires primitifs vient sans doute la différence de constitution de la famille mossi de la région de Ouagadougou et de la famille mossi du Yatenga.

3° *Le ménage et la femme.* — Nous en arrivons maintenant au Ménage et à la Femme. Nous subdiviserons cette partie en un certain nombre de titres que voici :

1. Promesse de mariage.
2. Personnes dont le consentement est exigé pour que la promesse de mariage soit valable.
3. Cadeaux.
4. Célébration et consommation du mariage.
5. Empêchements au mariage.
6. Question de la virginité.
7. Droits et devoirs du mari et de la femme.
8. Polygamie.
9. Organisation du ménage polygame.
10. Travail des femmes.
11. Le service conjugal.
12. Biens des femmes.
13. Adultère.
14. Divorce.
15. Formalités du divorce.
16. Effets du divorce.

(1) Voir mon *Noir du Soudan*, de la page 544 à la page 553.

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17. Psychologie des femmes. La femme amante et la femme mère. Etudions d'abord la promesse de mariage.

Promesse de mariage. — « Il est d'usage, dit Vadier, que ce soit le père qui donne à son fils la première femme. C'est lui qui effectue les premières démarches et donne les premiers cadeaux exigés. Mais lorsque ce fils est âgé de 17 ou 18 ans au moins ou qu'il est déjà marié, c'est lui-même qui remplit les formalités nécessaires.

« En pratique le fils consulte toujours son père et ne se marie avec une femme qu'il a choisie qu'après avoir obtenu son consentement. En principe le consentement du père n'est pas nécessaire pour que le mariage soit valable. Si cependant le fils passe outre à son autorisation, le père le chasse de sa soukala (habitation) mais le mariage produit tous ses effets.

« La demande en mariage s'effectue sans tenir compte de l'âge de la jeune fille. Celle-ci a généralement 6 ou 7 ans quand elle est demandée, mais il arrive fréquemment qu'elle soit encore au sein de sa mère lorsqu'elle est promise à quelqu'un. Nous voyons donc ainsi qu'il s'écoulera forcément un délai très long entre la demande en mariage et le mariage lui-même.

« Examinons d'abord les formalités de la demande en mariage :

« Le Mossi qui désire soit pour lui-même, soit pour son fils, une jeune fille, va saluer le chef de famille de l'enfant en lui faisant don, suivant son état de fortune, d'un poulet, d'une natte, d'une petite quantité de sel ou bien simplement d'un paquet de bois de chauffage. Il lui fait connaître l'objet de sa visite, en ayant bien soin de ne pas désigner par son nom la jeune fille qu'il désire. A ce sujet, il a eu soin à l'avance d'envoyer un ami commun au chef de famille, qui a averti celui-ci de la prochaine visite qu'il recevrait et qui lui a indiqué la jeune fille qui serait demandée. Le chef de famille, s'il ne veut pas accéder à cette demande, déclare qu'il n'a pas de fille à marier. Par contre, s'il accepte, il dit au solliciteur de revenir à une date ultérieure qu'il fixe et à laquelle il lui promettra la jeune fille. Le demandeur revient au jour dit avec plusieurs camarades apportant du dolo. Ceux-ci serviront de témoins. Devant ces derniers le chef de famille désigne par son nom au demandeur la jeune fille qu'il lui accorde et qu'il lui remettra plus tard comme femme, lorsqu'elle sera en âge de prendre mari.

« Le fiancé se rend ensuite avec les gens qu'il a amenés chez tous les chefs de soukala du village, les salue suivant la mode mossi et leur annonce que tel chef de famille lui a promis en mariage une jeune fille. Tout le village est donc ainsi pris à témoin ».

Personnes dont le consentement est exigé pour que la promesse de mariage soit valable. — « Le consentement de la jeune fille, dit Vadier, n'est nullement nécessaire ; d'ailleurs on dispose d'elle sans lui demander son avis et elle est toujours obligée de devenir la femme de celui à qui on l'a promise, excepté pourtant si son futur mari est lépreux ou aveugle. La

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jeune fille doit d'ailleurs ignorer, jusqu'au moment où on la conduit chez son mari, le nom de celui-ci.

« Pour que le mariage soit valable il faut que les personnes suivantes donnent leur consentement :

« 1° Le futur mari. Le consentement de celui-ci résulte des démarches que fait son père ou qu'il fait lui-même auprès de la famille de sa future.

« 2° Le père de la jeune fille. Lorsqu'un Mossi a une ou plusieurs filles et lorsqu'il pense que le moment est venu pour le chef de famille d'en disposer, il avertit celui-ci qu'il peut les promettre en mariage. Le chef de famille ne saurait, malgré ses pouvoirs, fiancer une jeune fille sans que le père de cette dernière lui ait déclaré qu'il pouvait la marier.

« Quand il a choisi un époux, il va trouver le père de la jeune fille et lui fait connaître la demande dont il a été l'objet. Le père peut à son gré accepter ou refuser. Son consentement est absolument indispensable et le chef de famille ne saurait passer outre.

« Le père ne peut disposer de sa fille sans le consentement du chef de famille, sauf dans les cas que nous verrons plus loin.

« 3° Le chef de famille. Le consentement du chef de famille est forcément exigé puisque c'est lui seul qui a le pouvoir de promettre en mariage les jeunes filles de sa famille, sous réserve des dispositions précédentes. Il existe trois cas où le consentement du chef de famille n'est pas indispensable :

« 1° Quand le père de la jeune fille est brouillé avec le chef de famille. Le père seul peut disposer de sa fille.

« 2° Quand le père est dans une extrême misère. Dans cette hypothèse il donne sa fille non promise encore à quelque indigène riche qui, par les cadeaux d'usage, viendra le secourir dans son dénûment car les dons du fiancé vont à la personne qui a promis la jeune fille.

« 3° La première fille, dans un ménage qu'elle soit unique ou qu'elle ait des sœurs, doit être promise par son grand'père maternel et non par le chef de famille ».

Ceci constitue, je crois, un curieux vestige de matriarcalisme et nous reporte sans doute aux temps assurément très éloignés où la famille mossi tournait autour de la tige maternelle et non autour de la tige paternelle.

4° La mère de la jeune fille. « La mère de la jeune fille, dit Vadier, est parfois consultée ; son mari lui demande simplement si elle est contente du choix qu'il a fait, de commun accord avec le chef de famille. Mais sa réponse n'a aucune valeur.

« La mère du fiancé n'a même pas à faire connaître son avis. »

Du moins tel est le principe. En fait la mère de la jeune fille a sans doute quelquefois plus d'autorité réelle que la théorie ne le suppose.

Cadeaux. — La dot n'existe pas dans le mariage mossi. Ceci est un point très important qui différencie les Mossis et même, je crois, les popu-

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lations voltaïques en général, des populations mandées comme les Bambaras et les Malinkés où il y a dot et même très forte (je dis très forte, si l'on prend en considération la pauvreté générale des Soudanais). Je n'ai pas assez insisté sur ce point dans mon *Noir du Soudan*, dans le chapitre consacré à la famille mossi, p. 548 et 549. J'ai dit que ce qu'on payait pour avoir une jeune fille chez les Mossis de la région de Ouagadougou allait de la valeur de 1.500 cauris (1 fr. 50) à la valeur de 50.000 cauris (50 francs). En fait ce sont là des cadeaux et non pas une dot.

Mais, s'il n'y a pas de dot proprement dite, les cadeaux jouent un grand rôle.

« Après la promesse de mariage, dit Vadier, le futur mari doit venir tous les ans, après la filikienga, apporter quelques petits cadeaux au chef de famille et à la mère de la jeune fille. Ceux-ci se composent généralement d'un peu de mil, sel, de quelques centaines de cauris, d'une natte ou de deux ou trois sékos grossiers.

« Quant au père, il ne reçoit aucun cadeau, ce qui ne veut pas dire qu'il ne profite pas de ceux reçus par sa femme ou le chef de famille.

« La jeune fille également ne reçoit aucun don. Elle ne doit pas d'ailleurs user des objets ou denrées donnés à sa mère.

« Les cadeaux effectués pendant cette longue période de fiançailles ne doivent pas être de grande valeur. Le futur mari qui apporterait 5 ou 6.000 cauris au chef de famille se les verrait d'ailleurs refuser. Le chef de famille ne manquerait certainement pas de lui dire qu'en lui promettant une jeune fille il a entendu la lui donner comme femme et non la lui vendre. Si le mari insistait, il serait simplement chassé. »

Le mariage n'est donc pas en définitive chez les Mossis considéré comme un achat, au contraire de ce qu'il est chez les Malinkés et les Bambaras, et, en ce sens, il a une dignité plus grande que chez ceux-ci. Malheureusement cette absence de dot permet une rupture facile des liens du mariage qui n'existe pas justement chez les Bambaras et chez les Malinkés où la femme est plus assujettie à ses devoirs. Le ménage est donc moins solide chez les Mossis que chez les Mandés et ainsi le mal sort du bien.

D'une façon générale chez les Voltaïques (Bobos, Gourounsis, Mossis, Habbés, etc.), le lien du mariage est beaucoup plus lâche et beaucoup plus fragile que chez les Mandés (Bambaras, Malinkés, etc.) et cela se relie au défaut de dot sérieuse. Quand il y a dot, la jeune fille est vendue, mais si elle veut s'en aller une fois mariée, comme une dot sérieuse est difficile à rendre, les chefs de famille imprévoyants commençant par la dissiper et les gens plus sérieux l'employant immédiatement à acheter une fille pour un jeune homme de la famille, la coutume s'est formée de s'opposer impérativement à ces demandes de rupture du lien de mariage. Ainsi, si les fiançailles ont plus de dignité chez les Voltaïques, le mariage lui-même a plus de tenue et plus de sérieux chez les Mandés et le ménage plus de solidité.

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Revenons aux Mossis.

Notons d'abord que l'offre des cadeaux comporte une certaine élasticité. Un jeune homme riche fera des cadeaux beaucoup plus forts qu'un pauvre. Il ne donnera pas une grosse somme de cauris, mais en vêtements, en denrées (sel, etc.), en animaux, il peut donner en définitive des sommes assez importantes au chef de famille de sa fiancée ou à la mère de celle-ci. En revanche, un pauvre donnera un fagot de bois qu'il vient de ramasser dans la brousse et un coq, et en sera quitte à ce prix.

Quoique la jeune fille ne soit pas vendue, le fiancé ou son père sont tenus de faire les cadeaux prescrits par l'usage.

« Le défaut de faire les cadeaux prescrits par l'usage, dit Vadier, a de grosses conséquences. Examinons les différents cas qui peuvent se présenter.

« I. — Si par négligence, par oubli ou pour cause d'absence (voyage) le futur mari n'effectue pas les cadeaux annuels, il se verra refuser la jeune fille le jour où il se présentera pour la faire conduire chez lui et perdra tous ses droits sur elle.

« Toutefois il reconquerra tous ses droits s'il verse au chef de famille et à la mère de sa fiancée en une seule fois tous les cadeaux qu'il aurait dû faire pendant la période d'absence ou d'oubli.

« Le chef de famille ne saurait refuser ce don collectif et par conséquent s'opposer au mariage.

« II. — Le mari a oublié de faire les cadeaux et ne se présente pas chez le chef de famille quand la jeune fille est pubère.

« A. S'il habite dans le pays, le défaut de se présenter au moment voulu devant le chef de famille est considéré comme un abandon de ses droits sur la jeune fille. Le chef de famille peut alors disposer à nouveau de celle-ci.

« B. Le fiancé est depuis longtemps parti en voyage et est encore absent au moment de la puberté de la jeune fille.

« Le chef de famille fait appeler le frère du fiancé. Il lui offre la jeune fille comme femme. Le frère n'est pas obligé d'accepter. Dans ce cas le chef de famille recouvre tous ses droits sur la jeune fille ».

Célébration du mariage. Consommation. — « Pour que la jeune fille puisse être conduite dans la case de son mari, il faut qu'elle soit pubère (15 ou 16 ans). Généralement on attend même six mois ou un an après qu'elle a été pour la première fois en état de zim, (zim veut dire sang en mossi).

Quant au mari il faut également qu'il ait atteint dix-sept ou dix-huit ans.

Les formalités de la célébration du mariage sont très simples au Yatenga.

Lorsque la jeune fille promise a atteint l'âge de puberté, le mari se rend chez le chef de famille pour la lui demander. Le chef de famille peut lui

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dire d'attendre six mois ou un an au maximum, délai que le fiancé est obligé d'observer, mais généralement le chef de famille lui répond qu'il peut faire prendre sa future femme dans quelques jours. Le fiancé lui remet alors un sac et deux peaux de bouc de mil et se retire. Ce mil sert à faire du dolo qui est bu par toute la famille de la jeune fille.

Chaque femme habitant la même soukala fait cadeau à la mère de la jeune fille d'une ou deux calebasses. Le père et le chef de famille lui remettent deux grands paniers. Tous ces objets constitueront en somme le trousseau de la nouvelle épouse.

Au jour fixé le fiancé envoie deux hommes de sa famille, dont l'un est généralement son frère, chercher sa fiancée. Ces deux indigènes se présentent chez le chef de famille avec 13 canaris de dolo. Il y a lieu alors à agapes.

Le père conduit sa fille dans la case aux Ancêtres, égorge un poulet sur la pierre fétiche afin que le mariage futur soit heureux et lui donne alors le nom de son mari.

La jeune fiancée, sous la conduite de deux vieilles femmes de sa famille et des deux représentants de son fiancé, se rend chez celui-ci.

Pendant quatre jours la jeune épouse restera seule avec les vieilles femmes dans une case. Celles-ci, pendant ce laps de temps, lui donneront tous les conseils d'usage et lui montreront la ligne de conduite qu'elle devra adopter pour plaire à son futur époux.

Celui-ci vient tous les jours saluer les vieilles femmes, mais pendant cette entrevue la jeune fille a bien soin de se cacher le visage.

Le troisième jour au soir, le mari fait tuer un mouton, une chèvre, choisit un gigot qu'il met de côté avec la peau de l'animal et avec le restant de la viande fait faire une grande quantité de sarabou. Il porte le tout aux vieilles femmes. Ces dernières distribuent le sarabou entre tous les gens de la famille et conservent soigneusement le gigot et la peau qu'elles porteront le lendemain à la mère de la jeune fille pour lui montrer que celle-ci a bien été remise à son mari.

Le mari fait ensuite conduire sa jeune épouse dans sa case où la consommation du mariage a lieu.

Ce délai de quatre jours n'a rien d'obligatoire. Il arrive fréquemment que la consommation du mariage a lieu le lendemain de l'arrivée de la jeune fille. Parfois aussi elle est retardée de plusieurs jours quand, ainsi que cela arrive parfois, le fiancé, âgé, destine à son fils ou à quelque membre de sa famille, l'épouse qui lui était primitivement destinée.

Le mariage est valable du jour du départ des vieilles femmes qui ont amené la jeune fille dans la soukala de son mari.

La consommation du mariage n'est nullement nécessaire pour la validité de l'union. Si toutefois le mari délaisse pendant trop longtemps (un an par exemple) la nouvelle arrivée, celle-ci pourra alors demander des explications. »

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Empêchements au mariage. — « Les empêchements au mariage, dit Vadier, sont les suivants :

I. *Différence de race ou de caste.* — Les Mossis ne peuvent contracter mariage avec les forgerons. C'est là un empêchement absolu. Par contre ils peuvent se marier avec les Foulsés, Samos, Peuls, Yarsés, etc. ».

Ceci appelle quelques réflexions. Les forgerons du Yatenga sont de race foulsé et non de race mossi. Cependant ce n'est pas une différence de race qui dicte la prohibition dont il s'agit puisque les Mossis peuvent se marier avec les Foulsés en général. C'est bien une différence de caste. A noter, comme nous l'avons dit plus haut, que les Foulsés ordinaires ne peuvent pas non plus se marier avec les forgerons.

Les forgerons sont ici comme dans tout le Soudan à la fois redoutés et méprisés. Au fond on les tient pour de redoutables sorciers.

« II. *Parenté.* — Il faut qu'il y ait au moins 200 ans écoulés entre l'époque où vivent les fiancés et celle où vivait leur ancêtre commun. C'est également là un empêchement absolu.

III. — Si un Mossi pendant la période de ses fiançailles a des rapports avec une jeune fille ou une femme de la soukala de sa fiancée, le mariage ne peut avoir lieu.

Toutefois cet empêchement n'a rien d'absolu. Si le coupable demande pardon au chef de famille et si celui-ci l'accorde, l'union peut plus tard être contractée. »

IV. *Rapports contre nature.* — Le mariage ne peut avoir lieu : 1° Si le fiancé a été surpris se livrant à l'acte sexuel sur une ânesse (le fait n'est pas très rare au Yatenga) ; 2° Si la fiancée a eu des relations avec un indigène ayant eu lui-même des rapports sexuels avec une ânesse. Ces empêchements sont absolus.

C'est ainsi que les habitants d'un village du Yatenga (Dénia) réputés pour avoir eu jadis des relations avec des ânesses ne peuvent se marier en dehors de leur localité.

V. *Infirmités.* — Si le fiancé est aveugle, le mariage ne peut avoir lieu que si la jeune fille y consent. Nul ne peut la contraindre.

VI. *Lèpre.* — Même chose que précédemment quand le fiancé a la lèpre.

VII. *Impuberté des fiancés.* — Le mariage ne saurait être contracté avant que les deux fiancés soient nubiles. C'est là un empêchement absolu mais qui se présente bien rarement en pratique.

VIII. — La folie d'un des fiancés ».

Question de la virginité. — La virginité de la fiancée n'est pas très importante ici et c'est une remarque à faire qu'elle l'est beaucoup moins que chez les Bambaras. Cela se lie du reste à ce que le mariage est moins solide et à ce que la séparation des époux est beaucoup plus facile. Il y a là un ensemble de faits concordants qui font de l'institution du mariage et du ménage quelque chose de plus sérieux et de plus ferme chez les Bambaras que dans cette région-ci.

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Vadier dit à ce sujet : « Le fait pour une jeune fille d'avoir eu avant son mariage des relations avec un indigène autre que son mari n'est nullement un empêchement au mariage.

« Beaucoup de jeunes fiancées ont des amants. Il arrive assez fréquemment même que leur père est obligé d'aller les chercher chez ceux-ci avec lesquels elles se sont enfuies. D'ailleurs cette question ne concerne nullement le mari. Pourvu qu'il ait la femme, le reste lui importe peu. Le cas n'est pas rare où une jeune fille apporte dans la maison de son époux un enfant qu'elle a eu d'un autre indigène. Cet enfant revient plus tard à son père naturel ».

Le tableau est un peu poussé au noir. En fait pères et mères essayent d'empêcher leurs filles, comme ils le peuvent, d'avoir des amants. Ils n'aiment pas les voir aller au tamtam, mais on ne peut guère les en empêcher, et souvent le tamtam, comme les bals champêtres de nos campagnes, cause des accrocs à la vertu des jeunes filles. Si celles-ci ne disent rien, tout va bien. Comme chez les Mossis il n'y a pas d'exposition de pagne après la consommation du mariage, on ne voit rien. Si même le mari sait d'avance ou s'aperçoit au dernier moment, il ne dira rien, par honte, pour ne pas se faire moquer de lui. Mais, quand le père amène sa fille dans la case des Ancêtres avant de l'envoyer à son fiancé, souvent celle-ci n'ose pas entrer dans cette case, ayant perdu sa virginité, de peur d'être tuée par les Ancêtres et elle avoue sa faute à son père. D'autres fois elle a le courage ou l'impudeur d'entrer chez les Ancêtres, mais, plus tard, chez son mari, tombée malade, elle verra dans son état une vengeance de ceux-ci pour cette espèce de parjure moral qu'elle aura commis en entrant chez eux en état de faute et elle avouera à son mari ce qu'elle a fait. Dans ces deux cas on s'adresse à l'amant, dans le premier cas le père, dans le second cas le mari, et on lui demande une chèvre, deux canaris de dolo, un poulet. Avec ces divers objets un sacrifice sera offert aux Ancêtres pour leur demander grâce et ils pardonneront alors à la femme et à l'amant. Tout rentrera dans l'ordre.

Quelquefois, comme cela a été dit plus haut, un enfant se trouvera être le fruit de l'amour d'une jeune fille. L'amant ayant été mis à l'amende et les Ancêtres étant satisfaits, le mari acceptera l'enfant avec la fille, mais, dès que celui-ci pourra se passer de sa mère, le mari le renverra à son vrai père, ne tenant pas à le conserver chez lui.

En définitive, la virginité n'est pas strictement exigée de la jeune fille, quoiqu'elle soit considérée comme meilleure et plus respectable que la non-virginité. Les Mossis ne sont pas difficiles sur ce point comme les Bambaras et cela leur est commun, d'après mes renseignements, avec toutes les populations voltaïques.

Notons encore un détail : Si l'amant auquel on demande réparation pour le préjudice causé, c'est-à-dire le paiement de la chèvre, du poulet et des deux canaris de dolo, ne veut pas les donner, le mari s'adressait jadis

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au moro-naba qui forçait l'amant à payer ce qu'il devait et de plus lui confisquait pour lui-même, pour son salaire de justicier, une partie de ses biens. Si l'amant n'avait rien, c'était la famille qui payait à sa place. Actuellement on s'adresse encore pour les faits de cette espèce aux chefs de village ou de canton qui forcent l'amant à payer ce qui est de coutume.

Droits et devoirs du mari et de la femme. — Le mari doit aide et assistance a sa femme. Il doit la protéger et prendre sa défense quand il y a nécessité.

L'époux doit entretenir sa femme : pour la nourriture, le mari fait partie généralement d'un groupe de travail, comme nous l'avons vu plus haut. Le groupe de travail nourrit le mari et la femme 7 mois sur 12. Le reste du temps le mari nourrit la femme du produit de ses petits champs. La femme a aussi ses petits coins de cultures particuliers (grands comme un mouchoir) mais ils ne servent pas à la nourriture du ménage, à moins que le mari ne soit complètement démuni. Généralement donc le produit de ces petits carrés de culture va à la femme elle-même.

C'est le mari en tout cas qui doit habiller sa femme et non le groupe ; il le fait sur le produit de ses petits champs.

Dans le cas où son mari, le pouvant, refuserait de l'entretenir, la femme porterait plainte au chef de famille de son époux. Si après l'intervention de celui-ci le mari persistait à lui refuser l'entretien, la femme deviendrait libre et pourrait retourner dans sa famille.

Le mari doit pourvoir à l'entretien de sa femme infirme ou malade jusqu'à sa mort.

La femme doit obéissance au mari. Ce dernier a le droit de la frapper en cas de désobéissance, d'adultère etc. Il ne peut lui casser un membre ni la tuer.

Polygamie. — La polygamie est la règle commune, au moins théoriquement, c'est-à-dire que le Mossi peut avoir autant d'épouses qu'il le désire pourvu qu'il puisse subvenir à leurs besoins.

En fait, les gens riches seuls ont plusieurs femmes. La majorité est monogame par nécessité et il y a même des célibataires. Et, pour le dire en passant, il en est ainsi chez les nègres soudanais en général, car la nature créant partout à peu près autant d'hommes que de femmes, on ne voit pas comment il pourrait se faire que dans un pays chaque homme puisse avoir plusieurs femmes. Cependant, malgré l'existence des célibataires et d'un grand nombre de monogames de fait, la question se pose encore : elle se résout si l'on songe que les filles sont mariées beaucoup plus tôt que les hommes ce qui crée un beaucoup plus grand nombre de femmes « en activité de service », si j'ose ainsi dire, que d'hommes. C'est là sans doute la solution (avec l'existence des célibataires et d'un nombre sérieux de monogames) de l'objection qui se pose naturellement quand on parle de polygamie.

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Ajoutez qu'il peut se faire qu'ici le nombre des filles mises au monde soit un peu plus grand que celui des garçons, comme cela a été remarqué par exemple en Angleterre.

Comme chiffres de polygamie, disons que le moro-naba Bango, le dernier qui régna avant l'arrivée des Français, avait environ 80 femmes. Le naba Koboga qui a régné de 1902 à 1914 en avait 30 ou 40. Le Rassam-naba actuel, un des ministres du moro-naba, a 30 ou 35 femmes. Mais ce sont là des chiffres exceptionnels bien entendu si l'on considère la masse mossi du Yatenga. En tout cas les riches, les notables, les gens aisés ont toujours plusieurs femmes.

Organisation du ménage polygame. — « La première femme, dit Vadier, jouit d'une certaine autorité sur ses compagnes. C'est elle qui transmet les ordres du mari à ses autres épouses, qui lui rend compte des désidérata de celles-ci, qui veille à la confection des aliments et qui répartit la nourriture. C'est elle également qui vient déclarer au mari que telle de ses femmes n'est plus en état de zim et qu'elle peut par conséquent satisfaire aux obligations conjugales.

« En dehors de cette prérogative dont jouit la première épouse, toutes les femmes ont les mêmes droits et les mêmes devoirs. En principe chaque femme doit partager à son tour la couche de son mari. Toutefois celui-ci est libre d'appeler pendant la journée l'épouse qu'il préfère ».

Travail des femmes. — Les femmes mossis aident d'abord à la culture. Elles ne défrichent pas, mais elles font tous les autres travaux de culture, en concurrence avec les hommes, pendant l'hivernage. Cependant étant donné la nécessité de faire le pilage des grains, la cuisine et les autres travaux de ménage, elles ne peuvent pas travailler aux champs autant que les hommes. Quand elles sont plusieurs, elles se partagent la besogne : les unes vaquent aux travaux du ménage, les autres vont aux champs. Quand il n'y en a pas assez pour opérer cette division du travail, elles laissent les hommes partir le matin et elles ne vont les rejoindre que vers 10 ou 11 heures avec la nourriture. Après le repas et le repos de midi, elles travaillent avec les hommes, mais elles quittent le champ avant ceux-ci pour vaquer aux travaux du repas du soir. Avant de rentrer au village pourtant, elles vont soigner leurs petits carrés de culture particuliers mais elles n'y travaillent que peu de temps, tandis que les hommes ayant quitté les champs du groupe, s'attardent dans leur petit champ particulier jusqu'à la nuit.

Avec les travaux des champs, les femmes font les travaux de ménage : elles pilent et écrasent les grains. Elles les pilent dans les mortiers et les écrasent sur les pierres à écraser. Nous reparlerons au Mode d'existence de ces mortiers, pilons et pierres.

Elles font la cuisine et confectionnent les différents plats mossis que nous aurons à examiner plus loin. Elles vont chercher le bois dans la brousse et l'eau au puits.

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Ajoutons que ce sont les femmes qui cueillent les marrons de karité pendant la saison des pluies et les gousses de néré au printemps (fin mars, avril). Ce sont elles qui préparent le beurre de karité et la farine de néré. Elles font aussi le dolo et, s'il en est besoin, les diverses autres boissons dont nous avons déjà parlé à la Cueillette et sur lesquelles nous aurons à revenir au Mode d'existence.

Avec les travaux de cuisine, les femmes mossi du Yatenga ont les travaux de nettoyage à exécuter. Elles balaient les cases et toute la maison avec des poignées de paille attachées au milieu avec une corde, ce qui forme de petits balais primitifs, sans manche, de 30 ou 40 centimètres de long. Elles lavent le linge, fabriquent le savon. Elles filent le coton, tandis que les hommes le tissent. Enfin ce sont elles qui dament soit le sol des cases, soit les murs avec des claquoirs en bois (silimpandé en mossi au singulier, silimpama au pluriel) après avoir ajouté de l'eau de néré. Nous verrons plus loin, au Mode d'existence (construction de l'habitation) comment se fait cette opération.

Le service conjugal. — La femme doit à son mari l'accomplissement du devoir conjugal.

La femme ne doit jamais s'y refuser, exception faite cependant si elle est indisposée, enceinte ou si elle allaite. On voit qu'il y a chez les Mossis en particulier et chez les Soudanais en général, (car les mêmes coutumes existent à ce sujet chez tous les nègres soudanais), une grande délicatesse. On l'apprécie encore mieux si l'on songe qu'ici les femmes allaitent leurs enfants pendant des deux et trois ans.

« Si, dit Vadier, par pudeur de jeune épousée ou pour tout autre motif, une femme se refusait à son mari, celui-ci userait d'abord de tous les moyens de persuasion en son pouvoir, priant notamment les parents de la femme d'intervenir auprès de celle-ci. Si les exhortations de ces derniers restaient vaines, on userait de contrainte en infligeant une correction à la femme ou en la mettant aux fers. Enfin, si ces mesures ne parvenaient pas à amener l'épouse à composition, celle-ci pourrait être chassée par le mari.

« Le mari en revanche doit à la femme le même service conjugal qu'il est en droit d'exiger d'elle.

« Si le mari ne l'accomplissait pas, par suite d'impuissance ou de maladie ou simplement par suite de mauvaise volonté, l'épouse délaissée ferait part de la situation à la première femme du chef de famille qui en informerait ce dernier.

« Si la conduite du mari était causée par son inaptitude physique, la femme lui serait retirée et serait remise à un de ses frères ou, à défaut, à son parent le plus proche, exception faite de ses fils. Si elle était due seulement à son mauvais vouloir, des représentations seraient faites et si, au bout de quelques jours, on se rendait compte qu'elles sont infructueuses, la femme serait rendue libre de rentrer dans sa famille ».

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Ajoutons tout de suite qu'en fait ces cas n'arrivent pour ainsi dire jamais ou sont si rares qu'ils équivalent presque à zéro. Pourtant la coutume les prévoit et nous venons de dire ce qui arrive quand par hasard ils se présentent.

Biens des femmes. — Les femmes peuvent posséder des biens particuliers, nous le savons déjà, biens qui n'entrent pas dans la communauté et qui sont complètement à elles. Les sources de ces biens sont diverses : ce sont tantôt les petits champs des femmes, tantôt le boni qu'elles font sur le mil qu'on leur donne à préparer pour la nourriture et qui, transformé en dolo, est vendu et rapporte des cauris ; tantôt la munificence du mari qui leur donne des bracelets, des bijoux divers. Ces bijoux sont bien à elles une fois donnés et s'ajoutent à ceux qu'elles se procurent avec leurs ressources.

Les biens d'une femme quand elle meurt vont à ses enfants : les objets pour les femmes vont aux filles (bracelets, pagnes), les autres objets (animaux, etc.) vont aux fils. Plus exactement c'est l'aîné des fils qui est avantagé parmi les fils et l'aînée des filles parmi les filles. Quand il n'y a pas d'enfants le mari ne prend rien et ce que laisse la femme va à sa famille, à ses sœurs et à ses frères en première ligne. Le mari, n'ayant pas eu d'enfants de la défunte, aurait honte de prendre ce qu'elle laisse.

Adultère. — La femme doit fidélité à son époux.

Cependant l'infidélité n'est pas très importante car, à moins qu'elle ne soit fréquente, elle n'est généralement pas suivie de rupture. Le mari se contente de frapper sa femme et de la corriger.

Quand la femme s'est enfuie chez un amant, le mari va la chercher. L'amant en sera quitte pour donner un mouton, un poulet (le mouton peut être remplacé par une chèvre) et deux canaris de dolo, tout cela pour le sacrifice aux Ancêtres, afin qu'ils pardonnent à la femme. Celle-ci ne peut rentrer dans la maison que quand le sacrifice a été fait : sans cela les Ancêtres la tueraient. Du reste ceux-ci sont intraitables, plus que le mari assurément, sur le point d'honneur de celui-ci. Si un mari savait sa femme coupable et ne faisait rien, les Ancêtres seraient furieux contre lui et le tueraient : d'où nécessité pour le mari d'agir.

Si le mari ne peut retrouver sa femme enfuie c'est son beau-père qui a le devoir de la rechercher et de la lui ramener.

Jadis, avant l'occupation française, si l'amant ne voulait pas rendre la femme, le père de celle-ci s'adressait au naba, c'est-à-dire au chef de village ou de canton ou même au moro-naba, qui envoyait des cavaliers pour arrêter les deux coupables. Il restituait la femme à son mari et confisquait pour lui-même les greniers de mil et les animaux de l'amant.

Actuellement, depuis l'occupation française, on s'adresse au commandant de cercle et au Tribunal indigène de province pour ravoir sa femme.

Quelquefois, jadis, il arrivait qu'en cas de flagrant délit le mari tuât l'amant de sa femme. Il avait le droit de le faire, mais alors il perdait sa

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femme qui devenait la propriété du moro-naba. Quant aux biens de l'amant tué ils devenaient également la propriété de celui-ci.

Le mari, en tout cas, n'avait pas le droit de tuer sa femme en dehors du flagrant délit — sauf cependant le moro-naba et l'aristocratie. Pour le moro-naba quand une de ses femmes le trompait, il la faisait tuer avec son amant. On étranglait les deux coupables avec des bandes de coton. Quant aux nakomsés, aux vrais, car les descendants de naba Rawa ou de naba Yadega ne sont plus considérés comme des nakomsés actuellement et sont rentrés dans la masse du peuple, quant aux vrais nakomsés se rattachant à la royauté depuis naba Nabacéré (1625-1655) ses descendants Pigo (1720-1739) et Kango (1754-1787), ils s'adressaient d'abord, quand une de leurs femmes les avait trompés, au Basi-naba chef des nakomsés, en lui présentant les deux coupables. Le Basi-naba les renvoyait au moro-naba qui faisait étrangler la femme et l'amant. Les biens de celui-ci étaient pour le Rassam-naba, chef des gens du Bingo qui étaient chargés de l'exécution. Il en était de même quand les gens du Bingo (les captifs de case du moro-naba) exécutaient la femme d'un moro-naba et son amant : les biens de celui-ci ne pouvant pas décemment revenir au moro-naba trompé revenaient au Rassam-naba chef du Bingo.

De même que la femme doit fidélité au mari, le mari doit fidélité à sa ou à ses femmes. Mais il y a souvent des accrocs à cette règle et les frasques du mari ont beaucoup moins d'importance que les frasques de la femme. En tout cas l'infidélité du mari n'entraîne jamais la nullité du mariage. Cependant si les femmes n'ont pas le droit de dire grand chose quand leur mari les trompe (pourvu qu'il n'installe pas de concubine au domicile conjugal, cas inexistant du reste) elles ont deux moyens de se venger de lui : le premier est très rarement employé par les femmes mossi du Yatenga. Il consiste à avertir le mari de cette femme avec laquelle leur mari les trompe. Elles attirent ainsi à celui-ci des désagréments plus ou moins sérieux. Si le mari s'est hasardé à faire pénétrer momentanément chez lui une femme qui ne lui appartient pas, il arrive (et cela est plus fréquent) que ses femmes se réunissent, attendent la coupable à la sortie de la soukala et lui administrent une tournée en règle. Le mari ne peut rien leur dire. Lui, il est protégé, pour ainsi dire, par sa dignité de mari, mis en dehors du débat, mais on se venge sur sa malheureuse complice et si on ne lui dit rien à lui, il ne peut rien par contre pour la protéger.

Divorce. — Le divorce existe dans le Yatenga, plus fréquent qu'en pays bambara, pour des raisons que nous avons expliquées plus haut. Voici les principaux cas théoriques qui peuvent se présenter au sujet du divorce. Je les emprunte à Vadier.

« Le divorce existe dans les cas suivants :

1° Par consentement mutuel. Lorsque les deux époux ne s'entendent pas, ils peuvent se séparer. Le cas est cependant très rare et n'a lieu qu'après l'intervention amiable des chefs de famille des deux époux. La

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femme garde pour elle les cadeaux que le mari a pu lui faire, si c'est le mari qui a le premier demandé le divorce. Elle les laisse si c'est elle qui a demandé à partir.

2° Injures. — Les insultes adressées au mari par la femme ou inversement ne sont pas un cas de divorce. Si le mari insulte les parents de sa femme le divorce a lieu. La femme garde les cadeaux.

3° Mauvais traitements. — Il est admis que le mari peut frapper la femme pour la corriger, mais si les blessures sont graves ou si le mari bat continuellement sa femme, celle-ci devient libre, mais les cadeaux, moutons, chèvres, bracelets, etc. qu'elle a reçus de son mari restent à ce dernier.

4° Non accomplissement des devoirs conjugaux : 1° De la part du mari. — Si le mari ne cohabite pas avec sa femme celle-ci ne peut rien dire, mais elle est libre d'avoir des amants en dehors de la soukala du mari. Si ce dernier proteste la femme le quitte.

Si le mari est atteint d'une maladie vénérienne, un délai de trois ans lui est donné pour guérir. Après ce laps de temps et dans le cas de non-guérison la femme devient libre.

Si le mari est impuissant il y a lieu, comme dans le cas précédent d'ailleurs, à vérification par le naba ; la femme retourne également dans sa famille. Dans les trois cas la femme gardera les cadeaux.

2° De la part de la femme. — Si la femme se refuse à accomplir ses devoirs conjugaux, le mari peut la chasser et il garde les cadeaux qu'il a donnés.

Si la femme est atteinte de maladie vénérienne, le mari ne peut la reprendre.

5° Infidélité. — L'infidélité du mari n'est pas un cas de divorce. L'infidélité de la femme, par contre, est un motif suffisant pour l'annulation du mariage. Les cadeaux restent au mari.

6° Manque d'entretien. — Si le mari refuse de pourvoir à la nourriture et à l'entretien de sa femme, celle-ci peut demander le divorce, mais elle doit abandonner à son mari les cadeaux qu'elle a reçus de lui.

7° Relations coupables de l'un des époux avec des animaux ou avec une personne accusée d'avoir eu des rapports avec une ânesse.

8° Inceste. — En cas d'inceste de l'un des époux, l'autre a le droit de demander le divorce. Les cadeaux restent au mari si la femme est coupable. Celle-ci les emporte si c'est le mari qui a commis l'inceste ».

Voilà les principaux cas théoriques qui peuvent donner lieu au divorce. Revenons d'abord sur l'un d'eux : non accomplissement des devoirs conjugaux de la part du mari. Les effets qu'en note Vadier semblent en contradiction avec ceux que nous avons notés plus haut nous-même (service conjugal). En fait il n'y a pas contradiction : quand un mari ne remplit pas le service conjugal envers sa femme, cas du reste très rare, ou bien la femme n'a qu'à se louer de son époux sous tous les

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autres rapports ou bien il est méchant, mauvais et elle en est mécontente en dehors même du grief dont il s'agit. Dans le premier cas elle prend un « bon ami » en dehors de l'habitation de son mari, liaison sur laquelle celui-ci ferme volontairement les yeux et elle ne demande pas le divorce. Dans le second cas elle le demande. Voilà, en fait, comment se dénoue la situation.

Parmi les cas de divorce énumérés par Vadier, les plus fréquents, ou les moins rares plutôt, sont : 1° l'infidélité continuelle de la femme, je dis continuelle car, comme nous l'avons déjà fait remarquer, quoique une seule infidélité de la femme autorise en principe le mari à demander le divorce, en fait on ne renvoie jamais sa femme pour un seul accroc au contrat de mariage : on se contente de la battre. Mais si la femme s'obstine à tromper son mari, alors celui-ci finit par la renvoyer ; 2° les insultes que peuvent s'adresser entre eux dans un moment de colère le mari et la femme ne comptent pas, mais, ce qui est grave, ce sont les insultes du mari aux parents de la femme ou de la femme aux parents du mari. (Du reste cette susceptibilité pour leurs parents n'est pas spéciale aux Mossis. Elle est commune à tous les nègres soudanais que j'ai vus, Bambaras, Malinkés, etc.). Donc, si le mari insulte les parents de la femme, celle-ci peut demander le divorce. En fait une femme qui aime son mari ne rapporte pas à ses parents les injures que, dans un moment de colère, celui-ci a pu proférer contre eux. Elle ne dit rien et ne demande pas le divorce. Mais, si elle a d'autres griefs contre son mari ou désire secrètement la séparation elle s'empressera de profiter de ce motif qui est considéré comme grave. Pour les insultes de la femme aux parents du mari (cas rare, comme le précédent, chez les Mossis), il en est de même : ou le mari aime sa femme et il ne dit rien ou il ne l'aime pas et il en profite pour se débarrasser d'elle.

Quant aux autres cas de divorce, ils se présentent très rarement, plus rarement que les précédents.

Formalités du divorce. — « Il n'en existe pas, dit Vadier. Le mari rend compte à son chef de famille et au père de sa femme de la décision qu'il a prise. La femme avertit également son père et son chef de famille.

« En cas de contestation, quand les choses ne s'arrangent pas à l'amiable, le naba intervient et reste souverain juge ».

Effets du divorce. — « 1° Quant aux biens. Chaque épouse, dit Vadier, garde les biens qui lui sont propres. Nous avons vu au Paragraphe précédent ce qu'il advenait, pour chaque cas, des cadeaux remis par le mari à sa femme.

« En ce qui concerne les cadeaux qui furent faits par le mari au chef de famille ou à la mère de la jeune fille, il ne saurait, en aucune hypothèse, être parlé de leur restitution.

« 2° Quant aux époux. Les époux deviennent par le divorce absolument libres. Ils ne sont plus tenus à aucune obligation l'un envers l'autre.

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« Ils peuvent par la suite se remarier ensemble.

« 3° Quant aux enfants. Un grand principe règle la question : les enfants appartiennent à leur père et doivent par conséquent rester avec lui.

« L'enfant en bas âge part avec sa mère, mais il devra revenir habiter chez son père lorsqu'il aura trois ans, si c'est un garçon, six ou sept ans si c'est une fille.

« La femme divorcée ne peut revenir dans la case même de son mari pour voir ses enfants. Elle pourra toutefois aller chez le chef de famille de celui-ci où ses enfants, avec l'autorisation du mari, pourront se rendre. Le naba peut passer par dessus l'autorisation du père.

« Les enfants pourront, avec le consentement paternel, aller voir leur mère chez elle ».

Comme le dit Vadier, un grand principe domine en effet les conséquences du divorce quant aux enfants : comme chez la plupart des Soudanais, ils vont au père. Celui-ci s'est marié pour avoir des enfants. La femme peut s'en aller, se dérober à son rôle essentiel de génitrice pour le mari, de génitrice au profit du mari, mais les enfants restent à celui-ci. Ce point est très important et mérite d'être bien noté.

Psychologie des femmes. La femme amante et la femme mère. — Les femmes mossis aiment plus leurs enfants que leur mari. Quant à leur famille, elles l'aiment beaucoup, mais aiment autant leur mari que leur famille, si elles aiment leur mari. Si elles n'aiment pas celui-ci, elles aiment naturellement leur famille infiniment plus.

Nous verrons en étudiant la vie des enfants que les filles mossi sont excisées à neuf ou dix ans. Cette barbare opération enlève naturellement aux femmes une grande partie de leur sensibilité sensuelle. La négresse est donc génitrice plutôt qu'amante. On ne peut pas dire d'elle comme de la maîtresse du poète latin : *crispam... docta movere latus*. Elle est passive en amour et se contente de s'abandonner sans résistance à l'ardeur de l'homme.

La moralité des femmes mossis est certainement plus lâche que celle des Européennes (je compare naturellement la femme mossi à l'honnête femme de nos sociétés occidentales). On a vu plus haut que l'accroc à la virginité avant le mariage n'était pas rare, et était supporté assez indulgemment par la coutume. De même l'adultère est fréquent et est puni d'une façon toute paysanne et rustre : on frappe la femme et on lui pardonne. Bref les mœurs sont certainement moins sévères que dans nos pays. Mais la prostitution en revanche n'existe pas. Et ceci est un grand avantage moral. Bref, la division du travail dans le domaine sexuel comme dans les autres domaines, est beaucoup moins poussée chez les Mossis du Yatenga que dans les civilisations très évoluées de nos pays européens et occidentaux. Il en est de même chez les autres Soudanais.

Nous en arrivons maintenant *aux Enfants et à l'Education*. Nous examinerons tour à tour les matières suivantes :

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1. De la filiation.
2. Théorie de la naissance.
3. Comment sont accueillis les enfants.
4. Avortements.
5. Accouchements.
6. Baptême.
7. Phénomènes. Jumeaux.
8. Allaitement.
9. Grigris d'enfants et tatouages.
10. Jeux des enfants.
11. Education familiale.
12. Education des enfants entre eux, associations.
13. Travail des jeunes gens.
14. Droits et devoirs des parents envers leurs enfants.
15. Devoirs des enfants avec leurs parents.
16. Circoncision.
17. Excision.
18. Après la circoncision.
19. Emancipation et majorité.
20. Tutelle.
21. De l'adoption.
22. De l'interdiction.

Commençons par la filiation.

De la filiation. — « Le Mossi, dit Vadier, distingue trois sortes de filiations :

1° la filiation légitime ;
2° la filiation naturelle ;
3° la filiation incestueuse.

Quant à la filiation adultérine, elle est considérée absolument comme la filiation naturelle.

La durée de la gestation est de sept à douze mois. L'enfant conçu en dehors de ce laps de temps est considéré comme enfant naturel. D'ailleurs il suffit qu'une femme déclare à son mari que l'enfant qu'elle porte dans son sein n'est pas de son œuvre pour que le mari le renie.

L'enfant naturel ou adultérin, lorsqu'il atteint suivant son sexe l'âge de trois ans ou de six ans, est confié à son père naturel. Cet enfant conservera malgré ce départ ses droits à la succession de sa mère.

La filiation incestueuse n'existe pas, ou plutôt elle n'a pas le temps nécessaire pour créer des obligations et des droits. D'après une coutume barbare l'enfant incestueux est en effet mis à mort dès sa naissance par les femmes qui assistent à l'accouchement.

Il y a inceste entre ascendants et descendants à n'importe quel degré : frère et sœur, oncle et nièce, neveu et tante et leurs ascendants et descendants directs ; beau-père et bru ; gendre et belle-mère.

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Lorsqu'il y a inceste les coupables sont chassés de leur famille et du Yatenga et le naba leur confisque tous leurs biens. »

Théorie de la naissance. — Les Mossis croient que quand une femme est enceinte, c'est l'âme d'un ancêtre qui revient en elle. Nous reparlerons plus loin à la Religion de cette explication animiste de la naissance.

On remarque du reste, toutes les fois qu'on le peut, des ressemblances entre quelque ancêtre que l'on a connu et l'enfant et alors on dit que c'est cet ancêtre-là qui s'est réincarné dans la femme.

Comment sont accueillis les enfants. — Les Mossis sont très contents d'avoir des enfants et veulent absolument en avoir. D'ailleurs c'est tout bénéfice pour eux puisque les enfants travaillent dès 7 ou 8 ans, puisqu'ils feront les sacrifices pour eux quand ils seront morts, puisque les filles par leur mariage rapportent des cadeaux à la famille. Plus on a d'enfants, plus on est content.

« Dans ces conditions, dit Vadier, une femme stérile est fort mal vue de son mari et peu considérée par les voisins. Pour vaincre cette stérilité quand elle existe, les deux époux font appel aux dieux. Ils se rendent tous les deux chez le tengasoba ou chef religieux du village avec un poulet, une chèvre ou un mouton, suivant leur fortune. Le tengasoba égorge l'animal sur une pierre spéciale, recueille son sang et le fait bouillir dans un récipient, avec différentes écorces d'arbres possédant certaines vertus.

« Cette préparation est remise ensuite à la femme qui doit la mélanger avec son sarabou. Si plus tard les deux époux ont un enfant, ils devront, sous peine d'attirer sur eux la vengeance de la divinité, la Terre en l'espèce, faire don au tengasoba de 3.000 cauris s'ils ont obtenu un garçon, 4.000 cauris si c'est une fille qui est née.

« Les tengasobas combattent encore la stérilité en égorgeant l'animal dans le bois sacré (kango). »

Avortements. — Cependant les avortements ne sont pas inconnus. Quelquefois les femmes mossis se font avorter en cas de grossesse illégitime arrivée en l'absence du mari. De plus les avortements sont assez fréquents chez les filles-mères. Pour cacher leur faute, elles font appel aux tipas ou aux timisobas (fabricants de grigris, médicaments et poisons) qui leur donnent un breuvage *ad hoc* dont ils ont le secret.

Ces pratiques sont très mal vues par les Mossis, naturellement. Les femmes mariées qui s'en rendent coupables sont chassées par leur mari. De plus, si une femme meurt des suites d'un avortement, son mari manifeste plutôt de la joie, déclarant que la défunte a reçu le juste châtiment de sa faute. Enfin le mari allait jadis, après la mort de la coupable, trouver le moro-naba pour lui dénoncer l'amant. Le naba confisquait tous les biens de ce dernier.

Accouchement. — La femme enceinte chez les Mossis riches est entourée de certains égards. Elle ne travaille plus à partir du troisième mois

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de sa grossesse, si c'est la première fois qu'elle est enceinte, à partir du sixième mois si elle a déjà eu des enfants. Chez les gens ordinaires la femme travaille jusqu'à sa délivrance. La femme mossi est dure aux douleurs de l'enfantement et sans nerfs, comme les autres soudanaises.

Souvent les Mossis vont consulter le baga quand leur femme est dans une situation intéressante pour savoir quels sacrifices il faut faire pour que l'événement aboutisse à bien. Le baga indique, à sa façon ordinaire, tel ou tel sacrifice. De plus il pronostique aussi, sur demande, si l'on aura un garçon ou une fille.

Si la femme enceinte a été effrayée par un mauvais esprit (kinkirga), elle fait venir le tipa qui lui lave le corps avec un liquide préparé spécialement, ou, plus simplement, lui donne de violents coups de tarakanré (sandales en peau de bœuf, dont nous avons parlé plus haut) sur la tête, pour chasser le mauvais esprit.

La femme mossi ne doit accoucher que dans sa case à elle. Elle considérerait comme une honte si l'enfant naissait dans la case particulière de son mari.

Lorsqu'une femme accouche, elle fait sa confession aux vieilles femmes qui l'assistent, de peur de trop souffrir ou de ne pas bien accoucher si elle n'avoue pas les fautes commises. Les vieilles femmes vont les rapporter au mari qui dit : « C'est bien, je savais tout cela » et lui pardonne. Ce sont en définitive les tourments de l'accouchement qui sont mis à profit par les vieilles femmes pour confesser la patiente.

Chez les Mossi il y a des accoucheuses (pougourorosa en mossi). Elles sont payées par le mari, mais ce n'est pas proprement un salaire qu'elles reçoivent, mais un cadeau : morceau de sel, pagne, etc. Si on ne leur donne rien elles ne peuvent rien réclamer et ne réclament rien.

En dehors de l'accoucheuse, les vieilles femmes de l'habitation ou du quartier ou du village viennent assister la patiente.

Pour l'accouchement même, la femme mossi se met à quatre pattes, les deux bras tendus à terre, le corps légèrement incliné de la tête aux reins, dans la posture ordinaire pour saluer ou se tenir devant un chef. Derrière elle se tient l'accoucheuse.

Quand l'enfant est né, les femmes qui sont là font chauffer un bouillon très fort, au piment, au soumbara, etc., qu'elles font avaler à l'accouchée et qui est destiné à activer la sortie du sang et de toutes les matières impures. Après cela la femme est lavée à l'eau chaude. On lui frotte, aussi, vigoureusement les reins, pour qu'elle ne se ressente pas de ce côté-là des efforts faits pour l'accouchement. L'enfant de son côté est également lavé à l'eau chaude, puis placé sur une natte dans une espèce de nid fait de vieux pagnes et de morceaux d'étoffes diverses. On couche alors la femme sur la natte à côté de l'enfant et celui-ci peut désormais être allaité. Notons pourtant une dernière cérémonie : avant que la femme donne le sein, on lave l'enfant au dolo, particulièrement l'intérieur du

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nez et l'appareil génital, car les Mossis, comme les Bambaras, sont persuadés que le lait de la femme a un effet nocif sur ces deux parties du corps de l'enfant. Si celui-ci en tétant respirait du lait par le nez, cela, paraît-il, lui ferait pourrir l'intérieur de l'organe. De même si quelques gouttes tombaient sur son appareil génital, celui-ci en pâtirait. Le dolo prévient ces lamentables accidents.

La femme, au bout de trois jours, sort de l'habitation et va rendre visite aux vieilles femmes qui l'ont assistée et les remercier. Au bout d'une quinzaine ou d'un mois, elle reprend le travail habituel.

Les femmes mossi et foulsé du Yatenga portent sur le dos leur enfant, à la manière des autres soudanaises, en le tenant dans un pagne qu'elles attachent et nouent par-devant sur les seins.

Baptême. — Aucune fête n'a lieu à l'occasion de la naissance. Environ un mois après celle-ci, l'enfant est baptisé. Un des membres âgés de la famille autre que le père et la mère choisit son nom. Le parrain tiendra compte pour adopter celui-ci d'un événement important ou non, qui s'est passé pendant le temps de grossesse de la mère. Si cette dernière a eu peur d'un cheval, l'enfant s'appellera Oueyfo. Si, par mégarde, elle a écrasé un poulet, le nouveau-né se nommera Noga. Si l'on a sacrifié pour l'enfant futur à la colline, celui-ci s'appellera Tenga ; si l'on a sacrifié à un caïlcédrat l'enfant s'appellera Kouka, etc., etc.

Notons que la plupart des noms propres des Mossis, hommes ou femmes, sont des noms de légumes, d'arbres, d'animaux, etc., c'est-à-dire exactement ces noms par lesquels on essaya en France en 1793 de remplacer les noms propres traditionnels.

Ce qui est assez curieux c'est que le nom de famille n'existe pas. Quand on veut préciser la personnalité de quelqu'un on dit : un tel (ici le nom propre) fils d'un tel (ici le nom propre de son père). Ou bien, dans une habitation où il y aura deux hommes du même nom, on s'en tirera par un surnom pour les distinguer : on dira par exemple Tenga le grand et Tenga le petit. Quant au sondogo mossi (au pl. sondéré) qui est le diamou bambara, c'est un nom de clan (nous reviendrons sur le clan) et non pas un nom de famille. Ouidiraogo, par exemple, qui est le nom de clan le plus répandu dans le Mossi, est commun à d'innombrables familles.

Quant au nom personnel, propre de l'individu, il est assez changeant et variable car souvent un individu ne répond pas à un seul nom mais à deux ou trois : le nom que lui a donné son parrain, le nom que lui donne sa mère, le nom que lui donnent ses amis, le nom que lui donne le voisinage. Le noir, d'une part, aime à dissimuler son nom, d'autre part en change ou semble en changer avec une extrême facilité. Nous avons déjà vu que les moro-nabas en arrivant sur le trône changent leur nom propre en un nom officiel et qu'on ne doit plus désormais prononcer le premier. Les Mossis qui s'engagent comme tirailleurs (et cela est vrai de tous les Soudanais) ont une tendance à ne jamais s'engager sous leur vrai nom,

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toute espèce d'idée préventive de désertion mise à part. Ils donnent le nom de leur village ou celui de leur race ou le nom d'une race voisine ou tel nom qui leur plaît. En un mot il ne faut pas chercher chez le noir la même conception du nom que chez l'Européen : l'Européen a un nom (nom propre, nom de famille) et c'est fini : il est inscrit, étiqueté, classé. Il ne peut plus s'en débarrasser. Son nom fait corps avec lui. Le noir est trop primitif pour être arrivé à cette discipline sociale. Il dérobe sa véritable personnalité sous des noms changeants auxquels il ne veut pas s'enchaîner.

En résumé le Mossi et le Foulsé du Yatenga ont : 1° un nom personnel, un petit nom ou nom propre, comme on dit en français, doublé d'un certain nombre de noms ou de surnoms qui font double emploi avec celui-ci ; 2° on dit un *tel fils d'un tel* quand on veut désigner la personne sans qu'il y ait confusion avec un autre portant le même nom personnel. Avec ces deux désignations on se trouve avoir le nom propre et le nom du père sans avoir à proprement parler de nom de famille, celle-ci débordant bien le ménage, comme nous le savons. 3° si le nom de famille n'existe pas, il est remplacé par un nom de clan qui déborde à son tour de beaucoup la famille. On a donc plus et moins que le nom de famille, sans avoir absolument l'équivalent.

Phénomènes. Jumeaux. — Les enfants phénomènes effrayent les Mossis. La mère ne leur donne pas à téter et les condamne ainsi à une mort rapide.

Les enfants nés de l'inceste sont mis à mort.

La naissance de deux jumeaux est de bon augure quand ils sont de sexe différent. Mais, s'ils sont de même sexe, c'est un signe de la mort prochaine du père si ce sont deux filles ou de la mère s'ils sont de sexe masculin. Pour conjurer le sort on fait le sacrifice d'un poulet.

Allaitement. — Lorsqu'une femme ne peut allaiter son enfant on fait appel à une autre femme de la famille comme nourrice ou, plus simplement, on fait téter une chèvre à l'enfant. Mais ces deux cas sont très rares.

Grigris d'enfants et tatouage. — Pour protéger l'enfant de la maladie ou des accidents, on lui met au cou, environ deux mois après sa naissance, un collier auquel est attaché un grigri contenant de la cendre de différents arbustes.

Deux ans et demi ou trois ans après sa naissance, l'enfant est tatoué. Ce sont de vieilles femmes qui sont chargées de cette besogne. Elles tracent des cicatrices sur le visage de l'enfant à l'aide d'un petit couteau effilé et recourbé à son extrémité. Après quoi elles mettent sur les plaies, pour arrêter l'écoulement du sang, une mixture composée de beurre de karité et de poussière de charbon.

Le tatouage est le même pour tous les Mossis du Yatenga sans distinction de rang. Il consiste en trois cicatrices verticales sur chaque joue, une oblique de chaque côté de la face allant du coin compris entre l'œil et le nez jusqu'au bas de la joue, et deux ou trois petites sur le milieu du front.

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L'enfant tout jeune. — La mère porte son enfant sur le dos, comme dans tout le Soudan, enveloppé dans un pagne qui se noue par devant, sur ou sous les seins. Elle se promène ainsi partout et travaille, pile le mil, etc. avec l'enfant sur le dos.

Quand elle veut lui donner à téter, elle le met sur le côté, à cheval sur sa hanche, et le soutenant d'un bras.

Elle ne pose l'enfant à terre que quand elle est dans sa case ou quand elle lui apprend à marcher.

A deux ou trois ans l'enfant cesse de téter et on le met à terre.

Jusqu'à quatre ou cinq ans les enfants courent dans l'habitation et autour. A cet âge ils commencent à sortir dans la brousse tout seuls et jouent alors avec les autres petits garçons.

Jeux des enfants. — Nous traiterons ce sujet au Mode d'existence (hygiène, sports, jeux).

Education familiale. — Les enfants, dès qu'ils ont cinq ou six ans, vont avec le grand frère garder les chèvres dans la brousse. Ils vont aussi chercher du bois à brûler, de la paille, etc. C'est quand ils ont neuf ou dix ans qu'ils commencent à manier le daba. A onze ou douze ans ils travaillent déjà comme des hommes.

Les filles restent avec leur mère, allant chercher de l'eau avec elle, apprenant à piler le mil, à faire la cuisine, etc. A partir de huit ou neuf ans on leur apprend à filer le coton.

Les garçons couchent dans la case de leur mère jusqu'à la circoncision, c'est-à-dire jusqu'à 13 ans environ. Ensuite ils couchent dans une case spéciale, qu'on appelle kombarogo, avec tous les autres garçons circoncis de l'habitation. Les fillles couchent dans la case de leur mère jusqu'au mariage.

Les petits garçons s'appellent les kondibili kirisé ou biribili kirisé ou komkirisé (au singulier komkiriga). Les petites filles sont les kompougouli kirisé ou bipougouli kirisé. Les grandes filles sont les kompougouli béda ou bipougouli béda. Les grands garçons, les jeunes gens (ils sont considérés comme tels une fois circoncis) sont les rasamba (au singulier rasanga). Les jeunes filles sont les pourousada ou pougousada (au pluriel pourousadaba).

Education des enfants entre eux. Associations. — Les enfants mossis forment des associations entre eux. On appelle celles-ci nam (ce sont les tons ou flambolos bambaras). Il y a une association pour les garçons et une pour les filles dans les petits villages. Dans les grands villages, comme par exemple Ouahigouya, ces associations se font par quartier.

Chaque société a son chef et ses grands dignitaires : son moro-naba qui la commande et ses quatre ministres. Pour les filles, il y a aussi la pourousada-moro-naba et les quatre ministresses.

Ces sociétés sont d'amusement, de beuverie, de tamtam et de danse.

Chaque associé doit fournir un certain nombre de cauris : les chefs en

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donnent 2 ou 300, les simples rasambas 100, les kondibili 50, les kondibili-kirisé 30. C'est le moro-naba de l'association qui recueille les cotisations et qui est en même temps trésorier.

Une autre ressource de l'association est de travailler pour les gens du village, pour les propriétaires de champs. Et l'on ne va pas seulement se proposer aux gens ; quand quelqu'un a besoin d'un coup de main sur son champ, il va trouver le moro-naba de l'association qui, moyennant paiement, met toute la société à son service. Le paiement sera en nature, en mil, avec lequel les associés feront du dolo pour leurs fêtes.

Une autre ressource consiste à mettre des amendes aux sociétaires pour tel ou tel manquement aux devoirs de l'association : le moro-naba du nam mettra à l'amende ceux qui, convoqués pour le travail sur le champ d'un tel, y arriveront en retard, ceux qui feront une course ou un petit voyage sans l'avertir préalablement. Les gens mis à l'amende le sont de 3 ou 4 canaris de dolo (le canari de dolo ordinaire vaut 150 cauris ou trois sous).

On se réunit pour manger, boire du dolo, danser au son du tamtam dans la maison du père du moro-naba de l'association. On invite les filles à venir danser. Les nams n'ont pas chez les Mossis du Yatenga de case à eux comme en ont les tons et les flambolos bambaras.

Dans ces sociétés se font de petits mariages blancs entre les garçons et les filles. Les jeunes époux s'offrent de petits cadeaux de cauris, d'arachides, de coton, etc.

Les jeunes filles une fois mariées se retirent de leur association, à cause de la jalousie du mari. Les hommes mariés au contraire peuvent rester dans la leur et y restent assez souvent, tant qu'ils sont jeunes. Les vieillards, en revanche, ne font plus partie du nam.

Travail des jeunes gens. — Les jeunes gens, à partir de la circoncision (13 ou 14 ans) travaillent dans l'habitation, ou plutôt dans le groupe de travail dont ils font partie, les mêmes jours et aux mêmes heures que les autres personnes du groupe.

Ils sont nourris par le chef du groupe sept mois sur douze, par leur père cinq mois sur douze et habillés par celui-ci.

Ils ont de petits champs particuliers, mais le produit n'en est pas exclusivement pour eux. Leur père, leur mère, prennent là-dessus ce dont ils ont besoin pour la nourriture ou l'habillement de l'enfant. Le reste est pour lui. Les garçons peuvent donc amasser de petits biens particuliers avant leur mariage.

Les jeunes filles n'ont pas de petits carrés de culture à elles. Elles font l'apprentissage de la culture en travaillant avec leur mère sur les champs du groupe et sur ses petits carrés de culture particuliers. Elles sont donc nourries par le groupe sept mois sur douze, par le père et la mère pendant cinq mois et habillées par ces derniers. Elles possèdent comme bien particulier de menus bijoux surtout, provenant principalement de cadeaux.

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Droits et devoirs des parents envers leurs enfants. — La puissance paternelle appartient principalement au père de l'enfant, mais pour une part aussi au chef du groupe de travail, au chef de l'habitation et au chef de la famille. Cela se comprend puisque l'obligation d'entretien de l'enfant est assurée la plus grande partie du temps par le groupe de travail sauf pour le vêtement et puisque l'obligation de logement est assumée par l'habitation.

Le droit de correction appartient principalement au père (mais aussi au chef de groupe, d'habitation et de famille) et à la mère suivant l'âge de l'enfant.

« La mère, dit Vadier, a le droit de correction pour le garçon jusqu'à la circoncision, pour les filles jusqu'à leur mariage. Ce qui ne veut pas dire que le père ne peut pas intervenir à cette époque-là pour réprimander ou corriger l'un de ses enfants, mais presque toujours il laisse ce soin à la mère.

Après la circoncision des garçons ou le mariage des filles le droit de correction appartient au père et non plus à la mère. »

Le devoir de surveillance appartient au père principalement, en seconde ligne au chef du groupe, de l'habitation, de la famille. Une des conséquences de ceci est la responsabilité pécuniaire : un enfant vole-t-il ou commet-il quelque acte répréhensible qui peut donner lieu à dédommagement, c'est le père qui est responsable en première ligne et qui doit indemniser les personnes lésées, après avoir toutefois pris ce que l'enfant possède en propre.

Jadis, lorsqu'un indigène ne pouvait pas parvenir à corriger son fils ou sa fille dont la conduite était par trop mauvaise, après avoir pris l'avis du chef de famille et du conseil de famille, il remettait l'enfant au moro-naba. De ce jour il abandonnait la puissance paternelle et le moro-naba seul la détenait avec toutefois des attributs plus étendus. Si l'enfant continuait à commettre des exactions, le moro-naba avait le droit de le faire tuer. Lorsqu'il s'agissait de la remise d'une fille au naba, si celui-ci était bien disposé à l'égard du père, il lui donnait une femme de sa famille en échange.

Actuellement cela ne se fait plus, depuis l'occupation française. En tel cas maintenant on met simplement l'enfant à la porte de l'habitation et de la famille.

Un père ne pouvait pas donner son enfant en gage ni en faire un captif temporaire.

La puissance paternelle se perd dans deux cas du reste très peu fréquents dans le fait :

1° lorsque le père devient fou ;

2° lorsqu'il a commis un inceste.

La puissance paternelle passe alors à son frère vivant le plus âgé ou, à défaut de frères, au fils aîné. Ce tuteur a exactement sur les enfants les mêmes pouvoirs que le père.

Dans le cas de folie les enfants sont tenus de secourir leur père et mère,

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de subvenir à leurs besoins ; dans celui d'inceste ils ne sont tenus à aucune obligation envers le coupable.

C'est le moro-naba qui, après avis du conseil de famille, prononce la déchéance paternelle. En cas d'inceste le coupable était chassé du pays.

Devoirs des enfants envers leurs parents. — Les enfants doivent obéissance à leur père et mère. Ils leur doivent également le respect.

Pour ce qui est de l'obligation de travail, elle se répartit entre les champs du groupe, les champs particuliers du père, les petits champs particuliers de la mère et leurs petits champs à eux. Ce qu'ils travaillent le plus ce sont évidemment les grands champs, les champs du groupe.

Circoncision. — La circoncision se fait à treize ou quatorze ans.

Elle a lieu au mois de décembre, donc pendant la saison froide et sèche. A cette époque on n'a pas besoin des enfants pour aider au travail des champs comme pendant l'hivernage. Cette condition est aussi réalisée par la saison chaude et sèche : mais alors les plaies guériraient moins vite. Reste la saison sèche et froide, excellente pour le traitement des circoncis, époque où les enfants n'ont rien du tout à faire et les grandes personnes peu de chose.

La circoncision se fait pour un certain nombre d'enfants à la fois. Quand il s'agit d'un petit village on circoncit tous les enfants du village ensemble. Quand il s'agit d'un grand village, chaque quartier circoncit les siens.

Ce sont les enfants eux-mêmes qui demandent à leur grand frère d'être circoncis lorsqu'ils se figurent être arrivés à l'âge convenable pour cette opération. Le grand frère décide et dit oui ou non.

Ils fixent aussi la date exacte de la circoncision et vont trouver pour s'entendre avec lui l'homme qui est chargé de l'opération. C'est, en général, au Yatenga, un forgeron (ainsi à Ouahigouya dans le quartier du Baloumnaba). Quelquefois cependant des non-forgerons, Foulsés ou Mossis, opèrent. Quand un opérateur meurt, on le remplace par quelqu'un qui sait circoncire, soit un frère, soit un fils du défunt, soit quelqu'un d'une autre famille.

La circoncision ne se fait ni le soir, ni la nuit comme cela a lieu chez d'autres noirs d'Afrique occidentale, mais le matin à six heures. Quelqu'un de particulièrement bon parmi les gens du quartier ou du village a été choisi par les enfants qui doivent être circoncis. Celui-ci les réveille ce matin-là et les mène chez l'opérateur. Les grands frères y accompagnent leurs plus jeunes frères. Mais les père et mère n'assistent pas à l'opération et ne sont même pas avertis, pas plus que les chefs de famille. Les femmes, les filles et les autres enfants (ceux qui ne sont pas à circoncire) ne peuvent pas assister à l'opération et cela leur est même défendu. La circoncision a lieu dans la brousse, à 500 mètres du village, en plein air, à côté d'un arbre. Il n'y a pas du reste d'endroit fixé par la coutume et l'on choisit celui que l'on veut chaque année.

L'opérateur attache avec une ficelle le bout du prépuce du patient qui

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s'accroupit. Un petit billot de bois est là que l'on met sous la verge en y posant le bout de celle-ci. L'opérateur place un petit couperet de fer sur l'endroit indiqué par la ficelle puis il frappe un coup sec et dur avec un gros caillou, de façon que le tranchant du couperet sectionne bien net. Naturellement une hémorragie abondante se déclare qu'on laisse d'abord aller quelque temps puis l'opérateur l'arrête en mettant de la poussière sur la plaie. Chaque enfant est circoncis à son tour. Quand c'est fini l'homme qui a été choisi, le nané, emmène les circoncis à un autre endroit, à 500 mètres du village, sous un arbre. Il envoie avertir les chefs de famille des enfants (qui avertissent à leur tour les père et mère) que ceux-ci viennent de se faire circoncire et qu'ils demandent pardon pour avoir fait cela sans le leur dire. Chefs de famille, père et mère pardonnent naturellement en faveur de la coutume. Cependant les enfants commencent à se soigner : ils relèvent la verge pour que l'extrémité ne frotte pas contre les cuisses : pour cela ils se mettent une ficelle autour du corps, ficelle qui en soutient une autre qui vient relever la verge pour qu'elle demeure horizontale ; ils mettent aussi sous celle-ci une petite fourche en bois qui la maintient dans la même position, petite fourche dont l'extrémité repose sur les testicules. Ils ne font pas encore de pansement : cela ne viendra que trois jours plus tard.

Pendant ce temps, les hommes des habitations des circoncis construisent deux hangars à la mode mossi (bas, sur fourches, avec une épaisse toiture en paille) l'un hors du village, à l'endroit où sont les jeunes gens, l'autre dans le village, devant l'habitation du nané. Pour leur nourriture, les circoncis sont nourris par leur famille. Chaque mère fait du sarabou pour son fils, mais les mères ne l'apportent pas elles-mêmes, car, en leur qualité de femmes, elles ne peuvent pas voir les nouveaux opérés. Elles envoient le sarabou par quelque garçon déjà circoncis. Le soir, quand la nuit est bien tombée, vers 7 heures, le nané amène les enfants coucher sous le hangar fait dans le village. Le matin ils repartiront pour la brousse, avant le lever du jour, comme des ombres.

Au bout de trois jours, le nané envoie des circoncis des années précédentes, des rasambas, chercher dans la brousse de l'écorce de néré, de karité, de n'pékou et de n'kouna. Il les fait bouillir dans un grand canari, puis laisse tiédir l'eau. Alors il appelle les bankonsé (c'est le nom des nouveaux circoncis en mossi, bankonka au singulier, bankonsé au pluriel) et leur ordonne de se laver la verge dans cette eau. Il a en même temps fait bouillir des feuilles de kantoboga, plante genre agave dont nous avons déjà parlé. Les bankonsés, le lavage terminé, s'enduisent la verge de beurre de vache (le beurre de karité étant évité parce qu'il passe pour amollir la verge et pour déviriliser), puis, après avoir coupé des morceaux de feuilles de kantoboga, les mettent autour du membre en en formant une espèce d'étui. On enveloppe ces feuilles de fil de coton pour qu'elles tiennent bien.

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Désormais, tous les matins et tous les soirs, on fera la même opération : les bankonsé déferont le bandage, se laveront à l'eau de néré ou de karité, mettront du beurre frais et de nouvelles feuilles de kantoboga, ceci jusqu'à la guérison.

L'eau de néré, une fois faite, est bonne pour sept jours. Quant à la provision de feuilles de kantoboga on ne la renouvelle que quand on vient à en manquer.

Pendant les trois premiers jours les bankonsés n'ont pas bougé. Du troisième au dixième jour ils commencent à se donner un peu de mouvement : ils vont chercher l'eau dont ils ont besoin par exemple. Au bout de dix jours ils se promènent dans la brousse, vont chercher du bois qu'ils mettent en tas, de la paille idem. Ils vont chasser dans la campagne, avec des bâtons, les lièvres, les rats, les serpents, bref tout le petit gibier qu'on rencontre dans celle-ci. Quand il y a de l'eau aux environs ils pêchent les grenouilles, les poissons. Ils cueillent également les fruits des arbustes, etc.

Ils ont pour costume une espèce de jupe qui leur tombe jusqu'aux chevilles, faite de vieux vêtements mis en pièces, de bandes de cotonnade effilochées.

Les bankonsés font tamtam, le soir, de temps en temps, près du hangar où ils couchent dans le village. Les griots viennent jouer de leurs instruments. Comme c'est la nuit, hommes, femmes, enfants peuvent venir.

Les bankonsés ont le droit de piller dans la brousse : ils enlèvent tout ce qu'ils rencontrent : poulets, chèvres, moutons, coton, etc. Les propriétaires n'ont pas le droit de réclamer. Mais cela se borne au petit bétail : sur le gros bétail et les chevaux les bankonsés n'ont aucun droit.

Il paraît que le nané ne fait pas chez les Mossis et les Foulsés de leçons de morale aux bankonsés — au contraire de ce qui a lieu chez les Bambaras où la coutume s'en est conservée.

Au bout d'un mois les bankonsés sont guéris. On avertit la famille et chaque ménage prépare une culotte et un boubou neuf pour le jeune circoncis.

Le soir du jour avant celui où ils feront leur réapparition au village, vers sept heures, on met en tas les jupes des circoncis et on les brûle. Le lendemain matin le nané emmène les bankonsés au puits pour qu'ils se lavent du haut en bas avant de revêtir leurs nouveaux vêtements. Avant de partir du campement, on partage le bois accumulé par eux entre les mères des circoncis, la paille entre les chefs de famille. Le nané en garde aussi une certaine quantité pour lui. C'est son bénéfice, ainsi que d'avoir été nourri pendant tout le mois en même temps que les circoncis par les parents de ceux-ci (En revanche, il a dû rester éloigné de sa femme, car le préjugé existe que, s'il s'approche de celle-ci, les bankonsés ne puissent pas guérir). Le partage de la paille et du bois effectué, nos circoncis font leur entrée triomphale dans le village, à 7 heures du matin, avec leurs

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beaux habits neufs. Ils visitent, avec tamtam, toutes les habitations, rendant visite à toutes les personnes. On leur donne des cadeaux (kolas, cauris, arachides, coton, dolo, etc). Quand les visites sont finies, la fête se termine et les bankonsés rentrent chez eux. On peut dès lors les appeler de nouveau par leur nom, ce qu'on ne pouvait pas faire pendant leur retraite.

Excision. — Les filles sont excisées à huit, neuf ou dix ans, suivant leur développement. Cela se fait aussi au mois de décembre, comme pour les garçons, mais au lieu de se faire par village ou par quartier, cela se fait par maison. Pour l'opération matérielle on a recours à quelque vieille qui sache la pratiquer. Mais ce n'est pas celle-ci qui garde ensuite les jeunes excisées. C'est une vieille femme de la maison qui les a sous son autorité pendant vingt-cinq ou trente jours. Pendant ce temps les jeunes filles sont à part, couchent dans la case de leur gardienne, se soignent. Quand elles peuvent marcher, elles vont chercher dans la brousse du bois pour celle-ci, de l'eau, filent le coton, etc. Au commencement de la nuit elles chantent, font des chœurs, frappant des mains en cadence.

Quand elles sont guéries, elles s'ornent de tous les bracelets et bijoux divers qu'elles peuvent trouver dans l'habitation. Ainsi attifées et parées elles vont en groupe saluer la mère de chacune d'elles, mais elles ne sortent pas dans le village comme les garçons.

En définitive, ce qui caractérise la circoncision et l'excision chez les Mossis et Foulsés du Yatenga, c'est la non intervention dans ces pratiques de quelque société religieuse puissante, comme le komo chez les Bambaras, et chez les Mandés en général. On ne relève pas non plus ici les détails pittoresques qui frappent chez les Malinkés de la Haute-Guinée et encore bien plus chez les populations de la Basse-Guinée (Soussous, Landoumans, etc.) (1). Cependant la circoncision reste importante dans la vie des Mossis et Foulsés du Yatenga parce qu'elle transforme l'enfant en jeune homme.

Après la circoncision. — Après la circoncision et l'excision, il ne reste plus que le mariage. Pour le mariage la jeune fille, comme nous l'avons vu plus haut, quitte son habitation pour aller dans celle de son mari. Le jeune homme, au contraire, reste dans la sienne. On lui donne une case, une hutte, pour lui et sa jeune femme, s'il y en a une de libre et vide, ou bien on lui en construit une neuve. Quand il aura un enfant, il construira auprès de la sienne une hutte pour la jeune mère et son fils s'il n'hérite pas d'une nouvelle hutte libre.

Emancipation et majorité. — On ne peut guère chez les Mossis parler d'émancipation et de majorité. Un homme est majeur lorsqu'il se marie. Mais il reste toujours jusqu'à un certain point mineur vis-à-vis de son groupe de travail, de son habitation, de sa famille. L'émancipation

(1) Voir à ce sujet André Arcin : *La Guinée française*, p. 438 à 446 et Noirot, *A travers le Foutah-Djallon et le Bamboak*, au sujet des Landoumans.

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et la majorité sont des distinctions françaises qui ne correspondent à rien chez les Mossis en particulier, chez les Soudanais en général.

Cependant on peut admettre, comme le fait Vadier, dans sa Monographie du Yatenga, une espèce de majorité vers 17 ou 18 ans pour la vente et pour l'achat.

Tutelle. — Quand un Mossi meurt, ses femmes et ses enfants passent à son frère le plus âgé. S'il y a beucoup de femmes et d'enfants, on les partage entre les frères du défunt. C'est le chef de famille qui préside au partage.

Quand le défunt n'a pas de frère ou de fils âgé, le chef de famille partage les enfants entre les différents membres de la famille.

Le tuteur est tenu envers ses pupilles aux mêmes obligations et jouit envers eux des mêmes droits que le père décédé.

Les pupilles ont également les mêmes devoirs envers le tuteur que ceux qu'ils avaient envers leur père.

L'enfant hérite de son tuteur comme les enfants légitimes de celui-ci.

Le tuteur est responsable civilement de son pupille comme le père.

De l'adoption. — L'adoption existe au Yatenga.

Lorsque deux époux n'ont pas de progéniture (le fait est assez rare) ou tardent simplement à en avoir, ils adoptent parfois un enfant. Celui-ci doit être pris dans leur famille.

L'adoption ne donne lieu à aucune formalité.

L'enfant, adopté très jeune, n'est jamais consulté.

C'est entre l'adoptant, le père de l'enfant et le chef de famille que la question se règle.

On peut adopter garçon ou fille mais, en fait, on adopte surtout des garçons.

L'enfant, du jour de son adoption, rentre dans le ménage de son père et mère adoptifs comme un enfant légitime.

En réalité cette adoption diffère de l'adoption française en ce qu'elle est bornée à la famille, à la famille totale.

A côté de cette adoption et dans le même genre signalons une curieuse coutume chez les Mossis.

L'aîné des garçons, d'après la coutume, ne doit pas être élevé par son père. Dès qu'il a quitté le sein de sa mère ou bien, d'autres fois, dès la circoncision, on le remet au frère puîné ou au frère aîné qui l'élèvent et lui donnent une femme. Mais, à la mort de son père, il vient à l'héritage de celui-ci et n'a donc pas quitté vraiment le ménage qui l'a mis au monde.

Interdiction. — « Le fou seul est interdit, dit Vadier.

Lorsqu'un indigène est atteint de folie, le chef de famille et les autres membres de la famille se réunissent pour examiner le cas du malade. S'il est reconnu irresponsable, le chef de famille fait prévenir tous les habitants du village de n'avoir pas à contracter envers lui. Personne, en

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effet, ne saurait, d'après la coutume, être rendu civilement responsable des engagements pris par un indigène atteint de folie.

Quand le fou possède encore son père, c'est à celui-ci qu'il appartient d'avertir les habitants des environs.

Tous les actes passés, les dettes contractées, toutes les transactions commerciales effectuées par le fou sont déclarés nuls. Les tiers ne peuvent avoir aucun recours contre un membre de la famille de l'aliéné ».

Nous en arrivons maintenant aux *Annexes de la famille*.

Nous diviserons cette partie en plusieurs titres :

1. Clients.
2. Domestiques.
3. Esclaves. Leur origine.
4. Esclaves. Nom.
5. Esclaves. Espèces d'esclaves.
6. Serfs.

Commençons par les clients.

1. *Clients*. — Le clientélage ordinaire consistant en ce qu'un ménage vient demander appui, protection, logement, nourriture, à une famille riche, sous condition de travailler pour elle et d'habiter chez elle, — cela n'existe pas chez les Mossis et Foulsés du Yatenga. Ce qui existe, c'est tel ou tel jeune homme désireux de gagner rapidement une femme ou un cheval ou des biens ou une autorité qui n'appartient pas aux jeunes gens ordinaires, décidant de quitter sa famille et son habitation pour aller se mettre au service d'un chef quelconque (moro-naba, chefs de canton, de village, tengasobas, etc.). Ce sont les jeunes gens, les rasambas, qui prennent de ces décisions. Mais, une fois qu'ils ont gagné ce qu'ils voulaient obtenir, ils retournent dans leur famille. Quand on va chez un tengasoba on n'attend généralement de lui qu'une femme et on ne le quitte que quand il meurt. Alors, pourvu d'une femme, on retourne dans sa famille. Naturellement tous ces « engagés volontaires à temps » conservent leurs droits respectifs chacun dans leur famille.

Signalons autre chose encore : En temps de famine quelques Mossis vont demander du travail à des gens plus aisés. La durée de leur travail est généralement très courte, quelques jours à peine (deux ou trois jours par exemple).

L'employé et l'employeur (si ces mots peuvent être usités ici) ne sont nullement liés l'un envers l'autre. Le premier peut partir quand il le désire, le second peut le renvoyer également selon son bon plaisir. Toutefois il doit payer intégralement, les journées de travail de l'employé. Le salaire journalier est soit de 100 cauris (0 fr. 10), soit d'un panier de mil non égrené. En dehors de cela, l'employeur nourrit son employé.

Ceci est borné, je le répète, aux temps de famine.

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Le vrai clientélage, tel que nous avons pu le constater chez les Malinkés, n'existe donc pas chez les Mossis.

2. *Domestiques.* — Le domestique, tel qu'il existe en France et dans les sociétés civilisées, n'existe pas et n'a jamais existé chez les Mossis. En fait les travaux de domesticité (nettoyage, cuisine, lavage) sont assurés dans la société du Yatenga par les femmes. Nous renvoyons pour la démonstration de ceci à ce que nous avons dit plus haut du travail des femmes.

3. *Esclaves. Origine.* — Avant les Français les Mossis avaient des esclaves et actuellement encore ils en ont, mais beaucoup moins — ceux qui ne se sont pas enfuis. La source du recrutement étant tarie par la défense de l'achat ou de la vente des esclaves, appuyée de peines sévères, le nombre des captifs diminue de jour en jour et ils finiront évidemment par disparaître tout à fait. Actuellement ce n'est pas encore complètement fait.

Les Mossis tiraient leurs esclaves, par le pillage, de chez les Samos, les Bobos, les Kipirsi, les Gourounsi, les Habbés, les Rimaïbés. Les Yarsés en ramenaient aussi des marchés du sud (Sikasso, Etats de Samory, etc.) et les vendaient dans tout le Yatenga. Pour leur propre compte ils en gardaient beaucoup et ils en avaient plus que les Mossis (en leur qualité de marchands ils en ont d'ailleurs toujours possédé plus qu'eux). Les Peuls du Yatenga en avaient aussi beaucoup, plus que les Mossis, obtenus par pillage ou achat.

L'esclavage volontaire et l'esclavage pour dettes ne fournissaient rien, ces deux sortes d'esclavages n'ayant jamais existé dans le pays.

Les Mossis du Yatenga eux-mêmes ne fournissaient rien comme esclaves aux autres Mossis du Yatenga. Un mossi de la région ne pouvait être captif d'un autre mossi. Seuls pouvaient être pris comme esclaves les gens des races étrangères que nous avons vues plus haut (y compris les Mossis de Ouagadougou). Les Peuls n'étaient pas pris comme esclaves mais seulement mis à rançon, étant à la fois riches (en troupeaux) et paresseux. Mais leurs Rimaïbés, comme nous l'avons dit (un peul n'aurait certainement pas voulu verser de rançon pour ceux-ci) étaient pris comme captifs.

Quand deux partis au Yatenga étaient en guerre, les Mossis prisonniers étaient tués immédiatement, y compris les petits enfants du sexe mâle même encore au sein de leur mère. Seuls les fils des deux chefs belligérants étaient épargnés : ils étaient rendus à leur famille contre rançon. Les femmes étaient également épargnées et rendues à leur mari en échange d'autres femmes ou d'animaux. Si leurs maris ne revenaient pas les réclamer, les vainqueurs en faisaient leurs épouses et non leurs captives.

Disons quelques mots du prix d'un esclave.

Un homme valait 40 000 cauris, une femme 50 ou 60.000, un jeune homme 50.000 cauris, une jeune fille 80.000. On voit que ce qu'on prisait le plus était d'une part le sexe féminin, d'autre part la jeunesse.

Nom. — Esclave se dit en mossi yemba (au pl. yembésé) quand on ne fait pas la distinction des sexes. Quand il s'agit d'un esclave mâle on dit

yembraogo (yembraodo ou yembrâdo au pluriel). Quand il s'agit d'un esclave du sexe féminin on dit yempoka (yempokosé au pluriel).

Espèces d'esclaves. — Le yembraogo, une fois acheté ou pris, était mis aux fers, c'est-à-dire, exactement, on lui mettait des fers aux pieds pour l'empêcher de s'enfuir tout en lui laissant la liberté de travailler. Pendant deux ou trois ans on lui laissait ces fers. Quand on était bien sûr qu'il ne se sauverait pas, on les lui enlevait. Il travaillait tout le temps pour son maître à l'époque des cultures ou bien travaillait les petits champs particuliers des femmes de celui-ci. En revanche il était nourri et habillé tout le temps. On pouvait le revendre et on le faisait si on n'était pas content de lui ou de son travail.

Si le maître en était content il lui achetait une femme. Alors il devenait l'homme du bingo, le « bingo », et n'était plus le yembraogo. Il passait du rang de captif de traite ou captif de guerre au rang de captif de case. Bingo c'est le nom du captif de case chez les Mossi du Yatenga. A Ouagadougou on dit daparé ou daporé (poré ou paré voulant dire dos. Le daparé ou daporé est l'homme qui marche derrière son maître, l'homme de la suite, l'esclave). Le bingo ne pouvait plus être revendu, sauf dans un cas exceptionnel, quand il forniquait par exemple avec la femme de son maître.

Les bingo, quand le maître n'en avait que peu, habitaient dans la même habitation que celui-ci, avec une porte à part sur le dehors. Quand il y en avait un certain nombre, ils avaient une petite habitation à côté de celle de la famille.

Le bingo, pendant la saison des cultures, travaillait pour le maître deux jours sur trois. Pendant la saison sèche il travaillait aussi pour lui, quand le maître avait du travail à lui donner. Le reste du temps il travaillait pour lui-même : c'est-à-dire pendant la saison des cultures un jour sur trois et, quand il n'était pas « commandé de service », pendant la saison sèche.

Il était nourri par le maître quand il travaillait pour celui-ci. Quand il travaillait pour lui-même il se nourrissait lui-même.

Pour l'habillement, le bingo s'habillait lui même sauf quand il était absolument incapable de le faire. Alors il avait recours à son maître.

Les filles du bingo étaient mariées par le maître qui les prenait pour lui ou les donnait à ses fils, à ses frères, etc. En revanche les fils du bingo devaient être pourvus d'une femme non pas par leur père mais par leur maître. Ils travaillaient du reste pour celui-ci comme leur père et ne pouvaient pas plus être vendus que lui, à moins qu'ils ne trompassent le maître avec ses femmes.

Le bingo pouvait posséder, puisqu'il avait du temps de travail pour lui. A sa mort, son héritage passait non pas au maître mais à son fils aîné (à moins qu'il n'eût un frère esclave à côté de lui, mais j'envisage le cas de l'ancien yembraogo, acheté par le maître puis marié par celui-ci, devenu ainsi bingo puis ayant des enfants). Ensuite, l'héritage à la mort du fils

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aîné de l'esclave passait à son frère puîné, etc. Le maître n'héritait que quand il n'y avait pas d'héritier.

En revanche, le maître pouvait demander à son captif ce qu'il voulait, un poulet, une chèvre, un bœuf. Le captif ne pouvait pas refuser, tout, en principe, étant au maître puisque le captif lui-même était à celui-ci.

Le bingo ne pouvait jamais se racheter ni être affranchi par son maître. Le nombre des générations n'y faisait rien.

Les bingos pouvaient appartenir soit au chef de famille, soit au chef d'habitation, soit au chef de groupe, soit à n'importe quel chef de ménage. Ils étaient possédés à titre individuel. Quand celui qui possédait un bingo ou un yembraogo devait le travail à une autre personne, à son chef de groupe de travail, par exemple, son bingo ou son yembraogo devait également le travail à cette autre personne et allait travailler avec lui.

Il faut noter que les bingos du moro-naba, c'est-à-dire les bingos « de la couronne » étaient dans une situation spéciale à tous les points de vue. Comme nous le verrons plus loin en étudiant les Pouvoirs Publics, ils relevaient du Rassam-naba ou Rassoum-naba, un des quatre ministrés, appelé pour cela quelquefois Bingo-naba. Ils ne travaillaient pas pour le moro-naba, sauf sept à huit jours par an où ils étaient appelés avec tous les habitants de Ouahigouya sans exception, sur les champs du moro-naba. En fait, sous le rapport du travail, ils étaient donc de vrais gens libres. Mais leurs filles appartenaient pour moitié au moro-naba qui les prenait pour lui ou pour ses proches. En revanche ils s'entretenaient complètement eux-mêmes (nourriture, vêtement, etc.). Le moro-naba ne les aidait nullement à ce sujet.

Ajoutons que les captifs ordinaires, les bingos des simples Mossis trouvaient un asile assuré auprès du moro-naba. Si un esclave était mécontent de son maître, il s'enfuyait et se réfugiait auprès du chef du Yatenga. Celui-ci le faisait remettre au Rassam-naba qui lui faisait donner une case, un champ (s'il était marié), une femme (s'il n'en avait pas). Tant qu'il n'était pas marié il cultivait les champs des femmes du moro-naba qui, en revanche, lui assuraient la nourriture. Quand il était marié, il cultivait, travaillait pour lui et pour sa femme et n'avait plus d'autres obligations que les obligations générales des bingos du moro-naba que nous avons vues plus haut. Bref il rentrait dans la condition générale des captifs de la couronne.

Ajoutons cependant que, quand le maître venait réclamer son esclave auprès du moro-naba, on le lui rendait quelquefois : cela dépendait de la justice de sa cause (il n'avait pas maltraité son captif, avait toujours été bon pour lui, etc.) et aussi du cadeau plus ou moins important qu'il donnait au moro-naba pour le bien disposer envers lui.

Les bingos du Riziam-naba, roi indépendant comme nous l'avons vu, étaient dans la situation des bingos du moro-naba et non pas dans la situation des bingos ordinaires. De même les bingos de trois grands

chefs de canton : le Zitenga-naba, le Ratenga-naba et le Boussoum-naba.

Serfs. — Au Yatenga il y avait des espèces de serfs, des « bagarés » pour employer l'expression mossi. Mais ils n'étaient possédés que par le moro-naba du Yatenga, celui du Riziam et par quelques grands chefs de canton comme le Zitenga-naba et le Ratenga-naba. Les ministres même du moro-naba ne pouvaient en avoir et à plus forte raison les simples mossis. Le bagaré c'était l'esclave peuhl, le dimadio (au pl. rimaïbé) enlevé aux Peuls ou bien enfui de ceux-ci chez les Mossis, bref un ex-rimaïbé passé aux Mossis.

Les bagarés ne cultivaient pas. Ils gardaient simplement les troupeaux de leur maître. En fait d'autre travail ils construisaient encore les cases en paille où couchaient à la nouvelle année (nous verrons à la Religion à quelle occasion) le moro-naba du Yatenga, le Riziam-naba et d'autres chefs.

Les bagarés s'entretenaient eux-mêmes (nourriture et vêtement). Le croît du troupeau était pour le naba, mais les produits en étaient pour les bagarés (lait et beurre). Cependant, sur ces produits, ils donnaient au naba ce dont il se trouvait avoir besoin en fait de lait et en fait de beurre.

En résumé, on voit qu'il y a chez les Mossis et les Foulsés ou plutôt qu'il y avait les deux sortes d'esclaves connus dans tout le Soudan : les captifs de traite et les captifs de case, les premiers vendables, les seconds faisant partie de la famille. Actuellement, avec la suppression de la vente et de l'achat, il n'y a plus que des captifs de case de moins en moins nombreux.

Nous voici amenés aux *Biens de la famille* et à leur transmission.

Biens familiaux proprement dits. — Il n'y a pas de biens familiaux chez nos Mossis, n'y ayant pas de travail commun de toute la famille. Les biens familiaux se réduisent aux grigris de la famille possédés par le boudoukasaman.

Biens de l'habitation ou biens sous-familiaux. — Ils n'existent pas non plus pour la même raison, sauf l'habitation qui est un bien commun du groupe de la zaka. Pourtant chaque ménage y a bien des cases à lui mais c'est une possession usufruitière qui s'accorde avec la pleine propriété du groupe zaka. Maintenant, si quelque chef de ménage veut construire une nouvelle case, il avertit le zakasoba, qui donne toujours l'autorisation du reste. Une fois la hutte construite, le constructeur peut la détruire s'il le veut, ce qui prouve qu'il la possède en pleine propriété, l'ayant faite, mais il ne peut pas détruire une hutte qu'il n'a pas construite et où il habite, celle-ci appartenant véritablement à la zaka. En définitive il peut y avoir dans celle-ci un mélange de biens communs (de la zaka) et de biens individuels (hutte construite par un ménage ou par un individu, grenier à mil établi dans les mêmes conditions, etc.), mais le bien commun l'emporte de très loin.

Biens du groupe de travail. — Ici les biens communs sont très impor-

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tants. Ce sont les champs du groupe qui nourrissent le groupe la plus grande partie du temps (7 mois sur 12). Ce sont encore les instruments de travail qui appartiennent au groupe, comme nous le verrons plus loin. Cependant le groupe ne possède ni esclaves, ni animaux.

Biens du ménage. — Le mari travaille, comme nous le savons, pendant la saison des pluies ou des cultures deux jours sur trois pour son groupe de travail. Le troisième jour est pour lui. Ce jour-là il travaille son petit champ aidé par sa femme ou ses femmes. Pendant la saison sèche, le mari ne travaille pas pour le groupe, mais pour lui seulement, sauf les travaux de réfection de l'habitation.

Le groupe nourrit le ménage pendant sept mois sur douze. Pendant cinq mois c'est le champ du ménage qui nourrit celui-ci.

Il y a donc comme première possession ménagère le champ particulier du ménage.

Le champ particulier offre une caractéristique spéciale pour le ménage du chef de groupe lui-même. Comme celui-ci s'occupe tout le temps du champ commun du groupe, même le troisième jour, son petit champ est cultivé exclusivement par ses femmes (et par ses esclaves s'il en a). Il est donc nourri cinq mois sur douze par ses femmes. Mais cela n'existe que pour les chefs de groupe (et les chefs de zaka et de famille qui sont forcément chefs de groupe).

Biens individuels. — Les femmes mossis ont de petits carrés de culture minuscules, tout à fait à elles, pas au groupe, pas au ménage, qu'elles travaillent à partir de cinq heures du soir les jours où elles le peuvent. Ceci est bien individuel. Sont aussi bien individuels les vêtements, les bijoux des femmes, etc.

Le mari, l'enfant ont aussi leurs biens individuels. Du reste pour mieux déterminer les biens individuels et les biens communs (soit du ménage, soit du groupe, soit de l'habitation, soit de la famille) il vaut mieux passer en revue chaque espèce de biens.

Les champs. — Les champs appartiennent surtout au groupe de travail (Ils n'appartiennent qu'exceptionnellement à l'habitation quand celle-ci étant petite, on n'y forme qu'un groupe de travail). A côté des champs du groupe, il y a le champ du ménage. Enfin, à côté du champ du ménage, il y a les champs particuliers : par exemple les petits carrés de culture des femmes ou des jeunes gens.

Les instruments de travail. — Ceux-ci (dabas, haches, etc.) appartiennent au groupe. Pour travailler sur leurs petits champs (ménagers, individuels) hommes et femmes se servent des dabas du groupe mais, s'ils les abîment, ils doivent les réparer à leurs frais. Les instruments qui ne peuvent servir sont remplacés par le chef de groupe.

Les animaux domestiques — Les poules, chèvres, moutons, ânes, etc., tout cela est possédé à titre absolument individuel et non pas par le groupe ni même par le ménage. C'est l'homme ou la femme qui a acheté

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tel animal, qui le possède. Cela n'empêche pas que les chèvres, les moutons sont réunis par habitation, couchent au même endroit et sont menés en bloc dans la brousse par les petits garçons de l'habitation. On ne réunit les animaux ni par famille totale, ni par village.

Les femmes. — Les femmes, je n'ai pas besoin d'insister là-dessus, sont évidemment une propriété individuelle. Il n'y a pas de femmes communes au village, à la famille, à l'habitation, au groupe. Cependant la femme est en quelque sorte considérée comme une possession de l'habitation, ou même de la famille, en ce sens que les femmes d'un individu passent toujours à sa mort à son frère.

L'habitation. — Nous avons vu plus haut ce qui en est : l'habitation appartient au zakasoba, mais en temps que représentant de la zaka, en tant que gestionnaire des biens de ce groupe sous-familial. Elle ne lui appartient pas en propriété privée avec le *jus utendi et abutendi* romain. Elle appartient en définitive à la zaka elle-même.

S'il en est ainsi, il n'en est pas moins vrai que les parties habitables de la zaka, les cases ou huttes, sont affectées définitivement à tel ou tel ménage qui en a l'usufruit. Ainsi la propriété appartient à la zaka représentée par son chef. L'usufruit appartient aux ménages ou aux individus.

Enfin, nous pouvons signaler, comme nous l'avons fait plus haut, qu'une case construite exclusivement par un ménage avec ses propres forces ou par un simple individu de la zaka peut être jetée bas, détruite par lui car c'est un bien ménager ou individuel installé dans un bien sous-familial. Mais ce cas est tout à fait exceptionnel.

Les grandes cases à mil ou huttes à mil sont aux groupes de culture. Il y a aussi des cases à mil ménagères où le mari met la récolte du champ du ménage. Enfin les grands vases en terre, les jarres qui sont dans les cases, nous amènent de l'habitation au mobilier. Fabriquées par les femmes elles appartiennent individuellement à telle ou telle femme.

Le mobilier. — Le mobilier, que nous étudierons plus minutieusement au Mode d'existence est très pauvre et très simple : il est approprié individuellement.

Les ustensiles de ménage. — Les grandes tables en terre dressées pour l'écrasage des grains appartiennent à l'habitation, mais les pierres granitiques rectangulaires qu'on y encastre sont la propriété de chaque femme elle-même, comme les molettes mobiles avec lesquelles on broie sur les premières.

Les mortiers et les pilons en bois, matériel d'une grande utilité et d'autre part lourd, encombrant, difficile à détruire, appartiennent à l'habitation, quelquefois au chef de groupe, c'est-à-dire au groupe. Le chef de groupe complète en effet ce matériel quand celui qu'a acheté le zakasoba n'est pas suffisant.

Parmi les canaris, les plus grands, qui sont comme des cuveaux et atteignent 1 mètre ou 1 m. 50 de haut, destinés à recevoir le dolo fabri-

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qué par les femmes, appartiennent à l'habitation et sont achetés par le chef d'habitation. Les canaris ordinaires (hauts de 25 à 30 centimètres, servant à aller chercher de l'eau ou à faire la cuisine), appartiennent individuellement à chaque femme de l'habitation. De même les calebasses. C'est souvent avec les cauris du mari que les femmes achètent leurs canaris ou leurs calebasses, mais l'objet, une fois acheté, appartient à la femme.

Les vêtements. — Les vêtements sont appropriés d'une façon absolument individuelle, quelle qu'en soit l'origine. Ainsi le pagne acheté par le mari à la femme appartient à la femme.

Ornements et bijoux. — Ils sont également appropriés individuellement quelle qu'en soit l'origine. Ils appartiennent donc à chaque homme, à chaque femme, à chaque enfant, etc.

Armes. — Elles sont également appropriées individuellement.

Amulettes, grigris. — Il en est de même que pour les armes. Cependant, si l'on prend le mot grigri dans toute son extension d'objets pour le culte, il y a les grigris de famille qui sont possédés par la famille.

Cauris, monnaie métallique, etc. — C'est également de la propriété individuelle.

En résumé, les biens de la famille totale n'existent pour ainsi dire pas chez les Mossis du Yatenga : ce qui existe ce sont les biens de la sous-famille (habitation) et les biens de ce démembrement économique de la sous-famille qu'est le groupe de travail. En dehors de ces biens communs il y a les biens de ménage et les biens purement individuels.

Passons à la *Transmission des biens ou Héritage.*

Dévolution des biens de la famille totale. — Ces biens n'existant pas ne sont pas transmis, sauf les grigris de la famille. Mais la qualité de chef de famille est transmise, elle. Quand un chef de famille meurt c'est l'homme le plus âgé de la famille après lui, quelquefois son frère, quelquefois son cousin etc., qui prend le commandement de la famille.

Dévolution de l'habitation et de ses biens. — Quand un chef d'habitation meurt, c'est l'homme le plus âgé de l'habitation (frère, cousin, etc.) qui prend le commandement de l'habitation. Il prend en même temps la gestion des biens appartenant en commun à toute l'habitation.

Dévolution des biens du groupe. — Quand un chef de groupe meurt c'est également le plus âgé du groupe (généralement le frère puîné du défunt) qui prend le commandement et la gestion des biens du groupe (champs, instruments de travail, etc.).

A noter que dans toutes ces dévolutions, quand il n'y a plus de gens de la même génération, on choisit les fils de tous les frères, cousins, etc., en commençant par l'aîné. C'est-à-dire qu'une génération étant épuisée, on commence à épuiser la génération suivante.

Dévolution des biens du ménage. — Quand un mossi marié et ayant

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des enfants meurt, c'est son frère (de père et de mère ou de père seulement) le plus âgé qui prend l'héritage. Mais il ne prend pas tout. Il y a lieu à partage, jusqu'à un certain point, avec les autres frères de père et de mère ou de père seulement et avec les fils quand ils sont assez âgés.

Pour les cases et le champ, c'est le frère le plus âgé qui les prend. Les femmes au contraire sont partagées entre les frères et même entre les fils s'ils sont grands. S'il n'y en a pas beaucoup, le frère le plus âgé n'a rien de plus que les autres. Les bestiaux sont aussi partagés, toujours entre les mêmes, mais avec avantage cette fois non plus pour le frère le plus âgé absolument, mais pour le frère le plus âgé de père et de mère. Les cauris, l'argent, les objets mobiliers, les bijoux sont partagés de même. Les armes sont partagées mais avec avantage pour le frère le plus âgé absolument. Ainsi il prendra l'arc du défunt et son carquois et partagera les flèches entre les frères et les fils, sans s'oublier lui-même.

Comme on le voit, il y a lieu à partage et même à un partage assez compliqué puisque c'est tantôt le frère le plus âgé de tous les frères soit de père et de mère soit de père seulement qui est avantagé, tantôt le frère le plus âgé parmi exclusivement les frères de père et de mère. Mais ce partage est très inégal. Les deux frères aînés que nous venons de voir ont sensiblement plus que les autres copartageants.

Après le partage on reste dans la même habitation généralement et aussi dans le même groupe de travail. Pourtant c'est au moment des décès des pères de famille, surtout au moment des décès des chefs de groupe, que les groupes de travail (qui ont augmenté peu à peu avec les naissances) se remanient pour se diviser. Ces groupes de travail, en fait, sont en voie d'accroissement constant (par le jeu naturel des naissances) et aussi en voie de diminution constante (par le jeu des décès et des nouvelles répartitions). Quant aux zakas, elles ne sont pas non plus complètement stables, puisqu'il s'en fonde de nouvelles avec le temps, d'une façon proportionnée à l'accroissement de la population.

Ajoutons quelques détails sur l'héritage :

Les petits enfants du sexe masculin héritent, mais on ne leur remet pas leur part. On la remet au frère qui hérite de la mère de ces enfants. Quand ils seront grands, le nouvel époux de leur mère la leur remettra.

Les filles n'héritent pas.

Les femmes n'héritent jamais. Au contraire on hérite d'elles.

Dévolution des biens proprement individuels. — Un cas de ce genre est l'héritage d'une femme. Comme nous l'avons vu plus haut, les biens d'une femme décédée vont à ses enfants, fils ou filles. Les objets pour les garçons vont aux garçons, les objets pour les filles vont aux filles. Tous les garçons prennent quelque chose, mais le fils aîné est très avantagé. Toutes les filles prennent quelque chose, mais la fille aînée est très avantagée. Quand il n'y a pas d'enfants, la succession de la femme revient à sa famille, non à son mari ni à la famille du mari.

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Un autre cas de ce genre est la mort d'un enfant ou d'un jeune homme. S'il a un frère, c'est celui-ci qui hérite, s'il n'a pas de frère c'est son père. Quelquefois le père laisse les objets à la mère pour les donner à un enfant à venir.

En cas de décès d'une jeune fille c'est sa sœur qui hérite. Si elle n'en a pas c'est sa mère. En cas de prédécès de la mère, c'est la famille de celle-ci (c'est-à-dire la sœur cadette de sa mère).

Un autre cas de ce genre enfin est le décès d'un mossi célibataire. C'est son frère qui hérite, à défaut le fils de son frère.

Ajoutons enfin à tout ceci quelques remarques diverses sur les successions.

De l'enfant naturel. — « L'enfant naturel, dit Vadier, a exactement les mêmes droits que l'enfant légitime. Il hérite de son père ou de sa mère concurremment avec ses frères et suivant les règles que nous avons vues précédemment ». Ceci est exact mais n'oublions pas que l'enfant naturel a été renvoyé par le mari légitime de la femme à son vrai père, dès qu'il a pu se passer de sa mère. C'est donc dans le ménage de son véritable père qu'il a tous ces droits, non dans le ménage du mari de sa mère.

De l'enfant conçu. — Dans la coutume mossi l'enfant conçu hérite et est traité comme s'il était déjà hors du sein de sa mère.

Cas d'indignité. — Il existe une cause d'indignité excluant de la succession. Si le défunt a été tué, celui qui l'a tué est déclaré indigne, mais cette indignité ne s'étend pas à ses enfants.

Réclamations en fait d'héritage. — Dans l'héritage ordinaire, si le fils aîné n'est pas satisfait de ce qu'il a reçu, il peut porter plainte au chef de famille qui essaie de trancher la question. Dans le cas où il ne réussit pas, le naba intervient. Cette réclamation du fils aîné est très rare. Les frères du défunt et les autres fils ne peuvent réclamer : seul le fils aîné a ce droit.

Des testaments. — Le testament n'existe ni en théorie ni en fait. La coutume règne souverainement. Quelquefois un frère qui a eu à se plaindre de ses frères décide solennellement avant de mourir que tous ses biens iront à ses fils. Mais c'est là une manifestation purement platonique. On laisse le mourant parler comme il veut et, une fois qu'il est mort et enterré, on n'en fait ni plus ni moins : on agit d'après la coutume qui, s'imposant à tous, renverse, dans son ordre à elle, les ordres particuliers du défunt.

De l'acceptation et de la renonciation. — Elles n'existent pas ici. La coutume ne permet pas aux gens de se dérober à l'exercice de leurs droits qui sont en même temps des devoirs.

Des rapports. — Un mossi est libre de son vivant de disposer comme il l'entend de ses biens propres, mais on comprend qu'il doit donner la chose avant sa mort pour que la donation ait son effet et soit respectée.

Il résulte de là qu'un héritier peut cumuler sa part d'héritage avec une donation reçue du vivant du défunt.

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Des donations entre vifs. — Un mossi peut, de son vivant, faire toutes les donations qu'il veut sur ses biens particuliers.

Etant le maître absolu de ceux-ci et pouvant en faire tel usage qui lui semble bon, nul n'a le droit d'attaquer les donations qu'il fait.

En fait rappelons que les chefs de famille, d'habitation, de groupe, de ménage, ne sont que les gestionnaires et non les possesseurs à la romaine des biens de la famille, de la zaka, du groupe, du ménage. Les biens particuliers, les biens propres, ceux sur lesquels existe chez les Mossis le *jus utendi et abutendi*, nous savons à quoi ils se réduisent. De plus les Mossis sont très loin dans la pratique de faire grand usage de ce droit théorique, mais ici nous nous occupons de la théorie. C'est à elle que se réfèrent les règles suivantes :

La donation entre vifs devra, pour être valable, être faite devant plusieurs témoins.

Aucune capacité n'est exigée pour recevoir une donation.

La femme possède les mêmes droits que le mari. Mais la donation sera cependant sans valeur s'il est démontré que le bénéficiaire est ou a été son amant.

Nous en avons fini pour la Famille mossi.

En résumé, comme nous l'avons déjà dit plus haut, elle est communautaire et patriarcale.

Mais pour le communautarisme il est bien ébranlé : on demeure non pas en groupe familial, mais en sous-groupe familial (la zaka). Et on travaille non pas en sous-groupe familial mais en sous-sous-groupe (le groupe de travail). Peut-être était-ce jadis la zaka qui en même temps que communauté d'habitation était la communauté de travail. Ce qui se passe actuellement chez les Foulsés ou Nioniossés et que nous verrons plus loin où c'est tantôt la zaka qui forme la communauté de travail et tantôt le groupe de travail qui forme cette communauté et où l'on semble évoluer du premier état de choses vers le second peut le faire supposer.

Pour le patriarcalisme il est bien net et bien établi. La famille tourne autour de l'homme et non pas autour de la femme. J'ai dit que certains indices font croire que la famille mossi, comme la famille soudanaise en général, a été jadis matriarcale à une époque très reculée. En tout cas cela n'existe plus depuis longtemps et nous avons affaire actuellement à un communautarisme ébranlé doublé d'un patriarcalisme très net.

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Christianity and Islam among the Mossi[1]

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797 THE twin forces of Christianity and Islam are both seriously contending for the conversion of the pagan masses of the Western Sudan. Islam first penetrated this region during the 11th century and succeeded in converting many people to its faith. Christianity arrived on the scene only 60 years ago, and has not had the time to win many converts. However, there remained many societies in this area which were largely pagan until European conquests exposed them almost simultaneously to the influences of both Christianity and Islam. One such society, the Mossi, has been described as the principal island of resistance to Islam in the Sudan (Gouilly 1952:52). André (1924:31) states that the Mossi "offered to the Animists an irreducible rampart against the invasion of Islam." And Delafosse concurs that the Mossi "seem to have been particularly hostile to Islam which has made no progress among them since the Hegira. And although an appreciable number of Moslem strangers (Yarsé) lived among them, they have almost all remained pagans" (1912, vol. 3:187).

The first Christian Catholic missionaries arrived in Mossi territory in 1900, just four years after French conquest. These missionaries were kindly if fearfully received by the people, who gave them land for building a mission and for cultivating crops. The Mossi helped the Christians cultivate these crops and willingly allowed the children to attend the mission school. Nevertheless, when the missionaries tried to convert the children to Catholicism, the parents objected and withdrew the children from school (Socquet 1956:62). The Protestant American "Assemblies of God" mission first worked among the Mossi in 1926, and in 1931 they reported that the outlook for conversions was "hopeful" (Cooksey and McLeish 1931:215). But from 1926 to date, the Protestants have made negligible progress in their conversions. There are today about 155,000 Moslems, 26,000 Catholics, and 1,760 Protestants in a Mossi population of over 1,500,000. These figures attest to the fact that despite a long history of resistance to foreign religious systems, many Mossi are now abandoning their traditional religion. But the figures also show that while Islam is gaining many converts, the Catholics are making only slight progress, and the American Protestants hardly any at all. There are obviously many reasons for the differential advance of these three religious systems. In this paper I will examine and analyze the processes by which these religious systems attempt to gain converts, and delineate the reasons for their differential success.

The Mossi who are now feeling the impact of external religious influences
173 represent the unique example of a Sudanese group which has preserved its
105 ethnic identity and political autonomy through all the vicissitudes of Sudanic
[186] history until French conquest in 1896. Tradition records that the first Mossi

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rulers left the Dagomba region in the Gold Coast (present-day Ghana) during the 11th century and moved into the bend of the Niger River, carving out three large kingdoms and smaller principalities in the process. At the head of these still extant kingdoms are rulers (*Moro Nabas*) who hold feudal-like control of the provinces, districts, and villages which comprise their domains. A complex hierarchical administrative apparatus extends the power of the rulers into the smallest village, and funnels taxes and tribute back to them. French conquest modified this highly efficient system but did not greatly change it. The Mossi state apparatus rests on an economy which produces cotton cloth, horses, sheep, cattle, and goats, but the main support of this large population—one of the densest in the Sudan—is grain agriculture. Today, some Mossi districts still have as many as 70 persons per square mile. 105 173 105

The Mossi are divided into stratified royal, noble, and commoner patrilineages. Characteristic of this lineage system is a process by which royal sublineages descend serially until they merge with the mass of commoner lineages. Below the lineages there were once large non-Mossi groups of serfs and slaves, but these people have now been grouped into lineages and have become Mossi. Patrilocal polygynous extended family households, grouped into villages, form the basic Mossi settlement pattern. Marriages are arranged between unrelated persons through the agency of lineage members who establish "friendly" relationships. The two friends might ask their lineage heads for women to exchange as wives, or the "friend" who has received more gifts from his opposite number will give over a wife. Because only the older men have women and goods at their disposal, they are usually the ones who receive wives. The result is that most young men have no wives and must content themselves with occasional lovers until they inherit wives from lineage members. The Mossi have a great fear of incestuous relations which bring down the wrath of the ancestors (the *Keemsé*).

Ancestor veneration is at the core of Mossi religious behavior. The recent ancestors are notified, through sacrifices, of the important events in the lives of their descendants, and they are expected to aid in solving everyday problems. The ancestors also invoke their sanctions against antisocial behavior among their descendants. Once a year the Mossi people, in concert with the Moro Nabas, appeal to their individual and collective ancestors for good crops, large families, and for the preservation of the dynasty. Often associated with the ancestors as propitiatory agents are local deities called *Tengkougas* (sing. *Tenkougre*) or earth shrines, visibly manifested by clumps of trees, mountains, rocks, or rivers. *Tengsobas* or earth priests appeal to the Tengkougas on behalf of the local populations for help in sickness, for rain and good crops, and for children. When proper sacrifices are offered to the Tengkougas, their spiritual agents, called *kinkirsé*, enter the wombs of women and are born as children. Twins and children who die young are regarded as "evil" kinkirsé who entered a woman without being invited. Nevertheless, many persons consider twins as special gifts to parents in favor of the earth deities. 769 [778] [842] [845]

The earth itself, *Tenga*, is one of the principal deities of the Mossi. Tenga is 776 [823]

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776 considered the wife of a male deity called *Winnam*, *Windé*, or *Noba Zidiwindé*. The true nature of Winnam is not clear. The Mossi say: "Winnam is the sun, and Winnam is God"; he is considered a sun god as well as a supreme deity. [775] Winnam is venerated but he is not feared, because it is the dead ancestors who chastise evil-doers by affliction or death. When wicked people die they face the wrath of the ancestors in *Keemsélenga*, or land of the ancestors.

The Mossi have several concepts of the spiritual essence or animating principle of man. First there is the *seega* (pl. *seesé*), an entity found in all living beings; it leaves the body during sleep, and its adventures provide the dreams of men. The seega can be captured during its nocturnal wanderings or in places where large crowds congregate. If the seega is captured and eaten by a [761] sorcerer, its owner will die. A man's shadow is also called his seega; persons about to die have no shadows, since their seesé have either been stolen or have [822] left on their own account.

Another principle called the *keema* (pl. *keemsé*) is associated with the dead or with persons about to die. The keema of a dying man wanders around and often frightens people; as soon as he is dead, he is no longer referred to by name but is called the "keema." Keemsé is also the word used for the generalized [769] ancestors who sanction the behavior of the living and who must be placated if people wish to have enough food, wives, children, and good health. A man's own keemsé take a vital interest in his affairs, in return for which they receive nourishment in the form of the seesé (animals do not have keemsé) of sacrificed animals.

[827] The breath, called *vousem*, is also considered an animating principle by the Mossi and, since it leaves the body through the nose at death, they believe that a man's nose is the first thing to die. It is not clear how the seega is disposed of when the body dies. Some people say it remains forever about the haunts of man; others believe that it goes to a mountain called Plimpikou and disappears into a cavern. Still others believe that the seega becomes the keema and goes to Plimpikou, from whence the keemsé come to visit their descendants. It is difficult to determine whether the Mossi have always been vague about their traditional religious concepts or whether this uncertainty is the result of the influx of such foreign creeds as Islam and Christianity.

The first recorded contact between the Mossi and Moslems took place around 1328 when the Yatenga Mossi attacked, burned, and sacked Timbuktu, then held by the Dia dynasty of the Songhoi (Dubois 1896:251). For more than a century afterward, the Mossi pursued a turbulent and aggressive policy in the region of the Niger bend, pushing as far as Gourma, Walata, and Banku (ibid:127). They were finally defeated and routed by Sonni Ali in 1477. In 1499, when Askia the Great (El Hadj Mohammed ben Abou Bekr, usurper of the Songhoi throne from the Sonni dynasty in 1494) returned from his pilgrimage to Mecca, he launched a *jihad* or holy war on the Mossi who had rejected his ultimatum to adopt Islam. Askia defeated the Mossi, "devastated the towns and countryside, took men, women, and children as prisoners, and forcibly converted these captives to Islam" (Dubois 1896:127–128). The

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pagan Mossi and the Moslem Songhoi fought several other battles until Songhoi power was broken by the Moroccans, who conquered Timbuktu in 1590. 175 797

The Moslems made no further attempt to convert the Mossi by force, but Moslem pressure did not stop; it now came in the peaceful guise of Moslem merchants and Yarsé Moslem refugees from the Mandingo cities such as Timbuktu and Djenne, who received permission from the Mossi rulers to settle in the country. However, judging from the reports of the first Europeans to reach the Mossi, the Moslems lived under many restrictions and were forbidden by the Moro Nabas to recite their prayers in public places (Tauxier 1912:585–586). Despite these restrictions, the Moslems were able to extend their influence through conversion of the cadet sons of the rulers and conversion of at least one ruler of the Ouagadougou Mossi dynasty.

About 1780 Naba Kom, the son of Zombré and a Yarsé Moslem woman, permitted the Yarsé to live in the villages and sent one of them to the Gold Coast for religious instruction. His son, Naba Sagha, was involved in a civil war and replaced some dissident pagan district chiefs with his Moslem sons. The present ruling lineage of Nobéré (where I worked) is descended from Ngado, one of these sons.[2] But although the rulers permitted their younger sons to adopt Islam, they themselves and the heirs to the thrones remained pagan in order to maintain the bonds with the ancestors. The exception to this rule was Doulougou, the grandson of Sagha, who was elected Moro Naba despite being a Moslem. Now the spread of Islam was given new impetus: Yarsé proselyting increased, mosques were built in Ouagadougou and in the villages, and many Koranic schools were founded. But with Doulougou's death the rulers reverted to paganism and Moslem influence declined. Nevertheless, the learned Moslem Imams continued to serve at court and used their knowledge of the outside world for the benefit of the rulers.

The Moslem Mossi showed the greatest hostility to the first Europeans who arrived in the country. The Imam of Yako, under the influence of his Tidjani son (who had made the pilgrimage to Mecca), refused to have any dealings with Europeans. Furthermore, he convinced the Moro Naba that death awaited any ruler who granted an audience to a European. When the French attacked the Mossi in 1896, an Imam from Béré, a former pilgrim, told the ruler to flee and not depend on his ill-equipped soldiers to defeat the gun-bearing invaders. Lamberth reported that the Moslems told the defeated and demoralized Mossi that "as soon as all the blacks become Moslems, the whites will leave" (Tauxier 1912:792).

No one knows how many Moslems were in Ouagadougou when the French arrived. Delafosse (1912, vol. 3:193) records that around the turn of the century there were about 42 Koranic schools with 230 students scattered around the country. Tauxier (1912:793), writing about the same period, states that there were 33 Koranic schools with about 358 students. No Koranic schools were reported for the Nobéré and Manga districts, but I know that there were several in the neighboring district of Béré. In 1926 there were 70 Koranic 175 797 871

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175 schools and 4,000 Moslems in Ouagadougou (seven percent of whom were non-
797 Mossi). By 1944 there were about 240 schools and approximately 25,000
871 Moslems. The last census, 1954, did not record the number of Koranic schools but gave the figure of 60,000 Moslems in the Ouagadougou region.[3] The 4,000 Moslems of Nobéré comprise 42 percent of that district's population. With the exception of one Catholic school master and the Catholic catechist who came to the district during 1956, the population is pagan. It might be relevant to point out that Nobéré has the highest percentage of Moslems in Kombissiri, an administrative unit (a subdivision) which has 152,000 pagans, 23,000 Moslems, 3,000 Catholics, and about 100 Protestants.

797 As noted above, Islam first came into the Nobéré district with Ngado, who replaced a dissident pagan chief, but Ngado's lineal descendants reverted to
634 paganism until a few years ago when the present district chief became a nominal Moslem. The cadet sons of Ngado did not revert to paganism, and today all the noble sublineages of the district are Moslem. We may note here that one of the main aspects of Islamic proselytization in this district, as elsewhere among the Mossi, has been the conversion of persons who do not hold strategic positions vis-à-vis the ancestors. The present chief is no exception to this rule, because he is only a nominal Moslem. His eldest son is the only one in the family who is not a Moslem—a status which is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain in a growing Moslem population. The chief himself became partially converted to Islam in gratitude to a Moslem Hausa trader who cured his illness. He recites the five daily prayers and observes most of the prescriptions of Islam, but he still drinks European beer, subscribes to many pagan rites and
[769] beliefs, and supervises the annual Péléga or sacrifice to the ancestors. This dual allegiance is politically expedient because the chief can function as the head of the Moslem community as well as the traditional head of all the people. He does have occasional difficulty with intolerant Moslems who wish him to become a devout Moslem, and with the traditionalists who claim that today the crops are smaller, the people sicker, and the women barren because of the neglect of the ancestors. However, with the approach of holy days, these differences are resolved in the interest of community harmony.

622 The chiefs of the villages under the overall command of the district chief are mainly pagan, since they are descended from the district chief replaced by
797 Ngado. Yet they command villages inhabited by the noble Moslem sublineages
769 of the ruling house as well as by commoner lineages. The village chief cannot become a Moslem because he too is responsible for sacrifices to the ancestors, without whose help his people would suffer. He does not take an active part in Moslem festivities, but receives the homage due a chief from the Moslems on these and other occasions. However, most village chiefs show an interest in Moslem affairs, and one of them, the chief of Vook[illegible], built a prayer-circle (*misseri*) for Moslems who came to pay homage.

622 The pivotal role which the village chief plays in the exchange of wives be-
797 tween Moslems and pagans has led indirectly to the increase of the Moslem
582 population. Before the French conquest he gave the Moslems more wives than

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622
he received from them. This unequal exchange, plus the nobles' prerogative 797
of seizing the wives of pagans, contributed to the increase of the Moslems. 582

The conversion of Mossi to Islam is sometimes accompanied by a rupture
in the relationships between persons involved in "friendships" with a view of 572
obtaining wives. A great quarrel developed in the district between a pagan 622
chief and a recent convert who refused to give the chief a daughter promised as 582
a wife. The chief became furious and claimed that the Moslem had broken a 797
promise made years ago, but the Moslem claimed that it was against his new
religion to give his daughter to a pagan. It is not true that Moslems in the village do not exchange wives with pagans, but the Moslems often try to convert their pagan friends so that the brides will not have to revert to paganism. The chief's difficulty was that he could not become a Moslem because of his ritual and ceremonial relationship with the ancestors. The Moslem men do not have such difficulties with their pagan wives because most women follow their hus- [562]
bands' dictates in religious and other matters. Many Moslem men attempt to [593]
prevent their wives from having sacrifices made to the ancestors, but if a woman really wishes such a sacrifice she can easily have it arranged through her pagan relatives. If a woman married to a Moslem refuses to observe Islamic practices, she is liable to divorce and runs the risk of having her children [586]
taken away.

Mossi anxiety over children is often instrumental in converting them to 797
Islam. When a woman is barren or her young children die, she consults a sooth-
sayer (*barga*). She is either told that her Tengkougre benefactor was not am- 842
ply rewarded and recalled the children, or that her "Moslem" children (chil- [787]
dren who wished to be Moslems) were angry because they were given pagan names. In the latter case she is advised to make a gift to a Moslem and to ask her husband to build a Moslem prayer-circle outside his hut so that when her children "return" (are born again) they will see it. Finally, she is advised to
give all her children Moslem names. I could discover no reason why the pagan [551]
soothsayers advise these anxious parents to adopt Islam, except that they hope that complicated prescriptions will be more efficacious. Nevertheless, so effective is this technique for gaining converts to Islam that even members of the family of the chief pagan priest are not immune to it. Furthermore, once a woman has a Moslem child, all her other children must be Moslems or they will
die. A man whose children are all Moslem has no recourse except to adopt [164]
Islam if he wants a funeral, because his Moslem sons may not give him a pagan funeral.

Every Mossi, whether Moslem or non-Moslem, wishes a proper funeral, 797
and now that travel has increased the fact of being Moslem or pagan is of great
importance. Many young migrants to Ashanti have reported that their dead 167
pagan comrades were unceremoniously disposed of, while the local Christians [164]
and Moslems took care of their dead coreligionists. But despite this fact, and the belief of administrators and missionaries, I found no evidence that the seasonal and other migration of Mossi youth to Ghana and the Ivory Coast have contributed very much to the spread of Islam. It is true that some of the thou-

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797 sands of Mossi who fled their homeland to escape forced labor or military serv-
ice ultimately returned as Moslems, but the majority of seasonal migrants do
167 not have enough contact with foreign populations for them to become Mos-
lems. Most of the Mossi who migrate to Ghana work on cocoa farms far re-
moved from large centers of population. It is also true that even those Mossi
who worked for Moslems on the farms and found it expedient to "pray" (as
the Mossi refer to conversion to Islam) soon reverted to paganism on their re-
turn in order to escape the displeasure of their lineage members. I have re-
corded several cases of pagans who became Moslems only when they returned
from abroad to find their relatives all converted to Islam.

571 Today there are obvious rewards for those Mossi who embrace Islam; be-
797 sides such tangible rewards as getting wives and children, there are the intan-
554 gible ones of upward social mobility and greater prestige. It is important to
566 note that most liberated slaves and serfs are now Moslems. Formerly these non-
[567] Mossi had low status, but today those who have been to Mecca bear such
proud titles as *Hadji*. On the night before Ramadan, one of these men gave a
talk before the Nobéré chief during which he chided the chief for his impiety
and voiced the hope that the next chief would be a true Moslem. He admitted
that the chief might interpret such a speech from a former serf as impertinence, but he begged him to accept the censure as coming from the servant of *Nabiyama* (the prophet). This same man had refused to pay homage to the chief at the annual sacrifice to the ancestors, and when admonished returned the daughter which the chief had given him as a wife. In earlier days a chief would not have given a daughter to a serf, and moreover, a disrespectful serf could be killed instantly.

797 Many French administrators and Christian missionaries allege that Mossi
youth embrace Islam because they like the beautiful robes and red fezzes of the
291 Moslems, but this is a naive explanation for the conduct of a highly sophisti-
515 cated people. Most young men in Nobéré wear Moslem-type clothes because
such clothes are the mode. Now that sun helmets, dark glasses, and women's
raincoats with hoods are in vogue, pagans as well as Moslems wear them. What
is of interest, however, is that when pagans become Moslems they wear cleaner
clothes and affect a different style of life.

794 The local consensus is that Moslems are much better behaved than pagans
because they do not swear, fight, or get drunk in public. The man chosen as
577 Imam is required to have such characteristics as mercy toward evil-doers,
benevolence, magnanimity, physical beauty, and virility. Yet many Mossi say
that the Moslems can be worse than any other people. They accuse them of
being charlatans, of selling Koranic verses as charms, and of committing mur-
der by the use of magical formulae. Neither pagans nor Moslems believe that
a man is necessarily good because he recites his daily prayers or goes to Mecca.

Moslems in the district follow most precepts of their religion: they recite
794 the five daily prayers according to the rites of Tidjani (there are only two Mos-
lems of the Hamada sect in the district and no members of the Hamallist sect),
give alms to the poor, observe the month-long fast (called by the Mossi the

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Karême), celebrate the great festival of Ramadan and the lesser festivals, and 794
aspire to make the pilgrimage to Mecca. Most of the Moslems can lead prayers, but only about one-tenth of their number can read and recite the Koran. [212]
However, today the masters (*karasambas*) of the 32 Koranic schools in the district are endeavoring to instruct the many boys and few girls in reading the [871]
Koran and understanding Moslem theology.

The Karême is observed by most adult Moslems in the community with the exception of invalids and working men. Moslems say that the fast is intended to turn the minds of the people to God, and they distinguish between the Moslems "of the mouth" who break the fast and those "of the heart" who [184]
fast until Ramadan. The crescent moon of Ramadan is greeted with guns and general rejoicing and the following morning the Moslems gather at the tomb of Ngado to give praises to God; during the rest of the day they pay homage to the chief and visit their friends. However, a change in the traditional observance of Ramadan is expected, because one of the Moslem leaders objects to the [178]
ceremony at the tomb of Ngado. He feels that some Moslems are beginning to regard the tomb of the first Moslem as an earth shrine or Tengkougre.

So far, only five of the more prominent Moslems in the district have made 794
or are making the pilgrimage to Mecca. The first man made the voyage about 788
seven years ago, and is now conducting a Koranic school in a neighboring district. His brother went to Mecca about two years ago and is now the senior *El Hadj* in the district. Of the two men who were on the pilgrimage when I arrived in the district, one has since died near the Red Sea and the other is still away. One other man left for Mecca and returned to the district during my stay. Most of the pilgrims now fly to Mecca; only two men followed the traditional route through Ghana, Kano, Lake Chad, the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan (now Sudan), and on to Mecca. In general, all pilgrims have used their own re- [613]
sources for the trip, but they receive some help from their lineage brothers and from the other Moslems in the district and in Ouagadougou.

The pilgrimage to Mecca represents the greatest event in the lives of the district Moslems. When the last pilgrim left, a great crowd gathered at his house and prayed for his safe journey, and some even accompanied him to [621]
Ouagadougou and remained there until he left. The Moslems and many pagans of the district, under the command of the district chief, cultivated his fields during his absence. And when the new El Hadj returned, a large crowd accompanied him to his house with shouts of joy. There he killed a sheep in thanks- [782]
giving, sprinkled the crowd with holy water from Mecca, and recounted his experiences. His listeners were impressed by his airplane flight and the description of Mecca, but they showed the greatest interest when he said that Mecca women covered their faces and that most Meccan men were monogamous. The local Moslems smiled when they heard this bit of news from one of their members, but I have seen them scowl when discussing the monogamous practice desired by the Christians.

The attitudes of Moslems differ very little from those of the other Mossi 794 595
as regards children and polygyny. They say that they do not believe in the 842

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794 efficacy of ancestor veneration and do not "kill chickens" to the ancestors, but
595 they maintain that it is a man's duty to have many wives so that he may have
842 children to succeed him. Furthermore, since Mohammed himself decreed that his followers may keep four wives, provided they treat each with the same degree of kindness, there is no conflict between Islamic tenets and Mossi practice of polygny. The average Moslem has two wives, but even the few men in the district who have more than four wives do not appear overly concerned about transgressing the tenets of their faith. Mossi Moslems have not adopted the [582] paternal parallel cousin marriage so common among other Moslems, and show surprise when told that Islam permits such marriages. However, they have modified their marriage behavior to harmonize with what they consider an Islamic tenet that "a man should not marry the widow of his father." The Moslem Mossi profess to look with horror on these marriages among their pagan brothers, preferring the levirate instead.

794 The Moslems' attitude toward the low status of women in Mossi society has not changed, and in one respect it can even be said that this attitude has
562 been strengthened. Many Moslem wives now cover their faces, and many El Hadjis have attempted to place their wives in purdah by preventing them from going to the market for fear they would come in contact with pagan men. The development of this practice is running counter to the growing emancipation of Mossi women, who have just begun to leave their villages for periodic visits to the larger towns. Nevertheless, the important fact is that the Mecca pilgrims have the opportunity to see Moslem women playing roles which are forbidden or unknown to Mossi women. And while it is true that the Mossi pilgrims would not easily adopt and foster monogamy, their receptivity to new Islamic beliefs and customs might have a liberating effect on their treatment of women. Once institutional and cultural changes have been accepted by the El Hadjis, they are likely to spread quite rapidly throughout the society because men who have visited Mecca are believed to have returned filled with wisdom and understanding.

797 Christianity came to the Mossi on January 24, 1900, shortly after French conquest. As noted above, the first missionaries were well treated, but the Mossi balked at the attempts at conversion. Nevertheless, by 1919 the White Fathers of the Catholic missions had established several centers, among which was the district of Manga where this study was conducted. Manga is considered a Catholic district, but there are only 3,000 Catholics out of a population of 124,000—which also includes 9,200 Moslems and five Protestants. [184] Thus, in contrast to Moslem Nobéré, which has no Catholics or Protestants, Manga, like most districts in Mossi territory, has a Moslem community.

The conversion of the Mossi in Manga to Catholicism follows the classical pattern of missionary proselytization in the country. Monsignor Socquet (1956:62) states that the Mossi always react to attempts at conversion with the statement: " 'We are looking at our chief,' that is to say, 'We will follow our chief in conversion as in all other matters. If he is favorable to it, then we will not go against his will.' " Socquet concludes: "It is thus understandable

how important is the conversion of the chiefs, or, at least, their sympathy for our religion, in the spread of Catholicism." The missionaries may have been successful in the village of the Manga district chief because he was sympathetic to them, but they made few converts in the villages far from the district center or in the neighboring districts. In the Béré district, a few miles from Manga, the Catholics have made only 22 converts despite more than 15 years' work. In Manga, however, they were able to "recruit" most of the young children for their church and school. When an old man was asked why his children became Catholic, he tried to evade the question but finally replied that he did not control the minds of his children. Knowing the nature of administrative practice in the upper Volta before 1946, and the nature of Mossi family structure, we looked further for the answer.

Paradoxically, it comes from a Catholic missionary, André Dupont, who, seeking to discover the reason for the decrease of patients in the Catholic-controlled maternity clinics, asked:

> Why have the maternity clinics which in 1942 served more than seventy mothers a month now serve only two or three? "We are no longer forced to go," reply the villagers. Was it the fear of sanction which accounted for the unanimous use of the clinics? Alas! It would seem to be so. The use of force and sanction have rendered odious an institution of charity. It would have been better if the mothers were only encouraged to use the clinics. "These natives do not understand," I am told sometimes. But how does one expect them to understand? (Dupont 1949:4)

Fear was certainly one of the reasons why the people in Manga embraced Catholicism. Before 1946 (the Brazzaville conference in 1944 abolished forced labor), men and women were recruited for work on the roads and on Ivory Coast plantations, and children were recruited for the schools. The district chiefs often gathered orphans and the children of their former serfs and sent them to the mission to fill the quotas, but many children and whole families voluntarily attached themselves to the missions. The reasons for so doing are legion, but in some cases it was simply the desire to accept the new religious faith.

Once at the mission the children were taught French and the tenets of Catholicism. Many of the boys later became catechists or priests and several girls went into the nunnery. However, the largest group of educated youths became the clerical personnel of the administration and were lost to missionary activity. Because the administration lacked French-speaking Mossi, the young people received good jobs. This desertion to the administration has become so serious that the missionaries at Manga have ceased to teach French to their catechists and now use the vernacular.

Conversion to Catholicism, bringing with it the knowledge of French, was formerly one of the sure roads to upward social mobility. Most Catholic teachers at Manga (and at Nobéré) are individuals who were recruited as unwilling school-boys but today are the highest paid members of their lineages. Other gains have accrued to persons who become Catholics. For example, the people at Manga believe that the missionaries used their influence with the

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797 administration to have one of their converts, a younger son of the late chief,
555 elected to the district chieftainship over his elder brother. This belief is probably unfounded, since the Moro Naba seems to be electing the literate sons of chiefs to their fathers' positions so that educated chiefs, and not educated commoners, can serve as members of French parliamentary bodies. Unfortunately, the people of Manga do not understand modern political problems, and have accepted the new chief only because of their traditional respect for the chieftainship.

634 The conversion of the Manga chief to Catholicism has not engendered
797 many problems for his pagan subjects. The chief's primary duty—to begin the yearly ceremonial cycle of sacrifices to the ancestors—has been taken over
769 by his father's brother, who is now considered the ritual head of the chiefly
[602] lineage. Nevertheless, to the chief still accrue the gains of this ceremony because his followers pay him homage and bring him gifts on his birthday, which comes at this period. Moslems in the community also pay their respects at this time, and they prefer his Catholic birthday celebration to the bloody sacrifices of chickens to the ancestors. On the other hand, the chief shows little of the common Catholic disapproval of Moslems and sends gifts to their leaders on the Moslem feast days. He also entertains the district Moslems when they come to pay him homage.

797 The Catholic chief does not act as a pivot in the exchange of wives be-
634 tween pagans of his lineage and the other lineages. This task now falls to his father's brothers. Nevertheless, as district chief he is constantly involved
582 with the marital problems involving pagan parents and their Catholic children. The main source of the difficulty is that Catholic girls are encouraged to refuse to join their pagan husbands when so ordered by their parents. The mission not only insists that the girl freely choose her own husband, but encourages her to reject a polygynous union. Catholicism thereby interposes it-
[562] self between the girls and their society, not only impairing the prestige of their fathers and lineages but also giving the girls more freedom than they would ordinarily possess.

The pagans claim that by encouraging girls to choose mates without parental consent, the Catholics are really taking the opportunity to obtain wives for young Catholic men. Paradoxically, there seems to be some truth in this, since Bouniol, a White Father, states:

> A Mossi who is unable to acquire a wife by [traditional] means must either remain unmarried or seduce another man's wife . . . they must choose between celibacy and immorality.
>
> Such a state of affairs creates many problems for the missions, especially as the system is recognized and sanctioned by the colonial authorities. . . . Young native Christians are obviously placed in a very awkward position. Their conversion angers their parents, who refuse to give them a wife; neither will their friends bestow a daughter upon them, because they know that they will not receive one in return, since a Christian may not give a daughter in marriage to a pagan. . . . *Consequently, unless the missionaries help them to find a wife, they must remain unmarried—a very discouraging prospect!* (1920:160 italics mine)

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When a young Catholic receives a wife through the mission, he may visit her father and pay the customary respect by giving him kola nuts and brass coins. The father of a mission girl may accept or reject his son-in-law as he sees fit, but formerly he could not defy the power of the missions. 797 582 634

A pagan youth who wishes to marry one of the mission girls has to discuss the matter with the priests and swear publicly that he will become a Christian. Before 1946 the young man had to fulfill his promise or be intimidated by the chief and the missionaries until he relented or fled the district. Today, however, the priests usually abandon their efforts to obtain the conversion of the young men after three months have passed. In some cases the young men take their wives and move to other districts, and return only after the girls have given up Catholicism. Despite the lure of wives from the mission, not many young men become Christians on this account because the Mossi are still concerned primarily with family relationships and the effect that conversion would have on these relationships. [596]

The church's prohibition of polygyny is by far the most serious bar to the spread of Catholicism. Many men do not adopt Catholicism simply because they fear that monogamous marriages would not produce children. Father Paternot (Considine 1954:103) has cited a study purporting to show that Christian Mossi have more children than the pagans, but the ordinary people of the district would not accept the facts he presented. They cite their personal experience to the contrary. Dim Delobson (1934:136), a Mossi converted to Catholicism, states: 797 595 842

> A certain number of Christians of my acquaintance whose wives did not have children during the first years of marriage had recourse to magical practices in order to get children. These simple people thought that although they had an omnipotent God beside them, they could impudently—after all the good priests will not know about it—ask the little, but also powerful gods to grant them some material favors here on earth. When the gods given children were taken for Holy Baptism, they were given Christian names instead of the names of the earth shrines, and they did not wear magical charms which would have indicated to the priest the real state of affairs. Nevertheless, the children were bathed in water to which magical potions were added, and when the mothers went to visit their parents, sacrifices of chickens were given to the benevolent Tengkougas.

The Mossi's strong desire for children is admittedly one of the main reasons for leaving the Catholic Church so that they can take other spouses in addition to barren ones. The church has now belatedly recognized this problem and, knowing that it cannot prevent men from taking plural wives, allows them to come to church but prohibits them from taking the Mass.

Many cultural factors besides the desire for children make polygyny important for the Mossi, and make conversion detrimental to the functioning of their family system. Because of lineage opposition to their conversions, some converts are forced to establish nuclear households—a practice out of harmony with the normal rhythm of Mossi life. The reason for this disharmony is that Mossi women married to Catholics must work alone instead of with 595 797 182 [594]

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595 co-wives and other women of the extended families. Even the Catholic hus-
797 bands would not help their wives with household tasks requiring more than
182 one person, nor would they violate tradition by chatting with their wives
except at night in their huts. Another factor is that after the Mossi Christian
[846] woman has given birth to a child, she follows the traditional custom and goes
back to her parents' home to remain there during the two or three years'
lactation period. This imposes a great hardship on a Catholic husband be-
cause during this time he is left without wife or helpmate. In the extended
family household there would have been women to take care of a man's
material needs, and his mistresses would have taken care of his sexual needs.
The Catholic can and does ask the mission for a young girl to take care of
his material needs, but of course she is not expected to satisfy his sexual de-
[837] sires. Obviously this arrangement is not satisfactory, and many Catholic men,
with the acquiescence of their wives, keep mistresses. Dim Delobson com-
ments:

> Ouagadougou has a large number of Christians, but does this mean that these people in their love for the church respect all her rules? Alas! there are a large number of Christians who oblige their lawful wives to leave the conjugal couch and make way for the accommodation of mistresses . . . in conformity with the old custom. But this is a subject which is too delicate to discuss further. I only note it in passing: *Noli me tangere* (1934:169).

797 Despite the influence of tradition on Mossi Catholics, I feel it would be a
794 mistake to say that the complexity of Catholic dogma is one of the drawbacks
to missionary success in this country. One Mossi has already been made a
bishop of the Catholic Church, and most of the proselytizing in Manga falls
on the two Mossi priests and the five Mossi nuns. Under the supervision of
two White Fathers, the Catholic children and adults are acquainted with the
dogma and rituals of the church. The festivals are well attended and cele-
brated with as much pomp as possible. Although the Mass is sung in Latin,
the Mossi have adapted some of their traditional tunes to the Mass, and use
their own language for prayers and hymns. Catholics observe all the sacra-
ments including Confession—a sacrament which is hazardous from the
Mossi point of view, because man must lay bare his innermost thoughts to
the priests, who, in the final analysis, are Europeans and thus administrators.

It is true that even the staunchest Catholics in Manga have not aban-
doned all belief in traditional rituals and religious credos. For example, many
Mossi Catholics believe in the existence of sorcerers, but the Catholic Church
[754] does not recognize the existence of sorcerers or such evil forces (I have met
White Fathers who believe that there are unexplainable psychic and physical
phenomena in Africa), and moreover has no way of dealing with them.
"But," says Dim Delobson (1934:136), "the Mossi believe so strongly in the
power of such entities, that even those converted to Christianity cannot al-
ways escape the action of malevolent practitioners." The result is that many
Catholics desert the church when they believe that only traditional spe-
cialists can help them with personal problems. Catholic families easily aban-

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don Christianity when told by shamans that to do so is necessary in order to have children. Unfortunately, the panoply of saints in modern French Catholicism does not seem to be able to syncretize with or displace the local deities, and thus come to the aid of the Mossi. This weakness of modern Catholicism in West Africa appears to make it unable to deal with many of the insecurities which arise in the daily lives of its adherents. 797 794

The American Protestant missionaries were never able to establish stations in either Manga or Nobéré because of the relative strengths of Catholicism and Islam in these two districts. However, they do have stations in Po and Koubri, 30 and 50 miles away. The 1954 census lists five Protestants in Manga, but I could find only one family head who had been a Protestant and that during the period when he worked for missionaries. It is interesting to note that when he returned to his native Manga he did not become a Catholic but embraced Islam instead. Although Protestants among the Mossi are trying very hard, they are working under three handicaps: (1) the opposition of the local administration, (2) their own explicit cultural bias, and (3) the puritanical nature of their brand of American Midwestern Protestantism. 797

The first Protestant missionaries to arrive in 1926 reported: "There has often been opposition to the preaching of the Gospel in the district, and there is a continual under-current which has hindered many from accepting Christ" (Assemblies of God Mission 1934:14). Americans who wished to train the young Mossi to read and write found official opposition to the use of the vernacular for such purposes, and were obliged to receive French teaching certificates. When one recognizes that in those days less than one-tenth of one percent of the Mossi children were in schools (today the number is just over three percent) one cannot help feeling that any kind of education would have been useful to the Mossi. During the war the Pétain-oriented administration restricted the movements of the Americans and frightened off their converts. And finally, the Americans come under the general disapprobation with which the Mossi view most Europeans. [871] [609]

American Protestants are fairly well insulated from the Mossi population, and have only now begun to show any interest in Mossi culture and problems. Geoffrey Gorer, who visited the Mossi in 1935, wrote:

> There were some American missionaries in this village, a whole family living in a house filled with texts; I do not know what creed they preached, or with what success; they looked more like American missionaries than I had thought anyone could have done off the films . . . they spoke with a dispassionate "none of our business" disapproval of the ill treatment of the negroes, who they said were ruled entirely by fear (1935:149).

Many of the Protestant missionaries who are now working with the Mossi are still inclined to agree with the first missionaries' ethnocentric judgement of their customs:

> Moral standards are very low. Nothing is wrong until it is found out. Chastity is unknown . . . we questioned in vain many natives in search of a suitable Mossi word for "virgin." They all declared there was no such word in their language. . . . Many

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797 horrifying and degrading customs of theirs, we would not dare to put in print (Assemblies of God Mission 1934:12).

Given such reactions, it is not surprising that the Protestants take no opportunity to use "heathen" beliefs and practices to further their own work. When they do take an interest in village affairs, it is usually to aid some young woman having marital difficulties with her lineage members (Sanders 1953:43). Since most Mossi problems are ultimately concerned with women, one can take it as a general rule that they are not in sympathy with any religious system which aggravates this problem.

The American Protestants have the most puritanical religious regime of all the proselyting religions in this country. The Catholics forbid polygyny, and the Moslems prohibit the use of alcohol, but the American Protestants forbid polygyny, drinking native beer, smoking cigarettes, and chewing kola nuts. The result is that the Protestants find it difficult to gain converts, and are constantly weeding out "rice Christians" from their mission stations. One young Catholic informant said that he was very impressed with the Americans who drove up in their big cars and straightway "cried out the Evangelists." Asked why the missionaries did not get converts, he said that the Mossi were afraid of whites. This response, while true, is inadequate, but as one former Protestant said to me, "With the Americans one can do nothing." So far the American Protestants have made little progress and it is safe to predict that the puritan brand of American Protestantism is not going to make much headway among the Mossi.

The old pagan priest, seeing the steady advance of the new religious systems, tells the visitor that the traditional ways of the ancestors are disappearing and that now the Mossi must follow one of three ways: Allah (Islam), Péredamba soré (Catholicism), or Americadamba soré (Protestantism). He is sad to see this happen, but even his grandchildren are now Moslems. In the struggle between Catholicism and Islam for adherents it is the general consensus that Islamic conversions are on the increase. Islam is gaining, not only because of the reasons already cited but also because the political situation, which has greatly changed since the Brazzaville conference in 1944, is still rapidly changing. Today the Moslems are gaining twenty converts to every Catholic convert, largely because the Mossi do not now fear official sanctions.
797 For example, the Manga mission installed a Mossi catechist in Nobéré with
798 the avowed purpose of gaining converts among Moslem and pagan children enrolled at the new state-run school. The people of the district initially refused to give their land for such a station, but were overruled by the administration through the chief. Although the teacher is a Catholic, he has not dared to encourage any of his students to join the church. The one pagan child who showed an interest in Catholicism was immediately ostracized and beaten by the other students. Shortly afterward, many Moslem parents attempted to withdraw their children from the school, claiming that the children could not attend Koranic classes and the public schools at the same time. But the teacher, realizing the source of their fear, told them that the school

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would remain entirely secular in nature. The Imam at Nobéré is positive that now the White Fathers do not have "force" behind them, no conversions will be made in the district. He said that the Moslems here do not rely on force to convert the pagans, and leave them alone if they resist persuasion to embrace Islam.

Mossi politicians who, for the most part, were trained by the Catholics and are still supported by the church, are careful not to offend their pagan and Moslem constituents. One internationally-known Mossi politician told a Nobéré audience that he had a Moslem name in addition to his Catholic name, and that he even attended a Koranic school. Although this admission did not help him gain the votes of the Moslems, he carried the district because he was supported by the chief and received the votes of the pagans. The politicians are now under pressure from the people to expand the system of public schools so that the road to social mobility, through education, would be open to pagans and Moslems as well as Catholics. Even in Manga, where the government-supported parochial school is adequate for the school population, there are plans to build a public school. The special prerogative of the mission schools to use noncertificated personnel on their teaching staffs is now being attacked by teachers who themselves were trained in these schools. These teachers are demanding that the government either cease paying salaries to the unqualified teachers in the mission schools or else employ similar persons in the public schools. Thus one of the most important channels through which the Catholics obtained converts is being consciously narrowed.

CONCLUSION

The spread of Islam in Africa south of the Sahara is one of the significant cultural events in this area. Islam is not only spreading at the expense of the indigenous religious systems, but is taking precedence over Christianity brought to Africa by the conquering Europeans. The reasons cited for the success of Islam over Christianity are legion. They include: the adaptability of Islam in contrast to the rigidity of Christianity (Greenberg 1946:70; Goilly 1952:173; Marty 1917:283); the simplicity of Islamic doctrines, as opposed to the complexity of Christianity (Delafosse 1931:236; Quellien 1910:38–39); and the "imponderable factors" brought about by European conquest (Goilly 1952:261–266).

In this paper I have shown that Islam has made greater progress than has Christianity among the Mossi because:

(1) Christianity has a negative appeal to the Mossi because it was brought by their conquerors. For the proud Mossi, Christianity is intimately linked with their first real invasion, defeat, and occupation by aliens in their long history. In contrast, Islam has penetrated the country by peaceful means after its initial failure at proselytization by means of the jihad.

(2) In the early period of this century, the European administration recruited Mossi men and women for forced labor at home and in the Ivory Coast, and recruited children for the mission schools. But as soon as forced

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797 labor was abolished and the Mossi could do as they wished, mission school and church attendance declined, and the Mossi mothers even refused to attend the Catholic maternity clinics. During this entire period, the Moslems were propagating the ideas that recruitment for forced labor and other injustices would cease only when all the Mossi embraced Islam.

(3) Catholicism attempted to break down the Mossi social system during the period when their political system was rendered practially impotent. But while the Mossi could not forcibly oppose the effects of French policy on their political system, they effectively neutralized the church's attempts to disrupt their social system. In contrast to Catholicism, Islamic practices and tenets harmonized with many aspects of the Mossi social system, especially with regard to polygny and the status of women. Many Mossi converted to Islam in order to fulfill the prescriptions 6f pagan shamans, who linked conversion with the acquisition of children to continue the lineage. Christianity did not admit the existence of the tradtional supernatural forces, and evolved no techniques for dealing with the Mossi's belief in the efficacy of such forces. In the sphere of social mobility, Islam permitted the most illiterate emancipated serf to make a pilgrimage and return an honored El Hadj, while only the most brilliant scholar is able to become an official in the Catholic community.

(4) More of the young men who leave their homes to serve in the armed forces or spend long periods away as laborers return as Moslems than as Christians. There is, however, no evidence that the increased Islamization of the Mossi is due to the heavy seasonal migration of young men to Ghana and Ivory Coast.

(5) American Protestantism, although not associated with French administrative policy, was negatively received because its missionaries were Europeans (whites). Furthermore, the extremely intolerant Protestant attitude toward the traditional Mossi religion and the puritanical nature of their religion made their efforts at conversion highly unsuccessful.

(6) The increase of public schools is lessening the importance of Catholicism and the Catholic school as the only means of social mobility through education. The newly emancipated pagan and Moslem masses are forcing the Catholic-trained Mossi politicians to act in the interest of their constituents, even if at the expense of the missions and Catholicism. The Catholics have consecrated the first Mossi bishop and have installed him in his see, but the return of each plane-load of Mossi Hadjis from Mecca spreads Islam into the remotest villages.

NOTES

114 [1] This article is an expanded version of a paper read at a meeting of the American Anthropological Association in Chicago, 1957. The field work on which this analysis is based was conducted among the Mossi of Ouagadougou from November 1955 to January 1957, and was made [122] possible by a Fellowship from The Ford Foundation African Studies Program. Needless to say, all ideas contained herein are my own. During these months among the Mossi I lived both in the predominantly Moslem district of Nobéré, and in the district of Manga, which has a fairly

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large Catholic population. I am indebted to Conrad Arensberg, Joseph Greenberg, Marvin Harris, and Ben Zimmermann for many helpful suggestions. 114

[3] Tauxier (1912:792) reports that when he visited Pirigui village, situated to the north of Ouagadougou, he was surprised to discover that almost half of the nobles were Moslems. It is highly probably that here, also, were the descendants of a son of Sagha who replaced a dissident chief.

[4] These figures are only approximate since many thousands of persons are unreported. Again, many persons listed as Moslems are pagans who have taken Moslem names for ritual purposes.

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TRADITIONAL AND MODERN PATTERNS OF SUCCESSION TO POLITICAL OFFICE AMONG THE MOSSI OF THE VOLTAIC REPUBLIC*

By

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TRADITIONAL AND MODERN PATTERNS OF SUCCESSION TO POLITICAL OFFICE AMONG THE MOSSI OF THE VOLTAIC REPUBLIC*

ELLIOTT P. SKINNER

643 A characteristic of kingship shared by early European monarchies and many African societies has been the hazardous interregnum. In Europe this period was a time of shifting loyalties, intrigues, and bargained alliances; and the people's cry "the king is dead long live the king" was uttered without pause as if to abolish a hiatus that made them uneasy. The European monarchy later developed a strength and stability which enabled a king to pass on succession quietly to his heir. In African societies where the political power of the court was not strong, and the line of succession was not clearly delineated, the attempt was made to avoid a hazardous interregnum by keeping the people ritually ignorant of the death of a king. Only when the electors were ready to choose his successor were the people told of their monarch's demise. Even then, there was some real or ritual violence as the [662 609] numerous candidates vied for the vacant office.[1] Africans have themselves interpreted these stormy interregnums as being valuable for their societies. According to Oberg, in the Ankole Kingdom of Uganda, "The Bahima demanded that the strongest of the king's sons should be their leader and that the test should be one of war. The brothers must fight among themselves until one of them alone remained alive in Ankole Kingdom of Uganda to claim the drum and the mugabeship."[2] Other African populations believed that violent interregnums served to convince the people that a ruler was necessary. The Mossi of the Western Sudan was one of those societies which had a difficult interregnum. In this paper I shall try to show that this pattern coinciding [121] as it did, with a flexibility of succession to power among the ruling group, enabled this population to elect capable rulers before European conquest, helped them to insure the continuity of the ruling dynasty under European domination, and is now serving them in good stead during a period of transition to effective independence

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during a period of transition to effective independence.

The Mossi have the unique distinction of having preserved their ethnic identity and political autonomy throughout all the vicissitudes of Sudanese history until conquered by the French on September 1, 1896. The origin of Mossi society is couched in mythological terms. According to their tradition they came from Dagomba in the Gold Coast (present day Ghana) sometime during the 11th or 12th century and moved northward towards the Niger River. During this migration they carved out three large kingdoms and many small principalities by conquering and absorbing some of the indigenous Ninisi and Foulse and Dogon populations, and by chasing the others into the cliffs of Bandiagara. In 1328, according to Es Sadi in the *Tarikh es Soudan*, the Mossi attacked, burned, and sacked Timbuktu, then held by Mali, and during the following century attacked Walata and Banku. They received their first setback by the Ali, and were severely beaten by Askia the Great, the usurper of the Songhoi throne, who lead a *jihad* against them in 1499. But their attacks into the Niger bend did not cease until the Moroccans became masters of Timbuktu sometime in the early 1590's. From that period until the French conquest, the Mossi remained relatively quiescent. They developed and maintained an economy based on grain cultivation, livestock rearing, cotton production, and trade between the forest zones and the desert. Their political system crystallized into a loose confederacy of fairly autonomous kingdoms and principalities, sometimes tribute to the Moro Naba, the ruler of Wagadougou.

Wagadougou, the most important Mossi political entity, was like the lesser kingdoms, pyramidal in political structure. At the top was and still is the Moro Naba, a lineal descendant of Wedraogo, the Dagomba conquerer who founded the Mossi group and Moro Naba Wubri, the first ruler of the Wagadougou dynasty. Paying allegiance to him, were the princes who ruled such autonomous provinces as Yako, Boulsa, Mane, Riziam, and Boussouma. These princes were all sons or near relatives of the early Moro Nabas. Directly under the Moro Naba were district chiefs who were descended from the cadet branches of the ruling family. The villages within the district were in turn ruled by the chiefs of the indigenous populations. In many of the villages,

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631
643 the sons of the ruling family, the *nakomces*, formed a noble class, above
565 classes of commoners, serfs, and slaves. Classed among the commoners in many villages were the descendants of former district chiefs who had been deposed by the Moro Nabas. The reason that the rulers gave for the deposal of district chiefs was always disloyalty; but everyone recognized that this was an excuse whereby the reigning sublineage deposed older branches and provided positions for its cadet or collateral branches.

631 The governing hierarchy of the Mossi was a lineage with its com-
613 ponent minor and minimal branches. Like most lineages, this ruling lineage possessed an ideology that all of its members had equal access to its corporate assets. The most important asset of this lineage was, of course, its sovereignty, its right to rule. The *nam* is the symbol of Mossi sovereignty and is described by them as "that force of God which enables a mere man to rule over other men." The *nam* was the possession of Wedraogo, the group's founder, and of Moro Naba Wubri, the first ruler of Wagadougou, and this possession became the patrimony of all their descendants. This being the case, the ruling chief of any village, district, principality, or kingdom did not own the *nam* of that area; he was considered the temporary holder of it, and on his death it reverted to the collective descendants of the royal ancestors.
[428 A man did not have the right to pass the *nam* on to any person because
424] it was not his. Whenever a Mossi chief was being considered for office his commoner electors asked him the following questions: "Before his death, did Naba X designate anyone to replace him as chief?" This question was asked three times, and the candidate responded three times: "No! The Naba did not designate anyone. You may name anyone you wish; even if he is a blind man or a leper."

In actuality, this vaunted equality of access to the *nam* by all members of the ruling lineage was a legal fiction. And despite the fact that all the nobles declared that they could go to Wagadougou to seek the *nam* whenever a chief died, in reality only the members of the dead chief's minimal lineage (often the descendants of his grandfather) presented themselves as candidates. Indeed, of all the candidates, the eldest son of the dead ruler was the one most often chosen to be

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chief. If he was not qualified then one of his younger brothers, or 631
one of father's brothers or uncles was chosen. Yet, the fiction of 613
equal access to the *nam* was important to the Mossi because it enabled them to adhere to their most important political axiom which was that "The only man who should rule is one who can keep the country." Regencies were avoided, and persons with physical and character defects were barred. Moreover, this flexibility gave the electors a wide choice of candidates from which to choose the person best fitted for chieftainship at any given period. The Mossi have always believed that it is difficult to rule men and this is what they mean when they declare: "Nanamsè toumdè ya yida fa fa"—"The work of the chiefs is the most difficult of all."[3] For example, it does not seem like an accident that the first ruler, Moro Naba Wubri, was succeeded by four of his brothers in turn instead of by his sons. The Mossi had not completely conquered the territory, and the young sons were incapable of handling the complex political situation. The graves of each of the successors to Wubri in different parts of the country remain as markers to testify to the difficult task which the early rulers had in controlling their realm.

The Mossi believed, and still do believe, that it was only when con- [812]
flict developed after a ruler died, that the people realized how necessary
and valuable a chief was. The death of a chief, especially of the Moro [764]
Naba, was kept a secret until the war minister arrived at the capital with his troops. Only then did the cry go up: "The fire has gone out!"; and as soon as it was heard, violence broke out throughout the [669]
land. Prisoners were released, thieves rifled the markets, and the
nakomces, or nobles, rode about the countryside doing whatever they wished. This custom persisted as late as 1942. Reporting to his superior in Abijan about the events that transpired in Wagadougou when Moro Naba Kom died, the French commander wrote: "On Friday, March 13, 1942, young people, profiting from old custom, tried to steal things, but they were stopped and about one hundred were arrested."[4] Throughout all the chaos which attended the death of a 645
king, the war minister remained calm unless an attempt was actually 696
made to seize power. He never attempted to stop the public disorder or to catch thieves or murderers, because everyone believed that out of

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645
696 all the chaos would come a new appreciation for the task of the chief, and a cessation of the grumbling that the chiefs were greedy.

662 The Mossi interregnum also served another purpose. It gave the
428 electors the opportunity to exhaust and redistribute much of the patri-
666 mony of the dead ruler, which was brought to them by his heirs who were trying to obtain the chieftainship through bribery. Sometimes, a candidate's ability to collect a great deal of goods with which to press his suit often revealed to the electors the strength of his following in the district or village, for had he been an unpopular man he would have had to use only his own resources.

666 The Mossi electors were always concerned with the health and
643 character of a potential chief, and turned down the most promising
175 candidates who were deficient in any of these qualities. For example, when Moro Naba Sanum died in 1890 without leaving a male heir, his younger brother, Bokary Koutou, was the strongest candidate for the *nam*. Yet he was passed over, at first, by the electors because of his reputation as a bandit and a rebel. We know from Captain Binger, a Frenchman who met Bokary in 1888, that this prince was indeed a bandit and a slave raider. But Binger, although deploring Bokary's conduct, exonerated him on the grounds that the Moro Naba had sent him into exile without any means of support. This was true, but the
[687] reason that Moro Naba Sanum did so was because Bokary had raised a rebellion against him as an attempt to obtain their father's position. Bokary was forbidden to appear in the capital; but when he heard that his brother Sanum was dead, he took a force of soldiers and hurried to Wagadougou fearing that an attempt would have been made to prevent his election. When he found that his fears were justified, he became
[669] desperate and secreted a force of Gurunsi warriors around the elector's meeting place, threatening to kill them if he was not named Moro Naba. They succumbed to his threat and he received the *nam*. During
643 the customary speech in which a new ruler chose his official name,
175 announced his program for the people and the country, or ridiculed his erstwhile competitors, Bokary Koutou said: "A hundred ghosts cannot frighten an elephant (Wobogo)," meaning that he was not afraid
648 of any of his enemies. He thereafter became known as Moro Naba
721 Wobogo, and he chose to live up to his boast when the French arrived
175 and asked him to sign a treaty of protection with them. He refused

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and chose to fight, and when defeated, fled to the Gold Coast (Ghana). From here he intrigued with the British against the French and even succeeded in having his brother poisoned for accepting the title of Moro Naba. It was only when the British accepted French sovereignty over Mossi country that Bokary accepted his deposition and permanent exile.

Once the traditional electors had chosen one of Bokary's younger relatives, Siguiri as Moro Naba, the Mossi people themselves quietly accepted French rule. Their behavior was in this respect similar to that of many indigenous populations with complex political institutions who had been conquered by the Europeans. In contrast, the neighboring Dogon, Gurunsi, and Lobi, whose political systems were very simple, and who had been constantly raided by the Mossi for slaves, kept on rebelling against French rule, and in some cases shot poisoned arrows at French tax collectors and labor recruiters as late as 1941. The only opposition which they offered the French was in 1910 when an attempt was made to reorganize the Mossi districts for administrative reasons. However, when the French changed their policy of direct administration to a form of indirect rule, the Mossi remained so peaceful that by 1922 there was only one administrator for every 60,000 inhabitants.

Moro Naba Kom who reigned from 1905 to 1942 skillfully preserved the power of the ruling dynasty during a period when the Mossi people were subjected to a rather severe forced labor regime. This was also a period during which the administration deposed chiefs who ran afoul of its wishes or policies. The political ability of this ruler is best exemplified by the order of succession that occurred in the Doulougou district. In 1895 Moro Naba Wobogo had appointed his own son as Doulougou chief in place of Koabga Wedraogo whom he had deposed and killed. However, when Wobogo fled from the French the next year, his son, the Doulougou chief, killed himself because he did not wish to follow his father into exile. The new Moro Naba Siguiri placed a son of the former district chief, Koabga Wodraogo, as chief of Doulougou. This chief died in 1906 and was replaced by a brother. Unfortunately this chief ran afoul of the French, was deposed and placed in "obligatory residence" in another district where he died in 1927. The Moro Naba then elected another son of ex-

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643 Moro Naba Wobogo as chief of Doulougou, but this chief was assas-
636 sinated. Thereafter the Moro Naba placed his own brother as chief
175 of Doulougou district only to have him deposed by the French in 1932
662 for abusing his power. Now the Moro Naba again turned to a descendant of Koabga Wedrago and named him chief, but the French also deposed and jailed this chief for incapacity. Finally in 1935, the Moro Naba named his own son, Etienne Kongo, as chief, and this man was still chief when I left the Mossi in 1957. The interesting feature of this succession is that the Moro Naba confined it to three specific families: his own, that of ex-Moro Naba Wobogo, and that of the ancient chiefly line of Doulougou. In no case did Moro Naba Kom attempt to elevate to chieftainship the son or relative of a man whom the French deposed. He named a chief from another one of the chiefly families, and when a member of this line was deposed, he quickly turned to another one. In this way, the Moro Naba never gave the French any cause for thinking that he disapproved of their action by placing as chief a relative of the man they had deposed. This type of succession was only possible because of the flexibility in the Mossi mode of chiefly succession. Furthermore, the district people readily accepted the chiefs appointed by the Moro Naba because he never deviated from their cultural expectations, or violated the accepted norm of succession.

636 A more serious attempt on the part of the French to influence the
643 traditional political organization of the Mossi came when they tried to enroll the sons of the Moro Naba and those of other chiefs in a special school in order to make these boys adjuncts in their administration. The eldest sons of the Moro Naba and of the officials around Wagadougou were all sent to school because they were well known to the French.
636 However, in the rural districts, the chiefs hesitated to send their eldest
643 sons to school. First of all, they regarded this plan as another form of
186 forced labor from which their sons might never return. And secondly,
662 because they also feared that if these youths did return as educated men, they would have been Christianized, and thereby would have been unable or unwilling to perform the important roles which chiefs had vis-a-vis the ancestors. To palliate the French the chiefs sent their youngest or motherless sons to schools, or in some cases substituted the sons

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of their former serfs and slaves who were theoretically also "their sons." 636

The sons of the chiefs and those boys of commoner, serf, and slave 643
origins who had gone to the mission schools became the first group 186
of educated Mossi. The educated commoners had no function in the 662
traditional political system and were readily absorbed by the local French bureaucracy. However, since these persons were not sufficient to fill the administration's need of literate Mossi, the sons of chiefs and even the carefully coached missionary catechists were encouraged to join the civil service. The result of this policy was that almost no literate Mossi were elected to district and village chieftainship before the end of the second world war.

The relatively rapid political development which came to French 636
Africa as a result of the Brazzaville Conference of 1944 and the after- 646
math of the war presented the traditional Mossi political hierarchy with a grave problem: "Who should represent the Mossi people in the new French assemblies and councils both in Africa and in metropolitan France?" There were three possibilities: They could be represented by educated foreign Africans; by the educated sons of Mossi chiefs whose loyalties were not known; or by the potentially hostile educated Mossi commoners. The first hint of the Moro Naba's policy was re- 636
vealed when the Africans were called upon to select delegates to send 646
to the French Constituent Assembly on October 21, 1945. Houphouet 666
[Boigny], who anticipated the determination of the Mossi to support 662
their own candidate, had vainly taken the precaution of sending an emissary to the Moro Naba prior to the September 8 meeting [which the Africans had called to plan strategy]. The Moro Naba proved unamenable to the suggestion that he support Houphouet's candidacy, and insisted on backing one of his own loyals vassals, Tenga Wedraogo or Baloum Naba.[8] This action showed clearly that the Mossi had planned to use educated chiefs who could also represent them in the assemblies. The flexible pattern of Mossi political succession enabled the Moro Naba and his advisers to meet this new contingency. In three districts, Manga, Sapone, and Kaya, the eldest sons of deceased chiefs were passed over, and their younger educated brothers were elected to the vacant chieftainships. There were some hard feelings over the appointment of Sapone, but the reason given was that the new chief was partially blind in one eye. I have no data for the reaction of

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636 646 666 662 the Kaya people to their new chief. However, in Manga the proposed election of a young chief over his four elder brothers did cause some concern and talk about Catholic machinations because the nominee was of that faith. But there was no overt opposition to him once he had been elected. His elder brother accepted the wishes of the Moro Naba with good graces even though he remains a rather tragic individual.

643 636 The differential treatment that the Manga Naba receives from the administration is obvious to everyone. Whereas the other district chiefs are still summarily summoned to the administrative center, and kept waiting, the Manga Naba sends his assistants to represent him. When the Governor of the Haute Volta came to Manga to make it an administrative subdivision, he was entertained by the Manga Naba while the neighboring district chiefs celebrated outside. It was the political power of this educated chief which was responsible for Manga becoming an administrative subdivision even though it is located several miles from the highway which runs between Wagadougou and Ghana. Furthermore, the population of the neighboring district all complain that Manga's population has gained a disproportionate share of all the services provided by the governmental agencies whose headquarters are there. The fears which the Manga people and the other Mossi have had over their chiefs being Catholic have not materialized in Manga. Of course, the Manga Naba does perform the rituals on the [769] day of the ancestral feasts. These rites are now being performed by his father's brother who has become the ritual head of the ruling lineage (and it is possible that this line may become the line which performs this task for the now "secular" chief). However, when the [797] chief celebrates the anniversary of his conversion to Catholicism at the mission, afterwards he holds court in his house where he receives from Catholics, Moslems, and pagans alike, the gifts he normally would have received in the feast of the ancestors.[8]

The most important function of such Mossi chiefs as the Manga Naba is to defend the interests of the Mossi people in the territorial assemblies and the French councils and assemblies while preserving the ruling tradition of the descendants of Wedraogo and Wubri. In his capacity as politician-chief, the Manga Naba joined a fellow Mossi of rather humble origin in sponsoring several bills in the Assembly of

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the French Union including one to build up the capital of Wagadougou. 643 At home he has taken an active interest in interdistrict politics, and has 636 acted as a liaison between his fellow traditional chiefs and the Mossi politicians of commoner origins. It goes without saying that he only supports those persons who are not opposed to the Moro Naba. As a matter of course, leading Mossi politicians fearing rebuffs from the district chiefs seldom visit any of the districts in the Manga subdivision unless they are accompanied and introduced by the Manga Naba. This kind of co-operation is what made it reasonable for a united block of political parties in Upper Volta, the Unified Democratic Party (Parti Democratique Unifie) to elect the late Moro Naba Sagha as it's honorary president before his death in 1956. At that time, the new party stressed the point that its action was guided by the fact that only the Mossi people had preserved their political identity throughout African history.[7]

The power of the traditional Mossi chiefs has been ably defended by their new politician-chiefs against those Africans who would relegate the institution of the chieftainship to ethnological musuems. The Manga Naba speaking before the Congress of Traditional Chiefs in Dakar in 1956 declared:

> Without wishing to direct any reproach to those who are demanding the abolition of traditional chieftainships, and who severely criticize institutions of whose value they are totally unaware, we ask them to beware of blaming the desert for the grain of sand which falls into the eye. We ask them not to compare the chieftainship instituted among them only a few years ago, chieftainship which perhaps has been imposed upon them, to ours which has existed for centuries.
>
> It is not our fault, if the manufactured chiefs among them have not known how to perform their tasks and have believed that to administer they had to resort to all sorts of extortions. One has never placed at the head of our villages, districts, provinces, or kingdoms persons who have come from elsewhere (former boys, stewards, cooks, or interpreters), because it could not be done. If in our country there are chiefs who are former civil servants [like the speaker, I must add] it is that they are persons who have inherited these positions according to custom, and in the places of their fathers, uncles, or brothers.

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643 We Mossi cannot say that the Europeans have introduced
636 chieftainship among us; for we are old hands at it. Chieftainship has always existed among us, and we intend to conserve it in spite of anything one may say about it.

Who better than we chiefs can hope for a rapid evolution of our country? However, because of the pride we have
[185] in the organized society that we have known well before French occupation, we wish this evolution to take place within our specific cultural pattern, to harmonize with, and to take into consideration the wisdom which has permitted us to conserve the integrity of our homeland until French occupation.

Without wishing to place ourselves against the demands of those who are wedded to an overthrow of local traditions, we endeavor to state our position clearly: Let everyone scratch whatever itches him.[8]

643 It is too early to predict what will be the fate of the traditional
178 Mossi chiefs. The factors which made for such weaknesses in their political system—hazardous interregnums and flexibility in succession—have certainly ceased to operate. But, as I have shown, by a curious coincidence, a form of succession which evolved to meet a particular set of circumstances served the Mossi in good stead during French occupation, and is now being adapted to serve the needs of a new political environment. This flexibility in succession may even provide the Mossi with a wide enough choice of candidates to preserve the traditional ruling lineages in the face of a changing political system. Furthermore, this flexibility in political succession appears to be more compatible and less in conflict with the principles of universal suffrage which have been introduced in this society to serve the needs of the developing parliamentary system.

The growing use of Mossi traditional chiefs as modern politicians has not precluded the opportunity of Mossi commoners to take part in the governmental organization of the territory in which their group resides. As a matter of fact, there are a number of commoners who
[556] are well educated, and individually have held high administrative offices. However, despite a number of them who have been critical of the traditional ruling hierarchy, they have not succeeded in breaking the strong hold of the traditional ruling lineage on the people. Some commoners have even found it to their advantage to ally themselves

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with the Moro Naba and his chiefs. The Mossi commoner who became Minister of the Interior in the Mendes-France government received the treatment fitting to his rank from French officials in Africa, but he bowed humbly and paid homage to the Moro Naba when he visited Wagadougou. In return he still receives political support from the traditional Mossi hierarchy. Whether or not this man and the other Mossi politicians of commoner origin will continue to honor and respect the chiefs in order to obtain their support is not known. It is possible that this situation will change if the growing number of urban Mossi and some of their rural fellows attack the position of the chiefs. But for the foreseeable future it appears as though the traditional dynasty will remain in power, and may even extend its power at the expense of the other non-Mossi groups who are now members of the Voltaic Republic.

The apparent success of the ancient political dynasty of the Mossi people to adapt itself to the requirements of the modern world shows the ability of African institutions to adjust novelty with tradition. It confirms what the anthropologists have always known, that Africa was not a *tabla rasa* on which conquerors could easily impose their ideas and institutions. The cultures of Africa were meaningful to its peoples and when they could not be maintained, they were reinterpreted to meet new situations.* It is quite true that because of historical reasons the Mossi did not come into as intensive contact with Europeans as did their neighbors to the south, and that this is possibly why their institutions have persisted. However, the experience of Ghana should make us pause before accepting such a facile answer. A British type of Parliamentary system was imposed upon that country, but it is changing so rapidly that one wonders whether it should have been imposed in the first place. It is still too early to tell what the Ghanaian and other modern African governments will look like; but one might speculate that within the bounds set by the exigencies of the modern world, these governments may resemble the traditional African ones much more than those of their ephemeral conquerors.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. According to C. K. Meek, among the Jukun "The King's demise was and is kept a close secret, and is not, in fact revealed until some months afterwards, when the body is formally buried. Various reasons are assigned for this secrecy, such as that

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113 the counsellors may have time to choose a successor, that bloody contests between
114 aspirants for the throne may be avoided, or that the royal slaves and wives may not run off." (*A Sudanese Kingdom*, C. K. Meek. London, 1931), p. 166. Among the Banyoro of Uganda, "When the King died, it was not made known for some days and only those in attendance knew that death had taken place, that, as they said, "Kutura," he "slept." (p. 21). And although there was some understanding as to who should be chief there was fighting between the different princes. "The fighting among princes might last only a few days while sometimes it would go on for weeks and even months." (p. 124) (*The Bakitara of Banyoro*. John Roscoe. Cambridge University Press, 1923). Among the BaVenda, "None of the people are informed of the death of the chief, but when some months have passed and the people begin to grow restless they are told that he has gone away; often a year or more used to elapse between the death of the chief and any recognition of it . . . It appears that during the interregnum any excitement or attempts at usurpation of power have time to work themselves out before the heir is installed; Everybody has a shrewd idea as to the true state of affairs, although no one dares to speak of it." *The BaVenda*, Hugh A. Stayt, London, 1931), p. 207.

113 2. "The Kingdom of Ankole in Uganda," by K. Oberg, pp. 157-158, in *African Political Systems*, edited by M. Fortes and E. E. Evans-Pritchard, Oxford Press, 1940.

3. "An Analysis of the Political Organization of the Mossi People" by Elliott P. Skinner, in *Transactions of the New York Academy of Sciences*, Ser. II, Vol. 19, No. 8, 00 740-750, June, 1957.

4. Copy of Telegram in the Archives of I.F.A.N. at Wagadougou, Voltaic Republic.

5. *French West Africa*. Virginia Thompson and Richard Adloff, Stanford University Press. 1958, pp. 223-224.

6. "Christianity and Islam Among the Mossi," Eliott P. Skinner in *American Anthropologist*, Vol. 60, No. 6, December, 1958, pp. 1102-1119.

7. Thompson and Adloff, *op. cit.* p. 177.

8. *L'Afrique Francaise*. Vol. 66, 1957, p. 21, Paris.

9. *Man and His Works*, Melville J. Herskovits, New York, 1950, p. 542 ff, and Joseph H. Greenberg, "The Influence of Islam on a Sudanese Religion," *Monographs of the American Ethnological Society*, Vol. X, 1946.

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Mossi Joking[1]

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Some important aspects of the joking relationship as an adjustive mechanism have not yet been explicitly recognized, although they have been implicit in the literature on joking for nearly half a century—since before Eggan (1937: 75-81) made his valuable formulation and prior to the appearance of the two classic papers by Radcliffe-Brown (1940, 1949) and the important analysis by Murdock (1949: 272-283). In fact, evidence for them is present in the materials used by these three scholars themselves. But certain aspects of its full significance have remained unexplored.

For Africa, evidence of these important but so far neglected aspects of joking is contained in the early descriptive work of Fortes (1949), Griaule (1948), Labouret (1929), and Paulme (1939) on West Africa, and it is abundant in more contemporary accounts from that area, e.g., Goody (1956) and Tait (1961). For Central Africa, from which extensive materials are likewise available for comparison, the early reports of Moreau (1941), Pedler (1940), and Richards (1927) appear to be corroborated by the more recent studies of Colson (1953), Cunnison (1959), Watson (1958), Turner (1957), and Christensen (1963).

Some of the interesting implications of the data contained in these papers have not been developed. There has been a persistent tendency either to limit theoretical considerations of joking to a reaffirmation of the brilliant, but loose, analysis made by Radcliffe-Brown or to ignore the theoretical significance of joking altogether. Where there has been criticism it has been largely negative, or the narrower problem of the role of sex as the precipitating factor in conflict regulated by joking has been offered as an alternative emphasis (Brant 1948; Murdock 1949).

Despite the limitations of Radcliffe-Brown's analysis—the important aspects of joking it ignores—no equally ample or comprehensive alternative has been proposed. This paper is presented, not as a refutation of his position, but as a tentative step toward its amplification and emendation.

Radcliffe-Brown (1940: 195) described joking as a "relationship between two persons in which one is by custom permitted, and in some instances required, to tease or make fun of the other," who in turn is required not to take offense. He recognized that joking often occurs both within and between kin groups and between tribes, and he identified the distinction between symmetrical and asymmetrical types of joking. All such joking was explained by him (Radcliffe-Brown 1940: 200) as a means of reconciling what he termed the "conjunctive" and "disjunctive" aspects of single relationships. The development of serious hostility was said to be pre-

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121 vented by the "playful antagonism of teasing," and he argued that the regular repetition of joking serves as a reminder of the social "disjunction" of the relation, while "conjunction" is simultaneously maintained by friendliness.

Such an analysis is insightful but inadequate. The social structural sources of the need for reliance on joking and the social and psychological processes which joking involves are more complex than Radcliffe-Brown recognized. More occurs in joking than the symbolic reification of "separateness" and the concurrent assertion of intergroup amity.

The Structural Context of Joking

In support of this contention I would like first to consider the characteristics of the structural contexts in which joking tends to be institutionalized. For it is from the nature of certain social structural situations that joking derives its reason for being.

I suggest that wherever joking is institutionalized, the relations between the participants will tend to be characterized by five interrelated factors:

(1) *separation:* either social or spatial or both;
(2) *reciprocity:* a traditionally sanctioned exchange of economic, social, or ceremonial goods and/or services;
(3) *ambivalence:* an equivocal melange of amity and hostility;
(4) *equality:* analogous individual or group status;
(5) *independence:* the absence of relevant allegiance to a single authority.

Obviously the comparative weight of these several factors will vary with the relationships of which they are a part. Where, for example, spatial separation is great, and/or the reciprocal tie is weak, joking is likely to be mild. Where ambivalence is strong, joking may be relied on more frequently and may be more hostile in content. Where the status of the participants is unequal, joking may tend to be asymmetrical. And so on.

I further suggest that as an adjustive mechanism joking derives its significance from the manner in which it provides concurrently for the operation of three interrelated but analytically separable processes: communication, control, and catharsis. These will be considered later.

Joking Among the Mossi

101 The points in the argument just outlined may be illustrated by a brief discussion of the varieties of joking found among the Mossi living in Yatenga, an indigenous kingdom in the Voltaic Republic of West Africa.
571 Among the Mossi, joking is institutionalized as an adjustive mechanism in
[illegible] the following relationships: (1) between Ego and his mother's agnatic kin, particularly his mother's elder brother; (2) between Ego and his mother's brother's wife; (3) between siblings-in-law; (4) between sibs; (5) between age-sets in the same age-grade; (6) between certain villages; and (7) be-

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tween the Mossi and several other ethnic groups. In each instance the structural relationship in which joking occurs is characterized by the five features listed above.

Joking with the Mother's Brother

The relationship with a maternal uncle is marked by all five of the structural features mentioned. Separation results from the rules of patrilineal descent and inheritance rules, from patrisib exogamy, and from the general observance of patrilocal residence. The relationship is reciprocal in that a mother's brother serves throughout Ego's life as an important alternative source of emotional, economic, and social support: he often acts as intermediary in disputes between Ego and his parents or the elders of his lineage; he gives Ego frequent gifts; and residence in the mother's patriclan is the most frequent alternative to patrilocality. In turn Ego, as a result of the permissive relationship he enjoys with the spirits of his deceased cognatic kinsmen, often serves their living descendants as an intermediary in their ritual efforts to maintain a secure relationship with the ancestral spirits.

Ambivalence between Ego and his mother's brother and her other kin results from the conflicting sources of "conjunction" and "dissociation" just mentioned. The conflict between a strong affective bond—a "feeling" of kinship—and a system of inheritance which denies it jural recognition generates frustration. The ambivalence in the relationship is manifested not only by joking, which is asymmetrical—with Ego being the more aggressive—but by theft as well. Perhaps as partial compensation for his inability to inherit matrilaterally, Ego is permitted to steal his mother's brother's property during his lifetime and can also make off with the beer and some of the animals collected for his funeral.

As for equality of status, the descent groups of Ego and mother's brother are structurally equivalent. Although their respective positions within these two groups differ, the permissiveness of Ego's relationship to his maternal uncle absolves him from recognition of the canons of comportment that otherwise prevail among the Mossi in relations between persons of differing status. Indeed, disregard for such status differences is part of the "joke." Independence is assured by the fact that Ego and his mother's brother are members of autonomous descent groups and that each is responsive only to the authority of his respective lineage elders.

Joking with a Mother's Brother's Wife

Joking between Ego and his mother's brother's wife is to be regarded as a separate relationship because of her nonmembership in the mother's brother's descent group, but certain of the structural circumstances are similar. The source of separation from the mother's brother's wife is evident. The reciprocal tie that unites them is indirect; when Ego is received warmly in his mother's brother's household it is the wife of the latter who prepares the food he is given. Similarly, as a member of her husband's patriclan, she benefits

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indirectly from the good will of his ancestral spirits whose benevolence Ego often invokes.

Ambivalence follows from other characteristics of the relationship. Resentment of Ego's depredations of her husband's property and jealous concern for the inheritance rights of her own children appear to be at least partially balanced by a share of the affection her husband shows for Ego. However, joking in this relationship is asymmetrical. The mother's brother's wife takes the more aggressive role, and from the vehemence of her joking, and the structural nature of the relationship, it appears likely that amity lies less heavily in the balance than hostility. The groups to which the two parties belong are equal in status. Their respective positions within them, of course, are not, and this is reflected in the aforementioned asymmetry. Each party is obviously independent of the authority system of the other.

Joking Between Siblings-in-Law

Siblings-in-law who joke are separated by the rule of sib exogamy observed among the Mossi. Reciprocity is basic to the marriage contract that unites their respective kin groups. Several factors tend to create ambivalence in the relationship. Both kin groups—in particular, the extended families of the two marriage partners—profit from the reciprocal tie established between them, but possible failure on the part of either group to reciprocate adequately, particularly with regard to marriage payments, constitutes a persistent source of potential friction. Moreover, the Mossi observe the levirate. Joking between siblings-in-law who are potential spouses, yet are presently constrained by a prohibition against adultery, has frequently been ascribed the function of reducing tension in a situation of conflict. The kin groups of siblings-in-law are always structurally equivalent because groups occupying significantly different strata in Mossi society do not intermarry. As members of autonomous descent groups the participants are obviously independent of one another.

Joking Between Sibs

Sibs (or lineages) whose members joke with one another are, of course, also separate groups.[2] They are always united by a strong tradition of reciprocal social and economic aid. Ambivalence apparently stems from the conflict between this tradition of reciprocity and actual competing claims to land. The origin of joking relationships between two descent groups is often ascribed to the alleged fact that, when they first arrived in the village, leaders of both falsely claimed to the chief that he and his kinsmen had arrived first, and thus had a prior right to land, and that the members of the other group were their slaves. Despite their jocular allegations, both groups are in fact structurally equal and independent.

Joking Between Age-Sets

Joking between age-sets within an age-grade varies with the generational

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position of the set in Mossi society. In the years immediately following initiation the members are much involved in group activities, e.g., the arrangement of social dances, courtship, and co-operation in work groups composed of male and female age-sets, and during this period joking is important. As the members attain adult status the groups tend to lose their structural integrity; their minor corporate functions dwindle and ultimately disappear as the responsibility of the young people to their kin groups increases. With this shift in emphasis, joking behavior also diminishes.

While it lasts, however, this type of joking likewise has a structural context characterized by the attributes already identified. Age-sets are structurally separate within the age-grade. Their relations are reciprocal: individual members co-operate in the arrangement of one another's sexual liaisons; they pool their labor and share the profits they earn as members of their co-operative work organizations; and young men often leave Yatenga as migrant laborers in groups organized on the basis of age-grade membership, thereby reinforcing many of the reciprocal ties established in the work groups. The ambivalence characteristic of the relationship is perhaps best explained as the rivalry of peers. Since there is no status hierarchy within a Mossi age-grade, the age-sets are structurally equivalent and independent.

Intervillage Joking

When intervillage joking is institutionalized it may involve all the members of each community. However, I believe it is particularly expected of their respective chiefs. In either case, the participants are separated by their differing political affiliations. The inhabitants of each village are expected to reciprocate in one another's defense, to be mutually hospitable, and to co-operate in the regulation of land tenure at their frontiers. Ambivalence derives from a history of past hostility, dating perhaps from an earlier period when competition for new land was keener and the expanding kingdom did not yet encompass all the villages now within its borders. Such villages are always structurally equivalent in status within the political system, and each is independent of the other.

Joking Between Ethnic Groups

The joking relationship which the Mossi maintain with the Gurunsi and the Samogho peoples, among others, appears to involve the same structural characteristics. However, I learned of this relationship only shortly before I left Yatenga, and a more certain statement concerning it must therefore await further research. It is certain that such joking occurs; I am unsure only of the number of other ethnic groups involved[8] and of the relevant details of their historical relations to the Mossi of Yatenga. The groups involved are again separate. There is an expectation that members of each group should extend hospitality and assistance to members of the other. As with villages whose inhabitants joke, the participants in this relationship are ambivalent in their attitudes; the present expectation of co-operation is coupled with a past

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tradition of hostility. Such groups obviously have both equal and mutually independent status.

The Processes of Mossi Joking

I have already suggested that the significance of joking as an adjustive mechanism is derived from the manner in which it provides concurrently for the operation of three interrelated but analytically separable processes. These are *communication, control,* and *catharsis.*

As a means of communication, joking provides a permissive and flexible context in which a grievance can be expressed, thus allowing for its rectification and the restoration of amity. As a means of control, the public nature of most joking serves to shame the object of the jocular offensive, to invoke social pressure for his conformity, and to elicit support for the complainant. As a means of catharsis, the joking expression of aggressive feelings reduces frustration and thus serves indirectly to perpetuate the amicable aspect of the relationship in which it occurs.

Joking also gives pleasure. The feeling of triumphant release that follows the successful—and safe—expression of hostile sentiments probably functions to reinforce reliance on joking as an adjustive mechanism. And the intrinsic pleasure of wit may also explain the persistence of joking behavior in the absence of an immediate "structural need" for it.

A more detailed description of one of the relationships already mentioned—sibling-in-law joking—will serve to illustrate these several points. Because of its relation to the pivotal institution of marriage, sibling-in-law joking is perhaps the most frequently used adjustive mechanism in Mossi social structure. The potential for marital conflict is high. This appears to be due to the combined factors of a sexually differentiated enculturative experience that results in marked dissimilarities in adult male and female personality; to an age difference between husbands and wives of at least ten years; to the classic stresses of polygyny; to the subordinate status of Mossi women, particularly of junior wives within their husband's patriclan; and to the possible dissatisfaction of a woman's parents, particularly her mother, at the loss of their daughter's services or at the inadequacy of bride-wealth payments.

Whatever its origins in a specific instance, it is important that this potential for conflict be controlled, for each marriage extends the network of affinal and cognatic ties that link the patrilineage to the larger community. Given a persistent potential for strife, the preservation of marital stability requires the provision of a means for minimizing its deleterious effects. When conflict occurs, the resultant frustration must be reduced, and accord must be reestablished in a manner that does no serious damage either to the marriage itself or to the larger context of social relations in which it is embedded. Sibling-in-law joking helps to accomplish this.

If, for example, a Mossi is irritated by his wife's performance of some aspect of her duties in the household or the field, he need not address her directly in order to communicate his dissatisfaction and release the tension he feels. To do so in a culture which places a high value on indirection in emo-

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tionally charged relationships would be such a serious breach of etiquette as to threaten permanent damage, if not actual dissolution, of the marriage relationship (Hammond 1959: 187; 1963: 21). Thus if he has been angered over his wife's frequent failure to prepare his food properly, or to present it to him before his kinsmen with a proper show of deference, he need not and should not reprimand her directly. He need only wait until she is visited by one of her younger sisters when he can call out:

> Eh! Here come women more worthless than my wife! What do you want here? Are you looking for *saraho* (a millet cake)? Who eats well here? Do you want an old groundnut? No one here has tasted *saraho* with sauce since your sister came to my house!

By expressing his resentment of his wife in this way the husband is able—indirectly—to communicate the cause of his displeasure, to elicit support for himself and social pressure against her, and to achieve harmlessly the reduction of his hostile feelings. All this he accomplishes without risking the sort of direct and angry confrontation which might have a permanently damaging effect on their relationship. The wife's younger sisters cannot take offense at this joking, and they can be relied upon to relay the husband's complaints to their sister—if, indeed, she does not herself overhear the joking exchange. Furthermore, since a wife's younger sisters are usually aware of the sources of her grievance with her husband, they can use the same means to communicate to him the reason for her resentment and consequent failure to perform her domestic tasks to his satisfaction.

Similarly, when a man's younger brothers come into the presence of his wife, she is expected to insult them in the same way—to deride with humor their appearance, their lack of energy, their skill at their work, or their intelligence. The expectation and acceptance of such joking provides her with an indirect means of criticizing her husband as well. By saving her grievances until she is in the company of her husband's younger siblings, she may, within the context of joking, pour out her resentment at the way she is treated, revealing succinctly the causes of her dissatisfaction. His brothers can be relied upon to relay to her husband what she has said, if he has not himself overheard the exchange. If he recognizes as valid the criticism implied by her joking remarks, he may correct those aspects of his behavior which are frustrating or unsatisfactory to her. Indeed, if the criticisms are justified, his kinsmen are likely to exert pressure on him to do so. The joking provides the woman with a means of channeling in a culturally acceptable manner the aggressive feelings generated by her frustrations. And her husband's younger brothers, by retorting with hostile banter of the same sort, can convey to her the dissatisfaction of both her husband and their other kinsmen with her comportment, thus providing her, too, with a chance to mend her ways.

By these means both marriage partners have an equal opportunity to evaluate the content of the other's criticism and, if necessary, to alter their behavior accordingly. Since this is achieved through joking, the result of such an exchange is the maintenance of communication, the exercise of a measure of social control, and the mutual reduction of frustration without the face-to-face conflict that might result in permanent damage to both the marriage relation-

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ship itself and the contract of interlineage co-operation and solidarity which every marriage serves to establish or reinforce.[4]

Although this joking interchange is seen in its full implications when there is an immediate source of dissension between marriage partners, it may also occur in the absence of any specific difficulty. Then it is apparently indulged in simply because it is expected, and for the pleasure which the Mossi, like all people, derive from an occasion to exercise their wit. It is this relatively disinterested joking which has been most frequently described in the literature, and this may account for the failure of many scholars to perceive more fully the important social and psychological functions which joking may fulfill.

Conclusion

This paper has been written as a tentative step toward a reformulation of the various and disparate observations on joking contained in the anthropological literature. I have contended that an analysis of this literature indicates that wherever joking is institutionalized the structural relationship between the participants tends to be characterized by five significantly interrelated structural attributes: separation, reciprocity, ambivalence, equality, and independence. I have also indicated that such joking may serve as an adjustive mechanism by providing for the concurrent maintenance of communication, control, and the culturally harmless catharsis of potentially disruptive emotions.

A variety of forms of institutionalized joking found among the Mossi of Yatenga have been cited to illustrate these points. However, I suggest that the factors which cluster with this reliance on joking as an adjustive mechanism are not unique to the Mossi. Institutionalized joking reported for other parts of Africa appears to be structurally and processually similar.

NOTES

1. A shorter version of this paper was read at the annual meeting of the American Anthropological Association held in San Francisco in November, 1963. It is based on field research conducted among the Mossi from 1954 to 1956 with the assistance of a Ford Foundation Fellowship.

2. Marriage between the members of descent groups united by a joking alliance is regarded by the Mossi as highly desirable, apparently in recognition of the useful role of joking as an adjustive mechanism. Once such a marriage is contracted, however, Ego and his wife must take care that their joking insults are directed only at the younger kinsmen of the other and that the insulting remarks are personal. It would, for example, be acceptable for Ego to call his wife's younger sister a disreputable shrew but dangerous to call her a slave (a term of disrespect used frequently in joking between sibs). To refer to her as a slave would cast unflattering aspersions on her entire kin group, including her mother and father, with whom, in their new status as parents-in-law, Ego may no longer joke.

3. I believe that joking is also institutionalized between the Mossi and the Yarse, a highly acculturated ethnic minority of Mande origin who live throughout Yatenga. There is also joking between the Mossi and the indigenous blacksmith caste. Unfortunately my data on these two instances of joking are inadequate.

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4. The importance of sibling-in-law joking as a means of regulating conflict in the Mossi marriage relationship is further substantiated by the results of comparative research conducted among the Mossi resettled at the Office du Niger in the neighboring Republic of Mali.

The Mossi, who were first forcibly and later voluntarily resettled in Mali, were allocated farm land as elementary family units without regard for their extended kinship affiliations. Thus a man often found himself living in unaccustomed "isolation," in the company only of his wife or wives and children, and otherwise surrounded by total strangers. Although the potential for conflict in the marriage relationship remained high, or was even augmented by the stresses of adjusting to a changed milieu, sibling-in-law joking, the institution through which such tension is traditionally regulated among the Mossi, was no longer operative. Unless the younger siblings of each spouse had accompanied them to the resettlement area, those individuals were absent to whom they might have communicated their grievances and expressed their aggressive sentiments in a socially harmless, psychologically satisfactory, and culturally acceptable way.

As the traditionally sanctioned means of dealing with tension resulting from marital conflict was no longer available to the Mossi resettled in Mali, there occurred an increase in the incidence both of violence in marital disputes and of separation and divorce.

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THE MOSSI OF THE UPPER VOLTA

The Political Development of a Sudanese People

ELLIOTT P. SKINNER

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PREFACE

THIS BOOK ATTEMPTS to contribute to our understanding of Mossi society, 114
about which relatively little is known even within the continent of Africa. [121]
Many of the data were collected in the Upper Volta Republic between November 1955 and January 1957, a period when the Voltaics were preparing for important political changes. I did most of my field work in the area formerly included within the kingdom of Ouagadougou. I stayed only one week in the Yatenga and paid but brief visits to Tenkodogo and the Boussouma region. Thus, my basic data hold chiefly for Ouagadougou. My 12
methods of research were the conventional anthropological ones: I recorded local oral histories, conducted personal interviews, attended court and important rituals, participated in the life of the people whenever possible, and collected genealogical and biographical data.

In addition, I read all the important documents I could find on the political history of the Mossi people in the files of the Institut Français d'Afrique Noire, in local administrative offices, and in the Archives of the Governor General of French West Africa in Dakar, Senegal. I also read published works on the Mossi by such scholars as Maurice Delafosse, A. A. Dim Delobson, Georges Cheron, Eugene Mangin, Lucien Marc, and Louis Tauxier. Their works were invaluable to me, and I owe them a debt of 121
gratitude. My hope is that what I have added to the store of knowledge about the Mossi may be of service to Mossi scholars, whose studies will ultimately bring to light aspects of their own culture that we have missed.

The ethnographer working in contemporary Africa is faced with the problem of the time dimension. In reporting his findings, he may use the "ethnographic present" and describe the cultural system he studied as though all elements, even those dredged up from the memories of old men, were still viable in the society. Or he may use the past tense and thus underscore [178]
the fact that the society is changing, even though cultural traits from the past may be present and viable. I have elected the latter course primarily

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because, even though many of the aspects of Mossi culture described here are still in existence, Mossi society is changing ever more rapidly. Many old culture traits that I found there as late as 1955 had all but disappeared when I returned in 1960. Not to recognize this fact in preparing this study would have laid the ground for the criticism that anthropologists ignore the changes taking place around them in order to concentrate upon the past.

My own interest in the Mossi grew out of an early curiosity about the cultures and societies of Africa. It was born of my parents' concern over Ethiopia's struggle to remain free and nurtured by the writings of Mr. Marcus A. Garvey, Dr. W. E. B. Dubois, and Professors Melville J. Herskovits and E. Franklin Frazier. These factors, together with the help and encouragement of my relatives and friends, ultimately led me to choose a career in anthropology and African studies. I am grateful to Professor John L. Landgraf of New York University, who first taught me the elements of anthropology and thus provided me with the basic tools for understanding human societies. To Dr. Gene Weltfish and Professor Joseph H. Greenberg of Columbia University I owe a further debt of gratitude for having directed my first studies of African cultures. To them, and to Professors Conrad M. Arensberg, Morton H. Fried, and Charles Wagley, also of Columbia University, I owe whatever skill and competence in social-science research I may possess. I am grateful to the Ford Foundation for financing the field work on which this study is based, and to the Arts and Science Research Fund Committee of New York University for help in defraying the cost of preparing the manuscript for publication.

I am deeply indebted to the Mossi people for having permitted me to live among them for fourteen months. M. François Bouda, district chief of Manga, and Naba Boulga, district chief of Nobere, not only welcomed me but kindly consented to answer my innumerable questions about the nature of their political and other institutions. The Djiba Naba, who subsequently became Mogho Naba Kougri, also encouraged me in my task, and so did Dr. Joseph Conombo. Without the help of M. Beta Nyissa, my friend and interpreter, field work would have been difficult. He not only explained many aspects of Mossi culture to me, but put me in touch with persons who could answer my questions, and taught me the rudiments of the Mossi language.

I must also thank my good friend Mme. Ouennam Pousde for helping me to understand the point of view of the Mossi women. This kind lady never ceased to be amused at the attempts of this *yagenga* (brother's son) to participate as fully as possible in Mossi life. M. Frederic Guierma en-

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M. Frederic Guiernua en-
couraged me to prepare this work for publication, and M. Albert Salfo 128
Balima not only read a draft of the manuscript, but kindly made available 127
to me his own notes on Mossi society. Other Mossi and Voltaics, far too numerous to mention, gave freely of their time and friendship.

I am indebted to M. Le Moal, Director of the Institut Français d'Afrique Noire at Ouagadougou, and to his assistant, M. Savonnet, for their hospitality. MM. Pujol and Mathieu, the French administrators in charge of the Mossi areas where I conducted my field work, were especially courteous and helpful. By introducing me to other administrators, they made it possible for me to visit other areas of Mossi country. [122]

I should like to thank Mrs. Doby Gilletti and Dr. Shirley Gorenstein for [128] their helpful criticism of parts of this manuscript, and the Service Information Haute-Volta for permission to use the photographs that appear between [127] pp. 178 and 179. I am also deeply indebted to Miss Ariane Brunel for her editorial assistance. Finally, I should like to praise my wife, Thelma, and my children for their forbearance during the many months of absences and neglect while I conducted this research and wrote up the results. Their support contributed greatly to my work.

E. P. S.

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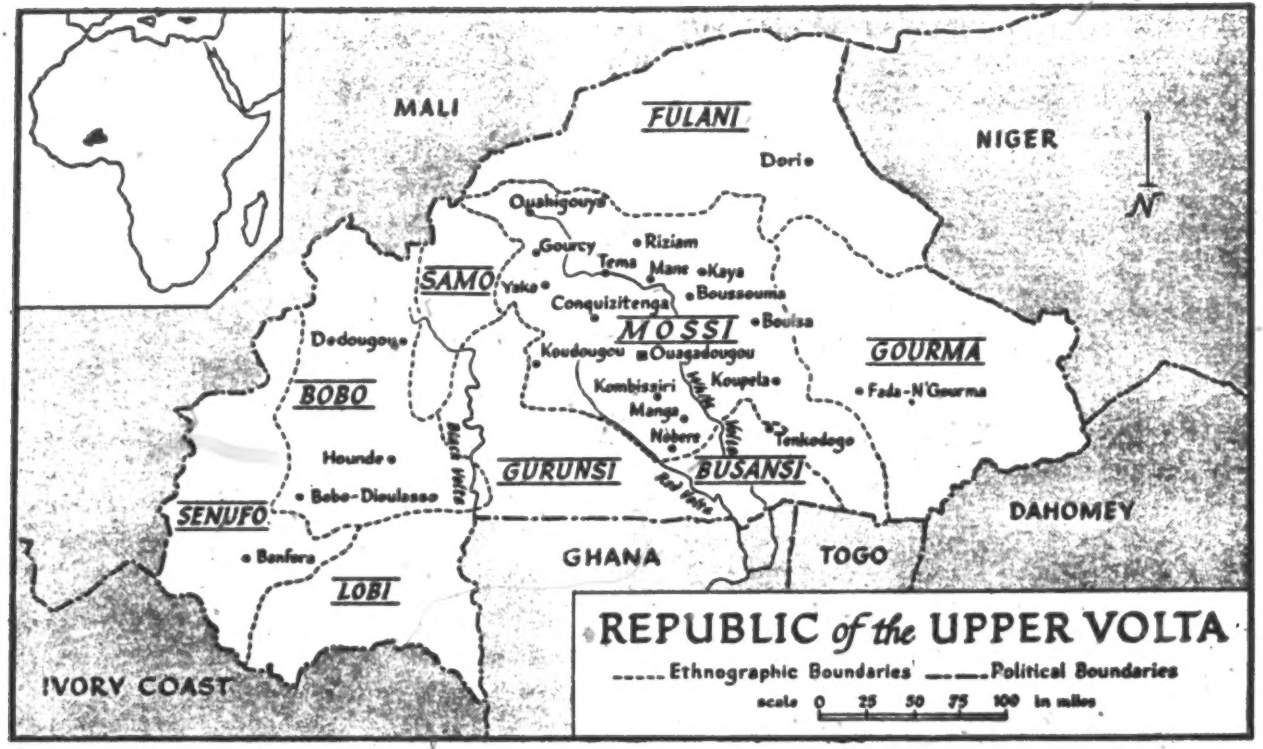

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Africa must walk a narrow line in her growth and development: On the one hand, she must draw strength, wisdom, and a sense of stability from the past; on the other, she must make sure that she does not become immobilized or imprisoned by an exaggerated respect for the traditions of the past.

—ALEX QUAISON-SACKEY

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I

INTRODUCTION

DESPITE THE GROWING interest in Africa over the last decade, scholars still know very little about the medieval societies that once flourished in the western Sudan. With few exceptions, these societies declined or disappeared long before they had been adequately described. Today, historians are poring over Arabic documents and local chronicles dealing with the ancient kingdoms of Ghana, Mali, Songhai, Bornu, Kanem, the Mossi, and the Hausa in an attempt to unravel the origins, evolution, and nature of these societies. Had more archeological investigations been conducted in the area, the task would be easier. Unfortunately, the generalization still holds that for every ton of archeological materials sifted in Egypt and parts of the Middle East, only one teaspoonful has been examined in the western Sudan.

The second source of clues about early Sudanese societies is the work of ethnologists. However, most of the societies mentioned by early chroniclers have changed radically. Of course, many traits still survive, but they often occur within different institutional structures. One of the few societies that appears to have maintained much of its ancient structure is the Mossi. The Mossi were in contact with the now nonexistent Mali and Songhai kingdoms, and they survived the rise and fall of such Sudanese conquerors as El Hadj Omar and Samory Touré. Their remarkable society retained its structure throughout French rule. Only on the eve of independence did the Mossi traditional political organization collapse.

It would be tempting to claim, as many scholars have done, that the governmental system of the Mossi mirrored faithfully that of the early Sudanese kingdoms.[1] As will be noted below, Mossi society, especially in the kingdom of Ouagadougou, did possess in detail many of the political institutions described for ancient Mali. Yet one cannot extrapolate from the contemporary scene to the early Sudan, for Mossi society undoubtedly changed over the centuries. It is my hope, however, that this study of Mossi government will contribute to the understanding of the development, structure, and

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121 [174] functioning of early Sudanese societies. It will also attempt to demonstrate how European conquest affected the political organization of the Mossi and contributed to its ultimate decline.

The kingdom of Ouagadougou was selected as the main object of study, primarily because it emerged as the most important Mossi polity and retained this position through the greater part of Mossi history. Attention will be given to the other Mossi polities and the three other Mossi kingdoms—Yatenga, Tenkodogo, and the more remote Fada-N'Gourma, all of which resemble Ouagadougou—only insofar as they affect the history of Ouagadougou or highlight the basic nature of Mossi government.

101 161 The Mossi are a Sudanese Negroid population in the new Republic of the Upper Volta.[2] They number about 2,200,000, or approximately half of the country's total population. Their ancestral territory, which they call 131 *Mogho* (land of the Mossi), covers some 30,000 square miles in the southern 133 part of the Republic. It is a huge plateau, lying from 1,000 to 1,600 feet above sea level, and broken by three low mountain ranges and numerous small hills. The Kipirsi range in the northeast has an average height of about 2,000 feet and includes the sacred mountain of the Mossi, known as Plimpikou. The Boussouma range to the east reaches a height of some 1,500 feet, and the Naouri range in the southeast is almost as high.

132 The climate of Mossi country is typical of the Sudanic zone. There are two main seasons, one cold and dry, the other hot and wet. The first begins in November with the coming of the harmattan and ends in January, the coolest month, when the average temperature is about 70° F. and the humidity about 12 per cent. The hot season extends from March to October. In July, the warmest month, the temperature reaches a high of 88° F. and the humidity 78 per cent. Violent dust storms herald the rains, which begin late in May and end in September. The rain falls almost entirely in heavy showers and thunderstorms, and the average annual fall is between 30 and 40 inches. In those years when the rainfall is about 40 inches and is regularly spaced, the Mossi can look forward to a good harvest. When the rainfall is below 30 inches and is spaced irregularly during the planting season, the threat of famine is serious. So narrow is the margin of rainfall for agriculture that in 1956 the people of one Mossi district anxiously awaited "two rains" (two showers), without which they feared that in 1957 there would be a difficult "hungry period" (the time between the exhaustion of one year's crops and the maturing of the next).

133 Mossi country is drained by only three rivers: the Black Volta with its two chief tributaries, the Sourou and the Debere, and the Red and White Voltas with their numerous small tributaries. Only the Black Volta flows

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all year round. The Red and White Voltas are important only as drainage 133
systems during the short rainy period, for they dwindle to a string of small stagnant pools in the dry season. In some low-lying areas near the main watercourses, trapped waters provide the moisture for dank riverine vegetation.

The soils of Mossi country, which are typical of the Sudanic and Sahel 134
areas, were formed chiefly by the weathering of Pre-Cambrian rocks. Ferruginous soils of varying depths, red argils, and pure silicates of aluminum predominate in the northern regions. In the south are found thin, sandy soils formed by the decomposition of crystalline rocks and sandstones. Most of these soils are eroded by torrential rains, the scouring action of the harmattan, and the incendiary action of man and nature. Even where the soils 133
are reasonably fertile, the nature of the underlying rocks precludes important deposits of ground water. In the western sandstone region, rain filters down with such rapidity that water can be obtained only from deep wells. In the remainder of the territory, the presence of Pre-Cambrian rocks induces a rapid runoff, with the result that wells yield very little water at any depth. Rainfall collects only in river-bed pools or along dams constructed for that purpose in hollow places. The building of dams was relatively un- [241]
known in aboriginal times, and the Mossi did not practice irrigation farming.

During the dry season, Mossi country presents a picture of such utter 137
aridity that one wonders whether it is possible for such parched red soils to produce plant life. After the first drops of rain, however, the entire plain quickly becomes covered with grasses that sometimes reach heights of five or six feet. The most characteristic and valuable trees in the region are the baobab (*Adansonia digitata*), the locust-bean (*Parkia biglobosa*), the shea butter (*Butyrospermum parkii*), the tamarind (*Tamarindus indica*), and the kapok (*Bombax costatum*). The sole and unimportant representative of the palm family is the *Borassus aethiopium*. There are several kinds of acacias, including the *Kenyaya senegalensis*, and a wide variety of silk-cotton trees, the most important of which is *Eryodendron anfractuosum*.

The cultivated plants of the region include numerous varieties of cereals, 241
roots, and legumes. Several varieties of sorghum (*Sorghum vulgare*) and millet (*Pennisetum typhoides*) constitute the staple crops of the Mossi, but maize (*Zea mays*) is extremely important because it is one of the first crops to be harvested after the difficult hungry period. Peanuts, onions, rice, beans, okra, fonio, and sweet potatoes form the bulk of the other cultivated crops. Manioc is grown only in small quantities because it requires moist soil for optimum development. The Mossi grow tobacco in fields around their 600

The Mossi grow tobacco in fields around their
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249 homesteads, where they also cultivate their most important cash crops, cotton and indigo, which are used in the manufacture and dyeing of cotton cloth.

136 The wild fauna of Mossi country include several species of antelope, deer, monkeys, rabbits, snakes, and wild pigs. Elephants roam the beds of rivers and streams and often destroy cultivated fields, while lions and hyenas distress the people by attacking livestock. The pools and rivers of Mossi country are inhabited by turtles, crocodiles, and various species of scaled and scaleless fish. Chickens, muscovy ducks, and half-domesticated guinea fowl are the most valuable species of birds.

231 The Mossi have long been famous for their splendid donkeys and [492] horses. Donkeys are sometimes ridden, but they are used primarily as [439] beasts of burden. Horses are important for military and ceremonial purposes and for export to the tsetse-fly zones to the south. The Mossi raise two main types of cattle: a zebu-like animal in the northern regions and a [439] dwarf variety in the south. These animals are raised primarily for their milk and for export, and are seldom killed for meat until they are fairly old. Goats and sheep provide the main source of meat. Hog-raising is not wide- [771] spread, and seems to be declining in importance with the increased ob- [178] servance of Islamic food taboos, which is on the uprise even among people who are still pagans.

135 The subsoil of Mossi country is not well known, but so far there have been no major discoveries of mineral deposits. The only known gold field [301] remained unworked in aboriginal times. The Mossi do not like to wear [325] gold ornaments, preferring jewelry worked from imported copper and [439] silver. The northern Mossi worked their local iron in aboriginal times, but those in the south obtained this metal from caravan traders.

175 The nineteenth-century reports of Barth and other European travelers 439 indicate that the Mossi conducted a rather extensive foreign trade. At least six caravan routes passed through their territory, and traders such as the [443] Hausa and Mandingo visited the important Mossi trading centers at Yako, Pouitenga, and Ouagadougou, where they exchanged Saharan and forest products for Mossi livestock and cloth.[8]

101 The Mossi belong to the Voltaic culture area, a name given by Delafosse to the regions drained by the Black, Red, and White Voltas and their tributaries. The area embraces parts of Mali, the Ivory Coast, Dahomey, the Upper Volta, and northern Ghana.[9] It includes a vast congeries of peoples such [197] as the Dagomba, Mamprusi, Dagari, Birifo, Senufo, Gurmanche, Gurunsi, Lobi, Bobo, Tallensi, Konkomba, Dogon, Somba, Fulse, and Ninisi, all of whom speak languages belonging to the Gur or Moshi-Grunshi group of

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the Niger-Congo family of African languages.[5] Like the Mossi, these groups are primarily horticultural;-cereals are their main crops, and they cultivate yams where conditions permit. Their social organization takes both patrilineal and matrilineal forms. The veneration of ancestors lies at the core of their religious beliefs, but the existence of an otiose high god whose name contains the root *We* (*Ouennam, Win, Wene,* etc.) is also recognized. There are also tutelary spirits, the chief one being a female earth deity associated with We and called *Tenga* (also occurring as *Teng, Tena,* and *Ten*). The *Tengsobadamba,* who are priests or custodians of the earth shrines, are found among all the groups in the Voltaic family, and they often share leadership with more secular chiefs called *Naba, Na,* or *Nab.* Most of the ruling clans of the Voltaic groups claim common ancestry and acknowledge the same totems.[6]

The only glaring dissimilarity between these Voltaic peoples, and the one with which this study is primarily concerned, lies in the realm of political organization. Some are united into large kingdoms, while others form small acephalous groups. Delafosse makes the following generalizations about the smaller groups:

> It may be said of these people that, as a whole, they have remained quite primitive. With a few exceptions, they have not reached any significant level of political development; as a rule, they have not progressed beyond family unity. Although they neighbor on well-organized and powerful states such as the Mossi empires and the kingdoms of the Gourma and Bergo, which are inhabited by populations of the same ethnic group, they have derived little benefit from this proximity; some of them have been absorbed as subjects or vassals by these states, while others have remained on the outside, and seem to have but one purpose, the forceful preservation of their fierce but sterile independence. . . . Attachment to the land seems to be the only solid and fecund institution in their chaotic society.[7]

Rattray believes that the development of such highly organized political systems as those of the Mossi, Dagomba, and Mamprusi may be traced to "small bands of strangers." He thinks that the outsiders were better armed, better clothed, and familiar with the rudiments of Islam, and that since they knew about the institution of kingship, they were able to "superimpose upon the primitive tribes among whom they settled a new and unheard-of political conception, namely the idea of territorial and secular leadership in place of the immemorial institution of a ruler who was the high priest of a totemic clan and dealt only in spiritual sanctions." Nevertheless, Rattray is not certain that the Voltaic groups would not have evolved complex political systems if they had been left to themselves. He makes the significant statement that if the subjugation by the bands of strangers had not

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taken place, the local earth-priest or priest-king "undoubtedly would have evolved into the type of native ruler . . . who was not only high priest and custodian of the land of his tribe and of the ancestral spirits but one who was a chief or king on a territorial basis, whose sanctions were secular and physical rather than spiritual; in other words, what the average European implies when he uses the word 'king' or 'chief.'"[8]

Since pristine state development has occurred so seldom, it is difficult to evaluate Rattray's speculations about the possible local development of complex political forms. Nevertheless, his view that bands of strangers were responsible for state formation in the area is supported by most of the local traditions.

The relationship between the Voltaic peoples and the bands of strangers has not received the attention it deserves. In fact, the implications of such a relationship have often been underrated. As a result, groups that may once have been part of larger political entities created by these strangers have been regarded as acephalous, that is, as having very weak chiefs or no chiefs at all. In his studies of the Tallensi of northern Ghana, for example, Fortes constantly refers to a group of lineages called *Namoos,* whose members claim to be descended from the Mamprusi ruling group. He states that a Tallensi chief from the Tongo area claimed to be "the ruler of all the Tallensi." In another context Fortes discusses the status of a chief called *Kuna'aba,* who, he tells us, is regarded by the other Tallensi chiefs as their "father," to whom they owe "loyalty, respect, and ceremonial deference." Moreover, Fortes indicates that ceremonial investiture by Kuna'aba is "the crucial act conferring chiefship" on a Tale, even if the latter is actually selected by an administrative officer.[9] These facts should have indicated to Fortes that he was dealing with a rather complex historical problem that required further investigation.

Instead of carrying the investigation further, however, he dismisses the Tongo chief's claim of control over all Taleland with the assertion that "it is a distortion in terms of the modern privileges of chiefship, of a status which is merely that of *primus inter pares* in the native system." Similarly, he doubts the historical status and role of Kuna'aba: "Kuna'aba's modern judicial and administrative authority rests solely on the sanction of force represented by the [British] Administration." Interestingly enough, Fortes tells us that "the Administration has always regarded Taleland as part of the 'Mamprusi State,' under the ultimate rule of the chief of Mampurugu, through his sub-chief and deputy, the Kuna'aba, who was considered to have full jurisdiction over the 'Kurugu Division.'"[10]

Rattray, whose study of the Tallensi predates Fortes', declares that the

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Tallensi chiefs and the Namoos clans are descended from the noble lineages of the Mamprusi kingdom, which at one time controlled Tallensi country. The chief of one of the Namoos clans reportedly told him, "We came from Mampurugu. . . . We have now become Talense; we no longer circumcise, because the local people would not marry us. The chief of Kurugu, our 'father,' still speaks Mampelle, but we no longer do so." The chief referred to is of course Fortes' Kuna'aba. Rattray adds that the Tallensi chiefs of the Namoos clans told him that they had to be sanctioned in office by the ruler of the Mamprusi at Naleregu.[11]

These data certainly suggest that prior to the arrival of the British, the Mamprusi were either incorporating Tale country into their kingdom or losing their hold on the Tallensi. Fortes' insistence on the acephalous nature of Tallensi society stems from his failure to consider that these people had been defeated and dispersed by the British at the turn of the century and had probably lost a great deal of their organization. The society he describes can be compared to a modern community arbitrarily divorced from its nation state. Such a community would have many of the truncated institutions and personnel of the state, but they would appear bizarre because they would lack the power normally derived from their national context. Moreover, to an investigator, the strictly local institutions would seem just as important as the truncated state institutions. His study would no doubt give a good synchronic picture of the community, but it would be incomplete because the diachronic dimension would be lacking. Fortes unfortunately gives us no idea of the relationship of the Tallensi to the Mamprusi, or of the cultural, historical, and especially the political processes in the region.

The origin of Mossi society lies buried in myths that not only sanction the power of the ruling families but support the political system with rich traditions of migrations and conquest. Traditional beliefs in the Voltaic area and among the Mossi themselves give a common origin for the Dagomba, Mamprusi, and Mossi peoples.[12] According to the most widespread Mossi belief, some forty generations ago a ruler called Naba Nedega (also known as Toese or Koulougbagha), who lived at Gambaga in present-day Ghana, reigned over the Dagomba, Mamprusi, and Nankana.[13] He had a daughter called Nyennega, whose warring skills he valued so highly that he would not grant her permission to marry. As a result, she fled Gambaga and rode toward the north, where she met and married a man called Rialle, who according to some traditions was the son of the Mali chief, and according to others was a Busansi hunter. The couple had a son whom they

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(173 named Ouedraogo ("Stallion") in honor of the horse that had carried Nyennega in her flight to the north.[14] A few years later, Nyennega sent Ouedraogo to Gambaga to visit her father, give him news of her marriage and of her family, and seek his aid.[15] Nedega welcomed the child and cared for him until he was ready to return to Busansi territory. As a farewell present, he gave Ouedraogo four horses and fifty cows. When he left Gambaga, the young man was accompanied by Dagomba horsemen who had seized the opportunity to leave their crowded homeland. With his troop of warriors, Ouedraogo skirted his father's village and invaded Tankourou (present-day Tenkodogo), from which the indigenous Busansi fled at his approach.

The Mossi bards relate that Ouedraogo and the Dagomba horsemen intermarried with the Busansi women, and that these unions gave rise to a new group of people called the Mossi. Ouedraogo himself married a woman named Pouriketa, who bore him three sons, Rawa, Diaba Lompo, and Zoungourana. Ouedraogo thus became known as the progenitor of the Mossi, and his mother, Nyennega, as their progenitrix. Other Dagomba horsemen subsequently arrived from Gambaga to swell the Mossi group. The Mossi then undertook to subdue neighboring peoples such as the Gurunsi (a large group including the Kasena, Sisala, and Nunuma), who lived to the east; the Ninisi, who were thinly scattered to the northwest in the vicinity of Ouagadougou; other large Ninisi, Foulse, and Habe (Tombo or Dogon) populations further north in Ouahigouya and extending northwestward to the Bandiagara cliffs; large Kipirsi populations northeast of Ouahigouya; and scattered Ninisi groups in Fada-N'Gourma east of Tenkodogo. Ouedraogo sent his son Diaba Lompo to conquer and rule over the Ninisi populations of Fada-N'Gourma.[16] Rawa, another son, was sent to subdue the region called Zandoma, northwest of Tenkodogo. The Ninisi of this region quickly accepted his authority. He acknowledged their claim to the land by calling them *Tinguimbissi,* "sons of the earth," and allowed their earth-priests, the Tengsobadamba, to retain ritual control of the earth shrines. However, the Habe (Dogon) refused to submit to Rawa and fled to the safety of the Bandiagara cliffs. Ouedraogo did not wish his youngest son, Zoungourana, to leave Tenkodogo, and the young man remained with him.

According to Ouagadougou tradition, the successful exploits of the Mossi warriors soon came to the attention of the Ninisi chief of Guilingou village, near Ouagadougou. He and the chief of Ziri village sent a wife to Ouedraogo and requested that he join them in an alliance against their Ninisi enemies. Ouedraogo accepted the invitation and gave the woman, who was called Poughtoenga, to Zoungourana as his wife. She gave birth

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to a son called Oubri. Soon afterwards, the Ninisi returned to Tenkodogo and asked Ouedraogo to aid them in a war against their enemies. Ouedraogo did so, and in the process continued his conquest of the Ouagadougou region but died before completing it. 173

After Ouedraogo's death his elder sons refused to leave their kingdoms to succeed their father at Tenkodogo, and the territory fell to Zoungourana. He declined to continue Ouedraogo's wars against the dissident Ninisi elements of Ouagadougou but accepted the demands of the Guilingou Ninisi that Oubri, their daughter's son, be sent to rule their territory. Tradition recounts that the youthful Oubri settled with his retinue at Oubritenga near Ziri until he was old enough to continue the Mossi wars of expansion. Later he conquered Gangado, Lumbila, Boulsa, and Boussouma northeast of Ouagadougou before turning west and conquering Ninisi and Kibisi groups at La and Yako and chasing many Kibisi under a chief called Waregoumga into the Bandiagara cliffs. He then returned and conquered the Ouagadougou area itself after a bitter fight. He finally met his death in the Kipirsi region after having conquered Koudougou and chased defiant groups across the Black Volta River. By the time of his death the kingdom of Ouagadougou was firmly established. Along with Ouedraogo, he thus became known as one of the two founders of the Ouagadougou dynasty and the first *Mogho Naba* ("chief of Mossi country"). The Ouagadougou kingdom now eclipsed all of the kingdoms founded by Ouedraogo's other sons. It retained its ascendancy through the centuries, although this is denied by the other Mossi kingdoms.

As Ouagadougou developed, Tenkodogo declined; when Zoungourana's son, Sere, inherited Tenkodogo, his rule extended only over the neighboring Busansi. In time, Tenkodogo declined further, losing all control over the southern Busansi populations, which finally came under the tutelage of Ouagadougou, and which have retained much of their language and customs to this day. The kingdom at Fada-N'Gourma founded by Diaba Lompo gradually lost contact with the other Mossi groups and became a separate group known as the Gurmanche or Gourma. Although these people occasionally waged war on the Mossi kingdoms, they maintained ritual ties with them.

Rawa enlarged his kindom of Zandoma by expelling the Habe and absorbing the Ninisi population of Ouahigouya. However, his descendants ultimately lost Zandoma to Yadega, a prince of the Ouagadougou dynasty. This prince, a grandson of Naba Oubri, allegedly lost his rightful claim to power because he was away at war on the death of his father, and his younger brother Koudoumie bribed the electors.[17] When Yadega learned that Koudoumie had been elected, he led an army against him but found

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173 him too firmly entrenched to be deposed. He then returned north to a place called Gourcy in Ouahigouya. There he was joined by his sister Pabre, who brought him the royal amulets of Rialle (Ouedraogo's father), which she is said to have stolen from Koudoumie and which were believed to sanction the power of the Ouagadougou ruler. Koudoumie gathered his army and pursued Pabre in an attempt to recover the amulets, but he met so much opposition at Yako that he returned without them.

The struggle for supremacy between Koudoumie and Yadega led many of the princely descendants of Ouedraogo to carve out their own principalities from their patrimony and declare themselves independent of Ouagadougou. Faced with the dissolution of his realm, Koudoumie dispatched his sons to different parts of the kingdom to halt the process. There came into existence such principalities as Boulsa, Boussouma, Conquizitenga, Mane, Riziam, Tema, and Yako.[18] However, some of these princes joined the ranks of the rebels, who by this time had taken for themselves the title of *Dim*, meaning "submit only to God." The ruler of Ouagadougou later recognized the autonomy of these princes but not their independence from Ouagadougou.[19]

After Koudoumie's death his descendants at Ouagadougou continued to rule and to consolidate their territory. Each ruler resided wherever control of the population was most necessary, and the graves of the first fourteen rulers of the Ouagadougou dynasty are markers along the road to that dynasty's complete domination of the country. It was only during the reign of the fifteenth ruler, Mogho Naba Sana (ca. 1430–1450), that Ouagadougou became the permanent capital of the dynasty. Meanwhile, the northern Mossi, under Yadega (who had claimed the title of Mogho Naba and complete independence from Ouagadougou on the strength of the amulets brought by Pabre), were also extending and consolidating their territory. They had absorbed into the kingdom of Yatenga ("country of Yadega") all the lands in the kingdom of Zandoma, which had belonged to Rawa, the son of Ouedraogo. Under their rulers (the Yatenga Nanamse), these Mossi moved into the bend of the Niger, a region they called Ghanata, and sacked such towns as Djenne, Sarafere, Timbuktu, and Walata.

175 The author of *Tarikh es-Sudan*, a seventeenth-century chronicle, describes the attack on Timbuktu by the Mossi ruler, which took place about 1329:

> It was in the reign of one of the princes of [sultan Kankan Moussa's] dynasty that the sultan of the Mossi at the head of a strong army made an expedition against that city. Seized with fright, the people of Mali fled and abandoned the city to its assailants. The Mossi ruler entered the city, and after killing

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all the people he found there and seizing all the goods he could find, he burned the city and returned to his own country. The peoples of Mali returned afterwards to Timbuktu and remained there for the next hundred years.[20] 175

The Yatenga Mossi subsequently warred upon and defended themselves against the Songhai, who had tried to force Islam upon them. The Mossi were among the strongest peoples in the Niger bend area when the Moroccans arrived in 1591, and there were no wars between these two groups. [648]

There has been a great deal of discussion among scholars of Sudanese history about the relationship between the Mossi expeditions into the Niger area and the power of early Mossi kingdoms. Marc believes that the Mossi reached their zenith late in the fifteenth century, when they attacked Walata and Timbuktu for the second time. He writes, "It was undoubtedly during this period that they extended their influence over all the territories where their language is spoken at the present day."[21] 174 175

On the other hand, Tauxier believes that the Mossi reached their apogee much earlier, toward the end of the fourteenth century. He notes that this was the period when the Mossi were "propelled by a powerful drive of expanding conquest," which carried them to Timbuktu and its neighboring regions.[22] With the recapture of Timbuktu by Mansa Souliman, however, they turned back and firmly established themselves in Gourma and Yange to the east of Ouagadougou, and among non-Mossi populations in Ouahigouya and Ouagadougou. Tauxier believes that this southern drive made the Mossi sufficiently powerful to reinvade the Niger area and thus control a territory extending from Gambaga in the south up to Timbuktu and Djenne in the north. This second period of success came to a close when the Mossi were defeated by Askia the Great of Songhai in 1497, and by Askia Daoud in 1549 and 1561. After these defeats, they not only abandoned their territories north of Ouahigouya but withdrew into their present boundaries. Tauxier concludes that from this time onward, the bonds between the different Mossi kingdoms grew weaker and the power of Ouagadougou waned.

At the same time, the Mossi kingdoms, principalities, and districts developed their internal structure and continued to absorb the Ninisi population. They also welcomed the Moslem Yarse merchants and refugees who settled in their country and adopted most aspects of their culture.[23] These Yarse refugees were joined by Mandingo-Dioula and Soninke Moslem refugees, who entered Mossi country as the result of wars or rebellions in such places as Djenne, Segou, and Timbuktu. The sheltering of these refugees by the Mossi eventually led to a series of wars between them and 175 648 563

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648 the Bambara in the mid-eighteenth century.[24] In the course of these wars
563 and up into modern times, many Fulani (Peulh or Fulbe) entered Mossi territory. The circumstances surrounding their first coming are not fully known, but many of them claim to have come originally from Fouta-Djalon and Fouta-Toro. They gained the good will of most of the Mossi rulers and spread throughout the territory.[25] Many of them married Mossi women, giving rise to a new group known as Simili-Mossi, who continued to raise cattle but also practiced agriculture and adopted many of the cultural traits of their hosts.[26]

175 There are some reports that Europeans had heard about the Mossi ex-
648 ploits at least from the time of King John II of Portugal, who reigned from 1481 to 1495. Marc states that the Portuguese ambassadors to Mali and Timbuktu convinced their King that the Mossi were Christians, and that he attempted to enter into relations with them. According to Barth, these attempts were made as late as 1533.[27] Unfortunately, we have no way of knowing whether the Mossi even knew about the existence of the Portuguese. After this period, there is no evidence of European interest in the Mossi until the end of the nineteenth century. As we shall see in a later chapter, the Mossi received more than their share of attention when the scramble for Africa began.

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II

SOVEREIGNTY, KINSHIP, AND COMMUNITY

THE MOSSI restricted all important positions within the traditional political 642
organization to persons who claimed lineal descent from Ouedraogo and 613
Oubri, the ancient founders of the Mossi nation. Thus all the *Mogho Na-* [173]
namse, Dimdamba, Kombemba, and *Tense Nanamse*—the heads of king-
doms, principalities, districts, and villages, respectively—claimed descent
in the royal line. The bond of kinship among all important Mossi rulers [614]
was symbolized by membership in the lion clan (*Gegema*) and affiliated
clans or *boodoo* founded by ancient members of the ruling families. Al- 613
though the Mossi respected clan totems, they did not stress clan organ- 778
ization. They were more interested in membership in the segmentary 642
lineages within the clans.[1] Yet not all Mossi groups stressed lineage affilia-
tion. This was of supreme importance only for nobles whose membership
in particular segments of ruling lineages gave them access to the *nam*—
the power first possessed by the ancient founders, which is described by
the Mossi as "that force of God which enables one man to control another."
So important was the corporate possession of the nam by a ruling lineage [554]
that with few exceptions, membership in such a lineage gave a Moaga
noble status.[2] Lineage segmentation gave some segments easier access to [578]
the nam, however, and resulting conflicts over sovereignty gave rise to the
various Mossi kingdoms, principalities, and even districts.

Every Mossi ruling line attempted to legitimize its position by claiming
the most direct descent from Ouedraogo and Oubri. The descendants of the
founder of a local ruling lineage would claim that he had been an elder son
deprived of his patrimony by unscrupulous younger brothers, or an elder
son disqualified by a physical handicap from receiving the nam. Some rul- 642
ing lineages even claimed that their founders had been elder sons who had 613
voluntarily forsaken the problems of government and established new 173
districts for themselves. Whenever tradition recounted that a younger son 778
had indeed founded a kingdom or district, it was invariably said that he

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had done so with full permission of his father and in place of an unadventurous elder brother.

For example, the ruling family of the Boulsa province claimed that its ancestor, Naba Namende, was the eldest son of Mogho Naba Oubri and chose to become his father's *Kourita* (a young son of a deceased Mogho Naba chosen as his father's personal representative on earth) and go into exile rather than subject his younger brother to the ordeal. At the same time, Namende sought to retain royal power equal to that of his brother, the new Mogho Naba, by taking Oubri's royal amulets with him.[3]

Mane province, too, was founded by one Nyaseme, a son of Koudoumie, who felt that he should have been given the nam. When routed in battle by his elder brother Kouda, he moved into the region of Mane, where he defeated the indigenous Ninisi and ruled over them. The princes who broke away from Ouagadougou during Koudoumie's reign considered themselves theoretically equal to the supreme ruler. Thus, they took the title of Dim. By so doing, they dramatized their claim to equality of status, if not of power, with the Mogho Naba, and their determination to "submit only to God."[4]

The Mossi insist that the relationship between the Mogho Naba and the Dimdamba was similar to that between father and sons, since the Dimdamba were "really the sons of the Mogho Naba" and are said to have acted as such. This analogy is interesting in view of the Mossi traditional pattern of avoidance—combined with love and tolerance—between fathers and elder sons.[5] The Dimdamba were often allowed to act at variance with the Mogho Naba. Some of them shifted allegiance from kingdom to kingdom; others usurped the power of the Mogho Naba over smaller districts, or claimed that they had been given this power; and most of them regulated their own affairs with little interference from their sovereign. He, as "father," interfered on occasion in their internal affairs, demanding help from them and often chastising them if they failed to comply.

The Mogho Naba and the Dimdamba often appointed their younger sons or brothers as rulers (Kombemba) of the districts that made up their kingdoms and principalities. In this way, power and authority were kept within the royal clan and its lineages. Nevertheless, in keeping with the concept of corporate access to the nam, the rulers of these dependencies had traditions that served to reconcile their claims to kingly or princely status with their actual subordinate position. District founders, too, were often portrayed as eldest sons who had been cheated out of their patrimony or had voluntarily left it to establish new districts. In some cases, the legendary heroes were granted miraculous births as well.

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The people of Nobere district have a legend that its founder, Naba Biligo, was sired by a spirit who impregnated the wife of Mogho Naba Oubri. She carried him in her womb for more than a year, and noticed that although her belly was extended during the daytime, it was always flat at night. She became concerned and confided her worries to the ruler's first wife, who asked the other co-wives to keep vigil for the child. When they arrived in the evening, they noticed that the woman's belly was flat. They awakened her and kept watch until dawn. At cock's crow, the child Biligo returned from his nocturnal wanderings. Seeing the women, he fell from the top of the hut into his mother's lap and began to cry as though he had just been born. When Biligo grew to manhood, he went hunting in the Nobere area. He found the region so fertile that when he returned to Ouagadougou, he told his father, Mogho Naba Oubri, that he did not want the nam but preferred to conquer the Ninisi of Nobere and become their chief.

The people of Doulougou give a slightly different account of the founding of their district. Their founder, a man called Moumde, was also said to be a son of Mogho Naba Oubri. He did not like the capital, and rode all over the kingdom until he came to Doulougou. He liked this region so much that he asked his father to name him chief over its indigenous population. Oubri then sent down an army, defeated the Ninisi, and appointed Moumde as Doulougou Naba.

According to some traditions, Mogho Nanamse appointed their sons as chiefs of conquered districts. A more common tradition, represented by the Biligo legend, is that the founders of local districts conquered their territories with or without the permission of the Mogho Naba. Biligo, the founder of Nobere district, is said to have found the area sparsely inhabited by Ninisi, most of whom fled before him. A person of gigantic proportions, he easily defeated those Ninisi who elected to give him battle. He then went into the woods, where he invited the Ninisi leader, an earth-priest (Tengsoba) called Tedego, to return to the district. Biligo promised him and the other refugees safe conduct and good treatment if they agreed to return. Tedego refused, whereupon Biligo captured him and installed him in a special quarter, with the injunction that he and his family should make sacrifices to the local earth shrines (*Tengkouga*) in the name of the new ruling lineage. Naba Biligo went back into the woods, captured the other refugees, and resettled them in their villages. He allowed the local Tengsobadamba to retain their religious duties, but sent his sons to take political control of the villages. Not satisfied with the number of people under his command, Naba Biligo then raided Gurunsi country and cap-

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634 173 tured slaves, whom he settled behind his compound and in separate villages under their own chiefs. He also welcomed refugees from wars in other territories and established them in special villages under their own chiefs.

631 173 The Dimdamba followed a similar practice in establishing power and control. According to Cheron, when Mogho Naba Koudoumie sent his son Tiraongo to conquer the Ninisi of Boussouma, the Ninisi defended themselves fiercely. Tiraongo's advance was thus very slow until he found a Ninisi named Wine, dressed in a panther's skin and hiding in a hole, "who on the promise that his life would be saved, consented to serve as guide to Tiraongo and to make propitiatory sacrifices to the divinities of the country. Thanks to him, the Mossi were able to progress to Somtongande."[6] Boulsa tradition recounts that when Naba Namende left Ouagadougou as the Kourita of Mogho Naba Oubri and took possession of their province, he placed his sons at the head of the principal villages "in order to control it [Boulsa] better."[7] One son was even sent to rule over a village at the request of the local Tengsoba.

634 613 778 [565] The villages that made up a Mossi district were usually ruled by chiefs who belonged to sub-lineages of the local ruling lineage. These village chiefs and the members of their lineage formed a noble class, the *nakomce* ("children of the Naba"). As long as a lineage held the nam of a district, all of its sub-lineages had all the privileges of the noble class, regardless of whether they had charge of villages. But if the Mogho Naba deprived [558] a ruling lineage of the nam by deposing the district chief, all its members were reduced to commoner status. Such people still traced their descent from the Mogho Naba who was the ancestor of their lineage founder, but this relationship ceased to be important unless the lineage recovered the nam of the district. If it did not, the former ruling lineage officially lost its ancient link with the royal clan within a few generations and became a nondescript local group.

634 613 778 557 558 The place of a deposed royal lineage was usually taken by the relatives of the nobles who subsequently acquired the nam of the district. These newcomers were genealogically closer to the ruling Mogho Naba, and formed the new nakomce of the district. The new district chief sometimes sent his sons to rule over the villages under his command. But if the village chiefs did not suffer the same fate as their lineage head at the hands of the Mogho Naba, the new district chief often permitted them to retain their posts. Thus they retained possession of the nam but lost their noble status. They served the new district chief in a political sense much as the Tengsoba served him in a ritual sense.

554 602 778 The plight of deposed district nakomce shows quite clearly the distinc-

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tion made by the Mossi between kinship and sovereignty within their 602
governmental system. Kinship was the basis on which the ruling class 778
was formed. However, sovereignty itself, although associated with kinship, was not unalterably linked with it. When a ruling Mossi kin group held the nam, its subgroups were linked by bonds of prestige. But once this group lost the nam or access to the nam, its component subgroups began to drift away. That this situation could exist shows the true nature of the relationship between sovereignty and kinship within the Mossi political system.

There were other chiefs in Mossi districts who had never had either a 602
lineal or a collateral relationship with any lineage of the ancient royal clan.[8] 554
These men were the descendants of provincial ministers. They became 634
chiefs for the same reasons that the sons of ruling sovereigns became 557
chiefs. When a Mogho Naba sent his sons to replace deposed district chiefs, the young men were usually accompanied by a full complement of administrators. These administrators, mostly younger sons of administrators at Ouagadougou who would not normally succeed their fathers, often automatically replaced the administrators of the former chiefs. But if, for reasons of administrative efficiency, the new chiefs elected to retain the administrators of their predecessors, they assigned village chieftainships to the newcomers. They might also settle them in independent hamlets and furnish them with wives and slaves. For chiefs in this category, kinship did play an initial role in the accession to power; but since they were not related to the district chief, they never gained noble status. Socially, they were comparable to chiefs who were former nobles; as in the latter's case, their kinship ties with the administrators at Ouagadougou gradually lost their significance.

There were yet other kinds of chiefs or men who rated the title Naba 634
in Mossi districts. They included: the descendants of aboriginal chiefs, the chiefs of alien groups, and the chiefs of the Mossi refugee groups that had left other districts because of disputes over the nam. In districts where there were large groups of the autochthonous Ninisi, there were Ninisi "chiefs"; in most cases, however, these "chiefs" were really the senior Tengsobadamba of the villages. In most other districts, the sole Ninisi "chief" was the official Tengsoba of the district chief. This man had ritual power but no political power. Yet he was called Naba, because the Mossi thought that all persons in positions of command or prominence must be named chiefs. Villages made up of aliens (Busansi, Gurunsi, Yarse, and occasionally Fulani) had chiefs in the true sense of the word. These men were granted access to the nam by the district chiefs, and their [778] [428]

[428] power and authority were inherited by their families in the same manner as among Mossi lineages.

634 The last important category of Mossi chiefs included men who ruled over slave and serf villages. These men were themselves the descendants 622 of slaves and serfs, for no free-born Mossi were placed in such posts. Needless to say, these chiefs were never lineally or collaterally related to the [602] district chiefs, and therefore were never nobles. However, they might be affinally related to district chiefs, and in such cases the relationship was often of some political value.

It must be emphasized that once a man was made chief, he was respected, if not honored, by all the people of the district. In some districts, the Dapore Naba and the Baglere Naba, chiefs of two categories of serfs, were among the most valued assistants of the Kombere Naba. The only [565] people who sometimes refused to honor the village chiefs were the nakomce, [778] who were the holders of the district nam. Nevertheless, they were censored by the Kombere if they were disrespectful to his subordinates. No district chief could allow his government to be jeopardized by the maltreatment of persons who served it. In any conflict between the nam and the kin group, the supremacy of the nam was always maintained.

613 Every Mossi ruler, whether he held the nam of a kingdom, principality, 631 district, or village, was *ipso facto* also *Boodkasma* (literally, "family head") 622 of the local segment of his boodoo. The word boodoo refers to patrilineal groups that anthropologists would normally call clans, maximal lineages, major lineages, or minor lineages. The Mossi do not make any terminological distinction between these levels of their segmentary lineage system. Nevertheless, they recognize and use the status differences between these units to limit the access of each unit to the corporate assets of the boodoo. Their major social distinction is drawn between the minor lineage, which is also called boodoo, and its component minimal lineages. Each minimal- [596] lineage unit is called a *babissi* (literally, "father's brother"), and is really a large extended family composed of relatives who had a common ancestor, three, four, or at most five generations ago.

643 The Mogho Naba, for example, was head of his babissi as well as ex 613 officio head of the entire royal clan. Those rulers who claimed equality with him claimed that they, not he, were the true heads of the royal clan and the "direct" descendants of Ouedraogo and Oubri. As a function of their political position, the many princes and district chiefs were heads of their own babissi and of the maximal lineage to which their babissi be- 631 longed. Like the Mogho Naba, they were the ex officio heads of all members 613 of their boodoo who lived in their territory and who claimed descent from the same royal ancestors,

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the same royal ancestors. A Mossi village chief was likewise the head of his babissi and ex officio head of all the other babissi in his village that belonged to his boodoo. As the official Boodkasma of his village's ruling lineage, the village chief held junior or senior status in relation to other village chiefs of the same boodoo who were also the Boodkasemdamba of their respective lineage segments.

Possession of the nam influenced the pattern of seniority within lineages and lineage segments. In most cases, seniority was based on age and generation. Thus, the oldest man of the oldest generation was the Boodkasma, and his office devolved upon the next oldest man when he died. But within the ruling lineages and their segments, the man who held the nam, whether young or old, was automatically senior to all others. This does not mean that these ruling lineages did not recognize age and generational seniority. For example, whenever a chief died and sovereignty returned to the lineage as a corporate group, the senior noble of the senior generation became the acting Boodkasma and lineage head. Like all Boodkasemdamba, he managed the affairs of his group, but only until a new chief was elected. The new Boodkasma, however, sometimes delegated some of his social rights and ritual obligations to this elder, who was often regarded as the unofficial or semi-official Boodkasma of his lineage. Similarly, the senior nobles of all segments of the ruling lineage were also regarded as Boodkasemdamba. Because they were so regarded and because of the role they played, these men seldom came into conflict with the district chief. He gave them a certain amount of leeway in dealing with the everyday affairs of their group. It was understood by all, however, that nothing should jeopardize the most important asset of the lineage—the nam. Therefore, the chief was obeyed in all important matters involving the noble lineage of the district. In such matters he listened to no one; for, as one district chief said, "Once I have received the nam from the Mogho Naba, no man in this district stands above me!"

This dominance of political relations over social relations was made clear by the behavior of commoners toward ruling nobles on the one hand, and of nobles among themselves on the other. Commoners showed greater respect and deference toward members of the ruling babissi than toward persons belonging to other noble babissi. Thus, they were more respectful to the district chief's father's brothers, his siblings, and his children than to his more distant relatives. Within the noble lineage itself, everyone had to respect the chief as the holder of the nam, but otherwise the generational principle of respect and deference was maintained. The eldest nobleman of the eldest generation received deference from all others (excluding the

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554 613 571 778 chief), and the hierarchy of respect descended to the youngest nobleman of the youngest generation. Very often, the full-grown son and presumed heir of the district chief had to kneel in respect to a distantly related younger man of an elder generation. Of course, this deference ceased if and when he became chief. If he did not receive the nam, he continued to show deference to all his lineage elders. This distinction between nam and boodoo was [578] a source of potential conflict within the ruling lineages. The people usually accepted the implications of both principles, but when they did not, there were dynastic quarrels and territorial secessions.

622 613 554 778 571 The age and generational principles also operated within non-noble ruling lineages, but here too they were often complicated by the possession of the nam. Those village chiefs who had lost their noble status but retained the nam acted as official Boodkasemdamba of their local lineage segments and had considerable influence over their lineage although they did not control all its segments. Each lineage segment had its own Boodkasma, who normally ran its affairs. But because of the importance of the nam in Mossi life, the Boodkasemdamba deferred to the village chief in [565] important matters pertaining to their own boodoo. However, the generational principle was followed within the local boodoo. Almost no one deferred to the children of the village chief, who, after all, were not nakomce.

613 571 778 The situation within commoner lineages that did not hold the nam was quite different. The age and generational principles obtained within the lineage segments of these boodoo, but never *across* the segments, as they did across the babissi. These segments were more autonomous. Each had its own Boodkasma, who looked after it without deferring to anyone. This autonomy was all the more pronounced since the segments of non-noble lineages tended to be scattered throughout a district. They interacted socially and politically only when they were physically close. In any case, in the absence of the nam, the segments of non-noble lineages had no reason to remain together; they tended to lose their hierarchical quality and to become equal and separate.

613 173 778 As would be expected in such circumstances, not all Mossi lineages paid the same attention to their genealogies. Noble lineages kept track of their actual or putative ancestors, whereas non-noble lineages tended to ignore them and to let geographical proximity determine meaningful kinship ties. This loss of interest in exact genealogies was found even among lineages that had lost the nam of a district and with it their nobility, but still retained the nam of a village. Members of the minimal units in such lineages competed actively for the village nam and were interested in fairly recent an-

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613 173 778

cestors. They did not remember how they were related unless they happened to have a common grandfather or great-grandfather who had held the nam. The differential value thus placed on genealogies by the noble and non-noble lineages was due in most cases to the differential access of these lineages to the strategic resources of Mossi society. People who held the nam [554] and belonged to noble lineages enjoyed special claims to goods and services. Those whose lineages did not hold the nam had no such privileges.

613 554

Because Mossi society was basically patrilineal, a man shared in the status and the corporate assets of his patrilineage. Conversely, a man had no access to the status or resources of his mother's patrilineage except for some ritual rights and duties that accrued to him as a *yagenga* (a sister's or daughter's son). These rights and duties included residence in the home of a maternal patrilineage during childhood, attendance at sacrifices to the mother's patrilineal ancestors, the settling of quarrels between maternal kinsmen, and ritual license to seize specific items of property from these relatives. This license dramatized the *lack* of access rather than *freedom* of access to the property of maternal relatives. [591]

613 778 602 554 [175]

When a man's maternal relatives controlled the nam of the territory in which he lived, he could improve his social and economic position. In many cases, a young man who had gone to live as a "stranger" with a noble uncle or grandfather remained with these relatives. His privilege to remain was sanctioned by the Mossi belief that a boy's maternal ancestors would wreak vengeance on any person who tried to evict him from the village from which his mother had been "sent into the bush" (given away as a wife). By using various strategies and subterfuges, the "stranger" obtained wives through his maternal relatives and used their land and other resources. After several generations the lineal descendants of the "stranger" frequently became indistinguishable from their maternal relatives, although such cases were not often formally acknowledged. Whether these "sisters' children" ever managed to obtain the nam of their mother's patrilineage is a moot point, because in theory they could not. Yet, also by Mossi definition, a man could never inherit rights and duties in his mother's patrilineage; however, it is known that this did happen. It is possible that the close check kept by the ruling lineage on its genealogy made usurpation impossible. Yet I know of several cases in which candidates for chiefship feared competition from men whose descent actually barred them from the nam.

The son of a nobleman and a commoner woman seldom attached himself permanently to his maternal patrilineage, although he retained all of his customary rights, privileges, and duties in it. Occasionally, noblemen did attach themselves to their maternal relatives, but those who did had

613 usually been banished from their patrilineage for some illegal act or had
778 voluntarily left home after a dispute over inheritance of the nam, goods, or
602 women.
554

The fact that noble lineages often absorbed sisters' sons was only one of the reasons why such lineages survived and expanded, even if only at the expense of other lineages within the local society. Another reason for this growth was that the nobles, possessing the nam and its prerogatives, received more wives than the commoners. They had more children and thus multiplied more rapidly. Mossi lineages were generally exogamous through their whole depth, but exogamy became increasingly mandatory as the segments became smaller. Marriage within a maximal lineage was permitted only when some of its members had moved so far away from its original locality that the original ties were either forgotten or ignored. The Mossi [173] have myths in which the lineage founder gives his overly numerous descendants permission to marry certain of their relatives. Even so, if a marriage was actually found to have occurred between distant relatives, appropriate sacrifices had to be made to the ancestors.

613 Marriage was also forbidden between persons who could trace a common maternal ancestor. But because the time depth here was very shallow, total bilateral exogamy was practiced to a depth of only four or five generations. Of course, the differential concern with genealogies between those who had access to the nam and those who did not, had an effect on the extent to which exogamy was practiced.

613 Most Mossi marriages were based on an exchange of women between
583 two lineages linked by a long-term series of reciprocal exchanges of goods and services. Women were regarded as the most valuable part of this system. In theory, only the Boodkasma of a babissi had the right to give a woman as a wife to another lineage. However, the initiators of the reciprocal relations between lineage segments were often babissi heads, Yirisobadamba (heads of nuclear families), or individual lineage members. When a man from one lineage "made friends" with a member of another and rendered him a service or received a favor from him, their respective lineages were considered to be involved. The corporate nature of the lineage segment was acknowledged by all persons engaged in reciprocal relations, and the relations between two individuals were seen as relations between their lineages.

When a man wished to give a daughter to a friend as a wife, he had to consult his Boodkasma, who then gave the woman to the friend's Boodkasma. The latter accepted the woman as a wife for the lineage rather than for the man involved. The lineage retained its rights *in gene-*

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tricem over the woman and turned over the rights *in uxorem* to the man. 613
This point is very important, because, by accepting the woman as a wife 583
for his lineage segment, the Boodkasma accepted the responsibility of giving a woman in return to the other lineage. The stress placed on the lineage in wife-exchange was due to the corporate nature of this kinship group, as well as to the prohibition against a man's exchanging his own sisters or daughters as wives. He had to use other women in the lineage. It was believed that if this rule were violated, the women exchanged would also "exchange lives"—i.e., the fate of one would automatically reflect the fate of the other.

The Mossi marriage system worked to the advantage of both the elder males of the lineage segment and the nobles of the ruling lineage. Since the older men of the various groups controlled the resources of their kinsmen, they usually initiated "friendship" relations and obtained wives for their group. The more impartial elders distributed the women equitably among their fellow kinsmen, but occasionally older men kept the wives for themselves, knowing that in time these wives would be inherited by their younger kinsmen. Younger men had to wait until their elders died, do without wives, or establish "friendly" relations with older men. Some young men and newcomers to the district appealed to the chief for *pughsiudse* (from *pugho*, the diminutive of *pagha*, "woman," and *siubo*, "to give with the hope of profitable return"). These pughsiudse were women whom the chief received from his subjects and whom he subsequently gave out as wives on condition that their husbands give him their eldest daughters as future pughsiudse.[9]

The nobility benefited by the Mossi marriage system because, as a 613
group, they received more women than they gave out in the exchange of 565
wives. Furthermore, this enabled them to make more marriage arrange- 562
ments. This does not mean that a differential value was placed on women of different status groups. The Mossi tended to regard all women as equally valuable, but commoners tended to be more generous to noble friends than vice versa.

The nobles also received wives from their "brother," the district chief. 613
He received women as presents and signs of fealty and homage from most 565
of the groups in his district, and also from groups outside his district. He 583
kept some of these women as wives; others he used as pughsiudse; and still others he gave to his lineage segments. Some nobles had another method of obtaining wives, namely, by abduction. A nobleman who saw the daughter or wife of a commoner in the market place often encouraged her to desert her father or husband and come to him. Her relatives usually

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appealed to the district chief, and occasionally the woman was sent back. A nobleman set on having a certain girl as a wife usually had small bracelets like those worn by all noble wives placed on her ankles. Once this was done, the chief could not be compelled to send her back to her parents, and any man who tried to retrieve her was guilty of interfering with a nobleman's wife and could be killed for it. In fact, only the male relatives of noblemen's wives could converse with them without running the risk of being apprehended and executed.

The district was the most important unit in the Mossi principalities and kingdoms. It was on this level that the Mossi nobility came into direct contact with the various social and ethnic groups of the society. Here, kinship and affinal ties linked the conquerors and the conquered, the ancient and recent nobility, the refugees from conflicts over the nam and the resident aliens, in a network of social, ritual, economic, and political relationships. It was also on this level that myths and traditions legitimized most effectively the Mossi socio-economic and political system as well as the relationships between the various social and ethnic groups.

The number and size of the Mossi districts varied greatly from one principality or kingdom to another. Some districts were large and wealthy, with a number of large villages; smaller districts had a larger proportion of small villages and hamlets. The average number of these small units was probably between fifty and sixty-five per district. The population of the districts ranged from 10,000 to 35,000 persons. Some *tense* (villages) had as many as 5,000 inhabitants and some as few as 50. The average village had about 500 inhabitants. But regardless of size, all Mossi districts and component villages had basically the same structure and fulfilled the same functions. The structure of Nobere district is representative. Nobere covered approximately 200 square miles. It was bounded on the east by a district called Manga, on the north by the districts of Toece and Djiba, and on the west and south by the Red Volta River. A census taken in 1905, just nine years after the European conquest, showed the Nobere population to be about 13,200.[10] In 1955 approximately 10,000 persons inhabited 24 villages and hamlets scattered through the more inhabitable part of the district.

The number of villages and hamlets in Nobere district apparently fluctuated. Villages were occasionally abandoned, while small hamlets grew into prominent settlements. The people of Nobere always tried to establish their villages as close to the Red Volta as possible in order to utilize the more fertile lands. But they were repeatedly driven back by disease and

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marauding animals. Just twenty years ago, the six villages that lay closest to the river were gradually abandoned and their populations absorbed by other villages. As of 1955, three of these populations were still paying allegiance to their former chiefs—a fact that bears out the Mossi axiom that chiefs govern people rather than land. The three other chiefs had lost control over their followers, who had placed themselves under the protection of the chiefs of their host villages. On occasion, Nobere also lost villages to other districts. One such village, Rissoma, was taken away from Nobere and given to Djiba when one of the Nobere district chiefs had a dispute with the Mogho Naba. 634 621

The hub or center of Nobere district, like that of all Mossi districts, was Nab'tenga (also called Nobere Naba Tenga, or Na-tenga), the village of the district chief. This village was rather large and in many respects a replica in miniature of the capital of Ouagadougou. Like most Mossi villages, Nab'tenga was divided into sections, quarters, or neighborhoods called *saghse* (sing. *saka*), which included a number of compounds (*yiya*, sing. *yiri*; or *zaghse*, sing. *zaka*). The district chief's compound was called Nab'yiri. He lived there surrounded by his wives, unmarried daughters, younger children, and pages. His older male children lived in separate compounds within the same saka. The saghse of Nab'tenga included Ouidi, the saka of the Ouidi Naba; Balbalse, the saka of the Baloum Naba; Tansoba, the saka of the local war minister (Tansoba or Tampsobo); Baglere, the saka of the chief's serfs; Bendere, the saka of the chief's musicians; Ouedrange, the saka of the chief's grooms; and Pwese, the saka of the guardians of the chief's wives. Scattered among them were the saghse of noble families, smiths, the Moslem Imam, and other persons. The most important market place in the district was located about four hundred yards from the chief's compound. [592] [591] [443]

The number and types of social and ethnic groups within the district and its villages reflected Nobere's history. When the French arrived, the district chief was Kaglere, a descendant of Ngado, who was a son of Mogho Naba Sagha I (ca. 1787–1803). Ngado had been sent to Nobere at the end of the eighteenth century to replace Naba Peka (a descendant of Naba Biligo), who had been deposed and killed by Mogho Naba Sagha during a civil war. The other chiefly descendants of Biligo, however, were not deposed by Ngado; they remained in charge of all but five or six of the major villages in the district. The chiefs of such villages as Ronse, Barkago, Tewarka, and Pinse are *yagense* (descendants) of Naba Biligo. The village called Passintenga was ruled by the descendants of a Busanga from Lenga called Passentre, who allegedly had been given a wife by Biligo. It is not 634 622 175

634 known, however, whether this woman was Biligo's daughter or one of his
622 pughsiudse. The people of Passintenga claimed descent from Biligo's
175 daughter, but the other groups in the district questioned this ancestry. The village called Bourougna had two chiefs. One, the Tang Naba, was descended from a son of a Ouidi Naba of Ouagadougou who had settled in Nobere; the other, the Yang Naba, claimed descent from an aboriginal Ninisi man and woman of Biligo's lineage. The Yang Naba was thus another of Biligo's yagense in the district. The chief of Nimpwe village was a descendant of the aboriginal Ninisi people and was the principal Tengsoba in the district. He had more ritual power than political power, however. The nam of Basbedo village was held by a man descended from Busansi refugees. Living in this village was a man with the honorific title of Soulougre Naba, who claimed descent from the most important Ninisi family who had lived in the district prior to the arrival of Biligo.

634 Most of the nobles of the local ruling lineage lived either in the saghse
173 of the district villages or in isolated hamlets. Local tradition holds that one
621 of the conditions set by Naba Ngado for allowing Biligo's descendants to
[613] remain as village chiefs was the right to settle nineteen of his sons in many
[565] of the villages. He allegedly sent *mabissi* (sons of the same mother) to the same village. By so doing, he took advantage of the normal lines of fission that are created after the death of a Mossi father and prevented undue rivalries. Yet there was no driving necessity for him to do so, because there were more villages than chief's sons available. In fact, there are still many villages without nobles in Nobere district. The people of Passintenga, for instance, allegedly refused to have nobles live among them, while the people of Nimpwe allegedly killed by sorcery all the nobles who ever tried to live there. The actual reason for the absence of nobles in these villages may have been that the district chief did not wish to send his sons to villages into which his daughters had married or where there lived earth priests who
[565] were thought to be powerful sorcerers. Nobles were often unwelcome, feared, and resisted, because they tended to exploit the village people and to take advantage of the commoners.

621 The villages of Nobere district, like those of other Mossi districts, were
167 populated in part by refugees and strangers. Several saghse in Togese vil-
173 lage were inhabited by Mossi refugees who had fled a district called Guiergo after a fight over the nam of that district. Scattered throughout the district's villages were people of unknown origin called Siamse. The Siamse found in the villages of Tewaka and Nabadogo claimed that their ancestors had "followed" Naba Biligo when he came down from Ouagadougou to found the district. Several saghse in Bourougna village were in-

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habited by Yarse, people of Mandingo origin who had been assimilated by the Mossi. There were no Fulani in Nobere, even though some lived in nearby districts. But in Pinse village there lived people called Simili-Mossi, who claimed descent from Fulani herdsmen and Mossi women. Basbedo village was inhabited and ruled by people of Busansi origin. They claimed that their ancestors had fled from famine and other hardships in Busansi country and had been granted haven by Naba Biligo. The people who lived in the two saghse of Nab'tenga called Dapore (Dapobi) and Baglere (Bangare) were serfs of diverse non-Mossi origin. Saghse or compounds of Gurunsi slaves were found close to the dwellings of nobles and village chiefs throughout the district.

The number of saghse in the villages of Nobere district varied according to the size of the village and the pattern of nam inheritance within the major lineage segment that ruled the village. The saka itself housed a minor-lineage segment. The larger the village's minor lineage segment and the greater this group's genealogical depth, the more numerous were its component segments and thus its saghse. The proliferation of saghse and minor-lineage segments within the ruling lineage of a village was dependent primarily on possession of the nam. As soon as a man received the nam, he obtained control over a large amount of goods and services. He was then in a position to obtain many wives for himself and his immediate relatives, and as a result his minimal lineage grew rapidly. In time this group became so large that it split from its brother babissi within the saka, and formed a new saka of its own. Finally, this babissi became a minor lineage in its own saka, in segmental opposition to the other babissi and minor lineages within the other saghse. If the descendants of one man retained the nam for about three generations, their lineage segment and saka grew larger and in time cast off its own junior segments. However, if the segment lost the nam to a man of another babissi and saka, it ceased to proliferate. Some such groups even declined and disappeared by fusing with other local segments of the same lineage. Here is how the system worked in Barkago village of Nobere district.

Barkago itself was founded sometime in the dim past by a son of Naba Biligo. It had an area of eight or ten square miles and a population of about 650 when the French arrived in 1896. Its boundaries were set by such natural phenomena as clumps of trees, hills, and ravines. The village itself included five distinct saghse separated by footpaths, hills, rocks, and ravines, and an area of wasteland (*weogho*). Three of the saghse, Natenga ("chief's land"), Godin, and Kedpalago, were inhabited by the minor segments of the boodoo of Naba Biligo. Here is how this came about. After

the original segment of the ruling Biligo lineage had lived in Barkago for some time, it divided into two minor lineages and settled in two saghse, Natenga and Godin. A noble from Godin possessed the nam, but it eventually passed to a noble from Natenga. The new chief then founded a new saka called Kedpalago because he wanted more living space for his own children. As a result, the minor lineage of Natenga now had two babissi living in two saghse. The minor lineage of Godin subsequently declined in size and prestige. The only evidence of its former importance was that its eldest male continued to make separate sacrifices to his own chiefly ancestors, even though the more recent holders of the nam made sacrifices to all former chiefs. These independent sacrifices were made in spite of the fact that this minor lineage kept growing smaller because its male members left to live elsewhere or to join maternal patrilineages with higher status. The sacrifices were expected to cease only if and when the minor lineage were to disappear with the incorporation of the widows and orphans of its last surviving males into the other Biligo groups of the village and district. Of course, if the Godin minor lineage had regained the nam, it undoubtedly would have experienced a rebirth and renewal of strength. It might have attracted its daughter's sons, and even aliens who would have lived in its saghse as they did in those of the ruling lineage segments.

A fourth saka, Nakomgo ("we hunger after the nam"), was inhabited by the noble descendants of Naba Ngado, the district chief who had replaced the descendant of Naba Biligo of Nobere. Since these nobles traced their descent from two full brothers, Kouliga and Kongo, they formed two related minor lineages with five component minimal lineages. The compounds of the two babissi of the Kouliga minor lineage were separate but contiguous. Near them were the compounds of the three babissi of the Kongo minor lineage. Scattered about in the Nakomgo saka were compounds of sisters' sons, strangers, and nobles' slaves.

The people of Narila, the fifth saka of Barkago, were members of the aboriginal Ninisi population, and thus furnished the village's earth-priest. He made sacrifices to the earth shrines in the village, gave ritual permission for building compounds and digging graves, and took control of the village during the period between the death of a chief and the accession of another. Scattered throughout the various saghse were compounds inhabited by people of serf, slave, or refugee origin.

Of all the groups within the village, the Ngado people kept the most exact genealogies. They did so because one of the segments of their maximal lineage held the district nam, and as nobles they had theoretical access to it. Once they had lost the nam of the district, the descendants of Biligo

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also lost much of their interest in preserving their genealogies. Their local 613
lineage segment, which controlled the village nam, still showed interest in 778
its genealogy, but the people of Godin did not quite remember how they were related to the ruling lineage segment. Several times in the recent history of Barkago (and other villages), the men who were given the village nam had to be recalled from distant villages where they were living with maternal patrilineages. So relatively unimportant was possession of the village nam without concomitant noble status that after Naba Ngado took over, the local Biligo people began to ignore all local genealogical records except descent from Biligo. The Ninisi people had the least reason to be interested in their genealogy, and they simply ignored it. They had been separated from the other Ninisi groups in the district for so long that they did not even forbid marriage into those groups.

In villages such as Barkago, the existence of several lineage groupings 613
and families of strangers facilitated local marriages. But in villages with 621
fewer lineage groups, the time came when all groups were so closely linked by marriage and affinal alliances that for all practical purposes the village became an exogamous unit. By 1956, this process had reached such an advanced stage in Barkago that hardly any marriages took place between the Ninisi and Biligo local lineage segments. Both groups were permitted to marry the local descendants of Ngado, because the latter were more recent arrivals in the village. These marriages were of great significance to all villagers because they linked the nobles and the commoners in a series of exchanges. Moreover, because the groups were linked through sisters' sons [565]
with special privileges in both groups, problems deriving from status dif- [606]
ferences were more easily solved. Even the most arrogant noble was often [607]
constrained by ancestral sanctions to maintain amicable relations with his in-laws.

The Biligo lineage of Barkago contracted marriages with the other, non-related groups within and without the district. The Ngado people did likewise. Whether these nobles were able to marry noble women of other districts is a moot point. Owing to distance and politics, no such marriages are known to have occurred, and no one seems to know whether they were permissible. The Ninisi, who had always been commoners, had the largest marriage circle of all the village groups. They were able to marry nobles, commoners, and the Ninisi of the district and other districts.

The inhabitants of a Mossi village built their houses and cultivated their 423
crops on land the village chief had granted to their respective lineages. 613
Since the royal lineage, by right of conquest, controlled all of Mossi country, the rights of usufruct of a lineage depended ultimately on the Mogho [643]

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Naba. This did not mean, however, that either the Mogho Naba or any of his chiefs owned the land of Mossi country. The Mossi chiefs and their ruling lineage controlled the Mossi people and thus were able to decide who should use the land. However, there is no evidence that Mossi chiefs ever thought of controlling people by controlling land. The land appears to have been a public good, the utilization of which was in the rulers' interests. Rulers tried to attract more people, but they hardly ever tried to get more land. The people within a Mossi community who might have been said to "own" the land were the Ninisi, whose rights were derived from first occupancy and from their special association with the soil in which their ancestors were buried. When they were conquered, they did not lose their "ritual" rights over the land of their communities, but they were persuaded or forced to "care for" them in the name of the ruling group.

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III

KINGSHIP AND CHIEFSHIP

MOSSI TRADITIONAL government revolved around the Nanamse, as all Mossi 642
rulers were called. Sometimes the title was also given on an honorific basis to commoners, serfs, or slaves who performed specific duties for a Mogho Naba or a district chief; but the only true Nanamse were persons who traced their descent from Ouedraogo and Oubri.

The heads of the four Mossi kingdoms—the Mogho Naba of Ouaga- 642
dougou, the Yatenga Naba, the Tenkodogo Naba, and the Fada-N'Gourma 643
Naba—were supreme in their own realms, but there was considerable rivalry among them throughout Mossi history.[1] In terms of closeness of descent from the nation's founders, the Tenkodogo Naba came first, the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou second, and the Yatenga Naba third. The Naba of Fada-N'Gourma was outside the hierarchy. As time passed, the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou gradually became more powerful than the other rulers, even though he recognized the seniority of Tenkodogo and, as we shall see, had difficulty exercising his seniority and supremacy over the Yatenga. Because he was the pre-eminent Mossi ruler, the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou set the general pattern of kingship and chiefship. The heads of the other kingdoms, principalities, districts, and villages tried to approximate the pomp and ceremony of the Ouagadougou court as closely as their resources and etiquette permitted. The pattern of chiefship among the Mossi in general thus differed little from that of the Ouagadougou kingdom.

The Mossi of Ouagadougou believed that their Mogho Naba was supe- 643
rior to all other kings. They believed that his realm was the largest in the world, and that no other king was so rich and powerful. He was so awe-inspiring, so "like the sun," that no one dared to look upon his face. It was [516]
forbidden to touch his hand, or speak to him from any but a kneeling posi- [576]
tion with the forehead touching the ground. People were expected to hesitate before pronouncing his name, and no other person was allowed to bear

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643 the name of the current ruler. When Crozat asked one of his Mossi bearers why Boukary Koutou had chosen a title that means "elephant," the man declared, "He is an elephant; he is king of all kings as the elephant is king of all animals; a great elephant-king he is."[2] Another Moaga, meeting Crozat on the road to Ouagadougou, told him to be prepared to meet a monarch "whose riches are inexhaustible and whose splendor is marvelous. [644] He and his family wear only the most admirable European clothes; a thousand horses stand before his door, and there are more than a thousand women in his house. He is served by one hundred eunuchs; he commands as master 333 chiefs; and when he speaks to them it is as though God himself had spoken; everyone bows down before him and obeys."[3] Crozat, looking at the Mogho Naba through European eyes, did not find the "great [576] king" he had expected. Yet he and later European visitors to the Mossi [516] capital did affirm that all Mossi officials and district chiefs prostrated themselves in obeisance to their sovereign, even if they did not subsequently follow his instructions.[4]

643 Many rituals associated with the person and court of the Mogho Naba 796 served to emphasize the high esteem in which he was held by his subjects. For example, the sovereign showed himself every morning at a ceremony called "Ouend pous yan" (literally, "God rises," or "the sun rises") that [114] survives to this day. The name of this ceremony has led many scholars and travelers to assert that traditionally the Mogho Naba was considered a divine king. Dim Delobson states that this ceremony "shows the regard which the Mossi have for their chief, since they compare him to the sun, and thus to a 'god.' "[5] However, the Mossi do not now and probably never did regard their monarchs either as gods or as divine kings. There is a great deal of difference between regarding a man as "powerful and brilliant" like the sun and regarding him as divine. As a matter of fact, the [522] Mossi very often dramatize in humorous fashion the all-too-human frailties of their rulers, without ever considering it sacrilegious to do so. On the other hand, the Mogho Naba, as the supreme ruler, was expected to follow faithfully the strict etiquette demanded by his exalted position.

643 The morning ceremony was opened by the ruler's chief page, the *so-* 796 *ghone-kasanga,* who sprinkled a phylacteric solution around a throne 644 (*guere*) in the courtyard in front of a reception room called the *zongo.* Other pages (*soghondamba*) brought out a large cushion (*naghpure*), the ruler's sword, and other personal accouterments, and placed them on the [292] throne. Still other pages aided the Mogho Naba in his toilet. He was clothed in a large red robe, which symbolized the rising sun; he wore a bonnet surmounted by silver streamers (*wazourfou sebere*), which repre- -sented the sun itself.

 643

sented the sun itself. The toilet was performed in complete silence, for no 644
one was allowed to speak to the monarch until after the ceremony. Mean- 796
while, in the courtyard, the court dignitaries, visitors, and the musicians and
minstrels (*bendere*) took their places. The provincial ministers sat on their [645]
respective stones (*coganaramse*), and the visitors sat by their hosts. The
pages at the door of the zongo awaited the moment when the Mogho Naba
and his escort would emerge from the zongo. On seeing the two pages who
preceded the monarch, they snapped their fingers as a signal to the still
silent bendere.

On seeing the monarch, the chief musician, the Bendere Naba, rubbed [533]
his fingers across the top of his drum to produce the sound of a lion's
growl, and the other drummers and violinists played the royal air, "Ouend
pous yan." The head guard, the Kambo Naba, and his men, carrying guns,
walked up from the side and knelt down facing the assembly. And the
samande-kamba, the "servants of the courtyard," came with heavy batons
to guard against crimes of lese majesty. From the wings came a groom
with a partly saddled ceremonial horse. As soon as the monarch was seated
on his throne, his two pages moved to the front and knelt down facing the
courtyard. The salutations now began. The first group of ministers, led 643
by the Baloum Naba and including the Samande Naba, the Samande Na- 645
bila, the Ouedrange Naba, the Kamsaogho Naba, and the Zusoaba Kasan- 796
ga, left their stones and came to the throne with slow steps and bowed 576
heads. A few yards from the monarch, they knelt on the ground, and with
their fingers folded and their thumbs in the air, leaned forward, struck the
ground with both hands three times, and then rubbed the palms of their
left hands with the fingers of their right. Then they arose, and with heads
still bowed walked backwards to their places.[6] With the music still playing,
another group of ministers, led by the Ouidi Naba and including such men
as the Gounga Naba, the Larhalle Naba, and the Pwe Naba, saluted the
ruler in the same manner. On Fridays and other Islamic holy days, the [792]
Moslem Imam representing the Ouagadougou congregation read aloud
from the Koran. This part of the ceremony ended when the Mogho Naba [481]
rose, and, with the measured steps and swaying gait that signified royalty,
retired to the zongo, preceded by his two pages.[7]

A few minutes later, the monarch returned to the courtyard without
his red robe and glittering headdress. There was a second round of salu-
tations comparable to the first, but this time the Ouidi Naba and his group
did not appear unless it was an important occasion or important guests
were present. When this part of the ceremony was over, the monarch 643
called for his half-saddled horse and announced that he wished to go to 796

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643 La, a village near Koudougou district. His eldest wife, the *Pughtiema,*
796 appeared carrying her household utensils in order to accompany her husband. However, all the ministers, led by the Kamsaogho Naba, implored the monarch to have his horse unsaddled and to postpone the trip until the following day. Feigning anger, the Mogho Naba reluctantly agreed to remain in the capital, ordered his horse unsaddled, dismissed his wife, and re-entered the palace.[8]

173 The tradition about the origin of this ritual reveals something of the
643 Mossi attitude toward the human frailties of their rulers. It appears that
796 Poko, the favorite wife of Mogho Naba Waraga (ca. 1660–80), asked permission to visit her father at La, and that he refused to grant her request because of his love and admiration for her. Nevertheless, she continued to ask him for permission, and after her third request he granted her wish and sent a page and a small girl with her as chaperons. When Poko did not return to the palace on the third day, Naba Waraga sent two pages to her father's compound to fetch her, and here they discovered that she had died. Fearing the king's wrath toward persons who brought bad tidings, the pages did not report back to him but notified the ministers of Poko's death. When subsequent messengers also failed to return, the king decided to go to La. The following day, after the morning ceremonies, he ordered his horse saddled and commanded the Pughtiema to get ready to accompany him on his journey. But the ministers, anxious to protect him from grief, told him that a great king never followed a mere woman under any circumstances and persuaded him not to depart. The monarch went back into the palace, and the dignitaries ordered the horse unsaddled and sent it away. Shortly afterwards, the king changed his mind and decided to go to La, but he was beseeched not to do so. He swore that he would leave the following morning, and that if he were prevented from doing so, he would advise all his descendants to try to go to La every morning until one of them succeeded.[9]

643 At the end of this ceremony, a page gave the ministers an ample supply
644 of beer and kola nuts. The Moslems were given presents of kola nuts and
692 millet water (*zom kom*) sweetened with honey, since they were forbidden
576 to drink millet beer. Later in the morning, the Mogho Naba left the palace
[431] and entered the zongo, where he greeted his visitors, accepted gifts from visiting chiefs and subjects, dispensed gifts in turn, and presided over the court of justice. Anyone who went to see the ruler had to be accompanied by his provincial minister or his host—regardless of whether it was his purpose to pay a courtesy visit, to pledge allegiance, to plead for aid, or to give
643 testimony in a lawsuit. Pages moved back and forth between the palace
644 and the courtyard, dispensing kola nuts and beer or millet water prepared
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by the sovereign's wives. Other pages waited upon the monarch, and accompanied him when he moved about the courtyard. When the ruler drank any liquid, the pages rubbed the palm of one hand with the fingers of the other; when he sneezed, everyone clapped; and when he stepped out to urinate, a page accompanied him, turned his back to him, knelt down, and saluted by rubbing his palm.

When the Mogho Naba had finished his morning audiences, he entered his palace for a solitary meal. This meal was prepared by one of his young wives, who tasted it in his presence before giving it to the page who served him.[10] After eating, the monarch rested for a few hours; then he emerged into the courtyard to grant audiences and hear court cases until sunset. At that time he retired to his palace, and those courtiers who were not connected with the evening ceremonies returned to their homes.

The ceremony that closed the day at the monarch's court was called "Kwaga Basgha" (literally, "final meal"). This ceremony still survives. As soon as the sun began to set, the samande-kamba took their heavy batons and stood guard to prevent unauthorized persons from coming near the *namtibo* (royal amulets). The Baloum Naba and the Bendere Naba entered the palace courtyard and knelt before the zongo. The chief page then brought out the *kwaga*, a pottery vessel containing a fire ritually associated with the namtibo.[11] The vessel was placed on the ground, and the page blew on the fire to make it burn brightly. Meanwhile, the Bendere Naba rubbed his fingers across his drum to make the growl of a lion. When the fire finally died out, the Zusoaba Kasanga and the Baloum Naba closed the ceremony by rising, coming together, and saluting the namtibo in the traditional Mossi manner. (The Mogho Naba did not attend this ceremony.) Before the officials left for the night, the pages gave them pots of beer prepared by the royal wives. Sometimes these officials visited the Mogho Naba before they retired to their compounds. Once these men had departed, the pages served the ruler his evening meal, which again had been prepared by one of his young wives.

During the hours of darkness the Mogho Naba conducted many secret affairs of state and conversed with the members of his household. Persons seeking the nam of a deceased relative were often granted audience at night, as were litigants in court cases. When there were no pressing matters of state, the ruler gathered some of the royal wives around him and discussed family affairs, which protocol forbade him to discuss during the day. Some rulers reportedly disguised themselves and visited the wards of the town in the company of a young man from the palace, in an effort to learn things that did not ordinarily come to a ruler's attention.

The Mogho Naba slept in a grass hut in the palace compound. Two

513 The Mogho Naba slept in a grass hut in the palace
643 compound. Two reasons are given for the choice of a grass hut over a brick building: first,
[342] the grass hut was considered better protection against sorcerers, who were
[754] believed to induce storms that destroy buildings and their occupants; sec-
[775] ond, it was believed that the ruler's ancestors preferred to visit grass huts because it was easier for them to enter through the interstices in the walls.
[644] When the monarch retired for the night, one of his pages stood guard at the door. The Mogho Naba usually slept all night, but he occasionally made the rounds with a page to check on the palace guards or the safety (and virtue) of his wives.

643 The routine of the Mogho Naba seldom varied. Only in times of danger
[644] or on great ceremonial occasions did protocol permit any major changes in court procedure. Normally, pages, ministers, and other court officials adhered very strictly to their traditional tasks.

The Mossi considered the king's office to be such a difficult one that even today they say, *Mogho Naba toumde ya yida fa* ("The Mogho Naba's task is the most difficult of all"). Nevertheless, the Mogho Naba's office was always eagerly sought, and considerable care had to be exercised to
[645] ensure that the right person was chosen. As soon as the incumbent Mogho Naba died, and even before he was buried, the Ouidi Naba, as prime minister, began the consultations leading to the selection of a new monarch. Mossi custom decreed that the eldest son of a previous ruler be chosen as the new Mogho Naba. This choice was not automatic, however, in view of the primary consideration that the person selected should have the skill to "keep" the country. Other qualifications for office were membership in the royal minimal lineage, soundness of body and mind, and sufficient age to command universal respect. Given these requirements and the lack of any provisions for a regency, it is not surprising that a dead ruler's sons, brothers, uncles, and even grandchildren—that is, his entire babissi—should have competed to "eat the nam" (accede to power).[13] Of the thirty-four kings who have ruled since Oubri, the founder of the Ouagadougou dynasty, twelve succeeded their brothers and twenty-two their fathers. Interestingly enough, there is some indication that at the beginning of the Ouagadougou dynasty, the successor of a king was usually chosen from among his brothers before the nam was passed on to the next generation.[14] For example, Oubri's four sons all reigned in turn before the kingship descended to the son of the last brother in office. Then, two of this brother's sons reigned before the nam descended to a new generation. Initially, then, seniority within the royal lineage, like seniority within the local ruling lineages, may have been determined by generation. On the other hand, accidental factors may have governed: a weak state organization may have

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required mature rulers, or an uncle may have vanquished a nephew by 643
physical prowess or force of character.

The pretenders to the Mossi nam began to press their claims as soon as 643
propriety allowed. They presented gifts to the Ouidi Naba and to the other 645
ministers in an attempt to sway the issue. The Ouidi Naba finally called a secret council composed of the Gounga Naba, the Larhalle Naba, the Kamsaogho Naba, and the Tansoba, and recited to them the following formula: "The country does not have a chief, and it needs one. Among all the people who wish to be elected [*di nam,* "eat the nam"], it is for you to choose the most worthy."[14] To this the councillors responded: "Naba! You are our superior, and the right to make the choice rests upon you alone." Thus given a free hand, the Ouidi Naba chose the most capable candidate. However, before announcing his choice, he said to the Tansoba, "My heart is heavy because I fear that those persons whose hopes have not been fulfilled will resort to violence to get their way." The Tansoba responded, "That will be against tradition and justice. Do not fear. I am here with my army to see that your decision is respected." Having received the support of the Tansoba, the Ouidi Naba announced his choice to the other councillors. They said to him, "Naba! You have expressed our will, and that of all the people." It is not to be understood from these formulas that the other councillors had no voice in selecting the candidate. They did in fact advise the Ouidi Naba concerning the best candidate, but these formulas emphasized that it was the Ouidi Naba, as prime minister, who was responsible for the choice.

The Ouidi Naba's choice of a new Mogho Naba was kept secret until the successful candidate was summoned for investiture. This occurred on the second night of the late Mogho Naba's funeral ceremony. Toward nightfall, the Ouidi Naba secretly dispatched a messenger to summon the
successful candidate. The need for secrecy was demonstrated in 1890, when 175
Boukary Koutou forced the committee to name him Mogho Naba. The cir- 643
cumstances were as follows: Mogho Naba Sanum died without male issue, 669
and all his brothers vied for the nam. One of them, Boukary Koutou, was 645
felt to be ineligible because he had been exiled for leading a civil war against Sanum, but like his brothers he hastened to Ouagadougou. Boukary feared that the electors would not look favorably upon his claim, and when he failed to ascertain their intentions he decided upon a *coup d'état.* He gathered an army composed of his supporters and his Gurunsi slaves, and surrounded the compound in which the electors were gathered. One of the electors discovered the army during a break in the deliberations and reported his findings to the Ouidi Naba. The chief minister and his aides

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175 643 669 645 knew that Boukary Koutou was the only person capable of such a conspiracy. Fearing for their lives if they did not nominate him, they immediately sent a messenger to summon him as the successful candidate.[16] Under normal circumstances, however, there was no coercion of the ministers and the nominee was quietly brought to the councillors.

645 643 [292] Wearing a pair of trousers and a sheepskin mantle and carrying a spear in each hand, the nominee entered the courtyard of the compound through the women's door.[16] He was preceded by the Samande Nabila, who sprinkled the earth with water. He came up to the councillors and saluted them, and the Ouidi Naba addressed him as follows: "Before your father [brother] died, did he designate you to be his successor?" The nominee replied, "No, Sire! My father has left you free to choose whom you wish, be he a blind man or a leper!" This question was asked three times, and the nominee responded three times. The Ouidi Naba then made the following declaration: "I am giving you the nam of your father and grandfathers. You must try to conduct yourself as they did when they had the nam." The Ouidi Naba then listed the names of the territories over which the ruler had absolute power and authority. The new monarch raised his two spears in the air, made a speech in which he announced three guiding principles by which he vowed to reign, and "named a name," that is, suggested the title by which he wished to be known. For example, Mogho Naba Sagha II (1942–57) said in his inaugural speech: "Without rain, there is no life. I will be like rain for the country." He then became known as Mogho Naba Sagha ("Rain"), a rather fitting title for a ruler in a country with uncertain rainfall. The present Mogho Naba stressed in his inaugural speech (in 1957) that he was "solid as a rock." His official title is now Mogho Naba Kougri ("Rock").[17]

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The taking of a new name was only the first step in the elaborate process through which a man became Mogho Naba. Next, the Ouidi Naba took the two spears from the new monarch and removed his sheepskin mantle. Then he gave him his new white clothes, which included a pair of trousers, a bonnet, and a sleeveless robe, all made for him by the people of the Sculougou ward in the capital. Next, he was given a cushion made by the people of Baramimi. The Baloum Naba then took the closely guarded namtibo, the sacred amulets of the dynasty, and used them in the preparation of a potion of millet beer mixed with millet-flour water, part of which was poured as a libation to the earth goddess, Tenga.[18] The ruler and the assembled ministers all partook of the potion in a kind of communion. The ministers then shook the ruler's hand, an act thereafter forbidden, and departed for their own compounds. The newly elected

645 643 [789] [782] [776]

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The newly elected monarch secreted himself either at the Samande Nabila's home or elsewhere in the capital until daybreak. Tradition holds that if he were killed before being officially proclaimed before his subjects as the new ruler, the assassin could become Mogho Naba.[19] 643 [682]

The public ceremonies marking the official proclamation of the new ruler's accession to power took place on the following day. Early that morning, the monarch left his secret sleeping quarters and proceeded to the Koumbi Naba's house. Here he dressed in his white garments and mounted an old, unsaddled horse. The Baloum Naba then gave him a sack containing the namtibo, which he placed over his shoulder, and the Kaizi Naba led him out of the courtyard by the women's door. As the ruler's horse passed through the gate, his sister, the *Napoko* ("female ruler"), cried, "The sun has reappeared! The fire is relighted! The earth lives again!" A large crowd of musicians and warriors who had been alerted by the ministers shouted and danced as they accompanied the monarch, who circled the compound three times.[20] The ruler then reentered the compound, and this time he came out through the men's door as a sign of his full status. Here he was greeted by the Ouidi Naba, who proclaimed in a loud voice, "Mossi people, here is the Mogho Naba!" The warriors shouted and fired their muskets, and the musicians played. Then all the dignitaries and their followers solemnly prostrated themselves and paid homage and swore allegiance to their monarch. He, in turn, listened attentively when his ministers and some of the elder chiefs gave him advice about how the affairs of state should be conducted. After each declaration of loyalty or word of counsel, the people shouted in praise of their ruler. The Bendere Naba, accompanied by his musicians, then recited the ruler's genealogy, announced the pledges the new monarch had made to his people, and acclaimed him by his royal title, "Mogho Naba [X]." From this moment on, no child born during his reign could bear the ruler's name, and those persons who already bore it called themselves *Nab'yure* ("king's name"). 643 796 [645] [644] [551]

As the next stage in the ceremony the Mogho Naba, accompanied by his retinue, visited the various wards in the capital. In each he was proclaimed ruler and received the allegiance of both Mossi and non-Mossi ward chiefs. He visited the wards controlled by such men as the Loumbila Naba, the Sapone Naba, and the Ouagadougou Naba, and at each stop the ward chief declared, "People of [X], here is your new sovereign." Having been acknowledged by the leading chiefs of the capital, the new ruler then returned to his host's house. He emerged later in the day to visit the compound of a palace attendant, the Samande Nabila, where he sat under a 643 [621] [641] 643 641

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643 tree and again received oaths of allegiance from his chief ministers and
641 other dignitaries. He then proceeded to the house of the Ouagadougou Naba (a direct descendant of the aboriginal Ninisi population), where he spent the night. The following morning, his host made sacrifices to his Ninisi ancestors in the name of the new ruler. Once again, the principal ministers and dignitaries appeared and joined in a ceremony of allegiance to their king, but this time they drank a potion prepared with the namtibo and swore that they hoped their ancestors would kill them if they should prove disloyal to the Mogho Naba.

The monarch then left the Ouagadougou Naba's compound, accompanied by the Tansoba and his warriors, and went to Paspanga (a ward in the capital whose name means "to add strength or power") to receive homage and allegiance from his assembled district chiefs. Along the way, he met symbolic opposition from the candidates he had defeated. However, these "hostile" forces were quickly routed by the Tansoba and his
[173] army. According to one Mossi tradition, when Sagha I (ca. 1787–1803) was elected Mogho Naba, his father's brother, Kaoko, tried to kill him during this mock battle. A vigorous civil war ensued, in which some district chiefs joined Kaoko. Sagha defeated and killed Kaoko and many of his supporters, and then swept through the country, executing rebellious district chiefs and placing his own sons in power.

At Paspanga the sovereign sat under a tree, surrounded by his ministers, warriors, and musicians. The onlookers formed two facing ranks in front of the sovereign, between which the district chiefs and their retinues walked up to pledge their allegiance. Those members of the royal sub-lineage who had been put to flight by the Tansoba's army returned and rendered homage to the monarch. Emissaries from the autonomous Mossi princes also greeted him.

When this ceremony was over, the Mogho Naba instructed his retainers to provide food and drink for his subjects and guests, and retired for the night. He remained at Paspanga for a week, during which time he greeted those persons who had not arrived in time for the first day's ceremony. On the seventh day, the monarch and a few courtiers and retainers retired to Dimvousse ("king's resting place"), where the district chiefs who had come to Ouagadougou for the installation brought him presents before returning home. The Mogho Naba remained at Dimvousse for a period ranging from several weeks to three years, depending on whether the earth-priests advised him to inhabit his predecessor's palace or build a new one.[21] When at last he ended his retreat, a large crowd of horsemen, warriors, and musicians accompanied him to his palace, where he set up his permanent court.

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The Mogho Naba had an elaborate court composed of many officials, relatives, and servants. The most important courtiers were the five ministers, who appeared daily at court and took part in all important ceremonies in addition to administering their own provinces. Aside from these men, the Mogho Naba had a number of other officials called Naba whose responsibilities covered the full range of duties in the palace and in the capital. One of the most interesting was the Pwe Naba, a royal diviner and court chaperon. His chief duty was to guard the morals of the pages and the royal wives; he also administered the ordeal to persons accused of treason. The pages were required to be chaste until they were discharged from the palace, lest their amorous adventures lead them to compromise the virtue of the royal wives, with whom they were constantly in contact. A wife and a page suspected of adultery were tested by the Pwe Naba. He forced them to look into a mirror or a calabash of water, and declared them guilty or innocent according to the way their faces were reflected. If they were found guilty, the wife was executed and the page was either executed or discharged in disgrace. The Pwe Naba also saw to it that strangers did not address the ruler's wives either on the street or in the market. Offenders were executed.

The Dapore Naba served as the court's chief executioner and as head of a group of the Mogho Naba's hereditary serfs. Members of the royal clan were executed by strangulation, since royal blood could not be shed; all other persons were executed either with a sword, by hanging, or with heavy clubs. Another palace official was the Ouedrango Naba, the head groom. It was he who saddled and presented the king's ceremonial horse to him at the morning ceremony. The Kambo Naba commanded the palace guard; only he and his guards were permitted to carry guns. The Samande Naba and the Samande Nabila supervised the work of the samande-kamba, young men who worked around the palace courtyard and kept watch with heavy batons to enforce order during ceremonies. A lesser palace official was the Zusoaba Kasanga, who, as chief of the palace eunuchs, ruled over the guardians of the royal harem. The Gande Naba made sacrifices for the ruler and also distributed gifts from the king to the royal officials and the royal household.

Another courtier, and one who played an important role during the installation of the new ruler, was the Ouagadougou Naba. As a direct descendant of the Ninisi, he was all but indispensable at sacrifices propitiating or honoring his ancestors. The Bendere Naba was the chief musician and court historian; according to some reports, a Bendere Naba was killed instantly if he made a mistake while reciting the ruler's genealogy. The Raga Naba was chief of the markets in the capital. Under him were

Under him were 644 the Kos Naba, who levied taxes on general merchandise sold in the mar- [651] kets, and the Nemdo Naba, who collected taxes on meat sold in the markets and was responsible for distributing meat within the royal household. Most of these positions were hereditary, but here primogeniture was not as important as in the ruling and administrative lineages.

[648] The various foreign groups in the capital also sent representatives to the court. Among them were the Zangweoto Naba for the Hausa, a Naba for the Songhai, and an Imam for the Ouagadougou Moslems. Even total strangers such as the early European visitors were placed under the care of a special chief.

The most ubiquitous persons at the Mogho Naba's court were the pages, who were boys between the ages of ten and twenty. These boys were regarded as comparable to the ruler's wives, since they served him in the same manner as ordinary Mossi women serve their husbands at home. They wore women's bracelets and women's clothes, and dressed their hair in the same style as the royal wives. As we have seen, they were forbidden sexual [834] intercourse until they were released from the royal household.[33]

173 The institution of pages is said to have originated sometime in the sev- 644 enteenth century, during the reign of Mogho Naba Waraga. Before his reign, the wives of the Mogho Naba attended him at court. The change came during a lengthy civil war between Waraga and the chief of Riziam territory, who had refused to pay allegiance to him. During five "dry seasons" (five years) of fighting, the Mogho Naba was attended only by a small boy. He found him so efficient that at the end of the war he resolved to employ only page boys and prohibit his wives from attending him at court. This origin is conjectural. However, the use of pages effectively segregated the royal wives from court intrigues, and, once instituted, the practice spread throughout the country.

644 The Mogho Naba had little difficulty recruiting pages. Many of them were the sons of pughsiudse whom he had given to his subjects as wives. In theory, the Mogho Naba could select boys at will, but in practice the pages were usually selected by the ministers and sent to the palace. Most boys willingly accepted service, but some, often with the support of their parents, resisted confinement to the palace. Some ten-year-olds even ran away to escape their impending fate, but they were soon caught and bracelets with the insignia of their new status. Once this had been done, their lineages encouraged them to remain at the palace. Their period of service [145] terminated when they began to "push beards," usually at about eighteen years of age. One district chief claims that ancient Mogho Nanamse used to take the sons of district chiefs as pages and release them only when their

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fathers died. In this way the rulers not only retained the allegiance of the boys' fathers but had a unique opportunity to determine whether these boys were qualified to succeed to the nam. 644

The life of a page was confining, even if sometimes very rewarding. Pages were bound by the demands of the ruler, whose every wish had to be satisfied immediately. A quarrelsome ruler was a terror to his pages, who had to bear silently his insults and blows. On the other hand, a considerate monarch permitted or encouraged his pages to profit from the small [662] political intrigues in which they were invariably involved. Prospective district chiefs "made friends" with pages to find out whether their suits were progressing, or to whom they might usefully offer gifts. The pages used any money they might procure to buy clothes for themselves, to supplement the clothing and presents they received from their relatives. Every page was "adopted" by one of the royal wives, who prepared his meals and took care of him. In return, he helped this woman cultivate her field when his presence was not required by the monarch. When a page completed his service satisfactorily, he received a pughsiudga as a wife. If his work had not been satisfactory, he was simply dismissed.

The only woman who played any significant role at the court of the Mogho Naba was the Pughtiema, his head wife. She was the only wife to whom he presented his friends, and whom he allowed his subjects to visit. This woman, who was commonly the widow of the former Mogho Naba, was often chosen because she was past childbearing age: she was thus older and wiser than the other wives, less preoccupied with children, and above the sexual jealousies that may often develop in polygynous households. She arbitrated among the wives and stood *in loco parentis* to the younger ones, whom she instructed and advised. She served also as official hostess to the ancestors during the annual propitiatory rituals. It was her duty to prepare the millet beer and millet water for the sacrifices [782] to the ancestors, who were believed to feast at her hut before they visited the rest of the household. In addition, it was she who prepared to accompany the Mogho Naba to La each day. Lastly, it was her duty to introduce any new royal wife to the ancestors, and to ask them to watch over this potential mother of their descendants. 644 595 643

The ruler inherited some of his wives from his father; some he received from his many friends and vassals; and others he selected from among his pughsiudse. Crozat reports that Mogho Naba Wobogo (1890-96) allegedly had a hundred wives. Crozat did not see this many women at Wobogo's [114] court, understandably, since most of a ruler's wives lived in villages, where they were guarded by eunuchs.[21] Of the substantial number of royal wives

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595 who did live at the palace, only a small minority prepared the ruler's meals
644 and shared his bed. Dim Delobson reports that Mogho Naba Kom II (1905–42) had thirty-seven wives. His son, Mogho Naba Sagha II (1942–
[177] 57), had twenty.[24] The present Mogho Naba, Kougri, recently married
[178] according to Western tradition and is officially monogamous.[25] There seems to be a general trend toward fewer wives among Mossi chiefs.

643 Mossi rulers never married for the purpose of forming state alliances,
581 and their marriages had no political significance. The Mogho Naba's mar-
582 riages were exogamous with regard to the royal lineage and to his mother's minimal lineage. Aside from these restrictions, however, the Mogho Naba could marry women from any Mossi lineage or group, including serfs, slaves, and foreign populations. It is said that when Mogho Naba Sanum (1850–90) despaired of having an heir by a Mossi woman, he took a Fulani wife.[26]

643 The Mogho Naba had no formal wedding ceremony. The task of intro-
585 ducing a new wife to the royal harem fell to the Pughtiema. She and her
[302] assistants welcomed the wife in a prescribed fashion. First they shaved all the hair from her body. They then bathed her in warm water to which shea butter and ritual herbs had been added, and during the bath they recited the ruler's genealogy to impress her with her new status.[27] The Pughtiema advised her on the need for proper deportment, and warned her that
[301] adultery was punished by death. To close the ceremony, a smith fastened to the girl's wrists and ankles the silver or brass bracelets that identified her as a wife of the Mogho Naba. If the bride was still a child, she was often allowed to return to her father's house until she reached childbearing age. If she was past the age of puberty, her marriage was consummated without further ceremony, and she joined the ranks of the ruler's wives.

644 The wives who lived in the palace were divided into three groups. The
595 first group included the wives who lived with the Pughtiema in a section of the palace harem called the *zaka sanga* ("large courtyard"). These women were all past childbearing age and no longer received nocturnal visits from the Mogho Naba. They had their own fields in the vicinity of the palace and cultivated them with the aid of the samande-kamba, the pages they had adopted, and their own children. The women of the second group, those of the *zagbilin* ("small courtyard"), were mostly in their thirties or forties and still sexually active. They received occasional visits from the Mogho Naba, but fewer than his younger wives. These women also cultivated their fields with the help of the young men of the court.

The third group of wives, the *dogunba* ("keepers of the household"), was the most important. The dogunba prepared the ruler's meals and satis-

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fied his sexual desires. Since these women were in the monarch's favor, they were better dressed than the other wives and received more attention from him. The dogunba generally cultivated a large field in common with the aid of the palace retainers, but some insisted on cultivating their own fields instead. Like the other wives, the dogunba usually lived in huts of their own. Childless women sometimes shared the same hut until one of them became pregnant and had to set up a hut for herself and her child. 644 595 [342] [591]

Those wives who lived in special villages under the supervision of eunuchs rarely went to the palace. Usually, they were past childbearing age or had lost favor with the monarch. They cultivated plots of land, spun cotton, and prepared locust-bean flour, locust-bean "balls," and shea butter. They kept a part of the produce for their own use and sent the remainder to the palace stores; the same arrangement obtained for all three categories of palace wives.

The Mogho Naba's heir was usually born while his father was still Crown Prince. He was never born in his father's compound because, unlike other Mossi women, the wife of a Mogho Naba or Crown Prince returned to her father's house for confinement. As soon as she announced her pregnancy, the Pughtiema or one of the older wives held a ceremony to notify the ancestors. Once the rite had been completed, the wife was sent to her relatives for fear that she might be harmed by her less fortunate co-wives. If the child was a boy, the ruler or Crown Prince was notified immediately, because the important privileges of a first-born hinged upon this notification. Since several wives of the Mogho Naba might be pregnant at the same time and errors might be made about the onset and duration of pregnancy, primogeniture had to be established immediately to forestall dynastic conflicts. For example, it is commonly believed that the present Doulougou Naba was born several days before Mogho Naba Sagha II (1942–57) but was deprived of the nam because the messenger who brought news of his birth reached Mogho Naba Kom after the messenger who announced Sagha's birth. Undoubtedly, such allegations were sometimes used to foster and support dynastic rebellions. 644 595 843 644 595 843 428 643 [578]

So strong was the fear that the most likely heir to the nam would be harmed by jealous co-wives that the child and his mother never returned to the palace except for brief visits on ceremonial occasions. The young prince remained with his mother's relatives and was guarded and educated by servants sent from the palace. If his father was on the throne at Ouagadougou when the boy reached the age of ten, he was formally installed as chief of Djiba district, the traditional seat of the Crown Prince. If his father was not on the throne, the boy remained with his mother's relatives and went to Djiba when his grandfather died and his father was installed as Mogho Naba.

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000 went to Djiba when his grandfather died and his father was installed as Mogho Naba.

The origin of Djiba's status as the seat of the Crown Prince is rather 634 obscure. The people of the neighboring district of Nobere say that Djiba 644 was founded by a "companion" of their own founder, Naba Biligo, one of 173 the numerous "eldest" sons of Mogho Naba Oubri, the implication being that Djiba was supervised by Nobere. However, no one seems to know when Djiba's status changed or what happened to the ancient family who used to govern it. The consensus is that in earlier times the heir presumptive to Ouagadougou did not necessarily become chief of Djiba, but was given any district whose chieftainship was vacant when he came of age. Dim [114] Delobson reports that Djiba became the district of the Crown Prince sometime during the seventeenth century, when Mogho Naba Zombere, who had reigned for sixty years, found it necessary to establish a permanent seat for his heir.[28] However, Dim Delobson does not report under what conditions Djiba was chosen, nor does he say what happened to the local ruling lineage when this transfer took place. That the transfer was carried out in the manner reported by Dim Delobson is not doubted, because each new [558] Mogho Naba obtained districts for his relatives in this way. Through this process, the people of the ancient ruling lineages were usually reduced to [613] the level of commoners, and this is apparently what happened to the rulers of Djiba.

634 The first public sign that the young prince was being prepared for the 643 nam came in the form of a summons commanding him to go to Ouagadougou to be installed as Djiba Naba. On his way to the capital, he visited several villages where the local Tengsobadamba made sacrifices to the earth goddess in his name. He took this opportunity to meet with the district chiefs and their assembled village chiefs; he was entertained by them; and in turn he distributed gifts to the old women, whose praises were considered especially effective in bringing health and long life. When the boy finally arrived at the capital, he lodged at the compound of the Kambo Naba, head of the palace guard, until the Mogho Naba and his ministers installed him as chief of Djiba.

The installation rites for the Crown Prince were very similar to those already described for the Mogho Naba, and identical to those for the district chiefs. During the ceremony, no mention was made of the fact that the prince was the son of the Mogho Naba. The only special feature was that when the prince went into the courtyard after the ceremony to render homage to the Mogho Naba, he sat in an area assigned to him by custom. When the ruler appeared, the prince followed the Gounga Naba, who was pro-

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vincial minister for Djiba, and rendered homage to the sovereign. After 634
this reception the prince went to the Gounga Naba's compound, which 644
henceforth was his headquarters whenever he visited Ouagadougou; for, like other district chiefs, he had to consult with this minister before seeing the monarch. Everyone in the kingdom had to follow the political hierarchy, even the ruler's heir.

The young prince remained at his host's house and from there visited the other important officials, in the order of their rank, receiving from each presents of sheep, millet beer, kola nuts, and sometimes wives. He then [795]
visited the Imam of the Ouagadougou Moslem community, where he received a blessing in the name of Allah and was given kola nuts and millet water sweetened with honey. On the fourth or fifth day the prince went to [769]
a small village called Zoangha, where he made a sacrifice to his ancestors and requested their protection against all enemies.[29] He returned to Ouagadougou on the same day and was given a palace escort to accompany him to his district.

During his journey, the royal heir had the opportunity to establish or 634
re-establish friendly relations with district chiefs who were now his peers, 644
but who might someday become his subjects. He visited in turn the war 431
leader at Tansobatenga, the Koubri Naba, the Ipelse Naba, and the Kondrin Naba. Each of these chiefs offered him livestock, slaves, and wives. He, in turn, distributed salt (a valuable commodity) to the old women and gave kola nuts and other commodities to the chiefs' head wives. The Baganmini Naba presented the prince with a special quiver of arrows, and the chief of the Fulani at Bedego gave him a pretty maiden and one of his best bulls. The prince spent a few days with each of his hosts, but stayed for seven days in Bere, a district bordering on his own. The Bere Naba gave him a wife, a robe, and a cow, and sent messengers to the village chiefs of Djiba to announce that their chief had arrived in Bere. The chiefs then journeyed to Bere, pledged allegiance to their ruler, and presented gifts to him. On the seventh night there was a ritual (whose main features are 634
unclear), in the course of which the prince entered Djiba secretly on horse- 644
back, accompanied only by one servant, one groom, and the nobles and [788]
chiefs of Djiba.[30] Most members of the escort who had accompanied him from the capital were left behind at Bere, and followed only when the prince had established himself in his district. When the prince's band entered Djiba under cover of darkness, it was met by the local Ouidi Naba, who ruled the district in the absence of a Crown Prince. The Ouidi Naba now became the prince's protector if the boy were still young, or his most trusted adviser if he were old enough to rule by himself.

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634 As soon as the prince arrived, the Ouidi Naba made preparations to
644 receive the chiefs of such local districts as Manga, Nobere, and Basgana, who visited the prince and brought him wives, livestock, and money. During a seven-day period, other chiefs and well-wishers visited the new chief
[431] and offered him gifts. When this period was over, the new Djiba Naba gave wives to the noble members of his escort and livestock, money, and kola nuts to the commoners and serfs, and sent the group back to Ouagadougou. Then he settled down to the life of a typical district chief, governing his villages in the name of the Mogho Naba, paying him tribute, and settling disputes among his villagers. Dim Delobson reports that the other
[431] district chiefs and the heads of such principalities as Boussouma and Con-
[651] quizitenga formerly sent presents to the Djiba Naba when they sent their annual tribute to the Mogho Naba.[21] But this contradicts all that I heard and saw of the relationship between the royal heir and the other district chiefs. They treated him as an equal and showed no deference to him either in private or on ceremonial occasions. As a matter of fact, in the presence of the Mogho Naba, the royal heir actually effaced himself before the other district chiefs. This behavior served to preserve the concept of equal access
[643] of all members of the ruling clan to the ancestral nam. The Mogho Naba was head of the ruling group as well as political leader of the Mossi. His son, on the other hand, was often a junior in terms of age and generation within the ruling group, but politically he was on the same level as the other district chiefs. The sovereign could not show by his behavior that his son was either actually or potentially superior to the other Nanamse; nor could the prince presume to be haughty because of his strategic but accidental relationship to the actual possessor of the nam. Had he tried to do so, he might have ruined his chances of being selected to take over the "house" of his father and his father's fathers.

643 The relations between the Mogho Naba and his children, including his
644 heir, were characterized by formality—at least in public. Nevertheless, the ruler took a vital interest in the training and welfare of the youthful Djiba
593 Naba. Mogho Naba Wobogo (1890-96) reportedly had the Ouidi Naba
634 and the Baloum Naba of Djiba executed because the Crown Prince died under strange circumstances while under their care. Yet the Mogho Naba was not expected to enjoy seeing his son and heir, because of the Mossi father's traditional anxiety regarding those individuals who would profit most from his death. At the assemblies of district chiefs called by the Mogho Naba, the royal heir was not even greeted by his father; moreover, the heir usually stood at the edge of the assembly and left without attending the customary feast. However, there is considerable evidence that the Mogho

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Naba regularly saw his son in private, and that the prince often interceded 644
successfully with his father for the lives of rebels or criminals. 593

The Mogho Naba seldom saw his younger sons, who usually remained 634
with their mothers' patrilineages until they were old enough to be assigned district chieftainships or sent to live in villages controlled by the Baloum Naba. He was rather suspicious of these boys, who, if certain traditions are believed, were not averse to plotting the death of the Djiba Naba in order to succeed to the nam. The district chiefs also feared these younger sons, in whose favor they were often deposed by the Mogho Naba. Almost all of the dynastic changes that occurred in the Mossi districts seem to have stemmed from a ruler's attempt to find districts for his brothers or his younger sons.

The ruler was less concerned with the welfare of his daughters and 643
female relatives. Their marriages seldom benefited the political system. 644
As a matter of fact, the behavior of a royal princess usually strained the re- 593
lations between her husband and the ruling lineage. The reason for this [562]
was a status conflict: as wives, they had low prestige in Mossi society; but as relatives of the Mogho Naba, they enjoyed high status. This contradiction made it difficult for them to accept the low estate of wives. Consequently, they clashed with their husband and often dominated the women and co-wives in his compound. Since few Mossi men tolerate strife within their household, these noble wives often withdrew from their husband's home and established one of their own. The one exception to this pattern was the ruler's eldest daughter, the Napoko, whose ceremonial duties at his death and during the interregnum compelled her to remain loyal to the husband chosen for her by the king. Like her brother, the Crown Prince, if she violated any of the traditions and thus became ineligible to fulfill her duties to her father and to the state, she endangered the country at its weakest moment, when the government was being transferred from the deceased Mogho Naba to his successor.

The death of a Mogho Naba was usually attributed to foul play or 643
supernatural forces. When Mogho Naba Sagha II died in 1957, a report 761
from Ouagadougou stated that the Governor of the Upper Volta had felt constrained to have an autopsy performed to quell rumors that the monarch had died of poisoning.[32] The obvious function of such rumors was to dramatize the gravity of the situation during the interregnum.

Because the Mogho Naba was usually accompanied by a page, it was 643
often this boy who witnessed his death. It was the page's responsibility to 763
notify the Baloum Naba, who notified, in order, the Ouidi Naba, the Lar- [644]
halle Naba, the Karnsaogho Naba, the Gounga Naba, the ruler's children, [645]

643 763 [645] [793] the Tansoba, the members of the royal sub-lineage, and the district chiefs. The Tengsoba of the Ouagadougou area was also notified. Because he was a descendant of the aboriginal Ninisi population that "owned" the land, he supervised the burial ceremony.

[701] The Mogho Naba's death was kept secret, and no mourning was allowed until the Crown Prince had arrived at the capital and the Tansoba had recruited an army to protect the realm against would-be usurpers of power. Then the cry was raised in the palace, to reverberate throughout the land, 643 764 669 that "the fire had gone out." Once the ruler's death had been announced, the country was plunged into an interregnum, which was characterized by ritual and often by actual anarchy. The people in the towns immediately looted the markets and stole their neighbors' goods; the prisoners and captives in stocks were released by their guards; the nakomse in all the territories, districts, and villages subjected the local populations to robbery and pillage; and the members of the monarch's babissi began their intrigues for power. The traditional sanction for this anarchy was that only when people suffer during the breakdown of political control do they really appreciate the sovereign's role. The Mossi declare (with some truth) that no one was safe during the interregnum. However, as we shall see, the ruler was symbolically kept alive, and the country was never without effective political leadership.

766 644 643 When the Tengsoba arrived at the palace, he was joined by five hereditary funeral chiefs: the Pazany'tengsoba, the Tampouy Naba, the Benghin Naba, the Togbin Naba, and the Tanghin Naba. In the ceremony that followed, he gave permission for the royal grave to be dug. Meanwhile, the ruler's body was prepared for burial in the traditional manner by his female relatives and laid in state in the zongo. These women kept vigil over the body, shouting and weeping. Only the five ministers of the realm and the male members of the ruler's babissi were allowed to pay homage to the corpse within the zongo. All other mourners had to pay their respects to the monarch's eldest daughter, who, as Napoko, was dressed in the dead sovereign's clothes and sat in his place before the zongo. As her father's symbolic representative, she held daily court and received greetings and homage from all visitors until a new ruler was chosen. The drummer who sat by her side declared to all visitors, "You say that the Mogho Naba is dead! Well, who is that sitting there? Tell me! Is that not the Mogho Naba?"

766 643 [782] The ruler was buried the day after he died, at the end of an elaborate ceremony. Libations were poured out to the ancient rulers, and sacrifices made to them. All the important officials and members of the royal mini-

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mal lineage segment except the pretenders to the throne shaved their heads as a sign of mourning. The royal pretenders donned sheepskin mantles to signify that they were willing to "eat the nam." Once the ruler had been buried, the country settled down to an uneasy peace until the eighth day, when the funeral ceremonies took place. In the meantime, the Napoko symbolically held daily court, and the Tansoba's army acted as a check against the attempts of ambitious princes to seize power by force of arms.

Two days before the funeral, the Kamsaogho Naba selected the Kourita, who was to replace the Napoko as the living symbolic representative of the dead Mogho Naba. The person chosen to be Kourita was usually a young son of the deceased king, but since this person was banished from the capital, most of the royal wives hid their young children or fled the palace with them.[23] Once the Kourita had been chosen, the Kamsaogho Naba performed a ceremony (similar to those connected with the divine kings of the Near East) during which the youth was given one of his father's horses, dressed in his father's clothes, and given his father's youngest widow as a wife. He was then paid the homage due the Mogho Naba, and after receiving many gifts from the dignitaries, he was banished from Ouagadougou forever. As he went through the country, he was treated like the Mogho Naba and given many wives and presents. If he should chance to return to Ouagadougou or see the new Mogho Naba, either or both of them would be killed by the ancestors. Many Mossi districts seem to have been founded by exiled Kouritadamba. These men were undoubtedly among the numerous "elder" sons of past kings who are said to have "refused" the nam and gone to live in the districts now governed by their descendants.

The choice and banishment of the Kourita heralded the funeral rites, which were characterized by numerous animal sacrifices to the ancestors in the name of the deceased ruler. On the afternoon of the first day of the funeral, the Crown Prince mounted a horse and left the palace by the women's door. The Napoko then took the bridle of her brother's horse and led him and an immense crowd of cavalry, armed warriors, and musicians around the palace walls three times. After the third round, the Napoko demanded that her brother give her a personal servant as a present; he hesitated, but finally granted her request. The Napoko was then lifted up by the warriors, who shouted as they carried her home. The funeral thus came to an end.

All Mossi potentates tried to emulate the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou in matters of pomp, ceremony, and government.[24] Their courts were inferior to his, but only because they were less powerful and less wealthy.

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Some of the more important rulers, such as the heads of the Yatenga, Fada-N'Gourma, and Tenkodogo kingdoms, were chosen by local electoral colleges, which did not have to seek the approval of the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou or notify him of the choices made. Their authority, as we have seen, was supported by claims of equality with Ouagadougou. But, with the exception of the Tenkodogo ruler, they were actually farther removed from the main line of royal descent than the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou. The autonomous Dimdamba had their own electoral colleges, which in some cases were made up of men related to the electoral-college members of the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou. (For example, the Ouidi Naba of Boulsa was descended from the Ouidi Naba of Ouagadougou.) These local colleges were usually free to nominate and elect the Dimdamba without consulting the Mogho Naba, even though he ratified many nominations.[33] According to Cheron, "The nomination of the Dim of Boulsa did not become definitive until ratified by the Mogho Naba, who was always consulted by the electors and who could impose his own candidate."[34] This was not always true; nor did every Mogho Naba refrain from interfering in the internal affairs of autonomous provinces. Whether he did or not often depended on his strength relative to that of the Dimdamba. Once the Dimdamba had been chosen, however, they were installed with ceremonies similar to those for the Ouagadougou ruler.

Like their superiors, the Dimdamba had the authority to delegate power to the Kombemba and Tense Nanamse. Some of them also had the right to grant the nam to a fellow Dim. The Boussouma Naba, for instance, could grant it to the Mane Naba.[37] Mogho Nanamse granted such rights to Dimdamba for various reasons. They might do so on the basis of their relative strength vis-à-vis a particular Dim at a particular time, or because they admired him or were closely related to him. However, a Dim exercised sovereignty in his own name, regardless of whether he was subordinate to the Mogho Naba or to another Dim. In contrast, the district chiefs and the village chiefs exercised sovereignty on behalf of the Mogho Naba or of the Dim in whose territory they resided.

The installation ceremonies for the two lower orders of chiefs were not too different from those for the Mogho Nanamse and Dimdamba. For example, when the Nobere district chief died, the provincial minister for Nobere—in this case the Gounga Naba—reported his death to the Mogho Naba. The ruler then summoned one of the deceased chief's officials to the capital to report on the qualifications of all potential candidates for the nam. The provincial minister, in turn, dispatched one of his own representatives to the district to verify the reports he had received. It was only when this

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It was only when this man had returned to the capital that all the nobles in the local ruling lineage were invited to Ouagadougou to press their claims. Only the dead chief's babissi went to Ouagadougou, even though all nobles subscribed to the traditional concept that "the nam does not belong to any one sub-lineage; it can be given to any nobleman." Unlike the others, these nobles did not shave their heads in mourning, thus indicating their candidacy for the nam. When they donned sheepskin cloaks and carried spears on their shoulders, they indicated that they were interested in the nam of the district. 634 [613] [302] [765]

Before a candidate for the district chieftainship left for Ouagadougou, he collected livestock, money, clothing, and grain from his friends to give as gifts or bribes to important officials in the capital. When he arrived there, he lived with friends and conducted his campaign from their home. He and the other candidates visited their provincial minister and his colleagues, the Mogho Naba, and other courtiers, giving presents ostensibly as a sign of friendship but actually with the ultimate aim of impressing these people with their generosity. These activities were often very costly; for if the Ouagadougou officials suspected that the candidates were wealthy, they made every effort to obtain as many presents as possible. It was not unusual for candidates for the district chieftainship to remain at the capital as long as "thirty-three" or "sixty-six" days before the officials were satisfied with their generosity and made preparations for the election. 634 662

The evening before the election, the Baloum Naba asked each candidate to provide a chicken and a sheep for the evening sacrifices to the namtibo.[20] After the morning ceremony on the following day, the Ouidi Naba reminded the sovereign that a new chief had to be chosen for Nobere district. The Mogho Naba summoned the Gounga Naba and asked him which candidate had the best character and was most capable of taking care of the district—a question which shows that the Mossi never placed primogeniture above the ability to rule.[21] The Gounga Naba had already consulted his friends about the matter, but he recounted both the good and the bad qualities of each candidate. At the same time, he hinted which one would make the best chief. He finally told the Mogho Naba that all of the candidates were worthy men, adding, "You can give the nam to any of them." The Mogho Naba then looked around to ascertain whether the other ministers had concurred in the Gounga Naba's implied choice before declaring, "I will give the nam to X, because when his [father, grandfather, or brother, used in the generic or classificatory sense] was alive, he was good to me. The ancestors would be angry if I did not give his [son, grandson, or brother] the nam." With these words the selection was made, and the ministers now prepared to install the successful candidate. 634 645 643 [782]

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634 A man usually heard about his nomination through his "friends" (usu-
645 ally pages) long before the Baloum Naba had received instructions from the
Ouidi Naba to summon him to the palace. Nevertheless, protocol demanded
[576] that he show proper humility and surprise at receiving the news, and that
he be tardy in arriving at court. When he arrived, he was taken before the
Ouidi Naba, who asked him three times, "Did your [father] say who should
be his successor?" To this the nominee replied each time, "No, Naba! My
[father] did not say who should replace him. You may appoint anyone you
wish, even if he is a blind man or a leper." The Ouidi Naba then asked the
candidate, "Which of the nakomce do the district people prefer?" The can-
didate's standard reply was, "That is the affair of the Mogho Naba. The
people will accept anyone, even a blind man or a leper." This question was
asked three times, and each time the candidate gave the same answer. The
Ouidi Naba then declared, "The Mogho Naba has given you the nam of
your [father]." Upon hearing these words, the Samande Kasma (head ser-
vant of the palace) came up to the new chief and removed his sheepskin
mantle, while the samande-kamba took their heavy batons and chased away
the other pretenders who, having heard about the election, had come to the
palace. The samande-kamba then bore the new chief on their shoulders to
the *tomboko* (a circle filled with sand in the courtyard). To the accompani-
ment of the royal airs played by musicians under the direction of the Ben-
dere Naba, he took sand and poured it on his head as a sign of submission
to the Mogho Naba. The ruler's wives and the courtiers surrounded the
new chief, raised their hands over his head, and shouted their praises to the
Mogho Naba. Then the new chief showed his respect for all the ministers
[576] and important men, in order of rank, by falling on his knees before them in
the traditional Mossi salute. He then went to the Bendere Naba's shed,
where he stood in the middle of the musicians and made a speech, the leit-
motiv of which became his ruling title. The present chief of Nobere, whose
name is Naba Boulga ("Well"), says that he made the following speech
when he was nominated: "I am like a well; he who opens me will profit
greatly." After the new chief had thus "taken a name," he came to the
zongo to "drink the namtibo."

634 The drinking of the namtibo was the highlight of the election ceremony
[1778] because it strengthened the link between the new chief and his ancestors
and provided the ritual sanction for loyalty, obedience, and service to the
Mogho Naba.[48] After the new chief had drunk the namtibo, he called upon
the ancestors to kill him if he should ever betray the Mogho Naba or fail to
[641] render him homage and faithful service. This oath was the sign for the un-
successful candidates to pledge their allegiance to the new chief. Then they

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hoisted him on their shoulders and proceeded to his host's house with loud acclaim. 634

The next morning, the new chief went to the palace to pay homage to the Mogho Naba and receive from him the traditional cowries, three kola nuts, and a small jar of millet water. In the days that followed, he celebrated his good fortune at the house of the important ministers and court officials. About a week later he returned to the palace, and the Baloum Naba's chief assistant invested him with the insignia of office: a white gown, a cushion, a pair of slippers, and, most important, a bonnet—the true symbol of chieftainship. Soon afterward, the new chief asked the Mogho Naba and his provincial minister for permission to return home. He was then provided with an escort to accompany him to his district.

The journey of a new chief to his district was marked by pomp and ceremony. The Nobere Naba stopped at such districts as Toudou and Twili, where he was entertained by the chiefs and presented with wives and other gifts. Some districts he would never be allowed to visit again, and others he had to bypass during his joyful journey. The reasons for these restrictions and prohibitions have long since been forgotten, but they were probably instituted to prevent conflicts among Kombemba and to prevent the new chief from coming into contact with the descendants of the Kouritadamba of former Mogho Nanamse. 634 574

As the new Nobere Naba neared his district, he was met by a welcoming committee of village chiefs, nobles, and commoners, who pledged allegiance to him and gave him wives, goods, clothing, money, grain, and livestock. He was then taken to the Soulougre Naba, a descendant of the aboriginal Ninisi, at whose hands he had to undergo another series of rites before he could set up his new compound and begin his rule. These ceremonies were rather simple in comparison with those at Ouagadougou, but they represented a ritual re-enactment of the Mossi conquest of the district, and reinforced the status relationship between the Mossi and the aboriginal population. At the end of seven days, the Kombere Naba gave the Soulougre Naba a black cow to be sacrificed at a pool called Yarega, a shrine of the ancient Ninisi on a tributary of the White Volta River. When this final rite was over, an enthusiastic crowd fetched the chief, and the young people of Soulougre village bore him aloft to his compound. A period of celebration now began during which all the heads of villages, lineages, and compounds paid homage and swore allegiance to their ruler. This ended when the chief summoned his escort from Ouagadougou and gave presents to those who wished to return there and wives and land to those who wished to settle in his district. 634 [641] [43] [788]

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634 The Kombere Naba, as the person who had "eaten the nam" of the district, was infused with some of the power and authority of the Mogho Naba and had the right to use force to maintain this power and authority. He was [576] respected, and people uncovered their heads and removed their slippers in his presence. Unlike the Mogho Naba, the Kombere Naba was permitted to eat with his peers. But whenever he drank the musicians made a roar-like sound with their instruments, and when he sneezed his attendants clapped. These rituals were rigidly adhered to because the Kombere Naba was readily accessible to the populace and might easily have lost their respect if he behaved in an undignified manner. He emphasized his social distance from them by never visiting the market place, and he did not go anywhere without a large entourage.

The Kombere Naba performed ceremonies and duties that were similar to but simpler than those of the Mogho Naba, and he was surrounded by officers bearing the same titles as those in the capital. But, as will be shown later, these officials had fewer and sometimes different duties than the courtiers at Ouagadougou. Some district chiefs had as many pages and wives as the Mogho Naba, but this was as much a result of their own desires as of their popularity with the local people. The death and funeral rites of a [766] district chief were not as elaborate as those of a Mogho Naba. They included the circumambulation of the chief's compound by the principal heir and [788] heiress, the symbolic reign of the Napoko, and the banishment of the Kourita.[41]

634 Every district chief, whether a Mogho Naba's vassal or a Dim's subordi-
778 nate, was empowered to bestow the nam on his own subordinates. These [622] might be other district chiefs; but most often they were village chiefs. The circumstances under which a Kombere Naba received the authority to grant the nam to another Kombere Naba were usually complex and sprang from rebellions and dynastic changes. Once granted, this authority was seldom revoked, but the district chief had to report to his immediate superior, a Mogho Naba or Dim, whenever he wished to confer the nam upon another district chief.

634 In some cases the Mogho Naba invested a district chief himself, and
175 afterward placed him under the control of a neighboring district chief. For
669 example, the chiefs of two districts, Vooko and Nobila, were always installed
778 by the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou, but were supervised by the Nobere district chief. This practice dates back to the civil war involving Mogho Naba Sagha I (ca. 1787–1803), in which chiefs of Vooko and Nobere sided with the loser. The Mogho Naba executed the local rebels and placed one of his sons in Nobere. He then divided Vooko into two districts, placing a younger son in the one he called Nobila (little Nobere) and subjecting him

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to the control of his brother at Nobere. The other district, still called Vooko but now half its former size, was given to a descendant of its deposed ruler. The relationship between these two rulers and the Nobere Naba was that of vassals and lord. They did not stand up in the presence of the Nobere Naba, but knelt or sat on the ground and uncovered their heads in respect to him. The Nobere Naba traditionally appointed the village chiefs in the Vooko and Nobila districts; however, he sometimes granted that right to the two district chiefs. Furthermore, the traditional provincial administrator could not transmit any orders to those two district chiefs without first notifying the Nobere Naba. In their everyday affairs the two chiefs were autonomous, but the Nobere Naba could challenge and countermand all their actions. Actually, he did seem to exercise greater control over Vooko than over Nobila. One may even say that the relationship between the Nobere district chief and the Vooko chief was like that between the Mogho Naba and his district chiefs, and that the relationship between the Nobere Naba and the Nobila Naba was comparable to the one between the Mogho Naba and the Dimdamba. We have seen that the Dimdamba claimed equality with the Mogho Naba because of their alleged descent from a putative common ancestor. The Nobere Naba was actually more closely related to the Nobila Naba than to the Vooko Naba, and his behavior toward them reflected this fact. In both cases, the relationships involved were determined by the concept of joint possession of the nam by the ruling family.

634 [622] [631]

A district chief was not required to notify his superior when he wished to confer the nam upon a village chief. In this choice he was completely autonomous and subject only to tradition. The fact is that on the district and village levels, traditions were more frequently modified in the face of practical political and socio-economic considerations. This occurred primarily because the district chief had closer relations with persons who possessed goods and services or who controlled them directly than did the chiefs on higher levels. Secondly, he was often under great temptation to allow presents or bribes to affect his choice of subordinate chiefs.

634 778 622 [662]

When a Tenga Naba died, the district chief permitted control of the village to revert to its Tengsoba. If there was none, the village was "given" to the eldest man among the aboriginal Ninisi lineages or to the eldest member of the ruling lineage segment. However, none of these persons was considered anything but a trustee of the village, and even when the trustee was a potential candidate for the nam, the Mossi did not feel that this man had any advantage over his competitors. Whoever held control of the village was held responsible for its affairs by the district administrator until the new chief was elected.

634 622 [793]

Competition for chieftainship on this level was very keen because of the

634 622 greater number of lineage members eligible for the nam and the shallow genealogical depth. Every man who had the ability or desire to rule was 634 encouraged to seek the post. Many candidates tried to impress the district 622 chief and his advisers with their good qualities; most tried to bribe them. 662 Since the candidates could not openly seek the post during the day, they visited the important officials of the district at night, taking money and cattle as presents. Some candidates even promised wives. The intrigues on this level, such as seeking the friendship of pages to find out about the activities of rivals, paralleled those at Ouagadougou. The more gifts a candidate gave the district chief, the more his rivals tried to surpass him. Consequently, the district chief often kept the office vacant for months or even as long as two or three years in order to enjoy these lucrative gifts. Neither the caretakers of the village, who complained about the administrative problems of a village without a chief, nor the Tengsobadamba, who declared that without the permission of a chief they could not make sacrifices to help the people avoid illness, drought, and sterility, could force the Kombere Naba to name a new village chief. Only when the candidates had exhausted most of their wealth was the process to elect the chief set in motion.

634 The district chief had a better knowledge of the character of candidates 622 for the village chieftainship than the Dimdamba or Mogho Nanamse had about the men whom they selected. The district chiefs were better able than other Mossi rulers to obey the dictum that only those men capable of "keeping" the country should rule. Nevertheless, before making a choice, the Kombere Naba called in the local minister responsible for the village in question and discussed with him the character and capabilities of the various candidates.[42] As on higher levels, the eldest son of the former chief [651] was usually favored, especially if he had sent a large *fado* (death tax) to the district chief and had been generous to him during the interregnum. [662] But it was also possible that one of the dead chief's younger sons or one of his brothers or uncles might be chosen. In some cases, the district chiefs [613] chose men from related sub-lineages that had not held the nam for generations. One district chief chose a man who had lived away from the village for thirty years. He had gone to live in his mother's brother's village as a young man and did not return until he was named chief. Admittedly, such cases were exceptional, but they kept alive in the minds of the local people the concept of the Mossi lineage's corporate possession of the nam.

On the day chosen for the election of a village chief, all the candidates with their unshaved heads and sheepskin mantles reported to the village [431] administrator's house along with all the other men of their lineage. They gave him presents, and he led them to the compound of the district chief.

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The entire assembly saluted the district chief, and the official declared the 634
reason for his visit. Then the district chief sent a page for a chief's bonnet, 622
which he gave to a samande. This youth took the bonnet, came up to the kneeling candidates, and jokingly attempted to place it on the head of each one in turn while asking, "Whom did the *keema* ["dead person"; in this case, the dead chief] say should be chief?" When no one answered he gave up the game, ran to the successful candidate, and placed the bonnet on his head. As soon as this happened, all the unsuccessful candidates and men of the lineage ran away, followed by other samande-kamba, who waved big clubs and feigned violence if they should catch them. The men of the lineage soon returned while the new chief did homage and pledged allegiance [641] to the Kombere Naba by prostrating himself on the ground and by putting sand from the tomboko on his head. By this act the Tenga Naba became the district chief's subordinate and the lowest elected official in a ruling hierarchy that extended from the Mogho Naba down to the least village chief.

Once the oath-taking ceremony was over, the new chief's followers saluted the district chief, lifted their new leader onto their shoulders, and bore him triumphantly back to his village, shouting for joy. Here, in imitation [537] of his superiors, the new chief made a speech in which he ridiculed his competitors, reviewed his background, and made known his chiefly intentions. Here, too, the people seized upon some significant point in his speech as [651] an indication of the name "he had named." However, this name was seldom used, since people referred to him as the Naba of such-and-such village, e.g., Barkago Naba, and addressed him simply as "Naba." The village Tengsoba then performed propitiatory sacrifices to the Ninisi ancestors and to the local earth deity in the chief's name, and "gave him back the village" of which he had been the temporary caretaker. Only after these rites had been performed could the chief assume command of the village without incurring supernatural sanctions of the ancient Ninisi.

The typical village chief had no court. His compound was only slightly 622
larger than that of a village family. He had no officials, but some of his companions who assumed special duties similar to those of the Ouidi Naba and the Tansoba were sometimes jokingly referred to by these honorific titles. The village chief had neither soghondamba nor samande-kamba, and he permitted his wives to serve refreshments to his visitors. In general, everything was on a smaller scale than on the district level, including all ceremonies even to the burial of the village chief.

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IV

ADMINISTRATION

642 631 THE Mossi always looked to their rulers, especially to the Mogho Nanamse, the Dimdamba, and the Kombemba, to determine administrative policies and to pronounce on all relevant issues. All foreigners who requested information were told, "You must talk to the chief."[1] The Mossi believed that [825] men cannot live without chiefs, and insisted that even animals have chiefs. Mossi rulers were therefore expected to ensure internal tranquillity in times of peace and to protect their subjects and territories in times of war. The expectation that they would also provide impartial judgment is best expressed by a dictum of the Ouagadougou people: "The truth is at Ouaga- [769] dougou." Finally, Mossi chiefs were held responsible for inducing the ancestors to bring health and prosperity to their subjects. To this end, they supervised and participated in rituals to their ancestors and encouraged the people in every territory, district, village, and compound to do likewise. In return, the people paid homage and allegiance to their chiefs and provided them with the goods and services they needed to support the administrative process.

643 631 642 175 The nature of the administrative relationship between the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou, the rulers of Yatenga, Fada-N'Gourma, and Tenkodogo, and the autonomous Dimdamba was not clear to the early visitors to Mossi country, and remains a matter of controversy. Two conflicting principles were always at work: seniority with respect to the nam and claims of close descent from Ouedraogo and Oubri on the one hand, and relative political strength or military power on the other. The stronger a ruler, the less he deferred to his lineal seniors. He might even claim a supremacy over them that came close to a claim of seniority. When Barth visited the Sudan in 1853, he was told that the Mossi country was "split into a number of small principalities, almost totally independent of each other, and paying only slight homage to the principality of Woghododogo." Barth reports, however, that the Dim of Boussouma was "probably the most powerful of the Mossi chiefs at the . . . time, especially with regard to cavalry." Similarly,

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Binger reports that the Mossi were divided into "a number of confederacies, more or less independent of each other, whose chiefs were vassals of Naba Sanum, the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou." He found, nevertheless, that although the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou claimed suzerainty over the Yatenga, he could not grant travelers permission to enter that territory.[2]

Crozat, who visited the Mossi in 1890, just two years after Binger, was told repeatedly that the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou had the right to control the destinies of all chiefs who claimed descent from Ouedraogo and Oubri. But he, too, found that the principalities were self-governing and mutually independent, and were united only by the weak bond that attached them all to Ouagadougou. Noting the claims of the people he encountered that Ouagadougou was still supreme, Crozat suggests that "time and circumstances have weakened this sovereignty. The ruler of Ouagadougou is regarded by the other chiefs merely as their senior and the head of their family. They seldom obey him, yet they recognize that in certain cases he has the right to give them orders." Like many Frenchmen who came after him, Crozat concludes, "One will be struck, as I have been, by this political organization in which the waning of the central authority has led to a true feudal system closely reminiscent of a certain period in our own history."[3]

Delafosse tells us that "the authority of the emperor [of Ouagadougou] does not seem to have been ignored within his borders except in very rare instances. The vassal kings, who were brothers, sons, or nephews of the emperor, usually obeyed him. In any case, the emperor did not interfere with the administration [of their territories], and required nothing from them except the payment of taxes and the raising of contingents for any expeditions he might have to organize against outside enemies (the emperors of Mali, Gao, or Segou; Moroccan pashas; etc.). In return, the emperor granted his support to those of his vassals who were unable to command the obedience of their subjects or tributaries."[4]

It appears, then, that although the independent rulers and autonomous princes sometimes recognized the supremacy (if not the seniority) of the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou, they were relatively free to rule as they wished. As possessors of the nam, they claimed and exercised the right to administer the peoples of their realms. It appears, furthermore, that the rulers of Ouagadougou seldom challenged the independence of their confreres in Yatenga, although the latter often disturbed them. For example, when Yatenga Naba Kango (ca. 1754-89) sacked and burned the Ouagadougou district of Yako for sheltering refugees from a civil war, the Mogho Naba did not come to the aid of the Yako Naba. Nor did he take offense when this chief, in order to regain his seat, was compelled to switch his

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642 allegiance to the Yatenga. The situation lasted throughout Kango's reign,
631 "but as soon as he died, the Yako chiefs ceased to pay allegiance to his suc-
628 cessors and paid homage, as before, to the court of Ouagadougou."[5] About
175 fifty years later, Yako district was again captured by a Yatenga ruler, Naba Tougouri (ca. 1806–22), who deposed the reigning chief and installed his own. The deposed chief fled to his sovereign at Ouagadougou for aid and safety. He did receive sanctuary and eventually reconquered his principality, but there is no evidence that the Mogho Naba gave him any active support. Similarly, when another Yatenga ruler, Naba Totebaldbo (ca. 1834–50), once more conquered Yako as well as Riziam, another dependency of Ouagadougou, the Mogho Naba took no action. It was only after Totebaldbo's death that Riziam seceded from Yatenga and returned its allegiance to Ouagadougou. Yako did not submit to Ouagadougou's rule until some time later, when it revolted against Totebaldbo's son.[6] Similarly, both Mogho Naba Sanum and Mogho Naba Wobogo had difficulty in controlling a civil war between Yatenga and Yako which they felt would cause European travelers to think ill of the Mossi. During Crozat's visit to Ouagadougou, Mogho Naba Wobogo asked the combatants to cease fighting, but his efforts failed because "Yako would have liked to obey, but Yatenga refused."[7]

The Ouagadougou rulers experienced less difficulty with the weaker Tenkodogo kingdom, which seldom attacked their vassals or territories. Instead, the rulers of Tenkodogo often sought the aid of the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou against their enemies or rebellious subjects. For example, when the Busansi subjects of the Tenkodogo Naba rebelled against him in the fifteenth century, Mogho Naba Dawoema of Ouagadougou went to his aid and defeated them.[8] However, when Korongo, the Tenkodogo Naba, asked Mogho Naba Wobogo to help him defeat a contestant for the nam in 1894, the Ouagadougou ruler refused and said he would acknowledge the victor.[9] In this case, personal considerations seem to have dictated the Mogho Naba's reply.

The rulers of Ouagadougou appear to have taken greater interest in the affairs of the Dimdamba. Here again, however, intervention was conditioned by personal considerations, and especially by relative strength. Failure to be prudent in this respect often resulted in disaster. Mogho Naba Doulougou's insistence on punishing Naba Piga (1806–23), a ruler of the Boussouma principality, resulted in his own death. One of Piga's subjects had fled to Ouagadougou to evade punishment, and the Mogho Naba had returned him with the injunction that he should be imprisoned but not killed. Nevertheless, Piga had the prisoner executed. Moreover, he sent a

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disrespectful message to the Mogho Naba asking that a horse which a Fulani had stolen from him and presented to the ruler be returned. Doulougou sent an army to chastise Piga, who quickly fled and later appealed to the Mogho Naba for pardon. No sooner had this pardon been granted than Piga again offended the Mogho Naba by granting refuge to his wayward son, who had been expelled from Ouagadougou. The Mogho Naba subsequently forgave his son, but he decided to punish the recalcitrant Piga once and for all. Piga fled at the approach of the royal army, but Doulougou, who had accompanied his troops, was wounded by an enemy arrow and died shortly after his return to Ouagadougou.[10]

A later Mogho Naba, Sanum (ca. 1861), fought, defeated, and executed Naba Zande of Boulsa for taxing the Boulsa people so heavily that they rebelled. After Zande was succeeded by his brother Yemde (ca. 1863–72), the Mogho Naba continued to intervene in Boulsa's affairs and eventually had Yemde executed. Yemde's undoing was the result of his inability or unwillingness to implement the Mogho Naba's desire—which was contrary to Mossi custom—to elect a ten-year-old boy to the chieftainship of Koupela district. The Koupela chief's brother ignored his young nephew and seized the nam; Yemde sent an army to depose him, but his men were routed. Suspecting treachery on Yemde's part, Mogho Naba Sanum sent an army to defeat and depose him and to place his father's brother in command of Boulsa. Yemde defeated the Mogho Naba's army. His victory was short-lived, however, because the Mogho Naba sent a larger army and routed his forces. Yemde fled to the territory of the Boussouma Dim and requested asylum. The Boussouma ruler, Ligidi, did not wish to incur the wrath of the Mogho Naba and dispatched Yemde to Ouagadougou. Yemde apparently convinced the Mogho Naba of his loyalty, but he was executed because he had inadvertently violated the rule that no descendant of a Kourita might see a Mogho Naba and live.[11]

Ligidi, in turn, found himself in conflict with the Mogho Naba. After surrendering Yemde to his sovereign, he had proceeded to Boulsa and seized some of the prisoner's property. At first the Mogho Naba paid no attention, but when he had made peace with Yemde's son, Kiba, he ordered Ligidi to return the property. Ligidi refused to do so and consequently became involved in a series of wars against Kiba and the Mogho Naba. Ligidi died of natural causes before peace was restored, leaving a legacy of hostility between Ouagadougou and Boussouma. Either in complicity with the ruling Mogho Naba (Wobogo) or in an attempt to gain his favor, the electors named Ligidi's brother, Kom, to the nam and ignored his son and rightful heir, Venewende. This unfortunate young man had no one to

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turn to, and fled to Wobogo for safety. Wishing to maintain good relations with Kom, the Mogho Naba forced Venewende to return to Boussouma, but with the injunction that he should not be killed. Nevertheless, the Boussouma ruler had the young prince executed. The angry Mogho Naba threatened reprisal and declared that "if the Boussouma chief was not careful, it would be too bad for all his people, because they would fare as badly as their chief."[12] He did not have an opportunity to carry out his threats, however, because the French arrived soon afterwards.

Whereas some Mogho Nanamse took an active interest in the affairs of their Dimdamba or even tried to control them, others hesitated to interfere with disobedient or recalcitrant subordinates, especially when they fought and quarreled among themselves. Mogho Naba Oubya did not interfere when a Boussouma ruler, Pougoula (1745–67), bragging that no one in the nation was strong enough to depose him, arrogantly annexed the Ouagadougou province of Pisila and chased its ruler into Yatenga. Pougoula then gave the chieftainship to the fugitive's son, on condition that he should henceforth recognize his sovereignty.[13] On another occasion, a recalcitrant Boussouma Dim called Zabo (ca. 1767–84) defeated and punished the people of the Mane principality for rejecting the ruler he had chosen for them. They insisted that the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou had given Zabo the right to express his preference for a certain ruler, but not the right of choice itself. They appealed to Mogho Naba Waraga for help, but he ignored them. It may well be that Waraga was too involved in a war with the recalcitrant Riziam Naba to interfere, but there is no evidence that he ever censured Zabo. Again, Mogho Naba Sanum apparently took no part when Zende (ca. 1862–76), the ruler of Tema principality, and Totoabo, the ruler of Yako, joined forces against the ruler of La in a dispute over an abducted wife.[14] Perhaps, like other Mossi rulers, he did not care to deal with men who fought over women.

The relationship between the Mogho Naba and the Dimdamba, then, apparently varied in accordance with the persons involved and their relative strength. Sometimes they quarreled and fought; sometimes the Mogho Naba remained aloof from the Dimdamba's affairs; and sometimes the Dimdamba obeyed their sovereign and came to his aid. The one aspect of this relationship that seems to stand out, especially when the Dimdamba had no serious grievance, is their reluctance to fight against the Mogho Naba. Even Piga, the most belligerent in a long line of quarrelsome Boussouma rulers, always fled when Mogho Naba Doulougou attacked him, because "he did not wish to oppose his sovereign."[15] As we have seen, Yemde did fight against Mogho Naba Sanum, but he did so mainly be-

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cause he thought Sanum had attacked him unjustly. For such acts of war, the Dimdamba involved usually lost their lives, and in at least one such case a Dim was turned over to the Mogho Naba by another Dim. We have seen that Dimdamba occasionally came to the aid of the Mogho Naba against another Dim.

A question of some importance is whether this relationship between the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou and the rulers of independent kingdoms and autonomous principalities was characteristic of Mossi society or a rather late development. Was warfare the natural concomitant of a system in which the normally powerful Ouagadougou ruler was sometimes too weak to command allegiance from his peers and subordinates? Did the Mogho Naba resort to warfare as the only possible means of exercising his authority when his commands were challenged or ignored? Delafosse states, "Sometimes . . . , especially in very recent times, discord arose between the emperor [of Ouagadougou] and some of his vassal kings: thus Naba Sanum had to fight against the desire for independence of the kings of Boussouma and Boulsa."[16] Delafosse seems to suggest that the Mossi people were undergoing a period of stress when the Europeans arrived, and were faced with significant new administrative problems.

Here Binger appears to support Delafosse's view:

> Ever since he acceded to the throne, [Mogho Naba Sanum] has been compelled to govern the Mossi with unmitigated despotism. His fear of losing power led him to take such severe measures that he was forced to relax them. As soon as his major vassals saw this, they took these concessions as signs of fear and began to conspire secretly against him. Today, the chiefs of Mani, Boussouma, Yako, and Koupela represent forces with which Naba Sanum will have to reckon. . . . Before long, the Mossi empire will break up; the country will organize into confederacies like those of Beledougou and Yatenga.[17]

It is not completely clear, however, whether Binger really understood the intricacies of the Mossi political organization. He lists as "vassals" of the Mogho Naba such territories as Mane, Kaya, Koupela, Bonsa, Boussouma, Djitenga, Boulsa, Dakay, and Doulougou, as though they were all related to Ouagadougou in the same way. In reality, some were autonomous and some were directly dependent on the Ouagadougou ruler. It is possible that at the time of Binger's visit, the relations between the Mogho Naba and his subordinates were so fluid that the outsider had difficulty in understanding them. If this is the case, then the situation in Mossi country had indeed changed when the Europeans came in.

Crozat, who says the Mossi governmental structure was feudal in na-

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642 66

631 ture, offers what is probably the best analysis of power relations among the
628 important Mossi chiefs. In commenting upon the Mogho Naba's inability
174 to stop the war between Yako and Yatenga he asks, "How could it be
114 otherwise? With what sanctions could this king without an army back up his orders if he ventured to give any? . . . In short, when the Ouagadougou ruler speaks, he is sometimes obeyed. If he is, all is well; if he is not, all is still well. Everything remains as before."[18] Crozat was mistaken if he believed that the Mogho Naba did not have a fighting force. What he did not have was a standing army to exercise his power whenever he wished. When he was able to summon an army, he was effective; when he was not, he had little power over any territory but his own. Crozat, like Binger, gives a strange picture of the political relationship between the Mogho Naba and the other rulers. He tells us that in the Mossi political hierarchy, "after the ruler of Ouagadougou comes the ruler of Boussouma, then the Yatenga ruler, and then the ruler of Yako."[19] Yatenga was traditionally independent of Ouagadougou, whereas Boussouma and Yako were simply autonomous principalities dependent on the Mogho Naba. It is possible that Crozat mistook the relative power of these various political entities for a hierarchical relationship. It is also possible that at the time of his visit, the Dimdamba felt sufficiently powerful to ignore the traditional hierarchy as far as their political relationship with other rulers was concerned, and were simply acknowledging relative gradations of power.

643 Clearly, the sovereignty of the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou over the
642 independent kingdoms and autonomous principalities depended chiefly on
628 military might. The stronger a Mogho Naba was, the more actively he tried to control the internal administration of the autonomous principalities and to exercise police powers over them or on their behalf. However, most Mogho Nanamse were content to claim superiority or control over the independent kingdoms and refrained from meddling in their affairs.

643 Within the Mogho Naba's own kingdom, however, the situation was
635 different. Here, like other important Mossi rulers, he directed the admin-
634 istrative apparatus. For administrative purposes, the kingdom of Ouaga-
[642] dougou was divided into five large provinces (*weto*; sing. *weogho*; or
[161] *solem*, from *so*, "command"). Together they included some three hundred districts, in which there were over four thousand villages inhabited by some 862,000 persons.[20] (Not included here were districts and villages directly administered by the Mogho Naba.) The provinces were not compact physical entities, because their component units were scattered throughout the country. To be sure, some of the districts within a province were close together or even contiguous, but many others stood alongside districts be-

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longing to other provinces. Provinces also differed with respect to the number of districts they included and the nature and size of these districts. Some provinces were larger than others; some were wealthier; and some were more difficult to administer.

Each province was administered by a governor, who also functioned as an important minister at the court of Ouagadougou. In the order of their importance, these governors were the Ouidi Naba, the Larhalle Naba, the Gounga Naba, the Baloum Naba, and the Kamsaogho Naba. Smaller administrative units (both districts and villages) were under the direct control of the Mogho Naba himself, or under the supervision of his relatives or lesser officials. None of the governors were nobles or descendants of Ouedraogo and Oubri, but their positions were hereditary. According to one tradition, the first provincial administrators were personal slaves of the early Mossi rulers who were given the task of supervising the activities of district chiefs of noble status. Another, more romantic tradition is that the man who became the first governor or Gounga Naba was a companion of Mogho Naba Oubri during the conquest of Ouagadougou. Later, the Gounga Naba presented one of his friends to Oubri with the request that the man take precedence over him, be made chief governor, and be given the title of Ouidi Naba. Oubri allegedly acceded to this request, and later granted another request of the Gounga Naba that a friend of the Ouidi Naba be named Larhalle Naba and be made the second governor. The Gounga Naba told the Mogho Naba that he preferred to see his friends happy and that he was content to be third minister. This tradition does not state when or how the Baloum Naba and the Kamsaogho Naba were named governors.[21]

With the exception of the Kamsaogho Naba, who was a eunuch and had no heirs, the provincial governors headed administrative lineages. These lineages provided administrators not only for Ouagadougou but also for the principalities and districts. Cheron states that the Ouidi Naba of Boulsa was "a descendant of the Ouidi Naba of Ouagadougou, a great dignitary who rules a province and sits among the electors of the Mogho Naba."[22] Many administrative lineages on the district level were descended from officials sent down by the Mogho Naba with a new district chief in lieu of one deposed. When a chief was deposed, his administrators, like his relatives, lost their importance and their ties to Ouagadougou.

The Ouidi Naba, called *Moss' ba* ("father of the Mossi") and *Sida soba* ("master of the truth"), was the principal administrator and the prime minister. His titles undoubtedly sprang from his important role in the election of the Mogho Naba and from his position as caretaker of the king-

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645 dom during the interregnum.[23] The latter task was especially suited to a prime minister, since the Mossi regarded the interregnum as the most difficult period in their political life. The Ouidi Naba's administrative tasks 645 were considered so important that he never went to war and was theoreti- 643 cally immune from punishment or execution by the Mogho Naba. This [203] immunity was necessary, because the Mogho Naba had the right to execute anyone who brought him unwelcome news, and often did so. Since the Ouidi Naba announced good news as well as bad, it would have been folly to subject him to this rule. Some reports in the French colonial archives [195] state that the Mogho Naba was expected to follow the Ouidi Naba's advice at all times, and could not veto any of his actions. These reports add, moreover, that if a Ouidi Naba considered a Mogho Naba dangerous for the welfare of the country, he could rightfully compel the ruler to kill him- [762] self. According to Lambert, one Ouidi Naba known as Baba forced Mogho Naba Karfo (ca. 1800) to commit suicide. It appears that aside from waging a long and unpopular war against Naba Djighima of Lalle, this Mogho Naba had seized the riches of his wealthy subjects for distribution among the poor. Moreover, he allegedly dispensed justice without making much distinction between nobles and commoners, which so displeased the nobles that they encouraged the Ouidi Naba to put Karfo to death. Baba sent the sovereign a poisoned arrow and a message consisting of a single word: *ki* (die). Karfo allegedly committed suicide that very night.[24]

Thus, it appears that under certain conditions the prime minister could impeach his "all-powerful" sovereign. We cannot assume, however, that all prime ministers were sufficiently powerful to control the Mogho Naba. Many Mogho Nanamse limited their Ouidi Naba to merely giving advice on affairs of state and insisted that he concern himself solely with his own province.

634 The provinces administered by the five ministers were made up of 635 smaller entities or districts. The districts in the provinces of the Ouidi Naba, the Larhalle Naba, and the Gounga Naba were ruled by the sons 645 and other descendants of ancient Mogho Nanamse. The province controlled by the Kamsaogho Naba was more important. His districts were the wealthiest and among the most populous in the nation, and they brought the largest revenues to the Mogho Naba. The reason for this, of course, was [768] that the Kamsaogho Naba was a eunuch and had no heirs; when he died, all his riches reverted to the Mogho Naba. The province controlled by the Baloum Naba was the most difficult to administer. Its districts were ruled by the sons of recent Mogho Nanamse who felt that as holders of the nam they were free to appropriate the goods of the population. The Baloum

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Naba was responsible for checking these depredations, but he had little coercive force since these nobles were infinitely superior to him in rank. 634 635 645

The Mogho Naba held his five ministers responsible for the administration of the districts within their provinces. Therefore they had to function as liaison officers between him and the district chiefs. Every morning, in order of precedence, the ministers reported the news they had received from their provinces since the previous day. At this time, the Mogho Naba also gave them messages for their districts. Later in the day, the ministers presented to the ruler those persons who had come from their provinces to the capital with special grievances, requests, or gifts. Delicate affairs of state were left for the evening, when they were discussed by the Mogho Naba, his minister or ministers, and other important persons.

From all reports, these administrative affairs kept both the ministers and the Mogho Naba quite busy. Binger, who could barely conceal his displeasure with Mogho Naba Sanum, gives this critical but otherwise highly illuminating view of the Mossi ruler's administrative activities: 643 644

> The duties of Naba Sanum are not too important. They consist of receiving visits throughout the day. In the morning, at about six o'clock, the drums announce that the ruler has arisen. When he has washed and refreshed himself with a meal, his captives and his wives go to his chamber to salute him. Then comes the turn of strangers, people of the neighborhood, petitioners, and others. They squat before the reception area until the ruler deigns to appear. When a large number of people have gathered, one of the [pages] goes to notify the ruler, who then arrives, sits on his cushion, and casts an amiable glance on the gathering while all present snap their fingers. As soon as Naba Sanum is seated, the petitioners and visitors hurry toward the monarch, throw themselves face down on the earth, and cover their heads with sand. Then each of them gets up and presents a gift of greater or lesser importance, in cowries or foodstuffs, according to what he wishes to ask. Then the [pages] come and say to the ruler, "A certain man has brought a sack of cowries, or a goat, or an ox. He desires to speak to you." The ruler thanks all of them with a *nif kende* (thanks) and retires into his chamber. It is well known that not one out of fifty petitioners was given the opportunity to have his wishes heard. Those who were heard had first spoken to an attendant who, after being paid in advance, had put off their case indefinitely by stating that it would be dealt with next. . . . Since the monarch's days are so well filled, one easily understands why he finds it difficult to deal effectively with the internal and external affairs of his kingdom; in any case, Mossi country is in a period of decadence that will only be aggravated with time.[28] [662]

The activities Binger considered frivolous were, on the contrary, important for the proper administration of the kingdom. The Mogho Naba had to receive petitions from the districts and transmit administrative orders to 643 [114]

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643 his people. We shall see that these orders ran the gamut from demands for soldiers, tribute, and labor, to requests for sacrifices to the ancestors or to local deities for the welfare of the country.

635 The provincial governors seldom visited the districts under their control
645 more than once or twice a year. They transmitted official orders to the dis-
[203] tricts through retainers. Some ministers such as the Gounga Naba kept the
[634] sons and servants of district chiefs in the capital to be used as messengers. The district chiefs, in turn, used their sons or servants to transmit messages to their provincial governors or through them to the Mogho Naba. The use of intermediaries in the administration served another purpose: it prevented face-to-face contact, with all its potential for personal animosities, from impairing relations between those whose status depended on their political office and those whose status was derived from membership in the royal lineage.

635 Relations between the provincial ministers and the district chiefs were
645 often charged with hostility and suspicion. The district chiefs regarded the
634 provincial ministers as representatives of the Mogho Naba, and thus as
578 persons to be obeyed. Simultaneously, however, they resented this control by social inferiors. They felt that since they were the descendants of Ouedraogo and Oubri, they should receive orders only from the Mogho Naba himself. Thus, while the district chiefs accepted orders from their provincial governors, they never permitted them to forget their social status or to interfere with the internal affairs of the districts. They felt that this was the prerogative of the royal lineage. Most provincial ministers accepted these restrictions on their activities, but nevertheless saw to it that the district chiefs surrendered the goods collected for the Mogho Naba and governed their people well. Sometime in the 1920's, a provincial administrator went to a district and insulted its chief for failing to deliver the quota of millet set by the French colonial government. The accusation of laziness and embezzlement so infuriated the district chief that he asked the provincial minister whether he had taken leave of his senses and forgotten to whom he was speaking. The person who reported this incident said that if the district chief had not been restrained, he would have killed the administrator on the spot.

Both provincial administrators and district chiefs could impose indirect sanctions on each other if the bounds of propriety were overstepped in either direction. A district chief harried by his minister could not complain directly to the Mogho Naba. But he could, and often did, show his dissatisfaction by lodging with another provincial minister when he went to the capital. He would then ask the official to accompany him when he went

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to render homage to the monarch. This attracted the attention of the Mogho 635
Naba, who investigated the grievance of the district chief. If the provincial 645
minister were found to be in serious error, he might be deposed and exe- 634
cuted. The Ouidi Naba was theoretically exempt from such punishment, 578
but it is doubtful that a strong monarch would have allowed even this official to cause trouble.

A provincial governor dissatisfied with a district chief under his charge could, under certain conditions, have him deposed and put to death. He achieved this by complaining to the monarch that the chief was either withholding tribute or misgoverning his people. In most cases, however, the minister could curb the district chief by hinting that his son would not receive a recommendation as successor to the nam of the district. This was usually enough to win the cooperation of the most recalcitrant chief, if only because his future status as the honored ancestor of a ruling local line would be jeopardized if he rebelled. These sanctions were thus sufficient to ensure satisfactory relations between the provincial ministers and their district chiefs, at least on the surface. This was to the advantage of both groups, [687] since in the final analysis the failure of either to administer or rule well might result in the death penalty.

Many districts and villages in Ouagadougou were administered not by 634
the provincial ministers but by officials directly responsible to the Mogho 621
Naba. The districts in question were often ruled by close relatives of the Mogho Naba or by persons who had gained his good graces. The villages [567] were often inhabited by slaves and governed by headmen who were themselves slaves. Like the other territories of the Mogho Naba, these districts and villages were not physically contiguous. The districts were mixed in with districts administered by the provincial ministers, and the villages stood within the territorial boundaries of district chiefs. Whenever the [203] Mogho Naba wanted to communicate with a chief of such a village or district, he sent one of his retainers. The chiefs, in turn, used their own people to send messages and goods to Ouagadougou. The general administration of these districts and villages differed little from that of the territories administered by the provincial ministers. The main difference was that the Mogho Naba took a greater interest in their everyday affairs. This called for greater efficiency on the part of local officials; for they, like the other chiefs, faced the penalty of deposition and death for maladministration.

Of all Mossi officials, the district chiefs had the most difficult admini- 634
trative task. They were in direct contact with the people, and thus ran a greater risk of being charged with misgovernment. Countless district chiefs [687] were deposed and executed because they had allegedly disobeyed or rebelled

634 against the Mogho Naba. I say "allegedly" because it was never quite clear
687 whether the district chief was at fault or whether the Mogho Naba wanted to replace him for dynastic reasons. For example, Tanga, a district chief, was accused by Mogho Naba Sanum (1850–90) of withholding tribute and of maladministration. The Ouidi Naba who administered Tanga's district advised him to prove his innocence by making a sacrifice on Naba Oubri's tomb, and then go to Ouagadougou and ask the Mogho Naba's forgiveness.
634 Tanga agreed to do so. But it appears that the Mogho Naba, who wished
687 to place his own father's brother in Tanga's place, did not want a reconcili-
662 ation. He waged war on Tanga, and seized his relatives, retainers, and cattle. Tanga tried to regain his losses by appealing to his provincial minister, but the minister told him that the Mogho Naba had distributed the livestock and had sold the people to Hausa traders. Moreover, he informed Tanga that he could not help him because the Mogho Naba could do as he
[669] pleased. Tanga thereupon decided to take matters into his own hands. He successfully attacked the Mogho Naba's villages, and was still a rebel when the French arrived shortly afterward.[26]

634 Tanga's action was unusual, for district chiefs seldom risked rebelling
687 against the Mogho Naba when accused of maladministration. In 1895, for example, Koabga, chief of Doulougou district in the province of the Gounga
669 Naba, took poison rather than wage war when Mogho Naba Wobogo accused him of misgovernment. Usually, a district chief who disobeyed an order of the Mogho Naba was summoned to the capital to answer the charge of lese majesty. If he was found guilty, the ruler knocked the bonnet off his head, thus deposing him, and had him strangled. The Mossi seldom
[762] spilled royal blood. A district chief who refused to go to Ouagadougou could either kill himself (traditionally by taking arsenic) or resort to civil war.[27] If he chose suicide, he was given an honorable burial as though he had died naturally. If the Mogho Naba sent down an army, however, the offending chief was invariably killed. His compound was burned, his slaves and cattle were seized, and his allies and immediate relatives were compelled to flee. The strength of this tradition is borne out by Tanga's case. He had successfully resisted the attempts of two Mogho Nanamse to bring him to heel, and was still at large when the French conquered the country.
[648] But Ouidi Naba Koabga, who had deserted his sovereign and selected Kouka Koutou as Mogho Naba under French orders, had not forgiven Tanga. When the French asked him what additional steps they should take to pacify the country, he asked them to capture Tanga. The unfortunate district chief was captured, placed on an unsaddled colt, and taken to Ouagadougou, where he was ignominiously executed.[28]

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The district chief was relatively secure in the control of his territory as long as he maintained amicable relations with his immediate superiors and administered his district to their satisfaction. A less important but more constant source of concern was his relationship with neighboring chiefs. Many people who can remember the pre-conquest period say it was unsafe for a man to trespass into another district unless he was on an official mission from his chief to another chief. It appears that most of the fighting occurred over strayed cattle and stolen women, with constant raids and counter-raids. The cattle were eaten, and the women kept as wives. Captured men were sometimes sold as slaves, but more often were held for ransom. They were not kept as slaves, since the Mossi were forbidden to enslave other Mossi. Needless to say, this fighting was frowned upon by the Mogho Naba. Since all district chiefs believed in their common descent from Ouedraogo and Oubri and paid allegiance to the Mogho Naba, any fighting among them was not only a sin against the ancestors but also an act of disloyalty to the Mogho Naba. When (as was usually the case) this fighting was of short duration and few people were killed, the Mogho Naba took no official notice of it. But when it became serious, he sent the provincial administrator to stop the fighting and to summon the dissident elements to the capital for trial. The speed and severity with which the Mogho Naba dealt with quarrels within his own realm usually depended upon his strength. At some periods in Mossi history there was little internal disorder, because the rulers were strong; at other periods, under weak rulers, disorder practically amounted to internal chaos. During such periods, the Mossi were kept together only by the bonds of kinship and religion which united them against outsiders.

The district chief maintained tight control over his own territory and took an active part in its administration. In a district like Nobere, for example, the chief was aided both by an informal council and by an administrative apparatus similar to but smaller than the one at Ouagadougou. The council included men with whom the chief had grown up, members of his immediate family such as his brothers, and a few formal administrative personnel. These councillors visited him every day, brought him occasional gifts, received gifts from him in turn, and discussed informally all matters of interest. Yet, informal as this communication was, it enabled the district chief to know what was going on in his villages. Moreover, these councillors interceded for various villages and gave the chief valuable advice in administrative matters.

The formal administrative personnel of the district included a Ouidi Naba, a Baloum Naba, a Tansoba, and lesser officials with titles identical

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634 to those found at the court of Ouagadougou: Baglere Naba, Dapore Naba, Pwe Naba, Samande Naba, Ouedrange Naba, Raga Naba, etc. However, the officials who bore the same titles as the chief administrators of the Mogho Naba did not necessarily serve in the same capacity. A local historical event often determined which official held which administrative task. In Nobere, the Ouidi Naba and the Tansoba were the two principal administrators. The Ouidi Naba administered those villages north and west of Nab'tenga (the chief's village), and the Tansoba administered the villages south and east of it. The Baloum Naba and other officials had no villages under their jurisdiction, but performed many valuable services for the chief.

Administrative processes on the district level were not as formal as in the capital. Except on Fridays and on important occasions, the district administrators visited the chief's compound only when summoned or when they had an important matter to discuss. (Of course, those administrators who formed part of his unofficial council could visit him at any time.) Their problems differed little from those of the Ouagadougou officials, except that their personal problems were greater, owing to the intimacy of the smaller area. The differences in status between non-noble administrators and noble relatives of the district chief were more keenly felt and caused more difficulties. Whereas the provincial administrator seldom met the district chiefs, the district administrators regularly met nobles in the market place, at ceremonies, and in the course of their everyday work. The latent conflict between official status and royal rank often broke out openly. When it did, the nobles of a village would refuse to obey the orders the administrators had transmitted to their village chief. This compelled the district chief either to summon the nobles for an explanation of their behavior or to use his own relatives to transmit orders to them. He did not like to take either course of action, especially the latter, because both violated hierarchical procedure. Furthermore, when he sent a near relative to a village, the relative often demanded goods and services not authorized by the district chief. Of course, not all the nobles made the administrator's task difficult, but enough of them did to cause him anxiety.

The duties of the district administrators fell into several categories. [203] First, it was their task to transmit to the village chiefs orders which the Kombere Naba had received from the Mogho Naba concerning warfare, [622] special gifts and tribute, and nation-wide ceremonies and rituals. Second, they had similar duties toward the provincial governor and the district chief. Third, and most important from the local viewpoint, they handled those affairs concerning only the district. The administrators seldom had

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difficulty discharging these duties, for, nobles aside, the Mossi usually obeyed orders from their chiefs—a fact verified by most observers. At the same time, a district chief had to be temperate in his demands upon his villagers, and could not take advantage of his obligations to the Mogho Naba as a means of personal enrichment. Similarly, the district administrators could not seek personal gain either by augmenting the demands of the district chief or by withholding part of the goods and services rendered to him. District administrators who were found guilty of maladministration or embezzlement were executed, because activities of this kind could—and often did—jeopardize the life of the district chief. 634

The Mossi might complain among themselves about the administrative policies of their district chief, but they took no measures against him unless he was very cruel or exploitative. A district chief who by his disregard for the people's welfare was believed to have lost the ability to "command people" jeopardized not only his position but also his life. When the people were dissatisfied with a chief, they either boycotted him or deserted their villages and migrated to another district, thus "increasing the force" (nam) of the chief who gave them sanctuary. This placed the deserted chief in a rather difficult position. Mogho Nanamse are known to have ordered the execution of district chiefs and even autonomous Dimdamba who had lost their subjects through their own fault. In 1863, when Mogho Naba Sanum was informed that the ruler of Boussouma, Naba Zande, had been chased away by his subjects for administrative abuses and had fled to a Ouagadougou village, he had him captured and executed.[29] Thus, the threat that people might leave the district was often strong enough to ensure a just administration, because the district chiefs and officials depended upon the villagers not only for the economic support of the central administration but also for their livelihood and their lives. 634 687 578 626 634 687 626

Those district chiefs who supervised other district chiefs for the Mogho Naba did not interfere with the internal administration of the districts. The chiefs of the Vooko and Nobila districts, for instance, had administrators of their own to look after their villages. But they were responsible to the chief of Nobere district, not their respective provincial ministers, for their internal affairs. Moreover, they had to follow the Nobere chief when he went to Ouagadougou to pay homage and allegiance to the Mogho Naba. But aside from these prescriptions, the chiefs of these subordinate districts administered their territories in the same manner as the Nobere chief administered his own. 634 628

The Mossi village chief had no administrators of his own to help him with day-to-day affairs of his village. However, like the district chief, he 622 623

622 had a group of confidants who acted as an informal council. These men
623 included senior members of his own lineage, elders from other local lineages, and personal friends. Again, like the confidants of the district chiefs, these men visited the village chief whenever they were not busy with their own affairs to talk to him about wives, crops, and village matters. Although protocol was at a minimum on this level, the chief had to maintain a high
[613] degree of decorum. As a member of the ruling lineage of the district, he
[565] had noble status and had to be treated accordingly. The non-noble village
622 chief was also respected as a recipient of the nam. But all chiefs, whether nobles or commoners, were expected to lead exemplary lives lest the flaws in their characters as revealed by the intimacy of village life should weaken their prestige.

622 The village chief received his orders from the district chief through the
203 administrator in charge of his village or through one of this official's servants. He, in turn, used his own sons or relatives to transmit messages to the heads of the saghse. If the message was extremely important, the village chief's messenger might be accompanied by the administrator's messenger or by the district chief's personal representatives. The saksobadamba then transmitted the order to the various compound heads. This hierarchy was always followed because, by following it, the officials knew who was responsible for disobeying or frustrating the wishes of the superior chiefs. As on the district level, the orders transmitted to the village and its sections dealt with such things as collecting tribute, picking fruits from the district chief's trees, allocating labor for the district chief or his personal retainers, transferring or summoning cases to the district court, procuring sacrificial animals for the local Tengsoba, and requesting soldiers. The village chief also sent his own messages to the saghse. These messages, however, dealt with such village matters as local sacrifices, quarrels, and court cases.

622 Misrule and maladministration by a village chief were punished either
687 by the district chief or by the villagers. Like other Mossi rulers, the village
634 chief could not be deposed and allowed to live. However, he had a better chance of fleeing and finding refuge in another district. His presence in a strange district did not challenge the authority of the local chief, and he had no opportunities to seize any of his host's villages. In fact, if the refugee was accompanied by a large number of his subjects, his host might even give him land on which to erect a new village. The proviso was, of course, that he should not "spoil" the district by causing trouble. If a village chief accused of maladministration was seized by the district chief before he could
[696] flee, he was invariably executed. If he was a commoner, he was decapitated or even stoned to death; if he was a nobleman, he was taken into the bush and strangled in secret by the district police.

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and strangled in secret by the district police. If a district chief hesitated to punish a village chief whose followers had complained, the aggrieved lineage or the entire village simply took its movable property and left. This sanction does not seem to have been applied often, but its threat was normally sufficient to curb the excesses of the worst village chief.

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V

LAW AND THE JUDICIAL PROCESS

671 THE Mossi possessed a comprehensive body of rules governing human conduct. These rules were well known to the people, and violators were punished by the responsible authorities. The Mossi might be said to have had substantive law, but they had no written codes. Nevertheless, the lack of written codes does not warrant Mangin's blanket criticism of Mossi judicial processes: "Of course, there was no written code, no formal scale of penalties. Everything depended on custom and on the whim of the judge. [662] Thus, the wealthy could obtain sentences in their favor by paying the judges, and thieves could avoid punishment by sharing their loot with the Naba."[1] Custom did dictate the penalties, just as "written custom" dictates penalties [692] in all written legal codes. But, as we shall see, the Mossi did have a known [695] scale of penalties. Moreover, a Mossi judge had to be careful in rendering judgment, because his decisions could be reviewed by a higher court.

596 The head of the Mossi extended family, the *Yirisoba,* was responsible 681 for the everyday conduct of his charges. It was his duty to settle all family quarrels, and to punish persons guilty of theft within the compound, disrespect toward elders, and incest. Punishment for the lesser wrongs included 596 reprimands and floggings. A person found guilty of disrespect to the elders 683 or of incest could be banished from the group. But banishment was so severe 684 that it was imposed only if the criminal refused to make the usual conciliatory gestures and was condemned by all the members of his boodoo. Even after this condemnation, however, he could ask a "sister's son," a yagenga, [613] to intercede for him. This man, the son of a female lineage member, had many privileges within his mother's brother's lineage, including the right to mediate between an exile and his boodoo.

593 Amicable relations within the family group were most often disrupted 586 by conjugal difficulties. A Mossi husband could occasionally flog an erring 613 wife, but he was not allowed to maltreat her. When a man became disgusted with his wife and wished to repudiate her, he put her water pots in the compound yard. This rather serious action often led to hostile relations

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between the lineages concerned. If either the repudiated woman or a member of her husband's lineage wished to initiate a reconciliation, she or he had to summon a yagenga. He alone was permitted to reconcile the couple after the pots had been placed in the courtyard. When a woman felt that she was being maltreated by her husband, she usually fled to her own patrilineage and waited for her husband's patrilineage—usually his brothers—to visit her male relatives and discuss the case. If the woman was judged guilty, she was reprimanded and sometimes flogged by her own relatives for causing trouble between the two lineages, and then sent home to her husband. However, if the man was found guilty, his wife was returned to him, but he was warned that he would forfeit all rights to her if he maltreated her again. A man who lost his wife through repeated maltreatment could not take the matter to court, because chiefs usually refused to deal with purely domestic issues. His only recourse was to induce one of his lineage brothers to recall a daughter who had married into his wife's lineage. This act was usually sufficient to bring about the reconciliation of the estranged couple before innocent persons were hurt.

The Mossi made every effort to solve minor problems without recourse to the chiefs. The local Boodkasemdamba and lineage elders adjudicated quarrels and simple offenses involving members of minimal segments in the various village saghse. They even tried to resolve difficulties between lineage members of larger segments who lived in different villages. The elders often imposed punishments such as reprimands, floggings, and even banishment. The convicted person did not usually appeal to the chief, because he knew that the chief would advise him to settle his problem within the family.

Unrelated villagers also tried to settle difficulties among themselves without appealing to the chief. For example, a man who was caught stealing could be beaten or even killed by his intended victims, and the chief did not punish them for their action. In many cases, villagers simply took the thief back to his relatives, knowing they would punish him. Occasionally, a family disgraced by a thieving member forced him to kill himself. When this happened the chief held an inquest but took no other action.

The Mossi gave a fairly simple explanation for returning a thief to his relatives for punishment. They said that every family had "weak" members, and that by not harming the captured thief they were only protecting themselves against retaliation if one of their own relatives should commit a similar crime. But a more important reason seems to have been their fear of starting a feud that might result in the premeditated murder of a man and the subsequent execution of his murderer.

The one crime that invoked terrible unofficial sanctions was rape. If the

684 offender was caught in the act, he was immediately killed. If he was merely
[613] suspected of guilt both by his own lineage and by the lineage of the wronged woman, he was banished from his lineage and from the village. So swift and sure was this punishment that a rapist always fled if he believed he
[847] would be discovered. The Mossi considered rape such a heinous crime that if the act resulted in pregnancy, an abortion was attempted; if this failed,
[613] the child was killed at birth. Furthermore, the rapist could never hope to
[629] return to his community, because even if the yagenga appealed on his behalf and his lineage forgave him, the community ban still stood.[2]

692 The village chief was usually aware of the torts and crimes that occurred
622 in his village, and of how the families concerned had handled them. He seldom interfered in the internal affairs of a lineage, or in problems between lineages, unless he felt that a case was beyond their legal competence.
[684] In the case of a rapist's expulsion, community feeling usually ran so high that if the chief intervened, it was only to support the will of the community. However, when people could not settle their differences peaceably or when a major crime was committed within a village, the chief usually summoned
622 the offender to his court for trial. His right to do so was sanctioned by his
692 possession of the nam, but the very concept of the nam often made his task
565 difficult. If he was a commoner, the nobles often emphasized their rela-
634 tionship to the holder of the royal nam, the district chief, and objected to
695 being tried by a commoner. They usually appeared at the village court if summoned, but often attempted afterward to find some excuse for taking their case to the district chief. They felt that their local reputation would prevent them from receiving a fair hearing from anyone but their lineage brother. Furthermore, if they were judged and convicted in the lower court and the verdict was confirmed in the district court, they felt that the district chief, in concurring with the village chief, had broken the solidarity of their lineage. But if they took their case directly to the district chief, they knew they were being judged by an equal or a superior, and that an unfavorable judgment would not damage their status.

622 The competence of the village chief to deal with court cases was limited.[3]
692 He did pass on all the legal infractions that occurred in his village, but he tried to adjudicate only the minor cases. Thus, he tried cases involving theft, quarrels, trespassing, adultery, indebtedness, and abuse, and tried to
[692] settle them by reprimanding the guilty ones. He sent cases involving serious injury and homicide to the district court, along with cases he was unable to resolve.

692 The district court was a most efficient and effective judicial organ, and
634 the nature of the Mossi judicial process was most evident on this level. The

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district court did not deal with all cases referred to it. Many cases, especially those concerning the behavior of women, were referred back to the village to be resolved by the respective lineages. The district chief considered it beneath his dignity to deal with such cases, and his guards ostentatiously chased away the litigants. He consented to try such cases only when he suspected that more serious trouble would develop if he did not. Theoretically, district courts could not try cases involving the death penalty, but in practice most of them did. Higher chiefs tolerated this as long as district chiefs did not abuse their usurpation of power.[4]

When a major crime was committed in a district, the case was usually sent immediately to the district court. The chief of the village where the crime had been committed sent one of his relatives with the accused or with the litigants to the district chief's compound, and dispatched another relative to notify the village administrator. The administrator either went to the district court to await the litigants, or sent his representative to meet the court-bound party on the way and question them about the case. Such parties were often very large, because the Mossi believed that a man should not go to court alone. They felt that the criminal act of a relative reflected on all of them, and that it was important for them to appear with him. To quote a Mossi proverb, "A chicken without its feathers is a very small bird indeed." Therefore, no matter how grievous his crime might be, the accused was accompanied to court by his relatives. If his own lineage members refused to do so, his mother's patrilineage was duty-bound to come to his aid. These relatives believed that they would incur ancestral wrath if they refused to help him.

As soon as the accused or the litigants arrived at the district chief's compound, a page notified him that the people of such-and-such a village had brought him a case. If it was after dark, the chief told his police to take charge of the litigants until morning; otherwise he prepared to convene the court. When the chief was ready, the page reappeared and alerted the court party, who had been milling about in the courtyard under the watchful eyes of the chief's guards. They ranged themselves at a respectful distance on either side of the chief's chair. When he appeared they arose, and when he sat down they knelt and offered the customary salutation. The litigants and their relatives then gave the chief the customary kola nuts, cowries, and chickens.[5] He, in turn, acknowledged the gifts and inquired about the case. The relatives of the village chief who had accompanied the litigants reported what had allegedly happened; what action, if any, had been taken by the village court; and why the case had been brought to the district court (either because the crime was too serious to be judged on the village level,

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692 634 695 or because the litigants had rejected the village chief's verdict). The chief then asked the plaintiff or "the people of X village" to state their case. Someone usually spoke up, and after he had finished, the chief asked the defendant or defendants to do likewise. The litigants were then asked to produce reputable witnesses to support or refute the testimony.

[641] Witnesses had to be male, adult (to have begun to "push a beard"), and [562] free. Women and bondsmen had no legal personality before a Mossi court. [567] A slave was represented at court by his master, and a woman by her husband (and, by extension, by his patrilineage). In marital quarrels or property suits, a woman was usually represented by her patrilineage. Only if she alone could give the required evidence was she allowed in court. When [576] she was asked to testify, she knelt, and spoke in a high, thin, soft voice, thus showing extreme respect to the chief and proper deference to the court. Except for these restrictions, any person could be called in as a witness. [578] Tempers often ran fairly high among the litigants' relatives and friends while they gave their testimony and argued the case, but their physical separation and their respect for the chief prevented abuse and fighting. Anyone who started a fight in court was liable to a beating by the samandekamba.

[674] The Mossi believed that most people, given sufficient reason, would commit any crime. Thus they examined the litigants carefully and at great length in an attempt to "get behind" the offense. The district chief interrogated the litigants, but the dignity of the court prevented him from arguing with them. As a matter of fact, most of the cross-examination was done by the litigants themselves. From time to time, the village administrator and the chief's confidants asked brief, direct questions. When a woman was involved, the chief's Pughtiema usually listened to the proceedings from behind a wall and questioned her. When all the evidence was in, the chief either rendered his verdict without delay or retired to the zongo to confer with his confidants and the village administrator. He took the latter course whenever he felt that further discussion was necessary or that false testimony was confusing the issue. Not until he felt that he had the facts well in hand did he return to the court to render his verdict.

The Mossi did not use ordeals in court except in the "chastity trials" conducted by the Pwe Naba. Some litigants called upon the ancestors to kill them if they were not telling the truth; others went to earth shrines and drank an infusion of dust to show that they were not afraid of the spirits who wrought vengeance on the guilty. However, such acts were never carried out in court and thus were of no use to the chief.

The following case, tried in a district court in 1956, illustrates the Mossi

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illustrates the Mossi 685

concept of justice. To reach the central market, the people of Donse village 634
used a path that ran across the fields belonging to two of their fellow villagers, Zami and Isa. The path was normally open all year round, even during the planting season, because neither man wished to inconvenience the villagers. But one day the two men quarreled, and shortly thereafter Isa announced his decision to close his path during the planting season. He said he feared that "people would steal his growing crops" if he left it open. Moreover, he wanted to use the path to increase his planting area. Zami objected to what he considered an insult, and, believing that Isa had violated a customary rule, used the path. In doing so, he crushed several stalks of millet. Isa witnessed his action, and the men came to blows. When the village chief proved unable to reconcile them, they were brought before the district court.

The district chief ruled that according to Mossi custom, a man could 695
close a path during the planting season to prevent people from stealing his 691
crops. But if he closed a path, he had to provide an alternative route, for no 685
one had the right to restrict the movements of others. The chief sympa- 634
thized with Isa over the small size of his field, but insisted that he provide a path across or around it. However, he persuaded Zami to let Isa use a portion of his land in compensation for the new path.

The chief tried to reconcile the interests of Isa and Zami with those of the entire village. He apparently felt that reconciliation was more useful than judgment. He did uphold the law that the right of passage is mandatory, but also maintained that a man has the right to protect his property from potential thieves. At the same time, he made it clear that although a man may defend his own rights, he may not do so by infringing upon the rights of others.

The same principles seem to have been upheld in the following case, 691
also recorded in 1956, which is interesting because it illustrates the flexi- 428
bility of Mossi law. A man named Hammadou died, leaving fifteen cows as his legacy. Moussa, his eldest son and principal heir, distributed the cows among his father's other sons and male relatives, but did not give any to his father's daughter. Strictly speaking, he was right to exclude her, because a [562]
woman was not supposed to inherit any of her father's property unless he had no living lineal or collateral relatives. In practice, however, a daughter always received part of her father's legacy, especially if he had been wealthy. Hammadou's daughter therefore felt slighted, and when she received no redress from Moussa or her other male relatives, she had the case taken to the village chief. He could not resolve it, and referred it to the district chief. [692]

When Moussa was called before the district chief, he explained that his [634]

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691 father had given the woman a silver bracelet before he died, and that the
428 babissi felt that this was sufficient, since she had a husband to provide for
634 her. Furthermore, Moussa said that the inheritance had already been distributed, and that any redistribution would impose a hardship on all concerned.

695 Interpreting the inheritance law according to common practice, the chief
691 ruled that the milk from a man's cattle was for *all* his children, regardless
428 of sex, and that the fact that the father had formerly given the daughter a
634 bracelet should not have influenced the distribution of the inheritance. The chief stated that the woman should receive at least one cow, and that if the defendant did not agree, he (the chief) would recall all the animals and supervise their distribution. He did not feel that he had to state the principles by which he had reached his judgment, for the consensus among the people of the district was that the heir was trying to take advantage of the law for his own selfish interests. Rather than appeal to Ouagadougou, Moussa and his babissi accepted the verdict.

671 On the basis of these and other cases, we are led to the conclusion that the Mossi felt that law and the judicial process should serve to reconcile people and to maintain what was commonly considered to be social justice.

634 Most of the cases at the district court were tried in the same manner as
692 those cited above. Cases involving relations between men and women were
684 the most common. This is paradoxical, because the district chief tried to avoid any involvement with such cases. For every domestic case tried by
593 the district chief, five others were sent back to the village or lineage level. Even so, it is estimated that about 80 per cent of the cases tried by Mossi district chiefs ultimately concerned women. The most common case of this type was the alleged refusal of a woman to return to her husband.* If the judge found that another man had encouraged her to leave her husband, he ordered her to return to him and warned her and the man about the possibility of serious difficulty with her husband's relatives. On the other hand, if the chief found that the woman had left a cruel husband who threatened to harm her or her relatives, he warned the husband not to carry out his threats. The Mossi had no bride price; thus, a woman's family was not faced with the problem of restitution. Sometimes, an angry husband did demand that his wife's family return the gifts (*pogopoussum*, "thanks for the woman") he had given them from time to time—e.g., at funerals—and they complied.

684 Adultery cases were next in frequency at the district court. A man con-
692 victed of adultery with another man's wife was either warned to leave her
634 alone or fined a sheep or a goat. He was also liable to be put in stocks for

He was also liable to be put in stocks for 684
several days, and when released he was warned against visiting the local 692
markets, where he might be tempted to renew his illicit relations. A noble- 634
man convicted of adultery was often merely warned or fined, since his [696]
movements could not be restricted. But if a man caught his wife and an- [622]
other man in *flagrante delicto* and killed them, his act was considered justifiable homicide (even if the slain man was a noble), and he went free. If, however, he killed the lover but spared his wife, he had to send her to the chief's household. Here she was made to perform hard work under the supervision of the palace guards until it was believed that she had reformed. A man who was experiencing difficulties with an unfaithful wife and feared he might eventually kill her or her paramour also sent her to the chief's compound for a few months.

The Mossi have always been great creditors and debtors, and cases con- 686
cerning indebtedness seem to have been next in frequency at the district 692
court. The chief usually dismissed cases of indebtedness brought against 634
minors, because it was considered unseemly for adults to give credit or to loan valuable property to youths not yet of age. Thus, if the minor's family refused to make restitution, the creditor usually had no redress. However, [613]
if a woman borrowed property and refused to return it, her husband's lineage was held responsible. Similarly, if an adult male borrowed anything and refused to return it or to do so on time, the case was taken to the local court and eventually to the district court. The creditor was asked to supply witnesses to the loan, and if the chief was satisfied that the loan had been made under the conditions specified, the debtor was ordered to make restitution. If the debtor claimed bankruptcy, the chief ordered that his goods be seized and sold, and that restitution be made to the creditor. If the debtor 686
was truly destitute, his relatives were compelled to pay his debts. The col- 692
lective responsibility of the babissi for the debts of its members was seen 634
most clearly in cases where men died in a state of indebtedness. The credi- 613
tors were allowed to summon the debtor's babissi to court, and if proof of the debt was established, the relatives were compelled to repay. If they failed to do so, the chief's police seized and sold their goods to repay the debt.

Cases dealing with violations of civil contracts were somewhat similar. 686
The Mossi did not believe in the axiom *caveat emptor*. If a man sold an 634
animal that died within a week for no apparent reason, the chief ordered 692
an investigation. If it was found that the animal had been ill when sold, the chief ordered that the buyer be reimbursed. If the investigation showed that the animal had been healthy when sold, no restitution was made. Similarly, if a man borrowed an ass or an ox to transport goods and the animal

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686 634 692 died while he was using it, the owner could not press any claims. However, the borrower was obliged to sell the animal's flesh and give the money to the owner along with the animal's skin as proof of its death. Under no circumstances would a district chief absolve a man from paying the market value of an animal if he failed to return the skin. Such failure would brand him as a thief and involve an additional fine.

685 [674] The Mossi considered theft a major crime. A thief could be killed with impunity if he was caught in the act and in the presence of several witnesses. If these conditions were not met but the man killed was known to have been a thief, the killer was fined several cows. But if he was known to have been a man of good character, the killer ran the risk of being executed. In this way, the Mossi tried to prevent any abuse of an accepted practice. The theft of grain and other foodstuffs was considered especially reprehensible, because it was held to indicate that the thief was so depraved 685 that he would not even grow his own food. During the rule of Naba Kaglere of Nobere district (1888–1906), a man called Yahiya left his own village 175 of Donse and went to a village called Quitenga to steal sweet potatoes. The people of that village caught him in the act and shot him with a poisoned arrow as he made his escape. Yahiya died without revealing the source of his wound, and his babissi, suspecting foul play, asked Kaglere to investigate. When the Quitenga people learned of the investigation, they went forward voluntarily and reported the circumstances under which they had wounded Yahiya. Kaglere absolved them of all guilt and told the Donse people that Yahiya had deserved to die, not only because he had stolen food (which he might have received if he had asked for it), but because sweet potatoes were the easiest vegetable to cultivate.

685 [692] A thief who was too clever to be caught in the act but who was apprehended afterwards was treated quite harshly by the Mossi court. Here, the penalty of double indemnity was often applied. A man who was brought to court for stealing a chicken or guinea hen was fined a goat or a sheep. Hence the Mossi proverb "Zou noaga ronda bouga"—"He who steals a [692] chicken repays a goat." The thief who stole one cow had to return several. If a thief could not pay the fine, he was placed in stocks until his relatives paid for him. If they refused to do so, the chief's retainers seized their property, sold it, and made restitution. This often compelled the family of a [762] recidivous thief to make him commit suicide. If the family would not re- [634] sort to this, the district chief had the man seized and clubbed to death.[7] Sometimes the chief sent recidivists to the Mogho Naba, who sent them to a [565] village called Teemetenga to be made into eunuchs.[8]

[599] The Mossi seem to have made a distinction between theft and pillage—

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a practice whereby nobles deprived commoners of their property. Those 685
nobles who lived among commoners quite often confiscated their neigh- 579
bors' property. But this was not regarded as theft and was not punishable 565
as such, although a rapacious nobleman could be sanctioned for terrorizing and "spoiling" a village. If a nobleman was caught performing an act that *was* considered theft, or if he was accused and found guilty of theft, he was severely punished. During Kaglere's reign, the people of a small village 686
suffered a series of livestock thefts. One day, while the friends of a village 685
chief were sitting with him, a dog came out of the chief's compound 622
dragging an animal skin. The men recognized the skin as that described for a stolen goat, and decided to investigate. In the chief's courtyard they discovered the hole from which the dog had unearthed the skin. They also found the skins of several other stolen animals. The villagers took the [692]
village chief to the district chief, who found him guilty and exiled him [634]
from the region. In passing judgment, the district chief told him that he had been elected "to care for the village," but that he had betrayed his trust by robbing his own people.

According to Mossi law, willful homicide or murder was punishable by 682
execution. The Mossi did not use wergild or "blood money," but insisted on the *lex talionis,* which they interpreted as "a life for a life." They did not believe that money or any other valuables could compensate for the life of a man, nor would they allow a slave to be executed in place of the murderer. They believed that only by executing the murderer himself could they prevent his victim's relatives from resorting to vengeance and thus "spoiling" the district or village.

A man who grievously wounded another was apprehended, bound, and taken to the village chief and subsequently to the district chief. Here he was [696]
kept in stocks in the serfs' quarter without being tried until his victim either died or recovered. If his victim recovered and the judge found that the wound had been inflicted accidentally, the defendant was fined or had his goods confiscated, but he was released. If the judge found that the victim had been wounded in a fair fight, the prisoner was usually censured and dismissed. The chief often warned the wounded man that he ought to have lived up to the Mossi axiom that a grown man is always able to protect himself. If, however, the trial revealed that the prisoner had ambushed his victim with the intent to kill, he either was fined several cows or had his entire property confiscated. District chiefs are known to have executed [634]
the perpetrators of cowardly ambushes even though their victims recovered. [696]

If a man died at the hands of another, an inquest was held immediately. If the killing had been accidental or committed in self-defense, or if it was

682 found to have been justified—that is, if the victim was a thief or a nocturnal
622 intruder—then the accused was acquitted or simply fined. If, however, the accused was found guilty of murder, he was sentenced to die, and the mode
696 of execution was at the chief's pleasure. The chief surrendered the prisoner to his executioners, serfs who lived in the Baglere ward. They took him into the woods and carried out the sentence by strangulation, hanging, decapitation, clubbing, or stoning.

696 The perpetrator of an unusually heinous crime was often ordered to kill himself with a poisoned arrow. This form of execution was feared most, because it tested the murderer's mettle and called into play the
[634] coercive force of his lineage if he proved to be a coward. When such an execution was ordered, the district chief had a poisoned arrow prepared and brought to the murderer's father, his brother, or his father's brother's son. The relative gave the arrow to the condemned man, and, while apologizing for his painful mission, explained that the crime had to be expiated. If the murderer agreed to kill himself, his relatives prepared food and drink for
[766] him while his grave was dug. Some proud and brave men helped their relatives dig the oblong-shaped grave required for a murderer; some even insisted on digging it themselves. When both the food and the grave had been prepared, the murderer bade his relatives farewell, took the food and the poisoned arrow, and went into a hut. Here he ate the food and after-
696 ward killed himself by pushing the poisoned arrow into his leg. In some
626 cases he had to be provided with a second arrow to hasten his death. If a cowardly murderer refused to kill himself, one of his relatives offered to
613 die in his stead. He told the murderer that death was preferable to the knowledge that his lineage brother was a coward. What would happen, he asked the murderer, if he saw a relative being harmed? Would he choose his own safety rather than run the risk of death? The other relatives asked the same questions, and this subtle coercion was usually sufficient to induce the most cowardly man to kill himself. There are no reports of a murderer's permitting a relative to die for him; life would have been impossible for him afterward. One suspects that if ever a murderer had attempted to elude his fate, the district chief would have had him executed.

634 The district court also prescribed capital punishment for individuals
681 convicted of arson, abduction, witchcraft, or lese majesty. A person con-
[685] victed of willfully setting fire to someone's hut or crops was put to death even if no one was killed in the resulting fire; he was held to have
[683] jeopardized the life and livelihood of his victims. Similarly, the rare person convicted of threatening the well-being of others through the practice of
[695] witchcraft was usually tortured and killed. Conviction usually followed the testimony of witnesses or the confession of the accused.

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The torture was seen as a punishment, and not as a form of ordeal to 695
ascertain guilt or innocence. It was designed to cause the culprit as much 696
suffering as possible before he died, and its harshness reflects the Mossi fear of witches and witchcraft. In one form of punishment called *koudgilga*, the culprit was sent to the smith, who tortured him by placing hot iron balls in both his hands. He was then beaten to death. Another type of punishment called *swengalenga* was more painful. A pottery jar from which the bottom had been removed was heated in a fire. Then it was placed over the head of the convicted witch and allowed to burn its way down onto his shoulders. The culprit was subsequently killed. Sometimes a convicted witch was [304]
not killed; instead, a man was sent to Ouagadougou to be castrated and [567]
sold as a eunuch, and a woman was sold outside the country as a slave.

Gross disrespect toward the chief and crimes of lese majesty were un- 687
common among the Mossi. These crimes were usually committed by persons who came into close contact with the chief—nobles and court retainers—rather than by commoners, serfs, or slaves. The most common form of [684]
lese majesty was adultery with one of the district chief's wives. The penalty [634]
for this was death for both violators. Anyone who dared insult the district chief at court was seized and executed. The same fate awaited those who talked about him maliciously in public or threatened to stir a rebellion against him. If the culprits were commoners, they were executed; if they were nobles, they were strangled in secret or were forced to commit suicide.

The district chief was caught in a dilemma whenever nobles committed 634
major crimes or unlawful acts. They could not be imprisoned, and only the 565
Mogho Naba had the legal prerogative to execute them. When a noble 681
committed a major crime such as treason or rebellion, he was sent to the capital to be executed by slaves, who strangled him with a piece of cotton cloth. However, no district chief could allow the nobles to commit crimes 634
with impunity, secure in the knowledge that they could only be punished 696
at Ouagadougou. If a nobleman subverted the chief's rule by repeated acts 565
of cruelty and brigandage, he was executed, although illegally. The execu- [693]
tioners were the Baglere Naba and the Dapore Naba. These two men secretly visited the condemned noble, taking with them a bundle as a present from the chief. This bundle contained a new white robe in which were secreted a chief's bonnet and a poisoned arrow. As soon as the noble saw the gift, he knew that he was being ordered to kill himself. If he attempted to raise an alarm or run away, he was instantly strangled and his body was discarded in the bush. If he accepted the sentence, he was allowed to have food prepared, to eat, and then to kill himself. The chief ordered an elaborate funeral for his kinsman as though he had died an ordinary death. Thus, he was able to observe all the proprieties while at the same

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time safeguarding his position within the district and toward the Mogho Naba. For, as already pointed out, the district chief who failed to protect his subjects as well as to rule them was deposed and executed by the sovereign.

The promptness with which the lower courts dealt with litigations left little time for pre-trial bribery, and there is general agreement that the traditional courts were just. Of course, some lower chiefs were known to have been unfair and to have taken bribes. However, they were always in danger of having their verdicts appealed to Ouagadougou.

The Mossi believed in and acted on the dictum that "the truth is at Ouagadougou." They were convinced that they could obtain justice from the Mogho Naba if from no other chief. If a man was not satisfied with the ruling of a lower chief, he was free in theory to seek a higher verdict, and this influenced the kind of justice rendered on the lower level. As a rule, however, the district chiefs did not favor appeals to Ouagadougou. They felt, like most Mossi, that the less their superiors knew about their activities, the better. Thus, the district chief used all of his influence to prevent cases from being appealed to the capital. Some district chiefs were not above coercing litigants into such abstention. They even threatened them with reprisals if the verdict should be unfavorable. But the greatest deterrent against such appeals was the expenditure of time and money. The docket of the Mogho Naba's court was always crowded, and the suitors often had to remain at the capital for as long as three months before they were given a hearing.[9] During this period they often spent more money than the action was worth. Marc states that the word "Ouagadougou" means "the place where one becomes thin," a reference to the amount of money litigants had to spend while waiting for their cases to be heard.[10]

When the object of a lawsuit was the inheritance of cattle, the litigants sustained a double loss. As soon as they asked that the case be taken to the capital, the district chief impounded the cattle. While the case was pending he appropriated the cows' milk, and when the case was settled both he and the Mogho Naba received some animals. Thus, suitors were usually under a great deal of pressure to resolve their problems on the district level. However, if they were determined to go to the capital, they were permitted to do so.

The district chief always sent one of his retainers to the capital with the litigants. The group went directly to the district's provincial minister, who was empowered to hear the appeal and decide whether it should be brought before the Mogho Naba or returned to the district court. If he decided to send it to the Mogho Naba, he placed it on the docket and told the

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litigants when it would be heard. On the day set he took his charges to court, where they waited in the company of the litigants from other districts and from the wards of the capital itself. 643 692 634

The procedure of the Mogho Naba's court differed little from that of the district chief's court. When called upon, the litigant stated his case, called witnesses, and underwent cross-examination by his opponents and by ministers of the Mogho Naba. The litigants were not allowed to look at the Mogho Naba while they spoke, but had to kneel forward on the ground with their faces turned away from him. The Mogho Naba himself seldom looked at the litigants and rarely questioned them. When presented with a complex case, the Mogho Naba, like the district chief, retired with his councillors and canvassed their opinion in order "to ascertain whether or not their verdicts were similar to his own." Nevertheless, he could not follow their advice. He had to make up his own mind, and when he returned to court he rendered his verdict, which could not be appealed. If those who received an unfavorable verdict showed any displeasure, they were taken outside by the palace guards and executed.

The penalties imposed by the Ouagadougou court were usually more severe than those handed down at the district level. The main reason for this was that aside from cases involving residents of Ouagadougou, the lawsuits tried by the Mogho Naba were serious ones and often had been sent to him on appeal. Moreover, the Mogho Naba's court was alone empowered to impose the death penalty within the kingdom of Ouagadougou. [681] It should be noted here once more that district chiefs often executed criminals. But it should also be reiterated that the Mogho Naba never surrendered his prerogative to the district chiefs. They simply usurped it, and if they used it judiciously they were not penalized.

Those nobles and commoners who were convicted for serious crimes at the monarch's court were killed by the royal executioners. Moreover, in contrast to the procedure at the district court, the criminal's property was often seized before his execution. The reason for this is not clear, but it was probably related to the lack of a personal relationship between the court and the relatives of the accused, which enabled the Mogho Naba to impose a harsher penalty. The district chief, it must be remembered, lived in close association with his people and was influenced in his behavior by social relationships. Interestingly enough, the Mogho Naba did not keep the goods seized, but allowed them to be distributed among his executioners. 643 696 692 634

Crimes against the person or office of the Mogho Naba were punished with greater severity than crimes against the district chief. Any man who was seen speaking to one of the ruler's wives and who did not happen to [687]

696 be related to her was tried and executed. In some cases, he was put to death
692 without a trial. Adultery with a royal wife was considered so reprehensible
634 that both adulterers were publicly beaten to death. Their bodies were
[687] denied burial and were thrown into the bush to be eaten by vultures. The
[684] Dapore Naba and the Baglere Naba seized and retained the man's property.

Men who committed treason against the Mogho Naba were usually
687 killed before they could be tried. Chiefs and nobles who were suspected of
643 treason and who consented to come to Ouagadougou for trial were deposed
692 and executed if found guilty. Those who were found innocent were released and sent back to their chiefly duties. The sole exception on record to this general rule was the case of Naba Yemde, a Dim of Boulsa province.
[669] He had fought and defeated the forces of Mogho Naba Sanum, and when the Mogho Naba sent a larger army and routed him, he was treacherously delivered to the monarch by another Dim. Sanum found Yemde innocent of treason, but had him executed because he had violated another rule: as the descendant of a Kourita, he had come face to face with the Mogho Naba, thus jeopardizing the monarch's life. This exception is always cited by the Mossi when the inevitability of execution for treason is brought up. Actually, a person accused of treason rarely went to court. He either took poison or died in battle against the royal forces. As a posthumous punishment, his compound was burned, his property seized, and his relatives and servants sold into slavery outside the country. Thus, the supreme penalty
[613] was not merely the death of a traitor but the permanent banishment of his entire lineage.

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VI

WARFARE

THE Mossi were proud of their warrior tradition, which had earned them 721
their several kingdoms, principalities, and districts. Even the least district [173]
chief had stories about the wars in which his ancestors had wrested their territories from aboriginal populations. These traditions of conquest legitimized to a large extent the power of the Mossi kings and chiefs, who never hesitated to use force in order to obtain tribute, to maintain their rule, and to enforce their authority. The Mossi value fighting ability so [181]
highly that even today, when fighting is no longer necessary, most Mossi males in the rural areas carry sticks and other weapons on their shoulders as symbols of manhood. In their view, every man should know how to fight and should be able to defend his village, his district, and his kingdom.

According to tradition, the northward thrust of the Mossi warriors dur- 648
ing the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries carried them into the 173
region of the Niger River bend. Here, around A.D. 1329, the Yatenga Mossi attacked and sacked the town of Timbuktu, which belongs to the Mali. When Mali was on the decline during the early fifteenth century, the Mossi again attacked its towns. According to the *Tarikh es-Sudan*, when 648
the Mali ruler appointed Amin-ben-Ahmad jurisconsul of Timbuktu, 175

> the sultan of the Mossi led an expedition against Benka. The population of that region went out to engage the enemy, and at that time left others sitting around El Hadj. He pronounced certain words on the millet which was being served and asked those around him to eat of it. All of them ate except the son-in-law of El Hadj, who did not because he was related to him. "Now go and fight," said the holy man, "and you will have nothing to fear from the weapons of the enemy." All, in effect, returned safe and sound, and only those persons who did not eat the millet died in the battle. The king of the Mossi was routed, and his troops were chased without having seized anything from the people of Benka. All this thanks to the protection of the blessed person.[1]

Later, the Mossi attacked towns of the Songhai empire whenever they felt strong enough, only to be driven away later by a stronger adversary. Sa'di describes a Mossi incursion into the Songhai empire as follows:

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648 175 Sonni-Ali entered Kabara in the year 882 after the Hegira (1477); and it was during the course of the same year that the king of the Mossi entered Sama. In 884 (1479) Sonni-Ali was at Tosoko. . . .

During the month of Jumada I of that year (July 9 to August 8, 1480), the king of the Mossi entered Biro [the Songhai name for Walata] and did not leave until Jumada II (August 8 to September 7, 1480). The siege lasted one month, and during that time he demanded a woman from the inhabitants. . . . After the siege the Mossi king gave battle to the inhabitants of Biro, vanquished them, and took them and their families into captivity. But, as he was returning to his country with his booty, the inhabitants of Biro followed and fought him, and freed their families. Omar-ben-Mohammed-Nadi, who was at Biro at this time, distinguished himself by his valor and ardor during the battle; for he was the first warrior to attack the Mossi king and thus force him to give up the families which had been captured.[2]

A few years later, the Mossi again invaded the area, this time making war on Sonni-Ali himself. The chronicler writes:

Then the prince Sonni-Ali undertook the task of digging a canal leading from Ras-el-Ma to Biro. He was devoting all his effort and a great deal of energy to this task when word reached him that the king of the Mossi had decided to make war on him, and was then leading the attack at the head of his troops. Sonni-Ali was at a place called Chan-Fenech when he heard this news, and he stopped work on the canal right there. God spared the inhabitants of Biro the misfortune which threatened them; for Sonni-Ali, going out to meet the king of the Mossi, made contact with him at a place called Djiniki-To'oi, situated near the town of Kobi behind the river. The battle took place there, and the victorious Sonni-Ali put the Mossi king to flight, and pursued him into his own country. That battle took place in the year 888 (1483).[3]

This battle seems to have represented the high point in the northern expansion of the Mossi, because the next reference to them in the *Tarikh es-Sudan* tells of Askia-El-Hadj-Mohammed's holy war against them. This man, who had usurped the throne from Sonni-Ali's heir, made a pilgrimage to Mecca, and when he returned he decided to convert the pagan masses of the Sudan to Islam:

During the year 903 (August 1497 to August 1498), he undertook an expedition against Na'asira, the king of the Mossi. He took with him the mallam, Mour-Salih-Djaaura, inviting him to give the necessary indications so that the expedition would be a veritable holy war made in the name of God. Mour did not refuse this request, and explained to the prince all the rules relative to the holy war. The prince of the faithful, Askia-Mohammed, then asked the mallam to be his envoy to the Mossi king. The learned holy man accepted this mission; he went to the country of the Mossi and delivered the letter of his master which called upon the king to embrace Islam. Before [787] replying, the Mossi ruler declared that he wished first of all to consult his

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ancestors who were in the other world. Accompanied by his ministers, he 648
went to the temple of the idol of the country. The learned holy man went 175
there also, in order to see how one went about consulting the dead. They 787
began by making the customary offerings; then a very old man appeared. At his appearance everyone prostrated himself and then the king announced the object of his visit. Calling upon the names of the ancestors, the old man said: "I will never agree to this step for you. On the contrary, you must fight until you or they die to the last man."

Then Na'asira replied to the mallam: "Return to your master and tell 648
him that between us there will be only war and combat." Remaining alone 175
in the temple with the personage who appeared in the form of an old man, the mallam questioned him in these words: "In the name of God Almighty I ask you to declare who you are." "I am Iblis [Satan]," replied the deceiving old man; "I have led them astray so that they will all die in a state of unbelief."

Mour returned to prince Askia-El-Hadj-Mohammed and reported all which had come to pass. "Now," he added, "your duty is to fight them." Straightway he launched his war against them, killed a number of their men, devastated their fields, plundered their habitations, and took their children into captivity. All of the men and women who were taken away as captives were made the object of divine benediction [converted to Islam]. In the entire country, no other expedition outside of this one had the character of a holy war made in the name of God.[4]

The rulers of the Songhai appear to have kept up their attacks on the Mossi during the following hundred years. One of them, Askia Daoud, launched an expedition against the Mossi in 1549 to celebrate his accession to the throne. He attacked and defeated them again in 1561 while on his way to attack Bornou, and their ruler "abandoned the country with all his troops."[5] After this and several other crushing defeats, the Mossi refrained from attacking Songhai territory. Their ardor for external adventures apparently cooled after this period, and there are no reports of their fighting anyone else except the Bambara of Segou in the eighteenth century.[6] Of [721]
course, Mossi chiefs made local forays among smaller neighboring groups such as the Busansi, Gurunsi, and Samogo, but only to catch slaves.

During the nineteenth century—a rather chaotic period in the western Sudan—the Mossi appear to have been immune from outside attacks. Crozat, who visited them in 1890, states: "From the very first, in Mossi country, one feels that one has entered a new land, more peaceful, richer, and more populous [than other African countries he had visited]. . . . The people one meets on the roads are workers on their way to the fields, or are carrying wares to the neighboring market. They are not like the Songhai and the Bobo, who always carry bows on their shoulders."[7] The immunity of the Mossi from attack by such intrepid nineteenth-century

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648 warriors as El Hadj Omar and Samory Touré surprised and puzzled many
175 of their early visitors. Binger explains it as follows:

> Thanks to the primitive tribes that surrounded them like a rampart, the Mossi were spared the incursions of their powerful neighbors. This immunity cannot last much longer, because [Mogho Naba] Sanum is weak, has little spirit, and is badly counseled.[8]

Binger was partly correct in attributing the immunity of the Mossi to the presence of weaker groups on their borders. To the military adventurers of the period, the Mossi must have appeared invulnerable when compared to their weaker neighbors. Nevertheless, the Mossi declare that it was their vigilance and willingness to fight that prevented Samory Touré, among others, from invading their country.[9] They claim to have captured and executed nine of the ten spies he sent to survey their territory. The one spy who returned allegedly told Samory Touré that the Mossi were too strong to be attacked, because they banded together against all outsiders.

175 Crozat attributes the Mossi freedom from attack to miraculous and
648 magical factors:
789

> There is widespread belief in surrounding territories that Mossi country is inviolable. Alone amid the troubled populations that surround it, it enjoys relative peace. It owes this to the very special protection of a deity, and also to the virtues of the special talismans owned by the ruler of Ouagadougou. The terror inspired by these charms is such that some years ago the leader of Gadiari's column suffered a mass desertion of his men when he tried to lead them to the conquest of Mossi country. He himself was killed, perhaps by his own *sofas* [soldiers]. This case cannot be expected to undermine belief in these presumptuous charms.[10]

[976]

175 This statement, like Binger's, contains an element of truth, but not in
648 the way that Crozat believed. The Ouagadougou kingdom did have a
[114] series of ritual pacts with neighboring Mossi and non-Mossi groups. Crozat found that Mogho Naba Sanum was on "good terms" with the people of Fada-N'Gourma. He tells us that this friendship was maintained by a "curious custom" whereby the Ouagadougou ruler sent wives, captives, and horses from his predecessor's estate to the ruler of the Gurmanche.[11] Similarly, Pinchon, a British officer stationed in the Gold Coast at the beginning of the century, reports that there existed an ancient pact between the Mossi and the Mamprusi. This pact kept the ruler of each country from attacking the other on pain of death by the ancestors. Like the pact between the Mossi and the Gurmanche, this agreement was sanctioned by an annual gift of a horse, slaves, and cloth from the Mossi to the Mamprusi. Pinchon speculates that it was the existence of this pact that induced the Mamprusi

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ruler to grant asylum to Mogho Naba Wobogo in 1897. He adds that it was probably the injunction in the pact that they should never meet which prevented the ruler from personally receiving Wobogo.[18] 648 175

A ritual pact also bound the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou to the ruler of Dagomba. He sent him goods from the estate of the previous Mogho Naba as well as gifts for yearly sacrifices on the grave of Nyennega, the Mossi progenitrix. There are reports that the Ouagadougou ruler also exchanged annual presents with the Ashanti ruler, but it is not known whether these were courtesy gifts or goods sanctioning ritual pacts.

The ritual pacts among Mossi kingdoms and between them and their neighbors appear to have derived from actual or putative kinship ties. This seems to be supported not only by the traditions of the Mossi but also by those of the surrounding peoples. Whatever their origin, these pacts seem to have afforded their beneficiaries a remarkable degree of freedom from external aggression. It is possible that the Mossi and their neighbors really believed in the efficacy of supernatural sanctions, for purposes of mutual protection. But one suspects that it was the relative weakness of these various groups that caused them to rely on supernatural agencies rather than military might for protection. As will be pointed out below, the Mossi (and probably all of their important neighbors) had considerable difficulty in building and maintaining a fighting force sufficiently large to wage protracted or large-scale wars against foreign groups. 174 648 776 789

The Mossi kingdoms seldom fought among themselves, although their leaders quarreled over status and committed aggression against each other's territories. For example, the Ouagadougou rulers, who claimed suzerainty over Yatenga, often tried to impose their will on that kingdom. Yet, although they were usually rebuffed by the Yatenga Naba, they never tried to resolve the issue by force of arms. In fact, even when a Yatenga ruler appears to have given the Mogho Naba just cause for war, little fighting actually took place. Several times the Yatenga rulers seized such principalities as Riziam and Yako, which were dependent on Ouagadougou, but in no case did the Ouagadougou rulers wage war against them. In 1890, Crozat witnessed Mogho Naba Wobogo's attempt to stop a war between Yatenga and Yako. The Yako people wanted to obey their sovereign and stop the war, but the Yatenga monarch refused to do so.[19] 628 642 643 175

Crozat attributes the ineffectiveness of the Mogho Naba's authority over brother kingdoms to the fact that he had no standing army with which to enforce his rule. While relative strength may have been and probably was the main reason for the Mogho Naba's lack of aggressiveness, the ritual pact that prevented the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou from meeting the

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628 642 643 175 [648]

Yatenga Naba (and other rulers) or treading on his territory should not be overlooked. The suggestion that force was not the only consideration was lent force by later events. The French conquest later reduced the rulers of both Ouagadougou and Yatenga to impotence and obviated war between them, yet they did not meet until 1946—some fifty years after the conquest. They met then only because they had to represent their subjects at a meeting to plan the restoration of the Upper Volta and reunite all the descendants of Oubri and Ouedraogo into one territory.

Relative strength obviously played an important part in determining whether one Mossi kingdom interfered in the internal affairs of another. For example, when a Tenkodogo ruler asked a Mogho Naba to help him suppress Busansi subjects who had rebelled, the Mogho Naba readily complied.[14] But when a fratricidal struggle over the nam broke out in Tenkodogo in 1894, the Mogho Naba decided not to intervene even though he was asked to do so.[15]

628 643 669 175

The central governments of the various kingdoms found it necessary to wage war against their subordinate territories at regular intervals. In the Ouagadougou kingdom, most of these wars seem to have been administrative actions against a prince or district chief who had contravened an order from the Mogho Naba or refused to pay tribute. The Dimdamba were the Mogho Naba's most rebellious subordinates, and it was against them that he fought most of his wars. Characteristic of these wars was the series between Naba Ligidi (1866–90), Dim of Boussouma province, and Mogho Naba Sanum.[16] Ligidi had seized and turned over to the Mogho Naba the recalcitrant Naba Yemde, then Dim of Boulsa, and confiscated the rebel's property. Later on, when the Mogho Naba had made peace with Yemde's son, Naba Kiba, he asked Ligidi to surrender the seized property. Ligidi refused to do so, and the angry Mogho Naba sent the royal army into his territory. The army sacked and burned several villages and retreated. Ligidi's forces skirmished with the rear guard but abandoned pursuit near the Ouagadougou border.

Ligidi took his revenge by helping a district chief who had rebelled against Naba Kiba. While he was thus engaged, the royal army again attacked and defeated him. Four days later, it reinvaded Boussouma, engaged Ligidi's forces at a place called Goudri, and won a brilliant victory. Despite Ligidi's furious counter-attacks, the army captured his capital, Ouayougya. The ruler's army finally returned to Ouagadougou, satisfied that Ligidi was thoroughly beaten. But the Mogho Naba had underestimated Ligidi's tenacity. For the next ten years, this Dim waged war against his fellow Dimdamba. The Mogho Naba finally grew tired of his depreda-

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tions and launched another expedition against Ouayougya. The expedition failed because of a lack of water, and the army was forced to return to Ouagadougou. The war would have continued had not both Mogho Naba Sanum and Ligidi died in 1890. 628 669 175 643

It appears that the Mogho Naba tolerated fighting among his immediate subordinates, and seldom intervened in local wars unless one of the combatants openly flouted his authority. For example, when the autonomous principality of Riziam attempted to wrest control of Salmetenga district from Boussouma province, Mogho Naba Doulougou did not intervene. He knew that Salmetenga owed allegiance to Boussouma, but was perfectly willing to allow its ruler to transfer allegiance to Riziam. When Boussouma was on the brink of defeat, the Salmetenga Naba fled to Ouagadougou to seek asylum. The Mogho Naba sent him back to Naba Piga, the Boussouma Dim, with the request that he be allowed to live. Piga was so angry with the chief that he ignored the Mogho Naba's request and executed him. This incurred the wrath of Mogho Naba Doulougou, and he sent an army to attack Piga. Fortunately for this disobedient Dim, the Mogho Naba died and the attack was called off.[17]

The reaction of Mogho Naba Koutou to fighting among his subordinates was more typical. He did not interfere in a long series of battles between the principalities of Riziam and Mane which culminated in 1866 when the Riziam people seized, imprisoned, and executed several Mane merchants who had gone to buy salt in Timbuktu. Mane appealed to its brother province of Boussouma for aid, and Riziam appealed to a Fulani chieftain for reinforcements. Before a battle could ensue, however, the Boussouma Dim, Naba Siguiri, died after drinking some millet beer, and the fighting was called off. Naba Kom of Mane then went off alone with his army, defeated the Fulani, and killed their chief, Sekki. When Ligidi (the chief mentioned above) succeeded his father, Naba Siguiri, he elected to continue the war against Riziam with the help of the Mane army, but the battle was inconclusive. The stalemate did not satisfy the bellicose Ligidi, who attacked Riziam once more in 1871, burning villages and seizing property. The Riziam people finally rallied and halted him. They ambushed his soldiers when they tried to retreat, and harried them so thoroughly that Ligidi had to call off the war when slaughter and thirst decimated his ranks.[18] [648]

Similarly, Mogho Naba Sanum did not interfere when one of his own district chiefs, the Salogho Naba, was attacked and defeated by the ruler of Tema principality. Nor did he enter the fray when another of his district chiefs was attacked and defeated by the Boulsa Dim. The fighting in both 628 669 175 643 634

669 cases was over women. The Tema Dim successfully defended his prin-
175 cipality against a Zittenga district chief who not only had the effrontery to
643 demand the return of a wife who had fled into Tema but also invaded the
634 principality when she failed to return.[19] The Boulsa Dim attacked and defeated the Salogho Naba when he refused to repatriate a man and woman convicted of adultery who had fled into his district. It is possible that in each case the Mogho Naba refused to become involved in a squabble over women, but it is more likely that he refrained from participating in a local war that did not threaten the security of the entire country.

628 Many Dimdamba made it a practice to help each other in wars against
669 common enemies. In the middle of the nineteenth century, Naba Zende of
175 Tema and Naba Totoabo of Yako joined in a war against Naba Sebogo of La when Sebogo refused to repatriate one of Totoabo's wives, who had fled into his territory. The two victorious allies burned villages in La and forced Sebogo to flee for his life. They searched for the woman, but she was never found. The successors of the three rulers remained embittered by this war and eventually renewed the fighting. On this occasion, Naba Tanga of Tema and Naba Sagha of Yako fought against Naba Kombase of La. But
[643] this time Yako and Tema were unable to defeat La and had to withdraw. There is no evidence that the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou took any part in these wars.[20]

643 The Mogho Naba appears to have taken a greater interest in wars be-
648 tween his Dimdamba and non-Mossi populations, and to have profited by
175 them occasionally. When the followers of a Fulani chief named Karfo carried off some cattle belonging to the Boussouma people, the Boussouma Dim, Naba Siguiri, threatened war if the animals were not returned. Karfo not only refused to surrender the cattle but insulted Siguiri in his reply. Siguiri marched against the Fulani, killed Karfo, seized all the cattle he could find, and sent some of the "most beautiful animals" to Mogho Naba Koutou.[21]

634 Although the Mogho Naba tolerated wars among his Dimdamba, he
669 apparently forbade the district chiefs under his direct command to fight
578 among themselves. As we saw in Chapter IV, some such fighting did take
628 place, but the Mogho Naba seems to have ignored it in most cases because of its relative unimportance. The Mossi, on the other hand, magnified this local fighting, which they called *tengkom* ("civil war"), and which consisted of mere skirmishes between villages or neighboring districts, with few casualties. In fact, the Gounga Naba once stopped a war between districts after only nineteen persons had died. But as a rule, districts seldom if ever fought among themselves. The actual combatants were villagers

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who fought the villagers of other districts over stray livestock, stolen goods, and runaway women, in that order of frequency.

The main reason for these inter-village wars was the lack of local mechanisms (aside from meetings of district chiefs) to deal with problems between villagers of different districts. If the district chiefs refused to meet, they could either refer the matter to the provincial level or allow the villages to resolve the problem among themselves. Many district chiefs preferred the latter course because it saved them from interference by the authorities in the capital. Besides, these problems were usually unimportant and did not pit one entire district against another. People of different districts were often bound to each other by familial and ritual ties, and did not like to fight against relatives. Only when the potential combatants were unrelated or all attempts at reconciliation failed would the people of a village (and occasionally of a district) band together, either secretly without their chiefs or under their chiefs, and go to war. In such cases, persons who had relatives in the enemy villages often remained at home.

The inhabitants of Mossi districts did band together eagerly under their chiefs to participate in slave-raiding expeditions into non-Mossi territories. This type of warfare seems to have been fairly common. Ruelle writes, "Before our [French] occupation, warfare was the chief preoccupation of the chiefs. Moreover, expeditions into Gurunsi country had as their goal pillage and the procurement of slaves for sale."[22] Similarly, Mangin states, "The Gurunsi and Busansi were frequently raided with the sole intent of obtaining slaves."[23] Binger gives the following description of a Mossi slave-catching expedition and the subsequent disposal of the slaves:

> During my second stay at Banema, Boukary [later Mogho Naba Wobogo], knowing my aversion to pillage and slavery and fearing to displease me, sent off two expeditions during the night without warning me—one to Nabouli, and the other towards the south to Baouer'a. By six o'clock in the morning of the following day, the returning horsemen were heralded by gunshots. Soon afterwards, a line of slaves of both sexes appeared, tied to each other by a cord slung around their necks. The expedition to Nabouli brought back seventeen slaves; that to Baouer'a brought only five, along with an ass laden with salt and a little cotton. As soon as these unfortunate people arrived, they were given water to drink, and mallets were used to remove the rings and copper bracelets which they wore on their arms and legs. Then they were classified into three categories:
>
> 1. The men formed a lot destined for immediate sale for fear that they should run away. They were led forthwith to Sakhaboutenga, to be exchanged against sorghum for the horses, millet for the personnel, and gunpowder.
> 2. A second lot, composed of women, was kept as a reserve to trade for horses.

634 721 567 175

3. Finally, a third lot, composed of young girls and young boys, was distributed among the warriors and put into their charge. The boys will be employed until further notice as grooms to the warriors; later on, those who prove themselves useful and docile will be kept. The others will be sold at the first opportunity. The girls will be given in marriage to warriors who distinguish themselves.[24]

721 643 644 701 [645]

The military campaigns of the Mossi, in contrast to their slave-raiding expeditions, appear to have been well organized. When the Mogho Naba felt that a war was necessary, he summoned his five provincial ministers and the Tansoba to a parley. If war was decided upon, the Tansoba was given full charge of all operations. This man, chosen from a hereditary clan of warriors who lived in a village called Tansob'tenga in Sapone district, was listed among the Mogho Naba's courtiers but seldom appeared at court unless war was imminent. His duties as chief warrior were considered so dangerous that he constantly sought out religious practitioners for supernatural aid. Nevertheless, a war minister who was good and brave was not expected to live very long. If he did live to become gray-haired, the other courtiers made fun of him by pretending that his graying head could only be the result of his having carried a sheep captured in warfare on his head as a present to the ruler.

701 721 644 [202] [411]

Once given a mandate for war, the Tansoba collected his magico-religious apparatus and prepared the requisite sacrifices. He then asked the provincial ministers to notify the district chiefs to assemble with their warriors under the leadership of the local Tansobadamba, who were often members of the Tansoba clan. When the district chiefs received this notice, they beat their *zongagondo* (war drums), and the local administrators sent orders for men to the village chiefs. The village chiefs, in turn, beat their war drums to summon their noble cavalrymen and commoner foot soldiers, who came armed with bows and arrows, spears, swords, and clubs, with or without iron tips. The tips of the sharp weapons were often covered with a vegetable poison derived from a shrub of the Strophanthus species. Some of the men also carried guns after firearms were introduced among the Mossi from the desert region and from the coast. Many carried rawhide shields.

[278] [411] [177] [714]

701 726 [648]

As soon as the village contingents had assembled and had gathered their provisions, they marched to the district centers. Then they proceeded either to the place of battle or to Ouagadougou. In the latter case, they became part of the royal army and were joined by the forces of those princes who were prepared to honor their obligation to the Mogho Naba. For example, when the French invaded Ouagadougou in 1896, the Boulsa Dim sent his prime minister "at the head of an army to aid Mogho Naba

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Wobogo. However, he did not have to intervene, because while still en route he heard that Ouagadougou had fallen."[88] Thanks to this type of aid, the Mogho Naba was able to gather quite a large army, a fact that contradicts Crozat's belief that the Mogho Naba was a "king without an army."[89]

The early Mogho Nanamse used to accompany their armies into the field, but this practice was later abandoned and was revived periodically only by the more adventurous rulers. (The last ruler to die in warfare was Mogho Naba Doulougou [ca. 1800].) However, it was the Mogho Naba's duty to greet the army when it came to Ouagadougou, to beat the royal war drum, and to turn the troops over to the Tansoba. This officer served as commander in chief of the army, and was assisted by the Gounga Naba, a provincial minister, who served as his aide-de-camp. The Gounga Naba was expected to die rather than retreat in battle, especially if the Tansoba was killed. Two other ministers, the Kamsaogho Naba and the Larhalle Naba, also accompanied the army. The later Baloum Nanamse did not venture into battle, because they had to attend to the personal needs of the Mogho Naba. In early times, however, they accompanied their sovereigns into battle and fought alongside them. The Ouidi Naba never went to war, because it was his duty to look after the kingdom. He had to ensure the interests of all the people even if the royal army was defeated, the country invaded, and the ruler killed or forced to flee. The Samande Naba went to war and served as chief of the infantry.

Scouts preceded each district contingent as the army marched off to battle. Within the contingent, the younger warriors marched in front, followed by older men. It was the duty of the more experienced warriors to make sure that the younger men did not break ranks and run under the stress of battle. Behind the foot soldiers came the cavalry, composed of nobles and of the few commoners who possessed horses. Behind these came the district chief, surrounded by his own palace guard. Several heralds known as *yumba* (sing. *yuma*) accompanied the district forces to exhort them to fight. As the men marched to battle the yumba shouted:

> Men! Your ancestors were not slaves. They were men. They were stronger than anyone else. They did not bathe with water; they bathed with blood. Do you wish to return home to drink millet water and eat bread? Never! A man does not eat bread or drink millet water; a man fights. Your ancestors were not afraid of anyone; you must not be afraid of anyone. Even if you are killed today, you must march ahead, beat your enemies, and take their villages. You must not be afraid!

Mossi armies on the march used scouts to keep a sharp lookout for the enemy or for any evidence that he was aware of impending attack. The tactics these scouts used to avoid detection, such as camouflaging themselves

726 with leaves and branches and crawling upon the ground, can be witnessed
[964] even today at Mossi funerals where men re-enact warfare practices. Whenever possible, the Mossi preferred to take the enemy by surprise, but this was seldom possible when large-scale fighting and massive preparations were involved.

When two Mossi armies drew up to each other, the heralds from both sides issued such challenges and epithets as: "If you men do not wish to die, you should run or you will never eat again. We will have your blood to wash with." In the meantime, the Tansobadamba on both sides deployed their forces in accordance with the number of men available, the spirit of
[723] the enemy, and the nature of the terrain. From the description of warfare given to me by an old Tansoba in Nobere district, it appears that the strategy most commonly used was to split the infantry in two while attacking, thus making room for the cavalry to charge through. If the initial charge was successful, the attack was maintained, but if it failed, the army usually turned about and fled. Despite their braggadocio, Mossi commanders seldom insisted that their troops fight against overwhelming odds.
[644] However, shame over impending defeat often induced such officers as the
[645] Tansoba and the Gounga Naba to fight to the death. For example, during the war between Boulsa and Fada-N'Gourma in 1897, the Boulsa army lost so many men that the Boulsa Dim wanted to commit suicide in his humiliation. However, he was prevented from doing so by one of his subordinates.[27]

Soldiers wounded by poisoned spears or arrows extracted the projectiles if possible, and kept on fighting until they died. Even if they were wounded
[789] by an unpoisoned weapon, they did not seek medical aid. Most wounded men believed that they were doomed, because their protective amulets had
[727] failed them. For the same reason, a defeated army fleeing a battlefield made no attempt to retrieve its dead and dying, but left them to the vultures. When an army was victorious, however, the Mossi either carried their dead home for burial or buried them on the battlefield, saving some item of their clothing or equipment for the funeral.

Victorious Mossi armies usually pursued the enemy, burning villages as
[648] they went. The soldiers killed all the infants and the infirm, and when they
[567] fought against non-Mossi, they captured young people to be sold as slaves. Then they collected all the available booty and departed hurriedly, fearing
[727] that the confiscated cattle and slaves would slow their return and enable the rallied enemy to catch up with them.[28] If the army could not return home before dark, camp was set up for the night near a body of water so that the Tansobadamba could offer thanksgiving sacrifices. Pickets were later

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posted to alert the troops in case the enemy should attempt an attack at dawn. If the war was waged against foreigners, individual soldiers were allowed to keep a slave or a cow out of the booty; the remainder was divided between the district chiefs and the central government. In victorious civil wars against the enemies of the Mogho Naba, however, the entire booty was sent to the capital.

When the Mossi had to defend their own territory, their most common tactic was to evacuate the villages. This was the technique most often employed against invading French forces.[19] Other defenses included palisaded villages, barricades of fallen trees, trenches, and hedges, some with poisoned foot traps. Mangin reports that the Boulsa were defeated in their war with Fada-N'Gourma not only because their enemies fought valiantly, but also because they "were favored by very propitious terrain covered with thorny scrub, behind which the besieged men took cover to shoot on the Mossi."[20] Mangin does not say whether the scrub was poisoned, but his data indicate that this type of defense was common in the area. The Mossi say that the use of poisoned prickly plants (*silenage*) against invading forces dates back to the early conquest of the territory. Tradition recounts that Naba Oubri was unable to conquer Ouagadougou until his Ninisi wife advised him to shoe his soldiers against the poisoned foot traps of the aborigines.

Mossi wars or raids were usually limited to the dry season and stopped at the beginning of the planting season. Commenting on the war between Boulsa and Fada-N'Gourma, Mangin tells us: "This was during the dry season. Thirst completed what the courage of the Gyekango people had begun, and many Mossi perished."[21] Tradition recounts that it took Mogho Naba Waraga five successive years of attack before he defeated Ramzi, the rebellious chief of Riziam principality. He finally defeated him when his army attacked the province before its people had been able to harvest their crops and retire into an impregnable fortress for the dry season. Judging by the reports of European visitors, this type of dry-season warfare continued as late as the 1890's. For example, Crozat could not understand why the Mogho Naba did not send an army to defeat the chief of Lalle district, who had imprudently raided a village near Ouagadougou, and he concluded that the ruler did not have an army. The fact is, however, that Crozat was in Ouagadougou between September 9 and September 30, a period when the potential soldiers of the Mogho Naba had not yet harvested their crops. Had Crozat remained in Mossi country for three or four months longer, he would have seen the ruler's army in action; for, as a matter of fact, the Lalle Naba's attack on Mogho Naba Wobogo was but the latest episode in a prolonged struggle between the two rulers.

726 For several years Mogho Naba Sanum had tried unsuccessfully to corner
628 and defeat the rebellious Lalle Naba. Then one dry season the Mogho Naba
669 called his Tansoba and said to him:

> "I want you to assemble immediately an army composed only of courageous men, to go to Lalle and bring me, alive, Tanga [also called Wobogo], chief of that district." Several thousand men, eager for glory, were gathered, and the army advanced against Lalle. It managed to burn Siguele, Tanga's residence, but did not capture the chief, who had fled to Koudougou. The royal army would have pursued him, but because the rainy season was imminent, and the men were needed to work in the fields, the army returned to Ouagadougou with a considerable amount of booty. The king received his war minister very kindly, because he foresaw the impending defeat of his obstinate enemy. The Mogho Naba then said to his warriors, "Go and cultivate your fields, but remember that as soon as the harvest has been stored, you have to capture Tanga. Regardless of the cost, I must have him, even if all of you must die."[23]

Mogho Naba Sanum died before he could capture Tanga, and the task fell to his successor, Mogho Naba Wobogo, who fared no better. One dry season, the royal army chased the rebel into Gurunsi territory but failed to catch him. They would have continued the chase, but "it was during the rainy season, and the royal army was disbanded."[23]

[648] Mogho Naba Wobogo never succeeded in capturing Tanga, because the French came in and conquered the Mossi. Nevertheless, the rebel did not go unpunished. After the French had completed their conquest they asked the Ouidi Naba what steps should be taken to ensure peace. He told them to capture and kill the Lalle Naba. This unfortunate chief was hunted down, captured, placed on an unsaddled colt, and brought to Ouagadougou, where he was publicly humiliated and then executed.

701 The episode with Tanga and the limiting of warfare to the dry season
726 indicate that the Mogho Naba did not have the resources to maintain a standing army, and, therefore, had difficulty exerting his authority by the use of force. There is no doubt that the Mogho Nanamse were able to gather very large armies at specific times against both internal and external enemies, but when the planting period came the soldiers had to attend to their crops. This lack of resources also limited the power and authority of Mogho Nanamse over their autonomous subordinates. As a result, the Mossi kingdoms remained segmentary in nature, and became highly organized only at certain periods of their history.[24] The availability of military resources thus had a significant effect on the nature of the Mossi governmental and political system.

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VII

THE ECONOMIC FOUNDATION

THE REVENUE for the support of the Mossi chiefs and their governmental system came from many sources in a variety of forms. The Mossi of Ouagadougou held that "the Mogho Naba is master of everything" (*Mogh Nab n so fa*), and when they referred to the control he and his chiefs exercised over their goods and services, they said, "The commoner rears his livestock for the chief," and cited the proverb "The snake gets whatever is in the belly of the frog." 652 [643] [539]

Since the Mossi were, and still are, primarily an agricultural people, the products of the soil were the main source of revenue. The Mossi chiefs did not own the land, but they controlled it and assigned land rights to their subjects. The Mossi believed that land had no value apart from people, and, conversely, that people could not exist without land. As they said, "Land is the mother; it fed the ancestors of this generation; it feeds the present generation and its children; and it provides the final resting place for all men." Therefore, a Mossi chief never hesitated to give anyone permission to use unoccupied land. It was in his interest to do so, because the more subjects he commanded, the greater were his revenue and prestige. An unpopular chief was censured not by a withholding of tribute and presents, but by a mass exodus of his subjects to another area. 651 423 [181] [427] [427] [626]

Through the administrative hierarchy, the common people contributed to the support of the various levels of government. The Mogho Naba periodically received agricultural produce from all his subjects. Through the village chiefs, the village people sent part of their produce to the district chiefs, who forwarded it to the provincial ministers. They, in turn, delivered it to the central government during a ceremony appropriately called "Soretaagho" ("completion of the road"). This event occurred at the end of the harvest festival, after all the crops had been gathered in.[1] 643 651 796

To open the ceremony, the provincial governors' retainers began to clear the paths leading from the governors' compounds to the palace, for they had

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643 651 796 become overgrown with grass and weeds during the rainy season. This clearing was done to within a few yards of the palace, but was not completed. Early in the morning of the day chosen for the actual rendering of the agricultural tribute, the retainers placed baskets of produce along these paths. During the morning ceremony, the Ouidi Naba presented a basket of millet to the Mogho Naba. Then the Bendere Naba, acting as Sore Naba ("chief of the road"), signaled on his drum, and the men with baskets who were waiting on the uncleared portion of the paths, preceded by drummers and men with hoes, axes, and other tools, began to move forward. The men in the processions raised a din, shouting, singing, drumming, and pretending that the task of clearing was very difficult. From time to time, the more energetic among those who were not carrying bundles ran ahead of the others, turned somersaults, and then, going through the motions of warriors in battle, pranced back into the procession. All the processions came to the shed occupied by the royal drummers and deposited their burdens. These were later retrieved by the palace staff and stored for use in the royal household.

643 644 241 The royal household was also supplied with produce grown by the royal wives. Foodstuffs for guests and fodder for the ruler's horses were provided by the people of the Bilbalgo and Dapoya wards, which were under the general supervision of the Kam Naba. Two or three times during the agricultural season, this official recruited extra help from these wards to help [464] cultivate the fields. In recompense for this *sosogha* (work bee), the laborers [465] were given food, drink, and kola nuts from the royal household. At the 243 end of the year, the harvesting and threshing of the grain from the Mogho 643 Naba's fields was the occasion for an elaborate ceremony, "Mogh Nab' 644 kawinre" ("threshing the ruler's grain").[2]

796 To begin this ceremony, the Mogho Naba summoned a local earth- [791] priest, the Manougoudougou Tengsoba, to the court. This man, a descend- [782] ant of the Ninisi, had to perform the propitiatory sacrifices to the earth deity who was symbolized by the threshing floor. After the sacrifices were completed, the Kam Naba went to the threshing floor with the young men of the Bilbalgo and Dapoya wards, who threshed the millet gathered there. The next morning they all returned to the threshing floor with the Bendere Naba and his minstrels, who recited the Mogho Naba's genealogy and sang praises to his ancestors. The drummers then beat out work rhythms and traditional drum patterns to which the workers danced while scattering the millet far and wide. Finally, the dancing stopped, and the Kam Naba drew a line on the threshing floor, dividing the pile of millet in two; the Bilbalgo people gathered one half, the Dapoya people the other. Regard-

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less of the amount of millet harvested from the Mogho Naba's fields, there had to be one hundred baskets full of grain. If the number of baskets filled with the Mogho Naba's grain fell short of the mark, the serfs and slaves had to make up the difference with the produce of their own fields. The ceremony concluded with sacrifices to the royal ancestors, after which the Mogho Naba's wives, daughters, and sisters gave beer and kola nuts to the laborers.

As head of the central government, the Mogho Naba received revenue in the form of money and livestock which the district chiefs collected from the village people. These were given to him during an elaborate annual ceremony called the "Basgha" ("feast of the royal ancestors"). Several days before this post-harvest festival, the district chiefs and their retainers arrived in the capital and lodged with their provincial ministers. At a designated time during the ceremony, the district chiefs and nobles went to the palace. In provincial contingents and led by their ministers, they walked up to the sovereign's throne and gave the Mossi salute. After they had returned to their places, their servants gave the royal pages the presents they had brought to the palace.

The Dimdamba apparently made their annual contribution to the Mogho Naba at the time of the Basgha. There is one report that they took this opportunity to send gifts to the ruler's son, the Djiba Naba, as well. The Dimdamba customarily sent the Mogho Naba part of the goods they had seized in combat against non-Mossi peoples, as well as a tax (*fado*) out of the goods they had inherited from their predecessors.[3] There is also some evidence that the Mogho Naba solicited goods from the Dimdamba at other times. Crozat says:

> During my first visit to Yako, three envoys from Ouagadougou were at the chief's house. They were tax collectors. They had come to offer the vassal a silver bracelet sent by the sovereign. The Yako Naba responded by sending horses, captives, and cowries to Ouagadougou.[4]

Crozat could not understand this reciprocity between the Mogho Naba and his vassals, and questions whether the Mogho Naba really collected taxes from them. He concludes that the Mogho Naba did receive taxes, "but these are never given to him except in the form of presents which are reciprocated."[5] Crozat found it puzzling and disturbing that many of the Dimdamba had not given the Mogho Naba any "taxes" for several years. He indicated, moreover, that they did not wish to pay taxes to the Ouagadougou ruler even under the guise of an exchange of presents. This was especially true of the Yatenga Naba, who had not sent the Mogho Naba any presents for six or seven years prior to 1890. Crozat surmised that

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because of this delinquency, the Mogho Naba might hesitate to come to the aid of any of his vassals if a general war broke out. It is true that the Mogho Naba did not aid the Yatenga ruler when the French arrived. But whether this was because of his failure to pay taxes, or because the French conquest of the Yatenga coincided with a civil war there, we shall probably never know. We do know that many of the Mogho Naba's vassals came to his aid when the French finally arrived at Ouagadougou. It is my opinion that the gifts exchanged between Yatenga and Ouagadougou were not "tributary," but were more in the nature of tokens of friendship between two peers.

The Mogho Naba and his provincial ministers also received revenue as a function of their judicial roles. The nature and disposition of the fines levied against legal offenders were discussed in Chapter V. The Mogho Naba's fees came in the form of the traditional gifts the litigants gave him even before their cases were tried. These gifts were never regarded as bribes, for this would have contradicted the Mossi axiom that "the truth is at Ouagadougou."

The Mogho Naba inherited all the property of the Kamsaogho Naba, and claimed all the property of district chiefs who died without close relatives. He also received inheritance taxes (fado) from the estates of deceased district chiefs. In collecting the fado, the Mogho Naba first retained the horse on which the messenger came to announce the chief's death. He reciprocated by sending envoys with cowries and animals to be offered to their common ancestors at the chief's funeral. After the funeral, the envoys claimed the dead chief's quiver of arrows to take to Ouagadougou for deposit with those of other dead chiefs. Then they demanded the fado, and jestingly told the heirs that the Mogho Naba would be satisfied with nothing less than "a thousand of everything" (*tusri bumbu fa*) the deceased had possessed: wives, slaves, horses, cows, goats, chickens, articles of clothing, and so on. The heirs pleaded poverty and jokingly gave the envoys a few old and sickly animals, old chickens, tattered pieces of clothing, etc. Eventually, they handed out the fado, which usually consisted of livestock, clothing, food, weapons, jewelry, cowries, and even slaves. Lastly, they gave the envoys the chief's ceremonial horse and presents for themselves.

The Mogho Naba and his ministers collected a considerable amount of revenue from the traders who visited Ouagadougou and the larger market towns and village markets throughout the kingdom.[6] The Mossi (especially the assimilated Yarse) were good traders, and they benefited from their country's strategic location between the Sahara and the forest regions. According to Barth, some six caravan routes crossed the country, linking

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the Niger River area to the Gold Coast and Togoland. Important stops 645
were made at such Mossi centers as Ouagadougou, Bere, Dakay, La, Mane, 651
Yako, and Koupela.[7] At Dori, northwest of Ouagadougou, Barth found 439
Mossi with "their fine donkeys, which are greatly sought after." He adds [487]
that in addition, [443]

> the people of Mossi supply this market with gabaga, or "tari" [cotton bands], as Arabs near Timbuktu call them, cotton being extremely cheap in their country, so that in the great market places of that country, especially in Kulfela [Koupela, but really at Poitenga a few miles away], an indigo-colored shirt is not worth more than from 700 to 800 [cowry] shells. . . . Besides salt, cotton strips, dyed cloth, kola nuts, corn, and asses, some copper manufactured chiefly into large drinking-vessels is also brought into the market by the people of Mossi. However, I do not think they manufacture the copper vessels themselves, but bring them from Ashanti.[8]

Dubois, one of the early visitors to Timbuktu, tells us that he saw Mossi 175
men carrying on their traditional trade in that city. Mossi traders dealt in 439
such diverse commodities as millet, rice, manioc, peanuts, honey, kola nuts, peppers, dried onions, tobacco, dried fish, soap, iron, antimony, lead, cotton bands, straw hats, mats, jars, pots, and calabashes. They traded these articles for needles, mirrors, beads, coral, amber, tea, coffee, perfumes, carpets, fezzes, tailored robes, and salt. What impressed Dubois most was that while the merchants from Bamako, Djenne, Sansanding, and Touat enjoyed themselves at Timbuktu, "the great town of pleasures with the freest morals in the Sudan," and spent a great deal of money in gifts to beautiful women, "the Mossi did not waste their money, and left as soon as they had finished their business."[9] On the way south, Mossi and other caravaneers picked up goods from the Yatenga and other northern Ouagadougou provinces before stopping at the capital and then proceeding to the forest regions.

It is impossible to determine the exact volume of caravan trade that 439
passed through Mossi country, and the amount of revenue it brought to the [651]
Mossi rulers. We can get some idea of this trade, however, by examining the customs reports on goods crossing the border between Mossi country and the northern territories of the Gold Coast in the few years just following European conquest.

The official figures for 1901 and 1903 are as follows:[10]

Year	Horses	Head of Cattle	Sheep and Goats	Loaded Donkeys	Bales of Cotton Cloth
1901	126	3,111	18,181	2,095	236
1903	196	6,624	30,392	4,294	269

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439 Marc, who had the opportunity to check the volume of this trade in 1904 and 1905, estimates that about 16,000 head of cattle and 75,000 sheep and goats passed through the two customs posts in Mossi country. Furthermore, he believes that since "the Mossi also supply in part the markets of Togoland and the market at Bondoukou [Ivory Coast], one may assume a minimum annual export of 20,000 head of cattle and 100,000 sheep or goats. The import of kola nuts is at least 500 tons."[11] It is clear that this volume [174] of trade could not have been achieved so soon after the French conquest. [651] We can only conclude that it existed prior to the coming of the Europeans, and that it brought the Mossi rulers a considerable income.

643 The Mogho Naba's officials collected taxes from all caravans that passed 651 through his capital. The caravaneers also gave the Mogho Naba important gifts, and he apparently traded with them, even if always to his own 439 profit. Binger states that Mogho Naba Sanum forced horse traders from [431] the Yatenga and Hausa merchants to sell him part of their commodities at one-hundredth the purchase price.[12] Crozat reports that Mogho Naba Wobogo

> appears to have had some business relations with white merchants who came to Salaga every dry season. He sent horses to them in exchange for silver. He claims that he had no reason to be pleased with their integrity, and that the silver they sent him contained plenty of copper. Some traders apparently came as far as Ouagadougou, bringing merchandise of German origin. There was one of them there during my stay. I was told that he was an important *marabout*, a shereef, perhaps an Arab or a Moor, for I was assured that he was very light in color. As was repeated to me several times, his relations with the king were limited to the solemn greetings on Fridays. He never entered the royal hut in spite of being an important marabout. He was at Ouagadougou for about three and one-half months, but he was compelled to return to the coast since the merchandise which he had brought was exhausted. He spoke no Mossi.[13]

439 All the caravans that passed through Mossi country were obliged to stop 651 and give presents to the district officials. Those caravaneers who tried to 634 elude taxation by going through the forest ran the risk of being attacked by local nobles, who usually confiscated their goods.

The Mogho Naba and the lesser chiefs had "market officials" who taxed 644 the merchants in the markets of their territories. The officials at Ouaga- 651 dougou, the Kos Naba ("sales chief") and the Raga Naba ("market chief"), 443 were fairly rigorous in their exactions. The Kos Naba collected taxes in cowries for every cow slaughtered at the market, and also took its hump and gave it to the Nemdo Naba ("meat chief") for distribution in the royal household. He also collected taxes on every cow sold in the market, but

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did not usually tax goats and sheep. In lieu of this, he occasionally took one or two of these animals from each herd that passed through the market and sent them to the palace kitchens. Donkeys sold in the market were taxed at the rate of 200 cowries each. Horses sold to the nobility were not taxed, but those exported were.

The Raga Naba collected taxes on the other commodities sold at the market. Cotton weavers paid him according to the size of their bolts of cloth, and cotton growers paid taxes on the sales of their raw produce. The tailors and dyers paid no fixed amounts, but were asked to send clothing to the palace. Every donkey- and ox-load of salt entering the market place was taxed. The smiths were not taxed in cowries, but had to supply the Mogho Naba's wives with hoes and the palace personnel with arrowheads, spear points, and iron clubs. The jewelers also sent bracelets as presents to the ruler. There were no fixed taxes on the cereals, vegetables, and cooked food sold at the market, but each day the Raga Naba, accompanied by several pages or retainers carrying baskets, went from vendor to vendor taking several calabashes of their produce for use in the palace. In addition, the vendors of cooked food had to feed the Mogho Naba's young grooms, who were not normally fed by the palace household. The beer sellers were not formally taxed, but they contributed a substantial percentage of their beverage to palace and market personnel, who demanded the customary *lembgha* ("taste before buying") more frequently and freely than ordinary buyers. [431]

There is some evidence (mainly from European travelers) that the traders occasionally found the caravan and market taxes prohibitive. Binger reports that the high taxes exacted by the Mogho Naba were "one of the reasons why Ouagadougou placed second [as a market town] and Mane was the commercial capital of Mossi country." Binger himself was caught in the institutionalized gift system and wrote sarcastically: "On market day [at Ouagadougou] the receipts are good. People bring everything to the palace, whether it be millet, hoes, or peanuts, and everything is accepted. *All this giving is left to the discretion of the donors.*"[14] The italics are Binger's.

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Some of the later Mogho Nanamse appear to have obtained a great deal of revenue through the sale of slaves. Most of these slaves were captured in raids among the smaller groups surrounding Mossi territory, such as the Samo, Gurunsi, and Busansi populations. According to Mangin, Gurunsi and Busansi countries were true granaries for the Mossi, who drew upon them according to their needs.[15] In early times the Mossi chiefs utilized these slaves (*yemse*, sing. *yamba*) as agricultural workers, until Mogho [464]

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567 643 651 [464] [439] Naba Baongo (ca. 1800-30) decided that it was more profitable to sell them.[16] Subsequent rulers, especially the two Mogho Nanamse who ruled just prior to the French conquest, sold most of their captives to passing caravans or in special sections of the larger markets. When other persons sold slaves in the market, the Raga Naba collected some 1,000 cowries on each transaction—the largest tax on any market commodity.

567 839 [752] [439] [175] The Mossi rulers seem to have benefited even more from the sale of eunuchs, for they had a monopoly over them. The Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou sent some captured slaves and all recidivous thieves to Teemetenga village in Koubri district, some 13 miles south of the capital, to be operated upon.[17] So successful were the Mossi surgeons that—in contrast to specialists in other areas, who lost nine lives for every successful castration—the mortality among the Mossi was only one out of ten.[18] Some of the eunuchs furnished by the Mossi were sold as far away as Constantinople, a fact which surprised the French ambassador to Turkey who saw them there in 1900.[19]

566 643 563 621 [839] [567] In addition to slaves and eunuchs, the Mogho Naba kept a large number of bondsmen to provide services for him. One group, the Dapore, lived in a ward of the capital called Dapoya, and had a chief, the Dapore Naba, who was himself a Dapore. The origin of these people is obscure, but they seem to have been the children of foreign captives who were brought to Ouagadougou and placed in the ruler's service. Some of them even claimed that their ancestors had come to Ouagadougou voluntarily and had placed themselves under the care and protection of the ruler. This seems unlikely, however, since the status of these people resembles that of persons captured by Sudanese rulers and installed in special wards as serfs.[20] Some of the Dapore lived in villages of their own and cultivated fields for the Mogho Naba. Others lived in a ward of Ouagadougou, served in the palace household, and provided the royal executioners. Some were selected to serve as palace eunuchs, and placed under the charge of the Kamsaogho Naba. The Dapore were hardly ever sold unless they were convicted criminals. The Mogho Naba and his chiefs refrained from selling serfs or captives who had been born in Mossi country. However, they often claimed the sons and daughters of these people as pages or pughsiudse.

The Baglere made up the second group of bondsmen providing services for the Mogho Naba. They, too, lived in a special ward and were headed by the Baglere Naba, one of their own people. Their origin is also obscure: some of them claimed to be descended from Fulani slaves who had run away from their masters and sought asylum in Mossi country; others believed that they were the descendants of foreign captives. The Baglere

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worked for the Mogho Naba in and around the palace courtyard, and in the fields. They also kept his herds and provided him with animals from their own herds. Like the Dapore, they were seldom sold, but they often had to give their sons and daughters to the Mogho Naba.

The last group of persons who contributed their services to the Mogho Naba were the Kamboinse. Their origin is also unclear. Most of my respondents claimed that the Kamboinse and their chief first came to Ouagadougou from the direction of the Gold Coast, that they bore guns, and that they offered their services as guards to the Mogho Naba.[21] Later on, the sovereign allegedly assigned slaves to the Kamboinse unit, with the result that the entire group eventually took on a serf-like character. The Kamboinse guarded the Mogho Naba's palace and seized for him the goods of persons whom he condemned to death.

The services performed for the Mogho Naba by his pages and other youthful retainers also contributed significantly to the support of his administration. We have already seen how these young men and boys took care of his every need and functioned as important messengers within the royal household. The Mogho Naba also had control over the daughters of his serfs, whom he used to obtain revenue from aliens and subjects alike. Periodically, the Mogho Naba gave one of these girls as pughsiudga to a man, thus obligating him to render goods and services to the court. Moreover, the man had to return the eldest daughter he had by this wife to the Mogho Naba as a future pughsiudga. In this way, the sovereign had a revolving store of women through whom he could bind men to himself in a nexus of obligations, and from whom he eventually received additional women.[22]

The provincial ministers of the Ouagadougou kingdom occupied such a strategic position within the central administration that anyone rendering gifts or tribute to the Mogho Naba always gave presents to them as well. Their main source of revenue, however, came from the villages under their direct control, and from the retainers who lived in their compounds and in their wards in the capital. The economic relations between the ministers and their villages were similar to those between the district chiefs and their villages, and will be discussed below. The retainers, serfs, and slaves who served these ministers provided them with many of the services their counterparts rendered to the Mogho Naba. They kept their houses in repair and provided them with firewood and with fodder for their horses. Many of them also cultivated fields for their masters. Whenever the ministers needed extra goods or services, they called on those persons who lived in their compounds or in their wards. For example, hun-

dreds of persons lived in Ouidin, the ward of the Ouidi Naba. Some of them were related to him; others had been attracted by his wealth and by his ability to obtain wives for his charges. All of them benefited from being attached to him in one way or another, and in return helped him to augment his income.

All the district chiefs sent women to their provincial ministers to be kept as wives (and thus as agricultural workers), or to be given out as pughsiudse. The Kamsaogho Naba received more pughsiudse than the other ministers because he was in charge of the wealthier districts, and also of course distributed more. The Baloum Naba was especially favored in another respect. Each year, he was entitled to call several *seghse* (sing. *seka*; a corvée or convocation) of his former pages and their relatives to help cultivate his fields. The Ouidi Naba's sources of revenue were about the same as the Baloum Naba's. In addition, his position as chief minister enabled him to obtain numerous gifts from persons who visited Ouagadougou. Moreover, the Mogho Naba often gave him horses from the fado of deceased district chiefs. The Larhalle Naba had full ministerial privileges, and a few other means of obtaining revenue. He was allowed, for instance, to keep the animals that had not been sacrificed on the graves of deceased rulers.

The provincial ministers received many goods and services from the district chiefs of their provinces. Whenever one of these ministers sent a messenger to the district, the chief gave the messenger money and livestock for his master. Furthermore, the district chiefs brought presents for their minister when they paid their annual visit to Ouagadougou to render homage to the Mogho Naba. The provincial ministers used their position as confidants and advisers to obtain as many presents as possible from persons who came to Ouagadougou to ask special favors from the Mogho Naba, to participate in judicial proceedings, or to seek the nam. Moreover, they cooperated with each other in these exactions, so that a person seeking a favor from or through one minister was prudently advised to give presents to or to seek the aid of the others.

The district chief played a key role in the procurement of revenue for the central administration, and derived an income for himself in the process. The seignorial rights over the Mossi people delegated by the Mogho Naba to all nam holders were quite obvious on this level. The district chief had rights to all valuable fruit trees, such as locust-bean and shea-butter, that grew within the boundaries of his territory. He instructed the village chiefs to harvest the fruit of these trees and send it to him. The village chiefs even had to send him the wood from the fallen branches of these trees.

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The district chiefs did not often exercise their rights over fruit trees in the weogho, as the wasteland in their districts was called. If a villager went into the weogho and collected fruit or wood from the chief's trees, he surrendered only part of it to the chief. On the other hand, if he received permission from a district chief to farm in the weogho, he was obliged to gather and send to the chief the fruit on any valuable trees. A district chief sometimes granted the rights over certain fruit trees in the inhabited areas to specific families or individuals, for personal reasons or as a reward for services. In such cases, the chief forfeited his rights to these trees, but retained his rights to the others.[28]

District chiefs also controlled all the resources of creeks and pools within their jurisdiction that were not sacred to certain aboriginal families, or which had not been transferred to specific persons. The aboriginal Ninisi families always notified the district chief when they planned to perform their annual fishing rite to the earth deities. He, in turn, sent representatives to the ceremony, and they were given part of the catch as his share. Persons who were granted permission to fish in the chief's water holes gave him a substantial part of their catch, and even those persons who had private control of fishing places regularly did the same.

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The district chiefs also had rights to certain parts of animals caught in their territories. This applied especially to animals caught with such traditional weapons as traps, clubs, bows and arrows, and spears. Men who had obtained flint guns and other firearms from the Ashanti or elsewhere and who had bought their own powder were not obliged to give the chief a part of their game, but it was always prudent to do so. According to a long-standing tradition, the tusk and legs of a slain elephant that were not resting on the ground belonged to the chief, and those that lay on the ground belonged to the Tengsoba in whose ritual jurisdiction the animal had been slain. But the district chief's secular power was so much stronger than the Tengsoba's sacred power that he usually took both tusks, leaving the Tengsoba only two legs. The district chief also received other portions of elephants and parts of all the larger animals killed in his territory. And when hunters in the district were successful in the chase, they usually gave him entire small animals.

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Every village in a district contributed to the district chief's revenue by performing special services for him. Certain villages were responsible for keeping specific huts in his compound in good condition; others, whose lands bordered on the woods, had to provide firewood for his compound; and yet others furnished grass and other fodder for his horses. Many villages had the task of cultivating special fields and crops for the district chief.

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651 For example, the villagers of Barkago traditionally cultivated and harvested
634 a field of millet behind his compound for the chief. The people of Pinse,
243 Donse, Passingtenga, and Tewarka cultivated millet for him in their own villages, and those of Togose and Basbedo cultivated rice for him in their excellent lowlands.

243 The district chief had fields both behind his compound and in the bush,
634 which were cultivated for him by his retainers, serfs, and slaves. More than the Mogho Naba and the provincial ministers, the district chief believed
566 that a Moaga must perform agricultural work during the planting season;
567 to show his interest in farming, he often personally supervised the work on his plantations. When the task of weeding or harvesting proved too much for his own people, he asked his villages for a *sosogha*. On that day, each
[464] village chief, accompanied by his men, went to the district chief's fields, where, to the accompaniment of drums and chants and with the verbal encouragement of district administrators, the villages vied with each other in their task. The district chief usually sat under a tree and watched the
[465] proceedings and occasionally visited the various contingents to observe the progress made. Toward evening, the chief's wives gave the workers large quantities of food and drink in compensation for their services.

651 Like the Mogho Naba, the district chief had officials who collected taxes
634 on commodities sold in local markets. These district market officials were usually serfs, Gurunsi captives, or bondsmen from other populations. Mossi
[776] rarely served in such capacities because many of the local market places were considered ritually dangerous, and their titular deities, the Tengkouga, were believed to wreak vengeance on market officials who were tardy with sacrifices. The local Kos Naba supervised the slaughtering of every animal killed in the market, kept its skin so that its ownership could be verified if necessary, and collected taxes from the butchers in the form of meat or cowries. The Raga Naba of the district was not as strict as his counterpart in Ouagadougou, and seldom imposed formal taxes on the traders. He usually walked around the market, trailed by the chief's servants, and seized calabashes of grain and other commodities, which he placed in the servants' baskets. The Raga Naba did not tax those itinerant traders or caravaneers who visited the markets in the district, nor did he interfere with them in any other way. These merchants usually had business and personal relations with the chief, and he himself handled revenue from this source. The merchants gave him goods from the forest and Sahara regions, and he in turn often gave them wives, who were thus taken out of the district.

[167] The Mossi district chief was always on the lookout for new sources of
[434] revenue, and thus welcomed strangers into his district because they "in-

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creased his force" and ultimately added to his income. Men who had been compelled to flee from other districts because of crimes or power struggles were granted refuge and given pughsiudse. In this manner, the district chief, like the Mogho Naba, established seignorial rights over his new subjects, incorporated them into the district, and obtained goods and services from them. The better a district chief's reputation, the greater the number of refugees who sought shelter with him and added to his wealth. Conversely, a chief who was known for his injustice, his rascality, and his excessive demands from persons seeking the village nam was shunned by potential subjects and might even be deserted by his own.

Those persons who visited the district chief's compound to settle court cases also contributed to his revenue. When the case dealt with cattle or other livestock, the chief received a few animals. In other cases, he received only the customary gifts from the litigants. He also received gifts from all the families in his district several times a year. One occasion was the "Tense," a festival in honor of the mother of Mogho Naba Oubri, the founder of the Ouagadougou dynasty; the other was the Basgha. During these two ceremonies every village chief, preceded by his district administrator and followed by his subjects, paid homage to the district chief and gave him presents. The district chief retained part of what he received for the upkeep of his household and to fulfill such obligations as hospitality to travelers, and added the remainder to his own annual tribute to the Mogho Naba.

The manner in which the district chief collected his annual tax or tribute for the Mogho Naba is the subject of controversy. Several of my respondents declared that the collection of this tribute was rather informal. The district chief allegedly notified the village chiefs that he wished to give a present to the Mogho Naba, and these chiefs sent word to the family heads, who, in turn, notified every household. The village people then collected chickens and livestock, baskets of grain, and cowries, and sent them up through the hierarchy to the district chief. The district chief's retainers checked the gifts from each village very carefully, and if some villages gave less than was expected of them, the district chief summoned their chiefs for explanations. In most cases the district chief knew exactly how much could be expected of his subjects, because his informers—usually his own pages and courtyard servants, or messengers of the local administrators—kept him informed of the wealth of each hamlet. Usually, a village chief who had withheld too much from the commodities turned over to him, or who had not demanded sufficient goods from his villagers, sought to make amends. It was in his interest to do so, since it was always dangerous to incur the

634 district chief's wrath. Thus, there was some method in the collection of this
651 tribute and certain expectations had to be met, even though many of the
[622] contributors may have felt that their gifts were voluntary.

In direct contrast, Dim Delobson, himself a chief, states that Mossi chiefs demanded a stipulated amount from their villagers. He adds, however, that the tribute "varied in amount according to the resources of the contributors," and that the district chief set the "amount of cowries and grain due from each village in accordance with the number of its inhabitants."[24] According to him, the rate of assessment was usually 100 cowries for a married man and 50 for an adult bachelor (apparently, this difference was an acknowledgment of the woman's contribution to her husband's wealth). In addition, each adult male was assessed 10 baskets of millet of about 100 pounds each. Dim Delobson adds that to these exactions the district chief added his own contributions to the Mogho Naba, usually in the form of cattle.

[114] It seems that Dim Delobson rationalized and regularized a rather informal system of contributions. The present-day Mossi declare that soil differences in the villages and variations in rainfall prevented a district chief from demanding a set tribute, because no one could tell whether a crop would be good or bad. Only a ruler's informers could tell him how much he should receive each year, and the chief based his exactions on this report. Several of my respondents agreed with Dim Delobson that the district chief provided mostly cattle for the annual tribute to the Mogho Naba, and that the village people furnished cowries, small animals, and grain.

634 A district chief was seldom wealthy, because he always had to use his
652 revenue to fulfill unexpected obligations toward his subjects, his superiors
574 in the political hierarchy, and his household. He had to be generous to his subjects, providing millet water, millet beer, and the more expensive imported kola nuts for those who visited and conferred with him daily. He was expected to provide food and shelter for the countless strangers who settled in his district, until they could provide for themselves. He also lodged and fed the messengers who brought him orders from the capital, and gave them gifts to take back to the provincial ministers. And he had to provide goods for the many members of his family who depended upon him. Finally, in the event of crop failure or famine in any of his villages, he had to provide grain from his granaries to feed the hungry. "How could he do otherwise? Was he not a 'father' to his people?"

634 The expectation that the district chief should provide hospitality to his
574 subjects was so strong that those chiefs or princes who were deprived of
579 an income for any reason often resorted to banditry to fulfil their obliga-
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tions. Binger, who found Boukary Koutou (the future Mogho Naba Wobogo) living in exile for having led a rebellion against his brother, Mogho Naba Sanum, tells us: 574 579 434

> Boukary has no resources, and does not even have the advantage of receiving periodic tribute from several large villages. In order to subsist and to maintain a certain status, he is compelled to live by pillage and even by brigandage. From time to time, his horsemen make incursions into the outskirts of some Gurunsi or Kipirsi village, and carry off by surprise the inhabitants whom they find working the fields or looking for wood. His people also hide and lie in wait along the roads to capture any persons who may pass within their range. This type of behavior has given Boukary Naba a bad reputation. However, the people who understand his position forgive him, knowing the situation in which his brother has placed him. And, in spite of all this, he has numerous partisans, and many others who would be happy to see him gain power.[28]

Those district chiefs or princes who wished to retain their power legitimately were forced to be generous or run the risk of losing the allegiance and good will of their villagers, who were their ultimate supporters. 634 574

It is very difficult to generalize about the amount of revenue collected by a village chief. He did not receive any revenue from the land used by his villagers. He treated the weogho in his village in the same manner as the district chief. If some families grew too large and wanted to establish permanent residence in the village bush, they asked the chief for permission to settle there. However, many village chiefs had special areas of waste for their own use. They had usually received them as gifts from some district chief, and therefore had the right to collect tribute on any crops, firewood, or fish obtained from these lands. 651 622 634 [361] [431]

The average village chief's main source of revenue was derived from the agricultural and other labor of his wives and relatives. A village chief received a number of wives from his subjects and from aliens living in his village. These women helped cultivate his fields. If their labor was insufficient he called a sosogha, to which he often invited his wives' relatives. Some chiefs also had serfs and slaves who helped cultivate their land and kept their cattle as well. [464] [566] [567]

The village chief did not have the power to tax his subjects. Instead, he functioned as a channel through which commodities and services passed up the hierarchy and on to Ouagadougou. Many villagers voluntarily helped the chief to repair his huts and compound walls and to cut thatch for his roofs. Many gave him baskets of grain and other vegetable products after the harvest. They also visited him and gave him presents during the annual rites to his ancestors. In contrast to higher chiefs, however, the village head [476] [431] [692]

did not derive any revenue from his judicial functions. He could not levy a fine against any malefactor. However, his intermediary position between the villagers and the district chief did permit him to obtain some revenue whenever commodities moved from one level to the other.

The officials who administered the villages for the district chief received part of their revenue from the villages under their charge. These local administrators had no courts or retainers comparable to those at the provincial level. However, they did have a large number of wives who contributed valuable agricultural labor. These administrators were permitted to ask the village chiefs for sosose on their own fields several times during the planting season, but—unlike the district chiefs—they were not permitted to have the villagers cultivate special fields for them. In return for any help received, they had to provide food and drink for the workers.

The administrator received most of his revenue as a by-product of active duty in the villages. When he visited a village or transmitted a message to a village chief, he almost invariably received a sheep, a goat, a chicken, or some millet, from the village chief. He also acquired large quantities of goods during the village interregnum: he received gifts from the chief's heirs during the chief's funeral; he received additional presents when they took the fado to the district chief; he could prolong the interregnum in order to receive as many bribes as possible from contenders for the nam; and he was handsomely rewarded when the candidate he had backed was finally installed in office.

The extended family was the basic socio-economic unit supporting the Mossi political organization. The Yirisoba received land rights in his saka from his Sakakasma, who had obtained his rights from the village chief. An extended family in need of additional land would seek help from its Sakakasma or its Boodkasma. When the family no longer needed this land, it reverted to the lineage. If all the land granted to the lineage was already occupied, the extended family, through its lineage head, asked the village chief for more land. The chief usually granted this request, unless he had no more weogho available. In this case, the needy Yirisoba sometimes tried to borrow land from his non-kin neighbors. Such a step was not undertaken lightly, however. If a man borrowed land from his own lineage members or from the chief, the land rights reverted to its donors without difficulty. However, if he borrowed land from another lineage and either he or his benefactor died without assuring the return of the land, litigation often ensued. In some cases a man would seek land from his lineage brothers in another village, who let him use some of their land with their chief's permission. Some Yirisobadamba even asked their district chief for

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permission to use weogho in the district, and new hamlets arose in this way. A Yirisoba who could not obtain adequate land on which to grow food for his family left the district and sought land elsewhere, especially among his mother's patrilineage. However, village and district chiefs always tried to prevent this because they did not like to lose any of their subjects.

As director of economic activities in the household, the Yirisoba supervised the agricultural labor of his charges. It was he who directed the work of his wives, his sons, and his sons' wives, and supervised the care of the family herd. He provided the cotton, which was carded and spun by the women and woven by the men. It was also his task to ensure adequate clothing for the members of his household; and he sold excess commodities in order to buy salt, kola nuts, bracelets, foreign clothes, and other products imported from the forest and desert zones. In each case, the Yirisoba had to balance judiciously the requirements of his household against his obligations to the community and to the political hierarchy. He had to prevent economic rivalry among his sons, and especially among his sons' wives. He had to make sure that every married member of the household had sufficient time to provide goods and services for his own family, and that foodstuffs were distributed equitably among the wives. Finally, he had to use the resources of the household to build and maintain the nexus of socioeconomic relationships that provided wives for the male members of the household, and to meet his obligations to the political hierarchy.

The Yirisoba also had social and economic responsibilities toward the other members of his babissi and boodoo. He furnished labor and goods to needy lineage members and to non-relatives with whom he had marriage arrangements. Since much of this help was given on the basis of ultimate reciprocity, very little loss was involved. However, the relationship between commoner and noble families was quite different. In theory, the nobles had no claims on the property of the commoners; but in practice, they did claim such rights. Furthermore, commoner lineages often gave the nobles many more wives than the nobles returned. This inequality enabled the nobles to receive more goods and services from their marriage partners among the commoners than they gave in return. The nobles thus took advantage of their power as possessors of the nam, but even membership in the royal lineage did not exempt them from supporting the governmental services at all levels. This duty was incumbent upon every Moaga.

The Mossi people could not refuse to support their political organization, but often complained about having to do so. Many Mossi felt that their rulers were greedy and avaricious and received too many gifts. Some Mossi held that if the chiefs were not placated with goods and services,

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they might take the lives and property of their subjects. There are many stories of avaricious chiefs who convicted wealthy commoners of spurious crimes and had them executed or banished in order to seize their wealth. There are also stories of twin tricksters, Raogo, a boy, and Poko, a girl, two *enfants terribles* who always succeeded in outwitting and killing avaricious chiefs. When I asked a district chief to explain the significance of the Raogo and Poko tales, he replied that they were "meaningless stories told by children who do not understand how difficult it is for a chief to command and protect men." This remark prompted one of his officials to add that in olden days, people gladly supported the Mogho Naba and his chiefs in order to be safe from their enemies—a statement which might have been made by a conscientious government official anywhere. However, whether commoners or chiefs, all Mossi believed that men must have government, and that without it chaos would prevail.

The Mossi political organization was subject to severe strains. For one thing, its economic basis was not very strong. True, goods and services were channeled to the capital from the smallest areas, and in time this permitted the establishment of increasingly complex governmental structures. Nevertheless, the Mossi fiscal system was not highly developed, and much of the revenue the rulers received came to them in the form of legal fees and gifts. Moreover, most of these revenues were irregular in nature.

Despite this fact, the Mossi believed that their rulers were wealthy—and there can be no doubt that they were wealthier than their subjects. Nevertheless, visiting Europeans found little difference between the standard of living of the chiefs and that of the people. Binger would have us believe that Mogho Naba Sanum bragged so much about imaginary wealth, including 10,000 horses, that he "managed to convince himself of it."[29] Binger's subsequent remarks about Sanum's resources are illuminating even if somewhat biased, because they throw light on the economic basis of the Ouagadougou kingdom. He tells us that Sanum's revenues were

> not well regulated. He lives on gifts and offerings which people have brought him with the aim of obtaining justice, or to demand something from him. He sometimes sends a band of men to capture slaves in Kipirsi country, or at least supports such ventures. But these revenues, like those of all the black chiefs, are not sufficient, because these men are prone to squander their resources. As a result, these sovereigns are compelled to use expedients in order to procure horses and other commodities. Thus, like the rulers of Tieba, Pegue, and Kong, Naba Sanum still has captives in villages devoted to agriculture, but he does not take proper care of these villages. If he does not receive enough millet in the form of gifts, he must sell his slaves in order to procure it.[27]

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Binger's statement about the "squandering" to which "all the black chiefs" are prone reveals his ignorance of the nature, role, and function of West African chiefs in general and of Mossi chiefs in particular. These men were often the center of redistribution systems that embraced their entire territory. The Mossi chiefs did not necessarily squander their resources when they used them to support their household, their administrative staff, and even visitors to their realm. A rather large portion of the millet the Mogho Naba received was not even used by his own household, but was held for gifts to visiting strangers. Binger himself benefited from the generosity of Mogho Naba Sanum, and he provides us with excellent data about how Boukary Koutou distributed his resources: "I can say that never has a chief given me food, kola nuts, and beer as often as he did. I received things to eat two or three times a day."[28] No Mossi chief could have done less. This was a role that chiefs had to play, and they lost power and prestige if they proved inhospitable or parsimonious either to visiting strangers or to their own subjects. 631 434 574 [114]

Binger's lack of insight into the economic basis of the Mossi political organization also kept him from obtaining a clear understanding of the political system itself. For example, he saw the loose political organization of the Mossi as a sign of decadence, and felt that the Ouagadougou kingdom was too weak to survive for any length of time: 642 114

> Before long the Mossi empire will break up, and the country will be organized into a confederacy like Beledougou and Yatenga. This is an event that we Europeans can only favor. Experience has shown us that as soon as a Negro chief commands more than 2,000 people, he dreams of empire; his needs grow, and he tries to expand. Since his revenues are small, he labors under a deficit, which he must remedy with slave raids. In a confederacy the chiefs do not reach this point so rapidly. As soon as one of them begins to rise, the others can band together and nip his ambition in the bud.[29]

It is quite true that many of the political systems in the western Sudan had a loose character similar to that of a "confederacy." This was not due to the vigilance of neighboring chiefs, however. From time to time, such powerful rulers as Sundiata, Mansa Musa, Sonni-Ali, El Hadj Omar, and Samory Touré did arise and conquer vast areas, but they were unable to sustain their gains over extended periods.

The political organization of the Mossi was not decadent but structurally weak—its economic base was never strong enough to support a higher degree of centralization. Strong chiefs only tested the limits of the system; they could not change the system itself. 642

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VIII

RELIGION AND GOVERNMENT

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642 RELIGION AND RITUAL played an important role in supporting and preserv-
[769] ing the Mossi political system. Religio-political ceremonies were centered
[776] around the ancestors (Keemse) and the earth deities (Tengkouga); the otiose high god (Ouennam or Naba Zid Ouende) had a very minor role.

769 The political importance of ancestor veneration lay in the fact that every
642 Mossi chief claimed Nyennega of Dagomba and her descendants, Ouedra-
778 ogo and Oubri, as his ancestors. Furthermore, possession of the amulets of Rialle, Nyennega's husband and Ouedraogo's father, legitimized possession
[613] of the nam. In order to rule, a Moaga had either to be a member of a royal
669 lineage still in possession of the nam or to have received the nam from such a lineage. No Moaga ever tried to usurp the nam of a kingdom or princi-
778 pality without trying to steal the royal amulets at the same time; nor, if his
642 rebellion was successful, did he ever fail to claim that he had stolen the
769 amulets or had received them as a gift. Thus Yadega, who rebelled against his father's brother, Mogho Naba Koudoumie, and founded the Yatenga kingdom, declared that he had obtained Rialle's amulets. He claimed that they had been given to him by his sister, Pabre, who had stolen them from Ouagadougou and had thus deprived that kingdom of any legitimate sanctions for power. Thus, when the Yatenga people declare that they are equal to Ouagadougou, they add that the only "amulets" that still legitimize the nam of the Ouagadougou dynasty are the droppings left behind by Pabre's horse as she fled northward.

769 Similarly, all the princes who founded principalities and proclaimed
642 their independence of Ouagadougou defended their action on the grounds
643 that they, being as close to the main line of descent as the Mogho Naba, were also entitled to rule. The younger sons of deceased Mogho Nanamse
[631] who were banished from the capital as Kouritadamba and who subse-
[634] quently became provincial Dimdamba also stressed their relationship to the royal ancestors. Even those district chiefs whose ancestors had prob-

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769 642 613 [634]

ably been younger sons sent to rule in conquered territories claimed that their ancestors were direct descendants of Ouedraogo and Oubri. Thus, to the Mossi, the power to rule was intimately linked to closeness of descent from the royal ancestors. The supernatural power of these ancestors, and the vigilance they were believed to maintain over the affairs of their descendants, were regarded as important factors in Mossi government.

796 631 643 769 [778] [782]

From the moment when the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou or any other Mossi ruler "drank the namtibo" and thereby received the nam of his ancestors, he had the right—indeed, the duty—to offer sacrifices to these ancestors in the name of his subjects. Every night, throughout Mossi country, the Baloum Naba of every ruler performed an act of supplication (Kwaga Basgha) to the ancestors. He beseeched them to protect the subjects of their descendants through the night, to maintain peace in Mossi country, and to grant health, children, and prosperity to all Mossi. This nightly ceremony was climaxed yearly by an elaborate ritual in honor of the ancestors (called the Basgha in some areas, and the Pelegha, Filigha, or Kinkiriga in others) that began at the highest levels of the government and ultimately linked every Mossi chief and lineage head.

643 769 241 782 796 [644]

The Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou, like the other Mogho Nanamse and Dimdamba, initiated this ceremony in his own kingdom. His celebration, called "M'barengma," was held at the end of the Mossi agricultural year and after the Soretasgho. Thus, the M'barengma was a New Year's festival in thanksgiving for good crops, as well as the annual Feast of the Dead. A few weeks before the first moon of the new year (the *ki-basgha* or *ki-pelegha*), the Mogho Naba ordered his soghondamba and samande-kamba to clean up the palace buildings and courtyards—an activity intended to notify the ever-vigilant ancestors that preparations were being made to offer sacrifices in their honor. A short time later, the Mogho Naba gave grain from his fields to the Pughtiema so she could prepare millet water for the sacrifices. Present-day Mossi insist that part of the grain came from the first ears harvested that year and part from those of the previous year. This was supposed to symbolize the continuity between crops, mirroring the continuity between the ruler and his ancestors. A few days before the principal ceremony, the Mogho Naba ordered the Larhalle Naba to pour millet water and sacrifice chickens on the graves of former Mogho Nanamse.

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Shortly before the ki-basgha moon appeared, the ruler had to leave his palace at night to elude the ancestors, who had been attracted by the preparations and who were expected to be angry when they discovered that the sacrifices were not yet ready. The unjust ruler feared ancestral sanctions; the just ruler that his ancestors might want him to join them. One night he

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went to the home of his Samande Naba, the next to the Gounghin ward, then to Baghin, and subsequently to the homes of other officials. He could not remain long at one place for fear that the ancestors might find him. Every morning, however, when the cock's crow heralded the ancestors' departure, he returned to his palace.

The principal part of the Basgha ceremony was performed on the night when the crescent moon appeared. On that night more than any other, the ruler had to seek refuge elsewhere, because the ancestors visited the palace to accept the sacrifices offered to them by the Pughtiema with the help of the Baloum Naba and the chief eunuch of the harem. The exact nature of this ceremony is unknown, but it is known that the Baloum Naba used the sacred namtibo along with animals and millet-flour water provided by the Pughtiema and the chief eunuch for propitiatory sacrifices to the ancestors. The aim of these sacrifices was to induce the ancestors to grant good crops, health, happiness, and children to their descendants, and to "increase the force of the namtibo."[1] At cock's crow the Bendere Naba sprinkled a flour infusion called *gningmassem* ("water of health") on the palace courtyard so that the ruler might walk upon it when he returned. The Mogho Naba was greeted with drumbeats and escorted to the palace gate. His entry into the antechamber marked the close of this ceremony, and the people retired until later in the day.

The elaborate public ceremony of the Basgha took place in mid-morning. The ministers and important officials, clad in ceremonial garb, arrived at the palace quite early. When the Mogho Naba appeared, the Bendere Naba recited the official genealogy, starting with Ouedraogo and Oubri and ending with elaborate praises of the current ruler. The ministers and their entourage then saluted the Mogho Naba and wished him *Ne tarbo*, which means a happy and prosperous new year for himself and the country. He, in turn, took advantage of this occasion to give many presents to his retinue, and his wives distributed huge amounts of food and drink to the assembly until everyone was satiated. Then all the officials except the Bendere Naba and his group paid homage to the Mogho Naba and departed. The musicians remained at court most of the day, beating their drums and singing praises to their sovereign and his illustrious ancestors. The royal pages kept them well supplied with food and beer, and now and again during the day the ruler sent them gifts among which robes were often included. Whenever the drummers received a gift, they slipped into a rhythmic pattern that signified: *Tompaonto, Wend'kaouss' Naba niore, Wenne wilig vinre*, or, "We bow in thanksgiving for your gift. May God give the ruler long life. May God grant us to be alive next year so that we may do this again." The

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climax of this gift-giving came when the ruler sent the Bendere Naba about 19,000 cowries and a slave.[8] This ceremony terminated at nightfall.

The close of the Mogho Naba's Basgha heralded the start of similar ceremonies throughout his kingdom. The heads of the other Mossi kingdoms and the Dimdamba were free to hold their own Basgha when they wished; but the Ouagadougou ruler's own subjects, including the provincial ministers, district chiefs, village chiefs, and lineage heads, apparently were not. One reason for this, aside from respect for the ruler, was that the important officials' head wives had to wait for the yeast (*dabili*) from the Mogho Naba's beer before they could prepare the sacrificial offerings for their husbands' ancestors. This dabili went from district to district or to several districts at once, depending on whether the chiefs celebrated Basgha at the same time or successively. Thus, the dabili from the capital united all the wives of the royal clan, and made for both a ritual continuity in the veneration of all ancestors and a strengthening of religious and political bonds.

The Basgha ceremonies on the district level were much less elaborate than those held at Ouagadougou, but just as important. The district chief, too, had his buildings repaired and his grain distributed for sacrifices for the ancestors. A few days before the actual ceremony, he ordered the Gande Naba to pour millet water on the graves of recently deceased chiefs and to sacrifice chickens there. As in Ouagadougou, these sacrifices were offered to induce the chiefly ancestors to grant the villagers health, food, and children. Unlike the Mogho Naba, most district chiefs did not ritually hide from their ancestors for several nights prior to the ceremony. Some of them did change their sleeping place within the compound every night, and the court people always slept indoors during this period. On the night of the Basgha itself, however, the district chiefs did not sleep in their compounds.

As in Ouagadougou, the Pughtiema performed the main ceremony by pouring millet water as a libation to the ancestors who visited her hut. She was assisted by the Baloum Naba, who had possession of the namtibo. Apparently, the district chief remained in hiding and took no part in the ceremony. But he was the main figure in the morning ceremony, which differed little from that of Ouagadougou. In some districts the Tengsoba performed a public sacrifice to the ancestors. He was given the namtibo—sacred objects that had belonged to former district chiefs—and poured libations and sacrificed chickens to all of the chief's ancestors. He also prayed both to these ancestors and to his own on the chief's behalf, and beseeched them to grant long life and happiness to the district population. He also declared that the sacred objects would seek out and kill any enemies of the local ruler, wherever they might be. Once this ritual had been com-

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pleted, the remainder of the ceremony followed the pattern of the Ouagadougou ritual.

During the weeks that followed, the village chiefs and the heads of the larger lineage segments all offered sacrifices to their ancestors. The Pughtiema of each prominent local administrator, chief, or lineage head prepared and poured the millet water as a libation to the ancestors. Whenever possible, each of these personages invited musicians to sing praises to his ancestors. He dressed in his best robe and sat outside his hut to receive presents from his relatives, friends, and subjects, along with their best wishes for the new year, and for long life and prosperity. In return he gave them kola nuts, beer, and food. Thus, in celebrating the Basgha, all the Mossi were united in prayers and supplications to the ancestors, upon whom rested the future of their country and the successful reign of the descendants of Ouedraogo and Oubri.

The earth deity, Tenga, held the central place in the second major religio-political ceremony which linked all Mossi. This ritual, called *Tense* (from *tenga*, "earth") and sometimes *Naba Oubri ma koure* ("the anniversary of the funeral of Mogho Naba Oubri's mother"), was so important to Mossi cohesion that it was banned by the French, and as a result its main features are now unclear. According to tradition, Naba Oubri loved Poughtoenga, his Ninisi mother, so much, and was so pleased with the elaborate funeral he gave her, that he decided to repeat this ceremony each year in the hope that his subjects would be blessed with the bountiful crops and herds which had made the first one possible. Curiously enough, Oubri's mother was not a central figure in the Tense celebration. Instead, great stress was placed on the fructifying powers of the earth and on the importance of the royal ancestors in Mossi life. The juxtaposition and association of the earth deity with Oubri's mother has important implications for the Mossi political organization. Mossi tradition holds that a Ninisi woman was the ancestress of the Mossi of Ouagadougou. Her people probably celebrated the Tense as a fertility rite to their earth goddess, Tenga. The Mossi apparently took over the ceremony and used it both as a fertility rite and as a memorial festival, thus symbolically uniting the conquerors and the conquered.[3]

In contrast to the Basgha, no special date appears to have been set for the celebration of the Tense. It was held sometime before the crops were sowed, but according to Tauxier it was not celebrated at all in Ouagadougou when the previous year's harvest had been poor.[4] Before setting the date for the festival, the Mogho Naba summoned the Larhalle Naba and ordered him to have sacrifices made on the graves of all former rulers. This minister

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provided the sacrificial animals for the royal tombs in the area of the capital, and the Ouagadougou Naba, as chief Tengsoba, performed the sacrifices. The Larhalle Naba also dispatched his servants to the distant districts where royal tombs were located, with orders to obtain (by force, if necessary) the animals for the sacrifices from the local populations and give them to the special guardians of the tombs. Sacrifices were made on the grave of Naba Oubri at Koudougou and on that of his father, Zoungourana, in the village of Zomtoega in Tenkodogo. However, there is no indication that a sacrifice was made on the grave of Ouedraogo, who is believed to have died in Sagabatenga but whose burial place is unknown. Nor is it clear whether, as some Mossi claim, annual sacrifices were made on the alleged grave of Nyennega in Gambaga. As soon as these preparatory sacrifices had been completed and the Mogho Naba had been notified, preparations were made for the celebration.

The Mogho Naba met with the Larhalle Naba, and the date of the Tense was set for twenty-one days after the meeting. On the following day, the Larhalle Naba made five cords out of tree bark and tied nineteen knots in each of them. The next day, he gave each provincial minister a cord to send to the districts in his province. The provincial ministers then sent their messengers with the cords to the districts, with orders to untie one knot every day the cords were in transit. Thus a district chief, counting the number of knots in the cord on the day it reached him, knew how many days were left before the Tense. As soon as the entire kingdom had been notified of the festival, the envoys returned to Ouagadougou and returned the cords to their ministers.

On the Friday morning before the Tense, the Larhalle Naba went to the palace. Kneeling before the monarch, he untied the last knot on each cord to indicate that the ceremony would begin on the morrow. To acknowledge this fact, the Mogho Naba distributed bars of salt to his courtiers and visitors instead of the customary kola nuts, beer, and millet water. Visitors left the court early in order to provide their families with foodstuffs for the celebration.

Early on Saturday morning, royal servants brought huge quantities of beef and mutton that had been cooked without pepper (this spice being disliked by the ancestors) and other foods, and deposited them in large heaps in the courtyard. Nearby, they also placed numerous large pots of millet beer. As soon as the morning ceremony was over, the Larhalle Naba slowly approached the Mogho Naba, who presented him with a new white robe. The minister donned the robe and walked to the piles of food, from which he took three portions of millet mush, dipped them in a specially

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prepared sauce, and flung them in three directions to the waiting ancestral spirits. He then beseeched the royal spirits, the spirits of former provincial ministers, and the spirits of the ancient people (the Ninisi) to grant a long life to the Mogho Naba and peace to all the Mossi. He repeated the ritual with three morsels of meat and with the contents of a pot of beer. When he had finished, the Gande Naba picked up the food thrown to the ancestors and carried it away. He did not look backward for fear that he should see the ancestors and die as a result. The departure of the Gande Naba was the signal for the palace retainers to rush toward the food. They seized and ate what they could, spilling and wasting a good deal in the process.[8]

Meanwhile, chiefs and headmen held similar ceremonies in every district, village, hamlet, and compound in the Ouagadougou kingdom. District and village chiefs offered sacrifices to their ancestors in the name of their subjects. The sacrifices on the hamlet and compound level were more specific. Every grown man had to take a sheep, goat, or chicken to his elder and request that it be offered to the ancestors in his name. The elder sacrificed the animal and beseeched the ancestors to grant the petitioner good health, bountiful crops, and many children during the coming year. The women and children did not take part in the ritual, but they did participate in the general feasting that followed.

The festivities of the Tense lasted only a few days in the districts and villages, but in the capital it did not end officially until about four weeks had elapsed. At the end of this period, the Larhalle Naba gave the Mogho Naba all the cords that had been used to mark the coming of the Tense. A few days later, the chief Tengsoba of Guillingou, the native village of Oubri's mother, and the Tengsobadamba of other important ceremonial centers, visited the Mogho Naba in the palace courtyard. Here they all sacrificed white cocks and placed the blood and feathers of their victims on their ceremonial axes in order to "increase the power" of these objects. Later on, they were given cooked mutton, millet cakes, and other presents. Their departure for home later in the day marked the close of the Tense.

The religio-political function of the Tense is quite explicit, despite the statement by Dim Delobson, himself a Mossi chief (but also a convert to Catholicism), that "it is apparent that this festival has no outstanding features. Its sole aim is to make peace between the living and the dead, and, in the process, to allow everyone to enjoy the food."[9] Judging by the reports of old men who participated in the festival before it was banned, the people did have a good time and enjoyed the food. What is important, however, is that like the Basgha, the Tense served not only "to make peace

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between the living and the dead," but also to strengthen the political bonds between the Mogho Naba and his chiefs, down to the humblest elder of a Mossi compound.

In addition to the Basgha and Tense, the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou appears to have offered another yearly sacrifice to Tenga. Each year, after the Basgha, the Mogho Naba, the Baloum Naba, and a large entourage reportedly visited a large earth shrine called Tantibo in the vicinity of Sabatenga to offer propitiatory sacrifices in the name of all the people. When the royal party arrived at Sabatenga, they were joined by the Sabatenga Naba and his Tengsoba. The group proceeded to the foot of the sacred hill, and here the monarch dismounted, took off his bonnet and shoes, and climbed the hill. He made the customary Mossi salute at the shrine and looked on silently while the Tengsoba sacrificed animals and poured libations of millet beer and millet water in supplication for the health and prosperity of the Mogho Naba and all his people.[7]

When evil befell Mossi country in spite of the annual sacrifices to the ancestors and to the earth deity, the Mogho Naba had to offer additional sacrifices. If the country was plagued by drought, the ruler went to an earth shrine in Ouagadougou itself, called "Kom be paspanga" (literally, "water is strong there"), for a sacrifice. Moreover, he might order all his district and village chiefs to perform similar sacrifices to the earth shrines within their territories. In Nobere district, for instance, the district chief went to the village called Barkago, where, standing barefoot and bareheaded on the hilly shrine known as Beta, he ordered the local village chief and the Tengsoba to offer sacrifices for rain and good health.

It is generally believed by the Mossi that when the French attacked Ouagadougou, the deposed Mogho Naba Wobogo made sacrifices to earth shrines. Tradition has it that he sacrificed a black cock, a black ram, a black donkey, and a black slave on a large hill near the White Volta River, beseeching the earth goddess to drive the French away and to destroy the traitor Mazi whom they had placed upon the throne. When Mazi died, the Mossi people believed that he had received his just deserts from the earth shrine for treason. The French believe that Mazi was poisoned.[8]

The district and village chiefs, like the Mogho Naba, were required to make propitiatory sacrifices to the earth shrines on behalf of their subjects. Before taking office, a district chief was ritually shown the major earth shrines in his territory, and he could not ignore their existence and their need for sacrifices. In a country with major local variations in rainfall and localized animal and human epidemics, the Tengsobadamba of stricken areas always called upon the local chiefs to help them propitiate disgruntled spirits.

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634 spirits. The chiefs could not refuse such requests, especially when the vil-
622 lagers were poor, because they were regarded as "fathers of their people."
782 In some cases, however, district chiefs had to protect their subjects against unscrupulous Tengsobadamba who took advantage of local crises and tried
661 to prey upon the villagers by refusing to perform the requisite sacrifices
793 unless they received substantial gifts. The ensuing struggle was between
634 the secular and the sacred; between the chief as a representative of the con-
782 querors, and the Tengsoba as a member of the conquered group. It was always resolved in favor of the Mossi chief, who never permitted his Tengsobadamba the same privileges held by religious practitioners in neighboring societies.[9] The Mossi chiefs recognized that they needed the Tengsobadamba, and many myths recount how invading Mossi chiefs went into the woods where the Tengsobadamba were hiding to beseech and eventually force them to return to their districts so that sacrifices might be continued. On the other hand, the Mossi chiefs always insisted on the primacy of the nam over any other power. They employed the Tengsobadamba to intercede with Tenga for the welfare of their subjects, but they never allowed the priests to control them.

771 The coming of Moslems to the kingdom of Ouagadougou had little
795 effect on the way in which the Mogho Nanamse used the traditional reli-
643 gious system to bolster their political power.[10] In fact, the Mossi rulers later used Islam and its adherents in the same manner as they had used the
[797] aboriginal religion. The Moslems first tried to subdue the Mossi in the fifteenth century by persuasion, and later by the jihad. Both attempts
[648] failed, but the Moslems finally entered Mossi country as refugees from
[167] Sudanese wars. Their fortunes waxed and waned, depending on whether they were befriended by the ruler in whose territory they lived. During
[798] certain periods, they were subjected to many restrictions and were forbidden by the Mogho Naba to recite their prayers in public places.[11] At other times, they were left free to practice their religion, and even succeeded in
[797] converting several Mogho Nanamse to Islam. Under converts such as Savadogo (ca. 1760), Islam spread into many districts and gave rise to such important local centers as Sakhaboutenga (Dakay).

771 The Moslems in Ouagadougou were represented at the court by their
795 Imam. This person even received his badge of office—a white turban and
792 white robe—from the Mogho Naba, and had to swear in the name of Allah and *Nabiyama* (the prophet Mohammed) to be faithful to him, obey him, and aid him in times of need. However, he did not have to drink the namtibo as suggested by Dim Delobson; nor did he have to observe such non-Moslem customs as drinking the millet beer the Mogho Naba provided for

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his guests.[13] On the contrary, when the Imam visited the ruler on Fridays 795
or during important festivals to read from the Koran, the sovereign gave 792
him sweetened millet water and appropriate gifts.

Most Mossi rulers at all levels had Moslems among their councillors. 795
These men were often the only persons who had traveled extensively out- 645
side the country (on pilgrimages to Mecca), and thus could counsel a ruler 648
about how to deal with foreign visitors. Most early European visitors to Mossi country were either helped or hindered (chiefly the latter, it seems) by these travel-wise councillors. Crozat had difficulties with the Moslems long before he arrived in Mossi country proper. When he got to Lanfiera, the Mossi who lived there were alarmed, and refused to help him proceed to Ouagadougou despite his protestations that "I come for the good of all, white and black, that we may be together like brothers, since the same God has made us all." Crozat reports that his plea was in vain because "El Hadj Ali-Karl declared that he would not receive me, and he will not receive me. El Hadj is wise, El Hadj is prudent, El Hadj knows all, El Hadj does not make decisions without good foresight, and once made, he keeps them."[13]

Crozat had the same difficulty when he entered Mossi country. He tells 795
us, "At Dounse [near Yako], for example, the marabouts did not look 645
favorably upon my arrival, and it took a great deal of insistence on the part 648
of Moussa to convince the Imam, my unwilling host, to present me to the 792
chief who had expressed the desire to see me."[14] Crozat also found that he had to lodge with the Imam when he arrived at Ouagadougou, and he was assigned the same huts "which had served Captain Binger," who had visited the capital before him. He was disappointed with his reception and declares:

> I already knew from experience what sort of influence these men exercised over the chiefs. As a councillor of the chief, the Imam was overtly acknowledged as the second official in the village, but in reality he often commanded it. The Imam of Ouagadougou, therefore, could do much to help me or to hurt me. My decision to court him might flatter him, and that would be a move in the direction of winning his good graces, which, all things considered, was most important to me. The result was only partly in my favor. I succeeded insofar as the Imam was not hostile to me, but he did not help me as he might have.[15]

These Moslem councillors realized better than most other people what the visits of the Europeans implied for the independence of the country, and they tried their best to counsel the monarchs against receiving such visitors.

Beginning with Mogho Naba Doulougou (ca. 1750) Mossi sovereigns, 771
whether Moslem or pagan, participated in the more important Moslem festi- 795
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vals. Being monarchs of the Mossi, they could not do otherwise. A few days before the Moslem feast of Tabaski (called *Kibsa* by the Mossi), the Mogho Naba sent the Imam of Ouagadougou cattle and sheep to be sacrificed on the holy day. On the day of the festival, the Mogho Naba and his entourage went to the mosque and joined the Imam and his flock in prayer. After the ceremony the sovereign returned to his palace and ordered that a well-washed sheep be given to the Imam for a sacrifice. This Moslem sacrifice was performed in the palace courtyard, and the Mogho Naba himself held the tail of the animal while the Imam officiated. The Mogho Naba afterward ordered his servants to provide millet water and food for his Moslem subjects. Similar ceremonies were held in all of the districts and villages where Moslems lived.

The feast at the end of the Moslem month of Ramadan was also celebrated by the Mogho Naba and most of the people within the kingdom—a fact that so surprised Binger that he wrote, "It is a most curious fact that, whether Moslem or not, all the blacks celebrate this feast."[16] The Moslems usually flattered the Mogho Naba and the other chiefs by pretending to believe that they had observed the month-long fast (which the Mossi called *no-lwere*, from *nore*, "mouth," and *lwere*, "to tie up") during Ramadan. [576] Thus, whenever they visited the Mogho Naba or another chief during this period, they greeted him with the salutation *Ne no-lwere*, which means, "I greet you who are fasting." Similarly, the morning after the end of the fasting period, the ruler and his officials were ritually given millet water "to break their fast." The important point here is that everyone knew that the Mogho Naba's fast was a ritual fiction. Binger, who was with Boukary Naba at the end of Ramadan before this prince became Mogho Naba Wobogo, commented: "Boukary Naba is a Moslem in outward appearance only. When the prayers were about to begin, he asked me whether I was going to worship. I told him that this festival was not in accord with those of the Christians. He seemed to be delighted by the idea that the whites are not Moslems."[17]

Most Mossi chiefs celebrated the end of Ramadan in a grander manner than they did Tabaski. The members of the royal household joined the other inhabitants of the capital in their anxious vigil for the crescent moon that was to herald the start of the ceremonies. There was general rejoicing when the moon appeared, and all through the night palace guards fired shots and launched arrows into the air. The following morning, the Mogho Naba went to the mosque with his courtiers to attend prayers. Then he returned to his palace to await the Imam, who came to offer prayers of thanksgiving. The Mogho Naba gave him presents, and was visited by gift-bearing

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Moslems. In return, he gave them millet water sweetened with honey, millet cakes, meat, and kola nuts.

The celebration of the festival in the districts was not as imposing as it was at Ouagadougou, but we have Binger's excellent eyewitness account of the festivities at Sakhaboutenga:

> First of all, Boukary sent word that he would like me to accompany him to Sakhaboutenga, where it is his custom to go on the day of the festival. The chief's men spent the entire day attending to preparations: they distributed powder, cleaned guns, tried on harnesses, and polished copper fittings as we would in France on the eve of a great parade. . . . It was an occasion for revelry, and they took full advantage of it. They ate as much as they could, drank a great deal of beer, and fired many rounds of ammunition. . . . In the evening there was a moment of consternation: no one had seen the crescent; however, they consoled themselves by repeating that although it had not been sighted here, it had certainly shown itself elsewhere, and they sat down to drink beer all night long.
>
> Monday, June 11. Early this morning Boukary sent a horseman to Sakhaboutenga to consult the marabouts. The messenger soon returned and assured the chief that the moon will be seen tonight. "All the marabouts have said so." The much-desired crescent appeared for a few moments this evening; shots were fired through half the night, and beer ran in floods. . . .
>
> Tuesday, June 12. From four o'clock in the morning, the tam-tams sounded everywhere, and everyone was busy; it is obvious that this is the eve of an important event. . . . Half an hour after our departure we arrived at Sakhaboutenga. We dismounted and camped under the trees at the entrance of the village. Some Moslems from the neighborhood came, greeted Boukary, and offered him some kola nuts in lots varying from five to eight. But they always held them out in a fold of their robe [it being forbidden for a commoner to hand a gift directly to a chief]. A village nearby sent twelve large jars of beer.
>
> From afar and from all directions, long files of Moslems emerged from the village on their way to the Imam's for prayers. Several onlookers arrived on donkeys from the surrounding countryside. The religious ceremony took place on a flat expanse to the east of the village. It was an impressive spectacle. The crowd was silent. The faithful, ranged in ranks about 20 feet deep, prostrated themselves and rose again in perfect harmony and with awesome slowness. From time to time the voice of the Imam was raised, and his *emine* [amen] was heard with deep reverence.
>
> There were about three thousand persons of both sexes there, almost all of them dressed in white. The *bournous* [robes], the red tarbooshes, and the multitude of black faces lent to the ceremony the grandiose character of an oriental fete. As soon as the prayers were over, Boukary Naba walked up to the Imam of Sakhaboutenga to the sound of tam-tams to receive his blessing and the good wishes of the Moslems, who wished on my illustrious host many horses and warriors. Boukary Naba ordered that the Imam be given a magnificent sheep and several sheepskins full of cowries. He presents this

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gift every year to the Imam and to Karamakho Isa, for whom he has great veneration. These are old and wise men who cannot but give him excellent counsel.[18]

The relations between Boukary Koutou and the Moslems of the Sakhaboutenga district show how Mossi chiefs, though pagans, were able to establish viable political bonds with potentially hostile believers of another religion. Boukary Koutou was probably a Moslem "in outward appearance only," as Binger suggests. Nevertheless, it was by being Moslems of this kind that Mossi rulers managed to retain the allegiance of their Moslem subjects. This was their duty as "fathers of their people," and apparently they did it without much hesitation. In this manner, they effectively used religion to bolster their power and sustain their authority.

Ritual connections between the Mossi rulers and the chiefs of surrounding countries enabled them to protect their subjects from foreign attack and to maintain internal cohesion. The numerous reciprocal gifts between the Mossi and such other Voltaic groups as the Dagomba, Mamprusi, and Gurmanche were based on the belief in descent from a common ancestor or ancestress. Ritual and the supernatural thus played an extremely important role in the cohesiveness of the Mossi kingdoms and in the functioning of their governmental processes. Without these ritual factors, it is doubtful whether the Mossi rulers would have been able to maintain such a relatively high degree of control over their subjects, given the relative weakness of their economic resources, communications, and armed forces. In trying to understand why the Mossi retained their autonomy for so long, one must take into consideration the statement made by a French officer a year after the Mossi were conquered: "We must not lose sight of the fact that [the Mossi] have always presented a common front to strangers, and that a single word of command is sufficient to unite them against the invader in the name of kinship and national unity."[19]

The phase of Mossi political history that began when Nyennega left Dagomba and moved northward came to an end with the European conquest. Most French scholars believe that the Mossi were in a state of decadence at the time of conquest and might have fallen to such African conquerors as El Hadj Omar, Samory Touré, or Baba To. The fact remains, however, that these conquerors all skirted Mossi country without entering it. If these African rulers believed that the Mossi were invincible in their unity, it was because the Mossi, through mythical bonds of common descent and actual bonds of kinship, had welded themselves into a cohesive and powerful group.

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IX

EUROPEAN CONTACT AND THE CONQUEST OF THE MOSSI

No one knows with any degree of certainty when the Mossi came to the attention of an expanding Western Europe. Marc reports that the ambassadors of John II of Portugal (1481-95) who visited Mali and Timbuktu heard about the Mossi and convinced the King on their return that the Mossi were Christians, and that the King attempted to establish contact with them.[1] Similarly, Barth tells us that around 1488,

> The Jolof [Wolof] Prince Bemoy came to Portugal and communicated so much information with regard to the nations of the interior of Africa, especially the Mossi, who, according to him, had much in common with the Christians, that he excited the greatest interest. It was supposed that the king of Mossi was the long-sought Prester John. Ogane is the native royal title of the king of Mossi. In consequence, from this time forward, numerous messengers were sent into the interior by King John from different quarters, and a nearer alliance seems to have been concluded with the king of the Mandingoes, although it was well understood in Portugal that the empire of the Mellians had fallen in ruin.[2]

Barth also states that as late as 1533, "The Portuguese endeavored also to open communication with the king of Mossi (el rey dos Moses), of whose power they had received reports, but from the wrong side, namely from Benin. The king of Mossi was then waging war with Mandi Mansa."[3] Unfortunately, no Mossi tradition reveals whether they had heard about the Portuguese at that time.

There are no authentic reports that Western Europeans tried to reach the Mossi until three centuries later. During the intervening period, the Europeans were so preoccupied with the gold- and slave-rich coastal African states and with their American and Asian colonies that they had little interest in the interior of the African continent. Only after the slave trade had been abolished and they were trying to find out about the interior of the Sudan in the hope of establishing trade relations there did the Europeans again hear about the Mossi.

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*175 The Mossi were probably brought to the attention of modern Europe [77] by T. E. Bowdich, an Englishman who went to Ashanti in 1817 to sign a 114 trade agreement with the Asantehene. While at Kumasi, Bowdich diligently sought information about the lands in the interior, but was relatively unsuccessful because his hosts pleaded ignorance. Nevertheless, he did find out that "five journies [days] from Yngwa [Yendi] is Mosee, a warlike but less visited kingdom: it consists of many states, but the superior monarch is named Billa, and the capital Kookoopella."[4] This misinformation is interesting because it shows that Bowdich's respondent had precise information only about Koupela, a town located near the great caravan center of Poitenga. Similarly, the linguistic data reported by Bowdich are for Dagomba rather than Mossi.

*195 Another Englishman, Joseph Dupuis, led a trade mission to Kumasi in 199 1819, and obtained data on the Mossi that are surprisingly accurate given the reluctance of middlemen traders to reveal commercial information. He reports that Ashanti traders "sometimes travel as far as Aughoa, the Magho, and to the east of Kasogho. Aughoa is distant from Coomassie twenty-five journies by the Salgha and Yandy Roads, which would give a distance of 360 British miles. Their object in frequenting this place is to collect that vegetable substance by the name of shea butter."[5] There is no doubt that "Aughoa" is really "Ouagha," the term often used by the Mossi to refer to their capital, and the distance between Kumasi and Ouagadougou as reported by Dupuis is approximately the same as the road mileage [101] today. The name "Magho," which appears from time to time in these early documents, seems to be none other than "Mogho," the traditional name of Mossi country. "Kasogho" probably refers to the section of Ouagadougou that was controlled by the Kamsaogho Naba.

The Hausa merchants knew a great deal about the Mossi and the resources of their territory, but only with difficulty did the English trader Hugh Clapperton persuade Sultan Mohammed Bello of Sokoto to give him the following information:

> The country of Mouchier or Mouchi is situated to the west of Ghurma. It is vast and possesses a gold mine, rivers, forests, and mountains. It is inhabited by tribes of the Sudan who possess many fast horses and large donkeys. Their king is called Wagadougou; their asses are sent down to the Gondja to carry the drums of the Army.[6]

[114] Either Clapperton or his informant obviously confused the capital of the Mossi with their king, and included parts of Dagomba in their territory.

Barth, who traveled extensively in the Sudan between 1849 and 1855, did

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not enter Mossi territory. Nevertheless, he obtained rather precise information on the important caravan routes leading from Timbuktu through the Mossi trade centers of Ouagadougou, Kaya, Yako, and Koupela, down to Salaga and other towns in Ghana, and even across to Sansane Mango in Togoland. His data on the Mossi are invaluable:

> The whole triangle interposed between the Niger toward the north, and the country of the Eastern Mandingoes or Wangarawa toward the south, appears to be inhabited by a single race of people whose language, although they are divided into several states and nations, nevertheless appears originally to have been the same stock. It is very probable that this race in ancient times occupied the whole upper course of the Niger, and that this tract may have been wrested from it in later times by the Songhai and the Mandingoes, especially that section of the latter which is generally called Bambara. These are the Gourma toward the N.E., the Tombo toward the N.W., and between them the Mossi. . . . The strongest among these pagan kingdoms five centuries ago, and even at the present moment, is that of the Mossi, although the country is split into a number of small principalities, almost totally independent of each other, and paying only some slight homage to the ruler of the principality of Woghodogo.[7]

Europe learned more about the Mossi from Sigismund Koelle, who visited Sierra Leone in 1854. His informant was one Andrew Dixon, who had lived in Koupela before being captured and sold into slavery. He furnished information on the location of the Mossi, their wars with the Busansi, and their important commercial and political relations with the Ashanti.[8] Koelle's report, taken in conjunction with the reports of Dupuis, Bowdich, Clapperton, and Barth, shows that the Ashanti, like the Hausa and other coastal peoples, were protecting their trade when they attempted to isolate the peoples of the interior from the Europeans. But as soon as the British defeated the Ashanti in the war of 1873–74, the Sudan was opened and adventurers poured in. In 1877 and 1878, two missionaries of the Basel Mission visited the northern regions of Ghana, and subsequently gave a good description of Mossi commerce in that area.[9] Lonsdale, who visited Salaga in 1881, found among the traders in the market "the Mossi with his cattle, sheep, and slaves—these latter, generally Gurunsi, are not exposed for sale in the street or market, but can be seen where the owner resides."[10]

The activities of the various European nations in West Africa and other regions at this time led to military and diplomatic difficulties, which the Berlin Conference of 1884–85 was convened to resolve. Agreement was reached to assign "spheres of influence" to the various European nations, to regulate trade, and to provide for arbitration between rival claimants of conquered or "protected" territories. In West Africa, this meant the end

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of the long Mossi isolation from European activity. In 1886, a German by the name of Krause became the first European to enter Ouagadougou. He left German-controlled Togoland and joined a caravan at Salaga in July 1886 with a load of kola nuts destined for Timbuktu. He arrived in the Mossi district of Bere sometime in August, and remained there long enough to observe that although this was the period of cultivation, there was a severe food shortage. The caravan proceeded to Ouagadougou and remained there until October, when it continued northward.[11] Krause reports that the journey through the Yatenga and Bandiagara region was uneventful, but that shortly after the caravan left Douentza, in December, he received word from the Mogho Naba to return to Ouagadougou immediately. Afraid to disobey, he returned to Ouagadougou in January 1887, tarried there for about two weeks, and then returned to the Gold Coast. Krause gives only a brief topographic description of Mossi country, and says little about the people and their society.[12] His visit might even be doubted, had Binger not visited Ouagadougou the following year and met the person at whose house Krause had lived.

In 1888 Binger left the French colony of Senegal with the sole purpose of reaching the Mossi and placing their country under the "protection" of France if this proved feasible. In many of the towns he passed through on his way to Mossi country, he encountered Mossi men trading slaves, salt, and kola nuts.[13] He also met a future Mossi ruler, Boukary Koutou, who was then in exile at Banema on the outskirts of the territory of Ouagadougou. Binger thought well of this prince, and described him as having "an honest countenance. His whole appearance denotes intelligence. He seems to be a just man, but firm in his resolutions."[14] Binger got better treatment from Boukary Koutou than he had from any other African ruler. He writes:

> Boukary Naba . . . treated me with plenty of good will, and had edibles and meat sent to me every day. . . . It is a great pity that I did not find Boukary Naba in power upon my arrival in Mossi country. It certainly would have facilitated my journey toward the Niger, and if he ever accedes to the throne, he will help with all the means at his disposal the European traveler who happens to pass through his country. This man has fine ideas; he loves progress, and will be well disposed to hear the counsel of the white man. Although his intelligence is higher than the average among blacks, he considers himself quite inferior to the European.[15]

Boukary Koutou further endeared himself to Binger by providing him with an escort so that he might reach the capital safely.

[643] In contrast, Binger was not impressed with Mogho Naba Sanum. He

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lamented the fact that when Mogho Naba Koutou died in 1850, the youthful Boukary Koutou had not been able to defeat his brother in the struggle for power. He voiced his disappointment with the town of Ouagadougou: 175* 177 643

> I expected to find something better than the ordinary royal residence in the Sudan, because everywhere I went people bragged to me about the riches of the chief and the number of his wives and eunuchs. I did not have to wait long to find out the true state of affairs, because that very evening I found that what was acknowledged as a palace and seraglio was nothing but a group of miserable huts surrounded by heaps of filth, and a group of straw huts which served as stables and lodgings for captives and *griots* [bards]. In the courtyard were cows, sheep, and donkeys, which had been brought that day as presents for the king, but which had not yet been presented to him.[16]

Binger did say that Sanum had treated him well and had allowed him to remain at Ouagadougou for over a month, but he was angered when the ruler refused to let him pass through Yatenga (which he claimed as part of his realm) to go to Timbuktu. Nor would Sanum consider his request to place the Mossi under French protection. Finally, Sanum sent him a message ordering him to leave the capital immediately. Binger asked the reason for this summary dismissal, and was informed that the Mogho Naba believed that he was an advance guard for Europeans who were coming from the south, and that he did not show sufficient respect for the ruler. Binger scoffed at the first charge, but later found out that a German column under Von François was indeed heading for the Mossi. He violently rejected the charge of disrespect. He states: 175* 177 643 648*

> I feel that a white man traveling in this country, whoever he may be, should not prostrate himself before a black king, however powerful the latter may be. It is necessary that a white man should inspire respect and consideration wherever he goes; for if the Europeans should ever come here, they should come as masters, as the superior class of the society, and not have to bow their heads before indigenous chiefs to whom they are definitely superior in all respects.[17]

Despite these personal sentiments, Binger was compelled to leave Ouagadougou. He stopped briefly to visit his friend Boukary Koutou, and proceeded to the Gold Coast.

For some reason, Von François and his expedition never reached Mossi country. He left Togoland in February 1888 with a sizable force, intending to establish German rule in the Niger bend area, but turned back at Surma on the Mossi border.[18] He was soon followed by numerous British missions from the Gold Coast, German missions from Togoland, and French missions from Dahomey and the Sudan. Marc states: "The three 175* 648*

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*175 *648 European powers established in the vicinity realized that by controlling the markets of the Mossi, they could become masters of all the commercial routes in the interior near the bend of the Niger River."[19] The French pursued a more aggressive policy than any other power, dispatching mission after mission to the Mossi. In August 1890, Crozat was sent "to establish friendly relations between the French Sudan and the Mossi."[20] When he reached Ouagadougou in September, he found that Boukary Koutou had succeeded his brother and was reigning as Mogho Naba Wobogo.

Crozat, like Binger, was disappointed by the appearance of the Mossi capital, which he describes in the following words: "Like the smallest of Mossi hamlets, the capital is but a village surrounded by fields, and except for the absence of forest vegetation, nothing would indicate to the traveler that this is a great center and the home of the sovereign."[21] Most European travelers in the Sudan were disappointed by the capitals of African states. They could not reconcile the glowing reports of the Africans with their own ideas of royal splendor. Crozat was even more disappointed with Boukary Koutou. He states:

*175 *648 643

> The king of Ouagadougou is the same Boukary Naba who was Binger's cordial host at Banema; but what I was told about him and what I saw a little later were two different things, and the difference was to the ruler's disadvantage. Binger knew him as friendly, dignified, simple, somewhat opportunistic, and showing very little displeasure at his brother and predecessor who had exiled him from Ouagadougou. I found myself in the presence of a monarch very proud of his newly obtained but long-hoped-for dignity (Boukary, in effect, became king at Ouagadougou only because his brother died without male issue). Yet he was timid, shaky, and lived confined to his palace with his servants and wives, not daring to go out. He spent his time consulting holy men who had him under their control and who used up the resources of the realm to contrive the oddest and most expensive charms in order to allay the ruler's fear that he would be assassinated.[22]

[789] [792]

Mogho Naba Wobogo did little to change Crozat's opinion of him. He hesitated to grant the Frenchman an interview because his councillors had advised against it. When Crozat was finally permitted to see the ruler, he told him:

> I was sent to you by the white chief who rules all the countries of the blacks from Bamako to Kayes, and from Fouta-Djallon to Kaarta. I have come in his name, and in the name of the ruler of all the French, to greet you and congratulate you on your ascension to the throne and to thank you for having received so well my countryman, the white man, who came to the Mossi two years ago. My superior has instructed me to remain with you for several days, so that you may have the opportunity to find out that whites will not harm you, and so that you may become our friend.[23]

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Wobogo thanked Crozat for coming to his country, and expressed his thanks to the chiefs who had sent him to Ouagadougou. But he refused to accept the gifts Crozat had proffered publicly. Crozat states, however, that the Mogho Naba sent a messenger to him explaining that he would accept the gifts if offered in secret, but could not accept them publicly because his ministers distrusted the Europeans. Crozat says that he complied with his host's wishes, and promised him more of "the kind of gifts that will be exchanged between two rich and powerful monarchs in mutual friendship."[24] Nevertheless, the Mossi ruler and his councillors showed by their behavior that they mistrusted the Frenchman. In trying to ascertain the nature of this mistrust, Crozat asked a servant of the king whether it was thought that Europeans would come to Mossi country if they felt that the Mogho Naba did not wish them to do so. The man replied that the monarch was being advised as follows: "The white men always act in the same way. . . . One of them always comes, and if he is well received, they come in large numbers; they establish themselves in the country; and where they establish themselves there are no more black rulers. It is they who rule."[25] The servant added that the Mogho Naba had replied that he was not afraid of the whites since his ancestors had all "died in bed." Crozat was reassured by the ruler's reply.

The Mogho Naba did not grant Crozat another audience, however, until he had stated his intention to leave Mossi country. Then Wobogo sent a messenger to tell him he could come to the palace and discuss any affair he wished before he left. Crozat appeared at court, and, acknowledging the strength of the opposition, attempted to counter its charges with feigned anger and guile:

> I do not have any affairs to discuss; for all that I had to say to you I said during the first meeting. I am not a merchant come here to sell, or to buy. I am a chief, as you can see from the attendants who escort me. I was sent to greet you in the name of the white men who are in the West, and to ask you to be our friend. If you wish to be our friend, that will be good for us, and our chief will be happy to have a great king like you as a friend. I think that such an agreement will be equally good for you. Our merchants will bring you the money and the goods you lack, and you will give us in return those things which you have in excess. Such are the relations that will be established between the Mossi and the French. Our ruler will often send you as gifts the wonderful things we make, and this exchange will make us both greater, richer, and stronger.
>
> There may be some who are trying to prevent you from becoming our friend, saying that we are evil and bad. Those who speak like that are liars. Have you heard of any evil I have done, even to a child, since I came to the Mossi or during my trip? Have you heard of any maltreatment on our part

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> of those chiefs whom we like, in those countries on the other side of the Niger which have been given to us? Perhaps people will tell you again that everywhere we go, we change everything and wish to be the only masters. Have we changed something in Kenedougou, whose *fama* [chief] has been our friend for a long time? We have, it is true, deposed Ahmadou of Segou, but he waged war upon us, and Segou is not his. . . .

The Mogho Naba listened to Crozat in silence and later sent a servant to him with an equally diplomatic message:

> The Mogho Naba is very happy that you came, and thanks the chiefs who sent you; he wishes to declare his friendship with the white men who are in the West, especially with the French. He will see them with pleasure when they come again to the Mossi. They will be well received by us. . . . The chief declares his alliance and friendship with the French. . . . He will be pleased to see other Frenchmen come here, provided that they are not too numerous. As for your black traders and French merchants, they can come and trade with the Mossi in all security: he will not maltreat them.
>
> On his part, the chief will send his people to trade in your possessions. As for you . . . you are now free to depart whenever you wish, and by whichever route you choose. The chief will give you four men to accompany you to the border.[26]

In his report to his superiors, Crozat suggests that the widespread belief in the Mossi immunity to attack by neighboring populations is based on imperfect knowledge of their actual strength and fighting ability. He questions the Mogho Naba's riches and power, declares that "he does not have an army," and concludes by stating that the commoners are exploited by their rulers and by the Moslem holy men and "would welcome the Europeans as rulers." He thus shows quite clearly that the Mossi were correct in viewing him as an enemy.[27] Marc, who had no reason to be hostile to Crozat, commented: "It seems to us that Crozat is somewhat unfair in his notes on the indigenous culture of the Mossi. It is possible that the total failure of his mission made him rather intolerant."[28]

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Crozat was followed the next year by another French emissary, Lt.-Col. P. L. Monteil. The chief of Yako detained him briefly on the advice of a Moslem who had had unpleasant experiences with Europeans. When Monteil finally reached Ouagadougou and asked for an audience with the Mogho Naba, he was informed that the ruler would not see him and had given orders for him to be expelled from the country. Monteil had no recourse but to leave, but he made this observation: "One important result of this journey augurs well for the future. We were able to travel throughout Mossi country without difficulty."[29] He made a careful survey of the country which was used to good effect by his countrymen five years later.

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Meanwhile, the British were not idle. Their emissaries were traveling all through the northern section of the Gold Coast, making alliances with, and in some cases subjugating, the local rulers. One such emissary, George Ferguson, referred to as "a mulatto from Sierra Leone," worked extensively in the north from 1884 until 1897, when he was killed fighting at Wa.[20] He was at Ouagadougou in December 1894. From a Frenchman who sought to discredit him, we have this report of his activities:

> He drew up before [Ouagadougou] with several soldiers. The entry refused to several French political missions which had preceded him was accorded to him because he declared that he had come to trade. When Ferguson saw the chief before leaving Ouagadougou, he expressed his wish to aid him in a war he was fighting against the people of the district of Lale, and offered him "an object which was to ensure victory." This object was a flag to which Ferguson had pinned a roll of paper: the flag was to be shown to the rebels of Lale, and the paper to the whites who would undoubtedly arrive at Ouagadougou sooner or later. The chief found a use for these two objects right away. The diplomatic instrument was buried in the old trunk of a councillor from which it was eventually retrieved, and the flag was used as a skirt for the head wife of the ruler. . . . Such is the singular procedure whereby Ferguson "established" English influence among the Mossi.[21]

There is still some argument about whether the Mogho Naba knew that this paper was a treaty, and whether he actually signed a treaty "of friendship and freedom of commerce" with Ferguson. In any case, the document terminated with the words: "Signed at Wagadougou, the 2nd July 1894, between Her Gracious Majesty Victoria, Queen, etc., her heirs and successors, represented by her loyal subject George Ekem Ferguson, an officer in the Gold Coast civil service acting by virtue of the special instructions of His Excellency [Sir William E. Maxwell] the officer in charge of the government of the same colony; and the king, chiefs, and principal notables of the Mossi."[22] The discrepancy between the July date and Ferguson's actual visit in December shows quite plainly that the treaty had been drawn up before he left the coast for Mossi country. One must conclude, therefore, that Ferguson, like other European agents of the period, was dishonest. Nevertheless, as we shall see, the Mossi did claim that the treaty had been accepted voluntarily.

In the following year, the French again sent an envoy from Dahomey to make a treaty with the Mossi. This man, Alby, even sought the aid of the Mossi Crown Prince at Djiba, but was turned back not more than twenty-five miles from the capital.[23] During that year, the race to Mossi country was intensified. The French sent Decoeur, Band, and Vermeersh; the English, Lugard; and the Germans, Gruner, Von Karnap, and Von Zech.

*175 *648 None of these men reached Ouagadougou, however, and no treaties were signed.[54]

The events that eventually led to the fall of the Mossi had already occurred two years earlier in the Sudan, even before the last group of European agents tried to reach Mossi country. In 1893, the French defeated Ahmadou, the sultan of the Toucouleur, and captured Bandiagara, just *175 north of Mossi country. Thus, when civil war broke out in Yatenga be- *648 tween Naba Baongo and a rebel noble, Bagare, the French were near enough to take advantage of the situation. Baongo journeyed to Bandi- 669 agara and sought the aid of France against his enemy. The French commander, Destenave, desiring to place the country under French protection and not wishing to become involved in local dynastic rivalries, tried to reconcile all the dissident elements. The Yatenga ruler rejected this offer and launched an attack against Bagare, but was killed during the ensuing battle. Bagare then became Yatenga Naba. Soon afterward, he became embroiled in a civil war with rival princes of the royal house and sought help from Destenave, who, according to Tauxier, "was awaiting an opportunity such as this to take a decisive action, which, starting with Yatenga, would have annexed all Mossi areas to our other Sudanese possessions."[55] In May 1895, the French troops accompanied Bagare to Yatenga, defeated the rebels, reinstalled him in the sacred town of Gourcy, and placed his *175 realm under the protection of France. While still in Yatenga, Destenave allegedly sent a message to the ruler of Ouagadougou asking him to sign *648 a treaty with France. Mogho Naba Wobogo reportedly replied:

> I had the oracles consulted a long time ago, and they all answered that if I should see a white man, I would be a dead man. I know that the whites want me to die in order to take my country. And besides, you (my friend) pretend that they are coming to help me organize my country. But I find my country very good as it is. I have absolutely no need of them; I know what is good for me, and what I need. Also, you should consider yourself fortunate that I am not having your head cut off. Away with you, then, and, above all, do not return.[56]

Destenave ignored this reply and pushed southward to the Ouagadougou territories. His small force met with such resistance at Yako that he returned to his base at Bandiagara. Shortly afterward he returned to Paris and appealed to Colonial Minister Delcassé to send a strong military force to occupy Say (on the Niger River), Mossi country, and the surrounding area, and subject them to a military administration. Before Destenave could return, however, the commander of the Sudan, Lt.-Col. Trentinian, ordered Lt. Voulet to prepare the way for the occupation of Mossi country.[57]

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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With his staff, African infantry, cavalry, and bearers, Voulet left Bandiagara in July 1896 to conquer the Mossi and Gurunsi territories. As the column entered Yatenga it was hailed by Bagare, who had again been chased from his capital by rebel forces. Voulet allowed him to join the invading force, and together they proceeded to Gourcy.[38] According to French sources, the Mossi army offered only token resistance, and the people deserted their villages as the column advanced.[39] In contrast, local tradition states that the Mossi fought valiantly, and that heroes entrenched themselves along the way to die at their posts. However, the French eventually routed the defenders and reinstalled Bagare at Gourcy. Voulet then proceeded to Yako, and the population fled. After capturing this town, Voulet proceeded to Ouagadougou.

175* 648* [669]

The events leading to the capture of the Mossi capital are not clear, because the official sources and the information culled from the memories of witnesses differ a great deal. Noll reports that Voulet sent an emissary to Mogho Naba Wobogo demanding the surrender of the town, and that the emissary was whipped for bringing bad news to the ruler and sent back to Voulet with a rejection of his demand. In the words of Noll, "That insult was immediately punished, and that same evening the French flag flew above the walls of Ouagadougou."[40]

One Mossi version, as related by Dim Delobson, is that a man named Seddo met Voulet's column and, after acting as its guide until nightfall, ran off and notified Mogho Naba Wobogo that the column would arrive at Ouagadougou the following day. The ruler's ministers then held a conference. Some of them counseled him to await the French and show them the flags and the treaty of protection they had received from the British. Others feared that if the Mogho Naba waited for the French, they might seize him, maltreat him, humiliate him before all the people, and probably kill him. They advised him to leave the country. Wobogo decided to be prudent and fled the capital.[41]

According to another tradition, a Moslem from Bere district who had been to Mecca and who had encountered Europeans told Wobogo that it would be folly for the Mossi to try to fight the gun-bearing invaders, and that he should either surrender or flee. The Tansoba who heard this statement became so angry that he wanted to kill the speaker. He declared that no man could enter Mossi country without the ruler's permission, and he swore to die before this happened. However, the other councillors persuaded Wobogo to leave the capital.

[645]

Dim Delobson states that Voulet arrived at Ouagadougou with his column in September 1896, and sent a former Gurunsi slave of the Mossi with

*175 *648 eight soldiers to reconnoiter the town. (This slave might be the emissary referred to by Noll.) The people who had gathered for the market day were unaware that an attack on the capital was imminent, and were frightened when they saw the soldiers. A deaf man named Wanda, who was a tax collector in the market, went home for his gun and his horse in the belief that the Mogho Naba's army was on the march. He went out to meet the French and was killed. Later that day the Mossi army, under the command of Koabga, the Kamsaogho Naba, and the Tansoba, launched an attack on the invaders. Their flint guns, spears, clubs, and poisoned arrows were powerless against superior French arms. Dim Delobson states that when the French guns began to fire, "It was a thorough stampede; all tried to save themselves and fled in all directions. Some of them, in their pre-
[645] cipitous flight, even rode past their homes and villages." According to local tradition, one of the first persons to run was the Tansoba, who had once pledged to defend the Mogho Naba to the death. About five o'clock that afternoon, the French flag flew over Wobogo's palace.[43] The Mogho Naba and his army did not regroup until they reached a village called Bagare, some 25 miles southeast of the capital.

Three days later, Wobogo marched back toward Ouagadougou at the head of a large army in an attempt to crush the relatively few enemy soldiers. But Voulet's men chased him toward the south. It was either during this battle or after he returned from the pursuit of Wobogo that Voulet burned Ouagadougou to punish its inhabitants for helping their sovereign. Meanwhile, Wobogo had regrouped his forces, and although Voulet pursued him and burned Mane and Boussouma, where the sovereign had sought refuge, Wobogo fled rather than sign a treaty with the invaders. This attitude surprised and annoyed Voulet, who is quoted as saying:

> Although we represent peace, safety, security on the trade routes, and thus ease of communication . . . nothing could prevail against their fear that in accepting us, they would also have to accept the suppression of slavery: the principal activity around which everything revolves in this backward country. The majority of the population are kept well in hand [by their chiefs]. Although the central power (I speak of the authority of the chief of Ouagadougou vis-à-vis the other chiefs, his vassals) is *relatively* weak, each of these vassals, on the other hand, is thoroughly obeyed in his own territory. There is not one village chief who would dare to receive us if his superior forbade him to do so. We are told that if anyone permitted himself such a liberty, he would have his head cut off the moment our backs were turned.[44]

After being routed by Voulet's forces for the second time, the Mogho
[701] Naba sent requests for aid to many of the autonomous Dimdamba and to his district chiefs. The Dim of Boulsa sent an army under the command

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of his prime minister, Rimsekedo, and the chiefs of the districts of Bere, Djiba, Manga, Nobere, and Rissouma led their armies to join the royal forces at a rallying point near the White Volta River. Meanwhile, Voulet had expended most of his supplies in trying to bring Wobogo to terms. Having failed to do so, he tried to solve the problems of Mossi government by electing Wobogo's younger brother, Mazi, as ruler of Ouagadougou and emperor of the Mossi. Voulet then marched off to his base at Bandiagara by way of the White Volta, hoping to catch and defeat Wobogo's forces along the way. The monarch fled at Voulet's approach, so that when the forces of Rimsekedo and of the district chiefs arrived at the rendezvous, "they found only the droppings of Wobogo's horses," and angrily returned home. Naba Kaglere, chief of Nobere, was allegedly so infuriated by Wobogo's cowardice that he withdrew his support from his sovereign. However, the chiefs of Djiba and Rissouma remained faithful to their ruler, and the Dim of Mane attempted to intercept Voulet's advance toward Bandiagara, only to be defeated by the French, who burned his villages.

When Wobogo heard that the enemy had left the country, he ordered that the roof of his palace be restored, resumed his traditional duties such as appointing to office the heirs of district chiefs who had died during his absence, and prepared to return to the capital. In the interim Mazi had died (under suspicious circumstances, according to the French), thus leaving the people of Ouagadougou without a ruler and eager for Wobogo's return.[44] Unfortunately for the Mogho Naba, Voulet unexpectedly returned to Ouagadougou in December 1896, thus preventing Wobogo's return. Voulet, too, was in a predicament, for he had few allies among the Mossi, and Wobogo was firmly entrenched near Kombissiri in the south. To prevent many chiefs from coming to the aid of their sovereign, Voulet immediately launched an offensive against Wobogo. He burned several villages along the way, and received the allegiance of Wobogo's two brothers, Tarbega and Mahmadou, of two of his sons, and of two of his important vassals, the Mane Naba and the Boussouma Naba. But he failed to find the sovereign, who had fled to the region of Djiba and Nobere. Voulet then turned back to Ouagadougou, which he reached about a month later, in January 1897. On the following day, the Ouidi Naba surrendered, and two days later the Tansoba followed suit. Voulet now formally deposed Mogho Naba Wobogo. A week later, he obtained the permission and cooperation of the traditional electors and placed Wobogo's brother Mahmadou on the throne as Mogho Naba Sighiri. This sovereign then "solemnly signed a treaty which placed his kingdom under the protection of France."[45]

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*175 Voulet left Ouagadougou in February to establish French control
*648 among the Gurunsi, leaving a military commander, Captain Scal, and a Resident Officer at Ouagadougou. But he acted without taking into account the resourcefulness of Wobogo (now once more Boukary Koutou), who
[645] had gained the allegiance of chiefs in the Manga area. The Gounga Naba,
[634] who was provincial minister for that region, tried to gain the support of the Djiba and Rissouma districts for Mogho Naba Sighiri. He failed, and or-
[669] dered the troops of Garanse, Nobere, Toise, and Yake districts to attack Boukary Koutou's supporters. In the ensuing battle the Gounga Naba's forces lost nine men, the rebels ten. The Gounga Naba considered these losses too high and called off the fighting.[46]

*175 Meanwhile, Boukary Koutou had sent an appeal to Steward, the com-
*648 mander of a British force that was then on its march of conquest through Gambaga and that had designs on Ouagadougou, "for protection in virtue
643 of the treaty concluded with Mr. Ferguson in 1894." Wishing to avoid conflict with the British, Voulet hastened to Tenkodogo in February 1897 to meet Steward, and the two men established boundaries between the French and British spheres of influence. Boukary Koutou was thus left to fend for himself.[47] Undaunted, he crossed the Gold Coast frontier once more and proceeded toward Ouagadougou. Scal heard about his activities and decided to launch an attack against him. He took Boukary Koutou by surprise in June 1897, and forced him to flee. Boukary passed through Bere district and arrived in the Gold Coast, where he was granted refuge by the British. About a year later, he convinced a Colonel Northcott that he had been unjustly deposed by the French, and that under the treaty of 1894 the British were his protectors and were obliged to restore him to his throne. In May 1898, a British force under Northcott and with Boukary Koutou in tow arrived at Kombissiri, some twenty-five miles from Ouagadougou, but here they were met by French emissaries who brought with them copies of the treaty of protection signed by Sighiri in January 1897. The British troops retreated, taking the dejected ruler with them into permanent exile.[48] Boukary reportedly settled at Zangoiri, a few miles from Gambaga.[49] He was forbidden to enter Gambaga because of the tradition that if he ever saw the Gambaga ruler, both of them would die. Boukary never returned to Mossi country. He died and was buried in the Gold Coast in 1904, but his funeral was held at Ouagadougou.[50]

Boukary Koutou is seen in retrospect as a tragic figure, whose main fault seems to have been that he ruled at the most difficult time in his country's history. Judging by his treatment of Binger, he appears to have
[173] been a clever politician, but his resources were of no avail against the

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superior might of the French. Like many other African groups, the Mossi have now evolved traditions to account for his fall and for the conquest of their country. They say that Wobogo lost his realm because he was a cruel ruler. According to the Mossi, he executed the noble retainers of Djiba in whose care his heir had died. But most important, the Mossi believe that Boukary was destined to lose his country to foreigners. According to one tradition, a holy man warned the ruler of Tenkodogo that an evil child who would bring harm to the country would be born into his house unless his birth was prevented by oblations to the ancestors. The Tenkodogo Naba made the necessary sacrifices, and the tragedy was averted. The holy man then went to Ouagadougou and gave the same warning to Mogho Naba Koutou. Koutou replied that he was the direct descendant of Ouedraogo and Oubri, and that no child of his could bring harm to the patrimony of the royal ancestors. He made no sacrifices, and a child who had "two teeth like the tusks of an elephant" was born into his house. This child, Boukary Koutou, was disrespectful of his father and made war against his brother, and was eventually defeated by the French.

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X

MOSSI GOVERNMENT DURING THE COLONIAL PERIOD

*175 171 *648 In an effort to undermine the power of the Mossi chiefs, change the traditional Mossi administration, and incorporate the Mossi territories into the colonial complex, the French attempted to weaken the structure of the Mossi political organization. They tried at first to apply their policy of *assimilation*, which was characterized by direct rule and by "giving the colonies institutions analogous to those of metropolitan France, [which] little by little removes the distances that separate the diverse parts of French territory and finally realizes their intimate union through the application of common legislation."[1]

The French attitude toward the Mossi political organization and its chiefs is clearly defined in the instructions Commander Destenave gave to Captain Scal for the administration of a territory that had not yet been brought completely under French control. Destenave writes:

> We have no interest in strengthening the power that is regarded as central, nor in increasing the power of the various Nabas; on the contrary, we must look for points of stress which will permit us to divide the country, and thus preclude any coalitions against us. . . . In so doing, the authority of the Mogho Naba itself will be weakened, because we can easily acknowledge the independence of these great [princes] and free them from his influence. This is an excellent measure from a political standpoint; for we must not lose sight of the fact that we have no interest in strengthening the power of the central authority. On the contrary, we must encourage as much as possible the tendency of the great chiefs (vassals) to break the last bonds that still attach them to Ouagadougou. This is the course which has been followed by the Resident Officer. It has produced excellent results, and the requested taxes have come in regularly. In future, we should seize every opportunity to weaken the authority of these vassals by declaring the independence of the villages under their command. Just recently, the chiefs of Coundiri and Tema were removed from under the command of the Yako chief, and are now under the direct command of the Resident.[2]

At first the Mossi resisted all changes in their political organization and all demands for foodstuffs, information about their territories, and laborers.[3]

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laborers.[8] In desperation, the French sought help from those very chiefs 177
whose power they wished to curb, especially from the Mogho Naba of 648*
Ouagadougou, whom they regarded as the supreme ruler of the Mossi. 643
However, they met with the same resistance:

> The king of the Mossi, Kouka Naba [Mogho Naba Sighiri], is lavish with vows of devotion and fidelity, but these vows are never translated into action. It is impossible to obtain from him any pertinent information about the country—he tries to give the impression that he knows nothing about it—or any information about Boukary Koutou [then in exile, but still a threat to the French], of whom he pretends to have no news.[9]

One cannot tell whether the Mogho Naba knew about Boukary Koutou's activities, but it is highly unlikely that he could have given the French much information about the country even if he had wished to do so. No Mogho Naba ever possessed this kind of information. The Dimdamba and [631]
the Kombemba paid allegiance and tribute to their superior ruler, but did [651]
not furnish him with specific data on their principalities and districts.

The death of Mogho Naba Sighiri in 1905 enabled the French officials 175*
to secure the election of a Mogho Naba they could control and to change 177
the Mossi political organization. Sighiri's principal heir was his sixteen- 643
year-old son, Saidou Congo, who in the opinion of the Mossi electoral 648*
college "could not keep the country" because of his youth. The French, keenly aware that they could more easily control a young ruler, insisted that Saidou be given the nam, and he became Mogho Naba Kom. Two years later, in 1907, the French began to reorganize the kingdom of Ouagadougou and the surrounding territories. They suppressed certain districts and principalities, enlarged some, and unified others by granting them control over the smaller political entities that lay near or within their boundaries. These changes were often made without regard for the traditional hierarchies, and many district chiefs found themselves controlling other district chiefs, while Dimdamba were reduced to the level of district chiefs.

The French also reorganized the provincial administration, replacing 175*
the five ministers with persons more favorably disposed toward their rule. 177
The Larhalle Naba was replaced in 1908 after he had mysteriously left the 648*
capital for Koudougou. The Kamsaogho Naba was deposed by the Mogho 645
Naba, and was replaced by a nominee of the French. As in the case of the district chiefs, the French shifted the territorial responsibilities of these ministers "without taking into consideration the hierarchy prevailing among [them]. The intention of the administration apparently was to reward certain young and capable ministers to the detriment of those who were old."[10] One commentator concludes: "In view of the youth of the

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175 reigning king, Naba Kom, and also owing to certain difficulties, the ad-
177 ministration was compelled to grant more authority to the five great min-
* 648 isters and to make them true provincial chiefs with whom it could deal and
[645] who would govern their territories directly."[6]

Some of the demoted chiefs and their followers opposed these changes. In 1910, they refused to pay taxes and fought the police. However, they were forced to accept the changes when the police burned their villages, seized their goods and animals to pay the taxes, and deposed uncooperative chiefs. These harsh measures so shocked the Mossi that they remained docile from that time onward, and thereafter the French were able to rule the country with one European administrator for every 60,000 Mossi.[7]

Once the French officials had put down the opposition to their policies of control and had succeeded in installing loyal provincial administrators, they sought to bring Mossi country into the political structure they were creating in West Africa. In 1895, they had installed a Governor-General at Dakar to represent the French Government in the territories of Senegal, the French Sudan, French Guinea, and the Ivory Coast. With the subsequent conquest of Mossi country and other areas, however, this arrangement became obsolete, and a decree was passed in October 1899, dividing the French Sudan in two. One half was attached to the coastal colonies. The other half was combined with the Voltaic region (which included Mossi country), declared a military territory, and placed under the direct control of the Governor-General. In 1900 Niger was also made into a military territory, and two years later, by a decree of October 1902, a new territory called Sénégambie-Niger was set up which included Mossi country. This new arrangement lasted only two years. It was superseded by a decree of October 1904 dismembering Sénégambie-Niger and creating, among others, a territory called Haut-Sénégal et Niger, which included Mossi country. This new colony was similar to the others in that it had its own administration (at Bamako), its own budget, and a Lieutenant-Governor responsible to the Governor-General at Dakar. The territory was divided into administrative units called *cercles*, each with a commander responsible to the Lieutenant-Governor. Each cercle commander was assisted by adjutants who served in smaller units called *subdivisions* and *postes*. Mossi country itself was divided into three cercles: Ouagadougou (including Tenkodogo), Ouahigouya (including Yatenga), and Fada-N'-Gourma. This territorial change was the last to affect the Mossi until the end of World War I.[8]

[651] The implementation of full colonial rule among the Mossi was to have a profound effect on their traditional political organization and on the

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relationship between the people and their chiefs. One of the principal contributing factors was the demand of the French administration that Mossi country not only share in the over-all development of French West Africa, but pay for its own administration as well. The resources of Mossi country were largely limited to agricultural production and stock raising, however, and revenue from these activities was slight. The full weight of administrative expenses thus fell on the Mossi people. Apparently, the first taxation was of a collective nature, for according to the official government report for June 1899, "No regular tax has been levied, but taxes have been collected from the Mogho Naba and the other chiefs."[9]

Decrees of July and November, 1903, authorized "native chiefs to collect taxes, and granted them a commission on the tax yield to arouse their interest in the regular payment of taxes."[10] Accustomed as they were to giving taxes (gifts) to their rulers with the knowledge that subordinate chiefs would extract a share before sending the remainder up the hierarchy, the Mossi were not averse to paying taxes through their traditional rulers to the "new chiefs," the French administration. However, when taxes grew to excessive proportions and chiefs continued to get a percentage, the people accused their rulers of cheating them. The reasons for the Mossi complaints about taxation are described by Tauxier, himself an administrator:

> This tax, light at first, has grown rapidly over the last few years. In 1906 it was 311,000 francs for the territory of Ouagadougou, which had a population of 861,000 inhabitants. In 1907, the tax was raised to 360,000 francs; in 1909, to 555,000 francs; and in 1910, to 656,000 francs. Furthermore, from 1908 onward this tax was exacted with such rigor and on such short notice that it was exactly as though the amount had been tripled. Under the circumstances, the Mossi were compelled to resort to trade in order to obtain the French money they did not have, since the local currency is the cowry and the French administration does not wish to receive it. . . . To meet this difficult situation the Mossi now organize small caravans in the villages, and send the young men to Wanke to sell cattle, sheep, goats, asses, horses, and bolts of cotton. They bring back with them either French money or kola nuts.[11]

Many Mossi had a great deal of difficulty in securing French currency. Mangin, a White Father who arrived in Mossi country in 1904, writes:

> The Europeans who live among the Mossi, including all the riflemen and cercle guards, do not put into circulation a quarter of the five-franc pieces that are required each year from the natives. At first the Mossi were taken by surprise and had to give 10,000 or even 15,000 cowries to obtain this famous coin, this charm which was to free them from all difficulties with the white man. At the official rate of exchange this coin is worth 5,000 cowries.[12]

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*175 What Mangin referred to euphemistically as "difficulties with the white
177 man" was, to the Mossi, rather drastic punishment for non-payment of
*648 taxes. If a man refused to pay his taxes, the Mossi chief was permitted to
651 sequester his goods and sell them. If the man had neither the taxes nor the goods, the chief had to send him and his wife (or wives) to the administrative post to be punished. Sometimes, a man and his wife would be made to look at the sun from sunrise to sunset while intoning the prayer *Ouennam co mam ligidi* ("God, give me money"). Other times, a man would be made to run around the administrative post with his wife on his back; if he had several wives, he had to take each one in turn. Then his wife or wives had to carry him around. The Mossi claim that a man had
[801] to run around the post three times, and his wife four. This is probably an exaggeration, however, because the numbers 3 and 4 are symbolically associated with men and women, respectively.

*175 A further source of difficulty for the Mossi chiefs, and one which be-
177 came more serious as time went by, was that they were charged by the
*648 administration to recruit men for both labor and military service. Initially,
464 the chiefs had to supply men to transport grain for the French-organized agricultural societies from one region to another; later, they were commanded to supply labor for private and public works. Labouret states:

> The initial recruitment, which took place in 1912, was carried out without any difficulty, thanks to the unexpected afflux of volunteers. This was not the case in subsequent years. The reason for this was that the credulous natives
[776] of these distant regions, lacking any contact with the world, believed that the Europeans were carrying off their most robust youths to sell them to the Men of the Sea [mythical cannibalistic beings].[13]

[165] The Mossi were alarmed at the high rate of mortality among the young men who went away to work. They had a saying, *Nansara toumde di Mossi*
*175 ("White man's work eats [kills] people"), and resisted the recruiting attempts of their chiefs. There was, however, less opposition to recruit-
177 ment for military service, owing in part to the Mossi tradition of warfare.
*648 Many Mossi youths served in France during World War I, and additional hundreds served in an African contingent recruited "by an administrator named d'Arboussier, and with the cooperation of the Mogho Naba, to take possession of northern Togoland."[14]

The manner in which the Mossi chiefs administered their territories before the First World War was conditioned by the colonial administrators even when it was not directly controlled by them. The Mogho Naba had
[643] gradually lost most of his power, and he had no authority to act without the specific authorization of the French. He retained most of his cere-

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monial activities, especially since they were considered interesting "feudal" anachronisms to be shown to visiting officials and travelers. He also retained the power to appoint district chiefs, but the French often vetoed men they disliked and suggested that other candidates be elected. He also lost all control over his provincial administrators. The administrative chain now extended from the cercle commanders, through the provincial ministers and district chiefs, down to the village chiefs. Many provincial ministers, out of loyalty to the traditional system, occasionally briefed the Mogho Naba on the policies the French had ordered them to carry out, and told him about the state of affairs in the districts. This was completely unofficial if not illegal, but it made little difference to the French.

One serious blow to the power of the Mossi chiefs, especially on the district level, was their loss of judicial autonomy. Mossi country was subjected to the Indigénat, a rather harsh code of law for new colonies, which was promulgated by a decree of September 1887. Under this code, administrators could hold summary trials and punish any Moaga, whether chief or commoner. In June 1905, the Mossi chiefs regained some of their judicial power when a supplementary decree established village, district, and cercle courts throughout Haut-Sénégal et Niger.[18] Mossi village chiefs regained their police powers and the right to reconcile disputes among their people, but their decisions could be appealed to a district court. The district chief heard appeals and judged civil and criminal cases, but in all deliberations he was aided by two assessors appointed by the Governor. His judgment could be appealed to a cercle court, which was presided over by a European, who was assisted by two Africans. They heard appeals and judged crimes for which the penalty could be no more than five years. Penalties handed down by this court could be appealed to the Supreme Court of the Federation of French West Africa in Dakar, which judged all major crimes.

Thus the Mossi chiefs did regain part of their judicial power; but because the decree of 1905 did not abolish the Indigénat, local French administrators could easily countermand this power. Moreover, some administrators, dissatisfied with the Mossi courts and possibly resentful at their own loss of judicial power, sent numerous complaints to Dakar about the incompetence of the chiefs and the injustices perpetrated by village and district courts. As a result, a decree of August 1912 abolished the judicial power of the Mossi and of all other African chiefs, and instructed them to refer all litigation to courts at the poste, subdivision, and cercle levels.[19]

During the period before the First World War, the Mossi chiefs lost not only their judicial power but also much of the economic and religious basis of their political power. The French administration abolished slavery

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175 and serfdom, and discouraged the various corvées performed by the people
177 for their chiefs on the ground that the chiefs gained sufficient income from
*648 tax commissions. What really undermined the economic position of the Mossi chiefs, however, was the abolition of the religio-political practices and ceremonies that provided the rulers with substantial income, while reinforcing the traditional political system. The French permitted Mossi chiefs to celebrate the Basgha, but abolished the Tense with its revenue-producing Soretasgho ritual on the ground that it exploited the local population. The Mossi chiefs could no longer authorize the Tengsobadamba to appropriate sacrificial animals from the villages to propitiate capricious deities. But some chiefs, taking quite seriously the concept that they were the "fathers" of their people, and had been selected for the nam because of their ability to care for their subjects, provided these animals or covertly permitted their servants to seize them and turn them over to the Tengsobadamba.

At the end of World War I, the French administration tried to establish a new policy toward the Mossi chiefs, but new economic programs that were implemented at the same time rendered these plans ineffective and further undermined the old institutions. A new Governor-General of French West Africa, Joost Van Vollenhoven, strongly influenced by one of his predecessors, Merleau-Ponty, and by the policy of *association* between France and her colonies (a policy based on the idea that colonial policy should be determined by the geographic and ethnic characteristics and the level of social development of the regions involved), advocated respect for the chiefs and for strong traditional political systems. Van Vollenhoven stipulated that the chiefs should not be harried by administrators, subjected to corporal punishment, or legally prosecuted without the sanction of higher officials (cercle commanders and lieutenant-governors). They should be granted higher salaries and help for agricultural labor, and should be shown techniques for improving their material well-being. They should also be decorated more often with the Legion of Honor, in order to heighten their prestige and to demonstrate "French generosity." Their relatives should be educated, given prestige and remuneration, and permitted to retain some status.[17]

The colonial economic policy that was to subvert Van Vollenhoven's political concepts and adversely affect the Mossi chiefs was outlined by Albert Sarraut, the postwar French Colonial Minister, who drew up an ingenious plan (*La Mise en valeur des colonies françaises*) to foster the development of railroads, wharves, roads, plantations, and other enterprises in every colony.[18] In contrast to Van Vollenhoven, Sarraut believed that

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economic development should take precedence over everything else in the colonies. The Mossi were to be directly affected by the policies of both Van Vollenhoven and Sarraut. The colony of Haut-Sénégal et Niger was suppressed in March 1919, and replaced by the new colony of Upper Volta, in which the Mossi were the chief ethnic group. Moreover, Ouagadougou was chosen as the administrative center of this new colony.[19]

The new Governor of the Upper Volta, Edouard Hesling, who arrived in Ouagadougou in November 1919, sympathized with Van Vollenhoven's views, but was even more interested in economic development. He was determined to transform Ouagadougou from a small town with an indigenous population of about 8,000 and some 76 European soldiers, merchants, and missionaries, into a capital worthy of a colony. Shortly after he arrived, he summoned the Mogho Naba and the traditional ministers and had them recruit some 2,000 salaried and unsalaried men to provide enough mud bricks and wooden beams to complete the construction of eleven administrative buildings before the rainy season began the following May.

Hesling and his administrators believed that the Upper Volta, a country "with such diverse products and such a dense population, could attain an exceptional level of development by acquiring those economic elements which ensure prosperity."[20] Cotton was one of those elements. They believed that the Upper Volta "can and should export thousands of tons as soon as an easy and economical way of shipping is established."[21] By 1925, Hesling had constructed 6,000 kilometers of roads in the Upper Volta, about one-eighth the entire road network of French West Africa. Travelers in the Upper Volta at this time wrote of "the enforced enthusiasm with which the natives, under M. E. Hesling, have thrown themselves into agricultural labor and in particular into the planting of cotton."[22]

The administration of the Upper Volta continued to furnish Mossi manpower for the development of the other colonies as well as for the colonial army. In 1922, it was asked to furnish "6,000 workers for the Thies-Kayes railway, renewable every six months; and under the same conditions to furnish 2,000 laborers to build the railways in the Ivory Coast. Similarly, with the consent of the chief administrator of the colony, it was possible to recruit a thousand workers in the regions of Ouagadougou and Bobo-Dioulasso for private business in the Ivory Coast."[23] Londres, who visited the Upper Volta in the late 1920's, reports that Mossi country was known as "a 'reservoir' of manpower."[24] Burthe d'Annelet reports that during this same period, "The Minister of War [took] 45,000 men each year to compensate for the weakness of our metropolitan recruitment, and

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*177 648 to cut down the length of service of our draftees as much as possible."[25] The Governor of the Upper Volta made full use of the Mossi chiefs to develop the colony, and although some chiefs may have objected to the labor imposed on their subjects, others seemingly approved. In commenting upon cotton production in the Upper Volta, Ossendowski writes:

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> Cotton is an artificial crop and one the value of which is not entirely clear to the natives. The chiefs with their superior intellect, seeing the profit to be obtained from the plantation of cotton, are continually enlarging the area of the fields, and resort to draft animals, ploughs, manures, and even partial irrigation of the fields; nevertheless, the great mass of the population submit rather unwillingly to those instructions of the administration which aim at the development of cotton cultivation in the colony.[26]

[631] Delavignette's comment on the role of the chiefs in cotton production seems to indicate that they, like their subjects, had to conform to the desires of the French:

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> [The French] lived at Ouagadougou in the shade of the great Nabas, and because [the latter] possessed servitors and were at the head of docile provinces, [the French] dignified by the name of "custom," and in any case adjudged convenient, this domestication of the peasants whereby they were forced to work in a common field under the authority of the village chief, and for a salary which was theoretically to be distributed among them afterwards. Sometimes cercle guards were stationed in these fields.[27]

*175 177 *648 631 The Governor carried out many of Van Vollenhoven's reforms concerning the Mossi chiefs, and instructed his district administrators to respect the chiefs and to seek their aid in governing the people. De Beauminy, an administrator in the Upper Volta, contrasts the old policy with the new:

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> Not without reason, we followed the rule of regarding the great black chiefs as exploiters of their peoples, and this caused us to introduce and to maintain a policy aimed at reducing their authority. Later on we were compelled to abandon this policy in the face of discouraging results. During the past few years we have restored power and prestige to the Mogho Naba and to his vassals, the Mossi chiefs. They are now paid by us, and they administer their kingdoms and territories under our guidance and under the supervision of an extremely small European staff (one official for every 60,000 inhabitants). The rulers are now helping us to restore, on a newer and sounder basis, a political edifice which had once appeared to be on the point of collapse.[28]

An official report also stated that the Mossi chiefs

> understand that the time of their absolute power, and the privileges of their "medieval lordships," are fated to wear away gradually. Certainly, the main-

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tenance of their authority and prestige is indispensable, and the local administration is firmly resolved not only to preserve it but even to strengthen it. Henceforth, however, this authority and prestige will be upheld on the basis of principles and methods better suited to the new order of things which has been established.[20]

The administration tried to educate some of the sons of the chiefs "in order to attune them to progress and to the fundamental principles of our policy."[20] It encountered some resistance from chiefs who resented what they considered the "recruitment" of their children for education, and from other chiefs who were afraid that, if educated, their sons might be converted to Catholicism and thus would be unable to perform the traditional religio-political ceremonies. Nevertheless, one official states quite proudly that "Despite some resistance, the results obtained so far are encouraging and of such a nature as to allay our anxiety: 671 sons of chiefs are now attending our schools, among them 52 sons of provincial chiefs and 342 sons of district chiefs."[21] However, very few of these boys even learned French well enough to take part in the government of their society.

Hesling also made an effort to improve the material welfare of the Mossi chiefs. He felt that under the previous administration the chiefs had been "inadequately remunerated," and he considered this bad for their morale. He therefore increased the appropriation for the salaries of chiefs from 86,000 francs in the 1919 budget to 190,000 francs in the 1924 budget, and counted on their receiving an additional 163,260 francs from tax commissions during the year. The Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou, considered the emperor of the Mossi and judged loyal, efficient, and capable by the French, was granted a stipend of 25,000 francs, while the Yatenga Naba, considered his subordinate and judged less capable, was granted only 8,700 francs.[22] Only 276 chiefs out of a total of 497 in the territory received any stipend at all that year, because even an augmented budget was too small to provide funds for the lesser chiefs. These chiefs, in the words of one official, "were often inadequate or incapable, but . . . could not be replaced, either because they had no qualified successors or because the traditional system placed an obstacle in the way."[23] Instead of salaries, they received seeds of new plant species such as mangoes, and they were helped in building dams to irrigate their fields and in sinking deep wells near their compounds. In addition to these material rewards, the Governor increased the prestige of the chiefs by giving them medals and honors.

Despite these increased salaries and honors, and the more important role they now played in the administration of their subjects, the Mossi

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chiefs did not regain any of their traditional power. They remained auxiliaries of the administration. Taking Mogho Naba Kom as an example, one report states that this "simple, intelligent, compliant man served as news agent and made himself useful to the political administration" until the arrival of Hesling, when he took a livelier interest in the affairs of the colony.[84] Another source says of the same monarch:

> Free of the ancestral traditions that forbade him to leave his palace, and curious about progress and administration, he travels on all the roads and, under our supervision, busies himself with the settlement of administrative problems, to which he lends the weight of his authority. He makes the proposals for the nomination of province and district chiefs; he encourages his subjects to work and produce. Finally, he fulfills with the greatest dignity the representative functions that devolve upon him at his palace and in the official ceremonies.[85]

While it is true that the Mogho Naba made proposals for the nomination of chiefs, he was powerless to prevent their dismissal if they incurred the displeasure of the administration—a frequent occurrence during the Hesling period. For example, when the administration deposed Naba Boulga of Doulougou district for "incompetence" and placed him in "enforced residence" in a neighboring district, the French officials encouraged the election of Bila Kongo primarily because he was a former cercle guard. Bila Kongo was assassinated in 1924, and the Mogho Naba named Mahama Ouedraogo to take his place. This new chief soon had difficulties with the administration, however, and was deposed for exacting unauthorized taxes from his subjects and for abusing his authority. Mogho Naba Kom then appointed Ousmane Ouedraogo, but he was deposed for "incompetence" and exiled to Sao district.

On the other hand, Hesling made few attempts to change the traditional political and administrative structures of the Mossi. One contemporary source says:

> Since its inception the Government of the Upper Volta has made no changes or innovations, or at best very few, in this connection. The native administrative entities in the cercles of Ouagadougou, Oushigouya, Kaya, and Fada-N'Gourma have remained the same as those which Haut-Sénégal et Niger transferred to the colony in 1919. . . . Only in 1922 did the cercle of Koudougou have its "Gurunsi" districts separated from its "Mossi" districts to form a new province, which was placed under the command of the Leo Naba, a chief of the same Gurunsi race. Tenkodogo, a cercle made up of a large number of small districts ruled by thoroughly inept chiefs, has been the object of a partial internal reorganization since the beginning of 1923. The number of its native *circonscriptions* [districts] has been reduced from 82 to 73.[86]

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These were minor changes indeed, but they truncated the power of the 177
Mossi chiefs over the Gurunsi and Busansi, which had been on the increase 648*
as recently as the 1880's. Except for these slight changes, however, the Mossi 631
traditional organization remained as it had been since the immediate post-conquest period.

Instead of changing the traditional administrative structure, the Gov- 175*
ernor introduced a new administrative device, the *Conseil de notables* 177
indigènes (Council of Native Notables) in Ouagadougou in April 1920, 648*
and subsequently established similar councils at Ouahigouya, Tenkodogo, 646
Kaya, and Koudougou. By establishing these councils, the administration hoped to provide the Mossi with a better understanding of the ideals and standards of French policy; to place the French administrators in closer contact with the people, who "had been almost totally ignorant of the functioning of [the French] administration"; and to form "an elite who will later be able to contribute in a closer and more personal way to the economic and financial life of the colony."[87] The council at Ouagadougou, which was to serve as a model for Mossi country, was to be presided over by the cercle commanders and to have from ten to sixteen members, including the traditional provincial ministers of the Mossi (with life membership); members of the Moslem community in Ouagadougou; and representatives of foreign groups living in the capital, of French citizens, and of the veterans of World War I. No provision was made to include the Mossi chiefs, but hope was expressed that they would support these councils and work with them.

These councils failed primarily because they turned out to be organs of the French administration and in fact functioned as such, and because their members had varied and often conflicting status. They met two or three times a year at administrative centers and discussed such things as personal taxes, the allocation and execution of prestations, the use of Mossi labor in foreign areas, the licensing and taxation of African traders and merchants, the status of women, the expansion of cultivation, stock breeding, and the collection of shea-butter nuts and kapok pods. None of the Mossi or African representatives had sufficient power or knowledge to challenge the ideas or recommendations of the European members. And the Mossi ministers, while submissive to the Europeans, found it difficult to accept as equals the representatives of non-Mossi peoples who prior to the conquest had lived at Ouagadougou only at the sufferance of the Mogho Naba; nor were they willing to discuss administrative affairs with these people or with the Mossi commoners who represented the war veterans. Ultimately, the councils became rubber stamps for the policies of the

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administration, and failed to serve as an administrative training ground for either the Mossi ministers or the commoner representatives.[88]

During the Hesling period, the Mossi district chiefs remained in power, but the French, through their African administrative assistants, kept a stricter watch on district affairs. The chiefs regained some of their judicial (or, rather, conciliatory) power in 1921 when the Governor, dissatisfied with the territory's legal system, promulgated a decree reorganizing the courts and giving the Mossi district and village chiefs the right of adjudication in minor cases involving civil and commercial matters.[89] However, they had to send all cases involving serious crimes and all appeals from other cases to higher courts. Because their subjects could appeal to the subdivision courts and because they risked reprimand by administrators when their verdicts were deemed unjust, many Mossi chiefs complied. They tried to do so even when the litigants themselves would have preferred not to deal with the administrators. Often the chiefs overtly told the litigants to go to the administrators but covertly persuaded them not to do so. In this manner they observed all proprieties toward both the French and their subjects.

The village and district courts had to send all criminal offenses such as assault and battery cases and major thefts, as well as appeals against their verdicts, to a "tribunal of the first degree," which was presided over by a subdivision commander and his Mossi assessors. Cases were taken to the tribunal only when the dispute was extremely serious or when people were gravely injured, because Mossi villagers hesitated to take their cases to officials who, when not swamped with work, had little patience with the complexities of Mossi litigation. Moreover, the Mossi feared to subject their fellows to the rigors of the Indigénat, which was still in existence, because, as one official source declares, "If this regime subsists, it is because the Voltaic populations have not yet reached a level of development that would permit the withdrawal of a weapon which is so readily useful to the commanders of administrative units. Besides, when judiciously managed, it does not present any danger in these underdeveloped regions."

Cases which the subdivision commanders considered too serious for their courts were sent to "tribunals of the second degree" at the cercle level. From there, cases were sent to a "colonial court of appeal," which was presided over by the Chief Officer of Political Affairs of the territory and which could sentence a criminal to three to ten years in prison. More serious crimes carrying longer prison terms or the death penalty were sent up to the Supreme Court at Dakar. Owing in part to the lack of communication between the rural districts and the higher courts, the Mossi

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were seldom able to follow a case higher than the subdivision level. In cases involving long imprisonment or the death penalty, the relatives of the condemned person usually learned about the sentence through rumors from the capital, but seldom through the administration.

One judicial duty which the administration gave the Mossi chiefs and which they had always disliked was the adjudication of domestic cases. They found such cases even more difficult and distasteful after Hesling issued a circular on "The Condition of the Native Woman," which is summarized in a semi-official report as follows:

> [The Governor] is pained to see [the Mossi woman] so often subjected to a special form of slavery which, notably at the time of marriage, reduces her to the role of a domestic animal. Without wishing to interfere with ingrained native traditions, the Governor desires "to prime the desirable evolution by means of judicial decisions." Thus he comes to the decision that in those lawsuits concerning marriage in which formerly the woman was not consulted, she must henceforth be present and must argue the case with her husband. M. Hesling trusts that this procedural reform, which he hopes will give the native woman "a consciousness of her individuality and her rights," will be followed in the courts by further reforms. First of all [the courts] must weaken and then progressively modify those traditions which promote injustice toward women. . . . Questions will no doubt be raised as to whether it is necessary to set up regulations on such matters. However, M. Hesling advises his administrators to adjust [such regulations] to, and apply them with respect for, ancestral traditions. It will be interesting to see the results obtained in this attempt, and to see whether the "moussos" [a malapropism denoting Mossi women] of the Upper Volta will acquire some individuality.[40]

The Mossi chiefs were not told that the Governor's circular recommending a change in the status of women stipulated that traditional practices be taken into account. But even if they had been told, they would not have been impressed, because any fundamental change in the status of women would have placed their whole society in jeopardy. Woman exchange stood at the core of a social, economic, and political nexus that held Mossi society together. True, in pre-conquest times most quarrels and lawsuits were caused by trouble over women, but the marriage system was upheld by all the other institutions. Even after the arrival of the French and the weakening of the chiefs' judicial role, the Mossi could punish violators of the marriage system by imposing social sanctions. They now feared that if the French passed laws giving the women free choice in marriage, and the chiefs had to adjudicate on the basis of these laws, all traditional sanctions would become obsolete. Neither the chiefs nor the Mossi on the Councils of Native Notables nor the elders welcomed any discussion about

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the status of women. They maintained that the French had conquered the Mossi men, not the women, and that the administration should not interfere with the way in which a Moaga treated his wife. Ironically enough, there was little the administration could do for the Mossi women, since the latter were too timid to approach the Europeans. Most of them continued to react to maltreatment from their husbands by running away, but now they went to the Gold Coast with labor migrants instead of returning to their lineage.

Although the Mossi chiefs had little autonomy in the administration of their subjects, and had to look to the administration for guidance in nearly everything they did, they were not completely powerless. They were the representatives of the colonial administration on the local level, and as such they could control their subjects through the differential allocation of prestations. Those Mossi who had maintained the traditional respect for the chiefs could look forward to less arduous tasks for the administration and to the avoidance of forced labor or army recruitment. Those who by their actions or attitude indicated that they had lost respect for the chiefs were penalized accordingly. Chiefs were also able to retain some control over their subjects because they were still the centers of social, economic, and political relations within their territories. They still received homage and presents from their more loyal or traditionalistic subjects, and with these goods and services they could bind other persons to themselves. Clever chiefs were able to manipulate the colonial administration and use it to enhance their traditional position so successfully that the administration and the missionaries had to take these men into account whenever they wished to establish contact with the population.

The desire of the missionaries to establish missions and schools for the purpose of converting the Mossi to Christianity presented the chiefs with a great challenge because, unlike the administration, the missionaries tried to establish direct contact with the people. The chiefs not only did not like to have Europeans living in their midst, but feared that they would lose control over their subjects who went to live near the missions. However, the chiefs could not refuse to grant the missionaries land on which to build missions and schools. They also provided labor for them, just as they did for the construction of administrative buildings and roads. Similarly, the chiefs recruited children for the mission schools in the same spirit as they recruited students for the schools of the administration. The difference between the Catholic missionaries and the administration with respect to education was that while the former were interested in educating the children of chiefs, they were also interested in children from other backgrounds. Nevertheless, the majority of chiefs continued to send to school

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only those children whose parents could not prevent them from being sent away. Many of the boys came from serf and commoner families; a few others were the orphan sons or very young sons of chiefs. As a result, few of the chiefs' sons received an education, and thus they were later unable to compete effectively with commoners who had gained a valuable education at the missions.

Acknowledging the average Moaga's refusal to adopt Catholicism as long as his chiefs remained pagan, the missionaries made a valiant attempt to convert the chiefs. Monsignor Socquet reports that when asked why they did not become Catholics most Mossi replied: " 'We are looking to our chief,' that is to say, 'We will follow our chief in conversion as in all other matters. If he is in favor of it, we will not go against his will.' " Socquet concludes: "It is thus easy to understand how important is the conversion of the chiefs, or at least their sympathy for our religion, to the spread of Catholicism."[41] However, the chiefs and their eldest sons were the most difficult to convert because they were responsible for supervising and carrying out the traditional sacrifices to the royal ancestors, without whose help the Mossi people believed that they could not survive.

The attempts of the missionaries to recruit as many girls as possible for education and conversion alienated the chiefs, because it got them involved in the delicate problem of the status of women and struck at one of the few remaining bulwarks of their traditional power. The problem was that many of the girls whom the missionaries wanted as students were or had been betrothed, or were actually living in their husbands' compounds, when they were taken to the mission. Here the girls were educated and, in the words of Sister Marie-André, "wished to abandon those practices" that were "repugnant to them"—i.e., they rejected polygynous marriages and desired to choose their own spouses.[42] Those men who lost fiancées or wives as a result of missionary activities sought redress from their chiefs. But the chiefs were powerless against the missionaries, and after the promulgation of Hesling's circular nothing could be done. Many Mossi chiefs were also parties to the defeated marriage alliances because of their involvement in the pughsiure system. Because their prestige and power were at stake, and because they were unable to combat the Europeans openly, these chiefs often used devious means to spirit away the girls from the missions and to return them to their fiancés or husbands. Such activities angered the missionaries, who through the administrators either punished the guilty chiefs or sought new legislation in this area.

The chiefs, the missions, and the French administration were perpetually embroiled because both the chiefs and the missions wanted Mossi women for their own purposes. The administration was caught in the

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middle. The Mossi accused the missionaries of being especially anxious to get girls who could become the wives of their converts, and accused them of "stealing" the women. Paradoxically, this charge is supported by a missionary of the White Fathers:

> A Mossi who is unable to acquire a wife by traditional means must either remain unmarried or seduce another man's wife . . . they must choose between celibacy and immorality.
>
> Such a state of affairs creates many problems for the missions, especially since the system is recognized and sanctioned by the colonial authorities. . . . Young native Christians are obviously placed in a very awkward position. Their conversion angers their parents, who refuse to give them a wife; neither will their friends bestow a daughter upon them, because they know that they will not receive one in return, since a Christian may not give a daughter in marriage to a pagan. . . . *Consequently, unless the missionaries help them to find a wife, they must remain unmarried—a very discouraging prospect.* [Italics mine.][43]

The Mossi chiefs objected strongly to these activities of the missionaries on behalf of their converts, for they insisted that marriages could not legally take place outside the traditional pattern of reciprocity in woman exchange. They argued that the priests had no daughters, but that once they had obtained wives for their male converts, the daughters of these converts would in fact be pughsiudse to the priests and would be used by them to obtain further converts. There was some truth in this argument. Some young men, anxious to obtain wives without trouble and hard work, approached the mission girls, only to be told that the missionaries alone could sanction their marriage. The priests asked only that the potential husbands become Catholics. Some young men agreed and became Catholics; others reneged on their promise after they had been baptized and married. When a young man left the Church himself and also forbade his wife to go to church, the missionaries sought help from the district chief. If he did not satisfy them, they asked the district commander to intervene on their behalf. The young man then had to return to the Church with his wife or leave the district. Many men chose the latter course, taking their wives to visit some distant relatives or to the Gold Coast, until the women, burdened by motherhood and reintegrated into the traditional social system, lost all desire to renew their association with the missionaries. Under these circumstances, the missionaries could not summon the couple to the administrative center, because they had not violated any of the tenets of the Governor's circular. Furthermore, most administrators, like the Mossi chiefs, had little interest in such cases.

The Mossi chiefs considered the Catholic missionaries a greater threat

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to Mossi society and to their own authority than the French administration itself. This was primarily due to the fact that these missionaries, as Frenchmen, were very deeply involved not only in preaching Christianity, but also in changing Mossi society by introducing modern medical practices and education. Moreover, as was later brought out, they did not hesitate to use coercion to gain their ends. In seeking to understand why the number of patients in a maternity clinic had declined from an all-time high in the late 1920's and early 1930's to almost zero in the late 1940's, André Dupont, a Catholic missionary, was told by Mossi women, "We are no longer forced to go." He comments: "Was it the fear of sanction that accounted for the unanimous use of the clinic? Alas! It would seem to be so. The use of force and sanction have made a charitable institution odious. It would have been better if the mothers had only been encouraged to use the clinics. 'These natives do not understand,' I am sometimes told. But how are they expected to understand?"[44]

The American Protestant missionaries did little to challenge the authority of either the Mossi chiefs or the French administration. They were interested only in religious education, and concentrated on teaching the Scripture. The British social critic Geoffrey Gorer, who visited the Mossi during the Hesling period, reports: "There were some American missionaries in this village, a whole family living in a house filled with texts; I do not know what creed they preached or with what success. . . . They spoke with a dispassionate 'none of our business' disapproval of the ill treatment of the negroes, who they said were ruled entirely by fear."[45]

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The Moslems, on the other hand, took advantage of the declining power of the Mossi chiefs to spread their doctrines. They pointed out, with little fear of contradiction, that formerly the chiefs had checked the spread of Islam in order to protect their own religion, which supported their political power, but that this power had now been broken by the French. They continued to preach that as soon as all the black people became Moslems the whites would leave, and pointed out that whereas the missionaries had succeeded in getting the administration to attack the marriage customs of the pagan Mossi, they had not interfered with the marriage customs of the Moslem Mossi.[46] Moreover, the Moslems tried to impress upon the chiefs that conversion to Islam brought with it the benefit of being judged according to Koranic principles rather than native law or French statutes. This propaganda was relatively successful, and by the end of the Hesling period the number of Koranic schools and converts among the Mossi had increased eightfold. True to form, however, the Mossi chiefs seldom adopted Islam or permitted their elder sons to do so. But they did allow

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177 their younger sons to become Moslems, and soon abandoned their active
*648 resistance to Islam.

63 Hesling did not permit the Mossi chiefs to revive their traditional religio-
[795] political rituals and ceremonies such as the Tense, but he continued to toler-
[797] ate the Basgha. The French banned the Mossi market chiefs, because they believed (with some justification) that these officials used their offices to procure revenue for the chiefs. The difficulty was that the market chiefs were also responsible for arranging sacrifices to the market deities, which in the absence of such sacrifices would not protect the people from quarrels and violence in the market place. Some chiefs covertly retained their market chiefs; others obeyed the administration and remained anxious over the behavior of their subjects in the market. In general, however, most Mossi chiefs tried to adjust to the religious changes that were taking place, and sought to maintain at least surface amicability with all religious groups. Commenting upon the behavior of the Mogho Naba in this regard,
[643] Dim Delobson states:

> The Mogho Naba, above all, is a believer in animism like all his subjects, and it is hard to understand how he manages to reconcile his fetishism with the complex dogmas of Islam and with the many interdictions of Christianity. However, the Mogho Naba is quite capable of being a Catholic or a Moslem on appropriate occasions, while at the same time respecting the traditions of his ancestors. Thus, when the Christians are celebrating Christmas, the emperor of the Mossi devoutly attends midnight Mass. Nevertheless, he wears his fez [really the bonnet which is the symbol of his office],
> [292] just as the bishop wears his miter. He likewise embraces Islam for the three Moslem festivals.[47]

+175 Hesling failed in his attempt to develop the Upper Volta as a viable
*648 colony, and many of the chiefs whom he had used as his auxiliaries lost
[631] not only a great deal of power but also a great deal of prestige in the eyes
[558] of their subjects because of the role they had played vis-à-vis the administration. By 1929 the economy of the Upper Volta was in poor condition:
[433] cotton production had declined; taxes (raised from 5,800,000 francs in
[651] 1921 to 18,274,000 francs in 1927 and scheduled to be raised to 26,400,000
[491] francs in 1930) were unbearable; many of the roads that were too extensive, too little used, and too difficult to maintain had been abandoned; and
[167] more than 46,000 laborers who had worked in the cotton fields and on the roads had fled to the neighboring Gold Coast.[48] The Colonial Minister, Sarraut, ordered that the colony of the Upper Volta be dismembered. He states in his decree of September 1932 that the suppression of the Upper Volta "would permit appreciable savings, and would make the adminis-

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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trative and technical personnel serving in its capital available for general service."[80] But another, more important reason for dismembering the colony was to make available "to the Ivory Coast, a rich and prosperous colony with diversified environments and products, an abundant and disciplined labor force, which alone was lacking to infuse it with hopeful vigor."[80] According to the articles of a decree promulgated in January 1933, the Upper Volta was divided as follows: The cercle of Ouahigouya [131] and part of the cercle of Dedougou, encompassing 52,400 square kilometers and 712,000 people, were attached to the Sudan; the cercle of Fada-N'- [162] Gourma and Dori, with 70,700 square kilometers and 268,000 people, was attached to the Niger; Tenkodogo, Gaoua, Batie, Ouagadougou, Bobo-Dioulasso, and part of Dedougou were given to the Ivory Coast. The Ivory Coast by this change gained some 153,400 square kilometers and 2,019,000 people.

The Mossi chiefs resented the division of the lands conquered by Ouedraogo and Oubri, and while they never ceased to desire the reintegration of Mogho, they were powerless to do or say anything about it at the time. Many young French colonial officials also resented the division of the colony, and were eloquent in their denunciation of what they considered a moribund colonial policy. A member of the Upper Volta administration, Robert Delavignette, says in his obituary of the colony:

> These obscure masses: three million persons. . . . Once they represented a threat, although the thousands of horsemen of the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou were defeated by the infantry squads of Captain Voulet in 1897. Soon the threat had diminished, but the matchless aggregate of villages remained. It was an alluring challenge to administrators. Let us mention briefly how they dealt with it. The more they pacified it, the more difficult their task became. The more they tried to impose upon it an open economy with a pattern of roads, urban centers, and cotton fields; and the more they tried to discover the vital principle of that economy in order to establish a new harmony between the land and these obscure masses, the more they broke down the old, set, traditional economy. . . . The heartland of the Upper Volta was indeed molded: 6,000 kilometers of roads, 100,000 hectares of collective fields, and a few urban centers built of mudbricks—all or almost all of this done by hand. No original methods or powerful tools were used, no inventiveness or clarity of purpose was shown. This was but a megalomanic copy of old patterns of mercantile exploitation, and [represented], in the heartlands, powerless, joyless work for those obscure masses.[81]

The criticisms of such officials as Delavignette and Henri Labouret persuaded the colonial administration to dispatch to Ouagadougou a higher

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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official, M. Louveau, to relieve the Mossi of excessive prestations and taxation. Louveau cut taxes from 33,000,000 to 24,000,000 francs, a decision which, according to Burthe d'Annelet,

> forward-looking as it was, represented only an amelioration of the past situation. In effect, the natives had exhausted all their reserves, sold their animals dirt cheap, and could not pay their taxes in an honest manner. This represents quite clearly an abuse of taxation. One must conclude from these facts that taxes had been raised too rapidly, and that these excesses had long surpassed the resources of the natives, even though it is the present depression that brings this out.[52]

The administration continued to require the Mossi chiefs to supply laborers, but found that many potential workers were leaving for the Gold Coast instead.

Despite the fact that Abidjan, the capital of the Ivory Coast, is far removed from Mossi country, the administration of the Ivory Coast hesitated at first to maintain an administrative center in Ouagadougou or to return to the Mossi chiefs any of their lost authority for administrative purposes. The situation had become so chaotic by the mid-1930's that Pierre Boisson, the Governor-General of French West Africa, issued a decree making the Ouagadougou region part of an administrative unit called the Upper Ivory Coast. He says:

> In acting thus we wish, on the one hand, to facilitate relations between the Upper and Lower Ivory Coast, and, on the other hand, to ensure for the Mossi population an effective representation of their particular interests, which do not always coincide with those of their neighbors. It also seems to us that in order to ensure this simultaneous liaison and separation, the Governor of the Ivory Coast ought to be seconded by a delegate in Mossi country who would be responsible for coordinating the local interests of [the Mossi] with the general interests of the colony.[53]

Boisson was under increasing pressure from such officials as Delavignette and Labouret to improve the administration of his territories, but when World War II broke out all plans for reform had to be shelved.[54]

The Mossi chiefs, especially the Mogho Naba, swiftly came to the support of France in her hour of need, and several thousand Mossi and other Voltaics were sent to the lines as soon as war broke out. According to Balima:

> In 1940, the old and popular Mogho Naba Kom II, shocked by the spectacle of the French disaster, . . . took his two eldest sons by the hand and declared to the Mossi people in the presence of General Barraud, senior commander of the troops: "Here are my two sons, my eldest sons, to fight for France." Soon afterward this French general was able to recruit more than

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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10,000 Mossi soldiers, each of whom took this oath like the two princes: "I enlist in the name of God, and I enlist in the name of the Mogho Naba." Throughout the long hostilities, thousands of Mossi sacrificed their lives for France, faithfully and without regret, because all of this was in accordance with the rules of warfare.[55]

France's disaster was so swift and so total, however, that only those Mossi who were in France when the war began took part in the debacle. Many hundreds were killed, and hundreds more were taken prisoners by the Germans.

Boisson's decision to ignore General de Gaulle's appeal to rally to the side of the Free French angered and disappointed Mogho Naba Kom II and his chiefs. Their anger turned to dismay when Boisson allied himself with the Vichy Government. One report states that in West Africa, "Vichy's tenets increased racial discrimination, reinforced the arbitrary features of the Indigénat, and led to elimination of the few existing political and labor organizations and to repression of any movements or individuals favoring General de Gaulle."[56] Vichy replaced the motto of the French Revolution, "Liberty, equality, fraternity," with "Work, country, family." When any administration in French West Africa had work to be done, the Mossi bore the brunt of it. The regime of forced labor, which had been in the process of being ameliorated before the war, grew harsher as the more reactionary groups gained the ascendancy in the Lower Ivory Coast. In addition to providing men for the plantations, the Mossi were forced to double their efforts at home. Because of the war, their territory had to become self-supporting and to provide vegetable fats, cotton, and livestock to other areas as well. Balima reports that what infuriated the Mossi chiefs and the group of young educated Mossi "was that military service was diverted into other channels. In other words, under cover of a vague governmental decision, the massive recruitments of draftees were not transferred to the barracks for shipment to the front, but instead were placed in the hands of the Public Works Department or, worse yet, sent to the plantations of the ubiquitous *colons* of the Ivory Coast." He adds, "This was a psychological mistake which produced dreadful results, and which precipitated the permanent departure of a number of Voltaics to British territories, particularly to the Gold Coast, where compulsory military service was completely unknown and where every deserter was sure to find a well-paid job and shops filled with merchandise."[57]

The Upper Volta, especially Mossi country, came in for a great deal of attention by the Vichyites, not only because its young people fled across the border to the neighboring Gold Coast, but also because agents of the Free

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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French Forces were present there. The official Vichy radio began broadcasts urging discipline, increased production, and "patriotic cooperation in making the Federation [of French West Africa] a military bastion against the encroachment of its British neighbors."[88] In response, local officials ordered Mossi chiefs to provide laborers to build trenches and fortifications between the two areas. The Free French, for their part, used the Gold Coast as a center for the distribution of anti-Pétain propaganda, and tried to employ returning Mossi labor migrants as couriers. The majority of these young men were not interested in politics, however, and those who were prevailed upon to take propaganda leaflets into Mossi country simply discarded them as soon as they crossed the border.

The pressures, counter-pressures, and anxieties of this period were apparently too much for Mogho Naba Kom II, who died on March 12, 1942. By the next morning, countless rumors to the effect that the Mogho Naba had committed suicide had spread as far as the Gold Coast. The most widespread rumor was that the Mogho Naba's anti-Pétainist views had become clear to the administration. In reprisal, he was "placed under surveillance on Boisson's orders and separated from his subjects. He died solemnly by his own hand after having summoned his son and commanded him not to take office 'until the true French should return.'"[88] Another widely circulated rumor, probably originated by Moslems, was that the Catholic missionaries, freed from the restraints of Paris, had tried to compel the Mogho Naba to divorce his many wives and become monogamous. The Mogho Naba allegedly could not comply with this demand because it would have been a severe violation of Mossi tradition for a royal wife to become the wife of any other man while her husband was still alive. Faced with this dilemma, the rumor said, the Mogho Naba committed suicide.

The official French report on the Mogho Naba's death reveals that the administration was aware of these and other rumors and of their potential influence on the behavior of the Mossi people. The report also shows that the French officials believed, and credited the Mossi with believing, the classical superstition that "The heavens themselves blaze forth the death of princes." The report states:

> Over the last few years, the health of Saidou Congo [Mogho Naba Kom II] has been impaired by heart trouble, and it was a heart attack which carried him off at about 11 P.M. on March 12th.
>
> The natives have no explanation for sudden deaths, and attribute them either to supernatural intervention or to poison. Besides, two phenomena had occurred just then to strike the imagination: there had been a total eclipse of the moon on the night of March 2d to 3d, which announced,

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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according to the Mossi, the imminent death of an important chief; secondly, a meteor had passed unexpectedly over Ouagadougou between 8 and 9 P.M. [on March 12th], vividly impressing the Mogho Naba himself.

It is quite possible that the emotions induced by these phenomena aggravated the heart condition that felled him. Certain people have maintained that the Mogho Naba, being opposed to all foreign domination and convinced that serious developments were imminent, voluntarily commited suicide by poison in order to elude them. So far, there is no proof that such a rumor has really been adrift. The matter is under strict investigation.[80]

The Mossi people practiced as best they could the traditional rituals connected with the death of a Mogho Naba. During the interregnum, however, the administration did not permit the usual chaos, ritual or otherwise. One administration report states: "Young people tried to steal things in the market, taking advantage of the old customs, but they were checked."[81] A later report adds that the traditions of the Napoko and the Kourita were honored, and that one hundred persons were arrested for the ritual larceny of small objects.

The traditional Mossi authorities allegedly requested that the deceased Mogho Naba, as one who had worn the Legion of Honor, be given full military honors. This required the placing of his body in a coffin so that the funeral cortege could move through the streets, a fact which introduced a new ritual element in royal funerals. Once this ceremony was over, however, the representatives of the administration withdrew, and the body was buried according to customary rites.

The traditional electoral college then proceeded with the task of choosing a new ruler. The choice was between Issoufou Congo, Kom's eldest son, who was then a lieutenant in the French Colonial Army in the Ivory Coast, and his younger brother, Etienne Congo, chief of the Doulougou district. With the administration's permission, the college elected Issoufou Congo. He took the title "Sagha" (the second Mogho Naba to bear that name), and was installed with traditional ceremonies.

The message Sagha sent to the French High Commissioner bears quoting. Like the traditional speeches of newly elected Mogho Nanamse, it was believed by the Mossi people to contain subtle jibes at enemies, praises to benefactors and friends, and portents of future plans. The Mogho Naba said:

> At the moment when I take command of the Mossi people, I must thank you for having placed me on the throne of my father. I give you assurance of my fidelity toward France in all circumstances. Be assured by this testimony that my father will remain for me an honored person and a guide. I will walk in the footsteps of my father. In these difficult times, my people and I re-

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175 main attached to the French cause. My father is dead, but the soul of Mossi
*648 country lives on. I beg you to transmit to Marshal Pétain, Admiral Platon,
Governor-General Boisson, and Governor Deschamps the expression of my
643 profound attachment to France and the assurance of my full devotion.[60]

[537] Some contemporary Mossi claim to see the Mogho Naba's appreciation of General de Gaulle, his rejection of the Pétain regime, and his desire to regain power over the Mossi people, in the words, "I will walk in the footsteps of my father. In these difficult times, my people and I remain attached to the French cause. My father is dead, but the soul of Mossi country lives on." No one could be sure that this was indeed the Mogho Naba's true sentiment, but this too is according to custom.

Nine months after Issoufou became Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou, the situation in French West Africa changed radically. The Allied forces invaded North Africa, and, after more than two years of resistance, Governor-General Boisson shifted West African support to the Free French. Forced labor and product requisitions continued, but now the Mogho Naba and his chiefs were told that the aim was to help General de Gaulle. M. Cournarie, who had replaced Boisson as Governor-General in 1943, made no significant changes either in the administration of Mossi country or in
* its traditional political organization. Nevertheless, the pressures for funda-
175 mental changes in European colonial territories were steadily building up
*648 throughout the colonial world. De Gaulle, with the foresight he was to show time and again, realized that the prewar colonial system was dead. He attempted to set the stage for the progress of the African peoples by calling a conference of high French colonial officials at Brazzaville in the Moyen-Congo, to open in January 1944. This conference was to effect great changes throughout French Africa and to set the stage for an irrevocable change in the position of the Mossi chiefs.

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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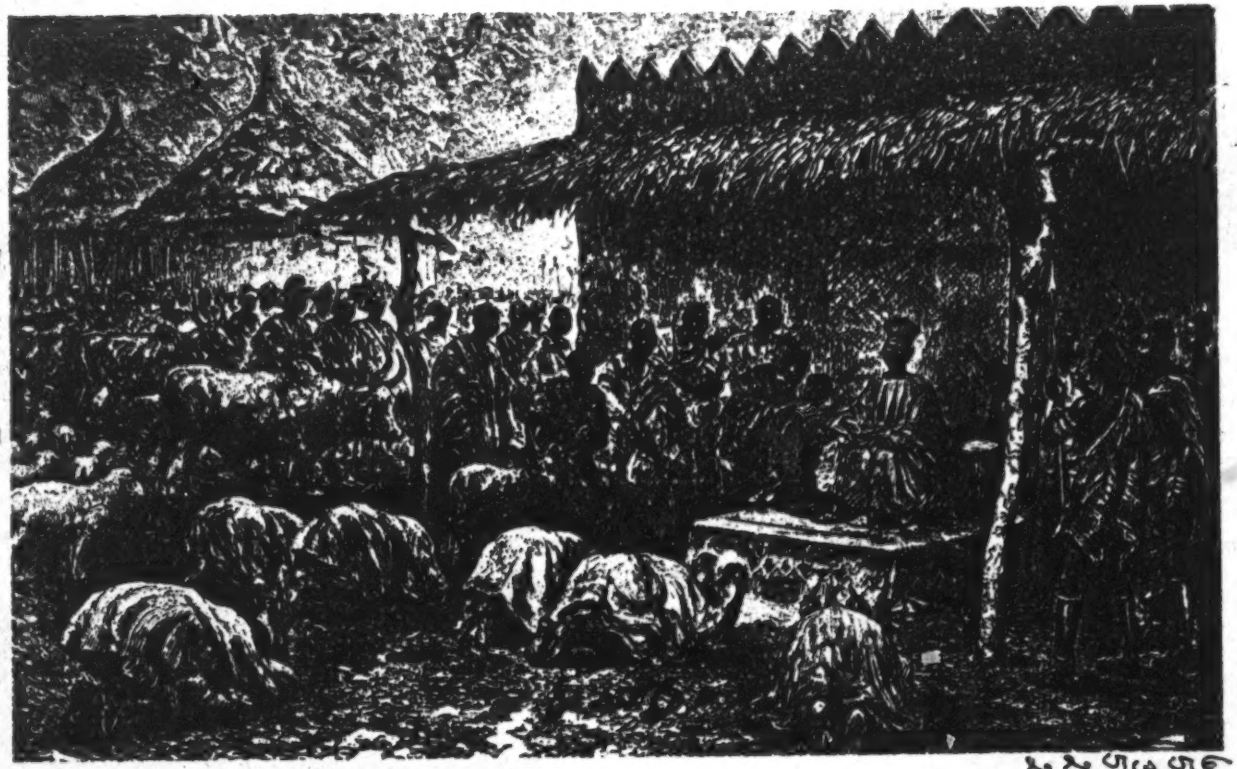

Visitors to the court of Mogho Naba Sanum salute him in the traditional Mossi manner.
From Louis Binger, *Du Niger au Golfe de Guinée par le pays Kong et le Mossi, 1887–1889* (Paris, 1892).

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[p. 178 - A]

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The Mogho Naba's daughter, the Napoko, impersonates her deceased father at his funeral ceremonies. Note that she wears one of his robes, his slippers, and his bonnet, and has his sword behind her.

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Mogho Naba Sagha II (1942-57), who was instrumental in reuniting the Mossi people into one territory, the Upper Volta.

[p. 178-8]

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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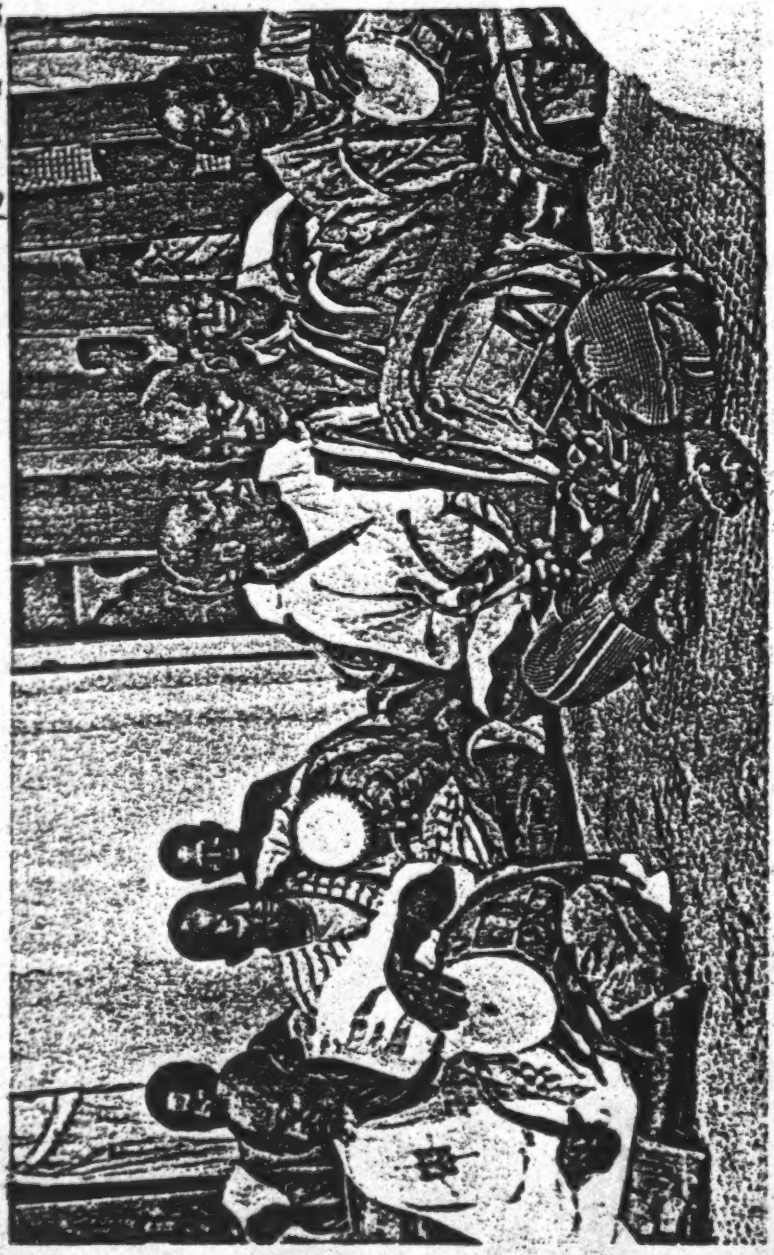

The musicians of the royal court, the Benin.

[p. 178-C]

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964

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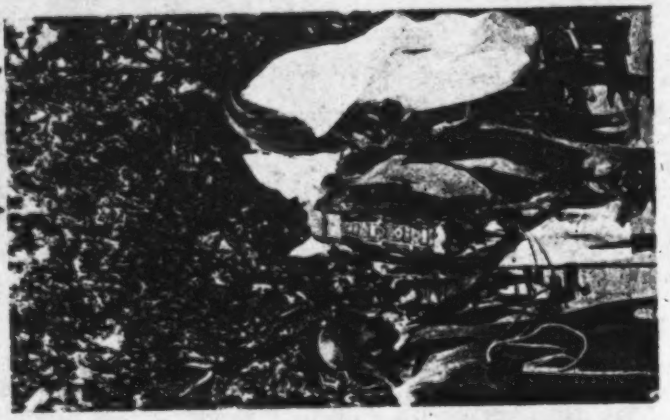

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(*Left*) Maghe Naba Kougri and Ouezzin Coulibaly, who became Vice President of the Government Council of the Upper Volta in 1957. (*Center*) Maurice Yameogo, President of the Republic of Upper Volta. (*Right*) Maghe Naba Kougri (1957–) on his ceremonial horse at his installation.

[p. 178-D]

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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Mogho Naba Kougri at court. He is flanked on the right by his pages and musicians, and on the left by members of the Moslem community.

[p. 171-E]

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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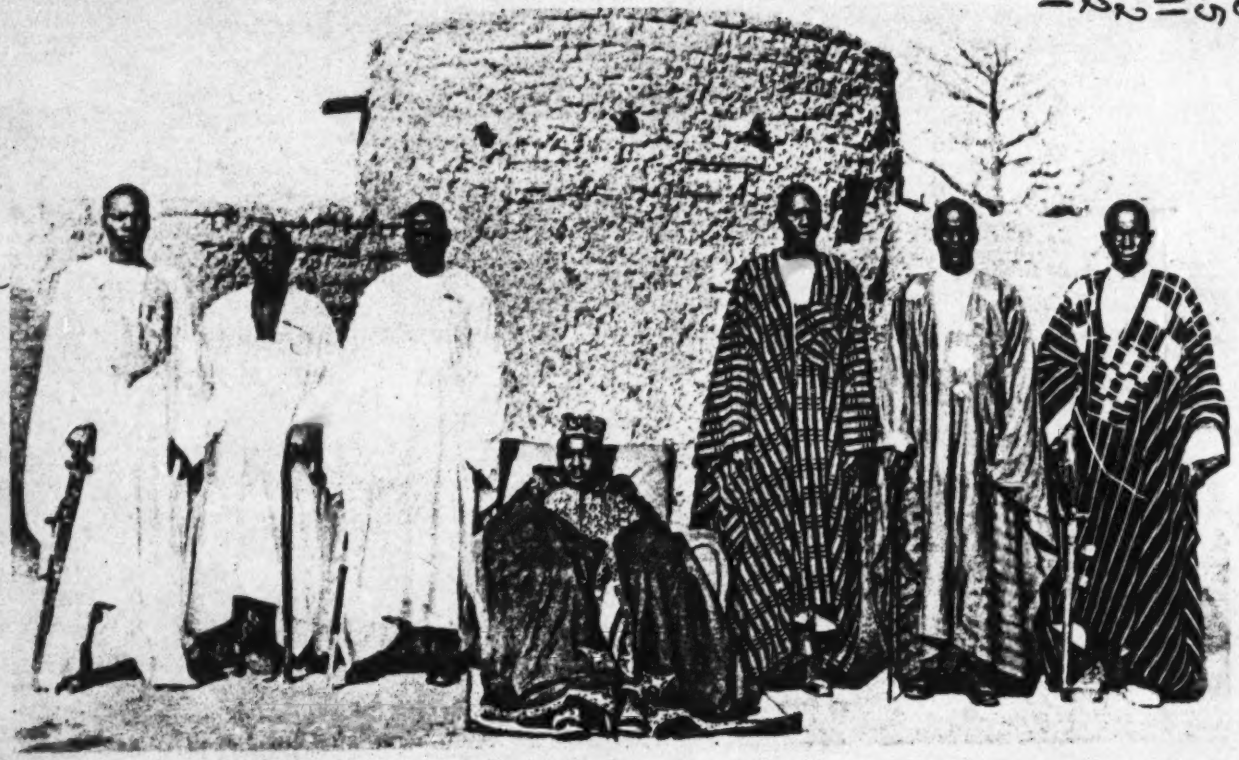

Mogho Naba Kougri (*1948*) and, from left, the Kambo Naba, the Gounga Naba, the Ouidi Naba, the Larlaale Naba, the Balcoum Naba, and the Nemdo Naba.

[N. 178-F]

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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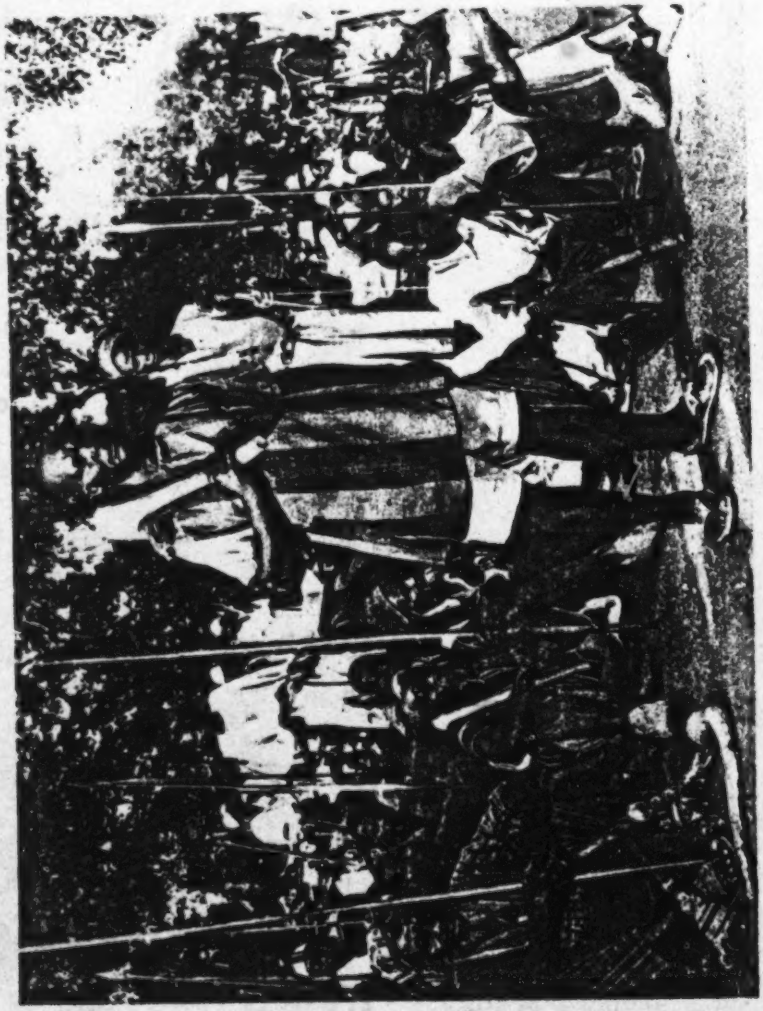

Mogho Naba Kougri's warriors, many bearing traditional weapons, respond to their sovereign's call for aid against the new French administration.

[p. 178 - G]

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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Mogho Naba Kougri concedes to the administration, and orders his warriors to disband.

[Kr. 178- H]

[P. 179]

[post world war II period]

XI

CHIEFS AND POLITICIANS

THE MOSSI CHIEFS were neither present nor represented at the Brazzaville Conference, and thus had no voice in the discussions about the postwar political structure of the territories and their place in this structure. The delegates laid the groundwork for the governmental structure, but failed to define the role of the chiefs.[1] Thus, when the first postwar elections were held in August 1945 to select municipal officers (the first elections held in French West Africa outside of Senegal), none of the African chiefs had a role aside from their unofficial influence on their subjects.[2] The Mossi who were in Abidjan, Ivory Coast, and who were qualified to vote took part in the election, but the Mossi in Mogho could not vote because their towns had not yet been granted municipal status. 175* 666 631

The first election in which the Mossi and their chiefs voted was the one held in October 1945 to elect delegates from the Ivory Coast (Ouagadougou was then considered the Upper Ivory Coast) to the Constituent Assembly in Paris, which was to establish the Fourth French Republic. Félix Houphouët-Boigny, a Baulé chief, planter, and founder of the African Agricultural Union (Syndicat Agricole Africain), had won the municipal elections in Abidjan, and now sought the support of the Abidjan Mossi for his candidacy to the Assembly. The Mossi spokesman in Abidjan, Zebango Pohi, stated that the Mossi would vote only for a Voltaic, and that the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou (who because of his father's reputation and his own educational qualifications was now acknowledged as the spokesman for all Mossi chiefs) would decide whom the Mossi would support.[3] Houphouët-Boigny then sought the support of the Mogho Naba, but the ruler was committed to a policy of detaching Mossi country from the Ivory Coast and named one of his own traditional ministers, the Baloum Naba. Houphouët-Boigny and his supporters were reportedly "greatly surprised by the Mogho Naba's choice. They felt that the honest but illiterate Baloum Naba was unqualified for the task, and, moreover, could not hope to gain the sup- 175* 666 648* [643]

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964

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[post-world war I period]

* 175 * 648 666 port of the coastal Ivory Coast population. There was little they could do about it, however, because 'the decision of the Mogho Naba was irrevocable.'"[6]

[643] The election was hotly contested. The candidates based their campaigns * 175 666 665 on local issues: taxes, forced labor, the lack of public services, the status of the traditional chiefs, colonialism, racial discrimination, and so on. The Parti Démocratique de la Côte d'Ivoire (PDCI), led by Houphouët-Boigny, stressed the need for combating racial discrimination and exploitation by European planters. The Union pour la Défense des Interêts de la Haute-Volta (UDIHV), formed by the Mogho Naba and a group of mission-educated young men and led by the Baloum Naba, stressed the need to end forced labor, especially among the Mossi, and to place all the Mossi under one territorial government. The UDIHV realized that it had little chance of gaining votes in the south, and therefore concentrated its efforts in the north. However, no credence is to be given to the story that "Whenever [the Baloum Naba] was free from [official] supervision, he told the people, 'Vote for my friend Houphouët. . . . What would I do in Paris, with my forty wives and at my age? I can't speak a blasted word of French.'"[8] Houphouët-Boigny won the election by the surprisingly narrow margin of 12,650 to 11,620.[9]

* * 175 648 668 [646] [177] Houphouët-Boigny played a leading role in persuading the first Constituent Assembly to submit to the voters a number of important liberal colonial reforms. These included the abolition of the Indigénat; the freedom of meeting and association; the bestowal of French citizenship on colonial peoples without affecting their traditional personal status; the use of the French Penal Code in all courts dealing with criminal cases; and the abolition of forced labor.[7]

* 175 631 646 177 There was some discussion in the Assembly of what role the traditional chiefs should play in the projected political structure of Overseas France. One group of delegates held that "the structure of the local Assemblies should be tied intimately to the existing structure of the overseas societies. Otherwise, they would be bogus Assemblies whose decisions would serve the interests of only one class in the society, the dominant class."[8] These men felt that while many chiefs were conservatives and might incline to "neo-feudalism," the new elite of young educated Africans who aspired to replace the Europeans were, for the most part, European-trained and out of contact with the rural masses. These delegates believed that only the chiefs could provide adequate popular leadership, and that the French Union could not cohere or develop unless the chiefs had some status vis-à-vis the elite and prestige in the eyes of the people.[9]

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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Another group held that the chiefs need not be formally associated with the governmental apparatus. A historical precedent was cited: in the early days of colonialism, the chiefs had not become civil servants, and their status had not been impaired. Thus, when a chief collected taxes for the administration, his action was comparable to his former collection of tribute; when he recruited forced labor for the administration and the large plantations, it was similar to the traditional corvée; and when he asked people to plant certain crops, it was like asking them to cultivate his own fields. In a word, as the institution of chieftainship had adjusted to past changes in African societies, so it had the capacity to adjust in the future.[10] 175* 631 648* [182]

Other delegates, and apparently the French administrators as well, felt that the chiefs should be associated with the administration, but as administrative assistants and not as elected representatives of the masses.[11] Since the position of the chiefs was sacred as well as secular, it was argued, political defeat might impair their position as "the fathers of their people."[12]

The constitution drafted by the first Constituent Assembly (lacking any provisions concerning the traditional chiefs) was finally submitted to the voters in May 1946. Although it won a majority of overseas votes, it was defeated by the French people. The subsequently convened second Constituent Assembly was subjected to a great deal of pressure by a group of colonialists called Etats Généraux de Colonisation, and as a result many of the provisions of the first constitution, among them the single-college provision and various rights of citizenship, were not included in the second. The revised constitution was accepted by the French voters in October 1946.[13] 175* 648* 642 666

By this time, however, many of the African delegates had become so disillusioned with the French parliamentarians in the National Assembly that they decided to fend for themselves. They met in Bamako in the French Sudan and formed an inter-territorial grouping called the Rassemblement Démocratique Africain (RDA), led by Houphouët-Boigny. Houphouët-Boigny was strongly anti-imperialist, and the party received the active support of the French Communists. It adopted a violently anti-colonial platform, pledging to rally the peoples of Africa to a world-wide struggle against colonial imperialism, and to try to bring all of the emerging political parties in French Africa under its banner in order to achieve the "emancipation of the African masses."[14] 175* 648* 668

The Mogho Naba and the other Mossi chiefs, noting the anti-colonial posture of the RDA and the hostile reaction of the colonial regime to this group, attempted to take advantage of the situation by advocating the reintegration of the Upper Volta under their more conservative auspices. The Mogho Naba had already taken advantage of the Bastille Day celebration 175* 648* 642 643 631

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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*175 *648 642 643 631 [668] in 1946 to visit and consult with the Yatenga Naba about Mossi reunification, thus ending a centuries-old tradition whereby the two rulers could not meet for fear of death inflicted by the ancestors. Their project was now received with greater interest by the local Europeans, both *colons* and administrators, who were alarmed by Houphouët-Boigny's radicalism and bent on preventing the spread of virulent anti-colonialism among the well-disciplined Voltaic populations.

*175 642 668 665 Shortly after the constitution was approved, the administration announced that elections would be held on December 15 for the Second College of the Ivory Coast's General Council or Territorial Assembly (to be composed of Africans and persons without full French citizenship) and for the other organs of the French Union. Once again Houphouët-Boigny and the RDA, having gained the support of the PDCI and the Parti Progressiste de la Côte d'Ivoire (PPCI), tried to obtain the backing of the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou and the Mossi-supported UDIHV (shortly to become the Union Voltaïque).[15] Again the Mogho Naba refused. Gabriel D'Arboussier, one of Houphouët-Boigny's lieutenants and an important official of the RDA, later charged that the ruler had been influenced by the Minister of Overseas France, Coste-Floret, who told him that the RDA "was no more democratic than it was African, that it was not an Assembly, and that Africans should rally to an institution that was truly African."[16] In any event, the Mogho Naba and the UDIHV decided to oppose the RDA. They emphasized the common interests of the Upper Volta and championed Voltaic candidates, Mossi and non-Mossi alike.

*175 666 631 The electoral law of the territories promulgated in October 1946 did not specifically discriminate against the chiefs, but it was heavily weighted in favor of the educated and urban elite. The electorate was confined to civil servants; soldiers and veterans of the armed forces; chiefs; permanent employees of commercial, industrial, craft, or agricultural establishments; members and former members, for at least two years, of cooperatives, trade unions, and committees of provident societies; holders of official decorations; members of prewar courts and councils including the Chambers of Commerce, Agriculture, and Industry, and agricultural unions; Christian priests and ministers; owners of registered real property; holders of driving or shooting licenses; and persons literate in French or Arabic. Candidates for election to the Territorial Assemblies had to be at least twenty-three years of age, to be registered on the electoral list as residents of the territory, to have a good knowledge of French, and to post a bond of 5,000 CFA (Colonies Françaises d'Afrique) francs, which was forfeited if the candidate received less than 5 per cent of the votes in his election district. Many chiefs were eligible to vote, but, because their fathers had opposed their be-

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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ing educated at mission-sponsored schools, few were qualified to run for office.[17]

More serious for the position of the Mossi chiefs, perhaps, was the fact that many of them either were ill informed about the election or refused to take it seriously. Balima states that a surprisingly large number of Mossi chiefs "could not understand very well the importance of this novelty—which is understandable; had no interest in the formalities, which they nevertheless carried out; and somewhat haphazardly designated as candidates African civil servants to whom they were not even tied by close bonds of friendship."[18] Of course, another reason for this choice of "African civil servants" was that they were among the only persons with the training and education required for candidacy. Nevertheless, the candidates included a few educated members of chiefly families—persons who, not being in the main line of descent or being otherwise ineligible for office in the traditional system, had been "given" to the Europeans to be educated.

The partisans of the Mossi chiefs were victorious in the northern part of the Ivory Coast in an election that saw the emergence of such Voltaic politicians of later fame as Blaise Benon, François Bouda, Zinda Kaboré, Christophe Kalenzaga, Tindougou Ouédraogo, Zebango Pohi, and Maurice Yaméogo. However, the Second College was dominated by Houphouët-Boigny and his RDA colleagues. Despite the Mogho Naba's opposition, RDA delegates set out to ameliorate conditions in the Volta region. For example, the RDA secured the passage of bills to raise the Mogho Naba's salary from 60,000 francs a year, a trifling sum in view of his official and private expenses, to about 500,000 francs a year. Similarly, it ensured that Mossi and other Voltaic students would receive a fair share of the scholarships which France had assigned to colonial students.[19] 175* 643 668 [465]

These gestures did not dampen the ardor of the Mossi chiefs for the reintegration of the Upper Volta. In April 1947, when French President Auriol, touring the territories to observe the operation of the new political institutions, visited the Upper Volta, the Yatenga Naba, the Tenkodogo Naba, and the head ruler of Fada-N'Gourma met the presidential party at Ouagadougou and pressed their claim for separate territorial status. The French reportedly welcomed this petition because it gave them an opportunity to clip the wings of Houphouët-Boigny, as well as to ensure the aid of the chiefs in procuring adequate manpower for a projected extension of the Abidjan–Bobo-Dioulasso railroad to Ouagadougou. The problem was to convince the National Assembly in Paris that the reunification of the Upper Volta was in the best interests of all concerned. 175* 648* 642 [631]

The French government set up a Parliamentary Commission and sent its chairman, Jean Jacques Duglas, to Ouagadougou and other Voltaic re-

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*175 648 642 gions to ascertain whether the people desired reunification. Duglas reported his findings to the National Assembly:

> You know as well as I do that the Mossi are proud of their past. Thanks to a political and social organization without peer in West Africa, they have known peace since the Middle Ages, in an Africa ravaged by war and depopulated by the slave trade. . . . This ancient land also desires prosperity and modernization. To achieve this its voice must be heard, not only in the National Assembly but particularly in the Grand Council [the highest consultative body] of French West Africa. The Upper Volta must have its own General Council.[20]

*175 *648 The law authorizing the reconstitution of the Upper Volta as a separate territory was promulgated on September 4, 1947. The non-Mossi populations of the projected territory feared Mossi domination and voiced their opposition in the Assembly, but in the end an accord was reached. The Mossi chiefs next petitioned the French government to pay for the rebuilding and refurbishing of Ouagadougou. François Bouda, one of the few traditional Mossi nakomce to become an elected representative of the Mossi, reminded the members of the Council of the French Union of what had occurred in 1919. He stated that his own father had recruited thousands of men to make bricks for "Bancoville" (an epithet for Ouagadougou; most of its buildings were of sun-dried bricks called *banco*) because Governor Hesling "never considered the possibility of purchasing cement, which was [464] not even expensive. Forced labor was easy to recruit, and no one thought that the day would come when it would be gone."[21] Bouda said that the Government should now help the new territory to modernize the capital.

D'Arboussier, an RDA delegate in the Assembly, declared that he would support the bill, if only because in the past the French government had attempted "to make a crack race horse out of an ordinary horse, and in so doing had made it a decrepit mare."[22] Funds for rebuilding Ouagadougou were finally voted, and the "Bancoville" of French West Africa began to take on a new look with wide avenues, large administrative buildings, official residences, and even a new palace for the Mogho Naba.

*175 643 631 554 *648 With the reconstitution of the Upper Volta, the Mogho Naba and his chiefs attained their highest prestige since the conquest. The chiefs even had strong influence over the Mossi representatives to the organs of the French Union, because of the decisive support they had granted them in the elections. But this increase in prestige was to be short-lived. The chiefs were no longer the sole representatives of their people, and the Mossi were no longer isolated from events in other parts of the Upper Volta, or for that

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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matter from events in French West Africa and the rest of Overseas France. All projects undertaken in the Upper Volta became of interest to the other units of the French Union because the funds to support them had to be voted on by representatives of the whole, including not only local Mossi and non-Mossi, but also Africans in other territories, French colonial populations outside Africa, and the metropolitan French. 643 631 554 648*

The conditions that were to have the greatest effect on the position of Mossi chiefs were created in January 1949, when elections were held to choose the Upper Volta's first General Council. The major parties involved in the election were the Mossi-dominated Union Voltaïque; the Entente Voltaïque, a local section of the RDA representing the interests of such non-Mossi populations as the Lobi, Fulani, Bobo, Senufo, and Gurunsi; and a group of smaller ethnic parties such as the Union Lobie and the Indépendants. The campaign reflected all the tensions and conflicts prevalent among the administration, the RDA, the non-Mossi parties, and the Union Voltaïque. Both the Union Lobie and the Indépendants spoke out against what they feared to be Mossi domination, and accused the Mossi chiefs of "neo-feudalism." The Union Voltaïque accused the RDA of radicalism, of associating with communists, and of hostility to the chiefs. It cited as evidence the deposal of several Agni and Senufo chiefs in the Ivory Coast by partisans of the RDA. The RDA, in turn, charged the Union Voltaïque with supporting reactionary, feudal-minded chiefs, and thus with opposing the true interests of the Mossi and other Voltaic peoples. Furthermore, it accused Masson (Governor Mouragues's executive officer) of encouraging the cercle commanders to fight against the RDA, and of jailing about 300 RDA members at Bobo-Dioulasso.[28] 175* 631 666 665 [646]

As expected, the Union Voltaïque won most of the seats in the more populous Mossi section of the Upper Volta, and thus was able to dominate the political institutions created by the administration. Nevertheless, the election produced deep political scars in the Upper Volta, and lasting enmity between the RDA and the Mossi chiefs.

During the years that followed the reunification of the Upper Volta, the Mossi chiefs as such were not accorded any specific status by the administration. Beginning in 1953, bills designed to regularize the status of the chiefs were submitted by Mossi delegates to the Assembly of the French Union and to various other organs of the French Union, but to no effect. The Mossi chiefs meanwhile sought to define their own position. In 1952, under the leadership of the Mogho Naba, they formed an organization called the Union of the Traditional Chiefs of the Upper Volta. Article IV of the statutes which they filed with the territorial administration reads as follows: 175* 648* 631 [646] 175* 631 647 [643]

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*175 The present Union has as its aims:

631 1. To establish an alliance and effective solidarity among its members, and to defend their material and moral interests in the face of all difficulties;

647 2. To collaborate closely with the economic and social aims of the French administration;

3. To provide aid to the dependents, wives or minor children, of all deceased members of the society. This aid will be obtained:

a. by drawing from a special reserve fund;

b. by contributions from all members; and

c. by an additional subscription according to the circumstances. The total sum to be granted to each family will be set at the annual meetings of the general assembly.

This organization decided to meet annually in Ouagadougou, Ouahigouya, Tenkodogo, and Koudougou. Member chiefs were to be notified of meetings through the existing traditional political hierarchies. Those chiefs who were unable to attend meetings could send a representative.[24]

*[648] Both the politicians and the French administration welcomed the formation of the Union. The politicians saw it as a forum that would support them in elections and to which they could report on their activities on behalf of their constituents. The French officials welcomed the opportunity to meet periodically with the chiefs and to obtain their help and support for official plans and projects.

One of the new administrative policies was to increase the number of administrative units (the cercles, subdivisions, and postes), and to staff them with European civil servants. Mossi country was given one civil servant for every thousand inhabitants. These officials were thus less isolated from the central administration and more directly responsible to their superiors for the areas under their command. Most of them were assisted by young African civil servants, both Mossi and non-Mossi, who kept administrative records, worked in the agricultural extension programs, acted as interpreters and court assessors, and so on. In addition to these administrative assistants, there were usually junior civil servants who were stationed at the homes of the district chiefs. They were called "secretaries," but they actually served as liaison officers between the administrators and the chiefs.

[634] Thus the administrators notified the district chiefs through these secretaries that certain taxes were being levied, and would be collected on a specific date; that certain laws affecting them had been passed; that an election would be held on a certain date; or that they should summon the potential draftees in their district to be examined at a certain time.

The postwar administrators did much more than communicate with the district chiefs through their secretaries. They still had considerable author-

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ity in local matters, even though the Indigénat had been abolished. They adjudicated minor offenses committed in their territories or referred to them on appeal by the districts and villages. They attempted to settle family quarrels and commercial cases, and ordered that restitution be made in cases of theft. However, they had to send any difficult case or major crime up the hierarchy until it reached the officials authorized to deal with it.

The French administrators also continued to act as intermediaries between the large commercial enterprises in Ouagadougou who wished to recruit men for labor or to buy local produce and enterprises in the larger Mossi towns. Thus, if a private firm in Ouagadougou wanted men to work on the roads, it asked the *chef de poste* (administrator) of a region to tell the district chiefs that its representatives would come to recruit men on a certain date. If a large business was planning to canvass a certain area in order to buy shea nuts, it asked the local administrators to notify the chiefs. No one was ever quite certain whether these activities were legal, but no one questioned them. The *chefs de poste* might simply have been giving the people information that they could not have obtained by any other means.

The Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou, like the supreme chiefs of the other Mossi regions, continued to perform both the administrative role assigned to him by the colonial government and his traditional politico-ceremonial role. He was partly responsible, through his active cooperation with the administration, for the rapidity with which the Upper Volta became a functioning entity. For example, in his anxiety to make his capital worthy of being the territory's administrative center, he gave his full support to the extension of the Abidjan–Bobo-Dioulasso railroad to Ouagadougou. But he always succeeded in giving the impression (to foreigners at least) of detachment and dissociation from the French administration. His behavior was quite different when he functioned as Mogho Naba of the Ouagadougou Mossi. The following is a brief description of a visit he made to one of the districts:

> The Mogho Naba arrived unexpectedly at the district chief's headquarters, where no preparations had been made for his visit. It appears that he was on a tour of his domains to consult with the local chiefs about the forthcoming elections, and had simply dropped in to visit the district chief. However, as soon as his presence became known around the district, important village chiefs and the heads of lineages all put on their robes and appeared to pay homage to him. Meanwhile, he was consulting with his host. But as soon as the conversation was over he came out into the compound, where he was saluted by the chief's Bendere, who praised the royal ancestors by reciting

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175 their genealogies and traditions. The Mogho Naba was pleased by the reci-
643 tation and thanked the drummer.

Later that day, the Mogho Naba presented himself in the courtyard of
634 the district chief's compound to be saluted by the village chiefs and by the
574 heads of lineages. They came to him in the traditional way, rubbing their
182 palms and bending their foreheads to the ground. He addressed them, and in response they snapped their fingers in the customary manner. Then, one by one, the village chiefs and the lineage elders came to their monarch and gave him presents of money which ranged from 50 to 200 francs. The Mogho Naba paid little attention to the sums given, being more interested in this act of homage and fealty. However, he listened carefully as each donor announced his name and rank within the official hierarchy or village. He later thanked them collectively and departed. This ceremony, while not very elaborate, differed little in detail from those characteristic of the traditional Mossi's relationship to their Mogho Naba. The new element here was that the monarch was traveling around his domain, establishing a close relationship with his chiefs and subjects, whose support he needed for his modern political alliances.[28]

*175
643 The Mogho Naba continued to hold the morning ceremony at court,
796 even though it was rapidly losing its traditional function and becoming of
182 major interest only to visitors. He also continued to hold those ceremonies associated with individual appointments to the nam and with traditional
[692] sacrifices. Unknown to many was the fact that traditional authorities at court still judged legal cases which many Mossi refused to take to the Europeans.

*175 In contrast to the Mogho Naba, the traditional provincial ministers now
645 lost most of the power they had held in the pre-conquest period, and all the
182 duties they had acquired in the immediate post-conquest era. As we have seen, one minister, the Baloum Naba, had entered politics at the suggestion of the Mogho Naba, but even he was now relegated to the entourage that accompanied the Mogho Naba and the European administrators on visits to the ministers' former provinces. The increased number of European administrators had made these ministers superfluous.

178 The district chiefs retained some prestige after the war. They could still
*175 judge legal cases, with the understanding that the litigants were free to go
554 to the Europeans if they so desired and had to be sent there in serious cases.
634 Their major problem was that a more efficient administration was taking
[692] a greater interest in district affairs. For the first time since the conquest, officials were visiting some of the more remote villages. No longer were they said to "act as locusts"—that is, to appear periodically to garner supplies and men from the districts and then disappear until the next onslaught. Instead, they appeared regularly to collect taxes and to take censuses, and

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they were kept informed of almost everything that occurred in the districts by their secretaries and "friends" (usually war veterans who visited the administrative headquarters on business).

Not all the district chiefs accepted with equanimity their gradual loss of power. Many of them had accepted at face value the joyful refrain of the elite and the politicians that the "land was cooling"—i.e., that the rigors of colonialism were over. They welcomed the liberal laws of 1946, and believed that they would regain the power lost by their fathers. Thus, they were among the most surprised persons in the Upper Volta when the easing of colonial rule brought with it more French supervision rather than less. From the standpoint of political power, most district chiefs had been better off in the days of the "locusts." At least the locusts came and went, whereas progressive government slowly but irrevocably eroded their power.

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The village chiefs, as those members of the traditional Mossi hierarchy who had the closest contact with the people, felt the postwar administrative changes much more keenly than the other chiefs. They found it increasingly difficult to deal with war veterans, adherents of formal religions, and other people who had lost respect for traditional values and practices.[20] Whereas few Mossi would have refused to visit or to pay allegiance to the Mogho Naba or to their district chief, with whom they had little personal contact, many did refuse to have political relationships with those village chiefs whom they neither liked nor respected.

175* 178 648* 641

The rural Mossi, upon whom the position of the Mogho Naba and his chiefs ultimately depended, did not fully comprehend the postwar changes in the Upper Volta, and were initially willing to look to their chiefs for guidance. Most of them referred to their newly won civil rights in the French Union by what they called *soguem minga,* which may be translated as "possession of one's self," "liberty," or "liberation." To the majority of them, however, the reforms meant chiefly the end of forced labor. They were more than willing to leave the new political affairs to their chiefs, despite the assurance of the elite that they could now participate in the governmental processes. Dupont wrote in a romantic vein about the introduction of political reforms in the Upper Volta:

> Can we truly speak of a change for the better in this country? Yes! A page has been turned, the last in a chapter. A new chapter has just begun, and I was the amazed witness of this beginning. . . . One must say, in France's favor, that she did not merely engage in beautiful speeches, but that her liberating decrees deeply modified the life of the natives. Gone is the export of laborers; gone are the uncontrolled prestations; gone the requisitions of produce which the peasants had to buy elsewhere at a higher price and resell at a loss; gone the sales in which the collective price given to the district

chief became ridiculously smaller when distributed among the producers; gone the tolls along the roads. Henceforth, all such services will be duly and individually compensated.

Even in the most remote and least accessible villages, people speak of liberty. The old women who go to the pools for water sit down for a moment near their jars in order to talk about it. Even bush fires spread less rapidly than this news.[27]

Very few Mossi in the rural areas were qualified to vote in the first post-war elections, and those who were qualified voted for the candidates preferred by the chiefs. However, as the franchise was progressively broadened after 1951, and many more Mossi and non-Mossi politicians traveled through the rural areas, the politicians favored by the chiefs found that they had to campaign to maintain their position. Both the chiefs and their politicians resented this. One visitor to the Upper Volta reports: "A highly educated Mossi of the Upper Volta told me, 'Citizenship has unsettled and ruined the people. Everyone has become his own master, and believes himself free to do whatever he wishes.'"[28] Opposition to the chiefs and their friends came from the Moslems, who supported their co-religionists for office, and from a growing group of young Mossi who resented the power of the chiefs. In 1955 one such group in Yatenga, composed of mission-educated youths, war veterans, and former workers, broke away from the Union Voltaïque and formed the Mouvement Démocratique Voltaïque (MDV) under the joint leadership of Gérard Ouédraogo and Michel Dorange, a Frenchman, who had been a captain in the colonial army. The partisans of the MDV often came into violent conflict with the supporters of the chiefs, but the organization itself was not banned by the administration, because its members included many veterans, and because Dorange was one of its leaders.

The appearance of the anti-chief MDV was symptomatic of the problems which the Mossi chiefs were to encounter as the people became free to elect their own representatives. For one thing, the people could now censure their chiefs by voting for their opponents, who appealed to them in terms of release from traditional prestations. But more important, even those Mossi politicians who were still friendly to the chiefs and depended on their support for election were becoming increasingly autonomous. The chiefs were operating in one power structure, the politicians in another and more important one. In Dakar, in Paris, and in the Palace of Versailles (where the Assembly of the French Union met) Mossi politicians dealt not only with local African problems but with problems the chiefs knew nothing about. As the politicians grew skillful at the game of metropolitan

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As the politicians grew skillful at the game of metropolitan politics, their power increasingly eclipsed that of their chiefly benefactors 175* and of local French administrators. For example: 631 554

> A local chef de poste summoned the district chiefs to bring their potential draftees for the war in Algeria early in the morning on a specific date to be examined by medical officers. Those chiefs who looked upon any summons with a trepidation born of their past experience with prewar administrators, arrived at the headquarters as early as 5:30 A.M. on the morning in question, bringing their young men with them. Many of these chiefs, whose only means of transportation was their slow-moving ceremonial horse, spent the night en route to be there at dawn. More sophisticated chiefs coming from similar distances left on the same morning and arrived at about 8:00 A.M., the hour when the administrator himself was first seen stirring in his residence. One chief, a war veteran, rode up on his bicycle at about 8:45 A.M. in a most unchiefly manner and became the butt of jokes from the other waiting chiefs. Another district chief, who was an elected representative, did not arrive until about 9:30 A.M., and he was greeted on arrival by the administrator. This man had only about half a mile to travel, and he did so in his car. His colleagues greeted him with a mixture of jokes, feigned awe, and surprise, and some of them addressed him as "Mogho Naba" and "Governor."[19]

665 634 [489] [492] [493]

Another example of the shift in the balance of power was the relationship that developed between Joseph Conombo and the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou. The Mogho Naba had nominated and supported Conombo as a candidate for deputy to the National Assembly. He was elected, and later became Secretary of the Interior in the Mendès-France Government of 1954. He thus had access to power undreamed of by the Mogho Naba. Being a Moaga as well as a good politician, he never flaunted his authority before his traditional chief; nor did the Mogho Naba try to exercise his traditional powers over him. But their behavior toward each other clearly demonstrated that they were both aware of the shift in power, even though they were both too wise and too polite to make an issue of it.

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Other political forces also jeopardized the position of the chiefs. For example, as head of the Union Voltaïque, Conombo had an honored position within a Paris-based African parliamentary group called the Indépendants d'Outre-Mer (IOM). He would have held an even more important position within this group if he had had wider support among the non-Mossi in the Upper Volta. But his power was limited by the presence and competition of the MDV, which, while Mossi-supported, was anti-chief; the Mouvement Populaire de la Révolution Africaine (MPA), an anti-Mossi and anti-RDA party formed in 1954 by Nazi Boni of the Bobo ethnic group and supported by some officials in the administration; and the Parti Démocratique Voltaïque (PDV), a local branch of a now less radical RDA

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*175 created out of the defunct Entente Voltaïque. In an attempt to gain the sup-
*646 port of these parties and of the young Mossi intellectuals who, while anti-
648 chief, were not yet willing to join the PDV, Conombo officially scrapped
665 the Union Voltaïque in 1955 and formed the Parti Social d'Education des
554 Masses Africaines (PSEMA).[30] The party pledged to promote social reform and the right of Africans to manage their own affairs, and to struggle against family, regional, and racial hatredi. But it did not win the support of the non-Mossi; nor did it attract many young Mossi, who did not believe that it had discarded the mantle of the chiefs. Conombo's readiness to ally himself with anti-chief forces, however, did make it obvious to the chiefs that when politicians were out to gain power, they did not always take the interests of the chiefs into account.

*175 In 1956, when a *loi-cadre* granting almost complete autonomy to the
642 French African territories was approved by the National Assembly, it made
631 no provision for the participation of the traditional chiefs in the projected
578 governmental structure.[31] In fact, as preparations were being made to implement the new reforms, a number of politicians and educated Africans launched an attack on the chiefs which seems to have been a step toward edging them out of power altogether. The newspaper *Afrique Nouvelle*, published in Dakar but read by the educated elite throughout French West Africa, carried a series of articles that proclaimed: "The district chiefs should be given neither a position nor a salary!" "Let us democratize the chieftainship!" and "Let us decapitate the district!" (i.e., let us do away with the district chief). Over a photo showing the traditional chiefs, *Afrique Nouvelle* ran the caption, "Are they still chiefs of the territories?"[32]

[554] The Mossi chiefs, who had retained more power and prestige than any other chiefs in French West Africa, bore the brunt of these attacks and rose to defend the rights of all the chiefs. Their most able spokesman was Bouda, a Councillor of the French Union and a district chief in his own right. He wrote in *Afrique Nouvelle*:

> The Mossi [socio-political] organization, by its simplicity and cohesiveness, aroused the admiration of France, which respected and retained it.
>
> The power of the Mossi chief may be great, but it is not used to oppose the progress which is being made. The Mossi chief is not as much of a conformist as people have a tendency to believe. The social and political revolution which, since 1946, has made Mossi country so different from what it was before the war, is effecting the transition from a society largely encompassed by Nabas possessing real authority, an authority sanctioned by custom, to a more progressive way of life whose essential characteristics are underlined by the growth of towns, the uprooting of a large part of the population, and the triumph of the desire to be on one's own. . . .

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The Mossi chiefs indeed understand today that a tradition, no matter how 642
respected, is not immutable. It is susceptible to change and evolution; it will 631
evolve.

In all truth, and with due deference to those who systematically denigrate 578
everything connected with them, the chiefs have borne positive witness to the characteristic spirit of this country, and it is as unfair as it is stupid to deny the important role they have played in certain cases in the cause of tranquility and peace.

As the natural spokesmen for their people, they have been, in many instances, the first to pay a heavy price for the common cause. Without them, demagoguery would have plunged the country into irreparable decadence.

. . .

The demands of the traditional chiefs are justified and deserve to be heeded, because, in the face of the inertia of the Government and the rapid development of events, it is to be feared that the chiefs, although disposed by nature to be patient and to wait quietly, might run rather than walk in the days to come.[53]

In December 1956, the Mossi chiefs, supported by the other traditional 175*
chiefs in French West Africa, convoked a Congress of Chiefs at Dakar. 642
This Congress approved a constitution for an organization called the Fed- 631
eral Union of the Syndicates of the Traditional Chiefs, and adopted a pro- 665
posal on the need for a statute governing the status and material well-being of the chiefs. The Congress did underline the apolitical character of the chieftainship, but asked that the chiefs be given some recognition in the new structures being created by the loi-cadre.

On the local level, the Mossi chiefs convoked a Syndicate of the Traditional Chiefs of the Upper Volta at Tenkodogo a month later. Its president, Etienne Congo, brother of Mogho Naba Sagha II of Ouagadougou, declared:

> At this time, when vast changes are under way, it would be inconceivable for us, the traditional chiefs, not to take an active part in the new developments, of whose urgent and precarious nature we are fully aware.
>
> Our position is clear: we are not opposed in any way to this evolution.
>
> As for statutory matters, I wish to express our concern over the fact that at the very moment when the loi-cadre is turning an important page in the history of Africa, our group has been left out.[54]

668

The Mossi chiefs had indeed been abandoned by the French administra- 175*
tion. Although they continued to receive the support of some politicians, 631
it soon became clear that the latter were mainly interested in maneuvering 642
for power under the loi-cadre and in uniting their parties to this end. Co- 665
nombo, the leader of the PSEMA, was induced by his supporters and by a [648]*

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number of young educated Mossi to merge his party with the PDV-RDA in the hope of gaining a foothold in the Bobo-Dioulasso area and of uniting the Mossi and non-Mossi of the Upper Volta. The two parties did merge in September 1956, becoming the Parti Démocratique Unifié (PDU). The PDU's manifesto roundly condemned the "artificial division of the territory into East and West Volta" and the "classification of the population as Mossi and non-Mossi," and urged all Voltaics to join the new party. In addition, it declared that the Mossi chiefs merited some status in the territory because they had preserved their "political entity throughout African history."[35] The PDU went so far as to make the Mogho Naba its honorary president, and to speculate that he might be made the Governor of an autonomous or independent Upper Volta.

Nevertheless, the merger was to be a greater victory for the opponents of the Mossi chiefs than for their allies in the PSEMA. For one thing, many of the anti-chief Mossi intellectuals now joined the PDU, bringing with them their modernistic views. For another, since former RDA members were running for office in the Upper Volta under the banner of the PDU, the local chiefs had to give up their opposition to these candidates, and the French administration did likewise. This hands-off policy gave all the candidates, even those who were basically hostile to the chiefs, a better chance of being elected.

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The PDU won a slight over-all majority and a large Ouagadougou majority in the Upper Volta elections for the Territorial Assembly and the Government Council in March 1957. However, the anti-chief MDV carried the Ouahigouya (Yatenga) area, and an Indépendant candidate, Maurice Yaméogo, defeated a supporter of the Mossi chiefs, Henri Guissou, in the Koudougou area. Of great importance was the election of Ouezzain Coulibaly, one of the early non-Mossi Voltaic supporters of Houphouët-Boigny, who had returned to the Upper Volta after the merger of the PSEMA and the PDV-RDA. Coulibaly was elected on the PDU ticket as a representative for Banfora, a district in the western region.[36]

Unfortunately for the Mossi chiefs, the RDA emerged from the March elections as the strongest party in all the former French West African territories. Because of this, most of the politicians in the Upper Volta sought to establish a modus vivendi with Houphouët-Boigny, the Party's recognized leader. Most of them went to visit him at Yamoussokro, his home in the Ivory Coast, and out of these meetings there emerged a realignment of the MDV and the PDV-RDA wing of the PDU at the expense of Conombo and the PSEMA group. This created a new majority in the Upper Volta, and Coulibaly, an old ally of Houphouët-Boigny long suspected by the

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Mossi chiefs of being a modernist, was elected as the first Vice-President of the new government. Not only was the Mogho Naba deprived of the opportunity to become the African head of the Upper Volta, but such stalwart supporters of the chiefs as Conombo and Bouda were left out of the government. Thus, after twelve years of opposition to Houphouët-Boigny, Mogho Naba Sagha and his chiefs were finally defeated. Their defeat was made even more ignominious by the elevation of a non-Mossi commoner to a position of dominance over the Mossi chiefs.[37]

Having lost out in the Upper Volta, the Mossi chiefs had no spokesman when the new Vice-Presidents of the Government Councils of the French West African territories and the European Presidents of these territories met at Dakar to discuss the problems of the truncated French West Africa Federation. No one mentioned the problem of the position of the traditional chiefs. As far as the politicians were concerned, the issue of the chief on the inter-territorial level was dead. It had relevance only in those territories where the chiefs retained some influence.

In an effort to consolidate their hold on the Upper Volta, the PDV-RDA members in the PDU met in September 1957 and sought to convert the PDU into a territorial subsection of the RDA. This move was resisted by the supporters of the chiefs within the PDU, especially by Conombo, who as leader of the PSEMA, an important faction within the PDU, had been completely eclipsed by Coulibaly and the PDV. Conombo resigned from the PDU and announced his intention to rebuild the PSEMA with the support of the Mossi chiefs. On November 12, however, before his plans could be put into action, Mogho Naba Sagha II died in Ouagadougou and political activities in the Upper Volta came to a standstill. A period of national mourning was proclaimed, and politicians from all parties gathered to pay their last respects and to eulogize the monarch.

Sagha's death, like that of all Mossi princes, was ascribed to foul means, although it was clear that he had succumbed to uremia. The people reacted to the interregnum by looting, and the shopkeepers in Ouagadougou and surrounding areas were compelled to close their establishments. "The people of Ouagadougou ran to Saba, but the merchants there were quite diligent, and needed no police force to protect them."[38] It was reported that those wives of the deceased ruler who were not at the palace at the time of his death took off the brass anklets denoting their royal status and became free women. If this actually happened, it was an unprecedented occurrence.

When the Mossi traditional electoral college convened to choose a new Mogho Naba, it reportedly considered the candidacy of both Moussa Con-

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*175 643 666 go, Sagha's eldest son, and Etienne Congo, Sagha's brother. Etienne Congo allegedly had the support of some politicians, but he was rejected in favor of Moussa. The new ruler was accepted by the Government Council as the "supreme chief of the Mossi" and was installed in the traditional manner. He indicated in his acceptance speech that he was "like a rock [*kougri*] that nothing can move," and became known as Mogho Naba Kougri. A few days after his installation, he appeared in full regalia before the members of the Territorial Assembly to deliver what was probably the most *175 643 difficult inauguration speech ever composed by a Mogho Naba. This speech will be quoted in full, because it may well be a eulogy for the Mossi chief:

539 Over and above the signs of respect shown to the mortal remains of my father, and later the expressions of keen satisfaction on the people's part for the choice of which I have been the object—over and above all this, I see the great interest that the governmental and administrative authorities attach to the role which my ancestors have always fulfilled, and which I am called upon to fulfill anew. Over and above all of these external manifestations, I see the unfailing love of all the Mossi for the throne I occupy and for the tradition I represent along with my confreres. Because the importance of my position, as well as the honor that befalls me, surpasses the meager reality and the possibilities of one man, it is with conviction, sincerity, and faith that I present myself to all of you to tell you that while I accept with fortitude these responsibilities and these honors for the love of my people, I count upon the cooperation and friendship of all, the faithfulness, devotion, and courage of all the Mossi, to acquit myself worthily and to preside not in a passive but in an active and decisive way over the social and economic evolution of our country.

Although I represent tradition and custom in this country; although I must ensure the survival of venerable customs, concerning which we shall be intransigent; I am aware, nevertheless, that there are customs which adapt themselves with difficulty to the exigencies of the modern times in which we live.

*175 643 631 539 This is why, in addressing myself to all the customary chiefs, and especially to my closest associates, I shall say that we have no right to remain passive observers of the reconstruction of our country and of the multiple transformations of the society over whose destiny we have always presided. We must move along with the tide, but in order not to be swept along at a headlong pace and risk failure before reaching our goal, we must stand in the vanguard of the race and lead it at a vigorous and satisfying pace, but one which does not stifle the weak, for they too have a right to life, to progress, to well-being, and to our protection.

As recently as ten years ago, it was easy to be a chief, just as it was easy to be a cercle commander. It was enough to give orders for everything to run smoothly. But today, the chief must add to his title a real merit, a knowledge of men, a true devotion, an integrity, and, above all, a commitment to the welfare of the people under his jurisdiction. It is under these conditions alone

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that the customary chiefs will preserve and extend their influence, and it is our task to extend this influence. For, if the new institutions are meant for the progress and welfare of the Africans, then they must also be meant for that of the chieftainship.

Our intention, then, is not to leave the management of the country to the elected representatives alone, but to remain in close collaboration with them; for, if the elected representatives of yesterday have rights, the representatives of several centuries' standing retain theirs also.

Intent as I mean to be on curbing all the abuses for which the people have customarily blamed the chiefs, I will not cease to remind the Chief of the Territory, the members of the Government Council, and the elected representatives at all levels, that they themselves must remain, before God and man, the ones truly responsible for these abuses. For, while the lot of the civil servant has improved considerably, and that of the elected representative is at the summit of the pyramid, that of the chief has remained quite modest and quite comparable to that of the still miserable peasant—riches for the others, poverty for himself.

Your Excellency the Governor, Honorable Ministers, and Parliamentarians, I am sure that you understand me. I am equally sure that you think of the meager outlook for the territory, but it is necessary that everyone live well during the period of the seven fat cows, and meagerly during that of the seven lean cows. The cooperation of the chieftainship will be granted to you increasingly for the economic and social betterment of our territory. It devolves upon you, as agents of superior authority, to rid the chiefs of the arbitrary vexations to which no civil servant is subjected any longer, and to send them forth, not as mercenaries but as true captains, into the battle which we all have joined against the human misery that weighs so heavily upon our people.

We are all aware of the magnitude of the struggle, and the cooperation of the chiefs, who influence the entire Voltaic population, may be needed to crown it with success.

Moreover, your Excellency the Governor, the chieftainship has always served well—perhaps has served France, or at least its representatives, too well, at the expense of its own interests.

But I will deliberately forget the errors of the past. I shall remember only the true fidelity which my fathers and their associates have always displayed toward France. I shall look only for the gratitude of the Government of the French Republic on their behalf, and for the considerable role they played in transforming our country. I shall think only of that Franco-African friendship which under normal circumstances will lead us to success, happiness, and peace. I know that the times are difficult; I know that men today have numerous reasons for quarrels. I know that vast popular or so-called popular movements sometimes topple all that other men have built with much patience and wisdom. But despite all of these things, it is with words of concord and of peace that I wish to close, hoping that throughout our political battles we shall keep in mind the need for peace, because man is only happy insofar as he enjoys social peace, as well as peace of the heart.[29]

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175 For all its occasional eloquence, the new Mogho Naba's speech was
643 clearly self-serving; moreover, the French officials to whom it was addressed
*[648] were withdrawing from the territory, and the young Mossi elite had other ideas about the distribution of power. It is no wonder, then, that most of the politicians listened to his speech in respectful silence and then "calmly went ahead with their tasks," confident, it seems, in their new status as the elected representatives of the people.[40]

175 The new Mogho Naba was faced with a political situation in which
643 he could play only a limited role. His strength now lay exclusively among
668 the more conservative elements of the newly enfranchised rural masses.
578 The political representative of this group was Conombo, who in November 1957 went ahead with his plans to rebuild the PSEMA. In December Conombo saw a chance to embarrass and perhaps defeat the Coulibaly
[646] Government when the Territorial Assembly decided to vote on the budget of the Upper Volta; he and his followers withheld their vote of confidence in the Government and tried to force it to resign. But the conditions under which the members of the Territorial Assembly could force a government to resign were not clearly defined by the loi-cadre. The various parliamentary groups appealed in vain to Paris and to Houphouët-Boigny to resolve the problem. Coulibaly broke the impasse by forming a new coalition and giving Maurice Yaméogo, an Indépendant candidate who had been a member of the RDA and later of the MDV but had switched back to the RDA, the important portfolio of Minister of the Interior. Finally, the Assembly, which had been adjourned, reconvened in April 1958 and confirmed Coulibaly in power. In a speech to the Assembly, Coulibaly declared: "It is my imperative task to tell you that each one of you is faced today with a decisive choice. You must choose either a pooling of efforts and good will in the interests of the country, or the pursuit of personal quarrels and partisan rivalries that will undermine the public welfare."[41]

175 The Mogho Naba and his political allies suffered yet another defeat
643 with the Assembly's approval of the Coulibaly Government. However,
*648 Kougri had other strings to his bow. In June 1958, when de Gaulle re-
578 turned to power, Kougri sought to gain the General's favor, and to raise his own status, by pledging his support and that of the Mossi chiefs. This astute political move infuriated many Voltaics, Mossi and non-Mossi, politicians and non-politicians. Amadou Tamboura, a member of the MDV, replied to the Mogho Naba in the newspaper *Paris-Dakar*. Under the headline, "The Message of the Mogho Naba to General de Gaulle Commits Only Himself," he wrote:

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It will be well if the Mogho Naba understands that he owns but the vestige of a past whose hour has irrevocably tolled, and that his message to the President of the Council [de Gaulle] commits no one in the Upper Volta but himself, a mere citizen like the others.

I deplore the discrimination which the message of the Mogho Naba implicitly contains. I should like to say to the Mogho Naba that in the Upper Volta there are no Mossi, Fulani, or Bobo people, but only Black people struggling for their liberty. No Mossi or any other Voltaic would agree to the Mogho Naba's expression of fidelity to France in his name. If this must be done, then the Territorial Assembly and the Government Council alone are qualified to do so.[42]

Despite these attacks and numerous suggestions in the press that the Mogho Naba and the Mossi chiefs were developing a "Touré complex" (i.e., the fear of suffering the same fate as the Fulani chiefs of Fouta Djallon, who had been deposed by Sékou Touré, Vice-President of the Guinea Government Council), the Mossi ruler actively supported acceptance of the constitution of the Fifth French Republic, which promised the colonies full internal self-government within the "French Community." Since the constitution was adopted by the Upper Volta population by an overwhelming favorable vote of 99.1 per cent, no one could estimate how effective the Mogho Naba's support had been.[43] [177] [642]

Coulibaly died just before the referendum, and was replaced on an interim basis by Yaméogo. The parliamentarians accordingly had to choose a new leader, now to be President of the Government Council, as well as to draw up a constitution for the new republic and determine whether it would join any of the regional federations then being considered by several territories. The Territorial Assembly was scheduled to meet in extraordinary session on October 17, 1958, to select a successor to Coulibaly. The Mogho Naba, anticipating dissension and perhaps once again seeking the limelight, sent a message to the representatives on October 15, urging "a government of union and public safety." But the politicians resented what they regarded as his interference in matters that did not concern him; few, if any, took his message seriously, and none replied. 175 646 642 666 [643] [578]

The Mogho Naba therefore decided to force the issue. He summoned his traditional ministers to a conference, and, despite the objections of the Baloum Naba, obtained their permission to order his Tansoba to muster his warriors and lay siege to the Territorial Assembly. Early in the morning of October 17, about 3,000 Mossi warriors, armed with bows and arrows, swords, spears, and ancient flint guns, converged on the Assembly. Later that morning, the Mogho Naba himself, accompanied by his Tansoba, 175* 643 669 578

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*175 643 669 *578 [648]

arrived on the scene, dressed in his dark-brown cotton war cloak and his war bonnet, the symbol of his power. The demonstration lasted until 11 A.M., when the French Army undertook to scatter the warriors. Finally, the Ouidi Naba ordered the warriors to return to the palace. Only then did Max Berthet, the High Commissioner, open the Assembly session with an expression of regret for the "unacceptable and incomprehensible" demonstrations.[44]

The Assembly adjourned that afternoon and did not meet again until October 20. In the interim, the parliamentarians took measures to deal with this challenge to their power. On October 18, the Government Council issued a communiqué "stigmatizing Friday's demonstration." The Council regretted that the demonstration had prevented a democratically elected body from sitting, but affirmed that "order and public security, indispensable to everyday life, will be maintained."[45] On the following day a longer communiqué was issued, declaring that a truce had been signed by the authorized representatives of the Union Démocratique (Voltaic section of the RDA) and the Mouvement de Regroupement Africain (Voltaic section of the PRA) after a three-day meeting in Ouagadougou. According to the communiqué, the two groups had agreed that "the unity of the democratic forces of the country" was "the decisive question of the hour."

[646] The Territorial Assembly met in Plenary Session on October 20, and on the basis of the political truce, 68 representatives unanimously elected Maurice Yaméogo as President of the Government Council. The politicians further showed their disdain for the Mogho Naba by adopting the following motion:

> The Territorial Assembly, in the unanimous assurance that it alone has the mandate of the Voltaic people to legislate in their name, solemnly declares that, in the face of all opposition, it will work to give the Voltaic State democratic institutions conforming to the aspirations of the population, within the framework of the constitution which they approved by such a strong majority on September 28. Furthermore, it is insistent in its demands that the authorities responsible for public order do everything in their power to determine the persons responsible for the demonstration and to see what should be done to avoid a recurrence of such an event.[46]

The Mogho Naba soon found to his chagrin that even some of his own vassal chiefs had turned against him. They had been persuaded by the politicians that the French Government would never allow the Mogho Naba to take over the country, and furthermore that he had overstepped his bounds and had thereby endangered further the institution of the chieftainship. The Bureau of the Syndicate of the Traditional Chiefs of

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the Upper Volta met; discussed "the affair of October 17," and issued a statement dissociating itself from the Mogho Naba's action, reaffirming its desire to collaborate with the established authority, and requesting a clarification of the status of chiefs in the new order. The Government Council of the Upper Volta welcomed this statement, and hastened to reassure the chiefs that their status was not in danger: "It is not a question of damaging the traditional chiefs as a group, but rather of stigmatizing vigorously an act emanating from a superior chief like Mogho Naba Kougri, the consequences of which, unforeseen as they were, could have placed all the Mossi chiefs in a regrettable and irreparable position."[47]

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The Mogho Naba had obviously reached a political impasse, and he next turned his attention to creating a new image of the chieftainship. To this end, he married a young Mossi woman in accordance with the civil statutes of the state, thus becoming the first Mogho Naba and the first important Mossi chief to do so. A spokesman at the wedding placed this act in its proper perspective with the following words:

> I should now like to underscore the fact that this date, November 22 [1958], will be inscribed officially in the annals of the Upper Volta. For the first time in the history of our country, an Emperor, the person who best symbolizes tradition, has upset ancestral habits in the interest of progress. For the first time a woman will be given consideration in a royal court where she will be able to feel at her ease. For the first time, the spouse of a traditional chief will have her place near her husband as an equal and steady companion.[48] [644]

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The politicians were apparently prepared to recognize the eminence of the chiefs as long as they did not attempt to intervene in the affairs of the state, and a number of them attended the Mogho Naba's wedding. Among those present were the Presidents of both the Government Council and the Territorial Assembly, parliamentarians from various parties, and the mayors of Bobo-Dioulasso and Ouagadougou. On December 10, 1958, the Territorial Assembly confirmed Yameogo as President of the Government Council. The Assembly also approved his slate of ministers, among them Bouda, the Mossi chief who had once been a strong supporter of the traditional political hierarchy but who now belonged to the UDV-RDA. Then, on December 11, the Assembly decided to adopt the draft of a proposed constitution for the Upper Volta. Articles 2 and 3 of Paragraph I of this constitution state explicitly:

> The Republic of the Upper Volta is one and indivisible, secular, democratic, and social. Its principle is that the government is *of the people, by the people, and for the people. . . .*
>
> *Sovereignty belongs to the people. No section of the population, and no individual, may usurp it.* [Italics mine.][49]

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*175 631 642 The proposed constitution thus negated any claims of the traditional chiefs over any section of the Voltaic population. Henceforth, the only leaders of the Voltaic people were to be their elected representatives. The constitution did not even mention the traditional chiefs, and no provision was made to give them a special voice in the government. By its silence on these matters, the constitution had reduced the Mossi chiefs to the status of ordinary citizens. Certain parts of this constitution were later changed, but not the sections dealing with the democratic nature of the emerging state. The power of the chiefs was gone. Yaméogo, who had been a commoner among the Mossi of Koudougou, was given the title of "President of the Republic" by what had now become the National Assembly. It was he who traveled to and from Paris with Houphouët-Boigny and the other members of the Conseil de l'Entente, an organization comprising Dahomey, the Ivory Coast, Niger, and the Upper Volta, to parley for the independence of the Upper Volta; and it was he who traveled around the country explaining his policies. Yaméogo did not belabor the issue of the chiefs, but he declared quite firmly that "the days of devotion to certain little Voltaic saints" were over. "Now must begin the era of the cult of the Upper Volta, next only to that of God."[80]

*175 *648 642 631 France finally agreed that the Upper Volta should become independent on August 5, 1960, just 64 years after the conquest. However, sovereignty and power were not to be transferred to those from whom it had been wrested originally. Mogho Naba Kougri was only a spectator at the National Assembly when Yaméogo, praising Houphouët-Boigny and General de Gaulle, announced the coming of independence; and he was only a spectator when the Assembly ratified the independence agreement on July 27, 1960. The President said on that occasion that "Independence is not an end in itself, but a beginning. In effect, from now on we are called upon to assume full responsibility for our destiny."[81] He added that changes in the country would be brought about "in cooperation with the elected representatives, the party [RDA], and the youth organizations." He made no mention of the chiefs, and in fact the only chiefs who played any role during this period did so as politicians. The chiefs were to be honored only on Independence Day, when the President, in a spirit of benevolence, gave thanks to all those who had played a role in recovering the dignity of "Voltaic Man," including not only the French professors, the clergy, the war veterans, and the politicians, but also the "traditional chiefs who safeguarded the integrity of our state against external attack."[82]

*175 182 631 The government of the Upper Volta Republic decided to allow the institution of chieftainship to fade away by preventing the election of new

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chiefs. The Mogho Naba continued to receive a yearly stipend from the government, and local chiefs were still respected by the older people and by the more tradition-minded youths. Nevertheless, the drive toward the elimination of chiefly status in the Upper Volta went on. In January 1962, government decrees prohibited "the wearing of any costume or headgear indicating the status of chief or slave";[58] thus, the remaining Mossi chiefs are to be unrecognizable as such outside their own villages and districts. The chiefs, for their part, seem to have become reconciled to their fate. Many of their young relatives are joining the growing ranks of the new politicians.

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NOTES

Complete authors' names, titles, and publication data are given in the Bibliography, pp. 225–27. 000

CHAPTER ONE

1. Murdock states, "The large Gourma and Mossi tribes in the north of the [Voltaic] province have had strong states for at least the past 800 years and have frequently warred with their powerful neighbors on the Niger. . . . Their culture probably reflects fairly closely what that of the Mande must have been prior to their embarkation on a career of empire building and to the advent of the Berbers and Arabs from the north" (Murdock, p. 78. Cf. Greenberg, "Negro Kingdoms," p. 130, and Forde, p. 206). [174]

2. Binger states, "There does not exist one type general enough to permit one to say: there is a Mossi type. One meets people who resemble the Wolof; others who look like Mandingo from the banks of the Niger; and yet others who resemble the Hausa" (Binger, II, 491). Tauxier, on the other hand, reports that the nobles' faces were totally different from the Negroes'. According to him, the physiognomies of the nobles were "Semitic" and "truly distinguished" (*Le Noir du Soudan*, pp. 578–79). However, judging from the physiognomies of the three most recent Mogho Nanamse, one could make the equally erroneous generalization that the ruling group was the most Negroid of the entire Mossi population. [142] [144]

3. Barth, III, 202, 643; Dubois, p. 300.
4. Delafosse, I, 115.
5. Greenberg, "Languages," p. 8.
6. See Cardinall, *passim*, and Rattray, I, x, xi.
7. Maurice Delafosse, *Negroes of Africa* (Washington, D.C., 1931), p. 101.
8. Rattray, I, xxii, xi.
9. Fortes, "Political System," pp. 255–57.
10. *Ibid.*
11. Rattray, I, 343.
12. Cf. Cardinall, pp. 1–14, and Rattray, *passim*.
13. Dim Delobson claims that this took place toward the end of the tenth century (p. 2). Delafosse believes the date to be about 1030 A.D. (I, 306). After comparing the dates of many scholars, Tauxier felt that this event occurred around 1233 A.D. (*Le Noir du Yatenga*, p. 672). Most contemporary Mossi believe that it occurred during the eleventh century. [174]
14. According to a belief found among the people of Nobere district, Nedega gave his daughter permission to search for a husband and she went northward into Busansi country, where an old woman found her a husband named Rialle. Still another tradition states that she became pregnant by an animal and fled north from the anger

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600 of her parent. She aborted the child during her flight, and when she arrived in Busansi country she married a hunter called Rialle.

In a version of this tradition given in Delafosse (III, 307), Nyennega is called Poko (a general Mossi name for "woman"), and it is said that she left her father's house to lead an expedition against the Busansi. Her horse carried her far ahead of her troops and into the forest, past Rialle's hut. The young man caught it and helped her dismount. He told her he was the son of a Malinke (Mali) chief, but that he had been deprived of his succession and was now an elephant hunter. Poko was so charmed by his kindness that she decided to remain with him and become his wife.

According to Cardinall (p. 5), the Mamprusi claim descent from a woman warrior named Poko. When she saw her father's troops nearing defeat, she took a stallion and—to the amazement of the men, who believed a woman could not ride—led the troops to victory. Being a woman, however, she could not stop the horse, and it carried her far into Gambaga, where it stopped. Poko dismounted and fell asleep. A Boussanga came upon her sleeping form and, struck by her beauty, had intercourse with her. When she awoke he confessed his act to her, and in her shame she did not return home but elected to remain with the stranger. The child born as a result of this act was called Widiraogo, after the stallion she had been riding.

Ruelle (p. 675) recounts a tradition that Ouidraouga was the name of the Dagomba ruler's daughter who fled with a Busansi elephant hunter to Tenkodogo. Here she married the chief of that country, a man called Zangourana, and bore a son called Bougoum. Bougoum pushed his way to Koupela, where he lived with his wives and three sons called Houbri, Nabakere, and Kouda. Houbri conquered Ouagadougou, made it his capital, and forced his brothers to recognize his authority. He then divided the country into provinces, making his brothers nabas (chiefs); divided his own fee into provinces, placing his dignitaries as heads; and further divided the provinces into districts, at the heads of which he placed his own relatives.

15. Contemporary Mossi still send a woman's first son back to her patrilineage to live until he has grown to adulthood.

16. Delafosse (I, 311-12) states that the people of Fada-N'Gourma have a legend that Diaba Lompo came from the sky while the earth was not yet solid and stood with his wife upon a rock. Lompo then had children who dispersed over the earth and cultivated the soil. In Delafosse's opinion, a comparison of Gurmanche and Mossi genealogies shows that they agree on the date when the Dagomba entered the country.

17. Oubri himself was succeeded by several of his sons. Narimtore (also called Sorba), the eldest, was succeeded by his brothers Naskiemde, Nassebere, and Gningnemdo, all of whom lived at La. This line of succession is of interest since it throws some light on the inheritance pattern of the early Mossi. Dim Delobson (p. 290) states that Narimtore had no children and was succeeded by his brother Naskiemde. We know that Naskiemde had sons, because they received districts from him; however, he was succeeded by his brother Nassebere and not by any of his sons. Nassebere had several sons, including Yadega and Koudoumie, but one tradition states that he was succeeded by his brother Gningnemdo. The latter apparently had no sons, for none of his descendants are heads of districts. There is no way of determining whether he reigned. The interesting point is that there seems to have been an early custom whereby all the sons of a ruler succeeded him before the rule passed to another generation. This custom coincided with one dictating that the ruler must have attained his majority. Because the rule was passed from brother to brother, this latter condition was usually fulfilled without difficulty.

18. Cf. Dim Delobson, pp. 1-12, and Tauxier, *Le Noir du Yatenga*, pp. 55-75.

19. Cf. Dim Delobson, p. 55. He recognized only four Dimdamba: Boussouma

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Naba, Conquizitenga Naba, Yako Naba, and Riziam Naba. He specifically states that the Boulsa Naba was not a dim, and he would not have recognized the claim of such Dimdamba as Mane, Tema, and, later, Koupela. At the same time, Dim Delobson took advantage of the ideology of corporate possession of the nam by all the children of Ouedraogo and Oubri to take for himself the title Dim. He was in fact a simple Kombere of Sao. 000

20. Sa'di, pp. 16-17. Barth (III, 662-63), who was one of the first Europeans to read *Tarikh es-Sudan*, believed that the Mossi were at Timbuktu ca. 1329. His translation of the pertinent section reads: "The town of Timbuktu having been ransacked and destroyed by fire and sword by the king of Mossi, the garrison of Melle made their escape, and gave up the town. The power of Mossi, which up to this time has always been the successful champion of paganism, is very remarkable at such an early period, but the date is not quite certain within a year or two. If the date given is right, it happened toward the end of the reign of Mansa Musa."

The exact date of the capture of Timbuktu is not known. Nevertheless, the date most usually cited is 1333 or 1334 as given by Marc (p. 135), who argues not only from approximate dates in the *Tarikh* but also from evidence derived from the history of Mali. He believes that the Mossi could have wrested Timbuktu only from a weak ruler, and that such a ruler existed in the person of Mansa Magha, who ruled around 1333 or 1334.

The identity of the Mossi ruler who captured the city is uncertain. Tauxier (p. 67) believes it was Wemtanango, a younger son of Oubri, who had fought his way north and in the process had carved out for himself a realm which later became the Riziam province. But Delafosse (II, 240), believed it was Nassegue (1320-40) of the Yatenga kingdom. There is a discrepancy of about two hundred years between the genealogies of Tauxier and Delafosse.

21. Marc, p. 138.
22. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Soudan*, p. 459.
23. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Yatenga*, p. 554.
24. Binger, II, 394; Delafosse, II, 143-45; Tauxier, *Le Noir du Soudan*, pp. 88-91.
25. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Soudan*, pp. 621-30.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 609.
27. Marc, p. 17; Barth, III, 665-66, 671.

CHAPTER TWO

1. See Fortes, "The Structure of Unilineal Descent Groups," pp. 17-41.
2. See Fried, pp. 1-29.
3. Cheron, "Contribution," p. 648.
4. The Mossi also called the Dimdamba by the term *Kyedouende*, which means, literally, "Submit to God alone."
5. See Skinner, "Intergenerational Conflict," pp. 55-60.
6. Cheron, "Contribution," pp. 644-45.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 648.
8. Cf. Mangin, p. 16.
9. Skinner, "The Mossi 'Pogsioure,'" Article 28, pp. 20-22.
10. Archives, Document 1G-316 (1905-1906, Haute Volta).

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CHAPTER THREE

1. Dim Delobson, pp. 8–9.

2. Crozat, p. 4849.

[802] 3. *Ibid.* The Mossi always use multiples of three in connection with masculine affairs.

4. Archives, Document 15G-190 (1897–98, Haute Volta).

5. Dim Delobson, p. 37. The difficulty here is caused by the Mossi words and their meanings. For example, the words for "God" are Ouennam and Ouende. The words for "sun" are the same. The ethnologists can speculate about whether the Mossi once worshiped the sun or whether a high god has evolved into a supreme deity. But the Mossi do not agree that their use of the same words for God and for the sun implies that they believe God is the sun, or that the sun is their God. It should be pointed out *inter alia* that many African peoples are not awed by their gods and grant them human feelings and attributes. The Mossi regard their supreme being Ouennam as an otiose deity who is not too concerned with human affairs. It is the ancestors who provide the sanctions for good conduct.

[171] 6. It seems certain that Ibn Battuta saw a similar salutation in Mali: "The Negroes are of all people the most submissive to their king, and the most abject in their behavior before him. They swear by his name, saying *Mansa Souliman ki* [the Emperor Souliman has commanded]. If he summons any of them while he is holding an audience in his pavilion, the person summoned takes off his clothes and puts on worn garments, removes his turban and dons a dirty skullcap, and enters with his garments and trousers raised knee-high. He goes forward in an attitude of humility and dejection, and knocks the ground hard with his elbows, then stands with bowed head and bent back, listening to what he says. If anyone addresses the king and receives a reply from him, he uncovers his back and throws dust over his head and back, for all the world like a bather splashing himself with water. I used to wonder how it was that they did not blind themselves" (Gibb, p. 327; cf. Mangin, p. 15).

Obviously, Ibn Battuta found this salutation distasteful. Most Europeans feel the same way about the Mossi salute. If a Moaga visited England, he might be equally struck by the sight of a great soldier or statesman kneeling before a *woman ruler* and being touched on the shoulder with a sword.

[171] 7. It is interesting to compare this account with Ibn Battuta's description of Mansa Souliman, king of Mali: "On certain days the sultan holds audiences in the palace yard, where there is a platform under a tree, with three steps; this they call the *pempi*. . . . The sultan comes out of a door in the corner of the palace, carrying a bow in his hand and a quiver on his back. On his head he has a golden skullcap bound with a gold band which has narrow ends shaped like knives, more than a span in length. His usual dress is a velvety red tunic, made of the European fabric called *mutanfas*. The sultan is preceded by his musicians, who carry gold and silver guimbris (two-stringed guitars), and behind him come three hundred armed slaves. He walks in a leisurely fashion, affecting a very slow movement, and even stops from time to time. On reaching the *pempi*, he stops and looks round the assembly, then ascends it in the sedate manner of a preacher ascending a mosque pulpit. As he takes his seat, the drums, trumpets, and bugles are sounded" (Gibb, p. 326).

[177] [171] 8. It is possible that the Mossi either borrowed this tradition from Mali or shared part of the Mali king complex, for Ibn Battuta reports that a similar rite was held in Mali during the fourteenth century. He says that when the ruler entered the pavilion for the morning ceremony, "two saddled and bridled horses are brought, along with two goats, which they hold to serve as a protection against the evil eye" (Gibb, p. 326).

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9. In Dim Delobson's account (p. 60), an unnamed wife of the Mogho Naba ran away, and he allegedly tried to follow her because she was the only person in his household who knew how to cook his favorite food. 000

It is interesting that the Mossi have a tradition in which their ruler undergoes the same experience as many a Mossi husband, namely, being betrayed by his wife. It is also interesting that Mogho Naba Waraga is the ruler named in this incident. He is the ruler who waged a five-year-long civil war with one of his vassals. It may well be that his ministers devised the myth about his wife in order to prevent him from leaving the capital to fight. [837]

10. The Mossi practice of tasting food before giving it to another person is obviously connected with the fear of poison. The Mossi believe that only a boorish person would give another person something to eat without first tasting it himself. [576]

11. The full significance of this ceremony is unclear, for the Mossi hesitate to talk about it. It is known that the "sacred fire" is linked to the nocturnal visits of the royal ancestors. But the relationship of the fire to another sacred fire kept in Koubri district (about seventeen miles from Ouagadougou) is not known. [372]

Faithful to Mossi tradition or ignorant of the true nature of the ceremony, Dim Delobson says nothing about the ceremony and does not mention the presence of the namtibo. However, he does report that the palace guards would kill anyone who approached the place where the rite was being performed (p. 62). [114]

12. There are several traditions concerning female regents. However, I believe that they may have their basis in the role the Mogho Naba's daughter played during the interregnum.

13. Mossi genealogies show that only in one case in which the nam passed from a Mogho Naba to his brother did the former Mogho Naba's sons receive districts from their uncle, the new ruler. Since it is difficult to believe that the eleven other Mogho Nanamse who were succeeded by their brothers died without issue, it can only be concluded that the descendants of a ruler who did not inherit the nam were ignored by their uncles in power.

14. To this council could be added other men whose experience was valued. For example, the Baloum Naba was called upon in 1942 to give advice about a successor to Kom.

15. Dim Delobson, pp. 130–32.

16. It is interesting that the sheepskin garb of the Mossi pretenders is similar to the dress of the chiefs among the smaller tribal groups of the Voltaic culture area. If we can assume that culture traits characteristic of ritual and ceremonial practices tend to persist longer than most other traits, we might have evidence that the complex Mossi state evolved from the political organizations found among the smaller local groups. [171] [174]

17. The "naming of a name" speech is part of most Mossi *rites de passage*, and is often used to brag about some achievement or to cast aspersions on one's enemies. Most newly elected monarchs pledge good government, brag about their elevation, and vilify their enemies.

In his inaugural speech Naba Kom II said, "When plenty of water falls during the rainy season, the rivers and seas are glad because they are enlarged." "Kom" means "water," and Kom's speech meant that he pledged to bring happiness to all his subjects.

Boukary Koutou insulted his listeners by declaring, "Even if a hundred ghosts join together, they cannot harm an elephant." He was called Mogho Naba Wobogo ("elephant").

18. It is said that if the amulets were stolen during the interregnum, the thief had to be elected Mogho Naba; if they were stolen afterwards, the ruler lost the basis for the mystical quality of leadership and authority he had inherited from his ancestors.

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000 19. There is a curious story among the people of Nobere district that Mogho Naba Mottoba (who reigned in the seventeenth century) was not a Mossi but a Fulani who was given the nam after he chanced upon the installation ceremony and assassinated the newly elected man during the night. This story is denied in Ouagadougou; in fact, it contradicts the genealogical records of the ruling dynasty. However, the gene-
[174] alogy does show that Mottoba's father, Mogho Naba Guiliga, had succeeded his brother, and it is possible that there was dynastic rivalry for the nam between Mottoba and the former Mogho Naba's son.

20. This rite was performed during the installation of the present Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou, although it is hardly recognizable as described in *Newsweek* (December 9, 1957, p. 48): "A man named Moussa Congo assumed the name of Kougri Naba last week and became the 35th Mogho Naba of the Mossi in the capital city of Ouagadougou in the Upper Volta region of French West Africa. Son of Emperor Issoufou Congo, Kougri Naba, as the new Mogho Naba, has one white horse, 200 wives, and 8,000 warriors, who danced around his palace ten times."

[182] 21. This practice has apparently lapsed since Mogho Naba Kougri moved into the modern concrete palace built for his father, Mogho Naba Sagha II.

[838] 22. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Soudan*, pp. 569–70. Tauxier claims the Mogho Nanamse used the pages for homosexual purposes on Fridays in order to circumvent the Moslem prohibition against intercourse with women on this holy day. Homosexuality is rare among the Mossi, as Tauxier himself admits, and most Mossi deny that the Mogho Nanamse ever resorted to it. However, one respondent did state that he had heard about homosexuality among certain past rulers.

23. Crozat, p. 4849.

[648] 24. When Mogho Naba Kom II died under mysterious circumstances in 1942, it
[762] was rumored that he had committed suicide rather than reduce the number of his wives as ordered by the administration under the influence of the Catholic mission-
[797] aries. Kom allegedly held that no one can inherit a sovereign's wife during his lifetime. Therefore, in order to avoid loss of status by seeing his wives go to commoners,
[114] he chose death so they would be inherited by nobles.

25. The statement in *Newsweek* (December 9, 1957, p. 48) that Kougri has two hundred wives is untrue.

[563] 26. Intermarriage between the Mossi and the Fulani has produced a people known as the Simili-Mossi. Nevertheless, the Mossi are strongly prejudiced against the Fulani, especially against the women, stating that the Moaga who has sexual intercourse with a Fulani woman must bathe in nine different rivers before he becomes clean. The basis of this prejudice appears to be that Fulani women are not cultivators and therefore are unacceptable as Mossi wives.

27. Mossi women know a great deal about the history and traditions of their people. But they never indicate that they do except during such rituals, when they are required to play certain roles.

28. Dim Delobson, p. 96.

29. Dim Delobson (p. 101) states that there are "sacred things" in this village, but I have been unable to substantiate his report.

[824] 30. Dim Delobson (p. 104) gives the classic explanation of this nighttime ride. On his ride from Bere to Djiba, the mounted prince must try to touch a certain branch of a certain tree. If he is destined to succeed his father, he will succeed in touching the branch; if he is not, the branch will magically withdraw at his approach.

I visited the area in which this ritual reportedly took place, but the people in the vicinity denied that such a tree existed.

31. *Ibid.*, p. 106.

[648] 32. IFAN (Compte Rendu No. 429). There are many other rumors concerning Kom's death. In a book praising the loyalty of the Africans to the Free French Gov-

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ernment of Charles de Gaulle, Deveze declares (p. 74): "Moreover, the Mogho Naba, 000 himself king of the Mossi of Ouagadougou, one of the most powerful dynasties of French Africa, who was placed under surveillance by order of Boisson [the local Vichyite commander] and separated from his subjects, committed suicide after calling his son [648] and solemnly commanding him not to take power 'until the true French should return.'" If this is true, the heir to the throne either could not or would not follow his father's advice.

33. Today a girl is usually chosen as Kourita, because it is easier to banish a woman than a man from the capital. Nevertheless, when Mogho Naba Kom II died in 1942, the young girl chosen to be Kourita was hidden by her mother, and as a result the funeral and the investiture of the new ruler were delayed.

34. See Cheron, "La Cour du Boussouma Naba" (pp. 304-12), for a description of the court of the Boussouma Naba, an autonomous provincial ruler.

35. Dim Delobson (p. 8) claims that the Mogho Naba had the right to ratify the [643] nomination of all Dimdamba, and that it was he who gave them their insignia of office.

36. Cheron, "Contribution," p. 651. He also reports (p. 654): "The Boulsa Naba was elected by a special college. In principle, the choice of this college always fell on one of the sons of the deceased, generally the eldest."

37. *Ibid.*, p. 672.

38. Dim Delobson (p. 143) claims that the person who was asked to give a sacrificial animal to the Baloum Naba was thus assured of the nomination. But the Nobere chief with whom I discussed this matter insisted that he and all the other claimants had given sacrificial animals, and that he did not know he had been chosen until he was notified by the Ouidi Naba.

39. Despite a legend which says that a young woman once ruled the Doulougou district as regent for her young son, the choice of district chief was always a man old enough to rule. If a chief's heir was still a boy, the nam was given to another relative and no provision was made for it to return either to the boy or to his descendants. Unless the boy were fortunate, neither he nor his line ever received the nam again.

40. The ingredients used by the Baloum Naba in preparing the namtibo are kept secret. Most people believe that he uses some elements of the royal amulets, blood, and other liquids. It is not known whether the blood used in ancient times was that of a slave or merely of an animal. Most of the district chiefs with whom I discussed this point reacted with horror to the implication of cannibalism, and insisted that the blood was from animals sacrificed the previous day. However, commoners believe that human blood was used.

41. A fact of great importance in understanding Mossi expansion is that the Kouritadamba of the Nobere district chiefs were banished to the Gurunsi region of Gouroungo on the other side of the Red Volta River. The last Kourita from Nobere is now living in that area, where he rules over a Mossi population drawn from Nobere district and Manga district.

42. Cf. Mangin, p. 19.

CHAPTER FOUR

1. Cf. Socquet, p. 62.
2. Barth, III, 643, 648; Binger, II, 479.
3. Crozat, p. 4822.
4. Delafosse, II, 128-29.
5. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Yatenga*, p. 90.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 93, 100.
7. Crozat, p. 4849.
8. Delafosse, II, 29.
9. Mangin, pp. 12 ff.
10. Cheron, "Contribution," pp. 673-74.
11. *Ibid.*, pp. 654-55, 657-58.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 680.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 670.
14. *Ibid.*, pp. 685-86.

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15. *Ibid.*, p. 673.
16. Delafosse, II, 128–29.
17. Binger, II, 502.
18. Crozat, p. 4849.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 4822.

20. The structure of the Mossi kingdoms and their relationship with the autonomous principalities make it difficult to determine the exact number of districts within each unit. For example, the Mossi people always claimed that the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou was sovereign over "333" chiefs (cf. Binger, I, 502). However, since the Mossi always associate the number 3 with males, any number giving a multiple of threes is suspect. Binger stated that some of the chiefs referred to as part of the 333 were no more than village chiefs. However, Tauxier (*Le Noir du Soudan*, p. 567), describing the kingdom of Ouagadougou, states, "At the top of this hierarchy is the king, the Mogho Naba, paramount chief of the Mossi, residing at Ouagadougou. To give at least an idea of the relative importance of this empire, without going further than, say, the cercle of Ouagadougou, there were eight provinces comprising 300 *cantons* [districts], 5,000 villages or small towns, and 861,700 inhabitants."

[802] [622]

While voicing the myth that the Mogho Naba had "under his control 333 chiefs or Nabas," Dim Delobson actually gives only about 150 chiefs in his list of district and other chiefs (pp. 46, 288–97). It was impossible for me to get any idea of the number of chiefs, because the Mossi hierarchy has changed radically since 1905.

[114]

21. Dim Delobson, p. 63.
22. Cheron, "Contribution," p. 651.

23. The Mossi did not acknowledge the defeat of Mogho Naba Wobogo by the French until the Ouidi Naba surrendered to the invaders and installed a ruler they had chosen.

[648]

24. Archives, Document 1G-334. Lambert describes Karfo as "a curious figure who unfortunately is not well known."
25. Binger, I, 465.
26. Dim Delobson, pp. 15–45, *passim*.

27. It appears that the monarchs found fault with their district chiefs most readily when they had sons or other relatives in need of districts to govern. Since a possessor of the nam could not be deprived of it while alive, he had to be accused of some crime and executed. Koabga was replaced as Doulougou Naba by Lassanne Congo (called Naba Kouliga), a son of the Mogho Naba. On the other hand, when Naba Pusha of Nobere district fled rather than commit suicide or start a civil war, he was replaced by his own brother, who became Naba Soulougou.

[662]

28. Dim Delobson, p. 44.
29. Cheron, "Contribution," p. 655.

CHAPTER FIVE

[847]

1. Mangin, p. 25.

2. Mangin does not discuss rape, but reported that an "abductor" was beaten and put in irons. The girl was returned to her family, and if she gave birth to a child, it was killed (pp. 26–27).

3. Dim Delobson, p. 55.

4. Most of my informants state quite clearly that the district chiefs did not have the right to impose the death penalty, but could do so if they were discreet about it and did not take advantage of their subjects. But Dim Delobson states: "Contrary to what people generally believe, the Kombere—the chief of the *canton* [district]—also had the power of life and death over his subjects. How many persons have been put to death only because they were wealthy? How many village chiefs have been killed by the district chiefs in their territories without the Mogho Naba's intervention?" (pp. 55–56).

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5. Dim Delobson (p. 56) insists that justice was free of charge, but added that

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plaintiffs gave the chiefs the traditional presents of a white cock and a sack containing from 200 to 1,000 cowries.

6. Mangin declares: "Most of the troubles which arise between one Mossi and another derive from their wives and from their debts; yet it may not be said, as a general rule, that women are unhappy or ill treated" (p. 39; see also p. 33). But cf. Dim Delobson, pp. 182, 185.

7. Mangin states that in Koupela a recidivous thief was "led to the market place with a rope around his neck; he was supplied with an abundance of meat and beer, and then clubbed to death at the foot of a tree" (p. 25). I doubt whether this practice was very widespread, because the Mossi were afraid to anger the market Tengkouga (earth spirits) by spilling blood in the market place.

8. Cf. Ruelle, pp. 679 ff.

9. Binger, I, 462.

10. But cf. Marc, p. 134.

CHAPTER SIX

1. Sa'di, pp. 45–46. The date of this battle and the location of Benka are unknown. However, Delafosse (II, 141) believes that it was located in the Massina region on the shores of Lake Debo.

2. Sa'di, pp. 112–13.

3. *Ibid.*, pp. 114–15.

4. *Ibid.*, pp. 121–23. The chronicle also states (p. 168) that these Mossi captives were installed in a special ward of Askia's capital, a practice apparently followed by all victorious Sudanese groups including the Mossi.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 173.

6. See Delafosse, II, 143–45, and Tauxier, *Le Noir du Yatenga*, pp. 88–91.

7. Crozat, p. 4822.

8. Binger, I, 502.

9. Almamy Samory Touré was the last empire-builder in the western Sudan. He was defeated by the French in 1898 and exiled to Gabon, where he died in 1900. See Binger, I, 84ff.

10. Crozat, p. 4837.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 4849.

12. Archives, Document 1G-315 (1903–1904).

13. Crozat, p. 4849.

14. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Soudan*, p. 463.

15. Mangin, p. 13.

16. Cheron, "Contribution," pp. 655, 675–76.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 673.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 676.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 654.

20. *Ibid.*, pp. 685–86.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 674.

22. Ruelle, p. 686.

23. Mangin, p. 62.

24. Binger, I, 473.

25. Cheron, "Contribution," p. 660.

26. Crozat, p. 4849.

27. Mangin, p. 12.

28. For example, when Mogho Naba Sanum's army attacked Boussouma, it made "such a rapid retreat" that Ligidi, the Boussouma Dim, could only counterattack the army's rear guard (Cheron, "Contribution," p. 676).

29. Archives, Document 15G-190 (1897–98).

30. Mangin, p. 12.

31. *Ibid.*

32. Dim Delobson, p. 21.

33. *Ibid.*, p. 29.

34. Cf. Southall (pp. 246–60) for a discussion of the "segmentary" state in Africa.

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CHAPTER SEVEN

1. Dim Delobson, pp. 153ff.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 251–54.
3. Cheron, "Contribution," p. 674.
4. Crozat, p. 4849.
5. *Ibid.*
6. Skinner, "Trade and Markets," pp. 237–78.
7. Barth, III, 644–49.
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 202–4.
9. Dubois, pp. 282–92, 300.
10. Great Britain, Parliamentary papers: Cd. 788–27, No. 357, Acc. Papers, Vol. LXIV (1902).
11. Marc, p. 178.
12. Binger, I, 467.
13. Crozat, p. 4849.
14. Binger, I, 465.
15. Mangin, p. 23.
16. Dim Delobson, pp. 85–86.
17. Ruelle, p. 679.
18. Bovill, p. 244.
19. Gautier, p. 139; cf. Mangin, p. 112.
20. Cf. Sa'di, p. 168.
21. The chief of the Kamboinse was the only Mossi "chief" to possess a stool, which is indicative of an Akan origin. The Akan origin of this group is further supported by Koelle's evidence: a Mossi informant told him that the Mossi called the Ashanti "Kamboinse" (Koelle, p. 6).
22. Skinner, "The Mossi 'Pogsioure,'" pp. 20–22.
23. Cf. Ouédraogo and Prost, pp. 16–18.
24. Dim Delobson, p. 25.
25. Binger, I, 470.
26. *Ibid.*, pp. 502–4.
27. *Ibid.*, pp. 504–5.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 456.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 502.

CHAPTER EIGHT

1. Cf. Dim Delobson, p. 156. He speculates that the Mogho Naba himself sacrificed the animals in the presence of his senior wife and courtiers.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 157.
3. Tauxier (*Le Noir du Yatenga*, p. 379) reports that a comparable ceremony among the Yatenga Mossi was called the "Bega," and that in reality it was a Fulse ceremony "adopted by the Mossi." According to him, both the Fulse and the Mossi held this festival in order to obtain good harvests the following year, and made sacrifices to "the ancestors, to the Earth, and to God."
4. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Soudan*, p. 588.
5. Dim Delobson's description (pp. 148 ff) of the Tense differs somewhat from that given to me by my respondents. According to his version, the Tansoba played the role I have ascribed to the Larhalle Naba. Furthermore, he states that the Tense was held on Friday, an impossible fact since Saturday is the Mossi "day of the dead." In any case, all of my respondents insisted that Saturday, and not Friday, was the day on which the Tense was held. It is possible that Dim Delobson mistook the eve of the festival for its beginning, in which case his error is understandable. In most other respects our descriptions are not too different.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 152.
7. There is a widespread tradition in Mossi country that the Tenkodogo Naba made and still makes similar sacrifices at Kouroungousenga and Sansabloga, two important earth shrines. There is a controversy about whether human sacrifices were ever offered there. The missionaries in the region claim they were. The Mossi deny this and accuse the missionaries of slander.

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8. Cf. Marc, p. 156.
9. Cf. Fortes, pp. 258–71.
10. Skinner, "The Diffusion of Islam," pp. 659–69.
11. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Soudan*, pp. 585–86.
12. Dim Delobson, p. 205.
13. Crozat, p. 4820.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 4822.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 4835.
16. Binger, I, 452.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 456.
18. *Ibid.*, pp. 452–56.
19. Archives, Document 15G-190 (1897–98). Instructions left to Captain Scal by Desenave, June 1897.

CHAPTER NINE

1. Marc, p. 17.
2. Barth, III, 595. Although it is possible that the Wolof prince Bemoy did hear about the Mossi, he was mistaken about the name of their ruler. Interestingly enough, the title "Ogane" is not too dissimilar from Hogon, the title of head men among the Dogon (Habe or Kado) whom the Mossi had pushed into the hills of Bandiagara. Cf. Bascom, p. 24.
3. Barth, III, 606.
4. Bowdich, p. 180.
5. Dupuis, Appendix CVII.
6. Clapperton, II, 323.
7. Barth, III, 643–49. As cited earlier, Barth states that the Portuguese got reports about the Mossi in the year 1533 "from the wrong side, namely from Benin." This may not have been altogether "the wrong side," however, for Barth gives us data on caravans from Mossi country to Sansane Mango in Togoland that indicate how news about the Mossi might have traveled from the interior to Benin city in Nigeria.
8. Koelle, p. 6. Dixon, who seems to have been one of the few captured Mossi sold to the West, reports: "Mose is west of Gurma, east of Andemtenga, where a different language is spoken. Mose is also two days journey from Butmera, where the same language is spoken; four days from Bulega [Bolga tanga], the language still the same, and confederate with Kambonse, i.e. Asante; two days from Yaongo, with still the same language; six days from Bosanse which is at enmity with Mose and where people bore their lips, and often tie them together with grass, and whose language is different from Mose; four days from Busma also a different language, and in which country there is a very high mountain (Tanga) from which those who ascend never come back again [probably a reference to Plimpikou, the Mossi holy mountain]; three or four weeks from Kambonse, i.e. Asante. Kupeala is four days from Wardyga [Ouagadougou] the Mossi capital, whither the king of Asante often sent presents; and one month from Salak [Salaga], an Asante town, where they bring kola nuts."
9. Marc, p. 30.
10. Great Britain, Parliamentary papers xlvi, 1882.
11. The people of Nobere, Manga, and other districts surrounding Bere have traditions about Krause, who is remembered as the first white-skinned person ever seen in those parts. The color of his skin was attributed to the fact that, "like the fish," he had come out of the sea.
12. Krause, pp. 92 ff. Although there is no evidence to this effect in the literature, it appears certain that Mossi government officials knew of Krause's visit. They treated most travelers in the following manner: "After entering a town the party is given in charge of a man usually termed 'housemaster.' It is his duty to exercise surveillance over the action of the stranger and to report the result to the authorities. . . . The trader conducts his business through his 'housemaster,' who usually makes a handsome gain by acting as middleman (G. E. Ferguson, quoted in Wolfson, p. 199).

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[410] 13. Binger, I, 18, 440.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 450.
15. *Ibid.*, pp. 469-70.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 460.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 467.
18. Von François, p. 143 ff.
19. Marc, p. 36.
20. Crozat, p. 4820.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 4835.
22. *Ibid.*
23. *Ibid.*, p. 4836.
24. *Ibid.*
25. *Ibid.*
26. *Ibid.*, p. 4849.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 4850.

[404] 28. Marc, p. 38. He attempts to maintain historical veracity: "Contrary to what Crozat believed, the Mogho Naba was able to assemble thousands of horsemen with which to confront the French."

29. Monteil, p. 163.

30. He gives an account of the northern region of Ghana in a secret report quoted in Wolfson, p. 199.

31. "Les Missions Françaises dans La Boucle du Niger," *Bull. du Comité de L'Afrique Française*, VII (1897), 108-9.

32. *Ibid.*

33. *Bull. du Comité de L'Afrique Française*, V (1895), 276. The people of Nobere say that Alby went to the ruler's son at Djiba and asked to be taken to Ouagadougou because he had presents for the Mogho Naba. But the prince, noting the soldiers with the European, secretly went to his father and told him about the mission. Mogho Naba Wobogo then called his ministers together and asked them whether the visitor should be received. They told him that they feared this visit was a trick to capture the country, and told the Djiba Naba to tell his guest that Mogho Naba Wobogo did not want any Europeans in his kingdom.

34. Marc, pp. 35-38. See "Les Missions Françaises dans La Boucle du Niger," *Bull. du Comité de L'Afrique Française*, VII (1897), 107-12, for a discussion of the controversy between the European powers for control of these territories.

35. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Yatenga*, p. 109.

36. Barry, p. 131.

37. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Yatenga*, p. 111.

38. Noll, p. 257. The Mossi were a bit chagrined that a relatively small force conquered them. This force consisted of Lt. Voulet, his adjutant Lt. Chanoine, Sergeants Laury and Le Geriel, 29 Senegalese infantrymen, 10 spahis, 180 Sudanese infantrymen [411] armed with European weapons, 40 Sudanese horsemen, and 250 porters. The Mossi now insist that although this force was small, it had more fire-power than they had ever encountered, and that they had only flint guns aside from their traditional weapons. They say that if they had had rifles, no one would ever have entered their country.

39. Archives, Document 15G-190 (June 1897).

40. Noll, p. 257.
41. Dim Delobson, p. 38.
42. *Ibid.*, p. 39 ff.
43. Randau, p. 433.

44. It is not clear whether Mazi was poisoned (as the French claim), or whether he died a natural death. Despite French claims to the contrary, the Mossi insist that Mazi was never ruler of Ouagadougou, and they do not include him in their genealogies. The present chief of Nobere insists that Mazi was never Mogho Naba and that he died a natural death. Dim Delobson also declares that although Mazi was Wobogo's sworn enemy, and would have liked to become Mogho Naba, he was ill when Voulet called upon him and died before acceding to power. (Dim Delobson, pp. 41-42.)

45. Lambert, p. 73.

46. Archives, Doc. 15G-190 (May 1897). The Nobere people deny that they supported the French, but official documents of the period report that it was the Nobere Naba who informed the French of Boukary Koutou's activities. The people of Nobere

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declare that they supported Boukary Koutou all along, but that he was defeated because he had lost the confidence of the country.

47. Great Britain, Colonial Report, 1900.
48. Lambert, p. 73.
49. Great Britain, Colonial Report, 1903.
50. Dim Delobson, p. 45.

CHAPTER TEN

1. Arnaud and Mersy, pp. 1–32. See also Roberts, I, 89–102.
2. IFAN.
3. Archives, Doc. 15G-190 (1877–78).
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Bull. d'information et de Renseignements Coloniaux* (hereinafter cited as *Rens. Coloniaux*), XLVIII (Aug. 25, 1938), 307.
6. *Ibid.*
7. De Beauminy, "Une Féodalité," p. 24. During this period and for many years afterward, the neighboring acephalous Lobi and Gurunsi groups refused to pay taxes (*L'Afrique Française* [Feb.–Mar. 1910], pp. 77, 341).
8. Mahaut, pp. 20–27.
9. IFAN.
10. Mahaut, p. 31.
11. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Soudan*, p. 538.
12. Mangin, pp. 61–62.
13. *L'Afrique Française*, XLVIII (1938), 20.
14. Burthe d'Annelet, I, 291.
15. Mahaut, pp. 36–39.
16. Buell, I, 1006.
17. *L'Afrique Française*, XIX (1909), 348–49; see also Van Vollenhoven, pp. 187 ff.
18. Sarraut, pp. 1–12 *passim*.
19. The Europeans in Mossi country received this news with mixed feelings, and according to one source their opinions were based "principally on questions of pure interests" (*Rens. Coloniaux*, XXXI [1921], 6). De Beauminy stated that "the principal riches actually utilizable in Mossi country are its numerous laborers" (De Beauminy, "Le Pays de la Boucle," pp. 71–78). See also Ledange, pp. 133–36.
20. *Rens. Coloniaux*, XXXI (1921), 4–5.
21. *Ibid.*
22. Ossendowski, p. 272.
23. Ledange, pp. 133–36.
24. Londres, pp. 126 ff.
25. Burthe d'Annelet, I, 204.
26. Ossendowski, p. 276.
27. *L'Afrique Française*, XLII (1932), 520.
28. De Beauminy, "Une Féodalité," p. 24.
29. *Rens. Coloniaux*, XXXI (1921), 4.
30. *Rens. Coloniaux*, XXXIII (1923), 439.
31. *La Haute Volta*, p. 55.
32. Burthe d'Annelet, I, 292.
33. *Rens. Coloniaux*, XXXIII (1923), 441.
34. *Ibid.*
35. *La Haute Volta*, p. 54.
36. *Rens. Coloniaux*, XXXIII (1923), 439.
37. *Journal Officiel de la République Française* (circular of June 16, 1919), p. 410.
38. Cowan (p. 117) states that in French West Africa, "It was almost universally admitted that the *conseils de notables* served little, if any, useful purpose." The fol-

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lowing comment applies most aptly to the situation in Mossi country: "Perhaps the most serious defect in the *conseils de notables* lay in the fact that, consisting as they did usually of older, and often illiterate, members who were without a knowledge of modern administration, they were unprepared to offer any opinion on a matter of technical nature even if the administrator were prepared to consult them." It should be added, however, that there were hardly any western-educated Mossi in the country at this time, and the officials in and around Ouagadougou were not willing to listen to the local people. Cf. Buell, I, 998–1000.

39. Buell, I, 1007.
40. *L'Afrique Française*, XXX (1920), 299.
41. Socquet, p. 62.
42. Soeur Marie-André, p. 236. Her propaganda in favor of ameliorating the status of the African woman led to the Mandel decree of June 1939, which forbade the marriage of preadolescent girls and instituted other reforms.
43. Bouniol, p. 60.
44. Dupont, p. 4.
45. Gorer, p. 149.
46. Cf. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Soudan*, p. 203.
47. Dim Delobson, p. 203.
48. Burthe d'Annelet, I, 288.
49. *Journal Officiel de la République Française* (Sept. 10, 1932), p. 9927.
50. Burthe d'Annelet, I, 299.
51. *L'Afrique Française*, XLII (1932), 523–33.
52. Burthe d'Annelet, I, 301–2.
53. *L'Afrique Française*, XLVIII (1938), 21.
54. *Ibid.*, XLIX (1939), 136–39.
55. Balima, p. 36.
56. Thompson and Adloff, p. 29.
57. Balima, pp. 36–37.
58. Thompson and Adloff, p. 29.
59. Deveze, pp. 184–85.
60. IFAN (Compte Rendu No. 429).
61. *Ibid.*
62. *Ibid.*

CHAPTER ELEVEN

1. The text of the recommendations and of other documents from the Brazzaville Conference can be found in "La Conférence Africaine Française, Brazzaville, 1944," in *Renaissance* (Paris, 1944).
2. Thompson and Adloff, pp. 206–7, and Cowan, pp. 175 ff.
3. Thompson and Adloff, p. 122.
4. Amon d'Aby, pp. 55–56.
5. Hodgkin and Schachter, p. 405.
6. Thompson and Adloff, p. 124.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 33–35.
8. Gonidec, p. 328.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 331.
10. *Journal Officiel, Débats de la République Française* (April–Dec. 1955), p. 2534.
11. Gonidec, pp. 333–34.
12. Holleaux, pp. 18 ff.
13. Wright, pp. 148–49, 178–79, 227.
14. "Manifeste du Rassemblement Démocratique Africain," *Le RDA dans la Lutte Anti-impérialiste* (Paris, 1948), p. 23.
15. Amon d'Aby, pp. 55–56.
16. *Journal Officiel, Débats de l'Assemblée de l'Union Française* (June 22, 1949), p. 769.
17. Cowan, pp. 98–99.
18. Balima, pp. 42–43.

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19. *Journal Officiel, Débats de l'Assemblée de l'Union Française* (June 22, 1949), p. 749.
20. *Journal Officiel, Débats de l'Assemblée Nationale* (Mar. 1, 1948), p. 1881.
21. *Journal Officiel, Débats de l'Assemblée de l'Union Française* (June 22, 1949), p. 749.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 767.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 768.
24. Balima, p. 41.
25. Taken from my field notes.
26. Skinner, "Labour Migration," pp. 393-94.
27. Dupont, pp. 2327-28.
28. Soeur Marie-André, p. 490.
29. Taken from my field notes.
30. *L'Afrique Française*, LXIV (1955), 63.
31. For the provisions of the loi-cadre, see "Political Evolution in the French Overseas Territories," *African Affairs*, Bull. 14A, Ambassade de France, Service de Presse et d'Information (New York, August 1956).
32. See Mathias Moriba in *Afrique Nouvelle* (Nov. 12, 1957), p. 1; see also *ibid.* (Oct. 15, 1957), p. 1, and (Feb. 19, 1957), p. 2.
33. *Ibid.* (Nov. 5, 1956), p. 6.
34. *Ibid.* (Feb. 5, 1957), p. 3.
35. "Party alignments in Afrique Occidentale Française," *West Africa* (London), Nov. 17, 1956, p. 920. See also Siriex, p. 110.
36. *Afrique Nouvelle* (April 2, 1957), p. 6.
37. Dugue, p. 25.
38. *Afrique Nouvelle* (Nov. 26, 1957), p. 3. For an account of Mogho Naba Kougri's installation, see *ibid.* (Dec. 3, 1957), p. 2.
39. *Ibid.* (Feb. 21, 1958), p. 1.
40. *Marchés Tropicaux du Monde* (Paris), No. 847 (Feb. 3, 1962), 227.
41. Dugue, p. 34.
42. Balima, pp. 44-46.
43. "Birth of a new community of free peoples," *French Affairs*, Bull. 71, Ambassade de France, Service de Presse et d'Information (New York, Oct. 1958).
44. *Ibid.*
45. *Ibid.*; see also *Le Monde* (Paris), Oct. 23, 1958.
46. *Ibid.*
47. *Ibid.*
48. *Bull. Quotidien d'Information*, Distribué par le service de l'information de la République de Haute-Volta (Nov. 23, 1958), p. 2.
49. Lajus, p. 3.
50. *Carrefour Africain* (Ouagadougou), Dec. 4, 1960, p. 3.
51. *Bull. Quotidien d'Information*, Distribué par le service de l'information de la République de Haute-Volta (June 20, 1960), p. 1.
52. *Afrique Nouvelle* (Aug. 10, 1960), p. 8.
53. *Marchés Tropicaux du Monde* (Paris), No. 847 (Feb. 3, 1962), 227.

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GLOSSARY

BABISSI. Literally, "fathers' brothers." A large extended family (minimal lineage) composed of people who had a common ancestor three, four, or five generations back.

BAGLERE. A group of bondsmen believed to be descended from the Fulani or from war captives.

BALOUM NABA. A provincial minister and the chief steward of the royal household.

BASCHA. Annual feast of the royal ancestors.

BENDERE NABA. A bard or minstrel who is often called upon to recite the ruler's genealogy at royal functions.

BOODKASMA (pl. BOODKASEMDAMBA). Head of a lineage or lineage segment.

COGANAMARSE. Stones on which dignitaries are seated during court ceremonies.

DAPORE. A group of bondsmen believed to be descended from war captives.

DIM (pl. DIMDAMBA). Literally, "submit only to God." King or king's son.

DOGUNBA. Literally, "keepers of the household." The younger wives of the ruler.

FADO. An inheritance tax.

GANDE NABA. An official charged with performing sacrifices on the ruler's behalf and with distributing gifts from the ruler to the royal officials and the royal household.

GOUNGA NABA. A provincial minister.

KAMBOINSE. Guards of the royal household.

KAMBO NABA. Head guard of the royal household.

KAMSAOGHO NABA. A provincial minister. He is also a eunuch.

KEEMA (pl. KEEMSE). Ancestral spirit; also, a deceased person.

KOMBERE or KOMBERE NABA (pl. KOMBEMBA NANAMSE). A district chief.

KOS NABA. Collector of taxes on general merchandise sold in the market.

KOURITA (pl. KOURITADAMBA). A young son of a deceased Mogho Naba chosen to represent his father on earth. He is banned from the capital, and forbidden to see the new Mogho Naba under pain of death.

LARHALLE NABA. A provincial minister. He was also responsible for offering sacrifices to the royal ancestors.

MABISSI. Literally, "sons of the same mother." All the children of one woman.

MOAGA (pl. MOSSI). A member of the Mossi group or nation.

MOGHO. Literally, "the world." The country of the Mossi.

MOGHO NABA. Literally, "ruler of the world." The title of the ruler of the Ouagadougou kingdom.

NABA (pl. NANAMSE). Chief, ruler, or official.

NABA ZID OUENDE. Literally, "sun king." God.

NAB'YIRI. House of the chief or ruler.

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164 NAB'YURE. Literally, "king's name." No child born during his reign could bear the ruler's name, and those persons who already bore it when a new ruler was chosen called themselves Nab'yure.

NAKOMCE (sing. NABIGA). Children of the Naba; people of the ruling or noble class.

NAM. Sovereignty, which was conceived of by the Mossi as "that force of God which permits one man to control another."

NAMTIBO. The royal amulets, or any substance or object embodying the nam.

NAPOKO. Literally, "female ruler." The eldest daughter of a Mogho Naba. She ritually impersonates her deceased father during the interregnum.

NEMDO NABA. Collector of taxes on meat sold in the market, and the person responsible for distributing meat within the royal household.

NINISI, SEE TINGUIMBISSI.

OUAGADOUGOU NABA. The earth priest (Tengsoba) who had ritual control of the capital district.

OUEDRANGE NABA. Head groom of the royal stables.

OUIDI NABA. An official of the ruler. In Ouagadougou, he was both a provincial minister and the prime minister.

POOPOSSUM. Premarital gift from a man's family to his wife's family.

PUGHSIUDSE. Women whom the chief received from his subjects and whom he subsequently gave out as wives on condition that their husbands give him their eldest daughters as future pughsiudse.

PUGHTIEMA. Head wife of a ruler.

PWE NABA. A religious practitioner in a ruler's household; he is responsible for the virtue of the ruler's wives and pages.

RAGA NABA. Official in charge of the market.

SAKA (pl. SAGHSE). A section of a village.

SAKAKASMA (pl. SAKAKASMADAMBA). Head of a village section; usually the senior man of the senior lineage segment in the village.

SAMANDE (pl. SAMANDE-KAMBA). A servant in the royal household or the chief's household.

SAMANDE KASMA. Head retainer in a ruler's household.

SAMANDE NABA. Official in charge of palace retainers.

SEKA (pl. SEGHSE). Compulsory labor performed for a ruler by his subjects.

SIMILI-MOSSI. An ethnic group formed through the intermarriage of the Fulani and the Mossi.

SOGHONE (pl. SOGHONDAMBA). A page in the ruler's household.

SOGHONE-KASANGA. Head page.

SOLEM. Kingdom or area ruled by the Mogho Naba.

SOSOGHA (pl. SOSOSE). Voluntary labor performed for a ruler by his subjects.

TANSOBA. War minister.

TENGA (pl. TENSE). Generalized female earth deity. Tenga had local manifestations called Tengkouga, or earth shrines. The Mossi talk about these shrines as though they are deities in their own right.

TENGKOUGA (sing. TENGKOUGRE). Earth shrines, including mountains, rivers, clumps of trees, etc. See TENGA.

TENGKOM. Civil war between villages or districts.

TENGSOBA (pl. TENGSOBADAMBA). Earth priest.

TINGUIMBISSI. Literally, "sons of the earth." The autochthonous population of Mossi country; also called Ninisi.

WEOGHO (pl. WEOTO). Wasteland or uncultivated land.

YAGENGA (pl. YAGENSE). Literally, sister's son. The son or grandchild of a female lineage member.

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YIRI (pl. YIYA). A Mossi household.
YIRISOBA (pl. YIRISOBADAMBA). Head of a household.
YUMA (pl. YUMBA). Herald or musician.
ZAKA (pl. ZAGHSE). Interior courtyard of a compound.
ZOM KOM. A beverage made with millet flour and water. Sometimes honey is added.
ZONGAGONGO. War drum.
ZONGO. Reception hall of a ruler.
ZUSOABA KASANGA. Head eunuch.

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/For a history of the Mossi of the Upper Volta at the time of the first European contacts and the subsequent conquest of the Mossi by the French, see category 116, pp. 139-153; for a history of the Mossi government during the colonial period of European administration (up to and including the 2nd World War period) see category 116, pp. 154-178; for a history of political changes taking place in Mossi government in the post World War II period, see category 116, pp. 179-203./

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/For information on Mossi "kingdoms" see category 642./

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/For a history of the relations between the Mossi and various European powers, particularly the French, see category 116, pp. 143-193, 197-200, 202./

/Additional information on the "Tansoba" or Minister of War, may be found in category 845./

/Additional information on the "nam" in relation to Mossi lineages may be found in category 613./

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MARKETS IN AFRICA

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PAUL BOHANNAN AND GEORGE DALTON

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CHAPTER 9

Trade and Markets Among the Mossi People

BY ELLIOTT P. SKINNER

The Mossi represent the dominant population of the Voltaic Republic, numbering about 1,600,000 out of some 3,200,000 inhabitants. They represent the unique example of a group which has preserved its ethnic identity and political autonomy through all the vicissitudes of Sudanic history until it was conquered by the French in 1896. Tradition records that the people who became the Mossi left the Dagomba region in present-day Ghana during the eleventh century and moved into the bend of the Niger River, carving out three large kingdoms and smaller principalities in the process. At the head of these still extant kingdoms are rulers *(Moro Nabas)* who formerly held feudal-like control over the provinces, districts and villages which comprise their domains. The villages, with their patri-local, polygynous, extended family households, formed the basic Mossi settlement pattern. A complex hierarchical administrative apparatus carried the power of the Mossi rulers into the smallest villages, and funneled taxes and tribute back to them. This structure still exists, but of course it has been modified by the French.

The Mossi were and are still divided into stratified royal, noble and commoner patrilineages. Characteristic of this lineage system is a process by which royal sub-lineages descend serially until they merge with the mass of commoner lineages. Below the lineages there once were large non-Mossi groups of serfs and slaves, but these people have now been grouped into lineages and have become Mossicized.

The topography of Mossi country is typical of the Sudanic grasslands. It is an immense plain, some 1,500 feet above sea level and broken only by three low mountain ranges and numerous small hills. The annual total rainfall is between 30 and 40 inches, and falls almost entirely as heavy showers or thundershowers during the period from June to September. So narrow is the margin of rainfall for successful crop cultivation that any variation in the cycle results in low crop yields and a difficult "hungry period" the following year before the new crops are harvested. The Mossi do not practice irrigation, and would have trouble doing so because the three Volta Rivers which drain their territory serve as drainage chiefly during the rainy season. Only the Black Volta has water all year round; the

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133 Red and White Voltas are merely a series of small stagnant pools during the dry season. In some low-lying areas around the main water courses, trapped water provides the moisture for dank riverine vegetation.

134 The soils of Mossi country are mainly ferruginous with red argils and pure silicates of aluminum predominating in the northern region. The soils in the south are thin, sandy, and formed from the decom-
137 position of crystalline rocks and sandstones. During the dry season the Mossi landscape appears too sterile to produce plant life, but with the first drops of rain the entire country soon becomes covered with the grasses and shrubs which are characteristic of this Sudanese region. The uncultivated but valuable trees of this area include the Baobab *(Adansonia digitata)*, the locust bean *(Parkia biglobosa)*, the shea-butter *(Butyrospermum parkii)*, the tamarind *(Tamarindus*
241 *indica)* and the kapok *(Bombax costatum)*. The plants which the Mossi cultivate include varieties of cereals, roots and legumes. Sorghums *(Sorghum vulgare)* and millets *(Pennisetum typhoides)* are their staples, with maize *(Zea mays)* filling the role of a secondary but rather useful crop because its growing cycle is shorter than that of other important crops and it breaks the "hungry period." Maize would be a more important crop to the Mossi if it could grow on soil less fertile than what is normally available around the Mossi compound—the area where it brings the greatest yield. Peanuts, onions,
249 rice, beans, okra, peas and sweet potatoes are other food crops. To-
248 bacco is grown for local consumption, but the crops which have the greatest export value are cotton and indigo, used for making cloth and dyeing it.

224 The wild fauna of the country does not provide a major part of the
262 food needs of the Mossi people. The several species of deer and antelope, monkeys, rabbits and wild pig are hunted and used for food.
136 But the elephants and lions which are also found in the country are sources of great distress to the people because the former decimate the growing crops and the latter attack and kill the grazing animals.

231 The Mossi rear two main types of cattle: a zebu-like one in the north-
[234] ern regions and a small dwarf variety in the south. These animals are kept primarily for their milk and for export, and are seldom killed
231 for meat until they are very old. The animals which provide the
262 Mossi with meat are goats, sheep, chickens and guinea fowls. Pig-
[177] raising is not widespread and seems to be declining in importance with the increasing observance of Islamic food taboos, even among
262 people who are still pagan. Fish forms only a minor part of the Mossi
487 diet and is obtained mainly from traders rather than from local activ-
231 ities. The Mossi also rear donkeys and horses for which they have

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long been famous. The former are sometimes ridden but are used 231
primarily as beasts of burden. Horses were and are still important 492
for military and ceremonial purposes and for external trade to other 439
areas.

The Mossi have never excelled in metalworking. The people in 326
the northern part of the country have worked indigenous ores since 335
aboriginal times. Those in the south get iron mainly from traders 439
and caravans. The other metals which the Mossi smiths manufacture
into tools and ornaments are also obtained from traders.

TRADE IN HISTORICAL TIMES

The geographic position of Mossi country has much to do with its 131
being an important trade and market center. The country itself has 437
always produced grain, cotton and livestock for export. And for 487
several centuries caravans have passed through this region carrying
Sudanese and Saharan products to the forest zones to the south, and
carrying forest products back to the arid north. The beginning of 174
this trade is lost in the dim past, but it safe to say that it developed 437
shortly after or along with the founding of Timbuktu about 1100
A.D. The Mossi themselves were not definitely linked to this impor-
tant *entrepot* until they raided it in 1328, but we can assume that they
had been trading there for some time before that event took place.
Similarly, we have no record of when the Mossi began trading with
the forest zones, but we can also assume that this trade began around
the same period or even before.

Our first evidence of Mossi trade and commerce comes from Europ- 125
eans who were themselves interested in conducting their own trading 437
activities with the peoples in the Bend of the Niger. Bowditch, an
Englishman who had journeyed to Ashanti to sign a treaty facilitating
the reopening of a profitable trade with the coast, wangled the first
important piece of information about the Mossi from his reluctant
hosts:

> Five journies from Yngwa is Mosee, a more warlike but less visited 101
> kingdom: it consists of many states, but the superior monarch is named 331
> Billa, and the capital Kookoopella. I place it to the N.W. because its
> merchants pass by Yngwa; they do not cross the Karhalla [White Volta]
> nor any river which is not fordable. (Bowditch 1819 : 180)

This information is not strictly correct since Koupela was not the 366
capital of any of the Mossi kingdoms, but Bowditch's informant had
probably heard of Koupela because it was the largest political entity
near the large caravan center at Pouitenga.

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175 437 Dupuis, who replaced Bowditch in Kumasi in 1817, obtained surprisingly good data on trade relations between the Ashanti and the Mossi, considering the reluctance of the middlemen traders to furnish any help in this matter. He discovered that Ashanti traders

[103] . . . sometimes travel as far as Aughoa, the Magho, and to the east of Kasogho. Aughoa is distant from Coomassie twenty-five journies by the Salgha and Yandy Roads, which would give a distance of three hundred that vegetable substance . . . by the name of Shea butter. (Dupuis 1824 : App. cvii)[1]

The Hausa merchants and caravaneers knew a great deal about the Mossi and their resources, but it was only with great difficulty that Clapperton persuaded Sultan Mohammed Bello of Sokoto to give him the following information:

[101] The country of Mouchier or Mouchi is situated to the west of Ghurma. It is vast and possesses a gold mine, rivers, forests and mountains. It is inhabited by tribes of the Sudan who possess many fast horses, and large donkeys. Their king is called Wagadougou; their asses are sent down to the Gondja to carry the drums of the army. (Clapperton 1829 : 323)

It is obvious that either Clapperton or his informant confused the capital of the Mossi with their king, and included parts of Ghana in [23] their territory. Nevertheless, one does get an indication of the importance of livestock in Mossi trading.

The great bulk of the trade between the Mossi and their neighbors to the north and to the south was done through the medium of 175 caravans which crisscrossed their territory. The first person to signal 437 the existence of these caravans was Barth (1859 : III, 646–648) who, 487 although he did not enter Mossi country during his extensive travels in the Sudan from 1849 to 1855, reported the existence of several caravan routes which traversed the Mossi from the desert to the [103] forest. The first route he described proceeded from "Kirotashi, a town on the east side of the Niger, one day south of Say, to Woghodogho." [366] Ten days out of Kirotashi caravans usually reached Tengkodogo, and on the thirteenth day they arrived at Koupela which according to

(1) The Aughoa referred to here is really "Wagha," the term often used by the Mossi [63] when talking about their capital, Waghadougou. Magho is really "Mogho" the name of Mossi country itself, and Kasoagho is the name of a province of Wagadougou commanded by a minister of the Moro Naba, the Kasoagho Naba. Dupuis' report on the actual distance between Kumasis and Waghadougou is almost the same mileage as that [366] of today. Koelle (1854 : 6) received a report from a slave liberated in Sierra Leone in [648] 1854 that the great Mossi trading center "Kupeala is four days from Wardugu, the Mossi capital, whither the king of Asante often sends presents; and one month from Salak (Salaga), an Asante town, where they bring their cola-nuts."

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Barth was "a well-frequented market place of Mosi, and of greater importance than all the other towns of Mosi; the governor's name is Nabere Gager. The inhabitants are celebrated archers." Barth states that by the fifteenth day, or two days later, the caravans usually arrived at Wagadougou, but he tells us in a note that:

> Other people, in going slowly from Kulfela to Woghodogho, spend eight days on the road, sleeping the first night in Pashipanga, the second in Tangay, the third in Zorogo, the next in a place ruled by a man called Mane Bogonje, the fifth in another village called Tangay, and reach Woghodogho on the eighth. (Marc 1909 : 27)[2]

Finally, he reports that another spur of this caravan route ran from Tengkodogo to Sansanne Mangho, in what is now Togoland. This journey took five days.

The second caravan route described by Barth ran from Djibo, the capital of the province of Gilgohi or Jilgodi (about 60 miles south from Montdoro, 55 miles West-Southwest from Aribinda and 35 miles South-Southwest from Tinie) by way of Kaya, to Mane and finally to Wagadougou. A caravan leaving Djibo entered Kelbo, the first village of the territory of Mossi on the eighth day, but according to Barth the "border district in general is regarded as very unsafe." On the fourteenth day the caravan entered Kaya;

> ... an important place where several roads meet. And from Kaya the route went to Wagadougou by way of Boussouma, Mane and Yako. It took a caravan ten days to traverse it.[3]

The third major caravan route that Barth described lay entirely within Mossi country. It ran from Mane to "Yadega" (probably Wahigouya, the capital of the kingdom of Yatenga) by way of Yako, and it took a caravan eight days to travel it. The fourth caravan route lay between Mane and a place called Kong by way of Tema, Yako, La and other places. On the tenth day a caravan reached Kong;

> ... a large place, according to my informant, inhabited by Bambara. It can scarcely be identical with the well-known Kong, if the itinerary be correct; but nevertheless it may be the case.

The first day after the caravan left Kong to return to Mane, it

(2) Barth received fairly accurate information about the caravan routes, and Marc was impressed with his data. Nevertheless, Marc finds it impossible to believe that caravans took two days to travel the twenty-five miles between Tengkodogo and Koupela, and only two more days to travel the ninety odd miles from Koupela to Wagadougou. Barth obviously erred here, but the timetable he gives for those persons "going slowly" from Koupela to Wagadougou appears to be quite correct.

(3) It is highly unlikely that a caravan going to Wagadougou from Kaya would have gone through Mane and Yako unless the caravaneers were interested in tapping the resources of these two western towns before heading straight south to their destination.

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175 stopped at "Fura, a large market place." On the fourth day it stopped
437 at Dullugu (probably present-day Doulougou), and on the fifth day
487 at "Dakay [or Rakay] a place belonging to the territory of Mosi."
103 Finally, on the thirteenth day it arrived at Mane.[4] The last caravan route that Barth reported ran from:

> Kaye to Belussa [Boulsa], and thence to Belanga [Bilanga] ... From Belussa a person on horseback reaches Belanga comfortably the second day, the great station between these two towns being Alitinga, still belonging to Mosi, and an important place, inhabited by Mosi and Hausa traders; but common native travellers generally halt twice between Belanga and Alitinga, in Nyennyega and Koburi [Kouri], and once between Alitinga and Belanga, in a Gurma village called Yamba.

175 The goods which these caravans carried appear to have varied a
437 great deal. Barth met a Mossi caravan at Dori, southeast of Timbuktu,
439 and reported that to this market:

> [231] The people of Mosi bring chiefly their fine donkeys, which are greatly sought after; and a numerous body of people of the Sheikh A'hmedu, of Hamda-Ailahi, had left a few days before with a number of asses which
> [435] they had brought here. Besides asses, the people of Mosi supply this market
> [436] with gabaga [cotton strips] or tari, as the Arabs near Timbuktu call them, cotton being extremely cheap in their country, so that in the great market place of that country, especially in Kulfela [Koupela, but really at Pouitenga a few miles away] an indigo-colored shirt is not worth more than from 700 to 800 [cowry] shells ... Besides salt, cotton strips, dyed cloth, Kola nuts, corn, and asses, some copper manufactured chiefly into large drinking vessels is also brought into the market by the people of Mosi. However, I do not think they manufacture the copper vessels themselves, but bring them from Asanti. (Barth 1859 : III, 203–4)

Adolphe Krause, a German who was actually the first European to enter Mossi country, went through Wagadougou with a load of kola nuts destined for Timbuktu. He joined the caravan at Salaga on July 7, 1885, stopped at the Bere market in Mossi country during August, and then proceeded to their capital where he remained until October 26 before resuming his northward journey (Krause 1887–8).

Felix Dubois, who visited Timbuktu in 1895, gives us some information on the actual products which the Mossi traded there. He reported that the Mossi came to the market organized into caravans of oxen, donkeys and porters, and brought such commodities as livestock, millet, rice, manioc, peanuts, honey, kola nuts, peppers, dried onions, tobacco, dried fish, soap, iron, antimony, lead, cotton bands, straw hats, mats, jars, pots and calabashes. These goods the Mossi

(4) Barth's skill as a reporter is evident here. He is quite correct in disbelieving that the caravans could have reached Kong on the tenth day. Marc. 1909, agrees with Barth.

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traded for such articles as needles, mirrors, beads, coral and amber, tea, coffee, fezes, tailored robes, and most important of all, salt (Dubois 1899 : 292–304). Presumably, by the time Dubois reported on this trade, the Mossi had stopped trading slaves and eunuchs into this region, because we know from other sources that these people were sold through Timbuktu as far north as Algeria and Constantinople.[8]

The caravans which brought desert and northern goods into Mossi country collected grain, cotton cloth, livestock and slaves to be sold in the forest areas. Captain Lonsdale, an Englishman who visited Salaga in 1881 and gave a good description of its markets and traders, includes among the latter

> ... the Mossi with his cattle, sheep and slaves—these latter, generally Gurunsi, are not exposed for sale in the street or market, but can be seen where the owner resides. (Lonsdale 1882)

The extent to which the Mossi people themselves participated in all aspects of the caravan trade which crossed their country is far from clear. Barth, Lonsdale and Dubois all report that the Mossi were members of the caravans both in the forest zone and in Timbuktu, and my own informants agree with these reports. In contrast, however, both Marc and Tauxier believe that the Mossi were seldom the actual caravaneers. Marc declares that the Yarse

> ... are the most numerous group devoting itself to commerce in the region which we occupy. This is equally true of the Hausa, but probably only over the last years. Moors come sometimes from Dori as far as Wagadougou. One seldom meets Mande-Dioulas. As for the pure Mossi, it was only a short while ago that they themselves began to follow the caravans. (Marc 1909 : 170–71)

Similarly, Tauxier states that

> ... it is not the Mossi who do this [caravan] trading but the Yarse we know so well, and the Hausa settled in Mossi territory. Mossi trade, therefore, is not really Mossi, or at least it was not in the past. If it has now begun to be to some extent, it is thanks to the French settlement in the territory. (Tauxier 1912 : 538)

In the face of the early reports by Barth and others, how does one resolve the contradiction apparent in Tauxier's comments? These early travelers might have mistaken the Yarse for Mossi since these

(8) Marc, 1909 : 170–171. "We met in Mossi country two natives who, when children, had been seized [as slaves] and led through Timbuktu as far as Algeria ... The commerce in slaves was doubled among the Mossi by commerce in eunuchs. Mossi country was one of those rare countries where people knew how to make them, and the Moro Nabas exported with great profit as far as Constantinople those whom they had had mutilated."

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175 people have become Mossicized in language and culture, but it is
437 doubtful whether they would have taken the Hausa for Mossi. The
441 true Mossi may have played a minor role in the caravan trade, but I am certain that they took part in it and that they did so before the French conquest of their country.

175 There is little doubt that the Mossi traded with the caravans that
437 passed *through* their country. Crozat, who visited Moro Naba Wobogo
439 six years before the conquest, reported that the king

[43] . . . appeared to have had some business relations with white merchants who came up to Salaga every dry season. He sent horses to them in exchange for silver. He claims that he had no reasons to be pleased with their integrity and that the silver which they sent to him contained plenty of copper. It happens also that traders may come as far as Wagadougou, bringing merchandise of German origin. There was one of them on hand during my stay at Wagadougou. I was told that he was an important marabout, a shereef, perhaps an Arab or a Moor, for I was assured that he was very light in color. As was repeated to me several times, his relations with the king were limited to the solemn greetings on Fridays. He has never entered the royal hut in spite of being an important marabout. He was at Wagadougou for about three and one-half months, but he was compelled to return to the coast since the merchandise which he had brought was exhausted. He spoke no Mossi. (Crozat 1891)

The caravans which passed through Mossi country were well organized but seemed to have lacked the regularity which was characteristic of the trans-Sahara ones. Those caravans coming from the north were apparently more regular since they had to await the coming of the great trans-Sahara caravans, which brought them salt and other
[366] valuable merchandise. Those coming from Salaga and points south
[221] traveled at all times of the year, a fact which is corroborated by the voyage of Krauss, who arrived at the Bere market during August and the height of the Mossi planting season. This was a period of scarcity or "hungry period" as Krauss himself observed, and it is doubtful whether the Mossi had much to trade at this time. Nevertheless, caravaneers always found some trade goods at the larger Mossi market centers all through the year, even if only cloth and cotton bands.

[221] The main season for external trade in Mossi country came after the harvest. In the words of Marc, who served there shortly after the conquest:

Towards the end of the rainy season, in September or October, the
[34] Yarse begin to assemble the livestock in order to leave for the south. In certain large commercial centers like Kaya, Pouitenga, Dakay, one finds
[422] around this period the owners of livestock: Mossi chiefs, Fulani or rich natives, who are ready to sell their animals. People also assemble sheep of

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People also assemble sheep of
the Mossi variety, which are very puny. The larger variety of long-haired 175
Macina sheep are seldom exported. Once the livestock has been assembled, 437
the chief of the caravan would also provide himself with cotton bands. 439
This native fabric has often been described; it is commonly used on the [231]
caravan routes to pay for the food of the travellers. (Marc 1909 : 172) [436]

Most of the caravans through Mossi country traveled as much as 175
fifteen or twenty miles a day. They left at the first sign of dawn, 437
traveled steadily until the heat became too intense, and then stopped 484
to rest. They resumed their march when the sun was midway between the zenith and the horizon, and then stopped at some village or stream for the night. This schedule was followed on the next day if the caravan was far from a market center, but in the vicinity of a large market the caravan might remain stationary as many as six days while its merchants traded for more livestock or merchandise. This being 175
the case, it is difficult to gauge how long it took the caravans to make 437
the journey from Salaga in Ghana to Timbuktu. Our best data come 484
from an analysis of Krauss' itinerary. He left Salaga with a caravan 487
on July 7, 1885, heading north through Walwale, and arrived in Bere, 103
a distance of some 250 miles (today's road mileage) towards the end of August. Famine delayed the caravan at Bere for some time, and he [231]
did not complete the 50 miles or so to Wagadougou until September 24. He remained in the Mossi capital until October 26, some thirty-two days, before his caravan headed north again through Tema, Yatenga and Bandiagara. Krauss does not tell us when he reached Douentza, some 400 miles northwest of Wagadougou, or how long he remained there, but on December 7, a few days after he had left Douenzta on the last 200- or 250-mile leg of his voyage to Timbuktu, the Moro Naba ordered him to return to Wagadougou. It is possible that it took Krauss' caravan some thirty-five odd days to make the trip from Wagadougou to Douentza. His return to Wagadougou took him only about thirty days, since he arrived there on January 7, 1886. He apparently had to wait some fifteen days there for a caravan going south, because he did not leave the Mossi capital until January 22, 1886 (Krause 1887–88). Judging from this itinerary, it probably took caravans between five and six months to travel from the forest zones to the desert, a distance of about a thousand miles at the most. This averages about six or seven miles a day, with the normal stops for rest and marketing, instead of the fifteen or twenty miles a day which the average caravan covered when it was on the road.

The caravans did not encounter many dangers or difficulties during 175
their voyage. When the caravaneers had friends along the way they 437
stopped at their friends' homes for the night, and when they camped 484
in uninhabited places men were posted to protect the goods and live-
stock against marauding beasts and thieves.

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175 stock against marauding beasts and thieves. All caravaneers had to
437 pay a tax to the local chiefs to cross their borders or to stop in their
486 markets to trade. Binger reported that the caravans which passed
651 through the market center of Wagadougou had to give the Moro
[66] Naba a share of their merchandise, aside from the presents which they gave to him. He also reported that the horse traders from the Yatenga, in the north of Mossi country, and the Hausa caravaneers, were sometimes forced to sell part of their wares to the Moro Naba at one-hundredth the purchase price (Binger 1892 : II, 292–300). Not all the caravaneers submitted to extortion, however, and at one period many of them traded with Mane instead of passing through Wagadougou where the tariffs were too high. On the other hand, the Mossi chiefs did not tolerate any trespassing on their territories by
[488] caravans that did not pay taxes. Those who tried to avoid doing so
[565] were subjected to attack by the mounted nobles *(nakomce)* on behalf of the district chiefs. Wise caravan leaders not only paid their taxes but established close relationships with the chiefs in order to receive adequate protection from some nobles who illegally attacked and looted the caravans.

175 It is impossible to know the actual volume of caravan trade which
437 passed through Mossi country, but we can get a fairly good idea of it
439 by examining the customs reports on goods crossing the border between Mossi country and the northern territories of the Gold Coast in the few years just following European conquest.* For 1901 and 1903 the official figures were:

TABLE 28A
Mossi Trade (1901–3)

Year	*Horses*	*Cattle*	*Sheep and Goats*	*Loaded Donkeys*	*Bales of Cotton Cloth*
1901	126	3,111	18,181	2,005	256
1903	196	6,624	30,892	4,294	369

Lucien Marc, who had the opportunity to check the volume of this trade for 1904 and 1905, guessed that about 16,000 cattle and 75,000 sheep and goats passed through the customs post in Mossi country. Furthermore, he believed that since

> ... the Mossi also supply in part the markets of Togoland and the market at Bondoukou [Ivory Coast], one can estimate at least an annual export of 20,000 cattle and 100,000 sheep or goats. The import of kola nuts is at least 500 tons. (Marc 1909 : 178)

[113] (*) Great Britain Parliamentary Papers: Cd. 788–27, no. 357, Northern territories of Gold Coast, report of 1901 in Acc. and Papers, vol. LXIV 1902. Cd. 2239–6, no. 429, N.Ts of Gold Coast, report of 1903 in Acc. and Papers, 1904, and 1905, vol. LI.

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It is clear that the volume of this trade could not have been enlarged since the French conquest which, as we know, had disrupted Mossi society. Therefore our conclusion must be that it must have existed prior to the coming of the Europeans.

The caravaneers used cowries and cloth as trade currency and in some cases even bartered one type of commodity for another. Cowries appear to have been the chief currency used and came close to being used for all purposes. Evidence for the use of cloth as currency comes from Barth and Marc. Barth met a trader who had

> ... a good quantity of the gabaga, or cotton strips, of Mosi with him, which form the staple currency in the whole tract of country from Libtu to Timbuktu, ten Dr'a being reckoned equal to one hundred shells. (Barth 1859 : III, 198)

The big rolls of cotton cloth which Marc saw being loaded by Mossi caravaneers were said by them to serve the purpose of buying food ("They are for eating") in regions where cloth was the necessary currency (Marc 1909 : 172 f.n.). The traders apparently resorted to barter whenever and wherever they could or when their currency was in short supply. This appears to have been the case when Binger visited the Mossi in 1888. Cowries were then in short supply and the people were using slaves, valued at 50,000 to 65,000 cowries apiece, to obtain goods. Horses could be bought for as many as two or four slaves apiece. Traders apparently kept the cowry equivalence in mind when using other commodities to barter with, but we cannot be sure of this since Binger himself, and not the traders, may have been conscious of the equivalence (Binger 1892 : II, 498).

The prices which the traders paid and received for their goods differed greatly from place to place, according to the season of the year and over a span of several years. The earliest price data are given by Barth for the 1850's:

> As regards Selga [Salaga], the district to which the Hausa traders go for their supply of this article, three points are considered essential to the business of the Kola trade; first, that the people of Mosi bring their asses; secondly, that the Tonawa, or natives of Asanti, bring the nut in sufficient quantities; and thirdly, that the state of the road is such as not to prevent the Hausa people from arriving. If one of these conditions is wanting, the trade is not flourishing. The price of the asses rises with the cheapness of the guro [kola nut]. The average price of an ass in the market of Selga is 15,000 [cowry] Shell: While in Hausa the general price does not exceed 5,000. But the fataki, or native traders, take only as many asses with them from Hausa as are necessary for transporting their luggage, as the toll, or

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175 fitto, levied upon each ass by the petty chiefs on the road is very consider-
437 able. From 5,000 to 6,000 guro, or kola nuts, constitute an assload.
435 Selga, the market place for this important article, being, it appears, a
651 most miserable town, where even water is very scarce and can only be
346 purchased at an exorbitant price, the merchants always manage to make their stay here as short as possible, awaiting the proper season in Yendi, a town said to be as large as Timbuktu, or in Kulfela, the great market place of Mosi; and they are especially obliged to wait in case they arrive at the beginning of the rainy season, there being no kola nuts before the latter part of the Kharif. The price of this nut in Timbuktu varies from 20 to
[238] 100 shells each, and it always constitutes a luxury; so that, even on great festivals, alms consisting of this article are distributed by the rich people of the town. (Barth 1859 : II, 364)

175 The other data we have on prices paid for goods come from the
43 period between 1890 and 1910, at which time French francs had been introduced. At this time the official value of one franc was 1,000 cowries. Around 1904, a trader paid about 50 francs or 50,000 cowries for a head of cattle in Mossi country and sold it for about double the price at Salaga. With the proceeds of this transaction he bought kola nuts at the rate of one franc or 100 cowries per hundred. Thus with the sale of one cow a trader could obtain 10,000 kolas, these being valued at about 500 francs or 500,000 cowries in Mossi country and at 20 or 200 cowries each at Sarfere and Timbuktu (Marc 1909 : 173–4). At Timbuktu about this same period, 1895, traders could buy salt at about 30 francs for a slab weighing between 60 and 100 pounds and sell it for 45 francs at Sarafere, for 60 francs at Djenne, for between 70 and 80 francs at San, and "thus progressively more until they reached Mossi country" (Dubois 1899 : 276). In 1910, Mossi traders bought cattle for about 40 to 100 francs, horses for about 90 francs, donkeys for 25 francs, and so on, and sold these animals in Salaga for three times the prices. There they bought kolas at 2 Fr. 50 per thousand, and sold them at 20 per thousand at Leo on the Mossi border, 35 francs per thousand at Wagadougou, 50 francs at Wahigouya, 60 francs at Saravere, and 100 francs per thousand at Timbuktu. Here these traders bought bars of salt weighing about 75 pounds for between 10 and 12 francs a piece, and sold them for between 40 to 60 francs at Wahigouya, and for from 80 to 100 francs a piece at Dedougou and points as far down as Wagadougou (Tauxier 1917 : 221).

175 Not all the profit from this trade went into the pockets of the
437 traders. We have the report of Binger that the chiefs, besides com-
416 mandering the goods at less than one-hundredth their purchase
651 price, received taxes on each caravan which passed through their territory.

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territory. This report is substantiated by Barth. Marc adds that the caravaneers had

. . . a considerable amount of incidental expenses. Ten thousand kolas called for two asses or four porters for whom it was necessary to provide food during close to two months. Formerly there had been a certain number of local exactions to pay each time that the caravans crossed a new country. Now there are taxes on the caravans in the Gold Coast and also in French territory. It is also necessary to pay for ferryman who transports the livestock across the Volta [River]. There are risks, and occasionally cattle, fatigued by the trip, arrive in such bad shape that they are sold more cheaply than they had cost. Finally, the realization of profits is often difficult, the kola market being, in the commercial centers of the Mossi, subject to considerable fluctuations at the time when the caravans return. (Marc 1909 : 174)[7]

Sometimes the caravaneers made extensive use of middlemen and did not realize all the profits. Marc, who was stationed at the customs post at Leo on the Mossi border with the Gold Coast, wrote:

The livestock is bought upon arrival by interpreter-brokers, middlemen between the butchers and the meat merchants, to whom the caravaneers are practically forced to resort. These men buy all the kola nuts brought by the forest natives, and control the market prices . . . These interpreter-brokers apparently speculate on livestock in a most curious way. They have scouts who go out to meet the caravans, sometimes two days' march to the north. These scouts attempt to alarm the travellers with tendentious remarks, until they are willing to cede their herds at a low price. Some times, at the height of the business season—that is, in January and February—the livestock prices may fluctuate by one hundred per cent within a few weeks. The Mande-Dioula vie in eloquence, the Yarse and Mossi in politeness, the Hausa in friendliness. In reality, there is here, an embryonic trading center, a veritable stock exchange, using extensively indigenous methods. ((Marc 1909 : 173)

According to most reports, all the larger market centers of Mossi country were like this.

Caravan centers, like all the lesser market centers in Mossi country, provided merchants not only with trading opportunities but also with occasions for conviviality after hectic days of travel. At Dakay, south of Wagadougou, livestock traders found musicians, singers, and the most beautiful dancers in the country. And according to Marc, during the whole caravan season the market was abundantly furnished with beer (Marc 1909 : 175). But if the Mossi enjoyed themselves at

(7) Tauxier (1912 : 589) states that each porter was paid 35 francs for the thirty-five days of travels or at the rate of one franc per day. In addition a caravaneer spent about 500 cowries a day on food for each of his bearers.

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175 366 437 54 their own commercial centers, they acted quite differently outside their country. Dubois reports that at Timbuktu, "the great town of pleasure" with the freest morals in the Sudan, the merchants from Bamako, Djenne, Sansanding and Touat spent a great deal of money in pleasure and in gifts to the beautiful women, but the "Mossi did not waste their money and left as soon as they had finished their affairs" (Dubois 1899 : 292–300).

175 437 439 648 The days of the caravans are now over in Mossi country, even though large groups of traders carry on the traditional commerce in livestock, cotton, kola nuts, some dried fish, and salt. As soon as the French conquered th country they formulated plants to control the caravans. One of the earliest reports, for June 1899, reads:

> The country is calm and direct administration was established at Koupela, Mane, Yake . . . The Mossi trade is mainly with the English colony of the Gold Coast. It consists mainly of livestock, very plentiful in Mossi country, which is exchanged for merchandise from England; copper and material goods . . . Our task will be to discover the materials of the northern Ivory Coast which could be exchanged for cattle, and when this information is forthcoming we should be able to direct the caravans quite easily to the Ivory Coast. At the same time the English will see their provisions of cattle and sheep diminish. They will flood us less with their cotton cloth, with their glass beads, and with their kola nuts. In their place, the products of French manufacture can arrive to us through the Ivory Coast after being exchanged for the products of our colony there.[8]

439 167 464 These plans did not succeed. The Mossi still export a great deal of their products towards the forest zones of Ghana, including their "numerous laborers" which, according to Beauminy writing in 1919, were "the principal riches actually utilizable in Mossi country". (Beauminy 1919 : 71–78). The migrants themselves are, in a sense, the greatest traders in contemporary Mossi society.

PRESENT-DAY TRADE

439 [441] [452] [178] [113] There is a constant flow of goods between Mossi country and the Ivory Coast and Ghana. Much of the trade to the former region is in the hands of the large commercial companies and as such is beyond the purview of this paper. What is of interest here is the trade which is conducted by the ordinary people. A great deal of this trade is highly unorganized and the result of one or two men, or as many as five men, joining together to trade goods to and from Ghana and the Ivory Coast. The types of goods sent down to these two areas are the same as those traded in pre-European times.

(8) Unpublished document in the archives of *Institut Français d'Afrique Noire*, Wagadougou, Voltaic Republic.

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same as those traded in pre-European times. For example, my notes 439
for March 22, 1956, record that five young men were transporting [499]
50-kilogram sacks of onions on their bicycles for trade in Ghana. On 439
March 23, the next day, I wrote the following: "This appears to be 492
the season of increased trade and the donkey trains are passing to and from Wagadougou and the Yatenga to Po (a town on the Ghana-Voltaic Republic border) and Bolgatenga in northern Ghana. Very often the donkeys carry nothing down, and at other times they are loaded with beans, millet, cotton bands, onions, peanuts and other vegetable produce. On the return trip they are laden with kola nuts going northward. This afternoon I counted twenty-eight asses coming from Ghana and going towards Wagadougou. Eighteen of them were laden with kolas, and ten were carrying long pieces of scrap iron which I was told, were to be converted into hoes for use during the coming planting season."

There is also a steady trade in livestock between Mossi country 439
and the southern lands but the height of this trade occurs just prior 231
to Ramadan. Beginning from one month to one week before this [22]
important Moslem feast day, the roads of Mossi country are clogged with thousands of sheep and goats being driven south for the use of religious households in Ghana and the Ivory Coast. Cattle are also shipped during this period, but not in the same volume since they are most often used collectively by Moslem families too poor to have their own sheep or goat.

The total volume of trade between Mossi country and Ghana and 439
the Ivory Coasts is difficult to ascertain since despite the existence of 448
Customs Posts a great deal of contraband trading takes place. My notes for December 12, 1955, read *"Contraband":* Two customs men came into the village to complain to the district chief about the behavior of Naba, one of his village chiefs. This is what happened: About two days ago, two agents saw in the forests the tracks of some thirty-five asses (heavily laden as can be seen by the depth of the tracks) and the marks of a bicycle with new tires. The agents followed the tracks all day and rested during the night. Yesterday they had to interrupt their search when the bicycle of one of the agents broke down, and when they resumed the search later in the day they came across five asses laden with kola nuts inside the compound of a man in Naba's village. Since they were forbidden by law to go into the man's compound and seize the animals, they went to the village chief in an attempt to have him tell the man to put the animals outside so that they could be seized. This the village chief refused to do, stating that it was not his affair, and adding that the agents should have seized the animals in the forest. The agents, now helpless, came and

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439 complained to the district chief. Unfortunately for them the district
648 chief was absent, but his assistants did send out a call for the village chief. However, the chief refused to appear, saying that he would only do so when the district chief returned. The last thing I saw was the agents leaving the district chief's compound still unsatisfied with the whole affair." The sequel to this comes from my notes for December 26, 1955. "I inquired about the aftermath of the contraband case and was told that the whole affair is being referred to the courts at Abidjan. If the village chief is found guilty, he will have to pay a fine of 10,000 francs for the first ass and 3,000 francs for each subsequent ass, or in lieu of this go to jail. Informant said that since the village chief is a poor man, he would probably go to jail."

439 In spite of the contraband, the actual volume of trade appears to
433 be considerable. The production, trade and export of goods largely produced by the Mossi people in 1954 are set forth in Table 29.

TABLE 29

Production, Trade and Export of the Mossi (1954)

Product	*Amount*	*Export*	*Destination*
Almonds	35,000 tons	5,602	France and African countries
Peanuts	50,000 tons	3,031	France and African countries
Cattle	1,560,000 tons	101,000	Ghana, Togo and Ivory Coast
Sheep and Goats	2,115,000 tons	238,555	Ghana, Togo and Ivory Coast

439 These figures do not include the numerous items that drift over
167 the frontiers of Ghana and the Ivory Coast with the thousands of
464 migrants who go to these places each year. While the actual number of such migrants is difficult to ascertain, Pierre Dufour believes that it is "about 150,000 men per year, of whom 100,000 go to the Gold Coast and 50,000 to the Ivory Coast". (Dufour 1956 : 3). And since almost every one of these migrants takes with him some trade item such as a chicken or two, a small sheep or goat, a small sack of cereal or other vegetable produce or a few bands of cotton to defray part of his transportation costs, the amount of goods actually exported is
439 considerable. These statistics rarely enter into the account of goods
167 exported from Mossi country, since custom officers do not usually tax
464 migrants for small items, and do not make any record of them. Of
648 course, when the migrants carry large loads, these are recorded and the migrants must pay export taxes.

Greater attention is paid to the goods which those migrants who work in Ghana (but not in the Ivory Coast) bring back with them after one season or after several years of work, since the government of the Voltaic Republic derives a great deal of its tax revenue from duties on these goods.

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The migrants bring back all types of goods with them. According to Dufour: "Money as such is not brought back in very large proportion because manufactured products of the English colony (Gold Coast) cost less. Consequently, each year there is a great introduction of bicycles, sewing machines, fabrics". (Dufour 1956 : 140). One might add to this list kerosene lamps, zinc buckets, all types of wearing apparel, and all manner of household goods. An inventory of the common trunk of two returning migrants revealed the following merchandise: two kerosene lamps, two bottles of kerosene, two burnoose of black serge trimmed with pink silk, one white burnoose, two blue shirts, two khaki shorts, two tubes of Thermogene (a medicated rub), eight women's headkerchiefs, two Moslem fezes, two hand mirrors, two jars of Vaseline petroleum jelly, two pairs of sandals, one black scarf, packs of camphor balls, and one bottle of perfume. These goods represent the migrant's work over one season, from October to the following April, in the cacao fields of Ghana. Other migrants return with more, but few return with less. The actual value of these goods has been estimated by Dufour at about one billion francs C.F.A. per year. The custom duties which the migrants pay amount to more than 150 million francs C.F.A. annually—the sum they actually paid into the treasury of the Haute Volta in 1953 (Rouch 1956 : 139 ff.).

The migrants distribute to their relatives a good part of the goods they bring back, but a large proportion gets into the hands of other people either through the market or through more direct channels. Here is an example taken from my notes of March 24, 1956: "*Trading in bicycles:* Moussa gave Souliman a cow and an old bicycle for a new bicycle which Souliman had bought for 5,000 francs from a passing migrant. Souliman was trying to sell this same cycle for 6,250 francs, thus trying to make a profit of 1,250 francs just two or three days after he had bought it . . . Souliman slaughtered the cow which he received from Moussa and sold the beef to the local *restaurateur* at an additional profit. Souliman appears to be a sharp individual. He recently bought another bicycle for 5,000 francs from a migrant and resold it for 7,500 francs." This type of trading is not unusual, but the most typical articles resold by migrants in the local markets are lamps, worn shirts, shoes and other articles of clothing.

The growth of migration among Mossi men has led to a new type of commercial activity in the country. This is the selling of cooked food by the women to passing migrants. These women and young girls prepare food such as chicken, rice, millet balls, millet flour water and fried cakes which they bring to the principal thoroughfares to sell. Many of them arrive at the central village areas as early as four

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485 o'clock in the morning to sell food to those migrants who have slept
265 under the trees or in the deserted market place and who are going on towards Ghana or to Wagadougou. At about 8:00 or 9:00 A.M. the majority of the food-sellers leave for home, but some of them remain around all day to sell to those migrants who pass by in the few trucks which can travel during the heat of the day. The food sellers then return at about 5:00 P.M. because from this time until about 1:00 A.M. most of the trucks bearing migrants stop for water and to allow
485 their passengers to eat and rest. The amount of money these women
265 gross varies from day to day depending upon the amount of traffic
434 and the time of year. During the off-season from June to October,
221 when most of the migrants are home planting, a woman may make as little as ten francs per day. In contrast, at the beginning of the dry season when the young men are migrating in droves, the women may make as much as 100 francs a day, even though twenty or thirty women line the road at trucking centers. Many women welcome this opportunity to earn money because by so doing they are free to buy in the local markets the things they need.

MARKET

366 The Mossi have always conducted most of their commercial activities
443 in market places even though some extra-market trading continually takes place. These markets were and are still divided into two main
[103] types: (1) those specializing in external trading, such as Pouitenga, Dakay, Kaya, Mane, Yako, La, Beloussa, Tema, Wagadougou; and (2) those specializing in internal commerce such as the markets in the villages and district centers. Of course, there is an overlap between the two types of markets in the sense that some people from the villages go to the larger markets to dispose of their commodities and, in turn, buy goods which they bring back for resale on the local level. Similarly, in former days some caravaneers visited the local markets to buy commodities and in the process disposed of their goods. However, the main pattern is for local commodities to filter into the large market centers through local markets, and for goods from these centers to filter back down to the local markets. The more goods and traders available, the more numerous and successful the markets are.
443 The Mossi do not appear to have any legends about the origin of
173 markets in their country. When asked how and why markets first arose, they say that markets developed simply because people wanted to exchange goods with each other, or because the chiefs wanted markets in their own villages so that their people need not go to
443 other districts. When one asks the Mossi directly, "What is a market?"

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When one asks the Mossi directly, "What is a market?" the response to this question is: "A market is a place where people 443 meet to buy and sell. People travel from one market place to another 829 market place, and on the way they stop and see their friends in other villages. In the market one often meets and drinks with one's friends. People also go to distant markets to find things which they do not grow themselves or which cannot be found in their own markets."

Lending support to the Mossi contention that markets are places 443 where one goes to buy and sell is the fact that most important markets 487 in their country are found at the intersections of well-traveled routes. These intersections are often the places where chiefs have their capi- [531] tals or compounds and this leads to the further idea that there is a connection between chiefs and markets, if only because the power of the chiefs makes markets possible. This does not mean, however, 443 that the market is a purely physical entity which can only exist under 571 the aegis of a chief, or that it is a purely economic institution. First of all, some markets, especially the smaller ones, are moved periodically without too much difficulty. Secondly, and of great importance, is the fact that whenever and wherever there is a large gathering of Mossi there is a "market." Indeed one can say that Mossi seldom come together in large numbers without coming to a market, or without creating one. It appears that the Mossi cannot interact with one [437] another in any circumstance without also exchanging goods of some kind. For example, when a pagan chief holds the annual festival to [769] his ancestors, the people who attend form a market in the vicinity of his compound. In those districts where the chiefs have become Chris- [797] tians and celebrate their birthdays rather than the traditional an- [527] cestors' rites, the people go to pay them homage and also "make a market." Similarly, whenever there is a funeral of an important chief, [766] the people from the surrounding villages or even districts bring commodities to his hamlet and hold a market during the ceremony. On [796] Christmas day, 1955, the people of Manga district "moved their market" about 500 yards to the Catholic Mission grounds where the Christians were celebrating their holiday. And after celebrating the prayers of Ramadan, the Moslems and their pagan townsmen repair to the markets to spend the rest of the day.

Most Mossi markets are inaugurated with religious ceremonies ex- 443 cept those which develop by accretion—that is, by more and more per- 433 sons coming voluntarily to trade. When a chief orders that a market be [659] created or when a market is moved from one place to another place for any reason, the chief is the person who gives the order for the ceremony to be performed. First of all he speaks to his Raga Naba (market [554] chief), usually a non-Mossi slave, about the need for the market or the desirability of changing its location. This man then consults a *teng-*

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443 This man then consults a teng-
787 *soba* (earth priest) who must be also a *barga* (soothsayer) to find out
[791] where in a certain area it would be most propitious to locate the new
market. After the *tengsoba* has ascertained the number and nature of
[776] the *tengkouga* (earth deities, plural of *Tengkougri)* in the designated
spot, he tells the *Raga Naba* what type of sacrifice would be appropri-
443 ate. A few days later the *Raga Naba*, his young assistant and the *teng-*
782 *soba* take *zom kom* (milletflour), *dam* (sorghum beer), and a chicken
(or goat) of the designated color, and go to the new market place.
[776] Here they pick out the stone or three which is the abode of the spirit
or spirits, if there are several of them, and prepare to make the offer-
ing. The *Raga Naba* takes the millet water and pours some on the
ground saying: "Good God, take this water, drink it, and take this
other water (here he pours the beer), and give it to all the *tengkouga*
in the villages so that the market will aways be good and there will be
no fighting in the market!" Then the *Raga Naba* takes the sacrificial
animal, and in the case of a chicken pulls off the neck feathers and
cuts its throat, saying: "Good God, take this chicken and heed all the
prayers of the people of this market!" He releases the chicken and
waits to see whether it will fall on its back, thereby indicating whether
the petition has been accepted. Of course, if it has not been accepted,
a new site is chosen. If the sacrifice has been accepted, then the *Raga
Naba* gives the chicken to his young helper to be cleaned and roasted.
He then prays to the *tengkouga* who live in the market place and
begs them to help with the market. When the boy brings back the
dissected chicken, the *Raga Naba* cuts the liver into two parts; one
for God and the other for the local *tengkouga*. He then says, "Now
that God and the *Tengkouga* have eaten, they should drink," and
forthwith pours out the remainder of the millet water. The *Raga
Naba* then distributes the remainder of the roasted chicken among
those present saying, "*Winnam dege* (God has accepted the sacrifice)."
Only after this ceremony is completed can the market be opened.[9]
443 All Mossi markets, except those which specialize in one type of
366 trading, have the same basic physical structure even though they vary
in size from one-eighth of an acre to as much as four or five acres.
We do not know the size of some of the traditional markets such as
Pouitenga, La, Yako, Dakay, Belousa, Mane, and Tenkodogo, but we have
Crozat's report that "The market at Wagadougou, which is found
at Kounkounbissi, the royal residence . . . is large" (Crozat 1891 :
4848). Since the market at Wagadougou was smaller than some of the
other important ones, we may assume that some of the markets must
have been quite large. At the same time, the physical appurtenances
of Mossi markets are not elaborate, or were not so until today. In the

(9) See Zahan (1954 : 371) and Mangin (1921 : 55).

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larger markets there were and are solid stalls which are built and tenanted by merchants. In the small district and village markets, these stalls are built out of millet stalks which offer little but protection against the noonday sun on market days. Men build these structures for their womenfolk and for themselves. Some of the shelters which are not used for trading serve as galleries where the young blades look out and comment on the passing scene. Others are used as meeting places by adult men who sit and discuss all sorts of affairs. Still others are used by the older men, who gather there to arrange marriages between their several families, wait for gifts from younger men who seek wives, or spend a great deal of time reminiscing about their youthful adventures. Those persons who do not have such shelters sit in the sun or use grass lean-tos as protection from the sun.

Except in the large towns, Mossi markets are held between the hours of 10:00 A.M. and 4:00 P.M. every fourth day. In the larger towns there are daily markets, but these remained unimportant until today when they serve a growing urban population. The capital city of Wagadougou now even has an "evening" market which opens about 4:00 P.M. and closes at about 9:00 P.M. In addition, numerous daily markets have sprung up in many of its wards. The three-day markets are, however, the traditional type, and they are still the most numerous through the country. By "three-day market" I mean that a market is held one day, not held over the two following days, and then held again on the next day. These markets also have a 21-day cycle from one *Ragakasanga* or *Rag'kasanga* ("larger market") on a Friday to another *Rag'kasanga* on a Friday three weeks later, a total of seven markets between the two important ones. The people give no adequate explanation for the observance of the three-day cycle or the 21-day cycle. One man did suggest that it took the women three days to prepare beer and this was why markets could not be held more often, but even he did not speculate about the 21-day cycle.[10] This same man did point out, however, that the cycle made little difference to persons who really liked to go to market, since it was possible for

(10) Zahan (1954 : 375) apparently found one of the few Mossi informants with a mystical bent; he reports that the seven three-day cycles of markets in the 21-day cycle have the following significance for the Yatenga people: "The first of these numbers explains the cycle of the person (7 symbolizes the complete person: male [to which the Mossi assign the number 3] and female [to which they assign the number 4], the second that of the creation." He believes that each market starts a new cycle, a beginning and an end; "the seventh market signifies the most perfect equilibrium: the one which exists between the universe, mankind, and the divinity." In a footnote he suggests that this sybolism is not too different among the Dogon, who are "ideologically and geographically close to the Mossi." Peter Hammond, who worked in Yatenga, could not find this kind of symbolism.

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443 such individuals to find a market everyday in one neighboring district or another.

Every Mossi market not only has its own schedule but is also part of a cycle of markets in the sense that its main customers can and do regularly attend two other markets on the two nonmarket days without missing their "own" market. Table 30 takes the district market at Nobere as the home market and lists the markets which Nobere's people can attend and the reasons they themselves give for going there.

443 366 438 484

[103]

TABLE 30

Markets near Nobere

		Distance Away	*Reasons for Going*
First Day:			
	Nobere		Home Market
	Manga	12 kilometers	Good Pottery
	Vooko	15 kilometers	Butter and Millet
	Twese	20 kilometers	Millet and Sorghum
	Binde	35 kilometers	Good Pottery and Mats "Very far and people do not go there very often"
Second Day:			
	Basgana	10 kilometers	Good Pottery
	Sakouliga	15 kilometers	"To Have Fun"
	Giba	10 kilometers	"To Have Fun"
Third Day:			
	Nobili	27 kilometers	"Good Millet"
	Pinse	6 kilometers	"Small Market; to have fun"
	Parougre	10 kilometers	"Good Millet and Pottery"

Nobere people scarcely ever go to Manga because the market there conflicts with their own and its one unique product, pottery, can be bought at Basgana on a day when there is no market at Nobere. A person is likely to go do Vooko when he wishes to buy butter and millet at cheaper prices than he can obtain in his own market. But he scarcely visits the Binde market unless he is there visiting a friend or relative. Nobere people think nothing of going to Giba or to Pinse to show off their clothes or to have fun at those markets. If any commodity is cheap there they take advantage of the prices, but in general they believe that they can obtain better and cheaper products at their own market.

[435] [517] [436]

443 438

It is now possible to find a great variety of products at Mossi markets, and the larger the market the more varied its merchandise. Apparently this was not always so. Crozart (1891 : 4848), who visited the country just before it was conquered, reported that in the market at Wagadougou, he found "millet, rice, millet beer, butchered meat, small cutlery, morocco-leather goods, basketwork and jewelry items,

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all of local manufacture and in great abundance. Local cloth is also very abundant. However, there are scarcely any imported objects salt, kola nuts, copper rings and extremely rare European fabrics. The salt always comes from the north. During my stay at Wagadougou I saw the arrival of a convoy of five or six small-sized mules loaded with this merchandise." Crozat felt that the Wagadougou market with its mainly local products was inferior to the markets at Woroudoy and Bobo-Dioulasso which he found less crowded, but which were, in his words, "true *entrepots* of imported merchandise."

Tauxier gives us a better picture of the goods found in the markets of Mossi country before the Europeans arrived. His reports list few imported products except salt and kola nuts. The preponderance of goods sold were such local foodstuffs as maize, manioc, peppers, tomatoes, squash, karite or shea butter, locust-bean balls, locust-bean flour, rice and a local variety of potatoes. Other foodstuffs included were honey, beer, butchered meat, chickens, and guinea fowls. Tobacco both for chewing and smoking was also available, and so was hemp for making rope. Raw cotton, cotton thread, cloth and tailored cotton garments were also present, and so was indigo for dyeing the cotton materials. Other goods included hides, sandals, pouches, amulets, iron items such as axes, hoes, knives, scythes, locks, clubs and spearpoints, bracelets and anklets made of copper by the lost-wax process, baskets, mats and hats made out of local grasses, pottery, pipes and wooden stools (Tauxier 1912 : 466 ff.). By 1914 Mangin could add little to this list of local products, sold in the markets, but added such foreign items as "matches, glass trinkets, handkerchiefs, basins, dishes, perfumes, and even firecrackers" (Mangin 1921 : 53).

The markets of contemporary Mossi society contain all of the articles found in pre-European times and those seen there by Mangin in 1914. In the larger markets one now can find such additional items as bicycles, razor blades, plastic raincoats and other plastic products, and the latest "rock 'n roll" records from the United States. The goods found in the smaller district and village markets tend to be of the traditional variety. But even here it is possible to buy refined cane sugar, matches, plastic necklaces, shoe polish, nail polish, toilet water, glass beads, costume jewelry, chinaware, and glass and enamel containers. In some of the smaller markets it is even possible to buy wheat bread made of imported flour, and bottled beer and soda water. The more different types of goods entering the larger markets, the richer the variety found in the smaller markets, since local merchants are quick to take advantage of the prestige value of any new produce and introduce it into the rural areas. The only barrier to this type of commercial activity is the relative poverty of the rural people.

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175 436 437 Cowries used to be chief medium of exchange in Mossi markets until the Europeans arrived. In addition the people bartered specific goods for other products. The prices of goods in these markets fluc- 175 435 tuated from time to time. Prices were highest during the planting season when most goods were scarce, and lowest during the harvest periods, but we have little precise information about the prices of goods in the traditional markets. Even Barth's information is too sketchy to deal with. Our first reliable data come from Tauxier, whose writings cover the first decade (1896-1906) of the conquest. Using the then official rate of one franc equals 1,000 cowries, the prices of a few representative products were: horses, 40 to 100 francs (40,000 to 100,000 cowries); cattle, 30 to 40 francs (30,000 to 40,000 cowries); chickens, 250 cowries; guinea fowls, 250 to 300 cowries; hides, 3,000 cowries; pottery jars, 300 cowries; cotton trousers, 200 cowries; baskets, 1,500 cowries; and locust-bean balls, 100 cowries (Tauxier 1912 : 466 ff.).

Mangin, whose work covers the period from about 1910 to 1913, when the value of the franc was lowered to one franc equals 700 to 800 cowries, lists the approximate prices for the following goods: "Millet, 0.02 franc a kilogram; rice, 0.10 franc a kilogram; *fabirama,* 0.05 franc a kilogram; shea butter, 0.50 franc a kilogram; milk butter, 1.50 francs a kilogram; peanuts, 0.07 franc a kilogram; peanut oil, 0.50 franc a liter; one jar of ordinary millet beer, containing about six to eight liters, 0.20 franc; one jar of strong millet beer *(tose),* containing about six to eight liters, 0.40 franc; hydromel *(bese),* 0.15 franc a liter; chicken, 0.40 franc; average goat, 3 to 4 francs; large goat, 8 to 10 francs; average sheep, 3.50 francs for a ram, 4 francs, for an ewe; large sheep, 8 to 10 francs; donkey, 25 to 30 francs; horse, 150 francs; small cow (no hump), 50 francs; zebu cow, 70 francs; goat skin, 0.30 franc; cow skin, 1 franc; salt bars, from 1.50 to 2 francs a kilogram; kola nuts, from 0.03 to 0.10 franc apiece; one hoe, about 0.60 franc; cloth: strip of white cloth, 0.05 franc, about 0.60 franc a cubit; white blanket, 2 francs; indigo-dyed blanket, 3 francs; striped blanket, 4 francs; medium-sized shirt, 2.50 francs" (Mangin 1921 : 53). In dealing with these prices, a number of things should be kept in mind: first of all, these prices fluctuated very much during the year; secondly [436] they varied from region to region within the country; and thirdly, although these prices are given in francs during this period, it was still possible to use cowries to buy a large number of the products.

177 436 [43] [42] Enormous changes have taken place in the Mossi economic and exchange systems over the decades following the studies of Tauxier and Mangin. Even before, but certainly after World War I, the French pressure on the Mossi to pay taxes in francs finally resulted

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in the adoption of this currency as the medium of exchange in most markets.[11] The one-franc piece and coins of smaller denominations were those most often used because they were ideally suited to the petty trading that took place in the markets. The franc even became the standard of value in the larger markets, but one receives only 3 local francs for a five-franc note C.F.A. or seven francs for a ten-franc note C.F.A. These changes in value seem to occur by common concensus, since it is impossible to discover who it was that changed the exchange rate. A further fact is that many Europeans remain unaware of these changes since they seldom go to the local markets themselves. When they do go and insist upon the official exchange rate, the "unofficial" market chief appears and takes over the situation, giving the *nansara* ("conqueror" or "master," the way in which every European is regarded) what he wishes.

While the equivalence between the cowrie, the old brass franc, and the franc C.F.A. works splendidly when products are sold in small quantities, I found the system difficult to understand when more expensive goods are traded. For example, when one buys meat, an expensive item, the butcher accepts either the official francs or the local currency and gives change in both. The difficulty here is that since the butcher uses no scales, one is never sure about the price or about the system of value the butcher is using. The most that can be done if one does not receive as much meat as expected is to haggle with the butcher until he adds more. However, this haggling leaves unresolved the problem of the value of one's official money in terms of the unofficial money, and the product which it is intended to buy. One is thus left with the *impression* that there must be an internal consistency to the exchange system, or barring this, that the local people accept the system as it is as a matter of expediency. On the other hand, the vendors of products with fixed prices such as matches, cigarettes and the like appear to make differential profits when they

(11) Mangin (1921 : 61–62) reports that the Mossi had great difficulty obtaining the five-franc piece which they needed to pay their taxes because the "Europeans who live in Mossi country, including all the riflemen and provincial guards do not put into circulation a quarter of the five-franc pieces which are required each year from the natives. At first the Mossi were taken by surprise and had to give 10 or even 15,000 cowries to obtain this famous coin; this *greegree* which was to free them from all difficulties with the white man. And yet at the official rate of exchange this coin is worth 5,000 cowries. Nowadays it is very difficult to find a native willing to give this much for one of the coins. The usual exchange rate varies from 3,500 to 4,000 cowries: the French currency has been depreciated. This must mean that the natives find elsewhere —through trading— this indispensable coin. They know that the tax must be paid every year, and instead of waiting till the last minute, as soon as they have accumulated the necessary cowries they secure the five-franc pieces from those who have fetched them from far away. The coins flow into the country, and the rate of exchange goes down."

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436 use one type of currency rather than another. For example, a petty
435 trader often buys a package of European cigarettes for 20 francs
443 C.F.A. in the Wagadougou market for retail in the local markets. Here he sells some individual cigarettes at the price of two for 5 francs C.F.A., some at two for 3 old-fashioned francs (making a total of about 21 francs C.F.A.). The vendors are fully aware of this profit differential, but make no attempt to insist on one currency over the other. Furthermore, they appeared indifferent when I suggested that I planned to take advantage of the price differential which I suspected in the two systems. It appears that they believe it would be a waste of time to try to obtain the profit differential.

437 Barter as a form of exchange had just about disappeared from the
435 larger markets in Mossi country, but it exists alongside the use of
443 currency in the local markets, especially in connection with foodstuffs
[178] and other vegetable commodities. People tend to resort to barter when they wish to exchange a specific product for another. Thus, a woman who normally sells rice for currency sometimes will suddenly refuse to accept money and insist on exchanging the rice for cotton or peanuts. The bartering then takes the form of a half-calabash of rice for a half-calabash of either peanuts or cotton, depending upon which products are desired. This equivalence seems always to be maintained regardless of the currency value of rice, cotton, or peanuts at the market on the day in question. For example, a woman who was looking for persons with whom she could exchange peanuts for rice and she refused to sell peanuts to me. I asked why she would not sell the peanuts and then take the money and buy rice with it. She said that if she did so, she would suffer a dual loss: first, in selling the peanuts, each valued at 100 cowries (one-half franc of unofficial currency) for 5 francs. I counted the nuts, which amounted to about 120, and then asked for the customary *lenga* (bonus) and received 36 more peanuts worth 1.5 franc. On the next market day I observed that peanuts were not being sold but only bartered for cotton which was being sold. I decided to test the system. I bought 2 old-fashioned francs' worth of cotton at 100 cowries a ball, and took them over to the woman bartering peanuts for cotton. She accepted the balls of cotton, measured them in a calabash, and then gave me the same volume of peanuts in exchange. I counted the nuts and discovered that I had received some 200 nuts for only 2 francs. When I discussed this experiment with some of the people, they admitted knowing
[123] about this practice and said that they did this at times. I then suggested that it would be possible to manipulate the system to one's advantage, but was again greeted with a show of indifference by most of my auditors. One man eventually said that I would lose because prices

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changed. I remain ignorant of what the real facts are, but still suspect that it may be possible to speculate on the system.

Barter is very specific in Mossi markets in the sense that not every product can be bartered against every other product. Some days rice would be bartered for cotton, and on other days only for peanuts and vice versa. It is not possible either to exchange vegetable produce for livestock, even though livestock may be exchanged for livestock. Sometimes people take chickens or guinea hens to market to exchange for goats or sheep, and often these animals are exchanged for young cattle. What is not at all clear, however, is whether or not the people see the value of the things exchanged in terms of currency value, or in terms of some value which has no reference to the European currency system. The ordinary people in the markets, like ordinary people everywhere, are not concerned with these problems as long as they believe that they are conducting their commercial activities with equity and are deriving satisfaction from them.

The most significant feature of all the Mossi markets is the segregation of certain merchants into certain areas. The makers and sellers of one product are found only in one part of the market, and anyone wishing to buy or sell these products must go to the place where they are traded. The other type of segregation is by reference to the trader's place of origin. For example, a woman who sells beer would be found in the section of the market where beer is sold, but she would be found sitting with her back towards the village or facing toward the direction from which she came. There are often some variations on this pattern. For example, if there are a large number of traders with one type of product, they will form a large open circle in which each person will sit with his or her back towards the point of origin. Inside of this circle, and separated by a few feet, would be another circle of people selling another product with their faces toward the general direction from which they came. Sitting with their backs to the people of this circle would be other people forming another circle and selling one type of product. These people would have their backs towards the region from which they came. When the group of persons selling one type of product is very small, they may form a small circle in a corner of the market with their backs towards their points of origin. All of these patterns often exist simultaneously in Mossi markets, but it is obvious that two basic configurations prevail. One configuration is in terms of goods, and facilitates trading. The other configuration is a social one and facilitates the social interaction which is an integral part of the Mossi market. This seating pattern makes it easier to find one's friends, to converse and drink with them, to find someone through whom to send mes-

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443 sages to specific villages, to find the help needed in the event of a
571 fight, and finally to find an escape route by which one can leave in the event of trouble.

443 The vendors in the larger markets of Mossi country include Yoru-
463 ba, Hausa and other ethnic groups, many of whose members were
563 born in Mossi country and have never visited the land of their fathers. The lives of these people are usually centered around the markets; where the markets are held every day, many of the men, women and children of these foreign groups spend almost all of their lives at the
[439] markets. In marked contrast to the Mossi, they usually sell products of foreign provenience, whether African or European, and seldom deal in the local products. These vendors are tolerated by the Mossi and are valued for their commerce, but are always regarded as outsiders. And as outsiders the markets do not belong to them, but only
443 to the Mossi. Even so, the Mossi do not really like the larger markets.
829 True, one can buy all kinds of wonderful goods on the large markets, but to the Mossi, a market is more than a place where one goes to buy and sell, even though everyone who goes there tries to do some of both.

443 There is a marked division of labor among the vendors in a Mossi
462 market—a division which can be seen at its best on the local markets.
438 Here only the women sell cooked food, beer, millet, rice, peanuts,
439 shea-butter, tobacco, and all of the other locally grown vegetables and vegetable products, except cotton which may also be sold by a man. In contrast, women do not sell such local products as cotton cloth, hemp, jewelry, iron implements and leather goods, which are the province of the men. Only men may butcher and sell animals and meat in the market. And they alone control the commerce in foreign food articles such as salt and dried fish. Both men and women sell the valuable imported kola nut, but only men sell goods of European manufacture such as cigarettes, matches, sugar, mirrors and so on.
[257] Small girls sell calabashes of water to everyone, and small boys wander through the market selling single cigarettes, bundles of a few matches, single lumps of sugar, chickens and guinea fowls, and skewers of roasted meat.

443 There is little competition about someone else having "stolen"
437 a customer. The reason for this is mainly that every person in the market is a potential customer of everyone else. Normally, a buyer
432 simply moves from seller to seller sampling the goods if that is possible (some unscrupulous men can even get drunk in the process of "sampling" beer) and trying to get the best bargain. No seller would think of running after a customer, and customers seldom, if ever, move away from a vendor in the hope that he would be called back to be sold the article at a lower price.

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to be sold the article at a lower price. The result is that the pace of commerce in a Mossi market is somewhat relaxed, but the lack of intense competition prevents a great deal of hositility and quarreling among the market people.

The amount of small trading which takes place in a Mossi market is fantastic, so much so that one gains the impression that some people trade simply for the sake of trading. Everyone tries to get money so that he or she can buy some desired object, but it is impossible for one to obtain a clear idea of what kind of profit, if any, people make from their commerce. In fact, the idea of a profit does not seem to be important when people are selling their own products. Most people only think about profit when they buy things to resell—whether these things are of African or European manufacture. This, incidentally, is one of the reasons why the prices of foodstuffs are about 10 per cent lower in the country districts than at Wagadougou, and concommitently, why imported products are 10 to 20 per cent higher in the rural districts than at Wagadougou where they are bought. When a woman takes such products as cotton, beans or millet to market, she may gross about 100 francs in the course of the day. But out of this she may give a few francs to her husband to buy kola nuts, a few francs to her daughter to buy a plastic necklace, and spend the rest for a cotton skirt, a piece of meat and condiments for her sauces. Men whose wives do not bring many goods to market must usually give them about 100 francs to spend on the various products the family needs. There are no official restrictions on the kinds of goods which may or may not be sold in the Mossi markets. In pre-European times slaves and eunuchs were the common stock-in-trade of the major markets and of some of the smaller ones as well. The only active supervision that existed and still exists concerns the butchering of meat. Every person who sells meat in the market must exhibit the skin of the butchered animal in a public place so that there will be no question as to the ownership of the animal. If the meat in question is the remains of a cow killed and half-eaten by a lion, then the village or district chief must be notified before the meat enters the market. The person in charge of this task used to be, and often still is, a man called the Kos Naba, a kind of sales chief. He also formerly doubled as a tax collector for the rulers and chiefs. Another official, the Raga Naba, where he still exists, is more concerned with protecting the lives and property of the people who trade at the markets, but he also supervises the sale of some commodities there and formerly also collected taxes for his superior.

In pre-European times, every important Mossi prince and district chief had the counterpart of a Kos Naba and Raga Naba, to collect taxes in their markets.

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443 taxes in their markets. The French abolished both of these offices
554 when they took over the country, because they looked upon them as
651 purely exploitative rather than regulatory agents. But like so many
656 other Mossi political institutions which the French have "abolished,"
178 the Kos Naga and Raga Naba persist in many of the districts, and per-
[649] haps even in such large centers as Wagadougou. These officials persist
[829] because one of the basic assumptions of the Mossi is that everything
[825] must have a "chief." They believe that even the animals in the bush have chiefs, and if men, too, did not have chiefs then social life would be chaos. Thus, in the rural areas many or most district chiefs have retained their market officials even though the roles of these officials have become highly attenuated and so secretive that their existence is often denied.

175 Taxes collected at the market places played an important part in
443 supporting the traditional political hierarchy of the Mossi people.
651 The Kos Naba collected 250 cowries in taxes for every beef cattle
[649] slaughtered at the market and took their humps and gave them to a palace official called the Nemdo Naba (meat chief) for distribution in the royal household. He also collected 250 cowries on every cow sold there, but did not usually tax goats and sheep. In lieu of this he occasionally took a head or two of these animals from each herd that passed through the market and sent them to the palace kitchens. Donkeys were also taxed at the rate of 200 cowries per head sold in the market. Horses sold to the nobility were not taxed, but those exported were taxed about 300 cowries.

175 The Raga Naba collected the taxes on other commodities sold at
443 market. Cotton weavers paid him taxes according to the size of their
651 bolts of cloth, and cotton producers paid as much as 20 cowries on
463 especially large sales of their raw produce. The tailors and dyers paid no fixed tax on their wares, but were asked to send clothing to the palace. Every donkey- or ox-load of salt which entered the market place was assessed a tax of 300 cowries. The smiths were not taxed in cowries, but had to supply the wives of the Moro Naba with hoes and the palace personnel with arrowheads, spearpoints and iron clubs. The jewelers also sent bracelets as presents to the ruler. There were no fixed taxes on cereals, vegetables and cooked food sold at market, but each day the Raga Naba, accompanied by several pages or retainers carrying baskets, went from vendor to vendor taking several calabash-fuls of their produce for use in the palace. In addition, the vendors of cooked food had to feed the young grooms of the Moro Naba who were not regularly fed by the palace household. The beer sellers, too, while they were not assessed taxes, contributed a good percentage of their beverage to palace and market personnel who demanded the

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customary "taste" with greater frequency and freedom than did ordinary buyers. But the most valuable tax collected by the Raga Naba was on the sale of slaves, whose buyers paid a tax of 1,000 cowries per head.

There is some evidence, mainly from Europeans, that the Mossi occasionally may have found the market taxes prohibitive. Binger reports that during his visit to the Mossi in 1888, the high taxes exacted by the Moro Naba were "one of the causes which placed Wagadougou in second place [as a market town] and which made Mane the commercial capital of Mossi country" (Binger 1892 : 467). Binger, himself, was caught in the institutionalized gift system and wrote sarcastically: "The day of the market [at Wagadougou] the receipts are good. People bring every-thing to the palace including millet as well as hoes or peanuts, and everything is accepted. *All this giving is left to the generosity of the customers . . .*" (Binger 1892 : 465) (his italics). Even so, one cannot be sure that the Mossi felt the same way about paying taxes to their rulers as Binger felt. There is, incidentally, always an air of mutual recriminations among the Mossi and their rulers about the level of reciprocation between them. The people admit that the chiefs are indispensable; yet they complain that they are greedy—they "eat" too much. The chiefs insist that it is difficult to rule a territory and complain that the people are ungrateful.

SOCIAL AND RITUAL ASPECTS OF THE MARKETPLACE

Although the offices of Kos Naba and Raga Naba have been abolished officially, these officials still exist in many Mossi districts, and even when they do not exist, some men acting in their stead appropriate commodities in the markets for the chiefs. Furthermore, the *nakomce* (plural of *nabiga*—chief's child) or nobles still wander about the market places taking handfuls of kola nuts, peanuts and everything they need without the people becoming angry or complaining to the French about it. Once when I visited a market in the company of a *nabiga*, the local Raga Naba came up to where we were buying meat and indicated to the butcher that one of his customers was a *nabiga* and that he should treat him accordingly. It is not because of ignorance that the market people continue to grant these privileges to the nobles and the chiefs, but rather because they believe that only the market officials, and not the Europeans, can take care of the markets.

One of the most important tasks of the Raga Naba (or in the absence of this official, the Kos Naba) is to propitiate the *tengkouga* in the market place, or supervise the sacrifices which the *tengsobas* make to them. The task of the market spirits is believed to be so difficult—

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443 due to the bickering, quarreling and even fighting they have to
554 prevent by cooling the tempers of the market people—that they
776 become quite angry. When the spirits are not satisfied, they fail in
782 their tasks and real trouble breaks out in the market, disrupting the trading; and if they are not pacified they may even cause the death of the market officials.[12]

In the days before the market officials were banned, these sacrifices were performed regularly. At that time the Raga Naba simply asked the Kos Naba to seize the appropriate animal in the market to perform
[648] the rite. The problem today is that since the French have abolished the office of Raga Naba, and in some districts have prevented the chief from even naming one secretly, the markets in the latter local-
[208] ities are considered "dangerous markets." Once a market acquires such a reputation, people do not like to visit it because they fear that they would get into fights or quarrels. Not only this, but it is believed that if a market has been without a Raga Naba for a long time, the *tengkouga* there become so angry for being neglected that they kill
[123] the first chief appointed to it. This was the reality or belief behind a series of misadventures of which I was the victim.

123 I had spent an entire day in a market, and on returning home could
443 not find my pen. The next morning I sent an assistant to the chief
554 telling him about the loss and asking him to have an announcement
656 made in the market on the next market day that I would pay a handsome reward to whomever should find and deliver the pen. The chief sent back a reply saying that since there was no Raga Naba, he would have the Kos Naba acquaint the people with my loss. On the day of the market, I waited until midday, when most of the people had arrived, and then went to see whether the Kos Naba had any news of the pen. I checked with several of my friends to see whether they had heard about the pen and discovered, to my chagrin, that no an-
[564] nouncement had been made about it. I went and told the Kos Naba that the people were not hearing about the pen and suggested that one way to do so would be to have the Binderes (drummers and griots) circulate through the market announcing the loss. The Kos Naba refused to do this, and when I enlisted the aid of the chief's secretary, he, too, said that it could not be done because there was no Raga Naba. I had some notes on the institution of the Raga Naba, but as I did not know everything about it, I was, therefore, frankly puzzled

(12) Zahan (1954 : 371) states that "the place where all kinds of merchandise accumulate and where strangers come is a place charged with forces. In time, these forces build up to such a point within the precincts of the market that some purifications are necessary to liberate them. To omit making them would expose the participants to excitements leading to brawls and compromising the place of the transactions."

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and a bit peeved at not being able to put my idea into practice. I next sought the advice and consolation of an elder noble who listened quite calmly and then said: "The customs of these kafirs (heathens) are foolish." Being a Moslem, my friend was very often critical of the pagans, and could be relied upon to explain why their customs were "foolish." He said that in former days the Raga Naba would have climbed a tree and announced to the crowd any message from the district chief. Moreover, he was the custodian of all lost articles and restored them to their owners. The Moslem said that my request could not be granted because there was no Raga Naba, and that probably there would never be another. When the French first banned the institution, the local chief dismissed the Raga Naba. With the passage of years, however, the market became so dangerous that the chief tried to appoint another ex-serf to the job. This man soon died, and his successor died shortly after being appointed. Since that time the chief has made no attempt to name a new market chief.

With this new knowledge I called my aide and inquired from him whether this information was true and if so, why did he not tell me the true state of affairs. His reply was that he did not wish to say that the market was bad because the local people believed that they had solved the problem of the lack of a Raga Naba. When the last Raga Naba died, the chief decided not to name a new one, but in order to placate the market *tengkouga*, he ordered his *tengsoba* to make sacrifices to it. It was believed that these sacrifices would be acceptable as long as the officiant did not bear the title of Raga Naba. The other functions of the Raga Naba, such as collecting goods for the chief and preserving peace in the market, were taken over by the Kos Naba and another servant of the chief. However, the Kos Naba had to be careful lest he overstep his authority in such a way as would acquaint the *tengkouga* with the real situation. In my case, the chief was acting by trying to get the Kos Naba to acquaint the people with my loss in as inconspicuous a manner as possible. The consensus was that the Kos Naba would have risked his life had he made any kind of announcement to the market people, because the *tengkouga* would have thought that he was the new Raga Naba, and if not contented with the people would have killed him. Under these circumstances, I withdrew my request. I discovered later that my pen was not lost but had been in the hut all the time.

Those chiefs who have succeeded in retaining their market officials even secretly have been able to maintain their control over public behavior there. The Mossi are fairly law-abiding despite the persistence among them of a warrior tradition. Every man who goes to market, or anywhere for that matter, usually carries a baton over his

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443 shoulder; but when he arrives in the market, he calmly places his
651 weapon on top of one of the sheds before he makes his rounds. The
626 women do not carry any weapons to market except their "words" but
411 even these are not often used because of the desire to avoid hostility—
[576] which the Mossi do not like to have disrupt one of their major institutions.

443 The rural market is the center of Mossi social life, and friends
571 as well as enemies meet within its confines. What Mangin wrote some forty years ago is still true: "Every self-respecting Mossi—man or woman, child or elder—must go to market at least once in a while, were it only to look . . . and to be looked at, if he can put on some
[79] handsome clothes" (Mangin 1921 : 53). Except for the Moslems who
[189] are now experimenting with a form of Purdah, there are few persons who do not go to market. The absence of someone from the market for more than two consecutive occasions is a sure sign of illness, travel, or family crisis. As one man said to me, "I must go to market, and when I get there I look for three persons: my girl friend, my debtor and my enemy. If I do now know whether any of them are at the market I am ill at ease. And when I go to the market and do not see them all, the market is not good."

443 The lively character of the Mossi market will be discussed later,
571 but throughout this kaleidoscope of activities certain consistencies
576 can be discerned. For example, one notices many different kinds of greetings and salutations in the market place, but each one of them correctly indicates the exact relation or relationship between the persons involved. Young girls on passing each other on one of their innumerable circuits of the market bend their knees slightly and place both of their cupped hands on their own breasts. Only then will they stop and exchange news. At the end of the conversation they repeat the same greeting and continue their rounds. Both girls and women greet casual male acquaintances in the same way, but
[512] invariably kneel if the male stops and talks to them. Women some-
[602] time kneel when speaking to each other, but always do so when addressing any male relative of a respected category, who may then send them on errands such as buying tobacco from the vendors. A man who meets a female benefactor, such as a woman who has given medi-
[512] cine to one of his children, invariably kneels down before her. She
[604] may do the same thing out of respect for his male status. However,
[604] when a man meets either his mother-in-law or his father's sister, he is the one to kneel down in order to greet her. Two men who are equals normally shake hands, but if not, the junior in status or in age kneels down before his elder or superior. Sometimes a high status man will prevent his greeter from kneeling by raising him. When

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greeting a lower status benefactor, a man will get down and greet him from a kneeling position. It is because of this elaborate system of greeting, with the many opportunities thus provided for one person to slight another, that many important persons never go to the market. As a rule, the failure of any one person to give the required greeting to another when they meet in the market place is always an indication of strained relations between them.

The persons from whom an individual may buy goods, and the kinds of goods which may be purchased by one individual from another, are governed by convention and social relationships. A person may not buy anything from a relative except European goods. A man cannot buy any but cooked food in the market place, and often he asks a female relative or a passing female to buy it for him. To do the contrary is held to be unmanly and indicative of a bad character. A woman will not buy cotton cloth but will send a man to buy it for her. She would hate to have people believe that she has no male relative to weave it for her, or what is more likely, that she is too lazy to spin the cotton thread which would then be woven for her. A woman may purchase any type of commodity from other women, but she must be careful not to patronize men who are known to be libertines or with whom she is suspected of having an affair. She must also be careful about running errands for men, since people know that men often use this device to establish amorous relationships with women. Men also use this device to give presents, or to arrange secret meetings with them. If any man sees a female relative involved in any of these misadventures, he chases her away and more than likely curses the man, if he does not fight him. In any event, he warns the man to leave the woman alone.

The market is one of the few places where men and women can initiate relationships not sanctioned by their relatives. Under normal conditions marriages are arranged between unrelated individuals through the lineage members who establish "friendly" relationships. Two friends might ask their lineage heads for women to exchange as wives or the "friend" who has received more gifts from the other will give over a wife. Because the older men most often have goods and women at their disposal, they are usually the ones who receive wives. The result is that most young men have no wives, and until they inherit wives from lineage members, are continually seeking to establish intimate relations with women whom they meet on the market place. The technique which a young man employes to gain the favors of a woman he sees at market is highly stereotyped. First of all, he must ascertain that the woman in question is not a member of his maximal lineage or married to a member of his own lineage. A responsible

837 man even refrains from making overtures to a woman whose husband's female relatives may be married to a member of his own [689] lineage. He fears that a wronged husband may have the wives of his [613] lineage brothers recalled, thus causing dissension within and between the two lineages. If none of these complications are present, a man seeks out a person who knows the woman and sends a message de- [431] claring his intentions. If the response is favorable, the man then buys [801] four large kola nuts (four being the number for a woman), wraps them together with 44 francs, and send them to his lady. This procedure may be followed on subsequent market days without the two parties ever coming into direct contact with each other. Finally, however, a rendezvous is arranged, and on the pretense of leaving the market to visit a relative for several days, the woman goes instead to her lover's village.

837 These casual affairs started at the market sometimes become quite 586 serious, and if for any reason they are sanctioned by the relatives of either the man or the woman, they often lead to the breakup of a [443] marriage. And since the market is the place where disputants of any [578] sort most likely come into contact, it is here that fights over "stolen" wives break out.

837 This pattern of extramarial relationships centering around the 443 market place is so common among the Mossi that the younger men, and even some of the older ones, are disappointed with the "market" when their mistresses do not appear. Mossi men who sit under the shelters around the market place can usually give an inquirer not only the name of a woman, the name and village of her husband and father, but also the name and village of her paramour. Characteristically enough, they are always "ignorant" of the escapades of their own female relatives or of the wives of their lineage members. The only 593 time when men act as though their relatives might be involved in 443 extramarital affairs is when for some purpose or another a man has to recall a wife or daughter who has gone to visit a relative in another village or district. Regardless of how pressing the problem may be, a man will seldom go directly to his father-in-law's house to recall the woman. He goes to the market nearest to his in-laws' village, and seeks his wife there. If he does not find her or any of her relatives, he goes to the part of the market in which people from her village sell their products and sends a message to her family that he will come for her the next day, or that he would like her to come home.

443 A market place is also one of the best places to look for news of a 203 runaway wife, or of any stranger in an area. The Mossi say that women have footprints like an elephant in that they can be found quite easily, but that the footprints are always clearest in the market.

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What this really means is that the market is the main communication 443
center of Mossi society and news of happenings in the region can be 203
heard there. If a person is in an area one can be sure that the people in the market will know about him, or that he will sooner or later visit the market.

The young men who have returned from work in the cacao fields 167
or towns of Ghana and the Ivory Coast add a great deal of color and 443
excitement to the rural markets of contemporary Mossi country. 556
During the time these young men spend away, they give a great deal of thought and planning to the show they hope to put on when they make the grand tour *(mane do)* of their district's market place. The best day for this is the day of the "great market" and regardles of what day many migrants return to their homes, they wait for that Friday before they show themselves publicly.

On the morning of that day, the typical migrant dresses in his best 167
clothes, lends the remainder of his wardrobe to relatives, and together 443
they go to pay homage to the chief during the morning ceremony 556
(Wend pous yan). The migrant offers the chief such presents as a 431
small amount of money, an article of clothing or kola nuts, and replies [578]
to the chief's questions about the health and welfare of all Mossi in the area whence the migrant came, the whereabouts of "lost" migrants, the nature of the work the migrants were doing, and so on. As soon as the young man receives the chief's permission to leave, he [569]
goes to the market where he is quickly surrounded by *griots* who accompany him in periodic circumambulations of the market place, drumming and singing praises in honor of his ancestry. The migrant is also greeted warmly by his many friends to whom he then gives presents of money, beer and kola nuts. He acknowledges the general praise for having brought goods and clothing for his relatives and takes pride in seeing these relatives dressed in the cloths and clothing he has brought them. If young and unmarried, the migrant also seeks to take advantage of his new-found importance to make the first overtures to available young women or to renew his relationship with former paramours. Towards evening before going home, he rewards the *griots* with money and bear. Many a migrant attempts to prolong this feeling of grandeur by visiting other markets and by dressing up on subsequent grand market days, but after a few weeks he is re-incorporated into the ordinary market routine, and has to make room for the other newly-arrived migrants.

The market is also the place where important rites marking the 443
changing social status of individuals are carried out. Under normal 844
circumstances, the ceremonies attending the birth of a Mossi child are performed at home. When a woman has a number of stillbirths or

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When a woman has a number of stillbirths or
845 loses her children when they are still babies, however, it is believed
761 than these children were embodiments of the same *kinkirsi* (spirits)
776 who must be tricked into remaining on earth when it returns, and
443 the market place is chosen as the site for this trickery. As soon as such
851 a woman gives birth to a child, and old woman places it in a basket
443 and on the next market day takes it to the market place. Her intention is to "sell" the child in the hope that it would not die if owned by someone other than its mother. The old woman walks around the market place shouting: "I have something to sell!" Invariably a man will walk up to her, and after ascertaining the contents of the basket, offer to buy it. The price varies with the fortune of the man, but traditionally the amount paid has been 500 cowries or their equivalent. The man takes the child for a few minutes and then returns it to its vendor, telling her in a loud voice so that the kinkirsi will hear: "I would like you to give this child to 'X' (the child's mother) to be reared for me and I will pay for its upbringing and will come
[551] for the child in a few years. He then gives the child the name *Yamba*
[553] (slave), or *Yemdaogo* (male slave) if male and *Yempoko* (female slave) if a girl. The old woman then returns the child to its mother, relating what has passed in the market and indicating who the "owner" of her child is. The "owner" of the child may not even see the child again, and naturally does not take this ownership seriously. In many cases the money with which he bought the child was given to him by the child's father.

852 The market also plays an important part in the circumcision and
443 incision ceremonies of Mossi boys and girls. For about two to three months after the actual operations the young children, especially the boys are secluded in the circumcision lodges or compounds and have almost no contact with the village population. Their re-introduction to society always takes place on the great market day. The parents of the children buy new clothing for them this occasion, and on the appointed day the boys or girls parade together in the market and are offered gifts by the market people. Later in the day, they are dismissed and individually feted by their relatives.

585 Owing to the relatively unceremonious nature of Mossi marriages,
76 the market does not play a role in Mossi weddings. However, the
554 same thing cannot be said about the last important *rite de passage*,
443 especially the funeral of a chief, or important elder. Prior to the intervention of the French, and to a lesser extent even today, the announcement of the death of an important ruler was seen as the breakdown of law and order and was ritually dramatized by a popular raid
[565] on the markets throughout the territories (Skinner : ms). During the interregnum the vendors are subject to constant raids by members of

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the noble class, whose actions embody the ideology that the exercise of sovereignty is a corporate right which reverts to all of them when the head ruler dies. Much of this raiding is symbolic and does not interrupt market activities.

Many of the ceremonies connected with the funeral of chiefs and respected deceased elders take place in the market. Sometime between the interment of the dead person, the *keema,* and the first burial ceremonies, the sister-in-law *(dakia)* of the dead man in her role as joking relative—a role she plays until the funeral ceremonies are completed—impersonates him in the market place. On the day chosen for this rite the *dakia* dresses in the clothes of the *keema* and goes to market. While there, she acts as she observed her brother-in-law to have acted in the past: she circles the market and buys goods; she buys beer from his favorite beer seller and drinks with his friends; and for a moment, at least, she sits with his old cronies in their favorite haunts and takes part in their discussions. She may even be serenaded by *griots* who sing praises in honor of "her" ancestors, and she rewards them before leaving the market place that evening.

The market is the scene of an important ritual during the final funeral ceremonies, which are held about one year after a man was buried. On the morning of this ceremony the female relatives of the *keema,* led by his eldest daughter and his *dakia,* appear in the market and go from stall to stall buying all the things the deceased used in his lifetime. These include meat, *zumbala* (locust bean balls), cotton, tobacco, salt, kola nuts, peppers, *kumba* (a tomato), cakes, cooked millet-mush balls, potatoes, etc. When they have gathered all of these things, they retire to a spot near the market where they lay out all the foodstuff in baskets. In the meantime, the drummers play the royal airs, if the dead man was a chief, or ordinary rhythms if he was a commoner. Then the *keema's* eldest daughter places a basket on her head and, accompanied by four men, leads a procession of drummers and of the other women, also with their baskets, around the market. While this procession is circling the market three times in honor of the deceased, the *dakia,* carrying a very old basket containing the stalest food she could find, weaves back and forth through the marching throng making a nuisance of herself. After the third round the marchers return to their assembly point whence the eldest daughter and some of the older women now rush into the market, stealing merchandise from the stalls and placing it in their baskets. This assault is often so quickly done that it is fairly successful. The raiders then join the other mourners at the assembly point, where with bowed heads they listen respectfully while the chief drummer recites the genealogy of the *keema* and tells him that the people from the surrounding villages

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765 and districts were present to honor him. This being completed, the
602 *griots* are paid, everyone rises and shouts *Ne Wardo* (the salutation at
443 funerals), and that part of the funeral ceremony during which a man
takes leave of the market community is concluded. Now his relatives,
[571] descendants and friends all return to the market, whose sights and sounds make it an integral part of the life cycle of the Mossi—the one institution of their society in which almost everyone participates actively.

443 Preparation for a market day, especially the tri-weekly Friday
512 market or *Raga kasanga*, usually begins on Thursday. This day is
571 characterized by a great deal of activity: preparing the commodities which are to be sold the next day, washing body and clothes, and combing hair. The women who prepare the beer and fried foods work late into the night preparing their wares, and a visit to the homes of the *griots* finds them preparing their drums. The little boys who go to
[857] the roadside to chant Moslem prayers to the passers-by, and the little girls who sell water to these strangers redouble their efforts until late on Thursday night to get enough money to buy presents in the market the next day. Finally, when it is quite late and the beer-making fires are out, everyone retires until the morning of the market.

At 7:00 A.M. on Friday the market is deserted except for a leper who sweeps out the stalls of the sellers in return for bits of food or presents of money. Looking at the empty stalls, one has a certain amount of difficulty imagining that this spot will be crowded with human beings five hours hence. But one is also conscious of the fact that even at this early hour scores of persons have already left their homes in distant villages and are on their way to market loaded with prod-
[462] uce and with high hopes for the day. About 9:00 A.M. the first women arrive, balancing net-covered bundles on their heads, and take their positions in the various sections of the market with either face or back pointing to the direction from which they came. By 9:30 A.M. the butchers have arrived with their bleating sheep and goats and an
[273] aged cow. The first beer sellers have also arrived and are giving "sips" to men before they settle down to sustained drinking.

The pace of the market quickens about 10:30, and in the distance the first tap of the Bindere's drum resounds. All of a sudden, the market seems to have become a giant magnet, drawing long lines of
[854] people towards it along every path and from every direction. Women dressed in brightly colored print cloths and dresses, with babies straddling their backs and the inevitable bundles on their head, saunter into their places. Young children run ahead of their mothers or stumble behind them. Those vendors of European products who customarily transport their goods in boxes on bicycles arrive in the

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market and set up their small tables to display all types of goods from trinkets to single lumps of sugar. And the more numerous young men, who have no goods but have money in their pockets, go to the leaf-covered sheds, place their weapons on top of them, and take seats from which to view the passing parade. Imperceptibly, the hum in the market increases as people find their places and greet one another with *Ne Raga*, the market greeting, until by 11:30 A.M. the whole market reverberates with sounds of drumming, cries of vendors, and the shrill voice of water hawkers and juvenile vendors. Now the market is in full swing.

From midday until about 3:30 P.M., the Mossi market is a sea of humanity—talking, laughing, arranging rendezvous, quarreling, selling, buying, parading, and (where youngsters are concerned) often crying for want of money to buy a desired object. The return of migrants lends additional color and excitement to the market as these young people walk about in their new clothes, encouraging the drummers to sing louder praises, the maidens to feel jealous of the clothes of the migrants' female relatives, the former migrants to reminisce about the days when they too had bright new clothes, and the young boys to dream of going off one day to obtain the things they need.

Men, noting that their female relatives are spending too much time looking over the wares of a vendor of European products or of the kola-nut seller, wander over ostensibly to help in the purchase but really to prevent love affairs. The failure to observe such a precaution may be the cause of the shouting a man hears in the distance, and off he hurries to see whether a lineage brother or a friend may need his aid. He may either get into the battle himself, or aid the Raga Naba and the other elders to chase the battlers out of the market place, or to take them to the chief. This may indeed restore some peace and good fellowship to the market.

Elders, now more interested in beer than in other pleasures, pass the heat of the market day under the beer sellers' shed. From time to time one of them may be interrupted by a young man bringing him three kola nuts, one or two of which are immediately broken and given to friends. However, when an oldster, whether a drinking pagan or a Moslem teetotaler, sees or overhears a young man buying four kolas, he may frown or smile in the knowledge that mischief is afoot. Loud-voiced predictions of the consequences of evil-doing may suddenly disturb the merrymakers as American missionaries speaking in perfect More (the language of the Mossi) appear and harangue the market people. Then, as suddenly, the *Americadamba* depart in their large cars, and the curious pagans, amused Catholics or hostile Moslems who had gathered to hear the gospel return to

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443 their "evil" and "non-evil" ways. A little later the young men who
512 possess bicycles may be seen suddenly hurrying to avoid the other
571 *nansara*, this time, the French official, who comes into the market to
[648] apprehend those individuals who have not bought a bicycle license.
[493] All the *nansara* know that the market is the best place to find a Mossi.

Towards 3:00 P.M. the matrons in the market, having sold most of their own goods and bought those which they need, make the last rounds to see whether there are any bargains to be had. In their rounds the women may be badgered by sons, daughters and other relatives, but seldom by husbands, for extra francs to buy kolas or tobacco to bridge them over the two non-market days. Or the women themselves may seek out their male relatives to buy kola or goods, from the stranger who is making the rounds of the local markets. By this time of day the market place is emptying—at first this happens so imperceptibly that one does not notice it. However, by 4:00 P.M. a mass exodus begins as women collect their little children, hitch their babies on their backs, place baskets on their head and set out in the direction of their own villages or to the villages of relatives where
[564] they plan to spend time. By this hour also the Bendere are drunk,
[273] and for an extra calabash of beer are willing to recount genealogies for which, if sober, they would demand a sheep or goat.

[231] Evening finds the market deserted except for scavenging dogs which hunt the scraps of food dropped by the now departed human
[485] beings. The market place finally falls silent, until late at night passing migrants retire there to sleep. These persons leave the market place at dawn to buy food from the women whose hawking cries herald another day of roadside commerce. The women use the profit from this trade to buy goods on the following market days.

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PREFACE

THIS BOOK ATTEMPTS to contribute to our understanding of Mossi society, 114
about which relatively little is known even within the continent of Africa. [121]
Many of the data were collected in the Upper Volta Republic between November 1955 and January 1957, a period when the Voltaics were preparing for important political changes. I did most of my field work in the area formerly included within the kingdom of Ouagadougou. I stayed only one week in the Yatenga and paid but brief visits to Tenkodogo and the Boussouma region. Thus, my basic data hold chiefly for Ouagadougou. My 12
methods of research were the conventional anthropological ones: I recorded local oral histories, conducted personal interviews, attended court and important rituals, participated in the life of the people whenever possible, and collected genealogical and biographical data.

In addition, I read all the important documents I could find on the po- 127
litical history of the Mossi people in the files of the Institut Français d'Afrique Noire, in local administrative offices, and in the Archives of the Governor General of French West Africa in Dakar, Senegal. I also read published works on the Mossi by such scholars as Maurice Delafosse, A. A. Dim Delobson, Georges Cheron, Eugene Mangin, Lucien Marc, and Louis Tauxier. Their works were invaluable to me, and I owe them a debt of 121
gratitude. My hope is that what I have added to the store of knowledge about the Mossi may be of service to Mossi scholars, whose studies will ultimately bring to light aspects of their own culture that we have missed.

The ethnographer working in contemporary Africa is faced with the problem of the time dimension. In reporting his findings, he may use the "ethnographic present" and describe the cultural system he studied as though all elements, even those dredged up from the memories of old men, were still viable in the society. Or he may use the past tense and thus underscore [178]
the fact that the society is changing, even though cultural traits from the past may be present and viable. I have elected the latter course primarily

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SECTION OF ANTHROPOLOGY

AN ANALYSIS OF THE POLITICAL ORGANIZATION OF THE MOSSI PEOPLE*

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121 The African Sudanic states were the subject of a discussion presented before The New York Academy of Sciences in 1949. At that time Joseph Greenberg discussed the rise of these states and evaluated the theories assigning the predominant part in their formation to Caucasian influences. However, the Negro genesis of the Mossi Sudanic state never has been seriously questioned.[1] In this paper I propose to analyze the political system of the Mossi in the light of such questions as: the power structure of the African state; the conquest theory of state formation; and the presence of feudalism or feudal-type states in the Sudan.

105 The one and one-half million Mossi represent the largest population aggregate in what is now known as French West Africa. They inhabit an arid 125,000 square miles of sub-Saharan area drained by the Black, Red, and White Voltas and their tributaries. The Mossi are described physically as "true" Negroes as distinguished from the other Sudanic types. Their language belongs to the Mossi-Grunshi groups of the Niger-Congo family of African languages. In many respects their culture is similar to those of such Voltaic groups as the Tallensi, Dagomba, and Mamprussi peoples of the Northern Gold Coast (Ghana). The people in this Voltaic region are mainly agriculturalists who grow several varieties of millet and sorghum. They rear some cattle, sheep, and goats, but do little fishing or hunting. Their kinship systems are based on patrilineal segmented lineages. Throughout this entire region we find the institution of earth priests who are ritual owners of the land, but political organization is highly segmented and acephalous, with the exception of the centrally organized systems of the Dagomba, Mossi, and Mamprussi.

175 The *Tarikh es Soudan*, a chronicle written by Es Sadi, who lived in Timbuktu during the early seventeenth century, records that the Mossi first appeared on the historical scene about 1328. Between the years 1328 and 1477 the Mossi of the northern kingdom of Yatenga attacked and conquered Timbuktu, sacked Macina, and raided the towns of Bagana and Walata held by the Songhoi. In turn they were defeated by Sonni-Ali, the famous Songhoi ruler, who even invaded their territory, capturing slaves and booty. Askia El Hadj Mohamed, ruler of the Songhoi, raised a holy war

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**The author accepts sole responsibility for the contents of this paper.

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631 these conquerors even adopted the language and culture of the indigenous
642 populations, but introduced an "administrative machinery" that welded
174 scattered local groups into loose confederacies without affecting in any
114 great degree the inner life of these groups.[8] Rattray's hypothesis appears to explain quite adequately the reasons for the cultural homogeneity of the Mossi and the other Voltaic peoples. It also conforms to what we know from recent historical times of the organizing and conquering abilities of such figures as Samory and El Hadj Omar. These men carved out veritable empires in this area in remarkably short periods. However, we need not accept Rattray's hypothesis that foreigners were the ones who instituted "administrative machinery" among the Mossi. It is highly possible that the Mossi state might have been the result of internal Voltaic development when one Dagomba lineage established its hegemony over scattered local people in this area. There is some evidence here that the Mossi state had many of the features of the widespread Negro pattern of political structure so common to the other Sudanic states, and this fits in very well with what Professor Greenberg reports about the basic African nature of these states.[9]

631 It is clear that the Mossi state was a complex entity and many persons
642 cannot describe it without calling it feudal.[10] However, the question of
● 121 feudalism itself is a vexing one, and many scholars limit the use of this
171 term to describe the political system of medieval France and possibly Japan. In fact, not many people would admit the presence of feudal states in Africa although some, such as S. F. Nadel, who worked among the Nupe, call the Sudanic states feudal and talk about fiefs and vassalage. It is now generally agreed that feudalism, despite its other aspects, is basically a form of government. Stephenson gives the classic features of a feudal state as: (1) fief-holding with vassalage; (2) homage and fealty; (3) mutual obligations between lords and vassals; (4) military service from the vassals; (5) inheritance of fiefs by heirs of vassals, usually by primogeniture; (6) subinfeudation; (7) attendance at court; and (8) wardship and marriage arrangements by which fiefs could be held in trust for minors and, in the case of female heirs, husbands who can render homage for them.[11]

An examination of the Mossi political system in terms of the first six characteristics of feudalism shows that this system conforms very well to the specifications for a feudal system. The Mossi did not have an elabrate court structure on the European model and, since only mature males could inherit fiefs, no arrangements for wardships and marriages were necessary. Furthermore, I do not think that these two traits are necessary for feudalism, and they can be considered as cultural content that need not be present in all social processes with similar functions.

Mossi-like societies present a special problem to political theorists because of the importance of kinship in their political systems. Coulborn[12] strongly insists that "A feudal society . . . is based on contract. It is not

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based on kinship." He contrasts the Geselschaft feudal system with the tribal Gemeinschaft, and recognizes the possible transition from Gemeinschaft relationships to Geselschaft relationships in the evolution of culture. However, this admission places Coulborn on the horns of a dilemma as he does not accept feudalism as a step in the evolution of the state, but as a form of government that develops after the breakdown of a state and is used for state restoration. He states that "The place of feudalism in the rise of civilized societies is not yet complete, but we must pause to notice the profound importance of the substitution of something different for kinship relations."[13] We see from the Mossi data that they used kin bonds instead of warrior-band bonds as the basis for delimiting the persons chosen for government. The warrior-band members were rewarded with hereditary administrative positions. It must be emphasized, however, that despite kinship bonds, it was the loyalty of a man that determined whether his heirs received his fief.... These new vassals were required to renew pledges of allegiance to a ruler sometimes very remotely related. It must be borne in mind that kinship does play a part in political systems that range from feudalism to twentieth century Western democracy.

We cannot fail to observe that it was in regard to the society of the Chou period in China, one similar to that of the Mossi, that Coulborn was compelled to withhold judgment as to the nature of its political system. Shang society seemed to have had many of the tribal characteristics of the people found in the pre-Mossi Voltaic area. Chou had to face the problems of ancestor veneration associated with the tribal lands, and used some of the same techniques as the Mossi. Coulborn found many of these features "foreign to a tribal society" and finally decided to "leave open the decision as to whether Chou China developed a feudal system or a system of city states as its first enduring polity."[14]

In conclusion I shall say that the political system of the Mossi had definite feudal characteristics. These feudal characteristics did not come as a result of the breakdown of a pre-existing state, but served as techniques for building a state from small scattered groups. I should certainly like to keep open the whole question of feudalism, especially as it applies to the question of the origin of the pristine state, until more comparative data from Africa can shed additional light on this important subject.

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13. *Economic Change and Mossi Acculturation*

121 178 [177] [166] Some five thousand Mossi from the kingdom of Yatenga in the Upper Volta have been resettled on the newly developed lands of the Niger Irrigation Project in the French Sudan. Removed from a cultural setting which has been relatively undisturbed by the influence of European civilization, they are required to adapt themselves rapidly to an economic situation structured and directed by Europeans. Economic organization being the variable involved, a study of their adjustment provides an opportunity to examine some of the cultural problems and processes related to economic development in underdeveloped areas.

131 101 Yatenga is the northernmost of four Mossi kingdoms located in the Upper Volta. It is a sub-Saharan savanna land of red earth, low rainfall, gently rolling plains, and low hills. Ouahigouya, the capital, gives its name to the French administrative unit, the Cercle de Ouahigouya, which has governed the kingdom from its headquarters in this ancient city since its conquest in 1895.[1]

101 173 To distinguish themselves from the people of the neighboring kingdoms of Ouagadougou, Fada-N'Gourma, and Tenkodogo, the Mossi of the Yatenga sometimes speak of themselves as "Yadise" (those of Yadiga). This name refers to the fact that they regard themselves as being descended, as a nation, from Naba Yadiga, the half-mythical warrior-prince from Oaugadougou who broke away from his father's dynasty to form the separate political entity, Yatenga, which bears his name (*ya* for "Yadiga" and *tenga* for "country"). The Mossi have not always been numerically and culturally dominant in the Yatenga, as they are today. They recognize that their ancestors came from the south, from Mamprusi and Dagomba in the northern territories of Ghana.

171 Highly organized politico-religious states representing the cultural amalgamation of native and foreign populations and institutions are characteristic of the Voltaic region of West Africa. Acknowledging that we "owe to Rattray the discovery that these central Voltaic tribes are

[1] Capitaine Noire, *Monographie du Cercle de Ouahigouya* (Ouahigouya, 1904), p. 15.

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TRADITIONAL AND MODERN PATTERNS OF SUCCESSION TO POLITICAL OFFICE AMONG THE MOSSI OF THE VOLTAIC REPUBLIC*

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643 A characteristic of kingship shared by early European monarchies and many African societies has been the hazardous interregnum. In Europe this period was a time of shifting loyalties, intrigues, and bargained alliances; and the people's cry "the king is dead long live the king" was uttered without pause as if to abolish a hiatus that made them uneasy. The European monarchy later developed a strength and stability which enabled a king to pass on succession quietly to his heir. In African societies where the political power of the court was not strong, and the line of succession was not clearly delineated, the attempt was made to avoid a hazardous interregnum by keeping the people ritually ignorant of the death of a king. Only when the electors were ready to choose his successor were the people told of their monarch's demise. Even then, there was some real or ritual violence as the [662 669] numerous candidates vied for the vacant office.[1] Africans have themselves interpreted these stormy interregnums as being valuable for their societies. According to Oberg, in the Ankole Kingdom of Uganda, "The Bahima demanded that the strongest of the king's sons should be their leader and that the test should be one of war. The brothers must fight among themselves until one of them alone remained alive in Ankole Kingdom of Uganda to claim the drum and the mugabeship."[2] Other African populations believed that violent interregnums served to convince the people that a ruler was necessary. The Mossi of the Western Sudan was one of those societies which had a difficult interregnum. In this paper I shall try to show that this pattern coinciding [121] as it did, with a flexibility of succession to power among the ruling group, enabled this population to elect capable rulers before European conquest, helped them to insure the continuity of the ruling dynasty under European domination, and is now serving them in good stead during a period of transition to effective independence

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Mossi Joking[1]

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Some important aspects of the joking relationship as an adjustive mechanism have not yet been explicitly recognized, although they have been implicit in the literature on joking for nearly half a century—since before Eggan (1937: 75-81) made his valuable formulation and prior to the appearance of the two classic papers by Radcliffe-Brown (1940, 1949) and the important analysis by Murdock (1949: 272-283). In fact, evidence for them is present in the materials used by these three scholars themselves. But certain aspects of its full significance have remained unexplored.

For Africa, evidence of these important but so far neglected aspects of joking is contained in the early descriptive work of Fortes (1949), Griaule (1948), Labouret (1929), and Paulme (1939) on West Africa, and it is abundant in more contemporary accounts from that area, e.g., Goody (1956) and Tait (1961). For Central Africa, from which extensive materials are likewise available for comparison, the early reports of Moreau (1941), Pedler (1940), and Richards (1927) appear to be corroborated by the more recent studies of Colson (1953), Cunnison (1959), Watson (1958), Turner (1957), and Christensen (1963).

Some of the interesting implications of the data contained in these papers have not been developed. There has been a persistent tendency either to limit theoretical considerations of joking to a reaffirmation of the brilliant, but loose, analysis made by Radcliffe-Brown or to ignore the theoretical significance of joking altogether. Where there has been criticism it has been largely negative, or the narrower problem of the role of sex as the precipitating factor in conflict regulated by joking has been offered as an alternative emphasis (Brant 1948; Murdock 1949).

Despite the limitations of Radcliffe-Brown's analysis—the important aspects of joking it ignores—no equally ample or comprehensive alternative has been proposed. This paper is presented, not as a refutation of his position, but as a tentative step toward its amplification and emendation.

Radcliffe-Brown (1940: 195) described joking as a "relationship between two persons in which one is by custom permitted, and in some instances required, to tease or make fun of the other," who in turn is required not to take offense. He recognized that joking often occurs both within and between kin groups and between tribes, and he identified the distinction between symmetrical and asymmetrical types of joking. All such joking was explained by him (Radcliffe-Brown 1940: 200) as a means of reconciling what he termed the "conjunctive" and "disjunctive" aspects of single relationships. The development of serious hostility was said to be pre-

10:Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1964 FA28 Mossi FA28
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121 vented by the "playful antagonism of teasing," and he argued that the regular repetition of joking serves as a reminder of the social "disjunction" of the relation, while "conjunction" is simultaneously maintained by friendliness.

Such an analysis is insightful but inadequate. The social structural sources of the need for reliance on joking and the social and psychological processes which joking involves are more complex than Radcliffe-Brown recognized. More occurs in joking than the symbolic reification of "separateness" and the concurrent assertion of intergroup amity.

The Structural Context of Joking

In support of this contention I would like first to consider the characteristics of the structural contexts in which joking tends to be institutionalized. For it is from the nature of certain social structural situations that joking derives its reason for being.

I suggest that wherever joking is institutionalized, the relations between the participants will tend to be characterized by five interrelated factors:

(1) *separation:* either social or spatial or both;
(2) *reciprocity:* a traditionally sanctioned exchange of economic, social, or ceremonial goods and/or services;
(3) *ambivalence:* an equivocal melange of amity and hostility;
(4) *equality:* analogous individual or group status;
(5) *independence:* the absence of relevant allegiance to a single authority.

Obviously the comparative weight of these several factors will vary with the relationships of which they are a part. Where, for example, spatial separation is great, and/or the reciprocal tie is weak, joking is likely to be mild. Where ambivalence is strong, joking may be relied on more frequently and may be more hostile in content. Where the status of the participants is unequal, joking may tend to be asymmetrical. And so on.

I further suggest that as an adjustive mechanism joking derives its significance from the manner in which it provides concurrently for the operation of three interrelated but analytically separable processes: communication, control, and catharsis. These will be considered later.

Joking Among the Mossi

101 The points in the argument just outlined may be illustrated by a brief discussion of the varieties of joking found among the Mossi living in Yatenga, an indigenous kingdom in the Voltaic Republic of West Africa.
571 Among the Mossi, joking is institutionalized as an adjustive mechanism in the following relationships: (1) between Ego and his mother's agnatic kin, particularly his mother's elder brother; (2) between Ego and his mother's brother's wife; (3) between siblings-in-law; (4) between sibs; (5) between age-sets in the same age-grade; (6) between certain villages; and (7) be-

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tradition of hostility. Such groups obviously have both equal and mutually independent status.

The Processes of Mossi Joking

I have already suggested that the significance of joking as an adjustive mechanism is derived from the manner in which it provides concurrently for the operation of three interrelated but analytically separable processes. These are *communication, control,* and *catharsis.*

As a means of communication, joking provides a permissive and flexible context in which a grievance can be expressed, thus allowing for its rectification and the restoration of amity. As a means of control, the public nature of most joking serves to shame the object of the jocular offensive, to invoke social pressure for his conformity, and to elicit support for the complainant. As a means of catharsis, the joking expression of aggressive feelings reduces frustration and thus serves indirectly to perpetuate the amicable aspect of the relationship in which it occurs.

Joking also gives pleasure. The feeling of triumphant release that follows the successful—and safe—expression of hostile sentiments probably functions to reinforce reliance on joking as an adjustive mechanism. And the intrinsic pleasure of wit may also explain the persistence of joking behavior in the absence of an immediate "structural need" for it.

A more detailed description of one of the relationships already mentioned—sibling-in-law joking—will serve to illustrate these several points. Because of its relation to the pivotal institution of marriage, sibling-in-law joking is perhaps the most frequently used adjustive mechanism in Mossi social structure. The potential for marital conflict is high. This appears to be due to the combined factors of a sexually differentiated enculturative experience that results in marked dissimilarities in adult male and female personality; to an age difference between husbands and wives of at least ten years; to the classic stresses of polygyny; to the subordinate status of Mossi women, particularly of junior wives within their husband's patrician; and to the possible dissatisfaction of a woman's parents, particularly her mother, at the loss of their daughter's services or at the inadequacy of bride-wealth payments.

Whatever its origins in a specific instance, it is important that this potential for conflict be controlled, for each marriage extends the network of affinal and cognatic ties that link the patrilineage to the larger community. Given a persistent potential for strife, the preservation of marital stability requires the provision of a means for minimizing its deleterious effects. When conflict occurs, the resultant frustration must be reduced, and accord must be reestablished in a manner that does no serious damage either to the marriage itself or to the larger context of social relations in which it is embedded. Sibling-in-law joking helps to accomplish this.

If, for example, a Mossi is irritated by his wife's performance of some aspect of her duties in the household or the field, he need not address her directly in order to communicate his dissatisfaction and release the tension he feels. To do so in a culture which places a high value on indirection in emo-

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ship itself and the contract of interlineage co-operation and solidarity which every marriage serves to establish or reinforce.[4]

Although this joking interchange is seen in its full implications when there is an immediate source of dissension between marriage partners, it may also occur in the absence of any specific difficulty. Then it is apparently indulged in simply because it is expected, and for the pleasure which the Mossi, like all people, derive from an occasion to exercise their wit. It is this relatively disinterested joking which has been most frequently described in the literature, and this may account for the failure of many scholars to perceive more fully the important social and psychological functions which joking may fulfill.

Conclusion

This paper has been written as a tentative step toward a reformulation of the various and disparate observations on joking contained in the anthropological literature. I have contended that an analysis of this literature indicates that wherever joking is institutionalized the structural relationship between the participants tends to be characterized by five significantly interrelated structural attributes: separation, reciprocity, ambivalence, equality, and independence. I have also indicated that such joking may serve as an adjustive mechanism by providing for the concurrent maintenance of communication, control, and the culturally harmless catharsis of potentially disruptive emotions.

A variety of forms of institutionalized joking found among the Mossi of Yatenga have been cited to illustrate these points. However, I suggest that the factors which cluster with this reliance on joking as an adjustive mechanism are not unique to the Mossi. Institutionalized joking reported for other parts of Africa appears to be structurally and processually similar.

NOTES

1. A shorter version of this paper was read at the annual meeting of the American Anthropological Association held in San Francisco in November, 1963. It is based on field research conducted among the Mossi from 1954 to 1956 with the assistance of a Ford Foundation Fellowship.

2. Marriage between the members of descent groups united by a joking alliance is regarded by the Mossi as highly desirable, apparently in recognition of the useful role of joking as an adjustive mechanism. Once such a marriage is contracted, however, Ego and his wife must take care that their joking insults are directed only at the younger kinsmen of the other and that the insulting remarks are personal. It would, for example, be acceptable for Ego to call his wife's younger sister a disreputable shrew but dangerous to call her a slave (a term of disrespect used frequently in joking between sibs). To refer to her as a slave would cast unflattering aspersions on her entire kin group, including her mother and father, with whom, in their new status as parents-in-law, Ego may no longer joke.

3. I believe that joking is also institutionalized between the Mossi and the Yarse, a highly acculturated ethnic minority of Mande origin who live throughout Yatenga. There is also joking between the Mossi and the indigenous blacksmith caste. Unfortunately my data on these two instances of joking are inadequate.

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PREFACE

THIS BOOK ATTEMPTS to contribute to our understanding of Mossi society, 114
about which relatively little is known even within the continent of Africa. [121]
Many of the data were collected in the Upper Volta Republic between November 1955 and January 1957, a period when the Voltaics were preparing for important political changes. I did most of my field work in the area formerly included within the kingdom of Ouagadougou. I stayed only one week in the Yatenga and paid but brief visits to Tenkodogo and the Boussouma region. Thus, my basic data hold chiefly for Ouagadougou. My 12
methods of research were the conventional anthropological ones: I recorded local oral histories, conducted personal interviews, attended court and important rituals, participated in the life of the people whenever possible, and collected genealogical and biographical data.

In addition, I read all the important documents I could find on the po- 127
litical history of the Mossi people in the files of the Institut Français d'Afrique Noire, in local administrative offices, and in the Archives of the Governor General of French West Africa in Dakar, Senegal. I also read published works on the Mossi by such scholars as Maurice Delafosse, A. A. Dim Delobson, Georges Cheron, Eugene Mangin, Lucien Marc, and Louis Tauxier. Their works were invaluable to me, and I owe them a debt of 121
gratitude. My hope is that what I have added to the store of knowledge about the Mossi may be of service to Mossi scholars, whose studies will ultimately bring to light aspects of their own culture that we have missed.

The ethnographer working in contemporary Africa is faced with the problem of the time dimension. In reporting his findings, he may use the "ethnographic present" and describe the cultural system he studied as though all elements, even those dredged up from the memories of old men, were still viable in the society. Or he may use the past tense and thus underscore [178]
the fact that the society is changing, even though cultural traits from the past may be present and viable. I have elected the latter course primarily

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because, even though many of the aspects of Mossi culture described here are still in existence, Mossi society is changing ever more rapidly. Many old culture traits that I found there as late as 1955 had all but disappeared when I returned in 1960. Not to recognize this fact in preparing this study would have laid the ground for the criticism that anthropologists ignore the changes taking place around them in order to concentrate upon the past.

My own interest in the Mossi grew out of an early curiosity about the cultures and societies of Africa. It was born of my parents' concern over Ethiopia's struggle to remain free and nurtured by the writings of Mr. Marcus A. Garvey, Dr. W. E. B. Dubois, and Professors Melville J. Herskovits and E. Franklin Frazier. These factors, together with the help and encouragement of my relatives and friends, ultimately led me to choose a career in anthropology and African studies. I am grateful to Professor John L. Landgraf of New York University, who first taught me the elements of anthropology and thus provided me with the basic tools for understanding human societies. To Dr. Gene Weltfish and Professor Joseph H. Greenberg of Columbia University I owe a further debt of gratitude for having directed my first studies of African cultures. To them, and to Professors Conrad M. Arensberg, Morton H. Fried, and Charles Wagley, also of Columbia University, I owe whatever skill and competence in social-science research I may possess. I am grateful to the Ford Foundation for financing the field work on which this study is based, and to the Arts and Science Research Fund Committee of New York University for help in defraying the cost of preparing the manuscript for publication.

I am deeply indebted to the Mossi people for having permitted me to live among them for fourteen months. M. François Bouda, district chief of Manga, and Naba Boulga, district chief of Nobere, not only welcomed me but kindly consented to answer my innumerable questions about the nature of their political and other institutions. The Djiba Naba, who subsequently became Mogho Naba Kougri, also encouraged me in my task, and so did Dr. Joseph Conombo. Without the help of M. Beta Nyissa, my friend and interpreter, field work would have been difficult. He not only explained many aspects of Mossi culture to me, but put me in touch with persons who could answer my questions, and taught me the rudiments of the Mossi language.

I must also thank my good friend Mme. Ouennam Pousde for helping me to understand the point of view of the Mossi women. This kind lady never ceased to be amused at the attempts of this *yagenga* (brother's son) to participate as fully as possible in Mossi life. M. Frederic Guierma en-

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I

INTRODUCTION

DESPITE THE GROWING interest in Africa over the last decade, scholars still know very little about the medieval societies that once flourished in the western Sudan. With few exceptions, these societies declined or disappeared long before they had been adequately described. Today, historians are poring over Arabic documents and local chronicles dealing with the ancient kingdoms of Ghana, Mali, Songhai, Bornu, Kanem, the Mossi, and the Hausa in an attempt to unravel the origins, evolution, and nature of these societies. Had more archeological investigations been conducted in the area, the task would be easier. Unfortunately, the generalization still holds that for every ton of archeological materials sifted in Egypt and parts of the Middle East, only one teaspoonful has been examined in the western Sudan. 121

The second source of clues about early Sudanese societies is the work of ethnologists. However, most of the societies mentioned by early chroniclers have changed radically. Of course, many traits still survive, but they often occur within different institutional structures. One of the few societies that appears to have maintained much of its ancient structure is the Mossi. The Mossi were in contact with the now nonexistent Mali and Songhai kingdoms, and they survived the rise and fall of such Sudanese conquerors as El Hadj Omar and Samory Touré. Their remarkable society retained its structure throughout French rule. Only on the eve of independence did the Mossi traditional political organization collapse. 121 174

It would be tempting to claim, as many scholars have done, that the governmental system of the Mossi mirrored faithfully that of the early Sudanese kingdoms.[1] As will be noted below, Mossi society, especially in the kingdom of Ouagadougou, did possess in detail many of the political institutions described for ancient Mali. Yet one cannot extrapolate from the contemporary scene to the early Sudan, for Mossi society undoubtedly changed over the centuries. It is my hope, however, that this study of Mossi government will contribute to the understanding of the development, structure, and

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121 [174] functioning of early Sudanese societies. It will also attempt to demonstrate how European conquest affected the political organization of the Mossi and contributed to its ultimate decline.

The kingdom of Ouagadougou was selected as the main object of study, primarily because it emerged as the most important Mossi polity and retained this position through the greater part of Mossi history. Attention will be given to the other Mossi polities and the three other Mossi kingdoms—Yatenga, Tenkodogo, and the more remote Fada-N'Gourma, all of which resemble Ouagadougou—only insofar as they affect the history of Ouagadougou or highlight the basic nature of Mossi government.

101 The Mossi are a Sudanese Negroid population in the new Republic of 161 the Upper Volta.[2] They number about 2,200,000, or approximately half of the country's total population. Their ancestral territory, which they call 131 *Mogho* (land of the Mossi), covers some 30,000 square miles in the southern 133 part of the Republic. It is a huge plateau, lying from 1,000 to 1,600 feet above sea level, and broken by three low mountain ranges and numerous small hills. The Kipirsi range in the northeast has an average height of about 2,000 feet and includes the sacred mountain of the Mossi, known as Plimpikou. The Boussouma range to the east reaches a height of some 1,500 feet, and the Naouri range in the southeast is almost as high.

132 The climate of Mossi country is typical of the Sudanic zone. There are two main seasons, one cold and dry, the other hot and wet. The first begins in November with the coming of the harmattan and ends in January, the coolest month, when the average temperature is about 70° F. and the humidity about 12 per cent. The hot season extends from March to October. In July, the warmest month, the temperature reaches a high of 88° F. and the humidity 78 per cent. Violent dust storms herald the rains, which begin late in May and end in September. The rain falls almost entirely in heavy showers and thunderstorms, and the average annual fall is between 30 and 40 inches. In those years when the rainfall is about 40 inches and is regularly spaced, the Mossi can look forward to a good harvest. When the rainfall is below 30 inches and is spaced irregularly during the planting season, the threat of famine is serious. So narrow is the margin of rainfall for agriculture that in 1956 the people of one Mossi district anxiously awaited "two rains" (two showers), without which they feared that in 1957 there would be a difficult "hungry period" (the time between the exhaustion of one year's crops and the maturing of the next).

133 Mossi country is drained by only three rivers: the Black Volta with its two chief tributaries, the Sourou and the Debere, and the Red and White Voltas with their numerous small tributaries. Only the Black Volta flows

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SECTION OF ANTHROPOLOGY

AN ANALYSIS OF THE POLITICAL ORGANIZATION OF THE MOSSI PEOPLE*

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121 The African Sudanic states were the subject of a discussion presented before The New York Academy of Sciences in 1949. At that time Joseph Greenberg discussed the rise of these states and evaluated the theories assigning the predominant part in their formation to Caucasian influences. However, the Negro genesis of the Mossi Sudanic state never has been seriously questioned.[1] In this paper I propose to analyze the political system of the Mossi in the light of such questions as: the power structure of the African state; the conquest theory of state formation; and the presence of feudalism or feudal-type states in the Sudan.

105 The one and one-half million Mossi represent the largest population aggregate in what is now known as French West Africa. They inhabit an arid 125,000 square miles of sub-Saharan area drained by the Black, Red, and White Voltas and their tributaries. The Mossi are described physically as "true" Negroes as distinguished from the other Sudanic types. Their language belongs to the Mossi-Grunshi groups of the Niger-Congo family of African languages. In many respects their culture is similar to those of such Voltaic groups as the Tallensi, Dagomba, and Mamprussi peoples of the Northern Gold Coast (Ghana). The people in this Voltaic region are mainly agriculturalists who grow several varieties of millet and sorghum. They rear some cattle, sheep, and goats, but do little fishing or hunting. Their kinship systems are based on patrilineal segmented lineages. Throughout this entire region we find the institution of earth priests who are ritual owners of the land, but political organization is highly segmented and acephalous, with the exception of the centrally organized systems of the Dagomba, Mossi, and Mamprussi.

175 The *Tarikh es Soudan*, a chronicle written by Es Sadi, who lived in Timbuktu during the early seventeenth century, records that the Mossi first appeared on the historical scene about 1328. Between the years 1328 and 1477 the Mossi of the northern kingdom of Yatenga attacked and conquered Timbuktu, sacked Macina, and raided the towns of Bagana and Walata held by the Songhoi. In turn they were defeated by Sonni-Ali, the famous Songhoi ruler, who even invaded their territory, capturing slaves and booty. Askia El Hadj Mohamed, ruler of the Songhoi, raised a holy war

*This paper, illustrated with lantern slides, was presented at a meeting of the Section on May 27, 1957. The field work on which it is based was conducted between November 1955 and January 1957 and was made possible by a fellowship of the Ford Foundation's African Studies Program, New York, N.Y.

[122]

**The author accepts sole responsibility for the contents of this paper.

8: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1958
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797 labor was abolished and the Mossi could do as they wished, mission school and church attendance declined, and the Mossi mothers even refused to attend the Catholic maternity clinics. During this entire period, the Moslems were propagating the ideas that recruitment for forced labor and other injustices would cease only when all the Mossi embraced Islam.

(3) Catholicism attempted to break down the Mossi social system during the period when their political system was rendered practially impotent. But while the Mossi could not forcibly oppose the effects of French policy on their political system, they effectively neutralized the church's attempts to disrupt their social system. In contrast to Catholicism, Islamic practices and tenets harmonized with many aspects of the Mossi social system, especially with regard to polygny and the status of women. Many Mossi converted to Islam in order to fulfill the prescriptions of pagan shamans, who linked conversion with the acquisition of children to continue the lineage. Christianity did not admit the existence of the tradtional supernatural forces, and evolved no techniques for dealing with the Mossi's belief in the efficacy of such forces. In the sphere of social mobility, Islam permitted the most illiterate emancipated serf to make a pilgrimage and return an honored El Hadj, while only the most brilliant scholar is able to become an official in the Catholic community.

(4) More of the young men who leave their homes to serve in the armed forces or spend long periods away as laborers return as Moslems than as Christians. There is, however, no evidence that the increased Islamization of the Mossi is due to the heavy seasonal migration of young men to Ghana and Ivory Coast.

(5) American Protestantism, although not associated with French administrative policy, was negatively received because its missionaries were Europeans (whites). Furthermore, the extremely intolerant Protestant attitude toward the traditional Mossi religion and the puritanical nature of their religion made their efforts at conversion highly unsuccessful.

(6) The increase of public schools is lessening the importance of Catholicism and the Catholic school as the only means of social mobility through education. The newly emancipated pagan and Moslem masses are forcing the Catholic-trained Mossi politicians to act in the interest of their constituents, even if at the expense of the missions and Catholicism. The Catholics have consecrated the first Mossi bishop and have installed him in his see, but the return of each plane-load of Mossi Hadjis from Mecca spreads Islam into the remotest villages.

NOTES

114 [1] This article is an expanded version of a paper read at a meeting of the American Anthropological Association in Chicago, 1957. The field work on which this analysis is based was conducted among the Mossi of Ouagadougou from November 1955 to January 1957, and was made [122] possible by a Fellowship from The Ford Foundation African Studies Program. Needless to say, all ideas contained herein are my own. During these months among the Mossi I lived both in the predominantly Moslem district of Nobéré, and in the district of Manga, which has a fairly

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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because, even though many of the aspects of Mossi culture described here are still in existence, Mossi society is changing ever more rapidly. Many old culture traits that I found there as late as 1955 had all but disappeared when I returned in 1960. Not to recognize this fact in preparing this study would have laid the ground for the criticism that anthropologists ignore the changes taking place around them in order to concentrate upon the past.

My own interest in the Mossi grew out of an early curiosity about the cultures and societies of Africa. It was born of my parents' concern over Ethiopia's struggle to remain free and nurtured by the writings of Mr. Marcus A. Garvey, Dr. W. E. B. Dubois, and Professors Melville J. Herskovits and E. Franklin Frazier. These factors, together with the help and encouragement of my relatives and friends, ultimately led me to choose a career in anthropology and African studies. I am grateful to Professor John L. Landgraf of New York University, who first taught me the elements of anthropology and thus provided me with the basic tools for understanding human societies. To Dr. Gene Weltfish and Professor Joseph H. Greenberg of Columbia University I owe a further debt of gratitude for having directed my first studies of African cultures. To them, and to Professors Conrad M. Arensberg, Morton H. Fried, and Charles Wagley, also of Columbia University, I owe whatever skill and competence in social-science research I may possess. I am grateful to the Ford Foundation for financing the field work on which this study is based, and to the Arts and Science Research Fund Committee of New York University for help in defraying the cost of preparing the manuscript for publication.

I am deeply indebted to the Mossi people for having permitted me to live among them for fourteen months. M. François Bouda, district chief of Manga, and Naba Boulga, district chief of Nobere, not only welcomed me but kindly consented to answer my innumerable questions about the nature of their political and other institutions. The Djiba Naba, who subsequently became Mogho Naba Kougri, also encouraged me in my task, and so did Dr. Joseph Conombo. Without the help of M. Beta Nyissa, my friend and interpreter, field work would have been difficult. He not only explained many aspects of Mossi culture to me, but put me in touch with persons who could answer my questions, and taught me the rudiments of the Mossi language.

I must also thank my good friend Mme. Ouennam Pousde for helping me to understand the point of view of the Mossi women. This kind lady never ceased to be amused at the attempts of this *yagenga* (brother's son) to participate as fully as possible in Mossi life. M. Frederic Guierma en-

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434 use one type of currency rather than another. For example, a petty
435 trader often buys a package of European cigarettes for 20 francs
443 C.F.A. in the Wagadougou market for retail in the local markets. Here he sells some individual cigarettes at the price of two for 5 francs C.F.A., some at two for 3 old-fashioned francs (making a total of about 21 francs C.F.A.). The vendors are fully aware of this profit differential, but make no attempt to insist on one currency over the other. Furthermore, they appeared indifferent when I suggested that I planned to take advantage of the price differential which I suspected in the two systems. It appears that they believe it would be a waste of time to try to obtain the profit differential.

437 Barter as a form of exchange had just about disappeared from the
435 larger markets in Mossi country, but it exists alongside the use of
443 currency in the local markets, especially in connection with foodstuffs
[178] and other vegetable commodities. People tend to resort to barter when they wish to exchange a specific product for another. Thus, a woman who normally sells rice for currency sometimes will suddenly refuse to accept money and insist on exchanging the rice for cotton or peanuts. The bartering then takes the form of a half-calabash of rice for a half-calabash of either peanuts or cotton, depending upon which products are desired. This equivalence seems always to be maintained regardless of the currency value of rice, cotton, or peanuts at the market on the day in question. For example, a woman who was looking for persons with whom she could exchange peanuts for rice and she refused to sell peanuts to me. I asked why she would not sell the peanuts and then take the money and buy rice with it. She said that if she did so, she would suffer a dual loss: first, in selling the peanuts, each valued at 100 cowries (one-half franc of unofficial currency) for 5 francs. I counted the nuts, which amounted to about 120, and then asked for the customary *lenga* (bonus) and received 36 more peanuts worth 1.5 franc. On the next market day I observed that peanuts were not being sold but only bartered for cotton which was being sold. I decided to test the system. I bought 2 old-fashioned francs' worth of cotton at 100 cowries a ball, and took them over to the woman bartering peanuts for cotton. She accepted the balls of cotton, measured them in a calabash, and then gave me the same volume of peanuts in exchange. I counted the nuts and discovered that I had received some 200 nuts for only 2 francs. When I discussed this experiment with some of the people, they admitted knowing
[123] about this practice and said that they did this at times. I then suggested that it would be possible to manipulate the system to one's advantage, but was again greeted with a show of indifference by most of my auditors. One man eventually said that I would lose because prices

changed.

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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443 due to the bickering, quarreling and even fighting they have to
554 prevent by cooling the tempers of the market people—that they
776 become quite angry. When the spirits are not satisfied, they fail in
782 their tasks and real trouble breaks out in the market, disrupting the trading; and if they are not pacified they may even cause the death of the market officials.[12]

In the days before the market officials were banned, these sacrifices were performed regularly. At that time the Raga Naba simply asked the Kos Naba to seize the appropriate animal in the market to perform
[648] the rite. The problem today is that since the French have abolished the office of Raga Naba, and in some districts have prevented the chief from even naming one secretly, the markets in the latter local-
[208] ities are considered "dangerous markets." Once a market acquires such a reputation, people do not like to visit it because they fear that they would get into fights or quarrels. Not only this, but it is believed that if a market has been without a Raga Naba for a long time, the *tengkouga* there become so angry for being neglected that they kill
[123] the first chief appointed to it. This was the reality or belief behind a series of misadventures of which I was the victim.

123 I had spent an entire day in a market, and on returning home could
443 not find my pen. The next morning I sent an assistant to the chief
554 telling him about the loss and asking him to have an announcement
656 made in the market on the next market day that I would pay a handsome reward to whomever should find and deliver the pen. The chief sent back a reply saying that since there was no Raga Naba, he would have the Kos Naba acquaint the people with my loss. On the day of the market, I waited until midday, when most of the people had arrived, and then went to see whether the Kos Naba had any news of the pen. I checked with several of my friends to see whether they had heard about the pen and discovered, to my chagrin, that no an-
[564] nouncement had been made about it. I went and told the Kos Naba that the people were not hearing about the pen and suggested that one way to do so would be to have the Binderes (drummers and griots) circulate through the market announcing the loss. The Kos Naba refused to do this, and when I enlisted the aid of the chief's secretary, he, too, said that it could not be done because there was no Raga Naba. I had some notes on the institution of the Raga Naba, but as I did not know everything about it, I was, therefore, frankly puzzled

(12) Zahan (1954 : 371) states that "the place where all kinds of merchandise accumulate and where strangers come is a place charged with forces. In time, these forces build up to such a point within the precincts of the market that some purifications are necessary to liberate them. To omit making them would expose the participants to excitements leading to brawls and compromising the place of the transactions."

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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and a bit peeved at not being able to put my idea into practice. I next sought the advice and consolation of an elder noble who listened quite calmly and then said: "The customs of these kafirs (heathens) are foolish." Being a Moslem, my friend was very often critical of the pagans, and could be relied upon to explain why their customs were "foolish." He said that in former days the Raga Naba would have climbed a tree and announced to the crowd any message from the district chief. Moreover, he was the custodian of all lost articles and restored them to their owners. The Moslem said that my request could not be granted because there was no Raga Naba, and that probably there would never be another. When the French first banned the institution, the local chief dismissed the Raga Naba. With the passage of years, however, the market became so dangerous that the chief tried to appoint another ex-serf to the job. This man soon died, and his successor died shortly after being appointed. Since that time the chief has made no attempt to name a new market chief.

With this new knowledge I called my aide and inquired from him whether this information was true and if so, why did he not tell me the true state of affairs. His reply was that he did not wish to say that the market was bad because the local people believed that they had solved the problem of the lack of a Raga Naba. When the last Raga Naba died, the chief decided not to name a new one, but in order to placate the market *tengkouga,* he ordered his *tengsoba* to make sacrifices to it. It was believed that these sacrifices would be acceptable as long as the officiant did not bear the title of Raga Naba. The other functions of the Raga Naba, such as collecting goods for the chief and preserving peace in the market, were taken over by the Kos Naba and another servant of the chief. However, the Kos Naba had to be careful lest he overstep his authority in such a way as would acquaint the *tengkouga* with the real situation. In my case, the chief was acting by trying to get the Kos Naba to acquaint the people with my loss in as inconspicuous a manner as possible. The consensus was that the Kos Naba would have risked his life had he made any kind of announcement to the market people, because the *tengkouga* would have thought that he was the new Raga Naba, and if not contented with the people would have killed him. Under these circumstances, I withdrew my request. I discovered later that my pen was not lost but had been in the hut all the time.

Those chiefs who have succeeded in retaining their market officials even secretly have been able to maintain their control over public behavior there. The Mossi are fairly law-abiding despite the persistence among them of a warrior tradition. Every man who goes to market, or anywhere for that matter, usually carries a baton over his

648 to open talks with Voulet. This poor political judgment cost him his crown. Binger had been preceded in Ouagadougou by Dr. Krause, who in 1885 was the first European allowed to enter the capital; Von François, coming from German Togoland in 1887, was stopped at the first Mossi village. As already mentioned, Binger, not without difficulty, managed to reach Ouagadougou in 1888. He stayed there for some time, longer than he had wished, and it was by virtue of his admirable energy that he was able to resume his journey toward the south. In 1890 Dr. Crozat was received for the first time by the Moro Naba, but he had to leave Ouagadougou speedily. The following year Monteil did not even manage to reach the capital. He was stopped a few kilometers from it and forced to depart abruptly. The mulatto Fergusson, in the service of the British, reached Ouagadougou by way of Tenkodogo, Nyaogo, and Kombisgri. Von Carnap, a German, came from Sansané-Mango in 1897 and visited Tenkodogo and Koupéla.

114 Such are, in brief outline, the verified contacts of the Mossi with Europeans. Were they already known by John II of Portugal, and even by John III, in the sixteenth century? Did they come from far to the east, from Sokoto, Bornu, perhaps even from Wadai? There are so many questions that seem quite mysterious to us in the present state of our knowledge of these peoples of the bend of the Niger, who lack written traditions. Lt. Marc discusses at great length the various opinions on this subject in his book, Au pays des Mossi /In Mossi Country/, chapters 1 and 7. Delafosse presents his own opinion in his work on Upper Senegal and Niger (especially in volume 2). We shall limit this account to the traditions gathered from the natives themselves.

124 Our working method, indeed, has been to question as many natives as possible and to gather their statements on all matters which seemed of interest. We have avoided any "interpretation" of the facts. We have allowed the natives to talk, to tell their story, to describe /3/ their customs, to explain the phenomena of nature and of life as they understand them. Our role was limited to a day-to-day record of what we heard, to the inducement of explanations, to the arrangement of these notes. Of course, our questions sometimes remained unanswered. We shall leave them unanswered here. Having no plan to defend, we hope to have been sufficiently objective.

114 We shall, nevertheless, be happy if this modest work makes a small contribution to the study of regional history, so heavily stressed

596 under the supervision of the husband's first wife; the daughters are never their own masters at any age and thus live in semi-slavery. The children do not spend much time together. They undoubtedly have affection for each other and show it at times, and their parents love them, but there does not exist among them that bond, that family spirit which only Christianity can bring them.

/77/ BOOK IV. RELIGIOUS LIFE

Chapter 1. Beliefs and Ethics

000 We have studied so far the external manifestations of Mossi life: the political structure and its hierarchy, the family structure and all its derivatives, marriage, birth, life, and death. We must now take a further step and carry our investigation to a more intimate level, to analyze the deepest and most persistent feelings and attitudes of these people. It is very difficult to understand one individual and to grasp the motives for his actions in everyday life; it is all the more difficult to do so in the case of a people, especially when this people does not practice self-analysis and when no writings exist to reflect its soul, which must be detected in its most spontaneous manifestations, in the most commonplace conversations. We would, however, know almost nothing about the Mossi if we did not know their ideas about God, the world, and ancestral and other spirits, as well as the relationships they have established with this invisible world. Religious life plays a very important role in the life of any people. Would it be an exaggeration to state that the significance of its role increases with the primitiveness of the people and their resulting tendency to attribute all they cannot explain to preternatural intervention?

124 The Mossi do not like to broach these subjects with foreigners, especially with Whites, whose beliefs they know to be so different from theirs. Not only are they afraid to offend the spirits by revealing their secrets, but they fear the derisive smile. One must be careful not to laugh at their ideas, no matter how childish they may seem to us. To laugh at them is the surest way of hurting their feelings and of making them hopelessly secretive. In any case, is not sincere belief worthy of some respect, even if this respect is mixed with a certain amount of pity?

124 The problem is aggravated by the fact that the Mossi possess no religious theories and are not in the habit of discussing their beliefs. They are bewildered by the slightest "Why," the most elementary "how is it so." To fulfill the needs of our European minds, therefore, it proved necessary to put a little order and clarity into the ideas we gleaned here and there. In this area especially we have avoided as much as possible any tendency to systematize, and we can say that there is nothing of our own in the two chapters that follow. We have listened to the natives, elicited explanations, asked questions, and made note of the answers. We shall now transcribe the results. Of course the answers did not always agree, and we /78/ were forced to make choices on the basis of those testimonies which appeared most worthy of trust. The disagreements were on matters of detail only, and on the whole the statements persistently agreed on the most important points. In any case, whenever a serious doubt arises, we shall be careful to point it out.

776 576 How could Lt. Marc ever write, "We do not believe that the Mossi have the concept of a single God and Creator"? (1) The idea of God

1. Marc, Au pays des Mossi /In Mossi Country/, p. 158.

is everywhere to be found among this people. The merest wish, the simplest greeting, includes the name of God. When someone is going away, the person who is leaving and those who are staying hold the following exchange: "May God be with me," says the one who goes; "May God see you home! May God cause you to return! May God move your legs!" answer those who remain.

Persons who receive gifts tell their benefactor: "May God keep you! May God cause you to remain a long time (on this earth)! May God reward you! May God repay you!"

If a friend is seen wearing a new garment, this occasions another greeting: "May God allow you to wear it out before you discard it!"

If he is eating, he is told: "May God cause you to profit by it!"

If he comes to announce the birth of an heir: "God grant that you may suspend him from your shoulder!" /Tr., Mossi children from age [854] two or thereabouts are often carried astraddle the hip and holding on to the shoulder./

If he is leaving to return on the same day: "May God grant us the pleasure of talking to each other!"

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[p. vii]
[pp. iv–vi are blank]

PREFACE

THIS BOOK ATTEMPTS to contribute to our understanding of Mossi society, 114
about which relatively little is known even within the continent of Africa. [121]
Many of the data were collected in the Upper Volta Republic between November 1955 and January 1957, a period when the Voltaics were preparing for important political changes. I did most of my field work in the area formerly included within the kingdom of Ouagadougou. I stayed only one week in the Yatenga and paid but brief visits to Tenkodogo and the Boussouma region. Thus, my basic data hold chiefly for Ouagadougou. My 12
methods of research were the conventional anthropological ones: I recorded local oral histories, conducted personal interviews, attended court and important rituals, participated in the life of the people whenever possible, and collected genealogical and biographical data.

In addition, I read all the important documents I could find on the po- 127
litical history of the Mossi people in the files of the Institut Français d'Afrique Noire, in local administrative offices, and in the Archives of the Governor General of French West Africa in Dakar, Senegal. I also read published works on the Mossi by such scholars as Maurice Delafosse, A. A. Dim Delobson, Georges Cheron, Eugene Mangin, Lucien Marc, and Louis Tauxier. Their works were invaluable to me, and I owe them a debt of 121
gratitude. My hope is that what I have added to the store of knowledge about the Mossi may be of service to Mossi scholars, whose studies will ultimately bring to light aspects of their own culture that we have missed.

The ethnographer working in contemporary Africa is faced with the problem of the time dimension. In reporting his findings, he may use the "ethnographic present" and describe the cultural system he studied as though all elements, even those dredged up from the memories of old men, were still viable in the society. Or he may use the past tense and thus underscore [178]
the fact that the society is changing, even though cultural traits from the past may be present and viable. I have elected the latter course primarily

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173 While these events occurred in the east, a sister of the Moro Naba, assigned to guard the tibo fetishes, quarreled with her brother and fled west to Ouahigouya. This region thus became Mossi territory and took the name of land of Ya. (2)

2. For further details, see Lt. Marc. op. cit. Ch. 7, and especially Delafosse, Haut Sénégal et Niger /Upper Senegal and Niger/, Series I, Vol. 2, p. 305 ff.

131 The region thus conquered lies within the bend of the Niger, approximately between the 11°30 and 13°30 parallels and from 2° to 5° longitude west of Paris. Its closest neighbors are the Macina and the Habé to the north, the Samo to the northwest, the Gourounsi to the west and southwest, the Nancana /Nankana/ to the south, the Bousansé to the southeast, the Gourmantché to the east, and the Peul of Dori to the northeast. The Mossi population has been estimated at
161 one and a half million, to which must be added the Yarsé, who are Mandé completely assimilated to the Mossi, the pastoral Peul, the Haoussa /Hausa/ who form small colonies near the large commercial centers of the region, and a few lesser groups. We shall deal with these populations only insofar as they have contact with the Mossi, in whose territory they are scattered.

Two important rivers cross the country from northwest [Tr., the
133 original reads northeast] to southeast. They are the two Volta rivers, the White and the Red. In addition to these two larger waterways, which nevertheless do not flow throughout the year, there are a large number of watercourses /Tr., the French term, marigot, covers both river branch channels and shallow depressions where water accumulates forming pools/. They become impassable torrents after a storm, /6/ but remain empty during the dry season from November to June. The
[312] shallow wells which supply water for the households are usually dug by the women in the beds of these watercourses.

There are no high mountains in Mossi country. When arriving from the north, the traveller crosses the beautiful cliffs of Bandiagara and the mountainous country of the Habe. /Two photographs appear here./ Mossi country begins almost at the foot of the cliffs. The northwestern region is, however, quite broken and includes the Pilimpikou peak; the two Volta rivers, especially the White Volta,

5: Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1959
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PETER B. HAMMOND

13. *Economic Change and Mossi Acculturation*

Some five thousand Mossi from the kingdom of Yatenga in the Upper Volta have been resettled on the newly developed lands of the Niger Irrigation Project in the French Sudan. Removed from a cultural setting which has been relatively undisturbed by the influence of European civilization, they are required to adapt themselves rapidly to an economic situation structured and directed by Europeans. Economic organization being the variable involved, a study of their adjustment provides an opportunity to examine some of the cultural problems and processes related to economic development in underdeveloped areas.

Yatenga is the northernmost of four Mossi kingdoms located in the Upper Volta. It is a sub-Saharan savanna land of red earth, low rainfall, gently rolling plains, and low hills. Ouahigouya, the capital, gives its name to the French administrative unit, the Cercle de Ouahigouya, which has governed the kingdom from its headquarters in this ancient city since its conquest in 1895.[1]

To distinguish themselves from the people of the neighboring kingdoms of Ouagadougou, Fada-N'Gourma, and Tenkodogo, the Mossi of the Yatenga sometimes speak of themselves as "Yadise" (those of Yadiga). This name refers to the fact that they regard themselves as being descended, as a nation, from Naba Yadiga, the half-mythical warrior-prince from Oaugadougou who broke away from his father's dynasty to form the separate political entity, Yatenga, which bears his name (*ya* for "Yadiga" and *tenga* for "country"). The Mossi have not always been numerically and culturally dominant in the Yatenga, as they are today. They recognize that their ancestors came from the south, from Mamprusi and Dagomba in the northern territories of Ghana.

Highly organized politico-religious states representing the cultural amalgamation of native and foreign populations and institutions are characteristic of the Voltaic region of West Africa. Acknowledging that we "owe to Rattray the discovery that these central Voltaic tribes are

[1] Capitaine Noire, *Monographie du Cercle de Ouahigouya* (Ouahigouya, 1904), p. 15.

/451/ Book Four

Black Warriors and Conquerors

Chapter I

The Mossi -- Occupations

101 The Mossi are settled between the twelfth and fourteenth de-
131 grees of north latitude, and between the second and fifth degrees of west longitude. To the south, they extend slightly beyond the twelfth degree of latitude. They are indeed to be found in Saraboutenga, Rakaye, Béré, and Tenkodogo, but this does not bring them too far south of the twelfth degree. To the north, on the other hand, they do not quite reach the fourteenth degree.

161 The Mossi form a rather large group which occupies, in the
563 center of the area, the circle /an administrative division/ of Ouagadougou; to the northwest, the circle of Ouahigouya; to the southeast, the residency /administrative center/ of Tenkodogo; and to the east of the latter, the circle of Fada N'Gourma. Of course, the Mossi do not make up the total population of these four districts. In the Ouahigouya circle, there are the Habé /Habe/ and Houmbébé /Humbe/ to the northwest, and the Samoro /Samo/ to the south. In the Ouagadougou circle, which may be regarded as the center of Mossi territory, there are the Kipirsi to the east. In the Tenkodogo residency there are the Boussansé /Busansi/ to the south and in the circle of Fada N'Gourma the Gourmantché or Gourmanké /Gurma/ to the east. The Mossi, however, make up
161 the /452/ greater part of the total population in all four areas. In the circle of Ouagadougou, they number 750,000, in the residency of Tenkodogo, 122,000, in the residency of Leo, 1,000. This adds up to 873,000 for the circle of Ouagadougou as a whole. Assuming that there are 200,000 Mossi in the circles of Ouahigouya and Fada N'Gourma (a very approximate figure), a total of 1,073,000 Mossi is obtained. This makes them by far the most numerous group in all of French West Africa. The whole of our Dahomey, for example,

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28

[P. xii]

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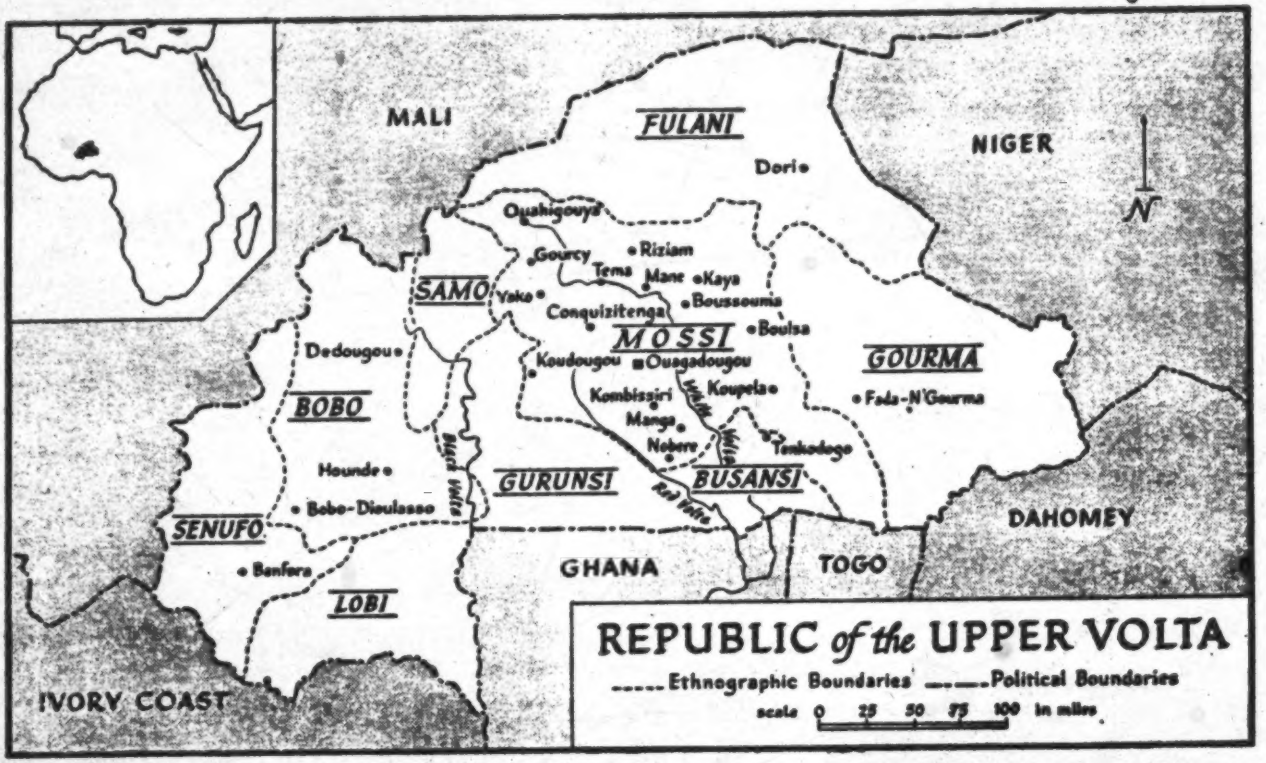

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28

121 [174] functioning of early Sudanese societies. It will also attempt to demonstrate how European conquest affected the political organization of the Mossi and contributed to its ultimate decline.

The kingdom of Ouagadougou was selected as the main object of study, primarily because it emerged as the most important Mossi polity and retained this position through the greater part of Mossi history. Attention will be given to the other Mossi polities and the three other Mossi kingdoms—Yatenga, Tenkodogo, and the more remote Fada-N'Gourma, all of which resemble Ouagadougou—only insofar as they affect the history of Ouagadougou or highlight the basic nature of Mossi government.

101 The Mossi are a Sudanese Negroid population in the new Republic of 161 the Upper Volta.[2] They number about 2,200,000, or approximately half of the country's total population. Their ancestral territory, which they call 131 *Mogho* (land of the Mossi), covers some 30,000 square miles in the southern 133 part of the Republic. It is a huge plateau, lying from 1,000 to 1,600 feet above sea level, and broken by three low mountain ranges and numerous small hills. The Kipirsi range in the northeast has an average height of about 2,000 feet and includes the sacred mountain of the Mossi, known as Plimpikou. The Boussouma range to the east reaches a height of some 1,500 feet, and the Naouri range in the southeast is almost as high.

132 The climate of Mossi country is typical of the Sudanic zone. There are two main seasons, one cold and dry, the other hot and wet. The first begins in November with the coming of the harmattan and ends in January, the coolest month, when the average temperature is about 70° F. and the humidity about 12 per cent. The hot season extends from March to October. In July, the warmest month, the temperature reaches a high of 88° F. and the humidity 78 per cent. Violent dust storms herald the rains, which begin late in May and end in September. The rain falls almost entirely in heavy showers and thunderstorms, and the average annual fall is between 30 and 40 inches. In those years when the rainfall is about 40 inches and is regularly spaced, the Mossi can look forward to a good harvest. When the rainfall is below 30 inches and is spaced irregularly during the planting season, the threat of famine is serious. So narrow is the margin of rainfall for agriculture that in 1956 the people of one Mossi district anxiously awaited "two rains" (two showers), without which they feared that in 1957 there would be a difficult "hungry period" (the time between the exhaustion of one year's crops and the maturing of the next).

133 Mossi country is drained by only three rivers: the Black Volta with its two chief tributaries, the Sourou and the Debere, and the Red and White Voltas with their numerous small tributaries. Only the Black Volta flows

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28

613 appealed to the district chief, and occasionally the woman was sent back.
565 A nobleman set on having a certain girl as a wife usually had small brace-
583 lets like those worn by all noble wives placed on her ankles. Once this was done, the chief could not be compelled to send her back to her parents, and any man who tried to retrieve her was guilty of interfering with a nobleman's wife and could be killed for it. In fact, only the male relatives of noblemen's wives could converse with them without running the risk of being apprehended and executed.

634 The district was the most important unit in the Mossi principalities and kingdoms. It was on this level that the Mossi nobility came into direct contact with the various social and ethnic groups of the society. Here, kinship and affinal ties linked the conquerors and the conquered, the ancient and recent nobility, the refugees from conflicts over the nam and the resident aliens, in a network of social, ritual, economic, and political relationships. It was also on this level that myths and traditions legitimized most effectively the Mossi socio-economic and political system as well as the relationships between the various social and ethnic groups.

634 The number and size of the Mossi districts varied greatly from one
161 principality or kingdom to another. Some districts were large and wealthy, with a number of large villages; smaller districts had a larger proportion of small villages and hamlets. The average number of these small units was probably between fifty and sixty-five per district. The population of the districts ranged from 10,000 to 35,000 persons. Some *tense* (villages) had as many as 5,000 inhabitants and some as few as 50. The average village had about 500 inhabitants. But regardless of size, all Mossi districts and component villages had basically the same structure and fulfilled the same functions. The structure of Nobere district is representative. Nobere
[131] covered approximately 200 square miles. It was bounded on the east by a district called Manga, on the north by the districts of Toece and Djiba, and on the west and south by the Red Volta River. A census taken in 1905, just nine years after the European conquest, showed the Nobere population to be about 13,200.[10] In 1955 approximately 10,000 persons inhabited 24 villages and hamlets scattered through the more inhabitable part of the district.

634 The number of villages and hamlets in Nobere district apparently fluc-
621 tuated. Villages were occasionally abandoned, while small hamlets grew
[361] into prominent settlements. The people of Nobere always tried to establish their villages as close to the Red Volta as possible in order to utilize the more fertile lands. But they were repeatedly driven back by disease and

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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habited by Yarse, people of Mandingo origin who had been assimilated by the Mossi. There were no Fulani in Nobere, even though some lived in nearby districts. But in Pinse village there lived people called Simili-Mossi, who claimed descent from Fulani herdsmen and Mossi women. Basbedo village was inhabited and ruled by people of Busansi origin. They claimed that their ancestors had fled from famine and other hardships in Busansi country and had been granted haven by Naba Biligo. The people who lived in the two saghse of Nab'tenga called Dapore (Dapobi) and Baglere (Bangare) were serfs of diverse non-Mossi origin. Saghse or compounds of Gurunsi slaves were found close to the dwellings of nobles and village chiefs throughout the district.

The number of saghse in the villages of Nobere district varied according to the size of the village and the pattern of nam inheritance within the major lineage segment that ruled the village. The saka itself housed a minor-lineage segment. The larger the village's minor lineage segment and the greater this group's genealogical depth, the more numerous were its component segments and thus its saghse. The proliferation of saghse and minor-lineage segments within the ruling lineage of a village was dependent primarily on possession of the nam. As soon as a man received the nam, he obtained control over a large amount of goods and services. He was then in a position to obtain many wives for himself and his immediate relatives, and as a result his minimal lineage grew rapidly. In time this group became so large that it split from its brother babissi within the saka, and formed a new saka of its own. Finally, this babissi became a minor lineage in its own saka, in segmental opposition to the other babissi and minor lineages within the other saghse. If the descendants of one man retained the nam for about three generations, their lineage segment and saka grew larger and in time cast off its own junior segments. However, if the segment lost the nam to a man of another babissi and saka, it ceased to proliferate. Some such groups even declined and disappeared by fusing with other local segments of the same lineage. Here is how the system worked in Barkago village of Nobere district.

Barkago itself was founded sometime in the dim past by a son of Naba Biligo. It had an area of eight or ten square miles and a population of about 650 when the French arrived in 1896. Its boundaries were set by such natural phenomena as clumps of trees, hills, and ravines. The village itself included five distinct saghse separated by footpaths, hills, rocks, and ravines, and an area of wasteland (*weogho*). Three of the saghse, Natenga ("chief's land"), Godin, and Kedpalago, were inhabited by the minor segments of the boodoo of Naba Biligo. Here is how this came about. After

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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[Pre - World War II Period]

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trative and technical personnel serving in its capital available for general service."[80] But another, more important reason for dismembering the colony was to make available "to the Ivory Coast, a rich and prosperous colony with diversified environments and products, an abundant and disciplined labor force, which alone was lacking to infuse it with hopeful vigor."[80] According to the articles of a decree promulgated in January 1933, the Upper Volta was divided as follows: The cercle of Ouahigouya [131] and part of the cercle of Dedougou, encompassing 52,400 square kilometers and 712,000 people, were attached to the Sudan; the cercle of Fada-N'- [162] Gourma and Dori, with 70,700 square kilometers and 268,000 people, was attached to the Niger; Tenkodogo, Gaoua, Batie, Ouagadougou, Bobo-Dioulasso, and part of Dedougou were given to the Ivory Coast. The Ivory Coast by this change gained some 153,400 square kilometers and 2,019,000 people.

The Mossi chiefs resented the division of the lands conquered by Ouedraogo and Oubri, and while they never ceased to desire the reintegration of Mogho, they were powerless to do or say anything about it at the time. Many young French colonial officials also resented the division of the colony, and were eloquent in their denunciation of what they considered a moribund colonial policy. A member of the Upper Volta administration, Robert Delavignette, says in his obituary of the colony:

> These obscure masses: three million persons. . . . Once they represented a threat, although the thousands of horsemen of the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou were defeated by the infantry squads of Captain Voulet in 1897. Soon the threat had diminished, but the matchless aggregate of villages remained. It was an alluring challenge to administrators. Let us mention briefly how they dealt with it. The more they pacified it, the more difficult their task became. The more they tried to impose upon it an open economy with a pattern of roads, urban centers, and cotton fields; and the more they tried to discover the vital principle of that economy in order to establish a new harmony between the land and these obscure masses, the more they broke down the old, set, traditional economy. . . . The heartland of the Upper Volta was indeed molded: 6,000 kilometers of roads, 100,000 hectares of collective fields, and a few urban centers built of mudbricks—all or almost all of this done by hand. No original methods or powerful tools were used, no inventiveness or clarity of purpose was shown. This was but a megalomanic copy of old patterns of mercantile exploitation, and [represented], in the heartlands, powerless, joyless work for those obscure masses.[81]

The criticisms of such officials as Delavignette and Henri Labouret persuaded the colonial administration to dispatch to Ouagadougou a higher

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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8. Cf. Marc, p. 156. 9. Cf. Fortes, pp. 258-71. 040
10. Skinner, "The Diffusion of Islam," pp. 659-69.
11. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Soudan*, pp. 585-86.
12. Dim Delobson, p. 205. 13. Crozat, p. 4820.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 4822. 15. *Ibid.*, p. 4835.
16. Binger, I, 452. 17. *Ibid.*, p. 456.
18. *Ibid.*, pp. 452-56.
19. Archives, Document 15G-190 (1897-98). Instructions left to Captain Scal by Destenave, June 1897.

CHAPTER NINE

1. Marc, p. 17.
2. Barth, III, 595. Although it is possible that the Wolof prince Bemoy did hear about the Mossi, he was mistaken about the name of their ruler. Interestingly enough, the title "Ogane" is not too dissimilar from Hogon, the title of head men among the Dogon (Habe or Kado) whom the Mossi had pushed into the hills of Bandiagara. Cf. Bascom, p. 24. [114] [174]
3. Barth, III, 606. 4. Bowdich, p. 180.
5. Dupuis, Appendix CVII. 6. Clapperton, II, 323.
7. Barth, III, 643-49. As cited earlier, Barth states that the Portuguese got reports about the Mossi in the year 1533 "from the wrong side, namely from Benin." This may not have been altogether "the wrong side," however, for Barth gives us data on caravans from Mossi country to Sansane Mango in Togoland that indicate how news about the Mossi might have traveled from the interior to Benin city in Nigeria.
8. Koelle, p. 6. Dixon, who seems to have been one of the few captured Mossi sold to the West, reports: "Mose is west of Gurma, east of Andemtenga, where a different language is spoken. Mose is also two days journey from Butmera, where the same language is spoken; four days from Bulega [Bolga tanga], the language still the same, and confederate with Kambonse, i.e. Asante; two days from Yaongo, with still the same language; six days from Bosanse which is at enmity with Mose and where people bore their lips, and often tie them together with grass, and whose language is different from Mose; four days from Busma also a different language, and in which country there is a very high mountain (Tanga) from which those who ascend never come back again [probably a reference to Plimpikou, the Mossi holy mountain]; three or four weeks from Kambonse, i.e. Asante. Kupeala is four days from Wardyga [Ouagadougou] the Mossi capital, whither the king of Asante often sent presents; and one month from Salak [Salaga], an Asante town, where they bring kola nuts." [131] [101] [197] [484]
9. Marc, p. 30.
10. Great Britain, Parliamentary papers xlvi, 1882.
11. The people of Nobere, Manga, and other districts surrounding Bere have traditions about Krause, who is remembered as the first white-skinned person ever seen in those parts. The color of his skin was attributed to the fact that, "like the fish," he had come out of the sea. [826]
12. Krause, pp. 92 ff. Although there is no evidence to this effect in the literature, it appears certain that Mossi government officials knew of Krause's visit. They treated most travelers in the following manner: "After entering a town the party is given in charge of a man usually termed 'housemaster.' It is his duty to exercise surveillance over the action of the stranger and to report the result to the authorities. . . . The trader conducts his business through his 'housemaster,' who usually makes a handsome gain by acting as middleman (G. E. Ferguson, quoted in Wolfson, p. 199). [574]

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
FA28 Mossi FA28

CHAPTER 9

Trade and Markets Among the Mossi People

BY ELLIOTT P. SKINNER

The Mossi represent the dominant population of the Voltaic Republic, numbering about 1,600,000 out of some 3,200,000 inhabitants. They represent the unique example of a group which has preserved its ethnic identity and political autonomy through all the vicissitudes of Sudanic history until it was conquered by the French in 1896. Tradition records that the people who became the Mossi left the Dagomba region in present-day Ghana during the eleventh century and moved into the bend of the Niger River, carving out three large kingdoms and smaller principalities in the process. At the head of these still extant kingdoms are rulers *(Moro Nabas)* who formerly held feudal-like control over the provinces, districts and villages which comprise their domains. The villages, with their patri-local, polygynous, extended family households, formed the basic Mossi settlement pattern. A complex hierarchical administrative apparatus carried the power of the Mossi rulers into the smallest villages, and funneled taxes and tribute back to them. This structure still exists, but of course it has been modified by the French.

The Mossi were and are still divided into stratified royal, noble and commoner patrilineages. Characteristic of this lineage system is a process by which royal sub-lineages descend serially until they merge with the mass of commoner lineages. Below the lineages there once were large non-Mossi groups of serfs and slaves, but these people have now been grouped into lineages and have become Mossicized.

The topography of Mossi country is typical of the Sudanic grasslands. It is an immense plain, some 1,500 feet above sea level and broken only by three low mountain ranges and numerous small hills. The annual total rainfall is between 30 and 40 inches, and falls almost entirely as heavy showers or thundershowers during the period from June to September. So narrow is the margin of rainfall for successful crop cultivation that any variation in the cycle results in low crop yields and a difficult "hungry period" the following year before the new crops are harvested. The Mossi do not practice irrigation, and would have trouble doing so because the three Volta Rivers which drain their territory serve as drainage chiefly during the rainy season. Only the Black Volta has water all year round; the

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
FA28 Mossi FA28

long been famous. The former are sometimes ridden but are used 231
primarily as beasts of burden. Horses were and are still important 492
for military and ceremonial purposes and for external trade to other 439
areas.

The Mossi have never excelled in metalworking. The people in 326
the northern part of the country have worked indigenous ores since 435
aboriginal times. Those in the south get iron mainly from traders 439
and caravans. The other metals which the Mossi smiths manufacture
into tools and ornaments are also obtained from traders.

TRADE IN HISTORICAL TIMES

The geographic position of Mossi country has much to do with its 131
being an important trade and market center. The country itself has 437
always produced grain, cotton and livestock for export. And for 487
several centuries caravans have passed through this region carrying
Sudanese and Saharan products to the forest zones to the south, and
carrying forest products back to the arid north. The beginning of 174
this trade is lost in the dim past, but it safe to say that it developed 437
shortly after or along with the founding of Timbuktu about 1100
A.D. The Mossi themselves were not definitely linked to this important *entrepot* until they raided it in 1328, but we can assume that they had been trading there for some time before that event took place. Similarly, we have no record of when the Mossi began trading with the forest zones, but we can also assume that this trade began around the same period or even before.

Our first evidence of Mossi trade and commerce comes from Europ- 125
eans who were themselves interested in conducting their own trading 437
activities with the peoples in the Bend of the Niger. Bowditch, an Englishman who had journeyed to Ashanti to sign a treaty facilitating the reopening of a profitable trade with the coast, wangled the first important piece of information about the Mossi from his reluctant hosts:

> Five journies from Yngwa is Mosee, a more warlike but less visited 101
> kingdom: it consists of many states, but the superior monarch is named 631
> Billa, and the capital Kookoopella. I place it to the N.W. because its merchants pass by Yngwa; they do not cross the Karhalla [White Volta] nor any river which is not fordable. (Bowditch 1819 : 180)

This information is not strictly correct since Koupela was not the 366
capital of any of the Mossi kingdoms, but Bowditch's informant had probably heard of Koupela because it was the largest political entity near the large caravan center at Pouitenga.

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28

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[p.237]

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2:Mangin--2a M-5 (ca. 1910) 1921 FA28 Mossi FA28

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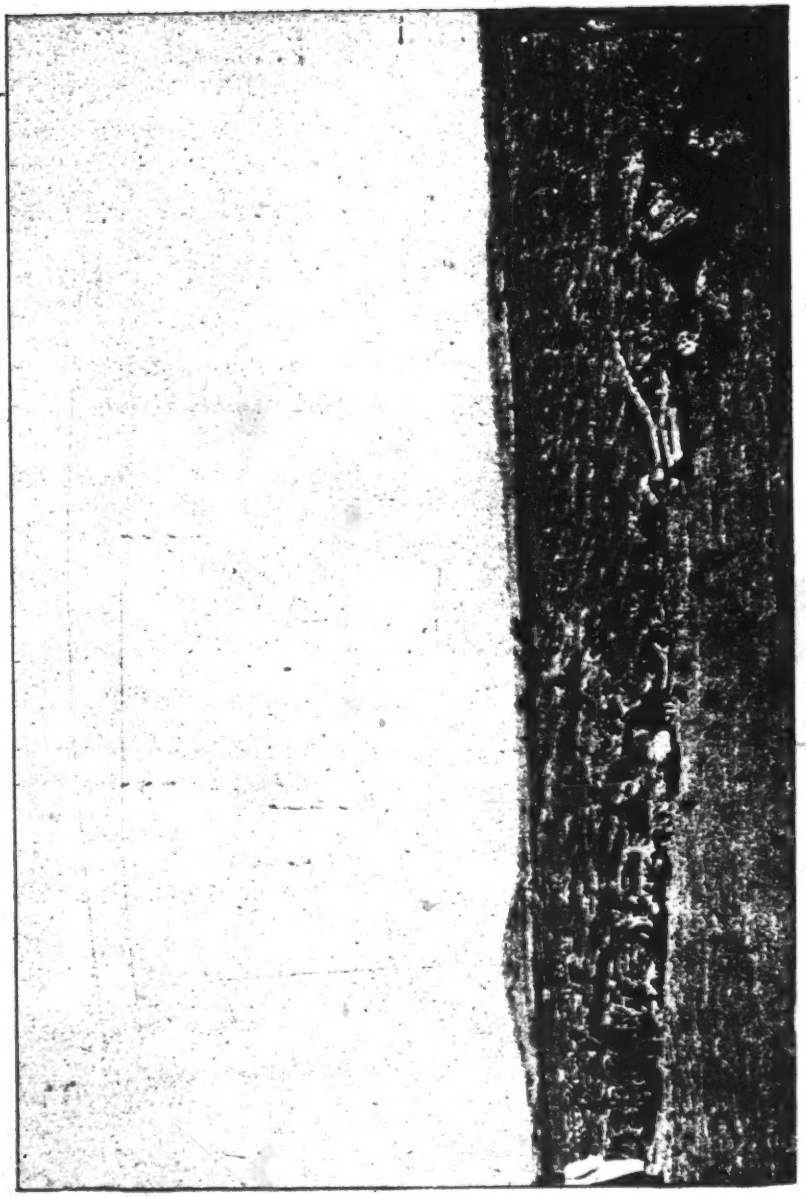

The Bush in Mossi Country.

173 While these events occurred in the east, a sister of the Moro Naba, assigned to guard the tibo fetishes, quarreled with her brother and fled west to Ouahigouya. This region thus became Mossi territory and took the name of land of Ya. (2)

2. For further details, see Lt. Marc. op. cit. Ch. 7, and especially Delafosse, Haut Sénégal et Niger /Upper Senegal and Niger/, Series I, Vol. 2, p. 305 ff.

131 The region thus conquered lies within the bend of the Niger, approximately between the 11°30 and 13°30 parallels and from 2° to 5° longitude west of Paris. Its closest neighbors are the Macina and the Habé to the north, the Samo to the northwest, the Gourounsi to the west and southwest, the Nancana /Nankana/ to the south, the Bousansé to the southeast, the Gourmantché to the east, and the Peul of Dori to the northeast. The Mossi population has been estimated at
161 one and a half million, to which must be added the Yarsé, who are Mandé completely assimilated to the Mossi, the pastoral Peul, the Haoussa /Hausa/ who form small colonies near the large commercial centers of the region, and a few lesser groups. We shall deal with these populations only insofar as they have contact with the Mossi, in whose territory they are scattered.

Two important rivers cross the country from northwest [Tr., the
● 133 original reads northeast] to southeast. They are the two Volta rivers, the White and the Red. In addition to these two larger waterways, which nevertheless do not flow throughout the year, there are a large number of watercourses /Tr., the French term, marigot, covers both river branch channels and shallow depressions where water accumulates forming pools/. They become impassable torrents after a storm, /6/ but remain empty during the dry season from November to June. The
[317] shallow wells which supply water for the households are usually dug by the women in the beds of these watercourses.

There are no high mountains in Mossi country. When arriving from the north, the traveller crosses the beautiful cliffs of Bandiagara and the mountainous country of the Habe. /Two photographs appear here./ Mossi country begins almost at the foot of the cliffs. The northwestern region is, however, quite broken and includes the Pilimpikou peak; the two Volta rivers, especially the White Volta,

● 133 are bordered with hills. Nevertheless, it may be said that Mossi country is flat. It is covered with the classic bush of the Sudan with [137] its small shrubs and tall grass interspersed with bastard mahogany, /7/ huge trunks of the baobabs, and tamarind and silk-cotton trees, thicker on the banks of the Volta rivers, thinner around the villages.

241 The country is quite fertile and easily provides for its inhabitants. 262 The various kinds of millet grow well, especially the small white variety (Pennisetum spicatum) which, mashed and boiled, is the staple of the diet and sorghum, or large red millet, which is used to prepare the famous beer of the country. The horses eat the latter kind, although they prefer the large white millet. Around the huts maize grows well in soil fertilized by the daily accumulation of waste. It is a welcome source of grain when the millet reserves of the previous year are running low and the current harvest has not yet matured. Maize fields are surrounded with a double row of sorghum and often [283] with a double row of a fiber plant called bérensé, a sort of hemp which the natives use to make ropes. After the maize has been harvested, the field is planted with previously prepared tobacco seedlings. Finally, the sunken areas created when huts are built, as well as all slightly damp places, are planted with gombo, okra, which is highly valued as a sauce ingredient.

[311] During the rainy season no piece of land remains unused around the villages, and when the red millet ripens and the ears join across the path, passage becomes difficult. Even the hut roofs bear all kinds [415] of calabash plants. These supply the housewives with gourds that fulfill the purposes served by our plates, dishes, glasses, and basins; the travellers with their flasks; the snuff-takers with their boxes; and the sorcerers with their spirit-calling instruments. The large gourds that are used to make drums grow among the shoots of maize. In the marshes near the watercourses where water lies stagnant, rice fields are planted, but rice is a luxury food, hard to cultivate because of [554] the care it requires. The natives use it only on feast days or when they wish to honor a distinguished guest. Cotton is sown in damp places among the stalks of large red millet, and it is harvested much later. Peanuts and peas also take up part of the cultivated land, while beans creep along the ground between the shoots of small millet. Peppers, sesame, the indigo plant, yams, manioc, sweet potatoes, and a small

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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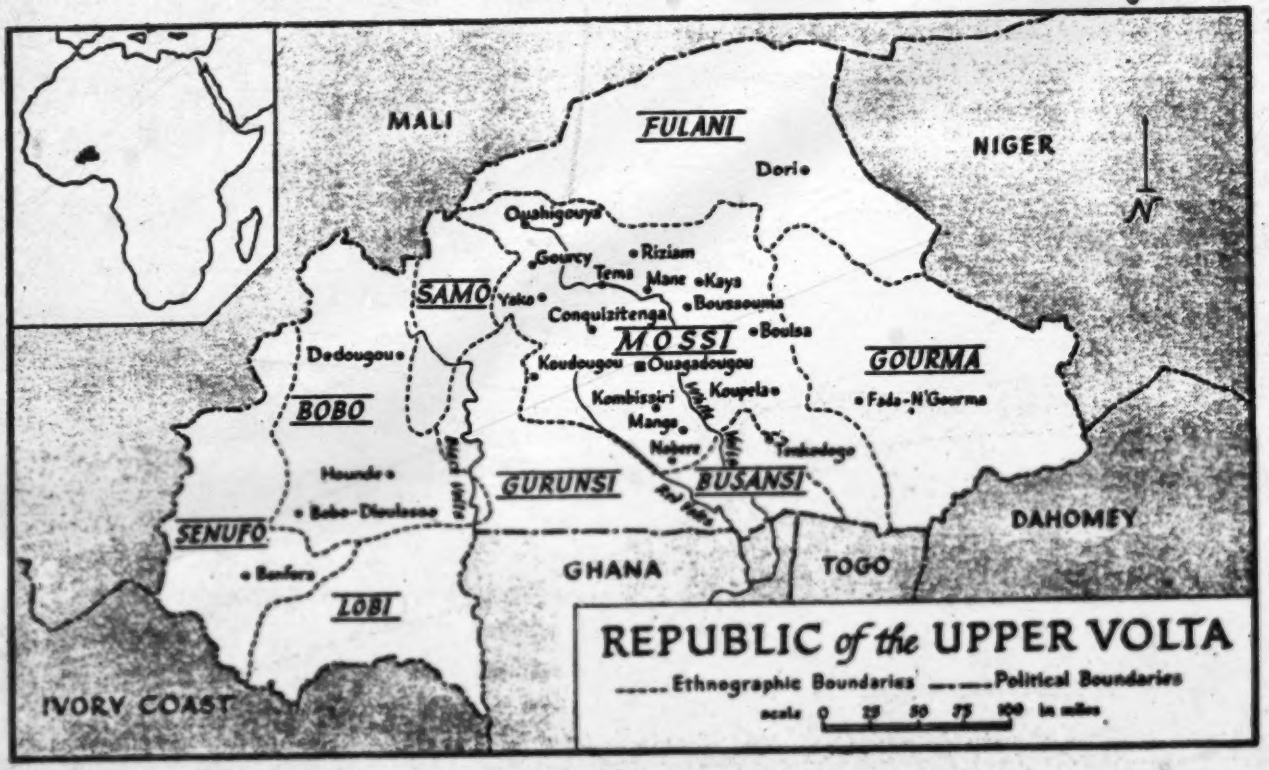

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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121 [174] functioning of early Sudanese societies. It will also attempt to demonstrate how European conquest affected the political organization of the Mossi and contributed to its ultimate decline.

The kingdom of Ouagadougou was selected as the main object of study, primarily because it emerged as the most important Mossi polity and retained this position through the greater part of Mossi history. Attention will be given to the other Mossi polities and the three other Mossi kingdoms—Yatenga, Tenkodogo, and the more remote Fada-N'Gourma, all of which resemble Ouagadougou—only insofar as they affect the history of Ouagadougou or highlight the basic nature of Mossi government.

101 The Mossi are a Sudanese Negroid population in the new Republic of 161 the Upper Volta.[2] They number about 2,200,000, or approximately half of the country's total population. Their ancestral territory, which they call 131 *Mogho* (land of the Mossi), covers some 30,000 square miles in the southern 133 part of the Republic. It is a huge plateau, lying from 1,000 to 1,600 feet above sea level, and broken by three low mountain ranges and numerous small hills. The Kipirsi range in the northeast has an average height of about 2,000 feet and includes the sacred mountain of the Mossi, known as Plimpikou. The Boussouma range to the east reaches a height of some 1,500 feet, and the Naouri range in the southeast is almost as high.

132 The climate of Mossi country is typical of the Sudanic zone. There are two main seasons, one cold and dry, the other hot and wet. The first begins in November with the coming of the harmattan and ends in January, the coolest month, when the average temperature is about 70° F. and the humidity about 12 per cent. The hot season extends from March to October. In July, the warmest month, the temperature reaches a high of 88° F. and the humidity 78 per cent. Violent dust storms herald the rains, which begin late in May and end in September. The rain falls almost entirely in heavy showers and thunderstorms, and the average annual fall is between 30 and 40 inches. In those years when the rainfall is about 40 inches and is regularly spaced, the Mossi can look forward to a good harvest. When the rainfall is below 30 inches and is spaced irregularly during the planting season, the threat of famine is serious. So narrow is the margin of rainfall for agriculture that in 1956 the people of one Mossi district anxiously awaited "two rains" (two showers), without which they feared that in 1957 there would be a difficult "hungry period" (the time between the exhaustion of one year's crops and the maturing of the next).

133 Mossi country is drained by only three rivers: the Black Volta with its two chief tributaries, the Sourou and the Debere, and the Red and White Voltas with their numerous small tributaries. Only the Black Volta flows

all year round. The Red and White Voltas are important only as drainage 133
systems during the short rainy period, for they dwindle to a string of small stagnant pools in the dry season. In some low-lying areas near the main watercourses, trapped waters provide the moisture for dank riverine vegetation.

The soils of Mossi country, which are typical of the Sudanic and Sahel 134
areas, were formed chiefly by the weathering of Pre-Cambrian rocks. Ferruginous soils of varying depths, red argils, and pure silicates of aluminum predominate in the northern regions. In the south are found thin, sandy soils formed by the decomposition of crystalline rocks and sandstones. Most of these soils are eroded by torrential rains, the scouring action of the harmattan, and the incendiary action of man and nature. Even where the soils 133
are reasonably fertile, the nature of the underlying rocks precludes important deposits of ground water. In the western sandstone region, rain filters down with such rapidity that water can be obtained only from deep wells. In the remainder of the territory, the presence of Pre-Cambrian rocks induces a rapid runoff, with the result that wells yield very little water at any depth. Rainfall collects only in river-bed pools or along dams constructed for that purpose in hollow places. The building of dams was relatively unknown in aboriginal times, and the Mossi did not practice irrigation farming. [241]

During the dry season, Mossi country presents a picture of such utter 137
aridity that one wonders whether it is possible for such parched red soils to produce plant life. After the first drops of rain, however, the entire plain quickly becomes covered with grasses that sometimes reach heights of five or six feet. The most characteristic and valuable trees in the region are the baobab (*Adansonia digitata*), the locust-bean (*Parkia biglobosa*), the shea butter (*Butyrospermum parkii*), the tamarind (*Tamarindus indica*), and the kapok (*Bombax costatum*). The sole and unimportant representative of the palm family is the *Borassus aethiopium*. There are several kinds of acacias, including the *Kenyaya senegalensis*, and a wide variety of silk-cotton trees, the most important of which is *Eryodendron anfractuosum*.

The cultivated plants of the region include numerous varieties of cereals, 241
roots, and legumes. Several varieties of sorghum (*Sorghum vulgare*) and millet (*Pennisetum typhoides*) constitute the staple crops of the Mossi, but maize (*Zea mays*) is extremely important because it is one of the first crops to be harvested after the difficult hungry period. Peanuts, onions, rice, beans, okra, fonio, and sweet potatoes form the bulk of the other cultivated crops. Manioc is grown only in small quantities because it requires moist soil for optimum development. The Mossi grow tobacco in fields around their 600

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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[p.237]

CHAPTER 9

Trade and Markets Among the Mossi People

BY ELLIOTT P. SKINNER

The Mossi represent the dominant population of the Voltaic Republic, numbering about 1,600,000 out of some 3,200,000 inhabitants. They represent the unique example of a group which has preserved its ethnic identity and political autonomy through all the vicissitudes of Sudanic history until it was conquered by the French in 1896. Tradition records that the people who became the Mossi left the Dagomba region in present-day Ghana during the eleventh century and moved into the bend of the Niger River, carving out three large kingdoms and smaller principalities in the process. At the head of these still extant kingdoms are rulers *(Moro Nabas)* who formerly held feudal-like control over the provinces, districts and villages which comprise their domains. The villages, with their patri-local, polygynous, extended family households, formed the basic Mossi settlement pattern. A complex hierarchical administrative apparatus carried the power of the Mossi rulers into the smallest villages, and funneled taxes and tribute back to them. This structure still exists, but of course it has been modified by the French.

The Mossi were and are still divided into stratified royal, noble and commoner patrilineages. Characteristic of this lineage system is a process by which royal sub-lineages descend serially until they merge with the mass of commoner lineages. Below the lineages there once were large non-Mossi groups of serfs and slaves, but these people have now been grouped into lineages and have become Mossicized.

The topography of Mossi country is typical of the Sudanic grasslands. It is an immense plain, some 1,500 feet above sea level and broken only by three low mountain ranges and numerous small hills. The annual total rainfall is between 30 and 40 inches, and falls almost entirely as heavy showers or thundershowers during the period from June to September. So narrow is the margin of rainfall for successful crop cultivation that any variation in the cycle results in low crop yields and a difficult "hungry period" the following year before the new crops are harvested. The Mossi do not practice irrigation, and would have trouble doing so because the three Volta Rivers which drain their territory serve as drainage chiefly during the rainy season. Only the Black Volta has water all year round; the

133 Red and White Voltas are merely a series of small stagnant pools during the dry season. In some low-lying areas around the main water courses, trapped water provides the moisture for dank riverine vegetation.

134 The soils of Mossi country are mainly ferruginous with red argils and pure silicates of aluminum predominating in the northern region. The soils in the south are thin, sandy, and formed from the decom-
137 position of crystalline rocks and sandstones. During the dry season the Mossi landscape appears too sterile to produce plant life, but with the first drops of rain the entire country soon becomes covered with the grasses and shrubs which are characteristic of this Sudanese region. The uncultivated but valuable trees of this area include the Baobab *(Adansonia digitata)*, the locust bean *(Parkia biglobosa)*, the shea-butter *(Butyrospermum parkii)*, the tamarind *(Tamarindus*
241 *indica)* and the kapok *(Bombax costatum)*. The plants which the Mossi cultivate include varieties of cereals, roots and legumes. Sorghums *(Sorghum vulgare)* and millets *(Pennisetum typhoides)* are their staples, with maize *(Zea mays)* filling the role of a secondary but rather useful crop because its growing cycle is shorter than that of other important crops and it breaks the "hungry period." Maize would be a more important crop to the Mossi if it could grow on soil less fertile than what is normally available around the Mossi compound—the area where it brings the greatest yield. Peanuts, onions, rice, beans, okra, peas and sweet potatoes are other food crops. To-
240 bacco is grown for local consumption, but the crops which have the
248 greatest export value are cotton and indigo, used for making cloth and dyeing it.

224 The wild fauna of the country does not provide a major part of the
262 food needs of the Mossi people. The several species of deer and antelope, monkeys, rabbits and wild pig are hunted and used for food.
136 But the elephants and lions which are also found in the country are sources of great distress to the people because the former decimate the growing crops and the latter attack and kill the grazing animals.

231 The Mossi rear two main types of cattle: a zebu-like one in the north-
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The soils of Mossi country, which are typical of the Sudanic and Sahel areas, were formed chiefly by the weathering of Pre-Cambrian rocks. Ferruginous soils of varying depths, red argils, and pure silicates of aluminum predominate in the northern regions. In the south are found thin, sandy soils formed by the decomposition of crystalline rocks and sandstones. Most of these soils are eroded by torrential rains, the scouring action of the harmattan, and the incendiary action of man and nature. Even where the soils are reasonably fertile, the nature of the underlying rocks precludes important deposits of ground water. In the western sandstone region, rain filters down with such rapidity that water can be obtained only from deep wells. In the remainder of the territory, the presence of Pre-Cambrian rocks induces a rapid runoff, with the result that wells yield very little water at any depth. Rainfall collects only in river-bed pools or along dams constructed for that purpose in hollow places. The building of dams was relatively unknown in aboriginal times, and the Mossi did not practice irrigation farming. 134 133 [241]

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231 ities. The Mossi also rear donkeys and horses for which they have

326 First, there is that of the blacksmith (saba or sahaba in the local tongue). Two kinds of blacksmiths may be distinguished among the Mossi. First, the blacksmiths who are gathered into separate villages or in large special quarters within the village, both cases being frequent in the northern part of Mossi territory, and secondly the isolated blacksmiths, such as those of Ouagadougou for example.

The blacksmiths who live in separate villages or quarters smelt
325 the iron ore in large furnaces in the bush. They do this once a year,
326 during the dry season, and the process takes one month.

The whole blacksmith village sets down to the task and builds a certain number of blast furnaces, at the ratio of one for every two blacksmiths.

The furnaces are built of red earth near the hills that contain iron ore, and it takes five days to build one of them. Once this is done each blacksmith pair takes over a furnace and uses it. The smiths do not use it together, incidentally, but each one in turn.

Our blacksmiths break up the soil with a soumbéré or taré. They break up pieces of ore and pile them near the furnace. They spread out a layer of dry wood at the bottom of the furnace, then a layer of ore, then another layer of wood, another layer of ore, etc., up to the top. Then the fire is lit.

The fire is stirred with bellows and kept up for three days. At the end of this period of time, the doors made at the bottom of the blast furnace are opened. The iron escapes through these special openings, which are distinct from the permanently open doors through which the slag runs out. On the fourth day the iron has cooled off, and it is removed from the little pits into which it has flowed. It is broken with an iron mallet and returned to the furnace.

The total labor lasts one month. Every evening our blacksmiths return to the village. Some of them produce ten loads of iron /513/ (about 300 kilograms), others only two or three (60 or 90 kilograms).

326 As for isolated blacksmiths, they do not smelt iron. They buy
●135 it from the blacksmiths of the Yatenga (Ouahigouya circle) who
423 are great iron smelters and who own small, famed ferruginous hills around Ouahigouya.

The Mossi grow tobacco in fields around their

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248 homesteads, where they also cultivate their most important cash crops, cotton and indigo, which are used in the manufacture and dyeing of cotton cloth.

136 The wild fauna of Mossi country include several species of antelope, deer, monkeys, rabbits, snakes, and wild pigs. Elephants roam the beds of rivers and streams and often destroy cultivated fields, while lions and hyenas distress the people by attacking livestock. The pools and rivers of Mossi country are inhabited by turtles, crocodiles, and various species of scaled and scaleless fish. Chickens, muscovy ducks, and half-domesticated guinea fowl are the most valuable species of birds.

231 The Mossi have long been famous for their splendid donkeys and [492] horses. Donkeys are sometimes ridden, but they are used primarily as [439] beasts of burden. Horses are important for military and ceremonial purposes and for export to the tsetse-fly zones to the south. The Mossi raise two main types of cattle: a zebu-like animal in the northern regions and a [439] dwarf variety in the south. These animals are raised primarily for their milk and for export, and are seldom killed for meat until they are fairly old. Goats and sheep provide the main source of meat. Hog-raising is not wide- [771] spread, and seems to be declining in importance with the increased ob- [178] servance of Islamic food taboos, which is on the uprise even among people who are still pagans.

135 The subsoil of Mossi country is not well known, but so far there have been no major discoveries of mineral deposits. The only known gold field [301] remained unworked in aboriginal times. The Mossi do not like to wear [325] gold ornaments, preferring jewelry worked from imported copper and [439] silver. The northern Mossi worked their local iron in aboriginal times, but those in the south obtained this metal from caravan traders.

175 The nineteenth-century reports of Barth and other European travelers 439 indicate that the Mossi conducted a rather extensive foreign trade. At least six caravan routes passed through their territory, and traders such as the [443] Hausa and Mandingo visited the important Mossi trading centers at Yako, Pouitenga, and Ouagadougou, where they exchanged Saharan and forest products for Mossi livestock and cloth.[8]

101 The Mossi belong to the Voltaic culture area, a name given by Delafosse to the regions drained by the Black, Red, and White Voltas and their tributaries. The area embraces parts of Mali, the Ivory Coast, Dahomey, the Upper Volta, and northern Ghana.[4] It includes a vast congeries of peoples such [197] as the Dagomba, Mamprusi, Dagari, Birifo, Senufo, Gurmanche, Gurunsi, Lobi, Bobo, Tallensi, Konkomba, Dogon, Somba, Fulse, and Ninisi, all of whom speak languages belonging to the Gur or Moshi-Grunshi group of

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long been famous. The former are sometimes ridden but are used primarily as beasts of burden. Horses were and are still important for military and ceremonial purposes and for external trade to other areas.

The Mossi have never excelled in metalworking. The people in the northern part of the country have worked indigenous ores since aboriginal times. Those in the south get iron mainly from traders and caravans. The other metals which the Mossi smiths manufacture into tools and ornaments are also obtained from traders.

TRADE IN HISTORICAL TIMES

The geographic position of Mossi country has much to do with its being an important trade and market center. The country itself has always produced grain, cotton and livestock for export. And for several centuries caravans have passed through this region carrying Sudanese and Saharan products to the forest zones to the south, and carrying forest products back to the arid north. The beginning of this trade is lost in the dim past, but it safe to say that it developed shortly after or along with the founding of Timbuktu about 1100 A.D. The Mossi themselves were not definitely linked to this important *entrepot* until they raided it in 1328, but we can assume that they had been trading there for some time before that event took place. Similarly, we have no record of when the Mossi began trading with the forest zones, but we can also assume that this trade began around the same period or even before.

Our first evidence of Mossi trade and commerce comes from Europeans who were themselves interested in conducting their own trading activities with the peoples in the Bend of the Niger. Bowditch, an Englishman who had journeyed to Ashanti to sign a treaty facilitating the reopening of a profitable trade with the coast, wangled the first important piece of information about the Mossi from his reluctant hosts:

> Five journies from Yngwa is Mosee, a more warlike but less visited kingdom: it consists of many states, but the superior monarch is named Billa, and the capital Kookoopella. I place it to the N.W. because its merchants pass by Yngwa; they do not cross the Karhalla [White Volta] nor any river which is not fordable. (Bowditch 1819 : 180)

This information is not strictly correct since Koupela was not the capital of any of the Mossi kingdoms, but Bowditch's informant had probably heard of Koupela because it was the largest political entity near the large caravan center at Pouitenga.

231 bother to raise them; as a result the number of horses has decreased, and this country, formerly renowned for its mounts, may have none in a not too distant future.

Unfortunately, horses do not thrive in every part of the country; Ouagadougou is particularly deadly for them, although, to my knowledge, the true reason for this insalubrity has not yet been found. The natives attribute it to the water, and there is no doubt that horses watered at the wells are in better health than those watered at the streams; it is also true that horses thrive in areas only a few kilometers [136] from Ouagadougou. Europeans tend to attribute this mortality to the tsetse fly. The two opinions are easy to reconcile, for, on the one hand, tsetse flies prefer damp places, and, on the other hand, the [312] Ouagadougou wells contain salt of magnesium which purges the horses and thus checks the disease.

231 The Peul own fine herds of bovines, some rather small and without 563 humps (small cattle), others large and humped (zebu). Traders also 437 use the zebu as a beast of burden. Much of this cattle belongs to the Mossi who seldom tend their own herds but prefer to entrust them to the Peul shepherds who keep the milk in payment. An adult cow yields from two to four liters a day during the good season. The guardians, however, know how to make the best of this near slavery. When an animal dies it is never one of theirs, and if the owner of the herd /a Mossi/ dies without telling his heirs where his cattle is to be found and how many head he owns, the Peul carefully refrain from disclosing the herd entrusted to them. In former days they were slightly more conscientious because they feared retaliation, but now they bless the French occupation.

231 The herds are sometimes decimated by an epizootic disease, as happened in 1910 and 1911 when the Koupéla area was ravaged by what must have been the bovine plague or peripneumonia. The cows would cough, entirely lose their appetites, and die within a few days.

The Mossi also raise bees. The hives are made of straw or flexible sticks and placed in the trees; sometimes swarms of bees also settle in the hollow trunks of baobabs. The honey is gathered at the end and at the beginning of the winter season; the hive is smoked out and [273] the bees destroyed. Honey is used primarily to make bésé, a kind of hydromel which the Moslem Yarsé, Peul, and Haoussa like very much, and which they are allowed to drink in spite of its fermentation; [237 whereas, in principle, millet beer is forbidden to them. The wax 306] is sold to the jewelry-makers who use it to make bracelets by the lost wax process.

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133 Red and White Voltas are merely a series of small stagnant pools during the dry season. In some low-lying areas around the main water courses, trapped water provides the moisture for dank riverine vegetation.

134 The soils of Mossi country are mainly ferruginous with red argils and pure silicates of aluminum predominating in the northern region. The soils in the south are thin, sandy, and formed from the decom-
137 position of crystalline rocks and sandstones. During the dry season the Mossi landscape appears too sterile to produce plant life, but with the first drops of rain the entire country soon becomes covered with the grasses and shrubs which are characteristic of this Sudanese region. The uncultivated but valuable trees of this area include the Baobab *(Adansonia digitata)*, the locust bean *(Parkia biglobosa)*, the shea-butter *(Butyrospermum parkii)*, the tamarind *(Tamarindus*
241 *indica)* and the kapok *(Bombax costatum)*. The plants which the Mossi cultivate include varieties of cereals, roots and legumes. Sorghums *(Sorghum vulgare)* and millets *(Pennisetum typhoides)* are their staples, with maize *(Zea mays)* filling the role of a secondary but rather useful crop because its growing cycle is shorter than that of other important crops and it breaks the "hungry period." Maize would be a more important crop to the Mossi if it could grow on soil less fertile than what is normally available around the Mossi compound—the area where it brings the greatest yield. Peanuts, onions,
240 rice, beans, okra, peas and sweet potatoes are other food crops. To-
248 bacco is grown for local consumption, but the crops which have the greatest export value are cotton and indigo, used for making cloth and dyeing it.

224 The wild fauna of the country does not provide a major part of the
262 food needs of the Mossi people. The several species of deer and antelope, monkeys, rabbits and wild pig are hunted and used for food.
136 But the elephants and lions which are also found in the country are sources of great distress to the people because the former decimate the growing crops and the latter attack and kill the grazing animals.

231 The Mossi rear two main types of cattle: a zebu-like one in the north-
[234] ern regions and a small dwarf variety in the south. These animals are kept primarily for their milk and for export, and are seldom killed
231 for meat until they are very old. The animals which provide the
262 Mossi with meat are goats, sheep, chickens and guinea fowls. Pig-
[177] raising is not widespread and seems to be declining in importance with the increasing observance of Islamic food taboos, even among
262 people who are still pagan. Fish forms only a minor part of the Mossi
487 diet and is obtained mainly from traders rather than from local activ-
231 ities. The Mossi also rear donkeys and horses for which they have

133 are bordered with hills. Nevertheless, it may be said that Mossi country is flat. It is covered with the classic bush of the Sudan with its small shrubs and tall grass interspersed with bastard mahogany, /7/ [137] huge trunks of the baobabs, and tamarind and silk-cotton trees, thicker on the banks of the Volta rivers, thinner around the villages.

24 The country is quite fertile and easily provides for its inhabitants. The various kinds of millet grow well, especially the small white 262 variety (Pennisetum spicatum) which, mashed and boiled, is the staple of the diet and sorghum, or large red millet, which is used to prepare the famous beer of the country. The horses eat the latter kind, although they prefer the large white millet. Around the huts maize grows well in soil fertilized by the daily accumulation of waste. It is a welcome source of grain when the millet reserves of the previous year are running low and the current harvest has not yet matured. Maize fields are surrounded with a double row of sorghum and often [283] with a double row of a fiber plant called bérensé, a sort of hemp which the natives use to make ropes. After the maize has been harvested, the field is planted with previously prepared tobacco seedlings. Finally, the sunken areas created when huts are built, as well as all slightly damp places, are planted with gombo, okra, which is highly valued as a sauce ingredient.

[311] During the rainy season no piece of land remains unused around the villages, and when the red millet ripens and the ears join across the path, passage becomes difficult. Even the hut roofs bear all kinds [415] of calabash plants. These supply the housewives with gourds that fulfill the purposes served by our plates, dishes, glasses, and basins; the travellers with their flasks; the snuff-takers with their boxes; and the sorcerers with their spirit-calling instruments. The large gourds that are used to make drums grow among the shoots of maize. In the marshes near the watercourses where water lies stagnant, rice fields are planted, but rice is a luxury food, hard to cultivate because of [554] the care it requires. The natives use it only on feast days or when they wish to honor a distinguished guest. Cotton is sown in damp places among the stalks of large red millet, and it is harvested much later. Peanuts and peas also take up part of the cultivated land, while beans creep along the ground between the shoots of small millet. Peppers, sesame, the indigo plant, yams, manioc, sweet potatoes, and a small

241 tuber, Coleus coffini, which Europeans call oussounifing or fabirama,
262 and which may replace potatoes in a pinch, are cultivated in the soils most propitious to them.

221 The precious karite /shea/ tree (Butyrospermum parkii) grows in
262 most fields; its fruit, prized for its cool and slightly sweet flesh, con-
● 137 tains a pit which yields karite butter, the fat most widely used in
[388] cooking and to make soap. Around the villages, and sometimes even within them, the néré /locust bean/ tree (Parkia africana) produces
[356] elongated pods; its bark, mashed in water, yields a paste that is used to harden the floors of the huts. Its flour makes a cooling drink when
[272] mixed in water, and it may also be eaten; its seeds /8/ are used to make kalro /kalre in the original/, the soumbara of the Bambara, an ingredient /made from locust beans, héré/ of all carefully prepared
137 sauces. The doubalé and silk-cotton or kapokiero trees spread their shade over the weavers, numerous among the Mossi, and over the talkers who are even more. Bamboo grows well in the damp southern regions, and the palm oil tree is occasionally found. The caoutchouc liana, however, has not yet been introduced.

231 Small chickens run in all directions through the villages, along with domesticated guinea hens. Everywhere in the bush near the huts,
[85] little boys herd goats and sheep; this is the task of youngsters here at the age when their contemporaries among us /in France/ begin to learn the alphabet. The most common sheep and goats are small in size. The sheep have short hair. Sometimes, especially in the larger villages where markets are held, goats and sheep are to be seen with
[439] long legs and long, curled horns. They are imported from the northeast and fattened to be sold as butcher's meat. The height of fashion for the wife or a prosperous naba is to be followed by a Touareg /Tuareg/ sheep, well washed and very white. It is fed on millet leftovers and bean mush, and its mistress often presents it with a bit of salt to lick. In short, it is well cared for and agreeably fat; on some important feast day, it will embellish the menu.

The huts are usually guarded by very commonplace dogs, often ill-tempered, but cowardly. A stick is enough to drive them away.
[224] They are mostly used in the hunt, the great Mossi pastime during the dry season. Domesticated ducks are sometimes found in nabas' households, as well as pigeons, but these birds are not widespread and not within the reach of everyone. Finally, almost every group of huts has cats which belong to the women and which are difficult

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Above: A Baobab.
Below: Mossi Village.

244 /476/ André Rançon (Dans la Haute-Gambie /In the Upper
137 Gambia/ 1895) describes it in detail as follows:

"The Bambara and Sarracolé /Soninke/ call it diabéré, the Malinké diabéro, and the Peuhl oussoudié. It is a magnificent aroid of the Arum genus. It grows chiefly in damp places sheltered from the sun, and it favors soil which is rich in humus. This is why the lougan /frameworks/ for diabéré are always located in the shade of large trees where the ground is cooler, sheltered from the sun, and richer in humus because of the mold formed by the rotting leaves. It is a hardy plant, and its underground stem consists of a tubercle. The leaves have long petioles and may be as high as 2 meters. They are strongly ensheathed at the base, peltate, and the broad part of the leaf is sometimes of enormous size. They exhibit at the lower edge a rather deep indentation which runs up to a few centimeters from the spot where the stem radiates into three main nerves. These three are larger than the others and easy to recognize for they are quite obvious. From them radiate secondary nerves which also stand out strongly.

"These leaves are very thick. The three main nerves are never absent. The secondary nerves vary in number according to the age of the plant, and especially the size of the leaves. The secondary nerves radiate in turn into a large number of filaments which are quite easy to recognize and which crisscross the parenchyma of the leaf and reach the edges almost in a straight line. The upper face of the leaf is of a vivid dark green and somewhat velvety. Finally, the petioles are greenish brown at the base and a tender green at the top.

"The flowers are unisexual, clustered on a single spadix, with the females at the base and the males above, and without a perianth. They are surrounded by a spathe which is rather closed, rolled up like a horn, and of a slightly yellowish white. The fruit is a globular berry, unilocular, and containing from two to eight /477/ seeds. I dedicate this new plant to Professor Heckel and name it Arum heckeli.

"The root is a tubercle, about the thickness of a fist, blackish brown, and somewhat like a slightly elongated onion in shape. When the plant ripens, about twelve or fifteen turions grow on this tubercle, the largest of them the size of an egg at most. They make up the edible part, which is also used for reproduction. Their shape is the

244 same as that of the tubercle, to which they adhere strongly. Their
137 color is also the same. The flesh of these turions is white, highly aqueous, and compact. It recalls that of the potato, or rather that of the sweet potato. The odor is slightly noxious.

244 "The diabéré are sown in June and July. It is sufficient to place the turions in a hole dug into the ground to a depth of 10 or 15 centimeters. The harvesting is done in December. Around the end of October or beginning of November, the inhabitants of the Sandougou (Upper Gambia) are in the habit of cutting the leaves to a height of about 10 centimeters from the ground, in order to make the turions grow bigger.

252 "The diabéré is not a vegetable to be scorned even by the delicate palate of the Europeans. When boiled or fried in the pan, it makes a dish of pleasant taste. I recall eating it with pleasure in a mutton stew. The natives prefer it boiled, and in certain areas, for example the Diaka, Sandougou, and Tenda, they eat it in large quantities. In the latter region especially it is consumed intensively, and the natives of neighboring territories attribute the
[164] skin disease and numerous goiters of the Tenda inhabitants to their over-indulgence in this food." (Pages 83 to 85.)

246 The Mossi also cultivate karyanga or kamyanga. "This gramineous plant," says the Cahier des rapports /Production Report) of the Ouagadougou circle, "grows wild along watercourses, but the natives also cultivate it around the edges of their millet fields. The stalk, hairy and rough, reaches a /478/ height of 0.80 meter when full grown. It expands into a sheaf near the tip. The leaves, about 3 centimeters wide, are shaped like very elongated spearheads. When still green, they are severed about 20 centimeters from the ground. Then they are left to dry in the sun and stored for consumption during the dry season. The karyanga serves as fodder for livestock and horses. This plant is quite widespread in the eastern and southeastern parts of Mossi territory (Béloussa and Tenkodogo)."

As we can see, karyanga is a grass that grows in the bush along watercourses and that is cut down and fed to horses. Some horse owners cut it down and replant it in their maize field. In the

224 435 At Kombisiguiri, as we have just seen, there are 10 elephant hunters out of about 70 chiefs of compounds. Among the latter there are also some 20 men who hunt other animals, but they are cultivators who hunt on the side. They seek buffalo. When they kill one, they sell the meat to the village that stands nearest to the spot of the kill for 35,000 cowries. They also hunt the koba antelope, whose meat is worth from 20,000 cowries, the striped deer worth 6,500, the pig deer worth 5,000, the wart hog worth 10,000. They also hunt hares, bustards, guinea fowl, partridges, turtledoves, etc.

224 262 The Mossi do not hunt monkeys and do not eat them. /495/ Actually, there are very few in Mossi territory, except for the red-haired monkeys who are great lovers of millet and maize.

224 825 778 The Mossi do not hunt crocodiles because the latter are held sacred. If one were to kill a crocodile, one would become ill, one's head would swell and one's teeth would fall out. Snakes, on the other hand, are killed and eaten, but in Mossi territory proper there are few large ones (pythons, boas) because the climate is not sufficiently humid. They are more numerous in Boussansé and Gourounsi lands.

226 Fishing is less important than hunting among the Mossi, for the simple reason that the land, with its low rainfall, only has muddy ponds during the dry season (on this subject, see our Introduction /not translated/). Thus, not only do the Mossi lack professional fishermen, but the villages do not even undertake collective fishing during the dry season (with the exception of some southern localities, in Kombisiguiri for example). Only children attempt to catch the mudfish which are always present in large quantities in small ponds, even when they are nearly dry.

222 Gathering, on the other hand, plays the same role among the Mossi as among the other Sudanese Blacks, and we shall study it here in some detail, since we have only described it in broad outline so far.

222 137 The tree most widespread throughout Mossi territory, and which grows wild, is the karité. Its leaves are a pleasant green, and it is somewhat similar to our Normandy apple tree. Its bark is whitish and made of small juxtaposed quadrilaterals. It is the karité which

222 predominates in the bush of the territory and which, owing to its
137 abundance, lends the bush its particular character.

The karité fruit is an egg-shaped, elongated chestnut, smaller than the fruit of the European chestnut tree. It is distinguished from it even more clearly by its fleshy covering with its greenish skin. This flesh is soft, quite thick, and tastes delicious, like a very ripe, even overripe pear.

222 It is the women who gather the karité when the fruit is ripe,
252 before the rainy season, at the beginning of April. First, the flesh surrounding the chestnut is eaten /496/. Then, after breaking the brown shell, the inner part is used to make the famous karité butter.

252 As everywhere else, it is the women who do this among the Mossi. They remove the shell of the chestnut, and then mash the sticky and whitish substance which is found inside. It is pounded on crushing stones with a little wooden pestle. Once this is done, the substance is cooked in a canari and then mashed again, this time in the large wooden mortars, until the paste acquires the consistency of butter. Then it is pounded once more between crushing stones. When this is over, the paste is placed in a canari with lukewarm water, and then stirred and manipulated by hand. This produces a sort of dirty-white cream, somewhat similar to beaten egg whites, but firmer. Then this cream is boiled until it changes into oil. The impurities drop to the bottom of the canari, and the oil floats. The latter is gathered, placed in a clean gourd, and allowed to cool. The result is a pale yellow butter. At first sight it looks like real butter, but when sniffed it reveals a characteristic odor which is unpleasant to Europeans.

Gourounsi women prepare karité butter in the same manner as Mossi women.

302 This butter is put to various uses. First of all, it is utilized for grooming purposes. The women especially rub it into their hair in copious quantities, not only among the Mossi but throughout the Sudan as well. This, naturally enough, lends them an aroma which
[388] is not very pleasant to European noses. Karité butter is also made into soap when certain ashes are added. Finally, it is used in cooking.

423 The karité trees standing in a field belong to the owner of the field. Those which stand in the bush belong to the people of the

423 village in whose territory the bush is located. They belong to all the people of the village, for Mossi chiefs have not set those trees aside for themselves as they did with the néré trees.

222 137 The néré are found in large numbers in Mossi territory, although they are far less numerous than the karité, which literally fill the bush. The ratio must be something like one /497/ néré for every fifteen karité. The néré is nevertheless far from rare, and sometimes ten or fifteen are to be found together, standing not far apart. The néré is easily distinguished by its branches which expand in a fanlike arrangement from a short but elegant trunk. The branches spread out very prettily, in triangular fashion, so the néré blossoms out like a shower of fireworks. Its leaves are no less characteristic than its shape. They are of a dark, oxydized green which contrasts with the superb brilliant green of the karité. The néré leaves are similar to those of the acacia.

The néré is called roga or goaga, doga or doaga in Mossi. It is called soungou in Nounouma and Kassouna, sôla in Sissala. The Nankana call it roga or doga like the Mossi.

The fruits of the néré are long brown pods that grow in clusters on the tree and that contain a yellow substance, sweet to the taste, packed around a sort of very elongated pit. The women gather these 222 fruits approximately from March 15 to April 15. The neré trees 423 standing in a field belong to the owner of the field, but the Mossi village chiefs claim ownership to those that stand in the uncultivated bush.

Among the Gourounsi, as we know, the néré that stand in a field, even if the latter is not being cultivated at the moment, belong to the owner of the field, while those that stand in the uncultivated bush surrounding the village belong to all the people of the village.

This points up the difference between a centralized kingdom where the authority of the chiefs is strong, and small independent cantons or villages where it is not.

252 261 Néré is put to many uses. First of all, the yellow meal, including the more solid central part that runs from one end of the pod to the other like a pit, is mashed by the women in millet mortars or in wooden gourds. Once mashed, it is thinned with

222 Let us now proceed to the baobab.
137 It is called touéra or touéga in Mossi (sira or izira in Bambara). It is to be found most everywhere in the Mossi bush, and especially in rocky, hilly spots near large streams.

The fruit of the baobab is gathered from December to April. It is a sort of huge green almond hanging from a stem that often
252 reaches 25 or 30 centimeters in length. One breaks the shell, removes the flesh, and mashes it in the mortar (this, of course, is done by the women). Once this is done, the resulting meal is strained through a straw strainer. It is now ready to eat.

This is called tofdésoum in Mossi, tiondé-boé in Peuhl, siramogou in Mandé (from sira, "baobab" and mogou, "flour").
[438] Colloquially, Europeans call it "monkey bread." It is sold on Mossi markets as on the markets of Bambara country.

To prepare it for consumption, this meal is thinned with milk, or water if there is no milk, or else mixed with millet flour. The latter mixture is called sangaré ni siramogou in Bambara ("millet flour and baobab flour"). The meal may also be mixed with néré flour.

It is not only the fruit of the baobab, however, that is utilized. The fresh green leaves are used as a sauce ingredient. The dried leaves are used to make tonéra (lalo in Foutanké /Futajalonke?/, namourou or namougou in Bambara, oro in Peuhl). The leaves are dried and crushed in a mortar to make a powder that is added to sauce.

283 Finally, let us add that the bark of the baobab is used to make rope.

222 After the karité, néré, and baobab, we must list the tamarind
137 tree (Tamarindus indica), koussouga or poussouga in Mossi, n'tomi in Bambara.

222 The fruit of the tamarind is a pod, longer than a finger /500/
137 and about the same thickness, that ripens between January and April.
263 It is a yellow-green brown. When cut along its length, it is found to contain some ten little round fruits, the size of half a hazelnut, lying in a row within the greenish pulp. Only the dried pod is used, after removing the little fruits which have a rather pleasing taste when fresh, something between the kola nut and the hazelnut. When the pod is dry, however, the fruits are also dried out and hard, and they are discarded.

222 These pods, of course, are not eaten. They merely serve to
263 make the tô sauce fresh and sour, as the Blacks like it.

The pods[3] themselves are only eaten in times of famine, because
[261] they give colic. In addition, they harm the mouth, tongue, and teeth (gingivitis).

In ordinary times, the natives use them medically as a fever remedy. They boil them with pimento and drink the decoction. This is done by the Mossi as well as by the Gourounsi, Bambara, etc.

Tamarind pods are also made into dry balls which are sold at market. They are crudely mashed with a pestle, and then pressed together in cold water into balls of varying size. Whenever one wishes to give the to a tamarind taste, one pries loose a small piece of the ball with a knife and places it in the canari of boiling water where millet flour will be added.

Like the Bambara, the Mossi prepare a purging drink with the
278 tamarind pod, either fresh or dried. It is boiled in water, a tiny
757 bit of millet flour is added, and the drink is consumed when slightly warm. This decoction has laxative properties. The Haoussa are also familiar with it, but the Gourounsi are not.

222 To summarize, the tamarind pod has two chief uses among the
● 137 Mossi and other Blacks of West Africa. It serves to sour and freshen the tô, and it also serves as a purgative.

222 Let us add that Dr. Rançon, in the account of his /501/ trip through Upper Gambia, described the preparation of a tamarind drink for European consumption. The pod is left to dissolve in cold water for three hours, sugar is added, and a sort of lemonade results.

222 The Mossi have rônier in every village. This, as we know, is a
137 variety of palm tree.

"It is the largest palm tree, Borassus flabelliformis," says Dr. Rançon (Dans la Haute-Gambie, pages 139 to 141). "It is easy to recognize owing to its height and characteristic appearance. Its trunk is very long and may sometimes reach 25 or 30 meters. It is swollen in the middle, and its lower and upper parts are much less thick, much more slender. The bark is blackish and bears scars of the wounds left by fallen leaves. The wood, although it looks spongy, is quite tough and hard to dent with a saw. Rônier logs are heavier than water. This is one of the rare woods that do not float. The leaves of a grown rônier are clustered in a thick bunch at the

3 [i.e. tamarind pods — Analyst]

222 top of the trunk, and they are deeply indented. The trunk never
● 137 bears leaves except when it is young. The dark green of the leaves and their toughness makes /sic/ them look from afar like the artificial zinc leaves of some theatrical backdrops or weather vanes. The youngest leaves at the top are strongly imbricated and ensheathed, and ivory white in color. They are very tender and yield palm cabbage. The leaves of the rônier only fall off when completely dry.

"The fruits, which are called rône, come in clusters of about forty or fifty. They are the size of a medium-sized melon and very heavy. Their covering is green when they are young, orange-yellow when they are ripe. The large seeds, which are blackish and disc-shaped, or like spheres flattened at the poles, are surrounded with a fibrous, gold-yellow meat which is very watery and very fragrant. Its taste is pleasant, although slightly tinged with turpentine. The
[261] natives eat large quantities of it, especially in times of scarcity.

"Rônier wood is dense, long lasting, and remarkably tough.
313 137 502/ Immune to insects and humidity, it is excellently suited to the manufacture of piles, and often used in the construction of bridges and wharves. The male trees alone are used. The female trees can only be used for fencing, for they are hollow and lacking in strength....

"In addition to the fruit, the Blacks also eat the roots of the
222 137 young shoots, the taste of which is slightly astringent and rather un-
262 pleasant. They are eaten raw. The terminal buds of the palms are very tender. They are palm cabbages, less tasty to be sure than those of Oreodoxa oleracea, but nevertheless deserving of recognition. When cut into small pieces 2 centimeters square and well seasoned with oil, vinegar, salt and pepper, they make a very good salad, especially if they were previously soaked for twenty-four hours. This dish is highly prized by Europeans who live in the Sudan. Finally,
[263] the rônier yields a fairly abundant sap from which sugar might be
273 extracted. When fermented, it produces a palm wine of inferior quality."

137 It must be added that the fibers of the rônier leaves are also
[285] utilized. The West African Blacks use them to make baskets (as for example in Mossi territory) or cords (as for instance in Upper Gambia).

137 They are 7 or 8 meters tall, 10 meters at most, and their huge fruits are bunched in clusters of five or six rather than forty or fifty.

137 There are no rônier in the Mossi bush itself, but there are some in every Mossi village. They originated from seeds tossed at random 222 after eating the fruits, or from an ancient cultivation of the tree. The rônier, therefore, is not a natural product of Mossi territory and should not, in all exactitude, be listed among the gathering crops. On the other hand, can it be listed with the cultivated crops at the present day, and can we call cultivation the act of tossing seeds to the ground in order to get rid of them? No matter what the truth may be, the Mossi eat /503/ the fruits of their rônier but do not extract any palm wine. As we have just said, they use the fibers of the leaves for their wickerwork.

137 While the rônier occur in Mossi territory, there are, on the other hand, no palm-oil trees and palmier-ban /?/. Those begin to appear only in Gourounsi territory, to the south of the Mossi.

222 We have just reviewed the most important gathering trees in 137 the area, but the Mossi bush contains many others, less important to be sure but nevertheless useful, which we shall now mention.

First, there is the ganra or ganga (sounsoun in Mandé, diomba in Peuhl and Sarakolé). This is the medlar tree of West Africa. In appearance, it is a big tree similar to the karité but even bigger, with a thicker and more powerful trunk.

The fruit is a medlar, smaller than the European one. When green, it has the same acrid taste and numbs the mouth. When ripe, it is such as we eat it in Europe. The natives begin to eat it during the rainy season and consume it until January.

386 The wives of Bambara blacksmiths make a varnish for pots and canari with the bark of the sounsoun. As for the wives of Mossi 171 blacksmiths, they prefer to use for this purpose the bark of two trees we shall mention later, the nobora and the sibi. In Gourounsi territory, on the other hand, the women who make pottery pluck the medlars while still green and crush them. They add water, thus making a sort of varnish which they use on the canari after they are fired. The ganra is called kano in Nounouma, kakano in Kassouna, kalo in Sissala, and ganra or ganga in Nankana and Mossi.

225 Let us add that among the Mossi, as in all of West Africa, the ganra tree is closely related to fetishistic superstitions, and will be mentioned again in a later chapter on religion.

222 Now for the kankanga (plural kankansé; the Bambara and Malinké
● 137 call it n'toro, the Foulbé guip-bi, and the Nounouma /504/ kaporo).
The kankanga is the native fig tree of West Africa. Its fruits are
none other than figs, not as good to be sure as those eaten in Europe,
but figs nevertheless. The Mossi, as well as the Gourounsi, Bam-
bara, etc., usually eat these figs as they are. There are ripe ones
to be found at all times of the year, and one plucks them at will.
259 In times of famine, instead of eating them in this fashion, one al-
261 lows them to dry in the sun and then mashes them on crushing
stones (among the Mossi) or in small mortars (among the Bambara).
They are thus made into a sort of meal which is boiled and which
serves as a substitute for millet flour. At such times the Mossi also
eat the leaves of the kankanga. They cook them in boiling water
and add salt.

As for the Gourounsi, sometimes they eat the figs fresh, and
252 sometimes they prepare them for their sauces. In the latter case
they boil them, cut them to pieces, and dry them in the sun. When
the pieces are quite dry they are laid aside, and whenever needed
one of them is mashed, reduced to powder, and added to the sauce.

222 Now for nobora or noboga (n'kouna in Mandé, kountan in
137 Khassonké /Kasonke/, hèdè in Foulbé and Toucouleur, kounguié in
Sarakolé, salo in Nounouma, kansalo in Kassouna).

The nobora is a kind of wild plum tree. Its fruits ripen from
the time when millet is sown until the time when it reaches a height
of 80 centimeters, that is to say, between May and July.

273 The fruits of the n'kouna are either eaten fresh or made into a
sort of drink called noborame in Mossi, n'kounangui in Mandé,
n'diam hèdam in Foulbé. In all three tongues, this means "nobora
(or n'kouna) water." This drink is known throughout the Sudan.

In order to prepare this drink, the fruits are placed in water
after being pricked with a small piece of wood to let the juice run,
and they are left there for twelve hours. At the end of this period
of time, they are removed and the water is boiled for a /505/
quarter of an hour. Once this is done, one takes some of the residue
left at the bottom of the canari in which dolo is made, and puts it
in the jar containing n'kounangui. The liquid is allowed to rest for
one night. In the morning, the drink is gaseous and ready for con-
sumption. It is not as strong as dolo.

273 The Mossi make n'kounangui, like the Bambara, but the Toucouleur and Foulah do not because they are Moslems. The latter's slaves alone, being fetishists make some. The Gourounsi do not make it either, but this is because n'kouna is scarce in Gourounga country. The Gourounsi claim that this tree keeps hyenas away, and when someone dies in the bush and is buried on the spot, a branch of n'kouna is planted where he was buried. It is said that the hyenas will wander about at a distance, but will never dare come close and dig up the body. The Gourounsi claim that this is a matter of common knowledge.

222 The léla is another kind of wild plum tree. It is called séno in
137 Bambara and Malinké, filina in Nounouma, mia in Kassouna, mellemoila in Sissala. Its plums are tiny. They are yellow before they ripen, and red when completely ripe (March-May). They are no larger than the tip of the finger, and they are eaten as they are. The almond is not eaten. Children sometimes munch on it, but when eaten in large quantities it causes colic.

The sibi, another tree found in the Mossi bush, is called n'pékou in Bambara and Peuhl, bembé in Sarakolé. The Nounouma called it kakian, the Kassouna kakiéno, the Nankana sibi like the Mossi. The fruit is tiny and sometimes causes colic. It ripens during the dry and warm season, and it is eaten as it comes. The
[272] Habé prepare a drink from it which is called diam-n'pékoudian ("n'pékou water") by the local Foulbé and Toucouleur. The Mossi, Gourounsi, and Bambara do not make this drink.

Let us cite also the tiarala (tiaralsé or tiaralésé in the plural, n'ségué in Bambara, saõ in Nounouma). The Mossi are very fond of
[276] the tiarala fruit, which is highly aromatic and which is used /506/ to lend fragrance to native tobacco. They also eat the leaves.

Let us proceed to kara (or kaka). This is the Mandé n'taba. It is the Mandé n'taba. It is called dankola in Nounouma and Sissala, kalankola in Kassonboura.

"The n'taba," says André Rançon (Dans la Haute-Gambie, page 35), "is a malvoidea /?/ of the Sterculiacea family. It is the Sterculia cordifolia Cav., thus named because its leaves are heart-shaped. It is one of the most beautiful plants of tropical African regions. It is easily recognized by its enormous trunk, huge leaves,

222 and very peculiar fruit. The latter, which grows at the tip of
137 young boughs, is shaped like a huge pod whose pulpy valves open when pressure is exercised along the convex ridge. Its free tip is equipped with a sort of pulpy appendage shaped like a thorn, about 0.06 meter in length. When ripe, the fruit is of a distinctive light-red color. It contains a dozen polyhedral seeds immersed in a yellowish flesh which is tasty and highly fragrant. It is one of the best desserts I came across in the Sudan, and we often feasted on it. The fruits are clustered in bunches of three, five, or seven, and strongly fastened to the peduncle and stem that hold them. They rarely fall, and in order to gather them one must break the bough that bears them."

André Rançon adds (page 36) that the n'taba is related to the kola nut. It is apparently a sort of false kola tree.

The n'taba fruits ripen from December to April. The Mossi and Gourounsi eat them when they have dried out on the tree, or
65 else as they come /fresh/, or after boiling them for a quarter of an
435 hour. They are sold on Mossi markets at the price of three for 1 cowrie, six for 2 cowries, etc., that is to say, 150 for 1 sou.

272 These fruits are also used to prepare a drink among the Mossi and Gourounsi. They are boiled, mashed, placed in a canari filter, that is, a canari perforated at the bottom which is placed on top of another canari. Water is poured upon the fruits /507/, becomes permeated with the juice, and passes on to the bottom canari. This drink is sweet and tastes like honey.

222 Let us cite also the kamsoro (n'kodo in Bambara). It is a very
137 big, thickset tree, with characteristic leaves. The latter are very tough, very large, very thick, their shape ovoidal or rather a little more elongated than an egg, and their color a brilliant green.

The fruits of this tree are eaten throughout the year, especially by children, because ripe ones are to be found at all times.

There are no kamsoro in Gourounga territory.

Let us also cite the véda or ouéda, the caoutchouc liana, called n'saba in Mandé, fôgui in Peuhl, fittigné in Sarakolé, which is also called laré and Vahea senegalensis. This liana bears fruits that ripen in March and April. They might best be compared to oranges. They are green before they ripen and orange-yellow when ripe. Rançon claims that they are delicious. These fruits are eaten as they

222 come, and they are not used to prepare any sort of drink.
●137 The n'saba is found almost everywhere in West Africa, but grows scarcer toward the north. It is found in Mossi and Gourounsi territories in very small numbers.

314 The Dagari, who live farther south than the Gourounsi, gather the caoutchouc from the n'saba lianas and make wads with it for the tip of the sticks used to beat their tom-toms. The Gourounsi griot purchase these sticks from the Dagari. The Mossi and Gourounsi do not themselves gather the n'saba caoutchouc.

In the south this liana is used to make cords, but this is not done among the Mossi or Gourounsi.

222 137 261 252 In addition to the plants we have just mentioned and which are utilized at all times, there are others whose products are used almost exclusively in times of famine. Such are the konkouira, sabatouli, silikoré, etc.

The konkouira is a big tree whose Mandé name is n'zéfé. Its leaves are gathered when they are beginning to grow when they are still quite tender. They are mashed in a small mortar with a pestle, and then placed in water for two hours. Then they are worked into balls, with the addition of millet flour. A canari is filled with water and put on the fire /508/, and then twigs are laid across its mouth, parallel to each other, to form a grill on which the konkouira balls are placed. In order to ensure thorough cooking, the balls are covered with an overturned gourd which encloses them and prevents the steam from escaping too rapidly. The balls are steamed in this fashion for one hour, and then they are ready to eat.

These leaves are never eaten straight but always with millet flour, and they really serve to stretch the flour supply. If they were eaten straight, they would cause colic. In any case they cause hiccups (gounsounkouira in Mossi). They are therefore more a food for times of famine.

The silikoré or kalanianga (both are Mossi names) is a small thorny bush that grows around trees and bears very small fruits. The women gather those fruits during the rainy season. They mash them in a small trough and then boil them in a canari. This first water is discarded, and the fruits boiled a second time. Again the water is discarded, and the fruits are washed in cold water. Karité butter and salt are added, and the mixture is eaten. The silikoré are used

222 chiefly in times of famine, but occasionally at other times also.
137 The silikoré fruits are not eaten among the Gourounsi and Bam-
261 bara.
252 Gonsé is called sofarangoni in Bambara. It is a shrub, the height of a man, that yields kéména. The latter is a pod containing small flat beans of a sort, very thin, that ripen at the time of the millet harvest. These /beans/ are boiled twice, and the water is discarded both times. Then they are washed in cold water and boiled again, for the last time, in a canari covered with a straw lid. Once this is done karité butter is added, and the mixture is eaten. Kéména
[435] is sold at market ready made. A handful is worth 5 cowries (1/2 centime). Kéména is also mixed with /true/ beans and either eaten or sold in this fashion.

Lamboye is called béré in Bambara, guidili in Peuhl. It is found almost everywhere in the Sudan. Its fruits, or rather seeds, are eaten only in times of famine. They are round, very /509/ tiny, and they ripen during the dry and warm season. They are gathered, laid out in the sun, and then crushed in a small mortar to break the outer membrane. Once this is done, they are soaked in water for eight days. This water is discarded, and the seeds are washed twice. Then they are boiled, salt is added, and they are eaten. This is done only in times of famine. These seeds are poisonous, as we can see, and would be toxic if they were not submitted to these various processes.

222 Sabatouli (bembé in Bambara and Sôninké) is a tree whose fruits
137 ripen one month after the first rains (that is, in May). The fruit is very tiny, no larger than a grain of maize. One eats it as it comes, when passing by or clearing land in the bush, or else one takes it to the village children. Nothing else is done with it. Sabatouli is found almost everywhere in the Sudan.

Vâka is a tree which is called goumou or goumbou in Bambara. The flowers of this tree, which are red, are used to make sauce when there is no gombo left. It is called fofo in Nounouma and Sissala, kafro in Kassouna. Its fruits are not eaten.

We overlooked the jujube tree above. It is called mourouga in Mossi, n'tomono in Bambara, gouésso in Nounouma and Kassouna. The Mossi eat the fruits only when traveling through the bush. The Gourounsi do not eat them at all.

222 137 Let us mention also kankalra (lenga in Mandé), whose leaves are eaten by the Mossi.

We have just reviewed the trees and shrubs whose produce is utilized by the Mossi. We must still say a word about mushrooms, wild roots, and wild fodder.

Mushrooms are called goudou in Mossi, dakon in Nounouma and Kassouna, kon in Sissala. They grow in the Mossi bush during the winter season, as they do in Gourounsi territory and incidentally throughout West Africa, and they are gathered by the women. Two kinds are distinguished, the /510/ termite-nest mushrooms (yaoré-goudou in Mossi, from yaoré, "termite nest," and goûdou, "mushroom") and the mushrooms that grow among refuse. The latter are called niandara-goûdou, meaning "straw mushrooms," because they grow chiefly under old discarded roof thatch. These mushrooms taste better, but those on termite nests are bigger.

252 The Mossi cook mushrooms in karité butter, mash them in the butter, and eat them. They also use them to make a sauce for the sarabout to which body is added with beans, cooked separately and also mashed. The sarabout (Mossi name for tô) is eaten after dipping in the bean-and-mushroom sauce.

Gourounsi women boil the mushrooms and then leave them to dry on the soukala roofs. They take a handful or two a day for their sauces. To this end, they boil the mushrooms again without mashing them and add soumbara and salt. Mushrooms are never served as a separate dish among the Gourounsi.

Let us proceed to edible roots.

222 137 Vidiba is a sort of wild onion called fanto by the Bambara, Sarakolé, and Foulbé.

261 252 The Bambara use vidiba leaves to make sauce, but they do not eat the onion itself because it is poisonous. The Mossi do likewise, except in times of famine. At such times, the onion is rubbed with sand until the black membrane is removed, and then it is copiously washed. Then it is boiled in a canari filled with water to the brim and covered, and the cooking is maintained until all the water has evaporated. Then ashes are gathered, strained, and added to the contents of the gourd. The mixture is stirred with a piece of wood, and then the vidiba is removed, cut to pieces, and eaten.

222 137 261 Séba is a kind of long, poisonous, black turnip which is eaten only in times of famine and after protracted cooking.

Seba and vidiba caused the death of many people during the last Mossi famine by giving them dysentery.

137 281 /511/ As for wild fodder found in Mossi territory, there is first of all kénibédo, that grows in bunches 30 centimeters high in damp hollows. Its leaves are rudimentary. It is severed 20 centimeters from the ground and stored during the dry season.

Then there are the fodder plants belonging to the papilionaceous family, densa and youbenga. The tiny stem of densa or youbenga is not severed from the plant itself, which reaches a height of 0.30 or 0.40 meter in both cases. Horses eat them either green or dry, indiscriminately.

137 314 283 Finally, let us say a word about souga, a sort of wild hemp called thus by the Mossi. The Nounouma call it boupo, and the Kassouna bénédévio. It is found only in certain parts of Mossi territory, but it grows throughout Gourounsi lands. Its bark yields very tough white fibers which the natives use in the manufacture of rope, string or thread for fishing implements. The bark does not keep through the dry season, so it is reduced to fibers during the rainy season. The fibers, on the other hand, can take the most intensive dryness without deteriorating. Souga is not cultivated.

222 433 We are now finished with Mossi gathering activities. They have a certain importance, as we have just seen, the same one on the whole as in other Sudanese populations. They are infinitely less important than cultivation, of course, but only slightly less so than stockbreeding, and they must be placed on the same level as the hunt. They are far more important than fishing or arboriculture.

245 433 The latter deserves no real mention. It hardly exists among the Mossi. It is limited to what we described earlier about the rônier and to the planting, here and there, of a few papaw trees.

433 In short, cultivation comes first, with stockbreeding trailing far behind, then gathering and hunting on the same level, then fishing and finally arboriculture.

010 /512/ Industries flourish among the Mossi. We shall review one by one, in detail, the various trades they exercise.

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28

all year round. The Red and White Voltas are important only as drainage 133
systems during the short rainy period, for they dwindle to a string of small stagnant pools in the dry season. In some low-lying areas near the main watercourses, trapped waters provide the moisture for dank riverine vegetation.

The soils of Mossi country, which are typical of the Sudanic and Sahel 134
areas, were formed chiefly by the weathering of Pre-Cambrian rocks. Ferruginous soils of varying depths, red argils, and pure silicates of aluminum predominate in the northern regions. In the south are found thin, sandy soils formed by the decomposition of crystalline rocks and sandstones. Most of these soils are eroded by torrential rains, the scouring action of the harmattan, and the incendiary action of man and nature. Even where the soils 133
are reasonably fertile, the nature of the underlying rocks precludes important deposits of ground water. In the western sandstone region, rain filters down with such rapidity that water can be obtained only from deep wells. In the remainder of the territory, the presence of Pre-Cambrian rocks induces a rapid runoff, with the result that wells yield very little water at any depth. Rainfall collects only in river-bed pools or along dams constructed for that purpose in hollow places. The building of dams was relatively unknown in aboriginal times, and the Mossi did not practice irrigation farming. [241]

During the dry season, Mossi country presents a picture of such utter 137
aridity that one wonders whether it is possible for such parched red soils to produce plant life. After the first drops of rain, however, the entire plain quickly becomes covered with grasses that sometimes reach heights of five or six feet. The most characteristic and valuable trees in the region are the baobab (*Adansonia digitata*), the locust-bean (*Parkia biglobosa*), the shea butter (*Butyrospermum parkii*), the tamarind (*Tamarindus indica*), and the kapok (*Bombax costatum*). The sole and unimportant representative of the palm family is the *Borassus aethiopium*. There are several kinds of acacias, including the *Kenyaya senegalensis*, and a wide variety of silk-cotton trees, the most important of which is *Eryodendron anfractuosum*.

The cultivated plants of the region include numerous varieties of cereals, 241
roots, and legumes. Several varieties of sorghum (*Sorghum vulgare*) and millet (*Pennisetum typhoides*) constitute the staple crops of the Mossi, but maize (*Zea mays*) is extremely important because it is one of the first crops to be harvested after the difficult hungry period. Peanuts, onions, rice, beans, okra, fonio, and sweet potatoes form the bulk of the other cultivated crops. Manioc is grown only in small quantities because it requires moist soil for optimum development. The Mossi grow tobacco in fields around their 600

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
FA28 Mossi FA28

133 Red and White Voltas are merely a series of small stagnant pools during the dry season. In some low-lying areas around the main water courses, trapped water provides the moisture for dank riverine vegetation.

134 The soils of Mossi country are mainly ferruginous with red argils and pure silicates of aluminum predominating in the northern region. The soils in the south are thin, sandy, and formed from the decom-
137 position of crystalline rocks and sandstones. During the dry season the Mossi landscape appears too sterile to produce plant life, but with the first drops of rain the entire country soon becomes covered with the grasses and shrubs which are characteristic of this Sudanese region. The uncultivated but valuable trees of this area include the Baobab *(Adansonia digitata)*, the locust bean *(Parkia biglobosa)*, the shea-butter *(Butyrospermum parkii)*, the tamarind *(Tamarindus*
241 *indica)* and the kapok *(Bombax costatum)*. The plants which the Mossi cultivate include varieties of cereals, roots and legumes. Sorghums *(Sorghum vulgare)* and millets *(Pennisetum typhoides)* are their staples, with maize *(Zea mays)* filling the role of a secondary but rather useful crop because its growing cycle is shorter than that of other important crops and it breaks the "hungry period." Maize would be a more important crop to the Mossi if it could grow on soil less fertile than what is normally available around the Mossi compound—the area where it brings the greatest yield. Peanuts, onions,
240 rice, beans, okra, peas and sweet potatoes are other food crops. To-
248 bacco is grown for local consumption, but the crops which have the greatest export value are cotton and indigo, used for making cloth and dyeing it.

224 The wild fauna of the country does not provide a major part of the
262 food needs of the Mossi people. The several species of deer and antelope, monkeys, rabbits and wild pig are hunted and used for food.
136 But the elephants and lions which are also found in the country are sources of great distress to the people because the former decimate the growing crops and the latter attack and kill the grazing animals.

231 The Mossi rear two main types of cattle: a zebu-like one in the north-
[234] ern regions and a small dwarf variety in the south. These animals are kept primarily for their milk and for export, and are seldom killed
231 for meat until they are very old. The animals which provide the
262 Mossi with meat are goats, sheep, chickens and guinea fowls. Pig-
[177] raising is not widespread and seems to be declining in importance with the increasing observance of Islamic food taboos, even among
262 people who are still pagan. Fish forms only a minor part of the Mossi
187 diet and is obtained mainly from traders rather than from local activ-
231 ities. The Mossi also rear donkeys and horses for which they have

174 /13/This lack of certainty concerning the origins of the Mossi should not prevent us from treating the anthropological question of the Mossi. On the contrary, for it is quite evident that, while linguistics can give us valuable information about the origins and affinities of the Mossi, anthropology can give us even more valuable and far-reaching information since, as we know, it is obviously easier for a people to change its language than the form of its skull. Let us, therefore, look to anthropology and consult Dr. Ruelle to find out what the Mossi are from a somatic viewpoint.

Dr. Ruelle, in the work cited below (1), has worked with 100

1. L'Anthropologie, Vol. XV (1904), pp. 519-561 and 657-703.

Mossi men (unfortunately, he did not measure women, which is a regrettable shortcoming and can invalidate certain averages, for instance, the ones concerning stature). From the viewpoint of skin color, which he generally finds dark brown (not only for the Mossi but for the other tribes of the IInd military territory which he studied at the same time as the Mossi), he gives for the Mossi the following numbers on Broca's chromatic scale:

70 Mossi out of 100 have no. 42
14 Mossi out of 100 have no. 41
19 Mossi out of 100 have no. 37 (2)

2. Page 522.

For the horizontal cephalic index:

2 Mossi have 65	15 Mossi have 75
4 Mossi have 68	11 Mossi have 76
4 Mossi have 69	7 Mossi have 77
2 Mossi have 70	8 Mossi have 78
3 Mossi have 71	6 Mossi have 79
13 Mossi have 72	1 Mossi has 80
17 Mossi have 73	2 Mossi have 81 (3)
5 Mossi have 74	

14 /14/ 3. Page 524. If Dr. Ruelle had taken care to measure Mossi women, it is probable that the cephalic index would have been larger, since we know, for instance, that Lobi women have an average horizontal cephalic index of 75.89, while the men have only 74.36; Birifon women have 77.35, while the men have only 74.58; and finally, Dagari women have 72.32, while the men have only 72.09. This means that the women have a shorter skull than the men, yet it is no broader, that is to say, they have a smaller cerebral capacity. This also undoubtedly means that these women's ancestors probably belonged, more or less, to the pygmy or Negrito race whose unequivocal traces are still found on the Ivory Coast, a racial group with skulls shorter than those of the tall Negroes without being commensurately broader, quite the contrary.

We see, thus, that 12 Mossi out of 100 are ultradolichocephalic or hyperdolichocephalic, 53 are properly called dolichocephalic, 32 subdolichocephalic, and 3 are subbrachycephalic.

The average is 74.65, that is, clearly dolichocephalic. The extremes of the indices are: maximum, 81.76; minimum, 65.62. The spread is 16.14.

14 17 The peoples who most resemble the Mossi on Dr. Ruelle's table are:

the Ouangarbé or Yarsé	74.95	(average)
the Samo	74.90	"
the Nounouma	74.40	"
the Birifon	74.58	"
the Lobi	74.36	"

14 The nasal index for 100 Mossi is:

1 where the nasal index figures between 80 and 84.9

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2	where the nasal index figures	between 85 and 89.9
9	-	between 90 and 94.9
14	-	between 95 and 99.9
29	-	between 100 and 104.9
17	-	between 105 and 109.9
11	-	between 110 and 114.9
15	-	between 115 and 119.9
2	-	above 120

The average is 104.60. Considered in detail, we find one mesorrhine (up to 85), 23 platyrrhine (from 85 to 100) and 74 hyperplatyrrhine (from 100 to 120) (1).

1. Page 538.

[171] The Mossi is thus decidedly platyrrhine and even hyperplatyrrhine, although less so than the Bambara.

As far as height is concerned, the average of 94 Mossi men is 1.71 /15/ (exactly 1.712). But this average would be quite a bit lowered if Dr. Ruelle could have measured women (1).

[171]

1. Lobi women measure on the average 1.66, while the men measure 1.75; Birifon women measure 1.62, while the men measure 1.75; Dagari women are 1.59, while the men are 1.72 (p. 550).

141 144 In conclusion, Dr. Ruelle's study tells us that the Mossi are dolichocephalic, platyrrhine, and tall. These are characteristics usually attributed to the Black race in general (tall Negroes, not Negritos). These traits do not differentiate the Mossi to any extent from the peoples surrounding them. In order to reach anthropological conclusions about the origin of the Mossi, more far-reaching somatic studies than those now in existence will need to be made on the Mossi themselves and on the hundreds of Negro tribes living in the Sudan, between Abyssinia and the Atlantic and between the Sahara and the Gulf of Guinea.

1: Delobsom--146 I-5 (no date) 1933 FA28 Mossi FA28

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A Mossi Type.

From the Mission of the White Fathers at Ouagadougou.

1: Delobsom--147 I-5 (no date) 1933 FA28 Mossi FA28

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Drummer (bendré).

From the Mission of the
White Fathers at
Ouagadougou.

1: Delobsom--148 I-5 (no date) 1933 FA28 Mossi FA28

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Mossi Girl.

From the Mission of the
White Fathers at Ouagadougou.

1: Delobsom--158 I-5, (no date) 1933 FA28 Mossi FA28

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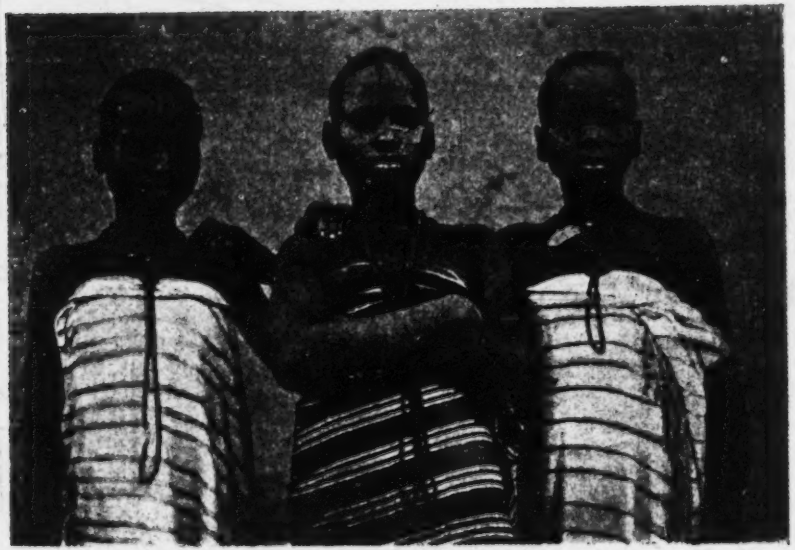

Three Mossi Girls.

From the Mission of the White Fathers at Ouagadougou.

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BOOK I. POLITICAL LIFE

Chapter 1. The Country and Its Inhabitants

142 Although the Mossi is not a handsome type of Black, there is nothing disagreeable about him. He is rather tall, with lively eyes, woolly hair, flat nose, occasionally rather fine features, lips which are broad without being too thick, and cheeks heavily marked with three parallel lines running from the temples to the chin and a fourth leading perpendicularly from the nose to the other three. His limbs are muscular, and his color neither ebony nor copper but an intermediate hue.

291 He acquires a truly attractive and resolute air when he dresses in festive clothes, with his broad, dark blue, Zouave-like trousers, his loose shirt made of white and blue fabric strips which falls lightly over the arms, and on the right shoulder his doré, a weapon consisting 411 of a slightly bent iron rod, flattened at one end and terminating at the other in a ring hafted perpendicularly to a short stick. His wrist [301] is often adorned with a copper bracelet, and he nearly always carries at his waist a stiff knife, enclosed in a leather sheath which ends in a tuft of leather strips with cowries attached to them. He wears a 291 cap made of two diamond-shaped pieces of colored fabric half-sewn together; the two free ends may serve to cover the ears and cheeks, but are usually worn raised in the shape of a tiara. A great fighter, he wields the knife with dexterity or strikes with the doré which can become a dangerous club.

173 The Mossi are a conquering people. They have not always lived in the territory they now occupy. But where did they come from? 648 The elders questioned all say that their people came from Gambaga 643 (British Gold Coast), and this is why the Moro Naba Wobro took refuge in Gambaga when he was dethroned by the French conquest; this is also why the naba of Gambaga is notified whenever a Moro Naba dies, and why the shoes, cap, and scepter of command of the deceased are sent to him as gifts to be laid on the ancestral tomb. Gifts are also sent to the naba of Fada N'Gourma, which the Mossi call "Bingo." When the Moro Naba dies, his bow and quiver are presented to the

2:Mangin--5a M-5 (ca. 1910) 1921 FA28 Mossi FA28

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Mossi Youths.

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Above: A Naba and his Men.
Below: Mossi Elders.

2:Mangin--49a M-5 (ca. 1910) 1921 FA28 Mossi FA28

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Tattooed Mossi Women.

Tattooed Mossi Youth.

565 171 were, conquerors. This represents a higher level of social complexity and development, in short, a higher level of civilization.

566 556 The nakomsé were and still are gathered in separate villages scattered throughout the territory. They did the same work as other Mossi, but prior to the French occupation they also practiced looting, which was their chief expedient, their major source of wealth. True, this manner of acquiring wealth had lent them improvident habits. Nowadays they own no more small livestock than the Mossi populace, and only a little more large livestock, while they should own much more in view of their former opportunities to acquire wealth. They immediately "ate up" what they looted, however, counting on future pillage. Nowadays they no longer loot, but they seem to have preserved their former improvident habits. It should be noted, however, that they own considerably more horses than other Mossi.

565 142 I saw at Pirigui, in January, 1909, one of those villages of chiefs' sons. There were altogether 841 inhabitants of the nobility with their families and their slaves. Those people would be interesting to study from the point of view of physical anthropology. There were faces totally at variance with Negro faces, truly distinguished physiognomies, oriental and semitic casts of features, in short, enough /579/ to strike an observer even though unfamiliar with physical anthropology.

642 The superstructure of the Mossi state thus consisted of a supreme chief, a carefully established hierarchy of chiefs, and a class of nobles to whom important privileges were granted.

651 As for taxes, "every year at the end of the winter season, prior to our occupation," says Moulins, "the canton chiefs had to come, greet the Moro Naba, and offer him certain gifts (beeves, sheep, millet) which constituted a sort of fixed due." This was the common tax levied after each harvest.

"In addition, whenever the sovereign needed anything whatever, he requested the province chiefs to secure it for him. They summoned the canton chiefs, who in turn gathered the village chiefs, who secured through the soukala chiefs the animals, grain, cowries, and other items requested.

[431] "Finally, whenever a native, chief or common man, came to the Moro Naba, he offered a present to the latter.

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28

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The Mogho Naba's daughter, the Napoko, impersonates her deceased father at his funeral ceremonies. Note that she wears one of his robes, his slippers, and his bonnet, and has his sword behind her.

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Mogho Naba Sagha II (1942–57), who was instrumental in reuniting the Mossi people into one territory, the Upper Volta.

[p. 178-B]

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28

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The musicians of the royal court, the Benders.

[p. 178-C]

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28

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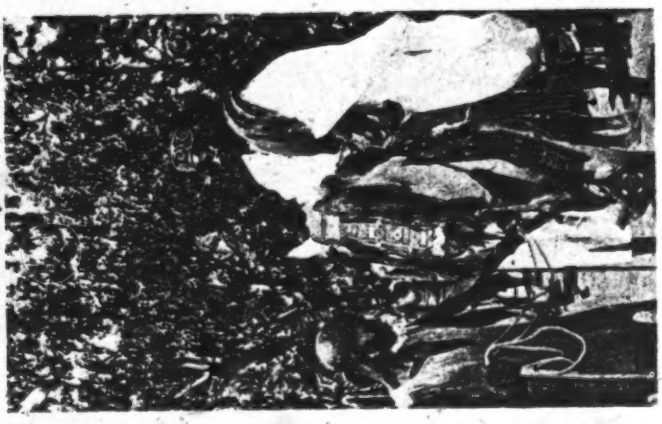

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[p. 178-D]

(*Left*) Mogho Naba Kougri and Ouezzain Coulibaly, who became Vice President of the Government Council of the Upper Volta in 1957. (*Center*) Maurice Yameogo, President of the Republic of Upper Volta. (*Right*) Mogho Naba Kougri (1957–) on his ceremonial horse at his installation.

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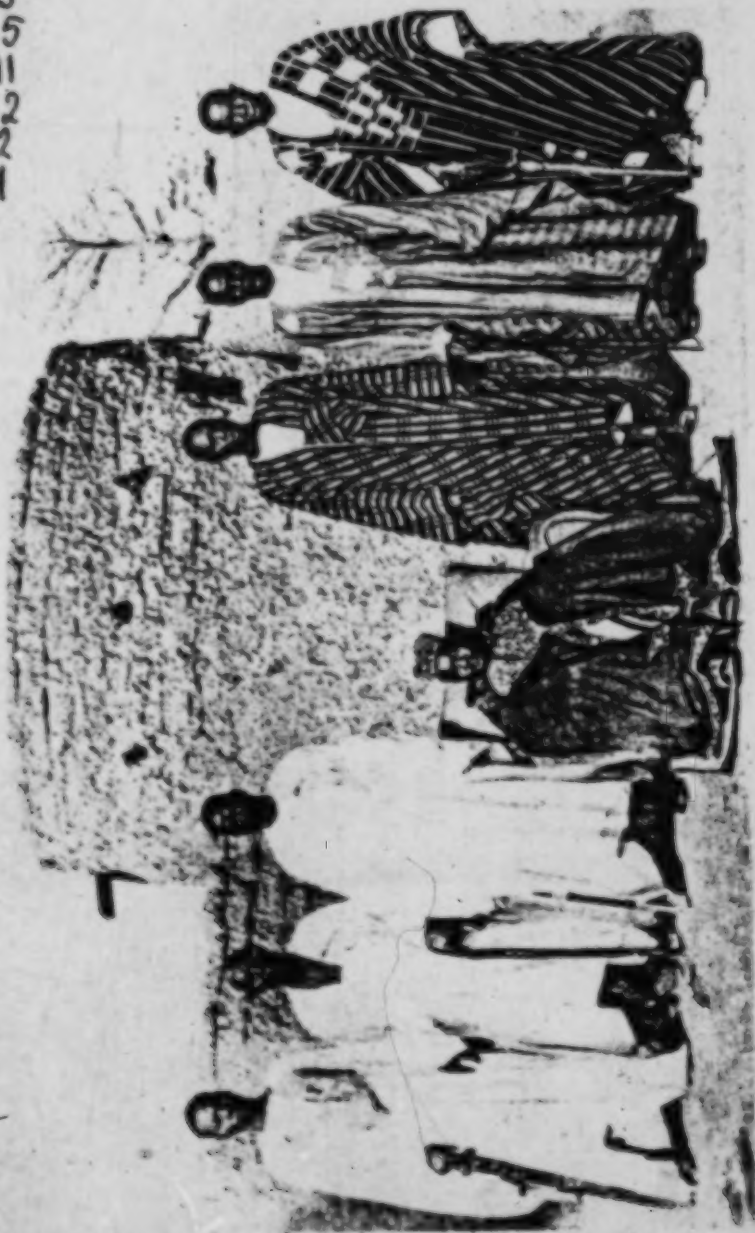

Moogho Naba Kango (center) and, from left, the Kombo Naba, the Gounga Naba, the Ouidi Naba, the Larlaba Naba, the Balaum Naba, and the Nonsio Naba.

[p. 178-F]

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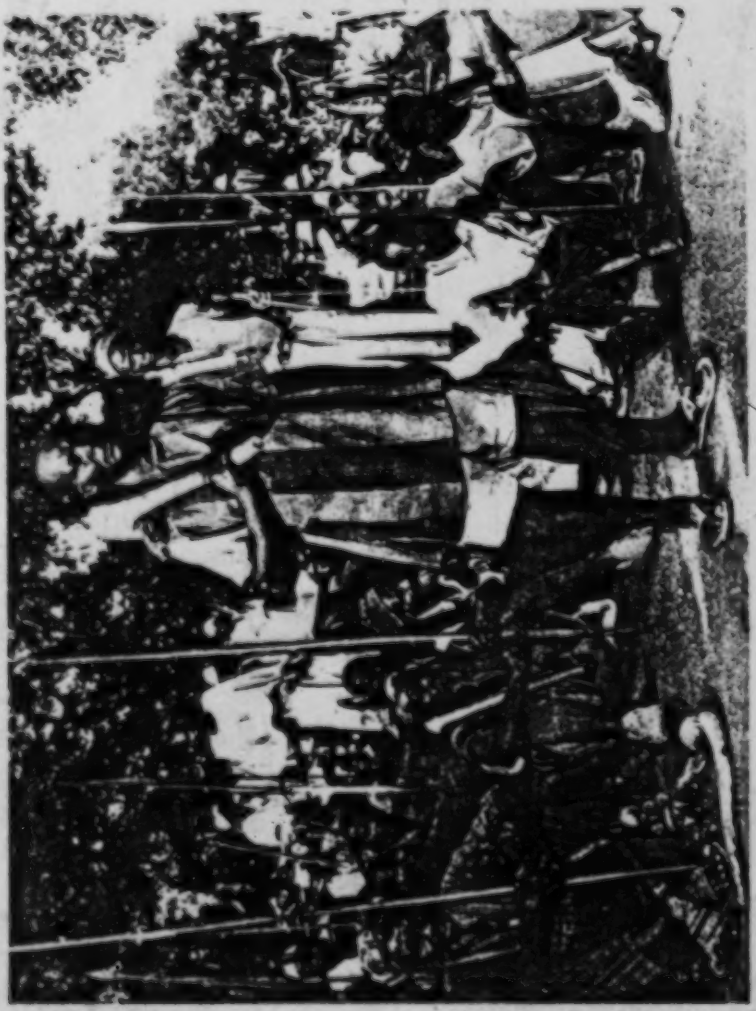

Mogho Naba Kouguri's warriors, many bearing traditional weapons, respond to their sovereign's call for aid against the new French administration.

[FA 178 - G]

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Mogho Naba Kutugri counsels to the administration, and orders his warriors to disband.

[pa 178- H]

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[P. 205]
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NOTES

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CHAPTER ONE

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6. See Cardinall, *passim*, and Rattray, I, x, xi.
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8. Rattray, I, xxii, xi.
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141

2	where the nasal index figures	between	85 and 89.9
9	-	between	90 and 94.9
14	-	between	95 and 99.9
29	-	between	100 and 104.9
17	-	between	105 and 109.9
11	-	between	110 and 114.9
15	-	between	115 and 119.9
2	-	above	120

The average is 104.60. Considered in detail, we find one mesorrhine (up to 85), 23 platyrrhine (from 85 to 100) and 74 hyperplatyrrhine (from 100 to 120) (1).

1. Page 538.

[171] The Mossi is thus decidedly platyrrhine and even hyperplatyrrhine, although less so than the Bambara.

As far as height is concerned, the average of 94 Mossi men is 1.71 /15/ (exactly 1.712). But this average would be quite a bit lowered if Dr. Ruelle could have measured women (1).

[171]

1. Lobi women measure on the average 1.66, while the men measure 1.75; Birifon women measure 1.62, while the men measure 1.75; Dagari women are 1.59, while the men are 1.72 (p. 550).

141 144 In conclusion, Dr. Ruelle's study tells us that the Mossi are dolichocephalic, platyrrhine, and tall. These are characteristics usually attributed to the Black race in general (tall Negroes, not Negritos). These traits do not differentiate the Mossi to any extent from the peoples surrounding them. In order to reach anthropological conclusions about the origin of the Mossi, more far-reaching somatic studies than those now in existence will need to be made on the Mossi themselves and on the hundreds of Negro tribes living in the Sudan, between Abyssinia and the Atlantic and between the Sahara and the Gulf of Guinea.

161 has but 655,000 inhabitants, while our French Guinea has 1,400,000, the Yolof /Wolof/ group of the Senegal numbers only 400,000, etc.

●144 At present the Mossi are a completely homogeneous group in terms of custom and language, but this homogeneity is a mere end result. The Mossi population of today derives from the fusion of a conquering group (the Mossi proper) with a conquered group that was probably related closely to the Habé, Kipirsi, Gourounsi /Grunshi/, Boussansé, etc.

173 Lieutenant Marc, who lived for many years among the Mossi and who published a book /Le pays Mossi (Mossi Country)/ on the region in 1909, which I have already mentioned /in section not translated/, has the following to say on the subject:

"Local traditions claim that the Mossi come from far to the east. A long time ago, they occupied a territory located beyond the Niger, whose capital was called Aliaman. It is said that this land is now occupied by a Songhay /Songhai/ population. Then the Mossi came and occupied Dagomba /Tamale/. They defeated the inhabitants of that land, and the chief of the Mossi settled in Gambaga. The daughter of the king of Gambaga, Ouidiraogo ("male horse" in Mossi), had an affair in the bush with a Dagomba elephant hunter called Samba. She became pregnant, and as her father wanted to have her put to death, she took refuge in Tenkodogo. There she married the king of the land, a Boussangçé named Zoungourouma, who waged war on his father-in-law and conquered the entire region from Gambaga to Koupéla. Zoungourouma had three sons, Séré, Oubri, and Kouda. The first became naba of Boussouma. The second, Naba Oubri, conquered the region of Ouagadougou, built his capital there, and seized the Yatenga territory. Naba Oubri is regarded by the /453/ Mossi as the first Moro Naba and the founder of the present dynasty. He was succeeded by his brother Couda, and then by his son Nigamenda. The Mossi trace back to Naba Oubri the present organization of Mossi country and attribute to him the division of the land into fiefs governed by his brothers and relatives. At present members of the royal families of Ouagadougou, Boussouma, Tenkodogo, Fada N'Gourma, and Gambaga are regarded as direct descendants of Naba Oubri and his brothers.

173 "This does not mean that nothing remained to be done by Oubry's successors. The land had been conquered, but remained to be explored and incorporated. The political organization had been outlined, but remained to be strengthened and completed.

"Up to the reign of Naba Kobra, fourteenth successor of Oubry, the Moro Nabas settled successively at various points of the empire instead of living generation after generation at Ouagadougou as they have done ever since. It would seem that in so doing they were attempting to strengthen their authority in regions where it was as yet insufficiently acknowledged.

"Whenever a territorial command became vacant, on the other hand, the Moro Nabas systematically filled it with a member of their own family. As a result, the whole land was soon in the hands of individuals who were united by bonds /457/ of kinship and who acknowledged the Moro Naba as the head of their family.

"Finally, thanks to marriages between Mossi, Nymsi, and Gourounsi individuals, the conquering element fused slowly with the initial population and eventually absorbed it almost completely.

174 144 "We have already seen that at the time of the Dagomba invasion the territory that makes up the present district of Tenkodogo was inhabited by a Boussansé population, while the area covered by the present district of Ouagadougou was settled by Gourounsi and Nymsi or Nioniossé.

"The mixture of Dagomba with Boussansé, Nymsi and Gourounsi resulted in the Mossi element, which soon became the most important part of the population. As conquerors, indeed, the Dagomba married several women each, and the prohibitions governing kin marriages led them to seek their wives among the Boussansé, Nioniossé, and Gourounsi families. This is how they soon came to absorb the Autochtonous element, or at least the element that was already established in the area when they arrived.

"A few Nymsi families among the Mossi have avoided all intermixture, but their continuous contact with the Mossi has led them to adopt the latter's language and customs, and from a political standpoint there is no difference between the two groups."

174 From the two accounts of Marc and Moulins, the following broad facts may be gathered:

1. The Mossi, coming from the northwest, conquered the Dagomba at a time which is difficult to determine exactly, but which must not have long antedated their conquest of Mossi territory.

[Passages quoted from the "Monograph of the Ouagadougou circle in 1909" by Moulins. — Analyst.]

144 This is all we shall say by way of introduction to our study of Mossi customs. The main point to be remembered is that the bulk of the present Mossi population is not of "pure" origin, but results from a mixture between the Mossi conquerors and antecedent primitive groups.

000 Let us now turn our attention to work, and first of all to cultivation. We shall study the various types of labor in greater detail than we did so far in relation to the populations previously studied, and the reader will get a better idea of the work performed by the Blacks in these regions.

243 Millet is the most important item of cultivation among the Mossi, who call it ki. They cultivate various kinds of millet, and we shall take them up one by one.

First of all, the ordinary small millet, which is most widely cultivated. It is the Bambara sanio or Mossi kasui. It requires good black soil with low sand content.

243 242 Let us make the general statement that the Mossi, whenever they can, change plots every four years. That is, they clear a new field or take over an old one which has lain fallow. If they have little land, they cultivate the same plot indefinitely. In other words, they may till the same field for some twenty years.

243 When a new plot is cleared, the clearing is done in March or April. The head of the soukala goes to work with all his men. Daba /hoe/ and hatchets are used to cut down the trees. The women come along, but only to serve drink to the men, because they do not take part in the clearing.

[461 512] The workers go into the bush in the morning and remain there all day. They rest around the middle of the day (from noon to /467/ two or three o'clock), and then take up their work again until sundown. The women return home first to prepare dinner, and then the men follow. After the clearing proper has been completed, all that was torn up from the ground is gathered in a heap and set afire. The ashes are left on the soil to fertilize it. It should be noted that the roots of the trees are not removed. The trees, in fact, are merely cut about one meter from the ground, so that the field is dotted with stumps. Sometimes, instead of cutting down a tree, a small fire of branches and dry leaves is lit at its base and the

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644 Under him were the Kos Naba, who levied taxes on general merchandise sold in the mar-
[651] kets, and the Nemdo Naba, who collected taxes on meat sold in the markets and was responsible for distributing meat within the royal household. Most of these positions were hereditary, but here primogeniture was not as important as in the ruling and administrative lineages.

[648] The various foreign groups in the capital also sent representatives to the court. Among them were the Zangweoto Naba for the Hausa, a Naba for the Songhai, and an Imam for the Ouagadougou Moslems. Even total strangers such as the early European visitors were placed under the care of a special chief.

The most ubiquitous persons at the Mogho Naba's court were the pages, who were boys between the ages of ten and twenty. These boys were regarded as comparable to the ruler's wives, since they served him in the same manner as ordinary Mossi women serve their husbands at home. They wore women's bracelets and women's clothes, and dressed their hair in the same style as the royal wives. As we have seen, they were forbidden sexual
[834] intercourse until they were released from the royal household.[22]

173 The institution of pages is said to have originated sometime in the sev-
644 enteenth century, during the reign of Mogho Naba Waraga. Before his reign, the wives of the Mogho Naba attended him at court. The change came during a lengthy civil war between Waraga and the chief of Riziam territory, who had refused to pay allegiance to him. During five "dry seasons" (five years) of fighting, the Mogho Naba was attended only by a small boy. He found him so efficient that at the end of the war he resolved to employ only page boys and prohibit his wives from attending him at court. This origin is conjectural. However, the use of pages effectively segregated the royal wives from court intrigues, and, once instituted, the practice spread throughout the country.

644 The Mogho Naba had little difficulty recruiting pages. Many of them were the sons of pughsiudse whom he had given to his subjects as wives. In theory, the Mogho Naba could select boys at will, but in practice the pages were usually selected by the ministers and sent to the palace. Most boys willingly accepted service, but some, often with the support of their parents, resisted confinement to the palace. Some ten-year-olds even ran away to escape their impending fate, but they were soon caught and bracelet ed with the insignia of their new status. Once this had been done, their lineages encouraged them to remain at the palace. Their period of service
[145] terminated when they began to "push beards," usually at about eighteen years of age. One district chief claims that ancient Mogho Nanamse used to take the sons of district chiefs as pages and release them only when their

585 The following morning the new wife returns to the hut of her "mother." She is summoned by her husband several nights in a row before he resumes the practice of receiving each wife in turn.

The Bride Price. The Basket of the Fiancée

583 Bride price. Mossi custom does not require a bride price. The one thousand to several thousand cowries that are required, depending on the man's resources, plus chickens, a sheep and beer, are not a bride price, properly speaking, or "selling a daughter." Nothing is asked which could not be repaid one day without too much difficulty.

585 The fiancée's basket. The basket of the fiancée contains the girl's clothes, some soap, some karite butter, some cowries, gourds, and ladles. The basket is carried by one of the women in the cortege.

The cortege. The fiancée's cortege is usually composed of a young girl, a woman who has borne children, and a boy.

They proceed to the house of the village elder. [182] The relatives of the bridegroom provide food for them for several days. Finally, they are given a farewell dinner consisting of baskets of millet cakes and mutton, goat, or merely some chickens. They are also given cowries.

585 In addition to these gifts, the sum of 444 or 1,400 cowries (the
431 "virginity price") is sewn into a sack and sent to the girl's mother. If the bride was given by a chief, he is entitled to from 2,000 to 3,000 cowries if the husband is an ordinary Moaga, 10,000 to 50,000 cowries if the husband himself is a naba. In this last case, the women in the cortege receive skirts, and the boy, a robe.

585 Note. While it is true that among many peoples a girl goes to her
●152 husband joyfully, it is quite the contrary in Mossi country. There is a real struggle to separate the girl from her parents. Many lose sleep and their appetites. On the day of departure they weep bitterly, and those who do not are insulted by the old women.

181 /109/ The Mossi have passions, and they are the same as ours:
152 ambition, jealousy, gluttony, sloth, lust, and sometimes even avarice, though more rarely. All of these reign among them. Because they cannot control their emotions, cannot resist their evil inclinations, these passions become tyrannical as they grow older. The children are usually quite malleable. The spirit of obedience and complete submission to their parents is instilled into them from such an early age that when taken sufficiently young their character can be trained and they become capable of truly virtuous actions which cost them an effort. When left to themselves, however, they listen only to their own desires and seek out whatever can bring them some satisfaction. This is rather similar to the morality of a slave who fears only the whip.

The Mossi are vain and easily offended by a word they have misunderstood, even when spoken in jest. The practice of humility is far from being one of their habitual pursuits. The Mossi are quarrelsome and testy, especially when they have drunk a little more millet beer than they should have. There are no festivities and few markets of any importance where a quarrel does not arise among some natives, often for no better reason than because someone is jostled in the crowd. The brawl begins with insults, proceeds with clubs, and ends up with knives. No one gives way. A Mossi who gave way in a quarrel would feel dishonored. The man who gives in proves that he is the weakest, and at the first opportunity someone who witnessed the incident will insult him in turn. Why not, since he does not defend himself? This is why a Mossi who has been abused will give in only at the final extremity, especially if his father and mother were insulted, and all cursing soon gets to this point. When drawn apart, the opponents keep up their invectives at a distance. An angry Mossi loses all control. A quarrel often has its aftermath. The Mossi are spiteful, and, especially if they were placed in the weaker position, they will seek revenge in one way or another, so it cannot be said that they got the worst of it.

181 Not only do the Mossi have passions like ours, but like us they also
157 have their temperaments. There are the lymphatic ones, languid and incapable of any effort; there are the nervous people who are always in motion, sensitive to a fault, who weep at the slightest remark; there are the taciturn ones who almost never laugh, who think that no one loves them and that everyone wants to hurt them, who like solitude and

586 As for the other causes of divorce, they occur very rarely, more rarely than the above.

Formalities of divorce. —"There are none," says Vadier. "The husband informs the head of his family and his wife's father of the decision he has taken. Likewise, the wife tells her father and the head of her family.

"If the divorce is contested and things do not work out amicably, the naba intervenes and remains the supreme judge."

Consequences of divorce. —1. Concerning property. "Each spouse," says Vadier, "keeps his or her own property." We have seen in the preceding paragraphs what happened in each case to the gifts given to the wife by her husband.

"As concerns the gifts given by the husband to the girl's family head or mother, there is no possibility of their return under any circumstances.

"2. Concerning the spouses. The spouses are completely freed by the divorce. They no longer have any obligations toward each other. /249/

"They may later marry each other again.

"3. Concerning the children. An important principle settles this question. The children belong to their father and consequently must remain with him.

"Small children accompany the mother, but they must return and live with their father when they reach the age of three (for boys) or six or seven (for girls).

"The divorced woman cannot return to her husband's hut to see her children. She may, however, go to the home of the head of her husband's family where her children may meet her with her husband's permission. The naba can override the father's authorization.

"With paternal consent, the children may go and see their mother at her home."

As Vadier has stated, an important principle governs the consequences of divorce as far as the children are concerned. As among most Sudanese populations, they revert to the father. He married in order to have children. The wife may go away and escape her basic function as generatrix for the husband, as generatrix for the husband's benefit, but the children remain with him. This matter is very important and deserves to be duly noted.

152 Psychology of the women. The woman as lover and as mother. —Mossi women love their children better than their husband. As for

152 their family, they love it very much, but they love their husband just as much if they love him at all. If they do not love their husband, naturally they love their family infinitely more.

304 833 When we study the children's life, we shall see that Mossi girls are excised at the age of nine or ten. This barbarous operation naturally removes an important part of a woman's sensual sensitiveness. The Negress is thus a generatrix rather than a lover. One cannot say of her as of the Latin poet's mistress: crispum ... docta movere latus /gracefully moving her slender body/. She is passive in love and content to give herself without resistance to the man's passion.

831 577 The morality of Mossi women is certainly laxer than that of European women. (Naturally, I compare the Mossi woman to the respectable woman of our occidental societies.) We saw earlier that the breach of virginity prior to marriage was not unusual and was tolerated with considerable leniency by custom. Adultery is also frequent and is punished in crude and rustic fashion. The woman is beaten and then forgiven. In short, morals are certainly less rigid than in our own countries. On the other hand, prostitution does not [548] exist, and this is a great moral advantage. Briefly, the division of labor in the sexual domain, as in other domains, is far less developed among the Mossi of Yatenga than among the highly evolved civilizations of our European and occidental countries. The same applies to the other Sudanese populations.

000 Now we turn to Children and Education. We shall discuss these matters in the following order. /250/

1. Filiation.
2. Theory of birth.
3. How children are welcomed.
4. Abortion.
5. Childbirth.
6. Baptism.
7. Freaks. Twins.
8. Nursing.
9. Charms for children and tattooings.
10. Children's games.
11. Familial education.
12. Education of children among themselves. Societies.
13. Young people's tasks.
14. Rights and duties of parents toward their children.
15. Duties of children toward their parents.

181 who speak little; there are the choleric people, more liable than others
157 to anger, more spiteful, but also endowed with more energy.

Energy is not the chief quality of these people, who are trained by
181 their leaders to blind and faithful obedience. The tight organization
156 we have described has its unhappy consequences, atrophy of the will and destruction of the spirit of initiative. Such is the price. A Mossi cannot resist those who are more powerful. Flexible and almost cowardly before his superiors, he makes up for it with his inferiors and shows great arrogance and disdain toward those who are weaker.

181 /110/ The Mossi do not exercise their will, and they do not exer-
153 cise their thinking faculty. This is not because they lack intelligence, but because they are not accustomed to thought except when their interests are at stake, at which time some of them demonstrate true intelligence and diplomacy.

The Mossi do not question the why of things. While small children in our country like to argue and often perplex us with their questions, the Mossi never ask themselves, "How can this be? Why is it so and not otherwise?" The first answer that comes to mind satisfies them.

This lack of thought is the cause of their lagging civilization, for is it not true that we move forward unceasingly only because we seek to investigate the cause of everything? It also results in a paucity of ideas. Conversations turn mainly upon women, food, and agriculture during the rainy season. Their sphere of ideas is quite restricted, but it is capable of expansion, for the Mossi may be considered quite intelligent.

539 If proverbs express the wisdom of a people, the Mossi certainly do not lack wisdom and often couch it with great subtlety. Permit us to prove this by quoting a few proverbs, culled in the course of conversations by Fr. Thueux, who kindly conveyed them to us and who gathered explanations, since some of them are real enigmas to our European minds.

1. Kota ningri, ka kot' sen kong'ye.
   Give above you, not below.
   (If you give to someone who is more powerful, you will always get something out of it.)
2. Maokasankaré ñarda kon lo'é naobi taoré.
   No matter how much it may hurry, the heel never catches up with the toes.
   (Who is the hen to sing before the rooster?)

539 15. Sosra sen kaosda, wata ne korg' wenbsego.
When a conversation lingers, the bag is fingered.
(Familiarity breeds contempt.)

16. Pu' pidya, bango luéya.
Full belly, gagged indiscretion.
(Those who need you are discreet).

17. Sad' no' o, yid noa' karga.
A good laugh is better than a chicken leg.
(A warm reception is better than a good meal.)

18. Ned' kon wok' a bâka, ti pemsom yi ye.
You don't cut open your shoulder just for the air to come out.
(Never abandon a friend in need.)

19. Bunbundi ka dod' zalof'n yé.
Those who give their best do not go away empty-handed.
(Work hard, do your best, there is no lack of true wealth.)

181 153 The Mossi likes to talk. Although he has few ideas of his own, if one knows how to make use of his familiar experiences to bring him to a higher level, he follows the reasoning easily, understands quite promptly what is told him, and grasps the train of ideas and even the finer gradations of meaning. In short, he has quite a noteworthy aptitude for assimilation. Often I explained to a chief in broad outline the handling of a gun or the mechanism of a watch or bicycle. If an outsider came by, the naba relayed the explanations to show that he was intelligent and that he had grasped them properly. Indeed, I was often surprised at how well most of them did this.

They like pictures. At first they often hold them upside down, but a few explanations are usually sufficient to make them grasp their meaning. First they recognize familiar things, such as people, horses, dogs, and trees, and they explain them to each other. They come to understand the scene and the reasons for the attitudes of the figures pictured.

181 522 576 /112/ In conversations, when they are not ill at ease, they are lively, merry, and they like to laugh. It is a compliment on their part when they say that someone laughs easily. They are sometimes humorous, they understand innuendoes, but they know how to keep their distance and do not permit themselves any familiarities, even in words, toward their superiors.

181 153 They are very susceptible to teaching. The little slaves raised in Malta learned the French language well, and all those who have met them say that they are quite intelligent. We had children in our school who quicly learned writing, reading, and arithmetic, and who did not forget what they had learned when they got married and had to leave school to work in the fields. Reading remains a pastime to them, and they keep up their knowledge of the French language. We did not notice among them what has so often been pointed out about the little Arabs, who give great promise when young, signs of real intelligence, and who do not live up to this promise when they grow up. The intelligence of the Mossi develops with the years, and this would make it possible to exercise considerable influence over them. 080 Teaching that opens their minds, however, should not cause them to lose their religious sense without contributing anything in its place. Within a short period of time this would bring about the demoralization and downfall of this people who seem capable of rapid progress, and it would be a pity.

538 They like to tell fables, and a volume of Mossi literature could easily be compiled by gathering the historical legends, proverbs, and fables which are to be found among this people. As an example, we shall now recount a few stories we have been told. As in all primitive tales, animals play the role of intelligent actors. The Romaunt of the Rose has long since familiarized us with this kind of literature.

The Bad Vulture and the White Hawk

539 A bald vulture was wandering about the bush. A white hawk came by and said to the vulture, "Why have you nothing to eat?" The vulture replied, "It is true, I have nothing to eat. May God help me find something." The hawk said, "God cannot give people enough food to satisfy their hunger." The vulture answered, "If God does not give me something to eat, I shall not eat."

The white hawk saw a dove alighting on a stick. The hawk swooped down upon her, but the stick pierced his breast and came out behind his head. The vulture came and ate the hawk.

174 traveler himself, between the people of Gotto who were mixed in this
114 affair and the Mossi of Yatenga who made the expedition. Finally, Naba Kango, although he brought great glory /29/ in the eighteenth century to the Mossi dynasty of Yatenga, obviously did not find, at the beginning of his reign, an absolute fragmentation of small countries which he would have gathered under single authority. He doubtless limited himself to restoring a kingdom that had formerly been powerful and centralized, and which he made so again through his personal prestige. In any case, he did not give his name to the Mossi (it is, on the contrary, the Mossi who, in Mungo-Park's description, give him his name), any more than to the capital which he indeed founded and which he called Ouahigouya. All these details are thus false or imaginary, but the principal fact remains and is very interesting. Mungo-Park arrived in Ségou just in time, in 1796, to
● [153] record it before the weak memories of the Mossi and Bambara Negroes would have condemned it to hopeless oblivion. /30/

Chapter 4

The Cult of the Sun Among the Mossi

194 Do the Mossi adore the sun? And is their great god Ouendé partly or wholly a sun god?

Binger was the first to state that the Mossi adored the sun. "They are fetishists," he says (1), "but they have a cult of the sun, which

1. Du Niger au golfe de Guinée
/From the Niger to the Gulf of Guinea/,
Vol. I, p. 492.

still today bears the same name as God; they call it Wouidi."

In turn, Lieutenant Desplagnes, in his Plateau Central Nigérien /Central Nigerian Plateau/ (pp. 275, 276) said in 1907:

"The Hougho-Ouango of Mossi (these priests live in Mossi in the villages of Boujema, Mani, Kondogho, Yolo, Tio) make sacrifices to the sun in order to bind it to the earth, morning and evening, at

10:Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1964 FA28 Mossi FA28
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571 604 indirectly from the good will of his ancestral spirits whose benevolence Ego often invokes.

Ambivalence follows from other characteristics of the relationship. Resentment of Ego's depredations of her husband's property and jealous concern for the inheritance rights of her own children appear to be at least partially balanced by a share of the affection her husband shows for Ego. However, joking in this relationship is asymmetrical. The mother's brother's wife takes the more aggressive role, and from the vehemence of her joking, and the [152] structural nature of the relationship, it appears likely that amity lies less heavily in the balance than hostility. The groups to which the two parties belong are equal in status. Their respective positions within them, of course, are not, and this is reflected in the aforementioned asymmetry. Each party is obviously independent of the authority system of the other.

571 607 *Joking Between Siblings-in-Law*

[144] Siblings-in-law who joke are separated by the rule of sib exogamy observed among the Mossi. Reciprocity is basic to the marriage contract that unites their respective kin groups. Several factors tend to create ambivalence in the relationship. Both kin groups—in particular, the extended families of the two marriage partners—profit from the reciprocal tie established between them, but possible failure on the part of either group to reciprocate adequately, [57] particularly with regard to marriage payments, constitutes a persistent source [38] of potential friction. Moreover, the Mossi observe the levirate. Joking between siblings-in-law who are potential spouses, yet are presently constrained by a [137] prohibition against adultery, has frequently been ascribed the function of reducing tension in a situation of conflict. The kin groups of siblings-in-law [144] are always structurally equivalent because groups occupying significantly dif- [58] ferent strata in Mossi society do not intermarry. As members of autonomous descent groups the participants are obviously independent of one another.

571 614 *Joking Between Sibs*

Sibs (or lineages) whose members joke with one another are, of course, also separate groups.[2] They are always united by a strong tradition of reciprocal social and economic aid. Ambivalence apparently stems from the conflict between this tradition of reciprocity and actual competing claims to land. The origin of joking relationships between two descent groups is often ascribed to the alleged fact that, when they first arrived in the village, leaders of both falsely claimed to the chief that he and his kinsmen had arrived first, [423] and thus had a prior right to land, and that the members of the other group were their slaves. Despite their jocular allegations, both groups are in fact structurally equal and independent.

571 561 *Joking Between Age-Sets*

Joking between age-sets within an age-grade varies with the generational

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tradition of hostility. Such groups obviously have both equal and mutually independent status.

The Processes of Mossi Joking

I have already suggested that the significance of joking as an adjustive mechanism is derived from the manner in which it provides concurrently for the operation of three interrelated but analytically separable processes. These are *communication, control,* and *catharsis.*

As a means of communication, joking provides a permissive and flexible context in which a grievance can be expressed, thus allowing for its rectification and the restoration of amity. As a means of control, the public nature of most joking serves to shame the object of the jocular offensive, to invoke social pressure for his conformity, and to elicit support for the complainant. As a means of catharsis, the joking expression of aggressive feelings reduces frustration and thus serves indirectly to perpetuate the amicable aspect of the relationship in which it occurs.

Joking also gives pleasure. The feeling of triumphant release that follows the successful—and safe—expression of hostile sentiments probably functions to reinforce reliance on joking as an adjustive mechanism. And the intrinsic pleasure of wit may also explain the persistence of joking behavior in the absence of an immediate "structural need" for it.

A more detailed description of one of the relationships already mentioned—sibling-in-law joking—will serve to illustrate these several points. Because of its relation to the pivotal institution of marriage, sibling-in-law joking is perhaps the most frequently used adjustive mechanism in Mossi social structure. The potential for marital conflict is high. This appears to be due to the combined factors of a sexually differentiated enculturative experience that results in marked dissimilarities in adult male and female personality; to an age difference between husbands and wives of at least ten years; to the classic stresses of polygyny; to the subordinate status of Mossi women, particularly of junior wives within their husband's patriclan; and to the possible dissatisfaction of a woman's parents, particularly her mother, at the loss of their daughter's services or at the inadequacy of bride-wealth payments.

Whatever its origins in a specific instance, it is important that this potential for conflict be controlled, for each marriage extends the network of affinal and cognatic ties that link the patrilineage to the larger community. Given a persistent potential for strife, the preservation of marital stability requires the provision of a means for minimizing its deleterious effects. When conflict occurs, the resultant frustration must be reduced, and accord must be reestablished in a manner that does no serious damage either to the marriage itself or to the larger context of social relations in which it is embedded. Sibling-in-law joking helps to accomplish this.

If, for example, a Mossi is irritated by his wife's performance of some aspect of her duties in the household or the field, he need not address her directly in order to communicate his dissatisfaction and release the tension he feels. To do so in a culture which places a high value on indirection in emo-

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tionally charged relationships would be such a serious breach of etiquette as to threaten permanent damage, if not actual dissolution, of the marriage relationship (Hammond 1959: 187; 1963: 21). Thus if he has been angered over his wife's frequent failure to prepare his food properly, or to present it to him before his kinsmen with a proper show of deference, he need not and should not reprimand her directly. He need only wait until she is visited by one of her younger sisters when he can call out:

> Eh! Here come women more worthless than my wife! What do you want here? Are you looking for *sacabo* (a millet cake)? Who eats well here? Do you want an old groundnut? No one here has tasted *sacabo* with sauce since your sister came to my house!

By expressing his resentment of his wife in this way the husband is able—indirectly—to communicate the cause of his displeasure, to elicit support for himself and social pressure against her, and to achieve harmlessly the reduction of his hostile feelings. All this he accomplishes without risking the sort of direct and angry confrontation which might have a permanently damaging effect on their relationship. The wife's younger sisters cannot take offense at this joking, and they can be relied upon to relay the husband's complaints to their sister—if, indeed, she does not herself overhear the joking exchange. Furthermore, since a wife's younger sisters are usually aware of the sources of her grievance with her husband, they can use the same means to communicate to him the reason for her resentment and consequent failure to perform her domestic tasks to his satisfaction.

Similarly, when a man's younger brothers come into the presence of his wife, she is expected to insult them in the same way—to deride with humor their appearance, their lack of energy, their skill at their work, or their intelligence. The expectation and acceptance of such joking provides her with an indirect means of criticizing her husband as well. By saving her grievances until she is in the company of her husband's younger siblings, she may, within the context of joking, pour out her resentment at the way she is treated, revealing succinctly the causes of her dissatisfaction. His brothers can be relied upon to relay to her husband what she has said, if he has not himself overheard the exchange. If he recognizes as valid the criticism implied by her joking remarks, he may correct those aspects of his behavior which are frustrating or unsatisfactory to her. Indeed, if the criticisms are justified, his kinsmen are likely to exert pressure on him to do so. The joking provides the woman with a means of channeling in a culturally acceptable manner the aggressive feelings generated by her frustrations. And her husband's younger brothers, by retorting with hostile banter of the same sort, can convey to her the dissatisfaction of both her husband and their other kinsmen with her comportment, thus providing her, too, with a chance to mend her ways.

By these means both marriage partners have an equal opportunity to evaluate the content of the other's criticism and, if necessary, to alter their behavior accordingly. Since this is achieved through joking, the result of such an exchange is the maintenance of communication, the exercise of a measure of social control, and the mutual reduction of frustration without the face-to-face conflict that might result in permanent damage to both the marriage relation-

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ship itself and the contract of interlineage co-operation and solidarity which every marriage serves to establish or reinforce.[4]

Although this joking interchange is seen in its full implications when there is an immediate source of dissension between marriage partners, it may also occur in the absence of any specific difficulty. Then it is apparently indulged in simply because it is expected, and for the pleasure which the Mossi, like all people, derive from an occasion to exercise their wit. It is this relatively disinterested joking which has been most frequently described in the literature, and this may account for the failure of many scholars to perceive more fully the important social and psychological functions which joking may fulfill.

Conclusion

This paper has been written as a tentative step toward a reformulation of the various and disparate observations on joking contained in the anthropological literature. I have contended that an analysis of this literature indicates that wherever joking is institutionalized the structural relationship between the participants tends to be characterized by five significantly interrelated structural attributes: separation, reciprocity, ambivalence, equality, and independence. I have also indicated that such joking may serve as an adjustive mechanism by providing for the concurrent maintenance of communication, control, and the culturally harmless catharsis of potentially disruptive emotions.

A variety of forms of institutionalized joking found among the Mossi of Yatenga have been cited to illustrate these points. However, I suggest that the factors which cluster with this reliance on joking as an adjustive mechanism are not unique to the Mossi. Institutionalized joking reported for other parts of Africa appears to be structurally and processually similar.

NOTES

1. A shorter version of this paper was read at the annual meeting of the American Anthropological Association held in San Francisco in November, 1963. It is based on field research conducted among the Mossi from 1954 to 1956 with the assistance of a Ford Foundation Fellowship.

2. Marriage between the members of descent groups united by a joking alliance is regarded by the Mossi as highly desirable, apparently in recognition of the useful role of joking as an adjustive mechanism. Once such a marriage is contracted, however, Ego and his wife must take care that their joking insults are directed only at the younger kinsmen of the other and that the insulting remarks are personal. It would, for example, be acceptable for Ego to call his wife's younger sister a disreputable shrew but dangerous to call her a slave (a term of disrespect used frequently in joking between sibs). To refer to her as a slave would cast unflattering aspersions on her entire kin group, including her mother and father, with whom, in their new status as parents-in-law, Ego may no longer joke.

3. I believe that joking is also institutionalized between the Mossi and the Yarse, a highly acculturated ethnic minority of Mande origin who live throughout Yatenga. There is also joking between the Mossi and the indigenous blacksmith caste. Unfortunately my data on these two instances of joking are inadequate.

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4. The importance of sibling-in-law joking as a means of regulating conflict in the Mossi marriage relationship is further substantiated by the results of comparative research conducted among the Mossi resettled at the Office du Niger in the neighboring Republic of Mali.

The Mossi, who were first forcibly and later voluntarily resettled in Mali, were allocated farm land as elementary family units without regard for their extended kinship affiliations. Thus a man often found himself living in unaccustomed "isolation," in the company only of his wife or wives and children, and otherwise surrounded by total strangers. Although the potential for conflict in the marriage relationship remained high, or was even augmented by the stresses of adjusting to a changed milieu, sibling-in-law joking, the institution through which such tension is traditionally regulated among the Mossi, was no longer operative. Unless the younger siblings of each spouse had accompanied them to the resettlement area, those individuals were absent to whom they might have communicated their grievances and expressed their aggressive sentiments in a socially harmless, psychologically satisfactory, and culturally acceptable way.

As the traditionally sanctioned means of dealing with tension resulting from marital conflict was no longer available to the Mossi resettled in Mali, there occurred an increase in the incidence both of violence in marital disputes and of separation and divorce.

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181 who speak little; there are the choleric people, more liable than others
157 to anger, more spiteful, but also endowed with more energy.

Energy is not the chief quality of these people, who are trained by
181 their leaders to blind and faithful obedience. The tight organization
156 we have described has its unhappy consequences, atrophy of the will and destruction of the spirit of initiative. Such is the price. A Mossi cannot resist those who are more powerful. Flexible and almost cowardly before his superiors, he makes up for it with his inferiors and shows great arrogance and disdain toward those who are weaker.

181 /110/ The Mossi do not exercise their will, and they do not exer-
153 cise their thinking faculty. This is not because they lack intelligence, but because they are not accustomed to thought except when their interests are at stake, at which time some of them demonstrate true intelligence and diplomacy.

The Mossi do not question the why of things. While small children in our country like to argue and often perplex us with their questions, the Mossi never ask themselves, "How can this be? Why is it so and not otherwise?" The first answer that comes to mind satisfies them.

This lack of thought is the cause of their lagging civilization, for is it not true that we move forward unceasingly only because we seek to investigate the cause of everything? It also results in a paucity of ideas. Conversations turn mainly upon women, food, and agriculture during the rainy season. Their sphere of ideas is quite restricted, but it is capable of expansion, for the Mossi may be considered quite intelligent.

539 If proverbs express the wisdom of a people, the Mossi certainly do not lack wisdom and often couch it with great subtlety. Permit us to prove this by quoting a few proverbs, culled in the course of conversations by Fr. Thueux, who kindly conveyed them to us and who gathered explanations, since some of them are real enigmas to our European minds.

1. Kota ningri, ka kot' sen kong'ye.
   Give above you, not below.
   (If you give to someone who is more powerful, you will always get something out of it.)
2. Maokasankaré ñarda kon lo'é naobi taoré.
   No matter how much it may hurry, the heel never catches up with the toes.
   (Who is the hen to sing before the rooster?)

M
566 may leave his master whenever he pleases, either to devote himself
M to trade or to enter the service of another man; but often he gets all
F his work from his master.

563 The Peul shepherds never were slaves of the Mossi, because they
M only knew how to watch the herds and were incapable of working the
F land. They were, nevertheless, held in severe vassalage by the Mossi,
[188] especially by the nabas, and served as victims in certain sacrifices.
Some Mossi sold by the Yarsé or by other Mossi have occasionally been
their slaves, especially in the Dori region called Gyémaré by the
natives.

/15/ Chapter 2. Administration

M
157 The power of the chiefs and the submission of their subjects are
characteristic traits of Mossi country. The spirit of submission
permeates the whole Mossi mentality. The Mossi are not particularly
secretive or incommunicative, as the Bambara are said to be. On
the contrary, they talk quite freely to their friends, even of their
personal affairs; this does not mean that they are unable to keep a
secret, especially if it is the king's secret. Two individuals have to
be equals if there is to be some freedom between them; this freedom
may develop into a certain closeness, but never into friendship in the
highest sense of the term. If the Mossi appears secretive, it is because
he is afraid to offend someone more powerful than himself. He al-
ways yields before a chief, before someone who "has the strength,"
as he puts it, while inwardly he may retain his own opinion and act
as he pleases. When a chief talks, he hears nothing but these words
M in reply: bé néré, naba — "That's it, that's right. I agree with you."
576 The Mossi salute, formerly used in all the Black empires of the
Sudan, especially in the courts of Ghana, Mali, and Gao, provides
good evidence of this mentality. When we first enter the country as
foreigners, we are shocked to see a man thus lower himself before
another man. In order to salute, the Mossi puts down his load, hat,
and sword, removes his shoes, sits on the ground, folds his legs slightly,
and leans the upper part of his body forward. The elbows rest against
the ground, as far apart as possible; the forearms, folded in front of

77/ It would seem that living as they do in the midst of spirits who
157 permeate the air, the earth, the fire, the houses, the fields, and everything else, and who are not always in an accommodating mood, the Mossi would live in a perpetual state of terror since they have everything to fear from the poisoners during the day, the seuya during the night, but this is not the case. The Mossi are a light-hearted people; they like to laugh, and they do not look a bit worried. Once, as I pointed this out to an old man, he replied: "Everyone does not have enemies. And then, why worry about the inevitable?" In fact, those dreadful sorcerers are only to be feared by those who know that they have an enemy and that he can resort to the power of the sorcerers. The spirits are pacified with sacrifices, and if a soul is seized at night by a seuya, the only thing to do is to try one's best to release it.

Furthermore, like so many others, the Mossi easily forget all these beliefs in the course of everyday life and act as if they were masters of their own actions and confident of achieving their goals. Laughingly and playfully they toss sticks and stones at the wind eddies that whirl by, stirring up the dust and dry leaves. And yet, how many spirits and sorcerers may they conceal, each more dreadful than the next! The most ardent believers consult sorcerers and offer sacrifices before every undertaking; the others only bother with sacrifices on the Day of the Dead and when misfortune strikes. Is it not suffering that recalls us to the religious life, because it reminds us of our dependence on a power greater than ours? Here as elsewhere, there are ardent and lukewarm believers; no one seems to be indifferent, and atheism is unknown. They are not yet sufficiently civilized for such ideas!

000 Their conversion to Catholicism seems to be only a matter of time. Messis quidem multa, operarii autem pauci. /The harvest is great, but the workers are few./ May the Master of the Harvest dispatch many workers to this land and hasten the day when the whole of this people will enter the divine fold!

/108/ CONCLUSION

181 By way of conclusion, we shall now attempt to draw in rough outline the mental characteristics of the Mossi as we see them.

181 /109/ The Mossi have passions, and they are the same as ours:
152 ambition, jealousy, gluttony, sloth, lust, and sometimes even avarice, though more rarely. All of these reign among them. Because they cannot control their emotions, cannot resist their evil inclinations, these passions become tyrannical as they grow older. The children are usually quite malleable. The spirit of obedience and complete submission to their parents is instilled into them from such an early age that when taken sufficiently young their character can be trained and they become capable of truly virtuous actions which cost them an effort. When left to themselves, however, they listen only to their own desires and seek out whatever can bring them some satisfaction. This is rather similar to the morality of a slave who fears only the whip.

The Mossi are vain and easily offended by a word they have misunderstood, even when spoken in jest. The practice of humility is far from being one of their habitual pursuits. The Mossi are quarrelsome and testy, especially when they have drunk a little more millet beer than they should have. There are no festivities and few markets of any importance where a quarrel does not arise among some natives, often for no better reason than because someone is jostled in the crowd. The brawl begins with insults, proceeds with clubs, and ends up with knives. No one gives way. A Mossi who gave way in a quarrel would feel dishonored. The man who gives in proves that he is the weakest, and at the first opportunity someone who witnessed the incident will insult him in turn. Why not, since he does not defend himself? This is why a Mossi who has been abused will give in only at the final extremity, especially if his father and mother were insulted, and all cursing soon gets to this point. When drawn apart, the opponents keep up their invectives at a distance. An angry Mossi loses all control. A quarrel often has its aftermath. The Mossi are spiteful, and, especially if they were placed in the weaker position, they will seek revenge in one way or another, so it cannot be said that they got the worst of it.

181 Not only do the Mossi have passions like ours, but like us they also
157 have their temperaments. There are the lymphatic ones, languid and incapable of any effort; there are the nervous people who are always in motion, sensitive to a fault, who weep at the slightest remark; there are the taciturn ones who almost never laugh, who think that no one loves them and that everyone wants to hurt them, who like solitude and

181 who speak little; there are the choleric people, more liable than others
157 to anger, more spiteful, but also endowed with more energy.

Energy is not the chief quality of these people, who are trained by
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5: Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1959
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debt-free cultivation entitle the settler to permanent residence on the land he has been loaned. 177 241

Adaptation to the conditions of the new geographical setting in which the Mossi find themselves has been relatively rapid and easy. The Yatenga and the Niger project lie within the same climatic zone; the only important ecological difference between the two areas is the increased water supply resulting from irrigation. This change in the origin of the water supply, control of which provides a basic sanction of Mossi religion, was less disturbing to traditional belief than might have been anticipated.

Rather than diminishing their belief in their own religion, it only convinces the Mossi colonists that the forces of the natural order are different in their new habitat and accordingly must be controlled in a different way. Finding the indigenous inhabitants of the French Sudan, the Bambara, to be zealous Moslems, the Mossi settlers have accepted Islam as the religion of their new country. Confident that their religious obligations in the Yatenga will be taken care of by the elders who have remained behind, and with some pressure from those who have already become Moslemized, new arrivals rapidly embrace Islam as the system by which the supernatural forces governing their new environment can be manipulated. 797 177

Their acceptance of Islam has been as superficial as it has been rapid. There is time neither for the study of Moslem theology nor for the soul-searching which must precede the rejection of previously held religious beliefs. With a tradition which emphasizes the observance of religious form rather than intense emotional participation in ceremonial, their observance of the five daily prayers, taking of a Moslem name, deference to the marabout, and casual attention to certain dietary prohibitions should be viewed as their rational reaction to the fact of being in a strange land with an obviously different supernatural order which must be dealt with in a new way. Desire for a measure of control over this new supernatural order, pressure for conformity to the religious norms of their new social setting, and—perhaps most significantly—the permissiveness which characterizes the West African's acceptance of the existence of new supernatural forces, makes Islamization possible without the rejection of previously held religious ideas or practices. [157]

In contrast to the relative ease of their adaptation to the natural and supernatural aspects of their new environment, their adjustment to the social situations which result from the change in economic organization has been most difficult. They must, of course, learn a new technology: the cultivation of rice and cotton by modern methods. Since the machines used for clearing the land and for the harvest are operated by 177 241

10:Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1964 FA28 Mossi FA28
Yatenga

tradition of hostility. Such groups obviously have both equal and mutually independent status.

The Processes of Mossi Joking

I have already suggested that the significance of joking as an adjustive mechanism is derived from the manner in which it provides concurrently for the operation of three interrelated but analytically separable processes. These are *communication, control,* and *catharsis.*

As a means of communication, joking provides a permissive and flexible context in which a grievance can be expressed, thus allowing for its rectification and the restoration of amity. As a means of control, the public nature of most joking serves to shame the object of the jocular offensive, to invoke social pressure for his conformity, and to elicit support for the complainant. As a means of catharsis, the joking expression of aggressive feelings reduces frustration and thus serves indirectly to perpetuate the amicable aspect of the relationship in which it occurs.

Joking also gives pleasure. The feeling of triumphant release that follows the successful—and safe—expression of hostile sentiments probably functions to reinforce reliance on joking as an adjustive mechanism. And the intrinsic pleasure of wit may also explain the persistence of joking behavior in the absence of an immediate "structural need" for it.

A more detailed description of one of the relationships already mentioned—sibling-in-law joking—will serve to illustrate these several points. Because of its relation to the pivotal institution of marriage, sibling-in-law joking is perhaps the most frequently used adjustive mechanism in Mossi social structure. The potential for marital conflict is high. This appears to be due to the combined factors of a sexually differentiated enculturative experience that results in marked dissimilarities in adult male and female personality; to an age difference between husbands and wives of at least ten years; to the classic stresses of polygyny; to the subordinate status of Mossi women, particularly of junior wives within their husband's patriclan; and to the possible dissatisfaction of a woman's parents, particularly her mother, at the loss of their daughter's services or at the inadequacy of bride-wealth payments.

Whatever its origins in a specific instance, it is important that this potential for conflict be controlled, for each marriage extends the network of affinal and cognatic ties that link the patrilineage to the larger community. Given a persistent potential for strife, the preservation of marital stability requires the provision of a means for minimizing its deleterious effects. When conflict occurs, the resultant frustration must be reduced, and accord must be reestablished in a manner that does no serious damage either to the marriage itself or to the larger context of social relations in which it is embedded. Sibling-in-law joking helps to accomplish this.

If, for example, a Mossi is irritated by his wife's performance of some aspect of her duties in the household or the field, he need not address her directly in order to communicate his dissatisfaction and release the tension he feels. To do so in a culture which places a high value on indirection in emo-

173 While these events occurred in the east, a sister of the Moro Naba, assigned to guard the tibo fetishes, quarreled with her brother and fled west to Ouahigouya. This region thus became Mossi territory and took the name of land of Ya. (2)

2. For further details, see Lt. Marc. op. cit. Ch. 7, and especially Delafosse, Haut Sénégal et Niger /Upper Senegal and Niger/, Series I, Vol. 2, p. 305 ff.

131 The region thus conquered lies within the bend of the Niger, approximately between the 11°30 and 13°30 parallels and from 2° to 5° longitude west of Paris. Its closest neighbors are the Macina and the Habé to the north, the Samo to the northwest, the Gourounsi to the west and southwest, the Nancana /Nankana/ to the south, the Bousansé to the southeast, the Gourmantché to the east, and the Peul of Dori to the northeast. The Mossi population has been estimated at 161 one and a half million, to which must be added the Yarsé, who are Mandé completely assimilated to the Mossi, the pastoral Peul, the Haoussa /Hausa/ who form small colonies near the large commercial centers of the region, and a few lesser groups. We shall deal with these populations only insofar as they have contact with the Mossi, in whose territory they are scattered.

133 Two important rivers cross the country from northwest [Tr., the original reads northeast] to southeast. They are the two Volta rivers, the White and the Red. In addition to these two larger waterways, which nevertheless do not flow throughout the year, there are a large number of watercourses /Tr., the French term, marigot, covers both river branch channels and shallow depressions where water accumulates forming pools/. They become impassable torrents after a storm, /6/ but remain empty during the dry season from November to June. The [312] shallow wells which supply water for the households are usually dug by the women in the beds of these watercourses.

There are no high mountains in Mossi country. When arriving from the north, the traveller crosses the beautiful cliffs of Bandiagara and the mountainous country of the Habe. /Two photographs appear here./ Mossi country begins almost at the foot of the cliffs. The northwestern region is, however, quite broken and includes the Pilimpikou peak; the two Volta rivers, especially the White Volta,

/451/ Book Four

Black Warriors and Conquerors

Chapter I

The Mossi -- Occupations

101 The Mossi are settled between the twelfth and fourteenth de-
131 grees of north latitude, and between the second and fifth degrees of west longitude. To the south, they extend slightly beyond the twelfth degree of latitude. They are indeed to be found in Saraboutenga, Rakaye, Béré, and Tenkodogo, but this does not bring them too far south of the twelfth degree. To the north, on the other hand, they do not quite reach the fourteenth degree.

161 The Mossi form a rather large group which occupies, in the
563 center of the area, the circle /an administrative division/ of Ouagadougou; to the northwest, the circle of Ouahigouya; to the southeast, the residency /administrative center/ of Tenkodogo; and to the east of the latter, the circle of Fada N'Gourma. Of course, the Mossi do not make up the total population of these four districts. In the Ouahigouya circle, there are the Habé /Habe/ and Houmbébé /Humbe/ to the northwest, and the Samoro /Samo/ to the south. In the Ouagadougou circle, which may be regarded as the center of Mossi territory, there are the Kipirsi to the east. In the Tenkodogo residency there are the Boussansé /Busansi/ to the south and in the circle of Fada N'Gourma the Gourmantché or Gourmanké /Gurma/ to the east. The Mossi, however, make up
161 the /452/ greater part of the total population in all four areas. In the circle of Ouagadougou, they number 750,000, in the residency of Tenkodogo, 122,000, in the residency of Leo, 1,000. This adds up to 873,000 for the circle of Ouagadougou as a whole. Assuming that there are 200,000 Mossi in the circles of Ouahigouya and Fada N'Gourma (a very approximate figure), a total of 1,073,000 Mossi is obtained. This makes them by far the most numerous group in all of French West Africa. The whole of our Dahomey, for example,

161 has but 655,000 inhabitants, while our French Guinea has 1,400,000, the Yolof /Wolof/ group of the Senegal numbers only 400,000, etc.

144 At present the Mossi are a completely homogeneous group in terms of custom and language, but this homogeneity is a mere end result. The Mossi population of today derives from the fusion of a conquering group (the Mossi proper) with a conquered group that was probably related closely to the Habé, Kipirsi, Gourounsi /Grunshi/, Boussansé, etc.

173 Lieutenant Marc, who lived for many years among the Mossi and who published a book /Le pays Mossi (Mossi Country)/ on the region in 1909, which I have already mentioned /in section not translated/, has the following to say on the subject:

"Local traditions claim that the Mossi come from far to the east. A long time ago, they occupied a territory located beyond the Niger, whose capital was called Aliaman. It is said that this land is now occupied by a Songhay /Songhai/ population. Then the Mossi came and occupied Dagomba /Tamale/. They defeated the inhabitants of that land, and the chief of the Mossi settled in Gambaga. The daughter of the king of Gambaga, Ouidiraogo ("male horse" in Mossi), had an affair in the bush with a Dagomba elephant hunter called Samba. She became pregnant, and as her father wanted to have her put to death, she took refuge in Tenkodogo. There she married the king of the land, a Boussangcé named Zoungourouma, who waged war on his father-in-law and conquered the entire region from Gambaga to Koupéla. Zoungourouma had three sons, Séré, Oubri, and Kouda. The first became naba of Boussouma. The second, Naba Oubri, conquered the region of Ouagadougou, built his capital there, and seized the Yatenga territory. Naba Oubri is regarded by the /453/ Mossi as the first Moro Naba and the founder of the present dynasty. He was succeeded by his brother Couda, and then by his son Nigamenda. The Mossi trace back to Naba Oubri the present organization of Mossi country and attribute to him the division of the land into fiefs governed by his brothers and relatives. At present members of the royal families of Ouagadougou, Boussouma, Tenkodogo, Fada N'Gourma, and Gambaga are regarded as direct descendants of Naba Oubri and his brothers.

241 2. The sououga, a knife used to cut down the heads of millet.

3. The gouégo, a curved knife, a kind of scythe which is used to cut straw, for example when preparing thatch for hut roofs.

To summarize, cultivation is the most important pursuit among the Mossi. It insures the subsistence of this population which is [161] relatively dense, since there are 25 inhabitants per square kilometer, a very high figure unusual for West Africa. The species of cultivated plants are as numerous as anywhere else, and the agricultural tools tend to be superior. In spite of all this, the Mossi are not very good cultivators, and in this respect I believe that they must be placed beneath the Bobo, Gourounsi, Habé, Bambara, etc. One senses that the Mossi descend at least in part from people who were once familiar with easier and more fruitful ways of procuring food (such as war and attendant loot) or, to put it another way, one senses the meeting of two groups, one of which was truly adept at cultivation while the other was less so. Thus, although the Mossi are cultivators first and foremost and actually subsist on cultivation, the latter is not as basic to them as it is to the Bobo, the Gourounsi, etc. They do practice cultivation, this is even by far their chief subsistence activity, and yet one cannot say that they are, in all respects, good cultivators.

231 Are they at least noteworthy stockbreeders?

To this we may give forthwith a negative answer. The Mossi are very mediocre, not to say worthless breeders. This is not to mean, incidentally, that there is no cattle in Mossi territory. There [563] is a great deal, on the contrary, and this stems from the presence of the Foulbé, who are cattle herders, as much as from the presence of the Yarsé, who /487/ have always owned considerable quantities of cattle, and from the density of the Mossi population. The Mossi themselves, nevertheless, own little cattle. To be more exact, they have a low per capita average of cattle.

We might list over-all or partial figures, but those most recently 231 compiled are vitiated by the fact that Mossi territory lost part of 563 its cattle in recent years due to repeated famines around 1906-1908 and to an overly rigorous tax system that went into effect a little later. We shall, therefore, merely validate our statement that the

161 How many inhabitants did this Mossi empire number, with its careful centralization, its hierarchy of chiefs, and its class of nobles, at the time of the French occupation (1896)?

In 1909 the census yielded 861,700 souls in the circle of Ouagadougou itself and 273,000 in the Tenkodogo residency, or a total of 1,135,000 inhabitants. From this figure, however, we must deduct the independent Boussansé (99,000 in the Tenkodogo residency) and also the people of the Kipirsi (Ouagadougou circle; in theory they are ruled by the Mossi, in fact they are independent; they may be estimated at 40,000). This leaves, for the five subject provinces and the four vassal provinces, about 996,000 inhabitants. It may thus be said that the Moro Naba of Ouagadougou ruled over a population of about a million men.

161 563 Out of this million men, there were roughly /583/ 850,000 Mossi, 40,000 Boussansé, 69,000 Yarsé, 32,000 Foulbé, 5,000 Silmi-Mossi, 1,000 Songhay (in the northern part of the Ouagadougou circle), and 1,000 Haoussa scattered here and there in the same fashion as the Yarsé and Foulbé.

161 We already know that this Ouagadougou empire did not make up the whole Mossi population. There stood alongside it two other kingdoms which must formerly have been subject to Ouagadougou but which had gained their independence long before our occupation. One of them, Yatenga, with Ouahigouya as its capital, was located to the northwest of the Ouagadougou empire. The other one, Gourma, with Fada N'Gourma as its capital, was located to the east. Those two kingdoms may have added up between them to a population of 450,000 in which the Mossi element predominated, with Habé and Samo elements in the Ouahigouya circle, and Gourmanké elements in the circle of Fada N'Gourma.

In short, about a million and a half inhabitants were divided among the Mossi kingdoms in the bend of the Niger, with one million in the most important of those kingdoms, that of Ouagadougou.

161 642 648 The population of the Mossi was, and still is, extraordinarily dense as compared with the over-all population density of West Africa. Among the Mossi, indeed, there are about 25 inhabitants per square kilometer, while in French Guinea, for example, there is an average of 6 inhabitants per square kilometer. This stems

[161] 642 648 from the fact that the Mossi empire was centralized. The internal struggles which often occur among primitive Blacks (Bobo, Gourounsi, Boussansé, Kipirsi, etc.) between villages, quarters, or even soukala, did not exist among the Mossi. Internal peace and security prevailed. In addition, the same centralized power that prevented Negro anarchy also prevented the territory from being devastated by chance conquerors, founders of empires. Thus, while the Djermabé Songhay devastated Gourounsi territory, a land of independent villages or small cantons, and cast it into a kingdom by force of arms, they did not dare attack their Mossi neighbors for fear of the Moro Naba's ten thousand horsemen. /583/ Thus, both internal and external peace were insured thanks to a centralized power. Hence, the impression made by the territory on various travelers between the time of Barth's trip (he did not see Mossi itself, but followed its northern border) and the French occupation. "Mossi territory is regarded as being untouchable," says Marc (op. cit., p. 28). "No doubt, at that time (the time of Barth's trip), as Crozat verified forty years later, one was struck on entering Mossi territory by the complete safety in which the people lived, while everywhere else war and the hunt for slaves devastated the villages. And one mentioned enviously the Mossi peasants who walked singly to their fields, hoe on shoulder, while everywhere else the head of the family had to keep his weapons at hand night and day."

Marc attributes this safety to the Mossi fear of fetishes. He thus looks far afield for an obvious explanation. The Gourounsi, too, had fetishes, and yet the Djermabé did not spare them and treated them more or less as cranes would treat frogs. The Mossi were spared because they lived in a centralized and thus powerful empire, in spite of Marc's assertion that this power was nil since it could not resist Lt. Voulet's handful of riflemen. Indeed, it was nil against power displayed in European fashion, just as Achanti /Ashanti/ power was nil against British strength, and Toucouleur power could not prevail against the forces of Col. Archinard. This Mossi power was nevertheless considerable within its own sphere, that is to say, in West Africa and against other Blacks. It sufficed to give the Mossi an advantage over the Kipirsi, Gourounsi, Boussansé, etc. It sufficed to prevent Toucouleur or Djermabé attack.

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28

121 functioning of early Sudanese societies. It will also attempt to demonstrate
[174] how European conquest affected the political organization of the Mossi and contributed to its ultimate decline.

The kingdom of Ouagadougou was selected as the main object of study, primarily because it emerged as the most important Mossi polity and retained this position through the greater part of Mossi history. Attention will be given to the other Mossi polities and the three other Mossi kingdoms—Yatenga, Tenkodogo, and the more remote Fada-N'Gourma, all of which resemble Ouagadougou—only insofar as they affect the history of Ouagadougou or highlight the basic nature of Mossi government.

101 The Mossi are a Sudanese Negroid population in the new Republic of
161 the Upper Volta.[2] They number about 2,200,000, or approximately half of the country's total population. Their ancestral territory, which they call
131 *Mogho* (land of the Mossi), covers some 30,000 square miles in the southern
133 part of the Republic. It is a huge plateau, lying from 1,000 to 1,600 feet above sea level, and broken by three low mountain ranges and numerous small hills. The Kipirsi range in the northeast has an average height of about 2,000 feet and includes the sacred mountain of the Mossi, known as Plimpikou. The Boussouma range to the east reaches a height of some 1,500 feet, and the Naouri range in the southeast is almost as high.

132 The climate of Mossi country is typical of the Sudanic zone. There are two main seasons, one cold and dry, the other hot and wet. The first begins in November with the coming of the harmattan and ends in January, the coolest month, when the average temperature is about 70° F. and the humidity about 12 per cent. The hot season extends from March to October. In July, the warmest month, the temperature reaches a high of 88° F. and the humidity 78 per cent. Violent dust storms herald the rains, which begin late in May and end in September. The rain falls almost entirely in heavy showers and thunderstorms, and the average annual fall is between 30 and 40 inches. In those years when the rainfall is about 40 inches and is regularly spaced, the Mossi can look forward to a good harvest. When the rainfall is below 30 inches and is spaced irregularly during the planting season, the threat of famine is serious. So narrow is the margin of rainfall for agriculture that in 1956 the people of one Mossi district anxiously awaited "two rains" (two showers), without which they feared that in 1957 there would be a difficult "hungry period" (the time between the exhaustion of one year's crops and the maturing of the next).

133 Mossi country is drained by only three rivers: the Black Volta with its two chief tributaries, the Sourou and the Debere, and the Red and White Voltas with their numerous small tributaries. Only the Black Volta flows

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28

613 appealed to the district chief, and occasionally the woman was sent back.
565 A nobleman set on having a certain girl as a wife usually had small brace-
583 lets like those worn by all noble wives placed on her ankles. Once this was done, the chief could not be compelled to send her back to her parents, and any man who tried to retrieve her was guilty of interfering with a nobleman's wife and could be killed for it. In fact, only the male relatives of noblemen's wives could converse with them without running the risk of being apprehended and executed.

634 The district was the most important unit in the Mossi principalities and kingdoms. It was on this level that the Mossi nobility came into direct contact with the various social and ethnic groups of the society. Here, kinship and affinal ties linked the conquerors and the conquered, the ancient and recent nobility, the refugees from conflicts over the nam and the resident aliens, in a network of social, ritual, economic, and political relationships. It was also on this level that myths and traditions legitimized most effectively the Mossi socio-economic and political system as well as the relationships between the various social and ethnic groups.

634 The number and size of the Mossi districts varied greatly from one
● 161 principality or kingdom to another. Some districts were large and wealthy, with a number of large villages; smaller districts had a larger proportion of small villages and hamlets. The average number of these small units was probably between fifty and sixty-five per district. The population of the districts ranged from 10,000 to 35,000 persons. Some *tense* (villages) had as many as 5,000 inhabitants and some as few as 50. The average village had about 500 inhabitants. But regardless of size, all Mossi districts and component villages had basically the same structure and fulfilled the same functions. The structure of Nobere district is representative. Nobere
[131] covered approximately 200 square miles. It was bounded on the east by a district called Manga, on the north by the districts of Toece and Djiba, and on the west and south by the Red Volta River. A census taken in 1905, just nine years after the European conquest, showed the Nobere population to be about 13,200.[10] In 1955 approximately 10,000 persons inhabited 24 villages and hamlets scattered through the more inhabitable part of the district.

634 The number of villages and hamlets in Nobere district apparently fluc-
621 tuated. Villages were occasionally abandoned, while small hamlets grew
[361] into prominent settlements. The people of Nobere always tried to establish their villages as close to the Red Volta as possible in order to utilize the more fertile lands. But they were repeatedly driven back by disease and

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642 66

631 ture, offers what is probably the best analysis of power relations among the
628 important Mossi chiefs. In commenting upon the Mogho Naba's inability
174 to stop the war between Yako and Yatenga he asks, "How could it be
114 otherwise? With what sanctions could this king without an army back up his orders if he ventured to give any? . . . In short, when the Ouagadougou ruler speaks, he is sometimes obeyed. If he is, all is well; if he is not, all is still well. Everything remains as before."[18] Crozat was mistaken if he believed that the Mogho Naba did not have a fighting force. What he did not have was a standing army to exercise his power whenever he wished. When he was able to summon an army, he was effective; when he was not, he had little power over any territory but his own. Crozat, like Binger, gives a strange picture of the political relationship between the Mogho Naba and the other rulers. He tells us that in the Mossi political hierarchy, "after the ruler of Ouagadougou comes the ruler of Boussouma, then the Yatenga ruler, and then the ruler of Yako."[19] Yatenga was traditionally independent of Ouagadougou, whereas Boussouma and Yako were simply autonomous principalities dependent on the Mogho Naba. It is possible that Crozat mistook the relative power of these various political entities for a hierarchical relationship. It is also possible that at the time of his visit, the Dimdamba felt sufficiently powerful to ignore the traditional hierarchy as far as their political relationship with other rulers was concerned, and were simply acknowledging relative gradations of power.

643 Clearly, the sovereignty of the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou over the
642 independent kingdoms and autonomous principalities depended chiefly on
628 military might. The stronger a Mogho Naba was, the more actively he tried to control the internal administration of the autonomous principalities and to exercise police powers over them or on their behalf. However, most Mogho Nanamse were content to claim superiority or control over the independent kingdoms and refrained from meddling in their affairs.

643 Within the Mogho Naba's own kingdom, however, the situation was
635 different. Here, like other important Mossi rulers, he directed the admin-
634 istrative apparatus. For administrative purposes, the kingdom of Ouaga-
[642] dougou was divided into five large provinces (*weto*; sing. *weogho*; or
[161] *solem*, from *so*, "command"). Together they included some three hundred districts, in which there were over four thousand villages inhabited by some 862,000 persons.[20] (Not included here were districts and villages directly administered by the Mogho Naba.) The provinces were not compact physical entities, because their component units were scattered throughout the country. To be sure, some of the districts within a province were close together or even contiguous, but many others stood alongside districts be-

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28
[Pre-World War II Period]

relationship between the people and their chiefs. One of the principal contributing factors was the demand of the French administration that Mossi country not only share in the over-all development of French West Africa, but pay for its own administration as well. The resources of Mossi country were largely limited to agricultural production and stock raising, however, and revenue from these activities was slight. The full weight of administrative expenses thus fell on the Mossi people. Apparently, the first taxation was of a collective nature, for according to the official government report for June 1899, "No regular tax has been levied, but taxes have been collected from the Mogho Naba and the other chiefs."[9]

Decrees of July and November, 1903, authorized "native chiefs to collect taxes, and granted them a commission on the tax yield to arouse their interest in the regular payment of taxes."[10] Accustomed as they were to giving taxes (gifts) to their rulers with the knowledge that subordinate chiefs would extract a share before sending the remainder up the hierarchy, the Mossi were not averse to paying taxes through their traditional rulers to the "new chiefs," the French administration. However, when taxes grew to excessive proportions and chiefs continued to get a percentage, the people accused their rulers of cheating them. The reasons for the Mossi complaints about taxation are described by Tauxier, himself an administrator:

> This tax, light at first, has grown rapidly over the last few years. In 1906 it was 311,000 francs for the territory of Ouagadougou, which had a population of 861,000 inhabitants. In 1907, the tax was raised to 360,000 francs; in 1909, to 555,000 francs; and in 1910, to 656,000 francs. Furthermore, from 1908 onward this tax was exacted with such rigor and on such short notice that it was exactly as though the amount had been tripled. Under the circumstances, the Mossi were compelled to resort to trade in order to obtain the French money they did not have, since the local currency is the cowry and the French administration does not wish to receive it. . . . To meet this difficult situation the Mossi now organize small caravans in the villages, and send the young men to Wanke to sell cattle, sheep, goats, asses, horses, and bolts of cotton. They bring back with them either French money or kola nuts.[11]

Many Mossi had a great deal of difficulty in securing French currency. Mangin, a White Father who arrived in Mossi country in 1904, writes:

> The Europeans who live among the Mossi, including all the riflemen and cercle guards, do not put into circulation a quarter of the five-franc pieces that are required each year from the natives. At first the Mossi were taken by surprise and had to give 10,000 or even 15,000 cowries to obtain this famous coin, this charm which was to free them from all difficulties with the white man. At the official rate of exchange this coin is worth 5,000 cowries.[12]

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
FA28 Mossi FA28

[p.237]

CHAPTER 9

Trade and Markets Among the Mossi People

BY ELLIOTT P. SKINNER

The Mossi represent the dominant population of the Voltaic Re- 105
public, numbering about 1,600,000 out of some 3,200,000 inhabitants. 161
They represent the unique example of a group which has preserved its
ethnic identity and political autonomy through all the vicissitudes
of Sudanic history until it was conquered by the French in 1896. Tra-
dition records that the people who became the Mossi left the Dagomba
region in present-day Ghana during the eleventh century and moved
into the bend of the Niger River, carving out three large kingdoms
and smaller principalities in the process. At the head of these still
extant kingdoms are rulers *(Moro Nabas)* who formerly held feudal-
like control over the provinces, districts and villages which comprise
their domains. The villages, with their patri-locai, polygynous, ex-
tended family households, formed the basic Mossi settlement pattern.
A complex hierarchical administrative apparatus carried the power
of the Mossi rulers into the smallest villages, and funneled taxes and
tribute back to them. This structure still exists, but of course it has
been modified by the French.

The Mossi were and are still divided into stratified royal, noble
and commoner patrilineages. Characteristic of this lineage system is
a process by which royal sub-lineages descend serially until they
merge with the mass of commoner lineages. Below the lineages there
once were large non-Mossi groups of serfs and slaves, but these people
have now been grouped into lineages and have become Mossicized.

The topography of Mossi country is typical of the Sudanic grass- 133
lands. It is an immense plain, some 1,500 feet above sea level and
broken only by three low mountain ranges and numerous small hills.
The annual total rainfall is between 30 and 40 inches, and falls 132
almost entirely as heavy showers or thundershowers during the period
from June to September. So narrow is the margin of rainfall for
successful crop cultivation that any variation in the cycle results in
low crop yields and a difficult "hungry period" the following year
before the new crops are harvested. The Mossi do not practice irri- 133
gation, and would have trouble doing so because the three Volta
Rivers which drain their territory serve as drainage chiefly during
the rainy season. Only the Black Volta has water all yehr round; the

567 Dagomba conquest. Both family type and slave status, indeed, re-
326 fer back to the Bobo, Gourounsi, etc.

000 We come now to public powers. We refer the reader to Appendix 32 /not translated/ for a study of property regulations and neighborhood relations, and plunge forthwith into the study of public powers.

631 We already know that the Mossi political organization is centralized. The villages belong to cantons, which are in turn gathered into provinces under direct administration or into mere vassal provinces. At the summit of the hierarchy stands the king, the Moro Naba, the supreme chief of the Mossi, who lives at Ouagadougou. To give an idea of the former importance, or at least relative importance, of this empire, we shall state that in the Ouagadougou
[162] circle alone there were eight provinces including among them 300 cantons, 5,000 villages or small towns, and 861,700 inhabitants.

643 Let us begin our description of this political organism with the head, that is, with the Moro Naba.

Moro Naba means "chief of the Mossi," from naba, "chief" and Moro or Mora which means Mossi in the singular. Moro yields Mossi or Mossé in the plural. (The French have grown accustomed to saying "one Mossi, several Mossi," but this is a barbarism and one should /568/ actually say, "one Moro, several Mossi," just as one says, "one Gourounga, several Gourounsi," "one Kipirga, several Kipirsi," etc.). As for the word for "chief," it is both naba and soba in Mossi. Naba seems to be the word brought by the con-
[192] quering Mossi-Dagomba group, while soba is probably the word that was used by the autochtonous population to designate chiefs.

645 Prior to the French conquest, the Moro Naba was surrounded by a certain number of ministers or eminent dignitaries who were given 1) specific duties /at court/, 2) in addition, part of the territory to govern. This is what accounted for provinces over and above the cantons, at least in those areas that were administered directly, but the heads of those provinces did not reside there. They lived at Ouagadougou, and were first and foremost ministers of the Moro Naba.

They were:

596 even the compound. As a rule, the work group is not composed of a single household but of two or more. We are dealing here, therefore, with a highly disintegrated communal family. Let us state immediately that the family among the Foulsé /Fulse/ and Yarsé /Yarse/, which we shall describe later /not translated/, is less disintegrated than the Mossi family, while the Samo family is even less so than the Foulsé and Yarsé families.

[611] As far as matriarchy and patriarchy are concerned, the Mossi family of Yatenga is patriarchal, that is to say, the family revolves around the man rather than the woman. This is a clearly documented fact. There are, however, some indications, as we shall see, that permit us to inquire whether once upon a time, very long ago, the Mossi family was not matriarchal. In our Noir du Soudan /The Black Population of the Sudan/ we pointed out various indications of the same sort about the Gourounsi /Grunshi/.

In sum, the Mossi family of Yatenga is (1) communal and quite disintegrated and (2) patriarchal.

592 596 162 Examples. —Let us first list some statistical figures. Here is a table summarizing some important censuses taken among the Mossi of Yatenga.

Localities	Families	Compounds	Number of Persons
Diogoré and Lako (small cantons)	25	78	3, 165
Small canton of Tangay	11	51	1, 241
Village of Dio	7	50	842
Totals	43	179	5, 248

This set of figures yields an average of 122 persons per family, four compounds or iri or zaka per family, and 29 persons per compound.

Now for some details.

In the village of Tangay (canton of Tangay) there are 11 Mossi families. Here are the figures for the persons who compose them and the compounds where they live.

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Families	Compounds	Number of Persons
1st family	1	51
2nd family	6	132
3rd family	2	23
4th family	6	160
5th family	3	59
6th family	5	50
/225/ 7th family	9	136
8th family	3	79
9th family	8	242
10th family	4	158
11th family	4	151
	51	1, 241

592 This gives us an average of 113 persons per family, 5 compounds
596 per family, and 24 persons per compound.
162 Now, here are the villages in the little canton of Lako or Lago.
621

Villages	Families	Compounds	Number of Persons
Bô	2	3	89
Boulounsi	1	3	137
Ninga	2	12	146
Piga-Sorodé	1	2	35
Réga	4	17	484
Viré-Sorodé	3	4	242
Diogoré	1	8	352
Lako	7	25	1, 457
Touba	3	3	216
Nango-Yarsé (Mossi of the village)	1	1	7
Totals	25	78	3, 165

592 This gives us an average of 126 or 127 persons per family, 3 com-
596 pounds per family, and 40 or 41 people per compound.
162 Now, here are some other statistics.
621

Villages	Families	Compounds	Households	Number of Persons
Lougouri	2	4	48	157
Oula	2	5	43	149
Réka	1	2	3	46
Noungou	2	14	46	233
Zíré	1	3	36	197
Kindiba	7	35	149	736
Diessiré	5	15	49	286
Bissigaï	4	17	100	510
Bougounam	8	32	151	999
Totals	32	127	625	3, 313

/226/ On an average, this gives us 103 or 104 persons per family, 26 persons per compound, 5 persons per household, 4 compounds or soukala per family.

Here are some statistics collected in the canton of Koussouka and covering those villages which are entirely Mossi as well as those which are predominantly Mossi.

Villages	Families	Compounds	Households	Population
Rondo	7	72	148	975
Bouga-Mossi	1	11	23	152
Sékéba	1	9	28	183
Zandoma	3	24	62	344
Tangué	7	26	67	439
Konga-Mossi	3	23	72	483
Iroum	2	63	159	880
Totals	24	228	559	3, 456

592 Here we get an average of 144 persons per family, 15 persons per
596 compound, and 6 persons per household. This gives 2 or 3 households
162 per compound and 9 to 10 compounds per family.
261 Finally, here are some figures obtained among the Mossi in the northern part of the /Ouahigouya/ circle /a circle is an administrative district/.

Villages	Compounds	Persons	Average per Compound	Observations
Boulzoma	1	39 (1)	39	(1) 7 households
Aoréma	50	672	13	
Bogoya	29	379 (2)	13	(2) 64 households
Yabonsoro	37	494 (3)	13	(3) 74 households
Bagayaloro	14	290	21	
Barélogo	17	317	19	
Lilligondé	12	177	15	
Rikou	33	486	15	
Dinghiri	59	725	12	
Dinghila	44	362	8	
Irigué	17	94	6	
Bahn (Mossi)	3	54	18	
Pogoro	38	334	8	
Ninighé	7	75	11	
Séghé	8	111	14	
Tibo	19	228	12	
Totals	388	4,837	12 to 13	

Here we have only 12 or 13 persons per compound (and 6 per household). This shows an evolution of the Mossi family of Yatenga toward /227/ a more disintegrated form, which we shall discuss later when we mention the exceptions.

If we summarize the preceding statistics, we obtain the following table.

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Locations	Families	Compounds	Persons
Diogoré, etc.	43	179	5, 248
Oula, etc.	32	127	3, 313
Koussouka	24	228	3, 456
Northern part	?	369	4, 609
	?	903	16, 626

This gives us on an average 18 to 19 persons per compound and 121 persons per family (1).

1. This figure of 18 to 19 persons is an average one. Actually, there are some Mossi compounds which contain only 3 persons and others which boast as many as 100. To give a better idea of the matter, I shall provide below a numerical breakdown of the village of Diessiré (canton of Léba) where there are 286 persons and 15 compounds, or an average of 19 persons per compound. In reality, no one compound holds exactly 19 people.

Compounds	Households	Persons
First compound	4	24
Second compound	3	18
Third compound	1	6
Fourth compound	2	11
Fifth compound	4	23
Sixth compound	3	17
Seventh compound	1	5
Eighth compound	2	12
Ninth compound	2	12
Tenth compound	1	6
Eleventh compound	2	12
Twelfth compound	14	81
Thirteenth compound	3	18

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Fourteenth compound	6	36
Fifteenth compound	1	5
	49	286

This gives us, therefore:

Compounds with several households (more than two) ..	7
Compounds with several households (two)	4
Compounds with a single household	4
	15

Now that these statistics have been listed, let us examine in detail the groupings larger than the single household, which may be categorized as follows: (1) the total family; (2) the compound; (3) the work group.

596 The total family. —As we stated earlier, the total family /228/ does not occupy one and the same compound. It is divided into a number of zaka or iri of varying size (the average number given by the above statistics is five). One of these compounds is that of the boudoukasaman or head of the family, who governs the whole family and is at the same time the head of his own zaka and head of his work group. As head of the family, he holds definitively only three types of powers: (1) religious powers; (2) judicial powers; (3) the right to give the daughters of the whole family in marriage.

As head of the family, he has no economic powers.

We shall study the religious powers of the boudoukasaman in detail under "Religion (Sacerdotal Organization)" /not translated/. Let us [592] simply state here that although the head of the total family holds the highest religious powers, the zakasoba or heads of compounds are not totally deprived of them, and this contributes to the greater autonomy of these subfamilies.

I am borrowing the following particulars on the family head and the family council which assists him from Vadier's excellent monograph, here and there correcting some inexact details.

"The head of the family, or patriarch, " says Vadier, "is the oldest member of the family. It is he who is the head of it.

"He enjoys great authority over all family members, but exclusively in regard to personal matters. To him alone, after obtaining the consent of the fathers, belongs the right to give the young girls of the

596 182 592 Here the zaka is quite clearly reduced to the single household, which becomes identified at the same time with the compound and with the work group. Let us state, however, that in the whole of Ratenga there are 4, 637 Mossi for 458 compounds, or ten persons per compound. An average of ten people per compound represents slightly more than a single household (which averages six persons in Yatenga), but not as much as two households. This means that the compounds sometimes contain two households, sometimes only one. Thus, since there are only a few people in each zaka, there is but a single work group.

162 592 621 Here is a complete numerical breakdown of the canton of Ratenga.

Villages	Inhabitants	Compounds	Average per Compound
Napalra	254	20	13
Ouembatenga	61	5	12
Alaga	335	22	15
Boulounga	197	23	9
Bani	387	30	13
Singuitenga	248	18	14
Boudé	69	11	6
Foulgo-Koquin	22	5	4
Zomkalga	88	12	7
Momoné	86	10	9
Toïsi	100	13	8
Denian	4	1	4
Pinsi	145	13	11
Dologa	110	15	7
Kiédéwendé	103	10	10
/233/ Koundi-Bittou	63	9	7
Yalka	56	4	14
Koumbango	221	19	12
Kourpellé	167	15	11
Zimtenga	307	39	8
Battenga	94	11	9
Badnoro	83	10	8
Douré	96	6	16
Yalgatenga	45	8	6

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Villages	Inhabitants	Compounds	Average per Compound
Bargo	77	8	10
Lo	127	14	9
Rakoéga-Tenga	33	4	8
Moro-Koquin	37	7	5
Dougouré	41	7	6
Bama	82	7	12
Kora	99	9	11
Tangué	110	14	8
Minima	113	12	9
Kanion	75	10	7
Toukoulounga	124	4	31
Tempelra	35	6	6
Bauda	162	5	32
Kargo-Mossi	181	22	8
	4,637	458	10

The same applies to the Mossi of the canton of Tougo, located south-southeast of Yatenga. Here are the figures concerning the number of compounds and the number of people in the canton.

Villages	Compounds	Persons	Average per Compound
Tibtenga	9	102	11
Béma	96	792	8
Ouembatenga	9	76	8
Rima	63	347	5 to 6
Tougo	69	937	13 to 14
Lébenga	4	40	10
Danaoua	22	229	10
Rasoumdé	27	189	7
Mangoulouma	2	28	14
Rikéba	52	545	10 to 11
Totals	353	3,285	9 to 10

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3: Paques--7A S-4 (no date) 1954 FA8 Bambara FA8
Mossi FA28
Wolof M530

Recapitulatory Table by Circles (General Population), 1950
Established by the Bureau of Political Affairs of the Sudan General Government

* Races et territoires A. O. F. Africains de statut commun et de statut personnel	Bafoulabé	Bamako	Bandiagara	Bougouni	Gao	Goundam	Issa-Ber Niafunké	Kayes	Kita	Koutiala	Mopti	Nioro	San	Ségou	Sikasso	Tombouctou	Total pour le territoire
Bellah						35.026											35.026
Bambara	994	299.074	21.538	110.000			20.765	13.896	3.200	33.536	20.530	20.973	42.424	202.617	9.082	293	798.922
Peul	10.200	8.213	97.001		11.095	12.875	71.258	1.962	200	3.217	33.318	39.831	15.297	77.595		1.822	383.884
Mossi	28	857	4.043		61		135	234		49	27.955		303	4.832		9	38.506
Marka	150	27.746					4.381	29.519	3.000	8.100	26.870	112.776	30.679	21.553	406		265.180
Songhaï		647	9.962		102.712	62.821	1.025			454	6.000		625			26.518	210.764
Malinké	68.753	62.671	2	4.932				11.503	53.530			3.598	52				206.041
Minianka		400	3							125.551	500		29.697	2.843			158.994
Maures		2.958	433		19.266	2.743		3.536		67		9.313				15.502	53.818
Senoufo		300	1	10.000						15				228	117.588		128.132
Touareg		20	19		77.640	17.007	252									58.599	153.537
Samogo		150	4.999												26.218	8	31.375
Foula Bambara		9.600		42.100					21.600	182				2.444	22.673	15	98.614
Bobo		500								11.933	2.570					1	15.004
Bozo		400	22			1.582	4.916				18.000		61.712			83	86.715
Kassonkés	23.800	600						20.297				5.734	474	23.447		9	74.361
Dioula	270	11.050								6.958					29.333		47.611
Toucouleurs		700	1.781					23.574	320		1.500	19.680		84	934		48.573
Kagoro		17.395							5.010			4.492					26.897
Somono	4	5.748						1.762			7.000						14.514
Marka Bambara	13.350	750	8.115	885			4.381							14.787		28	42.296
Diallonke	5.100	100							4.600					5.112		8	14.920
Peuls berberisés													60				60
Ouolofs	76	700	68		3	1	7	1.055	132	4	25	2.139	2	65	23	28	4.328
Ouassoulounké	3.200		2	41.000				8.790				1.675					54.667
Diawara	2.500		274									33.785					36.559
Diawambé	2.520	150							515		3.500	4.143		1.684			12.512
Diakanke																	2.016
Dogon		386	157.966				20.675			30	680		3.779				183.516
Guirganke			42									1.620					1.662
** Divers	726	48.340	2.209	346	11.187	3.820	1.725	889	13.421	569	9.925	1.148		12.527	727	192	107.751
TOTAUX	133.671	499.455	308.480	209.263	221.964	136.875	129.520	117.017	105.328	190.665	158.373	260.907	185.104	369.818	206.984	103.115	3.336.739

* Races and territories French West Africa - Africans of public status and of personal status.

** Others

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	City	Central Subdivision	Koulikoro Subdivision	Kolokani Subdivision	Dioila Subdivision	Kourémalé Subdivision
Bambara	19,000	93,974	56,048	59,930	68,310	812
Peul	1,000	2,074	4,251	500	350	38
Mossi	500		157	200		
Marka	1,000		26,746			
Habbe	250		136			
Songhai	450		197			
Malinké	3,200	32,434	139			26,898
Minianka	400					
Moors	2,600		358			
Sénoufo	300					
Touareg	20					
Samo	150					
Foula-Bambara	600				9,000	
Bozo	400					
Bobo	500					
Kassonké	600					
Dioula	5,200			850	5,000	
Toucouleur	700					
Kagoro	100		3,795	13,500		
Somono	500	804	3,454		300	690
Marka Bambara	150				600	

(continued)

[Bamako circle] [population division of ethnic groups]

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28
[Pre-World War II Period]

economic development should take precedence over everything else in the colonies. The Mossi were to be directly affected by the policies of both Van Vollenhoven and Sarraut. The colony of Haut-Sénégal et Niger was suppressed in March 1919, and replaced by the new colony of Upper Volta, in which the Mossi were the chief ethnic group. Moreover, Ouagadougou was chosen as the administrative center of this new colony.[19]

The new Governor of the Upper Volta, Edouard Hesling, who arrived in Ouagadougou in November 1919, sympathized with Van Vollenhoven's views, but was even more interested in economic development. He was determined to transform Ouagadougou from a small town with an indigenous population of about 8,000 and some 76 European soldiers, merchants, and missionaries, into a capital worthy of a colony. Shortly after he arrived, he summoned the Mogho Naba and the traditional ministers and had them recruit some 2,000 salaried and unsalaried men to provide enough mud bricks and wooden beams to complete the construction of eleven administrative buildings before the rainy season began the following May.

Hesling and his administrators believed that the Upper Volta, a country "with such diverse products and such a dense population, could attain an exceptional level of development by acquiring those economic elements which ensure prosperity."[20] Cotton was one of those elements. They believed that the Upper Volta "can and should export thousands of tons as soon as an easy and economical way of shipping is established."[21] By 1925, Hesling had constructed 6,000 kilometers of roads in the Upper Volta, about one-eighth the entire road network of French West Africa. Travelers in the Upper Volta at this time wrote of "the enforced enthusiasm with which the natives, under M. E. Hesling, have thrown themselves into agricultural labor and in particular into the planting of cotton."[22]

The administration of the Upper Volta continued to furnish Mossi manpower for the development of the other colonies as well as for the colonial army. In 1922, it was asked to furnish "6,000 workers for the Thies-Kayes railway, renewable every six months; and under the same conditions to furnish 2,000 laborers to build the railways in the Ivory Coast. Similarly, with the consent of the chief administrator of the colony, it was possible to recruit a thousand workers in the regions of Ouagadougou and Bobo-Dioulasso for private business in the Ivory Coast."[23] Londres, who visited the Upper Volta in the late 1920's, reports that Mossi country was known as "a 'reservoir' of manpower."[24] Burthe d'Annelet reports that during this same period, "The Minister of War [took] 45,000 men each year to compensate for the weakness of our metropolitan recruitment, and

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28
[Pre - World War II Period]

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trative and technical personnel serving in its capital available for general service."[80] But another, more important reason for dismembering the colony was to make available "to the Ivory Coast, a rich and prosperous colony with diversified environments and products, an abundant and disciplined labor force, which alone was lacking to infuse it with hopeful vigor."[81] According to the articles of a decree promulgated in January 1933, the Upper Volta was divided as follows: The cercle of Ouahigouya and part of the cercle of Dedougou, encompassing 52,400 square kilometers and 712,000 people, were attached to the Sudan; the cercle of Fada-N'-Gourma and Dori, with 70,700 square kilometers and 268,000 people, was attached to the Niger; Tenkodogo, Gaoua, Batie, Ouagadougou, Bobo-Dioulasso, and part of Dedougou were given to the Ivory Coast. The Ivory Coast by this change gained some 153,400 square kilometers and 2,019,000 people.

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The Mossi chiefs resented the division of the lands conquered by Ouedraogo and Oubri, and while they never ceased to desire the reintegration of Mogho, they were powerless to do or say anything about it at the time. Many young French colonial officials also resented the division of the colony, and were eloquent in their denunciation of what they considered a moribund colonial policy. A member of the Upper Volta administration, Robert Delavignette, says in his obituary of the colony:

> These obscure masses: three million persons. . . . Once they represented a threat, although the thousands of horsemen of the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou were defeated by the infantry squads of Captain Voulet in 1897. Soon the threat had diminished, but the matchless aggregate of villages remained. It was an alluring challenge to administrators. Let us mention briefly how they dealt with it. The more they pacified it, the more difficult their task became. The more they tried to impose upon it an open economy with a pattern of roads, urban centers, and cotton fields; and the more they tried to discover the vital principle of that economy in order to establish a new harmony between the land and these obscure masses, the more they broke down the old, set, traditional economy. . . . The heartland of the Upper Volta was indeed molded: 6,000 kilometers of roads, 100,000 hectares of collective fields, and a few urban centers built of mudbricks—all or almost all of this done by hand. No original methods or powerful tools were used, no inventiveness or clarity of purpose was shown. This was but a megalomanic copy of old patterns of mercantile exploitation, and [represented], in the heartlands, powerless, joyless work for those obscure masses.[82]

The criticisms of such officials as Delavignette and Henri Labouret persuaded the colonial administration to dispatch to Ouagadougou a higher

593 The wife must obey her husband. The latter has the right to strike
562 her in case of disobedience, adultery, etc. He cannot break one of her limbs, or kill her.

595 Polygamy. —Polygamy is the general rule, at least theoretically. That is to say, the Mossi may have as many spouses as he wishes as long as he can minister to their needs.

595 In actual fact, only rich people have several wives. The majority
589 are monogamous by necessity, and there are even bachelors. As a passing remark, this applies to the Sudanese Negroes in general, for everywhere nature creates approximately as many men as women, and it is hard to visualize how in any one region each man could have several wives. However, in spite of the occurrence of bachelors and a large number of truly monogamous people, the question still stands. It is solved if we bear in mind that girls are married much earlier than men. This results in a much larger number of women than men "in active service," if I may be permitted to say so. Undoubtedly, this (along with the occurrence of bachelors and a considerable number of monogamists), takes care of the objection which naturally arises when we speak of polygamy. /243/

163 It may be, let us add, that the number of girls born here is a little higher than that of boys, as has been noted in England, for example.

595 By way of figures on polygamy, let us state that the Moro Naba
643 Bango, the last one who reigned before the arrival of the French, had
445 about 80 wives. The Naba Koboga, who ruled from 1902 to 1914, had 30 or 40. The present Rassam Naba, one of the ministers of the Moro Naba, has 30 or 35 wives. These are, of course, exceptional figures if the total population of Yatenga is taken into account. In any case, the rich men, notables, and men in easy circumstances always have several wives.

595 Organization of the polygamous household. —"The first wife," says Vadier, "enjoys a certain authority over the others. It is she who transmits her husband's orders to the other wives and who notifies him of their wants, who supervises the preparation of meals and apportions the food. In addition, it is she who comes and tells the
[841] husband that such-and-such a wife is no longer in a state of zim and can now fulfill her conjugal duties.

"Aside from this special prerogative enjoyed by the first wife, all wives have the same rights and duties. In principle, each wife must share in turn her husband's bed. Nevertheless, he is free to summon his favorite wife during the day."

291 distance from his home, he wears only a benda (loincloth), which does not even cover his buttocks, and a blanket.

He goes about with torso uncovered and likes to show that he is [229] well muscled. When the women are inside their huts, especially when they are engaged in the laborious task of removing the seeds from cotton with their gourça, they pull their skirts up to the hips, making themselves half-naked.

Young girls who have not yet reached puberty and are not yet excised often go about completely nude, unless they hide their sex behind the rags of an old skirt.

Personal Grooming

Ablutions and Care of the Body

515 Married persons and women are fastidious about body cleanliness and therefore have a regular morning routine. This involves washing the face, hands, arms, and legs. During the cool season (end of November to February 15), a little karite butter is added [271] to warm water to soften the skin. Since water is scarce, people take few baths. In villages where there is abundant water, however, the inhabitants bathe two or three times a week.

Unlike their elders, young people and children are careless about cleanliness and may go about all day long without washing [14] their faces. This gives rise, incidentally, to serious cases of conjunctivitis among the children.

Sanitation

312 Drinking water. Water for general use is obtained from 271 water holes created [230] by the inhabitants with dams in order to supplement the wells which often run dry during the dry season. The natives make no effort to purify the water which they often keep for days in containers where mosquito larvae flourish. Pond water is used for drinking. In some villages, however, where the water is actually muddy, the following measure are taken to clear it.

(a) The oil is extracted from crushed peanuts, and the residue is put into the muddy water. It takes about three-quarters of an

244 same as that of the tubercle, to which they adhere strongly. Their
137 color is also the same. The flesh of these turions is white, highly aqueous, and compact. It recalls that of the potato, or rather that of the sweet potato. The odor is slightly noxious.

"The diabéré are sown in June and July. It is sufficient to
247 place the turions in a hole dug into the ground to a depth of 10 or 15 centimeters. The harvesting is done in December. Around the end of October or beginning of November, the inhabitants of the Sandougou (Upper Gambia) are in the habit of cutting the leaves to a height of about 10 centimeters from the ground, in order to make the turions grow bigger.

252 "The diabéré is not a vegetable to be scorned even by the delicate palate of the Europeans. When boiled or fried in the pan, it makes a dish of pleasant taste. I recall eating it with pleasure in a mutton stew. The natives prefer it boiled, and in certain areas, for example the Diaka, Sandougou, and Tenda, they eat it in large quantities. In the latter region especially it is consumed intensively, and the natives of neighboring territories attribute the
[164] skin disease and numerous goiters of the Tenda inhabitants to their over-indulgence in this food." (Pages 83 to 85.)

246 The Mossi also cultivate karyanga or karnyanga. "This gramineous plant," says the Cahier des rapports /Production Report) of the Ouagadougou circle, "grows wild along watercourses, but the natives also cultivate it around the edges of their millet fields. The stalk, hairy and rough, reaches a /478/ height of 0.80 meter when full grown. It expands into a sheaf near the tip. The leaves, about 3 centimeters wide, are shaped like very elongated spearheads. When still green, they are severed about 20 centimeters from the ground. Then they are left to dry in the sun and stored for consumption during the dry season. The karyanga serves as fodder for livestock and horses. This plant is quite widespread in the eastern and southeastern parts of Mossi territory (Béloussa and Tenkodogo)."

As we can see, karyanga is a grass that grows in the bush along watercourses and that is cut down and fed to horses. Some horse owners cut it down and replant it in their maize field. In the

586 principal theoretical cases which may arise concerning divorce. I borrow them from Vadier.

"Divorce occurs in the following cases.

1. By mutual consent. Spouses may separate if they do not get along. This is very unusual, however, and occurs only after the family heads of both spouses intervene amicably. The /247/ wife keeps whatever gifts her husband may have offered her if it was he who first requested a divorce. On the other hand, she leaves them behind if it was she who asked to leave.

2. Insults. Insults addressed to the husband by the wife, or vice versa, are not grounds for divorce. If the husband insults his wife's relatives, divorce does follow. The wife keeps the gifts.

3. Maltreatment. It is acknowledged that the husband may beat his wife in order to discipline her. If the injuries are serious, however, or if the husband continually beats his wife, she becomes free, but the gifts, sheep, goats, bracelets, etc., which she received from her husband remain in his possession.

4. Nonfulfillment of the conjugal duty. (1) On the husband's part. If the husband does not cohabit with his wife, she cannot say anything, but she is free to have lovers outside of her husband's soukala. If the latter complains, the wife leaves him.

●[164] If the husband is infected with a venereal disease, a period of three years is granted him for a cure. If he does not get well after this lapse of time, the wife becomes free.

Verification by the naba takes place, as in the preceding case, if the husband is impotent, and likewise the wife returns to her family. The wife retains the gifts in all three cases.

(2) On the wife's part. If the wife refuses to fulfill her conjugal duty, the husband can turn her out and keep the gifts which he gave to her.

If the wife has a venereal disease, the husband cannot take her back.

5. Infidelity. The husband's infidelity is not grounds for divorce. The infidelity of the wife, however, is sufficient reason to terminate the marriage. The gifts remain with the husband.

6. Lack of support. If the husband refuses to provide food and support for his wife, she may request a divorce, but she must leave to her husband the gifts she received from him.

[839] 7. Guilty relations of one of the spouses with animals or with a person accused of having had intercourse with a she-ass.

364 For the Mossi, as for all other men, life ends in death, with or without illness. The Blacks do not know how to prevent diseases, and they know very little about fighting them. Hygiene is almost unknown. The huts are poorly aired, the chickens and in general all the animals in the inner courtyard walk everywhere and foul everything. The courtyard is swept often, but the hut of the sheep and goats is located in the midst of the other dwellings; the horse is kept within the soukala [514] itself; and people relieve themselves anywhere, wherever they find a convenient spot. The manure is gathered in a heap, but it is kept next to the huts and gives off a nauseating smell and noxious miasmas, especially at the beginning of the rainy season.

515 The Mossi are not dirty, but they cannot be called clean. Those who dwell in villages abundantly supplied with water at all times are the cleanest. The women, who fetch water every day and thus have an opportunity to wash, are usually cleaner than the men. A Mossi never passes a pond without drinking copiously and washing all over, and this would seem to prove that those who go dirty do so unwillingly; they have no water nearby, and it would be too much trouble to go to the river to bathe. Clothing, especially breechcloths, is often repulsively dirty. This is because washing wears out clothes, and who knows when new ones will be available? No wonder disease has such a hold on this people.

855 Child care is quite rudimentary: a few baths; enemas two or three 165 times a day, without which it is said their bowels would not move; and that is all. At the slightest indisposition the sorcerer is consulted, or else the child is left to himself; he will get well or die, and nothing is done about it. As a consequence, child mortality is very high.

758 Those who fall prey to a contagious disease are not isolated. A healthy child lies on the same mat as one with smallpox, a leper drinks from the common gourd unless his lips are covered with sores. People do, however, hesitate to sit where a syphilitic person with sores previously sat. The education of the Mossi in matters of hygiene is wholly yet to be learned.

576 On meeting someone, Mossi politeness requires that an inquiry be made about his health and that of all his relatives. The response invariably is "So-and-So is well," and the other in turn responds, "May God permit his health to wax." It is only after a little conversation that a certain person is said to be ill or to be getting better. 195 It is not said that someone died, but that he ran short of strength, that he passed away, that he left us.

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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[Pre-World War II Period]

What Mangin referred to euphemistically as "difficulties with the white man" was, to the Mossi, rather drastic punishment for non-payment of taxes. If a man refused to pay his taxes, the Mossi chief was permitted to sequester his goods and sell them. If the man had neither the taxes nor the goods, the chief had to send him and his wife (or wives) to the administrative post to be punished. Sometimes, a man and his wife would be made to look at the sun from sunrise to sunset while intoning the prayer *Ouennam co mam ligidi* ("God, give me money"). Other times, a man would be made to run around the administrative post with his wife on his back; if he had several wives, he had to take each one in turn. Then his wife or wives had to carry him around. The Mossi claim that a man had to run around the post three times, and his wife four. This is probably an exaggeration, however, because the numbers 3 and 4 are symbolically associated with men and women, respectively.

A further source of difficulty for the Mossi chiefs, and one which became more serious as time went by, was that they were charged by the administration to recruit men for both labor and military service. Initially, the chiefs had to supply men to transport grain for the French-organized agricultural societies from one region to another; later, they were commanded to supply labor for private and public works. Labouret states:

> The initial recruitment, which took place in 1912, was carried out without any difficulty, thanks to the unexpected afflux of volunteers. This was not the case in subsequent years. The reason for this was that the credulous natives of these distant regions, lacking any contact with the world, believed that the Europeans were carrying off their most robust youths to sell them to the Men of the Sea [mythical cannibalistic beings].[13]

The Mossi were alarmed at the high rate of mortality among the young men who went away to work. They had a saying, *Nansara toumde di Mossi* ("White man's work eats [kills] people"), and resisted the recruiting attempts of their chiefs. There was, however, less opposition to recruitment for military service, owing in part to the Mossi tradition of warfare. Many Mossi youths served in France during World War I, and additional hundreds served in an African contingent recruited "by an administrator named d'Arboussier, and with the cooperation of the Mogho Naba, to take possession of northern Togoland."[14]

The manner in which the Mossi chiefs administered their territories before the First World War was conditioned by the colonial administrators even when it was not directly controlled by them. The Mogho Naba had gradually lost most of his power, and he had no authority to act without the specific authorization of the French. He retained most of his cere-

631 powers to his vassals, the province chiefs, who in turn entrust them to the canton chiefs, and these do likewise with the village chiefs. Thus, when a native wants to move from one canton to another, or 631 even from one village to another, he must be authorized to do so. 166 He must request the permission of the canton or village chief to settle 425 in such-and-such a place, and the chief of the village where he wants to live tells him where he may build his huts and which field he may cultivate. The naba may dispossess one of his subjects, if he so wishes, and give his field to another. After all, he "has the strength." This rarely happens, however, and a native who has cleared a piece of bush, fertilized a plot to sow maize, sowed and weeded the ground, is usually assured of a harvest, except in case of war. If a man is evicted, on the other hand, there is no appeal; neither the canton chief nor the province chief would listen to him; they would do the same thing if the opportunity arose.

421 There is no communal property. Every individual works his fields for his own account; he himself collects the fruit of his labor and remains its undisputed master. Nevertheless, every native owes his 651 chiefs and benefactors a tithe; and at harvest time it is interesting 431 to watch everyone sorting ears of maize, braiding sorghum stems, and measuring out baskets of small millet. The village chief is to get so many ears of maize; the canton chief, if he does not reside too far away, so many others; the father- or fathers-in-law will get theirs, and so will one friend or another to whom one owes cowries, or who has previously granted a favor. However, everyone who deals out goods right and left will in turn get some from various other people and approximately regain his expenditure. The village chiefs offer more sizable gifts to the canton chiefs, and the latter do likewise to the province chiefs.

651 These were, in fact, taxes, not fixed taxes per capita, but completely arbitrary ones. If the naba found a gift insufficient, he had 661 no compunction about saying so, and the person involved had to comply. It is said that the naba of Koupéla paid annually 500,000 cowries (500 francs) and /23/ three horses to the naba of Bélousa, and a million cowries (1000 francs) in two installments to the Moro Naba, to whom he also gave five horses. The gifts to the Moro Naba were brought first to the naba of Bélousa and from there conveyed to Ouagadougou: ever the hierarchy.

This quasi-official tax, however, was not the only one. Whenever the Moro Naba wanted horses, cattle, or anything whatever, he

5: Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1959
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PETER B. HAMMOND

13. *Economic Change and Mossi Acculturation*

Some five thousand Mossi from the kingdom of Yatenga in the Upper Volta have been resettled on the newly developed lands of the Niger Irrigation Project in the French Sudan. Removed from a cultural setting which has been relatively undisturbed by the influence of European civilization, they are required to adapt themselves rapidly to an economic situation structured and directed by Europeans. Economic organization being the variable involved, a study of their adjustment provides an opportunity to examine some of the cultural problems and processes related to economic development in underdeveloped areas.

Yatenga is the northernmost of four Mossi kingdoms located in the Upper Volta. It is a sub-Saharan savanna land of red earth, low rainfall, gently rolling plains, and low hills. Ouahigouya, the capital, gives its name to the French administrative unit, the Cercle de Ouahigouya, which has governed the kingdom from its headquarters in this ancient city since its conquest in 1895.[1]

To distinguish themselves from the people of the neighboring kingdoms of Ouagadougou, Fada-N'Gourma, and Tenkodogo, the Mossi of the Yatenga sometimes speak of themselves as "Yadise" (those of Yadiga). This name refers to the fact that they regard themselves as being descended, as a nation, from Naba Yadiga, the half-mythical warrior-prince from Oaugadougou who broke away from his father's dynasty to form the separate political entity, Yatenga, which bears his name (*ya* for "Yadiga" and *tenga* for "country"). The Mossi have not always been numerically and culturally dominant in the Yatenga, as they are today. They recognize that their ancestors came from the south, from Mamprusi and Dagomba in the northern territories of Ghana.

Highly organized politico-religious states representing the cultural amalgamation of native and foreign populations and institutions are characteristic of the Voltaic region of West Africa. Acknowledging that we "owe to Rattray the discovery that these central Voltaic tribes are

[1] Capitaine Noire, *Monographie du Cercle de Ouahigouya* (Ouahigouya, 1904), p. 15.

10:Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1964 FA28 Mossi FA28

4. The importance of sibling-in-law joking as a means of regulating conflict in the Mossi marriage relationship is further substantiated by the results of comparative research conducted among the Mossi resettled at the Office du Niger in the neighboring Republic of Mali.

The Mossi, who were first forcibly and later voluntarily resettled in Mali, were allocated farm land as elementary family units without regard for their extended kinship affiliations. Thus a man often found himself living in unaccustomed "isolation," in the company only of his wife or wives and children, and otherwise surrounded by total strangers. Although the potential for conflict in the marriage relationship remained high, or was even augmented by the stresses of adjusting to a changed milieu, sibling-in-law joking, the institution through which such tension is traditionally regulated among the Mossi, was no longer operative. Unless the younger siblings of each spouse had accompanied them to the resettlement area, those individuals were absent to whom they might have communicated their grievances and expressed their aggressive sentiments in a socially harmless, psychologically satisfactory, and culturally acceptable way.

As the traditionally sanctioned means of dealing with tension resulting from marital conflict was no longer available to the Mossi resettled in Mali, there occurred an increase in the incidence both of violence in marital disputes and of separation and divorce.

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641 as part of the family.

641 2. When a Moaga emigrates and settles permanently in a foreign country, either to take up trading or to study the precepts of
167 Islam. He is forced to abandon his usual customs and to scorn ancestral ways, thus losing his personal status. If he wishes to embrace Islam, he changes his name, and if he should return to his native village, he would no longer try to be identified as a Moaga, whose customs and beliefs he no longer shares and whom he now regards as an inferior.

641 [188] As has been noted, the Moaga woman who marries a foreigner or the foreign woman who marries a Moaga subject retains her own nationality. Thus, marriage does not involve any loss of nationality. Customs may have been modified, but it is certain that even a Moaga woman who had lived abroad for a long time would soon resume the customs and practices of her own country. The same may be said of a foreign woman who might divorce her Moaga husband and return to her own land.

Naturalization. Since naturalization is unknown, children born in Mossi country of a foreign father and either a Moaga or a foreign mother remain foreign. Furthermore, since children take their father's nationality, a divorce will not affect their status.

II. Birth

842 Conception. The natives have no very well-defined idea of the
776 process of conception. In their minds, the primary cause is God (Wenam), Master of Heaven and Earth, who gives children. It seems, however, that Wendé or Wenam forces the kinkirsi (spirits) to change into a human egg when the sperm is transmitted at the time of ejaculation.

The kinkirsi are invisible beings said to resemble small children and who live near certain houses or [189] groves. Only a few favored persons can see them.

In the same connection, it is believed that ancestors or certain deceased relatives are reincarnated.

843 Pregnancy. It is known that complete cessation of menstruation and the development and darkening of the breasts are the signs of

433 made do with what his own village could produce, and there was
178 really no trade in the ordinary sense of the word. The Moaga, essentially a stay-at-home, depended on the soil for food and clothing.

241 Only two new crops have been added since the coming of the
177 French: yams (na-niouyan, "chiefs' yams") and white potatoes.

The recent increase in the cultivation of cotton makes it easier for the natives to meet their tax, and this encourages them to grow even more.

178 The French occupation has brought many benefits in its wake (creation of a network of roads, peace and the resulting free circulation among the villages, and suppression of banditry and looting), but it has also given the Moaga a desire to leave the country.

● 167 The extensive recruitment of [249] laborers for the needs of
464 other colonies in the area, for work on the roads, and for the now obligatory military service -- all of which are accepted reluctantly by the Mossi -- has caused many young men to emigrate.

Some of them set out, for the Gold Coast preferably, without the slightest means of support. They go to work in the English colony in order to earn money for clothes. Since they had no money when they started out, they remain there for months or even years, and this seriously diminishes the agricultural labor force at home. It also forces their old and helpless relatives to cultivate their fields alone.

Besides, so many of them never return!

The Native Diet

262 Sagbo (millet mush) is the principal item in the Mossi diet at all social levels. Rice, regarded as a luxury food, is eaten by the naba and notables. It costs from two and a half to three francs a
[435] kilogram at Ouagadougou and is therefore too expensive for most people. It may be added that it rarely is found in the diet of civil service employees.

264 Mossi chiefs usually have two main meals a day: a [250] first meal of sagbo or rice at around nine in the morning, and a second

567 When a master wants one of the sheep or beeves belonging to his
178 bagaré, the latter refuses to give it, or if he consents to sell the animal at market he gives his master but one-tenth of the cowries paid by the buyer. Nowadays, as a rule, the bagaré only "go
[405] along" when their master's debts are involved, and yet some of them run away with their belongings rather than pay those debts.

567 Let us also add that these slaves, who were mostly of Gourounsi
167 or Boussansé origin, now want to return to their own land, and there is a continuous exodus, slow but sure, of Mossi slaves toward the south. Since the French have strictly forbidden the purchase and sale of slaves, on the other hand, the sources of supply have dried out. All this makes it clear why among the Mossi, as incidentally throughout West Africa, we are progressing toward a slow but certain suppression of slavery and serfdom.

326 In closing, let us say that among the Mossi blacksmiths who
567 live in /special/ quarters or villages and whom we have already mentioned with regard to their patriarchal and nondecommunalized family type, we find true slaves of the common familial type such as we have described up to now, rather than serfs like the bagaré.

These slaves live in the same soukala as their master, whether married or unmarried, trade or house slaves. During the winter season, they all work on the fields of the soukala head from six in the morning to three in the afternoon, with the usual luncheon break. They have small individual plots, which they may work after three o'clock. During /567/ the dry season, they work all day at the blacksmith's trade with their master.

They are provided with food throughout the year by the head of the soukala, but they procure their own clothing, jewelry, grigri, etc. The soukala head buys the first wife for them and disposes of their daughters in return.

567 The estate of a deceased slave goes to his master and to his sons.
408 As far as livestock and cowries are concerned, the master takes half
326 and gives half to the son or sons. As for clothing, bracelets, etc., everything goes to the children. The latter share equally the part of their father's estate that devolves to them.

567 We can see that just as the family type of Mossi blacksmiths
326 bears witness to an older state of affairs, the status of slaves among them also bears witness to the ancient local conditions prior to

8: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1958
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he received from them. This unequal exchange, plus the nobles' prerogative of seizing the wives of pagans, contributed to the increase of the Moslems. 622 797 582

The conversion of Mossi to Islam is sometimes accompanied by a rupture in the relationships between persons involved in "friendships" with a view of obtaining wives. A great quarrel developed in the district between a pagan chief and a recent convert who refused to give the chief a daughter promised as a wife. The chief became furious and claimed that the Moslem had broken a promise made years ago, but the Moslem claimed that it was against his new religion to give his daughter to a pagan. It is not true that Moslems in the village do not exchange wives with pagans, but the Moslems often try to convert their pagan friends so that the brides will not have to revert to paganism. The chief's difficulty was that he could not become a Moslem because of his ritual and ceremonial relationship with the ancestors. The Moslem men do not have such difficulties with their pagan wives because most women follow their husbands' dictates in religious and other matters. Many Moslem men attempt to prevent their wives from having sacrifices made to the ancestors, but if a woman really wishes such a sacrifice she can easily have it arranged through her pagan relatives. If a woman married to a Moslem refuses to observe Islamic practices, she is liable to divorce and runs the risk of having her children taken away. 572 622 582 797 [562] [593] [586]

Mossi anxiety over children is often instrumental in converting them to Islam. When a woman is barren or her young children die, she consults a soothsayer (*barga*). She is either told that her Tengkougre benefactor was not amply rewarded and recalled the children, or that her "Moslem" children (children who wished to be Moslems) were angry because they were given pagan names. In the latter case she is advised to make a gift to a Moslem and to ask her husband to build a Moslem prayer-circle outside his hut so that when her children "return" (are born again) they will see it. Finally, she is advised to give all her children Moslem names. I could discover no reason why the pagan soothsayers advise these anxious parents to adopt Islam, except that they hope that complicated prescriptions will be more efficacious. Nevertheless, so effective is this technique for gaining converts to Islam that even members of the family of the chief pagan priest are not immune to it. Furthermore, once a woman has a Moslem child, all her other children must be Moslems or they will die. A man whose children are all Moslem has no recourse except to adopt Islam if he wants a funeral, because his Moslem sons may not give him a pagan funeral. 797 842 [787] [551] [764]

Every Mossi, whether Moslem or non-Moslem, wishes a proper funeral, and now that travel has increased the fact of being Moslem or pagan is of great importance. Many young migrants to Ashanti have reported that their dead pagan comrades were unceremoniously disposed of, while the local Christians and Moslems took care of their dead coreligionists. But despite this fact, and the belief of administrators and missionaries, I found no evidence that the seasonal and other migration of Mossi youth to Ghana and the Ivory Coast have contributed very much to the spread of Islam. It is true that some of the thou- 797 167 [764]

8: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1958
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797 sands of Mossi who fled their homeland to escape forced labor or military serv-
167 ice ultimately returned as Moslems, but the majority of seasonal migrants do not have enough contact with foreign populations for them to become Moslems. Most of the Mossi who migrate to Ghana work on cocoa farms far removed from large centers of population. It is also true that even those Mossi who worked for Moslems on the farms and found it expedient to "pray" (as the Mossi refer to conversion to Islam) soon reverted to paganism on their return in order to escape the displeasure of their lineage members. I have recorded several cases of pagans who became Moslems only when they returned from abroad to find their relatives all converted to Islam.

574 Today there are obvious rewards for those Mossi who embrace Islam; be-
797 sides such tangible rewards as getting wives and children, there are the intan-
554 gible ones of upward social mobility and greater prestige. It is important to
566 note that most liberated slaves and serfs are now Moslems. Formerly these non-
[561] Mossi had low status, but today those who have been to Mecca bear such proud titles as *Hadji*. On the night before Ramadan, one of these men gave a talk before the Nobéré chief during which he chided the chief for his impiety and voiced the hope that the next chief would be a true Moslem. He admitted that the chief might interpret such a speech from a former serf as impertinence, but he begged him to accept the censure as coming from the servant of *Nabiyama* (the prophet). This same man had refused to pay homage to the chief at the annual sacrifice to the ancestors, and when admonished returned the daughter which the chief had given him as a wife. In earlier days a chief would not have given a daughter to a serf, and moreover, a disrespectful serf could be killed instantly.

797 Many French administrators and Christian missionaries allege that Mossi
291 youth embrace Islam because they like the beautiful robes and red fezzes of the Moslems, but this is a naive explanation for the conduct of a highly sophisti-
515 cated people. Most young men in Nobéré wear Moslem-type clothes because such clothes are the mode. Now that sun helmets, dark glasses, and women's raincoats with hoods are in vogue, pagans as well as Moslems wear them. What is of interest, however, is that when pagans become Moslems they wear cleaner clothes and affect a different style of life.

794 The local consensus is that Moslems are much better behaved than pagans
577 because they do not swear, fight, or get drunk in public. The man chosen as Imam is required to have such characteristics as mercy toward evil-doers, benevolence, magnanimity, physical beauty, and virility. Yet many Mossi say that the Moslems can be worse than any other people. They accuse them of being charlatans, of selling Koranic verses as charms, and of committing murder by the use of magical formulae. Neither pagans nor Moslems believe that a man is necessarily good because he recites his daily prayers or goes to Mecca.

Moslems in the district follow most precepts of their religion: they recite
794 the five daily prayers according to the rites of Tidjani (there are only two Moslems of the Hamada sect in the district and no members of the Hamallist sect), give alms to the poor, observe the month-long fast (called by the Mossi the

634 known, however, whether this woman was Biligo's daughter or one of his
622 pughsiudse. The people of Passintenga claimed descent from Biligo's
175 daughter, but the other groups in the district questioned this ancestry. The village called Bourougna had two chiefs. One, the Tang Naba, was descended from a son of a Ouidi Naba of Ouagadougou who had settled in Nobere; the other, the Yang Naba, claimed descent from an aboriginal Ninisi man and woman of Biligo's lineage. The Yang Naba was thus another of Biligo's yagense in the district. The chief of Nimpwe village was a descendant of the aboriginal Ninisi people and was the principal Tengsoba in the district. He had more ritual power than political power, however. The nam of Basbedo village was held by a man descended from Busansi refugees. Living in this village was a man with the honorific title of Soulougre Naba, who claimed descent from the most important Ninisi family who had lived in the district prior to the arrival of Biligo.

634 Most of the nobles of the local ruling lineage lived either in the saghse
173 of the district villages or in isolated hamlets. Local tradition holds that one
621 of the conditions set by Naba Ngado for allowing Biligo's descendants to
[613] remain as village chiefs was the right to settle nineteen of his sons in many
[565] of the villages. He allegedly sent *mabissi* (sons of the same mother) to the same village. By so doing, he took advantage of the normal lines of fission that are created after the death of a Mossi father and prevented undue rivalries. Yet there was no driving necessity for him to do so, because there were more villages than chief's sons available. In fact, there are still many villages without nobles in Nobere district. The people of Passintenga, for instance, allegedly refused to have nobles live among them, while the people of Nimpwe allegedly killed by sorcery all the nobles who ever tried to live there. The actual reason for the absence of nobles in these villages may have been that the district chief did not wish to send his sons to villages into which his daughters had married or where there lived earth priests who
[565] were thought to be powerful sorcerers. Nobles were often unwelcome, feared, and resisted, because they tended to exploit the village people and to take advantage of the commoners.

621 The villages of Nobere district, like those of other Mossi districts, were
167 populated in part by refugees and strangers. Several saghse in Togese vil-
173 lage were inhabited by Mossi refugees who had fled a district called Guiergo after a fight over the nam of that district. Scattered throughout the district's villages were people of unknown origin called Siamse. The Siamse found in the villages of Tewaka and Nabadogo claimed that their ancestors had "followed" Naba Biligo when he came down from Ouagadougou to found the district. Several saghse in Bourougna village were in-

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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habited by Yarse, people of Mandingo origin who had been assimilated by the Mossi. There were no Fulani in Nobere, even though some lived in nearby districts. But in Pinse village there lived people called Simili-Mossi, who claimed descent from Fulani herdsmen and Mossi women. Basbedo village was inhabited and ruled by people of Busansi origin. They claimed that their ancestors had fled from famine and other hardships in Busansi country and had been granted haven by Naba Biligo. The people who lived in the two saghse of Nab'tenga called Dapore (Dapobi) and Baglere (Bangare) were serfs of diverse non-Mossi origin. Saghse or compounds of Gurunsi slaves were found close to the dwellings of nobles and village chiefs throughout the district.

The number of saghse in the villages of Nobere district varied according to the size of the village and the pattern of nam inheritance within the major lineage segment that ruled the village. The saka itself housed a minor-lineage segment. The larger the village's minor lineage segment and the greater this group's genealogical depth, the more numerous were its component segments and thus its saghse. The proliferation of saghse and minor-lineage segments within the ruling lineage of a village was dependent primarily on possession of the nam. As soon as a man received the nam, he obtained control over a large amount of goods and services. He was then in a position to obtain many wives for himself and his immediate relatives, and as a result his minimal lineage grew rapidly. In time this group became so large that it split from its brother babissi within the saka, and formed a new saka of its own. Finally, this babissi became a minor lineage in its own saka, in segmental opposition to the other babissi and minor lineages within the other saghse. If the descendants of one man retained the nam for about three generations, their lineage segment and saka grew larger and in time cast off its own junior segments. However, if the segment lost the nam to a man of another babissi and saka, it ceased to proliferate. Some such groups even declined and disappeared by fusing with other local segments of the same lineage. Here is how the system worked in Barkago village of Nobere district.

Barkago itself was founded sometime in the dim past by a son of Naba Biligo. It had an area of eight or ten square miles and a population of about 650 when the French arrived in 1896. Its boundaries were set by such natural phenomena as clumps of trees, hills, and ravines. The village itself included five distinct saghse separated by footpaths, hills, rocks, and ravines, and an area of wasteland (*weogho*). Three of the saghse, Natenga ("chief's land"), Godin, and Kedpalago, were inhabited by the minor segments of the boodoo of Naba Biligo. Here is how this came about. After

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621 651 634 243 For example, the villagers of Barkago traditionally cultivated and harvested a field of millet behind his compound for the chief. The people of Pinse, Donse, Passingtenga, and Tewarka cultivated millet for him in their own villages, and those of Togose and Basbedo cultivated rice for him in their excellent lowlands.

243 634 566 567 The district chief had fields both behind his compound and in the bush, which were cultivated for him by his retainers, serfs, and slaves. More than the Mogho Naba and the provincial ministers, the district chief believed that a Moaga must perform agricultural work during the planting season; to show his interest in farming, he often personally supervised the work on his plantations. When the task of weeding or harvesting proved too much for his own people, he asked his villages for a *sosogha*. On that day, each [464] village chief, accompanied by his men, went to the district chief's fields, where, to the accompaniment of drums and chants and with the verbal encouragement of district administrators, the villages vied with each other in their task. The district chief usually sat under a tree and watched the [465] proceedings and occasionally visited the various contingents to observe the progress made. Toward evening, the chief's wives gave the workers large quantities of food and drink in compensation for their services.

651 634 Like the Mogho Naba, the district chief had officials who collected taxes on commodities sold in local markets. These district market officials were usually serfs, Gurunsi captives, or bondsmen from other populations. Mossi [776] rarely served in such capacities because many of the local market places were considered ritually dangerous, and their titular deities, the Tengkouga, were believed to wreak vengeance on market officials who were tardy with sacrifices. The local Kos Naba supervised the slaughtering of every animal killed in the market, kept its skin so that its ownership could be verified if necessary, and collected taxes from the butchers in the form of meat or cowries. The Raga Naba of the district was not as strict as his counterpart in Ouagadougou, and seldom imposed formal taxes on the traders. He usually walked around the market, trailed by the chief's servants, and seized calabashes of grain and other commodities, which he placed in the servants' baskets. The Raga Naba did not tax those itinerant traders or caravaneers who visited the markets in the district, nor did he interfere with them in any other way. These merchants usually had business and personal relations with the chief, and he himself handled revenue from this source. The merchants gave him goods from the forest and Sahara regions, and he in turn often gave them wives, who were thus taken out of the district.

[167] [434] The Mossi district chief was always on the lookout for new sources of revenue, and thus welcomed strangers into his district because they "in-

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creased his force" and ultimately added to his income. Men who had been compelled to flee from other districts because of crimes or power struggles were granted refuge and given pughsiudse. In this manner, the district chief, like the Mogho Naba, established seignorial rights over his new subjects, incorporated them into the district, and obtained goods and services from them. The better a district chief's reputation, the greater the number of refugees who sought shelter with him and added to his wealth. Conversely, a chief who was known for his injustice, his rascality, and his excessive demands from persons seeking the village nam was shunned by potential subjects and might even be deserted by his own.

Those persons who visited the district chief's compound to settle court cases also contributed to his revenue. When the case dealt with cattle or other livestock, the chief received a few animals. In other cases, he received only the customary gifts from the litigants. He also received gifts from all the families in his district several times a year. One occasion was the "Tense," a festival in honor of the mother of Mogho Naba Oubri, the founder of the Ouagadougou dynasty; the other was the Basgha. During these two ceremonies every village chief, preceded by his district administrator and followed by his subjects, paid homage to the district chief and gave him presents. The district chief retained part of what he received for the upkeep of his household and to fulfill such obligations as hospitality to travelers, and added the remainder to his own annual tribute to the Mogho Naba.

The manner in which the district chief collected his annual tax or tribute for the Mogho Naba is the subject of controversy. Several of my respondents declared that the collection of this tribute was rather informal. The district chief allegedly notified the village chiefs that he wished to give a present to the Mogho Naba, and these chiefs sent word to the family heads, who, in turn, notified every household. The village people then collected chickens and livestock, baskets of grain, and cowries, and sent them up through the hierarchy to the district chief. The district chief's retainers checked the gifts from each village very carefully, and if some villages gave less than was expected of them, the district chief summoned their chiefs for explanations. In most cases the district chief knew exactly how much could be expected of his subjects, because his informers—usually his own pages and courtyard servants, or messengers of the local administrators—kept him informed of the wealth of each hamlet. Usually, a village chief who had withheld too much from the commodities turned over to him, or who had not demanded sufficient goods from his villagers, sought to make amends. It was in his interest to do so, since it was always dangerous to incur the

634 spirits. The chiefs could not refuse such requests, especially when the vil-
622 lagers were poor, because they were regarded as "fathers of their people."
782 In some cases, however, district chiefs had to protect their subjects against unscrupulous Tengsobadamba who took advantage of local crises and tried
661 to prey upon the villagers by refusing to perform the requisite sacrifices
793 unless they received substantial gifts. The ensuing struggle was between
634 the secular and the sacred; between the chief as a representative of the con-
782 querors, and the Tengsoba as a member of the conquered group. It was always resolved in favor of the Mossi chief, who never permitted his Tengsobadamba the same privileges held by religious practitioners in neighboring societies.[9] The Mossi chiefs recognized that they needed the Tengsobadamba, and many myths recount how invading Mossi chiefs went into the woods where the Tengsobadamba were hiding to beseech and eventually force them to return to their districts so that sacrifices might be continued. On the other hand, the Mossi chiefs always insisted on the primacy of the nam over any other power. They employed the Tengsobadamba to intercede with Tenga for the welfare of their subjects, but they never allowed the priests to control them.

771 The coming of Moslems to the kingdom of Ouagadougou had little
795 effect on the way in which the Mogho Nanamse used the traditional reli-
643 gious system to bolster their political power.[10] In fact, the Mossi rulers later used Islam and its adherents in the same manner as they had used the
[797] aboriginal religion. The Moslems first tried to subdue the Mossi in the fifteenth century by persuasion, and later by the jihad. Both attempts
[648] failed, but the Moslems finally entered Mossi country as refugees from
[167] Sudanese wars. Their fortunes waxed and waned, depending on whether they were befriended by the ruler in whose territory they lived. During
[798] certain periods, they were subjected to many restrictions and were forbidden by the Mogho Naba to recite their prayers in public places.[11] At other
[797] times, they were left free to practice their religion, and even succeeded in converting several Mogho Nanamse to Islam. Under converts such as Savadogo (ca. 1760), Islam spread into many districts and gave rise to such important local centers as Sakhaboutenga (Dakay).

771 The Moslems in Ouagadougou were represented at the court by their
795 Imam. This person even received his badge of office—a white turban and
792 white robe—from the Mogho Naba, and had to swear in the name of Allah and *Nabiyama* (the prophet Mohammed) to be faithful to him, obey him, and aid him in times of need. However, he did not have to drink the namtibo as suggested by Dim Delobson; nor did he have to observe such non-Moslem customs as drinking the millet beer the Mogho Naba provided for

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the status of women. They maintained that the French had conquered the Mossi men, not the women, and that the administration should not interfere with the way in which a Moaga treated his wife. Ironically enough, there was little the administration could do for the Mossi women, since the latter were too timid to approach the Europeans. Most of them continued to react to maltreatment from their husbands by running away, but now they went to the Gold Coast with labor migrants instead of returning to their lineage.

Although the Mossi chiefs had little autonomy in the administration of their subjects, and had to look to the administration for guidance in nearly everything they did, they were not completely powerless. They were the representatives of the colonial administration on the local level, and as such they could control their subjects through the differential allocation of prestations. Those Mossi who had maintained the traditional respect for the chiefs could look forward to less arduous tasks for the administration and to the avoidance of forced labor or army recruitment. Those who by their actions or attitude indicated that they had lost respect for the chiefs were penalized accordingly. Chiefs were also able to retain some control over their subjects because they were still the centers of social, economic, and political relations within their territories. They still received homage and presents from their more loyal or traditionalistic subjects, and with these goods and services they could bind other persons to themselves. Clever chiefs were able to manipulate the colonial administration and use it to enhance their traditional position so successfully that the administration and the missionaries had to take these men into account whenever they wished to establish contact with the population.

The desire of the missionaries to establish missions and schools for the purpose of converting the Mossi to Christianity presented the chiefs with a great challenge because, unlike the administration, the missionaries tried to establish direct contact with the people. The chiefs not only did not like to have Europeans living in their midst, but feared that they would lose control over their subjects who went to live near the missions. However, the chiefs could not refuse to grant the missionaries land on which to build missions and schools. They also provided labor for them, just as they did for the construction of administrative buildings and roads. Similarly, the chiefs recruited children for the mission schools in the same spirit as they recruited students for the schools of the administration. The difference between the Catholic missionaries and the administration with respect to education was that while the former were interested in educating the children of chiefs, they were also interested in children from other backgrounds. Nevertheless, the majority of chiefs continued to send to school

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their younger sons to become Moslems, and soon abandoned their active resistance to Islam.

Hesling did not permit the Mossi chiefs to revive their traditional religio-political rituals and ceremonies such as the Tense, but he continued to tolerate the Basgha. The French banned the Mossi market chiefs, because they believed (with some justification) that these officials used their offices to procure revenue for the chiefs. The difficulty was that the market chiefs were also responsible for arranging sacrifices to the market deities, which in the absence of such sacrifices would not protect the people from quarrels and violence in the market place. Some chiefs covertly retained their market chiefs; others obeyed the administration and remained anxious over the behavior of their subjects in the market. In general, however, most Mossi chiefs tried to adjust to the religious changes that were taking place, and sought to maintain at least surface amicability with all religious groups. Commenting upon the behavior of the Mogho Naba in this regard, Dim Delobson states:

> The Mogho Naba, above all, is a believer in animism like all his subjects, and it is hard to understand how he manages to reconcile his fetishism with the complex dogmas of Islam and with the many interdictions of Christianity. However, the Mogho Naba is quite capable of being a Catholic or a Moslem on appropriate occasions, while at the same time respecting the traditions of his ancestors. Thus, when the Christians are celebrating Christmas, the emperor of the Mossi devoutly attends midnight Mass. Nevertheless, he wears his fez [really the bonnet which is the symbol of his office], just as the bishop wears his miter. He likewise embraces Islam for the three Moslem festivals.[47]

Hesling failed in his attempt to develop the Upper Volta as a viable colony, and many of the chiefs whom he had used as his auxiliaries lost not only a great deal of power but also a great deal of prestige in the eyes of their subjects because of the role they had played vis-à-vis the administration. By 1929 the economy of the Upper Volta was in poor condition: cotton production had declined; taxes (raised from 5,800,000 francs in 1921 to 18,274,000 francs in 1927 and scheduled to be raised to 26,400,000 francs in 1930) were unbearable; many of the roads that were too extensive, too little used, and too difficult to maintain had been abandoned; and more than 46,000 laborers who had worked in the cotton fields and on the roads had fled to the neighboring Gold Coast.[48] The Colonial Minister, Sarraut, ordered that the colony of the Upper Volta be dismembered. He states in his decree of September 1932 that the suppression of the Upper Volta "would permit appreciable savings, and would make the adminis-

official, M. Louveau, to relieve the Mossi of excessive prestations and taxation. Louveau cut taxes from 33,000,000 to 24,000,000 francs, a decision which, according to Burthe d'Annelet,

> forward-looking as it was, represented only an amelioration of the past situation. In effect, the natives had exhausted all their reserves, sold their animals dirt cheap, and could not pay their taxes in an honest manner. This represents quite clearly an abuse of taxation. One must conclude from these facts that taxes had been raised too rapidly, and that these excesses had long surpassed the resources of the natives, even though it is the present depression that brings this out.[52]

The administration continued to require the Mossi chiefs to supply laborers, but found that many potential workers were leaving for the Gold Coast instead.

Despite the fact that Abidjan, the capital of the Ivory Coast, is far removed from Mossi country, the administration of the Ivory Coast hesitated at first to maintain an administrative center in Ouagadougou or to return to the Mossi chiefs any of their lost authority for administrative purposes. The situation had become so chaotic by the mid-1930's that Pierre Boisson, the Governor-General of French West Africa, issued a decree making the Ouagadougou region part of an administrative unit called the Upper Ivory Coast. He says:

> In acting thus we wish, on the one hand, to facilitate relations between the Upper and Lower Ivory Coast, and, on the other hand, to ensure for the Mossi population an effective representation of their particular interests, which do not always coincide with those of their neighbors. It also seems to us that in order to ensure this simultaneous liaison and separation, the Governor of the Ivory Coast ought to be seconded by a delegate in Mossi country who would be responsible for coordinating the local interests of [the Mossi] with the general interests of the colony.[53]

Boisson was under increasing pressure from such officials as Delavignette and Labouret to improve the administration of his territories, but when World War II broke out all plans for reform had to be shelved.[54]

The Mossi chiefs, especially the Mogho Naba, swiftly came to the support of France in her hour of need, and several thousand Mossi and other Voltaics were sent to the lines as soon as war broke out. According to Balima:

> In 1940, the old and popular Mogho Naba Kom II, shocked by the spectacle of the French disaster, . . . took his two eldest sons by the hand and declared to the Mossi people in the presence of General Barraud, senior commander of the troops: "Here are my two sons, my eldest sons, to fight for France." Soon afterward this French general was able to recruit more than

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their own commercial centers, they acted quite differently outside their country. Dubois reports that at Timbuktu, "the great town of pleasure" with the freest morals in the Sudan, the merchants from Bamako, Djenne, Sansanding and Touat spent a great deal of money in pleasure and in gifts to the beautiful women, but the "Mossi did not waste their money and left as soon as they had finished their affairs" (Dubois 1899 : 292–300).

The days of the caravans are now over in Mossi country, even though large groups of traders carry on the traditional commerce in livestock, cotton, kola nuts, some dried fish, and salt. As soon as the French conquered th country they formulated plants to control the caravans. One of the earliest reports, for June 1899, reads:

> The country is calm and direct administration was established at Koupela, Mane, Yake . . . The Mossi trade is mainly with the English colony of the Gold Coast. It consists mainly of livestock, very plentiful in Mossi country, which is exchanged for merchandise from England; copper and material goods . . . Our task will be to discover the materials of the northern Ivory Coast which could be exchanged for cattle, and when this information is forthcoming we should be able to direct the caravans quite easily to the Ivory Coast. At the same time the English will see their provisions of cattle and sheep diminish. They will flood us less with their cotton cloth, with their glass beads, and with their kola nuts. In their place, the products of French manufacture can arrive to us through the Ivory Coast after being exchanged for the products of our colony there.[8]

These plans did not succeed. The Mossi still export a great deal of their products towards the forest zones of Ghana, including their "numerous laborers" which, according to Beauminy writing in 1919, were "the principal riches actually utilizable in Mossi country". (Beauminy 1919 : 71–78). The migrants themselves are, in a sense, the greatest traders in contemporary Mossi society.

PRESENT-DAY TRADE

There is a constant flow of goods between Mossi country and the Ivory Coast and Ghana. Much of the trade to the former region is in the hands of the large commercial companies and as such is beyond the purview of this paper. What is of interest here is the trade which is conducted by the ordinary people. A great deal of this trade is highly unorganized and the result of one or two men, or as many as five men, joining together to trade goods to and from Ghana and the Ivory Coast. The types of goods sent down to these two areas are the same as those traded in pre-European times.

(8) Unpublished document in the archives of *Institut Français d'Afrique Noire*, Wagadougou, Voltaic Republic.

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439 complained to the district chief. Unfortunately for them the district
648 chief was absent, but his assistants did send out a call for the village chief. However, the chief refused to appear, saying that he would only do so when the district chief returned. The last thing I saw was the agents leaving the district chief's compound still unsatisfied with the whole affair." The sequel to this comes from my notes for December 26, 1955. "I inquired about the aftermath of the contraband case and was told that the whole affair is being referred to the courts at Abidjan. If the village chief is found guilty, he will have to pay a fine of 10,000 francs for the first ass and 3,000 francs for each subsequent ass, or in lieu of this go to jail. Informant said that since the village chief is a poor man, he would probably go to jail."

439 In spite of the contraband, the actual volume of trade appears to
433 be considerable. The production, trade and export of goods largely produced by the Mossi people in 1954 are set forth in Table 29.

TABLE 29

Production, Trade and Export of the Mossi (1954)

Product	*Amount*	*Export*	*Destination*
Almonds	35,000 tons	3,602	France and African countries
Peanuts	50,000 tons	3,031	France and African countries
Cattle	1,560,000 tons	101,000	Ghana, Togo and Ivory Coast
Sheep and Goats	2,115,000 tons	238,255	Ghana, Togo and Ivory Coast

439 These figures do not include the numerous items that drift over
● 167 the frontiers of Ghana and the Ivory Coast with the thousands of
464 migrants who go to these places each year. While the actual number of such migrants is difficult to ascertain, Pierre Dufour believes that it is "about 150,000 men per year, of whom 100,000 go to the Gold Coast and 50,000 to the Ivory Coast". (Dufour 1956 : 3). And since almost every one of these migrants takes with him some trade item such as a chicken or two, a small sheep or goat, a small sack of cereal or other vegetable produce or a few bands of cotton to defray part of his transportation costs, the amount of goods actually exported is
439 considerable. These statistics rarely enter into the account of goods
167 exported from Mossi country, since custom officers do not usually tax
464 migrants for small items, and do not make any record of them. Of
648 course, when the migrants carry large loads, these are recorded and the migrants must pay export taxes.

Greater attention is paid to the goods which those migrants who work in Ghana (but not in the Ivory Coast) bring back with them after one season or after several years of work, since the government of the Voltaic Republic derives a great deal of its tax revenue from duties on these goods.

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The migrants bring back all types of goods with them. According to Dufour: "Money as such is not brought back in very large proportion because manufactured products of the English colony (Gold Coast) cost less. Consequently, each year there is a great introduction of bicycles, sewing machines, fabrics". (Dufour 1956 : 140). One might add to this list kerosene lamps, zinc buckets, all types of wearing apparel, and all manner of household goods. An inventory of the common trunk of two returning migrants revealed the following merchandise: two kerosene lamps, two bottles of kerosene, two burnoose of black serge trimmed with pink silk, one white burnoose, two blue shirts, two khaki shorts, two tubes of Thermogene (a medicated rub), eight women's headkerchiefs, two Moslem fezes, two hand mirrors, two jars of Vaseline petroleum jelly, two pairs of sandals, one black scarf, packs of camphor balls, and one bottle of perfume. These goods represent the migrant's work over one season, from October to the following April, in the cacao fields of Ghana. Other migrants return with more, but few return with less. The actual value of these goods has been estimated by Dufour at about one billion francs C.F.A. per year. The custom duties which the migrants pay amount to more than 150 million francs C.F.A. annually—the sum they actually paid into the treasury of the Haute Volta in 1953 (Rouch 1956 : 139 ff.).

The migrants distribute to their relatives a good part of the goods they bring back, but a large proportion gets into the hands of other people either through the market or through more direct channels. Here is an example taken from my notes of March 24, 1956: "*Trading in bicycles:* Moussa gave Souliman a cow and an old bicycle for a new bicycle which Souliman had bought for 5,000 francs from a passing migrant. Souliman was trying to sell this same cycle for 6,250 francs, thus trying to make a profit of 1,250 francs just two or three days after he had bought it . . . Souliman slaughtered the cow which he received from Moussa and sold the beef to the local *restaurateur* at an additional profit. Souliman appears to be a sharp individual. He recently bought another bicycle for 5,000 francs from a migrant and resold it for 7,500 francs." This type of trading is not unusual, but the most typical articles resold by migrants in the local markets are lamps, worn shirts, shoes and other articles of clothing.

The growth of migration among Mossi men has led to a new type of commercial activity in the country. This is the selling of cooked food by the women to passing migrants. These women and young girls prepare food such as chicken, rice, millet balls, millet flour water and fried cakes which they bring to the principal thoroughfares to sell. Many of them arrive at the central village areas as early as four

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What this really means is that the market is the main communication 443
center of Mossi society and news of happenings in the region can be 203
heard there. If a person is in an area one can be sure that the people in the market will know about him, or that he will sooner or later visit the market.

The young men who have returned from work in the cacao fields 167
or towns of Ghana and the Ivory Coast add a great deal of color and 443
excitement to the rural markets of contemporary Mossi country 556
During the time these young men spend away, they give a great deal of thought and planning to the show they hope to put on when they make the grand tour *(mane do)* of their district's market place. The best day for this is the day of the "great market" and regardles of what day many migrants return to their homes, they wait for that Friday before they show themselves publicly.

On the morning of that day, the typical migrant dresses in his best 167
clothes, lends the remainder of his wardrobe to relatives, and together 443
they go to pay homage to the chief during the morning ceremony 556
(Wend pous yan). The migrant offers the chief such presents as a 431
small amount of money, an article of clothing or kola nuts, and replies 576
to the chief's questions about the health and welfare of all Mossi in the area whence the migrant came, the whereabouts of "lost" migrants, the nature of the work the migrants were doing, and so on. As soon as the young man receives the chief's permission to leave, he 569
goes to the market where he is quickly surrounded by *griots* who accompany him in periodic circumambulations of the market place, drumming and singing praises in honor of his ancestry. The migrant is also greeted warmly by his many friends to whom he then gives presents of money, beer and kola nuts. He acknowledges the general praise for having brought goods and clothing for his relatives and takes pride in seeing these relatives dressed in the cloths and clothing he has brought them. If young and unmarried, the migrant also seeks to take advantage of his new-found importance to make the first overtures to available young women or to renew his relationship with former paramours. Towards evening before going home, he rewards the *griots* with money and bear. Many a migrant attempts to prolong this feeling of grandeur by visiting other markets and by dressing up on subsequent grand market days, but after a few weeks he is re-incorporated into the ordinary market routine, and has to make room for the other newly-arrived migrants.

The market is also the place where important rites marking the 443
changing social status of individuals are carried out. Under normal 844
circumstances, the ceremonies attending the birth of a Mossi child are performed at home. When a woman has a number of stillbirths or

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market and set up their small tables to display all types of goods from 443
trinkets to single lumps of sugar. And the more numerous young 512
men, who have no goods but have money in their pockets, go to the 571
leaf-covered sheds, place their weapons on top of them, and take
seats from which to view the passing parade. Imperceptibly, the hum 576
in the market increases as people find their places and greet one
another with *Ne Raga*, the market greeting, until by 11:30 A.M. the
whole market reverberates with sounds of drumming, cries of ven-
dors, and the shrill voice of water hawkers and juvenile vendors. Now
the market is in full swing.

From midday until about 3:30 P.M., the Mossi market is a sea of
humanity—talking, laughing, arranging rendezvous, quarreling, sell-
ing, buying, parading, and (where youngsters are concerned) often
crying for want of money to buy a desired object. The return of mi- 612
grants lends additional color and excitement to the market as these 292
young people walk about in their new clothes, encouraging the drum-
mers to sing louder praises, the maidens to feel jealous of the clothes
of the migrants' female relatives, the former migrants to reminisce
about the days when they too had bright new clothes, and the young
boys to dream of going off one day to obtain the things they need.

Men, noting that their female relatives are spending too much time 443
looking over the wares of a vendor of European products or of the 512
kola-nut seller, wander over ostensibly to help in the purchase but 571
really to prevent love affairs. The failure to observe such a precaution 578
may be the cause of the shouting a man hears in the distance, and
off he hurries to see whether a lineage brother or a friend may need
his aid. He may either get into the battle himself, or aid the Raga
Naba and the other elders to chase the battlers out of the market
place, or to take them to the chief. This may indeed restore some
peace and good fellowship to the market.

Elders, now more interested in beer than in other pleasures, pass 443
the heat of the market day under the beer sellers' shed. From time 512
to time one of them may be interrupted by a young man bringing 571
him three kola nuts, one or two of which are immediately broken 273
and given to friends. However, when an oldster, whether a drinking 297
pagan or a Moslem teetotaler, sees or overhears a young man buying
four kolas, he may frown or smile in the knowledge that mischief is
afoot. Loud-voiced predictions of the consequences of evil-doing 297
may suddenly disturb the merrymakers as American missionaries 197
speaking in perfect More (the language of the Mossi) appear and
harangue the market people. Then, as suddenly, the *Americadamba*
depart in their large cars, and the curious pagans, amused Catholics
or hostile Moslems who had gathered to hear the gospel return to

361 /10/ The appearance of the villages indicates that their inhabitants feel safe. There are none of those hut clusters bunched together in [171] narrow walled-in areas to withstand the invasions of an El-hadj-Omar or of a Samory, as in Bambara country; none of those family groupings of flat-roofed huts, those strongholds sheltering the whole family from the grandfather to the last of his grandchildren to resist through sheer numbers the incursions of a more powerful neighbor, as in Gourounsi [592] country where the authority of chiefs is so weak. Here every family head, that is, a man with his wives, his unmarried children, and his servants, occupies a certain number of huts that together form his yri, a grouping Europeans call by its Bambara name, soukala.

342 The huts are circular and usually built of mud, but sometimes of 333 stakes driven into the ground and surrounded with seko, a kind of mat of plaited broad straw. The huts are surmounted with a roof, likewise of straw, resting on a wooden framework. When a native wishes to build a hut, he sets a date with a mason expert in laying mud bricks and notifies the village people. On the appointed day everyone comes to him. The women fetch water from the stream; the men excavate the soil a few meters from where the hut is to be erected; the children trample the mortar and carry to the mason the clods prepared by the old men who sit gravely around the mud pile. This is a festive occasion for the village, because the man who builds must supply drink for all, and food as well if he wishes to do things properly.

A circle is traced on the ground to indicate the outline of the hut, and the mason places the mud clods obliquely side by side along the circle. When the first round is finished, he starts another, and he proceeds in this fashion to mid-height. The work is then interrupted until the following day to give the first part a chance to dry. This is why several huts are usually built at the same time. No opening is left in the wall. When it is dry, a door is cut through, usually arched and so low that one must creep on hands and knees in order to get in. Well-to-do women close their hut with a wooden [414] door that opens inward; it is equipped with a wooden latch that works by means of a large key made of a stick with small iron rods perpendicularly attached to it. The children and even the husband usually leave their clothing, their luxury items, and their cowries in these closed huts which are better protected against thieves. Those who cannot afford this luxury of a door drive two stakes into the ground, one on each side of the opening, and slip a mat between the stakes and the wall.

FIRST BOOK

Chapter 1

The Origins of the Mossi

174 Most of the people who have dealt with the history of the Mossi have said that they come from the southeast, from the region of Gambakha or Gambaga (Dagomba). From there they are said to have occupied successively, going toward the north, the regions of Fada-N'Gourma, Ouagadougou, and Ouahigouya.

But before that where did they come from?

Captain Lambert, who commanded the circle of Ouagadougou in 1906-07, has tried to find an answer to this question in his study of the Mossi country, published in the Bulletin de la Société de Géographie de l'Afrique Occidentale française /Bulletin of the Geographic Society of French West Africa/, 1908.

174 171 "South of Bornu," he writes (op. cit. No. 7, page 166), "in the German Cameroons, people still exist who are known as Mossah and who, according to local tradition, were once master of the whole country. At present they are confined to a rather restricted area (the valley of Logone-Cameroons).

"The Mossah today bear such a striking physical resemblance to the Mossi that one could not have lived among them without recognizing the similarities; the tattooing is identical except for the circumflex accent which has been more recently acquired, as we shall demonstrate. The physical resemblance is almost total, and, besides, the Mossah have the same social organization as the Mossi, with all its characteristic hierarchy. In brief, /2/ there is no doubt as to the common origin of the two groups, and we can be certain that the presence of the Mossah in one part of Bornu and their traditional supremacy in the country in bygone days establish with certainty the habitat where the people we are dealing with must have been formed and developed. All this, of course, occurred during a period long before the events that allowed the Arab chroniclers to reveal their existence to us." (1)

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1. Actually, these "Arab chroniclers" is simply Es-Sadi, the author of Tarikh-es-Soudan /History of Sudan/, who wrote as late as the seventeenth century. As a matter of fact, it was the Portuguese writer, the great historian and geographer, Jean de Barros, author of l'Asia (1552-53), who was the first to reveal the existence of the Mossi in the sixteenth century. Léon, the African, did not know of them, nor did the Arab geographers and historians of the Middle Ages. Let us add that one should verify exactly in the area whether the Mossah resemble the Mossi other than by name. The matter has become relatively easy since the French occupation of the Cameroons.

171 Captain Lambert adds in a note:

174 "A new question arises here: can one consider the Mossi as being autochthonous to Bornu, or should their long stay in that region be considered as a step in the great migratory movement that, in successive phases, has brought them to the heart of the Niger estuary?

"In the present state of our knowledge, it would be unwise to take a firm position. We shall merely show that the feudal system that characterizes the political constitution of the Mossi can be compared to the system prevalent in Abyssinia. The hierarchical set-up seems to be identical in certain respects; leaders are appointed under analogous conditions, and the election of the Negus is accompanied by a period of anarchy which we also find here and which seems to go back to ancient traditions.

174 "It may well be that this goes beyond pure coincidence. While
197 we were in the process of editing a small dictionary of the Mossi language, we took the trouble to find out whether the dialects spoken in Abyssinia were likely to give us some clues on this point. We must admit, however, that the vocabularies of the Galla, Ahmaris /sic/, and Tigré languages that we consulted have not provided us /3/ with convincing arguments. But it is a proven fact today that, from the

174 viewpoint of ethnographic research, text similarities do not mean
197 very much, and idioms that are not fixed by writing may, within a few centuries, become deformed to the extent of being unrecognizable. While the value of grammatical comparisons is much more important, we have unfortunately had neither the time nor the means to make use of this method. We will, therefore, merely indicate this point of view which, in our opinion, could lead to fruitful observations. On
174 the other hand, missionaries have claimed that the Mossi traditionally would have preserved the symbolic notion of the Christian cross, a fact we have been unable to verify and which, without being impossible a priori, seems unlikely."

After this parenthesis about the distant origins of the Mossi, Captain Lambert continues:

"It is indeed highly probable, and here again, lacking written documents, we have only oral traditions to base our opinions on, that the Mossi people, split up by the impact of a Moslem invasion from the east, must have, through successive waves and losing ground in the opposite direction, spread further toward the west, so that the Mossi-bé (1), who still form several agglomerations in the western

1. Mossi-bé is simply the plural of the word Mossi in Peuhle /Péul/ language.

part of Sokoto and even in the Dounzou circle and who also show striking analogies with the Mossi proper, can also be used as a reference. (Captain Lambert adds in a note: "Among the Mossi-bé we
304 find the circumflex accent which would complete the ethnic tatooing
171 of the Mossi as it is today. This mark rightly belongs to the natives
64 of the left bank of the Niger river up to the angle formed by the Dollol-Maouri.") These agglomerations indicate, in a very approximate fashion, the location of the Mossi empire at the historical period that evidently marks its apogee of power; toward 1350, as we saw /4/ in the Tarikh, Timbuktu was conquered by the sultan of Mossi."

174 The incident to which Captain Lambert refers here is the con-
114 quest of Timbuktu by the Mossi (in 1333 exactly, according to the most advanced calculations) (1), which is mentioned by Es-Sadi in

174 Yemen. But the indication that this country is presently inhabited by the Songhay /sic/ certainly points to Djerma or Zaberma, slightly east of the Niger River in the Say and Dosso region. By dissociating the Moslem legend (undoubtedly created by some Yarse Moslem of the Mossi) from the rest of the tale, one still comes back to the temporary and distant occupation of Djerma by the ancestors of the Mossi.

174 Delafosse, on the other hand, contrary to Dr. Ruelle, Captain
114 Lambert, and Lieutenant Marc, although, like the others, he has the Mossi come from Dagomba to their present habitat (see Haut-Sénégal-Niger /Upper Senegal and Niger/, Vol. I, pp. 305-310), seems disinclined to accept the idea of an eastern origin. He says (page 310, in a note), "Lieutenant Marc seems to want to attribute an eastern
174 origin to the Mossi. To strengthen his hypothesis, he says that the
171 organization of the court of the Morho nâba (emperors of the Mossi)
644 is unique in western Africa, while there are /11/ equivalents in
114 Haoussa, Bornu, etc. I should like to point out that this argument is of little value, precisely because, contrary to Lieutenant Marc's theory, one finds in all ancient states of western Africa (Ghana, Mali, Tekrour, Gao, Dahomey, Benin, etc.) an organization absolutely analogous to that of the Mossi court (see part IV of this work and compare with the reports of Arab geographers and early European
174 travelers)." Of course I agree with Delafosse in not finding Lieutenant
114 Marc's argument very penetrating (1), but Ruelle, Lambert, and

1. Here is the argument as developed by Lieutenant Marc (op. cit., p. 134, 135):

"The feudal organization of the Mossi country, the court of the Moro-Naba, its pages, and its eunuchs, are all unique in western Africa. On the other hand, the black monarchs, as they are known in central Africa, seem to live in a setting that greatly resembles the one in which the Moro-Naba lives. The sultans of Zinder, Bornu, and Wadai have also a court, eunuchs, and pages. The little we know about the organization of their empires seems rather similar to what we have seen among the Mossi. But our

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documentation on this matter is not extensive enough to enable us to attempt a comparative study."

Marc do not base themselves exclusively on this argument. They also use a tradition of the Mossi themselves, and it would doubtless be unwise to reject it without examining it further. An argument that could be cited in favor of a very ancient occupation of Djerma by the ancestors of the Mossi is Binger's following remark: "The Mossi must [171 411] have remained in contact with the Touareg /Tuareg/ for a fairly long time (2) ... since they partially adopted their dress and use, as they do, the crutch-handled [poignée en croix] saber."

2. In this quotation, I have omitted the word "after," since Binger assumes that the Mossi, after taking Timbuktu in 1326 by order of the Mali, remained there until 1433, having, therefore, one century of contact with the Touareg. In reality, the Mossi stayed in Timbuktu only a very short time, and this raid could not have given them a prolonged contact with the Touareg, from whom they were separated before the fall of Timbuktu, and again as soon as they left the town, by the entire Songhaï country stretching along the banks of the Niger River. On the contrary, if they had formerly occupied Djerma, before the Djermabé or the Songhaï, one can easily understand this contact with the Touareg as well as the existence of the sword with the short crutch-handle /poignée en croix (Binger wrongly calls this straight sword a saber). In addition, when Binger speaks of the Targui /Tuareg/ dress, adopted [291] in part by the Mossi, he doubtless thinks of the lithâm (or face veil) which was then worn by the Mossi horsemen. At the present time, they are no longer worn, and I have never seen them among the Mossi, where I lived 1908-1909.

do, the crutch-handled /poignée en croix/ saber."

Actually, we must admit that we know nothing certain about the Mossi outside of Dagomba. This is what I /12/ clearly stated in my Noir du Yatenga /Blacks of Yatenga/ (1917) (1). The move into

1. See pp. 57 and 58.

Djerma is conjectural, and the question concerning the Mossah would have to be settled by an inquiry made in the Cameroons. At one time I was tempted to connect the Mossi with the races of the south, the Agni-Achanti /Ashanti/, and it seems certain that close relationships exist (2) between the numerical vocabularies of the Voltaic

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2. See Appendix No. I. In addition, a woman called Aoura-Poko plays as important a part in the Baoulé historic tradition as in the Mossi historic tradition. And, although the word for woman is oba, eba, bla in Achanti, Abron, and Baoulé, the Baoulé heroine is called Poko, like Poko (woman) or Pokotoéga (woman of the baobab) of the Mossi tradition.

group and the Agni-Achanti group. But can one base a linguistic comparison on vocabulary alone? It would also have to be proven, grammatically speaking, that the Voltaic linguistic group is very close to the Agni-Achanti group. (3) And this has not yet been done.

3. Delafosse says that there is no special relation between these two groups from a grammatical viewpoint. In a more general manner, Delafosse would now like to believe, as far as Mossi origins are concerned, that Mossi residence in their present country goes back far before the eleventh century A. D. Apparently only a band of pillagers and happy warriors, a princely dynasty came

141 · /14/ 3. Page 524. If Dr. Ruelle had taken care to measure Mossi women, it is probable that the cephalic index would have been larger, since we know, for instance, that Lobi women have an average horizontal cephalic index of 75.89, while the men have only 74.36; Birifon women have 77.35, while the men have only 74.58; and finally, Dagari women have 72.32, while the men have only 72.09. This means that the women have a shorter skull than the men, yet it is no broader, that is to say, they have a smaller cerebral capacity. This also undoubtedly means that these women's ancestors probably belonged, more or less, to the pygmy or Negrito race whose unequivocal traces are still found on the Ivory Coast, a racial group with skulls shorter than those of the tall Negroes without being commensurately broader, quite the contrary.

We see, thus, that 12 Mossi out of 100 are ultradolichocephalic or hyperdolichocephalic, 53 are properly called dolichocephalic, 32 subdolichocephalic, and 3 are subbrachycephalic.

The average is 74.65, that is, clearly dolichocephalic. The extremes of the indices are: maximum, 81.76; minimum, 65.62. The spread is 16.14.

141 The peoples who most resemble the Mossi on Dr. Ruelle's table
971 are:

the Ouangarbé or Yarsé	74.95	(average)
the Samo	74.90	"
the Nounouma	74.40	"
the Birifon	74.58	"
the Lobi	74.36	"

141 The nasal index for 100 Mossi is:

1 where the nasal index figures between 80 and 84.9

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2	where the nasal index figures	between 85 and 89.9
9	-	between 90 and 94.9
14	-	between 95 and 99.9
29	-	between 100 and 104.9
17	-	between 105 and 109.9
11	-	between 110 and 114.9
15	-	between 115 and 119.9
2	-	above 120

The average is 104.60. Considered in detail, we find one mesorrhine (up to 85), 23 platyrrhine (from 85 to 100) and 74 hyperplatyrrhine (from 100 to 120) (1).

1. Page 538.

[171] The Mossi is thus decidedly platyrrhine and even hyperplatyrrhine, although less so than the Bambara.

As far as height is concerned, the average of 94 Mossi men is 1.71 /15/ (exactly 1.712). But this average would be quite a bit lowered if Dr. Ruelle could have measured women (1).

[171]

1. Lobi women measure on the average 1.66, while the men measure 1.75; Birifon women measure 1.62, while the men measure 1.75; Dagari women are 1.59, while the men are 1.72 (p. 550).

141 144 In conclusion, Dr. Ruelle's study tells us that the Mossi are dolichocephalic, platyrrhine, and tall. These are characteristics usually attributed to the Black race in general (tall Negroes, not Negritos). These traits do not differentiate the Mossi to any extent from the peoples surrounding them. In order to reach anthropological conclusions about the origin of the Mossi, more far-reaching somatic studies than those now in existence will need to be made on the Mossi themselves and on the hundreds of Negro tribes living in the Sudan, between Abyssinia and the Atlantic and between the Sahara and the Gulf of Guinea.

794 sunrise and at sunset, during the first week of the winter season, then, later, only every six days, in the morning at sunrise. They go to the [778] altars, formed by three conical stones, to offer sacrifices and libations, always surrounded by all the people, the heads of families, tom-tom players, and family masks (Ouango).

"During the entire year, in a highly decorated niche dug into a [372] wall of their houses, the priests watch the sacred fire with which, at the end of the rainy season, they must light the great purifying brush fires."

Lieutenant Desplagnes adds in a note:

"They make sacrifices at each new moon, and then have seven great feasts each year for the divinity. Finally, during the sun festivals, [237] they use a cow's tail to tie the sun to the earth and assure its fertilizing warmth." /31/

794 In my book Noir du Soudan, Pays Mossi et Gourounsi /Blacks of the Sudan, Country of the Mossi and Gourounsi/ (1912), I reproduced ●171 this page of Lieutenant Desplagnes without comment (page 590). In addition, I described the cult of the sun among the Gourounsi, who, like the Mossi, are part of the Voltaic family. Thus, on page 241, I wrote:

"The Kassonfra, like the Nounouma and the Menkiéra, say that they offer no sacrifice either to the moon or to the sun. However, I found an exception in the village of Nitiédougou (canton of Sia). It would seem that here, in the early mornings when the sun rises and begins to leave the horizon, people offer it a chicken or whatever else they wish to offer. Moreover, this sacrifice is only made when the voro (1) says it should be made.

1. Soothsayer.

"My informant claims that this same procedure is followed, not only in Nitiédougou and in the little canton of Sia, but also in all of the Kasouna (Kassonfra and Kassonboura) country. He must be mistaken (2) since my previous informants and my interpreter, who is

2. Today, on the other hand, I tend to think he was right.

Kassonboura, have neither seen nor heard of anything like it."

794 lightning as well, which he can do only if he is the Sky-Atmosphere.
[82] "The natural phenomena, " he says, "are sometimes attributed to God. Lightning kills those who have done evil, it kills the animal ill-gotten through fraud or theft, and it is God who sends lightning as a punishment..." Thus, Ouendé, while being the sun, is also the Sky-Atmosphere, and other things too, for he has characteristics that go
[797] beyond the sun divinity and the sky divinity. We must not forget here that the Allah of the Moslems is well known among the Mossi and has his established representatives there (Yarsé of Mandé origin, Peul, etc.), or temporary ones (merchants who have come from the north or south, Soninnké /Soninke/, Songhay, Dyoula). Thus, for a long time, /33/ the Moslem conception of god could and has, in effect, rubbed off on the sun-atmosphere-god of the Mossi. The latter might have waged war on the Songhay sultans who led religious crusades against them, yet it is also true that they were content to bestow upon their most important god the remarkable characteristics that struck them and that they admired in the Moslem god. Thus, Ouendé gradually became more and more a supreme god, although it would seem that in the beginning, he was only a sun god and an atmosphere god, first separated, later fused with a predominance of the sun god element.

To summarize, it has been well established that one finds the cult of the sun among the Mossi, along with many other elements as
[171] we have just shown. I have since found this cult among the Dorhosié (1922) and the Gouro (1923). However, among the Gouro, it is relegated to a few fetishists and does not interest the bulk of the population. Among the Dorhosié, on the contrary, it interests the vast multitude and occasions a solemn sacrifice made in the winter, at the end of the old year and the beginning of the new. Among these people, however, the sun divinity has not become a leading divinity as it has among the Mossi. It is one divinity among several and is rather subordinate to the cult of the Earth-brush and that of the Sky-atmosphere. Moreover, I am persuaded that more far-reaching studies among all the branches of the Voltaic population would uncover, here and there, the cult of the sun, as among the Mossi, the Gourounsi, the Dorhosié, etc.

[pp. 34 ff. not processed]

4: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1957
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631 these conquerors even adopted the language and culture of the indigenous
642 populations, but introduced an "administrative machinery" that welded
174 scattered local groups into loose confederacies without affecting in any
114 great degree the inner life of these groups.[8] Rattray's hypothesis appears to explain quite adequately the reasons for the cultural homogeneity of the Mossi and the other Voltaic peoples. It also conforms to what we know from recent historical times of the organizing and conquering abilities of such figures as Samory and El Hadj Omar. These men carved out veritable empires in this area in remarkably short periods. However, we need not accept Rattray's hypothesis that foreigners were the ones who instituted "administrative machinery" among the Mossi. It is highly possible that the Mossi state might have been the result of internal Voltaic development when one Dagomba lineage established its hegemony over scattered local people in this area. There is some evidence here that the Mossi state had many of the features of the widespread Negro pattern of political structure so common to the other Sudanic states, and this fits in very well with what Professor Greenberg reports about the basic African nature of these states.[9]

631 It is clear that the Mossi state was a complex entity and many persons
642 cannot describe it without calling it feudal.[10] However, the question of
121 feudalism itself is a vexing one, and many scholars limit the use of this
171 term to describe the political system of medieval France and possibly Japan. In fact, not many people would admit the presence of feudal states in Africa although some, such as S. F. Nadel, who worked among the Nupe, call the Sudanic states feudal and talk about fiefs and vassalage. It is now generally agreed that feudalism, despite its other aspects, is basically a form of government. Stephenson gives the classic features of a feudal state as: (1) fief-holding with vassalage; (2) homage and fealty; (3) mutual obligations between lords and vassals; (4) military service from the vassals; (5) inheritance of fiefs by heirs of vassals, usually by primogeniture; (6) subinfeudation; (7) attendance at court; and (8) wardship and marriage arrangements by which fiefs could be held in trust for minors and, in the case of female heirs, husbands who can render homage for them.[11]

An examination of the Mossi political system in terms of the first six characteristics of feudalism shows that this system conforms very well to the specifications for a feudal system. The Mossi did not have an elaborate court structure on the European model and, since only mature males could inherit fiefs, no arrangements for wardships and marriages were necessary. Furthermore, I do not think that these two traits are necessary for feudalism, and they can be considered as cultural content that need not be present in all social processes with similar functions.

Mossi-like societies present a special problem to political theorists because of the importance of kinship in their political systems. Coulborn[12] strongly insists that "A feudal society . . . is based on contract. It is not

4: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1957
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based on kinship." He contrasts the Geselschaft feudal system with the tribal Gemeinschaft, and recognizes the possible transition from Gemeinschaft relationships to Geselschaft relationships in the evolution of culture. However, this admission places Coulborn on the horns of a dilemma as he does not accept feudalism as a step in the evolution of the state, but as a form of government that develops after the breakdown of a state and is used for state restoration. He states that "The place of feudalism in the rise of civilized societies is not yet complete, but we must pause to notice the profound importance of the substitution of something different for kinship relations."[13] We see from the Mossi data that they used kin bonds instead of warrior-band bonds as the basis for delimiting the persons chosen for government. The warrior-band members were rewarded with hereditary administrative positions. It must be emphasized, however, that despite kinship bonds, it was the loyalty of a man that determined whether his heirs received his fief . . . . These new vassals were required to renew pledges of allegiance to a ruler sometimes very remotely related. It must be borne in mind that kinship does play a part in political systems that range from feudalism to twentieth century Western democracy.

We cannot fail to observe that it was in regard to the society of the Chou period in China, one similar to that of the Mossi, that Coulborn was compelled to withhold judgment as to the nature of its political system. Shang society seemed to have had many of the tribal characteristics of the people found in the pre-Mossi Voltaic area. Chou had to face the problems of ancestor veneration associated with the tribal lands, and used some of the same techniques as the Mossi. Coulborn found many of these features "foreign to a tribal society" and finally decided to "leave open the decision as to whether Chou China developed a feudal system or a system of city states as its first enduring polity."[14]

In conclusion I shall say that the political system of the Mossi had definite feudal characteristics. These feudal characteristics did not come as a result of the breakdown of a pre-existing state, but served as techniques for building a state from small scattered groups. I should certainly like to keep open the whole question of feudalism, especially as it applies to the question of the origin of the pristine state, until more comparative data from Africa can shed additional light on this important subject.

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5: Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1959
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PETER B. HAMMOND

13. *Economic Change and Mossi Acculturation*

121 Some five thousand Mossi from the kingdom of Yatenga in the Upper
178 Volta have been resettled on the newly developed lands of the Niger
[177] Irrigation Project in the French Sudan. Removed from a cultural setting
which has been relatively undisturbed by the influence of European
[166] civilization, they are required to adapt themselves rapidly to an economic situation structured and directed by Europeans. Economic organization being the variable involved, a study of their adjustment provides an opportunity to examine some of the cultural problems and processes related to economic development in underdeveloped areas.

131 Yatenga is the northernmost of four Mossi kingdoms located in the
101 Upper Volta. It is a sub-Saharan savanna land of red earth, low rainfall, gently rolling plains, and low hills. Ouahigouya, the capital, gives its name to the French administrative unit, the Cercle de Ouahigouya, which has governed the kingdom from its headquarters in this ancient city since its conquest in 1895.[1]

101 To distinguish themselves from the people of the neighboring king-
doms of Ouagadougou, Fada-N'Gourma, and Tenkodogo, the Mossi of
173 the Yatenga sometimes speak of themselves as "Yadise" (those of Yadiga). This name refers to the fact that they regard themselves as being descended, as a nation, from Naba Yadiga, the half-mythical warrior-prince from Ouagadougou who broke away from his father's dynasty to form the separate political entity, Yatenga, which bears his name (*ya* for "Yadiga" and *tenga* for "country"). The Mossi have not always been numerically and culturally dominant in the Yatenga, as they are today. They recognize that their ancestors came from the south, from Mamprusi and Dagomba in the northern territories of Ghana.

171 Highly organized politico-religious states representing the cultural amalgamation of native and foreign populations and institutions are characteristic of the Voltaic region of West Africa. Acknowledging that we "owe to Rattray the discovery that these central Voltaic tribes are

[1] Capitaine Noire, *Monographie du Cercle de Ouahigouya* (Ouahigouya, 1904), p. 15.

5: Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1959
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composed of two major groups of communities," Fortes goes on to describe this pattern succinctly: 171

> On the one side are those that claim to be descendants of immigrants from parts of the country other than their present habitats. On the other side are communities that claim to be the autochthonous inhabitants. . . . Many of the immigrant communities claim descent from forbears of the Mampuru ruling stock. Though now wholly amalgamated with the alleged aboriginal inhabitants, they have certain ritual observances and a system of chieftainship similar to those of the Mamprusi. . . . The institution distinctive of the autochthonous communities is the office of "Custodian of the Earth." This ritual office, involving priestly functions in connection with the cult of the Earth, is found among many West African peoples from the Senegal to the mouth of the Niger. In the Voltaic region it is the exclusive prerogative of the autochthonous communities.[2] [793]

The inhabitants of the Yatenga at the time of the arrival of the Mossi were the Kurumankobe, or Fulse, as they are called by the Mossi. Their descendants recognize their indigenous origin but have become almost wholly acculturated to the Mossi. While most Mossi bear the sib name Wedraogo and maintain political control in the Yatenga, the descendants of the Kurumankobe usually have the sib name Savadogo and are excluded from the exercise of political authority. They have retained the custodianship of the earth, and the elders of their lineages and sibs are the Mossi's *Tenga Soba namba*, their "earth custodians," charged with propitiating the supernatural forces of nature. 173 563 614 [793]

POLITICAL AND SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

The present king of the Yatenga, the *Yatenga Naba*, is a lineal descendant of the first ruler, Naba Yadiga. The members of the lineage of the king are called "those who maintain themselves upon us" (*riim namba*). Directly subordinate to the authority of the Yatenga Naba are his four grand ministers, each of whom has authority over a particular province (*solum*) of the Yatenga.[3] 631 [644] [635]

The province over which each of the grand ministers presides as lord is divided up into a number of cantons (*tense*), each of which is ruled by a chief who is the central political authority both of the village in which he resides and of the villages within the canton. Like the province, the concept of the canton is not precisely territorial. Some villages may owe 631 634

[2] Meyer Fortes, *The Dynamics of Clanship among the Tallensi* (London: Oxford University Press, 1945), p. 6.

[3] These provinces refer not only to geographical areas of the kingdom but to particular categories of the population. For example, the *Balum Naba* has direct authority over the southern regions of the Yatenga and indirect authority over the cantons of Riziam and Zittenga, political entities which have never fully recognized the central authority of the *Yatenga Naba*. This same minister is also especially charged with maintaining liaison with certain of the more important earth custodians throughout the Yatenga.

244 The Mossi also grow sorrel.

They have two kinds, the dakissé sorrel and the dangono sorrel. These are Bambara names. In Mossi, dakissé is called bi and dangono is called ouéréda.

The Mossi plant bi around the millet fields at the same time as millet, at the beginning of the winter season. Holes are made with a koutiaga for the seeds, which are put in by hand and covered with earth. Then the plants are allowed to grow. After three months, the sorrel is ripe. The leaves are then removed to be used in the sauce, and the stalk is cut at mid-height to get the seeds, which are also used in the sauce.

[71] Like the Bambara, the Mossi sometimes plant both kinds of sorrel in the peanut and underground pea lougan, and sow them along with these plants when the first rains begin to fall. The sorrel is gathered eight days after the peanuts and underground peas.

252 The Mossi cook dakissé seeds in a canari full of water. Then they remove the jar from the fire and top it with another one that covers the mouth of the first jar completely. This is allowed to sit for four or five days, and then the dakissé seeds are removed and ground in a small mortar to make flour.

Then the ashes of burnt wood are placed with water in a perforated gourd that serves as a filter. /480/ The ashes are filtrated into a canari that stands underneath. They are then mixed with dakissé flour and transferred to a canari that is left covered for five or six days. When these are over, the mixture is cooked for the last time. It is placed in a gourd that is perforated and that sits on a canari full of water. The water is heated, and the vapor comes in through the small holes in the upper gourd and steams the dakissé for an hour. The paste thus obtained is dried in the sun for a whole day, and then placed in a canari where it is sought as the need arises.

Like the Bambara the Mossi sometimes take the dakissé seeds, mix them with millet grains, boil the whole thing, and then eat it.

As for the leaves, they are cooked by being placed in water and boiled with salt.

As far as dangono or ouéréda is concerned, the Mossi, like the Bambara, remove the bark. They allow this bark to cook in water, and add crushed peanuts and salt. The sauce thus obtained is called ziédo by the Mossi and na by the Bambara.

137 They are 7 or 8 meters tall, 10 meters at most, and their huge fruits are bunched in clusters of five or six rather than forty or fifty.

There are no rônier in the Mossi bush itself, but there are some 137 in every Mossi village. They originated from seeds tossed at random 222 after eating the fruits, or from an ancient cultivation of the tree. The rônier, therefore, is not a natural product of Mossi territory and should not, in all exactitude, be listed among the gathering crops. On the other hand, can it be listed with the cultivated crops at the present day, and can we call cultivation the act of tossing seeds to the ground in order to get rid of them? No matter what the truth may be, the Mossi eat /503/ the fruits of their rônier but do not extract any palm wine. As we have just said, they use the fibers of the leaves for their wickerwork.

137 While the rônier occur in Mossi territory, there are, on the other hand, no palm-oil trees and palmier-ban /?/. Those begin to appear only in Gourounsi territory, to the south of the Mossi.

222 We have just reviewed the most important gathering trees in 137 the area, but the Mossi bush contains many others, less important to be sure but nevertheless useful, which we shall now mention.

First, there is the ganra or ganga (sounsoun in Mandé, diomba in Peuhl and Sarakolé). This is the medlar tree of West Africa. In appearance, it is a big tree similar to the karité but even bigger, with a thicker and more powerful trunk.

The fruit is a medlar, smaller than the European one. When green, it has the same acrid taste and numbs the mouth. When ripe, it is such as we eat it in Europe. The natives begin to eat it during the rainy season and consume it until January.

386 The wives of Bambara blacksmiths make a varnish for pots and canari with the bark of the sounsoun. As for the wives of Mossi 171 blacksmiths, they prefer to use for this purpose the bark of two trees we shall mention later, the nobora and the sibi. In Gourounsi territory, on the other hand, the women who make pottery pluck the medlars while still green and crush them. They add water, thus making a sort of varnish which they use on the canari after they are fired. The ganra is called kano in Nounouma, kakano in Kassouna, kalo in Sissala, and ganra or ganga in Nankana and Mossi.

825 Let us add that among the Mossi, as in all of West Africa, the ganra tree is closely related to fetishistic superstitions, and will be mentioned again in a later chapter on religion.

592 father cannot procure one or delays too long in doing so. The son
584 who secedes in this fashion goes to work for a chief or noble who
464 will later give him a wife as a reward. The first male child and the
565 first female child born of this union, however, will devolve to the chief or noble who gave the wife. He will use the male child as a servant, and the girl to be handed out as a reward to someone working for him. This is a side effect of the political organization on the family. This secession on the part of sons can only occur, indeed, thanks to the existence of chiefs and nobles in sufficient numbers to permit the secessionists to find work and employment among them without difficulty. Among the Bobo and Nounouma, such a situation could not exist.

Let us note that this institution, while restricting the authority of the family head or household head, has strengthened the power of the Mossi aristocracy.

592 In closing, let us note a few details about the Mossi soukala
361 from a physical standpoint. It is a cluster of round huts, about five or six of them, usually built of red earth with a straw roof and connected to each other by a concave wall made likewise of red earth. The soukala is thus fortified, as it were, and sheltered from the outside.

592 The Mossi soukala is quite similar to the Malinké or Dialonké
361 "compound" /literally, "square"/, which also consists of a cluster of clay huts with straw roofs. Among the Malinké and Dialonké,
● 171 however, the huts are often connected by a palisade or a mere séko instead of a red earth wall as they are here. Another difference is /557/ that the doors of the huts of the Mossi soukala are so low that one must often creep in on all fours. Furthermore, there are no porches such as are found among the Malinké and Dialonké. In spite of those differences, however, the Mossi soukala bear a general resemblance to the Guinean soukala, while they are in no way related to the massive citadels of the Gourounsi and Kipirsi.

The Mossi soukala, on the other hand, are set about 50 meters apart. The maize plot surrounding the soukala lies directly around it, as among the Bobo, Gourounsi, Kipirsi, etc., while among the Malinké and Dialonké of Guinea the garden plot of each compound is located outside the village boundaries, since the compounds stand

592 only one or two meters apart, close together. It is true that there
361 is sometimes a small plot within the séko....
171 The soukala or compound is called iri in Mossi, the hut rogo or dogo, and the soukala head irisoba (from soba, "chief" and iri, "compound").

462 We shall close this analysis of the Mossi family with a few notes
562 on the status of women and that of slaves.

First of all, Mossi women help with the tilling. They do not clear the fields, it is true, but they participate in all other field tasks along with the men. They do this only in the morning, however, since they spend the afternoon on household tasks or on their little individual plots, for they have small fields of large white millet, underground peas, beans, or peanuts.

They also do household tasks: they pound and crush the grain. Large millet or sorghum is, as we know, pounded first and then crushed, while small millet is crushed after being threshed.

462 The Mossi set their crushing stones in huge round clay /banco/
252 tables which are built outside the soukala and which are used by
412 the whole quarter. This is a strictly Mossi characteristic which is not found among the /558/ Bobo, Gourounsi, etc., in short, among any of the other groups who nevertheless use the same stones. Those large round tables are not high. They are about 1 or 1.20 meters in height and approximately 6 meters in diameter, with a correspondingly large circumference. The Mossi set in their crushing stones all around the circumference, and each table can thus hold ten, twelve, or even more. Every evening at nightfall the women of the soukala which are around it, women, young girls, etc., come together to crush their grain. They are usually in the simplest of garb, bare as the back of my hand, for the work is hard and demands a continuous back-and-forth motion of the arms, the upper part of the body, and the body as a whole.

To make those tables, they first build a circular wall to the desired height of the table, and then the whole inner space is filled up with earth almost to the top. This earth is pounded thoroughly, and then well-tamped casings are fashioned on the horizontal circumference in which are set the stones on which the crushing is done. The stones are firmly ensheathed in the clay, which is then allowed to dry.

462 Those large tables are called niénouga in Mossi, the stones on
252 which the crushing is done are called néré, and the movable stones
412 used for crushing are called nérébila "little néré"/.

171 We stated above that those large clay tables are peculiarly
252 Mossi and are not to be found among the Bobo, Habé, or Gourounsi.
412 Actually the latter, as we saw earlier, set their stones in small clay tables which are only 1 meter high and 1 meter in diameter and thus quite small, and which stand in every soukala inside each woman's room. They also make slightly larger tables, long ones that look like large earthen bathtubs of a sort or that even bear a certain resemblance to crude sarcophagi, and into which the stones are set. Those, too, stand within the soukala, in dark, dirty rooms. Sometimes, the Gourounsi merely set down their crushing stones under a shelter covered with wood and straw, built at the gate of their citadel-soukala. Three or four stones are placed upon two thick and solid parallel sticks which in turn are held /559/ about 50 centimeters from the ground on four solid forks thrust into the ground. In this case the woman must kneel down in order to crush the grain. I have observed this method chiefly among the Menkiéra, that is to say, in the northern part of the Leo residency.

462 To go back to female work among the Mossi. Along with the crushing of grain, they do the cooking, fetch firewood and water, do the gathering, prepare the products derived from gathering, etc. We saw earlier how those products are made, and we shall not go over it again.

252 Among the Mossi, the only known millet dishes are sarabout
171 and vessala. Couscous is unknown. This is rather strange, since the dish thus called is known practically throughout West Africa.

Sarabout (the Mossi word) is what the Malinké and Bambara call tô, the Foulbé, Toucouleur, and Foulah niri, the Sarakolé souré, the Maure /Moors/ lisi.

As for couscous, the Malinké and Bambara call it baci, the Foulbé, Toucouleur, and Foulah lakiri, the Sarakole fouto, the Moors and Arabs couscous.

To or sarabout is prepared for immediate consumption. Couscous is prepared for relatively long storage.

252 This is how their methods of preparation differ. To make to or sarabout, one simply leaves the millet flour to cook in boiling water, stirring occasionally with a piece of wood or a spoon. To make couscous, on the other hand, one takes a canari, fills it with water, sets it to boil on the fire, and then puts the millet into a gourd which is perforated at the bottom and thus makes a sort of strainer. This gourd is placed over the canari where the water is boiling, and covered with a straw dish. The steam emanating from the canari comes through the holes into the gourd, and since the latter is covered the steam remains there a long time. The millet flour is thus cooked by steaming. At the end of a period of time, the gourd is removed and its contents are left to cool and to dry in the sun. Once the millet flour has thus been cooked and dried, it will keep /560/ almost indefinitely. It is eaten either with water or with milk, which is better, or else, if one has some meat, by boiling the latter and pouring the sarabout into the pot.

The Mossi may not be familiar with couscous, but they are familiar with vessala. This method of preparing millet consists of boiling the flour as it is boiled for sarabout. The difference lies in the amount of flour used. When the mush has been cooked it is allowed to cool, and then fresh or curdled milk is bought and mixed in with it. This kind of mush is made only for the purpose of mixing [171] it with milk. The Bambara are familiar with vessala and call it by name of fisan or finsan.

484 252 171 The Mossi, when they are traveling, often cook millet grains which have not been reduced to flour. This is called honandourou-ki ("cooked millet"). The Bambara call it niobalabala, the Foulbe m'bafna-gaouri, the Sarakolé ilé-n'kioro, and all these words have the same meaning. This method of preparing millet is quite unusual, and is resorted to only when the time or means to reduce millet grains to flour are lacking.

[462] 273 Mossi women also make dolo (dama). To do this, they soak the grains of large red millet in water for two days, and then expose them to the sun and crush them. The flour is boiled for two hours, and then strained and boiled in the necessary amount of water for a whole day. This is transferred to another canari and allowed to cool.

567 As for the bagaré, they live separately, work for themselves, see to their own subsistence, etc.

Their duties are as follows:

1. To come and work one day a week on their master's field (on that day, as on other days, they provide their own food).

2. To come and work for their master in exceptional circumstances, such as for example when the master gathers all his neighbors to work on his field.

3. To come and greet their master every year after the harvest. They give him a basketful of millet. When the harvest has been poor, they are exempted from this gift.

4. The master may request from his slave chickens, sheep, an ox or a cow. Chickens may not be denied under any circumstances. As for sheep or beeves, the slave may refuse to provide the animal requested, but then he is expected to go and sell it at market right away, and to give half the money to his master. If the slave refuses to go and sell the animal at market, the master has the right to seize his movable property and sell it.

[426] 5. When the master has debts, the bagaré must help him pay them.

428 As for inheritance, when a bagaré died his master left all the
567 property to the children. The oldest son of the bagaré inherited, but he gave something to the other sons. If there was no son, the younger brother inherited. If the sons were children the younger brother also inherited, at least temporarily. If there were no male heirs, the master inherited the property but gave some to the daughters.

567 In short, the position of the bagaré is more similar to that of /566/ serfs than to that of slaves proper. In this respect, their status is a far cry from the familial status of the slaves we have described
[171] up to now, and it is much closer to the status of the Dialonké, Soussou /Susu/, and Foulah slaves of Guinea who are also serfs, work three days a week for their master (six hours a day), and are free the rest of the time on condition of seeing to their own subsistence.

Let us add that since the arrival of the French among the Mossi,
567 the bagaré have gained a considerable amount of freedom. Nowa-
178 days, most of them will not give any of their crops to their master.

687 631 Moulins adds, "Custom does not anticipate the possibility of a chief being, properly speaking, stripped of his rule. A naba who gives the sovereign reasons for complaint is summoned under a pretext of some sort and put to death without further ceremony at the close of the audience granted to him. If the chief, guessing at the true purpose of the Moro Naba's invitation, demurs at going, a column is sent into the region over which he rules with the mission of seizing him and taking him to the Moro Naba, who has him put to death by his pages."

622 Let us add that in the Mossi /language/ a village chief is called tengasoba or tenganaba, from tenga, "earth, place, spot" and by extension "village," and from naba or soba, "chief." There are also chiefs of quarters called sakanaba, sakasoba, or sakakasaman, from saka, "quarter," and naba, soba, or kasaman, "chief." Mossi villages are indeed divided into quarters located some 200, 300, 400, or 500 meters apart and consisting of several soukala which usually stand, as we know, 40 or 50 meters apart. When the head of a quarter dies, it is the oldest soukala chief in the quarter who replaces him.

565 Below the Moro Naba and the chiefs of provinces, cantons, and villages, there existed among the Mossi a true aristocracy, a genuine nobility, the nakomsé, or sons of chiefs. "They were granted," says Moulins, "important privileges. They had the right to loot passing caravans and to demand from the common natives gifts of cowries, livestock, grain, etc., which the latter could not deny them. They were forbidden to kill, but if they committed murder, instead of being put to death, they were merely put in irons for a short period of time. Furthermore, they were granted the privilege of being tried only by the Moro Naba, head of their house, for all their crimes and misdemeanors." They are all descended, or supposed to be descended, from Moro Naba Oubry, conqueror of Mossi territory.

565 171 The existence of this aristocracy among the Mossi must be carefully noted, for it distinguishes them sharply from the populations we have studied up to now, Bobo, Nounouma, Kassouna, Sissala, Dagari, etc. Nobles are not found often among the Blacks of West Africa, and they are found only among groups that are, or formerly

565 171 were, conquerors. This represents a higher level of social complexity and development, in short, a higher level of civilization.

566 556 The nakomsé were and still are gathered in separate villages scattered throughout the territory. They did the same work as other Mossi, but prior to the French occupation they also practiced looting, which was their chief expedient, their major source of wealth. True, this manner of acquiring wealth had lent them improvident habits. Nowadays they own no more small livestock than the Mossi populace, and only a little more large livestock, while they should own much more in view of their former opportunities to acquire wealth. They immediately "ate up" what they looted, however, counting on future pillage. Nowadays they no longer loot, but they seem to have preserved their former improvident habits. It should be noted, however, that they own considerably more horses than other Mossi.

565 142 I saw at Pirigui, in January, 1909, one of those villages of chiefs' sons. There were altogether 841 inhabitants of the nobility with their families and their slaves. Those people would be interesting to study from the point of view of physical anthropology. There were faces totally at variance with Negro faces, truly distinguished physiognomies, oriental and semitic casts of features, in short, enough /579/ to strike an observer even though unfamiliar with physical anthropology.

642 The superstructure of the Mossi state thus consisted of a supreme chief, a carefully established hierarchy of chiefs, and a class of nobles to whom important privileges were granted.

651 As for taxes, "every year at the end of the winter season, prior to our occupation," says Moulins, "the canton chiefs had to come, greet the Moro Naba, and offer him certain gifts (beeves, sheep, millet) which constituted a sort of fixed due." This was the common tax levied after each harvest.

"In addition, whenever the sovereign needed anything whatever, he requested the province chiefs to secure it for him. They summoned the canton chiefs, who in turn gathered the village chiefs, who secured through the soukala chiefs the animals, grain, cowries, and other items requested.

[431] "Finally, whenever a native, chief or common man, came to the Moro Naba, he offered a present to the latter.

535 while the ouango are singing will surely die within the year. (The
532 ouango sing at the funeral ceremonies of important personages, at the
575 second ceremony performed a month or a year after the burial).
The masks of the ouango are made in the greatest secrecy. They have to be carved out of a single piece of wood, and the man who is making one must not be seen as long as his task has not been completed.

535 "In our opinion it would be most interesting to try and study
575 the ouango and their customs more closely than we succeeded in
171 doing. We believe, indeed, that theirs is a very old institution
174 antedating the arrival of the Mossi in the Volta basin, an institution which they found among the peoples they conquered and which they preserved, no doubt because they did not dare fight it. Ouango are to be found throughout Gourounsi territory, and the dou noticed by Binger among the Bobo would seem to have the same origin. The dancers with totemic masks who appear in some of Desplagnes' photographs are quite similar to the Mossi ouango."

The Mossi ouango are thus no different from the Bobo dou, the Khassonké mamadiombo, the Habé and Bambara namakoro, the Malinké dokho, the Landouman /Landuma/ simo, etc.

713 The Earth chief or Tensoba is also part of the Mossi priestly
174 organization. We are already familiar with Earth chiefs, whom we encountered among the Gourounsi. They exercise no political authority in the village, but they are entrusted with the performance of sacrifices to the Earth and to other local divinities.

The presence of those Earth chiefs among the Mossi is no doubt to be explained by the superposition of the conquering group over the conquered group. When the Mossi invaded and conquered the country, they placed their own men at the head of all the villages and all the cantons in the course of conquest, /595/ to ensure the submission of the vanquished population. They never felt, however, (and they hold this in common with the rest of West Africa) that they were themselves qualified to offer sacrifices to the Earth and other divinities of the place. Only the vanquished, former owners of the latter and on good terms with it, were qualified to do this. The former autochtonous political chief thus naturally became a religious chief under Mossi authority. We have already seen that the Moro Naba

304 occasion calls for festivities that last for one month, and it is repeated every seven or eight years in each village.

As for girls, they undergo the barbarous operation of excision when they are from eight to twelve years old. The girls' excision is not performed at the same time as the boys' circumcision, but in another year. The attendant festivities also last for one month.

The girls are operated on by a woman, the boys by a man.

It is not the labia of the girls that are severed, but the clitoris itself. Why do this? My informants did not know. Is it to make the weaker sex less susceptible to sensual pleasures? No. It would rather be, my informants tell me, to facilitate the physical union of men and women. This would also be the aim of the boys' circumcision. But my informants were not sure.

884 304 171 We might note that among the Mossi, as in certain other parts of West Africa, for example in Guinea (but not among the Gourounsi, where boys are not circumcised /598/ and girls are often excised at birth), circumcision and excision are combined with an initiation, that is to say, are closely connected with the education and instruction of young men and girls. One takes advantage of the circumcision or excision to complete, so to speak, the instruction and education of youth.

881 304 Marc has the following to say about the subject (op. cit., p. 150). "The circumcision of boys takes place around the age of twelve and occasions important festivities. There seems to be a sort of initiation ceremony, which is performed in rather mysterious circumstances. Unfortunately, it is difficult to find out exactly what does take place."

000 We close our survey of Mossi religion by referring the reader to Appendix 33 /not translated/ for a few complementary details on the Moslem question in the territory. We have also concluded our description of Mossi society as a whole. In order to gain a deeper understanding of its origins as far as the conquering population is concerned, we shall now have a glance at the Foutanké social type in the following chapter /not translated/.

584 daughter; (2) when the father is in extreme penury, he gives his still
596 unpromised daughter to some rich native who, with the customary gifts, will help him in his need, since the gifts of the fiancé go to the man who promised the young girl; (3) the first daughter in a household,
[603] whether or not she is the only daughter, must be promised by her maternal grandfather and not by the head of the family."

This constitutes, I believe, a curious vestige of matriarchy which doubtless refers to those very distant times when the Mossi family revolved around the maternal rather than the paternal line.

4. The mother of the young girl. "The girl's mother," says Vadier, "is sometimes consulted. Her husband merely asks her if she is satisfied with the choice he has made in agreement with the head of the family. Her answer, however, is given no weight whatever.

"The fiancé's mother is not even consulted."

Such at least is the theory. In reality, no doubt, the mother of the young girl often has more authority than the theory supposes.

431 Gifts.—Bride price is nonexistent in Mossi marriage. This is a very
583 important point which differentiates the Mossi and even, I believe,
[171] the Voltaic /237/ tribes in general, from the Mandé groups, such as the Bambara and Malinké, where bride price does exist and is actually quite high (I say quite high, considering the general poverty of the Sudanese). I did not emphasize this sufficiently in my Noir du Soudan in the chapter concerning the Mossi family, pages 548 and 549. I did mention that the price paid to win a Mossi girl of the Ouagadougou region ranged from 1, 500 cowries (1. 50 francs) to 50, 000 cowries (50 francs). In fact, these are gifts rather than bride price.

Although there is no bride price, properly speaking, the gifts have an important role.

"After the promise of marriage," says Vadier, "the future husband must come every year, after the filikienga /a feast/, to bring a few small gifts to the head of the family and to the girl's mother. These consist as a rule of a little millet, salt, a few hundred cowries, a mat, or two or three crudely made séko /coarse matting/.

"As for the father, he receives no gifts, which does not mean that he does not benefit from those received by his wife or by the head of the family.

"Likewise, the girl receives no gifts. Moreover, she may not utilize the commodities or foodstuffs given to her mother.

"The gifts offered during the long betrothal period cannot be of great value. A prospective husband who should bring 5, 000 or 6, 000

582 I. Differences of tribe or caste. The Mossi may not contract
326 marriage with blacksmiths. This is absolutely forbidden. However,
564 they may marry among the Foulsé, Samo, Peul, Yarsé, etc."

This calls for several remarks. The blacksmiths of Yatenga are Foulsé and not Mossi. However, it is not a tribal difference which dictates the prohibition under discussion, since the Mossi can marry among the Foulsé as a whole. It is rather a difference in caste. It must be noted, as we said above /not translated/, that the common Foulsé cannot marry blacksmiths either.

[171] Here, as in all of the /French/ Sudan, blacksmiths are both feared and scorned. Basically, they are regarded as fearful sorcerers.

582 II. Kinship. There must be a lapse of 200 years between the time of the betrothed couple and the time when their common ancestor lived. This is likewise an absolute impediment.

III. If a Mossi has relations with a young girl or woman belonging to his fiancée's soukala during the period of his engagement, the marriage cannot take place.

This impediment, however, is not absolute. If the guilty man begs for the forgiveness of the family head and the latter accords it, the union may be effected later."

582 IV. Unnatural practices. The marriage cannot take place: (1) if
839 the betrothed man has been caught in the act of sexual intercourse with a she-ass (a phenomenon none too rare in Yatenga); and (2) if the betrothed girl has relations with a native who had sexual intercourse with a she-ass. These impediments are absolute.

This is why the inhabitants of a Yatenga village (Dénia) who are reputed to have had relations with asses in former times may not marry outside their locality.

582 V. Infirmities. If the fiancé is blind, the marriage may not take
[132] place unless the girl consents to it. No one can constrain her to do so.

VI. Leprosy. The same applies when the fiancé has leprosy.

VII. Impuberty of the betrothed pair. The marriage cannot take place unless both parties are nubile. This is an absolute impediment, but in practice the problem rarely arises.

VIII. Insanity of one of the betrothed."

582 Question of virginity. The girl's virginity is not very important
836 here and, it must be pointed out, far less so than among the Bambara. This is, incidentally, connected with the fact that the marriage bond is less sound and the separation of the spouses easier to obtain. A combination of related facts makes the institution of marriage and

848 as soon as the baby is old enough to leave its mother, the husband, not wishing to keep it with him, will return the child to its natural father.

582 In short, virginity is not rigidly demanded of the girl, although it
171 is considered better and more respectable than non-virginity. The Mossi are not as demanding on this point as the Bambara, and in this, according to my data, they are like all other Voltaic peoples.

684 Let us note one further detail. If the lover from whom reparation is demanded for the damage caused, that is to say, the payment of the goat, chicken, and two canari of dolo, does not want to give them, the husband would formerly appeal /242/ to the Moro Naba, who forced the lover to pay what he owed and in addition confiscated for himself a part of his goods for his salary as a judge. If the lover owned nothing, his family paid for him. Nowadays, the village or canton chiefs are still approached about such matters, and they force the lover to make the customary payment.

593 Rights and duties of the husband and wife. —The husband owes assistance and help to his wife. He must protect her and come to her aid whenever necessary.

The husband must support his wife. To secure food, he usually belongs to a work group, as we have seen earlier. The work group sustains the husband and wife for seven months out of twelve. The rest of the time, the husband maintains the wife with the produce of his small fields. The wife also has her own little patches of cultivated land (as big as a handkerchief), but they are not used to procure food for the household unless the husband is completely destitute. Hence, the produce from these little patches of soil usually goes to the wife herself.

In any case, it is the husband and not the group who must provide clothing for his wife. He does this with the earnings from his small fields.

593 If the husband should refuse to support his wife, although able to
596 do so, she would take her complaint to the head of her spouse's family. If the husband still refused to support her after the intervention of the family head, the woman would regain her freedom and could return to her family.

593 The husband must see to his ailing or invalid wife's upkeep until her death.

586 8. Incest. In case incest is committed by one of the spouses, the other has the right to request a divorce. The gifts remain in the husband's possession if the wife is guilty, or revert to her if it was the husband who commited incest."

Such are the major theoretical cases which may result in divorce. Let us first return to one of them: nonfulfillment of the conjugal duty on the husband's part. The results noted by Vadier seem contradictory to those which we mentioned above (under "conjugal duty"). Actually, no contradiction is involved. When a husband does not fulfill his conjugal duty toward his wife (this, incidentally, occurs quite rarely), either the woman has only praise for her husband in all /248/ other respects, or he is cruel and mean and she is dissatisfied with him on other counts. In the first instance, she takes a lover outside her husband's compound, a liaison to which he voluntarily shuts his eyes, and she does not request a divorce. In the second case, she does request one. That is how the situation is actually resolved.

[837]

586 837 Among the instances of divorce enumerated by Vadier, the most frequent, or rather the least rare, are as follows. (1) Continual infidelity on the part of the wife. I say "continual," for as we have already noted, while in principle a single infidelity on the woman's part enables the husband to ask for a divorce, in actual fact a wife is never sent back for a single breach of the marriage contract. Instead, she is merely beaten. If the woman persists in betraying her husband, however, he eventually sends her away. (2) Insults passed between each other by the husband and wife in a moment of anger do not count, but insults by the husband about his wife's relatives or by a wife about the husband's relatives are serious. (Incidentally, this sensitivity on the subject of relatives is not peculiar to the Mossi. It is common to all the Sudanese Negroes I have seen, Bambara, Malinké, etc.) Thus, if the husband insults his wife's relatives, she may request a divorce. Actually, a woman who loves her husband does not tell her relatives about insults which he may have aimed at them in a moment of anger. She says nothing and does not ask for a divorce. If she holds other grudges against her husband, however, or secretly wishes for a separation, she will eagerly take advantage of this motive which is considered to be serious. As regards the wife's insults against her husband's relatives (like the preceding, an unusual case among the Mossi), the same thing applies. Either the husband loves his wife and says nothing, or he does not love her and takes this opportunity to get rid of her.

586 578 602 [71]

857 The people fined must give three or four canari of dolo (the usual
575 canari of dolo is worth 150 cowries, or three sous).

The members assemble to eat, to drink dolo, and to dance to the sound of the tom-tom at the compound belonging to the father of the society's Moro Naba. The girls are invited to come and dance.

[171] Among the Mossi of Yatenga, the nam do not have their own huts as do the Bambara ton and flambolo.

Little mock weddings are performed in the societies between the girls and boys. The young spouses offer each other small gifts of cowries, peanuts, cotton, etc.

Once married, the young girls withdraw from their society on account of their husband's jealousy. Married men, on the other hand, may remain in theirs and quite frequently do while they are young. Old men, however, are no longer members of the nam.

883 Young people's tasks. —Young men, after they are circumcised (at the age of 13 or 14), work in the compound or rather in the work group to which they belong on the same days and at the same hours as other members of the group.

They are provided with food by the head of the group seven months out of twelve and by their father five months out of twelve, and they are clothed by the latter.

They have their own little plots, but the produce does not belong exclusively to them. Their father and mother take what they need to feed or clothe the youth. The remainder is his. Boys can thus accumulate a little property of their own before they marry.

Young girls have no little plots of their own to cultivate. They learn how to till the soil by working with their mother in the fields of the work group and in the mother's little private plots. Hence, they are fed by the group seven months out of twelve and by their father and mother for five months, and they are clothed by their parents. The individual property they own consists mostly of trifling jewels usually received as gifts. /257/

593 Rights and duties of parents toward their children. —Paternal authority rests largely with the father of the child, but also partly with the head of the work group, the head of the compound, and the family head. This is understandable, since the child's support is ensured for the greater part of the time, except for clothing, by the work group and since lodging is ensured by the compound.

10:Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1964 FA28 Mossi FA28
Yatenga

ship itself and the contract of interlineage co-operation and solidarity which every marriage serves to establish or reinforce.[4]

Although this joking interchange is seen in its full implications when there is an immediate source of dissension between marriage partners, it may also occur in the absence of any specific difficulty. Then it is apparently indulged in simply because it is expected, and for the pleasure which the Mossi, like all people, derive from an occasion to exercise their wit. It is this relatively disinterested joking which has been most frequently described in the literature, and this may account for the failure of many scholars to perceive more fully the important social and psychological functions which joking may fulfill.

Conclusion

This paper has been written as a tentative step toward a reformulation of the various and disparate observations on joking contained in the anthropological literature. I have contended that an analysis of this literature indicates that wherever joking is institutionalized the structural relationship between the participants tends to be characterized by five significantly interrelated structural attributes: separation, reciprocity, ambivalence, equality, and independence. I have also indicated that such joking may serve as an adjustive mechanism by providing for the concurrent maintenance of communication, control, and the culturally harmless catharsis of potentially disruptive emotions.

A variety of forms of institutionalized joking found among the Mossi of Yatenga have been cited to illustrate these points. However, I suggest that the factors which cluster with this reliance on joking as an adjustive mechanism are not unique to the Mossi. Institutionalized joking reported for other parts of Africa appears to be structurally and processually similar.

NOTES

1. A shorter version of this paper was read at the annual meeting of the American Anthropological Association held in San Francisco in November, 1963. It is based on field research conducted among the Mossi from 1954 to 1956 with the assistance of a Ford Foundation Fellowship.

2. Marriage between the members of descent groups united by a joking alliance is regarded by the Mossi as highly desirable, apparently in recognition of the useful role of joking as an adjustive mechanism. Once such a marriage is contracted, however, Ego and his wife must take care that their joking insults are directed only at the younger kinsmen of the other and that the insulting remarks are personal. It would, for example, be acceptable for Ego to call his wife's younger sister a disreputable shrew but dangerous to call her a slave (a term of disrespect used frequently in joking between sibs). To refer to her as a slave would cast unflattering aspersions on her entire kin group, including her mother and father, with whom, in their new status as parents-in-law, Ego may no longer joke.

3. I believe that joking is also institutionalized between the Mossi and the Yarse, a highly acculturated ethnic minority of Mande origin who live throughout Yatenga. There is also joking between the Mossi and the indigenous blacksmith caste. Unfortunately my data on these two instances of joking are inadequate.

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28

the Niger-Congo family of African languages.[5] Like the Mossi, these groups are primarily horticultural; cereals are their main crops, and they cultivate yams where conditions permit. Their social organization takes both patrilineal and matrilineal forms. The veneration of ancestors lies at the core of their religious beliefs, but the existence of an otiose high god whose name contains the root *We* (*Ouennam, Win, Wene,* etc.) is also recognized. There are also tutelary spirits, the chief one being a female earth deity associated with We and called *Tenga* (also occurring as *Teng, Tena,* and *Ten*). The *Tengsobadamba,* who are priests or custodians of the earth shrines, are found among all the groups in the Voltaic family, and they often share leadership with more secular chiefs called *Naba, Na,* or *Nab.* Most of the ruling clans of the Voltaic groups claim common ancestry and acknowledge the same totems.[6]

The only glaring dissimilarity between these Voltaic peoples, and the one with which this study is primarily concerned, lies in the realm of political organization. Some are united into large kingdoms, while others form small acephalous groups. Delafosse makes the following generalizations about the smaller groups:

> It may be said of these people that, as a whole, they have remained quite primitive. With a few exceptions, they have not reached any significant level of political development; as a rule, they have not progressed beyond family unity. Although they neighbor on well-organized and powerful states such as the Mossi empires and the kingdoms of the Gourma and Bergo, which are inhabited by populations of the same ethnic group, they have derived little benefit from this proximity; some of them have been absorbed as subjects or vassals by these states, while others have remained on the outside, and seem to have but one purpose, the forceful preservation of their fierce but sterile independence. . . . Attachment to the land seems to be the only solid and fecund institution in their chaotic society.[7]

Rattray believes that the development of such highly organized political systems as those of the Mossi, Dagomba, and Mamprusi may be traced to "small bands of strangers." He thinks that the outsiders were better armed, better clothed, and familiar with the rudiments of Islam, and that since they knew about the institution of kingship, they were able to "superimpose upon the primitive tribes among whom they settled a new and unheard-of political conception, namely the idea of territorial and secular leadership in place of the immemorial institution of a ruler who was the high priest of a totemic clan and dealt only in spiritual sanctions." Nevertheless, Rattray is not certain that the Voltaic groups would not have evolved complex political systems if they had been left to themselves. He makes the significant statement that if the subjugation by the bands of strangers had not

mal lineage segment except the pretenders to the throne shaved their heads as a sign of mourning. The royal pretenders donned sheepskin mantles to signify that they were willing to "eat the nam." Once the ruler had been buried, the country settled down to an uneasy peace until the eighth day, when the funeral ceremonies took place. In the meantime, the Napoko symbolically held daily court, and the Tansoba's army acted as a check against the attempts of ambitious princes to seize power by force of arms. 766 643 [701]

Two days before the funeral, the Kamsaogho Naba selected the Kourita, who was to replace the Napoko as the living symbolic representative of the dead Mogho Naba. The person chosen to be Kourita was usually a young son of the deceased king, but since this person was banished from the capital, most of the royal wives hid their young children or fled the palace with them.[25] Once the Kourita had been chosen, the Kamsaogho Naba performed a ceremony (similar to those connected with the divine kings of the Near East) during which the youth was given one of his father's horses, dressed in his father's clothes, and given his father's youngest widow as a wife. He was then paid the homage due the Mogho Naba, and after receiving many gifts from the dignitaries, he was banished from Ouagadougou forever. As he went through the country, he was treated like the Mogho Naba and given many wives and presents. If he should chance to return to Ouagadougou or see the new Mogho Naba, either or both of them would be killed by the ancestors. Many Mossi districts seem to have been founded by exiled Kouritadamba. These men were undoubtedly among the numerous "elder" sons of past kings who are said to have "refused" the nam and gone to live in the districts now governed by their descendants. 644 766 783 [171] [431] [634]

The choice and banishment of the Kourita heralded the funeral rites, which were characterized by numerous animal sacrifices to the ancestors in the name of the deceased ruler. On the afternoon of the first day of the funeral, the Crown Prince mounted a horse and left the palace by the women's door. The Napoko then took the bridle of her brother's horse and led him and an immense crowd of cavalry, armed warriors, and musicians around the palace walls three times. After the third round, the Napoko demanded that her brother give her a personal servant as a present; he hesitated, but finally granted her request. The Napoko was then lifted up by the warriors, who shouted as they carried her home. The funeral thus came to an end. 766 644 643 [782] [788]

All Mossi potentates tried to emulate the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou in matters of pomp, ceremony, and government.[26] Their courts were inferior to his, but only because they were less powerful and less wealthy. 631 184 643 644

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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[P.154]

X

MOSSI GOVERNMENT DURING THE COLONIAL PERIOD

*175 ● 171 *648 In an effort to undermine the power of the Mossi chiefs, change the traditional Mossi administration, and incorporate the Mossi territories into the colonial complex, the French attempted to weaken the structure of the Mossi political organization. They tried at first to apply their policy of *assimilation*, which was characterized by direct rule and by "giving the colonies institutions analogous to those of metropolitan Frence, [which] little by little removes the distances that separate the diverse parts of French territory and finally realizes their intimate union through the application of common legislation."[1]

The French attitude toward the Mossi political organization and its chiefs is clearly defined in the instructions Commander Destenave gave to Captain Scal for the administration of a territory that had not yet been brought completely under French control. Destenave writes:

> We have no interest in strengthening the power that is regarded as central, nor in increasing the power of the various Nabas; on the contrary, we must look for points of stress which will permit us to divide the country, and thus preclude any coalitions against us. . . . In so doing, the authority of the Mogho Naba itself will be weakened, because we can easily acknowledge the independence of these great [princes] and free them from his influence. This is an excellent measure from a political standpoint; for we must not lose sight of the fact that we have no interest in strengthening the power of the central authority. On the contrary, we must encourage as much as possible the tendency of the great chiefs (vassals) to break the last bonds that still attach them to Ouagadougou. This is the course which has been followed by the Resident Officer. It has produced excellent results, and the requested taxes have come in regularly. In future, we should seize every opportunity to weaken the authority of these vassals by declaring the independence of the villages under their command. Just recently, the chiefs of Coundiri and Tema were removed from under the command of the Yako chief, and are now under the direct command of the Resident.[2]

At first the Mossi resisted all changes in their political organization and all demands for foodstuffs, information about their territories, and laborers.[3]

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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CHAPTER THREE

1. Dim Delobson, pp. 8-9.

2. Crozat, p. 4849.

3. *Ibid.* The Mossi always use multiples of three in connection with masculine affairs.

4. Archives, Document 15G-190 (1897-98, Haute Volta).

5. Dim Delobson, p. 37. The difficulty here is caused by the Mossi words and their meanings. For example, the words for "God" are Ouennam and Ouende. The words for "sun" are the same. The ethnologists can speculate about whether the Mossi once worshiped the sun or whether a high god has evolved into a supreme deity. But the Mossi do not agree that their use of the same words for God and for the sun implies that they believe God is the sun, or that the sun is their God. It should be pointed out *inter alia* that many African peoples are not awed by their gods and grant them human feelings and attributes. The Mossi regard their supreme being Ouennam as an otiose deity who is not too concerned with human affairs. It is the ancestors who provide the sanctions for good conduct.

6. It seems certain that Ibn Battuta saw a similar salutation in Mali: "The Negroes are of all people the most submissive to their king, and the most abject in their behavior before him. They swear by his name, saying *Mansa Souliman ki* [the Emperor Souliman has commanded]. If he summons any of them while he is holding an audience in his pavilion, the person summoned takes off his clothes and puts on worn garments, removes his turban and dons a dirty skullcap, and enters with his garments and trousers raised knee-high. He goes forward in an attitude of humility and dejection, and knocks the ground hard with his elbows, then stands with bowed head and bent back, listening to what he says. If anyone addresses the king and receives a reply from him, he uncovers his back and throws dust over his head and back, for all the world like a bather splashing himself with water. I used to wonder how it was that they did not blind themselves" (Gibb, p. 327; cf. Mangin, p. 15).

Obviously, Ibn Battuta found this salutation distasteful. Most Europeans feel the same way about the Mossi salute. If a Moaga visited England, he might be equally struck by the sight of a great soldier or statesman kneeling before a *woman ruler* and being touched on the shoulder with a sword.

7. It is interesting to compare this account with Ibn Battuta's description of Mansa Souliman, king of Mali: "On certain days the sultan holds audiences in the palace yard, where there is a platform under a tree, with three steps; this they call the *pempi*. . . . The sultan comes out of a door in the corner of the palace, carrying a bow in his hand and a quiver on his back. On his head he has a golden skullcap bound with a gold band which has narrow ends shaped like knives, more than a span in length. His usual dress is a velvety red tunic, made of the European fabric called *mutanfas*. The sultan is preceded by his musicians, who carry gold and silver guimbris (two-stringed guitars), and behind him come three hundred armed slaves. He walks in a leisurely fashion, affecting a very slow movement, and even stops from time to time. On reaching the *pempi*, he stops and looks round the assembly, then ascends it in the sedate manner of a preacher ascending a mosque pulpit. As he takes his seat, the drums, trumpets, and bugles are sounded" (Gibb, p. 326).

8. It is possible that the Mossi either borrowed this tradition from Mali or shared part of the Mali king complex, for Ibn Battuta reports that a similar rite was held in Mali during the fourteenth century. He says that when the ruler entered the pavilion for the morning ceremony, "two saddled and bridled horses are brought, along with two goats, which they hold to serve as a protection against the evil eye" (Gibb, p. 326).

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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9. In Dim Delobson's account (p. 60), an unnamed wife of the Mogho Naba ran away, and he allegedly tried to follow her because she was the only person in his household who knew how to cook his favorite food. 000

It is interesting that the Mossi have a tradition in which their ruler undergoes the same experience as many a Mossi husband, namely, being betrayed by his wife. It is also interesting that Mogho Naba Waraga is the ruler named in this incident. He is the ruler who waged a five-year-long civil war with one of his vassals. It may well be that his ministers devised the myth about his wife in order to prevent him from leaving the capital to fight. [837]

10. The Mossi practice of tasting food before giving it to another person is obviously connected with the fear of poison. The Mossi believe that only a boorish person would give another person something to eat without first tasting it himself. [576]

11. The full significance of this ceremony is unclear, for the Mossi hesitate to talk about it. It is known that the "sacred fire" is linked to the nocturnal visits of the royal ancestors. But the relationship of the fire to another sacred fire kept in Koubri district (about seventeen miles from Ouagadougou) is not known. [372]

Faithful to Mossi tradition or ignorant of the true nature of the ceremony, Dim Delobson says nothing about the ceremony and does not mention the presence of the namtibo. However, he does report that the palace guards would kill anyone who approached the place where the rite was being performed (p. 62). [114]

12. There are several traditions concerning female regents. However, I believe that they may have their basis in the role the Mogho Naba's daughter played during the interregnum.

13. Mossi genealogies show that only in one case in which the nam passed from a Mogho Naba to his brother did the former Mogho Naba's sons receive districts from their uncle, the new ruler. Since it is difficult to believe that the eleven other Mogho Nanamse who were succeeded by their brothers died without issue, it can only be concluded that the descendants of a ruler who did not inherit the nam were ignored by their uncles in power.

14. To this council could be added other men whose experience was valued. For example, the Baloum Naba was called upon in 1942 to give advice about a successor to Kom.

15. Dim Delobson, pp. 130–32.

16. It is interesting that the sheepskin garb of the Mossi pretenders is similar to the dress of the chiefs among the smaller tribal groups of the Voltaic culture area. If we can assume that culture traits characteristic of ritual and ceremonial practices tend to persist longer than most other traits, we might have evidence that the complex Mossi state evolved from the political organizations found among the smaller local groups. [171] [174]

17. The "naming of a name" speech is part of most Mossi *rites de passage*, and is often used to brag about some achievement or to cast aspersions on one's enemies. Most newly elected monarchs pledge good government, brag about their elevation, and vilify their enemies.

In his inaugural speech Naba Kom II said, "When plenty of water falls during the rainy season, the rivers and seas are glad because they are enlarged." "Kom" means "water," and Kom's speech meant that he pledged to bring happiness to all his subjects.

Boukary Koutou insulted his listeners by declaring, "Even if a hundred ghosts join together, they cannot harm an elephant." He was called Mogho Naba Wobogo ("elephant").

18. It is said that if the amulets were stolen during the interregnum, the thief had to be elected Mogho Naba; if they were stolen afterwards, the ruler lost the basis for the mystical quality of leadership and authority he had inherited from his ancestors.

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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larger markets there were and are solid stalls which are built and tenanted by merchants. In the small district and village markets, these stalls are built out of millet stalks which offer little but protection against the noonday sun on market days. Men build these structures for their womenfolk and for themselves. Some of the shelters which are not used for trading serve as galleries where the young blades look out and comment on the passing scene. Others are used as meeting places by adult men who sit and discuss all sorts of affairs. Still others are used by the older men, who gather there to arrange marriages between their several families, wait for gifts from younger men who seek wives, or spend a great deal of time reminiscing about their youthful adventures. Those persons who do not have such shelters sit in the sun or use grass lean-tos as protection from the sun.

Except in the large towns, Mossi markets are held between the hours of 10:00 A.M. and 4:00 P.M. every fourth day. In the larger towns there are daily markets, but these remained unimportant until today when they serve a growing urban population. The capital city of Wagadougou now even has an "evening" market which opens about 4:00 P.M. and closes at about 9:00 P.M. In addition, numerous daily markets have sprung up in many of its wards. The three-day markets are, however, the traditional type, and they are still the most numerous through the country. By "three-day market" I mean that a market is held one day, not held over the two following days, and then held again on the next day. These markets also have a 21-day cycle from one *Ragakasanga* or *Rag'kasanga* ("larger market") on a Friday to another *Rag'kasanga* on a Friday three weeks later, a total of seven markets between the two important ones. The people give no adequate explanation for the observance of the three-day cycle or the 21-day cycle. One man did suggest that it took the women three days to prepare beer and this was why markets could not be held more often, but even he did not speculate about the 21-day cycle.[10] This same man did point out, however, that the cycle made little difference to persons who really liked to go to market, since it was possible for

(10) Zahan (1954 : 373) apparently found one of the few Mossi informants with a mystical bent; he reports that the seven three-day cycles of markets in the 21-day cycle have the following significance for the Yatenga people: "The first of these numbers explains the cycle of the person (7 symbolizes the complete person: male [to which the Mossi assign the number 3] and female [to which they assign the number 4], the second that of the creation." He believes that each market starts a new cycle, a beginning and an end: "the seventh market signifies the most perfect equilibrium: the one which exists between the universe, mankind, and the divinity." In a footnote he suggests that this sybolism is not too different among the Dogon, who are "ideologically and geographically close to the Mossi." Peter Hammond, who worked in Yatenga, could not find this kind of symbolism.

644 431 The Mogho Naba spends the rest of the day receiving individuals who have come to see him, accepting poussoum (gifts to the chief) and giving dam, gouré, foutou (garments), etc., and listening to the praises of his courtiers.

Mogho Naba Na Tough'la, "The Mogho Naba Goes to La" (1)

1. A dependent village in the administrative district of Yako, Koudougou Circle.

173 644 [267] Tradition relates that a certain Mogho Naba, Naba Warga, had a favorite, the only one who knew that his preferred food was léla (fruit of the léhinga or wild plum tree). It should be added that ordinarily anything might be chosen as a favorite food, and it should not be supposed that the Mogho Naba eats only the best foods. Obviously he does not lack choice morsels, but he cannot be expected to like everything. One day this woman asked leave to visit her home at La and failed to return. The Magho Naba, tired of waiting and missing his favorite food, had his horse saddled one morning and announced that he wished to go and join his wife. His ministers begged him to stay at home and asked him to put off his departure until the next day... Every morning the preparations for the departure were repeated and always there was the same pleading, up to the time of the ruler's death. His son, [61] who succeeded him, chose to follow his example. The following paragraph describes the manner in which this custom was still practiced only a few years ago.

[492] When the Mogho Naba appears in the morning, one of his horses, partially harnessed, is brought into the courtyard bearing a saddle with silver stirrups, but with the girth unbuckled. After the Mogho Naba has responded to the salutations of his ministers and the whole court and has dealt with some minor matters, he declares that he is going to La. The court officials, especially the Kamsaongo Naba, appear before him and say: "Sire, order them to unsaddle your horse; you shall go tomorrow." The Mogho Naba of course agrees to this, but he retires to his apartments rather

173 abruptly, as though he were somewhat provoked by this obstacle
644 to what he wants to do. At the same time the saddle is removed and the horse returned to the stables.

It should also be noted that every morning the pougtiéma (first wife) orders a basket and hamper to be filled with all the things needed for a journey, intending to accompany her husband to Lâ.

As soon as the Mogho Naba postpones his journey to the following day, the pougtiéma, duly warned, unpacks her basket.

Today, the breath of civilization has blown upon these ancient practices, and the present Mogho Naba merely sees his horse, which is walked up and down while he is receiving his ministers. The animal is at once taken back to the stables when the [62] king returns to his palace without having tried to mount it, much less having heard any entreaties from the Kamsaongo Naba.

Koaga Basgo

644 At sundown each day the Baloum Naba goes to the residence
789 of the Mogho Naba for the koaga. Only the Zusobin-Kassanga (chief eunuch) and the Sogon'kassanga (ranking servitor) assist at this performance. The koaga is a sort of earthenware basin into which is put a bit of fire and ... mystery. The head servitor places the koaga in the courtyard in front of the antechamber and blows on the fire, which quickly blazes up and then dies down. Meanwhile, the bendré (drummer) has been rubbing his hand back and forth over the waxed portion of the drumhead.

During the whole performance, no one is allowed either to enter or leave the house of the Mogho Naba. Anyone coming from
[687] the outside is not allowed to pass through the courtyard during the proceedings and anyone caught watching the koaga basgo was severely punished by the lash or even executed. When the performance is over, the Zusoba and the Baloum Naba, each of whom was seated at a particular place, arise, then approach and greet each other, and wait to be served some dam before separating for the rest of the night. They sometimes also salute the Mogho Naba before returning to their quarters.

[63]
Ministers and Officials of the Court of the Mogho Naba

644 645 Ministers. (a) Ouidi Naba (literally, "chief of the horses," or superintendent of His Majesty's stables). In the old days the Ouidi Naba had the duty of choosing the color and kind of horse suitable for the Mogho Naba. He usually had charge of the horses of deceased chiefs.

202 644 If a kombéré (canton chief) owned horses during his lifetime, upon his death one of them is sent to the Mogho Naba in Ouagadougou as bearer of the sad news. Branches of the tahnga (karite [or shea] tree), wound with white rope, are tied to the horse's tail.

[64] The horse thus presented to the Mogho Naba is then handed over to one of the representatives of the Ouidi Naba who, after cutting loose the branches with a knife and leaving them in the courtyard of the Mogho Naba, leads the animal to Ouidin [section of the Ouidi Naba].

Unless the Mogho Naba gives the horse to someone, the Ouidi Naba is free to dispose of it.

645 (b) Larrhallé Naba, second minister of the Mogho Naba. Formerly he accompanied the Tansoba or Tampsoba to war.

In the section where the Larrhallé Naba now lives, there were once enormous trees whose leaves were constantly astir. When he was made a minister, the Larrhallé Naba said that he wished to dwell at the place "where the leaves on the trees are always astir" (tisse vand'sin y a lag, lag zighin wan). From this came the name of Larrhallé, which designates the section.

(c) Gounga Naba, third minister (1). His section stands in a

645 173 1. Originally the Gounga Naba was the prime minister, and the title was his by right since he was a companion of Naba Oubri. One day, as he was attending to a natural need, he met a very handsome young man and offered his friendship to him; the latter accepted. Later he presented the boy to Naba Oubri who adopted him, settled him at court, and put him in charge of the royal stables. The Gounga Naba then said

645
173

to the Mogho Naba: "Since I have come to you, give the first rank to this man. I will show him what he must do to please you. He will be the Ouidi Naba."

A man from Tansobongo, having heard that the Ouidi Naba was living in the greatest ease, came to see him. He, too, was a handsome youth. He was presented to the Mogho Naba (Naba Oubri) by the Gounga Naba who proposed the young man's appointment as second minister, the Larrhallé Naba, and reserved for himself the post of third minister.

So it came about that the Gounga Naba is the emperor's third minister.

645 place where there were once many goumsé (gounga, silk-cotton tree); hence, his name.

[126] He is a brother-in-arms of the Tansoba and always accompanied him to war, where he chose death rather than defeat, especially if the Tansoba had been killed.

644 (d) Baloum Naba, the chief steward of the palace and chief servitor of the Mogho Naba. He never goes to war, but remains always at the side of the Mogho Naba. It is his duty to carry out [181] [65] sacrifices, such as killing the chickens or livestock offered to the manes or to the spirits when such sacrifices are prescribed by the soothsayers or other charlatans for the health and well-being of the Mogho Naba.

(e) Kamsaogho Naba, formerly accompanied the Tansoba to [839] war. The Kamsaogho Naba is a eunuch, and for this reason he is commonly called Mogho Naba na poug'tiéma, "first wife of the Mogho Naba."

Other personages (not ministers). (a) Samandé Naba, in charge of all of the people in the outer courtyard of the Mogho Naba and a brother-in-arms of the Larrhallé Naba.

644 687 661 (b) Poé Naba, formerly the confessor for the wives and pages of the Mogho Naba. His duty, carried out by magical practices, was to denounce those wives or persons guilty of treason or of

443 Ready-made clothing, beads. No tax collected.
651 [82] Soumbala (kalgo in Mossi) [locust beans pressed into balls]. Payment in kind (one ball per seller).

Other spices. No fee paid.

Karite [shea] butter. Collected with a soutga (a kind of ladle), karite butter was used almost exclusively for the horses of the Mogho Naba.

Fritters and other cooked foods. Actually no fee was called for on these products, but the collectors demanded the payment of a tax in kind to provide their own food or that of the samand'kamba (servitors of the outer courtyard).

Salt. 300 cowries for each load (ox or donkey).

Hoes, axes. Each merchant provided a daba or an axe for work in the field of the naba. Nothing was collected at the subsequent market if all of the tools had not been sold in one day.

Jewelry. No tax was collected. The jewelers who made
[306] bracelets and other jewels for the wives of the naba, as well as various harness parts, were exempt from all taxes.

Other markets. Fees collected for the benefit of the canton chiefs were about the same as [83] those paid at the market of Ouagadougou. In small markets, however, payments were made in kind. The edible products made up the food of the collectors, Gourounsi captives for the most part, who were prevented by their social status from having wives and so had no one to prepare food for them.

Chapter 5

Slavery Among the Mossi

567 We shall endeavor in the following lines to describe slavery as it existed among the Mossi before the French occupation.

567 We know that slavery has existed for a very long time in the
173 land of the Mogho Naba, but, because of the total lack of dates in Mossi history -- handed down from generation to generation by the griot [heralds, drummers] of the naba -- it is difficult to determine when it was first introduced.

567 It is known, however, that the first slaves of the Mossi were all of Boussanga [Busansi] origin. The canton of Garango in what is

769 they return to their homes.
796 The Bend'Naba and other drummers remain in the courtyard un-
533 til the Sogon' kassanga (chief eunuch) bring to them, on behalf of the emperor, the sum of 10,000 cowries and some beer. In the old days a young captive, seated amidst the cowries, accompanied these gifts. The messengers say to the drummers: "Nab'yet b'wa poustabo (the king sends us to give you these gifts on the occasion of his basgha)."

The chief of the drummers pours a drink for the Zussoba and orders his followers to play together "Tompaongo, Wend'kaouss'Naba nioré, Wenna wilig'vinré" (literally, "We thank the king for his gifts. May God give the Mogho Naba long life and allow us to come back to play here next year").

Before sending them away, the Mogho Naba is obligated to give a karfo (black robe [158] imported by the Haoussa) to the Bend' Naba and a robe to the Loun Naba (chief of the luinsé). Water with flour in it is likewise brought to the Bend'Naba, and he scatters it about the courtyard. The emperor is required by custom to walk upon this water of gnimassem (of good health) as he goes back to his apartments.

When all these formalities have been completed, the Bend'Naba, accompanied by his bards, takes his leave. The festival is over. On the days following, the drummers call on the ministers and
[431] the other court dignitaries and are given many gifts (cowries and livestock).

All of these gifts are retained by the Bend'Naba or by someone chosen by him, and they are distributed later, with due regard for the hierarchy existing among the griot. The share of the older men is always greater than that accorded to the younger ones. [159]

Chapter 10

The Wives of the Naba. The sogoné. The Pogsioure

Naba Warga and the Origin of the Sogoné

173 Naba Warga was constantly at war with the Riziam Naba, who
644 was called Mamzi (which means "I myself do not know"). He had
357

173 to be on the field of battle himself and for five years was unable
644 to vanquish his enemy who was entrenched on a mountain and
357 well supported by the local inhabitants.

After Warga had tried every means at his command to conquer his enemy, he hacked down the crops, which were almost ripe, and captured all the livestock that ventured down the mountain. In short, he devastated the country.

This succeeded so well that at last the local inhabitants, faced with famine, had to choose between the life of the chief they were sheltering and their own lives. Mamzi was therefore handed over and imprisoned at Saponé (1).

1. The principal canton town in the district of Ouagadougou.

During the five years of this difficult campaign, Naba Warga, aside from the warriors, had only a young boy to serve him since his wives were not present. The boy served as cook [160] and personal servant. In short, he performed the duties of a wife so well that Warga decided that he was worthy of some notice and decided to reward him.

When he had returned to his lands, he freed this faithful servitor after first giving him a wife. Then it occurred to him that several children in his court could perform the same services. He therefore ordered them to be recruited on a large scale, and these were the sogoné.

357 Every boy recruited to become a sogoné can expect to be given
644 a wife, however little she may be worth, when he is freed.

The sogoné have the same standing as the napagba,* and they
[554 304] wear the same ornaments. A group of bracelets worn on the wrists, in fact, distinguish the napagba and the sogoné from free women.

It is their duty to serve the naba. They form a half circle around the naba when he appears; they accompany him on his short outings; and they carry the scepter and all of the insignia of chiefdom. They serve drinks to the naba, fan him when he takes a nap
[293] with fans called fika, make his bed, and do various errands. Likewise a naba never sends anyone but a sogoné to take a message to his wives.

*[i.e. royal wives — Analyst]

/4/

BOOK I. POLITICAL LIFE

Chapter 1. The Country and Its Inhabitants

142 Although the Mossi is not a handsome type of Black, there is nothing disagreeable about him. He is rather tall, with lively eyes, woolly hair, flat nose, occasionally rather fine features, lips which are broad without being too thick, and cheeks heavily marked with three parallel lines running from the temples to the chin and a fourth leading perpendicularly from the nose to the other three. His limbs are muscular, and his color neither ebony nor copper but an intermediate hue.

291 He acquires a truly attractive and resolute air when he dresses in festive clothes, with his broad, dark blue, Zouave-like trousers, his loose shirt made of white and blue fabric strips which falls lightly over the arms, and on the right shoulder his doré, a weapon consisting
411 of a slightly bent iron rod, flattened at one end and terminating at the other in a ring hafted perpendicularly to a short stick. His wrist
[301] is often adorned with a copper bracelet, and he nearly always carries at his waist a stiff knife, enclosed in a leather sheath which ends in a tuft of leather strips with cowries attached to them. He wears a
291 cap made of two diamond-shaped pieces of colored fabric half-sewn together; the two free ends may serve to cover the ears and cheeks, but are usually worn raised in the shape of a tiara. A great fighter, he wields the knife with dexterity or strikes with the doré which can become a dangerous club.

173 The Mossi are a conquering people. They have not always lived in the territory they now occupy. But where did they come from?
648 The elders questioned all say that their people came from Gambaga
643 (British Gold Coast), and this is why the Moro Naba Wobro took refuge in Gambaga when he was dethroned by the French conquest; this is also why the naba of Gambaga is notified whenever a Moro Naba dies, and why the shoes, cap, and scepter of command of the deceased are sent to him as gifts to be laid on the ancestral tomb. Gifts are also sent to the naba of Fada N'Gourma, which the Mossi call "Bingo." When the Moro Naba dies, his bow and quiver are presented to the

173 chief of Fada along with his two best horses, saddled, his two youngest
618 wives, twelve head of cattle, one captive, and three bars of salt.
[643] When the naba of Fada dies, however, nothing is sent to the Moro Naba, but his best horse is sent to the chief of Gambaga.

There has been contact, therefore, between the Gourmantché /Gurma/ of Fada, the Mossi, and the Dagomse /Dagomba/ of Gambaga. The Gourmantché claim that they come from Bornu. The first naba of Fada was a slave of the naba of Bornu. The Gourmantché formerly ruled the area as far as Dori. The Peul /Fulani/ came and chased them from the region after a long war. The Gourmantché, however, did not fight either the people of Gambaga or the Mossi. If they ever fought the latter, it was in the course of civil wars; the naba of Fada requested the Mossi to help him against his own subjects.

/5/ This is how the Mossi tell of the conquest of the territory. A
173 daughter of the chief of Gambaga, called Yennenga, had a son by the hunter Riala. This son was given the name Weddaogo. His son, Zougourana, seized Tenkodogo and settled there; in his turn Zougourana's son, Naba Oubri, seized the Ouagadougou area and became master of the whole country. The eldest son of Yennenga had seized Fada and founded the present dynasty, but had been unable to impose his language or his tattoing patterns on the inhabitants. This explains the gifts sent to Gambaga, the cradle of the race, and to the naba of Fada, the eldest son of the family. Part of the autochtonous inhabitants, driven away by the Mossi invasion, withdrew to the southeast and became the Bousansé /Busansi/ and the Gourounsi; the other part, remaining in the country, were assimilated by the Mossi and learned the tongue of their conquerors. A son of Naba Oubri, Naba Namendé, seized Bélousa and its territory.

In the meantime, the naba of Tenkodogo died, leaving only one son who succeeded him. His family requested the naba of Bélousa to give them his own son, who became Kourita, representative after death, of the deceased naba of Tenkodogo. Kourita wished to return to his father in Bélousa, but the latter sent him word not to do so, and Kourita stopped at Zaoré, a day's march from Bélousa, where his immediate successors resided. It was only later that this dynasty came to settle in Koupéla, after defeating and expelling, with the help of the naba of Bélousa, the descendants of Naba Guigma who had settled in Gobro near Soulgou. This is how the province of Koupéla originated, and this is why the naba of Koupéla must be invested by his overlord, the naba of Bélousa.

173 While these events occurred in the east, a sister of the Moro Naba, assigned to guard the tibo fetishes, quarreled with her brother and fled west to Ouahigouya. This region thus became Mossi territory and took the name of land of Ya. (2)

2. For further details, see Lt. Marc. op. cit. Ch. 7, and especially Delafosse, Haut Sénégal et Niger /Upper Senegal and Niger/, Series I, Vol. 2, p. 305 ff.

131 The region thus conquered lies within the bend of the Niger, approximately between the 11°30 and 13°30 parallels and from 2° to 5° longitude west of Paris. Its closest neighbors are the Macina and the Habé to the north, the Samo to the northwest, the Gourounsi to the west and southwest, the Nancana /Nankana/ to the south, the Bousansé to the southeast, the Gourmantché to the east, and the Peul of Dori to the northeast. The Mossi population has been estimated at
161 one and a half million, to which must be added the Yarsé, who are Mandé completely assimilated to the Mossi, the pastoral Peul, the Haoussa /Hausa/ who form small colonies near the large commercial centers of the region, and a few lesser groups. We shall deal with these populations only insofar as they have contact with the Mossi, in whose territory they are scattered.

Two important rivers cross the country from northwest [Tr., the
133 original reads northeast] to southeast. They are the two Volta rivers, the White and the Red. In addition to these two larger waterways, which nevertheless do not flow throughout the year, there are a large number of watercourses /Tr., the French term, marigot, covers both river branch channels and shallow depressions where water accumulates forming pools/. They become impassable torrents after a storm, /6/ but remain empty during the dry season from November to June. The
[312] shallow wells which supply water for the households are usually dug by the women in the beds of these watercourses.

There are no high mountains in Mossi country. When arriving from the north, the traveller crosses the beautiful cliffs of Bandiagara and the mountainous country of the Habe. /Two photographs appear here./ Mossi country begins almost at the foot of the cliffs. The northwestern region is, however, quite broken and includes the Pilimpikou peak; the two Volta rivers, especially the White Volta,

174 2. One may wonder whether the Bariba were not part of this Mossi or pre-Mossi migration, since the Bariba have certain points of resemblance, from a sociological viewpoint, with the Mossi: like the Mossi, they are warrior-horsemen, pillagers, and courageous. On the other hand, Delafosse (Vocabulaires comparatifs /Comparative Vocabularies/) wonders, on page 224, if one should not connect the Bariba to the Mossi-Gourounsi, from a linguistic viewpoint.

173 Also, Captain Lambert says in a note on page 170: "The leader of Djougou (Dahomey) is of Mossi origin. Tradition claims that the inhabitants of this village, divided by internal strife brought about by the rivalry of several pretenders to power, offered the leadership to a weaver who had been living for a long time in Djougou where he most certainly kept out of local squabbles; the latter refused the offer. But the people of Djougou refused to give up and made him a prisoner in his hut. Having to choose between the disadvantages of power and his own captivity, the weaver could not but make a decision; at the end of the sixth day, he consented to take command. His descendants have succeeded him since that time without interruption, and, in memory of the incident described, a custom was set up which requires that the new leader remain enclosed in his hut for the six days following his election."

174 as far as Gambakha, the present-day capital of the northern territories /6/ of the English colony of the Gold Coast. This is where the leader who had organized the exodus chose his residence. We have no positive information about him as a person, but it is certain that the establishment of the Mampoursi and Dagomba kingdom can be traced to him or his immediate successors."

174 [114] Captain Lambert adds in a note: "According to Colonel M.-P. Northcott, the founder of the Gambakha dynasty was called Tosogo; but the information that he provides about him seems hardly in agreement with the tradition we are relying upon here." (See Report on the Northern Territories of the Gold-Coast, London, 1890).

Captain Lambert continues as follows:

"The creation of the actual Mossi empire came later; it is nevertheless safe to assert that from that period on, some of the new inhabitants of Mampoursi undertook to open a passage toward the north and achieved it in two different ways. One group, after leaving Gambakha, pushed the Boussanga back into the region they occupy today and reached Béloussa country where they spread toward the west and north, occupying a vast stretch of land which is today almost exclusively inhabited by the Mossi. The other group, blazing a path in Nankana country, went north of Tiébélé and pushed the Boussanga back from the opposite side, thus crushing them in a vice, so to speak, and spread out in the country circumscribed by the Red Volta, toward Ouagadougou.

"One has only to glance at a map of the Mossi country to recognize the direction of these two parallel movements which came together north of the present-day Boussangsé, an almost uninhabited region at the time of the great Mossi migration. It was there that the autochthonous Boussanga, who were then occupying the whole Tenkodogo country, were forced to find refuge and have since been just existing, hostile to any fusion with the invader."

173 Captain Lambert then goes on to the legend of the origins of the true Mossi empire:

"A naba of the Gambakha (the Gambakha, as we have seen, were directly descended from the leader who had led the great immigration to the Mampoursi River), having reached the end of his life without an heir, believed this fact to be a fulfillment of destiny. Nothing in this world is permanent, and doubtless his glorious dynasty had to make way for a new line of leaders. He was at least resigned to this, but his lonely old age was what saddened him above all else. He therefore implored the spirits to give him a child, pronouncing the solemn vow that he would dedicate it to virginity, whether it be a boy or girl. As if by a miracle, a girl was born to him at once. He called her Pogotoenga (woman of the tree) (1), considering her, therefore, from

•173 1. Pogotoenga, or rather Pogotoéga, means "woman of the baobab, " and comes from pogo, meaning "woman, " and toéga, meaning "baobab" /a species of tree/. One may wonder what relation there is between this name and the fact that Pogotoenga was dedicated to virginity, if one ignores the customs of the Sudanese. A woman dedicated
588 to a baobab (a powerful vegetal divinity) is considered the spouse of the baobab. Therefore, she cannot enter into marriage with a man, which means forced celibacy. It is true that certain Blacks (for instance, the Dialonké of the Faranah circle, French Guinea) consider that a woman married to a spirit owes him only her spirit or spiritual form, and that her material body is free. From this arises the fact that with those Blacks, and some others as well, women-fetishes, women married to spirits or divinities, are actually prostitutes and practice prostitution. They are, besides, very rare.
[786] In short, they are allowed to prostitute themselves but not to marry. It is sacred prostitution, well known to the whole of oriental and Greco-Roman antiquity. Thus, virginity (sacred), on the one hand, and prostitution (sacred), on the other, are rather strangely derived from the same order of ideas.

173 her birth as being a stranger to her sex, and he had her given masculine clothes.

"Pogotoenga developed quickly. At the age of ten, she reached a degree of incomparable beauty, and at about the same period, torn by the ardors of puberty, she succeeded—despite the strict vigilance of the old man, anxious to remain faithful to his oath—in fleeing the paternal household.

Although pursued for a long time, she managed to evade all /8/ attempts at capturing her, until the day when, wandering in what is

173 today the Tenkodogo country, she met, in the midst of the bush, the elephant hunter Rialé, a lonely and violent man who seduced her. She had a son, Widiraogo, and a daughter, Wedaogo, by Rialé. (1)

1. In other legends (see my Noir du Yatenga /Blacks of Yatenga/, p. 58) Pogotoenga is called Yennenga, or simply Poko (woman). As far as the name Ouidiraogo or Widiraogo is concerned, it means male horse, stallion. I do not know exactly what the name Wedaogo or Ouédaogo means, but it seems to me to be unsuitable for a girl, since it contains the word daogo or raogo which means "male" in Mossi.

"In order that the quality of royal blood inherited by these children not be debased by exogamy, Rialé and Pogotoenga decided to marry them to each other, and from this marriage were born also a boy and a girl, Zunghrama (2) and Yuganemdo. For the same reason,

2. This is the Zoungourana of the Moulins-Carrier and Vadier legends (See my Noir du Yatenga, p. 60).

Zunghrama married his sister (3), and from this union, three sons

3. The unions of brothers and sisters are not indicated in the other variations of the legend.

were born: Oubri, Oubrogo, and Yampango. Oubri was to found the dynasty of Ouagadougou; Oubrogo, that of Tenkodogo; and Yampango, that of Gourma (4). Oubri's offspring were the most glorious and the

4. The Moulins-Carrier and Vadier variations present things somewhat differently. Zoungourana is supposed to have founded the Tenkodogo dynasty himself; his brother, Diaba, is supposed to

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have founded the Fada-N'Gourma dynasty; and Rawa, his eldest brother (in Mossi, "Rawa" means the courageous, the strong), is supposed to have founded the Rawatenga dynasty which has since become the Yatenga. As for the Ouagadougou dynasty, it was indeed Oubri, son of Zoungourana, who is said to have founded it. On this last point, all the traditions are in agreement, the one on which Captain Lambert bases his theories, as well as those of Moulins and Vadier.

most powerful. The relations between the naba of Ouagadougou and
[631] those of Tenkodogo and Gourma, their cousins, were always those of a sovereign to his vassal (5).

5. It is unlikely that this situation prevailed from the beginning, since the higher authority should have been that of the Tenkodogo naba. But when the Mossi kingdom of Ouagadougou subsequently became the more powerful, it established its primacy over the neighboring, less powerful kingdoms of Tenkodogo and Fada-N'Gourma.

"Their common ancestor, Zunghrama, died in Komtoéga, where his grave is still shown."

174 In conclusion, Captain Lambert states:

1. That the Mossi come from south of Bornu, an area still inhabited by a people, the Mossah, who greatly resemble them. /9/

2. That the Mossi went through Haoussa and Djerma in order to come to Dagomba.

3. That the Mossi of today come from those of Dagomba.

He also states, but we can ignore this claim as being absolutely contrary to the facts known to us today, that the journey from Djerma to Dagomba was made during or after the sixteenth century A. D. and was occasioned by the crusades that the second Songhaï empire

174 led against the Mossi. In fact, the Mossi had left Dagomba long before the fourteenth century and occupied their present sites, including Yatenga.

173 Dr. Ruelle as well admits that the Mossi came from the east before settling in Dagomba. "The same tradition," he says (1), "has

1. L'Anthropologie /Anthropology/, Vol. XV (1904), p. 675. The tradition mentioned refers to the tradition of the old people.

it that warriors who came from the east defeated at Gambakha the Dagomba tribe who was them master of the land, and they set up their own leader. His daughter, Ouiaraouga, fell in love with an elephant hunter with whom she ran away, and, as her father tried to apprehend her, she took refuge in Tenkodogo. There she married the local chief, a Boussanga called Zangoumana, whose grave in Komterga is still a place of pilgrimage for the Mossi. Their son, Bougoum, after several expeditions in that region, conquered Koupéla. He, in turn, had three sons: Houbri, Nabakéré, and Kouda, all of whom made further conquests. The first pushed on as far as Yako, made Ouagadougou his capital, and forced his two brothers to recognize him as suzerain." (2).

2. I quote this version which is somewhat different from the others and which also has some mistakes since the name of "Ouiaraouga" (Ouidiraogo, "stallion, male horse") is given to the young girl whom the other traditions call Poko, Pokotoéga, Yennenga, etc. The name rightfully belongs to her son and not to her. It should be noted that Zoungourana (or Zangoumana) here becomes a Boussanga, the second husband of the ex-maiden, daughter of the king of Dagomba.

174 Lieutenant Marc also believes that the Mossi originated in the east. "Where did the Mossi come from when they arrived in the

174 country of Gambaga?" he asks (op. cit., p. 134). "It is rather difficult to /10/ speak authoritatively on this subject: probably from the central African Sudan, the region of the Chad. All Mossi traditions are unanimous in placing their country of origin very far in the east . . ."

Lieutenant Marc had already said on page 130, "Local traditions have it that the Mossi come from very far in the east. Very long ago, they occupied a country located beyond the Niger River, whose capital was called Aliaman. This country is presently inhabited by the Songhai. Then the Mossi came to live in Dagomba, defeated its inhabitants, and the leader of the Mossi settled in Gambaga." (1)

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1. There follows the legend of the daughter of the king of Gambakha. She is wrongly called Ouidiraogo, "stallion," as in Dr. Ruelle's version. Lieutenant Marc goes on to make another mistake by saying that Ouidiraogo means "hoof" (instead of male horse). Zoungourana (whom Lieutenant Marc calls Zoungourouma or Zougourouma) is presented here, as he was by Dr. Ruelle, as the second husband of the daughter of the king of Gambakha and as a Boussansé king. In Lieutenant Marc's version, he "waged war against his father-in-law and conquered the whole country from Gambaga to Koupéla." Then "Zougourouma had three sons: Séré, Oubri, and Couda. The first became naba of Boussouma; the second, Naba Oubri, conquered the country of Ouagadougou, set up his capital there, and took possession of Yatenga. Naba Oubri is considered by the Mossi as the first of the Moro-naba and founder of the present dynasty. His successors were his brother Couda, and then his son Nigamenda."

174 In this tradition reported by Lieutenant Marc, there is obviously an element of Moslem imaginations; Aliaman probably designates

174 of reference given us by the chroniclers of Timbuktu or by the Portuguese. Once these chronologies have been set down, we shall be able to discuss them again with the help of an important bit of information which is given by the Tarikh-el-Fettach /History of Fettach/:

174 Mossi Kings 173	Delafosse's Chronology	Tauxier 1912	Tauxier 1917
Nédéga (Dagomba)	1000	"	1233
Riâlé	"	"	1253
Ouidiraogo	dead in 1050	"	1273 /17/
Rawa	11 century	"	1293
Oubri	1050-1090	1175-1199	1313
Ouemtanango	1130	"	1333
Yadega	1170	"	1353
Yaouloumfao	1200-1225	"	1360
Guéda	"	"	
Tounougoum	"	"	1360-1375
Possinga	"	"	
Nasségué	1320-1340	"	1375-1385
Somna	"	"	
Vanté-Baragouan	1350-1380	"	1385-1395
Bonga	1380-1410	"	1395-1415
Sougounoum	1410-1430	"	1415-1430
Kissoum	1430-1435	"	1430
Zangayella	1435-1460	"	1430-1450
Lanlasse	1460-1475	"	1450-1475
Nassodoba	1475-1500	"	1475-1505
Yamba	1500-1530	"	1505-1535
Niago	1530-1560	"	1535-1565
Parima	1560-1590	"	1565-1595
Koumpaougoum	1590-1620	"	1595-1625
Nabasséré	1620-1660	"	1625-1655
Toussourou	1660-1690	"	1655-1685
Sini	1690-1720	"	1685-1720
Pigo	1720-1739	"	1720-1739
Ouabégo	1739-1754	"	1739-1754
Kango	1754-1787	"	1754-1787
Sagha	1787-1803	"	1787-1803

174 173 Kaogo	1803-1806	"	1803-1306
Tougouri	1806-1822	"	1806-1822
Kom	1822-1825	"	1822-1825
Ragongo	1825-1831	"	1825-1831
Ridimba	1831	"	1831
Diogoré	1831-1834	"	1831-1834
Totébalobo	1834-1850	"	1834-1850
Yemdé	1850-1877	"	1850-1877
Sanoum	1877-1879	"	1877-1879
Noboga	1879-1884	"	1879-1884
Pigo II	1884-1885	"	1884-1885
Baogo	1885-1895	"	1885-1894
Bagaré	1895-1899	"	1894-1899
Liguidi	1899-1902	"	1899-1902
Koboga	since 1902	"	1902-1914

174 [174] First of all, we can note that there is, I think, a slight confusion in the beginning /18/ of Delafosse's chronology. As a matter of fact, he counts (Vol. I, page 306) 40 years per generation, and, on the other hand (Vol. II, page 126), he places Oubri approximately from 1050 to 1090. But Oubri was the son of Zoungourana, himself the son of Ouidiraogo, himself the son of the princess Yennenga, himself the son of Nédéga, the king who ruled in Dagomba. There are, then, four generations from Nédéga to Oubri, which must make 160 years, according to Delafosse's calculations, and, if Oubri is to be placed between 1050 and 1090, that would put his great-great-grandfather Nédéga at about 890, that is, at the end of the ninth century A. D., or at least in 910, that is, at the beginning of the tenth century (1).

1. I have already noted this in my Noir du Yatenga, p. 673 (Appendix No. IV).

In this last case, the approximate dates would be the following:

[173]

Nédéga.....about 910
Yennenga.....about 950
Ouidiraogo.....about 990
Zoungourana.....about 1030
Oubri ..... between 1050 and 1090

174 we are counting from Za Alayaman to Issihak II, 58 Songhay princes, this dates the beginning of these princes at about the year 837 A. D.

On the other hand, we must be aware of the fact that we have the approximate date of Ali Kolon's reign (or Ali Kolen, or Ali Golom, or Ali Kilnou), who freed the Songhay from the Mali suzerainty a little after the reign of Kankan-Moussa and during that temporary period of weakness which enabled the Mossi to raid Timbuktu (1333). Delafosse (2) puts the flight of Ali Kolen from the court of the Mali

2. Haut-Sénégal-Niger /Upper Senegal and Niger/, Vol. II, p. 73.

king and his victorious defense against the pursuing Mali people in the year 1335. Before him, Binger (3) had dated this flight in the year

3. Du Niger au golfe de Guinée /From the Niger to the Gulf of Guinea/, Vol. II, p. 368. See also page 371.

1331, during the reign of the weak Magha I, successor of Kankan-Moussa who reigned from 1331 to 1335. We can take 1333 as an average date, and it is conceivable that the fall of Timbuktu to the Mossi, which occurred in that year, helped in the restoration of Songhaï independence.

174 /20/ On the basis of this data, we have:
173

1.	Za Alayaman	837-849
2.	Zakoï	849-861
3.	Takoï	861-873
4.	Akoï	873-885
5.	Kou	885-897
6.	Ali Faï	897-909
7.	Biyaï Komaï	909-921
8.	Biyaï	921-933
9.	Karaï	933-945
10.	Yama-Karaouï'a	945-957
11.	Yama	957-969
12.	Yama-Danka-Kibao	969-981

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13.	Koukoraï'	981-993
14.	Kenken	993-1005
15.	Kosoï' (about 1009-1010)	1005-1025
16.	Kosaï'-Dariyâ	1025-1044
17.	Hen-Kon-Ouanko-Dam	1044-1063
18.	Biyaï-Koï'-Kimi	1063-1082
19.	Nintâsanaï'	1082-1101
20.	Biyaï'-Kaïna-Kimba	1101-1120
21.	Kaïna-Chinyounbo	1120-1139
22.	Tib	1139-1158
23.	Yama-Dao	1158-1177
24.	Fadazou	1177-1196
25.	Ali-Koro	1196-1215
26.	Bir-Foloko	1215-1235
27.	Yasiboï'	1235-1255
28.	Douro	1255-1275
29.	Zenko-Bâro	1275-1295
30.	Bisi-Bâro	1295-1315
31.	Bada	1325-1332
32.	Ali-Kolon (about 1333)	1333-1340
33.	Selman-Nâri	1340-1347
34.	Ibrahim Kabaï'	1347-1354
35.	Otsmân Kanafa	1354-1362
36.	Bar-Kaïna-Ankabi	1362-1370
37.	Mousa	1370-1378
38.	Bokar-Zonka	1378-1386
39.	Bokar-Dalla-Boyonbo	1386-1394
40.	Mar Kiraï'	1394-1402
41.	Mohammed Dâo	1402-1410
42.	Mohammed Koukiya	1410-1418
43.	Mohammed Fâr	1418-1426
44.	Karbifô	1426-1434
45.	Mar-Fâï-Kolli-Djimo	1434-1442
46.	Mar Arkena	1442-1449
47.	Mar Arandan	1449-1456
48.	Selimân Dam	1456-1464

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173

49.	Sonni Ali Ber	1464-1492
50.	Askia El-Hadj Mohammed	1493-1528
51.	Askia Moussa	1528-1531
52.	Askia Mohammed II	1531-1537
53.	Askia Ismaïl	1537-1539
54.	Askia Issihak I	1539-1549
55.	Askia Daoud	1549-1582
56.	Askia Mohammed III	1582-1586
57.	Askia Mohammed Bani	1586-1588
58.	Askia Issihak II	1588-1591

I underlined in this list the name of Bir Foloko (1215-1235), because he is the king of the Tarikh-es-Soudan list who corresponds to the Baraï of the Tarikh-el-Fettach list.

174 Concerning the dates which one can get from the Tarikh-el-Fettach, they consist of three notations:

1) A giant, originally from Yemen, who lived toward the middle of the fourth century of the Hegira (1), that is, counting 350 years

1. Tarikh-el-Fettach, Houdas and Delafosse translation, p. 329.

from the Hegira, around 961 A. D.

2) The date of conversion to Islam of the people of Gao which took place, according to El-Motaouakkel Kâti, between 471 and 475 of the Hegira, that is, between 1079 and 1082 A. D. (2)

2. Ibid., pp. 332-333.

3) And the date of Mâkara-Komsoû, who was contemporary with Kankan-Moussa's pilgrimage to Mecca in the year 720 of the Hegira, or 1321-22 A. D. (3) This Mâkara-Komsoû was the 33rd king of

3. Ibid., p. 335.

Songhay, according to the list given by Mahmoud Kâti.

174 On the basis of these three notations, a chronological list of the Songhay princes can be established in accordance with the Tarikh-el-Fettach, making a note of the fact that 360 years (961 to 1321) are given for 33 princes, which makes an average of approximately 11 years per prince. On the other hand, one is led to think that the date of the conversion to Islam of the people of Gao gives the date of Kotso-Moslem (Kotso the Mussulman) and that, therefore, we can place this prince at about 1079-82, that is, at approximately 1080. /22/ True, the Tarikh says that it was not Kotso-Moslem who converted the people of Gao to Islam and that the widespread general opinion about this matter is false, but Mahmoûd Kâti seems to mumble strangely (may I be forgiven the word) about the subject (1), and one

1. See the note of Houdas-Delafosse, p. 333.

can, despite his authority and following the general opinion he rejects, admit the fact that it was Kotso who Islamized both Gao and the Songhay kingdom. We thus arrive at the year 1080 for his period, which gives his predecessors nine years on the average until the giant from Yemen. Moreover, there and now, we can indicate all our reservations about this far too recent beginning of the Songhay empire. The date one obtains from the Tarikh-es-Soudan (837 A. D.) seems preferable by far to the date of 961, obtained from the Tarikh-el-Fettach.

174 173 Regardless of how the matter stands concerning this last topic, we have then:

1.	Giant from Yemen	961
2.	Ouaaï	970
3.	Kaïen	979
4.	Takaï	988
5.	Mata-Kaï	997
6.	Mali Biyaï	1006
7.	Bayaï Kima	1015
8.	Beï	1024
9.	Kiraï	1033
10.	Yama Kalaouaï	1042

174	11.	Yama-Dombo	1051
173	12.	Yama-Diamaa	1060
	13.	Diatakoré	1070
	14.	Koto-Moslem	1080
	15.	Kotso-Dariâ	1093
	16.	Hounabououa	1106
	17.	Yama-Kitsi	1119
	18.	Baraï	1132
	19.	Bibaï-Kaïna	1145
	20.	Sémanbao	1158
	21.	Fanda Diaoro	1171
	22.	Yama-Daa	1184
	23.	Arkour-Dioua	1197
	24.	Baraï (war with the Mossi)	1210
	25.	Yassi Bo'o	1223 /23/
	26.	Baro	1236
	27.	Douro	1249
	28.	Bitsi-Baro	1262
	29.	Ali Golom	1275
	30.	Silman Nari	1288
	31.	Ibrahim Kabayao	1301
	32.	Ousman Guifo	1311
	33.	Mâkara Komsôu	1321-1322
	34.	Boubakar	1335-1349
	35.	Ankada	1349-1363
	36.	Kimi-Yankoï	1363-1377
	37.	Baro del Yombo	1377-1390
	38.	Madao	1390-1405
	39.	Mohammed Koukiya	1405-1420
	40.	Mohammed Fari	1420-1435
	41.	Balam	1435-1450
	42.	Souleïman-Dama	1450-1465
	43.	Sonni-Ali-Ber	1465-1492

174 What is noticeable on this list (apart from the fact that this chronology brings the beginnings of the Songhaï kingdom much too close to our time and that, on this point, the chronology drawn from the Tarikh-es-Soudan is preferable) is that Kotso-Moslem is placed

4: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1957
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against the Mossi in 1497 and defeated them, but he failed to make them embrace Islam. The Mossi and Songhoi fought several other wars until Songhoi power was broken by the Moroccans, who captured Timbuktu in 1590.[2] 175

The Mossi first came to the attention of the Europeans during the travels of Heinrich Barth, J. Dupuis, and Edward Bowdich, but the first European, G. A. Krause, did not enter Mossi country until 1888. Krause was followed six months later by Louis G. Binger, but the Mossi became suspicious and closed their territory to other Europeans. About 1894, one Ferguson, a British mulatto, safely arrived at Ouagadougou, the Mossi capital, and signed a treaty with the supreme Mossi ruler placing the area under British protection. The French arrived in the country in September 1896 and, refusing to honor the British treaty, conquered the Mossi and secured control of the country.

The Mossi traditional history goes back to about the eleventh century and is part of a tradition relating the origin of the Dagomba, Mamprussi, and Mossi peoples. The Mossi claim descent from Nyennega, the daughter of a Dagomba ruler, who fled from her father's home to marry a hunter by the name of Riallé. This man had left his father's country and was living in exile as a result of a quarrel over the chieftainship. The product of the union between Riallé and Nyennega was a son called Wedraogo in honor of the stallion that carried his mother to the north. At the age of fifteen the boy Wedraogo went back to the Dagomba to visit his grandfather and was given 4 horses and 50 cows. According to tradition, when Wedraogo left the Dagomba country to return north many Dagomba horsemen followed him, because their country was overcrowded. Wedraogo and his followers rode northward and conquered his father's people, the Boussansi, and decided to live in a place called Tankurn (Tengdodogo—old country). Here Wedraogo married a Boussansi woman called Pouiriketa, who bore him three sons. Diaba Lompo, the eldest, was sent out to rule Fada N'Gourma; another, called Rawa, was sent to rule a place called Zondema (now part of Yatenga); the youngest, Zoungrana, remained with his father at Tengkodogo. 173

Tradition states that the Boussansi were only one of a group of small but warlike peoples who inhabited this region. The others were the Ninisis, the Kibissi, and the Gourounsi. These groups were constantly at war with one another and they made frequent alliances with stronger peoples to fight their enemies. A Ninisi chief visited Tengkodogo and, seeing the strength of the Dagomba, sought an alliance with Wedraogo. The Ninisi chief sent Wedraogo a woman called Pouitenga as a wife for Zoungrana, Wedraogo's son. A few years later the Ninisi asked Wedraogo to come and rule their country, but he died at a place called Sagabtenga before he could establish complete control of their territory. Zoungrana succeeded his father as head of the Mossi (a new tribe resulting from the union of the Dagomba and the local inhabitants) but, wishing to remain at Tengkodogo, he sent his son Oubri to complete the conquest of the

4: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1957
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173 country. The Ninisi were happy to have Oubri as their sovereign since he was related to them through his mother. Oubri made war on the local inhabitants and subjugated or drove away those Ninisi, Kibissi, and Gourounsi who did not accept his rule.

Naba Oubri is regarded as the founder of the Ouagadougou dynasty, the most important of the dynasties issuing from the original Dagomba conquerer, Wedraogo. The Mossi rulers who succeeded him spent most of their lives subjugating the rest of the country; the sites of their graves are markers along the road of Mossi conquests. It was only after the reign of Naba Coibga, the fourteenth ruler, that the Mossi rulers were able to confine their activities to the capital at Ouagadougou. By the reign of Naba Warga, the twentieth ruler, ritual prevented the leader from leaving his capital. The country had become so centralized at this time that it was feared that civil strife would erupt if the sovereign left his capital.

The consolidation of the Mossi state seemed to have been a difficult task, and at various periods in its history some decentralization took place. During the reign of Komdimie, the fifth ruler, two of his relatives broke away from his control and formed principalities. The northern kingdom of Yatenga was created by a man called Yadiga, and the state of Riziam was founded by Kouda. Despite opposition and constant attacks by Komdimie the new states remained independent and Yatenga absorbed Zondema, the fief of Wedraogo's son. At this same period Komdimie allegedly gave the provinces of Boussouma, Yako, Conquisitenga, and La to his sons, who called themselves Dima, meaning "Submit only to God." Another province called Kayao broke away from Komdimie's control, and its sovereign took the title of Dima when the supreme ruler was unable to conquer him. Most of the Dimas established courts similar to that of the supreme ruler and performed similar functions, but they still recognized the supremacy of the Ouagadougou dynasty. Besides these small independent states ruled by the Dimas, there were the important independent entities of Tengkodogo, Fada N'Gourma, and Yatenga. The first two claimed independence from Ouagadougou because they were founded by the sons of Wedraogo, while Yatenga claimed independence by the right of revolt and by the subsequent absorption of Zondema. The rulers of these states were forbidden to see each other, or to see the Ouagadougou ruler on pain of death inflicted by their ancestors.

The traditions that describe how the Mossi rulers subjugated and controlled the country differ little from region to region. As the rulers conquered new areas they sent their sons, in company with the sons of their ministers, to command the new districts. When the country was finally conquered the new rulers sent their sons to rule districts taken away from the heirs of former rulers.

The people of Nobéré, the district in which this study was carried out, say that their first sovereign, Biligo, was heir to Oubri, but that he did not wish to rule over the Mossi. Biligo left Ouagadougou on a hunting expedi-

4: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1957
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tion and, when he arrived at the sparsely settled Ninisi village of Nobéré, 173
he decided to stay and make it his home. The Ninisi ran away when they saw Biligo coming, but he persuaded them to return and live in peace under his command. The Tengsoba, or earth priest, of the village refused to return, and Biligo went into the bush and captured him so that the sacrifices to the earth shrines could continue as before. Biligo married a local woman and, when she bore him sons, he sent them to rule those villages not inhabited by the earth priests. These sons and their families formed the noble classes in the district.

About one hundred years ago a district chief called Peka supported the 173
loser in a fight for the supreme chieftainship and was killed when the 565
victorious pretender was installed as chief in Ouagadougou. The victor 631
sent his son, Ngado, to rule over Nobéré and, although the relatives of Peka were scattered, the village chiefs were allowed to retain their posts. These chiefs did lose their noble status, however, because Ngádo's sons who went to live in the villages formed the new nobility. The chiefs and their families were submerged into the commoner class. The history of Nobéré is typical of that of most of the Mossi districts and, today, one finds the remnants of many former ruling lineages scattered around the country.

The supreme ruler of the Mossi was called the Moro-naba. He possessed 643
the *nam* which is the symbol of power, and because of this power he had the right of life and death over all his subjects. He also had a religious role in the country because it was his duty to initiate the yearly rites dedicated to the ancestors so that the country would have good crops, and so that the people would be happy and multiply. The Moro-naba was aided in [645]
his rule over the Mossi by five ministers who were responsible for the five provinces grouping 333 villages that made up the territory of the state. These ministers were responsible for the proper administration of the state, and they nominally elected the new Moro-naba.

As soon as the death of the ruler was announced, civil disorder broke out throughout the country and continued until the five ministers and the minister for war took fictive control of the country. When the funeral of the late chief was completed the chief minister, the Ouidi-naba, summoned the lesser ministers to a conference and told them that the country had no chief "because the fire had gone out" and that it now required one. He advised them to consider the qualifications of the late chief's son and of all the other pretenders, and to choose the most worthy individual. The lesser ministers refused to do this, saying: "You are our superior, and the right to make the choice rests on you alone."

The eldest son of the former ruler was usually elected Moro-naba but, as any member of the royal lineage up to the third degree was eligible, many persons tried to bribe the elector. When the Ouidi-naba made his choice he told the minister of war: "My mind is not at ease because I fear that those whose hopes have not been fulfilled will resort to violence."

5: Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1959
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PETER B. HAMMOND

13. *Economic Change and Mossi Acculturation*

121 Some five thousand Mossi from the kingdom of Yatenga in the Upper
178 Volta have been resettled on the newly developed lands of the Niger
[177] Irrigation Project in the French Sudan. Removed from a cultural setting
which has been relatively undisturbed by the influence of European
[166] civilization, they are required to adapt themselves rapidly to an economic situation structured and directed by Europeans. Economic organization being the variable involved, a study of their adjustment provides an opportunity to examine some of the cultural problems and processes related to economic development in underdeveloped areas.

131 Yatenga is the northernmost of four Mossi kingdoms located in the
101 Upper Volta. It is a sub-Saharan savanna land of red earth, low rainfall, gently rolling plains, and low hills. Ouahigouya, the capital, gives its name to the French administrative unit, the Cercle de Ouahigouya, which has governed the kingdom from its headquarters in this ancient city since its conquest in 1895.[1]

101 To distinguish themselves from the people of the neighboring king-
doms of Ouagadougou, Fada-N'Gourma, and Tenkodogo, the Mossi of
173 the Yatenga sometimes speak of themselves as "Yadise" (those of Yadiga). This name refers to the fact that they regard themselves as being descended, as a nation, from Naba Yadiga, the half-mythical warrior-prince from Ouagadougou who broke away from his father's dynasty to form the separate political entity, Yatenga, which bears his name (*ya* for "Yadiga" and *tenga* for "country"). The Mossi have not always been numerically and culturally dominant in the Yatenga, as they are today. They recognize that their ancestors came from the south, from Mamprusi and Dagomba in the northern territories of Ghana.

171 Highly organized politico-religious states representing the cultural amalgamation of native and foreign populations and institutions are characteristic of the Voltaic region of West Africa. Acknowledging that we "owe to Rattray the discovery that these central Voltaic tribes are

[1] Capitaine Noire, *Monographie du Cercle de Ouahigouya* (Ouahigouya, 1904), p. 15.

5: Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1959
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composed of two major groups of communities," Fortes goes on to describe this pattern succinctly: 171

> On the one side are those that claim to be descendants of immigrants from parts of the country other than their present habitats. On the other side are communities that claim to be the autochthonous inhabitants. . . . Many of the immigrant communities claim descent from forbears of the Mampuru ruling stock. Though now wholly amalgamated with the alleged aboriginal inhabitants, they have certain ritual observances and a system of chieftainship similar to those of the Mamprusi. . . . The institution distinctive of the autochthonous communities is the office of "Custodian of the Earth." This ritual office, involving priestly functions in connection with the cult of the Earth, is found among many West African peoples from the Senegal to the mouth of the Niger. In the Voltaic region it is the exclusive prerogative of the autochthonous communities.[1] [793]

The inhabitants of the Yatenga at the time of the arrival of the Mossi were the Kurumankobe, or Fulse, as they are called by the Mossi. Their descendants recognise their indigenous origin but have become almost wholly acculturated to the Mossi. While most Mossi bear the sib name Wedrsogo and maintain political control in the Yatenga, the descendants of the Kurumankobe usually have the sib name Savadogo and are excluded from the exercise of political authority. They have retained the custodianship of the earth, and the elders of their lineages and sibs are the Mossi's *Tenga Soba namba*, their "earth custodians," charged with propitiating the supernatural forces of nature. 173 563 614 [793]

POLITICAL AND SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

The present king of the Yatenga, the *Yatenga Naba*, is a lineal descendant of the first ruler, Naba Yadiga. The members of the lineage of the king are called "those who maintain themselves upon us" (*riim namba*). Directly subordinate to the authority of the Yatenga Naba are his four grand ministers, each of whom has authority over a particular province (*solum*) of the Yatenga.[2] 631 [644] [635]

The province over which each of the grand ministers presides as lord is divided up into a number of cantons (*tense*), each of which is ruled by a chief who is the central political authority both of the village in which he resides and of the villages within the canton. Like the province, the concept of the canton is not precisely territorial. Some villages may owe 631 634

[1] Meyer Fortes, *The Dynamics of Clanship among the Tallensi* (London: Oxford University Press, 1945), p. 6.

[2] These provinces refer not only to geographical areas of the kingdom but to particular categories of the population. For example, the *Balum Naba* has direct authority over the southern regions of the Yatenga and indirect authority over the cantons of Riziam and Zittenga, political entities which have never fully recognized the central authority of the *Yatenga Naba*. This same minister is also especially charged with maintaining liaison with certain of the more important earth custodians throughout the Yatenga.

161 has but 655,000 inhabitants, while our French Guinea has 1,400,000, the Yolof /Wolof/ group of the Senegal numbers only 400,000, etc.

144 At present the Mossi are a completely homogeneous group in terms of custom and language, but this homogeneity is a mere end result. The Mossi population of today derives from the fusion of a conquering group (the Mossi proper) with a conquered group that was probably related closely to the Habé, Kipirsi, Gourounsi /Grunshi/, Boussansé, etc.

173 Lieutenant Marc, who lived for many years among the Mossi and who published a book /Le pays Mossi (Mossi Country)/ on the region in 1909, which I have already mentioned /in section not translated/, has the following to say on the subject:

"Local traditions claim that the Mossi come from far to the east. A long time ago, they occupied a territory located beyond the Niger, whose capital was called Aliaman. It is said that this land is now occupied by a Songhay /Songhai/ population. Then the Mossi came and occupied Dagomba /Tamale/. They defeated the inhabitants of that land, and the chief of the Mossi settled in Gambaga. The daughter of the king of Gambaga, Ouidiraogo ("male horse" in Mossi), had an affair in the bush with a Dagomba elephant hunter called Samba. She became pregnant, and as her father wanted to have her put to death, she took refuge in Tenkodogo. There she married the king of the land, a Boussangçé named Zoungourouma, who waged war on his father-in-law and conquered the entire region from Gambaga to Koupéla. Zoungourouma had three sons, Séré, Oubri, and Kouda. The first became naba of Boussouma. The second, Naba Oubri, conquered the region of Ouagadougou, built his capital there, and seized the Yatenga territory. Naba Oubri is regarded by the /453/ Mossi as the first Moro Naba and the founder of the present dynasty. He was succeeded by his brother Couda, and then by his son Nigamenda. The Mossi trace back to Naba Oubri the present organization of Mossi country and attribute to him the division of the land into fiefs governed by his brothers and relatives. At present members of the royal families of Ouagadougou, Boussouma, Tenkodogo, Fada N'Gourma, and Gambaga are regarded as direct descendants of Naba Oubri and his brothers.

173 "The Mossi say that at the time of their arrival the land was occupied by savages who went naked and bore tattooings on their bellies. Those natives were named Suida. The Mossi claim that they chased the Habé into the mountains of Bandiagara and that the Habé, Kipirsi, and Boussangçé are the survivors of this autochtonous Suida group . . . .

"The traditions of the primitive groups driven off by the invaders agree rather closely with Mossi traditions. . . .

174 "In view of these traditions, it seems to us[1] that the Mossi, coming from far to the east, occupied those lands which are now Mampoursi /Mamprusi/ and Dagomba territories, with Gambaga as their capital, and then, from Gambaga, set out for the northwest and came to settle in the vast plains of the White Volta basin, where they still live. At the time of their arrival, the present Mossi country was inhabited by tribes which are now represented by the Boussangçé, the Gourounsi, and the Habé.

"It is probable that the Mossi owed part of their success to their cavalry. We believe that the Mossi were responsible for introducing the types of horses found at the present day in the Volta basin. Even today, all the Mossi love horses and are proud to own them, and no naba would deign to appear in public except on horseback. The Gourounsi, on the other hand, care little for horses. . . .

"Only part of the autochtonous inhabitants took refuge in the mountains or beyond the Red Volta. The remaining group was conquered and incorporated into the Mossi group, and adopted the Mossi language and customs /454/. This autochtonous population did not vanish without traces. In our opinion, it is to be credited with the religious organization of the Mossi." (Pages 130 to 134.)

173 Moulins, on the other hand, an official in charge of native affairs who lived among the Mossi from 1907 to 1909 and who wrote the Monographie /Monograph/ of the Ouagadougou circle in 1909, tells the story as follows:

"Tradition has it that some thirty-five generations ago, the king of Dagomba who lived in Gambakha had a daughter named Poko whom he allowed to grow in years and in beauty without attempting to find her a husband. This made the young girl so angry that she did not hesitate to run away from her paternal home on a horse she had found.

[1] [These passages are quoted from "Le Pays Mossi" of Lt. Mart, see p 2 —Analyst.]

173 "She reached the area of present-day Yanga (Tenkodogo district), which was then occupied by a sparse group of Boussansé, and fell in love with an elephant hunter named Riare, by whom she had a son called Ouidiraogo (possibly in memory of the house on which Poko had fled Gambakha, for ouidiraogo means "male horse").

"When Ouidiraogo was about fifteen years old, Poko sent a messenger to Gambakha with the mission of telling the king of the Dagomba, "You did not want to give me in marriage, but God gave me a son whom I beg you to help." Then she sent Ouidiraogo to his grandfather, and the latter welcomed him and presented him with four horses and fifty head of cattle.

"At that time, the kingdom of the Dagomba was overpopulated. When Ouidiraogo returned to the Tenkodogo area, therefore, a large number of Dagomba threw in their lot with him and followed him. With this group, he founded a village which he named Tankourou on a site the Boussansé had abandoned when they saw him coming. This is present-day Tenkodogo.

"From that time onward, Ouidiraogo's power grew with the endless stream of Dagomba who came and gathered under his rule. The neighboring populations, on the other hand, were quite sparse and highly divided, and he was able to impose his authority upon them.

/455/ "Meanwhile, Ouidirago had married and given birth to numerous sons. When his boys grew up, he installed them as chiefs in the neighboring areas, especially in Fada N'Gourma, forcing his will by strength of arms upon those who were unwilling to submit.

"The area forming the present-day district of Ouagadougou was occupied at the time by Nymsi /Nioniosse/ and Gourounsi who lived side by side in a state of complete anarchy. The various villages acknowledged to a greater or lesser extent the authority of their chief, but although they were sometimes federated into cantons of a sort, they did not submit to any central power. As a result, incessant warfare and pillage prevailed among the villages.

"The chief of a group of Nymsi or Nioniossé which consisted of seven villages, the approximate equivalent of the present canton of Oubrytenga, dispatched a delegation to Ouidiraogo offering him one of his daughters in marriage. Ouidiraogo accepted the offer and

173 gave the girl to his son Zoungourana, who had by her a child named Oubry.

"A few years later a new delegation of Nioniossé came to greet Ouidiraogo and to ask him to take their country under his protection by placing it under the command of one of his sons. Ouidiraogo set out to the land of the Nioniossé to take possession of it, but in the course of this reconnaissance he died in the village of Saraboutenga. His son Zoungourana succeeded him and dispatched Oubry, who was about twelve years old at the time, to assume command of the Nioniossé. Oubry settled with his retinue in a village that took the name of Oubrytenga.

"During the initial years of his reign, on account of his youth, Oubry merely governed the region which had called upon him as its ruler. When he reached manhood, however, he prepared to extend the boundaries of his rule.

"A first detachment, sent to Gangado and Loumbila-Poko, procured the submission of the Boussouma and Béloussa regions. A second expedition, conducted to La, established Oubry's sovereignty in the Yako area.

/456/ "At that time, Zoungourana died. Oubry was his legitimate heir. Under the name of Moro Naba, he thus became chief of the Mossi and head of all branches of the reigning family. He left the administration of the Tenkodogo region to one of his brothers, but retained over it rights of suzerainty which subsisted until the time of the French occupation.

"Oubry's final expedition was aimed at Ouagadougou, where he waged a battle that lasted for five days. As a result, his authority was acknowledged as far as the Kipirsi. The Mossi empire was now established.

"Oubry died soon afterwards at Koudougou (Kipirsi) in the course of a journey through his new lands.

"When he died, not only had the conquest been carried out, but the political organization of the territory had already been firmly outlined. In order to facilitate the administration of his vast empire, Oubry had divided it into provinces, which were in turn subdivided into cantons, each of which contained a number of villages. A strong hierarchy prevailed among the various chiefs and converged on the Moro Naba, who thus centralized a considerable amount of power.

173 "This does not mean that nothing remained to be done by Oubry's successors. The land had been conquered, but remained to be explored and incorporated. The political organization had been outlined, but remained to be strengthened and completed.

"Up to the reign of Naba Kobra, fourteenth successor of Oubry, the Moro Nabas settled successively at various points of the empire instead of living generation after generation at Ouagadougou as they have done ever since. It would seem that in so doing they were attempting to strengthen their authority in regions where it was as yet insufficiently acknowledged.

"Whenever a territorial command became vacant, on the other hand, the Moro Nabas systematically filled it with a member of their own family. As a result, the whole land was soon in the hands of individuals who were united by bonds /457/ of kinship and who acknowledged the Moro Naba as the head of their family.

"Finally, thanks to marriages between Mossi, Nymsi, and Gourounsi individuals, the conquering element fused slowly with the initial population and eventually absorbed it almost completely.

174 "We have already seen that at the time of the Dagomba in-
144 vasion the territory that makes up the present district of Tenkodogo was inhabited by a Boussansé population, while the area covered by the present district of Ouagadougou was settled by Gourounsi and Nymsi or Nioniossé.

"The mixture of Dagomba with Boussansé, Nymsi and Gourounsi resulted in the Mossi element, which soon became the most important part of the population. As conquerors, indeed, the Dagomba married several women each, and the prohibitions governing kin marriages led them to seek their wives among the Boussansé, Nioniossé, and Gourounsi families. This is how they soon came to absorb the Autochtonous element, or at least the element that was already established in the area when they arrived.

"A few Nymsi families among the Mossi have avoided all intermixture, but their continuous contact with the Mossi has led them to adopt the latter's language and customs, and from a political standpoint there is no difference between the two groups."

174 From the two accounts of Marc and Moulins, the following broad facts may be gathered:

1. The Mossi, coming from the northwest, conquered the Dagomba at a time which is difficult to determine exactly, but which must not have long antedated their conquest of Mossi territory.

[Passages quoted from the "Monograph of the Ouagadougou circle in 1909" by Moulins. — Analyst.]

174 It must be said, however, as Marc points out, that the Mossi empire enjoyed a peaceful old age in the nineteenth century. The Toucouleur /Tukulor/ who conquered the Haoussa /Hausa/ territory with Othman /Usuman/ dan Fodio did not touch Mossi lands, and neither did El-Hadj-Omar who was detained in Macina territory by the Foulah /Fulani/. Toward the south, Samory went no farther than Boromo after conquering the Sudanese Ivory Coast. As for the forces of Djerma or Zaberma /Zerma/, they suffered a defeat in Kipirsi lands after their conquest of Gourounsi territories, that checked temporarily their march toward the north. They might later have nibbled at Mossi lands, but the French arrived precisely at that time. In short, the Mossi empire remained intact throughout the nineteenth century, though none the stronger for it, and crumbled at one blow in 1896 at the hand of a small French detachment.

173 174 We must add to this brief historical outline a list of the Moro Nabas who have succeeded one another since the time of Oubry. This list was borrowed from Moulins' Monographie du cercle de Ouagadougou /Monograph of the Ouagadougou Circle/.

1. Oubry, son of Zoungourana, grandson of Ouidiraogo, great-grandson of Poko. He lived at Oubrytenga.
2. Sorba, son of Oubry, who lived at Lougousi.
3. Nassekiemdé, brother of Sorba.
4. Nassébiri, brother of Sorba. He lived at La.
5. Ningnom, brother of the preceding.
6. Koundoumié, son of the preceding. He lived at Tiou.
7. Kouda, son of the preceding. He lived at Saponé.
8. Dawoéma, son of the preceding. He lived at Loumbila.
9. Zettembousma, brother of the preceding.
10. Nandieffo, son of the preceding. He lived at Ouagadougou.

If the reign of Naba Oubry is set around 1175 A.D., a period of 721 years is obtained up to the time of Bokary Koutou, thirtieth Moro Naba, who ruled in 1896. This yields an average reign of 24 years for each Moro Naba. If these figures are applied to the first ten Moro Nabas, it means that Kida would have reigned from 1463 /462/ to 1487. He would have been the one to invade the second Songhay empire in 1483 and to be driven back by Sonni-Ali.

113 11. Nattia, son of the preceding. He lived at Dazouli.
174 12. Namoëro, son of the preceding.
13. Kida, brother of Nattia. He lived at Ouagadougou.
14. Kimba, brother of the preceding. He lived at the same place.
15. Kobra, son of the preceding. He lived at Uougandé.
16. Sana, son of the preceding. He lived at Ouagadougou, where all his successors resided up to the present day.
17. Guiliga, son of the preceding.
18. Oubia, brother of the preceding.
19. Mottaba, son of the preceding.
20. Ouarga, brother of the preceding.
21. Zombéré, son of the preceding.
22. Kom, son of the preceding.
23. Sagha, son of the preceding.
24. Koulougou, son of the preceding.
25. Savadoro, son of the preceding.
26. Karfo, son of Savadoro.
27. Baoro, brother of Savadoro.
28. Koutou, son of the preceding.
29. Sanom, son of Koutou.
30. Boukary /sic/ Koutou, son of Koutou.

It was Bokary Koutou who was dethroned by Lt. Voulet in 1896.

31. Kouka (Siguiri) with whom Lt. Voulet signed a treaty whereby Mossi territory was placed under the suzerainty of France
32. Kom, the present Moro Naba (1910).

648 As may be seen, therefore, the Moro Nabas continue to exist among the Mossi. France even provides them with a pension, which first amounted to 25,000 francs a year and has since been lowered to 18,000 francs. They no longer hold any powers, however, and they do nothing whatever.

175 I have found in the Monographie of the circle some interesting data on expeditions led by the Moro Nabas into Kipirsi territory, which always resisted Mossi conquest. Naba Koundoumié, sixth successor of Oubry, /463/ first led a bloody expedition to Kayao and Tiou. Naba Dawoéma, eighth successor of Oubry, waged war to the north of Yako. Naba Ouarga, twentieth successor of Oubry, settled

644 who will make him into a sorone if he is a boy, or alone have the right to give her in marriage if she is a girl."

643 Moulins also provides interesting details on the manner in which the Moro Naba spends his days, or rather spent them in the past, for this description refers to the state of affairs prior to the French occupation.

"From Ouarga's reign onward, the Moro Nabas, who had previously resided successively in various parts of the empire, settled at Ouagadougou where they have lived ever since. Custom constrains them never to leave /571/ the capital except in unusually serious circumstances. This is because the land falls into anarchy [674 when the sovereign is absent from Ouagadougou. All theft, pillage, 696] and murder committed at that time remain unprosecuted.

644 "Every morning at seven, the Moro Naba emerges from his hut. His saddled horse waits before the door. He mounts it and pretends 173 to set out on his way, but after riding around his hut he dismounts and goes back into his hut only to come out again immediately.

"This formality of the protocol has the following origin. A long time ago the favorite wife of the Moro Naba having fled to La, the sovereign wished to go and fetch her himself. He mounted his horse and was about to leave when all the court dignitaries rushed to him, admonishing him not to carry out his project, for his absence from Ouagadougou could only result in anarchy. The monarch gave way, and soon afterwards his wife returned of her own accord. It is in memory of the magnanimity of this sovereign, who sacrificed himself in the interests of his people, that every morning since that time the Moro Naba has pretended to prepare for departure and to then give up his plan.

644 "Following this ceremony, the Moro Naba settles himself in a recess sunk into the wall that surrounds his residence, and then, to the strains of abundant music, the whole court comes to the sovereign and prostrates itself before him, brow in the dust, forearms striking the ground in rhythm with a great clicking of bracelets. Then business is attended to.

"First, the five province chiefs come forward in order of precedence, relate to the Moro Naba those events which have taken place since the preceding day, and receive his instructions for the day. Then they present to him the canton and village chiefs and the common natives who wish for an audience.

8: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1958
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Christianity and Islam among the Mossi[1]

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797 THE twin forces of Christianity and Islam are both seriously contending for the conversion of the pagan masses of the Western Sudan. Islam first penetrated this region during the 11th century and succeeded in converting many people to its faith. Christianity arrived on the scene only 60 years ago, and has not had the time to win many converts. However, there remained many societies in this area which were largely pagan until European conquests exposed them almost simultaneously to the influences of both Christianity and Islam. One such society, the Mossi, has been described as the principal island of resistance to Islam in the Sudan (Gouilly 1952:52). André (1924:31) states that the Mossi "offered to the Animists an irreducible rampart against the invasion of Islam." And Delafosse concurs that the Mossi "seem to have been particularly hostile to Islam which has made no progress among them since the Hegira. And although an appreciable number of Moslem strangers (Yarsé) lived among them, they have almost all remained pagans" (1912, vol. 3:187).

The first Christian Catholic missionaries arrived in Mossi territory in 1900, just four years after French conquest. These missionaries were kindly if fearfully received by the people, who gave them land for building a mission and for cultivating crops. The Mossi helped the Christians cultivate these crops and willingly allowed the children to attend the mission school. Nevertheless, when the missionaries tried to convert the children to Catholicism, the parents objected and withdrew the children from school (Socquet 1956:62). The Protestant American "Assemblies of God" mission first worked among the Mossi in 1926, and in 1931 they reported that the outlook for conversions was "hopeful" (Cooksey and McLeish 1931:215). But from 1926 to date, the Protestants have made negligible progress in their conversions. There are today about 155,000 Moslems, 26,000 Catholics, and 1,760 Protestants in a Mossi population of over 1,500,000. These figures attest to the fact that despite a long history of resistance to foreign religious systems, many Mossi are now abandoning their traditional religion. But the figures also show that while Islam is gaining many converts, the Catholics are making only slight progress, and the American Protestants hardly any at all. There are obviously many reasons for the differential advance of these three religious systems. In this paper I will examine and analyze the processes by which these religious systems attempt to gain converts, and delineate the reasons for their differential success.

173 105 [186] The Mossi who are now feeling the impact of external religious influences represent the unique example of a Sudanese group which has preserved its ethnic identity and political autonomy through all the vicissitudes of Sudanic history until French conquest in 1896. Tradition records that the first Mossi

8: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1958
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rulers left the Dagomba region in the Gold Coast (present-day Ghana) during the 11th century and moved into the bend of the Niger River, carving out three large kingdoms and smaller principalities in the process. At the head of these still extant kingdoms are rulers (*Moro Nabas*) who hold feudal-like control of the provinces, districts, and villages which comprise their domains. A complex hierarchical administrative apparatus extends the power of the rulers into the smallest village, and funnels taxes and tribute back to them. French conquest modified this highly efficient system but did not greatly change it. The Mossi state apparatus rests on an economy which produces cotton cloth, horses, sheep, cattle, and goats, but the main support of this large population—one of the densest in the Sudan—is grain agriculture. Today, some Mossi districts still have as many as 70 persons per square mile.

The Mossi are divided into stratified royal, noble, and commoner patrilineages. Characteristic of this lineage system is a process by which royal sublineages descend serially until they merge with the mass of commoner lineages. Below the lineages there were once large non-Mossi groups of serfs and slaves, but these people have now been grouped into lineages and have become Mossi. Patrilocal polygynous extended family households, grouped into villages, form the basic Mossi settlement pattern. Marriages are arranged between unrelated persons through the agency of lineage members who establish "friendly" relationships. The two friends might ask their lineage heads for women to exchange as wives, or the "friend" who has received more gifts from his opposite number will give over a wife. Because only the older men have women and goods at their disposal, they are usually the ones who receive wives. The result is that most young men have no wives and must content themselves with occasional lovers until they inherit wives from lineage members. The Mossi have a great fear of incestuous relations which bring down the wrath of the ancestors (the *Keemsé*).

Ancestor veneration is at the core of Mossi religious behavior. The recent ancestors are notified, through sacrifices, of the important events in the lives of their descendants, and they are expected to aid in solving everyday problems. The ancestors also invoke their sanctions against antisocial behavior among their descendants. Once a year the Mossi people, in concert with the Moro Nabas, appeal to their individual and collective ancestors for good crops, large families, and for the preservation of the dynasty. Often associated with the ancestors as propitiatory agents are local deities called *Tengkougas* (sing. *Tenkougre*) or earth shrines, visibly manifested by clumps of trees, mountains, rocks, or rivers. *Tengsobas* or earth priests appeal to the Tengkougas on behalf of the local populations for help in sickness, for rain and good crops, and for children. When proper sacrifices are offered to the Tengkougas, their spiritual agents, called *kinkirsé*, enter the wombs of women and are born as children. Twins and children who die young are regarded as "evil" kinkirsé who entered a woman without being invited. Nevertheless, many persons consider twins as special gifts to parents in favor of the earth deities.

The earth itself, *Tenga*, is one of the principal deities of the Mossi. Tenga is

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during a period of transition to effective independence.

The Mossi have the unique distinction of having preserved their ethnic identity and political autonomy throughout all the vicissitudes of Sudanese history until conquered by the French on September 1, 1896. The origin of Mossi society is couched in mythological terms. According to their tradition they came from Dagomba in the Gold Coast (present day Ghana) sometime during the 11th or 12th century and moved northward towards the Niger River. During this migration they carved out three large kingdoms and many small principalities by conquering and absorbing some of the indigenous Ninisi and Foulse and Dogon populations, and by chasing the others into the cliffs of Bandiagara. In 1328, according to Es Sadi in the *Tarikh es Soudan*, the Mossi attacked, burned, and sacked Timbuktu, then held by Mali, and during the following century attacked Walata and Banku. They received their first setback by the Ali, and were severely beaten by Askia the Great, the usurper of the Songhoi throne, who lead a *jihad* against them in 1469. But their attacks into the Niger bend did not cease until the Moroccans became masters of Timbuktu sometime in the early 1590's. From that period until the French conquest, the Mossi remained relatively quiescent. They developed and maintained an economy based on grain cultivation, livestock rearing, cotton production, and trade between the forest zones and the desert. Their political system crystallized into a loose confederacy of fairly autonomous kingdoms and principalities, sometimes tribute to the Moro Naba, the ruler of Wagadougou.

Wagadougou, the most important Mossi political entity, was like the lesser kingdoms, pyramidal in political structure. At the top was and still is the Moro Naba, a lineal descendant of Wedraogo, the Dagomba conquerer who founded the Mossi group and Moro Naba Wubri, the first ruler of the Wagadougou dynasty. Paying allegiance to him, were the princes who ruled such autonomous provinces as Yako, Boulsa, Mane, Riziam, and Boussouma. These princes were all sons or near relatives of the early Moro Nabas. Directly under the Moro Naba were district chiefs who were descended from the cadet branches of the ruling family. The villages within the district were in turn ruled by the chiefs of the indigenous populations. In many of the villages,

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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Tallensi chiefs and the Namoos clans are descended from the noble lineages of the Mamprusi kingdom, which at one time controlled Tallensi country. The chief of one of the Namoos clans reportedly told him, "We came from Mampurugu. . . . We have now become Talense; we no longer circumcise, because the local people would not marry us. The chief of Kurugu, our 'father,' still speaks Mampelle, but we no longer do so." The chief referred to is of course Fortes' Kuna'aba. Rattray adds that the Tallensi chiefs of the Namoos clans told him that they had to be sanctioned in office by the ruler of the Mamprusi at Naleregu.[11]

These data certainly suggest that prior to the arrival of the British, the Mamprusi were either incorporating Tale country into their kingdom or losing their hold on the Tallensi. Fortes' insistence on the acephalous nature of Tallensi society stems from his failure to consider that these people had been defeated and dispersed by the British at the turn of the century and had probably lost a great deal of their organization. The society he describes can be compared to a modern community arbitrarily divorced from its nation state. Such a community would have many of the truncated institutions and personnel of the state, but they would appear bizarre because they would lack the power normally derived from their national context. Moreover, to an investigator, the strictly local institutions would seem just as important as the truncated state institutions. His study would no doubt give a good synchronic picture of the community, but it would be incomplete because the diachronic dimension would be lacking. Fortes unfortunately gives us no idea of the relationship of the Tallensi to the Mamprusi, or of the cultural, historical, and especially the political processes in the region.

The origin of Mossi society lies buried in myths that not only sanction the power of the ruling families but support the political system with rich traditions of migrations and conquest. Traditional beliefs in the Voltaic area and among the Mossi themselves give a common origin for the Dagomba, Mamprusi, and Mossi peoples.[12] According to the most widespread Mossi belief, some forty generations ago a ruler called Naba Nedega (also known as Toese or Koulougbagha), who lived at Gambaga in present-day Ghana, reigned over the Dagomba, Mamprusi, and Nankana.[13] He had a daughter called Nyennega, whose warring skills he valued so highly that he would not grant her permission to marry. As a result, she fled Gambaga and rode toward the north, where she met and married a man called Rialle, who according to some traditions was the son of the Mali chief, and according to others was a Busansi hunter. The couple had a son whom they

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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173 named Ouedraogo ("Stallion") in honor of the horse that had carried Nyennega in her flight to the north.[14] A few years later, Nyennega sent Ouedraogo to Gambaga to visit her father, give him news of her marriage and of her family, and seek his aid.[15] Nedega welcomed the child and cared for him until he was ready to return to Busansi territory. As a farewell present, he gave Ouedraogo four horses and fifty cows. When he left Gambaga, the young man was accompanied by Dagomba horsemen who had seized the opportunity to leave their crowded homeland. With his troop of warriors, Ouedraogo skirted his father's village and invaded Tankourou (present-day Tenkodogo), from which the indigenous Busansi fled at his approach.

The Mossi bards relate that Ouedraogo and the Dagomba horsemen intermarried with the Busansi women, and that these unions gave rise to a new group of people called the Mossi. Ouedraogo himself married a woman named Pouriketa, who bore him three sons, Rawa, Diaba Lompo, and Zoungourana. Ouedraogo thus became known as the progenitor of the Mossi, and his mother, Nyennega, as their progenitrix. Other Dagomba horsemen subsequently arrived from Gambaga to swell the Mossi group. The Mossi then undertook to subdue neighboring peoples such as the Gurunsi (a large group including the Kasena, Sisala, and Nunuma), who lived to the east; the Ninisi, who were thinly scattered to the northwest in the vicinity of Ouagadougou; other large Ninisi, Foulse, and Habe (Tombo or Dogon) populations further north in Ouahigouya and extending northwestward to the Bandiagara cliffs; large Kipirsi populations northeast of Ouahigouya; and scattered Ninisi groups in Fada-N'Gourma east of Tenkodogo. Ouedraogo sent his son Diaba Lompo to conquer and rule over the Ninisi populations of Fada-N'Gourma.[16] Rawa, another son, was sent to subdue the region called Zandoma, northwest of Tenkodogo. The Ninisi of this region quickly accepted his authority. He acknowledged their claim to the land by calling them *Tinguimbissi*, "sons of the earth," and allowed their earth-priests, the Tengsobadamba, to retain ritual control of the earth shrines. However, the Habe (Dogon) refused to submit to Rawa and fled to the safety of the Bandiagara cliffs. Ouedraogo did not wish his youngest son, Zoungourana, to leave Tenkodogo, and the young man remained with him.

According to Ouagadougou tradition, the successful exploits of the Mossi warriors soon came to the attention of the Ninisi chief of Guilingou village, near Ouagadougou. He and the chief of Ziri village sent a wife to Ouedraogo and requested that he join them in an alliance against their Ninisi enemies. Ouedraogo accepted the invitation and gave the woman, who was called Poughtoenga, to Zoungourana as his wife. She gave birth

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to a son called Oubri. Soon afterwards, the Ninisi returned to Tenkodogo and asked Ouedraogo to aid them in a war against their enemies. Ouedraogo did so, and in the process continued his conquest of the Ouagadougou region but died before completing it.

After Ouedraogo's death his elder sons refused to leave their kingdoms to succeed their father at Tenkodogo, and the territory fell to Zoungourana. He declined to continue Ouedraogo's wars against the dissident Ninisi elements of Ouagadougou but accepted the demands of the Guilingou Ninisi that Oubri, their daughter's son, be sent to rule their territory. Tradition recounts that the youthful Oubri settled with his retinue at Oubritenga near Ziri until he was old enough to continue the Mossi wars of expansion. Later he conquered Gangado, Lumbila, Boulsa, and Boussouma northeast of Ouagadougou before turning west and conquering Ninisi and Kibisi groups at La and Yako and chasing many Kibisi under a chief called Waregoumga into the Bandiagara cliffs. He then returned and conquered the Ouagadougou area itself after a bitter fight. He finally met his death in the Kipirsi region after having conquered Koudougou and chased defiant groups across the Black Volta River. By the time of his death the kingdom of Ouagadougou was firmly established. Along with Ouedraogo, he thus became known as one of the two founders of the Ouagadougou dynasty and the first *Mogho Naba* ("chief of Mossi country"). The Ouagadougou kingdom now eclipsed all of the kingdoms founded by Ouedraogo's other sons. It retained its ascendancy through the centuries, although this is denied by the other Mossi kingdoms.

As Ouagadougou developed, Tenkodogo declined; when Zoungourana's son, Sere, inherited Tenkodogo, his rule extended only over the neighboring Busansi. In time, Tenkodogo declined further, losing all control over the southern Busansi populations, which finally came under the tutelage of Ouagadougou, and which have retained much of their language and customs to this day. The kingdom at Fada-N'Gourma founded by Diaba Lompo gradually lost contact with the other Mossi groups and became a separate group known as the Gurmanche or Gourma. Although these people occasionally waged war on the Mossi kingdoms, they maintained ritual ties with them.

Rawa enlarged his kindom of Zandoma by expelling the Habe and absorbing the Ninisi population of Ouahigouya. However, his descendants ultimately lost Zandoma to Yadega, a prince of the Ouagadougou dynasty. This prince, a grandson of Naba Oubri, allegedly lost his rightful claim to power because he was away at war on the death of his father, and his younger brother Koudoumie bribed the electors.[17] When Yadega learned that Koudoumie had been elected, he led an army against him but found

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173 him too firmly entrenched to be deposed. He then returned north to a place called Gourcy in Ouahigouya. There he was joined by his sister Pabre, who brought him the royal amulets of Rialle (Ouedraogo's father), which she is said to have stolen from Koudoumie and which were believed to sanction the power of the Ouagadougou ruler. Koudoumie gathered his army and pursued Pabre in an attempt to recover the amulets, but he met so much opposition at Yako that he returned without them.

The struggle for supremacy between Koudoumie and Yadega led many of the princely descendants of Ouedraogo to carve out their own principalities from their patrimony and declare themselves independent of Ouagadougou. Faced with the dissolution of his realm, Koudoumie dispatched his sons to different parts of the kingdom to halt the process. There came into existence such principalities as Boulsa, Boussouma, Conquizitenga, Mane, Riziam, Tema, and Yako.[18] However, some of these princes joined the ranks of the rebels, who by this time had taken for themselves the title of *Dim*, meaning "submit only to God." The ruler of Ouagadougou later recognized the autonomy of these princes but not their independence from Ouagadougou.[19]

After Koudoumie's death his descendants at Ouagadougou continued to rule and to consolidate their territory. Each ruler resided wherever control of the population was most necessary, and the graves of the first fourteen rulers of the Ouagadougou dynasty are markers along the road to that dynasty's complete domination of the country. It was only during the reign of the fifteenth ruler, Mogho Naba Sana (ca. 1430–1450), that Ouagadougou became the permanent capital of the dynasty. Meanwhile, the northern Mossi, under Yadega (who had claimed the title of Mogho Naba and complete independence from Ouagadougou on the strength of the amulets brought by Pabre), were also extending and consolidating their territory. They had absorbed into the kingdom of Yatenga ("country of Yadega") all the lands in the kingdom of Zandoma, which had belonged to Rawa, the son of Ouedraogo. Under their rulers (the Yatenga Nanamse), these Mossi moved into the bend of the Niger, a region they called Ghanata, and sacked such towns as Djenne, Sarafere, Timbuktu, and Walata.

175 The author of *Tarikh es-Sudan*, a seventeenth-century chronicle, describes the attack on Timbuktu by the Mossi ruler, which took place about 1339:

> It was in the reign of one of the princes of [sultan Kankan Moussa's] dynasty that the sultan of the Mossi at the head of a strong army made an expedition against that city. Seized with fright, the people of Mali fled and abandoned the city to its assailants. The Mossi ruler entered the city, and after killing

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[P. 13]

II

SOVEREIGNTY, KINSHIP, AND COMMUNITY

THE Mossi restricted all important positions within the traditional political 642
organization to persons who claimed lineal descent from Ouedraogo and 613
Oubri, the ancient founders of the Mossi nation. Thus all the *Mogho Na-* [173]
namse, Dimdamba, Kombemba, and *Tense Nanamse*—the heads of king-
doms, principalities, districts, and villages, respectively—claimed descent
in the royal line. The bond of kinship among all important Mossi rulers [614]
was symbolized by membership in the lion clan (*Gegema*) and affiliated
clans or *boodoo* founded by ancient members of the ruling families. Al- 613
though the Mossi respected clan totems, they did not stress clan organ- 778
ization. They were more interested in membership in the segmentary 642
lineages within the clans.[1] Yet not all Mossi groups stressed lineage affilia-
tion. This was of supreme importance only for nobles whose membership
in particular segments of ruling lineages gave them access to the *nam*—
the power first possessed by the ancient founders, which is described by
the Mossi as "that force of God which enables one man to control another."
So important was the corporate possession of the nam by a ruling lineage [554]
that with few exceptions, membership in such a lineage gave a Moaga
noble status.[2] Lineage segmentation gave some segments easier access to [578]
the nam, however, and resulting conflicts over sovereignty gave rise to the
various Mossi kingdoms, principalities, and even districts.

Every Mossi ruling line attempted to legitimize its position by claiming
the most direct descent from Ouedraogo and Oubri. The descendants of the
founder of a local ruling lineage would claim that he had been an elder son
deprived of his patrimony by unscrupulous younger brothers, or an elder
son disqualified by a physical handicap from receiving the nam. Some rul- 642
ing lineages even claimed that their founders had been elder sons who had 613
voluntarily forsaken the problems of government and established new 173
districts for themselves. Whenever tradition recounted that a younger son 778
had indeed founded a kingdom or district, it was invariably said that he

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had done so with full permission of his father and in place of an unadventurous elder brother.

For example, the ruling family of the Boulsa province claimed that its ancestor, Naba Namende, was the eldest son of Mogho Naba Oubri and chose to become his father's *Kourita* (a young son of a deceased Mogho Naba chosen as his father's personal representative on earth) and go into exile rather than subject his younger brother to the ordeal. At the same time, Namende sought to retain royal power equal to that of his brother, the new Mogho Naba, by taking Oubri's royal amulets with him.[3]

Mane province, too, was founded by one Nyaseme, a son of Koudoumie, who felt that he should have been given the nam. When routed in battle by his elder brother Kouda, he moved into the region of Mane, where he defeated the indigenous Ninisi and ruled over them. The princes who broke away from Ouagadougou during Koudoumie's reign considered themselves theoretically equal to the supreme ruler. Thus, they took the title of Dim. By so doing, they dramatized their claim to equality of status, if not of power, with the Mogho Naba, and their determination to "submit only to God."[4]

The Mossi insist that the relationship between the Mogho Naba and the Dimdamba was similar to that between father and sons, since the Dimdamba were "really the sons of the Mogho Naba" and are said to have acted as such. This analogy is interesting in view of the Mossi traditional pattern of avoidance—combined with love and tolerance—between fathers and elder sons.[5] The Dimdamba were often allowed to act at variance with the Mogho Naba. Some of them shifted allegiance from kingdom to kingdom; others usurped the power of the Mogho Naba over smaller districts, or claimed that they had been given this power; and most of them regulated their own affairs with little interference from their sovereign. He, as "father," interfered on occasion in their internal affairs, demanding help from them and often chastising them if they failed to comply.

The Mogho Naba and the Dimdamba often appointed their younger sons or brothers as rulers (Kombemba) of the districts that made up their kingdoms and principalities. In this way, power and authority were kept within the royal clan and its lineages. Nevertheless, in keeping with the concept of corporate access to the nam, the rulers of these dependencies had traditions that served to reconcile their claims to kingly or princely status with their actual subordinate position. District founders, too, were often portrayed as eldest sons who had been cheated out of their patrimony or had voluntarily left it to establish new districts. In some cases, the legendary heroes were granted miraculous births as well.

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The people of Nobere district have a legend that its founder, Naba Biligo, was sired by a spirit who impregnated the wife of Mogho Naba Oubri. She carried him in her womb for more than a year, and noticed that although her belly was extended during the daytime, it was always flat at night. She became concerned and confided her worries to the ruler's first wife, who asked the other co-wives to keep vigil for the child. When they arrived in the evening, they noticed that the woman's belly was flat. They awakened her and kept watch until dawn. At cock's crow, the child Biligo returned from his nocturnal wanderings. Seeing the women, he fell from the top of the hut into his mother's lap and began to cry as though he had just been born. When Biligo grew to manhood, he went hunting in the Nobere area. He found the region so fertile that when he returned to Ouagadougou, he told his father, Mogho Naba Oubri, that he did not want the nam but preferred to conquer the Ninisi of Nobere and become their chief.

The people of Doulougou give a slightly different account of the founding of their district. Their founder, a man called Moumde, was also said to be a son of Mogho Naba Oubri. He did not like the capital, and rode all over the kingdom until he came to Doulougou. He liked this region so much that he asked his father to name him chief over its indigenous population. Oubri then sent down an army, defeated the Ninisi, and appointed Moumde as Doulougou Naba.

According to some traditions, Mogho Nanamse appointed their sons as chiefs of conquered districts. A more common tradition, represented by the Biligo legend, is that the founders of local districts conquered their territories with or without the permission of the Mogho Naba. Biligo, the founder of Nobere district, is said to have found the area sparsely inhabited by Ninisi, most of whom fled before him. A person of gigantic proportions, he easily defeated those Ninisi who elected to give him battle. He then went into the woods, where he invited the Ninisi leader, an earth-priest (Tengsoba) called Tedego, to return to the district. Biligo promised him and the other refugees safe conduct and good treatment if they agreed to return. Tedego refused, whereupon Biligo captured him and installed him in a special quarter, with the injunction that he and his family should make sacrifices to the local earth shrines (*Tengkouga*) in the name of the new ruling lineage. Naba Biligo went back into the woods, captured the other refugees, and resettled them in their villages. He allowed the local Tengsobadamba to retain their religious duties, but sent his sons to take political control of the villages. Not satisfied with the number of people under his command, Naba Biligo then raided Gurunsi country and cap-

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634 tured slaves, whom he settled behind his compound and in separate villages
173 under their own chiefs. He also welcomed refugees from wars in other territories and established them in special villages under their own chiefs.

631 The Dimdamba followed a similar practice in establishing power and
173 control. According to Cheron, when Mogho Naba Koudoumie sent his son Tiraongo to conquer the Ninisi of Boussouma, the Ninisi defended themselves fiercely. Tiraongo's advance was thus very slow until he found a Ninisi named Wine, dressed in a panther's skin and hiding in a hole, "who on the promise that his life would be saved, consented to serve as guide to Tiraongo and to make propitiatory sacrifices to the divinities of the country. Thanks to him, the Mossi were able to progress to Somtongande."[6] Boulsa tradition recounts that when Naba Namende left Ouagadougou as the Kourita of Mogho Naba Oubri and took possession of their province, he placed his sons at the head of the principal villages "in order to control it [Boulsa] better."[7] One son was even sent to rule over a village at the request of the local Tengsoba.

634 The villages that made up a Mossi district were usually ruled by chiefs
613 who belonged to sub-lineages of the local ruling lineage. These village
778 chiefs and the members of their lineage formed a noble class, the *nakomce*
[565] ("children of the Naba"). As long as a lineage held the nam of a district, all of its sub-lineages had all the privileges of the noble class, regardless of whether they had charge of villages. But if the Mogho Naba deprived
[558] a ruling lineage of the nam by deposing the district chief, all its members were reduced to commoner status. Such people still traced their descent from the Mogho Naba who was the ancestor of their lineage founder, but this relationship ceased to be important unless the lineage recovered the nam of the district. If it did not, the former ruling lineage officially lost its ancient link with the royal clan within a few generations and became a nondescript local group.

634 The place of a deposed royal lineage was usually taken by the relatives
613 of the nobles who subsequently acquired the nam of the district. These
778 newcomers were genealogically closer to the ruling Mogho Naba, and
557 formed the new nakomce of the district. The new district chief sometimes sent his sons to rule over the villages under his command. But if the village
558 chiefs did not suffer the same fate as their lineage head at the hands of the Mogho Naba, the new district chief often permitted them to retain their posts. Thus they retained possession of the nam but lost their noble status. They served the new district chief in a political sense much as the Tengsoba served him in a ritual sense.

554 The plight of deposed district nakomce shows quite clearly the distinc-
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554 613 571 778 chief), and the hierarchy of respect descended to the youngest nobleman of the youngest generation. Very often, the full-grown son and presumed heir of the district chief had to kneel in respect to a distantly related younger man of an elder generation. Of course, this deference ceased if and when he became chief. If he did not receive the nam, he continued to show deference to all his lineage elders. This distinction between nam and boodoo was [578] a source of potential conflict within the ruling lineages. The people usually accepted the implications of both principles, but when they did not, there were dynastic quarrels and territorial secessions.

622 613 554 778 571 The age and generational principles also operated within non-noble ruling lineages, but here too they were often complicated by the possession of the nam. Those village chiefs who had lost their noble status but retained the nam acted as official Boodkasemdamba of their local lineage segments and had considerable influence over their lineage although they did not control all its segments. Each lineage segment had its own Boodkasma, who normally ran its affairs. But because of the importance of the nam in Mossi life, the Boodkasemdamba deferred to the village chief in [565] important matters pertaining to their own boodoo. However, the generational principle was followed within the local boodoo. Almost no one deferred to the children of the village chief, who, after all, were not nakomce.

613 571 778 The situation within commoner lineages that did not hold the nam was quite different. The age and generational principles obtained within the lineage segments of these boodoo, but never *across* the segments, as they did across the babissi. These segments were more autonomous. Each had its own Boodkasma, who looked after it without deferring to anyone. This autonomy was all the more pronounced since the segments of non-noble lineages tended to be scattered throughout a district. They interacted socially and politically only when they were physically close. In any case, in the absence of the nam, the segments of non-noble lineages had no reason to remain together; they tended to lose their hierarchical quality and to become equal and separate.

613 173 778 As would be expected in such circumstances, not all Mossi lineages paid the same attention to their genealogies. Noble lineages kept track of their actual or putative ancestors, whereas non-noble lineages tended to ignore them and to let geographical proximity determine meaningful kinship ties. This loss of interest in exact genealogies was found even among lineages that had lost the nam of a district and with it their nobility, but still retained the nam of a village. Members of the minimal units in such lineages competed actively for the village nam and were interested in fairly recent an-

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cestors. They did not remember how they were related unless they happened to have a common grandfather or great-grandfather who had held the nam. The differential value thus placed on genealogies by the noble and non-noble lineages was due in most cases to the differential access of these lineages to the strategic resources of Mossi society. People who held the nam [554] and belonged to noble lineages enjoyed special claims to goods and services. Those whose lineages did not hold the nam had no such privileges.

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Because Mossi society was basically patrilineal, a man shared in the status and the corporate assets of his patrilineage. Conversely, a man had no access to the status or resources of his mother's patrilineage except for some ritual rights and duties that accrued to him as a *yagenga* (a sister's or daughter's son). These rights and duties included residence in the home of [591] a maternal patrilineage during childhood, attendance at sacrifices to the mother's patrilineal ancestors, the settling of quarrels between maternal kinsmen, and ritual license to seize specific items of property from these relatives. This license dramatized the *lack* of access rather than *freedom* of access to the property of maternal relatives.

613 778 602 554 [175]

When a man's maternal relatives controlled the nam of the territory in which he lived, he could improve his social and economic position. In many cases, a young man who had gone to live as a "stranger" with a noble uncle or grandfather remained with these relatives. His privilege to remain was sanctioned by the Mossi belief that a boy's maternal ancestors would wreak vengeance on any person who tried to evict him from the village from which his mother had been "sent into the bush" (given away as a wife). By using various strategies and subterfuges, the "stranger" obtained wives through his maternal relatives and used their land and other resources. After several generations the lineal descendants of the "stranger" frequently became indistinguishable from their maternal relatives, although such cases were not often formally acknowledged. Whether these "sisters' children" ever managed to obtain the nam of their mother's patrilineage is a moot point, because in theory they could not. Yet, also by Mossi definition, a man could never inherit rights and duties in his mother's patrilineage; however, it is known that this did happen. It is possible that the close check kept by the ruling lineage on its genealogy made usurpation impossible. Yet I know of several cases in which candidates for chiefship feared competition from men whose descent actually barred them from the nam.

The son of a nobleman and a commoner woman seldom attached himself permanently to his maternal patrilineage, although he retained all of his customary rights, privileges, and duties in it. Occasionally, noblemen did attach themselves to their maternal relatives, but those who did had

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634 known, however, whether this woman was Biligo's daughter or one of his
622 pughsiudse. The people of Passintenga claimed descent from Biligo's
175 daughter, but the other groups in the district questioned this ancestry. The village called Bourougna had two chiefs. One, the Tang Naba, was descended from a son of a Ouidi Naba of Ouagadougou who had settled in Nobere; the other, the Yang Naba, claimed descent from an aboriginal Ninisi man and woman of Biligo's lineage. The Yang Naba was thus another of Biligo's yagense in the district. The chief of Nimpwe village was a descendant of the aboriginal Ninisi people and was the principal Tengsoba in the district. He had more ritual power than political power, however. The nam of Basbedo village was held by a man descended from Busansi refugees. Living in this village was a man with the honorific title of Soulougre Naba, who claimed descent from the most important Ninisi family who had lived in the district prior to the arrival of Biligo.

634 Most of the nobles of the local ruling lineage lived either in the saghse
173 of the district villages or in isolated hamlets. Local tradition holds that one
621 of the conditions set by Naba Ngado for allowing Biligo's descendants to
[613] remain as village chiefs was the right to settle nineteen of his sons in many
[565] of the villages. He allegedly sent *mabissi* (sons of the same mother) to the same village. By so doing, he took advantage of the normal lines of fission that are created after the death of a Mossi father and prevented undue rivalries. Yet there was no driving necessity for him to do so, because there were more villages than chief's sons available. In fact, there are still many villages without nobles in Nobere district. The people of Passintenga, for instance, allegedly refused to have nobles live among them, while the people of Nimpwe allegedly killed by sorcery all the nobles who ever tried to live there. The actual reason for the absence of nobles in these villages may have been that the district chief did not wish to send his sons to villages into which his daughters had married or where there lived earth priests who
[565] were thought to be powerful sorcerers. Nobles were often unwelcome, feared, and resisted, because they tended to exploit the village people and to take advantage of the commoners.

621 The villages of Nobere district, like those of other Mossi districts, were
167 populated in part by refugees and strangers. Several saghse in Togese vil-
173 lage were inhabited by Mossi refugees who had fled a district called Guiergo after a fight over the nam of that district. Scattered throughout the district's villages were people of unknown origin called Siamse. The Siamse found in the villages of Tewaka and Nabadogo claimed that their ancestors had "followed" Naba Biligo when he came down from Ouagadougou to found the district. Several saghse in Bourougna village were in-

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habited by Yarse, people of Mandingo origin who had been assimilated by the Mossi. There were no Fulani in Nobere, even though some lived in nearby districts. But in Pinse village there lived people called Simili-Mossi, who claimed descent from Fulani herdsmen and Mossi women. Basbedo village was inhabited and ruled by people of Busansi origin. They claimed that their ancestors had fled from famine and other hardships in Busansi country and had been granted haven by Naba Biligo. The people who lived in the two saghse of Nab'tenga called Dapore (Dapobi) and Baglere (Bangare) were serfs of diverse non-Mossi origin. Saghse or compounds of Gurunsi slaves were found close to the dwellings of nobles and village chiefs throughout the district.

The number of saghse in the villages of Nobere district varied according to the size of the village and the pattern of nam inheritance within the major lineage segment that ruled the village. The saka itself housed a minor-lineage segment. The larger the village's minor lineage segment and the greater this group's genealogical depth, the more numerous were its component segments and thus its saghse. The proliferation of saghse and minor-lineage segments within the ruling lineage of a village was dependent primarily on possession of the nam. As soon as a man received the nam, he obtained control over a large amount of goods and services. He was then in a position to obtain many wives for himself and his immediate relatives, and as a result his minimal lineage grew rapidly. In time this group became so large that it split from its brother babissi within the saka, and formed a new saka of its own. Finally, this babissi became a minor lineage in its own saka, in segmental opposition to the other babissi and minor lineages within the other saghse. If the descendants of one man retained the nam for about three generations, their lineage segment and saka grew larger and in time cast off its own junior segments. However, if the segment lost the nam to a man of another babissi and saka, it ceased to proliferate. Some such groups even declined and disappeared by fusing with other local segments of the same lineage. Here is how the system worked in Barkago village of Nobere district.

Barkago itself was founded sometime in the dim past by a son of Naba Biligo. It had an area of eight or ten square miles and a population of about 650 when the French arrived in 1896. Its boundaries were set by such natural phenomena as clumps of trees, hills, and ravines. The village itself included five distinct saghse separated by footpaths, hills, rocks, and ravines, and an area of wasteland (*weogho*). Three of the saghse, Natenga ("chief's land"), Godin, and Kedpalago, were inhabited by the minor segments of the boodoo of Naba Biligo. Here is how this came about. After

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the original segment of the ruling Biligo lineage had lived in Barkago for some time, it divided into two minor lineages and settled in two saghse, Natenga and Godin. A noble from Godin possessed the nam, but it eventually passed to a noble from Natenga. The new chief then founded a new saka called Kedpalago because he wanted more living space for his own children. As a result, the minor lineage of Natenga now had two babissi living in two saghse. The minor lineage of Godin subsequently declined in size and prestige. The only evidence of its former importance was that its eldest male continued to make separate sacrifices to his own chiefly ancestors, even though the more recent holders of the nam made sacrifices to all former chiefs. These independent sacrifices were made in spite of the fact that this minor lineage kept growing smaller because its male members left to live elsewhere or to join maternal patrilineages with higher status. The sacrifices were expected to cease only if and when the minor lineage were to disappear with the incorporation of the widows and orphans of its last surviving males into the other Biligo groups of the village and district. Of course, if the Godin minor lineage had regained the nam, it undoubtedly would have experienced a rebirth and renewal of strength. It might have attracted its daughter's sons, and even aliens who would have lived in its saghse as they did in those of the ruling lineage segments.

A fourth saka, Nakomgo ("we hunger after the nam"), was inhabited by the noble descendants of Naba Ngado, the district chief who had replaced the descendant of Naba Biligo of Nobere. Since these nobles traced their descent from two full brothers, Kouliga and Kongo, they formed two related minor lineages with five component minimal lineages. The compounds of the two babissi of the Kouliga minor lineage were separate but contiguous. Near them were the compounds of the three babissi of the Kongo minor lineage. Scattered about in the Nakomgo saka were compounds of sisters' sons, strangers, and nobles' slaves.

The people of Narila, the fifth saka of Barkago, were members of the aboriginal Ninisi population, and thus furnished the village's earth-priest. He made sacrifices to the earth shrines in the village, gave ritual permission for building compounds and digging graves, and took control of the village during the period between the death of a chief and the accession of another. Scattered throughout the various saghse were compounds inhabited by people of serf, slave, or refugee origin.

Of all the groups within the village, the Ngado people kept the most exact genealogies. They did so because one of the segments of their maximal lineage held the district nam, and as nobles they had theoretical access to it. Once they had lost the nam of the district, the descendants of Biligo

643 796 La, a village near Koudougou district. His eldest wife, the *Pughtiema*, appeared carrying her household utensils in order to accompany her husband. However, all the ministers, led by the Kamsaogho Naba, implored the monarch to have his horse unsaddled and to postpone the trip until the following day. Feigning anger, the Mogho Naba reluctantly agreed to remain in the capital, ordered his horse unsaddled, dismissed his wife, and re-entered the palace.[8]

173 643 796 The tradition about the origin of this ritual reveals something of the Mossi attitude toward the human frailties of their rulers. It appears that Poko, the favorite wife of Mogho Naba Waraga (ca. 1660–80), asked permission to visit her father at La, and that he refused to grant her request because of his love and admiration for her. Nevertheless, she continued to ask him for permission, and after her third request he granted her wish and sent a page and a small girl with her as chaperons. When Poko did not return to the palace on the third day, Naba Waraga sent two pages to her father's compound to fetch her, and here they discovered that she had died. Fearing the king's wrath toward persons who brought bad tidings, the pages did not report back to him but notified the ministers of Poko's death. When subsequent messengers also failed to return, the king decided to go to La. The following day, after the morning ceremonies, he ordered his horse saddled and commanded the Pughtiema to get ready to accompany him on his journey. But the ministers, anxious to protect him from grief, told him that a great king never followed a mere woman under any circumstances and persuaded him not to depart. The monarch went back into the palace, and the dignitaries ordered the horse unsaddled and sent it away. Shortly afterwards, the king changed his mind and decided to go to La, but he was beseeched not to do so. He swore that he would leave the following morning, and that if he were prevented from doing so, he would advise all his descendants to try to go to La every morning until one of them succeeded.[9]

643 644 692 576 [431] At the end of this ceremony, a page gave the ministers an ample supply of beer and kola nuts. The Moslems were given presents of kola nuts and millet water (*zom kom*) sweetened with honey, since they were forbidden to drink millet beer. Later in the morning, the Mogho Naba left the palace and entered the zongo, where he greeted his visitors, accepted gifts from visiting chiefs and subjects, dispensed gifts in turn, and presided over the court of justice. Anyone who went to see the ruler had to be accompanied by his provincial minister or his host—regardless of whether it was his purpose to pay a courtesy visit, to pledge allegiance, to plead for aid, or to give testimony in a lawsuit. Pages moved back and forth between the palace and the courtyard, dispensing kola nuts and beer or millet water prepared

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643 tree and again received oaths of allegiance from his chief ministers and
641 other dignitaries. He then proceeded to the house of the Ouagadougou Naba (a direct descendant of the aboriginal Ninisi population), where he spent the night. The following morning, his host made sacrifices to his Ninisi ancestors in the name of the new ruler. Once again, the principal ministers and dignitaries appeared and joined in a ceremony of allegiance to their king, but this time they drank a potion prepared with the namtibo and swore that they hoped their ancestors would kill them if they should prove disloyal to the Mogho Naba.

The monarch then left the Ouagadougou Naba's compound, accompanied by the Tansoba and his warriors, and went to Paspanga (a ward in the capital whose name means "to add strength or power") to receive homage and allegiance from his assembled district chiefs. Along the way, he met symbolic opposition from the candidates he had defeated. However, these "hostile" forces were quickly routed by the Tansoba and his
[173] army. According to one Mossi tradition, when Sagha I (ca. 1787–1803) was elected Mogho Naba, his father's brother, Kaoko, tried to kill him during this mock battle. A vigorous civil war ensued, in which some district chiefs joined Kaoko. Sagha defeated and killed Kaoko and many of his supporters, and then swept through the country, executing rebellious district chiefs and placing his own sons in power.

At Paspanga the sovereign sat under a tree, surrounded by his ministers, warriors, and musicians. The onlookers formed two facing ranks in front of the sovereign, between which the district chiefs and their retinues walked up to pledge their allegiance. Those members of the royal sub-lineage who had been put to flight by the Tansoba's army returned and rendered homage to the monarch. Emissaries from the autonomous Mossi princes also greeted him.

When this ceremony was over, the Mogho Naba instructed his retainers to provide food and drink for his subjects and guests, and retired for the night. He remained at Paspanga for a week, during which time he greeted those persons who had not arrived in time for the first day's ceremony. On the seventh day, the monarch and a few courtiers and retainers retired to Dimvousse ("king's resting place"), where the district chiefs who had come to Ouagadougou for the installation brought him presents before returning home. The Mogho Naba remained at Dimvousse for a period ranging from several weeks to three years, depending on whether the earth-priests advised him to inhabit his predecessor's palace or build a new one.[21] When at last he ended his retreat, a large crowd of horsemen, warriors, and musicians accompanied him to his palace, where he set up his permanent court.

644 Under him were the Kos Naba, who levied taxes on general merchandise sold in the mar-
[651] kets, and the Nemdo Naba, who collected taxes on meat sold in the markets and was responsible for distributing meat within the royal household. Most of these positions were hereditary, but here primogeniture was not as important as in the ruling and administrative lineages.

[648] The various foreign groups in the capital also sent representatives to the court. Among them were the Zangweoto Naba for the Hausa, a Naba for the Songhai, and an Imam for the Ouagadougou Moslems. Even total strangers such as the early European visitors were placed under the care of a special chief.

The most ubiquitous persons at the Mogho Naba's court were the pages, who were boys between the ages of ten and twenty. These boys were regarded as comparable to the ruler's wives, since they served him in the same manner as ordinary Mossi women serve their husbands at home. They wore women's bracelets and women's clothes, and dressed their hair in the
[834] same style as the royal wives. As we have seen, they were forbidden sexual intercourse until they were released from the royal household.[22]

● 173 The institution of pages is said to have originated sometime in the sev-
644 enteenth century, during the reign of Mogho Naba Waraga. Before his reign, the wives of the Mogho Naba attended him at court. The change came during a lengthy civil war between Waraga and the chief of Riziam territory, who had refused to pay allegiance to him. During five "dry seasons" (five years) of fighting, the Mogho Naba was attended only by a small boy. He found him so efficient that at the end of the war he resolved to employ only page boys and prohibit his wives from attending him at court. This origin is conjectural. However, the use of pages effectively segregated the royal wives from court intrigues, and, once instituted, the practice spread throughout the country.

644 The Mogho Naba had little difficulty recruiting pages. Many of them were the sons of pughsiudse whom he had given to his subjects as wives. In theory, the Mogho Naba could select boys at will, but in practice the pages were usually selected by the ministers and sent to the palace. Most boys willingly accepted service, but some, often with the support of their parents, resisted confinement to the palace. Some ten-year-olds even ran away to escape their impending fate, but they were soon caught and braceleted with the insignia of their new status. Once this had been done, their lineages encouraged them to remain at the palace. Their period of service
[145] terminated when they began to "push beards," usually at about eighteen years of age. One district chief claims that ancient Mogho Nanamse used to take the sons of district chiefs as pages and release them only wh n their

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000 went to Djiba when his grandfather died and his father was installed as Mogho Naba.

The origin of Djiba's status as the seat of the Crown Prince is rather 634 obscure. The people of the neighboring district of Nobere say that Djiba 644 was founded by a "companion" of their own founder, Naba Biligo, one of 173 the numerous "eldest" sons of Mogho Naba Oubri, the implication being that Djiba was supervised by Nobere. However, no one seems to know when Djiba's status changed or what happened to the ancient family who used to govern it. The consensus is that in earlier times the heir presumptive to Ouagadougou did not necessarily become chief of Djiba, but was given any district whose chieftainship was vacant when he came of age. Dim Delobson reports that Djiba became the district of the Crown Prince some- [114] time during the seventeenth century, when Mogho Naba Zombere, who had reigned for sixty years, found it necessary to establish a permanent seat for his heir.[25] However, Dim Delobson does not report under what conditions Djiba was chosen, nor does he say what happened to the local ruling lineage when this transfer took place. That the transfer was carried out in the manner reported by Dim Delobson is not doubted, because each new [558] Mogho Naba obtained districts for his relatives in this way. Through this [613] process, the people of the ancient ruling lineages were usually reduced to the level of commoners, and this is apparently what happened to the rulers of Djiba.

634 The first public sign that the young prince was being prepared for the 643 nam came in the form of a summons commanding him to go to Ouagadougou to be installed as Djiba Naba. On his way to the capital, he visited several villages where the local Tengsobadamba made sacrifices to the earth goddess in his name. He took this opportunity to meet with the district chiefs and their assembled village chiefs; he was entertained by them; and in turn he distributed gifts to the old women, whose praises were considered especially effective in bringing health and long life. When the boy finally arrived at the capital, he lodged at the compound of the Kambo Naba, head of the palace guard, until the Mogho Naba and his ministers installed him as chief of Djiba.

The installation rites for the Crown Prince were very similar to those already described for the Mogho Naba, and identical to those for the district chiefs. During the ceremony, no mention was made of the fact that the prince was the son of the Mogho Naba. The only special feature was that when the prince went into the courtyard after the ceremony to render homage to the Mogho Naba, he sat in an area assigned to him by custom. When the ruler appeared, the prince followed the Gounga Naba, who was pro-

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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longing to other provinces. Provinces also differed with respect to the number of districts they included and the nature and size of these districts. Some provinces were larger than others; some were wealthier; and some were more difficult to administer.

Each province was administered by a governor, who also functioned as an important minister at the court of Ouagadougou. In the order of their importance, these governors were the Ouidi Naba, the Larhalle Naba, the Gounga Naba, the Baloum Naba, and the Kamsaogho Naba. Smaller administrative units (both districts and villages) were under the direct control of the Mogho Naba himself, or under the supervision of his relatives or lesser officials. None of the governors were nobles or descendants of Ouedraogo and Oubri, but their positions were hereditary. According to one tradition, the first provincial administrators were personal slaves of the early Mossi rulers who were given the task of supervising the activities of district chiefs of noble status. Another, more romantic tradition is that the man who became the first governor or Gounga Naba was a companion of Mogho Naba Oubri during the conquest of Ouagadougou. Later, the Gounga Naba presented one of his friends to Oubri with the request that the man take precedence over him, be made chief governor, and be given the title of Ouidi Naba. Oubri allegedly acceded to this request, and later granted another request of the Gounga Naba that a friend of the Ouidi Naba be named Larhalle Naba and be made the second governor. The Gounga Naba told the Mogho Naba that he preferred to see his friends happy and that he was content to be third minister. This tradition does not state when or how the Baloum Naba and the Kamsaogho Naba were named governors.[21]

With the exception of the Kamsaogho Naba, who was a eunuch and had no heirs, the provincial governors headed administrative lineages. These lineages provided administrators not only for Ouagadougou but also for the principalities and districts. Cheron states that the Ouidi Naba of Boulsa was "a descendant of the Ouidi Naba of Ouagadougou, a great dignitary who rules a province and sits among the electors of the Mogho Naba."[22] Many administrative lineages on the district level were descended from officials sent down by the Mogho Naba with a new district chief in lieu of one deposed. When a chief was deposed, his administrators, like his relatives, lost their importance and their ties to Ouagadougou.

The Ouidi Naba, called *Moss' ba* ("father of the Mossi") and *Sidu soba* ("master of the truth"), was the principal administrator and the prime minister. His titles undoubtedly sprang from his important role in the election of the Mogho Naba and from his position as caretaker of the king-

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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VI

WARFARE

THE Mossi were proud of their warrior tradition, which had earned them their several kingdoms, principalities, and districts. Even the least district chief had stories about the wars in which his ancestors had wrested their territories from aboriginal populations. These traditions of conquest legitimized to a large extent the power of the Mossi kings and chiefs, who never hesitated to use force in order to obtain tribute, to maintain their rule, and to enforce their authority. The Mossi value fighting ability so highly that even today, when fighting is no longer necessary, most Mossi males in the rural areas carry sticks and other weapons on their shoulders as symbols of manhood. In their view, every man should know how to fight and should be able to defend his village, his district, and his kingdom.

According to tradition, the northward thrust of the Mossi warriors during the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries carried them into the region of the Niger River bend. Here, around A.D. 1329, the Yatenga Mossi attacked and sacked the town of Timbuktu, which belongs to the Mali. When Mali was on the decline during the early fifteenth century, the Mossi again attacked its towns. According to the *Tarikh es-Sudan*, when the Mali ruler appointed Amin-ben-Ahmad jurisconsul of Timbuktu,

> the sultan of the Mossi led an expedition against Benka. The population of that region went out to engage the enemy, and at that time left others sitting around El Hadj. He pronounced certain words on the millet which was being served and asked those around him to eat of it. All of them ate except the son-in-law of El Hadj, who did not because he was related to him. "Now go and fight," said the holy man, "and you will have nothing to fear from the weapons of the enemy." All, in effect, returned safe and sound, and only those persons who did not eat the millet died in the battle. The king of the Mossi was routed, and his troops were chased without having seized anything from the people of Benka. All this thanks to the protection of the blessed person.[1]

Later, the Mossi attacked towns of the Songhai empire whenever they felt strong enough, only to be driven away later by a stronger adversary. Sa'di describes a Mossi incursion into the Songhai empire as follows:

pleted, the remainder of the ceremony followed the pattern of the Ouagadougou ritual.

During the weeks that followed, the village chiefs and the heads of the larger lineage segments all offered sacrifices to their ancestors. The Pughtiema of each prominent local administrator, chief, or lineage head prepared and poured the millet water as a libation to the ancestors. Whenever possible, each of these personages invited musicians to sing praises to his ancestors. He dressed in his best robe and sat outside his hut to receive presents from his relatives, friends, and subjects, along with their best wishes for the new year, and for long life and prosperity. In return he gave them kola nuts, beer, and food. Thus, in celebrating the Basgha, all the Mossi were united in prayers and supplications to the ancestors, upon whom rested the future of their country and the successful reign of the descendants of Ouedraogo and Oubri.

The earth deity, Tenga, held the central place in the second major religio-political ceremony which linked all Mossi. This ritual, called *Tense* (from *tenga*, "earth") and sometimes *Naba Oubri ma koure* ("the anniversary of the funeral of Mogho Naba Oubri's mother"), was so important to Mossi cohesion that it was banned by the French, and as a result its main features are now unclear. According to tradition, Naba Oubri loved Poughtoenga, his Ninisi mother, so much, and was so pleased with the elaborate funeral he gave her, that he decided to repeat this ceremony each year in the hope that his subjects would be blessed with the bountiful crops and herds which had made the first one possible. Curiously enough, Oubri's mother was not a central figure in the Tense celebration. Instead, great stress was placed on the fructifying powers of the earth and on the importance of the royal ancestors in Mossi life. The juxtaposition and association of the earth deity with Oubri's mother has important implications for the Mossi political organization. Mossi tradition holds that a Ninisi woman was the ancestress of the Mossi of Ouagadougou. Her people probably celebrated the Tense as a fertility rite to their earth goddess, Tenga. The Mossi apparently took over the ceremony and used it both as a fertility rite and as a memorial festival, thus symbolically uniting the conquerors and the conquered.[8]

In contrast to the Basgha, no special date appears to have been set for the celebration of the Tense. It was held sometime before the crops were sowed, but according to Tauxier it was not celebrated at all in Ouagadougou when the previous year's harvest had been poor.[6] Before setting the date for the festival, the Mogho Naba summoned the Larhalle Naba and ordered him to have sacrifices made on the graves of all former rulers. This minister

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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*175 648 Voulet left Ouagadougou in February to establish French control among the Gurunsi, leaving a military commander, Captain Scal, and a Resident Officer at Ouagadougou. But he acted without taking into account the resourcefulness of Wobogo (now once more Boukary Koutou), who [645] had gained the allegiance of chiefs in the Manga area. The Gounga Naba, [634] who was provincial minister for that region, tried to gain the support of the Djiba and Rissouma districts for Mogho Naba Sighiri. He failed, and or- [669] dered the troops of Garanse, Nobere, Toisé, and Yake districts to attack Boukary Koutou's supporters. In the ensuing battle the Gounga Naba's forces lost nine men, the rebels ten. The Gounga Naba considered these losses too high and called off the fighting.[46]

*175 *648 643 Meanwhile, Boukary Koutou had sent an appeal to Steward, the commander of a British force that was then on its march of conquest through Gambaga and that had designs on Ouagadougou, "for protection in virtue of the treaty concluded with Mr. Ferguson in 1894." Wishing to avoid conflict with the British, Voulet hastened to Tenkodogo in February 1897 to meet Steward, and the two men established boundaries between the French and British spheres of influence. Boukary Koutou was thus left to fend for himself.[47] Undaunted, he crossed the Gold Coast frontier once more and proceeded toward Ouagadougou. Scal heard about his activities and decided to launch an attack against him. He took Boukary Koutou by surprise in June 1897, and forced him to flee. Boukary passed through Bere district and arrived in the Gold Coast, where he was granted refuge by the British. About a year later, he convinced a Colonel Northcott that he had been unjustly deposed by the French, and that under the treaty of 1894 the British were his protectors and were obliged to restore him to his throne. In May 1898, a British force under Northcott and with Boukary Koutou in tow arrived at Kombissiri, some twenty-five miles from Ouagadougou, but here they were met by French emissaries who brought with them copies of the treaty of protection signed by Sighiri in January 1897. The British troops retreated, taking the dejected ruler with them into permanent exile.[48] Boukary reportedly settled at Zangoiri, a few miles from Gambaga.[49] He was forbidden to enter Gambaga because of the tradition that if he ever saw the Gambaga ruler, both of them would die. Boukary never returned to Mossi country. He died and was buried in the Gold Coast in 1904, but his funeral was held at Ouagadougou.[50]

Boukary Koutou is seen in retrospect as a tragic figure, whose main fault seems to have been that he ruled at the most difficult time in his country's history. Judging by his treatment of Binger, he appears to have [173] been a clever politician, but his resources were of no avail against the

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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superior might of the French. Like many other African groups, the Mossi have now evolved traditions to account for his fall and for the conquest of their country. They say that Wobogo lost his realm because he was a cruel ruler. According to the Mossi, he executed the noble retainers of Djiba in whose care his heir had died. But most important, the Mossi believe that Boukary was destined to lose his country to foreigners. According to one tradition, a holy man warned the ruler of Tenkodogo that an evil child who would bring harm to the country would be born into his house unless his birth was prevented by oblations to the ancestors. The Tenkodogo Naba made the necessary sacrifices, and the tragedy was averted. The holy man then went to Ouagadougou and gave the same warning to Mogho Naba Koutou. Koutou replied that he was the direct descendant of Ouedraogo and Oubri, and that no child of his could bring harm to the patrimony of the royal ancestors. He made no sacrifices, and a child who had "two teeth like the tusks of an elephant" was born into his house. This child, Boukary Koutou, was disrespectful of his father and made war against his brother, and was eventually defeated by the French.

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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CHAPTER 9

Trade and Markets Among the Mossi People

BY ELLIOTT P. SKINNER

The Mossi represent the dominant population of the Voltaic Republic, numbering about 1,600,000 out of some 3,200,000 inhabitants. They represent the unique example of a group which has preserved its ethnic identity and political autonomy through all the vicissitudes of Sudanic history until it was conquered by the French in 1896. Tradition records that the people who became the Mossi left the Dagomba region in present-day Ghana during the eleventh century and moved into the bend of the Niger River, carving out three large kingdoms and smaller principalities in the process. At the head of these still extant kingdoms are rulers *(Moro Nabas)* who formerly held feudal-like control over the provinces, districts and villages which comprise their domains. The villages, with their patri-local, polygynous, extended family households, formed the basic Mossi settlement pattern. A complex hierarchical administrative apparatus carried the power of the Mossi rulers into the smallest villages, and funneled taxes and tribute back to them. This structure still exists, but of course it has been modified by the French.

The Mossi were and are still divided into stratified royal, noble and commoner patrilineages. Characteristic of this lineage system is a process by which royal sub-lineages descend serially until they merge with the mass of commoner lineages. Below the lineages there once were large non-Mossi groups of serfs and slaves, but these people have now been grouped into lineages and have become Mossicized.

The topography of Mossi country is typical of the Sudanic grasslands. It is an immense plain, some 1,500 feet above sea level and broken only by three low mountain ranges and numerous small hills. The annual total rainfall is between 30 and 40 inches, and falls almost entirely as heavy showers or thundershowers during the period from June to September. So narrow is the margin of rainfall for successful crop cultivation that any variation in the cycle results in low crop yields and a difficult "hungry period" the following year before the new crops are harvested. The Mossi do not practice irrigation, and would have trouble doing so because the three Volta Rivers which drain their territory serve as drainage chiefly during the rainy season. Only the Black Volta has water all year round; the

485 o'clock in the morning to sell food to those migrants who have slept
265 under the trees or in the deserted market place and who are going on towards Ghana or to Wagadougou. At about 8:00 or 9:00 A.M. the majority of the food-sellers leave for home, but some of them remain around all day to sell to those migrants who pass by in the few trucks which can travel during the heat of the day. The food sellers then return at about 5:00 P.M. because from this time until about 1:00 A.M. most of the trucks bearing migrants stop for water and to allow
485 their passengers to eat and rest. The amount of money these women
265 gross varies from day to day depending upon the amount of traffic
434 and the time of year. During the off-season from June to October,
221 when most of the migrants are home planting, a woman may make as little as ten francs per day. In contrast, at the beginning of the dry season when the young men are migrating in droves, the women may make as much as 100 francs a day, even though twenty or thirty women line the road at trucking centers. Many women welcome this opportunity to earn money because by so doing they are free to buy in the local markets the things they need.

MARKET

366 The Mossi have always conducted most of their commercial activities
443 in market places even though some extra-market trading continually takes place. These markets were and are still divided into two main
[103] types: (1) those specializing in external trading, such as Pouitenga, Dakay, Kaya, Mane, Yako, La, Beloussa, Tema, Wagadougou; and (2) those specializing in internal commerce such as the markets in the villages and district centers. Of course, there is an overlap between the two types of markets in the sense that some people from the villages go to the larger markets to dispose of their commodities and, in turn, buy goods which they bring back for resale on the local level. Similarly, in former days some caravaneers visited the local markets to buy commodities and in the process disposed of their goods. However, the main pattern is for local commodities to filter into the large market centers through local markets, and for goods from these centers to filter back down to the local markets. The more goods and traders available, the more numerous and successful the markets are.

443 The Mossi do not appear to have any legends about the origin of
● 173 markets in their country. When asked how and why markets first arose, they say that markets developed simply because people wanted to exchange goods with each other, or because the chiefs wanted markets in their own villages so that their people need not go to
443 other districts. When one asks the Mossi directly, "What is a market?"

FIRST BOOK

Chapter 1

The Origins of the Mossi

974 Most of the people who have dealt with the history of the Mossi have said that they come from the southeast, from the region of Gambakha or Gambaga (Dagomba). From there they are said to have occupied successively, going toward the north, the regions of Fada-N'Gourma, Ouagadougou, and Ouahigouya.

But before that where did they come from?

Captain Lambert, who commanded the circle of Ouagadougou in 1906-07, has tried to find an answer to this question in his study of the Mossi country, published in the Bulletin de la Société de Géographie de l'Afrique Occidentale française /Bulletin of the Geographic Society of French West Africa/, 1908.

174 "South of Bornu," he writes (op. cit. No. 7, page 166), "in the
171 German Cameroons, people still exist who are known as Mossah and who, according to local tradition, were once master of the whole country. At present they are confined to a rather restricted area (the valley of Logone-Cameroons).

"The Mossah today bear such a striking physical resemblance to the Mossi that one could not have lived among them without recognizing the similarities; the tattooing is identical except for the circumflex accent which has been more recently acquired, as we shall demonstrate. The physical resemblance is almost total, and, besides, the Mossah have the same social organization as the Mossi, with all its characteristic hierarchy. In brief, /2/ there is no doubt as to the common origin of the two groups, and we can be certain that the presence of the Mossah in one part of Bornu and their traditional supremacy in the country in bygone days establish with certainty the habitat where the people we are dealing with must have been formed and developed. All this, of course, occurred during a period long before the events that allowed the Arab chroniclers to reveal their existence to us." (1)

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1. Actually, these "Arab chroniclers" is simply Es-Sadi, the author of Tarikh-es-Soudan /History of Sudan/, who wrote as late as the seventeenth century. As a matter of fact, it was the Portuguese writer, the great historian and geographer, Jean de Barros, author of l'Asia (1552-53), who was the first to reveal the existence of the Mossi in the sixteenth century. Léon, the African, did not know of them, nor did the Arab geographers and historians of the Middle Ages. Let us add that one should verify exactly in the area whether the Mossah resemble the Mossi other than by name. The matter has become relatively easy since the French occupation of the Cameroons.

171 Captain Lambert adds in a note:
174 "A new question arises here: can one consider the Mossi as being autochthonous to Bornu, or should their long stay in that region be considered as a step in the great migratory movement that, in successive phases, has brought them to the heart of the Niger estuary?

"In the present state of our knowledge, it would be unwise to take a firm position. We shall merely show that the feudal system that characterizes the political constitution of the Mossi can be compared to the system prevalent in Abyssinia. The hierarchical set-up seems to be identical in certain respects; leaders are appointed under analogous conditions, and the election of the Negus is accompanied by a period of anarchy which we also find here and which seems to go back to ancient traditions.

174 "It may well be that this goes beyond pure coincidence. While
197 we were in the process of editing a small dictionary of the Mossi language, we took the trouble to find out whether the dialects spoken in Abyssinia were likely to give us some clues on this point. We must admit, however, that the vocabularies of the Galla, Ahmaris /sic/, and Tigré languages that we consulted have not provided us /3/ with convincing arguments. But it is a proven fact today that, from the

174 viewpoint of ethnographic research, text similarities do not mean
197 very much, and idioms that are not fixed by writing may, within a few centuries, become deformed to the extent of being unrecognizable. While the value of grammatical comparisons is much more important, we have unfortunately had neither the time nor the means to make use of this method. We will, therefore, merely indicate this point of view which, in our opinion, could lead to fruitful observations. On
174 the other hand, missionaries have claimed that the Mossi traditionally would have preserved the symbolic notion of the Christian cross, a fact we have been unable to verify and which, without being impossible a priori, seems unlikely."

After this parenthesis about the distant origins of the Mossi, Captain Lambert continues:

"It is indeed highly probable, and here again, lacking written documents, we have only oral traditions to base our opinions on, that the Mossi people, split up by the impact of a Moslem invasion from the east, must have, through successive waves and losing ground in the opposite direction, spread further toward the west, so that the Mossi-bé (1), who still form several agglomerations in the western

1. Mossi-bé is simply the plural of the word Mossi in Peuhle /Peul/ language.

part of Sokoto and even in the Dounzou circle and who also show striking analogies with the Mossi proper, can also be used as a reference. (Captain Lambert adds in a note: "Among the Mossi-bé we
[304 find the circumflex accent which would complete the ethnic tatooing
171 of the Mossi as it is today. This mark rightly belongs to the natives
64 of the left bank of the Niger river up to the angle formed by the Dollol-Maouri.") These agglomerations indicate, in a very approximate fashion, the location of the Mossi empire at the historical period that evidently marks its apogee of power; toward 1350, as we saw /4/ in the Tarikh, Timbuktu was conquered by the sultan of Mossi."

174 The incident to which Captain Lambert refers here is the con-
114 quest of Timbuktu by the Mossi (in 1333 exactly, according to the most advanced calculations) (1), which is mentioned by Es-Sadi in

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1. See the book by Lieutenant Marc, Le Pays Mossi /The Land of the Mossi/, pp. 136-138. The author sets the date of the fall of Timbuktu to the Mossi at 1333 or 1334. Delafosse, in his book Haut-Sénegal-Niger /Upper Senegal and Niger/, took the date of 1333. Binger (op. cit. Vol. I, pp. 481, 482) gives the date of 1329 according to the Tarikh, but assumes it to be wrong and that it was in 1326 that the Mossi, who he says were then part of the kingdom of Mali, captured Timbuktu for the sake of and by the order of the Mali kings. We know now that this assumption is false, that the Mossi were never under the domination of Mali, and that they sacked Timbuktu on their own behalf in 1333. Besides, the Malinké recaptured Timbuktu fairly soon thereafter and held it until 1433, at which time the leader Targui Akil took possession. The Mossi expedition against Timbuktu was, everything considered, nothing more than a raid, perfectly executed, but without any follow-up.

the Tarikh-es-Soudan /History of Sudan/; but one cannot conclude, as Captain Lambert does, that in the fourteenth century the Mossi were still living on the east bank of the Niger River, in what today is Djerma, and that they had not yet reached, at that time, the Mossi of today, nor even the Dagomba, and that it was from Djerma that they conducted their triumphant raid on Timbuktu. If the Mossi really did come from Bornu and ended up in Dagomba, and, as is only natural, spread on to Haoussa and Djerma (2), they did so in the very

2. As a matter of fact, one can explain the Mossi colonies of Sokoto as having come from the regions of Ouagadougou, Yatenga, or Fada N'Gourma at a relatively recent date, the thirteenth, fourteenth, or fifteenth centuries.

114 distant past, since we must place Rawa, the first conqueror of
174 Ouagadougou and Ouahigouya (see further on), in the twelfth century A.D., and his parents came from Dagomba where it is clear the Mossi have lived for some time. The crossing of Haoussa and Djerma by the forefathers of the Dagomba Mossi takes us back to a period that obviously cannot be precisely established, but which is definitely earlier than the fourteenth century (when the Mossi conquered Timbuktu), and one must recognize, contrary to Captain Lambert's opinion, that the Mossi who took Timbuktu came from the south (probably from Ouahigouya) and not from the east (the Say region). We would like to point out /5/ also that they were a great deal closer to Timbuktu in Ouahigouya than in Say. Once this point has been cleared up and the ensuing mistakes corrected, the plausibility of the discovery of the road followed by the Mossi who came from Bornu (if they came from there), which was re-traced by Captain Lambert, is acceptable.

These observations also apply to the continuation of Captain Lambert's report. He says that the wars waged by the second Songhaï empire against the Mossi (sixteenth century) forced the latter to leave the Djerma country to go southwest toward Dagomba. Obviously, all of this is quite inaccurate, but, without accepting Captain Lambert's cause for the emigration and his establishing it further in the past, we can accept the route he traces.

174 "This movement," says Captain Lambert, speaking of the march from Djerma to Dagomba, "took place in a southerly direction, and the Mossi, after having followed the Niger River, crossed it at a point located between Say and Ilo, but much closer to Ilo.

"North of Ilo, the custom of shaving the heads of the chieftains'
[301] [302] wives still persists. These women also wear metal leggings (1), par-

[556] 1. Captain Lambert undoubtedly is referring to the beautiful copper leggings, about 20 centimeters high, worn by the rich Mossi women.

ticularly characteristic of the Mossi peoples and sometimes encountered among peoples who have been in contact with them.

"From this point, the migration, leaving the Bariba country on the left (2), went in a straight line through Gourma and the Pama region

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2. One may wonder whether the Bariba were not part of this Mossi or pre-Mossi migration, since the Bariba have certain points of resemblance, from a sociological viewpoint, with the Mossi: like the Mossi, they are warrior-horsemen, pillagers, and courageous. On the other hand, Delafosse (Vocabulaires comparatifs /Comparative Vocabularies/) wonders, on page 224, if one should not connect the Bariba to the Mossi-Gourounsi, from a linguistic viewpoint.

173 Also, Captain Lambert says in a note on page 170: "The leader of Djougou (Dahomey) is of Mossi origin. Tradition claims that the inhabitants of this village, divided by internal strife brought about by the rivalry of several pretenders to power, offered the leadership to a weaver who had been living for a long time in Djougou where he most certainly kept out of local squabbles; the latter refused the offer. But the people of Djougou refused to give up and made him a prisoner in his hut. Having to choose between the disadvantages of power and his own captivity, the weaver could not but make a decision; at the end of the sixth day, he consented to take command. His descendants have succeeded him since that time without interruption, and, in memory of the incident described, a custom was set up which requires that the new leader remain enclosed in his hut for the six days following his election."

174 as far as Gambakha, the present-day capital of the northern territories /6/ of the English colony of the Gold Coast. This is where the leader who had organized the exodus chose his residence. We have no positive information about him as a person, but it is certain that the establishment of the Mampoursi and Dagomba kingdom can be traced to him or his immediate successors."

174 [114] Captain Lambert adds in a note: "According to Colonel M.-P. Northcott, the founder of the Gambakha dynasty was called Tosogo; but the information that he provides about him seems hardly in agreement with the tradition we are relying upon here." (See Report on the Northern Territories of the Gold-Coast, London, 1890).

Captain Lambert continues as follows:

"The creation of the actual Mossi empire came later; it is nevertheless safe to assert that from that period on, some of the new inhabitants of Mampoursi undertook to open a passage toward the north and achieved it in two different ways. One group, after leaving Gambakha, pushed the Boussanga back into the region they occupy today and reached Béloussa country where they spread toward the west and north, occupying a vast stretch of land which is today almost exclusively inhabited by the Mossi. The other group, blazing a path in Nankana country, went north of Tiébélé and pushed the Boussanga back from the opposite side, thus crushing them in a vice, so to speak, and spread out in the country circumscribed by the Red Volta, toward Ouagadougou.

"One has only to glance at a map of the Mossi country to recognize the direction of these two parallel movements which came together north of the present-day Boussangsé, an almost uninhabited region at the time of the great Mossi migration. It was there that the autochthonous Boussanga, who were then occupying the whole Tenkodogo country, were forced to find refuge and have since been just existing, hostile to any fusion with the invader."

173 Captain Lambert then goes on to the legend of the origins of the true Mossi empire:

"A naba of the Gambakha (the Gambakha, as we have seen, were directly descended from the leader who had led the great immigration to the Mampoursi River), having reached the end of his life without an heir, believed this fact to be a fulfillment of destiny. Nothing in this world is permanent, and doubtless his glorious dynasty had to make way for a new line of leaders. He was at least resigned to this, but his lonely old age was what saddened him above all else. He therefore implored the spirits to give him a child, pronouncing the solemn vow that he would dedicate it to virginity, whether it be a boy or girl. As if by a miracle, a girl was born to him at once. He called her Pogotoenga (woman of the tree) (1), considering her, therefore, from

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have founded the Fada-N'Gourma dynasty; and Rawa, his eldest brother (in Mossi, "Rawa" means the courageous, the strong), is supposed to have founded the Rawatenga dynasty which has since become the Yatenga. As for the Ouagadougou dynasty, it was indeed Oubri, son of Zoungourana, who is said to have founded it. On this last point, all the traditions are in agreement, the one on which Captain Lambert bases his theories, as well as those of Moulins and Vadier.

most powerful. The relations between the naba of Ouagadougou and [631] those of Tenkodogo and Gourma, their cousins, were always those of a sovereign to his vassal (5).

5. It is unlikely that this situation prevailed from the beginning, since the higher authority should have been that of the Tenkodogo naba. But when the Mossi kingdom of Ouagadougou subsequently became the more powerful, it established its primacy over the neighboring, less powerful kingdoms of Tenkodogo and Fada-N'Gourma.

"Their common ancestor, Zunghrama, died in Komtoéga, where his grave is still shown."

174 In conclusion, Captain Lambert states:

1. That the Mossi come from south of Bornu, an area still inhabited by a people, the Mossah, who greatly resemble them. /9/

2. That the Mossi went through Haoussa and Djerma in order to come to Dagomba.

3. That the Mossi of today come from those of Dagomba.

He also states, but we can ignore this claim as being absolutely contrary to the facts known to us today, that the journey from Djerma to Dagomba was made during or after the sixteenth century A. D. and was occasioned by the crusades that the second Songhaï empire

174 led against the Mossi. In fact, the Mossi had left Dagomba long before the fourteenth century and occupied their present sites, including Yatenga.

173 Dr. Ruelle as well admits that the Mossi came from the east before settling in Dagomba. "The same tradition," he says (1), "has

1. L'Anthropologie /Anthropology/, Vol. XV (1904), p. 675. The tradition mentioned refers to the tradition of the old people.

it that warriors who came from the east defeated at Gambakha the Dagomba tribe who was them master of the land, and they set up their own leader. His daughter, Ouiaraouga, fell in love with an elephant hunter with whom she ran away, and, as her father tried to apprehend her, she took refuge in Tenkodogo. There she married the local chief, a Boussanga called Zangoumana, whose grave in Komterga is still a place of pilgrimage for the Mossi. Their son, Bougoum, after several expeditions in that region, conquered Koupéla. He, in turn, had three sons: Houbri, Nabakéré, and Kouda, all of whom made further conquests. The first pushed on as far as Yako, made Ouagadougou his capital, and forced his two brothers to recognize him as suzerain." (2)

2. I quote this version which is somewhat different from the others and which also has some mistakes since the name of "Ouiaraouga" (Ouidiraogo, "stallion, male horse") is given to the young girl whom the other traditions call Poko, Pokotoéga, Yennenga, etc. The name rightfully belongs to her son and not to her. It should be noted that Zoungourana (or Zangoumana) here becomes a Boussanga, the second husband of the ex-maiden, daughter of the king of Dagomba.

174 Lieutenant Marc also believes that the Mossi originated in the east. "Where did the Mossi come from when they arrived in the

174 country of Gambaga?" he asks (op. cit., p. 134). "It is rather difficult to /10/ speak authoritatively on this subject: probably from the central African Sudan, the region of the Chad. All Mossi traditions are unanimous in placing their country of origin very far in the east ..."

Lieutenant Marc had already said on page 130, "Local traditions have it that the Mossi come from very far in the east. Very long ago, they occupied a country located beyond the Niger River, whose capital was called Aliaman. This country is presently inhabited by the Songhai. Then the Mossi came to live in Dagomba, defeated its inhabitants, and the leader of the Mossi settled in Gambaga." (1)

173 114

1. There follows the legend of the daughter of the king of Gambakha. She is wrongly called Ouidiraogo, "stallion," as in Dr. Ruelle's version. Lieutenant Marc goes on to make another mistake by saying that Ouidiraogo means "hoof" (instead of male horse). Zoungourana (whom Lieutenant Marc calls Zoungourouma or Zougourouma) is presented here, as he was by Dr. Ruelle, as the second husband of the daughter of the king of Gambakha and as a Boussansé king. In Lieutenant Marc's version, he "waged war against his father-in-law and conquered the whole country from Gambaga to Koupéla." Then "Zougourouma had three sons: Séré, Oubri, and Couda. The first became naba of Boussouma; the second, Naba Oubri, conquered the country of Ouagadougou, set up his capital there, and took possession of Yatenga. Naba Oubri is considered by the Mossi as the first of the Moro-naba and founder of the present dynasty. His successors were his brother Couda, and then his son Nigamenda."

174 In this tradition reported by Lieutenant Marc, there is obviously an element of Moslem imaginations; Aliaman probably designates

174 Yemen. But the indication that this country is presently inhabited by the Songhay /sic/ certainly points to Djerma or Zaberma, slightly east of the Niger River in the Say and Dosso region. By dissociating the Moslem legend (undoubtedly created by some Yarse Moslem of the Mossi) from the rest of the tale, one still comes back to the temporary and distant occupation of Djerma by the ancestors of the Mossi.

174 Delafosse, on the other hand, contrary to Dr. Ruelle, Captain
114 Lambert, and Lieutenant Marc, although, like the others, he has the Mossi come from Dagomba to their present habitat (see Haut-Sénégal-Niger /Upper Senegal and Niger/, Vol. I, pp. 305-310), seems disinclined to accept the idea of an eastern origin. He says (page 310, in a note), "Lieutenant Marc seems to want to attribute an eastern
174 origin to the Mossi. To strengthen his hypothesis, he says that the
171 organization of the court of the Morho nâba (emperors of the Mossi)
644 is unique in western Africa, while there are /11/ equivalents in
114 Haoussa, Bornu, etc. I should like to point out that this argument is of little value, precisely because, contrary to Lieutenant Marc's theory, one finds in all ancient states of western Africa (Ghana, Mali, Tekrour, Gao, Dahomey, Benin, etc.) an organization absolutely analogous to that of the Mossi court (see part IV of this work and compare with the reports of Arab geographers and early European
174 travelers)." Of course I agree with Delafosse in not finding Lieutenant
114 Marc's argument very penetrating (1), but Ruelle, Lambert, and

1. Here is the argument as developed by Lieutenant Marc (op. cit., p. 134, 135):

"The feudal organization of the Mossi country, the court of the Moro-Naba, its pages, and its eunuchs, are all unique in western Africa. On the other hand, the black monarchs, as they are known in central Africa, seem to live in a setting that greatly resembles the one in which the Moro-Naba lives. The sultans of Zinder, Bornu, and Wadai have also a court, eunuchs, and pages. The little we know about the organization of their empires seems rather similar to what we have seen among the Mossi. But our

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documentation on this matter is not extensive enough to enable us to attempt a comparative study."

Marc do not base themselves exclusively on this argument. They also use a tradition of the Mossi themselves, and it would doubtless be unwise to reject it without examining it further. An argument that could be cited in favor of a very ancient occupation of Djerma by the ancestors of the Mossi is Binger's following remark: "The Mossi must [171 411] have remained in contact with the Touareg /Tuareg/ for a fairly long time (2) ... since they partially adopted their dress and use, as they do, the crutch-handled [poignée en croix] saber."

2. In this quotation, I have omitted the word "after," since Binger assumes that the Mossi, after taking Timbuktu in 1326 by order of the Mali, remained there until 1433, having, therefore, one century of contact with the Touareg. In reality, the Mossi stayed in Timbuktu only a very short time, and this raid could not have given them a prolonged contact with the Touareg, from whom they were separated before the fall of Timbuktu, and again as soon as they left the town, by the entire Songhaï country stretching along the banks of the Niger River. On the contrary, if they had formerly occupied Djerma, before the Djermabé or the Songhaï, one can easily understand this contact with the Touareg as well as the existence of the sword with the short crutch-handle /poignée en croix (Binger wrongly calls this straight sword a saber). In addition, when Binger speaks of the Targui /Tuareg/ dress, adopted [291] in part by the Mossi, he doubtless thinks of the lithâm (or face veil) which was then worn by the Mossi horsemen. At the present time, they are no longer worn, and I have never seen them among the Mossi, where I lived 1908-1909.

174 do, the crutch-handled /poignée en croix/ saber."
114 Actually, we must admit that we know nothing certain about the Mossi outside of Dagomba. This is what I /12/ clearly stated in my Noir du Yatenga /Blacks of Yatenga/ (1917) (1). The move into

1. See pp. 57 and 58.

Djerma is conjectural, and the question concerning the Mossah would have to be settled by an inquiry made in the Cameroons. At one
174 time I was tempted to connect the Mossi with the races of the south,
197 the Agni-Achanti /Ashanti/, and it seems certain that close relationships exist (2) between the numerical vocabularies of the Voltaic

[171]

2. See Appendix No. I. In addition, a woman called Aoura-Poko plays as important a part in the Baoulé historic tradition as in the Mossi historic tradition. And, although the word for woman is oba, eba, bla in Achanti, Abron, and Baoulé, the Baoulé heroine is called Poko, like Poko (woman) or Pokotoéga (woman of the baobab) of the Mossi tradition.

group and the Agni-Achanti group. But can one base a linguistic comparison on vocabulary alone? It would also have to be proven, grammatically speaking, that the Voltaic linguistic group is very close to the Agni-Achanti group. (3) And this has not yet been done.

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3. Delafosse says that there is no special relation between these two groups from a grammatical viewpoint. In a more general manner, Delafosse would now like to believe, as far as Mossi origins are concerned, that Mossi residence in their present country goes back far before the eleventh century A. D. Apparently only a band of pillagers and happy warriors, a princely dynasty came

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[563]

from Gambakha in the eleventh century to found small kingdoms in a country which had already been colonized by the Mossi. However, there is a drawback to this opinion: the existence among the Mossi of an autochthonous people (Nioniossé or Foulsé /Fulse/) still extant, who are far from having, always and everywhere, merged with the Mossi. According to my observations made in the area (I spent three years in Yatenga, from 1913 to 1916), there are still more Nioniossé than Mossi in Yatenga, 100, 000 as against 70, 000 (see my Noir du Yatenga, pages 665 and 666). The existence of this earlier people proves that the Mossi colonization is a relatively recent one. Also, the Mossi could not have penetrated and survived in an already inhabited region in any way other than by forming small, conquering military monarchies. I think therefore, that the Mossi came, with their chiefs, from Dagomba, and that they didn't reach the present Mossi country until ... But we are coming back to the chronological question which we will deal with later on.

174 For the moment, then, we are still reduced to dealing with hypotheses insofar as the origins of the Mossi are concerned. We know that the Mossi come from Dagomba and that they probably entered the country as conquerors. But where did they come from then? From the north-east? From the south? From the east? We cannot yet answer with certainty, just as we cannot for so many other historical, philosophical, and scientific questions, alas!

Grammatici certant et adhuc sub judice lis est.

174 /13/ This lack of certainty concerning the origins of the Mossi
141 should not prevent us from treating the anthropological question of the Mossi. On the contrary, for it is quite evident that, while linguistics can give us valuable information about the origins and affinities of the Mossi, anthropology can give us even more valuable and far-reaching information since, as we know, it is obviously easier for a people to change its language than the form of its skull. Let us, therefore, look to anthropology and consult Dr. Ruelle to find out what the Mossi are from a somatic viewpoint.

14 Dr. Ruelle, in the work cited below (1), has worked with 100

[18]

1. L'Anthropologie, Vol. XV (1904), pp. 519-561 and 657-703.

Mossi men (unfortunately, he did not measure women, which is a regrettable shortcoming and can invalidate certain averages, for instance, the ones concerning stature). From the viewpoint of skin color, which he generally finds dark brown (not only for the Mossi but for the other tribes of the IInd military territory which he studied at the same time as the Mossi), he gives for the Mossi the following numbers on Broca's chromatic scale:

70 Mossi out of 100 have no. 42
14 Mossi out of 100 have no. 41
19 Mossi out of 100 have no. 37 (2)

[19]

2. Page 522.

For the horizontal cephalic index:

2 Mossi have 65	15 Mossi have 75
4 Mossi have 68	11 Mossi have 76
4 Mossi have 69	7 Mossi have 77
2 Mossi have 70	8 Mossi have 78
3 Mossi have 71	6 Mossi have 79
13 Mossi have 72	1 Mossi has 80
17 Mossi have 73	2 Mossi have 81 (3)
5 Mossi have 74	

Chapter 2

Mossi Chronology

174 Mossi chronology is still a hypothetical construction, at least insofar as the beginnings of Mossi history are concerned. Since the beginning of the fifteenth century, historians are almost in agreement, and for the eighteenth century they have reached complete accord. Delafosse, in his Haut-Sénégal-Niger /Upper Senegal and Niger/ (1912), has given a complete chronology of the Mossi (the regions of Ouagadougou, Yatenga, and Fada-N'Gourma) (1), while I have traced

1. See Vol. I, pp. 306-312, and Vol. II, pp. 126, 139-140 and 149-150.

one myself in my Noir du Soudan: Pays Mossi et Gourounsi /Blacks of the Sudan: Country of the Mossi and Gourounsi/ (1912), for the naba of Ouagadougou (2). In 1917, I took up this question more

2. See pp. 458-462. In truth, these pages do not give an actual chronological list, but there are various indications from which one can deduce the dates referring to the kings of Ouagadougou which I have given on page 674 of my Noir du Yatenga /Blacks of Yatenga/, under the title : "Chronologie du Mossi (région de Ouagadougou /Chronology of the Mossi (region of Ouagadougou)/, from my Noir du Soudan /Blacks of the Sudan/, 1912" (Appendix No. V).

thoroughly in my Noir du Yatenga /Blacks of Yatenga/ (pp. 667-677). I give here these three different chronologies insofar as they concern Yatenga, that is, the northern kingdom of all the Mossi, which is the one that dealt with the Mali, the Songhaï, and the Bambara throughout the ages— which is the one, therefore, for which we have some points

174 of reference given us by the chroniclers of Timbuktu or by the Portuguese. Once these chronologies have been set down, we shall be able to discuss them again with the help of an important bit of information which is given by the Tarikh-el-Fettach /History of Fettac./:

174 173 Mossi Kings	Delafosse's Chronology	Tauxier 1912	Tauxier 1917
Nédéga (Dagomba)	1000	"	1233
Riâlé	"	"	1253
Ouidiraogo	dead in 1050	"	1273 /17/
Rawa	11 century	"	1293
Oubri	1050-1090	1175-1199	1313
Ouemtanango	1130	"	1333
Yadega	1170	"	1353
Yaouloumfao	1200-1225	"	1360
Guéda	"	"	
Tounougoum	"	"	1360-1375
Possinga	"	"	
Nasségué	1320-1340	"	1375-1385
Somna	"	"	
Vanté-Baragouan	1350-1380	"	1385-1395
Bonga	1380-1410	"	1395-1415
Sougounoum	1410-1430	"	1415-1430
Kissoum	1430-1435	"	1430
Zangayella	1435-1460	"	1430-1450
Lanlasse	1460-1475	"	1450-1475
Nassodoba	1475-1500	"	1475-1505
Yamba	1500-1530	"	1505-1535
Niago	1530-1560	"	1535-1565
Parima	1560-1590	"	1565-1595
Koumpaougoum	1590-1620	"	1595-1625
Nabasséré	1620-1660	"	1625-1655
Toussourou	1660-1690	"	1655-1685
Sini	1690-1720	"	1685-1720
Pigo	1720-1739	"	1720-1739
Ouabégo	1739-1754	"	1739-1754
Kango	1754-1787	"	1754-1787
Sagha	1787-1803	"	1787-1803

174 173 Kaogo	1803-1806	"	1803-1306
Tougouri	1806-1822	"	1806-1822
Kom	1822-1825	"	1822-1825
Ragongo	1825-1831	"	1825-1831
Ridimba	1831	"	1831
Diogoré	1831-1834	"	1831-1834
Totébalobo	1834-1850	"	1834-1850
Yemdé	1850-1877	"	1850-1877
Sanoum	1877-1879	"	1877-1879
Noboga	1879-1884	"	1879-1884
Pigo II	1884-1885	"	1884-1885
Baogo	1885-1895	"	1885-1894
Bagaré	1895-1899	"	1894-1899
Liguidi	1899-1902	"	1899-1902
Koboga	since 1902	"	1902-1914

174 [174] First of all, we can note that there is, I think, a slight confusion in the beginning /18/ of Delafosse's chronology. As a matter of fact, he counts (Vol. I, page 306) 40 years per generation, and, on the other hand (Vol. II, page 126), he places Oubri approximately from 1050 to 1090. But Oubri was the son of Zoungourana, himself the son of Ouidiraogo, himself the son of the princess Yennenga, himself the son of Nédéga, the king who ruled in Dagomba. There are, then, four generations from Nédéga to Oubri, which must make 160 years, according to Delafosse's calculations, and, if Oubri is to be placed between 1050 and 1090, that would put his great-great-grandfather Nédéga at about 890, that is, at the end of the ninth century A. D., or at least in 910, that is, at the beginning of the tenth century (1).

1. I have already noted this in my Noir du Yatenga, p. 673 (Appendix No. IV).

In this last case, the approximate dates would be the following:

[173]

Nédéga.....about 910
Yennenga.....about 950
Ouidiraogo.....about 990
Zoungourana.....about 1030
Oubri ..... between 1050 and 1090

174 This would definitely place Nédéga, the king of Dagomba, his daughter, Yennenga, and his grandson, Ouidiraogo, in the tenth century, then Zoungourana (with his brothers Rawa and Diaba) and Oubri in the eleventh century.

This said, the fact remains that the Mossi chronology of the tenth to the fourteenth century is not settled, and it would be interesting to find some information that would make possible a true approximation.

As it happens, there is an existing text of the second appendix of the Tarikh-el-Fettach /History of Fettach/ which can throw light on this darkness. In the name of a certain Songhaï king, Baraï, it is said, in fact, that the king of the Mossi waged war against him (2).

2. Tarikh-el-Fettach, Houdas translation, p. 333.

We do not know, however, which Mossi king, since the Tarikh-el-Fettach does not give his name, but before looking into the long list of Mossi kings to find out who this aggressor might have been, one would have to fix, at least approximately, the date of that Baraï.

This then forces us to establish the whole chronology /19/ of the Sonraï /sic/, also a very approximative chronology which varies according to whether we consult the Tarikh-es-Soudan /History of Sudan/ or the Tarikh-el-Fettach.

Let us see first how one could establish, even in a schematic and grossly approximative fashion, the chronology of the Songhaï princes according to the Tarikh-es-Soudan.

This chronicle gives only one date up to the time of Sonni-Ali-Ber: that of Kosoï, who was converted to Islam in the year 400 of the Hegira, that is, in 1009-10 A.D. (1), but it gives the dates of Sonni-

1. Tarikh-es-Soudan, Houdas translation, p. 5.

Ali-Ber and the Askias who succeeded him from 1464-65 to 1591, the period of the Moroccan conquest.

We can first point out that, for the princes for whom we have the exact dates (Sonni-Ali and the Askias), 126 or 127 years are given for ten reigns, which makes each reign approximately 13 years. We can apply this average to all the Songhay princes: thus, since

174 we are counting from Za Alayaman to Issihak II, 58 Songhay princes, this dates the beginning of these princes at about the year 837 A. D.

On the other hand, we must be aware of the fact that we have the approximate date of Ali Kolon's reign (or Ali Kolen, or Ali Golom, or Ali Kilnou), who freed the Songhay from the Mali suzerainty a little after the reign of Kankan-Moussa and during that temporary period of weakness which enabled the Mossi to raid Timbuktu (1333). Delafosse (2) puts the flight of Ali Kolen from the court of the Mali

2. Haut-Sénégal-Niger /Upper Senegal and Niger/, Vol. II, p. 73.

king and his victorious defense against the pursuing Mali people in the year 1335. Before him, Binger (3) had dated this flight in the year

3. Du Niger au golfe de Guinée /From the Niger to the Gulf of Guinea/, Vol. II, p. 368. See also page 371.

1331, during the reign of the weak Magha I, successor of Kankan-Moussa who reigned from 1331 to 1335. We can take 1333 as an average date, and it is conceivable that the fall of Timbuktu to the Mossi, which occurred in that year, helped in the restoration of Songhaï independence.

174 173 /20/ On the basis of this data, we have:

1.	Za Alayaman	837-849
2.	Zakoï	849-861
3.	Takoï	861-873
4.	Akoï	873-885
5.	Kou	885-897
6.	Ali Faï	897-909
7.	Biyaï Komaï	909-921
8.	Biyaï	921-933
9.	Karaï	933-945
10.	Yama-Karaouï'a	945-957
11.	Yama	957-969
12.	Yama-Danka-Kibao	969-981

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13.	Koukoraï	981-993
14.	Kenken	993-1005
15.	Kosoï (about 1009-1010)	1005-1025
16.	Kosaï-Dariyâ	1025-1044
17.	Hen-Kon-Ouanko-Dam	1044-1063
18.	Biyaï-Koï-Kimi	1063-1082
19.	Nintâsanaï	1082-1101
20.	Biyaï-Kaïna-Kimba	1101-1120
21.	Kaïna-Chinyounbo	1120-1139
22.	Tib	1139-1158
23.	Yama-Dao	1158-1177
24.	Fadazou	1177-1196
25.	Ali-Koro	1196-1215
26.	Bir-Foloko	1215-1235
27.	Yasiboï	1235-1255
28.	Douro	1255-1275
29.	Zenko-Bâro	1275-1295
30.	Bisi-Bâro	1295-1315
31.	Bada	1325-1332
32.	Ali-Kolon (about 1333)	1333-1340
33.	Selman-Nâri	1340-1347
34.	Ibrahim Kabaï	1347-1354
35.	Otsmân Kanafa	1354-1362
36.	Bar-Kaïna-Ankabi	1362-1370
37.	Mousa	1370-1378
38.	Bokar-Zonka	1378-1386
39.	Bokar-Dalla-Boyonbo	1386-1394
40.	Mar Kiraï	1394-1402
41.	Mohammed Dâo	1402-1410
42.	Mohammed Koukiya	1410-1418
43.	Mohammed Fâr	1418-1426
44.	Karbifô	1426-1434
45.	Mar-Fâi-Kolli-Djimo	1434-1442
46.	Mar Arkena	1442-1449
47.	Mar Arandan	1449-1456
48.	Selimân Dam	1456-1464

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49.	Sonni Ali Ber	1464-1492
50.	Askia El-Hadj Mohammed	1493-1528
51.	Askia Moussa	1528-1531
52.	Askia Mohammed II	1531-1537
53.	Askia Ismaïl	1537-1539
54.	Askia Issihak I	1539-1549
55.	Askia Daoud	1549-1582
56.	Askia Mohammed III	1582-1586
57.	Askia Mohammed Bani	1586-1588
58.	Askia Issihak II	1588-1591

I underlined in this list the name of Bir Foloko (1215-1235), because he is the king of the Tarikh-es-Soudan list who corresponds to the Baraï of the Tarikh-el-Fettach list.

174 Concerning the dates which one can get from the Tarikh-el-Fettach, they consist of three notations:

1) A giant, originally from Yemen, who lived toward the middle of the fourth century of the Hegira (1), that is, counting 350 years

1. Tarikh-el-Fettach, Houdas and Delafosse translation, p. 329.

from the Hegira, around 961 A. D.

2) The date of conversion to Islam of the people of Gao which took place, according to El-Motaouakkel Kâti, between 471 and 475 of the Hegira, that is, between 1079 and 1082 A. D. (2)

2. Ibid., pp. 332-333.

3) And the date of Mâkara-Komsoû, who was contemporary with Kankan-Moussa's pilgrimage to Mecca in the year 720 of the Hegira, or 1321-22 A. D. (3) This Mâkara-Komsoû was the 33rd king of

3. Ibid., p. 335.

Songhay, according to the list given by Mahmoud Kâti.

174 On the basis of these three notations, a chronological list of the Songhay princes can be established in accordance with the Tarikh-el-Fettach, making a note of the fact that 360 years (961 to 1321) are given for 33 princes, which makes an average of approximately 11 years per prince. On the other hand, one is led to think that the date of the conversion to Islam of the people of Gao gives the date of Kotso-Moslem (Kotso the Mussulman) and that, therefore, we can place this prince at about 1079-82, that is, at approximately 1080. /22/ True, the Tarikh says that it was not Kotso-Moslem who converted the people of Gao to Islam and that the widespread general opinion about this matter is false, but Mahmoûd Kâti seems to mumble strangely (may I be forgiven the word) about the subject (1), and one

1. See the note of Houdas-Delafosse, p. 333.

can, despite his authority and following the general opinion he rejects, admit the fact that it was Kotso who Islamized both Gao and the Songhay kingdom. We thus arrive at the year 1080 for his period, which gives his predecessors nine years on the average until the giant from Yemen. Moreover, there and now, we can indicate all our reservations about this far too recent beginning of the Songhay empire. The date one obtains from the Tarikh-es-Soudan (837 A. D.) seems preferable by far to the date of 961, obtained from the Tarikh-el-Fettach.

174 173 Regardless of how the matter stands concerning this last topic, we have then:

1.	Giant from Yemen	961
2.	Ouaaï	970
3.	Kaïen	979
4.	Takaï	988
5.	Mata-Kaï	997
6.	Mali Biyaï	1006
7.	Bayaï Kima	1015
8.	Beï	1024
9.	Kiraï	1033
10.	Yama Kalaouaï	1042

174	11.	Yama-Dombo	1051
173	12.	Yama-Diamaa	1060
	13.	Diatakoré	1070
	14.	Koto-Moslem	1080
	15.	Kotso-Darîa	1093
	16.	Hounabououa	1106
	17.	Yama-Kitsi	1119
	18.	Baraï	1132
	19.	Bibaï-Kaïna	1145
	20.	Sémanbao	1158
	21.	Fanda Diaoro	1171
	22.	Yama-Daa	1184
	23.	Arkour-Dioua	1197
	24.	Baraï (war with the Mossi)	1210
	25.	Yassi Bo'o	1223 /23/
	26.	Baro	1236
	27.	Douro	1249
	28.	Bitsi-Baro	1262
	29.	Ali Golom	1275
	30.	Silman Nari	1288
	31.	Ibrahim Kabayao	1301
	32.	Ousman Guifo	1311
	33.	Mâkara Komsôu	1321-1322
	34.	Boubakar	1335-1349
	35.	Ankada	1349-1363
	36.	Kimi-Yankoï	1363-1377
	37.	Baro del Yombo	1377-1390
	38.	Madao	1390-1405
	39.	Mohammed Koukiya	1405-1420
	40.	Mohammed Fari	1420-1435
	41.	Balam	1435-1450
	42.	Souleïman-Dama	1450-1465
	43.	Sonni-Ali-Ber	1465-1492

174 What is noticeable on this list (apart from the fact that this chronology brings the beginnings of the Songhaï kingdom much too close to our time and that, on this point, the chronology drawn from the Tarikh-es-Soudan is preferable) is that Kotso-Moslem is placed

174 here at about 1080, while the same king (called Kosoï, by Es'Sadi) is placed at about 1010 by the latter. On this point, the date of the Tarikh-el-Fettach seems preferable to us, for, if we think about the events of the eleventh century that might have brought about this conversion to Islam, we think, first of all, of the conquest of Ghana, at about 1076, by the Almoravide. We are, therefore, inclined to prefer the date drawn from the Tarikh-el-Fettach, without our reason being absolutely conclusive. For it is possible that either another cause besides the pressure of the Almoravide brought about the conversion to Islam by the Songhay king of that period, or even that that pressure made itself felt in the region at a period other than the precise time of the capture of Ghana. Yet it seems logical to think that it was this event which led the Songhaï toward Islam, and, therefore, Kotso-Moslem, or Kosoï the Mussulman, must be placed at about 1080, rather than at about 1010.

But there is yet a stronger contradiction than the above /24/ between the Tarikh-el-Fettach and the Tarikh-es-Soudan. The Tarikh-es-Soudan states explicitly that Kankan-Moussa was the first of the Mali kings to conquer Songhay. (1) From this the logical result is

1. Houdas translation, pp. 12, 13.

that Ali Kolon and his quest for liberation must be placed after Kankan-Moussa. According to the Tarikh-el-Fettach, Ali Kolon (called Ali Golom) did indeed free the Songhaï or, more precisely, "abandoned king of the Malli for reasons too long to give here and which do not enter into our plan," the author calmly states. (2) But, after him,

2. Houdas and Delafosse translation, p. 334.

Silman-Nâri reigned, then Ibrahim-Kabayao, then Ousman-Guifo, then Mâkara-Komsoû, and it was in the latter's reign that Kankan-Moussa went into the Songhay country on a pilgrimage to Mecca. (3)

3. Ibid., p. 335.

We must thus acknowledge, according to this account, that Ali Golom or Ali Kolon precedes Kankan-Moussa, that he lived about the year

174 1275, and, if he freed the country from the Mali yoke, he did so under the direct successors of Soundiata, alias Mari-Diata. Then, at the time of Kankan-Moussa, the most famous of the Mali kings after Soundiata, the Songhaï country probably again fell under Mali suzerainty for an undeterminable length of time.

It is difficult to approach the question as to which is right, in that respect, the Tarikh-es-Soudan or the Tarikh-el-Fettach. Besides, for the question we are particularly interested in (the date of Baraï or Bir-Foloko), it is not essential to find a solution to it here. Let us simply point out that the chronology we took from the Tarikh-es-Soudan puts Bir-Foloko between 1215 and 1235, and the chronology of the Tarikh-el-Fettach puts him at about 1210. On the other hand, Binger places "Za-Birou or Bayarou Falaka" as corresponding to the reign of Mansa Wali I (1260-76) (4). Delafosse, in his study, (5) does not give the

4. Binger, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 368, 369.

5. Haut-Sénégal-Niger /Upper Senegal and Niger/, Vol. II, p. 65.

actual date for "Beïra-Foloko," but, according to the two outside dates he gives /25/ for the Dia in Gao (1010 to 1335), and considering the place of Beïra-Foloko between his predecessors and successors, he should be placed at about 1275-1300. In conclusion, I think that Baraï belongs to the first half of the thirteenth century and that the first war of the Songhaï and the Mossi took place at that time.

Here are the details given about this war in the Tarikh-el-Fettach (page 333): "Then /came/ the diaoua Baraï, against whom the king of the Mossi waged war. The campaign lasted four months, at the end of which time the king of the Mossi was beaten and his army routed and annihilated." The Mossi seem thus to have been the aggressors, but in the end they appear to have been beaten and pushed back.

The question now is to determine which king of the Mossi undertook this campaign, and, on this point, we must admit that we have no indication. We must naturally eliminate Nédéga, the king of Dagomba, his daughter Yennenga or Pokotoéga, and his grandson

174 Ouidiraogo, but one might hesitate between Rawa and Ouemtanango. If one chose the former, he would then have lived from 1200 to 1250 (which would indicate that my date of 1293 for this naba is too recent, and that Delafosse's date, the beginning of the eleventh century, is too early). If one chose Ouemtanango, the same would still apply: my date of 1333 for this naba would be a century too recent, and Delafosse's date would be some fifty years too early (1). In conclusion,

1. Delafosse places Ouemtanango at about 1170. One can deduce this from two passages of his Vol. II, pp. 126 and 139. In the last passage, he speaks of Ouemtanango himself and, in the first, of his father and uncles.

it is impossible for us to say exactly which naba was the first to wage war against the north, but, whether it was Rawa or Ouemtanango, it seems clear that since the beginning of the thirteenth century the Mossi were settled in their present territories, including Yatenga, and, therefore, we must conclude that they came there during the twelfth century. My 1917 Mossi chronology would, therefore, need some revision, since it brings the origins of Mossi history too close to our time. On the other hand, Delafosse's chronology also would seem to need some correction, since it exaggerates in the opposite direction. It would not be the first time that the truth should be found, as often happens, between two extreme opinions. /26/

Chapter 3

Mossi and Bambara

174 114 We know that the Bambara king, N'Golo, and the Mossi king, Kango, waged war against each other toward the end of the eighteenth century. Yatenga traditions preserve in detail the memory, embellished with somewhat burlesque variations, of the events that precipitated this war (see my Noir du Yatenga /Blacks of Yatenga/, 1917, pp. 88-91), but they say nothing of the war itself. Delafosse, in his

174 114 Haut-Sénégal-Niger /Upper Senegal and Niger/ (1912), starts out by relating, according to Bambara traditions, the same stories of the causes that brought about the war (1), but he does not say much about

1. Vol. II, pp. 143, 144.

the war itself. After speaking of Kango's cruel extermination of the Bambara auxiliaries whom he had formerly needed and who had been lent to him, Delafosse adds (2): "It took place about 1760: Ngolo

2. Page 144.

Diara, then emperor of Ségou, wanted to avenge his compatriots and waged war against Yatenga, but he was driven back by Kango. Later, following a kind of civil war that broke out in Ségou, the Dioula merchants of the town fled and took refuge in Yatenga. Ngolo asked Kango to send them back to him and, upon his refusal, led for the third time an expedition against the Ouahigouya empire. This expedition had no more success than the preceding one, and Ngolo died during it, followed in death shortly thereafter by his opponent (1787)."

Further on, Delafosse says (3): "Ngolo led two expeditions against /27/

3. Same work, Vol. II, pp. 289, 290 (chapter on the history of the Bambara of Ségou).

the Mossi of Yatenga, whose emperor, Kango, had cruelly put to death some Banmana /Bambara/ warriors, who had been previously put at his disposal by Denkoro or by Ton-Mansa. Driven back after his first expedition (about 1760), Ngolo later returned to Yatenga in order to get back from Kango some Dioula merchants who had fled Ségou following a kind of civil war and whom the Yatenga emperor refused to send home. It would seem that this second expedition was no more successful than the first; in any case, in the course of this campaign, Ngolo contracted a disease from which he died before he could return to his capital (1787)."

All this is very scanty, and we would know little more about it (1) were it not for a very curious passage by Mungo-Park, which no

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1. Monteil, in his recent book, Bambara de Ségou et du Kaarta /Bambara of Ségou and Kaarta/ (1924), says nothing about these wars. He only alludes to them in a short note on page 76.

one has yet pointed out to my knowledge and which tells us of a very important event in this war: the capture of the town of Dienné by Kango, a feat of arms worthy of the ancient Mossi conquerors, Rawa, Ouemtanango, Nassodoba, etc., which assured a conclusive victory of the Mossi naba over the Bambara fama.

174 I have copied the following passage word for word from Mungo-Park (translation by the Abbé of Voisin, 1800, Vol. II, pp. 45 and 46):

[114] "In the south of Jimbala is the Negro kingdom of Gotto (2) that

2. Djimbala (which in Mandé means country of the great water, from gui, "water," ba, "great," and la, a suffix indicating the country or region) is the region north of Lake Débo. As for "Gotto," a name that Mungo-Park gives here to all the countries of the southeast and south (Mossi, Kong, Bondoukou, etc.), it is undoubtedly the word "Gottogo," the Sudanese and Mandé name for Bondoukou, which is given in error to everything southeast and south of Djimbala or Guimbala.

is said to be very large. In the past, it was divided into a large number of small states, governed by different chiefs whose continual wars incited neighboring countries to invade the land. One of these chiefs, called Moossie, was politic and shrewd enough to get all the others to declare war on the king of Bambarra /sic/, and to have himself unanimously named generalissimo. /28/ From the shores of Lake Debbie (1), on the upper Niger, Moossie sent a large number of

1. This refers to Lake Débo.

boats filled with provisions toward Yenné; and with his entire army

174 he entered into Bambarra. The inhabitants of Yenné saw him on the opposite shore of the Niger (2) before they had been told of his march.

2. Djenné is not right on the Niger nor on the Bani, but at a certain distance between the two rivers.

His flotilla joined him that same day, and, after having unloaded his provisions, he crossed the river with one part of his army and took Yenné by assault during the night. This exploit so frightened the Bambarra king that he asked for peace. He agreed to pay the victor an annual tribute of a certain number of slaves and to give back to the Gotto inhabitants all that had been taken away from them. (3)

[721 648]

3. This passage would indicate that the Dyoula of Gottogo (or Bondoukou), having some grievances against the Bambara of the Ségou region (assaulted peddlers, unpaid debts, etc.), went to the king of the Mossi to obtain justice, and that this might have been one of the causes of the war. There doubtless existed reciprocal grievances between Bambara and Mossi or between their natural allies.

Moussee /sic/ returned to Gotto in triumph, and he was proclaimed king. He gave his name to the capital."

As one can see, the important and valuable fact that must be extracted from this thick forest is the capture of Dienné by the king of the northern Mossi, the king of Yatenga (who at that time was Kango), during his struggles with the Bambara, that is, with Ngolo who was his contemporary. Because of his informants, who obviously did not inform him with absolute precision and thus made him commit many small errors or miscalculations, Mungo-Park embellished the true fact with imaginary details. First of all, there is the name of Kango, Moossie, Moussie /sic/, which is the name of the conqueror's country and not his own name. Then, the name of Gotto is given to the Mossi country, undoubtedly because of a confusion, either in the minds of the Blacks who informed Mungo-Park or in the mind of the great

174 114

174 114 traveler himself, between the people of Gotto who were mixed in this affair and the Mossi of Yatenga who made the expedition. Finally, Naba Kango, although he brought great glory /29/ in the eighteenth century to the Mossi dynasty of Yatenga, obviously did not find, at the beginning of his reign, an absolute fragmentation of small countries which he would have gathered under single authority. He doubtless limited himself to restoring a kingdom that had formerly been powerful and centralized, and which he made so again through his personal prestige. In any case, he did not give his name to the Mossi (it is, on the contrary, the Mossi who, in Mungo-Park's description, give him his name), any more than to the capital which he indeed founded and which he called Ouahigouya. All these details are thus false or imaginary, but the principal fact remains and is very interesting. Mungo-Park arrived in Ségou just in time, in 1796, to [153] record it before the weak memories of the Mossi and Bambara Negroes would have condemned it to hopeless oblivion. /30/

Chapter 4

The Cult of the Sun Among the Mossi

794 Do the Mossi adore the sun? And is their great god Ouendé partly or wholly a sun god?

Binger was the first to state that the Mossi adored the sun. "They are fetishists," he says (1), "but they have a cult of the sun, which

1. Du Niger au golfe de Guinée /From the Niger to the Gulf of Guinea/, Vol. I, p. 492.

still today bears the same name as God; they call it Wouidi."

In turn, Lieutenant Desplagnes, in his Plateau Central Nigérien /Central Nigerian Plateau/ (pp. 275, 276) said in 1907:

"The Hougho-Ouango of Mossi (these priests live in Mossi in the villages of Boujema, Mani, Kondogho, Yolo, Tio) make sacrifices to the sun in order to bind it to the earth, morning and evening, at

4: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1957
FA28 Mossi FA28

The village chiefs held their fiefs directly from the district chiefs, and were enfeoffed through the principle of primogeniture on the advice of district chiefs' ministers. They paid homage, and owed fealty, to their district chiefs, although part of their tribute always was sent to the Moro-naba. In the event of war they followed their district chief when he went to serve the Moro-naba. The village chiefs received presents from the heads of the families in the village and settled any local court cases in their villages. They did not have the right, however, either to put men into stocks or to have them executed. They were aided in the administration of the villages by the heads of families. 631 622

Almost every Mossi village had sections in which the nobles lived. As stated above, these people were the relatives or descendants of the district heads, and they lived in a semiparasitic condition upon the commoners in the village. Most of them owned horses and, in addition to furnishing the cavalry for the district chief's contingent during war, they raided and attacked caravans passing through the country. The nobles were subject to the control of the village chiefs, and it was not unusual for them to be under the jurisdiction of chiefs who were members of the commoner class. In such cases the district chiefs had a great deal of difficulty resolving the problems between their vassals and their kinsmen. The nobles could steal the wives and daughters of the commoners, but if a commoner tried to steal the wife of a noble he and the woman were both killed. Whenever a noble threatened to disrupt the life of a district he was secretly strangled by the district chief's men. 565 631

The above is a brief account of the origin and structure of the Mossi political system. Most of the myths regarding the origin of this system seem to suggest that here is a classic conquest state, but one neither founded by Caucasians nor extraordinarily influenced by them. The Mossi state is homogeneous in race, language, and culture, a feature not found in most of the other Sudanic states. This fact is not interesting in itself until we note that the Mossi share many cultural traits with the Voltaic peoples. Marc believes that this cultural homogeneity is the result of the Mossi invasion of the area during which they imposed their languages and customs on the indigenous populations. Apparently not believing the traditions about the Dagomba origin of the Mossi, he explains the fact that such non-Mossi groups as the Nankana, Wala, and Dagari speak Mossi dialects as proof that the Mossi were politically more powerful in ancient times, but "the feudal regime disappeared little by little.... The Mossi language was kept; [it is] the only actual witness of the ancient power of the Mossi" (author's translation).[5] We know, however, that the Mossi were still encroaching on the territories of their neighbors when the French arrived in 1896.[6] 631 642 174 114

Rattray believes that the inhabitants of Mamprussi, Dagomba, and Mossi territories are the same now as they were "centuries before the ancestors of those who are now their rulers appeared on the scene."[7] He states that

4: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1957
FA28 Mossi FA28

these conquerors even adopted the language and culture of the indigenous populations, but introduced an "administrative machinery" that welded scattered local groups into loose confederacies without affecting in any great degree the inner life of these groups.[8] Rattray's hypothesis appears to explain quite adequately the reasons for the cultural homogeneity of the Mossi and the other Voltaic peoples. It also conforms to what we know from recent historical times of the organizing and conquering abilities of such figures as Samory and El Hadj Omar. These men carved out veritable empires in this area in remarkably short periods. However, we need not accept Rattray's hypothesis that foreigners were the ones who instituted "administrative machinery" among the Mossi. It is highly possible that the Mossi state might have been the result of internal Voltaic development when one Dagomba lineage established its hegemony over scattered local people in this area. There is some evidence here that the Mossi state had many of the features of the widespread Negro pattern of political structure so common to the other Sudanic states, and this fits in very well with what Professor Greenberg reports about the basic African nature of these states.[9]

It is clear that the Mossi state was a complex entity and many persons cannot describe it without calling it feudal.[10] However, the question of feudalism itself is a vexing one, and many scholars limit the use of this term to describe the political system of medieval France and possibly Japan. In fact, not many people would admit the presence of feudal states in Africa although some, such as S. F. Nadel, who worked among the Nupe, call the Sudanic states feudal and talk about fiefs and vassalage. It is now generally agreed that feudalism, despite its other aspects, is basically a form of government. Stephenson gives the classic features of a feudal state as: (1) fief-holding with vassalage; (2) homage and fealty; (3) mutual obligations between lords and vassals; (4) military service from the vassals; (5) inheritance of fiefs by heirs of vassals, usually by primogeniture; (6) subinfeudation; (7) attendance at court; and (8) wardship and marriage arrangements by which fiefs could be held in trust for minors and, in the case of female heirs, husbands who can render homage for them.[11]

An examination of the Mossi political system in terms of the first six characteristics of feudalism shows that this system conforms very well to the specifications for a feudal system. The Mossi did not have an elaborate court structure on the European model and, since only mature males could inherit fiefs, no arrangements for wardships and marriages were necessary. Furthermore, I do not think that these two traits are necessary for feudalism, and they can be considered as cultural content that need not be present in all social processes with similar functions.

Mossi-like societies present a special problem to political theorists because of the importance of kinship in their political systems. Coulborn[12] strongly insists that "A feudal society . . . is based on contract. It is not

173 "The Mossi say that at the time of their arrival the land was occupied by savages who went naked and bore tattooings on their bellies. Those natives were named Suida. The Mossi claim that they chased the Habé into the mountains of Bandiagara and that the Habé, Kipirsi, and Boussangçé are the survivors of this autochtonous Suida group . . . .

"The traditions of the primitive groups driven off by the invaders agree rather closely with Mossi traditions. . . .

"In view of these traditions, it seems to us* that the Mossi, 174 coming from far to the east, occupied those lands which are now Mampoursi /Mamprusi/ and Dagomba territories, with Gambaga as their capital, and then, from Gambaga, set out for the northwest and came to settle in the vast plains of the White Volta basin, where they still live. At the time of their arrival, the present Mossi country was inhabited by tribes which are now represented by the Boussangçé, the Gourounsi, and the Habé.

"It is probable that the Mossi owed part of their success to their cavalry. We believe that the Mossi were responsible for introducing the types of horses found at the present day in the Volta basin. Even today, all the Mossi love horses and are proud to own them, and no naba would deign to appear in public except on horseback. The Gourounsi, on the other hand, care little for horses. . . .

"Only part of the autochtonous inhabitants took refuge in the mountains or beyond the Red Volta. The remaining group was conquered and incorporated into the Mossi group, and adopted the Mossi language and customs /454/. This autochtonous population did not vanish without traces. In our opinion, it is to be credited with the religious organization of the Mossi." (Pages 130 to 134.)

173 Moulins, on the other hand, an official in charge of native affairs who lived among the Mossi from 1907 to 1909 and who wrote the Monographie /Monograph/ of the Ouagadougou circle in 1909, tells the story as follows:

"Tradition has it that some thirty-five generations ago, the king of Dagomba who lived in Gambakha had a daughter named Poko whom he allowed to grow in years and in beauty without attempting to find her a husband. This made the young girl so angry that she did not hesitate to run away from her paternal home on a horse she had found.

*[These passages are quoted from "Le Pays Mossi" of Lt. Marc, see p 2 — Analyst.]

173 "This does not mean that nothing remained to be done by Oubry's successors. The land had been conquered, but remained to be explored and incorporated. The political organization had been outlined, but remained to be strengthened and completed.

"Up to the reign of Naba Kobra, fourteenth successor of Oubry, the Moro Nabas settled successively at various points of the empire instead of living generation after generation at Ouagadougou as they have done ever since. It would seem that in so doing they were attempting to strengthen their authority in regions where it was as yet insufficiently acknowledged.

"Whenever a territorial command became vacant, on the other hand, the Moro Nabas systematically filled it with a member of their own family. As a result, the whole land was soon in the hands of individuals who were united by bonds /457/ of kinship and who acknowledged the Moro Naba as the head of their family.

"Finally, thanks to marriages between Mossi, Nymsi, and Gourounsi individuals, the conquering element fused slowly with the initial population and eventually absorbed it almost completely.

174 144 "We have already seen that at the time of the Dagomba invasion the territory that makes up the present district of Tenkodogo was inhabited by a Boussansé population, while the area covered by the present district of Ouagadougou was settled by Gourounsi and Nymsi or Nioniossé.

"The mixture of Dagomba with Boussansé, Nymsi and Gourounsi resulted in the Mossi element, which soon became the most important part of the population. As conquerors, indeed, the Dagomba married several women each, and the prohibitions governing kin marriages led them to seek their wives among the Boussansé, Nioniossé, and Gourounsi families. This is how they soon came to absorb the Autochtonous element, or at least the element that was already established in the area when they arrived.

"A few Nymsi families among the Mossi have avoided all intermixture, but their continuous contact with the Mossi has led them to adopt the latter's language and customs, and from a political standpoint there is no difference between the two groups."

174 From the two accounts of Marc and Moulins, the following broad facts may be gathered:

1. The Mossi, coming from the northwest, conquered the Dagomba at a time which is difficult to determine exactly, but which must not have long antedated their conquest of Mossi territory.

[Passages quoted from the "Monograph of the Ouagadougou circle in 1909" by Moulins. — Analyst.]

174 2. They set out from Dagomba to conquer the present Mossi territory, beginning with Tenkodogo and ending with Ouahigouya, that is, proceeding from southeast to northwest. Moulins' account is preferable to Marc's, as concerns the details of this conquest, for the items are better documented, more credible, and more accurate (for example, /458/ Marc says that Ouidiraogo was the daughter of the king of Dagomba. Yet Ouidiraogo means "male horse" in Mossi, and consequently could not be a girl's name, while Poko is a female name common among the Mossi, and in fact simply means "woman." Likewise, if Marc's account were to be taken literally Zougourana would be a Boussansé, while he is a Mossi, father of Oubry the conqueror, etc.).

3. They found there an autochtonous group closely related to the Kipirsi, Gourounsi, Habé, and Boussansé of today, and they mixed with it. From previous study we are already familiar with the Gourounsi, who are communal cultivators. The Kipirsi, Boussansé, and Habé are of similar social type. It was the conquering Mossi who injected into the resulting mixture a superior, decommunalizing element.

Something must now be added to Moulins' account. He seems to believe that the Mossi reached their greatest conquering expansion in Oubry's reign, and that once they had seized the present Mossi territory, from the time of Oubry onward, they concerned themselves merely with the administration and consolidation of the lands they had conquered. This, however, does not agree with the account of the Tarikh-es-Soudan /History of the Sudan/ from which Marc borrowed so fruitfully.

The Tarikh tells us that the Mossi seized Timbuktu in the fourteenth century, and Marc, very logically it seems sets the seizure of Timbuktu around 1333 or 1334 (for a discussion of this topic see pages 136-138 of his book, mentioned above). In 1336 or 1337, however, Mali forces re-occupied Timbuktu. The Mossi, therefore, reached much farther north than Moulins indicates right from their first conquering thrust. The reign of Oubry, conqueror of Ouagadougou, may be set in the twelfth century A.D. His successors continued the drive toward the northwest. They occupied Ouahigouya, drove back the Habé just beyond the village, and pushed on toward the river /Niger/ to attack Timbuktu for the first time in 1333 or 1334. They seized the town, but Mansa Sliman,

174 chief of the Mali empire, recaptured it a few years later.

/459/ Mossi expansion toward the south may no doubt be set at that time. This expansion is a fact. We have already verified, in mentioning the Dagari, that an important Mossi group came and settled in Dagari country, fusing with the autochtonous inhabitants and forming the present-day Dagari who speak a language derived from Mossi and very closely related to it. The Dagari live in the extreme south of the Leo district and in the north of the British Gold Coast. In other words they are settled, as we already know, on the tenth and eleventh parallels.

Marc, incidentally, acknowledges the fact that the Mossi went as far as the ninth degree south. "In the east," he says on page 138, "they occupied all of Gourma /Gurma/ territory and, to the southeast of Dori, Yaga territory. To the south, in the valley of the White Volta, they pushed on to the ninth parallel, and in the valley of the Black Volta they reached the tenth parallel near Oua. These southern boundaries are roughly the extreme frontiers which may be reached on horseback, and since the Mossi, as we have already mentioned, are basically horsemen, it is probable that they did not attempt to come any closer to the great forest."

Marc sets the conquering Mossi thrust toward the east (Gourma, Yanga, etc.) and toward the south (Nounouma /Nunuma/, Sissala /Isala/, Dagari, Kassouna /Kasena/, Boura /Builsa/, etc.) in the fifteenth century. I myself would rather place it in the second half of the fourteenth century, for at the time when the Mossi seized Timbuktu (1333 or 1334) they were certainly propelled by a powerful drive of conquest and expansion. Yet we know that Mansa Sliman, sultan of the Mali empire, recaptured Timbuktu a few years later. This of course could not be done without pushing back the Mossi toward the southeast, toward Ouahigouya or Ouagadougou, but it is most likely that this temporary setback did not stem their expanding drive. Rather, it would be logical and consistent with the broad trends of history to assume that it was merely deflected in another direction. It was no doubt shortly after the recapture of Timbuktu by the Mandé, therefore, that the Mossi turned south and pushed on as conquerors to Oua. It is probable that the whole second half of the fourteenth century, as well as the first few years of the fifteenth, were given to this task.

174 /460/ This Mossi expansion toward the south served, incidentally, to swell the forces of the empire. It is hardly surprising, therefore, to find the Mossi heading north again at a later time. The Tarikh-es-Soudan relates that in 1432 and 1480 they led victorious expeditions against Timbuktu and successfully attacked the Macina.

In my opinion, it was at that time, toward the middle of the fifteenth century, that the Mossi empire reached its zenith. It ruled over the whole bend of the Niger, from Oua and Gambakha /sic/ in the south to near Timbuktu in the north, and roughly from the eastern to the western Niger /River/.

This position of dominance, however, was soon to be lost. In 1483, the Mossi invaded territories which the founder of the second Songhay empire had just won from the Mali empire. The forces of the latter advanced on the Mossi, inflicted upon them a bloody defeat, and pursued them right into their own territory.

In 1497, Askia El-Hadj-Mohammed unleashed the holy war against the Mossi. In 1549 and 1561, Askia Daoud made brilliant forays into Mossi territory. In short, the second Songhay empire took the upper hand, checked Mossi attacks to the north, and went so far as to pursue them into their own lands. It was at that time, no doubt, that the Mossi were forced to abandon permanently those territories located beyond Ouahigouya, both to the northwest and to the north. It was probably at that time also that the Mossi wave which had advanced toward the south drew back within its present boundaries, abandoning the Dagari and Gourounsi lands, etc., although not without leaving some traces.

In 1591, a Moroccan detachment brought the second Songhay empire to an end and captured Timbuktu. Now the Mossi had nothing to fear from the north, since their great enemy, the Songhay empire, had been destroyed, while the Moroccan empire of Timbuktu was soon to decay. Nevertheless, the Mossi had suffered too many reverses in the sixteenth century to recover from the blows inflicted by the Songhay, and they too were well on their way to decadence. It was at that time, no doubt, that the Ouahigouya Mossi broke all the bonds that tied them to Ouagadougou. /461/ The Gourma region probably did the same. In short, in the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Mossi empire shrank to the dimensions it possessed when we conquered it in 1896.

174 It must be said, however, as Marc points out, that the Mossi empire enjoyed a peaceful old age in the nineteenth century. The Toucouleur /Tukulor/ who conquered the Haoussa /Hausa/ territory with Othman /Usuman/ dan Fodio did not touch Mossi lands, and neither did El-Hadj-Omar who was detained in Macina territory by the Foulah /Fulani/. Toward the south, Samory went no farther than Boromo after conquering the Sudanese Ivory Coast. As for the forces of Djerma or Zaberma /Zerma/, they suffered a defeat in Kipirsi lands after their conquest of Gourounsi territories, that checked temporarily their march toward the north. They might later have nibbled at Mossi lands, but the French arrived precisely at that time. In short, the Mossi empire remained intact throughout the nineteenth century, though none the stronger for it, and crumbled at one blow in 1896 at the hand of a small French detachment.

173 174 We must add to this brief historical outline a list of the Moro Nabas who have succeeded one another since the time of Oubry. This list was borrowed from Moulins' Monographie du cercle de Ouagadougou /Monograph of the Ouagadougou Circle/.

1. Oubry, son of Zoungourana, grandson of Ouidiraogo, great-grandson of Poko. He lived at Oubrytenga.
2. Sorba, son of Oubry, who lived at Lougousi.
3. Nassekiemdé, brother of Sorba.
4. Nassébiri, brother of Sorba. He lived at La.
5. Ningnom, brother of the preceding.
6. Koundoumié, son of the preceding. He lived at Tiou.
7. Kouda, son of the preceding. He lived at Saponé.
8. Dawoéma, son of the preceding. He lived at Loumbila.
9. Zettembousma, brother of the preceding.
10. Nandieffo, son of the preceding. He lived at Ouagadougou.

If the reign of Naba Oubry is set around 1175 A.D., a period of 721 years is obtained up to the time of Bokary Koutou, thirtieth Moro Naba, who ruled in 1896. This yields an average reign of 24 years for each Moro Naba. If these figures are applied to the first ten Moro Nabas, it means that Kida would have reigned from 1463 /462/ to 1487. He would have been the one to invade the second Songhay empire in 1483 and to be driven back by Sonni-Ali.

173 11. Nattia, son of the preceding. He lived at Dazouli.
174 12. Namoëro, son of the preceding.
13. Kida, brother of Nattia. He lived at Ouagadougou.
14. Kimba, brother of the preceding. He lived at the same place.
15. Kobra, son of the preceding. He lived at Uougandé.
16. Sana, son of the preceding. He lived at Ouagadougou, where all his successors resided up to the present day.
17. Guiliga, son of the preceding.
18. Oubia, brother of the preceding.
19. Mottaba, son of the preceding.
20. Ouarga, brother of the preceding.
21. Zombéré, son of the preceding.
22. Kom, son of the preceding.
23. Sagha, son of the preceding.
24. Koulougou, son of the preceding.
25. Savadoro, son of the preceding.
26. Karfo, son of Savadoro.
27. Baoro, brother of Savadoro.
28. Koutou, son of the preceding.
29. Sanom, son of Koutou.
30. Boukary /sic/ Koutou, son of Koutou.

It was Bokary Koutou who was dethroned by Lt. Voulet in 1896.

31. Kouka (Siguiri) with whom Lt. Voulet signed a treaty whereby Mossi territory was placed under the suzerainty of France
32. Kom, the present Moro Naba (1910).

648 As may be seen, therefore, the Moro Nabas continue to exist among the Mossi. France even provides them with a pension, which first amounted to 25,000 francs a year and has since been lowered to 18,000 francs. They no longer hold any powers, however, and they do nothing whatever.

175 I have found in the Monographie of the circle some interesting data on expeditions led by the Moro Nabas into Kipirsi territory, which always resisted Mossi conquest. Naba Koundoumié, sixth successor of Oubry, /463/ first led a bloody expedition to Kayao and Tiou. Naba Dawoéma, eighth successor of Oubry, waged war to the north of Yako. Naba Ouarga, twentieth successor of Oubry, settled

175 at La and waged a series of battles in the Yako region. Naba Koutou, twenty-eighth successor of Oubry, fought in the Sourgou region (Kipirsi). And finally, during the last few years preceding our occupation, Naba Sanom and Bokary Koutou attacked the village of Lallé.

643 631 According to Moulins' data, it was Naba Koundoumié, sixth successor of Oubry, who set three of his sons as heads of the Boussouma, Béloussa and Yako provinces. He made them veritable monarchs who were united to the Moro Naba by a mere bond of vassalage, as was already the case with the chief of Tenkodogo.

Moulins adds, "As a rule, the chiefs of vassal provinces do not seem to have given much thought to enfranchisement from the Moro Naba's suzerainty, which actually did not weigh heavily upon them. We must come all the way to modern times, to Sanom's reign, to find signs of a struggle between the sovereign and the chiefs of Boussouma and Béloussa.

"On the other hand, the important vassals sometimes resorted to the Moro Naba's support to strengthen their authority within their own provinces. We have just mentioned the expeditions directed against Yako. Tradition has also preserved the memory of a series of battles waged by Dawoéma, eighth successor of Oubry, against the Boussansé of Garango who attempted to free themselves from Tenkodogo Naba."

● 174 Following this brief glance at the history of the Mossi empire, there remain, or should remain, three questions to investigate.

1. The remote origins of the Mossi proper, the conquering Mossi who came from Dagomba to Tenkodogo and then to Ouagadougou. At the present day, however, these origins are unknown. They might be uncovered by studying the Mossi language and comparing it systematically with the ancient or present tongues of north, east, and west Africa. I do not believe that such a piece of research is forthcoming, however. /464/ The Mossi might also be studied from the standpoint of physical anthropology, in which case two distinct studies ought to be made, one of the chiefs and nobles, another of the bulk of the Mossi population. The results would then be compared with those obtained for other populations of north and west Africa. Like the one previously mentioned, however, this would be a tremendous project which is not likely to be undertaken in the near future.

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In connection with this problem, I shall enumerate below the digits from one to ten in Mossi, in closely related languages (Dagomba, Nankana /Nankanse/), and in derivative tongues (Dagari, Boura, Gourma).

	Mossi	Dagomba	Nankana	Dagari	Boura	Gourma
Un . .	Yémeri	N'Dan	Yendé	Yen	Gni	Iendi
Deux .	Yibou	Niyi	Yi	Ayi	Niyé	Lié
Trois .	Tabo	Nta	Ntan	Ata	Ngata	Ita
Quatre	Nasé	Nahé	Anasé	Ana	Anasi	Ina
Cinq .	Nou	Anou	Anou	Anou	Nganou	Imou
Six . .	Ayobé	Ayobo	Ayobé	Ayobe	Vendenta	Ilouoba
Sept .	Yopoï	Ayopoué	Ayopoué	Ayopoué	Nantanasé	Illélé
Huit .	Ani	Ani	Ani	Ani	Nané (ou Nani)	Ni
Neuf .	Aoué	Aoué	Aoué	Voué	Noo	Ia
Dix . .	Piga	Pia	Pia	Pié	Pi	Piga

174 2. The second question is a priori less difficult to solve. It concerns the time when the Yarsé or Ouangarbé settled in Mossi territory.

Marc and Moulins do not agree on this score.

Speaking of Mossi territory, Marc says (op. cit., p. 142), "It was most probably its reputation as a peaceful land that lured the Mandé-Dioula /Diula/ or present-day Yarsé about the middle of the eighteenth century. According to the native traditions summarized by Binger, some Mandé-Dioula who were established in Ségou and who had taken a stand against N'Golo, victor over Sogoné, fled in fear of retaliation after the death of Sogoné in 1754 and came to settle among the Mossi. N'Golo attempted to pursue them, and twice came and attacked the Mossi. Both expeditions failed, and N'Golo died in the course of the second one in 1787."

/465/ According to Marc, the Yarsé would thus be Mandé-Dyoula /sic/ from Ségou who settled in Mossi territory in the eighteenth century. Moulins has quite a different idea.

174 "The Yarsé or Ouangarbé," he says in the Monographie of the Ouagadougou circle, "entered the territory during the reign of Koundoumié, sixth Moro Naba.

"At that time, as tradition has it, seven Mandé traders named respectively Bolle, Rambéré, Séré, Pallom, Morebanom, Parirabo, and Mari Konda, were traveling through Mossi territory with their merchandise. They called upon the Moro Naba, and the latter, impressed by their intelligence, conceived the thought of keeping those superior individuals in his own employ. He plied them with gifts, offered them wives, and installed them nearby in a quarter that was given the name of Zoroné. According to this account, the descendants of these men gave rise to the various Yarsé communities which are found today throughout the circle."

According to Moulins, therefore, the Yarsé would have entered Mossi territory toward the end of the thirteenth century or the beginning of the fourteenth, since Naba Koundoumié's time may be set around 1300. I believe that this opinion is more accurate than Marc's, in view of the fact that the Yarsé no longer know the Mandé language and speak only Mossi. It would be surprising if these Mandé had come to forget their mother tongue within a century and a half, although this might occur in five centuries. Nevertheless, one detail disturbs me in the Moulins version: the seven Mandé traders bear Mossi names, Bolle, Rambéré, Pallom, etc., instead of Mandé names as would be natural. No matter what the truth may be, it is more probable that the Yarsé settled in Mossi territory during the thirteenth or fourteenth century A.D. than in the eighteenth century.

174 3. The same problem of a date of settlement applies to the
563 Foulbé /Fulani/, and there again Marc and Moulins are in complete disagreement.

"The Peul probably came to Mossi territory in the footsteps of the Mandé-Dioula," says Marc, page 143. Moulins has a different opinion. /466/ "The Peuhl, he says, "must have settled in the Mossi area at a very remote time. It even seems that they had long been there at the time of the Dagomba invasion." This would take us beyond the twelfth century A.D. In any case, it is probable that the Foulbé were established in Mossi territory in small groups, as they are still today, well before the eighteenth century.

593 672 to guard against dangers resulting from the obligation to make reparation for injuries committed by one of its members. This has led naturally to a recognition of the family's right, in the person of its head, to take whatever measures are necessary for the preservation of its common interests. Prior to our occupation, such measures could go as far as putting in irons or even putting to death an individual who called upon the collective responsibility of the family too frequently or too onerously, and thus threatened to endanger its equilibrium. The decision of a family head involving the [643] death sentence or putting in irons for life for one of his people, however, only became final with the naba's approval. The latter could oppose it by assuming financial responsibility, in the family's stead, for all future misdemeanors committed by the person he had pardoned."

593 174 We come now to an interesting although extremely ticklish subject, namely, the causes of the partial decommunalization of the Mossi family.

If we look at the present workaday life of these people, their decommunalization seems inexplicable in view of the fact that we are dealing with a group of cultivators, somewhat indolent to be sure, but nevertheless cultivators first and foremost. The Mossi, on the other hand, are not herdsmen. They are very mediocre stock-breeders. Among them as among other Blacks of West Africa, hunting merely accounts for a small percentage of their total food-producing activities. They are not traders, either. We see nothing here, therefore, that might explain the decommunalization of the family, and we must refer back to the previous workaday life of this people. We saw earlier, however, that while the present Mossi population originated /554/ from the fusion of two disparate elements, one of those elements was similar to the Bobo, Gourounsi, Habé, Kipirsi, etc., and thus deeply communal and patriarchal. It is obviously not from this element that the present decommunalization might stem.

Fortunately, there exists another and very different element. The Mossi who came from the Dagomba were, as we know, Blacks who were 1) warriors and conquerors, 2) breeders of horses, no doubt,

593 and very probably of large and small livestock as well. In this
174 respect they must have been strikingly similar to the present-day Toucouleur, who conquered part of West Africa in the nineteenth century and who are, like the Foulah of Guinea, half stockbreeders, half cultivators. (We shall review briefly those very Toucouleur in Chapter 4 of this book, to give the reader an idea of the Black conqueror on the active rather than the potential level, in a "pure state" rather than already fused into a heterogeneous conquered population /not translated/). Now war with its attendant loot, like stockbreeding, augments private property and allows individuals and households to secede from the family, at least to the extent permitted by the problems of cultivation and especially of field clearing. It is a fact that among the Toucouleur and Foulah, as among the Dagomba and Mossi, every household lives separately and works separately (except for that most difficult of all tasks to the Blacks, the clearing of fields). Thus, it must be concluded that the decommunalization of the present-day Mossi family derives from the ancient workaday life of the conquering segment of the population, which imposed its own customs on the conquered group. This workaday life consisted half of stockbreeding, half of cultivation as among the present-day Toucouleur and Foulah, with war and looting in addition as among the same groups up to quite recently.

Of course, we learn nothing that might shed light on the subject by questioning the Mossi themselves. My informants, for example, tell me that the various soukala in a family actually constitute but one family. I ask them why, then, do they not live together and do all their tilling together, like /555/ the Bobo, Gourounsi, Bambara, etc.? Because the women quarrel, they tell me. Those quarrels caused other fights among the men, and people ended up living separately. Of course, this could only have been a pretext for secession, and the true cause which made this secession possible, namely, the increasing individual wealth of the households, was something else again.

592 We shall close with a few details concerning the internal structure of the Mossi household. The latter includes, as we have stated above, the following members:

535 while the ouango are singing will surely die within the year. (The
532 ouango sing at the funeral ceremonies of important personages, at the
575 second ceremony performed a month or a year after the burial).
The masks of the ouango are made in the greatest secrecy. They have to be carved out of a single piece of wood, and the man who is making one must not be seen as long as his task has not been completed.

535 "In our opinion it would be most interesting to try and study
575 the ouango and their customs more closely than we succeeded in
171 doing. We believe, indeed, that theirs is a very old institution
● 174 antedating the arrival of the Mossi in the Volta basin, an institution which they found among the peoples they conquered and which they preserved, no doubt because they did not dare fight it. Ouango are to be found throughout Gourounsi territory, and the dou noticed by Binger among the Bobo would seem to have the same origin. The dancers with totemic masks who appear in some of Desplagnes' photographs are quite similar to the Mossi ouango."

The Mossi ouango are thus no different from the Bobo dou, the Khassonké mamadiombo, the Habé and Bambara namakoro, the Malinké dokho, the Landouman /Landuma/ simo, etc.

773 The Earth chief or Tensoba is also part of the Mossi priestly
174 organization. We are already familiar with Earth chiefs, whom we encountered among the Gourounsi. They exercise no political authority in the village, but they are entrusted with the performance of sacrifices to the Earth and to other local divinities.

The presence of those Earth chiefs among the Mossi is no doubt to be explained by the superposition of the conquering group over the conquered group. When the Mossi invaded and conquered the country, they placed their own men at the head of all the villages and all the cantons in the course of conquest, /595/ to ensure the submission of the vanquished population. They never felt, however, (and they hold this in common with the rest of West Africa) that they were themselves qualified to offer sacrifices to the Earth and other divinities of the place. Only the vanquished, former owners of the latter and on good terms with it, were qualified to do this. The former autochtonous political chief thus naturally became a religious chief under Mossi authority. We have already seen that the Moro Naba

793 never offers sacrifices himself to the Earth at Ouagadougou, nor does
●174 he have them offered by the Gandé Naba, his minister of religion. He entrusts with this task the Ouagadougou Naba, who is a grandson of the autochtonous inhabitants and thus favorably regarded by the local divinities. Similarly, when the Moro Naba sacrifices to the hillocks surrounding Ouagadougou, he entrusts the local chief with the offerings and the physical sacrifice. Now, what the Moro Naba still does at Ouagadougou was no doubt done by other Mossi chiefs throughout the land after conquest, once the submission of the autochtonous inhabitants had been ensured by force of arms. Hence, the institution of the Tensoba.

One might object that Earth chiefs are also to be found in Gourounsi territory, although the Gourounsi are independent. We know, however, that the present-day Gourounsi cantons were not the achievement of the Gourounsi themselves but of minor Mossi dynasties established in the territory. Under the circumstances, the same substitution of conquering chiefs for conquered chiefs has occurred there as in Mossi territory, with the same consequences.

793 "The Tensoba," says Marc, p. 157, "whose title means 'Master of the Earth,' stands in opposition to the naba who is a military chief....

"The Tensoba is the indispensable mediator between the ancestors and their living descendants. It is he who conducts the funeral ceremonies and who decides on the honors to be rendered on the Day of the Dead. It is to him that one appeals in case of an epidemic or any public misfortune, since misfortunes are always due to the evil inclinations of ancestors that must be allayed."

793 /596/ Actually, the institution of the Earth chief does not strip
643 the village and canton chiefs of all religious powers. In some areas,
839 as Marc pointed out, the Earth chiefs have gradually vanished, and
778 the political chiefs have become religious chiefs as well. They per-
[43] form sacrifices on the bara's advice, without failing to make a gift of some sort (100 or 1,000 cowries) to the latter also. By the same token and up to a point, the Moro Naba is invested with a religious character and with religious attributes. It is he, as we have already seen, who orders the performance of sacrifices to the Earth, to the hills. Every year during the dry season, he has a donkey sacrificed to Naba Koutou, a former Moro Naba, in the hut where the latter is buried. Prior to our occupation it was a eunuch who performed

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[p. 1]

I

INTRODUCTION

DESPITE THE GROWING interest in Africa over the last decade, scholars still know very little about the medieval societies that once flourished in the western Sudan. With few exceptions, these societies declined or disappeared long before they had been adequately described. Today, historians are poring over Arabic documents and local chronicles dealing with the ancient kingdoms of Ghana, Mali, Songhai, Bornu, Kanem, the Mossi, and the Hausa in an attempt to unravel the origins, evolution, and nature of these societies. Had more archeological investigations been conducted in the area, the task would be easier. Unfortunately, the generalization still holds that for every ton of archeological materials sifted in Egypt and parts of the Middle East, only one teaspoonful has been examined in the western Sudan.

The second source of clues about early Sudanese societies is the work of ethnologists. However, most of the societies mentioned by early chroniclers have changed radically. Of course, many traits still survive, but they often occur within different institutional structures. One of the few societies that appears to have maintained much of its ancient structure is the Mossi. The Mossi were in contact with the now nonexistent Mali and Songhai kingdoms, and they survived the rise and fall of such Sudanese conquerors as El Hadj Omar and Samory Touré. Their remarkable society retained its structure throughout French rule. Only on the eve of independence did the Mossi traditional political organization collapse.

It would be tempting to claim, as many scholars have done, that the governmental system of the Mossi mirrored faithfully that of the early Sudanese kingdoms.[1] As will be noted below, Mossi society, especially in the kingdom of Ouagadougou, did possess in detail many of the political institutions described for ancient Mali. Yet one cannot extrapolate from the contemporary scene to the early Sudan, for Mossi society undoubtedly changed over the centuries. It is my hope, however, that this study of Mossi government will contribute to the understanding of the development, structure, and

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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121 functioning of early Sudanese societies. It will also attempt to demonstrate [174] how European conquest affected the political organization of the Mossi and contributed to its ultimate decline.

The kingdom of Ouagadougou was selected as the main object of study, primarily because it emerged as the most important Mossi polity and retained this position through the greater part of Mossi history. Attention will be given to the other Mossi polities and the three other Mossi kingdoms—Yatenga, Tenkodogo, and the more remote Fada-N'Gourma, all of which resemble Ouagadougou—only insofar as they affect the history of Ouagadougou or highlight the basic nature of Mossi government.

101 The Mossi are a Sudanese Negroid population in the new Republic of 161 the Upper Volta.[2] They number about 2,200,000, or approximately half of the country's total population. Their ancestral territory, which they call 131 *Mogho* (land of the Mossi), covers some 30,000 square miles in the southern 133 part of the Republic. It is a huge plateau, lying from 1,000 to 1,600 feet above sea level, and broken by three low mountain ranges and numerous small hills. The Kipirsi range in the northeast has an average height of about 2,000 feet and includes the sacred mountain of the Mossi, known as Plimpikou. The Boussouma range to the east reaches a height of some 1,500 feet, and the Naouri range in the southeast is almost as high.

132 The climate of Mossi country is typical of the Sudanic zone. There are two main seasons, one cold and dry, the other hot and wet. The first begins in November with the coming of the harmattan and ends in January, the coolest month, when the average temperature is about 70° F. and the humidity about 12 per cent. The hot season extends from March to October. In July, the warmest month, the temperature reaches a high of 88° F. and the humidity 78 per cent. Violent dust storms herald the rains, which begin late in May and end in September. The rain falls almost entirely in heavy showers and thunderstorms, and the average annual fall is between 30 and 40 inches. In those years when the rainfall is about 40 inches and is regularly spaced, the Mossi can look forward to a good harvest. When the rainfall is below 30 inches and is spaced irregularly during the planting season, the threat of famine is serious. So narrow is the margin of rainfall for agriculture that in 1956 the people of one Mossi district anxiously awaited "two rains" (two showers), without which they feared that in 1957 there would be a difficult "hungry period" (the time between the exhaustion of one year's crops and the maturing of the next).

133 Mossi country is drained by only three rivers: the Black Volta with its two chief tributaries, the Sourou and the Debere, and the Red and White Voltas with their numerous small tributaries. Only the Black Volta flows

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the Niger-Congo family of African languages.[6] Like the Mossi, these groups are primarily horticultural; cereals are their main crops, and they cultivate yams where conditions permit. Their social organization takes both patrilineal and matrilineal forms. The veneration of ancestors lies at the core of their religious beliefs, but the existence of an otiose high god whose name contains the root *We* (*Ouennam, Win, Wene,* etc.) is also recognized. There are also tutelary spirits, the chief one being a female earth deity associated with We and called *Tenga* (also occurring as *Teng, Tena,* and *Ten*). The *Tengsobadamba,* who are priests or custodians of the earth shrines, are found among all the groups in the Voltaic family, and they often share leadership with more secular chiefs called *Naba, Na,* or *Nab.* Most of the ruling clans of the Voltaic groups claim common ancestry and acknowledge the same totems.[6]

The only glaring dissimilarity between these Voltaic peoples, and the one with which this study is primarily concerned, lies in the realm of political organization. Some are united into large kingdoms, while others form small acephalous groups. Delafosse makes the following generalizations about the smaller groups:

> It may be said of these people that, as a whole, they have remained quite primitive. With a few exceptions, they have not reached any significant level of political development; as a rule, they have not progressed beyond family unity. Although they neighbor on well-organized and powerful states such as the Mossi empires and the kingdoms of the Gourma and Bergo, which are inhabited by populations of the same ethnic group, they have derived little benefit from this proximity; some of them have been absorbed as subjects or vassals by these states, while others have remained on the outside, and seem to have but one purpose, the forceful preservation of their fierce but sterile independence. . . . Attachment to the land seems to be the only solid and fecund institution in their chaotic society.[7]

Rattray believes that the development of such highly organized political systems as those of the Mossi, Dagomba, and Mamprusi may be traced to "small bands of strangers." He thinks that the outsiders were better armed, better clothed, and familiar with the rudiments of Islam, and that since they knew about the institution of kingship, they were able to "superimpose upon the primitive tribes among whom they settled a new and unheard-of political conception, namely the idea of territorial and secular leadership in place of the immemorial institution of a ruler who was the high priest of a totemic clan and dealt only in spiritual sanctions." Nevertheless, Rattray is not certain that the Voltaic groups would not have evolved complex political systems if they had been left to themselves. He makes the significant statement that if the subjugation by the bands of strangers had not

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114 taken place, the local earth-priest or priest-king "undoubtedly would have
● 194 evolved into the type of native ruler . . . who was not only high priest and custodian of the land of his tribe and of the ancestral spirits but one who was a chief or king on a territorial basis, whose sanctions were secular and physical rather than spiritual; in other words, what the average European implies when he uses the word 'king' or 'chief.' "[8]

Since pristine state development has occurred so seldom, it is difficult to evaluate Rattray's speculations about the possible local development of complex political forms. Nevertheless, his view that bands of strangers were responsible for state formation in the area is supported by most of the local traditions.

The relationship between the Voltaic peoples and the bands of strangers has not received the attention it deserves. In fact, the implications of such a relationship have often been underrated. As a result, groups that may once have been part of larger political entities created by these strangers have been regarded as acephalous, that is, as having very weak chiefs or no chiefs at all. In his studies of the Tallensi of northern Ghana, for example, Fortes constantly refers to a group of lineages called *Namoos,* whose members claim to be descended from the Mamprusi ruling group. He states that a Tallensi chief from the Tongo area claimed to be "the ruler of all the Tallensi." In another context Fortes discusses the status of a chief called *Kuna'aba,* who, he tells us, is regarded by the other Tallensi chiefs as their "father," to whom they owe "loyalty, respect, and ceremonial deference." Moreover, Fortes indicates that ceremonial investiture by Kuna'aba is "the crucial act conferring chiefship" on a Tale, even if the latter is actually selected by an administrative officer.[9] These facts should have indicated to Fortes that he was dealing with a rather complex historical problem that required further investigation.

Instead of carrying the investigation further, however, he dismisses the Tongo chief's claim of control over all Taleland with the assertion that "it is a distortion in terms of the modern privileges of chiefship, of a status which is merely that of *primus inter pares* in the native system." Similarly, he doubts the historical status and role of Kuna'aba: "Kuna'aba's modern judicial and administrative authority rests solely on the sanction of force represented by the [British] Administration." Interestingly enough, Fortes tells us that "the Administration has always regarded Taleland as part of the 'Mamprusi State,' under the ultimate rule of the chief of Mampurugu, through his sub-chief and deputy, the Kuna'aba, who was considered to have full jurisdiction over the 'Kurugu Division.' "[10]

Rattray, whose study of the Tallensi predates Fortes', declares that the

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all the people he found there and seizing all the goods he could find, he burned the city and returned to his own country. The peoples of Mali returned afterwards to Timbuktu and remained there for the next hundred years.[20] 175

The Yatenga Mossi subsequently warred upon and defended themselves against the Songhai, who had tried to force Islam upon them. The Mossi were among the strongest peoples in the Niger bend area when the Moroccans arrived in 1591, and there were no wars between these two groups. [648]

There has been a great deal of discussion among scholars of Sudanese history about the relationship between the Mossi expeditions into the Niger area and the power of early Mossi kingdoms. Marc believes that the Mossi reached their zenith late in the fifteenth century, when they attacked Walata and Timbuktu for the second time. He writes, "It was undoubtedly during this period that they extended their influence over all the territories where their language is spoken at the present day."[21] 174 175

On the other hand, Tauxier believes that the Mossi reached their apogee much earlier, toward the end of the fourteenth century. He notes that this was the period when the Mossi were "propelled by a powerful drive of expanding conquest," which carried them to Timbuktu and its neighboring regions.[22] With the recapture of Timbuktu by Mansa Souliman, however, they turned back and firmly established themselves in Gourma and Yange to the east of Ouagadougou, and among non-Mossi populations in Ouahigouya and Ouagadougou. Tauxier believes that this southern drive made the Mossi sufficiently powerful to reinvade the Niger area and thus control a territory extending from Gambaga in the south up to Timbuktu and Djenne in the north. This second period of success came to a close when the Mossi were defeated by Askia the Great of Songhai in 1497, and by Askia Daoud in 1549 and 1561. After these defeats, they not only abandoned their territories north of Ouahigouya but withdrew into their present boundaries. Tauxier concludes that from this time onward, the bonds between the different Mossi kingdoms grew weaker and the power of Ouagadougou waned.

At the same time, the Mossi kingdoms, principalities, and districts developed their internal structure and continued to absorb the Ninisi population. They also welcomed the Moslem Yarse merchants and refugees who settled in their country and adopted most aspects of their culture.[23] These Yarse refugees were joined by Mandingo-Dioula and Soninke Moslem refugees, who entered Mossi country as the result of wars or rebellions in such places as Djenne, Segou, and Timbuktu. The sheltering of these refugees by the Mossi eventually led to a series of wars between them and 175 648 563

cause he thought Sanum had attacked him unjustly. For such acts of war, the Dimdamba involved usually lost their lives, and in at least one such case a Dim was turned over to the Mogho Naba by another Dim. We have seen that Dimdamba occasionally came to the aid of the Mogho Naba against another Dim.

A question of some importance is whether this relationship between the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou and the rulers of independent kingdoms and autonomous principalities was characteristic of Mossi society or a rather late development. Was warfare the natural concomitant of a system in which the normally powerful Ouagadougou ruler was sometimes too weak to command allegiance from his peers and subordinates? Did the Mogho Naba resort to warfare as the only possible means of exercising his authority when his commands were challenged or ignored? Delafosse states, "Sometimes . . . , especially in very recent times, discord arose between the emperor [of Ouagadougou] and some of his vassal kings: thus Naba Sanum had to fight against the desire for independence of the kings of Boussouma and Boulsa."[16] Delafosse seems to suggest that the Mossi people were undergoing a period of stress when the Europeans arrived, and were faced with significant new administrative problems.

Here Binger appears to support Delafosse's view:

> Ever since he acceded to the throne, [Mogho Naba Sanum] has been compelled to govern the Mossi with unmitigated despotism. His fear of losing power led him to take such severe measures that he was forced to relax them. As soon as his major vassals saw this, they took these concessions as signs of fear and began to conspire secretly against him. Today, the chiefs of Mani, Boussouma, Yako, and Koupela represent forces with which Naba Sanum will have to reckon. . . . Before long, the Mossi empire will break up; the country will organize into confederacies like those of Beledougou and Yatenga.[17]

It is not completely clear, however, whether Binger really understood the intricacies of the Mossi political organization. He lists as "vassals" of the Mogho Naba such territories as Mane, Kaya, Koupela, Bonsa, Boussouma, Djitenga, Boulsa, Dakay, and Doulougou, as though they were all related to Ouagadougou in the same way. In reality, some were autonomous and some were directly dependent on the Ouagadougou ruler. It is possible that at the time of Binger's visit, the relations between the Mogho Naba and his subordinates were so fluid that the outsider had difficulty in understanding them. If this is the case, then the situation in Mossi country had indeed changed when the Europeans came in.

Crozat, who says the Mossi governmental structure was feudal in na-

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631 ture, offers what is probably the best analysis of power relations among the
628 important Mossi chiefs. In commenting upon the Mogho Naba's inability
● 174 to stop the war between Yako and Yatenga he asks, "How could it be
114 otherwise? With what sanctions could this king without an army back up his orders if he ventured to give any? . . . In short, when the Ouagadougou ruler speaks, he is sometimes obeyed. If he is, all is well; if he is not, all is still well. Everything remains as before."[18] Crozat was mistaken if he believed that the Mogho Naba did not have a fighting force. What he did not have was a standing army to exercise his power whenever he wished. When he was able to summon an army, he was effective; when he was not, he had little power over any territory but his own. Crozat, like Binger, gives a strange picture of the political relationship between the Mogho Naba and the other rulers. He tells us that in the Mossi political hierarchy, "after the ruler of Ouagadougou comes the ruler of Boussouma, then the Yatenga ruler, and then the ruler of Yako."[19] Yatenga was traditionally independent of Ouagadougou, whereas Boussouma and Yako were simply autonomous principalities dependent on the Mogho Naba. It is possible that Crozat mistook the relative power of these various political entities for a hierarchical relationship. It is also possible that at the time of his visit, the Dimdamba felt sufficiently powerful to ignore the traditional hierarchy as far as their political relationship with other rulers was concerned, and were simply acknowledging relative gradations of power.

643 Clearly, the sovereignty of the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou over the
642 independent kingdoms and autonomous principalities depended chiefly on
628 military might. The stronger a Mogho Naba was, the more actively he tried to control the internal administration of the autonomous principalities and to exercise police powers over them or on their behalf. However, most Mogho Nanamse were content to claim superiority or control over the independent kingdoms and refrained from meddling in their affairs.

643 Within the Mogho Naba's own kingdom, however, the situation was
635 different. Here, like other important Mossi rulers, he directed the admin-
634 istrative apparatus. For administrative purposes, the kingdom of Ouaga-
[642] dougou was divided into five large provinces (*weto*; sing. *weogho*; or
[161] *solem*, from *so*, "command"). Together they included some three hundred districts, in which there were over four thousand villages inhabited by some 862,000 persons.[20] (Not included here were districts and villages directly administered by the Mogho Naba.) The provinces were not compact physical entities, because their component units were scattered throughout the country. To be sure, some of the districts within a province were close together or even contiguous, but many others stood alongside districts be-

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ruler to grant asylum to Mogho Naba Wobogo in 1897. He adds that it was probably the injunction in the pact that they should never meet which prevented the ruler from personally receiving Wobogo.[12] 648 175

A ritual pact also bound the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou to the ruler of Dagomba. He sent him goods from the estate of the previous Mogho Naba as well as gifts for yearly sacrifices on the grave of Nyennega, the Mossi progenitrix. There are reports that the Ouagadougou ruler also exchanged annual presents with the Ashanti ruler, but it is not known whether these were courtesy gifts or goods sanctioning ritual pacts.

The ritual pacts among Mossi kingdoms and between them and their neighbors appear to have derived from actual or putative kinship ties. This seems to be supported not only by the traditions of the Mossi but also by those of the surrounding peoples. Whatever their origin, these pacts seem to have afforded their beneficiaries a remarkable degree of freedom from external aggression. It is possible that the Mossi and their neighbors really believed in the efficacy of supernatural sanctions, for purposes of mutual protection. But one suspects that it was the relative weakness of these various groups that caused them to rely on supernatural agencies rather than military might for protection. As will be pointed out below, the Mossi (and probably all of their important neighbors) had considerable difficulty in building and maintaining a fighting force sufficiently large to wage protracted or large-scale wars against foreign groups. 174 648 776 789

The Mossi kingdoms seldom fought among themselves, although their leaders quarreled over status and committed aggression against each other's territories. For example, the Ouagadougou rulers, who claimed suzerainty over Yatenga, often tried to impose their will on that kingdom. Yet, although they were usually rebuffed by the Yatenga Naba, they never tried to resolve the issue by force of arms. In fact, even when a Yatenga ruler appears to have given the Mogho Naba just cause for war, little fighting actually took place. Several times the Yatenga rulers seized such principalities as Riziam and Yako, which were dependent on Ouagadougou, but in no case did the Ouagadougou rulers wage war against them. In 1890, Crozat witnessed Mogho Naba Wobogo's attempt to stop a war between Yatenga and Yako. The Yako people wanted to obey their sovereign and stop the war, but the Yatenga monarch refused to do so.[13] 628 642 643 175

Crozat attributes the ineffectiveness of the Mogho Naba's authority over brother kingdoms to the fact that he had no standing army with which to enforce his rule. While relative strength may have been and probably was the main reason for the Mogho Naba's lack of aggressiveness, the ritual pact that prevented the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou from meeting the

439 Marc, who had the opportunity to check the volume of this trade in 1904 and 1905, estimates that about 16,000 head of cattle and 75,000 sheep and goats passed through the two customs posts in Mossi country. Furthermore, he believes that since "the Mossi also supply in part the markets of Togoland and the market at Bondoukou [Ivory Coast], one may assume a minimum annual export of 20,000 head of cattle and 100,000 sheep or goats. [174] The import of kola nuts is at least 500 tons."[11] It is clear that this volume of trade could not have been achieved so soon after the French conquest. [651] We can only conclude that it existed prior to the coming of the Europeans, and that it brought the Mossi rulers a considerable income.

643 The Mogho Naba's officials collected taxes from all caravans that passed 651 through his capital. The caravaneers also gave the Mogho Naba important gifts, and he apparently traded with them, even if always to his own 439 profit. Binger states that Mogho Naba Sanum forced horse traders from [431] the Yatenga and Hausa merchants to sell him part of their commodities at one-hundredth the purchase price.[12] Crozat reports that Mogho Naba Wobogo

> appears to have had some business relations with white merchants who came to Salaga every dry season. He sent horses to them in exchange for silver. He claims that he had no reason to be pleased with their integrity, and that the silver they sent him contained plenty of copper. Some traders apparently came as far as Ouagadougou, bringing merchandise of German origin. There was one of them there during my stay. I was told that he was an important *marabout*, a shereef, perhaps an Arab or a Moor, for I was assured that he was very light in color. As was repeated to me several times, his relations with the king were limited to the solemn greetings on Fridays. He never entered the royal hut in spite of being an important marabout. He was at Ouagadougou for about three and one-half months, but he was compelled to return to the coast since the merchandise which he had brought was exhausted. He spoke no Mossi.[13]

439 All the caravans that passed through Mossi country were obliged to stop 651 and give presents to the district officials. Those caravaneers who tried to 634 elude taxation by going through the forest ran the risk of being attacked by local nobles, who usually confiscated their goods.

The Mogho Naba and the lesser chiefs had "market officials" who taxed 644 the merchants in the markets of their territories. The officials at Ouaga- 651 dougou, the Kos Naba ("sales chief") and the Raga Naba ("market chief"), 443 were fairly rigorous in their exactions. The Kos Naba collected taxes in cowries for every cow slaughtered at the market, and also took its hump and gave it to the Nemdo Naba ("meat chief") for distribution in the royal household. He also collected taxes on every cow sold in the market, but

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NOTES

Complete authors' names, titles, and publication data are given in the Bibliography, pp. 225–27.

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CHAPTER ONE

1. Murdock states, "The large Gourma and Mossi tribes in the north of the [Voltaic] province have had strong states for at least the past 800 years and have frequently warred with their powerful neighbors on the Niger. . . . Their culture probably reflects fairly closely what that of the Mande must have been prior to their embarkation on a career of empire building and to the advent of the Berbers and Arabs from the north" (Murdock, p. 78. Cf. Greenberg, "Negro Kingdoms," p. 130, and Forde, p. 206). [174]

2. Binger states, "There does not exist one type general enough to permit one to say: there is a Mossi type. One meets people who resemble the Wolof; others who look like Mandingo from the banks of the Niger; and yet others who resemble the Hausa" (Binger, II, 491). Tauxier, on the other hand, reports that the nobles' faces were totally different from the Negroes'. According to him, the physiognomies of the nobles were "Semitic" and "truly distinguished" (*Le Noir du Soudan*, pp. 578–79). However, judging from the physiognomies of the three most recent Mogho Nanamse, one could make the equally erroneous generalization that the ruling group was the most Negroid of the entire Mossi population. [142] [144]

3. Barth, III, 202, 643; Dubois, p. 300.
4. Delafosse, I, 115.
5. Greenberg, "Languages," p. 8.
6. See Cardinall, *passim*, and Rattray, I, x, xi.
7. Maurice Delafosse, *Negroes of Africa* (Washington, D.C., 1931), p. 101.
8. Rattray, I, xxii, xi.
9. Fortes, "Political System," pp. 255–57.
10. *Ibid.*
11. Rattray, I, 343.
12. Cf. Cardinall, pp. 1–14, and Rattray, *passim*.
13. Dim Delobson claims that this took place toward the end of the tenth century (p. 2). Delafosse believes the date to be about 1030 A.D. (I, 306). After comparing the dates of many scholars, Tauxier felt that this event occurred around 1233 A.D. (*Le Noir du Yatenga*, p. 672). Most contemporary Mossi believe that it occurred during the eleventh century. [174]
14. According to a belief found among the people of Nobere district, Nedega gave his daughter permission to search for a husband and she went northward into Busansi country, where an old woman found her a husband named Rialle. Still another tradition states that she became pregnant by an animal and fled north from the anger

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9. In Dim Delobson's account (p. 60), an unnamed wife of the Mogho Naba ran away, and he allegedly tried to follow her because she was the only person in his household who knew how to cook his favorite food. 000

It is interesting that the Mossi have a tradition in which their ruler undergoes the same experience as many a Mossi husband, namely, being betrayed by his wife. It is also interesting that Mogho Naba Waraga is the ruler named in this incident. He is the ruler who waged a five-year-long civil war with one of his vassals. It may well be that his ministers devised the myth about his wife in order to prevent him from leaving the capital to fight. [837]

10. The Mossi practice of tasting food before giving it to another person is obviously connected with the fear of poison. The Mossi believe that only a boorish person would give another person something to eat without first tasting it himself. [576]

11. The full significance of this ceremony is unclear, for the Mossi hesitate to talk about it. It is known that the "sacred fire" is linked to the nocturnal visits of the royal ancestors. But the relationship of the fire to another sacred fire kept in Koubri district (about seventeen miles from Ouagadougou) is not known. [372]

Faithful to Mossi tradition or ignorant of the true nature of the ceremony, Dim Delobson says nothing about the ceremony and does not mention the presence of the namtibo. However, he does report that the palace guards would kill anyone who approached the place where the rite was being performed (p. 62). [114]

12. There are several traditions concerning female regents. However, I believe that they may have their basis in the role the Mogho Naba's daughter played during the interregnum.

13. Mossi genealogies show that only in one case in which the nam passed from a Mogho Naba to his brother did the former Mogho Naba's sons receive districts from their uncle, the new ruler. Since it is difficult to believe that the eleven other Mogho Nanamse who were succeeded by their brothers died without issue, it can only be concluded that the descendants of a ruler who did not inherit the nam were ignored by their uncles in power.

14. To this council could be added other men whose experience was valued. For example, the Baloum Naba was called upon in 1942 to give advice about a successor to Kom.

15. Dim Delobson, pp. 130–32.

16. It is interesting that the sheepskin garb of the Mossi pretenders is similar to the dress of the chiefs among the smaller tribal groups of the Voltaic culture area. If we can assume that culture traits characteristic of ritual and ceremonial practices tend to persist longer than most other traits, we might have evidence that the complex Mossi state evolved from the political organizations found among the smaller local groups. [171] [174]

17. The "naming of a name" speech is part of most Mossi *rites de passage*, and is often used to brag about some achievement or to cast aspersions on one's enemies. Most newly elected monarchs pledge good government, brag about their elevation, and vilify their enemies.

In his inaugural speech Naba Kom II said, "When plenty of water falls during the rainy season, the rivers and seas are glad because they are enlarged." "Kom" means "water," and Kom's speech meant that he pledged to bring happiness to all his subjects.

Boukary Koutou insulted his listeners by declaring, "Even if a hundred ghosts join together, they cannot harm an elephant." He was called Mogho Naba Wobogo ("elephant").

18. It is said that if the amulets were stolen during the interregnum, the thief had to be elected Mogho Naba; if they were stolen afterwards, the ruler lost the basis for the mystical quality of leadership and authority he had inherited from his ancestors.

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000 19. There is a curious story among the people of Nobere district that Mogho Naba Mottoba (who reigned in the seventeenth century) was not a Mossi but a Fulani who was given the nam after he chanced upon the installation ceremony and assassinated the newly elected man during the night. This story is denied in Ouagadougou; in fact, it contradicts the genealogical records of the ruling dynasty. However, the genealogy does show that Mottoba's father, Mogho Naba Guiliga, had succeeded his brother, and it is possible that there was dynastic rivalry for the nam between Mottoba and the former Mogho Naba's son. [174]

20. This rite was performed during the installation of the present Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou, although it is hardly recognizable as described in *Newsweek* (December 9, 1957, p. 48): "A man named Moussa Congo assumed the name of Kougri Naba last week and became the 35th Mogho Naba of the Mossi in the capital city of Ouagadougou in the Upper Volta region of French West Africa. Son of Emperor Issoufou Congo, Kougri Naba, as the new Mogho Naba, has one white horse, 200 wives, and 8,000 warriors, who danced around his palace ten times."

[182] 21. This practice has apparently lapsed since Mogho Naba Kougri moved into the modern concrete palace built for his father, Mogho Naba Sagha II.

[838] 22. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Soudan*, pp. 569–70. Tauxier claims the Mogho Nanamse used the pages for homosexual purposes on Fridays in order to circumvent the Moslem prohibition against intercourse with women on this holy day. Homosexuality is rare among the Mossi, as Tauxier himself admits, and most Mossi deny that the Mogho Nanamse ever resorted to it. However, one respondent did state that he had heard about homosexuality among certain past rulers.

23. Crozat, p. 4849.

[648] 24. When Mogho Naba Kom II died under mysterious circumstances in 1942, it was rumored that he had committed suicide rather than reduce the number of his [762] wives as ordered by the administration under the influence of the Catholic missionaries. Kom allegedly held that no one can inherit a sovereign's wife during his life- [797] time. Therefore, in order to avoid loss of status by seeing his wives go to commoners, he chose death so they would be inherited by nobles.

[114] 25. The statement in *Newsweek* (December 9, 1957, p. 48) that Kougri has two hundred wives is untrue.

[563] 26. Intermarriage between the Mossi and the Fulani has produced a people known as the Simili-Mossi. Nevertheless, the Mossi are strongly prejudiced against the Fulani, especially against the women, stating that the Moaga who has sexual intercourse with a Fulani woman must bathe in nine different rivers before he becomes clean. The basis of this prejudice appears to be that Fulani women are not cultivators and therefore are unacceptable as Mossi wives.

27. Mossi women know a great deal about the history and traditions of their people. But they never indicate that they do except during such rituals, when they are required to play certain roles.

28. Dim Delobson, p. 96.

29. Dim Delobson (p. 101) states that there are "sacred things" in this village, but I have been unable to substantiate his report.

[824] 30. Dim Delobson (p. 104) gives the classic explanation of this nighttime ride. On his ride from Bere to Djiba, the mounted prince must try to touch a certain branch of a certain tree. If he is destined to succeed his father, he will succeed in touching the branch; if he is not, the branch will magically withdraw at his approach.

I visited the area in which this ritual reportedly took place, but the people in the vicinity denied that such a tree existed.

31. *Ibid.*, p. 106.

[648] 32. IFAN (Compte Rendu No. 429). There are many other rumors concerning Kom's death. In a book praising the loyalty of the Africans to the Free French Gov-

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CHAPTER SEVEN

1. Dim Delobson, pp. 153ff.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 251–54.
3. Cheron, "Contribution," p. 674.
4. Crozat, p. 4849.
5. *Ibid.*
6. Skinner, "Trade and Markets," pp. 237–78.
7. Barth, III, 644–49.
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 202–4.
9. Dubois, pp. 282–92, 300.
10. Great Britain, Parliamentary papers: Cd. 788–27, No. 357, Acc. Papers, Vol. LXIV (1902).
11. Marc, p. 178.
12. Binger, I, 467.
13. Crozat, p. 4849.
14. Binger, I, 465.
15. Mangin, p. 23.
16. Dim Delobson, pp. 85–86.
17. Ruelle, p. 679.
18. Bovill, p. 244.
19. Gautier, p. 139; cf. Mangin, p. 112.
20. Cf. Sa'di, p. 168.
21. The chief of the Kamboinse was the only Mossi "chief" to possess a stool, which is indicative of an Akan origin. The Akan origin of this group is further supported by Koelle's evidence: a Mossi informant told him that the Mossi called the Ashanti "Kamboinse" (Koelle, p. 6).
22. Skinner, "The Mossi 'Pogsioure,'" pp. 20–22.
23. Cf. Ouédraogo and Prost, pp. 16–18.
24. Dim Delobson, p. 25.
25. Binger, I, 470.
26. *Ibid.*, pp. 502–4.
27. *Ibid.*, pp. 504–5.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 456.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 502.

CHAPTER EIGHT

1. Cf. Dim Delobson, p. 156. He speculates that the Mogho Naba himself sacrificed the animals in the presence of his senior wife and courtiers.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 157.
3. Tauxier (*Le Noir du Yatenga*, p. 379) reports that a comparable ceremony among the Yatenga Mossi was called the "Bega," and that in reality it was a Fulse ceremony "adopted by the Mossi." According to him, both the Fulse and the Mossi held this festival in order to obtain good harvests the following year, and made sacrifices to "the ancestors, to the Earth, and to God."
4. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Soudan*, p. 588.
5. Dim Delobson's description (pp. 148 ff) of the Tense differs somewhat from that given to me by my respondents. According to his version, the Tansoba played the role I have ascribed to the Larhalle Naba. Furthermore, he states that the Tense was held on Friday, an impossible fact since Saturday is the Mossi "day of the dead." In any case, all of my respondents insisted that Saturday, and not Friday, was the day on which the Tense was held. It is possible that Dim Delobson mistook the eve of the festival for its beginning, in which case his error is understandable. In most other respects our descriptions are not too different.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 152.
7. There is a widespread tradition in Mossi country that the Tenkodogo Naba made and still makes similar sacrifices at Kouroungoutenga and Sansabloga, two important earth shrines. There is a controversy about whether human sacrifices were ever offered there. The missionaries in the region claim they were. The Mossi deny this and accuse the missionaries of slander.

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8. Cf. Marc, p. 156. 9. Cf. Fortes, pp. 258–71.
10. Skinner, "The Diffusion of Islam," pp. 659–69.
11. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Soudan*, pp. 585–86.
12. Dim Delobson, p. 205. 13. Crozat, p. 4820.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 4822. 15. *Ibid.*, p. 4835.
16. Binger, I, 452. 17. *Ibid.*, p. 456.
18. *Ibid.*, pp. 452–56.
19. Archives, Document 15G-190 (1897–98). Instructions left to Captain Scal by Destenave, June 1897.

CHAPTER NINE

1. Marc, p. 17.
2. Barth, III, 595. Although it is possible that the Wolof prince Bemoy did hear about the Mossi, he was mistaken about the name of their ruler. Interestingly enough, the title "Ogane" is not too dissimilar from Hogon, the title of head men among the Dogon (Habe or Kado) whom the Mossi had pushed into the hills of Bandiagara. Cf. Bascom, p. 24. [114] [174]
3. Barth, III, 606. 4. Bowdich, p. 180.
5. Dupuis, Appendix CVII. 6. Clapperton, II, 323.
7. Barth, III, 643–49. As cited earlier, Barth states that the Portuguese got reports about the Mossi in the year 1533 "from the wrong side, namely from Benin." This may not have been altogether "the wrong side," however, for Barth gives us data on caravans from Mossi country to Sansane Mango in Togoland that indicate how news about the Mossi might have traveled from the interior to Benin city in Nigeria.
8. Koelle, p. 6. Dixon, who seems to have been one of the few captured Mossi sold to the West, reports: "Mose is west of Gurma, east of Andemtenga, where a different language is spoken. Mose is also two days journey from Butmera, where the same language is spoken; four days from Bulega [Bolga tanga], the language still the same, and confederate with Kambonse, i.e. Asante; two days from Yaongo, with still the same language; six days from Bosanse which is at enmity with Mose and where people bore their lips, and often tie them together with grass, and whose language is different from Mose; four days from Busma also a different language, and in which country there is a very high mountain (Tanga) from which those who ascend never come back again [probably a reference to Plimpikou, the Mossi holy mountain]; three or four weeks from Kambonse, i.e. Asante. Kupeala is four days from Wardyga [Ouagadougou] the Mossi capital, whither the king of Asante often sent presents; and one month from Salak [Salaga], an Asante town, where they bring kola nuts." [131] [101] [197] [484]
9. Marc, p. 30.
10. Great Britain, Parliamentary papers xlvi, 1882.
11. The people of Nobere, Manga, and other districts surrounding Bere have traditions about Krause, who is remembered as the first white-skinned person ever seen in those parts. The color of his skin was attributed to the fact that, "like the fish," he had come out of the sea. [826]
12. Krause, pp. 92 ff. Although there is no evidence to this effect in the literature, it appears certain that Mossi government officials knew of Krause's visit. They treated most travelers in the following manner: "After entering a town the party is given in charge of a man usually termed 'housemaster.' It is his duty to exercise surveillance over the action of the stranger and to report the result to the authorities. . . . The trader conducts his business through his 'housemaster,' who usually makes a handsome gain by acting as middleman (G. E. Ferguson, quoted in Wolfson, p. 199). [574]

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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long been famous. The former are sometimes ridden but are used primarily as beasts of burden. Horses were and are still important for military and ceremonial purposes and for external trade to other areas.

The Mossi have never excelled in metalworking. The people in the northern part of the country have worked indigenous ores since aboriginal times. Those in the south get iron mainly from traders and caravans. The other metals which the Mossi smiths manufacture into tools and ornaments are also obtained from traders.

TRADE IN HISTORICAL TIMES

The geographic position of Mossi country has much to do with its being an important trade and market center. The country itself has always produced grain, cotton and livestock for export. And for several centuries caravans have passed through this region carrying Sudanese and Saharan products to the forest zones to the south, and carrying forest products back to the arid north. The beginning of this trade is lost in the dim past, but it safe to say that it developed shortly after or along with the founding of Timbuktu about 1100 A.D. The Mossi themselves were not definitely linked to this important *entrepot* until they raided it in 1328, but we can assume that they had been trading there for some time before that event took place. Similarly, we have no record of when the Mossi began trading with the forest zones, but we can also assume that this trade began around the same period or even before.

Our first evidence of Mossi trade and commerce comes from Europeans who were themselves interested in conducting their own trading activities with the peoples in the Bend of the Niger. Bowditch, an Englishman who had journeyed to Ashanti to sign a treaty facilitating the reopening of a profitable trade with the coast, wangled the first important piece of information about the Mossi from his reluctant hosts:

> Five journies from Yngwa is Mosee, a more warlike but less visited kingdom: it consists of many states, but the superior monarch is named Billa, and the capital Kookoopella. I place it to the N.W. because its merchants pass by Yngwa; they do not cross the Karhalla [White Volta] nor any river which is not fordable. (Bowditch 1819 : 180)

This information is not strictly correct since Koupela was not the capital of any of the Mossi kingdoms, but Bowditch's informant had probably heard of Koupela because it was the largest political entity near the large caravan center at Pouitenga.

4: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1957
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SECTION OF ANTHROPOLOGY

AN ANALYSIS OF THE POLITICAL ORGANIZATION OF THE MOSSI PEOPLE*

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121 The African Sudanic states were the subject of a discussion presented before The New York Academy of Sciences in 1949. At that time Joseph Greenberg discussed the rise of these states and evaluated the theories assigning the predominant part in their formation to Caucasian influences. However, the Negro genesis of the Mossi Sudanic state never has been seriously questioned.[1] In this paper I propose to analyze the political system of the Mossi in the light of such questions as: the power structure of the African state; the conquest theory of state formation; and the presence of feudalism or feudal-type states in the Sudan.

105 The one and one-half million Mossi represent the largest population aggregate in what is now known as French West Africa. They inhabit an arid 125,000 square miles of sub-Saharan area drained by the Black, Red, and White Voltas and their tributaries. The Mossi are described physically as "true" Negroes as distinguished from the other Sudanic types. Their language belongs to the Mossi-Grunshi groups of the Niger-Congo family of African languages. In many respects their culture is similar to those of such Voltaic groups as the Tallensi, Dagomba, and Mamprussi peoples of the Northern Gold Coast (Ghana). The people in this Voltaic region are mainly agriculturalists who grow several varieties of millet and sorghum. They rear some cattle, sheep, and goats, but do little fishing or hunting. Their kinship systems are based on patrilineal segmented lineages. Throughout this entire region we find the institution of earth priests who are ritual owners of the land, but political organization is highly segmented and acephalous, with the exception of the centrally organized systems of the Dagomba, Mossi, and Mamprussi.

175 The *Tarikh es Soudan*, a chronicle written by Es Sadi, who lived in Timbuktu during the early seventeenth century, records that the Mossi first appeared on the historical scene about 1328. Between the years 1328 and 1477 the Mossi of the northern kingdom of Yatenga attacked and conquered Timbuktu, sacked Macina, and raided the towns of Bagana and Walata held by the Songhoi. In turn they were defeated by Sonni-Ali, the famous Songhoi ruler, who even invaded their territory, capturing slaves and booty. Askia El Hadj Mohamed, ruler of the Songhoi, raised a holy war

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against the Mossi in 1497 and defeated them, but he failed to make them embrace Islam. The Mossi and Songhoi fought several other wars until Songhoi power was broken by the Moroccans, who captured Timbuktu in 1590.[2] 175

The Mossi first came to the attention of the Europeans during the travels of Heinrich Barth, J. Dupuis, and Edward Bowdich, but the first European, G. A. Krause, did not enter Mossi country until 1888. Krause was followed six months later by Louis G. Binger, but the Mossi became suspicious and closed their territory to other Europeans. About 1894, one Ferguson, a British mulatto, safely arrived at Ouagadougou, the Mossi capital, and signed a treaty with the supreme Mossi ruler placing the area under British protection. The French arrived in the country in September 1896 and, refusing to honor the British treaty, conquered the Mossi and secured control of the country.

The Mossi traditional history goes back to about the eleventh century and is part of a tradition relating the origin of the Dagomba, Mamprussi, and Mossi peoples. The Mossi claim descent from Nyennega, the daughter of a Dagomba ruler, who fled from her father's home to marry a hunter by the name of Riallé. This man had left his father's country and was living in exile as a result of a quarrel over the chieftainship. The product of the union between Riallé and Nyennega was a son called Wedraogo in honor of the stallion that carried his mother to the north. At the age of fifteen the boy Wedraogo went back to the Dagomba to visit his grandfather and was given 4 horses and 50 cows. According to tradition, when Wedraogo left the Dagomba country to return north many Dagomba horsemen followed him, because their country was overcrowded. Wedraogo and his followers rode northward and conquered his father's people, the Boussansi, and decided to live in a place called Tankurn (Tengdodogo—old country). Here Wedraogo married a Boussansi woman called Pouiriketa, who bore him three sons. Diaba Lompo, the eldest, was sent out to rule Fada N'Gourma; another, called Rawa, was sent to rule a place called Zondema (now part of Yatenga); the youngest, Zoungrana, remained with his father at Tengkodogo. 173

Tradition states that the Boussansi were only one of a group of small but warlike peoples who inhabited this region. The others were the Ninisis, the Kibissi, and the Gourounsi. These groups were constantly at war with one another and they made frequent alliances with stronger peoples to fight their enemies. A Ninisi chief visited Tengkodogo and, seeing the strength of the Dagomba, sought an alliance with Wedraogo. The Ninisi chief sent Wedraogo a woman called Pouitenga as a wife for Zoungrana, Wedraogo's son. A few years later the Ninisi asked Wedraogo to come and rule their country, but he died at a place called Sagabtenga before he could establish complete control of their territory. Zoungrana succeeded his father as head of the Mossi (a new tribe resulting from the union of the Dagomba and the local inhabitants) but, wishing to remain at Tengkodogo, he sent his son Oubri to complete the conquest of the

173 11. Nattia, son of the preceding. He lived at Dazouli.
174 12. Namoëro, son of the preceding.
13. Kida, brother of Nattia. He lived at Ouagadougou.
14. Kimba, brother of the preceding. He lived at the same place.
15. Kobra, son of the preceding. He lived at Uougandé.
16. Sana, son of the preceding. He lived at Ouagadougou, where all his successors resided up to the present day.
17. Guiliga, son of the preceding.
18. Oubia, brother of the preceding.
19. Mottaba, son of the preceding.
20. Ouarga, brother of the preceding.
21. Zombéré, son of the preceding.
22. Kom, son of the preceding.
23. Sagha, son of the preceding.
24. Koulougou, son of the preceding.
25. Savadoro, son of the preceding.
26. Karfo, son of Savadoro.
27. Baoro, brother of Savadoro.
28. Koutou, son of the preceding.
29. Sanom, son of Koutou.
30. Boukary /sic/ Koutou, son of Koutou.
It was Bokary Koutou who was dethroned by Lt. Voulet in 1896.
31. Kouka (Siguiri) with whom Lt. Voulet signed a treaty whereby Mossi territory was placed under the suzerainty of France
32. Kom, the present Moro Naba (1910).

648 As may be seen, therefore, the Moro Nabas continue to exist among the Mossi. France even provides them with a pension, which first amounted to 25,000 francs a year and has since been lowered to 18,000 francs. They no longer hold any powers, however, and they do nothing whatever.

175 I have found in the Monographie of the circle some interesting data on expeditions led by the Moro Nabas into Kipirsi territory, which always resisted Mossi conquest. Naba Koundoumié, sixth successor of Oubry, /463/ first led a bloody expedition to Kayao and Tiou. Naba Dawoéma, eighth successor of Oubry, waged war to the north of Yako. Naba Ouarga, twentieth successor of Oubry, settled

175 at La and waged a series of battles in the Yako region. Naba Koutou, twenty-eighth successor of Oubry, fought in the Sourgou region (Kipirsi). And finally, during the last few years preceding our occupation, Naba Sanom and Bokary Koutou attacked the village of Lallé.

643 631 According to Moulins' data, it was Naba Koundoumié, sixth successor of Oubry, who set three of his sons as heads of the Boussouma, Béloussa and Yako provinces. He made them veritable monarchs who were united to the Moro Naba by a mere bond of vassalage, as was already the case with the chief of Tenkodogo.

Moulins adds, "As a rule, the chiefs of vassal provinces do not seem to have given much thought to enfranchisement from the Moro Naba's suzerainty, which actually did not weigh heavily upon them. We must come all the way to modern times, to Sanom's reign, to find signs of a struggle between the sovereign and the chiefs of Boussouma and Béloussa.

"On the other hand, the important vassals sometimes resorted to the Moro Naba's support to strengthen their authority within their own provinces. We have just mentioned the expeditions directed against Yako. Tradition has also preserved the memory of a series of battles waged by Dawoéma, eighth successor of Oubry, against the Boussansé of Garango who attempted to free themselves from Tenkodogo Naba."

174 Following this brief glance at the history of the Mossi empire, there remain, or should remain, three questions to investigate.

1. The remote origins of the Mossi proper, the conquering Mossi who came from Dagomba to Tenkodogo and then to Ouagadougou. At the present day, however, these origins are unknown. They might be uncovered by studying the Mossi language and comparing it systematically with the ancient or present tongues of north, east, and west Africa. I do not believe that such a piece of research is forthcoming, however. /464/ The Mossi might also be studied from the standpoint of physical anthropology, in which case two distinct studies ought to be made, one of the chiefs and nobles, another of the bulk of the Mossi population. The results would then be compared with those obtained for other populations of north and west Africa. Like the one previously mentioned, however, this would be a tremendous project which is not likely to be undertaken in the near future.

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776 considered the wife of a male deity called *Winnam*, *Windé*, or *Naba Zidiwindé*. The true nature of Winnam is not clear. The Mossi say: "Winnam is the sun, and Winnam is God"; he is considered a sun god as well as a supreme deity. [775] Winnam is venerated but he is not feared, because it is the dead ancestors who chastise evil-doers by affliction or death. When wicked people die they face the wrath of the ancestors in *Keemsélenga*, or land of the ancestors.

The Mossi have several concepts of the spiritual essence or animating principle of man. 774 First there is the *seega* (pl. *seesé*), an entity found in all living beings; it leaves the body during sleep, and its adventures provide the dreams of men. The seega can be captured during its nocturnal wanderings or in places where large crowds congregate. If the seega is captured and eaten by a [761] sorcerer, its owner will die. A man's shadow is also called his seega; persons about to die have no shadows, since their seesé have either been stolen or have [822] left on their own account.

Another principle called the *keema* (pl. *keemsé*) is associated with the dead 775 or with persons about to die. The keema of a dying man wanders around and often frightens people; as soon as he is dead, he is no longer referred to by name but is called the "keema." Keemsé is also the word used for the generalized [769] ancestors who sanction the behavior of the living and who must be placated if people wish to have enough food, wives, children, and good health. A man's own keemsé take a vital interest in his affairs, in return for which they receive nourishment in the form of the seesé (animals do not have keemsé) of sacrificed animals.

[827] The breath, called *vousem*, is also considered an animating principle by the Mossi and, since it leaves the body through the nose at death, they believe that a man's nose is the first thing to die. It is not clear how the seega is disposed of when the body dies. Some people say it remains forever about the haunts of man; others believe that it goes to a mountain called Plimpikou and disappears into a cavern. Still others believe that the seega becomes the keema and goes to Plimpikou, from whence the keemsé come to visit their descendants. It is difficult to determine whether the Mossi have always been vague about their traditional religious concepts or whether this uncertainty is the result of the influx of such foreign creeds as Islam and Christianity.

175 The first recorded contact between the Mossi and Moslems took place around 1328 when the Yatenga Mossi attacked, burned, and sacked Timbuktu, 797 then held by the Dia dynasty of the Songhoi (Dubois 1896:251). For more than a century afterward, the Mossi pursued a turbulent and aggressive policy in the region of the Niger bend, pushing as far as Gourma, Walata, and Banku (ibid:127). They were finally defeated and routed by Sonni Ali in 1477. In 1499, when Askia the Great (El Hadj Mohammed ben Abou Bekr, usurper of the Songhoi throne from the Sonni dynasty in 1494) returned from his pilgrimage to Mecca, he launched a *jihad* or holy war on the Mossi who had rejected his ultimatum to adopt Islam. Askia defeated the Mossi, "devastated the towns and countryside, took men, women, and children as prisoners, and forcibly converted these captives to Islam" (Dubois 1896:127–128). The

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pagan Mossi and the Moslem Songhoi fought several other battles until Songhoi power was broken by the Moroccans, who conquered Timbuktu in 1590. 175 797

The Moslems made no further attempt to convert the Mossi by force, but Moslem pressure did not stop; it now came in the peaceful guise of Moslem merchants and Yarsé Moslem refugees from the Mandingo cities such as Timbuktu and Djenne, who received permission from the Mossi rulers to settle in the country. However, judging from the reports of the first Europeans to reach the Mossi, the Moslems lived under many restrictions and were forbidden by the Moro Nabas to recite their prayers in public places (Tauxier 1912:585–586). Despite these restrictions, the Moslems were able to extend their influence through conversion of the cadet sons of the rulers and conversion of at least one ruler of the Ouagadougou Mossi dynasty.

About 1780 Naba Kom, the son of Zombré and a Yarsé Moslem woman, permitted the Yarsé to live in the villages and sent one of them to the Gold Coast for religious instruction. His son, Naba Sagha, was involved in a civil war and replaced some dissident pagan district chiefs with his Moslem sons. The present ruling lineage of Nobéré (where I worked) is descended from Ngado, one of these sons.[3] But although the rulers permitted their younger sons to adopt Islam, they themselves and the heirs to the thrones remained pagan in order to maintain the bonds with the ancestors. The exception to this rule was Doulougou, the grandson of Sagha, who was elected Moro Naba despite being a Moslem. Now the spread of Islam was given new impetus: Yarsé proselyting increased, mosques were built in Ouagadougou and in the villages, and many Koranic schools were founded. But with Doulougou's death the rulers reverted to paganism and Moslem influence declined. Nevertheless, the learned Moslem Imams continued to serve at court and used their knowledge of the outside world for the benefit of the rulers.

The Moslem Mossi showed the greatest hostility to the first Europeans who arrived in the country. The Imam of Yako, under the influence of his Tidjani son (who had made the pilgrimage to Mecca), refused to have any dealings with Europeans. Furthermore, he convinced the Moro Naba that death awaited any ruler who granted an audience to a European. When the French attacked the Mossi in 1896, an Imam from Béré, a former pilgrim, told the ruler to flee and not depend on his ill-equipped soldiers to defeat the gun-bearing invaders. Lamberth reported that the Moslems told the defeated and demoralized Mossi that "as soon as all the blacks become Moslems, the whites will leave" (Tauxier 1912:792).

No one knows how many Moslems were in Ouagadougou when the French arrived. Delafosse (1912, vol. 3:193) records that around the turn of the century there were about 42 Koranic schools with 230 students scattered around the country. Tauxier (1912:793), writing about the same period, states that there were 33 Koranic schools with about 358 students. No Koranic schools were reported for the Nobéré and Manga districts, but I know that there were several in the neighboring district of Béré. In 1926 there were 70 Koranic 175 797 871

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175 schools and 4,000 Moslems in Ouagadougou (seven percent of whom were non-
797 Mossi). By 1944 there were about 240 schools and approximately 25,000
871 Moslems. The last census, 1954, did not record the number of Koranic schools but gave the figure of 60,000 Moslems in the Ouagadougou region.[3] The 4,000 Moslems of Nobéré comprise 42 percent of that district's population. With the exception of one Catholic school master and the Catholic catechist who came to the district during 1956, the population is pagan. It might be relevant to point out that Nobéré has the highest percentage of Moslems in Kombissiri, an administrative unit (a subdivision) which has 152,000 pagans, 23,000 Moslems, 3,000 Catholics, and about 100 Protestants.

797 As noted above, Islam first came into the Nobéré district with Ngado, who
634 replaced a dissident pagan chief, but Ngado's lineal descendants reverted to paganism until a few years ago when the present district chief became a nominal Moslem. The cadet sons of Ngado did not revert to paganism, and today all the noble sublineages of the district are Moslem. We may note here that one of the main aspects of Islamic proselytization in this district, as elsewhere among the Mossi, has been the conversion of persons who do not hold strategic positions vis-à-vis the ancestors. The present chief is no exception to this rule, because he is only a nominal Moslem. His eldest son is the only one in the family who is not a Moslem—a status which is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain in a growing Moslem population. The chief himself became partially converted to Islam in gratitude to a Moslem Hausa trader who cured his illness. He recites the five daily prayers and observes most of the prescriptions of Islam, but he still drinks European beer, subscribes to many pagan rites and
[769] beliefs, and supervises the annual Péléga or sacrifice to the ancestors. This dual allegiance is politically expedient because the chief can function as the head of the Moslem community as well as the traditional head of all the people. He does have occasional difficulty with intolerant Moslems who wish him to become a devout Moslem, and with the traditionalists who claim that today the crops are smaller, the people sicker, and the women barren because of the neglect of the ancestors. However, with the approach of holy days, these differences are resolved in the interest of community harmony.

622 The chiefs of the villages under the overall command of the district chief
797 are mainly pagan, since they are descended from the district chief replaced by
769 Ngado. Yet they command villages inhabited by the noble Moslem sublineages of the ruling house as well as by commoner lineages. The village chief cannot become a Moslem because he too is responsible for sacrifices to the ancestors, without whose help his people would suffer. He does not take an active part in Moslem festivities, but receives the homage due a chief from the Moslems on these and other occasions. However, most village chiefs show an interest in Moslem affairs, and one of them, the chief of Vooko, built a prayer-circle (*misseri*) for Moslems who came to pay homage.

622 The pivotal role which the village chief plays in the exchange of wives be-
797 tween Moslems and pagans has led indirectly to the increase of the Moslem
582 population. Before the French conquest he gave the Moslems more wives than

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645
696 all the chaos would come a new appreciation for the task of the chief, and a cessation of the grumbling that the chiefs were greedy.

662
428 The Mossi interregnum also served another purpose. It gave the electors the opportunity to exhaust and redistribute much of the patri-
666 mony of the dead ruler, which was brought to them by his heirs who were trying to obtain the chieftainship through bribery. Sometimes, a candidate's ability to collect a great deal of goods with which to press his suit often revealed to the electors the strength of his following in the district or village, for had he been an unpopular man he would have had to use only his own resources.

666 The Mossi electors were always concerned with the health and
643 character of a potential chief, and turned down the most promising
175 candidates who were deficient in any of these qualities. For example, when Moro Naba Sanum died in 1890 without leaving a male heir, his younger brother, Bokary Koutou, was the strongest candidate for the *nam*. Yet he was passed over, at first, by the electors because of his reputation as a bandit and a rebel. We know from Captain Binger, a Frenchman who met Bokary in 1888, that this prince was indeed a bandit and a slave raider. But Binger, although deploring Bokary's conduct, exonerated him on the grounds that the Moro Naba had sent him into exile without any means of support. This was true, but the
[687] reason that Moro Naba Sanum did so was because Bokary had raised a rebellion against him as an attempt to obtain their father's position. Bokary was forbidden to appear in the capital; but when he heard that his brother Sanum was dead, he took a force of soldiers and hurried to Wagadougou fearing that an attempt would have been made to prevent his election. When he found that his fears were justified, he became
[669] desperate and secreted a force of Gurunsi warriors around the elector's meeting place, threatening to kill them if he was not named Moro Naba. They succumbed to his threat and he received the *nam*. During
643 the customary speech in which a new ruler chose his official name,
175 announced his program for the people and the country, or ridiculed his erstwhile competitors, Bokary Koutou said: "A hundred ghosts cannot frighten an elephant (Wobogo)," meaning that he was not afraid
648 of any of his enemies. He thereafter became known as Moro Naba
721 Wobogo, and he chose to live up to his boast when the French arrived
175 and asked him to sign a treaty of protection with them. He refused

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and chose to fight, and when defeated, fled to the Gold Coast (Ghana). From here he intrigued with the British against the French and even succeeded in having his brother poisoned for accepting the title of Moro Naba. It was only when the British accepted French sovereignty over Mossi country that Bokary accepted his deposition and permanent exile.

Once the traditional electors had chosen one of Bokary's younger relatives, Siguiri as Moro Naba, the Mossi people themselves quietly accepted French rule. Their behavior was in this respect similar to that of many indigenous populations with complex political institutions who had been conquered by the Europeans. In contrast, the neighboring Dogon, Gurunsi, and Lobi, whose political systems were very simple, and who had been constantly raided by the Mossi for slaves, kept on rebelling against French rule, and in some cases shot poisoned arrows at French tax collectors and labor recruiters as late as 1941. The only opposition which they offered the French was in 1910 when an attempt was made to reorganize the Mossi districts for administrative reasons. However, when the French changed their policy of direct administration to a form of indirect rule, the Mossi remained so peaceful that by 1922 there was only one administrator for every 60,000 inhabitants.

Moro Naba Kom who reigned from 1905 to 1942 skillfully preserved the power of the ruling dynasty during a period when the Mossi people were subjected to a rather severe forced labor regime. This was also a period during which the administration deposed chiefs who ran afoul of its wishes or policies. The political ability of this ruler is best exemplified by the order of succession that occurred in the Doulougou district. In 1895 Moro Naba Wobogo had appointed his own son as Doulougou chief in place of Koabga Wedraogo whom he had deposed and killed. However, when Wobogo fled from the French the next year, his son, the Doulougou chief, killed himself because he did not wish to follow his father into exile. The new Moro Naba Siguiri placed a son of the former district chief, Koabga Wodraogo, as chief of Doulougou. This chief died in 1906 and was replaced by a brother. Unfortunately this chief ran afoul of the French, was deposed and placed in "obligatory residence" in another district where he died in 1927. The Moro Naba then elected another son of ex-

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643 Moro Naba Wobogo as chief of Doulougou, but this chief was assas-
636 sinated. Thereafter the Moro Naba placed his own brother as chief
175 of Doulougou district only to have him deposed by the French in 1932
662 for abusing his power. Now the Moro Naba again turned to a descendant of Koabga Wedrago and named him chief, but the French also deposed and jailed this chief for incapacity. Finally in 1935, the Moro Naba named his own son, Etienne Kongo, as chief, and this man was still chief when I left the Mossi in 1957. The interesting feature of this succession is that the Moro Naba confined it to three specific families: his own, that of ex-Moro Naba Wobogo, and that of the ancient chiefly line of Doulougou. In no case did Moro Naba Kom attempt to elevate to chieftainship the son or relative of a man whom the French deposed. He named a chief from another one of the chiefly families, and when a member of this line was deposed, he quickly turned to another one. In this way, the Moro Naba never gave the French any cause for thinking that he disapproved of their action by placing as chief a relative of the man they had deposed. This type of succession was only possible because of the flexibility in the Mossi mode of chiefly succession. Furthermore, the district people readily accepted the chiefs appointed by the Moro Naba because he never deviated from their cultural expectations, or violated the accepted norm of succession.

636 A more serious attempt on the part of the French to influence the
643 traditional political organization of the Mossi came when they tried to enroll the sons of the Moro Naba and those of other chiefs in a special school in order to make these boys adjuncts in their administration. The eldest sons of the Moro Naba and of the officials around Wagadougou were all sent to school because they were well known to the French.
636 However, in the rural districts, the chiefs hesitated to send their eldest
643 sons to school. First of all, they regarded this plan as another form of
186 forced labor from which their sons might never return. And secondly,
662 because they also feared that if these youths did return as educated men, they would have been Christianized, and thereby would have been unable or unwilling to perform the important roles which chiefs had vis-a-vis the ancestors. To palliate the French the chiefs sent their youngest or motherless sons to schools, or in some cases substituted the sons

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/For a history of the Mossi of the Upper Volta at the time of the first European contacts and the subsequent conquest of the Mossi by the French, see category 116, pp. 139-153; for a history of the Mossi government during the colonial period of European administration (up to and including the 2nd World War period) see category 116, pp. 154-178; for a history of political changes taking place in Mossi government in the post World War II period, see category 116, pp. 179-203./

The Mossi grow tobacco in fields around their
248 4 INTRODUCTION
249 homesteads, where they also cultivate their most important cash crops, cotton and indigo, which are used in the manufacture and dyeing of cotton cloth.

136 The wild fauna of Mossi country include several species of antelope, deer, monkeys, rabbits, snakes, and wild pigs. Elephants roam the beds of rivers and streams and often destroy cultivated fields, while lions and hyenas distress the people by attacking livestock. The pools and rivers of Mossi country are inhabited by turtles, crocodiles, and various species of scaled and scaleless fish. Chickens, muscovy ducks, and half-domesticated guinea fowl are the most valuable species of birds.

231 The Mossi have long been famous for their splendid donkeys and [492] horses. Donkeys are sometimes ridden, but they are used primarily as [439] beasts of burden. Horses are important for military and ceremonial purposes and for export to the tsetse-fly zones to the south. The Mossi raise two main types of cattle: a zebu-like animal in the northern regions and a [439] dwarf variety in the south. These animals are raised primarily for their milk and for export, and are seldom killed for meat until they are fairly old. Goats and sheep provide the main source of meat. Hog-raising is not wide- [771] spread, and seems to be declining in importance with the increased ob- [178] servance of Islamic food taboos, which is on the uprise even among people who are still pagans.

135 The subsoil of Mossi country is not well known, but so far there have been no major discoveries of mineral deposits. The only known gold field [301] remained unworked in aboriginal times. The Mossi do not like to wear [325] gold ornaments, preferring jewelry worked from imported copper and [439] silver. The northern Mossi worked their local iron in aboriginal times, but those in the south obtained this metal from caravan traders.

175 The nineteenth-century reports of Barth and other European travelers 439 indicate that the Mossi conducted a rather extensive foreign trade. At least [443] six caravan routes passed through their territory, and traders such as the Hausa and Mandingo visited the important Mossi trading centers at Yako, Pouitenga, and Ouagadougou, where they exchanged Saharan and forest products for Mossi livestock and cloth.[8]

101 The Mossi belong to the Voltaic culture area, a name given by Delafosse to the regions drained by the Black, Red, and White Voltas and their tributaries. The area embraces parts of Mali, the Ivory Coast, Dahomey, the Upper Volta, and northern Ghana.[4] It includes a vast congeries of peoples such [197] as the Dagomba, Mamprusi, Dagari, Birifo, Senufo, Gurmanche, Gurunsi, Lobi, Bobo, Tallensi, Konkomba, Dogon, Somba, Fulse, and Ninisi, all of whom speak languages belonging to the Gur or Moshi-Grunshi group of

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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173 him too firmly entrenched to be deposed. He then returned north to a place called Gourcy in Ouahigouya. There he was joined by his sister Pabre, who brought him the royal amulets of Rialle (Ouedraogo's father), which she is said to have stolen from Koudoumie and which were believed to sanction the power of the Ouagadougou ruler. Koudoumie gathered his army and pursued Pabre in an attempt to recover the amulets, but he met so much opposition at Yako that he returned without them.

The struggle for supremacy between Koudoumie and Yadega led many of the princely descendants of Ouedraogo to carve out their own principalities from their patrimony and declare themselves independent of Ouagadougou. Faced with the dissolution of his realm, Koudoumie dispatched his sons to different parts of the kingdom to halt the process. There came into existence such principalities as Boulsa, Boussouma, Conquizitenga, Mane, Riziam, Tema, and Yako.[18] However, some of these princes joined the ranks of the rebels, who by this time had taken for themselves the title of *Dim*, meaning "submit only to God." The ruler of Ouagadougou later recognized the autonomy of these princes but not their independence from Ouagadougou.[19]

After Koudoumie's death his descendants at Ouagadougou continued to rule and to consolidate their territory. Each ruler resided wherever control of the population was most necessary, and the graves of the first fourteen rulers of the Ouagadougou dynasty are markers along the road to that dynasty's complete domination of the country. It was only during the reign of the fifteenth ruler, Mogho Naba Sana (ca. 1430–1450), that Ouagadougou became the permanent capital of the dynasty. Meanwhile, the northern Mossi, under Yadega (who had claimed the title of Mogho Naba and complete independence from Ouagadougou on the strength of the amulets brought by Pabre), were also extending and consolidating their territory. They had absorbed into the kingdom of Yatenga ("country of Yadega") all the lands in the kingdom of Zandoma, which had belonged to Rawa, the son of Ouedraogo. Under their rulers (the Yatenga Nanamse), these Mossi moved into the bend of the Niger, a region they called Ghanata, and sacked such towns as Djenne, Sarafere, Timbuktu, and Walata.

● 175 The author of *Tarikh es-Sudan*, a seventeenth-century chronicle, describes the attack on Timbuktu by the Mossi ruler, which took place about 1329:

> It was in the reign of one of the princes of [sultan Kankan Moussa's] dynasty that the sultan of the Mossi at the head of a strong army made an expedition against that city. Seized with fright, the people of Mali fled and abandoned the city to its assailants. The Mossi ruler entered the city, and after killing

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all the people he found there and seizing all the goods he could find, he burned the city and returned to his own country. The peoples of Mali returned afterwards to Timbuktu and remained there for the next hundred years.[20] 175

The Yatenga Mossi subsequently warred upon and defended themselves against the Songhai, who had tried to force Islam upon them. The Mossi were among the strongest peoples in the Niger bend area when the Moroccans arrived in 1591, and there were no wars between these two groups. [648]

There has been a great deal of discussion among scholars of Sudanese history about the relationship between the Mossi expeditions into the Niger area and the power of early Mossi kingdoms. Marc believes that the Mossi reached their zenith late in the fifteenth century, when they attacked Walata and Timbuktu for the second time. He writes, "It was undoubtedly during this period that they extended their influence over all the territories where their language is spoken at the present day."[21] 174 175

On the other hand, Tauxier believes that the Mossi reached their apogee much earlier, toward the end of the fourteenth century. He notes that this was the period when the Mossi were "propelled by a powerful drive of expanding conquest," which carried them to Timbuktu and its neighboring regions.[22] With the recapture of Timbuktu by Mansa Souliman, however, they turned back and firmly established themselves in Gourma and Yange to the east of Ouagadougou, and among non-Mossi populations in Ouahigouya and Ouagadougou. Tauxier believes that this southern drive made the Mossi sufficiently powerful to reinvade the Niger area and thus control a territory extending from Gambaga in the south up to Timbuktu and Djenne in the north. This second period of success came to a close when the Mossi were defeated by Askia the Great of Songhai in 1497, and by Askia Daoud in 1549 and 1561. After these defeats, they not only abandoned their territories north of Ouahigouya but withdrew into their present boundaries. Tauxier concludes that from this time onward, the bonds between the different Mossi kingdoms grew weaker and the power of Ouagadougou waned.

At the same time, the Mossi kingdoms, principalities, and districts developed their internal structure and continued to absorb the Ninisi population. They also welcomed the Moslem Yarse merchants and refugees who settled in their country and adopted most aspects of their culture.[23] These Yarse refugees were joined by Mandingo-Dioula and Soninke Moslem refugees, who entered Mossi country as the result of wars or rebellions in such places as Djenne, Segou, and Timbuktu. The sheltering of these refugees by the Mossi eventually led to a series of wars between them and 175 648 563

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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648 the Bambara in the mid-eighteenth century.[24] In the course of these wars
563 and up into modern times, many Fulani (Peulh or Fulbe) entered Mossi territory. The circumstances surrounding their first coming are not fully known, but many of them claim to have come originally from Fouta-Djalon and Fouta-Toro. They gained the good will of most of the Mossi rulers and spread throughout the territory.[25] Many of them married Mossi women, giving rise to a new group known as Simili-Mossi, who continued to raise cattle but also practiced agriculture and adopted many of the cultural traits of their hosts.[26]

175 There are some reports that Europeans had heard about the Mossi ex-
648 ploits at least from the time of King John II of Portugal, who reigned from 1481 to 1495. Marc states that the Portuguese ambassadors to Mali and Timbuktu convinced their King that the Mossi were Christians, and that he attempted to enter into relations with them. According to Barth, these attempts were made as late as 1533.[27] Unfortunately, we have no way of knowing whether the Mossi even knew about the existence of the Portuguese. After this period, there is no evidence of European interest in the Mossi until the end of the nineteenth century. As we shall see in a later chapter, the Mossi received more than their share of attention when the scramble for Africa began.

11: Skinner E-5 (19[illegible]-1957) 1964
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marauding animals. Just twenty years ago, the six villages that lay closest to the river were gradually abandoned and their populations absorbed by other villages. As of 1955, three of these populations were still paying allegiance to their former chiefs—a fact that bears out the Mossi axiom that chiefs govern people rather than land. The three other chiefs had lost control over their followers, who had placed themselves under the protection of the chiefs of their host villages. On occasion, Nobere also lost villages to other districts. One such village, Rissoma, was taken away from Nobere and given to Djiba when one of the Nobere district chiefs had a dispute with the Mogho Naba. 634 621

The hub or center of Nobere district, like that of all Mossi districts, was Nab'tenga (also called Nobere Naba Tenga, or Na-tenga), the village of the district chief. This village was rather large and in many respects a replica in miniature of the capital of Ouagadougou. Like most Mossi villages, Nab'tenga was divided into sections, quarters, or neighborhoods called *saghse* (sing. *saka*), which included a number of compounds (*yiya*, sing. *yiri*; or *saghse*, sing. *saka*). The district chief's compound was called Nab'yiri. He lived there surrounded by his wives, unmarried daughters, younger children, and pages. His older male children lived in separate compounds within the same saka. The saghse of Nab'tenga included Ouidi, the saka of the Ouidi Naba; Balbalse, the saka of the Baloum Naba; Tansoba, the saka of the local war minister (Tansoba or Tampsobo); Baglere, the saka of the chief's serfs; Bendere, the saka of the chief's musicians; Ouedrange, the saka of the chief's grooms; and Pwese, the saka of the guardians of the chief's wives. Scattered among them were the saghse of noble families, smiths, the Moslem Imam, and other persons. The most important market place in the district was located about four hundred yards from the chief's compound. [592] [591] [443]

The number and types of social and ethnic groups within the district and its villages reflected Nobere's history. When the French arrived, the district chief was Kaglere, a descendant of Ngado, who was a son of Mogho Naba Sagha I (ca. 1787–1803). Ngado had been sent to Nobere at the end of the eighteenth century to replace Naba Peka (a descendant of Naba Biligo), who had been deposed and killed by Mogho Naba Sagha during a civil war. The other chiefly descendants of Biligo, however, were not deposed by Ngado; they remained in charge of all but five or six of the major villages in the district. The chiefs of such villages as Ronse, Barkago, Tewarka, and Pinse are *yagense* (descendants) of Naba Biligo. The village called Passintenga was ruled by the descendants of a Busanga from Lenga called Passentre, who allegedly had been given a wife by Biligo. It is not 634 622 175

634 known, however, whether this woman was Biligo's daughter or one of his
622 pughsiudse. The people of Passintenga claimed descent from Biligo's
175 daughter, but the other groups in the district questioned this ancestry. The village called Bourougna had two chiefs. One, the Tang Naba, was descended from a son of a Ouidi Naba of Ouagadougou who had settled in Nobere; the other, the Yang Naba, claimed descent from an aboriginal Ninisi man and woman of Biligo's lineage. The Yang Naba was thus another of Biligo's yagense in the district. The chief of Nimpwe village was a descendant of the aboriginal Ninisi people and was the principal Tengsoba in the district. He had more ritual power than political power, however. The nam of Basbedo village was held by a man descended from Busansi refugees. Living in this village was a man with the honorific title of Soulougre Naba, who claimed descent from the most important Ninisi family who had lived in the district prior to the arrival of Biligo.

634 Most of the nobles of the local ruling lineage lived either in the saghse
173 of the district villages or in isolated hamlets. Local tradition holds that one
621 of the conditions set by Naba Ngado for allowing Biligo's descendants to
[613] remain as village chiefs was the right to settle nineteen of his sons in many
[565] of the villages. He allegedly sent *mabissi* (sons of the same mother) to the same village. By so doing, he took advantage of the normal lines of fission that are created after the death of a Mossi father and prevented undue rivalries. Yet there was no driving necessity for him to do so, because there were more villages than chief's sons available. In fact, there are still many villages without nobles in Nobere district. The people of Passintenga, for instance, allegedly refused to have nobles live among them, while the people of Nimpwe allegedly killed by sorcery all the nobles who ever tried to live there. The actual reason for the absence of nobles in these villages may have been that the district chief did not wish to send his sons to villages into which his daughters had married or where there lived earth priests who
[565] were thought to be powerful sorcerers. Nobles were often unwelcome, feared, and resisted, because they tended to exploit the village people and to take advantage of the commoners.

621 The villages of Nobere district, like those of other Mossi districts, were
167 populated in part by refugees and strangers. Several saghse in Togese vil-
173 lage were inhabited by Mossi refugees who had fled a district called Guiergo after a fight over the nam of that district. Scattered throughout the district's villages were people of unknown origin called Siamse. The Siamse found in the villages of Tewaka and Nabadogo claimed that their ancestors had "followed" Naba Biligo when he came down from Ouagadougou to found the district. Several saghse in Bourougna village were in-

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required mature rulers, or an uncle may have vanquished a nephew by physical prowess or force of character. 643

The pretenders to the Mossi nam began to press their claims as soon as propriety allowed. They presented gifts to the Ouidi Naba and to the other ministers in an attempt to sway the issue. The Ouidi Naba finally called a secret council composed of the Gounga Naba, the Larhalle Naba, the Kamsaogho Naba, and the Tansoba, and recited to them the following formula: "The country does not have a chief, and it needs one. Among all the people who wish to be elected [*di nam,* "eat the nam"], it is for you to choose the most worthy."[14] To this the councillors responded: "Naba! You are our superior, and the right to make the choice rests upon you alone." Thus given a free hand, the Ouidi Naba chose the most capable candidate. However, before announcing his choice, he said to the Tansoba, "My heart is heavy because I fear that those persons whose hopes have not been fulfilled will resort to violence to get their way." The Tansoba responded, "That will be against tradition and justice. Do not fear. I am here with my army to see that your decision is respected." Having received the support of the Tansoba, the Ouidi Naba announced his choice to the other councillors. They said to him, "Naba! You have expressed our will, and that of all the people." It is not to be understood from these formulas that the other councillors had no voice in selecting the candidate. They did in fact advise the Ouidi Naba concerning the best candidate, but these formulas emphasized that it was the Ouidi Naba, as prime minister, who was responsible for the choice. 643 645

The Ouidi Naba's choice of a new Mogho Naba was kept secret until the successful candidate was summoned for investiture. This occurred on the second night of the late Mogho Naba's funeral ceremony. Toward nightfall, the Ouidi Naba secretly dispatched a messenger to summon the successful candidate. The need for secrecy was demonstrated in 1899, when Boukary Koutou forced the committee to name him Mogho Naba. The circumstances were as follows: Mogho Naba Sanum died without male issue, and all his brothers vied for the nam. One of them, Boukary Koutou, was felt to be ineligible because he had been exiled for leading a civil war against Sanum, but like his brothers he hastened to Ouagadougou. Boukary feared that the electors would not look favorably upon his claim, and when he failed to ascertain their intentions he decided upon a *coup d'état.* He gathered an army composed of his supporters and his Gurunsi slaves, and surrounded the compound in which the electors were gathered. One of the electors discovered the army during a break in the deliberations and reported his findings to the Ouidi Naba. The chief minister and his aides 175 643 669 645

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knew that Boukary Koutou was the only person capable of such a conspiracy. Fearing for their lives if they did not nominate him, they immediately sent a messenger to summon him as the successful candidate.[15] Under normal circumstances, however, there was no coercion of the ministers and the nominee was quietly brought to the councillors.

Wearing a pair of trousers and a sheepskin mantle and carrying a spear in each hand, the nominee entered the courtyard of the compound through the women's door.[16] He was preceded by the Samande Nabila, who sprinkled the earth with water. He came up to the councillors and saluted them, and the Ouidi Naba addressed him as follows: "Before your father [brother] died, did he designate you to be his successor?" The nominee replied, "No, Sire! My father has left you free to choose whom you wish, be he a blind man or a leper!" This question was asked three times, and the nominee responded three times. The Ouidi Naba then made the following declaration: "I am giving you the nam of your father and grandfathers. You must try to conduct yourself as they did when they had the nam." The Ouidi Naba then listed the names of the territories over which the ruler had absolute power and authority. The new monarch raised his two spears in the air, made a speech in which he announced three guiding principles by which he vowed to reign, and "named a name," that is, suggested the title by which he wished to be known. For example, Mogho Naba Sagha II (1942–57) said in his inaugural speech: "Without rain, there is no life. I will be like rain for the country." He then became known as Mogho Naba Sagha ("Rain"), a rather fitting title for a ruler in a country with uncertain rainfall. The present Mogho Naba stressed in his inaugural speech (in 1957) that he was "solid as a rock." His official title is now Mogho Naba Kougri ("Rock").[17]

The taking of a new name was only the first step in the elaborate process through which a man became Mogho Naba. Next, the Ouidi Naba took the two spears from the new monarch and removed his sheepskin mantle. Then he gave him his new white clothes, which included a pair of trousers, a bonnet, and a sleeveless robe, all made for him by the people of the Sculougou ward in the capital. Next, he was given a cushion made by the people of Baramimi. The Baloum Naba then took the closely guarded namtibo, the sacred amulets of the dynasty, and used them in the preparation of a potion of millet beer mixed with millet-flour water, part of which was poured as a libation to the earth goddess, Tenga.[18] The ruler and the assembled ministers all partook of the potion in a kind of communion. The ministers then shook the ruler's hand, an act thereafter forbidden, and departed for their own compounds. The newly elected

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634 The Kombere Naba, as the person who had "eaten the nam" of the district, was infused with some of the power and authority of the Mogho Naba and had the right to use force to maintain this power and authority. He was [576] respected, and people uncovered their heads and removed their slippers in his presence. Unlike the Mogho Naba, the Kombere Naba was permitted to eat with his peers. But whenever he drank the musicians made a roar-like sound with their instruments, and when he sneezed his attendants clapped. These rituals were rigidly adhered to because the Kombere Naba was readily accessible to the populace and might easily have lost their respect if he behaved in an undignified manner. He emphasized his social distance from them by never visiting the market place, and he did not go anywhere without a large entourage.

The Kombere Naba performed ceremonies and duties that were similar to but simpler than those of the Mogho Naba, and he was surrounded by officers bearing the same titles as those in the capital. But, as will be shown later, these officials had fewer and sometimes different duties than the courtiers at Ouagadougou. Some district chiefs had as many pages and wives as the Mogho Naba, but this was as much a result of their own desires as of their popularity with the local people. The death and funeral rites of a [766] district chief were not as elaborate as those of a Mogho Naba. They included the circumambulation of the chief's compound by the principal heir and [788] heiress, the symbolic reign of the Napoko, and the banishment of the Kourita.[41]

634 Every district chief, whether a Mogho Naba's vassal or a Dim's subordi- 778 nate, was empowered to bestow the nam on his own subordinates. These [622] might be other district chiefs; but most often they were village chiefs. The circumstances under which a Kombere Naba received the authority to grant the nam to another Kombere Naba were usually complex and sprang from rebellions and dynastic changes. Once granted, this authority was seldom revoked, but the district chief had to report to his immediate superior, a Mogho Naba or Dim, whenever he wished to confer the nam upon another district chief.

634 In some cases the Mogho Naba invested a district chief himself, and ●175 afterward placed him under the control of a neighboring district chief. For 669 example, the chiefs of two districts, Vooko and Nobila, were always installed 778 by the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou, but were supervised by the Nobere district chief. This practice dates back to the civil war involving Mogho Naba Sagha I (ca. 1787–1803), in which chiefs of Vooko and Nobere sided with the loser. The Mogho Naba executed the local rebels and placed one of his sons in Nobere. He then divided Vooko into two districts, placing a younger son in the one he called Nobila (little Nobere) and subjecting him

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to the control of his brother at Nobere. The other district, still called Vooko but now half its former size, was given to a descendant of its deposed ruler. The relationship between these two rulers and the Nobere Naba was that of vassals and lord. They did not stand up in the presence of the Nobere Naba, but knelt or sat on the ground and uncovered their heads in respect to him. The Nobere Naba traditionally appointed the village chiefs in the Vooko and Nobila districts; however, he sometimes granted that right to the two district chiefs. Furthermore, the traditional provincial administrator could not transmit any orders to those two district chiefs without first notifying the Nobere Naba. In their everyday affairs the two chiefs were autonomous, but the Nobere Naba could challenge and countermand all their actions. Actually, he did seem to exercise greater control over Vooko than over Nobila. One may even say that the relationship between the Nobere district chief and the Vooko chief was like that between the Mogho Naba and his district chiefs, and that the relationship between the Nobere Naba and the Nobila Naba was comparable to the one between the Mogho Naba and the Dimdamba. We have seen that the Dimdamba claimed equality with the Mogho Naba because of their alleged descent from a putative common ancestor. The Nobere Naba was actually more closely related to the Nobila Naba than to the Vooko Naba, and his behavior toward them reflected this fact. In both cases, the relationships involved were determined by the concept of joint possession of the nam by the ruling family.

A district chief was not required to notify his superior when he wished to confer the nam upon a village chief. In this choice he was completely autonomous and subject only to tradition. The fact is that on the district and village levels, traditions were more frequently modified in the face of practical political and socio-economic considerations. This occurred primarily because the district chief had closer relations with persons who possessed goods and services or who controlled them directly than did the chiefs on higher levels. Secondly, he was often under great temptation to allow presents or bribes to affect his choice of subordinate chiefs.

When a Tenga Naba died, the district chief permitted control of the village to revert to its Tengsoba. If there was none, the village was "given" to the eldest man among the aboriginal Ninisi lineages or to the eldest member of the ruling lineage segment. However, none of these persons was considered anything but a trustee of the village, and even when the trustee was a potential candidate for the nam, the Mossi did not feel that this man had any advantage over his competitors. Whoever held control of the village was held responsible for its affairs by the district administrator until the new chief was elected.

Competition for chieftainship on this level was very keen because of the

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IV

ADMINISTRATION

642 631 The Mossi always looked to their rulers, especially to the Mogho Nanamse, the Dimdamba, and the Kombemba, to determine administrative policies and to pronounce on all relevant issues. All foreigners who requested information were told, "You must talk to the chief."[1] The Mossi believed that [825] men cannot live without chiefs, and insisted that even animals have chiefs. Mossi rulers were therefore expected to ensure internal tranquillity in times of peace and to protect their subjects and territories in times of war. The expectation that they would also provide impartial judgment is best expressed by a dictum of the Ouagadougou people: "The truth is at Ouaga- [769] dougou." Finally, Mossi chiefs were held responsible for inducing the ancestors to bring health and prosperity to their subjects. To this end, they supervised and participated in rituals to their ancestors and encouraged the people in every territory, district, village, and compound to do likewise. In return, the people paid homage and allegiance to their chiefs and provided them with the goods and services they needed to support the administrative process.

643 631 642 175 The nature of the administrative relationship between the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou, the rulers of Yatenga, Fada-N'Gourma, and Tenkodogo, and the autonomous Dimdamba was not clear to the early visitors to Mossi country, and remains a matter of controversy. Two conflicting principles were always at work: seniority with respect to the nam and claims of close descent from Ouedraogo and Oubri on the one hand, and relative political strength or military power on the other. The stronger a ruler, the less he deferred to his lineal seniors. He might even claim a supremacy over them that came close to a claim of seniority. When Barth visited the Sudan in 1853, he was tokl that the Mossi country was "split into a number of small principalities, almost totally independent of each other, and paying only slight homage to the principality of Woghododogo." Barth reports, however, that the Dim of Boussouma was "probably the most powerful of the Mossi chiefs at the . . . time, especially with regard to cavalry." Similarly,

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Binger reports that the Mossi were divided into "a number of confederacies, more or less independent of each other, whose chiefs were vassals of Naba Sanum, the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou." He found, nevertheless, that although the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou claimed suzerainty over the Yatenga, he could not grant travelers permission to enter that territory.[2]

Crozat, who visited the Mossi in 1890, just two years after Binger, was told repeatedly that the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou had the right to control the destinies of all chiefs who claimed descent from Ouedraogo and Oubri. But he, too, found that the principalities were self-governing and mutually independent, and were united only by the weak bond that attached them all to Ouagadougou. Noting the claims of the people he encountered that Ouagadougou was still supreme, Crozat suggests that "time and circumstances have weakened this sovereignty. The ruler of Ouagadougou is regarded by the other chiefs merely as their senior and the head of their family. They seldom obey him, yet they recognize that in certain cases he has the right to give them orders." Like many Frenchmen who came after him, Crozat concludes, "One will be struck, as I have been, by this political organization in which the waning of the central authority has led to a true feudal system closely reminiscent of a certain period in our own history."[3]

Delafosse tells us that "the authority of the emperor [of Ouagadougou] does not seem to have been ignored within his borders except in very rare instances. The vassal kings, who were brothers, sons, or nephews of the emperor, usually obeyed him. In any case, the emperor did not interfere with the administration [of their territories], and required nothing from them except the payment of taxes and the raising of contingents for any expeditions he might have to organize against outside enemies (the emperors of Mali, Gao, or Segou; Moroccan pashas; etc.). In return, the emperor granted his support to those of his vassals who were unable to command the obedience of their subjects or tributaries."[4]

It appears, then, that although the independent rulers and autonomous princes sometimes recognized the supremacy (if not the seniority) of the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou, they were relatively free to rule as they wished. As possessors of the nam, they claimed and exercised the right to administer the peoples of their realms. It appears, furthermore, that the rulers of Ouagadougou seldom challenged the independence of their confreres in Yatenga, although the latter often disturbed them. For example, when Yatenga Naba Kango (ca. 1754–89) sacked and burned the Ouagadougou district of Yako for sheltering refugees from a civil war, the Mogho Naba did not come to the aid of the Yako Naba. Nor did he take offense when this chief, in order to regain his seat, was compelled to switch his

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642 allegiance to the Yatenga. The situation lasted throughout Kango's reign,
631 "but as soon as he died, the Yako chiefs ceased to pay allegiance to his suc-
628 cessors and paid homage, as before, to the court of Ouagadougou."[6] About
175 fifty years later, Yako district was again captured by a Yatenga ruler, Naba Tougouri (ca. 1806–22), who deposed the reigning chief and installed his own. The deposed chief fled to his sovereign at Ouagadougou for aid and safety. He did receive sanctuary and eventually reconquered his principality, but there is no evidence that the Mogho Naba gave him any active support. Similarly, when another Yatenga ruler, Naba Totebaldbo (ca. 1834–50), once more conquered Yako as well as Riziam, another dependency of Ouagadougou, the Mogho Naba took no action. It was only after Totebaldbo's death that Riziam seceded from Yatenga and returned its allegiance to Ouagadougou. Yako did not submit to Ouagadougou's rule until some time later, when it revolted against Totebaldbo's son.[8] Similarly, both Mogho Naba Sanum and Mogho Naba Wobogo had difficulty in controlling a civil war between Yatenga and Yako which they felt would cause European travelers to think ill of the Mossi. During Crozat's visit to Ouagadougou, Mogho Naba Wobogo asked the combatants to cease fighting, but his efforts failed because "Yako would have liked to obey, but Yatenga refused."[7]

The Ouagadougou rulers experienced less difficulty with the weaker Tenkodogo kingdom, which seldom attacked their vassals or territories. Instead, the rulers of Tenkodogo often sought the aid of the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou against their enemies or rebellious subjects. For example, when the Busansi subjects of the Tenkodogo Naba rebelled against him in the fifteenth century, Mogho Naba Dawoema of Ouagadougou went to his aid and defeated them.[8] However, when Korongo, the Tenkodogo Naba, asked Mogho Naba Wobogo to help him defeat a contestant for the nam in 1894, the Ouagadougou ruler refused and said he would acknowledge the victor.[9] In this case, personal considerations seem to have dictated the Mogho Naba's reply.

The rulers of Ouagadougou appear to have taken greater interest in the affairs of the Dimdamba. Here again, however, intervention was conditioned by personal considerations, and especially by relative strength. Failure to be prudent in this respect often resulted in disaster. Mogho Naba Doulougou's insistence on punishing Naba Piga (1806–23), a ruler of the Boussouma principality, resulted in his own death. One of Piga's subjects had fled to Ouagadougou to evade punishment, and the Mogho Naba had returned him with the injunction that he should be imprisoned but not killed. Nevertheless, Piga had the prisoner executed. Moreover, he sent a

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disrespectful message to the Mogho Naba asking that a horse which a Fulani had stolen from him and presented to the ruler be returned. Doulougou sent an army to chastise Piga, who quickly fled and later appealed to the Mogho Naba for pardon. No sooner had this pardon been granted than Piga again offended the Mogho Naba by granting refuge to his wayward son, who had been expelled from Ouagadougou. The Mogho Naba subsequently forgave his son, but he decided to punish the recalcitrant Piga once and for all. Piga fled at the approach of the royal army, but Doulougou, who had accompanied his troops, was wounded by an enemy arrow and died shortly after his return to Ouagadougou.[10]

A later Mogho Naba, Sanum (ca. 1861), fought, defeated, and executed Naba Zande of Boulsa for taxing the Boulsa people so heavily that they rebelled. After Zande was succeeded by his brother Yemde (ca. 1863–72), the Mogho Naba continued to intervene in Boulsa's affairs and eventually had Yemde executed. Yemde's undoing was the result of his inability or unwillingness to implement the Mogho Naba's desire—which was contrary to Mossi custom—to elect a ten-year-old boy to the chieftainship of Koupela district. The Koupela chief's brother ignored his young nephew and seized the nam; Yemde sent an army to depose him, but his men were routed. Suspecting treachery on Yemde's part, Mogho Naba Sanum sent an army to defeat and depose him and to place his father's brother in command of Boulsa. Yemde defeated the Mogho Naba's army. His victory was short-lived, however, because the Mogho Naba sent a larger army and routed his forces. Yemde fled to the territory of the Boussouma Dim and requested asylum. The Boussouma ruler, Ligidi, did not wish to incur the wrath of the Mogho Naba and dispatched Yemde to Ouagadougou. Yemde apparently convinced the Mogho Naba of his loyalty, but he was executed because he had inadvertently violated the rule that no descendant of a Kourita might see a Mogho Naba and live.[11]

Ligidi, in turn, found himself in conflict with the Mogho Naba. After surrendering Yemde to his sovereign, he had proceeded to Boulsa and seized some of the prisoner's property. At first the Mogho Naba paid no attention, but when he had made peace with Yemde's son, Kiba, he ordered Ligidi to return the property. Ligidi refused to do so and consequently became involved in a series of wars against Kiba and the Mogho Naba. Ligidi died of natural causes before peace was restored, leaving a legacy of hostility between Ouagadougou and Boussouma. Either in complicity with the ruling Mogho Naba (Wobogo) or in an attempt to gain his favor, the electors named Ligidi's brother, Kom, to the nam and ignored his son and rightful heir, Venewende. This unfortunate young man had no one to

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631 turn to, and fled to Wobogo for safety. Wishing to maintain good rela-
642 tions with Kom, the Mogho Naba forced Venewende to return to Bous-
628 souma, but with the injunction that he should not be killed. Nevertheless,
●175 the Boussouma ruler had the young prince executed. The angry Mogho Naba threatened reprisal and declared that "if the Boussouma chief was not careful, it would be too bad for all his people, because they would fare as badly as their chief."[12] He did not have an opportunity to carry out his threats, however, because the French arrived soon afterwards.

Whereas some Mogho Nanamse took an active interest in the affairs of their Dimdamba or even tried to control them, others hesitated to interfere with disobedient or recalcitrant subordinates, especially when they fought and quarreled among themselves. Mogho Naba Oubya did not interfere when a Boussouma ruler, Pougoula (1745–67), bragging that no one in the nation was strong enough to depose him, arrogantly annexed the Ouagadougou province of Pisila and chased its ruler into Yatenga. Pougoula then gave the chieftainship to the fugitive's son, on condition that he should henceforth recognize his sovereignty.[13] On another occasion, a recalcitrant Boussouma Dim called Zabo (ca. 1767–84) defeated and punished the people of the Mane principality for rejecting the ruler he had chosen for them. They insisted that the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou had given Zabo the right to express his preference for a certain ruler, but not the right of choice itself. They appealed to Mogho Naba Waraga for help, but he ignored them. It may well be that Waraga was too involved in a war with the recalcitrant Riziam Naba to interfere, but there is no evidence that he ever censured Zabo. Again, Mogho Naba Sanum apparently took no part when Zende (ca. 1862–76), the ruler of Tema principality, and Totoabo, the ruler of Yako, joined forces against the ruler of La in a dispute over an abducted wife.[14] Perhaps, like other Mossi rulers, he did not care to deal with men who fought over women.

The relationship between the Mogho Naba and the Dimdamba, then, apparently varied in accordance with the persons involved and their relative strength. Sometimes they quarreled and fought; sometimes the Mogho Naba remained aloof from the Dimdamba's affairs; and sometimes the Dimdamba obeyed their sovereign and came to his aid. The one aspect of this relationship that seems to stand out, especially when the Dimdamba had no serious grievance, is their reluctance to fight against the Mogho Naba. Even Piga, the most belligerent in a long line of quarrelsome Boussouma rulers, always fled when Mogho Naba Doulougou attacked him, because "he did not wish to oppose his sovereign."[15] As we have seen, Yemde did fight against Mogho Naba Sanum, but he did so mainly be-

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cause he thought Sanum had attacked him unjustly. For such acts of war, the Dimdamba involved usually lost their lives, and in at least one such case a Dim was turned over to the Mogho Naba by another Dim. We have seen that Dimdamba occasionally came to the aid of the Mogho Naba against another Dim.

A question of some importance is whether this relationship between the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou and the rulers of independent kingdoms and autonomous principalities was characteristic of Mossi society or a rather late development. Was warfare the natural concomitant of a system in which the normally powerful Ouagadougou ruler was sometimes too weak to command allegiance from his peers and subordinates? Did the Mogho Naba resort to warfare as the only possible means of exercising his authority when his commands were challenged or ignored? Delafosse states, "Sometimes . . . , especially in very recent times, discord arose between the emperor [of Ouagadougou] and some of his vassal kings: thus Naba Sanum had to fight against the desire for independence of the kings of Boussouma and Boulsa."[10] Delafosse seems to suggest that the Mossi people were undergoing a period of stress when the Europeans arrived, and were faced with significant new administrative problems.

Here Binger appears to support Delafosse's view:

> Ever since he acceded to the throne, [Mogho Naba Sanum] has been compelled to govern the Mossi with unmitigated despotism. His fear of losing power led him to take such severe measures that he was forced to relax them. As soon as his major vassals saw this, they took these concessions as signs of fear and began to conspire secretly against him. Today, the chiefs of Mani, Boussouma, Yako, and Koupela represent forces with which Naba Sanum will have to reckon. . . . Before long, the Mossi empire will break up; the country will organize into confederacies like those of Beledougou and Yatenga.[11]

It is not completely clear, however, whether Binger really understood the intricacies of the Mossi political organization. He lists as "vassals" of the Mogho Naba such territories as Mane, Kaya, Koupela, Bonsa, Boussouma, Djitenga, Boulsa, Dakay, and Doulougou, as though they were all related to Ouagadougou in the same way. In reality, some were autonomous and some were directly dependent on the Ouagadougou ruler. It is possible that at the time of Binger's visit, the relations between the Mogho Naba and his subordinates were so fluid that the outsider had difficulty in understanding them. If this is the case, then the situation in Mossi country had indeed changed when the Europeans came in.

Crozat, who says the Mossi governmental structure was feudal in na-

645 dom during the interregnum.[23] The latter task was especially suited to a prime minister, since the Mossi regarded the interregnum as the most difficult period in their political life. The Ouidi Naba's administrative tasks 645 were considered so important that he never went to war and was theoreti- 643 cally immune from punishment or execution by the Mogho Naba. This [203] immunity was necessary, because the Mogho Naba had the right to execute anyone who brought him unwelcome news, and often did so. Since the Ouidi Naba announced good news as well as bad, it would have been folly to subject him to this rule. Some reports in the French colonial archives [195] state that the Mogho Naba was expected to follow the Ouidi Naba's advice at all times, and could not veto any of his actions. These reports add, moreover, that if a Ouidi Naba considered a Mogho Naba dangerous for the welfare of the country, he could rightfully compel the ruler to kill him- [762] self. According to Lambert, one Ouidi Naba known as Baba forced Mogho Naba Karfo (ca. 1800) to commit suicide. It appears that aside from waging a long and unpopular war against Naba Djighima of Lalle, this Mogho Naba had seized the riches of his wealthy subjects for distribution among the poor. Moreover, he allegedly dispensed justice without making much distinction between nobles and commoners, which so displeased the nobles that they encouraged the Ouidi Naba to put Karfo to death. Baba sent the sovereign a poisoned arrow and a message consisting of a single word: *ki* (die). Karfo allegedly committed suicide that very night.[24]

Thus, it appears that under certain conditions the prime minister could impeach his "all-powerful" sovereign. We cannot assume, however, that all prime ministers were sufficiently powerful to control the Mogho Naba. Many Mogho Nanamse limited their Ouidi Naba to merely giving advice on affairs of state and insisted that he concern himself solely with his own province.

634 The provinces administered by the five ministers were made up of 635 smaller entities or districts. The districts in the provinces of the Ouidi Naba, the Larhalle Naba, and the Gounga Naba were ruled by the sons 645 and other descendants of ancient Mogho Nanamse. The province controlled by the Kamsaogho Naba was more important. His districts were the wealthiest and among the most populous in the nation, and they brought the largest revenues to the Mogho Naba. The reason for this, of course, was that the Kamsaogho Naba was a eunuch and had no heirs; when he died, [768] all his riches reverted to the Mogho Naba. The province controlled by the Baloum Naba was the most difficult to administer. Its districts were ruled by the sons of recent Mogho Nanamse who felt that as holders of the nam they were free to appropriate the goods of the population. The Baloum

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686 634 692 died while he was using it, the owner could not press any claims. However, the borrower was obliged to sell the animal's flesh and give the money to the owner along with the animal's skin as proof of its death. Under no circumstances would a district chief absolve a man from paying the market value of an animal if he failed to return the skin. Such failure would brand him as a thief and involve an additional fine.

685 [674] The Mossi considered theft a major crime. A thief could be killed with impunity if he was caught in the act and in the presence of several witnesses. If these conditions were not met but the man killed was known to have been a thief, the killer was fined several cows. But if he was known to have been a man of good character, the killer ran the risk of being executed. In this way, the Mossi tried to prevent any abuse of an accepted practice. The theft of grain and other foodstuffs was considered especially reprehensible, because it was held to indicate that the thief was so depraved 685 that he would not even grow his own food. During the rule of Naba Kaglere of Nobere district (1888–1906), a man called Yahiya left his own village 175 of Donse and went to a village called Quitenga to steal sweet potatoes. The people of that village caught him in the act and shot him with a poisoned arrow as he made his escape. Yahiya died without revealing the source of his wound, and his babissi, suspecting foul play, asked Kaglere to investigate. When the Quitenga people learned of the investigation, they went forward voluntarily and reported the circumstances under which they had wounded Yahiya. Kaglere absolved them of all guilt and told the Donse people that Yahiya had deserved to die, not only because he had stolen food (which he might have received if he had asked for it), but because sweet potatoes were the easiest vegetable to cultivate.

685 [682] A thief who was too clever to be caught in the act but who was apprehended afterwards was treated quite harshly by the Mossi court. Here, the penalty of double indemnity was often applied. A man who was brought to court for stealing a chicken or guinea hen was fined a goat or a sheep. Hence the Mossi proverb "Zou noaga ronda bouga"—"He who steals a [696] chicken repays a goat." The thief who stole one cow had to return several. If a thief could not pay the fine, he was placed in stocks until his relatives paid for him. If they refused to do so, the chief's retainers seized their property, sold it, and made restitution. This often compelled the family of a [762] recidivous thief to make him commit suicide. If the family would not re- [634] sort to this, the district chief had the man seized and clubbed to death.[7] Sometimes the chief sent recidivists to the Mogho Naba, who sent them to a village called Teemetenga to be made into eunuchs.[8]

[565] [599] The Mossi seem to have made a distinction between theft and pillage—

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VI

WARFARE

THE Mossi were proud of their warrior tradition, which had earned them 721
their several kingdoms, principalities, and districts. Even the least district [173]
chief had stories about the wars in which his ancestors had wrested their territories from aboriginal populations. These traditions of conquest legitimized to a large extent the power of the Mossi kings and chiefs, who never hesitated to use force in order to obtain tribute, to maintain their rule, and to enforce their authority. The Mossi value fighting ability so [181]
highly that even today, when fighting is no longer necessary, most Mossi males in the rural areas carry sticks and other weapons on their shoulders as symbols of manhood. In their view, every man should know how to fight and should be able to defend his village, his district, and his kingdom.

According to tradition, the northward thrust of the Mossi warriors during the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries carried them into the 648
region of the Niger River bend. Here, around A.D. 1329, the Yatenga Mossi 173
attacked and sacked the town of Timbuktu, which belongs to the Mali. When Mali was on the decline during the early fifteenth century, the Mossi again attacked its towns. According to the *Tarikh es-Sudan*, when 648
the Mali ruler appointed Amin-ben-Ahmad jurisconsul of Timbuktu, 175

> the sultan of the Mossi led an expedition against Benka. The population of that region went out to engage the enemy, and at that time left others sitting around El Hadj. He pronounced certain words on the millet which was being served and asked those around him to eat of it. All of them ate except the son-in-law of El Hadj, who did not because he was related to him. "Now go and fight," said the holy man, "and you will have nothing to fear from the weapons of the enemy." All, in effect, returned safe and sound, and only those persons who did not eat the millet died in the battle. The king of the Mossi was routed, and his troops were chased without having seized anything from the people of Benka. All this thanks to the protection of the blessed person.[1]

Later, the Mossi attacked towns of the Songhai empire whenever they felt strong enough, only to be driven away later by a stronger adversary. Sa'di describes a Mossi incursion into the Songhai empire as follows:

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648 Sonni-Ali entered Kabara in the year 882 after the Hegira (1477); and it was
175 during the course of the same year that the king of the Mossi entered Sama. In 884 (1479) Sonni-Ali was at Tosoko. . . .

During the month of Jumada I of that year (July 9 to August 8, 1480), the king of the Mossi entered Biro [the Songhai name for Walata] and did not leave until Jumada II (August 8 to September 7, 1480). The siege lasted one month, and during that time he demanded a woman from the inhabitants. . . . After the siege the Mossi king gave battle to the inhabitants of Biro, vanquished them, and took them and their families into captivity. But, as he was returning to his country with his booty, the inhabitants of Biro followed and fought him, and freed their families. Omar-ben-Mohammed-Nadi, who was at Biro at this time, distinguished himself by his valor and ardor during the battle; for he was the first warrior to attack the Mossi king and thus force him to give up the families which had been captured.[2]

A few years later, the Mossi again invaded the area, this time making war on Sonni-Ali himself. The chronicler writes:

Then the prince Sonni-Ali undertook the task of digging a canal leading from Ras-el-Ma to Biro. He was devoting all his effort and a great deal of energy to this task when word reached him that the king of the Mossi had decided to make war on him, and was then leading the attack at the head of his troops. Sonni-Ali was at a place called Chan-Fenech when he heard this news, and he stopped work on the canal right there. God spared the inhabitants of Biro the misfortune which threatened them; for Sonni-Ali, going out to meet the king of the Mossi, made contact with him at a place called Djiniki-To'oi, situated near the town of Kobi behind the river. The battle took place there, and the victorious Sonni-Ali put the Mossi king to flight, and pursued him into his own country. That battle took place in the year 888 (1483).[3]

This battle seems to have represented the high point in the northern expansion of the Mossi, because the next reference to them in the *Tarikh es-Sudan* tells of Askia-El-Hadj-Mohammed's holy war against them. This man, who had usurped the throne from Sonni-Ali's heir, made a pilgrimage to Mecca, and when he returned he decided to convert the pagan masses of the Sudan to Islam:

During the year 903 (August 1497 to August 1498), he undertook an expedition against Na'asira, the king of the Mossi. He took with him the mallam, Mour-Salih-Djaaura, inviting him to give the necessary indications so that the expedition would be a veritable holy war made in the name of God. Mour did not refuse this request, and explained to the prince all the rules relative to the holy war. The prince of the faithful, Askia-Mohammed, then asked the mallam to be his envoy to the Mossi king. The learned holy man accepted this mission; he went to the country of the Mossi and delivered the letter of his master which called upon the king to embrace Islam. Before
[787] replying, the Mossi ruler declared that he wished first of all to consult his

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ancestors who were in the other world. Accompanied by his ministers, he 648
went to the temple of the idol of the country. The learned holy man went 175
there also, in order to see how one went about consulting the dead. They 787
began by making the customary offerings; then a very old man appeared. At his appearance everyone prostrated himself and then the king announced the object of his visit. Calling upon the names of the ancestors, the old man said: "I will never agree to this step for you. On the contrary, you must fight until you or they die to the last man."

Then Na'asira replied to the mallam: "Return to your master and tell 648
him that between us there will be only war and combat." Remaining alone 175
in the temple with the personage who appeared in the form of an old man, the mallam questioned him in these words: "In the name of God Almighty I ask you to declare who you are." "I am Iblis [Satan]," replied the deceiving old man; "I have led them astray so that they will all die in a state of unbelief."

Mour returned to prince Askia-El-Hadj-Mohammed and reported all which had come to pass. "Now," he added, "your duty is to fight them." Straightway he launched his war against them, killed a number of their men, devastated their fields, plundered their habitations, and took their children into captivity. All of the men and women who were taken away as captives were made the object of divine benediction [converted to Islam]. In the entire country, no other expedition outside of this one had the character of a holy war made in the name of God.[6]

The rulers of the Songhai appear to have kept up their attacks on the Mossi during the following hundred years. One of them, Askia Daoud, launched an expedition against the Mossi in 1549 to celebrate his accession to the throne. He attacked and defeated them again in 1561 while on his way to attack Bornou, and their ruler "abandoned the country with all his troops."[8] After this and several other crushing defeats, the Mossi refrained from attacking Songhai territory. Their ardor for external adventures apparently cooled after this period, and there are no reports of their fighting anyone else except the Bambara of Segou in the eighteenth century.[8] Of [721]
course, Mossi chiefs made local forays among smaller neighboring groups such as the Busansi, Gurunsi, and Samogo, but only to catch slaves.

During the nineteenth century—a rather chaotic period in the western Sudan—the Mossi appear to have been immune from outside attacks. Crozat, who visited them in 1890, states: "From the very first, in Mossi country, one feels that one has entered a new land, more peaceful, richer, and more populous [than other African countries he had visited]. . . . The people one meets on the roads are workers on their way to the fields, or are carrying wares to the neighboring market. They are not like the Songhai and the Bobo, who always carry bows on their shoulders."[7] The immunity of the Mossi from attack by such intrepid nineteenth-century

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648 warriors as El Hadj Omar and Samory Touré surprised and puzzled many
175 of their early visitors. Binger explains it as follows:

> Thanks to the primitive tribes that surrounded them like a rampart, the Mossi were spared the incursions of their powerful neighbors. This immunity cannot last much longer, because [Mogho Naba] Sanum is weak, has little spirit, and is badly counseled.[8]

Binger was partly correct in attributing the immunity of the Mossi to the presence of weaker groups on their borders. To the military adventurers of the period, the Mossi must have appeared invulnerable when compared to their weaker neighbors. Nevertheless, the Mossi declare that it was their vigilance and willingness to fight that prevented Samory Touré, among others, from invading their country.[9] They claim to have captured and executed nine of the ten spies he sent to survey their territory. The one spy who returned allegedly told Samory Touré that the Mossi were too strong to be attacked, because they banded together against all outsiders.

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Crozat attributes the Mossi freedom from attack to miraculous and magical factors:

> There is widespread belief in surrounding territories that Mossi country is inviolable. Alone amid the troubled populations that surround it, it enjoys relative peace. It owes this to the very special protection of a deity, and also to the virtues of the special talismans owned by the ruler of Ouagadougou. The terror inspired by these charms is such that some years ago the leader of Gadiari's column suffered a mass desertion of his men when he tried to lead them to the conquest of Mossi country. He himself was killed, perhaps by his own *sofas* [soldiers]. This case cannot be expected to undermine belief in these presumptuous charms.[10]

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This statement, like Binger's, contains an element of truth, but not in the way that Crozat believed. The Ouagadougou kingdom did have a series of ritual pacts with neighboring Mossi and non-Mossi groups. Crozat found that Mogho Naba Sanum was on "good terms" with the people of Fada-N'Gourma. He tells us that this friendship was maintained by a "curious custom" whereby the Ouagadougou ruler sent wives, captives, and horses from his predecessor's estate to the ruler of the Gurmanche.[11] Similarly, Pinchon, a British officer stationed in the Gold Coast at the beginning of the century, reports that there existed an ancient pact between the Mossi and the Mamprusi. This pact kept the ruler of each country from attacking the other on pain of death by the ancestors. Like the pact between the Mossi and the Gurmanche, this agreement was sanctioned by an annual gift of a horse, slaves, and cloth from the Mossi to the Mamprusi. Pinchon speculates that it was the existence of this pact that induced the Mamprusi

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ruler to grant asylum to Mogho Naba Wobogo in 1897. He adds that it was probably the injunction in the pact that they should never meet which prevented the ruler from personally receiving Wobogo.[18]

A ritual pact also bound the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou to the ruler of Dagomba. He sent him goods from the estate of the previous Mogho Naba as well as gifts for yearly sacrifices on the grave of Nyennega, the Mossi progenitrix. There are reports that the Ouagadougou ruler also exchanged annual presents with the Ashanti ruler, but it is not known whether these were courtesy gifts or goods sanctioning ritual pacts.

The ritual pacts among Mossi kingdoms and between them and their neighbors appear to have derived from actual or putative kinship ties. This seems to be supported not only by the traditions of the Mossi but also by those of the surrounding peoples. Whatever their origin, these pacts seem to have afforded their beneficiaries a remarkable degree of freedom from external aggression. It is possible that the Mossi and their neighbors really believed in the efficacy of supernatural sanctions, for purposes of mutual protection. But one suspects that it was the relative weakness of these various groups that caused them to rely on supernatural agencies rather than military might for protection. As will be pointed out below, the Mossi (and probably all of their important neighbors) had considerable difficulty in building and maintaining a fighting force sufficiently large to wage protracted or large-scale wars against foreign groups.

The Mossi kingdoms seldom fought among themselves, although their leaders quarreled over status and committed aggression against each other's territories. For example, the Ouagadougou rulers, who claimed suzerainty over Yatenga, often tried to impose their will on that kingdom. Yet, although they were usually rebuffed by the Yatenga Naba, they never tried to resolve the issue by force of arms. In fact, even when a Yatenga ruler appears to have given the Mogho Naba just cause for war, little fighting actually took place. Several times the Yatenga rulers seized such principalities as Riziam and Yako, which were dependent on Ouagadougou, but in no case did the Ouagadougou rulers wage war against them. In 1890, Crozat witnessed Mogho Naba Wobogo's attempt to stop a war between Yatenga and Yako. The Yako people wanted to obey their sovereign and stop the war, but the Yatenga monarch refused to do so.[19]

Crozat attributes the ineffectiveness of the Mogho Naba's authority over brother kingdoms to the fact that he had no standing army with which to enforce his rule. While relative strength may have been and probably was the main reason for the Mogho Naba's lack of aggressiveness, the ritual pact that prevented the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou from meeting the

628 642 643 175 [648] Yatenga Naba (and other rulers) or treading on his territory should not be overlooked. The suggestion that force was not the only consideration was lent force by later events. The French conquest later reduced the rulers of both Ouagadougou and Yatenga to impotence and obviated war between them, yet they did not meet until 1946—some fifty years after the conquest. They met then only because they had to represent their subjects at a meeting to plan the restoration of the Upper Volta and reunite all the descendants of Oubri and Ouedraogo into one territory.

Relative strength obviously played an important part in determining whether one Mossi kingdom interfered in the internal affairs of another. For example, when a Tenkodogo ruler asked a Mogho Naba to help him suppress Busansi subjects who had rebelled, the Mogho Naba readily complied.[14] But when a fratricidal struggle over the nam broke out in Tenkodogo in 1894, the Mogho Naba decided not to intervene even though he was asked to do so.[15]

628 643 669 175 The central governments of the various kingdoms found it necessary to wage war against their subordinate territories at regular intervals. In the Ouagadougou kingdom, most of these wars seem to have been administrative actions against a prince or district chief who had contravened an order from the Mogho Naba or refused to pay tribute. The Dimdamba were the Mogho Naba's most rebellious subordinates, and it was against them that he fought most of his wars. Characteristic of these wars was the series between Naba Ligidi (1866–90), Dim of Boussouma province, and Mogho Naba Sanum.[16] Ligidi had seized and turned over to the Mogho Naba the recalcitrant Naba Yemde, then Dim of Boulsa, and confiscated the rebel's property. Later on, when the Mogho Naba had made peace with Yemde's son, Naba Kiba, he asked Ligidi to surrender the seized property. Ligidi refused to do so, and the angry Mogho Naba sent the royal army into his territory. The army sacked and burned several villages and retreated. Ligidi's forces skirmished with the rear guard but abandoned pursuit near the Ouagadougou border.

Ligidi took his revenge by helping a district chief who had rebelled against Naba Kiba. While he was thus engaged, the royal army again attacked and defeated him. Four days later, it reinvaded Boussouma, engaged Ligidi's forces at a place called Goudri, and won a brilliant victory. Despite Ligidi's furious counter-attacks, the army captured his capital, Ouayougya. The ruler's army finally returned to Ouagadougou, satisfied that Ligidi was thoroughly beaten. But the Mogho Naba had underestimated Ligidi's tenacity. For the next ten years, this Dim waged war against his fellow Dimdamba. The Mogho Naba finally grew tired of his depreda-

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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tions and launched another expedition against Ouayougya. The expedition failed because of a lack of water, and the army was forced to return to Ouagadougou. The war would have continued had not both Mogho Naba Sanum and Ligidi died in 1890. 628 669 175 643

It appears that the Mogho Naba tolerated fighting among his immediate subordinates, and seldom intervened in local wars unless one of the combatants openly flouted his authority. For example, when the autonomous principality of Riziam attempted to wrest control of Salmetenga district from Boussouma province, Mogho Naba Doulougou did not intervene. He knew that Salmetenga owed allegiance to Boussouma, but was perfectly willing to allow its ruler to transfer allegiance to Riziam. When Boussouma was on the brink of defeat, the Salmetenga Naba fled to Ouagadougou to seek asylum. The Mogho Naba sent him back to Naba Piga, the Boussouma Dim, with the request that he be allowed to live. Piga was so angry with the chief that he ignored the Mogho Naba's request and executed him. This incurred the wrath of Mogho Naba Doulougou, and he sent an army to attack Piga. Fortunately for this disobedient Dim, the Mogho Naba died and the attack was called off.[17]

The reaction of Mogho Naba Koutou to fighting among his subordinates was more typical. He did not interfere in a long series of battles between the principalities of Riziam and Mane which culminated in 1866 when the Riziam people seized, imprisoned, and executed several Mane merchants who had gone to buy salt in Timbuktu. Mane appealed to its brother province of Boussouma for aid, and Riziam appealed to a Fulani chieftain for reinforcements. Before a battle could ensue, however, the Boussouma Dim, Naba Siguiri, died after drinking some millet beer, and the fighting was called off. Naba Kom of Mane then went off alone with his army, defeated the Fulani, and killed their chief, Sekki. When Ligidi (the chief mentioned above) succeeded his father, Naba Siguiri, he elected to continue the war against Riziam with the help of the Mane army, but the battle was inconclusive. The stalemate did not satisfy the bellicose Ligidi, who attacked Riziam once more in 1871, burning villages and seizing property. The Riziam people finally rallied and halted him. They ambushed his soldiers when they tried to retreat, and harried them so thoroughly that Ligidi had to call off the war when slaughter and thirst decimated his ranks.[18] [648]

Similarly, Mogho Naba Sanum did not interfere when one of his own district chiefs, the Salogho Naba, was attacked and defeated by the ruler of Tema principality. Nor did he enter the fray when another of his district chiefs was attacked and defeated by the Boulsa Dim. The fighting in both 628 669 175 643 634

cases was over women. The Tema Dim successfully defended his principality against a Zittenga district chief who not only had the effrontery to demand the return of a wife who had fled into Tema but also invaded the principality when she failed to return.[19] The Boulsa Dim attacked and defeated the Salogho Naba when he refused to repatriate a man and woman convicted of adultery who had fled into his district. It is possible that in each case the Mogho Naba refused to become involved in a squabble over women, but it is more likely that he refrained from participating in a local war that did not threaten the security of the entire country.

Many Dimdamba made it a practice to help each other in wars against common enemies. In the middle of the nineteenth century, Naba Zende of Tema and Naba Totoabo of Yako joined in a war against Naba Sebogo of La when Sebogo refused to repatriate one of Totoabo's wives, who had fled into his territory. The two victorious allies burned villages in La and forced Sebogo to flee for his life. They searched for the woman, but she was never found. The successors of the three rulers remained embittered by this war and eventually renewed the fighting. On this occasion, Naba Tanga of Tema and Naba Sagha of Yako fought against Naba Kombase of La. But this time Yako and Tema were unable to defeat La and had to withdraw. There is no evidence that the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou took any part in these wars.[20]

The Mogho Naba appears to have taken a greater interest in wars between his Dimdamba and non-Mossi populations, and to have profited by them occasionally. When the followers of a Fulani chief named Karfo carried off some cattle belonging to the Boussouma people, the Boussouma Dim, Naba Siguiri, threatened war if the animals were not returned. Karfo not only refused to surrender the cattle but insulted Siguiri in his reply. Siguiri marched against the Fulani, killed Karfo, seized all the cattle he could find, and sent some of the "most beautiful animals" to Mogho Naba Koutou.[21]

Although the Mogho Naba tolerated wars among his Dimdamba, he apparently forbade the district chiefs under his direct command to fight among themselves. As we saw in Chapter IV, some such fighting did take place, but the Mogho Naba seems to have ignored it in most cases because of its relative unimportance. The Mossi, on the other hand, magnified this local fighting, which they called *tengkom* ("civil war"), and which consisted of mere skirmishes between villages or neighboring districts, with few casualties. In fact, the Gounga Naba once stopped a war between districts after only nineteen persons had died. But as a rule, districts seldom if ever fought among themselves. The actual combatants were villagers

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who fought the villagers of other districts over stray livestock, stolen goods, and runaway women, in that order of frequency.

The main reason for these inter-village wars was the lack of local mechanisms (aside from meetings of district chiefs) to deal with problems between villagers of different districts. If the district chiefs refused to meet, they could either refer the matter to the provincial level or allow the villages to resolve the problem among themselves. Many district chiefs preferred the latter course because it saved them from interference by the authorities in the capital. Besides, these problems were usually unimportant and did not pit one entire district against another. People of different districts were often bound to each other by familial and ritual ties, and did not like to fight against relatives. Only when the potential combatants were unrelated or all attempts at reconciliation failed would the people of a village (and occasionally of a district) band together, either secretly without their chiefs or under their chiefs, and go to war. In such cases, persons who had relatives in the enemy villages often remained at home.

The inhabitants of Mossi districts did band together eagerly under their chiefs to participate in slave-raiding expeditions into non-Mossi territories. This type of warfare seems to have been fairly common. Ruelle writes, "Before our [French] occupation, warfare was the chief preoccupation of the chiefs. Moreover, expeditions into Gurunsi country had as their goal pillage and the procurement of slaves for sale."[22] Similarly, Mangin states, "The Gurunsi and Busansi were frequently raided with the sole intent of obtaining slaves."[23] Binger gives the following description of a Mossi slave-catching expedition and the subsequent disposal of the slaves:

> During my second stay at Banema, Boukary [later Mogho Naba Wobogo], knowing my aversion to pillage and slavery and fearing to displease me, sent off two expeditions during the night without warning me—one to Nabouli, and the other towards the south to Baouer'a. By six o'clock in the morning of the following day, the returning horsemen were heralded by gunshots. Soon afterwards, a line of slaves of both sexes appeared, tied to each other by a cord slung around their necks. The expedition to Nabouli brought back seventeen slaves; that to Baouer'a brought only five, along with an ass laden with salt and a little cotton. As soon as these unfortunate people arrived, they were given water to drink, and mallets were used to remove the rings and copper bracelets which they wore on their arms and legs. Then they were classified into three categories:
>
> 1. The men formed a lot destined for immediate sale for fear that they should run away. They were led forthwith to Sakhaboutenga, to be exchanged against sorghum for the horses, millet for the personnel, and gunpowder.
> 2. A second lot, composed of women, was kept as a reserve to trade for horses.

634 721 567 175

3. Finally, a third lot, composed of young girls and young boys, was distributed among the warriors and put into their charge. The boys will be employed until further notice as grooms to the warriors; later on, those who prove themselves useful and docile will be kept. The others will be sold at the first opportunity. The girls will be given in marriage to warriors who distinguish themselves.[24]

721 643 644 701 [645]

The military campaigns of the Mossi, in contrast to their slave-raiding expeditions, appear to have been well organized. When the Mogho Naba felt that a war was necessary, he summoned his five provincial ministers and the Tansoba to a parley. If war was decided upon, the Tansoba was given full charge of all operations. This man, chosen from a hereditary clan of warriors who lived in a village called Tansob'tenga in Sapone district, was listed among the Mogho Naba's courtiers but seldom appeared at court unless war was imminent. His duties as chief warrior were considered so dangerous that he constantly sought out religious practitioners for supernatural aid. Nevertheless, a war minister who was good and brave was not expected to live very long. If he did live to become gray-haired, the other courtiers made fun of him by pretending that his graying head could only be the result of his having carried a sheep captured in warfare on his head as a present to the ruler.

701 721 644 [202] [411]

Once given a mandate for war, the Tansoba collected his magico-religious apparatus and prepared the requisite sacrifices. He then asked the provincial ministers to notify the district chiefs to assemble with their warriors under the leadership of the local Tansobadamba, who were often members of the Tansoba clan. When the district chiefs received this notice, they beat their *zongagondo* (war drums), and the local administrators sent orders for men to the village chiefs. The village chiefs, in turn, beat their war drums to summon their noble cavalrymen and commoner foot soldiers, who came armed with bows and arrows, spears, swords, and clubs, with or without iron tips. The tips of the sharp weapons were often covered with a vegetable poison derived from a shrub of the Strophanthus species. Some of the men also carried guns after firearms were introduced among the Mossi from the desert region and from the coast. Many carried rawhide shields.

[278] [411] [177] [714]

701 726 [648]

As soon as the village contingents had assembled and had gathered their provisions, they marched to the district centers. Then they proceeded either to the place of battle or to Ouagadougou. In the latter case, they became part of the royal army and were joined by the forces of those princes who were prepared to honor their obligation to the Mogho Naba. For example, when the French invaded Ouagadougou in 1896, the Boulsa Dim sent his prime minister "at the head of an army to aid Mogho Naba

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the Niger River area to the Gold Coast and Togoland. Important stops were made at such Mossi centers as Ouagadougou, Bere, Dakay, La, Mane, Yako, and Koupela.[7] At Dori, northwest of Ouagadougou, Barth found Mossi with "their fine donkeys, which are greatly sought after." He adds that in addition, 645 651 439 [487] [443]

> the people of Mossi supply this market with gabaga, or "tari" [cotton bands], as Arabs near Timbuktu call them, cotton being extremely cheap in their country, so that in the great market places of that country, especially in Kulfela [Koupela, but really at Poitenga a few miles away], an indigo-colored shirt is not worth more than from 700 to 800 [cowry] shells. . . . Besides salt, cotton strips, dyed cloth, kola nuts, corn, and asses, some copper manufactured chiefly into large drinking-vessels is also brought into the market by the people of Mossi. However, I do not think they manufacture the copper vessels themselves, but bring them from Ashanti.[8]

Dubois, one of the early visitors to Timbuktu, tells us that he saw Mossi men carrying on their traditional trade in that city. Mossi traders dealt in such diverse commodities as millet, rice, manioc, peanuts, honey, kola nuts, peppers, dried onions, tobacco, dried fish, soap, iron, antimony, lead, cotton bands, straw hats, mats, jars, pots, and calabashes. They traded these articles for needles, mirrors, beads, coral, amber, tea, coffee, perfumes, carpets, fezzes, tailored robes, and salt. What impressed Dubois most was that while the merchants from Bamako, Djenne, Sansanding, and Touat enjoyed themselves at Timbuktu, "the great town of pleasures with the freest morals in the Sudan," and spent a great deal of money in gifts to beautiful women, "the Mossi did not waste their money, and left as soon as they had finished their business."[9] On the way south, Mossi and other caravaneers picked up goods from the Yatenga and other northern Ouagadougou provinces before stopping at the capital and then proceeding to the forest regions. 175 439

It is impossible to determine the exact volume of caravan trade that passed through Mossi country, and the amount of revenue it brought to the Mossi rulers. We can get some idea of this trade, however, by examining the customs reports on goods crossing the border between Mossi country and the northern territories of the Gold Coast in the few years just following European conquest. 439 [651]

The official figures for 1901 and 1903 are as follows:[10]

Year	Horses	Head of Cattle	Sheep and Goats	Loaded Donkeys	Bales of Cotton Cloth
1901	126	3,111	18,181	2,095	236
1903	196	6,624	30,392	4,294	269

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567 643 651 [464] [439] Naba Baongo (ca. 1800–30) decided that it was more profitable to sell them.[16] Subsequent rulers, especially the two Mogho Nanamse who ruled just prior to the French conquest, sold most of their captives to passing caravans or in special sections of the larger markets. When other persons sold slaves in the market, the Raga Naba collected some 1,000 cowries on each transaction—the largest tax on any market commodity.

567 839 [752] [439] [175] The Mossi rulers seem to have benefited even more from the sale of eunuchs, for they had a monopoly over them. The Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou sent some captured slaves and all recidivous thieves to Teemetenga village in Koubri district, some 13 miles south of the capital, to be operated upon.[17] So successful were the Mossi surgeons that—in contrast to specialists in other areas, who lost nine lives for every successful castration—the mortality among the Mossi was only one out of ten.[18] Some of the eunuchs furnished by the Mossi were sold as far away as Constantinople, a fact which surprised the French ambassador to Turkey who saw them there in 1900.[19]

566 643 563 621 In addition to slaves and eunuchs, the Mogho Naba kept a large number of bondsmen to provide services for him. One group, the Dapore, lived in a ward of the capital called Dapoya, and had a chief, the Dapore Naba, who was himself a Dapore. The origin of these people is obscure, but they seem to have been the children of foreign captives who were brought to Ouagadougou and placed in the ruler's service. Some of them even claimed that their ancestors had come to Ouagadougou voluntarily and had placed themselves under the care and protection of the ruler. This seems unlikely, however, since the status of these people resembles that of persons captured by Sudanese rulers and installed in special wards as serfs.[20] Some of the Dapore lived in villages of their own and cultivated fields for the Mogho Naba. Others lived in a ward of Ouagadougou, served in the palace household, and provided the royal executioners. Some were selected to serve as palace eunuchs, and placed under the charge of the Kamsaogho Naba. The Dapore were hardly ever sold unless they were convicted criminals. The Mogho Naba and his chiefs refrained from selling serfs or captives who had been born in Mossi country. However, they often claimed the sons and daughters of these people as pages or pughsiudse. [839] [567]

The Baglere made up the second group of bondsmen providing services for the Mogho Naba. They, too, lived in a special ward and were headed by the Baglere Naba, one of their own people. Their origin is also obscure: some of them claimed to be descended from Fulani slaves who had run away from their masters and sought asylum in Mossi country; others believed that they were the descendants of foreign captives. The Baglere

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long been famous. The former are sometimes ridden but are used primarily as beasts of burden. Horses were and are still important for military and ceremonial purposes and for external trade to other areas.

The Mossi have never excelled in metalworking. The people in the northern part of the country have worked indigenous ores since aboriginal times. Those in the south get iron mainly from traders and caravans. The other metals which the Mossi smiths manufacture into tools and ornaments are also obtained from traders.

TRADE IN HISTORICAL TIMES

The geographic position of Mossi country has much to do with its being an important trade and market center. The country itself has always produced grain, cotton and livestock for export. And for several centuries caravans have passed through this region carrying Sudanese and Saharan products to the forest zones to the south, and carrying forest products back to the arid north. The beginning of this trade is lost in the dim past, but it safe to say that it developed shortly after or along with the founding of Timbuktu about 1100 A.D. The Mossi themselves were not definitely linked to this important *entrepot* until they raided it in 1328, but we can assume that they had been trading there for some time before that event took place. Similarly, we have no record of when the Mossi began trading with the forest zones, but we can also assume that this trade began around the same period or even before.

Our first evidence of Mossi trade and commerce comes from Europeans who were themselves interested in conducting their own trading activities with the peoples in the Bend of the Niger. Bowditch, an Englishman who had journeyed to Ashanti to sign a treaty facilitating the reopening of a profitable trade with the coast, wangled the first important piece of information about the Mossi from his reluctant hosts:

> Five journies from Yngwa is Mosee, a more warlike but less visited kingdom: it consists of many states, but the superior monarch is named Billa, and the capital Kookoopella. I place it to the N.W. because its merchants pass by Yngwa; they do not cross the Karhalla [White Volta] nor any river which is not fordable. (Bowditch 1819 : 180)

This information is not strictly correct since Koupela was not the capital of any of the Mossi kingdoms, but Bowditch's informant had probably heard of Koupela because it was the largest political entity near the large caravan center at Pouitenga.

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175 437 Dupuis, who replaced Bowditch in Kumasi in 1817, obtained surprisingly good data on trade relations between the Ashanti and the Mossi, considering the reluctance of the middlemen traders to furnish any help in this matter. He discovered that Ashanti traders

[103] . . . sometimes travel as far as Aughoa, the Magho, and to the east of Kasogho. Aughoa is distant from Coomassie twenty-five journies by the Salgha and Yandy Roads, which would give a distance of three hundred that vegetable substance . . . by the name of Shea butter. (Dupuis 1824 : App. cvii)[1]

The Hausa merchants and caravaneers knew a great deal about the Mossi and their resources, but it was only with great difficulty that Clapperton persuaded Sultan Mohammed Bello of Sokoto to give him the following information:

[101] The country of Mouchier or Mouchi is situated to the west of Ghurma. It is vast and possesses a gold mine, rivers, forests and mountains. It is inhabited by tribes of the Sudan who possess many fast horses, and large donkeys. Their king is called Wagadougou; their asses are sent down to the Gondja to carry the drums of the army. (Clapperton 1829 : 323)

It is obvious that either Clapperton or his informant confused the capital of the Mossi with their king, and included parts of Ghana in [23] their territory. Nevertheless, one does get an indication of the importance of livestock in Mossi trading.

The great bulk of the trade between the Mossi and their neighbors to the north and to the south was done through the medium of 175 caravans which crisscrossed their territory. The first person to signal 437 the existence of these caravans was Barth (1859 : III, 646–648) who, 487 although he did not enter Mossi country during his extensive travels in the Sudan from 1849 to 1855, reported the existence of several caravan routes which traversed the Mossi from the desert to the [103] forest. The first route he described proceeded from "Kirotashi, a town on the east side of the Niger, one day south of Say, to Woghodogho." [366] Ten days out of Kirotashi caravans usually reached Tengkodogo, and on the thirteenth day they arrived at Koupela which according to

(1) The Aughoa referred to here is really "Wagha," the term often used by the Mossi [131] when talking about their capital, Waghadougou. Magho is really "Mogho" the name of Mossi country itself, and Kasoagho is the name of a province of Wagadougou commanded by a minister of the Moro Naba, the Kasoagho Naba. Dupuis' report on the actual distance between Kumasis and Waghadougou is almost the same mileage as that [366] of today. Koelle (1854 : 6) received a report from a slave liberated in Sierra Leone in [648] 1854 that the great Mossi trading center "Kupeala is four days from Wardugu, the Mossi capital, whither the king of Asante often sends presents; and one month from Salak (Salaga), an Asante town, where they bring their cola-nuts."

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Barth was "a well-frequented market place of Mosi, and of greater importance than all the other towns of Mosi; the governor's name is Nabere Gager. The inhabitants are celebrated archers." Barth states that by the fifteenth day, or two days later, the caravans usually arrived at Wagadougou, but he tells us in a note that:

> Other people, in going slowly from Kulfela to Woghodogho, spend eight days on the road, sleeping the first night in Pashipanga, the second in Tangay, the third in Zorogo, the next in a place ruled by a man called Mane Bogonje, the fifth in another village called Tangay, and reach Woghodogho on the eighth. (Marc 1909 : 27)[2]

Finally, he reports that another spur of this caravan route ran from Tengkodogo to Sansanne Mangho, in what is now Togoland. This journey took five days.

The second caravan route described by Barth ran from Djibo, the capital of the province of Gilgohi or Jilgodi (about 60 miles south from Montdoro, 55 miles West-Southwest from Aribinda and 35 miles South-Southwest from Tinie) by way of Kaya, to Mane and finally to Wagadougou. A caravan leaving Djibo entered Kelbo, the first village of the territory of Mossi on the eighth day, but according to Barth the "border district in general is regarded as very unsafe." On the fourteenth day the caravan entered Kaya;

> ... an important place where several roads meet. And from Kaya the route went to Wagadougou by way of Boussouma, Mane and Yako. It took a caravan ten days to traverse it.[3]

The third major caravan route that Barth described lay entirely within Mossi country. It ran from Mane to "Yadega" (probably Wahigouya, the capital of the kingdom of Yatenga) by way of Yako, and it took a caravan eight days to travel it. The fourth caravan route lay between Mane and a place called Kong by way of Tema, Yako, La and other places. On the tenth day a caravan reached Kong;

> ... a large place, according to my informant, inhabited by Bambara. It can scarcely be identical with the well-known Kong, if the itinerary be correct; but nevertheless it may be the case.

The first day after the caravan left Kong to return to Mane, it

(2) Barth received fairly accurate information about the caravan routes, and Marc was impressed with his data. Nevertheless, Marc finds it impossible to believe that caravans took two days to travel the twenty-five miles between Tengkodogo and Koupela, and only two more days to travel the ninety odd miles from Koupela to Wagadougou. Barth obviously erred here, but the timetable he gives for those persons "going slowly" from Koupela to Wagadougou appears to be quite correct.

(3) It is highly unlikely that a caravan going to Wagadougou from Kaya would have gone through Mane and Yako unless the caravaneers were interested in tapping the resources of these two western towns before heading straight south to their destination.

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175 stopped at "Fura, a large market place." On the fourth day it stopped
437 at Dullugu (probably present-day Doulougou), and on the fifth day
439 at "Dakay [or Rakay] a place belonging to the territory of Mosi."
103 Finally, on the thirteenth day it arrived at Mane.[4] The last caravan route that Barth reported ran from:

> Kaye to Belussa [Boulsa], and thence to Belanga [Bilanga] ... From Belussa a person on horseback reaches Belanga comfortably the second day, the great station between these two towns being Alitinga, still belonging to Mosi, and an important place, inhabited by Mosi and Hausa traders; but common native travellers generally halt twice between Belanga and Alitinga, in Nyennyega and Koburi [Kouri], and once between Alitinga and Belanga, in a Gurma village called Yamba.

175 The goods which these caravans carried appear to have varied a
437 great deal. Barth met a Mossi caravan at Dori, southeast of Timbuktu,
439 and reported that to this market:

> [23] The people of Mosi bring chiefly their fine donkeys, which are greatly sought after; and a numerous body of people of the Sheikh A'hmedu, of Hamda-Ailahi, had left a few days before with a number of asses which
> [438] they had brought here. Besides asses, the people of Mosi supply this market
> [439] with gabaga [cotton strips] or tari, as the Arabs near Timbuktu call them, cotton being extremely cheap in their country, so that in the great market place of that country, especially in Kulfela [Koupela, but really at Pouitenga a few miles away] an indigo-colored shirt is not worth more than from 700 to 800 [cowry] shells ... Besides salt, cotton strips, dyed cloth, Kola nuts, corn, and asses, some copper manufactured chiefly into large drinking vessels is also brought into the market by the people of Mosi. However, I do not think they manufacture the copper vessels themselves, but bring them from Asanti. (Barth 1859 : III, 203–4)

Adolphe Krause, a German who was actually the first European to enter Mossi country, went through Wagadougou with a load of kola nuts destined for Timbuktu. He joined the caravan at Salaga on July 7, 1885, stopped at the Bere market in Mossi country during August, and then proceeded to their capital where he remained until October 26 before resuming his northward journey (Krause 1887–8).

Felix Dubois, who visited Timbuktu in 1895, gives us some information on the actual products which the Mossi traded there. He reported that the Mossi came to the market organized into caravans of oxen, donkeys and porters, and brought such commodities as livestock, millet, rice, manioc, peanuts, honey, kola nuts, peppers, dried onions, tobacco, dried fish, soap, iron, antimony, lead, cotton bands, straw hats, mats, jars, pots and calabashes. These goods the Mossi

(4) Barth's skill as a reporter is evident here. He is quite correct in disbelieving that the caravans could have reached Kong on the tenth day. Marc, 1909, agrees with Barth.

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traded for such articles as needles, mirrors, beads, coral and amber, tea, coffee, fezes, tailored robes, and most important of all, salt (Dubois 1899 : 292–304). Presumably, by the time Dubois reported on this trade, the Mossi had stopped trading slaves and eunuchs into this region, because we know from other sources that these people were sold through Timbuktu as far north as Algeria and Constantinople.[8]

The caravans which brought desert and northern goods into Mossi country collected grain, cotton cloth, livestock and slaves to be sold in the forest areas. Captain Lonsdale, an Englishman who visited Salaga in 1881 and gave a good description of its markets and traders, includes among the latter

> ... the Mossi with his cattle, sheep and slaves—these latter, generally Gurunsi, are not exposed for sale in the street or market, but can be seen where the owner resides. (Lonsdale 1882)

The extent to which the Mossi people themselves participated in all aspects of the caravan trade which crossed their country is far from clear. Barth, Lonsdale and Dubois all report that the Mossi were members of the caravans both in the forest zone and in Timbuktu, and my own informants agree with these reports. In contrast, however, both Marc and Tauxier believe that the Mossi were seldom the actual caravaneers. Marc declares that the Yarse

> ... are the most numerous group devoting itself to commerce in the region which we occupy. This is equally true of the Hausa, but probably only over the last years. Moors come sometimes from Dori as far as Wagadougou. One seldom meets Mande-Dioulas. As for the pure Mossi, it was only a short while ago that they themselves began to follow the caravans. (Marc 1909 : 170–71)

Similarly, Tauxier states that

> ... it is not the Mossi who do this [caravan] trading but the Yarse we know so well, and the Hausa settled in Mossi territory. Mossi trade, therefore, is not really Mossi, or at least it was not in the past. If it has now begun to be to some extent, it is thanks to the French settlement in the territory. (Tauxier 1912 : 538)

In the face of the early reports by Barth and others, how does one resolve the contradiction apparent in Tauxier's comments? These early travelers might have mistaken the Yarse for Mossi since these

(8) Marc, 1909 : 170–171. "We met in Mossi country two natives who, when children, had been seized [as slaves] and led through Timbuktu as far as Algeria ... The commerce in slaves was doubled among the Mossi by commerce in eunuchs. Mossi country was one of those rare countries where people knew how to make them, and the Moro Nabas exported with great profit as far as Constantinople those whom they had had mutilated."

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175 437 441 people have become Mossicized in language and culture, but it is doubtful whether they would have taken the Hausa for Mossi. The true Mossi may have played a minor role in the caravan trade, but I am certain that they took part in it and that they did so before the French conquest of their country.

175 437 439 There is little doubt that the Mossi traded with the caravans that passed *through* their country. Crozat, who visited Moro Naba Wobogo six years before the conquest, reported that the king

[443] . . . appeared to have had some business relations with white merchants who came up to Salaga every dry season. He sent horses to them in exchange for silver. He claims that he had no reasons to be pleased with their integrity and that the silver which they sent to him contained plenty of copper. It happens also that traders may come as far as Wagadougou, bringing merchandise of German origin. There was one of them on hand during my stay at Wagadougou. I was told that he was an important marabout, a shereef, perhaps an Arab or a Moor, for I was assured that he was very light in color. As was repeated to me several times, his relations with the king were limited to the solemn greetings on Fridays. He has never entered the royal hut in spite of being an important marabout. He was at Wagadougou for about three and one-half months, but he was compelled to return to the coast since the merchandise which he had brought was exhausted. He spoke no Mossi. (Crozat 1891)

The caravans which passed through Mossi country were well organized but seemed to have lacked the regularity which was characteristic of the trans-Sahara ones. Those caravans coming from the north were apparently more regular since they had to await the coming of the great trans-Sahara caravans, which brought them salt and other [366] valuable merchandise. Those coming from Salaga and points south [221] traveled at all times of the year, a fact which is corroborated by the voyage of Krauss, who arrived at the Bere market during August and the height of the Mossi planting season. This was a period of scarcity or "hungry period" as Krauss himself observed, and it is doubtful whether the Mossi had much to trade at this time. Nevertheless, caravaneers always found some trade goods at the larger Mossi market centers all through the year, even if only cloth and cotton bands.

[22] The main season for external trade in Mossi country came after the harvest. In the words of Marc, who served there shortly after the conquest:

Towards the end of the rainy season, in September or October, the [34] Yarse begin to assemble the livestock in order to leave for the south. In certain large commercial centers like Kaya, Pouitenga, Dakay, one finds [422] around this period the owners of livestock: Mossi chiefs, Fulani or rich natives, who are ready to sell their animals. People also assemble sheep of

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people also assemble sheep of
the Mossi variety, which are very puny. The larger variety of long-haired 175
Macina sheep are seldom exported. Once the livestock has been assembled, 437
the chief of the caravan would also provide himself with cotton bands. 439
This native fabric has often been described; it is commonly used on the [231]
caravan routes to pay for the food of the travellers. (Marc 1909 : 172) [436]

Most of the caravans through Mossi country traveled as much as 175
fifteen or twenty miles a day. They left at the first sign of dawn, 437
traveled steadily until the heat became too intense, and then stopped 484
to rest. They resumed their march when the sun was midway between the zenith and the horizon, and then stopped at some village or stream for the night. This schedule was followed on the next day if the caravan was far from a market center, but in the vicinity of a large market the caravan might remain stationary as many as six days while its merchants traded for more livestock or merchandise. This being 175
the case, it is difficult to gauge how long it took the caravans to make 437
the journey from Salaga in Ghana to Timbuktu. Our best data come 484
from an analysis of Krauss' itinerary. He left Salaga with a caravan 187
on July 7, 1885, heading north through Walwale, and arrived in Bere, 103
a distance of some 250 miles (today's road mileage) towards the end of August. Famine delayed the caravan at Bere for some time, and he [231]
did not complete the 50 miles or so to Wagadougou until September 24. He remained in the Mossi capital until October 26, some thirty-two days, before his caravan headed north again through Tema, Yatenga and Bandiagara. Krauss does not tell us when he reached Douentza, some 400 miles northweast of Wagadougou, or how long he remained there, but on December 7, a few days after he had left Douenzta on the last 200- or 250-mile leg of his voyage to Timbuktu, the Moro Naba ordered him to return to Wagadougou. It is possible that it took Krauss' caravan some thirty-five odd days to make the trip from Wagadougou to Douentza. His return to Wagadougou took him only about thirty days, since he arrived there on January 7, 1886. He apparently had to wait some fifteen days there for a caravan going south, because he did not leave the Mossi capital until January 22, 1886 (Krause 1887–88). Judging from this itinerary, it probably took caravans between five and six months to travel from the forest zones to the desert, a distance of about a thousand miles at the most. This averages about six or seven miles a day, with the normal stops for rest and marketing, instead of the fifteen or twenty miles a day which the average caravan covered when it was on the road.

The caravans did not encounter many dangers or difficulties during 175
their voyage. When the caravaneers had friends along the way they 437
stopped at their friends' homes for the night, and when they camped 484
in uninhabited places men were posted to protect the goods and live-
stock against marauding beasts and thieves.

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175 stock against marauding beasts and thieves. All caravaneers had to
437 pay a tax to the local chiefs to cross their borders or to stop in their
486 markets to trade. Binger reported that the caravans which passed
651 through the market center of Wagadougou had to give the Moro
[661] Naba a share of their merchandise, aside from the presents which they gave to him. He also reported that the horse traders from the Yatenga, in the north of Mossi country, and the Hausa caravaneers, were sometimes forced to sell part of their wares to the Moro Naba at one-hundredth the purchase price (Binger 1892 : II, 292–300). Not all the caravaneers submitted to extortion, however, and at one period many of them traded with Mane instead of passing through Wagadougou where the tariffs were too high. On the other hand, the Mossi chiefs did not tolerate any trespassing on their territories by
[685] caravans that did not pay taxes. Those who tried to avoid doing so
365 were subjected to attack by the mounted nobles *(nakomce)* on behalf of the district chiefs. Wise caravan leaders not only paid their taxes but established close relationships with the chiefs in order to receive adequate protection from some nobles who illegally attacked and looted the caravans.

175 It is impossible to know the actual volume of caravan trade which
437 passed through Mossi country, but we can get a fairly good idea of it
439 by examining the customs reports on goods crossing the border between Mossi country and the northern territories of the Gold Coast in the few years just following European conquest.[8] For 1901 and 1903 the official figures were:

TABLE 28A

Mossi Trade (1901–3)

Year	*Horses*	*Cattle*	*Sheep and Goats*	*Loaded Donkeys*	*Bales of Cotton Cloth*
1901	126	3,111	18,181	2,095	236
1903	196	6,624	30,892	4,294	369

Lucien Marc, who had the opportunity to check the volume of this trade for 1904 and 1905, guessed that about 16,000 cattle and 75,000 sheep and goats passed through the customs post in Mossi country. Furthermore, he believed that since

> ... the Mossi also supply in part the markets of Togoland and the market at Bondoukou [Ivory Coast], one can estimate at least an annual export of 20,000 cattle and 100,000 sheep or goats. The import of kola nuts is at least 500 tons. (Marc 1909 : 178)

[113] (8) Great Britain Parliamentary Papers: Cd. 788–27, no. 357, Northern territories of Gold Coast, report of 1901 in Acc. and Papers, vol. LXIV 1902. Cd. 2238–6, no. 429, N.Ts of Gold Coast, report of 1903 in Acc. and Papers, 1904, and 1905, vol. LI.

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It is clear that the volume of this trade could not have been enlarged since the French conquest which, as we know, had disrupted Mossi society. Therefore our conclusion must be that it must have existed prior to the coming of the Europeans.

The caravaneers used cowries and cloth as trade currency and in some cases even bartered one type of commodity for another. Cowries appear to have been the chief currency used and came close to being used for all purposes. Evidence for the use of cloth as currency comes from Barth and Marc. Barth met a trader who had

> . . . a good quantity of the gabaga, or cotton strips, of Mosi with him, which form the staple currency in the whole tract of country from Libta to Timbuktu, ten Dr'a being reckoned equal to one hundred shells. (Barth 1859 : III, 198)

The big rolls of cotton cloth which Marc saw being loaded by Mossi caravaneers were said by them to serve the purpose of buying food ("They are for eating") in regions where cloth was the necessary currency (Marc 1909 : 172 f.n.). The traders apparently resorted to barter whenever and wherever they could or when their currency was in short supply. This appears to have been the case when Binger visited the Mossi in 1888. Cowries were then in short supply and the people were using slaves, valued at 50,000 to 65,000 cowries apiece, to obtain goods. Horses could be bought for as many as two or four slaves apiece. Traders apparently kept the cowry equivalence in mind when using other commodities to barter with, but we cannot be sure of this since Binger himself, and not the traders, may have been conscious of the equivalence (Binger 1892 : II, 498).

The prices which the traders paid and received for their goods differed greatly from place to place, according to the season of the year and over a span of several years. The earliest price data are given by Barth for the 1850's:

> As regards Selga [Salaga], the district to which the Hausa traders go for their supply of this article, three points are considered essential to the business of the Kola trade; first, that the people of Mosi bring their asses; secondly, that the Tonawa, or natives of Asanti, bring the nut in sufficient quantities; and thirdly, that the state of the road is such as not to prevent the Hausa people from arriving. If one of these conditions is wanting, the trade is not flourishing. The price of the asses rises with the cheapness of the guro [kola nut]. The average price of an ass in the market of Selga is 15,000 [cowry] Shell: While in Hausa the general price does not exceed 5,000. But the fataki, or native traders, take only as many asses with them from Hausa as are necessary for transporting their luggage, as the toll, or

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175 fitto, levied upon each ass by the petty chiefs on the road is very consider-
437 able. From 5,000 to 6,000 guro, or kola nuts, constitute an assload.
435 Selga, the market place for this important article, being, it appears, a
[65] most miserable town, where even water is very scarce and can only be
[36] purchased at an exorbitant price, the merchants always manage to make their stay here as short as possible, awaiting the proper season in Yendi, a town said to be as large as Timbuktu, or in Kulfela, the great market place of Mosi; and they are especially obliged to wait in case they arrive at the beginning of the rainy season, there being no kola nuts before the latter part of the Kharif. The price of this nut in Timbuktu varies from 20 to
[235] 100 shells each, and it always constitutes a luxury; so that, even on great festivals, alms consisting of this article are distributed by the rich people of the town. (Barth 1859 : II, 364)

175 The other data we have on prices paid for goods come from the
43 period between 1890 and 1910, at which time French francs had been introduced. At this time the official value of one franc was 1,000 cowries. Around 1904, a trader paid about 50 francs or 50,000 cowries for a head of cattle in Mossi country and sold it for about double the price at Salaga. With the proceeds of this transaction he bought kola nuts at the rate of one franc or 100 cowries per hundred. Thus with the sale of one cow a trader could obtain 10,000 kolas, these being valued at about 500 francs or 500,000 cowries in Mossi country and at 20 or 200 cowries each at Sarfere and Timbuktu (Marc 1909 : 173–4). At Timbuktu about this same period, 1895, traders could buy salt at about 30 francs for a slab weighing between 60 and 100 pounds and sell it for 45 francs at Sarafere, for 60 francs at Djenne, for between 70 and 80 francs at San, and "thus progressively more until they reached Mossi country" (Dubois 1899 : 276). In 1910, Mossi traders bought cattle for about 40 to 100 francs, horses for about 90 francs, donkeys for 25 francs, and so on, and sold these animals in Salaga for three times the prices. There they bought kolas at 2 Fr. 50 per thousand, and sold them at 20 per thousand at Leo on the Mossi border, 35 francs per thousand at Wagadougou, 50 francs at Wahigouya, 60 francs at Saravere, and 100 francs per thousand at Timbuktu. Here these traders bought bars of salt weighing about 75 pounds for between 10 and 12 francs a piece, and sold them for between 40 to 60 francs at Wahigouya, and for from 80 to 100 francs a piece at Dedougou and points as far down as Wagadougou (Tauxier 1917 : 221).

175 Not all the profit from this trade went into the pockets of the
437 traders. We have the report of Binger that the chiefs, besides com-
486 mandering the goods at less than one-hundredth their purchase
651 price, received taxes on each caravan which passed through their territory.

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territory. This report is substantiated by Barth. Marc adds that the caravaneers had

> . . . a considerable amount of incidental expenses. Ten thousand kolas called for two asses or four porters for whom it was necessary to provide food during close to two months. Formerly there had been a certain number of local exactions to pay each time that the caravans crossed a new country. Now there are taxes on the caravans in the Gold Coast and also in French territory. It is also necessary to pay for ferryman who transports the livestock across the Volta [River]. There are risks, and occasionally cattle, fatigued by the trip, arrive in such bad shape that they are sold more cheaply than they had cost. Finally, the realization of profits is often difficult, the kola market being, in the commercial centers of the Mossi, subject to considerable fluctuations at the time when the caravans return. (Marc 1909 : 174)[7]

Sometimes the caravaneers made extensive use of middlemen and did not realize all the profits. Marc, who was stationed at the customs post at Leo on the Mossi border with the Gold Coast, wrote:

> The livestock is bought upon arrival by interpreter-brokers, middlemen between the butchers and the meat merchants, to whom the caravaneers are practically forced to resort. These men buy all the kola nuts brought by the forest natives, and control the market prices . . . These interpreter-brokers apparently speculate on livestock in a most curious way. They have scouts who go out to meet the caravans, sometimes two days' march to the north. These scouts attempt to alarm the travellers with tendentious remarks, until they are willing to cede their herds at a low price. Some times, at the height of the business season—that is, in January and February—the livestock prices may fluctuate by one hundred per cent within a few weeks. The Mande-Dioula vie in eloquence, the Yarse and Mossi in politeness, the Hausa in friendliness. In reality, there is here, an embryonic trading center, a veritable stock exchange, using extensively indigenous methods. ((Marc 1909 : 173)

According to most reports, all the larger market centers of Mossi country were like this.

Caravan centers, like all the lesser market centers in Mossi country, provided merchants not only with trading opportunities but also with occasions for conviviality after hectic days of travel. At Dakay south of Wagadougou, livestock traders found musicians, singers, and the most beautiful dancers in the country. And according to Marc, during the whole caravan season the market was abundantly furnished with beer (Marc 1909 : 175). But if the Mossi enjoyed themselves at

(7) Tauxier (1912 : 539) states that each porter was paid 35 francs for the thirty-five days of travels or at the rate of one franc per day. In addition a caravaneer spent about 300 cowries a day on food for each of his bearers.

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175 366 437 54 their own commercial centers, they acted quite differently outside their country. Dubois reports that at Timbuktu, "the great town of pleasure" with the freest morals in the Sudan, the merchants from Bamako, Djenne, Sansanding and Touat spent a great deal of money in pleasure and in gifts to the beautiful women, but the "Mossi did not waste their money and left as soon as they had finished their affairs" (Dubois 1899 : 292–300).

175 437 439 648 The days of the caravans are now over in Mossi country, even though large groups of traders carry on the traditional commerce in livestock, cotton, kola nuts, some dried fish, and salt. As soon as the French conquered th country they formulated plants to control the caravans. One of the earliest reports, for June 1899, reads:

> The country is calm and direct administration was established at Koupela, Mane, Yake . . . The Mossi trade is mainly with the English colony of the Gold Coast. It consists mainly of livestock, very plentiful in Mossi country, which is exchanged for merchandise from England; copper and material goods . . . Our task will be to discover the materials of the northern Ivory Coast which could be exchanged for cattle, and when this information is forthcoming we should be able to direct the caravans quite easily to the Ivory Coast. At the same time the English will see their provisions of cattle and sheep diminish. They will flood us less with their cotton cloth, with their glass beads, and with their kola nuts. In their place, the products of French manufacture can arrive to us through the Ivory Coast after being exchanged for the products of our colony there.[8]

439 167 464 These plans did not succeed. The Mossi still export a great deal of their products towards the forest zones of Ghana, including their "numerous laborers" which, according to Beauminy writing in 1919, were "the principal riches actually utilizable in Mossi country". (Beauminy 1919 : 71–78). The migrants themselves are, in a sense, the greatest traders in contemporary Mossi society.

PRESENT-DAY TRADE

439 [441] [472] [178] [113] There is a constant flow of goods between Mossi country and the Ivory Coast and Ghana. Much of the trade to the former region is in the hands of the large commercial companies and as such is beyond the purview of this paper. What is of interest here is the trade which is conducted by the ordinary people. A great deal of this trade is highly unorganized and the result of one or two men, or as many as five men, joining together to trade goods to and from Ghana and the Ivory Coast. The types of goods sent down to these two areas are the same as those traded in pre-European times.

(8) Unpublished document in the archives of *Institut Français d'Afrique Noire*, Wagadougou, Voltaic Republic.

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all of local manufacture and in great abundance. Local cloth is also 443
very abundant. However, there are scarcely any imported objects salt, 438
kola nuts, copper rings and extremely rare European fabrics. The salt 439
always comes from the north. During my stay at Wagadougou I saw the arrival of a convoy of five or six small-sized mules loaded with this merchandise." Crozat felt that the Wagadougou market with its mainly local products was inferior to the markets at Woroudoy and Bobo-Dioulasso which he found less crowded, but which were, in his words, "true *entrepots* of imported merchandise."

Tauxier gives us a better picture of the goods found in the markets 175
of Mossi country before the Europeans arrived. His reports list few 443
imported products except salt and kola nuts. The preponderance of 438
goods sold were such local foodstuffs as maize, manioc, peppers, to- 439
matoes, squash, karite or shea butter, locust-bean balls, locust-bean 262
flour, rice and a local variety of potatoes. Other foodstuffs included were honey, beer, butchered meat, chickens, and guinea fowls. Tobacco both for chewing and smoking was also available, and so was hemp for making rope. Raw cotton, cotton thread, cloth and tailored cotton garments were also present, and so was indigo for dyeing the cotton materials. Other goods included hides, sandals, pouches, amu- 325
lets, iron items such as axes, hoes, knives, scythes, locks, clubs and spearpoints, bracelets and anklets made of copper by the lost-wax process, baskets, mats and hats made out of local grasses, pottery, pipes and wooden stools (Tauxier 1912 : 466 ff.). By 1914 Mangin could add 439
little to this list of local products, sold in the markets, but added such foreign items as "matches, glass trinkets, handkerchiefs, basins, dishes, perfumes, and even firecrackers" (Mangin 1921 : 53).

The markets of contemporary Mossi society contain all of the 443
articles found in pre-European times and those seen there by Mangin 438
in 1914. In the larger markets one now can find such additional items 439
as bicycles, razor blades, plastic raincoats and other plastic products, and the latest "rock 'n roll" records from the United States. The goods found in the smaller district and village markets tend to be of the traditional variety. But even here it is possible to buy refined cane sugar, matches, plastic necklaces, shoe polish, nail polish, toilet water, glass beads, costume jewelry, chinaware, and glass and enamel containers. In some of the smaller markets it is even possible to buy wheat bread made of imported flour, and bottled beer and soda water. The more different types of goods entering the larger markets, the 435
richer the variety found in the smaller markets, since local merchants are quick to take advantage of the prestige value of any new produce and introduce it into the rural areas. The only barrier to this type of 369
commercial activity is the relative poverty of the rural people.

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175 436 437 Cowries used to be chief medium of exchange in Mossi markets until the Europeans arrived. In addition the people bartered specific goods for other products. The prices of goods in these markets fluc- 175 435 tuated from time to time. Prices were highest during the planting season when most goods were scarce, and lowest during the harvest periods, but we have little precise information about the prices of goods in the traditional markets. Even Barth's information is too sketchy to deal with. Our first reliable data come from Tauxier, whose writings cover the first decade (1896-1906) of the conquest. Using the then official rate of one franc equals 1,000 cowries, the prices of a few representative products were: horses, 40 to 100 francs (40,000 to 100,000 cowries); cattle, 30 to 40 francs (30,000 to 40,000 cowries); chickens, 250 cowries; guinea fowls, 250 to 300 cowries; hides, 3,000 cowries; pottery jars, 300 cowries; cotton trousers, 200 cowries; baskets, 1,500 cowries; and locust-bean balls, 100 cowries (Tauxier 1912 : 466 ff.).

Mangin, whose work covers the period from about 1910 to 1913, when the value of the franc was lowered to one franc equals 700 to 800 cowries, lists the approximate prices for the following goods; "Millet, 0.02 franc a kilogram; rice, 0.10 franc a kilogram; *fabirama,* 0.05 franc a kilogram; shea butter, 0.50 franc a kilogram; milk butter, 1.50 francs a kilogram; peanuts, 0.07 franc a kilogram; peanut oil, 0.50 franc a liter; one jar of ordinary millet beer, containing about six to eight liters, 0.20 franc; one jar of strong millet beer *(tose),* containing about six to eight liters, 0.40 franc; hydromel *(bese),* 0.15 franc a liter; chicken, 0.40 franc; average goat, 3 to 4 francs; large goat, 8 to 10 francs; average sheep, 3.50 francs for a ram, 4 francs, for an ewe; large sheep, 8 to 10 francs; donkey, 25 to 30 francs; horse, 150 francs; small cow (no hump), 50 francs; zebu cow, 70 francs; goat skin, 0.30 franc; cow skin, 1 franc; salt bars, from 1.50 to 2 francs a kilogram; kola nuts, from 0.03 to 0.10 franc apiece; one hoe, about 0.60 franc; cloth: strip of white cloth, 0.05 franc, about 0.60 franc a cubit; white blanket, 2 francs; indigo-dyed blanket, 3 francs; striped blanket, 4 francs; medium-sized shirt, 2.50 francs" (Mangin 1921 : 53). In dealing with these prices, a number of things should be kept in mind: first of all, these prices fluctuated very much during the year; secondly [436] they varied from region to region within the country; and thirdly, although these prices are given in francs during this period, it was still possible to use cowries to buy a large number of the products.

177 436 Enormous changes have taken place in the Mossi economic and exchange systems over the decades following the studies of Tauxier [43] and Mangin. Even before, but certainly after World War I, the [42] French pressure on the Mossi to pay taxes in francs finally resulted

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to be sold the article at a lower price. The result is that the pace of 443
commerce in a Mossi market is somewhat relaxed, but the lack of 437
intense competition prevents a great deal of hositility and quarreling [578]
among the market people.

The amount of small trading which takes place in a Mossi market 443
is fantastic, so much so that one gains the impression that some people 434
trade simply for the sake of trading. Everyone tries to get money so 435
that he or she can buy some desired object, but it is impossible for
one to obtain a clear idea of what kind of profit, if any, people make
from their commerce. In fact, the idea of a profit does not seem to
be important when people are selling their own products. Most
people only think about profit when they buy things to resell—whether
these things are of African or European manufacture. This, incidentally, is one of the reasons why the prices of foodstuffs are about
10 per cent lower in the country districts than at Wagadougou, and
concommitently, why imported products are 10 to 20 per cent higher
in the rural districts than at Wagadougou where they are bought.
When a woman takes such products as cotton, beans or millet to
market, she may gross about 100 francs in the course of the day. But
out of this she may give a few francs to her husband to buy kola nuts,
a few francs to her daughter to buy a plastic necklace, and spend the
rest for a cotton skirt, a piece of meat and condiments for her sauces.
Men whose wives do not bring many goods to market must usually
give them about 100 francs to spend on the various products the
family needs. There are no official restrictions on the kinds of goods 443
which may or may not be sold in the Mossi markets. In pre-European 432
times slaves and eunuchs were the common stock-in-trade of the
major markets and of some of the smaller ones as well. The only
active supervision that existed and still exists concerns the butchering
of meat. Every person who sells meat in the market must exhibit the
skin of the butchered animal in a public place so that there will be no
question as to the ownership of the animal. If the meat in question is
the remains of a cow killed and half-eaten by a lion, then the village
or district chief must be notified before the meat enters the market.
The person in charge of this task used to be, and often still is, a man 443
called the Kos Naba, a kind of sales chief. He also formerly doubled 554
as a tax collector for the rulers and chiefs. Another official, the Raga 651
Naba, where he still exists, is more concerned with protecting the 656
lives and property of the people who trade at the markets, but he also
supervises the sale of some commodities there and formerly also
collected taxes for his superior.

In pre-European times, every important Mossi prince and district [175]
chief had the counterpart of a Kos Naba and Raga Naba, to collect
taxes in their markets.

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443 taxes in their markets. The French abolished both of these offices
557 when they took over the country, because they looked upon them as
651 purely exploitative rather than regulatory agents. But like so many
656 other Mossi political institutions which the French have "abolished,"
178 the Kos Naga and Raga Naba persist in many of the districts, and per-
648 haps even in such large centers as Wagadougou. These officials persist
829 because one of the basic assumptions of the Mossi is that everything
825 must have a "chief." They believe that even the animals in the bush have chiefs, and if men, too, did not have chiefs then social life would be chaos. Thus, in the rural areas many or most district chiefs have retained their market officials even though the roles of these officials have become highly attenuated and so secretive that their existence is often denied.

175 443 651 649 Taxes collected at the market places played an important part in supporting the traditional political hierarchy of the Mossi people. The Kos Naba collected 250 cowries in taxes for every beef cattle slaughtered at the market and took their humps and gave them to a palace official called the Nemdo Naba (meat chief) for distribution in the royal household. He also collected 250 cowries on every cow sold there, but did not usually tax goats and sheep. In lieu of this he occasionally took a head or two of these animals from each herd that passed through the market and sent them to the palace kitchens. Donkeys were also taxed at the rate of 200 cowries per head sold in the market. Horses sold to the nobility were not taxed, but those exported were taxed about 300 cowries.

175 443 651 463 The Raga Naba collected the taxes on other commodities sold at market. Cotton weavers paid him taxes according to the size of their bolts of cloth, and cotton producers paid as much as 20 cowries on especially large sales of their raw produce. The tailors and dyers paid no fixed tax on their wares, but were asked to send clothing to the palace. Every donkey- or ox-load of salt which entered the market place was assessed a tax of 300 cowries. The smiths were not taxed in cowries, but had to supply the wives of the Moro Naba with hoes and the palace personnel with arrowheads, spearpoints and iron clubs. The jewelers also sent bracelets as presents to the ruler. There were no fixed taxes on cereals, vegetables and cooked food sold at market, but each day the Raga Naba, accompanied by several pages or retainers carrying baskets, went from vendor to vendor taking several calabash-fuls of their produce for use in the palace. In addition, the vendors of cooked food had to feed the young grooms of the Moro Naba who were not regularly fed by the palace household. The beer sellers, too, while they were not assessed taxes, contributed a good percentage of their beverage to palace and market personnel who demanded the

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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customary "taste" with greater frequency and freedom than did ordinary buyers. But the most valuable tax collected by the Raga Naba was on the sale of slaves, whose buyers paid a tax of 1,000 cowries per head.

There is some evidence, mainly from Europeans, that the Mossi occasionally may have found the market taxes prohibitive. Binger reports that during his visit to the Mossi in 1888, the high taxes exacted by the Moro Naba were "one of the causes which placed Wagadougou in second place [as a market town] and which made Mane the commercial capital of Mossi country" (Binger 1892 : 467). Binger, himself, was caught in the institutionalized gift system and wrote sarcastically: "The day of the market [at Wagadougou] the receipts are good. People bring every-thing to the palace including millet as well as hoes or peanuts, and everything is accepted. *All this giving is left to the generosity of the customers . . .*" (Binger 1892 : 465) (his italics). Even so, one cannot be sure that the Mossi felt the same way about paying taxes to their rulers as Binger felt. There is, incidentally, always an air of mutual recriminations among the Mossi and their rulers about the level of reciprocation between them. The people admit that the chiefs are indispensable; yet they complain that they are greedy—they "eat" too much. The chiefs insist that it is difficult to rule a territory and complain that the people are ungrateful.

SOCIAL AND RITUAL ASPECTS OF THE MARKETPLACE

Although the offices of Kos Naba and Raga Naba have been abolished officially, these officials still exist in many Mossi districts, and even when they do not exist, some men acting in their stead appropriate commodities in the markets for the chiefs. Furthermore, the *nakomce* (plural of *nabiga*—chief's child) or nobles still wander about the market places taking handfuls of kola nuts, peanuts and everything they need without the people becoming angry or complaining to the French about it. Once when I visited a market in the company of a *nabiga*, the local Raga Naba came up to where we were buying meat and indicated to the butcher that one of his customers was a *nabiga* and that he should treat him accordingly. It is not because of ignorance that the market people continue to grant these privileges to the nobles and the chiefs, but rather because they believe that only the market officials, and not the Europeans, can take care of the markets.

One of the most important tasks of the Raga Naba (or in the absence of this official, the Kos Naba) is to propitiate the *tengkouga* in the market place, or supervise the sacrifices which the *tengsobas* make to them. The task of the market spirits is believed to be so difficult—

[46] Chapter 3

Political, Administrative, and Judicial Organization of the Mossi Empire

I. Political and Administrative Organization

643 The Mossi empire of Ouagadougou was governed prior to the period of French occupation by a supreme chief, the Mogho Naba, who was revered by all his subjects as a "god" and whose territory, in the minds of his people, had no limits. He had the power of life and death over all his subjects.

[192] The word mogho means "country of the Mossi," but by extension it also means "the world." Thus, in this sense the Mogho Naba was regarded as the master of the world.

643 631 It is said that he had under his rule 333 chiefs, naba, among whom were his ministers, the three sogon kassemsé (great servitors), and some forty petty chiefs called kougzindba, which refers to the heaps of stones designating the place of each minister or petty naba in the emperor's court.

643 177 The authority of the Mogho Naba over his vassals. In spite of the claims made by a colonial official who was trying to free the canton chiefs of one of the administrative districts of the colony from the authority of the Mogho Naba, the emperor's power never was merely nominal. If it has become so, it is a consequence of the intervention of French [47] administrative authority in the politics of the country -- an intervention which has resulted in assigning too much power to certain chiefs.

643 669 I do not mean to imply that before French penetration into the country there were not real conflicts, wars or mere skirmishes (1), but the chiefs who tried by these means to free themselves from the emperor's authority were usually punished for their temerity.

1. In Chapter 1 [not translated] we described in great detail the war waged by the Mogho Nabas Sanum and Wobgo against Lallé. We said also that Sanum warred with the Boussouma Naba and with Boulsa.

576 Thus, although the Mogho Naba would not in the least object
643 to shaking hands with a Bambara or a Djerma, he would be astonished if a native Moaga -- even an official -- should offer his hand.

543 As soon as the children of a naba have reached the age of dis-
576 cretion, they may no longer play with their "papa," even less shake hands with him. They must henceforth follow the general rule which requires the Mossi salute, kantissé.

576 [111] Nowadays naba (kombemba) and nayiridamba (ministers
602 of the emperor) understand the uselessness of such signs of distrust. Therefore, even though they continue to be less familiar with their relatives (brothers, uncles, and sons -- whom they regard as rivals), they willingly offer their hands to Mossi of any standing and to foreigners.

644 Reception by the naba. 1) Up to the present time and despite some thirty-five years of French occupation, the way one is received at the court of the emperor, which, of course, befalls his servitors, has altered very little. Natives who are now officials in the administration and in business enterprises are still treated on the same footing as their less highly placed compatriots. Not only are they required to perform the kantissé (Mossi salute) as described by Father Mangin, but also afterwards they must sit on the ground, a position that is difficult in European clothes. Foreigners (Bambara,
[648] Djerma, even Gourounsi) are offered seats because the soroné do not regard them as fellow countrymen.

645 2) By the ministers. At the present time all the emperor's
576 ministers have comfortable houses and splendid drawing rooms
352 furnished with Morris chairs and folding chairs. These seats are offered [112] to visitors of any standing, while benches two or
177 three meters long are reserved for persons of less consequence (house boys, cooks, circle guards, notables, etc.).

631 3) By the kombemba. Benches are always reserved for visitors of
576 note or, if there are none, mats are provided. Some of these chiefs
352 even own a few commonplace chairs and perhaps one or two folding chairs.

551 645 [134] (b) Kata laghem koagb'kon sirigh tanga. (A hundred barking hyenas cannot shake a mountain.)

6. Kamsoro Naba (Ouene Nongué), Naba Niouga ("cat"). He is chief eunuch. Nioug'nok wendé na pa ne Sabelem. (A cat who trusts in God is sure to preserve his blackness.) In other words, one who is protected by the Mogho Naba, his "God," will never lack for anything; everything will come to him as if by magic.

551 643 835 7. Naba Gnighnemdo (Mogho Naba). Naba Oubri, the founder of the Ouagadougou dynasty, fell in love with one of his own daughters and had intercourse with her. The girl became pregnant and gave birth to a son. The wives of Naba Oubri wanted to put both the child and the mother to death. They asked the girl the name of the child's father, and she replied, "Ask my father, he ought to know." When Oubri was questioned, he answered: "Bassi yan ya mam lam gnighnemdo (Do nothing, this is my own flesh)."

The child of this incestuous union was thus named Gnighnemdo and later succeeded his relative, Naba Nasbiré.

The Placing of Statues at Loumbi-Raogo

211 306 532 Ganlougdou. In the old days, upon the death of a Mogho Naba or soon after, a jeweler was called in [135] to make a wax statuette, later to be cast in bronze, in the likeness of the late chief. The jeweler also made statuettes of one soronè, one napagha, one bendré, and one lounga, and all were deposited at the home of the Loumbila Naba. This practice was suppressed upon the arrival of the French, and it appears that there is no statue of Naba Siguiri, father of Naba Kom, the present naba, at Loumbila. [177]

The acting Mogho Naba is never supposed to see these statues, and the jeweler who made the likeness of his father must not see them either. The jeweler was paid 100,000 cowries, a horse, a donkey, a cow, a wife, a large robe, and 1,000 kola nuts, and he was then sent away from Ouagadougou. He must never return and must never see the new Mogho Naba. [135]

These gifts represented a considerable sum in the old days, even today for that matter. They were given to aid the jeweler in consulting seers and charlatans for the purpose of prolonging his life. Tradition has it that unless he followed faithfully the prescriptions given by the seers, he would die within a year after completing the statues.

796 643 of the present house of Ouendasida, the police adjutant), and there he attended the salam presided over by the Imam.

After the ceremony, the Imam, surrounded by the faithful, went to call upon the emperor for the doua (a kind of benediction involving the recitation of verses from the Koran). The Imam received kola nuts and sheep or a cow.

[368] At the present time the two mosques exist in name only; the one real mosque is that of the Imam in the ward of the mohémé (marabouts). The present Mogho Naba never attends the salam on feast days. He goes to the Circle [Administration Building], then to the home of the Governor, and finally returns home to await the visit of the representative of Islam in Mossi country.

643 368 177 The only Mogho Naba who was truly a Moslem was Naba Koutou, the twenty-seventh successor of Oubri. He was sent to the Koranic school at Sagabtenga and is said to have made a creditable record there. When he succeeded his father, he installed a mosque in front of the women's gate. Since then a mosque has traditionally been located in the same place on the palace grounds of every Mogho Naba, even though, as in the case of the present emperor, he was not a believer.

643 177 Naba Koutou regularly made his salam in accordance with the rites of the Moslem faith and even observed the thirty days of abstinence during the month of fasting. [210] All his children had Moslem names. All, except his eldest son who succeeded him as Naba Sanum, were sent to Koranic schools, although none did any serious work there since they were more interested in becoming naba.

643 696 During his lifetime, Naba Koutou himself never sentenced anyone to death, even if he were guilty. He loved peace. When his ministers submitted serious cases to him, he always said: "Go and do what seems best and do not tell me what fate was meted out to the guilty." Like Pontius Pilate, he allowed his ministers to bear the responsibility for the crimes. Since he gave little credence to what the priests said of poeré (confession by the use of magic), he acquitted individuals condemned to death by that barbaric method.

Chapter 13

Dwellings of the Mossi Chiefs

342 554 787 We have seen, in an earlier chapter under "Labor Duties and Obligations of Mossi Subjects to their Chiefs," how the dwelling of the naba is built and repaired. We know also that the naba like all his subjects, consults a soothsayer to select the site for his dwelling. He needs to know whether he should keep his father's establishment, build a new one on the site of his grandfather's home, or finally, if the spirits are not favorable, whether he might build on unoccupied land.

342 554 The establishment of a naba differed from those of his subjects in former times in the great number of huts included within it. Also, there was an empty ostrich egg on the roof of each hut.

The sketch which follows shows the home of a naba before the arrival of the French. Such houses exist even today in certain areas.

There were no native houses with terraces or clay roofs. To be sure, the Mogho Naba had one, but although it was copied from the Djenné style, [214] it had, aside from a few doors and tiny windows, only a single opening in the ceiling the size of a canari. This was supposed to admit air to the inhabitants, and it was blocked up during the winter.

The Ouidi Naba (first minister) and the Kamsaongo Naba (chief eunuch) also had tata, but they were smaller. The former kept the sacred water (nam-tibo) and the latter the wealth of his master, the emperor.

342 177 A description of the typical dwelling of the Moaga will be given later. At present, especially since the installation of the [French] government at Ouagadougou, virtually all of the province and canton chiefs have dwellings more or less of the European type. The present tata of the Mogho Naba, the Baloum Naba, and the Ouidi Naba at Ouagadougou, those of the Konkistenga Naba at Imasshoro and at Zoétigomdé, and that of the Lallé Naba at Koudougou -- to mention only the principal ones -- prove that real progress has been made in housing by the Mossi chiefs.

342 177 Of course, like all European houses in the region under discussion, these buildings are, unfortunately, made of mud bricks, but is that not the rule in French West Africa?

342 In the homes of those two ministers of the emperor who are most advanced, the reception rooms are arranged in such a way that callers benefit from a constant flow of fresh air through large openings. During periods of extreme heat, a punkah operated [417] by a sogoné in the middle [216] of the room provides air for the panting visitors. The wall, always whitewashed with kaolin, bears an [353] an advertisement or two, the picture of an important chief, or perhaps some family photographs, which enliven the apartments a bit. All of this shows a real anxiety on the part of the chiefs to develop along the lines of progress and civilization.

In recent years, some of the notables at Ouagadougou have built houses with clay roofs, not so much to live in as to safeguard their family valuables against fire and theft.

Finally, it should be noted that custom requires every new naba for the first three years of his reign to live in songodo, straw huts, which will be described later. Only then may he build with clay.

Dwellings of Mossi Subjects

342 787 Temporary dwelling. Before building his conjugal hut, the young man consults a soothsayer in order to make sure that the site chosen is not haunted by evil spirits and that he will have happiness and good fortune if he lives there.

342 782 Even if the soothsayer finds nothing especially alarming about the site, he always orders a chicken or other animal to be sacrificed or alms to be given. The young man arranges with the village elder [217] or, if he is a [Nioniosse], with the Tingsoba (from tenga "earth," and soba, "master"), to sacrifice the victim.

The Tingsoba goes to the site and calls for two small gourds which contain ordinary water and water mixed with flour, respectively. He invokes all his ancestors and pours the water on the ground, praying God to accept it for His wife, Tinga, who is absorbing it. Then he kills the chicken, saying: "On -- on,

291 554 435 (d) Zag'banko: a colored garment, varying in price between 40,000 and 50,000 cowries.

(e) Baourou ganga: a light gray blanket, valued [224] at 50,000 to 60,000 cowries, which can easily be made into robes and trousers.

[439] All these garments were imported by traveling Haoussa (Zangoéto) and a few Yarcé, the only traders at the time, who bought them in Gambaga (Gold Coast), the only known trading center at that time. As we have pointed out in an earlier chapter, the Mossi knew of no country other than their own.

There were, of course, some naba who wore only rough garments made of cotton strips woven locally.

Headgear. The inhabitants of Béré (a village of the province now ruled by the Gounga Naba) used to make caps, called manfo, which were highly prized by Mossi chiefs (priced at 2,000 to 3,000 cowries).

Some notables wore caps made at Wéogtinga (province of the Ouidi Naba) by the descendants of Naba Zombré, the twentieth successor of Oubri.

291 554 177 2. Modifications and improvements introduced since the establishment of the government of Upper Volta (1919). The various fabrics available in the European outlets and the fine white or blue bazin [fabric] are more and more being used to replace the clothing of former times. [225] These fabrics are made into robes, trousers, blouses, and forkia (this last is a kind of long blouse with wide sleeves, much prized by Senegalese traders). [352] Shirts of every conceivable color and style are hoarded in trunks and chests bought at the commissary or made locally by carpenters trained in European shops.

Many chiefs claim that garments made of cotton strips are heavy and cumbersome and impede walking.

[439] Oriental caps imported from the Gold Coast, dark red velvet hats, and even sun helmets are replacing the headgear of old.

The markatassé and mougou, rustic leather boots made by Mossi shoemakers are giving way to shoes, puttees, and leggings, [494] or to new types of boots and slippers -- the shoemakers of Djenné are now well known among the Mossi.

291 554 177 Finally, many chiefs (particularly province chiefs and dignitaries at the emperor's court) appear on feast days dressed in costumes ornately embroidered in gold and silver, products of Moroccan industry. Two of these ministers even wear with pride European costumes on these occasions.

Dress of the Mossi Subjects

292 Men. The accouterments and weapons of a Moaga who wished to be admired on festive occasions used to include the following: the koiglinga and the dandaogo (kinds of long blouses with sleeves); koursi(trousers) in dark blue; the karfo (seldom worn, [226] however, because of its high cost); a zangoégo [411] (large Haoussa knife); a manyanfo (cap); a logwaoga (quiver and arrows); and a boussan-zandé (iron club).

292 177 Today he wears the same garments made from cotton strips woven locally (except the karfo), but it should be noted that young men who return from the Gold Coast or neighboring colonies nearly always have clothing made of commercial fabrics. They may even -- and this often happens -- parade a second-hand overcoat. In the villages out in the bush, the large knife (zangoégo) is still worn, hanging from the shoulder by an albolé (ornament).

Some young men, however, usually traders in prosperous circumstances, dress in the fashion of the Sudanese who live in cities.

291 Women. A Moaga woman usually had only three skirts: (a) the skirt worn at home which was her working costume; (b) an indigo-blue skirt (fou-sablaga) which was reserved for holidays and for trips to the market; and (c) a white or dark-blue skirt cloth, trimmed with long fringes -- a kind of bambara dissa -- which she wore over her shoulders or over her head on ceremonial occasions. She replaced these articles whenever necessary.

[554 435] Only the wives of naba and of certain notables [227] were able to own, in addition to the forementioned skirts, a godé, a skirt of Haoussa origin and quite expensive (1).

1. Even today it costs between 55 and 100 francs.

301 As ornaments the Moaga woman had only red or yellow copper bracelets and the kindifou (a bright red bead). Even then only women of means could procure such ornaments. The [435] kindifou cost only 50 cowries a bead, but since cowries were monopolized by the naba, notables, and rakangba (prosperous Mossi), the beads were far too expensive for the small resources of the average Moaga woman.

Bracelets made of a special stone (a mixture of gray and white) and called manekagcé (manekaka in the singular) were worn only by the Yarbi (young Yarcé of both sexes). It is said [439] that these bracelets were peddled by the Kibissi (Habé), and they seem to have come from the Timbuktu area.

301 554 Silver bracelets were worn only by the dimbissi (descendants of dima, that is, the family of the Mogho Naba), by kombemba (canton and province chiefs) and their descendants, and, finally, by prominent persons who were in favor at court.

291 177 At the present time, especially at Ouagadougou, the women adorn themselves with garments of all kinds (skirts of native material, bazin, godé, and other fabrics, as well as skirts from stores). Some have even adopted the blouse and ample robe affected by elegant Sudanese [228] women. Many now own trunks which [352] replace the sacks formerly used to store their clothing.

291 178 The Senegalese handkerchief, a head scarf, is now considered absolutely indispensable. In rural areas there is an increasing desire to dress better. More cotton is grown. Girls and women from the bush buy glass beads of all colors when they come to Ouagadougou to work, and they wear them around their necks or around their hips in the manner of Bambara women.

416 Although the "mirror" used to be the clear water of springs and brooks, there is hardly a woman today who does not have one or two mirrors. Finally, a bit of elegance is added to the wild 301 beauty of the women by silver earrings, bracelets, and amulets sewed in a panther skin -- these are becoming a passion with Mossi peasant women.

291 It should not be inferred from the above that the Moaga always feels obliged to wear clothing at home. Any time that he has no need to go out or to visit a friend or relative at some

433 made do with what his own village could produce, and there was
178 really no trade in the ordinary sense of the word. The Moaga, essentially a stay-at-home, depended on the soil for food and clothing.

241 Only two new crops have been added since the coming of the
177 French: yams (na-niouyan, "chiefs' yams") and white potatoes.

The recent increase in the cultivation of cotton makes it easier for the natives to meet their tax, and this encourages them to grow even more.

178 The French occupation has brought many benefits in its wake (creation of a network of roads, peace and the resulting free circulation among the villages, and suppression of banditry and looting), but it has also given the Moaga a desire to leave the country.

167 The extensive recruitment of [249] laborers for the needs of
464 other colonies in the area, for work on the roads, and for the now obligatory military service -- all of which are accepted reluctantly by the Mossi -- has caused many young men to emigrate.

Some of them set out, for the Gold Coast preferably, without the slightest means of support. They go to work in the English colony in order to earn money for clothes. Since they had no money when they started out, they remain there for months or even years, and this seriously diminishes the agricultural labor force at home. It also forces their old and helpless relatives to cultivate their fields alone.

Besides, so many of them never return!

The Native Diet

262 Sagbo (millet mush) is the principal item in the Mossi diet at all social levels. Rice, regarded as a luxury food, is eaten by the naba and notables. It costs from two and a half to three francs a
[435] kilogram at Ouagadougou and is therefore too expensive for most people. It may be added that it rarely is found in the diet of civil service employees.

264 Mossi chiefs usually have two main meals a day: a [250] first meal of sagbo or rice at around nine in the morning, and a second

177 The preceding pages deal wholly with past history. The French occupation has profoundly modified the whole administrative set-up and curtailed the rights of nabas, who are now mere civil servants. The people are slowly learning not to fear them; their authority is weakening; the gifts dwindle; and the nabas have been put on short allowance and forced to cultivate their fields like everybody else. Their judicial power is practically gone, and those few who have preserved real authority were able to do so because of their remoteness from administrative centers and their past. They were in charge before the French occupation, and they have managed to keep up their prestige in spite of everything. Yet little by little attitudes 600 change and respect vanishes. Is this good? Is it bad? The matter could be argued at great length. Although this administrative system led to regrettable abuses which had to be checked, it also had its favorable aspects, and it made the Mossi into one of the most feared and most homogeneous peoples in the bend of the Niger.

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BOOK II. FAMILY LIFE

Chapter 1. Establishment of the Family Through Marriage

562 584 567 The family is established through marriage. We shall, therefore, first study the marriage bond. Obviously, since Christianity was introduced in the country only a short time ago, virginity is unknown there even as a concept. Every nubile girl must marry. She is given in marriage by the person to whom she belongs, and her own tastes are not taken into account. She belongs primarily to her father, but sometimes even before her birth she belongs to the person who gave her mother away on the condition — a common clause in free marriage contracts — that the first girl she bears will be given in marriage by her grandfather. Or the woman may belong to her father's master, and this may be her father's only remaining obligation toward the man who formerly owned him as a slave. Thus, nearly all girls born in Koupéla belong by right to the naba, for the inhabitants of this locality were formerly his slaves. Sometimes a

5: Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1959
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13. *Economic Change and Mossi Acculturation*

121 178 177 166 Some five thousand Mossi from the kingdom of Yatenga in the Upper Volta have been resettled on the newly developed lands of the Niger Irrigation Project in the French Sudan. Removed from a cultural setting which has been relatively undisturbed by the influence of European civilization, they are required to adapt themselves rapidly to an economic situation structured and directed by Europeans. Economic organization being the variable involved, a study of their adjustment provides an opportunity to examine some of the cultural problems and processes related to economic development in underdeveloped areas.

131 101 Yatenga is the northernmost of four Mossi kingdoms located in the Upper Volta. It is a sub-Saharan savanna land of red earth, low rainfall, gently rolling plains, and low hills. Ouahigouya, the capital, gives its name to the French administrative unit, the Cercle de Ouahigouya, which has governed the kingdom from its headquarters in this ancient city since its conquest in 1895.[1]

101 173 To distinguish themselves from the people of the neighboring kingdoms of Ouagadougou, Fada-N'Gourma, and Tenkodogo, the Mossi of the Yatenga sometimes speak of themselves as "Yadise" (those of Yadiga). This name refers to the fact that they regard themselves as being descended, as a nation, from Naba Yadiga, the half-mythical warrior-prince from Oaugadougou who broke away from his father's dynasty to form the separate political entity, Yatenga, which bears his name (*ya* for "Yadiga" and *tenga* for "country"). The Mossi have not always been numerically and culturally dominant in the Yatenga, as they are today. They recognize that their ancestors came from the south, from Mamprusi and Dagomba in the northern territories of Ghana.

171 Highly organized politico-religious states representing the cultural amalgamation of native and foreign populations and institutions are characteristic of the Voltaic region of West Africa. Acknowledging that we "owe to Rattray the discovery that these central Voltaic tribes are

[1] Capitaine Noire, *Monographie du Cercle de Ouahigouya* (Ouahigouya, 1904), p. 15.

5: Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1959
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221 796 their continued reliance upon his political power and intercession with his noble ancestors, in order that the village may enjoy peace through the coming months of the dry season and early rains at the beginning of the next economic cycle.

With this observance all of the sources of power—both social and supernatural—upon which the Mossis' well-being is dependent have been thanked for their support throughout the year just ended and have been encouraged, by the generosity of their supplicants, to continue their benevolence for the year to come. The Mossi understand the nature of these forces and the manner in which they can be controlled. They know them as manifestations of a deity who will reward their observance of ceremonial obligations with the soft winds and heavy rains that bring a rich harvest. The individual is intellectually and emotionally absorbed in maintaining a balance in his relationship to a world he understands. His efforts to maintain this balance are occasionally frustrated by sorcery or the contrary will of his deity, but he enjoys, nonetheless, a very real security.

CULTURAL ADJUSTMENTS AT THE NIGER IRRIGATION PROJECT

177 241 Given the nature of these interrelationships between the organization of economic activity and the social and religious institutions of their culture, the adjustment of the Mossi who have been resettled at the Niger Irrigation Project has implications which go beyond mere technological adaptation. The settlers must, in fact, adjust to a totally changed cultural setting.

Arriving at the Niger project, they fail to find the institutions upon which they have always depended for their security; they find instead a natural environment governed by forces they do not know. Their water supply is no longer dependent on the supernatural controls of the earth custodians but comes from a dam built by Europeans. They are socially isolated from their kinsmen and their ancestral spirits in the Yatenga, and they derive little comfort from the presence of fellow Mossi with whom they have neither consanguineal nor affinal relationship.

[466] Settlers were forcibly recruited for the Niger Irrigation Project until 1944, when forced labor was abolished throughout the French Union. Now a recruitment program brings Mossi families to the project each year; every family head receives a house, oxen, a plow, and a plot of land proportionate to the number of active workers accompanying him. Under the supervision of European agronomists, they apply modern methods to the production of rice and cotton. The project administration buys their crop for cash after deducting costs for seed, irrigation, mechanized cultivation, transportation, and processing. In theory, ten years of

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debt-free cultivation entitle the settler to permanent residence on the land he has been loaned. 177 241

Adaptation to the conditions of the new geographical setting in which the Mossi find themselves has been relatively rapid and easy. The Yatenga and the Niger project lie within the same climatic zone; the only important ecological difference between the two areas is the increased water supply resulting from irrigation. This change in the origin of the water supply, control of which provides a basic sanction of Mossi religion, was less disturbing to traditional belief than might have been anticipated.

Rather than diminishing their belief in their own religion, it only convinces the Mossi colonists that the forces of the natural order are different in their new habitat and accordingly must be controlled in a different way. Finding the indigenous inhabitants of the French Sudan, the Bambara, to be zealous Moslems, the Mossi settlers have accepted Islam as the religion of their new country. Confident that their religious obligations in the Yatenga will be taken care of by the elders who have remained behind, and with some pressure from those who have already become Moslemized, new arrivals rapidly embrace Islam as the system by which the supernatural forces governing their new environment can be manipulated. 797 177

Their acceptance of Islam has been as superficial as it has been rapid. There is time neither for the study of Moslem theology nor for the soul-searching which must precede the rejection of previously held religious beliefs. With a tradition which emphasizes the observance of religious form rather than intense emotional participation in ceremonial, their observance of the five daily prayers, taking of a Moslem name, deference to the marabout, and casual attention to certain dietary prohibitions should be viewed as their rational reaction to the fact of being in a strange land with an obviously different supernatural order which must be dealt with in a new way. Desire for a measure of control over this new supernatural order, pressure for conformity to the religious norms of their new social setting, and—perhaps most significantly—the permissiveness which characterizes the West African's acceptance of the existence of new supernatural forces, makes Islamization possible without the rejection of previously held religious ideas or practices. [157]

In contrast to the relative ease of their adaptation to the natural and supernatural aspects of their new environment, their adjustment to the social situations which result from the change in economic organization has been most difficult. They must, of course, learn a new technology: the cultivation of rice and cotton by modern methods. Since the machines used for clearing the land and for the harvest are operated by 177 241

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177 specially trained non-Mossi personnel, the use of irrigation, fertilizer,
241 and the plow are their most important technological innovations. Despite their difficulty in communicating with the European agronomists under whose direction they work, they soon master these agricultural techniques. Patterns of consumption are also altered, rice taking the
[261] place of millet as the staple in their diet. After some initial illness they become accustomed to rice but suspect that it is less nourishing than their traditional diet.

177 Far more difficult than adjusting to either the new technology or the diet is adaptation to the changed social organization. Trying to ease this
182 adjustment but with an imperfect understanding of traditional Mossi institutions, the project administration has tried to re-create their forms in the area of resettlement.

Despite this, the new colonist finds himself isolated among social forces he does not understand. The attempt to reproduce the traditional pattern of residential grouping is meaningless in the absence of the lineage. Separated from his kinsmen and his community, the colonist is confused by social institutions whose resemblance to those he has known in the Yatenga exists only on the level of form. He does not like or understand being housed with strangers as if they were his kinsmen. Equally incomprehensible is an approximation of the familiar political organization which, ignoring the traditional sanctions of chieftainship, has a former earth custodian, whose supernatural role has traditionally precluded the exercise of political authority, as paramount chief.

Despite the efforts of the European administration to reproduce their structural appearance, the institutions of Mossi society are so interrelated that the change in the organization of economic activity has created new needs which make alterations in traditional institutions inevitable. Rather than permitting the colonists to modify their indigenous social organization to fit these new needs, the social structure rigidly imposed by the Europeans has impeded the Mossi in their efforts to adjust their institutions to the changed situation. The delegation of authority to inept administrative appointees thinly disguised as chiefs and to the older, least adaptive members of the settler communities only complicates the problem of adjustment.

Isolated from their kinsmen and the protection of their ancestral spirits, the colonists miss the emotional and social satisfactions of extended family living as well as the security of an established position in the community in which they were born. Adherence to the traditional kinship organization, with its emphasis on obedience to the elders who
[582] have remained behind in the Yatenga, makes marriage at the Niger project almost impossible.

The young men born and raised at the project resent the tradition

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which requires sharing and compliance with the authority of kinsmen in the Yatenga whom they have never known. Forced to return to the Yatenga to assist the extended family there, they are frustrated in their efforts to form a permanent identification with their residence at the irrigation project. More efficient than their elders in communicating with the Europeans and in learning their techniques, they are thwarted by a social organization which denies expression to their initiative. The older men, given no share in the administration of the project and with little understanding of its objectives, believe that they are being exploited by the Europeans and that they would be more successful if they were to follow their own system of production and marketing. 177 182

The Mossi have learned that the official policy of the Niger Irrigation Project specifies their participation in administration through "indigenous agricultural associations," and even through their "collaboration" within the board of directors; but they do not actually participate in either of these. Possibly the fact that the Mossi have had no previous experience of participation in democratic forms discouraged the Europeans in their early efforts to include them in the administration of the project, but such participation implies a profound cultural adjustment and would require patience on the part of the Europeans. Whatever the case, the fact that the colonists know they have a right to participate in the administration and yet are denied it only serves to increase their conviction that they are being exploited.

Unsure of their rights to the land, unaware of the goals of the project, and inhibited by their artificially maintained tradition from forming meaningful social relationships in the area of resettlement, the Mossi make little permanent identification with the Niger project and its objectives. They say that it is like the hut a man builds in his fields during the rainy season; when the crop is harvested, he will return to the house of his fathers.

The relatively rapid and easy adaptation to the new natural setting and the supernatural forces which govern it is probably due both to the lack of European interference in this aspect of the colonists' lives and to the traditional permissiveness of West African religions. On the other hand, the greatest obstacle to adjustment seems to be just that aspect of the changed situation which was designed to facilitate it: the reconstruction and artificial maintenance of a social structure which cannot be efficiently integrated with the new economic organization. This structure has been maintained with such rigidity that it actually impedes Mossi efforts to reinterpret their institutions in terms of their new situation.

The Mossi who have returned from the Niger project have had little effect on their kinsmen in the Yatenga. Islamized colonists are often [561]

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177 too young to be listened to seriously by their elders. If they are returning as senior members of their lineages, and since their power and prestige
182 are dependent on the maintenance of the socio-religious status quo, they
561 are unlikely to be innovators. For these same reasons the few changes in the social organization which have occurred at the Niger project have had little effect on the social environment of the Yatenga.

177 Most of the agricultural techniques acquired in the Sudan are useless in the Yatenga because of the absence of irrigation. Even were this not
241 so, the rationale of the modern agricultural methods employed at the Niger project is not explained to the settlers; they are required to follow the instructions of the European agronomists or be penalized. As a result, the improved agricultural techniques of the Europeans are regarded as just another of the white man's incomprehensible ways and are quickly forgotten.

177 The response of the Mossi to resettlement at the Niger Irrigation Project shows that in a situation of rapid cultural change, retentions or
182 changes on the superficial level of form are misleading; nor is a brief statement of the functional interrelationship between institutions sufficient. The final reality of an institution lies in its meaning for the members of the society in which it exists, and its final evaluation must be based on its capacity to fulfil the changing needs of individuals. This concept is essential to an understanding of the colonists' dissatisfaction with the effort of the Niger project administration to reproduce artificially a static model of their traditional social structure. This can also be seen in their reaction to a changed supernatural order; an analysis which failed to descend beneath the level of form would miss the significant fact that their psychological response to religion and the basic premises of their theology have remained unaffected by an "Islamization" which amounts to little more than adopting certain new propitiatory usages.

Apparently not understanding the interrelationship of cultural institutions and the sanctions which give them meaning, the administration of the Niger Irrigation Project sought to modify the Mossi organization of economic activity without referring to the traditional values to which it is vitally related. Seeming to regard the indigenous culture as little more than a compendium of savage rites upon which superior European usages need only be imposed in order to prevail, such an approach reveals a failure to comprehend both the complexity and the tenacity of the Mossi cultural heritage.

2444 All Mossi grow ozonifie. They like it, but do not cultivate it in large quantities. It has to be planted in damp places. Some people plant it in the bush, others in the villages, but always near a spot where there is water.

[184] /475/ The Mossi hardly grow any yams (nioua or niouya in Mossi, pia in Nounouma, kou in Mandé). The southern Mossi alone cultivate it, and very little at that, in Kombisiguiri for example.

Here yams are sown in November along watercourses. Earth mounds 50 centimeters high and correspondingly wide are built with the ouaka. Then holes are made with a stick at the top of these little pyramids. Yam slices are cut, buried in these holes, and covered with earth. Then a prop is driven into the ground. The stem of the yam plant emerges from the ground and climbs along the prop. Seven months are required for the root, the yam itself, to reach its proper thickness and ripeness. During the month of April, therefore, a certain number of yams are dug out of the ground with the ouaka. The greatest number are left there, however, the soil is replaced, and the major harvest, the total harvest, is only taken in November, that is to say, a year after sowing.

[252] To eat yams, one cuts them into pieces and boils them in water.

[177] As for manioc (boumboro in Nounouma), it was unknown to the Mossi until the arrival of the French. The latter brought a few stalks, but the natives do not cultivate it as yet.

As far as diabéré is concerned (kousoubadé in Mossi, diabéré in Mandé), the Mossi grow a little of it. It is sown at the time of the first rains in the fields of maize or large red millet, that is to say, around the soukala. Holes are made with the koutiaga, and small tubercles are placed within them. The plant is harvested one month after maize, that is, in September.

In Mossi territory, it is cultivated chiefly by the Yarsé, for example those of Rakaye and Saraboutenga.

The Mossi themselves cultivate it little, and the same applies to the Bambara. The Gourounsi and Boussansé do not grow it at all.

[252] The diabéré is cooked in water, peeled, and eaten as it is.

According to Guebhardt (Au Gouta-Djallon /In the Fouta Djallon/, 1910), the diabéré (the Poullo /Fulani/ name) is really taro (Caladium antiquorum or esculentum).

231 While the Mossi entrust their cattle to the Foulbé, as we have seen earlier, they do no such thing with their sheep which are kept with the goats. They are handed over to the young boys to care for during the winter and the dry season.

231 262 As almost everywhere in West Africa, the flesh of the sheep is of mediocre quality and smells of suint. The natives nevertheless like it very much.

231 The sheep have short hair and yield no wool. Actually, in all of West Africa, only the Macina sheep yield some.

"The Mossi sheep," says the Cahier des Rapports of the /Ouagadougou/ circle, "differs basically from the Macina sheep. While the latter are rather large, with very thick hair, the Ouagadougou sheep are small with short hair. The males have horns, and usually long manes.

"The sheep race of the Macina does not in fact exist among the Mossi, for the climate of the region does not permit it. In the northern part of the circle one may find, though rarely, some sheep belonging to that breed brought by the Dioula and destined for slaughter, but nowhere is that race raised /among the Mossi/.

"Although the Mossi sheep cannot be exploited in any way as far as their hair is concerned, they nevertheless constitute a source of income of some importance to the natives. /490/ Sheep are indeed quite numerous throughout the circle. They are chiefly consumed locally. A few flocks, however, are led to the markets of the Gold Coast."

[77] Let us note further the existence of so-called "house sheep," raised individually in the household in accordance with a custom introduced among the Mossi by the Yarsé, and fattened carefully to be slaughtered on festive occasions.

Goats are not entrusted to the Foulbé either, and the latter, incidentally, would not want them. During the winter season, they are herded by children who prevent them from eating the millet. During the dry season they are not herded, and they may wander about as they please.

The majority of Mossi goats are of dwarf species. Yet goats of usual size, large goats which are no doubt of Maure /Moorish/ origin, are also to be found in small numbers.

386 There are dyers as well as weavers and tailors among the Mossi.
177 "Dyer" is garalosadaba in Mossi, from gara, "indigo" and sadaba, "maker." There are no dyers in the southern part of Mossi territory but only in the north, from Ouagadougou upward. This would tend to prove that just as the Mossi probably learned cotton weaving from the Yarsé, they must have learned the dyer's craft from the Songhay, with whom they have had contact toward the north. Actually, Songhay emigrants have established villages in the northern part of the Ouagadougou circle, and the dyer's craft is their chief industry. This strongly corroborates our theory. Let us add that /535/ the Mossi practice dyeing in certain places, at certain spots, so to speak. One may not find a single dyer in a large number of Mossi villages, and then all at once come upon a locality with thirty dyers' wells, such as Yakki for example.

386 To present a Ouagadougou dyer, here is a Mossi by the name
249 of Gomdounguiba Nangakoré. He does not himself cultivate indigo. He buys it at market in loaves or balls. Anyone may grow indigo among the Mossi (see the section on cultivation above). When it is ripe, the leaves are gathered, heaped in a wooden gourd, and
[435] pressed to make loaves worth 50, 100, or 500 cowries. The dyer buys the loaves at market.

386 He dyes either cotton threads or strips, or even garments (cloaks, etc.). The item to be dyed is brought to him. In short, he usually does custom work.

Sometimes, nevertheless, he buys thread, strips, cloaks, or skirts, dyes them, and has them sold at market by his wife or wives.

Every dyer sinks a dyeing well outside, but right beside, his soukala. He makes a neatly squared hole, quadrangular, about 60 centimeters long by 60 wide and 1 meter deep. This hole is tamped carefully several times, and the clay walls are polished with water prepared with néré bark. Finally, water is poured in to see whether it is watertight. About three days are needed to make one of those wells. Every dyer has one.

In order to dye thread, strips or garments, millet-stalk ashes are placed in water, strained, and tossed to the bottom of the dyeing hole. Then come the ashes of a tree called gouara by the Mossi (the ashes themselves are called zato or iato). They are laid

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with the Moro Naba and his chiefs. The Mossi commoner who became Minister of the Interior in the Mendes-France government received the treatment fitting to his rank from French officials in Africa, but he bowed humbly and paid homage to the Moro Naba when he visited Wagadougou. In return he still receives political support from the traditional Mossi hierarchy. Whether or not this man and the other Mossi politicians of commoner origin will continue to honor and respect the chiefs in order to obtain their support is not known. It is possible that this situation will change if the growing number of urban Mossi and some of their rural fellows attack the position of the chiefs. But for the foreseeable future it appears as though the traditional dynasty will remain in power, and may even extend its power at the expense of the other non-Mossi groups who are now members of the Voltaic Republic.

The apparent success of the ancient political dynasty of the Mossi people to adapt itself to the requirements of the modern world shows the ability of African institutions to adjust novelty with tradition. It confirms what the anthropologists have always known, that Africa was not a *tabla rasa* on which conquerors could easily impose their ideas and institutions. The cultures of Africa were meaningful to its peoples and when they could not be maintained, they were reinterpreted to meet new situations.[9] It is quite true that because of historical reasons the Mossi did not come into as intensive contact with Europeans as did their neighbors to the south, and that this is possibly why their institutions have persisted. However, the experience of Ghana should make us pause before accepting such a facile answer. A British type of Parliamentary system was imposed upon that country, but it is changing so rapidly that one wonders whether it should have been imposed in the first place. It is still too early to tell what the Ghanaian and other modern African governments will look like; but one might speculate that within the bounds set by the exigencies of the modern world, these governments may resemble the traditional African ones much more than those of their ephemeral conquerors.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. According to C. K. Meek, among the Jukun "The King's demise was and is kept a close secret, and is not, in fact revealed until some months afterwards, when the body is formally buried. Various reasons are assigned for this secrecy, such as that

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who did live at the palace, only a small minority prepared the ruler's meals and shared his bed. Dim Delobson reports that Mogho Naba Kom II (1905–42) had thirty-seven wives. His son, Mogho Naba Sagha II (1942–57), had twenty.[24] The present Mogho Naba, Kougri, recently married according to Western tradition and is officially monogamous.[25] There seems to be a general trend toward fewer wives among Mossi chiefs.

Mossi rulers never married for the purpose of forming state alliances, and their marriages had no political significance. The Mogho Naba's marriages were exogamous with regard to the royal lineage and to his mother's minimal lineage. Aside from these restrictions, however, the Mogho Naba could marry women from any Mossi lineage or group, including serfs, slaves, and foreign populations. It is said that when Mogho Naba Sanum (1850–90) despaired of having an heir by a Mossi woman, he took a Fulani wife.[26]

The Mogho Naba had no formal wedding ceremony. The task of introducing a new wife to the royal harem fell to the Pughtiema. She and her assistants welcomed the wife in a prescribed fashion. First they shaved all the hair from her body. They then bathed her in warm water to which shea butter and ritual herbs had been added, and during the bath they recited the ruler's genealogy to impress her with her new status.[27] The Pughtiema advised her on the need for proper deportment, and warned her that adultery was punished by death. To close the ceremony, a smith fastened to the girl's wrists and ankles the silver or brass bracelets that identified her as a wife of the Mogho Naba. If the bride was still a child, she was often allowed to return to her father's house until she reached childbearing age. If she was past the age of puberty, her marriage was consummated without further ceremony, and she joined the ranks of the ruler's wives.

The wives who lived in the palace were divided into three groups. The first group included the wives who lived with the Pughtiema in a section of the palace harem called the *zaka sanga* ("large courtyard"). These women were all past childbearing age and no longer received nocturnal visits from the Mogho Naba. They had their own fields in the vicinity of the palace and cultivated them with the aid of the samande kamba, the pages they had adopted, and their own children. The women of the second group, those of the *zagbilin* ("small courtyard"), were mostly in their thirties or forties and still sexually active. They received occasional visits from the Mogho Naba, but fewer than his younger wives. These women also cultivated their fields with the help of the young men of the court.

The third group of wives, the *dogunba* ("keepers of the household"), was the most important. The dogunba prepared the ruler's meals and satis-

634 721 567 175 3. Finally, a third lot, composed of young girls and young boys, was distributed among the warriors and put into their charge. The boys will be employed until further notice as grooms to the warriors; later on, those who prove themselves useful and docile will be kept. The others will be sold at the first opportunity. The girls will be given in marriage to warriors who distinguish themselves.[24]

721 643 644 701 [645] The military campaigns of the Mossi, in contrast to their slave-raiding expeditions, appear to have been well organized. When the Mogho Naba felt that a war was necessary, he summoned his five provincial ministers and the Tansoba to a parley. If war was decided upon, the Tansoba was given full charge of all operations. This man, chosen from a hereditary clan of warriors who lived in a village called Tansob'tenga in Sapone district, was listed among the Mogho Naba's courtiers but seldom appeared at court unless war was imminent. His duties as chief warrior were considered so dangerous that he constantly sought out religious practitioners for supernatural aid. Nevertheless, a war minister who was good and brave was not expected to live very long. If he did live to become gray-haired, the other courtiers made fun of him by pretending that his graying head could only be the result of his having carried a sheep captured in warfare on his head as a present to the ruler.

701 721 644 [202] [411] Once given a mandate for war, the Tansoba collected his magico-religious apparatus and prepared the requisite sacrifices. He then asked the provincial ministers to notify the district chiefs to assemble with their warriors under the leadership of the local Tansobadamba, who were often members of the Tansoba clan. When the district chiefs received this notice, they beat their *zongagondo* (war drums), and the local administrators sent orders for men to the village chiefs. The village chiefs, in turn, beat their war drums to summon their noble cavalrymen and commoner foot soldiers, who came armed with bows and arrows, spears, swords, and clubs, with or [278] without iron tips. The tips of the sharp weapons were often covered with a vegetable poison derived from a shrub of the Strophanthus species. Some [411] of the men also carried guns after firearms were introduced among the [177] Mossi from the desert region and from the coast. Many carried rawhide [714] shields.

701 726 [648] As soon as the village contingents had assembled and had gathered their provisions, they marched to the district centers. Then they proceeded either to the place of battle or to Ouagadougou. In the latter case, they became part of the royal army and were joined by the forces of those princes who were prepared to honor their obligation to the Mogho Naba. For example, when the French invaded Ouagadougou in 1896, the Boulsa Dim sent his prime minister "at the head of an army to aid Mogho Naba

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The district chiefs did not often exercise their rights over fruit trees in the weogho, as the wasteland in their districts was called. If a villager went into the weogho and collected fruit or wood from the chief's trees, he surrendered only part of it to the chief. On the other hand, if he received permission from a district chief to farm in the weogho, he was obliged to gather and send to the chief the fruit on any valuable trees. A district chief sometimes granted the rights over certain fruit trees in the inhabited areas to specific families or individuals, for personal reasons or as a reward for services. In such cases, the chief forfeited his rights to these trees, but retained his rights to the others.[58]

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District chiefs also controlled all the resources of creeks and pools within their jurisdiction that were not sacred to certain aboriginal families, or which had not been transferred to specific persons. The aboriginal Ninisi families always notified the district chief when they planned to perform their annual fishing rite to the earth deities. He, in turn, sent representatives to the ceremony, and they were given part of the catch as his share. Persons who were granted permission to fish in the chief's water holes gave him a substantial part of their catch, and even those persons who had private control of fishing places regularly did the same.

[226] [796]

The district chiefs also had rights to certain parts of animals caught in their territories. This applied especially to animals caught with such traditional weapons as traps, clubs, bows and arrows, and spears. Men who had obtained flint guns and other firearms from the Ashanti or elsewhere and who had bought their own powder were not obliged to give the chief a part of their game, but it was always prudent to do so. According to a long-standing tradition, the tusk and legs of a slain elephant that were not resting on the ground belonged to the chief, and those that lay on the ground belonged to the Tengsoba in whose ritual jurisdiction the animal had been slain. But the district chief's secular power was so much stronger than the Tengsoba's sacred power that he usually took both tusks, leaving the Tengsoba only two legs. The district chief also received other portions of elephants and parts of all the larger animals killed in his territory. And when hunters in the district were successful in the chase, they usually gave him entire small animals.

224 651 634 [411] [177] [793]

Every village in a district contributed to the district chief's revenue by performing special services for him. Certain villages were responsible for keeping specific huts in his compound in good condition; others, whose lands bordered on the woods, had to provide firewood for his compound; and yet others furnished grass and other fodder for his horses. Many villages had the task of cultivating special fields and crops for the district chief.

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pleted, the remainder of the ceremony followed the pattern of the Ouagadougou ritual.

During the weeks that followed, the village chiefs and the heads of the larger lineage segments all offered sacrifices to their ancestors. The Pughtiena of each prominent local administrator, chief, or lineage head prepared and poured the millet water as a libation to the ancestors. Whenever possible, each of these personages invited musicians to sing praises to his ancestors. He dressed in his best robe and sat outside his hut to receive presents from his relatives, friends, and subjects, along with their best wishes for the new year, and for long life and prosperity. In return he gave them kola nuts, beer, and food. Thus, in celebrating the Basgha, all the Mossi were united in prayers and supplications to the ancestors, upon whom rested the future of their country and the successful reign of the descendants of Ouedraogo and Oubri.

The earth deity, Tenga, held the central place in the second major religio-political ceremony which linked all Mossi. This ritual, called *Tense* (from *tenga*, "earth") and sometimes *Naba Oubri ma koure* ("the anniversary of the funeral of Mogho Naba Oubri's mother"), was so important to Mossi cohesion that it was banned by the French, and as a result its main features are now unclear. According to tradition, Naba Oubri loved Poughtoenga, his Ninisi mother, so much, and was so pleased with the elaborate funeral he gave her, that he decided to repeat this ceremony each year in the hope that his subjects would be blessed with the bountiful crops and herds which had made the first one possible. Curiously enough, Oubri's mother was not a central figure in the Tense celebration.[5] Instead, great stress was placed on the fructifying powers of the earth and on the importance of the royal ancestors in Mossi life. The juxtaposition and association of the earth deity with Oubri's mother has important implications for the Mossi political organization. Mossi tradition holds that a Ninisi woman was the ancestress of the Mossi of Ouagadougou. Her people probably celebrated the Tense as a fertility rite to their earth goddess, Tenga. The Mossi apparently took over the ceremony and used it both as a fertility rite and as a memorial festival, thus symbolically uniting the conquerors and the conquered.[6]

In contrast to the Basgha, no special date appears to have been set for the celebration of the Tense. It was held sometime before the crops were sowed, but according to Tauxier it was not celebrated at all in Ouagadougou when the previous year's harvest had been poor.[6] Before setting the date for the festival, the Mogho Naba summoned the Larhalle Naba and ordered him to have sacrifices made on the graves of all former rulers. This minister

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IX

EUROPEAN CONTACT AND THE CONQUEST OF THE MOSSI

No one knows with any degree of certainty when the Mossi came to the attention of an expanding Western Europe. Marc reports that the ambassadors of John II of Portugal (1481-95) who visited Mali and Timbuktu heard about the Mossi and convinced the King on their return that the Mossi were Christians, and that the King attempted to establish contact with them.[1] Similarly, Barth tells us that around 1488, 177 175*

> The Jolof [Wolof] Prince Bemoy came to Portugal and communicated so much information with regard to the nations of the interior of Africa, especially the Mossi, who, according to him, had much in common with the Christians, that he excited the greatest interest. It was supposed that the king of Mossi was the long-sought Prester John. Ogane is the native royal title of the king of Mossi. In consequence, from this time forward, numerous messengers were sent into the interior by King John from different quarters, and a nearer alliance seems to have been concluded with the king of the Mandingoes, although it was well understood in Portugal that the empire of the Mellians had fallen in ruin.[2]

Barth also states that as late as 1533, "The Portuguese endeavored also to open communication with the king of Mossi (el rey dos Moses), of whose power they had received reports, but from the wrong side, namely from Benin. The king of Mossi was then waging war with Mandi Mansa."[3] Unfortunately, no Mossi tradition reveals whether they had heard about the Portuguese at that time.

There are no authentic reports that Western Europeans tried to reach the Mossi until three centuries later. During the intervening period, the Europeans were so preoccupied with the gold- and slave-rich coastal African states and with their American and Asian colonies that they had little interest in the interior of the African continent. Only after the slave trade had been abolished and they were trying to find out about the interior of the Sudan in the hope of establishing trade relations there did the Europeans again hear about the Mossi.

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*175 The Mossi were probably brought to the attention of modern Europe
177 by T. E. Bowdich, an Englishman who went to Ashanti in 1817 to sign a
114 trade agreement with the Asantehene. While at Kumasi, Bowdich diligently sought information about the lands in the interior, but was relatively unsuccessful because his hosts pleaded ignorance. Nevertheless, he did find out that "five journies [days] from Yngwa [Yendi] is Mosee, a warlike but less visited kingdom: it consists of many states, but the superior monarch is named Billa, and the capital Kookoopella."[4] This misinformation is interesting because it shows that Bowdich's respondent had precise information only about Koupela, a town located near the great caravan center of Poitenga. Similarly, the linguistic data reported by Bowdich are for Dagomba rather than Mossi.

*175 Another Englishman, Joseph Dupuis, led a trade mission to Kumasi in
177 1819, and obtained data on the Mossi that are surprisingly accurate given the reluctance of middlemen traders to reveal commercial information. He reports that Ashanti traders "sometimes travel as far as Aughoa, the Magho, and to the east of Kasogho. Aughoa is distant from Coomassie twenty-five journies by the Salgha and Yandy Roads, which would give a distance of 360 British miles. Their object in frequenting this place is to collect that vegetable substance by the name of shea butter."[5] There is no doubt that "Aughoa" is really "Ouagha," the term often used by the Mossi to refer to their capital, and the distance between Kumasi and Ouagadougou as reported by Dupuis is approximately the same as the road mileage
[101] today. The name "Magho," which appears from time to time in these early documents, seems to be none other than "Mogho," the traditional name of Mossi country. "Kasogho" probably refers to the section of Ouagadougou that was controlled by the Kamsaogho Naba.

The Hausa merchants knew a great deal about the Mossi and the resources of their territory, but only with difficulty did the English trader Hugh Clapperton persuade Sultan Mohammed Bello of Sokoto to give him the following information:

> The country of Mouchier or Mouchi is situated to the west of Ghurma. It is vast and possesses a gold mine, rivers, forests, and mountains. It is inhabited by tribes of the Sudan who possess many fast horses and large donkeys. Their king is called Wagadougou; their asses are sent down to the Gondja to carry the drums of the Army.[6]

[114] Either Clapperton or his informant obviously confused the capital of the Mossi with their king, and included parts of Dagomba in their territory.

Barth, who traveled extensively in the Sudan between 1849 and 1855, did

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not enter Mossi territory. Nevertheless, he obtained rather precise information on the important caravan routes leading from Timbuktu through the Mossi trade centers of Ouagadougou, Kaya, Yako, and Koupela, down to Salaga and other towns in Ghana, and even across to Sansane Mango in Togoland. His data on the Mossi are invaluable: 175* 177 [114]

> The whole triangle interposed between the Niger toward the north, and the country of the Eastern Mandingoes or Wangarawa toward the south, appears to be inhabited by a single race of people whose language, although they are divided into several states and nations, nevertheless appears originally to have been the same stock. It is very probable that this race in ancient times occupied the whole upper course of the Niger, and that this tract may have been wrested from it in later times by the Songhai and the Mandingoes, especially that section of the latter which is generally called Bambara. These are the Gourma toward the N.E., the Tombo toward the N.W., and between them the Mossi. . . . The strongest among these pagan kingdoms five centuries ago, and even at the present moment, is that of the Mossi, although the country is split into a number of small principalities, almost totally independent of each other, and paying only some slight homage to the ruler of the principality of Woghodogo.[7] [101] [631]

Europe learned more about the Mossi from Sigismund Koelle, who visited Sierra Leone in 1854. His informant was one Andrew Dixon, who had lived in Koupela before being captured and sold into slavery. He furnished information on the location of the Mossi, their wars with the Busansi, and their important commercial and political relations with the Ashanti.[8] Koelle's report, taken in conjunction with the reports of Dupuis, Bowdich, Clapperton, and Barth, shows that the Ashanti, like the Hausa and other coastal peoples, were protecting their trade when they attempted to isolate the peoples of the interior from the Europeans. But as soon as the British defeated the Ashanti in the war of 1873–74, the Sudan was opened and adventurers poured in. In 1877 and 1878, two missionaries of the Basel Mission visited the northern regions of Ghana, and subsequently gave a good description of Mossi commerce in that area.[9] Lonsdale, who visited Salaga in 1881, found among the traders in the market "the Mossi with his cattle, sheep, and slaves—these latter, generally Gurunsi, are not exposed for sale in the street or market, but can be seen where the owner resides."[10] [115] [797] [439] [567]

The activities of the various European nations in West Africa and other regions at this time led to military and diplomatic difficulties, which the Berlin Conference of 1884–85 was convened to resolve. Agreement was reached to assign "spheres of influence" to the various European nations, to regulate trade, and to provide for arbitration between rival claimants of conquered or "protected" territories. In West Africa, this meant the end

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of the long Mossi isolation from European activity. In 1886, a German by
• 177 the name of Krause became the first European to enter Ouagadougou. He left German-controlled Togoland and joined a caravan at Salaga in July 1886 with a load of kola nuts destined for Timbuktu. He arrived in the Mossi district of Bere sometime in August, and remained there long enough to observe that although this was the period of cultivation, there was a severe food shortage. The caravan proceeded to Ouagadougou and remained there until October, when it continued northward.[11] Krause reports that the journey through the Yatenga and Bandiagara region was uneventful, but that shortly after the caravan left Douentza, in December, he received word from the Mogho Naba to return to Ouagadougou immediately. Afraid to disobey, he returned to Ouagadougou in January 1887, tarried there for about two weeks, and then returned to the Gold Coast. Krause gives only a brief topographic description of Mossi country, and says little about the people and their society.[12] His visit might even be doubted, had Binger not visited Ouagadougou the following year and met the person at whose house Krause had lived.

In 1888 Binger left the French colony of Senegal with the sole purpose of reaching the Mossi and placing their country under the "protection" of France if this proved feasible. In many of the towns he passed through on his way to Mossi country, he encountered Mossi men trading slaves, salt, and kola nuts.[13] He also met a future Mossi ruler, Boukary Koutou, who was then in exile at Banema on the outskirts of the territory of Ouagadougou. Binger thought well of this prince, and described him as having "an honest countenance. His whole appearance denotes intelligence. He seems to be a just man, but firm in his resolutions."[14] Binger got better treatment from Boukary Koutou than he had from any other African ruler. He writes:

> Boukary Naba . . . treated me with plenty of good will, and had edibles and meat sent to me every day. . . . It is a great pity that I did not find Boukary Naba in power upon my arrival in Mossi country. It certainly would have facilitated my journey toward the Niger, and if he ever accedes to the throne, he will help with all the means at his disposal the European traveler who happens to pass through his country. This man has fine ideas; he loves progress, and will be well disposed to hear the counsel of the white man. Although his intelligence is higher than the average among blacks, he considers himself quite inferior to the European.[15]

Boukary Koutou further endeared himself to Binger by providing him with an escort so that he might reach the capital safely.

[643] In contrast, Binger was not impressed with Mogho Naba Sanum. He

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lamented the fact that when Mogho Naba Koutou died in 1850, the youthful Boukary Koutou had not been able to defeat his brother in the struggle for power. He voiced his disappointment with the town of Ouagadougou: 175* 177 643

> I expected to find something better than the ordinary royal residence in the Sudan, because everywhere I went people bragged to me about the riches of the chief and the number of his wives and eunuchs. I did not have to wait long to find out the true state of affairs, because that very evening I found that what was acknowledged as a palace and seraglio was nothing but a group of miserable huts surrounded by heaps of filth, and a group of straw huts which served as stables and lodgings for captives and *griots* [bards]. In the courtyard were cows, sheep, and donkeys, which had been brought that day as presents for the king, but which had not yet been presented to him.[16]

Binger did say that Sanum had treated him well and had allowed him to remain at Ouagadougou for over a month, but he was angered when the ruler refused to let him pass through Yatenga (which he claimed as part of his realm) to go to Timbuktu. Nor would Sanum consider his request to place the Mossi under French protection. Finally, Sanum sent him a message ordering him to leave the capital immediately. Binger asked the reason for this summary dismissal, and was informed that the Mogho Naba believed that he was an advance guard for Europeans who were coming from the south, and that he did not show sufficient respect for the ruler. Binger scoffed at the first charge, but later found out that a German column under Von François was indeed heading for the Mossi. He violently rejected the charge of disrespect. He states: 175* 177 643 648*

> I feel that a white man traveling in this country, whoever he may be, should not prostrate himself before a black king, however powerful the latter may be. It is necessary that a white man should inspire respect and consideration wherever he goes; for if the Europeans should ever come here, they should come as masters, as the superior class of the society, and not have to bow their heads before indigenous chiefs to whom they are definitely superior in all respects.[17]

Despite these personal sentiments, Binger was compelled to leave Ouagadougou. He stopped briefly to visit his friend Boukary Koutou, and proceeded to the Gold Coast.

For some reason, Von François and his expedition never reached Mossi country. He left Togoland in February 1888 with a sizable force, intending to establish German rule in the Niger bend area, but turned back at Surma on the Mossi border.[18] He was soon followed by numerous British missions from the Gold Coast, German missions from Togoland, and French missions from Dahomey and the Sudan. Marc states: "The three 175* 648*

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laborers.[3] In desperation, the French sought help from those very chiefs whose power they wished to curb, especially from the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou, whom they regarded as the supreme ruler of the Mossi. However, they met with the same resistance:

> The king of the Mossi, Kouka Naba [Mogho Naba Sighiri], is lavish with vows of devotion and fidelity, but these vows are never translated into action. It is impossible to obtain from him any pertinent information about the country—he tries to give the impression that he knows nothing about it—or any information about Boukary Koutou [then in exile, but still a threat to the French], of whom he pretends to have no news.[4]

One cannot tell whether the Mogho Naba knew about Boukary Koutou's activities, but it is highly unlikely that he could have given the French much information about the country even if he had wished to do so. No Mogho Naba ever possessed this kind of information. The Dimdamba and the Kombemba paid allegiance and tribute to their superior ruler, but did not furnish him with specific data on their principalities and districts. [631] [651]

The death of Mogho Naba Sighiri in 1905 enabled the French officials to secure the election of a Mogho Naba they could control and to change the Mossi political organization. Sighiri's principal heir was his sixteen-year-old son, Saidou Congo, who in the opinion of the Mossi electoral college "could not keep the country" because of his youth. The French, keenly aware that they could more easily control a young ruler, insisted that Saidou be given the nam, and he became Mogho Naba Kom. Two years later, in 1907, the French began to reorganize the kingdom of Ouagadougou and the surrounding territories. They suppressed certain districts and principalities, enlarged some, and unified others by granting them control over the smaller political entities that lay near or within their boundaries. These changes were often made without regard for the traditional hierarchies, and many district chiefs found themselves controlling other district chiefs, while Dimdamba were reduced to the level of district chiefs. 175* 177 643 648*

The French also reorganized the provincial administration, replacing the five ministers with persons more favorably disposed toward their rule. The Larhalle Naba was replaced in 1908 after he had mysteriously left the capital for Koudougou. The Kamsaogho Naba was deposed by the Mogho Naba, and was replaced by a nominee of the French. As in the case of the district chiefs, the French shifted the territorial responsibilities of these ministers "without taking into consideration the hierarchy prevailing among [them]. The intention of the administration apparently was to reward certain young and capable ministers to the detriment of those who were old."[5] One commentator concludes: "In view of the youth of the 175* 177 648* 645

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175 reigning king, Naba Kom, and also owing to certain difficulties, the ad-
177 ministration was compelled to grant more authority to the five great min-
648 isters and to make them true provincial chiefs with whom it could deal and
[645] who would govern their territories directly."[6]

Some of the demoted chiefs and their followers opposed these changes. In 1910, they refused to pay taxes and fought the police. However, they were forced to accept the changes when the police burned their villages, seized their goods and animals to pay the taxes, and deposed uncooperative chiefs. These harsh measures so shocked the Mossi that they remained docile from that time onward, and thereafter the French were able to rule the country with one European administrator for every 60,000 Mossi.[7]

Once the French officials had put down the opposition to their policies of control and had succeeded in installing loyal provincial administrators, they sought to bring Mossi country into the political structure they were creating in West Africa. In 1895, they had installed a Governor-General at Dakar to represent the French Government in the territories of Senegal, the French Sudan, French Guinea, and the Ivory Coast. With the subsequent conquest of Mossi country and other areas, however, this arrangement became obsolete, and a decree was passed in October 1899, dividing the French Sudan in two. One half was attached to the coastal colonies. The other half was combined with the Voltaic region (which included Mossi country), declared a military territory, and placed under the direct control of the Governor-General. In 1900 Niger was also made into a military territory, and two years later, by a decree of October 1902, a new territory called Sénégambie-Niger was set up which included Mossi country. This new arrangement lasted only two years. It was superseded by a decree of October 1904 dismembering Sénégambie-Niger and creating, among others, a territory called Haut-Sénégal et Niger, which included Mossi country. This new colony was similar to the others in that it had its own administration (at Bamako), its own budget, and a Lieutenant-Governor responsible to the Governor-General at Dakar. The territory was divided into administrative units called *cercles*, each with a commander responsible to the Lieutenant-Governor. Each cercle commander was assisted by adjutants who served in smaller units called *subdivisions* and *postes*. Mossi country itself was divided into three cercles: Ouagadougou (including Tenkodogo), Ouahigouya (including Yatenga), and Fada-N'-Gourma. This territorial change was the last to affect the Mossi until the end of World War I.[8]

[651] The implementation of full colonial rule among the Mossi was to have a profound effect on their traditional political organization and on the

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relationship between the people and their chiefs. One of the principal contributing factors was the demand of the French administration that Mossi country not only share in the over-all development of French West Africa, but pay for its own administration as well. The resources of Mossi country were largely limited to agricultural production and stock raising, however, and revenue from these activities was slight. The full weight of administrative expenses thus fell on the Mossi people. Apparently, the first taxation was of a collective nature, for according to the official government report for June 1899, "No regular tax has been levied, but taxes have been collected from the Mogho Naba and the other chiefs."[9]

Decrees of July and November, 1903, authorized "native chiefs to collect taxes, and granted them a commission on the tax yield to arouse their interest in the regular payment of taxes."[10] Accustomed as they were to giving taxes (gifts) to their rulers with the knowledge that subordinate chiefs would extract a share before sending the remainder up the hierarchy, the Mossi were not averse to paying taxes through their traditional rulers to the "new chiefs," the French administration. However, when taxes grew to excessive proportions and chiefs continued to get a percentage, the people accused their rulers of cheating them. The reasons for the Mossi complaints about taxation are described by Tauxier, himself an administrator:

> This tax, light at first, has grown rapidly over the last few years. In 1906 it was 311,000 francs for the territory of Ouagadougou, which had a population of 861,000 inhabitants. In 1907, the tax was raised to 360,000 francs; in 1909, to 555,000 francs; and in 1910, to 656,000 francs. Furthermore, from 1908 onward this tax was exacted with such rigor and on such short notice that it was exactly as though the amount had been tripled. Under the circumstances, the Mossi were compelled to resort to trade in order to obtain the French money they did not have, since the local currency is the cowry and the French administration does not wish to receive it. . . . To meet this difficult situation the Mossi now organize small caravans in the villages, and send the young men to Wanke to sell cattle, sheep, goats, asses, horses, and bolts of cotton. They bring back with them either French money or kola nuts.[11]

Many Mossi had a great deal of difficulty in securing French currency. Mangin, a White Father who arrived in Mossi country in 1904, writes:

> The Europeans who live among the Mossi, including all the riflemen and cercle guards, do not put into circulation a quarter of the five-franc pieces that are required each year from the natives. At first the Mossi were taken by surprise and had to give 10,000 or even 15,000 cowries to obtain this famous coin, this charm which was to free them from all difficulties with the white man. At the official rate of exchange this coin is worth 5,000 cowries.[12]

What Mangin referred to euphemistically as "difficulties with the white man" was, to the Mossi, rather drastic punishment for non-payment of taxes. If a man refused to pay his taxes, the Mossi chief was permitted to sequester his goods and sell them. If the man had neither the taxes nor the goods, the chief had to send him and his wife (or wives) to the administrative post to be punished. Sometimes, a man and his wife would be made to look at the sun from sunrise to sunset while intoning the prayer *Ouennam co mam ligidi* ("God, give me money"). Other times, a man would be made to run around the administrative post with his wife on his back; if he had several wives, he had to take each one in turn. Then his wife or wives had to carry him around. The Mossi claim that a man had to run around the post three times, and his wife four. This is probably an exaggeration, however, because the numbers 3 and 4 are symbolically associated with men and women, respectively.

A further source of difficulty for the Mossi chiefs, and one which became more serious as time went by, was that they were charged by the administration to recruit men for both labor and military service. Initially, the chiefs had to supply men to transport grain for the French-organized agricultural societies from one region to another; later, they were commanded to supply labor for private and public works. Labouret states:

> The initial recruitment, which took place in 1912, was carried out without any difficulty, thanks to the unexpected afflux of volunteers. This was not the case in subsequent years. The reason for this was that the credulous natives of these distant regions, lacking any contact with the world, believed that the Europeans were carrying off their most robust youths to sell them to the Men of the Sea [mythical cannibalistic beings].[13]

The Mossi were alarmed at the high rate of mortality among the young men who went away to work. They had a saying, *Nansara toumde di Mossi* ("White man's work eats [kills] people"), and resisted the recruiting attempts of their chiefs. There was, however, less opposition to recruitment for military service, owing in part to the Mossi tradition of warfare. Many Mossi youths served in France during World War I, and additional hundreds served in an African contingent recruited "by an administrator named d'Arboussier, and with the cooperation of the Mogho Naba, to take possession of northern Togoland."[14]

The manner in which the Mossi chiefs administered their territories before the First World War was conditioned by the colonial administrators even when it was not directly controlled by them. The Mogho Naba had gradually lost most of his power, and he had no authority to act without the specific authorization of the French. He retained most of his cere-

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monial activities, especially since they were considered interesting "feudal" anachronisms to be shown to visiting officials and travelers. He also retained the power to appoint district chiefs, but the French often vetoed men they disliked and suggested that other candidates be elected. He also lost all control over his provincial administrators. The administrative chain now extended from the cercle commanders, through the provincial ministers and district chiefs, down to the village chiefs. Many provincial ministers, out of loyalty to the traditional system, occasionally briefed the Mogho Naba on the policies the French had ordered them to carry out, and told him about the state of affairs in the districts. This was completely unofficial if not illegal, but it made little difference to the French.

One serious blow to the power of the Mossi chiefs, especially on the district level, was their loss of judicial autonomy. Mossi country was subjected to the Indigénat, a rather harsh code of law for new colonies, which was promulgated by a decree of September 1887. Under this code, administrators could hold summary trials and punish any Moaga, whether chief or commoner. In June 1905, the Mossi chiefs regained some of their judicial power when a supplementary decree established village, district, and cercle courts throughout Haut-Sénégal et Niger.[18] Mossi village chiefs regained their police powers and the right to reconcile disputes among their people, but their decisions could be appealed to a district court. The district chief heard appeals and judged civil and criminal cases, but in all deliberations he was aided by two assessors appointed by the Governor. His judgment could be appealed to a cercle court, which was presided over by a European, who was assisted by two Africans. They heard appeals and judged crimes for which the penalty could be no more than five years. Penalties handed down by this court could be appealed to the Supreme Court of the Federation of French West Africa in Dakar, which judged all major crimes.

Thus the Mossi chiefs did regain part of their judicial power; but because the decree of 1905 did not abolish the Indigénat, local French administrators could easily countermand this power. Moreover, some administrators, dissatisfied with the Mossi courts and possibly resentful at their own loss of judicial power, sent numerous complaints to Dakar about the incompetence of the chiefs and the injustices perpetrated by village and district courts. As a result, a decree of August 1912 abolished the judicial power of the Mossi and of all other African chiefs, and instructed them to refer all litigation to courts at the poste, subdivision, and cercle levels.[19]

During the period before the First World War, the Mossi chiefs lost not only their judicial power but also much of the economic and religious basis of their political power. The French administration abolished slavery

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and serfdom, and discouraged the various corvées performed by the people for their chiefs on the ground that the chiefs gained sufficient income from tax commissions. What really undermined the economic position of the Mossi chiefs, however, was the abolition of the religio-political practices and ceremonies that provided the rulers with substantial income, while reinforcing the traditional political system. The French permitted Mossi chiefs to celebrate the Basgha, but abolished the Tense with its revenue-producing Soretasgho ritual on the ground that it exploited the local population. The Mossi chiefs could no longer authorize the Tengsobadamba to appropriate sacrificial animals from the villages to propitiate capricious deities. But some chiefs, taking quite seriously the concept that they were the "fathers" of their people, and had been selected for the nam because of their ability to care for their subjects, provided these animals or covertly permitted their servants to seize them and turn them over to the Tengsobadamba.

At the end of World War I, the French administration tried to establish a new policy toward the Mossi chiefs, but new economic programs that were implemented at the same time rendered these plans ineffective and further undermined the old institutions. A new Governor-General of French West Africa, Joost Van Vollenhoven, strongly influenced by one of his predecessors, Merleau-Ponty, and by the policy of *association* between France and her colonies (a policy based on the idea that colonial policy should be determined by the geographic and ethnic characteristics and the level of social development of the regions involved), advocated respect for the chiefs and for strong traditional political systems. Van Vollenhoven stipulated that the chiefs should not be harried by administrators, subjected to corporal punishment, or legally prosecuted without the sanction of higher officials (cercle commanders and lieutenant-governors). They should be granted higher salaries and help for agricultural labor, and should be shown techniques for improving their material well-being. They should also be decorated more often with the Legion of Honor, in order to heighten their prestige and to demonstrate "French generosity." Their relatives should be educated, given prestige and remuneration, and permitted to retain some status.[17]

The colonial economic policy that was to subvert Van Vollenhoven's political concepts and adversely affect the Mossi chiefs was outlined by Albert Sarraut, the postwar French Colonial Minister, who drew up an ingenious plan (*La Mise en valeur des colonies françaises*) to foster the development of railroads, wharves, roads, plantations, and other enterprises in every colony.[18] In contrast to Van Vollenhoven, Sarraut believed that

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economic development should take precedence over everything else in the colonies. The Mossi were to be directly affected by the policies of both Van Vollenhoven and Sarraut. The colony of Haut-Sénégal et Niger was suppressed in March 1919, and replaced by the new colony of Upper Volta, in which the Mossi were the chief ethnic group. Moreover, Ouagadougou was chosen as the administrative center of this new colony.[19]

The new Governor of the Upper Volta, Edouard Hesling, who arrived in Ouagadougou in November 1919, sympathized with Van Vollenhoven's views, but was even more interested in economic development. He was determined to transform Ouagadougou from a small town with an indigenous population of about 8,000 and some 76 European soldiers, merchants, and missionaries, into a capital worthy of a colony. Shortly after he arrived, he summoned the Mogho Naba and the traditional ministers and had them recruit some 2,000 salaried and unsalaried men to provide enough mud bricks and wooden beams to complete the construction of eleven administrative buildings before the rainy season began the following May.

Hesling and his administrators believed that the Upper Volta, a country "with such diverse products and such a dense population, could attain an exceptional level of development by acquiring those economic elements which ensure prosperity."[20] Cotton was one of those elements. They believed that the Upper Volta "can and should export thousands of tons as soon as an easy and economical way of shipping is established."[21] By 1925, Hesling had constructed 6,000 kilometers of roads in the Upper Volta, about one-eighth the entire road network of French West Africa. Travelers in the Upper Volta at this time wrote of "the enforced enthusiasm with which the natives, under M. E. Hesling, have thrown themselves into agricultural labor and in particular into the planting of cotton."[22]

The administration of the Upper Volta continued to furnish Mossi manpower for the development of the other colonies as well as for the colonial army. In 1922, it was asked to furnish "6,000 workers for the Thies-Kayes railway, renewable every six months; and under the same conditions to furnish 2,000 laborers to build the railways in the Ivory Coast. Similarly, with the consent of the chief administrator of the colony, it was possible to recruit a thousand workers in the regions of Ouagadougou and Bobo-Dioulasso for private business in the Ivory Coast."[23] Londres, who visited the Upper Volta in the late 1920's, reports that Mossi country was known as "a 'reservoir' of manpower."[24] Burthe d'Annelet reports that during this same period, "The Minister of War [took] 45,000 men each year to compensate for the weakness of our metropolitan recruitment, and

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to cut down the length of service of our draftees as much as possible."[25] The Governor of the Upper Volta made full use of the Mossi chiefs to develop the colony, and although some chiefs may have objected to the labor imposed on their subjects, others seemingly approved. In commenting upon cotton production in the Upper Volta, Ossendowski writes:

> Cotton is an artificial crop and one the value of which is not entirely clear to the natives. The chiefs with their superior intellect, seeing the profit to be obtained from the plantation of cotton, are continually enlarging the area of the fields, and resort to draft animals, ploughs, manures, and even partial irrigation of the fields; nevertheless, the great mass of the population submit rather unwillingly to those instructions of the administration which aim at the development of cotton cultivation in the colony.[26]

Delavignette's comment on the role of the chiefs in cotton production seems to indicate that they, like their subjects, had to conform to the desires of the French:

> [The French] lived at Ouagadougou in the shade of the great Nabas, and because [the latter] possessed servitors and were at the head of docile provinces, [the French] dignified by the name of "custom," and in any case adjudged convenient, this domestication of the peasants whereby they were forced to work in a common field under the authority of the village chief, and for a salary which was theoretically to be distributed among them afterwards. Sometimes cercle guards were stationed in these fields.[27]

The Governor carried out many of Van Vollenhoven's reforms concerning the Mossi chiefs, and instructed his district administrators to respect the chiefs and to seek their aid in governing the people. De Beauminy, an administrator in the Upper Volta, contrasts the old policy with the new:

> Not without reason, we followed the rule of regarding the great black chiefs as exploiters of their peoples, and this caused us to introduce and to maintain a policy aimed at reducing their authority. Later on we were compelled to abandon this policy in the face of discouraging results. During the past few years we have restored power and prestige to the Mogho Naba and to his vassals, the Mossi chiefs. They are now paid by us, and they administer their kingdoms and territories under our guidance and under the supervision of an extremely small European staff (one official for every 60,000 inhabitants). The rulers are now helping us to restore, on a newer and sounder basis, a political edifice which had once appeared to be on the point of collapse.[28]

An official report also stated that the Mossi chiefs

> understand that the time of their absolute power, and the privileges of their "medieval lordships," are fated to wear away gradually. Certainly, the main-

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tenance of their authority and prestige is indispensable, and the local administration is firmly resolved not only to preserve it but even to strengthen it. Henceforth, however, this authority and prestige will be upheld on the basis of principles and methods better suited to the new order of things which has been established.[29]

The administration tried to educate some of the sons of the chiefs "in order to attune them to progress and to the fundamental principles of our policy."[30] It encountered some resistance from chiefs who resented what they considered the "recruitment" of their children for education, and from other chiefs who were afraid that, if educated, their sons might be converted to Catholicism and thus would be unable to perform the traditional religio-political ceremonies. Nevertheless, one official states quite proudly that "Despite some resistance, the results obtained so far are encouraging and of such a nature as to allay our anxiety: 671 sons of chiefs are now attending our schools, among them 52 sons of provincial chiefs and 342 sons of district chiefs."[31] However, very few of these boys even learned French well enough to take part in the government of their society. 175* 177 648* 631

Hesling also made an effort to improve the material welfare of the Mossi chiefs. He felt that under the previous administration the chiefs had been "inadequately remunerated," and he considered this bad for their morale. He therefore increased the appropriation for the salaries of chiefs from 86,000 francs in the 1919 budget to 190,000 francs in the 1924 budget, and counted on their receiving an additional 163,260 francs from tax commissions during the year. The Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou, considered the emperor of the Mossi and judged loyal, efficient, and capable by the French, was granted a stipend of 25,000 francs, while the Yatenga Naba, considered his subordinate and judged less capable, was granted only 8,700 francs.[32] Only 276 chiefs out of a total of 497 in the territory received any stipend at all that year, because even an augmented budget was too small to provide funds for the lesser chiefs. These chiefs, in the words of one official, "were often inadequate or incapable, but . . . could not be replaced, either because they had no qualified successors or because the traditional system placed an obstacle in the way."[33] Instead of salaries, they received seeds of new plant species such as mangoes, and they were helped in building dams to irrigate their fields and in sinking deep wells near their compounds. In addition to these material rewards, the Governor increased the prestige of the chiefs by giving them medals and honors. 175* 177 648* 631 465 [643]

Despite these increased salaries and honors, and the more important role they now played in the administration of their subjects, the Mossi 175* 177 648* 631 643

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chiefs did not regain any of their traditional power. They remained auxiliaries of the administration. Taking Mogho Naba Kom as an example, one report states that this "simple, intelligent, compliant man served as news agent and made himself useful to the political administration" until the arrival of Hesling, when he took a livelier interest in the affairs of the colony.[34] Another source says of the same monarch:

> Free of the ancestral traditions that forbade him to leave his palace, and curious about progress and administration, he travels on all the roads and, under our supervision, busies himself with the settlement of administrative problems, to which he lends the weight of his authority. He makes the proposals for the nomination of province and district chiefs; he encourages his subjects to work and produce. Finally, he fulfills with the greatest dignity the representative functions that devolve upon him at his palace and in the official ceremonies.[35]

While it is true that the Mogho Naba made proposals for the nomination of chiefs, he was powerless to prevent their dismissal if they incurred the displeasure of the administration—a frequent occurrence during the Hesling period. For example, when the administration deposed Naba Boulga of Doulougou district for "incompetence" and placed him in "enforced residence" in a neighboring district, the French officials encouraged the election of Bila Kongo primarily because he was a former cercle guard. Bila Kongo was assassinated in 1924, and the Mogho Naba named Mahama Ouedraogo to take his place. This new chief soon had difficulties with the administration, however, and was deposed for exacting unauthorized taxes from his subjects and for abusing his authority. Mogho Naba Kom then appointed Ousmane Ouedraogo, but he was deposed for "incompetence" and exiled to Sao district.

On the other hand, Hesling made few attempts to change the traditional political and administrative structures of the Mossi. One contemporary source says:

> Since its inception the Government of the Upper Volta has made no changes or innovations, or at best very few, in this connection. The native administrative entities in the cercles of Ouagadougou, Ouahigouya, Kaya, and Fada-N'Gourma have remained the same as those which Haut-Sénégal et Niger transferred to the colony in 1919. . . . Only in 1922 did the cercle of Koudougou have its "Gurunsi" districts separated from its "Mossi" districts to form a new province, which was placed under the command of the Leo Naba, a chief of the same Gurunsi race. Tenkodogo, a cercle made up of a large number of small districts ruled by thoroughly inept chiefs, has been the object of a partial internal reorganization since the beginning of 1923. The number of its native *circonscriptions* [districts] has been reduced from 82 to 73.[36]

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These were minor changes indeed, but they truncated the power of the Mossi chiefs over the Gurunsi and Busansi, which had been on the increase as recently as the 1880's. Except for these slight changes, however, the Mossi traditional organization remained as it had been since the immediate post-conquest period.

Instead of changing the traditional administrative structure, the Governor introduced a new administrative device, the *Conseil de notables indigènes* (Council of Native Notables) in Ouagadougou in April 1920, and subsequently established similar councils at Ouahigouya, Tenkodogo, Kaya, and Koudougou. By establishing these councils, the administration hoped to provide the Mossi with a better understanding of the ideals and standards of French policy; to place the French administrators in closer contact with the people, who "had been almost totally ignorant of the functioning of [the French] administration"; and to form "an elite who will later be able to contribute in a closer and more personal way to the economic and financial life of the colony."[37] The council at Ouagadougou, which was to serve as a model for Mossi country, was to be presided over by the cercle commanders and to have from ten to sixteen members, including the traditional provincial ministers of the Mossi (with life membership); members of the Moslem community in Ouagadougou; and representatives of foreign groups living in the capital, of French citizens, and of the veterans of World War I. No provision was made to include the Mossi chiefs, but hope was expressed that they would support these councils and work with them.

These councils failed primarily because they turned out to be organs of the French administration and in fact functioned as such, and because their members had varied and often conflicting status. They met two or three times a year at administrative centers and discussed such things as personal taxes, the allocation and execution of prestations, the use of Mossi labor in foreign areas, the licensing and taxation of African traders and merchants, the status of women, the expansion of cultivation, stock breeding, and the collection of shea-butter nuts and kapok pods. None of the Mossi or African representatives had sufficient power or knowledge to challenge the ideas or recommendations of the European members. And the Mossi ministers, while submissive to the Europeans, found it difficult to accept as equals the representatives of non-Mossi peoples who prior to the conquest had lived at Ouagadougou only at the sufferance of the Mogho Naba; nor were they willing to discuss administrative affairs with these people or with the Mossi commoners who represented the war veterans. Ultimately, the councils became rubber stamps for the policies of the

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administration, and failed to serve as an administrative training ground for either the Mossi ministers or the commoner representatives.[88]

During the Hesling period, the Mossi district chiefs remained in power, but the French, through their African administrative assistants, kept a stricter watch on district affairs. The chiefs regained some of their judicial (or, rather, conciliatory) power in 1921 when the Governor, dissatisfied with the territory's legal system, promulgated a decree reorganizing the courts and giving the Mossi district and village chiefs the right of adjudication in minor cases involving civil and commercial matters.[89] However, they had to send all cases involving serious crimes and all appeals from other cases to higher courts. Because their subjects could appeal to the subdivision courts and because they risked reprimand by administrators when their verdicts were deemed unjust, many Mossi chiefs complied. They tried to do so even when the litigants themselves would have preferred not to deal with the administrators. Often the chiefs overtly told the litigants to go to the administrators but covertly persuaded them not to do so. In this manner they observed all proprieties toward both the French and their subjects.

The village and district courts had to send all criminal offenses such as assault and battery cases and major thefts, as well as appeals against their verdicts, to a "tribunal of the first degree," which was presided over by a subdivision commander and his Mossi assessors. Cases were taken to the tribunal only when the dispute was extremely serious or when people were gravely injured, because Mossi villagers hesitated to take their cases to officials who, when not swamped with work, had little patience with the complexities of Mossi litigation. Moreover, the Mossi feared to subject their fellows to the rigors of the Indigénat, which was still in existence, because, as one official source declares, "If this regime subsists, it is because the Voltaic populations have not yet reached a level of development that would permit the withdrawal of a weapon which is so readily useful to the commanders of administrative units. Besides, when judiciously managed, it does not present any danger in these underdeveloped regions."

Cases which the subdivision commanders considered too serious for their courts were sent to "tribunals of the second degree" at the cercle level. From there, cases were sent to a "colonial court of appeal," which was presided over by the Chief Officer of Political Affairs of the territory and which could sentence a criminal to three to ten years in prison. More serious crimes carrying longer prison terms or the death penalty were sent up to the Supreme Court at Dakar. Owing in part to the lack of communication between the rural districts and the higher courts, the Mossi

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were seldom able to follow a case higher than the subdivision level. In cases involving long imprisonment or the death penalty, the relatives of the condemned person usually learned about the sentence through rumors from the capital, but seldom through the administration.

One judicial duty which the administration gave the Mossi chiefs and which they had always disliked was the adjudication of domestic cases. They found such cases even more difficult and distasteful after Hesling issued a circular on "The Condition of the Native Woman," which is summarized in a semi-official report as follows:

> [The Governor] is pained to see [the Mossi woman] so often subjected to a special form of slavery which, notably at the time of marriage, reduces her to the role of a domestic animal. Without wishing to interfere with ingrained native traditions, the Governor desires "to prime the desirable evolution by means of judicial decisions." Thus he comes to the decision that in those lawsuits concerning marriage in which formerly the woman was not consulted, she must henceforth be present and must argue the case with her husband. M. Hesling trusts that this procedural reform, which he hopes will give the native woman "a consciousness of her individuality and her rights," will be followed in the courts by further reforms. First of all [the courts] must weaken and then progressively modify those traditions which promote injustice toward women. . . . Questions will no doubt be raised as to whether it is necessary to set up regulations on such matters. However, M. Hesling advises his administrators to adjust [such regulations] to, and apply them with respect for, ancestral traditions. It will be interesting to see the results obtained in this attempt, and to see whether the "moussos" [a malapropism denoting Mossi women] of the Upper Volta will acquire some individuality.[40]

The Mossi chiefs were not told that the Governor's circular recommending a change in the status of women stipulated that traditional practices be taken into account. But even if they had been told, they would not have been impressed, because any fundamental change in the status of women would have placed their whole society in jeopardy. Woman exchange stood at the core of a social, economic, and political nexus that held Mossi society together. True, in pre-conquest times most quarrels and lawsuits were caused by trouble over women, but the marriage system was upheld by all the other institutions. Even after the arrival of the French and the weakening of the chiefs' judicial role, the Mossi could punish violators of the marriage system by imposing social sanctions. They now feared that if the French passed laws giving the women free choice in marriage, and the chiefs had to adjudicate on the basis of these laws, all traditional sanctions would become obsolete. Neither the chiefs nor the Mossi on the Councils of Native Notables nor the elders welcomed any discussion about

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the status of women. They maintained that the French had conquered the Mossi men, not the women, and that the administration should not interfere with the way in which a Moaga treated his wife. Ironically enough, there was little the administration could do for the Mossi women, since the latter were too timid to approach the Europeans. Most of them continued to react to maltreatment from their husbands by running away, but now they went to the Gold Coast with labor migrants instead of returning to their lineage.

Although the Mossi chiefs had little autonomy in the administration of their subjects, and had to look to the administration for guidance in nearly everything they did, they were not completely powerless. They were the representatives of the colonial administration on the local level, and as such they could control their subjects through the differential allocation of prestations. Those Mossi who had maintained the traditional respect for the chiefs could look forward to less arduous tasks for the administration and to the avoidance of forced labor or army recruitment. Those who by their actions or attitude indicated that they had lost respect for the chiefs were penalized accordingly. Chiefs were also able to retain some control over their subjects because they were still the centers of social, economic, and political relations within their territories. They still received homage and presents from their more loyal or traditionalistic subjects, and with these goods and services they could bind other persons to themselves. Clever chiefs were able to manipulate the colonial administration and use it to enhance their traditional position so successfully that the administration and the missionaries had to take these men into account whenever they wished to establish contact with the population.

The desire of the missionaries to establish missions and schools for the purpose of converting the Mossi to Christianity presented the chiefs with a great challenge because, unlike the administration, the missionaries tried to establish direct contact with the people. The chiefs not only did not like to have Europeans living in their midst, but feared that they would lose control over their subjects who went to live near the missions. However, the chiefs could not refuse to grant the missionaries land on which to build missions and schools. They also provided labor for them, just as they did for the construction of administrative buildings and roads. Similarly, the chiefs recruited children for the mission schools in the same spirit as they recruited students for the schools of the administration. The difference between the Catholic missionaries and the administration with respect to education was that while the former were interested in educating the children of chiefs, they were also interested in children from other backgrounds. Nevertheless, the majority of chiefs continued to send to school

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only those children whose parents could not prevent them from being sent away. Many of the boys came from serf and commoner families; a few others were the orphan sons or very young sons of chiefs. As a result, few of the chiefs' sons received an education, and thus they were later unable to compete effectively with commoners who had gained a valuable education at the missions.

Acknowledging the average Moaga's refusal to adopt Catholicism as long as his chiefs remained pagan, the missionaries made a valiant attempt to convert the chiefs. Monsignor Socquet reports that when asked why they did not become Catholics most Mossi replied: " 'We are looking to our chief,' that is to say, 'We will follow our chief in conversion as in all other matters. If he is in favor of it, we will not go against his will.' " Socquet concludes: "It is thus easy to understand how important is the conversion of the chiefs, or at least their sympathy for our religion, to the spread of Catholicism."[41] However, the chiefs and their eldest sons were the most difficult to convert because they were responsible for supervising and carrying out the traditional sacrifices to the royal ancestors, without whose help the Mossi people believed that they could not survive.

The attempts of the missionaries to recruit as many girls as possible for education and conversion alienated the chiefs, because it got them involved in the delicate problem of the status of women and struck at one of the few remaining bulwarks of their traditional power. The problem was that many of the girls whom the missionaries wanted as students were or had been betrothed, or were actually living in their husbands' compounds, when they were taken to the mission. Here the girls were educated and, in the words of Sister Marie-André, "wished to abandon those practices" that were "repugnant to them"—*i.e.*, they rejected polygynous marriages and desired to choose their own spouses.[42] Those men who lost fiancées or wives as a result of missionary activities sought redress from their chiefs. But the chiefs were powerless against the missionaries, and after the promulgation of Hesling's circular nothing could be done. Many Mossi chiefs were also parties to the defeated marriage alliances because of their involvement in the pughsiure system. Because their prestige and power were at stake, and because they were unable to combat the Europeans openly, these chiefs often used devious means to spirit away the girls from the missions and to return them to their fiancés or husbands. Such activities angered the missionaries, who through the administrators either punished the guilty chiefs or sought new legislation in this area.

The chiefs, the missions, and the French administration were perpetually embroiled because both the chiefs and the missions wanted Mossi women for their own purposes. The administration was caught in the

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middle. The Mossi accused the missionaries of being especially anxious to get girls who could become the wives of their converts, and accused them of "stealing" the women. Paradoxically, this charge is supported by a missionary of the White Fathers:

> A Mossi who is unable to acquire a wife by traditional means must either remain unmarried or seduce another man's wife . . . they must choose between celibacy and immorality.
>
> Such a state of affairs creates many problems for the missions, especially since the system is recognized and sanctioned by the colonial authorities. . . . Young native Christians are obviously placed in a very awkward position. Their conversion angers their parents, who refuse to give them a wife; neither will their friends bestow a daughter upon them, because they know that they will not receive one in return, since a Christian may not give a daughter in marriage to a pagan. . . . *Consequently, unless the missionaries help them to find a wife, they must remain unmarried—a very discouraging prospect.* [Italics mine.][13]

The Mossi chiefs objected strongly to these activities of the missionaries on behalf of their converts, for they insisted that marriages could not legally take place outside the traditional pattern of reciprocity in woman exchange. They argued that the priests had no daughters, but that once they had obtained wives for their male converts, the daughters of these converts would in fact be pughsiudse to the priests and would be used by them to obtain further converts. There was some truth in this argument. Some young men, anxious to obtain wives without trouble and hard work, approached the mission girls, only to be told that the missionaries alone could sanction their marriage. The priests asked only that the potential husbands become Catholics. Some young men agreed and became Catholics; others reneged on their promise after they had been baptized and married. When a young man left the Church himself and also forbade his wife to go to church, the missionaries sought help from the district chief. If he did not satisfy them, they asked the district commander to intervene on their behalf. The young man then had to return to the Church with his wife or leave the district. Many men chose the latter course, taking their wives to visit some distant relatives or to the Gold Coast, until the women, burdened by motherhood and reintegrated into the traditional social system, lost all desire to renew their association with the missionaries. Under these circumstances, the missionaries could not summon the couple to the administrative center, because they had not violated any of the tenets of the Governor's circular. Furthermore, most administrators, like the Mossi chiefs, had little interest in such cases.

The Mossi chiefs considered the Catholic missionaries a greater threat

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to Mossi society and to their own authority than the French administration itself. This was primarily due to the fact that these missionaries, as Frenchmen, were very deeply involved not only in preaching Christianity, but also in changing Mossi society by introducing modern medical practices and education. Moreover, as was later brought out, they did not hesitate to use coercion to gain their ends. In seeking to understand why the number of patients in a maternity clinic had declined from an all-time high in the late 1920's and early 1930's to almost zero in the late 1940's, André Dupont, a Catholic missionary, was told by Mossi women, "We are no longer forced to go." He comments: "Was it the fear of sanction that accounted for the unanimous use of the clinic? Alas! It would seem to be so. The use of force and sanction have made a charitable institution odious. It would have been better if the mothers had only been encouraged to use the clinics. 'These natives do not understand,' I am sometimes told. But how are they expected to understand?"[44]

The American Protestant missionaries did little to challenge the authority of either the Mossi chiefs or the French administration. They were interested only in religious education, and concentrated on teaching the Scripture. The British social critic Geoffrey Gorer, who visited the Mossi during the Hesling period, reports: "There were some American missionaries in this village, a whole family living in a house filled with texts; I do not know what creed they preached or with what success. . . . They spoke with a dispassionate 'none of our business' disapproval of the ill treatment of the negroes, who they said were ruled entirely by fear."[45]

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The Moslems, on the other hand, took advantage of the declining power of the Mossi chiefs to spread their doctrines. They pointed out, with little fear of contradiction, that formerly the chiefs had checked the spread of Islam in order to protect their own religion, which supported their political power, but that this power had now been broken by the French. They continued to preach that as soon as all the black people became Moslems the whites would leave, and pointed out that whereas the missionaries had succeeded in getting the administration to attack the marriage customs of the pagan Mossi, they had not interfered with the marriage customs of the Moslem Mossi.[46] Moreover, the Moslems tried to impress upon the chiefs that conversion to Islam brought with it the benefit of being judged according to Koranic principles rather than native law or French statutes. This propaganda was relatively successful, and by the end of the Hesling period the number of Koranic schools and converts among the Mossi had increased eightfold. True to form, however, the Mossi chiefs seldom adopted Islam or permitted their elder sons to do so. But they did allow

● 177 their younger sons to become Moslems, and soon abandoned their active
*648 resistance to Islam.
63 Hesling did not permit the Mossi chiefs to revive their traditional religio-
[795] political rituals and ceremonies such as the Tense, but he continued to toler-
[797] ate the Basgha. The French banned the Mossi market chiefs, because they believed (with some justification) that these officials used their offices to procure revenue for the chiefs. The difficulty was that the market chiefs were also responsible for arranging sacrifices to the market deities, which in the absence of such sacrifices would not protect the people from quarrels and violence in the market place. Some chiefs covertly retained their market chiefs; others obeyed the administration and remained anxious over the behavior of their subjects in the market. In general, however, most Mossi chiefs tried to adjust to the religious changes that were taking place, and sought to maintain at least surface amicability with all religious groups. Commenting upon the behavior of the Mogho Naba in this regard,
[643] Dim Delobson states:

> The Mogho Naba, above all, is a believer in animism like all his subjects, and it is hard to understand how he manages to reconcile his fetishism with the complex dogmas of Islam and with the many interdictions of Christianity. However, the Mogho Naba is quite capable of being a Catholic or a Moslem on appropriate occasions, while at the same time respecting the traditions of his ancestors. Thus, when the Christians are celebrating Christmas, the emperor of the Mossi devoutly attends midnight Mass. Nevertheless, he wears his fez [really the bonnet which is the symbol of his office], just as the bishop wears his miter. He likewise embraces Islam for the three Moslem festivals.[47]
> [292]

+175 Hesling failed in his attempt to develop the Upper Volta as a viable
*648 colony, and many of the chiefs whom he had used as his auxiliaries lost
[631] not only a great deal of power but also a great deal of prestige in the eyes
[558] of their subjects because of the role they had played vis-à-vis the administration. By 1929 the economy of the Upper Volta was in poor condition:
[433] cotton production had declined; taxes (raised from 5,800,000 francs in
[651] 1921 to 18,274,000 francs in 1927 and scheduled to be raised to 26,400,000
[491] francs in 1930) were unbearable; many of the roads that were too extensive, too little used, and too difficult to maintain had been abandoned; and
[167] more than 46,000 laborers who had worked in the cotton fields and on the roads had fled to the neighboring Gold Coast.[48] The Colonial Minister, Sarraut, ordered that the colony of the Upper Volta be dismembered. He states in his decree of September 1932 that the suppression of the Upper Volta "would permit appreciable savings, and would make the adminis-

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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according to the Mossi, the imminent death of an important chief; secondly, a meteor had passed unexpectedly over Ouagadougou between 8 and 9 P.M. [on March 12th], vividly impressing the Mogho Naba himself.

It is quite possible that the emotions induced by these phenomena aggravated the heart condition that felled him. Certain people have maintained that the Mogho Naba, being opposed to all foreign domination and convinced that serious developments were imminent, voluntarily commited suicide by poison in order to elude them. So far, there is no proof that such a rumor has really been adrift. The matter is under strict investigation.[80]

The Mossi people practiced as best they could the traditional rituals connected with the death of a Mogho Naba. During the interregnum, however, the administration did not permit the usual chaos, ritual or otherwise. One administration report states: "Young people tried to steal things in the market, taking advantage of the old customs, but they were checked."[81] A later report adds that the traditions of the Napoko and the Kourita were honored, and that one hundred persons were arrested for the ritual larceny of small objects.

The traditional Mossi authorities allegedly requested that the deceased Mogho Naba, as one who had worn the Legion of Honor, be given full military honors. This required the placing of his body in a coffin so that the funeral cortege could move through the streets, a fact which introduced a new ritual element in royal funerals. Once this ceremony was over, however, the representatives of the administration withdrew, and the body was buried according to customary rites. [766] [177]

The traditional electoral college then proceeded with the task of choosing a new ruler. The choice was between Issoufou Congo, Kom's eldest son, who was then a lieutenant in the French Colonial Army in the Ivory Coast, and his younger brother, Etienne Congo, chief of the Doulougou district. With the administration's permission, the college elected Issoufou Congo. He took the title "Sagha" (the second Mogho Naba to bear that name), and was installed with traditional ceremonies. [666]

The message Sagha sent to the French High Commissioner bears quoting. Like the traditional speeches of newly elected Mogho Nanamse, it was believed by the Mossi people to contain subtle jibes at enemies, praises to benefactors and friends, and portents of future plans. The Mogho Naba said: 175* 648* 643 537

> At the moment when I take command of the Mossi people, I must thank you for having placed me on the throne of my father. I give you assurance of my fidelity toward France in all circumstances. Be assured by this testimony that my father will remain for me an honored person and a guide. I will walk in the footsteps of my father. In these difficult times, my people and I re-

(*Left*) Mogho Naba Kougri and Ouezzain Coulibaly, who became Vice President of the Government Council of the Upper Volta in 1957. (*Center*) Maurice Yaméogo, President of the Republic of Upper Volta. (*Right*) Mogho Naba Kougri (1957–) on his ceremonial horse at his installation.

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*175 port of the coastal Ivory Coast population. There was little they could do
*648 about it, however, because 'the decision of the Mogho Naba was irrevo-
666 cable.'"[4]

[643] The election was hotly contested. The candidates based their campaigns
*175 on local issues: taxes, forced labor, the lack of public services, the status of
666 the traditional chiefs, colonialism, racial discrimination, and so on. The
665 Parti Démocratique de la Côte d'Ivoire (PDCI), led by Houphouët-Boigny, stressed the need for combating racial discrimination and exploitation by European planters. The Union pour la Défense des Interêts de la Haute-Volta (UDIHV), formed by the Mogho Naba and a group of mission-educated young men and led by the Baloum Naba, stressed the need to end forced labor, especially among the Mossi, and to place all the Mossi under one territorial government. The UDIHV realized that it had little chance of gaining votes in the south, and therefore concentrated its efforts in the north. However, no credence is to be given to the story that "Whenever [the Baloum Naba] was free from [official] supervision, he told the people, 'Vote for my friend Houphouët. . . . What would I do in Paris, with my forty wives and at my age? I can't speak a blasted word of French.'"[5] Houphouët-Boigny won the election by the surprisingly narrow margin of 12,650 to 11,620.[6]

*175 Houphouët-Boigny played a leading role in persuading the first Con-
*648 stituent Assembly to submit to the voters a number of important liberal
668 colonial reforms. These included the abolition of the Indigénat; the free-
[646] dom of meeting and association; the bestowal of French citizenship on co-
[177] lonial peoples without affecting their traditional personal status; the use of the French Penal Code in all courts dealing with criminal cases; and the abolition of forced labor.[7]

*175 There was some discussion in the Assembly of what role the traditional
631 chiefs should play in the projected political structure of Overseas France.
646 One group of delegates held that "the structure of the local Assemblies
177 should be tied intimately to the existing structure of the overseas societies. Otherwise, they would be bogus Assemblies whose decisions would serve the interests of only one class in the society, the dominant class."[8] These men felt that while many chiefs were conservatives and might incline to "neo-feudalism," the new elite of young educated Africans who aspired to replace the Europeans were, for the most part, European-trained and out of contact with the rural masses. These delegates believed that only the chiefs could provide adequate popular leadership, and that the French Union could not cohere or develop unless the chiefs had some status vis-à-vis the elite and prestige in the eyes of the people.[9]

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It will be well if the Mogho Naba understands that he owns but the vestige of a past whose hour has irrevocably tolled, and that his message to the President of the Council [de Gaulle] commits no one in the Upper Volta but himself, a mere citizen like the others.

I deplore the discrimination which the message of the Mogho Naba implicitly contains. I should like to say to the Mogho Naba that in the Upper Volta there are no Mossi, Fulani, or Bobo people, but only Black people struggling for their liberty. No Mossi or any other Voltaic would agree to the Mogho Naba's expression of fidelity to France in his name. If this must be done, then the Territorial Assembly and the Government Council alone are qualified to do so.[42]

Despite these attacks and numerous suggestions in the press that the Mogho Naba and the Mossi chiefs were developing a "Touré complex" (i.e., the fear of suffering the same fate as the Fulani chiefs of Fouta Djallon, who had been deposed by Sékou Touré, Vice-President of the Guinea Government Council), the Mossi ruler actively supported acceptance of the constitution of the Fifth French Republic, which promised the colonies full internal self-government within the "French Community." Since the constitution was adopted by the Upper Volta population by an overwhelming favorable vote of 99.1 per cent, no one could estimate how effective the Mogho Naba's support had been.[43] [177] [642]

Coulibaly died just before the referendum, and was replaced on an interim basis by Yaméogo. The parliamentarians accordingly had to choose a new leader, now to be President of the Government Council, as well as to draw up a constitution for the new republic and determine whether it would join any of the regional federations then being considered by several territories. The Territorial Assembly was scheduled to meet in extraordinary session on October 17, 1958, to select a successor to Coulibaly. The Mogho Naba, anticipating dissension and perhaps once again seeking the limelight, sent a message to the representatives on October 15, urging "a government of union and public safety." But the politicians resented what they regarded as his interference in matters that did not concern him; few, if any, took his message seriously, and none replied.

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The Mogho Naba therefore decided to force the issue. He summoned his traditional ministers to a conference, and, despite the objections of the Baloum Naba, obtained their permission to order his Tansoba to muster his warriors and lay siege to the Territorial Assembly. Early in the morning of October 17, about 3,000 Mossi warriors, armed with bows and arrows, swords, spears, and ancient flint guns, converged on the Assembly. Later that morning, the Mogho Naba himself, accompanied by his Tansoba,

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CHAPTER THREE

1. Dim Delobson, pp. 8–9.

2. Crozat, p. 4849.

[802] 3. *Ibid.* The Mossi always use multiples of three in connection with masculine affairs.

4. Archives, Document 15G-190 (1897–98, Haute Volta).

5. Dim Delobson, p. 37. The difficulty here is caused by the Mossi words and their meanings. For example, the words for "God" are Ouennam and Ouende. The words for "sun" are the same. The ethnologists can speculate about whether the Mossi once worshiped the sun or whether a high god has evolved into a supreme deity. But the Mossi do not agree that their use of the same words for God and for the sun implies that they believe God is the sun, or that the sun is their God. It should be pointed out *inter alia* that many African peoples are not awed by their gods and grant them human feelings and attributes. The Mossi regard their supreme being Ouennam as an otiose deity who is not too concerned with human affairs. It is the ancestors who provide the sanctions for good conduct.

[171] 6. It seems certain that Ibn Battuta saw a similar salutation in Mali: "The Negroes are of all people the most submissive to their king, and the most abject in their behavior before him. They swear by his name, saying *Mansa Souliman ki* [the Emperor Souliman has commanded]. If he summons any of them while he is holding an audience in his pavilion, the person summoned takes off his clothes and puts on worn garments, removes his turban and dons a dirty skullcap, and enters with his garments and trousers raised knee-high. He goes forward in an attitude of humility and dejection, and knocks the ground hard with his elbows, then stands with bowed head and bent back, listening to what he says. If anyone addresses the king and receives a reply from him, he uncovers his back and throws dust over his head and back, for all the world like a bather splashing himself with water. I used to wonder how it was that they did not blind themselves" (Gibb, p. 327; cf. Mangin, p. 15).

Obviously, Ibn Battuta found this salutation distasteful. Most Europeans feel the same way about the Mossi salute. If a Moaga visited England, he might be equally struck by the sight of a great soldier or statesman kneeling before a *woman ruler* and being touched on the shoulder with a sword.

[171] 7. It is interesting to compare this account with Ibn Battuta's description of Mansa Souliman, king of Mali: "On certain days the sultan holds audiences in the palace yard, where there is a platform under a tree, with three steps; this they call the *pempi*. . . . The sultan comes out of a door in the corner of the palace, carrying a bow in his hand and a quiver on his back. On his head he has a golden skullcap bound with a gold band which has narrow ends shaped like knives, more than a span in length. His usual dress is a velvety red tunic, made of the European fabric called *mutanfas*. The sultan is preceded by his musicians, who carry gold and silver guimbris (two-stringed guitars), and behind him come three hundred armed slaves. He walks in a leisurely fashion, affecting a very slow movement, and even stops from time to time. On reaching the *pempi*, he stops and looks round the assembly, then ascends it in the sedate manner of a preacher ascending a mosque pulpit. As he takes his seat, the drums, trumpets, and bugles are sounded" (Gibb, p. 326).

[177] 8. It is possible that the Mossi either borrowed this tradition from Mali or shared part of the Mali king complex, for Ibn Battuta reports that a similar rite was held in [171] Mali during the fourteenth century. He says that when the ruler entered the pavilion for the morning ceremony, "two saddled and bridled horses are brought, along with two goats, which they hold to serve as a protection against the evil eye" (Gibb, p. 326).

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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CHAPTER SEVEN

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1. Dim Delobson, pp. 153ff.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 251–54.
3. Cheron, "Contribution," p. 674.
4. Crozat, p. 4849.
5. *Ibid.*
6. Skinner, "Trade and Markets," pp. 237–78.
7. Barth, III, 644–49.
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 202–4.
9. Dubois, pp. 282–92, 300.
10. Great Britain, Parliamentary papers: Cd. 788–27, No. 357, Acc. Papers, Vol. LXIV (1902).
11. Marc, p. 178.
12. Binger, I, 467.
13. Crozat, p. 4849.
14. Binger, I, 465.
15. Mangin, p. 23.
16. Dim Delobson, pp. 85–86.
17. Ruelle, p. 679.
18. Bovill, p. 244.
19. Gautier, p. 139; cf. Mangin, p. 112.
20. Cf. Sa'di, p. 168.

[422] 21. The chief of the Kamboinse was the only Mossi "chief" to possess a stool, which [174] is indicative of an Akan origin. The Akan origin of this group is further supported by Koelle's evidence: a Mossi informant told him that the Mossi called the Ashanti "Kamboinse" (Koelle, p. 6).

22. Skinner, "The Mossi 'Pogsioure,'" pp. 20–22.
23. Cf. Ouédraogo and Prost, pp. 16–18.
24. Dim Delobson, p. 25.
25. Binger, I, 470.
26. *Ibid.*, pp. 502–4.
27. *Ibid.*, pp. 504–5.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 456.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 502.

CHAPTER EIGHT

1. Cf. Dim Delobson, p. 156. He speculates that the Mogho Naba himself sacrificed the animals in the presence of his senior wife and courtiers.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 157.

[184] 3. Tauxier (*Le Noir du Yatenga*, p. 379) reports that a comparable ceremony among the Yatenga Mossi was called the "Bega," and that in reality it was a Fulse cere- [177] mony "adopted by the Mossi." According to him, both the Fulse and the Mossi held this festival in order to obtain good harvests the following year, and made sacrifices to "the ancestors, to the Earth, and to God."

4. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Soudan*, p. 588.

[114] 5. Dim Delobson's description (pp. 148 ff) of the Tense differs somewhat from that given to me by my respondents. According to his version, the Tansoba played the role I have ascribed to the Larhalle Naba. Furthermore, he states that the Tense was held on Friday, an impossible fact since Saturday is the Mossi "day of the dead." In any case, all of my respondents insisted that Saturday, and not Friday, was the day on which the Tense was held. It is possible that Dim Delobson mistook the eve of the festival for its beginning, in which case his error is understandable. In most other respects our descriptions are not too different.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 152.

7. There is a widespread tradition in Mossi country that the Tenkodogo Naba made and still makes similar sacrifices at Kouroungoutenga and Sansabloga, two important earth shrines. There is a controversy about whether human sacrifices were ever offered [797] there. The missionaries in the region claim they were. The Mossi deny this and accuse the missionaries of slander.

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133 Red and White Voltas are merely a series of small stagnant pools during the dry season. In some low-lying areas around the main water courses, trapped water provides the moisture for dank riverine vegetation.

134 The soils of Mossi country are mainly ferruginous with red argils and pure silicates of aluminum predominating in the northern region. The soils in the south are thin, sandy, and formed from the decom-
137 position of crystalline rocks and sandstones. During the dry season the Mossi landscape appears too sterile to produce plant life, but with the first drops of rain the entire country soon becomes covered with the grasses and shrubs which are characteristic of this Sudanese region. The uncultivated but valuable trees of this area include the Baobab *(Adansonia digitata)*, the locust bean *(Parkia biglobosa)*, the shea-butter *(Butyrospermum parkii)*, the tamarind *(Tamarindus*
241 *indica)* and the kapok *(Bombax costatum)*. The plants which the Mossi cultivate include varieties of cereals, roots and legumes. Sorghums *(Sorghum vulgare)* and millets *(Pennisetum typhoides)* are their staples, with maize *(Zea mays)* filling the role of a secondary but rather useful crop because its growing cycle is shorter than that of other important crops and it breaks the "hungry period." Maize would be a more important crop to the Mossi if it could grow on soil less fertile than what is normally available around the Mossi compound—the area where it brings the greatest yield. Peanuts, onions, rice, beans, okra, peas and sweet potatoes are other food crops. To-
249 bacco is grown for local consumption, but the crops which have the
248 greatest export value are cotton and indigo, used for making cloth and dyeing it.

224 The wild fauna of the country does not provide a major part of the
262 food needs of the Mossi people. The several species of deer and antelope, monkeys, rabbits and wild pig are hunted and used for food.
136 But the elephants and lions which are also found in the country are sources of great distress to the people because the former decimate the growing crops and the latter attack and kill the grazing animals.

231 The Mossi rear two main types of cattle: a zebu-like one in the north-
[234] ern regions and a small dwarf variety in the south. These animals are kept primarily for their milk and for export, and are seldom killed
231 for meat until they are very old. The animals which provide the
262 Mossi with meat are goats, sheep, chickens and guinea fowls. Pig-
[177] raising is not widespread and seems to be declining in importance with the increasing observance of Islamic food taboos, even among
262 people who are still pagan. Fish forms only a minor part of the Mossi
487 diet and is obtained mainly from traders rather than from local activ-
231 ities. The Mossi also rear donkeys and horses for which they have

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It is clear that the volume of this trade could not have been enlarged since the French conquest which, as we know, had disrupted Mossi society. Therefore our conclusion must be that it must have existed prior to the coming of the Europeans.

The caravaneers used cowries and cloth as trade currency and in some cases even bartered one type of commodity for another. Cowries appear to have been the chief currency used and came close to being used for all purposes. Evidence for the use of cloth as currency comes from Barth and Marc. Barth met a trader who had

> . . . a good quantity of the gabaga, or cotton strips, of Mosi with him, which form the staple currency in the whole tract of country from Libta to Timbuktu, ten Dr'a being reckoned equal to one hundred shells. (Barth 1859 : III, 198)

The big rolls of cotton cloth which Marc saw being loaded by Mossi caravaneers were said by them to serve the purpose of buying food ("They are for eating") in regions where cloth was the necessary currency (Marc 1909 : 172 f.n.). The traders apparently resorted to barter whenever and wherever they could or when their currency was in short supply. This appears to have been the case when Binger visited the Mossi in 1888. Cowries were then in short supply and the people were using slaves, valued at 50,000 to 65,000 cowries apiece, to obtain goods. Horses could be bought for as many as two or four slaves apiece. Traders apparently kept the cowry equivalence in mind when using other commodities to barter with, but we cannot be sure of this since Binger himself, and not the traders, may have been conscious of the equivalence (Binger 1892 : II, 498).

The prices which the traders paid and received for their goods differed greatly from place to place, according to the season of the year and over a span of several years. The earliest price data are given by Barth for the 1850's:

> As regards Selga [Salaga], the district to which the Hausa traders go for their supply of this article, three points are considered essential to the business of the Kola trade; first, that the people of Mosi bring their asses; secondly, that the Tonawa, or natives of Asanti, bring the nut in sufficient quantities; and thirdly, that the state of the road is such as not to prevent the Hausa people from arriving. If one of these conditions is wanting, the trade is not flourishing. The price of the asses rises with the cheapness of the guro [kola nut]. The average price of an ass in the market of Selga is 15,000 [cowry] Shell: While in Hausa the general price does not exceed 5,000. But the fataki, or native traders, take only as many asses with them from Hausa as are necessary for transporting their luggage, as the toll, or

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175 436 437 Cowries used to be chief medium of exchange in Mossi markets until the Europeans arrived. In addition the people bartered specific goods for other products. The prices of goods in these markets fluc- 175 435 tuated from time to time. Prices were highest during the planting season when most goods were scarce, and lowest during the harvest periods, but we have little precise information about the prices of goods in the traditional markets. Even Barth's information is too sketchy to deal with. Our first reliable data come from Tauxier, whose writings cover the first decade (1896-1906) of the conquest. Using the then official rate of one franc equals 1,000 cowries, the prices of a few representative products were: horses, 40 to 100 francs (40,000 to 100,000 cowries); cattle, 30 to 40 francs (30,000 to 40,000 cowries); chickens, 250 cowries; guinea fowls, 250 to 300 cowries; hides, 3,000 cowries; pottery jars, 300 cowries; cotton trousers, 200 cowries; baskets, 1,500 cowries; and locust-bean balls, 100 cowries (Tauxier 1912 : 466 ff.).

Mangin, whose work covers the period from about 1910 to 1913, when the value of the franc was lowered to one franc equals 700 to 800 cowries, lists the approximate prices for the following goods; "Millet, 0.02 franc a kilogram; rice, 0.10 franc a kilogram; *fabirama*, 0.05 franc a kilogram; shea butter, 0.50 franc a kilogram; milk butter, 1.50 francs a kilogram; peanuts, 0.07 franc a kilogram; peanut oil, 0.50 franc a liter; one jar of ordinary millet beer, containing about six to eight liters, 0.20 franc; one jar of strong millet beer *(tose)*, containing about six to eight liters, 0.40 franc; hydromel *(bese)*, 0.15 franc a liter; chicken, 0.40 franc; average goat, 3 to 4 francs; large goat, 8 to 10 francs; average sheep, 3.50 francs for a ram, 4 francs, for an ewe; large sheep, 8 to 10 francs; donkey, 25 to 30 francs; horse, 150 francs; small cow (no hump), 50 francs; zebu cow, 70 francs; goat skin, 0.30 franc; cow skin, 1 franc; salt bars, from 1.50 to 2 francs a kilogram; kola nuts, from 0.03 to 0.10 franc apiece; one hoe, about 0.60 franc; cloth: strip of white cloth, 0.05 franc, about 0.60 franc a cubit; white blanket, 2 francs; indigo-dyed blanket, 3 francs; striped blanket, 4 francs; medium-sized shirt, 2.50 francs" (Mangin 1921 : 53). In dealing with these prices, a number of things should be kept in mind: first of all, these prices fluctuated very much during the year; secondly [436] they varied from region to region within the country; and thirdly, although these prices are given in francs during this period, it was still possible to use cowries to buy a large number of the products.

177 436 [43] [42] Enormous changes have taken place in the Mossi economic and exchange systems over the decades following the studies of Tauxier and Mangin. Even before, but certainly after World War I, the French pressure on the Mossi to pay taxes in francs finally resulted

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in the adoption of this currency as the medium of exchange in most markets.[11] The one-franc piece and coins of smaller denominations were those most often used because they were ideally suited to the petty trading that took place in the markets. The franc even became the standard of value in the larger markets, but one receives only 3 local francs for a five-franc note C.F.A. or seven francs for a ten-franc note C.F.A. These changes in value seem to occur by common concensus, since it is impossible to discover who it was that changed the exchange rate. A further fact is that many Europeans remain unaware of these changes since they seldom go to the local markets themselves. When they do go and insist upon the official exchange rate, the "unofficial" market chief appears and takes over the situation, giving the *nansaro* ("conqueror" or "master," the way in which every European is regarded) what he wishes.

While the equivalence between the cowrie, the old brass franc, and the franc C.F.A. works splendidly when products are sold in small quantities, I found the system difficult to understand when more expensive goods are traded. For example, when one buys meat, an expensive item, the butcher accepts either the official francs or the local currency and gives change in both. The difficulty here is that since the butcher uses no scales, one is never sure about the price or about the system of value the butcher is using. The most that can be done if one does not receive as much meat as expected is to haggle with the butcher until he adds more. However, this haggling leaves unresolved the problem of the value of one's official money in terms of the unofficial money, and the product which it is intended to buy. One is thus left with the *impression* that there must be an internal consistency to the exchange system, or barring this, that the local people accept the system as it is as a matter of expediency. On the other hand, the vendors of products with fixed prices such as matches, cigarettes and the like appear to make differential profits when they

(11) Mangin (1921 : 61–62) reports that the Mossi had great difficulty obtaining the five-franc piece which they needed to pay their taxes because the "Europeans who live in Mossi country, including all the riflemen and provincial guards do not put into circulation a quarter of the five-franc pieces which are required each year from the natives. At first the Mossi were taken by surprise and had to give 10 or even 15,000 cowries to obtain this famous coin, this *greegree* which was to free them from all difficulties with the white man. And yet at the official rate of exchange this coin is worth 5,000 cowries. Nowadays it is very difficult to find a native willing to give this much for one of the coins. The usual exchange rate varies from 3,500 to 4,000 cowries: the French currency has been depreciated. This must mean that the natives find elsewhere —through trading— this indispensable coin. They know that the tax must be paid every year, and instead of waiting till the last minute, as soon as they have accumulated the necessary cowries they secure the five-franc pieces from those who have fetched them from far away. The coins flow into the country, and the rate of exchange goes down."

Customary Payments by the Mossi to their Chiefs

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To the Mogho Naba. In former times, before the coming of the French, the kombemba (canton chiefs) [69] and the nakomsé (descendants of Mogho Naba) were all required to come to Ouagadougou once a year to pay their respects to the Mogho Naba on this occasion to present gifts to him (cattle, horses, sheep, cowries, and loads of millet).

For all practical purposes, this amounted to a fixed fee which varied in amount, of course, with the resources of the contributors (canton chiefs and nakomsé) and the number of subjects that the administration entrusted to the leaders.

Although the horses, cattle, and sheep were personally contributed by the kombéré, the cowries and millet were furnished by their Mossi subjects. The canton chief set the amounts of cowries and grain due from each village according to the number of its inhabitants.

The assessment was usually 100 cowries for a married man and 50 for a bachelor (adult). The payment in millet was 10 baskets, each averaging 40 kilograms.

Likewise, a kind of fee was paid annually to the Djiba Naba, crown price, in cowries and livestock. This was done to stay in the good graces of his father, the emperor.

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Nowadays the canton chiefs (kombemba), who come to Ouagadougou more often than formerly for important feasts and other events, never return to their lands without paying their respects to the Mogho Naba and giving him the traditional gifts (cowries and livestock). Gifts are now made more often, but they no longer have [70] the same importance. As a general rule, certain canton chiefs still require their people to give small amounts of cowries when they visit Ouagadougou for the celebration of July 14. Some chiefs, however, either because they fear penalties from the administration or because they think that their people are already heavily burdened, prefer to give the little they have personally acquired by selling produce (cotton, yams, etc.) or trading.

Some of the vassal chiefs of the Mogho Naba, who, however, are no longer subject to Ouagadougou since the division of the

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651 Mossi circle into several administrative districts, still continue to
178 make substantial annual gifts to the Mogho Naba (cowries, cattle, and a considerable amount of grain, millet and rice).

634 Payments Due the Kombemba (canton chiefs). Formerly each
651 canton held one or more ritual feasts each year, and the Mossi subjects, that is, the tengsoba (village elders, notables, and those in comfortable circumstances), regularly made gifts to the canton chief (cowries, goats, sheep, and roosters). The Peulh [Peul] gave cattle.

The canton chiefs also retained a portion of the payment made by the people for the benefit of the Mogho Naba.

[178] At the present time these traditional gifts are still made, but white or light gray roosters are more and more being substituted for livestock. [71]

661 Payments due the Ministers of the Mogho Naba. In order to
431 maintain good relations with the ministers, court officials, and
644 intermediaries between the emperor and his vassals, the canton
634 chiefs in former times used to present unspecified gifts to the high dignitaries at court when they paid their respects to the Mogho Naba. A certain number of cowries was given to the pougtiéma, first wife of the Mogho Naba (500 cowries equals two and a half francs, formerly 50 centimes).

A canton chief who has been called to Ouagadougou for some reason may choose not to call on the emperor, but he is obligated to bring cowries, a sheep, or a rooster to the minister who is head of the province in which his canton is located.

651 Common laws. (a) Regulation of market fees. Before the ar-
443 rival of the French, market fees at Ouagadougou were collected for the benefit of the Mogho Naba by a collector in his employ.

In important villages, fees were collected by Gourounsi [Grunshi] captives on behalf of the canton chiefs (kombemba).

651 (b) Hunting. In former times, before the fields were cleared
224 for seeding, the Mossi used to go out in groups of several villages
634 on hunting drives. Small game (partridges, guinea fowl, hares, etc.) were left to the hunters. On the other hand, a haunch of any quadruped killed (deer, gazelle, coba [a kind of horse antelope], etc.) was reserved for the canton chief.

301 As ornaments the Moaga woman had only red or yellow copper bracelets and the kindifou (a bright red bead). Even then only women of means could procure such ornaments. The [435] kindifou cost only 50 cowries a bead, but since cowries were monopolized by the naba, notables, and rakangba (prosperous Mossi), the beads were far too expensive for the small resources of the average Moaga woman.

Bracelets made of a special stone (a mixture of gray and white) and called manekagcé (manekaka in the singular) were worn only by the Yarbi (young Yarcé of both sexes). It is said [439] that these bracelets were peddled by the Kibissi (Habé), and they seem to have come from the Timbuktu area.

301 554 Silver bracelets were worn only by the dimbissi (descendants of dima, that is, the family of the Mogho Naba), by kombemba (canton and province chiefs) and their descendants, and, finally, by prominent persons who were in favor at court.

291 177 At the present time, especially at Ouagadougou, the women adorn themselves with garments of all kinds (skirts of native material, bazin, godé, and other fabrics, as well as skirts from stores). Some have even adopted the blouse and ample robe affected by [352] elegant Sudanese [228] women. Many now own trunks which replace the sacks formerly used to store their clothing.

291 178 The Senegalese handkerchief, a head scarf, is now considered absolutely indispensable. In rural areas there is an increasing desire to dress better. More cotton is grown. Girls and women from the bush buy glass beads of all colors when they come to Ouagadougou to work, and they wear them around their necks or around their hips in the manner of Bambara women.

416 Although the "mirror" used to be the clear water of springs and brooks, there is hardly a woman today who does not have one or two mirrors. Finally, a bit of elegance is added to the wild 301 beauty of the women by silver earrings, bracelets, and amulets sewed in a panther skin -- these are becoming a passion with Mossi peasant women.

291 It should not be inferred from the above that the Moaga always feels obliged to wear clothing at home. Any time that he has no need to go out or to visit a friend or relative at some

241 Baningha (large white millet or sorghum).

These two types are grown for food, [247] although the large white millet is especially reserved for horses in well-to-do households.

[262 273] Kazinga (large red millet). As a food the poorer Mossi prefer this to the baningha, but it is more especially grown for the making of dam, millet beer.

[556] Mouï (rice) is sought only by the chiefs, notables, and a few families of dakangba (well-to-do men).

Benga (beans).

Souma (peas of either the small green variety or large white or red ones).

Niouyan (from niouri, "yam"), grown only in certain areas.

Nangouri or sounkama (peanuts).

Pèsça (fabirama) [a tuber plant].

Sinni or sili (sesame), grown only by a few people who like it.

Bito (sorrel), used in preparing the sauce served with sagbo.

Mana (gombo [okra]) is also cultivated.

Aside from its food crops, each family has its own plot for cotton (lamdo) which provides for the clothing needed during the year.

311 178 I am told that fields are much more extensive today than in former times, in spite of the abolition of slavery. This is explained by the fact that many areas supposed to be haunted were formerly left uncultivated. It is said, however, that the Moaga used to grow larger crops since in those days he was closer to the soil.

[248] At the present time there is a lack of farm hands. As [857] recently as twenty years ago, the young Moaga followed his parents to the field as soon as he was six or seven years old. He took a liking to the work at a very young age. Before the French [484] occupation, the Moaga rarely left his village because of the dangers on the roads, frequented in those days by bandits (usually descend- [579] ants of naba). People were even afraid to go into the bush alone, for fear of being attacked, captured, and reduced to slavery.

433 178 There was little contact even between adjoining villages. At Ouagadougou, no one ventured from section to section unless he had very good reason and was armed to the teeth. In short, everyone

433 made do with what his own village could produce, and there was
178 really no trade in the ordinary sense of the word. The Moaga, essentially a stay-at-home, depended on the soil for food and clothing.

241 Only two new crops have been added since the coming of the
177 French: yams (na-niouyan, "chiefs' yams") and white potatoes.

The recent increase in the cultivation of cotton makes it easier for the natives to meet their tax, and this encourages them to grow even more.

178 The French occupation has brought many benefits in its wake (creation of a network of roads, peace and the resulting free circulation among the villages, and suppression of banditry and looting), but it has also given the Moaga a desire to leave the country.

167 The extensive recruitment of [249] laborers for the needs of other colonies in the area, for work on the roads, and for the now
444 obligatory military service -- all of which are accepted reluctantly by the Mossi -- has caused many young men to emigrate.

Some of them set out, for the Gold Coast preferably, without the slightest means of support. They go to work in the English colony in order to earn money for clothes. Since they had no money when they started out, they remain there for months or even years, and this seriously diminishes the agricultural labor force at home. It also forces their old and helpless relatives to cultivate their fields alone.

Besides, so many of them never return!

The Native Diet

262 Sagbo (millet mush) is the principal item in the Mossi diet at all social levels. Rice, regarded as a luxury food, is eaten by the naba and notables. It costs from two and a half to three francs a
[435] kilogram at Ouagadougou and is therefore too expensive for most people. It may be added that it rarely is found in the diet of civil service employees.

264 Mossi chiefs usually have two main meals a day: a [250] first meal of sagbo or rice at around nine in the morning, and a second

482 their pack, their full cartridge pouches, and their gun. This is proved by the fact that it is very easy to find volunteer porters nowadays who [465] agree to carry a box weighing 25 or 30 kilograms for 200 or 400 kilometers, or even farther, for half a franc a day.

[492] The fabrics are coiled into huge rolls which hang on either side of the ox or donkey, or, when the man carries them himself, they are [285] folded in baskets from one and a half to two meters long, made of bamboo stems slit lengthwise in two. These baskets are semi-cylindrical in shape and are used to carry kola nuts on the way back. A small pillow is attached to the center of the basket, and when the traveller stops to rest, he looks for a thick tree, leans one tip of the [481] basket on the crotch of two branches and the other tip on the bamboo he uses as a staff. He can thus pick up his load effortlessly when the resting period is over.

484 The traveller always returns to his village at night to avoid those prying persons who would rush out to see what he brought back. The goods are carefully put away, and on the following day the man takes up village life as though he had never left it. It is only gradually, at the evening gatherings, that he relates his adventures. At the first subsequent festivity, however, he dons his new, bright clothes and a red tarboosh, sometimes stockings and shoes, and proudly displays them. Those who have tasted /64/ the life of travel and adventure cannot do without it, and they set out again every year. Some of the independent and carefree young men even live all winter on the [178] profits of their distant journey and no longer cultivate the soil. This is shocking to the elders, who do not understand it at all but are aware that something has changed in their country.

600 Some Europeans have attempted to engage in livestock trading like the natives. One enterprising and courageous European settled in Ouahigouya, and another near Mané; a trading house sent one of its representatives to Ouagadougou, and a Syrian settled there. None of them seems to have succeeded. We are not in their confidence and cannot say just why this happened, but would it not be, at least in part, because a European cannot easily adapt himself to the native way of life? The Blacks manage to make a profit because they do not spend much along the way; they subsist on very little and carry part of the goods themselves instead of hiring porters. Also, the natives

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13. *Economic Change and Mossi Acculturation*

121 Some five thousand Mossi from the kingdom of Yatenga in the Upper
● 178 Volta have been resettled on the newly developed lands of the Niger
[177] Irrigation Project in the French Sudan. Removed from a cultural setting
[166] which has been relatively undisturbed by the influence of European civilization, they are required to adapt themselves rapidly to an economic situation structured and directed by Europeans. Economic organization being the variable involved, a study of their adjustment provides an opportunity to examine some of the cultural problems and processes related to economic development in underdeveloped areas.

131 Yatenga is the northernmost of four Mossi kingdoms located in the
101 Upper Volta. It is a sub-Saharan savanna land of red earth, low rainfall, gently rolling plains, and low hills. Ouahigouya, the capital, gives its name to the French administrative unit, the Cercle de Ouahigouya, which has governed the kingdom from its headquarters in this ancient city since its conquest in 1895.[1]

101 To distinguish themselves from the people of the neighboring king-
doms of Ouagadougou, Fada-N'Gourma, and Tenkodogo, the Mossi of
173 the Yatenga sometimes speak of themselves as "Yadise" (those of Yadiga). This name refers to the fact that they regard themselves as being descended, as a nation, from Naba Yadiga, the half-mythical warrior-prince from Oaugadougou who broke away from his father's dynasty to form the separate political entity, Yatenga, which bears his name (*ya* for "Yadiga" and *tenga* for "country"). The Mossi have not always been numerically and culturally dominant in the Yatenga, as they are today. They recognize that their ancestors came from the south, from Mamprusi and Dagomba in the northern territories of Ghana.

171 Highly organized politico-religious states representing the cultural amalgamation of native and foreign populations and institutions are characteristic of the Voltaic region of West Africa. Acknowledging that we "owe to Rattray the discovery that these central Voltaic tribes are

[1] Capitaine Noire, *Monographie du Cercle de Ouahigouya* (Ouahigouya, 1904), p. 15.

596 428 significance vis-à-vis family property in this second Mossi family type. /547/ Thus, my informant stresses that here family property still has greater significance than private property, but at the same time he adds that in every inheritance he witnessed, the soukala always went to the oldest son, no matter what its origin. He corroborates this with information about his own family, as follows:

He lives, he says, with five wives, two daughters, two unmarried cousins who are the sons of one of his father's brothers, an unmarried cousin who is the son of one of his father's sisters, a nephew who is the son of his own sister, in short, twelve persons including him.

The soukala where he lives once belonged to his father and was built by the latter alone. He has thus inherited it, even though his father had a younger brother.

Incidentally, the brother got nothing, since my informant's father left nothing beside the soukala, no family property or private worth much.

To whom will the soukala go when he dies? Since he has no son, he replies, it will go to his younger brother (he has a younger brother who lives in a separate soukala). Supposing he had a son, however? Then it would go to his son.

I counter that it should go to his brother, since he did not build it himself but inherited it from his father (that is, from his own and his brother's common father), in accordance with the rule he mentioned earlier. He nevertheless holds, however, that it is not so, that younger brothers never did inherit a soukala, I cannot make him alter his position.

596 423 178 This gives us a living example of how the Mossi family has changed. In the old days, family property went along with the family headship to the younger brother. The soukala, for example, figured in almost every case among the family property, either because the family had given it ready made to the young man, or simply because the family had helped him build it. A soukala was private property only when the young man had built it altogether by himself (a very unusual case). Later, the soukala came to be considered private property when it had been built by the young man

596 with the help of his father and family head (which is by far the
423 most frequent occurrence), /548/ while in such a case it had for-
178 merly been considered family property. Finally, the soukala came to be regarded in every case as personal property and to be transmitted for that reason to the oldest son. This, incidentally, is the same evolution that applied to property in general, as we shall see shortly.

Now, here is the third and last variant of the prevailing Mossi
593 family type. Nowadays, this variant is by far the most widespread.

1. Every household lives separately, works separately, and procures its own food and subsistence. The help of neighbors is enlisted to clear the fields.

2. Every household gives its own children in marriage. The
584 family head no longer does so.
593 As soon as a man has a son, he chooses a little girl who will go to the boy when he reaches puberty. He visits the girl's relatives from time to time and offers them gifts.

584 When the girl is old enough to be married, he takes 50,000
583 cowries (if he is wealthy), skirt cloths, salt, kola nuts, and gives it
593 all to the relatives. Then, the old women in the daughter's family lead her to the home of the betrothed man's relatives. The father kills a sheep, makes a lot of couscous, buys dolo to celebrate her arrival. Then he offers the girl six or seven baskets containing respectively 1,000, 2,000, 3,000, 4,000, 5,000, 6,000, and 7,000 cowries. The young man himself gives his betrothed four or five skirts. If he is very wealthy, he gives her one or two little girls as slaves.

On the evening when the wedding is celebrated, the father asks
585 one of his neighbors to lend him a hut, and the young married pair
[426] are sent there all alone (they will remain there as long as their soukala is not built). On the morrow, the feasting begins. People dance and feast for seven days at the gates of the father's soukala, at least when the girl is a virgin. If she is not, the feasting is curtailed but nevertheless lasts for another three days.

When the father is poor, he offers a few kola nuts to the girl's
583 /549/ father (six or ten). He gives the father and mother some fire-
591 wood he gathered in the bush, straw to make séko /Tr.: mats/ for door, 2,000 cowries, a skirt cloth. He kills a sheep to make

567 As for the bagaré, they live separately, work for themselves, see to their own subsistence, etc.

Their duties are as follows:

1. To come and work one day a week on their master's field (on that day, as on other days, they provide their own food).

2. To come and work for their master in exceptional circumstances, such as for example when the master gathers all his neighbors to work on his field.

3. To come and greet their master every year after the harvest. They give him a basketful of millet. When the harvest has been poor, they are exempted from this gift.

4. The master may request from his slave chickens, sheep, an ox or a cow. Chickens may not be denied under any circumstances. As for sheep or beeves, the slave may refuse to provide the animal requested, but then he is expected to go and sell it at market right away, and to give half the money to his master. If the slave refuses to go and sell the animal at market, the master has the right to seize his movable property and sell it.

[426] 5. When the master has debts, the bagaré must help him pay them.

428 As for inheritance, when a bagaré died his master left all the
567 property to the children. The oldest son of the bagaré inherited, but he gave something to the other sons. If there was no son, the younger brother inherited. If the sons were children the younger brother also inherited, at least temporarily. If there were no male heirs, the master inherited the property but gave some to the daughters.

567 In short, the position of the bagaré is more similar to that of /566/ serfs than to that of slaves proper. In this respect, their status is a far cry from the familial status of the slaves we have described
[171] up to now, and it is much closer to the status of the Dialonké, Soussou /Susu/, and Foulah slaves of Guinea who are also serfs, work three days a week for their master (six hours a day), and are free the rest of the time on condition of seeing to their own subsistence.

Let us add that since the arrival of the French among the Mossi,
567 the bagaré have gained a considerable amount of freedom. Nowa-
578 days, most of them will not give any of their crops to their master.

567 When a master wants one of the sheep or beeves belonging to his
178 bagaré, the latter refuses to give it, or if he consents to sell the animal at market he gives his master but one-tenth of the cowries paid by the buyer. Nowadays, as a rule, the bagaré only "go
[426] along" when their master's debts are involved, and yet some of them run away with their belongings rather than pay those debts.

567 Let us also add that these slaves, who were mostly of Gourounsi
167 or Boussansé origin, now want to return to their own land, and there is a continuous exodus, slow but sure, of Mossi slaves toward the south. Since the French have strictly forbidden the purchase and sale of slaves, on the other hand, the sources of supply have dried out. All this makes it clear why among the Mossi, as incidentally throughout West Africa, we are progressing toward a slow but certain suppression of slavery and serfdom.

326 In closing, let us say that among the Mossi blacksmiths who
567 live in /special/ quarters or villages and whom we have already mentioned with regard to their patriarchal and nondecommunalized family type, we find true slaves of the common familial type such as we have described up to now, rather than serfs like the bagaré.

These slaves live in the same soukala as their master, whether married or unmarried, trade or house slaves. During the winter season, they all work on the fields of the soukala head from six in the morning to three in the afternoon, with the usual luncheon break. They have small individual plots, which they may work after three o'clock. During /567/ the dry season, they work all day at the blacksmith's trade with their master.

They are provided with food throughout the year by the head of the soukala, but they procure their own clothing, jewelry, grigri, etc. The soukala head buys the first wife for them and disposes of their daughters in return.

567 The estate of a deceased slave goes to his master and to his sons.
428 As far as livestock and cowries are concerned, the master takes half
326 and gives half to the son or sons. As for clothing, bracelets, etc., everything goes to the children. The latter share equally the part of their father's estate that devolves to them.

567 We can see that just as the family type of Mossi blacksmiths
326 bears witness to an older state of affairs, the status of slaves among them also bears witness to the ancient local conditions prior to

8: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1958
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Karême), celebrate the great festival of Ramadan and the lesser festivals, and 794
aspire to make the pilgrimage to Mecca. Most of the Moslems can lead prayers, but only about one-tenth of their number can read and recite the Koran. [212]
However, today the masters (*karasambas*) of the 32 Koranic schools in the district are endeavoring to instruct the many boys and few girls in reading the [871]
Koran and understanding Moslem theology.

The Karême is observed by most adult Moslems in the community with the exception of invalids and working men. Moslems say that the fast is intended to turn the minds of the people to God, and they distinguish between the Moslems "of the mouth" who break the fast and those "of the heart" who [184]
fast until Ramadan. The crescent moon of Ramadan is greeted with guns and general rejoicing and the following morning the Moslems gather at the tomb of Ngado to give praises to God; during the rest of the day they pay homage to the chief and visit their friends. However, a change in the traditional observance of Ramadan is expected, because one of the Moslem leaders objects to the [178]
ceremony at the tomb of Ngado. He feels that some Moslems are beginning to regard the tomb of the first Moslem as an earth shrine or Tengkougre.

So far, only five of the more prominent Moslems in the district have made 794
or are making the pilgrimage to Mecca. The first man made the voyage about 788
seven years ago, and is now conducting a Koranic school in a neighboring district. His brother went to Mecca about two years ago and is now the senior *El Hadj* in the district. Of the two men who were on the pilgrimage when I arrived in the district, one has since died near the Red Sea and the other is still away. One other man left for Mecca and returned to the district during my stay. Most of the pilgrims now fly to Mecca; only two men followed the traditional route through Ghana, Kano, Lake Chad, the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan (now Sudan), and on to Mecca. In general, all pilgrims have used their own re- [613]
sources for the trip, but they receive some help from their lineage brothers and from the other Moslems in the district and in Ouagadougou.

The pilgrimage to Mecca represents the greatest event in the lives of the district Moslems. When the last pilgrim left, a great crowd gathered at his house and prayed for his safe journey, and some even accompanied him to [621]
Ouagadougou and remained there until he left. The Moslems and many pagans of the district, under the command of the district chief, cultivated his fields during his absence. And when the new El Hadj returned, a large crowd accompanied him to his house with shouts of joy. There he killed a sheep in thanks- [782]
giving, sprinkled the crowd with holy water from Mecca, and recounted his experiences. His listeners were impressed by his airplane flight and the description of Mecca, but they showed the greatest interest when he said that Mecca women covered their faces and that most Meccan men were monogamous. The local Moslems smiled when they heard this bit of news from one of their members, but I have seen them scowl when discussing the monogamous practice desired by the Christians.

The attitudes of Moslems differ very little from those of the other Mossi 794
as regards children and polygyny. They say that they do not believe in the 595 842

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643 636 We Mossi cannot say that the Europeans have introduced chieftainship among us; for we are old hands at it. Chieftainship has always existed among us, and we intend to conserve it in spite of anything one may say about it.

Who better than we chiefs can hope for a rapid evolution of our country? However, because of the pride we have in the organized society that we have known well before French occupation, we wish this evolution to take place within our specific cultural pattern, to harmonize with, and to take into consideration the wisdom which has permitted us to conserve the integrity of our homeland until French occupation.

[185]

Without wishing to place ourselves against the demands of those who are wedded to an overthrow of local traditions, we endeavor to state our position clearly: Let everyone scratch whatever itches him.[8]

643 178 It is too early to predict what will be the fate of the traditional Mossi chiefs. The factors which made for such weaknesses in their political system—hazardous interregnums and flexibility in succession—have certainly ceased to operate. But, as I have shown, by a curious coincidence, a form of succession which evolved to meet a particular set of circumstances served the Mossi in good stead during French occupation, and is now being adapted to serve the needs of a new political environment. This flexibility in succession may even provide the Mossi with a wide enough choice of candidates to preserve the traditional ruling lineages in the face of a changing political system. Furthermore, this flexibility in political succession appears to be more compatible and less in conflict with the principles of universal suffrage which have been introduced in this society to serve the needs of the developing parliamentary system.

The growing use of Mossi traditional chiefs as modern politicians has not precluded the opportunity of Mossi commoners to take part in the governmental organization of the territory in which their group resides. As a matter of fact, there are a number of commoners who are well educated, and individually have held high administrative offices. However, despite a number of them who have been critical of the traditional ruling hierarchy, they have not succeeded in breaking the strong hold of the traditional ruling lineage on the people. Some commoners have even found it to their advantage to ally themselves

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with the Moro Naba and his chiefs. The Mossi commoner who became Minister of the Interior in the Mendes-France government received the treatment fitting to his rank from French officials in Africa, but he bowed humbly and paid homage to the Moro Naba when he visited Wagadougou. In return he still receives political support from the traditional Mossi hierarchy. Whether or not this man and the other Mossi politicians of commoner origin will continue to honor and respect the chiefs in order to obtain their support is not known. It is possible that this situation will change if the growing number of urban Mossi and some of their rural fellows attack the position of the chiefs. But for the foreseeable future it appears as though the traditional dynasty will remain in power, and may even extend its power at the expense of the other non-Mossi groups who are now members of the Voltaic Republic.

The apparent success of the ancient political dynasty of the Mossi people to adapt itself to the requirements of the modern world shows the ability of African institutions to adjust novelty with tradition. It confirms what the anthropologists have always known, that Africa was not a *tabla rasa* on which conquerors could easily impose their ideas and institutions. The cultures of Africa were meaningful to its peoples and when they could not be maintained, they were reinterpreted to meet new situations.[9] It is quite true that because of historical reasons the Mossi did not come into as intensive contact with Europeans as did their neighbors to the south, and that this is possibly why their institutions have persisted. However, the experience of Ghana should make us pause before accepting such a facile answer. A British type of Parliamentary system was imposed upon that country, but it is changing so rapidly that one wonders whether it should have been imposed in the first place. It is still too early to tell what the Ghanaian and other modern African governments will look like; but one might speculate that within the bounds set by the exigencies of the modern world, these governments may resemble the traditional African ones much more than those of their ephemeral conquerors.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. According to C. K. Meek, among the Jukun "The King's demise was and is kept a close secret, and is not, in fact revealed until some months afterwards, when the body is formally buried. Various reasons are assigned for this secrecy, such as that

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PREFACE

THIS BOOK ATTEMPTS to contribute to our understanding of Mossi society, 114
about which relatively little is known even within the continent of Africa. [121]
Many of the data were collected in the Upper Volta Republic between November 1955 and January 1957, a period when the Voltaics were preparing for important political changes. I did most of my field work in the area formerly included within the kingdom of Ouagadougou. I stayed only one week in the Yatenga and paid but brief visits to Tenkodogo and the Boussouma region. Thus, my basic data hold chiefly for Ouagadougou. My 12
methods of research were the conventional anthropological ones: I recorded local oral histories, conducted personal interviews, attended court and important rituals, participated in the life of the people whenever possible, and collected genealogical and biographical data.

In addition, I read all the important documents I could find on the po- 127
litical history of the Mossi people in the files of the Institut Français d'Afrique Noire, in local administrative offices, and in the Archives of the Governor General of French West Africa in Dakar, Senegal. I also read published works on the Mossi by such scholars as Maurice Delafosse, A. A. Dim Delobson, Georges Cheron, Eugene Mangin, Lucien Marc, and Louis Tauxier. Their works were invaluable to me, and I owe them a debt of 121
gratitude. My hope is that what I have added to the store of knowledge about the Mossi may be of service to Mossi scholars, whose studies will ultimately bring to light aspects of their own culture that we have missed.

The ethnographer working in contemporary Africa is faced with the problem of the time dimension. In reporting his findings, he may use the "ethnographic present" and describe the cultural system he studied as though all elements, even those dredged up from the memories of old men, were still viable in the society. Or he may use the past tense and thus underscore [178]
the fact that the society is changing, even though cultural traits from the past may be present and viable. I have elected the latter course primarily

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because, even though many of the aspects of Mossi culture described here are still in existence, Mossi society is changing ever more rapidly. Many old culture traits that I found there as late as 1955 had all but disappeared when I returned in 1960. Not to recognize this fact in preparing this study would have laid the ground for the criticism that anthropologists ignore the changes taking place around them in order to concentrate upon the past.

My own interest in the Mossi grew out of an early curiosity about the cultures and societies of Africa. It was born of my parents' concern over Ethiopia's struggle to remain free and nurtured by the writings of Mr. Marcus A. Garvey, Dr. W. E. B. Dubois, and Professors Melville J. Herskovits and E. Franklin Frazier. These factors, together with the help and encouragement of my relatives and friends, ultimately led me to choose a career in anthropology and African studies. I am grateful to Professor John L. Landgraf of New York University, who first taught me the elements of anthropology and thus provided me with the basic tools for understanding human societies. To Dr. Gene Weltfish and Professor Joseph H. Greenberg of Columbia University I owe a further debt of gratitude for having directed my first studies of African cultures. To them, and to Professors Conrad M. Arensberg, Morton H. Fried, and Charles Wagley, also of Columbia University, I owe whatever skill and competence in social-science research I may possess. I am grateful to the Ford Foundation for financing the field work on which this study is based, and to the Arts and Science Research Fund Committee of New York University for help in defraying the cost of preparing the manuscript for publication.

I am deeply indebted to the Mossi people for having permitted me to live among them for fourteen months. M. François Bouda, district chief of Manga, and Naba Boulga, district chief of Nobere, not only welcomed me but kindly consented to answer my innumerable questions about the nature of their political and other institutions. The Djiba Naba, who subsequently became Mogho Naba Kougri, also encouraged me in my task, and so did Dr. Joseph Conombo. Without the help of M. Beta Nyissa, my friend and interpreter, field work would have been difficult. He not only explained many aspects of Mossi culture to me, but put me in touch with persons who could answer my questions, and taught me the rudiments of the Mossi language.

I must also thank my good friend Mme. Ouennam Pousde for helping me to understand the point of view of the Mossi women. This kind lady never ceased to be amused at the attempts of this *yagenga* (brother's son) to participate as fully as possible in Mossi life. M. Frederic Guierma en-

The Mossi grow tobacco in fields around their

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248 homesteads, where they also cultivate their most important cash crops, cotton and indigo, which are used in the manufacture and dyeing of cotton cloth.

136 The wild fauna of Mossi country include several species of antelope, deer, monkeys, rabbits, snakes, and wild pigs. Elephants roam the beds of rivers and streams and often destroy cultivated fields, while lions and hyenas distress the people by attacking livestock. The pools and rivers of Mossi country are inhabited by turtles, crocodiles, and various species of scaled and scaleless fish. Chickens, muscovy ducks, and half-domesticated guinea fowl are the most valuable species of birds.

231 The Mossi have long been famous for their splendid donkeys and [492] horses. Donkeys are sometimes ridden, but they are used primarily as [439] beasts of burden. Horses are important for military and ceremonial purposes and for export to the tsetse-fly zones to the south. The Mossi raise two main types of cattle: a zebu-like animal in the northern regions and a [439] dwarf variety in the south. These animals are raised primarily for their milk and for export, and are seldom killed for meat until they are fairly old. Goats and sheep provide the main source of meat. Hog-raising is not wide- [771] spread, and seems to be declining in importance with the increased ob- [178] servance of Islamic food taboos, which is on the uprise even among people who are still pagans.

135 The subsoil of Mossi country is not well known, but so far there have been no major discoveries of mineral deposits. The only known gold field [301] remained unworked in aboriginal times. The Mossi do not like to wear [325] gold ornaments, preferring jewelry worked from imported copper and [439] silver. The northern Mossi worked their local iron in aboriginal times, but those in the south obtained this metal from caravan traders.

175 The nineteenth-century reports of Barth and other European travelers 439 indicate that the Mossi conducted a rather extensive foreign trade. At least [443] six caravan routes passed through their territory, and traders such as the Hausa and Mandingo visited the important Mossi trading centers at Yako, Pouitenga, and Ouagadougou, where they exchanged Saharan and forest products for Mossi livestock and cloth.[3]

101 The Mossi belong to the Voltaic culture area, a name given by Delafosse to the regions drained by the Black, Red, and White Voltas and their tributaries. The area embraces parts of Mali, the Ivory Coast, Dahomey, the Upper Volta, and northern Ghana.[4] It includes a vast congeries of peoples such [199] as the Dagomba, Mamprusi, Dagari, Birifo, Senufo, Gurmanche, Gurunsi, Lobi, Bobo, Tallensi, Konkomba, Dogon, Somba, Fulse, and Ninisi, all of whom speak languages belonging to the Gur or Moshi-Grunshi group of

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who did live at the palace, only a small minority prepared the ruler's meals and shared his bed. Dim Delobson reports that Mogho Naba Kom II (1905–42) had thirty-seven wives. His son, Mogho Naba Sagha II (1942–57), had twenty.[24] The present Mogho Naba, Kougri, recently married according to Western tradition and is officially monogamous.[25] There seems to be a general trend toward fewer wives among Mossi chiefs.

Mossi rulers never married for the purpose of forming state alliances, and their marriages had no political significance. The Mogho Naba's marriages were exogamous with regard to the royal lineage and to his mother's minimal lineage. Aside from these restrictions, however, the Mogho Naba could marry women from any Mossi lineage or group, including serfs, slaves, and foreign populations. It is said that when Mogho Naba Sanum (1850–90) despaired of having an heir by a Mossi woman, he took a Fulani wife.[26]

The Mogho Naba had no formal wedding ceremony. The task of introducing a new wife to the royal harem fell to the Pughtiema. She and her assistants welcomed the wife in a prescribed fashion. First they shaved all the hair from her body. They then bathed her in warm water to which shea butter and ritual herbs had been added, and during the bath they recited the ruler's genealogy to impress her with her new status.[27] The Pughtiema advised her on the need for proper deportment, and warned her that adultery was punished by death. To close the ceremony, a smith fastened to the girl's wrists and ankles the silver or brass bracelets that identified her as a wife of the Mogho Naba. If the bride was still a child, she was often allowed to return to her father's house until she reached childbearing age. If she was past the age of puberty, her marriage was consummated without further ceremony, and she joined the ranks of the ruler's wives.

The wives who lived in the palace were divided into three groups. The first group included the wives who lived with the Pughtiema in a section of the palace harem called the *zaka sanga* ("large courtyard"). These women were all past childbearing age and no longer received nocturnal visits from the Mogho Naba. They had their own fields in the vicinity of the palace and cultivated them with the aid of the samande kamba, the pages they had adopted, and their own children. The women of the second group, those of the *zagbilin* ("small courtyard"), were mostly in their thirties or forties and still sexually active. They received occasional visits from the Mogho Naba, but fewer than his younger wives. These women also cultivated their fields with the help of the young men of the court.

The third group of wives, the *dogunba* ("keepers of the household"), was the most important. The dogunba prepared the ruler's meals and satis-

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175 their genealogies and traditions. The Mogho Naba was pleased by the reci-
643 tation and thanked the drummer.
634 Later that day, the Mogho Naba presented himself in the courtyard of
574 the district chief's compound to be saluted by the village chiefs and by the
182 heads of lineages. They came to him in the traditional way, rubbing their palms and bending their foreheads to the ground. He addressed them, and in response they snapped their fingers in the customary manner. Then, one by one, the village chiefs and the lineage elders came to their monarch and gave him presents of money which ranged from 50 to 200 francs. The Mogho Naba paid little attention to the sums given, being more interested in this act of homage and fealty. However, he listened carefully as each donor announced his name and rank within the official hierarchy or village. He later thanked them collectively and departed. This ceremony, while not very elaborate, differed little in detail from those characteristic of the traditional Mossi's relationship to their Mogho Naba. The new element here was that the monarch was traveling around his domain, establishing a close relationship with his chiefs and subjects, whose support he needed for his modern political alliances.[28]

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643 The Mogho Naba continued to hold the morning ceremony at court,
796 even though it was rapidly losing its traditional function and becoming of
182 major interest only to visitors. He also continued to hold those ceremonies associated with individual appointments to the nam and with traditional
[692] sacrifices. Unknown to many was the fact that traditional authorities at court still judged legal cases which many Mossi refused to take to the Europeans.

* 175 In contrast to the Mogho Naba, the traditional provincial ministers now
645 lost most of the power they had held in the pre-conquest period, and all the
182 duties they had acquired in the immediate post-conquest era. As we have seen, one minister, the Baloum Naba, had entered politics at the suggestion of the Mogho Naba, but even he was now relegated to the entourage that accompanied the Mogho Naba and the European administrators on visits to the ministers' former provinces. The increased number of European administrators had made these ministers superfluous.

178 The district chiefs retained some prestige after the war. They could still
* 175 judge legal cases, with the understanding that the litigants were free to go
554 to the Europeans if they so desired and had to be sent there in serious cases.
634 Their major problem was that a more efficient administration was taking
[692] a greater interest in district affairs. For the first time since the conquest, officials were visiting some of the more remote villages. No longer were they said to "act as locusts"—that is, to appear periodically to garner supplies and men from the districts and then disappear until the next onslaught. Instead, they appeared regularly to collect taxes and to take censuses, and

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they were kept informed of almost everything that occurred in the districts by their secretaries and "friends" (usually war veterans who visited the administrative headquarters on business).

Not all the district chiefs accepted with equanimity their gradual loss of power. Many of them had accepted at face value the joyful refrain of the elite and the politicians that the "land was cooling"—i.e., that the rigors of colonialism were over. They welcomed the liberal laws of 1946, and believed that they would regain the power lost by their fathers. Thus, they were among the most surprised persons in the Upper Volta when the easing of colonial rule brought with it more French supervision rather than less. From the standpoint of political power, most district chiefs had been better off in the days of the "locusts." At least the locusts came and went, whereas progressive government slowly but irrevocably eroded their power.

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The village chiefs, as those members of the traditional Mossi hierarchy who had the closest contact with the people, felt the postwar administrative changes much more keenly than the other chiefs. They found it increasingly difficult to deal with war veterans, adherents of formal religions, and other people who had lost respect for traditional values and practices.[28] Whereas few Mossi would have refused to visit or to pay allegiance to the Mogho Naba or to their district chief, with whom they had little personal contact, many did refuse to have political relationships with those village chiefs whom they neither liked nor respected.

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The rural Mossi, upon whom the position of the Mogho Naba and his chiefs ultimately depended, did not fully comprehend the postwar changes in the Upper Volta, and were initially willing to look to their chiefs for guidance. Most of them referred to their newly won civil rights in the French Union by what they called *soguem minga*, which may be translated as "possession of one's self," "liberty," or "liberation." To the majority of them, however, the reforms meant chiefly the end of forced labor. They were more than willing to leave the new political affairs to their chiefs, despite the assurance of the elite that they could now participate in the governmental processes. Dupont wrote in a romantic vein about the introduction of political reforms in the Upper Volta:

> Can we truly speak of a change for the better in this country? Yes! A page has been turned, the last in a chapter. A new chapter has just begun, and I was the amazed witness of this beginning. . . . One must say, in France's favor, that she did not merely engage in beautiful speeches, but that her liberating decrees deeply modified the life of the natives. Gone is the export of laborers; gone are the uncontrolled prestations; gone the requisitions of produce which the peasants had to buy elsewhere at a higher price and resell at a loss; gone the sales in which the collective price given to the district

[post-World War II Period]

chief became ridiculously smaller when distributed among the producers; gone the tolls along the roads. Henceforth, all such services will be duly and individually compensated.

Even in the most remote and least accessible villages, people speak of liberty. The old women who go to the pools for water sit down for a moment near their jars in order to talk about it. Even bush fires spread less rapidly than this news.[27]

Very few Mossi in the rural areas were qualified to vote in the first post-war elections, and those who were qualified voted for the candidates preferred by the chiefs. However, as the franchise was progressively broadened after 1951, and many more Mossi and non-Mossi politicians traveled through the rural areas, the politicians favored by the chiefs found that they had to campaign to maintain their position. Both the chiefs and their politicians resented this. One visitor to the Upper Volta reports: "A highly educated Mossi of the Upper Volta told me, 'Citizenship has unsettled and ruined the people. Everyone has become his own master, and believes himself free to do whatever he wishes.'"[28] Opposition to the chiefs and their friends came from the Moslems, who supported their co-religionists for office, and from a growing group of young Mossi who resented the power of the chiefs. In 1955 one such group in Yatenga, composed of mission-educated youths, war veterans, and former workers, broke away from the Union Voltaïque and formed the Mouvement Démocratique Voltaïque (MDV) under the joint leadership of Gérard Ouédraogo and Michel Dorange, a Frenchman, who had been a captain in the colonial army. The partisans of the MDV often came into violent conflict with the supporters of the chiefs, but the organization itself was not banned by the administration, because its members included many veterans, and because Dorange was one of its leaders.

The appearance of the anti-chief MDV was symptomatic of the problems which the Mossi chiefs were to encounter as the people became free to elect their own representatives. For one thing, the people could now censure their chiefs by voting for their opponents, who appealed to them in terms of release from traditional prestations. But more important, even those Mossi politicians who were still friendly to the chiefs and depended on their support for election were becoming increasingly autonomous. The chiefs were operating in one power structure, the politicians in another and more important one. In Dakar, in Paris, and in the Palace of Versailles (where the Assembly of the French Union met) Mossi politicians dealt not only with local African problems but with problems the chiefs knew nothing about. As the politicians grew skillful at the game of metropolitan

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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Mossi chiefs of being a modernist, was elected as the first Vice-President of the new government. Not only was the Mogho Naba deprived of the opportunity to become the African head of the Upper Volta, but such stalwart supporters of the chiefs as Conombo and Bouda were left out of the government. Thus, after twelve years of opposition to Houphouët-Boigny, Mogho Naba Sagha and his chiefs were finally defeated. Their defeat was made even more ignominious by the elevation of a non-Mossi commoner to a position of dominance over the Mossi chiefs.[27]

Having lost out in the Upper Volta, the Mossi chiefs had no spokesman when the new Vice-Presidents of the Government Councils of the French West African territories and the European Presidents of these territories met at Dakar to discuss the problems of the truncated French West Africa Federation. No one mentioned the problem of the position of the traditional chiefs. As far as the politicians were concerned, the issue of the chief on the inter-territorial level was dead. It had relevance only in those territories where the chiefs retained some influence.

In an effort to consolidate their hold on the Upper Volta, the PDV-RDA members in the PDU met in September 1957 and sought to convert the PDU into a territorial subsection of the RDA. This move was resisted by the supporters of the chiefs within the PDU, especially by Conombo, who as leader of the PSEMA, an important faction within the PDU, had been completely eclipsed by Coulibaly and the PDV. Conombo resigned from the PDU and announced his intention to rebuild the PSEMA with the support of the Mossi chiefs. On November 12, however, before his plans could be put into action, Mogho Naba Sagha II died in Ouagadougou and political activities in the Upper Volta came to a standstill. A period of national mourning was proclaimed, and politicians from all parties gathered to pay their last respects and to eulogize the monarch.

Sagha's death, like that of all Mossi princes, was ascribed to foul means, although it was clear that he had succumbed to uremia. The people reacted to the interregnum by looting, and the shopkeepers in Ouagadougou and surrounding areas were compelled to close their establishments. "The people of Ouagadougou ran to Saba, but the merchants there were quite diligent, and needed no police force to protect them."[28] It was reported that those wives of the deceased ruler who were not at the palace at the time of his death took off the brass anklets denoting their royal status and became free women. If this actually happened, it was an unprecedented occurrence.

When the Mossi traditional electoral college convened to choose a new Mogho Naba, it reportedly considered the candidacy of both Moussa Con-

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the Upper Volta met, discussed "the affair of October 17," and issued a statement dissociating itself from the Mogho Naba's action, reaffirming its desire to collaborate with the established authority, and requesting a clarification of the status of chiefs in the new order. The Government Council of the Upper Volta welcomed this statement, and hastened to reassure the chiefs that their status was not in danger: "It is not a question of damaging the traditional chiefs as a group, but rather of stigmatizing vigorously an act emanating from a superior chief like Mogho Naba Kougri, the consequences of which, unforeseen as they were, could have placed all the Mossi chiefs in a regrettable and irreparable position."[47] 175* 643 669 578

The Mogho Naba had obviously reached a political impasse, and he next turned his attention to creating a new image of the chieftainship. To this end, he married a young Mossi woman in accordance with the civil statutes of the state, thus becoming the first Mogho Naba and the first important Mossi chief to do so. A spokesman at the wedding placed this act in its proper perspective with the following words: 643 175* 178 ●

> I should now like to underscore the fact that this date, November 22 [1958], will be inscribed officially in the annals of the Upper Volta. For the first time in the history of our country, an Emperor, the person who best symbolizes tradition, has upset ancestral habits in the interest of progress. For the first time a woman will be given consideration in a royal court where she will be able to feel at her ease. For the first time, the spouse of a traditional chief will have her place near her husband as an equal and steady companion.[48] [644]

The politicians were apparently prepared to recognize the eminence of the chiefs as long as they did not attempt to intervene in the affairs of the state, and a number of them attended the Mogho Naba's wedding. Among those present were the Presidents of both the Government Council and the Territorial Assembly, parliamentarians from various parties, and the mayors of Bobo-Dioulasso and Ouagadougou. On December 10, 1958, the Territorial Assembly confirmed Yaméogo as President of the Government Council. The Assembly also approved his slate of ministers, among them Bouda, the Mossi chief who had once been a strong supporter of the traditional political hierarchy but who now belonged to the UDV-RDA. Then, on December 11, the Assembly decided to adopt the draft of a proposed constitution for the Upper Volta. Articles 2 and 3 of Paragraph I of this constitution state explicitly: 175* 631 642 [646]

> The Republic of the Upper Volta is one and indivisible, secular, democratic, and social. Its principle is that the government is *of the people, by the people, and for the people. . . .*
>
> *Sovereignty belongs to the people. No section of the population, and no individual, may usurp it.* [Italics mine.][49]

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CHAPTER 9

Trade and Markets Among the Mossi People

BY ELLIOTT P. SKINNER

The Mossi represent the dominant population of the Voltaic Re- 105 [131]
public, numbering about 1,600,000 out of some 3,200,000 inhabitants. [161]
They represent the unique example of a group which has preserved its [172]
ethnic identity and political autonomy through all the vicissitudes [648]
of Sudanic history until it was conquered by the French in 1896. Tra- [173]
dition records that the people who became the Mossi left the Dagomba
region in present-day Ghana during the eleventh century and moved
into the bend of the Niger River, carving out three large kingdoms
and smaller principalities in the process. At the head of these still [642]
extant kingdoms are rulers *(Moro Nabas)* who formerly held feudal- [643]
like control over the provinces, districts and villages which comprise [631]
their domains. The villages, with their patri-local, polygynous, ex- [821]
tended family households, formed the basic Mossi settlement pattern. [592]
A complex hierarchical administrative apparatus carried the power [631]
of the Mossi rulers into the smallest villages, and funneled taxes and
tribute back to them. This structure still exists, but of course it has [648]
been modified by the French.

The Mossi were and are still divided into stratified royal, noble [565]
and commoner patrilineages. Characteristic of this lineage system is [613]
a process by which royal sub-lineages descend serially until they
merge with the mass of commoner lineages. Below the lineages there [563]
once were large non-Mossi groups of serfs and slaves, but these people
have now been grouped into lineages and have become Mossicized.

The topography of Mossi country is typical of the Sudanic grass- 133
lands. It is an immense plain, some 1,500 feet above sea level and
broken only by three low mountain ranges and numerous small hills.
The annual total rainfall is between 30 and 40 inches, and falls 132
almost entirely as heavy showers or thundershowers during the period
from June to September. So narrow is the margin of rainfall for [433]
successful crop cultivation that any variation in the cycle results in [511]
low crop yields and a difficult "hungry period" the following year
before the new crops are harvested. The Mossi do not practice irri- 133
gation, and would have trouble doing so because the three Volta [241]
Rivers which drain their territory serve as drainage chiefly during
the rainy season. Only the Black Volta has water all year round; the

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their own commercial centers, they acted quite differently outside their country. Dubois reports that at Timbuktu, "the great town of pleasure" with the freest morals in the Sudan, the merchants from Bamako, Djenne, Sansanding and Touat spent a great deal of money in pleasure and in gifts to the beautiful women, but the "Mossi did not waste their money and left as soon as they had finished their affairs" (Dubois 1899 : 292–300).

The days of the caravans are now over in Mossi country, even though large groups of traders carry on the traditional commerce in livestock, cotton, kola nuts, some dried fish, and salt. As soon as the French conquered th country they formulated plants to control the caravans. One of the earliest reports, for June 1899, reads:

> The country is calm and direct administration was established at Koupela, Mane, Yake . . . The Mossi trade is mainly with the English colony of the Gold Coast. It consists mainly of livestock, very plentiful in Mossi country, which is exchanged for merchandise from England; copper and material goods . . . Our task will be to discover the materials of the northern Ivory Coast which could be exchanged for cattle, and when this information is forthcoming we should be able to direct the caravans quite easily to the Ivory Coast. At the same time the English will see their provisions of cattle and sheep diminish. They will flood us less with their cotton cloth, with their glass beads, and with their kola nuts. In their place, the products of French manufacture can arrive to us through the Ivory Coast after being exchanged for the products of our colony there.[8]

These plans did not succeed. The Mossi still export a great deal of their products towards the forest zones of Ghana, including their "numerous laborers" which, according to Beauminy writing in 1919, were "the principal riches actually utilizable in Mossi country". (Beauminy 1919 : 71–78). The migrants themselves are, in a sense, the greatest traders in contemporary Mossi society.

PRESENT-DAY TRADE

There is a constant flow of goods between Mossi country and the Ivory Coast and Ghana. Much of the trade to the former region is in the hands of the large commercial companies and as such is beyond the purview of this paper. What is of interest here is the trade which is conducted by the ordinary people. A great deal of this trade is highly unorganized and the result of one or two men, or as many as five men, joining together to trade goods to and from Ghana and the Ivory Coast. The types of goods sent down to these two areas are the

(8) Unpublished document in the archives of *Institut Français d'Afrique Noire*, Wagadougou, Voltaic Republic.

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436 use one type of currency rather than another. For example, a petty
435 trader often buys a package of European cigarettes for 20 francs
443 C.F.A. in the Wagadougou market for retail in the local markets. Here he sells some individual cigarettes at the price of two for 5 francs C.F.A., some at two for 3 old-fashioned francs (making a total of about 21 francs C.F.A.). The vendors are fully aware of this profit differential, but make no attempt to insist on one currency over the other. Furthermore, they appeared indifferent when I suggested that I planned to take advantage of the price differential which I suspected in the two systems. It appears that they believe it would be a waste of time to try to obtain the profit differential.

437 Barter as a form of exchange had just about disappeared from the
435 larger markets in Mossi country, but it exists alongside the use of
443 currency in the local markets, especially in connection with foodstuffs
[178] and other vegetable commodities. People tend to resort to barter when they wish to exchange a specific product for another. Thus, a woman who normally sells rice for currency sometimes will suddenly refuse to accept money and insist on exchanging the rice for cotton or peanuts. The bartering then takes the form of a half-calabash of rice for a half-calabash of either peanuts or cotton, depending upon which products are desired. This equivalence seems always to be maintained regardless of the currency value of rice, cotton, or peanuts at the market on the day in question. For example, a woman who was looking for persons with whom she could exchange peanuts for rice and she refused to sell peanuts to me. I asked why she would not sell the peanuts and then take the money and buy rice with it. She said that if she did so, she would suffer a dual loss: first, in selling the peanuts, each valued at 100 cowries (one-half franc of unofficial currency) for 5 francs. I counted the nuts, which amounted to about 120, and then asked for the customary *lenga* (bonus) and received 36 more peanuts worth 1.5 franc. On the next market day I observed that peanuts were not being sold but only bartered for cotton which was being sold. I decided to test the system. I bought 2 old-fashioned francs' worth of cotton at 100 cowries a ball, and took them over to the woman bartering peanuts for cotton. She accepted the balls of cotton, measured them in a calabash, and then gave me the same volume of peanuts in exchange. I counted the nuts and discovered that I had received some 200 nuts for only 2 francs. When I discussed this experiment with some of the people, they admitted knowing
[123] about this practice and said that they did this at times. I then suggested that it would be possible to manipulate the system to one's advantage, but was again greeted with a show of indifference by most of my auditors. One man eventually said that I would lose because prices

changed.

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443 taxes in their markets. The French abolished both of these offices
554 when they took over the country, because they looked upon them as
651 purely exploitative rather than regulatory agents. But like so many
656 other Mossi political institutions which the French have "abolished,"
178 the Kos Naga and Raga Naba persist in many of the districts, and per-
649 haps even in such large centers as Wagadougou. These officials persist
829 because one of the basic assumptions of the Mossi is that everything
825 must have a "chief." They believe that even the animals in the bush have chiefs, and if men, too, did not have chiefs then social life would be chaos. Thus, in the rural areas many or most district chiefs have retained their market officials even though the roles of these officials have become highly attenuated and so secretive that their existence is often denied.

175 Taxes collected at the market places played an important part in
443 supporting the traditional political hierarchy of the Mossi people.
651 The Kos Naba collected 250 cowries in taxes for every beef cattle
649 slaughtered at the market and took their humps and gave them to a palace official called the Nemdo Naba (meat chief) for distribution in the royal household. He also collected 250 cowries on every cow sold there, but did not usually tax goats and sheep. In lieu of this he occasionally took a head or two of these animals from each herd that passed through the market and sent them to the palace kitchens. Donkeys were also taxed at the rate of 200 cowries per head sold in the market. Horses sold to the nobility were not taxed, but those exported were taxed about 300 cowries.

175 The Raga Naba collected the taxes on other commodities sold at
443 market. Cotton weavers paid him taxes according to the size of their
651 bolts of cloth, and cotton producers paid as much as 20 cowries on
463 especially large sales of their raw produce. The tailors and dyers paid no fixed tax on their wares, but were asked to send clothing to the palace. Every donkey- or ox-load of salt which entered the market place was assessed a tax of 300 cowries. The smiths were not taxed in cowries, but had to supply the wives of the Moro Naba with hoes and the palace personnel with arrowheads, spearpoints and iron clubs. The jewelers also sent bracelets as presents to the ruler. There were no fixed taxes on cereals, vegetables and cooked food sold at market, but each day the Raga Naba, accompanied by several pages or retainers carrying baskets, went from vendor to vendor taking several calabash-fuls of their produce for use in the palace. In addition, the vendors of cooked food had to feed the young grooms of the Moro Naba who were not regularly fed by the palace household. The beer sellers, too, while they were not assessed taxes, contributed a good percentage of their beverage to palace and market personnel who demanded the

000 help each other. If they are sometimes, indeed too often, fleeced by middlemen—and it would seem that the various European administrations, no matter what their nationality, should prevent such speculations in their own best interests—if the natives are fleeced, a European ignorant of the customs and the language would be fleeced all the more. Who would guard his herds during his absence; who would lead them to far markets if he stayed home? It is difficult to find a native [181] who can be fully trusted. At present, however, trading in livestock is the only possible source of profit in the country.

The forthcoming railroad will soon change trade conditions and promote the interests of the Europeans without undermining those of the natives. This is to be desired, because Mossi country will only come fully into its own when its products can be exported. The natives were too long isolated as a result of their continuous warfare, and the nabas, it must be said, were too inclined to monopolize all the goods, for trade to develop in a significant way. The French peace, by making the roads safe, has already done much for the country; it will achieve even more when the railroad which is now cutting across Mossi country links it on the one hand to the Ivory Coast and on the other hand to the Niger Colony. Trade will then no longer be carried out exclusively with the Germans and the British, and as soon as native products find sure channels of export, the raising of livestock and agriculture itself will be greatly extended. The Mossi are not averse to trade. [181 They actually seem to possess a real knack for it, which until now 439] they have had no opportunity to exercise freely. They have not yet taken full advantage of their transactions, and this is why they seemed to some observers to have no aptitude for trade. They will adapt to it, as they already are.

/65/ Chapter 3. Hygiene, Disease, Death, and Burial

828 Part of life, especially the life of a Black, is spent in sleep, but 774 the slumberer is sometimes disturbed by dreams that are more or less 787 extraordinary. The Mossi attribute dreams to ancestral and other spirits. They also say that the soul leaves the body during sleep and does the things witnessed in the dream. Sorcerers are consulted to find out what caused the dreams and how to cope with the bad omens.

527 victorious heroes that they were only mortals. The thought of death is wholesome and beneficial.

The "bean feast" is so named because on that day the naba eats bean sauce for the first time in the year.

The naba's hoeing ceremony (na-kobo) is celebrated twenty-one days after the previous one, and like it, like the naky, always on a Saturday. When the naba of Koupéla was solemnly invested by the naba of Bélousa, he used to go with a large number of horsemen and much pomp to hoe a field located some distance from Koupéla. Nowadays he merely breaks ground on a path which connects his huts with those of his two prime ministers. He gives the first blows with the [526] hoe to the sound of drums, and his men take up from there. If the Peul and the horsemen have come in sufficient numbers, they run [273] races. As is usual in such circumstances, beer flows freely, and at the end of the day everyone is drunk. These festivities bring the naba a few thousand cowries offered by his subjects.

There ceremonies, naky, nakobo, do they not constitute a sort of homage to agriculture, do they not recall similar festivities celebrated long ago by the Romans and even today by the Chinese?

443 The market which follows each of these feasts is always crowded. Several beeves and large numbers of sheep are killed. Everyone makes a point of attending in his very best clothes, and the sight of this motley crowd is quite interesting indeed.

Chapter 3. Magic

Mgr. Le Roy, as already mentioned, defines magic as "the art of coercing into one's service the forces of nature, or harnessing the powers of the invisible world, through certain occult practices of a more or less religious character." This is what we shall now study. To put some order into a subject which is wholly lacking in it in the mind of the native, we shall first discuss the superstitions, then the sorcerers.

[181] Like all primitive people, black or white, the Mossi are very superstitious. Were not our own ancestors, in the Middle Ages? Have superstitious beliefs, such as those concerning thirteen people at table,

77/ It would seem that living as they do in the midst of spirits who
157 permeate the air, the earth, the fire, the houses, the fields, and everything else, and who are not always in an accommodating mood, the Mossi would live in a perpetual state of terror since they have everything to fear from the poisoners during the day, the seuya during the night, but this is not the case. The Mossi are a light-hearted people; they like to laugh, and they do not look a bit worried. Once, as I pointed this out to an old man, he replied: "Everyone does not have enemies. And then, why worry about the inevitable?" In fact, those dreadful sorcerers are only to be feared by those who know that they have an enemy and that he can resort to the power of the sorcerers. The spirits are pacified with sacrifices, and if a soul is seized at night by a seuya, the only thing to do is to try one's best to release it.

Furthermore, like so many others, the Mossi easily forget all these beliefs in the course of everyday life and act as if they were masters of their own actions and confident of achieving their goals. Laughingly and playfully they toss sticks and stones at the wind eddies that whirl by, stirring up the dust and dry leaves. And yet, how many spirits and sorcerers may they conceal, each more dreadful than the next! The most ardent believers consult sorcerers and offer sacrifices before every undertaking; the others only bother with sacrifices on the Day of the Dead and when misfortune strikes. Is it not suffering that recalls us to the religious life, because it reminds us of our dependence on a power greater than ours? Here as elsewhere, there are ardent and lukewarm believers; no one seems to be indifferent, and atheism is unknown. They are not yet sufficiently civilized for such ideas!

000 Their conversion to Catholicism seems to be only a matter of time. Messis quidem multa, operarii autem pauci. /The harvest is great, but the workers are few./ May the Master of the Harvest dispatch many workers to this land and hasten the day when the whole of this people will enter the divine fold!

/108/ CONCLUSION

181 By way of conclusion, we shall now attempt to draw in rough outline the mental characteristics of the Mossi as we see them.

181 The Mossi are a mixture of defects and qualities. As a rule they
577 are not overly scrupulous about stealing and lying, but these deficiencies
674 are not so deeply rooted that they could not be corrected with the development of a more refined conscience. The Mossi are thievish because they often have the opportunity to take what belongs to others, especially cowries which are handled in a very intricate manner. It is so easy, when counting cowries, to slip a few into a pocket without the master's notice! There are some highway robbers, who are greatly feared, and many of them are very skillful. They are, of course, a very small minority.

181 Debts are the most frequent cause of theft. As a rule every Mossi
577 is both a debtor and a creditor, and when he borrows only God knows
426 when he will repay. If someone owes him a debt, he borrows, saying, "So-and-So owes me such-and-such an amount; when he pays me back, I will repay you," and he always finds someone who is willing to lend. Who can deny a friend such a favor? In order to be repaid numerous steps will prove necessary, and the day when the sum is refunded will be a happy one. This shortcoming is so ingrained among them that the wealthiest people are not exempt from it, and although able to return what they have borrowed without difficulty, they do not return it.

181 The Mossi lie easily, but they especially practice the method of
577 mental reservation. When questioned, they excel at posing another question, to find out whether their questioner is really acquainted with the facts. If they can mislead one, they do; on the other hand, if they feel that to confess would be to their advantage, they do so even if their confession implicates their accomplices; but they only do so if they are quite sure of coming through safely.

The Mossi are not false or deceitful, but they often fail to tell the truth for fear of displeasing a more powerful person. They try to guess the reply expected by their questioner, and much caution is needed when a precise piece of information is required. They also deceive by telling only half the truth; when queried, they sometimes reply to a question but suppress a detail which would have modified the answer or opened the way to another question.

They are discreet and know how to keep a secret, especially the king's secrets. When they do not wish to tell anything, they say "I don't know." This is not incriminating, and it cuts short any prying question.

181 /109/ The Mossi have passions, and they are the same as ours:
152 ambition, jealousy, gluttony, sloth, lust, and sometimes even avarice, though more rarely. All of these reign among them. Because they cannot control their emotions, cannot resist their evil inclinations, these passions become tyrannical as they grow older. The children are usually quite malleable. The spirit of obedience and complete submission to their parents is instilled into them from such an early age that when taken sufficiently young their character can be trained and they become capable of truly virtuous actions which cost them an effort. When left to themselves, however, they listen only to their own desires and seek out whatever can bring them some satisfaction. This is rather similar to the morality of a slave who fears only the whip.

The Mossi are vain and easily offended by a word they have misunderstood, even when spoken in jest. The practice of humility is far from being one of their habitual pursuits. The Mossi are quarrelsome and testy, especially when they have drunk a little more millet beer than they should have. There are no festivities and few markets of any importance where a quarrel does not arise among some natives, often for no better reason than because someone is jostled in the crowd. The brawl begins with insults, proceeds with clubs, and ends up with knives. No one gives way. A Mossi who gave way in a quarrel would feel dishonored. The man who gives in proves that he is the weakest, and at the first opportunity someone who witnessed the incident will insult him in turn. Why not, since he does not defend himself? This is why a Mossi who has been abused will give in only at the final extremity, especially if his father and mother were insulted, and all cursing soon gets to this point. When drawn apart, the opponents keep up their invectives at a distance. An angry Mossi loses all control. A quarrel often has its aftermath. The Mossi are spiteful, and, especially if they were placed in the weaker position, they will seek revenge in one way or another, so it cannot be said that they got the worst of it.

181 Not only do the Mossi have passions like ours, but like us they also
157 have their temperaments. There are the lymphatic ones, languid and incapable of any effort; there are the nervous people who are always in motion, sensitive to a fault, who weep at the slightest remark; there are the taciturn ones who almost never laugh, who think that no one loves them and that everyone wants to hurt them, who like solitude and

181 who speak little; there are the choleric people, more liable than others
157 to anger, more spiteful, but also endowed with more energy.

Energy is not the chief quality of these people, who are trained by
181 their leaders to blind and faithful obedience. The tight organization
156 we have described has its unhappy consequences, atrophy of the will and destruction of the spirit of initiative. Such is the price. A Mossi cannot resist those who are more powerful. Flexible and almost cowardly before his superiors, he makes up for it with his inferiors and shows great arrogance and disdain toward those who are weaker.

181 /110/ The Mossi do not exercise their will, and they do not exer-
153 cise their thinking faculty. This is not because they lack intelligence, but because they are not accustomed to thought except when their interests are at stake, at which time some of them demonstrate true intelligence and diplomacy.

The Mossi do not question the why of things. While small children in our country like to argue and often perplex us with their questions, the Mossi never ask themselves, "How can this be? Why is it so and not otherwise?" The first answer that comes to mind satisfies them.

This lack of thought is the cause of their lagging civilization, for is it not true that we move forward unceasingly only because we seek to investigate the cause of everything? It also results in a paucity of ideas. Conversations turn mainly upon women, food, and agriculture during the rainy season. Their sphere of ideas is quite restricted, but it is capable of expansion, for the Mossi may be considered quite intelligent.

539 If proverbs express the wisdom of a people, the Mossi certainly do not lack wisdom and often couch it with great subtlety. Permit us to prove this by quoting a few proverbs, culled in the course of conversations by Fr. Thueux, who kindly conveyed them to us and who gathered explanations, since some of them are real enigmas to our European minds.

1. Kota ningri, ka kot' sen kong'ye.
   Give above you, not below.
   (If you give to someone who is more powerful, you will always get something out of it.)
2. Maokasankaré ñarda kon lo'é naobi taoré.
   No matter how much it may hurry, the heel never catches up with the toes.
   (Who is the hen to sing before the rooster?)

539

15. Sosra sen kaosda, wata ne korg' wenbsego.
When a conversation lingers, the bag is fingered.
(Familiarity breeds contempt.)

16. Pu' pidya, bango luéya.
Full belly, gagged indiscretion.
(Those who need you are discreet).

17. Sad' no' o, yid noa' karga.
A good laugh is better than a chicken leg.
(A warm reception is better than a good meal.)

18. Ned' kon wok' a bâka, ti pemsom yi ye.
You don't cut open your shoulder just for the air to come out.
(Never abandon a friend in need.)

19. Bunbundi ka dod' zalol'n yé.
Those who give their best do not go away empty-handed.
(Work hard, do your best, there is no lack of true wealth.)

●181 153 The Mossi likes to talk. Although he has few ideas of his own, if one knows how to make use of his familiar experiences to bring him to a higher level, he follows the reasoning easily, understands quite promptly what is told him, and grasps the train of ideas and even the finer gradations of meaning. In short, he has quite a noteworthy aptitude for assimilation. Often I explained to a chief in broad outline the handling of a gun or the mechanism of a watch or bicycle. If an outsider came by, the naba relayed the explanations to show that he was intelligent and that he had grasped them properly. Indeed, I was often surprised at how well most of them did this.

They like pictures. At first they often hold them upside down, but a few explanations are usually sufficient to make them grasp their meaning. First they recognize familiar things, such as people, horses, dogs, and trees, and they explain them to each other. They come to understand the scene and the reasons for the attitudes of the figures pictured.

181 522 576 /112/ In conversations, when they are not ill at ease, they are lively, merry, and they like to laugh. It is a compliment on their part when they say that someone laughs easily. They are sometimes humorous, they understand innuendoes, but they know how to keep their distance and do not permit themselves any familiarities, even in words, toward their superiors.

181 153 They are very susceptible to teaching. The little slaves raised in Malta learned the French language well, and all those who have met them say that they are quite intelligent. We had children in our school who quicly learned writing, reading, and arithmetic, and who did not forget what they had learned when they got married and had to leave school to work in the fields. Reading remains a pastime to them, and they keep up their knowledge of the French language. We did not notice among them what has so often been pointed out about the little Arabs, who give great promise when young, signs of real intelligence, and who do not live up to this promise when they grow up. The intelligence of the Mossi develops with the years, and this would make it possible to exercise considerable influence over them. 080 Teaching that opens their minds, however, should not cause them to lose their religious sense without contributing anything in its place. Within a short period of time this would bring about the demoralization and downfall of this people who seem capable of rapid progress, and it would be a pity.

538 They like to tell fables, and a volume of Mossi literature could easily be compiled by gathering the historical legends, proverbs, and fables which are to be found among this people. As an example, we shall now recount a few stories we have been told. As in all primitive tales, animals play the role of intelligent actors. The Romaunt of the Rose has long since familiarized us with this kind of literature.

The Bad Vulture and the White Hawk

539 A bald vulture was wandering about the bush. A white hawk came by and said to the vulture, "Why have you nothing to eat?" The vulture replied, "It is true, I have nothing to eat. May God help me find something." The hawk said, "God cannot give people enough food to satisfy their hunger." The vulture answered, "If God does not give me something to eat, I shall not eat."

The white hawk saw a dove alighting on a stick. The hawk swooped down upon her, but the stick pierced his breast and came out behind his head. The vulture came and ate the hawk.

539 The goat replied, "The hyena should give all of herself." The lion told the hyena to remove her own leg. The hyena bit herself. It hurt, and she ran away. The lion caught her and killed her. The goat ran away with his salt and went home.

This is why the hyena attacks livestock.

● 181 576 The Mossi are polite. This is the quality that first strikes all those who have dealings with them. We mentioned earlier that the natives always greet one another. In fear of their nabas, the Mossi maintain before them a respectful, almost humiliating posture. They are very attentive to important outsiders and see to it that they should lack nothing a Mossi might wish: a sitting stool and mat are brought in immediately along with the drink; the food is abundant and usually clean and carefully prepared.

181 574 The Mossi are very hospitable and willingly give alms for its own sake, that is, to poor people who cannot repay. They are generous and always share with their neighbors, and when they have millet beer, they hand it out liberally. No woman who is brewing beer would allow a stranger of some importance to go by without offering him a gourdful, and she is displeased if he refuses. An object once offered is never retrieved, and stratagems must be used to make a native take back under some pretext what he has given away.

576 /114/ The Mossi always offer things with the right hand. It is an insult to pass the gourd or to take it with the left hand. The oldest person in a group helps himself from a dish first, and all those present follow in order of seniority, down to the youngest. On the other 264 hand, the eldest stops eating first, and it is the youngest who eats the 27 last bits and cleans the gourd. When drinking, however, the most eminent person drinks the last drop.

576 574 Children do not greet their parents in the home, because it is their home; but if a properly brought-up girl sees her mother coming with a full jar or a basket, she rushes to take the load from her, even if the woman is only a few yards from the soukala. When a friend has come to visit, it is considered good manners to carry her load for some distance when she leaves. In any case, visitors are always seen on their way, sometimes to the outskirts of the village.

576 The Mossi do not lack tact and sensibility. When they want something, they first delegate a friend with a gift, then send word that they have a small matter to discuss; sometimes they hint at what it may be and leave without waiting for an answer. Some time later

576 they send their friend once again to indicate what they desire, or they go and bring up the matter themselves.

181 Being sensitive and capable of attachment, even of affection, the
577 Mossi readily acknowledge the good done to them and seek to express their gratitude. If they can offer a gift, such as eggs, millet, honey, a chicken, they offer it unobtrusively. "Take this millet for your horse; give this chicken to your child." If they have nothing to give, they watch for every opportunity to spare their benefactor work or trouble. They take the hoe from him to weed his field or help him lift a load. They show their gratitude as they can, through action rather than words.

181 The Mossi are not lazy. As a rule it may even be said that they
46 like work. Lazy people are pointed at, avoided, and despised. During the winter season everyone must be in the fields from morning to night, men, women and children alike. Only those who cannot work or who have household tasks to perform stay home. The Mossi work very hard at this time of year. During the dry season, on the other hand, they enjoy some leisure. Although most of them weave during these months or travel for trading purposes, while the children cut grass to thatch the roofs and the millet is threshed, it must be said that it is not possible to work in these sun-scorched lands as it is in our temperate European counties. Besides, why work when there are so few outlets? Since the time when the French peace made the roads safe, trade has been on the upsurge. Now, sure of reaping the fruit of their toil, the natives are expanding their crops and every year the fields encroach further upon the bush. All the important villages are surrounded with cultivated fields as far as the eye can reach. If the Mossi do not work more then they do, therefore, it is not from laziness but from /115/ lack of outlets. It seems likely that the country will develop quite rapidly as soon as channels of communication open it to European trade.

181 Such are, in succinct and impartial outline, the qualities and defects of this people. Which of the two preponderate? It is for the reader to judge. In our opinion the Mossi are a very worthy people capable of a brilliant future, but under one condition, that they become Christians. Their most striking characteristics, as we have stated over and again, are their religious sense and their absolute submission to all that bears the stamp of authority.

11: Skinner .E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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VI

WARFARE

THE Mossi were proud of their warrior tradition, which had earned them 721
their several kingdoms, principalities, and districts. Even the least district [173]
chief had stories about the wars in which his ancestors had wrested their
territories from aboriginal populations. These traditions of conquest
legitimized to a large extent the power of the Mossi kings and chiefs, who
never hesitated to use force in order to obtain tribute, to maintain their
rule, and to enforce their authority. The Mossi value fighting ability so [181]
highly that even today, when fighting is no longer necessary, most Mossi
males in the rural areas carry sticks and other weapons on their shoulders
as symbols of manhood. In their view, every man should know how to
fight and should be able to defend his village, his district, and his kingdom.

According to tradition, the northward thrust of the Mossi warriors dur- 648
ing the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries carried them into the
region of the Niger River bend. Here, around A.D. 1329, the Yatenga Mossi 173
attacked and sacked the town of Timbuktu, which belongs to the Mali.
When Mali was on the decline during the early fifteenth century, the
Mossi again attacked its towns. According to the *Tarikh es-Sudan*, when 648
the Mali ruler appointed Amin-ben-Ahmad jurisconsul of Timbuktu, 175

> the sultan of the Mossi led an expedition against Benka. The population of that region went out to engage the enemy, and at that time left others sitting around El Hadj. He pronounced certain words on the millet which was being served and asked those around him to eat of it. All of them ate except the son-in-law of El Hadj, who did not because he was related to him. "Now go and fight," said the holy man, "and you will have nothing to fear from the weapons of the enemy." All, in effect, returned safe and sound, and only those persons who did not eat the millet died in the battle. The king of the Mossi was routed, and his troops were chased without having seized anything from the people of Benka. All this thanks to the protection of the blessed person.[1]

Later, the Mossi attacked towns of the Songhai empire whenever they felt strong enough, only to be driven away later by a stronger adversary. Sa'di describes a Mossi incursion into the Songhai empire as follows:

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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VII

THE ECONOMIC FOUNDATION

THE REVENUE for the support of the Mossi chiefs and their governmental system came from many sources in a variety of forms. The Mossi of Ouagadougou held that "the Mogho Naba is master of everything" (*Mogh Nab n so fa*), and when they referred to the control he and his chiefs exercised over their goods and services, they said, "The commoner rears his livestock for the chief," and cited the proverb "The snake gets whatever is in the belly of the frog."

Since the Mossi were, and still are, primarily an agricultural people, the products of the soil were the main source of revenue. The Mossi chiefs did not own the land, but they controlled it and assigned land rights to their subjects. The Mossi believed that land had no value apart from people, and, conversely, that people could not exist without land. As they said, "Land is the mother; it fed the ancestors of this generation; it feeds the present generation and its children; and it provides the final resting place for all men." Therefore, a Mossi chief never hesitated to give anyone permission to use unoccupied land. It was in his interest to do so, because the more subjects he commanded, the greater were his revenue and prestige. An unpopular chief was censured not by a withholding of tribute and presents, but by a mass exodus of his subjects to another area.

Through the administrative hierarchy, the common people contributed to the support of the various levels of government. The Mogho Naba periodically received agricultural produce from all his subjects. Through the village chiefs, the village people sent part of their produce to the district chiefs, who forwarded it to the provincial ministers. They, in turn, delivered it to the central government during a ceremony appropriately called "Soretasgho" ("completion of the road"). This event occurred at the end of the harvest festival, after all the crops had been gathered in.[1]

To open the ceremony, the provincial governors' retainers began to clear the paths leading from the governors' compounds to the palace, for they had

5: Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1959
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221 796 time. "Waraga," which means "first cultivation," is the name given to the fifth. The sixth, which appears in early September or late August, is called "Baca," meaning "second cultivation."

If the millet is not yet ripe for harvest at the appearance of the seventh moon, it is also called "Baca," since the work of cultivation must continue. This choice rests with the chief of the village of Room. The entire Mossi kingdom waits for his decision to know whether the ceremonial cycle called "Basga," which closes the economic year, is to begin or whether the harvest and its attendant ceremonies are to be put off for another month. Just behind his residence is a sacred millet field whose [774 824] grains, as they mature, contain an aspect of the souls (*riim shiise*) of the dead kings of the Yatenga. When the millet in this field is ready to be cut, the next moon to appear is called "Yalem," and the ceremonial cycle which closes the economic year is begun. In the early days of the Yatenga [769] dynasty millet from this field was used to prepare a sacrificial gruel to propitiate the deceased rulers of the newly established kingdom. When it is cut today, a first portion is taken to the altar at Room dedicated to the souls of these early kings. Two other bundles of millet are prepared from the same field. One is sent to the *Yatenga Naba* at Ouahigouya, who is the living descendant of the dead kings. The other is sent to the village of Gourcy, the former capital and the first residence of the founder of the Yatenga dynasty, Naba Yadiga.

The emissaries to the two political centers are accompanied by young people who break off stalks of millet from the fields along their way, adding these to the bundles of grain so as to include all of the farmers of the [769] Yatenga in this offering which symbolizes the dependence of the Mossi on the benevolence of the souls of the dead kings and their living descendant. The millet taken to Ouahigouya is sacrificed at the palace altar of the former rulers. Part of the millet sent to Gourcy is sacrificed at the altar of the spirits of the former village chiefs (*nakom shiise*); the other part is sacrificed at the shrine of the former kings. At Ouahigouya and Gourcy a portion of each sacrificial offering of millet is returned to Room [182] with stalks from the local crop at each place. These are used to make a final sacrifice symbolizing the interdependent relationship of Mossi religious, economic, and political organizations. The ceremonial cycle serves to demonstrate the reliance of the people on the benevolence of the spirits of their former kings for their social, economic, and supernatural well-being.

A ceremony called "Kom Filiga" follows. Meaning "water thanksgiving," it is the occasion for thanking the Mossi ruler, the *Yatenga Naba*, for the wise direction of affairs which has permitted the farmers to cultivate their fields in peace. All village and canton chiefs travel to Ouahigouya to salute their king and rededicate themselves to his service.

5: Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1959
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177 specially trained non-Mossi personnel, the use of irrigation, fertilizer, and the plow are their most important technological innovations. De-
241 spite their difficulty in communicating with the European agronomists under whose direction they work, they soon master these agricultural techniques. Patterns of consumption are also altered, rice taking the
[261] place of millet as the staple in their diet. After some initial illness they become accustomed to rice but suspect that it is less nourishing than their traditional diet.

177 Far more difficult than adjusting to either the new technology or the diet is adaptation to the changed social organization. Trying to ease this
182 adjustment but with an imperfect understanding of traditional Mossi institutions, the project administration has tried to re-create their forms in the area of resettlement.

Despite this, the new colonist finds himself isolated among social forces he does not understand. The attempt to reproduce the traditional pattern of residential grouping is meaningless in the absence of the lineage. Separated from his kinsmen and his community, the colonist is confused by social institutions whose resemblance to those he has known in the Yatenga exists only on the level of form. He does not like or understand being housed with strangers as if they were his kinsmen. Equally incomprehensible is an approximation of the familiar political organization which, ignoring the traditional sanctions of chieftainship, has a former earth custodian, whose supernatural role has traditionally precluded the exercise of political authority, as paramount chief.

Despite the efforts of the European administration to reproduce their structural appearance, the institutions of Mossi society are so interrelated that the change in the organization of economic activity has created new needs which make alterations in traditional institutions inevitable. Rather than permitting the colonists to modify their indigenous social organization to fit these new needs, the social structure rigidly imposed by the Europeans has impeded the Mossi in their efforts to adjust their institutions to the changed situation. The delegation of authority to inept administrative appointees thinly disguised as chiefs and to the older, least adaptive members of the settler communities only complicates the problem of adjustment.

Isolated from their kinsmen and the protection of their ancestral spirits, the colonists miss the emotional and social satisfactions of extended family living as well as the security of an established position in the community in which they were born. Adherence to the traditional kinship organization, with its emphasis on obedience to the elders who
[582] have remained behind in the Yatenga, makes marriage at the Niger project almost impossible.

The young men born and raised at the project resent the tradition

5: Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1959
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which requires sharing and compliance with the authority of kinsmen in the Yatenga whom they have never known. Forced to return to the Yatenga to assist the extended family there, they are frustrated in their efforts to form a permanent identification with their residence at the irrigation project. More efficient than their elders in communicating with the Europeans and in learning their techniques, they are thwarted by a social organization which denies expression to their initiative. The older men, given no share in the administration of the project and with little understanding of its objectives, believe that they are being exploited by the Europeans and that they would be more successful if they were to follow their own system of production and marketing. 177 182

The Mossi have learned that the official policy of the Niger Irrigation Project specifies their participation in administration through "indigenous agricultural associations," and even through their "collaboration" within the board of directors; but they do not actually participate in either of these. Possibly the fact that the Mossi have had no previous experience of participation in democratic forms discouraged the Europeans in their early efforts to include them in the administration of the project, but such participation implies a profound cultural adjustment and would require patience on the part of the Europeans. Whatever the case, the fact that the colonists know they have a right to participate in the administration and yet are denied it only serves to increase their conviction that they are being exploited.

Unsure of their rights to the land, unaware of the goals of the project, and inhibited by their artificially maintained tradition from forming meaningful social relationships in the area of resettlement, the Mossi make little permanent identification with the Niger project and its objectives. They say that it is like the hut a man builds in his fields during the rainy season; when the crop is harvested, he will return to the house of his fathers.

The relatively rapid and easy adaptation to the new natural setting and the supernatural forces which govern it is probably due both to the lack of European interference in this aspect of the colonists' lives and to the traditional permissiveness of West African religions. On the other hand, the greatest obstacle to adjustment seems to be just that aspect of the changed situation which was designed to facilitate it: the reconstruction and artificial maintenance of a social structure which cannot be efficiently integrated with the new economic organization. This structure has been maintained with such rigidity that it actually impedes Mossi efforts to reinterpret their institutions in terms of their new situation.

The Mossi who have returned from the Niger project have had little effect on their kinsmen in the Yatenga. Islamized colonists are often [561]

177 too young to be listened to seriously by their elders. If they are returning as senior members of their lineages, and since their power and prestige
● 182 are dependent on the maintenance of the socio-religious status quo, they
561 are unlikely to be innovators. For these same reasons the few changes in the social organization which have occurred at the Niger project have had little effect on the social environment of the Yatenga.

177 Most of the agricultural techniques acquired in the Sudan are useless in the Yatenga because of the absence of irrigation. Even were this not
241 so, the rationale of the modern agricultural methods employed at the Niger project is not explained to the settlers; they are required to follow the instructions of the European agronomists or be penalized. As a result, the improved agricultural techniques of the Europeans are regarded as just another of the white man's incomprehensible ways and are quickly forgotten.

177 The response of the Mossi to resettlement at the Niger Irrigation Project shows that in a situation of rapid cultural change, retentions or
182 changes on the superficial level of form are misleading; nor is a brief statement of the functional interrelationship between institutions sufficient. The final reality of an institution lies in its meaning for the members of the society in which it exists, and its final evaluation must be based on its capacity to fulfil the changing needs of individuals. This concept is essential to an understanding of the colonists' dissatisfaction with the effort of the Niger project administration to reproduce artificially a static model of their traditional social structure. This can also be seen in their reaction to a changed supernatural order; an analysis which failed to descend beneath the level of form would miss the significant fact that their psychological response to religion and the basic premises of their theology have remained unaffected by an "Islamization" which amounts to little more than adopting certain new propitiatory usages.

Apparently not understanding the interrelationship of cultural institutions and the sanctions which give them meaning, the administration of the Niger Irrigation Project sought to modify the Mossi organization of economic activity without referring to the traditional values to which it is vitally related. Seeming to regard the indigenous culture as little more than a compendium of savage rites upon which superior European usages need only be imposed in order to prevail, such an approach reveals a failure to comprehend both the complexity and the tenacity of the Mossi cultural heritage.

592 The compound, from an intellectual point of view, is a kind of subfamily. It is not the whole family; it is not the equivalent of the total family. It is, however, quite superior to the single household.

592 If the Mossi family of Yatenga were completely communal and
● 182 perfectly integrated, the 100 or 125 persons or so who make up a
571 Mossi family would live and work together. A less marked but still quite appreciable degree of community would exist if the compound were a tight economic unit (this does occur among many blacks of the /French/ Sudan, especially among the Bobo /230/ of the Residency of Léo, the Menkiéra, the Nounouma /Nunuma/, the Kassonfra /Awuna/, etc., and also among the Samo of Yatenga as we shall see later), with all the people who live in it working and consuming together under the authority and guidance of the head of the home. Actually, there is even more disintegration of the family among our Mossi of Yatenga. In each home there are work groups which vary in number according to the importance of the compound and the number of its occupants.

592 Work groups. —We must proceed to the work group, then, in order
571 to deal with the actual economic unit. This group has the communal
241 fields which are not, therefore, properly speaking, familial fields or even subfamilial fields. They belong to a subordinate unit. It is the head of the work group who supplies food for all the people in his group during the greater part of the year (seven months out of twelve). In return, they owe him the larger part of their time during the rainy season (two days out of three) but little work during the dry season. Each member of the group also has his own little field which he cultivates on the third day, as we shall see later on.

592 Consumption. Meals. —People do not assemble for meals in the
264 same fashion during the rainy season as during the dry season.

During the rainy season the members of each work group eat together at noon in the fields, but men and women are always apart. The boys eat with the men, the girls and small children with the women. In the evening they gather for meals in the same manner as during the dry season.

During the dry season the members of each compound, the whole zaka, eat together, but they are divided into several groups. First, there is the basic division between men and women. Then, if the compound is a large one, there are on the male side the groupings of old men, married men, and young unmarried men. There are also three groups on the female side: old women, married women,

592 and young girls. Thus, there are six groups altogether, but we must
264 add that when the women do not get along well, each one eats in her own hut with her own children. In the smaller compounds, there cannot be six groups; there are only two basic ones, that of the men and that of the women.

592 For the preparation of food during the seven months when millet
252 furnished by the head of the work group is eaten, or in other words the millet from the communal fields (roughly from April to October), each woman is "on duty" for 24 hours and cooks for the whole group. The other women help her, of course, by fetching water, pounding millet for her, etc. During the five months when the millet from the small private fields is eaten (November-March), each woman prepares her husband's food. When a husband has several wives, they take turns preparing the food.

592 /231/ As we can see, the manner of preparing meals follows the
252 schedule of millet consumption. While the communal grain distributed
264 by the head of the work group or under his supervision is being consumed, cooking is done on a work group basis. During the time when the millet from household fields is being consumed, the preparation of meals is on a household basis. The actual consumption of the meals, however (except when people are working in the fields) involves a larger community, that of the compound. There remains, however, the basic division between men and women, who must not eat together and who always split into two groups at mealtime. In the larger compounds, moreover, each of these two major groups is further divided into subgroups according to natural age lines. Finally, to cap it all, the female spirit of anarchy sometimes causes some of the women to withdraw. Hence, for the consumption and preparation of food as well as for its production, there exists only this very unstable community which is characteristic of the family we are studying.

592 Exceptions.—We come now to the Mossi household, which we
182 shall discuss at some length. Before doing so, however, it must be stated that the family as we have just described it has its exceptions here and there.

First, there are exceptions in the sense of community, in the sense of integration; above all, there are exceptions in the sense of greater disintegration.

596 In the sense of integration, we must mention primarily the families
592 of great chiefs. For example, there is the family of Gombiraogo, a
182 former Baloum Naba, a very wealthy and important personage. He
591 has five brothers. Two of them live together in the village of Kalo and another two, similarly, in the village of Bembéla. Gombiraogo lives in Ouahigouya with the fifth brother. With this brother he has three zaka where 70 or 80 people live, all of whom work for him and form a single work group under his direction (that is to say, during the rainy season they work for him two days out of three, and during the dry season they do so only when he has exceptional need of them; in return, he provides them with food seven months out of twelve, according to custom, and does not provide them with clothes unless they are unmarried).

What should be noted here is the strength of this work group (70 to 80 people). As a result, it includes several compounds, while it is the compound as a rule that contains several or at least two work groups.

[145] The present Baloum Naba, the prime minister, likewise has two zaka working for him. Moreover, the total family of the Baloum Naba is not assembled in Ouahigouya but scattered throughout Yatenga.

[143] In the same connection, the Rassam Naba has a zaka of 157 people who form a single work group under his direction. In return, he provides them with food all year.

/232/ Again, there is a zaka of shoemakers at Ouahigouya which
294 includes nearly 100 people altogether, among them 15 or 20 full-
592 grown men, all of them shoemakers. They all work for the zakasoba,
182 who provides them all with food. This zaka, of exceptional numerical strength, is at the same time completely integrated.

596 At the other end of the scale, we find the Mossi family of Yatenga
182 evolving toward complete disintegration in certain parts of the terri-
592 tory, that is to say, evolving toward a state of affairs where nothing remains except the total family on the one hand and the single household on the other (that is, the compound has only a single household).

Thus, in the course of a journey through the canton of Ratenga, I noted in the village of Tangué a family of 110 persons distributed among 14 homes. This gives an average of only seven or eight persons per home. In Kargo (another village) there are five Mossi families for 22 homes sheltering 181 persons, or only eight persons per home.

596 Here the zaka is quite clearly reduced to the single household,
182 which becomes identified at the same time with the compound and
592 with the work group. Let us state, however, that in the whole of Ratenga there are 4, 637 Mossi for 458 compounds, or ten persons per compound. An average of ten people per compound represents slightly more than a single household (which averages six persons in Yatenga), but not as much as two households. This means that the compounds sometimes contain two households, sometimes only one. Thus, since there are only a few people in each zaka, there is but a single work group.

162 Here is a complete numerical breakdown of the canton of Ratenga.
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Villages	Inhabitants	Compounds	Average per Compound
Napalra	254	20	13
Ouembatenga	61	5	12
Alaga	335	22	15
Boulounga	197	23	9
Bani	387	30	13
Singuitenga	248	18	14
Boudé	69	11	6
Foulgo-Koquin	22	5	4
Zomkalga	88	12	7
Momoné	86	10	9
Toïsi	100	13	8
Denian	4	1	4
Pinsi	145	13	11
Dologa	110	15	7
Kiédéwendé	103	10	10
/233/ Koundi-Bittou	63	9	7
Yalka	56	4	14
Koumbango	221	19	12
Kourpellé	167	15	11
Zimtenga	307	39	8
Battenga	94	11	9
Badnoro	83	10	8
Douré	96	6	16
Yalgatenga	45	8	6

596 /234/ The kind of family found in the cantons of Ratenga and
592 Tougo is quite similar in type to the family among the Mossi of
●182 Ouagadougou, or in its common types (3) which are characterized by

3. See my Noir du Soudan, pp. 544-553.

the fact that the zaka is identified with the single household, and only the total family and the single household remain.

This leads us to note that the average Mossi family of Yatenga, as we have described it above, is more compact, more communal, more integrated than the Mossi family of Ouagadougou.

182 This results, I believe, from the fact that the primitive element
563 of the population, the Foulsé (the basic element, let us not forget,
592 at Ouagadougou as well as in Yatenga), who are more communal than
596 the Mossi, are still much more numerous in Yatenga than in the Ouagadougou region. While in the latter area the Foulsé blended almost completely with the mass of invaders, in Yatenga they resisted more successfully, did not blend with them, and continued to make up the greater part of the population. In view of these circumstances, they probably exercised considerable influence on the morphology of the Mossi family, just as they gave it their prejudices against the ownership of cattle, etc.

This high proportion of the primitive communal element no doubt caused the structural differences between the Mossi family of the Ouagadougou region and that of Yatenga.

000 Women and the household. —We shall deal now with women and the household. We shall subdivide this section into a number of headings as follows.

1. Promise of marriage.
2. Persons whose consent is required to validate the promise of marriage.
3. Gifts.
4. Celebration and consummation of marriage.
5. Impediments to marriage.
6. Question of virginity.
7. Rights and duties of the husband and wife.
8. Polygamy.
9. Organization of the polygamous household.
10. Women's tasks.
11. The conjugal duty.

When a young Catholic receives a wife through the mission, he may visit her father and pay the customary respect by giving him kola nuts and brass coins. The father of a mission girl may accept or reject his son-in-law as he sees fit, but formerly he could not defy the power of the missions. 797 582 634

A pagan youth who wishes to marry one of the mission girls has to discuss the matter with the priests and swear publicly that he will become a Christian. Before 1946 the young man had to fulfill his promise or be intimidated by the chief and the missionaries until he relented or fled the district. Today, however, the priests usually abandon their efforts to obtain the conversion of the young men after three months have passed. In some cases the young men take their wives and move to other districts, and return only after the girls have given up Catholicism. Despite the lure of wives from the mission, not many young men become Christians on this account because the Mossi are still concerned primarily with family relationships and the effect that conversion would have on these relationships. [596]

The church's prohibition of polygyny is by far the most serious bar to the spread of Catholicism. Many men do not adopt Catholicism simply because they fear that monogamous marriages would not produce children. Father Paternot (Considine 1954:103) has cited a study purporting to show that Christian Mossi have more children than the pagans, but the ordinary people of the district would not accept the facts he presented. They cite their personal experience to the contrary. Dim Delobson (1934:136), a Mossi converted to Catholicism, states: 797 595 842

> A certain number of Christians of my acquaintance whose wives did not have children during the first years of marriage had recourse to magical practices in order to get children. These simple people thought that although they had an omnipotent God beside them, they could impudently—after all the good priests will not know about it—ask the little, but also powerful gods to grant them some material favors here on earth. When the gods given children were taken for Holy Baptism, they were given Christian names instead of the names of the earth shrines, and they did not wear magical charms which would have indicated to the priest the real state of affairs. Nevertheless, the children were bathed in water to which magical potions were added, and when the mothers went to visit their parents, sacrifices of chickens were given to the benevolent Tengkougas.

The Mossi's strong desire for children is admittedly one of the main reasons for leaving the Catholic Church so that they can take other spouses in addition to barren ones. The church has now belatedly recognized this problem and, knowing that it cannot prevent men from taking plural wives, allows them to come to church but prohibits them from taking the Mass.

Many cultural factors besides the desire for children make polygyny important for the Mossi, and make conversion detrimental to the functioning of their family system. Because of lineage opposition to their conversions, some converts are forced to establish nuclear households—a practice out of harmony with the normal rhythm of Mossi life. The reason for this disharmony is that Mossi women married to Catholics must work alone instead of with 595 797 182 ● [594]

8: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1958
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595 co-wives and other women of the extended families. Even the Catholic hus-
797 bands would not help their wives with household tasks requiring more than
182 one person, nor would they violate tradition by chatting with their wives except at night in their huts. Another factor is that after the Mossi Christian
[846] woman has given birth to a child, she follows the traditional custom and goes back to her parents' home to remain there during the two or three years' lactation period. This imposes a great hardship on a Catholic husband because during this time he is left without wife or helpmate. In the extended family household there would have been women to take care of a man's material needs, and his mistresses would have taken care of his sexual needs. The Catholic can and does ask the mission for a young girl to take care of his material needs, but of course she is not expected to satisfy his sexual de-
[837] sires. Obviously this arrangement is not satisfactory, and many Catholic men, with the acquiescence of their wives, keep mistresses. Dim Delobson comments:

> Ouagadougou has a large number of Christians, but does this mean that these people in their love for the church respect all her rules? Alas! there are a large number of Christians who oblige their lawful wives to leave the conjugal couch and make way for the accommodation of mistresses . . . in conformity with the old custom. But this is a subject which is too delicate to discuss further. I only note it in passing: *Noli me tangere* (1934:169).

797 Despite the influence of tradition on Mossi Catholics, I feel it would be a
794 mistake to say that the complexity of Catholic dogma is one of the drawbacks to missionary success in this country. One Mossi has already been made a bishop of the Catholic Church, and most of the proselytizing in Manga falls on the two Mossi priests and the five Mossi nuns. Under the supervision of two White Fathers, the Catholic children and adults are acquainted with the dogma and rituals of the church. The festivals are well attended and celebrated with as much pomp as possible. Although the Mass is sung in Latin, the Mossi have adapted some of their traditional tunes to the Mass, and use their own language for prayers and hymns. Catholics observe all the sacraments including Confession—a sacrament which is hazardous from the Mossi point of view, because man must lay bare his innermost thoughts to the priests, who, in the final analysis, are Europeans and thus administrators.

It is true that even the staunchest Catholics in Manga have not abandoned all belief in traditional rituals and religious credos. For example, many Mossi Catholics believe in the existence of sorcerers, but the Catholic Church
[754] does not recognize the existence of sorcerers or such evil forces (I have met White Fathers who believe that there are unexplainable psychic and physical phenomena in Africa), and moreover has no way of dealing with them. "But," says Dim Delobson (1934:136), "the Mossi believe so strongly in the power of such entities, that even those converted to Christianity cannot always escape the action of malevolent practitioners." The result is that many Catholics desert the church when they believe that only traditional specialists can help them with personal problems. Catholic families easily aban-

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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climax of this gift-giving came when the ruler sent the Bendere Naba about 19,000 cowries and a slave.[8] This ceremony terminated at nightfall.

The close of the Mogho Naba's Basgha heralded the start of similar ceremonies throughout his kingdom. The heads of the other Mossi kingdoms and the Dimdamba were free to hold their own Basgha when they wished; but the Ouagadougou ruler's own subjects, including the provincial ministers, district chiefs, village chiefs, and lineage heads, apparently were not. One reason for this, aside from respect for the ruler, was that the important officials' head wives had to wait for the yeast (*dabili*) from the Mogho Naba's beer before they could prepare the sacrificial offerings for their husbands' ancestors. This dabili went from district to district or to several districts at once, depending on whether the chiefs celebrated Basgha at the same time or successively. Thus, the dabili from the capital united all the wives of the royal clan, and made for both a ritual continuity in the veneration of all ancestors and a strengthening of religious and political bonds.

The Basgha ceremonies on the district level were much less elaborate than those held at Ouagadougou, but just as important. The district chief, too, had his buildings repaired and his grain distributed for sacrifices for the ancestors. A few days before the actual ceremony, he ordered the Gande Naba to pour millet water on the graves of recently deceased chiefs and to sacrifice chickens there. As in Ouagadougou, these sacrifices were offered to induce the chiefly ancestors to grant the villagers health, food, and children. Unlike the Mogho Naba, most district chiefs did not ritually hide from their ancestors for several nights prior to the ceremony. Some of them did change their sleeping place within the compound every night, and the court people always slept indoors during this period. On the night of the Basgha itself, however, the district chiefs did not sleep in their compounds.

As in Ouagadougou, the Pughtiema performed the main ceremony by pouring millet water as a libation to the ancestors who visited her hut. She was assisted by the Baloum Naba, who had possession of the namtibo. Apparently, the district chief remained in hiding and took no part in the ceremony. But he was the main figure in the morning ceremony, which differed little from that of Ouagadougou. In some districts the Tengsoba performed a public sacrifice to the ancestors. He was given the namtibo—sacred objects that had belonged to former district chiefs—and poured libations and sacrificed chickens to all of the chief's ancestors. He also prayed both to these ancestors and to his own on the chief's behalf, and beseeched them to grant long life and happiness to the district population. He also declared that the sacred objects would seek out and kill any enemies of the local ruler, wherever they might be. Once this ritual had been com-

pleted, the remainder of the ceremony followed the pattern of the Ouagadougou ritual.

During the weeks that followed, the village chiefs and the heads of the larger lineage segments all offered sacrifices to their ancestors. The Pughtiema of each prominent local administrator, chief, or lineage head prepared and poured the millet water as a libation to the ancestors. Whenever possible, each of these personages invited musicians to sing praises to his ancestors. He dressed in his best robe and sat outside his hut to receive presents from his relatives, friends, and subjects, along with their best wishes for the new year, and for long life and prosperity. In return he gave them kola nuts, beer, and food. Thus, in celebrating the Basgha, all the Mossi were united in prayers and supplications to the ancestors, upon whom rested the future of their country and the successful reign of the descendants of Ouedraogo and Oubri.

The earth deity, Tenga, held the central place in the second major religio-political ceremony which linked all Mossi. This ritual, called *Tense* (from *tenga*, "earth") and sometimes *Naba Oubri ma koure* ("the anniversary of the funeral of Mogho Naba Oubri's mother"), was so important to Mossi cohesion that it was banned by the French, and as a result its main features are now unclear. According to tradition, Naba Oubri loved Poughtoenga, his Ninisi mother, so much, and was so pleased with the elaborate funeral he gave her, that he decided to repeat this ceremony each year in the hope that his subjects would be blessed with the bountiful crops and herds which had made the first one possible. Curiously enough, Oubri's mother was not a central figure in the Tense celebration. Instead, great stress was placed on the fructifying powers of the earth and on the importance of the royal ancestors in Mossi life. The juxtaposition and association of the earth deity with Oubri's mother has important implications for the Mossi political organization. Mossi tradition holds that a Ninisi woman was the ancestress of the Mossi of Ouagadougou. Her people probably celebrated the Tense as a fertility rite to their earth goddess, Tenga. The Mossi apparently took over the ceremony and used it both as a fertility rite and as a memorial festival, thus symbolically uniting the conquerors and the conquered.[8]

In contrast to the Basgha, no special date appears to have been set for the celebration of the Tense. It was held sometime before the crops were sowed, but according to Tauxier it was not celebrated at all in Ouagadougou when the previous year's harvest had been poor.[4] Before setting the date for the festival, the Mogho Naba summoned the Larhalle Naba and ordered him to have sacrifices made on the graves of all former rulers. This minister

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prepared sauce, and flung them in three directions to the waiting ancestral spirits. He then beseeched the royal spirits, the spirits of former provincial ministers, and the spirits of the ancient people (the Ninisi) to grant a long life to the Mogho Naba and peace to all the Mossi. He repeated the ritual with three morsels of meat and with the contents of a pot of beer. When he had finished, the Gande Naba picked up the food thrown to the ancestors and carried it away. He did not look backward for fear that he should see the ancestors and die as a result. The departure of the Gande Naba was the signal for the palace retainers to rush toward the food. They seized and ate what they could, spilling and wasting a good deal in the process.[8]

Meanwhile, chiefs and headmen held similar ceremonies in every district, village, hamlet, and compound in the Ouagadougou kingdom. District and village chiefs offered sacrifices to their ancestors in the name of their subjects. The sacrifices on the hamlet and compound level were more specific. Every grown man had to take a sheep, goat, or chicken to his elder and request that it be offered to the ancestors in his name. The elder sacrificed the animal and beseeched the ancestors to grant the petitioner good health, bountiful crops, and many children during the coming year. The women and children did not take part in the ritual, but they did participate in the general feasting that followed.

The festivities of the Tense lasted only a few days in the districts and villages, but in the capital it did not end officially until about four weeks had elapsed. At the end of this period, the Larhalle Naba gave the Mogho Naba all the cords that had been used to mark the coming of the Tense. A few days later, the chief Tengsoba of Guillingou, the native village of Oubri's mother, and the Tengsobadamba of other important ceremonial centers, visited the Mogho Naba in the palace courtyard. Here they all sacrificed white cocks and placed the blood and feathers of their victims on their ceremonial axes in order to "increase the power" of these objects. Later on, they were given cooked mutton, millet cakes, and other presents. Their departure for home later in the day marked the close of the Tense.

The religio-political function of the Tense is quite explicit, despite the statement by Dim Delobson, himself a Mossi chief (but also a convert to Catholicism), that "it is apparent that this festival has no outstanding features. Its sole aim is to make peace between the living and the dead, and, in the process, to allow everyone to enjoy the food."[9] Judging by the reports of old men who participated in the festival before it was banned, the people did have a good time and enjoyed the food. What is important, however, is that like the Basgha, the Tense served not only "to make peace

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between the living and the dead," but also to strengthen the political bonds between the Mogho Naba and his chiefs, down to the humblest elder of a Mossi compound.

In addition to the Basgha and Tense, the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou appears to have offered another yearly sacrifice to Tenga. Each year, after the Basgha, the Mogho Naba, the Baloum Naba, and a large entourage reportedly visited a large earth shrine called Tantibo in the vicinity of Sabatenga to offer propitiatory sacrifices in the name of all the people. When the royal party arrived at Sabatenga, they were joined by the Sabatenga Naba and his Tengsoba. The group proceeded to the foot of the sacred hill, and here the monarch dismounted, took off his bonnet and shoes, and climbed the hill. He made the customary Mossi salute at the shrine and looked on silently while the Tengsoba sacrificed animals and poured libations of millet beer and millet water in supplication for the health and prosperity of the Mogho Naba and all his people.[1]

When evil befell Mossi country in spite of the annual sacrifices to the ancestors and to the earth deity, the Mogho Naba had to offer additional sacrifices. If the country was plagued by drought, the ruler went to an earth shrine in Ouagadougou itself, called "Kom be paspanga" (literally, "water is strong there"), for a sacrifice. Moreover, he might order all his district and village chiefs to perform similar sacrifices to the earth shrines within their territories. In Nobere district, for instance, the district chief went to the village called Barkago, where, standing barefoot and bareheaded on the hilly shrine known as Beta, he ordered the local village chief and the Tengsoba to offer sacrifices for rain and good health.

It is generally believed by the Mossi that when the French attacked Ouagadougou, the deposed Mogho Naba Wobogo made sacrifices to earth shrines. Tradition has it that he sacrificed a black cock, a black ram, a black donkey, and a black slave on a large hill near the White Volta River, beseeching the earth goddess to drive the French away and to destroy the traitor Mazi whom they had placed upon the throne. When Mazi died, the Mossi people believed that he had received his just deserts from the earth shrine for treason. The French believe that Mazi was poisoned.[2]

The district and village chiefs, like the Mogho Naba, were required to make propitiatory sacrifices to the earth shrines on behalf of their subjects. Before taking office, a district chief was ritually shown the major earth shrines in his territory, and he could not ignore their existence and their need for sacrifices. In a country with major local variations in rainfall and localized animal and human epidemics, the Tengsobadamba of stricken areas always called upon the local chiefs to help them propitiate disgruntled spirits.

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795 796 771 184 gift every year to the Imam and to Karamakho Isa, for whom he has great veneration. These are old and wise men who cannot but give him excellent counsel.[18]

The relations between Boukary Koutou and the Moslems of the Sakhaboutenga district show how Mossi chiefs, though pagans, were able to establish viable political bonds with potentially hostile believers of another religion. Boukary Koutou was probably a Moslem "in outward appearance only," as Binger suggests. Nevertheless, it was by being Moslems of this kind that Mossi rulers managed to retain the allegiance of their Moslem subjects. This was their duty as "fathers of their people," and apparently they did it without much hesitation. In this manner, they effectively used religion to bolster their power and sustain their authority.

642 182 Ritual connections between the Mossi rulers and the chiefs of surrounding countries enabled them to protect their subjects from foreign attack and [648] to maintain internal cohesion. The numerous reciprocal gifts between the [431] Mossi and such other Voltaic groups as the Dagomba, Mamprusi, and [613] Gurmanche were based on the belief in descent from a common ancestor or ancestress. Ritual and the supernatural thus played an extremely important [771] role in the cohesiveness of the Mossi kingdoms and in the functioning of their governmental processes. Without these ritual factors, it is doubtful whether the Mossi rulers would have been able to maintain such a relatively high degree of control over their subjects, given the relative weakness of their economic resources, communications, and armed forces. In [648] trying to understand why the Mossi retained their autonomy for so long, one must take into consideration the statement made by a French officer a [619] year after the Mossi were conquered: "We must not lose sight of the fact that [the Mossi] have always presented a common front to strangers, and that a single word of command is sufficient to unite them against the invader in the name of kinship and national unity."[19]

642 648 182 The phase of Mossi political history that began when Nyennega left Dagomba and moved northward came to an end with the European conquest. Most French scholars believe that the Mossi were in a state of decadence at the time of conquest and might have fallen to such African conquerors as El Hadj Omar, Samory Touré, or Baba To. The fact remains, however, that these conquerors all skirted Mossi country without entering it. If these African rulers believed that the Mossi were invincible in their unity, it was because the Mossi, through mythical bonds of common descent and actual bonds of kinship, had welded themselves into a cohesive and powerful group.

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Another group held that the chiefs need not be formally associated with the governmental apparatus. A historical precedent was cited: in the early days of colonialism, the chiefs had not become civil servants, and their status had not been impaired. Thus, when a chief collected taxes for the administration, his action was comparable to his former collection of tribute; when he recruited forced labor for the administration and the large plantations, it was similar to the traditional corvée; and when he asked people to plant certain crops, it was like asking them to cultivate his own fields. In a word, as the institution of chieftainship had adjusted to past changes in African societies, so it had the capacity to adjust in the future.[10] [182]

Other delegates, and apparently the French administrators as well, felt that the chiefs should be associated with the administration, but as administrative assistants and not as elected representatives of the masses.[11] Since the position of the chiefs was sacred as well as secular, it was argued, political defeat might impair their position as "the fathers of their people."[12]

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The constitution drafted by the first Constituent Assembly (lacking any provisions concerning the traditional chiefs) was finally submitted to the voters in May 1946. Although it won a majority of overseas votes, it was defeated by the French people. The subsequently convened second Constituent Assembly was subjected to a great deal of pressure by a group of colonialists called Etats Généraux de Colonisation, and as a result many of the provisions of the first constitution, among them the single-college provision and various rights of citizenship, were not included in the second. The revised constitution was accepted by the French voters in October 1946.[13] By this time, however, many of the African delegates had become so disillusioned with the French parliamentarians in the National Assembly that they decided to fend for themselves. They met in Bamako in the French Sudan and formed an inter-territorial grouping called the Rassemblement Démocratique Africain (RDA), led by Houphouët-Boigny. Houphouët-Boigny was strongly anti-imperialist, and the party received the active support of the French Communists. It adopted a violently anti-colonial platform, pledging to rally the peoples of Africa to a world-wide struggle against colonial imperialism, and to try to bring all of the emerging political parties in French Africa under its banner in order to achieve the "emancipation of the African masses."[14]

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The Mogho Naba and the other Mossi chiefs, noting the anti-colonial posture of the RDA and the hostile reaction of the colonial regime to this group, attempted to take advantage of the situation by advocating the reintegration of the Upper Volta under their more conservative auspices. The Mogho Naba had already taken advantage of the Bastille Day celebration

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ity in local matters, even though the Indigénat had been abolished. They adjudicated minor offenses committed in their territories or referred to them on appeal by the districts and villages. They attempted to settle family quarrels and commercial cases, and ordered that restitution be made in cases of theft. However, they had to send any difficult case or major crime up the hierarchy until it reached the officials authorized to deal with it.

The French administrators also continued to act as intermediaries between the large commercial enterprises in Ouagadougou who wished to recruit men for labor or to buy local produce and enterprises in the larger Mossi towns. Thus, if a private firm in Ouagadougou wanted men to work on the roads, it asked the *chef de poste* (administrator) of a region to tell the district chiefs that its representatives would come to recruit men on a certain date. If a large business was planning to canvass a certain area in order to buy shea nuts, it asked the local administrators to notify the chiefs. No one was ever quite certain whether these activities were legal, but no one questioned them. The *chefs de poste* might simply have been giving the people information that they could not have obtained by any other means.

The Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou, like the supreme chiefs of the other Mossi regions, continued to perform both the administrative role assigned to him by the colonial government and his traditional politico-ceremonial role. He was partly responsible, through his active cooperation with the administration, for the rapidity with which the Upper Volta became a functioning entity. For example, in his anxiety to make his capital worthy of being the territory's administrative center, he gave his full support to the extension of the Abidjan–Bobo-Dioulasso railroad to Ouagadougou. But he always succeeded in giving the impression (to foreigners at least) of detachment and dissociation from the French administration. His behavior was quite different when he functioned as Mogho Naba of the Ouagadougou Mossi. The following is a brief description of a visit he made to one of the districts:

> The Mogho Naba arrived unexpectedly at the district chief's headquarters, where no preparations had been made for his visit. It appears that he was on a tour of his domains to consult with the local chiefs about the forthcoming elections, and had simply dropped in to visit the district chief. However, as soon as his presence became known around the district, important village chiefs and the heads of lineages all put on their robes and appeared to pay homage to him. Meanwhile, he was consulting with his host. But as soon as the conversation was over he came out into the compound, where he was saluted by the chief's Bendere, who praised the royal ancestors by reciting

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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175 their genealogies and traditions. The Mogho Naba was pleased by the reci-
643 tation and thanked the drummer.

Later that day, the Mogho Naba presented himself in the courtyard of
634 the district chief's compound to be saluted by the village chiefs and by the
574 heads of lineages. They came to him in the traditional way, rubbing their
182 palms and bending their foreheads to the ground. He addressed them, and in response they snapped their fingers in the customary manner. Then, one by one, the village chiefs and the lineage elders came to their monarch and gave him presents of money which ranged from 50 to 200 francs. The Mogho Naba paid little attention to the sums given, being more interested in this act of homage and fealty. However, he listened carefully as each donor announced his name and rank within the official hierarchy or village. He later thanked them collectively and departed. This ceremony, while not very elaborate, differed little in detail from those characteristic of the traditional Mossi's relationship to their Mogho Naba. The new element here was that the monarch was traveling around his domain, establishing a close relationship with his chiefs and subjects, whose support he needed for his modern political alliances.[23]

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643 The Mogho Naba continued to hold the morning ceremony at court,
796 even though it was rapidly losing its traditional function and becoming of
182 major interest only to visitors. He also continued to hold those ceremonies associated with individual appointments to the nam and with traditional
[692] sacrifices. Unknown to many was the fact that traditional authorities at court still judged legal cases which many Mossi refused to take to the Europeans.

*175 In contrast to the Mogho Naba, the traditional provincial ministers now
645 lost most of the power they had held in the pre-conquest period, and all the
182 duties they had acquired in the immediate post-conquest era. As we have seen, one minister, the Baloum Naba, had entered politics at the suggestion of the Mogho Naba, but even he was now relegated to the entourage that accompanied the Mogho Naba and the European administrators on visits to the ministers' former provinces. The increased number of European administrators had made these ministers superfluous.

178 The district chiefs retained some prestige after the war. They could still
*175 judge legal cases, with the understanding that the litigants were free to go
554 to the Europeans if they so desired and had to be sent there in serious cases.
634 Their major problem was that a more efficient administration was taking
[692] a greater interest in district affairs. For the first time since the conquest, officials were visiting some of the more remote villages. No longer were they said to "act as locusts"—that is, to appear periodically to garner supplies and men from the districts and then disappear until the next onslaught. Instead, they appeared regularly to collect taxes and to take censuses, and

11: Skinner E-5 (195[illegible]1957) 1964
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*175 631 642 The proposed constitution thus negated any claims of the traditional chiefs over any section of the Voltaic population. Henceforth, the only leaders of the Voltaic people were to be their elected representatives. The constitution did not even mention the traditional chiefs, and no provision was made to give them a special voice in the government. By its silence on these matters, the constitution had reduced the Mossi chiefs to the status of ordinary citizens. Certain parts of this constitution were later changed, but not the sections dealing with the democratic nature of the emerging state. The power of the chiefs was gone. Yaméogo, who had been a commoner among the Mossi of Koudougou, was given the title of "President of the Republic" by what had now become the National Assembly. It was he who traveled to and from Paris with Houphouët-Boigny and the other members of the Conseil de l'Entente, an organization comprising Dahomey, the Ivory Coast, Niger, and the Upper Volta, to parley for the independence of the Upper Volta; and it was he who traveled around the country explaining his policies. Yaméogo did not belabor the issue of the chiefs, but he declared quite firmly that "the days of devotion to certain little Voltaic saints" were over. "Now must begin the era of the cult of the Upper Volta, next only to that of God."[30]

* 175 *648 642 631 France finally agreed that the Upper Volta should become independent on August 5, 1960, just 64 years after the conquest. However, sovereignty and power were not to be transferred to those from whom it had been wrested originally. Mogho Naba Kougri was only a spectator at the National Assembly when Yaméogo, praising Houphouët-Boigny and General de Gaulle, announced the coming of independence; and he was only a spectator when the Assembly ratified the independence agreement on July 27, 1960. The President said on that occasion that "Independence is not an end in itself, but a beginning. In effect, from now on we are called upon to assume full responsibility for our destiny."[31] He added that changes in the country would be brought about "in cooperation with the elected representatives, the party [RDA], and the youth organizations." He made no mention of the chiefs, and in fact the only chiefs who played any role during this period did so as politicians. The chiefs were to be honored only on Independence Day, when the President, in a spirit of benevolence, gave thanks to all those who had played a role in recovering the dignity of "Voltaic Man," including not only the French professors, the clergy, the war veterans, and the politicians, but also the "traditional chiefs who safeguarded the integrity of our state against external attack."[32]

* 175 ● 182 631 The government of the Upper Volta Republic decided to allow the institution of chieftainship to fade away by preventing the election of new

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chiefs. The Mogho Naba continued to receive a yearly stipend from the government, and local chiefs were still respected by the older people and by the more tradition-minded youths. Nevertheless, the drive toward the elimination of chiefly status in the Upper Volta went on. In January 1962, government decrees prohibited "the wearing of any costume or headgear indicating the status of chief or slave";[33] thus, the remaining Mossi chiefs are to be unrecognizable as such outside their own villages and districts. The chiefs, for their part, seem to have become reconciled to their fate. Many of their young relatives are joining the growing ranks of the new politicians.

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000 19. There is a curious story among the people of Nobere district that Mogho Naba Mottoba (who reigned in the seventeenth century) was not a Mossi but a Fulani who was given the nam after he chanced upon the installation ceremony and assassinated the newly elected man during the night. This story is denied in Ouagadougou; in fact, it contradicts the genealogical records of the ruling dynasty. However, the genealogy [174] does show that Mottoba's father, Mogho Naba Guiliga, had succeeded his brother, and it is possible that there was dynastic rivalry for the nam between Mottoba and the former Mogho Naba's son.

20. This rite was performed during the installation of the present Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou, although it is hardly recognizable as described in *Newsweek* (December 9, 1957, p. 48): "A man named Moussa Congo assumed the name of Kougri Naba last week and became the 35th Mogho Naba of the Mossi in the capital city of Ouagadougou in the Upper Volta region of French West Africa. Son of Emperor Issoufou Congo, Kougri Naba, as the new Mogho Naba, has one white horse, 200 wives, and 8,000 warriors, who danced around his palace ten times."

[182] 21. This practice has apparently lapsed since Mogho Naba Kougri moved into the modern concrete palace built for his father, Mogho Naba Sagha II.

22. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Soudan*, pp. 569–70. Tauxier claims the Mogho Nanamse [838] used the pages for homosexual purposes on Fridays in order to circumvent the Moslem prohibition against intercourse with women on this holy day. Homosexuality is rare among the Mossi, as Tauxier himself admits, and most Mossi deny that the Mogho Nanamse ever resorted to it. However, one respondent did state that he had heard about homosexuality among certain past rulers.

23. Crozat, p. 4849.

[648] 24. When Mogho Naba Kom II died under mysterious circumstances in 1942, it [762] was rumored that he had committed suicide rather than reduce the number of his wives as ordered by the administration under the influence of the Catholic mission- [797] aries. Kom allegedly held that no one can inherit a sovereign's wife during his lifetime. Therefore, in order to avoid loss of status by seeing his wives go to commoners, he chose death so they would be inherited by nobles.

[114] 25. The statement in *Newsweek* (December 9, 1957, p. 48) that Kougri has two hundred wives is untrue.

26. Intermarriage between the Mossi and the Fulani has produced a people known [563] as the Simili-Mossi. Nevertheless, the Mossi are strongly prejudiced against the Fulani, especially against the women, stating that the Moaga who has sexual intercourse with a Fulani woman must bathe in nine different rivers before he becomes clean. The basis of this prejudice appears to be that Fulani women are not cultivators and therefore are unacceptable as Mossi wives.

27. Mossi women know a great deal about the history and traditions of their people. But they never indicate that they do except during such rituals, when they are required to play certain roles.

28. Dim Delobson, p. 96.

29. Dim Delobson (p. 101) states that there are "sacred things" in this village, but I have been unable to substantiate his report.

[824] 30. Dim Delobson (p. 104) gives the classic explanation of this nighttime ride. On his ride from Bere to Djiba, the mounted prince must try to touch a certain branch of a certain tree. If he is destined to succeed his father, he will succeed in touching the branch; if he is not, the branch will magically withdraw at his approach.

I visited the area in which this ritual reportedly took place, but the people in the vicinity denied that such a tree existed.

31. *Ibid.*, p. 106.

[648] 32. IFAN (Compte Rendu No. 429). There are many other rumors concerning Kom's death. In a book praising the loyalty of the Africans to the Free French Gov-

M 439 centralized structure of the Mossi empire ensured the necessary safety for exchanges and trade. Nowadays they still have a very small part in it, and only when forced and pressed by the need to pay taxes.

M 439 183 To corroborate this Mossi incapacity for trade, I need only select from my field notes of December, 1908. Here is a significant one concerning a Mossi village in the northern part of the /Ouagadougou/ circle, "No trade in this village. It is the Yarsé from Téma who come and buy the cotton bands dyed blue and sell them at Salaga (Gold Coast). Our Mossi would profit by doing this themselves. They agree but nevertheless fail to do it, saying that their forebears did not do it either. They do no trading, therefore." In another village, Yakki, where industries flourish, I made the following note, "Trade, on the other hand, is nil, as among all Mossi."

M H 441 439 I stated above that higher trade among the Mossi was confined to a few Haoussa colonies. Concerning this, and in order to give an idea of this trading, I shall record here a short profile of a Haoussa trader from Ouagadougou, Maïguisiri Dangaori, who has been there for fifteen years although his family lives at Iko in Haoussa territory.

He has no fields, of course. He does nothing but trade.

He buys cattle and sheep locally. He takes them to Kumasi on the Gold Coast (this is not usually done by the Yarsé, who do not go so far south). He sells them there, and with the returns he buys kola nuts, European fabrics, glass trinkets, sugar, cast-iron pots, etc. On the way back, he hires needy Haoussa who live on the Gold Coast as bearers and takes them to Ouagadougou. Each bearer is paid 35 francs on arrival for the fifty days of travel. In addition, he feeds them along the way. Their food costs him 300 cowries a day.

H [482 465]

He sells the goods he brought back, or rather has them sold at the Ouagadougou market, for he has an employee who /540/ sells for him at market. This employee is not a member of his family. He is a Haoussa, to whom he gives 5 percent of the sales. That is all. Beyond this he gives him nothing, not even food.

Our trader usually waits until everything is sold before returning to the Gold Coast. If the merchandise does not sell quickly enough, he picks up what is left and disposes of it on the way back.

701 Formerly, when war broke out and he was summoned to [117]
554 Ouagadougou, the Tansoba [sic] assembled the principal ministers
645 of the Mogho Naba at the home of his host, and his word was final.

Aside from this special case, he might call upon a minister, but then a servitor always brought along the cushion on which he would sit until the minister receives him in his private quarters. He was never received in public.

Once inside, the Tansoba occupied the best seat, and the minister got down on the floor and performed the Mossi salute.

In sum, the Tansoba was held in higher esteem than any other personage at the king's court.

645 (b) At the present time. Today ministers often visit each other.
574 Since they have rapid means of transportation at their disposal, they regularly go about without escorts. Most often their visits are made in order to deal with matters of general interest.

When a minister calls upon another minister, he keeps his cap
645 on and neither removes his shoes nor performs the kantissé. They
576 are equals. This equality has been established by the local admin-
574 istration which has granted the same rights and salary to all. The minister shakes hands with his colleague and takes a seat. He is served copious quantities of beer, and then he takes his leave.

642 In spite of assertions to the contrary, the Mossi empire is politically disorganized. This accounts for the errors committed by the local administration and the [118] mistakes held against the ministers of the Mogho Naba who for a long time were granted too much power.

The Origin of Mossi Chiefdom (Legend), or the Way the Peulh, the Yarcé, and the Blacksmiths Salute Mossi Chiefs

713 The Peulh, the Yarcé, and, to a certain extent, the black-
184 smiths do not perform the kantissé (Mossi salute). They have a dif-
576 ferent way of saluting naba. A curious legend explains this phenomenon. However bizarre it may seem, it is not lacking in interest, and we shall tell it just as it was handed down to us.

428 2. Not to be disqualified for the following causes.

a. Murder of the deceased.

b. Failure to avenge his death. In the old days the son had to avenge his father's death before inheriting his property. At present the term "vengeance" should be understood to mean that he must seek satisfaction for the crime in the courts.

c. Failure to celebrate the funeral.

If the legitimate heir is a minor, his guardian must carry out the ceremony in the child's name.

d. Existence of a will whereby the deceased disinherits the heir presumptive.

Order of succession. As a general rule, property is handed down in the direct line, that is, to the eldest son of the deceased. It is handed down in a collateral line only if there is no son. In the case of certain items, however, for example, the family fetish, the heir is the eldest brother of the deceased.

If there is no heir of the first or second degree, the estate goes to the closest relative of the person from whom the deceased inherited the property.

428 431 The eldest in the family excludes the others and has sole possession of the property. Custom demands, however, that he hand over to his brothers and uncles a part [258] of the property. Nevertheless, this is a free gift which he is not actually forced to make.

428 562 184 In the case of the estate of a naba, the eldest son alone usually inherits all the property left by the deceased because of the heavy expenses he must meet to follow custom when he becomes a candidate for the chiefdom. As far as the women are concerned -- they are a part of the property -- he selects the ones he likes, and the rest are left for the nabissi (sons and descendants of naba).

The same is not true for ordinary Mossi, who have begun to realize that there are advantages in allowing all of the children of the deceased to share in the estate. In the chapter dealing with "Marriage" we have already seen that women were allowed some choice of a husband among the sons of the deceased.

428 In any case, however, the eldest son retains the largest share of the estate, and this is easily understandable in view of the

428 to change his mind. If, however, he absolutely refuses to heed their protests, they will not make an issue of it, but when the time comes to [262] apportion the estate, the testamentary arrangement to disinherit the heir presumptive will simply be declared null and void.

If the heir presumptive was disinherited for any of the causes for disqualification listed above or because he had committed adultery with one of his father's wives or a wife of someone in the family, the estate is given to the next in the line of succession as determined by Moaga custom.

Right to make a will. All who own property may make wills.

Revocation of wills. Wills may be revoked if the testator so desires. He has only to make a simple oral declaration of changed intention in the same manner as that described above.

Chapter 18

Circumcision. Do the Mossi Practice It?

304 Circumcision is highly esteemed among the Mossi. Some
184 colonial officials, because of their ignorance of Mossi customs, have claimed that neither circumcision nor excision was practiced. One must be able, indeed, to distinguish between the Moaga, the Boussanga, and especially the Nionioga. Although the three groups are related, they have different customs.

304 Circumcision, which is done according to precise rules, is carried out here in virtually the same way as it is among the Kassonké of Kayes.

The ceremony must originally have been imposed on the
304 Dagomba (of whom the Mossi are descendants) by Islam. Now,
626 however, young men seek to have themselves circumcised, not for any religious reason, but rather to avoid the ridicule of their friends and, especially, the scorn shown by Mossi women for any uncircumcised man.

304 We shall attempt to describe below the circumcision ceremony among the Mossi.

After the harvest, toward the end of November, the young men state their wish to be circimcised. Since the cost of supporting

304 184 The Nioniossé and the Soukoaba do not practice circumcision, and that is why they are called Mossé. In villages inhabited solely by Nioniossé, a kéogo may not be set up. At present some boys of Nionioga origin ignore the prohibition and go to their mother's village (Yastenga) to have the purifying operation (1).

[775] 1. Apparently the Moslems believe that those who are circumcised will not go to hell.

304 832 626 Among the Mossi many Christians voluntarily have themselves circumcised; women -- even Christians -- feel a certain repugnance for the touch of the "Moaga."

Finally, excision is also esteemed among the Mossi, except among the Nioniossé who do not practice it. Girls who are not excised are scorned by their friends and will have no lovers.

585 184 It should be noted that these ceremonies are often curtailed. They may also vary in ways that will not be described here. Sometimes they may not take place at all. This happens when the girl already has a husband prior to her birth, or when she is part of an inheritance. In such cases her relatives merely take her to her husband.

585 782 No sacrifices are performed during the marriage ceremonies. The husband does offer a sacrifice on the day he builds a hut for his wife, and at the place where the structure is to be erected. The girl's mother consults the sorcerer a few times to find out if her daughter will be welcomed in her new home, and to know which sacrifice must be offered to ward off illness while she lives with her husband. She communicates the answer to the girl's father, and he himself offers the prescribed sacrifice.

602 431 In theory, the husband owes nothing else to his in-laws. In practice, he would hold himself in poor esteem if he were not to present them with a few more gifts, especially on important feast days. When his maize is harvested, he sets aside a few ears for his wife's relatives; when his millet is threshed, he is sure to send some to his father-in-law; whenever he organizes any sort of festivity, his in-laws are invited; and he personally helps them in their work.

586 There is no divorce in the formal sense of a judgment rendered by law. A husband may send his wife back to her relatives if she steals, if she is lazy, or especially if she commits adultery, but even in the latter case his action will be regarded with disapproval. It is a husband's duty to watch over his wife and, if necessary, to discipline her. The man who repudiates his wife makes himself unpopular and cannot obtain new wives. It also happens, and this occurs more frequently, that the wife runs away and goes back to her family, /33/ either because she complains of ill treatment, or because she is not happy with her husband, or for some other reason of a more or less dubious character. If the husband manages to catch up with her before she gets home, no great problem is involved. He merely beats her and shuts her in for a few days. If she does reach her relatives, especially if they are in connivance, the husband must present a few gifts to them and even to his wife. The in-laws usually try to convince their daughter to return to her husband, but they do not force her to do so. Even the naba, when called upon to intervene, limits himself to the use of moral authority; his threats usually persuade the woman to return to her husband, who may himself use force if he wishes.

304 Children are tattooed at any age, sometimes when already grown. Many Yarsé do not tattoo their children, and the Mossi themselves do not seem especially to hold to this barbarous custom which sometimes disfigures an individual. The tattooing is done with a razor, and powdered charcoal is put into the wounds. In order to soften the skin and to alleviate the pain, the whole face is covered with oil until the wounds are healed, leaving more or less accentuated scars depending on the success of the operation. Some natives are completely disfigured by thick excrescences of flesh as the result of a faulty operation.

Sorcerers sometimes have the strange idea of prescribing tattoo marks on the belly or lower back of children whose older siblings have [789] died. For instance, a woman had lost three of her children. She consulted a sorcerer when the fourth was born, and he declared with the greatest seriousness that the child would die if his buttocks were not marked with stripes and his belly with tattooings radiating from the navel. The child was marked accordingly, and he lived! Young girls nearly always tattoo their belly with lines extending radially from the navel; many adorn their chest above the bosom with small stripes running perpendicular to the breasts and parallel between them. The tattooing patterns we have described here are, of course, only the most widespread types, because there is a great variety of markings.

304 Just as there is no set age for tattooing, there is none for circum-
852 cision. Children of seven or eight are circumcised along with youths and even mature men. Circumcision does not seem to be a Mossi [184] custom, for it is not a general practice. In Ouagadougou province most children are circumcised, while in Koupéla province most of them are not. However, the custom is gaining yearly in Koupéla. The head of the family often has himself circumcised because he is ill, and his children follow suit. Thus circumcision is introduced into the family, for once the father has undergone the operation, his children do likewise. Sometimes the mother is a Yarga, thus from a
304 Moslem family, and her children are circumcised, a new gain for the
563 practice. It also happens that children are drawn to it through sheer
852 curiosity and the enticing assurances of the Peul and Yarsé, who are usually Moslems and thus circumcised, and who spread propaganda all around them. Excision, on the other hand, is universal.

/42/ When there is a group to be circumcised, their relatives set a date with the Peul who is to perform the operation. At dawn of that

764 meters in diameter and 0.70 meter in depth. At the bottom of this first hole or against the wall, a second pit is dug, 0.75 meter in diameter. The bottom of the second hole is enlarged to form a sort of chamber, 1.50 to 2 meters in length and 0.75 meter in depth, where the body will be laid. This chamber is plastered with a preparation of néré to make the inner surface very smooth.

Young men spend the whole night at this task. Meanwhile, friends and absent relatives hasten to the house of the deceased as soon as they hear of his death; drummers also come, on the lookout for a few jars of beer and a few cowries. Everyone dances, sings, and makes merry.

764 The children and younger brothers of the deceased wear mourning clothes: an ample apron with a large pocket, adorned with cloth
765 streamers and various designs on a red or blue background; a small gourd as head covering; a circle of ashes on the face, and a cross of ashes on the back. The daughters and sisters of the deceased wear in addition a bunch of leaves in the back and thin white cotton cords around the neck. The eldest son wears a sheep skin across his chest and over the shoulder. At dawn the millet beer comes, the millet
764 mush is ready, and they are taken to the men who dug the grave. The undertaker tosses a little beer onto the soil removed from the pit and mixes it with some millet mush. Then the merry-making comes to a halt, and everyone drinks, eats, and rests for a while. Sometimes the dancing is taken up again around noon. When the sun dips toward the horizon, the burial gets underway.

An opening is made in the hut where the dead man lays, and the corpse is removed through it. The body is laid in front of the hole, and every one of the dead man's children must pass through and step over his father's corpse. The body is then laid on a stretcher, but not tied as yet; it is taken back into the courtyard, through the opening left by the séko which was removed at the moment of death. The eldest son now draws near with a goat or chicken, according to his means, and gives it to the undertaker who offers it to the deceased by shoving it forward three times and saying: "Your son offers you this goat, so it will bear kids for you." The other children may also present offerings, as well as the friends, /70/ and the undertaker offers them all to the deceased in the same manner. In some localities, the animals thus presented are taken home by the undertaker, who kills
[84] and eats them, and no sacrifice is made on the spot; elsewhere the victims are killed near the corpse.

764 be worn, others for carrying jars or to take to market. A woman is also offered a gourd to cook sauce, along with pepper, spices of all sorts, and salt. In addition, she is given the spindle that she used to spin cotton, but first its stem is broken; in fact, everything which is offered to the dead is previously damaged or torn. Wealthy friends also present clothes, and the others toss cowries to the dead. The undertakers carefully cover the smaller hole with blankets to prevent the cowries /71/ from falling into the pit. Every once in a while they allow a few to slide down, but they keep the greater part to themselves. When everyone has tossed in his offering, the undertakers take one, two, or several pieces of clothing; this is their share, and the practice is sanctioned by custom. They also take a few handfuls of cowries from the mourning apron, and someone hastens to count them. All eyes are anxiously focussed on the person who counts them, [801] 787 for either a man or a woman will die soon, depending on whether the number of cowries comes nearer to 333 or to 444.

Finally the undertakers close up the pit. If the deceased was an old woman, the smaller opening is plugged with one of the large jars in which she prepared millet beer; if a man, it is covered with a small jar or sometimes, especially if the opening is larger, with sticks laid as close together as possible. The corpse is thus completely isolated in its funeral chamber. The larger hole is then filled up with the soil removed from the pit. A jar and an earthen sauce pot are placed on top in the case of a woman, an earthen pot and a large stone in the case of a man.

Everyone withdraws to drink, eat, and rest. There is no dancing that night, but they make up for it on the following day and even on the day after that, if the wealth of the deceased permits it. On the second day after the funeral in the case of an old man, on the third day for an old woman, the children and younger brothers of the deceased shave their heads, go to thank those who have helped them, and remove their mourning clothes. There will be no further preoccupation with the deceased until the anniversary festivities or koure.

[184] Such are the ceremonies which usually attend the death and burial of a married man or woman, those who have children. We say "usually," for all these complex ceremonies may be curtailed and modified to a greater or lesser extent, depending on the region and the customs peculiar to one family or another.

769 In addition to this kourita, if the deceased was head of the household, his oldest daughter, or in her absence, his granddaughter, [184] occasionally plays a role and is also called kourita, but this custom is less widespread. Her mourning clothes are embellished with thin cords of red straw (bini) around the neck and wrists and above the elbow and at the ankles, 13 for a man and 14 for a woman. Around her head she wears cotton threads (pana) which hang down her back like a long tail, ending in a pompon. The first kourita, previously mentioned, sometimes wears these badges also. This second kourita actually has only one task, namely, to plant large millet where her father's huts stood. When the millet is ripe, she sets it aside to use for preparing millet beer on the day of the kouré. Sometimes her position is held for three years, and she cannot shave during this time. To offset this, it is she who brews the beer for the Day of the Dead (basra). At the end of three years, she shaves and takes up her usual way of life. No such kourita is provided for an old woman, since she was not the head of a household.

A mother is kourita for a child who dies before he marries. She wears at her ankle a thin cotton cord to which she adds a knot daily [801] for the duration of mourning, 33 days for a boy, 44 days for a girl.

The Moro Naba has a kourita like other Mossi, but on the day of the kouré a young boy of his family is appointed to represent him for life. This kourita adopts the name of the dead naba, and all through the dry season he goes from canton to canton, as the true Moro Naba could not do in his lifetime. Everywhere he is greeted and entertained with great honors, he receives many gifts, and his men loot what they can. One place only is closed to him, Ouagadougou, the residence of his successor. If they were to meet, one of them would die within the year. At present there are among the Mossi two kourita of Moro Nabas: that of Naba Sanem, who welcomed Binger, and that of Naba Sigri, enthroned as a result of Voulet's conquest and deceased in 1905. Naba Wobro, deposed by our troops, has no kourita because he was [643] no longer Moro Naba when he died; he had failed tradition by leaving Ouagadougou and thereby renounced his rights as a sovereign.

/74/ The first funeral is a temporary expedient; the human body decomposes quickly, and the burial has to be held before all the friends and relatives can be assembled. Also, death comes by surprise; there are not enough cowries, the animals have not been gathered in sufficient numbers, and the deceased must be granted the honors due his rank, he must be offered numerous victims. These are the reasons

342 received, gossip exchanged, and social and ceremonial obligations dis-
592 cussed in its shade. Here, also, the men of the lineage take their meals,
brought out to them from the kitchens of their wives and set before them
[264] by their sons, who first attend their fathers and then dine on what remains.

592 A few paces away is the grinding platform (*nere*) where the women
252 gather to prepare the grain for their families' meals. This great circular mud table, some twenty feet in diameter, is raised about three feet from the ground. Its surface is beaten hard and worked over with cinders and manure to make it rainproof. Each woman has her assigned place at this
[512] platform where she keeps her pestle and where she stations herself at dawn and again at dusk to grind her millet and learn the news of the day.

Frequently found at the outer perimeter of the dwelling of the Mossi
592 kin group is the house of the son of a lineage woman who has returned from his father's household to live in the benevolent presence of his mother's family, with whom he enjoys an especially permissive relationship. The house set aside for the residence of the young unmarried men of the lineage is also located on the outer edge of the compound dwelling.

555 A recent addition to the traditional pattern of village organization described above is the independent households of socially ambitious
184 individuals who have chosen to separate themselves from the residences of their lineages in order to profit from their own economic or religious enterprises. Many have become independently wealthy through successful commercial ventures; others, as a result of conversion to Islam, have gained prestige through religious authority and wealth through the tuition and services provided by the Koranic students. Often these people are much younger than their lineage elders, not in line for the inheritance of political or religious authority through traditional channels, and unwilling either to accept the authority of their seniors or to share economically with the less prosperous members of their lineages. They are deviants, in conflict with the communal patterns of consumption and with the emphasis on accepting established authority which characterizes the traditional social organization of the Mossi.

THE TRADITIONAL ECONOMY

613 Much agricultural endeavor is necessarily co-operative. Each farmer
476 is dependent on the assistance of his kinsmen to get his fields seeded, cultivated, and harvested in the short time during which each of these
243 operations must take place. However, the yield from his field remains his own, to be shared only with his own wives and children. Members of the lineage also work in the fields under the specific control of the lineage elder. Although the harvest from these fields is stored in the granary

[i.e. at a sun shelter in the entrance-way. — Analyst]

244 mats in the sun to dry. Finally, the sesame seeds are beaten loose with a piece of wood.

252 The Mossi ordinarily use these seeds in the sauce. The women crush them on a stone, boil them, and add salt and soumbara /néré seeds/. This sauce is eaten with millet, /474/ maize, etc. Sometimes the fresh seeds are also eaten after roasting on the fire.

244 The Mossi also grow some beans (benna or binga in Mossi, soso in Mandé, niébé in Peuhl). They do not cultivate them in separate plots, but sow them in the millet fields along with the millet. The stalks creep along the ground. The beans are ripe before the millet.

It is the women and children, equipped with baskets, who do the harvesting (November). Then the pods are laid out on the ground and threshed by the men with sticks. The beans are picked
[252] and placed in the straw huts. To eat them, one simply boils them and adds salt.

The Mossi grow some sweet potatoes (nanioua in Mossi, nanioura
[084] in Nounouma). The Mossi who live around Ouagadougou do not grow any. Those who live around Kombisiguiri grow some. A few Tenkodogo Mossi also cultivate them. The potatoes are planted along the watercourses around July 15, that is to say, at the height of the rainy season. Small earth mounds are built, with holes at the top. Potato slices are placed in these holes and covered with earth. When the sowing is done, the work is over. No attempt is made to pull out the weeds. The harvesting is done at the end of three months, consequently around October 15. The potatoes are dug out
[252] with the ouaka, carried to the huts, and eaten boiled in water.

The Mossi grow some ozonifie /a potato-like plant/ (pèsa in Mossi, kayya in Nounouma and Kassouna, fabirama in Mandé) around the soukala or in the bush. They build small earth mounds with the ouaka, then make holes in these mounds with the koutiaga, and place one tubercle in each hole. They cover up the holes and spread the ground with fertilizer consisting of straw and grass, refuse taken from the soukala or gathered around it. The harvesting is done in November. At that time, the ozonifie are dug out with the ouaka. They are placed in a canari pending their consumption. They are
[252] eaten boiled.

2444 All Mossi grow ozonifie. They like it, but do not cultivate it in large quantities. It has to be planted in damp places. Some people plant it in the bush, others in the villages, but always near a spot where there is water.

[184] /475/ The Mossi hardly grow any yams (nioua or niouya in Mossi, pia in Nounouma, kou in Mandé). The southern Mossi alone cultivate it, and very little at that, in Kombisiguiri for example.

Here yams are sown in November along watercourses. Earth mounds 50 centimeters high and correspondingly wide are built with the ouaka. Then holes are made with a stick at the top of these little pyramids. Yam slices are cut, buried in these holes, and covered with earth. Then a prop is driven into the ground. The stem of the yam plant emerges from the ground and climbs along the prop. Seven months are required for the root, the yam itself, to reach its proper thickness and ripeness. During the month of April, therefore, a certain number of yams are dug out of the ground with the ouaka. The greatest number are left there, however, the soil is replaced, and the major harvest, the total harvest, is only taken in November, that is to say, a year after sowing.

[252] To eat yams, one cuts them into pieces and boils them in water.

[177] As for manioc (boumboro in Nounouma), it was unknown to the Mossi until the arrival of the French. The latter brought a few stalks, but the natives do not cultivate it as yet.

As far as diabéré is concerned (kousoubadé in Mossi, diabéré in Mandé), the Mossi grow a little of it. It is sown at the time of the first rains in the fields of maize or large red millet, that is to say, around the soukala. Holes are made with the koutiaga, and small tubercles are placed within them. The plant is harvested one month after maize, that is, in September.

In Mossi territory, it is cultivated chiefly by the Yarsé, for example those of Rakaye and Saraboutenga.

The Mossi themselves cultivate it little, and the same applies to the Bambara. The Gourounsi and Boussansé do not grow it at all.

[253] The diabéré is cooked in water, peeled, and eaten as it is.

According to Guebhardt (Au Gouta-Djallon /In the Fouta Djallon/, 1910), the diabéré (the Poullo /Fulani/ name) is really taro (Caladium antiquorum or esculentum).

428 593 184 Actually, those shares vary from region to region among the Mossi. Thus, in certain areas, the oldest son gets the soukala, the fields, two thirds of the livestock, cowries, and money, all the slaves and grain, as well as clothing, jewelry, weapons, horses, etc. The other sons get the remaining goods. The daughters get nothing. As for the wives, the oldest son takes three quarters and the other sons one quarter. In such cases, the eldest son is much more heavily favored than in the cases mentioned earlier.

At Kombisiguiri, this is even more accentuated. The oldest son may keep everything if he wishes. He may also give something to the other sons of the deceased or to the latter's brothers.

In short, at the stage /of evolution/ with which we are dealing, the transmission of property ranges from a complete and absolute law of primogeniture to an uneven sharing heavily tipped toward the eldest son.

593 736 Let us add that when the eldest son receives an estate, if his brothers are not yet of an age to be married, he keeps them at his home, in his own household (this is why, although Mossi households in principle include only a husband, his wives, children, and slaves, sometimes they also contain young unmarried brothers). In the morning they work for him, and in the afternoon they work their own little plots. The older brother provides them with food at all times, but not with clothes. They must procure their clothing with the returns from their own little plots. When they reach marriageable age, the older brother buys them a wife and helps them settle on their own.

429 593 When the head of a soukala dies leaving only small sons, his younger brother takes all the property for the time being but saves it for the legitimate heirs. When the eldest son of the deceased has grown up, the brother leaves the soukala and returns to his own former one, taking only his own belongings. /552/ At that time, all the real estate and movable property devolve to the oldest son and partly to the other sons.

428 593 If the head of a soukala leaves no sons but only brothers and daughters, the inheritance is shared between his younger brother and his daughters. The younger brother takes the soukala, the fields, and the wives. He leaves his own soukala and settles in that of the deceased, where he brings all his belongings. He puts up either a

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Karême), celebrate the great festival of Ramadan and the lesser festivals, and 794 aspire to make the pilgrimage to Mecca. Most of the Moslems can lead prayers, but only about one-tenth of their number can read and recite the Koran. [212] However, today the masters (*karasambas*) of the 32 Koranic schools in the district are endeavoring to instruct the many boys and few girls in reading the [871] Koran and understanding Moslem theology.

The Karême is observed by most adult Moslems in the community with the exception of invalids and working men. Moslems say that the fast is intended to turn the minds of the people to God, and they distinguish between the Moslems "of the mouth" who break the fast and those "of the heart" who [184] fast until Ramadan. The crescent moon of Ramadan is greeted with guns and general rejoicing and the following morning the Moslems gather at the tomb of Ngado to give praises to God; during the rest of the day they pay homage to the chief and visit their friends. However, a change in the traditional observance of Ramadan is expected, because one of the Moslem leaders objects to the [178] ceremony at the tomb of Ngado. He feels that some Moslems are beginning to regard the tomb of the first Moslem as an earth shrine or Tengkougre.

So far, only five of the more prominent Moslems in the district have made 794 or are making the pilgrimage to Mecca. The first man made the voyage about 788 seven years ago, and is now conducting a Koranic school in a neighboring district. His brother went to Mecca about two years ago and is now the senior *El Hadj* in the district. Of the two men who were on the pilgrimage when I arrived in the district, one has since died near the Red Sea and the other is still away. One other man left for Mecca and returned to the district during my stay. Most of the pilgrims now fly to Mecca; only two men followed the traditional route through Ghana, Kano, Lake Chad, the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan (now Sudan), and on to Mecca. In general, all pilgrims have used their own re- [613] sources for the trip, but they receive some help from their lineage brothers and from the other Moslems in the district and in Ouagadougou.

The pilgrimage to Mecca represents the greatest event in the lives of the district Moslems. When the last pilgrim left, a great crowd gathered at his house and prayed for his safe journey, and some even accompanied him to [621] Ouagadougou and remained there until he left. The Moslems and many pagans of the district, under the command of the district chief, cultivated his fields during his absence. And when the new El Hadj returned, a large crowd accompanied him to his house with shouts of joy. There he killed a sheep in thanks- [782] giving, sprinkled the crowd with holy water from Mecca, and recounted his experiences. His listeners were impressed by his airplane flight and the description of Mecca, but they showed the greatest interest when he said that Mecca women covered their faces and that most Meccan men were monogamous. The local Moslems smiled when they heard this bit of news from one of their members, but I have seen them scowl when discussing the monogamous practice desired by the Christians.

The attitudes of Moslems differ very little from those of the other Mossi 794 as regards children and polygyny. They say that they do not believe in the 595 842

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794 efficacy of ancestor veneration and do not "kill chickens" to the ancestors, but
595 they maintain that it is a man's duty to have many wives so that he may have
842 children to succeed him. Furthermore, since Mohammed himself decreed that his followers may keep four wives, provided they treat each with the same degree of kindness, there is no conflict between Islamic tenets and Mossi practice of polygny. The average Moslem has two wives, but even the few men in the district who have more than four wives do not appear overly concerned about transgressing the tenets of their faith. Mossi Moslems have not adopted the [582] paternal parallel cousin marriage so common among other Moslems, and show surprise when told that Islam permits such marriages. However, they have modified their marriage behavior to harmonize with what they consider an Islamic tenet that "a man should not marry the widow of his father." The Moslem Mossi profess to look with horror on these marriages among their pagan brothers, preferring the levirate instead.

794 The Moslems' attitude toward the low status of women in Mossi society has not changed, and in one respect it can even be said that this attitude has
562 been strengthened. Many Moslem wives now cover their faces, and many El Hadjis have attempted to place their wives in purdah by preventing them from going to the market for fear they would come in contact with pagan men. The development of this practice is running counter to the growing emancipation of Mossi women, who have just begun to leave their villages for periodic visits to the larger towns. Nevertheless, the important fact is that the Mecca pilgrims have the opportunity to see Moslem women playing roles which are forbidden or unknown to Mossi women. And while it is true that the Mossi pilgrims would not easily adopt and foster monogamy, their receptivity to new Islamic beliefs and customs might have a liberating effect on their treatment of women. Once institutional and cultural changes have been accepted by the El Hadjis, they are likely to spread quite rapidly throughout the society because men who have visited Mecca are believed to have returned filled with wisdom and understanding.

797 Christianity came to the Mossi on January 24, 1900, shortly after French conquest. As noted above, the first missionaries were well treated, but the Mossi balked at the attempts at conversion. Nevertheless, by 1919 the White Fathers of the Catholic missions had established several centers, among which was the district of Manga where this study was conducted. Manga is considered a Catholic district, but there are only 3,000 Catholics out of a population of 124,000—which also includes 9,200 Moslems and five Protestants. [184] Thus, in contrast to Moslem Nobéré, which has no Catholics or Protestants, Manga, like most districts in Mossi territory, has a Moslem community.

The conversion of the Mossi in Manga to Catholicism follows the classical pattern of missionary proselytization in the country. Monsignor Socquet (1956:62) states that the Mossi always react to attempts at conversion with the statement: " 'We are looking at our chief,' that is to say, 'We will follow our chief in conversion as in all other matters. If he is favorable to it, then we will not go against his will.' " Socquet concludes: "It is thus understandable

the original segment of the ruling Biligo lineage had lived in Barkago for some time, it divided into two minor lineages and settled in two saghse, Natenga and Godin. A noble from Godin possessed the nam, but it eventually passed to a noble from Natenga. The new chief then founded a new saka called Kedpalago because he wanted more living space for his own children. As a result, the minor lineage of Natenga now had two babissi living in two saghse. The minor lineage of Godin subsequently declined in size and prestige. The only evidence of its former importance was that its eldest male continued to make separate sacrifices to his own chiefly ancestors, even though the more recent holders of the nam made sacrifices to all former chiefs. These independent sacrifices were made in spite of the fact that this minor lineage kept growing smaller because its male members left to live elsewhere or to join maternal patrilineages with higher status. The sacrifices were expected to cease only if and when the minor lineage were to disappear with the incorporation of the widows and orphans of its last surviving males into the other Biligo groups of the village and district. Of course, if the Godin minor lineage had regained the nam, it undoubtedly would have experienced a rebirth and renewal of strength. It might have attracted its daughter's sons, and even aliens who would have lived in its saghse as they did in those of the ruling lineage segments.

A fourth saka, Nakomgo ("we hunger after the nam"), was inhabited by the noble descendants of Naba Ngado, the district chief who had replaced the descendant of Naba Biligo of Nobere. Since these nobles traced their descent from two full brothers, Kouliga and Kongo, they formed two related minor lineages with five component minimal lineages. The compounds of the two babissi of the Kouliga minor lineage were separate but contiguous. Near them were the compounds of the three babissi of the Kongo minor lineage. Scattered about in the Nakomgo saka were compounds of sisters' sons, strangers, and nobles' slaves.

The people of Narila, the fifth saka of Barkago, were members of the aboriginal Ninisi population, and thus furnished the village's earth-priest. He made sacrifices to the earth shrines in the village, gave ritual permission for building compounds and digging graves, and took control of the village during the period between the death of a chief and the accession of another. Scattered throughout the various saghse were compounds inhabited by people of serf, slave, or refugee origin.

Of all the groups within the village, the Ngado people kept the most exact genealogies. They did so because one of the segments of their maximal lineage held the district nam, and as nobles they had theoretical access to it. Once they had lost the nam of the district, the descendants of Biligo

mal lineage segment except the pretenders to the throne shaved their heads as a sign of mourning. The royal pretenders donned sheepskin mantles to signify that they were willing to "eat the nam." Once the ruler had been buried, the country settled down to an uneasy peace until the eighth day, when the funeral ceremonies took place. In the meantime, the Napoko symbolically held daily court, and the Tansoba's army acted as a check against the attempts of ambitious princes to seize power by force of arms.

Two days before the funeral, the Kamsaogho Naba selected the Kourita, who was to replace the Napoko as the living symbolic representative of the dead Mogho Naba. The person chosen to be Kourita was usually a young son of the deceased king, but since this person was banished from the capital, most of the royal wives hid their young children or fled the palace with them.[23] Once the Kourita had been chosen, the Kamsaogho Naba performed a ceremony (similar to those connected with the divine kings of the Near East) during which the youth was given one of his father's horses, dressed in his father's clothes, and given his father's youngest widow as a wife. He was then paid the homage due the Mogho Naba, and after receiving many gifts from the dignitaries, he was banished from Ouagadougou forever. As he went through the country, he was treated like the Mogho Naba and given many wives and presents. If he should chance to return to Ouagadougou or see the new Mogho Naba, either or both of them would be killed by the ancestors. Many Mossi districts seem to have been founded by exiled Kouritadamba. These men were undoubtedly among the numerous "elder" sons of past kings who are said to have "refused" the nam and gone to live in the districts now governed by their descendants.

The choice and banishment of the Kourita heralded the funeral rites, which were characterized by numerous animal sacrifices to the ancestors in the name of the deceased ruler. On the afternoon of the first day of the funeral, the Crown Prince mounted a horse and left the palace by the women's door. The Napoko then took the bridle of her brother's horse and led him and an immense crowd of cavalry, armed warriors, and musicians around the palace walls three times. After the third round, the Napoko demanded that her brother give her a personal servant as a present; he hesitated, but finally granted her request. The Napoko was then lifted up by the warriors, who shouted as they carried her home. The funeral thus came to an end.

All Mossi potentates tried to emulate the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou in matters of pomp, ceremony, and government.[24] Their courts were inferior to his, but only because they were less powerful and less wealthy.

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Some of the more important rulers, such as the heads of the Yatenga, Fada-N'Gourma, and Tenkodogo kingdoms, were chosen by local electoral colleges, which did not have to seek the approval of the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou or notify him of the choices made. Their authority, as we have seen, was supported by claims of equality with Ouagadougou. But, with the exception of the Tenkodogo ruler, they were actually farther removed from the main line of royal descent than the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou. The autonomous Dimdamba had their own electoral colleges, which in some cases were made up of men related to the electoral-college members of the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou. (For example, the Ouidi Naba of Boulsa was descended from the Ouidi Naba of Ouagadougou.) These local colleges were usually free to nominate and elect the Dimdamba without consulting the Mogho Naba, even though he ratified many nominations.[35] According to Cheron, "The nomination of the Dim of Boulsa did not become definitive until ratified by the Mogho Naba, who was always consulted by the electors and who could impose his own candidate."[36] This was not always true, nor did every Mogho Naba refrain from interfering in the internal affairs of autonomous provinces. Whether he did or not often depended on his strength relative to that of the Dimdamba. Once the Dimdamba had been chosen, however, they were installed with ceremonies similar to those for the Ouagadougou ruler.

Like their superiors, the Dimdamba had the authority to delegate power to the Kombemba and Tense Nanamse. Some of them also had the right to grant the nam to a fellow Dim. The Boussouma Naba, for instance, could grant it to the Mane Naba.[37] Mogho Nanamse granted such rights to Dimdamba for various reasons. They might do so on the basis of their relative strength vis-à-vis a particular Dim at a particular time, or because they admired him or were closely related to him. However, a Dim exercised sovereignty in his own name, regardless of whether he was subordinate to the Mogho Naba or to another Dim. In contrast, the district chiefs and the village chiefs exercised sovereignty on behalf of the Mogho Naba or of the Dim in whose territory they resided.

The installation ceremonies for the two lower orders of chiefs were not too different from those for the Mogho Nanamse and Dimdamba. For example, when the Nobere district chief died, the provincial minister for Nobere—in this case the Gounga Naba—reported his death to the Mogho Naba. The ruler then summoned one of the deceased chief's officials to the capital to report on the qualifications of all potential candidates for the nam. The provincial minister, in turn, dispatched one of his own representatives to the district to verify the reports he had received. It was only when this

prepared sauce, and flung them in three directions to the waiting ancestral spirits. He then beseeched the royal spirits, the spirits of former provincial ministers, and the spirits of the ancient people (the Ninisi) to grant a long life to the Mogho Naba and peace to all the Mossi. He repeated the ritual with three morsels of meat and with the contents of a pot of beer. When he had finished, the Gande Naba picked up the food thrown to the ancestors and carried it away. He did not look backward for fear that he should see the ancestors and die as a result. The departure of the Gande Naba was the signal for the palace retainers to rush toward the food. They seized and ate what they could, spilling and wasting a good deal in the process.[8]

Meanwhile, chiefs and headmen held similar ceremonies in every district, village, hamlet, and compound in the Ouagadougou kingdom. District and village chiefs offered sacrifices to their ancestors in the name of their subjects. The sacrifices on the hamlet and compound level were more specific. Every grown man had to take a sheep, goat, or chicken to his elder and request that it be offered to the ancestors in his name. The elder sacrificed the animal and beseeched the ancestors to grant the petitioner good health, bountiful crops, and many children during the coming year. The women and children did not take part in the ritual, but they did participate in the general feasting that followed.

The festivities of the Tense lasted only a few days in the districts and villages, but in the capital it did not end officially until about four weeks had elapsed. At the end of this period, the Larhalle Naba gave the Mogho Naba all the cords that had been used to mark the coming of the Tense. A few days later, the chief Tengsoba of Guillingou, the native village of Oubri's mother, and the Tengsobadamba of other important ceremonial centers, visited the Mogho Naba in the palace courtyard. Here they all sacrificed white cocks and placed the blood and feathers of their victims on their ceremonial axes in order to "increase the power" of these objects. Later on, they were given cooked mutton, millet cakes, and other presents. Their departure for home later in the day marked the close of the Tense.

The religio-political function of the Tense is quite explicit, despite the statement by Dim Delobson, himself a Mossi chief (but also a convert to Catholicism), that "it is apparent that this festival has no outstanding features. Its sole aim is to make peace between the living and the dead, and, in the process, to allow everyone to enjoy the food."[9] Judging by the reports of old men who participated in the festival before it was banned, the people did have a good time and enjoyed the food. What is important, however, is that like the Basgha, the Tense served not only "to make peace

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his guests.[13] On the contrary, when the Imam visited the ruler on Fridays or during important festivals to read from the Koran, the sovereign gave him sweetened millet water and appropriate gifts.

Most Mossi rulers at all levels had Moslems among their councillors. These men were often the only persons who had traveled extensively outside the country (on pilgrimages to Mecca), and thus could counsel a ruler about how to deal with foreign visitors. Most early European visitors to Mossi country were either helped or hindered (chiefly the latter, it seems) by these travel-wise councillors. Crozat had difficulties with the Moslems long before he arrived in Mossi country proper. When he got to Lanfiera, the Mossi who lived there were alarmed, and refused to help him proceed to Ouagadougou despite his protestations that "I come for the good of all, white and black, that we may be together like brothers, since the same God has made us all." Crozat reports that his plea was in vain because "El Hadj Ali-Karl declared that he would not receive me, and he will not receive me. El Hadj is wise, El Hadj is prudent, El Hadj knows all, El Hadj does not make decisions without good foresight, and once made, he keeps them."[14]

Crozat had the same difficulty when he entered Mossi country. He tells us, "At Dounse [near Yako], for example, the marabouts did not look favorably upon my arrival, and it took a great deal of insistence on the part of Moussa to convince the Imam, my unwilling host, to present me to the chief who had expressed the desire to see me."[15] Crozat also found that he had to lodge with the Imam when he arrived at Ouagadougou, and he was assigned the same huts "which had served Captain Binger," who had visited the capital before him. He was disappointed with his reception and declares:

> I already knew from experience what sort of influence these men exercised over the chiefs. As a councillor of the chief, the Imam was overtly acknowledged as the second official in the village, but in reality he often commanded it. The Imam of Ouagadougou, therefore, could do much to help me or to hurt me. My decision to court him might flatter him, and that would be a move in the direction of winning his good graces, which, all things considered, was most important to me. The result was only partly in my favor. I succeeded insofar as the Imam was not hostile to me, but he did not help me as he might have.[16]

These Moslem councillors realized better than most other people what the visits of the Europeans implied for the independence of the country, and they tried their best to counsel the monarchs against receiving such visitors.

Beginning with Mogho Naba Doulougou (ca. 1750) Mossi sovereigns, whether Moslem or pagan, participated in the more important Moslem festi-

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vals. Being monarchs of the Mossi, they could not do otherwise. A few days before the Moslem feast of Tabaski (called *Kibsa* by the Mossi), the Mogho Naba sent the Imam of Ouagadougou cattle and sheep to be sacrificed on the holy day. On the day of the festival, the Mogho Naba and his entourage went to the mosque and joined the Imam and his flock in prayer. After the ceremony the sovereign returned to his palace and ordered that a well-washed sheep be given to the Imam for a sacrifice. This Moslem sacrifice was performed in the palace courtyard, and the Mogho Naba himself held the tail of the animal while the Imam officiated. The Mogho Naba afterward ordered his servants to provide millet water and food for his Moslem subjects. Similar ceremonies were held in all of the districts and villages where Moslems lived.

The feast at the end of the Moslem month of Ramadan was also celebrated by the Mogho Naba and most of the people within the kingdom—a fact that so surprised Binger that he wrote, "It is a most curious fact that, whether Moslem or not, all the blacks celebrate this feast."[16] The Moslems usually flattered the Mogho Naba and the other chiefs by pretending to believe that they had observed the month-long fast (which the Mossi called *no-lwere*, from *nore*, "mouth," and *lwere*, "to tie up") during Ramadan. [576] Thus, whenever they visited the Mogho Naba or another chief during this period, they greeted him with the salutation *Ne no-lwere*, which means, "I greet you who are fasting." Similarly, the morning after the end of the fasting period, the ruler and his officials were ritually given millet water "to break their fast." The important point here is that everyone knew that the Mogho Naba's fast was a ritual fiction. Binger, who was with Boukary Naba at the end of Ramadan before this prince became Mogho Naba Wobogo, commented: "Boukary Naba is a Moslem in outward appearance only. When the prayers were about to begin, he asked me whether I was going to worship. I told him that this festival was not in accord with those of the Christians. He seemed to be delighted by the idea that the whites are not Moslems."[17]

Most Mossi chiefs celebrated the end of Ramadan in a grander manner than they did Tabaski. The members of the royal household joined the other inhabitants of the capital in their anxious vigil for the crescent moon that was to herald the start of the ceremonies. There was general rejoicing when the moon appeared, and all through the night palace guards fired shots and launched arrows into the air. The following morning, the Mogho Naba went to the mosque with his courtiers to attend prayers. Then he returned to his palace to await the Imam, who came to offer prayers of thanksgiving. The Mogho Naba gave him presents, and was visited by gift-bearing

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Moslems. In return, he gave them millet water sweetened with honey, millet cakes, meat, and kola nuts.

The celebration of the festival in the districts was not as imposing as it was at Ouagadougou, but we have Binger's excellent eyewitness account of the festivities at Sakhaboutenga:

> First of all, Boukary sent word that he would like me to accompany him to Sakhaboutenga, where it is his custom to go on the day of the festival. The chief's men spent the entire day attending to preparations: they distributed powder, cleaned guns, tried on harnesses, and polished copper fittings as we would in France on the eve of a great parade. . . . It was an occasion for revelry, and they took full advantage of it. They ate as much as they could, drank a great deal of beer, and fired many rounds of ammunition. . . . In the evening there was a moment of consternation: no one had seen the crescent; however, they consoled themselves by repeating that although it had not been sighted here, it had certainly shown itself elsewhere, and they sat down to drink beer all night long.
>
> Monday, June 11. Early this morning Boukary sent a horseman to Sakhaboutenga to consult the marabouts. The messenger soon returned and assured the chief that the moon will be seen tonight. "All the marabouts have said so." The much-desired crescent appeared for a few moments this evening; shots were fired through half the night, and beer ran in floods. . . .
>
> Tuesday, June 12. From four o'clock in the morning, the tam-tams sounded everywhere, and everyone was busy; it is obvious that this is the eve of an important event. . . . Half an hour after our departure we arrived at Sakhaboutenga. We dismounted and camped under the trees at the entrance of the village. Some Moslems from the neighborhood came, greeted Boukary, and offered him some kola nuts in lots varying from five to eight. But they always held them out in a fold of their robe [it being forbidden for a commoner to hand a gift directly to a chief]. A village nearby sent twelve large jars of beer.
>
> From afar and from all directions, long files of Moslems emerged from the village on their way to the Imam's for prayers. Several onlookers arrived on donkeys from the surrounding countryside. The religious ceremony took place on a flat expanse to the east of the village. It was an impressive spectacle. The crowd was silent. The faithful, ranged in ranks about 20 feet deep, prostrated themselves and rose again in perfect harmony and with awesome slowness. From time to time the voice of the Imam was raised, and his *amine* [amen] was heard with deep reverence.
>
> There were about three thousand persons of both sexes there, almost all of them dressed in white. The *bournous* [robes], the red tarbooshes, and the multitude of black faces lent to the ceremony the grandiose character of an oriental fete. As soon as the prayers were over, Boukary Naba walked up to the Imam of Sakhaboutenga to the sound of tam-tams to receive his blessing and the good wishes of the Moslems, who wished on my illustrious host many horses and warriors. Boukary Naba ordered that the Imam be given a magnificent sheep and several sheepskins full of cowries. He presents this

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gift every year to the Imam and to Karamakho Isa, for whom he has great veneration. These are old and wise men who cannot but give him excellent counsel.[18]

The relations between Boukary Koutou and the Moslems of the Sakhaboutenga district show how Mossi chiefs, though pagans, were able to establish viable political bonds with potentially hostile believers of another religion. Boukary Koutou was probably a Moslem "in outward appearance only," as Binger suggests. Nevertheless, it was by being Moslems of this kind that Mossi rulers managed to retain the allegiance of their Moslem subjects. This was their duty as "fathers of their people," and apparently they did it without much hesitation. In this manner, they effectively used religion to bolster their power and sustain their authority.

Ritual connections between the Mossi rulers and the chiefs of surrounding countries enabled them to protect their subjects from foreign attack and to maintain internal cohesion. The numerous reciprocal gifts between the Mossi and such other Voltaic groups as the Dagomba, Mamprusi, and Gurmanche were based on the belief in descent from a common ancestor or ancestress. Ritual and the supernatural thus played an extremely important role in the cohesiveness of the Mossi kingdoms and in the functioning of their governmental processes. Without these ritual factors, it is doubtful whether the Mossi rulers would have been able to maintain such a relatively high degree of control over their subjects, given the relative weakness of their economic resources, communications, and armed forces. In trying to understand why the Mossi retained their autonomy for so long, one must take into consideration the statement made by a French officer a year after the Mossi were conquered: "We must not lose sight of the fact that [the Mossi] have always presented a common front to strangers, and that a single word of command is sufficient to unite them against the invader in the name of kinship and national unity."[19]

The phase of Mossi political history that began when Nyennega left Dagomba and moved northward came to an end with the European conquest. Most French scholars believe that the Mossi were in a state of decadence at the time of conquest and might have fallen to such African conquerors as El Hadj Omar, Samory Touré, or Baba To. The fact remains, however, that these conquerors all skirted Mossi country without entering it. If these African rulers believed that the Mossi were invincible in their unity, it was because the Mossi, through mythical bonds of common descent and actual bonds of kinship, had welded themselves into a cohesive and powerful group.

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CHAPTER SEVEN

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1. Dim Delobson, pp. 153ff.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 251–54.
3. Cheron, "Contribution," p. 674.
4. Crozat, p. 4849.
5. *Ibid.*
6. Skinner, "Trade and Markets," pp. 237–78.
7. Barth, III, 644–49.
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 202–4.
9. Dubois, pp. 282–92, 300.
10. Great Britain, Parliamentary papers: Cd. 788–27, No. 357, Acc. Papers, Vol. LXIV (1902).
11. Marc, p. 178.
12. Binger, I, 467.
13. Crozat, p. 4849.
14. Binger, I, 465.
15. Mangin, p. 23.
16. Dim Delobson, pp. 85–86.
17. Ruelle, p. 679.
18. Bovill, p. 244.
19. Gautier, p. 139; cf. Mangin, p. 112.
20. Cf. Sa'di, p. 168.

[422]

21. The chief of the Kamboinse was the only Mossi "chief" to possess a stool, which is indicative of an Akan origin. The Akan origin of this group is further supported by Koelle's evidence: a Mossi informant told him that the Mossi called the Ashanti "Kamboinse" (Koelle, p. 6).

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22. Skinner, "The Mossi 'Pogsioure,'" pp. 20–22.
23. Cf. Ouédraogo and Prost, pp. 16–18.
24. Dim Delobson, p. 25.
25. Binger, I, 470.
26. *Ibid.*, pp. 502–4.
27. *Ibid.*, pp. 504–5.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 456.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 502.

CHAPTER EIGHT

1. Cf. Dim Delobson, p. 156. He speculates that the Mogho Naba himself sacrificed the animals in the presence of his senior wife and courtiers.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 157.

[184]

3. Tauxier (*Le Noir du Yatenga*, p. 379) reports that a comparable ceremony among the Yatenga Mossi was called the "Bega," and that in reality it was a Fulse ceremony "adopted by the Mossi." According to him, both the Fulse and the Mossi held this festival in order to obtain good harvests the following year, and made sacrifices to "the ancestors, to the Earth, and to God."

[177]

4. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Soudan*, p. 588.

[114]

5. Dim Delobson's description (pp. 148 ff) of the Tense differs somewhat from that given to me by my respondents. According to his version, the Tansoba played the role I have ascribed to the Larhalle Naba. Furthermore, he states that the Tense was held on Friday, an impossible fact since Saturday is the Mossi "day of the dead." In any case, all of my respondents insisted that Saturday, and not Friday, was the day on which the Tense was held. It is possible that Dim Delobson mistook the eve of the festival for its beginning, in which case his error is understandable. In most other respects our descriptions are not too different.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 152.
7. There is a widespread tradition in Mossi country that the Tenkodogo Naba made and still makes similar sacrifices at Kouroungoutenga and Sansabloga, two important earth shrines. There is a controversy about whether human sacrifices were ever offered there. The missionaries in the region claim they were. The Mossi deny this and accuse the missionaries of slander.

[797]

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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443 shoulder; but when he arrives in the market, he calmly places his
656 weapon on top of one of the sheds before he makes his rounds. The
626 women do not carry any weapons to market except their "words" but
411 even these are not often used because of the desire to avoid hostility—
[578] which the Mossi do not like to have disrupt one of their major institutions.

443 The rural market is the center of Mossi social life, and friends
671 as well as enemies meet within its confines. What Mangin wrote some forty years ago is still true: "Every self-respecting Mossi—man or woman, child or elder—must go to market at least once in a while, were it only to look . . . and to be looked at, if he can put on some
[79] handsome clothes" (Mangin 1921 : 53). Except for the Moslems who
[84] are now experimenting with a form of Purdah, there are few persons who do not go to market. The absence of someone from the market for more than two consecutive occasions is a sure sign of illness, travel, or family crisis. As one man said to me, "I must go to market, and when I get there I look for three persons: my girl friend, my debtor and my enemy. If I do now know whether any of them are at the market I am ill at ease. And when I go to the market and do not see them all, the market is not good."

443 The lively character of the Mossi market will be discussed later,
671 but throughout this kaleidoscope of activities certain consistencies
576 can be discerned. For example, one notices many different kinds of greetings and salutations in the market place, but each one of them correctly indicates the exact relation or relationship between the persons involved. Young girls on passing each other on one of their innumerable circuits of the market bend their knees slightly and place both of their cupped hands on their own breasts. Only then will they stop and exchange news. At the end of the conversation they repeat the same greeting and continue their rounds. Both girls and women greet casual male acquaintances in the same way, but
[562] invariably kneel if the male stops and talks to them. Women some-
[602] time kneel when speaking to each other, but always do so when addressing any male relative of a respected category, who may then send them on errands such as buying tobacco from the vendors. A man who meets a female benefactor, such as a woman who has given medi-
[562] cine to one of his children, invariably kneels down before her. She may do the same thing out of respect for his male status. However,
[604] when a man meets either his mother-in-law or his father's sister, he is the one to kneel down in order to greet her. Two men who are equals normally shake hands, but if not, the junior in status or in age kneels down before his elder or superior. Sometimes a high status man will prevent his greeter from kneeling by raising him. When

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643 636 We Mossi cannot say that the Europeans have introduced chieftainship among us; for we are old hands at it. Chieftainship has always existed among us, and we intend to conserve it in spite of anything one may say about it.

Who better than we chiefs can hope for a rapid evolution of our country? However, because of the pride we have in the organized society that we have known well before French occupation, we wish this evolution to take place within our specific cultural pattern, to harmonize with, and to take into consideration the wisdom which has permitted us to conserve the integrity of our homeland until French occupation.

[185]

Without wishing to place ourselves against the demands of those who are wedded to an overthrow of local traditions, we endeavor to state our position clearly: Let everyone scratch whatever itches him.*

643 178 It is too early to predict what will be the fate of the traditional Mossi chiefs. The factors which made for such weaknesses in their political system—hazardous interregnums and flexibility in succession—have certainly ceased to operate. But, as I have shown, by a curious coincidence, a form of succession which evolved to meet a particular set of circumstances served the Mossi in good stead during French occupation, and is now being adapted to serve the needs of a new political environment. This flexibility in succession may even provide the Mossi with a wide enough choice of candidates to preserve the traditional ruling lineages in the face of a changing political system. Furthermore, this flexibility in political succession appears to be more compatible and less in conflict with the principles of universal suffrage which have been introduced in this society to serve the needs of the developing parliamentary system.

The growing use of Mossi traditional chiefs as modern politicians has not precluded the opportunity of Mossi commoners to take part in the governmental organization of the territory in which their group resides. As a matter of fact, there are a number of commoners who are well educated, and individually have held high administrative offices. However, despite a number of them who have been critical of the traditional ruling hierarchy, they have not succeeded in breaking the strong hold of the traditional ruling lineage on the people. Some commoners have even found it to their advantage to ally themselves

[556]

8: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1958
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Christianity and Islam among the Mossi[1]

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797 THE twin forces of Christianity and Islam are both seriously contending for the conversion of the pagan masses of the Western Sudan. Islam first penetrated this region during the 11th century and succeeded in converting many people to its faith. Christianity arrived on the scene only 60 years ago, and has not had the time to win many converts. However, there remained many societies in this area which were largely pagan until European conquests exposed them almost simultaneously to the influences of both Christianity and Islam. One such society, the Mossi, has been described as the principal island of resistance to Islam in the Sudan (Gouilly 1952:52). André (1924:31) states that the Mossi "offered to the Animists an irreducible rampart against the invasion of Islam." And Delafosse concurs that the Mossi "seem to have been particularly hostile to Islam which has made no progress among them since the Hegira. And although an appreciable number of Moslem strangers (Yarsé) lived among them, they have almost all remained pagans" (1912, vol. 3:187).

The first Christian Catholic missionaries arrived in Mossi territory in 1900, just four years after French conquest. These missionaries were kindly if fearfully received by the people, who gave them land for building a mission and for cultivating crops. The Mossi helped the Christians cultivate these crops and willingly allowed the children to attend the mission school. Nevertheless, when the missionaries tried to convert the children to Catholicism, the parents objected and withdrew the children from school (Socquet 1956:62). The Protestant American "Assemblies of God" mission first worked among the Mossi in 1926, and in 1931 they reported that the outlook for conversions was "hopeful" (Cooksey and McLeish 1931:215). But from 1926 to date, the Protestants have made negligible progress in their conversions. There are today about 155,000 Moslems, 26,000 Catholics, and 1,760 Protestants in a Mossi population of over 1,500,000. These figures attest to the fact that despite a long history of resistance to foreign religious systems, many Mossi are now abandoning their traditional religion. But the figures also show that while Islam is gaining many converts, the Catholics are making only slight progress, and the American Protestants hardly any at all. There are obviously many reasons for the differential advance of these three religious systems. In this paper I will examine and analyze the processes by which these religious systems attempt to gain converts, and delineate the reasons for their differential success.

173 The Mossi who are now feeling the impact of external religious influences represent the unique example of a Sudanese group which has preserved its 105 ethnic identity and political autonomy through all the vicissitudes of Sudanic [186] history until French conquest in 1896. Tradition records that the first Mossi

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643 Moro Naba Wobogo as chief of Doulougou, but this chief was assas-
636 sinated. Thereafter the Moro Naba placed his own brother as chief
175 of Doulougou district only to have him deposed by the French in 1932
662 for abusing his power. Now the Moro Naba again turned to a descendant of Koabga Wedrago and named him chief, but the French also deposed and jailed this chief for incapacity. Finally in 1935, the Moro Naba named his own son, Etienne Kongo, as chief, and this man was still chief when I left the Mossi in 1957. The interesting feature of this succession is that the Moro Naba confined it to three specific families: his own, that of ex-Moro Naba Wobogo, and that of the ancient chiefly line of Doulougou. In no case did Moro Naba Kom attempt to elevate to chieftainship the son or relative of a man whom the French deposed. He named a chief from another one of the chiefly families, and when a member of this line was deposed, he quickly turned to another one. In this way, the Moro Naba never gave the French any cause for thinking that he disapproved of their action by placing as chief a relative of the man they had deposed. This type of succession was only possible because of the flexibility in the Mossi mode of chiefly succession. Furthermore, the district people readily accepted the chiefs appointed by the Moro Naba because he never deviated from their cultural expectations, or violated the accepted norm of succession.

636 A more serious attempt on the part of the French to influence the
643 traditional political organization of the Mossi came when they tried to enroll the sons of the Moro Naba and those of other chiefs in a special school in order to make these boys adjuncts in their administration. The eldest sons of the Moro Naba and of the officials around Wagadougou were all sent to school because they were well known to the French.
636 However, in the rural districts, the chiefs hesitated to send their eldest
643 sons to school. First of all, they regarded this plan as another form of
186 forced labor from which their sons might never return. And secondly,
662 because they also feared that if these youths did return as educated men, they would have been Christianized, and thereby would have been unable or unwilling to perform the important roles which chiefs had vis-a-vis the ancestors. To palliate the French the chiefs sent their youngest or motherless sons to schools, or in some cases substituted the sons

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of their former serfs and slaves who were theoretically also "their sons." 636

The sons of the chiefs and those boys of commoner, serf, and slave 643 origins who had gone to the mission schools became the first group 186 of educated Mossi. The educated commoners had no function in the 662 traditional political system and were readily absorbed by the local French bureaucracy. However, since these persons were not sufficient to fill the administration's need of literate Mossi, the sons of chiefs and even the carefully coached missionary catechists were encouraged to join the civil service. The result of this policy was that almost no literate Mossi were elected to district and village chieftainship before the end of the second world war.

The relatively rapid political development which came to French 636 Africa as a result of the Brazzaville Conference of 1944 and the after- 646 math of the war presented the traditional Mossi political hierarchy with a grave problem: "Who should represent the Mossi people in the new French assemblies and councils both in Africa and in metropolitan France?" There were three possibilities: They could be represented by educated foreign Africans; by the educated sons of Mossi chiefs whose loyalties were not known; or by the potentially hostile educated Mossi commoners. The first hint of the Moro Naba's policy was re- 636 vealed when the Africans were called upon to select delegates to send 646 to the French Constituent Assembly on October 21, 1945. Houphouet 666 [Boigny], who anticipated the determination of the Mossi to support 662 their own candidate, had vainly taken the precaution of sending an emissary to the Moro Naba prior to the September 8 meeting [which the Africans had called to plan strategy]. The Moro Naba proved unamenable to the suggestion that he support Houphouet's candidacy, and insisted on backing one of his own loyals vassals, Tenga Wedraogo or Baloum Naba.[8] This action showed clearly that the Mossi had planned to use educated chiefs who could also represent them in the assemblies. The flexible pattern of Mossi political succession enabled the Moro Naba and his advisers to meet this new contingency. In three districts, Manga, Sapone, and Kaya, the eldest sons of deceased chiefs were passed over, and their younger educated brothers were elected to the vacant chieftainships. There were some hard feelings over the appointment of Sapone, but the reason given was that the new chief was partially blind in one eye. I have no data for the reaction of

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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in the adoption of this currency as the medium of exchange in most markets.[11] The one-franc piece and coins of smaller denominations were those most often used because they were ideally suited to the petty trading that took place in the markets. The franc even became the standard of value in the larger markets, but one receives only 3 local francs for a five-franc note C.F.A. or seven francs for a ten-franc note C.F.A. These changes in value seem to occur by common concensus, since it is impossible to discover who it was that changed the exchange rate. A further fact is that many Europeans remain unaware of these changes since they seldom go to the local markets themselves. When they do go and insist upon the official exchange rate, the "unofficial" market chief appears and takes over the situation, giving the *nansara* ("conqueror" or "master," the way in which every European is regarded) what he wishes.

While the equivalence between the cowrie, the old brass franc, and the franc C.F.A. works splendidly when products are sold in small quantities, I found the system difficult to understand when more expensive goods are traded. For example, when one buys meat, an expensive item, the butcher accepts either the official francs or the local currency and gives change in both. The difficulty here is that since the butcher uses no scales, one is never sure about the price or about the system of value the butcher is using. The most that can be done if one does not receive as much meat as expected is to haggle with the butcher until he adds more. However, this haggling leaves unresolved the problem of the value of one's official money in terms of the unofficial money, and the product which it is intended to buy. One is thus left with the *impression* that there must be an internal consistency to the exchange system, or barring this, that the local people accept the system as it is as a matter of expediency. On the other hand, the vendors of products with fixed prices such as matches, cigarettes and the like appear to make differential profits when they

(11) Mangin (1921 : 61–62) reports that the Mossi had great difficulty obtaining the five-franc piece which they needed to pay their taxes because the "Europeans who live in Mossi country, including all the riflemen and provincial guards do not put into circulation a quarter of the five-franc pieces which are required each year from the natives. At first the Mossi were taken by surprise and had to give 10 or even 15,000 cowries to obtain this famous coin, this *greegree* which was to free them from all difficulties with the white man. And yet at the official rate of exchange this coin is worth 5,000 cowries. Nowadays it is very difficult to find a native willing to give this much for one of the coins. The usual exchange rate varies from 3,500 to 4,000 cowries: the French currency has been depreciated. This must mean that the natives find elsewhere —through trading— this indispensable coin. They know that the tax must be paid every year, and instead of waiting till the last minute, as soon as they have accumulated the necessary cowries they secure the five-franc pieces from those who have fetched them from far away. The coins flow into the country, and the rate of exchange goes down."

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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Mogho Naba Kougri concedes to the administration, and orders his warriors to disband.

[r. 178- H]

[46] Chapter 3

Political, Administrative, and Judicial Organization of the Mossi Empire

I. Political and Administrative Organization

643 The Mossi empire of Ouagadougou was governed prior to the period of French occupation by a supreme chief, the Mogho Naba, who was revered by all his subjects as a "god" and whose territory, in the minds of his people, had no limits. He had the power of life and death over all his subjects.

[192] The word mogho means "country of the Mossi," but by extension it also means "the world." Thus, in this sense the Mogho Naba was regarded as the master of the world.

643 631 It is said that he had under his rule 333 chiefs, naba, among whom were his ministers, the three sogon'kassemsé (great servitors), and some forty petty chiefs called kougzindba, which refers to the heaps of stones designating the place of each minister or petty naba in the emperor's court.

643 177 The authority of the Mogho Naba over his vassals. In spite of the claims made by a colonial official who was trying to free the canton chiefs of one of the administrative districts of the colony from the authority of the Mogho Naba, the emperor's power never was merely nominal. If it has become so, it is a consequence of the intervention of French [47] administrative authority in the politics of the country -- an intervention which has resulted in assigning too much power to certain chiefs.

643 669 I do not mean to imply that before French penetration into the country there were not real conflicts, wars or mere skirmishes (1), but the chiefs who tried by these means to free themselves from the emperor's authority were usually punished for their temerity.

1. In Chapter 1 [not translated]we described in great detail the war waged by the Mogho Nabas Sanum and Wobgo against Lallé. We said also that Sanum warred with the Boussouma Naba and with Boulsa.

567 Dagomba conquest. Both family type and slave status, indeed, re-
326 fer back to the Bobo, Gourounsi, etc.

000 We come now to public powers. We refer the reader to Appendix 32 /not translated/ for a study of property regulations and neighborhood relations, and plunge forthwith into the study of public powers.

631 We already know that the Mossi political organization is centralized. The villages belong to cantons, which are in turn gathered into provinces under direct administration or into mere vassal provinces. At the summit of the hierarchy stands the king, the Moro Naba, the supreme chief of the Mossi, who lives at Ouagadougou. To give an idea of the former importance, or at least relative importance, of this empire, we shall state that in the Ouagadougou
[162] circle alone there were eight provinces including among them 300 cantons, 5,000 villages or small towns, and 861,700 inhabitants.

643 Let us begin our description of this political organism with the head, that is, with the Moro Naba.

Moro Naba means "chief of the Mossi," from naba, "chief" and Moro or Mora which means Mossi in the singular. Moro yields Mossi or Mossé in the plural. (The French have grown accustomed to saying "one Mossi, several Mossi," but this is a barbarism and one should /568/ actually say, "one Moro, several Mossi," just as one says, "one Gourounga, several Gourounsi," "one Kipirga, several Kipirsi," etc.). As for the word for "chief," it is both naba and soba in Mossi. Naba seems to be the word brought by the con-
● [192] quering Mossi-Dagomba group, while soba is probably the word that was used by the autochtonous population to designate chiefs.

645 Prior to the French conquest, the Moro Naba was surrounded by a certain number of ministers or eminent dignitaries who were given 1) specific duties /at court/, 2) in addition, part of the territory to govern. This is what accounted for provinces over and above the cantons, at least in those areas that were administered directly, but the heads of those provinces did not reside there. They lived at Ouagadougou, and were first and foremost ministers of the Moro Naba.

They were:

596 family in marriage. Likewise, the head of the family, assisted by the family council, settles all the little differences which arise between relatives. He also intervenes when a father fails to secure the obedience of one of his children or cannot manage to discipline him.

"It is he alone who must sacrifice animals for the benefit of the whole family when his relatives bring them to him on the occasion of family feasts.

"All the members of the family owe obedience to the family head. Likewise, they must show him the greatest respect.

"When the family elder dies, his younger brother becomes head of the family. When all his brothers have successively held this office, the eldest son of the eldest brother becomes the family head after the brothers, etc.

"Sometimes the head of the family does not live in the same village as the rest of the family. He may very well live with some of his sons or brothers, away from his other relatives, but his powers remain unchanged.

"In addition to the family head, there is the family council which is made up of all the men and old women of the family. This body has no well-defined role. It meets under the leadership of the family head to settle all matters concerning the family. The council would decide, for example, as to whether an incorrigible child should be sent to a naba /ruler/, as to who should intervene /229/ in case of a quarrel over an inheritance, who should seize the goods of a spendthrift in order to dole them out to him in proportion to his needs, etc."

592 351 The compound. —The Mossi compound consists of a certain number of round earthen huts or cabins surmounted by thatched roofs and huts for millet, all crowded into a rather narrow space cut by passages, hallways, small courtyards, etc. This complex is surrounded by a moderately high earth wall (two meters) which encircles the huts or cabins and encloses the compound.

592 361 The compounds are scattered over the plain, 50 or 100 meters apart. Some are larger than others; some have 15 or 20 huts or even more; others have but four or five (2).

192 2. To designate these compounds, the word soukala or sokalá is often used. This word is hallowed by custom in Yatenga, in the Ouagadougou area, in the Léo area, etc., in short, in all Mossi lands and their

● 192

dependencies, as well as in the language of the European officials who inhabit the territory. Actually, the word sokala is not Mossi but Mandé /Mande/. In Bambara the hut is called so, in Malinké /Malinke/ sou. Soukala or sokala means exactly "the walls of the hut" (from kala, which means "bone" and by extension all elongated things, walls among them, and from so or sou, whose meaning we have learned already). This word was brought here from the shores of the Niger at the time of conquest. It is to some extent equivocal, for although it is usually given the meaning of "compound," some Europeans also use it to designate a whole quarter /a village subdivision including several compounds/. This is the meaning given to it by Delafosse (Le Haut-Sénégal-Niger /Upper Senegal-Niger/, Vol. 3, p. 126). As for myself, I always gave it the meaning of "compound" in my Noir du Soudan, that is to say, the meaning which I gave to the term carré or carrée in my monograph on the Noir de Guinée /The Black Population of (French) Guinea/. This word, however, and analogous words which are not strictly native to the region or whose French meaning is not absolutely clear lead to some confusion. We shall return to this subject later.

592 Let us add that the head of the compound is called zakasoba or irisoba (from zaka or iri, "compound," and soba, "chief, master"). Vadier incorrectly designated the head of the total family as zakasoba [596] in his monograph. The head of the total family is the boudoukasaman. The zakasoba is the head of a compound, of a home, of that cluster of huts and millet granaries encircled by a red wall which makes such a distinct and isolated unit on the Mossi plains.

This compound accommodates varying numbers of people, 18 or 19 being the average (with exceptions), as we have seen above.

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343 are tied, placed in baskets, and carried to special huts. These are small straw huts built on stakes, that is, raised on thick pieces of wood, which stand in a long curved line by the fields. About twenty such huts often stand side by side. Both men and women share in the harvesting.

243 Whenever the millet is to be eaten, the heads are taken from these straw huts and threshed with a stick to set the grain loose. This threshing is done by the men.

Aside from the ordinary small millet, it is the large red millet that is grown most extensively, as a rule, among the Mossi. They [199] call it kaziéra or kaziéga (we know that the r and g are interchangeable in Mossi; people will say, for example, either nora or noga to mean "chicken") and the Bambara call it niooulé. The large red millet is the kind used chiefly for dolo.

This is the millet that is planted before any other, as soon as the first rains begin to fall. The ouaka is used to remove the weeds which have grown in the fields, then the weeds are burned and the large red millet is sowed at the time of the first storms (April). It is sowed in the same fashion as the small millet, by holding the koutiaga in one-hand and the small gourd containing grain in the other.

When the millet has come out of the ground, a fortnight /469/ is allowed to elapse and then the weeds are cleared with the ouaka. When the millet is grown, the women and children are sent out to protect it against birds. The millet is ripe around September 1.

The bulk of the harvesting work is done by the men. The stalks, which are usually 3 meters high and which may even reach 4 are cut down at the base. Once they have been dug out and laid down, the heads, which are thick and tuftlike with red flowers, are cut with a knife and carried to the soukala. The women do the carrying as they do for other kinds of millet. The large red millet is threshed only as it is needed. The threshing is done by the men with a stick.

Let us note that when a new piece of land is cleared, the large red millet is sown first to find out if the soil is good. It is only in the following year, when this has been ascertained, that the small millet is sown.

The red millet is also cultivated around the soukala, like maize.

[273] As a rule the Mossi use the large red millet only to make dolo
231 (dama in Mossi). They may also give it to horses, but some horses
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364 For the Mossi, as for all other men, life ends in death, with or without illness. The Blacks do not know how to prevent diseases, and they know very little about fighting them. Hygiene is almost unknown. The huts are poorly aired, the chickens and in general all the animals in the inner courtyard walk everywhere and foul everything. The courtyard is swept often, but the hut of the sheep and goats is located in the midst of the other dwellings; the horse is kept within the soukala [514] itself; and people relieve themselves anywhere, wherever they find a convenient spot. The manure is gathered in a heap, but it is kept next to the huts and gives off a nauseating smell and noxious miasmas, especially at the beginning of the rainy season.

515 The Mossi are not dirty, but they cannot be called clean. Those who dwell in villages abundantly supplied with water at all times are the cleanest. The women, who fetch water every day and thus have an opportunity to wash, are usually cleaner than the men. A Mossi never passes a pond without drinking copiously and washing all over, and this would seem to prove that those who go dirty do so unwillingly; they have no water nearby, and it would be too much trouble to go to the river to bathe. Clothing, especially breechcloths, is often repulsively dirty. This is because washing wears out clothes, and who knows when new ones will be available? No wonder disease has such a hold on this people.

855 Child care is quite rudimentary: a few baths; enemas two or three 165 times a day, without which it is said their bowels would not move; and that is all. At the slightest indisposition the sorcerer is consulted, or else the child is left to himself; he will get well or die, and nothing is done about it. As a consequence, child mortality is very high. 758 Those who fall prey to a contagious disease are not isolated. A healthy child lies on the same mat as one with smallpox, a leper drinks from the common gourd unless his lips are covered with sores. People do, however, hesitate to sit where a syphilitic person with sores previously sat. The education of the Mossi in matters of hygiene is wholly yet to be learned.

576 On meeting someone, Mossi politeness requires that an inquiry be made about his health and that of all his relatives. The response invariably is "So-and-So is well," and the other in turn responds, "May God permit his health to wax." It is only after a little conversation that a certain person is said to be ill or to be getting better. 195 It is not said that someone died, but that he ran short of strength, that he passed away, that he left us.

852 Three days after the birth of a male child, or four days in the case
553 of a daughter, the father and mother invite the relatives to come and rejoice over the new addition to the family. On that day the baby's forehead is shaved in a circle, and he is given a name. The husband's sisters or his other wives choose a name for the first child, and the father himself chooses the names of the others.

551 The name is derived from an event which preceded, attended, or followed the birth. If the mother ever happened to kill a chicken, even by mistake, even in her childhood, her first child is called by the generic name for chickens (noara), or else he will die. If the father or mother have seen two snakes in the same spot, the child will bear the name Ganda. If several previous children died, the newborn takes the name Yéwaya, "he has come." If several reasons for specific names concur, for instance, if he should be named Noara, Ganda, Yéwaya, he is called Ywawa, "one with many names." A child often bears the name of an older sibling with the addition of the adjective Bila, "little, younger." Thus, if the older child is called Tibo, the younger one is called Tibila (Tibo Bila, "the little Tibo fetish"). In other words, names are not given haphazardly. Some names are rather pretty: Zuényendé, "he is shy"; Nongabamba, "she loves them (her parents)"; Danimmamyé, "forget me not." Sometimes the name merely indicates the child's sex: Daore, "male"; Poko, "female"; or else the festive occasion or day of the week when the child was born.

304 Just as names are not given haphazardly, tattoos do not vary without reason. The native tattooing consists basically of three parallel lines on each side of the face, running vertically across the cheek from the temples to the chin, with a fourth line leading from the nose perpendicularly to the other three and crossing the cheek horizontal hatching between them, like a ladder; this is the mark of free men and of chiefs' sons. The three vertical lines may also be interrupted halfway down the cheek by three horizontal stripes, and then continue down to the chin; this is the mark of a child who was born
[844] among the Peul because his older siblings had died and the sorcerer had decreed that his mother should give birth among the Peul. This
[197] tattooing is characteristic of a distinct Mossi tribe, which lives among them but speaks a different language—the Marensé, better known as Marka. If a child has a Yarga /Yarse/ mother or grandmother, he will bear one horizontal stripe on the right cheek in addition to the three vertical lines /on each cheek/; this is the Yarsé tattooing.

776 tangandé in every detail either, for only the village may have a tangandé, and there does not seem to be any magic pact unless the sacrifices offered are considered as such a pact, which does not seem justified. The tangandé-animal is never sacrificed, and no special initiation takes place.

774 761 [775] The closest thing to totemism among the Mossi seems to be their concept of the human soul, and yet it is not, properly speaking, a totem in the sense indicated by these authors. Every man has a soul that lives on after death and takes the name of kyma, while during life it is called siga. Shortly before death it takes the name of toullé /85/ in Ouagadougou or toundo in Koupela, but siga, toundo, kyma [197] are one and the same thing, one and the same principle. According to the Mossi, this soul is an animal, invisible of course, a snake, a crocodile, a deer, a hare. The soul is related to this animal, it belongs to the same family, so that to kill a snake or a crocodile in a village where the soul of the inhabitants is a snake or a crocodile is to kill an inhabitant of the village; every individual related to the snake has a snake in the village to represent thim, and he will die when his soul-animal dies.

774 784 Yet, and this runs counter to the definitions of totemism, the individual expects no aid from this animal, never sacrifices to it, and never kills it himself to renew the kinship pact. A person whose soul is a crocodile is forbidden to kill crocodiles in his own village, but he may kill them elsewhere, although he may never eat them, while he may kill the tangandé animal as long as he does so outside the tangandé, and he may eat it at any time. Some people, when they [766] find a dead soul-animal of their family near their village, render it funeral honors, weep, wail, and bury it as one of their own, but they offer it no gifts and hold no koure. Generally it is merely covered with earth. The most widespread soul-animals are a kind of snake (bosombodro) and the crocodile. Several families may have the same [502] one, and marriage, although exogamic, is not forbidden between members of these families.

774 754 The soul may leave the body and in fact leaves it often, especially during the night. If children had a good time in a certain place, if they enjoyed themselves at someone's house, the soul returns there at night. This is when the worst is to be feared from the sorcerers; they may seize the soul by surprise, and its unfortunate owner will die.

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1. Actually, these "Arab chroniclers" is simply Es-Sadi, the author of Tarikh-es-Soudan /History of Sudan/, who wrote as late as the seventeenth century. As a matter of fact, it was the Portuguese writer, the great historian and geographer, Jean de Barros, author of l'Asia (1552-53), who was the first to reveal the existence of the Mossi in the sixteenth century. Léon, the African, did not know of them, nor did the Arab geographers and historians of the Middle Ages. Let us add that one should verify exactly in the area whether the Mossah resemble the Mossi other than by name. The matter has become relatively easy since the French occupation of the Cameroons.

171 Captain Lambert adds in a note:
174 "A new question arises here: can one consider the Mossi as being autochthonous to Bornu, or should their long stay in that region be considered as a step in the great migratory movement that, in successive phases, has brought them to the heart of the Niger estuary?

"In the present state of our knowledge, it would be unwise to take a firm position. We shall merely show that the feudal system that characterizes the political constitution of the Mossi can be compared to the system prevalent in Abyssinia. The hierarchical set-up seems to be identical in certain respects; leaders are appointed under analogous conditions, and the election of the Negus is accompanied by a period of anarchy which we also find here and which seems to go back to ancient traditions.

174 "It may well be that this goes beyond pure coincidence. While
● 197 we were in the process of editing a small dictionary of the Mossi language, we took the trouble to find out whether the dialects spoken in Abyssinia were likely to give us some clues on this point. We must admit, however, that the vocabularies of the Galla, Ahmaris /sic/, and Tigré languages that we consulted have not provided us /3/ with convincing arguments. But it is a proven fact today that, from the

viewpoint of ethnographic research, text similarities do not mean very much, and idioms that are not fixed by writing may, within a few centuries, become deformed to the extent of being unrecognizable. While the value of grammatical comparisons is much more important, we have unfortunately had neither the time nor the means to make use of this method. We will, therefore, merely indicate this point of view which, in our opinion, could lead to fruitful observations. On the other hand, missionaries have claimed that the Mossi traditionally would have preserved the symbolic notion of the Christian cross, a fact we have been unable to verify and which, without being impossible a priori, seems unlikely."

After this parenthesis about the distant origins of the Mossi, Captain Lambert continues:

"It is indeed highly probable, and here again, lacking written documents, we have only oral traditions to base our opinions on, that the Mossi people, split up by the impact of a Moslem invasion from the east, must have, through successive waves and losing ground in the opposite direction, spread further toward the west, so that the Mossi-bé (1), who still form several agglomerations in the western

1. Mossi-bé is simply the plural of the word Mossi in Peuhle /Peul/ language.

part of Sokoto and even in the Dounzou circle and who also show striking analogies with the Mossi proper, can also be used as a reference. (Captain Lambert adds in a note: "Among the Mossi-bé we find the circumflex accent which would complete the ethnic tatooing of the Mossi as it is today. This mark rightly belongs to the natives of the left bank of the Niger river up to the angle formed by the Dollol-Maouri.") These agglomerations indicate, in a very approximate fashion, the location of the Mossi empire at the historical period that evidently marks its apogee of power; toward 1350, as we saw /4/ in the Tarikh, Timbuktu was conquered by the sultan of Mossi."

The incident to which Captain Lambert refers here is the conquest of Timbuktu by the Mossi (in 1333 exactly, according to the most advanced calculations) (1), which is mentioned by Es-Sadi in

do, the crutch-handled /poignée en croix/ saber."

Actually, we must admit that we know nothing certain about the Mossi outside of Dagomba. This is what I /12/ clearly stated in my Noir du Yatenga /Blacks of Yatenga/ (1917) (1). The move into

1. See pp. 57 and 58.

Djerma is conjectural, and the question concerning the Mossah would have to be settled by an inquiry made in the Cameroons. At one time I was tempted to connect the Mossi with the races of the south, the Agni-Achanti /Ashanti/, and it seems certain that close relationships exist (2) between the numerical vocabularies of the Voltaic

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2. See Appendix No. I. In addition, a woman called Aoura-Poko plays as important a part in the Baoulé historic tradition as in the Mossi historic tradition. And, although the word for woman is oba, eba, bla in Achanti, Abron, and Baoulé, the Baoulé heroine is called Poko, like Poko (woman) or Pokotoéga (woman of the baobab) of the Mossi tradition.

group and the Agni-Achanti group. But can one base a linguistic comparison on vocabulary alone? It would also have to be proven, grammatically speaking, that the Voltaic linguistic group is very close to the Agni-Achanti group. (3) And this has not yet been done.

3. Delafosse says that there is no special relation between these two groups from a grammatical viewpoint. In a more general manner, Delafosse would now like to believe, as far as Mossi origins are concerned, that Mossi residence in their present country goes back far before the eleventh century A. D. Apparently only a band of pillagers and happy warriors, a princely dynasty came

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In connection with this problem, I shall enumerate below the digits from one to ten in Mossi, in closely related languages (Dagomba, Nankana /Nankanse/), and in derivative tongues (Dagari, Boura, Gourma).

	Mossi	Dagomba	Nankana	Dagari	Boura	Gourma
Un . .	Yémeri	N'Dan	Yendé	Yen	Gni	Iendi
Deux .	Yibou	Niyi	Yi	Ayi	Niyé	Lié
Trois .	Tabo	Nta	Ntan	Ata	Ngata	Ita
Quatre	Nasé	Nahé	Anasé	Ana	Anasi	Ina
Cinq .	Nou	Anou	Anou	Anou	Nganou	Imou
Six . .	Ayobé	Ayobo	Ayobé	Ayobe	Vendenta	Ilouoba
Sept .	Yopoï	Ayopoué	Ayopoué	Ayopoué	Nantanasé	Illélé
Huit .	Ani	Ani	Ani	Ani	Nané (ou Nani)	Ni
Neuf .	Aoué	Aoué	Aoué	Voué	Noo	Ia
Dix . .	Piga	Pia	Pia	Pié	Pi	Piga

174 2. The second question is a priori less difficult to solve. It concerns the time when the Yarsé or Ouangarbé settled in Mossi territory.

Marc and Moulins do not agree on this score.

Speaking of Mossi territory, Marc says (op. cit., p. 142), "It was most probably its reputation as a peaceful land that lured the Mandé-Dioula /Diula/ or present-day Yarsé about the middle of the eighteenth century. According to the native traditions summarized by Binger, some Mandé-Dioula who were established in Ségou and who had taken a stand against N'Golo, victor over Sogoné, fled in fear of retaliation after the death of Sogoné in 1754 and came to settle among the Mossi. N'Golo attempted to pursue them, and twice came and attacked the Mossi. Both expeditions failed, and N'Golo died in the course of the second one in 1787."

/465/ According to Marc, the Yarsé would thus be Mandé-Dyoula /sic/ from Ségou who settled in Mossi territory in the eighteenth century. Moulins has quite a different idea.

The Mossi grow tobacco in fields around their
248 4 INTRODUCTION
249 homesteads, where they also cultivate their most important cash crops, cotton and indigo, which are used in the manufacture and dyeing of cotton cloth.

136 The wild fauna of Mossi country include several species of antelope, deer, monkeys, rabbits, snakes, and wild pigs. Elephants roam the beds of rivers and streams and often destroy cultivated fields, while lions and hyenas distress the people by attacking livestock. The pools and rivers of Mossi country are inhabited by turtles, crocodiles, and various species of scaled and scaleless fish. Chickens, muscovy ducks, and half-domesticated guinea fowl are the most valuable species of birds.

231 The Mossi have long been famous for their splendid donkeys and
[492] horses. Donkeys are sometimes ridden, but they are used primarily as
[439] beasts of burden. Horses are important for military and ceremonial purposes and for export to the tsetse-fly zones to the south. The Mossi raise two main types of cattle: a zebu-like animal in the northern regions and a
[439] dwarf variety in the south. These animals are raised primarily for their milk and for export, and are seldom killed for meat until they are fairly old. Goats and sheep provide the main source of meat. Hog-raising is not wide-
[771] spread, and seems to be declining in importance with the increased ob-
[178] servance of Islamic food taboos, which is on the uprise even among people who are still pagans.

135 The subsoil of Mossi country is not well known, but so far there have been no major discoveries of mineral deposits. The only known gold field
[301] remained unworked in aboriginal times. The Mossi do not like to wear
[325] gold ornaments, preferring jewelry worked from imported copper and
[439] silver. The northern Mossi worked their local iron in aboriginal times, but those in the south obtained this metal from caravan traders.

175 The nineteenth-century reports of Barth and other European travelers
439 indicate that the Mossi conducted a rather extensive foreign trade. At least
[443] six caravan routes passed through their territory, and traders such as the Hausa and Mandingo visited the important Mossi trading centers at Yako, Pouitenga, and Ouagadougou, where they exchanged Saharan and forest products for Mossi livestock and cloth.[3]

101 The Mossi belong to the Voltaic culture area, a name given by Delafosse to the regions drained by the Black, Red, and White Voltas and their tributaries. The area embraces parts of Mali, the Ivory Coast, Dahomey, the Upper Volta, and northern Ghana.[4] It includes a vast congeries of peoples such
[197] as the Dagomba, Mamprusi, Dagari, Birifo, Senufo, Gurmanche, Gurunsi, Lobi, Bobo, Tallensi, Konkomba, Dogon, Somba, Fulse, and Ninisi, all of whom speak languages belonging to the Gur or Moshi-Grunshi group of

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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the Niger-Congo family of African languages.[6] Like the Mossi, these groups are primarily horticultural; cereals are their main crops, and they cultivate yams where conditions permit. Their social organization takes both patrilineal and matrilineal forms. The veneration of ancestors lies at the core of their religious beliefs, but the existence of an otiose high god whose name contains the root *We* (*Ouennam, Win, Wene,* etc.) is also recognized. There are also tutelary spirits, the chief one being a female earth deity associated with We and called *Tenga* (also occurring as *Teng, Tena,* and *Ten*). The *Tengsobadamba,* who are priests or custodians of the earth shrines, are found among all the groups in the Voltaic family, and they often share leadership with more secular chiefs called *Naba, Na,* or *Nab.* Most of the ruling clans of the Voltaic groups claim common ancestry and acknowledge the same totems.[8]

The only glaring dissimilarity between these Voltaic peoples, and the one with which this study is primarily concerned, lies in the realm of political organization. Some are united into large kingdoms, while others form small acephalous groups. Delafosse makes the following generalizations about the smaller groups:

> It may be said of these people that, as a whole, they have remained quite primitive. With a few exceptions, they have not reached any significant level of political development; as a rule, they have not progressed beyond family unity. Although they neighbor on well-organized and powerful states such as the Mossi empires and the kingdoms of the Gourma and Bergo, which are inhabited by populations of the same ethnic group, they have derived little benefit from this proximity; some of them have been absorbed as subjects or vassals by these states, while others have remained on the outside, and seem to have but one purpose, the forceful preservation of their fierce but sterile independence. . . . Attachment to the land seems to be the only solid and fecund institution in their chaotic society.[9]

Rattray believes that the development of such highly organized political systems as those of the Mossi, Dagomba, and Mamprusi may be traced to "small bands of strangers." He thinks that the outsiders were better armed, better clothed, and familiar with the rudiments of Islam, and that since they knew about the institution of kingship, they were able to "superimpose upon the primitive tribes among whom they settled a new and unheard-of political conception, namely the idea of territorial and secular leadership in place of the immemorial institution of a ruler who was the high priest of a totemic clan and dealt only in spiritual sanctions." Nevertheless, Rattray is not certain that the Voltaic groups would not have evolved complex political systems if they had been left to themselves. He makes the significant statement that if the subjugation by the bands of strangers had not

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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8. Cf. Marc, p. 156.
9. Cf. Fortes, pp. 258–71.
10. Skinner, "The Diffusion of Islam," pp. 659–69.
11. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Soudan*, pp. 585–86.
12. Dim Delobson, p. 205.
13. Crozat, p. 4820.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 4822.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 4835.
16. Binger, I, 452.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 456.
18. *Ibid.*, pp. 452–56.
19. Archives, Document 15G-190 (1897–98). Instructions left to Captain Scal by Destenave, June 1897.

CHAPTER NINE

1. Marc, p. 17.
2. Barth, III, 595. Although it is possible that the Wolof prince Bemoy did hear about the Mossi, he was mistaken about the name of their ruler. Interestingly enough, the title "Ogane" is not too dissimilar from Hogon, the title of head men among the Dogon (Habe or Kado) whom the Mossi had pushed into the hills of Bandiagara. Cf. Bascom, p. 24.
3. Barth, III, 606.
4. Bowdich, p. 180.
5. Dupuis, Appendix CVII.
6. Clapperton, II, 323.
7. Barth, III, 643–49. As cited earlier, Barth states that the Portuguese got reports about the Mossi in the year 1533 "from the wrong side, namely from Benin." This may not have been altogether "the wrong side," however, for Barth gives us data on caravans from Mossi country to Sansane Mango in Togoland that indicate how news about the Mossi might have traveled from the interior to Benin city in Nigeria.
8. Koelle, p. 6. Dixon, who seems to have been one of the few captured Mossi sold to the West, reports: "Mose is west of Gurma, east of Andemtenga, where a different language is spoken. Mose is also two days journey from Butmera, where the same language is spoken; four days from Bulega [Bolga tanga], the language still the same, and confederate with Kambonse, i.e. Asante; two days from Yaongo, with still the same language; six days from Bosanse which is at enmity with Mose and where people bore their lips, and often tie them together with grass, and whose language is different from Mose; four days from Busma also a different language, and in which country there is a very high mountain (Tanga) from which those who ascend never come back again [probably a reference to Plimpikou, the Mossi holy mountain]; three or four weeks from Kambonse, i.e. Asante. Kupeala is four days from Wardyga [Ouagadougou] the Mossi capital, whither the king of Asante often sent presents; and one month from Salak [Salaga], an Asante town, where they bring kola nuts."
9. Marc, p. 30.
10. Great Britain, Parliamentary papers xlvi, 1882.
11. The people of Nobere, Manga, and other districts surrounding Bere have traditions about Krause, who is remembered as the first white-skinned person ever seen in those parts. The color of his skin was attributed to the fact that, "like the fish," he had come out of the sea.
12. Krause, pp. 92 ff. Although there is no evidence to this effect in the literature, it appears certain that Mossi government officials knew of Krause's visit. They treated most travelers in the following manner: "After entering a town the party is given in charge of a man usually termed 'housemaster.' It is his duty to exercise surveillance over the action of the stranger and to report the result to the authorities. . . . The trader conducts his business through his 'housemaster,' who usually makes a handsome gain by acting as middleman (G. E. Ferguson, quoted in Wolfson, p. 199).

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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market and set up their small tables to display all types of goods from trinkets to single lumps of sugar. And the more numerous young men, who have no goods but have money in their pockets, go to the leaf-covered sheds, place their weapons on top of them, and take seats from which to view the passing parade. Imperceptibly, the hum in the market increases as people find their places and greet one another with *Ne Raga*, the market greeting, until by 11:30 A.M. the whole market reverberates with sounds of drumming, cries of vendors, and the shrill voice of water hawkers and juvenile vendors. Now the market is in full swing.

From midday until about 3:30 P.M., the Mossi market is a sea of humanity—talking, laughing, arranging rendezvous, quarreling, selling, buying, parading, and (where youngsters are concerned) often crying for want of money to buy a desired object. The return of migrants lends additional color and excitement to the market as these young people walk about in their new clothes, encouraging the drummers to sing louder praises, the maidens to feel jealous of the clothes of the migrants' female relatives, the former migrants to reminisce about the days when they too had bright new clothes, and the young boys to dream of going off one day to obtain the things they need.

Men, noting that their female relatives are spending too much time looking over the wares of a vendor of European products or of the kola-nut seller, wander over ostensibly to help in the purchase but really to prevent love affairs. The failure to observe such a precaution may be the cause of the shouting a man hears in the distance, and off he hurries to see whether a lineage brother or a friend may need his aid. He may either get into the battle himself, or aid the Raga Naba and the other elders to chase the battlers out of the market place, or to take them to the chief. This may indeed restore some peace and good fellowship to the market.

Elders, now more interested in beer than in other pleasures, pass the heat of the market day under the beer sellers' shed. From time to time one of them may be interrupted by a young man bringing him three kola nuts, one or two of which are immediately broken and given to friends. However, when an oldster, whether a drinking pagan or a Moslem teetotaler, sees or overhears a young man buying four kolas, he may frown or smile in the knowledge that mischief is afoot. Loud-voiced predictions of the consequences of evil-doing may suddenly disturb the merrymakers as American missionaries speaking in perfect More (the language of the Mossi) appear and harangue the market people. Then, as suddenly, the *Americadamba* depart in their large cars, and the curious pagans, amused Catholics or hostile Moslems who had gathered to hear the gospel return to

773 According to tradition, he had beside him a toabga (a kind of
535 magic axe) and a tibo (a sacred object, fetish).
776 The people captured him and put him in a safe place. But of what possible use could he be to them? Nobody knew. [237] He was something unknown and fearful.

One day the people had gone off to hold the kouré (funeral observances) of an old man and were on their way back home. They were warba dancers. They were all singing as they approached the house of the waongo, who came out. The dancers were terrified and ran away. Only one of the singers had the courage to remain behind.

He went on with the songs and the waongo followed him right up to the house of the deceased, and there he began to dance.

From this it was concluded that the waongo had something to do with funerals. Since that time the waongo is summoned whenever an old man or woman of the Nioniossé (soukoaba) dies. He never dances for deceased young people.

Since the waongo or, rather, the soukou is considered to be sacred and to embody a sort of religion which possesses secrets that should not be made known to everyone, a special language -- [198] a deformation of the môré [Mossi] language -- has been invented. It is understood only by the initiates.

535 The waongo dances to the sound of a special tom-tom, accompanied by songs and praises in the secret language. The dance is of no special interest; it involves more or less frenetic movements, such as characterize most of the dances of the indigenous peoples.

The waongo is always accompanied by a circle of young men dressed in a narrow strip of cotton, decorated with cowries, and carrying satchels at their sides. These boys make movements with their heads which [238] are precisely like those made by circus [534] horses. In addition to the tom-tom, flute players (wissé) accompany the dances.

535 We shall now speak of the true funeral dance, called warba.
764 It is performed by men wearing skirts, a kind of net shirt dyed blue, and headdresses made of cowrie shells. A long fringe, weighted

304 wound with warm water which often is not scrupulously clean
752 since the gourd in which it is kept is not always washed. The
wound is dusted with a charred substance (made by burning the
[278] bark or leaves of the baguem-baga plant) mixed with karite butter.
It is bandaged with a leaf from the kantonga bush, tied on with a
bit of thread. Once the wound has begun to heal, it is wrapped
in cotton strips. The water used to wash the wound is thrown
into a hole that is covered with a stone.

304 Special language of the kéogo. In order to prevent the Moaga
198 (here meaning an uncircumcised person) from understanding what
is said within the kéogo or between the boys and the guards, a
special language has been developed. Some of its words are as
follows:

Water (kom in ordinary Mossi language), hargo;
Millet cake (saghbo in Mossi), lâbo;
Sauce (zindo in Mossi), kirou;
Fire (bougoum in Mossi), nionom;
Beer (dam in Mossi), sonnom;
A robe or blanket (fougou in Mossi), pilli;
Mat (pinri in Mossi), wanghé. [268]

304 Distinctive attire of the circumcised boys (bankoanga). His
292 costume, wallimba or zougba, consists of a fringed loincloth with
pockets. He carries a rough stick (zâbré) with which he hunts
rabbits and other small game.

He accompanies his evening dance with an instrument called
304 wassimba, a curved stick on the end of which are strung four or
293 five pieces of gourd, roughly circular in shape, with holes bored
through them.

Tom-toms. The bankoensé (newly circumcised boys) dance
304 to the beat of two drums like those used in the warba and waongo
534 (see the chapter on native dances). The drums are called
535 gangango when they accompany other dances, but here they are
called gallyans.

304 Prohibitions in the kéogo. A Moaga (1) is strictly forbidden

1. "Moaga" is used here in a pejorative sense and means an uncircumcised man.

304 day the one in charge of the circumcision, a wealthy Yarga or Mossi
563 who has the means to feed several of the people to be circumcised,
852 chooses a tree to serve as shelter for the operation. Rain need not be taken into account, for circumcision is always performed during the dry season from December to April, when agricultural work is at a
[778] standstill. The tree is surrounded with straw mats, forming the téoo or sacred enclosure which no one who is not circumcised may come near without running the risk of being insulted and often beaten; if he should dare to step inside it, he would be stricken by the greatest misfortunes. The Peul sets out a flat stone, sacrifices a chicken in order to make the spirit of the tree benevolent toward those to be circumcised, and operates on the boys one by one. Drums are played throughout the operation to drown the cries of the victims.

852 For three days afterwards the newly circumcised boys do nothing. They rest and tend their wounds. They remain isolated from the rest
[535] of the community for two or three months, sometimes even longer. Judging by the dances which close the festivities, dancing must be their primary concern during that period of time. They also thresh the millet of those who invite them to do so, but no uncircumcised person may join them, no uninitiated individual may come near them.
[198] They do not speak the Mossi language at this time, but a special tongue of which they learn enough to serve them in their everyday needs. Woe to those who forget and use their native tongue; they are
[551] beaten with switches made of a kind of willow. Even their names are changed, and no one may call them by their Mossi names.

The circumcised boys are divided in two groups, one "male" and one "female." One of the groups bears the name of the hyena (kwara in their language) and the other is called masalro, whose French equivalent we do not know. The hyena group must strain their wits to snatch food, even from the other circumcised boys, who are kept constantly on the alert. The other group makes improper gestures during the dance.

852 The circumcised boys are covered with gray dust to alter their
293 appearance completely. A tail is fastened to the back of their breech-
776 cloth, hanging to the ground. It is made of plaited cotton thread and
481 ends in a pompon. Its function is to drive off the kikirsi spirits, who apparently do not like circumcised persons. The boys walk bent over and leaning on sticks like old men. This is done to test their obedience and to see if they listen carefully to what they are told.

[57] Chapter 4

The Court of the Mogho Naba. Tribute and Payments Due. Obligations of Mossi Subjects to their Naba.

Morning Honors Paid to the Emperor of the Mossi

644 The council of the emperor of the Mossi is held every morning in front of an antechamber called zango which opens out upon a very large courtyard.

831 The Mossi have for a long time regarded the sun as a "god."
196 Wend'pous yan, "God shows himself," refers to the rising of
643 the sun, but it is used in a figurative sense to refer to the emergence of the Mogho Naba. This illustrates the regard held by the Mossi people for their chief since he is compared to the star of daylight and thus to a "god."

The Mogho Naba appears each morning dressed in an ample
643 red robe and with a red gourmousgá (a kind of burnoose) folded and
292 thrown over his shoulders. On his head he wears a cap, a fez, topped with a wazourfou sebré (literally, "silver paper" [streamers], that is to say, silver amulet). Red represents the light that comes
[822] with the appearance of the sun, while the silver on the cap represents the brilliance of the star itself.

Before the time set for the start of the ceremony, the three
644 sogon'kassemsé (great servitors) bring into the courtyard the [58] cushion, nagpouré, and all the other insignia of office. As soon as
[201] the Mogho Naba appears, they arise and make a snapping sound with thumb and index finger to indicate that the naba is coming.

"Wend'pous yan" is also cried out by the gagando and luinsé
[533] (drummers) as soon as His Majesty sits down. The Bend'Naba [chief drummer] is the only one who does not beat his drum; instead, he rubs his finger back and forth over the waxed part of the drum head to imitate the roar of the lion. Four or five young men bearing loaded rifles take their places in front of the emperor.

Honors are rendered to the Mogho Naba in the following order.

1. The Samandé Naba, Baloum Naba, Wedranga Naba, and Simandé Nabila, as well as the Zusoabin'kassanga (chief eunuch and guardian of the emperor's household), are the first to greet His Majesty and to inquire about his health.

644 The arms of the sorone are ornamented with two, three, or four copper
[301] bracelets, often of alternate yellow and red metal. Sometimes they wear them at the wrists and above the elbow, and occasionally both ankles are adorned with thick bracelets or even with copper gaiters which make walking quite difficult but which are prized very highly.
[201] All these pages wait on the monarch hand and foot. If he coughs, they all rub the palms of their hands together and snap their fingers. This is repeated /18/ even when he drinks, sneezes, or spits. If he rises, the whole court rises, and when he feels those needs common to all mortals, the whole court follows and squats as he does.

644 On important feast days, the naba is followed by music, and every
533 time he makes a gesture, says a word, or takes a step, the musicians
534 play on various kinds of drums. The typical drum peculiar to Mossi country, bindré, which only the members of the drummers' guild are allowed to play, is made of a gourd which may reach 70 or 80 centimeters in diameter. The calabash is emptied, and the side where the stem was attached is removed and replaced with a tightly stretched
533 goat skin. By hitting this skin with his hands, the artist draws many different sounds from his instrument. It is quite an art to play this drum well, and the members of the guild are trained to it from childhood. They are the troubadours, the griot of the country; they sing the praises of chiefs whose genealogies they know by heart, they frequent the markets, they follow the rich and proclaim them to be the bravest, the most generous, the most handsome men this world has ever known, for the sake of a few gifts. They attend all festivities.

534 Another instrument is the lounga, made of a hollowed piece of wood shaped like an hourglass; the two ends are rather broad and joined by a narrow cylinder. This drum is carried under the arm, and its two openings are closed with goat skins joined by cords. The artist stretches these cords more or less tightly by clasping the drum between his arm and the left side of his body, while he hits one of the skins with a small curved stick ending in a little ball and held in his right hand.

The naba's orchestra also includes flutes, from which the natives, especially the Peul, draw pretty but monotonous sounds, and small one-string violins which give forth pleasing tones under a skillful bow.

644 If the Moro Naba is to ride on horseback, the grooms bring his
492 mount magnificently decked out in a copper headstall and a large embroidered rug which covers its back and rump completely. A piece of embroidered cloth hides the horse's chest, and the Arab-type saddle,

[63]
Ministers and Officials of the Court of the Mogho Naba

644 645 Ministers. (a) Ouidi Naba (literally, "chief of the horses," or superintendent of His Majesty's stables). In the old days the Ouidi Naba had the duty of choosing the color and kind of horse suitable for the Mogho Naba. He usually had charge of the horses of deceased chiefs.

202 644 If a kombéré (canton chief) owned horses during his lifetime, upon his death one of them is sent to the Mogho Naba in Ouagadougou as bearer of the sad news. Branches of the tahnga (karite [or shea] tree), wound with white rope, are tied to the horse's tail.

[64] The horse thus presented to the Mogho Naba is then handed over to one of the representatives of the Ouidi Naba who, after cutting loose the branches with a knife and leaving them in the courtyard of the Mogho Naba, leads the animal to Ouidin [section of the Ouidi Naba].

Unless the Mogho Naba gives the horse to someone, the Ouidi Naba is free to dispose of it.

645 (b) Larrhallé Naba, second minister of the Mogho Naba. Formerly he accompanied the Tansoba or Tampsoba to war.

In the section where the Larrhallé Naba now lives, there were once enormous trees whose leaves were constantly astir. When he was made a minister, the Larrhallé Naba said that he wished to dwell at the place "where the leaves on the trees are always astir" (tisse vand'sin y a lag, lag zighin wan). From this came the name of Larrhallé, which designates the section.

(c) Gounga Naba, third minister (1). His section stands in a

645 173 1. Originally the Gounga Naba was the prime minister, and the title was his by right since he was a companion of Naba Oubri. One day, as he was attending to a natural need, he met a very handsome young man and offered his friendship to him; the latter accepted. Later he presented the boy to Naba Oubri who adopted him, settled him at court, and put him in charge of the royal stables. The Gounga Naba then said

The Kombéré: Death, Enthronement

631 763 202 Death. Upon the death of a kombéré two representatives in mourning are sent from the canton to Ouagadougou to deliver the sad news to the Mogho Naba. The envoys are entrusted with a horse or a sheep, depending on the importance of the naba. Tanga branches are tied to the animal's tail (see Ouidi Naba, Chapter 4).

[136] When the first emissary reaches the courtyard of the Mogho Naba, he sits down, taking care to place one hand on the ground and stretching out his arm. Since the very sight of the horse is significant, even before any explanation is offered, the Zusoaba enters the house of the Mogho Naba and comes out again bearing a gourd of water with flour in it (zom kom) which he pours on the envoy's arm.

The horse is then handed over to a representative of the Ouidi Naba who removes the branches and leads the animal to Widhin [Ouidin].

The Zusoaba takes back the gourd, and it is only then that the Ouidi Naba says to the Mogho Naba: "Naba zagl yka sambga le tongalamé (Chief So-and-So has been stricken with such-and-such an illness and has succumbed)." It should be added that before going to see the Mogho Naba, the envoys first inform the ministers of the death of the kombéré.

631 766 The Mogho Naba asks a few appropriate questions and sends the representatives to prepare the kouré. On the day of the ceremony, the Nabitienga (eldest son of the deceased chief) has large quantities of beer and saghbo prepared and sheep and cattle killed to feed the people gathered in great numbers for the occasion.

The house is circled, as was described for the Mogho Naba.

[145] (a) Koupéogo (kouré basket). The koupéogo is a basket, artistically made, into which is put the foutou (clothing of the deceased), [137] koursi (trousers), his pougla (red fez), his néoda (slippers), the zandé (club), and the wed'zouré (horse's tail). This basket is laid upon a pé'gaongo (skin of a sheep) in the zaongo (antechamber).

One of the sisters of the Nabitienga, usually the eldest daughter of the deceased, carries the péogo outside and seats herself at the place where the dead chief held his daily audiences (guéré). The benda, liumsé, and gangando drums are played together, and then

634 721 567 175 3. Finally, a third lot, composed of young girls and young boys, was distributed among the warriors and put into their charge. The boys will be employed until further notice as grooms to the warriors; later on, those who prove themselves useful and docile will be kept. The others will be sold at the first opportunity. The girls will be given in marriage to warriors who distinguish themselves.[24]

721 643 644 701 [645] The military campaigns of the Mossi, in contrast to their slave-raiding expeditions, appear to have been well organized. When the Mogho Naba felt that a war was necessary, he summoned his five provincial ministers and the Tansoba to a parley. If war was decided upon, the Tansoba was given full charge of all operations. This man, chosen from a hereditary clan of warriors who lived in a village called Tansob'tenga in Sapone district, was listed among the Mogho Naba's courtiers but seldom appeared at court unless war was imminent. His duties as chief warrior were considered so dangerous that he constantly sought out religious practitioners for supernatural aid. Nevertheless, a war minister who was good and brave was not expected to live very long. If he did live to become gray-haired, the other courtiers made fun of him by pretending that his graying head could only be the result of his having carried a sheep captured in warfare on his head as a present to the ruler.

701 721 644 [202] [411] Once given a mandate for war, the Tansoba collected his magico-religious apparatus and prepared the requisite sacrifices. He then asked the provincial ministers to notify the district chiefs to assemble with their warriors under the leadership of the local Tansobadamba, who were often members of the Tansoba clan. When the district chiefs received this notice, they beat their *zongagondo* (war drums), and the local administrators sent orders for men to the village chiefs. The village chiefs, in turn, beat their war drums to summon their noble cavalrymen and commoner foot soldiers, who came armed with bows and arrows, spears, swords, and clubs, with or [278] without iron tips. The tips of the sharp weapons were often covered with a vegetable poison derived from a shrub of the Strophanthus species. Some [411] of the men also carried guns after firearms were introduced among the [177] Mossi from the desert region and from the coast. Many carried rawhide [714] shields.

701 726 [648] As soon as the village contingents had assembled and had gathered their provisions, they marched to the district centers. Then they proceeded either to the place of battle or to Ouagadougou. In the latter case, they became part of the royal army and were joined by the forces of those princes who were prepared to honor their obligation to the Mogho Naba. For example, when the French invaded Ouagadougou in 1896, the Boulsa Dim sent his prime minister "at the head of an army to aid Mogho Naba

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went to the home of his Samande Naba, the next to the Gounghin ward, then to Baghin, and subsequently to the homes of other officials. He could not remain long at one place for fear that the ancestors might find him. Every morning, however, when the cock's crow heralded the ancestors' departure, he returned to his palace.

The principal part of the Basgha ceremony was performed on the night when the crescent moon appeared. On that night more than any other, the ruler had to seek refuge elsewhere, because the ancestors visited the palace to accept the sacrifices offered to them by the Pughtiema with the help of the Baloum Naba and the chief eunuch of the harem. The exact nature of this ceremony is unknown, but it is known that the Baloum Naba used the sacred namtibo along with animals and millet-flour water provided by the Pughtiema and the chief eunuch for propitiatory sacrifices to the ancestors. The aim of these sacrifices was to induce the ancestors to grant good crops, health, happiness, and children to their descendants, and to "increase the force of the namtibo."[1] At cock's crow the Bendere Naba sprinkled a flour infusion called *gningmassem* ("water of health") on the palace courtyard so that the ruler might walk upon it when he returned. The Mogho Naba was greeted with drumbeats and escorted to the palace gate. His entry into the antechamber marked the close of this ceremony, and the people retired until later in the day.

The elaborate public ceremony of the Basgha took place in mid-morning. The ministers and important officials, clad in ceremonial garb, arrived at the palace quite early. When the Mogho Naba appeared, the Bendere Naba recited the official genealogy, starting with Ouedraogo and Oubri and ending with elaborate praises of the current ruler. The ministers and their entourage then saluted the Mogho Naba and wished him *Ne tarbo*, which means a happy and prosperous new year for himself and the country. He, in turn, took advantage of this occasion to give many presents to his retinue, and his wives distributed huge amounts of food and drink to the assembly until everyone was satiated. Then all the officials except the Bendere Naba and his group paid homage to the Mogho Naba and departed. The musicians remained at court most of the day, beating their drums and singing praises to their sovereign and his illustrious ancestors. The royal pages kept them well supplied with food and beer, and now and again during the day the ruler sent them gifts among which robes were often included. Whenever the drummers received a gift, they slipped into a rhythmic pattern that signified: *Tompaongo, Wend'kaouss' Naba niore, Wenne wilig vinre*, or, "We bow in thanksgiving for your gift. May God give the ruler long life. May God grant us to be alive next year so that we may do this again." The

645 dom during the interregnum.[23] The latter task was especially suited to a prime minister, since the Mossi regarded the interregnum as the most difficult period in their political life. The Ouidi Naba's administrative tasks 645 were considered so important that he never went to war and was theoreti- 643 cally immune from punishment or execution by the Mogho Naba. This [203] immunity was necessary, because the Mogho Naba had the right to execute anyone who brought him unwelcome news, and often did so. Since the Ouidi Naba announced good news as well as bad, it would have been folly to subject him to this rule. Some reports in the French colonial archives [195] state that the Mogho Naba was expected to follow the Ouidi Naba's advice at all times, and could not veto any of his actions. These reports add, moreover, that if a Ouidi Naba considered a Mogho Naba dangerous for the welfare of the country, he could rightfully compel the ruler to kill him- [762] self. According to Lambert, one Ouidi Naba known as Baba forced Mogho Naba Karfo (ca. 1800) to commit suicide. It appears that aside from waging a long and unpopular war against Naba Djighima of Lalle, this Mogho Naba had seized the riches of his wealthy subjects for distribution among the poor. Moreover, he allegedly dispensed justice without making much distinction between nobles and commoners, which so displeased the nobles that they encouraged the Ouidi Naba to put Karfo to death. Baba sent the sovereign a poisoned arrow and a message consisting of a single word: *ki* (die). Karfo allegedly committed suicide that very night.[24]

Thus, it appears that under certain conditions the prime minister could impeach his "all-powerful" sovereign. We cannot assume, however, that all prime ministers were sufficiently powerful to control the Mogho Naba. Many Mogho Nanamse limited their Ouidi Naba to merely giving advice on affairs of state and insisted that he concern himself solely with his own province.

634 The provinces administered by the five ministers were made up of 635 smaller entities or districts. The districts in the provinces of the Ouidi Naba, the Larhalle Naba, and the Gounga Naba were ruled by the sons 645 and other descendants of ancient Mogho Nanamse. The province controlled by the Kamsaogho Naba was more important. His districts were the wealthiest and among the most populous in the nation, and they brought the largest revenues to the Mogho Naba. The reason for this, of course, was [768] that the Kamsaogho Naba was a eunuch and had no heirs; when he died, all his riches reverted to the Mogho Naba. The province controlled by the Baloum Naba was the most difficult to administer. Its districts were ruled by the sons of recent Mogho Nanamse who felt that as holders of the nam they were free to appropriate the goods of the population. The Baloum

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643 his people. We shall see that these orders ran the gamut from demands for soldiers, tribute, and labor, to requests for sacrifices to the ancestors or to local deities for the welfare of the country.

635 The provincial governors seldom visited the districts under their control
645 more than once or twice a year. They transmitted official orders to the dis-
[203] tricts through retainers. Some ministers such as the Gounga Naba kept the
[634] sons and servants of district chiefs in the capital to be used as messengers. The district chiefs, in turn, used their sons or servants to transmit messages to their provincial governors or through them to the Mogho Naba. The use of intermediaries in the administration served another purpose: it prevented face-to-face contact, with all its potential for personal animosities, from impairing relations between those whose status depended on their political office and those whose status was derived from membership in the royal lineage.

635 Relations between the provincial ministers and the district chiefs were
645 often charged with hostility and suspicion. The district chiefs regarded the
634 provincial ministers as representatives of the Mogho Naba, and thus as
578 persons to be obeyed. Simultaneously, however, they resented this control by social inferiors. They felt that since they were the descendants of Ouedraogo and Oubri, they should receive orders only from the Mogho Naba himself. Thus, while the district chiefs accepted orders from their provincial governors, they never permitted them to forget their social status or to interfere with the internal affairs of the districts. They felt that this was the prerogative of the royal lineage. Most provincial ministers accepted these restrictions on their activities, but nevertheless saw to it that the district chiefs surrendered the goods collected for the Mogho Naba and governed their people well. Sometime in the 1920's, a provincial administrator went to a district and insulted its chief for failing to deliver the quota of millet set by the French colonial government. The accusation of laziness and embezzlement so infuriated the district chief that he asked the provincial minister whether he had taken leave of his senses and forgotten to whom he was speaking. The person who reported this incident said that if the district chief had not been restrained, he would have killed the administrator on the spot.

Both provincial administrators and district chiefs could impose indirect sanctions on each other if the bounds of propriety were overstepped in either direction. A district chief harried by his minister could not complain directly to the Mogho Naba. But he could, and often did, show his dissatisfaction by lodging with another provincial minister when he went to the capital. He would then ask the official to accompany him when he went

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to render homage to the monarch. This attracted the attention of the Mogho 635
Naba, who investigated the grievance of the district chief. If the provincial 645
minister were found to be in serious error, he might be deposed and exe- 634
cuted. The Ouidi Naba was theoretically exempt from such punishment, 578
but it is doubtful that a strong monarch would have allowed even this official to cause trouble.

A provincial governor dissatisfied with a district chief under his charge could, under certain conditions, have him deposed and put to death. He achieved this by complaining to the monarch that the chief was either withholding tribute or misgoverning his people. In most cases, however, the minister could curb the district chief by hinting that his son would not receive a recommendation as successor to the nam of the district. This was usually enough to win the cooperation of the most recalcitrant chief, if only because his future status as the honored ancestor of a ruling local line would be jeopardized if he rebelled. These sanctions were thus sufficient to ensure satisfactory relations between the provincial ministers and their district chiefs, at least on the surface. This was to the advantage of both groups, [687] since in the final analysis the failure of either to administer or rule well might result in the death penalty.

Many districts and villages in Ouagadougou were administered not by 634
the provincial ministers but by officials directly responsible to the Mogho 621
Naba. The districts in question were often ruled by close relatives of the Mogho Naba or by persons who had gained his good graces. The villages [567] were often inhabited by slaves and governed by headmen who were themselves slaves. Like the other territories of the Mogho Naba, these districts and villages were not physically contiguous. The districts were mixed in with districts administered by the provincial ministers, and the villages stood within the territorial boundaries of district chiefs. Whenever the [203] Mogho Naba wanted to communicate with a chief of such a village or district, he sent one of his retainers. The chiefs, in turn, used their own people to send messages and goods to Ouagadougou. The general administration of these districts and villages differed little from that of the territories administered by the provincial ministers. The main difference was that the Mogho Naba took a greater interest in their everyday affairs. This called for greater efficiency on the part of local officials; for they, like the other chiefs, faced the penalty of deposition and death for maladministration.

Of all Mossi officials, the district chiefs had the most difficult admini- 634
trative task. They were in direct contact with the people, and thus ran a greater risk of being charged with misgovernment. Countless district chiefs [687] were deposed and executed because they had allegedly disobeyed or rebelled

634 to those found at the court of Ouagadougou: Baglere Naba, Dapore Naba, Pwe Naba, Samande Naba, Ouedrange Naba, Raga Naba, etc. However, the officials who bore the same titles as the chief administrators of the Mogho Naba did not necessarily serve in the same capacity. A local historical event often determined which official held which administrative task. In Nobere, the Ouidi Naba and the Tansoba were the two principal administrators. The Ouidi Naba administered those villages north and west of Nab'tenga (the chief's village), and the Tansoba administered the villages south and east of it. The Baloum Naba and other officials had no villages under their jurisdiction, but performed many valuable services for the chief.

Administrative processes on the district level were not as formal as in the capital. Except on Fridays and on important occasions, the district administrators visited the chief's compound only when summoned or when they had an important matter to discuss. (Of course, those administrators who formed part of his unofficial council could visit him at any time.) Their problems differed little from those of the Ouagadougou officials, except that their personal problems were greater, owing to the intimacy of the smaller area. The differences in status between non-noble administrators and noble relatives of the district chief were more keenly felt and caused more difficulties. Whereas the provincial administrator seldom met the district chiefs, the district administrators regularly met nobles in the market place, at ceremonies, and in the course of their everyday work. The latent conflict between official status and royal rank often broke out openly. When it did, the nobles of a village would refuse to obey the orders the administrators had transmitted to their village chief. This compelled the district chief either to summon the nobles for an explanation of their behavior or to use his own relatives to transmit orders to them. He did not like to take either course of action, especially the latter, because both violated hierarchical procedure. Furthermore, when he sent a near relative to a village, the relative often demanded goods and services not authorized by the district chief. Of course, not all the nobles made the administrator's task difficult, but enough of them did to cause him anxiety.

The duties of the district administrators fell into several categories. [203] First, it was their task to transmit to the village chiefs orders which the [622] Kombere Naba had received from the Mogho Naba concerning warfare, special gifts and tribute, and nation-wide ceremonies and rituals. Second, they had similar duties toward the provincial governor and the district chief. Third, and most important from the local viewpoint, they handled those affairs concerning only the district. The administrators seldom had

622 had a group of confidants who acted as an informal council. These men
623 included senior members of his own lineage, elders from other local lineages, and personal friends. Again, like the confidants of the district chiefs, these men visited the village chief whenever they were not busy with their own affairs to talk to him about wives, crops, and village matters. Although protocol was at a minimum on this level, the chief had to maintain a high
[613] degree of decorum. As a member of the ruling lineage of the district, he
[565] had noble status and had to be treated accordingly. The non-noble village chief was also respected as a recipient of the nam. But all chiefs, whether
622 nobles or commoners, were expected to lead exemplary lives lest the flaws in their characters as revealed by the intimacy of village life should weaken their prestige.

622 The village chief received his orders from the district chief through the
203 administrator in charge of his village or through one of this official's servants. He, in turn, used his own sons or relatives to transmit messages to the heads of the saghse. If the message was extremely important, the village chief's messenger might be accompanied by the administrator's messenger or by the district chief's personal representatives. The saksobadamba then transmitted the order to the various compound heads. This hierarchy was always followed because, by following it, the officials knew who was responsible for disobeying or frustrating the wishes of the superior chiefs. As on the district level, the orders transmitted to the village and its sections dealt with such things as collecting tribute, picking fruits from the district chief's trees, allocating labor for the district chief or his personal retainers, transferring or summoning cases to the district court, procuring sacrificial animals for the local Tengsoba, and requesting soldiers. The village chief also sent his own messages to the saghse. These messages, however, dealt with such village matters as local sacrifices, quarrels, and court cases.

622 Misrule and maladministration by a village chief were punished either
687 by the district chief or by the villagers. Like other Mossi rulers, the village
634 chief could not be deposed and allowed to live. However, he had a better chance of fleeing and finding refuge in another district. His presence in a strange district did not challenge the authority of the local chief, and he had no opportunities to seize any of his host's villages. In fact, if the refugee was accompanied by a large number of his subjects, his host might even give him land on which to erect a new village. The proviso was, of course, that he should not "spoil" the district by causing trouble. If a village chief accused of maladministration was seized by the district chief before he could
[696] flee, he was invariably executed. If he was a commoner, he was decapitated or even stoned to death; if he was a nobleman, he was taken into the bush and strangled in secret by the district police

Wobogo. However, he did not have to intervene, because while still en rout. he heard that Ouagadougou had fallen."[35] Thanks to this type of aid, the Mogho Naba was able to gather quite a large army, a fact that contradicts Crozat's belief that the Mogho Naba was a "king without an army."[36]

The early Mogho Nanamse used to accompany their armies into the field, but this practice was later abandoned and was revived periodically only by the more adventurous rulers. (The last ruler to die in warfare was Mogho Naba Doulougou [ca. 1800].) However, it was the Mogho Naba's duty to greet the army when it came to Ouagadougou, to beat the royal war drum, and to turn the troops over to the Tansoba. This officer served as commander in chief of the army, and was assisted by the Gounga Naba, a provincial minister, who served as his aide-de-camp. The Gounga Naba was expected to die rather than retreat in battle, especially if the Tansoba was killed. Two other ministers, the Kamsaogho Naba and the Larhalle Naba, also accompanied the army. The later Baloum Nanamse did not venture into battle, because they had to attend to the personal needs of the Mogho Naba. In early times, however, they accompanied their sovereigns into battle and fought alongside them. The Ouidi Naba never went to war, because it was his duty to look after the kingdom. He had to ensure the interests of all the people even if the royal army was defeated, the country invaded, and the ruler killed or forced to flee. The Samande Naba went to war and served as chief of the infantry.

Scouts preceded each district contingent as the army marched off to battle. Within the contingent, the younger warriors marched in front, followed by older men. It was the duty of the more experienced warriors to make sure that the younger men did not break ranks and run under the stress of battle. Behind the foot soldiers came the cavalry, composed of nobles and of the few commoners who possessed horses. Behind these came the district chief, surrounded by his own palace guard. Several heralds known as *yumba* (sing. *yuma*) accompanied the district forces to exhort them to fight. As the men marched to battle the yumba shouted:

> Men! Your ancestors were not slaves. They were men. They were stronger than anyone else. They did not bathe with water; they bathed with blood. Do you wish to return home to drink millet water and eat bread? Never! A man does not eat bread or drink millet water; a man fights. Your ancestors were not afraid of anyone; you must not be afraid of anyone. Even if you are killed today, you must march ahead, beat your enemies, and take their villages. You must not be afraid!

Mossi armies on the march used scouts to keep a sharp lookout for the enemy or for any evidence that he was aware of impending attack. The tactics these scouts used to avoid detection, such as camouflaging themselves

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worked for the Mogho Naba in and around the palace courtyard, and in the fields. They also kept his herds and provided him with animals from their own herds. Like the Dapore, they were seldom sold, but they often had to give their sons and daughters to the Mogho Naba.

The last group of persons who contributed their services to the Mogho Naba were the Kamboinse. Their origin is also unclear. Most of my respondents claimed that the Kamboinse and their chief first came to Ouagadougou from the direction of the Gold Coast, that they bore guns, and that they offered their services as guards to the Mogho Naba.[21] Later on, the sovereign allegedly assigned slaves to the Kamboinse unit, with the result that the entire group eventually took on a serf-like character. The Kamboinse guarded the Mogho Naba's palace and seized for him the goods of persons whom he condemned to death.

The services performed for the Mogho Naba by his pages and other youthful retainers also contributed significantly to the support of his administration. We have already seen how these young men and boys took care of his every need and functioned as important messengers within the royal household. The Mogho Naba also had control over the daughters of his serfs, whom he used to obtain revenue from aliens and subjects alike. Periodically, the Mogho Naba gave one of these girls as pughsiudga to a man, thus obligating him to render goods and services to the court. Moreover, the man had to return the eldest daughter he had by this wife to the Mogho Naba as a future pughsiudga. In this way, the sovereign had a revolving store of women through whom he could bind men to himself in a nexus of obligations, and from whom he eventually received additional women.[22]

The provincial ministers of the Ouagadougou kingdom occupied such a strategic position within the central administration that anyone rendering gifts or tribute to the Mogho Naba always gave presents to them as well. Their main source of revenue, however, came from the villages under their direct control, and from the retainers who lived in their compounds and in their wards in the capital. The economic relations between the ministers and their villages were similar to those between the district chiefs and their villages, and will be discussed below. The retainers, serfs, and slaves who served these ministers provided them with many of the services their counterparts rendered to the Mogho Naba. They kept their houses in repair and provided them with firewood and with fodder for their horses. Many of them also cultivated fields for their masters. Whenever the ministers needed extra goods or services, they called on those persons who lived in their compounds or in their wards. For example, hun-

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837 man even refrains from making overtures to a woman whose husband's female relatives may be married to a member of his own
[619] lineage. He fears that a wronged husband may have the wives of his
[613] lineage brothers recalled, thus causing dissension within and between the two lineages. If none of these complications are present, a man seeks out a person who knows the woman and sends a message de-
[431] claring his intentions. If the response is favorable, the man then buys
[801] four large kola nuts (four being the number for a woman), wraps them together with 44 francs, and send them to his lady. This procedure may be followed on subsequent market days without the two parties ever coming into direct contact with each other. Finally, however, a rendezvous is arranged, and on the pretense of leaving the market to visit a relative for several days, the woman goes instead to her lover's village.

837 These casual affairs started at the market sometimes become quite
586 serious, and if for any reason they are sanctioned by the relatives of either the man or the woman, they often lead to the breakup of a
[443] marriage. And since the market is the place where disputants of any
[574] sort most likely come into contact, it is here that fights over "stolen" wives break out.

837 This pattern of extramarial relationships centering around the
443 market place is so common among the Mossi that the younger men, and even some of the older ones, are disappointed with the "market" when their mistresses do not appear. Mossi men who sit under the shelters around the market place can usually give an inquirer not only the name of a woman, the name and village of her husband and father, but also the name and village of her paramour. Characteristically enough, they are always "ignorant" of the escapades of their own
593 female relatives or of the wives of their lineage members. The only
443 time when men act as though their relatives might be involved in extramarital affairs is when for some purpose or another a man has to recall a wife or daughter who has gone to visit a relative in another village or district. Regardless of how pressing the problem may be, a man will seldom go directly to his father-in-law's house to recall the woman. He goes to the market nearest to his in-laws' village, and seeks his wife there. If he does not find her or any of her relatives, he goes to the part of the market in which people from her village sell their products and sends a message to her family that he will come for her the next day, or that he would like her to come home.

443 A market place is also one of the best places to look for news of a
203 runaway wife, or of any stranger in an area. The Mossi say that women have footprints like an elephant in that they can be found quite easily, but that the footprints are always clearest in the market.

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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What this really means is that the market is the main communication center of Mossi society and news of happenings in the region can be heard there. If a person is in an area one can be sure that the people in the market will know about him, or that he will sooner or later visit the market.

The young men who have returned from work in the cacao fields or towns of Ghana and the Ivory Coast add a great deal of color and excitement to the rural markets of contemporary Mossi country. During the time these young men spend away, they give a great deal of thought and planning to the show they hope to put on when they make the grand tour *(mane do)* of their district's market place. The best day for this is the day of the "great market" and regardles of what day many migrants return to their homes, they wait for that Friday before they show themselves publicly.

On the morning of that day, the typical migrant dresses in his best clothes, lends the remainder of his wardrobe to relatives, and together they go to pay homage to the chief during the morning ceremony *(Wend pous yan)*. The migrant offers the chief such presents as a small amount of money, an article of clothing or kola nuts, and replies to the chief's questions about the health and welfare of all Mossi in the area whence the migrant came, the whereabouts of "lost" migrants, the nature of the work the migrants were doing, and so on. As soon as the young man receives the chief's permission to leave, he goes to the market where he is quickly surrounded by *griots* who accompany him in periodic circumambulations of the market place, drumming and singing praises in honor of his ancestry. The migrant is also greeted warmly by his many friends to whom he then gives presents of money, beer and kola nuts. He acknowledges the general praise for having brought goods and clothing for his relatives and takes pride in seeing these relatives dressed in the cloths and clothing he has brought them. If young and unmarried, the migrant also seeks to take advantage of his new-found importance to make the first overtures to available young women or to renew his relationship with former paramours. Towards evening before going home, he rewards the *griots* with money and bear. Many a migrant attempts to prolong this feeling of grandeur by visiting other markets and by dressing up on subsequent grand market days, but after a few weeks he is re-incorporated into the ordinary market routine, and has to make room for the other newly-arrived migrants.

The market is also the place where important rites marking the changing social status of individuals are carried out. Under normal circumstances, the ceremonies attending the birth of a Mossi child are performed at home. When a woman has a number of stillbirths or

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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443 554 776 782 due to the bickering, quarreling and even fighting they have to prevent by cooling the tempers of the market people—that they become quite angry. When the spirits are not satisfied, they fail in their tasks and real trouble breaks out in the market, disrupting the trading; and if they are not pacified they may even cause the death of the market officials.[12]

In the days before the market officials were banned, these sacrifices were performed regularly. At that time the Raga Naba simply asked the Kos Naba to seize the appropriate animal in the market to perform [648] the rite. The problem today is that since the French have abolished the office of Raga Naba, and in some districts have prevented the chief from even naming one secretly, the markets in the latter local- [208] ities are considered "dangerous markets." Once a market acquires such a reputation, people do not like to visit it because they fear that they would get into fights or quarrels. Not only this, but it is believed that if a market has been without a Raga Naba for a long time, the *tengkouga* there become so angry for being neglected that they kill [123] the first chief appointed to it. This was the reality or belief behind a series of misadventures of which I was the victim.

123 443 554 656 I had spent an entire day in a market, and on returning home could not find my pen. The next morning I sent an assistant to the chief telling him about the loss and asking him to have an announcement made in the market on the next market day that I would pay a handsome reward to whomever should find and deliver the pen. The chief sent back a reply saying that since there was no Raga Naba, he would have the Kos Naba acquaint the people with my loss. On the day of the market, I waited until midday, when most of the people had arrived, and then went to see whether the Kos Naba had any news of the pen. I checked with several of my friends to see whether they had heard about the pen and discovered, to my chagrin, that no an- [564] nouncement had been made about it. I went and told the Kos Naba that the people were not hearing about the pen and suggested that one way to do so would be to have the Binderes (drummers and griots) circulate through the market announcing the loss. The Kos Naba refused to do this, and when I enlisted the aid of the chief's secretary, he, too, said that it could not be done because there was no Raga Naba. I had some notes on the institution of the Raga Naba, but as I did not know everything about it, I was, therefore, frankly puzzled

(12) Zahan (1954 : 371) states that "the place where all kinds of merchandise accumulate and where strangers come is a place charged with forces. In time, these forces build up to such a point within the precincts of the market that some purifications are necessary to liberate them. To omit making them would expose the participants to excitements leading to brawls and compromising the place of the transactions."

551 [134] (b) Kata laghem koagb'kon sirigh tanga. (A hundred
645 barking hyenas cannot shake a mountain.)

6. Kamsoro Naba (Ouene Nongué), Naba Niouga ("cat"). He is chief eunuch. Nioug'nok wendé na pa ne Sabelem. (A cat who trusts in God is sure to preserve his blackness.) In other words, one who is protected by the Mogho Naba, his "God," will never lack for anything; everything will come to him as if by magic.

7. Naba Gnighnemdo (Mogho Naba). Naba Oubri, the founder
551 of the Ouagadougou dynasty, fell in love with one of his own daugh-
643 ters and had intercourse with her. The girl became pregnant and
835 gave birth to a son. The wives of Naba Oubri wanted to put both the child and the mother to death. They asked the girl the name of the child's father, and she replied, "Ask my father, he ought to know." When Oubri was questioned, he answered: "Bassi yan ya mam lam gnighnemdo (Do nothing, this is my own flesh)."

The child of this incestuous union was thus named Gnighnemdo and later succeeded his relative, Naba Nasbiré.

The Placing of Statues at Loumbi-Raogo

211 Ganlougdou. In the old days, upon the death of a Mogho
306 Naba or soon after, a jeweler was called in [135] to make a wax
532 statuette, later to be cast in bronze, in the likeness of the late chief. The jeweler also made statuettes of one soroné, one napagha, one bendré, and one lounga, and all were deposited at the home
[177] of the Loumbila Naba. This practice was suppressed upon the arrival of the French, and it appears that there is no statue of Naba Siguiri, father of Naba Kom, the present naba, at Loumbila.

The acting Mogho Naba is never supposed to see these statues, and the jeweler who made the likeness of his father must not see them either. The jeweler was paid 100,000 cowries, a horse, a donkey,
[135] a cow, a wife, a large robe, and 1,000 kola nuts, and he was then sent away from Ouagadougou. He must never return and must never see the new Mogho Naba.

These gifts represented a considerable sum in the old days, even today for that matter. They were given to aid the jeweler in consulting seers and charlatans for the purpose of prolonging his life. Tradition has it that unless he followed faithfully the prescriptions given by the seers, he would die within a year after completing the statues.

796 sacrificial animals, and they are required to celebrate the festi-
769 val in these villages before returning to Ouagadougou.
782 In the old days the animals destined to be sacrificed were captured in the cantons by horsemen assigned to that duty. Today, however, the Mogho Naba requests his vassals to supply them.

It should be noted that the following Peulh chiefs provide cattle of their own volition and without any compulsion: Komtam Silmanaba, Gombogo Silminaba, Kourgou Silminaba, and Barkoundba Silminaba.

796 Setting the date for the ceremony. A week after the sacrifices
769 the emperor summons the Tansoba (war minister) or, if he cannot appear (sickness or some other chance reason), the Konkosé Naba. This personage must reply to the summons on the day he receives it.

796 The king then assembles his principal ministers and sets the
769 date for the celebration of the tinsé, twenty or twenty-one days ahead. The Mogho Naba hands the Tansoba several knotted ropes
●211 (yoda) which are to be distributed by him to the following chiefs: [149] Sapone Naba, Tuili Naba, and Loumbila Naba.

The last-named chief hands his rope over to the Dapelgo Naba and to the Méguet Naba.

There are as many knots in the rope as there are days remaining until the festival.

As soon as the Tansoba has handed over the ropes, he must immediately return to his village.

The persons who have received the ropes are required to transmit them to the kombemba (plural of kombéré, canton chief) who untie a knot each day.

796 Celebration of the festival. Early on the day of the ceremony,
769 a Friday (arzouma), the ministers and other court officials present themselves before the king to wish him welcome (tabo).

The Mogho Naba presents a loaf of salt (yamss'néré, literally
796 "salt millstone") which is to be divided among the following digni-
769 taries: Ouidi Naba, Larrhallé Naba, Gounga Naba, Kamsaongho
263 Naba, Bougretenga Naba, Benga Naba, Poé Naba, Tampouf Naba, Bend'Naba, and their followers.

Half of a loaf of salt is also offered to the Baloum Naba, Dapoya Naba, Samandé Naba, and Wedranga Naba.

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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provided the sacrificial animals for the royal tombs in the area of the capital, and the Ouagadougou Naba, as chief Tengsoba, performed the sacrifices. The Larhalle Naba also dispatched his servants to the distant districts where royal tombs were located, with orders to obtain (by force, if necessary) the animals for the sacrifices from the local populations and give them to the special guardians of the tombs. Sacrifices were made on the grave of Naba Oubri at Koudougou and on that of his father, Zoungourana, in the village of Zomtoega in Tenkodogo. However, there is no indication that a sacrifice was made on the grave of Ouedraogo, who is believed to have died in Sagabatenga but whose burial place is unknown. Nor is it clear whether, as some Mossi claim, annual sacrifices were made on the alleged grave of Nyennega in Gambaga. As soon as these preparatory sacrifices had been completed and the Mogho Naba had been notified, preparations were made for the celebration.

The Mogho Naba met with the Larhalle Naba, and the date of the Tense was set for twenty-one days after the meeting. On the following day, the Larhalle Naba made five cords out of tree bark and tied nineteen knots in each of them. The next day, he gave each provincial minister a cord to send to the districts in his province. The provincial ministers then sent their messengers with the cords to the districts, with orders to untie one knot every day the cords were in transit. Thus a district chief, counting the number of knots in the cord on the day it reached him, knew how many days were left before the Tense. As soon as the entire kingdom had been notified of the festival, the envoys returned to Ouagadougou and returned the cords to their ministers.

On the Friday morning before the Tense, the Larhalle Naba went to the palace. Kneeling before the monarch, he untied the last knot on each cord to indicate that the ceremony would begin on the morrow. To acknowledge this fact, the Mogho Naba distributed bars of salt to his courtiers and visitors instead of the customary kola nuts, beer, and millet water. Visitors left the court early in order to provide their families with foodstuffs for the celebration.

Early on Saturday morning, royal servants brought huge quantities of beef and mutton that had been cooked without pepper (this spice being disliked by the ancestors) and other foods, and deposited them in large heaps in the courtyard. Nearby, they also placed numerous large pots of millet beer. As soon as the morning ceremony was over, the Larhalle Naba slowly approached the Mogho Naba, who presented him with a new white robe. The minister donned the robe and walked to the piles of food, from which he took three portions of millet mush, dipped them in a specially

8: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1958
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Karême), celebrate the great festival of Ramadan and the lesser festivals, and 794
aspire to make the pilgrimage to Mecca. Most of the Moslems can lead prayers, but only about one-tenth of their number can read and recite the Koran. [212]
However, today the masters (*karasambas*) of the 32 Koranic schools in the district are endeavoring to instruct the many boys and few girls in reading the [871]
Koran and understanding Moslem theology.

The Karême is observed by most adult Moslems in the community with the exception of invalids and working men. Moslems say that the fast is intended to turn the minds of the people to God, and they distinguish between the Moslems "of the mouth" who break the fast and those "of the heart" who [184]
fast until Ramadan. The crescent moon of Ramadan is greeted with guns and general rejoicing and the following morning the Moslems gather at the tomb of Ngado to give praises to God; during the rest of the day they pay homage to the chief and visit their friends. However, a change in the traditional observance of Ramadan is expected, because one of the Moslem leaders objects to the [178]
ceremony at the tomb of Ngado. He feels that some Moslems are beginning to regard the tomb of the first Moslem as an earth shrine or Tengkougre.

So far, only five of the more prominent Moslems in the district have made 794
or are making the pilgrimage to Mecca. The first man made the voyage about seven years ago, and is now conducting a Koranic school in a neighboring dis- 788
trict. His brother went to Mecca about two years ago and is now the senior *El Hadj* in the district. Of the two men who were on the pilgrimage when I arrived in the district, one has since died near the Red Sea and the other is still away. One other man left for Mecca and returned to the district during my stay. Most of the pilgrims now fly to Mecca; only two men followed the traditional route through Ghana, Kano, Lake Chad, the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan (now Sudan), and on to Mecca. In general, all pilgrims have used their own resources for the trip, but they receive some help from their lineage brothers and [613]
from the other Moslems in the district and in Ouagadougou.

The pilgrimage to Mecca represents the greatest event in the lives of the district Moslems. When the last pilgrim left, a great crowd gathered at his house and prayed for his safe journey, and some even accompanied him to [621]
Ouagadougou and remained there until he left. The Moslems and many pagans of the district, under the command of the district chief, cultivated his fields during his absence. And when the new El Hadj returned, a large crowd accompanied him to his house with shouts of joy. There he killed a sheep in thanks- [782]
giving, sprinkled the crowd with holy water from Mecca, and recounted his experiences. His listeners were impressed by his airplane flight and the description of Mecca, but they showed the greatest interest when he said that Mecca women covered their faces and that most Meccan men were monogamous. The local Moslems smiled when they heard this bit of news from one of their members, but I have seen them scowl when discussing the monogamous practice desired by the Christians.

The attitudes of Moslems differ very little from those of the other Mossi 794
as regards children and polygyny. They say that they do not believe in the 595 842

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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lowing comment applies most aptly to the situation in Mossi country: "Perhaps the most serious defect in the *conseils de notables* lay in the fact that, consisting as they did usually of older, and often illiterate, members who were without a knowledge of modern administration, they were unprepared to offer any opinion on a matter of technical nature even if the administrator were prepared to consult them." It should be added, however, that there were hardly any western-educated Mossi in the country at this time, and the officials in and around Ouagadougou were not willing to listen to the local people. Cf. Buell, I, 998–1000.

39. Buell, I, 1007.
40. *L'Afrique Française*, XXX (1920), 299.
41. Socquet, p. 62.
42. Soeur Marie-André, p. 236. Her propaganda in favor of ameliorating the status of the African woman led to the Mandel decree of June 1939, which forbade the marriage of preadolescent girls and instituted other reforms.
43. Bouniol, p. 60.
44. Dupont, p. 4.
45. Gorer, p. 149.
46. Cf. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Soudan*, p. 203.
47. Dim Delobson, p. 203.
48. Burthe d'Annelet, I, 288.
49. *Journal Officiel de la République Française* (Sept. 10, 1932), p. 9927.
50. Burthe d'Annelet, I, 299.
51. *L'Afrique Française*, XLII (1932), 523–33.
52. Burthe d'Annelet, I, 301–2.
53. *L'Afrique Française*, XLVIII (1938), 21.
54. *Ibid.*, XLIX (1939), 136–39.
55. Balima, p. 36.
56. Thompson and Adloff, p. 29.
57. Balima, pp. 36–37.
58. Thompson and Adloff, p. 29.
59. Deveze, pp. 184–85.
60. IFAN (Compte Rendu No. 429).
61. *Ibid.*
62. *Ibid.*

CHAPTER ELEVEN

1. The text of the recommendations and of other documents from the Brazzaville Conference can be found in "La Conférence Africaine Française, Brazzaville, 1944," in *Renaissance* (Paris, 1944).
2. Thompson and Adloff, pp. 206–7, and Cowan, pp. 175 ff.
3. Thompson and Adloff, p. 122.
4. Amon d'Aby, pp. 55–56.
5. Hodgkin and Schachter, p. 405.
6. Thompson and Adloff, p. 124.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 33–35.
8. Gonidec, p. 328.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 331.
10. *Journal Officiel, Débats de la République Française* (April–Dec. 1955), p. 2534.
11. Gonidec, pp. 333–34.
12. Holleaux, pp. 18 ff.
13. Wright, pp. 148–49, 178–79, 227.
14. "Manifeste du Rassemblement Démocratique Africain," *Le RDA dans la Lutte Anti-impérialiste* (Paris, 1948), p. 23.
15. Amon d'Aby, pp. 55–56.
16. *Journal Officiel, Débats de l'Assemblée de l'Union Française* (June 22, 1949), p. 769.
17. Cowan, pp. 98–99.
18. Balima, pp. 42–43.

241 tuber, Coleus coffini, which Europeans call oussounifing or fabirama,
262 and which may replace potatoes in a pinch, are cultivated in the soils most propitious to them.

221 The precious karite /shea/ tree (Butyrospermum parkii) grows in
262 most fields; its fruit, prized for its cool and slightly sweet flesh, con-
137 tains a pit which yields karite butter, the fat most widely used in
[388] cooking and to make soap. Around the villages, and sometimes even within them, the néré /locust bean/ tree (Parkia africana) produces
[356] elongated pods; its bark, mashed in water, yields a paste that is used to harden the floors of the huts. Its flour makes a cooling drink when
[272] mixed in water, and it may also be eaten; its seeds /8/ are used to make kalro /kalre in the original/, the soumbara of the Bambara, an ingredient /made from locust beans, héré/ of all carefully prepared
137 sauces. The doubalé and silk-cotton or kapokiero trees spread their shade over the weavers, numerous among the Mossi, and over the talkers who are even more. Bamboo grows well in the damp southern regions, and the palm oil tree is occasionally found. The caoutchouc liana, however, has not yet been introduced.

231 Small chickens run in all directions through the villages, along with domesticated guinea hens. Everywhere in the bush near the huts,
[857] little boys herd goats and sheep; this is the task of youngsters here at the age when their contemporaries among us /in France/ begin to learn the alphabet. The most common sheep and goats are small in size. The sheep have short hair. Sometimes, especially in the larger villages where markets are held, goats and sheep are to be seen with
[439] long legs and long, curled horns. They are imported from the northeast and fattened to be sold as butcher's meat. The height of fashion for the wife or a prosperous naba is to be followed by a Touareg /Tuareg/ sheep, well washed and very white. It is fed on millet leftovers and bean mush, and its mistress often presents it with a bit of salt to lick. In short, it is well cared for and agreeably fat; on some important feast day, it will embellish the menu.

The huts are usually guarded by very commonplace dogs, often ill-tempered, but cowardly. A stick is enough to drive them away.
[224] They are mostly used in the hunt, the great Mossi pastime during the dry season. Domesticated ducks are sometimes found in nabas' households, as well as pigeons, but these birds are not widespread and not within the reach of everyone. Finally, almost every group of huts has cats which belong to the women and which are difficult

852 shaved strips on top of the head, while the sides are shaved similarly
[302] in semi-circular strips. On the seventh day, people who were previously circumcised bring chickens to sacrifice to the spirits of the paths so that all will go well, but the newly circumcised take no part in the proceedings. The children wash, oil themselves, and put on their
852 beautiful clothes. Everything is brand new, the breechcloth, the
292 trousers, the shirt, the blanket, and the headgear. The belt is adorned
301 with a knife in a leather sheath and with a needle case which has at the end a tuft of leather strips with cowries attached to them. They
[776] hold a cow's tail, also adorned with cowries, to drive off the scheuyan spirits who dislike little rascals and people who dress too well. Both wrists are adorned with copper bracelets. Needless to say, this flashy new outfit with its cowries that clang like bells lures the eye and bewitches the young boys, who decide to be circumcised at the first opportunity so they too may eat well and wear beautiful clothes.

852 /44/ The circumcised boys continue to walk bent over, leaning on
[481] their sticks, but their crude staff is replaced with two sticks decorated with burnt designs and tied together. They no longer wear a tail. They go to greet the chiefs, and they thank those who have given them gifts. They walk to the sound of the large drum, since the bindré is forbidden at circumcision ceremonies, and sing plaintive chants to the spirits. They parade in the marketplace and display their clothes in the villages. They dance before the chiefs, and their dances are very
[535] graceful indeed. They dance in unison to the beat of the drum, making the same gestures all together or two by two, varying the figures in accordance with the beat. After seven days the festivities are over, and they all return to their families and take up everyday life as though nothing had happened.

We shall now study this everyday life.

/45/ BOOK III. DAILY WORK AND TRADES

Chapter 1. Occupations of a Mossi

221 The Mossi are essentially cultivators, and it may be said that no
241 Mossi who works at a trade will fail to cultivate his fields when the

221 rains come, laying aside any other task no matter what his profession
241 may be. The Mossi year is divided as described below, and year follows year without bringing any changes in this monotonous existence.

The rainy season from May to October is the time of the hard labor of cultivation, and all Mossi devote themselves fully to the task. Men, women, and children are always in the fields. They cut down the
[805] thorn bushes at the beginning of May, as soon as the Pleiades appear on the horizon and the baobabs begin to burgeon. This is spring (sigu). For this work they use a small hatchet, a few centimeters wide, with a short, easily grasped handle, and a forked stick to fold back the thorny branches so they may more conveniently be cut at the base. The branches are piled in heaps and burned one evening as soon as they are dry. When the first copious rains fall, usually in June, the natives immediately sow the small white millet used to make sarabo, the staple of the aboriginal diet, and the large red millet or sorghum from which millet beer is made.

Sowing is regarded as one of the most laborious tasks, because it forces the sower to remain bent so as not to lose sight of the stretch already covered. The natives sow with an old worn-out hoe, with which they strike the ground twice in order to make a small hole. The grain is carried in a gourd held by a string to the left hand; this leaves the fingers free to seize a few grains which are dropped into the hole. A little soil is then replaced by the hoe. When the rain has soaked the ground more thoroughly and the millet has begun to grow, maize is sowed around the huts.

Following the first weeding of the fields, beans are sowed among the shoots of small millet, and cotton among those of large red millet or near the watercourses. The ground is then prepared to sow rice, peanuts, and native peas. Meanwhile the fields must be hoed incessantly to remove the weeds that would smother the young millet shoots. If the rain is too abundant at the end of June, the cultivators are often overwhelmed with work, and they complain that it has become impossible to keep their fields clean. Gombo (okra) and all the condiments for making sauce, peppers, tomatoes, etc., are planted around the maize fields, near the huts, along with /46/ native hemp and all sorts of gourd plants. In favorable soil, hence only in certain areas, fabirama, manioc, and yams are cultivated in a special manner.

221 Those who raise chicks take them along to the fields in an oblong
235 cage of plaited straw or willow. When they get to the spot where

221 they will be working, they open the door of the cage and the mother
235 hen comes out. She is tied to the basket with a string, and the chicks run around her. If their master finds a good termite nest, he takes it to his little charges and breaks it in two. In the evening he puts the hen and chicks back into the basket and carries it home suspended from his shoulder.

[805] The heavy rains fall in July and August. This is summer (seoro).
221 Whenever the ground is not too soggy, everybody runs to the fields at
241 dawn and works until nightfall. One or two women stay home to pre-
476 pare food for the laborers, whose strength must be maintained for all this hard work. No one may rest. Only the sick and the helpless old people stay home, and even they are put to work, looking after the babies. This is the time when wealthy people call friends to their aid. The owner of a vast field has every member of the village notified — especially the young men, those who own some obligation toward him, those who have an eye on his daughters — that on a certain date he will be weeding his field, and at dawn of that day everyone gathers and labors while the drums spur them on. On another occasion, this man in turn will help those who have worked for him. This practice of mutual aid is very advantageous because a field overgrown with weeds is cleaned in a single day, but it becomes onerous when people must appeal to their neighbors several times in the course of a season.

221 The heavy rains stop in August or September, the maize is ripe,
241 and feasting begins. Roasted corn ears are a prized tidbit, especially
262 when the kernels are still tender. There is one kind of maize, faintly sweet, which when sautéed in butter recalls our garden peas. Everywhere the children and even the elders feast on maize; everywhere people offer a visitor a few ears of maize, which are often roasted on the spot. When the maize harvest is completed, maize gruel, which recalls the famous Italian polenta, advantageously replaces millet mush and brings a pleasant change to the daily fare, especially since gombo is ripening and adds variety to the sauce as well. Bellies fill out, faces glow with health, and as a very natural sequence, hearts are flooded with joy. The end of the dry season may have been difficult because millet was running low; the winter tasks may have been laborious; but now everyone makes up for it. The harvested maize is replaced in the fields by tobacco; its seedlings were prepared as the harvest drew near.

[805] At the end of September or beginning of October, the large red millet is ripe. This is autumn (houpéla). Maize is now too tough

22/ for roasting and is replaced with green millet, eaten raw after being
24/ beaten with a small stick to remove the chaff. /47/ Certain kinds of
26 large millet are sweet and not too unpleasant to eat in this fashion.
Horses grow fat because millet is their staple food and they may eat
22/ as much as they please. Men also profit greatly, because beer brewed
24/ from new millet tastes much better than that made from old millet,
273 and when millet abounds, drink is never wanting. At this time rice is harvested, threshed on the threshing floors, and laid aside carefully for festive occasions.

At the end of October the rains have stopped almost completely.
22/ The beans are gathered and laid out in the fields on millet stalks or
24/ on séko held up from the ground by forked stakes to keep the termites from eating them, or the beans may be brought home and tossed on the séko which serve as shelters in front of the soukala. Now is the time to harvest the small millet, which is dry. The millet stalks are severed at ground level by the men and laid out with all heads oriented in the same direction to facilitate the work of the women, who cut off the heads and gather them in heaps. When the millet has been cut, the women fill their baskets. The largest containers are used for the occasion, and each woman uses her ingenuity to pile the millet as high as possible over her basket, using the longest ears or bean stems as supports, like the Zouaves who vie for the tallest pack. Should the line of women on their way back to the village meet a man known for his generosity, they sing, cry out, and surround him until he throws them a few handfuls of cowries to buy a jar of beer.

As they near the threshing floor their cries get louder, and each
22/ woman comes to the granary and hands her basket to the man who
24/ stands there. These granaries are very crudely built and consist basi-
25/ cally of sticks driven into the ground in a circle to hold up a séko
343 which is wrapped around them. The floor is made up of another séko, usually resting on the ground but sometimes raised on stones or forked sticks to avoid termites. This is where the millet is placed prior to threshing. The granaries stand around the threshing floor of beaten earth, which is located 100 or 200 meters from the village, sometimes even farther. Thieves are no important threat. They may cut
[674] down millet when it stands in the bush, but they rarely steal millet already stored. Only goats, sheep, and guinea hens are to be feared, and they are kept away from the granaries by thorns.

As soon as these heavier tasks are over, everyone digs up peanuts
22/ and peas. The whole family gathers under the shade of a tree, and
24/

221 241 the men bring bunches of peanuts. While nibbling on the green nuts and talking, they all separate the pods from the leaves. The latter are carefully set aside along with the bean leaves. They make ex-
[231] cellent fodder for the horses during the dry season, when the sun has burned off all the grass in the bush.

221 241 356 857 By November harvesting is completed. The sun has already dried out the grass, and the time has come to cut straw for séko and roofing. /48/ This task is usually reserved for children and servants (dakonré). The head of the household tells each one of them the number of straw bundles he is to cut, and every morning the children set off in groups, a sickle on their shoulders. They look for straw on the banks of the watercourses and return when the sun begins to scorch. This marks the end of the working day, and there is nothing to do now but rest. The dry season is indeed a time of rest, and from November to May there are no pressing tasks.

[805] It gets cold in December. This is winter (sapolro). The natives 221 241 gather at dawn around fires of millet stalks, twigs, or straw; anything combustible serves. Every newcomer must contribute an armful; it
[372] is the price of admission to a seat near the fire. At the end of December 476 all the straw for roofing has been stored, and then the small millet is threshed. Every inhabitant of the village has the use of the threshing floor in turn. He notifies his friends and acquaintances as he did when he weeded his field. The millet beer is ready, and on the previous day the women have covered the area with cow dung diluted in water to harden the floor. At dawn the friends arrive, and the millet is removed from the granary and spread out on the floor. This is done with the help of millet stalks tied together in bundles and dragged along the ground with ropes while a man bears down upon them. The flail is merely a stick cut in the bush, a tree branch shaped in such a way that the part which is held in the hand is rather thin and flexible, while the part which is used for threshing is quite thick and forms an obtuse angle with the part in the hand. The boys line up in a row, with the tots at either end; the drummers stand before or behind them; and the flails fall with the beat, crushing the ears of millet and separating the very dry grain from the stalks. All the while the old men sit in the shade of the granaries, talking, smoking, and sewing clothes. When the threshers get to the end of the floor, they retrace their steps and rest, while the old men gather with straw brooms the grain which has been scattered outside the pile.

221 After a few hours when the millet has been sufficiently threshed,
241 the emptied and broken husks are swept to the side. The grain is
476 gathered in a heap, and a strong fellow tosses it into the air with a
788 wooden shovel to separate the chaff from the good grain, which is put in a heap. When all the grain has thus been winnowed, it is surrounded with a ring of ashes to protect it against evil spirits. Then one of the threshers, who is not a member of the family, puts some millet in a gourd and sprinkles it with water. He proceeds to throw it by the handful onto the millet pile, saying: "So-and-So fears rain," mentioning the name of the owner of the harvest and the name of every member of his family. He ends by saying: "When we are finished weeding, let the drought come. When we are finished planting, let the heavy rains come." If the owner of a horse is present, he receives a gourd of millet for his mount. Each of the elders also takes some for his chicken. If this ceremony is not carried out, the millet may not be used as seed the following year.

221 /49/ The women come with their baskets; a man takes one of the
251 brooms and sinks it into the millet heap in various places; then the
[482] men fill the baskets and help the women place them on their heads. At the house the millet is unloaded into granaries made of clay mixed with finely cut straw. These granaries have the shape of large jars 1.50 meters high; they usually rest on large stones, and they are
[343] smoked out beforehand to get rid of termites. They are closed with a lid of the same material and covered with a small thatch roof as a protection against rain, for they usually stand in the open air in the inner courtyard. Millet beer is brought and drunk on the spot while the millet is being winnowed. Sometimes the festivities end with dancing, and then everyone goes home, to begin again another day. The month of January goes by in this fashion.

221 February, March, and April are vacation months, months for hunting and fishing.

224 Actually no Mossi is a hunter, yet all Mossi are hunters to some
411 degree. Since the French occupation, men armed with very primitive flint guns are sometimes seen on the fringes of the heavy bush which borders the Volta and contains large game. These flint guns are so crude that they frequently burst and wound the man who recklessly
224 loaded it with too much powder. These natives know the bush thoroughly and are very helpful to the adventurers who wish to hunt koba, buffalo, elephant, leopard, or even lion, although the latter is to the

226 the sacrifices, these amphibians have no scruples about biting a foot or leg. However, the crocodiles in these ponds are seldom large enough to sever a limb.

In those places where the water is somewhat shallow and flows for some period of time, the bank dwellers make dams of tree branches intertwined with millet stalks. These are placed diagonally to the current and lead to a sort of funnel closed with a net. The fish follow the dam, enter the funnel, and get caught in the meshes of the net.

221 356 The major ceremonies also take place at this time of year.[1] This is when the Day of the Dead is celebrated, when the koure is held. When the first gust of wind unroofs a few huts or at least indicates those that need a new covering, everyone sets down to the task. The thatch cut in December is used for the purpose. Before the soukala, [283] children and youths knot blades of straw with strings of hemp and [857] plait séko. They also go into the bush to cut down branches and to gather bark which serves to bind the branches together. When everything is ready, the head of the household calls his people and gathers a few neighbors. The roof is made and laid within a short morning. This task must be repeated every two years or so, and it is men's work entirely. At the beginning of winter, the villages take on a smart 221 new look. This is when people think of building a new hut, the man who has acquired a new wife, the child who has grown into a young man and who can no longer live with his mother, the man whose wealth has increased by a few head of cattle or a horse. The women fetch water, the children knead the mortar with their feet and carry to the mason the mud clods prepared by the old men. These tasks are not laborious, and they are accomplished with merrymaking.

Now the thorn bushes have grown back, the rains will soon fall again, and already a few gusts of wind herald the coming winter. The Pleiades have appeared on the horizon, and the baobabs are budding once more. It is necessary to take up the hoe again and to sow; this is a good thing, because the millet is running low in the granaries. The working cycle we have described must begin anew. And year follows year without bringing any major changes in the life of the common man.

1 [i.e., February-April. —Analyst]

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776 bush is included in the orderly universe which the Mossi have fabri-
823 cated, it exists at the periphery and is a thing to be feared. The name of this unknown and unowned part of the bush is synonymous with fear. Dreams in which an individual sees frightening images are called "bush
[828] creeping up" (*weogo doore*) or "bush traps you" (*weogo n'yoko fo*). These phrases are also used to describe the emotional shock, the feeling of fear, elicited by the unexpected sight of a frightening object like a corpse or a lion.

Most important among the supernatural beings inhabiting the bush are the twin spirits (*kikirdisi*). Living in pairs or in larger groups, they inhabit the bush, caves, baobab trees, and certain dense thickets of underbrush. While specific details vary, it is generally conceded that they are small, about a foot tall, black like the Mossi, and of both sexes. Their social organization is like that of men: each group is ruled over by a twin spirit-chief (*Kikirdisi Naba*).

845 Twin children are always regarded as the emissaries of the twin spirits.
776 Shortly after the birth of twins their mother takes a present of food to a place where the twin spirits are known to dwell. Leaving the gift and expressing her thanks, she also makes it clear to the twin spirits that if they have any sort of malicious intent in sending her their children they might as well take them back immediately, since she will tolerate no foolishness. If, through her new children, they plan to torment her, they should save their efforts and desist at once. While the twin spirits are frequently mischief-makers, they are more frivolous than malicious and essentially neither good nor evil. The death of newborn twins is accepted with relief, for it is believed certain that the twin spirits have been thwarted in their mischievous intent and have conceded defeat.

THE ECONOMIC AND CEREMONIAL CYCLE

796 A brief description of the economic cycle and the ceremonials which
● 221 mark its phases will serve to illustrate the way the Mossi perceive their relationship to the forces of their natural, supernatural, and social milieux and the methods by which they seek to assure their well-being through control of these forces. The year is usually divided into twelve
[805] moons whose names refer either to the principal economic activity of the season or to a ceremonial which accompanies it.

The first moon of the Mossi year is called "Gambo" after the name of the village which celebrates its first rain-making ceremony (*Tengana*) at this time. Although the rains are still five or six months away, this ritual marks the beginning of the new economic cycle. Each household which possesses land controlled by the earth custodian sends one of its young girls with an offering of millet gruel to place at the altar of Tenga Wende, the terrestrial manifestation of the deity. The earth custodian advises

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Tenga Wende of the desire for a good growing year and gives each girl a small part of the wet earth near the shrine; this represents the now sanctified soul (*shiga*) and is placed under the granary from which the millet seeds for the new crop will be taken. 796 221

Then those who possess land controlled by the earth custodian organize a hunt for his benefit. The following day, the earth custodian visits each lineage which possesses fields in areas of the bush under his custodianship. He is given calabashes filled with millet gruel, which he pours as a libation on the earth, asking Tenga Wende to grant good health, heavy rains, and a successful harvest to the household. As the libation is poured, the women try to catch a little in their own calabashes of gruel, which they then pour as their sacrifice. Because the millet from the granaries of good harvests is lucky, other women want to try to catch a little of it in their own offerings; thus the libations spill from one calabash into another as they fall on the earth. [782] [777]

The second moon is called "Bega" after the ceremonial which coincides with the first labor in the fields, the clearing and burning which precedes planting. After making a sacrifice at his own altar, the earth custodian goes to the residence of the neighboring priest (*Boga*) specifically charged with the propitiation of the vegetal manifestation of the deity. This visit symbolizes the interdependent relationship of the two priests and the supernatural powers which they control. The *Boga* then repeats the libations made during the previous ritual, but this time the offerings of millet gruel are made to Tido Wende, the force which gives life to the plants, rather than to the earth. [793]

A sacrifice to Pogo Wende, the specific manifestation of Tenga Wende which guards a farmer's fields, is usually made after they have been cleared and prepared for planting. Either before or after the sowing of the first seeds, the farmer asks the earth custodian to sacrifice a sheep or a goat to the field deity, requesting good health, heavy rains, and a rich harvest. This sacrifice (*Pogo Mande*) is the final aspect of the ceremonial preparations for the new economic cycle. It is designed to enlist the benevolence not only of Pogo Wende but also of the twin spirits which inhabit the field. If the twins are well disposed toward the farmer, they will protect the soul (*ki shiga*) of his millet stand from the twin spirits from neighboring fields who might try to steal it. Like the ancestral spirits, the twin spirits send a high wind into a field, blowing the ripening grains from the stalk and liberating their "souls" (*shiise*), which are then captured to enrich the spirits' own fields. [776] [782] [774]

The third moon of the year is called "Cundiba Bega." The fourth, which usually corresponds with the European month of June, is called "unaccompanied" (Quizale), referring to the fact that no ceremonial is observed during its phase. The hard work in the fields is begun at this

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221 796 time. "Waraga," which means "first cultivation," is the name given to the fifth. The sixth, which appears in early September or late August, is called "Baca," meaning "second cultivation."

If the millet is not yet ripe for harvest at the appearance of the seventh moon, it is also called "Baca," since the work of cultivation must continue. This choice rests with the chief of the village of Room. The entire Mossi kingdom waits for his decision to know whether the ceremonial cycle called "Basga," which closes the economic year, is to begin or whether the harvest and its attendant ceremonies are to be put off for another month. Just behind his residence is a sacred millet field whose [774 824] grains, as they mature, contain an aspect of the souls (*riim shiise*) of the dead kings of the Yatenga. When the millet in this field is ready to be cut, the next moon to appear is called "Yalem," and the ceremonial cycle which closes the economic year is begun. In the early days of the Yatenga [769] dynasty millet from this field was used to prepare a sacrificial gruel to propitiate the deceased rulers of the newly established kingdom. When it is cut today, a first portion is taken to the altar at Room dedicated to the souls of these early kings. Two other bundles of millet are prepared from the same field. One is sent to the *Yatenga Naba* at Ouahigouya, who is the living descendant of the dead kings. The other is sent to the village of Gourcy, the former capital and the first residence of the founder of the Yatenga dynasty, Naba Yadiga.

The emissaries to the two political centers are accompanied by young people who break off stalks of millet from the fields along their way, adding these to the bundles of grain so as to include all of the farmers of the [769] Yatenga in this offering which symbolizes the dependence of the Mossi on the benevolence of the souls of the dead kings and their living descendant. The millet taken to Ouahigouya is sacrificed at the palace altar of the former rulers. Part of the millet sent to Gourcy is sacrificed at the altar of the spirits of the former village chiefs (*nakom shiise*); the other part is sacrificed at the shrine of the former kings. At Ouahigouya and Gourcy a portion of each sacrificial offering of millet is returned to Room [182] with stalks from the local crop at each place. These are used to make a final sacrifice symbolizing the interdependent relationship of Mossi religious, economic, and political organizations. The ceremonial cycle serves to demonstrate the reliance of the people on the benevolence of the spirits of their former kings for their social, economic, and supernatural well-being.

A ceremony called "Kom Filiga" follows. Meaning "water thanksgiving," it is the occasion for thanking the Mossi ruler, the *Yatenga Naba*, for the wise direction of affairs which has permitted the farmers to cultivate their fields in peace. All village and canton chiefs travel to Ouahigouya to salute their king and rededicate themselves to his service.

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The next moon, called "Tido," is the occasion for a ceremony thanking Wennam, through his terrestrial and vegetal manifestations, for his support during the growing season and for the rich harvests that have been received. Though it is directed by the custodians of the earth, it is their auxiliaries, the Bogaba, who officiate and who sacrifice at the altars to Tido Wende. After they have finished, others may offer a chicken as thanks for successful harvests or for the birth of a child.

At the appearance of the next moon the ceremony called "Filiga" is celebrated, thanking the ancestors of each lineage for their protection during the hard months of the rainy season. The initial sacrifices are made by the village chief both at the shrine to the spirits of the former chiefs and at the ancestral shrine of his lineage. Because their offerings are made to powerful spirits, it is wiser not to refer directly to them by name. They are called *Kikirigó Na Maore*, which means "twin dance." The twin spirits, like the ancestral spirits (*kiemse*), give children. Thus, through indirection a "charged" word is avoided by calling the sacrifice after an analogous but less powerful force. The specific purpose of the first sacrifice is to ask the protection and the assistance of the spirits of the former chiefs during the dangerous period which is to follow. The ancestral spirits of the villagers are then propitiated, and individuals who fail to perform the sacrifices properly may be punished by their ancestors. It is also believed that the ancestors may try to call some of the members of the lineage to join them at this time.

The sacrifices are made by the children of the daughters of the lineage (*Yasenamba*), whose permissive relationship with their mother's kinsmen is paralleled by their relationship to the ancestral spirits of their lineage. The lineage head presents the first chicken for sacrifice. Its throat is slowly cut as it is offered to the "twin" (*kikirigo*), as the "first ancestor" of the lineage is called—again through indirection, for even if the name of the first ancestor were known, it would be presumptuous of his descendants to call him by name. A chicken is then sacrificed to the "old ancestors" of the great-grandfather's generation, to the ancestors of the grandfather's generation, and to those of the fathers' generation who are deceased. As each chicken's throat is cut, the ancestors are thanked for their protection throughout the rainy season and requested to continue to look out for the welfare of their descendants during the months of the dry season which follow. Other men of the lineage may then give chickens to be sacrificed.

The final aspect of the ritual closing of the economic year is the ceremony called "Na Poosum," or "chief's salutation." It is essentially a social occasion. The homage to the central political authority made at Kom Filiga is now complemented on the village level. The elders of each lineage go to the village chief with presents of millet and assurances of

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221 796 their continued reliance upon his political power and intercession with his noble ancestors, in order that the village may enjoy peace through the coming months of the dry season and early rains at the beginning of the next economic cycle.

With this observance all of the sources of power—both social and supernatural—upon which the Mossis' well-being is dependent have been thanked for their support throughout the year just ended and have been encouraged, by the generosity of their supplicants, to continue their benevolence for the year to come. The Mossi understand the nature of these forces and the manner in which they can be controlled. They know them as manifestations of a deity who will reward their observance of ceremonial obligations with the soft winds and heavy rains that bring a rich harvest. The individual is intellectually and emotionally absorbed in maintaining a balance in his relationship to a world he understands. His efforts to maintain this balance are occasionally frustrated by sorcery or the contrary will of his deity, but he enjoys, nonetheless, a very real security.

CULTURAL ADJUSTMENTS AT THE NIGER IRRIGATION PROJECT

177 241 Given the nature of these interrelationships between the organization of economic activity and the social and religious institutions of their culture, the adjustment of the Mossi who have been resettled at the Niger Irrigation Project has implications which go beyond mere technological adaptation. The settlers must, in fact, adjust to a totally changed cultural setting.

Arriving at the Niger project, they fail to find the institutions upon which they have always depended for their security; they find instead a natural environment governed by forces they do not know. Their water supply is no longer dependent on the supernatural controls of the earth custodians but comes from a dam built by Europeans. They are socially isolated from their kinsmen and their ancestral spirits in the Yatenga, and they derive little comfort from the presence of fellow Mossi with whom they have neither consanguineal nor affinal relationship.

[466] Settlers were forcibly recruited for the Niger Irrigation Project until 1944, when forced labor was abolished throughout the French Union. Now a recruitment program brings Mossi families to the project each year; every family head receives a house, oxen, a plow, and a plot of land proportionate to the number of active workers accompanying him. Under the supervision of European agronomists, they apply modern methods to the production of rice and cotton. The project administration buys their crop for cash after deducting fees for seed, irrigation, mechanized cultivation, transportation, and processing. In theory, ten years of

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175 people have become Mossicized in language and culture, but it is
437 doubtful whether they would have taken the Hausa for Mossi. The
441 true Mossi may have played a minor role in the caravan trade, but I am certain that they took part in it and that they did so before the French conquest of their country.

175 There is little doubt that the Mossi traded with the caravans that
437 passed *through* their country. Crozat, who visited Moro Naba Wobogo
439 six years before the conquest, reported that the king

[343]

> . . . appeared to have had some business relations with white merchants who came up to Salaga every dry season. He sent horses to them in exchange for silver. He claims that he had no reasons to be pleased with their integrity and that the silver which they sent to him contained plenty of copper. It happens also that traders may come as far as Wagadougou, bringing merchandise of German origin. There was one of them on hand during my stay at Wagadougou. I was told that he was an important marabout, a shereef, perhaps an Arab or a Moor, for I was assured that he was very light in color. As was repeated to me several times, his relations with the king were limited to the solemn greetings on Fridays. He has never entered the royal hut in spite of being an important marabout. He was at Wagadougou for about three and one-half months, but he was compelled to return to the coast since the merchandise which he had brought was exhausted. He spoke no Mossi. (Crozat 1891)

The caravans which passed through Mossi country were well organized but seemed to have lacked the regularity which was characteristic of the trans-Sahara ones. Those caravans coming from the north were apparently more regular since they had to await the coming of the great trans-Sahara caravans, which brought them salt and other
[366] valuable merchandise. Those coming from Salaga and points south
[227] traveled at all times of the year, a fact which is corroborated by the voyage of Krauss, who arrived at the Bere market during August and the height of the Mossi planting season. This was a period of scarcity or "hungry period" as Krauss himself observed, and it is doubtful whether the Mossi had much to trade at this time. Nevertheless, caravaneers always found some trade goods at the larger Mossi market centers all through the year, even if only cloth and cotton bands.

[221] The main season for external trade in Mossi country came after the harvest. In the words of Marc, who served there shortly after the conquest:

> Towards the end of the rainy season, in September or October, the
> [344] Yarse begin to assemble the livestock in order to leave for the south. In certain large commercial centers like Kaya, Pouitenga, Dakay, one finds
> [422] around this period the owners of livestock: Mossi chiefs, Fulani or rich natives, who are ready to sell their animals. People also assemble sheep of

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territory. This report is substantiated by Barth. Marc adds that the caravaneers had

> . . . a considerable amount of incidental expenses. Ten thousand kolas called for two asses or four porters for whom it was necessary to provide food during close to two months. Formerly there had been a certain number of local exactions to pay each time that the caravans crossed a new country. Now there are taxes on the caravans in the Gold Coast and also in French territory. It is also necessary to pay for ferryman who transports the livestock across the Volta [River]. There are risks, and occasionally cattle, fatigued by the trip, arrive in such bad shape that they are sold more cheaply than they had cost. Finally, the realization of profits is often difficult, the kola market being, in the commercial centers of the Mossi, subject to considerable fluctuations at the time when the caravans return. (Marc 1909 : 174)[7]

Sometimes the caravaneers made extensive use of middlemen and did not realize all the profits. Marc, who was stationed at the customs post at Leo on the Mossi border with the Gold Coast, wrote:

> The livestock is bought upon arrival by interpreter-brokers, middlemen between the butchers and the meat merchants, to whom the caravaneers are practically forced to resort. These men buy all the kola nuts brought by the forest natives, and control the market prices . . . These interpréter-brokers apparently speculate on livestock in a most curious way. They have scouts who go out to meet the caravans, sometimes two days' march to the north. These scouts attempt to alarm the travellers with tendentious remarks, until they are willing to cede their herds at a low price. Some times, at the height of the business season—that is, in January and February—the livestock prices may fluctuate by one hundred per cent within a few weeks. The Mande-Dioula vie in eloquence, the Yarse and Mossi in politeness, the Hausa in friendliness. In reality, there is here, an embryonic trading center, a veritable stock exchange, using extensively indigenous methods. ((Marc 1909 : 173)

According to most reports, all the larger market centers of Mossi country were like this.

Caravan centers, like all the lesser market centers in Mossi country, provided merchants not only with trading opportunities but also with occasions for conviviality after hectic days of travel. At Dakay south of Wagadougou, livestock traders found musicians, singers, and the most beautiful dancers in the country. And according to Marc, during the whole caravan season the market was abundantly furnished with beer (Marc 1909 : 175). But if the Mossi enjoyed themselves at

(7) Tauxier (1912 : 559) states that each porter was paid 35 francs for the thirty-five days of travels or at the rate of one franc per day. In addition a caravaneer spent about 300 cowries a day on food for each of his bearers.

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same as those traded in pre-European times. For example, my notes 439
for March 22, 1956, record that five young men were transporting [494]
50-kilogram sacks of onions on their bicycles for trade in Ghana. On 439
March 23, the next day, I wrote the following: "This appears to be 492
the season of increased trade and the donkey trains are passing to and from Wagadougou and the Yatenga to Po (a town on the Ghana-Voltaic Republic border) and Bolgatenga in northern Ghana. Very often the donkeys carry nothing down, and at other times they are loaded with beans, millet, cotton bands, onions, peanuts and other vegetable produce. On the return trip they are laden with kola nuts going northward. This afternoon I counted twenty-eight asses coming from Ghana and going towards Wagadougou. Eighteen of them were laden with kolas, and ten were carrying long pieces of scrap iron which I was told, were to be converted into hoes for use during the coming planting season."

There is also a steady trade in livestock between Mossi country 439
and the southern lands but the height of this trade occurs just prior 231
to Ramadan. Beginning from one month to one week before this [22]
important Moslem feast day, the roads of Mossi country are clogged with thousands of sheep and goats being driven south for the use of religious households in Ghana and the Ivory Coast. Cattle are also shipped during this period, but not in the same volume since they are most often used collectively by Moslem families too poor to have their own sheep or goat.

The total volume of trade between Mossi country and Ghana and 439
the Ivory Coasts is difficult to ascertain since despite the existence of 648
Customs Posts a great deal of contraband trading takes place. My notes for December 12, 1955, read *"Contraband":* Two customs men came into the village to complain to the district chief about the behavior of Naba, one of his village chiefs. This is what happened: About two days ago, two agents saw in the forests the tracks of some thirty-five asses (heavily laden as can be seen by the depth of the tracks) and the marks of a bicycle with new tires. The agents followed the tracks all day and rested during the night. Yesterday they had to interrupt their search when the bicycle of one of the agents broke down, and when they resumed the search later in the day they came across five asses laden with kola nuts inside the compound of a man in Naba's village. Since they were forbidden by law to go into the man's compound and seize the animals, they went to the village chief in an attempt to have him tell the man to put the animals outside so that they could be seized. This the village chief refused to do, stating that it was not his affair, and adding that the agents should have seized the animals in the forest. The agents, now helpless, came and

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o'clock in the morning to sell food to those migrants who have slept under the trees or in the deserted market place and who are going on towards Ghana or to Wagadougou. At about 8:00 or 9:00 A.M. the majority of the food-sellers leave for home, but some of them remain around all day to sell to those migrants who pass by in the few trucks which can travel during the heat of the day. The food sellers then return at about 5:00 P.M. because from this time until about 1:00 A.M. most of the trucks bearing migrants stop for water and to allow their passengers to eat and rest. The amount of money these women gross varies from day to day depending upon the amount of traffic and the time of year. During the off-season from June to October, when most of the migrants are home planting, a woman may make as little as ten francs per day. In contrast, at the beginning of the dry season when the young men are migrating in droves, the women may make as much as 100 francs a day, even though twenty or thirty women line the road at trucking centers. Many women welcome this opportunity to earn money because by so doing they are free to buy in the local markets the things they need.

MARKET

The Mossi have always conducted most of their commercial activities in market places even though some extra-market trading continually takes place. These markets were and are still divided into two main types: (1) those specializing in external trading, such as Pouitenga, Dakay, Kaya, Mane, Yako, La, Beloussa, Tema, Wagadougou; and (2) those specializing in internal commerce such as the markets in the villages and district centers. Of course, there is an overlap between the two types of markets in the sense that some people from the villages go to the larger markets to dispose of their commodities and, in turn, buy goods which they bring back for resale on the local level. Similarly, in former days some caravaneers visited the local markets to buy commodities and in the process disposed of their goods. However, the main pattern is for local commodities to filter into the large market centers through local markets, and for goods from these centers to filter back down to the local markets. The more goods and traders available, the more numerous and successful the markets are.

The Mossi do not appear to have any legends about the origin of markets in their country. When asked how and why markets first arose, they say that markets developed simply because people wanted to exchange goods with each other, or because the chiefs wanted markets in their own villages so that their people need not go to other districts. When one asks the Mossi directly, "What is a market?"

243 Kassouna. We have already seen that the Kassonboura once grew it extensively. The Boussansé also cultivate it.

On the other hand, the Mossi grow a little sweet millet (or tiokandé). They call it mobinoro. This is the sampa of the Bambara, the gamba of the Kassonboura. The Mossi, like the Kassonboura and Bambara, sow this millet in small quantities in the maize fields that surround the soukala. The Nounouma, Kassonfra, and Sissala do not cultivate it.

● 222 Aside from cultivated millet, the Mossi are familiar with the bakat or wild millet, also called "bird's millet." They call it nadanga. This is the bouaboua of the Bambara, the mintoro of the Kassouna. Among the Mossi, in times of famine, the women go and cut it down, lay it in the sun to dry and crush it, for it contains a small edible grain. There is little to be found in Gourounga territory, although some of it does grow by the watercourses /marigots/ and could be utilized in times of famine.

243 /471/ Aside from millet, the food crop most extensively cultivated by the Mossi is maize, which they call kamana. Maize is grown around the soukala itself rather than in the bush. It is sown at the beginning of the rainy season. First the soil is turned up with the ouaka, and then holes are made with a koutiaga or hatchet. Two or three grains of maize are placed in each hole, and then covered up. Once this has been done the millet is allowed to grow, and when the stalk has come out of the ground the weeds are cleared with the ouaka. After this it takes two months and ten days for the maize to ripen. It is harvested in August, first among the grains. The stalks are dug out or cut down with a daba, or else they are simply broken by hand.

Once the stalks have been laid down, the ears are cut off. They are left to dry in the sun on the roofs, where they are suspended in [251] clusters. Then they are stored in the grain hut, from which they are removed when the kernels are to be made into flour.

252 It often happens that instead of being left to dry, the ears of maize are eaten green, roasted on the embers.

After the maize has been stored and allowed to dry, the women pound the kernels into flour. This flour is placed in boiling water to make soft cakes which are eaten immediately.

243 Maize, let us point out, is one of those crops that are harvested early. The Mossi, and as we know all black populations of West

224 435 At Kombisiguiri, as we have just seen, there are 10 elephant hunters out of about 70 chiefs of compounds. Among the latter there are also some 20 men who hunt other animals, but they are cultivators who hunt on the side. They seek buffalo. When they kill one, they sell the meat to the village that stands nearest to the spot of the kill for 35,000 cowries. They also hunt the koba antelope, whose meat is worth from 20,000 cowries, the striped deer worth 6,500, the pig deer worth 5,000, the wart hog worth 10,000. They also hunt hares, bustards, guinea fowl, partridges, turtledoves, etc.

224 262 The Mossi do not hunt monkeys and do not eat them. /495/ Actually, there are very few in Mossi territory, except for the red-haired monkeys who are great lovers of millet and maize.

224 825 778 The Mossi do not hunt crocodiles because the latter are held sacred. If one were to kill a crocodile, one would become ill, one's head would swell and one's teeth would fall out. Snakes, on the other hand, are killed and eaten, but in Mossi territory proper there are few large ones (pythons, boas) because the climate is not sufficiently humid. They are more numerous in Boussansé and Gourounsi lands.

226 Fishing is less important than hunting among the Mossi, for the simple reason that the land, with its low rainfall, only has muddy ponds during the dry season (on this subject, see our Introduction /not translated/). Thus, not only do the Mossi lack professional fishermen, but the villages do not even undertake collective fishing during the dry season (with the exception of some southern localities, in Kombisiguiri for example). Only children attempt to catch the mudfish which are always present in large quantities in small ponds, even when they are nearly dry.

222 Gathering, on the other hand, plays the same role among the Mossi as among the other Sudanese Blacks, and we shall study it here in some detail, since we have only described it in broad outline so far.

222 137 The tree most widespread throughout Mossi territory, and which grows wild, is the karité. Its leaves are a pleasant green, and it is somewhat similar to our Normandy apple tree. Its bark is whitish and made of small juxtaposed quadrilaterals. It is the karité which

222 predominates in the bush of the territory and which, owing to its
137 abundance, lends the bush its particular character.

The karité fruit is an egg-shaped, elongated chestnut, smaller than the fruit of the European chestnut tree. It is distinguished from it even more clearly by its fleshy covering with its greenish skin. This flesh is soft, quite thick, and tastes delicious, like a very ripe, even overripe pear.

222 It is the women who gather the karité when the fruit is ripe,
252 before the rainy season, at the beginning of April. First, the flesh surrounding the chestnut is eaten /496/. Then, after breaking the brown shell, the inner part is used to make the famous karité butter.

252 As everywhere else, it is the women who do this among the Mossi. They remove the shell of the chestnut, and then mash the sticky and whitish substance which is found inside. It is pounded on crushing stones with a little wooden pestle. Once this is done, the substance is cooked in a canari and then mashed again, this time in the large wooden mortars, until the paste acquires the consistency of butter. Then it is pounded once more between crushing stones. When this is over, the paste is placed in a canari with lukewarm water, and then stirred and manipulated by hand. This produces a sort of dirty-white cream, somewhat similar to beaten egg whites, but firmer. Then this cream is boiled until it changes into oil. The impurities drop to the bottom of the canari, and the oil floats. The latter is gathered, placed in a clean gourd, and allowed to cool. The result is a pale yellow butter. At first sight it looks like real butter, but when sniffed it reveals a characteristic odor which is unpleasant to Europeans.

Gourounsi women prepare karité butter in the same manner as Mossi women.

302 This butter is put to various uses. First of all, it is utilized for grooming purposes. The women especially rub it into their hair in copious quantities, not only among the Mossi but throughout the Sudan as well. This, naturally enough, lends them an aroma which
[388] is not very pleasant to European noses. Karité butter is also made into soap when certain ashes are added. Finally, it is used in cooking.

423 The karité trees standing in a field belong to the owner of the field. Those which stand in the bush belong to the people of the

423 village in whose territory the bush is located. They belong to all the people of the village, for Mossi chiefs have not set those trees aside for themselves as they did with the néré trees.

222 137 The néré are found in large numbers in Mossi territory, although they are far less numerous than the karité, which literally fill the bush. The ratio must be something like one /497/ néré for every fifteen karité. The néré is nevertheless far from rare, and sometimes ten or fifteen are to be found together, standing not far apart. The néré is easily distinguished by its branches which expand in a fanlike arrangement from a short but elegant trunk. The branches spread out very prettily, in triangular fashion, so the néré blossoms out like a shower of fireworks. Its leaves are no less characteristic than its shape. They are of a dark, oxydized green which contrasts with the superb brilliant green of the karité. The néré leaves are similar to those of the acacia.

The néré is called roga or goaga, doga or doaga in Mossi. It is called soungou in Nounouma and Kassouna, sôla in Sissala. The Nankana call it roga or doga like the Mossi.

The fruits of the néré are long brown pods that grow in clusters on the tree and that contain a yellow substance, sweet to the taste, packed around a sort of very elongated pit. The women gather these 222 423 fruits approximately from March 15 to April 15. The neré trees standing in a field belong to the owner of the field, but the Mossi village chiefs claim ownership to those that stand in the uncultivated bush.

Among the Gourounsi, as we know, the néré that stand in a field, even if the latter is not being cultivated at the moment, belong to the owner of the field, while those that stand in the uncultivated bush surrounding the village belong to all the people of the village.

This points up the difference between a centralized kingdom where the authority of the chiefs is strong, and small independent cantons or villages where it is not.

252 261 Néré is put to many uses. First of all, the yellow meal, including the more solid central part that runs from one end of the pod to the other like a pit, is mashed by the women in millet mortars or in wooden gourds. Once mashed, it is thinned with

222 Let us now proceed to the baobab.
137 It is called touéra or touéga in Mossi (sira or izira in Bambara). It is to be found most everywhere in the Mossi bush, and especially in rocky, hilly spots near large streams.

The fruit of the baobab is gathered from December to April. It is a sort of huge green almond hanging from a stem that often
252 reaches 25 or 30 centimeters in length. One breaks the shell, removes the flesh, and mashes it in the mortar (this, of course, is done by the women). Once this is done, the resulting meal is strained through a straw strainer. It is now ready to eat.

This is called tofdésoum in Mossi, tiondé-boé in Peuhl, siramogou in Mandé (from sira, "baobab" and mogou, "flour").
[438] Colloquially, Europeans call it "monkey bread." It is sold on Mossi markets as on the markets of Bambara country.

To prepare it for consumption, this meal is thinned with milk, or water if there is no milk, or else mixed with millet flour. The latter mixture is called sangaré ni siramogou in Bambara ("millet flour and baobab flour"). The meal may also be mixed with néré flour.

It is not only the fruit of the baobab, however, that is utilized. The fresh green leaves are used as a sauce ingredient. The dried leaves are used to make tonéra (lalo in Foutanké /Futajalonke?/, namourou or namougou in Bambara, oro in Peuhl). The leaves are dried and crushed in a mortar to make a powder that is added to sauce.

283 Finally, let us add that the bark of the baobab is used to make rope.

222 After the karité, néré, and baobab, we must list the tamarind
137 tree (Tamarindus indica), koussouga or poussouga in Mossi, n'tomi in Bambara.

222 The fruit of the tamarind is a pod, longer than a finger /500/
137 and about the same thickness, that ripens between January and April.
263 It is a yellow-green brown. When cut along its length, it is found to contain some ten little round fruits, the size of half a hazelnut, lying in a row within the greenish pulp. Only the dried pod is used, after removing the little fruits which have a rather pleasing taste when fresh, something between the kola nut and the hazelnut. When the pod is dry, however, the fruits are also dried out and hard, and they are discarded.

222 263 These pods, of course, are not eaten. They merely serve to make the tô sauce fresh and sour, as the Blacks like it.

[261] The pods[1] themselves are only eaten in times of famine, because they give colic. In addition, they harm the mouth, tongue, and teeth (gingivitis).

In ordinary times, the natives use them medically as a fever remedy. They boil them with pimento and drink the decoction. This is done by the Mossi as well as by the Gourounsi, Bambara, etc.

Tamarind pods are also made into dry balls which are sold at market. They are crudely mashed with a pestle, and then pressed together in cold water into balls of varying size. Whenever one wishes to give the to a tamarind taste, one pries loose a small piece of the ball with a knife and places it in the canari of boiling water where millet flour will be added.

278 757 Like the Bambara, the Mossi prepare a purging drink with the tamarind pod, either fresh or dried. It is boiled in water, a tiny bit of millet flour is added, and the drink is consumed when slightly warm. This decoction has laxative properties. The Haoussa are also familiar with it, but the Gourounsi are not.

222 137 To summarize, the tamarind pod has two chief uses among the Mossi and other Blacks of West Africa. It serves to sour and freshen the tô, and it also serves as a purgative.

272 Let us add that Dr. Rançon, in the account of his /501/ trip through Upper Gambia, described the preparation of a tamarind drink for European consumption. The pod is left to dissolve in cold water for three hours, sugar is added, and a sort of lemonade results.

222 137 The Mossi have rônier in every village. This, as we know, is a variety of palm tree.

"It is the largest palm tree, Borassus flabelliformis," says Dr. Rançon (Dans la Haute-Gambie, pages 139 to 141). "It is easy to recognize owing to its height and characteristic appearance. Its trunk is very long and may sometimes reach 25 or 30 meters. It is swollen in the middle, and its lower and upper parts are much less thick, much more slender. The bark is blackish and bears scars of the wounds left by fallen leaves. The wood, although it looks spongy, is quite tough and hard to dent with a saw. Rônier logs are heavier than water. This is one of the rare woods that do not float. The leaves of a grown rônier are clustered in a thick bunch at the

[1] [i.e. tamarind pods — Analyst]

222 top of the trunk, and they are deeply indented. The trunk never
137 bears leaves except when it is young. The dark green of the leaves and their toughness makes /sic/ them look from afar like the artificial zinc leaves of some theatrical backdrops or weather vanes. The youngest leaves at the top are strongly imbricated and ensheathed, and ivory white in color. They are very tender and yield palm cabbage. The leaves of the rônier only fall off when completely dry.

"The fruits, which are called rône, come in clusters of about forty or fifty. They are the size of a medium-sized melon and very heavy. Their covering is green when they are young, orange-yellow when they are ripe. The large seeds, which are blackish and disc-shaped, or like spheres flattened at the poles, are surrounded with a fibrous, gold-yellow meat which is very watery and very fragrant. Its taste is pleasant, although slightly tinged with turpentine. The
[261] natives eat large quantities of it, especially in times of scarcity.

"Rônier wood is dense, long lasting, and remarkably tough.
313 502/ Immune to insects and humidity, it is excellently suited to the
137 manufacture of piles, and often used in the construction of bridges and wharves. The male trees alone are used. The female trees can only be used for fencing, for they are hollow and lacking in strength....

"In addition to the fruit, the Blacks also eat the roots of the
222 young shoots, the taste of which is slightly astringent and rather un-
137 pleasant. They are eaten raw. The terminal buds of the palms are
262 very tender. They are palm cabbages, less tasty to be sure than those of Oreodoxa oleracea, but nevertheless deserving of recognition. When cut into small pieces 2 centimeters square and well seasoned with oil, vinegar, salt and pepper, they make a very good salad, especially if they were previously soaked for twenty-four hours. This dish is highly prized by Europeans who live in the Sudan. Finally,
[263 the rônier yields a fairly abundant sap from which sugar might be
273] extracted. When fermented, it produces a palm wine of inferior quality."

It must be added that the fibers of the rônier leaves are also
137 utilized. The West African Blacks use them to make baskets (as for
[285] example in Mossi territory) or cords (as for instance in Upper Gambia).

137 They are 7 or 8 meters tall, 10 meters at most, and their huge fruits are bunched in clusters of five or six rather than forty or fifty.

137 There are no rônier in the Mossi bush itself, but there are some in every Mossi village. They originated from seeds tossed at random 222 after eating the fruits, or from an ancient cultivation of the tree. The rônier, therefore, is not a natural product of Mossi territory and should not, in all exactitude, be listed among the gathering crops. On the other hand, can it be listed with the cultivated crops at the present day, and can we call cultivation the act of tossing seeds to the ground in order to get rid of them? No matter what the truth may be, the Mossi eat /503/ the fruits of their rônier but do not extract any palm wine. As we have just said, they use the fibers of the leaves for their wickerwork.

137 While the rônier occur in Mossi territory, there are, on the other hand, no palm-oil trees and palmier-ban /?/. Those begin to appear only in Gourounsi territory, to the south of the Mossi.

222 137 We have just reviewed the most important gathering trees in the area, but the Mossi bush contains many others, less important to be sure but nevertheless useful, which we shall now mention.

First, there is the ganra or ganga (sounsoun in Mandé, diomba in Peuhl and Sarakolé). This is the medlar tree of West Africa. In appearance, it is a big tree similar to the karité but even bigger, with a thicker and more powerful trunk.

The fruit is a medlar, smaller than the European one. When green, it has the same acrid taste and numbs the mouth. When ripe, it is such as we eat it in Europe. The natives begin to eat it during the rainy season and consume it until January.

386 The wives of Bambara blacksmiths make a varnish for pots and canari with the bark of the sounsoun. As for the wives of Mossi 171 blacksmiths, they prefer to use for this purpose the bark of two trees we shall mention later, the nobora and the sibi. In Gourounsi territory, on the other hand, the women who make pottery pluck the medlars while still green and crush them. They add water, thus making a sort of varnish which they use on the canari after they are fired. The ganra is called kano in Nounouma, kakano in Kassouna, kalo in Sissala, and ganra or ganga in Nankana and Mossi.

325 Let us add that among the Mossi, as in all of West Africa, the ganra tree is closely related to fetishistic superstitions, and will be mentioned again in a later chapter on religion.

222 137 Now for the kankanga (plural kankansé; the Bambara and Malinké call it n'toro, the Foulbé guip-bi, and the Nounouma /504/ kaporo). The kankanga is the native fig tree of West Africa. Its fruits are none other than figs, not as good to be sure as those eaten in Europe, but figs nevertheless. The Mossi, as well as the Gourounsi, Bambara, etc., usually eat these figs as they are. There are ripe ones to be found at all times of the year, and one plucks them at will. 259 261 In times of famine, instead of eating them in this fashion, one allows them to dry in the sun and then mashes them on crushing stones (among the Mossi) or in small mortars (among the Bambara). They are thus made into a sort of meal which is boiled and which serves as a substitute for millet flour. At such times the Mossi also eat the leaves of the kankanga. They cook them in boiling water and add salt.

As for the Gourounsi, sometimes they eat the figs fresh, and 252 sometimes they prepare them for their sauces. In the latter case they boil them, cut them to pieces, and dry them in the sun. When the pieces are quite dry they are laid aside, and whenever needed one of them is mashed, reduced to powder, and added to the sauce.

222 137 Now for nobora or noboga (n'kouna in Mandé, kountan in Khassonké /Kasonke/, hèdè in Foulbé and Toucouleur, kounguié in Sarakolé, salo in Nounouma, kansalo in Kassouna).

The nobora is a kind of wild plum tree. Its fruits ripen from the time when millet is sown until the time when it reaches a height of 80 centimeters, that is to say, between May and July.

273 The fruits of the n'kouna are either eaten fresh or made into a sort of drink called noborame in Mossi, n'kounangui in Mandé, n'diam hèdam in Foulbé. In all three tongues, this means "nobora (or n'kouna) water." This drink is known throughout the Sudan.

In order to prepare this drink, the fruits are placed in water after being pricked with a small piece of wood to let the juice run, and they are left there for twelve hours. At the end of this period of time, they are removed and the water is boiled for a /505/ quarter of an hour. Once this is done, one takes some of the residue left at the bottom of the canari in which dolo is made, and puts it in the jar containing n'kounangui. The liquid is allowed to rest for one night. In the morning, the drink is gaseous and ready for consumption. It is not as strong as dolo.

273 The Mossi make n'kounangui, like the Bambara, but the Toucouleur and Foulah do not because they are Moslems. The latter's slaves alone, being fetishists make some. The Gourounsi do not make it either, but this is because n'kouna is scarce in Gourounga country. The Gourounsi claim that this tree keeps hyenas away, and when someone dies in the bush and is buried on the spot, a branch of n'kouna is planted where he was buried. It is said that the hyenas will wander about at a distance, but will never dare come close and dig up the body. The Gourounsi claim that this is a matter of common knowledge.

222 137 The léla is another kind of wild plum tree. It is called séno in Bambara and Malinké, filina in Nounouma, mia in Kassouna, mellemoila in Sissala. Its plums are tiny. They are yellow before they ripen, and red when completely ripe (March-May). They are no larger than the tip of the finger, and they are eaten as they are. The almond is not eaten. Children sometimes munch on it, but when eaten in large quantities it causes colic.

The sibi, another tree found in the Mossi bush, is called n'pékou in Bambara and Peuhl, bembé in Sarakolé. The Nounouma called it kakian, the Kassouna kakiéno, the Nankana sibi like the Mossi. The fruit is tiny and sometimes causes colic. It ripens during the dry and warm season, and it is eaten as it comes. The [272] Habé prepare a drink from it which is called diam-n'pékoudian ("n'pékou water") by the local Foulbé and Toucouleur. The Mossi, Gourounsi, and Bambara do not make this drink.

Let us cite also the tiarala (tiaralsé or tiaralésé in the plural, n'ségué in Bambara, saõ in Nounouma). The Mossi are very fond of [276] the tiarala fruit, which is highly aromatic and which is used /506/ to lend fragrance to native tobacco. They also eat the leaves.

Let us proceed to kara (or kaka). This is the Mandé n'taba. It is the Mandé n'taba. It is called dankola in Nounouma and Sissala, kalankola in Kassonboura.

"The n'taba," says André Rançon (Dans la Haute-Gambie, page 35), "is a malvoidea /?/ of the Sterculiacea family. It is the Sterculia cordifolia Cav., thus named because its leaves are heart-shaped. It is one of the most beautiful plants of tropical African regions. It is easily recognized by its enormous trunk, huge leaves,

222 and very peculiar fruit. The latter, which grows at the tip of
137 young boughs, is shaped like a huge pod whose pulpy valves open when pressure is exercised along the convex ridge. Its free tip is equipped with a sort of pulpy appendage shaped like a thorn, about 0.06 meter in length. When ripe, the fruit is of a distinctive light-red color. It contains a dozen polyhedral seeds immersed in a yellowish flesh which is tasty and highly fragrant. It is one of the best desserts I came across in the Sudan, and we often feasted on it. The fruits are clustered in bunches of three, five, or seven, and strongly fastened to the peduncle and stem that hold them. They rarely fall, and in order to gather them one must break the bough that bears them."

André Rançon adds (page 36) that the n'taba is related to the kola nut. It is apparently a sort of false kola tree.

The n'taba fruits ripen from December to April. The Mossi and Gourounsi eat them when they have dried out on the tree, or
65 else as they come /fresh/, or after boiling them for a quarter of an
435 hour. They are sold on Mossi markets at the price of three for 1 cowrie, six for 2 cowries, etc., that is to say, 150 for 1 sou.

272 These fruits are also used to prepare a drink among the Mossi and Gourounsi. They are boiled, mashed, placed in a canari filter, that is, a canari perforated at the bottom which is placed on top of another canari. Water is poured upon the fruits /507/, becomes permeated with the juice, and passes on to the bottom canari. This drink is sweet and tastes like honey.

222 Let us cite also the kamsoro (n'kodo in Bambara). It is a very
137 big, thickset tree, with characteristic leaves. The latter are very tough, very large, very thick, their shape ovoidal or rather a little more elongated than an egg, and their color a brilliant green.

The fruits of this tree are eaten throughout the year, especially by children, because ripe ones are to be found at all times.

There are no kamsoro in Gourounga territory.

Let us also cite the véda or ouéda, the caoutchouc liana, called n'saba in Mandé, fôgui in Peuhl, fittigné in Sarakolé, which is also called laré and Vahea senegalensis. This liana bears fruits that ripen in March and April. They might best be compared to oranges. They are green before they ripen and orange-yellow when ripe. Rançon claims that they are delicious. These fruits are eaten as they

222 137 come, and they are not used to prepare any sort of drink.

The n'saba is found almost everywhere in West Africa, but grows scarcer toward the north. It is found in Mossi and Gourounsi territories in very small numbers.

314 The Dagari, who live farther south than the Gourounsi, gather the caoutchouc from the n'saba lianas and make wads with it for the tip of the sticks used to beat their tom-toms. The Gourounsi griot purchase these sticks from the Dagari. The Mossi and Gourounsi do not themselves gather the n'saba caoutchouc.

In the south this liana is used to make cords, but this is not done among the Mossi or Gourounsi.

222 137 261 252 In addition to the plants we have just mentioned and which are utilized at all times, there are others whose products are used almost exclusively in times of famine. Such are the konkouira, sabatouli, silikoré, etc.

The konkouira is a big tree whose Mandé name is n'zéfé. Its leaves are gathered when they are beginning to grow when they are still quite tender. They are mashed in a small mortar with a pestle, and then placed in water for two hours. Then they are worked into balls, with the addition of millet flour. A canari is filled with water and put on the fire /508/, and then twigs are laid across its mouth, parallel to each other, to form a grill on which the konkouira balls are placed. In order to ensure thorough cooking, the balls are covered with an overturned gourd which encloses them and prevents the steam from escaping too rapidly. The balls are steamed in this fashion for one hour, and then they are ready to eat.

These leaves are never eaten straight but always with millet flour, and they really serve to stretch the flour supply. If they were eaten straight, they would cause colic. In any case they cause hiccups (gounsounkouira in Mossi). They are therefore more a food for times of famine.

The silikoré or kalanianga (both are Mossi names) is a small thorny bush that grows around trees and bears very small fruits. The women gather those fruits during the rainy season. They mash them in a small trough and then boil them in a canari. This first water is discarded, and the fruits boiled a second time. Again the water is discarded, and the fruits are washed in cold water. Karité butter and salt are added, and the mixture is eaten. The silikoré are used

222 chiefly in times of famine, but occasionally at other times also.
137 The silikoré fruits are not eaten among the Gourounsi and Bam-
261 bara.
252 Gonsé is called sofarangoni in Bambara. It is a shrub, the height of a man, that yields kéména. The latter is a pod containing small flat beans of a sort, very thin, that ripen at the time of the millet harvest. These /beans/ are boiled twice, and the water is discarded both times. Then they are washed in cold water and boiled again, for the last time, in a canari covered with a straw lid. Once this is done karité butter is added, and the mixture is eaten. Kéména
[435] is sold at market ready made. A handful is worth 5 cowries (1/2 centime). Kéména is also mixed with /true/ beans and either eaten or sold in this fashion.

Lamboye is called béré in Bambara, guidili in Peuhl. It is found almost everywhere in the Sudan. Its fruits, or rather seeds, are eaten only in times of famine. They are round, very /509/ tiny, and they ripen during the dry and warm season. They are gathered, laid out in the sun, and then crushed in a small mortar to break the outer membrane. Once this is done, they are soaked in water for eight days. This water is discarded, and the seeds are washed twice. Then they are boiled, salt is added, and they are eaten. This is done only in times of famine. These seeds are poisonous, as we can see, and would be toxic if they were not submitted to these various processes.

222 Sabatouli (bembé in Bambara and Sôninké) is a tree whose fruits
137 ripen one month after the first rains (that is, in May). The fruit is very tiny, no larger than a grain of maize. One eats it as it comes, when passing by or clearing land in the bush, or else one takes it to the village children. Nothing else is done with it. Sabatouli is found almost everywhere in the Sudan.

Vâka is a tree which is called goumou or goumbou in Bambara. The flowers of this tree, which are red, are used to make sauce when there is no gombo left. It is called fofo in Nounouma and Sissala, kafro in Kassouna. Its fruits are not eaten.

We overlooked the jujube tree above. It is called mourouga in Mossi, n'tomono in Bambara, gouésso in Nounouma and Kassouna. The Mossi eat the fruits only when traveling through the bush. The Gourounsi do not eat them at all.

222 137 Let us mention also kankalra (lenga in Mandé), whose leaves are eaten by the Mossi.

We have just reviewed the trees and shrubs whose produce is utilized by the Mossi. We must still say a word about mushrooms, wild roots, and wild fodder.

Mushrooms are called goudou in Mossi, dakon in Nounouma and Kassouna, kon in Sissala. They grow in the Mossi bush during the winter season, as they do in Gourounsi territory and incidentally throughout West Africa, and they are gathered by the women. Two kinds are distinguished, the /510/ termite-nest mushrooms (yaoré-goudou in Mossi, from yaoré, "termite nest," and goûdou, "mushroom") and the mushrooms that grow among refuse. The latter are called niandara-goûdou, meaning "straw mushrooms," because they grow chiefly under old discarded roof thatch. These mushrooms taste better, but those on termite nests are bigger.

252 The Mossi cook mushrooms in karité butter, mash them in the butter, and eat them. They also use them to make a sauce for the sarabout to which body is added with beans, cooked separately and also mashed. The sarabout (Mossi name for tô) is eaten after dipping in the bean-and-mushroom sauce.

Gourounsi women boil the mushrooms and then leave them to dry on the soukala roofs. They take a handful or two a day for their sauces. To this end, they boil the mushrooms again without mashing them and add soumbara and salt. Mushrooms are never served as a separate dish among the Gourounsi.

222 137 Let us proceed to edible roots.

Vidiba is a sort of wild onion called fanto by the Bambara, Sarakolé, and Foulbé.

261 252 The Bambara use vidiba leaves to make sauce, but they do not eat the onion itself because it is poisonous. The Mossi do likewise, except in times of famine. At such times, the onion is rubbed with sand until the black membrane is removed, and then it is copiously washed. Then it is boiled in a canari filled with water to the brim and covered, and the cooking is maintained until all the water has evaporated. Then ashes are gathered, strained, and added to the contents of the gourd. The mixture is stirred with a piece of wood, and then the vidiba is removed, cut to pieces, and eaten.

222 137 261 Séba is a kind of long, poisonous, black turnip which is eaten only in times of famine and after protracted cooking.

Seba and vidiba caused the death of many people during the last Mossi famine by giving them dysentery.

137 231 /511/ As for wild fodder found in Mossi territory, there is first of all kénibédo, that grows in bunches 30 centimeters high in damp hollows. Its leaves are rudimentary. It is severed 20 centimeters from the ground and stored during the dry season.

Then there are the fodder plants belonging to the papilionaceous family, densa and youbenga. The tiny stem of densa or youbenga is not severed from the plant itself, which reaches a height of 0.30 or 0.40 meter in both cases. Horses eat them either green or dry, indiscriminately.

137 314 283 Finally, let us say a word about souga, a sort of wild hemp called thus by the Mossi. The Nounouma call it boupo, and the Kassouna bénédévio. It is found only in certain parts of Mossi territory, but it grows throughout Gourounsi lands. Its bark yields very tough white fibers which the natives use in the manufacture of rope, string or thread for fishing implements. The bark does not keep through the dry season, so it is reduced to fibers during the rainy season. The fibers, on the other hand, can take the most intensive dryness without deteriorating. Souga is not cultivated.

222 433 We are now finished with Mossi gathering activities. They have a certain importance, as we have just seen, the same one on the whole as in other Sudanese populations. They are infinitely less important than cultivation, of course, but only slightly less so than stockbreeding, and they must be placed on the same level as the hunt. They are far more important than fishing or arboriculture.

245 433 The latter deserves no real mention. It hardly exists among the Mossi. It is limited to what we described earlier about the rônier and to the planting, here and there, of a few papaw trees.

433 In short, cultivation comes first, with stockbreeding trailing far behind, then gathering and hunting on the same level, then fishing and finally arboriculture.

010 /512/ Industries flourish among the Mossi. We shall review one by one, in detail, the various trades they exercise.

643
651 Mossi circle into several administrative districts, still continue to
178 make substantial annual gifts to the Mogho Naba (cowries, cattle, and a considerable amount of grain, millet and rice).

634 Payments Due the Kombemba (canton chiefs). Formerly each
651 canton held one or more ritual feasts each year, and the Mossi subjects, that is, the tengsoba (village elders, notables, and those in comfortable circumstances), regularly made gifts to the canton chief (cowries, goats, sheep, and roosters). The Peulh [Peul] gave cattle.

The canton chiefs also retained a portion of the payment made by the people for the benefit of the Mogho Naba.

[178] At the present time these traditional gifts are still made, but white or light gray roosters are more and more being substituted for livestock. [71]

661 Payments due the Ministers of the Mogho Naba. In order to
431 maintain good relations with the ministers, court officials, and
644 intermediaries between the emperor and his vassals, the canton
634 chiefs in former times used to present unspecified gifts to the high dignitaries at court when they paid their respects to the Mogho Naba. A certain number of cowries was given to the pougtiéma, first wife of the Mogho Naba (500 cowries equals two and a half francs, formerly 50 centimes).

A canton chief who has been called to Ouagadougou for some reason may choose not to call on the emperor, but he is obligated to bring cowries, a sheep, or a rooster to the minister who is head of the province in which his canton is located.

651 Common laws. (a) Regulation of market fees. Before the ar-
443 rival of the French, market fees at Ouagadougou were collected for the benefit of the Mogho Naba by a collector in his employ.

In important villages, fees were collected by Gourounsi [Grunshi] captives on behalf of the canton chiefs (kombemba).

651 (b) Hunting. In former times, before the fields were cleared
224 for seeding, the Mossi used to go out in groups of several villages
634 on hunting drives. Small game (partridges, guinea fowl, hares, etc.) were left to the hunters. On the other hand, a haunch of any quadruped killed (deer, gazelle, coba [a kind of horse antelope], etc.) was reserved for the canton chief.

241 tuber, Coleus coffini, which Europeans call oussounifing or fabirama,
262 and which may replace potatoes in a pinch, are cultivated in the soils most propitious to them.

221 The precious karite /shea/ tree (Butyrospermum parkii) grows in
262 most fields; its fruit, prized for its cool and slightly sweet flesh, con-
137 tains a pit which yields karite butter, the fat most widely used in
[388] cooking and to make soap. Around the villages, and sometimes even within them, the néré /locust bean/ tree (Parkia africana) produces
[356] elongated pods; its bark, mashed in water, yields a paste that is used to harden the floors of the huts. Its flour makes a cooling drink when
[272] mixed in water, and it may also be eaten; its seeds /8/ are used to make kalro /kalre in the original/, the soumbara of the Bambara, an ingredient /made from locust beans, héré/ of all carefully prepared
137 sauces. The doubalé and silk-cotton or kapokiero trees spread their shade over the weavers, numerous among the Mossi, and over the talkers who are even more. Bamboo grows well in the damp southern regions, and the palm oil tree is occasionally found. The caoutchouc liana, however, has not yet been introduced.

231 Small chickens run in all directions through the villages, along with domesticated guinea hens. Everywhere in the bush near the huts,
[857] little boys herd goats and sheep; this is the task of youngsters here at the age when their contemporaries among us /in France/ begin to learn the alphabet. The most common sheep and goats are small in size. The sheep have short hair. Sometimes, especially in the larger villages where markets are held, goats and sheep are to be seen with
[439] long legs and long, curled horns. They are imported from the northeast and fattened to be sold as butcher's meat. The height of fashion for the wife or a prosperous naba is to be followed by a Touareg /Tuareg/ sheep, well washed and very white. It is fed on millet leftovers and bean mush, and its mistress often presents it with a bit of salt to lick. In short, it is well cared for and agreeably fat; on some important feast day, it will embellish the menu.

The huts are usually guarded by very commonplace dogs, often ill-tempered, but cowardly. A stick is enough to drive them away.
[224] They are mostly used in the hunt, the great Mossi pastime during the dry season. Domesticated ducks are sometimes found in nabas' households, as well as pigeons, but these birds are not widespread and not within the reach of everyone. Finally, almost every group of huts has cats which belong to the women and which are difficult

221 After a few hours when the millet has been sufficiently threshed,
241 the emptied and broken husks are swept to the side. The grain is
476 gathered in a heap, and a strong fellow tosses it into the air with a
788 wooden shovel to separate the chaff from the good grain, which is put in a heap. When all the grain has thus been winnowed, it is surrounded with a ring of ashes to protect it against evil spirits. Then one of the threshers, who is not a member of the family, puts some millet in a gourd and sprinkles it with water. He proceeds to throw it by the handful onto the millet pile, saying: "So-and-So fears rain," mentioning the name of the owner of the harvest and the name of every member of his family. He ends by saying: "When we are finished weeding, let the drought come. When we are finished planting, let the heavy rains come." If the owner of a horse is present, he receives a gourd of millet for his mount. Each of the elders also takes some for his chicken. If this ceremony is not carried out, the millet may not be used as seed the following year.

221 /49/ The women come with their baskets; a man takes one of the
351 brooms and sinks it into the millet heap in various places; then the
[482] men fill the baskets and help the women place them on their heads. At the house the millet is unloaded into granaries made of clay mixed with finely cut straw. These granaries have the shape of large jars 1.50 meters high; they usually rest on large stones, and they are
[343] smoked out beforehand to get rid of termites. They are closed with a lid of the same material and covered with a small thatch roof as a protection against rain, for they usually stand in the open air in the inner courtyard. Millet beer is brought and drunk on the spot while the millet is being winnowed. Sometimes the festivities end with dancing, and then everyone goes home, to begin again another day. The month of January goes by in this fashion.

221 February, March, and April are vacation months, months for hunting and fishing.

224 Actually no Mossi is a hunter, yet all Mossi are hunters to some
411 degree. Since the French occupation, men armed with very primitive flint guns are sometimes seen on the fringes of the heavy bush which borders the Volta and contains large game. These flint guns are so crude that they frequently burst and wound the man who recklessly
224 loaded it with too much powder. These natives know the bush thoroughly and are very helpful to the adventurers who wish to hunt koba, buffalo, elephant, leopard, or even lion, although the latter is to the

224 Mossi as to us the king of beasts, the master of the bush (wé' naba), and they attack it only if it has killed a man.

These hunters make their own powder with ground charcoal and
224 saltpeter extracted from earth soaked with urine. This earth is washed
389 carefully, and a residue of saltpeter crystals is left when the liquid evaporates. Usually no sulphur is added because it is too costly. This powder burns well, and when made carefully it is quite effective. The hunters keep it in small gourds or ram horns; they only make a little at a time. Hard pebbles are used as bullets.

224 The natives know how to disguise themselves skillfully, and they only shoot at very close range when the animal is not moving. They often lie in wait for hours on end, sometimes for the whole night. They know the habits of the animals and the water holes where they come to drink, and they build small huts with branches or dig holes where they hid under foliage. Others more ingeniously build a vast funnel-shaped trap, its open base sometimes one or even two kilometers long; the sides of equal length consist of thorn fences, and the tip of the funnel, which is located near a thick tree, leaves barely enough space for the animal to pass through. The hunter takes his position up in the tree with bow and arrows and settles comfortably because he may have to wait a long time. Unsuspecting animals follow the thorn fence and come to the tree where they are killed. The hunters manage to fell some handsome game in this fashion, even elephants, in spite of their very primitive weapons.

/50/ Professional hunters, those who always have adventures to relate and who say like those of Tarascon that they never miss a shot, such true hunters are rare, but those who hunt as a pastime are as numerous as the Mossi themselves. A Mossi never goes out without
[411 a stick. When asked why he does so, he answers that it is to kill
752] snakes, which — alas! — take so many victims, and to drive off dogs; and then, "I might find a hare or some other animal in the bush, and
[231] what would I kill it with if I didn't have a stick?" Many of them have dogs which are truly not very ferocious, but they are poorly fed and preserve all their agility. A Mossi on his way to the fields or walking from one village to another always keeps his ears and eyes open; he is on the lookout for meat! Since he does not have many ideas, he is seldom absorbed in his thoughts or absent-minded.

The season[1] we are now studying is the time of large-scale hunting. Several villages get together and set a date and a meeting place.

1 [i.e. February-April. - Analyst]

224 Each village goes there in a group, burning the bush and driving on the game. If the plan is carried out properly, the animals are eventually enclosed within a circle of fire behind which stand the natives, some on horseback and armed with spears, others on foot with their dogs and equipped merely with sticks or sometimes with bows and arrows. The bows are of medium size and made of hard wood. The
411 224 string is usually made from a rattan stem or a millet stalk. Arrows are made of the tough and light stems of tall reeds; they are not barbed, but the tip is made of iron and shaped like a harpoon, with two and sometimes three pairs of teeth. The leather quiver hangs from the shoulder.

224 The panic-stricken hares, deer, antelope of various kinds, guinea hens, and partridges run all around the fiery circle, and those who manage to cross this first obstacle are felled by the blows of the hunters. These hunts are sometimes quite fruitful, and buffalo and koba are
224 occasionally caught. Unfortunately, every animal killed in the bush
661 belongs by right to the naba, who searches the hunters' bags and takes what he pleases. If he learns that a lucky hunter has killed an antelope and failed to bring it, he summons him to his presence, reproves him harshly for his lack of consideration, and thrashes him soundly. It must nevertheless be said that such cases are constantly growing rarer, and now the natives flatly refuse to yield their catch.

224 Often no game is caught because one of the villages has failed to appear and the animals have fled through the unguarded opening. In short, these hunting parties are mostly a pastime and entertainment. The hunters who bring back a catch are few, owing to the large number of men who participate. It is true that when they set out for the hunt they all hope they will be lucky. They all are thirsty, for at this time of year the sun is very hot and it is better to hunt in the middle of the day when the game lies down in the bushes and cannot run very far. These hunting parties dwindle year by year. The cultivated fields are more extensive, and the game has withdrawn deeper into the bush. Also, the natives find it more difficult to reaching an agreement for large parties of beaters; /51/ they prefer to hunt in small groups, far from the chiefs' sight, so that nothing will be taken from them.

226 In addition to hunting, fishing is the great pastime at this time of year.1 Professional fishermen are as rare as professional hunters. Of
[481] course, those who live on the banks of streams usually know how to swim, especially when they live near those watercourses which are most difficult to ford.

1[e.g., February - April. - Analyst]

000 spilled salt, /99/ four-leaf clovers, hares crossing the roadway, etc., been altogether eradicated by science?

751 No matter how things may stand among us, superstition reigns
789 supreme among the Mossi. Amulets and talismans are greatly valued. Anything may contribute to their manufacture, from the highly prized head of a crowned crane to that of a hawk or a gray heron. Anything may be found in the numerous little bags which hang down a native's neck, from scraps of paper with a few words of Arabic scribbled upon them which Moslem Marabouts distribute in large numbers throughout the Sudan, to cowries or the ashes of every possible and imaginable root. There are amulet bracelets which are worn on the left arm and which protect against seuya sorcerers (see p. 127) if their wearer remembers to push them swiftly up his arm when meeting one of those dreadful soul-eaters. There are bracelets which protect people in fights, and iron rings which act as safeguards against snake bite. Do you want to be welcomed and accepted by the man whose daughter you wish to marry? Wear a certain bracelet on your right arm, and your hopes will come true.

Amulets are worn around the head, neck, arm, or wrist. They are sewn to the cap or to the clothes, attached to the belt, to the pipe, to the staff, anywhere. The list would be endless if we tried to enumerate all the various kinds of amulets. The shoulder blade of a beef fastened to the end of a stick and an iron chain stretched across the soukala entrance protect its inhabitants against a host of misfortunes and unpleasant nocturnal visitations. People consider themselves fortunate to possess such easy protection against the numerous spirits prowling for victims.

787 If you have dogs, watch them carefully. If they are so careless as to lie down or relieve themselves in a basket, or to vomit within the hut, kill them fast or you will die yourself. If your bitch bears only one puppy, kill her pitilessly. When the gray heron flies over the huts shrieking mothers beat on their jars for fear that their
783 children will get diarrhea. Hunters must not eat koba meat before
789 they engage in their sport, and if they want to gain skill, they must
224 secure certain roots, cook them in water, and wash their hands with the mixture.

777 Sunday is the day of the spirits, the day when koure is held. It is also a good day to build huts. There is nothing special about Monday, but you must be careful about Tuesday, for you never know what it

231 64 inhabitants among the nakomsé (nobles, descendants of chiefs, true Mossi). The Dagari and Nounouma, on the other hand, have one horse per 1,000 inhabitants, the Sissala one per 400, the Kassonboura one per 300. The Yarsé, who are in better circumstances than the common Mossi but less fond of horses than the nakomsé, have one horse per 100 people. Finally, the Foulbé of Mossi territory, who raise horses, have one for every 26 people.

To summarize, Mossi stockbreeding is mediocre except for donkeys and horses. Let us proceed to the hunt.

224 First of all, like the Gourounsi and all other populations of West Africa, the Mossi hunt collectively during the dry, warm season.

/494/ This collective endeavor is their chief hunting method.

Aside from this, the cultivators hunt individually with bow and arrow, chiefly during the dry season although sometimes also during the damp season.

Finally, there are a few elephant hunters in the southern regions. They are to be found only in the south, for in Mossi territory proper the relative density of the population and resulting extent of cultivated land make for a nearly total absence of elephants. Gourounsi and Boussansé lands, on the other hand, which are much less densely populated, include some deserted areas where elephants may be found. Mossi hunters, therefore, have settled in the southern part of the territory, on the borders of Gourounsi and Boussansé lands, to scour both regions /for elephants/.

At Kombisiguiri, for example, there are ten of them, ten soukala heads. They kill one or two elephants a year on the average. They sell the meat to the village that stands nearest to the spot where the animal was killed. This nets them about 50,000 cowries. [435] As for the tusks, they sell them for 120,000 or 140,000 cowries, sometimes 200,000. They always give a piece of the meat to the chief of the canton where the animal was killed. They hunt with [411] guns, while in the old days they hunted with poisoned spears but on the same individual basis as they do now.

[463] Elephant hunters do not cultivate the soil during the winter season, but their wives and children do.

224 435 At Kombisiguiri, as we have just seen, there are 10 elephant hunters out of about 70 chiefs of compounds. Among the latter there are also some 20 men who hunt other animals, but they are cultivators who hunt on the side. They seek buffalo. When they kill one, they sell the meat to the village that stands nearest to the spot of the kill for 35,000 cowries. They also hunt the koba antelope, whose meat is worth from 20,000 cowries, the striped deer worth 6,500, the pig deer worth 5,000, the wart hog worth 10,000. They also hunt hares, bustards, guinea fowl, partridges, turtle-doves, etc.

224 262 The Mossi do not hunt monkeys and do not eat them. /495/ Actually, there are very few in Mossi territory, except for the red-haired monkeys who are great lovers of millet and maize.

224 825 778 The Mossi do not hunt crocodiles because the latter are held sacred. If one were to kill a crocodile, one would become ill, one's head would swell and one's teeth would fall out. Snakes, on the other hand, are killed and eaten, but in Mossi territory proper there are few large ones (pythons, boas) because the climate is not sufficiently humid. They are more numerous in Boussansé and Gourounsi lands.

226 Fishing is less important than hunting among the Mossi, for the simple reason that the land, with its low rainfall, only has muddy ponds during the dry season (on this subject, see our Introduction /not translated/). Thus, not only do the Mossi lack professional fishermen, but the villages do not even undertake collective fishing during the dry season (with the exception of some southern localities, in Kombisiguiri for example). Only children attempt to catch the mudfish which are always present in large quantities in small ponds, even when they are nearly dry.

222 Gathering, on the other hand, plays the same role among the Mossi as among the other Sudanese Blacks, and we shall study it here in some detail, since we have only described it in broad outline so far.

222 137 The tree most widespread throughout Mossi territory, and which grows wild, is the karité. Its leaves are a pleasant green, and it is somewhat similar to our Normandy apple tree. Its bark is whitish and made of small juxtaposed quadrilaterals. It is the karité which

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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634 The district chiefs did not often exercise their rights over fruit trees in 651 the weogho, as the wasteland in their districts was called. If a villager went 423 into the weogho and collected fruit or wood from the chief's trees, he sur- 434 rendered only part of it to the chief. On the other hand, if he received permission from a district chief to farm in the weogho, he was obliged to gather and send to the chief the fruit on any valuable trees. A district chief sometimes granted the rights over certain fruit trees in the inhabited areas to specific families or individuals, for personal reasons or as a reward for services. In such cases, the chief forfeited his rights to these trees, but retained his rights to the others.[28]

District chiefs also controlled all the resources of creeks and pools within their jurisdiction that were not sacred to certain aboriginal families, or which had not been transferred to specific persons. The aboriginal Ninisi [226] families always notified the district chief when they planned to perform [796] their annual fishing rite to the earth deities. He, in turn, sent representatives to the ceremony, and they were given part of the catch as his share. Persons who were granted permission to fish in the chief's water holes gave him a substantial part of their catch, and even those persons who had private control of fishing places regularly did the same.

224 The district chiefs also had rights to certain parts of animals caught in 651 their territories. This applied especially to animals caught with such tra- 634 ditional weapons as traps, clubs, bows and arrows, and spears. Men who [411] had obtained flint guns and other firearms from the Ashanti or elsewhere [177] and who had bought their own powder were not obliged to give the chief a part of their game, but it was always prudent to do so. According to a long-standing tradition, the tusk and legs of a slain elephant that were not [793] resting on the ground belonged to the chief, and those that lay on the ground belonged to the Tengsoba in whose ritual jurisdiction the animal had been slain. But the district chief's secular power was so much stronger than the Tengsoba's sacred power that he usually took both tusks, leaving the Tengsoba only two legs. The district chief also received other portions of elephants and parts of all the larger animals killed in his territory. And when hunters in the district were successful in the chase, they usually gave him entire small animals.

621 Every village in a district contributed to the district chief's revenue by 651 performing special services for him. Certain villages were responsible for 634 keeping specific huts in his compound in good condition; others, whose lands bordered on the woods, had to provide firewood for his compound; and yet others furnished grass and other fodder for his horses. Many villages had the task of cultivating special fields and crops for the district chief.

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
FA28 Mossi FA28

133 Red and White Voltas are merely a series of small stagnant pools during the dry season. In some low-lying areas around the main water courses, trapped water provides the moisture for dank riverine vegetation.

134 The soils of Mossi country are mainly ferruginous with red argils and pure silicates of aluminum predominating in the northern region. The soils in the south are thin, sandy, and formed from the decom-
137 position of crystalline rocks and sandstones. During the dry season the Mossi landscape appears too sterile to produce plant life, but with the first drops of rain the entire country soon becomes covered with the grasses and shrubs which are characteristic of this Sudanese region. The uncultivated but valuable trees of this area include the Baobab *(Adansonia digitata)*, the locust bean *(Parkia biglobosa)*, the shea-butter *(Butyrospermum parkii)*, the tamarind *(Tamarindus*
241 *indica)* and the kapok *(Bombax costatum)*. The plants which the Mossi cultivate include varieties of cereals, roots and legumes. Sorghums *(Sorghum vulgare)* and millets *(Pennisetum typhoides)* are their staples, with maize *(Zea mays)* filling the role of a secondary but rather useful crop because its growing cycle is shorter than that of other important crops and it breaks the "hungry period." Maize would be a more important crop to the Mossi if it could grow on soil less fertile than what is normally available around the Mossi compound—the area where it brings the greatest yield. Peanuts, onions,
240 rice, beans, okra, peas and sweet potatoes are other food crops. To-
248 bacco is grown for local consumption, but the crops which have the greatest export value are cotton and indigo, used for making cloth and dyeing it.

224 The wild fauna of the country does not provide a major part of the
262 food needs of the Mossi people. The several species of deer and antelope, monkeys, rabbits and wild pig are hunted and used for food.
136 But the elephants and lions which are also found in the country are sources of great distress to the people because the former decimate the growing crops and the latter attack and kill the grazing animals.

231 The Mossi rear two main types of cattle: a zebu-like one in the north-
[234] ern regions and a small dwarf variety in the south. These animals are kept primarily for their milk and for export, and are seldom killed
231 for meat until they are very old. The animals which provide the
262 Mossi with meat are goats, sheep, chickens and guinea fowls. Pig-
[177] raising is not widespread and seems to be declining in importance with the increasing observance of Islamic food taboos, even among
262 people who are still pagan. Fish forms only a minor part of the Mossi
487 diet and is obtained mainly from traders rather than from local activ-
231 ities. The Mossi also rear donkeys and horses for which they have

651 [72] (c) Fishing. Fishing in the larger water holes could take
226 place only by authorization of the canton chiefs. The day on
634 which fishing took place was treated as a holiday. All the young men in the village and their neighbors, even if the latter did not belong to the canton, came out on the day set by the canton chief and fished for the benefit of the naba. All large fish were reserved for him, and only the small ones were left to the fishermen.

This practice still prevails.

776 Other common laws. Many deities are worshipped by the
782 Mossi. Groves, fields, mountains, etc., all have their "god."
661 It often happens that the naba (canton chief), at the behest of the soothsayers, offers an animal. This may be a sheep, a goat, or even a cow, and it is offered to one or another of the deities, either for his personal interests or for those of his people, or perhaps to ask for rain. The naba dispatches some sogoné [servitor] or samand'kamba [people of the outer courtyard] to one of the villages in his canton to find a victim. The animal is taken without its owner having any right to complain or to ask for compensation. Is there not a Mossi saying to the effect, Talagh-gounda
[538] Naba'gninga the serf raises livestock for the benefit of his naba)"?

For sacrifices prescribed for the Mogho Naba, the animals are provided either by the inhabitants of the [73] town of Ouagadougou and its environs or by the canton chiefs.

Labor Service Customarily Required of the Mossi on Behalf of their Chiefs

651 Forced labor was used to cultivate the fields of the naba and to repair or construct their houses.

647 The Mogho Naba. (a) Cultivation of fields. The duty of
651 cultivating the fields of the Mogho Naba fell entirely on the Bilbalsé,
241 the residents of Bilbalogo (section of the Baloum Naba) and on all former servitors and descendants of former servitors. The Kam Naba (chief of the young men), charged with assembling the workers, had a crier announce in all the important markets that on such-and-such a day the Bilbalsé were to assemble in the emperor's

224 Each village goes there in a group, burning the bush and driving on the game. If the plan is carried out properly, the animals are eventually enclosed within a circle of fire behind which stand the natives, some on horseback and armed with spears, others on foot with their dogs and equipped merely with sticks or sometimes with bows and arrows. The bows are of medium size and made of hard wood. The 411 224 string is usually made from a rattan stem or a millet stalk. Arrows are made of the tough and light stems of tall reeds; they are not barbed, but the tip is made of iron and shaped like a harpoon, with two and sometimes three pairs of teeth. The leather quiver hangs from the shoulder.

224 The panic-stricken hares, deer, antelope of various kinds, guinea hens, and partridges run all around the fiery circle, and those who manage to cross this first obstacle are felled by the blows of the hunters. These hunts are sometimes quite fruitful, and buffalo and koba are 224 occasionally caught. Unfortunately, every animal killed in the bush 661 belongs by right to the naba, who searches the hunters' bags and takes what he pleases. If he learns that a lucky hunter has killed an antelope and failed to bring it, he summons him to his presence, reproves him harshly for his lack of consideration, and thrashes him soundly. It must nevertheless be said that such cases are constantly growing rarer, and now the natives flatly refuse to yield their catch.

224 Often no game is caught because one of the villages has failed to appear and the animals have fled through the unguarded opening. In short, these hunting parties are mostly a pastime and entertainment. The hunters who bring back a catch are few, owing to the large number of men who participate. It is true that when they set out for the hunt they all hope they will be lucky. They all are thirsty, for at this time of year the sun is very hot and it is better to hunt in the middle of the day when the game lies down in the bushes and cannot run very far. These hunting parties dwindle year by year. The cultivated fields are more extensive, and the game has withdrawn deeper into the bush. Also, the natives find it more difficult to reaching an agreement for large parties of beaters; /51/ they prefer to hunt in small groups, far from the chiefs' sight, so that nothing will be taken from them.

226 In addition to hunting, fishing is the great pastime at this time of year. Professional fishermen are as rare as professional hunters. Of [48] course, those who live on the banks of streams usually know how to swim, especially when they live near those watercourses which are most difficult to ford.

[e.g., February - April. - Analyst]

226 most difficult to ford. Each watercourse, or more exactly each pond,
[423 belongs to a naba and bears a special name, so no river has the same name
558] name all along its course. During the dry season the lelek /bed?/ of the watercourses is usually dry. Here and there are to be found ponds of varying depth where the cattle is watered. These ponds are where the natives fish. They wait until the water level subsides to knee height, for otherwise fishing would be too difficult.

226 The fishing gear is as crude as the hunting gear. There is a small
227 net held open by three sticks forming a triangle and crossed by a tough stick that is held in the hand, quite similar to the spoon-nets we use to gather shrimp. Above all a sort of wicker trap is used, conical in shape, open at the base and closed at the tip with a movable lid. This trap sometimes contains a second one made of very flexible sticks that are attached to the base of the first one. The two traps thus have a common base, but the second one opens within the first. The fish enters the trap and is held by the sticks of the smaller cone, which close in as the fish tries to get out. The fisherman removes the trap from the water or leaves it sunk in the mud, opens the lid, plunges in his hand and removes the fish, which is confined and easy to seize. The fisherman then puts it in a net or in a leather bag.

226 On a set date the owner of the pond offers sacrifices to the crocodiles
825 so they will not bite anybody. This is why the naba of Koupéla, before he fishes in his pond, must sacrifice a black goat and a chicken. No one may kill a crocodile while fishing, or the naba will die before the year is over. Was not a crocodile killed in his father's pond on
[789] the very year when he died? Before they go fishing, the natives make charms by burning roots and tree bark inside their traps. If the charm is good, the fish will rush headlong into the net or trap.

226 The fishermen gather at one end of the pond. They stand in a row across the water and move slowly forward while dipping their nets and traps over and over again. All the fish caught are put in bags or tossed to friends who stand on the shore, but, as during the hunt, the naba takes an ample share and seizes the finest specimens. The ponds hold mostly silurids anyway, which like mud and retain its odor and taste even when cooked. The Volta rivers, on the other hand, contain more abundant and more varied fish. /52/ When the natives have crossed and recrossed the pond several times, only small fry remain, and everyone goes home glad to have a little fish for the sauce and especially to have escaped the teeth of the crocodiles, for in spite of

226 the sacrifices, these amphibians have no scruples about biting a foot or leg. However, the crocodiles in these ponds are seldom large enough to sever a limb.

In those places where the water is somewhat shallow and flows for some period of time, the bank dwellers make dams of tree branches intertwined with millet stalks. These are placed diagonally to the current and lead to a sort of funnel closed with a net. The fish follow the dam, enter the funnel, and get caught in the meshes of the net.

221 356 The major ceremonies also take place at this time of year.[1] This is when the Day of the Dead is celebrated, when the koure is held. When the first gust of wind unroofs a few huts or at least indicates those that need a new covering, everyone sets down to the task. The thatch cut in December is used for the purpose. Before the soukala, [283] [857] children and youths knot blades of straw with strings of hemp and plait séko. They also go into the bush to cut down branches and to gather bark which serves to bind the branches together. When everything is ready, the head of the household calls his people and gathers a few neighbors. The roof is made and laid within a short morning. This task must be repeated every two years or so, and it is men's work entirely. At the beginning of winter, the villages take on a smart 221 new look. This is when people think of building a new hut, the man who has acquired a new wife, the child who has grown into a young man and who can no longer live with his mother, the man whose wealth has increased by a few head of cattle or a horse. The women fetch water, the children knead the mortar with their feet and carry to the mason the mud clods prepared by the old men. These tasks are not laborious, and they are accomplished with merrymaking.

Now the thorn bushes have grown back, the rains will soon fall again, and already a few gusts of wind herald the coming winter. The Pleiades have appeared on the horizon, and the baobabs are budding once more. It is necessary to take up the hoe again and to sow; this is a good thing, because the millet is running low in the granaries. The working cycle we have described must begin anew. And year follows year without bringing any major changes in the life of the common man.

1 [i.e., February-April. —Analyst]

224 435 At Kombisiguiri, as we have just seen, there are 10 elephant hunters out of about 70 chiefs of compounds. Among the latter there are also some 20 men who hunt other animals, but they are cultivators who hunt on the side. They seek buffalo. When they kill one, they sell the meat to the village that stands nearest to the spot of the kill for 35,000 cowries. They also hunt the koba antelope, whose meat is worth from 20,000 cowries, the striped deer worth 6,500, the pig deer worth 5,000, the wart hog worth 10,000. They also hunt hares, bustards, guinea fowl, partridges, turtle-doves, etc.

224 262 The Mossi do not hunt monkeys and do not eat them. /495/ Actually, there are very few in Mossi territory, except for the red-haired monkeys who are great lovers of millet and maize.

224 825 778 The Mossi do not hunt crocodiles because the latter are held sacred. If one were to kill a crocodile, one would become ill, one's head would swell and one's teeth would fall out. Snakes, on the other hand, are killed and eaten, but in Mossi territory proper there are few large ones (pythons, boas) because the climate is not sufficiently humid. They are more numerous in Boussansé and Gourounsi lands.

226 Fishing is less important than hunting among the Mossi, for the simple reason that the land, with its low rainfall, only has muddy ponds during the dry season (on this subject, see our Introduction /not translated/). Thus, not only do the Mossi lack professional fishermen, but the villages do not even undertake collective fishing during the dry season (with the exception of some southern localities, in Kombisiguiri for example). Only children attempt to catch the mudfish which are always present in large quantities in small ponds, even when they are nearly dry.

222 Gathering, on the other hand, plays the same role among the Mossi as among the other Sudanese Blacks, and we shall study it here in some detail, since we have only described it in broad outline so far.

222 137 The tree most widespread throughout Mossi territory, and which grows wild, is the karité. Its leaves are a pleasant green, and it is somewhat similar to our Normandy apple tree. Its bark is whitish and made of small juxtaposed quadrilaterals. It is the karité which

The district chiefs did not often exercise their rights over fruit trees in the weogho, as the wasteland in their districts was called. If a villager went into the weogho and collected fruit or wood from the chief's trees, he surrendered only part of it to the chief. On the other hand, if he received permission from a district chief to farm in the weogho, he was obliged to gather and send to the chief the fruit on any valuable trees. A district chief sometimes granted the rights over certain fruit trees in the inhabited areas to specific families or individuals, for personal reasons or as a reward for services. In such cases, the chief forfeited his rights to these trees, but retained his rights to the others.[22] 634 651 423 434

District chiefs also controlled all the resources of creeks and pools within their jurisdiction that were not sacred to certain aboriginal families, or which had not been transferred to specific persons. The aboriginal Ninisi families always notified the district chief when they planned to perform their annual fishing rite to the earth deities. He, in turn, sent representatives to the ceremony, and they were given part of the catch as his share. Persons who were granted permission to fish in the chief's water holes gave him a substantial part of their catch, and even those persons who had private control of fishing places regularly did the same. [226] [796]

The district chiefs also had rights to certain parts of animals caught in their territories. This applied especially to animals caught with such traditional weapons as traps, clubs, bows and arrows, and spears. Men who had obtained flint guns and other firearms from the Ashanti or elsewhere and who had bought their own powder were not obliged to give the chief a part of their game, but it was always prudent to do so. According to a long-standing tradition, the tusk and legs of a slain elephant that were not resting on the ground belonged to the chief, and those that lay on the ground belonged to the Tengsoba in whose ritual jurisdiction the animal had been slain. But the district chief's secular power was so much stronger than the Tengsoba's sacred power that he usually took both tusks, leaving the Tengsoba only two legs. The district chief also received other portions of elephants and parts of all the larger animals killed in his territory. And when hunters in the district were successful in the chase, they usually gave him entire small animals. 224 651 634 [411] [177] [793]

Every village in a district contributed to the district chief's revenue by performing special services for him. Certain villages were responsible for keeping specific huts in his compound in good condition; others, whose lands bordered on the woods, had to provide firewood for his compound; and yet others furnished grass and other fodder for his horses. Many villages had the task of cultivating special fields and crops for the district chief. 621 651 634

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55P] name all along its course. During the dry season the lelek /bed?/ of the watercourses is usually dry. Here and there are to be found ponds of varying depth where the cattle is watered. These ponds are where the natives fish. They wait until the water level subsides to knee height, for otherwise fishing would be too difficult.

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343 Chicken house and pens. Every head of a compound has a
235 small straw hut for fowl within his establishment. There is also a
231 small round hut of clay for the sheep and goats.

Repair of houses. When an establishment is damaged by rain
356 or is in need of repair, the work is done by the residents (the head of the family and the dakompa, as well as the father's wives and brothers) with no help from outsiders. There is no pay beyond the usual meals. The head of the family merely says to the workers when the work has been completed: "N'fa nel toumtogo, imaou nian (thanks for the hard work, many thanks for the labor)."

[223] Chapter 14

Mossi Clothing

Dress of the Naba

291 In this chapter we shall examine the various modifications
554 and improvements in the dress of Mossi chiefs.
435 1. Before and during the first twenty years of the French occupation. (a) Zangoego pelga: a large robe made of narrow bands of cotton fabric, rather expertly woven. These robes, which are made and embroidered by specialists, used to cost from 70,000 to 100,000 cowries (1).

> 1. One hundred francs. The five-franc note is now worth 1,000 cowries. The silver five-franc piece was worth from 5,000 to 7,000 cowries, depending on the fluctuations of exchange.

(b) Karfo: a large robe, dark blue in color, made of the same material as the preceding (50,000 to 70,000 cowries).

(c) Noufa: a large robe and trousers, made of very fine fabric in a dark gray color. It had the value of two slaves or 70,000 cowries for the robe and 50,000 for the trousers.

241 tuber, Coleus coffini, which Europeans call oussounifing or fabirama,
262 and which may replace potatoes in a pinch, are cultivated in the soils most propitious to them.

221 The precious karite /shea/ tree (Butyrospermum parkii) grows in
262 most fields; its fruit, prized for its cool and slightly sweet flesh, con-
137 tains a pit which yields karite butter, the fat most widely used in
[388] cooking and to make soap. Around the villages, and sometimes even within them, the néré /locust bean/ tree (Parkia africana) produces
[356] elongated pods; its bark, mashed in water, yields a paste that is used to harden the floors of the huts. Its flour makes a cooling drink when
[272] mixed in water, and it may also be eaten; its seeds /8/ are used to make kalro /kalre in the original/, the soumbara of the Bambara, an ingredient /made from locust beans, héré/ of all carefully prepared
137 sauces. The doubalé and silk-cotton or kapokiero trees spread their shade over the weavers, numerous among the Mossi, and over the talkers who are even more. Bamboo grows well in the damp southern regions, and the palm oil tree is occasionally found. The caoutchouc liana, however, has not yet been introduced.

231 Small chickens run in all directions through the villages, along with domesticated guinea hens. Everywhere in the bush near the huts,
[857] little boys herd goats and sheep; this is the task of youngsters here at the age when their contemporaries among us /in France/ begin to learn the alphabet. The most common sheep and goats are small in size. The sheep have short hair. Sometimes, especially in the larger villages where markets are held, goats and sheep are to be seen with
[439] long legs and long, curled horns. They are imported from the northeast and fattened to be sold as butcher's meat. The height of fashion for the wife or a prosperous naba is to be followed by a Touareg /Tuareg/ sheep, well washed and very white. It is fed on millet leftovers and bean mush, and its mistress often presents it with a bit of salt to lick. In short, it is well cared for and agreeably fat; on some important feast day, it will embellish the menu.

The huts are usually guarded by very commonplace dogs, often ill-tempered, but cowardly. A stick is enough to drive them away.
[224] They are mostly used in the hunt, the great Mossi pastime during the dry season. Domesticated ducks are sometimes found in nabas' households, as well as pigeons, but these birds are not widespread and not within the reach of everyone. Finally, almost every group of huts has cats which belong to the women and which are difficult

231 to approach because they are half wild. The donkeys are of medium
[192] size, but strong and stout; they will carry loads of sixty kilograms for days on end, and their help is priceless to those who trade in fabrics, kola nuts, and salt. There are some donkeys in practically every village.

Horses are quite common throughout the country, and every naba of any importance possesses one or several. Two distinct races are to be found. They are described by Binger as follows: "The most common has all the characteristics of the Arab horse without its qualities: slender head, short neck, thin limbs, receding rump, and very long mane and tail. The coats most frequently seen are bay, chestnut, gray, light bay, and roan; the last three always have patches on the forehead. Horses without white stockings are rare. The other race bears no likeness to the Arab horse. The animal is strong and beautiful, with the characteristics of our cavalry horse; it is about 1.57 to 1.62 meters /in height/. The head is slender and well joined, the limbs strong and muscular, the hooves broad with firm horn, the breast wide, and the mane and tail hair short. The most usual coats are various shades of bay and chestnut." (3) /9/ The Mossi, however,

3. Binger, Du Niger au Golfe de Guinée /From the Niger to the Gulf of Guinea/, Vol. 1, p. 485. It seems exaggerated, however, to ascribe 1.57 meters to a Mossi horse. A horse of 1.52 meters /in height/ is a large horse here, and the average hardly exceeds 1.44 meters. For his part, Meniaud (Haut-Sénégal et Niger, Géographie economique II /Upper Senegal and Niger. Economic Geography, Series II, Vol. 2/, p. 106) states that "the horses of Upper Senegal and Niger seem to possess the characteristics of the Aryan and Mongolian races, occasionally modified by the Germanic race." Further on (p. 110) he includes the Mossi horse in the Mongolian race (Dougolawi or Nubian variety).

accustomed no doubt to getting horses in the course of raids, do not

231 bother to raise them; as a result the number of horses has decreased, and this country, formerly renowned for its mounts, may have none in a not too distant future.

Unfortunately, horses do not thrive in every part of the country; Ouagadougou is particularly deadly for them, although, to my knowledge, the true reason for this insalubrity has not yet been found. The natives attribute it to the water, and there is no doubt that horses watered at the wells are in better health than those watered at the streams; it is also true that horses thrive in areas only a few kilometers [136] from Ouagadougou. Europeans tend to attribute this mortality to the tsetse fly. The two opinions are easy to reconcile, for, on the one hand, tsetse flies prefer damp places, and, on the other hand, the [312] Ouagadougou wells contain salt of magnesium which purges the horses and thus checks the disease.

231 The Peul own fine herds of bovines, some rather small and without humps (small cattle), others large and humped (zebu). Traders also 563 use the zebu as a beast of burden. Much of this cattle belongs to the 437 Mossi who seldom tend their own herds but prefer to entrust them to the Peul shepherds who keep the milk in payment. An adult cow yields from two to four liters a day during the good season. The guardians, however, know how to make the best of this near slavery. When an animal dies it is never one of theirs, and if the owner of the herd /a Mossi/ dies without telling his heirs where his cattle is to be found and how many head he owns, the Peul carefully refrain from disclosing the herd entrusted to them. In former days they were slightly more conscientious because they feared retaliation, but now they bless the French occupation.

231 The herds are sometimes decimated by an epizootic disease, as happened in 1910 and 1911 when the Koupéla area was ravaged by what must have been the bovine plague or peripneumonia. The cows would cough, entirely lose their appetites, and die within a few days.

The Mossi also raise bees. The hives are made of straw or flexible sticks and placed in the trees; sometimes swarms of bees also settle in the hollow trunks of baobabs. The honey is gathered at the end and at the beginning of the winter season; the hive is smoked out and [273] the bees destroyed. Honey is used primarily to make bésé, a kind of hydromel which the Moslem Yarsé, Peul, and Haoussa like very much, and which they are allowed to drink in spite of its fermentation; [237] whereas, in principle, millet beer is forbidden to them. The wax 306 is sold to the jewelry-makers who use it to make bracelets by the lost wax process.

593 cases are rare. Less rare are the children who care little for their parents. Nevertheless, old people are usually treated well and with [888] great respect. A son who abandons his old father or mother is held in very poor esteem. A woman prefers to bear daughters who will help her in her daily work, but she hopes for one or two sons with whom she may live when she is old.

857 The girls live with their mother. As soon as they can walk, they 883 follow her to the stream and return with a gourd of water on their [482 heads. As they grow, so does the gourd, and little girls carry water 312] jars weighing from fifteen to twenty kilograms. At home, young girls mill grain to feed the whole family, tend the fire, stir the sauce, wash the dishes and the clothes, sweep, in short, attend to all the household tasks under their mother's guidance. The only task of a woman with two or three half-grown daughters is to supervise their work. Because they are always with their mother, the young girls are usually more responsible and better behaved than the boys. Unfortunately they make up for this later, and more often than not, it is on their own initiative that they go at night to the young men's huts. A young man may give presents to a girl who has already been promised in marriage, and he may do so in front of her mother, who says nothing.

857 Boys help their father as soon as they are strong enough. Younger 883 boys follow their older brothers into the bush as soon as they can and ●231 help them herd the sheep and goats. These boys go out every morning, before the sun has dried the dew, to look for new termite nests full of insects which the chicks are fond of eating. During the dry season, they cut down and plait grass to cover the roofs; if they are old enough, they even cut the firewood. When a little older, if their father or the person with whom they live owns a horse, they watch over it, take it to the stream to water it and to wash it, go into the bush to cut grass for it, and clean the stables. During the winter when the grass is green, each of the horses of a rich naba is cared for by three or four children. Some of them cut the grass, others /37/ stuff it almost by force into the horse's mouth, while one little boy drives the flies away with a stick to which a sort of flexible leather sole is attached. The winter season is a fine time for horses, who grow fat and heavy. Unfortunately, the Black does not think of the future and does not foresee how much dry grass will be needed to bridge the dry season; as a result, the horses suffer a great deal from hunger at that time.

221 the men bring bunches of peanuts. While nibbling on the green nuts
241 and talking, they all separate the pods from the leaves. The latter
are carefully set aside along with the bean leaves. They make ex-
[231] cellent fodder for the horses during the dry season, when the sun has
burned off all the grass in the bush.

221 By November harvesting is completed. The sun has already dried
241 out the grass, and the time has come to cut straw for séko and roofing.
356 /48/ This task is usually reserved for children and servants (dakonré).
857 The head of the household tells each one of them the number of straw
bundles he is to cut, and every morning the children set off in groups,
a sickle on their shoulders. They look for straw on the banks of the
watercourses and return when the sun begins to scorch. This marks
the end of the working day, and there is nothing to do now but rest.
The dry season is indeed a time of rest, and from November to May
there are no pressing tasks.

[805] It gets cold in December. This is winter (sapolro). The natives
221 gather at dawn around fires of millet stalks, twigs, or straw; anything
241 combustible serves. Every newcomer must contribute an armful; it
[372] is the price of admission to a seat near the fire. At the end of December
476 all the straw for roofing has been stored, and then the small millet
is threshed. Every inhabitant of the village has the use of the thresh-
ing floor in turn. He notifies his friends and acquaintances as he did
when he weeded his field. The millet beer is ready, and on the pre-
vious day the women have covered the area with cow dung diluted in
water to harden the floor. At dawn the friends arrive, and the millet
is removed from the granary and spread out on the floor. This is done
with the help of millet stalks tied together in bundles and dragged
along the ground with ropes while a man bears down upon them.
The flail is merely a stick cut in the bush, a tree branch shaped in
such a way that the part which is held in the hand is rather thin and
flexible, while the part which is used for threshing is quite thick and
forms an obtuse angle with the part in the hand. The boys line up in
a row, with the tots at either end; the drummers stand before or behind
them; and the flails fall with the beat, crushing the ears of millet
and separating the very dry grain from the stalks. All the while the
old men sit in the shade of the granaries, talking, smoking, and
sewing clothes. When the threshers get to the end of the floor, they
retrace their steps and rest, while the old men gather with straw brooms
the grain which has been scattered outside the pile.

224 Mossi as to us the king of beasts, the master of the bush (wé' naba), and they attack it only if it has killed a man.

These hunters make their own powder with ground charcoal and
224 saltpeter extracted from earth soaked with urine. This earth is washed
389 carefully, and a residue of saltpeter crystals is left when the liquid evaporates. Usually no sulphur is added because it is too costly. This powder burns well, and when made carefully it is quite effective. The hunters keep it in small gourds or ram horns; they only make a little at a time. Hard pebbles are used as bullets.

224 The natives know how to disguise themselves skillfully, and they only shoot at very close range when the animal is not moving. They often lie in wait for hours on end, sometimes for the whole night. They know the habits of the animals and the water holes where they come to drink, and they build small huts with branches or dig holes where they hid under foliage. Others more ingeniously build a vast funnel-shaped trap, its open base sometimes one or even two kilometers long; the sides of equal length consist of thorn fences, and the tip of the funnel, which is located near a thick tree, leaves barely enough space for the animal to pass through. The hunter takes his position up in the tree with bow and arrows and settles comfortably because he may have to wait a long time. Unsuspecting animals follow the thorn fence and come to the tree where they are killed. The hunters manage to fell some handsome game in this fashion, even elephants, in spite of their very primitive weapons.

/50/ Professional hunters, those who always have adventures to relate and who say like those of Tarascon that they never miss a shot, such true hunters are rare, but those who hunt as a pastime are as numerous as the Mossi themselves. A Mossi never goes out without
[411 a stick. When asked why he does so, he answers that it is to kill
752] snakes, which — alas! — take so many victims, and to drive off dogs; and then, "I might find a hare or some other animal in the bush, and
[231] what would I kill it with if I didn't have a stick?" Many of them have dogs which are truly not very ferocious, but they are poorly fed and preserve all their agility. A Mossi on his way to the fields or walking from one village to another always keeps his ears and eyes open; he is on the lookout for meat! Since he does not have many ideas, he is seldom absorbed in his thoughts or absent-minded.

The season[1] we are now studying is the time of large-scale hunting. Several villages get together and set a date and a meeting place.

1 [i.e. February-April. - Analyst]

243 are tied, placed in baskets, and carried to special huts. These
343 are small straw huts built on stakes, that is, raised on thick pieces of wood, which stand in a long curved line by the fields. About twenty such huts often stand side by side. Both men and women share in the harvesting.

Whenever the millet is to be eaten, the heads are taken from
243 these straw huts and threshed with a stick to set the grain loose. This threshing is done by the men.

Aside from the ordinary small millet, it is the large red millet that is grown most extensively, as a rule, among the Mossi. They
[194] call it kaziéra or kaziéga (we know that the r and g are interchangeable in Mossi; people will say, for example, either nora or noga to mean "chicken") and the Bambara call it niooulé. The large red millet is the kind used chiefly for dolo.

This is the millet that is planted before any other, as soon as the first rains begin to fall. The ouaka is used to remove the weeds which have grown in the fields, then the weeds are burned and the large red millet is sowed at the time of the first storms (April). It is sowed in the same fashion as the small millet, by holding the koutiaga in one hand and the small gourd containing grain in the other.

When the millet has come out of the ground, a fortnight /469/ is allowed to elapse and then the weeds are cleared with the ouaka. When the millet is grown, the women and children are sent out to protect it against birds. The millet is ripe around September 1.

The bulk of the harvesting work is done by the men. The stalks, which are usually 3 meters high and which may even reach 4 are cut down at the base. Once they have been dug out and laid down, the heads, which are thick and tuftlike with red flowers, are cut with a knife and carried to the soukala. The women do the carrying as they do for other kinds of millet. The large red millet is threshed only as it is needed. The threshing is done by the men with a stick.

Let us note that when a new piece of land is cleared, the large red millet is sown first to find out if the soil is good. It is only in the following year, when this has been ascertained, that the small millet is sown.

The red millet is also cultivated around the soukala, like maize.
[273] As a rule the Mossi use the large red millet only to make dolo
231 (dama in Mossi). They may also give it to horses, but some horses
262

231 will not take it. The Mossi only eat it themselves if there is no
262 other kind of millet available, or in times of famine. In any case,
[751] the red millet has a constipating effect, and when people suffer from colic they are given a to /mush/ of red millet to check the attack.

243 The Mossi also grow the ordinary large white millet, which is the kind grown most extensively, aside from sanio, throughout the Sudan. The Mossi call it baninga, the Bambara kéningué or guessékélé. It is called kéningué around Ségou, and guessékélé around Nioro. The Nounouma call it nienso, and so do the Kassonfra /Awuna/. The Kassonboura /Kasena/ call it béninga, that is to say, they have adopted the Mossi word and slightly altered it. (We saw, in fact, that some Kassouna-Boura, at least those of Po and Tiahané, are Kassouna-Mossi rather than Kassouna-Boura.)

Europeans often give this kind of millet the name of "pearly millet" /mil nacré/ or "horse millet," because it is tender and easy to crush.

/470/ This millet is not grown by every Mossi. Those who do grow the large white millet eat it themselves. They also give it to [231] their horses. It is cultivated exactly in the same fashion as the small millet, that is to say, it is sown and harvested at the same time.

The Mossi also grow the kipéléro or kipélégo (from ki, "millet," and péléro or pélégo, "white"). This is the yaro or yara of the Gourounsi, and probably the n'guéné or n'kendé of the Bambara and Malinké, a kind of millet intermediate between the small and large white varieties. Actually, one of my informants told me that the kipéléro is sown along with the ordinary small millet, that no distinction is made between the two, and that they are used for the same purposes, while another informant maintained that it is a kind of large white millet.

The Mossi also grow some gadiaba. This is a kind of large millet which is either white or red. The Bambara call it gadiabadié when it is white, hamadiboubou when it is red. The Mossi refer to the gadiabadié as noira. They cultivate it only in Boussouma province. As for hamadiboubou, it is not to be found among the Mossi.

As far as the early millet /mil précoce/ is concerned, the Mossi are familiar with it and call it nado, but they do not cultivate it. This is the souna of the Bambara, the tiara of the Nounouma and

244 The Mossi grow considerable quantities of peanuts (nangouri in Mossi, n'tiga in Bambara, gherté in Peuhl and Toucouleur).

No earth mounds are made for the cultivation of peanuts among the Mossi. The peanuts are sown five or six days after the millet. Holes are made with a koutiaga, one or two peanuts are placed in each hole and then covered up. When the shoots appear, the weeds are removed with the ouaka. When the peanuts are ripe (end of October), the pods are dug up with the ouaka. /473/ They are left
251 to dry in the sun for three or four days, and then they are taken to the village in baskets. Again the peanuts are left to dry on the clay roofs of the huts, and then placed in the little straw huts already mentioned from which they are removed only to be eaten. The
252 peanuts are roasted. They are also used, although not very often, to prepare sauces eaten with millet.

231 The greens of the plant do not go to waste. They are gathered and given to horses, and make excellent fodder for them.

244 In addition to peanuts, the Mossi grow considerable quantities of underground peas. Not everyone grows them, however. The underground peas are sown after all the other grains and tubercles.

The grass is cut on the spot where the peas are to be grown, but it is left there to serve as fertilizer. Then, holes are made into the ground with the koutiaga, and the sowing is done. When the plant begins to shoot, the weeds are pulled out by hand rather than with the ouaka, since the latter would remove everything. The underground peas ripen in three months. They are gathered at the same time as the peanuts, that is to say, in October. The peas are dug
251 out of the soil with the ouaka. They are cleaned, left to dry, placed
252 in baskets, and carried to the little straw huts. They are eaten boiled.

244 The Mossi also grow sesame, which they call sili. They cultivate it in small bush plots. Sesame is sown at the height of the winter season, three months after the first rains. The soil is scraped with the ouaka, and the grains carried in a little gourd are spread upon the ground. The sesame emerges from the ground ten days later. Men, women, and children pull out the weeds by hand. The harvesting is done when the stalks have reached 1.50 meters in height (immediately following the harvest of the small millet). The stalks are severed at mid-height with a knife and then laid out on

241 2. The sououga, a knife used to cut down the heads of millet.

3. The gouégo, a curved knife, a kind of scythe which is used to cut straw, for example when preparing thatch for hut roofs.

To summarize, cultivation is the most important pursuit among the Mossi. It insures the subsistence of this population which is [161] relatively dense, since there are 25 inhabitants per square kilometer, a very high figure unusual for West Africa. The species of cultivated plants are as numerous as anywhere else, and the agricultural tools tend to be superior. In spite of all this, the Mossi are not very good cultivators, and in this respect I believe that they must be placed beneath the Bobo, Gourounsi, Habé, Bambara, etc. One senses that the Mossi descend at least in part from people who were once familiar with easier and more fruitful ways of procuring food (such as war and attendant loot) or, to put it another way, one senses the meeting of two groups, one of which was truly adept at cultivation while the other was less so. Thus, although the Mossi are cultivators first and foremost and actually subsist on cultivation, the latter is not as basic to them as it is to the Bobo, the Gourounsi, etc. They do practice cultivation, this is even by far their chief subsistence activity, and yet one cannot say that they are, in all respects, good cultivators.

231 Are they at least noteworthy stockbreeders?

To this we may give forthwith a negative answer. The Mossi are very mediocre, not to say worthless breeders. This is not to mean, incidentally, that there is no cattle in Mossi territory. There [563] is a great deal, on the contrary, and this stems from the presence of the Foulbé, who are cattle herders, as much as from the presence of the Yarsé, who /487/ have always owned considerable quantities of cattle, and from the density of the Mossi population. The Mossi themselves, nevertheless, own little cattle. To be more exact, they have a low per capita average of cattle.

We might list over-all or partial figures, but those most recently 231 compiled are vitiated by the fact that Mossi territory lost part of 563 its cattle in recent years due to repeated famines around 1906-1908 and to an overly rigorous tax system that went into effect a little later. We shall, therefore, merely validate our statement that the

231 Mossi are very mediocre breeders by describing their manner of
563 caring for their animals. Instead of tending them or having this done by their young men, they nearly always hand them over to the Foulbé for herding. This is also done whenever possible by the Bobo, Nounouma, and Sissala in the Leo residency, but it is not done by the Kassonboura, Nankana, or Dagari. If the head of a Mossi
231 soukala is wealthy, he employs his own private Peuhl herder. If he
563 is of average means or poor, he makes an arrangement with other
464 Mossi in the same circumstances, and they all get together to pay a single herder for their cattle. It is the poorer Foulbé, for their part, who agree to herd Mossi cattle in this fashion.

The agreement that binds both parties grants the milk and butter to the Peuhl, but the increase of the herd devolves to the owner. This agreement is made without any definite time limits, and it is only broken if the herder fails to tend the animals properly. If he does his job well, on the other hand, he herds them indefinitely, and when he dies his son succeeds him. By the same token, when the Mossi owner dies, his son leaves the animals in the hands of the same Peuhl.

The Foulbé in charge of tending the herds live in low, conical straw huts at the back of the Mossi villages that own the herds. Not far from their huts, they build an enclosure where they leave the cattle during the night. They take the animals to graze in the bush in the morning, and bring them back in the evening. Whenever one of the Mossi owners wants milk or butter, he buys it from the Peuhl. Sometimes the latter offers him milk as a gift.

We shall see later, when we discuss the Foulbé, that in former
[567] times the Mossi often enslaved the small Foulbé bands that /488/ came with the intention of settling in Mossi territory. The Mossi chiefs would confiscate the herds, and then, since they were unwilling to care for them themselves, they would return them to the dispossessed Foulbé in usufruct and in accordance with the agreement we have just described. It must nevertheless be said that all
563 Foulbé in Mossi territory were not subjected to this high-handed procedure. When we occupied Mossi territory, there were some free and wealthy Foulbé, some Foulbé villages with chiefs of their own. Actually, those Foulbé were by far the more numerous.

563 From a political standpoint, they were subject to the high Mossi powers just like the Yarsé, but like the latter and aside from this, they had preserved all their personal and economic freedom.

Let us add a few words about the various races of livestock 231 which are to be found in Mossi territory.

As far as cattle is concerned, there are three races in the Ouagadougou circle:

1. Humped cattle, which is found mostly in the northern and eastern parts of the circle. This beef is tall, with a short dewlap and large horns. It is well suited to porterage, and furnishes excellent butcher's meat. There are some 5,000 head of humped cattle in the circle, 2,000 males and 3,000 females.

2. Humpless or local cattle. This beef has small horns, is found chiefly in the western and southwestern regions, and is usually designated by the name of Kipirsi cattle. It is not suited to porterage and yields inferior meat, but it is much stronger than the humped beef and better adapted to the climate.

3. Ordinary cattle, the result of a cross between the two preceding species. This beef has the strength of the Kipirsi cattle and is considerably taller. It is, furthermore, capable of being fattened, and can thus furnish meat of very good quality. This type predominates among the Tenkodogo Mossi. It comprises about 20,000 head, 8,000 males and 12,000 females.

It is therefore the local cattle (71,000 head), which is most numerous. The humped beeves are worth from 40 to 100 francs, [435] /489/ and the humpless beeves from 30 to 40 francs. The natives are familiar with castration but practice it at random on any subject [232] that comes to hand.

Prior to the arrival of the French, the Mossi used their cattle for 231 meat and for sacrifices, but the two uses really amounted to one 782 (the former) since the animals offered to a dead person are always 651 eaten by the living. Nowadays, the Mossi sell their cattle to pay their tax. They still eat meat, although apparently not as much as before. The need to pay a tax which has been understood imperfectly, raised too rapidly and levied too harshly over the past few years, has forced them to save their cattle in order to sell it on the southern kola markets.

231 While the Mossi entrust their cattle to the Foulbé, as we have seen earlier, they do no such thing with their sheep which are kept with the goats. They are handed over to the young boys to care for during the winter and the dry season.

231 262 As almost everywhere in West Africa, the flesh of the sheep is of mediocre quality and smells of suint. The natives nevertheless like it very much.

231 The sheep have short hair and yield no wool. Actually, in all of West Africa, only the Macina sheep yield some.

"The Mossi sheep," says the Cahier des Rapports of the /Ouagadougou/ circle, "differs basically from the Macina sheep. While the latter are rather large, with very thick hair, the Ouagadougou sheep are small with short hair. The males have horns, and usually long manes.

"The sheep race of the Macina does not in fact exist among the Mossi, for the climate of the region does not permit it. In the northern part of the circle one may find, though rarely, some sheep belonging to that breed brought by the Dioula and destined for slaughter, but nowhere is that race raised /among the Mossi/.

"Although the Mossi sheep cannot be exploited in any way as far as their hair is concerned, they nevertheless constitute a source of income of some importance to the natives. /490/ Sheep are indeed quite numerous throughout the circle. They are chiefly consumed locally. A few flocks, however, are led to the markets of the Gold Coast."

[77] Let us note further the existence of so-called "house sheep," raised individually in the household in accordance with a custom introduced among the Mossi by the Yarsé, and fattened carefully to be slaughtered on festive occasions.

Goats are not entrusted to the Foulbé either, and the latter, incidentally, would not want them. During the winter season, they are herded by children who prevent them from eating the millet. During the dry season they are not herded, and they may wander about as they please.

The majority of Mossi goats are of dwarf species. Yet goats of usual size, large goats which are no doubt of Maure /Moorish/ origin, are also to be found in small numbers.

231 Donkeys are relatively numerous in Mossi territory. They are light grey in color, with a handsome black strip on the withers which extends down the right and left sides. The Mossi are very fond of [492] riding them. They do this, incidentally, all the way back, sitting on the donkey's rump, and it is a rather comical sight. They are beginning to use their donkeys in trading. Formerly they did not do this, since they did not engage in trading.

[435] The average price of a donkey is 25 francs.

Mule breeding is unknown among the Mossi. It is practiced in [232 439] Sokoto lands among the Haoussa, who sometimes bring mules into /Mossi/ territory.

As for horses, the Mossi have three races.

1. In the northeast there is a horse of rather large stature, from 1.50 to 1.60 meters in height, elegant, with delicate joints and lines recalling the true Arab horse. These horses, ridden too early and too recklessly by the natives, are soon worn out.

2. The southern horse, which is to be found in the southern part of the Ouagadougou circle and in the Tenkodogo residency. It is small in stature, thin, rather stocky. Better adapted to /491/ the Sudanese climate than the large northern horse, it possesses greater strength and endurance.

3. The Mossi horse proper, which seems to derive from a cross between the northern and southern races. It is small in stature, but strong-backed, vigorous, tough, and frugal. It is less handsome than the northern horse, but more attractive than the Boussansé horse. On the other hand, it endures the climate better than the former, less well than the latter.

231 435 A southern horse is worth from 80 to 100 francs, a Mossi horse is worth about 150 francs, and finally, a northern horse is worth from 200 to 400 francs. There are about 7,000 horses in the Ouagadougou circle.

231 The horses are kept in the villages during the dry season. They are given millet and peanut greens to eat. Grass is cut down in the bush and given to them when it dries. During the rainy season, the [554] horses are usually taken to the bush. Only the chiefs keep their horses in the soukala, where the animals are brought fresh grass, millet, water and salt. Other people take their horses to the bush and tie them beside their field so they may browse on the grass.

231 We mentioned earlier the karyanga, which is gathered wild or cultivated for horses. It is given to them at the height of the winter season.

Many Mossi own dogs. They use them to guard the soukala, to hunt in the bush, or for consumption. In the latter case, the [262 animal is fattened. Dog meat was sold on Mossi markets in the 438] old days, but the Yarsé, who are Moslems as we know, found it improper to exhibit dog meat alongside mutton or beef, and the custom was abandoned. Dogs are still killed inside the soukala, however, for consumption purposes.

[435] A dog is worth from 2 to 5 francs.

The Mossi have chickens and guinea fowl. The chickens are 235 worth 250 cowries. The eggs are not sold.

It is the men who care for the chickens. They /492/ look in the bush for termite nests which they break to pieces so that the chickens may eat the termites. Sometimes, instead of one ration only, the chickens are issued two a day, one in the morning and one in the evening.

The guinea fowl are less numerous than the chickens. Accord- [435 ing to their weight, they are worth from 250 to 300 cowries. Their 462] eggs are eaten. It is the men who care for the guinea fowl as for the chickens.

231 The Mossi place beehives in the trees. The hives consist of elongated straw cylinders shaped like a tom-tom. One of the sides is completely closed, while the other is perforated to allow the bees to come and go.

231 These hives are placed in the trees at the time when the warm 237 season begins (March), and then the honey is gathered every month except at the height of the rainy season, when the downpours are too heavy. The children are in charge of this. They climb the tree with a straw torch on fire, and frighten the bees away. Then they take the honey and come down. In order to separate the honey from the wax, the honeycombs are placed in a large canari full of water. Another canari is heated intensely, and its burning-hot base is brought close to the surface of the jar where the combs are floating. The wax melts and sinks to the bottom, while the honey floats. The wax is sold to jewelers, who use it in the [306] manufacture of copper objects made by the lost-wax process. It is

231 also sold to shoemakers, who need it to rub and soften their hides.
237 In former days wax was given rather than sold. Nowadays it is sold because of the need for cash occasioned by the tax. As for honey, [262] it is eaten pure, or with milk, or mixed with sarabout. It is also 272 made into a drink called bésou, béci, or bici, which is no other than hydromel. The latter is known, incidentally, throughout West Africa.

The Nounouma call it torosana, from sana, "drink" and toro, "honey." The Kassouna call it by the same name.

The women make hydromel as follows. They boil water, pour the honey into it, and stir. Then they add small-millet flour. The mixture is stirred with a piece of wood and then strained to rid the drink of /493/ all impurities. It is poured into a clean canari, which is carefully covered. At the end of two days, one has a [435] yellowish drink which is worth 400 cowries or 0.40 franc a liter at Ouagadougou. Among the Nounouma, where honey is more abundant than among the Mossi, the liter is worth 0.20 franc (at Leo, for example). Hydromel is stronger and more potent than dolo, and one must be careful not to drink too much.

252 The Mossi also make little cakes with honey and millet flour. They call them baradaré. These cakes are not made by the Gourounsi.

231 This concludes our review of Mossi stockbreeding. Generally speaking, as we have seen, it is quite mediocre with the exception of two specialities, donkeys and horses. As far as donkeys are concerned, although the Mossi are no traders and have only begun to do a little trading since we occupied their territory, they have always liked the animals and used them either for their own transport or to carry grain. They have an average of one donkey per 42 inhabitants, while the Dagari only have one per 1,000, the Nounouma one per 166, the Sissala one per 55, the Kassonboura one per 50. In this respect, the Mossi run second only to the traders, the Yarsé, who have a pressing need for donkeys in connection with their trade and who have one per 23 inhabitants.

As for horse raising, the Mossi have left it to the Foulbé of Mossi territory. The Mossi nevertheless have an average of one horse per 166 inhabitants among the common people, and one per

231 64 inhabitants among the nakomsé (nobles, descendants of chiefs, true Mossi). The Dagari and Nounouma, on the other hand, have one horse per 1,000 inhabitants, the Sissala one per 400, the Kassonboura one per 300. The Yarsé, who are in better circumstances than the common Mossi but less fond of horses than the nakomsé, have one horse per 100 people. Finally, the Foulbé of Mossi territory, who raise horses, have one for every 26 people.

To summarize, Mossi stockbreeding is mediocre except for donkeys and horses. Let us proceed to the hunt.

224 First of all, like the Gourounsi and all other populations of West Africa, the Mossi hunt collectively during the dry, warm season.

/494/ This collective endeavor is their chief hunting method. Aside from this, the cultivators hunt individually with bow and arrow, chiefly during the dry season although sometimes also during the damp season.

Finally, there are a few elephant hunters in the southern regions. They are to be found only in the south, for in Mossi territory proper the relative density of the population and resulting extent of cultivated land make for a nearly total absence of elephants. Gourounsi and Boussansé lands, on the other hand, which are much less densely populated, include some deserted areas where elephants may be found. Mossi hunters, therefore, have settled in the southern part of the territory, on the borders of Gourounsi and Boussansé lands, to scour both regions /for elephants/.

At Kombisiguiri, for example, there are ten of them, ten soukala heads. They kill one or two elephants a year on the average. They sell the meat to the village that stands nearest to the spot where the animal was killed. This nets them about 50,000 cowries. [435] As for the tusks, they sell them for 120,000 or 140,000 cowries, sometimes 200,000. They always give a piece of the meat to the chief of the canton where the animal was killed. They hunt with [411] guns, while in the old days they hunted with poisoned spears but on the same individual basis as they do now.

[463] Elephant hunters do not cultivate the soil during the winter season, but their wives and children do.

222 137 261 Séba is a kind of long, poisonous, black turnip which is eaten only in times of famine and after protracted cooking.

Seba and vidiba caused the death of many people during the last Mossi famine by giving them dysentery.

137 231 /511/ As for wild fodder found in Mossi territory, there is first of all kénibédo, that grows in bunches 30 centimeters high in damp hollows. Its leaves are rudimentary. It is severed 20 centimeters from the ground and stored during the dry season.

Then there are the fodder plants belonging to the papilionaceous family, densa and youbenga. The tiny stem of densa or youbenga is not severed from the plant itself, which reaches a height of 0.30 or 0.40 meter in both cases. Horses eat them either green or dry, indiscriminately.

137 314 283 Finally, let us say a word about souga, a sort of wild hemp called thus by the Mossi. The Nounouma call it boupo, and the Kassouna bénédévio. It is found only in certain parts of Mossi territory, but it grows throughout Gourounsi lands. Its bark yields very tough white fibers which the natives use in the manufacture of rope, string or thread for fishing implements. The bark does not keep through the dry season, so it is reduced to fibers during the rainy season. The fibers, on the other hand, can take the most intensive dryness without deteriorating. Souga is not cultivated.

222 433 We are now finished with Mossi gathering activities. They have a certain importance, as we have just seen, the same one on the whole as in other Sudanese populations. They are infinitely less important than cultivation, of course, but only slightly less so than stockbreeding, and they must be placed on the same level as the hunt. They are far more important than fishing or arboriculture.

245 433 The latter deserves no real mention. It hardly exists among the Mossi. It is limited to what we described earlier about the rónier and to the planting, here and there, of a few papaw trees.

433 In short, cultivation comes first, with stockbreeding trailing far behind, then gathering and hunting on the same level, then fishing and finally arboriculture.

010 /512/ Industries flourish among the Mossi. We shall review one by one, in detail, the various trades they exercise.

422 591 them, they must repair them at their own expense. Those implements which are worn out are replaced by the head of the work group.

422 231 Domestic animals. —Chickens, goats, sheep, donkeys, etc., are all fully owned on an individual basis and not by the group or even by the household. The animal is owned by the man or woman who bought /269/ it. Nevertheless, all the goats and sheep in a compound are gathered together, they sleep in the same place, and they are led to the bush in a flock by the little boys of the compound. The animals of the total family or of the village, on the other hand, are never gathered together.

562 Wives. —I need not emphasize that wives are obviously private property. There are no wives owned in common by the village, the family, the compound, or the work group. The wife, however, is in some measure considered to belong to the compound or even to the family in the sense that a man's wives always go to his brother when he dies.

423 592 The compound. —We saw earlier what applies here. The compound belongs to the zakasoba, but only as a representative of the zaka, as a manager of the property of this subfamilial group. It does not belong to him as private property, in the Roman sense of jus utendi et abutendi /right of use and abuse/. It belongs, ultimately, to the zaka itself.

If this is so, it is not less true that those habitable portions of the zaka, the cabins or huts, are definitely allocated to specific households which have rights of usufruct over them. Thus, the ownership belongs to the zaka, as represented by its head. The usufruct belongs to the households or individuals.

Finally, we may note, as we did earlier, that a hut built exclusively by a household with its own labor or by a single individual of the zaka may be torn down and destroyed by him since it is household or private property set up on subfamilial property. This case, however, is quite exceptional.

The large cabins or huts for millet belong to the cultivating groups. There are also huts for millet belonging to the household, where the husband stores the harvest from the household field. Finally, the 422 large earthen vases, the jars which stand in the huts, lead us from the compound to the subject of furniture. These jars are made by the women and belong individually to specific women.

Furniture. —The furniture, which we shall study in greater detail under "Mode of Subsistence" /not translated/, is very scanty and crude. It is owned privately.

323 wide, 2 meters in diameter, and open at the top), then some straw on which the pots are laid, and then more straw and firewood. They set this afire and keep it burning for twelve hours.

In order to polish their pots, the women take the bark of the [314] nobora or n'kouna. They soak it in huge canari for a whole day. The water acquires a reddish hue. The fired and cooled pots are immersed in these canari for a while, and then allowed to dry in the open air. When this is over, the pots may be taken to market and sold.

The blacksmiths' wives make their pottery during the dry season. During the winter season, they work in their husbands' fields.

326 241 During the winter season, Mossi blacksmiths work both at cultivation and at their trade, but mostly at cultivation. During the dry season, on the other hand, they work only at the blacksmith's trade.

As far as cultivation is concerned, they mostly grow small millet, followed by large white millet and large red millet, maize, peanuts, underground peas, sesame, and beans. They cultivate cotton and tobacco, but no indigo. Their wives sow gombo, etc.

326 231 /516/ They own livestock which their children herd. As a rule, they have a little more livestock than other Mossi, except for goats and donkeys. This, incidentally, should not surprise us, for the Negro blacksmiths of West Africa often display an ability for stockbreeding and especially for horse trading. Among the Mossi, however, this is not very pronounced.

326 The blacksmiths neither hunt nor fish, but they do engage in gathering activities like other Mossi. They exercise no industries other than those of iron and pottery. They do not work copper, silver, or gold. They do not work as weavers, either. They entrust their wives with the task of gathering and spinning whatever cotton they grow, and then they hand it over to the weavers.

326 438 They do undertake a little trading, slightly more in fact than the average Mossi. When a blacksmith has smelted a large quantity of iron, he sometimes purchases some livestock, leads it to Ouanké, buys kola nuts which he takes to Saraféré, and brings back salt from that locality. This is not done very frequently, however.

The Mossi grow tobacco in fields around their

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248[4] homesteads, where they also cultivate their most important cash crops, cotton and indigo, which are used in the manufacture and dyeing of cotton cloth.

136 The wild fauna of Mossi country include several species of antelope, deer, monkeys, rabbits, snakes, and wild pigs. Elephants roam the beds of rivers and streams and often destroy cultivated fields, while lions and hyenas distress the people by attacking livestock. The pools and rivers of Mossi country are inhabited by turtles, crocodiles, and various species of scaled and scaleless fish. Chickens, muscovy ducks, and half-domesticated guinea fowl are the most valuable species of birds.

231 The Mossi have long been famous for their splendid donkeys and [492] horses. Donkeys are sometimes ridden, but they are used primarily as [439] beasts of burden. Horses are important for military and ceremonial purposes and for export to the tsetse-fly zones to the south. The Mossi raise two main types of cattle: a zebu-like animal in the northern regions and a [439] dwarf variety in the south. These animals are raised primarily for their milk and for export, and are seldom killed for meat until they are fairly old. Goats and sheep provide the main source of meat. Hog-raising is not wide- [771] spread, and seems to be declining in importance with the increased ob- [178] servance of Islamic food taboos, which is on the uprise even among people who are still pagans.

135 The subsoil of Mossi country is not well known, but so far there have been no major discoveries of mineral deposits. The only known gold field [301] remained unworked in aboriginal times. The Mossi do not like to wear [325] gold ornaments, preferring jewelry worked from imported copper and [430] silver. The northern Mossi worked their local iron in aboriginal times, but those in the south obtained this metal from caravan traders.

175 The nineteenth-century reports of Barth and other European travelers 439 indicate that the Mossi conducted a rather extensive foreign trade. At least six caravan routes passed through their territory, and traders such as the [443] Hausa and Mandingo visited the important Mossi trading centers at Yako, Pouitenga, and Ouagadougou, where they exchanged Saharan and forest products for Mossi livestock and cloth.[8]

101 The Mossi belong to the Voltaic culture area, a name given by Delafosse to the regions drained by the Black, Red, and White Voltas and their tributaries. The area embraces parts of Mali, the Ivory Coast, Dahomey, the Upper Volta, and northern Ghana.[4] It includes a vast congeries of peoples such [197] as the Dagomba, Mamprusi, Dagari, Birifo, Senufo, Gurmanche, Gurunsi, Lobi, Bobo, Tallensi, Konkomba, Dogon, Somba, Fulse, and Ninisi, all of whom speak languages belonging to the Gur or Moshi-Grunshi group of

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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Visitors to the court of Mogho Naba Sanem salute him in the traditional Mossi manner.
From Louis Binger, *Du Niger au Golfe de Guinée par le pays Kong et le Mossi, 1887–1889* (Paris, 1892).

[p. 178 - A]

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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(*Left*) Mogho Naba Kougri and Ouezzain Coulibaly, who became Vice President of the Government Council of the Upper Volta in 1957. (*Center*) Maurice Yameogo, President of the Republic of Upper Volta. (*Right*) Mogho Naba Kougri (1957–) on his ceremonial horse at his installation.

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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133 Red and White Voltas are merely a series of small stagnant pools during the dry season. In some low-lying areas around the main water courses, trapped water provides the moisture for dank riverine vegetation.

134 The soils of Mossi country are mainly ferruginous with red argils and pure silicates of aluminum predominating in the northern region. The soils in the south are thin, sandy, and formed from the decom-
137 position of crystalline rocks and sandstones. During the dry season the Mossi landscape appears too sterile to produce plant life, but with the first drops of rain the entire country soon becomes covered with the grasses and shrubs which are characteristic of this Sudanese region. The uncultivated but valuable trees of this area include the Baobab *(Adansonia digitata)*, the locust bean *(Parkia biglobosa)*, the shea-butter *(Butyrospermum parkii)*, the tamarind *(Tamarindus*
241 *indica)* and the kapok *(Bombax costatum)*. The plants which the Mossi cultivate include varieties of cereals, roots and legumes. Sorghums *(Sorghum vulgare)* and millets *(Pennisetum typhoides)* are their staples, with maize *(Zea mays)* filling the role of a secondary but rather useful crop because its growing cycle is shorter than that of other important crops and it breaks the "hungry period." Maize would be a more important crop to the Mossi if it could grow on soil less fertile than what is normally available around the Mossi compound—the area where it brings the greatest yield. Peanuts, onions, rice, beans, okra, peas and sweet potatoes are other food crops. To-
240 bacco is grown for local consumption, but the crops which have the
248 greatest export value are cotton and indigo, used for making cloth and dyeing it.

224 The wild fauna of the country does not provide a major part of the
262 food needs of the Mossi people. The several species of deer and antelope, monkeys, rabbits and wild pig are hunted and used for food.
136 But the elephants and lions which are also found in the country are sources of great distress to the people because the former decimate the growing crops and the latter attack and kill the grazing animals.

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262 people who are still pagan. Fish forms only a minor part of the Mossi
487 diet and is obtained mainly from traders rather than from local activ-
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12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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long been famous. The former are sometimes ridden but are used primarily as beasts of burden. Horses were and are still important for military and ceremonial purposes and for external trade to other areas.

The Mossi have never excelled in metalworking. The people in the northern part of the country have worked indigenous ores since aboriginal times. Those in the south get iron mainly from traders and caravans. The other metals which the Mossi smiths manufacture into tools and ornaments are also obtained from traders.

TRADE IN HISTORICAL TIMES

The geographic position of Mossi country has much to do with its being an important trade and market center. The country itself has always produced grain, cotton and livestock for export. And for several centuries caravans have passed through this region carrying Sudanese and Saharan products to the forest zones to the south, and carrying forest products back to the arid north. The beginning of this trade is lost in the dim past, but it safe to say that it developed shortly after or along with the founding of Timbuktu about 1100 A.D. The Mossi themselves were not definitely linked to this important *entrepot* until they raided it in 1328, but we can assume that they had been trading there for some time before that event took place. Similarly, we have no record of when the Mossi began trading with the forest zones, but we can also assume that this trade began around the same period or even before.

Our first evidence of Mossi trade and commerce comes from Europeans who were themselves interested in conducting their own trading activities with the peoples in the Bend of the Niger. Bowditch, an Englishman who had journeyed to Ashanti to sign a treaty facilitating the reopening of a profitable trade with the coast, wangled the first important piece of information about the Mossi from his reluctant hosts:

> Five journies from Yngwa is Mosee, a more warlike but less visited kingdom: it consists of many states, but the superior monarch is named Billa, and the capital Kookoopella. I place it to the N.W. because its merchants pass by Yngwa; they do not cross the Karhalla [White Volta] nor any river which is not fordable. (Bowditch 1819 : 180)

This information is not strictly correct since Koupela was not the capital of any of the Mossi kingdoms, but Bowditch's informant had probably heard of Koupela because it was the largest political entity near the large caravan center at Pouitenga.

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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175 437 Dupuis, who replaced Bowditch in Kumasi in 1817, obtained surprisingly good data on trade relations between the Ashanti and the Mossi, considering the reluctance of the middlemen traders to furnish any help in this matter. He discovered that Ashanti traders

[103] . . . sometimes travel as far as Aughoa, the Magho, and to the east of Kasogho. Aughoa is distant from Coomassie twenty-five journies by the Salgha and Yandy Roads, which would give a distance of three hundred that vegetable substance . . . by the name of Shea butter. (Dupuis 1824 : App. cvii)[1]

The Hausa merchants and caravaneers knew a great deal about the Mossi and their resources, but it was only with great difficulty that Clapperton persuaded Sultan Mohammed Bello of Sokoto to give him the following information:

[101] The country of Mouchier or Mouchi is situated to the west of Ghurma. It is vast and possesses a gold mine, rivers, forests and mountains. It is inhabited by tribes of the Sudan who possess many fast horses, and large donkeys. Their king is called Wagadougou; their asses are sent down to the Gondja to carry the drums of the army. (Clapperton 1829 : 323)

It is obvious that either Clapperton or his informant confused the capital of the Mossi with their king, and included parts of Ghana in [23] their territory. Nevertheless, one does get an indication of the importance of livestock in Mossi trading.

The great bulk of the trade between the Mossi and their neighbors to the north and to the south was done through the medium of caravans which crisscrossed their territory. The first person to signal 175 437 487 the existence of these caravans was Barth (1859 : III, 646–648) who, although he did not enter Mossi country during his extensive travels in the Sudan from 1849 to 1855, reported the existence of several caravan routes which traversed the Mossi from the desert to the forest. The first route he described proceeded from "Kirotashi, a town [103] on the east side of the Niger, one day south of Say, to Woghodogho." [366] Ten days out of Kirotashi caravans usually reached Tengkodogo, and on the thirteenth day they arrived at Koupela which according to

(1) The Aughoa referred to here is really "Wagha," the term often used by the Mossi [63] when talking about their capital, Waghadougou. Magho is really "Mogho" the name of Mossi country itself, and Kasoagho is the name of a province of Wagadougou commanded by a minister of the Moro Naba, the Kasoagho Naba. Dupuis' report on the actual distance between Kumasis and Waghadougou is almost the same mileage as that [366] of today. Koelle (1854 : 6) received a report from a slave liberated in Sierra Leone in [648] 1854 that the great Mossi trading center "Kupeala is four days from Wardugu, the Mossi capital, whither the king of Asante often sends presents; and one month from Salak (Salaga), an Asante town, where they bring their cola-nuts."

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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175 stopped at "Fura, a large market place." On the fourth day it stopped
437 at Dullugu (probably present-day Doulougou), and on the fifth day
487 at "Dakay [or Rakay] a place belonging to the territory of Mosi."
103 Finally, on the thirteenth day it arrived at Mane.[4] The last caravan route that Barth reported ran from:

> Kaye to Belussa [Boulsa], and thence to Belanga [Bilanga] ... From Belussa a person on horseback reaches Belanga comfortably the second day, the great station between these two towns being Alitinga, still belonging to Mosi, and an important place, inhabited by Mosi and Hausa traders; but common native travellers generally halt twice between Belanga and Alitinga, in Nyennyega and Koburi [Kouri], and once between Alitinga and Belanga, in a Gurma village called Yamba.

175 The goods which these caravans carried appear to have varied a
437 great deal. Barth met a Mossi caravan at Dori, southeast of Timbuktu,
439 and reported that to this market:

> [23] The people of Mosi bring chiefly their fine donkeys, which are greatly sought after; and a numerous body of people of the Sheikh A'hmedu, of Hamda-Ailahi, had left a few days before with a number of asses which
> [435] they had brought here. Besides asses, the people of Mosi supply this market
> [436] with gabaga [cotton strips] or tari, as the Arabs near Timbuktu call them, cotton being extremely cheap in their country, so that in the great market place of that country, especially in Kulfela [Koupela, but really at Pouitenga a few miles away] an indigo-colored shirt is not worth more than from 700 to 800 [cowry] shells ... Besides salt, cotton strips, dyed cloth, Kola nuts, corn, and asses, some copper manufactured chiefly into large drinking vessels is also brought into the market by the people of Mosi. However, I do not think they manufacture the copper vessels themselves, but bring them from Asanti. (Barth 1859 : III, 203–4)

Adolphe Krause, a German who was actually the first European to enter Mossi country, went through Wagadougou with a load of kola nuts destined for Timbuktu. He joined the caravan at Salaga on July 7, 1885, stopped at the Bere market in Mossi country during August, and then proceeded to their capital where he remained until October 26 before resuming his northward journey (Krause 1887–8).

Felix Dubois, who visited Timbuktu in 1895, gives us some information on the actual products which the Mossi traded there. He reported that the Mossi came to the market organized into caravans of oxen, donkeys and porters, and brought such commodities as livestock, millet, rice, manioc, peanuts, honey, kola nuts, peppers, dried onions, tobacco, dried fish, soap, iron, antimony, lead, cotton bands, straw hats, mats, jars, pots and calabashes. These goods the Mossi

(4) Barth's skill as a reporter is evident here. He is quite correct in disbelieving that the caravans could have reached Kong on the tenth day. Marc, 1969, agrees with Barth.

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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People also assemble sheep of

the Mossi variety, which are very puny. The larger variety of long-haired Macina sheep are seldom exported. Once the livestock has been assembled, the chief of the caravan would also provide himself with cotton bands. This native fabric has often been described; it is commonly used on the caravan routes to pay for the food of the travellers. (Marc 1909 : 172) 175 437 439 [231] [436]

Most of the caravans through Mossi country traveled as much as fifteen or twenty miles a day. They left at the first sign of dawn, traveled steadily until the heat became too intense, and then stopped to rest. They resumed their march when the sun was midway between the zenith and the horizon, and then stopped at some village or stream for the night. This schedule was followed on the next day if the caravan was far from a market center, but in the vicinity of a large market the caravan might remain stationary as many as six days while its merchants traded for more livestock or merchandise. This being the case, it is difficult to gauge how long it took the caravans to make the journey from Salaga in Ghana to Timbuktu. Our best data come from an analysis of Krauss' itinerary. He left Salaga with a caravan on July 7, 1885, heading north through Walwale, and arrived in Bere, a distance of some 250 miles (today's road mileage) towards the end of August. Famine delayed the caravan at Bere for some time, and he did not complete the 50 miles or so to Wagadougou until September 24. He remained in the Mossi capital until October 26, some thirty-two days, before his caravan headed north again through Tema, Yatenga and Bandiagara. Krauss does not tell us when he reached Douentza, some 400 miles northweast of Wagadougou, or how long he remained there, but on December 7, a few days after he had left Douenzta on the last 200- or 250-mile leg of his voyage to Timbuktu, the Moro Naba ordered him to return to Wagadougou. It is possible that it took Krauss' caravan some thirty-five odd days to make the trip from Wagadougou to Douentza. His return to Wagadougou took him only about thirty days, since he arrived there on January 7, 1886. He apparently had to wait some fifteen days there for a caravan going south, because he did not leave the Mossi capital until January 22, 1886 (Krause 1887–88). Judging from this itinerary, it probably took caravans between five and six months to travel from the forest zones to the desert, a distance of about a thousand miles at the most. This averages about six or seven miles a day, with the normal stops for rest and marketing, instead of the fifteen or twenty miles a day which the average caravan covered when it was on the road. 175 437 484 487 103 [231]

The caravans did not encounter many dangers or difficulties during their voyage. When the caravaneers had friends along the way they stopped at their friends' homes for the night, and when they camped in uninhabited places men were posted to protect the goods and live-
stock against marauding beasts and thieves. 175 437 484

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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same as those traded in pre-European times. For example, my notes for March 22, 1956, record that five young men were transporting 50-kilogram sacks of onions on their bicycles for trade in Ghana. On March 23, the next day, I wrote the following: "This appears to be the season of increased trade and the donkey trains are passing to and from Wagadougou and the Yatenga to Po (a town on the Ghana-Voltaic Republic border) and Bolgatenga in northern Ghana. Very often the donkeys carry nothing down, and at other times they are loaded with beans, millet, cotton bands, onions, peanuts and other vegetable produce. On the return trip they are laden with kola nuts going northward. This afternoon I counted twenty-eight asses coming from Ghana and going towards Wagadougou. Eighteen of them were laden with kolas, and ten were carrying long pieces of scrap iron which I was told, were to be converted into hoes for use during the coming planting season."

There is also a steady trade in livestock between Mossi country and the southern lands but the height of this trade occurs just prior to Ramadan. Beginning from one month to one week before this important Moslem feast day, the roads of Mossi country are clogged with thousands of sheep and goats being driven south for the use of religious households in Ghana and the Ivory Coast. Cattle are also shipped during this period, but not in the same volume since they are most often used collectively by Moslem families too poor to have their own sheep or goat.

The total volume of trade between Mossi country and Ghana and the Ivory Coasts is difficult to ascertain since despite the existence of Customs Posts a great deal of contraband trading takes place. My notes for December 12, 1955, read *"Contraband":* Two customs men came into the village to complain to the district chief about the behavior of Naba, one of his village chiefs. This is what happened: About two days ago, two agents saw in the forests the tracks of some thirty-five asses (heavily laden as can be seen by the depth of the tracks) and the marks of a bicycle with new tires. The agents followed the tracks all day and rested during the night. Yesterday they had to interrupt their search when the bicycle of one of the agents broke down, and when they resumed the search later in the day they came across five asses laden with kola nuts inside the compound of a man in Naba's village. Since they were forbidden by law to go into the man's compound and seize the animals, they went to the village chief in an attempt to have him tell the man to put the animals outside so that they could be seized. This the village chief refused to do, stating that it was not his affair, and adding that the agents should have seized the animals in the forest. The agents, now helpless, came and

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443 their "evil" and "non-evil" ways. A little later the young men who
512 possess bicycles may be seen suddenly hurrying to avoid the other
571 *nansara*, this time, the French official, who comes into the market to
[648] apprehend those individuals who have not bought a bicycle license.
[443] All the *nansara* know that the market is the best place to find a Mossi.

Towards 3:00 P.M. the matrons in the market, having sold most of their own goods and bought those which they need, make the last rounds to see whether there are any bargains to be had. In their rounds the women may be badgered by sons, daughters and other relatives, but seldom by husbands, for extra francs to buy kolas or tobacco to bridge them over the two non-market days. Or the women themselves may seek out their male relatives to buy kola or goods, from the stranger who is making the rounds of the local markets. By this time of day the market place is emptying—at first this happens so imperceptibly that one does not notice it. However, by 4:00 P.M. a mass exodus begins as women collect their little children, hitch their babies on their backs, place baskets on their head and set out in the direction of their own villages or to the villages of relatives where
[564] they plan to spend time. By this hour also the Bendere are drunk,
[273] and for an extra calabash of beer are willing to recount genealogies for which, if sober, they would demand a sheep or goat.

[231] Evening finds the market deserted except for scavenging dogs which hunt the scraps of food dropped by the now departed human
[485] beings. The market place finally falls silent, until late at night passing migrants retire there to sleep. These persons leave the market place at dawn to buy food from the women whose hawking cries herald another day of roadside commerce. The women use the profit from this trade to buy goods on the following market days.

[pp. 279–738 not processed]

563 From a political standpoint, they were subject to the high Mossi powers just like the Yarsé, but like the latter and aside from this, they had preserved all their personal and economic freedom.

231 Let us add a few words about the various races of livestock which are to be found in Mossi territory.

As far as cattle is concerned, there are three races in the Ouagadougou circle:

1. Humped cattle, which is found mostly in the northern and eastern parts of the circle. This beef is tall, with a short dewlap and large horns. It is well suited to porterage, and furnishes excellent butcher's meat. There are some 5,000 head of humped cattle in the circle, 2,000 males and 3,000 females.

2. Humpless or local cattle. This beef has small horns, is found chiefly in the western and southwestern regions, and is usually designated by the name of Kipirsi cattle. It is not suited to porterage and yields inferior meat, but it is much stronger than the humped beef and better adapted to the climate.

3. Ordinary cattle, the result of a cross between the two preceding species. This beef has the strength of the Kipirsi cattle and is considerably taller. It is, furthermore, capable of being fattened, and can thus furnish meat of very good quality. This type predominates among the Tenkodogo Mossi. It comprises about 20,000 head, 8,000 males and 12,000 females.

It is therefore the local cattle (71,000 head), which is most numerous. The humped beeves are worth from 40 to 100 francs, [435] /489/ and the humpless beeves from 30 to 40 francs. The natives [232] are familiar with castration but practice it at random on any subject that comes to hand.

231 Prior to the arrival of the French, the Mossi used their cattle for meat and for sacrifices, but the two uses really amounted to one 782 (the former) since the animals offered to a dead person are always 651 eaten by the living. Nowadays, the Mossi sell their cattle to pay their tax. They still eat meat, although apparently not as much as before. The need to pay a tax which has been understood imperfectly, raised too rapidly and levied too harshly over the past few years, has forced them to save their cattle in order to sell it on the southern kola markets.

231 Donkeys are relatively numerous in Mossi territory. They are light grey in color, with a handsome black strip on the withers which extends down the right and left sides. The Mossi are very fond of [492] riding them. They do this, incidentally, all the way back, sitting on the donkey's rump, and it is a rather comical sight. They are beginning to use their donkeys in trading. Formerly they did not do this, since they did not engage in trading.

[435] The average price of a donkey is 25 francs.

Mule breeding is unknown among the Mossi. It is practiced in [232 439] Sokoto lands among the Haoussa, who sometimes bring mules into /Mossi/ territory.

As for horses, the Mossi have three races.

1. In the northeast there is a horse of rather large stature, from 1.50 to 1.60 meters in height, elegant, with delicate joints and lines recalling the true Arab horse. These horses, ridden too early and too recklessly by the natives, are soon worn out.

2. The southern horse, which is to be found in the southern part of the Ouagadougou circle and in the Tenkodogo residency. It is small in stature, thin, rather stocky. Better adapted to /491/ the Sudanese climate than the large northern horse, it possesses greater strength and endurance.

3. The Mossi horse proper, which seems to derive from a cross between the northern and southern races. It is small in stature, but strong-backed, vigorous, tough, and frugal. It is less handsome than the northern horse, but more attractive than the Boussansé horse. On the other hand, it endures the climate better than the former, less well than the latter.

231 A southern horse is worth from 80 to 100 francs, a Mossi horse 435 is worth about 150 francs, and finally, a northern horse is worth from 200 to 400 francs. There are about 7,000 horses in the Ouagadougou circle.

231 The horses are kept in the villages during the dry season. They are given millet and peanut greens to eat. Grass is cut down in the bush and given to them when it dries. During the rainy season, the [554] horses are usually taken to the bush. Only the chiefs keep their horses in the soukala, where the animals are brought fresh grass, millet, water and salt. Other people take their horses to the bush and tie them beside their field so they may browse on the grass.

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262 people who are still pagan. Fish forms only a minor part of the Mossi
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231 ities. The Mossi also rear donkeys and horses for which they have

343 Chicken house and pens. Every head of a compound has a
235 small straw hut for fowl within his establishment. There is also a
231 small round hut of clay for the sheep and goats.

Repair of houses. When an establishment is damaged by rain
356 or is in need of repair, the work is done by the residents (the head of the family and the dakompa, as well as the father's wives and brothers) with no help from outsiders. There is no pay beyond the usual meals. The head of the family merely says to the workers when the work has been completed: "N'fa nel toumtogo, imaou nian (thanks for the hard work, many thanks for the labor)."

[223] Chapter 14

Mossi Clothing

Dress of the Naba

291 In this chapter we shall examine the various modifications
554 and improvements in the dress of Mossi chiefs.
435 1. Before and during the first twenty years of the French occupation. (a) Zangoego pelga: a large robe made of narrow bands of cotton fabric, rather expertly woven. These robes, which are made and embroidered by specialists, used to cost from 70,000 to 100,000 cowries (1).

> 1. One hundred francs. The five-franc note is now worth 1,000 cowries. The silver five-franc piece was worth from 5,000 to 7,000 cowries, depending on the fluctuations of exchange.

(b) Karfo: a large robe, dark blue in color, made of the same material as the preceding (50,000 to 70,000 cowries).

(c) Noufa: a large robe and trousers, made of very fine fabric in a dark gray color. It had the value of two slaves or 70,000 cowries for the robe and 50,000 for the trousers.

221 rains come, laying aside any other task no matter what his profession
241 may be. The Mossi year is divided as described below, and year follows year without bringing any changes in this monotonous existence.

The rainy season from May to October is the time of the hard labor of cultivation, and all Mossi devote themselves fully to the task. Men, women, and children are always in the fields. They cut down the [805] thorn bushes at the beginning of May, as soon as the Pleiades appear on the horizon and the baobabs begin to burgeon. This is spring (sigu). For this work they use a small hatchet, a few centimeters wide, with a short, easily grasped handle, and a forked stick to fold back the thorny branches so they may more conveniently be cut at the base. The branches are piled in heaps and burned one evening as soon as they are dry. When the first copious rains fall, usually in June, the natives immediately sow the small white millet used to make sarabo, the staple of the aboriginal diet, and the large red millet or sorghum from which millet beer is made.

Sowing is regarded as one of the most laborious tasks, because it forces the sower to remain bent so as not to lose sight of the stretch already covered. The natives sow with an old worn-out hoe, with which they strike the ground twice in order to make a small hole. The grain is carried in a gourd held by a string to the left hand; this leaves the fingers free to seize a few grains which are dropped into the hole. A little soil is then replaced by the hoe. When the rain has soaked the ground more thoroughly and the millet has begun to grow, maize is sowed around the huts.

Following the first weeding of the fields, beans are sowed among the shoots of small millet, and cotton among those of large red millet or near the watercourses. The ground is then prepared to sow rice, peanuts, and native peas. Meanwhile the fields must be hoed incessantly to remove the weeds that would smother the young millet shoots. If the rain is too abundant at the end of June, the cultivators are often overwhelmed with work, and they complain that it has become impossible to keep their fields clean. Gombo (okra) and all the condiments for making sauce, peppers, tomatoes, etc., are planted around the maize fields, near the huts, along with /46/ native hemp and all sorts of gourd plants. In favorable soil, hence only in certain areas, fabirama, manioc, and yams are cultivated in a special manner.

221 Those who raise chicks take them along to the fields in an oblong
235 cage of plaited straw or willow. When they get to the spot where

221 they will be working, they open the door of the cage and the mother
235 hen comes out. She is tied to the basket with a string, and the chicks run around her. If their master finds a good termite nest, he takes it to his little charges and breaks it in two. In the evening he puts the hen and chicks back into the basket and carries it home suspended from his shoulder.

[805] The heavy rains fall in July and August. This is summer (seoro).
221 Whenever the ground is not too soggy, everybody runs to the fields at
241 dawn and works until nightfall. One or two women stay home to pre-
476 pare food for the laborers, whose strength must be maintained for all this hard work. No one may rest. Only the sick and the helpless old people stay home, and even they are put to work, looking after the babies. This is the time when wealthy people call friends to their aid. The owner of a vast field has every member of the village notified — especially the young men, those who own some obligation toward him, those who have an eye on his daughters — that on a certain date he will be weeding his field, and at dawn of that day everyone gathers and labors while the drums spur them on. On another occasion, this man in turn will help those who have worked for him. This practice of mutual aid is very advantageous because a field overgrown with weeds is cleaned in a single day, but it becomes onerous when people must appeal to their neighbors several times in the course of a season.

221 The heavy rains stop in August or September, the maize is ripe,
241 and feasting begins. Roasted corn ears are a prized tidbit, especially
262 when the kernels are still tender. There is one kind of maize, faintly sweet, which when sautéed in butter recalls our garden peas. Everywhere the children and even the elders feast on maize; everywhere people offer a visitor a few ears of maize, which are often roasted on the spot. When the maize harvest is completed, maize gruel, which recalls the famous Italian polenta, advantageously replaces millet mush and brings a pleasant change to the daily fare, especially since gombo is ripening and adds variety to the sauce as well. Bellies fill out, faces glow with health, and as a very natural sequence, hearts are flooded with joy. The end of the dry season may have been difficult because millet was running low; the winter tasks may have been laborious; but now everyone makes up for it. The harvested maize is replaced in the fields by tobacco; its seedlings were prepared as the harvest drew near.

[805] At the end of September or beginning of October, the large red millet is ripe. This is autumn (houpéla). Maize is now too tough

231 We mentioned earlier the karyanga, which is gathered wild or cultivated for horses. It is given to them at the height of the winter season.

Many Mossi own dogs. They use them to guard the soukala, to hunt in the bush, or for consumption. In the latter case, the [262 animal is fattened. Dog meat was sold on Mossi markets in the 438] old days, but the Yarsé, who are Moslems as we know, found it improper to exhibit dog meat alongside mutton or beef, and the custom was abandoned. Dogs are still killed inside the soukala, however, for consumption purposes.

[435] A dog is worth from 2 to 5 francs.

The Mossi have chickens and guinea fowl. The chickens are •235 worth 250 cowries. The eggs are not sold.

It is the men who care for the chickens. They /492/ look in the bush for termite nests which they break to pieces so that the chickens may eat the termites. Sometimes, instead of one ration only, the chickens are issued two a day, one in the morning and one in the evening.

The guinea fowl are less numerous than the chickens. Accord- [435 ing to their weight, they are worth from 250 to 300 cowries. Their 462] eggs are eaten. It is the men who care for the guinea fowl as for the chickens.

231 The Mossi place beehives in the trees. The hives consist of elongated straw cylinders shaped like a tom-tom. One of the sides is completely closed, while the other is perforated to allow the bees to come and go.

231 These hives are placed in the trees at the time when the warm 237 season begins (March), and then the honey is gathered every month except at the height of the rainy season, when the downpours are too heavy. The children are in charge of this. They climb the tree with a straw torch on fire, and frighten the bees away. Then they take the honey and come down. In order to separate the honey from the wax, the honeycombs are placed in a large canari full of water. Another canari is heated intensely, and its burning-hot base is brought close to the surface of the jar where the combs are floating. The wax melts and sinks to the bottom, while the honey floats. The wax is sold to jewelers, who use it in the [306] manufacture of copper objects made by the lost-wax process. It is

23| bother to raise them; as a result the number of horses has decreased, and this country, formerly renowned for its mounts, may have none in a not too distant future.

Unfortunately, horses do not thrive in every part of the country; Ouagadougou is particularly deadly for them, although, to my knowledge, the true reason for this insalubrity has not yet been found. The natives attribute it to the water, and there is no doubt that horses watered at the wells are in better health than those watered at the streams; it is also true that horses thrive in areas only a few kilometers [134] from Ouagadougou. Europeans tend to attribute this mortality to the tsetse fly. The two opinions are easy to reconcile, for, on the one hand, tsetse flies prefer damp places, and, on the other hand, the [312] Ouagadougou wells contain salt of magnesium which purges the horses and thus checks the disease.

23| The Peul own fine herds of bovines, some rather small and without humps (small cattle), others large and humped (zebu). Traders also 563 use the zebu as a beast of burden. Much of this cattle belongs to the 437 Mossi who seldom tend their own herds but prefer to entrust them to the Peul shepherds who keep the milk in payment. An adult cow yields from two to four liters a day during the good season. The guardians, however, know how to make the best of this near slavery. When an animal dies it is never one of theirs, and if the owner of the herd /a Mossi/ dies without telling his heirs where his cattle is to be found and how many head he owns, the Peul carefully refrain from disclosing the herd entrusted to them. In former days they were slightly more conscientious because they feared retaliation, but now they bless the French occupation.

23| The herds are sometimes decimated by an epizootic disease, as happened in 1910 and 1911 when the Koupéla area was ravaged by what must have been the bovine plague or peripneumonia. The cows would cough, entirely lose their appetites, and die within a few days.

The Mossi also raise bees. The hives are made of straw or flexible sticks and placed in the trees; sometimes swarms of bees also settle in the hollow trunks of baobabs. The honey is gathered at the end and at the beginning of the winter season; the hive is smoked out and the bees destroyed. Honey is used primarily to make bége, a kind of [273] hydromel which the Moslem Yarsé, Peul, and Haoussa like very much, and which they are allowed to drink in spite of its fermentation; [237] whereas, in principle, millet beer is forbidden to them. The wax 306 is sold to the jewelry-makers who use it to make bracelets by the lost wax process.

592 A typical soukala consists of the master's hut, a hut for each wife, one hut for the sheep and goats, another for the horse if he has one, a hut for the family mill, and, finally, a receiving hut with two doors sufficiently high to permit entrance without stooping and set sometimes as an entrance way and sometimes within the cluster of huts. All [351] these dwellings stand in a circle and are joined either by a cob wall or by /11/ mat fences taller than a man and held up by stakes. The master's hut, which usually stands beside the huts for the horses and sheep, is set off from the others by mats to insure his privacy. A low wall describes an arc within the inner courtyard; this is the kitchen when it is not raining. Big jars of fired clay which are used to brew [273 415] millet beer rest between the huts. In front of this cluster of huts, a shelter is built, usually high enough to permit standing and consisting basically of forked stakes with branches and séko resting upon them; this shelter serves as a refuge during the hot part of the day. Small boys and unmarried girls live with their mother, while older boys, servants, and slaves each have their separate huts which face the dwellings of the master and his wives.

The term yri or soukala covers this whole complex of structures. [591] Each soukala is a distinct unit, and, some time after they marry, the children build their own residence, set completely apart from that of their parents, often in another part of the village and sometimes in [361] another village altogether. The soukala stand fifteen to twenty meters apart, and, because of this, the villages, though adequately concentrated, cover a rather extensive area. The heads of cantons 392 place an ostrich egg at the peak of the roof on their own dwellings, [237] and some even build terraced huts higher than the surrounding dwell- [55] ings. They keep their riches in these huts and a prison in the base- [697] ment. An earthen stairway leads to the terrace where the master of [592] the house receives his guests when the sun begins to sink on the horizon.

721 These people, apparently so peaceful today, were formerly quite warlike and went off to war at the slightest pretext. Foreign to the land they now occupy, the Mossi must have conquered it by force of arms. The Tarik-es-Soudan /History of Sudan/ relates that the people of Yatenga seized Timbuktu in the fourteenth century, and in 721 the fifteenth they probably carried their incursions as far as Lake 701 Bébo and even Oualata. (4) The Mossi army was greatly feared.

4. Delafosse, op. cit., Vol. 2, p. 80.

794 sunrise and at sunset, during the first week of the winter season, then, later, only every six days, in the morning at sunrise. They go to the [778] altars, formed by three conical stones, to offer sacrifices and libations, always surrounded by all the people, the heads of families, tom-tom players, and family masks (Ouango).

"During the entire year, in a highly decorated niche dug into a [372] wall of their houses, the priests watch the sacred fire with which, at the end of the rainy season, they must light the great purifying brush fires."

Lieutenant Desplagnes adds in a note:

"They make sacrifices at each new moon, and then have seven great feasts each year for the divinity. Finally, during the sun festivals, [237] they use a cow's tail to tie the sun to the earth and assure its fertilizing warmth." /31/

794 171 In my book Noir du Soudan, Pays Mossi et Gourounsi /Blacks of the Sudan, Country of the Mossi and Gourounsi/ (1912), I reproduced this page of Lieutenant Desplagnes without comment (page 590). In addition, I described the cult of the sun among the Gourounsi, who, like the Mossi, are part of the Voltaic family. Thus, on page 241, I wrote:

"The Kassonfra, like the Nounouma and the Menkiéra, say that they offer no sacrifice either to the moon or to the sun. However, I found an exception in the village of Nitiédougou (canton of Sia). It would seem that here, in the early mornings when the sun rises and begins to leave the horizon, people offer it a chicken or whatever else they wish to offer. Moreover, this sacrifice is only made when the voro (1) says it should be made.

1. Soothsayer.

"My informant claims that this same procedure is followed, not only in Nitiédougou and in the little canton of Sia, but also in all of the Kasouna (Kassonfra and Kassonboura) country. He must be mistaken (2) since my previous informants and my interpreter, who is

2. Today, on the other hand, I tend to think he was right.

Kassonboura, have neither seen nor heard of anything like it."

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231 also sold to shoemakers, who need it to rub and soften their hides.
237 In former days wax was given rather than sold. Nowadays it is sold because of the need for cash occasioned by the tax. As for honey,
[262] it is eaten pure, or with milk, or mixed with sarabout. It is also
272 made into a drink called bésou, béci, or bici, which is no other than hydromel. The latter is known, incidentally, throughout West Africa.

The Nounouma call it torosana, from sana, "drink" and toro, "honey." The Kassouna call it by the same name.

The women make hydromel as follows. They boil water, pour the honey into it, and stir. Then they add small-millet flour. The mixture is stirred with a piece of wood and then strained to rid the drink of /493/ all impurities. It is poured into a clean canari, which is carefully covered. At the end of two days, one has a
[435] yellowish drink which is worth 400 cowries or 0.40 franc a liter at Ouagadougou. Among the Nounouma, where honey is more abundant than among the Mossi, the liter is worth 0.20 franc (at Leo, for example). Hydromel is stronger and more potent than dolo, and one must be careful not to drink too much.

252 The Mossi also make little cakes with honey and millet flour. They call them baradaré. These cakes are not made by the Gourounsi.

231 This concludes our review of Mossi stockbreeding. Generally speaking, as we have seen, it is quite mediocre with the exception of two specialities, donkeys and horses. As far as donkeys are concerned, although the Mossi are no traders and have only begun to do a little trading since we occupied their territory, they have always liked the animals and used them either for their own transport or to carry grain. They have an average of one donkey per 42 inhabitants, while the Dagari only have one per 1,000, the Nounouma one per 166, the Sissala one per 55, the Kassonboura one per 50. In this respect, the Mossi run second only to the traders, the Yarsé, who have a pressing need for donkeys in connection with their trade and who have one per 23 inhabitants.

As for horse raising, the Mossi have left it to the Foulbé of Mossi territory. The Mossi nevertheless have an average of one horse per 166 inhabitants among the common people, and one per

651 [72] (c) Fishing. Fishing in the larger water holes could take
226 place only by authorization of the canton chiefs. The day on
634 which fishing took place was treated as a holiday. All the young men in the village and their neighbors, even if the latter did not belong to the canton, came out on the day set by the canton chief and fished for the benefit of the naba. All large fish were reserved for him, and only the small ones were left to the fishermen.

This practice still prevails.

776 Other common laws. Many deities are worshipped by the
782 Mossi. Groves, fields, mountains, etc., all have their "god."
661 It often happens that the naba (canton chief), at the behest of the soothsayers, offers an animal. This may be a sheep, a goat, or even a cow, and it is offered to one or another of the deities, either for his personal interests or for those of his people, or perhaps to ask for rain. The naba dispatches some sogoné [servitor] or samand'kamba [people of the outer courtyard] to one of the villages in his canton to find a victim. The animal is taken without its owner having any right to complain or to ask for compensa-
[538] tion. Is there not a Mossi saying to the effect, Talagh-gounda Naba'gninga the serf raises livestock for the benefit of his naba)"?

For sacrifices prescribed for the Mogho Naba, the animals are provided either by the inhabitants of the [73] town of Ouagadougou and its environs or by the canton chiefs.

Labor Service Customarily Required of the Mossi on Behalf of their Chiefs

651 Forced labor was used to cultivate the fields of the naba and to repair or construct their houses.

647 The Mogho Naba. (a) Cultivation of fields. The duty of
651 cultivating the fields of the Mogho Naba fell entirely on the Bilbalsé,
241 the residents of Bilbalogo (section of the Baloum Naba) and on all former servitors and descendants of former servitors. The Kam Naba (chief of the young men), charged with assembling the workers, had a crier announce in all the important markets that on such-and-such a day the Bilbalsé were to assemble in the emperor's

644 fields. On that day, the Mogho Naba had one or two cows
651 slaughtered and a large quantity of sagbo (millet cakes) prepared
241 for the workers. If the latter, after being assembled two or three times in the manner indicated above, were not finished with all the fields, the work was carried on by the samand'kamba (the people who dwelt in the outer courtyard of the Mogho Naba).

644 The emperor, however, received none of the millet grown in
574 his own fields, which, incidentally, did not have their present boundaries. This millet was reserved exclusively [74] for use as food for foreign visitors and for the feeding of horses (1).

1. For the ceremony of threshing this millet (kawinré), see the special chapter below [Chapter 16].

644 It was the duty of the canton chiefs and the ministers to pro-
651 vide loads of millet for the use of the Mogho Naba and his harem ("harem" should be understood to mean all young or middle-aged women, but to exclude the elderly women who have to support themselves and who have their private fields).

644 (b) Repair of the houses of the Mogho Naba. The work of
651 building and repairing the houses actually belonging to the em-
356 peror fell entirely upon the inhabitants of Bilbalogo (section of the Baloum Naba), Kamsaonghin (section of the chief eunuch), and Dapoya (section of the slaves of the Mogho Naba).

[343] The outbuildings, wédanga, four round huts with thatched roofs located outside the emperor's house, served as stables for the horses given to the Mogho Naba by canton chiefs or other personages and were built and maintained by three ministers, the Ouidi Naba, Larrhallé Naba, and Gounga Naba, with the help of the people in their sections.

The tamping of the floors and clay roofs was done wholly by the wives of the persons responsible for [75] the construction or repair, that is, the wives of the ministers and of the inhabitants of their sections.

Labor service due the province chiefs, ministers of the emperor.

651 (a) Cultivation of fields. The fields belonging to the ministers
645 of the Mogho Naba were cultivated by a system of payments in kind
241 as follows.

651 For the Baloum Naba, the work was done by all the bilbalsé.
645 The Kam Naba set the day for the sekka (gathering), and all the
241 young and able-bodied men were required to report. They received the food they required from the Baloum Naba. The number of work days was not fixed. The sekka might be held once or several times, depending on the acreage.

For the other ministers, the Ouidi Naba, Gounga Naba, and Larrhallé Naba, the field work was done by the people in their entourage (that is, the inhabitants of their respective sections) and in the neighboring villages which were formerly under their jurisdiction. Since the formation of the canton of Ouagadougou and its outskirts, the area has been under the exclusive authority of the Baloum Naba (fourth minister of the emperor).

645 If, however, the fields were so extensive that their cultiva-
476 tion could not be taken care of solely by the above system -- the
241 laborers also had to care for their own fields -- the ministers [76] called for volunteers from among the young men in the neighboring villages and paid them with food and drink. This is the sissoaga, a system commonly in use among the Mossi.

645 (b) Construction and repair of houses. As a general rule, re-
651 pair of the roofs of huts in the establishments of the province chiefs
356 was the duty of the inhabitants of their respective sections and of the neighboring villages under their jurisdiction.

651 The canton chiefs. The cultivation of the fields of the naba
634 and the repair of the huts in their establishments were wholly in-
241 cumbent on their subjects. Each village had a fixed number of
356 huts to be repaired or roofed; this is known as sough pilli, and it is still in effect annually.

651 Today, perhaps in the interests of tranquillity, canton chiefs require labor service in their fields only from their sogoné and samand'kamba and sometimes even resort to the sissoaga.

The local administration, with respect for local customs, has the policy of organizing the system in a way that, in our opinion, will safeguard the interests of the natives, overburdened due to the negligence of the province chiefs, and at the same time will enhance the prestige of the Mossi chiefs.

653 The naba is not entitled to any other labor services. The building of dams to provide water for the villages cannot be

535 or there will be falls which are inevitable when one of the girls is too robust.

535 539 Here, chosen at random, is one of the kiguibtobo songs:

> M'Ma ho, ka M'Ma warla y e
> Lebin wa regh'big' tim boudguin
> n'di Mossa yarbate ribo

> "Mother, oh, my mother,
> Come quickly and take my child,
> For I am going to the next village
> To consume pitilessly the goods of
> these wretched Mossé." (1)

1. Mossi.

[241] Chapter 16

Agriculture

241 787 Selection of land to be tilled. As he is wont to do in all important matters, the Moaga entrusts to a soothsayer the responsibility of choosing the land to be cultivated. In actual fact, he chooses it himself, but the diviner must tell him whether or not it is haunted by spirits and what sacrifices are advisable to protect him from evil spirits.

The soothsayer always warns him of the presence of spirits (kinkirsi) and prescribes the necessary sacrifices and alms.

241 782 Sacrifices. The new occupant calls for the head of the family or, if he is a Nionioga, for the Tengsoba, who is in charge of sacrifices. The following sacramental words are pronounced: "A zaguel tib reg' noag'la zom kom kon Naba zidwende, tib kon zig'tinguin damba, tib kon timpelem, tib kon yaramba, kon saramba, tib reg'kon zig, kinkirga ta wa me nan baou ki, on -- on tib reg'koin gnimassem, lass' pogh'banga, lasse zoug'banga, naore banga ..." Translation: "On the part of X, I offer this rooster and this water with flour to the sun god (Zidwendé), to the

241 brothers of the family heads who died childless (zig'tinguin damba),
782 and to the ancestors and grandparents. May they see to it that these offerings are accepted by the kinkirsi (spirits of the fields) and that the latter favor X with [242] good health and large crops of millet and beans."

Once these sacrifices have been made -- if they are accepted,
[787] the rooster falls on its back -- the new owner has his land cleared and awaits the winter season.

Field work. As soon as the first rains have come, the owner goes once more to the field and has another rooster killed and offered to the kinkirga [singular of kinkirsi] with a plea for gnimassem (good health) and large harvests which he will consume with new wives and new children (pog'palla, la bipalla). Afterward he sows large and small millet, peanuts, beans, etc.

If the year has been a good one and the Moaga has had fine crops, he is happy and in good time will remember the spirit of the fields. For the moment he is busy transporting the millet to the temporary granary (lourgho).

Threshing millet. Before his millet is threshed, the Moaga must make a sacrifice to the zéiga (threshing floor). The ritual words differ from those described above only in the following words: "X asks that this millet, which he will eat, be good for him and that he eat it in peace and good health with his family." (Kita ri ki wan ne lafi layelsomdé né a zak'ramba.)

241 [243] He then appeals to the young men of the village for help
476 in threshing his grain. For the occasion he has a great deal of beer
[252] prepared and quantities of beans (benga) cooked. The beans are prepared with sesame (sinni). After the job is done, two children between the ages of six and seven are called, and their hands filled with the bean mixture. They must run around the threshing floor while eating some of the beans. The rest will be scattered to the winds. They must stop three times for breath and look at each other. Then the remaining beans are distributed among the workers. They are also given beer.

423 Do owners retain rights over abandoned land? In order to occupy abandoned land, permission must first be obtained from the former owner, who retains his rights over the land. He may reclaim it at

423 will, and the new occupant cannot make the slightest protest.

It should be pointed out, however, that since land is most often abandoned because it was thought to be unproductive or haunted, there is rarely a claim to it by a former owner. In any event the matter is settled by the interested parties. The local administration and the canton chief rarely intervene in such cases.

Owners' rights over fruit trees in cultivated fields. Donsé
423 or néré [locust bean] trees whose fruits contain a yellowish, sweet
263 powder that is edible and [244] whose seeds are used to make soumbala, a fetid condiment much prized by the natives, remain the exclusive property of the former occupant. On the other hand, the tamsé (karite tree) belong to the new owner.

423 This is because the karite tree is found almost everywhere in the bush, while the néré is less common.

Rights of the chiefs over cultivated land. As a general rule,
425 since the principle of right by possession is honored among the
423 Mossi, a canton chief will not confiscate without reason cultivated land belonging to one of his subjects if the land has always been occupied by the occupant's grandparents.

When the land is unoccupied, however, or newly occupied, the canton chief may, by virtue of his absolute authority over his territory, take possession, and the new owner may not claim any compensation.

Field Work

241 In principle, a family field is held in common. When a woman
562 grows old, however, she no longer does field work with her hus-
595 band. She has her own field and feeds herself as best she may, since her husband pays no further attention to her and no longer supports her. The work is done by the family as a group, and the size of the field varies with the size of the family.

241 Early in the morning, usually before [245] sunrise, the head
512 of the family wakens the young people. They go out to the field, which may be five to ten kilometers away. Around ten o'clock, the women bring the remains of last night's sagbo or, lacking that, some millet flour which is taken in water.

241 512 At noon (wend'to souka, "the middle of the day") the family rests in the shade of a tree. There are always some fruit trees in every field. Work is resumed at about two in the afternoon. At five the women return home to prepare food, and the men stop work at nightfall.

241 476 The sisoaga. When the family fields are too extensive to be cultivated without help, all the able-bodied young men in the village are called to help with the weeding.

At such a time the head of the family gives several baskets of sprouted millet to his wives to make large quantities of dam, millet beer. He also orders them to prepare sagbo (millet cakes).

On the day set for the work, the young men go to the fields, where their enthusiasm is aroused by singing and the beating of drums. For their work they receive sagbo and dam. This is what is known as the sisoaga.

It is a kind of mutual aid, and without this indispensable system of solidarity, many fields would remain uncultivated.

[572] It should be noted, finally, that when a person falls [246] ill during the winter, his friends arrange to cultivate his fields, sometimes without any pay and simply out of a sense of solidarity.

241 Farm implements. As is the case everywhere in French West Africa, the natives have only the most primitive implements. Among the Mossi these include: the wanka or kounri, a hoe or Bambara daba to cultivate the soil; the sitoaga (small pickaxe) for sowing; and the laré (ax) to clear the site of brush and shrubs.

463 Other types of work. Aside from work in the fields, everyone goes about his own affairs. Some make baskets, hampers, and fans, while others weave cotton strips. It is perhaps of some [564 interest to note that there is no caste distinction among the Mossi, except for the blacksmiths; each person may practice the trade 326] that suits him. This is why shoemakers mostly come from among the nakomsé (descendants of naba).

Food Crops

241 The principal foods grown by the Mossi are as follows.

Kazouf (small white or gray millet).

241 Baningha (large white millet or sorghum).

These two types are grown for food, [247] although the large white millet is especially reserved for horses in well-to-do households.

[262 273] Kazinga (large red millet). As a food the poorer Mossi prefer this to the baningha, but it is more especially grown for the making of dam, millet beer.

[556] Mouĩ (rice) is sought only by the chiefs, notables, and a few families of dakangba (well-to-do men).

Benga (beans).

Souma (peas of either the small green variety or large white or red ones).

Niouyan (from niouri, "yam"), grown only in certain areas.

Nangouri or sounkama (peanuts).

Pèsça (fabirama) [a tuber plant].

Sinni or sili (sesame), grown only by a few people who like it.

Bito (sorrel), used in preparing the sauce served with sagbo.

Mana (gombo [okra]) is also cultivated.

Aside from its food crops, each family has its own plot for cotton (lamdo) which provides for the clothing needed during the year.

311 178 I am told that fields are much more extensive today than in former times, in spite of the abolition of slavery. This is explained by the fact that many areas supposed to be haunted were formerly left uncultivated. It is said, however, that the Moaga used to grow larger crops since in those days he was closer to the soil.

[248] At the present time there is a lack of farm hands. As [857] recently as twenty years ago, the young Moaga followed his parents to the field as soon as he was six or seven years old. He took a liking to the work at a very young age. Before the French [484] occupation, the Moaga rarely left his village because of the dangers on the roads, frequented in those days by bandits (usually descend- [579] ants of naba). People were even afraid to go into the bush alone, for fear of being attacked, captured, and reduced to slavery.

433 178 There was little contact even between adjoining villages. At Ouagadougou, no one ventured from section to section unless he had very good reason and was armed to the teeth. In short, everyone

433 made do with what his own village could produce, and there was
178 really no trade in the ordinary sense of the word. The Moaga, essentially a stay-at-home, depended on the soil for food and clothing.

●241 Only two new crops have been added since the coming of the
177 French: yams (na-niouyan, "chiefs' yams") and white potatoes. The recent increase in the cultivation of cotton makes it easier for the natives to meet their tax, and this encourages them to grow even more.

178 The French occupation has brought many benefits in its wake (creation of a network of roads, peace and the resulting free circulation among the villages, and suppression of banditry and looting), but it has also given the Moaga a desire to leave the country.

167 The extensive recruitment of [249] laborers for the needs of other colonies in the area, for work on the roads, and for the now
464 obligatory military service -- all of which are accepted reluctantly by the Mossi -- has caused many young men to emigrate.

Some of them set out, for the Gold Coast preferably, without the slightest means of support. They go to work in the English colony in order to earn money for clothes. Since they had no money when they started out, they remain there for months or even years, and this seriously diminishes the agricultural labor force at home. It also forces their old and helpless relatives to cultivate their fields alone.

Besides, so many of them never return!

The Native Diet

262 Sagbo (millet mush) is the principal item in the Mossi diet at all social levels. Rice, regarded as a luxury food, is eaten by the naba and notables. It costs from two and a half to three francs a
[435] kilogram at Ouagadougou and is therefore too expensive for most people. It may be added that it rarely is found in the diet of civil service employees.

264 Mossi chiefs usually have two main meals a day: a [250] first meal of sagbo or rice at around nine in the morning, and a second

264 meal of sagbo in the evening.

What we call breakfast is hardly known. Between the two main meals, however, the chiefs have meat grilled or roasted. They are very fond of it and have it seasoned with enough salt and pepper to make it possible to consume the endless number of [273] small gourds of beer which they drink from morning to night.

The Moaga has only one real meal a day, the evening meal. A large millet cake satisfies the day's hunger. If there is any left over, he keeps it carefully for his morning meal. If there is none left, a frequent state of affairs, he makes do with his zompanrga, crushed millet diluted with water and sometimes eaten with a bit of vegetable fat or a few peanuts.

He rarely eats any rice, and if he has no sagbo, he contents himself with benga and souma.

261 It is during the festivals that the Moaga eats his fill. At such
527 times the head of the compound kills a goat, a sheep, or some chickens and has sagbo and fabirama prepared, or beans with copious amounts of karite butter. This is the feast. The members of the family stuff themselves to the point where attacks of diarrhea are inevitable. The results of the attacks are all the more serious in that they are never cared for properly.

The only seasonings known to the Moaga are kalgo (soumbala),
263 red pepper, okra, and salt. No more than a few years ago, how-
439 ever, before the [251] development of trade in the colony, salt was brought from Timbuktu and Mopti by the Dioula and Yarcé and was so expensive that the Mossi people who lived in the countryside often went for six months without tasting salted food.

241 There is reason to believe that the time is not far off when the Moaga will devote his efforts much more intensively to cash crops, such as cotton, potatoes, peanuts, etc. In this domain, the province chiefs at Ouagadougou have made real progress.

Mogh 'Nab' Kawinré (Threshing the Grain of the Mogho Naba)

241 Sacrifices. For this ceremony, the emperor summons the
643 Mankougoudougou Tengsoba (a descendant of the autochthonous
782 Nioniossé, masters of the land) to Ouagadougou and gives him a

241 sheep to be sacrificed to the threshing floor (zéiga).

643 The work. After this sacrifice, around two-thirty in the after-
782 noon, the Kam Naba (a notable in the section of the Baloum Naba) proceeds to the threshing floor with the young men from Bilbalogo and Dapoya who have been assembled for the occasion. The operation involves beating the millet stalks with tree branches cut to form an obtuse angle and called dabandé or soika.

643 When the job is done, the workers depart, [252] leaving the
241 grain to be gathered up another day.

The next morning they return to the field, preceded by the Bend' Naba (chief drummer), who plays the bouloumbougri kabse nanamsé to which the other drummers respond with bouroum-bouroum (the Bend Naba gives the names of the emperor's ministers, recalling the origins of each one, and wishes a happy new year to Oubri-yiri Naba, "master of the house of Oubri," that is, to the Mogho Naba; bouroum-bouroum has no special meaning).

Immediately thereafter, the Bend Naba invites the young men to the warba (funeral dance), which is actually only a confused stamping on the millet which in the process is scattered far and wide. Suddenly the drums stop, the signal for a rest. Then the Kam Naba from Bilbalogo divides the pile of millet into two parts by tracing a straight line across the center of the zéiga. The people from Bilbalogo (the section of the Baloum Naba) gather one half, and those from Dapoya (section of the house slaves) gather up the other half.

Whether it is a good or bad year, the emperor's harvest is expected to yield 100 baskets (péog' koabga) full of grain.

The Mogho Naba sends 50 to 70 canari of beer to the workers and shortly goes there himself. He also distributes two or three wassé (from waga, load of 1,000 kola nuts) to the ministers and to the workers.

After thanking and encouraging the workers, the [253] emperor returns to his house, escorted by his ministers and all the horsemen.

643 Mankougoudougou Tensoba then uses wet ashes to make three
241 lines on the ground in different parts of the zéiga. Then he takes
782 a lagha (small earthenware jar) and puts some water into it. He

643 241 782 pronounces a few sacramental words and lightly sprinkles the millet, saying: "Zâbre saga Ybéogo sâga, samb'da kôbo la ka toin sameb'la fi yé (the morning and evening rains may put a stop to the cultivation of the fields, but cannot injure the health of the King)." He next takes a straw broom (sagha) and pulls it apart in order to get a bit of millet to put into the lagha mentioned above. He goes then to the temporary granary (lourgho, granary made of Mossi secco) and walks around it three times. An emissary of the emperor gives him a white rooster (nora-pelga), some beer (dam), and zom-kom (water with flour in it). The priest sits down in the shade of the lourgho and before making the sacrifice pronounces the following words: "Naba Siguiri bad'kom, deghin kon Naba Wogbo, tib reg, kon Naba Sanum, tib kon Naba Koutou, tib reg' kon Naba Baongo, tib kon Naba Karfo, tib reg'kon Naba Sawadogo, tib reg la be kon Nab, gnimassem, la lafi," which means literally, "I offer this rooster, this water with flour, and this beer to Naba Siguiri (father of the reigning emperor) in order that he will persuade the Mogho Nabas Wobgo, Sanum, Koukou, Baongo, Karfo, and Sawadogo, to accept them, so that the emperor may enjoy good health and happiness."

[343]

The Tengsoba then hands the small quantity of millet [254] which he took earlier to the pugtiéma (first wife of the king) to be made into a millet cake and offered to the spirits (manes of deceased emperors and other spirits of the threshing floor).

643 251 Transporting the millet to the granaries. The wives, daughters, and sisters of the Mogho Naba are alone given the duty of carrying the millet to the granaries (baoré) (1). We have already noted that

1. This baoré granary is made of earth mixed with quantities of straw.

there are supposed to be a hundred loads of grain, even though the harvest may not fill twenty baskets. The number of baskets required by custom is attained by putting a small quantity of millet in each basket.

643 241 The millet intentionally left on the zéiga. A little millet is purposely left here and there on the zéiga, and the Kassiri Naba (village chief) takes it for his own use. This signal favor, however,

643 imposes a heavy obligation on the chief. He is expected to in-
241 vite the emperor's principal bodyguards (samand'kamba) -- and there are many of them -- to a meal. He is also required to furnish a basket of millet for sowing the field of the Mogho Naba when the first rains come.

652 Utilization of the produce of the emperor's fields. As noted
644 in an earlier chapter [255] under Labor required of Mossi subjects by their naba," the Mogho Naba does not use the millet from his own field. The produce is used to feed the horses, to support the pages and samand'kamba, and especially to make beer on the festive days known as the tinsé and basgha of the king.

[256] Chapter 17

Inheritance and Rights of Succession among the Mossi

428 We have dealt with the question of inheritance at considerable length in the chapter on "Customs and Enthronement of Mossi Chiefs." We return to the subject because it seems necessary to clarify certain details of this question which is so important from the legal point of view.

The opening of succession. The succession is open upon the death of an individual, but property is not passed until after the funeral ceremonies (for all that concerns funerals, see the section on "Death").

Why is there a delay in taking possession of the property? As we have seen above in many chapters, the Moaga is superstitious. An old belief has it that to take possession of the property of the deceased before the funeral is celebrated will bring certain death to the heir or will cause some calamity for the whole family.

Further, since all the members of the family must be assembled for the funeral observances, the inheritance is well publicized, and [257] no one can later claim to have been defrauded.

Requirements for succession. In order to inherit, the following requirements must be met.

1. To be born before the succession is opened.

133 are bordered with hills. Nevertheless, it may be said that Mossi country is flat. It is covered with the classic bush of the Sudan with its small shrubs and tall grass interspersed with bastard mahogany, [137] /7/ huge trunks of the baobabs, and tamarind and silk-cotton trees, thicker on the banks of the Volta rivers, thinner around the villages.

24 The country is quite fertile and easily provides for its inhabitants. 262 The various kinds of millet grow well, especially the small white variety (Pennisetum spicatum) which, mashed and boiled, is the staple of the diet and sorghum, or large red millet, which is used to prepare the famous beer of the country. The horses eat the latter kind, although they prefer the large white millet. Around the huts maize grows well in soil fertilized by the daily accumulation of waste. It is a welcome source of grain when the millet reserves of the previous year are running low and the current harvest has not yet matured. Maize fields are surrounded with a double row of sorghum and often [283] with a double row of a fiber plant called bérensé, a sort of hemp which the natives use to make ropes. After the maize has been harvested, the field is planted with previously prepared tobacco seedlings. Finally, the sunken areas created when huts are built, as well as all slightly damp places, are planted with gombo, okra, which is highly valued as a sauce ingredient.

[311] During the rainy season no piece of land remains unused around the villages, and when the red millet ripens and the ears join across the path, passage becomes difficult. Even the hut roofs bear all kinds [415] of calabash plants. These supply the housewives with gourds that fulfill the purposes served by our plates, dishes, glasses, and basins; the travellers with their flasks; the snuff-takers with their boxes; and the sorcerers with their spirit-calling instruments. The large gourds that are used to make drums grow among the shoots of maize. In the marshes near the watercourses where water lies stagnant, rice fields are planted, but rice is a luxury food, hard to cultivate because of [554] the care it requires. The natives use it only on feast days or when they wish to honor a distinguished guest. Cotton is sown in damp places among the stalks of large red millet, and it is harvested much later. Peanuts and peas also take up part of the cultivated land, while beans creep along the ground between the shoots of small millet. Peppers, sesame, the indigo plant, yams, manioc, sweet potatoes, and a small

241 tuber, Coleus coffini, which Europeans call oussounifing or fabirama,
242 and which may replace potatoes in a pinch, are cultivated in the soils most propitious to them.

221 The precious karite /shea/ tree (Butyrospermum parkii) grows in
242 most fields; its fruit, prized for its cool and slightly sweet flesh, con-
137 tains a pit which yields karite butter, the fat most widely used in
[388] cooking and to make soap. Around the villages, and sometimes even within them, the néré /locust bean/ tree (Parkia africana) produces
[354] elongated pods; its bark, mashed in water, yields a paste that is used to harden the floors of the huts. Its flour makes a cooling drink when
[272] mixed in water, and it may also be eaten; its seeds /8/ are used to make kalro /kalre in the original/, the soumbara of the Bambara, an ingredient /made from locust beans, néré/ of all carefully prepared
137 sauces. The douhalé and silk-cotton or kapokiero trees spread their shade over the weavers, numerous among the Mossi, and over the talkers who are even more. Bamboo grows well in the damp southern regions, and the palm oil tree is occasionally found. The caoutchouc liana, however, has not yet been introduced.

231 Small chickens run in all directions through the villages, along with domesticated guinea hens. Everywhere in the bush near the huts,
[857] little boys herd goats and sheep; this is the task of youngsters here at the age when their contemporaries among us /in France/ begin to learn the alphabet. The most common sheep and goats are small in size. The sheep have short hair. Sometimes, especially in the larger villages where markets are held, goats and sheep are to be seen with
[439] long legs and long, curled horns. They are imported from the northeast and fattened to be sold as butcher's meat. The height of fashion for the wife or a prosperous naba is to be followed by a Touareg /Tuareg/ sheep, well washed and very white. It is fed on millet leftovers and bean mush, and its mistress often presents it with a bit of salt to lick. In short, it is well cared for and agreeably fat; on some important feast day, it will embellish the menu.

The huts are usually guarded by very commonplace dogs, often ill-tempered, but cowardly. A stick is enough to drive them away.
[224] They are mostly used in the hunt, the great Mossi pastime during the dry season. Domesticated ducks are sometimes found in nabas' households, as well as pigeons, but these birds are not widespread and not within the reach of everyone. Finally, almost every group of huts has cats which belong to the women and which are difficult

852 shaved strips on top of the head, while the sides are shaved similarly
[302] in semi-circular strips. On the seventh day, people who were previously circumcised bring chickens to sacrifice to the spirits of the paths so that all will go well, but the newly circumcised take no part in the proceedings. The children wash, oil themselves, and put on their
852 beautiful clothes. Everything is brand new, the breechcloth, the
292 trousers, the shirt, the blanket, and the headgear. The belt is adorned
301 with a knife in a leather sheath and with a needle case which has at the end a tuft of leather strips with cowries attached to them. They
[176] hold a cow's tail, also adorned with cowries, to drive off the scheuyan spirits who dislike little rascals and people who dress too well. Both wrists are adorned with copper bracelets. Needless to say, this flashy new outfit with its cowries that clang like bells lures the eye and bewitches the young boys, who decide to be circumcised at the first opportunity so they too may eat well and wear beautiful clothes.

852 /44/ The circumcised boys continue to walk bent over, leaning on
[48] their sticks, but their crude staff is replaced with two sticks decorated with burnt designs and tied together. They no longer wear a tail. They go to greet the chiefs, and they thank those who have given them gifts. They walk to the sound of the large drum, since the bindré is forbidden at circumcision ceremonies, and sing plaintive chants to the spirits. They parade in the marketplace and display their clothes in the villages. They dance before the chiefs, and their dances are very
[535] graceful indeed. They dance in unison to the beat of the drum, making the same gestures all together or two by two, varying the figures in accordance with the beat. After seven days the festivities are over, and they all return to their families and take up everyday life as though nothing had happened.

We shall now study this everyday life.

/45/ BOOK III. DAILY WORK AND TRADES

Chapter 1. Occupations of a Mossi

221 The Mossi are essentially cultivators, and it may be said that no
241 Mossi who works at a trade will fail to cultivate his fields when the

221 rains come, laying aside any other task no matter what his profession
241 may be. The Mossi year is divided as described below, and year follows year without bringing any changes in this monotonous existence.

The rainy season from May to October is the time of the hard labor of cultivation, and all Mossi devote themselves fully to the task. Men, women, and children are always in the fields. They cut down the [805] thorn bushes at the beginning of May, as soon as the Pleiades appear on the horizon and the baobabs begin to burgeon. This is spring (sigu). For this work they use a small hatchet, a few centimeters wide, with a short, easily grasped handle, and a forked stick to fold back the thorny branches so they may more conveniently be cut at the base. The branches are piled in heaps and burned one evening as soon as they are dry. When the first copious rains fall, usually in June, the natives immediately sow the small white millet used to make sarabo, the staple of the aboriginal diet, and the large red millet or sorghum from which millet beer is made.

Sowing is regarded as one of the most laborious tasks, because it forces the sower to remain bent so as not to lose sight of the stretch already covered. The natives sow with an old worn-out hoe, with which they strike the ground twice in order to make a small hole. The grain is carried in a gourd held by a string to the left hand; this leaves the fingers free to seize a few grains which are dropped into the hole. A little soil is then replaced by the hoe. When the rain has soaked the ground more thoroughly and the millet has begun to grow, maize is sowed around the huts.

Following the first weeding of the fields, beans are sowed among the shoots of small millet, and cotton among those of large red millet or near the watercourses. The ground is then prepared to sow rice, peanuts, and native peas. Meanwhile the fields must be hoed incessantly to remove the weeds that would smother the young millet shoots. If the rain is too abundant at the end of June, the cultivators are often overwhelmed with work, and they complain that it has become impossible to keep their fields clean. Gombo (okra) and all the condiments for making sauce, peppers, tomatoes, etc., are planted around the maize fields, near the huts, along with /46/ native hemp and all sorts of gourd plants. In favorable soil, hence only in certain areas, fabiràma, manioc, and yams are cultivated in a special manner.

221 Those who raise chicks take them along to the fields in an oblong
235 cage of plaited straw or willow. When they get to the spot where

221 they will be working, they open the door of the cage and the mother
235 hen comes out. She is tied to the basket with a string, and the chicks run around her. If their master finds a good termite nest, he takes it to his little charges and breaks it in two. In the evening he puts the hen and chicks back into the basket and carries it home suspended from his shoulder.

[805] The heavy rains fall in July and August. This is summer (seoro).
221 Whenever the ground is not too soggy, everybody runs to the fields at
241 dawn and works until nightfall. One or two women stay home to pre-
476 pare food for the laborers, whose strength must be maintained for all this hard work. No one may rest. Only the sick and the helpless old people stay home, and even they are put to work, looking after the babies. This is the time when wealthy people call friends to their aid. The owner of a vast field has every member of the village notified — especially the young men, those who own some obligation toward him, those who have an eye on his daughters — that on a certain date he will be weeding his field, and at dawn of that day everyone gathers and labors while the drums spur them on. On another occasion, this man in turn will help those who have worked for him. This practice of mutual aid is very advantageous because a field overgrown with weeds is cleaned in a single day, but it becomes onerous when people must appeal to their neighbors several times in the course of a season.

221 The heavy rains stop in August or September, the maize is ripe,
241 and feasting begins. Roasted corn ears are a prized tidbit, especially
262 when the kernels are still tender. There is one kind of maize, faintly sweet, which when sautéed in butter recalls our garden peas. Everywhere the children and even the elders feast on maize; everywhere people offer a visitor a few ears of maize, which are often roasted on the spot. When the maize harvest is completed, maize gruel, which recalls the famous Italian polenta, advantageously replaces millet mush and brings a pleasant change to the daily fare, especially since gombo is ripening and adds variety to the sauce as well. Bellies fill out, faces glow with health, and as a very natural sequence, hearts are flooded with joy. The end of the dry season may have been difficult because millet was running low; the winter tasks may have been laborious; but now everyone makes up for it. The harvested maize is replaced in the fields by tobacco; its seedlings were prepared as the harvest drew near.

[805] At the end of September or beginning of October, the large red millet is ripe. This is autumn (houpéla). Maize is now too tough

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Above: Water Carriers.
Below: Youths Returning from the Bush with Bundles of Straw.

Above: Threshing Millet.
Below: Winnowing Millet. Millet Granaries in the Background.

22/ for roasting and is replaced with green millet, eaten raw after being
24/ beaten with a small stick to remove the chaff. /47/ Certain kinds of
262 large millet are sweet and not too unpleasant to eat in this fashion.
Horses grow fat because millet is their staple food and they may eat
221 as much as they please. Men also profit greatly, because beer brewed
241 from new millet tastes much better than that made from old millet,
273 and when millet abounds, drink is never wanting. At this time rice is harvested, threshed on the threshing floors, and laid aside carefully for festive occasions.

221 At the end of October the rains have stopped almost completely.
241 The beans are gathered and laid out in the fields on millet stalks or on séko held up from the ground by forked stakes to keep the termites from eating them, or the beans may be brought home and tossed on the séko which serve as shelters in front of the soukala. Now is the time to harvest the small millet, which is dry. The millet stalks are severed at ground level by the men and laid out with all heads oriented in the same direction to facilitate the work of the women, who cut off the heads and gather them in heaps. When the millet has been cut, the women fill their baskets. The largest containers are used for the occasion, and each woman uses her ingenuity to pile the millet as high as possible over her basket, using the longest ears or bean stems as supports, like the Zouaves who vie for the tallest pack. Should the line of women on their way back to the village meet a man known for his generosity, they sing, cry out, and surround him until he throws them a few handfuls of cowries to buy a jar of beer.

221 As they near the threshing floor their cries get louder, and each
241 woman comes to the granary and hands her basket to the man who
251 stands there. These granaries are very crudely built and consist basi-
343 cally of sticks driven into the ground in a circle to hold up a séko which is wrapped around them. The floor is made up of another séko, usually resting on the ground but sometimes raised on stones or forked sticks to avoid termites. This is where the millet is placed prior to threshing. The granaries stand around the threshing floor of beaten earth, which is located 100 or 200 meters from the village, some-
674 times even farther. Thieves are no important threat. They may cut down millet when it stands in the bush, but they rarely steal millet already stored. Only goats, sheep, and guinea hens are to be feared, and they are kept away from the granaries by thorns.

221 As soon as these heavier tasks are over, everyone digs up peanuts
241 and peas. The whole family gathers under the shade of a tree, and

221 the men bring bunches of peanuts. While nibbling on the green nuts
241 and talking, they all separate the pods from the leaves. The latter are carefully set aside along with the bean leaves. They make ex-
[231] cellent fodder for the horses during the dry season, when the sun has burned off all the grass in the bush.

221 By November harvesting is completed. The sun has already dried
241 out the grass, and the time has come to cut straw for séko and roofing.
356 /48/ This task is usually reserved for children and servants (dakonré).
857 The head of the household tells each one of them the number of straw bundles he is to cut, and every morning the children set off in groups, a sickle on their shoulders. They look for straw on the banks of the watercourses and return when the sun begins to scorch. This marks the end of the working day, and there is nothing to do now but rest. The dry season is indeed a time of rest, and from November to May there are no pressing tasks.

[805] It gets cold in December. This is winter (sapolro). The natives
221 gather at dawn around fires of millet stalks, twigs, or straw; anything
241 combustible serves. Every newcomer must contribute an armful; it
[372] is the price of admission to a seat near the fire. At the end of December
476 all the straw for roofing has been stored, and then the small millet is threshed. Every inhabitant of the village has the use of the threshing floor in turn. He notifies his friends and acquaintances as he did when he weeded his field. The millet beer is ready, and on the previous day the women have covered the area with cow dung diluted in water to harden the floor. At dawn the friends arrive, and the millet is removed from the granary and spread out on the floor. This is done with the help of millet stalks tied together in bundles and dragged along the ground with ropes while a man bears down upon them. The flail is merely a stick cut in the bush, a tree branch shaped in such a way that the part which is held in the hand is rather thin and flexible, while the part which is used for threshing is quite thick and forms an obtuse angle with the part in the hand. The boys line up in a row, with the tots at either end; the drummers stand before or behind them; and the flails fall with the beat, crushing the ears of millet and separating the very dry grain from the stalks. All the while the old men sit in the shade of the granaries, talking, smoking, and sewing clothes. When the threshers get to the end of the floor, they retrace their steps and rest, while the old men gather with straw brooms the grain which has been scattered outside the pile.

221 After a few hours when the millet has been sufficiently threshed,
241 the emptied and broken husks are swept to the side. The grain is
476 gathered in a heap, and a strong fellow tosses it into the air with a
788 wooden shovel to separate the chaff from the good grain, which is put in a heap. When all the grain has thus been winnowed, it is surrounded with a ring of ashes to protect it against evil spirits. Then one of the threshers, who is not a member of the family, puts some millet in a gourd and sprinkles it with water. He proceeds to throw it by the handful onto the millet pile, saying: "So-and-So fears rain," mentioning the name of the owner of the harvest and the name of every member of his family. He ends by saying: "When we are finished weeding, let the drought come. When we are finished planting, let the heavy rains come." If the owner of a horse is present, he receives a gourd of millet for his mount. Each of the elders also takes some for his chicken. If this ceremony is not carried out, the millet may not be used as seed the following year.

221 /49/ The women come with their baskets; a man takes one of the
251 brooms and sinks it into the millet heap in various places; then the
[482] men fill the baskets and help the women place them on their heads. At the house the millet is unloaded into granaries made of clay mixed with finely cut straw. These granaries have the shape of large jars 1.50 meters high; they usually rest on large stones, and they are
[343] smoked out beforehand to get rid of termites. They are closed with a lid of the same material and covered with a small thatch roof as a protection against rain, for they usually stand in the open air in the inner courtyard. Millet beer is brought and drunk on the spot while the millet is being winnowed. Sometimes the festivities end with dancing, and then everyone goes home, to begin again another day. The month of January goes by in this fashion.

221 February, March, and April are vacation months, months for hunting and fishing.

224 Actually no Mossi is a hunter, yet all Mossi are hunters to some
411 degree. Since the French occupation, men armed with very primitive flint guns are sometimes seen on the fringes of the heavy bush which borders the Volta and contains large game. These flint guns are so crude that they frequently burst and wound the man who recklessly
224 loaded it with too much powder. These natives know the bush thoroughly and are very helpful to the adventurers who wish to hunt koba, buffalo, elephant, leopard, or even lion, although the latter is to the

776 other hand, the kikirsi do not drink fermented millet beer, but they must be offered some before the yeast (da'nodo) is added. They have their preferences like human beings. They know hatred and jealousy, and sometimes they even kill one another. They are said to have two 776 sexes, to marry, and to procreate. They even have the special faculty 845 of always bearing twins, and this is why twins are called by their 551 name and are dedicated to them; it is believed that spirits dwell within them.

776 The birth of twins causes their mother much trouble. Formerly 845 both were sometimes put to death, while at other times only one was killed. When a woman bears twins, she builds at the door of her hut 782 a tiny miniature house where the spirits dwelling /82/ within her children will take shelter. Three times a year if her means allow it, in the spring, in the winter, and at the height of the rainy season, or at least once a year, a guinea hen must be offered to the kikirsi. This fowl is sacrificed exclusively to them. On that day they must also be offered their favorite foods, and this means that honey, sesame, and millet cakes must be purchased, that beer must be prepared and a jar saved without yeast, that millet mush has to be cooked, and especially that no pepper be added to the sauce. Otherwise the husband, wife, or children will be afflicted with a dreadful eye disease, for [753] such is the illness which the kikirsi have the power of visiting on human beings.

776 As children, twins may wear only the kankabra, a garment made 845 of black and whitish threads, the characteristic clothing of the kikirsi. Happily, they are later allowed to dress as they please. If the mother dies, the twins offer the sacrifices themselves and build the small hut that serves as a dwelling for their little spirit. The later born twin is considered the older of the two. They both wear the same bracelet and share everything given to them. It is not considered proper to make a gift to one without giving the same thing to the other. Actually, these customs are to be found in Africa from Bambara country to Tanganyika.

776 To return to the kikirsi themselves, they are present everywhere. In the bush they are fond of termite nests, large and small. They 241 also like open spaces. They are to be found around the villages; there are ponds set apart for the kikirsi, wells considered to belong to them. There are spirits watching over every field, and before sowing, as also before harvesting millet, the master of the field sacrifices a chicken to the spirit on a stone in the middle of the field. The

776 kikiriga, in turn, are to ward off anything that might harm the crop,
241 birds, caterpillars, thieves, and the like, and to fill with millet a granary of the size drawn on the ground with ashes at the time of harvest. If the kikiriga has properly carried out his duties, he gets another chicken when all the grain has been gathered in a heap.
776 Pregnant women are under the protection of a special kikiriga, and
[843] small children have one of their own to ward off illness and danger. Do we not say ourselves that a special Providence watches over the very young?

776 Actually, everyone has his kikiriga. Some have an evil one, and
828 those are the people who quarrel with everybody, the ones who are never successful, whose livestock dies, for the kikirsi often kill the goats, sheep, and horses that die of illness. Other people have a
[577] good kikiriga, and for them everything goes well; they were born under a lucky star. These are the engaging, sweet, good-natured people
[513] who get rich and who have many children. When a Mossi lies down to sleep in his hut, he rests his head on a stone or a small mound of beaten earth. This is where his kikiriga dwells, and from time to time, especially when he feels the need for special protection, he
[782] sacrifices a guinea hen or sometimes even a goat, with the understanding that the spirit will chase away all fellow spirits who might want to harm him and will avert all illness and all danger from his path.

/83/ The tangandé is a spirit who has the shape of an animal and
776 who is regarded as the protector of a village. The term is also ex-
778 tended to designate the spirit's place of residence, usually the sacred
825 grove but sometimes a mere stone or even an open space. The tangandé may be a crocodile, a boa, a leopard, a turtle, a deer, a hare, etc. The animal is sacred to the whole village and may not be killed in the sacred grove, but it may be killed elsewhere, even a short distance from the thicket.

776 The tangandé is a guardian spirit because it protects men and sends
755 its servants to accompany the village people on trips when they request it to do so. The natives incessantly turn to it for protection and the sorcerers incessantly refer those who consult them to the tangandé to obtain cures and to request the release of souls held captive
776 by evil sorcerers. When someone dies, sacrifices are made to the
782 tangandé with requests to protect the survivors and to ward off illness.
[774] When souls leave the body during sleep, they often go to the sacred grove. Anyone may sacrifice to the tangandé and in the tangandé.

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belonging to him, he can be relied upon to share with the members of the lineage if this should be necessary.

Capital goods in the form of houses, granaries, and fields are the 613
property of the lineage. Individual rights are limited to temporary use 423
and custodianship but are passed on to others when a general shift in residence and role follows the death of a senior member of the lineage. Although property is passed on in accordance with the rules of descent in the lineage, part of the property redistributed represents the product 428
of the labor of the lineage as a consanguineal kin group. For, as has been 613
indicated, the labor of the wives, who are not lineage members, is as important as that of their husbands and children.

The lineage head discusses the coming year with the other elders, and 241
an over-all production plan is made out. They decide what fields are to 613
be left fallow, what ones are to be planted to cotton and the varieties of millet, what lands may be used by individuals desiring to plant a cash crop, and what, if any, land may be loaned to neighboring lineages or to in-laws. With the approach of the first rains, all economically active men and women go to their fields to prepare them for planting, leaving behind in the village only the old people and the children who are still too small to assist in the fields or tend their fathers' animals.

A considerable portion of the land within the limits of a Mossi village 423
is under the direct control of the village chief (*Tenga Naba*) and the 632
earth custodian (*Tenga Soba*), the local representatives of political and supernatural authority. This land is used for the public way, for the market place, and for burial grounds and latrines. Except for that which is too poor for any purpose, all available land within several miles of a village is put under cultivation.

Ki is the generic name which the Mossi give to the millet, which is the 241
basic product in their economy and which receives the largest single 243
allocation of land and labor of any Mossi economic activity. Two kinds of millet are planted, a large-grained variety (*kenda*) and a small-grained variety (*kazua*). Millet is the first crop to be planted after the rains have begun. Small- and large-grained millet seeds are frequently mixed and sown in the same field. Small-grained millet may also be sown in the same field with a white bean (*benga*). A "tired" field may be left fallow for five, ten, or fifteen years. When it is first replanted, it will be seeded to millet for the first three years. The fourth year it may again be put into millet, but if the previous crop was not good, cotton will be planted. Usually, a Mossi farmer plants cotton for two years, millet for three, then groundnuts, more cotton, then two more years of millet. It is 241
believed that cotton renews the soil because of the intensive cultivation [824]
required: the earth is brought up into hillocks and turned over; after picking, the plant may be turned under and left to enrich the soil.

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241 picking, the plant may be turned under and left to enrich the soil.

241 476 Apart from the co-operative cultivation of fields under the proprietorship of the lineage elder, each farmer works for himself. He aids his relatives, and they in turn assist him with his work, but the results of their communal effort are not shared. This applies not only to the work of planting but also to cultivation and harvest. The decision about what is to be planted in a particular field and how it shall be cultivated rests finally with the individual farmer.

Communal or co-operative effort is much more characteristic of the work of cultivation than of the planting period, when everyone is in a hurry to get his own seeds into the ground and requests for assistance are not welcomed. A strong note of competition is evident at this time. A [461] man takes pride in his efficiency as a farmer, and there is a race to see who can get farthest along with his work. In the earliest phase of prepa- [572] rations for the approaching rainy season it is the individual's best friend upon whom he relies most for assistance. He is the first person to be called on for assistance in clearing the field for planting. If a Mossi farmer is unmarried, he may also ask the other unmarried men of his lineage for help. If a long day must be spent in the field in order to clear and clean it properly, his mother will offer the helpers the midday meal, which is carried out to them as they work.

622 651 241 *Naba koba* (chief's cultivation) is the name given to the work which the villagers do in the fields belonging to the village chief. A village elder is charged with announcing when and where work in the chief's fields is to be done, and each lineage head relays the news to his kinsmen. This contribution of labor is no longer obligatory, as it was formerly, but only [626] a question of social pressure and recognition that individual well-being and the welfare of the village "depend on the chief."

241 463 Every Mossi is an agriculturist. Although agriculture is the principal source of income, everyone also engages in crafts, particularly during the dry season when the work in the fields is finished. However, there are no full-time crafts specialists. Even the African functionaries in the European administration and the teachers, clerks, and merchants all work in their fields part of the time during the rainy season. The activities of the blacksmiths, leather workers, butchers, wood workers, herbalists, and small merchants are carried out on a much smaller scale and are fitted into the routine established by the rains and the growth of their millet. Only elders whose age keeps them from the fields might be thought of as specialists who do not participate in agriculture, but their land is worked by younger members of the family, and they take a keen interest in the course of its cultivation. The village chief, the earth custodian, and certain other elderly and important members of the community do not cultivate; this is because of their position and age rather than because

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they are so exclusively occupied with political or religious duties. In every case, they own fields and are dependent upon their produce for an important part of their subsistence.

Each Mossi village in the Yatenga holds a market every third day; markets operate in nearby villages on the intermediate days. There are few full-time merchants; men usually market their wares themselves and trade in items of European manufacture. Except for the sale of meat, it is a man's wives who sell farm produce. For marketing her husband's surplus millet, a woman receives a gift when the market closes.

Markets are most active in the early hours of the morning when meat and farm produce are fresh. By afternoon only a few merchants stay on, trying to sell their remaining produce to late-comers at greatly reduced prices. Social satisfactions derived from participation in the market are greatly valued; it provides an opportunity for meeting friends and kinsmen and for exchanging gossip and observations on one another's dress, the crops, and current political developments. The market is a place for making loans and receiving small gifts from kinsmen and friends, for flirtations and the arrangement of rendezvous, and for that casual sort of social interaction which is one of the principal pleasures of life in the Yatenga.

The Mossi farmer is dependent on the co-operation of the members of his lineage both for the success of his individual economic endeavor and for their support if his crop should fail. To be assured of this support, he must contribute generously to the maintenance of his position in the intricate network of rights and obligations which describes the relationship of the individual to his kin group. A constant exchange of visits and presents, ceremonial and economic assistance, and presence and participation in the affairs of the lineage are necessary to maintain his status within this group.

The nature of the social, economic, and emotional dependence of the individual on his kinsmen, his affinal relations, and his neighbors is such that his social well-being and economic success may properly be regarded as depending as much on his skill in manipulating this complex web of relationships as on his specifically economic endeavors. When a man decides to forego a second weeding of his fields in order to prepare presents and make the journey to the funeral of a kinsman, he is making a choice which, considered in the total context of the culture, is realistically in accord with his own economic best interest.

The farmer feels equally dependent on the deceased members of his lineage, the ancestral spirits (*kiemse*). If he feeds them a chicken, they may steal the soul from a neighboring stand of millet and bring it to enrich his own field. If properly treated, they can be depended upon to protect his shea nut trees from the high winds which might otherwise

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by being placed on his altar, where they become part of the earth symbols (*tiinse*). As a result, these altars are piled high with old sardine cans, bicycle parts, remnants of clothing, unusual stones and scraps of metal, baskets, wooden implements, and weapons, which are left there to decompose slowly and return to the earth. Travelers in a strange village need never fear that their property will be stolen if they deposit it near the altar of the earth custodian. 778

When a farmer wishes to clear a part of the bush which has previously been unused, he must first ask permission of the earth custodian and make a present to the earth deity. If he wishes to use the land again the following year, the request and the gift must be repeated. Such a field may be passed on to his descendants, who have a right to the land so long as they acknowledge each year the authority of the earth custodian. If a new well is to be dug, his authorization must be requested, and his advice may also be asked for the proper place to seek water. The wise Mossi farmer consults the earth custodian frequently about his agricultural activities. He also reports anything that he may have done to alter the condition of his farmlands or the surrounding bush, not because each individual act is of such great importance, but because maintaining good relations with the custodian of the earth is in the interest of his own economic security. 241 782 793

OTHER ASPECTS OF RELIGION

Other descendants of the original inhabitants of the Yatenga, the Bogobs, are especially charged with the propitiation of Tido Wendé, the vegetal manifestation of Wennam. In addition to the many manifestations of Wennam and the complex organization of priests and ceremonial designed for his propitiation, many other forces inhabit the unseen world of the Mossi. Indeed, to the observer their number and variety might at first seem to be almost as great as the number of Mossi with whom he may discuss these beings. Each man's description of these supernatural beings varies in terms of his subjective reaction resulting either from direct experience of them or from stories he has heard concerning their behavior. In contrast to Wennam, whose disposition is essentially benevolent so long as he is properly propitiated, these lesser supernatural beings are more frequently malicious and always more difficult to control. Perhaps for these reasons they are not worshiped. The Mossi's concern is not to propitiate them but to neutralize their evil intentions by the use of protective charms (*tim*). 776

The "bush," the unused land lying beyond the farms, is the least-known aspect of the Mossi natural environment. This is especially true of those far areas of the bush where even the authority of the earth custodians does not extend and where unknown spirits dwell. For although the 776 823

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221 796 their continued reliance upon his political power and intercession with his noble ancestors, in order that the village may enjoy peace through the coming months of the dry season and early rains at the beginning of the next economic cycle.

With this observance all of the sources of power—both social and supernatural—upon which the Mossis' well-being is dependent have been thanked for their support throughout the year just ended and have been encouraged, by the generosity of their supplicants, to continue their benevolence for the year to come. The Mossi understand the nature of these forces and the manner in which they can be controlled. They know them as manifestations of a deity who will reward their observance of ceremonial obligations with the soft winds and heavy rains that bring a rich harvest. The individual is intellectually and emotionally absorbed in maintaining a balance in his relationship to a world he understands. His efforts to maintain this balance are occasionally frustrated by sorcery or the contrary will of his deity, but he enjoys, nonetheless, a very real security.

CULTURAL ADJUSTMENTS AT THE NIGER IRRIGATION PROJECT

177 241 Given the nature of these interrelationships between the organization of economic activity and the social and religious institutions of their culture, the adjustment of the Mossi who have been resettled at the Niger Irrigation Project has implications which go beyond mere technological adaptation. The settlers must, in fact, adjust to a totally changed cultural setting.

Arriving at the Niger project, they fail to find the institutions upon which they have always depended for their security; they find instead a natural environment governed by forces they do not know. Their water supply is no longer dependent on the supernatural controls of the earth custodians but comes from a dam built by Europeans. They are socially isolated from their kinsmen and their ancestral spirits in the Yatenga, and they derive little comfort from the presence of fellow Mossi with whom they have neither consanguineal nor affinal relationship.

[466] Settlers were forcibly recruited for the Niger Irrigation Project until 1944, when forced labor was abolished throughout the French Union. Now a recruitment program brings Mossi families to the project each year; every family head receives a house, oxen, a plow, and a plot of land proportionate to the number of active workers accompanying him. Under the supervision of European agronomists, they apply modern methods to the production of rice and cotton. The project administration buys their crop for cash after deducting fees for seed, irrigation, mechanized cultivation, transportation, and processing. In theory, ten years of

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debt-free cultivation entitle the settler to permanent residence on the land he has been loaned. 177 241

Adaptation to the conditions of the new geographical setting in which the Mossi find themselves has been relatively rapid and easy. The Yatenga and the Niger project lie within the same climatic zone; the only important ecological difference between the two areas is the increased water supply resulting from irrigation. This change in the origin of the water supply, control of which provides a basic sanction of Mossi religion, was less disturbing to traditional belief than might have been anticipated.

Rather than diminishing their belief in their own religion, it only convinces the Mossi colonists that the forces of the natural order are different in their new habitat and accordingly must be controlled in a different way. Finding the indigenous inhabitants of the French Sudan, the Bambara, to be zealous Moslems, the Mossi settlers have accepted Islam as the religion of their new country. Confident that their religious obligations in the Yatenga will be taken care of by the elders who have remained behind, and with some pressure from those who have already become Moslemized, new arrivals rapidly embrace Islam as the system by which the supernatural forces governing their new environment can be manipulated. 797 177

Their acceptance of Islam has been as superficial as it has been rapid. There is time neither for the study of Moslem theology nor for the soul-searching which must precede the rejection of previously held religious beliefs. With a tradition which emphasizes the observance of religious form rather than intense emotional participation in ceremonial, their observance of the five daily prayers, taking of a Moslem name, deference to the marabout, and casual attention to certain dietary prohibitions should be viewed as their rational reaction to the fact of being in a strange land with an obviously different supernatural order which must be dealt with in a new way. Desire for a measure of control over this new supernatural order, pressure for conformity to the religious norms of their new social setting, and—perhaps most significantly—the permissiveness which characterizes the West African's acceptance of the existence of new supernatural forces, makes Islamization possible without the rejection of previously held religious ideas or practices. [157]

In contrast to the relative ease of their adaptation to the natural and supernatural aspects of their new environment, their adjustment to the social situations which result from the change in economic organization has been most difficult. They must, of course, learn a new technology: the cultivation of rice and cotton by modern methods. Since the machines used for clearing the land and for the harvest are operated by 177 241

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177 specially trained non-Mossi personnel, the use of irrigation, fertilizer, and the plow are their most important technological innovations. Despite their difficulty in communicating with the European agronomists under whose direction they work, they soon master these agricultural techniques. Patterns of consumption are also altered, rice taking the [261] place of millet as the staple in their diet. After some initial illness they become accustomed to rice but suspect that it is less nourishing than their traditional diet.

Far more difficult than adjusting to either the new technology or the 177 diet is adaptation to the changed social organization. Trying to ease this 182 adjustment but with an imperfect understanding of traditional Mossi institutions, the project administration has tried to re-create their forms in the area of resettlement.

Despite this, the new colonist finds himself isolated among social forces he does not understand. The attempt to reproduce the traditional pattern of residential grouping is meaningless in the absence of the lineage. Separated from his kinsmen and his community, the colonist is confused by social institutions whose resemblance to those he has known in the Yatenga exists only on the level of form. He does not like or understand being housed with strangers as if they were his kinsmen. Equally incomprehensible is an approximation of the familiar political organization which, ignoring the traditional sanctions of chieftainship, has a former earth custodian, whose supernatural role has traditionally precluded the exercise of political authority, as paramount chief.

Despite the efforts of the European administration to reproduce their structural appearance, the institutions of Mossi society are so interrelated that the change in the organization of economic activity has created new needs which make alterations in traditional institutions inevitable. Rather than permitting the colonists to modify their indigenous social organization to fit these new needs, the social structure rigidly imposed by the Europeans has impeded the Mossi in their efforts to adjust their institutions to the changed situation. The delegation of authority to inept administrative appointees thinly disguised as chiefs and to the older, least adaptive members of the settler communities only complicates the problem of adjustment.

Isolated from their kinsmen and the protection of their ancestral spirits, the colonists miss the emotional and social satisfactions of extended family living as well as the security of an established position in the community in which they were born. Adherence to the traditional kinship organization, with its emphasis on obedience to the elders who [582] have remained behind in the Yatenga, makes marriage at the Niger project almost impossible.

The young men born and raised at the project resent the tradition

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too young to be listened to seriously by their elders. If they are returning as senior members of their lineages, and since their power and prestige are dependent on the maintenance of the socio-religious status quo, they are unlikely to be innovators. For these same reasons the few changes in the social organization which have occurred at the Niger project have had little effect on the social environment of the Yatenga.

Most of the agricultural techniques acquired in the Sudan are useless in the Yatenga because of the absence of irrigation. Even were this not so, the rationale of the modern agricultural methods employed at the Niger project is not explained to the settlers; they are required to follow the instructions of the European agronomists or be penalized. As a result, the improved agricultural techniques of the Europeans are regarded as just another of the white man's incomprehensible ways and are quickly forgotten.

The response of the Mossi to resettlement at the Niger Irrigation Project shows that in a situation of rapid cultural change, retentions or changes on the superficial level of form are misleading; nor is a brief statement of the functional interrelationship between institutions sufficient. The final reality of an institution lies in its meaning for the members of the society in which it exists, and its final evaluation must be based on its capacity to fulfil the changing needs of individuals. This concept is essential to an understanding of the colonists' dissatisfaction with the effort of the Niger project administration to reproduce artificially a static model of their traditional social structure. This can also be seen in their reaction to a changed supernatural order; an analysis which failed to descend beneath the level of form would miss the significant fact that their psychological response to religion and the basic premises of their theology have remained unaffected by an "Islamization" which amounts to little more than adopting certain new propitiatory usages.

Apparently not understanding the interrelationship of cultural institutions and the sanctions which give them meaning, the administration of the Niger Irrigation Project sought to modify the Mossi organization of economic activity without referring to the traditional values to which it is vitally related. Seeming to regard the indigenous culture as little more than a compendium of savage rites upon which superior European usages need only be imposed in order to prevail, such an approach reveals a failure to comprehend both the complexity and the tenacity of the Mossi cultural heritage.

249 rainy season ends, the tobacco has already grown tall. In the month of December, one begins to gather the leaves, taking first the lowest ones which are the first to ripen. One keeps plucking up the stem and gathering leaves until the end /485/ of January. Then the tobacco stems are cut down to get the seeds.

276 In order to make tobacco, the leaves are left to dry in the sun, and then, when they are dry, the men crush them in small mortars. They add a little water, stir, and make tobacco balls, or rather small elongated loaves worth one sou apiece. These loaves are entrusted to the women to be sold at market.

249 The Mossi also grow indigo (gara in Mossi, as in Bambara). During the rainy season, indigo is sown in separate plots. First the grass is removed, and then the ground is struck here and there with the koutiaga. Then indigo seeds are broadcast, and the soil is moved with the ouaka to cover the seeds so that the birds will not eat them. At the end of a fortnight, the indigo begins to shoot. The weeds are removed by hand. The leaves may be gathered forty days later. They are gathered by hand and given to the women, who press them into flat loaves.

248 As for hemp (berenga in Mossi, pepan in Nounouma, kanzé in Kassouna, dafou in Mandé), it is sown among the maize that surrounds the soukala as soon as the latter has put forth shoots. The barenga has a long stalk similar to maize and hard to distinguish from the latter, but while maize is harvested in August, berenga stalks are left standing until October or November.

262 Its leaves are used for sauces.

241 Hemp closes our list of food crops and other crops in Mossi territory. Let us close with a few words on agricultural tools.

The basic tool of cultivation, here as in all other parts of West Africa, is the daba. The Mossi have two kinds:

1. The ouaka, a kind of daba with a broad, thin blade. It is used to turn up the soil.

/486/ 2. The koutiaga, koutiara or koutiaba. This is a kind of small hoe which is used to make holes when sowing grain or seeds.

The Mossi also have the following accessory tools:

1. The laré. This is an axe used to cut stumps when a plot is cleared.

●241 2. The sououga, a knife used to cut down the heads of millet.

3. The gouégo, a curved knife, a kind of scythe which is used to cut straw, for example when preparing thatch for hut roofs.

To summarize, cultivation is the most important pursuit among the Mossi. It insures the subsistence of this population which is [161] relatively dense, since there are 25 inhabitants per square kilometer, a very high figure unusual for West Africa. The species of cultivated plants are as numerous as anywhere else, and the agricultural tools tend to be superior. In spite of all this, the Mossi are not very good cultivators, and in this respect I believe that they must be placed beneath the Bobo, Gourounsi, Habé, Bambara, etc. One senses that the Mossi descend at least in part from people who were once familiar with easier and more fruitful ways of procuring food (such as war and attendant loot) or, to put it another way, one senses the meeting of two groups, one of which was truly adept at cultivation while the other was less so. Thus, although the Mossi are cultivators first and foremost and actually subsist on cultivation, the latter is not as basic to them as it is to the Bobo, the Gourounsi, etc. They do practice cultivation, this is even by far their chief subsistence activity, and yet one cannot say that they are, in all respects, good cultivators.

231 Are they at least noteworthy stockbreeders?

To this we may give forthwith a negative answer. The Mossi are very mediocre, not to say worthless breeders. This is not to mean, incidentally, that there is no cattle in Mossi territory. There [563] is a great deal, on the contrary, and this stems from the presence of the Foulbé, who are cattle herders, as much as from the presence of the Yarsé, who /487/ have always owned considerable quantities of cattle, and from the density of the Mossi population. The Mossi themselves, nevertheless, own little cattle. To be more exact, they have a low per capita average of cattle.

We ~~might list~~ over-all or partial figures, but those most recently 231 compiled are vitiated by the fact that Mossi territory lost part of 563 its cattle in recent years due to repeated famines around 1906-1908 and to an overly rigorous tax system that went into effect a little later. We shall, therefore, merely validate our statement that the

323 wide, 2 meters in diameter, and open at the top), then some straw on which the pots are laid, and then more straw and firewood. They set this afire and keep it burning for twelve hours.

In order to polish their pots, the women take the bark of the [314] nobora or n'kouna. They soak it in huge canari for a whole day. The water acquires a reddish hue. The fired and cooled pots are immersed in these canari for a while, and then allowed to dry in the open air. When this is over, the pots may be taken to market and sold.

The blacksmiths' wives make their pottery during the dry season. During the winter season, they work in their husbands' fields.

326 241 During the winter season, Mossi blacksmiths work both at cultivation and at their trade, but mostly at cultivation. During the dry season, on the other hand, they work only at the blacksmith's trade.

As far as cultivation is concerned, they mostly grow small millet, followed by large white millet and large red millet, maize, peanuts, underground peas, sesame, and beans. They cultivate cotton and tobacco, but no indigo. Their wives sow gombo, etc.

326 231 /516/ They own livestock which their children herd. As a rule, they have a little more livestock than other Mossi, except for goats and donkeys. This, incidentally, should not surprise us, for the Negro blacksmiths of West Africa often display an ability for stockbreeding and especially for horse trading. Among the Mossi, however, this is not very pronounced.

326 The blacksmiths neither hunt nor fish, but they do engage in gathering activities like other Mossi. They exercise no industries other than those of iron and pottery. They do not work copper, silver, or gold. They do not work as weavers, either. They entrust their wives with the task of gathering and spinning whatever cotton they grow, and then they hand it over to the weavers.

326 438 They do undertake a little trading, slightly more in fact than the average Mossi. When a blacksmith has smelted a large quantity of iron, he sometimes purchases some livestock, leads it to Ouanké, buys kola nuts which he takes to Saraféré, and brings back salt from that locality. This is not done very frequently, however.

325 4. The iron rasp or sodara.
306 5. The sharpening tool or karé.
413 6. The iron wedge to cut copper (kétouga).
7. Shears to cut copper (mankasaga).
8. A few very primitive goatskin bellows.

306 As an example of a jeweler, may I present Sulémani Déréma, an inhabitant of Ouagadougou. He lives with his older brother, who is the head of the soukala and who has a wife and child. Sulémani himself has two wives and two children. A younger brother lives with them with his wife and child. Finally, there are other brothers in the soukala but they are not married (let us note in passing [592] that this soukala is exceptional, for the general rule among the /518/ Mossi is for every household to live separately; here, although they still live together, every household works separately).

Sulémani Déréma buys his copper at market, or else he works the copper furnished by his customers to order. He makes bracelets, rings, copper stirrups, etc.

306 He also works in the fields during the winter season, and like 241 the other households in the soukala, he does this on his own. Sulémani has two fields in the bush, one of small millet and another of large white millet, and in addition he grows maize around the soukala on the stretch of ground allotted him by the head of the soukala.

He owns neither large nor small livestock, not even chickens, He neither hunts nor fishes.

His jeweler's trade nets him more than his fields.

324 The blacksmith and niaka are representatives of metalworking.
316 Let us now proceed to stonework.

The makers of crushing stones are called nanlora in Mossi, from nan, "crushing stone" and lora, "to shatter."

Our quarrymen look in the bush for large stone slabs resting on the ground, and whenever possible raised in some manner above it. They draw lines on these large flat stones with karité and soumbara, the size of the crushing stones they wish to extract, and then they gather wood under the slab and set it afire. They allow the fire

285 294 435 2. Similar but smaller hats, worth from 1,000 to 1,500 cowries.

/529/ 3. Round straw hats with wide brims, mentioned above. These are worth 1,700 cowries.

285 All the leather parts on those hats are added by the shoemaker.

294 241 We have already mentioned that our hat makers are not exclusively manufacturers, that they also till the soil. It must be added that the latter activity nets them more than their trade. The man I mentioned cultivates a field of small millet and one of large red millet in the bush. He also grows maize, peanuts, and underground peas around his soukala. He owns neither large nor small livestock, but only chickens.

285 294 592 In his soukala he has two wives, four children, two married brothers who have one wife apiece but no children, and two unmarried brothers, as well as a father. They all make hats.

He lives at Saponé, where there are many hat manufacturers.

282 294 [564] After straw work, let us mention leatherwork.

Mossi shoemakers do not form a caste. Anyone who wants to may marry among them, and anyone who wishes to do so may exercise their trade.

[592] As an example, here is Kinoga Kologo, a Mossi, and the head of a soukala. He lives with two wives, two children, and an unmarried brother. His soukala consists of three huts.

His tools are as follows:

282 294 413 1. The pongo, a kind of broad little knife with a flaring blade hafted to a very short handle. It is used to cut hide.

2. The gansiouba, a wooden krife used to scrape and rub hides, clean them and smooth them.

3. The désara, a small tool with a wooden handle and a curved iron stem. It is used red hot to trace designs on hides.

4. The pime, a small awl used to sew hides.

5. The large tirisiga. This is an iron seal used to imprint hides with small circles.

6. The small tirisiga. This is a smaller seal, /530/ an iron rod whose tip makes a very tiny seal.

282 294 435 As among nearly all Blacks, the Mossi shoemaker is his own tanner. He buys sheepskins and goatskins at market (small ones

282 294 435 and needles are made by blacksmiths. A strike-a-light steel is worth 200 cowries.

5. They make sheaths for knives and swords. Knife sheaths are worth 200 cowries, sword sheaths 3,000.

6. Bridles and saddles. Saddles are worth 3,000 cowries, bridles 5,000.

Shoemakers also work with deerskin and leopardskin. They adorn Mossi truncheons or clubs with leopardskin. They also adorn spears with it. The leopardskin is provided by the customer. The shoemaker does not purchase it directly.

Leopardskin is sold at market in small pieces worth 100 cowries. A large leopardskin is worth 10 francs, a small one 7 francs.

Crocodile skin is also used by shoemakers. People who have killed a crocodile go and sell its skin at market, or else someone purchases the skin from the hunter and retails it at market. The skin of a small crocodile (hardly any but these are to be found in Mossi territory, owing to the scarcity of water) is worth 1,000 cowries. People who wish the shoemaker to work one of these skins purchase it at market and take it to him.

282 294 There are no hippopotamus skins in Mossi territory, because water is scarce and watercourses are small. As for elephant skin, it is too tough to be worked and remains unused.

282 294 241 The shoemaker I am describing exercises his trade only during the dry season. During the rainy season he tills the soil, and this nets him more than his trade. /532/ The same thing applies, incidentally, to all Mossi shoemakers. During the winter season, our man cultivates a field of small millet and one of large red millet, a small rice field, and a little maize around his soukala. He plants beans in his two millet fields. He owns neither large nor small livestock, not even a chicken or a dog.

There are no makers of headcrests among the Mossi, and the Boussouma chief I questioned about it told me there never were any.

286 Let us now proceed to the cotton industry, and study in turn the weaver's, tailor's and dyer's trades.

The Mossi weaver (soulouga) is a weaver-cultivator. He tills the soil during the rainy season and exercises his trade during the dry season. In fact he is primarily a cultivator, for cultivation rather than weaving comes first and foremost to him.

592 1. Husband.
2. Wife or wives.
3. Unmarried children, sons or daughters.
4. Slaves.

Sometimes, it also includes young unmarried brothers (see above).

592 As a rule, every soukala-household has only one large bush
241 field in addition to the garden plot surrounding the soukala (where
461 maize and large red millet are grown during the rainy season, tobacco and cotton during the dry season).

The head of the household, his unmarried sons and unmarried brothers, work on those fields during the rainy season from six in the morning to three in the afternoon, with a long rest period around noon. The women work there also, but their hours are different owing to their household tasks.

The unmarried sons and brothers also have small individual plots of cotton and large red millet. They work them in the afternoon after three o'clock. During the rainy season, as a rule, there are no rest days. A few Mossi, however, have adopted the customs
[527] of their Yarsé neighbors and rest on Friday. Others, who are Moslemized, and incidentally very few, rest both on Friday and on Monday.

During the dry season the members of the household repair hut roofs, go hunting, or else participate in the clearing of family fields, etc. In addition to this they work for themselves, as weavers for example. The money earned in this fashion goes to them and not to the soukala head.

592 /556/ It is the head of the soukala-household, the husband and father, who provides all occupants of the soukala with food throughout the year, morning and evening. He also provides clothing for those who cannot provide their own, but those who can do so procure it themselves.

592 We know that it is sometimes the head of the family and sometimes the head of the household who gives the children of the house-
584 hold in marriage. It sometimes happens, however, that a son
464 leaves the soukala without his father's permission. He usually does
565 this in order to win a wife, when the head of the family or the

769 along with millet flour mixed in water. A few chickens are also killed. No one works on that day, but people eat, drink, and rest. There is no drumming or dancing, however.

Other Mossi (at Yakki, for example) make offerings to the ancestors in the hut of their first wife rather than on the graves.

Another feast comes at sowing time and is called Tengana. Certain leaves are sought in the bush, cooked with beans and underground peas, and eaten. Much dolo is also preapred.

244 On the first day of sowing, one goes to the fields and offers a
776 chicken, millet flour, and dolo to the field stones (tenkougouri) and to the earth (tenga or tempeloun), so the sowing will go well, so there will be a good harvest, and so everyone will be in good health.

There is also an earth feast or Tensé (plural of tenga), which is celebrated once a year during the rainy season. It is the Moro Naba who sets the exact date of the Tensé. Every soukala head
[782] kills a beef, a sheep, or a chicken. The young men collect the blood of the sacrificed animals in gourds and pour some upon the ground (to the Earth) in order to secure a good crop. The remainder is mixed with the flour of large white millet and eaten. Much dolo is consumed. The earth feast is the special festivity of those people who are called Tenga (earth), Tembila, Tenfisi, etc., and of those who were born on the day of the Tensé.

On that day sacrifices are also offered to Naba Ouondé (the Chief God).

/588/ On years when the previous millet harvest was bad, the Tensé is not celebrated.

The Mossi have no special harvesting feast. Actually, it is the Tiougou or Bassara (celebrated when the millet has been harvested) that is the harvesting feast as well as the feast of the ancestors.

782 The Mossi do not offer sacrifices to isolated trees, but they do
778 to sacred groves or woods.

At Ouagadougou, at the spot where the White Fathers now live, there once stood a small sacred wood made up of large trees and thorny bushes, where sacrifices were offered before the French tore it down.

Every year the Moro Naba offered a sheep and a chicken to this sacred grove through the head of the Sékou quarter. He also offered

592 The compound, from an intellectual point of view, is a kind of subfamily. It is not the whole family; it is not the equivalent of the total family. It is, however, quite superior to the single household.

592 If the Mossi family of Yatenga were completely communal and
182 perfectly integrated, the 100 or 125 persons or so who make up a
571 Mossi family would live and work together. A less marked but still quite appreciable degree of community would exist if the compound were a tight economic unit (this does occur among many blacks of the /French/ Sudan, especially among the Bobo /230/ of the Residency of Léo, the Menkiéra, the Nounouma /Nunuma/, the Kassonfra /Awuna/, etc., and also among the Samo of Yatenga as we shall see later), with all the people who live in it working and consuming together under the authority and guidance of the head of the home. Actually, there is even more disintegration of the family among our Mossi of Yatenga. In each home there are work groups which vary in number according to the importance of the compound and the number of its occupants.

592 Work groups. —We must proceed to the work group, then, in order
571 to deal with the actual economic unit. This group has the communal
●241 fields which are not, therefore, properly speaking, familial fields or even subfamilial fields. They belong to a subordinate unit. It is the head of the work group who supplies food for all the people in his group during the greater part of the year (seven months out of twelve). In return, they owe him the larger part of their time during the rainy season (two days out of three) but little work during the dry season. Each member of the group also has his own little field which he cultivates on the third day, as we shall see later on.

592 Consumption. Meals. —People do not assemble for meals in the
264 same fashion during the rainy season as during the dry season.

During the rainy season the members of each work group eat together at noon in the fields, but men and women are always apart. The boys eat with the men, the girls and small children with the women. In the evening they gather for meals in the same manner as during the dry season.

During the dry season the members of each compound, the whole zaka, eat together, but they are divided into several groups. First, there is the basic division between men and women. Then, if the compound is a large one, there are on the male side the groupings of old men, married men, and young unmarried men. There are also three groups on the female side: old women, married women,

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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all year round. The Red and White Voltas are important only as drainage systems during the short rainy period, for they dwindle to a string of small stagnant pools in the dry season. In some low-lying areas near the main watercourses, trapped waters provide the moisture for dank riverine vegetation. 133

The soils of Mossi country, which are typical of the Sudanic and Sahel areas, were formed chiefly by the weathering of Pre-Cambrian rocks. Ferruginous soils of varying depths, red argils, and pure silicates of aluminum predominate in the northern regions. In the south are found thin, sandy soils formed by the decomposition of crystalline rocks and sandstones. Most of these soils are eroded by torrential rains, the scouring action of the harmattan, and the incendiary action of man and nature. Even where the soils are reasonably fertile, the nature of the underlying rocks precludes important deposits of ground water. In the western sandstone region, rain filters down with such rapidity that water can be obtained only from deep wells. In the remainder of the territory, the presence of Pre-Cambrian rocks induces a rapid runoff, with the result that wells yield very little water at any depth. Rainfall collects only in river-bed pools or along dams constructed for that purpose in hollow places. The building of dams was relatively unknown in aboriginal times, and the Mossi did not practice irrigation farming. 134 133 [241]

During the dry season, Mossi country presents a picture of such utter aridity that one wonders whether it is possible for such parched red soils to produce plant life. After the first drops of rain, however, the entire plain quickly becomes covered with grasses that sometimes reach heights of five or six feet. The most characteristic and valuable trees in the region are the baobab (*Adansonia digitata*), the locust-bean (*Parkia biglobosa*), the shea butter (*Butyrospermum parkii*), the tamarind (*Tamarindus indica*), and the kapok (*Bombax costatum*). The sole and unimportant representative of the palm family is the *Borassus aethiopium*. There are several kinds of acacias, including the *Kenyaya senegalensis*, and a wide variety of silk-cotton trees, the most important of which is *Eryodendron anfractuosum*. 137

The cultivated plants of the region include numerous varieties of cereals, roots, and legumes. Several varieties of sorghum (*Sorghum vulgare*) and millet (*Pennisetum typhoides*) constitute the staple crops of the Mossi, but maize (*Zea mays*) is extremely important because it is one of the first crops to be harvested after the difficult hungry period. Peanuts, onions, rice, beans, okra, fonio, and sweet potatoes form the bulk of the other cultivated crops. Manioc is grown only in small quantities because it requires moist soil for optimum development. The Mossi grow tobacco in fields around their 241 600

643 651 796 become overgrown with grass and weeds during the rainy season. This clearing was done to within a few yards of the palace, but was not completed. Early in the morning of the day chosen for the actual rendering of the agricultural tribute, the retainers placed baskets of produce along these paths. During the morning ceremony, the Ouidi Naba presented a basket of millet to the Mogho Naba. Then the Bendere Naba, acting as Sore Naba ("chief of the road"), signaled on his drum, and the men with baskets who were waiting on the uncleared portion of the paths, preceded by drummers and men with hoes, axes, and other tools, began to move forward. The men in the processions raised a din, shouting, singing, drumming, and pretending that the task of clearing was very difficult. From time to time, the more energetic among those who were not carrying bundles ran ahead of the others, turned somersaults, and then, going through the motions of warriors in battle, pranced back into the procession. All the processions came to the shed occupied by the royal drummers and deposited their burdens. These were later retrieved by the palace staff and stored for use in the royal household.

643 644 241 The royal household was also supplied with produce grown by the royal wives. Foodstuffs for guests and fodder for the ruler's horses were provided by the people of the Bilbalgo and Dapoya wards, which were under the general supervision of the Kam Naba. Two or three times during the agricultural season, this official recruited extra help from these wards to help [464] cultivate the fields. In recompense for this *sosogha* (work bee), the laborers [465] were given food, drink, and kola nuts from the royal household. At the 243 end of the year, the harvesting and threshing of the grain from the Mogho 643 Naba's fields was the occasion for an elaborate ceremony, "Mogh Nab' 644 kawinre" ("threshing the ruler's grain").[3]

796 To begin this ceremony, the Mogho Naba summoned a local earth- [791] priest, the Manougoudougou Tengsoba, to the court. This man, a descend- [782] ant of the Ninisi, had to perform the propitiatory sacrifices to the earth deity who was symbolized by the threshing floor. After the sacrifices were completed, the Kam Naba went to the threshing floor with the young men of the Bilbalgo and Dapoya wards, who threshed the millet gathered there. The next morning they all returned to the threshing floor with the Bendere Naba and his minstrels, who recited the Mogho Naba's genealogy and sang praises to his ancestors. The drummers then beat out work rhythms and traditional drum patterns to which the workers danced while scattering the millet far and wide. Finally, the dancing stopped, and the Kam Naba drew a line on the threshing floor, dividing the pile of millet in two; the Bilbalgo people gathered one half, the Dapoya people the other. Regard-

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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769 642 613 [634]

ably been younger sons sent to rule in conquered territories claimed that their ancestors were direct descendants of Ouedraogo and Oubri. Thus, to the Mossi, the power to rule was intimately linked to closeness of descent from the royal ancestors. The supernatural power of these ancestors, and the vigilance they were believed to maintain over the affairs of their descendants, were regarded as important factors in Mossi government.

796 631 643 769 [778] [782]

From the moment when the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou or any other Mossi ruler "drank the namtibo" and thereby received the nam of his ancestors, he had the right—indeed, the duty—to offer sacrifices to these ancestors in the name of his subjects. Every night, throughout Mossi country, the Baloum Naba of every ruler performed an act of supplication (Kwaga Basgha) to the ancestors. He beseeched them to protect the subjects of their descendants through the night, to maintain peace in Mossi country, and to grant health, children, and prosperity to all Mossi. This nightly ceremony was climaxed yearly by an elaborate ritual in honor of the ancestors (called the Basgha in some areas, and the Pelegha, Filigha, or Kinkiriga in others) that began at the highest levels of the government and ultimately linked every Mossi chief and lineage head.

643 769 241 782 796 [644]

The Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou, like the other Mogho Nanamse and Dimdamba, initiated this ceremony in his own kingdom. His celebration, called "M'barengma," was held at the end of the Mossi agricultural year and after the Soretasgho. Thus, the M'barengma was a New Year's festival in thanksgiving for good crops, as well as the annual Feast of the Dead. A few weeks before the first moon of the new year (the *ki-basgha* or *ki-pelegha*), the Mogho Naba ordered his soghondamba and samande-kamba to clean up the palace buildings and courtyards—an activity intended to notify the ever-vigilant ancestors that preparations were being made to offer sacrifices in their honor. A short time later, the Mogho Naba gave grain from his fields to the Pughtiema so she could prepare millet water for the sacrifices. Present-day Mossi insist that part of the grain came from the first ears harvested that year and part from those of the previous year. This was supposed to symbolize the continuity between crops, mirroring the continuity between the ruler and his ancestors. A few days before the principal ceremony, the Mogho Naba ordered the Larhalle Naba to pour millet water and sacrifice chickens on the graves of former Mogho Nanamse.

[645]

Shortly before the ki-basgha moon appeared, the ruler had to leave his palace at night to elude the ancestors, who had been attracted by the preparations and who were expected to be angry when they discovered that the sacrifices were not yet ready. The unjust ruler feared ancestral sanctions; the just ruler that his ancestors might want him to join them. One night he

[626]

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went to the home of his Samande Naba, the next to the Gounghin ward, then to Baghin, and subsequently to the homes of other officials. He could not remain long at one place for fear that the ancestors might find him. Every morning, however, when the cock's crow heralded the ancestors' departure, he returned to his palace.

The principal part of the Basgha ceremony was performed on the night when the crescent moon appeared. On that night more than any other, the ruler had to seek refuge elsewhere, because the ancestors visited the palace to accept the sacrifices offered to them by the Pughtiema with the help of the Baloum Naba and the chief eunuch of the harem. The exact nature of this ceremony is unknown, but it is known that the Baloum Naba used the sacred namtibo along with animals and millet-flour water provided by the Pughtiema and the chief eunuch for propitiatory sacrifices to the ancestors. The aim of these sacrifices was to induce the ancestors to grant good crops, health, happiness, and children to their descendants, and to "increase the force of the namtibo."[1] At cock's crow the Bendere Naba sprinkled a flour infusion called *gningmassem* ("water of health") on the palace courtyard so that the ruler might walk upon it when he returned. The Mogho Naba was greeted with drumbeats and escorted to the palace gate. His entry into the antechamber marked the close of this ceremony, and the people retired until later in the day.

The elaborate public ceremony of the Basgha took place in mid-morning. The ministers and important officials, clad in ceremonial garb, arrived at the palace quite early. When the Mogho Naba appeared, the Bendere Naba recited the official genealogy, starting with Ouedraogo and Oubri and ending with elaborate praises of the current ruler. The ministers and their entourage then saluted the Mogho Naba and wished him *Ne ŭarbo*, which means a happy and prosperous new year for himself and the country. He, in turn, took advantage of this occasion to give many presents to his retinue, and his wives distributed huge amounts of food and drink to the assembly until everyone was satiated. Then all the officials except the Bendere Naba and his group paid homage to the Mogho Naba and departed. The musicians remained at court most of the day, beating their drums and singing praises to their sovereign and his illustrious ancestors. The royal pages kept them well supplied with food and beer, and now and again during the day the ruler sent them gifts among which robes were often included. Whenever the drummers received a gift, they slipped into a rhythmic pattern that signified: *Tompaongo, Wend'kaouss' Naba niore, Wenne wilig vinre*, or, "We bow in thanksgiving for your gift. May God give the ruler long life. May God grant us to be alive next year so that we may do this again." The

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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climax of this gift-giving came when the ruler sent the Bendere Naba about 19,000 cowries and a slave.[8] This ceremony terminated at nightfall.

The close of the Mogho Naba's Basgha heralded the start of similar ceremonies throughout his kingdom. The heads of the other Mossi kingdoms and the Dimdamba were free to hold their own Basgha when they wished; but the Ouagadougou ruler's own subjects, including the provincial ministers, district chiefs, village chiefs, and lineage heads, apparently were not. One reason for this, aside from respect for the ruler, was that the important officials' head wives had to wait for the yeast (*dabili*) from the Mogho Naba's beer before they could prepare the sacrificial offerings for their husbands' ancestors. This dabili went from district to district or to several districts at once, depending on whether the chiefs celebrated Basgha at the same time or successively. Thus, the dabili from the capital united all the wives of the royal clan, and made for both a ritual continuity in the veneration of all ancestors and a strengthening of religious and political bonds.

The Basgha ceremonies on the district level were much less elaborate than those held at Ouagadougou, but just as important. The district chief, too, had his buildings repaired and his grain distributed for sacrifices for the ancestors. A few days before the actual ceremony, he ordered the Gande Naba to pour millet water on the graves of recently deceased chiefs and to sacrifice chickens there. As in Ouagadougou, these sacrifices were offered to induce the chiefly ancestors to grant the villagers health, food, and children. Unlike the Mogho Naba, most district chiefs did not ritually hide from their ancestors for several nights prior to the ceremony. Some of them did change their sleeping place within the compound every night, and the court people always slept indoors during this period. On the night of the Basgha itself, however, the district chiefs did not sleep in their compounds.

As in Ouagadougou, the Pughtiema performed the main ceremony by pouring millet water as a libation to the ancestors who visited her hut. She was assisted by the Baloum Naba, who had possession of the namtibo. Apparently, the district chief remained in hiding and took no part in the ceremony. But he was the main figure in the morning ceremony, which differed little from that of Ouagadougou. In some districts the Tengsoba performed a public sacrifice to the ancestors. He was given the namtibo—sacred objects that had belonged to former district chiefs—and poured libations and sacrificed chickens to all of the chief's ancestors. He also prayed both to these ancestors and to his own on the chief's behalf, and beseeched them to grant long life and happiness to the district population. He also declared that the sacred objects would seek out and kill any enemies of the local ruler, wherever they might be. Once this ritual had been com-

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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economic development should take precedence over everything else in the colonies. The Mossi were to be directly affected by the policies of both Van Vollenhoven and Sarraut. The colony of Haut-Sénégal et Niger was suppressed in March 1919, and replaced by the new colony of Upper Volta, in which the Mossi were the chief ethnic group. Moreover, Ouagadougou was chosen as the administrative center of this new colony.[19]

The new Governor of the Upper Volta, Edouard Hesling, who arrived in Ouagadougou in November 1919, sympathized with Van Vollenhoven's views, but was even more interested in economic development. He was determined to transform Ouagadougou from a small town with an indigenous population of about 8,000 and some 76 European soldiers, merchants, and missionaries, into a capital worthy of a colony. Shortly after he arrived, he summoned the Mogho Naba and the traditional ministers and had them recruit some 2,000 salaried and unsalaried men to provide enough mud bricks and wooden beams to complete the construction of eleven administrative buildings before the rainy season began the following May.

Hesling and his administrators believed that the Upper Volta, a country "with such diverse products and such a dense population, could attain an exceptional level of development by acquiring those economic elements which ensure prosperity."[20] Cotton was one of those elements. They believed that the Upper Volta "can and should export thousands of tons as soon as an easy and economical way of shipping is established."[21] By 1925, Hesling had constructed 6,000 kilometers of roads in the Upper Volta, about one-eighth the entire road network of French West Africa. Travelers in the Upper Volta at this time wrote of "the enforced enthusiasm with which the natives, under M. E. Hesling, have thrown themselves into agricultural labor and in particular into the planting of cotton."[22]

The administration of the Upper Volta continued to furnish Mossi manpower for the development of the other colonies as well as for the colonial army. In 1922, it was asked to furnish "6,000 workers for the Thies-Kayes railway, renewable every six months; and under the same conditions to furnish 2,000 laborers to build the railways in the Ivory Coast. Similarly, with the consent of the chief administrator of the colony, it was possible to recruit a thousand workers in the regions of Ouagadougou and Bobo-Dioulasso for private business in the Ivory Coast."[23] Londres, who visited the Upper Volta in the late 1920's, reports that Mossi country was known as "a 'reservoir' of manpower."[24] Burthe d'Annelet reports that during this same period, "The Minister of War [took] 45,000 men each year to compensate for the weakness of our metropolitan recruitment, and

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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[p.237]

CHAPTER 9

Trade and Markets Among the Mossi People

BY ELLIOTT P. SKINNER

The Mossi represent the dominant population of the Voltaic Re- 105
public, numbering about 1,600,000 out of some 3,200,000 inhabitants. [3] [16]
They represent the unique example of a group which has preserved its [72]
ethnic identity and political autonomy through all the vicissitudes [64]
of Sudanic history until it was conquered by the French in 1896. Tra- [73]
dition records that the people who became the Mossi left the Dagomba
region in present-day Ghana during the eleventh century and moved
into the bend of the Niger River, carving out three large kingdoms
and smaller principalities in the process. At the head of these still [42]
extant kingdoms are rulers *(Moro Nabas)* who formerly held feudal- [43]
like control over the provinces, districts and villages which comprise [3]
their domains. The villages, with their patri-local, polygynous, ex- [21]
tended family households, formed the basic Mossi settlement pattern. [92]
A complex hierarchical administrative apparatus carried the power [3]
of the Mossi rulers into the smallest villages, and funneled taxes and
tribute back to them. This structure still exists, but of course it has [48]
been modified by the French.

The Mossi were and are still divided into stratified royal, noble [565]
and commoner patrilineages. Characteristic of this lineage system is [13]
a process by which royal sub-lineages descend serially until they
merge with the mass of commoner lineages. Below the lineages there [53]
once were large non-Mossi groups of serfs and slaves, but these people
have now been grouped into lineages and have become Mossicized.

The topography of Mossi country is typical of the Sudanic grass- 133
lands. It is an immense plain, some 1,500 feet above sea level and
broken only by three low mountain ranges and numerous small hills.
The annual total rainfall is between 30 and 40 inches, and falls 132
almost entirely as heavy showers or thundershowers during the period
from June to September. So narrow is the margin of rainfall for [33]
successful crop cultivation that any variation in the cycle results in [51]
low crop yields and a difficult "hungry period" the following year
before the new crops are harvested. The Mossi do not practice irri- 133
gation, and would have trouble doing so because the three Volta [24]
Rivers which drain their territory serve as drainage chiefly during
the rainy season. Only the Black Volta has water all year round; the

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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133 Red and White Voltas are merely a series of small stagnant pools during the dry season. In some low-lying areas around the main water courses, trapped water provides the moisture for dank riverine vegetation.

134 The soils of Mossi country are mainly ferruginous with red argils and pure silicates of aluminum predominating in the northern region. The soils in the south are thin, sandy, and formed from the decom-
137 position of crystalline rocks and sandstones. During the dry season the Mossi landscape appears too sterile to produce plant life, but with the first drops of rain the entire country soon becomes covered with the grasses and shrubs which are characteristic of this Sudanese region. The uncultivated but valuable trees of this area include the Baobab *(Adansonia digitata)*, the locust bean *(Parkia biglobosa)*, the shea-butter *(Butyrospermum parkii)*, the tamarind *(Tamarindus*
● 241 *indica)* and the kapok *(Bombax costatum)*. The plants which the Mossi cultivate include varieties of cereals, roots and legumes. Sorghums *(Sorghum vulgare)* and millets *(Pennisetum typhoides)* are their staples, with maize *(Zea mays)* filling the role of a secondary but rather useful crop because its growing cycle is shorter than that of other important crops and it breaks the "hungry period." Maize would be a more important crop to the Mossi if it could grow on soil less fertile than what is normally available around the Mossi compound—the area where it brings the greatest yield. Peanuts, onions,
240 rice, beans, okra, peas and sweet potatoes are other food crops. To-
248 bacco is grown for local consumption, but the crops which have the greatest export value are cotton and indigo, used for making cloth and dyeing it.

224 The wild fauna of the country does not provide a major part of the
262 food needs of the Mossi people. The several species of deer and antelope, monkeys, rabbits and wild pig are hunted and used for food.
136 But the elephants and lions which are also found in the country are sources of great distress to the people because the former decimate the growing crops and the latter attack and kill the grazing animals.

231 The Mossi rear two main types of cattle: a zebu-like one in the north-
[234] ern regions and a small dwarf variety in the south. These animals are kept primarily for their milk and for export, and are seldom killed
231 for meat until they are very old. The animals which provide the
262 Mossi with meat are goats, sheep, chickens and guinea fowls. Pig-
[177] raising is not widespread and seems to be declining in importance with the increasing observance of Islamic food taboos, even among
262 people who are still pagan. Fish forms only a minor part of the Mossi
457 diet and is obtained mainly from traders rather than from local activ-
231 ities. The Mossi also rear donkeys and horses for which they have

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000 Let us now turn our attention to work, and first of all to cultivation. We shall study the various types of labor in greater detail than we did so far in relation to the populations previously studied, and the reader will get a better idea of the work performed by the Blacks in these regions.

243 Millet is the most important item of cultivation among the Mossi, who call it ki. They cultivate various kinds of millet, and we shall take them up one by one.

First of all, the ordinary small millet, which is most widely cultivated. It is the Bambara sanio or Mossi kasui. It requires good black soil with low sand content.

243 242 Let us make the general statement that the Mossi, whenever they can, change plots every four years. That is, they clear a new field or take over an old one which has lain fallow. If they have little land, they cultivate the same plot indefinitely. In other words, they may till the same field for some twenty years.

243 When a new plot is cleared, the clearing is done in March or April. The head of the soukala goes to work with all his men. Daba /hoe/ and hatchets are used to cut down the trees. The women come along, but only to serve drink to the men, because they do not take part in the clearing.

[461 512] The workers go into the bush in the morning and remain there all day. They rest around the middle of the day (from noon to /467/ two or three o'clock), and then take up their work again until sundown. The women return home first to prepare dinner, and then the men follow. After the clearing proper has been completed, all that was torn up from the ground is gathered in a heap and set afire. The ashes are left on the soil to fertilize it. It should be noted that the roots of the trees are not removed. The trees, in fact, are merely cut about one meter from the ground, so that the field is dotted with stumps. Sometimes, instead of cutting down a tree, a small fire of branches and dry leaves is lit at its base and the

342 received, gossip exchanged, and social and ceremonial obligations dis-
592 cussed in its shade. Here, also, the men of the lineage take their meals,
brought out to them from the kitchens of their wives and set before them
[264] by their sons, who first attend their fathers and then dine on what remains.

592 A few paces away is the grinding platform (*nere*) where the women
252 gather to prepare the grain for their families' meals. This great circular mud table, some twenty feet in diameter, is raised about three feet from the ground. Its surface is beaten hard and worked over with cinders and manure to make it rainproof. Each woman has her assigned place at this
[512] platform where she keeps her pestle and where she stations herself at dawn and again at dusk to grind her millet and learn the news of the day.

Frequently found at the outer perimeter of the dwelling of the Mossi
592 kin group is the house of the son of a lineage woman who has returned from his father's household to live in the benevolent presence of his mother's family, with whom he enjoys an especially permissive relationship. The house set aside for the residence of the young unmarried men of the lineage is also located on the outer edge of the compound dwelling.

A recent addition to the traditional pattern of village organization
555 described above is the independent households of socially ambitious
184 individuals who have chosen to separate themselves from the residences of their lineages in order to profit from their own economic or religious enterprises. Many have become independently wealthy through successful commercial ventures; others, as a result of conversion to Islam, have gained prestige through religious authority and wealth through the tuition and services provided by the Koranic students. Often these people are much younger than their lineage elders, not in line for the inheritance of political or religious authority through traditional channels, and unwilling either to accept the authority of their seniors or to share economically with the less prosperous members of their lineages. They are deviants, in conflict with the communal patterns of consumption and with the emphasis on accepting established authority which characterizes the traditional social organization of the Mossi.

THE TRADITIONAL ECONOMY

613 Much agricultural endeavor is necessarily co-operative. Each farmer
476 is dependent on the assistance of his kinsmen to get his fields seeded, cultivated, and harvested in the short time during which each of these
● 243 operations must take place. However, the yield from his field remains his own, to be shared only with his own wives and children. Members of the lineage also work in the fields under the specific control of the lineage elder. Although the harvest from these fields is stored in the granary

[i.e. at a sun shelter in the entrance-way. — Analyst]

5: Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1959
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476 613 243

belonging to him, he can be relied upon to share with the members of the lineage if this should be necessary.

Capital goods in the form of houses, granaries, and fields are the property of the lineage. Individual rights are limited to temporary use and custodianship but are passed on to others when a general shift in residence and role follows the death of a senior member of the lineage. Although property is passed on in accordance with the rules of descent in the lineage, part of the property redistributed represents the product of the labor of the lineage as a consanguineal kin group. For, as has been indicated, the labor of the wives, who are not lineage members, is as important as that of their husbands and children.

613 423 428 613

The lineage head discusses the coming year with the other elders, and an over-all production plan is made out. They decide what fields are to be left fallow, what ones are to be planted to cotton and the varieties of millet, what lands may be used by individuals desiring to plant a cash crop, and what, if any, land may be loaned to neighboring lineages or to in-laws. With the approach of the first rains, all economically active men and women go to their fields to prepare them for planting, leaving behind in the village only the old people and the children who are still too small to assist in the fields or tend their fathers' animals.

241 613

A considerable portion of the land within the limits of a Mossi village is under the direct control of the village chief (*Tenga Naba*) and the earth custodian (*Tenga Soba*), the local representatives of political and supernatural authority. This land is used for the public way, for the market place, and for burial grounds and latrines. Except for that which is too poor for any purpose, all available land within several miles of a village is put under cultivation.

423 632

Ki is the generic name which the Mossi give to the millet, which is the basic product in their economy and which receives the largest single allocation of land and labor of any Mossi economic activity. Two kinds of millet are planted, a large-grained variety (*kenda*) and a small-grained variety (*kazua*). Millet is the first crop to be planted after the rains have begun. Small- and large-grained millet seeds are frequently mixed and sown in the same field. Small-grained millet may also be sown in the same field with a white bean (*benga*). A "tired" field may be left fallow for five, ten, or fifteen years. When it is first replanted, it will be seeded to millet for the first three years. The fourth year it may again be put into millet, but if the previous crop was not good, cotton will be planted. Usually, a Mossi farmer plants cotton for two years, millet for three, then groundnuts, more cotton, then two more years of millet. It is believed that cotton renews the soil because of the intensive cultivation required: the earth is brought up into hillocks and turned over; after picking, the plant may be turned under and left to enrich the soil.

241 243

241 [824]

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243 tree set to fire. It burns slowly, and only a slight effort is needed to cut it or topple it down.

[423] When plots are being cleared, useful trees such as karité /shea butter/ or néré /locust bean/ are spared. They remain in the field and revert to the man who is doing the clearing, the owner of the plot.

One awaits the rains before sowing, but one does not sow when the first rains fall in April. It is only in May, when the rains are frequent and the storms heavy, that the sowing is done.

A previously cultivated field is merely cleaned before sowing. While only men, as we have already seen, may clear a new plot, Mossi women as well as men share in the cleaning of a field that was cultivated on preceding years, and in the sowing as well.

The sowing is done as follows: The koutiaga (a kind of daba) is held in the left hand, while a small gourd containing millet is held in the right hand. The man or woman, squatting, makes a hole with the koutiaga with the left hand, and drops the millet into the hole with the right hand. Then some earth is replaced with the left hand.

Now the millet is allowed to grow. When it has emerged from the ground and shot about 20 centimeters, people go with the ouaka (another kind of daba) to remove the weeds growing among the millet shoots. In some areas everyone cleans up, men, women, and children. In other areas, as a rule, it is the men who carry out this task, /468/ but when they are too few the women help out. The weeding is done every morning.

Among the Mossi fields are cleaned three times between sowing and harvesting. We have already seen that the Gourounsi only do this twice.

When the millet has grown tall and the birds might peck at it, the women and children are sent to the fields to frighten the birds away.

243 343 The small millet is harvested around mid-November. When it is ripe, the stalks, 2 or 3 meters high, are cut down. They are laid upon the ground, and the heads are cut with a knife. The heads might be likened to the tip of those water reeds which bear a kind of brown velvety stem, some 30 centimeters long, rounded and about the thickness of two fingers. Once the heads have been cut off, they

243 are tied, placed in baskets, and carried to special huts. These
343 are small straw huts built on stakes, that is, raised on thick pieces of wood, which stand in a long curved line by the fields. About twenty such huts often stand side by side. Both men and women share in the harvesting.

Whenever the millet is to be eaten, the heads are taken from
243 these straw huts and threshed with a stick to set the grain loose. This threshing is done by the men.

Aside from the ordinary small millet, it is the large red millet that is grown most extensively, as a rule, among the Mossi. They
[194] call it kaziéra or kaziéga (we know that the r and g are interchangeable in Mossi; people will say, for example, either nora or noga to mean "chicken") and the Bambara call it niooulé. The large red millet is the kind used chiefly for dolo.

This is the millet that is planted before any other, as soon as the first rains begin to fall. The ouaka is used to remove the weeds which have grown in the fields, then the weeds are burned and the large red millet is sowed at the time of the first storms (April). It is sowed in the same fashion as the small millet, by holding the koutiaga in one hand and the small gourd containing grain in the other.

When the millet has come out of the ground, a fortnight /469/ is allowed to elapse and then the weeds are cleared with the ouaka. When the millet is grown, the women and children are sent out to protect it against birds. The millet is ripe around September 1.

The bulk of the harvesting work is done by the men. The stalks, which are usually 3 meters high and which may even reach 4 are cut down at the base. Once they have been dug out and laid down, the heads, which are thick and tuftlike with red flowers, are cut with a knife and carried to the soukala. The women do the carrying as they do for other kinds of millet. The large red millet is threshed only as it is needed. The threshing is done by the men with a stick.

Let us note that when a new piece of land is cleared, the large red millet is sown first to find out if the soil is good. It is only in the following year, when this has been ascertained, that the small millet is sown.

The red millet is also cultivated around the soukala, like maize.
[273] As a rule the Mossi use the large red millet only to make dolo
231 (dama in Mossi). They may also give it to horses, but some horses
262

231 will not take it. The Mossi only eat it themselves if there is no
262 other kind of millet available, or in times of famine. In any case,
[757] the red millet has a constipating effect, and when people suffer from colic they are given a to /mush/ of red millet to check the attack.

243 The Mossi also grow the ordinary large white millet, which is the kind grown most extensively, aside from sanio, throughout the Sudan. The Mossi call it baninga, the Bambara kéninguê or guessékélé. It is called kéningué around Ségou, and guessékélé around Nioro. The Nounouma call it nienso, and so do the Kassonfra /Awuna/. The Kassonboura /Kasena/ call it béninga, that is to say, they have adopted the Mossi word and slightly altered it. (We saw, in fact, that some Kassouna-Boura, at least those of Po and Tiahané, are Kassouna-Mossi rather than Kassouna-Boura.)

Europeans often give this kind of millet the name of "pearly millet" /mil nacré/ or "horse millet," because it is tender and easy to crush.

/470/ This millet is not grown by every Mossi. Those who do
[231] grow the large white millet eat it themselves. They also give it to their horses. It is cultivated exactly in the same fashion as the small millet, that is to say, it is sown and harvested at the same time.

The Mossi also grow the kipéléro or kipélégo (from ki, "millet," and péléro or pélégo, "white"). This is the yaro or yara of the Gourounsi, and probably the n'guéné or n'kendé of the Bambara and Malinké, a kind of millet intermediate between the small and large white varieties. Actually, one of my informants told me that the kipéléro is sown along with the ordinary small millet, that no distinction is made between the two, and that they are used for the same purposes, while another informant maintained that it is a kind of large white millet.

The Mossi also grow some gadiaba. This is a kind of large millet which is either white or red. The Bambara call it gadiabadié when it is white, hamadiboubou when it is red. The Mossi refer to the gadiabadié as noira. They cultivate it only in Boussouma province. As for hamadiboubou, it is not to be found among the Mossi.

As far as the early millet /mil précoce/ is concerned, the Mossi are familiar with it and call it nado, but they do not cultivate it. This is the souna of the Bambara, the tiara of the Nounouma and

243 Kassouna. We have already seen that the Kassonboura once grew it extensively. The Boussansé also cultivate it.

On the other hand, the Mossi grow a little sweet millet (or tiokandé). They call it mobinoro. This is the sampa of the Bambara, the gamba of the Kassonboura. The Mossi, like the Kassonboura and Bambara, sow this millet in small quantities in the maize fields that surround the soukala. The Nounouma, Kassonfra, and Sissala do not cultivate it.

222 Aside from cultivated millet, the Mossi are familiar with the bakat or wild millet, also called "bird's millet." They call it nadanga. This is the bouaboua of the Bambara, the mintoro of the Kassouna. Among the Mossi, in times of famine, the women go and cut it down, lay it in the sun to dry and crush it, for it contains a small edible grain. There is little to be found in Gourounga territory, although some of it does grow by the watercourses /marigots/ and could be utilized in times of famine.

243 /471/ Aside from millet, the food crop most extensively cultivated by the Mossi is maize, which they call kamana. Maize is grown around the soukala itself rather than in the bush. It is sown at the beginning of the rainy season. First the soil is turned up with the ouaka, and then holes are made with a koutiaga or hatchet. Two or three grains of maize are placed in each hole, and then covered up. Once this has been done the millet is allowed to grow, and when the stalk has come out of the ground the weeds are cleared with the ouaka. After this it takes two months and ten days for the maize to ripen. It is harvested in August, first among the grains. The stalks are dug out or cut down with a daba, or else they are simply broken by hand.

Once the stalks have been laid down, the ears are cut off. They are left to dry in the sun on the roofs, where they are suspended in [251] clusters. Then they are stored in the grain hut, from which they are removed when the kernels are to be made into flour.

252 It often happens that instead of being left to dry, the ears of maize are eaten green, roasted on the embers.

After the maize has been stored and allowed to dry, the women pound the kernels into flour. This flour is placed in boiling water to make soft cakes which are eaten immediately.

243 Maize, let us point out, is one of those crops that are harvested early. The Mossi, and as we know all black populations of West

243 Africa as well, have two harvests, one in August and the other in November-December. The latter is by far the more important, but in order to prevent famine while waiting for it, these peoples also have early, quick-growing crops that yield from the second half of July, in August primarily, up to the middle of September. Among these crops, the most important may well be the maize sown in April and harvested in August, but there are others, such as the early millet mentioned above and also the large red millet. The most important crops (small millet, large white millet), on the other hand, are sown in May or earlier, or sometimes not until July, and harvested in November and December.

/472/ The Mossi also grow a little rice (mol in Mossi). The kind they cultivate is water rice /riz d'eau/. It is sown along watercourses and ponds. This is the most difficult crop to cultivate, according to the old men.

At the present day poor people grow a little rice. In former [354] times they did not grow it at all, and chiefs alone cultivated it. Even now, it is largely grown by chiefs.

Rice is sown in May after millet. The field is worked with a special daba, the souga, which is used to turn up the soil. Little holes are made with a koutiaga, and from seven to ten grains of rice are placed in each hole and covered with a little soil. Then, the rice is left to grow. It comes out of the ground at the end of seventeen days. During the rainy season, the waters of the watercourse or pond cover the small rice field. Weeds are removed, inside the water, with the ouaka. The harvesting is done during the second half of October, before the small millet and large white millet are gathered. The rice stalks are cut down with a kind of scythe and spread upon the ground to dry in the sun. Then, both men and women thresh it with sticks. Sometimes the stalks are taken into the soukala instead, left to dry for three days in the courtyard, and then threshed. [355] The straw is discarded. When there is only a little rice, it is kept in a canari. When there is a lot, it is stored in baskets which in turn are placed in little straw huts raised on stakes.

262 252 The Mossi, who in short grow very little rice, claim that they prefer millet to rice. Millet, they say, provides more energy. Rice is eaten boiled, with meat if possible, and the whole thing is served with peanut or gombo /Tr. okra/ sauce.

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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643 651 796 become overgrown with grass and weeds during the rainy season. This clearing was done to within a few yards of the palace, but was not completed. Early in the morning of the day chosen for the actual rendering of the agricultural tribute, the retainers placed baskets of produce along these paths. During the morning ceremony, the Ouidi Naba presented a basket of millet to the Mogho Naba. Then the Bendere Naba, acting as Sore Naba ("chief of the road"), signaled on his drum, and the men with baskets who were waiting on the uncleared portion of the paths, preceded by drummers and men with hoes, axes, and other tools, began to move forward. The men in the processions raised a din, shouting, singing, drumming, and pretending that the task of clearing was very difficult. From time to time, the more energetic among those who were not carrying bundles ran ahead of the others, turned somersaults, and then, going through the motions of warriors in battle, pranced back into the procession. All the processions came to the shed occupied by the royal drummers and deposited their burdens. These were later retrieved by the palace staff and stored for use in the royal household.

643 644 241 The royal household was also supplied with produce grown by the royal wives. Foodstuffs for guests and fodder for the ruler's horses were provided by the people of the Bilbalgo and Dapoya wards, which were under the general supervision of the Kam Naba. Two or three times during the agricultural season, this official recruited extra help from these wards to help [464] cultivate the fields. In recompense for this *sosogha* (work bee), the laborers [465] were given food, drink, and kola nuts from the royal household. At the 243 end of the year, the harvesting and threshing of the grain from the Mogho 643 Naba's fields was the occasion for an elaborate ceremony, "Mogh Nab' 644 kawinre" ("threshing the ruler's grain").[2]

796 To begin this ceremony, the Mogho Naba summoned a local earth- [791] priest, the Manougoudougou Tengsoba, to the court. This man, a descend- [782] ant of the Ninisi, had to perform the propitiatory sacrifices to the earth deity who was symbolized by the threshing floor. After the sacrifices were completed, the Kam Naba went to the threshing floor with the young men of the Bilbalgo and Dapoya wards, who threshed the millet gathered there. The next morning they all returned to the threshing floor with the Bendere Naba and his minstrels, who recited the Mogho Naba's genealogy and sang praises to his ancestors. The drummers then beat out work rhythms and traditional drum patterns to which the workers danced while scattering the millet far and wide. Finally, the dancing stopped, and the Kam Naba drew a line on the threshing floor, dividing the pile of millet in two; the Bilbalgo people gathered one half, the Dapoya people the other. Regard-

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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less of the amount of millet harvested from the Mogho Naba's fields, there had to be one hundred baskets full of grain. If the number of baskets filled with the Mogho Naba's grain fell short of the mark, the serfs and slaves had to make up the difference with the produce of their own fields. The ceremony concluded with sacrifices to the royal ancestors, after which the Mogho Naba's wives, daughters, and sisters gave beer and kola nuts to the laborers.

As head of the central government, the Mogho Naba received revenue in the form of money and livestock which the district chiefs collected from the village people. These were given to him during an elaborate annual ceremony called the "Basgha" ("feast of the royal ancestors"). Several days before this post-harvest festival, the district chiefs and their retainers arrived in the capital and lodged with their provincial ministers. At a designated time during the ceremony, the district chiefs and nobles went to the palace. In provincial contingents and led by their ministers, they walked up to the sovereign's throne and gave the Mossi salute. After they had returned to their places, their servants gave the royal pages the presents they had brought to the palace.

The Dimdamba apparently made their annual contribution to the Mogho Naba at the time of the Basgha. There is one report that they took this opportunity to send gifts to the ruler's son, the Djiba Naba, as well. The Dimdamba customarily sent the Mogho Naba part of the goods they had seized in combat against non-Mossi peoples, as well as a tax (*fado*) out of the goods they had inherited from their predecessors.[3] There is also some evidence that the Mogho Naba solicited goods from the Dimdamba at other times. Crozat says:

> During my first visit to Yako, three envoys from Ouagadougou were at the chief's house. They were tax collectors. They had come to offer the vassal a silver bracelet sent by the sovereign. The Yako Naba responded by sending horses, captives, and cowries to Ouagadougou.[4]

Crozat could not understand this reciprocity between the Mogho Naba and his vassals, and questions whether the Mogho Naba really collected taxes from them. He concludes that the Mogho Naba did receive taxes, "but these are never given to him except in the form of presents which are reciprocated."[5] Crozat found it puzzling and disturbing that many of the Dimdamba had not given the Mogho Naba any "taxes" for several years. He indicated, moreover, that they did not wish to pay taxes to the Ouagadougou ruler even under the guise of an exchange of presents. This was especially true of the Yatenga Naba, who had not sent the Mogho Naba any presents for six or seven years prior to 1890. Crozat surmised that

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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For example, the villagers of Barkago traditionally cultivated and harvested a field of millet behind his compound for the chief. The people of Pinse, Donse, Passingtenga, and Tewarka cultivated millet for him in their own villages, and those of Togose and Basbedo cultivated rice for him in their excellent lowlands.

The district chief had fields both behind his compound and in the bush, which were cultivated for him by his retainers, serfs, and slaves. More than the Mogho Naba and the provincial ministers, the district chief believed that a Moaga must perform agricultural work during the planting season; to show his interest in farming, he often personally supervised the work on his plantations. When the task of weeding or harvesting proved too much for his own people, he asked his villages for a *sosogha*. On that day, each village chief, accompanied by his men, went to the district chief's fields, where, to the accompaniment of drums and chants and with the verbal encouragement of district administrators, the villages vied with each other in their task. The district chief usually sat under a tree and watched the proceedings and occasionally visited the various contingents to observe the progress made. Toward evening, the chief's wives gave the workers large quantities of food and drink in compensation for their services.

Like the Mogho Naba, the district chief had officials who collected taxes on commodities sold in local markets. These district market officials were usually serfs, Gurunsi captives, or bondsmen from other populations. Mossi rarely served in such capacities because many of the local market places were considered ritually dangerous, and their titular deities, the Tengkouga, were believed to wreak vengeance on market officials who were tardy with sacrifices. The local Kos Naba supervised the slaughtering of every animal killed in the market, kept its skin so that its ownership could be verified if necessary, and collected taxes from the butchers in the form of meat or cowries. The Raga Naba of the district was not as strict as his counterpart in Ouagadougou, and seldom imposed formal taxes on the traders. He usually walked around the market, trailed by the chief's servants, and seized calabashes of grain and other commodities, which he placed in the servants' baskets. The Raga Naba did not tax those itinerant traders or caravaneers who visited the markets in the district, nor did he interfere with them in any other way. These merchants usually had business and personal relations with the chief, and he himself handled revenue from this source. The merchants gave him goods from the forest and Sahara regions, and he in turn often gave them wives, who were thus taken out of the district.

The Mossi district chief was always on the lookout for new sources of revenue, and thus welcomed strangers into his district because they "in-

244 The Mossi grow considerable quantities of peanuts (nangouri in Mossi, n'tiga in Bambara, gherté in Peuhl and Toucouleur).

No earth mounds are made for the cultivation of peanuts among the Mossi. The peanuts are sown five or six days after the millet. Holes are made with a koutiaga, one or two peanuts are placed in each hole and then covered up. When the shoots appear, the weeds are removed with the ouaka. When the peanuts are ripe (end of October), the pods are dug up with the ouaka. /473/ They are left
251 to dry in the sun for three or four days, and then they are taken to the village in baskets. Again the peanuts are left to dry on the clay roofs of the huts, and then placed in the little straw huts already mentioned from which they are removed only to be eaten. The
252 peanuts are roasted. They are also used, although not very often, to prepare sauces eaten with millet.

231 The greens of the plant do not go to waste. They are gathered and given to horses, and make excellent fodder for them.

In addition to peanuts, the Mossi grow considerable quantities
244 of underground peas. Not everyone grows them, however. The underground peas are sown after all the other grains and tubercles.

The grass is cut on the spot where the peas are to be grown, but it is left there to serve as fertilizer. Then, holes are made into the ground with the koutiaga, and the sowing is done. When the plant begins to shoot, the weeds are pulled out by hand rather than with the ouaka, since the latter would remove everything. The underground peas ripen in three months. They are gathered at the same time as the peanuts, that is to say, in October. The peas are dug
251 out of the soil with the ouaka. They are cleaned, left to dry, placed
252 in baskets, and carried to the little straw huts. They are eaten boiled.

244 The Mossi also grow sesame, which they call sili. They cultivate it in small bush plots. Sesame is sown at the height of the winter season, three months after the first rains. The soil is scraped with the ouaka, and the grains carried in a little gourd are spread upon the ground. The sesame emerges from the ground ten days later. Men, women, and children pull out the weeds by hand. The harvesting is done when the stalks have reached 1.50 meters in height (immediately following the harvest of the small millet). The stalks are severed at mid-height with a knife and then laid out on

244 mats in the sun to dry. Finally, the sesame seeds are beaten loose with a piece of wood.

252 The Mossi ordinarily use these seeds in the sauce. The women crush them on a stone, boil them, and add salt and soumbara /néré seeds/. This sauce is eaten with millet, /474/ maize, etc. Sometimes the fresh seeds are also eaten after roasting on the fire.

244 The Mossi also grow some beans (benna or binga in Mossi, soso in Mandé, niébé in Peuhl). They do not cultivate them in separate plots, but sow them in the millet fields along with the millet. The stalks creep along the ground. The beans are ripe before the millet.

It is the women and children, equipped with baskets, who do the harvesting (November). Then the pods are laid out on the ground and threshed by the men with sticks. The beans are picked and placed in the straw huts. To eat them, one simply boils them [252] and adds salt.

The Mossi grow some sweet potatoes (nanioua in Mossi, nanioura [184] in Nounouma). The Mossi who live around Ouagadougou do not grow any. Those who live around Kombisiguiri grow some. A few Tenkodogo Mossi also cultivate them. The potatoes are planted along the watercourses around July 15, that is to say, at the height of the rainy season. Small earth mounds are built, with holes at the top. Potato slices are placed in these holes and covered with earth. When the sowing is done, the work is over. No attempt is made to pull out the weeds. The harvesting is done at the end of three months, consequently around October 15. The potatoes are dug out [252] with the ouaka, carried to the huts, and eaten boiled in water.

The Mossi grow some ozonifie /a potato-like plant/ (pèsa in Mossi, kayya in Nounouma and Kassouna, fabirama in Mandé) around the soukala or in the bush. They build small earth mounds with the ouaka, then make holes in these mounds with the koutiaga, and place one tubercle in each hole. They cover up the holes and spread the ground with fertilizer consisting of straw and grass, refuse taken from the soukala or gathered around it. The harvesting is done in November. At that time, the ozonifie are dug out with the ouaka. They are placed in a canari pending their consumption. They are [252] eaten boiled.

244 All Mossi grow ozonifie. They like it, but do not cultivate it in large quantities. It has to be planted in damp places. Some people plant it in the bush, others in the villages, but always near a spot where there is water.

[184] /475/ The Mossi hardly grow any yams (nioua or niouya in Mossi, pia in Nounouma, kou in Mandé). The southern Mossi alone cultivate it, and very little at that, in Kombisiguiri for example.

Here yams are sown in November along watercourses. Earth mounds 50 centimeters high and correspondingly wide are built with the ouaka. Then holes are made with a stick at the top of these little pyramids. Yam slices are cut, buried in these holes, and covered with earth. Then a prop is driven into the ground. The stem of the yam plant emerges from the ground and climbs along the prop. Seven months are required for the root, the yam itself, to reach its proper thickness and ripeness. During the month of April, therefore, a certain number of yams are dug out of the ground with the ouaka. The greatest number are left there, however, the soil is replaced, and the major harvest, the total harvest, is only taken in November, that is to say, a year after sowing.

[252] To eat yams, one cuts them into pieces and boils them in water.

[177] As for manioc (boumboro in Nounouma), it was unknown to the Mossi until the arrival of the French. The latter brought a few stalks, but the natives do not cultivate it as yet.

As far as diabéré is concerned (kousoubadé in Mossi, diabéré in Mandé), the Mossi grow a little of it. It is sown at the time of the first rains in the fields of maize or large red millet, that is to say, around the soukala. Holes are made with the koutiaga, and small tubercles are placed within them. The plant is harvested one month after maize, that is, in September.

In Mossi territory, it is cultivated chiefly by the Yarsé, for example those of Rakaye and Saraboutenga.

The Mossi themselves cultivate it little, and the same applies to the Bambara. The Gourounsi and Boussansé do not grow it at all.

[252] The diabéré is cooked in water, peeled, and eaten as it is.

According to Guebhardt (Au Gouta-Djallon /In the Fouta Djallon/, 1910), the diabéré (the Poullo /Fulani/ name) is really taro (Caladium antiquorum or esculentum).

244 /476/ André Rançon (Dans la Haute-Gambie /In the Upper
137 Gambia/ 1895) describes it in detail as follows:

"The Bambara and Sarracolé /Soninke/ call it diabéré, the Malinké diabéro, and the Peuhl oussoudié. It is a magnificent aroid of the Arum genus. It grows chiefly in damp places sheltered from the sun, and it favors soil which is rich in humus. This is why the lougan /frameworks/ for diabéré are always located in the shade of large trees where the ground is cooler, sheltered from the sun, and richer in humus because of the mold formed by the rotting leaves. It is a hardy plant, and its underground stem consists of a tubercle. The leaves have long petioles and may be as high as 2 meters. They are strongly ensheathed at the base, peltate, and the broad part of the leaf is sometimes of enormous size. They exhibit at the lower edge a rather deep indentation which runs up to a few centimeters from the spot where the stem radiates into three main nerves. These three are larger than the others and easy to recognize for they are quite obvious. From them radiate secondary nerves which also stand out strongly.

"These leaves are very thick. The three main nerves are never absent. The secondary nerves vary in number according to the age of the plant, and especially the size of the leaves. The secondary nerves radiate in turn into a large number of filaments which are quite easy to recognize and which crisscross the parenchyma of the leaf and reach the edges almost in a straight line. The upper face of the leaf is of a vivid dark green and somewhat velvety. Finally, the petioles are greenish brown at the base and a tender green at the top.

"The flowers are unisexual, clustered on a single spadix, with the females at the base and the males above, and without a perianth. They are surrounded by a spathe which is rather closed, rolled up like a horn, and of a slightly yellowish white. The fruit is a globular berry, unilocular, and containing from two to eight /477/ seeds. I dedicate this new plant to Professor Heckel and name it Arum heckeli.

"The root is a tubercle, about the thickness of a fist, blackish brown, and somewhat like a slightly elongated onion in shape. When the plant ripens, about twelve or fifteen turions grow on this tubercle, the largest of them the size of an egg at most. They make up the edible part, which is also used for reproduction. Their shape is the

244 same as that of the tubercle, to which they adhere strongly. Their
137 color is also the same. The flesh of these turions is white, highly aqueous, and compact. It recalls that of the potato, or rather that of the sweet potato. The odor is slightly noxious.

"The diabéré are sown in June and July. It is sufficient to
244 place the turions in a hole dug into the ground to a depth of 10 or 15 centimeters. The harvesting is done in December. Around the end of October or beginning of November, the inhabitants of the Sandougou (Upper Gambia) are in the habit of cutting the leaves to a height of about 10 centimeters from the ground, in order to make the turions grow bigger.

"The diabéré is not a vegetable to be scorned even by the deli-
252 cate palate of the Europeans. When boiled or fried in the pan, it makes a dish of pleasant taste. I recall eating it with pleasure in a mutton stew. The natives prefer it boiled, and in certain areas, for example the Diaka, Sandougou, and Tenda, they eat it in large quantities. In the latter region especially it is consumed intensively, and the natives of neighboring territories attribute the
[164] skin disease and numerous goiters of the Tenda inhabitants to their over-indulgence in this food." (Pages 83 to 85.)

246 The Mossi also cultivate karyanga or karnyanga. "This gramineous plant," says the Cahier des rapports /Production Report) of the Ouagadougou circle, "grows wild along watercourses, but the natives also cultivate it around the edges of their millet fields. The stalk, hairy and rough, reaches a /478/ height of 0.80 meter when full grown. It expands into a sheaf near the tip. The leaves, about 3 centimeters wide, are shaped like very elongated spearheads. When still green, they are severed about 20 centimeters from the ground. Then they are left to dry in the sun and stored for consumption during the dry season. The karyanga serves as fodder for livestock and horses. This plant is quite widespread in the eastern and southeastern parts of Mossi territory (Béloussa and Tenkodogo)."

As we can see, karyanga is a grass that grows in the bush along watercourses and that is cut down and fed to horses. Some horse owners cut it down and replant it in their maize field. In the

246 following year seeds fall to the ground and the grass grows back once more. It is cut down, but not at ground level, so that it will perpetuate itself.

The Gourounsi call it keulo. They merely cut it down in the bush, and do not replant it among the maize. It grows in sufficient quantities in the open bush of Gourounsi territory, which is more extensive than that of Mossi country, to preclude the need of replanting.

244 The Mossi cultivate gombo (mana in Mossi, pora in Nounouma and Kassouna, gouan in Mandé). Every Mossi grows some for the sauce.

They sow it during the damp season at the same time as the millet, in small separate plots. They turn up the soil a little with the ouaka, make holes with the koutiaga, put in gombo seeds, and cover up the holes. One allows the plant to grow, digs out the weeds with the ouaka, and then waits for two months. At that time the enormous gombo stalk, which is even higher and sturdier than maize, has grown out and borne its greenish, slightly elongated and ribbed pods. Then, the ripest pods are gathered and cut up for the sauce. The harvesting is done gradually, from September 15 until the end of December.

252 To prepare gombo, one cuts the pods into pieces and leaves them to dry. When some gombo is needed, these pieces are crushed /479/ and reduced to a sort of powder which is boiled in water. The fresh gombo pods may also be utilized. They are cut into pieces and boiled in the same fashion. Salt and soumbara are added. This makes a sort of paste, greenish and sticky, which is highly prized by the natives.

244 We stated above that the Mossi grow gombo in small isolated plots along the watercourses. This does happen, but often, like other Blacks, they merely sow a few stalks of gombo among their maize.

438 The gombo is sold in dried pieces at Mossi markets.

252 Let us add that gombo leaves, when tender, are also used in sauce.

244 The Mossi also grow sorrel.

They have two kinds, the dakissé sorrel and the dangono sorrel. These are Bambara names. In Mossi, dakissé is called bi and dangono is called ouéréda.

The Mossi plant bi around the millet fields at the same time as millet, at the beginning of the winter season. Holes are made with a koutiaga for the seeds, which are put in by hand and covered with earth. Then the plants are allowed to grow. After three months, the sorrel is ripe. The leaves are then removed to be used in the sauce, and the stalk is cut at mid-height to get the seeds, which are also used in the sauce.

[71] Like the Bambara, the Mossi sometimes plant both kinds of sorrel in the peanut and underground pea lougan, and sow them along with these plants when the first rains begin to fall. The sorrel is gathered eight days after the peanuts and underground peas.

252 The Mossi cook dakissé seeds in a canari full of water. Then they remove the jar from the fire and top it with another one that covers the mouth of the first jar completely. This is allowed to sit for four or five days, and then the dakissé seeds are removed and ground in a small mortar to make flour.

Then the ashes of burnt wood are placed with water in a perforated gourd that serves as a filter. /480/ The ashes are filtrated into a canari that stands underneath. They are then mixed with dakissé flour and transferred to a canari that is left covered for five or six days. When these are over, the mixture is cooked for the last time. It is placed in a gourd that is perforated and that sits on a canari full of water. The water is heated, and the vapor comes in through the small holes in the upper gourd and steams the dakissé for an hour. The paste thus obtained is dried in the sun for a whole day, and then placed in a canari where it is sought as the need arises.

Like the Bambara the Mossi sometimes take the dakissé seeds, mix them with millet grains, boil the whole thing, and then eat it.

As for the leaves, they are cooked by being placed in water and boiled with salt.

As far as dangono or ouéréda is concerned, the Mossi, like the Bambara, remove the bark. They allow this bark to cook in water, and add crushed peanuts and salt. The sauce thus obtained is called ziédo by the Mossi and na by the Bambara.

252 The ouéréda is also used as a substitute for tamarind fruit in the preparation of to sauce. The ouéréda bark is boiled, and millet flour is tossed into the water when the latter comes to a boil. Now the to need only be stirred and then transferred with huge wooden spoons to the gourd where it will be eaten.

Those who like ouéréda with meat, or who wish to cure a cold, boil the bark along with meat and eat it in this fashion.

As for ouéréda seeds, they are prepared exactly in the same manner as the bi seeds, and that is rather involved.

● 2444 We have stated that the Mossi sow bi and ouéréda along the edges of millet fields, or even cultivate it in small separate plots. Let us add that the latter are tended by the women. The soukala heads merely sow both kinds of sorrel along the edges of their millet fields. In any case, when the Mossi have just cleared a plot, they often sow it with beans, sesame, bi, and ouéréda in the first /481/ year. It is only in the following year that they sow it with millet.

The Mossi also grow tomatoes.

There are many kinds in their territory, as among the Bambara.

The tomato is called koumba in Mossi. The bitter tomato is called koumba-gara or koumgara. The red tomato is called koumba-migou or kommigou. The white tomato is called koumba-pelra or koumpelra. In Bambara, the bitter tomato is called n'koyo ninkouna, the red tomato or cherry-tomato is called n'koyo bilé, and the white tomato is called n'koyo dié.

Like the Bambara, the Mossi, both men and women, grow tomatoes in separate plots. They first sow the seeds in a small space, no larger than a handkerchief, which they fertilize with wood ashes and sheep or goat dung. At the end of thirty days, when the plant has reached a few centimeters in height, they take it out and plant it in its permanent spot, again near the soukala, which they fertilize in the same manner as before. The tomatoes are ripe two months after sowing. If they are poorly tended, they only reach maturity at the time of the maize harvest (August). The green tomatoes are [252] eaten as fruit. The ripe tomatoes are cooked and mashed in the sauce. When the maize is harvested, all remaining tomatoes are removed.

244 Some people, before they sow millet, lay out small plots of tomatoes in the fields reserved for millet, and water them morning and evening. They do this when the field is cleared just before sowing. Then they dig up the seedlings at the first rainfall and plant them elsewhere. Their tomatoes are ripe before the maize.

The three other kinds of tomatoes are cultivated in the same fashion.

The Mossi are familiar with the native eggplant. It is called bovo in Mossi, baulo in Nounouma, bio in Kassouna, boroma /482/ in Sissala. These eggplants are planted when the large red millet is sown. They are placed around the soukala, or in the bush near the watercourses. They are harvested in September at the same time as the large red millet.

The Mossi also cultivate pimentos (kiparé).

The seeds are sown near the soukala, without any preparatory work, at the beginning of the winter season. The weeds are removed after fifteen or twenty days. Two months after sowing, the young shoot produces offspring. The pimento may be gathered at that time. They are removed as the need arises and added to the sauce.

[438] The Mossi are fond of pimento. Those who grow it in large quantities sell the surplus at market.

249 415 As for gourds and calabashes, the Mossi have three kinds as listed below:

1. The ordinary calabash, which is very large and which is cut in two to make household calabashes. They call it vandé.

The Mossi plant it at the beginning of the winter season, in patches of good soil near the huts, or in similar spots in the bush. Holes are made in the ground with the koutiaga, in which seeds are placed and then covered up. The calabashes only ripen at the end of six or seven months, that is to say, when the winter season is over. Then they are cut in two, and the inner part is removed. This is how the household calabashes are fashioned.

2. The drinking calabash. This one has the natural shape of a swollen gourd with a neck widening toward the top. The Mossi call it binga. It is sown by the huts and made to climb upon the roofs.

249 It is gathered when the winter season is over. The upper tip is cut
415 horizontally to create an opening, and water is poured inside to rot the fibrous inner part. When this is accomplished, the calabash is filled with pebbles and shaken until the torn fibers are removed. Once this has been done, the binga is ready to use. When they go
[482] on a trip, the Mossi carry it suspended from the shoulder as a drinking gourd, like all Blacks of West Africa. /483/ They use a cork of green leaves to prevent the water from escaping.

3. The green gourds properly so called (kamboudou in Mossi) which are made to grow on the roofs. The Mossi do not eat them any more than they eat the two previous species. They cut them in two and fashion them into small household calabashes.

249 Calabashes are not cultivated as a food crop, therefore, but as a crop ranking with karnyanga, cotton, tobacco, hemp, indigo, etc.

244 The Mossi also grow a kind of large cucumber, yorolé. The Gourounsi call it gango and the Bambara dié.

At the beginning of the winter season, yorolé are planted around the soukala where the household refuse is discarded. Yorolé are planted by the women. Weeds, when they come out, are cleared with the ouaka. The yorolé are harvested immediately
[252] after the millet and stored in the huts. They are cooked in water and eaten as they are, without seasoning or salt.

As for niri (the Mossi word) or yergan (the Nounouma word), it is a small gourd the size of an orange, green or yellowish green, that grows in the fields along the ground. The yergan are gathered when they are ripe, placed in a hole in the ground where they are left to rot, and then washed. Then the seeds are removed and used
[252] in the sauce, or else they are eaten roasted and seasoned with salt. One does not eat the yergan themselves, therefore, but only their seeds.

The Mossi grow them in the south, at Nobéré and Rakaye. The yergan are sown at the same time as millet, around the soukala, in the fields of maize and large red millet. They are gathered during the first half of October.

222 137 261 Séba is a kind of long, poisonous, black turnip which is eaten only in times of famine and after protracted cooking.

Seba and vidiba caused the death of many people during the last Mossi famine by giving them dysentery.

137 281 /511/ As for wild fodder found in Mossi territory, there is first of all kénibédo, that grows in bunches 30 centimeters high in damp hollows. Its leaves are rudimentary. It is severed 20 centimeters from the ground and stored during the dry season.

Then there are the fodder plants belonging to the papilionaceous family, densa and youbenga. The tiny stem of densa or youbenga is not severed from the plant itself, which reaches a height of 0.30 or 0.40 meter in both cases. Horses eat them either green or dry, indiscriminately.

137 314 283 Finally, let us say a word about souga, a sort of wild hemp called thus by the Mossi. The Nounouma call it boupo, and the Kassouna bénédévio. It is found only in certain parts of Mossi territory, but it grows throughout Gourounsi lands. Its bark yields very tough white fibers which the natives use in the manufacture of rope, string or thread for fishing implements. The bark does not keep through the dry season, so it is reduced to fibers during the rainy season. The fibers, on the other hand, can take the most intensive dryness without deteriorating. Souga is not cultivated.

222 433 We are now finished with Mossi gathering activities. They have a certain importance, as we have just seen, the same one on the whole as in other Sudanese populations. They are infinitely less important than cultivation, of course, but only slightly less so than stockbreeding, and they must be placed on the same level as the hunt. They are far more important than fishing or arboriculture.

245 433 The latter deserves no real mention. It hardly exists among the Mossi. It is limited to what we described earlier about the rónier and to the planting, here and there, of a few papaw trees.

433 In short, cultivation comes first, with stockbreeding trailing far behind, then gathering and hunting on the same level, then fishing and finally arboriculture.

010 /512/ Industries flourish among the Mossi. We shall review one by one, in detail, the various trades they exercise.

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137 color is also the same. The flesh of these turions is white, highly aqueous, and compact. It recalls that of the potato, or rather that of the sweet potato. The odor is slightly noxious.

"The diabéré are sown in June and July. It is sufficient to
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246 following year seeds fall to the ground and the grass grows back once more. It is cut down, but not at ground level, so that it will perpetuate itself.

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They sow it during the damp season at the same time as the millet, in small separate plots. They turn up the soil a little with the ouaka, make holes with the koutiaga, put in gombo seeds, and cover up the holes. One allows the plant to grow, digs out the weeds with the ouaka, and then waits for two months. At that time the enormous gombo stalk, which is even higher and sturdier than maize, has grown out and borne its greenish, slightly elongated and ribbed pods. Then, the ripest pods are gathered and cut up for the sauce. The harvesting is done gradually, from September 15 until the end of December.

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438 The gombo is sold in dried pieces at Mossi markets.

252 Let us add that gombo leaves, when tender, are also used in sauce.

439 As far as onions are concerned, the Mossi are familiar with
262 them and call them albasalé, but do not cultivate them. It is the Haoussa, on their way in from Bandiagara, who buy them from the Habé and bring them to the Mossi. The growers themselves sometimes come in large caravans and sell them at Ouagadougou.

248 /484/ We are now finished with the Mossi food crops. Let us proceed to other crops.

Cotton (lamdo or lango in Mossi) is a dry-season crop here rather than a rainy-season crop.

It is planted near the soukala, or else in the bush along the watercourses.

During the winter season, grass along watercourses is cut down and left lying there to fertilize the ground. Then cotton is planted at the end of the rainy season. Holes are made into the earth with the koutiaga, three or four cotton seeds are placed in each hole and then covered up. The cotton emerges from the ground at the end of five or six days. Weeds are pulled out every fortnight. The cotton ripens at the end of 100 days. The stem may reach 75 centimeters or 1.50 meters in height, depending on the quality of the soil. Then comes the harvesting, which extends over a period of thirty or forty days, because one must wait for the pod to burst and the boll to appear before plucking. The women, girls, and small boys do this plucking.

The Mossi grow a considerable amount of cotton and take very good care of their fields. In any case, the soil and climate of the region are rather propitious to this crop. The harvesting is done in
[435] February and March. The average local price of cotton is one franc a kilogram.

249 Tobacco is also partly a dry-season crop. At least its cultivation begins during the rainy season, extends into the dry season, and ends only in the latter. Tobacco is grown near the soukala like maize, large red millet, hemp, etc.

Tobacco is sown during the rainy season near the soukala. Twenty-five days are allowed to elapse, and then the plants are dug out and transplanted to another spot near the soukala. When the

249 rainy season ends, the tobacco has already grown tall. In the month of December, one begins to gather the leaves, taking first the lowest ones which are the first to ripen. One keeps plucking up the stem and gathering leaves until the end /485/ of January. Then the tobacco stems are cut down to get the seeds.

276 In order to make tobacco, the leaves are left to dry in the sun, and then, when they are dry, the men crush them in small mortars. They add a little water, stir, and make tobacco balls, or rather small elongated loaves worth one sou apiece. These loaves are entrusted to the women to be sold at market.

249 The Mossi also grow indigo (gara in Mossi, as in Bambara). During the rainy season, indigo is sown in separate plots. First the grass is removed, and then the ground is struck here and there with the koutiaga. Then indigo seeds are broadcast, and the soil is moved with the ouaka to cover the seeds so that the birds will not eat them. At the end of a fortnight, the indigo begins to shoot. The weeds are removed by hand. The leaves may be gathered forty days later. They are gathered by hand and given to the women, who press them into flat loaves.

248 As for hemp (berenga in Mossi, pepan in Nounouma, kanzé in Kassouna, dafou in Mandé), it is sown among the maize that surrounds the soukala as soon as the latter has put forth shoots. The barenga has a long stalk similar to maize and hard to distinguish from the latter, but while maize is harvested in August, berenga stalks are left standing until October or November.

262 Its leaves are used for sauces.

241 Hemp closes our list of food crops and other crops in Mossi territory. Let us close with a few words on agricultural tools.

The basic tool of cultivation, here as in all other parts of West Africa, is the daba. The Mossi have two kinds:

1. The ouaka, a kind of daba with a broad, thin blade. It is used to turn up the soil.

/486/ 2. The koutiaga, koutiara or koutiaba. This is a kind of small hoe which is used to make holes when sowing grain or seeds.

The Mossi also have the following accessory tools:

1. The laré. This is an axe used to cut stumps when a plot is cleared.

285 294 closer to our European hats and vaguely recalls a very fat and swollen straw bowler with wide rims.

In order to make the former kind, our hat maker begins by bringing together a hundred strings. He ties them at one end, an end left in its original straw state, and thus fashions the tip of the hat. Then he interlaces these strings by hand with bits of unmodified kansé straw. The strings hang vertically, the straw pieces are interlaced horizontally, and this makes up the web of the hat.

[386] /528/ The bits of kansé are often dyed black beforehand by immersion in the mud of a watercourse. This is how black lines and designs are obtained in certain parts of the hat.

[435] Six days are needed to make a hat. It is sold for 1,000 cowries, of course without the ornaments, straps, and strips of leather that will be added by the shoemaker.

Hat makers fashion these hats in advance and have their wives well them at market.

248 Bérenga or hemp (also called tamora among the Mossi) goes into the manufacture of straw hats as well. We saw above, when discussing cultivation, how bérenga is grown. It is sown either among maize or among large red millet, that is to say around the soukala, or even in fields in the bush among small millet or large white millet. If sown among maize, it is sown three days afterwards; if among large red millet, four days later; if among large white millet, ten days later; and if among small millet, ten or twelve days afterward.

Bérenga is harvested ten or twenty days after maize, if it stands in a maize field. If it has been sown among millet, it is harvested seven days afterwards. Bérenga stalks are severed at the base, and the fibrous bark is removed and dried. Bérenga is green when fresh and reddish brown when dry. It is usually made into strings and cords. It is also used for the thatch roofing of huts. When it is to go into the making of a hat, it is dyed black by immersion in bérédo and used along with kansé to furnish the black lines of the hats. 285 294

Here are some sample products of the Mossi hat-making industry:

1. Pointed straw hats made of kansé (yellow) and bérenga (black). They sport leather ornaments and straps added by the shoemaker. They are worth 2,500 cowries. [435]

The Mossi grow tobacco in fields around their

248 INTRODUCTION

249 homesteads, where they also cultivate their most important cash crops, cotton and indigo, which are used in the manufacture and dyeing of cotton cloth.

136 The wild fauna of Mossi country include several species of antelope, deer, monkeys, rabbits, snakes, and wild pigs. Elephants roam the beds of rivers and streams and often destroy cultivated fields, while lions and hyenas distress the people by attacking livestock. The pools and rivers of Mossi country are inhabited by turtles, crocodiles, and various species of scaled and scaleless fish. Chickens, muscovy ducks, and half-domesticated guinea fowl are the most valuable species of birds.

231 The Mossi have long been famous for their splendid donkeys and [492] horses. Donkeys are sometimes ridden, but they are used primarily as [439] beasts of burden. Horses are important for military and ceremonial purposes and for export to the tsetse-fly zones to the south. The Mossi raise two main types of cattle: a zebu-like animal in the northern regions and a [439] dwarf variety in the south. These animals are raised primarily for their milk and for export, and are seldom killed for meat until they are fairly old. Goats and sheep provide the main source of meat. Hog-raising is not wide- [771] spread, and seems to be declining in importance with the increased ob- [178] servance of Islamic food taboos, which is on the uprise even among people who are still pagans.

135 The subsoil of Mossi country is not well known, but so far there have been no major discoveries of mineral deposits. The only known gold field [301] remained unworked in aboriginal times. The Mossi do not like to wear [325] gold ornaments, preferring jewelry worked from imported copper and [439] silver. The northern Mossi worked their local iron in aboriginal times, but those in the south obtained this metal from caravan traders.

175 The nineteenth-century reports of Barth and other European travelers 439 indicate that the Mossi conducted a rather extensive foreign trade. At least six caravan routes passed through their territory, and traders such as the [443] Hausa and Mandingo visited the important Mossi trading centers at Yako, Pouitenga, and Ouagadougou, where they exchanged Saharan and forest products for Mossi livestock and cloth.[3]

101 The Mossi belong to the Voltaic culture area, a name given by Delafosse to the regions drained by the Black, Red, and White Voltas and their tributaries. The area embraces parts of Mali, the Ivory Coast, Dahomey, the Upper Volta, and northern Ghana.[4] It includes a vast congeries of peoples such [199] as the Dagomba, Mamprusi, Dagari, Birifo, Senufo, Gurmanche, Gurunsi, Lobi, Bobo, Tallensi, Konkomba, Dogon, Somba, Fulse, and Ninisi, all of whom speak languages belonging to the Gur or Moshi-Grunshi group of

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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economic development should take precedence over everything else in the colonies. The Mossi were to be directly affected by the policies of both Van Vollenhoven and Sarraut. The colony of Haut-Sénégal et Niger was suppressed in March 1919, and replaced by the new colony of Upper Volta, in which the Mossi were the chief ethnic group. Moreover, Ouagadougou was chosen as the administrative center of this new colony.[19]

The new Governor of the Upper Volta, Edouard Hesling, who arrived in Ouagadougou in November 1919, sympathized with Van Vollenhoven's views, but was even more interested in economic development. He was determined to transform Ouagadougou from a small town with an indigenous population of about 8,000 and some 76 European soldiers, merchants, and missionaries, into a capital worthy of a colony. Shortly after he arrived, he summoned the Mogho Naba and the traditional ministers and had them recruit some 2,000 salaried and unsalaried men to provide enough mud bricks and wooden beams to complete the construction of eleven administrative buildings before the rainy season began the following May.

Hesling and his administrators believed that the Upper Volta, a country "with such diverse products and such a dense population, could attain an exceptional level of development by acquiring those economic elements which ensure prosperity."[20] Cotton was one of those elements. They believed that the Upper Volta "can and should export thousands of tons as soon as an easy and economical way of shipping is established."[21] By 1925, Hesling had constructed 6,000 kilometers of roads in the Upper Volta, about one-eighth the entire road network of French West Africa. Travelers in the Upper Volta at this time wrote of "the enforced enthusiasm with which the natives, under M. E. Hesling, have thrown themselves into agricultural labor and in particular into the planting of cotton."[22]

The administration of the Upper Volta continued to furnish Mossi manpower for the development of the other colonies as well as for the colonial army. In 1922, it was asked to furnish "6,000 workers for the Thies-Kayes railway, renewable every six months; and under the same conditions to furnish 2,000 laborers to build the railways in the Ivory Coast. Similarly, with the consent of the chief administrator of the colony, it was possible to recruit a thousand workers in the regions of Ouagadougou and Bobo-Dioulasso for private business in the Ivory Coast."[23] Londres, who visited the Upper Volta in the late 1920's, reports that Mossi country was known as "a 'reservoir' of manpower."[24] Burthe d'Annelet reports that during this same period, "The Minister of War [took] 45,000 men each year to compensate for the weakness of our metropolitan recruitment, and

to cut down the length of service of our draftees as much as possible."[25] The Governor of the Upper Volta made full use of the Mossi chiefs to develop the colony, and although some chiefs may have objected to the labor imposed on their subjects, others seemingly approved. In commenting upon cotton production in the Upper Volta, Ossendowski writes:

> Cotton is an artificial crop and one the value of which is not entirely clear to the natives. The chiefs with their superior intellect, seeing the profit to be obtained from the plantation of cotton, are continually enlarging the area of the fields, and resort to draft animals, ploughs, manures, and even partial irrigation of the fields; nevertheless, the great mass of the population submit rather unwillingly to those instructions of the administration which aim at the development of cotton cultivation in the colony.[26]

Delavignette's comment on the role of the chiefs in cotton production seems to indicate that they, like their subjects, had to conform to the desires of the French:

> [The French] lived at Ouagadougou in the shade of the great Nabas, and because [the latter] possessed servitors and were at the head of docile provinces, [the French] dignified by the name of "custom," and in any case adjudged convenient, this domestication of the peasants whereby they were forced to work in a common field under the authority of the village chief, and for a salary which was theoretically to be distributed among them afterwards. Sometimes cercle guards were stationed in these fields.[27]

The Governor carried out many of Van Vollenhoven's reforms concerning the Mossi chiefs, and instructed his district administrators to respect the chiefs and to seek their aid in governing the people. De Beauminy, an administrator in the Upper Volta, contrasts the old policy with the new:

> Not without reason, we followed the rule of regarding the great black chiefs as exploiters of their peoples, and this caused us to introduce and to maintain a policy aimed at reducing their authority. Later on we were compelled to abandon this policy in the face of discouraging results. During the past few years we have restored power and prestige to the Mogho Naba and to his vassals, the Mossi chiefs. They are now paid by us, and they administer their kingdoms and territories under our guidance and under the supervision of an extremely small European staff (one official for every 60,000 inhabitants). The rulers are now helping us to restore, on a newer and sounder basis, a political edifice which had once appeared to be on the point of collapse.[28]

An official report also stated that the Mossi chiefs

> understand that the time of their absolute power, and the privileges of their "medieval lordships," are fated to wear away gradually. Certainly, the main-

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134 The soils of Mossi country are mainly ferruginous with red argils and pure silicates of aluminum predominating in the northern region. The soils in the south are thin, sandy, and formed from the decom-
137 position of crystalline rocks and sandstones. During the dry season the Mossi landscape appears too sterile to produce plant life, but with the first drops of rain the entire country soon becomes covered with the grasses and shrubs which are characteristic of this Sudanese region. The uncultivated but valuable trees of this area include the Baobab *(Adansonia digitata)*, the locust bean *(Parkia biglobosa)*, the shea-butter *(Butyrospermum parkii)*, the tamarind *(Tamarindus*
241 *indica)* and the kapok *(Bombax costatum)*. The plants which the Mossi cultivate include varieties of cereals, roots and legumes. Sorghums *(Sorghum vulgare)* and millets *(Pennisetum typhoides)* are their staples, with maize *(Zea mays)* filling the role of a secondary but rather useful crop because its growing cycle is shorter than that of other important crops and it breaks the "hungry period." Maize would be a more important crop to the Mossi if it could grow on soil less fertile than what is normally available around the Mossi compound—the area where it brings the greatest yield. Peanuts, onions,
249 rice, beans, okra, peas and sweet potatoes are other food crops. To-
248 bacco is grown for local consumption, but the crops which have the greatest export value are cotton and indigo, used for making cloth and dyeing it.

224 The wild fauna of the country does not provide a major part of the
262 food needs of the Mossi people. The several species of deer and antelope, monkeys, rabbits and wild pig are hunted and used for food.
136 But the elephants and lions which are also found in the country are sources of great distress to the people because the former decimate the growing crops and the latter attack and kill the grazing animals.

231 The Mossi rear two main types of cattle: a zebu-like one in the north-
[234] ern regions and a small dwarf variety in the south. These animals are kept primarily for their milk and for export, and are seldom killed
231 for meat until they are very old. The animals which provide the
262 Mossi with meat are goats, sheep, chickens and guinea fowls. Pig-
[177] raising is not widespread and seems to be declining in importance with the increasing observance of Islamic food taboos, even among
262 people who are still pagan. Fish forms only a minor part of the Mossi
487 diet and is obtained mainly from traders rather than from local activ-
231 ities. The Mossi also rear donkeys and horses for which they have

244 Some people, before they sow millet, lay out small plots of tomatoes in the fields reserved for millet, and water them morning and evening. They do this when the field is cleared just before sowing. Then they dig up the seedlings at the first rainfall and plant them elsewhere. Their tomatoes are ripe before the maize.

The three other kinds of tomatoes are cultivated in the same fashion.

The Mossi are familiar with the native eggplant. It is called bovo in Mossi, baulo in Nounouma, bio in Kassouna, boroma /482/ in Sissala. These eggplants are planted when the large red millet is sown. They are placed around the soukala, or in the bush near the watercourses. They are harvested in September at the same time as the large red millet.

The Mossi also cultivate pimentos (kiparé).

The seeds are sown near the soukala, without any preparatory work, at the beginning of the winter season. The weeds are removed after fifteen or twenty days. Two months after sowing, the young shoot produces offspring. The pimento may be gathered at that time. They are removed as the need arises and added to the sauce.

The Mossi are fond of pimento. Those who grow it in large [438] quantities sell the surplus at market.

249 As for gourds and calabashes, the Mossi have three kinds as 445 listed below:

1. The ordinary calabash, which is very large and which is cut in two to make household calabashes. They call it vandé.

The Mossi plant it at the beginning of the winter season, in patches of good soil near the huts, or in similar spots in the bush. Holes are made in the ground with the koutiaga, in which seeds are placed and then covered up. The calabashes only ripen at the end of six or seven months, that is to say, when the winter season is over. Then they are cut in two, and the inner part is removed. This is how the household calabashes are fashioned.

2. The drinking calabash. This one has the natural shape of a swollen gourd with a neck widening toward the top. The Mossi call it binga. It is sown by the huts and made to climb upon the roofs.

249 It is gathered when the winter season is over. The upper tip is cut
415 horizontally to create an opening, and water is poured inside to rot the fibrous inner part. When this is accomplished, the calabash is filled with pebbles and shaken until the torn fibers are removed. Once this has been done, the binga is ready to use. When they go
[482] on a trip, the Mossi carry it suspended from the shoulder as a drinking gourd, like all Blacks of West Africa. /483/ They use a cork of green leaves to prevent the water from escaping.

3. The green gourds properly so called (kamboudou in Mossi) which are made to grow on the roofs. The Mossi do not eat them any more than they eat the two previous species. They cut them in two and fashion them into small household calabashes.

249 Calabashes are not cultivated as a food crop, therefore, but as a crop ranking with karnyanga, cotton, tobacco, hemp, indigo, etc.

244 The Mossi also grow a kind of large cucumber, yorolé. The Gourounsi call it gango and the Bambara dié.

At the beginning of the winter season, yorolé are planted around the soukala where the household refuse is discarded. Yorolé are planted by the women. Weeds, when they come out, are cleared with the ouaka. The yorolé are harvested immediately
[252] after the millet and stored in the huts. They are cooked in water and eaten as they are, without seasoning or salt.

As for niri (the Mossi word) or yergan (the Nounouma word), it is a small gourd the size of an orange, green or yellowish green, that grows in the fields along the ground. The yergan are gathered when they are ripe, placed in a hole in the ground where they are left to rot, and then washed. Then the seeds are removed and used
[252] in the sauce, or else they are eaten roasted and seasoned with salt. One does not eat the yergan themselves, therefore, but only their seeds.

The Mossi grow them in the south, at Nobéré and Rakaye. The yergan are sown at the same time as millet, around the soukala, in the fields of maize and large red millet. They are gathered during the first half of October.

439 As far as onions are concerned, the Mossi are familiar with
262 them and call them albasalé, but do not cultivate them. It is the Haoussa, on their way in from Bandiagara, who buy them from the Habé and bring them to the Mossi. The growers themselves sometimes come in large caravans and sell them at Ouagadougou.

248 /484/ We are now finished with the Mossi food crops. Let us proceed to other crops.

Cotton (lamdo or lango in Mossi) is a dry-season crop here rather than a rainy-season crop.

It is planted near the soukala, or else in the bush along the watercourses.

During the winter season, grass along watercourses is cut down and left lying there to fertilize the ground. Then cotton is planted at the end of the rainy season. Holes are made into the earth with the koutiaga, three or four cotton seeds are placed in each hole and then covered up. The cotton emerges from the ground at the end of five or six days. Weeds are pulled out every fortnight. The cotton ripens at the end of 100 days. The stem may reach 75 centimeters or 1.50 meters in height, depending on the quality of the soil. Then comes the harvesting, which extends over a period of thirty or forty days, because one must wait for the pod to burst and the boll to appear before plucking. The women, girls, and small boys do this plucking.

The Mossi grow a considerable amount of cotton and take very good care of their fields. In any case, the soil and climate of the region are rather propitious to this crop. The harvesting is done in February and March. The average local price of cotton is one franc
[435] a kilogram.

● 249 Tobacco is also partly a dry-season crop. At least its cultivation begins during the rainy season, extends into the dry season, and ends only in the latter. Tobacco is grown near the soukala like maize, large red millet, hemp, etc.

Tobacco is sown during the rainy season near the soukala. Twenty-five days are allowed to elapse, and then the plants are dug out and transplanted to another spot near the soukala. When the

249 rainy season ends, the tobacco has already grown tall. In the month of December, one begins to gather the leaves, taking first the lowest ones which are the first to ripen. One keeps plucking up the stem and gathering leaves until the end /485/ of January. Then the tobacco stems are cut down to get the seeds.

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The Mossi also have the following accessory tools:

1. The laré. This is an axe used to cut stumps when a plot is cleared.

322 [435] salt, etc. Small bows are worth 20 cowries, medium ones 70, and large ones 100.

285 We have just reviewed woodworking. Let us proceed to basketry. Here the latter gives rise to two major trades, the basket maker's and the hat maker's. Let us study them in turn.

As an example, here is Niandé Zango, a basket maker and head of a soukala. He has two wives and three children. His soukala numbers five huts.

He works in the fields during the winter season, and at his trade during the dry season. His fields bring him the larger returns.

He makes his baskets at home without waiting for an order, and he has his wives sell them at market.

He gets doudouma straw in the bush and cultivates mono in his maize field.

[314] Doudouma is a tall grass that is left to dry and that furnishes excellent straw for the manufacture of baskets and trays.

Doudoumidou is doudouma straw dyed red with mono.

249 386 285 Mono (faraoro in Bambara) is a plant grown by the Mossi in their maize fields, around the soukala. It looks a great deal like large red millet, but it is /525/ not the same thing. It is probably a variety of large millet, however. Mono is sown along with maize when the first rains begin to fall. Holes are made with the koutiaga, mono grains placed within and covered up. When mono has emerged from the ground, the weeds are pulled out. The harvesting is done about two and a half months after sowing. The stalks are severed at the base and left to dry in the sun, and then the sheaths and culms are torn off. The latter are the parts used to dye the straw red.

The sheaths and culms are crushed by rubbing them by hand in a canari full of water. Then the doudouma straw is left to soak in this canari. The canari is placed on the fire, where it is kept for six hours. When this is over, the straw, now dyed red, is removed.

386 285 Doudousabalé is doudouma straw dyed black by immersion in bérédo. The straw is gathered, taken to a watercourse, and buried in bérédo. It is left there for a whole day, and this gives it a shiny grey hue.

386 There are dyers as well as weavers and tailors among the Mossi.
177 "Dyer" is garalosadaba in Mossi, from gara, "indigo" and sadaba, "maker." There are no dyers in the southern part of Mossi territory but only in the north, from Ouagadougou upward. This would tend to prove that just as the Mossi probably learned cotton weaving from the Yarsé, they must have learned the dyer's craft from the Songhay, with whom they have had contact toward the north. Actually, Songhay emigrants have established villages in the northern part of the Ouagadougou circle, and the dyer's craft is their chief industry. This strongly corroborates our theory. Let us add that /535/ the Mossi practice dyeing in certain places, at certain spots, so to speak. One may not find a single dyer in a large number of Mossi villages, and then all at once come upon a locality with thirty dyers' wells, such as Yakki for example.

386 To present a Ouagadougou dyer, here is a Mossi by the name
249 of Gomdounguiba Nangakoré. He does not himself cultivate indigo. He buys it at market in loaves or balls. Anyone may grow indigo among the Mossi (see the section on cultivation above). When it is ripe, the leaves are gathered, heaped in a wooden gourd, and
[435] pressed to make loaves worth 50, 100, or 500 cowries. The dyer buys the loaves at market.

386 He dyes either cotton threads or strips, or even garments (cloaks, etc.). The item to be dyed is brought to him. In short, he usually does custom work.

Sometimes, nevertheless, he buys thread, strips, cloaks, or skirts, dyes them, and has them sold at market by his wife or wives.

Every dyer sinks a dyeing well outside, but right beside, his soukala. He makes a neatly squared hole, quadrangular, about 60 centimeters long by 60 wide and 1 meter deep. This hole is tamped carefully several times, and the clay walls are polished with water prepared with néré bark. Finally, water is poured in to see whether it is watertight. About three days are needed to make one of those wells. Every dyer has one.

In order to dye thread, strips or garments, millet-stalk ashes are placed in water, strained, and tossed to the bottom of the dyeing hole. Then come the ashes of a tree called gouara by the Mossi (the ashes themselves are called zato or iato). They are laid

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241 *indica)* and the kapok *(Bombax costatum)*. The plants which the Mossi cultivate include varieties of cereals, roots and legumes. Sorghums *(Sorghum vulgare)* and millets *(Pennisetum typhoides)* are their staples, with maize *(Zea mays)* filling the role of a secondary but rather useful crop because its growing cycle is shorter than that of other important crops and it breaks the "hungry period." Maize would be a more important crop to the Mossi if it could grow on soil less fertile than what is normally available around the Mossi compound—the area where it brings the greatest yield. Peanuts, onions, rice, beans, okra, peas and sweet potatoes are other food crops. To-
● 240 bacco is grown for local consumption, but the crops which have the
248 greatest export value are cotton and indigo, used for making cloth and dyeing it.

224 The wild fauna of the country does not provide a major part of the
262 food needs of the Mossi people. The several species of deer and antelope, monkeys, rabbits and wild pig are hunted and used for food.
136 But the elephants and lions which are also found in the country are sources of great distress to the people because the former decimate the growing crops and the latter attack and kill the grazing animals.

231 The Mossi rear two main types of cattle: a zebu-like one in the north-
[234] ern regions and a small dwarf variety in the south. These animals are kept primarily for their milk and for export, and are seldom killed
231 for meat until they are very old. The animals which provide the
262 Mossi with meat are goats, sheep, chickens and guinea fowls. Pig-
[177] raising is not widespread and seems to be declining in importance with the increasing observance of Islamic food taboos, even among
262 people who are still pagan. Fish forms only a minor part of the Mossi
487 diet and is obtained mainly from traders rather than from local activ-
231 ities. The Mossi also rear donkeys and horses for which they have

643 241 782 pronounces a few sacramental words and lightly sprinkles the millet, saying: "Zâbre saga Ybéogo sâga, samb'da kôbo la ka toin sameb'la fi yé (the morning and evening rains may put a stop to the cultivation of the fields, but cannot injure the health of the King)." He next takes a straw broom (sagha) and pulls it apart in order to get a bit of millet to put into the lagha mentioned [343] above. He goes then to the temporary granary (lourgho, granary made of Mossi secco) and walks around it three times. An emissary of the emperor gives him a white rooster (nora-pelga), some beer (dam), and zom-kom (water with flour in it). The priest sits down in the shade of the lourgho and before making the sacrifice pronounces the following words: "Naba Siguiri bad'kom, deghin kon Naba Wogbo, tib reg, kon Naba Sanum, tib kon Naba Koutou, tib reg' kon Naba Baongo, tib kon Naba Karfo, tib reg'kon Naba Sawadogo, tib reg la be kon Nab, gnimassem, la lafi," which means literally, "I offer this rooster, this water with flour, and this beer to Naba Siguiri (father of the reigning emperor) in order that he will persuade the Mogho Nabas Wobgo, Sanum, Koukou, Baongo, Karfo, and Sawadogo, to accept them, so that the emperor may enjoy good health and happiness."

The Tengsoba then hands the small quantity of millet [254] which he took earlier to the pugtiéma (first wife of the king) to be made into a millet cake and offered to the spirits (manes of deceased emperors and other spirits of the threshing floor).

643 251 Transporting the millet to the granaries. The wives, daughters, and sisters of the Mogho Naba are alone given the duty of carrying the millet to the granaries (baoré) (1). We have already noted that

1. This baoré granary is made of earth mixed with quantities of straw.

there are supposed to be a hundred loads of grain, even though the harvest may not fill twenty baskets. The number of baskets required by custom is attained by putting a small quantity of millet in each basket.

643 241 The millet intentionally left on the zéiga. A little millet is purposely left here and there on the zéiga, and the Kassiri Naba (village chief) takes it for his own use. This signal favor, however,

482 241 343 251

Above: Water Carriers.
Below: Youths Returning from the Bush with Bundles of Straw.

Above: Threshing Millet.
Below: Winnowing Millet. Millet Granaries in the Background.

22/ for roasting and is replaced with green millet, eaten raw after being
24/ beaten with a small stick to remove the chaff. /47/ Certain kinds of
262 large millet are sweet and not too unpleasant to eat in this fashion.
Horses grow fat because millet is their staple food and they may eat
221 as much as they please. Men also profit greatly, because beer brewed
241 from new millet tastes much better than that made from old millet,
273 and when millet abounds, drink is never wanting. At this time rice is harvested, threshed on the threshing floors, and laid aside carefully for festive occasions.

221 At the end of October the rains have stopped almost completely.
241 The beans are gathered and laid out in the fields on millet stalks or on séko held up from the ground by forked stakes to keep the termites from eating them, or the beans may be brought home and tossed on the séko which serve as shelters in front of the soukala. Now is the time to harvest the small millet, which is dry. The millet stalks are severed at ground level by the men and laid out with all heads oriented in the same direction to facilitate the work of the women, who cut off the heads and gather them in heaps. When the millet has been cut, the women fill their baskets. The largest containers are used for the occasion, and each woman uses her ingenuity to pile the millet as high as possible over her basket, using the longest ears or bean stems as supports, like the Zouaves who vie for the tallest pack. Should the line of women on their way back to the village meet a man known for his generosity, they sing, cry out, and surround him until he throws them a few handfuls of cowries to buy a jar of beer.

221 As they near the threshing floor their cries get louder, and each
241 woman comes to the granary and hands her basket to the man who
251 stands there. These granaries are very crudely built and consist basi-
343 cally of sticks driven into the ground in a circle to hold up a séko which is wrapped around them. The floor is made up of another séko, usually resting on the ground but sometimes raised on stones or forked sticks to avoid termites. This is where the millet is placed prior to threshing. The granaries stand around the threshing floor of beaten earth, which is located 100 or 200 meters from the village, some-
[674] times even farther. Thieves are no important threat. They may cut down millet when it stands in the bush, but they rarely steal millet already stored. Only goats, sheep, and guinea hens are to be feared, and they are kept away from the granaries by thorns.

221 As soon as these heavier tasks are over, everyone digs up peanuts
241 and peas. The whole family gathers under the shade of a tree, and

221 After a few hours when the millet has been sufficiently threshed,
241 the emptied and broken husks are swept to the side. The grain is
476 gathered in a heap, and a strong fellow tosses it into the air with a
788 wooden shovel to separate the chaff from the good grain, which is put in a heap. When all the grain has thus been winnowed, it is surrounded with a ring of ashes to protect it against evil spirits. Then one of the threshers, who is not a member of the family, puts some millet in a gourd and sprinkles it with water. He proceeds to throw it by the handful onto the millet pile, saying: "So-and-So fears rain," mentioning the name of the owner of the harvest and the name of every member of his family. He ends by saying: "When we are finished weeding, let the drought come. When we are finished planting, let the heavy rains come." If the owner of a horse is present, he receives a gourd of millet for his mount. Each of the elders also takes some for his chicken. If this ceremony is not carried out, the millet may not be used as seed the following year.

221 /49/ The women come with their baskets; a man takes one of the
251 brooms and sinks it into the millet heap in various places; then the
[482] men fill the baskets and help the women place them on their heads. At the house the millet is unloaded into granaries made of clay mixed with finely cut straw. These granaries have the shape of large jars 1.50 meters high; they usually rest on large stones, and they are
[343] smoked out beforehand to get rid of termites. They are closed with a lid of the same material and covered with a small thatch roof as a protection against rain, for they usually stand in the open air in the inner courtyard. Millet beer is brought and drunk on the spot while the millet is being winnowed. Sometimes the festivities end with dancing, and then everyone goes home, to begin again another day. The month of January goes by in this fashion.

221 February, March, and April are vacation months, months for hunting and fishing.

224 Actually no Mossi is a hunter, yet all Mossi are hunters to some
411 degree. Since the French occupation, men armed with very primitive flint guns are sometimes seen on the fringes of the heavy bush which borders the Volta and contains large game. These flint guns are so crude that they frequently burst and wound the man who recklessly
224 loaded it with too much powder. These natives know the bush thoroughly and are very helpful to the adventurers who wish to hunt koba, buffalo, elephant, leopard, or even lion, although the latter is to the

243 Kassouna. We have already seen that the Kassonboura once grew it extensively. The Boussansé also cultivate it.

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243 /471/ Aside from millet, the food crop most extensively cultivated by the Mossi is maize, which they call kamana. Maize is grown around the soukala itself rather than in the bush. It is sown at the beginning of the rainy season. First the soil is turned up with the ouaka, and then holes are made with a koutiaga or hatchet. Two or three grains of maize are placed in each hole, and then covered up. Once this has been done the millet is allowed to grow, and when the stalk has come out of the ground the weeds are cleared with the ouaka. After this it takes two months and ten days for the maize to ripen. It is harvested in August, first among the grains. The stalks are dug out or cut down with a daba, or else they are simply broken by hand.

Once the stalks have been laid down, the ears are cut off. They are left to dry in the sun on the roofs, where they are suspended in [251] clusters. Then they are stored in the grain hut, from which they are removed when the kernels are to be made into flour.

252 It often happens that instead of being left to dry, the ears of maize are eaten green, roasted on the embers.

After the maize has been stored and allowed to dry, the women pound the kernels into flour. This flour is placed in boiling water to make soft cakes which are eaten immediately.

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At the present day poor people grow a little rice. In former [554] times they did not grow it at all, and chiefs alone cultivated it. Even now, it is largely grown by chiefs.

Rice is sown in May after millet. The field is worked with a special daba, the souga, which is used to turn up the soil. Little holes are made with a koutiaga, and from seven to ten grains of rice are placed in each hole and covered with a little soil. Then, the rice is left to grow. It comes out of the ground at the end of seventeen days. During the rainy season, the waters of the watercourse or pond cover the small rice field. Weeds are removed, inside the water, with the ouaka. The harvesting is done during the second half of October, before the small millet and large white millet are gathered. The rice stalks are cut down with a kind of scythe and spread upon the ground to dry in the sun. Then, both men and women thresh it with sticks. Sometimes the stalks are taken into the soukala instead, left to dry for three days in the courtyard, and then threshed. [351] The straw is discarded. When there is only a little rice, it is kept in a canari. When there is a lot, it is stored in baskets which in turn are placed in little straw huts raised on stakes.

262 The Mossi, who in short grow very little rice, claim that they 252 prefer millet to rice. Millet, they say, provides more energy. Rice is eaten boiled, with meat if possible, and the whole thing is served with peanut or gombo /Tr. okra/ sauce.

244 The Mossi grow considerable quantities of peanuts (nangouri in Mossi, n'tiga in Bambara, gherté in Peuhl and Toucouleur).

No earth mounds are made for the cultivation of peanuts among the Mossi. The peanuts are sown five or six days after the millet. Holes are made with a koutiaga, one or two peanuts are placed in each hole and then covered up. When the shoots appear, the weeds are removed with the ouaka. When the peanuts are ripe (end of October), the pods are dug up with the ouaka. /473/ They are left
251 to dry in the sun for three or four days, and then they are taken to the village in baskets. Again the peanuts are left to dry on the clay roofs of the huts, and then placed in the little straw huts already mentioned from which they are removed only to be eaten. The
252 peanuts are roasted. They are also used, although not very often, to prepare sauces eaten with millet.

231 The greens of the plant do not go to waste. They are gathered and given to horses, and make excellent fodder for them.

In addition to peanuts, the Mossi grow considerable quantities
244 of underground peas. Not everyone grows them, however. The underground peas are sown after all the other grains and tubercles.

The grass is cut on the spot where the peas are to be grown, but it is left there to serve as fertilizer. Then, holes are made into the ground with the koutiaga, and the sowing is done. When the plant begins to shoot, the weeds are pulled out by hand rather than with the ouaka, since the latter would remove everything. The underground peas ripen in three months. They are gathered at the same time as the peanuts, that is to say, in October. The peas are dug
251 out of the soil with the ouaka. They are cleaned, left to dry, placed
252 in baskets, and carried to the little straw huts. They are eaten boiled.

244 The Mossi also grow sesame, which they call sili. They cultivate it in small bush plots. Sesame is sown at the height of the winter season, three months after the first rains. The soil is scraped with the ouaka, and the grains carried in a little gourd are spread upon the ground. The sesame emerges from the ground ten days later. Men, women, and children pull out the weeds by hand. The harvesting is done when the stalks have reached 1.50 meters in height (immediately following the harvest of the small millet). The stalks are severed at mid-height with a knife and then laid out on

342
412 Tools. The only tools used are the sitoiga (native pickaxe) and the wanka (hoe).

352 House furnishings. (a) The man's hut. The only furnishings in a man's hut are a mat or thin secco, a bolster made of cotton strips or kapok, a quiver, the club, some arrows, the bow, a large knife (zangoégo), and a spear. Small bags of charms and other amulets hang from the wall here and there, and there is a sort of oval straw basket, pilgou, in which clothing is stored.

(b) The woman's hut. From one end of the hut to the other there are billi, small pieces of wood fastened to the wall to hold gourds, bowls (lensé), earthenware basins (lassé), ladles (soutissi), etc.

In the rear of the room lumps of dried earth, [221] hollowed in the center, hold the vessels, and pots, dougdo, which serve both as storage bins for clothing and as granaries for the produce of the woman's own garden.

592 Plan of a compound. As one enters a compound, the huts to left are those of the women and the master's huts stand to the right. Completely outside the establishment, there are one or two straw huts, similar to those already described, which provide sleeping quarters for the dakompa (young men).

[585] The head of the establishment lives alone. It could hardly be otherwise, since he summons his wives in turn.

The women live with their young children or with girls betrothed to their husband, until, of course, these girls receive huts of their own.

343 Kitchen arrangements. It is exceedingly rare among the Mossi to find a hut used specifically for cooking. The wife's bedroom serves also as a kitchen.

Ordinarily the husband issues provisions to the wife who is
592 cooking for the family, but there are exceptions to this rule. At
595 Ouagadougou, for example, most of the wives provide the food for
● 252 the husband. The latter furnishes provisions only during the winter when the fields are being worked.

[222] The wives take turns preparing the food. The woman on duty is aided by her co-wives in grinding the millet on the millstone (néré) of the section, but she alone prepares the millet cake, sagbo.

312 hour for the impurities and the residue to settle to the bottom of
271 the vessel. Then the water is poured off into another container and is ready to be used for drinking or cooking.

[824] (b) It is also possible to use an additive known as missim (crushed tamarind leaves). The water becomes clear, but it is, of course, somewhat sour. Although it may be drunk, it is
[552] ideally suited to cooking since the Mossi add missim (from miki, "to make sour") even to the water of springs and wells before they use it to prepare their principal food, sagbo.

744 In the town of Ouagadougou frequent visits by the sanitary
312 officers remind the natives of the necessity of keeping fresh water in their containers. They are also encouraged to fill in during the winter the low places holding water where mosquitoes might breed.

515 Laundering. There is no doubt [231] that the Moaga is care-
296 less about the cleanliness of his clothing. There is no shortage of soap -- karite butter, of which it is made, is plentiful -- but he believes that frequent laundering will wear out his clothes too quickly. He also thinks -- which is childish -- that the dirtier a garment is, the cleaner it will wash. He thinks it completely ridiculous for clothes to be ironed. It must be admitted that among the Mossi only a married man can require his wives to wash his clothes. A mother also takes care of her children's clothes, but a bachelor is forced to wash his own things. This, we think, explains the extreme negligence shown by some of them
[461] who let their clothes get dirtier and dirtier. Indolence, alas, is one of the dominant defects of the native of Mossi country.

514 Toilet arrangements. In general the Mossi have no regular latrines. Men, women, in short, everyone, simply goes into the bush. The only exception is the very young children who take care of their needs on the threshold. At night, especially during the winter when the grain is fairly tall, grownups themselves go to the kamanga or karaga (millet or maize field near the living quarters).

364 When the town of Ouagadougou was made a mixed commune [Ed., smallest French territorial subdivision, with both French and native representation in the municipal council], it was possible to install, at municipal expense, a number of lavatories in certain

241 brothers of the family heads who died childless (zig'tinguin damba),
782 and to the ancestors and grandparents. May they see to it that these offerings are accepted by the kinkirsi (spirits of the fields) and that the latter favor X with [242] good health and large crops of millet and beans."

[787] Once these sacrifices have been made -- if they are accepted, the rooster falls on its back -- the new owner has his land cleared and awaits the winter season.

Field work. As soon as the first rains have come, the owner goes once more to the field and has another rooster killed and offered to the kinkirga [singular of kinkirsi] with a plea for gnimassem (good health) and large harvests which he will consume with new wives and new children (pog'palla, la bipalla). Afterward he sows large and small millet, peanuts, beans, etc.

If the year has been a good one and the Moaga has had fine crops, he is happy and in good time will remember the spirit of the fields. For the moment he is busy transporting the millet to the temporary granary (lourgho).

Threshing millet. Before his millet is threshed, the Moaga must make a sacrifice to the zéiga (threshing floor). The ritual words differ from those described above only in the following words: "X asks that this millet, which he will eat, be good for him and that he eat it in peace and good health with his family." (Kita ri ki wan ne lafi layelsomdé né a zak'ramba.)

241 [243] He then appeals to the young men of the village for help
476 in threshing his grain. For the occasion he has a great deal of beer prepared and quantities of beans (benga) cooked. The beans are
● [252] prepared with sesame (sinni). After the job is done, two children between the ages of six and seven are called, and their hands filled with the bean mixture. They must run around the threshing floor while eating some of the beans. The rest will be scattered to the winds. They must stop three times for breath and look at each other. Then the remaining beans are distributed among the workers. They are also given beer.

423 Do owners retain rights over abandoned land? In order to occupy abandoned land; permission must first be obtained from the former owner, who retains his rights over the land. He may reclaim it at

462 on the other hand, are female prerogatives; every woman knows how to make millet beer, soap, karite butter, and kalro (soumbara) with varying effectiveness.

273 Millet beer is brewed with sprouted millet, which is boiled and reboiled in a volume of water proportionate to the amount of grain; yeast is added to the brew on the last day. The liquid is strained through twigs to remove the residue of millet. The more the beer is boiled, the stronger it is; when hops are added, the beverage recalls our own beer.

388 Soap is made with karite butter to which the ashes of millet stalks are added for potash.

252 Oil is extracted from peanuts, previously roasted and crushed between two stones; the women have no press and therefore lose a considerable amount of oil, but it remains in the residue, which is also sold.

Kalro is made from the beans found in the pods of néré /locust bean tree/. It has a strong and characteristic odor, but it enhances the sauce with a not unpleasant flavor.

463 The pottery, wood, and copper industries are carried out by specialists. This does not mean that only the members of a caste may exercise them, but that an apprenticeship is required which is not undergone by everyone, and that people bequeath to their children the secrets of the trade.

323 /58/ Pottery is chiefly made by women, although the men may
462 also work with clay and actually often make jars (canari), while the women make the large jars which are used in brewing millet beer, small pots in which they cook sarabo and sauce, and shallow dishes which are used to serve food.

323 The molding and firing methods are similar. A shallow pit is dug into the ground, larger or smaller depending on the size desired for the jar. The walls of the hole are pounded smooth. The woman places in this mold the prepared clay, previously kneaded with the feet and any stones removed. The clay is slightly damp, and the pit is dusted with dry earth. The woman spreads the clay with a well-polished granite stone and makes it revolve so that every portion of the clay is worked between the stone and the pit wall. After a while, she obtains the jar she wants in the proper thickness.

When several potters live in the same village, as usually happens, they get together for the firing. The jars are marked and gathered in

342 received, gossip exchanged, and social and ceremonial obligations dis-
592 cussed in its shade. Here, also, the men of the lineage take their meals,
brought out to them from the kitchens of their wives and set before them
[264] by their sons, who first attend their fathers and then dine on what remains.

592 A few paces away is the grinding platform (*nere*) where the women
252 gather to prepare the grain for their families' meals. This great circular mud table, some twenty feet in diameter, is raised about three feet from the ground. Its surface is beaten hard and worked over with cinders and manure to make it rainproof. Each woman has her assigned place at this
[512] platform where she keeps her pestle and where she stations herself at dawn and again at dusk to grind her millet and learn the news of the day.

Frequently found at the outer perimeter of the dwelling of the Mossi
592 kin group is the house of the son of a lineage woman who has returned from his father's household to live in the benevolent presence of his mother's family, with whom he enjoys an especially permissive relationship. The house set aside for the residence of the young unmarried men of the lineage is also located on the outer edge of the compound dwelling.

A recent addition to the traditional pattern of village organization
555 described above is the independent households of socially ambitious
184 individuals who have chosen to separate themselves from the residences of their lineages in order to profit from their own economic or religious enterprises. Many have become independently wealthy through successful commercial ventures; others, as a result of conversion to Islam, have gained prestige through religious authority and wealth through the tuition and services provided by the Koranic students. Often these people are much younger than their lineage elders, not in line for the inheritance of political or religious authority through traditional channels, and unwilling either to accept the authority of their seniors or to share economically with the less prosperous members of their lineages. They are deviants, in conflict with the communal patterns of consumption and with the emphasis on accepting established authority which characterizes the traditional social organization of the Mossi.

THE TRADITIONAL ECONOMY

613 Much agricultural endeavor is necessarily co-operative. Each farmer
476 is dependent on the assistance of his kinsmen to get his fields seeded,
cultivated, and harvested in the short time during which each of these
243 operations must take place. However, the yield from his field remains his own, to be shared only with his own wives and children. Members of the lineage also work in the fields under the specific control of the lineage elder. Although the harvest from these fields is stored in the granary
242 [i.e. at a sun shelter in the entrance-way. — Analyst]

243 Kassouna. We have already seen that the Kassonboura once grew it extensively. The Boussansé also cultivate it.

On the other hand, the Mossi grow a little sweet millet (or tiokandé). They call it mobinoro. This is the sampa of the Bambara, the gamba of the Kassonboura. The Mossi, like the Kassonboura and Bambara, sow this millet in small quantities in the maize fields that surround the soukala. The Nounouma, Kassonfra, and Sissala do not cultivate it.

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Once the stalks have been laid down, the ears are cut off. They are left to dry in the sun on the roofs, where they are suspended in [251] clusters. Then they are stored in the grain hut, from which they are removed when the kernels are to be made into flour.

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At the present day poor people grow a little rice. In former [554] times they did not grow it at all, and chiefs alone cultivated it. Even now, it is largely grown by chiefs.

Rice is sown in May after millet. The field is worked with a special daba, the souga, which is used to turn up the soil. Little holes are made with a koutiaga, and from seven to ten grains of rice are placed in each hole and covered with a little soil. Then, the rice is left to grow. It comes out of the ground at the end of seventeen days. During the rainy season, the waters of the watercourse or pond cover the small rice field. Weeds are removed, inside the water, with the ouaka. The harvesting is done during the second half of October, before the small millet and large white millet are gathered. The rice stalks are cut down with a kind of scythe and spread upon the ground to dry in the sun. Then, both men and women thresh it with sticks. Sometimes the stalks are taken into the soukala instead, left to dry for three days in the courtyard, and then threshed. [251] The straw is discarded. When there is only a little rice, it is kept in a canari. When there is a lot, it is stored in baskets which in turn are placed in little straw huts raised on stakes.

262 The Mossi, who in short grow very little rice, claim that they 252 prefer millet to rice. Millet, they say, provides more energy. Rice is eaten boiled, with meat if possible, and the whole thing is served with peanut or gombo /Tr. okra/ sauce.

244 The Mossi grow considerable quantities of peanuts (nangouri in Mossi, n'tiga in Bambara, gherté in Peuhl and Toucouleur).

No earth mounds are made for the cultivation of peanuts among the Mossi. The peanuts are sown five or six days after the millet. Holes are made with a koutiaga, one or two peanuts are placed in each hole and then covered up. When the shoots appear, the weeds are removed with the ouaka. When the peanuts are ripe (end of October), the pods are dug up with the ouaka. /473/ They are left
251 to dry in the sun for three or four days, and then they are taken to the village in baskets. Again the peanuts are left to dry on the clay roofs of the huts, and then placed in the little straw huts already mentioned from which they are removed only to be eaten. The
252 peanuts are roasted. They are also used, although not very often, to prepare sauces eaten with millet.

231 The greens of the plant do not go to waste. They are gathered and given to horses, and make excellent fodder for them.

In addition to peanuts, the Mossi grow considerable quantities
244 of underground peas. Not everyone grows them, however. The underground peas are sown after all the other grains and tubercles.

The grass is cut on the spot where the peas are to be grown, but it is left there to serve as fertilizer. Then, holes are made into the ground with the koutiaga, and the sowing is done. When the plant begins to shoot, the weeds are pulled out by hand rather than with the ouaka, since the latter would remove everything. The underground peas ripen in three months. They are gathered at the same time as the peanuts, that is to say, in October. The peas are dug
251 out of the soil with the ouaka. They are cleaned, left to dry, placed
252 in baskets, and carried to the little straw huts. They are eaten boiled.

244 The Mossi also grow sesame, which they call sili. They cultivate it in small bush plots. Sesame is sown at the height of the winter season, three months after the first rains. The soil is scraped with the ouaka, and the grains carried in a little gourd are spread upon the ground. The sesame emerges from the ground ten days later. Men, women, and children pull out the weeds by hand. The harvesting is done when the stalks have reached 1.50 meters in height (immediately following the harvest of the small millet). The stalks are severed at mid-height with a knife and then laid out on

244 mats in the sun to dry. Finally, the sesame seeds are beaten loose with a piece of wood.

● 252 The Mossi ordinarily use these seeds in the sauce. The women crush them on a stone, boil them, and add salt and soumbara /néré seeds/. This sauce is eaten with millet, /474/ maize, etc. Sometimes the fresh seeds are also eaten after roasting on the fire.

244 The Mossi also grow some beans (benna or binga in Mossi, soso in Mandé, niébé in Peuhl). They do not cultivate them in separate plots, but sow them in the millet fields along with the millet. The stalks creep along the ground. The beans are ripe before the millet.

It is the women and children, equipped with baskets, who do the harvesting (November). Then the pods are laid out on the ground and threshed by the men with sticks. The beans are picked [252] and placed in the straw huts. To eat them, one simply boils them and adds salt.

The Mossi grow some sweet potatoes (nanioua in Mossi, nanioura [184] in Nounouma). The Mossi who live around Ouagadougou do not grow any. Those who live around Kombisiguiri grow some. A few Tenkodogo Mossi also cultivate them. The potatoes are planted along the watercourses around July 15, that is to say, at the height of the rainy season. Small earth mounds are built, with holes at the top. Potato slices are placed in these holes and covered with earth. When the sowing is done, the work is over. No attempt is made to pull out the weeds. The harvesting is done at the end of three months, consequently around October 15. The potatoes are dug out [252] with the ouaka, carried to the huts, and eaten boiled in water.

The Mossi grow some ozonifie /a potato-like plant/ (pèsa in Mossi, kayya in Nounouma and Kassouna, fabirama in Mandé) around the soukala or in the bush. They build small earth mounds with the ouaka, then make holes in these mounds with the koutiaga, and place one tubercle in each hole. They cover up the holes and spread the ground with fertilizer consisting of straw and grass, refuse taken from the soukala or gathered around it. The harvesting is done in November. At that time, the ozonifie are dug out with the ouaka. They are placed in a canari pending their consumption. They are [252] eaten boiled.

2144 All Mossi grow ozonifie. They like it, but do not cultivate it in large quantities. It has to be planted in damp places. Some people plant it in the bush, others in the villages, but always near a spot where there is water.

[184] /475/ The Mossi hardly grow any yams (nioua or niouya in Mossi, pia in Nounouma, kou in Mandé). The southern Mossi alone cultivate it, and very little at that, in Kombisiguiri for example.

Here yams are sown in November along watercourses. Earth mounds 50 centimeters high and correspondingly wide are built with the ouaka. Then holes are made with a stick at the top of these little pyramids. Yam slices are cut, buried in these holes, and covered with earth. Then a prop is driven into the ground. The stem of the yam plant emerges from the ground and climbs along the prop. Seven months are required for the root, the yam itself, to reach its proper thickness and ripeness. During the month of April, therefore, a certain number of yams are dug out of the ground with the ouaka. The greatest number are left there, however, the soil is replaced, and the major harvest, the total harvest, is only taken in November, that is to say, a year after sowing.

[252] To eat yams, one cuts them into pieces and boils them in water.

[177] As for manioc (boumboro in Nounouma), it was unknown to the Mossi until the arrival of the French. The latter brought a few stalks, but the natives do not cultivate it as yet.

As far as diabéré is concerned (kousoubadé in Mossi, diabéré in Mandé), the Mossi grow a little of it. It is sown at the time of the first rains in the fields of maize or large red millet, that is to say, around the soukala. Holes are made with the koutiaga, and small tubercles are placed within them. The plant is harvested one month after maize, that is, in September.

In Mossi territory, it is cultivated chiefly by the Yarsé, for example those of Rakaye and Saraboutenga.

The Mossi themselves cultivate it little, and the same applies to the Bambara. The Gourounsi and Boussansé do not grow it at all.

[253] The diabéré is cooked in water, peeled, and eaten as it is.

According to Guebhardt (Au Gouta-Djallon /In the Fouta Djallon/, 1910), the diabéré (the Poullo /Fulani/ name) is really taro (Caladium antiquorum or esculentum).

244 same as that of the tubercle, to which they adhere strongly. Their
137 color is also the same. The flesh of these turions is white, highly aqueous, and compact. It recalls that of the potato, or rather that of the sweet potato. The odor is slightly noxious.

244 "The diabéré are sown in June and July. It is sufficient to place the turions in a hole dug into the ground to a depth of 10 or 15 centimeters. The harvesting is done in December. Around the end of October or beginning of November, the inhabitants of the Sandougou (Upper Gambia) are in the habit of cutting the leaves to a height of about 10 centimeters from the ground, in order to make the turions grow bigger.

252 "The diabéré is not a vegetable to be scorned even by the delicate palate of the Europeans. When boiled or fried in the pan, it makes a dish of pleasant taste. I recall eating it with pleasure in a mutton stew. The natives prefer it boiled, and in certain areas, for example the Diaka, Sandougou, and Tenda, they eat it in large quantities. In the latter region especially it is consumed intensively, and the natives of neighboring territories attribute the
[164] skin disease and numerous goiters of the Tenda inhabitants to their over-indulgence in this food." (Pages 83 to 85.)

246 The Mossi also cultivate karyanga or karnyanga. "This gramineous plant," says the Cahier des rapports /Production Report) of the Ouagadougou circle, "grows wild along watercourses, but the natives also cultivate it around the edges of their millet fields. The stalk, hairy and rough, reaches a /478/ height of 0.80 meter when full grown. It expands into a sheaf near the tip. The leaves, about 3 centimeters wide, are shaped like very elongated spearheads. When still green, they are severed about 20 centimeters from the ground. Then they are left to dry in the sun and stored for consumption during the dry season. The karyanga serves as fodder for livestock and horses. This plant is quite widespread in the eastern and southeastern parts of Mossi territory (Béloussa and Tenkodogo)."

As we can see, karyanga is a grass that grows in the bush along watercourses and that is cut down and fed to horses. Some horse owners cut it down and replant it in their maize field. In the

246 following year seeds fall to the ground and the grass grows back once more. It is cut down, but not at ground level, so that it will perpetuate itself.

The Gourounsi call it keulo. They merely cut it down in the bush, and do not replant it among the maize. It grows in sufficient quantities in the open bush of Gourounsi territory, which is more extensive than that of Mossi country, to preclude the need of replanting.

244 The Mossi cultivate gombo (mana in Mossi, pora in Nounouma and Kassouna, gouan in Mandé). Every Mossi grows some for the sauce.

They sow it during the damp season at the same time as the millet, in small separate plots. They turn up the soil a little with the ouaka, make holes with the koutiaga, put in gombo seeds, and cover up the holes. One allows the plant to grow, digs out the weeds with the ouaka, and then waits for two months. At that time the enormous gombo stalk, which is even higher and sturdier than maize, has grown out and borne its greenish, slightly elongated and ribbed pods. Then, the ripest pods are gathered and cut up for the sauce. The harvesting is done gradually, from September 15 until the end of December.

●252 To prepare gombo, one cuts the pods into pieces and leaves them to dry. When some gombo is needed, these pieces are crushed /479/ and reduced to a sort of powder which is boiled in water. The fresh gombo pods may also be utilized. They are cut into pieces and boiled in the same fashion. Salt and soumbara are added. This makes a sort of paste, greenish and sticky, which is highly prized by the natives.

244 We stated above that the Mossi grow gombo in small isolated plots along the watercourses. This does happen, but often, like other Blacks, they merely sow a few stalks of gombo among their maize.

438 The gombo is sold in dried pieces at Mossi markets.

252 Let us add that gombo leaves, when tender, are also used in sauce.

244 The Mossi also grow sorrel.

They have two kinds, the dakissé sorrel and the dangono sorrel. These are Bambara names. In Mossi, dakissé is called bi and dangono is called ouéréda.

The Mossi plant bi around the millet fields at the same time as millet, at the beginning of the winter season. Holes are made with a koutiaga for the seeds, which are put in by hand and covered with earth. Then the plants are allowed to grow. After three months, the sorrel is ripe. The leaves are then removed to be used in the sauce, and the stalk is cut at mid-height to get the seeds, which are also used in the sauce.

[71] Like the Bambara, the Mossi sometimes plant both kinds of sorrel in the peanut and underground pea lougan, and sow them along with these plants when the first rains begin to fall. The sorrel is gathered eight days after the peanuts and underground peas.

250 The Mossi cook dakissé seeds in a canari full of water. Then they remove the jar from the fire and top it with another one that covers the mouth of the first jar completely. This is allowed to sit for four or five days, and then the dakissé seeds are removed and ground in a small mortar to make flour.

Then the ashes of burnt wood are placed with water in a perforated gourd that serves as a filter. /480/ The ashes are filtrated into a canari that stands underneath. They are then mixed with dakissé flour and transferred to a canari that is left covered for five or six days. When these are over, the mixture is cooked for the last time. It is placed in a gourd that is perforated and that sits on a canari full of water. The water is heated, and the vapor comes in through the small holes in the upper gourd and steams the dakissé for an hour. The paste thus obtained is dried in the sun for a whole day, and then placed in a canari where it is sought as the need arises.

Like the Bambara the Mossi sometimes take the dakissé seeds, mix them with millet grains, boil the whole thing, and then eat it.

As for the leaves, they are cooked by being placed in water and boiled with salt.

As far as dangono or ouéréda is concerned, the Mossi, like the Bambara, remove the bark. They allow this bark to cook in water, and add crushed peanuts and salt. The sauce thus obtained is called ziédo by the Mossi and na by the Bambara.

● 252 The ouéréda is also used as a substitute for tamarind fruit in the preparation of to sauce. The ouéréda bark is boiled, and millet flour is tossed into the water when the latter comes to a boil. Now the to need only be stirred and then transferred with huge wooden spoons to the gourd where it will be eaten.

Those who like ouéréda with meat, or who wish to cure a cold, boil the bark along with meat and eat it in this fashion.

As for ouéréda seeds, they are prepared exactly in the same manner as the bi seeds, and that is rather involved.

2444 We have stated that the Mossi sow bi and ouéréda along the edges of millet fields, or even cultivate it in small separate plots. Let us add that the latter are tended by the women. The soukala heads merely sow both kinds of sorrel along the edges of their millet fields. In any case, when the Mossi have just cleared a plot, they often sow it with beans, sesame, bi, and ouéréda in the first /481/ year. It is only in the following year that they sow it with millet.

The Mossi also grow tomatoes.

There are many kinds in their territory, as among the Bambara.

The tomato is called koumba in Mossi. The bitter tomato is called koumba-gara or koumgara. The red tomato is called koumba-migou or kommigou. The white tomato is called koumba-pelra or koumpelra. In Bambara, the bitter tomato is called n'koyo ninkouna, the red tomato or cherry-tomato is called n'koyo bilé, and the white tomato is called n'koyo dié.

Like the Bambara, the Mossi, both men and women, grow tomatoes in separate plots. They first sow the seeds in a small space, no larger than a handkerchief, which they fertilize with wood ashes and sheep or goat dung. At the end of thirty days, when the plant has reached a few centimeters in height, they take it out and plant it in its permanent spot, again near the soukala, which they fertilize in the same manner as before. The tomatoes are ripe two months after sowing. If they are poorly tended, they only reach maturity at the time of the maize harvest (August). The green tomatoes are [252] eaten as fruit. The ripe tomatoes are cooked and mashed in the sauce. When the maize is harvested, all remaining tomatoes are removed.

249 It is gathered when the winter season is over. The upper tip is cut
415 horizontally to create an opening, and water is poured inside to rot the fibrous inner part. When this is accomplished, the calabash is filled with pebbles and shaken until the torn fibers are removed. Once this has been done, the binga is ready to use. When they go
[482] on a trip, the Mossi carry it suspended from the shoulder as a drinking gourd, like all Blacks of West Africa. /483/ They use a cork of green leaves to prevent the water from escaping.

3. The green gourds properly so called (kamboudou in Mossi) which are made to grow on the roofs. The Mossi do not eat them any more than they eat the two previous species. They cut them in two and fashion them into small household calabashes.

249 Calabashes are not cultivated as a food crop, therefore, but as a crop ranking with karnyanga, cotton, tobacco, hemp, indigo, etc.

244 The Mossi also grow a kind of large cucumber, yorolé. The Gourounsi call it gango and the Bambara dié.

At the beginning of the winter season, yorolé are planted around the soukala where the household refuse is discarded. Yorolé are planted by the women. Weeds, when they come out, are cleared with the ouaka. The yorolé are harvested immediately
[252] after the millet and stored in the huts. They are cooked in water and eaten as they are, without seasoning or salt.

As for niri (the Mossi word) or yergan (the Nounouma word), it is a small gourd the size of an orange, green or yellowish green, that grows in the fields along the ground. The yergan are gathered when they are ripe, placed in a hole in the ground where they are left to rot, and then washed. Then the seeds are removed and used
[252] in the sauce, or else they are eaten roasted and seasoned with salt. One does not eat the yergan themselves, therefore, but only their seeds.

The Mossi grow them in the south, at Nobéré and Rakaye. The yergan are sown at the same time as millet, around the soukala, in the fields of maize and large red millet. They are gathered during the first half of October.

231 also sold to shoemakers, who need it to rub and soften their hides.
237 In former days wax was given rather than sold. Nowadays it is sold because of the need for cash occasioned by the tax. As for honey, [262] it is eaten pure, or with milk, or mixed with sarabout. It is also 272 made into a drink called bésou, béci, or bici, which is no other than hydromel. The latter is known, incidentally, throughout West Africa.

The Nounouma call it torosana, from sana, "drink" and toro, "honey." The Kassouna call it by the same name.

The women make hydromel as follows. They boil water, pour the honey into it, and stir. Then they add small-millet flour. The mixture is stirred with a piece of wood and then strained to rid the drink of /493/ all impurities. It is poured into a clean canari, which is carefully covered. At the end of two days, one has a [435] yellowish drink which is worth 400 cowries or 0.40 franc a liter at Ouagadougou. Among the Nounouma, where honey is more abundant than among the Mossi, the liter is worth 0.20 franc (at Leo, for example). Hydromel is stronger and more potent than dolo, and one must be careful not to drink too much.

252 The Mossi also make little cakes with honey and millet flour. They call them baradaré. These cakes are not made by the Gourounsi.

231 This concludes our review of Mossi stockbreeding. Generally speaking, as we have seen, it is quite mediocre with the exception of two specialities, donkeys and horses. As far as donkeys are concerned, although the Mossi are no traders and have only begun to do a little trading since we occupied their territory, they have always liked the animals and used them either for their own transport or to carry grain. They have an average of one donkey per 42 inhabitants, while the Dagari only have one per 1,000, the Nounouma one per 166, the Sissala one per 55, the Kassonboura one per 50. In this respect, the Mossi run second only to the traders, the Yarsé, who have a pressing need for donkeys in connection with their trade and who have one per 23 inhabitants.

As for horse raising, the Mossi have left it to the Foulbé of Mossi territory. The Mossi nevertheless have an average of one horse per 166 inhabitants among the common people, and one per

222 predominates in the bush of the territory and which, owing to its
137 abundance, lends the bush its particular character.

The karité fruit is an egg-shaped, elongated chestnut, smaller than the fruit of the European chestnut tree. It is distinguished from it even more clearly by its fleshy covering with its greenish skin. This flesh is soft, quite thick, and tastes delicious, like a very ripe, even overripe pear.

222 It is the women who gather the karité when the fruit is ripe,
252 before the rainy season, at the beginning of April. First, the flesh surrounding the chestnut is eaten /496/. Then, after breaking the brown shell, the inner part is used to make the famous karité butter.

252 As everywhere else, it is the women who do this among the Mossi. They remove the shell of the chestnut, and then mash the sticky and whitish substance which is found inside. It is pounded on crushing stones with a little wooden pestle. Once this is done, the substance is cooked in a canari and then mashed again, this time in the large wooden mortars, until the paste acquires the consistency of butter. Then it is pounded once more between crushing stones. When this is over, the paste is placed in a canari with lukewarm water, and then stirred and manipulated by hand. This produces a sort of dirty-white cream, somewhat similar to beaten egg whites, but firmer. Then this cream is boiled until it changes into oil. The impurities drop to the bottom of the canari, and the oil floats. The latter is gathered, placed in a clean gourd, and allowed to cool. The result is a pale yellow butter. At first sight it looks like real butter, but when sniffed it reveals a characteristic odor which is unpleasant to Europeans.

Gourounsi women prepare karité butter in the same manner as Mossi women.

302 This butter is put to various uses. First of all, it is utilized for grooming purposes. The women especially rub it into their hair in copious quantities, not only among the Mossi but throughout the Sudan as well. This, naturally enough, lends them an aroma which
[388] is not very pleasant to European noses. Karité butter is also made into soap when certain ashes are added. Finally, it is used in cooking.

423 The karité trees standing in a field belong to the owner of the field. Those which stand in the bush belong to the people of the

423 village in whose territory the bush is located. They belong to all the people of the village, for Mossi chiefs have not set those trees aside for themselves as they did with the néré trees.

222 137 The néré are found in large numbers in Mossi territory, although they are far less numerous than the karité, which literally fill the bush. The ratio must be something like one /497/ néré for every fifteen karité. The néré is nevertheless far from rare, and sometimes ten or fifteen are to be found together, standing not far apart. The néré is easily distinguished by its branches which expand in a fanlike arrangement from a short but elegant trunk. The branches spread out very prettily, in triangular fashion, so the néré blossoms out like a shower of fireworks. Its leaves are no less characteristic than its shape. They are of a dark, oxydized green which contrasts with the superb brilliant green of the karité. The néré leaves are similar to those of the acacia.

The néré is called roga or goaga, doga or doaga in Mossi. It is called soungou in Nounouma and Kassouna, sôla in Sissala. The Nankana call it roga or doga like the Mossi.

The fruits of the néré are long brown pods that grow in clusters on the tree and that contain a yellow substance, sweet to the taste, packed around a sort of very elongated pit. The women gather these 222 423 fruits approximately from March 15 to April 15. The neré trees standing in a field belong to the owner of the field, but the Mossi village chiefs claim ownership to those that stand in the uncultivated bush.

Among the Gourounsi, as we know, the néré that stand in a field, even if the latter is not being cultivated at the moment, belong to the owner of the field, while those that stand in the uncultivated bush surrounding the village belong to all the people of the village.

This points up the difference between a centralized kingdom where the authority of the chiefs is strong, and small independent cantons or villages where it is not.

252 261 Néré is put to many uses. First of all, the yellow meal, including the more solid central part that runs from one end of the pod to the other like a pit, is mashed by the women in millet mortars or in wooden gourds. Once mashed, it is thinned with

252 boiling water and eaten in this fashion. This is an important source
261 of food in times of famine which, when they come among the Blacks, usually come in May, June, and the first half of July. The néré gathered in March and April comes just in time to combat the famine.

/498/ As for the seeds of the fruit, they are removed and set
252 aside before the sweet meal is mashed. They are preserved to make
263 kologo (the Mossi name) or soumbara (the Mandé name), a pungent condiment highly prized by the Blacks. In order to make this, the women boil the seeds, allow them to cool, stamp on them to remove the skin, and wash them carefully at the watercourse. Sometimes the skin is removed by hand. Then they are cooked for 24 hours, and steeped in water for another 48 in a well-covered canari, in the shade, in a damp spot, to rot the seeds. Then they are laid to dry in the sun on a mat for two days, and pressed with the hands into balls of varying size. It is in this shape that the soumbara is utilized or sold. In Mossi territory, small balls are
[435] worth 100 cowries apiece and large ones 300. At Leo, in Nounouma territory, all balls are the same size and worth 100 cowries. In appearance, the kologo is rather similar to that black coloring matter used by French housewives to add substance to the broth. Whenever a woman wants to use some kologo, to add some to the sauce, she pries loose a small piece from the ball with the tip of a knife and mashes it with the crushing stone. She pours the resulting powder into the sauce.

356 Let us note further that the bark of the néré pod is also used, although not for eating purposes. The Mossi and Gourounsi use it to blacken and polish the floor of their huts and clay roofs. The néré bark is seeped in water for one day, and then the water is tossed on the surface to be polished, that has been tamped down carefully first. The floor is tamped again with the water, and then allowed to dry. This is done three or four times, and in the end the clay surface acquires a handsome black or grey polish. It almost becomes a mirror if the procedure is carried out properly.

284 Finally, to close our list of the uses to which néré is put, we
291 have seen that the brown filaments that grow on the bark of the néré pod are used among the Gourounsi to make belts for /499/ the women, or rather cords to hold up the bunches of leaves that constitute the sole garment of local ladies.

222 Let us now proceed to the baobab.
137 It is called touéra or touéga in Mossi (sira or izira in Bambara). It is to be found most everywhere in the Mossi bush, and especially in rocky, hilly spots near large streams.

The fruit of the baobab is gathered from December to April. It is a sort of huge green almond hanging from a stem that often
● 252 reaches 25 or 30 centimeters in length. Onè breaks the shell, removes the flesh, and mashes it in the mortar (this, of course, is done by the women). Once this is done, the resulting meal is strained through a straw strainer. It is now ready to eat.

This is called toïdésoum in Mossi, tiondé-boé in Peuhl, siramogou in Mandé (from sira, "baobab" and mogou, "flour").
[438] Colloquially, Europeans call it "monkey bread." It is sold on Mossi markets as on the markets of Bambara country.

To prepare it for consumption, this meal is thinned with milk, or water if there is no milk, or else mixed with millet flour. The latter mixture is called sangaré ni siramogou in Bambara ("millet flour and baobab flour"). The meal may also be mixed with néré flour.

It is not only the fruit of the baobab, however, that is utilized. The fresh green leaves are used as a sauce ingredient. The dried leaves are used to make tonéra (lalo in Foutanké /Futajalonke?/, namourou or namougou in Bambara, oro in Peuhl). The leaves are dried and crushed in a mortar to make a powder that is added to sauce.

283 Finally, let us add that the bark of the baobab is used to make rope.

222 After the karité, néré, and baobab, we must list the tamarind
137 tree (Tamarindus indica), koussouga or poussouga in Mossi, n'tomi in Bambara.

222 The fruit of the tamarind is a pod, longer than a finger /500/
137 and about the same thickness, that ripens between January and April.
263 It is a yellow-green brown. When cut along its length, it is found to contain some ten little round fruits, the size of half a hazelnut, lying in a row within the greenish pulp. Only the dried pod is used, after removing the little fruits which have a rather pleasing taste when fresh, something between the kola nut and the hazelnut. When the pod is dry, however, the fruits are also dried out and hard, and they are discarded.

222 137 Now for the kankanga (plural kankansé; the Bambara and Malinké call it n'toro, the Foulbé guip-bi, and the Nounouma /504/ kaporo). The kankanga is the native fig tree of West Africa. Its fruits are none other than figs, not as good to be sure as those eaten in Europe, but figs nevertheless. The Mossi, as well as the Gourounsi, Bambara, etc., usually eat these figs as they are. There are ripe ones to be found at all times of the year, and one plucks them at will. 252 261 In times of famine, instead of eating them in this fashion, one allows them to dry in the sun and then mashes them on crushing stones (among the Mossi) or in small mortars (among the Bambara), They are thus made into a sort of meal which is boiled and which serves as a substitute for millet flour. At such times the Mossi also eat the leaves of the kankanga. They cook them in boiling water and add salt.

252 As for the Gourounsi, sometimes they eat the figs fresh, and sometimes they prepare them for their sauces. In the latter case they boil them, cut them to pieces, and dry them in the sun. When the pieces are quite dry they are laid aside, and whenever needed one of them is mashed, reduced to powder, and added to the sauce.

222 137 Now for nobora or noboga (n'kouna in Mandé, kountan in Khassonké /Kasonke/, hèdè in Foulbé and Toucouleur, kounguié in Sarakolé, salo in Nounouma, kansalo in Kassouna).

The nobora is a kind of wild plum tree. Its fruits ripen from the time when millet is sown until the time when it reaches a height of 80 centimeters, that is to say, between May and July.

273 The fruits of the n'kouna are either eaten fresh or made into a sort of drink called noborame in Mossi, n'kounangui in Mandé, n'diam hèdam in Foulbé. In all three tongues, this means "nobora (or n'kouna) water." This drink is known throughout the Sudan.

In order to prepare this drink, the fruits are placed in water after being pricked with a small piece of wood to let the juice run, and they are left there for twelve hours. At the end of this period of time, they are removed and the water is boiled for a /505/ quarter of an hour. Once this is done, one takes some of the residue left at the bottom of the canari in which dolo is made, and puts it in the jar containing n'kounangui. The liquid is allowed to rest for one night. In the morning, the drink is gaseous and ready for consumption. It is not as strong as dolo.

222 and very peculiar fruit. The latter, which grows at the tip of
137 young boughs, is shaped like a huge pod whose pulpy valves open when pressure is exercised along the convex ridge. Its free tip is equipped with a sort of pulpy appendage shaped like a thorn, about 0.06 meter in length. When ripe, the fruit is of a distinctive light-red color. It contains a dozen polyhedral seeds immersed in a yellowish flesh which is tasty and highly fragrant. It is one of the best desserts I came across in the Sudan, and we often feasted on it. The fruits are clustered in bunches of three, five, or seven, and strongly fastened to the peduncle and stem that hold them. They rarely fall, and in order to gather them one must break the bough that bears them."

André Rançon adds (page 36) that the n'taba is related to the kola nut. It is apparently a sort of false kola tree.

The n'taba fruits ripen from December to April. The Mossi and Gourounsi eat them when they have dried out on the tree, or
652 else as they come /fresh/, or after boiling them for a quarter of an
435 hour. They are sold on Mossi markets at the price of three for 1 cowrie, six for 2 cowries, etc., that is to say, 150 for 1 sou.

272 These fruits are also used to prepare a drink among the Mossi and Gourounsi. They are boiled, mashed, placed in a canari filter, that is, a canari perforated at the bottom which is placed on top of another canari. Water is poured upon the fruits /507/, becomes permeated with the juice, and passes on to the bottom canari. This drink is sweet and tastes like honey.

222 Let us cite also the kamsoro (n'kodo in Bambara). It is a very
137 big, thickset tree, with characteristic leaves. The latter are very tough, very large, very thick, their shape ovoidal or rather a little more elongated than an egg, and their color a brilliant green.

The fruits of this tree are eaten throughout the year, especially by children, because ripe ones are to be found at all times.

There are no kamsoro in Gourounga territory.

Let us also cite the véda or ouéda, the caoutchouc liana, called n'saba in Mandé, fôgui in Peuhl, fittigné in Sarakolé, which is also called laré and Vahea senegalensis. This liana bears fruits that ripen in March and April. They might best be compared to oranges. They are green before they ripen and orange-yellow when ripe. Rançon claims that they are delicious. These fruits are eaten as they

222 137 come, and they are not used to prepare any sort of drink.

The n'saba is found almost everywhere in West Africa, but grows scarcer toward the north. It is found in Mossi and Gourounsi territories in very small numbers.

314 The Dagari, who live farther south than the Gourounsi, gather the caoutchouc from the n'saba lianas and make wads with it for the tip of the sticks used to beat their tom-toms. The Gourounsi griot purchase these sticks from the Dagari. The Mossi and Gourounsi do not themselves gather the n'saba caoutchouc.

In the south this liana is used to make cords, but this is not done among the Mossi or Gourounsi.

222 137 261 252 In addition to the plants we have just mentioned and which are utilized at all times, there are others whose products are used almost exclusively in times of famine. Such are the konkouira, sabatouli, silikoré, etc.

The konkouira is a big tree whose Mandé name is n'zéfé. Its leaves are gathered when they are beginning to grow when they are still quite tender. They are mashed in a small mortar with a pestle, and then placed in water for two hours. Then they are worked into balls, with the addition of millet flour. A canari is filled with water and put on the fire /508/, and then twigs are laid across its mouth, parallel to each other, to form a grill on which the konkouira balls are placed. In order to ensure thorough cooking, the balls are covered with an overturned gourd which encloses them and prevents the steam from escaping too rapidly. The balls are steamed in this fashion for one hour, and then they are ready to eat.

These leaves are never eaten straight but always with millet flour, and they really serve to stretch the flour supply. If they were eaten straight, they would cause colic. In any case they cause hiccups (gounsounkouira in Mossi). They are therefore more a food for times of famine.

The silikoré or kalanianga (both are Mossi names) is a small thorny bush that grows around trees and bears very small fruits. The women gather those fruits during the rainy season. They mash them in a small trough and then boil them in a canari. This first water is discarded, and the fruits boiled a second time. Again the water is discarded, and the fruits are washed in cold water. Karité butter and salt are added, and the mixture is eaten. The silikoré are used

222 chiefly in times of famine, but occasionally at other times also.
137 The silikoré fruits are not eaten among the Gourounsi and Bam-
261 bara.
252 Gonsé is called sofarangoni in Bambara. It is a shrub, the height of a man, that yields kéména. The latter is a pod containing small flat beans of a sort, very thin, that ripen at the time of the millet harvest. These /beans/ are boiled twice, and the water is discarded both times. Then they are washed in cold water and boiled again, for the last time, in a canari covered with a straw lid. Once this is done karité butter is added, and the mixture is eaten. Kéména
[435] is sold at market ready made. A handful is worth 5 cowries (1/2 centime). Kéména is also mixed with /true/ beans and either eaten or sold in this fashion.

Lamboye is called béré in Bambara, guidili in Peuhl. It is found almost everywhere in the Sudan. Its fruits, or rather seeds, are eaten only in times of famine. They are round, very /509/ tiny, and they ripen during the dry and warm season. They are gathered, laid out in the sun, and then crushed in a small mortar to break the outer membrane. Once this is done, they are soaked in water for eight days. This water is discarded, and the seeds are washed twice. Then they are boiled, salt is added, and they are eaten. This is done only in times of famine. These seeds are poisonous, as we can see, and would be toxic if they were not submitted to these various processes.

222 Sabatouli (bembé in Bambara and Sôninké) is a tree whose fruits
137 ripen one month after the first rains (that is, in May). The fruit is very tiny, no larger than a grain of maize. One eats it as it comes, when passing by or clearing land in the bush, or else one takes it to the village children. Nothing else is done with it. Sabatouli is found almost everywhere in the Sudan.

Vâka is a tree which is called goumou or goumbou in Bambara. The flowers of this tree, which are red, are used to make sauce when there is no gombo left. It is called fofo in Nounouma and Sissala, kafro in Kassouna. Its fruits are not eaten.

We overlooked the jujube tree above. It is called mourouga in Mossi, n'tomono in Bambara, gouésso in Nounouma and Kassouna. The Mossi eat the fruits only when traveling through the bush. The Gourounsi do not eat them at all.

222 137 Let us mention also kankalra (lenga in Mandé), whose leaves are eaten by the Mossi.

We have just reviewed the trees and shrubs whose produce is utilized by the Mossi. We must still say a word about mushrooms, wild roots, and wild fodder.

Mushrooms are called goudou in Mossi, dakon in Nounouma and Kassouna, kon in Sissala. They grow in the Mossi bush during the winter season, as they do in Gouroùnsi territory and incidentally throughout West Africa, and they are gathered by the women. Two kinds are distinguished, the /510/ termite-nest mushrooms (yaoré-goudou in Mossi, from yaoré, "termite nest," and goûdou, "mushroom") and the mushrooms that grow among refuse. The latter are called niandara-goûdou, meaning "straw mushrooms," because they grow chiefly under old discarded roof thatch. These mushrooms taste better, but those on termite nests are bigger.

252 The Mossi cook mushrooms in karité butter, mash them in the butter, and eat them. They also use them to make a sauce for the sarabout to which body is added with beans, cooked separately and also mashed. The sarabout (Mossi name for tô) is eaten after dipping in the bean-and-mushroom sauce.

Gourounsi women boil the mushrooms and then leave them to dry on the soukala roofs. They take a handful or two a day for their sauces. To this end, they boil the mushrooms again without mashing them and add soumbara and salt. Mushrooms are never served as a separate dish among the Gourounsi.

222 137 Let us proceed to edible roots.

Vidiba is a sort of wild onion called fanto by the Bambara, Sarakolé, and Foulbé.

261 252 The Bambara use vidiba leaves to make sauce, but they do not eat the onion itself because it is poisonous. The Mossi do likewise, except in times of famine. At such times, the onion is rubbed with sand until the black membrane is removed, and then it is copiously washed. Then it is boiled in a canari filled with water to the brim and covered, and the cooking is maintained until all the water has evaporated. Then ashes are gathered, strained, and added to the contents of the gourd. The mixture is stirred with a piece of wood, and then the vidiba is removed, cut to pieces, and eaten.

592 only one or two meters apart, close together. It is true that there
361 is sometimes a small plot within the séko....
171 The soukala or compound is called iri in Mossi, the hut rogo or dogo, and the soukala head irisoba (from soba, "chief" and iri, "compound").

462 We shall close this analysis of the Mossi family with a few notes
562 on the status of women and that of slaves.

First of all, Mossi women help with the tilling. They do not clear the fields, it is true, but they participate in all other field tasks along with the men. They do this only in the morning, however, since they spend the afternoon on household tasks or on their little individual plots, for they have small fields of large white millet, underground peas, beans, or peanuts.

They also do household tasks: they pound and crush the grain. Large millet or sorghum is, as we know, pounded first and then crushed, while small millet is crushed after being threshed.

462 The Mossi set their crushing stones in huge round clay /banco/
252 tables which are built outside the soukala and which are used by
412 the whole quarter. This is a strictly Mossi characteristic which is not found among the /558/ Bobo, Gourounsi, etc., in short, among any of the other groups who nevertheless use the same stones. Those large round tables are not high. They are about 1 or 1.20 meters in height and approximately 6 meters in diameter, with a correspondingly large circumference. The Mossi set in their crushing stones all around the circumference, and each table can thus hold ten, twelve, or even more. Every evening at nightfall the women of the soukala which are around it, women, young girls, etc., come together to crush their grain. They are usually in the simplest of garb, bare as the back of my hand, for the work is hard and demands a continuous back-and-forth motion of the arms, the upper part of the body, and the body as a whole.

To make those tables, they first build a circular wall to the desired height of the table, and then the whole inner space is filled up with earth almost to the top. This earth is pounded thoroughly, and then well-tamped casings are fashioned on the horizontal circumference in which are set the stones on which the crushing is done. The stones are firmly ensheathed in the clay, which is then allowed to dry.

462 252 412 Those large tables are called niénouga in Mossi, the stones on which the crushing is done are called néré, and the movable stones used for crushing are called nérébila "little néré"/.

171 252 412 We stated above that those large clay tables are peculiarly Mossi and are not to be found among the Bobo, Habé, or Gourounsi. Actually the latter, as we saw earlier, set their stones in small clay tables which are only 1 meter high and 1 meter in diameter and thus quite small, and which stand in every soukala inside each woman's room. They also make slightly larger tables, long ones that look like large earthen bathtubs of a sort or that even bear a certain resemblance to crude sarcophagi, and into which the stones are set. Those, too, stand within the soukala, in dark, dirty rooms. Sometimes, the Gourounsi merely set down their crushing stones under a shelter covered with wood and straw, built at the gate of their citadel-soukala. Three or four stones are placed upon two thick and solid parallel sticks which in turn are held /559/ about 50 centimeters from the ground on four solid forks thrust into the ground. In this case the woman must kneel down in order to crush the grain. I have observed this method chiefly among the Menkiéra, that is to say, in the northern part of the Leo residency.

462 To go back to female work among the Mossi. Along with the crushing of grain, they do the cooking, fetch firewood and water, do the gathering, prepare the products derived from gathering, etc. We saw earlier how those products are made, and we shall not go over it again.

252 171 Among the Mossi, the only known millet dishes are sarabout and vessala. Couscous is unknown. This is rather strange, since the dish thus called is known practically throughout West Africa.

Sarabout (the Mossi word) is what the Malinké and Bambara call tô, the Foulbé, Toucouleur, and Foulah niri, the Sarakolé souré, the Maure /Moors/ lisi.

As for couscous, the Malinké and Bambara call it baci, the Foulbé, Toucouleur, and Foulah lakiri, the Sarakole fouto, the Moors and Arabs couscous.

To or sarabout is prepared for immediate consumption. Couscous is prepared for relatively long storage.

252 This is how their methods of preparation differ. To make to or sarabout, one simply leaves the millet flour to cook in boiling water, stirring occasionally with a piece of wood or a spoon. To make couscous, on the other hand, one takes a canari, fills it with water, sets it to boil on the fire, and then puts the millet into a gourd which is perforated at the bottom and thus makes a sort of strainer. This gourd is placed over the canari where the water is boiling, and covered with a straw dish. The steam emanating from the canari comes through the holes into the gourd, and since the latter is covered the steam remains there a long time. The millet flour is thus cooked by steaming. At the end of a period of time, the gourd is removed and its contents are left to cool and to dry in the sun. Once the millet flour has thus been cooked and dried, it will keep /560/ almost indefinitely. It is eaten either with water or with milk, which is better, or else, if one has some meat, by boiling the latter and pouring the sarabout into the pot.

The Mossi may not be familiar with couscous, but they are familiar with vessala. This method of preparing millet consists of boiling the flour as it is boiled for sarabout. The difference lies in the amount of flour used. When the mush has been cooked it is allowed to cool, and then fresh or curdled milk is bought and mixed in with it. This kind of mush is made only for the purpose of mixing [171] it with milk. The Bambara are familiar with vessala and call it by name of fisan or finsan.

484 The Mossi, when they are traveling, often cook millet grains 252 which have not been reduced to flour. This is called honandourou-ki 171 ("cooked millet"). The Bambara call it niobalabala, the Foulbe m'bafna-gaouri, the Sarakolé ilé-n'kioro, and all these words have the same meaning. This method of preparing millet is quite unusual, and is resorted to only when the time or means to reduce millet grains to flour are lacking.

[462] Mossi women also make dolo (dama). To do this, they soak the 273 grains of large red millet in water for two days, and then expose them to the sun and crush them. The flour is boiled for two hours, and then strained and boiled in the necessary amount of water for a whole day. This is transferred to another canari and allowed to cool.

592 and young girls. Thus, there are six groups altogether, but we must
264 add that when the women do not get along well, each one eats in her own hut with her own children. In the smaller compounds, there cannot be six groups; there are only two basic ones, that of the men and that of the women.

592 For the preparation of food during the seven months when millet
252 furnished by the head of the work group is eaten, or in other words the millet from the communal fields (roughly from April to October), each woman is "on duty" for 24 hours and cooks for the whole group. The other women help her, of course, by fetching water, pounding millet for her, etc. During the five months when the millet from the small private fields is eaten (November-March), each woman prepares her husband's food. When a husband has several wives, they take turns preparing the food.

592 /231/ As we can see, the manner of preparing meals follows the
252 schedule of millet consumption. While the communal grain distributed
264 by the head of the work group or under his supervision is being consumed, cooking is done on a work group basis. During the time when the millet from household fields is being consumed, the preparation of meals is on a household basis. The actual consumption of the meals, however (except when people are working in the fields) involves a larger community, that of the compound. There remains, however, the basic division between men and women, who must not eat together and who always split into two groups at mealtime. In the larger compounds, moreover, each of these two major groups is further divided into subgroups according to natural age lines. Finally, to cap it all, the female spirit of anarchy sometimes causes some of the women to withdraw. Hence, for the consumption and preparation of food as well as for its production, there exists only this very unstable community which is characteristic of the family we are studying.

592 Exceptions.—We come now to the Mossi household, which we
182 shall discuss at some length. Before doing so, however, it must be stated that the family as we have just described it has its exceptions here and there.

First, there are exceptions in the sense of community, in the sense of integration; above all, there are exceptions in the sense of greater disintegration.

585 On the appointed day the fiancé sends two men of his family, one of whom is usually his brother, to fetch his bride. These two natives [431] come to the home of the family head with 13 canari /jars/ of dolo. Then the feasting begins.

The father takes his daughter to the hut of the ancestors, cuts the [182] throat of a chicken on the fetish stone so the future marriage will be happy, and discloses to her the name of her husband.

The young fiancée, escorted by two old women of her family and the two emissaries of her fiancé, proceeds to the latter's home.

For four days the young bride will stay in a hut alone with the old women. During this period, the old women give her all the customary advice and show her the course of behavior she must follow to please her future spouse.

The bridegroom comes every day to greet the old women, but during this interview the young girl takes great care to hide her face from him.

On the third day, in the evening, the husband has a sheep and goat slaughtered. He chooses a leg of mutton which he puts aside with the ●[252] animal's skin, and he has a large quantity of sarabou /millet mush/ cooked along with the remaining meat. He takes the whole thing to the old women. They distribute the sarabou among all the members of the family and carefully put aside the leg of mutton and the skin which they will take on the following day to the girl's mother to show her that her daughter has indeed been delivered to her husband.

Then the husband has his bride brought to his hut where the marriage is consummated.

There is nothing compulsory about this four-day waiting period. It happens frequently that the consummation of the marriage takes place on the day following the young girl's arrival. Occasionally it is delayed for several days when, as sometimes happens, an elderly fiancé gives the bride who was originally intended for him to his son or to some other member of the family.

The marriage is valid from the day of the departure of the old women who brought the girl to her husband's soukala.

The consummation of the marriage is by no means necessary to validate the union. If the husband neglects his new bride for too long, however (a year, for example), she may demand explanations." /240/

582 Impediments to marriage. —"The impediments to marriage," says Vadier, "are as follows.

462 Women's tasks.—First of all, Mossi women help with the cultivation of the soil. They do not clear land for tillage, but during the winter season they do all the other agricultural tasks in competition with the men. Since they must also pound the grain, cook, and do other household tasks, however, they cannot work in the fields as long as the men. When there are several wives, they share the labor. Some devote themselves to housework while others work in the fields. When there are not enough of them to permit such a division of labor, they allow the men to leave in the morning and do not join them with the food until about 10 or 11 o'clock. After the meal and the noonday rest, they work with the men, but they leave the fields earlier to prepare the evening meal. Before returning to the village, however, the women work on their little individual plots, but only for a short time, while the men, after leaving the communal fields, linger in their own small fields until nightfall.

Besides working in the fields, the women do household chores. [252] They pound the grain in mortars and crush it on the crushing stones. We shall speak again about these mortars, pestles, and stones under "The Mode of Subsistence" /not translated/.

They do the cooking and prepare the various Mossi dishes which we shall describe later /not translated/. They go to get wood in the bush and water at the wells. /244/

Let us add that it is the women who pick the karite /shea/ nuts during the rainy season and the pods of the néré /locust bean/ in the spring (end of March, April). They, too, prepare the karite butter and the néré flour. They also brew dolo and, if need be, the various other drinks of which we have already spoken in the section on crops /not translated/ and to which we shall return under "The Mode of Subsistence" /not translated/.

In addition to their cooking tasks, the Mossi women of Yatenga must perform cleaning chores. They sweep the huts and the whole 556 establishment with bunches of straw tied in the middle with a rope. 412] This makes a small primitive broom without a handle, 30 or 40 centimeters long. They launder the clothes and make soap. They spin the cotton, whereas the men weave it. Finally, it is they who tamp the earthen floors and walls of the huts with wooden clappers (in Mossi, silimpandé in the singular, silimpama in the plural) after adding néré water. We shall see later in "Mode of Subsistence (construction of the compound)" how this is done.

796
769 would visit their anger upon those who were guilty of such an in-
263 discretion by making them blind or at least causing them severe
776 eye trouble in later years.

796 Everyone celebrates the tinsé at home by preparing all sorts of
769 food (sagbó, rice, corn, beans, etc.). The people stuff them-
[261] selves to the point of indigestion.

Thirty days after the anniversary celebration of the funeral of Oubri's mother, the Tansoba (war minister) returns to the emperor the rope used for the date of the tinsé.

Around the fortieth day, that is, a week after the departure of the Tansoba, the Loumbila Naba comes to salute the emperor. The latter gives him a cow to be slaughtered at Widin (section of the Ouidi Naba).

A week after the departure of the Loumbila Naba, [152] the Guilingou Tengsoba pays a visit to the Mogho Naba. We have already seen that it was an ancestor of this Tengsoba who asked Naba Zoungrana to send his son, Oubri, to administer the country and to help him drive out the Habé who today live by the cliffs of Bandiagara (Sudan). The Mogho Naba is obligated to give a cow and some salt to this Tengsoba.

Then comes the turn of the Saponé Naba (nayrdin, representative of Naba Kouda) who, with his followers, receives a cow and some salt. Finally, for Bonsa Naba, Kamsaonguin Tengsoba, and Pazani Tengsoba, the Mogho Naba has a sheep killed which is served with many plates of sagbo.

It should be noted that when the Tangsob-ramba appear before the emperor they put down their laya (magic axes) and are at once brought white roosters which they are expected to kill in the timpelem (courtyard).

Thus, it is apparent that this festival has no particularly remarkable features. Its sole aim is to make peace between the living and the dead and to give everyone a chance to eat well.

264 meal of sagbo in the evening.

What we call breakfast is hardly known. Between the two main meals, however, the chiefs have meat grilled or roasted. They are very fond of it and have it seasoned with enough salt and pepper to make it possible to consume the endless number of [273] small gourds of beer which they drink from morning to night.

The Moaga has only one real meal a day, the evening meal. A large millet cake satisfies the day's hunger. If there is any left over, he keeps it carefully for his morning meal. If there is none left, a frequent state of affairs, he makes do with his zompanrga, crushed millet diluted with water and sometimes eaten with a bit of vegetable fat or a few peanuts.

He rarely eats any rice, and if he has no sagbo, he contents himself with benga and souma.

261 527 It is during the festivals that the Moaga eats his fill. At such times the head of the compound kills a goat, a sheep, or some chickens and has sagbo and fabirama prepared, or beans with copious amounts of karite butter. This is the feast. The members of the family stuff themselves to the point where attacks of diarrhea are inevitable. The results of the attacks are all the more serious in that they are never cared for properly.

The only seasonings known to the Moaga are kalgo (soumbala), 263 red pepper, okra, and salt. No more than a few years ago, how- 439 ever, before the [251] development of trade in the colony, salt was brought from Timbuktu and Mopti by the Dioula and Yarcé and was so expensive that the Mossi people who lived in the countryside often went for six months without tasting salted food.

241 There is reason to believe that the time is not far off when the Moaga will devote his efforts much more intensively to cash crops, such as cotton, potatoes, peanuts, etc. In this domain, the province chiefs at Ouagadougou have made real progress.

Mogh'Nab' Kawinré (Threshing the Grain of the Mogho Naba)

241 643 782 Sacrifices. For this ceremony, the emperor summons the Mankougoudougou Tengsoba (a descendant of the autochthonous Nioniossé, masters of the land) to Ouagadougou and gives him a

5: Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1959
FA28 Mossi FA28

177 specially trained non-Mossi personnel, the use of irrigation, fertilizer,
241 and the plow are their most important technological innovations. Despite their difficulty in communicating with the European agronomists under whose direction they work, they soon master these agricultural techniques. Patterns of consumption are also altered, rice taking the
[261] place of millet as the staple in their diet. After some initial illness they become accustomed to rice but suspect that it is less nourishing than their traditional diet.

177 Far more difficult than adjusting to either the new technology or the diet is adaptation to the changed social organization. Trying to ease this
182 adjustment but with an imperfect understanding of traditional Mossi institutions, the project administration has tried to re-create their forms in the area of resettlement.

Despite this, the new colonist finds himself isolated among social forces he does not understand. The attempt to reproduce the traditional pattern of residential grouping is meaningless in the absence of the lineage. Separated from his kinsmen and his community, the colonist is confused by social institutions whose resemblance to those he has known in the Yatenga exists only on the level of form. He does not like or understand being housed with strangers as if they were his kinsmen. Equally incomprehensible is an approximation of the familiar political organization which, ignoring the traditional sanctions of chieftainship, has a former earth custodian, whose supernatural role has traditionally precluded the exercise of political authority, as paramount chief.

Despite the efforts of the European administration to reproduce their structural appearance, the institutions of Mossi society are so interrelated that the change in the organization of economic activity has created new needs which make alterations in traditional institutions inevitable. Rather than permitting the colonists to modify their indigenous social organization to fit these new needs, the social structure rigidly imposed by the Europeans has impeded the Mossi in their efforts to adjust their institutions to the changed situation. The delegation of authority to inept administrative appointees thinly disguised as chiefs and to the older, least adaptive members of the settler communities only complicates the problem of adjustment.

Isolated from their kinsmen and the protection of their ancestral spirits, the colonists miss the emotional and social satisfactions of extended family living as well as the security of an established position in the community in which they were born. Adherence to the traditional kinship organization, with its emphasis on obedience to the elders who
[582] have remained behind in the Yatenga, makes marriage at the Niger project almost impossible.

The young men born and raised at the project resent the tradition

423 village in whose territory the bush is located. They belong to all the people of the village, for Mossi chiefs have not set those trees aside for themselves as they did with the néré trees.

222 137 The néré are found in large numbers in Mossi territory, although they are far less numerous than the karité, which literally fill the bush. The ratio must be something like one /497/ néré for every fifteen karité. The néré is nevertheless far from rare, and sometimes ten or fifteen are to be found together, standing not far apart. The néré is easily distinguished by its branches which expand in a fanlike arrangement from a short but elegant trunk. The branches spread out very prettily, in triangular fashion, so the néré blossoms out like a shower of fireworks. Its leaves are no less characteristic than its shape. They are of a dark, oxydized green which contrasts with the superb brilliant green of the karité. The néré leaves are similar to those of the acacia.

The néré is called roga or goaga, doga or doaga in Mossi. It is called soungou in Nounouma and Kassouna, sɔ̀la in Sissala. The Nankana call it roga or doga like the Mossi.

The fruits of the néré are long brown pods that grow in clusters on the tree and that contain a yellow substance, sweet to the taste, packed around a sort of very elongated pit. The women gather these 222 fruits approximately from March 15 to April 15. The neré trees 423 standing in a field belong to the owner of the field, but the Mossi village chiefs claim ownership to those that stand in the uncultivated bush.

Among the Gourounsi, as we know, the néré that stand in a field, even if the latter is not being cultivated at the moment, belong to the owner of the field, while those that stand in the uncultivated bush surrounding the village belong to all the people of the village.

This points up the difference between a centralized kingdom where the authority of the chiefs is strong, and small independent cantons or villages where it is not.

252 Néré is put to many uses. First of all, the yellow meal, in- 261 cluding the more solid central part that runs from one end of the pod to the other like a pit, is mashed by the women in millet mortars or in wooden gourds. Once mashed, it is thinned with

252 boiling water and eaten in this fashion. This is an important source
261 of food in times of famine which, when they come among the Blacks, usually come in May, June, and the first half of July. The néré gathered in March and April comes just in time to combat the famine.

/498/ As for the seeds of the fruit, they are removed and set
252 aside before the sweet meal is mashed. They are preserved to make
263 kologo (the Mossi name) or soumbara (the Mandé name), a pungent condiment highly prized by the Blacks. In order to make this, the women boil the seeds, allow them to cool, stamp on them to remove the skin, and wash them carefully at the watercourse. Sometimes the skin is removed by hand. Then they are cooked for 24 hours, and steeped in water for another 48 in a well-covered canari, in the shade, in a damp spot, to rot the seeds. Then they are laid to dry in the sun on a mat for two days, and pressed with the hands into balls of varying size. It is in this shape that the soumbara is utilized or sold. In Mossi territory, small balls are
[435] worth 100 cowries apiece and large ones 300. At Leo, in Nounouma territory, all balls are the same size and worth 100 cowries. In appearance, the kologo is rather similar to that black coloring matter used by French housewives to add substance to the broth. Whenever a woman wants to use some kologo, to add some to the sauce, she pries loose a small piece from the ball with the tip of a knife and mashes it with the crushing stone. She pours the resulting powder into the sauce.

356 Let us note further that the bark of the néré pod is also used, although not for eating purposes. The Mossi and Gourounsi use it to blacken and polish the floor of their huts and clay roofs. The néré bark is seeped in water for one day, and then the water is tossed on the surface to be polished, that has been tamped down carefully first. The floor is tamped again with the water, and then allowed to dry. This is done three or four times, and in the end the clay surface acquires a handsome black or grey polish. It almost becomes a mirror if the procedure is carried out properly.

284 Finally, to close our list of the uses to which néré is put, we
291 have seen that the brown filaments that grow on the bark of the néré pod are used among the Gourounsi to make belts for /499/ the women, or rather cords to hold up the bunches of leaves that constitute the sole garment of local ladies.

222 These pods, of course, are not eaten. They merely serve to
263 make the tô sauce fresh and sour, as the Blacks like it.

[261] The pods[1] themselves are only eaten in times of famine, because they give colic. In addition, they harm the mouth, tongue, and teeth (gingivitis).

In ordinary times, the natives use them medically as a fever remedy. They boil them with pimento and drink the decoction. This is done by the Mossi as well as by the Gourounsi, Bambara, etc.

Tamarind pods are also made into dry balls which are sold at market. They are crudely mashed with a pestle, and then pressed together in cold water into balls of varying size. Whenever one wishes to give the to a tamarind taste, one pries loose a small piece of the ball with a knife and places it in the canari of boiling water where millet flour will be added.

278 Like the Bambara, the Mossi prepare a purging drink with the
757 tamarind pod, either fresh or dried. It is boiled in water, a tiny bit of millet flour is added, and the drink is consumed when slightly warm. This decoction has laxative properties. The Haoussa are also familiar with it, but the Gourounsi are not.

222 To summarize, the tamarind pod has two chief uses among the
137 Mossi and other Blacks of West Africa. It serves to sour and freshen the tô, and it also serves as a purgative.

222 Let us add that Dr. Rançon, in the account of his /501/ trip through Upper Gambia, described the preparation of a tamarind drink for European consumption. The pod is left to dissolve in cold water for three hours, sugar is added, and a sort of lemonade results.

222 The Mossi have rônier in every village. This, as we know, is a
137 variety of palm tree.

"It is the largest palm tree, Borassus flabelliformis," says Dr. Rançon (Dans la Haute-Gambie, pages 139 to 141). "It is easy to recognize owing to its height and characteristic appearance. Its trunk is very long and may sometimes reach 25 or 30 meters. It is swollen in the middle, and its lower and upper parts are much less thick, much more slender. The bark is blackish and bears scars of the wounds left by fallen leaves. The wood, although it looks spongy, is quite tough and hard to dent with a saw. Rônier logs are heavier than water. This is one of the rare woods that do not float. The leaves of a grown rônier are clustered in a thick bunch at the

[1] [i.e. tamarind pods — Analyst]

222 137 top of the trunk, and they are deeply indented. The trunk never bears leaves except when it is young. The dark green of the leaves and their toughness makes /sic/ them look from afar like the artificial zinc leaves of some theatrical backdrops or weather vanes. The youngest leaves at the top are strongly imbricated and ensheathed, and ivory white in color. They are very tender and yield palm cabbage. The leaves of the rônier only fall off when completely dry.

"The fruits, which are called rône, come in clusters of about forty or fifty. They are the size of a medium-sized melon and very heavy. Their covering is green when they are young, orange-yellow when they are ripe. The large seeds, which are blackish and disc-shaped, or like spheres flattened at the poles, are surrounded with a fibrous, gold-yellow meat which is very watery and very fragrant. Its taste is pleasant, although slightly tinged with turpentine. The [261] natives eat large quantities of it, especially in times of scarcity.

313 137 "Rônier wood is dense, long lasting, and remarkably tough. 502/ Immune to insects and humidity, it is excellently suited to the manufacture of piles, and often used in the construction of bridges and wharves. The male trees alone are used. The female trees can only be used for fencing, for they are hollow and lacking in strength....

222 137 262 "In addition to the fruit, the Blacks also eat the roots of the young shoots, the taste of which is slightly astringent and rather unpleasant. They are eaten raw. The terminal buds of the palms are very tender. They are palm cabbages, less tasty to be sure than those of Oreodoxa oleracea, but nevertheless deserving of recognition. When cut into small pieces 2 centimeters square and well seasoned with oil, vinegar, salt and pepper, they make a very good salad, especially if they were previously soaked for twenty-four hours. This dish is highly prized by Europeans who live in the Sudan. Finally, [263] the rônier yields a fairly abundant sap from which sugar might be 273 extracted. When fermented, it produces a palm wine of inferior quality."

137 It must be added that the fibers of the rônier leaves are also [285] utilized. The West African Blacks use them to make baskets (as for example in Mossi territory) or cords (as for instance in Upper Gambia).

222 137 Now for the kankanga (plural kankansé; the Bambara and Malinké call it n'toro, the Foulbé guip-bi, and the Nounouma /504/ kaporo). The kankanga is the native fig tree of West Africa. Its fruits are none other than figs, not as good to be sure as those eaten in Europe, but figs nevertheless. The Mossi, as well as the Gourounsi, Bambara, etc., usually eat these figs as they are. There are ripe ones to be found at all times of the year, and one plucks them at will. 252 261 In times of famine, instead of eating them in this fashion, one allows them to dry in the sun and then mashes them on crushing stones (among the Mossi) or in small mortars (among the Bambara). They are thus made into a sort of meal which is boiled and which serves as a substitute for millet flour. At such times the Mossi also eat the leaves of the kankanga. They cook them in boiling water and add salt.

As for the Gourounsi, sometimes they eat the figs fresh, and 252 sometimes they prepare them for their sauces. In the latter case they boil them, cut them to pieces, and dry them in the sun. When the pieces are quite dry they are laid aside, and whenever needed one of them is mashed, reduced to powder, and added to the sauce.

222 137 Now for nobora or noboga (n'kouna in Mandé, kountan in Khassonké /Kasonke/, hèdè in Foulbé and Toucouleur, kounguié in Sarakolé, salo in Nounouma, kansalo in Kassouna).

The nobora is a kind of wild plum tree. Its fruits ripen from the time when millet is sown until the time when it reaches a height of 80 centimeters, that is to say, between May and July.

273 The fruits of the n'kouna are either eaten fresh or made into a sort of drink called noborame in Mossi, n'kounangui in Mandé, n'diam hèdam in Foulbé. In all three tongues, this means "nobora (or n'kouna) water." This drink is known throughout the Sudan.

In order to prepare this drink, the fruits are placed in water after being pricked with a small piece of wood to let the juice run, and they are left there for twelve hours. At the end of this period of time, they are removed and the water is boiled for a /505/ quarter of an hour. Once this is done, one takes some of the residue left at the bottom of the canari in which dolo is made, and puts it in the jar containing n'kounangui. The liquid is allowed to rest for one night. In the morning, the drink is gaseous and ready for consumption. It is not as strong as dolo.

222 come, and they are not used to prepare any sort of drink.
137 The n'saba is found almost everywhere in West Africa, but grows scarcer toward the north. It is found in Mossi and Gourounsi territories in very small numbers.

314 The Dagari, who live farther south than the Gourounsi, gather the caoutchouc from the n'saba lianas and make wads with it for the tip of the sticks used to beat their tom-toms. The Gourounsi griot purchase these sticks from the Dagari. The Mossi and Gourounsi do not themselves gather the n'saba caoutchouc.

In the south this liana is used to make cords, but this is not done among the Mossi or Gourounsi.

222 In addition to the plants we have just mentioned and which
137 are utilized at all times, there are others whose products are used
261 almost exclusively in times of famine. Such are the konkouira,
252 sabatouli, silikoré, etc.

The konkouira is a big tree whose Mandé name is n'zéfé. Its leaves are gathered when they are beginning to grow when they are still quite tender. They are mashed in a small mortar with a pestle, and then placed in water for two hours. Then they are worked into balls, with the addition of millet flour. A canari is filled with water and put on the fire /508/, and then twigs are laid across its mouth, parallel to each other, to form a grill on which the konkouira balls are placed. In order to ensure thorough cooking, the balls are covered with an overturned gourd which encloses them and prevents the steam from escaping too rapidly. The balls are steamed in this fashion for one hour, and then they are ready to eat.

These leaves are never eaten straight but always with millet flour, and they really serve to stretch the flour supply. If they were eaten straight, they would cause colic. In any case they cause hiccups (gounsounkouira in Mossi). They are therefore more a food for times of famine.

The silikoré or kalanianga (both are Mossi names) is a small thorny bush that grows around trees and bears very small fruits. The women gather those fruits during the rainy season. They mash them in a small trough and then boil them in a canari. This first water is discarded, and the fruits boiled a second time. Again the water is discarded, and the fruits are washed in cold water. Karité butter and salt are added, and the mixture is eaten. The silikoré are used

222 chiefly in times of famine, but occasionally at other times also.
137 The silikoré fruits are not eaten among the Gourounsi and Bam-
●261 bara.
252 Gonsé is called sofarangoni in Bambara. It is a shrub, the height of a man, that yields kéména. The latter is a pod containing small flat beans of a sort, very thin, that ripen at the time of the millet harvest. These /beans/ are boiled twice, and the water is discarded both times. Then they are washed in cold water and boiled again, for the last time, in a canari covered with a straw lid. Once this is done karité butter is added, and the mixture is eaten. Kéména
[435] is sold at market ready made. A handful is worth 5 cowries (1/2 centime). Kéména is also mixed with /true/ beans and either eaten or sold in this fashion.

Lamboye is called béré in Bambara, guidili in Peuhl. It is found almost everywhere in the Sudan. Its fruits, or rather seeds, are eaten only in times of famine. They are round, very /509/ tiny, and they ripen during the dry and warm season. They are gathered, laid out in the sun, and then crushed in a small mortar to break the outer membrane. Once this is done, they are soaked in water for eight days. This water is discarded, and the seeds are washed twice. Then they are boiled, salt is added, and they are eaten. This is done only in times of famine. These seeds are poisonous, as we can see, and would be toxic if they were not submitted to these various processes.

222 Sabatouli (bembé in Bambara and Sòninké) is a tree whose fruits
137 ripen one month after the first rains (that is, in May). The fruit is very tiny, no larger than a grain of maize. One eats it as it comes, when passing by or clearing land in the bush, or else one takes it to the village children. Nothing else is done with it. Sabatouli is found almost everywhere in the Sudan.

Vâka is a tree which is called goumou or goumbou in Bambara. The flowers of this tree, which are red, are used to make sauce when there is no gombo left. It is called fofo in Nounouma and Sissala, kafro in Kassouna. Its fruits are not eaten.

We overlooked the jujube tree above. It is called mourouga in Mossi, n'tomono in Bambara, gouésso in Nounouma and Kassouna. The Mossi eat the fruits only when traveling through the bush. The Gourounsi do not eat them at all.

222 137 Let us mention also kankalra (lenga in Mandé), whose leaves are eaten by the Mossi.

We have just reviewed the trees and shrubs whose produce is utilized by the Mossi. We must still say a word about mushrooms, wild roots, and wild fodder.

Mushrooms are called goudou in Mossi, dakon in Nounouma and Kassouna, kon in Sissala. They grow in the Mossi bush during the winter season, as they do in Gourounsi territory and incidentally throughout West Africa, and they are gathered by the women. Two kinds are distinguished, the /510/ termite-nest mushrooms (yaoré-goudou in Mossi, from yaoré, "termite nest," and goûdou, "mushroom") and the mushrooms that grow among refuse. The latter are called niandara-goûdou, meaning "straw mushrooms," because they grow chiefly under old discarded roof thatch. These mushrooms taste better, but those on termite nests are bigger.

252 The Mossi cook mushrooms in karité butter, mash them in the butter, and eat them. They also use them to make a sauce for the sarabout to which body is added with beans, cooked separately and also mashed. The sarabout (Mossi name for tô) is eaten after dipping in the bean-and-mushroom sauce.

Gourounsi women boil the mushrooms and then leave them to dry on the soukala roofs. They take a handful or two a day for their sauces. To this end, they boil the mushrooms again without mashing them and add soumbara and salt. Mushrooms are never served as a separate dish among the Gourounsi.

Let us proceed to edible roots.

222 137 Vidiba is a sort of wild onion called fanto by the Bambara, Sarakolé, and Foulbé.

261 252 The Bambara use vidiba leaves to make sauce, but they do not eat the onion itself because it is poisonous. The Mossi do likewise, except in times of famine. At such times, the onion is rubbed with sand until the black membrane is removed, and then it is copiously washed. Then it is boiled in a canari filled with water to the brim and covered, and the cooking is maintained until all the water has evaporated. Then ashes are gathered, strained, and added to the contents of the gourd. The mixture is stirred with a piece of wood, and then the vidiba is removed, cut to pieces, and eaten.

222 137 261 Séba is a kind of long, poisonous, black turnip which is eaten only in times of famine and after protracted cooking.

Seba and vidiba caused the death of many people during the last Mossi famine by giving them dysentery.

137 231 /511/ As for wild fodder found in Mossi territory, there is first of all kénibédo, that grows in bunches 30 centimeters high in damp hollows. Its leaves are rudimentary. It is severed 20 centimeters from the ground and stored during the dry season.

Then there are the fodder plants belonging to the papilionaceous family, densa and youbenga. The tiny stem of densa or youbenga is not severed from the plant itself, which reaches a height of 0.30 or 0.40 meter in both cases. Horses eat them either green or dry, indiscriminately.

137 314 283 Finally, let us say a word about souga, a sort of wild hemp called thus by the Mossi. The Nounouma call it boupo, and the Kassouna bénédévio. It is found only in certain parts of Mossi territory, but it grows throughout Gourounsi lands. Its bark yields very tough white fibers which the natives use in the manufacture of rope, string or thread for fishing implements. The bark does not keep through the dry season, so it is reduced to fibers during the rainy season. The fibers, on the other hand, can take the most intensive dryness without deteriorating. Souga is not cultivated.

222 433 We are now finished with Mossi gathering activities. They have a certain importance, as we have just seen, the same one on the whole as in other Sudanese populations. They are infinitely less important than cultivation, of course, but only slightly less so than stockbreeding, and they must be placed on the same level as the hunt. They are far more important than fishing or arboriculture.

245 433 The latter deserves no real mention. It hardly exists among the Mossi. It is limited to what we described earlier about the rónier and to the planting, here and there, of a few papaw trees.

433 In short, cultivation comes first, with stockbreeding trailing far behind, then gathering and hunting on the same level, then fishing and finally arboriculture.

010 /512/ Industries flourish among the Mossi. We shall review one by one, in detail, the various trades they exercise.

592 Here we get an average of 144 persons per family, 15 persons per
596 compound, and 6 persons per household. This gives 2 or 3 households
162 per compound and 9 to 10 compounds per family.
261 Finally, here are some figures obtained among the Mossi in the northern part of the /Ouahigouya/ circle /a circle is an administrative district/.

Villages	Compounds	Persons	Average per Compound	Observations
Boulzoma	1	39 (1)	39	(1) 7 households
Aoréma	50	672	13	
Bogoya	29	379 (2)	13	(2) 64 households
Yabonsoro	37	494 (3)	13	(3) 74 households
Bagayaloro	14	290	21	
Barélogo	17	317	19	
Lilligondé	12	177	15	
Rikou	33	486	15	
Dinghiri	59	725	12	
Dinghila	44	362	8	
Irigué	17	94	6	
Bahn (Mossi)	3	54	18	
Pogoro	38	334	8	
Ninighé	7	75	11	
Séghé	8	111	14	
Tibo	19	228	12	
Totals	388	4,837	12 to 13	

Here we have only 12 or 13 persons per compound (and 6 per household). This shows an evolution of the Mossi family of Yatenga toward /227/ a more disintegrated form, which we shall discuss later when we mention the exceptions.

If we summarize the preceding statistics, we obtain the following table.

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162
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Locations	Families	Compounds	Persons
Diogoré, etc.	43	179	5, 248
Oula, etc.	32	127	3, 313
Koussouka	24	228	3, 456
Northern part	?	369	4, 609
	?	903	16, 626

This gives us on an average 18 to 19 persons per compound and 121 persons per family (1).

1. This figure of 18 to 19 persons is an average one. Actually, there are some Mossi compounds which contain only 3 persons and others which boast as many as 100. To give a better idea of the matter, I shall provide below a numerical breakdown of the village of Diessiré (canton of Léba) where there are 286 persons and 15 compounds, or an average of 19 persons per compound. In reality, no one compound holds exactly 19 people.

Compounds	Households	Persons
First compound	4	24
Second compound	3	18
Third compound	1	6
Fourth compound	2	11
Fifth compound	4	23
Sixth compound	3	17
Seventh compound	1	5
Eighth compound	2	12
Ninth compound	2	12
Tenth compound	1	6
Eleventh compound	2	12
Twelfth compound	14	81
Thirteenth compound	3	18

644 431 The Mogho Naba spends the rest of the day receiving individuals who have come to see him, accepting poussoum (gifts to the chief) and giving dam, gouré, foutou (garments), etc., and listening to the praises of his courtiers.

Mogho Naba Na Tough'la, "The Mogho Naba Goes to La" (1)

1. A dependent village in the administrative district of Yako, Koudougou Circle.

173 644 Tradition relates that a certain Mogho Naba, Naba Warga, had a favorite, the only one who knew that his preferred food was léla (fruit of the léhinga or wild plum tree). It should be added [262] that ordinarily anything might be chosen as a favorite food, and it should not be supposed that the Mogho Naba eats only the best foods. Obviously he does not lack choice morsels, but he cannot be expected to like everything. One day this woman asked leave to visit her home at La and failed to return. The Magho Naba, tired of waiting and missing his favorite food, had his horse saddled one morning and announced that he wished to go and join his wife. His ministers begged him to stay at home and asked him to put off his departure until the next day... Every morning the preparations for the departure were repeated and always there was the same pleading, up to the time of the ruler's death. His son, [61] who succeeded him, chose to follow his example. The following paragraph describes the manner in which this custom was still practiced only a few years ago.

When the Mogho Naba appears in the morning, one of his [492] horses, partially harnessed, is brought into the courtyard bearing a saddle with silver stirrups, but with the girth unbuckled. After the Mogho Naba has responded to the salutations of his ministers and the whole court and has dealt with some minor matters, he declares that he is going to La. The court officials, especially the Kamsaongo Naba, appear before him and say: "Sire, order them to unsaddle your horse; you shall go tomorrow." The Mogho Naba of course agrees to this, but he retires to his apartments rather

241 Baningha (large white millet or sorghum).

These two types are grown for food, [247] although the large white millet is especially reserved for horses in well-to-do households.

[262 273] Kazinga (large red millet). As a food the poorer Mossi prefer this to the baningha, but it is more especially grown for the making of dam, millet beer.

[556] Mouf (rice) is sought only by the chiefs, notables, and a few families of dakangba (well-to-do men).

Benga (beans).

Souma (peas of either the small green variety or large white or red ones).

Niouyan (from niouri, "yam"), grown only in certain areas.

Nangouri or sounkama (peanuts).

Pèsça (fabirama) [a tuber plant].

Sinni or sili (sesame), grown only by a few people who like it.

Bito (sorrel), used in preparing the sauce served with sagbo.

Mana (gombo [okra]) is also cultivated.

Aside from its food crops, each family has its own plot for cotton (lamdo) which provides for the clothing needed during the year.

311 178 I am told that fields are much more extensive today than in former times, in spite of the abolition of slavery. This is explained by the fact that many areas supposed to be haunted were formerly left uncultivated. It is said, however, that the Moaga used to grow larger crops since in those days he was closer to the soil.

[248] At the present time there is a lack of farm hands. As [857] recently as twenty years ago, the young Moaga followed his parents to the field as soon as he was six or seven years old. He took a liking to the work at a very young age. Before the French [484] occupation, the Moaga rarely left his village because of the dangers on the roads, frequented in those days by bandits (usually descend- [579] ants of naba). People were even afraid to go into the bush alone, for fear of being attacked, captured, and reduced to slavery.

433 178 There was little contact even between adjoining villages. At Ouagadougou, no one ventured from section to section unless he had very good reason and was armed to the teeth. In short, everyone

433 made do with what his own village could produce, and there was
178 really no trade in the ordinary sense of the word. The Moaga, essentially a stay-at-home, depended on the soil for food and clothing.

241 Only two new crops have been added since the coming of the
177 French: yams (na-niouyan, "chiefs' yams") and white potatoes. The recent increase in the cultivation of cotton makes it easier for the natives to meet their tax, and this encourages them to grow even more.

178 The French occupation has brought many benefits in its wake (creation of a network of roads, peace and the resulting free circulation among the villages, and suppression of banditry and looting), but it has also given the Moaga a desire to leave the country.

167 The extensive recruitment of [249] laborers for the needs of other colonies in the area, for work on the roads, and for the now
444 obligatory military service -- all of which are accepted reluctantly by the Mossi -- has caused many young men to emigrate.

Some of them set out, for the Gold Coast preferably, without the slightest means of support. They go to work in the English colony in order to earn money for clothes. Since they had no money when they started out, they remain there for months or even years, and this seriously diminishes the agricultural labor force at home. It also forces their old and helpless relatives to cultivate their fields alone.

Besides, so many of them never return!

The Native Diet

262 Sagbo (millet mush) is the principal item in the Mossi diet at all social levels. Rice, regarded as a luxury food, is eaten by the naba and notables. It costs from two and a half to three francs a
[435] kilogram at Ouagadougou and is therefore too expensive for most people. It may be added that it rarely is found in the diet of civil service employees.

264 Mossi chiefs usually have two main meals a day: a [250] first meal of sagbo or rice at around nine in the morning, and a second

304 to look into the enclosure. If he should commit such an indiscretion which is considered a gross blunder, he at once suffers the consequences. He is immediately dragged into the circle undressed, and circumcised without any consultation with his relatives.

It is strictly forbidden to enter the kéogo, with néoda (shoes), a pougla [269] (red fez), and kandé (spears). If a canton chief should take it into his head to visit the circumcised boys -- an unlikely situation -- he would have to leave all his insignia of rank outside.

304 834 Since it has been observed that young men who have had sexual intercourse before their circumcision had difficulty in being healed after the operation, they are advised to avoid sexual intercourse for the first few months after the scars form.

304 262 They do not eat wagha sauce (a sauce made of the immature fruit of the wagka, a tree of the kapok family).

Required exercises for the bankoensé. The bankoensé are 304 526 required to perform painful and tiring exercises, which considerably retards their recovery. We shall describe the principal ones below.

Very early in the morning when it is very cool -- we have pointed out that the ceremony takes place at the beginning of the cool season -- the boys are awakened and forced to lie prone on the cold sand without any covering. This is the bourga. Naturally enough, the limbs become a bit stiff, so they are roundly whipped with berrella (branches of certain trees), ostensibly to give them warmth and strength. Then, to the beat of the tom-toms, they must do the exercise called guella. This difficult feat involves jumping like a frog from a crouching position [270] and at intervals making a circular movement with the legs. They may also be required to do the even more difficult nagda, an exercise which involves walking on the hands with the legs in the air. Another exercise requires the boys, starting from an erect position, to bend backwards until the hands touch the ground. This is called kaougsèga, "back breaker." The unfortunates whose hands fail to reach the ground get a bump on the head. There are also movements of the head called zouanka, like those made by Kassonké girls and the Wiskamba of Mossi country.

133 are bordered with hills. Nevertheless, it may be said that Mossi country is flat. It is covered with the classic bush of the Sudan with
[137] its small shrubs and tall grass interspersed with bastard mahogany, /7/ huge trunks of the baobabs, and tamarind and silk-cotton trees, thicker on the banks of the Volta rivers, thinner around the villages.

241 The country is quite fertile and easily provides for its inhabitants.
262 The various kinds of millet grow well, especially the small white variety (Pennisetum spicatum) which, mashed and boiled, is the staple of the diet and sorghum, or large red millet, which is used to prepare the famous beer of the country. The horses eat the latter kind, although they prefer the large white millet. Around the huts maize grows well in soil fertilized by the daily accumulation of waste. It is a welcome source of grain when the millet reserves of the previous year are running low and the current harvest has not yet matured. Maize fields are surrounded with a double row of sorghum and often
[283] with a double row of a fiber plant called bérensé, a sort of hemp which the natives use to make ropes. After the maize has been harvested, the field is planted with previously prepared tobacco seedlings. Finally, the sunken areas created when huts are built, as well as all slightly damp places, are planted with gombo, okra, which is highly valued as a sauce ingredient.

[311] During the rainy season no piece of land remains unused around the villages, and when the red millet ripens and the ears join across the path, passage becomes difficult. Even the hut roofs bear all kinds
[415] of calabash plants. These supply the housewives with gourds that fulfill the purposes served by our plates, dishes, glasses, and basins; the travellers with their flasks; the snuff-takers with their boxes; and the sorcerers with their spirit-calling instruments. The large gourds that are used to make drums grow among the shoots of maize. In the marshes near the watercourses where water lies stagnant, rice fields are planted, but rice is a luxury food, hard to cultivate because of
[554] the care it requires. The natives use it only on feast days or when they wish to honor a distinguished guest. Cotton is sown in damp places among the stalks of large red millet, and it is harvested much later. Peanuts and peas also take up part of the cultivated land, while beans creep along the ground between the shoots of small millet. Peppers, sesame, the indigo plant, yams, manioc, sweet potatoes, and a small

241 tuber, Coleus coffini, which Europeans call oussounifing or fabirama,
262 and which may replace potatoes in a pinch, are cultivated in the soils most propitious to them.

221 The precious karite /shea/ tree (Butyrospermum parkii) grows in
262 most fields; its fruit, prized for its cool and slightly sweet flesh, con-
137 tains a pit which yields karite butter, the fat most widely used in
[388] cooking and to make soap. Around the villages, and sometimes even within them, the néré /locust bean/ tree (Parkia africana) produces
[356] elongated pods; its bark, mashed in water, yields a paste that is used to harden the floors of the huts. Its flour makes a cooling drink when
[272] mixed in water, and it may also be eaten; its seeds /8/ are used to make kalro /kalre in the original/, the soumbara of the Bambara, an ingredient /made from locust beans, héré/ of all carefully prepared
137 sauces. The doubalé and silk-cotton or kapokiero trees spread their shade over the weavers, numerous among the Mossi, and over the talkers who are even more. Bamboo grows well in the damp southern regions, and the palm oil tree is occasionally found. The caoutchouc liana, however, has not yet been introduced.

231 Small chickens run in all directions through the villages, along with domesticated guinea hens. Everywhere in the bush near the huts,
[857] little boys herd goats and sheep; this is the task of youngsters here at the age when their contemporaries among us /in France/ begin to learn the alphabet. The most common sheep and goats are small in size. The sheep have short hair. Sometimes, especially in the larger villages where markets are held, goats and sheep are to be seen with
[439] long legs and long, curled horns. They are imported from the north-east and fattened to be sold as butcher's meat. The height of fashion for the wife or a prosperous naba is to be followed by a Touareg /Tuareg/ sheep, well washed and very white. It is fed on millet leftovers and bean mush, and its mistress often presents it with a bit of salt to lick. In short, it is well cared for and agreeably fat; on some important feast day, it will embellish the menu.

The huts are usually guarded by very commonplace dogs, often ill-tempered, but cowardly. A stick is enough to drive them away.
[224] They are mostly used in the hunt, the great Mossi pastime during the dry season. Domesticated ducks are sometimes found in nabas' households, as well as pigeons, but these birds are not widespread and not within the reach of everyone. Finally, almost every group of huts has cats which belong to the women and which are difficult

585 been gathered together in a basket — clothes varying in number with the family's wealth, gourds, a pot for the sauce, a wooden spoon to stir the millet mush — the father tells the groom's messenger that the wedding date has been set for a certain day, nearly always on a Friday, sometimes Thursday. For the second time, the groom prepares the festivities and again the food and the drink. In the evening, his friends go out to meet the bride who is accompanied by her family. When nearing the village, they all let loose merry cries, "you, you", the bride pretends to run away, and the young men run after her and bear her on their shoulders to the head of the groom's family or to one of his uncles. And the party begins. The men eat millet mush [262] and a chicken; the women, millet mush and a guinea hen. They all drink beer, dance, and sing.

[302] On the following morning, the groom's relatives shave the bride's head, and that of her husband if she is his first wife, because their way of life has changed: the young man has become the master of a hut, and the young girl a wife. In the evening, the friends and relatives of the new husband go to the bride's village bearing in this order: a sheep killed at the husband's house, jars of beer, and finally the sarabo /millet mush/. The bride's relatives follow in complete silence /32/ and without greeting anybody. When they arrive at the home of the bride's family, the bearer of the sheep and the women who carry the millet beer and sarabo go into the inner courtyard and put down their loads; then they come out and dance, while the in-laws have the food transferred to other containers. The jars are returned to the bearers, who are driven away with blows by millet stalks and a sprinkling of water mixed with ashes.

All the while, the bride stays in the soukala of the elder, watched closely by his first wife. She remains shut in for several days, until the elder finally decides to send her to her husband. His wife prepares millet mush, sauce, and meat, and brings a jug of beer. The old women assemble and accompany the bride to the home of her husband. He returns the courtesy to the elder on the following day. Henceforth, they are married at long last.

If the new husband is prosperous, he goes to thank his in-laws a [431] few days after the festivities. In leather pouches sewn all around, he offers 1, 300 cowries to his father-in-law and 1, 400 to his mother-in-law. If he can, he also offers beer, two chickens, and a sheep. These last gifts are less essential, but if he fails to offer the cowries, the in-laws may seize his wife's children and keep them until the thank-you gifts have been received.

221 they will be working, they open the door of the cage and the mother
235 hen comes out. She is tied to the basket with a string, and the chicks run around her. If their master finds a good termite nest, he takes it to his little charges and breaks it in two. In the evening he puts the hen and chicks back into the basket and carries it home suspended from his shoulder.

[805] The heavy rains fall in July and August. This is summer (seoro).
221 Whenever the ground is not too soggy, everybody runs to the fields at
241 dawn and works until nightfall. One or two women stay home to pre-
476 pare food for the laborers, whose strength must be maintained for all this hard work. No one may rest. Only the sick and the helpless old people stay home, and even they are put to work, looking after the babies. This is the time when wealthy people call friends to their aid. The owner of a vast field has every member of the village notified — especially the young men, those who own some obligation toward him, those who have an eye on his daughters — that on a certain date he will be weeding his field, and at dawn of that day everyone gathers and labors while the drums spur them on. On another occasion, this man in turn will help those who have worked for him. This practice of mutual aid is very advantageous because a field overgrown with weeds is cleaned in a single day, but it becomes onerous when people must appeal to their neighbors several times in the course of a season.

221 The heavy rains stop in August or September, the maize is ripe,
241 and feasting begins. Roasted corn ears are a prized tidbit, especially
262 when the kernels are still tender. There is one kind of maize, faintly sweet, which when sautéed in butter recalls our garden peas. Everywhere the children and even the elders feast on maize; everywhere people offer a visitor a few ears of maize, which are often roasted on the spot. When the maize harvest is completed, maize gruel, which recalls the famous Italian polenta, advantageously replaces millet mush and brings a pleasant change to the daily fare, especially since gombo is ripening and adds variety to the sauce as well. Bellies fill out, faces glow with health, and as a very natural sequence, hearts are flooded with joy. The end of the dry season may have been difficult because millet was running low; the winter tasks may have been laborious; but now everyone makes up for it. The harvested maize is replaced in the fields by tobacco; its seedlings were prepared as the harvest drew near.

[805] At the end of September or beginning of October, the large red millet is ripe. This is autumn (houpéla). Maize is now too tough

22/ for roasting and is replaced with green millet, eaten raw after being
24/ beaten with a small stick to remove the chaff. /47/ Certain kinds of
26 large millet are sweet and not too unpleasant to eat in this fashion.
Horses grow fat because millet is their staple food and they may eat
22 as much as they please. Men also profit greatly, because beer brewed
24 from new millet tastes much better than that made from old millet,
27 and when millet abounds, drink is never wanting. At this time rice is
harvested, threshed on the threshing floors, and laid aside carefully
for festive occasions.

At the end of October the rains have stopped almost completely.
22 The beans are gathered and laid out in the fields on millet stalks or
24 on séko held up from the ground by forked stakes to keep the termites
from eating them, or the beans may be brought home and tossed on the
séko which serve as shelters in front of the soukala. Now is the time
to harvest the small millet, which is dry. The millet stalks are severed
at ground level by the men and laid out with all heads oriented in the
same direction to facilitate the work of the women, who cut off the
heads and gather them in heaps. When the millet has been cut, the
women fill their baskets. The largest containers are used for the
occasion, and each woman uses her ingenuity to pile the millet as
high as possible over her basket, using the longest ears or bean stems
as supports, like the Zouaves who vie for the tallest pack. Should the
line of women on their way back to the village meet a man known for
his generosity, they sing, cry out, and surround him until he throws
them a few handfuls of cowries to buy a jar of beer.

22 As they near the threshing floor their cries get louder, and each
24 woman comes to the granary and hands her basket to the man who
25 stands there. These granaries are very crudely built and consist basi-
34 cally of sticks driven into the ground in a circle to hold up a séko
which is wrapped around them. The floor is made up of another séko,
usually resting on the ground but sometimes raised on stones or forked
sticks to avoid termites. This is where the millet is placed prior to
threshing. The granaries stand around the threshing floor of beaten
earth, which is located 100 or 200 meters from the village, some-
674 times even farther. Thieves are no important threat. They may cut
down millet when it stands in the bush, but they rarely steal millet
already stored. Only goats, sheep, and guinea hens are to be feared,
and they are kept away from the granaries by thorns.

22 As soon as these heavier tasks are over, everyone digs up peanuts
24 and peas. The whole family gathers under the shade of a tree, and

766 Suicides are buried like our dogs; here, all dogs are eaten. Lepers
[761] are buried at night without festivities. Accidental death, whether
from a fall, snake bite, or any other cause, is attributed to an evil
[262] spirit who must not be irked by granting funerary honors to its victim,
or else it would return and kill another member of the family. This
is why those who die of an accident are buried without ceremonies
and without undertakers. Their heads are not shaved, because God has
called them with their hair on, as the Mossi say. A pit is dug, they
769 are buried, and that is all. They have no one to represent them; to
the anniversary of their death, the kouré, they have no kourita.

Every Mossi who dies of illness, be it man, woman, child, or naba, survives in the person of the kourita. In the case of a married man, the kourita or koutoarsa (who imitates the deceased) is a woman of the dead person's family, usually one of the wives of one of his younger brothers, someone who bears a certain resemblance to the deceased. She is chosen by the family, and sometimes designated by the dying person. She wears the clothes of the deceased, his shirt, his blanket, his hat, his shoes, his bracelets, and his rings; she wears his belt and knives, walks with his staff, his hoe, his doré, and bears his spear, blade pointing toward the ground. She walks like the person she represents. She must imitate him in every way and keep his presence alive in the household. If the deceased was usually accompanied by a /73/ child bearing his satchel, the kourita is followed by the same child bearing the same satchel, but turned inside out. If the deceased was a leper and had no fingers, she pretends not to have any; if he liked to laugh, she laughs; if he was peevish and quarreled with everyone, she maintains a constant state of anger. The children of the deceased call her their father; the wives call her their husband and prepare her millet mush. If the dead man was a naba, she is called naba; if he was not, she is called by the name of the deceased.

769 She acts in this manner until the day of koure. On that day she
428 shaves her head like the other members of the family, and her role
ends there. She retains the name kourita, however, and on the day when the inheritance is distributed, she receives a garment in exchange for the clothes of the deceased. If the heir is generous, if the inheritance allows it, she is given some livestock, sometimes a child. It is said that the kourita dies sooner than if she had not played this role, because the ancestral spirits will come and fetch her. For this reason, the position is not in great demand.

577
673 insofar as they involve an offense to justice. /88/ I do not speak of
[839] unnatural practices, which are almost unknown. When theft, murder, even insults, blows and wounds are punished, they are punished as injustices. Calumny is abhorred, and it is a very serious insult to say that someone has slandered someone else. A Mossi will not forgive an insult against his mother, because it is prejudicial to the family honor and hence to himself. In dealing with the natives, therefore, it is necessary to be careful and not to commit any injustices. They are very sensitive to this; while they accept a just punishment without complaint when the offense has been proved, they reject indignantly any accusation which cannot be proved, even when it is well founded.

577 In addition to this general morality, many things are forbidden not
784 because they are evil, but because they entail baleful consequences. The taboos (kisgou to the Mossi, from kisé, "to forbid") are almost innumerable. They may be divided into two classes: permanent kisgou, which affect the whole family, and personal and transitory kisgou.

784 The former usually consist of a prohibition to eat a certain animal or to do a certain thing. Thus some nabas are forbidden to meet, to see one another, and if they disregard this prohibition, one of them will die before the year is over. This prohibition is easily explained by the incessant wars which were formerly waged between important chiefs, and their fear of being poisoned or done away with in some other way by one of their enemies. Another instance: a Mossi goes to war on a frisky horse and he is forced to flee. His foes are about to seize him, and he owes his escape to the swiftness of his mount. When he returns home, he decrees that the horse will be a sacred animal to him and to his descendants, and that henceforth all his children and their children must treat horses well and may not eat their flesh under penalty of blindness or leprosy. This is the extent of the prohibition. The horse is not considered a guardian animal, no sacrifices are offered to it, and the Mossi do not call it tangandé (guardian animal of the village) or siga((soul-animal), but kisgou (prohibition).

784 Sometimes the kisgou affects only certain members of the family.
262 A father has been ill after eating dog flesh on two or three occasions. He consults the sorcerer, who states that dog flesh is forbidden to him and to his children, but not to other members of his family. A person

784 born among the Peul, to whom dog flesh is forbidden, may have the
262 dog as kisgou. Sometimes the kisgou concerns only him, his son, and grandson and not his other descendants, because the son and grandson will follow his own soul, while the soul of the other descendants will follow that of his mother, their great-grandmother, to whom dog flesh is not forbidden. A sorcerer's reasoning against which there is no argument!

/89/ This kind of kisgou is the more binding of the two, but it may be terminated if the person who established it offers the proper sacrifices, or if one of his descendants, of his own will, releases himself and his children from it. Thus the family of the Saman'Naba, Prime Minister of Koupéla, has the hare as kisgou. When the naba saw his Christian brothers and son eat hare flesh with impunity, without becoming blind or leprous, he took to eating it himself without ill effects.

784 Parents teach their children about the various family kisgou and
869 instill the proper awe into them so they will not eat these animals.
753 Involuntary disregard of one's kisgou may lead to illness, and the sorcerer consulted indicates what has to be done and what sacrifice must be offered to the tangandé to obtain his forgiveness. If the slip was deliberate, if it showed contempt, no forgiveness is possible.

784 The second kind of kisgou is quite special and personal. It consists
758 of the various prohibitions imposed by the sorcerers on a sick person.
262 A certain kind of meat or sauce is forbidden to the patient, or he may not drink water containing millet flour, or he may not eat millet or bean cakes. This is how a poor rachitic child with a heart disease was successively forbidden practically every kind of food. His relatives had the greatest difficulty finding those foods that were not forbidden to him, and eventually he died of starvation. All such kisgou terminate of course with the illness that caused them, unless the disease is incurable and lasts to the end of the patient's life.

Chapter 2. The Cult

000 If we define religion with Mgr. Le Roy (1) as "The body of beliefs,

1. Mgr. Le Roy, op. cit., p. 49.

243
343 are tied, placed in baskets, and carried to special huts. These are small straw huts built on stakes, that is, raised on thick pieces of wood, which stand in a long curved line by the fields. About twenty such huts often stand side by side. Both men and women share in the harvesting.

Whenever the millet is to be eaten, the heads are taken from
243 these straw huts and threshed with a stick to set the grain loose. This threshing is done by the men.

Aside from the ordinary small millet, it is the large red millet that is grown most extensively, as a rule, among the Mossi. They
[194] call it kaziéra or kaziéga (we know that the r and g are interchangeable in Mossi; people will say, for example, either nora or noga to mean "chicken") and the Bambara call it niooulé. The large red millet is the kind used chiefly for dolo.

This is the millet that is planted before any other, as soon as the first rains begin to fall. The ouaka is used to remove the weeds which have grown in the fields, then the weeds are burned and the large red millet is sowed at the time of the first storms (April). It is sowed in the same fashion as the small millet, by holding the koutiaga in one hand and the small gourd containing grain in the other.

When the millet has come out of the ground, a fortnight /469/ is allowed to elapse and then the weeds are cleared with the ouaka. When the millet is grown, the women and children are sent out to protect it against birds. The millet is ripe around September 1.

The bulk of the harvesting work is done by the men. The stalks, which are usually 3 meters high and which may even reach 4 are cut down at the base. Once they have been dug out and laid down, the heads, which are thick and tuftlike with red flowers, are cut with a knife and carried to the soukala. The women do the carrying as they do for other kinds of millet. The large red millet is threshed only as it is needed. The threshing is done by the men with a stick.

Let us note that when a new piece of land is cleared, the large red millet is sown first to find out if the soil is good. It is only in the following year, when this has been ascertained, that the small millet is sown.

The red millet is also cultivated around the soukala, like maize.
[273] As a rule the Mossi use the large red millet only to make dolo
231 (dama in Mossi). They may also give it to horses, but some horses
262

231 will not take it. The Mossi only eat it themselves if there is no
262 other kind of millet available, or in times of famine. In any case,
[757] the red millet has a constipating effect, and when people suffer from colic they are given a to /mush/ of red millet to check the attack.

243 The Mossi also grow the ordinary large white millet, which is the kind grown most extensively, aside from sanio, throughout the Sudan. The Mossi call it baninga, the Bambara kéninguê or guessékélé. It is called kéningué around Ségou, and guessékélé around Nioro. The Nounouma call it nienso, and so do the Kassonfra /Awuna/. The Kassonboura /Kasena/ call it béninga, that is to say, they have adopted the Mossi word and slightly altered it. (We saw, in fact, that some Kassouna-Boura, at least those of Po and Tiahané, are Kassouna-Mossi rather than Kassouna-Boura.)

Europeans often give this kind of millet the name of "pearly millet" /mil nacré/ or "horse millet," because it is tender and easy to crush.

/470/ This millet is not grown by every Mossi. Those who do
[231] grow the large white millet eat it themselves. They also give it to their horses. It is cultivated exactly in the same fashion as the small millet, that is to say, it is sown and harvested at the same time.

The Mossi also grow the kipéléro or kipélégo (from ki, "millet," and pélero or pélégo, "white"). This is the yaro or yara of the Gourounsi, and probably the n'guéné or n'kendé of the Bambara and Malinké, a kind of millet intermediate between the small and large white varieties. Actually, one of my informants told me that the kipéléro is sown along with the ordinary small millet, that no distinction is made between the two, and that they are used for the same purposes, while another informant maintained that it is a kind of large white millet.

The Mossi also grow some gadiaba. This is a kind of large millet which is either white or red. The Bambara call it gadiabadié when it is white, hamadiboubou when it is red. The Mossi refer to the gadiabadié as noira. They cultivate it only in Boussouma province. As for hamadiboubou, it is not to be found among the Mossi.

As far as the early millet /mil précoce/ is concerned, the Mossi are familiar with it and call it nado, but they do not cultivate it. This is the souna of the Bambara, the tiara of the Nounouma and

243 Africa as well, have two harvests, one in August and the other in November-December. The latter is by far the more important, but in order to prevent famine while waiting for it, these peoples also have early, quick-growing crops that yield from the second half of July, in August primarily, up to the middle of September. Among these crops, the most important may well be the maize sown in April and harvested in August, but there are others, such as the early millet mentioned above and also the large red millet. The most important crops (small millet, large white millet), on the other hand, are sown in May or earlier, or sometimes not until July, and harvested in November and December.

/472/ The Mossi also grow a little rice (mol in Mossi). The kind they cultivate is water rice /riz d'eau/. It is sown along watercourses and ponds. This is the most difficult crop to cultivate, according to the old men.

At the present day poor people grow a little rice. In former [354] times they did not grow it at all, and chiefs alone cultivated it. Even now, it is largely grown by chiefs.

Rice is sown in May after millet. The field is worked with a special daba, the souga, which is used to turn up the soil. Little holes are made with a koutiaga, and from seven to ten grains of rice are placed in each hole and covered with a little soil. Then, the rice is left to grow. It comes out of the ground at the end of seventeen days. During the rainy season, the waters of the watercourse or pond cover the small rice field. Weeds are removed, inside the water, with the ouaka. The harvesting is done during the second half of October, before the small millet and large white millet are gathered. The rice stalks are cut down with a kind of scythe and spread upon the ground to dry in the sun. Then, both men and women thresh it with sticks. Sometimes the stalks are taken into the soukala instead, left to dry for three days in the courtyard, and then threshed. [351] The straw is discarded. When there is only a little rice, it is kept in a canari. When there is a lot, it is stored in baskets which in turn are placed in little straw huts raised on stakes.

● 262 252 The Mossi, who in short grow very little rice, claim that they prefer millet to rice. Millet, they say, provides more energy. Rice is eaten boiled, with meat if possible, and the whole thing is served with peanut or gombo /Tr. okra/ sauce.

439 As far as onions are concerned, the Mossi are familiar with
262 them and call them albasalé, but do not cultivate them. It is the Haoussa, on their way in from Bandiagara, who buy them from the Habé and bring them to the Mossi. The growers themselves sometimes come in large caravans and sell them at Ouagadougou.

248 /484/ We are now finished with the Mossi food crops. Let us proceed to other crops.

Cotton (lamdo or lango in Mossi) is a dry-season crop here rather than a rainy-season crop.

It is planted near the soukala, or else in the bush along the watercourses.

During the winter season, grass along watercourses is cut down and left lying there to fertilize the ground. Then cotton is planted at the end of the rainy season. Holes are made into the earth with the koutiaga, three or four cotton seeds are placed in each hole and then covered up. The cotton emerges from the ground at the end of five or six days. Weeds are pulled out every fortnight. The cotton ripens at the end of 100 days. The stem may reach 75 centimeters or 1.50 meters in height, depending on the quality of the soil. Then comes the harvesting, which extends over a period of thirty or forty days, because one must wait for the pod to burst and the boll to appear before plucking. The women, girls, and small boys do this plucking.

The Mossi grow a considerable amount of cotton and take very good care of their fields. In any case, the soil and climate of the region are rather propitious to this crop. The harvesting is done in February and March. The average local price of cotton is one franc
[435] a kilogram.

249 Tobacco is also partly a dry-season crop. At least its cultivation begins during the rainy season, extends into the dry season, and ends only in the latter. Tobacco is grown near the soukala like maize, large red millet, hemp, etc.

Tobacco is sown during the rainy season near the soukala. Twenty-five days are allowed to elapse, and then the plants are dug out and transplanted to another spot near the soukala. When the

249 rainy season ends, the tobacco has already grown tall. In the month of December, one begins to gather the leaves, taking first the lowest ones which are the first to ripen. One keeps plucking up the stem and gathering leaves until the end /485/ of January. Then the tobacco stems are cut down to get the seeds.

276 In order to make tobacco, the leaves are left to dry in the sun, and then, when they are dry, the men crush them in small mortars. They add a little water, stir, and make tobacco balls, or rather small elongated loaves worth one sou apiece. These loaves are entrusted to the women to be sold at market.

249 The Mossi also grow indigo (gara in Mossi, as in Bambara). During the rainy season, indigo is sown in separate plots. First the grass is removed, and then the ground is struck here and there with the koutiaga. Then indigo seeds are broadcast, and the soil is moved with the ouaka to cover the seeds so that the birds will not eat them. At the end of a fortnight, the indigo begins to shoot. The weeds are removed by hand. The leaves may be gathered forty days later. They are gathered by hand and given to the women, who press them into flat loaves.

248 As for hemp (berenga in Mossi, pepan in Nounouma, kanzé in Kassouna, dafou in Mandé), it is sown among the maize that surrounds the soukala as soon as the latter has put forth shoots. The barenga has a long stalk similar to maize and hard to distinguish from the latter, but while maize is harvested in August, berenga stalks are left standing until October or November.

262 Its leaves are used for sauces.

248 Hemp closes our list of food crops and other crops in Mossi territory. Let us close with a few words on agricultural tools.

The basic tool of cultivation, here as in all other parts of West Africa, is the daba. The Mossi have two kinds:

1. The ouaka, a kind of daba with a broad, thin blade. It is used to turn up the soil.

/486/ 2. The koutiaga, koutiara or koutiaba. This is a kind of small hoe which is used to make holes when sowing grain or seeds.

The Mossi also have the following accessory tools:

1. The laré. This is an axe used to cut stumps when a plot is cleared.

231 While the Mossi entrust their cattle to the Foulbé, as we have seen earlier, they do no such thing with their sheep which are kept with the goats. They are handed over to the young boys to care for during the winter and the dry season.

231 As almost everywhere in West Africa, the flesh of the sheep is of mediocre quality and smells of suint. The natives nevertheless like it very much.

262

231 The sheep have short hair and yield no wool. Actually, in all of West Africa, only the Macina sheep yield some.

"The Mossi sheep," says the Cahier des Rapports of the /Ouagadougou/ circle, "differs basically from the Macina sheep. While the latter are rather large, with very thick hair, the Ouagadougou sheep are small with short hair. The males have horns, and usually long manes.

"The sheep race of the Macina does not in fact exist among the Mossi, for the climate of the region does not permit it. In the northern part of the circle one may find, though rarely, some sheep belonging to that breed brought by the Dioula and destined for slaughter, but nowhere is that race raised /among the Mossi/.

"Although the Mossi sheep cannot be exploited in any way as far as their hair is concerned, they nevertheless constitute a source of income of some importance to the natives. /490/ Sheep are indeed quite numerous throughout the circle. They are chiefly consumed locally. A few flocks, however, are led to the markets of the Gold Coast."

[77] Let us note further the existence of so-called "house sheep," raised individually in the household in accordance with a custom introduced among the Mossi by the Yarsé, and fattened carefully to be slaughtered on festive occasions.

Goats are not entrusted to the Foulbé either, and the latter, incidentally, would not want them. During the winter season, they are herded by children who prevent them from eating the millet. During the dry season they are not herded, and they may wander about as they please.

The majority of Mossi goats are of dwarf species. Yet goats of usual size, large goats which are no doubt of Maure /Moorish/ origin, are also to be found in small numbers.

231 We mentioned earlier the karyanga, which is gathered wild or cultivated for horses. It is given to them at the height of the winter season.

Many Mossi own dogs. They use them to guard the soukala, to hunt in the bush, or for consumption. In the latter case, the [262 animal is fattened. Dog meat was sold on Mossi markets in the 438] old days, but the Yarsé, who are Moslems as we know, found it improper to exhibit dog meat alongside mutton or beef, and the custom was abandoned. Dogs are still killed inside the soukala, however, for consumption purposes.

[435] A dog is worth from 2 to 5 francs.

The Mossi have chickens and guinea fowl. The chickens are 235 worth 250 cowries. The eggs are not sold.

It is the men who care for the chickens. They /492/ look in the bush for termite nests which they break to pieces so that the chickens may eat the termites. Sometimes, instead of one ration only, the chickens are issued two a day, one in the morning and one in the evening.

The guinea fowl are less numerous than the chickens. Accord- [435 ing to their weight, they are worth from 250 to 300 cowries. Their 462] eggs are eaten. It is the men who care for the guinea fowl as for the chickens.

231 The Mossi place beehives in the trees. The hives consist of elongated straw cylinders shaped like a tom-tom. One of the sides is completely closed, while the other is perforated to allow the bees to come and go.

231 These hives are placed in the trees at the time when the warm 237 season begins (March), and then the honey is gathered every month except at the height of the rainy season, when the downpours are too heavy. The children are in charge of this. They climb the tree with a straw torch on fire, and frighten the bees away. Then they take the honey and come down. In order to separate the honey from the wax, the honeycombs are placed in a large canari full of water. Another canari is heated intensely, and its burning-hot base is brought close to the surface of the jar where the combs are floating. The wax melts and sinks to the bottom, while the honey floats. The wax is sold to jewelers, who use it in the [306] manufacture of copper objects made by the lost-wax process. It is

231 also sold to shoemakers, who need it to rub and soften their hides.
237 In former days wax was given rather than sold. Nowadays it is sold because of the need for cash occasioned by the tax. As for honey,
● [262] it is eaten pure, or with milk, or mixed with sarabout. It is also
272 made into a drink called bésou, béci, or bici, which is no other than hydromel. The latter is known, incidentally, throughout West Africa.

The Nounouma call it torosana, from sana, "drink" and toro, "honey." The Kassouna call it by the same name.

The women make hydromel as follows. They boil water, pour the honey into it, and stir. Then they add small-millet flour. The mixture is stirred with a piece of wood and then strained to rid the drink of /493/ all impurities. It is poured into a clean canari, [435] which is carefully covered. At the end of two days, one has a yellowish drink which is worth 400 cowries or 0.40 franc a liter at Ouagadougou. Among the Nounouma, where honey is more abundant than among the Mossi, the liter is worth 0.20 franc (at Leo, for example). Hydromel is stronger and more potent than dolo, and one must be careful not to drink too much.

252 The Mossi also make little cakes with honey and millet flour. They call them baradaré. These cakes are not made by the Gourounsi.

231 This concludes our review of Mossi stockbreeding. Generally speaking, as we have seen, it is quite mediocre with the exception of two specialities, donkeys and horses. As far as donkeys are concerned, although the Mossi are no traders and have only begun to do a little trading since we occupied their territory, they have always liked the animals and used them either for their own transport or to carry grain. They have an average of one donkey per 42 inhabitants, while the Dagari only have one per 1,000, the Nounouma one per 166, the Sissala one per 55, the Kassonboura one per 50. In this respect, the Mossi run second only to the traders, the Yarsé, who have a pressing need for donkeys in connection with their trade and who have one per 23 inhabitants.

As for horse raising, the Mossi have left it to the Foulbé of Mossi territory. The Mossi nevertheless have an average of one horse per 166 inhabitants among the common people, and one per

224 435 At Kombisiguiri, as we have just seen, there are 10 elephant hunters out of about 70 chiefs of compounds. Among the latter there are also some 20 men who hunt other animals, but they are cultivators who hunt on the side. They seek buffalo. When they kill one, they sell the meat to the village that stands nearest to the spot of the kill for 35,000 cowries. They also hunt the koba antelope, whose meat is worth from 20,000 cowries, the striped deer worth 6,500, the pig deer worth 5,000, the wart hog worth 10,000. They also hunt hares, bustards, guinea fowl, partridges, turtle-doves, etc.

224 262 The Mossi do not hunt monkeys and do not eat them. /495/ Actually, there are very few in Mossi territory, except for the red-haired monkeys who are great lovers of millet and maize.

224 825 778 The Mossi do not hunt crocodiles because the latter are held sacred. If one were to kill a crocodile, one would become ill, one's head would swell and one's teeth would fall out. Snakes, on the other hand, are killed and eaten, but in Mossi territory proper there are few large ones (pythons, boas) because the climate is not sufficiently humid. They are more numerous in Boussansé and Gourounsi lands.

226 Fishing is less important than hunting among the Mossi, for the simple reason that the land, with its low rainfall, only has muddy ponds during the dry season (on this subject, see our Introduction /not translated/). Thus, not only do the Mossi lack professional fishermen, but the villages do not even undertake collective fishing during the dry season (with the exception of some southern localities, in Kombisiguiri for example). Only children attempt to catch the mudfish which are always present in large quantities in small ponds, even when they are nearly dry.

222 Gathering, on the other hand, plays the same role among the Mossi as among the other Sudanese Blacks, and we shall study it here in some detail, since we have only described it in broad outline so far.

222 137 The tree most widespread throughout Mossi territory, and which grows wild, is the karité. Its leaves are a pleasant green, and it is somewhat similar to our Normandy apple tree. Its bark is whitish and made of small juxtaposed quadrilaterals. It is the karité which

222 top of the trunk, and they are deeply indented. The trunk never
137 bears leaves except when it is young. The dark green of the leaves and their toughness makes /sic/ them look from afar like the artificial zinc leaves of some theatrical backdrops or weather vanes. The youngest leaves at the top are strongly imbricated and ensheathed, and ivory white in color. They are very tender and yield palm cabbage. The leaves of the rônier only fall off when completely dry.

"The fruits, which are called rône, come in clusters of about forty or fifty. They are the size of a medium-sized melon and very heavy. Their covering is green when they are young, orange-yellow when they are ripe. The large seeds, which are blackish and disc-shaped, or like spheres flattened at the poles, are surrounded with a fibrous, gold-yellow meat which is very watery and very fragrant. Its taste is pleasant, although slightly tinged with turpentine. The
[261] natives eat large quantities of it, especially in times of scarcity.

"Rônier wood is dense, long lasting, and remarkably tough.
313/137 502/ Immune to insects and humidity, it is excellently suited to the manufacture of piles, and often used in the construction of bridges and wharves. The male trees alone are used. The female trees can only be used for fencing, for they are hollow and lacking in strength....

"In addition to the fruit, the Blacks also eat the roots of the
222 young shoots, the taste of which is slightly astringent and rather un-
137 pleasant. They are eaten raw. The terminal buds of the palms are
262 very tender. They are palm cabbages, less tasty to be sure than those of Oreodoxa oleracea, but nevertheless deserving of recognition. When cut into small pieces 2 centimeters square and well seasoned with oil, vinegar, salt and pepper, they make a very good salad, especially if they were previously soaked for twenty-four hours. This dish is highly prized by Europeans who live in the Sudan. Finally,
[263] the rônier yields a fairly abundant sap from which sugar might be
273 extracted. When fermented, it produces a palm wine of inferior quality."

It must be added that the fibers of the rônier leaves are also
137 utilized. The West African Blacks use them to make baskets (as for
[285] example in Mossi territory) or cords (as for instance in Upper Gambia).

782 dolo and millet flour. There was no set time for this. The flesh
778 of the sacrificed animals devolved to the sacrificer, the head of Sékou.

At present day sacred groves are still to be found in various Mossi villages. Thus, for example, there are three at Kabayoro, two of which belong to individuals and one to the village. The Earth chief /Tr.: Tengsoba/ of Kabayoro offers sacrifices to the village grove whenever the bara says so.

The Mossi also make sacrifices to the hills.

At Sabtinga, about 17 kilometers northwest of Ouagadougou, there is a rise in the ground called Tantiibo where the Moro Naba used to go once a year with the Baloum Naba, many chiefs and people at the time when the weather begins to grow cold. He ordered a beef, a chicken, millet flour, and a gourd of dolo to be taken along, and they were handed over to the head of the quarter where the hillock stood. This chief performed the sacrifice and begged the piece of ground to grant good health to the Moro Naba. Only
[839] the Moro Naba, the Balou, the sacred people (eunuchs), and the soroné were present at the sacrifice, Other people who had come to Sabtinga remained in the village, whence the Moro Naba set out on foot to the spot of the sacrifice.

At Kombé-Padanda, a small hillock located in a /589/ Ouagadougou quarter, the same sacrifice was offered in the same fashion and at the same time of year.

326 Let us add that when Mossi blacksmiths go and smelt iron ore
782 in the bush, they kill chickens and offer millet flour on the spot where they extract the ore. The sacrifice is offered to the spirits of the hill, as well as to the Earth and to Naba Ouondé.

778 Sacrifices are made to watercourses as well as to hills, either
782 at fishing time or whenever the bara indicate that a certain stream requires a certain sacrifice.

825 As far as crocodiles are concerned, some of them are held
262 sacred by the Mossi. As for snakes, they are killed and usually eaten, but not everyone eats them. Some people abstain.

778 As for the Earth, the Moro Naba had sheep, chickens, millet
782 flour, and dolo handed over to the Baloum Naba through eunuchs several times a year, whenever a bara told him to do so. The Baloum Naba handed these gifts in person to the chief of Ouagadougou,

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133 Red and White Voltas are merely a series of small stagnant pools during the dry season. In some low-lying areas around the main water courses, trapped water provides the moisture for dank riverine vegetation.

134 The soils of Mossi country are mainly ferruginous with red argils and pure silicates of aluminum predominating in the northern region. The soils in the south are thin, sandy, and formed from the decom-
137 position of crystalline rocks and sandstones. During the dry season the Mossi landscape appears too sterile to produce plant life, but with the first drops of rain the entire country soon becomes covered with the grasses and shrubs which are characteristic of this Sudanese region. The uncultivated but valuable trees of this area include the Baobab *(Adansonia digitata)*, the locust bean *(Parkia biglobosa)*, the shea-butter *(Butyrospermum parkii)*, the tamarind *(Tamarindus*
241 *indica)* and the kapok *(Bombax costatum)*. The plants which the Mossi cultivate include varieties of cereals, roots and legumes. Sorghums *(Sorghum vulgare)* and millets *(Pennisetum typhoides)* are their staples, with maize *(Zea mays)* filling the role of a secondary but rather useful crop because its growing cycle is shorter than that of other important crops and it breaks the "hungry period." Maize would be a more important crop to the Mossi if it could grow on soil less fertile than what is normally available around the Mossi compound—the area where it brings the greatest yield. Peanuts, onions,
249 rice, beans, okra, peas and sweet potatoes are other food crops. To-
248 bacco is grown for local consumption, but the crops which have the greatest export value are cotton and indigo, used for making cloth and dyeing it.

224 The wild fauna of the country does not provide a major part of the
262 food needs of the Mossi people. The several species of deer and antelope, monkeys, rabbits and wild pig are hunted and used for food.
136 But the elephants and lions which are also found in the country are sources of great distress to the people because the former decimate the growing crops and the latter attack and kill the grazing animals.

231 The Mossi rear two main types of cattle: a zebu-like one in the north-
[234] ern regions and a small dwarf variety in the south. These animals are kept primarily for their milk and for export, and are seldom killed
231 for meat until they are very old. The animals which provide the
262 Mossi with meat are goats, sheep, chickens and guinea fowls. Pig-
[177] raising is not widespread and seems to be declining in importance with the increasing observance of Islamic food taboos, even among
262 people who are still pagan. Fish forms only a minor part of the Mossi
187 diet and is obtained mainly from traders rather than from local activ-
231 ities. The Mossi also rear donkeys and horses for which they have

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The migrants bring back all types of goods with them. According to Dufour: "Money as such is not brought back in very large proportion because manufactured products of the English colony (Gold Coast) cost less. Consequently, each year there is a great introduction of bicycles, sewing machines, fabrics". (Dufour 1956 : 140). One might add to this list kerosene lamps, zinc buckets, all types of wearing apparel, and all manner of household goods. An inventory of the common trunk of two returning migrants revealed the following merchandise: two kerosene lamps, two bottles of kerosene, two burnoose of black serge trimmed with pink silk, one white burnoose, two blue shirts, two khaki shorts, two tubes of Thermogene (a medicated rub), eight women's headkerchiefs, two Moslem fezes, two hand mirrors, two jars of Vaseline petroleum jelly, two pairs of sandals, one black scarf, packs of camphor balls, and one bottle of perfume. These goods represent the migrant's work over one season, from October to the following April, in the cacao fields of Ghana. Other migrants return with more, but few return with less. The actual value of these goods has been estimated by Dufour at about one billion francs C.F.A. per year. The custom duties which the migrants pay amount to more than 150 million francs C.F.A. annually—the sum they actually paid into the treasury of the Haute Volta in 1953 (Rouch 1956 : 139 ff.).

The migrants distribute to their relatives a good part of the goods they bring back, but a large proportion gets into the hands of other people either through the market or through more direct channels. Here is an example taken from my notes of March 24, 1956: "*Trading in bicycles:* Moussa gave Souliman a cow and an old bicycle for a new bicycle which Souliman had bought for 5,000 francs from a passing migrant. Souliman was trying to sell this same cycle for 6,250 francs, thus trying to make a profit of 1,250 francs just two or three days after he had bought it . . . Souliman slaughtered the cow which he received from Moussa and sold the beef to the local *restaurateur* at an additional profit. Souliman appears to be a sharp individual. He recently bought another bicycle for 5,000 francs from a migrant and resold it for 7,500 francs." This type of trading is not unusual, but the most typical articles resold by migrants in the local markets are lamps, worn shirts, shoes and other articles of clothing.

The growth of migration among Mossi men has led to a new type of commercial activity in the country. This is the selling of cooked food by the women to passing migrants. These women and young girls prepare food such as chicken, rice, millet balls, millet flour water and fried cakes which they bring to the principal thoroughfares to sell. Many of them arrive at the central village areas as early as four

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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all of local manufacture and in great abundance. Local cloth is also very abundant. However, there are scarcely any imported objects salt, kola nuts, copper rings and extremely rare European fabrics. The salt always comes from the north. During my stay at Wagadougou I saw the arrival of a convoy of five or six small-sized mules loaded with this merchandise." Crozat felt that the Wagadougou market with its mainly local products was inferior to the markets at Woroudoy and Bobo-Dioulasso which he found less crowded, but which were, in his words, "true *entrepots* of imported merchandise."

Tauxier gives us a better picture of the goods found in the markets of Mossi country before the Europeans arrived. His reports list few imported products except salt and kola nuts. The preponderance of goods sold were such local foodstuffs as maize, manioc, peppers, tomatoes, squash, karite or shea butter, locust-bean balls, locust-bean flour, rice and a local variety of potatoes. Other foodstuffs included were honey, beer, butchered meat, chickens, and guinea fowls. Tobacco both for chewing and smoking was also available, and so was hemp for making rope. Raw cotton, cotton thread, cloth and tailored cotton garments were also present, and so was indigo for dyeing the cotton materials. Other goods included hides, sandals, pouches, amulets, iron items such as axes, hoes, knives, scythes, locks, clubs and spearpoints, bracelets and anklets made of copper by the lost-wax process, baskets, mats and hats made out of local grasses, pottery, pipes and wooden stools (Tauxier 1912 : 466 ff.). By 1914 Mangin could add little to this list of local products, sold in the markets, but added such foreign items as "matches, glass trinkets, handkerchiefs, basins, dishes, perfumes, and even firecrackers" (Mangin 1921 : 53).

The markets of contemporary Mossi society contain all of the articles found in pre-European times and those seen there by Mangin in 1914. In the larger markets one now can find such additional items as bicycles, razor blades, plastic raincoats and other plastic products, and the latest "rock 'n roll" records from the United States. The goods found in the smaller district and village markets tend to be of the traditional variety. But even here it is possible to buy refined cane sugar, matches, plastic necklaces, shoe polish, nail polish, toilet water, glass beads, costume jewelry, chinaware, and glass and enamel containers. In some of the smaller markets it is even possible to buy wheat bread made of imported flour, and bottled beer and soda water. The more different types of goods entering the larger markets, the richer the variety found in the smaller markets, since local merchants are quick to take advantage of the prestige value of any new produce and introduce it into the rural areas. The only barrier to this type of commercial activity is the relative poverty of the rural people.

796 sacrificial animals, and they are required to celebrate the festi-
769 val in these villages before returning to Ouagadougou.
782 In the old days the animals destined to be sacrificed were captured in the cantons by horsemen assigned to that duty. Today, however, the Mogho Naba requests his vassals to supply them.

It should be noted that the following Peulh chiefs provide cattle of their own volition and without any compulsion: Komtam Silmanaba, Gombogo Silminaba, Kourgou Silminaba, and Barkoundba Silminaba.

796 Setting the date for the ceremony. A week after the sacrifices
769 the emperor summons the Tansoba (war minister) or, if he cannot appear (sickness or some other chance reason), the Konkosé Naba. This personage must reply to the summons on the day he receives it.

796 The king then assembles his principal ministers and sets the
769 date for the celebration of the tinsé, twenty or twenty-one days
211 ahead. The Mogho Naba hands the Tansoba several knotted ropes (yoda) which are to be distributed by him to the following chiefs: [149] Sapone Naba, Tuili Naba, and Loumbila Naba.

The last-named chief hands his rope over to the Dapelgo Naba and to the Méguet Naba.

There are as many knots in the rope as there are days remaining until the festival.

As soon as the Tansoba has handed over the ropes, he must immediately return to his village.

The persons who have received the ropes are required to transmit them to the kombemba (plural of kombéré, canton chief) who untie a knot each day.

796 Celebration of the festival. Early on the day of the ceremony,
769 a Friday (arzouma), the ministers and other court officials present themselves before the king to wish him welcome (tabo).

The Mogho Naba presents a loaf of salt (yamss'néré, literally
796 "salt millstone") which is to be divided among the following digni-
769 taries: Ouidi Naba, Larrhallé Naba, Gounga Naba, Kamsaongho
● 263 Naba, Bougretenga Naba, Benga Naba, Poé Naba, Tampouf Naba, Bend'Naba, and their followers.

Half of a loaf of salt is also offered to the Baloum Naba, Dapoya Naba, Samandé Naba, and Wedranga Naba.

796 769 263 The latter reserve a small share for the Zussoba [150] (chief eunuch) and the Bilbalsé (inhabitants of Bilbalogo, the section of the Baloum Naba).

796 769 The next morning, Saturday, the king has a large number of cattle slaughtered and many sagbo cakes prepared. The latter are piled one on top of another to form tahinsé (mountains) in the courtyard where the daily audiences are held.

On these mountains of sagbo are placed whole quarters of sheep. Many bowls of cooked rice are put in rows beside the millet cakes.

The Larrhallé Naba, the second minister who is in command of the Samandé (the court), stands before one of the mountains of sagbo, takes a cake which he divides into three parts, and tosses them at random in different directions in the courtyard. Thus he offers food to the invisible spirits and to the manes of previous ministers who once frequented the place. During this ceremony he utters some words which may be translated as follows: "Take this sagbo and bring peace and happiness to the emperor and to his people."

After this, the Larrhallé Naba returns to his kouga (mound of stones) to make way for the Gand'Naba. The latter, too, picks up a cake and also the foot of a cow. Then the king's bodyguard, the followers of the ministers, the Bilbalssé, and the emperor's servitors make a dash for the mountains of sagbo and the rice, and there is a general scramble to get the biggest piece. It goes without saying that they come out of the fray covered with sauce, and half of the food is spilled on the ground. [151]

At this point, the ministers and their escorts depart.

Each ikanda (head of a family) calls the family elder (the patriarch) and gives him a rooster and a goat (lacking a sheep) to be sacrificed to the manes of his ancestors. The old man pronounces the following words: "Youmd yelle n'ta, ta zagla yel t'm konfo, tif reg kouin gnimassem, la sounogo, ta pam kodo, la rogom (accept these offerings on the part of X... and grant him health, happiness, and prosperity. Protect his family and grant him good harvests and many children.

796 769 263 776 It is interesting to note that the meat, whether boiled or roasted, is never seasoned with red pepper (tiparé), for the tinsé [spirits]

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would visit their anger upon those who were guilty of such an indiscretion by making them blind or at least causing them severe eye trouble in later years.

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[261]

Everyone celebrates the tinsé at home by preparing all sorts of food (sagbo, rice, corn, beans, etc.). The people stuff themselves to the point of indigestion.

Thirty days after the anniversary celebration of the funeral of Oubri's mother, the Tansoba (war minister) returns to the emperor the rope used for the date of the tinsé.

Around the fortieth day, that is, a week after the departure of the Tansoba, the Loumbila Naba comes to salute the emperor. The latter gives him a cow to be slaughtered at Widin (section of the Ouidi Naba).

A week after the departure of the Loumbila Naba, [152] the Guilingou Tengsoba pays a visit to the Mogho Naba. We have already seen that it was an ancestor of this Tengsoba who asked Naba Zoungrana to send his son, Oubri, to administer the country and to help him drive out the Habé who today live by the cliffs of Bandiagara (Sudan). The Mogho Naba is obligated to give a cow and some salt to this Tengsoba.

Then comes the turn of the Saponé Naba (nayrdin, representative of Naba Kouda) who, with his followers, receives a cow and some salt. Finally, for Bonsa Naba, Kamsaonguin Tengsoba, and Pázani Tengsoba, the Mogho Naba has a sheep killed which is served with many plates of sagbo.

It should be noted that when the Tangsob-ramba appear before the emperor they put down their laya (magic axes) and are at once brought white roosters which they are expected to kill in the timpelem (courtyard).

Thus, it is apparent that this festival has no particularly remarkable features. Its sole aim is to make peace between the living and the dead and to give everyone a chance to eat well.

423 will, and the new occupant cannot make the slightest protest.

It should be pointed out, however, that since land is most often abandoned because it was thought to be unproductive or haunted, there is rarely a claim to it by a former owner. In any event the matter is settled by the interested parties. The local administration and the canton chief rarely intervene in such cases.

Owners' rights over fruit trees in cultivated fields. Donsé
423 or néré [locust bean] trees whose fruits contain a yellowish, sweet
263 powder that is edible and [244] whose seeds are used to make soumbala, a fetid condiment much prized by the natives, remain the exclusive property of the former occupant. On the other hand, the tamsé (karite tree) belong to the new owner.

423 This is because the karite tree is found almost everywhere in the bush, while the néré is less common.

Rights of the chiefs over cultivated land. As a general rule,
425 since the principle of right by possession is honored among the
423 Mossi, a canton chief will not confiscate without reason cultivated land belonging to one of his subjects if the land has always been occupied by the occupant's grandparents.

When the land is unoccupied, however, or newly occupied, the canton chief may, by virtue of his absolute authority over his territory, take possession, and the new owner may not claim any compensation.

Field Work

241 In principle, a family field is held in common. When a woman
562 grows old, however, she no longer does field work with her hus-
595 band. She has her own field and feeds herself as best she may, since her husband pays no further attention to her and no longer supports her. The work is done by the family as a group, and the size of the field varies with the size of the family.

241 Early in the morning, usually before [245] sunrise, the head
512 of the family wakens the young people. They go out to the field, which may be five to ten kilometers away. Around ten o'clock, the women bring the remains of last night's sagbo or, lacking that, some millet flour which is taken in water.

264 meal of sagbo in the evening.

What we call breakfast is hardly known. Between the two main meals, however, the chiefs have meat grilled or roasted. They are very fond of it and have it seasoned with enough salt and pepper to make it possible to consume the endless number of [273] small gourds of beer which they drink from morning to night.

The Moaga has only one real meal a day, the evening meal. A large millet cake satisfies the day's hunger. If there is any left over, he keeps it carefully for his morning meal. If there is none left, a frequent state of affairs, he makes do with his zompanrga, crushed millet diluted with water and sometimes eaten with a bit of vegetable fat or a few peanuts.

He rarely eats any rice, and if he has no sagbo, he contents himself with benga and souma.

261 527 It is during the festivals that the Moaga eats his fill. At such times the head of the compound kills a goat, a sheep, or some chickens and has sagbo and fabirama prepared, or beans with copious amounts of karite butter. This is the feast. The members of the family stuff themselves to the point where attacks of diarrhea are inevitable. The results of the attacks are all the more serious in that they are never cared for properly.

263 439 The only seasonings known to the Moaga are kalgo (soumbala), red pepper, okra, and salt. No more than a few years ago, however, before the [251] development of trade in the colony, salt was brought from Timbuktu and Mopti by the Dioula and Yarcé and was so expensive that the Mossi people who lived in the countryside often went for six months without tasting salted food.

241 There is reason to believe that the time is not far off when the Moaga will devote his efforts much more intensively to cash crops, such as cotton, potatoes, peanuts, etc. In this domain, the province chiefs at Ouagadougou have made real progress.

Mogh 'Nab' Kawinré (Threshing the Grain of the Mogho Naba)

241 643 782 Sacrifices. For this ceremony, the emperor summons the Mankougoudougou Tengsoba (a descendant of the autochthonous Nioniossé, masters of the land) to Ouagadougou and gives him a

252 boiling water and eaten in this fashion. This is an important source
261 of food in times of famine which, when they come among the Blacks, usually come in May, June, and the first half of July. The néré gathered in March and April comes just in time to combat the famine.

/498/ As for the seeds of the fruit, they are removed and set
252 aside before the sweet meal is mashed. They are preserved to make
263 kologo (the Mossi name) or soumbara (the Mandé name), a pungent condiment highly prized by the Blacks. In order to make this, the women boil the seeds, allow them to cool, stamp on them to remove the skin, and wash them carefully at the watercourse. Sometimes the skin is removed by hand. Then they are cooked for 24 hours, and steeped in water for another 48 in a well-covered canari, in the shade, in a damp spot, to rot the seeds. Then they are laid to dry in the sun on a mat for two days, and pressed with the hands into balls of varying size. It is in this shape that the soumbara is utilized or sold. In Mossi territory, small balls are
[435] worth 100 cowries apiece and large ones 300. At Leo, in Nounouma territory, all balls are the same size and worth 100 cowries. In appearance, the kologo is rather similar to that black coloring matter used by French housewives to add substance to the broth. Whenever a woman wants to use some kologo, to add some to the sauce, she pries loose a small piece from the ball with the tip of a knife and mashes it with the crushing stone. She pours the resulting powder into the sauce.

356 Let us note further that the bark of the néré pod is also used, although not for eating purposes. The Mossi and Gourounsi use it to blacken and polish the floor of their huts and clay roofs. The néré bark is seeped in water for one day, and then the water is tossed on the surface to be polished, that has been tamped down carefully first. The floor is tamped again with the water, and then allowed to dry. This is done three or four times, and in the end the clay surface acquires a handsome black or grey polish. It almost becomes a mirror if the procedure is carried out properly.

284 Finally, to close our list of the uses to which néré is put, we
291 have seen that the brown filaments that grow on the bark of the néré pod are used among the Gourounsi to make belts for /499/ the women, or rather cords to hold up the bunches of leaves that constitute the sole garment of local ladies.

222 Let us now proceed to the baobab.
137 It is called touéra or touéga in Mossi (sira or izira in Bambara). It is to be found most everywhere in the Mossi bush, and especially in rocky, hilly spots near large streams.

The fruit of the baobab is gathered from December to April. It is a sort of huge green almond hanging from a stem that often reaches 25 or 30 centimeters in length. One breaks the shell, 252 removes the flesh, and mashes it in the mortar (this, of course, is done by the women). Once this is done, the resulting meal is strained through a straw strainer. It is now ready to eat.

This is called tofdésoum in Mossi, tiondé-boé in Peuhl, siramogou in Mandé (from sira, "baobab" and mogou, "flour"). [438] Colloquially, Europeans call it "monkey bread." It is sold on Mossi markets as on the markets of Bambara country.

To prepare it for consumption, this meal is thinned with milk, or water if there is no milk, or else mixed with millet flour. The latter mixture is called sangaré ni siramogou in Bambara ("millet flour and baobab flour"). The meal may also be mixed with néré flour.

It is not only the fruit of the baobab, however, that is utilized. The fresh green leaves are used as a sauce ingredient. The dried leaves are used to make tonéra (lalo in Foutanké /Futajalonke?/, namourou or namougou in Bambara, oro in Peuhl). The leaves are dried and crushed in a mortar to make a powder that is added to sauce.

283 Finally, let us add that the bark of the baobab is used to make rope.

222 After the karité, néré, and baobab, we must list the tamarind
137 tree (Tamarindus indica), koussouga or poussouga in Mossi, n'tomi in Bambara.

222 The fruit of the tamarind is a pod, longer than a finger /500/
137 and about the same thickness, that ripens between January and April.
263 It is a yellow-green brown. When cut along its length, it is found to contain some ten little round fruits, the size of half a hazelnut, lying in a row within the greenish pulp. Only the dried pod is used, after removing the little fruits which have a rather pleasing taste when fresh, something between the kola nut and the hazelnut. When the pod is dry, however, the fruits are also dried out and hard, and they are discarded.

222 These pods, of course, are not eaten. They merely serve to
263 make the tô sauce fresh and sour, as the Blacks like it.

[261] The pods[1] themselves are only eaten in times of famine, because they give colic. In addition, they harm the mouth, tongue, and teeth (gingivitis).

In ordinary times, the natives use them medically as a fever remedy. They boil them with pimento and drink the decoction. This is done by the Mossi as well as by the Gourounsi, Bambara, etc.

Tamarind pods are also made into dry balls which are sold at market. They are crudely mashed with a pestle, and then pressed together in cold water into balls of varying size. Whenever one wishes to give the to a tamarind taste, one pries loose a small piece of the ball with a knife and places it in the canari of boiling water where millet flour will be added.

278 Like the Bambara, the Mossi prepare a purging drink with the
757 tamarind pod, either fresh or dried. It is boiled in water, a tiny bit of millet flour is added, and the drink is consumed when slightly warm. This decoction has laxative properties. The Haoussa are also familiar with it, but the Gourounsi are not.

222 To summarize, the tamarind pod has two chief uses among the
137 Mossi and other Blacks of West Africa. It serves to sour and freshen the tô, and it also serves as a purgative.

222 Let us add that Dr. Rançon, in the account of his /501/ trip through Upper Gambia, described the preparation of a tamarind drink for European consumption. The pod is left to dissolve in cold water for three hours, sugar is added, and a sort of lemonade results.

222 The Mossi have rônier in every village. This, as we know, is a
137 variety of palm tree.

"It is the largest palm tree, Borassus flabelliformis," says Dr. Rançon (Dans la Haute-Gambie, pages 139 to 141). "It is easy to recognize owing to its height and characteristic appearance. Its trunk is very long and may sometimes reach 25 or 30 m[illegible] It is swollen in the middle, and its lower and upper parts are [illegible]ss thick, much more slender. The bark is blackish and be[illegible]s of the wounds left by fallen leaves. The wood, although it looks spongy, is quite tough and hard to dent with a saw. Rônier logs are heavier than water. This is one of the rare woods that do not float. The leaves of a grown rônier are clustered in a thick bunch at the

[1] [i.e. tamarind pods — Analyst]

222 top of the trunk, and they are deeply indented. The trunk never
137 bears leaves except when it is young. The dark green of the leaves and their toughness makes /sic/ them look from afar like the artificial zinc leaves of some theatrical backdrops or weather vanes. The youngest leaves at the top are strongly imbricated and ensheathed, and ivory white in color. They are very tender and yield palm cabbage. The leaves of the rônier only fall off when completely dry.

"The fruits, which are called rône, come in clusters of about forty or fifty. They are the size of a medium-sized melon and very heavy. Their covering is green when they are young, orange-yellow when they are ripe. The large seeds, which are blackish and disc-shaped, or like spheres flattened at the poles, are surrounded with a fibrous, gold-yellow meat which is very watery and very fragrant.
[361] Its taste is pleasant, although slightly tinged with turpentine. The natives eat large quantities of it, especially in times of scarcity.

"Rônier wood is dense, long lasting, and remarkably tough.
313 502/ Immune to insects and humidity, it is excellently suited to the
137 manufacture of piles, and often used in the construction of bridges and wharves. The male trees alone are used. The female trees can only be used for fencing, for they are hollow and lacking in strength....

"In addition to the fruit, the Blacks also eat the roots of the
222 young shoots, the taste of which is slightly astringent and rather un-
137 pleasant. They are eaten raw. The terminal buds of the palms are
262 very tender. They are palm cabbages, less tasty to be sure than those of Oreodoxa oleracea, but nevertheless deserving of recognition. When cut into small pieces 2 centimeters square and well seasoned with oil, vinegar, salt and pepper, they make a very good salad, especially if they were previously soaked for twenty-four hours. This dish is highly prized by Europeans who live in the Sudan. Finally,
[263] the rônier yields a fairly abundant sap from which sugar might be
273 extracted. When fermented, it produces a palm wine of inferior quality."

It must be added that the fibers of the rônier leaves are also
137 utilized. The West African Blacks use them to make baskets (as for
[285] example in Mossi territory) or cords (as for instance in Upper Gambia).

433 made do with what his own village could produce, and there was
178 really no trade in the ordinary sense of the word. The Moaga, essentially a stay-at-home, depended on the soil for food and clothing.

241 Only two new crops have been added since the coming of the
177 French: yams (na-niouyan, "chiefs' yams") and white potatoes. The recent increase in the cultivation of cotton makes it easier for the natives to meet their tax, and this encourages them to grow even more.

178 The French occupation has brought many benefits in its wake (creation of a network of roads, peace and the resulting free circulation among the villages, and suppression of banditry and looting), but it has also given the Moaga a desire to leave the country.

167 The extensive recruitment of [249] laborers for the needs of other colonies in the area, for work on the roads, and for the now
464 obligatory military service -- all of which are accepted reluctantly by the Mossi -- has caused many young men to emigrate.

Some of them set out, for the Gold Coast preferably, without the slightest means of support. They go to work in the English colony in order to earn money for clothes. Since they had no money when they started out, they remain there for months or even years, and this seriously diminishes the agricultural labor force at home. It also forces their old and helpless relatives to cultivate their fields alone.

Besides, so many of them never return!

The Native Diet

262 Sagbo (millet mush) is the principal item in the Mossi diet at all social levels. Rice, regarded as a luxury food, is eaten by the naba and notables. It costs from two and a half to three francs a
[436] kilogram at Ouagadougou and is therefore too expensive for most people. It may be added that it rarely is found in the diet of civil service employees.

264 Mossi chiefs usually have two main meals a day: a [250] first meal of sagbo or rice at around nine in the morning, and a second

264 meal of sagbo in the evening.

What we call breakfast is hardly known. Between the two main meals, however, the chiefs have meat grilled or roasted. They are very fond of it and have it seasoned with enough salt and pepper to make it possible to consume the endless number of [273] small gourds of beer which they drink from morning to night.

The Moaga has only one real meal a day, the evening meal. A large millet cake satisfies the day's hunger. If there is any left over, he keeps it carefully for his morning meal. If there is none left, a frequent state of affairs, he makes do with his zompanrga, crushed millet diluted with water and sometimes eaten with a bit of vegetable fat or a few peanuts.

He rarely eats any rice, and if he has no sagbo, he contents himself with benga and souma.

261 It is during the festivals that the Moaga eats his fill. At such
527 times the head of the compound kills a goat, a sheep, or some chickens and has sagbo and fabirama prepared, or beans with copious amounts of karite butter. This is the feast. The members of the family stuff themselves to the point where attacks of diarrhea are inevitable. The results of the attacks are all the more serious in that they are never cared for properly.

The only seasonings known to the Moaga are kalgo (soumbala),
263 red pepper, okra, and salt. No more than a few years ago, how-
439 ever, before the [251] development of trade in the colony, salt was brought from Timbuktu and Mopti by the Dioula and Yarcé and was so expensive that the Mossi people who lived in the countryside often went for six months without tasting salted food.

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Mogh'Nab' Kawinré (Threshing the Grain of the Mogho Naba)

241 Sacrifices. For this ceremony, the emperor summons the
643 Mankougoudougou Tengsoba (a descendant of the autochthonous
782 Nioniossé, masters of the land) to Ouagadougou and gives him a

775 it aside to return it to the soul when it leaves the body. From this
[735] comes the thank-you wish, "May God repay you!" If the deceased led an evil life, if he was quarrelsome or a thief, if he killed, he is condemned to walk over live coals to reach God, or if he is a murderer, he may come to God only after he has drunk all the blood he has shed, which God has saved for this purpose. The major offenders are detained by the treetops and never reach the place of souls. It must be said, however, that most Mossi take little heed of the penalties which may await them in the other life or deny their existence altogether.

The souls go to Bourtenga, the "gathering place of the souls," according to the etymology of the word, a place of indeterminate geographical location, or they go to Pilimpikou, a mountain located
775 in Kipirsi country. Their sole occupation over there is to go to market
764 at night, and this is why on the day of burial the deceased is given cowries so that he may buy millet beer and clothes in order not to look like a tramp.

The souls are white but otherwise they look like men, although they are nimbler and can move effortlessly and with great rapidity
[264] from one place to another. They do everything upside down; they eat with the left hand and do with it all the things we do with the right, and this is why the corpse is washed with the left hand. They wear their clothes inside out, with the pocket of the breechcloth facing in; they carry the spears iron downward, and they walk backwards because their eyes are placed behind their head. This is why the kourita who represents the deceased wears everything inside out.

775 The souls of the animals sacrificed to him, chickens, sheep, goats,
769 beeves, etc., go to join the deceased, who can thus feast, invite friends, and gather kin together, for people are reunited up there. Although nabas are no longer such, those who were subject to them on earth recreate their cours. It is said that parents come to fetch their children, /87/ nabas their pages and favorite wives, and friends their friends, unless the survivors treat them very well and provide them with lots of food.

Indeed, the souls of the dead come back to earth to receive the gifts which are offered to them, to drink the blood of the victims sacrificed in their honor and the millet beer prepared for them on the annual Day of the Dead (basra). This is why no Mossi faithful to tradition ever drinks millet beer without first pouring a little on the

539 The goat replied, "The hyena should give all of herself." The lion told the hyena to remove her own leg. The hyena bit herself. It hurt, and she ran away. The lion caught her and killed her. The goat ran away with his salt and went home.

This is why the hyena attacks livestock.

181 576 The Mossi are polite. This is the quality that first strikes all those who have dealings with them. We mentioned earlier that the natives always greet one another. In fear of their nabas, the Mossi maintain before them a respectful, almost humiliating posture. They are very attentive to important outsiders and see to it that they should lack nothing a Mossi might wish: a sitting stool and mat are brought in immediately along with the drink; the food is abundant and usually clean and carefully prepared.

181 574 The Mossi are very hospitable and willingly give alms for its own sake, that is, to poor people who cannot repay. They are generous and always share with their neighbors, and when they have millet beer, they hand it out liberally. No woman who is brewing beer would allow a stranger of some importance to go by without offering him a gourdful, and she is displeased if he refuses. An object once offered is never retrieved, and stratagems must be used to make a native take back under some pretext what he has given away.

576 /114/ The Mossi always offer things with the right hand. It is an insult to pass the gourd or to take it with the left hand. The oldest person in a group helps himself from a dish first, and all those present follow in order of seniority, down to the youngest. On the other 264 hand, the eldest stops eating first, and it is the youngest who eats the 27 last bits and cleans the gourd. When drinking, however, the most eminent person drinks the last drop.

576 574 Children do not greet their parents in the home, because it is their home; but if a properly brought-up girl sees her mother coming with a full jar or a basket, she rushes to take the load from her, even if the woman is only a few yards from the soukala. When a friend has come to visit, it is considered good manners to carry her load for some distance when she leaves. In any case, visitors are always seen on their way, sometimes to the outskirts of the village.

576 The Mossi do not lack tact and sensibility. When they want something, they first delegate a friend with a gift, then send word that they have a small matter to discuss; sometimes they hint at what it may be and leave without waiting for an answer. Some time later

342 received, gossip exchanged, and social and ceremonial obligations dis-
592 cussed in its shade. Here also, the men of the lineage take their meals,
brought out to them from the kitchens of their wives and set before them
[264] by their sons, who first attend their fathers and then dine on what remains.

592 A few paces away is the grinding platform (*nere*) where the women
252 gather to prepare the grain for their families' meals. This great circular mud table, some twenty feet in diameter, is raised about three feet from the ground. Its surface is beaten hard and worked over with cinders and manure to make it rainproof. Each woman has her assigned place at this
[512] platform where she keeps her pestle and where she stations herself at dawn and again at dusk to grind her millet and learn the news of the day.

Frequently found at the outer perimeter of the dwelling of the Mossi
592 kin group is the house of the son of a lineage woman who has returned from his father's household to live in the benevolent presence of his mother's family, with whom he enjoys an especially permissive relationship. The house set aside for the residence of the young unmarried men of the lineage is also located on the outer edge of the compound dwelling.

555 A recent addition to the traditional pattern of village organization
described above is the independent households of socially ambitious
184 individuals who have chosen to separate themselves from the residences of their lineages in order to profit from their own economic or religious enterprises. Many have become independently wealthy through successful commercial ventures; others, as a result of conversion to Islam, have gained prestige through religious authority and wealth through the tuition and services provided by the Koranic students. Often these people are much younger than their lineage elders, not in line for the inheritance of political or religious authority through traditional channels, and unwilling either to accept the authority of their seniors or to share economically with the less prosperous members of their lineages. They are deviants, in conflict with the communal patterns of consumption and with the emphasis on accepting established authority which characterizes the traditional social organization of the Mossi.

THE TRADITIONAL ECONOMY

613 Much agricultural endeavor is necessarily co-operative. Each farmer
476 is dependent on the assistance of his kinsmen to get his fields seeded,
cultivated, and harvested in the short time during which each of these
243 operations must take place. However, the yield from his field remains his own, to be shared only with his own wives and children. Members of the lineage also work in the fields under the specific control of the lineage elder. Although the harvest from these fields is stored in the granary
242 [i.e. at a sub shelter in the extraneous-way. — Analyst]

592 The compound, from an intellectual point of view, is a kind of subfamily. It is not the whole family; it is not the equivalent of the total family. It is, however, quite superior to the single household.

592 If the Mossi family of Yatenga were completely communal and
- 182 perfectly integrated, the 100 or 125 persons or so who make up a
571 Mossi family would live and work together. A less marked but still quite appreciable degree of community would exist if the compound were a tight economic unit (this does occur among many blacks of the /French/ Sudan, especially among the Bobo /230/ of the Residency of Léo, the Menkiéra, the Nounouma /Nunuma/, the Kassonfra /Awuna/, etc., and also among the Samo of Yatenga as we shall see later), with all the people who live in it working and consuming together under the authority and guidance of the head of the home. Actually, there is even more disintegration of the family among our Mossi of Yatenga. In each home there are work groups which vary in number according to the importance of the compound and the number of its occupants.

592 Work groups. —We must proceed to the work group, then, in order
571 to deal with the actual economic unit. This group has the communal
241 fields which are not, therefore, properly speaking, familial fields or even subfamilial fields. They belong to a subordinate unit. It is the head of the work group who supplies food for all the people in his group during the greater part of the year (seven months out of twelve). In return, they owe him the larger part of their time during the rainy season (two days out of three) but little work during the dry season. Each member of the group also has his own little field which he cultivates on the third day, as we shall see later on.

592 Consumption. Meals. —People do not assemble for meals in the
● 264 same fashion during the rainy season as during the dry season.

During the rainy season the members of each work group eat together at noon in the fields, but men and women are always apart. The boys eat with the men, the girls and small children with the women. In the evening they gather for meals in the same manner as during the dry season.

During the dry season the members of each compound, the whole zaka, eat together, but they are divided into several groups. First, there is the basic division between men and women. Then, if the compound is a large one, there are on the male side the groupings of old men, married men, and young unmarried men. There are also three groups on the female side: old women, married women,

592 and young girls. Thus, there are six groups altogether, but we must
264 add that when the women do not get along well, each one eats in her own hut with her own children. In the smaller compounds, there cannot be six groups; there are only two basic ones, that of the men and that of the women.

592 For the preparation of food during the seven months when millet
252 furnished by the head of the work group is eaten, or in other words the millet from the communal fields (roughly from April to October), each woman is "on duty" for 24 hours and cooks for the whole group. The other women help her, of course, by fetching water, pounding millet for her, etc. During the five months when the millet from the small private fields is eaten (November-March), each woman prepares her husband's food. When a husband has several wives, they take turns preparing the food.

592 /231/ As we can see, the manner of preparing meals follows the
252 schedule of millet consumption. While the communal grain distributed
264 by the head of the work group or under his supervision is being consumed, cooking is done on a work group basis. During the time when the millet from household fields is being consumed, the preparation of meals is on a household basis. The actual consumption of the meals, however (except when people are working in the fields) involves a larger community, that of the compound. There remains, however, the basic division between men and women, who must not eat together and who always split into two groups at mealtime. In the larger compounds, moreover, each of these two major groups is further divided into subgroups according to natural age lines. Finally, to cap it all, the female spirit of anarchy sometimes causes some of the women to withdraw. Hence, for the consumption and preparation of food as well as for its production, there exists only this very unstable community which is characteristic of the family we are studying.

592 Exceptions. —We come now to the Mossi household, which we
182 shall discuss at some length. Before doing so, however, it must be stated that the family as we have just described it has its exceptions here and there.

First, there are exceptions in the sense of community, in the sense of integration; above all, there are exceptions in the sense of greater disintegration.

by the sovereign's wives. Other pages waited upon the monarch, and accompanied him when he moved about the courtyard. When the ruler drank any liquid, the pages rubbed the palm of one hand with the fingers of the other; when he sneezed, everyone clapped; and when he stepped out to urinate, a page accompanied him, turned his back to him, knelt down, and saluted by rubbing his palm.

When the Mogho Naba had finished his morning audiences, he entered his palace for a solitary meal. This meal was prepared by one of his young wives, who tasted it in his presence before giving it to the page who served him.[10] After eating, the monarch rested for a few hours; then he emerged into the courtyard to grant audiences and hear court cases until sunset. At that time he retired to his palace, and those courtiers who were not connected with the evening ceremonies returned to their homes.

The ceremony that closed the day at the monarch's court was called "Kwaga Basgha" (literally, "final meal"). This ceremony still survives. As soon as the sun began to set, the samande-kamba took their heavy batons and stood guard to prevent unauthorized persons from coming near the *namtibo* (royal amulets). The Baloum Naba and the Bendere Naba entered the palace courtyard and knelt before the zongo. The chief page then brought out the *kwaga*, a pottery vessel containing a fire ritually associated with the namtibo.[11] The vessel was placed on the ground, and the page blew on the fire to make it burn brightly. Meanwhile, the Bendere Naba rubbed his fingers across his drum to make the growl of a lion. When the fire finally died out, the Zusoaba Kasanga and the Baloum Naba closed the ceremony by rising, coming together, and saluting the namtibo in the traditional Mossi manner. (The Mogho Naba did not attend this ceremony.) Before the officials left for the night, the pages gave them pots of beer prepared by the royal wives. Sometimes these officials visited the Mogho Naba before they retired to their compounds. Once these men had departed, the pages served the ruler his evening meal, which again had been prepared by one of his young wives.

During the hours of darkness the Mogho Naba conducted many secret affairs of state and conversed with the members of his household. Persons seeking the nam of a deceased relative were often granted audience at night, as were litigants in court cases. When there were no pressing matters of state, the ruler gathered some of the royal wives around him and discussed family affairs, which protocol forbade him to discuss during the day. Some rulers reportedly disguised themselves and visited the wards of the town in the company of a young man from the palace, in an effort to learn things that did not ordinarily come to a ruler's attention.

The Mogho Naba slept in a grass hut in the palace compound. Two

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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The migrants bring back all types of goods with them. According to Dufour: "Money as such is not brought back in very large proportion because manufactured products of the English colony (Gold Coast) cost less. Consequently, each year there is a great introduction of bicycles, sewing machines, fabrics". (Dufour 1956 : 140). One might add to this list kerosene lamps, zinc buckets, all types of wearing apparel, and all manner of household goods. An inventory of the common trunk of two returning migrants revealed the following merchandise: two kerosene lamps, two bottles of kerosene, two burnoose of black serge trimmed with pink silk, one white burnoose, two blue shirts, two khaki shorts, two tubes of Thermogene (a medicated rub), eight women's headkerchiefs, two Moslem fezes, two hand mirrors, two jars of Vaseline petroleum jelly, two pairs of sandals, one black scarf, packs of camphor balls, and one bottle of perfume. These goods represent the migrant's work over one season, from October to the following April, in the cacao fields of Ghana. Other migrants return with more, but few return with less. The actual value of these goods has been estimated by Dufour at about one billion francs C.F.A. per year. The custom duties which the migrants pay amount to more than 150 million francs C.F.A. annually—the sum they actually paid into the treasury of the Haute Volta in 1953 (Rouch 1956 : 139 ff.).

The migrants distribute to their relatives a good part of the goods they bring back, but a large proportion gets into the hands of other people either through the market or through more direct channels. Here is an example taken from my notes of March 24, 1956: "*Trading in bicycles:* Moussa gave Souliman a cow and an old bicycle for a new bicycle which Souliman had bought for 5,000 francs from a passing migrant. Souliman was trying to sell this same cycle for 6,250 francs, thus trying to make a profit of 1,250 francs just two or three days after he had bought it . . . Souliman slaughtered the cow which he received from Moussa and sold the beef to the local *restaurateur* at an additional profit. Souliman appears to be a sharp individual. He recently bought another bicycle for 5,000 francs from a migrant and resold it for 7,500 francs." This type of trading is not unusual, but the most typical articles resold by migrants in the local markets are lamps, worn shirts, shoes and other articles of clothing.

The growth of migration among Mossi men has led to a new type of commercial activity in the country. This is the selling of cooked food by the women to passing migrants. These women and young girls prepare food such as chicken, rice, millet balls, millet flour water and fried cakes which they bring to the principal thoroughfares to sell. Many of them arrive at the central village areas as early as four

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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485 o'clock in the morning to sell food to those migrants who have slept
265 under the trees or in the deserted market place and who are going on towards Ghana or to Wagadougou. At about 8:00 or 9:00 A.M. the majority of the food-sellers leave for home, but some of them remain around all day to sell to those migrants who pass by in the few trucks which can travel during the heat of the day. The food sellers then return at about 5:00 P.M. because from this time until about 1:00 A.M. most of the trucks bearing migrants stop for water and to allow
485 their passengers to eat and rest. The amount of money these women
265 gross varies from day to day depending upon the amount of traffic
434 and the time of year. During the off-season from June to October,
221 when most of the migrants are home planting, a woman may make as little as ten francs per day. In contrast, at the beginning of the dry season when the young men are migrating in droves, the women may make as much as 100 francs a day, even though twenty or thirty women line the road at trucking centers. Many women welcome this opportunity to earn money because by so doing they are free to buy in the local markets the things they need.

MARKET

366 The Mossi have always conducted most of their commercial activities
443 in market places even though some extra-market trading continually takes place. These markets were and are still divided into two main
[103] types: (1) those specializing in external trading, such as Pouitenga, Dakay, Kaya, Mane, Yako, La, Beloussa, Tema, Wagadougou; and (2) those specializing in internal commerce such as the markets in the villages and district centers. Of course, there is an overlap between the two types of markets in the sense that some people from the villages go to the larger markets to dispose of their commodities and, in turn, buy goods which they bring back for resale on the local level. Similarly, in former days some caravaneers visited the local markets to buy commodities and in the process disposed of their goods. However, the main pattern is for local commodities to filter into the large market centers through local markets, and for goods from these centers to filter back down to the local markets. The more goods and traders available, the more numerous and successful the markets are.
443 The Mossi do not appear to have any legends about the origin of
173 markets in their country. When asked how and why markets first arose, they say that markets developed simply because people wanted to exchange goods with each other, or because the chiefs wanted markets in their own villages so that their people need not go to
443 other districts. When one asks the Mossi directly, "What is a market?"

539 The goat replied, "The hyena should give all of herself." The lion told the hyena to remove her own leg. The hyena bit herself. It hurt, and she ran away. The lion caught her and killed her. The goat ran away with his salt and went home.

This is why the hyena attacks livestock.

181 576 The Mossi are polite. This is the quality that first strikes all those who have dealings with them. We mentioned earlier that the natives always greet one another. In fear of their nabas, the Mossi maintain before them a respectful, almost humiliating posture. They are very attentive to important outsiders and see to it that they should lack nothing a Mossi might wish: a sitting stool and mat are brought in immediately along with the drink; the food is abundant and usually clean and carefully prepared.

181 574 The Mossi are very hospitable and willingly give alms for its own sake, that is, to poor people who cannot repay. They are generous and always share with their neighbors, and when they have millet beer, they hand it out liberally. No woman who is brewing beer would allow a stranger of some importance to go by without offering him a gourdful, and she is displeased if he refuses. An object once offered is never retrieved, and stratagems must be used to make a native take back under some pretext what he has given away.

576 /114/ The Mossi always offer things with the right hand. It is an insult to pass the gourd or to take it with the left hand. The oldest person in a group helps himself from a dish first, and all those present follow in order of seniority, down to the youngest. On the other 264 hand, the eldest stops eating first, and it is the youngest who eats the 27 last bits and cleans the gourd. When drinking, however, the most eminent person drinks the last drop.

576 574 Children do not greet their parents in the home, because it is their home; but if a properly brought-up girl sees her mother coming with a full jar or a basket, she rushes to take the load from her, even if the woman is only a few yards from the soukala. When a friend has come to visit, it is considered good manners to carry her load for some distance when she leaves. In any case, visitors are always seen on their way, sometimes to the outskirts of the village.

576 The Mossi do not lack tact and sensibility. When they want something, they first delegate a friend with a gift, then send word that they have a small matter to discuss; sometimes they hint at what it may be and leave without waiting for an answer. Some time later

291 distance from his home, he wears only a benda (loincloth), which does not even cover his buttocks, and a blanket.

He goes about with torso uncovered and likes to show that he is [229] well muscled. When the women are inside their huts, especially when they are engaged in the laborious task of removing the seeds from cotton with their gourça, they pull their skirts up to the hips, making themselves half-naked.

Young girls who have not yet reached puberty and are not yet excised often go about completely nude, unless they hide their sex behind the rags of an old skirt.

Personal Grooming

Ablutions and Care of the Body

515 Married persons and women are fastidious about body cleanliness and therefore have a regular morning routine. This involves washing the face, hands, arms, and legs. During the cool season (end of November to February 15), a little karite butter is added [271] to warm water to soften the skin. Since water is scarce, people take few baths. In villages where there is abundant water, however, the inhabitants bathe two or three times a week.

Unlike their elders, young people and children are careless about cleanliness and may go about all day long without washing [164] their faces. This gives rise, incidentally, to serious cases of conjunctivitis among the children.

Sanitation

312 Drinking water. Water for general use is obtained from 271 water holes created [230] by the inhabitants with dams in order to supplement the wells which often run dry during the dry season. The natives make no effort to purify the water which they often keep for days in containers where mosquito larvae flourish. Pond water is used for drinking. In some villages, however, where the water is actually muddy, the following measure are taken to clear it.

(a) The oil is extracted from crushed peanuts, and the residue is put into the muddy water. It takes about three-quarters of an

312 hour for the impurities and the residue to settle to the bottom of
271 the vessel. Then the water is poured off into another container and is ready to be used for drinking or cooking.

[824] (b) It is also possible to use an additive known as missim (crushed tamarind leaves). The water becomes clear, but it is, of course, somewhat sour. Although it may be drunk, it is
[252] ideally suited to cooking since the Mossi add missim (from miki, "to make sour") even to the water of springs and wells before they use it to prepare their principal food, sagbo.

744 In the town of Ouagadougou frequent visits by the sanitary
312 officers remind the natives of the necessity of keeping fresh water in their containers. They are also encouraged to fill in during the winter the low places holding water where mosquitoes might breed.

515 Laundering. There is no doubt [231] that the Moaga is care-
296 less about the cleanliness of his clothing. There is no shortage of soap -- karite butter, of which it is made, is plentiful -- but he believes that frequent laundering will wear out his clothes too quickly. He also thinks -- which is childish -- that the dirtier a garment is, the cleaner it will wash. He thinks it completely ridiculous for clothes to be ironed. It must be admitted that among the Mossi only a married man can require his wives to wash his clothes. A mother also takes care of her children's clothes, but a bachelor is forced to wash his own things. This, we think, explains the extreme negligence shown by some of them
[461] who let their clothes get dirtier and dirtier. Indolence, alas, is one of the dominant defects of the native of Mossi country.

514 Toilet arrangements. In general the Mossi have no regular latrines. Men, women, in short, everyone, simply goes into the bush. The only exception is the very young children who take care of their needs on the threshold. At night, especially during the winter when the grain is fairly tall, grownups themselves go to the kamanga or karaga (millet or maize field near the living quarters).

364 When the town of Ouagadougou was made a mixed commune [Ed., smallest French territorial subdivision, with both French and native representation in the municipal council], it was possible to install, at municipal expense, a number of lavatories in certain

191 Gambaga Naba (chief of a vast territory in the British colony
193 of the Gold Coast) was, as we have already seen [not translated], the father of Nyennenga, mother of Ouedraogo, the real founder of the Mossi empire. As is well known, any king tends to imitate an illustrious relative and to follow his lead in all matters which might lend him distinction.

This being the case, here is how Doulgou happened to install a marabout at his side. It is said that in addition to his many ministers the king of Gambaga had an imam whose duty was to settle all complicated matters. He was, at the same time, an intimate counselor of the king. Mogho Naba Doulgou, who ruled over a large territory and who felt that he was just as powerful as his ancestor, the king of Gambaga, decided that he, too, wanted to consult only an imam for certain affairs. The emperor had a friend [205] who was a marabout in the region of Zitenga and whose name was Moustapha. Doulgou summoned him to Ouagadougou and conferred upon him the title of Imam.

It goes without saying that neither the learning of this adept in Islam nor any of his other qualifications were checked and that he was not chosen by other marabouts. Thus, the Imam of the Mogho Naba is principally a court dignitary, just like the Ouidi Naba, for example, and, as such, his appointment involves certain barbaric procedures. This is why, after he has been given his turban and his burnoose (insignia of chiefdom) he is invited to a house called surbinda. In this sacred place he is handed a
[272] gourdful of a loathsome beverage, tibo, a mixture of human and animal blood, which all canton chiefs, all ministers, and all court officials must drink at the time of their appointment to make them incapable of treason or lese majesty. The imam takes up the gourd and utters the following sacramental words: "I shall never, under any circumstances, betray the Mogho Naba; I shall come to his aid in time of war; I shall execute without question all orders received from my King," etc.... He then pretends to drink some of the beverage and hands it to the Ouidi Naba who puts the liquid back into the copper jar in which it has been kept for nearly a thousand years. Once these formalities have been completed, he is the Imam of the Mogho Naba. As is

796
643

provided by the emperor. The meat is distributed among the assembled faithful. The salam took place in the mosque, and on this occasion the emperor became a Moslem whether or not he was actually a believer. He was expected to take his place among the faithful immediately behind the Imam. As soon as the Imam finished reciting verses from the sacred books, he turns toward the faithful, says, "A salama leckum," and then shakes the king's hand. When the prayer is ended, the emperor returns home, and the Imam soon follows to sacrifice the tabaski sheep. The Mogho Naba himself is required to hold the animal's tail.

Ramadan (Mossi nolokré). It is well known that Ramadan or Lent of the Moslems (the nolokré of the Mossi, from noré, "mouth," and lokré, "untie the knot, loosen") involves a series of privations and abstinences [208] during which the defenceless body is subjected to all sorts of indispositions, sometimes giving rise to real illness.

It is also obvious that the emperor is subject to so severe a regime and to so many obligations that it would be impossible for him to fast, as do the marabouts, even if he were a believer. Nevertheless, the emperor has been so thoroughly persuaded of the yelsomdé (bliss) attained by the penitent after the thirty days of suffering and since he is by no means indifferent to anything concerning the splendors of the Beyond, he asks for volunteers among his entourage who will practice abstinence in his place. On the day of the festival, they receive many gifts (robes, cowries, etc.).

What follows is a summary of the manner in which the king of the Mossi celebrated Ramadan a few years ago.

On the day of the festival, the Gare-yarga (Yarga in charge of the saddle) appears early in the morning bearing hydromel in an old gourd which is said to have been used by Naba Rimba. He drinks a little of the liquid to "break the fast" and then offers a gourdful to the Mogho Naba for the same purpose. The remainder is given to the ministers and other court officials. [272]

The emperor offers food to all present (bowls of rice and sagbo). He has had one or two cows and many sheep slaughtered in advance.

Around seven-thirty in the morning the Mogho Naba used to go with his usual entourage to Roundé-yiri (a place of prayers, a kind of outdoor mosque which [209] used to be located northwest

241 tuber, Coleus coffini, which Europeans call oussounifing or fabirama,
262 and which may replace potatoes in a pinch, are cultivated in the soils most propitious to them.

221 The precious karite /shea/ tree (Butyrospermum parkii) grows in
262 most fields; its fruit, prized for its cool and slightly sweet flesh, con-
137 tains a pit which yields karite butter, the fat most widely used in
[388] cooking and to make soap. Around the villages, and sometimes even within them, the néré /locust bean/ tree (Parkia africana) produces
[356] elongated pods; its bark, mashed in water, yields a paste that is used to harden the floors of the huts. Its flour makes a cooling drink when
[272] mixed in water, and it may also be eaten; its seeds /8/ are used to make kalro /kalre in the original/, the soumbara of the Bambara, an ingredient /made from locust beans, héré/ of all carefully prepared
137 sauces. The doubalé and silk-cotton or kapokiero trees spread their shade over the weavers, numerous among the Mossi, and over the talkers who are even more. Bamboo grows well in the damp southern regions, and the palm oil tree is occasionally found. The caoutchouc liana, however, has not yet been introduced.

231 Small chickens run in all directions through the villages, along with domesticated guinea hens. Everywhere in the bush near the huts,
[857] little boys herd goats and sheep; this is the task of youngsters here at the age when their contemporaries among us /in France/ begin to learn the alphabet. The most common sheep and goats are small in size. The sheep have short hair. Sometimes, especially in the larger villages where markets are held, goats and sheep are to be seen with
[439] long legs and long, curled horns. They are imported from the northeast and fattened to be sold as butcher's meat. The height of fashion for the wife or a prosperous naba is to be followed by a Touareg /Tuareg/ sheep, well washed and very white. It is fed on millet leftovers and bean mush, and its mistress often presents it with a bit of salt to lick. In short, it is well cared for and agreeably fat; on some important feast day, it will embellish the menu.

The huts are usually guarded by very commonplace dogs, often ill-tempered, but cowardly. A stick is enough to drive them away.
[224] They are mostly used in the hunt, the great Mossi pastime during the dry season. Domesticated ducks are sometimes found in nabas' households, as well as pigeons, but these birds are not widespread and not within the reach of everyone. Finally, almost every group of huts has cats which belong to the women and which are difficult

231 also sold to shoemakers, who need it to rub and soften their hides.
237 In former days wax was given rather than sold. Nowadays it is sold because of the need for cash occasioned by the tax. As for honey,
[262] it is eaten pure, or with milk, or mixed with sarabout. It is also
272 made into a drink called bésou, béci, or bici, which is no other than hydromel. The latter is known, incidentally, throughout West Africa.

The Nounouma call it torosana, from sana, "drink" and toro, "honey." The Kassouna call it by the same name.

The women make hydromel as follows. They boil water, pour the honey into it, and stir. Then they add small-millet flour. The mixture is stirred with a piece of wood and then strained to rid the drink of /493/ all impurities. It is poured into a clean canari, which is carefully covered. At the end of two days, one has a
[435] yellowish drink which is worth 400 cowries or 0.40 franc a liter at Ouagadougou. Among the Nounouma, where honey is more abundant than among the Mossi, the liter is worth 0.20 franc (at Leo, for example). Hydromel is stronger and more potent than dolo, and one must be careful not to drink too much.

252 The Mossi also make little cakes with honey and millet flour. They call them baradaré. These cakes are not made by the Gourounsi.

231 This concludes our review of Mossi stockbreeding. Generally speaking, as we have seen, it is quite mediocre with the exception of two specialities, donkeys and horses. As far as donkeys are concerned, although the Mossi are no traders and have only begun to do a little trading since we occupied their territory, they have always liked the animals and used them either for their own transport or to carry grain. They have an average of one donkey per 42 inhabitants, while the Dagari only have one per 1,000, the Nounouma one per 166, the Sissala one per 55, the Kassonboura one per 50. In this respect, the Mossi run second only to the traders, the Yarsé, who have a pressing need for donkeys in connection with their trade and who have one per 23 inhabitants.

As for horse raising, the Mossi have left it to the Foulbé of Mossi territory. The Mossi nevertheless have an average of one horse per 166 inhabitants among the common people, and one per

222 263 These pods, of course, are not eaten. They merely serve to make the tô sauce fresh and sour, as the Blacks like it.

[261] The pods[1] themselves are only eaten in times of famine, because they give colic. In addition, they harm the mouth, tongue, and teeth (gingivitis).

In ordinary times, the natives use them medically as a fever remedy. They boil them with pimento and drink the decoction. This is done by the Mossi as well as by the Gourounsi, Bambara, etc.

Tamarind pods are also made into dry balls which are sold at market. They are crudely mashed with a pestle, and then pressed together in cold water into balls of varying size. Whenever one wishes to give the to a tamarind taste, one pries loose a small piece of the ball with a knife and places it in the canari of boiling water where millet flour will be added.

278 757 Like the Bambara, the Mossi prepare a purging drink with the tamarind pod, either fresh or dried. It is boiled in water, a tiny bit of millet flour is added, and the drink is consumed when slightly warm. This decoction has laxative properties. The Haoussa are also familiar with it, but the Gourounsi are not.

222 137 To summarize, the tamarind pod has two chief uses among the Mossi and other Blacks of West Africa. It serves to sour and freshen the tô, and it also serves as a purgative.

● 222 Let us add that Dr. Rançon, in the account of his /501/ trip through Upper Gambia, described the preparation of a tamarind drink for European consumption. The pod is left to dissolve in cold water for three hours, sugar is added, and a sort of lemonade results.

222 137 The Mossi have rônier in every village. This, as we know, is a variety of palm tree.

"It is the largest palm tree, Borassus flabelliformis," says Dr. Rançon (Dans la Haute-Gambie, pages 139 to 141). "It is easy to recognize owing to its height and characteristic appearance. Its trunk is very long and may sometimes reach 25 or 30 meters. It is swollen in the middle, and its lower and upper parts are much less thick, much more slender. The bark is blackish and bears scars of the wounds left by fallen leaves. The wood, although it looks spongy, is quite tough and hard to dent with a saw. Rônier logs are heavier than water. This is one of the rare woods that do not float. The leaves of a grown rônier are clustered in a thick bunch at the

[1] [i.e. tamarind pods — Analyst]

273 The Mossi make n'kounangui, like the Bambara, but the Toucouleur and Foulah do not because they are Moslems. The latter's slaves alone, being fetishists make some. The Gourounsi do not make it either, but this is because n'kouna is scarce in Gourounga country. The Gourounsi claim that this tree keeps hyenas away, and when someone dies in the bush and is buried on the spot, a branch of n'kouna is planted where he was buried. It is said that the hyenas will wander about at a distance, but will never dare come close and dig up the body. The Gourounsi claim that this is a matter of common knowledge.

222 137 The léla is another kind of wild plum tree. It is called séno in Bambara and Malinké, filina in Nounouma, mia in Kassouna, mellemoila in Sissala. Its plums are tiny. They are yellow before they ripen, and red when completely ripe (March-May). They are no larger than the tip of the finger, and they are eaten as they are. The almond is not eaten. Children sometimes munch on it, but when eaten in large quantities it causes colic.

The sibi, another tree found in the Mossi bush, is called n'pékou in Bambara and Peuhl, bembé in Sarakolé. The Nounouma called it kakian, the Kassouna kakiéno, the Nankana sibi like the Mossi. The fruit is tiny and sometimes causes colic. It ripens during the dry and warm season, and it is eaten as it comes. The [27a] Habé prepare a drink from it which is called diam-n'pékoudian ("n'pékou water") by the local Foulbé and Toucouleur. The Mossi, Gourounsi, and Bambara do not make this drink.

Let us cite also the tiarala (tiaralsé or tiaralésé in the plural, n'ségué in Bambara, saô in Nounouma). The Mossi are very fond of [27b] the tiarala fruit, which is highly aromatic and which is used /506/ to lend fragrance to native tobacco. They also eat the leaves.

Let us proceed to kara (or kaka). This is the Mandé n'taba. It is the Mandé n'taba. It is called dankola in Nounouma and Sissala, kalankola in Kassonboura.

"The n'taba," says André Rançon (Dans la Haute-Gambie, page 35), "is a malvoidea /?/ of the Sterculiacea family. It is the Sterculia cordifolia Cav., thus named because its leaves are heart-shaped. It is one of the most beautiful plants of tropical African regions. It is easily recognized by its enormous trunk, huge leaves,

222 and very peculiar fruit. The latter, which grows at the tip of
137 young boughs, is shaped like a huge pod whose pulpy valves open when pressure is exercised along the convex ridge. Its free tip is equipped with a sort of pulpy appendage shaped like a thorn, about 0.06 meter in length. When ripe, the fruit is of a distinctive light-red color. It contains a dozen polyhedral seeds immersed in a yellowish flesh which is tasty and highly fragrant. It is one of the best desserts I came across in the Sudan, and we often feasted on it. The fruits are clustered in bunches of three, five, or seven, and strongly fastened to the peduncle and stem that hold them. They rarely fall, and in order to gather them one must break the bough that bears them."

André Rançon adds (page 36) that the n'taba is related to the kola nut. It is apparently a sort of false kola tree.

The n'taba fruits ripen from December to April. The Mossi and Gourounsi eat them when they have dried out on the tree, or
[52 else as they come /fresh/, or after boiling them for a quarter of an
435] hour. They are sold on Mossi markets at the price of three for 1 cowrie, six for 2 cowries, etc., that is to say, 150 for 1 sou.

272 These fruits are also used to prepare a drink among the Mossi and Gourounsi. They are boiled, mashed, placed in a canari filter, that is, a canari perforated at the bottom which is placed on top of another canari. Water is poured upon the fruits /507/, becomes permeated with the juice, and passes on to the bottom canari. This drink is sweet and tastes like honey.

222 Let us cite also the kamsoro (n'kodo in Bambara). It is a very
137 big, thickset tree, with characteristic leaves. The latter are very tough, very large, very thick, their shape ovoidal or rather a little more elongated than an egg, and their color a brilliant green.

The fruits of this tree are eaten throughout the year, especially by children, because ripe ones are to be found at all times.

There are no kamsoro in Gourounga territory.

Let us also cite the véda or ouéda, the caoutchouc liana, called n'saba in Mandé, fôgui in Peuhl, fittigné in Sarakolé, which is also called laré and Vahea senegalensis. This liana bears fruits that ripen in March and April. They might best be compared to oranges. They are green before they ripen and orange-yellow when ripe. Rançon claims that they are delicious. These fruits are eaten as they

644 2. Next come the Ouidi Naba, the Larralé Naba, the Kamsaogo Naba, the Gounga Naba, the Nemdo Naba, and the Poé Naba.

[527 788] 3. On Friday and other Moslem holidays, the imam who represents Islam at Ouagadougou comes to give the doua, a kind of benediction which consists of reciting verses from the Koran, in the morning as well as in the evening.

Lebeg'sonre. As soon as these honors have been completed, the Mogho Naba goes back into his house to put on a less dazzling costume. Shortly thereafter he once more returns to the courtyard.

[59] Next the Baloum Naba and his retinue present their respects as described above. The Ouidi Naba and his followers are not required to do so unless they have foreigners to present to His Majesty.

[533] Then, the Bend'Naba, gangando, and luinsé (drummers) and the doudissi (violin players) play together in praise of the Mogho Naba.

It should be noted that the Mogho Naba speaks to no one before his morning appearance. It is not until he has finished his ceremonial duties and returned to his apartments that his tampa (sisters) greet him.

644 273 Before the officials and ministers of the court return to their homes and as soon as the Mogho Naba has withdrawn, the Sogon'-kassanga, that is, the ranking servitor, offers them some dam (known as dolo or fermented millet beer).

1. One canari [jar] of dam is offered to the Baloum Naba, who is obligated to give a gourdful to the Zusoaba, one to the Wedkim Naba (chief groom), and one to the Soré Naba (Bendré, "chief of the path").

2. A canari of dam is then offered to the Ouidi Naba who is obligated to give a gourdful to the Poé Naba (chief confessor for the wives and pages of the Mogho Naba) and one koré [gourd] to the Bend'Naba. He drinks the remainder with the other ministers in his retinue.

[276] 3. On Fridays and holidays, kola nuts, gouré are offered to the imam after he has given his doua and before the Mogho Naba goes to renew his pledge of loyalty [60] to France before the representative of the Republic in Upper Volta.

241 Baningha (large white millet or sorghum).

These two types are grown for food, [247] although the large white millet is especially reserved for horses in well-to-do households.

[262 273] Kazinga (large red millet). As a food the poorer Mossi prefer this to the baningha, but it is more especially grown for the making of dam, millet beer.

[556] Mouf (rice) is sought only by the chiefs, notables, and a few families of dakangba (well-to-do men).

Benga (beans).

Souma (peas of either the small green variety or large white or red ones).

Niouyan (from niouri, "yam"), grown only in certain areas.

Nangouri or sounkama (peanuts).

Pèsça (fabirama) [a tuber plant].

Sinni or sili (sesame), grown only by a few people who like it.

Bito (sorrel), used in preparing the sauce served with sagbo.

Mana (gombo [okra]) is also cultivated.

Aside from its food crops, each family has its own plot for cotton (lamdo) which provides for the clothing needed during the year.

311 178 I am told that fields are much more extensive today than in former times, in spite of the abolition of slavery. This is explained by the fact that many areas supposed to be haunted were formerly left uncultivated. It is said, however, that the Moaga used to grow larger crops since in those days he was closer to the soil.

[248] At the present time there is a lack of farm hands. As [857] recently as twenty years ago, the young Moaga followed his parents to the field as soon as he was six or seven years old. He took a liking to the work at a very young age. Before the French [484] occupation, the Moaga rarely left his village because of the dangers on the roads, frequented in those days by bandits (usually descend- [579] ants of naba). People were even afraid to go into the bush alone, for fear of being attacked, captured, and reduced to slavery.

433 178 There was little contact even between adjoining villages. At Ouagadougou, no one ventured from section to section unless he had very good reason and was armed to the teeth. In short, everyone

264 meal of sagbo in the evening.

What we call breakfast is hardly known. Between the two main meals, however, the chiefs have meat grilled or roasted. They are very fond of it and have it seasoned with enough salt and pepper to make it possible to consume the endless number of [273] small gourds of beer which they drink from morning to night.

The Moaga has only one real meal a day, the evening meal. A large millet cake satisfies the day's hunger. If there is any left over, he keeps it carefully for his morning meal. If there is none left, a frequent state of affairs, he makes do with his zompanrga, crushed millet diluted with water and sometimes eaten with a bit of vegetable fat or a few peanuts.

He rarely eats any rice, and if he has no sagbo, he contents himself with benga and souma.

261 It is during the festivals that the Moaga eats his fill. At such
527 times the head of the compound kills a goat, a sheep, or some chickens and has sagbo and fabirama prepared, or beans with copious amounts of karite butter. This is the feast. The members of the family stuff themselves to the point where attacks of diarrhea are inevitable. The results of the attacks are all the more serious in that they are never cared for properly.

The only seasonings known to the Moaga are kalgo (soumbala),
263 red pepper, okra, and salt. No more than a few years ago, how-
439 ever, before the [251] development of trade in the colony, salt was brought from Timbuktu and Mopti by the Dioula and Yarcé and was so expensive that the Mossi people who lived in the countryside often went for six months without tasting salted food.

241 There is reason to believe that the time is not far off when the Moaga will devote his efforts much more intensively to cash crops, such as cotton, potatoes, peanuts, etc. In this domain, the province chiefs at Ouagadougou have made real progress.

Mogh'Nab' Kawinré (Threshing the Grain of the Mogho Naba)

241 Sacrifices. For this ceremony, the emperor summons the
643 Mankougoudougou Tengsoba (a descendant of the autochthonous
782 Nioniossé, masters of the land) to Ouagadougou and gives him a

231 bother to raise them; as a result the number of horses has decreased, and this country, formerly renowned for its mounts, may have none in a not too distant future.

Unfortunately, horses do not thrive in every part of the country; Ouagadougou is particularly deadly for them, although, to my knowledge, the true reason for this insalubrity has not yet been found. The natives attribute it to the water, and there is no doubt that horses watered at the wells are in better health than those watered at the streams; it is also true that horses thrive in areas only a few kilometers [136] from Ouagadougou. Europeans tend to attribute this mortality to the tsetse fly. The two opinions are easy to reconcile, for, on the one hand, tsetse flies prefer damp places, and, on the other hand, the [312] Ouagadougou wells contain salt of magnesium which purges the horses and thus checks the disease.

231 The Peul own fine herds of bovines, some rather small and without 563 humps (small cattle), others large and humped (zebu). Traders also 437 use the zebu as a beast of burden. Much of this cattle belongs to the Mossi who seldom tend their own herds but prefer to entrust them to the Peul shepherds who keep the milk in payment. An adult cow yields from two to four liters a day during the good season. The guardians, however, know how to make the best of this near slavery. When an animal dies it is never one of theirs, and if the owner of the herd /a Mossi/ dies without telling his heirs where his cattle is to be found and how many head he owns, the Peul carefully refrain from disclosing the herd entrusted to them. In former days they were slightly more conscientious because they feared retaliation, but now they bless the French occupation.

231 The herds are sometimes decimated by an epizootic disease, as happened in 1910 and 1911 when the Koupéla area was ravaged by what must have been the bovine plague or peripneumonia. The cows would cough, entirely lose their appetites, and die within a few days.

The Mossi also raise bees. The hives are made of straw or flexible sticks and placed in the trees; sometimes swarms of bees also settle in the hollow trunks of baobabs. The honey is gathered at the end and at the beginning of the winter season; the hive is smoked out and [273] the bees destroyed. Honey is used primarily to make bésé, a kind of hydromel which the Moslem Yarsé, Peul, and Haoussa like very much, and which they are allowed to drink in spite of its fermentation; [237 whereas, in principle, millet beer is forbidden to them. The wax 306] is sold to the jewelry-makers who use it to make bracelets by the lost wax process.

592 A typical soukala consists of the master's hut, a hut for each wife, one hut for the sheep and goats, another for the horse if he has one, a hut for the family mill, and, finally, a receiving hut with two doors sufficiently high to permit entrance without stooping and set sometimes as an entrance way and sometimes within the cluster of huts. All [351] these dwellings stand in a circle and are joined either by a cob wall or by /11/ mat fences taller than a man and held up by stakes. The master's hut, which usually stands beside the huts for the horses and sheep, is set off from the others by mats to insure his privacy. A low wall describes an arc within the inner courtyard; this is the kitchen when it is not raining. Big jars of fired clay which are used to brew [273 415] millet beer rest between the huts. In front of this cluster of huts, a shelter is built, usually high enough to permit standing and consisting basically of forked stakes with branches and séko resting upon them; this shelter serves as a refuge during the hot part of the day. Small boys and unmarried girls live with their mother, while older boys, servants, and slaves each have their separate huts which face the dwellings of the master and his wives.

The term yri or soukala covers this whole complex of structures. [591] Each soukala is a distinct unit, and, some time after they marry, the children build their own residence, set completely apart from that of their parents, often in another part of the village and sometimes in [361] another village altogether. The soukala stand fifteen to twenty meters apart, and, because of this, the villages, though adequately concentrated, cover a rather extensive area. The heads of cantons 342 place an ostrich egg at the peak of the roof on their own dwellings, [237] and some even build terraced huts higher than the surrounding dwell- [554] ings. They keep their riches in these huts and a prison in the base- [697] ment. An earthen stairway leads to the terrace where the master of [512] the house receives his guests when the sun begins to sink on the horizon.

721 These people, apparently so peaceful today, were formerly quite warlike and went off to war at the slightest pretext. Foreign to the land they now occupy, the Mossi must have conquered it by force of arms. The Tarik-es-Soudan /History of Sudan/ relates that the people of Yatenga seized Timbuktu in the fourteenth century, and in 721 the fifteenth they probably carried their incursions as far as Lake 701 Bébo and even Oualata. (4) The Mossi army was greatly feared.

4. Delafosse, op. cit., Vol. 2, p. 80.

22/ for roasting and is replaced with green millet, eaten raw after being
24/ beaten with a small stick to remove the chaff. /47/ Certain kinds of
262 large millet are sweet and not too unpleasant to eat in this fashion.
Horses grow fat because millet is their staple food and they may eat
221 as much as they please. Men also profit greatly, because beer brewed
241 from new millet tastes much better than that made from old millet,
273 and when millet abounds, drink is never wanting. At this time rice is harvested, threshed on the threshing floors, and laid aside carefully for festive occasions.

221 At the end of October the rains have stopped almost completely.
241 The beans are gathered and laid out in the fields on millet stalks or on séko held up from the ground by forked stakes to keep the termites from eating them, or the beans may be brought home and tossed on the séko which serve as shelters in front of the soukala. Now is the time to harvest the small millet, which is dry. The millet stalks are severed at ground level by the men and laid out with all heads oriented in the same direction to facilitate the work of the women, who cut off the heads and gather them in heaps. When the millet has been cut, the women fill their baskets. The largest containers are used for the occasion, and each woman uses her ingenuity to pile the millet as high as possible over her basket, using the longest ears or bean stems as supports, like the Zouaves who vie for the tallest pack. Should the line of women on their way back to the village meet a man known for his generosity, they sing, cry out, and surround him until he throws them a few handfuls of cowries to buy a jar of beer.

221 As they near the threshing floor their cries get louder, and each
241 woman comes to the granary and hands her basket to the man who
251 stands there. These granaries are very crudely built and consist basi-
343 cally of sticks driven into the ground in a circle to hold up a séko which is wrapped around them. The floor is made up of another séko, usually resting on the ground but sometimes raised on stones or forked sticks to avoid termites. This is where the millet is placed prior to threshing. The granaries stand around the threshing floor of beaten earth, which is located 100 or 200 meters from the village, some-
[674] times even farther. Thieves are no important threat. They may cut down millet when it stands in the bush, but they rarely steal millet already stored. Only goats, sheep, and guinea hens are to be feared, and they are kept away from the granaries by thorns.

221 As soon as these heavier tasks are over, everyone digs up peanuts
241 and peas. The whole family gathers under the shade of a tree, and

443 rice, beans, karite butter, roasted peanuts sold in little heaps for one centime, raw peanuts, and all the spices for the sauce. Yarsé or Haoussa girls walk from group to group with small basins full of kola nuts, and chiefs and rich men buy one or two nuts which they usually share with their followers. Foreign traders sit under shelters of foliage or millet stalks and sell a few pearls, salt or copper bars, henna or blue dye, while bald-headed vultures hovering above the butchers point out their location to everyone. The meat on sale consists of a goat or sheep, sometimes a beef found dead in the bush or more rarely one slaughtered especially for the occasion. Some people bring chicks and occasionally a hen. This is about all that is to be found.

443 To these comestibles drink must be added. The women who sell
273 millet beer occupy a whole section of the market, and this section is not the least frequented nor the quietest spot. While butchers may be located by watching the vultures, it is possible to spot the tavern-keepers merely by cocking one's ears. Their presence is revealed by the cries, the beating of drums, the hubbub inevitably connected with a crowd slightly the worse for drink. The Mossi undoubtedly drink a lot of millet beer, but the beverage sold at the marketplace does not easily go to the head. The beer that is boiled again (tēsé /sic/) is far more dangerous with its rather high percentage of alcohol, and hydromel (bésé) is even more so. The latter is made of honey and millet flour boiled in water, to which barm is added to induce fermentation. These two beverages are truly potent, especially when drunk
[579] alternately. This is why brawls occur rather frequently, and sometimes real battles in which people are wounded. These are drunkards' quarrels. Men are indeed the same everywhere, and how many fairs without a drunk or two are to be found in our own country? It must be said, however, that more intoxicated natives are to be met with in Mossi country than in France.

443 The market begins at about ten o'clock and usually closes at two; the important ones open around noon and last until nightfall. When we discuss the industries, we shall mention the other products which are sold there.

283 Weaving is the most widespread industry, the one that all men may
[386] practice and all do practice to some extent. The cotton is ginned,
462 and the thread prepared by the women. Delafosse, in his work on the Siéna, has described the process accurately: "When the cotton has been separated from the husk, the seeds are removed with an iron rod

462 on the other hand, are female prerogatives; every woman knows how to make millet beer, soap, karite butter, and kalro (soumbara) with varying effectiveness.

273 Millet beer is brewed with sprouted millet, which is boiled and reboiled in a volume of water proportionate to the amount of grain; yeast is added to the brew on the last day. The liquid is strained through twigs to remove the residue of millet. The more the beer is boiled, the stronger it is; when hops are added, the beverage recalls our own beer.

388 Soap is made with karite butter to which the ashes of millet stalks are added for potash.

252 Oil is extracted from peanuts, previously roasted and crushed between two stones; the women have no press and therefore lose a considerable amount of oil, but it remains in the residue, which is also sold.

Kalro is made from the beans found in the pods of néré /locust bean tree/. It has a strong and characteristic odor, but it enhances the sauce with a not unpleasant flavor.

463 The pottery, wood, and copper industries are carried out by specialists. This does not mean that only the members of a caste may exercise them, but that an apprenticeship is required which is not undergone by everyone, and that people bequeath to their children the secrets of the trade.

323 /58/ Pottery is chiefly made by women, although the men may
462 also work with clay and actually often make jars (canari), while the women make the large jars which are used in brewing millet beer, small pots in which they cook sarabo and sauce, and shallow dishes which are used to serve food.

323 The molding and firing methods are similar. A shallow pit is dug into the ground, larger or smaller depending on the size desired for the jar. The walls of the hole are pounded smooth. The woman places in this mold the prepared clay, previously kneaded with the feet and any stones removed. The clay is slightly damp, and the pit is dusted with dry earth. The woman spreads the clay with a well-polished granite stone and makes it revolve so that every portion of the clay is worked between the stone and the pit wall. After a while, she obtains the jar she wants in the proper thickness.

When several potters live in the same village, as usually happens, they get together for the firing. The jars are marked and gathered in

782 Friday evening. The sacrifice is the usual one described earlier, but
769 the invoking formula is replaced with the following: "Soul of my
796 father, stretch out your hand and take this chicken which I offer you; grant me to reach next year in good health, and I will return with another chicken." The chicken killed on the grave is not roasted as in other sacrifices, but cooked in water.

On those days one must be careful not to sleep outside. The souls come to drink beer from the vats, and woe to those who lie in their way. They will kill them or at least make them seriously ill.

782 On the feast day itself, all those who have some obligation toward
769 the naba or toward the man who is holding the festivities, such as
796 those to whom he has given a wife or who have asked him for one,
431 come to greet him with a rooster and cowries if they did not come on the previous day. Many of his subjects, especially the canton chiefs, also come to offer their rooster and cowries. On the other hand, if an important visitor comes on that day, it is an elementary rule of civility to offer him a rooster.

782 Usually, on the very day of the festivities, no sacrifices are offered
769 on the graves. The victims are offered to the protective kikirsi of the hut, of the inner courtyard, of the outer courtyard, of the whole
796 soukala. The number of sacrificed chickens varies in proportion to the number of gifts. When the sacrifices are over, the naba assembles his people, and the beer is brought in and presented to him. He first pours a little on the ground as an offering to the ancestral spirits, then he drinks and distributes the ars among his people. This is not
[273] a good day to discuss important matters, because after noon everybody is more or less drunk.

On the following Monday and Wednesday, the naba proceeds at dawn with great pomp to two neighboring villages (Nakalbo and Sabré) to sacrifice a beef to the tangandé. Much feasting ensues there on those two days; the naba loses a beef /in each village/ but gains many chickens and a few thousand cowries. He also goes to the village of Toulgou on the day when basra is celebrated in that locality, because his family originated there.

527 The kibsa is the Moslem sheep feast, and it is celebrated forty days after the end of the great feast. All Mossi celebrate it in private; every family has brewed millet beer, and on that day millet mush is replaced with rice and meat. These festivities are even more intimate than the previous ones in the sense that they are held

527 victorious heroes that they were only mortals. The thought of death is wholesome and beneficial.

The "beán feast" is so named because on that day the naba eats bean sauce for the first time in the year.

The naba's hoeing ceremony (na-kobo) is celebrated twenty-one days after the previous one, and like it, like the naky, always on a Saturday. When the naba of Koupéla was solemnly invested by the naba of Bélousa, he used to go with a large number of horsemen and much pomp to hoe a field located some distance from Koupéla. Nowadays he merely breaks ground on a path which connects his huts with those of his two prime ministers. He gives the first blows with the [526] hoe to the sound of drums, and his men take up from there. If the Peul and the horsemen have come in sufficient numbers, they run [273] races. As is usual in such circumstances, beer flows freely, and at the end of the day everyone is drunk. These festivities bring the naba a few thousand cowries offered by his subjects.

There ceremonies, naky, nakobo, do they not constitute a sort of homage to agriculture, do they not recall similar festivities celebrated long ago by the Romans and even today by the Chinese?

443 The market which follows each of these feasts is always crowded. Several beeves and large numbers of sheep are killed. Everyone makes a point of attending in his very best clothes, and the sight of this motley crowd is quite interesting indeed.

Chapter 3. Magic

Mgr. Le Roy, as already mentioned, defines magic as "the art of coercing into one's service the forces of nature, or harnessing the powers of the invisible world, through certain occult practices of a more or less religious character." This is what we shall now study. To put some order into a subject which is wholly lacking in it in the mind of the native, we shall first discuss the superstitions, then the sorcerers.

[181] Like all primitive people, black or white, the Mossi are very superstitious. Were not our own ancestors, in the Middle Ages? Have superstitious beliefs, such as those concerning thirteen people at table,

243
343 are tied, placed in baskets, and carried to special huts. These are small straw huts built on stakes, that is, raised on thick pieces of wood, which stand in a long curved line by the fields. About twenty such huts often stand side by side. Both men and women share in the harvesting.

243 Whenever the millet is to be eaten, the heads are taken from these straw huts and threshed with a stick to set the grain loose. This threshing is done by the men.

Aside from the ordinary small millet, it is the large red millet that is grown most extensively, as a rule, among the Mossi. They [194] call it kaziéra or kaziéga (we know that the r and g are interchangeable in Mossi; people will say, for example, either nora or noga to mean "chicken") and the Bambara call it niooulé. The large red millet is the kind used chiefly for dolo.

This is the millet that is planted before any other, as soon as the first rains begin to fall. The ouaka is used to remove the weeds which have grown in the fields, then the weeds are burned and the large red millet is sowed at the time of the first storms (April). It is sowed in the same fashion as the small millet, by holding the koutiaga in one hand and the small gourd containing grain in the other.

When the millet has come out of the ground, a fortnight /469/ is allowed to elapse and then the weeds are cleared with the ouaka. When the millet is grown, the women and children are sent out to protect it against birds. The millet is ripe around September 1.

The bulk of the harvesting work is done by the men. The stalks, which are usually 3 meters high and which may even reach 4 are cut down at the base. Once they have been dug out and laid down, the heads, which are thick and tuftlike with red flowers, are cut with a knife and carried to the soukala. The women do the carrying as they do for other kinds of millet. The large red millet is threshed only as it is needed. The threshing is done by the men with a stick.

Let us note that when a new piece of land is cleared, the large red millet is sown first to find out if the soil is good. It is only in the following year, when this has been ascertained, that the small millet is sown.

The red millet is also cultivated around the soukala, like maize.
[273] As a rule the Mossi use the large red millet only to make dolo
231 (dama in Mossi). They may also give it to horses, but some horses
262

222 top of the trunk, and they are deeply indented. The trunk never
137 bears leaves except when it is young. The dark green of the leaves and their toughness makes /sic/ them look from afar like the artificial zinc leaves of some theatrical backdrops or weather vanes. The youngest leaves at the top are strongly imbricated and ensheathed, and ivory white in color. They are very tender and yield palm cabbage. The leaves of the rônier only fall off when completely dry.

"The fruits, which are called rône, come in clusters of about forty or fifty. They are the size of a medium-sized melon and very heavy. Their covering is green when they are young, orange-yellow when they are ripe. The large seeds, which are blackish and disc-shaped, or like spheres flattened at the poles, are surrounded with a fibrous, gold-yellow meat which is very watery and very fragrant. Its taste is pleasant, although slightly tinged with turpentine. The
[261] natives eat large quantities of it, especially in times of scarcity.

"Rônier wood is dense, long lasting, and remarkably tough.
313 502/ Immune to insects and humidity, it is excellently suited to the
137 manufacture of piles, and often used in the construction of bridges and wharves. The male trees alone are used. The female trees can only be used for fencing, for they are hollow and lacking in strength....

"In addition to the fruit, the Blacks also eat the roots of the
222 young shoots, the taste of which is slightly astringent and rather un-
137 pleasant. They are eaten raw. The terminal buds of the palms are
262 very tender. They are palm cabbages, less tasty to be sure than those of Oreodoxa oleracea, but nevertheless deserving of recognition. When cut into small pieces 2 centimeters square and well seasoned with oil, vinegar, salt and pepper, they make a very good salad, especially if they were previously soaked for twenty-four hours. This dish is highly prized by Europeans who live in the Sudan. Finally,
[263] the rônier yields a fairly abundant sap from which sugar might be
273 extracted. When fermented, it produces a palm wine of inferior quality."

137 It must be added that the fibers of the rônier leaves are also
[285] utilized. The West African Blacks use them to make baskets (as for example in Mossi territory) or cords (as for instance in Upper Gambia).

222 137 Now for the kankanga (plural kankansé; the Bambara and Malinké call it n'toro, the Foulbé guip-bi, and the Nounouma /504/ kaporo). The kankanga is the native fig tree of West Africa. Its fruits are none other than figs, not as good to be sure as those eaten in Europe, but figs nevertheless. The Mossi, as well as the Gourounsi, Bambara, etc., usually eat these figs as they are. There are ripe ones to be found at all times of the year, and one plucks them at will. 259 261 In times of famine, instead of eating them in this fashion, one allows them to dry in the sun and then mashes them on crushing stones (among the Mossi) or in small mortars (among the Bambara). They are thus made into a sort of meal which is boiled and which serves as a substitute for millet flour. At such times the Mossi also eat the leaves of the kankanga. They cook them in boiling water and add salt.

As for the Gourounsi, sometimes they eat the figs fresh, and 252 sometimes they prepare them for their sauces. In the latter case they boil them, cut them to pieces, and dry them in the sun. When the pieces are quite dry they are laid aside, and whenever needed one of them is mashed, reduced to powder, and added to the sauce.

222 137 Now for nobora or noboga (n'kouna in Mandé, kountan in Khassonké /Kasonke/, hèdè in Foulbé and Toucouleur, kounguié in Sarakolé, salo in Nounouma, kansalo in Kassouna).

The nobora is a kind of wild plum tree. Its fruits ripen from the time when millet is sown until the time when it reaches a height of 80 centimeters, that is to say, between May and July.

273 The fruits of the n'kouna are either eaten fresh or made into a sort of drink called noborame in Mossi, n'kounangui in Mandé, n'diam hèdam in Foulbé. In all three tongues, this means "nobora (or n'kouna) water." This drink is known throughout the Sudan.

In order to prepare this drink, the fruits are placed in water after being pricked with a small piece of wood to let the juice run, and they are left there for twelve hours. At the end of this period of time, they are removed and the water is boiled for a /505/ quarter of an hour. Once this is done, one takes some of the residue left at the bottom of the canari in which dolo is made, and puts it in the jar containing n'kounangui. The liquid is allowed to rest for one night. In the morning, the drink is gaseous and ready for consumption. It is not as strong as dolo.

273 The Mossi make n'kounangui, like the Bambara, but the Toucouleur and Foulah do not because they are Moslems. The latter's slaves alone, being fetishists make some. The Gourounsi do not make it either, but this is because n'kouna is scarce in Gourounga country. The Gourounsi claim that this tree keeps hyenas away, and when someone dies in the bush and is buried on the spot, a branch of n'kouna is planted where he was buried. It is said that the hyenas will wander about at a distance, but will never dare come close and dig up the body. The Gourounsi claim that this is a matter of common knowledge.

222 The léla is another kind of wild plum tree. It is called séno in
137 Bambara and Malinké, filina in Nounouma, mia in Kassouna, mellemoila in Sissala. Its plums are tiny. They are yellow before they ripen, and red when completely ripe (March-May). They are no larger than the tip of the finger, and they are eaten as they are. The almond is not eaten. Children sometimes munch on it, but when eaten in large quantities it causes colic.

The sibi, another tree found in the Mossi bush, is called n'pékou in Bambara and Peuhl, bembé in Sarakolé. The Nounouma called it kakian, the Kassouna kakiéno, the Nankana sibi like the Mossi. The fruit is tiny and sometimes causes colic. It ripens during the dry and warm season, and it is eaten as it comes. The
[277] Habé prepare a drink from it which is called diam-n'pékoudian ("n'pékou water") by the local Foulbé and Toucouleur. The Mossi, Gourounsi, and Bambara do not make this drink.

Let us cite also the tiarala (tiaralsé or tiaralésé in the plural, n'ségué in Bambara, saõ in Nounouma). The Mossi are very fond of
[276] the tiarala fruit, which is highly aromatic and which is used /506/ to lend fragrance to native tobacco. They also eat the leaves.

Let us proceed to kara (or kaka). This is the Mandé n'taba. It is the Mandé n'taba. It is called dankola in Nounouma and Sissala, kalankola in Kassonboura.

"The n'taba," says André Rançon (Dans la Haute-Gambie, page 35), "is a malvoidea /?/ of the Sterculiacea family. It is the Sterculia cordifolia Cav., thus named because its leaves are heart-shaped. It is one of the most beautiful plants of tropical African regions. It is easily recognized by its enormous trunk, huge leaves,

252 This is how their methods of preparation differ. To make to or sarabout, one simply leaves the millet flour to cook in boiling water, stirring occasionally with a piece of wood or a spoon. To make couscous, on the other hand, one takes a canari, fills it with water, sets it to boil on the fire, and then puts the millet into a gourd which is perforated at the bottom and thus makes a sort of strainer. This gourd is placed over the canari where the water is boiling, and covered with a straw dish. The steam emanating from the canari comes through the holes into the gourd, and since the latter is covered the steam remains there a long time. The millet flour is thus cooked by steaming. At the end of a period of time, the gourd is removed and its contents are left to cool and to dry in the sun. Once the millet flour has thus been cooked and dried, it will keep /560/ almost indefinitely. It is eaten either with water or with milk, which is better, or else, if one has some meat, by boiling the latter and pouring the sarabout into the pot.

The Mossi may not be familiar with couscous, but they are familiar with vessala. This method of preparing millet consists of boiling the flour as it is boiled for sarabout. The difference lies in the amount of flour used. When the mush has been cooked it is allowed to cool, and then fresh or curdled milk is bought and mixed in with it. This kind of mush is made only for the purpose of mixing [171] it with milk. The Bambara are familiar with vessala and call it by name of fisan or finsan.

484 The Mossi, when they are traveling, often cook millet grains 252 which have not been reduced to flour. This is called honandourou-ki 171 ("cooked millet"). The Bambara call it niobalabala, the Foulbe m'bafna-gaouri, the Sarakolé ilé-n'kioro, and all these words have the same meaning. This method of preparing millet is quite unusual, and is resorted to only when the time or means to reduce millet grains to flour are lacking.

[462] Mossi women also make dolo (dama). To do this, they soak the 273 grains of large red millet in water for two days, and then expose them to the sun and crush them. The flour is boiled for two hours, and then strained and boiled in the necessary amount of water for a whole day. This is transferred to another canari and allowed to cool.

431 "I. If by negligence, forgetfulness, or because of an absence
583 (journey), the prospective husband does not make the annual gifts, he will be refused the girl on the day when he comes to have her taken to his home, and he will lose all his rights over her.

"Nevertheless, he will regain all his privileges if in one installment he pays to the head of the girl's family and to her mother all the gifts which he ought to have made during the period of his absence or forgetfulness.

"The head of the family cannot refuse this collective gift and thereby oppose the marriage.

"II. The husband has forgotten to make the gifts and does not come to the home of the family head when the young girl has reached puberty.

"A. If he lives in the area, the failure to call on the head of the family at the required time is regarded as a relinquishment of his rights over the girl. The head of the family may then dispose of her again.

"B. The fiancé has been away on a journey for a long time and is still absent when the girl reaches puberty.

"The head of the family has the fiancé's brother called to him. He offers the girl to him as his bride. The brother is not required to accept, and if he does not, the head of the family recovers all his rights over the girl."

582 Celebration of the marriage. Consummation. —"The girl must have reached puberty (15 or 16 years) in order to be taken to her husband's hut. It is even customary to wait six months or a year after she was first in a state of zim (zim means "blood" in Mossi).

As for the husband, it is equally necessary that he must have attained the age of 17 or 18.

585 The formalities of the marriage ceremony are very simple in Yatenga.

When the betrothed girl has reached puberty, the husband calls on the family head to ask for her. The family head can tell him /239/ to wait six months or a year at most, a delay which the fiancé is required to observe, but usually the head of the family replies that his
[431 future wife may be fetched in a few days. The fiancé then hands him
273] a bag and two goatskins full of millet and withdraws. This grain is used to make dolo which is drunk by the girl's entire family.

585 Each woman living in the same soukala makes a gift of one or two
431 gourds to the girl's mother. The father and the head of the family give her two large baskets. These objects will make up the bride's trousseau.

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
FA28 Mossi FA28

territory. This report is substantiated by Barth. Marc adds that the caravaneers had

> . . . a considerable amount of incidental expenses. Ten thousand kolas called for two asses or four porters for whom it was necessary to provide food during close to two months. Formerly there had been a certain number of local exactions to pay each time that the caravans crossed a new country. Now there are taxes on the caravans in the Gold Coast and also in French territory. It is also necessary to pay for ferryman who transports the livestock across the Volta [River]. There are risks, and occasionally cattle, fatigued by the trip, arrive in such bad shape that they are sold more cheaply than they had cost. Finally, the realization of profits is often difficult, the kola market being, in the commercial centers of the Mossi, subject to considerable fluctuations at the time when the caravans return. (Marc 1909 : 174)[7]

Sometimes the caravaneers made extensive use of middlemen and did not realize all the profits. Marc, who was stationed at the customs post at Leo on the Mossi border with the Gold Coast, wrote:

> The livestock is bought upon arrival by interpreter-brokers, middlemen between the butchers and the meat merchants, to whom the caravaneers are practically forced to resort. These men buy all the kola nuts brought by the forest natives, and control the market prices . . . These interpreter-brokers apparently speculate on livestock in a most curious way. They have scouts who go out to meet the caravans, sometimes two days' march to the north. These scouts attempt to alarm the travellers with tendentious remarks, until they are willing to cede their herds at a low price. Some times, at the height of the business season—that is, in January and February—the livestock prices may fluctuate by one hundred per cent within a few weeks. The Mande-Dioula vie in eloquence, the Yarse and Mossi in politeness, the Hausa in friendliness. In reality, there is here, an embryonic trading center, a veritable stock exchange, using extensively indigenous methods. ((Marc 1909 : 173)

According to most reports, all the larger market centers of Mossi country were like this.

Caravan centers, like all the lesser market centers in Mossi country, provided merchants not only with trading opportunities but also with occasions for conviviality after hectic days of travel. At Dakay south of Wagadougou, livestock traders found musicians, singers, and the most beautiful dancers in the country. And according to Marc, during the whole caravan season the market was abundantly furnished with beer (Marc 1909 : 175). But if the Mossi enjoyed themselves at

(7) Tauxier (1912 : 539) states that each porter was paid 35 francs for the thirty-five days of travels or at the rate of one franc per day. In addition a caravaneer spent about 300 cowries a day on food for each of his bearers.

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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and districts were present to honor him. This being completed, the *griots* are paid, everyone rises and shouts *Ne Wardo* (the salutation at funerals), and that part of the funeral ceremony during which a man takes leave of the market community is concluded. Now his relatives, descendants and friends all return to the market, whose sights and sounds make it an integral part of the life cycle of the Mossi—the one institution of their society in which almost everyone participates actively.

Preparation for a market day, especially the tri-weekly Friday market or *Raga kasanga,* usually begins on Thursday. This day is characterized by a great deal of activity: preparing the commodities which are to be sold the next day, washing body and clothes, and combing hair. The women who prepare the beer and fried foods work late into the night preparing their wares, and a visit to the homes of the *griots* finds them preparing their drums. The little boys who go to the roadside to chant Moslem prayers to the passers-by, and the little girls who sell water to these strangers redouble their efforts until late on Thursday night to get enough money to buy presents in the market the next day. Finally, when it is quite late and the beer-making fires are out, everyone retires until the morning of the market.

At 7:00 A.M. on Friday the market is deserted except for a leper who sweeps out the stalls of the sellers in return for bits of food or presents of money. Looking at the empty stalls, one has a certain amount of difficulty imagining that this spot will be crowded with human beings five hours hence. But one is also conscious of the fact that even at this early hour scores of persons have already left their homes in distant villages and are on their way to market loaded with produce and with high hopes for the day. About 9:00 A.M. the first women arrive, balancing net-covered bundles on their heads, and take their positions in the various sections of the market with either face or back pointing to the direction from which they came. By 9:30 A.M. the butchers have arrived with their bleating sheep and goats and an aged cow. The first beer sellers have also arrived and are giving "sips" to men before they settle down to sustained drinking.

The pace of the market quickens about 10:30, and in the distance the first tap of the Bindere's drum resounds. All of a sudden, the market seems to have become a giant magnet, drawing long lines of people towards it along every path and from every direction. Women dressed in brightly colored print cloths and dresses, with babies straddling their backs and the inevitable bundles on their head, saunter into their places. Young children run ahead of their mothers or stumble behind them. Those vendors of European products who customarily transport their goods in boxes on bicycles arrive in the

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market and set up their small tables to display all types of goods from trinkets to single lumps of sugar. And the more numerous young men, who have no goods but have money in their pockets, go to the leaf-covered sheds, place their weapons on top of them, and take seats from which to view the passing parade. Imperceptibly, the hum in the market increases as people find their places and greet one another with *Ne Raga,* the market greeting, until by 11:30 A.M. the whole market reverberates with sounds of drumming, cries of vendors, and the shrill voice of water hawkers and juvenile vendors. Now the market is in full swing.

From midday until about 3:30 P.M., the Mossi market is a sea of humanity—talking, laughing, arranging rendezvous, quarreling, selling, buying, parading, and (where youngsters are concerned) often crying for want of money to buy a desired object. The return of migrants lends additional color and excitement to the market as these young people walk about in their new clothes, encouraging the drummers to sing louder praises, the maidens to feel jealous of the clothes of the migrants' female relatives, the former migrants to reminisce about the days when they too had bright new clothes, and the young boys to dream of going off one day to obtain the things they need.

Men, noting that their female relatives are spending too much time looking over the wares of a vendor of European products or of the kola-nut seller, wander over ostensibly to help in the purchase but really to prevent love affairs. The failure to observe such a precaution may be the cause of the shouting a man hears in the distance, and off he hurries to see whether a lineage brother or a friend may need his aid. He may either get into the battle himself, or aid the Raga Naba and the other elders to chase the battlers out of the market place, or to take them to the chief. This may indeed restore some peace and good fellowship to the market.

Elders, now more interested in beer than in other pleasures, pass the heat of the market day under the beer sellers' shed. From time to time one of them may be interrupted by a young man bringing him three kola nuts, one or two of which are immediately broken and given to friends. However, when an oldster, whether a drinking pagan or a Moslem teetotaler, sees or overhears a young man buying four kolas, he may frown or smile in the knowledge that mischief is afoot. Loud-voiced predictions of the consequences of evil-doing may suddenly disturb the merrymakers as American missionaries speaking in perfect More (the language of the Mossi) appear and harangue the market people. Then, as suddenly, the *Americadamba* depart in their large cars, and the curious pagans, amused Catholics or hostile Moslems who had gathered to hear the gospel return to

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443 their "evil" and "non-evil" ways. A little later the young men who
512 possess bicycles may be seen suddenly hurrying to avoid the other
571 *nansara*, this time, the French official, who comes into the market to
[648] apprehend those individuals who have not bought a bicycle license.
[493] All the *nansara* know that the market is the best place to find a Mossi.

Towards 3:00 P.M. the matrons in the market, having sold most of their own goods and bought those which they need, make the last rounds to see whether there are any bargains to be had. In their rounds the women may be badgered by sons, daughters and other relatives, but seldom by husbands, for extra francs to buy kolas or tobacco to bridge them over the two non-market days. Or the women themselves may seek out their male relatives to buy kola or goods, from the stranger who is making the rounds of the local markets. By this time of day the market place is emptying—at first this happens so imperceptibly that one does not notice it. However, by 4:00 P.M. a mass exodus begins as women collect their little children, hitch their babies on their backs, place baskets on their head and set out in the direction of their own villages or to the villages of relatives where
[564] they plan to spend time. By this hour also the Bendere are drunk,
[273] and for an extra calabash of beer are willing to recount genealogies for which, if sober, they would demand a sheep or goat.

[231] Evening finds the market deserted except for scavenging dogs which hunt the scraps of food dropped by the now departed human
[985] beings. The market place finally falls silent, until late at night passing migrants retire there to sleep. These persons leave the market place at dawn to buy food from the women whose hawking cries herald another day of roadside commerce. The women use the profit from this trade to buy goods on the following market days.

[pp. 279-738 not processed]

644 2. Next come the Ouidi Naba, the Larralé Naba, the Kamsaogo Naba, the Gounga Naba, the Nemdo Naba, and the Poé Naba.

[527 788] 3. On Friday and other Moslem holidays, the imam who represents Islam at Ouagadougou comes to give the doua, a kind of benediction which consists of reciting verses from the Koran, in the morning as well as in the evening.

Lebeg'sonre. As soon as these honors have been completed, the Mogho Naba goes back into his house to put on a less dazzling costume. Shortly thereafter he once more returns to the courtyard.

[59] Next the Baloum Naba and his retinue present their respects as described above. The Ouidi Naba and his followers are not required to do so unless they have foreigners to present to His Majesty.

[533] Then, the Bend'Naba, gangando, and luinsé (drummers) and the doudissi (violin players) play together in praise of the Mogho Naba.

It should be noted that the Mogho Naba speaks to no one before his morning appearance. It is not until he has finished his ceremonial duties and returned to his apartments that his tampa (sisters) greet him.

644 273 Before the officials and ministers of the court return to their homes and as soon as the Mogho Naba has withdrawn, the Sogon'-kassanga, that is, the ranking servitor, offers them some dam (known as dolo or fermented millet beer).

1. One canari [jar] of dam is offered to the Baloum Naba, who is obligated to give a gourdful to the Zusoaba, one to the Wedkim Naba (chief groom), and one to the Soré Naba (Bendré, "chief of the path").

2. A canari of dam is then offered to the Ouidi Naba who is obligated to give a gourdful to the Poé Naba (chief confessor for the wives and pages of the Mogho Naba) and one koré [gourd] to the Bend'Naba. He drinks the remainder with the other ministers in his retinue.

[276] 3. On Fridays and holidays, kola nuts, gouré are offered to the imam after he has given his doua and before the Mogho Naba goes to renew his pledge of loyalty [60] to France before the representative of the Republic in Upper Volta.

249 rainy season ends, the tobacco has already grown tall. In the month of December, one begins to gather the leaves, taking first the lowest ones which are the first to ripen. One keeps plucking up the stem and gathering leaves until the end /485/ of January. Then the tobacco stems are cut down to get the seeds.

276 In order to make tobacco, the leaves are left to dry in the sun, and then, when they are dry, the men crush them in small mortars. They add a little water, stir, and make tobacco balls, or rather small elongated loaves worth one sou apiece. These loaves are entrusted to the women to be sold at market.

249 The Mossi also grow indigo (gara in Mossi, as in Bambara). During the rainy season, indigo is sown in separate plots. First the grass is removed, and then the ground is struck here and there with the koutiaga. Then indigo seeds are broadcast, and the soil is moved with the ouaka to cover the seeds so that the birds will not eat them. At the end of a fortnight, the indigo begins to shoot. The weeds are removed by hand. The leaves may be gathered forty days later. They are gathered by hand and given to the women, who press them into flat loaves.

248 As for hemp (berenga in Mossi, pepan in Nounouma, kanzé in Kassouna, dafou in Mandé), it is sown among the maize that surrounds the soukala as soon as the latter has put forth shoots. The barenga has a long stalk similar to maize and hard to distinguish from the latter, but while maize is harvested in August, berenga stalks are left standing until October or November.

262 Its leaves are used for sauces.

241 Hemp closes our list of food crops and other crops in Mossi territory. Let us close with a few words on agricultural tools.

The basic tool of cultivation, here as in all other parts of West Africa, is the daba. The Mossi have two kinds:

1. The ouaka, a kind of daba with a broad, thin blade. It is used to turn up the soil.

/486/ 2. The koutiaga, koutiara or koutiaba. This is a kind of small hoe which is used to make holes when sowing grain or seeds.

The Mossi also have the following accessory tools:

1. The laré. This is an axe used to cut stumps when a plot is cleared.

273 The Mossi make n'kounangui, like the Bambara, but the Toucouleur and Foulah do not because they are Moslems. The latter's slaves alone, being fetishists make some. The Gourounsi do not make it either, but this is because n'kouna is scarce in Gourounga country. The Gourounsi claim that this tree keeps hyenas away, and when someone dies in the bush and is buried on the spot, a branch of n'kouna is planted where he was buried. It is said that the hyenas will wander about at a distance, but will never dare come close and dig up the body. The Gourounsi claim that this is a matter of common knowledge.

222 137 The léla is another kind of wild plum tree. It is called séno in Bambara and Malinké, filina in Nounouma, mia in Kassouna, mellemoila in Sissala. Its plums are tiny. They are yellow before they ripen, and red when completely ripe (March-May). They are no larger than the tip of the finger, and they are eaten as they are. The almond is not eaten. Children sometimes munch on it, but when eaten in large quantities it causes colic.

The sibi, another tree found in the Mossi bush, is called n'pékou in Bambara and Peuhl, bembé in Sarakolé. The Nounouma called it kakian, the Kassouna kakiéno, the Nankana sibi like the Mossi. The fruit is tiny and sometimes causes colic. It ripens during the dry and warm season, and it is eaten as it comes. The [272] Habé prepare a drink from it which is called diam-n'pékoudian ("n'pékou water") by the local Foulbé and Toucouleur. The Mossi, Gourounsi, and Bambara do not make this drink.

Let us cite also the tiarala (tiaralsé or tiaralésé in the plural, n'ségué in Bambara, saõ in Nounouma). The Mossi are very fond of [276] the tiarala fruit, which is highly aromatic and which is used /506/ to lend fragrance to native tobacco. They also eat the leaves.

Let us proceed to kara (or kaka). This is the Mandé n'taba. It is the Mandé n'taba. It is called dankola in Nounouma and Sissala, kalankola in Kassonboura.

"The n'taba," says André Rançon (Dans la Haute-Gambie, page 35), "is a malvoidea /?/ of the Sterculiacea family. It is the Sterculia cordifolia Cav., thus named because its leaves are heart-shaped. It is one of the most beautiful plants of tropical African regions. It is easily recognized by its enormous trunk, huge leaves,

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that he did not cause his father's death. The daughters who dare go through the opening, even those who are grown women, are greeted with bravos by the crowd. The wives receive generous gifts from their husbands. The reason for this is that no girl who had been pregnant before being led to her husband would dare to pass through the opening because the deceased and other kimsé (ancestral spirits) would strike her dead.

This is why some women disappear at the crucial moment, to the great shame of their husbands.

[824
●278]

The funerary hut is fumigated by burning a certain aromatic plant known as sompiga. The Bambara and the Wolof call it benguefala or benguefira. The same plant was widely used by the Europeans during the recent outbreak of yellow fever, either in an infusion, in a tisane, or mixed with the shower water.

of chickens which are killed at his feet. He pronounces some ritual words which may be summarized as follows: "Accept these chickens and these cowries and do not return; may everything you leave behind profit your heirs!;" etc.

The body is then carried away. On reaching [197] the tomb, the bearers carry the corpse around it three times and then place the body on the ground. The undertaker goes into the tomb and arranges the sleeping place. The mat is removed, and the body is handed in to him. The members of the family and other relatives at once begin to weep as the opening is closed with a stone, and the whole is covered with earth.

The eldest daughter of the deceased and his wives cover their bodies with ashes. The pugtiéma (first wife) and the eldest daughter wrap leafy branches around their waists, and the rest of the family wear vines on their foreheads. This is the first mourning.

Forty or fifty days later the second funeral ceremony is held, accompanied by various games, the playing of tom-toms, killing

304 wound with warm water which often is not scrupulously clean
752 since the gourd in which it is kept is not always washed. The
[278] wound is dusted with a charred substance (made by burning the bark or leaves of the baguem-baga plant) mixed with karite butter. It is bandaged with a leaf from the kantonga bush, tied on with a bit of thread. Once the wound has begun to heal, it is wrapped in cotton strips. The water used to wash the wound is thrown into a hole that is covered with a stone.

304 Special language of the kéogo. In order to prevent the Moaga
198 (here meaning an uncircumcised person) from understanding what is said within the kéogo or between the boys and the guards, a special language has been developed. Some of its words are as follows:

Water (kom in ordinary Mossi language), hargo;
Millet cake (saghbo in Mossi), lâbo;
Sauce (zindo in Mossi), kirou;
Fire (bougoum in Mossi), nionom;
Beer (dam in Mossi), sonnom;
A robe or blanket (fougou in Mossi), pilli;
Mat (pinri in Mossi), wanghé. [268]

304 Distinctive attire of the circumcised boys (bankoanga). His
292 costume, wallimba or zougba, consists of a fringed loincloth with pockets. He carries a rough stick (zâbré) with which he hunts rabbits and other small game.

He accompanies his evening dance with an instrument called
304 wassimba, a curved stick on the end of which are strung four or
293 five pieces of gourd, roughly circular in shape, with holes bored through them.

Tom-toms. The bankoensé (newly circumcised boys) dance
304 to the beat of two drums like those used in the warba and waongo
534 (see the chapter on native dances). The drums are called
535 gangango when they accompany other dances, but here they are called gallyans.

304 Prohibitions in the kéogo. A Moaga (1) is strictly forbidden

1. "Moaga" is used here in a pejorative sense and means an uncircumcised man.

669 The last wars in the Koupéla area, therefore, were all civil wars that broke out upon the death of chiefs in the adjacent regions of Koupéla, Fada, and Tenkodogo.

721 The most usual theater of warfare, however, was Bousanga /Busansi/ country. If a Bousanga woman enslaved to the naba of Koupéla ran away, the naba demanded her return. If his request was turned down, this meant war. When the Mossi ran short of millet, when their herds had been decimated by an epizootic disease, or even simply when they wished to obtain slaves, the naba would assemble his ministers and direct them to raid the Bousansé. The Saman'Naba would take [701] charge of the war. The Trabana, an experienced warrior, acted as chief of staff, and all the other chiefs, heads of cantons and villages; assembled their men. This was a festive occasion, and its abolition is still lamented by many people, especially among the chiefs.

721 Everything was looted; the harvest and herds were shared, and the 567 population was reduced to slavery. Since we have mentioned slaves, we shall provide some details on the subject.

567 Slavery existed in Mossi country, but in a very mild form. The agricultural Mossi kept slaves to till their fields. It was to their advantage to treat them well and thus turn them to good account. [435] Slaves constituted a source of wealth. An adult slave sold for 50 to 100 francs according to his strength, and no distinction was made between men and women. It was, therefore, unusual for a Mossi to kill a slave. Custom certainly sanctioned his right to do so, and no one, not even his chief, could call him to account for his act; his slave was his property, and he could do with him as he pleased. When he wished to get rid of a slave, however, he found it more lucrative to sell him. Besides, a slave should be attached to the household; a [278] maltreated slave might run away, even at the risk of being caught and in spite of the drug he was forced to drink, which, like the Lethean waters, was supposed to cause him to lose his memory. On the other hand, a well-treated, well-fed slave had the hope of obtaining a wife and becoming in turn the master of a hut. When his master was pleased with him, when he had rendered an important service, he was sometimes given one of the master's daughters in marriage; this made him free, and his children were not born slaves. Slaves could also be freed if their family agreed to redeem them. They were freed most frequently by means of an exchange: one of their daughters, sisters, or nieces was given in their place. This custom persisted until quite recently.

789 /103/ Happily, it is possible to avoid lightning. To achieve this,
821 it is necessary to find in the bush a white substance rather similar to hyena droppings which the natives call "rain dung," as well as certain tree roots. Part of these roots is left to soak in water for three days, and the rest is burned to ashes. A chicken is sacrificed to the tim. Then the water in which the roots have steeped is used to cook the millet mush, and the sauce is made with baobab leaves. All the soukala dwellers must eat this millet mush, and every one of them is marked on the back and chest with a cross of ashes mixed with karite butter. The horse and donkey, alone among the animals, are similarly marked on the back, chest, and inside the mouth. The huts are marked on the east side, the direction from which the rain comes, and above the entrance. Now there is nothing to be feared. We do feel, however, that lightning-rods are more effective.

759 All these tim, medicinal remedies, amulets, talismans, and
756 superstitious recipes, are prescribed either by true doctors who actually know the properties of herbs and effect real cures or by sorcerers. The doctors are often consulted. Since they specialize in certain diseases, they are consulted for those diseases alone. Those who have been cured by a medicine willingly make it known to friends who are afflicted with the same illness. The doctors are as numerous as the diseases which afflict mankind.

278 Some doctors are not merely healers but also poisoners, and they
674 are greatly feared. The surest way to get rid of an enemy is to consult them, but their fees are high. They have slow poisons which consume the victim gradually and the overwhelming ones which kill in a few hours. They put them in drinks, in millet mush, or more
754 often in kola nuts. There are also people, sorcerers rather than doctors, who claim the power to kill at a distance and who know how to practice sympathetic magic. Their prestige has waned since the French occupation because they have not managed to kill the Whites who settled in the country; but they say that our tim are more powerful than theirs.

754 The sorcerers are also numerous. There are those who take up the
756 call of their own accord and those who are born sorcerers. The former
791 are the bagré and seuya; the latter the tibo, bartibo, waongo, and nyonnyonsé. Pardon us these barbaric words, but they are impossible to translate.

791 The bagre is the nice, innocuous kind of sorcerer, who helps the
756 poor for a penny or two. He is consulted about everything. For example, what does the future hold? Will fire destroy my huts or won't

222 These pods, of course, are not eaten. They merely serve to
263 make the tô sauce fresh and sour, as the Blacks like it.

The pods[1] themselves are only eaten in times of famine, because
[261] they give colic. In addition, they harm the mouth, tongue, and teeth (gingivitis).

In ordinary times, the natives use them medically as a fever remedy. They boil them with pimento and drink the decoction. This is done by the Mossi as well as by the Gourounsi, Bambara, etc.

Tamarind pods are also made into dry balls which are sold at market. They are crudely mashed with a pestle, and then pressed together in cold water into balls of varying size. Whenever one wishes to give the to a tamarind taste, one pries loose a small piece of the ball with a knife and places it in the canari of boiling water where millet flour will be added.

Like the Bambara, the Mossi prepare a purging drink with the
0278 tamarind pod, either fresh or dried. It is boiled in water, a tiny
757 bit of millet flour is added, and the drink is consumed when slightly warm. This decoction has laxative properties. The Haoussa are also familiar with it, but the Gourounsi are not.

222 To summarize, the tamarind pod has two chief uses among the
137 Mossi and other Blacks of West Africa. It serves to sour and freshen the tô, and it also serves as a purgative.

222 Let us add that Dr. Rançon, in the account of his /501/ trip through Upper Gambia, described the preparation of a tamarind drink for European consumption. The pod is left to dissolve in cold water for three hours, sugar is added, and a sort of lemonade results.

222 The Mossi have rônier in every village. This, as we know, is a
137 variety of palm tree.

"It is the largest palm tree, Borassus flabelliformis," says Dr. Rançon (Dans la Haute-Gambie, pages 139 to 141). "It is easy to recognize owing to its height and characteristic appearance. Its trunk is very long and may sometimes reach 25 or 30 meters. It is swollen in the middle, and its lower and upper parts are much less thick, much more slender. The bark is blackish and bears scars of the wounds left by fallen leaves. The wood, although it looks spongy, is quite tough and hard to dent with a saw. Rônier logs are heavier than water. This is one of the rare woods that do not float. The leaves of a grown rônier are clustered in a thick bunch at the

[1] [i.e. tamarind pods — Analyst]

634 721 567 175 3. Finally, a third lot, composed of young girls and young boys, was distributed among the warriors and put into their charge. The boys will be employed until further notice as grooms to the warriors; later on, those who prove themselves useful and docile will be kept. The others will be sold at the first opportunity. The girls will be given in marriage to warriors who distinguish themselves.[24]

721 643 644 701 [645] The military campaigns of the Mossi, in contrast to their slave-raiding expeditions, appear to have been well organized. When the Mogho Naba felt that a war was necessary, he summoned his five provincial ministers and the Tansoba to a parley. If war was decided upon, the Tansoba was given full charge of all operations. This man, chosen from a hereditary clan of warriors who lived in a village called Tansob'tenga in Sapone district, was listed among the Mogho Naba's courtiers but seldom appeared at court unless war was imminent. His duties as chief warrior were considered so dangerous that he constantly sought out religious practitioners for supernatural aid. Nevertheless, a war minister who was good and brave was not expected to live very long. If he did live to become gray-haired, the other courtiers made fun of him by pretending that his graying head could only be the result of his having carried a sheep captured in warfare on his head as a present to the ruler.

701 721 644 [202] [411] Once given a mandate for war, the Tansoba collected his magico-religious apparatus and prepared the requisite sacrifices. He then asked the provincial ministers to notify the district chiefs to assemble with their warriors under the leadership of the local Tansobadamba, who were often members of the Tansoba clan. When the district chiefs received this notice, they beat their *zongagondo* (war drums), and the local administrators sent orders for men to the village chiefs. The village chiefs, in turn, beat their war drums to summon their noble cavalrymen and commoner foot soldiers, who came armed with bows and arrows, spears, swords, and clubs, with or [278] without iron tips. The tips of the sharp weapons were often covered with a vegetable poison derived from a shrub of the Strophanthus species. Some [411] of the men also carried guns after firearms were introduced among the [177] Mossi from the desert region and from the coast. Many carried rawhide [714] shields.

701 726 [648] As soon as the village contingents had assembled and had gathered their provisions, they marched to the district centers. Then they proceeded either to the place of battle or to Ouagadougou. In the latter case, they became part of the royal army and were joined by the forces of those princes who were prepared to honor their obligation to the Mogho Naba. For example, when the French invaded Ouagadougou in 1896, the Boulsa Dim sent his prime minister "at the head of an army to aid Mogho Naba

285 The art of basketry, however, is exercised primarily to produce woven containers. These serve many purposes and come in all shapes and sizes from large wicker containers used to protect chicks against birds of prey and small wicker baskets for collecting refuse to baskets of plaited grass for carrying millet, rice, and most other goods. Some baskets are made with greater care, decorated with designs made by mixing dyed grasses and thin leather strips and edged with cowries.

[462] Only the men do basketry, and only they work with leather; some
281 of them make leather objects which are almost artistic and very well sewn. Unfortunately the natives do not know how to tan skins properly, and their leather has no strength. The hide is simply stretched out and dried by the sun; sometimes it is briefly immersed in water containing tamarind bark. The hair is removed by pouring hot water onto the skin and then scraping it off with a knife. To make it softer, the skin is moved back and forth over a stake planted in the ground and slightly sharpened at the tip, or it is simply crumpled /57/ between the hands. When it has been softened, it is stretched once more to dry in the sun, held with small wooden pegs driven into the
[386] ground. It may be dyed red, green, or black with special herbs.

Some men make knife or saber sheaths; others specialize in the long gaiters which are tied to the belt and worn by every horseman in full regalia; still others make saddle rugs stuffed with kapok or cotton and decorated with designs. They also make the various parts of the harness: the leather strip which runs across the horse's chest, and the
294 large rug which covers its rump. Leather is also used to make all kinds
281 of footgear, from the mere piece of hide held to the feet by leather strips running between the big and second toes and all round the foot, to the Turkish-type slipper and the ornamented boots with spurs attached which are a natural complement to the long gaiters. Some of the shoemakers are truly skillful and could make quite satisfactory shoes if they had lasts and especially if they had better leather.

281 Hide is also used in the manufacture of belts adorned with cowries, pouches, amulets, bags which are sometimes nicely adorned, etc. The designs are usually made as follows: small leather strips of various colors are sewn onto a skin of solid color which serves as a base; more rarely, as in Morocco, the top layer of skin is removed.

The above-mentioned industries are performed exclusively by men,
462 and any male individual may practice them. The preparation of gun powder and tobacco is also male work. The industries listed below,

285 294 435 2. Similar but smaller hats, worth from 1,000 to 1,500 cowries.

/529/ 3. Round straw hats with wide brims, mentioned above. These are worth 1,700 cowries.

285 All the leather parts on those hats are added by the shoemaker.

294 241 We have already mentioned that our hat makers are not exclusively manufacturers, that they also till the soil. It must be added that the latter activity nets them more than their trade. The man I mentioned cultivates a field of small millet and one of large red millet in the bush. He also grows maize, peanuts, and underground peas around his soukala. He owns neither large nor small livestock, but only chickens.

285 294 592 In his soukala he has two wives, four children, two married brothers who have one wife apiece but no children, and two unmarried brothers, as well as a father. They all make hats.

He lives at Saponé, where there are many hat manufacturers.

282 294 [564] After straw work, let us mention leatherwork.

Mossi shoemakers do not form a caste. Anyone who wants to may marry among them, and anyone who wishes to do so may exercise their trade.

[592] As an example, here is Kinoga Kologo, a Mossi, and the head of a soukala. He lives with two wives, two children, and an unmarried brother. His soukala consists of three huts.

His tools are as follows:

282 294 413 1. The pongo, a kind of broad little knife with a flaring blade hafted to a very short handle. It is used to cut hide.

2. The gansiouba, a wooden knife used to scrape and rub hides, clean them and smooth them.

3. The désara, a small tool with a wooden handle and a curved iron stem. It is used red hot to trace designs on hides.

4. The pime, a small awl used to sew hides.

5. The large tirisiga. This is an iron seal used to imprint hides with small circles.

6. The small tirisiga. This is a smaller seal, /530/ an iron rod whose tip makes a very tiny seal.

282 294 435 As among nearly all Blacks, the Mossi shoemaker is his own tanner. He buys sheepskins and goatskins at market (small ones

282 sell for 200 cowries, large ones for 400). He leaves them to soak
294 in a large canari with yogré seeds for twelve hours. Then he re-
435 moves the hair by hand, washes the skin thoroughly, and places it again in a canari with seeds of pélanaga (a tree that grows in the bush). He washes and rubs the hide with these seeds. Then he leaves it to dry in the sun after covering it with butter, real butter rather than karité butter. The skin may then be used to make various items.

Kinoga also buys cowhide at market to make sandals. One cowhide is worth 3,000 cowries. He puts it in a large canari where he leaves it soaking for three days, then he takes it out, removes the hair with a knife, and strikes the skin with a small stick to soften it. Whatever amount of leather is needed to make sandals is then removed from the hide, which is used up gradually as the need arises.

The shoemaker's tools are made by the blacksmith. These tools are worth 100 cowries apiece, except for the awl that is worth 20 and the wooden knife that is made by the shoemaker himself and worth 50. All of the shoemaker's tools taken together are thus worth 470 cowries, or only 50 centimes.

Our shoemaker makes the following items:

1. Sandals, first and foremost. The most expensive ones are worth 2,500 cowries a pair, the less expensive ones 1,500 cowries.

2. Leather grigris, bracelets, pouches, etc. The pouches are worth 100 cowries, the bracelets 50. He only makes them on order. It must be said that other shoemakers stock them up beforehand and have them taken to market.

Of course, what the shoemaker prepares is the physical part of the grigri, its outer covering. It is not he who gives the grigri its power, its soul.

3. Kinoga does not make satchels, goatskin bags, but other shoemakers do.

[415] /531/ There are goatskins used to store millet. Large ones are worth 1 franc and small ones 0.50 franc. Then, there are goatskins used to hold water. They are worth from 0.30 to 1 franc. Finally, there are small goatskins used as purses or coin bags and worth 0.20 franc.

[372] 4. Shoemakers also make leather cases for strike-a-light steel
[326] (200 cowries) and for needles (50 cowries). Both strike-a-light steel and needles are made by blacksmiths.

282 294 435 and needles are made by blacksmiths. A strike-a-light steel is worth 200 cowries.

5. They make sheaths for knives and swords. Knife sheaths are worth 200 cowries, sword sheaths 3,000.

6. Bridles and saddles. Saddles are worth 3,000 cowries, bridles 5,000.

Shoemakers also work with deerskin and leopardskin. They adorn Mossi truncheons or clubs with leopardskin. They also adorn spears with it. The leopardskin is provided by the customer. The shoemaker does not purchase it directly.

Leopardskin is sold at market in small pieces worth 100 cowries. A large leopardskin is worth 10 francs, a small one 7 francs.

Crocodile skin is also used by shoemakers. People who have killed a crocodile go and sell its skin at market, or else someone purchases the skin from the hunter and retails it at market. The skin of a small crocodile (hardly any but these are to be found in Mossi territory, owing to the scarcity of water) is worth 1,000 cowries. People who wish the shoemaker to work one of these skins purchase it at market and take it to him.

282 294 There are no hippopotamus skins in Mossi territory, because water is scarce and watercourses are small. As for elephant skin, it is too tough to be worked and remains unused.

282 294 241 The shoemaker I am describing exercises his trade only during the dry season. During the rainy season he tills the soil, and this nets him more than his trade. /532/ The same thing applies, incidentally, to all Mossi shoemakers. During the winter season, our man cultivates a field of small millet and one of large red millet, a small rice field, and a little maize around his soukala. He plants beans in his two millet fields. He owns neither large nor small livestock, not even a chicken or a dog.

There are no makers of headcrests among the Mossi, and the Boussouma chief I questioned about it told me there never were any.

286 Let us now proceed to the cotton industry, and study in turn the weaver's, tailor's and dyer's trades.

The Mossi weaver (soulouga) is a weaver-cultivator. He tills the soil during the rainy season and exercises his trade during the dry season. In fact he is primarily a cultivator, for cultivation rather than weaving comes first and foremost to him.

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Mossi Woman Spinning.
From the Mission of the White Fathers at Ouagadougou.

133 are bordered with hills. Nevertheless, it may be said that Mossi country is flat. It is covered with the classic bush of the Sudan with [137] its small shrubs and tall grass interspersed with bastard mahogany, /7/ huge trunks of the baobabs, and tamarind and silk-cotton trees, thicker on the banks of the Volta rivers, thinner around the villages.

241 The country is quite fertile and easily provides for its inhabitants. 262 The various kinds of millet grow well, especially the small white variety (Pennisetum spicatum) which, mashed and boiled, is the staple of the diet and sorghum, or large red millet, which is used to prepare the famous beer of the country. The horses eat the latter kind, although they prefer the large white millet. Around the huts maize grows well in soil fertilized by the daily accumulation of waste. It is a welcome source of grain when the millet reserves of the previous year are running low and the current harvest has not yet matured. Maize fields are surrounded with a double row of sorghum and often [283] with a double row of a fiber plant called bérensé, a sort of hemp which the natives use to make ropes. After the maize has been harvested, the field is planted with previously prepared tobacco seedlings. Finally, the sunken areas created when huts are built, as well as all slightly damp places, are planted with gombo, okra, which is highly valued as a sauce ingredient.

[311] During the rainy season no piece of land remains unused around the villages, and when the red millet ripens and the ears join across the path, passage becomes difficult. Even the hut roofs bear all kinds [415] of calabash plants. These supply the housewives with gourds that fulfill the purposes served by our plates, dishes, glasses, and basins; the travellers with their flasks; the snuff-takers with their boxes; and the sorcerers with their spirit-calling instruments. The large gourds that are used to make drums grow among the shoots of maize. In the marshes near the watercourses where water lies stagnant, rice fields are planted, but rice is a luxury food, hard to cultivate because of [554] the care it requires. The natives use it only on feast days or when they wish to honor a distinguished guest. Cotton is sown in damp places among the stalks of large red millet, and it is harvested much later. Peanuts and peas also take up part of the cultivated land, while beans creep along the ground between the shoots of small millet. Peppers, sesame, the indigo plant, yams, manioc, sweet potatoes, and a small

226 the sacrifices, these amphibians have no scruples about biting a foot or leg. However, the crocodiles in these ponds are seldom large enough to sever a limb.

In those places where the water is somewhat shallow and flows for some period of time, the bank dwellers make dams of tree branches intertwined with millet stalks. These are placed diagonally to the current and lead to a sort of funnel closed with a net. The fish follow the dam, enter the funnel, and get caught in the meshes of the net.

221 356 The major ceremonies also take place at this time of year.λ This is when the Day of the Dead is celebrated, when the koure is held. When the first gust of wind unroofs a few huts or at least indicates those that need a new covering, everyone sets down to the task. The thatch cut in December is used for the purpose. Before the soukala, [283] [857] children and youths knot blades of straw with strings of hemp and plait séko. They also go into the bush to cut down branches and to gather bark which serves to bind the branches together. When everything is ready, the head of the household calls his people and gathers a few neighbors. The roof is made and laid within a short morning. This task must be repeated every two years or so, and it is men's work entirely. At the beginning of winter, the villages take on a smart 221 new look. This is when people think of building a new hut, the man who has acquired a new wife, the child who has grown into a young man and who can no longer live with his mother, the man whose wealth has increased by a few head of cattle or a horse. The women fetch water, the children knead the mortar with their feet and carry to the mason the mud clods prepared by the old men. These tasks are not laborious, and they are accomplished with merrymaking.

Now the thorn bushes have grown back, the rains will soon fall again, and already a few gusts of wind herald the coming winter. The Pleiades have appeared on the horizon, and the baobabs are budding once more. It is necessary to take up the hoe again and to sow; this is a good thing, because the millet is running low in the granaries. The working cycle we have described must begin anew. And year follows year without bringing any major changes in the life of the common man.

λ [i.e., February-April. —Analyst]

443 rice, beans, karite butter, roasted peanuts sold in little heaps for one centime, raw peanuts, and all the spices for the sauce. Yarsé or Haoussa girls walk from group to group with small basins full of kola nuts, and chiefs and rich men buy one or two nuts which they usually share with their followers. Foreign traders sit under shelters of foliage or millet stalks and sell a few pearls, salt or copper bars, henna or blue dye, while bald-headed vultures hovering above the butchers point out their location to everyone. The meat on sale consists of a goat or sheep, sometimes a beef found dead in the bush or more rarely one slaughtered especially for the occasion. Some people bring chicks and occasionally a hen. This is about all that is to be found.

443 To these comestibles drink must be added. The women who sell
273 millet beer occupy a whole section of the market, and this section is not the least frequented nor the quietest spot. While butchers may be located by watching the vultures, it is possible to spot the tavern-keepers merely by cocking one's ears. Their presence is revealed by the cries, the beating of drums, the hubbub inevitably connected with a crowd slightly the worse for drink. The Mossi undoubtedly drink a lot of millet beer, but the beverage sold at the marketplace does not easily go to the head. The beer that is boiled again (tēsé /sic/) is far more dangerous with its rather high percentage of alcohol, and hydromel (bésé) is even more so. The latter is made of honey and millet flour boiled in water, to which barm is added to induce fermentation. These two beverages are truly potent, especially when drunk-
[579] alternately. This is why brawls occur rather frequently, and sometimes real battles in which people are wounded. These are drunkards' quarrels. Men are indeed the same everywhere, and how many fairs without a drunk or two are to be found in our own country? It must be said, however, that more intoxicated natives are to be met with in Mossi country than in France.

443 The market begins at about ten o'clock and usually closes at two; the important ones open around noon and last until nightfall. When we discuss the industries, we shall mention the other products which are sold there.

283 Weaving is the most widespread industry, the one that all men may
[296] practice and all do practice to some extent. The cotton is ginned,
462 and the thread prepared by the women. Delafosse, in his work on the Siéna, has described the process accurately: "When the cotton has been separated from the husk, the seeds are removed with an iron rod

283 which is rolled with both hands on the boll lying on a flat stone; /55/ the seeds are thus driven forward and picked up by hand... The cotton is coiled around a wooden rod which the woman holds in her left hand; with her right hand she grasps and stretches a strand of cotton from the distaff and winds it around the upper tip of a wooden needle, which bears at its lower end a sort of heavy clay ball and which is caused to spin rapidly, like a top, on the bottom of a wooden dish by the motion of the right hand. Extended between the left hand which holds the distaff and the right hand which secures and spins the top, the cotton stretches and becomes thread, which coils around the needle of the top... The thread is later uncoiled, then wound again around a wooden rod to make a thick cylindro-conical ball. When the thread is to be used for weaving, it is stretched around four stakes set in the ground in the shape of a very elongated quadrilateral." (2)

2. Delafosse, Le peuple Siéna /The Siena People/, p. 58.

286 All the young men learn how to weave; it is part of their education. The loom, like the spindle described above, is the kind used by all the Negroes of West Africa, and it is described by Delafosse as follows: "The slat loom is suspended from a piece of wood resting on two forked stakes; the shuttle is canoe-shaped and hollow; the treadled lever permits alternate crossing of the two rows of slats /heddles/; the threads are stretched by means of a large stone resting on the ground in front of the weaver who sits on a crude stool placed behind the trestle which supports the loom (here usually the weaver sits on the ground), so that his feet come to rest on the pedals. This apparatus is usually set up in the shade of the large trees which stand on the village grounds, or else under shelters of foliage built especially for the purpose. The cotton fabric is woven in strips 10 to 15 centimeters wide; several of them are sewn together to reach the width required for breechcloths and garments." (3)

3. Ibid., p. 59.

The fabric strips are not always solid in color. Often the warp consists of threads dyed red or dark blue and mixed with white strands, [531] while the woof is white. Some people know how to make strips with small blue or red checks which are quite attractive. All weavers are

222 Let us now proceed to the baobab.
137 It is called touéra or touéga in Mossi (sira or izira in Bambara). It is to be found most everywhere in the Mossi bush, and especially in rocky, hilly spots near large streams.

The fruit of the baobab is gathered from December to April. It is a sort of huge green almond hanging from a stem that often
252 reaches 25 or 30 centimeters in length. One breaks the shell, removes the flesh, and mashes it in the mortar (this, of course, is done by the women). Once this is done, the resulting meal is strained through a straw strainer. It is now ready to eat.

This is called toïdésoum in Mossi, tiondé-boé in Peuhl, siramogou in Mandé (from sira, "baobab" and mogou, "flour").
[438] Colloquially, Europeans call it "monkey bread." It is sold on Mossi markets as on the markets of Bambara country.

To prepare it for consumption, this meal is thinned with milk, or water if there is no milk, or else mixed with millet flour. The latter mixture is called sangaré ni siramogou in Bambara ("millet flour and baobab flour"). The meal may also be mixed with néré flour.

It is not only the fruit of the baobab, however, that is utilized. The fresh green leaves are used as a sauce ingredient. The dried leaves are used to make tonéra (lalo in Foutanké /Futajalonke?/, namourou or namougou in Bambara, oro in Peuhl). The leaves are dried and crushed in a mortar to make a powder that is added to sauce.

283 Finally, let us add that the bark of the baobab is used to make rope.

222 After the karité, néré, and baobab, we must list the tamarind
137 tree (Tamarindus indica), koussouga or poussouga in Mossi, n'tomi in Bambara.

222 The fruit of the tamarind is a pod, longer than a finger /500/
137 and about the same thickness, that ripens between January and April.
263 It is a yellow-green brown. When cut along its length, it is found to contain some ten little round fruits, the size of half a hazelnut, lying in a row within the greenish pulp. Only the dried pod is used, after removing the little fruits which have a rather pleasing taste when fresh, something between the kola nut and the hazelnut. When the pod is dry, however, the fruits are also dried out and hard, and they are discarded.

222 137 261 Séba is a kind of long, poisonous, black turnip which is eaten only in times of famine and after protracted cooking.

Seba and vidiba caused the death of many people during the last Mossi famine by giving them dysentery.

137 231 /511/ As for wild fodder found in Mossi territory, there is first of all kénibédo, that grows in bunches 30 centimeters high in damp hollows. Its leaves are rudimentary. It is severed 20 centimeters from the ground and stored during the dry season.

Then there are the fodder plants belonging to the papilionaceous family, densa and youbenga. The tiny stem of densa or youbenga is not severed from the plant itself, which reaches a height of 0.30 or 0.40 meter in both cases. Horses eat them either green or dry, indiscriminately.

137 314 283 Finally, let us say a word about souga, a sort of wild hemp called thus by the Mossi. The Nounouma call it boupo, and the Kassouna bénédévio. It is found only in certain parts of Mossi territory, but it grows throughout Gourounsi lands. Its bark yields very tough white fibers which the natives use in the manufacture of rope, string or thread for fishing implements. The bark does not keep through the dry season, so it is reduced to fibers during the rainy season. The fibers, on the other hand, can take the most intensive dryness without deteriorating. Souga is not cultivated.

222 433 We are now finished with Mossi gathering activities. They have a certain importance, as we have just seen, the same one on the whole as in other Sudanese populations. They are infinitely less important than cultivation, of course, but only slightly less so than stockbreeding, and they must be placed on the same level as the hunt. They are far more important than fishing or arboriculture.

245 433 The latter deserves no real mention. It hardly exists among the Mossi. It is limited to what we described earlier about the rónier and to the planting, here and there, of a few papaw trees.

433 In short, cultivation comes first, with stockbreeding trailing far behind, then gathering and hunting on the same level, then fishing and finally arboriculture.

010 /512/ Industries flourish among the Mossi. We shall review one by one, in detail, the various trades they exercise.

285 5. Straw dishes made with doudouma (yellow), doudoumidou
435 (red), and doudousabalé (shiny grey). They are worth 300 cowries.

6. Dishes made of gansacé straw (yellow) and doudoumidou straw (red) worth 250 cowries.

7. Dishes made of gansacé and sepso straw (sepso is dyed red with mono). The larger ones are worth 350 cowries, the smaller ones 250.

There are no basket makers at Ouagadougou proper, but there are many people in neighboring villages who work at this trade.

The basket maker's only tool is the lépéré-pime, a thick iron needle hooked at the head and adorned with small stripes, /527/ which serves to stitch the straw used for baskets and trays. The lépéré-pime is made by the blacksmith, and it is worth 50 cowries.

Gansacé is also used in the manufacture of bracelets, cords, and lids.

285 The maker of straw hats must be included with the basket
294 maker. Both trades belong together.

To present one of them, here is Tenda Ouidiraogo, a Mossi. He tills the soil during the rainy season, and he makes straw hats during the dry season.

Hats are made with kansé, a gramineous plant that grows along watercourses and ponds.

283 This grass is made into string. First it is placed in water to be
285 softened, and then it is sectioned into two sprigs which are also im-
294 mersed in water. They are rubbed and twisted by hand upon the thigh. The two sprigs coil together and make string that is fairly strong, although breakable by hand.

First, enough of this string is prepared for the manufacture of a hat.

The hat makers have a sort of block called dogoma, made of
285 a tripod stick with a vertical stem. They use it to make their hats,
294 which are the ordinary pointed straw hats common to all of West Africa, and which are found in the Sudan as well as in Guinea. These hats come way down on the back of the neck and make their wearers look like Calabrian bandits. It must be said, however, that among the Mossi there is another type of straw hat, which is swollen, rounded, and partly covered with leather patches. It is

286 There may be five weaver-cultivators in a small village, or fifteen in a large one.

286 Customers bring the weaver the cotton thread spun by their
283 wives, for spinning is a family affair. The women spread out the tufts of raw cotton on a small board and extract the seeds by pressing upon them. Then they spin small quantities of cotton between their fingers and thus make it into threads which they coil around a twig. The threads are handed to the weaver in this form.

286 The weaver uncoils the threads and sets them on his loom, which is very primitive. It is the same one used throughout West Africa, and it is called niri in Mossi. The cotton strips are usually from 8 to 10 centimeters wide. Their length, which is quite variable, may reach 50 meters. The weaver makes his loom himself.

Let us present an Ouagadougou weaver, Beïdou Ninkéma, the head of a soukala. He has two wives and no children. He tills the soil during the rainy season and weaves during the dry season. His fields net him more than his trade, because the Yarsé also work at the weaver's trade, and since they are more skillful at it than the Mossi their competition is formidable. /533/ The customers bring him thread, and he makes it into cotton strips. He is paid 500
[435] cowries to make the strips needed for a skirt. Sixty strips are needed to make one skirt.

Our weaver is also a tailor, but only on occasion, and incidentally
[294] a tailor of the lowest order for he can only make skirts and cloaks. He cannot make trousers. He makes a cloak for 0.50 franc, a skirt
[435] for 0.20 franc, with the fabric supplied, of course.

286 Let us add that child-weavers are also to be found among the
857 Mossi. They make pétala.
291 "Pétala," says the Cahier des Rapports of the circle /of Ouagadougou/, "are small, very narrow strips, from 10 to 25 millimeters wide, made of multicolored threads, yellow, red, blue, green, etc., dyed in the territory and woven by children on simplified looms.

"Those strips, which are very strong, are used as trouser belts.
[435] "Pétala is worth a little under 0.10 franc a meter, and its sale nets a small profit to the children who make it and who sell it themselves on Mossi markets.

286 not equally skillful, but some of them know how to weave cloth which is fine, tightly woven, and quite strong. Sewn together and cut according to unchanging patterns, these strips are made into breechcloths, trousers, wide shirts, full robes which cover the whole body, and especially men's and women's blankets, white or dark blue, which are an indispensable protection against the cold and which are worn wrapped around the body. Mossi fabrics are quite well-known in neighboring territories, and as we shall see they are an important trade item.

386 It is customary to dye the garments after they are made or the thread before it is woven. The dyer's trade is quite widespread in Mossi country, and there is no important /56/ village without dyers. They get together to dig their wells in the same spot; often choosing a small hillock for the purpose where they sink about ten wells, two or three meters deep, the inner surface baked with a charcoal fire. The dyeing solutions are poured into these wells, and the clothes or thread to be dyed are immersed in the liquid and stirred with sticks that have at the end pieces of wood set in the shape of a cross. Fabrics are left soaking for varying periods of time depending on their bulk, and then they are spread out in the sun to dry. The colors obtained vary from a very dark blue, nearly black, to light blue. Certain clothes are dyed sienna, a color favored by hunters because it is dark. Several washings are needed to remove the strong odor which permeates cloth dyed in this fashion, but each washing removes part of the dye.

Everyone knows how to weave, and almost everyone knows how to
285 make basketry. When the grass is full grown, the children have fun making straw hats, some of which are not badly done; others make containers in various patterns by mixing yellow and black straws, and red ones dyed with the leaves of a variety of millet, cultivated in order to obtain the red shade desired for coloring leather; yet others plait simple trays of straw which are used to cover the gourds or to carry meat.

294 Those who are skillful make sturdy hats adorned with leather figures, and this becomes a veritable industry. There are two main kinds of hats: those shaped like pointed cones, and the bell-shaped hats with a wide brim. They are so ample that they can easily be worn over a cap which is sometimes wrapped in a strip of soft fabric. A leather
[284] strap with a sliding knot holds the hat in place or permits it to hang down one's back with the cord holding it at the neck. Saponé is the manufacturing center for hats.

252 boiling water and eaten in this fashion. This is an important source
261 of food in times of famine which, when they come among the Blacks, usually come in May, June, and the first half of July. The néré gathered in March and April comes just in time to combat the famine.

/498/ As for the seeds of the fruit, they are removed and set
252 aside before the sweet meal is mashed. They are preserved to make
263 kologo (the Mossi name) or soumbara (the Mandé name), a pungent condiment highly prized by the Blacks. In order to make this, the women boil the seeds, allow them to cool, stamp on them to remove the skin, and wash them carefully at the watercourse. Sometimes the skin is removed by hand. Then they are cooked for 24 hours, and steeped in water for another 48 in a well-covered canari, in the shade, in a damp spot, to rot the seeds. Then they are laid to dry in the sun on a mat for two days, and pressed with the hands into balls of varying size. It is in this shape that the soumbara is utilized or sold. In Mossi territory, small balls are
[435] worth 100 cowries apiece and large ones 300. At Leo, in Nounouma territory, all balls are the same size and worth 100 cowries. In appearance, the kologo is rather similar to that black coloring matter used by French housewives to add substance to the broth. Whenever a woman wants to use some kologo, to add some to the sauce, she pries loose a small piece from the ball with the tip of a knife and mashes it with the crushing stone. She pours the resulting powder into the sauce.

356 Let us note further that the bark of the néré pod is also used, although not for eating purposes. The Mossi and Gourounsi use it to blacken and polish the floor of their huts and clay roofs. The néré bark is seeped in water for one day, and then the water is tossed on the surface to be polished, that has been tamped down carefully first. The floor is tamped again with the water, and then allowed to dry. This is done three or four times, and in the end the clay surface acquires a handsome black or grey polish. It almost becomes a mirror if the procedure is carried out properly.

284 Finally, to close our list of the uses to which néré is put, we
291 have seen that the brown filaments that grow on the bark of the néré pod are used among the Gourounsi to make belts for /499/ the women, or rather cords to hold up the bunches of leaves that constitute the sole garment of local ladies.

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Everyone knows how to weave, and almost everyone knows how to 285 make basketry. When the grass is full grown, the children have fun making straw hats, some of which are not badly done; others make containers in various patterns by mixing yellow and black straws, and red ones dyed with the leaves of a variety of millet, cultivated in order to obtain the red shade desired for coloring leather; yet others plait simple trays of straw which are used to cover the gourds or to carry meat.

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285 The art of basketry, however, is exercised primarily to produce woven containers. These serve many purposes and come in all shapes and sizes from large wicker containers used to protect chicks against birds of prey and small wicker baskets for collecting refuse to baskets of plaited grass for carrying millet, rice, and most other goods. Some baskets are made with greater care, decorated with designs made by mixing dyed grasses and thin leather strips and edged with cowries.

[462] Only the men do basketry, and only they work with leather; some
281 of them make leather objects which are almost artistic and very well sewn. Unfortunately the natives do not know how to tan skins properly, and their leather has no strength. The hide is simply stretched out and dried by the sun; sometimes it is briefly immersed in water containing tamarind bark. The hair is removed by pouring hot water onto the skin and then scraping it off with a knife. To make it softer, the skin is moved back and forth over a stake planted in the ground and slightly sharpened at the tip, or it is simply crumpled /57/ between the hands. When it has been softened, it is stretched once more to dry in the sun, held with small wooden pegs driven into the
[386] ground. It may be dyed red, green, or black with special herbs.

Some men make knife or saber sheaths; others specialize in the long gaiters which are tied to the belt and worn by every horseman in full regalia; still others make saddle rugs stuffed with kapok or cotton and decorated with designs. They also make the various parts of the harness: the leather strip which runs across the horse's chest, and the
294 large rug which covers its rump. Leather is also used to make all kinds
281 of footgear, from the mere piece of hide held to the feet by leather strips running between the big and second toes and all round the foot, to the Turkish-type slipper and the ornamented boots with spurs attached which are a natural complement to the long gaiters. Some of the shoemakers are truly skillful and could make quite satisfactory shoes if they had lasts and especially if they had better leather.

281 Hide is also used in the manufacture of belts adorned with cowries, pouches, amulets, bags which are sometimes nicely adorned, etc. The designs are usually made as follows: small leather strips of various colors are sewn onto a skin of solid color which serves as a base; more rarely, as in Morocco, the top layer of skin is removed.

The above-mentioned industries are performed exclusively by men,
462 and any male individual may practice them. The preparation of gun powder and tobacco is also male work. The industries listed below,

482 their pack, their full cartridge pouches, and their gun. This is proved by the fact that it is very easy to find volunteer porters nowadays who [465] agree to carry a box weighing 25 or 30 kilograms for 200 or 400 kilometers, or even farther, for half a franc a day.

[492] The fabrics are coiled into huge rolls which hang on either side of the ox or donkey, or, when the man carries them himself, they are [285] folded in baskets from one and a half to two meters long, made of bamboo stems slit lengthwise in two. These baskets are semi-cylindrical in shape and are used to carry kola nuts on the way back. A small pillow is attached to the center of the basket, and when the traveller stops to rest, he looks for a thick tree, leans one tip of the [481] basket on the crotch of two branches and the other tip on the bamboo he uses as a staff. He can thus pick up his load effortlessly when the resting period is over.

484 The traveller always returns to his village at night to avoid those prying persons who would rush out to see what he brought back. The goods are carefully put away, and on the following day the man takes up village life as though he had never left it. It is only gradually, at the evening gatherings, that he relates his adventures. At the first subsequent festivity, however, he dons his new, bright clothes and a red tarboosh, sometimes stockings and shoes, and proudly displays them. Those who have tasted /64/ the life of travel and adventure cannot do without it, and they set out again every year. Some of the independent and carefree young men even live all winter on the [178] profits of their distant journey and no longer cultivate the soil. This is shocking to the elders, who do not understand it at all but are aware that something has changed in their country.

500 Some Europeans have attempted to engage in livestock trading like the natives. One enterprising and courageous European settled in Ouahigouya, and another near Mané; a trading house sent one of its representatives to Ouagadougou, and a Syrian settled there. None of them seems to have succeeded. We are not in their confidence and cannot say just why this happened, but would it not be, at least in part, because a European cannot easily adapt himself to the native way of life? The Blacks manage to make a profit because they do not spend much along the way; they subsist on very little and carry part of the goods themselves instead of hiring porters. Also, the natives

222 top of the trunk, and they are deeply indented. The trunk never
137 bears leaves except when it is young. The dark green of the leaves and their toughness makes /sic/ them look from afar like the artificial zinc leaves of some theatrical backdrops or weather vanes. The youngest leaves at the top are strongly imbricated and ensheathed, and ivory white in color. They are very tender and yield palm cabbage. The leaves of the rônier only fall off when completely dry.

"The fruits, which are called rône, come in clusters of about forty or fifty. They are the size of a medium-sized melon and very heavy. Their covering is green when they are young, orange-yellow when they are ripe. The large seeds, which are blackish and disc-shaped, or like spheres flattened at the poles, are surrounded with a fibrous, gold-yellow meat which is very watery and very fragrant. Its taste is pleasant, although slightly tinged with turpentine. The
[261] natives eat large quantities of it, especially in times of scarcity.

"Rônier wood is dense, long lasting, and remarkably tough.
313 502/ Immune to insects and humidity, it is excellently suited to the
137 manufacture of piles, and often used in the construction of bridges and wharves. The male trees alone are used. The female trees can only be used for fencing, for they are hollow and lacking in strength....

"In addition to the fruit, the Blacks also eat the roots of the
222 young shoots, the taste of which is slightly astringent and rather un-
137 pleasant. They are eaten raw. The terminal buds of the palms are
262 very tender. They are palm cabbages, less tasty to be sure than those of Oreodoxa oleracea, but nevertheless deserving of recognition. When cut into small pieces 2 centimeters square and well seasoned with oil, vinegar, salt and pepper, they make a very good salad, especially if they were previously soaked for twenty-four hours. This dish is highly prized by Europeans who live in the Sudan. Finally,
[263] the rônier yields a fairly abundant sap from which sugar might be
273 extracted. When fermented, it produces a palm wine of inferior quality."

It must be added that the fibers of the rônier leaves are also
137 utilized. The West African Blacks use them to make baskets (as for
[285] example in Mossi territory) or cords (as for instance in Upper Gambia).

322 salt, etc. Small bows are worth 20 cowries, medium ones 70, and
[435] large ones 100.

285 We have just reviewed woodworking. Let us proceed to basketry. Here the latter gives rise to two major trades, the basket maker's and the hat maker's. Let us study them in turn.

As an example, here is Niandé Zango, a basket maker and head of a soukala. He has two wives and three children. His soukala numbers five huts.

He works in the fields during the winter season, and at his trade during the dry season. His fields bring him the larger returns.

He makes his baskets at home without waiting for an order, and he has his wives sell them at market.

He gets doudouma straw in the bush and cultivates mono in his maize field.

[314] Doudouma is a tall grass that is left to dry and that furnishes excellent straw for the manufacture of baskets and trays.

Doudoumidou is doudouma straw dyed red with mono.

249 Mono (faraoro in Bambara) is a plant grown by the Mossi in
386 their maize fields, around the soukala. It looks a great deal like
285 large red millet, but it is /525/ not the same thing. It is probably a variety of large millet, however. Mono is sown along with maize when the first rains begin to fall. Holes are made with the koutiaga, mono grains placed within and covered up. When mono has emerged from the ground, the weeds are pulled out. The harvesting is done about two and a half months after sowing. The stalks are severed at the base and left to dry in the sun, and then the sheaths and culms are torn off. The latter are the parts used to dye the straw red.

The sheaths and culms are crushed by rubbing them by hand in a canari full of water. Then the doudouma straw is left to soak in this canari. The canari is placed on the fire, where it is kept for six hours. When this is over, the straw, now dyed red, is removed.

386 Doudousabalé is doudouma straw dyed black by immersion in
285 bérédo. The straw is gathered, taken to a watercourse, and buried in bérédo. It is left there for a whole day, and this gives it a shiny grey hue.

285 314 Gansacé is a gramineous plant that grows wild along the banks of watercourses. The natives do not cultivate it. Dried gansacé provides a kind of straw that is used in the manufacture of straw trays. The Foulbé settled in the area also use it in the manufacture of hats.

Boulouvaka is a shrub that grows along watercourses. The boulouvaka stem is sectioned in two or four, yielding small flexible twigs that are dyed black by immersion in bérédo. Once dyed, these twigs are used in the manufacture of Mossi baskets.

Koué is a tall gramineous plant that provides straw used in the manufacture of certain baskets. Koué grows wild all over the bush, in dry spots as well as watered areas.

Dana is a shrub the wood of which is used in the manufacture of the Mossi baskets made of koué straw. It grows everywhere in the bush.

Sepso, semso, semsoro or semsogo is the Mossi name for the bark filaments taken from the néré pods. /526/ They are used in making straw trays. Sepso may be dyed red with mono, or black with bérédo.

All these elements are used by basket makers in the manufacture of their baskets and straw trays.

285 435 Now, here are some samples of Mossi basketry:

1. Large yellow baskets made of koué straw. The rims are made of dana stalks. These baskets are sold at local markets for 250 cowries apiece. They are crude baskets used to carry millet or to bring it to horses. They are quadrangular and shaped like upside-down pyramids sectioned at the base.

2. Large deluxe baskets shaped like the above but distinct in that instead of being solid yellow, straw- yellow, they are multi-colored. They are made of koué straw (yellow), doudoumidou straw (red), and boulouvaka straw (black). They are worth about 1,500 cowries apiece.

3. Straw trays, straw dishes of a sort, made with doudouma (yellow) and doudoumidou (red). They sell for 250 cowries when small, 300 when large.

4. Ordinary straw dishes made with doudouma only (undyed straw). They are worth 150 cowries.

285 435 5. Straw dishes made with doudouma (yellow), doudoumidou (red), and doudousabalé (shiny grey). They are worth 300 cowries.

6. Dishes made of gansacé straw (yellow) and doudoumidou straw (red) worth 250 cowries.

7. Dishes made of gansacé and sepso straw (sepso is dyed red with mono). The larger ones are worth 350 cowries, the smaller ones 250.

There are no basket makers at Ouagadougou proper, but there are many people in neighboring villages who work at this trade.

The basket maker's only tool is the lépéré-pime, a thick iron needle hooked at the head and adorned with small stripes, /527/ which serves to stitch the straw used for baskets and trays. The lépéré-pime is made by the blacksmith, and it is worth 50 cowries.

Gansacé is also used in the manufacture of bracelets, cords, and lids.

285 294 The maker of straw hats must be included with the basket maker. Both trades belong together.

To present one of them, here is Tenda Ouidiraogo, à Mossi. He tills the soil during the rainy season, and he makes straw hats during the dry season.

Hats are made with kansé, a gramineous plant that grows along watercourses and ponds.

283 285 294 This grass is made into string. First it is placed in water to be softened, and then it is sectioned into two sprigs which are also immersed in water. They are rubbed and twisted by hand upon the thigh. The two sprigs coil together and make string that is fairly strong, although breakable by hand.

First, enough of this string is prepared for the manufacture of a hat.

285 294 The hat makers have a sort of block called dogoma, made of a tripod stick with a vertical stem. They use it to make their hats, which are the ordinary pointed straw hats common to all of West Africa, and which are found in the Sudan as well as in Guinea. These hats come way down on the back of the neck and make their wearers look like Calabrian bandits. It must be said, however, that among the Mossi there is another type of straw hat, which is swollen, rounded, and partly covered with leather patches. It is

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294 closer to our European hats and vaguely recalls a very fat and swollen straw bowler with wide rims.

In order to make the former kind, our hat maker begins by bringing together a hundred strings. He ties them at one end, an end left in its original straw state, and thus fashions the tip of the hat. Then he interlaces these strings by hand with bits of unmodified kansé straw. The strings hang vertically, the straw pieces are interlaced horizontally, and this makes up the web of the hat.

[386] /528/ The bits of kansé are often dyed black beforehand by immersion in the mud of a watercourse. This is how black lines and designs are obtained in certain parts of the hat.

[435] Six days are needed to make a hat. It is sold for 1,000 cowries, of course without the ornaments, straps, and strips of leather that will be added by the shoemaker.

Hat makers fashion these hats in advance and have their wives well them at market.

248 Bérenga or hemp (also called tamora among the Mossi) goes into the manufacture of straw hats as well. We saw above, when discussing cultivation, how bérenga is grown. It is sown either among maize or among large red millet, that is to say around the soukala, or even in fields in the bush among small millet or large white millet. If sown among maize, it is sown three days afterwards; if among large red millet, four days later; if among large white millet, ten days later; and if among small millet, ten or twelve days afterward.

Bérenga is harvested ten or twenty days after maize, if it stands in a maize field. If it has been sown among millet, it is harvested seven days afterwards. Bérenga stalks are severed at the base, and the fibrous bark is removed and dried. Bérenga is green when fresh and reddish brown when dry. It is usually made into strings and cords. It is also used for the thatch roofing of huts. When it is to go into
285 the making of a hat, it is dyed black by immersion in bérédo and used
294 along with kansé to furnish the black lines of the hats.

Here are some sample products of the Mossi hat-making industry:

1. Pointed straw hats made of kansé (yellow) and bérenga (black). They sport leather ornaments and straps added by the
[435] shoemaker. They are worth 2,500 cowries.

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2. Similar but smaller hats, worth from 1,000 to 1,500 cowries.

/529/ 3. Round straw hats with wide brims, mentioned above. These are worth 1,700 cowries.

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All the leather parts on those hats are added by the shoemaker.

We have already mentioned that our hat makers are not exclusively manufacturers, that they also till the soil. It must be added that the latter activity nets them more than their trade. The man I mentioned cultivates a field of small millet and one of large red millet in the bush. He also grows maize, peanuts, and underground peas around his soukala. He owns neither large nor small livestock, but only chickens.

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In his soukala he has two wives, four children, two married brothers who have one wife apiece but no children, and two unmarried brothers, as well as a father. They all make hats.

He lives at Saponé, where there are many hat manufacturers.

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After straw work, let us mention leatherwork.

Mossi shoemakers do not form a caste. Anyone who wants to may marry among them, and anyone who wishes to do so may exercise their trade.

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As an example, here is Kinoga Kologo, a Mossi, and the head of a soukala. He lives with two wives, two children, and an unmarried brother. His soukala consists of three huts.

His tools are as follows:

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1. The pongo, a kind of broad little knife with a flaring blade hafted to a very short handle. It is used to cut hide.

2. The gansiouba, a wooden knife used to scrape and rub hides, clean them and smooth them.

3. The désara, a small tool with a wooden handle and a curved iron stem. It is used red hot to trace designs on hides.

4. The pime, a small awl used to sew hides.

5. The large tirisiga. This is an iron seal used to imprint hides with small circles.

6. The small tirisiga. This is a smaller seal, /530/ an iron rod whose tip makes a very tiny seal.

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As among nearly all Blacks, the Mossi shoemaker is his own tanner. He buys sheepskins and goatskins at market (small ones

1: Delobsom--161 I-5 (no date) 1933 FA28 Mossi FA28

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Mossi Weaver.

From the Mission of the White Fathers at Ouagadougou.

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Above: Inside a Soukala. Above: The Occupants of a Soukala.
Middle: Load-bearers. Middle: Weaver.
Below: Marketplace.

443 rice, beans, karite butter, roasted peanuts sold in little heaps for one centime, raw peanuts, and all the spices for the sauce. Yarsé or Haoussa girls walk from group to group with small basins full of kola nuts, and chiefs and rich men buy one or two nuts which they usually share with their followers. Foreign traders sit under shelters of foliage or millet stalks and sell a few pearls, salt or copper bars, henna or blue dye, while bald-headed vultures hovering above the butchers point out their location to everyone. The meat on sale consists of a goat or sheep, sometimes a beef found dead in the bush or more rarely one slaughtered especially for the occasion. Some people bring chicks and occasionally a hen. This is about all that is to be found.

443 To these comestibles drink must be added. The women who sell
273 millet beer occupy a whole section of the market, and this section is not the least frequented nor the quietest spot. While butchers may be located by watching the vultures, it is possible to spot the tavern-keepers merely by cocking one's ears. Their presence is revealed by the cries, the beating of drums, the hubbub inevitably connected with a crowd slightly the worse for drink. The Mossi undoubtedly drink a lot of millet beer, but the beverage sold at the marketplace does not easily go to the head. The beer that is boiled again (tēsé /sic/) is far more dangerous with its rather high percentage of alcohol, and hydromel (bésé) is even more so. The latter is made of honey and millet flour boiled in water, to which barm is added to induce fermentation. These two beverages are truly potent, especially when drunk
[579] alternately. This is why brawls occur rather frequently, and sometimes real battles in which people are wounded. These are drunkards' quarrels. Men are indeed the same everywhere, and how many fairs without a drunk or two are to be found in our own country? It must be said, however, that more intoxicated natives are to be met with in Mossi country than in France.

443 The market begins at about ten o'clock and usually closes at two; the important ones open around noon and last until nightfall. When we discuss the industries, we shall mention the other products which are sold there.

283 Weaving is the most widespread industry, the one that all men may
● 396 practice and all do practice to some extent. The cotton is ginned,
463 and the thread prepared by the women. Delafosse, in his work on the Siéna, has described the process accurately: "When the cotton has been separated from the husk, the seeds are removed with an iron rod

283 which is rolled with both hands on the boll lying on a flat stone; /55/ the seeds are thus driven forward and picked up by hand... The cotton is coiled around a wooden rod which the woman holds in her left hand; with her right hand she grasps and stretches a strand of cotton from the distaff and winds it around the upper tip of a wooden needle, which bears at its lower end a sort of heavy clay ball and which is caused to spin rapidly, like a top, on the bottom of a wooden dish by the motion of the right hand. Extended between the left hand which holds the distaff and the right hand which secures and spins the top, the cotton stretches and becomes thread, which coils around the needle of the top... The thread is later uncoiled, then wound again around a wooden rod to make a thick cylindro-conical ball. When the thread is to be used for weaving, it is stretched around four stakes set in the ground in the shape of a very elongated quadrilateral." (2)

2. Delafosse, Le peuple Siéna /The Siena People/, p. 58.

●286 All the young men learn how to weave; it is part of their education. The loom, like the spindle described above, is the kind used by all the Negroes of West Africa, and it is described by Delafosse as follows: "The slat loom is suspended from a piece of wood resting on two forked stakes; the shuttle is canoe-shaped and hollow; the treadled lever permits alternate crossing of the two rows of slats /heddles/; the threads are stretched by means of a large stone resting on the ground in front of the weaver who sits on a crude stool placed behind the trestle which supports the loom (here usually the weaver sits on the ground), so that his feet come to rest on the pedals. This apparatus is usually set up in the shade of the large trees which stand on the village grounds, or else under shelters of foliage built especially for the purpose. The cotton fabric is woven in strips 10 to 15 centimeters wide; several of them are sewn together to reach the width required for breechcloths and garments." (3)

3. Ibid., p. 59.

The fabric strips are not always solid in color. Often the warp consists of threads dyed red or dark blue and mixed with white strands, [531] while the woof is white. Some people know how to make strips with small blue or red checks which are quite attractive. All weavers are

286 not equally skillful, but some of them know how to weave cloth which is fine, tightly woven, and quite strong. Sewn together and cut according to unchanging patterns, these strips are made into breechcloths, trousers, wide shirts, full robes which cover the whole body, and especially men's and women's blankets, white or dark blue, which are an indispensable protection against the cold and which are worn wrapped around the body. Mossi fabrics are quite well-known in neighboring territories, and as we shall see they are an important trade item.

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282 294 435 and needles are made by blacksmiths. A strike-a-light steel is worth 200 cowries.

5. They make sheaths for knives and swords. Knife sheaths are worth 200 cowries, sword sheaths 3,000.

6. Bridles and saddles. Saddles are worth 3,000 cowries, bridles 5,000.

Shoemakers also work with deerskin and leopardskin. They adorn Mossi truncheons or clubs with leopardskin. They also adorn spears with it. The leopardskin is provided by the customer. The shoemaker does not purchase it directly.

Leopardskin is sold at market in small pieces worth 100 cowries. A large leopardskin is worth 10 francs, a small one 7 francs.

Crocodile skin is also used by shoemakers. People who have killed a crocodile go and sell its skin at market, or else someone purchases the skin from the hunter and retails it at market. The skin of a small crocodile (hardly any but these are to be found in Mossi territory, owing to the scarcity of water) is worth 1,000 cowries. People who wish the shoemaker to work one of these skins purchase it at market and take it to him.

282 294 There are no hippopotamus skins in Mossi territory, because water is scarce and watercourses are small. As for elephant skin, it is too tough to be worked and remains unused.

282 294 241 The shoemaker I am describing exercises his trade only during the dry season. During the rainy season he tills the soil, and this nets him more than his trade. /532/ The same thing applies, incidentally, to all Mossi shoemakers. During the winter season, our man cultivates a field of small millet and one of large red millet, a small rice field, and a little maize around his soukala. He plants beans in his two millet fields. He owns neither large nor small livestock, not even a chicken or a dog.

There are no makers of headcrests among the Mossi, and the Boussouma chief I questioned about it told me there never were any.

286 Let us now proceed to the cotton industry, and study in turn the weaver's, tailor's and dyer's trades.

The Mossi weaver (soulouga) is a weaver-cultivator. He tills the soil during the rainy season and exercises his trade during the dry season. In fact he is primarily a cultivator, for cultivation rather than weaving comes first and foremost to him.

286 There may be five weaver-cultivators in a small village, or fifteen in a large one.

286 Customers bring the weaver the cotton thread spun by their
283 wives, for spinning is a family affair. The women spread out the tufts of raw cotton on a small board and extract the seeds by pressing upon them. Then they spin small quantities of cotton between their fingers and thus make it into threads which they coil around a twig. The threads are handed to the weaver in this form.

286 The weaver uncoils the threads and sets them on his loom, which is very primitive. It is the same one used throughout West Africa, and it is called niri in Mossi. The cotton strips are usually from 8 to 10 centimeters wide. Their length, which is quite variable, may reach 50 meters. The weaver makes his loom himself.

Let us present an Ouagadougou weaver, Beïdou Ninkéma, the head of a soukala. He has two wives and no children. He tills the soil during the rainy season and weaves during the dry season. His fields net him more than his trade, because the Yarsé also work at the weaver's trade, and since they are more skillful at it than the Mossi their competition is formidable. /533/ The customers bring him thread, and he makes it into cotton strips. He is paid 500
[435] cowries to make the strips needed for a skirt. Sixty strips are needed to make one skirt.

Our weaver is also a tailor, but only on occasion, and incidentally
[294] a tailor of the lowest order for he can only make skirts and cloaks.
He cannot make trousers. He makes a cloak for 0.50 franc, a skirt
[435] for 0.20 franc, with the fabric supplied, of course.

286 Let us add that child-weavers are also to be found among the
857 Mossi. They make pétala.
291 "Pétala," says the Cahier des Rapports of the circle /of Ouagadougou/, "are small, very narrow strips, from 10 to 25 millimeters wide, made of multicolored threads, yellow, red, blue, green, etc., dyed in the territory and woven by children on simplified looms.

"Those strips, which are very strong, are used as trouser belts.
[435] "Pétala is worth a little under 0.10 franc a meter, and its sale nets a small profit to the children who make it and who sell it themselves on Mossi markets.

286 "This kind of braiding is not exported."
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294 There are tailors as well as weavers among the Mossi. The
563 tailor's trade, incidentally, is exercised in Mossi lands not only by the Mossi but also by the Yarsé and by some of the Haoussa who are settled in the territory.

294 Mossi tailors till the soil during the winter season and work as tailors during the dry season. Their fields net them more than their trade.

Most Mossi tailors do custom work. Cotton strips are brought to them, and they sew them into the required garment. Others purchase cotton strips, make them into various garments (skirts, cloaks, trousers, caps) and have their wives sell them at market. Those, however, are in the minority.

A cloak is called fougou in Mossi, a skirt fougoupoko from poko, "woman" and fougou, "cloak." Trousers are called koulouga.

/534/ Let us add that garment manufacture has remained a family industry in much of Mossi territory. Many Mossi can sew, and they make their own clothes by sewing up cotton strips. Let
[462] us note here that as in nearly all of West Africa, it is the men who sew rather than the women. In this area of Africa, indeed, sewing is essentially a male occupation rather than a female one.

Now to present a Ouagadougou tailor, Mohammadi Bagaré.

He tills the soil and does nothing else during the winter season. He exercises his tailor's trade during the dry season.

He does custom work. Those who want a garment bring him cotton strips in sufficient numbers, and he makes the requested gar-
[435] ment. He asks 1,000 cowries to make a large cloak, 500 for a small one, 200 for a skirt. To make a cap he asks only for one kola nut, which is worth 50 cowries at Ouagadougou. He takes 200 cowries for a pair of trousers.

It takes him five days' work to make a large cloak, two days for a small one, one day for a skirt, two days for a pair of trousers, one hour for a cap.

[412 His only working tool is the needle. Mohammadi uses European
431] needles.

386 at the bottom of the hole. A loaf of indigo is added, and then water. The ingredients are left to blend for three days, and then the thread, strips, etc., may be immersed.

The coloring mixture is replaced every twenty days. It leaves at the bottom of the dyeing well a sort of yellow-grey crust which is removed and allowed to dry in the sun. Once dry, it /536/ is reduced to powder and added to the next mixture.

Cotton threads, in order to be dyed, are immersed in the mixture and crumpled with the fingers. At nighttime they are removed and left to dry on the hut roof. The dyeing is resumed on the morrow. At the end of three days, the threads are black. Only two days are needed to obtain dark-blue threads, and one day is sufficient for light-blue threads. The same applies to cotton strips and garments.

Our dyer does not exercise his trade during the winter season. At that time, he undertakes nothing but cultivation. It is during the dry season that he is a dyer. He claims, however, that his trade nets him more than his fields.

386 435 To dye cotton threads he asks 200 cowries to dye a bundle black, from 60 to 100 to dye it dark blue, or 50 cowries to dye it light blue.

When he buys a cloak to dye it (he buys it for 1,500 cowries, for example) he resells it dyed black for 3,000 cowries, dark blue for 2,000, or light blue for 1,700.

Mossi fabrics are as follows:

286 435 1. White or off-white fabric, undyed. It is called pempéla. It is worth 25 cowries a cubit, that is, the length from the elbow to the tip of the fingers.

2. The white fabric with blue strips called nakoré. It is made of white threads and threads dyed blue. It is worth 50 cowries a cubit.

3. The fabric with small blue and white checks called arkilla. It is worth 50 cowries a cubit.

4. The dark-blue fabric with scattered white stripes. It is called ganga, and it is worth 50 cowries a cubit.

5. Finally, the blue fabric with blue and white stripes called oulambala or oulambalé, which costs 75 cowries or one sou and a half a cubit.

Respect Due the Home of the Naba

554 The kombéré is absolute master of his territory. His subjects must show him the same deference as he himself shows to the Mogho Naba.

However, even though he is not a noble, a minister of the emperor need not remove his cap to respond to the salute of a kombéré. On the contrary, the latter is required to humble himself, to give way before him just as he would before the Mogho Naba.

644 The nabiga (son of a naba), nakomsé (descendants of naba) and, still more, an ordinary Moaga are all categorically forbidden to wear their shoes or their caps at the court of the naba. The only exception to the rule is when the person is a Moslem convert, but even then he always leaves his shoes at the door. He may, however, wear his cap or turban. Shoes and headgear may be put on again only after the subject is 300 meters from the house of the naba. Sometimes, in places where custom is rigorously enforced, the person must be out of sight.

[687] Any infraction of these rules was punished severely by the lash and by confiscation of property by the samand'kamba of the naba [110] when the offender was not of the nobility, that is, was neither nabiga nor nakombga.

● 291 It is interesting to note that wearing the fez, originally one of the badges of chiefdom, was forbidden to the nabiga and all the more to the talga (ordinary Moaga). Today it is commonly worn by men and youths since European traders and shops have made common an article which was once very rare.

576 Shaking hands. One seldom sees a naba extend his hand to one
643 of his subjects or, more especially, to his brothers or fellow nobles (nakomsé).

There are two reasons for this prohibition: 1) the naba is supposed to maintain a certain distance between himself and his subjects, a normal practice; and 2) a superstitious belief has it that persons [154] harboring evil intentions toward the chief put magic powders on their hands to cause swellings which may develop into real abscesses.

644 It should be said that the napagha, who is regarded as a
595 piece of property, is part of the estate of a deceased chief. The
562 new naba takes some of the old and young wives, and the rest are
587 kept in the family of the nabissi. It is therefore not unusual to find women in the household of a naba who have been married to two or even three deceased chiefs. If they are not too old, they may give birth to children of the chief who is their second or third husband.

644 The establishment of a naba is often divided into three sec-
595 tions.

1. The zagkas sanga (the great house). All the old women, the unwanted ones, live here. Their mistress and guardian is the pugtiéma, who has charge of the house where the kimsé or manes of the ancestors live.

2. Zagbilin. The middle-aged women [163] who are still occasionally visited by their husband live here.

3. Dogoundba. This is the assemblage of several young and beautiful wives grouped around the favorite. They are called dogoundba, "guardians of the hut of the naba." These women receive all the favors, wear the finest ornaments, and are dressed in
●[291] godé (1). Most of the time the dogoundba live in one or several

1. A skirt that is highly valued among the Mossi.

huts, depending on their number.

Each of the women in the other two sections has her own hut.

Since the naba has too many wives to be able to look after all of them, they must provide their own clothing and food. Hence, they are forced to cultivate plots and sell some of their produce. Each napagha has her own small field of millet, peanuts, beans, and peas.

The dogoundba have a collective plot. They help their husband who not only has to feed them, but is also required to support
[357] the sogoné and the samand'kamba (the latter are "people of the outer courtyard," another category of servitors who are sent on errands to the villages or who serve as grooms).

In the homes of the kombemba (plural of kombéré), it is the duty of the dogoundba to prepare food for the sogoné and for any

343 Chicken house and pens. Every head of a compound has a
235 small straw hut for fowl within his establishment. There is also a
231 small round hut of clay for the sheep and goats.

Repair of houses. When an establishment is damaged by rain
356 or is in need of repair, the work is done by the residents (the head of the family and the dakompa, as well as the father's wives and brothers) with no help from outsiders. There is no pay beyond the usual meals. The head of the family merely says to the workers when the work has been completed: "N'fa nel toumtogo, imaou nian (thanks for the hard work, many thanks for the labor)."

[223] Chapter 14

Mossi Clothing

Dress of the Naba

291 In this chapter we shall examine the various modifications
554 and improvements in the dress of Mossi chiefs.
435 1. Before and during the first twenty years of the French occupation. (a) Zangoego pelga: a large robe made of narrow bands of cotton fabric, rather expertly woven. These robes, which are made and embroidered by specialists, used to cost from 70,000 to 100,000 cowries (1).

1. One hundred francs. The five-franc note is now worth 1,000 cowries. The silver five-franc piece was worth from 5,000 to 7,000 cowries, depending on the fluctuations of exchange.

(b) Karfo: a large robe, dark blue in color, made of the same material as the preceding (50,000 to 70,000 cowries).

(c) Noufa: a large robe and trousers, made of very fine fabric in a dark gray color. It had the value of two slaves or 70,000 cowries for the robe and 50,000 for the trousers.

291 554 435 (d) Zag'banko: a colored garment, varying in price between 40,000 and 50,000 cowries.

(e) Baourou ganga: a light gray blanket, valued [224] at 50,000 to 60,000 cowries, which can easily be made into robes and trousers.

[439] All these garments were imported by traveling Haoussa (Zangoéto) and a few Yarcé, the only traders at the time, who bought them in Gambaga (Gold Coast), the only known trading center at that time. As we have pointed out in an earlier chapter, the Mossi knew of no country other than their own.

There were, of course, some naba who wore only rough garments made of cotton strips woven locally.

Headgear. The inhabitants of Béré (a village of the province now ruled by the Gounga Naba) used to make caps, called manfo, which were highly prized by Mossi chiefs (priced at 2,000 to 3,000 cowries).

Some notables wore caps made at Wéogtinga (province of the Ouidi Naba) by the descendants of Naba Zombré, the twentieth successor of Oubri.

291 554 177 2. Modifications and improvements introduced since the establishment of the government of Upper Volta (1919). The various fabrics available in the European outlets and the fine white or blue bazin [fabric] are more and more being used to replace the clothing of former times. [225] These fabrics are made into robes, trousers, blouses, and forkia (this last is a kind of long blouse with wide sleeves, much prized by Senegalese [352] traders). Shirts of every conceivable color and style are hoarded in trunks and chests bought at the commissary or made locally by carpenters trained in European shops.

Many chiefs claim that garments made of cotton strips are heavy and cumbersome and impede walking.

[439] Oriental caps imported from the Gold Coast, dark red velvet hats, and even sun helmets are replacing the headgear of old.

The markatassé and mougou, rustic leather boots made by Mossi shoemakers are giving way to shoes, puttees, and leggings, [494] or to new types of boots and slippers -- the shoemakers of Djenné are now well known among the Mossi.

291 554 177 Finally, many chiefs (particularly province chiefs and dignitaries at the emperor's court) appear on feast days dressed in costumes ornately embroidered in gold and silver, products of Moroccan industry. Two of these ministers even wear with pride European costumes on these occasions.

Dress of the Mossi Subjects

292 Men. The accouterments and weapons of a Moaga who wished to be admired on festive occasions used to include the following: the koiglinga and the dandaogo (kinds of long blouses with sleeves); koursi(trousers) in dark blue; the karfo (seldom worn, [226] however, because of its high cost); a zangoégo [411] (large Haoussa knife); a manyanfo (cap); a logwaoga (quiver and arrows); and a boussan-zandé (iron club).

292 177 Today he wears the same garments made from cotton strips woven locally (except the karfo), but it should be noted that young men who return from the Gold Coast or neighboring colonies nearly always have clothing made of commercial fabrics. They may even -- and this often happens -- parade a second-hand overcoat. In the villages out in the bush, the large knife (zangoégo) is still worn, hanging from the shoulder by an albolé (ornament).

Some young men, however, usually traders in prosperous circumstances, dress in the fashion of the Sudanese who live in cities.

291 Women. A Moaga woman usually had only three skirts: (a) the skirt worn at home which was her working costume; (b) an indigo-blue skirt (fou-sablaga) which was reserved for holidays and for trips to the market; and (c) a white or dark-blue skirt cloth, trimmed with long fringes -- a kind of bambara dissa -- which she wore over her shoulders or over her head on ceremonial occasions. She replaced these articles whenever necessary.

[554 435] Only the wives of naba and of certain notables [227] were able to own, in addition to the forementioned skirts, a godé, a skirt of Haoussa origin and quite expensive (1).

1. Even today it costs between 55 and 100 francs.

301 As ornaments the Moaga woman had only red or yellow copper bracelets and the kindifou (a bright red bead). Even then only women of means could procure such ornaments. The [435] kindifou cost only 50 cowries a bead, but since cowries were monopolized by the naba, notables, and rakangba (prosperous Mossi), the beads were far too expensive for the small resources of the average Moaga woman.

Bracelets made of a special stone (a mixture of gray and white) and called manekagcé (manekaka in the singular) were worn only by the Yarbi (young Yarcé of both sexes). It is said [439] that these bracelets were peddled by the Kibissi (Habé), and they seem to have come from the Timbuktu area.

301 554 Silver bracelets were worn only by the dimbissi (descendants of dima, that is, the family of the Mogho Naba), by kombemba (canton and province chiefs) and their descendants, and, finally, by prominent persons who were in favor at court.

291 177 At the present time, especially at Ouagadougou, the women adorn themselves with garments of all kinds (skirts of native material, bazin, godé, and other fabrics, as well as skirts from stores). Some have even adopted the blouse and ample robe affected by [352] elegant Sudanese [228] women. Many now own trunks which replace the sacks formerly used to store their clothing.

291 178 The Senegalese handkerchief, a head scarf, is now considered absolutely indispensable. In rural areas there is an increasing desire to dress better. More cotton is grown. Girls and women from the bush buy glass beads of all colors when they come to Ouagadougou to work, and they wear them around their necks or around their hips in the manner of Bambara women.

416 Although the "mirror" used to be the clear water of springs and brooks, there is hardly a woman today who does not have one or two mirrors. Finally, a bit of elegance is added to the wild 301 beauty of the women by silver earrings, bracelets, and amulets sewed in a panther skin -- these are becoming a passion with Mossi peasant women.

291 It should not be inferred from the above that the Moaga always feels obliged to wear clothing at home. Any time that he has no need to go out or to visit a friend or relative at some

291 distance from his home, he wears only a benda (loincloth), which does not even cover his buttocks, and a blanket.

He goes about with torso uncovered and likes to show that he is [229] well muscled. When the women are inside their huts, especially when they are engaged in the laborious task of removing the seeds from cotton with their gourça, they pull their skirts up to the hips, making themselves half-naked.

Young girls who have not yet reached puberty and are not yet excised often go about completely nude, unless they hide their sex behind the rags of an old skirt.

Personal Grooming

Ablutions and Care of the Body

515 Married persons and women are fastidious about body cleanliness and therefore have a regular morning routine. This involves washing the face, hands, arms, and legs. During the cool season (end of November to February 15), a little karite butter is added [271] to warm water to soften the skin. Since water is scarce, people take few baths. In villages where there is abundant water, however, the inhabitants bathe two or three times a week.

Unlike their elders, young people and children are careless about cleanliness and may go about all day long without washing [164] their faces. This gives rise, incidentally, to serious cases of conjunctivitis among the children.

Sanitation

312 Drinking water. Water for general use is obtained from 271 water holes created [230] by the inhabitants with dams in order to supplement the wells which often run dry during the dry season. The natives make no effort to purify the water which they often keep for days in containers where mosquito larvae flourish. Pond water is used for drinking. In some villages, however, where the water is actually muddy, the following measure are taken to clear it.

(a) The oil is extracted from crushed peanuts, and the residue is put into the muddy water. It takes about three-quarters of an

1: Delobsom--146 I-5 (no date) 1933 FA28 Mossi FA28

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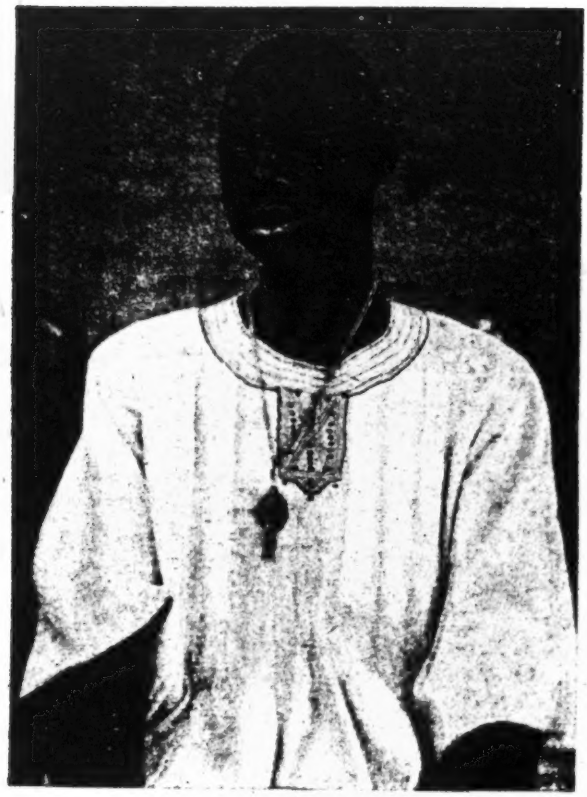

A Mossi Type.

From the Mission of the White Fathers at Ouagadougou.

1: Delobsom--148 I-5 (no date) 1933 FA28 Mossi FA28

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Mossi Girl.

From the Mission of the
White Fathers at Ouagadougou.

1: Delobsom--153 I-5 (no date) 1933 FA28 Mossi FA28

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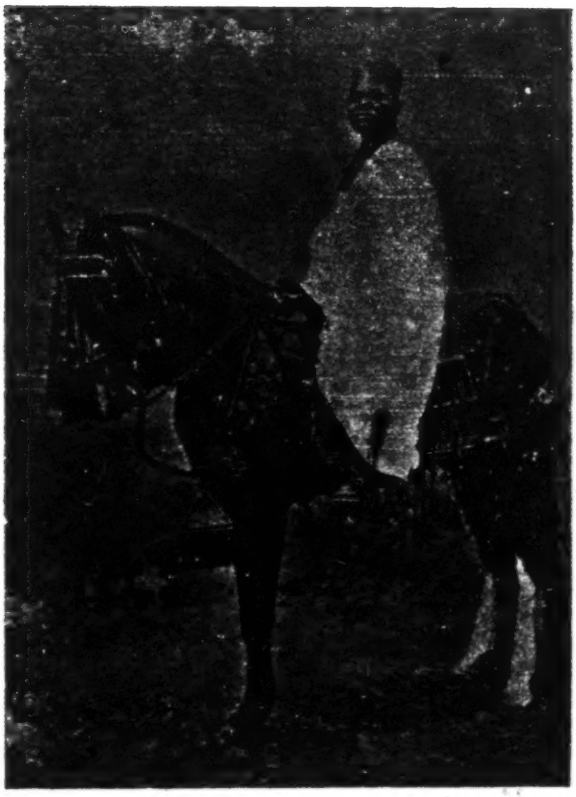

Gounga Naba
Third Minister of the Mogho Naba.

From the Mission of the White Fathers at Ouagadougou.

1: Delobson--155 I-5 (no date) 1933 FA28 Mossi FA28

The Baloum Naba on horseback among his Courtiers.
From the Mission of the White
Fathers at Ouagadougou.

1: Delobsom--157 I-5 (no date) 1933 FA28 Mossi FA28

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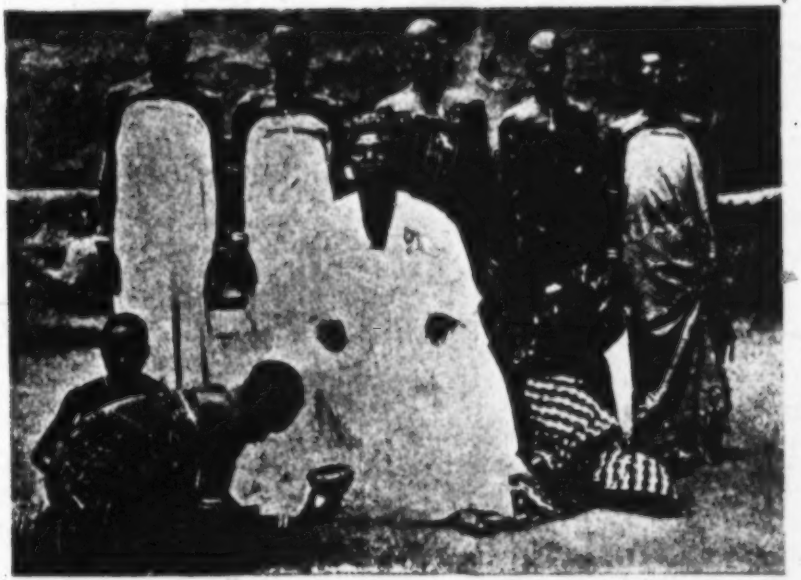

The Third Minister of the Mogho Naba (Gounga Naba) among his Servitors.
(The latter wear Christian medals)
From the Mission of the White Fathers at Ouagadougou.

1: Delobsom--158 I:5 (no date) 1933 FA28 Mossi FA28

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Three Mossi Girls.

From the Mission of the White Fathers at Ouagadougou.

1: Delobsom--159 1-5 (no date) 1933 FA28 Mossi FA28

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Mossi Woman Spinning.
From the Mission of the White
Fathers at Ouagadougou.

1: Delobsom--165 I-5 (no date) 1933 FA28 Mossi FA28

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A Canton Chief (Doulougou Naba) and his Servitor.

From the Mission of the White Fathers at Ouagadougou.

/4/

BOOK I. POLITICAL LIFE

Chapter 1. The Country and Its Inhabitants

142 Although the Mossi is not a handsome type of Black, there is nothing disagreeable about him. He is rather tall, with lively eyes, woolly hair, flat nose, occasionally rather fine features, lips which are broad without being too thick, and cheeks heavily marked with three parallel lines running from the temples to the chin and a fourth leading perpendicularly from the nose to the other three. His limbs are muscular, and his color neither ebony nor copper but an intermediate hue.

●291 He acquires a truly attractive and resolute air when he dresses in festive clothes, with his broad, dark blue, Zouave-like trousers, his loose shirt made of white and blue fabric strips which falls lightly over the arms, and on the right shoulder his doré, a weapon consisting 411 of a slightly bent iron rod, flattened at one end and terminating at the other in a ring hafted perpendicularly to a short stick. His wrist [301] is often adorned with a copper bracelet, and he nearly always carries at his waist a stiff knife, enclosed in a leather sheath which ends in a tuft of leather strips with cowries attached to them. He wears a 291 cap made of two diamond-shaped pieces of colored fabric half-sewn together; the two free ends may serve to cover the ears and cheeks, but are usually worn raised in the shape of a tiara. A great fighter, he wields the knife with dexterity or strikes with the doré which can become a dangerous club.

173 The Mossi are a conquering people. They have not always lived in the territory they now occupy. But where did they come from? 648 The elders questioned all say that their people came from Gambaga 643 (British Gold Coast), and this is why the Moro Naba Wobro took refuge in Gambaga when he was dethroned by the French conquest; this is also why the naba of Gambaga is notified whenever a Moro Naba dies, and why the shoes, cap, and scepter of command of the deceased are sent to him as gifts to be laid on the ancestral tomb. Gifts are also sent to the naba of Fada N'Gourma, which the Mossi call "Bingo." When the Moro Naba dies, his bow and quiver are presented to the

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Mossi Youths.

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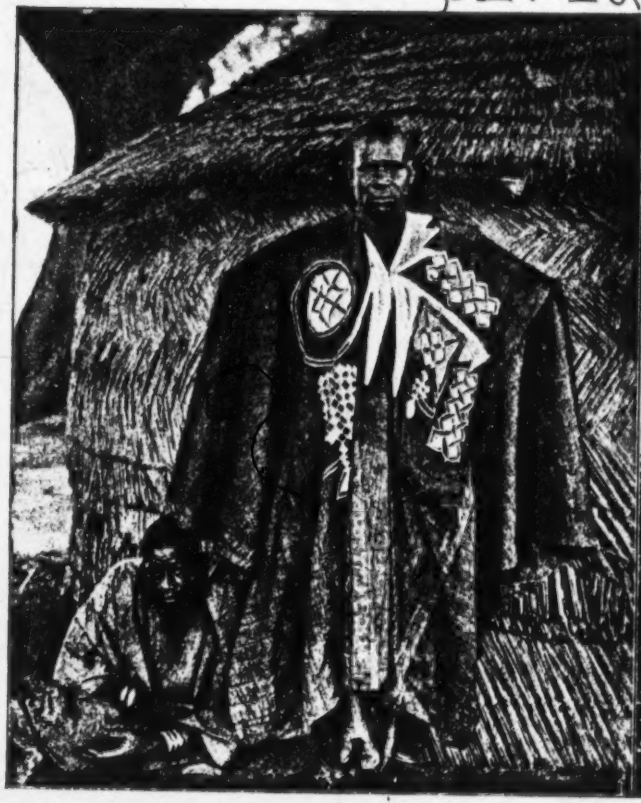

A Mossi Province Chief.

The Moro Naba of the Mossi.

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Above: The Moro Naba. Behind him, his brother, about twelve years old and the head of a large province, flanked by two pages.

Below: The Bullom Naba and his Pages. Behind him, his two Christian sons.

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Above: A Naba and his Men.
Below: Mossi Elders.

2:Mangin--49a M-5 (ca. 1910) 1921 FA28 Mossi FA28

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Tattooed Mossi Women.

Tattooed Mossi Youth.

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documentation on this matter is not extensive enough to enable us to attempt a comparative study."

Marc do not base themselves exclusively on this argument. They also use a tradition of the Mossi themselves, and it would doubtless be unwise to reject it without examining it further. An argument that could be cited in favor of a very ancient occupation of Djerma by the ancestors of the Mossi is Binger's following remark: "The Mossi must [171 411] have remained in contact with the Touareg /Tuareg/ for a fairly long time (2) ... since they partially adopted their dress and use, as they do, the crutch-handled [poignée en croix] saber."

2. In this quotation, I have omitted the word "after," since Binger assumes that the Mossi, after taking Timbuktu in 1326 by order of the Mali, remained there until 1433, having, therefore, one century of contact with the Touareg. In reality, the Mossi stayed in Timbuktu only a very short time, and this raid could not have given them a prolonged contact with the Touareg, from whom they were separated before the fall of Timbuktu, and again as soon as they left the town, by the entire Songhaï country stretching along the banks of the Niger River. On the contrary, if they had formerly occupied Djerma, before the Djermabé or the Songhaï, one can easily understand this contact with the Touareg as well as the existence of the sword with the short crutch-handle /poignée en croix (Binger wrongly calls this straight sword a saber). In addition, when Binger speaks of the Targui /Tuareg/ dress, adopted [291] in part by the Mossi, he doubtless thinks of the lithâm (or face veil) which was then worn by the Mossi horsemen. At the present time, they are no longer worn, and I have never seen them among the Mossi, where I lived 1908-1909.

252 boiling water and eaten in this fashion. This is an important source
261 of food in times of famine which, when they come among the Blacks, usually come in May, June, and the first half of July. The néré gathered in March and April comes just in time to combat the famine.

/498/ As for the seeds of the fruit, they are removed and set
252 aside before the sweet meal is mashed. They are preserved to make
263 kologo (the Mossi name) or soumbara (the Mandé name), a pungent condiment highly prized by the Blacks. In order to make this, the women boil the seeds, allow them to cool, stamp on them to remove the skin, and wash them carefully at the watercourse. Sometimes the skin is removed by hand. Then they are cooked for 24 hours, and steeped in water for another 48 in a well-covered canari, in the shade, in a damp spot, to rot the seeds. Then they are laid to dry in the sun on a mat for two days, and pressed with the hands into balls of varying size. It is in this shape that the soumbara is utilized or sold. In Mossi territory, small balls are
[435] worth 100 cowries apiece and large ones 300. At Leo, in Nounouma territory, all balls are the same size and worth 100 cowries. In appearance, the kologo is rather similar to that black coloring matter used by French housewives to add substance to the broth. Whenever a woman wants to use some kologo, to add some to the sauce, she pries loose a small piece from the ball with the tip of a knife and mashes it with the crushing stone. She pours the resulting powder into the sauce.

356 Let us note further that the bark of the néré pod is also used, although not for eating purposes. The Mossi and Gourounsi use it to blacken and polish the floor of their huts and clay roofs. The néré bark is seeped in water for one day, and then the water is tossed on the surface to be polished, that has been tamped down carefully first. The floor is tamped again with the water, and then allowed to dry. This is done three or four times, and in the end the clay surface acquires a handsome black or grey polish. It almost becomes a mirror if the procedure is carried out properly.

Finally, to close our list of the uses to which néré is put, we
284 have seen that the brown filaments that grow on the bark of the
291 néré pod are used among the Gourounsi to make belts for /499/ the women, or rather cords to hold up the bunches of leaves that constitute the sole garment of local ladies.

286 There may be five weaver-cultivators in a small village, or fifteen in a large one.

286 Customers bring the weaver the cotton thread spun by their
283 wives, for spinning is a family affair. The women spread out the tufts of raw cotton on a small board and extract the seeds by pressing upon them. Then they spin small quantities of cotton between their fingers and thus make it into threads which they coil around a twig. The threads are handed to the weaver in this form.

286 The weaver uncoils the threads and sets them on his loom, which is very primitive. It is the same one used throughout West Africa, and it is called niri in Mossi. The cotton strips are usually from 8 to 10 centimeters wide. Their length, which is quite variable, may reach 50 meters. The weaver makes his loom himself.

Let us present an Ouagadougou weaver, Beïdou Ninkéma, the head of a soukala. He has two wives and no children. He tills the soil during the rainy season and weaves during the dry season. His fields net him more than his trade, because the Yarsé also work at the weaver's trade, and since they are more skillful at it than the Mossi their competition is formidable. /533/ The customers bring him thread, and he makes it into cotton strips. He is paid 500
[435] cowries to make the strips needed for a skirt. Sixty strips are needed to make one skirt.

Our weaver is also a tailor, but only on occasion, and incidentally
[294] a tailor of the lowest order for he can only make skirts and cloaks. He cannot make trousers. He makes a cloak for 0.50 franc, a skirt
[435] for 0.20 franc, with the fabric supplied, of course.

286 Let us add that child-weavers are also to be found among the
857 Mossi. They make pétala.

291 "Pétala," says the Cahier des Rapports of the circle /of Ouagadougou/, "are small, very narrow strips, from 10 to 25 millimeters wide, made of multicolored threads, yellow, red, blue, green, etc., dyed in the territory and woven by children on simplified looms.

"Those strips, which are very strong, are used as trouser belts.
[435] "Pétala is worth a little under 0.10 franc a meter, and its sale nets a small profit to the children who make it and who sell it themselves on Mossi markets.

286 "This kind of braiding is not exported."
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294 There are tailors as well as weavers among the Mossi. The
563 tailor's trade, incidentally, is exercised in Mossi lands not only by the Mossi but also by the Yarsé and by some of the Haoussa who are settled in the territory.

294 Mossi tailors till the soil during the winter season and work as tailors during the dry season. Their fields net them more than their trade.

Most Mossi tailors do custom work. Cotton strips are brought to them, and they sew them into the required garment. Others purchase cotton strips, make them into various garments (skirts, cloaks, trousers, caps) and have their wives sell them at market. Those, however, are in the minority.

A cloak is called fougou in Mossi, a skirt fougoupoko from poko, "woman" and fougou, "cloak." Trousers are called koulouga.

/534/ Let us add that garment manufacture has remained a family industry in much of Mossi territory. Many Mossi can sew, and they make their own clothes by sewing up cotton strips. Let
[462] us note here that as in nearly all of West Africa, it is the men who sew rather than the women. In this area of Africa, indeed, sewing is essentially a male occupation rather than a female one.

Now to present a Ouagadougou tailor, Mohammadi Bagaré.

He tills the soil and does nothing else during the winter season. He exercises his tailor's trade during the dry season.

He does custom work. Those who want a garment bring him cotton strips in sufficient numbers, and he makes the requested gar-
[435] ment. He asks 1,000 cowries to make a large cloak, 500 for a small one, 200 for a skirt. To make a cap he asks only for one kola nut, which is worth 50 cowries at Ouagadougou. He takes 200 cowries for a pair of trousers.

It takes him five days' work to make a large cloak, two days for a small one, one day for a skirt, two days for a pair of trousers, one hour for a cap.

[412 His only working tool is the needle. Mohammadi uses European
431] needles.

8: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1958
FA28 Mossi FA28

797 sands of Mossi who fled their homeland to escape forced labor or military serv-
167 ice ultimately returned as Moslems, but the majority of seasonal migrants do not have enough contact with foreign populations for them to become Moslems. Most of the Mossi who migrate to Ghana work on cocoa farms far removed from large centers of population. It is also true that even those Mossi who worked for Moslems on the farms and found it expedient to "pray" (as the Mossi refer to conversion to Islam) soon reverted to paganism on their return in order to escape the displeasure of their lineage members. I have recorded several cases of pagans who became Moslems only when they returned from abroad to find their relatives all converted to Islam.

574 Today there are obvious rewards for those Mossi who embrace Islam; be-
787 sides such tangible rewards as getting wives and children, there are the intan-
554 gible ones of upward social mobility and greater prestige. It is important to
566 note that most liberated slaves and serfs are now Moslems. Formerly these non-
[567] Mossi had low status, but today those who have been to Mecca bear such proud titles as *Hadji*. On the night before Ramadan, one of these men gave a talk before the Nobéré chief during which he chided the chief for his impiety and voiced the hope that the next chief would be a true Moslem. He admitted that the chief might interpret such a speech from a former serf as impertinence, but he begged him to accept the censure as coming from the servant of *Nabiyama* (the prophet). This same man had refused to pay homage to the chief at the annual sacrifice to the ancestors, and when admonished returned the daughter which the chief had given him as a wife. In earlier days a chief would not have given a daughter to a serf, and moreover, a disrespectful serf could be killed instantly.

797 Many French administrators and Christian missionaries allege that Mossi
youth embrace Islam because they like the beautiful robes and red fezzes of the
● 291 Moslems, but this is a naive explanation for the conduct of a highly sophisti-
515 cated people. Most young men in Nobéré wear Moslem-type clothes because such clothes are the mode. Now that sun helmets, dark glasses, and women's raincoats with hoods are in vogue, pagans as well as Moslems wear them. What is of interest, however, is that when pagans become Moslems they wear cleaner clothes and affect a different style of life.

794 The local consensus is that Moslems are much better behaved than pagans
because they do not swear, fight, or get drunk in public. The man chosen as
577 Imam is required to have such characteristics as mercy toward evil-doers, benevolence, magnanimity, physical beauty, and virility. Yet many Mossi say that the Moslems can be worse than any other people. They accuse them of being charlatans, of selling Koranic verses as charms, and of committing murder by the use of magical formulae. Neither pagans nor Moslems believe that a man is necessarily good because he recites his daily prayers or goes to Mecca.

794 Moslems in the district follow most precepts of their religion: they recite the five daily prayers according to the rites of Tidjani (there are only two Moslems of the Hamada sect in the district and no members of the Hamallist sect), give alms to the poor, observe the month-long fast (called by the Mossi the

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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Visitors to the court of Naghto Naba Sanem salute him in the traditional Mossi manner.
From Louis Binger, *Du Niger au Golfe de Guinée par le pays Kong et le Mossi, 1887–1889* (Paris, 1892).

[p. 178 - A]

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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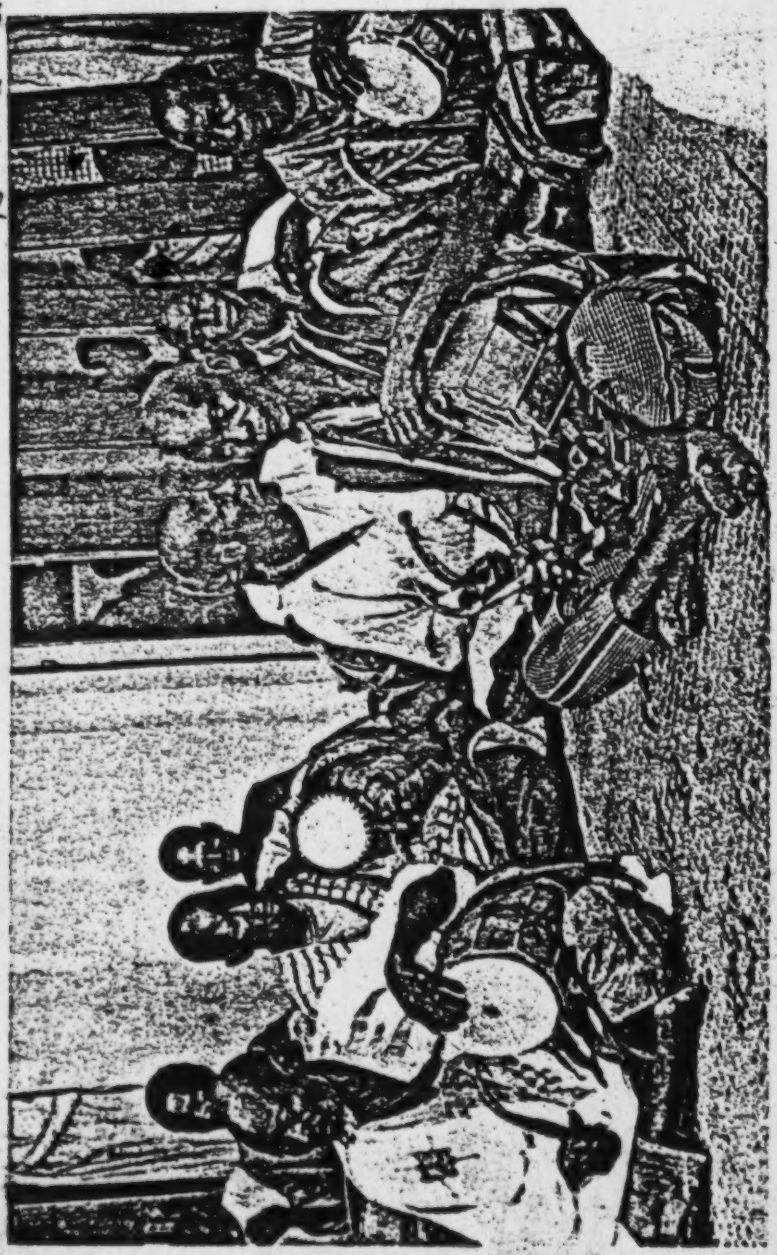

The musicians of the royal court, the Benaiere.

[p. 178-C]

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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[r. 178-D]

(*Left*) Mogho Naba Kougri and Ouezzain Coulibaly, who became Vice President of the Government Council of the Upper Volta in 1957. (*Center*) Maurice Yaméogo, President of the Republic of Upper Volta. (*Right*) Mogho Naba Kougri (1957–) on his ceremonial horse at his installation.

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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Mogho Naba Kougri at court. He is flanked on the right by his pages and musicians, and on the left by members of the Moslem community.

[p. 171-E]

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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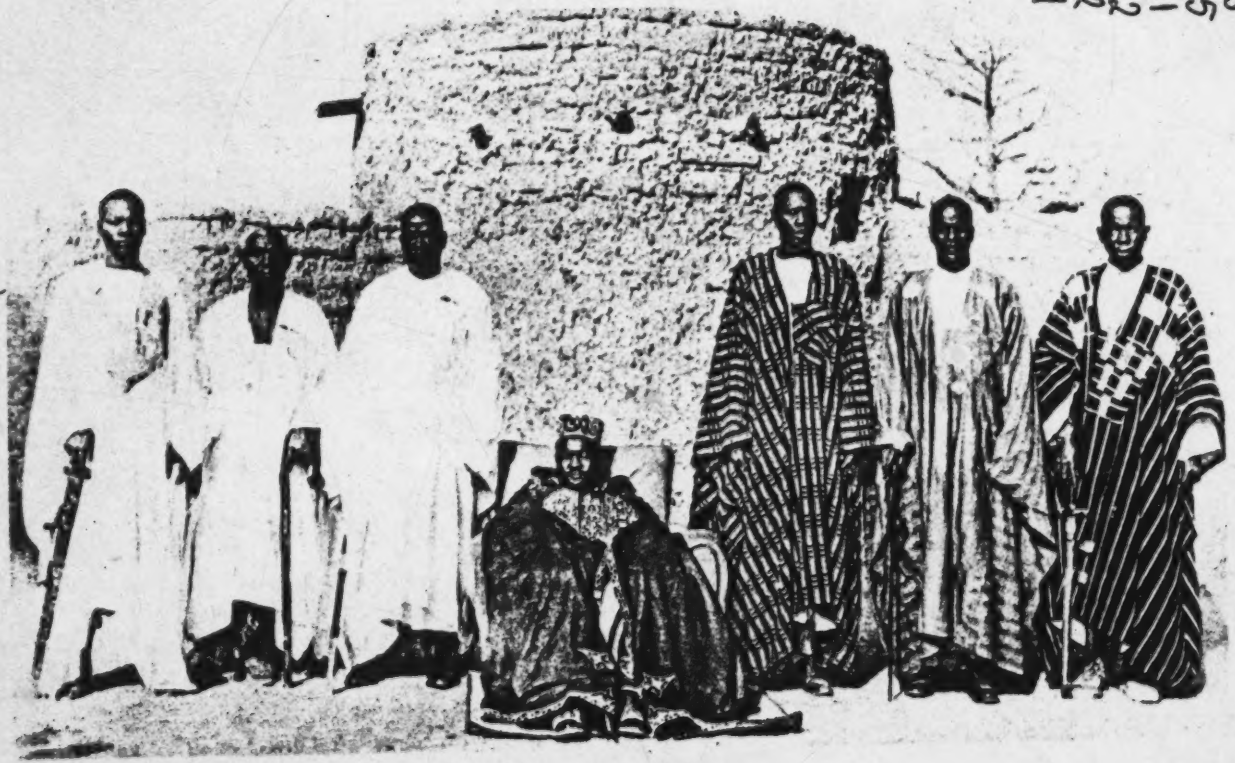

Mogho Naba Kougri (*center*) and, from left, the Kambo Naba, the Gounga Naba, the Ouidi Naba, the Larhalle Naba, the Baloum Naba, and the Nemdo Naba.

[W. 178-F]

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28

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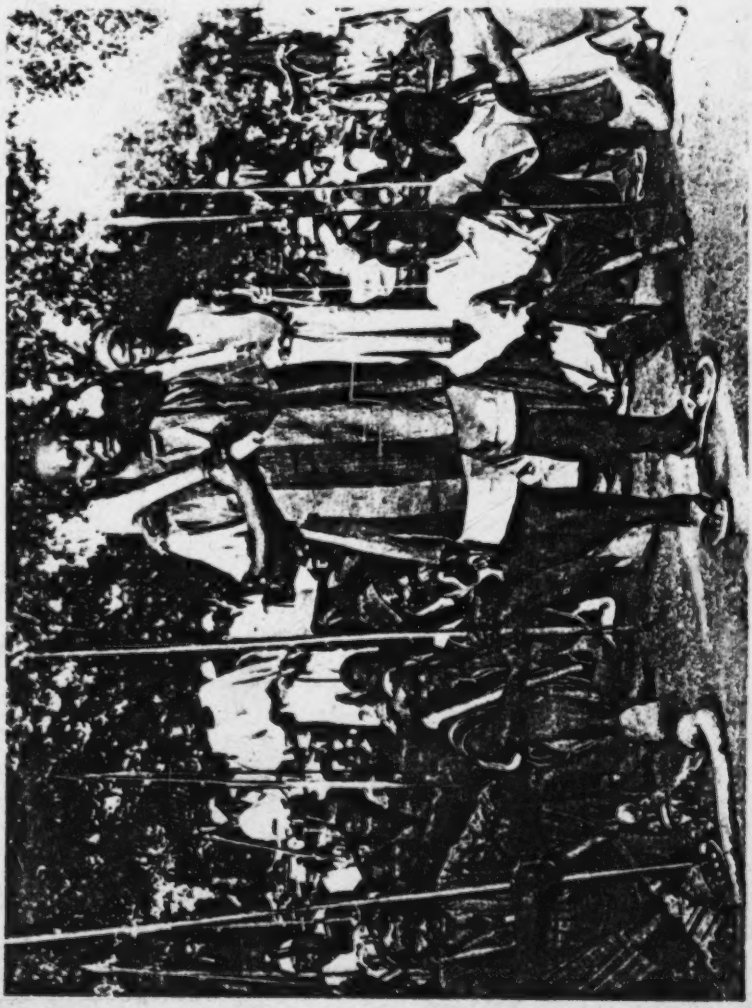

Mogho Naba Kougri's warriors, many bearing traditional weapons, respond to their sovereign's call for aid against the new French administration.

[p. 178 - G]

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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Mogho Naba Kougri concedes to the administration, and orders his warriors to disband.

[p. 178-H]

[57] Chapter 4

The Court of the Mogho Naba. Tribute and Payments Due. Obligations of Mossi Subjects to their Naba.

Morning Honors Paid to the Emperor of the Mossi

644 The council of the emperor of the Mossi is held every morning in front of an antechamber called zango which opens out upon a very large courtyard.

831 The Mossi have for a long time regarded the sun as a "god."
776 Wend'pous yan, "God shows himself," refers to the rising of
643 the sun, but it is used in a figurative sense to refer to the emergence of the Mogho Naba. This illustrates the regard held by the Mossi people for their chief since he is compared to the star of daylight and thus to a "god."

643 The Mogho Naba appears each morning dressed in an ample red robe and with a red gourmousga (a kind of burnoose) folded and
292 thrown over his shoulders. On his head he wears a cap, a fez, topped with a wazourfou sebré (literally, "silver paper" [streamers], that is to say, silver amulet). Red represents the light that comes
[822] with the appearance of the sun, while the silver on the cap represents the brilliance of the star itself.

644 Before the time set for the start of the ceremony, the three sogon'kassemsé (great servitors) bring into the courtyard the [58] cushion, nagpouré, and all the other insignia of office. As soon as
[201] the Mogho Naba appears, they arise and make a snapping sound with thumb and index finger to indicate that the naba is coming.

"Wend'pous yan" is also cried out by the gagando and luinsé
[533] (drummers) as soon as His Majesty sits down. The Bend'Naba [chief drummer] is the only one who does not beat his drum; instead, he rubs his finger back and forth over the waxed part of the drum head to imitate the roar of the lion. Four or five young men bearing loaded rifles take their places in front of the emperor.

Honors are rendered to the Mogho Naba in the following order.

1. The Samandé Naba, Baloum Naba, Wedranga Naba, and Simandé Nabila, as well as the Zusoabin'kassanga (chief eunuch and guardian of the emperor's household), are the first to greet His Majesty and to inquire about his health.

644 Ministers and other officials at the court of the Mogho Naba. In the courtyard where the emperor's audiences are held, [114] there are heaps of stones to mark the places of the ministers and their followers.

The Ouidi Naba, Larrhallé Naba, Gounga Naba, and Kamsaongho Naba assemble with their followers. The Baloum Naba, Zusobinkassanga, and the rest also have their fixed places. They are not permitted to leave their places to greet one another until they have saluted the Mogho Naba.

In the old days only the Baloum Naba, the Zusoaba, and the Kamsaogho, together with the servitors and grooms, were allowed to call upon the emperor in his palace courtyard. The other ministers and court officials (Ouidi Naba, Larrhallé Naba, Gounga Naba, etc.) were not, under any pretext or circumstance, permitted to penetrate the interior courtyard of the home of the Mogho Naba. They had their presence announced by soroné and [344] waited under a shelter (benda zandé) in the audience courtyard. Only a few years ago, when the present Gounga Naba succeeded his father, he asked the reason for this prohibition. Since no good reason was given, he asked the emperor for permission to break the rule, and since that time all his colleagues have followed suit.

644 The cap. We have seen that at the time of his appointment [115] each minister, court official, and canton chief is presented ●292 with a cap by the Mogho Naba. Obviously he cannot wear the 554 same cap for the rest of his life, so later replacements bought by him are regarded as just as sacred as the original. All his subjects, even the son of a naba, are strictly forbidden to wear this cap. We have also seen that in the old days an ordinary Moaga was expressly forbidden to wear the red fez (1) since this was the type of headgear

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1. Among the Habè [Habe] the hogon is the [illegible] is the only one who may wear the red fez. When young Habè men are taken into the [French] army as riflemen, they never again wear the red fez [part of the army uniform] after they are discharged and return to their homes.

644 conferred by the Mogho Naba on the canton chiefs.

292 With the exception of the Tenkodogo Naba and, more re-
554 cently, the Boussouma Naba, neither of whom renders honors to the Mogho Naba, all ministers, other petty dima, and chiefs of Mossi cantons must take off his cap to greet the emperor.

576 (a) Between ministers. The Ouidi Naba does not remove his
554 cap for any of his colleagues.

The Larrhallé Naba, Gounga Naba, and Kamsaongo Naba are
645 equals and greet each other with their caps on.

The Baloum Naba and Samandé Naba are also equals, and they do not take off their caps when greeting each other. However, they were required to remove their caps (pougla) and even to perform the kantissé in the presence of the three principal ministers.

[116] Next in importance are the Nemdo Naba or "chief of the meat" [in charge of slaughtering], the Poé Naba who is confessor to the emperor's wives, the Bend Naba, chief of the drummers, and, finally, a whole string of petty chiefs of no importance who can hardly be distinguished from the general populace and whom it would be fruitless to enumerate here.

The Poé Naba may keep his cap on when he is in the presence of the Baloum Naba or the Samandé Naba, but he must remove it for the other ministers and must even prostrate himself to perform the kantissé.

645 Not very long ago, when the province chiefs of Ouagadougou
574 possessed neither comfortable houses nor furniture, the ministers rarely visited each other. I have even once seen a minister sit on the ground in order to give his seat to one of his colleagues.

645 Whenever matters came up which required a meeting, the ministers met at night in one or another of their homes without the knowledge of the public.

645 Today, the principal ministers have proper reception rooms.
576 They can, therefore, remain seated when a more important colleague calls upon them and limit their special consideration of the visitor to offering him a Morris armchair or a folding chair.

701 The Tensoba, the minister of war, never takes off his cap for a
554 minister or a canton chief. He does so only before the emperor.
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644 The sogoné may not wear trousers. He wears a type of
357 drawers called benda. All the nanamsé (plural of naba) have
292 followed the example of Naba Warga, and nowadays the most insignificant kombéré has at least a dozen sogoné.

[161]

The Napogré. General Conditions. Number of Wives of the Emperor Today. Ornaments.

644 Depending on whether the napagha is destined for the chief
595 himself or for one of his brothers or sons, the instruction of the napogré are given either in the quarters of the pugtiéma (first wife of the naba) or at the home of one of the old nabissi.

644 Water is heated and in it is put a bit of karite butter and other
595 ingredients. After the girl's head, armpits, and pubic hair have
302 been shaved by some old women, the pugtiéma or the old man dips a hand into the water, utters certain cabalistic words, and gives the names of all the chiefs who have succeeded each other up to the father of the current ruler.

644 The water is then given to the old women who bathe the
595 young napagha. It is at this time that she is instructed in the duties and obligations of the napogré, what she may do and what she should avoid.

[301] The new wife is then adorned with bracelets, kouaba (plural of kobré), and with rouamba [ankle rings], or with only bracelets. The chief may marry her at once or, depending on the circumstances, send her to the man for whom she is destined.

[684] The napagha must never have relations with any man other than her husband as long as she lives. Formerly she was pitilessly killed if she broke this rule. [162]

[302 As we have just seen, the napagha has no hair, and this is
30[] the primary distinctive mark. Also, she wears bracelets on her wrists, sometimes even on her arms and some on her ankles (this is done mostly by favorites). Finally some wear kouaba, ornaments most often worn by old women.

The number of wives or napagha varies according to the importance of the naba and especially according to the desires of naba. According to the 1926 census, the present Mogho Naba had thirty-seven wives.

291 554 177 Finally, many chiefs (particularly province chiefs and dignitaries at the emperor's court) appear on feast days dressed in costumes ornately embroidered in gold and silver, products of Moroccan industry. Two of these ministers even wear with pride European costumes on these occasions.

Dress of the Mossi Subjects

292 Men. The accouterments and weapons of a Moaga who wished to be admired on festive occasions used to include the following: the koiglinga and the dandaogo (kinds of long blouses with sleeves); koursi(trousers) in dark blue; the karfo (seldom worn, [226] however, because of its high cost); a zangoégo [411] (large Haoussa knife); a manyanfo (cap); a logwaoga (quiver and arrows); and a boussan-zandé (iron club).

292 177 Today he wears the same garments made from cotton strips woven locally (except the karfo), but it should be noted that young men who return from the Gold Coast or neighboring colonies nearly always have clothing made of commercial fabrics. They may even -- and this often happens -- parade a second-hand overcoat. In the villages out in the bush, the large knife (zangoégo) is still worn, hanging from the shoulder by an albolé (ornament).

Some young men, however, usually traders in prosperous circumstances, dress in the fashion of the Sudanese who live in cities.

291 Women. A Moaga woman usually had only three skirts: (a) the skirt worn at home which was her working costume; (b) an indigo-blue skirt (fou-sablaga) which was reserved for holidays and for trips to the market; and (c) a white or dark-blue skirt cloth, trimmed with long fringes -- a kind of bambara dissa -- which she wore over her shoulders or over her head on ceremonial occasions. She replaced these articles whenever necessary.

[554 435] Only the wives of naba and of certain notables [227] were able to own, in addition to the forementioned skirts, a godé, a skirt of Haoussa origin and quite expensive (1).

1. Even today it costs between 55 and 100 francs.

304 wound with warm water which often is not scrupulously clean
752 since the gourd in which it is kept is not always washed. The wound is dusted with a charred substance (made by burning the
[278] bark or leaves of the baguem-baga plant) mixed with karite butter. It is bandaged with a leaf from the kantonga bush, tied on with a bit of thread. Once the wound has begun to heal, it is wrapped in cotton strips. The water used to wash the wound is thrown into a hole that is covered with a stone.

304 Special language of the kéogo. In order to prevent the Moaga
198 (here meaning an uncircumcised person) from understanding what is said within the kéogo or between the boys and the guards, a special language has been developed. Some of its words are as follows:

Water (kom in ordinary Mossi language), hargo;
Millet cake (saghbo in Mossi), lâbo;
Sauce (zindo in Mossi), kirou;
Fire (bougoum in Mossi), nionom;
Beer (dam in Mossi), sonnom;
A robe or blanket (fougou in Mossi), pilli;
Mat (pinri in Mossi), wanghé. [268]

304 Distinctive attire of the circumcised boys (bankoanga). His
292 costume, wallimba or zougba, consists of a fringed loincloth with pockets. He carries a rough stick (zâbré) with which he hunts rabbits and other small game.

He accompanies his evening dance with an instrument called
304 wassimba, a curved stick on the end of which are strung four or
293 five pieces of gourd, roughly circular in shape, with holes bored through them.

304 Tom-toms. The bankoensé (newly circumcised boys) dance
534 to the beat of two drums like those used in the warba and waongo
535 (see the chapter on native dances). The drums are called gangango when they accompany other dances, but here they are called gallyans.

304 Prohibitions in the kéogo. A Moaga (1) is strictly forbidden

1. "Moaga" is used here in a pejorative sense and means an uncircumcised man.

1: Delobsom--145 I-5 (no date) 1933 FA28 Mossi FA28

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Mogho Naba Kom Ruler of the Mossi.

From the Mission of the White
Fathers at Ouagadougou.

1: Delobsom--162 1-5 (no date) 1933 FA28 Mossi FA28

Mossi Warba Dancers.

From the Mission of the White Fathers at Ouagadougou.

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536 /38/ To tell the truth, however, the Mossi do not know how to dance. With the exception of the circumcision dance and of some villages of dancers where people devote themselves methodically to choreography, the greater part of the population do not know how to dance gracefully. This does not prevent them, one and all, from indulging in the dance. Men and women dance separately. The most common male dance consists of a rapid motion of the upper part of the body, from left to right and right to left; the feet do not leave the ground, and they are moved forward very slowly. The arms are bent up to shoulder height and away from the body; the fingers are extended, and arms and hands shake along with the rest of the body. When performed by professionals, who are sometimes found in the villages, this motion is rather graceful but lacks breadth of style.
[292] The dancers wear a cardboard headpiece, its crest adorned with a band of cowries and its sides often embellished with bits of mirror fragments, feathers, and all sorts of small, gaudy articles. The upper part of the body is covered with a tight, wide-meshed garment, decorated at the waist with pompons or cowries and small bells. The dancer wears
[301] on the middle finger a piece of iron which looks like a large clam shell, and on his thumb an iron ring. He strikes one against the other in rhythm. His wrist is often adorned with a bracelet made of several of these iron shells; hanging from them are small strips of the same metal which clang at the slightest motion. Those who do not have a costume deck themselves out in tawdry finery.

The women dance two at a time, each by herself, spinning around and assuming whatever poses they consider most graceful. When they come near one another, they turn around and strike their backs together; then one of the two withdraws, and another takes her place. All the while, the women spectators clap their hands in rhythm and sing. Sometimes one of them utters a shrill cry to arouse the dancers or to laud one who has proved unusually graceful and lithe.

[831] There are no special dances for the dead, and Mossi dances apparently do not have the obscenity of some Negro dances.

857 But to return to the children. It may be stated, as a general rule, that children can do as they please as long as they help out with everyday tasks, as long as the son helps his father and the daughter her mother. Happily there are exceptions to this, and some parents watch their children quite closely, but these are exceptions. Boys
593 prefer their mother to their father, because the latter must often

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Mossi Dancers.

Mossi Dancers.

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Mossi Dancer with Cowrie Headdress.

852 shaved strips on top of the head, while the sides are shaved similarly
[302] in semi-circular strips. On the seventh day, people who were previously circumcised bring chickens to sacrifice to the spirits of the paths so that all will go well, but the newly circumcised take no part in the proceedings. The children wash, oil themselves, and put on their
852 beautiful clothes. Everything is brand new, the breechcloth, the
292 trousers, the shirt, the blanket, and the headgear. The belt is adorned
301 with a knife in a leather sheath and with a needle case which has at the end a tuft of leather strips with cowries attached to them. They
[776] hold a cow's tail, also adorned with cowries, to drive off the scheuyan spirits who dislike little rascals and people who dress too well. Both wrists are adorned with copper bracelets. Needless to say, this flashy new outfit with its cowries that clang like bells lures the eye and bewitches the young boys, who decide to be circumcised at the first opportunity so they too may eat well and wear beautiful clothes.

852 /44/ The circumcised boys continue to walk bent over, leaning on
[48] their sticks, but their crude staff is replaced with two sticks decorated with burnt designs and tied together. They no longer wear a tail. They go to greet the chiefs, and they thank those who have given them gifts. They walk to the sound of the large drum, since the bindré is forbidden at circumcision ceremonies, and sing plaintive chants to the spirits. They parade in the marketplace and display their clothes in the villages. They dance before the chiefs, and their dances are very
[535] graceful indeed. They dance in unison to the beat of the drum, making the same gestures all together or two by two, varying the figures in accordance with the beat. After seven days the festivities are over, and they all return to their families and take up everyday life as though nothing had happened.

We shall now study this everyday life.

/45/ BOOK III. DAILY WORK AND TRADES

Chapter 1. Occupations of a Mossi

221 The Mossi are essentially cultivators, and it may be said that no
241 Mossi who works at a trade will fail to cultivate his fields when the

754 accused of eating the souls of little children, and I have known some who boasted of possessing this power!

The tibo are a family of sorcerers. People are born tibo, and the village they inhabit is called Tibin. The naba of this village has the special faculty of discerning all sorts of things, especially whether someone has an enemy, merely by gazing into a gourd filled with water in which a certain charm has been placed. A chicken was previously sacrificed on the gourd. This naba, and he alone, can also kill at a distance. To obtain his protection, it is necessary to bring him a goat, a chicken, millet flour mixed with water, and millet beer. Sooner or later the one designated will die! If it takes too long, the sorcerer always has an excuse handy..

754 778 The village of Tibin contains a hut where the tibo fetishes are lined in a row. These fetishes consist basically of clay pots containing water, branches, and tree leaves. They are covered with clay gourds of the kind used to cook sauce, and the sacrifices are made on these gourds. It is said that there are snakes and turtles in the pots, but only the tibo sorcerers can see them. Every village has its tibo jar in the naba's household, either at the door of his hut or hanging inside. These tibo are the dwellings of powerful kikirsi.

754 781 535 /106/ The bartibo are professional dancers. They have the faculty of distinguishing while dancing those who have the power of killing people, whether poison-givers or seuya. The bartibo themselves claim to have the power of riding the wind and going to kill anyone they wish. They specialize, however, in child-bearing charms for the benefit of sterile women.

754 292 The waongo also belong to a special family. People are born tibo, bartibo, waongo, or nyonnyonga. For their ceremonies, the waongo don garments made of the bark of baobabs which cover them completely. These strange garments completely conceal the person. A figure may be seen walking, but the person cannot be recognized, and a dreadful illness threatens those who dare to strike it. This is why people, when they see these shapeless forms, run away as fast as they can.

[761] The waongo wear masks when they celebrate the koure (death anniversary) of another waongo. They can ride the wind and inflict diseases; they can even kill if they wish.

304 824 752 881 At the end of three days, the nané sends a few circumcised boys of preceding years, rasamba, to look in the bush for bark of the néré, karite, n'pékou, and the n'kouna trees. He has them boiled in a large canari and then allows the water to cool until it is lukewarm. Then he calls the bankonsé (this is the name of the newly circumcised boys in Mossi, bankonka in the singular, bankonsé in the plural) and orders them to wash their penes in this water. At the same time he has the leaves of the kantoboga boiled. This is an aloe-type plant of which we have already spoken /not translated/. When this washing is done, the bankonsé smear their penes with cow butter (karite butter is avoided because it is believed to soften the penis and to make it less virile), and then, after cutting kantoboga leaves into pieces, they wrap them around the member, forming a sort of sheath. These leaves are wrapped with cotton thread so they will stay in place. /260/

From then on, the same procedure is repeated every morning and every evening. The bankonsé undo the bandage, wash with néré or karite water, apply fresh butter and new kantoboga leaves. This is done until the wounds are healed.

Néré water, once prepared, keeps for seven days. The supply of kantoboga leaves is renewed only when there are no more on hand.

304 883 881 The bankonsé do not stir for the first three days. From the third to the tenth day, they begin to take a little exercise. For example, they fetch whatever water they need. At the end of ten days, they walk about in the bush, fetch firewood which they stack in piles, and do the same with straw. In the open country they chase hares, rats, and snakes with sticks, in short, all the small game which is to be found there. When there is water in the vicinity, they fish for frogs and fish. They also pick berries from bushes, etc.

[292] Their clothing consists of a kind of skirt which goes down to their ankles and which is made of old garments torn to shreds, of frayed cotton bands.

In the evening from time to time the bankonsé have tom-tom sessions near the shed where they sleep in the village. The griot /drummers, minstrels/ come and play on their instruments. Since this is done at night, men, women, and children may attend.

304 425 881 The bankonsé are entitled to ransack the bush and to take everything they find: chickens, goats, sheep, cotton, etc. The owners have no right to object, but this applies only to small livestock. The bankonsé have no right to larger animals and horses.

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28

643 the name of the current ruler. When Crozat asked one of his Mossi bearers why Boukary Koutou had chosen a title that means "elephant," the man declared, "He is an elephant; he is king of all kings as the elephant is king of all animals; a great elephant-king he is."[2] Another Moaga, meeting Crozat on the road to Ouagadougou, told him to be prepared to meet a monarch "whose riches are inexhaustible and whose splendor is marvelous. [644] He and his family wear only the most admirable European clothes; a thousand horses stand before his door, and there are more than a thousand women in his house. He is served by one hundred eunuchs; he commands as master 333 chiefs; and when he speaks to them it is as though God himself had spoken; everyone bows down before him and obeys."[3] Crozat, looking at the Mogho Naba through European eyes, did not find the "great [576] king" he had expected. Yet he and later European visitors to the Mossi [516] capital did affirm that all Mossi officials and district chiefs prostrated themselves in obeisance to their sovereign, even if they did not subsequently follow his instructions.[4]

643 Many rituals associated with the person and court of the Mogho Naba 796 served to emphasize the high esteem in which he was held by his subjects. For example, the sovereign showed himself every morning at a ceremony called "Ouend pous yan" (literally, "God rises," or "the sun rises") that [114] survives to this day. The name of this ceremony has led many scholars and travelers to assert that traditionally the Mogho Naba was considered a divine king. Dim Delobson states that this ceremony "shows the regard which the Mossi have for their chief, since they compare him to the sun, and thus to a 'god.'"[5] However, the Mossi do not now and probably never did regard their monarchs either as gods or as divine kings. There is a great deal of difference between regarding a man as "powerful and brilliant" like the sun and regarding him as divine. As a matter of fact, the [522] Mossi very often dramatize in humorous fashion the all-too-human frailties of their rulers, without ever considering it sacrilegious to do so. On the other hand, the Mogho Naba, as the supreme ruler, was expected to follow faithfully the strict etiquette demanded by his exalted position.

643 The morning ceremony was opened by the ruler's chief page, the *so-* 796 *ghone-kasanga,* who sprinkled a phylacteric solution around a throne 644 (*guere*) in the courtyard in front of a reception room called the *zongo.* Other pages (*soghondamba*) brought out a large cushion (*naghpure*), the ruler's sword, and other personal accouterments, and placed them on the [292] throne. Still other pages aided the Mogho Naba in his toilet. He was clothed in a large red robe, which symbolized the rising sun; he wore a bonnet surmounted by silver streamers (*wazourfou sebere*), which repre- -sented the sun itself.

knew that Boukary Koutou was the only person capable of such a conspiracy. Fearing for their lives if they did not nominate him, they immediately sent a messenger to summon him as the successful candidate.[15] Under normal circumstances, however, there was no coercion of the ministers and the nominee was quietly brought to the councillors.

Wearing a pair of trousers and a sheepskin mantle and carrying a spear in each hand, the nominee entered the courtyard of the compound through the women's door.[16] He was preceded by the Samande Nabila, who sprinkled the earth with water. He came up to the councillors and saluted them, and the Ouidi Naba addressed him as follows: "Before your father [brother] died, did he designate you to be his successor?" The nominee replied, "No, Sire! My father has left you free to choose whom you wish, be he a blind man or a leper!" This question was asked three times, and the nominee responded three times. The Ouidi Naba then made the following declaration: "I am giving you the nam of your father and grandfathers. You must try to conduct yourself as they did when they had the nam." The Ouidi Naba then listed the names of the territories over which the ruler had absolute power and authority. The new monarch raised his two spears in the air, made a speech in which he announced three guiding principles by which he vowed to reign, and "named a name," that is, suggested the title by which he wished to be known. For example, Mogho Naba Sagha II (1942–57) said in his inaugural speech: "Without rain, there is no life. I will be like rain for the country." He then became known as Mogho Naba Sagha ("Rain"), a rather fitting title for a ruler in a country with uncertain rainfall. The present Mogho Naba stressed in his inaugural speech (in 1957) that he was "solid as a rock." His official title is now Mogho Naba Kougri ("Rock").[17]

The taking of a new name was only the first step in the elaborate process through which a man became Mogho Naba. Next, the Ouidi Naba took the two spears from the new monarch and removed his sheepskin mantle. Then he gave him his new white clothes, which included a pair of trousers, a bonnet, and a sleeveless robe, all made for him by the people of the Sculougou ward in the capital. Next, he was given a cushion made by the people of Baramimi. The Baloum Naba then took the closely guarded namtibo, the sacred amulets of the dynasty, and used them in the preparation of a potion of millet beer mixed with millet-flour water, part of which was poured as a libation to the earth goddess, Tenga.[18] The ruler and the assembled ministers all partook of the potion in a kind of communion. The ministers then shook the ruler's hand, an act thereafter forbidden, and departed for their own compounds. The newly elected

their younger sons to become Moslems, and soon abandoned their active resistance to Islam.

Hesling did not permit the Mossi chiefs to revive their traditional religio-political rituals and ceremonies such as the Tense, but he continued to tolerate the Basgha. The French banned the Mossi market chiefs, because they believed (with some justification) that these officials used their offices to procure revenue for the chiefs. The difficulty was that the market chiefs were also responsible for arranging sacrifices to the market deities, which in the absence of such sacrifices would not protect the people from quarrels and violence in the market place. Some chiefs covertly retained their market chiefs; others obeyed the administration and remained anxious over the behavior of their subjects in the market. In general, however, most Mossi chiefs tried to adjust to the religious changes that were taking place, and sought to maintain at least surface amicability with all religious groups. Commenting upon the behavior of the Mogho Naba in this regard, Dim Delobson states:

> The Mogho Naba, above all, is a believer in animism like all his subjects, and it is hard to understand how he manages to reconcile his fetishism with the complex dogmas of Islam and with the many interdictions of Christianity. However, the Mogho Naba is quite capable of being a Catholic or a Moslem on appropriate occasions, while at the same time respecting the traditions of his ancestors. Thus, when the Christians are celebrating Christmas, the emperor of the Mossi devoutly attends midnight Mass. Nevertheless, he wears his fez [really the bonnet which is the symbol of his office], just as the bishop wears his miter. He likewise embraces Islam for the three Moslem festivals.[47]

Hesling failed in his attempt to develop the Upper Volta as a viable colony, and many of the chiefs whom he had used as his auxiliaries lost not only a great deal of power but also a great deal of prestige in the eyes of their subjects because of the role they had played vis-à-vis the administration. By 1929 the economy of the Upper Volta was in poor condition: cotton production had declined; taxes (raised from 5,800,000 francs in 1921 to 18,274,000 francs in 1927 and scheduled to be raised to 26,400,000 francs in 1930) were unbearable; many of the roads that were too extensive, too little used, and too difficult to maintain had been abandoned; and more than 46,000 laborers who had worked in the cotton fields and on the roads had fled to the neighboring Gold Coast.[48] The Colonial Minister, Sarraut, ordered that the colony of the Upper Volta be dismembered. He states in his decree of September 1932 that the suppression of the Upper Volta "would permit appreciable savings, and would make the adminis-

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28

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The Mogho Naba's daughter, the Napoko, impersonates her deceased father at his funeral ceremonies. Note that she wears one of his robes, his slippers, and his bonnet, and has his sword behind her.

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Mogho Naba Sagha II (1942-57), who was instrumental in reuniting the Mossi people into one territory, the Upper Volta.

[p. 178-8]

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28

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(*Left*) Mogho Naba Kougri and Ouezzin Coulibaly, who became Vice President of the Government Council of the Upper Volta in 1957. (*Center*) Maurice Yameogo, President of the Republic of Upper Volta. (*Right*) Mogho Naba Kougri (1957–) on his ceremonial horse at his installation.

[p. 178-D]

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28

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Mogho Naba Kougri in court. He is flanked on the right by his pages and musicians, and on the left by members of the Moslem community.

[p. 171-E]

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28

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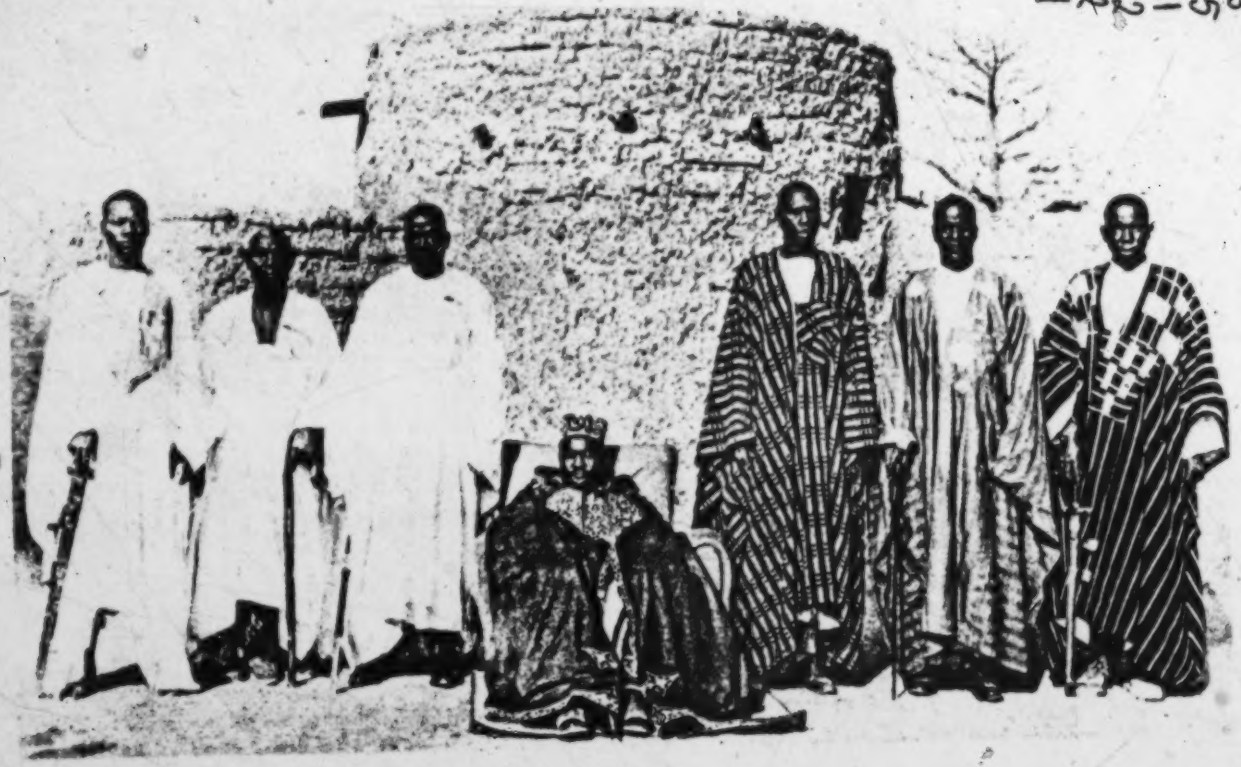

Mogho Naba Kougri (*center*) and, from left, the Kambo Naba, the Gounga Naba, the Ouidi Naba, the Larhalle Naba, the Baloum Naba, and the Nemdo Naba.

[N. 178-F]

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
FA28 Mossi FA28

market and set up their small tables to display all types of goods from trinkets to single lumps of sugar. And the more numerous young men, who have no goods but have money in their pockets, go to the leaf-covered sheds, place their weapons on top of them, and take seats from which to view the passing parade. Imperceptibly, the hum in the market increases as people find their places and greet one another with *Ne Raga,* the market greeting, until by 11:30 A.M. the whole market reverberates with sounds of drumming, cries of vendors, and the shrill voice of water hawkers and juvenile vendors. Now the market is in full swing.

From midday until about 3:30 P.M., the Mossi market is a sea of humanity—talking, laughing, arranging rendezvous, quarreling, selling, buying, parading, and (where youngsters are concerned) often crying for want of money to buy a desired object. The return of migrants lends additional color and excitement to the market as these young people walk about in their new clothes, encouraging the drummers to sing louder praises, the maidens to feel jealous of the clothes of the migrants' female relatives, the former migrants to reminisce about the days when they too had bright new clothes, and the young boys to dream of going off one day to obtain the things they need.

Men, noting that their female relatives are spending too much time looking over the wares of a vendor of European products or of the kola-nut seller, wander over ostensibly to help in the purchase but really to prevent love affairs. The failure to observe such a precaution may be the cause of the shouting a man hears in the distance, and off he hurries to see whether a lineage brother or a friend may need his aid. He may either get into the battle himself, or aid the Raga Naba and the other elders to chase the battlers out of the market place, or to take them to the chief. This may indeed restore some peace and good fellowship to the market.

Elders, now more interested in beer than in other pleasures, pass the heat of the market day under the beer sellers' shed. From time to time one of them may be interrupted by a young man bringing him three kola nuts, one or two of which are immediately broken and given to friends. However, when an oldster, whether a drinking pagan or a Moslem teetotaler, sees or overhears a young man buying four kolas, he may frown or smile in the knowledge that mischief is afoot. Loud-voiced predictions of the consequences of evil-doing may suddenly disturb the merrymakers as American missionaries speaking in perfect More (the language of the Mossi) appear and harangue the market people. Then, as suddenly, the *Americadamba* depart in their large cars, and the curious pagans, amused Catholics or hostile Moslems who had gathered to hear the gospel return to

173 to be on the field of battle himself and for five years was unable
644 to vanquish his enemy who was entrenched on a mountain and
357 well supported by the local inhabitants.

After Warga had tried every means at his command to conquer his enemy, he hacked down the crops, which were almost ripe, and captured all the livestock that ventured down the mountain. In short, he devastated the country.

This succeeded so well that at last the local inhabitants, faced with famine, had to choose between the life of the chief they were sheltering and their own lives. Mamzi was therefore handed over and imprisoned at Saponé (1).

1. The principal canton town in the district of Ouagadougou.

During the five years of this difficult campaign, Naba Warga, aside from the warriors, had only a young boy to serve him since his wives were not present. The boy served as cook [160] and personal servant. In short, he performed the duties of a wife so well that Warga decided that he was worthy of some notice and decided to reward him.

When he had returned to his lands, he freed this faithful servitor after first giving him a wife. Then it occurred to him that several children in his court could perform the same services. He therefore ordered them to be recruited on a large scale, and these were the sogoné.

357 Every boy recruited to become a sogoné can expect to be given
644 a wife, however little she may be worth, when he is freed.

The sogoné have the same standing as the napagba,[1] and they
[554 wear the same ornaments. A group of bracelets worn on the wrists,
304] in fact, distinguish the napagba and the sogoné from free women.

It is their duty to serve the naba. They form a half circle around the naba when he appears; they accompany him on his short outings; and they carry the scepter and all of the insignia of chiefdom. They serve drinks to the naba, fan him when he takes a nap
[293] with fans called fika, make his bed, and do various errands. Likewise a naba never sends anyone but a sogoné to take a message to his wives.

[1] [i.e. royal wives — Analyst]

304 wound with warm water which often is not scrupulously clean
752 since the gourd in which it is kept is not always washed. The
[278] wound is dusted with a charred substance (made by burning the bark or leaves of the baguem-baga plant) mixed with karite butter. It is bandaged with a leaf from the kantonga bush, tied on with a bit of thread. Once the wound has begun to heal, it is wrapped in cotton strips. The water used to wash the wound is thrown into a hole that is covered with a stone.

304 Special language of the kéogo. In order to prevent the Moaga
198 (here meaning an uncircumcised person) from understanding what is said within the kéogo or between the boys and the guards, a special language has been developed. Some of its words are as follows:

Water (kom in ordinary Mossi language), hargo;
Millet cake (saghbo in Mossi), lâbo;
Sauce (zindo in Mossi), kirou;
Fire (bougoum in Mossi), nionom;
Beer (dam in Mossi), sonnom;
A robe or blanket (fougou in Mossi), pilli;
Mat (pinri in Mossi), wanghé. [268]

304 Distinctive attire of the circumcised boys (bankoanga). His
292 costume, wallimba or zougba, consists of a fringed loincloth with pockets. He carries a rough stick (zâbré) with which he hunts rabbits and other small game.

He accompanies his evening dance with an instrument called
304 wassimba, a curved stick on the end of which are strung four or
293 five pieces of gourd, roughly circular in shape, with holes bored through them.

304 Tom-toms. The bankoensé (newly circumcised boys) dance
534 to the beat of two drums like those used in the warba and waongo
535 (see the chapter on native dances). The drums are called gangango when they accompany other dances, but here they are called gallyans.

304 Prohibitions in the kéogo. A Moaga (1) is strictly forbidden

1. "Moaga" is used here in a pejorative sense and means an uncircumcised man.

1: Delobsom--149 I-5 (no date) 1933 FA28 Mossi FA28

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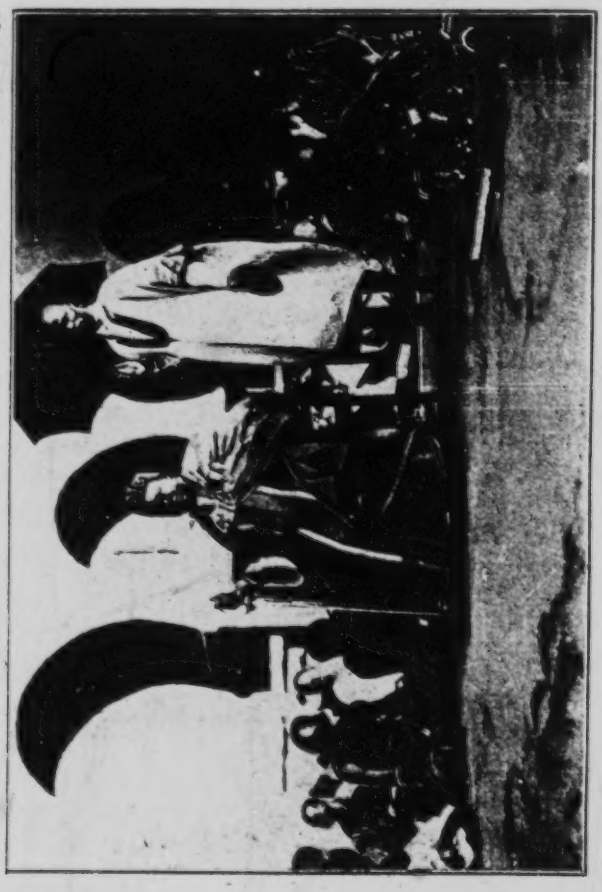

1: Delobsom--165 I-5 (no date) 1933 FA28 Mossi FA28

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A Canton Chief (Doulougou Naba) and his Servitor.
From the Mission of the White Fathers at Ouagadougou.

2:Mangin--49a M-5 (ca. 1910) 1921 FA28 Mossi FA28

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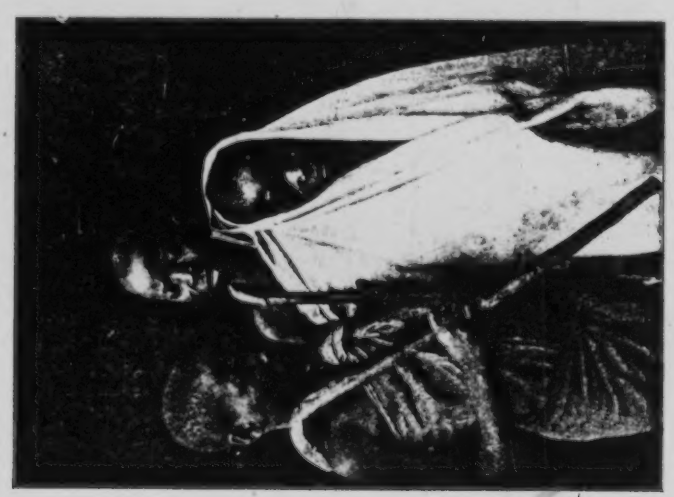
Tattooed Mossi Youth.



Tattooed Mossi Woman.

304 563 day the one in charge of the circumcision, a wealthy Yarga or Mossi who has the means to feed several of the people to be circumcised, 852 chooses a tree to serve as shelter for the operation. Rain need not be taken into account, for circumcision is always performed during the dry season from December to April, when agricultural work is at a [778] standstill. The tree is surrounded with straw mats, forming the téoo or sacred enclosure which no one who is not circumcised may come near without running the risk of being insulted and often beaten; if he should dare to step inside it, he would be stricken by the greatest misfortunes. The Peul sets out a flat stone, sacrifices a chicken in order to make the spirit of the tree benevolent toward those to be circumcised, and operates on the boys one by one. Drums are played throughout the operation to drown the cries of the victims.

852 For three days afterwards the newly circumcised boys do nothing. They rest and tend their wounds. They remain isolated from the rest [535] of the community for two or three months, sometimes even longer. Judging by the dances which close the festivities, dancing must be their primary concern during that period of time. They also thresh the millet of those who invite them to do so, but no uncircumcised person may join them, no uninitiated individual may come near them. [198] They do not speak the Mossi language at this time, but a special tongue of which they learn enough to serve them in their everyday needs. Woe to those who forget and use their native tongue; they are [551] beaten with switches made of a kind of willow. Even their names are changed, and no one may call them by their Mossi names.

The circumcised boys are divided in two groups, one "male" and one "female." One of the groups bears the name of the hyena (kwara in their language) and the other is called masalro, whose French equivalent we do not know. The hyena group must strain their wits to snatch food, even from the other circumcised boys, who are kept constantly on the alert. The other group makes improper gestures during the dance.

852 The circumcised boys are covered with gray dust to alter their 293 appearance completely. A tail is fastened to the back of their breech- 776 cloth, hanging to the ground. It is made of plaited cotton thread and 481 ends in a pompon. Its function is to drive off the kikirsi spirits, who apparently do not like circumcised persons. The boys walk bent over and leaning on sticks like old men. This is done to test their obedience and to see if they listen carefully to what they are told.

294

294 CLOTHING MANUFACTURE--techniques of manufacture (e.g., cutting, fitting, sewing); special treatment of particular materials and products (e.g., shoemaking, hat manufacture); decoration (e.g., embroidery); use of special implements and apparatus (e.g., sewing machines); specialization (e.g., dressmakers, tailors, cobblers, hatters); etc. See also:

Leather and textile industries 28
Factory buildings 348
Household sewing machines 404
Decorative art 531

291 554 435 (d) Zag'banko: a colored garment, varying in price between 40,000 and 50,000 cowries.

(e) Baourou ganga: a light gray blanket, valued [224] at 50,000 to 60,000 cowries, which can easily be made into robes and trousers.

[439] All these garments were imported by traveling Haoussa (Zangoéto) and a few Yarcé, the only traders at the time, who bought them in Gambaga (Gold Coast), the only known trading center at that time. As we have pointed out in an earlier chapter, the Mossi knew of no country other than their own.

There were, of course, some naba who wore only rough garments made of cotton strips woven locally.

Headgear. The inhabitants of Béré (a village of the province now ruled by the Gounga Naba) used to make caps, called manfo, which were highly prized by Mossi chiefs (priced at 2,000 to 3,000 cowries).

Some notables wore caps made at Wéogtinga (province of the Ouidi Naba) by the descendants of Naba Zombré, the twentieth successor of Oubri.

291 554 177 2. Modifications and improvements introduced since the establishment of the government of Upper Volta (1919). The various fabrics available in the European outlets and the fine white or blue bazin [fabric] are more and more being used to replace the clothing of former times. [225] These fabrics are made into robes, trousers, blouses, and forkia (this last is a kind of long blouse with wide sleeves, much prized by Senegalese [351] traders). Shirts of every conceivable color and style are hoarded in trunks and chests bought at the commissary or made locally by carpenters trained in European shops.

Many chiefs claim that garments made of cotton strips are heavy and cumbersome and impede walking.

[439] Oriental caps imported from the Gold Coast, dark red velvet hats, and even sun helmets are replacing the headgear of old.

The markatassé and mougou, rustic leather boots made by Mossi shoemakers are giving way to shoes, puttees, and leggings, [494] or to new types of boots and slippers -- the shoemakers of Djenné are now well known among the Mossi.

286 not equally skillful, but some of them know how to weave cloth which is fine, tightly woven, and quite strong. Sewn together and cut according to unchanging patterns, these strips are made into breechcloths, trousers, wide shirts, full robes which cover the whole body, and especially men's and women's blankets, white or dark blue, which are an indispensable protection against the cold and which are worn wrapped around the body. Mossi fabrics are quite well-known in neighboring territories, and as we shall see they are an important trade item.

386 It is customary to dye the garments after they are made or the thread before it is woven. The dyer's trade is quite widespread in Mossi country, and there is no important /56/ village without dyers. They get together to dig their wells in the same spot; often choosing a small hillock for the purpose where they sink about ten wells, two or three meters deep, the inner surface baked with a charcoal fire. The dyeing solutions are poured into these wells, and the clothes or thread to be dyed are immersed in the liquid and stirred with sticks that have at the end pieces of wood set in the shape of a cross. Fabrics are left soaking for varying periods of time depending on their bulk, and then they are spread out in the sun to dry. The colors obtained vary from a very dark blue, nearly black, to light blue. Certain clothes are dyed sienna, a color favored by hunters because it is dark. Several washings are needed to remove the strong odor which permeates cloth dyed in this fashion, but each washing removes part of the dye.

285 Everyone knows how to weave, and almost everyone knows how to make basketry. When the grass is full grown, the children have fun making straw hats, some of which are not badly done; others make containers in various patterns by mixing yellow and black straws, and red ones dyed with the leaves of a variety of millet, cultivated in order to obtain the red shade desired for coloring leather; yet others plait simple trays of straw which are used to cover the gourds or to carry meat.

294 Those who are skillful make sturdy hats adorned with leather figures, and this becomes a veritable industry. There are two main kinds of hats: those shaped like pointed cones, and the bell-shaped hats with a wide brim. They are so ample that they can easily be worn over a cap which is sometimes wrapped in a strip of soft fabric. A leather [284] strap with a sliding knot holds the hat in place or permits it to hang down one's back with the cord holding it at the neck. Saponé is the manufacturing center for hats.

285 The art of basketry, however, is exercised primarily to produce woven containers. These serve many purposes and come in all shapes and sizes from large wicker containers used to protect chicks against birds of prey and small wicker baskets for collecting refuse to baskets of plaited grass for carrying millet, rice, and most other goods. Some baskets are made with greater care, decorated with designs made by mixing dyed grasses and thin leather strips and edged with cowries.

[462] Only the men do basketry, and only they work with leather; some of them make leather objects which are almost artistic and very well 281 own. Unfortunately the natives do not know how to tan skins properly, and their leather has no strength. The hide is simply stretched out and dried by the sun; sometimes it is briefly immersed in water containing tamarind bark. The hair is removed by pouring hot water onto the skin and then scraping it off with a knife. To make it softer, the skin is moved back and forth over a stake planted in the ground and slightly sharpened at the tip, or it is simply crumpled /57/ between the hands. When it has been softened, it is stretched once more to dry in the sun, held with small wooden pegs driven into the [386] ground. It may be dyed red, green, or black with special herbs.

Some men make knife or saber sheaths; others specialize in the long gaiters which are tied to the belt and worn by every horseman in full regalia; still others make saddle rugs stuffed with kapok or cotton and decorated with designs. They also make the various parts of the harness: the leather strip which runs across the horse's chest, and the large rug which covers its rump. Leather is also used to make all kinds 294 of footgear, from the mere piece of hide held to the feet by leather 281 strips running between the big and second toes and all round the foot, to the Turkish-type slipper and the ornamented boots with spurs attached which are a natural complement to the long gaiters. Some of the shoemakers are truly skillful and could make quite satisfactory shoes if they had lasts and especially if they had better leather.

281 Hide is also used in the manufacture of belts adorned with cowries, pouches, amulets, bags which are sometimes nicely adorned, etc. The designs are usually made as follows: small leather strips of various colors are sewn onto a skin of solid color which serves as a base; more rarely, as in Morocco, the top layer of skin is removed.

The above-mentioned industries are performed exclusively by men, 462 and any male individual may practice them. The preparation of gun powder and tobacco is also male work. The industries listed below,

285 435 5. Straw dishes made with doudouma (yellow), doudoumidou (red), and doudousabalé (shiny grey). They are worth 300 cowries.

6. Dishes made of gansacé straw (yellow) and doudoumidou straw (red) worth 250 cowries.

7. Dishes made of gansacé and sepso straw (sepso is dyed red with mono). The larger ones are worth 350 cowries, the smaller ones 250.

There are no basket makers at Ouagadougou proper, but there are many people in neighboring villages who work at this trade.

The basket maker's only tool is the lépéré-pime, a thick iron needle hooked at the head and adorned with small stripes, /527/ which serves to stitch the straw used for baskets and trays. The lépéré-pime is made by the blacksmith, and it is worth 50 cowries.

Gansacé is also used in the manufacture of bracelets, cords, and lids.

285 294 The maker of straw hats must be included with the basket maker. Both trades belong together.

To present one of them, here is Tenda Ouidiraogo, a Mossi. He tills the soil during the rainy season, and he makes straw hats during the dry season.

Hats are made with kansé, a gramineous plant that grows along watercourses and ponds.

283 285 294 This grass is made into string. First it is placed in water to be softened, and then it is sectioned into two sprigs which are also immersed in water. They are rubbed and twisted by hand upon the thigh. The two sprigs coil together and make string that is fairly strong, although breakable by hand.

First, enough of this string is prepared for the manufacture of a hat.

285 294 The hat makers have a sort of block called dogoma, made of a tripod stick with a vertical stem. They use it to make their hats, which are the ordinary pointed straw hats common to all of West Africa, and which are found in the Sudan as well as in Guinea. These hats come way down on the back of the neck and make their wearers look like Calabrian bandits. It must be said, however, that among the Mossi there is another type of straw hat, which is swollen, rounded, and partly covered with leather patches. It is

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294 closer to our European hats and vaguely recalls a very fat and swollen straw bowler with wide rims.

In order to make the former kind, our hat maker begins by bringing together a hundred strings. He ties them at one end, an end left in its original straw state, and thus fashions the tip of the hat. Then he interlaces these strings by hand with bits of unmodified kansé straw. The strings hang vertically, the straw pieces are interlaced horizontally, and this makes up the web of the hat.

[386] /528/ The bits of kansé are often dyed black beforehand by immersion in the mud of a watercourse. This is how black lines and designs are obtained in certain parts of the hat.

[435] Six days are needed to make a hat. It is sold for 1,000 cowries, of course without the ornaments, straps, and strips of leather that will be added by the shoemaker.

Hat makers fashion these hats in advance and have their wives well them at market.

248 Bérenga or hemp (also called tamora among the Mossi) goes into the manufacture of straw hats as well. We saw above, when discussing cultivation, how bérenga is grown. It is sown either among maize or among large red millet, that is to say around the soukala, or even in fields in the bush among small millet or large white millet. If sown among maize, it is sown three days afterwards; if among large red millet, four days later; if among large white millet, ten days later; and if among small millet, ten or twelve days afterward.

Bérenga is harvested ten or twenty days after maize, if it stands in a maize field. If it has been sown among millet, it is harvested seven days afterwards. Bérenga stalks are severed at the base, and the fibrous bark is removed and dried. Bérenga is green when fresh and reddish brown when dry. It is usually made into strings and cords. It is also used for the thatch roofing of huts. When it is to go into
285 the making of a hat, it is dyed black by immersion in bérédo and used
294 along with kansé to furnish the black lines of the hats.

Here are some sample products of the Mossi hat-making industry:

1. Pointed straw hats made of kansé (yellow) and bérenga (black). They sport leather ornaments and straps added by the
[435] shoemaker. They are worth 2,500 cowries.

285 294 435 2. Similar but smaller hats, worth from 1,000 to 1,500 cowries.

/529/ 3. Round straw hats with wide brims, mentioned above. These are worth 1,700 cowries.

285 All the leather parts on those hats are added by the shoemaker.

294 241 We have already mentioned that our hat makers are not exclusively manufacturers, that they also till the soil. It must be added that the latter activity nets them more than their trade. The man I mentioned cultivates a field of small millet and one of large red millet in the bush. He also grows maize, peanuts, and underground peas around his soukala. He owns neither large nor small livestock, but only chickens.

285 294 592 In his soukala he has two wives, four children, two married brothers who have one wife apiece but no children, and two unmarried brothers, as well as a father. They all make hats.

He lives at Saponé, where there are many hat manufacturers.

282 294 [564] After straw work, let us mention leatherwork.

Mossi shoemakers do not form a caste. Anyone who wants to may marry among them, and anyone who wishes to do so may exercise their trade.

[592] As an example, here is Kinoga Kologo, a Mossi, and the head of a soukala. He lives with two wives, two children, and an unmarried brother. His soukala consists of three huts.

His tools are as follows:

282 294 1. The pongo, a kind of broad little knife with a flaring blade hafted to a very short handle. It is used to cut hide.

413 2. The gansiouba, a wooden knife used to scrape and rub hides, clean them and smooth them.

3. The désara, a small tool with a wooden handle and a curved iron stem. It is used red hot to trace designs on hides.

4. The pime, a small awl used to sew hides.

5. The large tirisiga. This is an iron seal used to imprint hides with small circles.

6. The small tirisiga. This is a smaller seal, /530/ an iron rod whose tip makes a very tiny seal.

282 294 435 As among nearly all Blacks, the Mossi shoemaker is his own tanner. He buys sheepskins and goatskins at market (small ones

282 sell for 200 cowries, large ones for 400). He leaves them to soak
294 in a large canari with yogré seeds for twelve hours. Then he re-
435 moves the hair by hand, washes the skin thoroughly, and places it again in a canari with seeds of pélanaga (a tree that grows in the bush). He washes and rubs the hide with these seeds. Then he leaves it to dry in the sun after covering it with butter, real butter rather than karité butter. The skin may then be used to make various items.

Kinoga also buys cowhide at market to make sandals. One cowhide is worth 3,000 cowries. He puts it in a large canari where he leaves it soaking for three days, then he takes it out, removes the hair with a knife, and strikes the skin with a small stick to soften it. Whatever amount of leather is needed to make sandals is then removed from the hide, which is used up gradually as the need arises.

The shoemaker's tools are made by the blacksmith. These tools are worth 100 cowries apiece, except for the awl that is worth 20 and the wooden knife that is made by the shoemaker himself and worth 50. All of the shoemaker's tools taken together are thus worth 470 cowries, or only 50 centimes.

Our shoemaker makes the following items:

1. Sandals, first and foremost. The most expensive ones are worth 2,500 cowries a pair, the less expensive ones 1,500 cowries.

2. Leather grigris, bracelets, pouches, etc. The pouches are worth 100 cowries, the bracelets 50. He only makes them on order. It must be said that other shoemakers stock them up beforehand and have them taken to market.

Of course, what the shoemaker prepares is the physical part of the grigri, its outer covering. It is not he who gives the grigri its power, its soul.

3. Kinoga does not make satchels, goatskin bags, but other shoemakers do.

[415] /531/ There are goatskins used to store millet. Large ones are worth 1 franc and small ones 0.50 franc. Then, there are goatskins used to hold water. They are worth from 0.30 to 1 franc. Finally, there are small goatskins used as purses or coin bags and worth 0.20 franc.

[372] 4. Shoemakers also make leather cases for strike-a-light steel
[326] (200 cowries) and for needles (50 cowries). Both strike-a-light steel and needles are made by blacksmiths.

282 294 435 and needles are made by blacksmiths. A strike-a-light steel is worth 200 cowries.

5. They make sheaths for knives and swords. Knife sheaths are worth 200 cowries, sword sheaths 3,000.

6. Bridles and saddles. Saddles are worth 3,000 cowries, bridles 5,000.

Shoemakers also work with deerskin and leopardskin. They adorn Mossi truncheons or clubs with leopardskin. They also adorn spears with it. The leopardskin is provided by the customer. The shoemaker does not purchase it directly.

Leopardskin is sold at market in small pieces worth 100 cowries. A large leopardskin is worth 10 francs, a small one 7 francs.

Crocodile skin is also used by shoemakers. People who have killed a crocodile go and sell its skin at market, or else someone purchases the skin from the hunter and retails it at market. The skin of a small crocodile (hardly any but these are to be found in Mossi territory, owing to the scarcity of water) is worth 1,000 cowries. People who wish the shoemaker to work one of these skins purchase it at market and take it to him.

282 294 There are no hippopotamus skins in Mossi territory, because water is scarce and watercourses are small. As for elephant skin, it is too tough to be worked and remains unused.

282 294 241 The shoemaker I am describing exercises his trade only during the dry season. During the rainy season he tills the soil, and this nets him more than his trade. /532/ The same thing applies, incidentally, to all Mossi shoemakers. During the winter season, our man cultivates a field of small millet and one of large red millet, a small rice field, and a little maize around his soukala. He plants beans in his two millet fields. He owns neither large nor small livestock, not even a chicken or a dog.

There are no makers of headcrests among the Mossi, and the Boussouma chief I questioned about it told me there never were any.

286 Let us now proceed to the cotton industry, and study in turn the weaver's, tailor's and dyer's trades.

The Mossi weaver (soulouga) is a weaver-cultivator. He tills the soil during the rainy season and exercises his trade during the dry season. In fact he is primarily a cultivator, for cultivation rather than weaving comes first and foremost to him.

286 There may be five weaver-cultivators in a small village, or fifteen in a large one.

286 283 Customers bring the weaver the cotton thread spun by their wives, for spinning is a family affair. The women spread out the tufts of raw cotton on a small board and extract the seeds by pressing upon them. Then they spin small quantities of cotton between their fingers and thus make it into threads which they coil around a twig. The threads are handed to the weaver in this form.

286 The weaver uncoils the threads and sets them on his loom, which is very primitive. It is the same one used throughout West Africa, and it is called niri in Mossi. The cotton strips are usually from 8 to 10 centimeters wide. Their length, which is quite variable, may reach 50 meters. The weaver makes his loom himself.

Let us present an Ouagadougou weaver, Beïdou Ninkéma, the head of a soukala. He has two wives and no children. He tills the soil during the rainy season and weaves during the dry season. His fields net him more than his trade, because the Yarsé also work at the weaver's trade, and since they are more skillful at it than the Mossi their competition is formidable. /533/ The customers bring him thread, and he makes it into cotton strips. He is paid 500 [435] cowries to make the strips needed for a skirt. Sixty strips are needed to make one skirt.

Our weaver is also a tailor, but only on occasion, and incidentally [294] a tailor of the lowest order for he can only make skirts and cloaks. He cannot make trousers. He makes a cloak for 0.50 franc, a skirt [435] for 0.20 franc, with the fabric supplied, of course.

286 Let us add that child-weavers are also to be found among the 857 Mossi. They make pétala.

291 "Pétala," says the Cahier des Rapports of the circle /of Ouagadougou/, "are small, very narrow strips, from 10 to 25 millimeters wide, made of multicolored threads, yellow, red, blue, green, etc., dyed in the territory and woven by children on simplified looms.

"Those strips, which are very strong, are used as trouser belts.

[435] "Pétala is worth a little under 0.10 franc a meter, and its sale nets a small profit to the children who make it and who sell it themselves on Mossi markets.

286 "This kind of braiding is not exported."
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294 There are tailors as well as weavers among the Mossi. The
563 tailor's trade, incidentally, is exercised in Mossi lands not only by the Mossi but also by the Yarsé and by some of the Haoussa who are settled in the territory.

294 Mossi tailors till the soil during the winter season and work as tailors during the dry season. Their fields net them more than their trade.

Most Mossi tailors do custom work. Cotton strips are brought to them, and they sew them into the required garment. Others purchase cotton strips, make them into various garments (skirts, cloaks, trousers, caps) and have their wives sell them at market. Those, however, are in the minority.

A cloak is called fougou in Mossi, a skirt fougoupoko from poko, "woman" and fougou, "cloak." Trousers are called koulouga.

/534/ Let us add that garment manufacture has remained a family industry in much of Mossi territory. Many Mossi can sew, and they make their own clothes by sewing up cotton strips. Let
[462] us note here that as in nearly all of West Africa, it is the men who sew rather than the women. In this area of Africa, indeed, sewing is essentially a male occupation rather than a female one.

Now to present a Ouagadougou tailor, Mohammadi Bagaré.

He tills the soil and does nothing else during the winter season. He exercises his tailor's trade during the dry season.

He does custom work. Those who want a garment bring him cotton strips in sufficient numbers, and he makes the requested gar-
[435] ment. He asks 1,000 cowries to make a large cloak, 500 for a small one, 200 for a skirt. To make a cap he asks only for one kola nut, which is worth 50 cowries at Ouagadougou. He takes 200 cowries for a pair of trousers.

It takes him five days' work to make a large cloak, two days for a small one, one day for a skirt, two days for a pair of trousers, one hour for a cap.

[412 His only working tool is the needle. Mohammadi uses European
431] needles.

596 In the sense of integration, we must mention primarily the families
592 of great chiefs. For example, there is the family of Gombiraogo, a
182 former Baloum Naba, a very wealthy and important personage. He
591 has five brothers. Two of them live together in the village of Kalo and another two, similarly, in the village of Bembéla. Gombiraogo lives in Ouahigouya with the fifth brother. With this brother he has three zaka where 70 or 80 people live, all of whom work for him and form a single work group under his direction (that is to say, during the rainy season they work for him two days out of three, and during the dry season they do so only when he has exceptional need of them; in return, he provides them with food seven months out of twelve, according to custom, and does not provide them with clothes unless they are unmarried).

What should be noted here is the strength of this work group (70 to 80 people). As a result, it includes several compounds, while it is the compound as a rule that contains several or at least two work groups.

[645] The present Baloum Naba, the prime minister, likewise has two zaka working for him. Moreover, the total family of the Baloum Naba is not assembled in Ouahigouya but scattered throughout Yatenga.

[643] In the same connection, the Rassam Naba has a zaka of 157 people who form a single work group under his direction. In return, he provides them with food all year.

/232/ Again, there is a zaka of shoemakers at Ouahigouya which
594 includes nearly 100 people altogether, among them 15 or 20 full-
592 grown men, all of them shoemakers. They all work for the zakasoba,
182 who provides them all with food. This zaka, of exceptional numerical strength, is at the same time completely integrated.

596 At the other end of the scale, we find the Mossi family of Yatenga
182 evolving toward complete disintegration in certain parts of the terri-
592 tory, that is to say, evolving toward a state of affairs where nothing remains except the total family on the one hand and the single household on the other (that is, the compound has only a single household).

Thus, in the course of a journey through the canton of Ratenga, I noted in the village of Tangué a family of 110 persons distributed among 14 homes. This gives an average of only seven or eight persons per home. In Kargo (another village) there are five Mossi families for 22 homes sheltering 181 persons, or only eight persons per home.

312 hour for the impurities and the residue to settle to the bottom of
271 the vessel. Then the water is poured off into another container and is ready to be used for drinking or cooking.

[824] (b) It is also possible to use an additive known as missim (crushed tamarind leaves). The water becomes clear, but it is, of course, somewhat sour. Although it may be drunk, it is
[252] ideally suited to cooking since the Mossi add missim (from miki, "to make sour") even to the water of springs and wells before they use it to prepare their principal food, sagbo.

744 In the town of Ouagadougou frequent visits by the sanitary
312 officers remind the natives of the necessity of keeping fresh water in their containers. They are also encouraged to fill in during the winter the low places holding water where mosquitoes might breed.

515 Laundering. There is no doubt [231] that the Moaga is care-
296 less about the cleanliness of his clothing. There is no shortage of soap -- karite butter, of which it is made, is plentiful -- but he believes that frequent laundering will wear out his clothes too quickly. He also thinks -- which is childish -- that the dirtier a garment is, the cleaner it will wash. He thinks it completely ridiculous for clothes to be ironed. It must be admitted that among the Mossi only a married man can require his wives to wash his clothes. A mother also takes care of her children's clothes, but a bachelor is forced to wash his own things. This, we think, explains the extreme negligence shown by some of them
[461] who let their clothes get dirtier and dirtier. Indolence, alas, is one of the dominant defects of the native of Mossi country.

514 Toilet arrangements. In general the Mossi have no regular latrines. Men, women, in short, everyone, simply goes into the bush. The only exception is the very young children who take care of their needs on the threshold. At night, especially during the winter when the grain is fairly tall, grownups themselves go to the kamanga or karaga (millet or maize field near the living quarters).

364 When the town of Ouagadougou was made a mixed commune [Ed., smallest French territorial subdivision, with both French and native representation in the municipal council], it was possible to install, at municipal expense, a number of lavatories in certain

644 The sogoné may not wear trousers. He wears a type of
357 drawers called benda. All the nanamsé (plural of naba) have
292 followed the example of Naba Warga, and nowadays the most insignificant kombéré has at least a dozen sogoné.

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The Napogré. General Conditions. Number of Wives of the Emperor Today. Ornaments.

644 Depending on whether the napagha is destined for the chief
595 himself or for one of his brothers or sons, the instruction of the napogré are given either in the quarters of the pugtiéma (first wife of the naba) or at the home of one of the old nabissi.

644 Water is heated and in it is put a bit of karite butter and other
595 ingredients. After the girl's head, armpits, and public hair have
302 been shaved by some old women, the pugtiéma or the old man dips a hand into the water, utters certain cabalistic words, and gives the names of all the chiefs who have succeeded each other up to the father of the current ruler.

644 The water is then given to the old women who bathe the
595 young napagha. It is at this time that she is instructed in the duties and obligations of the napogré, what she may do and what she should avoid.

[301] The new wife is then adorned with bracelets, kouaba (plural of kobré), and with rouamba [ankle rings], or with only bracelets. The chief may marry her at once or, depending on the circumstances, send her to the man for whom she is destined.

[684] The napagha must never have relations with any man other than her husband as long as she lives. Formerly she was pitilessly killed if she broke this rule. [162]

[302 As we have just seen, the napagha has no hair, and this is
30[] the primary distinctive mark. Also, she wears bracelets on her wrists, sometimes even on her arms and some on her ankles (this is done mostly by favorites). Finally some wear kouaba, ornaments most often worn by old women.

The number of wives or napagha varies according to the importance of the naba and especially according to the desires of naba. According to the 1926 census, the present Mogho Naba had thirty-seven wives.

301 As ornaments the Moaga woman had only red or yellow copper bracelets and the kindifou (a bright red bead). Even then only women of means could procure such ornaments. The [435] kindifou cost only 50 cowries a bead, but since cowries were monopolized by the naba, notables, and rakangba (prosperous Mossi), the beads were far too expensive for the small resources of the average Moaga woman.

Bracelets made of a special stone (a mixture of gray and white) and called manekagcé (manekaka in the singular) were worn only by the Yarbi (young Yarcé of both sexes). It is said [439] that these bracelets were peddled by the Kibissi (Habé), and they seem to have come from the Timbuktu area.

301 554 Silver bracelets were worn only by the dimbissi (descendants of dima, that is, the family of the Mogho Naba), by kombemba (canton and province chiefs) and their descendants, and, finally, by prominent persons who were in favor at court.

291 177 At the present time, especially at Ouagadougou, the women adorn themselves with garments of all kinds (skirts of native material, bazin, godé, and other fabrics, as well as skirts from stores). Some have even adopted the blouse and ample robe affected by [352] elegant Sudanese [228] women. Many now own trunks which replace the sacks formerly used to store their clothing.

291 178 The Senegalese handkerchief, a head scarf, is now considered absolutely indispensable. In rural areas there is an increasing desire to dress better. More cotton is grown. Girls and women from the bush buy glass beads of all colors when they come to Ouagadougou to work, and they wear them around their necks or around their hips in the manner of Bambara women.

416 Although the "mirror" used to be the clear water of springs and brooks, there is hardly a woman today who does not have one or two mirrors. Finally, a bit of elegance is added to the wild 301 beauty of the women by silver earrings, bracelets, and amulets sewed in a panther skin -- these are becoming a passion with Mossi peasant women.

291 It should not be inferred from the above that the Moaga always feels obliged to wear clothing at home. Any time that he has no need to go out or to visit a friend or relative at some

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Mossi Girl.

From the Mission of the
White Fathers at Ouagadougou.

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Mossi Woman Spinning.

From the Mission of the White Fathers at Ouagadougou.

/4/ BOOK I. POLITICAL LIFE

Chapter 1. The Country and Its Inhabitants

142 Although the Mossi is not a handsome type of Black, there is nothing disagreeable about him. He is rather tall, with lively eyes, woolly hair, flat nose, occasionally rather fine features, lips which are broad without being too thick, and cheeks heavily marked with three parallel lines running from the temples to the chin and a fourth leading perpendicularly from the nose to the other three. His limbs are muscular, and his color neither ebony nor copper but an intermediate hue.

291 He acquires a truly attractive and resolute air when he dresses in festive clothes, with his broad, dark blue, Zouave-like trousers, his loose shirt made of white and blue fabric strips which falls lightly over the arms, and on the right shoulder his doré, a weapon consisting
411 of a slightly bent iron rod, flattened at one end and terminating at the other in a ring hafted perpendicularly to a short stick. His wrist
[301] is often adorned with a copper bracelet, and he nearly always carries at his waist a stiff knife, enclosed in a leather sheath which ends in a tuft of leather strips with cowries attached to them. He wears a
291 cap made of two diamond-shaped pieces of colored fabric half-sewn together; the two free ends may serve to cover the ears and cheeks, but are usually worn raised in the shape of a tiara. A great fighter, he wields the knife with dexterity or strikes with the doré which can become a dangerous club.

173 The Mossi are a conquering people. They have not always lived in the territory they now occupy. But where did they come from?
648 The elders questioned all say that their people came from Gambaga
643 (British Gold Coast), and this is why the Moro Naba Wobro took refuge in Gambaga when he was dethroned by the French conquest; this is also why the naba of Gambaga is notified whenever a Moro Naba dies, and why the shoes, cap, and scepter of command of the deceased are sent to him as gifts to be laid on the ancestral tomb. Gifts are also sent to the naba of Fada N'Gourma, which the Mossi call "Bingo." When the Moro Naba dies, his bow and quiver are presented to the

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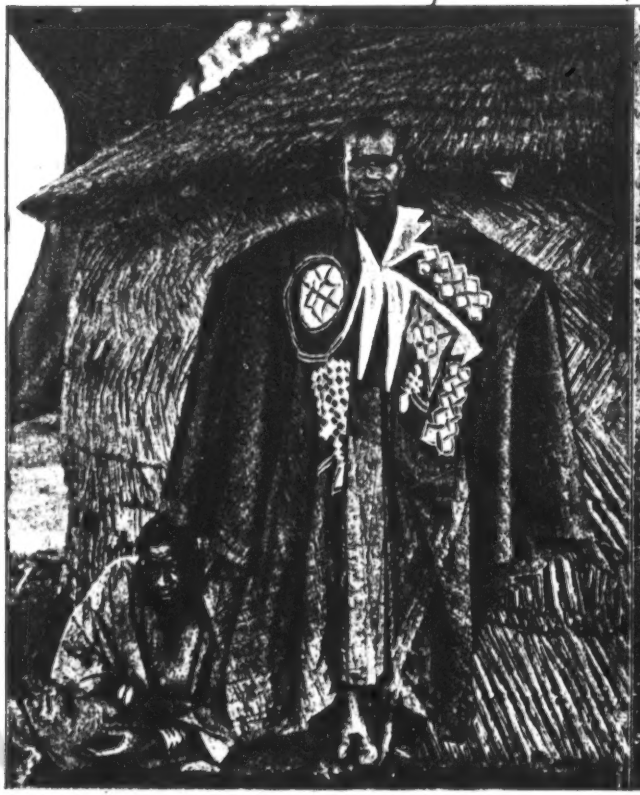

A Mossi Province Chief.

The Moro Naba of the Mossi.

644 The arms of the sorone are ornamented with two, three, or four copper
[301] bracelets, often of alternate yellow and red metal. Sometimes they wear them at the wrists and above the elbow, and occasionally both ankles are adorned with thick bracelets or even with copper gaiters which make walking quite difficult but which are prized very highly.
[201] All these pages wait on the monarch hand and foot. If he coughs, they all rub the palms of their hands together and snap their fingers. This is repeated /18/ even when he drinks, sneezes, or spits. If he rises, the whole court rises, and when he feels those needs common to all mortals, the whole court follows and squats as he does.

644 On important feast days, the naba is followed by music, and every
533 time he makes a gesture, says a word, or takes a step, the musicians
534 play on various kinds of drums. The typical drum peculiar to Mossi country, bindré, which only the members of the drummers' guild are allowed to play, is made of a gourd which may reach 70 or 80 centimeters in diameter. The calabash is emptied, and the side where the stem was attached is removed and replaced with a tightly stretched
533 goat skin. By hitting this skin with his hands, the artist draws many different sounds from his instrument. It is quite an art to play this drum well, and the members of the guild are trained to it from childhood. They are the troubadours, the griot of the country; they sing the praises of chiefs whose genealogies they know by heart, they frequent the markets, they follow the rich and proclaim them to be the bravest, the most generous, the most handsome men this world has ever known, for the sake of a few gifts. They attend all festivities.

534 Another instrument is the lounga, made of a hollowed piece of wood shaped like an hourglass; the two ends are rather broad and joined by a narrow cylinder. This drum is carried under the arm, and its two openings are closed with goat skins joined by cords. The artist stretches these cords more or less tightly by clasping the drum between his arm and the left side of his body, while he hits one of the skins with a small curved stick ending in a little ball and held in his right hand.

The naba's orchestra also includes flutes, from which the natives, especially the Peul, draw pretty but monotonous sounds, and small one-string violins which give forth pleasing tones under a skillful bow.

644 If the Moro Naba is to ride on horseback, the grooms bring his
492 mount magnificently decked out in a copper headstall and a large embroidered rug which covers its back and rump completely. A piece of embroidered cloth hides the horse's chest, and the Arab-type saddle,

535 /38/ To tell the truth, however, the Mossi do not know how to dance. With the exception of the circumcision dance and of some villages of dancers where people devote themselves methodically to choreography, the greater part of the population do not know how to dance gracefully. This does not prevent them, one and all, from indulging in the dance. Men and women dance separately. The most common male dance consists of a rapid motion of the upper part of the body, from left to right and right to left; the feet do not leave the ground, and they are moved forward very slowly. The arms are bent up to shoulder height and away from the body; the fingers are extended, and arms and hands shake along with the rest of the body. When performed by professionals, who are sometimes found in the villages, this motion is rather graceful but lacks breadth of style.
[292] The dancers wear a cardboard headpiece, its crest adorned with a band of cowries and its sides often embellished with bits of mirror fragments, feathers, and all sorts of small, gaudy articles. The upper part of the body is covered with a tight, wide-meshed garment, decorated at the waist with pompons or cowries and small bells. The dancer wears
[301] on the middle finger a piece of iron which looks like a large clam shell, and on his thumb an iron ring. He strikes one against the other in rhythm. His wrist is often adorned with a bracelet made of several of these iron shells; hanging from them are small strips of the same metal which clang at the slightest motion. Those who do not have a costume deck themselves out in tawdry finery.

The women dance two at a time, each by herself, spinning around and assuming whatever poses they consider most graceful. When they come near one another, they turn around and strike their backs together; then one of the two withdraws, and another takes her place. All the while, the women spectators clap their hands in rhythm and sing. Sometimes one of them utters a shrill cry to arouse the dancers or to laud one who has proved unusually graceful and lithe.

[831] There are no special dances for the dead, and Mossi dances apparently do not have the obscenity of some Negro dances.

857 But to return to the children. It may be stated, as a general rule, that children can do as they please as long as they help out with everyday tasks, as long as the son helps his father and the daughter her mother. Happily there are exceptions to this, and some parents watch their children quite closely, but these are exceptions. Boys
593 prefer their mother to their father, because the latter must often

2:Mangin--49a M-5 (ca. 1910) 1921 FA28 Mossi FA28

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Tattooed Mossi Youth.

Tattooed Mossi Women.

852 shaved strips on top of the head, while the sides are shaved similarly
[302] in semi-circular strips. On the seventh day, people who were previously circumcised bring chickens to sacrifice to the spirits of the paths so that all will go well, but the newly circumcised take no part in the proceedings. The children wash, oil themselves, and put on their
852 beautiful clothes. Everything is brand new, the breechcloth, the
292 trousers, the shirt, the blanket, and the headgear. The belt is adorned
301 with a knife in a leather sheath and with a needle case which has at the end a tuft of leather strips with cowries attached to them. They
[776] hold a cow's tail, also adorned with cowries, to drive off the scheuyan spirits who dislike little rascals and people who dress too well. Both wrists are adorned with copper bracelets. Needless to say, this flashy new outfit with its cowries that clang like bells lures the eye and bewitches the young boys, who decide to be circumcised at the first opportunity so they too may eat well and wear beautiful clothes.

852 /44/ The circumcised boys continue to walk bent over, leaning on
[48] their sticks, but their crude staff is replaced with two sticks decorated with burnt designs and tied together. They no longer wear a tail. They go to greet the chiefs, and they thank those who have given them gifts. They walk to the sound of the large drum, since the bindré is forbidden at circumcision ceremonies, and sing plaintive chants to the spirits. They parade in the marketplace and display their clothes in the villages. They dance before the chiefs, and their dances are very
[535] graceful indeed. They dance in unison to the beat of the drum, making the same gestures all together or two by two, varying the figures in accordance with the beat. After seven days the festivities are over, and they all return to their families and take up everyday life as though nothing had happened.

We shall now study this everyday life.

/45/ BOOK III. DAILY WORK AND TRADES

Chapter 1. Occupations of a Mossi

221 The Mossi are essentially cultivators, and it may be said that no
241 Mossi who works at a trade will fail to cultivate his fields when the

323 a hollow. Straw, twigs, or pieces of bark are laid between the jars and even inside them. Then everything is covered with straw and set afire in the evening. The smaller the jar, the more heat is needed. The women fetch their goods the following morning. Some of the jars are cracked; others, insufficiently fired, would be too porous and must be fired again; the rest are gathered and sold at the market.

322 Woodworking is done by men. They use a hatchet to cut down the trees, an adze and a knife to work the lumber. The mortars and pestles used by the women to crush maize, herbs, peanuts, and sauce ingredients are made of wood, and so are the dishes shaped like gourds, the bowls for sarabo, and the tool handles. There are also stools of a rather peculiar shape. Those women who can afford them close their huts with crude wooden doors. All these industries, however, are quite primitive and of no great interest.

326 The iron and copper work is so distinctive that those who practice
[564] it could only be specialists. The smiths, in fact, form a separate caste. One is born a smith, but one becomes a jeweller, since this
[306] profession is open to everyone. The smiths extract the metal and make iron tools: hoes, hatchets, adzes, and knives. It is said that no layman is allowed to watch when they extract the iron from the ore, and this would explain why the natives do not know how it is done. As I was unable to visit Yatenga, the area where most iron workers are to be found, I am not familiar with the extracting process.

326 /59/ The jewellers occasionally work with iron, but they do so on
306 the sly. They may repair broken tools, sharpen hatchets and arrow tips, and re-use a piece of iron, for instance, make an old hoe into
[30] nails, hinges, etc. Their main task, however, is the manufacture of all sorts of bracelets and of all the copper ornaments in a horse's harness: headstall, bit, spurs, stirrups, and the copper plates which hang from the saddle. These plates are a strange ornament which seems peculiar to the Mossi. They may reach 40 centimeters in diameter, and their edge may be as wide as 10 centimeters. The naba and the wealthy horsemen fasten them behind the stirrups, on either
[415] side of the saddle, where they hang down the horse's flanks. Servants sometimes use them to drink beer when they have no other containers. To smelt the iron or copper, the Mossi use charcoal which they obtain exactly in the same manner as our /French/ colliers. The fire is kept going with a double bellows made of the skin of goats or sheep and operated by a child. The red-hot iron is hammered with a cylindrical

114 distant past, since we must place Rawa, the first conqueror of
174 Ouagadougou and Ouahigouya (see further on), in the twelfth century A. D., and his parents came from Dagomba where it is clear the Mossi have lived for some time. The crossing of Haoussa and Djerma by the forefathers of the Dagomba Mossi takes us back to a period that obviously cannot be precisely established, but which is definitely earlier than the fourteenth century (when the Mossi conquered Timbuktu), and one must recognize, contrary to Captain Lambert's opinion, that the Mossi who took Timbuktu came from the south (probably from Ouahigouya) and not from the east (the Say region). We would like to point out /5/ also that they were a great deal closer to Timbuktu in Ouahigouya than in Say. Once this point has been cleared up and the ensuing mistakes corrected, the plausibility of the discovery of the road followed by the Mossi who came from Bornu (if they came from there), which was re-traced by Captain Lambert, is acceptable.

These observations also apply to the continuation of Captain Lambert's report. He says that the wars waged by the second Songhaï empire against the Mossi (sixteenth century) forced the latter to leave the Djerma country to go southwest toward Dagomba. Obviously, all of this is quite inaccurate, but, without accepting Captain Lambert's cause for the emigration and his establishing it further in the past, we can accept the route he traces.

174 "This movement," says Captain Lambert, speaking of the march from Djerma to Dagomba, "took place in a southerly direction, and the Mossi, after having followed the Niger River, crossed it at a point located between Say and Ilo, but much closer to Ilo.

[30] "North of Ilo, the custom of shaving the heads of the chieftains'
[302] wives still persists. These women also wear metal leggings (1), par-

[556]

1. Captain Lambert undoubtedly is referring to the beautiful copper leggings, about 20 centimeters high, worn by the rich Mossi women.

ticularly characteristic of the Mossi peoples and sometimes encountered among peoples who have been in contact with them.

"From this point, the migration, leaving the Bariba country on the left (2), went in a straight line through Gourma and the Pama region

326 In short, the blacksmith's profession is of greater consequence to him than anything else, although he avails himself of several other occupations.

[564] Mossi blacksmiths do not form a caste. That is to say, anyone can marry among them.

306 Let us proceed to the jewelers or copper workers (niaka in Mossi).
439 The Mossi have been familiar with copper for a long time, although West Africa does not produce it. The Yarsé have sought it at Ouanké, Kintampo, and even Kumasi from times immemorial. It comes from the coastal area, where it is brought by the Whites in the form of brass rods 30 or 40 centimeters long (like curtain rods). Nowadays, it is the British who supply the Gold Coast with copper, no doubt in the wake of the Portuguese and Dutch.

306 The niaka earns more money than the blacksmith. He buys the copper rods from the Dioula and makes them into various items /517/
301 such as women's copper leggings adorned with crocodiles, and thick copper bracelets worn at the wrists and ankles by women and soroné (pages). Depending on their thickness, these bracelets sell for 2,500
[435] to 20,000 cowries. He also makes women's copper hairpins, and low-price rings worth from 100 to 200 cowries.

306 Prior to the arrival of the French, these jewelers also made copper objects depicting everyday scenes, landscapes, huts. The
632 chiefs bought them, but now these objects, at least the more ancient ones, have become very difficult to obtain. It seems that the German physician Frobenius, when he passed through Mossi territory at the end of 1908, acquired some very beautiful specimens of ancient Mossi manufacture for an exorbitant price. Nowadays, one
[439] can imagine what the old industry was like by looking at the small items made at Ouagadougou by a few Europeanized Mossi who sell them on the spot for the benefit of local Whites. It might almost be said, therefore, that they manufacture them for export purposes. These items, made by the lost-wax process, are rather interesting and quite artistic for Blacks.

325 The tools of the niaka are about the same as those of the black-
306 smith:
413

1. The small portable anvil or kissiguiré.
2. The hammer or kouadara.
3. Shears (niougou) to pick copper pieces from the fire.

The Mossi grow tobacco in fields around their

INTRODUCTION

homesteads, where they also cultivate their most important cash crops, cotton and indigo, which are used in the manufacture and dyeing of cotton cloth.

The wild fauna of Mossi country include several species of antelope, deer, monkeys, rabbits, snakes, and wild pigs. Elephants roam the beds of rivers and streams and often destroy cultivated fields, while lions and hyenas distress the people by attacking livestock. The pools and rivers of Mossi country are inhabited by turtles, crocodiles, and various species of scaled and scaleless fish. Chickens, muscovy ducks, and half-domesticated guinea fowl are the most valuable species of birds.

The Mossi have long been famous for their splendid donkeys and horses. Donkeys are sometimes ridden, but they are used primarily as beasts of burden. Horses are important for military and ceremonial purposes and for export to the tsetse-fly zones to the south. The Mossi raise two main types of cattle: a zebu-like animal in the northern regions and a dwarf variety in the south. These animals are raised primarily for their milk and for export, and are seldom killed for meat until they are fairly old. Goats and sheep provide the main source of meat. Hog-raising is not widespread, and seems to be declining in importance with the increased observance of Islamic food taboos, which is on the uprise even among people who are still pagans.

The subsoil of Mossi country is not well known, but so far there have been no major discoveries of mineral deposits. The only known gold field remained unworked in aboriginal times. The Mossi do not like to wear gold ornaments, preferring jewelry worked from imported copper and silver. The northern Mossi worked their local iron in aboriginal times, but those in the south obtained this metal from caravan traders.

The nineteenth-century reports of Barth and other European travelers indicate that the Mossi conducted a rather extensive foreign trade. At least six caravan routes passed through their territory, and traders such as the Hausa and Mandingo visited the important Mossi trading centers at Yako, Pouitenga, and Ouagadougou, where they exchanged Saharan and forest products for Mossi livestock and cloth.[5]

The Mossi belong to the Voltaic culture area, a name given by Delafosse to the regions drained by the Black, Red, and White Voltas and their tributaries. The area embraces parts of Mali, the Ivory Coast, Dahomey, the Upper Volta, and northern Ghana.[6] It includes a vast congeries of peoples such as the Dagomba, Mamprusi, Dagari, Birifo, Senufo, Gurmanche, Gurunsi, Lobi, Bobo, Tallensi, Konkomba, Dogon, Somba, Fulse, and Ninisi, all of whom speak languages belonging to the Gur or Moshi-Grunshi group of

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28

who did live at the palace, only a small minority prepared the ruler's meals and shared his bed. Dim Delobson reports that Mogho Naba Kom II (1905–42) had thirty-seven wives. His son, Mogho Naba Sagha II (1942–57), had twenty.[24] The present Mogho Naba, Kougri, recently married according to Western tradition and is officially monogamous.[25] There seems to be a general trend toward fewer wives among Mossi chiefs.

Mossi rulers never married for the purpose of forming state alliances, and their marriages had no political significance. The Mogho Naba's marriages were exogamous with regard to the royal lineage and to his mother's minimal lineage. Aside from these restrictions, however, the Mogho Naba could marry women from any Mossi lineage or group, including serfs, slaves, and foreign populations. It is said that when Mogho Naba Sanum (1850–90) despaired of having an heir by a Mossi woman, he took a Fulani wife.[26]

The Mogho Naba had no formal wedding ceremony. The task of introducing a new wife to the royal harem fell to the Pughtiema. She and her assistants welcomed the wife in a prescribed fashion. First they shaved all the hair from her body. They then bathed her in warm water to which shea butter and ritual herbs had been added, and during the bath they recited the ruler's genealogy to impress her with her new status.[27] The Pughtiema advised her on the need for proper deportment, and warned her that adultery was punished by death. To close the ceremony, a smith fastened to the girl's wrists and ankles the silver or brass bracelets that identified her as a wife of the Mogho Naba. If the bride was still a child, she was often allowed to return to her father's house until she reached childbearing age. If she was past the age of puberty, her marriage was consummated without further ceremony, and she joined the ranks of the ruler's wives.

The wives who lived in the palace were divided into three groups. The first group included the wives who lived with the Pughtiema in a section of the palace harem called the *zaka sanga* ("large courtyard"). These women were all past childbearing age and no longer received nocturnal visits from the Mogho Naba. They had their own fields in the vicinity of the palace and cultivated them with the aid of the samande-kamba, the pages they had adopted, and their own children. The women of the second group, those of the *zagbilin* ("small courtyard"), were mostly in their thirties or forties and still sexually active. They received occasional visits from the Mogho Naba, but fewer than his younger wives. These women also cultivated their fields with the help of the young men of the court.

The third group of wives, the *dogunba* ("keepers of the household"), was the most important. The dogunba prepared the ruler's meals and satis-

567 The only slaves who have remained faithful to their masters or, more exactly, who have preferred to remain in Mossi territory after their emancipation, are nearly all Gourounsi.

The Gourounsi Captives

567 727 648 Sonrhaï [Songhai] forces led by Alpha Haïnon, Gazeré, and Babato used to raid Gourounsi country. They reduced a large number of Gourounsi to slavery, immediately making soldiers of the more enterprising among them to fight against their own people and selling or exchanging the rest for horses. Mossi country has always had a large supply of horses, so the Mossi used to go to Léo to trade their horses for slaves or simply to trade their slaves to the Sonrhaï for cowries. [439]

567 648 The Sonrhaï chiefs maintained good relations with the emperor of the Mossi, Naba Sanum. That is why they spared the Gourounsi village chiefs who had taken refuge with the Mogho Naba.

Boukary-koutou, the future Naba Wobgo, enjoyed the [87] regard and friendship of the Sonrhaï since he aided them in their wars against the Gourounsi in exchange for an ample share of the booty and slaves. We have shown that the large number of Gourounsi whom he brought with him to Ouagadougou contributed mightily to his being named emperor of the Mossi.

567 651 During the reigns of Naba Koutou, Sanum, and Wobgo, there were special slave markets attached to the regular markets at Ouagadougou and other large centers. A fee of 1,000 cowries was collected for the benefit of the naba for each captive sold, regardless of sex.

567 302 787 When owners desired to sell a slave, they first shaved his head, and it was only after the hair had begun to grow again that he was taken to market. The cutting of the hair derives from a superstition among the Mossi.

Depending on where the hair starts to grow, whether well back on the head, at the forehead, or near the ears, the interpretation varies as to how the slave is to be regarded: as a dangerous being; as a lucky or unlucky influence on the family owning him.

We shall not now go into details since such beliefs will be discussed in a special section.

631 new naba mounts his horse and goes off with the minister who has jurisdiction over him. The minister offers him some zom kom (water with flour in it) and then welcomes him into his courtyard where he is offered a canari of dam (beer) and gouré (kola nuts). He is then escorted back to the home of his gangsoba by a goodly throng of drummers, horsemen, etc.

631 All the defeated candidates are required to shave their heads
302 at once and to make a formal act of submission to the new naba as soon as he has returned to the home of his gangsoba (host). It should be added that the candidates allow their hair to grow from the day of the death of the naba to the day on which his successor is appointed.

631 The new appointee must offer dam, saghbo, and cowries to the
431 nayiridamba. He also offers dam, kola nuts, and cowries to the drummers.

631 On the following day he accompanies the minister to the home of the Mogho Naba. During the monarch's second audience (beg sonré),
644 the minister calls him to salute the Mogho Naba. The new naba goes forward to the tomboko, cries out three times (cries of joy), and then performs the kantissé (the Mossi salute). Thereupon, the Ouidi Naba says to the Mogho Naba: "The chief whom you deigned to honor yesterday wishes to express his gratitude." The Mogho Naba responds to the salute and then, for the first time, offers him a canari of dam.

The new naba then calls upon the ministers and other important personages (Ouidi Naba, Larrhallé Naba, Gounga Naba, [144] Poé Naba, Kamsoro Naba, Samandé Naba, the imam, Daporé Naba, and the next day the Zusoaba).

Seven days later the Mogho Naba gives him a robe, a pougla (red fez), a nagpouré (cushion), and néoda (slippers).

The new naba removes his old ragged clothes (I use the description advisedly, since custom forbids him to change his clothes until he has received those given by the Mogho Naba). He gives the discarded garments to a relative, dresses in the robe from the Mogho Naba, puts on the pougla (fez), and becomes a true naba.

631 A few days later he asks permission to return to his own lands. Many court representatives (nayirdamba) accompany him. It is the

644 The sogoné may not wear trousers. He wears a type of
357 drawers called benda. All the nanamsé (plural of naba) have
292 followed the example of Naba Warga, and nowadays the most insignificant kombéré has at least a dozen sogoné.

[161]

The Napogré. General Conditions. Number of Wives of the Emperor Today. Ornaments.

644 Depending on whether the napagha is destined for the chief
595 himself or for one of his brothers or sons, the instruction of the napogré are given either in the quarters of the pugtiéma (first wife of the naba) or at the home of one of the old nabissi.

644 Water is heated and in it is put a bit of karite butter and other
595 ingredients. After the girl's head, armpits, and public hair have
302 been shaved by some old women, the pugtiéma or the old man dips a hand into the water, utters certain cabalistic words, and gives the names of all the chiefs who have succeeded each other up to the father of the current ruler.

644 The water is then given to the old women who bathe the
595 young napagha. It is at this time that she is instructed in the duties and obligations of the napogré, what she may do and what she should avoid.

[301] The new wife is then adorned with bracelets, kouaba (plural of kobré), and with rouamba [ankle rings], or with only bracelets. The chief may marry her at once or, depending on the circumstances, send her to the man for whom she is destined.

[684] The napagha must never have relations with any man other than her husband as long as she lives. Formerly she was pitilessly killed if she broke this rule. [162]

[302 As we have just seen, the napagha has no hair, and this is
30[] the primary distinctive mark. Also, she wears bracelets on her wrists, sometimes even on her arms and some on her ankles (this is done mostly by favorites). Finally some wear kouaba, ornaments most often worn by old women.

The number of wives or napagha varies according to the importance of the naba and especially according to the desires of naba. According to the 1926 census, the present Mogho Naba had thirty-seven wives.

843 pregnancy in a woman. It is also known that the woman will give birth in nine months, but since it is impossible to be sure of the date of delivery, the pregnant woman is watched over constantly and is under the surveillance of the old women. In a general way, nature is allowed to take its course, but some people prefer to con-
[781 sult the soothsayers and the priests and to give alms and sacrifices
782] to avoid a miscarriage.

During pregnancy, women are forbidden to eat honey and, in general, any sweet foods.

Seguene-vando (from seguene, "to wear a skirt," and vando, "leaves, branches"). A few months after the cessation of menstruation, the pregnant woman is sent into the kim-dogo (hut of the kimsé, manes of the ancestors) at the home of the family elder. There she is completely disrobed, and branches are tied around her loins.

844 Delivery. Delivery takes place in the woman's own hut. There is no special preparation. [190] Old women who have had much practice help the mother while others heat water in which to cleanse the newborn child of all impurities.

No one except the old women is present during the delivery.
[842] Women who have not yet borne children are sent away, and for good reason since the sight of the birth process might make them sterile.

Finally, if the afterbirth does not come out at the time of birth or soon after, there are certain special measures taken to hasten its emergence.

846 Three or four days after the delivery, depending on whether the child is a boy or a girl, the mother, who has so far remained indoors, goes out for the first time.

She carries a sickle to ward off ghosts and other evil spirits.

The new mother's co-wives and relatives bring her safandé (soap), kamé (karite butter), and kalgo (soumbala); others give her cowries. The father has a sheep or rooster killed and a millet cake prepared.

The woman who acted as midwife is sent a ball of sagbo (millet mush) and a chicken leg. The heads of the mother and child are
[302] partially shaved, and there is nothing else to do but to choose a name for the child. [191]

553 Choice of a name. Among the Mossi, a child's personal name depends on circumstances which preceded the birth or on an important

1: Delobsom--148 1-5 (no date) 1933 FA28 Mossi FA28

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Mossi Girl.

From the Mission of the
White Fathers at Ouagadougou.

582 Marriage is exogamous, that is, relatives do not marry if their
564 kinship is known. There are no sharply defined caste lines. The Mossi marry Yarsé Malinké, Bousanse, and Gourounsi, but cannot marry Peul nor Haoussa. A Mossi who does not belong to a caste may choose his wife among Mossi who do belong to one. The latter do not intermarry freely; iron workers cannot marry from among the drummers.

584 But to go back to our story. The girl has grown. The suitor has already made numerous gifts. In short, the time has come to proceed with the wedding. The girl's father /31/ summons the betrothed and tells him: "Come and see me on such-and-such a day with a chicken." The suitor joyfully returns to his village and tells the elders that he was told to bring a chicken. On the day set, the suitor takes the bird to the girl's family, accompanied by his friends. He hands over the chicken, and everyone goes to the home of the head of the family, or, in his absence, to a village elder. The father states before all present that he wishes to give his daughter to So-and-So. Congratulations are exchanged, and everyone goes home. Now the festivities must be arranged, the relatives and friends must be notified, and the millet beer must be brewed. Meanwhile, the relatives and friends who have heard the good news come to greet the bridegroom and bring him fifty or a hundred cowries to help him meet the expenses of the festivities.

When everything is ready, the bridegroom takes 500 cowries and a rooster to the girl's father and 500 cowries to the elder in whose household the bride shall live until her wedding day. The girl's relatives have prepared dinner, while the bridegroom provides the
[302] drink. A relative of the groom shaves the bride's forehead in a circle, and she retires to the inner courtyard where her father's wives wash her thoroughly and tie a cotton cord around her waist. She dons a white garment and goes to offer a gourd of beer to her betrothed who has remained outside with his friends. Everyone thanks the girl's parents and then they all leave. On the day after next, the groom sends his friends to greet the family of his betrothed with a basket of
[431] millet flour, four kalro pellets, and salt, which are all distributed among the village people. These festivities, with their attendant ceremonies, come closest to a formal betrothal.

585 The girl, however, remains with the head of the family or with the elder who takes his place! When all these preliminary ceremonies are over, the groom sends daily for his bride. Once the trousseau has

585 been gathered together in a basket — clothes varying in number with the family's wealth, gourds, a pot for the sauce, a wooden spoon to stir the millet mush — the father tells the groom's messenger that the wedding date has been set for a certain day, nearly always on a Friday, sometimes Thursday. For the second time, the groom prepares the festivities and again the food and the drink. In the evening, his friends go out to meet the bride who is accompanied by her family. When nearing the village, they all let loose merry cries, "you, you", the bride pretends to run away, and the young men run after her and bear her on their shoulders to the head of the groom's family or to one of his uncles. And the party begins. The men eat millet mush [262] and a chicken; the women, millet mush and a guinea hen. They all drink beer, dance, and sing.

[302] On the following morning, the groom's relatives shave the bride's head, and that of her husband if she is his first wife, because their way of life has changed: the young man has become the master of a hut, and the young girl a wife. In the evening, the friends and relatives of the new husband go to the bride's village bearing in this order: a sheep killed at the husband's house, jars of beer, and finally the sarabo /millet mush/. The bride's relatives follow in complete silence /32/ and without greeting anybody. When they arrive at the home of the bride's family, the bearer of the sheep and the women who carry the millet beer and sarabo go into the inner courtyard and put down their loads; then they come out and dance, while the in-laws have the food transferred to other containers. The jars are returned to the bearers, who are driven away with blows by millet stalks and a sprinkling of water mixed with ashes.

All the while, the bride stays in the soukala of the elder, watched closely by his first wife. She remains shut in for several days, until the elder finally decides to send her to her husband. His wife prepares millet mush, sauce, and meat, and brings a jug of beer. The old women assemble and accompany the bride to the home of her husband. He returns the courtesy to the elder on the following day. Henceforth, they are married at long last.

If the new husband is prosperous, he goes to thank his in-laws a [431] few days after the festivities. In leather pouches sewn all around, he offers 1, 300 cowries to his father-in-law and 1, 400 to his mother-in-law. If he can, he also offers beer, two chickens, and a sheep. These last gifts are less essential, but if he fails to offer the cowries, the in-laws may seize his wife's children and keep them until the thank-you gifts have been received.

852 When they go into the bush, either to cut down straw or for any other reason, they sing invocations to the spirits of the paths and of the trees in order to propitiate them, to draw their blessing, and to avert illness. They chase everyone in their path, approach the villages, and, if they can, seize a few chickens, goats, or sheep as an extra tidbit. This is the custom, and they even steal the animals of their relatives in this fashion. At night they come up near the huts and beat everyone they meet; they take everything they can find, and no one would think of resisting them. /43/ In any case, during that time, people take good care of their children and send them plenty of food. To have a child undergoing circumcision is a burden to a family.

852 563 869 When the circumcised group consists largely of Moslems, Yarsé or Peul, the one in charge of the circumcision assembles them during rest periods, in the evening, or sometimes in the middle of the night, in order to instruct them. There does not seem to be any esoteric doctrine, and the instructions deal with the glorification of ancestors who were also circumcised there. Only those who are circumcised can enter heaven and have many children; those who are not will taste no happiness in the other life and will remain sterile. The group is also taught that God sits under a black tree on a sheep skin, that he eats from a dish and drinks from a bottle. It is all very childish. They are also told that they must not disclose to anyone, under penalty of death or at least of serious illness, what they have seen and learned during the circumcision period. This is to prevent them from revealing the robberies committed during that time and from discouraging those who should like to undergo the operation; for although it is tempting to eat well, to play a great deal, and especially to wear beautiful clothes, it is also unpleasant to be lashed with willows at the slightest slip, or for not dancing well, for quarreling with or insulting someone, for speaking Mossi, for being slow to go to work.

852 Occasionally, at circumcision time, two sticks are found on the path near the market. They were placed there on purpose, and if one looks to the right and left, he will see two children, all covered with dust and wearing dirty breechcloths. They are newly circumcised boys who are begging, and passersby drop a few cowries to the ground.

852 302 All these ceremonies are soon to end. The clothes are ready, and the children are getting tired and restive. The one in charge of the circumcision decides that the boys are to be shaved, that is, that the circumcision period will end in two weeks. The hair of the circumcised boys is not shaved off completely: strips of hair alternate with

852 shaved strips on top of the head, while the sides are shaved similarly
[302] in semi-circular strips. On the seventh day, people who were previously circumcised bring chickens to sacrifice to the spirits of the paths so that all will go well, but the newly circumcised take no part in the proceedings. The children wash, oil themselves, and put on their
852 beautiful clothes. Everything is brand new, the breechcloth, the
292 trousers, the shirt, the blanket, and the headgear. The belt is adorned
301 with a knife in a leather sheath and with a needle case which has at the end a tuft of leather strips with cowries attached to them. They
[776] hold a cow's tail, also adorned with cowries, to drive off the scheuyan spirits who dislike little rascals and people who dress too well. Both wrists are adorned with copper bracelets. Needless to say, this flashy new outfit with its cowries that clang like bells lures the eye and bewitches the young boys, who decide to be circumcised at the first opportunity so they too may eat well and wear beautiful clothes.

852 /44/ The circumcised boys continue to walk bent over, leaning on
[481] their sticks, but their crude staff is replaced with two sticks decorated with burnt designs and tied together. They no longer wear a tail. They go to greet the chiefs, and they thank those who have given them gifts. They walk to the sound of the large drum, since the bindré is forbidden at circumcision ceremonies, and sing plaintive chants to the spirits. They parade in the marketplace and display their clothes in the villages. They dance before the chiefs, and their dances are very
[535] graceful indeed. They dance in unison to the beat of the drum, making the same gestures all together or two by two, varying the figures in accordance with the beat. After seven days the festivities are over, and they all return to their families and take up everyday life as though nothing had happened.

We shall now study this everyday life.

/45/ BOOK III. DAILY WORK AND TRADES

Chapter 1. Occupations of a Mossi

221 The Mossi are essentially cultivators, and it may be said that no
241 Mossi who works at a trade will fail to cultivate his fields when the

777 may hold in store. Wednesday is unreservedly bad, and you must not start a job or leave for a trip on that day. Thursday and Friday are propitious to weddings, especially Friday. On Saturday the sorcerers take the day off and hold no consultations. In addition, every individual has his own lucky day and his unlucky day, which he must know and bear in mind.

778 Some stones are said to have fallen from heaven. On the day when they fall, the village chief immediately covers all the jars in his hut 787 which contain charms. If he knocks one down in his haste, he will 823 die within the year. These stones are held sacred. Those who can lift them /100/ have nothing to fear, but those who cannot are soon to die. People may also interrogate such a stone, whose reply is considered favorable if they manage to lift it, unfavorable if they cannot [788] do so. Passersby toss millet stalks onto the stone, or twigs cut along the way, or sometimes cowries, to procure success in their endeavors.

821 Comets are omens of war or of the death of a great chief. When Halley's comet appeared on the horizon, the chickens, goats, and 787 sheep had a bad time of it. It was necessary to ward off all the possible misfortunes. It is true that the comet was magnificent, spreading for several days from one end of the sky nearly to another, and it is understandable that the natives should be upset. We have heard that many people were troubled in our civilized countries, where the comet could not be seen in all its splendor. In spite of all those sacrifices, the chief of one of the principal cantons in the province, the naba of Pwitenga, died that very year!

000 We must limit our enumeration, and these few examples, which could easily be multiplied, suffice to make clear the role of amulets and superstitions in the life of this people.

801 One further word on superstitions. The reader may have noticed that the numbers three and four and their composites have recurred constantly according to the sex of the person spoken of. Three is reserved for men and four for women. In the sacrifices, God-king male is called three times. God-king female four times. The cord of the charm has three or four knots according to sex; mothers mourn their children for 33 or 44 days. A dead man receives 333 or 3, 333 cowries, a dead woman 444 or 4, 444, etc.

302 Every time a native changes his status, his hair must be removed. Babies are shaved before they are given a name, girls before they come to their husband, women when they are transferred to a new

302 husband by legacy; while men are shaved only when they receive their first wife, because then they become masters of a hut, but they are not shaved when they get new wives because their status does not change again. A man who is appointed naba must lose his hair which was that of a subject and no longer suitable to a chief. A dead person [764] may only be buried without being shaved if he died an accidental death, etc.

789 The cross also plays a role which must not be overrated, but which is nevertheless real. The hilts of swords bear the shape of a cross; the feet, hands, and chest of the sick are often anointed with charcoal mixed in fat, always in the shape of a cross. The chests and backs of soukala dwellers are also marked with crosses to protect them against lightning. The huts are marked likewise, and crosses are drawn even inside the mouths of horses and donkeys. A cross is also drawn on the hut door of those who are seriously ill so as to ward off evil spirits. A cross of ashes on the chest and back is part of the mourning costume.

What is the origin of this custom? The natives cannot say, and invariably reply, "This is what our fathers did."

In addition to these superstitious practices that do not commit one to anything and that harm no one, there are others which can be very useful to /101/ those who practice them, and others yet which seem indeed to fall into the category of magic. We are referring to what the natives designate by the generic name of tim, without differentiating between true remedies of medicinal origin and superstitions or evil spells which should be characterized as magic. Indeed, it is often quite difficult to distinguish between the two.

755 Amulets and charms are tim to the natives, and so are the medicines which their specialists prescribe and which seem to have real effectiveness. We mentioned them briefly when we spoke of illness. We did not say that the preparation of these medicines rarely goes unaccompanied by some sorcery, and that the person who has been cured by a remedy must at least keep some in a little bag and sacrifice a chicken to it every year. Everything is done as in the usual sacrifices, but the invoking formula is replaced with the following: "God-tim, stretch out your hand and take this chicken. God has given me a powerful medicine. May this medicine protect me night and day, in the middle of the night and on the path, where we amuse ourselves and in the huts. Keep the jaws of the snake shut so that next year I may still be in good health, so that no misfortune may come to me,

114 distant past, since we must place Rawa, the first conqueror of
174 Ouagadougou and Ouahigouya (see further on), in the twelfth century A. D., and his parents came from Dagomba where it is clear the Mossi have lived for some time. The crossing of Haoussa and Djerma by the forefathers of the Dagomba Mossi takes us back to a period that obviously cannot be precisely established, but which is definitely earlier than the fourteenth century (when the Mossi conquered Timbuktu), and one must recognize, contrary to Captain Lambert's opinion, that the Mossi who took Timbuktu came from the south (probably from Ouahigouya) and not from the east (the Say region). We would like to point out /5/ also that they were a great deal closer to Timbuktu in Ouahigouya than in Say. Once this point has been cleared up and the ensuing mistakes corrected, the plausibility of the discovery of the road followed by the Mossi who came from Bornu (if they came from there), which was re-traced by Captain Lambert, is acceptable.

These observations also apply to the continuation of Captain Lambert's report. He says that the wars waged by the second Songhaï empire against the Mossi (sixteenth century) forced the latter to leave the Djerma country to go southwest toward Dagomba. Obviously, all of this is quite inaccurate, but, without accepting Captain Lambert's cause for the emigration and his establishing it further in the past, we can accept the route he traces.

174 "This movement," says Captain Lambert, speaking of the march from Djerma to Dagomba, "took place in a southerly direction, and the Mossi, after having followed the Niger River, crossed it at a point located between Say and Ilo, but much closer to Ilo.

"North of Ilo, the custom of shaving the heads of the chieftains' [301] [302] wives still persists. These women also wear metal leggings (1), par-

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1. Captain Lambert undoubtedly is referring to the beautiful copper leggings, about 20 centimeters high, worn by the rich Mossi women.

ticularly characteristic of the Mossi peoples and sometimes encountered among peoples who have been in contact with them.

"From this point, the migration, leaving the Bariba country on the left (2), went in a straight line through Gourma and the Pama region

222 predominates in the bush of the territory and which, owing to its
137 abundance, lends the bush its particular character.

The karité fruit is an egg-shaped, elongated chestnut, smaller than the fruit of the European chestnut tree. It is distinguished from it even more clearly by its fleshy covering with its greenish skin. This flesh is soft, quite thick, and tastes delicious, like a very ripe, even overripe pear.

222 It is the women who gather the karité when the fruit is ripe,
252 before the rainy season, at the beginning of April. First, the flesh surrounding the chestnut is eaten /496/. Then, after breaking the brown shell, the inner part is used to make the famous karité butter.

252 As everywhere else, it is the women who do this among the Mossi. They remove the shell of the chestnut, and then mash the sticky and whitish substance which is found inside. It is pounded on crushing stones with a little wooden pestle. Once this is done, the substance is cooked in a canari and then mashed again, this time in the large wooden mortars, until the paste acquires the consistency of butter. Then it is pounded once more between crushing stones. When this is over, the paste is placed in a canari with lukewarm water, and then stirred and manipulated by hand. This produces a sort of dirty-white cream, somewhat similar to beaten egg whites, but firmer. Then this cream is boiled until it changes into oil. The impurities drop to the bottom of the canari, and the oil floats. The latter is gathered, placed in a clean gourd, and allowed to cool. The result is a pale yellow butter. At first sight it looks like real butter, but when sniffed it reveals a characteristic odor which is unpleasant to Europeans.

Gourounsi women prepare karité butter in the same manner as Mossi women.

● 302 This butter is put to various uses. First of all, it is utilized for grooming purposes. The women especially rub it into their hair in copious quantities, not only among the Mossi but throughout the Sudan as well. This, naturally enough, lends them an aroma which
[388] is not very pleasant to European noses. Karité butter is also made into soap when certain ashes are added. Finally, it is used in cooking.

423 The karité trees standing in a field belong to the owner of the field. Those which stand in the bush belong to the people of the

595 who did live at the palace, only a small minority prepared the ruler's meals
644 and shared his bed. Dim Delobson reports that Mogho Naba Kom II (1905–42) had thirty-seven wives. His son, Mogho Naba Sagha II (1942–
[177] 57), had twenty.[24] The present Mogho Naba, Kougri, recently married
[178] according to Western tradition and is officially monogamous.[25] There seems to be a general trend toward fewer wives among Mossi chiefs.

643 Mossi rulers never married for the purpose of forming state alliances,
581 and their marriages had no political significance. The Mogho Naba's mar-
582 riages were exogamous with regard to the royal lineage and to his mother's minimal lineage. Aside from these restrictions, however, the Mogho Naba could marry women from any Mossi lineage or group, including serfs, slaves, and foreign populations. It is said that when Mogho Naba Sanum (1850–90) despaired of having an heir by a Mossi woman, he took a Fulani wife.[26]

643 The Mogho Naba had no formal wedding ceremony. The task of intro-
585 ducing a new wife to the royal harem fell to the Pughtiema. She and her
[302] assistants welcomed the wife in a prescribed fashion. First they shaved all the hair from her body. They then bathed her in warm water to which shea butter and ritual herbs had been added, and during the bath they recited the ruler's genealogy to impress her with her new status.[27] The Pughtiema advised her on the need for proper deportment, and warned her that
[301] adultery was punished by death. To close the ceremony, a smith fastened to the girl's wrists and ankles the silver or brass bracelets that identified her as a wife of the Mogho Naba. If the bride was still a child, she was often allowed to return to her father's house until she reached childbearing age. If she was past the age of puberty, her marriage was consummated without further ceremony, and she joined the ranks of the ruler's wives.

644 The wives who lived in the palace were divided into three groups. The
595 first group included the wives who lived with the Pughtiema in a section of the palace harem called the *zaka sanga* ("large courtyard"). These women were all past childbearing age and no longer received nocturnal visits from the Mogho Naba. They had their own fields in the vicinity of the palace and cultivated them with the aid of the samande-kamba, the pages they had adopted, and their own children. The women of the second group, those of the *zagbilin* ("small courtyard"), were mostly in their thirties or forties and still sexually active. They received occasional visits from the Mogho Naba, but fewer than his younger wives. These women also cultivated their fields with the help of the young men of the court.

The third group of wives, the *dogunba* ("keepers of the household"), was the most important. The dogunba prepared the ruler's meals and satis-

It was only when this man had returned to the capital that all the nobles in the local ruling lineage were invited to Ouagadougou to press their claims. Only the dead chief's babissi went to Ouagadougou, even though all nobles subscribed to the traditional concept that "the nam does not belong to any one sub-lineage; it can be given to any nobleman." Unlike the others, these nobles did not shave their heads in mourning, thus indicating their candidacy for the nam. When they donned sheepskin cloaks and carried spears on their shoulders, they indicated that they were interested in the nam of the district. 634 [613] [302] [765]

Before a candidate for the district chieftainship left for Ouagadougou, he collected livestock, money, clothing, and grain from his friends to give as gifts or bribes to important officials in the capital. When he arrived there, he lived with friends and conducted his campaign from their home. He and the other candidates visited their provincial minister and his colleagues, the Mogho Naba, and other courtiers, giving presents ostensibly as a sign of friendship but actually with the ultimate aim of impressing these people with their generosity. These activities were often very costly; for if the Ouagadougou officials suspected that the candidates were wealthy, they made every effort to obtain as many presents as possible. It was not unusual for candidates for the district chieftainship to remain at the capital as long as "thirty-three" or "sixty-six" days before the officials were satisfied with their generosity and made preparations for the election. 634 662

The evening before the election, the Baloum Naba asked each candidate to provide a chicken and a sheep for the evening sacrifices to the namtibo.[28] After the morning ceremony on the following day, the Ouidi Naba reminded the sovereign that a new chief had to be chosen for Nobere district. The Mogho Naba summoned the Gounga Naba and asked him which candidate had the best character and was most capable of taking care of the district—a question which shows that the Mossi never placed primogeniture above the ability to rule.[29] The Gounga Naba had already consulted his friends about the matter, but he recounted both the good and the bad qualities of each candidate. At the same time, he hinted which one would make the best chief. He finally told the Mogho Naba that all of the candidates were worthy men, adding, "You can give the nam to any of them." The Mogho Naba then looked around to ascertain whether the other ministers had concurred in the Gounga Naba's implied choice before declaring, "I will give the nam to X, because when his [father, grandfather, or brother, used in the generic or classificatory sense] was alive, he was good to me. The ancestors would be angry if I did not give his [son, grandson, or brother] the nam." With these words the selection was made, and the ministers now prepared to install the successful candidate. 634 645 643 [782]

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The Mogho Naba's daughter, the Napoko, impersonates her deceased father at his funeral ceremonies. Note that she wears one of his robes, his slippers, and his bonnet, and has his sword behind her.

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Mogho Naba Sagha II (1942–57), who was instrumental in reuniting the Mossi people into one territory, the Upper Volta.

[p. 178-8]

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964

FA28 Mossi FA28

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The musicians of the royal court, the Bendera.

[p. 178-C]

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28

[J. 178-D]

(*Left*) Mogho Naba Kougri and Ouezzain Coulibaly, who became Vice President of the Government Council of the Upper Volta in 1957. (*Center*) Maurice Yaméogo, President of the Republic of Upper Volta. (*Right*) Mogho Naba Kougri (1957–) on his ceremonial horse at his installation.

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28

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Mogho Naba Kougri concedes to the administration, and orders his warriors to disband.

[p. 178-H]

567 now the circle of Tenkodogo constituted a reservoir (figuratively called lambagré, "cotton reserve") from which the warriors and vassals of the emperor brought back hundreds of young slaves. This was because Garango recognized no authority; it was dependent neither on the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou nor on the king of Tenkodogo. Tradition has it that the warriors of the Mossi chiefs were always surprising the people of Garango on market days. The memory of these raids is why, even today the markets at Garango [366] are open only from six in the morning until noon.

The Mossi considered themselves to be free men, and no one, [644] not even naba, had the [85] right to reduce a Moaga subject to slavery. The facial tattoos made it easy to distinguish the Moaga [304] from foreigners.

Since there were few contacts between neighboring villages, 567 it was difficult even for highwaymen to sell young people from near- 674 by areas. This does not mean that there were not, all the same, captives of Mossi origin. Bandits rode, for instance, from Ouagadougou to Boussouma. They always carried large leather [492] sacks tied to their saddles and into them thrust children and women who were taken by surprise while gathering fruit in the bush. Such captives were always sold far from their home villages. Naturally such practices were severely dealt with by the naba. Naba Wobgo drove the canton chief of Bilgotenga, Warongo, from his territory because he enslaved Mossi people. Warongo was forced to take refuge in Yatenga and returned home only after the coming of the French.

567 Some of the slaves brought back from Garango were kept by the emperor, and the rest were distributed among the warriors. Up to that time no one thought of using them for anything but field work and domestic labor.

It was Naba Baongo, the twenty-sixth successor of Oubri, who first thought of selling the slaves. He said: "Id kossi bazas kamba tib boude nan wa saf" (literally, "let us sell these slave dogs; perhaps, one day, [86] there will be no more of them"). It is as if the emperor had foreseen the suppression of slavery and the emancipation of the slaves.

Today one seldom encounters former Boussanga slaves. They have no doubt returned to their villages since the arrival of the [304] French. Their descendants (house slaves, dogyiri) now wear the same facial tattoos as the Mossi.

567 them for kola nuts with the Achanti [Ashanti] or for loaves of salt
439 at Timbuktu. Although they were always transported by roundabout routes to prevent them from finding their way back to their homes, still some of them always managed to escape.

492 The naba used the young yemdado as soroné or grooms, and
567 they would often [93] take the young and attractive women (yempoksé) as wives.

641 The sale of free men. Neither the emperor of the Mossi nor
681 his vassals sold their subjects. Individuals who were regarded as dangerous were simply put to death unless they took refuge in a bangaré to avoid being executed, as has been noted above. Some were sent to the emperor to be made into eunuchs.

304 The facial tattoos worn by the Mossi clearly distinguished them
567 from neighboring peoples. However, if by accident or because of
689 need a naba sold a free man and the latter was claimed by his relatives, the chief was required to buy back the slave or to indemnify his family. We have described above how a canton chief was exiled by the emperor for having sold free Mossi.

583 Concealed selling of women and children. In the chapter on
562 marriage customs among the Mossi we shall show that a native Moaga did not demand a bride price because he did not want to feel that
567 he was selling his daughter. There is no doubt that this rule has exceptions. Indeed, we shall show that the failure to pay a debt, a bout of drunkenness, or a favor received might suffice to mortgage the future of a daughter, even though at the time she might be a small child and quite unaware of her fate. In any event, there would be no question of her expressing any opinion, since her wishes are never taken into account. During periods of famine -- which have been
[131] occurring almost [94] regularly for some years -- a small basket of millet is enough to make a father promise his daughter. In the same way, we regret to say, a great many girls are promised in exchange for trifling sums at the time the poll tax is paid.

567 Rights of slaves. Since he is regarded as an inferior being, the yemdaogo (slave) has no well-defined rights. He is required to perform all kinds of domestic work and must give unquestioning obedience to his master and the master's family. Besides his essential duties, however, he is permitted to do some farming for himself, practice some trade, or to raise cattle, with the proceeds constituting

644 554 576 [101] It is to be noted that a gourdful of this water with millet flour on which a bit of karite butter is floating is a customary courtesy offering among the Mossi. It is most improper to greet or to receive a stranger by offering him plain water.

644 782 On the fourth or fifth day the Djiba Naba proceeds to Zoanghna (a village located two or three kilometers behind the government buildings) and there hands over a sheep and a cow to serve as offerings to the sacred amulets of the ancestors and to protect him from evil spirits and wicked people. He does not spend the night in this village but returns home immediately after the sacrifice.

644 788 Several days later the decision is made to install the new naba in his domain. A large number of soroné, drummers, and followers accompany him on what amounts to a kind of obligatory pilgrimage which we shall describe briefly.

The following itinerary is customary.

First, the Djiba Naba goes to Badnogo where he spends the night. The next day he goes on to Samba where he is offered water with flour in it, and for his part, he gives salt to be shared among the old women of the village.

One may ask why salt is given to the old women and not to the other people. The Mossi call old women nough' pouk ramba, [888] that is, those who, when blessing you, clasp their hands so as to make a higher power hear and grant their prayers.

644 788 431 [102] On the following day he proceeds to Tensobitenga where he remains for three days. Beer is prepared for him; he is given a cow for his followers and a wife for himself. At Nakamtenga, his next stop, the village chief welcomes him with a sheep and many baskets and bowls of sagbo (millet mush).

644 788 He does not remain here for the night but instead goes on to Koubri. This is the village where eunuchs formerly suffered the cruel operation of castration (1). The canton chief meets him, leads

839 ●304 681 1. Eunuchs. Bandits, thieves, murderers, and slaves or soroné (servitors) convicted of adultery with women of the nobility were the only ones sent to Koubri, a canton in the circle of Ouagadougou, to be castrated. This operation involved only the removal

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of the testicles, until the day when a eunuch managed, no one knows how, to take advantage of some of the women he was supposed to be guarding. From then on it was deemed necessary to remove the penis completely, and a copper cartridge was inserted for purposes of urination.

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As soon as the person fainted after undergoing the operation, a drink was concocted whose ingredients are unknown. When he revived, he was so thirsty that he downed the drink in a single gulp. It is said that the drug stupefied the eunuch to such a degree that he would be incapable of taking vengeance even if he had any weapons at hand.

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It was only after he had completely recovered that the victim was sent to the Mogho Naba. The latter assigned him the duty of guarding a harem or a royal tomb.

644 788 him to his house, seats him by his side, and announces to the populace that he has just been visited by his son (Koubri Naba is a descendant of the Mogho Naba).

644 788 431 He then offers the crown prince a cow and a great deal of [103] beer, and then, before he leaves, the Djiba Naba has free access to the chief's household where he takes as a wife the first nubile girl he encounters. The stay at Koubri traditionally lasted for seven days, but it could be shortened to two or three in view of the great expense involved in entertaining a prince of such high rank, especially at the present time when the canton chiefs no longer enjoy their former prestige.

The Djiba Naba continues on his way to Kombissiri where he is the guest of the canton chief. For a week, in addition to his food which must, of course, be copious and abundant quantities of beer, the crown prince also receives a cow, a sheep, and, before his departure for Doulougou, a wife.

[i.e. canton chief — Analyst]

173 to be on the field of battle himself and for five years was unable
644 to vanquish his enemy who was entrenched on a mountain and
357 well supported by the local inhabitants.

After Warga had tried every means at his command to conquer his enemy, he hacked down the crops, which were almost ripe, and captured all the livestock that ventured down the mountain. In short, he devastated the country.

This succeeded so well that at last the local inhabitants, faced with famine, had to choose between the life of the chief they were sheltering and their own lives. Mamzi was therefore handed over and imprisoned at Saponé (1).

1. The principal canton town in the district of Ouagadougou.

During the five years of this difficult campaign, Naba Warga, aside from the warriors, had only a young boy to serve him since his wives were not present. The boy served as cook [160] and personal servant. In short, he performed the duties of a wife so well that Warga decided that he was worthy of some notice and decided to reward him.

When he had returned to his lands, he freed this faithful servitor after first giving him a wife. Then it occurred to him that several children in his court could perform the same services. He therefore ordered them to be recruited on a large scale, and these were the sogoné.

357 Every boy recruited to become a sogoné can expect to be given
644 a wife, however little she may be worth, when he is freed.

The sogoné have the same standing as the napagba,* and they
[554 wear the same ornaments. A group of bracelets worn on the wrists,
304] in fact, distinguish the napagba and the sogoné from free women.

It is their duty to serve the naba. They form a half circle around the naba when he appears; they accompany him on his short outings; and they carry the scepter and all of the insignia of chief-
[293] dom. They serve drinks to the naba, fan him when he takes a nap with fans called fika, make his bed, and do various errands. Likewise a naba never sends anyone but a sogoné to take a message to his wives.

*[i.e. royal wives — Analyst]

775 that the same baby is returning. So, in order to induce him to
553 remain on earth, they give him a significant name.

One of these is Yewayan (literally, "one who has returned"), meaning "Here he is, back again; it is he once more, and we recognize him."

The same name is used for all members of the same family.

● 304 Scars. When a child is a year or two old, the family calls in an old woman who draws more or less straight lines on his face (cheeks, chin, forehead, even the nose) with a razor. These marks vary according to region and are not [193] the same, for example, at Kaya as at Ouagadougou.

The design used most often, however, has three straight lines from forehead to chin and one or two horizontal lines running across the nose and joining the vertical lines on the cheeks.

853 Feeding. If a mother does not have enough milk, she goes
782 very early in the morning to a tree, for example, the kamsaongo or wédega (of the family of gohine lianas), to ask for milk. She falls to her knees, and believing that she is addressing a living person, she makes her request humbly, but with what faith! It appears that the prayer is often granted, but the woman must never again go under the tree or she will lose her milk.

853 The question of choosing a nurse does not arise in Mossi
604 country unless the mother dies. In that case, the little orphan is entrusted to a sister of the child's father. If she has been a mother, she too goes to the tree to ask for milk, as described above, even if her most recent delivery occurred years before. Finally, if the child thus nursed is a girl and survives, she becomes the property of her father's sister who will give her in marriage, later on, to the suitor of her choice.

III. Death

764 The importance of funeral ceremonies depends on the age and
554 rank of the deceased.

Nitiema (aged persons). Upon the death of an [194] old man or woman, all the relatives who live in the village are assembled.

428 to change his mind. If, however, he absolutely refuses to heed their protests, they will not make an issue of it, but when the time comes to [262] apportion the estate, the testamentary arrangement to disinherit the heir presumptive will simply be declared null and void.

If the heir presumptive was disinherited for any of the causes for disqualification listed above or because he had committed adultery with one of his father's wives or a wife of someone in the family, the estate is given to the next in the line of succession as determined by Moaga custom.

Right to make a will. All who own property may make wills.

Revocation of wills. Wills may be revoked if the testator so desires. He has only to make a simple oral declaration of changed intention in the same manner as that described above.

Chapter 18

Circumcision. Do the Mossi Practice It?

304 184 Circumcision is highly esteemed among the Mossi. Some colonial officials, because of their ignorance of Mossi customs, have claimed that neither circumcision nor excision was practiced. One must be able, indeed, to distinguish between the Moaga, the Boussanga, and especially the Nionioga. Although the three groups are related, they have different customs.

304 Circumcision, which is done according to precise rules, is carried out here in virtually the same way as it is among the Kassonké of Kayes.

304 626 The ceremony must originally have been imposed on the Dagomba (of whom the Mossi are descendants) by Islam. Now, however, young men seek to have themselves circumcised, not for any religious reason, but rather to avoid the ridicule of their friends and, especially, the scorn shown by Mossi women for any uncircumcised man.

304 We shall attempt to describe below the circumcision ceremony among the Mossi.

After the harvest, toward the end of November, the young men state their wish to be circimcised. Since the cost of supporting

304 a boy [264] during the circumcision process is considerable for his family, the latter will not agree to it unless they have had a good harvest.

Besides, since the affair must be quite grandiose in character, thirty to fifty boys from the ages of twelve to fifteen must be ready before permission will be given for the operation. After the relatives have consulted the soothsayers (bagba), they seek out a Yarga (Dioula of Mandé origin) or a Silmimoaga (the Toucouleur [Tukolor] of Mossi country) and ask him to perform the operation.

This surgeon for the occasion is called gounni.

Kéogo. A site is selected where there are no habitations, preferably a sandy area. A circle is laid out and walled with Mossi secco (sogsak' pinri). The size of the enclosure, the keogo, is governed by the number of boys who are going to live in it.

The boys are brought to the gate of the kéogo, which is strictly guarded by zoumsi (men who have already been circumcised). Each boy assumes a serious and defiant manner to give himself courage. Inside the circle there is a milling crowd, and there is such a noise of drums and songs that the following ritual sentence is barely audible: "Moaga wanian konlebin kouli moaga (You came in a Moaga -- here meaning an uncircumcised man -- you will not be a Moaga when you go out)."

The operation. Before the boys are brought in, a hole has been [265] dug for each one. The child is blindfolded and made to sit on a stone in front of the hole. The prepuce, stretched out as far as possible and tied with a string, is placed on a block of wood and cut off with a single slash of a razor (barga). The penis is held up with a split reed to permit the blood to flow into the hole. I believe that there is a special hole into which all the severed prepuces are thrown. A string tied around the boy's hips replaces the reed after the operation to keep the penis away from the body and thus avoid painful rubbing.

304 551 Bankoensé yuiya (names given to circumcised boys). The names vary according to the rank of each boy. The first to be operated upon is called Falinga; the second, Ouanda; the third,

304 Wanzouri; and so on through Nodo, Koulwandé, Wemba, etc.
551 There is even the favorite who is called Ponsom because he is given special privileges.

Zouinsi yuiya (names of the guards of the kéogo and of those
304 who watch over the bankoensé). Seven days after the ceremony some of the zouinsi are chosen to supervise the kéogo, to take care of its organization and to arrange the games. A real hierarchy is involved, beginning with the Soré Naba ("chief of the path"), who is, so to speak, the head of the establishment, and proceeding down in order of [266] precedence through Sobila Naba, Dag'noré, and Dag'Nobila (gatekeepers). The role of the latter is to allow any zounga [singular of zouinsi] to re-enter the enclosure while preventing any of the circumcised boys from leaving the enclosure without their permission. The Galli and Gallibila are in charge of the drums. The Imam and the Imambilla ("chiefs of pardon") protect the bankoensé from ill-treatment by the zouinsi. Then there is Banzambo, a comic character who is always performing all sorts of dances to relieve the monotony of life in the kéogo and give the boys a little fun. His gyrations always amuse the company. The duty of two characters called Wagdré, "chief thief," and Wagd'billa, "little thief," is to steal the meat acquired by the newly circumcised boys during forays or the saghbo brought by the boys' parents. They compensate for their mischief, however, by putting the younger children to bed and feeding them when the games go on too long. They do this in spite of the vigilance of the guards.

The Nané and Nanebilla, along with the Bankoé, are the masters of ceremonies.

Support of the circumcised boys. As we have already pointed out, the relatives of the boys are expected to provide them with morning and evening meals during their recovery. Actually, the boys get very meager rations since more than half of the food -- after the choicest bits have been set aside by the lembré (person in charge of tasting the food)-- is reserved [267] for the many zouinsi. Since most of them are bachelors, they welcome a chance to eat their fill.

304 Care given the sick boys. A specially arranged corner of the
752 kéogo serves as an infirmary. Treatment consists of washing the

304 wound with warm water which often is not scrupulously clean
752 since the gourd in which it is kept is not always washed. The
wound is dusted with a charred substance (made by burning the
[278] bark or leaves of the baguem-baga plant) mixed with karite butter. It is bandaged with a leaf from the kantonga bush, tied on with a bit of thread. Once the wound has begun to heal, it is wrapped in cotton strips. The water used to wash the wound is thrown into a hole that is covered with a stone.

304 Special language of the kéogo. In order to prevent the Moaga
198 (here meaning an uncircumcised person) from understanding what is said within the kéogo or between the boys and the guards, a special language has been developed. Some of its words are as follows:

Water (kom in ordinary Mossi language), hargo;
Millet cake (saghbo in Mossi), lâbo;
Sauce (zindo in Mossi), kirou;
Fire (bougoum in Mossi), nionom;
Beer (dam in Mossi), sonnom;
A robe or blanket (fougou in Mossi), pilli;
Mat (pinri in Mossi), wanghé. [268]

304 Distinctive attire of the circumcised boys (bankoanga). His
292 costume, wallimba or zougba, consists of a fringed loincloth with pockets. He carries a rough stick (zâbré) with which he hunts rabbits and other small game.

He accompanies his evening dance with an instrument called
304 wassimba, a curved stick on the end of which are strung four or
293 five pieces of gourd, roughly circular in shape, with holes bored through them.

304 Tom-toms. The bankoensé (newly circumcised boys) dance
534 to the beat of two drums like those used in the warba and waongo
535 (see the chapter on native dances). The drums are called gangango when they accompany other dances, but here they are called gallyans.

304 Prohibitions in the kéogo. A Moaga (1) is strictly forbidden

1. "Moaga" is used here in a pejorative sense and means an uncircumcised man.

304 to look into the enclosure. If he should commit such an indiscretion which is considered a gross blunder, he at once suffers the consequences. He is immediately dragged into the circle undressed, and circumcised without any consultation with his relatives.

It is strictly forbidden to enter the kéogo, with néoda (shoes), a pougla [269] (red fez), and kandé (spears). If a canton chief should take it into his head to visit the circumcised boys -- an unlikely situation -- he would have to leave all his insignia of rank outside.

304 834 Since it has been observed that young men who have had sexual intercourse before their circumcision had difficulty in being healed after the operation, they are advised to avoid sexual intercourse for the first few months after the scars form.

304 262 They do not eat wagha sauce (a sauce made of the immature fruit of the wagka, a tree of the kapok family).

304 526 Required exercises for the bankoensé. The bankoensé are required to perform painful and tiring exercises, which considerably retards their recovery. We shall describe the principal ones below.

Very early in the morning when it is very cool -- we have pointed out that the ceremony takes place at the beginning of the cool season -- the boys are awakened and forced to lie prone on the cold sand without any covering. This is the bourga. Naturally enough, the limbs become a bit stiff, so they are roundly whipped with berrella (branches of certain trees), ostensibly to give them warmth and strength. Then, to the beat of the tom-toms, they must do the exercise called guella. This difficult feat involves jumping like a frog from a crouching position [270] and at intervals making a circular movement with the legs. They may also be required to do the even more difficult nagda, an exercise which involves walking on the hands with the legs in the air. Another exercise requires the boys, starting from an erect position, to bend backwards until the hands touch the ground. This is called kaougsèga, "back breaker." The unfortunates whose hands fail to reach the ground get a bump on the head. There are also movements of the head called zouanka, like those made by Kassonké girls and the Wiskamba of Mossi country.

304 Release. The stay in the kéogo lasts from 90 to 100 days. Around the eightieth day, when all the boys have recovered, their heads are shaved and they are told that they will be released a week later. Chickens (koug'nossé, "chickens of the stone") are killed, and each boy is given half a chicken.

Actually, the ceremony of liberation will not take place until fourteen days after this ceremony. All of the boys' belongings (loincloth, bandages, sticks, etc.) are burned by the zouinsi in a great fire near the kéogo. The bankoensé, completely naked, must jump over the fire and run straight to the house of the Bankoé without looking back. A new enclosure has been built there, and the boys are given skirts, robes, trousers, and caps of various colors which their relatives bought or [271] had made for them. Everyone on this occasion wants his son to be distinguished by the richness of his costume. The procession of the circumcised boys is a motley and picturesque sight. One or two days after this, the boys must go back toward the kéogo at nightfall for the last time. They stop before reaching it, however, and return to the house of the Bankoé with their backs slightly bent; this is called lé ssé-bourgou.

The boys enjoy a veritable festival for a week. They are in high spirits from the admiration they receive, from being able to perform dances other than those peculiar to the circumcision ceremony, from drinking beer, and especially from eating their fill, since their parents have sacrificed chickens and sheep for the occasion.

Finally, very early one morning, some zouinsi collect the boys' handsomely decorated sticks (wangha or dibissi) and go off to bury them in holes dug outside the village. This is the end of the cremony, and now the boys may return to their homes.

304 572 All of the boys have undergone the same rough treatment and have led the same life for about 100 days. During this time of trial, friendships and lasting attachments have been formed. They will henceforth call each other by their "circumcision names" and will help each other since they are now friends.

304 In order to forestall possible reprisals -- since in the kéogo no distinction is made between the son of a naba and a peasant's son -- custom forbids the [272] new initiates to hold a grudge against the zouinsi for the ill-treatment to which they were subjected.

304 184 The Nioniossé and the Soukoaba do not practice circumcision, and that is why they are called Mossé. In villages inhabited solely by Nioniossé, a kéogo may not be set up. At present some boys of Nionioga origin ignore the prohibition and go to their mother's village (Yastenga) to have the purifying operation (1).

[775] 1. Apparently the Moslems believe that those who are circumcised will not go to hell.

304 832 626 Among the Mossi many Christians voluntarily have themselves circumcised; women -- even Christians -- feel a certain repugnance for the touch of the "Moaga."

Finally, excision is also esteemed among the Mossi, except among the Nioniossé who do not practice it. Girls who are not excised are scorned by their friends and will have no lovers.

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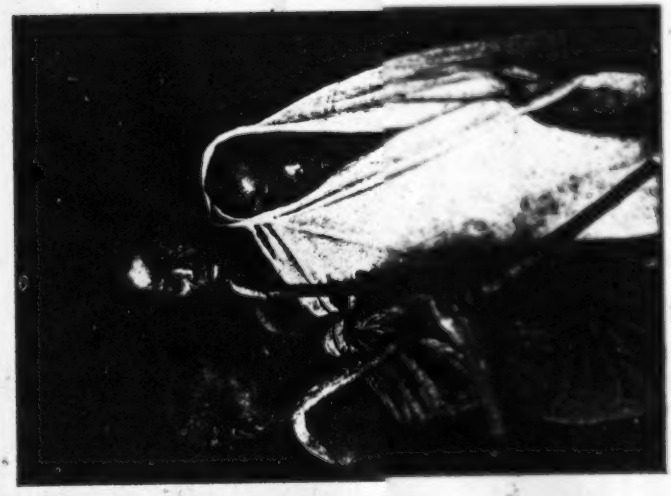
Tattooed Mossi Youth.



Tattooed Mossi Women.

852 Three days after the birth of a male child, or four days in the case
553 of a daughter, the father and mother invite the relatives to come and rejoice over the new addition to the family. On that day the baby's forehead is shaved in a circle, and he is given a name. The husband's sisters or his other wives choose a name for the first child, and the father himself chooses the names of the others.

551 The name is derived from an event which preceded, attended, or followed the birth. If the mother ever happened to kill a chicken, even by mistake, even in her childhood, her first child is called by the generic name for chickens (noara), or else he will die. If the father or mother have seen two snakes in the same spot, the child will bear the name Ganda. If several previous children died, the newborn takes the name Yéwaya, "he has come." If several reasons for specific names concur, for instance, if he should be named Noara, Ganda, Yéwaya, he is called Ywawa, "one with many names." A child often bears the name of an older sibling with the addition of the adjective Bila, "little, younger." Thus, if the older child is called Tibo, the younger one is called Tibila (Tibo Bila, "the little Tibo fetish"). In other words, names are not given haphazardly. Some names are rather pretty: Zuényendé, "he is shy"; Nongabamba, "she loves them (her parents)"; Danimmamyé, "forget me not." Sometimes the name merely indicates the child's sex: Daore, "male"; Poko, "female"; or else the festive occasion or day of the week when the child was born.

304 Just as names are not given haphazardly, tattoings do not vary without reason. The native tattooing consists basically of three parallel lines on each side of the face, running vertically across the cheek from the temples to the chin, with a fourth line leading from the nose perpendicularly to the other three and crossing the cheek horizontal hatching between them, like a ladder; this is the mark of free men and of chiefs' sons. The three vertical lines may also be interrupted halfway down the cheek by three horizontal stripes, and then continue down to the chin; this is the mark of a child who was born
[84] among the Peul because his older siblings had died and the sorcerer had decreed that his mother should give birth among the Peul. This
[197] tattooing is characteristic of a distinct Mossi tribe, which lives among them but speaks a different language—the Marensé, better known as Marka. If a child has a Yarga /Yarse/ mother or grandmother, he will bear one horizontal stripe on the right cheek in addition to the three vertical lines /on each cheek/; this is the Yarsé tattooing.

304 Children are tattooed at any age, sometimes when already grown. Many Yarsé do not tattoo their children, and the Mossi themselves do not seem especially to hold to this barbarous custom which sometimes disfigures an individual. The tattooing is done with a razor, and powdered charcoal is put into the wounds. In order to soften the skin and to alleviate the pain, the whole face is covered with oil until the wounds are healed, leaving more or less accentuated scars depending on the success of the operation. Some natives are completely disfigured by thick excrescences of flesh as the result of a faulty operation.

Sorcerers sometimes have the strange idea of prescribing tattoo marks on the belly or lower back of children whose older siblings have [789] died. For instance, a woman had lost three of her children. She consulted a sorcerer when the fourth was born, and he declared with the greatest seriousness that the child would die if his buttocks were not marked with stripes and his belly with tattooings radiating from the navel. The child was marked accordingly, and he lived! Young girls nearly always tattoo their belly with lines extending radially from the navel; many adorn their chest above the bosom with small stripes running perpendicular to the breasts and parallel between them. The tattooing patterns we have described here are, of course, only the most widespread types, because there is a great variety of markings.

304 Just as there is no set age for tattooing, there is none for circum-
852 cision. Children of seven or eight are circumcised along with youths and even mature men. Circumcision does not seem to be a Mossi [184] custom, for it is not a general practice. In Ouagadougou province most children are circumcised, while in Koupéla province most of them are not. However, the custom is gaining yearly in Koupéla. The head of the family often has himself circumcised because he is ill, and his children follow suit. Thus circumcision is introduced into the family, for once the father has undergone the operation, his
304 children do likewise. Sometimes the mother is a Yarga, thus from a
563 Moslem family, and her children are circumcised, a new gain for the
852 practice. It also happens that children are drawn to it through sheer curiosity and the enticing assurances of the Peul and Yarsé, who are usually Moslems and thus circumcised, and who spread propaganda all around them. Excision, on the other hand, is universal.

/42/ When there is a group to be circumcised, their relatives set a date with the Peul who is to perform the operation. At dawn of that

304 day the one in charge of the circumcision, a wealthy Yarga or Mossi
563 who has the means to feed several of the people to be circumcised,
852 chooses a tree to serve as shelter for the operation. Rain need not be taken into account, for circumcision is always performed during the dry season from December to April, when agricultural work is at a standstill. The tree is surrounded with straw mats, forming the téoo
[778] or sacred enclosure which no one who is not circumcised may come near without running the risk of being insulted and often beaten; if he should dare to step inside it, he would be stricken by the greatest misfortunes. The Peul sets out a flat stone, sacrifices a chicken in order to make the spirit of the tree benevolent toward those to be circumcised, and operates on the boys one by one. Drums are played throughout the operation to drown the cries of the victims.

852 For three days afterwards the newly circumcised boys do nothing. They rest and tend their wounds. They remain isolated from the rest
[535] of the community for two or three months, sometimes even longer. Judging by the dances which close the festivities, dancing must be their primary concern during that period of time. They also thresh the millet of those who invite them to do so, but no uncircumcised person may join them, no uninitiated individual may come near them.
[198] They do not speak the Mossi language at this time, but a special tongue of which they learn enough to serve them in their everyday needs. Woe to those who forget and use their native tongue; they are
[551] beaten with switches made of a kind of willow. Even their names are changed, and no one may call them by their Mossi names.

The circumcised boys are divided in two groups, one "male" and one "female." One of the groups bears the name of the hyena (kwara in their language) and the other is called masalro, whose French equivalent we do not know. The hyena group must strain their wits to snatch food, even from the other circumcised boys, who are kept constantly on the alert. The other group makes improper gestures during the dance.

852 The circumcised boys are covered with gray dust to alter their
293 appearance completely. A tail is fastened to the back of their breech-
776 cloth, hanging to the ground. It is made of plaited cotton thread and
481 ends in a pompon. Its function is to drive off the kikirsi spirits, who apparently do not like circumcised persons. The boys walk bent over and leaning on sticks like old men. This is done to test their obedience and to see if they listen carefully to what they are told.

775 ground; he also pours what is left at the bottom of the gourd, so the
769 souls will rejoice with him. It is considered a great honor when a
[554] naba tells an elder to grasp one side of the gourd and to pour along with him.

775 One must not laugh about the souls of the deceased and their visits
761 to earth. If you doubt their return, listen to what an old naba once told me. "One day, I had gone to visit a naba, my friend and neighbor. We had arranged to meet at his house with another neighboring chief. He gave us a very nice welcome, and the day was most pleasant. We were resting at night in the shelter of his soukala when we were suddenly awakened by the sound of harness bells and horses galloping. On the following day we left our host. No sooner had we left than he took ill. A week later he died. The souls had come to fetch him. Oh! Father, do not laugh about the souls of the deceased!" And the good old man trembled with emotion. This is what our Mossi believe. They firmly believe in all these ghost stories.

775 Are the souls reincarnated? Small children who die before the age of reason are said to return in the person of the first child borne by their mother. This is why, especially if the mother has lost several
● [304] children in a row, the baby is marked at birth with distinctive signs, particularly tattooings on the belly and lower back; sometimes, if he
[766] dies, a piece of his ear is cut off, or a toe or finger joint broken. It is said that the child born next will bear the same marks, but no living example of this could be cited. Often, the mother leaves the hut where her baby died. An old woman spreads ashes before the door in the evening, and if small footprints are found in the morning, it is a sign that the child came back and wishes to return to his mother's bosom.

Rebirth is not granted to anyone other than young children, not even to young unmarried people. They remain in the place of the souls for years on end, the number of which cannot be ascertained, and no distinction is made between the rich and the poor, the powerful and their subjects.

775 The soul of suicides, cursed in death, is not entitled as a rule to
762 funeral ceremonies. It wanders through the world without harming anyone, but unable to find rest.

577 Morality is reduced to its simplest expression. Whatever harms
673 other people is bad. Think your own intimate thoughts and desire anything you like; as long as you do no harm to your fellow man, no fault has been committed. Fornication and adultery are faults only

174 viewpoint of ethnographic research, text similarities do not mean
197 very much, and idioms that are not fixed by writing may, within a few centuries, become deformed to the extent of being unrecognizable. While the value of grammatical comparisons is much more important, we have unfortunately had neither the time nor the means to make use of this method. We will, therefore, merely indicate this point of view which, in our opinion, could lead to fruitful observations. On
174 the other hand, missionaries have claimed that the Mossi traditionally would have preserved the symbolic notion of the Christian cross, a fact we have been unable to verify and which, without being impossible a priori, seems unlikely."

After this parenthesis about the distant origins of the Mossi, Captain Lambert continues:

"It is indeed highly probable, and here again, lacking written documents, we have only oral traditions to base our opinions on, that the Mossi people, split up by the impact of a Moslem invasion from the east, must have, through successive waves and losing ground in the opposite direction, spread further toward the west, so that the Mossi-bé (1), who still form several agglomerations in the western

1. Mossi-bé is simply the plural of the word Mossi in Peuhle /Peul/ language.

part of Sokoto and even in the Dounzou circle and who also show striking analogies with the Mossi proper, can also be used as a reference. (Captain Lambert adds in a note: "Among the Mossi-bé we
304 find the circumflex accent which would complete the ethnic tatooing
171 of the Mossi as it is today. This mark rightly belongs to the natives
69 of the left bank of the Niger river up to the angle formed by the Dollol-Maouri.") These agglomerations indicate, in a very approximate fashion, the location of the Mossi empire at the historical period that evidently marks its apogee of power; toward 1350, as we saw /4/ in the Tarikh, Timbuktu was conquered by the sultan of Mossi."

174 The incident to which Captain Lambert refers here is the con-
114 quest of Timbuktu by the Mossi (in 1333 exactly, according to the most advanced calculations) (1), which is mentioned by Es-Sadi in

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The journey takes six months from the time he leaves Ouagadougou to the time he returns. On his way to the Gold Coast he needs no bearers. He merely takes a Peuhl to herd the cattle, and provides him with food and 300 cowries a day, plus 1 franc on arrival per head of cattle herded.

Our trader stays with another Haoussa from Ouagadougou, another trader of course, who is wealthier than he. He does not pay rent, but offers him gifts from time to time in return for his hospitality.

His family lives at Iko in Haoussa territory, and consists of three wives and three children. He goes and sees them every two years.

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We can see that the Haoussa do their trading in grander and more forceful fashion than the Yarsé. They do not hesitate to expatriate themselves in order to carry out their trade, and in this fashion they have actually colonized southern Nigeria, Dahomey, Togoland, the Gold Coast, Mossi country, etc. Once settled there, they carry their trading operations farther than local merchants, and they hardly do anything else. While the Yarsé is an example of cultivator-trader, the Haoussa of Mossi territory is in most cases an example of pure trader who specializes completely in trading. This is why he towers above the whole trading structure of the country. Bent on gain, a speculator in cowries and French currency, more intelligent than the Mossi and Yarsé, he amasses large fortunes.

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In order to be quite thorough on the subject of present and past trading in Mossi territory, it should be added that formerly the slave trade was carried out alongside that in livestock, cotton fabric, kola nut, and salt. The slaves came chiefly from Gourounsi, /541/, Boussansé, and Kipirsi lands. The Djermabé /Zerma?/, especially, sold slaves to the Mossi in very large numbers when they pillaged Gourounsi territory. This trade, like the others, was in the hands of the Yarsé and Haoussa.

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Let us also add a word about the now-abolished eunuch trade. Formerly, the Mossi furnished some to the Haoussa, who forwarded them to Turkey via Egypt. The operated men were Gourounsi sold to the Mossi by the Zaberma and by their chief Baba-Tô. Some Mossi villages specialized in this kind of work. The village of Koubry,

839 especially, subsisted upon it. The victims, children from twelve
439 to fifteen years old, were provided by the Moro Naba, who kept
304 them afterward or sold them to the Haoussa.

In 1900 our ambassador to Turkey learned that a shipment of eunuchs which had reached Constantinople had originated in Mossi territory, which we had occupied since 1896. He warned the Minister of Foreign Affairs, who notified his colleague the Minister of the Colonies. Strict orders were issued to put an end to this Mossi industry, which has since ceased to exist.

439 Let us finally add the grain trade, which is unusual in Mossi territory. In the years 1906, 1907, and 1908 which saw poor harvests, however, the Mossi were forced to acquire grain in Yatenga (Ouahigouya circle) and in Gourounsi territory by selling livestock.

We have now concluded our discussion of Mossi occupations. Let us proceed to a study of the family and the superposed social organisms.

Chapter II

The Mossi: The Family, Public Powers, and Religion

593 We must state first that the Mossi family is a partly decommunalized family. This may come as a surprise in view of the foregoing section on work (cultivation predominates, stockbreeding is poor, industries flourish, trade is nonexistent), which had led us to expect something altogether different. Nevertheless, this is a fact.

The family is even highly decommunalized, although not everywhere to the same degree. In this respect, five different family types are to be found.

596 The first two are quite rare. They would seem to be witnesses
326 to an ancient state of affairs which has now vanished. Thus, one finds the common patriarchal type among those blacksmiths who are gathered into /special/ quarters or even villages and whom we mentioned in the section on industries. This type is found only among them and not among isolated blacksmiths, where only the common Mossi family type occurs.

793 the sacrifice and killed the donkey. He also slit the throat of a
643 horse, a beef, and a sheep. (This eunuch in charge of guarding the
839 tomb was called by the name of Naba Koutou, and in a way per-
778 petuated the deceased Moro Naba. He was granted special privi-
leges. If a man who was condemned to death ran away and reached
the tomb, he was safe but became the eunuch's slave. Similarly,
[567] a captive who ran away from his master gained his freedom from the
latter if he reached the grave, but became the slave of Naba Koutou.
Finally, at that time, it was forbidden to ride by the hut on a donkey.
Naba Koutou would seize the donkey, or at least demand a ransom
in cowries before returning it. This applied to any animals who ran
astray near the tomb. The tomb still exists nowadays, along with
the Naba Koutou who watches over it, but the latter no longer enjoys
the same privileges.)

793 We saw earlier that the Moro Naba had a sort of minister of the
645 cult in the person of the Gandé Naba, high priest and sacrificer.
There was also the Pouy Naba, or chief of the fetisheers, whose
function was probably to mediate between the Mossi bara and
timisoba as a whole and the central authorities.

782 Let us close this study of Mossi religion, which incidentally is
quite incomplete and a mere outline, with a few words on the human
sacrifices that were performed /597/ in the territory prior to our
occupation, and a few words on circumcision as well.

782 "Human sacrifices," says Marc., p. 156, "definitely took place
766 among the Mossi up to the time when we occupied the territory.
Whenever a Moro Naba died at Ouagadougou, one of his wives and
one of his horses were sent to Gambaga in order to be sacrificed on
the tomb of Ouidiraogo (?) who is regarded as the mother of the first
Moro Naba. Soon after the occupation of Ouagadougou by the French,
782 the dethroned Moro Naba, Boukary Koutou, ordered the sacrifice of a
754 black rooster, a black goat, a black donkey, a black beef, and a
black slave on one of the mountains overlooking the White Volta.
This, it seems, was bound to cause the immediate death of the new
Moro Naba enthroned by Voulet."

304 As for circumcision, the Mossi circumcise boys and excise girls.
Boys are circumcised when they are from eight to twelve years
old, and thirty or forty of them are circumcised at one time. The

304 occasion calls for festivities that last for one month, and it is repeated every seven or eight years in each village.

As for girls, they undergo the barbarous operation of excision when they are from eight to twelve years old. The girls' excision is not performed at the same time as the boys' circumcision, but in another year. The attendant festivities also last for one month.

The girls are operated on by a woman, the boys by a man.

It is not the labia of the girls that are severed, but the clitoris itself. Why do this? My informants did not know. Is it to make the weaker sex less susceptible to sensual pleasures? No. It would rather be, my informants tell me, to facilitate the physical union of men and women. This would also be the aim of the boys' circumcision. But my informants were not sure.

881 304 171 We might note that among the Mossi, as in certain other parts of West Africa, for example in Guinea (but not among the Gourounsi, where boys are not circumcised /598/ and girls are often excised at birth), circumcision and excision are combined with an initiation, that is to say, are closely connected with the education and instruction of young men and girls. One takes advantage of the circumcision or excision to complete, so to speak, the instruction and education of youth.

881 304 Marc has the following to say about the subject (op. cit., p. 150). "The circumcision of boys takes place around the age of twelve and occasions important festivities. There seems to be a sort of initiation ceremony, which is performed in rather mysterious circumstances. Unfortunately, it is difficult to find out exactly what does take place."

000 We close our survey of Mossi religion by referring the reader to Appendix 33 /not translated/ for a few complementary details on the Moslem question in the territory. We have also concluded our description of Mossi society as a whole. In order to gain a deeper understanding of its origins as far as the conquering population is concerned, we shall now have a glance at the Foutanké social type in the following chapter /not translated/.

152 their family, they love it very much, but they love their husband just as much if they love him at all. If they do not love their husband, naturally they love their family infinitely more.

304 833 When we study the children's life, we shall see that Mossi girls are excised at the age of nine or ten. This barbarous operation naturally removes an important part of a woman's sensual sensitiveness. The Negress is thus a generatrix rather than a lover. One cannot say of her as of the Latin poet's mistress: crispum ... docta movere latus /gracefully moving her slender body/. She is passive in love and content to give herself without resistance to the man's passion.

831 577 The morality of Mossi women is certainly laxer than that of European women. (Naturally, I compare the Mossi woman to the respectable woman of our occidental societies.) We saw earlier that the breach of virginity prior to marriage was not unusual and was tolerated with considerable leniency by custom. Adultery is also frequent and is punished in crude and rustic fashion. The woman is beaten and then forgiven. In short, morals are certainly less rigid than in our own countries. On the other hand, prostitution does not [548] exist, and this is a great moral advantage. Briefly, the division of labor in the sexual domain, as in other domains, is far less developed among the Mossi of Yatenga than among the highly evolved civilizations of our European and occidental countries. The same applies to the other Sudanese populations.

000 Now we turn to Children and Education. We shall discuss these matters in the following order. /250/

1. Filiation.
2. Theory of birth.
3. How children are welcomed.
4. Abortion.
5. Childbirth.
6. Baptism.
7. Freaks. Twins.
8. Nursing.
9. Charms for children and tattooings.
10. Children's games.
11. Familial education.
12. Education of children among themselves. Societies.
13. Young people's tasks.
14. Rights and duties of parents toward their children.
15. Duties of children toward their parents.

845 The birth of twins is a good omen when they are of different sex.
787 If they are of the same sex, however, it is a sign of approaching death for the father if they are girls, or for the mother if they are of the male sex. To conjure away this fate, a chicken is sacrificed.

853 Nursing. —When a woman is unable to nurse her child, another woman of the family is called in as a wet nurse, or, more simply, a goat is made to suckle the child. Both cases, however, are quite unusual.

854 Charms for children and tattooing. To protect the child from ill-
751 ness or accidents, a necklace with a charm containing the ashes of various shrubs is placed around its neck about two months after birth.

●304 The child is tattooed two and a half or three years after birth. Old women are in charge of this operation. They trace out the lines for the scars on the child's face with a sharp little knife which is bent at the tip. Then they put a mixture of karite butter and powdered charcoal on the wounds to stop the flow of blood.

Tattooing is the same for all the Mossi of Yatenga without distinction of rank. It consists of three vertical scars on each cheek, an oblique one on either side of the face from the corner between the eye and nose to the base of the cheek, and two or three little ones in the middle of the forehead. /255/

854 The very young child. —As in all of the /French/ Sudan, the mother carries the child on her back, wrapped in a cloth that is knotted in front over or under the breasts. She goes thus everywhere, works, pounds millet, etc., with the child on her back.

853 When she wants to suckle it, she brings it to her side, astraddle one hip, and supports it with one arm. She does not put it on the ground unless she is in her hut or teaching it how to walk.

When the child is two or three, it stops nursing and is put on the ground.

857 Until they are four or five, the children run about the compound and around it. At that age, they begin to go out into the bush all by themselves and to play with the other little boys.

Children's games. —We shall deal with this subject under "Mode of Subsistence (hygiene, games, play)."

857 Familial education. —The boys, as soon as they reach the age of
868 five or six, go with their big brother and tend the goats in the bush. They also go and fetch firewood, straw, etc. When they are nine or ten, they begin to handle the daba /a field implement/. At eleven or twelve they are already doing men's work.

593 The Moro Naba, after he has been notified by the family council,
684 pronounces the forfeiture of paternal authority. In case of incest, the guilty party was driven out of the territory.

593 Duties of children toward their parents. —The children owe obedience to their father and mother. They also owe them respect.

Their labor obligations are distributed among the fields of the work group, the father's private fields, the mother's small private plots, and their own little plots. Naturally they work most on the large fields belonging to the work group.

304 Circumcision. —Circumcision is performed at the age of 13 or 14.
881 It takes place in the month of December, hence during the dry, cool season. At this time the children are not needed to help in the fields, as they are in the winter season. This is also the case in the hot, dry season, but at that time the wounds would heal less quickly. This leaves the dry, cold season, which is excellently suited to the treatment of the circumcised, a time when the children have nothing whatever to do and the grown-ups very little.

304 Circumcision is performed on a certain number of children at the
621 same time. When a small village is involved, all the children in the
593 village are circumcised at once. When a large village is involved,
881 the children in each quarter are circumcised together. The children themselves ask their big brother if they may be circumcised when they feel that they have reached a suitable age for this operation. The big brother decides and says yes or no.

304 The children also set the exact date for the circumcision and go to
326 the man who has charge of the operation to make the arrangements.
881 In Yatenga, as a rule, he is a blacksmith (at Ouahigouya, for example, from the quarter of the Baloum-Naba). Sometimes, however, non-blacksmiths, either Foulsé or Mossi, perform the operation. When a performer of operations dies, he is replaced by someone who knows how to circumcise, either a brother or a son of the deceased or someone from another family.

304 Circumcision is not performed in the evening or at night, as happens
881 among other Blacks of West Africa, but at six o'clock in the morning. A particularly kind man among the people of the quarter or of the village has been chosen by the children who are to be circumcised. He wakes them up on that morning and takes them to the man who is to perform the operation. Big brothers accompany their younger brothers, but the father and mother do not witness the operation and are not even

304 881 notified, nor are the family heads. The women, girls, and other boys (those who are not to be circumcised) cannot witness the operation, and this is actually forbidden to them. Circumcision is performed in the bush, 500 meters from the village, in the open air by the side of a tree. There is no location determined by custom, however, and a spot is chosen each year at will.

The man who is performing the operation ties the tip of the patient's prepuce with a string /259/, and the boy squats down. A small block of wood is placed under the penis, and the tip of the penis rests upon it. The man places a small iron cleaver on the spot marked by the string, and deals it a sharp, neat blow with a stone, so the blade will make a clean cut. Naturally, a copious hemorrhage ensues. It is [752] first allowed to take its course for a while, and then the man stanches it by putting dust upon the wound. Each child is circumcised in turn. When the operations are over, the man who was chosen, the nané, leads the circumcised boys to another spot, 500 meters from the village, under a tree. He has the heads of the children's families notified (and they notify in turn the children's parents) that the boys have just been circumcised and beg forgiveness for having done this without telling them. Family heads, fathers, and mothers naturally forgive in accordance with custom. Meanwhile, the boys are taking care of themselves. By tying a string around the body, they lift the penis so its tip will not rub against the thighs. The string holds another cord which lifts the penis in a horizontal position. To maintain it in this position, they also place under the penis a little piece of forked wood, the tip of which rests on the testicles. They do not dress the wounds as yet. This will not be done until three days have passed.

304 342 881 Meanwhile, the men of the circumcised boys' compounds build two sheds in Mossi style (low, on forks, with a thick straw roof), one outside the village where the young men are, the other inside the village in front of the compound of the nané. Food for the circumcised boys is provided by their families. Each mother makes sarabou for her son, but the mothers do not bring it themselves, for, being women, they are not permitted to see the newly-circumcised boys. They send the sarabou through some boy who has already been circumcised. In the evening when it is quite dark, around seven o'clock, the nané brings the children to sleep under the shed erected in the village. Before daybreak in the morning they will, like shadows, leave again for the bush.

304 824 752 881 At the end of three days, the nané sends a few circumcised boys of preceding years, rasamba, to look in the bush for bark of the néré, karite, n'pékou, and the n'kouna trees. He has them boiled in a large canari and then allows the water to cool until it is lukewarm. Then he calls the bankonsé (this is the name of the newly circumcised boys in Mossi, bankonka in the singular, bankonsé in the plural) and orders them to wash their penes in this water. At the same time he has the leaves of the kantoboga boiled. This is an aloe-type plant of which we have already spoken /not translated/. When this washing is done, the bankonsé smear their penes with cow butter (karite butter is avoided because it is believed to soften the penis and to make it less virile), and then, after cutting kantoboga leaves into pieces, they wrap them around the member, forming a sort of sheath. These leaves are wrapped with cotton thread so they will stay in place. /260/

From then on, the same procedure is repeated every morning and every evening. The bankonsé undo the bandage, wash with néré or karite water, apply fresh butter and new kantoboga leaves. This is done until the wounds are healed.

Néré water, once prepared, keeps for seven days. The supply of kantoboga leaves is renewed only when there are no more on hand.

304 883 881 The bankonsé do not stir for the first three days. From the third to the tenth day, they begin to take a little exercise. For example, they fetch whatever water they need. At the end of ten days, they walk about in the bush, fetch firewood which they stack in piles, and do the same with straw. In the open country they chase hares, rats, and snakes with sticks, in short, all the small game which is to be found there. When there is water in the vicinity, they fish for frogs and fish. They also pick berries from bushes, etc.

[292] Their clothing consists of a kind of skirt which goes down to their ankles and which is made of old garments torn to shreds, of frayed cotton bands.

In the evening from time to time the bankonsé have tom-tom sessions near the shed where they sleep in the village. The griot /drummers, minstrels/ come and play on their instruments. Since this is done at night, men, women, and children may attend.

304 425 881 The bankonsé are entitled to ransack the bush and to take everything they find: chickens, goats, sheep, cotton, etc. The owners have no right to object, but this applies only to small livestock. The bankonsé have no right to larger animals and horses.

881 It seems that among the Mossi and Foulsé, the nané does not give
●304 moral lessons to the bankonsé, contrary to the procedure among the Bambara where the custom has been preserved.

At the end of a month, the bankonsé are healed. The families are notified, and each household prepares a new pair of breeches and a boubou /robe/ for the young circumcised boys.

On the evening preceding the day when they make their reappearance in the village, around seven o'clock, the skirts of the circumcised boys are heaped into a pile and burned. The following morning the nané leads the bankonsé to the well to wash from head to toe before donning their new clothes. Before leaving camp, the firewood gathered by the boys is distributed among their mothers and the straw among their family heads. The nané also keeps a certain amount for himself. This is his allowance, aside from his being provided with food throughout the month, along with the circumcised boys, by the latter's
[833] relatives. (On the other hand, he had to remain separated from his wife, for there is a superstition that should he approach her, the bankonsé would fail to heal.) When the distribution of straw and firewood has been completed, our circumcised boys make their triumphal entry into the village at seven o'clock in the morning in their /261/ beautiful new garments. To the sound of the tom-tom, they visit all the compounds, calling on everyone. Gifts are offered to them
[431] (kola nuts, cowries, peanuts, cotton, dolo, etc.). When the visits are completed, the celebration is over, and the bankonsé return home.
[551] They may henceforth be called by name again; this could not be done during their retreat.

Excision. —Girls are excised when they are eight, nine, or ten, depending on how mature they are. As with the boys, this is done during the month of December, but instead of being carried out on a village or quarter basis, it is done on a compound basis. The operation itself is performed by an old woman who knows how to do it. It is not she, however, who watches over the girls afterwards, but an old woman of the compound who has them under her supervision for twenty-five or thirty days. During that time, the girls are kept apart, sleeping in their guardian's hut and taking care of themselves. As soon as they can walk, they go and gather wood in the bush for her, they fetch water, spin cotton, etc. At nightfall, they sing in chorus, clapping their hands in rhythm.

When they are healed, they deck themselves with all the bracelets and jewelry they can find in the compound. Thus dressed up and

881 adorned, they go in a group to greet the mother of each one in turn,
304 but they do not go out into the village like the boys.

In short, among the Mossi and Foulsé of Yatenga, circumcision and excision are not characterized by the intervention of any powerful religious society like the komo among the Bambara and among the Mandé in general. Nor do we find here those picturesque details which are so strikingly present among the Malinké of Upper Guinea and even more so among the tribes of Lower Guinea (Soussou /Susu/, Landouman /Landuma/, etc.) (3). Nevertheless, circumcision is

3. On this topic, see André Arcin, La Guinée française /French Guinea/, pp. 438-446, and Noirot, A travers le Foutah-Djallon et le Bambouk /Across the Fouta Djallon and Bambouk/, concerning the Landouman.

important in the lives of the Mossi and Foulsé of Yatenga, because it transforms the child into a young man.

591 After circumcision. —Following circumcision or excision, only marriage remains. When a girl married, as we have seen above, she leaves her compound and goes to her husband's residence. The young man, however, remains in his own compound. He is given a cabin, a hut, for himself and his bride if there is one available and empty, or a new one is built for him. When he has a child, he builds a hut near his own for the young mother and son, unless he is given another one which is available.

884 Emancipation and coming of age. —One can scarcely speak of emancipation and coming of age among the Mossi. A man comes of age when he marries, but he always remains a minor to some extent vis-à-vis his work group, his compound, and his family. Emancipation /262/ and coming of age are French concepts which have no equivalent among the Mossi in particular and the Sudanese in general. One might acknowledge, however, as does Vadier in his monograph on Yatenga, a sort of coming of age around the age of 17 or 18 for purposes of buying and selling.

429 Guardianship. —When a Mossi dies, his wives and children revert to his oldest brother. If there are many wives and children, they are apportioned among the brothers of the deceased. The head of the family presides over the distribution.

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28

The torture was seen as a punishment, and not as a form of ordeal to 695
ascertain guilt or innocence. It was designed to cause the culprit as much 696
suffering as possible before he died, and its harshness reflects the Mossi fear of witches and witchcraft. In one form of punishment called *koudgilga*, the culprit was sent to the smith, who tortured him by placing hot iron balls in both his hands. He was then beaten to death. Another type of punishment called *swengalenga* was more painful. A pottery jar from which the bottom had been removed was heated in a fire. Then it was placed over the head of the convicted witch and allowed to burn its way down onto his shoulders. The culprit was subsequently killed. Sometimes a convicted witch was [304]
not killed; instead, a man was sent to Ouagadougou to be castrated and [567]
sold as a eunuch, and a woman was sold outside the country as a slave.

Gross disrespect toward the chief and crimes of lese majesty were un- 687
common among the Mossi. These crimes were usually committed by persons who came into close contact with the chief—nobles and court retainers—rather than by commoners, serfs, or slaves. The most common form of [684]
lese majesty was adultery with one of the district chief's wives. The penalty [634]
for this was death for both violators. Anyone who dared insult the district chief at court was seized and executed. The same fate awaited those who talked about him maliciously in public or threatened to stir a rebellion against him. If the culprits were commoners, they were executed; if they were nobles, they were strangled in secret or were forced to commit suicide.

The district chief was caught in a dilemma whenever nobles committed 634
major crimes or unlawful acts. They could not be imprisoned, and only the 565
Mogho Naba had the legal prerogative to execute them. When a noble 681
committed a major crime such as treason or rebellion, he was sent to the capital to be executed by slaves, who strangled him with a piece of cotton cloth. However, no district chief could allow the nobles to commit crimes 634
with impunity, secure in the knowledge that they could only be punished
at Ouagadougou. If a nobleman subverted the chief's rule by repeated acts 696
of cruelty and brigandage, he was executed, although illegally. The execu- 565
tioners were the Baglere Naba and the Dapore Naba. These two men [693]
secretly visited the condemned noble, taking with them a bundle as a present from the chief. This bundle contained a new white robe in which were secreted a chief's bonnet and a poisoned arrow. As soon as the noble saw the gift, he knew that he was being ordered to kill himself. If he attempted to raise an alarm or run away, he was instantly strangled and his body was discarded in the bush. If he accepted the sentence, he was allowed to have food prepared, to eat, and then to kill himself. The chief ordered an elaborate funeral for his kinsman as though he had died an ordinary death. Thus, he was able to observe all the proprieties while at the same

443 651 Ready-made clothing, beads. No tax collected.

[82] Soumbala (kalgo in Mossi) [locust beans pressed into balls]. Payment in kind (one ball per seller).

Other spices. No fee paid.

Karite [shea] butter. Collected with a soutga (a kind of ladle), karite butter was used almost exclusively for the horses of the Mogho Naba.

Fritters and other cooked foods. Actually no fee was called for on these products, but the collectors demanded the payment of a tax in kind to provide their own food or that of the samand'kamba (servitors of the outer courtyard).

Salt. 300 cowries for each load (ox or donkey).

Hoes, axes. Each merchant provided a daba or an axe for work in the field of the naba. Nothing was collected at the subsequent market if all of the tools had not been sold in one day.

Jewelry. No tax was collected. The jewelers who made [306] bracelets and other jewels for the wives of the naba, as well as various harness parts, were exempt from all taxes.

Other markets. Fees collected for the benefit of the canton chiefs were about the same as [83] those paid at the market of Ouagadougou. In small markets, however, payments were made in kind. The edible products made up the food of the collectors, Gourounsi captives for the most part, who were prevented by their social status from having wives and so had no one to prepare food for them.

Chapter 5

Slavery Among the Mossi

567 We shall endeavor in the following lines to describe slavery as it existed among the Mossi before the French occupation.

567 173 We know that slavery has existed for a very long time in the land of the Mogho Naba, but, because of the total lack of dates in Mossi history -- handed down from generation to generation by the griot [heralds, drummers] of the naba -- it is difficult to determine when it was first introduced.

567 It is known, however, that the first slaves of the Mossi were all of Boussanga [Busansi] origin. The canton of Garango in what is

551 645 [134] (b) Kata laghem koagb'kon sirigh tanga. (A hundred barking hyenas cannot shake a mountain.)

6. Kamsoro Naba (Ouene Nongué), Naba Niouga ("cat"). He is chief eunuch. Nioug'nok wendé na pa ne Sabelem. (A cat who trusts in God is sure to preserve his blackness.) In other words, one who is protected by the Mogho Naba, his "God," will never lack for anything; everything will come to him as if by magic.

551 643 835 7. Naba Gnighnemdo (Mogho Naba). Naba Oubri, the founder of the Ouagadougou dynasty, fell in love with one of his own daughters and had intercourse with her. The girl became pregnant and gave birth to a son. The wives of Naba Oubri wanted to put both the child and the mother to death. They asked the girl the name of the child's father, and she replied, "Ask my father, he ought to know." When Oubri was questioned, he answered: "Bassi yan ya mam lam gnighnemdo (Do nothing, this is my own flesh)."

The child of this incestuous union was thus named Gnighnemdo and later succeeded his relative, Naba Nasbiré.

The Placing of Statues at Loumbi-Raogo

211 ●306 532 Ganlougdou. In the old days, upon the death of a Mogho Naba or soon after, a jeweler was called in [135] to make a wax statuette, later to be cast in bronze, in the likeness of the late chief. The jeweler also made statuettes of one soroné, one napagha, one bendré, and one lounga, and all were deposited at the home of the Loumbila Naba. This practice was suppressed upon the arrival of the French, and it appears that there is no statue of Naba Siguiri, father of Naba Kom, the present naba, at Loumbila. [177]

The acting Mogho Naba is never supposed to see these statues, and the jeweler who made the likeness of his father must not see them either. The jeweler was paid 100,000 cowries, a horse, a donkey, a cow, a wife, a large robe, and 1,000 kola nuts, and he was then sent away from Ouagadougou. He must never return and must never see the new Mogho Naba. [135]

These gifts represented a considerable sum in the old days, even today for that matter. They were given to aid the jeweler in consulting seers and charlatans for the purpose of prolonging his life. Tradition has it that unless he followed faithfully the prescriptions given by the seers, he would die within a year after completing the statues.

231 bother to raise them; as a result the number of horses has decreased, and this country, formerly renowned for its mounts, may have none in a not too distant future.

Unfortunately, horses do not thrive in every part of the country; Ouagadougou is particularly deadly for them, although, to my knowledge, the true reason for this insalubrity has not yet been found. The natives attribute it to the water, and there is no doubt that horses watered at the wells are in better health than those watered at the streams; it is also true that horses thrive in areas only a few kilometers [136] from Ouagadougou. Europeans tend to attribute this mortality to the tsetse fly. The two opinions are easy to reconcile, for, on the one hand, tsetse flies prefer damp places, and, on the other hand, the [312] Ouagadougou wells contain salt of magnesium which purges the horses and thus checks the disease.

231 The Peul own fine herds of bovines, some rather small and without 563 humps (small cattle), others large and humped (zebu). Traders also use the zebu as a beast of burden. Much of this cattle belongs to the 437 Mossi who seldom tend their own herds but prefer to entrust them to the Peul shepherds who keep the milk in payment. An adult cow yields from two to four liters a day during the good season. The guardians, however, know how to make the best of this near slavery. When an animal dies it is never one of theirs, and if the owner of the herd /a Mossi/ dies without telling his heirs where his cattle is to be found and how many head he owns, the Peul carefully refrain from disclosing the herd entrusted to them. In former days they were slightly more conscientious because they feared retaliation, but now they bless the French occupation.

231 The herds are sometimes decimated by an epizootic disease, as happened in 1910 and 1911 when the Koupéla area was ravaged by what must have been the bovine plague or peripneumonia. The cows would cough, entirely lose their appetites, and die within a few days.

The Mossi also raise bees. The hives are made of straw or flexible sticks and placed in the trees; sometimes swarms of bees also settle in the hollow trunks of baobabs. The honey is gathered at the end and at the beginning of the winter season; the hive is smoked out and [273] the bees destroyed. Honey is used primarily to make bésé, a kind of hydromel which the Moslem Yarsé, Peul, and Haoussa like very much, and which they are allowed to drink in spite of its fermentation; [237 whereas, in principle, millet beer is forbidden to them. The wax 306] is sold to the jewelry-makers who use it to make bracelets by the lost wax process.

533 their praises and beating fiercely on their drums in the hope of receiving a few cowries, kola nuts, or at least some beer.

326 The smiths (saba), by which is meant those who work with iron, extract the metal from the ore and make it into hoes and hatchets. 306 They sometimes work with wood, as in other parts of the Sudan, but usually this industry is carried out by members of another guild. The jewellers make bracelets, file teeth, repair worn hoes, etc. They are not smiths, properly speaking, and anyone may exercise their trade.

767 The undertakers (lada) offer gifts to the spirits of the deceased on the day of death or its anniversary (kouré). They also lay the corpse in the grave, and if death was due to illness, it is impossible to proceed with the burial without them. But anyone may dig the grave and carry the corpse. We shall discuss the undertakers again when funerals are described.

Chapter 2. The Family

596 The structure of the Roman family and the power granted to the paterfamilias, its very foundation, have been greatly and justly admired. Something like the paterfamilias is to be found among the Mossi. Would that we also found the Roman matron! As we have seen above, every Mossi is subject to the Moro Naba, a province chief, a canton chief, and a village chief. He is also subject in a more immediate sense to the head of his family, and he can do nothing without his consent. If he wishes to marry, he consults the family head, in whose household his bride will lodge when she arrives in the village. On the other hand, the man who wishes to give his daughter in marriage never does so without consulting his family head, at whose house the girl will stay before she goes to live with her husband.

[551] The family is thus very tightly organized among the Mossi. Each family has a name which is seldom used; if one of its members was ever naba, the name derives from that of the first naba. Members of [582 the same family may not intermarry, and usually they all have the 784] same kisgou (prohibition), whether the term designates a totem, a taboo, or something else altogether. The head of the family is its oldest member. Upon his death, the authority is transferred not to his

323 a hollow. Straw, twigs, or pieces of bark are laid between the jars and even inside them. Then everything is covered with straw and set afire in the evening. The smaller the jar, the more heat is needed. The women fetch their goods the following morning. Some of the jars are cracked; others, insufficiently fired, would be too porous and must be fired again; the rest are gathered and sold at the market.

322 Woodworking is done by men. They use a hatchet to cut down the trees, an adze and a knife to work the lumber. The mortars and pestles used by the women to crush maize, herbs, peanuts, and sauce ingredients are made of wood, and so are the dishes shaped like gourds, the bowls for sarabo, and the tool handles. There are also stools of a rather peculiar shape. Those women who can afford them close their huts with crude wooden doors. All these industries, however, are quite primitive and of no great interest.

326 [564] [306] The iron and copper work is so distinctive that those who practice it could only be specialists. The smiths, in fact, form a separate caste. One is born a smith, but one becomes a jeweller, since this profession is open to everyone. The smiths extract the metal and make iron tools: hoes, hatchets, adzes, and knives. It is said that no layman is allowed to watch when they extract the iron from the ore, and this would explain why the natives do not know how it is done. As I was unable to visit Yatenga, the area where most iron workers are to be found, I am not familiar with the extracting process.

326 306 [301] /59/ The jewellers occasionally work with iron, but they do so on the sly. They may repair broken tools, sharpen hatchets and arrow tips, and re-use a piece of iron, for instance, make an old hoe into nails, hinges, etc. Their main task, however, is the manufacture of all sorts of bracelets and of all the copper ornaments in a horse's harness: headstall, bit, spurs, stirrups, and the copper plates which hang from the saddle. These plates are a strange ornament which seems peculiar to the Mossi. They may reach 40 centimeters in diameter, and their edge may be as wide as 10 centimeters. The naba and the wealthy horsemen fasten them behind the stirrups, on either [415] side of the saddle, where they hang down the horse's flanks. Servants sometimes use them to drink beer when they have no other containers. To smelt the iron or copper, the Mossi use charcoal which they obtain exactly in the same manner as our /French/ colliers. The fire is kept going with a double bellows made of the skin of goats or sheep and operated by a child. The red-hot iron is hammered with a cylindrical

326 iron bar on an iron stump planted in the ground or on a stone. Copper
306 and zinc are smelted in small clay crucibles, the size of which varies with the desired thickness of the bracelet. The bracelet is first made in wax and coated with well-kneaded clayey earth which acquires the same shape. The wax is then removed with boiling water, and copper is poured into the clay mold. With a crude file the jewelry-maker removes the dross which clings to the metal, polishes the bracelet, and carves designs into it. The most skillful among them make attractive twisted ornaments of iron and red and yellow copper. One Ouagadougou Christian, deft at modeling wax, makes all sorts of objects, such as napkin rings, paper weights, inkwells, figurines, etc., which are not lacking in style.

484 The Mossi have always travelled a little, and they used to go quite regularly to Timbuktu; now, thanks to the French peace, journeys have become increasingly frequent. The European settlers in Tenkodogo, Ouagadougou, Léo, and Koudougou hire the Mossi as house boys and [464] take them to Ségou, sometimes to Kayes, and even to Saint-Louis. These boys, when they return, fill their friends with wonder and arouse their desire to take such great journeys also.

484 The recruitment of Black troops has also fostered this desire to see
464 new lands. Many natives have made the trip to Bandiagara to enlist as riflemen; others went to Kati, and when they found that no further enlistments were being made there, they went on to Saint-Louis.

484 During the dry season the Mossi are more often lured away by trading ventures. In October and November many young men who have managed to secure a sheep or two or a few goats and the wealthier natives who own cattle organize caravans in the hope of selling their livestock at a profit in faraway markets. In former times the Yarsé and Haoussa had a monopoly on trade. Nowadays the Mossi compete [651] with them, for they must find money to pay taxes to the Whites, the
648 famous five-franc piece. /60/ Besides, now the roads are safe. Highway robbers are no longer to be feared, and one no longer has to pay tolls every time he enters the territory of a new chief. From this point of view, and from it alone, the French peace is valued by the natives, although they find it onerous to pay taxes, to build roads and bridges, and to pay customs duties on leaving and re-entering French territory. Is a man ever pleased when something is required of him, even for his greatest good?

491 Now only the watercourses present some difficulty when they are full. The Administration, which does all it can to facilitate trade,

231 We mentioned earlier the karyanga, which is gathered wild or cultivated for horses. It is given to them at the height of the winter season.

Many Mossi own dogs. They use them to guard the soukala, to hunt in the bush, or for consumption. In the latter case, the [262 animal is fattened. Dog meat was sold on Mossi markets in the #38] old days, but the Yarsé, who are Moslems as we know, found it improper to exhibit dog meat alongside mutton or beef, and the custom was abandoned. Dogs are still killed inside the soukala, however, for consumption purposes.

[435] A dog is worth from 2 to 5 francs.

The Mossi have chickens and guinea fowl. The chickens are 235 worth 250 cowries. The eggs are not sold.

It is the men who care for the chickens. They /492/ look in the bush for termite nests which they break to pieces so that the chickens may eat the termites. Sometimes, instead of one ration only, the chickens are issued two a day, one in the morning and one in the evening.

The guinea fowl are less numerous than the chickens. Accord- [435 ing to their weight, they are worth from 250 to 300 cowries. Their #62] eggs are eaten. It is the men who care for the guinea fowl as for the chickens.

231 The Mossi place beehives in the trees. The hives consist of elongated straw cylinders shaped like a tom-tom. One of the sides is completely closed, while the other is perforated to allow the bees to come and go.

These hives are placed in the trees at the time when the warm 231 season begins (March), and then the honey is gathered every month 237 except at the height of the rainy season, when the downpours are too heavy. The children are in charge of this. They climb the tree with a straw torch on fire, and frighten the bees away. Then they take the honey and come down. In order to separate the honey from the wax, the honeycombs are placed in a large canari full of water. Another canari is heated intensely, and its burning-hot base is brought close to the surface of the jar where the combs are floating. The wax melts and sinks to the bottom, while the honey floats. The wax is sold to jewelers, who use it in the [306] manufacture of copper objects made by the lost-wax process. It is

326 In short, the blacksmith's profession is of greater consequence to him than anything else, although he avails himself of several other occupations.

[564] Mossi blacksmiths do not form a caste. That is to say, anyone can marry among them.

306 439 Let us proceed to the jewelers or copper workers (niaka in Mossi). The Mossi have been familiar with copper for a long time, although West Africa does not produce it. The Yarsé have sought it at Ouanké, Kintampo, and even Kumasi from times immemorial. It comes from the coastal area, where it is brought by the Whites in the form of brass rods 30 or 40 centimeters long (like curtain rods). Nowadays, it is the British who supply the Gold Coast with copper, no doubt in the wake of the Portuguese and Dutch.

306 301 The niaka earns more money than the blacksmith. He buys the copper rods from the Dioula and makes them into various items /517/ such as women's copper leggings adorned with crocodiles, and thick copper bracelets worn at the wrists and ankles by women and soroné (pages). Depending on their thickness, these bracelets sell for 2,500 [435] to 20,000 cowries. He also makes women's copper hairpins, and low-price rings worth from 100 to 200 cowries.

306 532 Prior to the arrival of the French, these jewelers also made copper objects depicting everyday scenes, landscapes, huts. The chiefs bought them, but now these objects, at least the more ancient ones, have become very difficult to obtain. It seems that the German physician Frobenius, when he passed through Mossi territory at the end of 1908, acquired some very beautiful specimens of ancient Mossi manufacture for an exorbitant price. Nowadays, one [439] can imagine what the old industry was like by looking at the small items made at Ouagadougou by a few Europeanized Mossi who sell them on the spot for the benefit of local Whites. It might almost be said, therefore, that they manufacture them for export purposes. These items, made by the lost-wax process, are rather interesting and quite artistic for Blacks.

325 306 413 The tools of the niaka are about the same as those of the blacksmith:

1. The small portable anvil or kissiguiré.
2. The hammer or kouadara.
3. Shears (niougou) to pick copper pieces from the fire.

325 4. The iron rasp or sodara.
306 5. The sharpening tool or karé.
413 6. The iron wedge to cut copper (kétouga).
7. Shears to cut copper (mankasaga).
8. A few very primitive goatskin bellows.

306 As an example of a jeweler, may I present Sulémani Déréma, an inhabitant of Ouagadougou. He lives with his older brother, who is the head of the soukala and who has a wife and child. Sulémani himself has two wives and two children. A younger brother lives with them with his wife and child. Finally, there are other brothers in the soukala but they are not married (let us note in passing [592] that this soukala is exceptional, for the general rule among the /518/ Mossi is for every household to live separately; here, although they still live together, every household works separately).

Sulémani Déréma buys his copper at market, or else he works the copper furnished by his customers to order. He makes bracelets, rings, copper stirrups, etc.

306 He also works in the fields during the winter season, and like 241 the other households in the soukala, he does this on his own. Sulémani has two fields in the bush, one of small millet and another of large white millet, and in addition he grows maize around the soukala on the stretch of ground allotted him by the head of the soukala.

He owns neither large nor small livestock, not even chickens, He neither hunts nor fishes.

His jeweler's trade nets him more than his fields.

324 The blacksmith and niaka are representatives of metalworking. 316 Let us now proceed to stonework.

The makers of crushing stones are called nanlora in Mossi, from nan, "crushing stone" and lora, "to shatter."

Our quarrymen look in the bush for large stone slabs resting on the ground, and whenever possible raised in some manner above it. They draw lines on these large flat stones with karité and soumbara, the size of the crushing stones they wish to extract, and then they gather wood under the slab and set it afire. They allow the fire

241 Baningha (large white millet or sorghum).

These two types are grown for food, [247] although the large white millet is especially reserved for horses in well-to-do households.

[262 273] Kazinga (large red millet). As a food the poorer Mossi prefer this to the baningha, but it is more especially grown for the making of dam, millet beer.

[556] Mouf (rice) is sought only by the chiefs, notables, and a few families of dakangba (well-to-do men).

Benga (beans).

Souma (peas of either the small green variety or large white or red ones).

Niouyan (from niouri, "yam"), grown only in certain areas.

Nangouri or sounkama (peanuts).

Pèsça (fabirama) [a tuber plant].

Sinni or sili (sesame), grown only by a few people who like it.

Bito (sorrel), used in preparing the sauce served with sagbo.

Mana (gombo [okra]) is also cultivated.

Aside from its food crops, each family has its own plot for cotton (lamdo) which provides for the clothing needed during the year.

●311 178 I am told that fields are much more extensive today than in former times, in spite of the abolition of slavery. This is explained by the fact that many areas supposed to be haunted were formerly left uncultivated. It is said, however, that the Moaga used to grow larger crops since in those days he was closer to the soil.

[248] At the present time there is a lack of farm hands. As [857] recently as twenty years ago, the young Moaga followed his parents to the field as soon as he was six or seven years old. He took a liking to the work at a very young age. Before the French [484] occupation, the Moaga rarely left his village because of the dangers on the roads, frequented in those days by bandits (usually descend- [579] ants of naba). People were even afraid to go into the bush alone, for fear of being attacked, captured, and reduced to slavery.

433 178 There was little contact even between adjoining villages. At Ouagadougou, no one ventured from section to section unless he had very good reason and was armed to the teeth. In short, everyone

133 are bordered with hills. Nevertheless, it may be said that Mossi country is flat. It is covered with the classic bush of the Sudan with
[137] its small shrubs and tall grass interspersed with bastard mahogany, /7/ huge trunks of the baobabs, and tamarind and silk-cotton trees, thicker on the banks of the Volta rivers, thinner around the villages.

241 The country is quite fertile and easily provides for its inhabitants.
262 The various kinds of millet grow well, especially the small white variety (Pennisetum spicatum) which, mashed and boiled, is the staple of the diet and sorghum, or large red millet, which is used to prepare the famous beer of the country. The horses eat the latter kind, although they prefer the large white millet. Around the huts maize grows well in soil fertilized by the daily accumulation of waste. It is a welcome source of grain when the millet reserves of the previous year are running low and the current harvest has not yet matured. Maize fields are surrounded with a double row of sorghum and often
[283] with a double row of a fiber plant called bérensé, a sort of hemp which the natives use to make ropes. After the maize has been harvested, the field is planted with previously prepared tobacco seedlings. Finally, the sunken areas created when huts are built, as well as all slightly damp places, are planted with gombo, okra, which is highly valued as a sauce ingredient.

[311] During the rainy season no piece of land remains unused around the villages, and when the red millet ripens and the ears join across the path, passage becomes difficult. Even the hut roofs bear all kinds
[415] of calabash plants. These supply the housewives with gourds that fulfill the purposes served by our plates, dishes, glasses, and basins; the travellers with their flasks; the snuff-takers with their boxes; and the sorcerers with their spirit-calling instruments. The large gourds that are used to make drums grow among the shoots of maize. In the marshes near the watercourses where water lies stagnant, rice fields are planted, but rice is a luxury food, hard to cultivate because of
[554] the care it requires. The natives use it only on feast days or when they wish to honor a distinguished guest. Cotton is sown in damp places among the stalks of large red millet, and it is harvested much later. Peanuts and peas also take up part of the cultivated land, while beans creep along the ground between the shoots of small millet. Peppers, sesame, the indigo plant, yams, manioc, sweet potatoes, and a small

291 distance from his home, he wears only a benda (loincloth), which does not even cover his buttocks, and a blanket.

He goes about with torso uncovered and likes to show that he is [229] well muscled. When the women are inside their huts, especially when they are engaged in the laborious task of removing the seeds from cotton with their gourça, they pull their skirts up to the hips, making themselves half-naked.

Young girls who have not yet reached puberty and are not yet excised often go about completely nude, unless they hide their sex behind the rags of an old skirt.

Personal Grooming

Ablutions and Care of the Body

515 Married persons and women are fastidious about body cleanliness and therefore have a regular morning routine. This involves washing the face, hands, arms, and legs. During the cool season (end of November to February 15), a little karite butter is added [271] to warm water to soften the skin. Since water is scarce, people take few baths. In villages where there is abundant water, however, the inhabitants bathe two or three times a week.

Unlike their elders, young people and children are careless about cleanliness and may go about all day long without washing [164] their faces. This gives rise, incidentally, to serious cases of conjunctivitis among the children.

Sanitation

312 Drinking water. Water for general use is obtained from 271 water holes created [230] by the inhabitants with dams in order to supplement the wells which often run dry during the dry season. The natives make no effort to purify the water which they often keep for days in containers where mosquito larvae flourish. Pond water is used for drinking. In some villages, however, where the water is actually muddy, the following measure are taken to clear it.

(a) The oil is extracted from crushed peanuts, and the residue is put into the muddy water. It takes about three-quarters of an

312 hour for the impurities and the residue to settle to the bottom of
271 the vessel. Then the water is poured off into another container and is ready to be used for drinking or cooking.

[824] (b) It is also possible to use an additive known as missim (crushed tamarind leaves). The water becomes clear, but it is, of course, somewhat sour. Although it may be drunk, it is
[552] ideally suited to cooking since the Mossi add missim (from miki, "to make sour") even to the water of springs and wells before they use it to prepare their principal food, sagbo.

744 In the town of Ouagadougou frequent visits by the sanitary
312 officers remind the natives of the necessity of keeping fresh water in their containers. They are also encouraged to fill in during the winter the low places holding water where mosquitoes might breed.

515 Laundering. There is no doubt [231] that the Moaga is care-
296 less about the cleanliness of his clothing. There is no shortage of soap -- karite butter, of which it is made, is plentiful -- but he believes that frequent laundering will wear out his clothes too quickly. He also thinks -- which is childish -- that the dirtier a garment is, the cleaner it will wash. He thinks it completely ridiculous for clothes to be ironed. It must be admitted that among the Mossi only a married man can require his wives to wash his clothes. A mother also takes care of her children's clothes, but a bachelor is forced to wash his own things. This, we think, explains the extreme negligence shown by some of them
[461] who let their clothes get dirtier and dirtier. Indolence, alas, is one of the dominant defects of the native of Mossi country.

514 Toilet arrangements. In general the Mossi have no regular latrines. Men, women, in short, everyone, simply goes into the bush. The only exception is the very young children who take care of their needs on the threshold. At night, especially during the winter when the grain is fairly tall, grownups themselves go to the kamanga or karaga (millet or maize field near the living quarters).

364 When the town of Ouagadougou was made a mixed commune [Ed., smallest French territorial subdivision, with both French and native representation in the municipal council], it was possible to install, at municipal expense, a number of lavatories in certain

173 While these events occurred in the east, a sister of the Moro Naba, assigned to guard the tibo fetishes, quarreled with her brother and fled west to Ouahigouya. This region thus became Mossi territory and took the name of land of Ya. (2)

2. For further details, see Lt. Marc. op. cit. Ch. 7, and especially Delafosse, Haut Sénégal et Niger /Upper Senegal and Niger/, Series I, Vol. 2, p. 305 ff.

131 The region thus conquered lies within the bend of the Niger, approximately between the 11°30 and 13°30 parallels and from 2° to 5° longitude west of Paris. Its closest neighbors are the Macina and the Habé to the north, the Samo to the northwest, the Gourounsi to the west and southwest, the Nancana /Nankana/ to the south, the Bousansé to the southeast, the Gourmantché to the east, and the Peul of Dori to the northeast. The Mossi population has been estimated at 161 one and a half million, to which must be added the Yarsé, who are Mandé completely assimilated to the Mossi, the pastoral Peul, the Haoussa /Hausa/ who form small colonies near the large commercial centers of the region, and a few lesser groups. We shall deal with these populations only insofar as they have contact with the Mossi, in whose territory they are scattered.

Two important rivers cross the country from northwest [Tr., the 133 original reads northeast] to southeast. They are the two Volta rivers, the White and the Red. In addition to these two larger waterways, which nevertheless do not flow throughout the year, there are a large number of watercourses /Tr., the French term, marigot, covers both river branch channels and shallow depressions where water accumulates forming pools/. They become impassable torrents after a storm, /6/ but remain empty during the dry season from November to June. The [312] shallow wells which supply water for the households are usually dug by the women in the beds of these watercourses.

There are no high mountains in Mossi country. When arriving from the north, the traveller crosses the beautiful cliffs of Bandiagara and the mountainous country of the Habe. /Two photographs appear here./ Mossi country begins almost at the foot of the cliffs. The northwestern region is, however, quite broken and includes the Pilimpikou peak; the two Volta rivers, especially the White Volta,

231 bother to raise them; as a result the number of horses has decreased, and this country, formerly renowned for its mounts, may have none in a not too distant future.

Unfortunately, horses do not thrive in every part of the country; Ouagadougou is particularly deadly for them, although, to my knowledge, the true reason for this insalubrity has not yet been found. The natives attribute it to the water, and there is no doubt that horses watered at the wells are in better health than those watered at the streams; it is also true that horses thrive in areas only a few kilometers [136] from Ouagadougou. Europeans tend to attribute this mortality to the tsetse fly. The two opinions are easy to reconcile, for, on the one hand, tsetse flies prefer damp places, and, on the other hand, the [312] Ouagadougou wells contain salt of magnesium which purges the horses and thus checks the disease.

231 The Peul own fine herds of bovines, some rather small and without 563 humps (small cattle), others large and humped (zebu). Traders also 437 use the zebu as a beast of burden. Much of this cattle belongs to the Mossi who seldom tend their own herds but prefer to entrust them to the Peul shepherds who keep the milk in payment. An adult cow yields from two to four liters a day during the good season. The guardians, however, know how to make the best of this near slavery. When an animal dies it is never one of theirs, and if the owner of the herd /a Mossi/ dies without telling his heirs where his cattle is to be found and how many head he owns, the Peul carefully refrain from disclosing the herd entrusted to them. In former days they were slightly more conscientious because they feared retaliation, but now they bless the French occupation.

231 The herds are sometimes decimated by an epizootic disease, as happened in 1910 and 1911 when the Koupéla area was ravaged by what must have been the bovine plague or peripneumonia. The cows would cough, entirely lose their appetites, and die within a few days.

The Mossi also raise bees. The hives are made of straw or flexible sticks and placed in the trees; sometimes swarms of bees also settle in the hollow trunks of baobabs. The honey is gathered at the end and at the beginning of the winter season; the hive is smoked out and [273] the bees destroyed. Honey is used primarily to make bésé, a kind of hydromel which the Moslem Yarsé, Peul, and Haoussa like very much, and which they are allowed to drink in spite of its fermentation; [237 whereas, in principle, millet beer is forbidden to them. The wax 306] is sold to the jewelry-makers who use it to make bracelets by the lost wax process.

593 cases are rare. Less rare are the children who care little for their parents. Nevertheless, old people are usually treated well and with [888] great respect. A son who abandons his old father or mother is held in very poor esteem. A woman prefers to bear daughters who will help her in her daily work, but she hopes for one or two sons with whom she may live when she is old.

857 883 [482 312] The girls live with their mother. As soon as they can walk, they follow her to the stream and return with a gourd of water on their heads. As they grow, so does the gourd, and little girls carry water jars weighing from fifteen to twenty kilograms. At home, young girls mill grain to feed the whole family, tend the fire, stir the sauce, wash the dishes and the clothes, sweep, in short, attend to all the household tasks under their mother's guidance. The only task of a woman with two or three half-grown daughters is to supervise their work. Because they are always with their mother, the young girls are usually more responsible and better behaved than the boys. Unfortunately they make up for this later, and more often than not, it is on their own initiative that they go at night to the young men's huts. A young man may give presents to a girl who has already been promised in marriage, and he may do so in front of her mother, who says nothing.

857 883 231 Boys help their father as soon as they are strong enough. Younger boys follow their older brothers into the bush as soon as they can and help them herd the sheep and goats. These boys go out every morning, before the sun has dried the dew, to look for new termite nests full of insects which the chicks are fond of eating. During the dry season, they cut down and plait grass to cover the roofs; if they are old enough, they even cut the firewood. When a little older, if their father or the person with whom they live owns a horse, they watch over it, take it to the stream to water it and to wash it, go into the bush to cut grass for it, and clean the stables. During the winter when the grass is green, each of the horses of a rich naba is cared for by three or four children. Some of them cut the grass, others /37/ stuff it almost by force into the horse's mouth, while one little boy drives the flies away with a stick to which a sort of flexible leather sole is attached. The winter season is a fine time for horses, who grow fat and heavy. Unfortunately, the Black does not think of the future and does not foresee how much dry grass will be needed to bridge the dry season; as a result, the horses suffer a great deal from hunger at that time.

222 top of the trunk, and they are deeply indented. The trunk never
137 bears leaves except when it is young. The dark green of the leaves and their toughness makes /sic/ them look from afar like the artificial zinc leaves of some theatrical backdrops or weather vanes. The youngest leaves at the top are strongly imbricated and ensheathed, and ivory white in color. They are very tender and yield palm cabbage. The leaves of the rônier only fall off when completely dry.

"The fruits, which are called rône, come in clusters of about forty or fifty. They are the size of a medium-sized melon and very heavy. Their covering is green when they are young, orange-yellow when they are ripe. The large seeds, which are blackish and disc-shaped, or like spheres flattened at the poles, are surrounded with a fibrous, gold-yellow meat which is very watery and very fragrant. Its taste is pleasant, although slightly tinged with turpentine. The
[261] natives eat large quantities of it, especially in times of scarcity.

"Rônier wood is dense, long lasting, and remarkably tough.
313 502/ Immune to insects and humidity, it is excellently suited to the
137 manufacture of piles, and often used in the construction of bridges and wharves. The male trees alone are used. The female trees can only be used for fencing, for they are hollow and lacking in strength....

"In addition to the fruit, the Blacks also eat the roots of the
222 young shoots, the taste of which is slightly astringent and rather un-
137 pleasant. They are eaten raw. The terminal buds of the palms are
262 very tender. They are palm cabbages, less tasty to be sure than those of Oreodoxa oleracea, but nevertheless deserving of recognition. When cut into small pieces 2 centimeters square and well seasoned with oil, vinegar, salt and pepper, they make a very good salad, especially if they were previously soaked for twenty-four hours. This dish is highly prized by Europeans who live in the Sudan. Finally,
[263 the rônier yields a fairly abundant sap from which sugar might be
273] extracted. When fermented, it produces a palm wine of inferior quality."

It must be added that the fibers of the rônier leaves are also
137 utilized. The West African Blacks use them to make baskets (as for
[285] example in Mossi territory) or cords (as for instance in Upper Gambia).

322 As for plots, he cultivates a field of small millet, a little
563 maize around his hut, a few peanuts and underground peas.

His soukala consists of a single and lone hut where he lives with his wife and two children.

Here is another example of a Laobé or séta, this one living at Kombisiguiri. He has left the Foulbé to settle among the Mossi.

[413] His woodworking tools are the same as those we mentioned above: diendé, tépotondé, menkéré, saotaré, and kéfirga.

[313] To make his gourds, he cuts down a whole tree, either hèdè or n'kouna, which yields the best wood, or bembé, sibi, or n'pékou, or else saboutoungaï, sanktougaï, or satantoulougaï, or finally bouagaï, which is less good. Gourds made of hèdè wood sell for more than others.

[435] He makes two kinds of gourds, small ones worth 50 cowries and large ones, some of which sell for up to 1,000 cowries. He makes his gourds without waiting for an order and has them taken to market by his wives.

Our Laobé does not work in the fields at all. From one end of the year to another, he makes his wooden gourds and they bring him enough to live on.

322 In addition, he makes mortars and pestles to crush grain. A
563 small mortar and pestle is worth 1,000 cowries, a large mortar
435 and pestle 2,000. He also makes large wooden spoons which he sells for 50 cowries, and clogs or wooden sandals of a sort which are worn during the rainy season and which he sells for 100 cowries.

/524/ There are eight people in his soukala, himself, his two wives, and his five children.

322 Let us add that a few, a very few, Mossi have begun to make wooden gourds like the Laobé, but contrary to the habits of the latter, they spend more time in the fields than at their trade. There are a few at Polsogo, a village located 12 kilometers from Ouagadougou. They must not be confused with the koukouperséba mentioned above.

There are also bow makers among the Mossi. They are called tempéséda. They are primarily cultivators, and their fields net them much more than their trade. They exercise the latter only for the purpose of getting a few cowries to buy condiments such as

222 137 261 Séba is a kind of long, poisonous, black turnip which is eaten only in times of famine and after protracted cooking.

Seba and vidiba caused the death of many people during the last Mossi famine by giving them dysentery.

137 231 /511/ As for wild fodder found in Mossi territory, there is first of all kénibédo, that grows in bunches 30 centimeters high in damp hollows. Its leaves are rudimentary. It is severed 20 centimeters from the ground and stored during the dry season.

Then there are the fodder plants belonging to the papilionaceous family, densa and youbenga. The tiny stem of densa or youbenga is not severed from the plant itself, which reaches a height of 0.30 or 0.40 meter in both cases. Horses eat them either green or dry, indiscriminately.

137 314 283 Finally, let us say a word about souga, a sort of wild hemp called thus by the Mossi. The Nounouma call it boupo, and the Kassouna bénédévio. It is found only in certain parts of Mossi territory, but it grows throughout Gourounsi lands. Its bark yields very tough white fibers which the natives use in the manufacture of rope, string or thread for fishing implements. The bark does not keep through the dry season, so it is reduced to fibers during the rainy season. The fibers, on the other hand, can take the most intensive dryness without deteriorating. Souga is not cultivated.

222 433 We are now finished with Mossi gathering activities. They have a certain importance, as we have just seen, the same one on the whole as in other Sudanese populations. They are infinitely less important than cultivation, of course, but only slightly less so than stockbreeding, and they must be placed on the same level as the hunt. They are far more important than fishing or arboriculture.

245 433 The latter deserves no real mention. It hardly exists among the Mossi. It is limited to what we described earlier about the rônier and to the planting, here and there, of a few papaw trees.

433 In short, cultivation comes first, with stockbreeding trailing far behind, then gathering and hunting on the same level, then fishing and finally arboriculture.

010 /512/ Industries flourish among the Mossi. We shall review one by one, in detail, the various trades they exercise.

323 wide, 2 meters in diameter, and open at the top), then some straw on which the pots are laid, and then more straw and firewood. They set this afire and keep it burning for twelve hours.

In order to polish their pots, the women take the bark of the [314] nobora or n'kouna. They soak it in huge canari for a whole day. The water acquires a reddish hue. The fired and cooled pots are immersed in these canari for a while, and then allowed to dry in the open air. When this is over, the pots may be taken to market and sold.

The blacksmiths' wives make their pottery during the dry season. During the winter season, they work in their husbands' fields.

326 241 During the winter season, Mossi blacksmiths work both at cultivation and at their trade, but mostly at cultivation. During the dry season, on the other hand, they work only at the blacksmith's trade.

As far as cultivation is concerned, they mostly grow small millet, followed by large white millet and large red millet, maize, peanuts, underground peas, sesame, and beans. They cultivate cotton and tobacco, but no indigo. Their wives sow gombo, etc.

326 231 /516/ They own livestock which their children herd. As a rule, they have a little more livestock than other Mossi, except for goats and donkeys. This, incidentally, should not surprise us, for the Negro blacksmiths of West Africa often display an ability for stockbreeding and especially for horse trading. Among the Mossi, however, this is not very pronounced.

326 The blacksmiths neither hunt nor fish, but they do engage in gathering activities like other Mossi. They exercise no industries other than those of iron and pottery. They do not work copper, silver, or gold. They do not work as weavers, either. They entrust their wives with the task of gathering and spinning whatever cotton they grow, and then they hand it over to the weavers.

326 438 They do undertake a little trading, slightly more in fact than the average Mossi. When a blacksmith has smelted a large quantity of iron, he sometimes purchases some livestock, leads it to Ouanké, buys kola nuts which he takes to Saraféré, and brings back salt from that locality. This is not done very frequently, however.

322 [B35] salt, etc. Small bows are worth 20 cowries, medium ones 70, and large ones 100.

285 We have just reviewed woodworking. Let us proceed to basketry. Here the latter gives rise to two major trades, the basket maker's and the hat maker's. Let us study them in turn.

As an example, here is Niandé Zango, a basket maker and head of a soukala. He has two wives and three children. His soukala numbers five huts.

He works in the fields during the winter season, and at his trade during the dry season. His fields bring him the larger returns.

He makes his baskets at home without waiting for an order, and he has his wives sell them at market.

He gets doudouma straw in the bush and cultivates mono in his maize field.

[314] Doudouma is a tall grass that is left to dry and that furnishes excellent straw for the manufacture of baskets and trays.

Doudoumidou is doudouma straw dyed red with mono.

249 386 285 Mono (faraoro in Bambara) is a plant grown by the Mossi in their maize fields, around the soukala. It looks a great deal like large red millet, but it is /525/ not the same thing. It is probably a variety of large millet, however. Mono is sown along with maize when the first rains begin to fall. Holes are made with the koutiaga, mono grains placed within and covered up. When mono has emerged from the ground, the weeds are pulled out. The harvesting is done about two and a half months after sowing. The stalks are severed at the base and left to dry in the sun, and then the sheaths and culms are torn off. The latter are the parts used to dye the straw red.

The sheaths and culms are crushed by rubbing them by hand in a canari full of water. Then the doudouma straw is left to soak in this canari. The canari is placed on the fire, where it is kept for six hours. When this is over, the straw, now dyed red, is removed.

386 285 Doudousabalé is doudouma straw dyed black by immersion in bérédo. The straw is gathered, taken to a watercourse, and buried in bérédo. It is left there for a whole day, and this gives it a shiny grey hue.

285
314 Gansacé is a gramineous plant that grows wild along the banks of watercourses. The natives do not cultivate it. Dried gansacé provides a kind of straw that is used in the manufacture of straw trays. The Foulbé settled in the area also use it in the manufacture of hats.

Boulouvaka is a shrub that grows along watercourses. The boulouvaka stem is sectioned in two or four, yielding small flexible twigs that are dyed black by immersion in bérédo. Once dyed, these twigs are used in the manufacture of Mossi baskets.

Koué is a tall gramineous plant that provides straw used in the manufacture of certain baskets. Koué grows wild all over the bush, in dry spots as well as watered areas.

Dana is a shrub the wood of which is used in the manufacture of the Mossi baskets made of koué straw. It grows everywhere in the bush.

Sepso, semso, semsoro or semsogo is the Mossi name for the bark filaments taken from the néré pods. /526/ They are used in making straw trays. Sepso may be dyed red with mono, or black with bérédo.

All these elements are used by basket makers in the manufacture of their baskets and straw trays.

285
435 Now, here are some samples of Mossi basketry:

1. Large yellow baskets made of koué straw. The rims are made of dana stalks. These baskets are sold at local markets for 250 cowries apiece. They are crude baskets used to carry millet or to bring it to horses. They are quadrangular and shaped like upside-down pyramids sectioned at the base.

2. Large deluxe baskets shaped like the above but distinct in that instead of being solid yellow, straw-yellow, they are multi-colored. They are made of koué straw (yellow), doudoumidou straw (red), and boulouvaka straw (black). They are worth about 1,500 cowries apiece.

3. Straw trays, straw dishes of a sort, made with doudouma (yellow) and doudoumidou (red). They sell for 250 cowries when small, 300 when large.

4. Ordinary straw dishes made with doudouma only (undyed straw). They are worth 150 cowries.

325 4. The iron rasp or sodara.
306 5. The sharpening tool or karé.
413 6. The iron wedge to cut copper (kétouga).
7. Shears to cut copper (mankasaga).
8. A few very primitive goatskin bellows.

306 As an example of a jeweler, may I present Sulémani Déréma, an inhabitant of Ouagadougou. He lives with his older brother, who is the head of the soukala and who has a wife and child. Sulémani himself has two wives and two children. A younger brother lives with them with his wife and child. Finally, there are other brothers in the soukala but they are not married (let us note in passing [592] that this soukala is exceptional, for the general rule among the /518/ Mossi is for every household to live separately; here, although they still live together, every household works separately).

Sulémani Déréma buys his copper at market, or else he works the copper furnished by his customers to order. He makes bracelets, rings, copper stirrups, etc.

306 He also works in the fields during the winter season, and like 241 the other households in the soukala, he does this on his own. Sulémani has two fields in the bush, one of small millet and another of large white millet, and in addition he grows maize around the soukala on the stretch of ground allotted him by the head of the soukala.

He owns neither large nor small livestock, not even chickens, He neither hunts nor fishes.

His jeweler's trade nets him more than his fields.

324 The blacksmith and niaka are representatives of metalworking.
316 Let us now proceed to stonework.

The makers of crushing stones are called nanlora in Mossi, from nan, "crushing stone" and lora, "to shatter."

Our quarrymen look in the bush for large stone slabs resting on the ground, and whenever possible raised in some manner above it. They draw lines on these large flat stones with karité and soumbara, the size of the crushing stones they wish to extract, and then they gather wood under the slab and set it afire. They allow the fire

324 to burn for one day. Then, with the aid of a large, sharp stone,
316 they strike the spots where the lines were drawn. The stone breaks at those spots, and they take the pieces and sell them at Mossi markets.

This thankless trade does not pay much, and those who exercise it do so only during the dry season. During the winter season they work in the fields, and this brings them much larger returns than their quarrymen's trade.

323 After stonework comes work with earth. It is represented among the Mossi by the potter, the pipe maker, and the bricklayer. Let us begin with the first.

/519/ Here and there among the Mossi, pottery has remained a family occupation performed by all the women. This might be called the initial level of the craft. Yet we saw earlier that the wives of those blacksmiths who live in /special/ quarters or villages make pottery in abundance. This is the second level of the craft, that of incipient specialization. Finally, there are professional potters to be found among the Mossi, and this is the third level of the craft, that of more pronounced specialization. There would remain a fourth level to attain, where potters would exercise this trade exclusively and would be completely specialized. This level, however, has not been reached among the Mossi. The potters here are potters only halfway, and they work as much in the fields as they do at their craft. We have here, nevertheless, an initial effort toward clay-work specialization, and this is by no means the case in every Black population.

As an example, here is a potter from Dassasogo, a small village located 8 kilometers from Ouagadougou.

During the rainy season, he works only in the fields. He exercises his potter's trade only during the dry season. His fields bring him the larger returns.

He has a field of small millet in the bush, and he grows maize around his soukala which consists of two huts only. He has a wife and a young child. His work tools are as follows:

323 1. A kind of crude basin, very thick, heavy brimmed, quite
413 shallow, and made of earth.

413
323 In order to make this basin the potter takes a kind of earth
[317] called yaoré (the kind from large brown or greyish termite nests).
He mixes it with straw and makes this kind of basin, this kind of primitive potter's wheel, called tébélé in Mossi.

2. A kind of short earth pestle, which is held in the fist and called toudoubila.

323 In order to make his canari our potter takes some yarado. To
[428] obtain this kind of clay one must dig at certain spots which are handed down traditionally from father to son. He crushes it with /520/ his pestle in the basin, and then wets it and builds his canari with it, raising the canari like a house wall and making it revolve slowly before him. Incidentally, he only knows how to make small canari.

Those potters who make big jars excavate a sort of large basin in the ground. They use the same short and compact little pestle to work the clay of the canari they are building, but they use a different kind of yarado, the red or reddish kind.

[435] Our potter sells his small canari for 80 to 120 cowries apiece.
He makes them in quantities. People come to him to purchase them, or else he has his wife take them to market.

Skillful potters make four canari a day. Beginners only make two or three.

[435] Large canari are worth 300 cowries apiece.

Those potters who make small canari often make nothing else. Similarly, those who make large canari do not usually make any others. There are some potters who make both kinds, however, for example at Kombisiguiri.

In order to fire the pots, Mossi potters have large round ovens which I have already described. They are completely open at the top, like circular walls 1.50 meters high, with four holes at the bottom. The potters heap up millet stalks within, and lay four canari on top. Upon each of these canari they place others, until the pile reaches the top of the wall. Then they set the millet stalks afire and allow everything to cool off until the following morning.

Every potter does not have his own oven. There is only one
323 oven per quarter. The potters in each quarter get together to build
467 a common oven behind the several soukala. If there are five potters,

323 a hollow. Straw, twigs, or pieces of bark are laid between the jars and even inside them. Then everything is covered with straw and set afire in the evening. The smaller the jar, the more heat is needed. The women fetch their goods the following morning. Some of the jars are cracked; others, insufficiently fired, would be too porous and must be fired again; the rest are gathered and sold at the market.

322 Woodworking is done by men. They use a hatchet to cut down the trees, an adze and a knife to work the lumber. The mortars and pestles used by the women to crush maize, herbs, peanuts, and sauce ingredients are made of wood, and so are the dishes shaped like gourds, the bowls for sarabo, and the tool handles. There are also stools of a rather peculiar shape. Those women who can afford them close their huts with crude wooden doors. All these industries, however, are quite primitive and of no great interest.

326 [564] [306] The iron and copper work is so distinctive that those who practice it could only be specialists. The smiths, in fact, form a separate caste. One is born a smith, but one becomes a jeweller, since this profession is open to everyone. The smiths extract the metal and make iron tools: hoes, hatchets, adzes, and knives. It is said that no layman is allowed to watch when they extract the iron from the ore, and this would explain why the natives do not know how it is done. As I was unable to visit Yatenga, the area where most iron workers are to be found, I am not familiar with the extracting process.

326 306 [30] /59/ The jewellers occasionally work with iron, but they do so on the sly. They may repair broken tools, sharpen hatchets and arrow tips, and re-use a piece of iron, for instance, make an old hoe into nails, hinges, etc. Their main task, however, is the manufacture of all sorts of bracelets and of all the copper ornaments in a horse's harness: headstall, bit, spurs, stirrups, and the copper plates which hang from the saddle. These plates are a strange ornament which seems peculiar to the Mossi. They may reach 40 centimeters in diameter, and their edge may be as wide as 10 centimeters. The naba and the wealthy horsemen fasten them behind the stirrups, on either [415] side of the saddle, where they hang down the horse's flanks. Servants sometimes use them to drink beer when they have no other containers. To smelt the iron or copper, the Mossi use charcoal which they obtain exactly in the same manner as our /French/ colliers. The fire is kept going with a double bellows made of the skin of goats or sheep and operated by a child. The red-hot iron is hammered with a cylindrical

323 467 the oven is built in one day. All those who cooperated in building it have the right to use it.

323 At Kombisiguiri, some potters have no ovens. They merely spread out millet stalks on the ground and place the canari on top. They light the millet, and the pots are fired in this fashion.

/521/ It is the potter himself who makes his tools, his crude basin, and his pestle.

Let us point out that the baouré, huge jars where the threshed millet is stored and which are about 2.50 meters high and proportionately wide, which look like enormous sandstone ink bottles and which I saw in the northern part of Mossi territory, are not made by the potters. They are built in each soukala by the inhabitants.

After the potters come the pipe makers. It is the old women who make pipes among the Mossi. They fetch the appropriate clay, [435] fashion the bowl of the pipe, and fire it. They sell it for 5 cowries.

333 Let us not forget the bricklayers, who are called tammétéba in Mossi. Like Gourounsi bricklayers, Mossi ones are primarily cultivators, and their fields net them much more than their trade. As among the Gourounsi, the bricklayers are not paid. They are merely fed for the duration of their work.

●322 Following work with earth and clay, let us proceed to woodworking. It is represented among the Mossi by the koukoupersèba and séta.

Among certain populations of West Africa, the woodworker's trade is exercised by the blacksmiths (for example, among the Malinké, Dialonké, etc.). Among the Mossi, as among the Gourounsi, it is sharply distinct from the blacksmith's trade and exercised by the koukoupersèba, who are counterparts of the Gourounsi voguésara and Mandé debakala-lésemba. The koukoupersèba make daba handles, axe handles, small chairs which are very nicely tooled with a hot iron and which represent a horse's back with two crude heads, two outlines of a head, on either side.

Actually, the koukoupersèba are primarily cultivators. They work the soil during the rainy season. During the dry season, they make the various items just mentioned.

322 563 In addition to these people, there are the Laobé among the Mossi, that is to say, /522/ those men who are employed by the

322 563 Foulbé as makers of wooden gourds and other items of a similar nature. The Mossi call them séta. Since there are many Foulbé in Mossi territory, there are Laobé also. Some of them have left their masters to settle independently, and they are now free.

May we present one, by the name of Louri. During the winter season he works the soil, although very slightly like all other Laobé and Foulbé, and he also makes wooden gourds. During the dry season, he only makes gourds. Owing to his very mediocre cultivating abilities, his trade nets him more than his fields.

His tools are as follows:

322 413 1. First, a large ax called diendé, which he uses to cut heavy timber.

2. The saotaré, a kind of well-sharpened hoe with a very short handle, which is used to fashion the gourd on the outside.

3. The tépotondé, a kind of hoe with a very short handle and a very sharp blade, which is used to hollow out the gourd.

4. The menkéré, which is also used to hollow out the inside of the gourd.

5. The kéfirga, a long-handled tool with a curved, sharp blade, which is used for the same purpose as the two preceding tools.

It is the blacksmith who makes the iron parts of these tools.

322 563 435 Their value is as follows:

The axe is worth	2,000	cowries
The saotaré is worth	500	"
The tépotondé is worth	500	"
The menkéré is worth	1,500	"
The kéfirga is worth	200	"

322 563 In order to make his gourds, our Laobé uses the wood of the following trees: hèdè, bouagaï, saboutoungaï, and bembé.

This Laobé comes from Badongo (a village located 31 kilometers from /523/ Ouagadougou). He has a wife and two children. [567] He is a former slave, a captive from Laobé, whose masters had settled at Badongo. The master left, and now he is free. Formerly he worked for his master, and now he works for himself. He makes gourds in advance and has them sold at market by his wife. He [435] sells the small ones for 100 cowries, the medium ones for 300, the large ones for 500 (0.10, 0.30, 0.50 franc).

322 As for plots, he cultivates a field of small millet, a little
563 maize around his hut, a few peanuts and underground peas.

His soukala consists of a single and lone hut where he lives with his wife and two children.

Here is another example of a Laobé or séta, this one living at Kombisiguiri. He has left the Foulbé to settle among the Mossi.

[413] His woodworking tools are the same as those we mentioned above: diendé, tépotondé, menkéré, saotaré, and kéfirga.

To make his gourds, he cuts down a whole tree, either hèdè
[313] or n'kouna, which yields the best wood, or bembé, sibi, or n'pékou, or else saboutoungaï, sanktougaï, or satantoulougaï, or finally bouagaï, which is less good. Gourds made of hèdè wood sell for more than others.

[435] He makes two kinds of gourds, small ones worth 50 cowries and large ones, some of which sell for up to 1,000 cowries. He makes his gourds without waiting for an order and has them taken to market by his wives.

Our Laobé does not work in the fields at all. From one end of the year to another, he makes his wooden gourds and they bring him enough to live on.

322 In addition, he makes mortars and pestles to crush grain. A
563 small mortar and pestle is worth 1,000 cowries, a large mortar
435 and pestle 2,000. He also makes large wooden spoons which he sells for 50 cowries, and clogs or wooden sandals of a sort which are worn during the rainy season and which he sells for 100 cowries.

/524/ There are eight people in his soukala, himself, his two wives, and his five children.

322 Let us add that a few, a very few, Mossi have begun to make wooden gourds like the Laobé, but contrary to the habits of the latter, they spend more time in the fields than at their trade. There are a few at Polsogo, a village located 12 kilometers from Ouagadougou. They must not be confused with the koukoupersèba mentioned above.

There are also bow makers among the Mossi. They are called tempéséda. They are primarily cultivators, and their fields net them much more than their trade. They exercise the latter only for the purpose of getting a few cowries to buy condiments such as

322 salt, etc. Small bows are worth 20 cowries, medium ones 70, and
[435] large ones 100.

285 We have just reviewed woodworking. Let us proceed to basketry. Here the latter gives rise to two major trades, the basket maker's and the hat maker's. Let us study them in turn.

As an example, here is Niandé Zango, a basket maker and head of a soukala. He has two wives and three children. His soukala numbers five huts.

He works in the fields during the winter season, and at his trade during the dry season. His fields bring him the larger returns.

He makes his baskets at home without waiting for an order, and he has his wives sell them at market.

He gets doudouma straw in the bush and cultivates mono in his maize field.

[314] Doudouma is a tall grass that is left to dry and that furnishes excellent straw for the manufacture of baskets and trays.

Doudoumidou is doudouma straw dyed red with mono.

249 Mono (faraoro in Bambara) is a plant grown by the Mossi in
386 their maize fields, around the soukala. It looks a great deal like
285 large red millet, but it is /525/ not the same thing. It is probably a variety of large millet, however. Mono is sown along with maize when the first rains begin to fall. Holes are made with the koutiaga, mono grains placed within and covered up. When mono has emerged from the ground, the weeds are pulled out. The harvesting is done about two and a half months after sowing. The stalks are severed at the base and left to dry in the sun, and then the sheaths and culms are torn off. The latter are the parts used to dye the straw red.

The sheaths and culms are crushed by rubbing them by hand in a canari full of water. Then the doudouma straw is left to soak in this canari. The canari is placed on the fire, where it is kept for six hours. When this is over, the straw, now dyed red, is removed.

386 Doudousabalé is doudouma straw dyed black by immersion in
285 bérédo. The straw is gathered, taken to a watercourse, and buried in bérédo. It is left there for a whole day, and this gives it a shiny grey hue.

462 on the other hand, are female prerogatives; every woman knows how to make millet beer, soap, karite butter, and kalro (soumbara) with varying effectiveness.

273 Millet beer is brewed with sprouted millet, which is boiled and reboiled in a volume of water proportionate to the amount of grain; yeast is added to the brew on the last day. The liquid is strained through twigs to remove the residue of millet. The more the beer is boiled, the stronger it is; when hops are added, the beverage recalls our own beer.

388 Soap is made with karite butter to which the ashes of millet stalks are added for potash.

252 Oil is extracted from peanuts, previously roasted and crushed between two stones; the women have no press and therefore lose a considerable amount of oil, but it remains in the residue, which is also sold.

Kalro is made from the beans found in the pods of néré /locust bean tree/. It has a strong and characteristic odor, but it enhances the sauce with a not unpleasant flavor.

463 The pottery, wood, and copper industries are carried out by specialists. This does not mean that only the members of a caste may exercise them, but that an apprenticeship is required which is not undergone by everyone, and that people bequeath to their children the secrets of the trade.

323 462 /58/ Pottery is chiefly made by women, although the men may also work with clay and actually often make jars (canari), while the women make the large jars which are used in brewing millet beer, small pots in which they cook sarabo and sauce, and shallow dishes which are used to serve food.

323 The molding and firing methods are similar. A shallow pit is dug into the ground, larger or smaller depending on the size desired for the jar. The walls of the hole are pounded smooth. The woman places in this mold the prepared clay, previously kneaded with the feet and any stones removed. The clay is slightly damp, and the pit is dusted with dry earth. The woman spreads the clay with a well-polished granite stone and makes it revolve so that every portion of the clay is worked between the stone and the pit wall. After a while, she obtains the jar she wants in the proper thickness.

When several potters live in the same village, as usually happens, they get together for the firing. The jars are marked and gathered in

323 a hollow. Straw, twigs, or pieces of bark are laid between the jars and even inside them. Then everything is covered with straw and set afire in the evening. The smaller the jar, the more heat is needed. The women fetch their goods the following morning. Some of the jars are cracked; others, insufficiently fired, would be too porous and must be fired again; the rest are gathered and sold at the market.

322 Woodworking is done by men. They use a hatchet to cut down the trees, an adze and a knife to work the lumber. The mortars and pestles used by the women to crush maize, herbs, peanuts, and sauce ingredients are made of wood, and so are the dishes shaped like gourds, the bowls for sarabo, and the tool handles. There are also stools of a rather peculiar shape. Those women who can afford them close their huts with crude wooden doors. All these industries, however, are quite primitive and of no great interest.

326 The iron and copper work is so distinctive that those who practice [564] it could only be specialists. The smiths, in fact, form a separate caste. One is born a smith, but one becomes a jeweller, since this [306] profession is open to everyone. The smiths extract the metal and make iron tools: hoes, hatchets, adzes, and knives. It is said that no layman is allowed to watch when they extract the iron from the ore, and this would explain why the natives do not know how it is done. As I was unable to visit Yatenga, the area where most iron workers are to be found, I am not familiar with the extracting process.

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325 413 2. An iron mallet called zinré which is used as a hammer to strike the above-mentioned anvil. These items are very small. The anvil is held in one hand and the mallet in the other.

3. A pair of tongs (iéougo) to pick the iron from the fire and put it on the anvil.

4. A hammer called kouadara, made of a thick, short, and solid wooden handle into which a long and narrow iron mallet has been driven to make a hammer.

5. A rasp (sodara or chandara), slightly curved, and hafted to a wooden handle.

6. A sort of small wedge to cut the iron (kitéga). This wedge is placed on the piece of iron to be cut, and it is hit with the mallet.

7. A small-sized tool called karé that consists of a curved blade, 3 centimeters long by 2 wide, hafted to a short piece of wood. The karé is used to sharpen knives.

8. The goatskin bellows (zougoudou).

Such are the tools of the Mossi blacksmith which, incidentally, he makes himself.

325 435

The mallet is worth	5,000	cowries	(5 francs)
The anvil	10,000	"	(10 francs)
The hammer	1,000	"	(1 franc)
The nippers	700	"	(0.70 francs)
The rasp	500	"	(0.50 francs)
The iron wedge	200	"	(0.20 francs)
The sharpener	200	"	(0.20 francs)

● 323 The wives of Mossi blacksmiths make pottery. They are not the only ones to do this, as we shall see later, but they do it, at least in the special blacksmith's villages and quarters.

They make pottery with bérédo, that special black earth, a kind of clay we have already mentioned/in a previous chapter, not translated/. They crush and mash old canari and add this powder to the bérédo. This makes the pots stronger than if fresh bérédo were used. When the pots have been fashioned, the women leave them to dry in the sun for six or seven days. While this drying process is taking place, they gather firewood in the bush. Then they place a layer of wood in a round oven (about 1 1/2 meters high, very

323 wide, 2 meters in diameter, and open at the top), then some straw on which the pots are laid, and then more straw and firewood. They set this afire and keep it burning for twelve hours.

In order to polish their pots, the women take the bark of the [314] nobora or n'kouna. They soak it in huge canari for a whole day. The water acquires a reddish hue. The fired and cooled pots are immersed in these canari for a while, and then allowed to dry in the open air. When this is over, the pots may be taken to market and sold.

The blacksmiths' wives make their pottery during the dry season. During the winter season, they work in their husbands' fields.

326 241 During the winter season, Mossi blacksmiths work both at cultivation and at their trade, but mostly at cultivation. During the dry season, on the other hand, they work only at the blacksmith's trade.

As far as cultivation is concerned, they mostly grow small millet, followed by large white millet and large red millet, maize, peanuts, underground peas, sesame, and beans. They cultivate cotton and tobacco, but no indigo. Their wives sow gombo, etc.

326 231 /516/ They own livestock which their children herd. As a rule, they have a little more livestock than other Mossi, except for goats and donkeys. This, incidentally, should not surprise us, for the Negro blacksmiths of West Africa often display an ability for stockbreeding and especially for horse trading. Among the Mossi, however, this is not very pronounced.

326 The blacksmiths neither hunt nor fish, but they do engage in gathering activities like other Mossi. They exercise no industries other than those of iron and pottery. They do not work copper, silver, or gold. They do not work as weavers, either. They entrust their wives with the task of gathering and spinning whatever cotton they grow, and then they hand it over to the weavers.

326 438 They do undertake a little trading, slightly more in fact than the average Mossi. When a blacksmith has smelted a large quantity of iron, he sometimes purchases some livestock, leads it to Ouanké, buys kola nuts which he takes to Saraféré, and brings back salt from that locality. This is not done very frequently, however.

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316 they strike the spots where the lines were drawn. The stone breaks at those spots, and they take the pieces and sell them at Mossi markets.

This thankless trade does not pay much, and those who exercise it do so only during the dry season. During the winter season they work in the fields, and this brings them much larger returns than their quarrymen's trade.

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413
323 In order to make this basin the potter takes a kind of earth
[317] called yaoré (the kind from large brown or greyish termite nests). He mixes it with straw and makes this kind of basin, this kind of primitive potter's wheel, called tébélé in Mossi.

2. A kind of short earth pestle, which is held in the fist and called toudoubila.

323 In order to make his canari our potter takes some yarado. To
[428] obtain this kind of clay one must dig at certain spots which are handed down traditionally from father to son. He crushes it with, /520/ his pestle in the basin, and then wets it and builds his canari with it, raising the canari like a house wall and making it revolve slowly before him. Incidentally, he only knows how to make small canari.

Those potters who make big jars excavate a sort of large basin in the ground. They use the same short and compact little pestle to work the clay of the canari they are building, but they use a different kind of yarado, the red or reddish kind.

[435] Our potter sells his small canari for 80 to 120 cowries apiece. He makes them in quantities. People come to him to purchase them, or else he has his wife take them to market.

Skillful potters make four canari a day. Beginners only make two or three.

[435] Large canari are worth 300 cowries apiece.

Those potters who make small canari often make nothing else. Similarly, those who make large canari do not usually make any others. There are some potters who make both kinds, however, for example at Kombisiguiri.

In order to fire the pots, Mossi potters have large round ovens which I have already described. They are completely open at the top, like circular walls 1.50 meters high, with four holes at the bottom. The potters heap up millet stalks within, and lay four canari on top. Upon each of these canari they place others, until the pile reaches the top of the wall. Then they set the millet stalks afire and allow everything to cool off until the following morning.

Every potter does not have his own oven. There is only one
323 oven per quarter. The potters in each quarter get together to build
467 a common oven behind the several soukala. If there are five potters,

323 467 the oven is built in one day. All those who cooperated in building it have the right to use it.

323 At Kombisiguiri, some potters have no ovens. They merely spread out millet stalks on the ground and place the canari on top. They light the millet, and the pots are fired in this fashion.

/521/ It is the potter himself who makes his tools, his crude basin, and his pestle.

Let us point out that the baouré, huge jars where the threshed millet is stored and which are about 2.50 meters high and proportionately wide, which look like enormous sandstone ink bottles and which I saw in the northern part of Mossi territory, are not made by the potters. They are built in each soukala by the inhabitants.

After the potters come the pipe makers. It is the old women who make pipes among the Mossi. They fetch the appropriate clay, [435] fashion the bowl of the pipe, and fire it. They sell it for 5 cowries.

333 Let us not forget the bricklayers, who are called tammétéba in Mossi. Like Gourounsi bricklayers, Mossi ones are primarily cultivators, and their fields net them much more than their trade. As among the Gourounsi, the bricklayers are not paid. They are merely fed for the duration of their work.

322 Following work with earth and clay, let us proceed to woodworking. It is represented among the Mossi by the koukoupersêba and sêta.

Among certain populations of West Africa, the woodworker's trade is exercised by the blacksmiths (for example, among the Malinké, Dialonké, etc.). Among the Mossi, as among the Gourounsi, it is sharply distinct from the blacksmith's trade and exercised by the koukoupersêba, who are counterparts of the Gourounsi voguésara and Mandé debakala-lésemba. The koukoupersêba make daba handles, axe handles, small chairs which are very nicely tooled with a hot iron and which represent a horse's back with two crude heads, two outlines of a head, on either side.

Actually, the koukoupersêba are primarily cultivators. They work the soil during the rainy season. During the dry season, they make the various items just mentioned.

322 563 In addition to these people, there are the Laobé among the Mossi, that is to say, /522/ those men who are employed by the

325 4. The iron rasp or sodara.
306 5. The sharpening tool or karé.
413 6. The iron wedge to cut copper (kétouga).
7. Shears to cut copper (mankasaga).
8. A few very primitive goatskin bellows.

306 As an example of a jeweler, may I present Sulémani Déréma, an inhabitant of Ouagadougou. He lives with his older brother, who is the head of the soukala and who has a wife and child. Sulémani himself has two wives and two children. A younger brother lives with them with his wife and child. Finally, there are other brothers in the soukala but they are not married (let us note in passing [592] that this soukala is exceptional, for the general rule among the /518/ Mossi is for every household to live separately; here, although they still live together, every household works separately).

Sulémani Déréma buys his copper at market, or else he works the copper furnished by his customers to order. He makes bracelets, rings, copper stirrups, etc.

306 He also works in the fields during the winter season, and like 241 the other households in the soukala, he does this on his own. Sulémani has two fields in the bush, one of small millet and another of large white millet, and in addition he grows maize around the soukala on the stretch of ground allotted him by the head of the soukala.

He owns neither large nor small livestock, not even chickens, He neither hunts nor fishes.

His jeweler's trade nets him more than his fields.

324 The blacksmith and niaka are representatives of metalworking.
316 Let us now proceed to stonework.

The makers of crushing stones are called nanlora in Mossi, from nan, "crushing stone" and lora, "to shatter."

Our quarrymen look in the bush for large stone slabs resting on the ground, and whenever possible raised in some manner above it. They draw lines on these large flat stones with karité and soumbara, the size of the crushing stones they wish to extract, and then they gather wood under the slab and set it afire. They allow the fire

324 316 to burn for one day. Then, with the aid of a large, sharp stone, they strike the spots where the lines were drawn. The stone breaks at those spots, and they take the pieces and sell them at Mossi markets.

This thankless trade does not pay much, and those who exercise it do so only during the dry season. During the winter season they work in the fields, and this brings them much larger returns than their quarrymen's trade.

323 After stonework comes work with earth. It is represented among the Mossi by the potter, the pipe maker, and the bricklayer. Let us begin with the first.

/519/ Here and there among the Mossi, pottery has remained a family occupation performed by all the women. This might be called the initial level of the craft. Yet we saw earlier that the wives of those blacksmiths who live in /special/ quarters or villages make pottery in abundance. This is the second level of the craft, that of incipient specialization. Finally, there are professional potters to be found among the Mossi, and this is the third level of the craft, that of more pronounced specialization. There would remain a fourth level to attain, where potters would exercise this trade exclusively and would be completely specialized. This level, however, has not been reached among the Mossi. The potters here are potters only halfway, and they work as much in the fields as they do at their craft. We have here, nevertheless, an initial effort toward clay-work specialization, and this is by no means the case in every Black population.

As an example, here is a potter from Dassasogo, a small village located 8 kilometers from Ouagadougou.

During the rainy season, he works only in the fields. He exercises his potter's trade only during the dry season. His fields bring him the larger returns.

He has a field of small millet in the bush, and he grows maize around his soukala which consists of two huts only. He has a wife and a young child. His work tools are as follows:

323 413 1. A kind of crude basin, very thick, heavy brimmed, quite shallow, and made of earth.

326 First, there is that of the blacksmith (saba or sahaba in the local tongue). Two kinds of blacksmiths may be distinguished among the Mossi. First, the blacksmiths who are gathered into separate villages or in large special quarters within the village, both cases being frequent in the northern part of Mossi territory, and secondly the isolated blacksmiths, such as those of Ouagadougou for example.

325 326 The blacksmiths who live in separate villages or quarters smelt the iron ore in large furnaces in the bush. They do this once a year, during the dry season, and the process takes one month.

The whole blacksmith village sets down to the task and builds a certain number of blast furnaces, at the ratio of one for every two blacksmiths.

The furnaces are built of red earth near the hills that contain iron ore, and it takes five days to build one of them. Once this is done each blacksmith pair takes over a furnace and uses it. The smiths do not use it together, incidentally, but each one in turn.

Our blacksmiths break up the soil with a soumbéré or taré. They break up pieces of ore and pile them near the furnace. They spread out a layer of dry wood at the bottom of the furnace, then a layer of ore, then another layer of wood, another layer of ore, etc., up to the top. Then the fire is lit.

The fire is stirred with bellows and kept up for three days. At the end of this period of time, the doors made at the bottom of the blast furnace are opened. The iron escapes through these special openings, which are distinct from the permanently open doors through which the slag runs out. On the fourth day the iron has cooled off, and it is removed from the little pits into which it has flowed. It is broken with an iron mallet and returned to the furnace.

The total labor lasts one month. Every evening our blacksmiths return to the village. Some of them produce ten loads of iron /513/ (about 300 kilograms), others only two or three (60 or 90 kilograms).

326 135 423 As for isolated blacksmiths, they do not smelt iron. They buy it from the blacksmiths of the Yatenga (Ouahigouya circle) who are great iron smelters and who own small, famed ferruginous hills around Ouahigouya.

326 Mossi blacksmiths make ouaka, koutiaga, axes, knives, daggers, swords, spearheads, arrowheads, razors, iron bracelets for women, men, nobles, spoons, horse bits, stirrups, spurs, etc. They also make needles of considerable thickness which are worth [435] 10 cowries apiece, or five for 1 sou.

During the winter season, they hardly make anything beside ouaka.[1] During the dry season, they make all the other items.

They also make zandé, or clubs with iron tips. Let us say 411 a word about clubs, which are in a way the Mossi national weapon. 326 A Mossi would believe himself dishonored if he were not to bear a club solemnly on his right shoulder wherever he goes. Even small boys carry them, proportioned to size, and they do this with no less solemnity than their elders.

Mossi clubs are of three kinds:

1. Some made wholly of wood, handle and body both, and carved all of one piece. They are called dori.

2. Others whose handle is made of wood, but whose head consists of a large round stone imbedded at the tip of the handle. These clubs are called gougou.

3. Finally, the clubs with a wooden handle and an iron mallet inserted perpendicularly at the tip of the handle. These are the zandé or zann'dé. Sometimes the handle is covered with hide, and this makes it richer and more handsome.

326 Blacksmiths make only the iron part of the zandé. The other kinds of clubs are made by the owners themselves.

Blacksmiths only make zandé on order. While they make ouaka and koutiaga in advance and have them taken /514/ to market in quantities, they only make zandé when someone comes and asks for one.

The Mossi blacksmiths, therefore, work sometimes on order and sometimes to build up their stock. They sell this stock at market through their children, just as their wives go there to sell the pottery they manufacture.

● 325 The tools used by Mossi blacksmiths are as follows:

413 1. A small anvil called kissiguiré, with a pointed iron piece underneath, which can be held in the hand or thrust into the ground.

[1] [i.e. A kind of large hoe, see p. 32. —Analyst]

325 413 2. An iron mallet called zinré which is used as a hammer to strike the above-mentioned anvil. These items are very small. The anvil is held in one hand and the mallet in the other.

3. A pair of tongs (iéougo) to pick the iron from the fire and put it on the anvil.

4. A hammer called kouadara, made of a thick, short, and solid wooden handle into which a long and narrow iron mallet has been driven to make a hammer.

5. A rasp (sodara or chandara), slightly curved, and hafted to a wooden handle.

6. A sort of small wedge to cut the iron (kitéga). This wedge is placed on the piece of iron to be cut, and it is hit with the mallet.

7. A small-sized tool called karé that consists of a curved blade, 3 centimeters long by 2 wide, hafted to a short piece of wood. The karé is used to sharpen knives.

8. The goatskin bellows (zougoudou).

Such are the tools of the Mossi blacksmith which, incidentally, he makes himself.

325 435 The mallet is worth	5,000	cowries	(5 francs)
The anvil	10,000	"	(10 francs)
The hammer	1,000	"	(1 franc)
The nippers	700	"	(0.70 francs)
The rasp	500	"	(0.50 francs)
The iron wedge	200	"	(0.20 francs)
The sharpener	200	"	(0.20 francs)

323 The wives of Mossi blacksmiths make pottery. They are not the only ones to do this, as we shall see later, but they do it, at least in the special blacksmith's villages and quarters.

They make pottery with bérédo, that special black earth, a kind of clay we have already mentioned/in a previous chapter, not translated/. They crush and mash old canari and add this powder to the bérédo. This makes the pots stronger than if fresh bérédo were used. When the pots have been fashioned, the women leave them to dry in the sun for six or seven days. While this drying process is taking place, they gather firewood in the bush. Then they place a layer of wood in a round oven (about 1 1/2 meters high, very

326 In short, the blacksmith's profession is of greater consequence to him than anything else, although he avails himself of several other occupations.

[564] Mossi blacksmiths do not form a caste. That is to say, anyone can marry among them.

306 Let us proceed to the jewelers or copper workers (niaka in Mossi).
439 The Mossi have been familiar with copper for a long time, although West Africa does not produce it. The Yarsé have sought it at Ouanké, Kintampo, and even Kumasi from times immemorial. It comes from the coastal area, where it is brought by the Whites in the form of brass rods 30 or 40 centimeters long (like curtain rods). Nowadays, it is the British who supply the Gold Coast with copper, no doubt in the wake of the Portuguese and Dutch.

306 The niaka earns more money than the blacksmith. He buys the copper rods from the Dioula and makes them into various items /517/
301 such as women's copper leggings adorned with crocodiles, and thick copper bracelets worn at the wrists and ankles by women and soroné (pages). Depending on their thickness, these bracelets sell for 2,500
[435] to 20,000 cowries. He also makes women's copper hairpins, and low-price rings worth from 100 to 200 cowries.

306 Prior to the arrival of the French, these jewelers also made copper objects depicting everyday scenes, landscapes, huts. The
532 chiefs bought them, but now these objects, at least the more ancient ones, have become very difficult to obtain. It seems that the German physician Frobenius, when he passed through Mossi territory at the end of 1908, acquired some very beautiful specimens of ancient Mossi manufacture for an exorbitant price. Nowadays, one
[439] can imagine what the old industry was like by looking at the small items made at Ouagadougou by a few Europeanized Mossi who sell them on the spot for the benefit of local Whites. It might almost be said, therefore, that they manufacture them for export purposes. These items, made by the lost-wax process, are rather interesting and quite artistic for Blacks.

325 The tools of the niaka are about the same as those of the black-
306 smith:
413

1. The small portable anvil or kissiguiré.
2. The hammer or kouadara.
3. Shears (niougou) to pick copper pieces from the fire.

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The Mossi grow tobacco in fields around their

248 homesteads, where they also cultivate their most important cash crops, cotton and indigo, which are used in the manufacture and dyeing of cotton cloth.

136 The wild fauna of Mossi country include several species of antelope, deer, monkeys, rabbits, snakes, and wild pigs. Elephants roam the beds of rivers and streams and often destroy cultivated fields, while lions and hyenas distress the people by attacking livestock. The pools and rivers of Mossi country are inhabited by turtles, crocodiles, and various species of scaled and scaleless fish. Chickens, muscovy ducks, and half-domesticated guinea fowl are the most valuable species of birds.

231 The Mossi have long been famous for their splendid donkeys and [492] horses. Donkeys are sometimes ridden, but they are used primarily as [439] beasts of burden. Horses are important for military and ceremonial purposes and for export to the tsetse-fly zones to the south. The Mossi raise two main types of cattle: a zebu-like animal in the northern regions and a [439] dwarf variety in the south. These animals are raised primarily for their milk and for export, and are seldom killed for meat until they are fairly old. Goats and sheep provide the main source of meat. Hog-raising is not wide- [771] spread, and seems to be declining in importance with the increased ob- [178] servance of Islamic food taboos, which is on the uprise even among people who are still pagans.

135 The subsoil of Mossi country is not well known, but so far there have been no major discoveries of mineral deposits. The only known gold field [301] remained unworked in aboriginal times. The Mossi do not like to wear [325] gold ornaments, preferring jewelry worked from imported copper and [439] silver. The northern Mossi worked their local iron in aboriginal times, but those in the south obtained this metal from caravan traders.

175 The nineteenth-century reports of Barth and other European travelers 439 indicate that the Mossi conducted a rather extensive foreign trade. At least [443] six caravan routes passed through their territory, and traders such as the Hausa and Mandingo visited the important Mossi trading centers at Yako, Pouitenga, and Ouagadougou, where they exchanged Saharan and forest products for Mossi livestock and cloth.[8]

101 The Mossi belong to the Voltaic culture area, a name given by Delafosse to the regions drained by the Black, Red, and White Voltas and their tributaries. The area embraces parts of Mali, the Ivory Coast, Dahomey, the Upper Volta, and northern Ghana.[9] It includes a vast congeries of peoples such [197] as the Dagomba, Mamprusi, Dagari, Birifo, Senufo, Gurmanche, Gurunsi, Lobi, Bobo, Tallensi, Konkomba, Dogon, Somba, Fulse, and Ninisi, all of whom speak languages belonging to the Gur or Moshi-Grunshi group of

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
FA28 Mossi FA28

all of local manufacture and in great abundance. Local cloth is also very abundant. However, there are scarcely any imported objects salt, kola nuts, copper rings and extremely rare European fabrics. The salt always comes from the north. During my stay at Wagadougou I saw the arrival of a convoy of five or six small-sized mules loaded with this merchandise." Crozat felt that the Wagadougou market with its mainly local products was inferior to the markets at Woroudoy and Bobo-Dioulasso which he found less crowded, but which were, in his words, "true *entrepots* of imported merchandise."

Tauxier gives us a better picture of the goods found in the markets of Mossi country before the Europeans arrived. His reports list few imported products except salt and kola nuts. The preponderance of goods sold were such local foodstuffs as maize, manioc, peppers, tomatoes, squash, karite or shea butter, locust-bean balls, locust-bean flour, rice and a local variety of potatoes. Other foodstuffs included were honey, beer, butchered meat, chickens, and guinea fowls. Tobacco both for chewing and smoking was also available, and so was hemp for making rope. Raw cotton, cotton thread, cloth and tailored cotton garments were also present, and so was indigo for dyeing the cotton materials. Other goods included hides, sandals, pouches, amulets, iron items such as axes, hoes, knives, scythes, locks, clubs and spearpoints, bracelets and anklets made of copper by the lost-wax process, baskets, mats and hats made out of local grasses, pottery, pipes and wooden stools (Tauxier 1912 : 466 ff.). By 1914 Mangin could add little to this list of local products, sold in the markets, but added such foreign items as "matches, glass trinkets, handkerchiefs, basins, dishes, perfumes, and even firecrackers" (Mangin 1921 : 53).

The markets of contemporary Mossi society contain all of the articles found in pre-European times and those seen there by Mangin in 1914. In the larger markets one now can find such additional items as bicycles, razor blades, plastic raincoats and other plastic products, and the latest "rock 'n roll" records from the United States. The goods found in the smaller district and village markets tend to be of the traditional variety. But even here it is possible to buy refined cane sugar, matches, plastic necklaces, shoe polish, nail polish, toilet water, glass beads, costume jewelry, chinaware, and glass and enamel containers. In some of the smaller markets it is even possible to buy wheat bread made of imported flour, and bottled beer and soda water. The more different types of goods entering the larger markets, the richer the variety found in the smaller markets, since local merchants are quick to take advantage of the prestige value of any new produce and introduce it into the rural areas. The only barrier to this type of commercial activity is the relative poverty of the rural people.

773 protection. The Peulh would acquire more cattle by taking charge of the animals belonging to the Mossi, and the Yarga would find better markets for his salt and kola nuts. As for the blacksmith, he would make the many farm implements needed for the cultivation of the vast domains which were either not worked at all or insufficiently exploited because of the lack of tools.

They set the date for their return. Once more the naba received them very cordially, but they showed no greater deference to him than they had shown on their first visit.

And so the legend comes to an end by concluding that this is why the Peulh and the Yarga have retained their spirit of independence. As for the blacksmith, who remained poorer, he came [326] to submit to certain regulations which are common to all the Mossi although he never leaves his forge to salute the naba when he passes. As has already been noted, he merely strikes his zanré against his anvil, just as formerly he struck it on the ground by way of salutation.

[124] Chapter 8

Customs. Enthronement of the Naba. Names.

Death of a Mogho Naba

643 766 The death of a Mogho Naba is kept secret until the arrival at Ouagadougou of the Tansoba, who was forewarned when the illness became grave. On his arrival, the public is told that "the fire has gone out" (bougsaré kimé).

The personages in charge of the burial are Pazany'ting'soba (the undertaker), Tampouy Naba, Kassiri Naba, Benghin Naba, Toghin Naba, Ganin Naba, and Tanghin Naba.

The arrangement of the tomb. The grave in which the mortal remains of the king are buried is really a subterranean hut. Before the king is placed in his final dwelling (1), the following things

1. The body is wrapped in one or several cow hides.

241 At noon (wend'to souka, "the middle of the day") the family
512 rests in the shade of a tree. There are always some fruit trees in every field. Work is resumed at about two in the afternoon. At five the women return home to prepare food, and the men stop work at nightfall.

241 The sisoaga. When the family fields are too extensive to be
476 cultivated without help, all the able-bodied young men in the village are called to help with the weeding.

At such a time the head of the family gives several baskets of sprouted millet to his wives to make large quantities of dam, millet beer. He also orders them to prepare sagbo (millet cakes).

On the day set for the work, the young men go to the fields, where their enthusiasm is aroused by singing and the beating of drums. For their work they receive sagbo and dam. This is what is known as the sisoaga.

It is a kind of mutual aid, and without this indispensable system of solidarity, many fields would remain uncultivated.

[512] It should be noted, finally, that when a person falls [246] ill during the winter, his friends arrange to cultivate his fields, sometimes without any pay and simply out of a sense of solidarity.

241 Farm implements. As is the case everywhere in French West Africa, the natives have only the most primitive implements. Among the Mossi these include: the wanka or kounri, a hoe or Bambara daba to cultivate the soil; the sitoaga (small pickaxe) for sowing; and the laré (ax) to clear the site of brush and shrubs.

463 Other types of work. Aside from work in the fields, everyone goes about his own affairs. Some make baskets, hampers, and fans, while others weave cotton strips. It is perhaps of some
[564 interest to note that there is no caste distinction among the Mossi,
326] except for the blacksmiths; each person may practice the trade that suits him. This is why shoemakers mostly come from among the nakomsé (descendants of naba).

Food Crops

241 The principal foods grown by the Mossi are as follows.
Kazouï (small white or gray millet).

1: Delobsom--156 I-5 (no date) 1933 FA28 Mossi FA28

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Native Blacksmith.
From the Mission of the White Fathers at Ouagadougou.

533 their praises and beating fiercely on their drums in the hope of receiving a few cowries, kola nuts, or at least some beer.

326 The smiths (saba), by which is meant those who work with iron, 306 extract the metal from the ore and make it into hoes and hatchets. They sometimes work with wood, as in other parts of the Sudan, but usually this industry is carried out by members of another guild. The jewellers make bracelets, file teeth, repair worn hoes, etc. They are not smiths, properly speaking, and anyone may exercise their trade.

767 The undertakers (lada) offer gifts to the spirits of the deceased on the day of death or its anniversary (koure). They also lay the corpse in the grave, and if death was due to illness, it is impossible to proceed with the burial without them. But anyone may dig the grave and carry the corpse. We shall discuss the undertakers again when funerals are described.

Chapter 2. The Family

596 The structure of the Roman family and the power granted to the paterfamilias, its very foundation, have been greatly and justly admired. Something like the paterfamilias is to be found among the Mossi. Would that we also found the Roman matron! As we have seen above, every Mossi is subject to the Moro Naba, a province chief, a canton chief, and a village chief. He is also subject in a more immediate sense to the head of his family, and he can do nothing without his consent. If he wishes to marry, he consults the family head, in whose household his bride will lodge when she arrives in the village. On the other hand, the man who wishes to give his daughter in marriage never does so without consulting his family head, at whose house the girl will stay before she goes to live with her husband.

[551] The family is thus very tightly organized among the Mossi. Each family has a name which is seldom used; if one of its members was ever naba, the name derives from that of the first naba. Members of [582 the same family may not intermarry, and usually they all have the 784] same kisgou (prohibition), whether the term designates a totem, a taboo, or something else altogether. The head of the family is its oldest member. Upon his death, the authority is transferred not to his

323 a hollow. Straw, twigs, or pieces of bark are laid between the jars and even inside them. Then everything is covered with straw and set afire in the evening. The smaller the jar, the more heat is needed. The women fetch their goods the following morning. Some of the jars are cracked; others, insufficiently fired, would be too porous and must be fired again; the rest are gathered and sold at the market.

322 Woodworking is done by men. They use a hatchet to cut down the trees, an adze and a knife to work the lumber. The mortars and pestles used by the women to crush maize, herbs, peanuts, and sauce ingredients are made of wood, and so are the dishes shaped like gourds, the bowls for sarabo, and the tool handles. There are also stools of a rather peculiar shape. Those women who can afford them close their huts with crude wooden doors. All these industries, however, are quite primitive and of no great interest.

326 The iron and copper work is so distinctive that those who practice [564] it could only be specialists. The smiths, in fact, form a separate caste. One is born a smith, but one becomes a jeweller, since this [306] profession is open to everyone. The smiths extract the metal and make iron tools: hoes, hatchets, adzes, and knives. It is said that no layman is allowed to watch when they extract the iron from the ore, and this would explain why the natives do not know how it is done. As I was unable to visit Yatenga, the area where most iron workers are to be found, I am not familiar with the extracting process.

/59/ The jewellers occasionally work with iron, but they do so on 326 the sly. They may repair broken tools, sharpen hatchets and arrow 306 tips, and re-use a piece of iron, for instance, make an old hoe into [301] nails, hinges, etc. Their main task, however, is the manufacture of all sorts of bracelets and of all the copper ornaments in a horse's harness: headstall, bit, spurs, stirrups, and the copper plates which hang from the saddle. These plates are a strange ornament which seems peculiar to the Mossi. They may reach 40 centimeters in diameter, and their edge may be as wide as 10 centimeters. The naba and the wealthy horsemen fasten them behind the stirrups, on either [415] side of the saddle, where they hang down the horse's flanks. Servants sometimes use them to drink beer when they have no other containers. To smelt the iron or copper, the Mossi use charcoal which they obtain exactly in the same manner as our /French/ colliers. The fire is kept going with a double bellows made of the skin of goats or sheep and operated by a child. The red-hot iron is hammered with a cylindrical

326 iron bar on an iron stump planted in the ground or on a stone. Copper
306 and zinc are smelted in small clay crucibles, the size of which varies with the desired thickness of the bracelet. The bracelet is first made in wax and coated with well-kneaded clayey earth which acquires the same shape. The wax is then removed with boiling water, and copper is poured into the clay mold. With a crude file the jewelry-maker removes the dross which clings to the metal, polishes the bracelet, and carves designs into it. The most skillful among them make attractive twisted ornaments of iron and red and yellow copper. One Ouagadougou Christian, deft at modeling wax, makes all sorts of objects, such as napkin rings, paper weights, inkwells, figurines, etc., which are not lacking in style.

The Mossi have always travelled a little, and they used to go quite
484 regularly to Timbuktu; now, thanks to the French peace, journeys have become increasingly frequent. The European settlers in Tenkodogo, Ouagadougou, Léo, and Koudougou hire the Mossi as house boys and
[464] take them to Ségou, sometimes to Kayes, and even to Saint-Louis. These boys, when they return, fill their friends with wonder and arouse their desire to take such great journeys also.

484 The recruitment of Black troops has also fostered this desire to see
464 new lands. Many natives have made the trip to Bandiagara to enlist as riflemen; others went to Kati, and when they found that no further enlistments were being made there, they went on to Saint-Louis.

During the dry season the Mossi are more often lured away by trading
484 ventures. In October and November many young men who have managed to secure a sheep or two or a few goats and the wealthier natives who own cattle organize caravans in the hope of selling their livestock at a profit in faraway markets. In former times the Yarsé and Haoussa had a monopoly on trade. Nowadays the Mossi compete
[651] with them, for they must find money to pay taxes to the Whites, the
648 famous five-franc piece. /60/ Besides, now the roads are safe. Highway robbers are no longer to be feared, and one no longer has to pay tolls every time he enters the territory of a new chief. From this point of view, and from it alone, the French peace is valued by the natives, although they find it onerous to pay taxes, to build roads and bridges, and to pay customs duties on leaving and re-entering French territory. Is a man ever pleased when something is required of him, even for his greatest good?

491 Now only the watercourses present some difficulty when they are full. The Administration, which does all it can to facilitate trade,

326 First, there is that of the blacksmith (saba or sahaba in the local tongue). Two kinds of blacksmiths may be distinguished among the Mossi. First, the blacksmiths who are gathered into separate villages or in large special quarters within the village, both cases being frequent in the northern part of Mossi territory, and secondly the isolated blacksmiths, such as those of Ouagadougou for example.

The blacksmiths who live in separate villages or quarters smelt
325 the iron ore in large furnaces in the bush. They do this once a year,
326 during the dry season, and the process takes one month.

The whole blacksmith village sets down to the task and builds a certain number of blast furnaces, at the ratio of one for every two blacksmiths.

The furnaces are built of red earth near the hills that contain iron ore, and it takes five days to build one of them. Once this is done each blacksmith pair takes over a furnace and uses it. The smiths do not use it together, incidentally, but each one in turn.

Our blacksmiths break up the soil with a soumbéré or taré. They break up pieces of ore and pile them near the furnace. They spread out a layer of dry wood at the bottom of the furnace, then a layer of ore, then another layer of wood, another layer of ore, etc., up to the top. Then the fire is lit.

The fire is stirred with bellows and kept up for three days. At the end of this period of time, the doors made at the bottom of the blast furnace are opened. The iron escapes through these special openings, which are distinct from the permanently open doors through which the slag runs out. On the fourth day the iron has cooled off, and it is removed from the little pits into which it has flowed. It is broken with an iron mallet and returned to the furnace.

The total labor lasts one month. Every evening our blacksmiths return to the village. Some of them produce ten loads of iron /513/ (about 300 kilograms), others only two or three (60 or 90 kilograms).

326 As for isolated blacksmiths, they do not smelt iron. They buy
135 it from the blacksmiths of the Yatenga (Ouahigouya circle) who
423 are great iron smelters and who own small, famed ferruginous hills around Ouahigouya.

326 Mossi blacksmiths make ouaka, koutiaga, axes, knives, daggers, swords, spearheads, arrowheads, razors, iron bracelets for women, men, nobles, spoons, horse bits, stirrups, spurs, etc. They also make needles of considerable thickness which are worth [435] 10 cowries apiece, or five for 1 sou.

During the winter season, they hardly make anything beside ouaka.* During the dry season, they make all the other items.

411 326 They also make zandé, or clubs with iron tips. Let us say a word about clubs, which are in a way the Mossi national weapon. A Mossi would believe himself dishonored if he were not to bear a club solemnly on his right shoulder wherever he goes. Even small boys carry them, proportioned to size, and they do this with no less solemnity than their elders.

Mossi clubs are of three kinds:

1. Some made wholly of wood, handle and body both, and carved all of one piece. They are called dori.

2. Others whose handle is made of wood, but whose head consists of a large round stone imbedded at the tip of the handle. These clubs are called gougou.

3. Finally, the clubs with a wooden handle and an iron mallet inserted perpendicularly at the tip of the handle. These are the zandé or zann'dé. Sometimes the handle is covered with hide, and this makes it richer and more handsome.

326 Blacksmiths make only the iron part of the zandé. The other kinds of clubs are made by the owners themselves.

Blacksmiths only make zandé on order. While they make ouaka and koutiaga in advance and have them taken /514/ to market in quantities, they only make zandé when someone comes and asks for one.

The Mossi blacksmiths, therefore, work sometimes on order and sometimes to build up their stock. They sell this stock at market through their children, just as their wives go there to sell the pottery they manufacture.

325 413 The tools used by Mossi blacksmiths are as follows:

1. A small anvil called kissiguiré, with a pointed iron piece underneath, which can be held in the hand or thrust into the ground.

* [i.e. A kind of large hoe, see p. 32 —Analyst]

323 wide, 2 meters in diameter, and open at the top), then some straw on which the pots are laid, and then more straw and firewood. They set this afire and keep it burning for twelve hours.

In order to polish their pots, the women take the bark of the [314] nobora or n'kouna. They soak it in huge canari for a whole day. The water acquires a reddish hue. The fired and cooled pots are immersed in these canari for a while, and then allowed to dry in the open air. When this is over, the pots may be taken to market and sold.

The blacksmiths' wives make their pottery during the dry season. During the winter season, they work in their husbands' fields.

326 241 During the winter season, Mossi blacksmiths work both at cultivation and at their trade, but mostly at cultivation. During the dry season, on the other hand, they work only at the blacksmith's trade.

As far as cultivation is concerned, they mostly grow small millet, followed by large white millet and large red millet, maize, peanuts, underground peas, sesame, and beans. They cultivate cotton and tobacco, but no indigo. Their wives sow gombo, etc.

326 231 /516/ They own livestock which their children herd. As a rule, they have a little more livestock than other Mossi, except for goats and donkeys. This, incidentally, should not surprise us, for the Negro blacksmiths of West Africa often display an ability for stockbreeding and especially for horse trading. Among the Mossi, however, this is not very pronounced.

326 The blacksmiths neither hunt nor fish, but they do engage in gathering activities like other Mossi. They exercise no industries other than those of iron and pottery. They do not work copper, silver, or gold. They do not work as weavers, either. They entrust their wives with the task of gathering and spinning whatever cotton they grow, and then they hand it over to the weavers.

326 438 They do undertake a little trading, slightly more in fact than the average Mossi. When a blacksmith has smelted a large quantity of iron, he sometimes purchases some livestock, leads it to Ouanké, buys kola nuts which he takes to Saraféré, and brings back salt from that locality. This is not done very frequently, however.

326 In short, the blacksmith's profession is of greater consequence to him than anything else, although he avails himself of several other occupations.

[564] Mossi blacksmiths do not form a caste. That is to say, anyone can marry among them.

306 439 Let us proceed to the jewelers or copper workers (niaka in Mossi). The Mossi have been familiar with copper for a long time, although West Africa does not produce it. The Yarsé have sought it at Ouanké, Kintampo, and even Kumasi from times immemorial. It comes from the coastal area, where it is brought by the Whites in the form of brass rods 30 or 40 centimeters long (like curtain rods). Nowadays, it is the British who supply the Gold Coast with copper, no doubt in the wake of the Portuguese and Dutch.

306 301 The niaka earns more money than the blacksmith. He buys the copper rods from the Dioula and makes them into various items /517/ such as women's copper leggings adorned with crocodiles, and thick copper bracelets worn at the wrists and ankles by women and soroné (pages). Depending on their thickness, these bracelets sell for 2,500 [435] to 20,000 cowries. He also makes women's copper hairpins, and low-price rings worth from 100 to 200 cowries.

306 532 Prior to the arrival of the French, these jewelers also made copper objects depicting everyday scenes, landscapes, huts. The chiefs bought them, but now these objects, at least the more ancient ones, have become very difficult to obtain. It seems that the German physician Frobenius, when he passed through Mossi territory at the end of 1908, acquired some very beautiful specimens of ancient Mossi manufacture for an exorbitant price. Nowadays, one [439] can imagine what the old industry was like by looking at the small items made at Ouagadougou by a few Europeanized Mossi who sell them on the spot for the benefit of local Whites. It might almost be said, therefore, that they manufacture them for export purposes. These items, made by the lost-wax process, are rather interesting and quite artistic for Blacks.

325 306 413 The tools of the niaka are about the same as those of the blacksmith:

1. The small portable anvil or kissiguiré.
2. The hammer or kouadara.
3. Shears (niougou) to pick copper pieces from the fire.

282 sell for 200 cowries, large ones for 400). He leaves them to soak
294 in a large canari with yogré seeds for twelve hours. Then he re-
435 moves the hair by hand, washes the skin thoroughly, and places it again in a canari with seeds of pélanaga (a tree that grows in the bush). He washes and rubs the hide with these seeds. Then he leaves it to dry in the sun after covering it with butter, real butter rather than karité butter. The skin may then be used to make various items.

Kinoga also buys cowhide at market to make sandals. One cowhide is worth 3,000 cowries. He puts it in a large canari where he leaves it soaking for three days, then he takes it out, removes the hair with a knife, and strikes the skin with a small stick to soften it. Whatever amount of leather is needed to make sandals is then removed from the hide, which is used up gradually as the need arises.

The shoemaker's tools are made by the blacksmith. These tools are worth 100 cowries apiece, except for the awl that is worth 20 and the wooden knife that is made by the shoemaker himself and worth 50. All of the shoemaker's tools taken together are thus worth 470 cowries, or only 50 centimes.

Our shoemaker makes the following items:

1. Sandals, first and foremost. The most expensive ones are worth 2,500 cowries a pair, the less expensive ones 1,500 cowries.

2. Leather grigris, bracelets, pouches, etc. The pouches are worth 100 cowries, the bracelets 50. He only makes them on order. It must be said that other shoemakers stock them up beforehand and have them taken to market.

Of course, what the shoemaker prepares is the physical part of the grigri, its outer covering. It is not he who gives the grigri its power, its soul.

3. Kinoga does not make satchels, goatskin bags, but other shoemakers do.

[415] /531/ There are goatskins used to store millet. Large ones are worth 1 franc and small ones 0.50 franc. Then, there are goatskins used to hold water. They are worth from 0.30 to 1 franc. Finally, there are small goatskins used as purses or coin bags and worth 0.20 franc.

[372] 4. Shoemakers also make leather cases for strike-a-light steel (200 cowries) and for needles (50 cowries). Both strike-a-light steel
[326] and needles are made by blacksmiths.

839 especially, subsisted upon it. The victims, children from twelve
439 to fifteen years old, were provided by the Moro Naba, who kept
304 them afterward or sold them to the Haoussa.

In 1900 our ambassador to Turkey learned that a shipment of eunuchs which had reached Constantinople had originated in Mossi territory, which we had occupied since 1896. He warned the Minister of Foreign Affairs, who notified his colleague the Minister of the Colonies. Strict orders were issued to put an end to this Mossi industry, which has since ceased to exist.

439 Let us finally add the grain trade, which is unusual in Mossi territory. In the years 1906, 1907, and 1908 which saw poor harvests, however, the Mossi were forced to acquire grain in Yatenga (Ouahigouya circle) and in Gourounsi territory by selling livestock.

We have now concluded our discussion of Mossi occupations. Let us proceed to a study of the family and the superposed social organisms.

Chapter II

The Mossi: The Family, Public Powers, and Religion

593 We must state first that the Mossi family is a partly decommunalized family. This may come as a surprise in view of the foregoing section on work (cultivation predominates, stockbreeding is poor, industries flourish, trade is nonexistent), which had led us to expect something altogether different. Nevertheless, this is a fact.

The family is even highly decommunalized, although not everywhere to the same degree. In this respect, five different family types are to be found.

596 The first two are quite rare. They would seem to be witnesses
326 to an ancient state of affairs which has now vanished. Thus, one finds the common patriarchal type among those blacksmiths who are gathered into /special/ quarters or even villages and whom we mentioned in the section on industries. This type is found only among them and not among isolated blacksmiths, where only the common Mossi family type occurs.

596 326 Are those blacksmiths who live in groups unaltered remnants of the ancient population as it existed prior to the Dagomba invasion? Are they autochthonous? Should their statement that they are not Mossi be interpreted in this light? This is probable, although by no means certain. In any case, the family among them is of the purest patriarchal cast.

596 326 592 Among them, all households belonging to a family occupy the same soukala. When a young man marries, he remains in the family soukala.

/543/ During the winter season, the occupants of the soukala work in the fields of the head of the soukala from six in the morning until three in the afternoon. From three o'clock on, they till their own little individual plots.

During the dry season, they all work together at the blacksmith's trade with the head of the soukala, and all profits devolve to the latter. They work from sunrise to sunset.

The head of the soukala provides them with food throughout the year. As for their clothing, they procure it themselves with the returns from their little plots. The same applies to bracelets, jewels, etc. (as for grigris, they do not like them).

The head of the soukala buys each man his first wife, and in return gives in marriage all the daughters of the soukala.

596 428 326 When the head of a soukala dies, it is his younger brother who takes command of the soukala. He also takes all the goods, fields, livestock, slaves, cowries, and the tools used to extract and work the iron. The sons get nothing. Everyone remains in the soukala.

When the supply of brothers has been exhausted, the oldest son in the whole soukala receives the inheritance.

If no males remain in the soukala, the sisters come first in line before the daughters if they have the same father and mother as the deceased, but after /them/ if they were born of the same father only. They take half of the movable property and give half to the daughters. They apportion their share evenly among themselves. The soukala and fields go to the village chief. If there are no sisters born of the same father and mother, the inheritance goes to the daughters, and next in line to the sisters born of the same father as the deceased. If there are neither sisters nor daughters, the whole estate goes to the village chief.

596
326 As we can see, the common patriarchal family is found among those blacksmiths who live in groups.

592 The second Mossi family type is one we had occasion to mention here and there in the section on work. Contrary to the first
596 type, which is found only in a special section of the population, this one occurs throughout the Mossi but as a rare /544/ and exceptional case. All the households in the family still live together, but every household works for itself. This is the type we studied among the Nankana and other groups of cultivator-breeders under the name of Nankana type No. 3 /not translated/.

593 We come now to those Mossi family types which are widespread rather than exceptional. They correspond to the Nankana type
592 No. 4 (every household lives separately and works separately), or rather they depart from it in the direction of even greater decommunalization. There are three variants, namely, one that corresponds to the pure Nankana type No. 4, and two where decommunalization is more accentuated. Let us describe them in turn.

Here is the first variant:

593 1. The households live separately. As soon as a young man
592 marries, he settles on his own with the help of his family.

596 When a family head gives one of the family's sons a wife, he uses a vacant soukala if there is one available. If there is none, the son builds a new soukala with the help of his father and of the family head.

2. Every household works separately (except for the clearing of family fields), procures its own food, clothing, and subsistence. The married son, however, comes and helps his father a little now and then. During the dry season, for example, he helps him repair the soukala. Or else he offers him small gifts from time to time.

When someone, on marrying, settles separately, the head of the family usually gives him some family field that was once cleared and cultivated and has since lain fallow.

3. Although households work separately, the children of the households are not given in marriage by their father and mother, but by the head of the family. The latter buys wives for the boys,
[583] but he also gives the daughters in marriage and receives the bride price.

567 When a master wants one of the sheep or beeves belonging to his
178 bagaré, the latter refuses to give it, or if he consents to sell the animal at market he gives his master but one-tenth of the cowries paid by the buyer. Nowadays, as a rule, the bagaré only "go
[426] along" when their master's debts are involved, and yet some of them run away with their belongings rather than pay those debts.

567 Let us also add that these slaves, who were mostly of Gourounsi
167 or Boussansé origin, now want to return to their own land, and there is a continuous exodus, slow but sure, of Mossi slaves toward the south. Since the French have strictly forbidden the purchase and sale of slaves, on the other hand, the sources of supply have dried out. All this makes it clear why among the Mossi, as incidentally throughout West Africa, we are progressing toward a slow but certain suppression of slavery and serfdom.

326 In closing, let us say that among the Mossi blacksmiths who
567 live in /special/ quarters or villages and whom we have already mentioned with regard to their patriarchal and nondecommunalized family type, we find true slaves of the common familial type such as we have described up to now, rather than serfs like the bagaré.

These slaves live in the same soukala as their master, whether married or unmarried, trade or house slaves. During the winter season, they all work on the fields of the soukala head from six in the morning to three in the afternoon, with the usual luncheon break. They have small individual plots, which they may work after three o'clock. During /567/ the dry season, they work all day at the blacksmith's trade with their master.

They are provided with food throughout the year by the head of the soukala, but they procure their own clothing, jewelry, grigri, etc. The soukala head buys the first wife for them and disposes of their daughters in return.

567 The estate of a deceased slave goes to his master and to his sons.
428 As far as livestock and cowries are concerned, the master takes half
326 and gives half to the son or sons. As for clothing, bracelets, etc., everything goes to the children. The latter share equally the part of their father's estate that devolves to them.

567 We can see that just as the family type of Mossi blacksmiths
326 bears witness to an older state of affairs, the status of slaves among them also bears witness to the ancient local conditions prior to

567 Dagomba conquest. Both family type and slave status, indeed, re-
326 fer back to the Bobo, Gourounsi, etc.

000 We come now to public powers. We refer the reader to Appendix 32 /not translated/ for a study of property regulations and neighborhood relations, and plunge forthwith into the study of public powers.

631 We already know that the Mossi political organization is centralized. The villages belong to cantons, which are in turn gathered into provinces under direct administration or into mere vassal provinces. At the summit of the hierarchy stands the king, the Moro Naba, the supreme chief of the Mossi, who lives at Ouagadougou. To give an idea of the former importance, or at least relative importance, of this empire, we shall state that in the Ouagadougou
[162] circle alone there were eight provinces including among them 300 cantons, 5,000 villages or small towns, and 861,700 inhabitants.

643 Let us begin our description of this political organism with the head, that is, with the Moro Naba.

Moro Naba means "chief of the Mossi," from naba, "chief" and Moro or Mora which means Mossi in the singular. Moro yields Mossi or Mossé in the plural. (The French have grown accustomed to saying "one Mossi, several Mossi," but this is a barbarism and one should /568/ actually say, "one Moro, several Mossi," just as one says, "one Gourounga, several Gourounsi," "one Kipirga, several Kipirsi," etc.). As for the word for "chief," it is both naba and soba in Mossi. Naba seems to be the word brought by the con-
[192] quering Mossi-Dagomba group, while soba is probably the word that was used by the autochtonous population to designate chiefs.

645 Prior to the French conquest, the Moro Naba was surrounded by a certain number of ministers or eminent dignitaries who were given 1) specific duties /at court/, 2) in addition, part of the territory to govern. This is what accounted for provinces over and above the cantons, at least in those areas that were administered directly, but the heads of those provinces did not reside there. They lived at Ouagadougou, and were first and foremost ministers of the Moro Naba.

They were:

782 dolo and millet flour. There was no set time for this. The flesh
778 of the sacrificed animals devolved to the sacrificer, the head of Sékou.

At present day sacred groves are still to be found in various Mossi villages. Thus, for example, there are three at Kabayoro, two of which belong to individuals and one to the village. The Earth chief /Tr.: Tengsoba/ of Kabayoro offers sacrifices to the village grove whenever the bara says so.

The Mossi also make sacrifices to the hills.

At Sabtinga, about 17 kilometers northwest of Ouagadougou, there is a rise in the ground called Tantiibo where the Moro Naba used to go once a year with the Baloum Naba, many chiefs and people at the time when the weather begins to grow cold. He ordered a beef, a chicken, millet flour, and a gourd of dolo to be taken along, and they were handed over to the head of the quarter where the hillock stood. This chief performed the sacrifice and begged the piece of ground to grant good health to the Moro Naba. Only
[839] the Moro Naba, the Balou, the sacred people (eunuchs), and the soroné were present at the sacrifice, Other people who had come to Sabtinga remained in the village, whence the Moro Naba set out on foot to the spot of the sacrifice.

At Kombé-Padanda, a small hillock located in a /589/ Ouagadougou quarter the same sacrifice was offered in the same fashion and at the same time of year.

326 Let us add that when Mossi blacksmiths go and smelt iron ore
782 in the bush, they kill chickens and offer millet flour on the spot where they extract the ore. The sacrifice is offered to the spirits of the hill, as well as to the Earth and to Naba Ouondé.

778 Sacrifices are made to watercourses as well as to hills, either
782 at fishing time or whenever the bara indicate that a certain stream requires a certain sacrifice.

825 As far as crocodiles are concerned, some of them are held
262 sacred by the Mossi. As for snakes, they are killed and usually eaten, but not everyone eats them. Some people abstain.

778 As for the Earth, the Moro Naba had sheep, chickens, millet
782 flour, and dolo handed over to the Baloum Naba through eunuchs several times a year, whenever a bara told him to do so. The Baloum Naba handed these gifts in person to the chief of Ouagadougou,

582 I. Differences of tribe or caste. The Mossi may not contract
326 marriage with blacksmiths. This is absolutely forbidden. However,
564 they may marry among the Foulsé, Samo, Peul, Yarsé, etc."

This calls for several remarks. The blacksmiths of Yatenga are Foulsé and not Mossi. However, it is not a tribal difference which dictates the prohibition under discussion, since the Mossi can marry among the Foulsé as a whole. It is rather a difference in caste. It must be noted, as we said above /not translated/, that the common Foulsé cannot marry blacksmiths either.

[171] Here, as in all of the /French/ Sudan, blacksmiths are both feared and scorned. Basically, they are regarded as fearful sorcerers.

582 II. Kinship. There must be a lapse of 200 years between the time of the betrothed couple and the time when their common ancestor lived. This is likewise an absolute impediment.

III. If a Mossi has relations with a young girl or woman belonging to his fiancée's soukala during the period of his engagement, the marriage cannot take place.

This impediment, however, is not absolute. If the guilty man begs for the forgiveness of the family head and the latter accords it, the union may be effected later."

582 IV. Unnatural practices. The marriage cannot take place: (1) if
839 the betrothed man has been caught in the act of sexual intercourse with a she-ass (a phenomenon none too rare in Yatenga); and (2) if the betrothed girl has relations with a native who had sexual intercourse with a she-ass. These impediments are absolute.

This is why the inhabitants of a Yatenga village (Dénia) who are reputed to have had relations with asses in former times may not marry outside their locality.

582 V. Infirmities. If the fiancé is blind, the marriage may not take
[132] place unless the girl consents to it. No one can constrain her to do so.

VI. Leprosy. The same applies when the fiancé has leprosy.

VII. Impuberty of the betrothed pair. The marriage cannot take place unless both parties are nubile. This is an absolute impediment, but in practice the problem rarely arises.

VIII. Insanity of one of the betrothed."

582 Question of virginity. The girl's virginity is not very important
836 here and, it must be pointed out, far less so than among the Bambara. This is, incidentally, connected with the fact that the marriage bond is less sound and the separation of the spouses easier to obtain. A combination of related facts makes the institution of marriage and

593 The Moro Naba, after he has been notified by the family council,
684 pronounces the forfeiture of paternal authority. In case of incest, the guilty party was driven out of the territory.

593 Duties of children toward their parents. —The children owe obedience to their father and mother. They also owe them respect.

Their labor obligations are distributed among the fields of the work group, the father's private fields, the mother's small private plots, and their own little plots. Naturally they work most on the large fields belonging to the work group.

304 Circumcision. —Circumcision is performed at the age of 13 or 14.
881 It takes place in the month of December, hence during the dry, cool season. At this time the children are not needed to help in the fields, as they are in the winter season. This is also the case in the hot, dry season, but at that time the wounds would heal less quickly. This leaves the dry, cold season, which is excellently suited to the treatment of the circumcised, a time when the children have nothing whatever to do and the grown-ups very little.

304 Circumcision is performed on a certain number of children at the
621 same time. When a small village is involved, all the children in the village are circumcised at once. When a large village is involved,
593 the children in each quarter are circumcised together. The children
881 themselves ask their big brother if they may be circumcised when they feel that they have reached a suitable age for this operation. The big brother decides and says yes or no.

304 The children also set the exact date for the circumcision and go to
326 the man who has charge of the operation to make the arrangements.
881 In Yatenga, as a rule, he is a blacksmith (at Ouahigouya, for example, from the quarter of the Baloum-Naba). Sometimes, however, non-blacksmiths, either Foulsé or Mossi, perform the operation. When a performer of operations dies, he is replaced by someone who knows how to circumcise, either a brother or a son of the deceased or someone from another family.

304 Circumcision is not performed in the evening or at night, as happens
881 among other Blacks of West Africa, but at six o'clock in the morning. A particularly kind man among the people of the quarter or of the village has been chosen by the children who are to be circumcised. He wakes them up on that morning and takes them to the man who is to perform the operation. Big brothers accompany their younger brothers, but the father and mother do not witness the operation and are not even

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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long been famous. The former are sometimes ridden but are used primarily as beasts of burden. Horses were and are still important for military and ceremonial purposes and for external trade to other areas.

The Mossi have never excelled in metalworking. The people in the northern part of the country have worked indigenous ores since aboriginal times. Those in the south get iron mainly from traders and caravans. The other metals which the Mossi smiths manufacture into tools and ornaments are also obtained from traders.

TRADE IN HISTORICAL TIMES

The geographic position of Mossi country has much to do with its being an important trade and market center. The country itself has always produced grain, cotton and livestock for export. And for several centuries caravans have passed through this region carrying Sudanese and Saharan products to the forest zones to the south, and carrying forest products back to the arid north. The beginning of this trade is lost in the dim past, but it safe to say that it developed shortly after or along with the founding of Timbuktu about 1100 A.D. The Mossi themselves were not definitely linked to this important *entrepot* until they raided it in 1328, but we can assume that they had been trading there for some time before that event took place. Similarly, we have no record of when the Mossi began trading with the forest zones, but we can also assume that this trade began around the same period or even before.

Our first evidence of Mossi trade and commerce comes from Europeans who were themselves interested in conducting their own trading activities with the peoples in the Bend of the Niger. Bowditch, an Englishman who had journeyed to Ashanti to sign a treaty facilitating the reopening of a profitable trade with the coast, wangled the first important piece of information about the Mossi from his reluctant hosts:

> Five journies from Yngwa is Mosee, a more warlike but less visited kingdom: it consists of many states, but the superior monarch is named Billa, and the capital Kookoopella. I place it to the N.W. because its merchants pass by Yngwa; they do not cross the Karhalla [White Volta] nor any river which is not fordable. (Bowditch 1819 : 180)

This information is not strictly correct since Koupela was not the capital of any of the Mossi kingdoms, but Bowditch's informant had probably heard of Koupela because it was the largest political entity near the large caravan center at Pouitenga.

361 /10/ The appearance of the villages indicates that their inhabitants feel safe. There are none of those hut clusters bunched together in [171] narrow walled-in areas to withstand the invasions of an El-hadj-Omar or of a Samory, as in Bambara country; none of those family groupings of flat-roofed huts, those strongholds sheltering the whole family from the grandfather to the last of his grandchildren to resist through sheer numbers the incursions of a more powerful neighbor, as in Gourounsi [542] country where the authority of chiefs is so weak. Here every family head, that is, a man with his wives, his unmarried children, and his servants, occupies a certain number of huts that together form his yri, a grouping Europeans call by its Bambara name, soukala.

342 The huts are circular and usually built of mud, but sometimes of 333 stakes driven into the ground and surrounded with seko, a kind of mat of plaited broad straw. The huts are surmounted with a roof, likewise of straw, resting on a wooden framework. When a native wishes to build a hut, he sets a date with a mason expert in laying mud bricks and notifies the village people. On the appointed day everyone comes to him. The women fetch water from the stream; the men excavate the soil a few meters from where the hut is to be erected; the children trample the mortar and carry to the mason the clods prepared by the old men who sit gravely around the mud pile. This is a festive occasion for the village, because the man who builds must supply drink for all, and food as well if he wishes to do things properly.

A circle is traced on the ground to indicate the outline of the hut, and the mason places the mud clods obliquely side by side along the circle. When the first round is finished, he starts another, and he proceeds in this fashion to mid-height. The work is then interrupted until the following day to give the first part a chance to dry. This is why several huts are usually built at the same time. No opening is left in the wall. When it is dry, a door is cut through, usually arched and so low that one must creep on hands and knees in order to get in. Well-to-do women close their hut with a wooden [414] door that opens inward; it is equipped with a wooden latch that works by means of a large key made of a stick with small iron rods perpendicularly attached to it. The children and even the husband usually leave their clothing, their luxury items, and their cowries in these closed huts which are better protected against thieves. Those who cannot afford this luxury of a door drive two stakes into the ground, one on each side of the opening, and slip a mat between the stakes and the wall.

323 467 the oven is built in one day. All those who cooperated in building it have the right to use it.

323 At Kombisiguiri, some potters have no ovens. They merely spread out millet stalks on the ground and place the canari on top. They light the millet, and the pots are fired in this fashion.

/521/ It is the potter himself who makes his tools, his crude basin, and his pestle.

Let us point out that the baouré, huge jars where the threshed millet is stored and which are about 2.50 meters high and proportionately wide, which look like enormous sandstone ink bottles and which I saw in the northern part of Mossi territory, are not made by the potters. They are built in each soukala by the inhabitants.

After the potters come the pipe makers. It is the old women who make pipes among the Mossi. They fetch the appropriate clay, [435] fashion the bowl of the pipe, and fire it. They sell it for 5 cowries.

333 Let us not forget the bricklayers, who are called tammétéba in Mossi. Like Gourounsi bricklayers, Mossi ones are primarily cultivators, and their fields net them much more than their trade. As among the Gourounsi, the bricklayers are not paid. They are merely fed for the duration of their work.

322 Following work with earth and clay, let us proceed to woodworking. It is represented among the Mossi by the koukoupersèba and séta.

Among certain populations of West Africa, the woodworker's trade is exercised by the blacksmiths (for example, among the Malinké, Dialonké, etc.). Among the Mossi, as among the Gourounsi, it is sharply distinct from the blacksmith's trade and exercised by the koukoupersèba, who are counterparts of the Gourounsi voguésara and Mandé debakala-lésemba. The koukoupersèba make daba handles, axe handles, small chairs which are very nicely tooled with a hot iron and which represent a horse's back with two crude heads, two outlines of a head, on either side.

Actually, the koukoupersèba are primarily cultivators. They work the soil during the rainy season. During the dry season, they make the various items just mentioned.

322 563 In addition to these people, there are the Laobé among the Mossi, that is to say, /522/ those men who are employed by the

Chapter 13

Dwellings of the Mossi Chiefs

342 554 787 We have seen, in an earlier chapter under "Labor Duties and Obligations of Mossi Subjects to their Chiefs," how the dwelling of the naba is built and repaired. We know also that the naba like all his subjects, consults a soothsayer to select the site for his dwelling. He needs to know whether he should keep his father's establishment, build a new one on the site of his grandfather's home, or finally, if the spirits are not favorable, whether he might build on unoccupied land.

342 554 The establishment of a naba differed from those of his subjects in former times in the great number of huts included within it. Also, there was an empty ostrich egg on the roof of each hut.

The sketch which follows shows the home of a naba before the arrival of the French. Such houses exist even today in certain areas.

There were no native houses with terraces or clay roofs. To be sure, the Mogho Naba had one, but although it was copied from the Djenné style, [214] it had, aside from a few doors and tiny windows, only a single opening in the ceiling the size of a canari. This was supposed to admit air to the inhabitants, and it was blocked up during the winter.

The Ouidi Naba (first minister) and the Kamsaongo Naba (chief eunuch) also had tata, but they were smaller. The former kept the sacred water (nam-tibo) and the latter the wealth of his master, the emperor.

342 177 A description of the typical dwelling of the Moaga will be given later. At present, especially since the installation of the [French] government at Ouagadougou, virtually all of the province and canton chiefs have dwellings more or less of the European type. The present tata of the Mogho Naba, the Baloum Naba, and the Ouidi Naba at Ouagadougou, those of the Konkistenga Naba at Imasshoro and at Zoétigomdé, and that of the Lallé Naba at Koudougou -- to mention only the principal ones -- prove that real progress has been made in housing by the Mossi chiefs.

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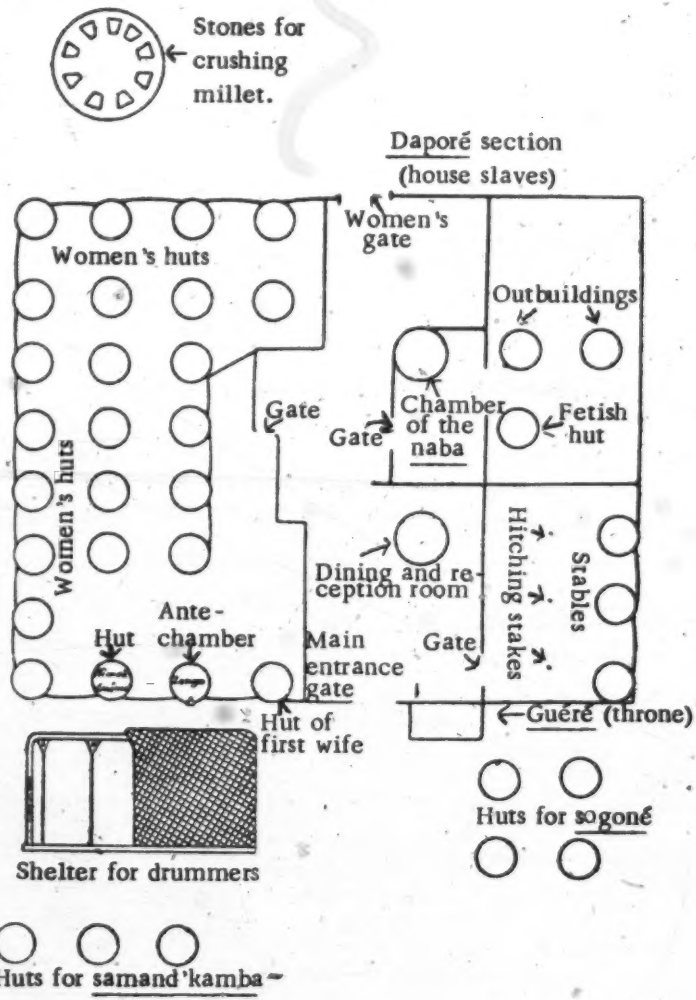

Dwelling of the Naba.

342 177 Of course, like all European houses in the region under discussion, these buildings are, unfortunately, made of mud bricks, but is that not the rule in French West Africa?

342 In the homes of those two ministers of the emperor who are most advanced, the reception rooms are arranged in such a way that callers benefit from a constant flow of fresh air through large openings. During periods of extreme heat, a punkah operated [417] by a sogoné in the middle [216] of the room provides air for the panting visitors. The wall, always whitewashed with kaolin, bears an [353] an advertisement or two, the picture of an important chief, or perhaps some family photographs, which enliven the apartments a bit. All of this shows a real anxiety on the part of the chiefs to develop along the lines of progress and civilization.

In recent years, some of the notables at Ouagadougou have built houses with clay roofs, not so much to live in as to safeguard their family valuables against fire and theft.

Finally, it should be noted that custom requires every new naba for the first three years of his reign to live in songodo, straw huts, which will be described later. Only then may he build with clay.

Dwellings of Mossi Subjects

342 787 Temporary dwelling. Before building his conjugal hut, the young man consults a soothsayer in order to make sure that the site chosen is not haunted by evil spirits and that he will have happiness and good fortune if he lives there.

342 787 Even if the soothsayer finds nothing especially alarming about the site, he always orders a chicken or other animal to be sacrificed or alms to be given. The young man arranges with the village elder [217] or, if he is a [Nioniosse], with the Tingsoba (from tenga "earth," and soba, "master"), to sacrifice the victim.

The Tingsoba goes to the site and calls for two small gourds which contain ordinary water and water mixed with flour, respectively. He invokes all his ancestors and pours the water on the ground, praying God to accept it for His wife, Tinga, who is absorbing it. Then he kills the chicken, saying: "On -- on,

342 782 mamé ka koud'ti y a niesmé yé ya saramb' boumbou, yaramb' boumbou, ti oua ta mamé" (which means something to this effect, "Accept the offering which I present in the name of X.... He appealed to me because I am the Tingsoba of the village. I do not consider myself to be more able than the other villagers, but this ceremony is a matter concerning our ancestors and I inherited the position from my predecessors").

The chicken is held with its feet up and head down, so that the blood mixes with the water having flour in it, and then it is thrown a short distance away. If the offering is accepted, the victim will fall on its back. Then it is hastily picked up, and a few feathers are pulled out and stuck into the slightly coagulated blood.

The chicken is given to the children to be plucked and roasted on the fire without salt or pepper. A leg is offered to the Tingsoba, and the rest of the meat is eaten by the family of the young man.

Part of the liver (saonré), however, is thrown onto the place of the sacrifice and thus offered to the spirits, [218] the invisible inhabitants of the place, so they will look favorably on the new household and help the couple to have children.

It should be noted that the Tingsoba may turn in any direction to make the sacrifice since no particular orientation is required.

342 A young husband's temporary dwelling is a simple straw hut made of the branches of a tree called randega. The branches are stuck into the ground, tied together at the top, walled around the base with Mossi mats (sougzakpinri), and roofed with thatch.

Permanent dwelling. After a year in the temporary dwelling the young man starts to build his permanent home if his means allow it. This is a group of clay huts, joined to each other by more or less even walls.

The earth must first be dug up, and the soil removed from the excavation must be dampened and molded into balls of mortar. A circle is laid out on the site by means of a string tied to a central stake. The foundation is built to a depth of about twenty centimeters. Mortar is put on the foundation, and construction of the walls is begun. These are always circular in form, and their dimensions vary. The mortar is allowed to dry before the work

342 is continued, and the process goes on until the hut is completed, that is, when it reaches a height of about 1.65 meters. The house is built without any openings, but when the walls are up, a [219] low door is put in, having the shape of a pointed arch. The interior of many Mossi houses is divided by a low wall, called kogré, which makes the hut very dark. A few small holes are made with the handle of a daba, and these, with the low door, are [726] the only openings. In time of war, the Moaga used to shoot his arrows through these tiny holes. Before the roof is put on, the [751] walls are daubed with wet ashes, a practice which is supposed to guarantee good health for the new inhabitants.

The roof is conical in shape. It is made with poles which are tightly tied at the top with vines. Stiff mats, zarsé, are placed on the poles. They are held in place with fibers and are covered with braided straw. Some twenty persons are needed to put up the roof. The construction of the house is then finished. Only the plastering remains to be done. For this job, the women collect a special kind of earth, boalga, which they mix with manure from cows or horses and then coat the walls with it. When this operation is completed, the women cover the floor with a ferruginous material that is sprinkled with water and tamped down with bits of flat wood called silpama. After the floor has been smoothed down, the sasgo is the next step. This involves covering the surface with a sticky material, boudou, mixed with ground charcoal. This is rubbed over and over with glass sherds or special stones called sassega. The shiny black surface obtained in this fashion prevents the ferruginous material from soiling the family's clothes. Some [824] people sprinkle the finished floor with kanmé, an infusion made of the skin of the néré fruit, in order to make it wear well.

[220] Construction workers. The master of the house is aided by his own brothers and other relatives in the same clan. He does not request help from outsiders. The women's job is to get the water needed for the mortar.

The earth used in building is taken from a hole near the house, the tan-nako (from tando, "earth," and nako, "hole"). This excavation is later filled with all the waste from the house and ordure from the courtyard. The tan-nako, well fertilized in this manner is planted with maize, and this field is called the kamanga.

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412 Tools. The only tools used are the sitoiga (native pickaxe) and the wanka (hoe).

352 House furnishings. (a) The man's hut. The only furnishings in a man's hut are a mat or thin secco, a bolster made of cotton strips or kapok, a quiver, the club, some arrows, the bow, a large knife (zangoégo), and a spear. Small bags of charms and other amulets hang from the wall here and there, and there is a sort of oval straw basket, pilgou, in which clothing is stored.

(b) The woman's hut. From one end of the hut to the other there are billi, small pieces of wood fastened to the wall to hold gourds, bowls (lensé), earthenware basins (lassé), ladles (soutissi), etc.

In the rear of the room lumps of dried earth, [221] hollowed in the center, hold the vessels, and pots, dougdo, which serve both as storage bins for clothing and as granaries for the produce of the woman's own garden.

592 Plan of a compound. As one enters a compound, the huts to left are those of the women and the master's huts stand to the right. Completely outside the establishment, there are one or two straw huts, similar to those already described, which provide sleeping quarters for the dakompa (young men).

[585] The head of the establishment lives alone. It could hardly be otherwise, since he summons his wives in turn.

The women live with their young children or with girls betrothed to their husband, until, of course, these girls receive huts of their own.

343 Kitchen arrangements. It is exceedingly rare among the Mossi to find a hut used specifically for cooking. The wife's bedroom serves also as a kitchen.

Ordinarily the husband issues provisions to the wife who is
592 cooking for the family, but there are exceptions to this rule. At
595 Ouagadougou, for example, most of the wives provide the food for
252 the husband. The latter furnishes provisions only during the winter when the fields are being worked.

[222] The wives take turns preparing the food. The woman on duty is aided by her co-wives in grinding the millet on the millstone (néré) of the section, but she alone prepares the millet cake, sagbo.

1: Delobsom--160 I-5 (no date) 1933 FA28 Mossi FA28

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The Home of the Gounga Naba.

From the Mission of the White Fathers at Ouagadougou.

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The Cliffs of Bandiagara (Sudan).

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Entering the Bush.

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Above: A Baobab.
Below: Mossi Village.

361 /10/ The appearance of the villages indicates that their inhabitants feel safe. There are none of those hut clusters bunched together in [171] narrow walled-in areas to withstand the invasions of an El-hadj-Omar or of a Samory, as in Bambara country; none of those family groupings of flat-roofed huts, those strongholds sheltering the whole family from the grandfather to the last of his grandchildren to resist through sheer numbers the incursions of a more powerful neighbor, as in Gourounsi [592] country where the authority of chiefs is so weak. Here every family head, that is, a man with his wives, his unmarried children, and his servants, occupies a certain number of huts that together form his yri, a grouping Europeans call by its Bambara name, soukala.

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592 A typical soukala consists of the master's hut, a hut for each wife, one hut for the sheep and goats, another for the horse if he has one, a hut for the family mill, and, finally, a receiving hut with two doors sufficiently high to permit entrance without stooping and set sometimes as an entrance way and sometimes within the cluster of huts. All [351] these dwellings stand in a circle and are joined either by a cob wall or by /11/ mat fences taller than a man and held up by stakes. The master's hut, which usually stands beside the huts for the horses and sheep, is set off from the others by mats to insure his privacy. A low wall describes an arc within the inner courtyard; this is the kitchen when it is not raining. Big jars of fired clay which are used to brew [273 415] millet beer rest between the huts. In front of this cluster of huts, a shelter is built, usually high enough to permit standing and consisting basically of forked stakes with branches and séko resting upon them; this shelter serves as a refuge during the hot part of the day. Small boys and unmarried girls live with their mother, while older boys, servants, and slaves each have their separate huts which face the dwellings of the master and his wives.

The term yri or soukala covers this whole complex of structures. [591] Each soukala is a distinct unit, and, some time after they marry, the children build their own residence, set completely apart from that of their parents, often in another part of the village and sometimes in [361] another village altogether. The soukala stand fifteen to twenty meters apart, and, because of this, the villages, though adequately concentrated, cover a rather extensive area. The heads of cantons 342 place an ostrich egg at the peak of the roof on their own dwellings, [237] and some even build terraced huts higher than the surrounding dwell- [554] ings. They keep their riches in these huts and a prison in the base- [697] ment. An earthen stairway leads to the terrace where the master of [512] the house receives his guests when the sun begins to sink on the horizon.

721 These people, apparently so peaceful today, were formerly quite warlike and went off to war at the slightest pretext. Foreign to the land they now occupy, the Mossi must have conquered it by force of arms. The Tarik-es-Soudan /History of Sudan/ relates that the people of Yatenga seized Timbuktu in the fourteenth century, and in 721 the fifteenth they probably carried their incursions as far as Lake 701 Bébo and even Oualata. (4) The Mossi army was greatly feared.

4. Delafosse, op. cit., Vol. 2, p. 80.

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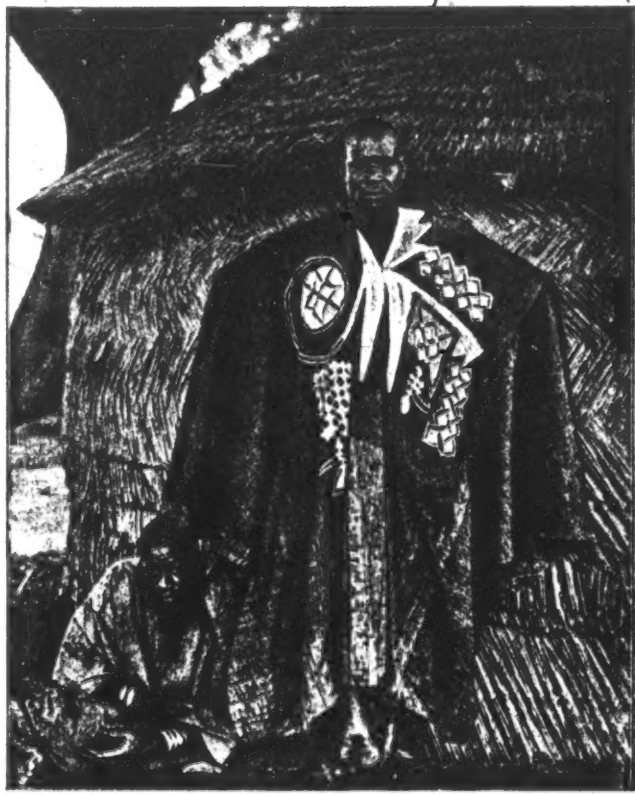

A Mossi Province Chief.

The Moro Naba of the Mossi.

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Above: A Naba and his Men.
Below: Mossi Elders.

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The Large Mossi Drums.

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Dance of Young Mossi Girls.

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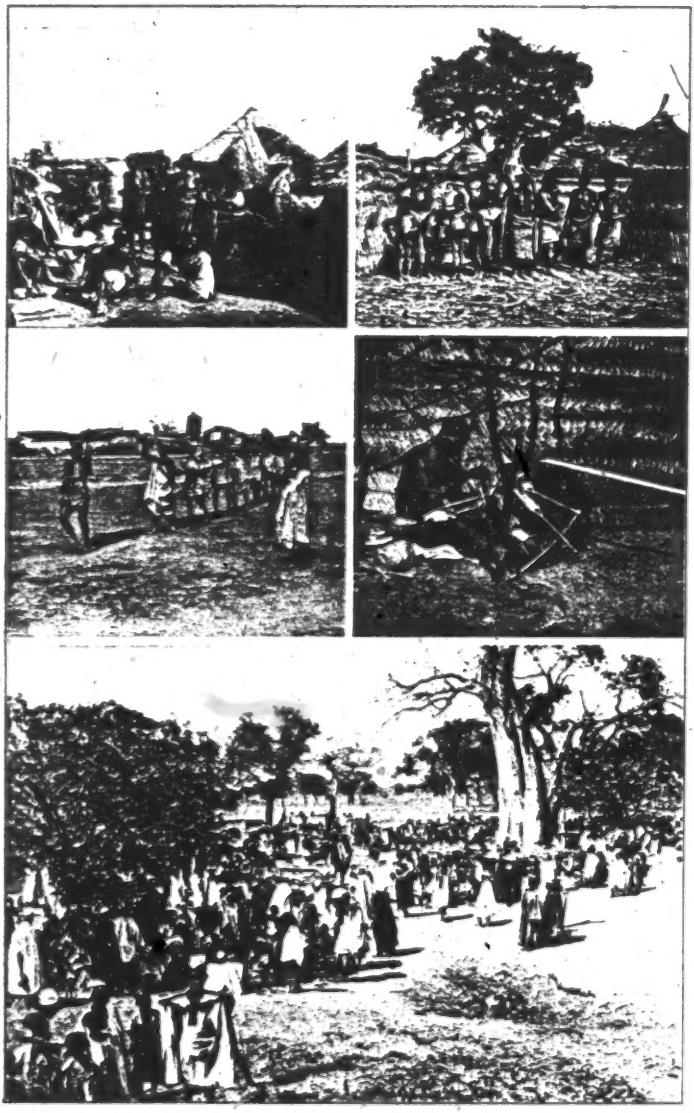

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Above: Inside a Soukala. Above: The Occupants of a Soukala.
Middle: Load-bearers. Middle: Weaver.
Below: Marketplace.

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Above: Cooking Sarabo.
Below: Outdoor Kitchen.

Above: Millet Granaries.
Below: Riding an Ox.

the ancestral spirits, he is the principal political and religious authority within his lineage. 596

The single term *boodoo* is used to refer to three separate groups: the sib, the lineage, and the local residential kin group described above. Aside from formalized recognition of patrilineal descent and inheritance, the lineage functions most significantly as a local residential kin group in which the economic and social participation of the female non-members is as important as that of the men. Although the men are most prominent in the direction of its affairs, their wives have a considerable, if somewhat indirect, effect upon decisions made. Even in the relationship of the members of the lineage to their ancestral spirits (*kiemse*), the women play an important part in preparing the food and the libations to be offered. They give birth to the members of the lineage, nourish them until weaning (usually at the age of two), and provide them with guidance and training for their ascribed roles. In the education of the female members of the lineage the wives play a more important part than the men. But it is in their economic activities that the significance of the women's role is best seen. In addition to their farm work, they co-operate fully in repairing roofs, flooring the courtyards, and even assisting in the brick-making which precedes house-building. The economic and social contribution of the wives is of equal importance with that of the husbands and sons, and it is more important than that of the daughters, since females born into the lineage marry and leave just as they become fully productive members of their fathers' households. 562 613

Daughters, however, serve their lineage in a different way. As they are successful in winning for themselves a good name in the households of their husbands, so the bond of economic and social co-operation established between the two lineages at the time of marriage is strengthened. When they mature, they return to assist the members of their lineage with ritual obligations to the ancestors. If they are left childless at their husband's death, they may return to their father's household to reside. [602]

Separated from one another by millet fields and the public way, the dwelling of each Mossi kin group has the appearance of a small walled village. Each round mud house with its thatched roof has a separate courtyard which is usually contiguous to the courtyards of the other houses in the residential unit of which it is a part. The individual dwellings are constructed in such a way—the wall of each house or courtyard being contiguous to that of the nearest neighbor—as to form a circular wall whose exterior is closed at all but two points. The dwelling of each kin group has a small exit and a large open entrance way just within which is located a thatch-covered sun shelter (*zande*) where the men of the lineage gather to rest, to work at small crafts, and to talk. Guests are 592 342 [343]

5: Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1959
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342 received, gossip exchanged, and social and ceremonial obligations dis-
592 cussed in its shade. Here, also, the men of the lineage take their meals,
brought out to them from the kitchens of their wives and set before them
[264] by their sons, who first attend their fathers and then dine on what remains.

592 A few paces away is the grinding platform (*nere*) where the women
252 gather to prepare the grain for their families' meals. This great circular mud table, some twenty feet in diameter, is raised about three feet from the ground. Its surface is beaten hard and worked over with cinders and manure to make it rainproof. Each woman has her assigned place at this
[512] platform where she keeps her pestle and where she stations herself at dawn and again at dusk to grind her millet and learn the news of the day.

Frequently found at the outer perimeter of the dwelling of the Mossi
592 kin group is the house of the son of a lineage woman who has returned from his father's household to live in the benevolent presence of his mother's family, with whom he enjoys an especially permissive relationship. The house set aside for the residence of the young unmarried men of the lineage is also located on the outer edge of the compound dwelling.

A recent addition to the traditional pattern of village organization
555 described above is the independent households of socially ambitious
184 individuals who have chosen to separate themselves from the residences of their lineages in order to profit from their own economic or religious enterprises. Many have become independently wealthy through successful commercial ventures; others, as a result of conversion to Islam, have gained prestige through religious authority and wealth through the tuition and services provided by the Koranic students. Often these people are much younger than their lineage elders, not in line for the inheritance of political or religious authority through traditional channels, and unwilling either to accept the authority of their seniors or to share economically with the less prosperous members of their lineages. They are deviants, in conflict with the communal patterns of consumption and with the emphasis on accepting established authority which characterizes the traditional social organization of the Mossi.

THE TRADITIONAL ECONOMY

613 Much agricultural endeavor is necessarily co-operative. Each farmer
476 is dependent on the assistance of his kinsmen to get his fields seeded,
243 cultivated, and harvested in the short time during which each of these operations must take place. However, the yield from his field remains his own, to be shared only with his own wives and children. Members of the lineage also work in the fields under the specific control of the lineage elder. Although the harvest from these fields is stored in the granary

[i.e. at a sun shelter in the entrance-way. — Analyst]

304 881 notified, nor are the family heads. The women, girls, and other boys (those who are not to be circumcised) cannot witness the operation, and this is actually forbidden to them. Circumcision is performed in the bush, 500 meters from the village, in the open air by the side of a tree. There is no location determined by custom, however, and a spot is chosen each year at will.

The man who is performing the operation ties the tip of the patient's prepuce with a string /259/, and the boy squats down. A small block of wood is placed under the penis, and the tip of the penis rests upon it. The man places a small iron cleaver on the spot marked by the string, and deals it a sharp, neat blow with a stone, so the blade will make a clean cut. Naturally, a copious hemorrhage ensues. It is [752] first allowed to take its course for a while, and then the man stanches it by putting dust upon the wound. Each child is circumcised in turn. When the operations are over, the man who was chosen, the nané, leads the circumcised boys to another spot, 500 meters from the village, under a tree. He has the heads of the children's families notified (and they notify in turn the children's parents) that the boys have just been circumcised and beg forgiveness for having done this without telling them. Family heads, fathers, and mothers naturally forgive in accordance with custom. Meanwhile, the boys are taking care of themselves. By tying a string around the body, they lift the penis so its tip will not rub against the thighs. The string holds another cord which lifts the penis in a horizontal position. To maintain it in this position, they also place under the penis a little piece of forked wood, the tip of which rests on the testicles. They do not dress the wounds as yet. This will not be done until three days have passed.

304 342 881 Meanwhile, the men of the circumcised boys' compounds build two sheds in Mossi style (low, on forks, with a thick straw roof), one outside the village where the young men are, the other inside the village in front of the compound of the nané. Food for the circumcised boys is provided by their families. Each mother makes sarabou for her son, but the mothers do not bring it themselves, for, being women, they are not permitted to see the newly-circumcised boys. They send the sarabou through some boy who has already been circumcised. In the evening when it is quite dark, around seven o'clock, the nané brings the children to sleep under the shed erected in the village. Before daybreak in the morning they will, like shadows, leave again for the bush.

513 The Mogho Naba slept in a grass hut in the palace compound. Two

643 reasons are given for the choice of a grass hut over a brick building: first, [342] the grass hut was considered better protection against sorcerers, who were [754] believed to induce storms that destroy buildings and their occupants; second, it was believed that the ruler's ancestors preferred to visit grass huts [775] because it was easier for them to enter through the interstices in the walls. [644] When the monarch retired for the night, one of his pages stood guard at the door. The Mogho Naba usually slept all night, but he occasionally made the rounds with a page to check on the palace guards or the safety (and virtue) of his wives.

643 The routine of the Mogho Naba seldom varied. Only in times of danger [644] or on great ceremonial occasions did protocol permit any major changes in court procedure. Normally, pages, ministers, and other court officials adhered very strictly to their traditional tasks.

The Mossi considered the king's office to be such a difficult one that even today they say, *Mogho Naba toumde ya yida ja* ("The Mogho Naba's task is the most difficult of all"). Nevertheless, the Mogho Naba's office was always eagerly sought, and considerable care had to be exercised to ensure that the right person was chosen. As soon as the incumbent Mogho [645] Naba died, and even before he was buried, the Ouidi Naba, as prime minister, began the consultations leading to the selection of a new monarch. Mossi custom decreed that the eldest son of a previous ruler be chosen as the new Mogho Naba. This choice was not automatic, however, in view of the primary consideration that the person selected should have the skill to "keep" the country. Other qualifications for office were membership in the royal minimal lineage, soundness of body and mind, and sufficient age to command universal respect. Given these requirements and the lack of any provisions for a regency, it is not surprising that a dead ruler's sons, brothers, uncles, and even grandchildren—that is, his entire babissi—should have competed to "eat the nam" (accede to power).[13] Of the thirty-four kings who have ruled since Oubri, the founder of the Ouagadougou dynasty, twelve succeeded their brothers and twenty-two their fathers. Interestingly enough, there is some indication that at the beginning of the Ouagadougou dynasty, the successor of a king was usually chosen from among his brothers before the nam was passed on to the next generation.[14] For example, Oubri's four sons all reigned in turn before the kingship descended to the son of the last brother in office. Then, two of this brother's sons reigned before the nam descended to a new generation. Initially, then, seniority within the royal lineage, like seniority within the local ruling lineages, may have been determined by generation. On the other hand, accidental factors may have governed: a weak state organization may have

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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fied his sexual desires. Since these women were in the monarch's favor, they were better dressed than the other wives and received more attention from him. The dogunba generally cultivated a large field in common with the aid of the palace retainers, but some insisted on cultivating their own fields instead. Like the other wives, the dogunba usually lived in huts of their own. Childless women sometimes shared the same hut until one of them became pregnant and had to set up a hut for herself and her child.

Those wives who lived in special villages under the supervision of eunuchs rarely went to the palace. Usually, they were past childbearing age or had lost favor with the monarch. They cultivated plots of land, spun cotton, and prepared locust-bean flour, locust-bean "balls," and shea butter. They kept a part of the produce for their own use and sent the remainder to the palace stores; the same arrangement obtained for all three categories of palace wives.

The Mogho Naba's heir was usually born while his father was still Crown Prince. He was never born in his father's compound because, unlike other Mossi women, the wife of a Mogho Naba or Crown Prince returned to her father's house for confinement. As soon as she announced her pregnancy, the Pughtiema or one of the older wives held a ceremony to notify the ancestors. Once the rite had been completed, the wife was sent to her relatives for fear that she might be harmed by her less fortunate co-wives. If the child was a boy, the ruler or Crown Prince was notified immediately, because the important privileges of a first-born hinged upon this notification. Since several wives of the Mogho Naba might be pregnant at the same time and errors might be made about the onset and duration of pregnancy, primogeniture had to be established immediately to forestall dynastic conflicts. For example, it is commonly believed that the present Doulougou Naba was born several days before Mogho Naba Sagha II (1942–57) but was deprived of the nam because the messenger who brought news of his birth reached Mogho Naba Kom after the messenger who announced Sagha's birth. Undoubtedly, such allegations were sometimes used to foster and support dynastic rebellions.

So strong was the fear that the most likely heir to the nam would be harmed by jealous co-wives that the child and his mother never returned to the palace except for brief visits on ceremonial occasions. The young prince remained with his mother's relatives and was guarded and educated by servants sent from the palace. If his father was on the throne at Ouagadougou when the boy reached the age of ten, he was formally installed as chief of Djiba district, the traditional seat of the Crown Prince. If his father was not on the throne, the boy remained with his mother's relatives and

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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Visitors to the court of Moghho Nába Sanom salute him in the traditional Mossi manner.
From Louis Binger, *Du Niger au Golfe de Guinée par le pays Kong et le Mossi, 1887–1889* (Paris, 1892).

[p. 178 - A]

644 fields. On that day, the Mogho Naba had one or two cows
651 slaughtered and a large quantity of sagbo (millet cakes) prepared
241 for the workers. If the latter, after being assembled two or three times in the manner indicated above, were not finished with all the fields, the work was carried on by the samand'kamba (the people who dwelt in the outer courtyard of the Mogho Naba).

644 The emperor, however, received none of the millet grown in
574 his own fields, which, incidentally, did not have their present boundaries. This millet was reserved exclusively [74] for use as food for foreign visitors and for the feeding of horses (1).

1. For the ceremony of threshing this millet (kawinré), see the special chapter below [Chapter 16].

644 It was the duty of the canton chiefs and the ministers to pro-
651 vide loads of millet for the use of the Mogho Naba and his harem ("harem" should be understood to mean all young or middle-aged women, but to exclude the elderly women who have to support themselves and who have their private fields).

644 (b) Repair of the houses of the Mogho Naba. The work of
651 building and repairing the houses actually belonging to the em-
356 peror fell entirely upon the inhabitants of Bilbalogo (section of the Baloum Naba), Kamsaonghin (section of the chief eunuch), and Dapoya (section of the slaves of the Mogho Naba).

[343] The outbuildings, wédanga, four round huts with thatched roofs located outside the emperor's house, served as stables for the horses given to the Mogho Naba by canton chiefs or other personages and were built and maintained by three ministers, the Ouidi Naba, Larrhallé Naba, and Gounga Naba, with the help of the people in their sections.

The tamping of the floors and clay roofs was done wholly by the wives of the persons responsible for [75] the construction or repair, that is, the wives of the ministers and of the inhabitants of their sections.

Labor service due the province chiefs, ministers of the emperor.

651 (a) Cultivation of fields. The fields belonging to the ministers
645 of the Mogho Naba were cultivated by a system of payments in kind
241 as follows.

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412 Tools. The only tools used are the sitoiga (native pickaxe) and the wanka (hoe).

352 House furnishings. (a) The man's hut. The only furnishings in a man's hut are a mat or thin secco, a bolster made of cotton strips or kapok, a quiver, the club, some arrows, the bow, a large knife (zangoégo), and a spear. Small bags of charms and other amulets hang from the wall here and there, and there is a sort of oval straw basket, pilgou, in which clothing is stored.

(b) The woman's hut. From one end of the hut to the other there are billi, small pieces of wood fastened to the wall to hold gourds, bowls (lensé), earthenware basins (lassé), ladles (soutissi), etc.

In the rear of the room lumps of dried earth, [221] hollowed in the center, hold the vessels, and pots, dougdo, which serve both as storage bins for clothing and as granaries for the produce of the woman's own garden.

592 Plan of a compound. As one enters a compound, the huts to left are those of the women and the master's huts stand to the right. Completely outside the establishment, there are one or two straw huts, similar to those already described, which provide sleeping quarters for the dakompa (young men).

[585] The head of the establishment lives alone. It could hardly be otherwise, since he summons his wives in turn.

The women live with their young children or with girls betrothed to their husband, until, of course, these girls receive huts of their own.

● 343 Kitchen arrangements. It is exceedingly rare among the Mossi to find a hut used specifically for cooking. The wife's bedroom serves also as a kitchen.

592 Ordinarily the husband issues provisions to the wife who is
595 cooking for the family, but there are exceptions to this rule. At
252 Ouagadougou, for example, most of the wives provide the food for the husband. The latter furnishes provisions only during the winter when the fields are being worked.

[222] The wives take turns preparing the food. The woman on duty is aided by her co-wives in grinding the millet on the millstone (néré) of the section, but she alone prepares the millet cake, sagbo.

343 Chicken house and pens. Every head of a compound has a
235 small straw hut for fowl within his establishment. There is also a
231 small round hut of clay for the sheep and goats.

356 Repair of houses. When an establishment is damaged by rain or is in need of repair, the work is done by the residents (the head of the family and the dakompa, as well as the father's wives and brothers) with no help from outsiders. There is no pay beyond the usual meals. The head of the family merely says to the workers when the work has been completed: "N'fa nel toumtogo, imaou nian (thanks for the hard work, many thanks for the labor)."

[223] Chapter 14

Mossi Clothing

Dress of the Naba

291 In this chapter we shall examine the various modifications
554 and improvements in the dress of Mossi chiefs.
435 1. Before and during the first twenty years of the French occupation. (a) Zangoego pelga: a large robe made of narrow bands of cotton fabric, rather expertly woven. These robes, which are made and embroidered by specialists, used to cost from 70,000 to 100,000 cowries (1).

1. One hundred francs. The five-franc note is now worth 1,000 cowries. The silver five-franc piece was worth from 5,000 to 7,000 cowries, depending on the fluctuations of exchange.

(b) Karfo: a large robe, dark blue in color, made of the same material as the preceding (50,000 to 70,000 cowries).

(c) Noufa: a large robe and trousers, made of very fine fabric in a dark gray color. It had the value of two slaves or 70,000 cowries for the robe and 50,000 for the trousers.

643 241 782 pronounces a few sacramental words and lightly sprinkles the millet, saying: "Zâbre saga Ybéogo sâga, samb'da kôbo la ka toin sameb'la fi yé (the morning and evening rains may put a stop to the cultivation of the fields, but cannot injure the health of the King)." He next takes a straw broom (sagha) and pulls it apart in order to get a bit of millet to put into the lagha mentioned above. He goes then to the temporary granary (lourgho, granary [343] made of Mossi secco) and walks around it three times. An emissary of the emperor gives him a white rooster (nora-pelga), some beer (dam), and zom-kom (water with flour in it). The priest sits down in the shade of the lourgho and before making the sacrifice pronounces the following words: "Naba Siguiri bad'kom, deghin kon Naba Wogbo, tib reg, kon Naba Sanum, tib kon Naba Koutou, tib reg' kon Naba Baongo, tib kon Naba Karfo, tib reg'kon Naba Sawadogo, tib reg la be kon Nab, gnimassem, la lafi," which means literally, "I offer this rooster, this water with flour, and this beer to Naba Siguiri (father of the reigning emperor) in order that he will persuade the Mogho Nabas Wobgo, Sanum, Koukou, Baongo, Karfo, and Sawadogo, to accept them, so that the emperor may enjoy good health and happiness."

The Tengsoba then hands the small quantity of millet [254] which he took earlier to the pugtiéma (first wife of the king) to be made into a millet cake and offered to the spirits (manes of deceased emperors and other spirits of the threshing floor).

643 251 Transporting the millet to the granaries. The wives, daughters, and sisters of the Mogho Naba are alone given the duty of carrying the millet to the granaries (baoré) (1). We have already noted that

1. This baoré granary is made of earth mixed with quantities of straw.

there are supposed to be a hundred loads of grain, even though the harvest may not fill twenty baskets. The number of baskets required by custom is attained by putting a small quantity of millet in each basket.

643 241 The millet intentionally left on the zéiga. A little millet is purposely left here and there on the zéiga, and the Kassiri Naba (village chief) takes it for his own use. This signal favor, however,

1: Delobsom--163 I-5 (no date) 1933 FA28 Mossi FA28

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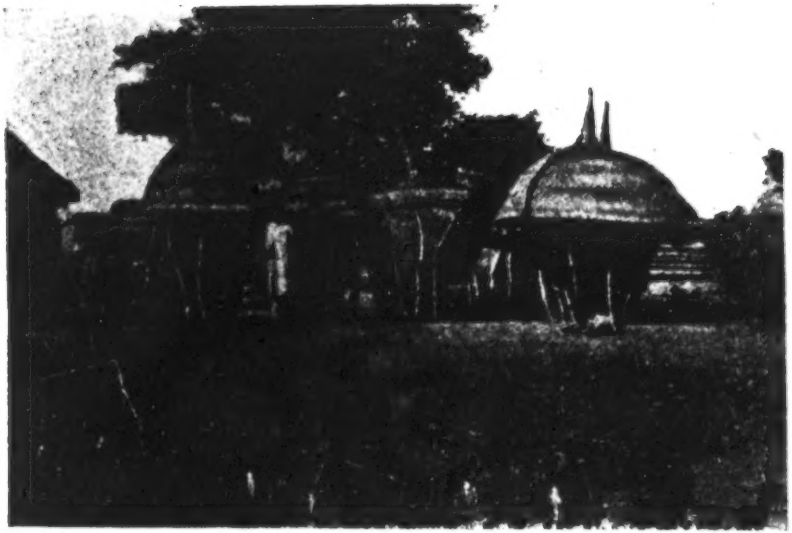

Large Mossi Granaries.

From the Mission of the White Fathers at Ouagadougou.

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Above: Water Carriers.
Below: Youths Returning from the Bush with Bundles of Straw.

Above: Threshing Millet.
Below: Winnowing Millet. Millet Granaries in the Background.

22/ for roasting and is replaced with green millet, eaten raw after being
24/ beaten with a small stick to remove the chaff. /47/ Certain kinds of
262 large millet are sweet and not too unpleasant to eat in this fashion.
Horses grow fat because millet is their staple food and they may eat
221 as much as they please. Men also profit greatly, because beer brewed
241 from new millet tastes much better than that made from old millet,
273 and when millet abounds, drink is never wanting. At this time rice is harvested, threshed on the threshing floors, and laid aside carefully for festive occasions.

221 At the end of October the rains have stopped almost completely.
241 The beans are gathered and laid out in the fields on millet stalks or on séko held up from the ground by forked stakes to keep the termites from eating them, or the beans may be brought home and tossed on the séko which serve as shelters in front of the soukala. Now is the time to harvest the small millet, which is dry. The millet stalks are severed at ground level by the men and laid out with all heads oriented in the same direction to facilitate the work of the women, who cut off the heads and gather them in heaps. When the millet has been cut, the women fill their baskets. The largest containers are used for the occasion, and each woman uses her ingenuity to pile the millet as high as possible over her basket, using the longest ears or bean stems as supports, like the Zouaves who vie for the tallest pack. Should the line of women on their way back to the village meet a man known for his generosity, they sing, cry out, and surround him until he throws them a few handfuls of cowries to buy a jar of beer.

221 As they near the threshing floor their cries get louder, and each
241 woman comes to the granary and hands her basket to the man who
251 stands there. These granaries are very crudely built and consist basi-
343 cally of sticks driven into the ground in a circle to hold up a séko which is wrapped around them. The floor is made up of another séko, usually resting on the ground but sometimes raised on stones or forked sticks to avoid termites. This is where the millet is placed prior to threshing. The granaries stand around the threshing floor of beaten earth, which is located 100 or 200 meters from the village, some-
[674] times even farther. Thieves are no important threat. They may cut down millet when it stands in the bush, but they rarely steal millet already stored. Only goats, sheep, and guinea hens are to be feared, and they are kept away from the granaries by thorns.

221 As soon as these heavier tasks are over, everyone digs up peanuts
241 and peas. The whole family gathers under the shade of a tree, and

221 After a few hours when the millet has been sufficiently threshed,
241 the emptied and broken husks are swept to the side. The grain is
476 gathered in a heap, and a strong fellow tosses it into the air with a
788 wooden shovel to separate the chaff from the good grain, which is put in a heap. When all the grain has thus been winnowed, it is surrounded with a ring of ashes to protect it against evil spirits. Then one of the threshers, who is not a member of the family, puts some millet in a gourd and sprinkles it with water. He proceeds to throw it by the handful onto the millet pile, saying: "So-and-So fears rain," mentioning the name of the owner of the harvest and the name of every member of his family. He ends by saying: "When we are finished weeding, let the drought come. When we are finished planting, let the heavy rains come." If the owner of a horse is present, he receives a gourd of millet for his mount. Each of the elders also takes some for his chicken. If this ceremony is not carried out, the millet may not be used as seed the following year.

221 /49/ The women come with their baskets; a man takes one of the
251 brooms and sinks it into the millet heap in various places; then the
[482] men fill the baskets and help the women place them on their heads. At the house the millet is unloaded into granaries made of clay mixed with finely cut straw. These granaries have the shape of large jars 1.50 meters high; they usually rest on large stones, and they are
[343] smoked out beforehand to get rid of termites. They are closed with a lid of the same material and covered with a small thatch roof as a protection against rain, for they usually stand in the open air in the inner courtyard. Millet beer is brought and drunk on the spot while the millet is being winnowed. Sometimes the festivities end with dancing, and then everyone goes home, to begin again another day. The month of January goes by in this fashion.

221 February, March, and April are vacation months, months for hunting and fishing.

224 Actually no Mossi is a hunter, yet all Mossi are hunters to some
411 degree. Since the French occupation, men armed with very primitive flint guns are sometimes seen on the fringes of the heavy bush which borders the Volta and contains large game. These flint guns are so crude that they frequently burst and wound the man who recklessly
224 loaded it with too much powder. These natives know the bush thoroughly and are very helpful to the adventurers who wish to hunt koba, buffalo, elephant, leopard, or even lion, although the latter is to the

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Above: Cooking Sarabo.
Below: Outdoor Kitchen.

Above: Millet Granaries.
Below: Riding an Ox.

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The Ouagadougou Mission.

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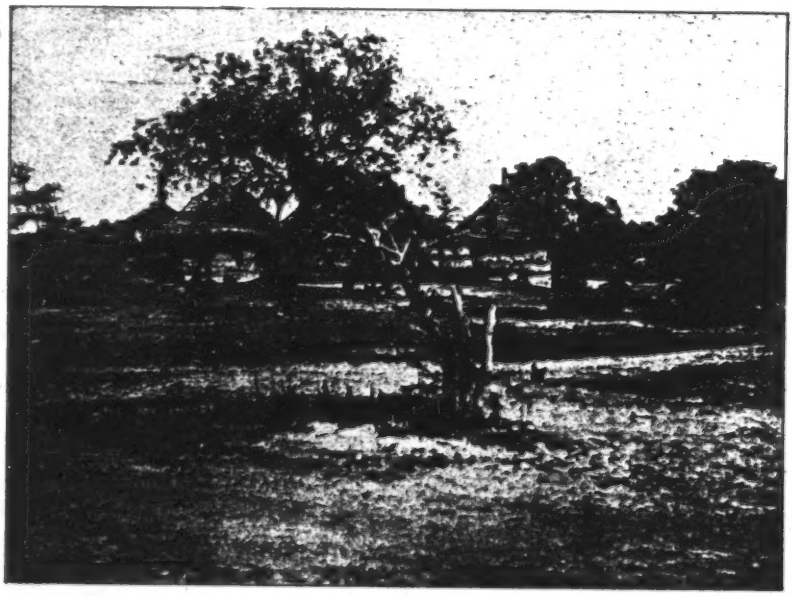

A Resthouse.

5: Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1959
FA28 Mossi FA28

the ancestral spirits, he is the principal political and religious authority within his lineage. 596

The single term *boodoo* is used to refer to three separate groups: the sib, the lineage, and the local residential kin group described above. Aside from formalized recognition of patrilineal descent and inheritance, the lineage functions most significantly as a local residential kin group in which the economic and social participation of the female non-members is as important as that of the men. Although the men are most prominent in the direction of its affairs, their wives have a considerable, if somewhat indirect, effect upon decisions made. Even in the relationship of the members of the lineage to their ancestral spirits (*kiemse*), the women play an important part in preparing the food and the libations to be offered. They give birth to the members of the lineage, nourish them until weaning (usually at the age of two), and provide them with guidance and training for their ascribed roles. In the education of the female members of the lineage the wives play a more important part than the men. But it is in their economic activities that the significance of the women's role is best seen. In addition to their farm work, they co-operate fully in repairing roofs, flooring the courtyards, and even assisting in the brick-making which precedes house-building. The economic and social contribution of the wives is of equal importance with that of the husbands and sons, and it is more important than that of the daughters, since females born into the lineage marry and leave just as they become fully productive members of their fathers' households. 562 613

Daughters, however, serve their lineage in a different way. As they are successful in winning for themselves a good name in the households of their husbands, so the bond of economic and social co-operation established between the two lineages at the time of marriage is strengthened. When they mature, they return to assist the members of their lineage with ritual obligations to the ancestors. If they are left childless at their husband's death, they may return to their father's household to reside. [602]

Separated from one another by millet fields and the public way, the dwelling of each Mossi kin group has the appearance of a small walled village. Each round mud house with its thatched roof has a separate courtyard which is usually contiguous to the courtyards of the other houses in the residential unit of which it is a part. The individual dwellings are constructed in such a way—the wall of each house or courtyard being contiguous to that of the nearest neighbor—as to form a circular wall whose exterior is closed at all but two points. The dwelling of each kin group has a small exit and a large open entrance way just within which is located a thatch-covered sun shelter (*zande*) where the men of the lineage gather to rest, to work at small crafts, and to talk. Guests are 592 342 [343]

243 tree set to fire. It burns slowly, and only a slight effort is needed to cut it or topple it down.

When plots are being cleared, useful trees such as karité /shea
[423] butter/ or néré /locust bean/ are spared. They remain in the field and revert to the man who is doing the clearing, the owner of the plot.

One awaits the rains before sowing, but one does not sow when the first rains fall in April. It is only in May, when the rains are frequent and the storms heavy, that the sowing is done.

A previously cultivated field is merely cleaned before sowing. While only men, as we have already seen, may clear a new plot, Mossi women as well as men share in the cleaning of a field that was cultivated on preceding years, and in the sowing as well.

The sowing is done as follows: The koutiaga (a kind of daba) is held in the left hand, while a small gourd containing millet is held in the right hand. The man or woman, squatting, makes a hole with the koutiaga with the left hand, and drops the millet into the hole with the right hand. Then some earth is replaced with the left hand.

Now the millet is allowed to grow. When it has emerged from the ground and shot about 20 centimeters, people go with the ouaka (another kind of daba) to remove the weeds growing among the millet shoots. In some areas everyone cleans up, men, women, and children. In other areas, as a rule, it is the men who carry out this task, /468/ but when they are too few the women help out. The weeding is done every morning.

Among the Mossi fields are cleaned three times between sowing and harvesting. We have already seen that the Gourounsi only do this twice.

When the millet has grown tall and the birds might peck at it, the women and children are sent to the fields to frighten the birds away.

The small millet is harvested around mid-November. When it
243 is ripe, the stalks, 2 or 3 meters high, are cut down. They are laid
343 upon the ground, and the heads are cut with a knife. The heads might be likened to the tip of those water reeds which bear a kind of brown velvety stem, some 30 centimeters long, rounded and about the thickness of two fingers. Once the heads have been cut off, they

243 are tied, placed in baskets, and carried to special huts. These
343 are small straw huts built on stakes, that is, raised on thick pieces of wood, which stand in a long curved line by the fields. About twenty such huts often stand side by side. Both men and women share in the harvesting.

Whenever the millet is to be eaten, the heads are taken from
243 these straw huts and threshed with a stick to set the grain loose. This threshing is done by the men.

Aside from the ordinary small millet, it is the large red millet that is grown most extensively, as a rule, among the Mossi. They
[194] call it kaziéra or kaziéga (we know that the r and g are interchangeable in Mossi; people will say, for example, either nora or noga to mean "chicken") and the Bambara call it niooulé. The large red millet is the kind used chiefly for dolo.

This is the millet that is planted before any other, as soon as the first rains begin to fall. The ouaka is used to remove the weeds which have grown in the fields, then the weeds are burned and the large red millet is sowed at the time of the first storms (April). It is sowed in the same fashion as the small millet, by holding the koutiaga in one hand and the small gourd containing grain in the other.

When the millet has come out of the ground, a fortnight /469/ is allowed to elapse and then the weeds are cleared with the ouaka. When the millet is grown, the women and children are sent out to protect it against birds. The millet is ripe around September 1.

The bulk of the harvesting work is done by the men. The stalks, which are usually 3 meters high and which may even reach 4 are cut down at the base. Once they have been dug out and laid down, the heads, which are thick and tuftlike with red flowers, are cut with a knife and carried to the soukala. The women do the carrying as they do for other kinds of millet. The large red millet is threshed only as it is needed. The threshing is done by the men with a stick.

Let us note that when a new piece of land is cleared, the large red millet is sown first to find out if the soil is good. It is only in the following year, when this has been ascertained, that the small millet is sown.

The red millet is also cultivated around the soukala, like maize.
[273] As a rule the Mossi use the large red millet only to make dolo
231 (dama in Mossi). They may also give it to horses, but some horses
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644 Ministers and other officials at the court of the Mogho Naba. In the courtyard where the emperor's audiences are held, [114] there are heaps of stones to mark the places of the ministers and their followers.

The Ouidi Naba, Larrhallé Naba, Gounga Naba, and Kamsaongho Naba assemble with their followers. The Baloum Naba, Zusobinkassanga, and the rest also have their fixed places. They are not permitted to leave their places to greet one another until they have saluted the Mogho Naba.

In the old days only the Baloum Naba, the Zusoaba, and the Kamsaogho, together with the servitors and grooms, were allowed to call upon the emperor in his palace courtyard. The other ministers and court officials (Ouidi Naba, Larrhallé Naba, Gounga Naba, etc.) were not, under any pretext or circumstance, permitted to penetrate the interior courtyard of the home of the Mogho Naba. They had their presence announced by soroné and [344] waited under a shelter (benda zandé) in the audience courtyard. Only a few years ago, when the present Gounga Naba succeeded his father, he asked the reason for this prohibition. Since no good reason was given, he asked the emperor for permission to break the rule, and since that time all his colleagues have followed suit.

644 The cap. We have seen that at the time of his appointment [115] each minister, court official, and canton chief is presented 292 with a cap by the Mogho Naba. Obviously he cannot wear the 554 same cap for the rest of his life, so later replacements bought by him are regarded as just as sacred as the original. All his subjects, even the son of a naba, are strictly forbidden to wear this cap. We have also seen that in the old days an ordinary Moaga was expressly forbidden to wear the red fez (1) since this was the type of headgear

[714]

1. Among the Habè [Habe] the hogon is the [illegible] is the only one who may wear the red fez. When young Habè men are taken into the [French] army as riflemen, they never again wear the red fez [part of the army uniform] after they are discharged and return to their homes.

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The Ouagadougou Mission.

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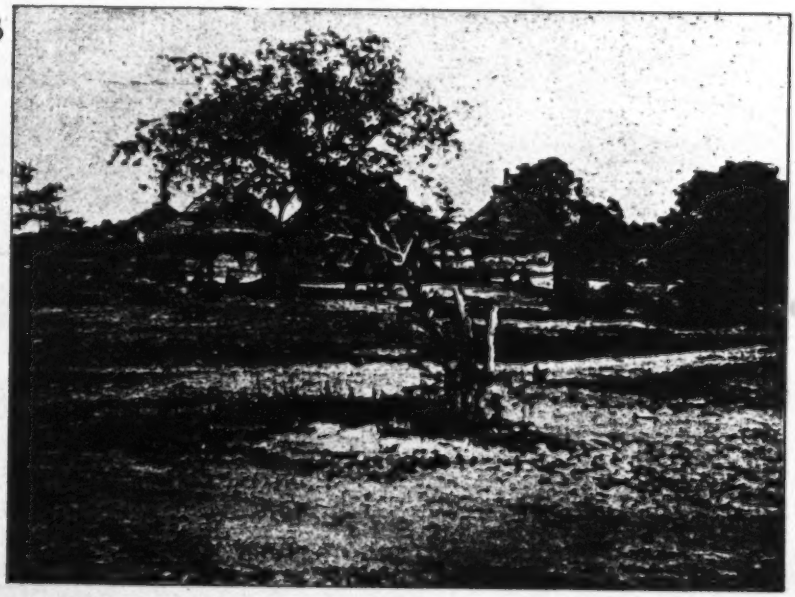

A Resthouse.

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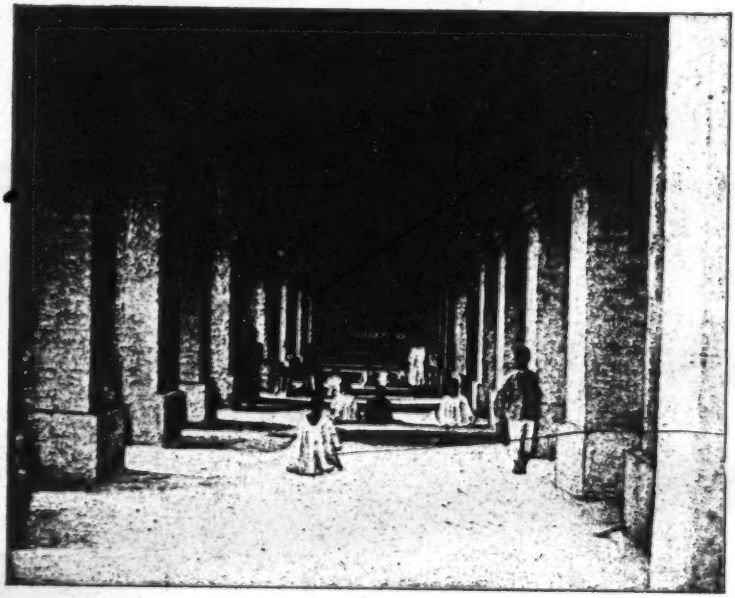

Above: The Ouagadougou Church
Below: Inside the Ouagadougou Church

larger markets there were and are solid stalls which are built and tenanted by merchants. In the small district and village markets, these stalls are built out of millet stalks which offer little but protection against the noonday sun on market days. Men build these structures for their womenfolk and for themselves. Some of the shelters which are not used for trading serve as galleries where the young blades look out and comment on the passing scene. Others are used as meeting places by adult men who sit and discuss all sorts of affairs. Still others are used by the older men, who gather there to arrange marriages between their several families, wait for gifts from younger men who seek wives, or spend a great deal of time reminiscing about their youthful adventures. Those persons who do not have such shelters sit in the sun or use grass lean-tos as protection from the sun.

Except in the large towns, Mossi markets are held between the hours of 10:00 A.M. and 4:00 P.M. every fourth day. In the larger towns there are daily markets, but these remained unimportant until today when they serve a growing urban population. The capital city of Wagadougou now even has an "evening" market which opens about 4:00 P.M. and closes at about 9:00 P.M. In addition, numerous daily markets have sprung up in many of its wards. The three-day markets are, however, the traditional type, and they are still the most numerous through the country. By "three-day market" I mean that a market is held one day, not held over the two following days, and then held again on the next day. These markets also have a 21-day cycle from one *Ragakasanga* or *Rag'kasanga* ("larger market") on a Friday to another *Rag'kasanga* on a Friday three weeks later, a total of seven markets between the two important ones. The people give no adequate explanation for the observance of the three-day cycle or the 21-day cycle. One man did suggest that it took the women three days to prepare beer and this was why markets could not be held more often, but even he did not speculate about the 21-day cycle.[10] This same man did point out, however, that the cycle made little difference to persons who really liked to go to market, since it was possible for

(10) Zahan (1954 : 373) apparently found one of the few Mossi informants with a mystical bent; he reports that the seven three-day cycles of markets in the 21-day cycle have the following significance for the Yatenga people: "The first of these numbers explains the cycle of the person (7 symbolizes the complete person: male [to which the Mossi assign the number 3] and female [to which they assign the number 4], the second that of the creation." He believes that each market starts a new cycle, a beginning and an end: "the seventh market signifies the most perfect equilibrium: the one which exists between the universe, mankind, and the divinity." In a footnote he suggests that this sybolism is not too different among the Dogon, who are "ideologically and geographically close to the Mossi." Peter Hammond, who worked in Yatenga, could not find this kind of symbolism.

592 A typical soukala consists of the master's hut, a hut for each wife, one hut for the sheep and goats, another for the horse if he has one, a hut for the family mill, and, finally, a receiving hut with two doors sufficiently high to permit entrance without stooping and set sometimes [351] as an entrance way and sometimes within the cluster of huts. All these dwellings stand in a circle and are joined either by a cob wall or by /11/ mat fences taller than a man and held up by stakes. The master's hut, which usually stands beside the huts for the horses and sheep, is set off from the others by mats to insure his privacy. A low wall describes an arc within the inner courtyard; this is the kitchen [273] when it is not raining. Big jars of fired clay which are used to brew [415] millet beer rest between the huts. In front of this cluster of huts, a shelter is built, usually high enough to permit standing and consisting basically of forked stakes with branches and séko resting upon them; this shelter serves as a refuge during the hot part of the day. Small boys and unmarried girls live with their mother, while older boys, servants, and slaves each have their separate huts which face the dwellings of the master and his wives.

The term yri or soukala covers this whole complex of structures. [591] Each soukala is a distinct unit, and, some time after they marry, the children build their own residence, set completely apart from that of their parents, often in another part of the village and sometimes in [361] another village altogether. The soukala stand fifteen to twenty meters apart, and, because of this, the villages, though adequately concentrated, cover a rather extensive area. The heads of cantons 342 place an ostrich egg at the peak of the roof on their own dwellings, [237] and some even build terraced huts higher than the surrounding dwell- [554] ings. They keep their riches in these huts and a prison in the base- [697] ment. An earthen stairway leads to the terrace where the master of [512] the house receives his guests when the sun begins to sink on the horizon.

721 These people, apparently so peaceful today, were formerly quite warlike and went off to war at the slightest pretext. Foreign to the land they now occupy, the Mossi must have conquered it by force of arms. The Tarik-es-Soudan /History of Sudan/ relates that the people of Yatenga seized Timbuktu in the fourteenth century, and in 721 the fifteenth they probably carried their incursions as far as Lake 701 Bébo and even Oualata. (4) The Mossi army was greatly feared.

4. Delafosse, op. cit., Vol. 2, p. 80.

596 family in marriage. Likewise, the head of the family, assisted by the family council, settles all the little differences which arise between relatives. He also intervenes when a father fails to secure the obedience of one of his children or cannot manage to discipline him.

"It is he alone who must sacrifice animals for the benefit of the whole family when his relatives bring them to him on the occasion of family feasts.

"All the members of the family owe obedience to the family head. Likewise, they must show him the greatest respect.

"When the family elder dies, his younger brother becomes head of the family. When all his brothers have successively held this office, the eldest son of the eldest brother becomes the family head after the brothers, etc.

"Sometimes the head of the family does not live in the same village as the rest of the family. He may very well live with some of his sons or brothers, away from his other relatives, but his powers remain unchanged.

"In addition to the family head, there is the family council which is made up of all the men and old women of the family. This body has no well-defined role. It meets under the leadership of the family head to settle all matters concerning the family. The council would decide, for example, as to whether an incorrigible child should be sent to a naba /ruler/, as to who should intervene /229/ in case of a quarrel over an inheritance, who should seize the goods of a spendthrift in order to dole them out to him in proportion to his needs, etc."

592 The compound. —The Mossi compound consists of a certain number of round earthen huts or cabins surmounted by thatched roofs and
351 huts for millet, all crowded into a rather narrow space cut by passages, hallways, small courtyards, etc. This complex is surrounded by a moderately high earth wall (two meters) which encircles the huts or cabins and encloses the compound.

592 The compounds are scattered over the plain, 50 or 100 meters
361 apart. Some are larger than others: some have 15 or 20 huts or even more; others have but four or five (2).

192 2. To designate these compounds, the word soukala or sokala is often used. This word is hallowed by custom in Yatenga, in the Ouagadougou area, in the Léo area, etc., in short, in all Mossi lands and their

576 Thus, although the Mogho Naba would not in the least object
643 to shaking hands with a Bambara or a Djerma, he would be astonished if a native Moaga -- even an official -- should offer his hand.

543 As soon as the children of a naba have reached the age of dis-
576 cretion, they may no longer play with their "papa," even less shake hands with him. They must henceforth follow the general rule which requires the Mossi salute, kantissé.

576 [111] Nowadays naba (kombemba) and nayiridamba (ministers
602 of the emperor) understand the uselessness of such signs of distrust. Therefore, even though they continue to be less familiar with their relatives (brothers, uncles, and sons -- whom they regard as rivals), they willingly offer their hands to Mossi of any standing and to foreigners.

644 Reception by the naba. 1) Up to the present time and despite some thirty-five years of French occupation, the way one is received at the court of the emperor, which, of course, befalls his servitors, has altered very little. Natives who are now officials in the administration and in business enterprises are still treated on the same footing as their less highly placed compatriots. Not only are they required to perform the kantissé (Mossi salute) as described by Father Mangin, but also afterwards they must sit on the ground, a position that is difficult in European clothes. Foreigners (Bambara,
[648] Djerma, even Gourounsi) are offered seats because the soroné do not regard them as fellow countrymen.

645 2) By the ministers. At the present time all the emperor's
576 ministers have comfortable houses and splendid drawing rooms
352 furnished with Morris chairs and folding chairs. These seats are offered [112] to visitors of any standing, while benches two or
177 three meters long are reserved for persons of less consequence (house boys, cooks, circle guards, notables, etc.).

631 3) By the kombemba. Benches are always reserved for visitors of
576 note or, if there are none, mats are provided. Some of these chiefs
352 even own a few commonplace chairs and perhaps one or two folding chairs.

342
4/2 Tools. The only tools used are the sitoiga (native pickaxe) and the wanka (hoe).

●352 House furnishings. (a) The man's hut. The only furnishings in a man's hut are a mat or thin secco, a bolster made of cotton strips or kapok, a quiver, the club, some arrows, the bow, a large knife (zangoégo), and a spear. Small bags of charms and other amulets hang from the wall here and there, and there is a sort of oval straw basket, pilgou, in which clothing is stored.

(b) The woman's hut. From one end of the hut to the other there are billi, small pieces of wood fastened to the wall to hold gourds, bowls (lensé), earthenware basins (lassé), ladles (soutissi), etc.

In the rear of the room lumps of dried earth, [221] hollowed in the center, hold the vessels, and pots, dougdo, which serve both as storage bins for clothing and as granaries for the produce of the woman's own garden.

592 Plan of a compound. As one enters a compound, the huts to left are those of the women and the master's huts stand to the right. Completely outside the establishment, there are one or two straw huts, similar to those already described, which provide sleeping quarters for the dakompa (young men).

[595] The head of the establishment lives alone. It could hardly be otherwise, since he summons his wives in turn.

The women live with their young children or with girls betrothed to their husband, until, of course, these girls receive huts of their own.

343 Kitchen arrangements. It is exceedingly rare among the Mossi to find a hut used specifically for cooking. The wife's bedroom serves also as a kitchen.

592 Ordinarily the husband issues provisions to the wife who is
595 cooking for the family, but there are exceptions to this rule. At
252 Ouagadougou, for example, most of the wives provide the food for the husband. The latter furnishes provisions only during the winter when the fields are being worked.

[222] The wives take turns preparing the food. The woman on duty is aided by her co-wives in grinding the millet on the millstone (néré) of the section, but she alone prepares the millet cake, sagbo.

291 554 435 (d) Zag'banko: a colored garment, varying in price between 40,000 and 50,000 cowries.

(e) Baourou ganga: a light gray blanket, valued [224] at 50,000 to 60,000 cowries, which can easily be made into robes and trousers.

[439] All these garments were imported by traveling Haoussa (Zangoéto) and a few Yarcé, the only traders at the time, who bought them in Gambaga (Gold Coast), the only known trading center at that time. As we have pointed out in an earlier chapter, the Mossi knew of no country other than their own.

There were, of course, some naba who wore only rough garments made of cotton strips woven locally.

Headgear. The inhabitants of Béré (a village of the province now ruled by the Gounga Naba) used to make caps, called manfo, which were highly prized by Mossi chiefs (priced at 2,000 to 3,000 cowries).

Some notables wore caps made at Wéogtinga (province of the Ouidi Naba) by the descendants of Naba Zombré, the twentieth successor of Oubri.

291 554 177 2. Modifications and improvements introduced since the establishment of the government of Upper Volta (1919). The various fabrics available in the European outlets and the fine white or blue bazin [fabric] are more and more being used to replace the clothing of former times. [225] These fabrics are made into robes, trousers, blouses, and forkia (this last is a kind of long blouse with wide sleeves, much prized by Senegalese [352] traders). Shirts of every conceivable color and style are hoarded in trunks and chests bought at the commissary or made locally by carpenters trained in European shops.

Many chiefs claim that garments made of cotton strips are heavy and cumbersome and impede walking.

[439] Oriental caps imported from the Gold Coast, dark red velvet hats, and even sun helmets are replacing the headgear of old.

The markatassé and mougou, rustic leather boots made by Mossi shoemakers are giving way to shoes, puttees, and leggings, [594] or to new types of boots and slippers -- the shoemakers of Djenné are now well known among the Mossi.

301 As ornaments the Moaga woman had only red or yellow copper bracelets and the kindifou (a bright red bead). Even then only women of means could procure such ornaments. The [435] kindifou cost only 50 cowries a bead, but since cowries were monopolized by the naba, notables, and rakangba (prosperous Mossi), the beads were far too expensive for the small resources of the average Moaga woman.

Bracelets made of a special stone (a mixture of gray and white) and called manekagcé (manekaka in the singular) were worn only by the Yarbi (young Yarcé of both sexes). It is said [439] that these bracelets were peddled by the Kibissi (Habé), and they seem to have come from the Timbuktu area.

301 554 Silver bracelets were worn only by the dimbissi (descendants of dima, that is, the family of the Mogho Naba), by kombemba (canton and province chiefs) and their descendants, and, finally, by prominent persons who were in favor at court.

291 177 At the present time, especially at Ouagadougou, the women adorn themselves with garments of all kinds (skirts of native material, bazin, godé, and other fabrics, as well as skirts from stores). Some have even adopted the blouse and ample robe affected by elegant Sudanese [228] women. Many now own trunks which [352] replace the sacks formerly used to store their clothing.

291 178 The Senegalese handkerchief, a head scarf, is now considered absolutely indispensable. In rural areas there is an increasing desire to dress better. More cotton is grown. Girls and women from the bush buy glass beads of all colors when they come to Ouagadougou to work, and they wear them around their necks or around their hips in the manner of Bambara women.

416 Although the "mirror" used to be the clear water of springs and brooks, there is hardly a woman today who does not have one or two mirrors. Finally, a bit of elegance is added to the wild 301 beauty of the women by silver earrings, bracelets, and amulets sewed in a panther skin -- these are becoming a passion with Mossi peasant women.

291 It should not be inferred from the above that the Moaga always feels obliged to wear clothing at home. Any time that he has no need to go out or to visit a friend or relative at some

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28

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Mogho Naba Kougri at court. He is flanked on the right by his pages and musicians, and on the left by members of the Moslem community.

[p. 178-E]

342 177 Of course, like all European houses in the region under discussion, these buildings are, unfortunately, made of mud bricks, but is that not the rule in French West Africa?

342 In the homes of those two ministers of the emperor who are most advanced, the reception rooms are arranged in such a way that callers benefit from a constant flow of fresh air through large openings. During periods of extreme heat, a punkah operated [417] by a sogoné in the middle [216] of the room provides air for the panting visitors. The wall, always whitewashed with kaolin, bears an [353] an advertisement or two, the picture of an important chief, or perhaps some family photographs, which enliven the apartments a bit. All of this shows a real anxiety on the part of the chiefs to develop along the lines of progress and civilization.

In recent years, some of the notables at Ouagadougou have built houses with clay roofs, not so much to live in as to safeguard their family valuables against fire and theft.

Finally, it should be noted that custom requires every new naba for the first three years of his reign to live in songodo, straw huts, which will be described later. Only then may he build with clay.

Dwellings of Mossi Subjects

342 787 Temporary dwelling. Before building his conjugal hut, the young man consults a soothsayer in order to make sure that the site chosen is not haunted by evil spirits and that he will have happiness and good fortune if he lives there.

342 782 Even if the soothsayer finds nothing especially alarming about the site, he always orders a chicken or other animal to be sacrificed or alms to be given. The young man arranges with the village elder [217] or, if he is a [Nioniosse], with the Tingsoba (from tenga "earth," and soba, "master"), to sacrifice the victim.

The Tingsoba goes to the site and calls for two small gourds which contain ordinary water and water mixed with flour, respectively. He invokes all his ancestors and pours the water on the ground, praying God to accept it for His wife, Tinga, who is absorbing it. Then he kills the chicken, saying: "On -- on,

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Above: Cooking Sarabo.
Below: Outdoor Kitchen.

Above: Millet Granaries.
Below: Riding an Ox.

644 fields. On that day, the Mogho Naba had one or two cows
651 slaughtered and a large quantity of sagbo (millet cakes) prepared
241 for the workers. If the latter, after being assembled two or three times in the manner indicated above, were not finished with all the fields, the work was carried on by the samand'kamba (the people who dwelt in the outer courtyard of the Mogho Naba).

644 The emperor, however, received none of the millet grown in
574 his own fields, which, incidentally, did not have their present boundaries. This millet was reserved exclusively [74] for use as food for foreign visitors and for the feeding of horses (1).

1. For the ceremony of threshing this millet (kawinré), see the special chapter below [Chapter 16].

644 It was the duty of the canton chiefs and the ministers to pro-
651 vide loads of millet for the use of the Mogho Naba and his harem ("harem" should be understood to mean all young or middle-aged women, but to exclude the elderly women who have to support themselves and who have their private fields).

644 (b) Repair of the houses of the Mogho Naba. The work of
651 building and repairing the houses actually belonging to the em-
356 peror fell entirely upon the inhabitants of Bilbalogo (section of the Baloum Naba), Kamsaonghin (section of the chief eunuch), and Dapoya (section of the slaves of the Mogho Naba).

[343] The outbuildings, wédanga, four round huts with thatched roofs located outside the emperor's house, served as stables for the horses given to the Mogho Naba by canton chiefs or other personages and were built and maintained by three ministers, the Ouidi Naba, Larrhallé Naba, and Gounga Naba, with the help of the people in their sections.

The tamping of the floors and clay roofs was done wholly by the wives of the persons responsible for [75] the construction or repair, that is, the wives of the ministers and of the inhabitants of their sections.

Labor service due the province chiefs, ministers of the emperor.

651 (a) Cultivation of fields. The fields belonging to the ministers
645 of the Mogho Naba were cultivated by a system of payments in kind
241 as follows.

651 For the Baloum Naba, the work was done by all the bilbalsé.
645 The Kam Naba set the day for the sekka (gathering), and all the
241 young and able-bodied men were required to report. They received the food they required from the Baloum Naba. The number of work days was not fixed. The sekka might be held once or several times, depending on the acreage.

For the other ministers, the Ouidi Naba, Gounga Naba, and Larrhallé Naba, the field work was done by the people in their entourage (that is, the inhabitants of their respective sections) and in the neighboring villages which were formerly under their jurisdiction. Since the formation of the canton of Ouagadougou and its outskirts, the area has been under the exclusive authority of the Baloum Naba (fourth minister of the emperor).

645 If, however, the fields were so extensive that their cultiva-
476 tion could not be taken care of solely by the above system -- the
241 laborers also had to care for their own fields -- the ministers [76] called for volunteers from among the young men in the neighboring villages and paid them with food and drink. This is the sissoaga, a system commonly in use among the Mossi.

645 (b) Construction and repair of houses. As a general rule, re-
651 pair of the roofs of huts in the establishments of the province chiefs
356 was the duty of the inhabitants of their respective sections and of the neighboring villages under their jurisdiction.

651 The canton chiefs. The cultivation of the fields of the naba
634 and the repair of the huts in their establishments were wholly in-
241 cumbent on their subjects. Each village had a fixed number of
356 huts to be repaired or roofed; this is known as sough'pilli, and it is still in effect annually.

651 Today, perhaps in the interests of tranquillity, canton chiefs require labor service in their fields only from their sogoné and samand'kamba and sometimes even resort to the sissoaga.

The local administration, with respect for local customs, has the policy of organizing the system in a way that, in our opinion, will safeguard the interests of the natives, overburdened due to the negligence of the province chiefs, and at the same time will enhance the prestige of the Mossi chiefs.

653 The naba is not entitled to any other labor services. The building of dams to provide water for the villages cannot be

343 Chicken house and pens. Every head of a compound has a
235 small straw hut for fowl within his establishment. There is also a
231 small round hut of clay for the sheep and goats.

Repair of houses. When an establishment is damaged by rain
356 or is in need of repair, the work is done by the residents (the head of the family and the dakompa, as well as the father's wives and brothers) with no help from outsiders. There is no pay beyond the usual meals. The head of the family merely says to the workers when the work has been completed: "N'fa nel toumtogo, imaou nian (thanks for the hard work, many thanks for the labor)."

[223] Chapter 14

Mossi Clothing

Dress of the Naba

291 In this chapter we shall examine the various modifications
554 and improvements in the dress of Mossi chiefs.
435 1. Before and during the first twenty years of the French occupation. (a) Zangoego pelga: a large robe made of narrow bands of cotton fabric, rather expertly woven. These robes, which are made and embroidered by specialists, used to cost from 70,000 to 100,000 cowries (1).

1. One hundred francs. The five-franc note is now worth 1,000 cowries. The silver five-franc piece was worth from 5,000 to 7,000 cowries, depending on the fluctuations of exchange.

(b) Karfo: a large robe, dark blue in color, made of the same material as the preceding (50,000 to 70,000 cowries).

(c) Noufa: a large robe and trousers, made of very fine fabric in a dark gray color. It had the value of two slaves or 70,000 cowries for the robe and 50,000 for the trousers.

241 tuber, Coleus coffini, which Europeans call oussounifing or fabirama,
262 and which may replace potatoes in a pinch, are cultivated in the soils most propitious to them.

221 The precious karite /shea/ tree (Butyrospermum parkii) grows in
262 most fields; its fruit, prized for its cool and slightly sweet flesh, con-
137 tains a pit which yields karite butter, the fat most widely used in
[388] cooking and to make soap. Around the villages, and sometimes even within them, the néré /locust bean/ tree (Parkia africana) produces
[356] elongated pods; its bark, mashed in water, yields a paste that is used to harden the floors of the huts. Its flour makes a cooling drink when
[272] mixed in water, and it may also be eaten; its seeds /8/ are used to make kalro /kalre in the original/, the soumbara of the Bambara, an ingredient /made from locust beans, héré/ of all carefully prepared
137 sauces. The doubalé and silk-cotton or kapokiero trees spread their shade over the weavers, numerous among the Mossi, and over the talkers who are even more. Bamboo grows well in the damp southern regions, and the palm oil tree is occasionally found. The caoutchouc liana, however, has not yet been introduced.

231 Small chickens run in all directions through the villages, along with domesticated guinea hens. Everywhere in the bush near the huts,
[857] little boys herd goats and sheep; this is the task of youngsters here at the age when their contemporaries among us /in France/ begin to learn the alphabet. The most common sheep and goats are small in size. The sheep have short hair. Sometimes, especially in the larger villages where markets are held, goats and sheep are to be seen with
[439] long legs and long, curled horns. They are imported from the northeast and fattened to be sold as butcher's meat. The height of fashion for the wife or a prosperous naba is to be followed by a Touareg /Tuareg/ sheep, well washed and very white. It is fed on millet leftovers and bean mush, and its mistress often presents it with a bit of salt to lick. In short, it is well cared for and agreeably fat; on some important feast day, it will embellish the menu.

The huts are usually guarded by very commonplace dogs, often ill-tempered, but cowardly. A stick is enough to drive them away.
[224] They are mostly used in the hunt, the great Mossi pastime during the dry season. Domesticated ducks are sometimes found in nabas' households, as well as pigeons, but these birds are not widespread and not within the reach of everyone. Finally, almost every group of huts has cats which belong to the women and which are difficult

221 the men bring bunches of peanuts. While nibbling on the green nuts
241 and talking, they all separate the pods from the leaves. The latter
are carefully set aside along with the bean leaves. They make ex-
[231] cellent fodder for the horses during the dry season, when the sun has
burned off all the grass in the bush.

221 By November harvesting is completed. The sun has already dried
241 out the grass, and the time has come to cut straw for séko and roofing.
356 /48/ This task is usually reserved for children and servants (dakonré).
857 The head of the household tells each one of them the number of straw
bundles he is to cut, and every morning the children set off in groups,
a sickle on their shoulders. They look for straw on the banks of the
watercourses and return when the sun begins to scorch. This marks
the end of the working day, and there is nothing to do now but rest.
The dry season is indeed a time of rest, and from November to May
there are no pressing tasks.

[805] It gets cold in December. This is winter (sapolro). The natives
221 gather at dawn around fires of millet stalks, twigs, or straw; anything
241 combustible serves. Every newcomer must contribute an armful; it
[372] is the price of admission to a seat near the fire. At the end of December
476 all the straw for roofing has been stored, and then the small millet
is threshed. Every inhabitant of the village has the use of the thresh-
ing floor in turn. He notifies his friends and acquaintances as he did
when he weeded his field. The millet beer is ready, and on the pre-
vious day the women have covered the area with cow dung diluted in
water to harden the floor. At dawn the friends arrive, and the millet
is removed from the granary and spread out on the floor. This is done
with the help of millet stalks tied together in bundles and dragged
along the ground with ropes while a man bears down upon them.
The flail is merely a stick cut in the bush, a tree branch shaped in
such a way that the part which is held in the hand is rather thin and
flexible, while the part which is used for threshing is quite thick and
forms an obtuse angle with the part in the hand. The boys line up in
a row, with the tots at either end; the drummers stand before or behind
them; and the flails fall with the beat, crushing the ears of millet
and separating the very dry grain from the stalks. All the while the
old men sit in the shade of the granaries, talking, smoking, and
sewing clothes. When the threshers get to the end of the floor, they
retrace their steps and rest, while the old men gather with straw brooms
the grain which has been scattered outside the pile.

226 the sacrifices, these amphibians have no scruples about biting a foot or leg. However, the crocodiles in these ponds are seldom large enough to sever a limb.

In those places where the water is somewhat shallow and flows for some period of time, the bank dwellers make dams of tree branches intertwined with millet stalks. These are placed diagonally to the current and lead to a sort of funnel closed with a net. The fish follow the dam, enter the funnel, and get caught in the meshes of the net.

The major ceremonies also take place at this time of year.[1] This
221 is when the Day of the Dead is celebrated, when the koure is held.
356 When the first gust of wind unroofs a few huts or at least indicates those that need a new covering, everyone sets down to the task. The thatch cut in December is used for the purpose. Before the soukala,
[283] children and youths knot blades of straw with strings of hemp and
[857] plait seko. They also go into the bush to cut down branches and to gather bark which serves to bind the branches together. When everything is ready, the head of the household calls his people and gathers a few neighbors. The roof is made and laid within a short morning. This task must be repeated every two years or so, and it is men's work entirely. At the beginning of winter, the villages take on a smart
221 new look. This is when people think of building a new hut, the man who has acquired a new wife, the child who has grown into a young man and who can no longer live with his mother, the man whose wealth has increased by a few head of cattle or a horse. The women fetch water, the children knead the mortar with their feet and carry to the mason the mud clods prepared by the old men. These tasks are not laborious, and they are accomplished with merrymaking.

Now the thorn bushes have grown back, the rains will soon fall again, and already a few gusts of wind herald the coming winter. The Pleiades have appeared on the horizon, and the baobabs are budding once more. It is necessary to take up the hoe again and to sow; this is a good thing, because the millet is running low in the granaries. The working cycle we have described must begin anew. And year follows year without bringing any major changes in the life of the common man.

1 [i.e., February-April. -Analyst]

252 boiling water and eaten in this fashion. This is an important source
261 of food in times of famine which, when they come among the Blacks, usually come in May, June, and the first half of July. The néré gathered in March and April comes just in time to combat the famine.

/498/ As for the seeds of the fruit, they are removed and set
252 aside before the sweet meal is mashed. They are preserved to make
263 kologo (the Mossi name) or soumbara (the Mandé name), a pungent condiment highly prized by the Blacks. In order to make this, the women boil the seeds, allow them to cool, stamp on them to remove the skin, and wash them carefully at the watercourse. Sometimes the skin is removed by hand. Then they are cooked for 24 hours, and steeped in water for another 48 in a well-covered canari, in the shade, in a damp spot, to rot the seeds. Then they are laid to dry in the sun on a mat for two days, and pressed with the hands into balls of varying size. It is in this shape that the soumbara is utilized or sold. In Mossi territory, small balls are
[435] worth 100 cowries apiece and large ones 300. At Leo, in Nounouma territory, all balls are the same size and worth 100 cowries. In appearance, the kologo is rather similar to that black coloring matter used by French housewives to add substance to the broth. Whenever a woman wants to use some kologo, to add some to the sauce, she pries loose a small piece from the ball with the tip of a knife and mashes it with the crushing stone. She pours the resulting powder into the sauce.

● 356 Let us note further that the bark of the néré pod is also used, although not for eating purposes. The Mossi and Gourounsi use it to blacken and polish the floor of their huts and clay roofs. The néré bark is seeped in water for one day, and then the water is tossed on the surface to be polished, that has been tamped down carefully first. The floor is tamped again with the water, and then allowed to dry. This is done three or four times, and in the end the clay surface acquires a handsome black or grey polish. It almost becomes a mirror if the procedure is carried out properly.

284 Finally, to close our list of the uses to which néré is put, we
291 have seen that the brown filaments that grow on the bark of the néré pod are used among the Gourounsi to make belts for /499/ the women, or rather cords to hold up the bunches of leaves that constitute the sole garment of local ladies.

462 Beside cooking tasks, Mossi women have cleaning tasks. They
356 sweep the huts and soukala with handfuls of straw, small primitive brooms 30 or 40 centimeters long. They wash and bleach clothes and make soap. Finally, it is the women who spin cotton and tamp the floor of the huts.

356 This tamping is done as follows. "The natives spread on the surface to be tamped a layer, 10 centimeters thick, of a special black earth that consists chiefly /561/ of ashes and humus resulting from the decomposition of plants and household refuse.

"Above this, the Mossi spread a second layer consisting of clayey ferruginous gravel, from 3 to 5 centimeters thick. The small pebbles are subsequently reduced by heavy tamping to very fine material. Then, the natives spread a little water over this material and tamp again. Once this is done, they allow the floor to dry.

"This procedure is repeated several times, but ordinary water is replaced with néré water (the latter resulting from the infusion in hot water of the fragments of néré fruit, dondo in Mossi) or water into which cow dung has been mixed. When the last tamping and the last drying have been completed, the natives pour néré water in large quantities onto the new floor.

"Finally, the last procedure consists of polishing the surface with flat stones." (Cahier des rapports of the Ouagadougou circle).

593 The duties of Mossi women toward their husband are as follows:

833 1. The fulfillment of the conjugal duty.

562 "The wife," says Moulins, "must never shirk her conjugal duty except when she is pregnant or nursing.

"Should a woman evade her husband from newlywed shyness or for any other reason, he would use at first all means of persuasion within his command, and especially beg the wife's relatives to have a word with her. Should their exhortations prove vain, coercion would be used by beating the woman or putting her in irons. Finally, should those means fail to bring the wife to compliance, she could be turned out by her husband."

593 2. Faithfulness.

562 "The wife must live with her husband. If she abandons the conjugal domicile, her spouse has the absolute right to force her to return. /562/ If she takes refuge with her relatives, the latter must

462 Women's tasks. —First of all, Mossi women help with the cultivation of the soil. They do not clear land for tillage, but during the winter season they do all the other agricultural tasks in competition with the men. Since they must also pound the grain, cook, and do other household tasks, however, they cannot work in the fields as long as the men. When there are several wives, they share the labor. Some devote themselves to housework while others work in the fields. When there are not enough of them to permit such a division of labor, they allow the men to leave in the morning and do not join them with the food until about 10 or 11 o'clock. After the meal and the noonday rest, they work with the men, but they leave the fields earlier to prepare the evening meal. Before returning to the village, however, the women work on their little individual plots, but only for a short time, while the men, after leaving the communal fields, linger in their own small fields until nightfall.

Besides working in the fields, the women do household chores. [252] They pound the grain in mortars and crush it on the crushing stones. We shall speak again about these mortars, pestles, and stones under "The Mode of Subsistence" /not translated/.

They do the cooking and prepare the various Mossi dishes which we shall describe later /not translated/. They go to get wood in the bush and water at the wells. /244/

Let us add that it is the women who pick the karite /shea/ nuts during the rainy season and the pods of the néré /locust bean/ in the spring (end of March, April). They, too, prepare the karite butter and the néré flour. They also brew dolo and, if need be, the various other drinks of which we have already spoken in the section on crops /not translated/ and to which we shall return under "The Mode of Subsistence" /not translated/.

In addition to their cooking tasks, the Mossi women of Yatenga must perform cleaning chores. They sweep the huts and the whole establishment with bunches of straw tied in the middle with a rope. [256 412] This makes a small primitive broom without a handle, 30 or 40 centimeters long. They launder the clothes and make soap. They spin the cotton, whereas the men weave it. Finally, it is they who tamp the earthen floors and walls of the huts with wooden clappers (in Mossi, silimpandé in the singular, silimpama in the plural) after adding néré water. We shall see later in "Mode of Subsistence (construction of the compound)" how this is done.

464 salary consists either of 100 cowries (10 centimes) or a basket of unthreshed millet. In addition to this, the employer feeds the employee. This is limited, I repeat, to times of famine.

/264/ True clientage, such as we described among the Malinké, does not occur among the Mossi.

2. Domestic servants. The domestic servant, such as exists in 356 France and other civilized societies, does not and never did exist among the Mossi. Actually, domestic tasks (cleaning, cooking, and washing) are performed by the women in Yatenga society. For a corroboration of this, we refer the reader to what we said above about women's tasks.

567 3. Slaves. Origins. The Mossi owned slaves prior to the French occupation. They still own some nowadays, although far fewer, only those, in fact, who did not run away. Since recruitment dried up at its source through the prohibition bearing on the purchase and sale of slaves, reinforced by severe penalties, the number of captives has dwindled day by day, and it is obvious that eventually they will disappear completely. At present, this has not yet come to pass.

[727] The Mossi used to obtain their slaves through raids on the Samo, Bobo, Kipirsi, Gourounsi, Habbé, and Rimaïbe /slaves of the Peul/. The Yarsé also brought some from the southern markets (Sikasso, Samory states, etc.) and sold them all over Yatenga. They kept many for their own benefit, and they possessed more slaves than the Mossi (as merchants, indeed, they always owned more slaves than the Mossi). The Peul of Yatenga also had many slaves, more than the Mossi, which they obtained through raid or purchase.

Voluntary slavery and debt slavery provided no captives, since these two kinds of slavery never existed in the region.

The Mossi of Yatenga themselves did not constitute a source of slaves for other Mossi of Yatenga. One Mossi of the region could not be the slave of another Mossi. Only members of the alien groups listed above could be enslaved (including the Mossi of Ouagadougou). The Peul were not enslaved, but only held for ransom, since they were both rich (in cattle) and lazy. Their Rimaïbe, however, as we have said, were taken as captives (a Peul would certainly not be willing to pay any ransom for them).

727 When two factions were at war in Yatenga, the Mossi who were made prisoners were killed immediately, including small children of the male sex, even those who were still at their mother's breast.

769 they return to their homes.

796 The Bend'Naba and other drummers remain in the courtyard until the Sogon' kassanga (chief eunuch) bring to them, on behalf
533 of the emperor, the sum of 10,000 cowries and some beer. In the old days a young captive, seated amidst the cowries, accompanied these gifts. The messengers say to the drummers: "Nab'yet b'wa poustabo (the king sends us to give you these gifts on the occasion of his basgha)."

The chief of the drummers pours a drink for the Zussoba and orders his followers to play together "Tompaongo, Wend'kaouss'Naba nioré, Wenna wilig'vinré" (literally, "We thank the king for his gifts. May God give the Mogho Naba long life and allow us to come back to play here next year").

Before sending them away, the Mogho Naba is obligated to give a karfo (black robe [158] imported by the Haoussa) to the Bend' Naba and a robe to the Loun Naba (chief of the luinsé). Water with flour in it is likewise brought to the Bend'Naba, and he scatters it about the courtyard. The emperor is required by custom to walk upon this water of gnimassem (of good health) as he goes back to his apartments.

When all these formalities have been completed, the Bend'Naba, accompanied by his bards, takes his leave. The festival is over. On the days following, the drummers call on the ministers and
[431] the other court dignitaries and are given many gifts (cowries and livestock).

All of these gifts are retained by the Bend'Naba or by someone chosen by him, and they are distributed later, with due regard for the hierarchy existing among the griot. The share of the older men is always greater than that accorded to the younger ones. [159]

Chapter 10

The Wives of the Naba. The sogoné. The Pogsiouré

Naba Warga and the Origin of the Sogoné

173 Naba Warga was constantly at war with the Riziam Naba, who
644 was called Mamzi (which means "I myself do not know"). He had
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173 to be on the field of battle himself and for five years was unable
644 to vanquish his enemy who was entrenched on a mountain and
● 357 well supported by the local inhabitants.

After Warga had tried every means at his command to conquer his enemy, he hacked down the crops, which were almost ripe, and captured all the livestock that ventured down the mountain. In short, he devastated the country.

This succeeded so well that at last the local inhabitants, faced with famine, had to choose between the life of the chief they were sheltering and their own lives. Mamzi was therefore handed over and imprisoned at Saponé (1).

1. The principal canton town in the district of Ouagadougou.

During the five years of this difficult campaign, Naba Warga, aside from the warriors, had only a young boy to serve him since his wives were not present. The boy served as cook [160] and personal servant. In short, he performed the duties of a wife so well that Warga decided that he was worthy of some notice and decided to reward him.

When he had returned to his lands, he freed this faithful servitor after first giving him a wife. Then it occurred to him that several children in his court could perform the same services. He therefore ordered them to be recruited on a large scale, and these were the sogoné.

357 Every boy recruited to become a sogoné can expect to be given
644 a wife, however little she may be worth, when he is freed.

The sogoné have the same standing as the napagba,* and they
[554 304] wear the same ornaments. A group of bracelets worn on the wrists, in fact, distinguish the napagba and the sogoné from free women.

It is their duty to serve the naba. They form a half circle around the naba when he appears; they accompany him on his short outings; and they carry the scepter and all of the insignia of chiefdom. They serve drinks to the naba, fan him when he takes a nap
[293] with fans called fika, make his bed, and do various errands. Likewise a naba never sends anyone but a sogoné to take a message to his wives.

*[i.e. royal wives — Analyst]

644 357 292 The sogoné may not wear trousers. He wears a type of drawers called benda. All the nanamsé (plural of naba) have followed the example of Naba Warga, and nowadays the most insignificant kombéré has at least a dozen sogoné.

[161]

The Napogré. General Conditions. Number of Wives of the Emperor Today. Ornaments.

644 595 Depending on whether the napagha is destined for the chief himself or for one of his brothers or sons, the instruction of the napogré are given either in the quarters of the pugtiéma (first wife of the naba) or at the home of one of the old nabissi.

644 595 302 Water is heated and in it is put a bit of karite butter and other ingredients. After the girl's head, armpits, and public hair have been shaved by some old women, the pugtiéma or the old man dips a hand into the water, utters certain cabalistic words, and gives the names of all the chiefs who have succeeded each other up to the father of the current ruler.

644 595 The water is then given to the old women who bathe the young napagha. It is at this time that she is instructed in the duties and obligations of the napogré, what she may do and what she should avoid.

[301] The new wife is then adorned with bracelets, kouaba (plural of kobré), and with rouamba [ankle rings], or with only bracelets. The chief may marry her at once or, depending on the circumstances, send her to the man for whom she is destined.

[684] The napagha must never have relations with any man other than her husband as long as she lives. Formerly she was pitilessly killed if she broke this rule. [162]

[302 301] As we have just seen, the napagha has no hair, and this is the primary distinctive mark. Also, she wears bracelets on her wrists, sometimes even on her arms and some on her ankles (this is done mostly by favorites). Finally some wear kouaba, ornaments most often worn by old women.

The number of wives or napagha varies according to the importance of the naba and especially according to the desires of naba. According to the 1926 census, the present Mogho Naba had thirty-seven wives.

644 It should be said that the napagha, who is regarded as a
595 piece of property, is part of the estate of a deceased chief. The
562 new naba takes some of the old and young wives, and the rest are
587 kept in the family of the nabissi. It is therefore not unusual to find women in the household of a naba who have been married to two or even three deceased chiefs. If they are not too old, they may give birth to children of the chief who is their second or third husband.

644 The establishment of a naba is often divided into three sec-
595 tions.

1. The zagkas sanga (the great house). All the old women, the unwanted ones, live here. Their mistress and guardian is the pugtiéma, who has charge of the house where the kimsé or manes of the ancestors live.

2. Zagbilin. The middle-aged women [163] who are still occasionally visited by their husband live here.

3. Dogoundba. This is the assemblage of several young and beautiful wives grouped around the favorite. They are called dogoundba, "guardians of the hut of the naba." These women receive all the favors, wear the finest ornaments, and are dressed in
[291] godé (1). Most of the time the dogoundba live in one or several

1. A skirt that is highly valued among the Mossi.

huts, depending on their number.

Each of the women in the other two sections has her own hut.

Since the naba has too many wives to be able to look after all of them, they must provide their own clothing and food. Hence, they are forced to cultivate plots and sell some of their produce. Each napagha has her own small field of millet, peanuts, beans, and peas.

The dogoundba have a collective plot. They help their husband who not only has to feed them, but is also required to support
[357] the sogoné and the samand'kamba (the latter are "people of the outer courtyard," another category of servitors who are sent on errands to the villages or who serve as grooms).

In the homes of the kombemba (plural of kombéré), it is the duty of the dogoundba to prepare food for the sogoné and for any

644
595 foreigners who are being housed by the naba. [164]

Each sogoné or samanbiga chooses a mother from among the
644 wives of the naba (only those in the first two sections).
595

He helps her to cultivate her plot of ground and receives in
357 return a little food over and above the ration of sagbo given to the
608 sogoné as a group.

At Nanore (1), for example, it was formerly the rule that

> 1. Canton in the administrative district of Koudougou.

when a woman brought some sagbo to her adopted son, she could not simply hand it to him. Instead, holes were dug in the courtyard of the naba, into which the woman put the sagbo and sauce. Then the young man came to eat the food, and later the woman came back for her bowls.

644 Finally, it is still forbidden for anyone to play a guitar when
595 a napagha is passing by unless the player is the naba himself or
533 someone called upon to play by the naba. It should be noted that
687 the Moaga prefers the guitar for intimate occasions. Therefore, to
832 play it when a napagha passes by is actually to court her.

The Pogsiouré, or the Recruitment of Sogoné and Saman'kamba

643 Aside from a few special cases limited by custom which we
562 shall presently describe, the naba can never dispose of the daughters of his subjects, either to make them [165] his own wives or to bestow them on someone else, without the permission of the parents.

Pogsiouré comes from pog', the diminutive of pagha, "woman," and from siouré, diminutive of sioubo, "to give anticipating a profit."

562 As a result of family quarrels or even voluntarily, a Moaga
431 "may give away his daughters and those of his brothers and close
643 relatives to the naba." It is obvious that the naba cannot keep all of these girls, so he gives some of them to his brothers, his uncles, his sons, and even to ordinary Mossi who have done him a service.

In the same way -- and this is more frequent -- every sogoné (page) or samand'biga [singular of samand'kamba] (bodyguard or

562
431 groom) who has served his naba satisfactorily receives, at the
643 time he is freed, a young girl who may be nubile, but who may, on the other hand, be just a small child.

In either case, the former servitor is required to call upon the naba from time to time and to take him gifts (cowries or roosters). If the girl is still living with her relatives, in addition to his trifling presents to the naba, the fiancé may make a few presents to his in-laws, although it is not obligatory.

562 Pogsiouré. The first daughter born of a marriage between a
643 Moaga subject (former servitor, son, brother, or uncle of the naba,
644 etc.) and the woman given to him [166] by the naba becomes the
858 "property" of the latter with full rights over her. She is known as "the daughter of the pogsiouré" and is fated to become pogsiouré in her turn.

If the first-born is a boy, the naba may bring him to his
643 court as soon as he reaches the age of discretion to make him either
644 a sogoné or a samand'biga, and the child's father cannot make the
858 slightest objection.

●357 This does not imply that under Mossi law the sogoné and samand'kamba must be children of the pogsiouré. As absolute master of all his subjects, the naba can recruit his servitors throughout his domain as he needs them, with no opposition by the Mossi to this recruitment.

644 The fate of the daughters of the pogsiouré. The girls are
858 taken from their relatives as soon as they are old enough to work
562 and are entrusted by the naba to his own wives.

The latter, for all practical purposes, become the adoptive mothers of these children and, as such, see to their food and clothing. This does not prevent the real mother from bringing cowries and clothing to her daughter, and to make sure that the child will be well treated by the napagha (wife of the naba), she sometimes
[431] even brings the latter a gift of kalgo (soumbala) or karite butter (kamé).

When the girls reach puberty, the naba chooses the most at-
[584] tractive for his fiancées, and the [167] others are given to some of his administrators or to his own relatives.

562 593 644 Rights of parents over their daughters. Although, as has already been noted, the parents retain the right to help their daughters in small ways, they may not, under any circumstances or pretext, break off their engagement nor prevent their marriage. Still less can they promise the daughter to a third party or expect any sort of gifts from the naba.

Later on, in the event that there is agreement between the parties, the husbands may give trifling presents to their in-laws, but there is neither obligation nor coercion to do so.

562 858 Exceptions. Girls given to the marabouts by the naba are considered a kind of alms (saraka), and any children born of such unions belong to the true fathers and may not be disposed of by the chief.

644 357 858 Disposition of boys. Boys recruited as sogoné or samand'kamba are required to serve the naba faithfully, but they continue to belong to their real relatives from whom they annually receive cowries and particularly the fougoibga (blanket).

Although the sogoné are regularly fed and clothed by the 644 naba -- because [168] a naba must always be surrounded by many 357 pages -- this is not done for the samand'kamba. In many cantons 661 and especially in Ouagadougou at the emperor's court, they receive only a meager pittance every two, three, four, or seven days since their role as "vagabond" or groom is supposed to provide them with ample opportunities to rob or rather to pillage the natives. During the winter the grooms and other samand'kamba go out into fields of maize and millet at night or in the morning, and there is general looting. As for any fowl lingering in the karaga (fields of millet near the huts), they are killed and hidden in the bundles of hay used to feed the horses. There are exceptions to this rule: some ministers of the emperor and canton chiefs give their samand'kamba at least one meal per day -- at night -- and during the winter, because they are doing field work, they are given cooked beans or sagbo (millet cakes) at noon.

644 357 608 In general way, however, it may be said that this type of servitor is not supported by the naba. Like the sogoné, the samand'biga chooses a mother at the court of the naba. He helps her cultivate her plot and performs other small services for her (weaving her clothes,

644 357 608 for example), and in return the adoptive mother gives him a bit of food, over and above his regular ration.

644 357 [169] In view of these circumstances, those who are not required at the home of the naba to care for the horses or for some special service spend half the year with their relatives.

644 357 565 It is perhaps of interest to point out that the samand'kamba are mostly sons of the chiefs of villages of nabissi (sons of naba), sons of nakomsé (descendants of naba and nabissi), and sometimes even sons of canton chiefs at the court of the Mogho Naba. There is also the child of the ordinary Moaga, who was not made a sogoné because he was not thought worthy of the position. The rigorous discipline required of the former young men teaches them "to suffer in order to be able to command."

644 357 Anticipation of freedom. If the sogoné or samand'biga is the eldest son and is old enough to marry at the time of his father's death, the naba is required to free him, even though the period of obligatory service has not been completed.

643 844 584 Another custom, the zan-boko. There is another curious custom among the Mossi. If during the course of his journeys the naba stops in a village and during his stay a girl is born to a local Mossi woman, the child is his, with full rights, if he has been told of the birth.

However, the naba often knows nothing about the event, and the father takes care not to speak of it and then makes whatever disposition of the child he wishes.

844 584 [170] This custom, however, is practiced to its fullest extent between Mossi. A Moaga sana (stranger) passing through the village is invited by the elders to dig the zan-boko (hole in which the placenta must be buried). This is his zounogo, "opportunity." He gives a few cowries (100 to 200) to the head of the family and becomes the fiancé of the baby girl. Later on, when she reaches puberty, the man will make the customary gifts to the parents, and nothing will stand in the way of the marriage.

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The Cliffs of Bandiagara (Sudan).

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Entering the Bush.

2:Mangin--9a M-5 (ca. 1910) 1921 FA28 Mossi FA28

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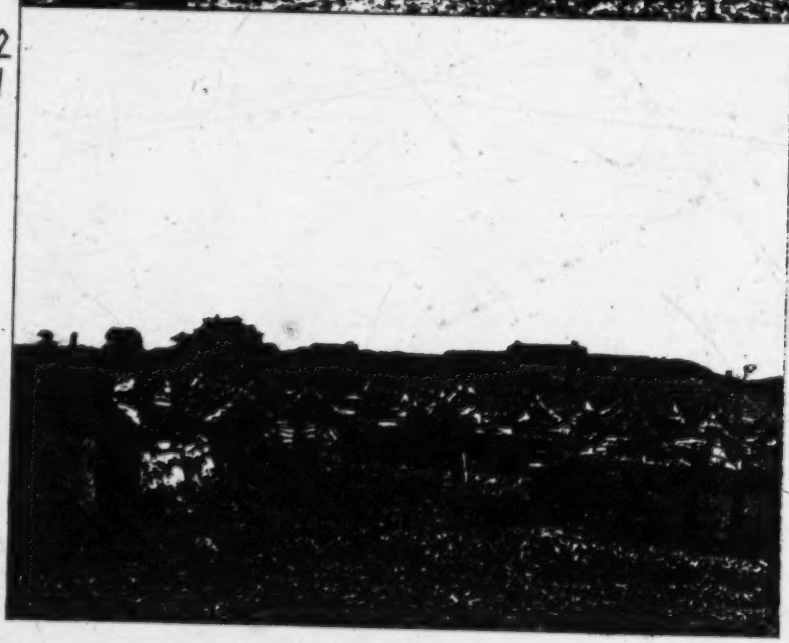

Above: A Baobab.
Below: Mossi Village.

361 /10/ The appearance of the villages indicates that their inhabitants feel safe. There are none of those hut clusters bunched together in [171] narrow walled-in areas to withstand the invasions of an El-hadj-Omar or of a Samory, as in Bambara country; none of those family groupings of flat-roofed huts, those strongholds sheltering the whole family from the grandfather to the last of his grandchildren to resist through sheer numbers the incursions of a more powerful neighbor, as in Gourounsi [592] country where the authority of chiefs is so weak. Here every family head, that is, a man with his wives, his unmarried children, and his servants, occupies a certain number of huts that together form his yri, a grouping Europeans call by its Bambara name, soukala.

342 The huts are circular and usually built of mud, but sometimes of 333 stakes driven into the ground and surrounded with séko, a kind of mat of plaited broad straw. The huts are surmounted with a roof, likewise of straw, resting on a wooden framework. When a native wishes to build a hut, he sets a date with a mason expert in laying mud bricks and notifies the village people. On the appointed day everyone comes to him. The women fetch water from the stream; the men excavate the soil a few meters from where the hut is to be erected; the children trample the mortar and carry to the mason the clods prepared by the old men who sit gravely around the mud pile. This is a festive occasion for the village, because the man who builds must supply drink for all, and food as well if he wishes to do things properly.

A circle is traced on the ground to indicate the outline of the hut, and the mason places the mud clods obliquely side by side along the circle. When the first round is finished, he starts another, and he proceeds in this fashion to mid-height. The work is then interrupted until the following day to give the first part a chance to dry. This is why several huts are usually built at the same time. No opening is left in the wall. When it is dry, a door is cut through, usually arched and so low that one must creep on hands and knees in order to get in. Well-to-do women close their hut with a wooden [414] door that opens inward; it is equipped with a wooden latch that works by means of a large key made of a stick with small iron rods perpendicularly attached to it. The children and even the husband usually leave their clothing, their luxury items, and their cowries in these closed huts which are better protected against thieves. Those who cannot afford this luxury of a door drive two stakes into the ground, one on each side of the opening, and slip a mat between the stakes and the wall.

592 A typical soukala consists of the master's hut, a hut for each wife, one hut for the sheep and goats, another for the horse if he has one, a hut for the family mill, and, finally, a receiving hut with two doors sufficiently high to permit entrance without stooping and set sometimes as an entrance way and sometimes within the cluster of huts. All [351] these dwellings stand in a circle and are joined either by a cob wall or by /11/ mat fences taller than a man and held up by stakes. The master's hut, which usually stands beside the huts for the horses and sheep, is set off from the others by mats to insure his privacy. A low wall describes an arc within the inner courtyard; this is the kitchen when it is not raining. Big jars of fired clay which are used to brew [273 415] millet beer rest between the huts. In front of this cluster of huts, a shelter is built, usually high enough to permit standing and consisting basically of forked stakes with branches and séko resting upon them; this shelter serves as a refuge during the hot part of the day. Small boys and unmarried girls live with their mother, while older boys, servants, and slaves each have their separate huts which face the dwellings of the master and his wives.

The term yri or soukala covers this whole complex of structures. [591] Each soukala is a distinct unit, and, some time after they marry, the children build their own residence, set completely apart from that of their parents, often in another part of the village and sometimes in [361] another village altogether. The soukala stand fifteen to twenty meters apart, and, because of this, the villages, though adequately concentrated, cover a rather extensive area. The heads of cantons 342 place an ostrich egg at the peak of the roof on their own dwellings, [237] and some even build terraced huts higher than the surrounding dwell- [554] ings. They keep their riches in these huts and a prison in the base- [697] ment. An earthen stairway leads to the terrace where the master of [512] the house receives his guests when the sun begins to sink on the horizon.

721 These people, apparently so peaceful today, were formerly quite warlike and went off to war at the slightest pretext. Foreign to the land they now occupy, the Mossi must have conquered it by force of arms. The Tarik-es-Soudan /History of Sudan/ relates that the people of Yatenga seized Timbuktu in the fourteenth century, and in 721 the fifteenth they probably carried their incursions as far as Lake 701 Bébo and even Oualata. (4) The Mossi army was greatly feared.

4. Delafosse, op. cit., Vol. 2, p. 80.

B M 361

3: Paques--10A S-4 (no date) 1954 FA8 Bambara FA8 Mossi FA28

Ségou

Chefferie of Somonos....		28 villages	8,440 hectares		
" " Bolomissé...	2,600km^2		27,550 "		Bambara Markas
" " Dokono...	270 "	98 "	11,083 "		" "
" " M'Pebala .	4,000 "	138 "	27,540 "		Bambara
" " Bibelambés.	500 "	9 "	1,846 "		Peul + some Bambara
" " Koulala....	400 "	18 "	4,545 "		Bambara
" " Sana	400 "	16 "	6,054 "		Markas Bambara
" " the Thiandis Peul	3,200 "	37 "	5,660 "		Peul
" " M Pérédiola .	1,250 "	20 "	5,384 "		Bambara
" " Farako	2,000 "	47 "	14,092 "		Bambara Markas Peul
" " Malaké Markas	100 "	4 "	2,310 "		Markas
" " Sansanding .	400 "	6 "			Bambara
" " Bambougou .	900 "	99 "	33,504 "		Bambara and Peul
" " Bebe	400 "	28 "	4,576 "		Bambara
" " Kalaké Bambara	700 "	13 "	2,911 "		"
" " Dioforongo .	1,200 "	72 "	12,935 "		Peul, Bambara

Nioro

Chefferie of the canton of Kala	1,900 km^2	5,400 hectares		Bambara
" Markabougou	3,200 "	2,782 "		"
" Sokolo	4,200 "	6,126 "		Bambara Markas
" Miempiéna	1,000 "	3,332 "		Bambara
" Segala	3,200 "	1,773 "		"
" Mossi of the Sahel .		1,254 "		Mossi

769 destroy the yield. And, depending on his attentions to them, they can give or take away the good health necessary to carry him through the arduous activity of the rainy season when work is hardest, the granaries nearly empty, and food in short supply. Separate ancestral spirits look out for different aspects of the well-being of the individual. Satisfying their various sacrificial requirements is both expensive and time-consuming, but their good will is essential to the success of the farmer, and it is in his own best interest to be attentive to their needs.

THE EARTH CUSTODIANS

793 A close relationship exists between the control of the water supply upon which the agricultural economy depends and the authority of the 776 earth custodians in their role as intermediaries with the several manifestations of Wennam, the Mossi deity. The deity itself is somewhat aloof from the affairs of men, but through his specific manifestations and with the intercession of the earth custodians (*Tenga Soba namba*), descendants of the indigenous inhabitants of the Yatenga, the individual propitiates Wennam in order to control the various forces of the natural and supernatural environment upon which the success of his economic or social endeavor is dependent. Tenga Wende, his terrestrial manifestation, and Tido Wende, which gives life to the vegetable kingdom, are the aspects of Wennam which are most frequently evoked; but Siguiri Wende, the deified first ancestor of the Mossi; Ki Wende, the millet god; and Saga Wende, the rain deity, are also frequently called upon for help.

Each Mossi village in the Yatenga is divided into one or more areas, 793 each of which is in the "command" of one of the village earth custodians. [36] Each of these areas contains both the dwelling of the Savadogo lineage of the earth custodian and the residence and farmlands of various "true" Mossi lineages. The head of each lineage maintains the good will of the terrestrial manifestation of the deity through the intercession of the earth custodian who "commands" his land. In some instances a lineage may own land under the authority of two different earth custodians; in this case offerings must be made at the shrine (*tenga*) of each.

793 The good fortune which may be secured through obeisance to the terrestrial manifestation of the deity (Tenga Wende) involves both 782 sacrifices and gifts of money to the earth custodian and abstention from acts offensive to the earth. For example, sexual intercourse may take [833] place only in a private courtyard or within the house. Violation of this 783 rule defiles the land and must be expiated through a special sacrifice and the payment of a fine to the earth custodian. Any lost object found in the 778 public way or in the bush is in the custody of the earth deity and must be turned over to the earth custodian to await the inquiry of the proper owners. If such objects are unclaimed, they are given to Tenga Wende

592 father cannot procure one or delays too long in doing so. The son
584 who secedes in this fashion goes to work for a chief or noble who
464 will later give him a wife as a reward. The first male child and the
565 first female child born of this union, however, will devolve to the chief or noble who gave the wife. He will use the male child as a servant, and the girl to be handed out as a reward to someone working for him. This is a side effect of the political organization on the family. This secession on the part of sons can only occur, indeed, thanks to the existence of chiefs and nobles in sufficient numbers to permit the secessionists to find work and employment among them without difficulty. Among the Bobo and Nounouma, such a situation could not exist.

Let us note that this institution, while restricting the authority of the family head or household head, has strengthened the power of the Mossi aristocracy.

592 In closing, let us note a few details about the Mossi soukala
361 from a physical standpoint. It is a cluster of round huts, about five or six of them, usually built of red earth with a straw roof and connected to each other by a concave wall made likewise of red earth. The soukala is thus fortified, as it were, and sheltered from the outside.

592 The Mossi soukala is quite similar to the Malinké or Dialonké
361 "compound" /literally, "square"/, which also consists of a cluster of clay huts with straw roofs. Among the Malinké and Dialonké,
171 however, the huts are often connected by a palisade or a mere séko instead of a red earth wall as they are here. Another difference is /557/ that the doors of the huts of the Mossi soukala are so low that one must often creep in on all fours. Furthermore, there are no porches such as are found among the Malinké and Dialonké. In spite of those differences, however, the Mossi soukala bear a general resemblance to the Guinean soukala, while they are in no way related to the massive citadels of the Gourounsi and Kipirsi.

The Mossi soukala, on the other hand, are set about 50 meters apart. The maize plot surrounding the soukala lies directly around it, as among the Bobo, Gourounsi, Kipirsi, etc., while among the Malinké and Dialonké of Guinea the garden plot of each compound is located outside the village boundaries, since the compounds stand

592 only one or two meters apart, close together. It is true that there
361 is sometimes a small plot within the séko....
171 The soukala or compound is called iri in Mossi, the hut rogo or dogo, and the soukala head irisoba (from soba, "chief" and iri, "compound").

462 We shall close this analysis of the Mossi family with a few notes
562 on the status of women and that of slaves.

First of all, Mossi women help with the tilling. They do not clear the fields, it is true, but they participate in all other field tasks along with the men. They do this only in the morning, however, since they spend the afternoon on household tasks or on their little individual plots, for they have small fields of large white millet, underground peas, beans, or peanuts.

They also do household tasks: they pound and crush the grain. Large millet or sorghum is, as we know, pounded first and then crushed, while small millet is crushed after being threshed.

462 The Mossi set their crushing stones in huge round clay /banco/
252 tables which are built outside the soukala and which are used by
412 the whole quarter. This is a strictly Mossi characteristic which is not found among the /558/ Bobo, Gourounsi, etc., in short, among any of the other groups who nevertheless use the same stones. Those large round tables are not high. They are about 1 or 1.20 meters in height and approximately 6 meters in diameter, with a correspondingly large circumference. The Mossi set in their crushing stones all around the circumference, and each table can thus hold ten, twelve, or even more. Every evening at nightfall the women of the soukala which are around it, women, young girls, etc., come together to crush their grain. They are usually in the simplest of garb, bare as the back of my hand, for the work is hard and demands a continuous back-and-forth motion of the arms, the upper part of the body, and the body as a whole.

To make those tables, they first build a circular wall to the desired height of the table, and then the whole inner space is filled up with earth almost to the top. This earth is pounded thoroughly, and then well-tamped casings are fashioned on the horizontal circumference in which are set the stones on which the crushing is done. The stones are firmly ensheathed in the clay, which is then allowed to dry.

596 family in marriage. Likewise, the head of the family, assisted by the family council, settles all the little differences which arise between relatives. He also intervenes when a father fails to secure the obedience of one of his children or cannot manage to discipline him.

"It is he alone who must sacrifice animals for the benefit of the whole family when his relatives bring them to him on the occasion of family feasts.

"All the members of the family owe obedience to the family head. Likewise, they must show him the greatest respect.

"When the family elder dies, his younger brother becomes head of the family. When all his brothers have successively held this office, the eldest son of the eldest brother becomes the family head after the brothers, etc.

"Sometimes the head of the family does not live in the same village as the rest of the family. He may very well live with some of his sons or brothers, away from his other relatives, but his powers remain unchanged.

"In addition to the family head, there is the family council which is made up of all the men and old women of the family. This body has no well-defined role. It meets under the leadership of the family head to settle all matters concerning the family. The council would decide, for example, as to whether an incorrigible child should be sent to a naba /ruler/, as to who should intervene /229/ in case of a quarrel over an inheritance, who should seize the goods of a spendthrift in order to dole them out to him in proportion to his needs, etc."

592 351 The compound. —The Mossi compound consists of a certain number of round earthen huts or cabins surmounted by thatched roofs and huts for millet, all crowded into a rather narrow space cut by passages, hallways, small courtyards, etc. This complex is surrounded by a moderately high earth wall (two meters) which encircles the huts or cabins and encloses the compound.

592 361 The compounds are scattered over the plain, 50 or 100 meters apart. Some are larger than others: some have 15 or 20 huts or even more; others have but four or five (2).

192 2. To designate these compounds, the word soukala or sokala is often used. This word is hallowed by custom in Yatenga, in the Ouagadougou area, in the Léo area, etc., in short, in all Mossi lands and their

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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613 appealed to the district chief, and occasionally the woman was sent back.
565 A nobleman set on having a certain girl as a wife usually had small brace-
583 lets like those worn by all noble wives placed on her ankles. Once this was done, the chief could not be compelled to send her back to her parents, and any man who tried to retrieve her was guilty of interfering with a nobleman's wife and could be killed for it. In fact, only the male relatives of noblemen's wives could converse with them without running the risk of being apprehended and executed.

634 The district was the most important unit in the Mossi principalities and kingdoms. It was on this level that the Mossi nobility came into direct contact with the various social and ethnic groups of the society. Here, kinship and affinal ties linked the conquerors and the conquered, the ancient and recent nobility, the refugees from conflicts over the nam and the resident aliens, in a network of social, ritual, economic, and political relationships. It was also on this level that myths and traditions legitimized most effectively the Mossi socio-economic and political system as well as the relationships between the various social and ethnic groups.

634 The number and size of the Mossi districts varied greatly from one
161 principality or kingdom to another. Some districts were large and wealthy, with a number of large villages; smaller districts had a larger proportion of small villages and hamlets. The average number of these small units was probably between fifty and sixty-five per district. The population of the districts ranged from 10,000 to 35,000 persons. Some *tense* (villages) had as many as 5,000 inhabitants and some as few as 50. The average village had about 500 inhabitants. But regardless of size, all Mossi districts and component villages had basically the same structure and fulfilled the same functions. The structure of Nobere district is representative. Nobere
[131] covered approximately 200 square miles. It was bounded on the east by a district called Manga, on the north by the districts of Toece and Djiba, and on the west and south by the Red Volta River. A census taken in 1905, just nine years after the European conquest, showed the Nobere population to be about 13,200.[10] In 1955 approximately 10,000 persons inhabited 24 villages and hamlets scattered through the more inhabitable part of the district.

634 The number of villages and hamlets in Nobere district apparently fluc-
621 tuated. Villages were occasionally abandoned, while small hamlets grew into prominent settlements. The people of Nobere always tried to establish
[361] their villages as close to the Red Volta as possible in order to utilize the more fertile lands. But they were repeatedly driven back by disease and

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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 634

tions. Binger, who found Boukary Koutou (the future Mogho Naba Wobogo) living in exile for having led a rebellion against his brother, Mogho Naba Sanum, tells us: 574 579 434

> Boukary has no resources, and does not even have the advantage of receiving periodic tribute from several large villages. In order to subsist and to maintain a certain status, he is compelled to live by pillage and even by brigandage. From time to time, his horsemen make incursions into the outskirts of some Gurunsi or Kipirsi village, and carry off by surprise the inhabitants whom they find working the fields or looking for wood. His people also hide and lie in wait along the roads to capture any persons who may pass within their range. This type of behavior has given Boukary Naba a bad reputation. However, the people who understand his position forgive him, knowing the situation in which his brother has placed him. And, in spite of all this, he has numerous partisans, and many others who would be happy to see him gain power.[28]

Those district chiefs or princes who wished to retain their power legitimately were forced to be generous or run the risk of losing the allegiance and good will of their villagers, who were their ultimate supporters. 634 574

It is very difficult to generalize about the amount of revenue collected by a village chief. He did not receive any revenue from the land used by his villagers. He treated the weogho in his village in the same manner as the district chief. If some families grew too large and wanted to establish permanent residence in the village bush, they asked the chief for permission to settle there. However, many village chiefs had special areas of waste for their own use. They had usually received them as gifts from some district chief, and therefore had the right to collect tribute on any crops, firewood, or fish obtained from these lands. 651 622 634 [361] [431]

The average village chief's main source of revenue was derived from the agricultural and other labor of his wives and relatives. A village chief received a number of wives from his subjects and from aliens living in his village. These women helped cultivate his fields. If their labor was insufficient he called a sosogha, to which he often invited his wives' relatives. Some chiefs also had serfs and slaves who helped cultivate their land and kept their cattle as well. [464] [566] [567]

The village chief did not have the power to tax his subjects. Instead, he functioned as a channel through which commodities and services passed up the hierarchy and on to Ouagadougou. Many villagers voluntarily helped the chief to repair his huts and compound walls and to cut thatch for his roofs. Many gave him baskets of grain and other vegetable products after the harvest. They also visited him and gave him presents during the annual rites to his ancestors. In contrast to higher chiefs, however, the village head [476] [431] [692]

312 hour for the impurities and the residue to settle to the bottom of
271 the vessel. Then the water is poured off into another container and is ready to be used for drinking or cooking.

[824] (b) It is also possible to use an additive known as missim (crushed tamarind leaves). The water becomes clear, but it is, of course, somewhat sour. Although it may be drunk, it is
[552] ideally suited to cooking since the Mossi add missim (from miki, "to make sour") even to the water of springs and wells before they use it to prepare their principal food, sagbo.

744 In the town of Ouagadougou frequent visits by the sanitary
312 officers remind the natives of the necessity of keeping fresh water in their containers. They are also encouraged to fill in during the winter the low places holding water where mosquitoes might breed.

515 Laundering. There is no doubt [231] that the Moaga is care-
296 less about the cleanliness of his clothing. There is no shortage of soap -- karite butter, of which it is made, is plentiful -- but he believes that frequent laundering will wear out his clothes too quickly. He also thinks -- which is childish -- that the dirtier a garment is, the cleaner it will wash. He thinks it completely ridiculous for clothes to be ironed. It must be admitted that among the Mossi only a married man can require his wives to wash his clothes. A mother also takes care of her children's clothes, but a bachelor is forced to wash his own things. This, we think, explains the extreme negligence shown by some of them who let their clothes get dirtier and dirtier. Indolence, alas, is
[461] one of the dominant defects of the native of Mossi country.

514 Toilet arrangements. In general the Mossi have no regular latrines. Men, women, in short, everyone, simply goes into the bush. The only exception is the very young children who take care of their needs on the threshold. At night, especially during the winter when the grain is fairly tall, grownups themselves go to the kamanga or karaga (millet or maize field near the living quarters).

364 When the town of Ouagadougou was made a mixed commune [Ed., smallest French territorial subdivision, with both French and native representation in the municipal council], it was possible to install, at municipal expense, a number of lavatories in certain

364 sections and especially around the market. Now formal regulations require the inhabitants [232] to dig latrine ditches in the compounds, but it will be a long time before the native loses the habit of relieving himself in the open air.

Chapter 15

Mossi Dances and their Significance (1)

1. An excerpt, revised and completed, from a lecture delivered by the author on December 24, 1926.

535 In this chapter, we shall describe the Mossi dances, explain their meaning, and tell of the old beliefs with which they are connected.

Indeed, these dances occupy a place apart in the general category of dances of indigenous peoples.

The latter, for the most part and notably among the Boussancé and the Gourma [Gurma], are only exuberant displays, sometimes exercises in suppleness, sometimes caricatures of the motions of love.

The Mossi dances, on the other hand, are actually performed in accordance with fixed rules. There are three types: 1) dances which we shall call sentimental, known as wennega; 2) dances that are part war dance and part religious, called waongo; and finally 3) funeral dances known as warba.

535 533 832 [534] In order of precedence, let us begin with the love dance called wennega. This is executed at gatherings. The lover and his sweetheart -- the latter dressed in black, the ceremonial color -- are receiving their friends. Beer is flowing, and mouths are filled with kola nuts. Soon the musicians strike up [234] their rustic guitars (kondé) which are accompanied by the beating of gourds. The women sing:

539 533 M' Ba sida talem néré
Talem kan-kaïn, talemti
Pagh ka zaïd koulogh wa mandé

●364 For the Mossi, as for all other men, life ends in death, with or without illness. The Blacks do not know how to prevent diseases, and they know very little about fighting them. Hygiene is almost unknown. The huts are poorly aired, the chickens and in general all the animals in the inner courtyard walk everywhere and foul everything. The courtyard is swept often, but the hut of the sheep and goats is located in the midst of the other dwellings; the horse is kept within the soukala [514] itself; and people relieve themselves anywhere, wherever they find a convenient spot. The manure is gathered in a heap, but it is kept next to the huts and gives off a nauseating smell and noxious miasmas, especially at the beginning of the rainy season.

515 The Mossi are not dirty, but they cannot be called clean. Those who dwell in villages abundantly supplied with water at all times are the cleanest. The women, who fetch water every day and thus have an opportunity to wash, are usually cleaner than the men. A Mossi never passes a pond without drinking copiously and washing all over, and this would seem to prove that those who go dirty do so unwillingly; they have no water nearby, and it would be too much trouble to go to the river to bathe. Clothing, especially breechcloths, is often repulsively dirty. This is because washing wears out clothes, and who knows when new ones will be available? No wonder disease has such a hold on this people.

855 Child care is quite rudimentary: a few baths; enemas two or three
165 times a day, without which it is said their bowels would not move; and that is all. At the slightest indisposition the sorcerer is consulted, or else the child is left to himself; he will get well or die, and nothing is done about it. As a consequence, child mortality is very high.
758 Those who fall prey to a contagious disease are not isolated. A healthy child lies on the same mat as one with smallpox, a leper drinks from the common gourd unless his lips are covered with sores. People do, however, hesitate to sit where a syphilitic person with sores previously sat. The education of the Mossi in matters of hygiene is wholly yet to be learned.

576 On meeting someone, Mossi politeness requires that an inquiry be made about his health and that of all his relatives. The response invariably is "So-and-So is well," and the other in turn responds, "May God permit his health to wax." It is only after a little conversation that a certain person is said to be ill or to be getting better.
195 It is not said that someone died, but that he ran short of strength, that he passed away, that he left us.

653 considered forced labor since this work is done in the common interest.

[77] Installation of a Market

366 787 782 As in many other circumstances, the Mossi first consult soothsayers when they desire to establish a market. The Moaga [singular of Mossi] is convinced that invisible spirits are everywhere, behind his house, under the trees, in the fields and groves, and even in uninhabited places, so above all he is anxious to obtain the good will of these beings whose anger is fearful. It is, therefore, only after consulting several soothsayers, who use various types of divination (with cowries, stones, sand, etc.), that the village chief has chickens and livestock sacrificed on the site where he wishes to set up the new market. The naba chooses two or three candidates from among his followers, and the soothsayers are required to indicate which of these has the best prospect of good fortune and a promising future. This person will be the one who performs the sacrifice. The victims are furnished, in theory, by the village or canton chief, unless he decides to call on the populace. In this case, a small assessment is made on some of the notables, and the proceeds are used to buy chickens, a goat, or a sheep.

366 782 In any event, the canton chief is not permitted to appropriate the animals in the villages or sections under his jurisdiction as would be done in the case of sacrifices offered for the general welfare of the country.

The individual chosen by the bagba [soothsayers] presents himself at the site, accompanied by a more or less [78] impressive crowd, depending on the importance of the village. The women bring fritters and other provisions.

The following sacramental words are pronounced: "Ya sida Ting' Naba yeta nan lougoul dagh, Naba zidwendé Bad kom deghin kon zigh tinghin damba, tib kon yaramba, tib regh kon saramba, tiya gnimassem lad ratta, tib regh lass zim-yellé, tiya nogoam la tigue koada soaba lad zoïta." A literal translation follows. "This is true, the canton chief wishes to install a market on this spot. Oh God, the Sun, here are water and animals for zigh tinghin damba (people who died childless), for grandparents and ancestors. We ask

366 782 for good fortune and health. Prevent all bloodshed in this market. We also fear those who are quarrelsome and those who talk too much, those who provoke disorder." The chicken is the first victim to be sacrificed, and if the offering is accepted, it must have first fallen on its back and only then turned over face downward (this means that the gods of the place will protect the naba and the persons who will frequent the market). Next the goat or sheep is killed.

The new market is opened immediately after the sacrifice. Those present buy the women's fritters. Ordinarily, Mossi markets [443] are held every three days. The news travels rapidly that such-and-such a village has a market, and thus the business of the market gradually grows.

366 651 [601] Collection of fees. It is only later on, one or even two years after the installation of his new market and when [79] it is successful, that the canton chief appoints a yaguinga (grandson, or, more accurately in native terms, a sister's son (nephew)or son's son (grandson), of the naba or of a member of his family) or a Gourounsi captive to act as collector of market fees. (We shall list below the various fees for a place in the market as they were collected for the benefit of the naba before the arrival of the French.)

366 Transfer of the market. Upon the death of a naba (the emperor, a vassal chief, or even the chief of the village where the market is held), the market is temporarily set up in another place. In large towns, such as Ouagadougou, for example, there may be as many markets as there are sections. These temporary markets are called kim'dagha (market of the kimsé, that is, of the deceased).

366 782 When a new naba has been named, the market is moved back to its former site and the reinstallation calls for new sacrifices of fowl and livestock. That was why in 1897, when the market at Ouagadougou was being re-established, the emperor asked the captain who was in command of the post to provide a cow to be sacrificed along with a sheep and a rooster which he himself provided.

366 825 787 Likewise, whenever a hyena has run through the market (its presence is discovered either by the tracks left by the animal or by consulting the soothsayers), just as happens when a naba dies, the market must be moved elsewhere for a few days. It is believed that if [80] a brawl should occur after a hyena had passed through the market, there would certainly be a death.

567 now the circle of Tenkodogo constituted a reservoir (figuratively called lambagré, "cotton reserve") from which the warriors and vassals of the emperor brought back hundreds of young slaves. This was because Garango recognized no authority; it was dependent neither on the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou nor on the king of Tenkodogo. Tradition has it that the warriors of the Mossi chiefs were always surprising the people of Garango on market days. The memory of these raids is why, even today the markets at Garango [366] are open only from six in the morning until noon.

The Mossi considered themselves to be free men, and no one, [644] not even naba, had the [85] right to reduce a Moaga subject to slavery. The facial tattoos made it easy to distinguish the Moaga [304] from foreigners.

Since there were few contacts between neighboring villages, 567 it was difficult even for highwaymen to sell young people from near- 674 by areas. This does not mean that there were not, all the same, captives of Mossi origin. Bandits rode, for instance, from Ouagadougou to Boussouma. They always carried large leather [492] sacks tied to their saddles and into them thrust children and women who were taken by surprise while gathering fruit in the bush. Such captives were always sold far from their home villages. Naturally such practices were severely dealt with by the naba. Naba Wobgo drove the canton chief of Bilgotenga, Warongo, from his territory because he enslaved Mossi people. Warongo was forced to take refuge in Yatenga and returned home only after the coming of the French.

567 Some of the slaves brought back from Garango were kept by the emperor, and the rest were distributed among the warriors. Up to that time no one thought of using them for anything but field work and domestic labor.

It was Naba Baongo, the twenty-sixth successor of Oubri, who first thought of selling the slaves. He said: "Id kossi bazas kamba tib boude nan wa saf" (literally, "let us sell these slave dogs; perhaps, one day, [86] there will be no more of them"). It is as if the emperor had foreseen the suppression of slavery and the emancipation of the slaves.

Today one seldom encounters former Boussanga slaves. They have no doubt returned to their villages since the arrival of the [304] French. Their descendants (house slaves, dogyiri) now wear the same facial tattoos as the Mossi.

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long been famous. The former are sometimes ridden but are used primarily as beasts of burden. Horses were and are still important for military and ceremonial purposes and for external trade to other areas.

The Mossi have never excelled in metalworking. The people in the northern part of the country have worked indigenous ores since aboriginal times. Those in the south get iron mainly from traders and caravans. The other metals which the Mossi smiths manufacture into tools and ornaments are also obtained from traders.

TRADE IN HISTORICAL TIMES

The geographic position of Mossi country has much to do with its being an important trade and market center. The country itself has always produced grain, cotton and livestock for export. And for several centuries caravans have passed through this region carrying Sudanese and Saharan products to the forest zones to the south, and carrying forest products back to the arid north. The beginning of this trade is lost in the dim past, but it safe to say that it developed shortly after or along with the founding of Timbuktu about 1100 A.D. The Mossi themselves were not definitely linked to this important *entrepot* until they raided it in 1328, but we can assume that they had been trading there for some time before that event took place. Similarly, we have no record of when the Mossi began trading with the forest zones, but we can also assume that this trade began around the same period or even before.

Our first evidence of Mossi trade and commerce comes from Europeans who were themselves interested in conducting their own trading activities with the peoples in the Bend of the Niger. Bowditch, an Englishman who had journeyed to Ashanti to sign a treaty facilitating the reopening of a profitable trade with the coast, wangled the first important piece of information about the Mossi from his reluctant hosts:

> Five journies from Yngwa is Mosee, a more warlike but less visited kingdom: it consists of many states, but the superior monarch is named Billa, and the capital Kookoopella. I place it to the N.W. because its merchants pass by Yngwa; they do not cross the Karhalla [White Volta] nor any river which is not fordable. (Bowditch 1819 : 180)

This information is not strictly correct since Koupela was not the capital of any of the Mossi kingdoms, but Bowditch's informant had probably heard of Koupela because it was the largest political entity near the large caravan center at Pouitenga.

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175 437 Dupuis, who replaced Bowditch in Kumasi in 1817, obtained surprisingly good data on trade relations between the Ashanti and the Mossi, considering the reluctance of the middlemen traders to furnish any help in this matter. He discovered that Ashanti traders

[103] . . . sometimes travel as far as Aughoa, the Magho, and to the east of Kasogho. Aughoa is distant from Coomassie twenty-five journies by the Salgha and Yandy Roads, which would give a distance of three hundred that vegetable substance . . . by the name of Shea butter. (Dupuis 1824 : App. cvii)[1]

The Hausa merchants and caravaneers knew a great deal about the Mossi and their resources, but it was only with great difficulty that Clapperton persuaded Sultan Mohammed Bello of Sokoto to give him the following information:

[101] The country of Mouchier or Mouchi is situated to the west of Ghurma. It is vast and possesses a gold mine, rivers, forests and mountains. It is inhabited by tribes of the Sudan who possess many fast horses, and large donkeys. Their king is called Wagadougou; their asses are sent down to the Gondja to carry the drums of the army. (Clapperton 1829 : 323)

It is obvious that either Clapperton or his informant confused the capital of the Mossi with their king, and included parts of Ghana in [23] their territory. Nevertheless, one does get an indication of the importance of livestock in Mossi trading.

The great bulk of the trade between the Mossi and their neighbors to the north and to the south was done through the medium of 175 caravans which crisscrossed their territory. The first person to signal 437 the existence of these caravans was Barth (1859 : III, 646–648) who, 487 although he did not enter Mossi country during his extensive travels in the Sudan from 1849 to 1855, reported the existence of several caravan routes which traversed the Mossi from the desert to the [103] forest. The first route he described proceeded from "Kirotashi, a town on the east side of the Niger, one day south of Say, to Woghodogho." [366] Ten days out of Kirotashi caravans usually reached Tengkodogo, and on the thirteenth day they arrived at Koupela which according to

(1) The Aughoa referred to here is really "Wagha," the term often used by the Mossi [63] when talking about their capital, Waghadougou. Magho is really "Mogho" the name of Mossi country itself, and Kasoagho is the name of a province of Wagadougou commanded by a minister of the Moro Naba, the Kasoagho Naba. Dupuis' report on the actual distance between Kumasis and Waghadougou is almost the same mileage as that [366] of today. Koelle (1854 : 6) received a report from a slave liberated in Sierra Leone in [647] 1854 that the great Mossi trading center "Kupeala is four days from Wardugu, the Mossi capital, whither the king of Asante often sends presents; and one month from Salak (Salags), an Asante town, where they bring their cola-nuts."

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Barth was "a well-frequented market place of Mosi, and of greater importance than all the other towns of Mosi; the governor's name is Nabere Gager. The inhabitants are celebrated archers." Barth states that by the fifteenth day, or two days later, the caravans usually arrived at Wagadougou, but he tells us in a note that:

> Other people, in going slowly from Kulfela to Woghodogho, spend eight days on the road, sleeping the first night in Pashipanga, the second in Tangay, the third in Zorogo, the next in a place ruled by a man called Mane Bogonje, the fifth in another village called Tangay, and reach Woghodogho on the eighth. (Marc 1909 : 27)[2]

Finally, he reports that another spur of this caravan route ran from Tengkodogo to Sansanne Mangho, in what is now Togoland. This journey took five days.

The second caravan route described by Barth ran from Djibo, the capital of the province of Gilgohi or Jilgodi (about 60 miles south from Montdoro, 55 miles West-Southwest from Aribinda and 35 miles South-Southwest from Tinie) by way of Kaya, to Mane and finally to Wagadougou. A caravan leaving Djibo entered Kelbo, the first village of the territory of Mossi on the eighth day, but according to Barth the "border district in general is regarded as very unsafe." On the fourteenth day the caravan entered Kaya;

> ... an important place where several roads meet. And from Kaya the route went to Wagadougou by way of Boussouma, Mane and Yako. It took a caravan ten days to traverse it.[3]

The third major caravan route that Barth described lay entirely within Mossi country. It ran from Mane to "Yadega" (probably Wahigouya, the capital of the kingdom of Yatenga) by way of Yako, and it took a caravan eight days to travel it. The fourth caravan route lay between Mane and a place called Kong by way of Tema, Yako, La and other places. On the tenth day a caravan reached Kong;

> ... a large place, according to my informant, inhabited by Bambara. It can scarcely be identical with the well-known Kong, if the itinerary be correct; but nevertheless it may be the case.

The first day after the caravan left Kong to return to Mane, it

(2) Barth received fairly accurate information about the caravan routes, and Marc was impressed with his data. Nevertheless, Marc finds it impossible to believe that caravans took two days to travel the twenty-five miles between Tengkodogo and Koupela, and only two more days to travel the ninety odd miles from Koupela to Wagadougou. Barth obviously erred here, but the timetable he gives for those persons "going slowly" from Koupela to Wagadougou appears to be quite correct.

(3) It is highly unlikely that a caravan going to Wagadougou from Kaya would have gone through Mane and Yako unless the caravaneers were interested in tapping the resources of these two western towns before heading straight south to their destination.

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traded for such articles as needles, mirrors, beads, coral and amber, tea, coffee, fezes, tailored robes, and most important of all, salt (Dubois 1899 : 292–304). Presumably, by the time Dubois reported on this trade, the Mossi had stopped trading slaves and eunuchs into this region, because we know from other sources that these people were sold through Timbuktu as far north as Algeria and Constantinople.[8]

The caravans which brought desert and northern goods into Mossi country collected grain, cotton cloth, livestock and slaves to be sold in the forest areas. Captain Lonsdale, an Englishman who visited Salaga in 1881 and gave a good description of its markets and traders, includes among the latter

> ... the Mossi with his cattle, sheep and slaves—these latter, generally Gurunsi, are not exposed for sale in the street or market, but can be seen where the owner resides. (Lonsdale 1882)

The extent to which the Mossi people themselves participated in all aspects of the caravan trade which crossed their country is far from clear. Barth, Lonsdale and Dubois all report that the Mossi were members of the caravans both in the forest zone and in Timbuktu, and my own informants agree with these reports. In contrast, however, both Marc and Tauxier believe that the Mossi were seldom the actual caravaneers. Marc declares that the Yarse

> ... are the most numerous group devoting itself to commerce in the region which we occupy. This is equally true of the Hausa, but probably only over the last years. Moors come sometimes from Dori as far as Wagadougou. One seldom meets Mande-Dioulas. As for the pure Mossi, it was only a short while ago that they themselves began to follow the caravans. (Marc 1909 : 170–71)

Similarly, Tauxier states that

> ... it is not the Mossi who do this [caravan] trading but the Yarse we know so well, and the Hausa settled in Mossi territory. Mossi trade, therefore, is not really Mossi, or at least it was not in the past. If it has now begun to be to some extent, it is thanks to the French settlement in the territory. (Tauxier 1912 : 538)

In the face of the early reports by Barth and others, how does one resolve the contradiction apparent in Tauxier's comments? These early travelers might have mistaken the Yarse for Mossi since these

(8) Marc, 1909 : 170–171. "We met in Mossi country two natives who, when children, had been seized [as slaves] and led through Timbuktu as far as Algeria ... The commerce in slaves was doubled among the Mossi by commerce in eunuchs. Mossi country was one of those rare countries where people knew how to make them, and the Moro Nabas exported with great profit as far as Constantinople those whom they had had mutilated."

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175 people have become Mossicized in language and culture, but it is
437 doubtful whether they would have taken the Hausa for Mossi. The
441 true Mossi may have played a minor role in the caravan trade, but I am certain that they took part in it and that they did so before the French conquest of their country.

175 There is little doubt that the Mossi traded with the caravans that
437 passed *through* their country. Crozat, who visited Moro Naba Wobogo
439 six years before the conquest, reported that the king

[643]

> . . . appeared to have had some business relations with white merchants who came up to Salaga every dry season. He sent horses to them in exchange for silver. He claims that he had no reasons to be pleased with their integrity and that the silver which they sent to him contained plenty of copper. It happens also that traders may come as far as Wagadougou, bringing merchandise of German origin. There was one of them on hand during my stay at Wagadougou. I was told that he was an important marabout, a shereef, perhaps an Arab or a Moor, for I was assured that he was very light in color. As was repeated to me several times, his relations with the king were limited to the solemn greetings on Fridays. He has never entered the royal hut in spite of being an important marabout. He was at Wagadougou for about three and one-half months, but he was compelled to return to the coast since the merchandise which he had brought was exhausted. He spoke no Mossi. (Crozat 1891)

The caravans which passed through Mossi country were well organized but seemed to have lacked the regularity which was characteristic of the trans-Sahara ones. Those caravans coming from the north were apparently more regular since they had to await the coming of the great trans-Sahara caravans, which brought them salt and other
[366] valuable merchandise. Those coming from Salaga and points south
[221] traveled at all times of the year, a fact which is corroborated by the voyage of Krauss, who arrived at the Bere market during August and the height of the Mossi planting season. This was a period of scarcity or "hungry period" as Krauss himself observed, and it is doubtful whether the Mossi had much to trade at this time. Nevertheless, caravaneers always found some trade goods at the larger Mossi market centers all through the year, even if only cloth and cotton bands.

[221] The main season for external trade in Mossi country came after the harvest. In the words of Marc, who served there shortly after the conquest:

> Towards the end of the rainy season, in September or October, the
> [341] Yarse begin to assemble the livestock in order to leave for the south. In certain large commercial centers like Kaya, Pouitenga, Dakay, one finds
> [422] around this period the owners of livestock: Mossi chiefs, Fulani or rich natives, who are ready to sell their animals. People also assemble sheep of

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175 fitto, levied upon each ass by the petty chiefs on the road is very consider-
437 able. From 5,000 to 6,000 guro, or kola nuts, constitute an assload.
435 Selga, the market place for this important article, being, it appears, a
[651] most miserable town, where even water is very scarce and can only be
purchased at an exorbitant price, the merchants always manage to make
[346] their stay here as short as possible, awaiting the proper season in Yendi, a town said to be as large as Timbuktu, or in Kulfela, the great market place of Mosi; and they are especially obliged to wait in case they arrive at the beginning of the rainy season, there being no kola nuts before the latter part of the Kharif. The price of this nut in Timbuktu varies from 20 to
[235] 100 shells each, and it always constitutes a luxury; so that, even on great festivals, alms consisting of this article are distributed by the rich people of the town. (Barth 1859 : II, 364)

175 The other data we have on prices paid for goods come from the
43 period between 1890 and 1910, at which time French francs had been introduced. At this time the official value of one franc was 1,000 cowries. Around 1904, a trader paid about 50 francs or 50,000 cowries for a head of cattle in Mossi country and sold it for about double the price at Salaga. With the proceeds of this transaction he bought kola nuts at the rate of one franc or 100 cowries per hundred. Thus with the sale of one cow a trader could obtain 10,000 kolas, these being valued at about 500 francs or 500,000 cowries in Mossi country and at 20 or 200 cowries each at Sarfere and Timbuktu (Marc 1909 : 173–4). At Timbuktu about this same period, 1895, traders could buy salt at about 30 francs for a slab weighing between 60 and 100 pounds and sell it for 45 francs at Sarafere, for 60 francs at Djenne, for between 70 and 80 francs at San, and "thus progressively more until they reached Mossi country" (Dubois 1899 : 276). In 1910, Mossi traders bought cattle for about 40 to 100 francs, horses for about 90 francs, donkeys for 25 francs, and so on, and sold these animals in Salaga for three times the prices. There they bought kolas at 2 Fr. 50 per thousand, and sold them at 20 per thousand at Leo on the Mossi border, 35 francs per thousand at Wagadougou, 50 francs at Wahigouya, 60 francs at Saravere, and 100 francs per thousand at Timbuktu. Here these traders bought bars of salt weighing about 75 pounds for between 10 and 12 francs a piece, and sold them for between 40 to 60 francs at Wahigouya, and for from 80 to 100 francs a piece at Dedougou and points as far down as Wagadougou (Tauxier 1917 : 221).

175 Not all the profit from this trade went into the pockets of the
437 traders. We have the report of Binger that the chiefs, besides com-
486 mandering the goods at less than one-hundredth their purchase
651 price, received taxes on each caravan which passed through their
territory.

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territory. This report is substantiated by Barth. Marc adds that the caravaneers had

> . . . a considerable amount of incidental expenses. Ten thousand kolas called for two asses or four porters for whom it was necessary to provide food during close to two months. Formerly there had been a certain number of local exactions to pay each time that the caravans crossed a new country. Now there are taxes on the caravans in the Gold Coast and also in French territory. It is also necessary to pay for ferryman who transports the livestock across the Volta [River]. There are risks, and occasionally cattle, fatigued by the trip, arrive in such bad shape that they are sold more cheaply than they had cost. Finally, the realization of profits is often difficult, the kola market being, in the commercial centers of the Mossi, subject to considerable fluctuations at the time when the caravans return. (Marc 1909 : 174)[7]

Sometimes the caravaneers made extensive use of middlemen and did not realize all the profits. Marc, who was stationed at the customs post at Leo on the Mossi border with the Gold Coast, wrote:

> The livestock is bought upon arrival by interpreter-brokers, middlemen between the butchers and the meat merchants, to whom the caravaneers are practically forced to resort. These men buy all the kola nuts brought by the forest natives, and control the market prices . . . These interpreter-brokers apparently speculate on livestock in a most curious way. They have scouts who go out to meet the caravans, sometimes two days' march to the north. These scouts attempt to alarm the travellers with tendentious remarks, until they are willing to cede their herds at a low price. Some times, at the height of the business season—that is, in January and February—the livestock prices may fluctuate by one hundred per cent within a few weeks. The Mande-Dioula vie in eloquence, the Yarse and Mossi in politeness, the Hausa in friendliness. In reality, there is here, an embryonic trading center, a veritable stock exchange, using extensively indigenous methods. ((Marc 1909 : 175)

According to most reports, all the larger market centers of Mossi country were like this.

Caravan centers, like all the lesser market centers in Mossi country, provided merchants not only with trading opportunities but also with occasions for conviviality after hectic days of travel. At Dakay south of Wagadougou, livestock traders found musicians, singers, and the most beautiful dancers in the country. And according to Marc, during the whole caravan season the market was abundantly furnished with beer (Marc 1909 : 175). But if the Mossi enjoyed themselves at

(7) Tauxier (1912 : 539) states that each porter was paid 35 francs for the thirty-five days of travels or at the rate of one franc per day. In addition a caravaneer spent about 300 cowries a day on food for each of his bearers.

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their own commercial centers, they acted quite differently outside their country. Dubois reports that at Timbuktu, "the great town of pleasure" with the freest morals in the Sudan, the merchants from Bamako, Djenne, Sansanding and Touat spent a great deal of money in pleasure and in gifts to the beautiful women, but the "Mossi did not waste their money and left as soon as they had finished their affairs" (Dubois 1899 : 292–300).

The days of the caravans are now over in Mossi country, even though large groups of traders carry on the traditional commerce in livestock, cotton, kola nuts, some dried fish, and salt. As soon as the French conquered th country they formulated plants to control the caravans. One of the earliest reports, for June 1899, reads:

> The country is calm and direct administration was established at Koupela, Mane, Yake . . . The Mossi trade is mainly with the English colony of the Gold Coast. It consists mainly of livestock, very plentiful in Mossi country, which is exchanged for merchandise from England; copper and material goods . . . Our task will be to discover the materials of the northern Ivory Coast which could be exchanged for cattle, and when this information is forthcoming we should be able to direct the caravans quite easily to the Ivory Coast. At the same time the English will see their provisions of cattle and sheep diminish. They will flood us less with their cotton cloth, with their glass beads, and with their kola nuts. In their place, the products of French manufacture can arrive to us through the Ivory Coast after being exchanged for the products of our colony there.[8]

These plans did not succeed. The Mossi still export a great deal of their products towards the forest zones of Ghana, including their "numerous laborers" which, according to Beauminy writing in 1919, were "the principal riches actually utilizable in Mossi country". (Beauminy 1919 : 71–78). The migrants themselves are, in a sense, the greatest traders in contemporary Mossi society.

PRESENT-DAY TRADE

There is a constant flow of goods between Mossi country and the Ivory Coast and Ghana. Much of the trade to the former region is in the hands of the large commercial companies and as such is beyond the purview of this paper. What is of interest here is the trade which is conducted by the ordinary people. A great deal of this trade is highly unorganized and the result of one or two men, or as many as five men, joining together to trade goods to and from Ghana and the Ivory Coast. The types of goods sent down to these two areas are the

(8) Unpublished document in the archives of *Institut Français d'Afrique Noire*, Wagadougou, Voltaic Republic.

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485 o'clock in the morning to sell food to those migrants who have slept
265 under the trees or in the deserted market place and who are going on towards Ghana or to Wagadougou. At about 8:00 or 9:00 A.M. the majority of the food-sellers leave for home, but some of them remain around all day to sell to those migrants who pass by in the few trucks which can travel during the heat of the day. The food sellers then return at about 5:00 P.M. because from this time until about 1:00 A.M. most of the trucks bearing migrants stop for water and to allow
485 their passengers to eat and rest. The amount of money these women
265 gross varies from day to day depending upon the amount of traffic
434 and the time of year. During the off-season from June to October,
221 when most of the migrants are home planting, a woman may make as little as ten francs per day. In contrast, at the beginning of the dry season when the young men are migrating in droves, the women may make as much as 100 francs a day, even though twenty or thirty women line the road at trucking centers. Many women welcome this opportunity to earn money because by so doing they are free to buy in the local markets the things they need.

MARKET

● 366 The Mossi have always conducted most of their commercial activities
443 in market places even though some extra-market trading continually takes place. These markets were and are still divided into two main
[103] types: (1) those specializing in external trading, such as Pouitenga, Dakay, Kaya, Mane, Yako, La, Beloussa, Tema, Wagadougou; and (2) those specializing in internal commerce such as the markets in the villages and district centers. Of course, there is an overlap between the two types of markets in the sense that some people from the villages go to the larger markets to dispose of their commodities and, in turn, buy goods which they bring back for resale on the local level. Similarly, in former days some caravaneers visited the local markets to buy commodities and in the process disposed of their goods. However, the main pattern is for local commodities to filter into the large market centers through local markets, and for goods from these centers to filter back down to the local markets. The more goods and traders available, the more numerous and successful the markets are.

443 The Mossi do not appear to have any legends about the origin of
173 markets in their country. When asked how and why markets first arose, they say that markets developed simply because people wanted to exchange goods with each other, or because the chiefs wanted markets in their own villages so that their people need not go to
443 other districts. When one asks the Mossi directly, "What is a market?"

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This man then consults a teng-

443 *soba* (earth priest) who must be also a *barga* (soothsayer) to find out
787 where in a certain area it would be most propitious to locate the new
[791] market. After the *tengsoba* has ascertained the number and nature of
[796] the *tengkouga* (earth deities, plural of *Tengkougri)* in the designated spot, he tells the *Raga Naba* what type of sacrifice would be appropri-
443 ate. A few days later the *Raga Naba*, his young assistant and the *teng-*
782 *soba* take *zom kom* (milletflour), *dam* (sorghum beer), and a chicken (or goat) of the designated color, and go to the new market place.
[776] Here they pick out the stone or three which is the abode of the spirit or spirits, if there are several of them, and prepare to make the offering. The *Raga Naba* takes the millet water and pours some on the ground saying: "Good God, take this water, drink it, and take this other water (here he pours the beer), and give it to all the *tengkouga* in the villages so that the market will aways be good and there will be no fighting in the market!" Then the *Raga Naba* takes the sacrificial animal, and in the case of a chicken pulls off the neck feathers and cuts its throat, saying: "Good God, take this chicken and heed all the prayers of the people of this market!" He releases the chicken and waits to see whether it will fall on its back, thereby indicating whether the petition has been accepted. Of course, if it has not been accepted, a new site is chosen. If the sacrifice has been accepted, then the *Raga Naba* gives the chicken to his young helper to be cleaned and roasted. He then prays to the *tengkouga* who live in the market place and begs them to help with the market. When the boy brings back the dissected chicken, the *Raga Naba* cuts the liver into two parts; one for God and the other for the local *tengkouga*. He then says, "Now that God and the *Tengkouga* have eaten, they should drink," and forthwith pours out the remainder of the millet water. The *Raga Naba* then distributes the remainder of the roasted chicken among those present saying, "*Winnam dege* (God has accepted the sacrifice)." Only after this ceremony is completed can the market be opened.[9]

443 All Mossi markets, except those which specialize in one type of
● 366 trading, have the same basic physical structure even though they vary in size from one-eighth of an acre to as much as four or five acres. We do not know the size of some of the traditional markets such as Pouitenga, La, Yako, Dakay, Belousa, Mane, and Tema, but we have Crozat's report that "The market at Wagadougou, which is found at Kounkounbissi, the royal residence . . . is large" (Crozat 1891 : 4848). Since the market at Wagadougou was smaller than some of the other important ones, we may assume that some of the markets must have been quite large. At the same time, the physical appurtenances of Mossi markets are not elaborate, or were not so until today. In the

(9) See Zahan (1964 : 371) and Mangin (1921 : 55).

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larger markets there were and are solid stalls which are built and tenanted by merchants. In the small district and village markets, these stalls are built out of millet stalks which offer little but protection against the noonday sun on market days. Men build these structures for their womenfolk and for themselves. Some of the shelters which are not used for trading serve as galleries where the young blades look out and comment on the passing scene. Others are used as meeting places by adult men who sit and discuss all sorts of affairs. Still others are used by the older men, who gather there to arrange marriages between their several families, wait for gifts from younger men who seek wives, or spend a great deal of time reminiscing about their youthful adventures. Those persons who do not have such shelters sit in the sun or use grass lean-tos as protection from the sun.

Except in the large towns, Mossi markets are held between the hours of 10:00 A.M. and 4:00 P.M. every fourth day. In the larger towns there are daily markets, but these remained unimportant until today when they serve a growing urban population. The capital city of Wagadougou now even has an "evening" market which opens about 4:00 P.M. and closes at about 9:00 P.M. In addition, numerous daily markets have sprung up in many of its wards. The three-day markets are, however, the traditional type, and they are still the most numerous through the country. By "three-day market" I mean that a market is held one day, not held over the two following days, and then held again on the next day. These markets also have a 21-day cycle from one *Ragakasanga* or *Rag'kasanga* ("larger market") on a Friday to another *Rag'kasanga* on a Friday three weeks later, a total of seven markets between the two important ones. The people give no adequate explanation for the observance of the three-day cycle or the 21-day cycle. One man did suggest that it took the women three days to prepare beer and this was why markets could not be held more often, but even he did not speculate about the 21-day cycle.[10] This same man did point out, however, that the cycle made little difference to persons who really liked to go to market, since it was possible for

(10) Zahan (1954 : 373) apparently found one of the few Mossi informants with a mystical bent; he reports that the seven three-day cycles of markets in the 21-day cycle have the following significance for the Yatenga people: "The first of these numbers explains the cycle of the person (7 symbolizes the complete person: male [to which the Mossi assign the number 3] and female [to which they assign the number 4], the second that of the creation." He believes that each market starts a new cycle, a beginning and an end: "the seventh market signifies the most perfect equilibrium: the one which exists between the universe, mankind, and the divinity." In a footnote he suggests that this sybolism is not too different among the Dogon, who are "ideologically and geographically close to the Mossi." Peter Hammond, who worked in Yatenga, could not find this kind of symbolism.

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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such individuals to find a market everyday in one neighboring district or another.

Every Mossi market not only has its own schedule but is also part of a cycle of markets in the sense that its main customers can and do regularly attend two other markets on the two nonmarket days without missing their "own" market. Table 30 takes the district market at Nobere as the home market and lists the markets which Nobere's people can attend and the reasons they themselves give for going there.

TABLE 30
Markets near Nobere

		Distance Away	*Reasons for Going*
First Day:			
	Nobere		Home Market
	Manga	12 kilometers	Good Pottery
	Vooko	15 kilometers	Butter and Millet
	Twese	20 kilometers	Millet and Sorghum
	Binde	35 kilometers	Good Pottery and Mats "Very far and people do not go there very often"
Second Day:			
	Basgana	10 kilometers	Good Pottery
	Sakouliga	15 kilometers	"To Have Fun"
	Giba	10 kilometers	"To Have Fun"
Third Day:			
	Nobili	27 kilometers	"Good Millet"
	Pinse	6 kilometers	"Small Market; to have fun"
	Parougre	10 kilometers	"Good Millet and Pottery"

Nobere people scarcely ever go to Manga because the market there conflicts with their own and its one unique product, pottery, can be bought at Basgana on a day when there is no market at Nobere. A person is likely to go do Vooko when he wishes to buy butter and millet at cheaper prices than he can obtain in his own market. But he scarcely visits the Binde market unless he is there visiting a friend or relative. Nobere people think nothing of going to Giba or to Pinse to show off their clothes or to have fun at those markets. If any commodity is cheap there they take advantage of the prices, but in general they believe that they can obtain better and cheaper products at their own market.

It is now possible to find a great variety of products at Mossi markets, and the larger the market the more varied its merchandise. Apparently this was not always so. Crozart (1891 : 4848), who visited the country just before it was conquered, reported that in the market at Wagadougou, he found "millet, rice, millet beer, butchered meat, small cutlery, morocco-leather goods, basketwork and jewelry items,

796
643 of the present house of Ouendasida, the police adjutant), and there he attended the salam presided over by the Imam.

After the ceremony, the Imam, surrounded by the faithful, went to call upon the emperor for the doua (a kind of benediction involving the recitation of verses from the Koran). The Imam received kola nuts and sheep or a cow.

[368] At the present time the two mosques exist in name only; the one real mosque is that of the Imam in the ward of the moñémé (marabouts). The present Mogho Naba never attends the salam on feast days. He goes to the Circle [Administration Building], then to the home of the Governor, and finally returns home to await the visit of the representative of Islam in Mossi country.

643 The only Mogho Naba who was truly a Moslem was Naba
368 Koutou, the twenty-seventh successor of Oubri. He was sent to
177 the Koranic school at Sagabtenga and is said to have made a creditable record there. When he succeeded his father, he installed a mosque in front of the women's gate. Since then a mosque has traditionally been located in the same place on the palace grounds of every Mogho Naba, even though, as in the case of the present emperor, he was not a believer.

643 Naba Koutou regularly made his salam in accordance with
177 the rites of the Moslem faith and even observed the thirty days of abstinence during the month of fasting. [210] All his children had Moslem names. All, except his eldest son who succeeded him as Naba Sanum, were sent to Koranic schools, although none did any serious work there since they were more interested in becoming naba.

643 During his lifetime, Naba Koutou himself never sentenced
696 anyone to death, even if he were guilty. He loved peace. When his ministers submitted serious cases to him, he always said: "Go and do what seems best and do not tell me what fate was meted out to the guilty." Like Pontius Pilate, he allowed his ministers to bear the responsibility for the crimes. Since he gave little credence to what the priests said of poéré (confession by the use of magic), he acquitted individuals condemned to death by that barbaric method.

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all of local manufacture and in great abundance. Local cloth is also very abundant. However, there are scarcely any imported objects salt, kola nuts, copper rings and extremely rare European fabrics. The salt always comes from the north. During my stay at Wagadougou I saw the arrival of a convoy of five or six small-sized mules loaded with this merchandise." Crozat felt that the Wagadougou market with its mainly local products was inferior to the markets at Woroudoy and Bobo-Dioulasso which he found less crowded, but which were, in his words, "true *entrepots* of imported merchandise."

Tauxier gives us a better picture of the goods found in the markets of Mossi country before the Europeans arrived. His reports list few imported products except salt and kola nuts. The preponderance of goods sold were such local foodstuffs as maize, manioc, peppers, tomatoes, squash, karite or shea butter, locust-bean balls, locust-bean flour, rice and a local variety of potatoes. Other foodstuffs included were honey, beer, butchered meat, chickens, and guinea fowls. Tobacco both for chewing and smoking was also available, and so was hemp for making rope. Raw cotton, cotton thread, cloth and tailored cotton garments were also present, and so was indigo for dyeing the cotton materials. Other goods included hides, sandals, pouches, amulets, iron items such as axes, hoes, knives, scythes, locks, clubs and spearpoints, bracelets and anklets made of copper by the lost-wax process, baskets, mats and hats made out of local grasses, pottery, pipes and wooden stools (Tauxier 1912 : 466 ff.). By 1914 Mangin could add little to this list of local products, sold in the markets, but added such foreign items as "matches, glass trinkets, handkerchiefs, basins, dishes, perfumes, and even firecrackers" (Mangin 1921 : 53).

The markets of contemporary Mossi society contain all of the articles found in pre-European times and those seen there by Mangin in 1914. In the larger markets one now can find such additional items as bicycles, razor blades, plastic raincoats and other plastic products, and the latest "rock 'n roll" records from the United States. The goods found in the smaller district and village markets tend to be of the traditional variety. But even here it is possible to buy refined cane sugar, matches, plastic necklaces, shoe polish, nail polish, toilet water, glass beads, costume jewelry, chinaware, and glass and enamel containers. In some of the smaller markets it is even possible to buy wheat bread made of imported flour, and bottled beer and soda water. The more different types of goods entering the larger markets, the richer the variety found in the smaller markets, since local merchants are quick to take advantage of the prestige value of any new produce and introduce it into the rural areas. The only barrier to this type of commercial activity is the relative poverty of the rural people.

221 the men bring bunches of peanuts. While nibbling on the green nuts
241 and talking, they all separate the pods from the leaves. The latter
are carefully set aside along with the bean leaves. They make ex-
[231] cellent fodder for the horses during the dry season, when the sun has
burned off all the grass in the bush.

221 By November harvesting is completed. The sun has already dried
241 out the grass, and the time has come to cut straw for séko and roofing.
356 /48/ This task is usually reserved for children and servants (dakonré).
857 The head of the household tells each one of them the number of straw
bundles he is to cut, and every morning the children set off in groups,
a sickle on their shoulders. They look for straw on the banks of the
watercourses and return when the sun begins to scorch. This marks
the end of the working day, and there is nothing to do now but rest.
The dry season is indeed a time of rest, and from November to May
there are no pressing tasks.

[805] It gets cold in December. This is winter (sapolro). The natives
221 gather at dawn around fires of millet stalks, twigs, or straw; anything
241 combustible serves. Every newcomer must contribute an armful; it
[372] is the price of admission to a seat near the fire. At the end of December
476 all the straw for roofing has been stored, and then the small millet
is threshed. Every inhabitant of the village has the use of the thresh-
ing floor in turn. He notifies his friends and acquaintances as he did
when he weeded his field. The millet beer is ready, and on the pre-
vious day the women have covered the area with cow dung diluted in
water to harden the floor. At dawn the friends arrive, and the millet
is removed from the granary and spread out on the floor. This is done
with the help of millet stalks tied together in bundles and dragged
along the ground with ropes while a man bears down upon them.
The flail is merely a stick cut in the bush, a tree branch shaped in
such a way that the part which is held in the hand is rather thin and
flexible, while the part which is used for threshing is quite thick and
forms an obtuse angle with the part in the hand. The boys line up in
a row, with the tots at either end; the drummers stand before or behind
them; and the flails fall with the beat, crushing the ears of millet
and separating the very dry grain from the stalks. All the while the
old men sit in the shade of the granaries, talking, smoking, and
sewing clothes. When the threshers get to the end of the floor, they
retrace their steps and rest, while the old men gather with straw brooms
the grain which has been scattered outside the pile.

794 sunrise and at sunset, during the first week of the winter season, then, later, only every six days, in the morning at sunrise. They go to the [778] altars, formed by three conical stones, to offer sacrifices and libations, always surrounded by all the people, the heads of families, tom-tom players, and family masks (Ouango).

"During the entire year, in a highly decorated niche dug into a [372] wall of their houses, the priests watch the sacred fire with which, at the end of the rainy season, they must light the great purifying brush fires."

Lieutenant Desplagnes adds in a note:

"They make sacrifices at each new moon, and then have seven great feasts each year for the divinity. Finally, during the sun festivals, [327] they use a cow's tail to tie the sun to the earth and assure its fertilizing warmth." /31/

794 171 In my book Noir du Soudan, Pays Mossi et Gourounsi /Blacks of the Sudan, Country of the Mossi and Gourounsi/ (1912), I reproduced this page of Lieutenant Desplagnes without comment (page 590). In addition, I described the cult of the sun among the Gourounsi, who, like the Mossi, are part of the Voltaic family. Thus, on page 241, I wrote:

"The Kassonfra, like the Nounouma and the Menkiéra, say that they offer no sacrifice either to the moon or to the sun. However, I found an exception in the village of Nitiédougou (canton of Sia). It would seem that here, in the early mornings when the sun rises and begins to leave the horizon, people offer it a chicken or whatever else they wish to offer. Moreover, this sacrifice is only made when the voro (1) says it should be made.

1. Soothsayer.

"My informant claims that this same procedure is followed, not only in Nitiédougou and in the little canton of Sia, but also in all of the Kasouna (Kassonfra and Kassonboura) country. He must be mistaken (2) since my previous informants and my interpreter, who is

2. Today, on the other hand, I tend to think he was right.

Kassonboura, have neither seen nor heard of anything like it."

282 sell for 200 cowries, large ones for 400). He leaves them to soak
294 in a large canari with yogré seeds for twelve hours. Then he re-
435 moves the hair by hand, washes the skin thoroughly, and places it again in a canari with seeds of pélanaga (a tree that grows in the bush). He washes and rubs the hide with these seeds. Then he leaves it to dry in the sun after covering it with butter, real butter rather than karité butter. The skin may then be used to make various items.

Kinoga also buys cowhide at market to make sandals. One cowhide is worth 3,000 cowries. He puts it in a large canari where he leaves it soaking for three days, then he takes it out, removes the hair with a knife, and strikes the skin with a small stick to soften it. Whatever amount of leather is needed to make sandals is then removed from the hide, which is used up gradually as the need arises.

The shoemaker's tools are made by the blacksmith. These tools are worth 100 cowries apiece, except for the awl that is worth 20 and the wooden knife that is made by the shoemaker himself and worth 50. All of the shoemaker's tools taken together are thus worth 470 cowries, or only 50 centimes.

Our shoemaker makes the following items:

1. Sandals, first and foremost. The most expensive ones are worth 2,500 cowries a pair, the less expensive ones 1,500 cowries.

2. Leather grigris, bracelets, pouches, etc. The pouches are worth 100 cowries, the bracelets 50. He only makes them on order. It must be said that other shoemakers stock them up beforehand and have them taken to market.

Of course, what the shoemaker prepares is the physical part of the grigri, its outer covering. It is not he who gives the grigri its power, its soul.

3. Kinoga does not make satchels, goatskin bags, but other shoemakers do.

[415] /531/ There are goatskins used to store millet. Large ones are worth 1 franc and small ones 0.50 franc. Then, there are goatskins used to hold water. They are worth from 0.30 to 1 franc. Finally, there are small goatskins used as purses or coin bags and worth 0.20 franc.

[372] 4. Shoemakers also make leather cases for strike-a-light steel
[326] (200 cowries) and for needles (50 cowries). Both strike-a-light steel and needles are made by blacksmiths.

778 whose ancestors had ruled the soil of the territory. In the name of
782 the Moro Naba, he entrusted him with the task of offering all those gifts to the Earth so that the latter might favor the sovereign. Ouagadougou Naba performed the sacrifice before the door of his soukala.

When the Moro Naba went to war, he also ordered the chief
[F24] of Ougadougou to perform a sacrifice to the Earth. The bara indicated what should be sacrificed in order to insure victory, to "break" the villages that were to be attacked.

782 When rain failed to come, the Moro Naba would go to the hillock at Koumbé /sic/-Padanda, and have the head of the quarter offer a sacrifice (beef, sheep, chicken) to secure rain. If rain refused to come, the bara were consulted once more, and sacrifices were offered until it came.

776 The Mossi also have a sky god whom they call Ounam as well
782 as Naba Ouendé or Naba Ouondé, meaning "Sun Chief." This is a
794 trace of the sun cult, which is unusual in Black West Africa, all opinions to the contrary notwithstanding. /590/ The majority of the Mossi sacrifice much more to ancestors and to the Earth than to Naba Ouondé, who is to them a somewhat remote god.

794 It must be added that Lieutenant Desplagnes found among the
782 Mossi an esoteric cult of the sun, moon, and fire, which is peculiar to religious initiates (Ouango) whom we shall mention later.

"The Hougho-Ouango of the Mossi (among the Mossi, those priests reside in the villages of Boujema, Mani, Kondogho, Yolo, and Tio) sacrifice to the sun in order to bind it to the Earth. They do this morning and evening, sunrise and sunset, during the first week of the winter season, and every six days in the morning at sunrise thereafter
[778] They also go to altars made of three conical stones and offer sacrifices and libations, always surrounded by the populace, family heads, drummers, and familial masks (ouango).

"Those priests tend the sacred fire throughout the year in a
794 small, highly adorned recess dug into one of their house walls. At
572 the end of the rainy season they will use it to light the great purifying
783 bush fires.

"They perform sacrifices at every new moon, and they have
794 seven important feasts a year for their divinity. Finally, during
782 the solar festivities, they use a cow's tail to tie down the sun to the earth and to bind its life-giving heat." (Le Plateau central nigérien /The Central Nigerian Plateau/, pages 275 and 276.)

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9. In Dim Delobson's account (p. 60), an unnamed wife of the Mogho Naba ran away, and he allegedly tried to follow her because she was the only person in his household who knew how to cook his favorite food. 000

It is interesting that the Mossi have a tradition in which their ruler undergoes the same experience as many a Mossi husband, namely, being betrayed by his wife. It is also interesting that Mogho Naba Waraga is the ruler named in this incident. He is the ruler who waged a five-year-long civil war with one of his vassals. It may well be that his ministers devised the myth about his wife in order to prevent him from leaving the capital to fight. [837]

10. The Mossi practice of tasting food before giving it to another person is obviously connected with the fear of poison. The Mossi believe that only a boorish person would give another person something to eat without first tasting it himself. [576]

11. The full significance of this ceremony is unclear, for the Mossi hesitate to talk about it. It is known that the "sacred fire" is linked to the nocturnal visits of the royal ancestors. But the relationship of the fire to another sacred fire kept in Koubri district (about seventeen miles from Ouagadougou) is not known. [372]

Faithful to Mossi tradition or ignorant of the true nature of the ceremony, Dim Delobson says nothing about the ceremony and does not mention the presence of the namsibo. However, he does report that the palace guards would kill anyone who approached the place where the rite was being performed (p. 62). [114]

12. There are several traditions concerning female regents. However, I believe that they may have their basis in the role the Mogho Naba's daughter played during the interregnum.

13. Mossi genealogies show that only in one case in which the nam passed from a Mogho Naba to his brother did the former Mogho Naba's sons receive districts from their uncle, the new ruler. Since it is difficult to believe that the eleven other Mogho Nanamse who were succeeded by their brothers died without issue, it can only be concluded that the descendants of a ruler who did not inherit the nam were ignored by their uncles in power.

14. To this council could be added other men whose experience was valued. For example, the Baloum Naba was called upon in 1942 to give advice about a successor to Kom.

15. Dim Delobson, pp. 130–32.

16. It is interesting that the sheepskin garb of the Mossi pretenders is similar to the dress of the chiefs among the smaller tribal groups of the Voltaic culture area. If we can assume that culture traits characteristic of ritual and ceremonial practices tend to persist longer than most other traits, we might have evidence that the complex Mossi state evolved from the political organizations found among the smaller local groups. [171] [174]

17. The "naming of a name" speech is part of most Mossi *rites de passage*, and is often used to brag about some achievement or to cast aspersions on one's enemies. Most newly elected monarchs pledge good government, brag about their elevation, and vilify their enemies.

In his inaugural speech Naba Kom II said, "When plenty of water falls during the rainy season, the rivers and seas are glad because they are enlarged." "Kom" means "water," and Kom's speech meant that he pledged to bring happiness to all his subjects.

Boukary Koutou insulted his listeners by declaring, "Even if a hundred ghosts join together, they cannot harm an elephant." He was called Mogho Naba Wobogo ("elephant").

18. It is said that if the amulets were stolen during the interregnum, the thief had to be elected Mogho Naba; if they were stolen afterwards, the ruler lost the basis for the mystical quality of leadership and authority he had inherited from his ancestors.

286 not equally skillful, but some of them know how to weave cloth which is fine, tightly woven, and quite strong. Sewn together and cut according to unchanging patterns, these strips are made into breechcloths, trousers, wide shirts, full robes which cover the whole body, and especially men's and women's blankets, white or dark blue, which are an indispensable protection against the cold and which are worn wrapped around the body. Mossi fabrics are quite well-known in neighboring territories, and as we shall see they are an important trade item.

386 It is customary to dye the garments after they are made or the thread before it is woven. The dyer's trade is quite widespread in Mossi country, and there is no important /56/ village without dyers. They get together to dig their wells in the same spot; often choosing a small hillock for the purpose where they sink about ten wells, two or three meters deep, the inner surface baked with a charcoal fire. The dyeing solutions are poured into these wells, and the clothes or thread to be dyed are immersed in the liquid and stirred with sticks that have at the end pieces of wood set in the shape of a cross. Fabrics are left soaking for varying periods of time depending on their bulk, and then they are spread out in the sun to dry. The colors obtained vary from a very dark blue, nearly black, to light blue. Certain clothes are dyed sienna, a color favored by hunters because it is dark. Several washings are needed to remove the strong odor which permeates cloth dyed in this fashion, but each washing removes part of the dye.

285 Everyone knows how to weave, and almost everyone knows how to make basketry. When the grass is full grown, the children have fun making straw hats, some of which are not badly done; others make containers in various patterns by mixing yellow and black straws, and red ones dyed with the leaves of a variety of millet, cultivated in order to obtain the red shade desired for coloring leather; yet others plait simple trays of straw which are used to cover the gourds or to carry meat.

294 Those who are skillful make sturdy hats adorned with leather figures, and this becomes a veritable industry. There are two main kinds of hats: those shaped like pointed cones, and the bell-shaped hats with a wide brim. They are so ample that they can easily be worn over a cap which is sometimes wrapped in a strip of soft fabric. A leather [284] strap with a sliding knot holds the hat in place or permits it to hang down one's back with the cord holding it at the neck. Saponé is the manufacturing center for hats.

285 The art of basketry, however, is exercised primarily to produce woven containers. These serve many purposes and come in all shapes and sizes from large wicker containers used to protect chicks against birds of prey and small wicker baskets for collecting refuse to baskets of plaited grass for carrying millet, rice, and most other goods. Some baskets are made with greater care, decorated with designs made by mixing dyed grasses and thin leather strips and edged with cowries.

[462] Only the men do basketry, and only they work with leather; some
281 of them make leather objects which are almost artistic and very well sewn. Unfortunately the natives do not know how to tan skins properly, and their leather has no strength. The hide is simply stretched out and dried by the sun; sometimes it is briefly immersed in water containing tamarind bark. The hair is removed by pouring hot water onto the skin and then scraping it off with a knife. To make it softer, the skin is moved back and forth over a stake planted in the ground and slightly sharpened at the tip, or it is simply crumpled /57/ between the hands. When it has been softened, it is stretched once more to dry in the sun, held with small wooden pegs driven into the
● [386] ground. It may be dyed red, green, or black with special herbs.

Some men make knife or saber sheaths; others specialize in the long gaiters which are tied to the belt and worn by every horseman in full regalia; still others make saddle rugs stuffed with kapok or cotton and decorated with designs. They also make the various parts of the harness; the leather strip which runs across the horse's chest, and the
294 large rug which covers its rump. Leather is also used to make all kinds
281 of footgear, from the mere piece of hide held to the feet by leather strips running between the big and second toes and all round the foot, to the Turkish-type slipper and the ornamented boots with spurs attached which are a natural complement to the long gaiters. Some of the shoemakers are truly skillful and could make quite satisfactory shoes if they had lasts and especially if they had better leather.

281 Hide is also used in the manufacture of belts adorned with cowries, pouches, amulets, bags which are sometimes nicely adorned, etc. The designs are usually made as follows: small leather strips of various colors are sewn onto a skin of solid color which serves as a base; more rarely, as in Morocco, the top layer of skin is removed.

The above-mentioned industries are performed exclusively by men,
462 and any male individual may practice them. The preparation of gun powder and tobacco is also male work. The industries listed below,

137 They are 7 or 8 meters tall, 10 meters at most, and their huge fruits are bunched in clusters of five or six rather than forty or fifty.

137 There are no rônier in the Mossi bush itself, but there are some in every Mossi village. They originated from seeds tossed at random 222 after eating the fruits, or from an ancient cultivation of the tree. The rônier, therefore, is not a natural product of Mossi territory and should not, in all exactitude, be listed among the gathering crops. On the other hand, can it be listed with the cultivated crops at the present day, and can we call cultivation the act of tossing seeds to the ground in order to get rid of them? No matter what the truth may be, the Mossi eat /503/ the fruits of their rônier but do not extract any palm wine. As we have just said, they use the fibers of the leaves for their wickerwork.

137 While the rônier occur in Mossi territory, there are, on the other hand, no palm-oil trees and palmier-ban /?/. Those begin to appear only in Gourounsi territory, to the south of the Mossi.

222 137 We have just reviewed the most important gathering trees in the area, but the Mossi bush contains many others, less important to be sure but nevertheless useful, which we shall now mention.

First, there is the ganra or ganga (sounsoun in Mandé, diomba in Peuhl and Sarakolé). This is the medlar tree of West Africa. In appearance, it is a big tree similar to the karité but even bigger, with a thicker and more powerful trunk.

The fruit is a medlar, smaller than the European one. When green, it has the same acrid taste and numbs the mouth. When ripe, it is such as we eat it in Europe. The natives begin to eat it during the rainy season and consume it until January.

386 171 The wives of Bambara blacksmiths make a varnish for pots and canari with the bark of the sounsoun. As for the wives of Mossi blacksmiths, they prefer to use for this purpose the bark of two trees we shall mention later, the nobora and the sibi. In Gourounsi territory, on the other hand, the women who make pottery pluck the medlars while still green and crush them. They add water, thus making a sort of varnish which they use on the canari after they are fired. The ganra is called kano in Nounouma, kakano in Kassouna, kalo in Sissala, and ganra or ganga in Nankana and Mossi.

425 Let us add that among the Mossi, as in all of West Africa, the ganra tree is closely related to fetishistic superstitions, and will be mentioned again in a later chapter on religion.

322 [435] salt, etc. Small bows are worth 20 cowries, medium ones 70, and large ones 100.

285 We have just reviewed woodworking. Let us proceed to basketry. Here the latter gives rise to two major trades, the basket maker's and the hat maker's. Let us study them in turn.

As an example, here is Niandé Zango, a basket maker and head of a soukala. He has two wives and three children. His soukala numbers five huts.

He works in the fields during the winter season, and at his trade during the dry season. His fields bring him the larger returns.

He makes his baskets at home without waiting for an order, and he has his wives sell them at market.

He gets doudouma straw in the bush and cultivates mono in his maize field.

[314] Doudouma is a tall grass that is left to dry and that furnishes excellent straw for the manufacture of baskets and trays.

Doudoumidou is doudouma straw dyed red with mono.

249 386 285 Mono (faraoro in Bambara) is a plant grown by the Mossi in their maize fields, around the soukala. It looks a great deal like large red millet, but it is /525/ not the same thing. It is probably a variety of large millet, however. Mono is sown along with maize when the first rains begin to fall. Holes are made with the koutiaga, mono grains placed within and covered up. When mono has emerged from the ground, the weeds are pulled out. The harvesting is done about two and a half months after sowing. The stalks are severed at the base and left to dry in the sun, and then the sheaths and culms are torn off. The latter are the parts used to dye the straw red.

The sheaths and culms are crushed by rubbing them by hand in a canari full of water. Then the doudouma straw is left to soak in this canari. The canari is placed on the fire, where it is kept for six hours. When this is over, the straw, now dyed red, is removed.

386 285 Doudousabalé is doudouma straw dyed black by immersion in bérédo. The straw is gathered, taken to a watercourse, and buried in bérédo. It is left there for a whole day, and this gives it a shiny grey hue.

285
294 closer to our European hats and vaguely recalls a very fat and swollen straw bowler with wide rims.

In order to make the former kind, our hat maker begins by bringing together a hundred strings. He ties them at one end, an end left in its original straw state, and thus fashions the tip of the hat. Then he interlaces these strings by hand with bits of unmodified kansé straw. The strings hang vertically, the straw pieces are interlaced horizontally, and this makes up the web of the hat.

[386] /528/ The bits of kansé are often dyed black beforehand by immersion in the mud of a watercourse. This is how black lines and designs are obtained in certain parts of the hat.

[435] Six days are needed to make a hat. It is sold for 1,000 cowries, of course without the ornaments, straps, and strips of leather that will be added by the shoemaker.

Hat makers fashion these hats in advance and have their wives well them at market.

248 Bérenga or hemp (also called tamora among the Mossi) goes into the manufacture of straw hats as well. We saw above, when discussing cultivation, how bérenga is grown. It is sown either among maize or among large red millet, that is to say around the soukala, or even in fields in the bush among small millet or large white millet. If sown among maize, it is sown three days afterwards; if among large red millet, four days later; if among large white millet, ten days later; and if among small millet, ten or twelve days afterward.

Bérenga is harvested ten or twenty days after maize, if it stands in a maize field. If it has been sown among millet, it is harvested seven days afterwards. Bérenga stalks are severed at the base, and the fibrous bark is removed and dried. Bérenga is green when fresh and reddish brown when dry. It is usually made into strings and cords. It is also used for the thatch roofing of huts. When it is to go into
285 the making of a hat, it is dyed black by immersion in bérédo and used
294 along with kansé to furnish the black lines of the hats.

Here are some sample products of the Mossi hat-making industry:

1. Pointed straw hats made of kansé (yellow) and bérenga (black). They sport leather ornaments and straps added by the
[435] shoemaker. They are worth 2,500 cowries.

386 177 There are dyers as well as weavers and tailors among the Mossi. "Dyer" is garalosadaba in Mossi, from gara, "indigo" and sadaba, "maker." There are no dyers in the southern part of Mossi territory but only in the north, from Ouagadougou upward. This would tend to prove that just as the Mossi probably learned cotton weaving from the Yarsé, they must have learned the dyer's craft from the Songhay, with whom they have had contact toward the north. Actually, Songhay emigrants have established villages in the northern part of the Ouagadougou circle, and the dyer's craft is their chief industry. This strongly corroborates our theory. Let us add that /535/ the Mossi practice dyeing in certain places, at certain spots, so to speak. One may not find a single dyer in a large number of Mossi villages, and then all at once come upon a locality with thirty dyers' wells, such as Yakki for example.

386 249 To present a Ouagadougou dyer, here is a Mossi by the name of Gomdounguiba Nangakoré. He does not himself cultivate indigo. He buys it at market in loaves or balls. Anyone may grow indigo among the Mossi (see the section on cultivation above). When it is ripe, the leaves are gathered, heaped in a wooden gourd, and [435] pressed to make loaves worth 50, 100, or 500 cowries. The dyer buys the loaves at market.

386 He dyes either cotton threads or strips, or even garments (cloaks, etc.). The item to be dyed is brought to him. In short, he usually does custom work.

Sometimes, nevertheless, he buys thread, strips, cloaks, or skirts, dyes them, and has them sold at market by his wife or wives.

Every dyer sinks a dyeing well outside, but right beside, his soukala. He makes a neatly squared hole, quadrangular, about 60 centimeters long by 60 wide and 1 meter deep. This hole is tamped carefully several times, and the clay walls are polished with water prepared with néré bark. Finally, water is poured in to see whether it is watertight. About three days are needed to make one of those wells. Every dyer has one.

In order to dye thread, strips or garments, millet-stalk ashes are placed in water, strained, and tossed to the bottom of the dyeing hole. Then come the ashes of a tree called gouara by the Mossi (the ashes themselves are called zato or iato). They are laid

386 at the bottom of the hole. A loaf of indigo is added, and then water. The ingredients are left to blend for three days, and then the thread, strips, etc., may be immersed.

The coloring mixture is replaced every twenty days. It leaves at the bottom of the dyeing well a sort of yellow-grey crust which is removed and allowed to dry in the sun. Once dry, it /536/ is reduced to powder and added to the next mixture.

Cotton threads, in order to be dyed, are immersed in the mixture and crumpled with the fingers. At nighttime they are removed and left to dry on the hut roof. The dyeing is resumed on the morrow. At the end of three days, the threads are black. Only two days are needed to obtain dark-blue threads, and one day is sufficient for light-blue threads. The same applies to cotton strips and garments.

Our dyer does not exercise his trade during the winter season. At that time, he undertakes nothing but cultivation. It is during the dry season that he is a dyer. He claims, however, that his trade nets him more than his fields.

386 435 To dye cotton threads he asks 200 cowries to dye a bundle black, from 60 to 100 to dye it dark blue, or 50 cowries to dye it light blue.

When he buys a cloak to dye it (he buys it for 1,500 cowries, for example) he resells it dyed black for 3,000 cowries, dark blue for 2,000, or light blue for 1,700.

Mossi fabrics are as follows:

386 435 1. White or off-white fabric, undyed. It is called pempéla. It is worth 25 cowries a cubit, that is, the length from the elbow to the tip of the fingers.

2. The white fabric with blue strips called nakoré. It is made of white threads and threads dyed blue. It is worth 50 cowries a cubit.

3. The fabric with small blue and white checks called arkilla. It is worth 50 cowries a cubit.

4. The dark-blue fabric with scattered white stripes. It is called ganga, and it is worth 50 cowries a cubit.

5. Finally, the blue fabric with blue and white stripes called oulambala or oulambalé, which costs 75 cowries or one sou and a half a cubit.

241 tuber, Coleus coffini, which Europeans call oussounifing or fabirama,
262 and which may replace potatoes in a pinch, are cultivated in the soils most propitious to them.

221 The precious karite /shea/ tree (Butyrospermum parkii) grows in
262 most fields; its fruit, prized for its cool and slightly sweet flesh, con-
137 tains a pit which yields karite butter, the fat most widely used in
[388] cooking and to make soap. Around the villages, and sometimes even within them, the néré /locust bean/ tree (Parkia africana) produces
[356] elongated pods; its bark, mashed in water, yields a paste that is used to harden the floors of the huts. Its flour makes a cooling drink when
[272] mixed in water, and it may also be eaten; its seeds /8/ are used to make kalro /kalre in the original/, the soumbara of the Bambara, an ingredient /made from locust beans, héré/ of all carefully prepared
137 sauces. The doubalé and silk-cotton or kapokiero trees spread their shade over the weavers, numerous among the Mossi, and over the talkers who are even more. Bamboo grows well in the damp southern regions, and the palm oil tree is occasionally found. The caoutchouc liana, however, has not yet been introduced.

231 Small chickens run in all directions through the villages, along with domesticated guinea hens. Everywhere in the bush near the huts,
[857] little boys herd goats and sheep; this is the task of youngsters here at the age when their contemporaries among us /in France/ begin to learn the alphabet. The most common sheep and goats are small in size. The sheep have short hair. Sometimes, especially in the larger villages where markets are held, goats and sheep are to be seen with
[439] long legs and long, curled horns. They are imported from the northeast and fattened to be sold as butcher's meat. The height of fashion for the wife or a prosperous naba is to be followed by a Touareg /Tuareg/ sheep, well washed and very white. It is fed on millet leftovers and bean mush, and its mistress often presents it with a bit of salt to lick. In short, it is well cared for and agreeably fat; on some important feast day, it will embellish the menu.

The huts are usually guarded by very commonplace dogs, often ill-tempered, but cowardly. A stick is enough to drive them away.
[224] They are mostly used in the hunt, the great Mossi pastime during the dry season. Domesticated ducks are sometimes found in nabas' households, as well as pigeons, but these birds are not widespread and not within the reach of everyone. Finally, almost every group of huts has cats which belong to the women and which are difficult

462 on the other hand, are female prerogatives; every woman knows how to make millet beer, soap, karite butter, and kalro (soumbara) with varying effectiveness.

273 Millet beer is brewed with sprouted millet, which is boiled and reboiled in a volume of water proportionate to the amount of grain; yeast is added to the brew on the last day. The liquid is strained through twigs to remove the residue of millet. The more the beer is boiled, the stronger it is; when hops are added, the beverage recalls our own beer.

388 Soap is made with karite butter to which the ashes of millet stalks are added for potash.

252 Oil is extracted from peanuts, previously roasted and crushed between two stones; the women have no press and therefore lose a considerable amount of oil, but it remains in the residue, which is also sold.

Kalro is made from the beans found in the pods of néré /locust bean tree/. It has a strong and characteristic odor, but it enhances the sauce with a not unpleasant flavor.

463 The pottery, wood, and copper industries are carried out by specialists. This does not mean that only the members of a caste may exercise them, but that an apprenticeship is required which is not undergone by everyone, and that people bequeath to their children the secrets of the trade.

323 /58/ Pottery is chiefly made by women, although the men may
462 also work with clay and actually often make jars (canari); while the women make the large jars which are used in brewing millet beer, small pots in which they cook sarabo and sauce, and shallow dishes which are used to serve food.

323 The molding and firing methods are similar. A shallow pit is dug into the ground, larger or smaller depending on the size desired for the jar. The walls of the hole are pounded smooth. The woman places in this mold the prepared clay, previously kneaded with the feet and any stones removed. The clay is slightly damp, and the pit is dusted with dry earth. The woman spreads the clay with a well-polished granite stone and makes it revolve so that every portion of the clay is worked between the stone and the pit wall. After a while, she obtains the jar she wants in the proper thickness.

When several potters live in the same village, as usually happens, they get together for the firing. The jars are marked and gathered in

222 predominates in the bush of the territory and which, owing to its
137 abundance, lends the bush its particular character.

The karité fruit is an egg-shaped, elongated chestnut, smaller than the fruit of the European chestnut tree. It is distinguished from it even more clearly by its fleshy covering with its greenish skin. This flesh is soft, quite thick, and tastes delicious, like a very ripe, even overripe pear.

222 It is the women who gather the karité when the fruit is ripe,
252 before the rainy season, at the beginning of April. First, the flesh surrounding the chestnut is eaten /496/. Then, after breaking the brown shell, the inner part is used to make the famous karité butter.

257 As everywhere else, it is the women who do this among the Mossi. They remove the shell of the chestnut, and then mash the sticky and whitish substance which is found inside. It is pounded on crushing stones with a little wooden pestle. Once this is done, the substance is cooked in a canari and then mashed again, this time in the large wooden mortars, until the paste acquires the consistency of butter. Then it is pounded once more between crushing stones. When this is over, the paste is placed in a canari with lukewarm water, and then stirred and manipulated by hand. This produces a sort of dirty-white cream, somewhat similar to beaten egg whites, but firmer. Then this cream is boiled until it changes into oil. The impurities drop to the bottom of the canari, and the oil floats. The latter is gathered, placed in a clean gourd, and allowed to cool. The result is a pale yellow butter. At first sight it looks like real butter, but when sniffed it reveals a characteristic odor which is unpleasant to Europeans.

Gourounsi women prepare karité butter in the same manner as Mossi women.

302 This butter is put to various uses. First of all, it is utilized for grooming purposes. The women especially rub it into their hair in copious quantities, not only among the Mossi but throughout the Sudan as well. This, naturally enough, lends them an aroma which
[388] is not very pleasant to European noses. Karité butter is also made into soap when certain ashes are added. Finally, it is used in cooking.

423 The karité trees standing in a field belong to the owner of the field. Those which stand in the bush belong to the people of the

224 Mossi as to us the king of beasts, the master of the bush (wé' naba), and they attack it only if it has killed a man.

224 These hunters make their own powder with ground charcoal and saltpeter extracted from earth soaked with urine. This earth is washed 389 carefully, and a residue of saltpeter crystals is left when the liquid evaporates. Usually no sulphur is added because it is too costly. This powder burns well, and when made carefully it is quite effective. The hunters keep it in small gourds or ram horns; they only make a little at a time. Hard pebbles are used as bullets.

224 The natives know how to disguise themselves skillfully, and they only shoot at very close range when the animal is not moving. They often lie in wait for hours on end, sometimes for the whole night. They know the habits of the animals and the water holes where they come to drink, and they build small huts with branches or dig holes where they hid under foliage. Others more ingeniously build a vast funnel-shaped trap, its open base sometimes one or even two kilometers long; the sides of equal length consist of thorn fences, and the tip of the funnel, which is located near a thick tree, leaves barely enough space for the animal to pass through. The hunter takes his position up in the tree with bow and arrows and settles comfortably because he may have to wait a long time. Unsuspecting animals follow the thorn fence and come to the tree where they are killed. The hunters manage to fell some handsome game in this fashion, even elephants, in spite of their very primitive weapons.

/50/ Professional hunters, those who always have adventures to relate and who say like those of Tarascon that they never miss a shot, such true hunters are rare, but those who hunt as a pastime are as numerous as the Mossi themselves. A Mossi never goes out without [411] a stick. When asked why he does so, he answers that it is to kill 752 snakes, which — alas! — take so many victims, and to drive off dogs; and then, "I might find a hare or some other animal in the bush, and [231] what would I kill it with if I didn't have a stick?" Many of them have dogs which are truly not very ferocious, but they are poorly fed and preserve all their agility. A Mossi on his way to the fields or walking from one village to another always keeps his ears and eyes open; he is on the lookout for meat! Since he does not have many ideas, he is seldom absorbed in his thoughts or absent-minded.

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291 554 177 Finally, many chiefs (particularly province chiefs and dignitaries at the emperor's court) appear on feast days dressed in costumes ornately embroidered in gold and silver, products of Moroccan industry. Two of these ministers even wear with pride European costumes on these occasions.

Dress of the Mossi Subjects

292 Men. The accouterments and weapons of a Moaga who wished to be admired on festive occasions used to include the following: the koiglinga and the dandaogo (kinds of long blouses with sleeves); koursi (trousers) in dark blue; the karfo (seldom worn, [226] however, because of its high cost); a zangoégo (large Haoussa knife); a manyanfo (cap); a logwaoga (quiver and arrows); and a boussan-zandé (iron club). [411]

292 177 Today he wears the same garments made from cotton strips woven locally (except the karfo), but it should be noted that young men who return from the Gold Coast or neighboring colonies nearly always have clothing made of commercial fabrics. They may even -- and this often happens -- parade a second-hand overcoat. In the villages out in the bush, the large knife (zangoégo) is still worn, hanging from the shoulder by an albolé (ornament).

Some young men, however, usually traders in prosperous circumstances, dress in the fashion of the Sudanese who live in cities.

291 Women. A Moaga woman usually had only three skirts: (a) the skirt worn at home which was her working costume; (b) an indigo-blue skirt (fou-sablaga) which was reserved for holidays and for trips to the market; and (c) a white or dark-blue skirt cloth, trimmed with long fringes -- a kind of bambara dissa -- which she wore over her shoulders or over her head on ceremonial occasions. She replaced these articles whenever necessary.

[554 435] Only the wives of naba and of certain notables [227] were able to own, in addition to the forementioned skirts, a godé, a skirt of Haoussa origin and quite expensive (1).

1. Even today it costs between 55 and 100 francs.

/4/

BOOK I. POLITICAL LIFE

Chapter 1. The Country and Its Inhabitants

142 Although the Mossi is not a handsome type of Black, there is nothing disagreeable about him. He is rather tall, with lively eyes, woolly hair, flat nose, occasionally rather fine features, lips which are broad without being too thick; and cheeks heavily marked with three parallel lines running from the temples to the chin and a fourth leading perpendicularly from the nose to the other three. His limbs are muscular, and his color neither ebony nor copper but an intermediate hue.

291 He acquires a truly attractive and resolute air when he dresses in festive clothes, with his broad, dark blue, Zouave-like trousers, his loose shirt made of white and blue fabric strips which falls lightly over the arms, and on the right shoulder his doré, a weapon consisting
41 of a slightly bent iron rod, flattened at one end and terminating at the other in a ring hafted perpendicularly to a short stick. His wrist
[30] is often adorned with a copper bracelet, and he nearly always carries at his waist a stiff knife, enclosed in a leather sheath which ends in a tuft of leather strips with cowries attached to them. He wears a
291 cap made of two diamond-shaped pieces of colored fabric half-sewn together; the two free ends may serve to cover the ears and cheeks, but are usually worn raised in the shape of a tiara. A great fighter, he wields the knife with dexterity or strikes with the doré which can become a dangerous club.

173 The Mossi are a conquering people. They have not always lived in the territory they now occupy. But where did they come from?
648 The elders questioned all say that their people came from Gambaga
643 (British Gold Coast), and this is why the Moro Naba Wobro took refuge in Gambaga when he was dethroned by the French conquest; this is also why the naba of Gambaga is notified whenever a Moro Naba dies, and why the shoes, cap, and scepter of command of the deceased are sent to him as gifts to be laid on the ancestral tomb. Gifts are also sent to the naba of Fada N'Gourma, which the Mossi call "Bingo." When the Moro Naba dies, his bow and quiver are presented to the

When a chief assembled his men, no one stayed behind. Only the women, children, invalids, and old men guarded the villages. Those who had no horses formed the infantry; they were armed with bow and arrows, usually poisoned, and a large sword hung from the shoulder. The horsemen carried a sword and a spear that rested on the tip of the foot and was held at mid-height with the right hand. The Mossi cavalry was especially numerous and fearful. The Moro Naba stayed home when his people went to war. He gathered together as many horses as possible, and, when horsemen lost their mounts, they came to him to get another horse and rejoin the fight.

The last wars before the French conquest of Koupéla, which we shall describe briefly, were civil wars that took place either between the people of Tenkodogo and those of Koupéla, or between the Mossi and the Gourmantché.

/12/ As generally happened in parallel cases, these wars followed the death of a naba, when several pretenders wrangled over the succession. It was in order to prevent such wars that only the immediate entourage of the naba was informed of his death. Outsiders were to remain in ignorance and believe the naba to be ill in his hut. The fatal news was spread only when the head of the family had gathered all that was necessary to honor the deceased in proper fashion by celebrating the kouré. (5)

5. Kouré, funeral ceremony in honor of the dead. See below.

When Naba Kidba died, leaving only a child of five or six to succeed him, a man from Kazem'bouanga who was powerful by virtue of his wealth and the number of his men decided to seize the throne. His followers had taken for themselves the name of Kazem'-bouanga and used to say: "Although the hyena (katré) is not the equal (zéma) of the donkey (bouanga), she nevertheless attacks and kills him if she meets him in the bush: similarly, although we are not as powerful as the inhabitants of Koupéla, we will manage to defeat them." And indeed, they marched on Koupéla. The prime minister, who bears the title, Saman'Naba (head of the outer courtyard), and whose own name was Wenkosgaraga, seized the child and fled with him to Sapara, the nearest village under the direct authority of the Moro Naba, located nine kilometers from Koupéla.

221 After a few hours when the millet has been sufficiently threshed,
241 the emptied and broken husks are swept to the side. The grain is
476 gathered in a heap, and a strong fellow tosses it into the air with a
788 wooden shovel to separate the chaff from the good grain, which is put in a heap. When all the grain has thus been winnowed, it is surrounded with a ring of ashes to protect it against evil spirits. Then one of the threshers, who is not a member of the family, puts some millet in a gourd and sprinkles it with water. He proceeds to throw it by the handful onto the millet pile, saying: "So-and-So fears rain," mentioning the name of the owner of the harvest and the name of every member of his family. He ends by saying: "When we are finished weeding, let the drought come. When we are finished planting, let the heavy rains come." If the owner of a horse is present, he receives a gourd of millet for his mount. Each of the elders also takes some for his chicken. If this ceremony is not carried out, the millet may not be used as seed the following year.

221 /49/ The women come with their baskets; a man takes one of the
251 brooms and sinks it into the millet heap in various places; then the
[182] men fill the baskets and help the women place them on their heads. At the house the millet is unloaded into granaries made of clay mixed with finely cut straw. These granaries have the shape of large jars 1.50 meters high; they usually rest on large stones, and they are
[343] smoked out beforehand to get rid of termites. They are closed with a lid of the same material and covered with a small thatch roof as a protection against rain, for they usually stand in the open air in the inner courtyard. Millet beer is brought and drunk on the spot while the millet is being winnowed. Sometimes the festivities end with dancing, and then everyone goes home, to begin again another day. The month of January goes by in this fashion.

221 February, March, and April are vacation months, months for hunting and fishing.

224 Actually no Mossi is a hunter, yet all Mossi are hunters to some
411 degree. Since the French occupation, men armed with very primitive flint guns are sometimes seen on the fringes of the heavy bush which borders the Volta and contains large game. These flint guns are so crude that they frequently burst and wound the man who recklessly
224 loaded it with too much powder. These natives know the bush thoroughly and are very helpful to the adventurers who wish to hunt koba, buffalo, elephant, leopard, or even lion, although the latter is to the

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224 Each village goes there in a group, burning the bush and driving on the game. If the plan is carried out properly, the animals are eventually enclosed within a circle of fire behind which stand the natives, some on horseback and armed with spears, others on foot with their dogs and equipped merely with sticks or sometimes with bows and arrows. The bows are of medium size and made of hard wood. The
411 224 string is usually made from a rattan stem or a millet stalk. Arrows are made of the tough and light stems of tall reeds; they are not barbed, but the tip is made of iron and shaped like a harpoon, with two and sometimes three pairs of teeth. The leather quiver hangs from the shoulder.

224 The panic-stricken hares, deer, antelope of various kinds, guinea hens, and partridges run all around the fiery circle, and those who manage to cross this first obstacle are felled by the blows of the hunters. These hunts are sometimes quite fruitful, and buffalo and koba are
224 661 occasionally caught. Unfortunately, every animal killed in the bush belongs by right to the naba, who searches the hunters' bags and takes what he pleases. If he learns that a lucky hunter has killed an antelope and failed to bring it, he summons him to his presence, reproves him harshly for his lack of consideration, and thrashes him soundly. It must nevertheless be said that such cases are constantly growing rarer, and now the natives flatly refuse to yield their catch.

224 Often no game is caught because one of the villages has failed to appear and the animals have fled through the unguarded opening. In short, these hunting parties are mostly a pastime and entertainment. The hunters who bring back a catch are few, owing to the large number of men who participate. It is true that when they set out for the hunt they all hope they will be lucky. They all are thirsty, for at this time of year the sun is very hot and it is better to hunt in the middle of the day when the game lies down in the bushes and cannot run very far. These hunting parties dwindle year by year. The cultivated fields are more extensive, and the game has withdrawn deeper into the bush. Also, the natives find it more difficult to reaching an agreement for large parties of beaters; /51/ they prefer to hunt in small groups, far from the chiefs' sight, so that nothing will be taken from them.

226 In addition to hunting, fishing is the great pastime at this time of year.* Professional fishermen are as rare as professional hunters. Of
[48] course, those who live on the banks of streams usually know how to swim, especially when they live near those watercourses which are

Most difficult to ford.

*[i.e., February - April. - Analyst]

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documentation on this matter is not extensive enough to enable us to attempt a comparative study."

Marc do not base themselves exclusively on this argument. They also use a tradition of the Mossi themselves, and it would doubtless be unwise to reject it without examining it further. An argument that could be cited in favor of a very ancient occupation of Djerma by the ancestors of the Mossi is Binger's following remark: "The Mossi must have remained in contact with the Touareg /Tuareg/ for a fairly long time (2) ... since they partially adopted their dress and use, as they do, the crutch-handled [poignée en croix] sabor."

[171 441]

2. In this quotation, I have omitted the word "after," since Binger assumes that the Mossi, after taking Timbuktu in 1326 by order of the Mali, remained there until 1433, having, therefore, one century of contact with the Touareg. In reality, the Mossi stayed in Timbuktu only a very short time, and this raid could not have given them a prolonged contact with the Touareg, from whom they were separated before the fall of Timbuktu, and again as soon as they left the town, by the entire Songhaï country stretching along the banks of the Niger River. On the contrary, if they had formerly occupied Djerma, before the Djermabé or the Songhaï, one can easily understand this contact with the Touareg as well as the existence of the sword with the short crutch-handle /poignée en croix (Binger wrongly calls this straight sword a saber). In addition, when Binger speaks of the Targui /Tuareg/ dress, adopted in part by the Mossi, he doubtless thinks of the lithâm (or face veil) which was then worn by the Mossi horsemen. At the present time, they are no longer worn, and I have never seen them among the Mossi, where I lived 1908-1909.

[291]

231 64 inhabitants among the nakomsé (nobles, descendants of chiefs, true Mossi). The Dagari and Nounouma, on the other hand, have one horse per 1,000 inhabitants, the Sissala one per 400, the Kassonboura one per 300. The Yarsé, who are in better circumstances than the common Mossi but less fond of horses than the nakomsé, have one horse per 100 people. Finally, the Foulbé of Mossi territory, who raise horses, have one for every 26 people.

To summarize, Mossi stockbreeding is mediocre except for donkeys and horses. Let us proceed to the hunt.

224 First of all, like the Gourounsi and all other populations of West Africa, the Mossi hunt collectively during the dry, warm season.

/494/ This collective endeavor is their chief hunting method.

Aside from this, the cultivators hunt individually with bow and arrow, chiefly during the dry season although sometimes also during the damp season.

Finally, there are a few elephant hunters in the southern regions. They are to be found only in the south, for in Mossi territory proper the relative density of the population and resulting extent of cultivated land make for a nearly total absence of elephants. Gourounsi and Boussansé lands, on the other hand, which are much less densely populated, include some deserted areas where elephants may be found. Mossi hunters, therefore, have settled in the southern part of the territory, on the borders of Gourounsi and Boussansé lands, to scour both regions /for elephants/.

At Kombisiguiri, for example, there are ten of them, ten soukala heads. They kill one or two elephants a year on the average. They sell the meat to the village that stands nearest to the spot where the animal was killed. This nets them about 50,000 cowries. [435] As for the tusks, they sell them for 120,000 or 140,000 cowries, sometimes 200,000. They always give a piece of the meat to the chief of the canton where the animal was killed. They hunt with [411] guns, while in the old days they hunted with poisoned spears but on the same individual basis as they do now.

[463] Elephant hunters do not cultivate the soil during the winter season, but their wives and children do.

326 Mossi blacksmiths make ouaka, koutiaga, axes, knives, daggers, swords, spearheads, arrowheads, razors, iron bracelets for women, men, nobles, spoons, horse bits, stirrups, spurs, etc. They also make needles of considerable thickness which are worth [435] 10 cowries apiece, or five for 1 sou.

During the winter season, they hardly make anything beside ouaka.[1] During the dry season, they make all the other items.

411 326 They also make zandé, or clubs with iron tips. Let us say a word about clubs, which are in a way the Mossi national weapon. A Mossi would believe himself dishonored if he were not to bear a club solemnly on his right shoulder wherever he goes. Even small boys carry them, proportioned to size, and they do this with no less solemnity than their elders.

Mossi clubs are of three kinds:

1. Some made wholly of wood, handle and body both, and carved all of one piece. They are called dori.

2. Others whose handle is made of wood, but whose head consists of a large round stone imbedded at the tip of the handle. These clubs are called gougou.

3. Finally, the clubs with a wooden handle and an iron mallet inserted perpendicularly at the tip of the handle. These are the zandé or zann'dé. Sometimes the handle is covered with hide, and this makes it richer and more handsome.

326 Blacksmiths make only the iron part of the zandé. ~~The other~~ kinds of clubs are made by the owners themselves.

Blacksmiths only make zandé on order. While they make ouaka and koutiaga in advance and have them taken /514/ to market in quantities, they only make zandé when someone comes and asks for one.

The Mossi blacksmiths, therefore, work sometimes on order and sometimes to build up their stock. They sell this stock at market through their children, just as their wives go there to sell the pottery they manufacture.

325 The tools used by Mossi blacksmiths are as follows:

413 1. A small anvil called kissiguiré, with a pointed iron piece underneath, which can be held in the hand or thrust into the ground.

[1] [i.e. A kind of large hoe, see p. 32. —Analyst]

634 721 567 175 3. Finally, a third lot, composed of young girls and young boys, was distributed among the warriors and put into their charge. The boys will be employed until further notice as grooms to the warriors; later on, those who prove themselves useful and docile will be kept. The others will be sold at the first opportunity. The girls will be given in marriage to warriors who distinguish themselves.[24]

721 643 644 701 [645] The military campaigns of the Mossi, in contrast to their slave-raiding expeditions, appear to have been well organized. When the Mogho Naba felt that a war was necessary, he summoned his five provincial ministers and the Tansoba to a parley. If war was decided upon, the Tansoba was given full charge of all operations. This man, chosen from a hereditary clan of warriors who lived in a village called Tansob'tenga in Sapone district, was listed among the Mogho Naba's courtiers but seldom appeared at court unless war was imminent. His duties as chief warrior were considered so dangerous that he constantly sought out religious practitioners for supernatural aid. Nevertheless, a war minister who was good and brave was not expected to live very long. If he did live to become gray-haired, the other courtiers made fun of him by pretending that his graying head could only be the result of his having carried a sheep captured in warfare on his head as a present to the ruler.

701 721 644 [202] [411] Once given a mandate for war, the Tansoba collected his magico-religious apparatus and prepared the requisite sacrifices. He then asked the provincial ministers to notify the district chiefs to assemble with their warriors under the leadership of the local Tansobadamba, who were often members of the Tansoba clan. When the district chiefs received this notice, they beat their *zongagondo* (war drums), and the local administrators sent orders for men to the village chiefs. The village chiefs, in turn, beat their war drums to summon their noble cavalrymen and commoner foot soldiers, who came armed with bows and arrows, spears, swords, and clubs, with or [278] without iron tips. The tips of the sharp weapons were often covered with a vegetable poison derived from a shrub of the Strophanthus species. Some [411] of the men also carried guns after firearms were introduced among the [177] Mossi from the desert region and from the coast. Many carried rawhide [714] shields.

701 726 [648] As soon as the village contingents had assembled and had gathered their provisions, they marched to the district centers. Then they proceeded either to the place of battle or to Ouagadougou. In the latter case, they became part of the royal army and were joined by the forces of those princes who were prepared to honor their obligation to the Mogho Naba. For example, when the French invaded Ouagadougou in 1896, the Boulsa Dim sent his prime minister "at the head of an army to aid Mogho Naba

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The district chiefs did not often exercise their rights over fruit trees in the weogho, as the wasteland in their districts was called. If a villager went into the weogho and collected fruit or wood from the chief's trees, he surrendered only part of it to the chief. On the other hand, if he received permission from a district chief to farm in the weogho, he was obliged to gather and send to the chief the fruit on any valuable trees. A district chief sometimes granted the rights over certain fruit trees in the inhabited areas to specific families or individuals, for personal reasons or as a reward for services. In such cases, the chief forfeited his rights to these trees, but retained his rights to the others.[25]

District chiefs also controlled all the resources of creeks and pools within their jurisdiction that were not sacred to certain aboriginal families, or which had not been transferred to specific persons. The aboriginal Ninisi families always notified the district chief when they planned to perform their annual fishing rite to the earth deities. He, in turn, sent representatives to the ceremony, and they were given part of the catch as his share. Persons who were granted permission to fish in the chief's water holes gave him a substantial part of their catch, and even those persons who had private control of fishing places regularly did the same.

The district chiefs also had rights to certain parts of animals caught in their territories. This applied especially to animals caught with such traditional weapons as traps, clubs, bows and arrows, and spears. Men who had obtained flint guns and other firearms from the Ashanti or elsewhere and who had bought their own powder were not obliged to give the chief a part of their game, but it was always prudent to do so. According to a long-standing tradition, the tusk and legs of a slain elephant that were not resting on the ground belonged to the chief, and those that lay on the ground belonged to the Tengsoba in whose ritual jurisdiction the animal had been slain. But the district chief's secular power was so much stronger than the Tengsoba's sacred power that he usually took both tusks, leaving the Tengsoba only two legs. The district chief also received other portions of elephants and parts of all the larger animals killed in his territory. And when hunters in the district were successful in the chase, they usually gave him entire small animals.

Every village in a district contributed to the district chief's revenue by performing special services for him. Certain villages were responsible for keeping specific huts in his compound in good condition; others, whose lands bordered on the woods, had to provide firewood for his compound; and yet others furnished grass and other fodder for his horses. Many villages had the task of cultivating special fields and crops for the district chief.

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Mogho Naba Sagha II (1942–57), who was instrumental in reuniting the Mossi people into one territory, the Upper Volta.

The Mogho Naba's daughter, the Napoko, impersonates her deceased father at his funeral ceremonies. Note that she wears one of his robes, his slippers, and his bonnet, and has his sword behind her.

[p. 178-8]

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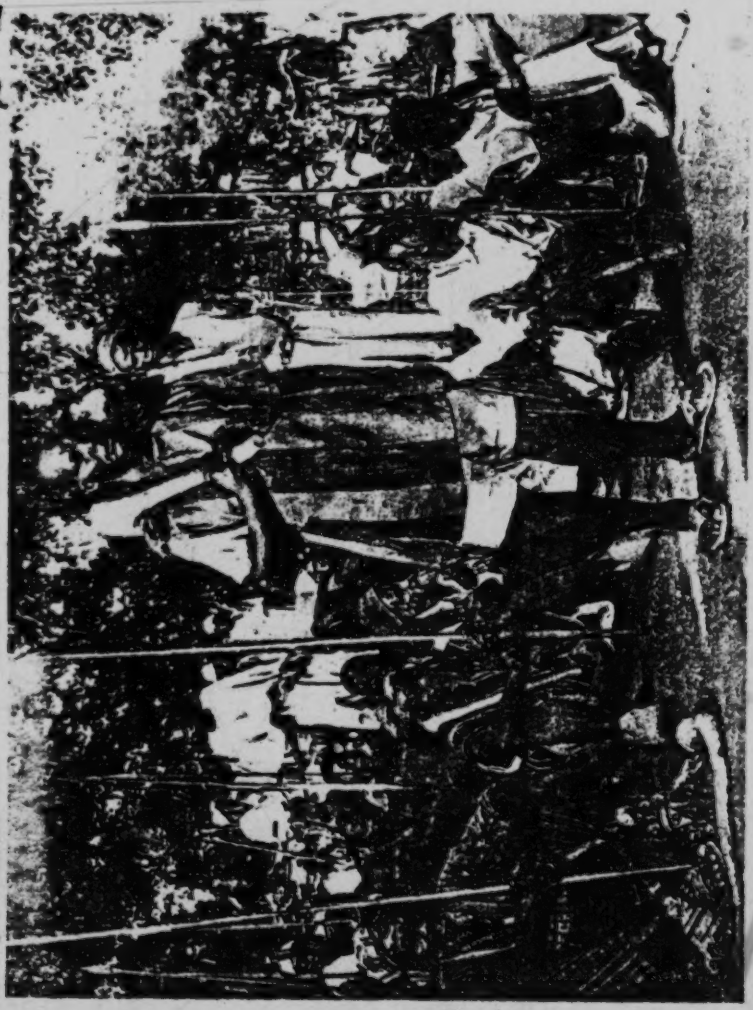

Mogho Naba Kougri's warriors, many bearing traditional weapons, respond to their sovereign's call for aid against the new French administration.

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13. Binger, I, 18, 440.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 450.
15. *Ibid.*, pp. 469–70.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 460.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 467.
18. Von François, p. 143 ff.
19. Marc, p. 36.
20. Crozat, p. 4820.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 4835.
22. *Ibid.*
23. *Ibid.*, p. 4836.
24. *Ibid.*
25. *Ibid.*
26. *Ibid.*, p. 4849.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 4850.

[104] 28. Marc, p. 38. He attempts to maintain historical veracity: "Contrary to what Caillat believed, the Mogho Naba was able to assemble thousands of horsemen with which to confront the French."

29. Monteil, p. 163.

30. He gives an account of the northern region of Ghana in a secret report quoted in Wolfson, p. 199.

31. "Les Missions Françaises dans La Boucle du Niger," *Bull. du Comité de L'Afrique Française*, VII (1897), 108–9.

32. *Ibid.*

33. *Bull. du Comité de L'Afrique Française*, V (1895), 276. The people of Nobere say that Alby went to the ruler's son at Djiba and asked to be taken to Ouagadougou because he had presents for the Mogho Naba. But the prince, noting the soldiers with the European, secretly went to his father and told him about the mission. Mogho Naba Wobogo then called his ministers together and asked them whether the visitor should be received. They told him that they feared this visit was a trick to capture the country, and told the Djiba Naba to tell his guest that Mogho Naba Wobogo did not want any Europeans in his kingdom.

34. Marc, pp. 35–38. See "Les Missions Françaises dans La Boucle du Niger," *Bull. du Comité de L'Afrique Française*, VII (1897), 107–12, for a discussion of the controversy between the European powers for control of these territories.

35. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Yatenga*, p. 109.

36. Barry, p. 131.

37. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Yatenga*, p. 111.

38. Noll, p. 257. The Mossi were a bit chagrined that a relatively small force conquered them. This force consisted of Lt. Voulet, his adjutant Lt. Chanoine, Sergeants Laury and Le Geriel, 29 Senegalese infantrymen, 10 spahis, 180 Sudanese infantrymen [411] armed with European weapons, 40 Sudanese horsemen, and 250 porters. The Mossi now insist that although this force was small, it had more fire-power than they had ever encountered, and that they had only flint guns aside from their traditional weapons. They say that if they had had rifles, no one would ever have entered their country.

39. Archives, Document 15G-190 (June 1897).

40. Noll, p. 257.
41. Dim Delobson, p. 38.
42. *Ibid.*, p. 39 ff.
43. Randau, p. 433.

44. It is not clear whether Mazi was poisoned (as the French claim), or whether he died a natural death. Despite French claims to the contrary, the Mossi insist that Mazi was never ruler of Ouagadougou, and they do not include him in their genealogies. The present chief of Nobere insists that Mazi was never Mogho Naba and that he died a natural death. Dim Delobson also declares that although Mazi was Wobogo's sworn enemy, and would have liked to become Mogho Naba, he was ill when Voulet called upon him and died before acceding to power. (Dim Delobson, pp. 41–42.)

45. Lambert, p. 73.

46. Archives, Doc. 15G-190 (May 1897). The Nobere people deny that they supported the French, but official documents of the period report that it was the Nobere Naba who informed the French of Boukary Koutou's activities. The people of Nobere

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and a bit peeved at not being able to put my idea into practice. I next sought the advice and consolation of an elder noble who listened quite calmly and then said: "The customs of these kafirs (heathens) are foolish." Being a Moslem, my friend was very often critical of the pagans, and could be relied upon to explain why their customs were "foolish." He said that in former days the Raga Naba would have climbed a tree and announced to the crowd any message from the district chief. Moreover, he was the custodian of all lost articles and restored them to their owners. The Moslem said that my request could not be granted because there was no Raga Naba, and that probably there would never be another. When the French first banned the institution, the local chief dismissed the Raga Naba. With the passage of years, however, the market became so dangerous that the chief tried to appoint another ex-serf to the job. This man soon died, and his successor died shortly after being appointed. Since that time the chief has made no attempt to name a new market chief.

With this new knowledge I called my aide and inquired from him whether this information was true and if so, why did he not tell me the true state of affairs. His reply was that he did not wish to say that the market was bad because the local people believed that they had solved the problem of the lack of a Raga Naba. When the last Raga Naba died, the chief decided not to name a new one, but in order to placate the market *tengkouga*, he ordered his *tengsoba* to make sacrifices to it. It was believed that these sacrifices would be acceptable as long as the officiant did not bear the title of Raga Naba. The other functions of the Raga Naba, such as collecting goods for the chief and preserving peace in the market, were taken over by the Kos Naba and another servant of the chief. However, the Kos Naba had to be careful lest he overstep his authority in such a way as would acquaint the *tengkouga* with the real situation. In my case, the chief was acting by trying to get the Kos Naba to acquaint the people with my loss in as inconspicuous a manner as possible. The consensus was that the Kos Naba would have risked his life had he made any kind of announcement to the market people, because the *tengkouga* would have thought that he was the new Raga Naba, and if not contented with the people would have killed him. Under these circumstances I withdrew my request. I discovered later that my pen was not lost but had been in the hut all the time.

Those chiefs who have succeeded in retaining their market officials even secretly have been able to maintain their control over public behavior there. The Mossi are fairly law-abiding despite the persistence among them of a warrior tradition. Every man who goes to market, or anywhere for that matter, usually carries a baton over his

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443 shoulder; but when he arrives in the market, he calmly places his
651 weapon on top of one of the sheds before he makes his rounds. The
626 women do not carry any weapons to market except their "words" but
●411 even these are not often used because of the desire to avoid hostility—
[578] which the Mossi do not like to have disrupt one of their major institutions.

443 The rural market is the center of Mossi social life, and friends
571 as well as enemies meet within its confines. What Mangin wrote some forty years ago is still true: "Every self-respecting Mossi—man or woman, child or elder—must go to market at least once in a while, were it only to look . . . and to be looked at, if he can put on some
[292] handsome clothes" (Mangin 1921 : 53). Except for the Moslems who
[184] are now experimenting with a form of Purdah, there are few persons who do not go to market. The absence of someone from the market for more than two consecutive occasions is a sure sign of illness, travel, or family crisis. As one man said to me, "I must go to market, and when I get there I look for three persons: my girl friend, my debtor and my enemy. If I do now know whether any of them are at the market I am ill at ease. And when I go to the market and do not see them all, the market is not good."

443 The lively character of the Mossi market will be discussed later,
571 but throughout this kaleidoscope of activities certain consistencies
576 can be discerned. For example, one notices many different kinds of greetings and salutations in the market place, but each one of them correctly indicates the exact relation or relationship between the persons involved. Young girls on passing each other on one of their innumerable circuits of the market bend their knees slightly and place both of their cupped hands on their own breasts. Only then will they stop and exchange news. At the end of the conversation they repeat the same greeting and continue their rounds. Both girls and women greet casual male acquaintances in the same way, but
[562] invariably kneel if the male stops and talks to them. Women some-
[602] time kneel when speaking to each other, but always do so when addressing any male relative of a respected category, who may then send them on errands such as buying tobacco from the vendors. A man who meets a female benefactor, such as a woman who has given medi-
[562] cine to one of his children, invariably kneels down before her. She
[601] may do the same thing out of respect for his male status. However,
[604] when a man meets either his mother-in-law or his father's sister, he is the one to kneel down in order to greet her. Two men who are equals normally shake hands, but if not, the junior in status or in age kneels down before his elder or superior. Sometimes a high status man will prevent his greeter from kneeling by raising him. When

342
412 Tools. The only tools used are the sitoiga (native pickaxe) and the wanka (hoe).

352 House furnishings. (a) The man's hut. The only furnishings in a man's hut are a mat or thin secco, a bolster made of cotton strips or kapok, a quiver, the club, some arrows, the bow, a large knife (zangoégo), and a spear. Small bags of charms and other amulets hang from the wall here and there, and there is a sort of oval straw basket, pilgou, in which clothing is stored.

(b) The woman's hut. From one end of the hut to the other there are billi, small pieces of wood fastened to the wall to hold gourds, bowls (lensé), earthenware basins (lassé), ladles (soutissi), etc.

In the rear of the room lumps of dried earth, [221] hollowed in the center, hold the vessels, and pots, dougdo, which serve both as storage bins for clothing and as granaries for the produce of the woman's own garden.

592 Plan of a compound. As one enters a compound, the huts to left are those of the women and the master's huts stand to the right. Completely outside the establishment, there are one or two straw huts, similar to those already described, which provide sleeping quarters for the dakompa (young men).

[585] The head of the establishment lives alone. It could hardly be otherwise, since he summons his wives in turn.

The women live with their young children or with girls betrothed to their husband, until, of course, these girls receive huts of their own.

343 Kitchen arrangements. It is exceedingly rare among the Mossi to find a hut used specifically for cooking. The wife's bedroom serves also as a kitchen.

592 595 252 Ordinarily the husband issues provisions to the wife who is cooking for the family, but there are exceptions to this rule. At Ouagadougou, for example, most of the wives provide the food for the husband. The latter furnishes provisions only during the winter when the fields are being worked.

[222] The wives take turns preparing the food. The woman on duty is aided by her co-wives in grinding the millet on the millstone (néré) of the section, but she alone prepares the millet cake, sagbo.

286 291 "This kind of braiding is not exported."

294 563 There are tailors as well as weavers among the Mossi. The tailor's trade, incidentally, is exercised in Mossi lands not only by the Mossi but also by the Yarsé and by some of the Haoussa who are settled in the territory.

294 Mossi tailors till the soil during the winter season and work as tailors during the dry season. Their fields net them more than their trade.

Most Mossi tailors do custom work. Cotton strips are brought to them, and they sew them into the required garment. Others purchase cotton strips, make them into various garments (skirts, cloaks, trousers, caps) and have their wives sell them at market. Those, however, are in the minority.

A cloak is called fougou in Mossi, a skirt fougoupoko from poko, "woman" and fougou, "cloak." Trousers are called koulouga.

/534/ Let us add that garment manufacture has remained a family industry in much of Mossi territory. Many Mossi can sew, and they make their own clothes by sewing up cotton strips. Let [462] us note here that as in nearly all of West Africa, it is the men who sew rather than the women. In this area of Africa, indeed, sewing is essentially a male occupation rather than a female one.

Now to present a Ouagadougou tailor, Mohammadi Bagaré.

He tills the soil and does nothing else during the winter season. He exercises his tailor's trade during the dry season.

He does custom work. Those who want a garment bring him cotton strips in sufficient numbers, and he makes the requested gar- [435] ment. He asks 1,000 cowries to make a large cloak, 500 for a small one, 200 for a skirt. To make a cap he asks only for one kola nut, which is worth 50 cowries at Ouagadougou. He takes 200 cowries for a pair of trousers.

It takes him five days' work to make a large cloak, two days for a small one, one day for a skirt, two days for a pair of trousers, one hour for a cap.

[412 439] His only working tool is the needle. Mohammadi uses European needles.

592 only one or two meters apart, close together. It is true that there
361 is sometimes a small plot within the séko....
171 The soukala or compound is called iri in Mossi, the hut rogo or dogo, and the soukala head irisoba (from soba, "chief" and iri, "compound").

462 We shall close this analysis of the Mossi family with a few notes
562 on the status of women and that of slaves.

First of all, Mossi women help with the tilling. They do not clear the fields, it is true, but they participate in all other field tasks along with the men. They do this only in the morning, however, since they spend the afternoon on household tasks or on their little individual plots, for they have small fields of large white millet, underground peas, beans, or peanuts.

They also do household tasks: they pound and crush the grain. Large millet or sorghum is, as we know, pounded first and then crushed, while small millet is crushed after being threshed.

462 The Mossi set their crushing stones in huge round clay /banco/
252 tables which are built outside the soukala and which are used by
412 the whole quarter. This is a strictly Mossi characteristic which is not found among the /558/ Bobo, Gourounsi, etc., in short, among any of the other groups who nevertheless use the same stones. Those large round tables are not high. They are about 1 or 1.20 meters in height and approximately 6 meters in diameter, with a correspondingly large circumference. The Mossi set in their crushing stones all around the circumference, and each table can thus hold ten, twelve, or even more. Every evening at nightfall the women of the soukala which are around it, women, young girls, etc., come together to crush their grain. They are usually in the simplest of garb, bare as the back of my hand, for the work is hard and demands a continuous back-and-forth motion of the arms, the upper part of the body, and the body as a whole.

To make those tables, they first build a circular wall to the desired height of the table, and then the whole inner space is filled up with earth almost to the top. This earth is pounded thoroughly, and then well-tamped casings are fashioned on the horizontal circumference in which are set the stones on which the crushing is done. The stones are firmly ensheathed in the clay, which is then allowed to dry.

462 Those large tables are called niénouga in Mossi, the stones on
252 which the crushing is done are called néré, and the movable stones
412 used for crushing are called nérébila "little néré"/.

171 We stated above that those large clay tables are peculiarly
252 Mossi and are not to be found among the Bobo, Habé, or Gourounsi.
412 Actually the latter, as we saw earlier, set their stones in small clay tables which are only 1 meter high and 1 meter in diameter and thus quite small, and which stand in every soukala inside each woman's room. They also make slightly larger tables, long ones that look like large earthen bathtubs of a sort or that even bear a certain resemblance to crude sarcophagi, and into which the stones are set. Those, too, stand within the soukala, in dark, dirty rooms. Sometimes, the Gourounsi merely set down their crushing stones under a shelter covered with wood and straw, built at the gate of their citadel-soukala. Three or four stones are placed upon two thick and solid parallel sticks which in turn are held /559/ about 50 centimeters from the ground on four solid forks thrust into the ground. In this case the woman must kneel down in order to crush the grain. I have observed this method chiefly among the Menkiéra, that is to say, in the northern part of the Leo residency.

462 To go back to female work among the Mossi. Along with the crushing of grain, they do the cooking, fetch firewood and water, do the gathering, prepare the products derived from gathering, etc. We saw earlier how those products are made, and we shall not go over it again.

252 Among the Mossi, the only known millet dishes are sarabout
171 and vessala. Couscous is unknown. This is rather strange, since the dish thus called is known practically throughout West Africa.

Sarabout (the Mossi word) is what the Malinké and Bambara call tô, the Foulbé, Toucouleur, and Foulah niri, the Sarakolé souré, the Maure /Moors/ lisi.

As for couscous, the Malinké and Bambara call it baci, the Foulbé, Toucouleur, and Foulah lakiri, the Sarakole fouto, the Moors and Arabs couscous.

To or sarabout is prepared for immediate consumption. Couscous is prepared for relatively long storage.

462 Women's tasks. —First of all, Mossi women help with the cultivation of the soil. They do not clear land for tillage, but during the winter season they do all the other agricultural tasks in competition with the men. Since they must also pound the grain, cook, and do other household tasks, however, they cannot work in the fields as long as the men. When there are several wives, they share the labor. Some devote themselves to housework while others work in the fields. When there are not enough of them to permit such a division of labor, they allow the men to leave in the morning and do not join them with the food until about 10 or 11 o'clock. After the meal and the noonday rest, they work with the men, but they leave the fields earlier to prepare the evening meal. Before returning to the village, however, the women work on their little individual plots, but only for a short time, while the men, after leaving the communal fields, linger in their own small fields until nightfall.

Besides working in the fields, the women do household chores. [252] They pound the grain in mortars and crush it on the crushing stones. We shall speak again about these mortars, pestles, and stones under "The Mode of Subsistence" /not translated/.

They do the cooking and prepare the various Mossi dishes which we shall describe later /not translated/. They go to get wood in the bush and water at the wells. /244/

Let us add that it is the women who pick the karite /shea/ nuts during the rainy season and the pods of the néré /locust bean/ in the spring (end of March, April). They, too, prepare the karite butter and the néré flour. They also brew dolo and, if need be, the various other drinks of which we have already spoken in the section on crops /not translated/ and to which we shall return under "The Mode of Subsistence" /not translated/.

In addition to their cooking tasks, the Mossi women of Yatenga must perform cleaning chores. They sweep the huts and the whole 556 establishment with bunches of straw tied in the middle with a rope. ●412] This makes a small primitive broom without a handle, 30 or 40 centimeters long. They launder the clothes and make soap. They spin the cotton, whereas the men weave it. Finally, it is they who tamp the earthen floors and walls of the huts with wooden clappers (in Mossi, silimpandé in the singular, silimpama in the plural) after adding néré water. We shall see later in "Mode of Subsistence (construction of the compound)" how this is done.

422 415 Household utensils. —The large earthen slabs set up to crush the grain belong to the compound, but the rectangular granitic stones set into the slabs are owned by individual women, as are the movable pestles used to pound grain on the stones.

422 412 592 571 The wooden mortars and pestles, which are very useful and, besides, are heavy, cumbersome, and difficult to destroy, belong to the compound and sometimes to the head of the work group, in other words, to the group itself. In fact, the head of the work group provides part of these implements when the ones purchased by the zakasoba are insufficient.

422 415 592 As for the canari, the largest, which are like small vats and may be as high as one or one and a half meters, are used to hold the dolo /270/ made by the women. They belong to the compound, and they are bought by the compound head. The ordinary canari (25 to 30 centimeters high and used to fetch water or to cook) belong privately to each woman of the compound. The same applies to gourds. The women often buy their canari or gourds with their husband's cowries, but the object, once bought, belongs to them.

422 Clothing. —Clothes are owned fully on a private basis, no matter what their origin. Thus, the skirt cloth bought by the husband for his wife belongs to her.

Ornaments and jewelry. —These are also owned privately, no matter what their origin. Hence, they belong to each man, each woman, each child.

Weapons. —They are likewise owned privately.

Amulets, charms. —The case is the same as for weapons. If, however, we use the word "charm" in its broadest sense, as any object pertaining to the cult, there are family charms which are owned by the family.

Cowries, metal coins, etc. —These are likewise private property.

421 In short, property belonging to the total family is practically nonexistent among the Mossi of Yatenga. There is subfamilial (compound) property and the property of that economic section of the subfamily which is called a work group. In addition to this communal property, there are household property and strictly private property.

326 Mossi blacksmiths make ouaka, koutiaga, axes, knives, daggers, swords, spearheads, arrowheads, razors, iron bracelets for women, men, nobles, spoons, horse bits, stirrups, spurs, etc. They also make needles of considerable thickness which are worth [435] 10 cowries apiece, or five for 1 sou.

During the winter season, they hardly make anything beside ouaka.* During the dry season, they make all the other items.

411 They also make zandé, or clubs with iron tips. Let us say
326 a word about clubs, which are in a way the Mossi national weapon. A Mossi would believe himself dishonored if he were not to bear a club solemnly on his right shoulder wherever he goes. Even small boys carry them, proportioned to size, and they do this with no less solemnity than their elders.

Mossi clubs are of three kinds:

1. Some made wholly of wood, handle and body both, and carved all of one piece. They are called dori.

2. Others whose handle is made of wood, but whose head consists of a large round stone imbedded at the tip of the handle. These clubs are called gougou.

3. Finally, the clubs with a wooden handle and an iron mallet inserted perpendicularly at the tip of the handle. These are the zandé or zann'dé. Sometimes the handle is covered with hide, and this makes it richer and more handsome.

326 Blacksmiths make only the iron part of the zandé. The other kinds of clubs are made by the owners themselves.

Blacksmiths only make zandé on order. While they make ouaka and koutiaga in advance and have them taken /514/ to market in quantities, they only make zandé when someone comes and asks for one.

The Mossi blacksmiths, therefore, work sometimes on order and sometimes to build up their stock. They sell this stock at market through their children, just as their wives go there to sell the pottery they manufacture.

325 The tools used by Mossi blacksmiths are as follows:
413 1. A small anvil called kissiguiré, with a pointed iron piece underneath, which can be held in the hand or thrust into the ground.

* [i.e. A kind of large hoe, see p. 32. —Analyst]

325 2. An iron mallet called zinré which is used as a hammer to
●413 strike the above-mentioned anvil. These items are very small. The anvil is held in one hand and the mallet in the other.

3. A pair of tongs (iéougo) to pick the iron from the fire and put it on the anvil.

4. A hammer called kouadara, made of a thick, short, and solid wooden handle into which a long and narrow iron mallet has been driven to make a hammer.

5. A rasp (sodara or chandara), slightly curved, and hafted to a wooden handle.

6. A sort of small wedge to cut the iron (kitéga). This wedge is placed on the piece of iron to be cut, and it is hit with the mallet.

7. A small-sized tool called karé that consists of a curved blade, 3 centimeters long by 2 wide, hafted to a short piece of wood. The karé is used to sharpen knives.

8. The goatskin bellows (zougoudou).

Such are the tools of the Mossi blacksmith which, incidentally, he makes himself.

325 435 The mallet is worth	5,000	cowries	(5 francs)
The anvil	10,000	"	(10 francs)
The hammer	1,000	"	(1 franc)
The nippers	700	"	(0.70 francs)
The rasp	500	"	(0.50 francs)
The iron wedge	200	"	(0.20 francs)
The sharpener	200	"	(0.20 francs)

323 The wives of Mossi blacksmiths make pottery. They are not the only ones to do this, as we shall see later, but they do it, at least in the special blacksmith's villages and quarters.

They make pottery with bérédo, that special black earth, a kind of clay we have already mentioned/in a previous chapter, not translated/. They crush and mash old canari and add this powder to the bérédo. This makes the pots stronger than if fresh bérédo were used. When the pots have been fashioned, the women leave them to dry in the sun for six or seven days. While this drying process is taking place, they gather firewood in the bush. Then they place a layer of wood in a round oven (about 1 1/2 meters high, very

326 In short, the blacksmith's profession is of greater consequence to him than anything else, although he avails himself of several other occupations.

[564] Mossi blacksmiths do not form a caste. That is to say, anyone can marry among them.

306 Let us proceed to the jewelers or copper workers (niaka in Mossi).

439 The Mossi have been familiar with copper for a long time, although West Africa does not produce it. The Yarsé have sought it at Ouanké, Kintampo, and even Kumasi from times immemorial. It comes from the coastal area, where it is brought by the Whites in the form of brass rods 30 or 40 centimeters long (like curtain rods). Nowadays, it is the British who supply the Gold Coast with copper, no doubt in the wake of the Portuguese and Dutch.

306 The niaka earns more money than the blacksmith. He buys the copper rods from the Dioula and makes them into various items /517/

301 such as women's copper leggings adorned with crocodiles, and thick copper bracelets worn at the wrists and ankles by women and soroné (pages). Depending on their thickness, these bracelets sell for 2,500

[435] to 20,000 cowries. He also makes women's copper hairpins, and low-price rings worth from 100 to 200 cowries.

306 Prior to the arrival of the French, these jewelers also made copper objects depicting everyday scenes, landscapes, huts. The

532 chiefs bought them, but now these objects, at least the more ancient ones, have become very difficult to obtain. It seems that the German physician Frobenius, when he passed through Mossi territory at the end of 1908, acquired some very beautiful specimens of ancient Mossi manufacture for an exorbitant price. Nowadays, one

[439] can imagine what the old industry was like by looking at the small items made at Ouagadougou by a few Europeanized Mossi who sell them on the spot for the benefit of local Whites. It might almost be said, therefore, that they manufacture them for export purposes. These items, made by the lost-wax process, are rather interesting and quite artistic for Blacks.

325 The tools of the niaka are about the same as those of the black-

306 smith:

43 1. The small portable anvil or kissiguiré.
2. The hammer or kouadara.
3. Shears (niougou) to pick copper pieces from the fire.

325 4. The iron rasp or sodara.
306 5. The sharpening tool or karé.
413 6. The iron wedge to cut copper (kétouga).
7. Shears to cut copper (mankasaga).
8. A few very primitive goatskin bellows.

306 As an example of a jeweler, may I present Sulémani Déréma, an inhabitant of Ouagadougou. He lives with his older brother, who is the head of the soukala and who has a wife and child. Sulémani himself has two wives and two children. A younger brother lives with them with his wife and child. Finally, there are other brothers in the soukala but they are not married (let us note in passing [592] that this soukala is exceptional, for the general rule among the /518/ Mossi is for every household to live separately; here, although they still live together, every household works separately).

Sulémani Déréma buys his copper at market, or else he works the copper furnished by his customers to order. He makes bracelets, rings, copper stirrups, etc.

306 He also works in the fields during the winter season, and like 241 the other households in the soukala, he does this on his own. Sulémani has two fields in the bush, one of small millet and another of large white millet, and in addition he grows maize around the soukala on the stretch of ground allotted him by the head of the soukala.

He owns neither large nor small livestock, not even chickens, He neither hunts nor fishes.

His jeweler's trade nets him more than his fields.

324 The blacksmith and niaka are representatives of metalworking.
316 Let us now proceed to stonework.

The makers of crushing stones are called nanlora in Mossi, from nan, "crushing stone" and lora, "to shatter."

Our quarrymen look in the bush for large stone slabs resting on the ground, and whenever possible raised in some manner above it. They draw lines on these large flat stones with karité and soumbara, the size of the crushing stones they wish to extract, and then they gather wood under the slab and set it afire. They allow the fire

324 to burn for one day. Then, with the aid of a large, sharp stone,
316 they strike the spots where the lines were drawn. The stone breaks at those spots, and they take the pieces and sell them at Mossi markets.

This thankless trade does not pay much, and those who exercise it do so only during the dry season. During the winter season they work in the fields, and this brings them much larger returns than their quarrymen's trade.

323 After stonework comes work with earth. It is represented among the Mossi by the potter, the pipe maker, and the bricklayer. Let us begin with the first.

/519/ Here and there among the Mossi, pottery has remained a family occupation performed by all the women. This might be called the initial level of the craft. Yet we saw earlier that the wives of those blacksmiths who live in /special/ quarters or villages make pottery in abundance. This is the second level of the craft, that of incipient specialization. Finally, there are professional potters to be found among the Mossi, and this is the third level of the craft, that of more pronounced specialization. There would remain a fourth level to attain, where potters would exercise this trade exclusively and would be completely specialized. This level, however, has not been reached among the Mossi. The potters here are potters only halfway, and they work as much in the fields as they do at their craft. We have here, nevertheless, an initial effort toward clay-work specialization, and this is by no means the case in every Black population.

As an example, here is a potter from Dassasogo, a small village located 8 kilometers from Ouagadougou.

During the rainy season, he works only in the fields. He exercises his potter's trade only during the dry season. His fields bring him the larger returns.

He has a field of small millet in the bush, and he grows maize around his soukala which consists of two huts only. He has a wife and a young child. His work tools are as follows:

323 1. A kind of crude basin, very thick, heavy brimmed, quite
413 shallow, and made of earth.

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323 In order to make this basin the potter takes a kind of earth
[317] called yaoré (the kind from large brown or greyish termite nests). He mixes it with straw and makes this kind of basin, this kind of primitive potter's wheel, called tébélé in Mossi.

2. A kind of short earth pestle, which is held in the fist and called toudoubila.

323 In order to make his canari our potter takes some yarado. To
[428] obtain this kind of clay one must dig at certain spots which are handed down traditionally from father to son. He crushes it with /520/ his pestle in the basin, and then wets it and builds his canari with it, raising the canari like a house wall and making it revolve slowly before him. Incidentally, he only knows how to make small canari.

Those potters who make big jars excavate a sort of large basin in the ground. They use the same short and compact little pestle to work the clay of the canari they are building, but they use a different kind of yarado, the red or reddish kind.

[435] Our potter sells his small canari for 80 to 120 cowries apiece. He makes them in quantities. People come to him to purchase them, or else he has his wife take them to market.

Skillful potters make four canari a day. Beginners only make two or three.

[435] Large canari are worth 300 cowries apiece.

Those potters who make small canari often make nothing else. Similarly, those who make large canari do not usually make any others. There are some potters who make both kinds, however, for example at Kombisiguiri.

In order to fire the pots, Mossi potters have large round ovens which I have already described. They are completely open at the top, like circular walls 1.50 meters high, with four holes at the bottom. The potters heap up millet stalks within, and lay four canari on top. Upon each of these canari they place others, until the pile reaches the top of the wall. Then they set the millet stalks afire and allow everything to cool off until the following morning.

Every potter does not have his own oven. There is only one
323 467 oven per quarter. The potters in each quarter get together to build a common oven behind the several soukala. If there are five potters,

322 563 Foulbé as makers of wooden gourds and other items of a similar nature. The Mossi call them séta. Since there are many Foulbé in Mossi territory, there are Laobé also. Some of them have left their masters to settle independently, and they are now free.

May we present one, by the name of Louri. During the winter season he works the soil, although very slightly like all other Laobé and Foulbé, and he also makes wooden gourds. During the dry season, he only makes gourds. Owing to his very mediocre cultivating abilities, his trade nets him more than his fields.

His tools are as follows:

322 413 1. First, a large ax called diendé, which he uses to cut heavy timber.

2. The saotaré, a kind of well-sharpened hoe with a very short handle, which is used to fashion the gourd on the outside.

3. The tépotondé, a kind of hoe with a very short handle and a very sharp blade, which is used to hollow out the gourd.

4. The menkéré, which is also used to hollow out the inside of the gourd.

5. The kéfirga, a long-handled tool with a curved, sharp blade, which is used for the same purpose as the two preceding tools.

It is the blacksmith who makes the iron parts of these tools.

322 563 435 Their value is as follows:

The axe is worth	2,000	cowries
The saotaré is worth	500	"
The tépotondé is worth	500	"
The menkéré is worth	1,500	"
The kéfirga is worth	200	"

322 563 In order to make his gourds, our Laobé uses the wood of the following trees: hèdè, bouagaï, saboutoungaï, and bembé.

This Laobé comes from Badongo (a village located 31 kilometers from /523/ Ouagadougou). He has a wife and two children. [561] He is a former slave, a captive from Laobé, whose masters had settled at Badongo. The master left, and now he is free. Formerly he worked for his master, and now he works for himself. He makes gourds in advance and has them sold at market by his wife. He [435] sells the small ones for 100 cowries, the medium ones for 300, the large ones for 500 (0.10, 0.30, 0.50 franc).

322 As for plots, he cultivates a field of small millet, a little
563 maize around his hut, a few peanuts and underground peas.

His soukala consists of a single and lone hut where he lives with his wife and two children.

Here is another example of a Laobé or séta, this one living at Kombisiguiri. He has left the Foulbé to settle among the Mossi.

[413] His woodworking tools are the same as those we mentioned above: diendé, tépotondé, menkéré, saotaré, and kéfirga.

To make his gourds, he cuts down a whole tree, either hèdè
[313] or n'kouna, which yields the best wood, or bembé, sibi, or n'pékou, or else saboutoungaï, sanktougaï, or satantouloungaï, or finally bouagaï, which is less good. Gourds made of hèdè wood sell for more than others.

[435] He makes two kinds of gourds, small ones worth 50 cowries and large ones, some of which sell for up to 1,000 cowries. He makes his gourds without waiting for an order and has them taken to market by his wives.

Our Laobé does not work in the fields at all. From one end of the year to another, he makes his wooden gourds and they bring him enough to live on.

322 In addition, he makes mortars and pestles to crush grain. A
563 small mortar and pestle is worth 1,000 cowries, a large mortar
435 and pestle 2,000. He also makes large wooden spoons which he sells for 50 cowries, and clogs or wooden sandals of a sort which are worn during the rainy season and which he sells for 100 cowries.

/524/ There are eight people in his soukala, himself, his two wives, and his five children.

322 Let us add that a few, a very few, Mossi have begun to make wooden gourds like the Laobé, but contrary to the habits of the latter, they spend more time in the fields than at their trade. There are a few at Polsogo, a village located 12 kilometers from Ouagadougou. They must not be confused with the koukouperséba mentioned above.

There are also bow makers among the Mossi. They are called tempéséda. They are primarily cultivators, and their fields net them much more than their trade. They exercise the latter only for the purpose of getting a few cowries to buy condiments such as

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435 2. Similar but smaller hats, worth from 1,000 to 1,500 cowries.

/529/ 3. Round straw hats with wide brims, mentioned above. These are worth 1,700 cowries.

285 All the leather parts on those hats are added by the shoemaker.

294 We have already mentioned that our hat makers are not exclusively manufacturers, that they also till the soil. It must be
241 added that the latter activity nets them more than their trade. The man I mentioned cultivates a field of small millet and one of large red millet in the bush. He also grows maize, peanuts, and underground peas around his soukala. He owns neither large nor small livestock, but only chickens.

285 In his soukala he has two wives, four children, two married
294 brothers who have one wife apiece but no children, and two un-
592 married brothers, as well as a father. They all make hats.

He lives at Saponé, where there are many hat manufacturers.

282 After straw work, let us mention leatherwork.

294 Mossi shoemakers do not form a caste. Anyone who wants to
[564] may marry among them, and anyone who wishes to do so may exercise their trade.

As an example, here is Kinoga Kologo, a Mossi, and the head
[592] of a soukala. He lives with two wives, two children, and an unmarried brother. His soukala consists of three huts.

His tools are as follows:

282 1. The pongo, a kind of broad little knife with a flaring blade
294 hafted to a very short handle. It is used to cut hide.

413 2. The gansiouba, a wooden knife used to scrape and rub hides, clean them and smooth them.

3. The désara, a small tool with a wooden handle and a curved iron stem. It is used red hot to trace designs on hides.

4. The pime, a small awl used to sew hides.

5. The large tirisiga. This is an iron seal used to imprint hides with small circles.

6. The small tirisiga. This is a smaller seal, /530/ an iron rod whose tip makes a very tiny seal.

282 As among nearly all Blacks, the Mossi shoemaker is his own
294 tanner. He buys sheepskins and goatskins at market (small ones
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361 /10/ The appearance of the villages indicates that their inhabitants feel safe. There are none of those hut clusters bunched together in [171] narrow walled-in areas to withstand the invasions of an El-hadj-Omar or of a Samory, as in Bambara country; none of those family groupings of flat-roofed huts, those strongholds sheltering the whole family from the grandfather to the last of his grandchildren to resist through sheer numbers the incursions of a more powerful neighbor, as in Gourounsi [542] country where the authority of chiefs is so weak. Here every family head, that is, a man with his wives, his unmarried children, and his servants, occupies a certain number of huts that together form his yri, a grouping Europeans call by its Bambara name, soukala.

342 333 The huts are circular and usually built of mud, but sometimes of stakes driven into the ground and surrounded with seko, a kind of mat of plaited broad straw. The huts are surmounted with a roof, likewise of straw, resting on a wooden framework. When a native wishes to build a hut, he sets a date with a mason expert in laying mud bricks and notifies the village people. On the appointed day everyone comes to him. The women fetch water from the stream; the men excavate the soil a few meters from where the hut is to be erected; the children trample the mortar and carry to the mason the clods prepared by the old men who sit gravely around the mud pile. This is a festive occasion for the village, because the man who builds must supply drink for all, and food as well if he wishes to do things properly.

A circle is traced on the ground to indicate the outline of the hut, and the mason places the mud clods obliquely side by side along the circle. When the first round is finished, he starts another, and he proceeds in this fashion to mid-height. The work is then interrupted until the following day to give the first part a chance to dry. This is why several huts are usually built at the same time. No opening is left in the wall. When it is dry, a door is cut through, usually arched and so low that one must creep on hands and knees in order to get in. Well-to-do women close their hut with a wooden [414] door that opens inward; it is equipped with a wooden latch that works by means of a large key made of a stick with small iron rods perpendicularly attached to it. The children and even the husband usually leave their clothing, their luxury items, and their cowries in these closed huts which are better protected against thieves. Those who cannot afford this luxury of a door drive two stakes into the ground, one on each side of the opening, and slip a mat between the stakes and the wall.

The Kombéré: Death, Enthronement

631 763 202 Death. Upon the death of a kombéré two representatives in mourning are sent from the canton to Ouagadougou to deliver the sad news to the Mogho Naba. The envoys are entrusted with a horse or a sheep, depending on the importance of the naba. Tanga branches are tied to the animal's tail (see Ouidi Naba, Chapter 4).

[136] When the first emissary reaches the courtyard of the Mogho Naba, he sits down, taking care to place one hand on the ground and stretching out his arm. Since the very sight of the horse is significant, even before any explanation is offered, the Zusoaba enters the house of the Mogho Naba and comes out again bearing a gourd of water with flour in it (zom kom) which he pours on the envoy's arm.

The horse is then handed over to a representative of the Ouidi Naba who removes the branches and leads the animal to Widhin [Ouidin].

The Zusoaba takes back the gourd, and it is only then that the Ouidi Naba says to the Mogho Naba: "Naba zagl yka sambga le tongalamé (Chief So-and-So has been stricken with such-and-such an illness and has succumbed)." It should be added that before going to see the Mogho Naba, the envoys first inform the ministers of the death of the kombéré.

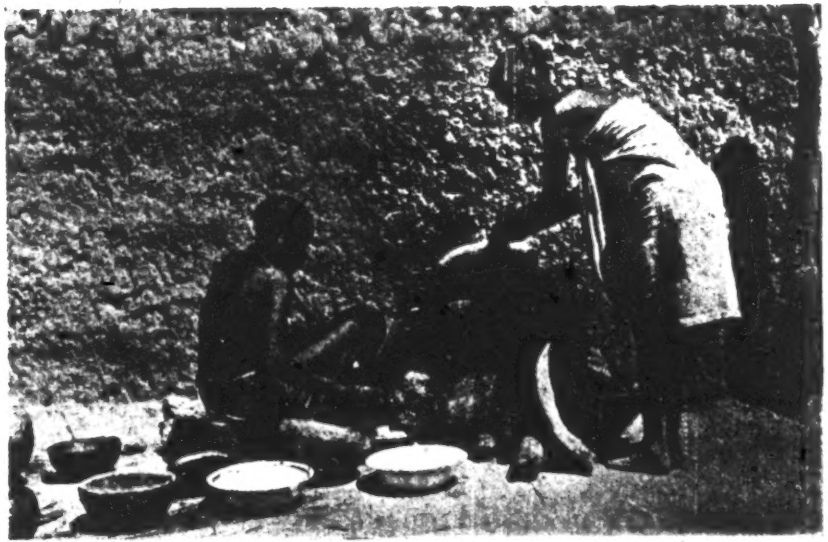
631 766 The Mogho Naba asks a few appropriate questions and sends the representatives to prepare the kouré. On the day of the ceremony, the Nabitienga (eldest son of the deceased chief) has large quantities of beer and saghbo prepared and sheep and cattle killed to feed the people gathered in great numbers for the occasion.

The house is circled, as was described for the Mogho Naba.

[415] (a) Koupéogo (kouré basket). The koupéogo is a basket, artistically made, into which is put the foutou (clothing of the deceased), [137] koursi (trousers), his pougla (red fez), his néoda (slippers), the zandé (club), and the wed'zouré (horse's tail). This basket is laid upon a pé'gaongo (skin of a sheep) in the zaongo (antechamber).

One of the sisters of the Nabitienga, usually the eldest daughter of the deceased, carries the péogo outside and seats herself at the place where the dead chief held his daily audiences (guéré). The benda, liumé, and gangando drums are played together, and then

1: Delobsom--164 I-5 (no date) 1933 FA28 Mossi FA28



Making Saghabo.
Millet Mush, Food of the Mossi.

From the Mission of the White
Fathers at Ouagadougou.

2:Mangin--2a M-5 (ca. 1910) 1921 FA28 Mossi FA28

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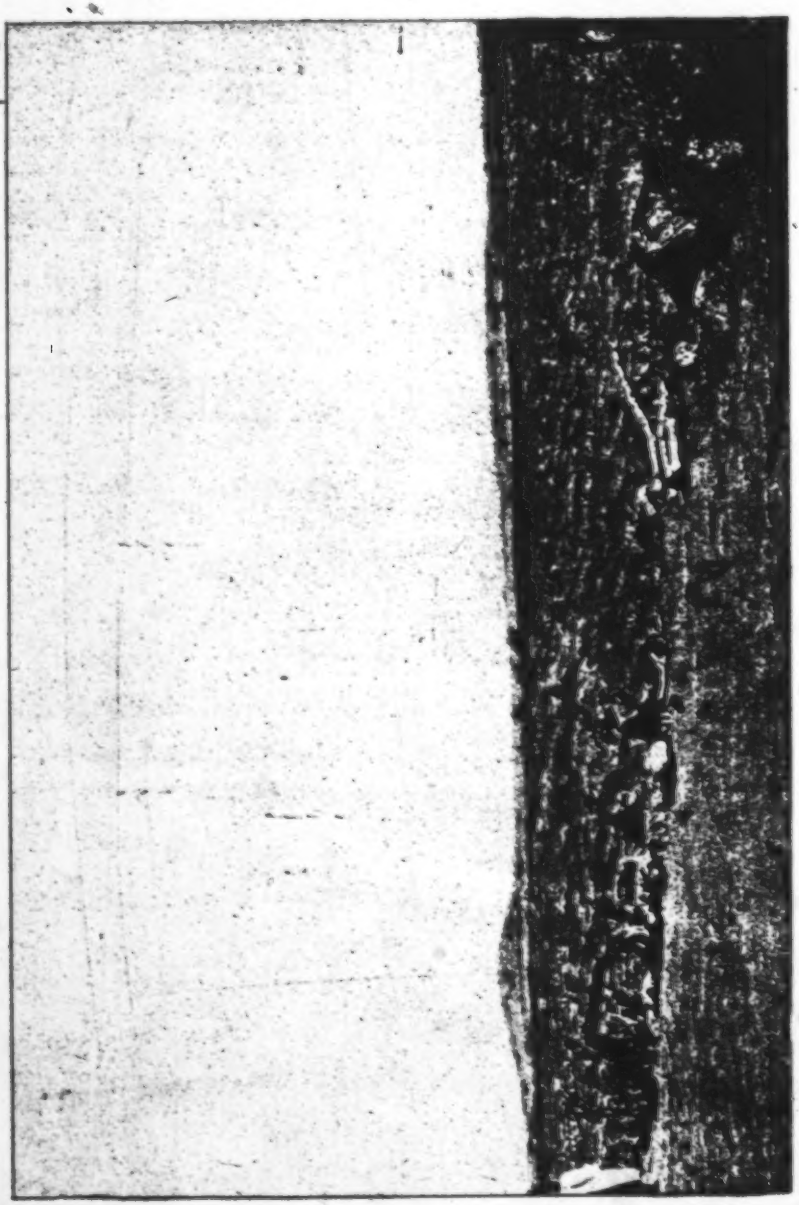

The Bush in Mossi Country.

133 are bordered with hills. Nevertheless, it may be said that Mossi country is flat. It is covered with the classic bush of the Sudan with [137] its small shrubs and tall grass interspersed with bastard mahogany, /7/ huge trunks of the baobabs, and tamarind and silk-cotton trees, thicker on the banks of the Volta rivers, thinner around the villages.

241 The country is quite fertile and easily provides for its inhabitants. 262 The various kinds of millet grow well, especially the small white variety (Pennisetum spicatum) which, mashed and boiled, is the staple of the diet and sorghum, or large red millet, which is used to prepare the famous beer of the country. The horses eat the latter kind, although they prefer the large white millet. Around the huts maize grows well in soil fertilized by the daily accumulation of waste. It is a welcome source of grain when the millet reserves of the previous year are running low and the current harvest has not yet matured. Maize fields are surrounded with a double row of sorghum and often [283] with a double row of a fiber plant called bérensé, a sort of hemp which the natives use to make ropes. After the maize has been harvested, the field is planted with previously prepared tobacco seedlings. Finally, the sunken areas created when huts are built, as well as all slightly damp places, are planted with gombo, okra, which is highly valued as a sauce ingredient.

[311] During the rainy season no piece of land remains unused around the villages, and when the red millet ripens and the ears join across the path, passage becomes difficult. Even the hut roofs bear all kinds [415] of calabash plants. These supply the housewives with gourds that fulfill the purposes served by our plates, dishes, glasses, and basins; the travellers with their flasks; the snuff-takers with their boxes; and the sorcerers with their spirit-calling instruments. The large gourds that are used to make drums grow among the shoots of maize. In the marshes near the watercourses where water lies stagnant, rice fields are planted, but rice is a luxury food, hard to cultivate because of [554] the care it requires. The natives use it only on feast days or when they wish to honor a distinguished guest. Cotton is sown in damp places among the stalks of large red millet, and it is harvested much later. Peanuts and peas also take up part of the cultivated land, while beans creep along the ground between the shoots of small millet. Peppers, sesame, the indigo plant, yams, manioc, sweet potatoes, and a small

592 A typical soukala consists of the master's hut, a hut for each wife, one hut for the sheep and goats, another for the horse if he has one, a hut for the family mill, and, finally, a receiving hut with two doors sufficiently high to permit entrance without stooping and set sometimes as an entrance way and sometimes within the cluster of huts. All [351] these dwellings stand in a circle and are joined either by a cob wall or by /11/ mat fences taller than a man and held up by stakes. The master's hut, which usually stands beside the huts for the horses and sheep, is set off from the others by mats to insure his privacy. A low wall describes an arc within the inner courtyard; this is the kitchen when it is not raining. Big jars of fired clay which are used to brew [273] millet beer rest between the huts. In front of this cluster of huts, a [415] shelter is built, usually high enough to permit standing and consisting basically of forked stakes with branches and séko resting upon them; this shelter serves as a refuge during the hot part of the day. Small boys and unmarried girls live with their mother, while older boys, servants, and slaves each have their separate huts which face the dwellings of the master and his wives.

The term yri or soukala covers this whole complex of structures. [591] Each soukala is a distinct unit, and, some time after they marry, the children build their own residence, set completely apart from that of their parents, often in another part of the village and sometimes in [361] another village altogether. The soukala stand fifteen to twenty meters apart, and, because of this, the villages, though adequately concentrated, cover a rather extensive area. The heads of cantons 342 place an ostrich egg at the peak of the roof on their own dwellings, [237] and some even build terraced huts higher than the surrounding dwell- [559] ings. They keep their riches in these huts and a prison in the base- [617] ment. An earthen stairway leads to the terrace where the master of [512] the house receives his guests when the sun begins to sink on the horizon.

721 These people, apparently so peaceful today, were formerly quite warlike and went off to war at the slightest pretext. Foreign to the land they now occupy, the Mossi must have conquered it by force of arms. The Tarik-es-Soudan /History of Sudan/ relates that the people of Yatenga seized Timbuktu in the fourteenth century, and in 721 the fifteenth they probably carried their incursions as far as Lake 701 Bébo and even Oualata. (4) The Mossi army was greatly feared.

4. Delafosse, op. cit., Vol. 2, p. 80.

323 a hollow. Straw, twigs, or pieces of bark are laid between the jars and even inside them. Then everything is covered with straw and set afire in the evening. The smaller the jar, the more heat is needed. The women fetch their goods the following morning. Some of the jars are cracked; others, insufficiently fired, would be too porous and must be fired again; the rest are gathered and sold at the market.

322 Woodworking is done by men. They use a hatchet to cut down the trees, an adze and a knife to work the lumber. The mortars and pestles used by the women to crush maize, herbs, peanuts, and sauce ingredients are made of wood, and so are the dishes shaped like gourds, the bowls for sarabo, and the tool handles. There are also stools of a rather peculiar shape. Those women who can afford them close their huts with crude wooden doors. All these industries, however, are quite primitive and of no great interest.

326 The iron and copper work is so distinctive that those who practice
[564] it could only be specialists. The smiths, in fact, form a separate caste. One is born a smith, but one becomes a jeweller, since this
[306] profession is open to everyone. The smiths extract the metal and make iron tools: hoes, hatchets, adzes, and knives. It is said that no layman is allowed to watch when they extract the iron from the ore, and this would explain why the natives do not know how it is done. As I was unable to visit Yàtenga, the area where most iron workers are to be found, I am not familiar with the extracting process.

326 /59/ The jewellers occasionally work with iron, but they do so on
306 the sly. They may repair broken tools, sharpen hatchets and arrow tips, and re-use a piece of iron, for instance, make an old hoe into
[30] nails, hinges, etc. Their main task, however, is the manufacture of all sorts of bracelets and of all the copper ornaments in a horse's harness: headstall, bit, spurs, stirrups, and the copper plates which hang from the saddle. These plates are a strange ornament which seems peculiar to the Mossi. They may reach 40 centimeters in diameter, and their edge may be as wide as 10 centimeters. The naba and the wealthy horsemen fasten them behind the stirrups, on either
[415] side of the saddle, where they hang down the horse's flanks. Servants sometimes use them to drink beer when they have no other containers. To smelt the iron or copper, the Mossi use charcoal which they obtain exactly in the same manner as our /French/ colliers. The fire is kept going with a double bellows made of the skin of goats or sheep and operated by a child. The red-hot iron is hammered with a cylindrical

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Above: Cooking Sarabo.
Below: Outdoor Kitchen.

Above: Millet Granaries.
Below: Riding an Ox.

244 Some people, before they sow millet, lay out small plots of tomatoes in the fields reserved for millet, and water them morning and evening. They do this when the field is cleared just before sowing. Then they dig up the seedlings at the first rainfall and plant them elsewhere. Their tomatoes are ripe before the maize.

The three other kinds of tomatoes are cultivated in the same fashion.

The Mossi are familiar with the native eggplant. It is called boyo in Mossi, baulo in Nounouma, bio in Kassouna, boroma /482/ in Sissala. These eggplants are planted when the large red millet is sown. They are placed around the soukala, or in the bush near the watercourses. They are harvested in September at the same time as the large red millet.

The Mossi also cultivate pimentos (kiparé).

The seeds are sown near the soukala, without any preparatory work, at the beginning of the winter season. The weeds are removed after fifteen or twenty days. Two months after sowing, the young shoot produces offspring. The pimento may be gathered at that time. They are removed as the need arises and added to the sauce.

[438] The Mossi are fond of pimento. Those who grow it in large quantities sell the surplus at market.

249 415 As for gourds and calabashes, the Mossi have three kinds as listed below:

1. The ordinary calabash, which is very large and which is cut in two to make household calabashes. They call it vandé.

The Mossi plant it at the beginning of the winter season, in patches of good soil near the huts, or in similar spots in the bush. Holes are made in the ground with the koutiaga, in which seeds are placed and then covered up. The calabashes only ripen at the end of six or seven months, that is to say, when the winter season is over. Then they are cut in two, and the inner part is removed. This is how the household calabashes are fashioned.

2. The drinking calabash. This one has the natural shape of a swollen gourd with a neck widening toward the top. The Mossi call it binga. It is sown by the huts and made to climb upon the roofs.

249 It is gathered when the winter season is over. The upper tip is cut
415 horizontally to create an opening, and water is poured inside to rot the fibrous inner part. When this is accomplished, the calabash is filled with pebbles and shaken until the torn fibers are removed. Once this has been done, the binga is ready to use. When they go
[482] on a trip, the Mossi carry it suspended from the shoulder as a drinking gourd, like all Blacks of West Africa. /483/ They use a cork of green leaves to prevent the water from escaping.

3. The green gourds properly so called (kamboudou in Mossi) which are made to grow on the roofs. The Mossi do not eat them any more than they eat the two previous species. They cut them in two and fashion them into small household calabashes.

249 Calabashes are not cultivated as a food crop, therefore, but as a crop ranking with karnyanga, cotton, tobacco, hemp, indigo, etc.

244 The Mossi also grow a kind of large cucumber, yorolé. The Gourounsi call it gango and the Bambara dié.

At the beginning of the winter season, yorolé are planted around the soukala where the household refuse is discarded. Yorolé are planted by the women. Weeds, when they come out, are cleared with the ouaka. The yorolé are harvested immediately
[252] after the millet and stored in the huts. They are cooked in water and eaten as they are, without seasoning or salt.

As for niri (the Mossi word) or yergan (the Nounouma word), it is a small gourd the size of an orange, green or yellowish green, that grows in the fields along the ground. The yergan are gathered when they are ripe, placed in a hole in the ground where they are left to rot, and then washed. Then the seeds are removed and used
[252] in the sauce, or else they are eaten roasted and seasoned with salt. One does not eat the yergan themselves, therefore, but only their seeds.

The Mossi grow them in the south, at Nobéré and Rakaye. The yergan are sown at the same time as millet, around the soukala, in the fields of maize and large red millet. They are gathered during the first half of October.

282 sell for 200 cowries, large ones for 400). He leaves them to soak
294 in a large canari with yogré seeds for twelve hours. Then he re-
435 moves the hair by hand, washes the skin thoroughly, and places it again in a canari with seeds of pélanaga (a tree that grows in the bush). He washes and rubs the hide with these seeds. Then he leaves it to dry in the sun after covering it with butter, real butter rather than karité butter. The skin may then be used to make various items.

Kinoga also buys cowhide at market to make sandals. One cowhide is worth 3,000 cowries. He puts it in a large canari where he leaves it soaking for three days, then he takes it out, removes the hair with a knife, and strikes the skin with a small stick to soften it. Whatever amount of leather is needed to make sandals is then removed from the hide, which is used up gradually as the need arises.

The shoemaker's tools are made by the blacksmith. These tools are worth 100 cowries apiece, except for the awl that is worth 20 and the wooden knife that is made by the shoemaker himself and worth 50. All of the shoemaker's tools taken together are thus worth 470 cowries, or only 50 centimes.

Our shoemaker makes the following items:

1. Sandals, first and foremost. The most expensive ones are worth 2,500 cowries a pair, the less expensive ones 1,500 cowries.

2. Leather grigris, bracelets, pouches, etc. The pouches are worth 100 cowries, the bracelets 50. He only makes them on order. It must be said that other shoemakers stock them up beforehand and have them taken to market.

Of course, what the shoemaker prepares is the physical part of the grigri, its outer covering. It is not he who gives the grigri its power, its soul.

3. Kinoga does not make satchels, goatskin bags, but other shoemakers do.

[415] /531/ There are goatskins used to store millet. Large ones are worth 1 franc and small ones 0.50 franc. Then, there are goatskins used to hold water. They are worth from 0.30 to 1 franc. Finally, there are small goatskins used as purses or coin bags and worth 0.20 franc.

[372] 4. Shoemakers also make leather cases for strike-a-light steel
[326] (200 cowries) and for needles (50 cowries). Both strike-a-light steel and needles are made by blacksmiths.

422 Household utensils. —The large earthen slabs set up to crush the
415 grain belong to the compound, but the rectangular granitic stones set into the slabs are owned by individual women, as are the movable pestles used to pound grain on the stones.

422 The wooden mortars and pestles, which are very useful and, be-
412 sides, are heavy, cumbersome, and difficult to destroy, belong to the
592 compound and sometimes to the head of the work group, in other
571 words, to the group itself. In fact, the head of the work group provides part of these implements when the ones purchased by the zakasoba are insufficient.

422 As for the canari, the largest, which are like small vats and may
415 be as high as one or one and a half meters, are used to hold the dolo
592 /270/ made by the women. They belong to the compound, and they are bought by the compound head. The ordinary canari (25 to 30 centimeters high and used to fetch water or to cook) belong privately to each woman of the compound. The same applies to gourds. The women often buy their canari or gourds with their husband's cowries, but the object, once bought, belongs to them.

422 Clothing. —Clothes are owned fully on a private basis, no matter what their origin. Thus, the skirt cloth bought by the husband for his wife belongs to her.

Ornaments and jewelry. —These are also owned privately, no matter what their origin. Hence, they belong to each man, each woman, each child.

Weapons. —They are likewise owned privately.

Amulets, charms. —The case is the same as for weapons. If, however, we use the word "charm" in its broadest sense, as any object pertaining to the cult, there are family charms which are owned by the family.

Cowries, metal coins, etc. —These are likewise private property.

421 In short, property belonging to the total family is practically nonexistent among the Mossi of Yatenga. There is subfamilial (compound) property and the property of that economic section of the subfamily which is called a work group. In addition to this communal property, there are household property and strictly private property.

301 As ornaments the Moaga woman had only red or yellow copper bracelets and the kindifou (a bright red bead). Even then only women of means could procure such ornaments. The [435] kindifou cost only 50 cowries a bead, but since cowries were monopolized by the naba, notables, and rakangba (prosperous Mossi), the beads were far too expensive for the small resources of the average Moaga woman.

Bracelets made of a special stone (a mixture of gray and white) and called manekagcé (manekaka in the singular) were worn only by the Yarbi (young Yarcé of both sexes). It is said [439] that these bracelets were peddled by the Kibissi (Habé), and they seem to have come from the Timbuktu area.

301 554 Silver bracelets were worn only by the dimbissi (descendants of dima, that is, the family of the Mogho Naba), by kombemba (canton and province chiefs) and their descendants, and, finally, by prominent persons who were in favor at court.

291 177 At the present time, especially at Ouagadougou, the women adorn themselves with garments of all kinds (skirts of native material, bazin, godé, and other fabrics, as well as skirts from stores). Some have even adopted the blouse and ample robe affected by elegant Sudanese [228] women. Many now own trunks which [352] replace the sacks formerly used to store their clothing.

291 178 The Senegalese handkerchief, a head scarf, is now considered absolutely indispensable. In rural areas there is an increasing desire to dress better. More cotton is grown. Girls and women from the bush buy glass beads of all colors when they come to Ouagadougou to work, and they wear them around their necks or around their hips in the manner of Bambara women.

416 Although the "mirror" used to be the clear water of springs and brooks, there is hardly a woman today who does not have one or two mirrors. Finally, a bit of elegance is added to the wild 301 beauty of the women by silver earrings, bracelets, and amulets sewed in a panther skin -- these are becoming a passion with Mossi peasant women.

291 It should not be inferred from the above that the Moaga always feels obliged to wear clothing at home. Any time that he has no need to go out or to visit a friend or relative at some

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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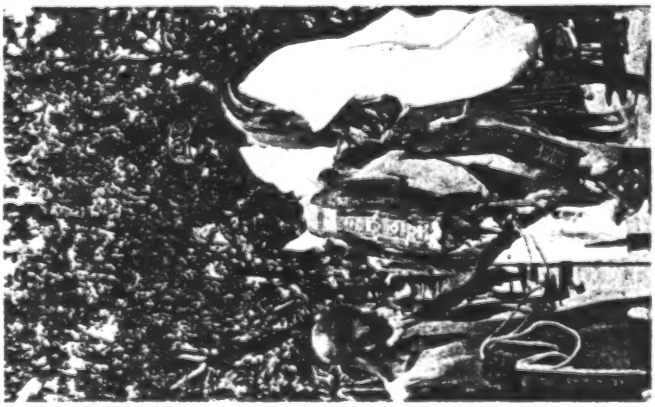

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(Left) Mogho Naba Kougri and Ouezzain Coulibaly, who became Vice President of the Government Council of the Upper Volta in 1957. *(Center)* Maurice Yaméogo, President of the Republic of Upper Volta. *(Right)* Mogho Naba Kougri (1957–) on his ceremonial horse at his installation.

342 177 Of course, like all European houses in the region under discussion, these buildings are, unfortunately, made of mud bricks, but is that not the rule in French West Africa?

342 In the homes of those two ministers of the emperor who are most advanced, the reception rooms are arranged in such a way that callers benefit from a constant flow of fresh air through large openings. During periods of extreme heat, a punkah operated [417] by a sogoné in the middle [216] of the room provides air for the panting visitors. The wall, always whitewashed with kaolin, bears an [353] an advertisement or two, the picture of an important chief, or perhaps some family photographs, which enliven the apartments a bit. All of this shows a real anxiety on the part of the chiefs to develop along the lines of progress and civilization.

In recent years, some of the notables at Ouagadougou have built houses with clay roofs, not so much to live in as to safeguard their family valuables against fire and theft.

Finally, it should be noted that custom requires every new naba for the first three years of his reign to live in songodo, straw huts, which will be described later. Only then may he build with clay.

Dwellings of Mossi Subjects

342 787 Temporary dwelling. Before building his conjugal hut, the young man consults a soothsayer in order to make sure that the site chosen is not haunted by evil spirits and that he will have happiness and good fortune if he lives there.

342 787 Even if the soothsayer finds nothing especially alarming about the site, he always orders a chicken or other animal to be sacrificed or alms to be given. The young man arranges with the village elder [217] or, if he is a [Nioniosse], with the Tingsoba (from tenga "earth," and soba, "master"), to sacrifice the victim.

The Tingsoba goes to the site and calls for two small gourds which contain ordinary water and water mixed with flour, respectively. He invokes all his ancestors and pours the water on the ground, praying God to accept it for His wife, Tinga, who is absorbing it. Then he kills the chicken, saying: "On -- on,

428 custom which decrees that he likewise inherits all of his father's responsibilities as head of the family.

428 562 Do daughters and wives share in an estate? Daughters have no share in an estate although their brothers may give them trifling gifts.

Wives never inherit from their husbands. They can only benefit indirectly as the representatives of their young sons. On the contrary, since the wife is considered a piece of property, [259] she is actually a part of the estate to the same extent as the rest of the property left by the deceased.

428 Disposition of an unclaimed estate. Only the canton chief is qualified to inherit the property of a deceased person having no known relatives.

Rights and Obligations Governing Property in the Family

421 Property is owned individually. Individual property is strictly a private matter. The head of the family has no rights over property acquired individually by the women and children or by other relatives under his rule. They may dispose of their possessions as they see fit. A mother may do some trading to provide savings for her children. The head of the family may not use such property under any circumstances without the consent of the true owner.

428 593 Does a husband inherit from his wife? A husband has no right to his wife's property. He cannot even claim it if she dies childless, since in that case it goes to her own relatives (brothers or sisters) or, failing that, to their children.

428 Aside from their rights in their father's estate, children inherit their mother's property.

[426] When the head of a family borrows cowries from [260] a member of his compound, he must repay the loan with a given time. His own property is inalienably his as long as he lives, and then it makes up his estate, along with his wives.

768 428 Disposition of a house after death. When the head of a compound dies, the establishment is not destroyed. It automatically passes to the heirs, that is, to his sons or, if he has no legitimate

631 powers to his vassals, the province chiefs, who in turn entrust them to the canton chiefs, and these do likewise with the village chiefs. Thus, when a native wants to move from one canton to another, or
631 even from one village to another, he must be authorized to do so.
166 He must request the permission of the canton or village chief to settle
425 in such-and-such a place, and the chief of the village where he wants to live tells him where he may build his huts and which field he may cultivate. The naba may dispossess one of his subjects, if he so wishes, and give his field to another. After all, he "has the strength." This rarely happens, however, and a native who has cleared a piece of bush, fertilized a plot to sow maize, sowed and weeded the ground, is usually assured of a harvest, except in case of war. If a man is evicted, on the other hand, there is no appeal; neither the canton chief nor the province chief would listen to him; they would do the same thing if the opportunity arose.

●421 There is no communal property. Every individual works his fields for his own account; he himself collects the fruit of his labor and remains its undisputed master. Nevertheless, every native owes his
651 chiefs and benefactors a tithe; and at harvest time it is interesting
431 to watch everyone sorting ears of maize, braiding sorghum stems, and measuring out baskets of small millet. The village chief is to get so many ears of maize; the canton chief, if he does not reside too far away, so many others; the father- or fathers-in-law will get theirs, and so will one friend or another to whom one owes cowries, or who has previously granted a favor. However, everyone who deals out goods right and left will in turn get some from various other people and approximately regain his expenditure. The village chiefs offer more sizable gifts to the canton chiefs, and the latter do likewise to the province chiefs.

651 These were, in fact, taxes, not fixed taxes per capita, but com-
661 pletely arbitrary ones. If the naba found a gift insufficient, he had no compunction about saying so, and the person involved had to comply. It is said that the naba of Koupéla paid annually 500,000 cowries (500 francs) and /23/ three horses to the naba of Bélousa, and a million cowries (1000 francs) in two installments to the Moro Naba, to whom he also gave five horses. The gifts to the Moro Naba were brought first to the naba of Bélousa and from there conveyed to Ouagadougou: ever the hierarchy.

This quasi-official tax, however, was not the only one. Whenever the Moro Naba wanted horses, cattle, or anything whatever, he

593 reprimand them, while the mother's role, here as elsewhere, is to indulge her children.

595 The children of different wives are quite fond of one another and often exchange help. When the father dies, the eldest son make no distinction among his brothers and helps them all as best he can. Polygamy seems to present no drawbacks in this respect.

When a man has several wives, his first wife (porkyéma) is mistress of the household rather than his mother. All the other wives are on an equal footing, even the slaves, excepting, of course, those for whom the husband has a special preference. As the number of wives increases, so does the authority of the first wife, who wants /39/ her husband to have as many wives as possible. Each wife has a separate hut where she lives with her children, and this avoids many a quarrel. The husband goes to the hut of the woman he desires, or he has her come to his own hut. When a man works in his field, all his wives and children must help him, because he feeds them all and gives them a daily millet ration; it is, accordingly, only fair that all should take part in agricultural work within the limits of their capacity.

593 443 421 Provided that a woman remain at her husband's disposal and help him in the fields, she is free to do as she pleases. She goes to market to sell the grain, the spices for sauce, and the thread to weave cloth, but the husband sells the fabric strips and the raw cotton. During the winter each woman may have her own field to cultivate with her children, and the harvest belongs wholly to her. The husband has no say in the matter. If the woman spins cotton, she sells it at the market or even to her husband; if she brews beer, she offers one jar to her husband, but if he entertains friends and wants additional jars, he must pay cash for them. It is not unusual for a woman to refuse her husband credit, for who knows when he would pay?

593 574 A woman may visit her relatives with the permission of her husband, who sets a return date. The woman rarely comes back on the date set, and the husband goes to fetch her himself, or he sends one of his friends with a piece of salt or a small gift. A woman especially likes to visit her relatives when she is pregnant or shortly after the baby's birth. She knows that she will be well cared for and especially that she will enjoy complete freedom. As a result, it is not unusual for a woman to leave her husband for several months and to return only after considerable coaxing. Most quarrels between one Mossi and [578] another derive from their wives and from their debts; yet it may not be said, as a general rule, that women are unhappy or ill treated.

566 gone into Mossi hands. The bagaré did not till the soil. They simply minded their master's herds. As for other work, they also built the straw huts where the Moro Naba of Yatenga, the Riziam Naba, and other chiefs slept at the New Year (we shall see under "Religion" /not translated/ to what purpose).

The bagaré saw to their own support (food and clothing). The multiplying herd belonged to the naba, but its yield (milk and butter) went to the bagaré. Out of this yield, however, they gave the naba whatever he needed of milk and butter.

567 In short, we can see that among the Mossi and Foulsé there exist, or rather existed, the two kinds of slaves known throughout the /French/ Sudan, the trade slaves and the house slaves, the former being salable and the latter a part of the family. Nowadays, as a result of the prohibition against their purchase and sale, there remains but a dwindling number of house slaves.

421 Now we come to family property and its transmission.

596 Family property, properly so-called. —There is no family property among our Mossi, since no work is done in common by the whole family. The family property is limited to family charms owned by the boudoukasaman.

423 Property of the compound, or subfamily property. —This does not
592 exist either, for the same reason, except for the compound itself which is the communal property of the zaka group. While each household has huts of its own, these huts are a usufructuary possession which is in accordance with the full ownership of the zaka group. Now, if some household chief wishes to build a new hut, he notifies the zakasoba, who, incidentally, always grants permission. Once the hut is built, the builder may destroy it if he wishes, which goes to prove that he has full ownership over it, having made it. He cannot, however, destroy the hut where he lives which he did not build as it actually belongs to the zaka. In short, there may be in the compound a mixture of communal property (belonging to the zaka) and individual property (hut built by a household or by an individual, millet granary erected in the same circumstances, etc.), but the communal property prevails by far.

423 Property of the work group. —Here, communal property is impor-
571 tant. /268/ It is from the group fields that the group derives most of its sustenance (seven months out of twelve). The work implements

423 also belong to the group, as we shall see later. The group, however,
571 owns neither slaves nor livestock.

Household property. —As we know, during the rainy or cultivating
421 season, the husband works two days out of three for his work group.
571 The third day is his. On that day he works in his small field, helped
592 by his wife or wives. During the dry season, the husband does not work for the group but for himself alone, except for repair work on the compound huts.

571 The household is provided with food by the work group seven months
592 out of twelve and is fed with the produce of its own field for five months.

592 The primary possession of the household, therefore, is its private
423 field.

The field belonging to the household of the head of the work group is marked by a special characteristic. Since the head of the group is busy at all times with the communal field, even on the third day, his small plot is cultivated exclusively by his wives (and by his slaves, if he has any). Hence, his food is procured by his wives five months out of twelve. This only applies, however, to the heads of work groups (as well as zaka and family heads who are necessarily heads of work groups also).

423 Individual property. —Mossi women have tiny cultivated patches
562 which are wholly theirs, which do not belong to the work group or to
422 the household and which they work after five o'clock in the evening whenever possible. This is private property. Clothing, women's jewelry, etc., are also individually owned.

The husband and children also own private property. Actually,
423 the better to distinguish between individual and communal property (whether belonging to the household, the work group, the compound, or the family), we shall review below each type of property in turn.

Fields. —The fields belong primarily to the work group. (They belong only exceptionally to the compound, when it is so small that there is only one work group.) In addition to the fields of the work group, there is the household field. Finally, beside the household field, there are the private plots, for example, the little patches of the women and young men.

Work implements. —These tools (daba, axes, etc.) belong to the
422 work group. To work their small fields (both household and private),
571 men and women use the daba of their work group, but if they damage

422 Household utensils. —The large earthen slabs set up to crush the
415 grain belong to the compound, but the rectangular granitic stones set into the slabs are owned by individual women, as are the movable pestles used to pound grain on the stones.

422 The wooden mortars and pestles, which are very useful and, be-
412 sides, are heavy, cumbersome, and difficult to destroy, belong to the
592 compound and sometimes to the head of the work group, in other words, to the group itself. In fact, the head of the work group pro-
571 vides part of these implements when the ones purchased by the zakasoba are insufficient.

422 As for the canari, the largest, which are like small vats and may be as high as one or one and a half meters, are used to hold the dolo
415 /270/ made by the women. They belong to the compound, and they
592 are bought by the compound head. The ordinary canari (25 to 30 centimeters high and used to fetch water or to cook) belong privately to each woman of the compound. The same applies to gourds. The women often buy their canari or gourds with their husband's cowries, but the object, once bought, belongs to them.

422 Clothing. —Clothes are owned fully on a private basis, no matter what their origin. Thus, the skirt cloth bought by the husband for his wife belongs to her.

Ornaments and jewelry. —These are also owned privately, no matter what their origin. Hence, they belong to each man, each woman, each child.

Weapons. —They are likewise owned privately.

Amulets, charms. —The case is the same as for weapons. If, however, we use the word "charm" in its broadest sense, as any object pertaining to the cult, there are family charms which are owned by the family.

Cowries, metal coins, etc. —These are likewise private property.

421 In short, property belonging to the total family is practically nonexistent among the Mossi of Yatenga. There is subfamilial (compound) property and the property of that economic section of the subfamily which is called a work group. In addition to this communal property, there are household property and strictly private property.

428 As a result, an heir may come into his share of the inheritance through a gift received during the lifetime of the deceased.

431 /273/ Gifts inter vivos. —A Mossi may, while alive, give away whatever he pleases of his own property.

Since he is absolute master of these goods and thus entitled to use them as he sees fit, no one has the right to question the gifts he makes.

421 Incidentally, let us recall that heads of families, compounds, work groups, and households are only the managers and not the owners, in the Roman sense, of the family, zaka, work group, or household property, respectively. As for private, individual goods on which the jus utendi et abutendi may be exercised, we know what they amount to among the Mossi. In practice, moreover, the Mossi are far from taking much advantage of this theoretical right. Here, nevertheless, we are concerned with theory, and the following rules pertain to it.

431 A gift made inter vivos must be made before several witnesses in order to be valid.

No special status is required in order to receive a gift.

The wife possesses the same rights as the husband. The gift will [837] nevertheless be worthless if it is proved that the beneficiary is or was her lover.

596 We are now finished with the Mossi family.

To summarize, as we already stated earlier, this family is communal and patriarchal.

Its communalism, however, is quite unstable. People live, not in family groups, but in family subgroups (the zaka). They work, not in family subgroups, but in sub-subgroups (the work groups). In former times, the zaka may have been a community of labor as well as a community of habitation. As we shall see later /not translated/, this is now the case among the Foulsé or Nioniossé /Nyonyose/, where sometimes it is the zaka that constitutes the community of labor and sometimes it is the work group, and where there seems to be an evolution from the former state of affairs to the latter.

As for patriarchy, it is very clearly defined and established. The family revolves around the man and not around the woman. As I have stated, certain signs induce us to believe that the Mossi family, like the Sudanese family in general, was once matriarchal in the very distant past. At all events, this has long ceased to be the case, and we are dealing now with an unstable communalism paired with clearly defined patriarchy.

833 The conjugal duty. —The wife owes her husband the fulfillment of the conjugal duty.

The wife must never evade it except when she is unwell, pregnant, or when she is nursing. We can see, therefore, that among the Mossi in particular and among the Sudanese in general (for the same customs prevail in this area among all Sudanese Negroes) there is great tactfulness. One appreciates this all the more if one bears in mind that [853] here the women suckle their children for two or three years.

"If," says Vadier, "a woman should evade her husband from newlywed shyness or from any other motive, he would first use all the means of persuasion at his command and, especially, beg the wife's relatives to speak to her. Should their exhortations prove vain, constraint [573] would be used by giving the wife a beating or putting her in irons. Finally, should these measures fail to bring the spouse to compliance, [586] she could be turned out by her husband.

"In return, the husband owes the wife the same conjugal duty which he has the right to demand from her.

"Should the husband fail to fulfill it because of impotence, sickness, or simply from ill will, the neglected wife would mention the matter to the family head's first wife, who would in turn notify him.

833 "Should the husband's behavior be caused by physical incapacity, 586 the wife would be taken from him and given to one of his brothers or, if there were none, to his closest male relative, but never to one of his sons. Should it be due merely to ill-feeling, a protest would be made, and should this fail to have any effect after several days, the wife would be allowed to return to her family." /245/

Let us state immediately that these contingencies almost never arise or are so rare as to be practically nonexistent. Custom anticipates them, however, and we have just described what happens when perchance they do arise.

562 Women's property. —Women may own individual property, as we 422 already know, goods which are not shared communally and which belong wholly to them. These goods come from various sources, sometimes the women's small plots of land, sometimes a surplus from the grain they are given to prepare food and which, once made into dolo, is sold for cowries. Sometimes also, the husband's munificence provides them with bracelets and other jewelry. Once given, this jewelry is wholly theirs, and it is added to the trinkets they procure with their own resources.

423 also belong to the group, as we shall see later. The group, however,
571 owns neither slaves nor livestock.

421 Household property. —As we know, during the rainy or cultivating
571 season, the husband works two days out of three for his work group.
592 The third day is his. On that day he works in his small field, helped by his wife or wives. During the dry season, the husband does not work for the group but for himself alone, except for repair work on the compound huts.

571 The household is provided with food by the work group seven months
592 out of twelve and is fed with the produce of its own field for five months.

592 The primary possession of the household, therefore, is its private
423 field.

The field belonging to the household of the head of the work group is marked by a special characteristic. Since the head of the group is busy at all times with the communal field, even on the third day, his small plot is cultivated exclusively by his wives (and by his slaves, if he has any). Hence, his food is procured by his wives five months out of twelve. This only applies, however, to the heads of work groups (as well as zaka and family heads who are necessarily heads of work groups also).

423 Individual property. —Mossi women have tiny cultivated patches
562 which are wholly theirs, which do not belong to the work group or to
422 the household and which they work after five o'clock in the evening whenever possible. This is private property. Clothing, women's jewelry, etc., are also individually owned.

The husband and children also own private property. Actually,
423 the better to distinguish between individual and communal property (whether belonging to the household, the work group, the compound, or the family), we shall review below each type of property in turn.

Fields. —The fields belong primarily to the work group. (They belong only exceptionally to the compound, when it is so small that there is only one work group.) In addition to the fields of the work group, there is the household field. Finally, beside the household field, there are the private plots, for example, the little patches of the women and young men.

Work implements. —These tools (daba, axes, etc.) belong to the
422 work group. To work their small fields (both household and private),
571 men and women use the daba of their work group, but if they damage

422 571 them, they must repair them at their own expense. Those implements which are worn out are replaced by the head of the work group.

422 231 Domestic animals. —Chickens, goats, sheep, donkeys, etc., are all fully owned on an individual basis and not by the group or even by the household. The animal is owned by the man or woman who bought /269/ it. Nevertheless, all the goats and sheep in a compound are gathered together, they sleep in the same place, and they are led to the bush in a flock by the little boys of the compound. The animals of the total family or of the village, on the other hand, are never gathered together.

562 Wives. —I need not emphasize that wives are obviously private property. There are no wives owned in common by the village, the family, the compound, or the work group. The wife, however, is in some measure considered to belong to the compound or even to the family in the sense that a man's wives always go to his brother when he dies.

423 592 The compound. —We saw earlier what applies here. The compound belongs to the zakasoba, but only as a representative of the zaka, as a manager of the property of this subfamilial group. It does not belong to him as private property, in the Roman sense of jus utendi et abutendi /right of use and abuse/. It belongs, ultimately, to the zaka itself.

If this is so, it is not less true that those habitable portions of the zaka, the cabins or huts, are definitely allocated to specific households which have rights of usufruct over them. Thus, the ownership belongs to the zaka, as represented by its head. The usufruct belongs to the households or individuals.

Finally, we may note, as we did earlier, that a hut built exclusively by a household with its own labor or by a single individual of the zaka may be torn down and destroyed by him since it is household or private property set up on subfamilial property. This case, however, is quite exceptional.

The large cabins or huts for millet belong to the cultivating groups. There are also huts for millet belonging to the household, where the husband stores the harvest from the household field. Finally, the 422 large earthen vases, the jars which stand in the huts, lead us from the compound to the subject of furniture. These jars are made by the women and belong individually to specific women.

Furniture. —The furniture, which we shall study in greater detail under "Mode of Subsistence" /not translated/, is very scanty and crude. It is owned privately.

422 415 Household utensils. —The large earthen slabs set up to crush the grain belong to the compound, but the rectangular granitic stones set into the slabs are owned by individual women, as are the movable pestles used to pound grain on the stones.

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11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28

CHAPTER SEVEN

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1. Dim Delobson, pp. 153ff.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 251–54.
3. Cheron, "Contribution," p. 674.
4. Crozat, p. 4849.
5. *Ibid.*
6. Skinner, "Trade and Markets," pp. 237–78.
7. Barth, III, 644–49.
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 202–4.
9. Dubois, pp. 282–92, 300.
10. Great Britain, Parliamentary papers: Cd. 788–27, No. 357, Acc. Papers, Vol. LXIV (1902).
11. Marc, p. 178.
12. Binger, I, 467.
13. Crozat, p. 4849.
14. Binger, I, 465.
15. Mangin, p. 23.
16. Dim Delobson, pp. 85–86.
17. Ruelle, p. 679.
18. Bovill, p. 244.
19. Gautier, p. 139; cf. Mangin, p. 112.
20. Cf. Sa'di, p. 168.
21. The chief of the Kamboinse was the only Mossi "chief" to possess a stool, which is indicative of an Akan origin. The Akan origin of this group is further supported by Koelle's evidence: a Mossi informant told him that the Mossi called the Ashanti "Kamboinse" (Koelle, p. 6). [422] [174]
22. Skinner, "The Mossi 'Pogsioure,'" pp. 20–22.
23. Cf. Ouédraogo and Prost, pp. 16–18.
24. Dim Delobson, p. 25.
25. Binger, I, 470.
26. *Ibid.*, pp. 502–4.
27. *Ibid.*, pp. 504–5.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 456.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 502.

CHAPTER EIGHT

1. Cf. Dim Delobson, p. 156. He speculates that the Mogho Naba himself sacrificed the animals in the presence of his senior wife and courtiers.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 157.
3. Tauxier (*Le Noir du Yatenga*, p. 379) reports that a comparable ceremony among the Yatenga Mossi was called the "Bega," and that in reality it was a Fulse ceremony "adopted by the Mossi." According to him, both the Fulse and the Mossi held this festival in order to obtain good harvests the following year, and made sacrifices to "the ancestors, to the Earth, and to God." [184] [177]
4. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Soudan*, p. 588.
5. Dim Delobson's description (pp. 148 ff) of the Tense differs somewhat from that given to me by my respondents. According to his version, the Tansoba played the role I have ascribed to the Larhalle Naba. Furthermore, he states that the Tense was held on Friday, an impossible fact since Saturday is the Mossi "day of the dead." In any case, all of my respondents insisted that Saturday, and not Friday, was the day on which the Tense was held. It is possible that Dim Delobson mistook the eve of the festival for its beginning, in which case his error is understandable. In most other respects our descriptions are not too different. [114]
6. *Ibid.*, p. 152.
7. There is a widespread tradition in Mossi country that the Tenkodogo Naba made and still makes similar sacrifices at Kouroungoutenga and Sansabloga, two important earth shrines. There is a controversy about whether human sacrifices were ever offered there. The missionaries in the region claim they were. The Mossi deny this and accuse the missionaries of slander. [797]

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
FA28 Mossi FA28

175 people have become Mossicized in language and culture, but it is
437 doubtful whether they would have taken the Hausa for Mossi. The
441 true Mossi may have played a minor role in the caravan trade, but I am certain that they took part in it and that they did so before the French conquest of their country.

175 There is little doubt that the Mossi traded with the caravans that
437 passed *through* their country. Crozat, who visited Moro Naba Wobogo
439 six years before the conquest, reported that the king

[643] . . . appeared to have had some business relations with white merchants who came up to Salaga every dry season. He sent horses to them in exchange for silver. He claims that he had no reasons to them in exchange for silver. He claims that he had no reasons to be pleased with their integrity and that the silver which they sent to him contained plenty of copper. It happens also that traders may come as far as Wagadougou, bringing merchandise of German origin. There was one of them on hand during my stay at Wagadougou. I was told that he was an important marabout, a shereef, perhaps an Arab or a Moor, for I was assured that he was very light in color. As was repeated to me several times, his relations with the king were limited to the solemn greetings on Fridays. He has never entered the royal hut in spite of being an important marabout. He was at Wagadougou for about three and one-half months, but he was compelled to return to the coast since the merchandise which he had brought was exhausted. He spoke no Mossi. (Crozat 1891)

The caravans which passed through Mossi country were well organized but seemed to have lacked the regularity which was characteristic of the trans-Sahara ones. Those caravans coming from the north were apparently more regular since they had to await the coming of the great trans-Sahara caravans, which brought them salt and other
[366] valuable merchandise. Those coming from Salaga and points south
[221] traveled at all times of the year, a fact which is corroborated by the voyage of Krauss, who arrived at the Bere market during August and the height of the Mossi planting season. This was a period of scarcity or "hungry period" as Krauss himself observed, and it is doubtful whether the Mossi had much to trade at this time. Nevertheless, caravaneers always found some trade goods at the larger Mossi market centers all through the year, even if only cloth and cotton bands.

[221] The main season for external trade in Mossi country came after the harvest. In the words of Marc, who served there shortly after the conquest:

Towards the end of the rainy season, in September or October, the
[364] Yarse begin to assemble the livestock in order to leave for the south. In certain large commercial centers like Kaya, Pouitenga, Dakay, one finds
[422] around this period the owners of livestock: Mossi chiefs, Fulani or rich natives, who are ready to sell their animals. People also assemble sheep of

241 brothers of the family heads who died childless (zig'tinguin damba),
782 and to the ancestors and grandparents. May they see to it that these offerings are accepted by the kinkirsi (spirits of the fields) and that the latter favor X with [242] good health and large crops of millet and beans."

[787] Once these sacrifices have been made -- if they are accepted, the rooster falls on its back -- the new owner has his land cleared and awaits the winter season.

Field work. As soon as the first rains have come, the owner goes once more to the field and has another rooster killed and offered to the kinkirga [singular of kinkirsi] with a plea for gnimassem (good health) and large harvests which he will consume with new wives and new children (pog'palla, la bipalla). Afterward he sows large and small millet, peanuts, beans, etc.

If the year has been a good one and the Moaga has had fine crops, he is happy and in good time will remember the spirit of the fields. For the moment he is busy transporting the millet to the temporary granary (lourgho).

Threshing millet. Before his millet is threshed, the Moaga must make a sacrifice to the zéiga (threshing floor). The ritual words differ from those described above only in the following words: "X asks that this millet, which he will eat, be good for him and that he eat it in peace and good health with his family." (Kita ri ki wan ne lafi layelsomdé né a zak'ramba.)

241 [243] He then appeals to the young men of the village for help
476 in threshing his grain. For the occasion he has a great deal of beer prepared and quantities of beans (benga) cooked. The beans are
[252] prepared with sesame (sinni). After the job is done, two children between the ages of six and seven are called, and their hands filled with the bean mixture. They must run around the threshing floor while eating some of the beans. The rest will be scattered to the winds. They must stop three times for breath and look at each other. Then the remaining beans are distributed among the workers. They are also given beer.

423 Do owners retain rights over abandoned land? In order to occupy abandoned land; permission must first be obtained from the former owner, who retains his rights over the land. He may reclaim it at

423 will, and the new occupant cannot make the slightest protest.

It should be pointed out, however, that since land is most often abandoned because it was thought to be unproductive or haunted, there is rarely a claim to it by a former owner. In any event the matter is settled by the interested parties. The local administration and the canton chief rarely intervene in such cases.

Owners' rights over fruit trees in cultivated fields. Donsé
423 or néré [locust bean] trees whose fruits contain a yellowish, sweet
263 powder that is edible and [244] whose seeds are used to make soumbala, a fetid condiment much prized by the natives, remain the exclusive property of the former occupant. On the other hand, the tamsé (karite tree) belong to the new owner.

423 This is because the karite tree is found almost everywhere in the bush, while the néré is less common.

Rights of the chiefs over cultivated land. As a general rule,
425 since the principle of right by possession is honored among the
423 Mossi, a canton chief will not confiscate without reason cultivated land belonging to one of his subjects if the land has always been occupied by the occupant's grandparents.

When the land is unoccupied, however, or newly occupied, the canton chief may, by virtue of his absolute authority over his territory, take possession, and the new owner may not claim any compensation.

Field Work

241 In principle, a family field is held in common. When a woman
562 grows old, however, she no longer does field work with her hus-
595 band. She has her own field and feeds herself as best she may, since her husband pays no further attention to her and no longer supports her. The work is done by the family as a group, and the size of the field varies with the size of the family.

241 Early in the morning, usually before [245] sunrise, the head
512 of the family wakens the young people. They go out to the field, which may be five to ten kilometers away. Around ten o'clock, the women bring the remains of last night's sagbo or, lacking that, some millet flour which is taken in water.

226 most difficult to ford. Each watercourse, or more exactly each pond,
[423 belongs to a naba and bears a special name, so no river has the same name
55P] name all along its course. During the dry season the lelek /bed?/ of the watercourses is usually dry. Here and there are to be found ponds of varying depth where the cattle is watered. These ponds are where the natives fish. They wait until the water level subsides to knee height, for otherwise fishing would be too difficult.

226 The fishing gear is as crude as the hunting gear. There is a small
227 net held open by three sticks forming a triangle and crossed by a tough stick that is held in the hand, quite similar to the spoon-nets we use to gather shrimp. Above all a sort of wicker trap is used, conical in shape, open at the base and closed at the tip with a movable lid. This trap sometimes contains a second one made of very flexible sticks that are attached to the base of the first one. The two traps thus have a common base, but the second one opens within the first. The fish enters the trap and is held by the sticks of the smaller cone, which close in as the fish tries to get out. The fisherman removes the trap from the water or leaves it sunk in the mud, opens the lid, plunges in his hand and removes the fish, which is confined and easy to seize. The fisherman then puts it in a net or in a leather bag.

226 On a set date the owner of the pond offers sacrifices to the crocodiles
825 so they will not bite anybody. This is why the naba of Koupéla, before he fishes in his pond, must sacrifice a black goat and a chicken. No one may kill a crocodile while fishing, or the naba will die before the year is over. Was not a crocodile killed in his father's pond on
[78P] the very year when he died? Before they go fishing, the natives make charms by burning roots and tree bark inside their traps. If the charm is good, the fish will rush headlong into the net or trap.

226 The fishermen gather at one end of the pond. They stand in a row across the water and move slowly forward while dipping their nets and traps over and over again. All the fish caught are put in bags or tossed to friends who stand on the shore, but, as during the hunt, the naba takes an ample share and seizes the finest specimens. The ponds hold mostly silurids anyway, which like mud and retain its odor and taste even when cooked. The Volta rivers, on the other hand, contain more abundant and more varied fish. /52/ When the natives have crossed and recrossed the pond several times, only small fry remain, and everyone goes home glad to have a little fish for the sauce and especially to have escaped the teeth of the crocodiles, for in spite of

belonging to him, he can be relied upon to share with the members of the lineage if this should be necessary.

Capital goods in the form of houses, granaries, and fields are the property of the lineage. Individual rights are limited to temporary use and custodianship but are passed on to others when a general shift in residence and role follows the death of a senior member of the lineage. Although property is passed on in accordance with the rules of descent in the lineage, part of the property redistributed represents the product of the labor of the lineage as a consanguineal kin group. For, as has been indicated, the labor of the wives, who are not lineage members, is as important as that of their husbands and children.

The lineage head discusses the coming year with the other elders, and an over-all production plan is made out. They decide what fields are to be left fallow, what ones are to be planted to cotton and the varieties of millet, what lands may be used by individuals desiring to plant a cash crop, and what, if any, land may be loaned to neighboring lineages or to in-laws. With the approach of the first rains, all economically active men and women go to their fields to prepare them for planting, leaving behind in the village only the old people and the children who are still too small to assist in the fields or tend their fathers' animals.

A considerable portion of the land within the limits of a Mossi village is under the direct control of the village chief (*Tenga Naba*) and the earth custodian (*Tenga Soba*), the local representatives of political and supernatural authority. This land is used for the public way, for the market place, and for burial grounds and latrines. Except for that which is too poor for any purpose, all available land within several miles of a village is put under cultivation.

Ki is the generic name which the Mossi give to the millet, which is the basic product in their economy and which receives the largest single allocation of land and labor of any Mossi economic activity. Two kinds of millet are planted, a large-grained variety (*kenda*) and a small-grained variety (*kazua*). Millet is the first crop to be planted after the rains have begun. Small- and large-grained millet seeds are frequently mixed and sown in the same field. Small-grained millet may also be sown in the same field with a white bean (*benga*). A "tired" field may be left fallow for five, ten, or fifteen years. When it is first replanted, it will be seeded to millet for the first three years. The fourth year it may again be put into millet, but if the previous crop was not good, cotton will be planted. Usually, a Mossi farmer plants cotton for two years, millet for three, then groundnuts, more cotton, then two more years of millet. It is believed that cotton renews the soil because of the intensive cultivation required: the earth is brought up into hillocks and turned over; after picking, the plant may be turned under and left to enrich the soil.

243 tree set to fire. It burns slowly, and only a slight effort is needed to cut it or topple it down.

[423] When plots are being cleared, useful trees such as karité /shea butter/ or néré /locust bean/ are spared. They remain in the field and revert to the man who is doing the clearing, the owner of the plot.

One awaits the rains before sowing but one does not sow when the first rains fall in April. It is only in May, when the rains are frequent and the storms heavy, that the sowing is done.

A previously cultivated field is merely cleaned before sowing. While only men, as we have already seen, may clear a new plot, Mossi women as well as men share in the cleaning of a field that was cultivated on preceding years, and in the sowing as well.

The sowing is done as follows: The koutiaga (a kind of daba) is held in the left hand, while a small gourd containing millet is held in the right hand. The man or woman, squatting, makes a hole with the koutiaga with the left hand, and drops the millet into the hole with the right hand. Then some earth is replaced with the left hand.

Now the millet is allowed to grow. When it has emerged from the ground and shot about 20 centimeters, people go with the ouaka (another kind of daba) to remove the weeds growing among the millet shoots. In some areas everyone cleans up, men, women, and children. In other areas, as a rule, it is the men who carry out this task, /468/ but when they are too few the women help out. The weeding is done every morning.

Among the Mossi fields are cleaned three times between sowing and harvesting. We have already seen that the Gourounsi only do this twice.

When the millet has grown tall and the birds might peck at it, the women and children are sent to the fields to frighten the birds away.

243 343 The small millet is harvested around mid-November. When it is ripe, the stalks, 2 or 3 meters high, are cut down. They are laid upon the ground, and the heads are cut with a knife. The heads might be likened to the tip of those water reeds which bear a kind of brown velvety stem, some 30 centimeters long, rounded and about the thickness of two fingers. Once the heads have been cut off, they

222 predominates in the bush of the territory and which, owing to its
137 abundance, lends the bush its particular character.

The karité fruit is an egg-shaped, elongated chestnut, smaller than the fruit of the European chestnut tree. It is distinguished from it even more clearly by its fleshy covering with its greenish skin. This flesh is soft, quite thick, and tastes delicious, like a very ripe, even overripe pear.

222 It is the women who gather the karité when the fruit is ripe,
252 before the rainy season, at the beginning of April. First, the flesh surrounding the chestnut is eaten /496/. Then, after breaking the brown shell, the inner part is used to make the famous karité butter.

252 As everywhere else, it is the women who do this among the Mossi. They remove the shell of the chestnut, and then mash the sticky and whitish substance which is found inside. It is pounded on crushing stones with a little wooden pestle. Once this is done, the substance is cooked in a canari and then mashed again, this time in the large wooden mortars, until the paste acquires the consistency of butter. Then it is pounded once more between crushing stones. When this is over, the paste is placed in a canari with lukewarm water, and then stirred and manipulated by hand. This produces a sort of dirty-white cream, somewhat similar to beaten egg whites, but firmer. Then this cream is boiled until it changes into oil. The impurities drop to the bottom of the canari, and the oil floats. The latter is gathered, placed in a clean gourd, and allowed to cool. The result is a pale yellow butter. At first sight it looks like real butter, but when sniffed it reveals a characteristic odor which is unpleasant to Europeans.

Gourounsi women prepare karité butter in the same manner as Mossi women.

302 This butter is put to various uses. First of all, it is utilized for grooming purposes. The women especially rub it into their hair in copious quantities, not only among the Mossi but throughout the Sudan as well. This, naturally enough, lends them an aroma which
[388] is not very pleasant to European noses. Karité butter is also made into soap when certain ashes are added. Finally, it is used in cooking.

423 The karité trees standing in a field belong to the owner of the field. Those which stand in the bush belong to the people of the

423 village in whose territory the bush is located. They belong to all the people of the village, for Mossi chiefs have not set those trees aside for themselves as they did with the néré trees.

222 137 The néré are found in large numbers in Mossi territory, although they are far less numerous than the karité, which literally fill the bush. The ratio must be something like one /497/ néré for every fifteen karité. The néré is nevertheless far from rare, and sometimes ten or fifteen are to be found together, standing not far apart. The néré is easily distinguished by its branches which expand in a fanlike arrangement from a short but elegant trunk. The branches spread out very prettily, in triangular fashion, so the néré blossoms out like a shower of fireworks. Its leaves are no less characteristic than its shape. They are of a dark, oxydized green which contrasts with the superb brilliant green of the karité. The néré leaves are similar to those of the acacia.

The néré is called roga or goaga, doga or doaga in Mossi. It is called soungou in Nounouma and Kassouna, sôla in Sissala. The Nankana call it roga or doga like the Mossi.

The fruits of the néré are long brown pods that grow in clusters on the tree and that contain a yellow substance, sweet to the taste, packed around a sort of very elongated pit. The women gather these 222 423 fruits approximately from March 15 to April 15. The neré trees standing in a field belong to the owner of the field, but the Mossi village chiefs claim ownership to those that stand in the uncultivated bush.

Among the Gourounsi, as we know, the néré that stand in a field, even if the latter is not being cultivated at the moment, belong to the owner of the field, while those that stand in the uncultivated bush surrounding the village belong to all the people of the village.

This points up the difference between a centralized kingdom where the authority of the chiefs is strong, and small independent cantons or villages where it is not.

252 261 Néré is put to many uses. First of all, the yellow meal, including the more solid central part that runs from one end of the pod to the other like a pit, is mashed by the women in millet mortars or in wooden gourds. Once mashed, it is thinned with

326 First, there is that of the blacksmith (saba or sahaba in the local tongue). Two kinds of blacksmiths may be distinguished among the Mossi. First, the blacksmiths who are gathered into separate villages or in large special quarters within the village, both cases being frequent in the northern part of Mossi territory, and secondly the isolated blacksmiths, such as those of Ouagadougou for example.

325 326 The blacksmiths who live in separate villages or quarters smelt the iron ore in large furnaces in the bush. They do this once a year, during the dry season, and the process takes one month.

The whole blacksmith village sets down to the task and builds a certain number of blast furnaces, at the ratio of one for every two blacksmiths.

The furnaces are built of red earth near the hills that contain iron ore, and it takes five days to build one of them. Once this is done each blacksmith pair takes over a furnace and uses it. The smiths do not use it together, incidentally, but each one in turn.

Our blacksmiths break up the soil with a soumbéré or taré. They break up pieces of ore and pile them near the furnace. They spread out a layer of dry wood at the bottom of the furnace, then a layer of ore, then another layer of wood, another layer of ore, etc., up to the top. Then the fire is lit.

The fire is stirred with bellows and kept up for three days. At the end of this period of time, the doors made at the bottom of the blast furnace are opened. The iron escapes through these special openings, which are distinct from the permanently open doors through which the slag runs out. On the fourth day the iron has cooled off, and it is removed from the little pits into which it has flowed. It is broken with an iron mallet and returned to the furnace.

The total labor lasts one month. Every evening our blacksmiths return to the village. Some of them produce ten loads of iron /513/ (about 300 kilograms), others only two or three (60 or 90 kilograms).

326 135 423 As for isolated blacksmiths, they do not smelt iron. They buy it from the blacksmiths of the Yatenga (Ouahigouya circle) who are great iron smelters and who own small, famed ferruginous hills around Ouahigouya.

596 428 significance vis-à-vis family property in this second Mossi family type. /547/ Thus, my informant stresses that here family property still has greater significance than private property, but at the same time he adds that in every inheritance he witnessed, the soukala always went to the oldest son, no matter what its origin. He corroborates this with information about his own family, as follows:

He lives, he says, with five wives, two daughters, two unmarried cousins who are the sons of one of his father's brothers, an unmarried cousin who is the son of one of his father's sisters, a nephew who is the son of his own sister, in short, twelve persons including him.

The soukala where he lives once belonged to his father and was built by the latter alone. He has thus inherited it, even though his father had a younger brother.

Incidentally, the brother got nothing, since my informant's father left nothing beside the soukala, no family property or private worth much.

To whom will the soukala go when he dies? Since he has no son, he replies, it will go to his younger brother (he has a younger brother who lives in a separate soukala). Supposing he had a son, however? Then it would go to his son.

I counter that it should go to his brother, since he did not build it himself but inherited it from his father (that is, from his own and his brother's common father), in accordance with the rule he mentioned earlier. He nevertheless holds, however, that it is not so, that younger brothers never did inherit a soukala, I cannot make him alter his position.

596 423 178 This gives us a living example of how the Mossi family has changed. In the old days, family property went along with the family headship to the younger brother. The soukala, for example, figured in almost every case among the family property, either because the family had given it ready made to the young man, or simply because the family had helped him build it. A soukala was private property only when the young man had built it altogether by himself (a very unusual case). Later, the soukala came to be considered private property when it had been built by the young man

596 with the help of his father and family head (which is by far the
423 most frequent occurrence), /548/ while in such a case it had for-
178 merly been considered family property. Finally, the soukala came to be regarded in every case as personal property and to be transmitted for that reason to the oldest son. This, incidentally, is the same evolution that applied to property in general, as we shall see shortly.

593 Now, here is the third and last variant of the prevailing Mossi family type. Nowadays, this variant is by far the most widespread.

1. Every household lives separately, works separately, and procures its own food and subsistence. The help of neighbors is enlisted to clear the fields.

584 2. Every household gives its own children in marriage. The family head no longer does so.

593 As soon as a man has a son, he chooses a little girl who will go to the boy when he reaches puberty. He visits the girl's relatives from time to time and offers them gifts.

584 When the girl is old enough to be married, he takes 50,000
583 cowries (if he is wealthy), skirt cloths, salt, kola nuts, and gives it
593 all to the relatives. Then, the old women in the daughter's family lead her to the home of the betrothed man's relatives. The father kills a sheep, makes a lot of couscous, buys dolo to celebrate her arrival. Then he offers the girl six or seven baskets containing respectively 1,000, 2,000, 3,000, 4,000, 5,000, 6,000, and 7,000 cowries. The young man himself gives his betrothed four or five skirts. If he is very wealthy, he gives her one or two little girls as slaves.

585 On the evening when the wedding is celebrated, the father asks
[426] one of his neighbors to lend him a hut, and the young married pair are sent there all alone (they will remain there as long as their soukala is not built). On the morrow, the feasting begins. People dance and feast for seven days at the gates of the father's soukala, at least when the girl is a virgin. If she is not, the feasting is curtailed but nevertheless lasts for another three days.

583 When the father is poor, he offers a few kola nuts to the girl's
591 /549/ father (six or ten). He gives the father and mother some firewood he gathered in the bush, straw to make sɛ́ko /Tr.: mats/ for door, 2,000 cowries, a skirt cloth. He kills a sheep to make

566 gone into Mossi hands. The bagaré did not till the soil. They simply minded their master's herds. As for other work, they also built the straw huts where the Moro Naba of Yatenga, the Riziam Naba, and other chiefs slept at the New Year (we shall see under "Religion" /not translated/ to what purpose).

The bagaré saw to their own support (food and clothing). The multiplying herd belonged to the naba, but its yield (milk and butter) went to the bagaré. Out of this yield, however, they gave the naba whatever he needed of milk and butter.

567 In short, we can see that among the Mossi and Foulsé there exist, or rather existed, the two kinds of slaves known throughout the /French/ Sudan, the trade slaves and the house slaves, the former being salable and the latter a part of the family. Nowadays, as a result of the prohibition against their purchase and sale, there remains but a dwindling number of house slaves.

421 Now we come to family property and its transmission.

596 Family property, properly so-called. —There is no family property among our Mossi, since no work is done in common by the whole family. The family property is limited to family charms owned by the houdoukasaman.

423 Property of the compound, or subfamily property. —This does not
592 exist either, for the same reason, except for the compound itself which is the communal property of the zaka group. While each household has huts of its own, these huts are a usufructuary possession which is in accordance with the full ownership of the zaka group. Now, if some household chief wishes to build a new hut, he notifies the zakasoba, who, incidentally, always grants permission. Once the hut is built, the builder may destroy it if he wishes, which goes to prove that he has full ownership over it, having made it. He cannot, however, destroy the hut where he lives which he did not build as it actually belongs to the zaka. In short, there may be in the compound a mixture of communal property (belonging to the zaka) and individual property (hut built by a household or by an individual, millet granary erected in the same circumstances, etc.), but the communal property prevails by far.

423 Property of the work group. —Here, communal property is impor-
571 tant. /268/ It is from the group fields that the group derives most of its sustenance (seven months out of twelve). The work implements

423 also belong to the group, as we shall see later. The group, however,
571 owns neither slaves nor livestock.

Household property. —As we know, during the rainy or cultivating
421 season, the husband works two days out of three for his work group.
571 The third day is his. On that day he works in his small field, helped
592 by his wife or wives. During the dry season, the husband does not work for the group but for himself alone, except for repair work on the compound huts.

571 The household is provided with food by the work group seven months
592 out of twelve and is fed with the produce of its own field for five months.

592 The primary possession of the household, therefore, is its private
423 field.

The field belonging to the household of the head of the work group is marked by a special characteristic. Since the head of the group is busy at all times with the communal field, even on the third day, his small plot is cultivated exclusively by his wives (and by his slaves, if he has any). Hence, his food is procured by his wives five months out of twelve. This only applies, however, to the heads of work groups (as well as zaka and family heads who are necessarily heads of work groups also).

423 Individual property. —Mossi women have tiny cultivated patches
562 which are wholly theirs, which do not belong to the work group or to
422 the household and which they work after five o'clock in the evening whenever possible. This is private property. Clothing, women's jewelry, etc., are also individually owned.

The husband and children also own private property. Actually,
423 the better to distinguish between individual and communal property (whether belonging to the household, the work group, the compound, or the family), we shall review below each type of property in turn.

Fields. —The fields belong primarily to the work group. (They belong only exceptionally to the compound, when it is so small that there is only one work group.) In addition to the fields of the work group, there is the household field. Finally, beside the household field, there are the private plots, for example, the little patches of the women and young men.

Work implements. —These tools (daba, axes, etc.) belong to the
422 work group. To work their small fields (both household and private),
571 men and women use the daba of their work group, but if they damage

422 591 them, they must repair them at their own expense. Those implements which are worn out are replaced by the head of the work group.

422 231 Domestic animals. —Chickens, goats, sheep, donkeys, etc., are all fully owned on an individual basis and not by the group or even by the household. The animal is owned by the man or woman who bought /269/ it. Nevertheless, all the goats and sheep in a compound are gathered together, they sleep in the same place, and they are led to the bush in a flock by the little boys of the compound. The animals of the total family or of the village, on the other hand, are never gathered together.

562 Wives. —I need not emphasize that wives are obviously private property. There are no wives owned in common by the village, the family, the compound, or the work group. The wife, however, is in some measure considered to belong to the compound or even to the family in the sense that a man's wives always go to his brother when he dies.

423 592 The compound. —We saw earlier what applies here. The compound belongs to the zakasoba, but only as a representative of the zaka, as a manager of the property of this subfamilial group. It does not belong to him as private property, in the Roman sense of jus utendi et abutendi /right of use and abuse/. It belongs, ultimately, to the zaka itself.

If this is so, it is not less true that those habitable portions of the zaka, the cabins or huts, are definitely allocated to specific households which have rights of usufruct over them. Thus, the ownership belongs to the zaka, as represented by its head. The usufruct belongs to the households or individuals.

Finally, we may note, as we did earlier, that a hut built exclusively by a household with its own labor or by a single individual of the zaka may be torn down and destroyed by him since it is household or private property set up on subfamilial property. This case, however, is quite exceptional.

The large cabins or huts for millet belong to the cultivating groups. There are also huts for millet belonging to the household, where the husband stores the harvest from the household field. Finally, the 422 large earthen vases, the jars which stand in the huts, lead us from the compound to the subject of furniture. These jars are made by the women and belong individually to specific women.

Furniture. —The furniture, which we shall study in greater detail under "Mode of Subsistence" /not translated/, is very scanty and crude. It is owned privately.

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Yatenga

indirectly from the good will of his ancestral spirits whose benevolence Ego often invokes.

Ambivalence follows from other characteristics of the relationship. Resentment of Ego's depredations of her husband's property and jealous concern for the inheritance rights of her own children appear to be at least partially balanced by a share of the affection her husband shows for Ego. However, joking in this relationship is asymmetrical. The mother's brother's wife takes the more aggressive role, and from the vehemence of her joking, and the structural nature of the relationship, it appears likely that amity lies less heavily in the balance than hostility. The groups to which the two parties belong are equal in status. Their respective positions within them, of course, are not, and this is reflected in the aforementioned asymmetry. Each party is obviously independent of the authority system of the other.

Joking Between Siblings-in-Law

Siblings-in-law who joke are separated by the rule of sib exogamy observed among the Mossi. Reciprocity is basic to the marriage contract that unites their respective kin groups. Several factors tend to create ambivalence in the relationship. Both kin groups—in particular, the extended families of the two marriage partners—profit from the reciprocal tie established between them, but possible failure on the part of either group to reciprocate adequately, particularly with regard to marriage payments, constitutes a persistent source of potential friction. Moreover, the Mossi observe the levirate. Joking between siblings-in-law who are potential spouses, yet are presently constrained by a prohibition against adultery, has frequently been ascribed the function of reducing tension in a situation of conflict. The kin groups of siblings-in-law are always structurally equivalent because groups occupying significantly different strata in Mossi society do not intermarry. As members of autonomous descent groups the participants are obviously independent of one another.

Joking Between Sibs

Sibs (or lineages) whose members joke with one another are, of course, also separate groups.[2] They are always united by a strong tradition of reciprocal social and economic aid. Ambivalence apparently stems from the conflict between this tradition of reciprocity and actual competing claims to land. The origin of joking relationships between two descent groups is often ascribed to the alleged fact that, when they first arrived in the village, leaders of both falsely claimed to the chief that he and his kinsmen had arrived first, and thus had a prior right to land, and that the members of the other group were their slaves. Despite their jocular allegations, both groups are in fact structurally equal and independent.

Joking Between Age-Sets

Joking between age-sets within an age-grade varies with the generational

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 621

also lost much of their interest in preserving their genealogies. Their local 613
lineage segment, which controlled the village nam, still showed interest in 798
its genealogy, but the people of Godin did not quite remember how they were related to the ruling lineage segment. Several times in the recent history of Barkago (and other villages), the men who were given the village nam had to be recalled from distant villages where they were living with maternal patrilineages. So relatively unimportant was possession of the village nam without concomitant noble status that after Naba Ngado took over, the local Biligo people began to ignore all local genealogical records except descent from Biligo. The Ninisi people had the least reason to be interested in their genealogy, and they simply ignored it. They had been separated from the other Ninisi groups in the district for so long that they did not even forbid marriage into those groups.

In villages such as Barkago, the existence of several lineage groupings 613
and families of strangers facilitated local marriages. But in villages with 621
fewer lineage groups, the time came when all groups were so closely linked by marriage and affinal alliances that for all practical purposes the village became an exogamous unit. By 1956, this process had reached such an advanced stage in Barkago that hardly any marriages took place between the Ninisi and Biligo local lineage segments. Both groups were permitted to marry the local descendants of Ngado, because the latter were more recent arrivals in the village. These marriages were of great significance to all villagers because they linked the nobles and the commoners in a series of exchanges. Moreover, because the groups were linked through sisters' sons [565]
with special privileges in both groups, problems deriving from status dif- [606]
ferences were more easily solved. Even the most arrogant noble was often [607]
constrained by ancestral sanctions to maintain amicable relations with his in-laws.

The Biligo lineage of Barkago contracted marriages with the other, non-related groups within and without the district. The Ngado people did likewise. Whether these nobles were able to marry noble women of other districts is a moot point. Owing to distance and politics, no such marriages are known to have occurred, and no one seems to know whether they were permissible. The Ninisi, who had always been commoners, had the largest marriage circle of all the village groups. They were able to marry nobles, commoners, and the Ninisi of the district and other districts.

The inhabitants of a Mossi village built their houses and cultivated their 423
crops on land the village chief had granted to their respective lineages. 613
Since the royal lineage, by right of conquest, controlled all of Mossi country, the rights of usufruct of a lineage depended ultimately on the Mogho [643]

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423 613 [643]

Naba. This did not mean, however, that either the Mogho Naba or any of his chiefs owned the land of Mossi country. The Mossi chiefs and their ruling lineage controlled the Mossi people and thus were able to decide who should use the land. However, there is no evidence that Mossi chiefs ever thought of controlling people by controlling land. The land appears to have been a public good, the utilization of which was in the rulers' interests. Rulers tried to attract more people, but they hardly ever tried to get more land. The people within a Mossi community who might have been said to "own" the land were the Ninisi, whose rights were derived from first occupancy and from their special association with the soil in which their ancestors were buried. When they were conquered, they did not lose their "ritual" rights over the land of their communities, but they were persuaded or forced to "care for" them in the name of the ruling group.

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VII

THE ECONOMIC FOUNDATION

THE REVENUE for the support of the Mossi chiefs and their governmental system came from many sources in a variety of forms. The Mossi of Ouagadougou held that "the Mogho Naba is master of everything" (*Mogh Nab n so fa*), and when they referred to the control he and his chiefs exercised over their goods and services, they said, "The commoner rears his livestock for the chief," and cited the proverb "The snake gets whatever is in the belly of the frog."

Since the Mossi were, and still are, primarily an agricultural people, the products of the soil were the main source of revenue. The Mossi chiefs did not own the land, but they controlled it and assigned land rights to their subjects. The Mossi believed that land had no value apart from people, and, conversely, that people could not exist without land. As they said, "Land is the mother; it fed the ancestors of this generation; it feeds the present generation and its children; and it provides the final resting place for all men." Therefore, a Mossi chief never hesitated to give anyone permission to use unoccupied land. It was in his interest to do so, because the more subjects he commanded, the greater were his revenue and prestige. An unpopular chief was censured not by a withholding of tribute and presents, but by a mass exodus of his subjects to another area.

Through the administrative hierarchy, the common people contributed to the support of the various levels of government. The Mogho Naba periodically received agricultural produce from all his subjects. Through the village chiefs, the village people sent part of their produce to the district chiefs, who forwarded it to the provincial ministers. They, in turn, delivered it to the central government during a ceremony appropriately called "Soretasgho" ("completion of the road"). This event occurred at the end of the harvest festival, after all the crops had been gathered in.[1]

To open the ceremony, the provincial governors' retainers began to clear the paths leading from the governors' compounds to the palace, for they had

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dreds of persons lived in Ouidin, the ward of the Ouidi Naba. Some of them were related to him; others had been attracted by his wealth and by his ability to obtain wives for his charges. All of them benefited from being attached to him in one way or another, and in return helped him to augment his income.

All the district chiefs sent women to their provincial ministers to be kept as wives (and thus as agricultural workers), or to be given out as pughsiudse. The Kamsaogho Naba received more pughsiudse than the other ministers because he was in charge of the wealthier districts, and also of course distributed more. The Baloum Naba was especially favored in another respect. Each year, he was entitled to call several *seghse* (sing. *seka*; a corvée or convocation) of his former pages and their relatives to help cultivate his fields. The Ouidi Naba's sources of revenue were about the same as the Baloum Naba's. In addition, his position as chief minister enabled him to obtain numerous gifts from persons who visited Ouagadougou. Moreover, the Mogho Naba often gave him horses from the fado of deceased district chiefs. The Larhalle Naba had full ministerial privileges, and a few other means of obtaining revenue. He was allowed, for instance, to keep the animals that had not been sacrificed on the graves of deceased rulers.

The provincial ministers received many goods and services from the district chiefs of their provinces. Whenever one of these ministers sent a messenger to the district, the chief gave the messenger money and livestock for his master. Furthermore, the district chiefs brought presents for their minister when they paid their annual visit to Ouagadougou to render homage to the Mogho Naba. The provincial ministers used their position as confidants and advisers to obtain as many presents as possible from persons who came to Ouagadougou to ask special favors from the Mogho Naba, to participate in judicial proceedings, or to seek the nam. Moreover, they cooperated with each other in these exactions, so that a person seeking a favor from or through one minister was prudently advised to give presents to or to seek the aid of the others.

The district chief played a key role in the procurement of revenue for the central administration, and derived an income for himself in the process. The seignorial rights over the Mossi people delegated by the Mogho Naba to all nam holders were quite obvious on this level. The district chief had rights to all valuable fruit trees, such as locust-bean and shea-butter, that grew within the boundaries of his territory. He instructed the village chiefs to harvest the fruit of these trees and send it to him. The village chiefs even had to send him the wood from the fallen branches of these trees.

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The district chiefs did not often exercise their rights over fruit trees in the weogho, as the wasteland in their districts was called. If a villager went into the weogho and collected fruit or wood from the chief's trees, he surrendered only part of it to the chief. On the other hand, if he received permission from a district chief to farm in the weogho, he was obliged to gather and send to the chief the fruit on any valuable trees. A district chief sometimes granted the rights over certain fruit trees in the inhabited areas to specific families or individuals, for personal reasons or as a reward for services. In such cases, the chief forfeited his rights to these trees, but retained his rights to the others.[28]

District chiefs also controlled all the resources of creeks and pools within their jurisdiction that were not sacred to certain aboriginal families, or which had not been transferred to specific persons. The aboriginal Ninisi families always notified the district chief when they planned to perform their annual fishing rite to the earth deities. He, in turn, sent representatives to the ceremony, and they were given part of the catch as his share. Persons who were granted permission to fish in the chief's water holes gave him a substantial part of their catch, and even those persons who had private control of fishing places regularly did the same.

The district chiefs also had rights to certain parts of animals caught in their territories. This applied especially to animals caught with such traditional weapons as traps, clubs, bows and arrows, and spears. Men who had obtained flint guns and other firearms from the Ashanti or elsewhere and who had bought their own powder were not obliged to give the chief a part of their game, but it was always prudent to do so. According to a long-standing tradition, the tusk and legs of a slain elephant that were not resting on the ground belonged to the chief, and those that lay on the ground belonged to the Tengsoba in whose ritual jurisdiction the animal had been slain. But the district chief's secular power was so much stronger than the Tengsoba's sacred power that he usually took both tusks, leaving the Tengsoba only two legs. The district chief also received other portions of elephants and parts of all the larger animals killed in his territory. And when hunters in the district were successful in the chase, they usually gave him entire small animals.

Every village in a district contributed to the district chief's revenue by performing special services for him. Certain villages were responsible for keeping specific huts in his compound in good condition; others, whose lands bordered on the woods, had to provide firewood for his compound; and yet others furnished grass and other fodder for his horses. Many villages had the task of cultivating special fields and crops for the district chief.

651 did not derive any revenue from his judicial functions. He could not levy
622 a fine against any malefactor. However, his intermediary position between
[692] the villagers and the district chief did permit him to obtain some revenue whenever commodities moved from one level to the other.

634 The officials who administered the villages for the district chief received part of their revenue from the villages under their charge. These local administrators had no courts or retainers comparable to those at the provincial
[595] level. However, they did have a large number of wives who contributed valuable agricultural labor. These administrators were permitted to ask the
[464] village chiefs for sosose on their own fields several times during the planting season, but—unlike the district chiefs—they were not permitted to have the villagers cultivate special fields for them. In return for any help received, they had to provide food and drink for the workers.

634 The administrator received most of his revenue as a by-product of active
434 duty in the villages. When he visited a village or transmitted a message to
431 a village chief, he almost invariably received a sheep, a goat, a chicken, or some millet, from the village chief. He also acquired large quantities of goods during the village interregnum: he received gifts from the chief's heirs during the chief's funeral; he received additional presents when they took the fado to the district chief; he could prolong the interregnum in order to receive as many bribes as possible from contenders for the nam; and he was handsomely rewarded when the candidate he had backed was finally installed in office.

596 The extended family was the basic socio-economic unit supporting the
613 Mossi political organization. The Yirisoba received land rights in his saka
622 from his Sakakasma, who had obtained his rights from the village chief.
423 An extended family in need of additional land would seek help from its Sakakasma or its Boodkasma. When the family no longer needed this land, it reverted to the lineage. If all the land granted to the lineage was already occupied, the extended family, through its lineage head, asked the village chief for more land. The chief usually granted this request, unless he had no more weogho available. In this case, the needy Yirisoba some-
596 times tried to borrow land from his non-kin neighbors. Such a step was
613 not undertaken lightly, however. If a man borrowed land from his own
423 lineage members or from the chief, the land rights reverted to its donors
426 without difficulty. However, if he borrowed land from another lineage and either he or his benefactor died without assuring the return of the land, litigation often ensued. In some cases a man would seek land from his lineage brothers in another village, who let him use some of their land with their chief's permission. Some Yirisobadamba even asked their district chief for

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permission to use weogho in the district, and new hamlets arose in this way. A Yirisoba who could not obtain adequate land on which to grow food for his family left the district and sought land elsewhere, especially among his mother's patrilineage. However, village and district chiefs always tried to prevent this because they did not like to lose any of their subjects.

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As director of economic activities in the household, the Yirisoba supervised the agricultural labor of his charges. It was he who directed the work of his wives, his sons, and his sons' wives, and supervised the care of the family herd. He provided the cotton, which was carded and spun by the women and woven by the men. It was also his task to ensure adequate clothing for the members of his household; and he sold excess commodities in order to buy salt, kola nuts, bracelets, foreign clothes, and other products imported from the forest and desert zones. In each case, the Yirisoba had to balance judiciously the requirements of his household against his obligations to the community and to the political hierarchy. He had to prevent economic rivalry among his sons, and especially among his sons' wives. He had to make sure that every married member of the household had sufficient time to provide goods and services for his own family, and that foodstuffs were distributed equitably among the wives. Finally, he had to use the resources of the household to build and maintain the nexus of socioeconomic relationships that provided wives for the male members of the household, and to meet his obligations to the political hierarchy.

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The Yirisoba also had social and economic responsibilities toward the other members of his babissi and boodoo. He furnished labor and goods to needy lineage members and to non-relatives with whom he had marriage arrangements. Since much of this help was given on the basis of ultimate reciprocity, very little loss was involved. However, the relationship between commoner and noble families was quite different. In theory, the nobles had no claims on the property of the commoners; but in practice, they did claim such rights. Furthermore, commoner lineages often gave the nobles many more wives than the nobles returned. This inequality enabled the nobles to receive more goods and services from their marriage partners among the commoners than they gave in return. The nobles thus took advantage of their power as possessors of the nam, but even membership in the royal lineage did not exempt them from supporting the governmental services at all levels. This duty was incumbent upon every Moaga.

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The Mossi people could not refuse to support their political organization, but often complained about having to do so. Many Mossi felt that their rulers were greedy and avaricious and received too many gifts. Some Mossi held that if the chiefs were not placated with goods and services,

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643 the sons of the ruling family, the *nakomces*, formed a noble class, above
565 classes of commoners, serfs, and slaves. Classed among the commoners in many villages were the descendants of former district chiefs who had been deposed by the Moro Nabas. The reason that the rulers gave for the deposal of district chiefs was always disloyalty; but everyone recognized that this was an excuse whereby the reigning sublineage deposed older branches and provided positions for its cadet or collateral branches.

631 The governing hierarchy of the Mossi was a lineage with its com-
613 ponent minor and minimal branches. Like most lineages, this ruling lineage possessed an ideology that all of its members had equal access to its corporate assets. The most important asset of this lineage was, of course, its sovereignty, its right to rule. The *nam* is the symbol of Mossi sovereignty and is described by them as "that force of God which enables a mere man to rule over other men." The *nam* was the possession of Wedraogo, the group's founder, and of Moro Naba Wubri, the first ruler of Wagadougou, and this possession became the patrimony of all their descendants. This being the case, the ruling chief of any village, district, principality, or kingdom did not own the *nam* of that area; he was considered the temporary holder of it, and on his death it reverted to the collective descendants of the royal ancestors.
[428 A man did not have the right to pass the *nam* on to any person because
421 it was not his. Whenever a Mossi chief was being considered for office his commoner electors asked him the following questions: "Before his death, did Naba X designate anyone to replace him as chief?" This question was asked three times, and the candidate responded three times: "No! The Naba did not designate anyone. You may name anyone you wish; even if he is a blind man or a leper."

In actuality, this vaunted equality of access to the *nam* by all members of the ruling lineage was a legal fiction. And despite the fact that all the nobles declared that they could go to Wagadougou to seek the *nam* whenever a chief died, in reality only the members of the dead chief's minimal lineage (often the descendants of his grandfather) presented themselves as candidates. Indeed, of all the candidates, the eldest son of the dead ruler was the one most often chosen to be

423 will, and the new occupant cannot make the slightest protest.

It should be pointed out, however, that since land is most often abandoned because it was thought to be unproductive or haunted, there is rarely a claim to it by a former owner. In any event the matter is settled by the interested parties. The local administration and the canton chief rarely intervene in such cases.

Owners' rights over fruit trees in cultivated fields. Donsé
423 or néré [locust bean] trees whose fruits contain a yellowish, sweet
263 powder that is edible and [244] whose seeds are used to make soumbala, a fetid condiment much prized by the natives, remain the exclusive property of the former occupant. On the other hand, the tamsé (karite tree) belong to the new owner.

423 This is because the karite tree is found almost everywhere in the bush, while the néré is less common.

Rights of the chiefs over cultivated land. As a general rule,
425 since the principle of right by possession is honored among the
423 Mossi, a canton chief will not confiscate without reason cultivated land belonging to one of his subjects if the land has always been occupied by the occupant's grandparents.

When the land is unoccupied, however, or newly occupied, the canton chief may, by virtue of his absolute authority over his territory, take possession, and the new owner may not claim any compensation.

Field Work

241 In principle, a family field is held in common. When a woman
562 grows old, however, she no longer does field work with her hus-
595 band. She has her own field and feeds herself as best she may, since her husband pays no further attention to her and no longer supports her. The work is done by the family as a group, and the size of the field varies with the size of the family.

241 Early in the morning, usually before [245] sunrise, the head
512 of the family wakens the young people. They go out to the field, which may be five to ten kilometers away. Around ten o'clock, the women bring the remains of last night's sagbo or, lacking that, some millet flour which is taken in water.

631 powers to his vassals, the province chiefs, who in turn entrust them to the canton chiefs, and these do likewise with the village chiefs. Thus, when a native wants to move from one canton to another, or 631 even from one village to another, he must be authorized to do so. 166 He must request the permission of the canton or village chief to settle 425 in such-and-such a place, and the chief of the village where he wants to live tells him where he may build his huts and which field he may cultivate. The naba may dispossess one of his subjects, if he so wishes, and give his field to another. After all, he "has the strength." This rarely happens, however, and a native who has cleared a piece of bush, fertilized a plot to sow maize, sowed and weeded the ground, is usually assured of a harvest, except in case of war. If a man is evicted, on the other hand, there is no appeal; neither the canton chief nor the province chief would listen to him; they would do the same thing if the opportunity arose.

421 There is no communal property. Every individual works his fields for his own account; he himself collects the fruit of his labor and remains its undisputed master. Nevertheless, every native owes his 651 chiefs and benefactors a tithe; and at harvest time it is interesting 431 to watch everyone sorting ears of maize, braiding sorghum stems, and measuring out baskets of small millet. The village chief is to get so many ears of maize; the canton chief, if he does not reside too far away, so many others; the father- or fathers-in-law will get theirs, and so will one friend or another to whom one owes cowries, or who has previously granted a favor. However, everyone who deals out goods right and left will in turn get some from various other people and approximately regain his expenditure. The village chiefs offer more sizable gifts to the canton chiefs, and the latter do likewise to the province chiefs.

651 These were, in fact, taxes, not fixed taxes per capita, but com- 661 pletely arbitrary ones. If the naba found a gift insufficient, he had no compunction about saying so, and the person involved had to comply. It is said that the naba of Koupéla paid annually 500,000 cowries (500 francs) and /23/ three horses to the naba of Bélousa, and a million cowries (1000 francs) in two installments to the Moro Naba, to whom he also gave five horses. The gifts to the Moro Naba were brought first to the naba of Bélousa and from there conveyed to Ouagadougou: ever the hierarchy.

This quasi-official tax, however, was not the only one. Whenever the Moro Naba wanted horses, cattle, or anything whatever, he

685 entitled to complain and merely removed the animal. If the damage was caused by a cow or donkey, the owner of the field had to obtain a witness and was entitled to recover damages.

425 Whoever found an object of small value, such as a knife or even a garment, was entitled to keep it, but anything valuable, such as a sheep, a donkey, or, all the more, a cow, had to be handed over to the naba and became his property.

684 837 The province chief alone could pass sentence on a rapist. He was beaten and put in irons, the girl was returned to her family, and, if she gave birth, the child was killed. If the girl had been promised to the naba, the rapist was put to death. An adulterer caught in flagrante delicto could be killed by the deceived husband, but if he had not been caught in flagrante delicto, if he had managed to run away, or if he had merely been denounced by the woman, the deceived husband could do nothing. A girl's seducer usually became her husband if she gave birth, but he had to provide another girl for her betrothed.

791 787 837 The province chief had a special procedure to insure the faithfulness of his numerous wives and his pages. When a wife or page did not behave properly, the Poënaba was supposed to point them out to the naba. He proceeded as follows. Every Friday the Poënaba left his village on foot, a whip in his hand. A servant preceded him with a leather satchel containing charms. No one was allowed to come near him. Everyone fled into the bush, and the path he had followed was closed to other people until they learned that the dreadful man had reached the home of the naba. The wives were gathered together. The Poënaba filled a large gourd with water, poured in his ingredients, and sat before it. The women came to him one by one and cast their reflection in the water. The Poënaba looked in and claimed to recognize those wives who were faithful and those who were not. The former were allowed to go free, but they were often beaten to remove any possible inclination to unfaithfulness. Those designated as unfaithful were seized and had to denounce their accomplice. Both the man and woman were clubbed to death. If the woman pointed out as guilty had no accomplice or refused to name him, she alone was killed. Women still point out with terror the place of execution. This procedure was very barbarous, and its abuses were flagrant. To avoid an accusation which would cost them /27/ their lives, the poor women were ready to do anything, and they presented the Poënaba with all the gifts they could gather in order to be spared.

651 "Market-place dues were levied by the Dara Haba, for the sovereign's account, on the markets surrounding Ouagadougou. The Moro Naba also got the tusks of elephants and one haunch of every buffalo or koba killed by hunters.

643 651 425 "Furthermore, the right of confiscation which the sovereign could use for his own benefit without any precise rule imperatively limiting the conditions under which he could exercise it, permitted him to augment, whenever needed, the revenue derived from his usual sources.

651 "Province chiefs, in turn, had the right to demand, through the canton chiefs, whatever they needed for the support of their families and retinues. Canton chiefs held the same rights over the villages within their rule. The village chiefs themselves received from their subjects a certain number of gifts."

692 Justice was rendered as follows: /580/

1. By the family heads, aided by the family elders.
2. By the village chiefs, aided by the village elders.
3. By the canton chiefs, aided by the elders of their own quarter.
4. By the province chiefs, aided by the elders of their own quarter and by the dignitaries of their entourage.
5. By the Moro Naba, aided by his ministers and the dignitaries of his entourage.

"The respective competence /legal authority/ of those various jurisdictions," says Moulins, "were in no way clearly determined or defined. The deed and the circumstances alone were taken into account in bringing up before a certain authority a matter which the lower jurisdiction had proved unable to resolve. A matter which the family council had been unable to solve was brought before the village chief, then the canton chief, the province chief, and finally the Moro Naba.

694 "Justice was free of charge in the sense that procedural expenses were unknown, but custom demanded that a litigant should never appear before a judge empty handed. He had to offer him at least a white chicken. The outcome of a trial must often have depended on the greater or lesser generosity displayed by the respective sides."

304 824 752 881 At the end of three days, the nané sends a few circumcised boys of preceding years, rasamba, to look in the bush for bark of the néré, karite, n'pékou, and the n'kouna trees. He has them boiled in a large canari and then allows the water to cool until it is lukewarm. Then he calls the bankonsé (this is the name of the newly circumcised boys in Mossi, bankonka in the singular, bankonsé in the plural) and orders them to wash their penes in this water. At the same time he has the leaves of the kantoboga boiled. This is an aloe-type plant of which we have already spoken /not translated/. When this washing is done, the bankonsé smear their penes with cow butter (karite butter is avoided because it is believed to soften the penis and to make it less virile), and then, after cutting kantoboga leaves into pieces, they wrap them around the member, forming a sort of sheath. These leaves are wrapped with cotton thread so they will stay in place. /260/

From then on, the same procedure is repeated every morning and every evening. The bankonsé undo the bandage, wash with néré or karite water, apply fresh butter and new kantoboga leaves. This is done until the wounds are healed.

Néré water, once prepared, keeps for seven days. The supply of kantoboga leaves is renewed only when there are no more on hand.

304 883 881 The bankonsé do not stir for the first three days. From the third to the tenth day, they begin to take a little exercise. For example, they fetch whatever water they need. At the end of ten days, they walk about in the bush, fetch firewood which they stack in piles, and do the same with straw. In the open country they chase hares, rats, and snakes with sticks, in short, all the small game which is to be found there. When there is water in the vicinity, they fish for frogs and fish. They also pick berries from bushes, etc.

[292] Their clothing consists of a kind of skirt which goes down to their ankles and which is made of old garments torn to shreds, of frayed cotton bands.

In the evening from time to time the bankonsé have tom-tom sessions near the shed where they sleep in the village. The griot /drummers, minstrels/ come and play on their instruments. Since this is done at night, men, women, and children may attend.

304 425 881 The bankonsé are entitled to ransack the bush and to take everything they find: chickens, goats, sheep, cotton, etc. The owners have no right to object, but this applies only to small livestock. The bankonsé have no right to larger animals and horses.

567 control by the canton chiefs in whose territories they are located.
622 The inhabitants pay nothing to the kombéré nor can the chief require any labor service in his fields or for the upkeep of his houses. They recognize only the Mogho Naba as chief.

567 Kamboinsé. True Kamboinsé are not Mossi; they came from the west during the reign of Naba Waraga (nineteenth successor of Oubri). Like the dapobi of the Dapoya section they came with guns (their chief even had a [ceremonial] stool) to put themselves under the authority of the Mogho Naba. Their chief, Gambaré by name, told the emperor that they had come to offer themselves as soldiers and slaves to help him pacify his territory. The Kamboinsé occupy a section of the town behind the Catholic mission on the right side of the road to Pô.

When the emperor's native gunners found themselves faced with competition from foreigners, they countered by appointing their own chief who took the title of Kamboin Naba. They are, however, different from the true Kamboinsé, and they live a dozen or so kilometers from Ouagadougou in the villages of Kamboinsé and Wobrigré.

While the first-mentioned Kamboinsé are voluntary slaves, the others are true slaves captured in war or bought by the emperor.

567 [92] Use of slaves as security for debt. Captives might be
426 used to settle debts. It should be noted that the right to own slaves was not limited to the emperor and his vassals. Any prosperous Moaga (dakangré) might own them.

[612] If the head of a household died leaving debts, the heirs could sell a few slaves to pay off the obligation. If, however, the creditor preferred to have the slaves, the latter were put up for appraisal just as though they were livestock.

In the same way, slaves could be traded for horses, garments, or even loads of kola nuts.

567 If slaves were maltreated by their owners, providing that the latter were not of the nobility, they could put themselves under the protection of the naba. In that event they ceased to belong to their former owners. On the other hand, if a Moaga took it upon himself
[682] to kill a slave, he at once had to pay a fine of 100,000 cowries to his canton chief as a blood price.

567 Ordinarily, captives who were brought back from the wars were
439 at once sold to the Haoussa [Hausa] or Yarcé [Yarse] who traded

428 custom which decrees that he likewise inherits all of his father's responsibilities as head of the family.

428 Do daughters and wives share in an estate? Daughters have no share in an estate although their brothers may give them
562 trifling gifts.

Wives never inherit from their husbands. They can only benefit indirectly as the representatives of their young sons. On the contrary, since the wife is considered a piece of property, [259] she is actually a part of the estate to the same extent as the rest of the property left by the deceased.

428 Disposition of an unclaimed estate. Only the canton chief is qualified to inherit the property of a deceased person having no known relatives.

Rights and Obligations Governing Property in the Family

421 Property is owned individually. Individual property is strictly a private matter. The head of the family has no rights over property acquired individually by the women and children or by other relatives under his rule. They may dispose of their possessions as they see fit. A mother may do some trading to provide savings for her children. The head of the family may not use such property under any circumstances without the consent of the true owner.

428 Does a husband inherit from his wife? A husband has no right to his wife's property. He cannot even claim it if she dies childless,
593 since in that case it goes to her own relatives (brothers or sisters) or, failing that, to their children.

428 Aside from their rights in their father's estate, children inherit their mother's property.

When the head of a family borrows cowries from [260] a
● [426] member of his compound, he must repay the loan with a given time. His own property is inalienably his as long as he lives, and then it makes up his estate, along with his wives.

768 Disposition of a house after death. When the head of a compound dies, the establishment is not destroyed. It automatically
428 passes to the heirs, that is, to his sons or, if he has no legitimate

768 heirs, to his brothers. If the deceased was the keeper and guard-
428 ian of the family fetish, it is taken to the home of his eldest brother or to a person designated by custom.

We have seen, however, that the Moaga will not live in a home without consulting a soothsayer. Therefore, if the spirits are not favorable to the heir, the home is turned over to the other sons or to the brothers of the deceased. Besides, in many cases the eldest son is already married and the head of a family and already has his own home. He then lodges his dakompa (young unmarried brothers) or one of his uncles in his father's home.

428 Acceptance or repudiation of inheritances. Consequences.
To accept and receive an inheritance involves the obligation to
● 426 pay the debts and claims against it. Among the Mossi, an inheri-
672 tance is never refused since a refusal does not free one from the obligation to pay the debts of the deceased. Relatives always collaborate, not because of any feeling for common property -- which [261] does not exist, as we have seen above -- but out of respect for the principle of collective responsibility which has been developed in the interests of public order. Creditors will naturally claim their due first from the legitimate heir, but if the estate cannot meet its obligations, all of the close relatives are jointly responsible.

428 The estate does not include any gifts made to members of the family by the deceased during his lifetime.

Wills. Among the Mossi, a will is always made orally.

In the presence of his relatives -- uncles and brothers -- and of his neighbors, who have been assembled for the occasion, the testator makes known his last wishes to his legitimate heir, who will have full rights as his testamentary successor. However, in the event that the will is intended to disinherit the legitimate heir and if for some reason or other he is not present, the testator will entrust the execution of his last wishes to the oldest member of the family present.

Disinheritance of the heir presumptive. In the presence of witnesses and under the conditions indicated above, the testator explains his reasons for disinheriting the heir presumptive. In the event that the reasons seem insufficient, the witnesses will seek

181 The Mossi are a mixture of defects and qualities. As a rule they
577 are not overly scrupulous about stealing and lying, but these deficiencies
674 are not so deeply rooted that they could not be corrected with the development of a more refined conscience. The Mossi are thievish because they often have the opportunity to take what belongs to others, especially cowries which are handled in a very intricate manner. It is so easy, when counting cowries, to slip a few into a pocket without the master's notice! There are some highway robbers, who are greatly feared, and many of them are very skillful. They are, of course, a very small minority.

181 Debts are the most frequent cause of theft. As a rule every Mossi
577 is both a debtor and a creditor, and when he borrows only God knows
426 when he will repay. If someone owes him a debt, he borrows, saying, "So-and-So owes me such-and-such an amount; when he pays me back, I will repay you," and he always finds someone who is willing to lend. Who can deny a friend such a favor? In order to be repaid numerous steps will prove necessary, and the day when the sum is refunded will be a happy one. This shortcoming is so ingrained among them that the wealthiest people are not exempt from it, and although able to return what they have borrowed without difficulty, they do not return it.

181 The Mossi lie easily, but they especially practice the method of
577 mental reservation. When questioned, they excel at posing another question, to find out whether their questioner is really acquainted with the facts. If they can mislead one, they do; on the other hand, if they feel that to confess would be to their advantage, they do so even if their confession implicates their accomplices; but they only do so if they are quite sure of coming through safely.

The Mossi are not false or deceitful, but they often fail to tell the truth for fear of displeasing a more powerful person. They try to guess the reply expected by their questioner, and much caution is needed when a precise piece of information is required. They also deceive by telling only half the truth; when queried, they sometimes reply to a question but suppress a detail which would have modified the answer or opened the way to another question.

They are discreet and know how to keep a secret, especially the king's secrets. When they do not wish to tell anything, they say "I don't know." This is not incriminating, and it cuts short any prying question.

596 with the help of his father and family head (which is by far the
423 most frequent occurrence), /548/ while in such a case it had for-
178 merly been considered family property. Finally, the soukala came to be regarded in every case as personal property and to be transmitted for that reason to the oldest son. This, incidentally, is the same evolution that applied to property in general, as we shall see shortly.

Now, here is the third and last variant of the prevailing Mossi
593 family type. Nowadays, this variant is by far the most widespread.

1. Every household lives separately, works separately, and procures its own food and subsistence. The help of neighbors is enlisted to clear the fields.

2. Every household gives its own children in marriage. The
584 family head no longer does so.
593 As soon as a man has a son, he chooses a little girl who will go to the boy when he reaches puberty. He visits the girl's relatives from time to time and offers them gifts.

584 When the girl is old enough to be married, he takes 50,000
583 cowries (if he is wealthy), skirt cloths, salt, kola nuts, and gives it
593 all to the relatives. Then, the old women in the daughter's family lead her to the home of the betrothed man's relatives. The father kills a sheep, makes a lot of couscous, buys dolo to celebrate her arrival. Then he offers the girl six or seven baskets containing respectively 1,000, 2,000, 3,000, 4,000, 5,000, 6,000, and 7,000 cowries. The young man himself gives his betrothed four or five skirts. If he is very wealthy, he gives her one or two little girls as slaves.

585 On the evening when the wedding is celebrated, the father asks one of his neighbors to lend him a hut, and the young married pair
●[426] are sent there all alone (they will remain there as long as their soukala is not built). On the morrow, the feasting begins. People dance and feast for seven days at the gates of the father's soukala, at least when the girl is a virgin. If she is not, the feasting is curtailed but nevertheless lasts for another three days.

583 When the father is poor, he offers a few kola nuts to the girl's
591 /549/ father (six or ten). He gives the father and mother some firewood he gathered in the bush, straw to make séko /Tr.: mats/ for door, 2,000 cowries, a skirt cloth. He kills a sheep to make

567 As for the bagaré, they live separately, work for themselves, see to their own subsistence, etc.

Their duties are as follows:

1. To come and work one day a week on their master's field (on that day, as on other days, they provide their own food).

2. To come and work for their master in exceptional circumstances, such as for example when the master gathers all his neighbors to work on his field.

3. To come and greet their master every year after the harvest. They give him a basketful of millet. When the harvest has been poor, they are exempted from this gift.

4. The master may request from his slave chickens, sheep, an ox or a cow. Chickens may not be denied under any circumstances. As for sheep or beeves, the slave may refuse to provide the animal requested, but then he is expected to go and sell it at market right away, and to give half the money to his master. If the slave refuses to go and sell the animal at market, the master has the right to seize his movable property and sell it.

[426] 5. When the master has debts, the bagaré must help him pay them.

428 As for inheritance, when a bagaré died his master left all the
567 property to the children. The oldest son of the bagaré inherited, but he gave something to the other sons. If there was no son, the younger brother inherited. If the sons were children the younger brother also inherited, at least temporarily. If there were no male heirs, the master inherited the property but gave some to the daughters.

567 In short, the position of the bagaré is more similar to that of /566/ serfs than to that of slaves proper. In this respect, their status is a far cry from the familial status of the slaves we have described
[171] up to now, and it is much closer to the status of the Dialonké, Soussou /Susu/, and Foulah slaves of Guinea who are also serfs, work three days a week for their master (six hours a day), and are free the rest of the time on condition of seeing to their own subsistence.

Let us add that since the arrival of the French among the Mossi,
567 the bagaré have gained a considerable amount of freedom. Nowa-
178 days, most of them will not give any of their crops to their master.

567 When a master wants one of the sheep or beeves belonging to his
178 bagaré, the latter refuses to give it, or if he consents to sell the animal at market he gives his master but one-tenth of the cowries paid by the buyer. Nowadays, as a rule, the bagaré only "go
[426] along" when their master's debts are involved, and yet some of them run away with their belongings rather than pay those debts.

567 Let us also add that these slaves, who were mostly of Gouroumsi
167 or Boussansé origin, now want to return to their own land, and there is a continuous exodus, slow but sure, of Mossi slaves toward the south. Since the French have strictly forbidden the purchase and sale of slaves, on the other hand, the sources of supply have dried out. All this makes it clear why among the Mossi, as incidentally throughout West Africa, we are progressing toward a slow but certain suppression of slavery and serfdom.

326 In closing, let us say that among the Mossi blacksmiths who
567 live in /special/ quarters or villages and whom we have already mentioned with regard to their patriarchal and nondecommunalized family type, we find true slaves of the common familial type such as we have described up to now, rather than serfs like the bagaré.

These slaves live in the same soukala as their master, whether married or unmarried, trade or house slaves. During the winter season, they all work on the fields of the soukala head from six in the morning to three in the afternoon, with the usual luncheon break. They have small individual plots, which they may work after three o'clock. During /567/ the dry season, they work all day at the blacksmith's trade with their master.

They are provided with food throughout the year by the head of the soukala, but they procure their own clothing, jewelry, grigri, etc. The soukala head buys the first wife for them and disposes of their daughters in return.

567 The estate of a deceased slave goes to his master and to his sons.
428 As far as livestock and cowries are concerned, the master takes half
326 and gives half to the son or sons. As for clothing, bracelets, etc., everything goes to the children. The latter share equally the part of their father's estate that devolves to them.

567 We can see that just as the family type of Mossi blacksmiths
326 bears witness to an older state of affairs, the status of slaves among them also bears witness to the ancient local conditions prior to

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did not derive any revenue from his judicial functions. He could not levy a fine against any malefactor. However, his intermediary position between the villagers and the district chief did permit him to obtain some revenue whenever commodities moved from one level to the other.

The officials who administered the villages for the district chief received part of their revenue from the villages under their charge. These local administrators had no courts or retainers comparable to those at the provincial level. However, they did have a large number of wives who contributed valuable agricultural labor. These administrators were permitted to ask the village chiefs for sosose on their own fields several times during the planting season, but—unlike the district chiefs—they were not permitted to have the villagers cultivate special fields for them. In return for any help received, they had to provide food and drink for the workers.

The administrator received most of his revenue as a by-product of active duty in the villages. When he visited a village or transmitted a message to a village chief, he almost invariably received a sheep, a goat, a chicken, or some millet, from the village chief. He also acquired large quantities of goods during the village interregnum: he received gifts from the chief's heirs during the chief's funeral; he received additional presents when they took the fado to the district chief; he could prolong the interregnum in order to receive as many bribes as possible from contenders for the nam; and he was handsomely rewarded when the candidate he had backed was finally installed in office.

The extended family was the basic socio-economic unit supporting the Mossi political organization. The Yirisoba received land rights in his saka from his Sakakasma, who had obtained his rights from the village chief. An extended family in need of additional land would seek help from its Sakakasma or its Boodkasma. When the family no longer needed this land, it reverted to the lineage. If all the land granted to the lineage was already occupied, the extended family, through its lineage head, asked the village chief for more land. The chief usually granted this request, unless he had no more weogho available. In this case, the needy Yirisoba sometimes tried to borrow land from his non-kin neighbors. Such a step was not undertaken lightly, however. If a man borrowed land from his own lineage members or from the chief, the land rights reverted to its donors without difficulty. However, if he borrowed land from another lineage and either he or his benefactor died without assuring the return of the land, litigation often ensued. In some cases a man would seek land from his lineage brothers in another village, who let him use some of their land with their chief's permission. Some Yirisobadamba even asked their district chief for

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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permission to use weogho in the district, and new hamlets arose in this way. A Yirisoba who could not obtain adequate land on which to grow food for his family left the district and sought land elsewhere, especially among his mother's patrilineage. However, village and district chiefs always tried to prevent this because they did not like to lose any of their subjects.

As director of economic activities in the household, the Yirisoba supervised the agricultural labor of his charges. It was he who directed the work of his wives, his sons, and his sons' wives, and supervised the care of the family herd. He provided the cotton, which was carded and spun by the women and woven by the men. It was also his task to ensure adequate clothing for the members of his household; and he sold excess commodities in order to buy salt, kola nuts, bracelets, foreign clothes, and other products imported from the forest and desert zones. In each case, the Yirisoba had to balance judiciously the requirements of his household against his obligations to the community and to the political hierarchy. He had to prevent economic rivalry among his sons, and especially among his sons' wives. He had to make sure that every married member of the household had sufficient time to provide goods and services for his own family, and that foodstuffs were distributed equitably among the wives. Finally, he had to use the resources of the household to build and maintain the nexus of socioeconomic relationships that provided wives for the male members of the household, and to meet his obligations to the political hierarchy.

The Yirisoba also had social and economic responsibilities toward the other members of his babissi and boodoo. He furnished labor and goods to needy lineage members and to non-relatives with whom he had marriage arrangements. Since much of this help was given on the basis of ultimate reciprocity, very little loss was involved. However, the relationship between commoner and noble families was quite different. In theory, the nobles had no claims on the property of the commoners; but in practice, they did claim such rights. Furthermore, commoner lineages often gave the nobles many more wives than the nobles returned. This inequality enabled the nobles to receive more goods and services from their marriage partners among the commoners than they gave in return. The nobles thus took advantage of their power as possessors of the nam, but even membership in the royal lineage did not exempt them from supporting the governmental services at all levels. This duty was incumbent upon every Moaga.

The Mossi people could not refuse to support their political organization, but often complained about having to do so. Many Mossi felt that their rulers were greedy and avaricious and received too many gifts. Some Mossi held that if the chiefs were not placated with goods and services,

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VII

THE ECONOMIC FOUNDATION

THE REVENUE for the support of the Mossi chiefs and their governmental system came from many sources in a variety of forms. The Mossi of Ouagadougou held that "the Mogho Naba is master of everything" (*Mogh Nab n so fa*), and when they referred to the control he and his chiefs exercised over their goods and services, they said, "The commoner rears his livestock for the chief," and cited the proverb "The snake gets whatever is in the belly of the frog."

Since the Mossi were, and still are, primarily an agricultural people, the products of the soil were the main source of revenue. The Mossi chiefs did not own the land, but they controlled it and assigned land rights to their subjects. The Mossi believed that land had no value apart from people, and, conversely, that people could not exist without land. As they said, "Land is the mother; it fed the ancestors of this generation; it feeds the present generation and its children; and it provides the final resting place for all men." Therefore, a Mossi chief never hesitated to give anyone permission to use unoccupied land. It was in his interest to do so, because the more subjects he commanded, the greater were his revenue and prestige. An unpopular chief was censured not by a withholding of tribute and presents, but by a mass exodus of his subjects to another area.

Through the administrative hierarchy, the common people contributed to the support of the various levels of government. The Mogho Naba periodically received agricultural produce from all his subjects. Through the village chiefs, the village people sent part of their produce to the district chiefs, who forwarded it to the provincial ministers. They, in turn, delivered it to the central government during a ceremony appropriately called "Soretasgho" ("completion of the road"). This event occurred at the end of the harvest festival, after all the crops had been gathered in.[1]

To open the ceremony, the provincial governors' retainers began to clear the paths leading from the governors' compounds to the palace, for they had

567 Were slaves part of an estate? Among the Mossi, the wives
428 are part of an estate on the same footing as the rest of the property
562 of the deceased. The same thing applies to the captives (yemsé) and dogyiri (house slaves) who constitute and integral part of the estate. They constitute a patrimony to be handed down from father to son in accordance with the customary order of succession. They remain the exclusive property of the legitimate heir and are not distributed as are the wives of the deceased.

[97] Chapter 6

Djiba Naba, Crown Prince of the Mossi Empire

Preliminary Remarks

644 In writing on this subject we have not tried to ascertain whether the canton of Djiba was once independent or whether it was under the direct authority of the Mogho Naba.

At the outbreak of the World War in 1914 the Djiba Naba, a brother of the present emperor, Naba Kom, was drafted into the army, and another brother had to be appointed to take his place. The latter's administration was in many ways unsatisfactory, so when the Djiba Naba, on his return from the front, had to be sent to Doulougou to replace a deceased son of Naba Wobgo, the Mogho Naba retained direct authority over the canton of Djiba. Meanwhile, his eldest son had returned from Tunis and had been officially named the chief of Djiba, but he had had to leave again for military service at Salonika. Thus, it can be said that even before the canton of Djiba had been made the prerogative of the eldest son of Naba Zombré, it had already been under the latter's authority.

It was during the reign of Naba Zombré, twenty-third Mogho Naba, that the eldest son of the emperor was given jurisdiction over the canton of Djiba. Naba Zombré, after Naba Niandeffo, had one of the longest reigns in the history of the country. He actually ruled for sixty years.

643 [98] An old tradition requires an emperor who has ruled for
782 thirty years to go to Oubritenga to celebrate zom'bika (literally,

631 766 everyone gives what he can. Everyone from the Nabitienga down through his brothers and sisters, close relatives, and their brothers and sisters, in short, anyone even remotely related to the deceased, comes up and offers something. Most often the gift is made up of cowries.

The koupéogo is then returned to the zaongo. Some zom kom (water with flour in it) and some dam (dolo or fermented millet beer) are poured at the door of the antechamber.

The benda and other drummers gather up all the cowries they have received and go a short distance from the house to divide them up.

The benda are expected to give a few cowries to any Yarga, Silmim[illegible]qa, or sayan (1) who happens to pass by during the distribution.

1. Yarga: a Dioula [Diula] of the 'andé [Mande] group. Silmimoaga: on[illegible] who has adopted the customs of the P[illegible]h.

Sayan: blacksmith.

643 428 (b) Fado. This is the share that goes by right to the Mogho Naba from the estate of every kombéré.

[138] The Mogho Naba sends representatives to whom are entrusted a rooster, a sheep, and, depending on the importance of the chief, a cow and 5,000 to 10,000 cowries.

As soon as he has been presented to the Nabitienga, the first envoy of the Mogho Naba says to him: "Nab'kayé ti mog'naba yel tid wa pous' nabitiengh'togo lad reguib' lokon'wa tib laguemb taba ti ya yel koudgo (Such-and-such a chief having died, the Mogho Naba sends us to deliver his condolences to the Nabitienga and to request of him that the quiver of the naba be turned over to us so that it may be placed beside those of his ancestors, as is the custom)."

The Nabitienga thanks them and orders the loko [quiver] to be brought out at once. It is placed on the ground, and sacrifice is made, in turn, of the chicken, the sheep, and even the cow sent by the Mogho Naba.

631 643 428 766

All of these preliminaries are only the beginning, and when they are completed, the emperor's first envoy orders the Nabitienga to go out into the sunshine so that the fado [share for the Mogho Naba] may be claimed. The Nabitienga complies with the request. Thereupon the first envoy says to him through a messenger: "Mogh' Naba yé tid wa reg fado, ya nig'tousri (1,000 head of cattle), pissi tousri (1,000 sheep), bouss'tousri (1,000 goats), foutou tousri (1,000 garments)," etc. To which the Nabitienga replies: "Tond ba sin ki a ka bas roumsi ne arzek'yé (our late father left neither animals nor other wealth sufficient to satisfy the demands of the Mogho Naba)."

The messenger reports the reply to the emperor's representatives. The relatives of the Nabitienga go [139] to gather together a wanka (hoe), a laré (ax), and a goégo (sickle), and then they tell the nayiridamba (representatives) to go into the antechamber where all of the wealth is piled up. The nayirdamba [sic] send in some soroné who come back and report on what is there. Then they ask the Nabitienga for the fado a second time, and this time it is given to them in the form of the following articles: a robe, a pair of trousers, bracelets, fodo, rouamba (ornaments of the napagha), an ample robe, a pair of slippers, a knife (zangoégo), some salt, some cowries, kalgo (soumbala) balls, nerndo (dried meat), moui (rice), etc.

The envoys are housed for a whole week by the Mabitienga, aided by the inhabitants and his relatives.

On the eighth day, before taking leave of his guests, the Nabitienga slaughters a cow, has large quantities of saghbo and beer prepared and sheep killed, gives clothing to all the envoys of the Mogho Naba, offers them up to 50,000 cowries, depending on their importance, etc.

He has a horse saddled with his father's saddle, and the animal is tethered in front of the antechamber.

One of the nayirdamba unties the horse and walks three times around the house of the deceased naba. The person who mounts the horse is given liguidi (cowries) and clothing and the fez of the naba. He is entitled to keep all this after his return to Ouagadougou, after he has reported to the authorities. The horse becomes the property of the Mogho Naba and is turned over to the Wedranga Naba (personal equerry of the king).

562 584 When the girl reaches marriageable age, she usually finds herself with a husband who is sometimes older than her father and whom she cannot possibly love. She must go to him, however, since such is her father's will.

[431 585] [173] The fiancé brings some gifts (cowries, chickens, millet beer) and claims his wife. The girl is sent off to her husband's home with no ceremony being performed.

This second type of forced marriage has the parents' consent.

587 428 562 768 Marriage by inheritance. When the head of a household dies, the women, who are considered a part of his estate, are divided up just as is the rest of the property. They are apportioned to the sons of the deceased, or his brothers if the sons are not of marriageable age. However, unlike the procedure for a chief's estate, in which the wife is just a "thing," these wives may choose their husbands from among the members of the family.

This is semi-free marriage.

587 Besides the type of marriage which we shall later call "free marriage" -- a form which occurs very frequently since it includes the marriages of loose women who may have as many as nine husbands, only stopping at the last one because of old age -- there is also remarriage due to successive widowhoods. Some women are so [177] unlucky as to lose [174] a succession of husbands. They are finally avoided like the plague since they have the reputation of being cursed by the gods (Mossi, kombwinga; Bambara, térédiougou).

584 Marriage after a conventional proposal. When a young man wishes to ask for the hand of a young girl who is not yet engaged, he chooses as his go-between a person who is on good terms with the elders of the girl's village. If the response is favorable, the young man brings a chicken, a secco (dagnopinri) [coarse matting] to close the doorway, and some fagots. He goes back to his village and returns at intervals bearing sprouted millet or millet beer and a chicken for the head of the family. The latter at last tells the go-between: "Tell X... that we accept him as our son and that we shall try to give him satisfaction as soon as possible."

Some time later the young man returns once more with a chicken, sprouted millet, or beer for the elders of the village. He makes

643 imposes a heavy obligation on the chief. He is expected to in-
241 vite the emperor's principal bodyguards (samand'kamba) -- and there are many of them -- to a meal. He is also required to furnish a basket of millet for sowing the field of the Mogho Naba when the first rains come.

652 Utilization of the produce of the emperor's fields. As noted
644 in an earlier chapter [255] under Labor required of Mossi subjects by their naba," the Mogho Naba does not use the millet from his own field. The produce is used to feed the horses, to support the pages and samand'kamba, and especially to make beer on the festive days known as the tinsé and basgha of the king.

[256] Chapter 17

Inheritance and Rights of Succession among the Mossi

●428 We have dealt with the question of inheritance at considerable length in the chapter on "Customs and Enthronement of Mossi Chiefs." We return to the subject because it seems necessary to clarify certain details of this question which is so important from the legal point of view.

The opening of succession. The succession is open upon the death of an individual, but property is not passed until after the funeral ceremonies (for all that concerns funerals, see the section on "Death").

Why is there a delay in taking possession of the property? As we have seen above in many chapters, the Moaga is superstitious. An old belief has it that to take possession of the property of the deceased before the funeral is celebrated will bring certain death to the heir or will cause some calamity for the whole family.

Further, since all the members of the family must be assembled for the funeral observances, the inheritance is well publicized, and [257] no one can later claim to have been defrauded.

Requirements for succession. In order to inherit, the following requirements must be met.

1. To be born before the succession is opened.

428 2. Not to be disqualified for the following causes.

a. Murder of the deceased.

b. Failure to avenge his death. In the old days the son had to avenge his father's death before inheriting his property. At present the term "vengeance" should be understood to mean that he must seek satisfaction for the crime in the courts.

c. Failure to celebrate the funeral.

If the legitimate heir is a minor, his guardian must carry out the ceremony in the child's name.

d. Existence of a will whereby the deceased disinherits the heir presumptive.

Order of succession. As a general rule, property is handed down in the direct line, that is, to the eldest son of the deceased. It is handed down in a collateral line only if there is no son. In the case of certain items, however, for example, the family fetish, the heir is the eldest brother of the deceased.

If there is no heir of the first or second degree, the estate goes to the closest relative of the person from whom the deceased inherited the property.

428 431 The eldest in the family excludes the others and has sole possession of the property. Custom demands, however, that he hand over to his brothers and uncles a part [258] of the property. Nevertheless, this is a free gift which he is not actually forced to make.

428 562 184 In the case of the estate of a naba, the eldest son alone usually inherits all the property left by the deceased because of the heavy expenses he must meet to follow custom when he becomes a candidate for the chiefdom. As far as the women are concerned -- they are a part of the property -- he selects the ones he likes, and the rest are left for the nabissi (sons and descendants of naba).

The same is not true for ordinary Mossi, who have begun to realize that there are advantages in allowing all of the children of the deceased to share in the estate. In the chapter dealing with "Marriage" we have already seen that women were allowed some choice of a husband among the sons of the deceased.

428 In any case, however, the eldest son retains the largest share of the estate, and this is easily understandable in view of the

428 custom which decrees that he likewise inherits all of his father's responsibilities as head of the family.

428 562 Do daughters and wives share in an estate? Daughters have no share in an estate although their brothers may give them trifling gifts.

Wives never inherit from their husbands. They can only benefit indirectly as the representatives of their young sons. On the contrary, since the wife is considered a piece of property, [259] she is actually a part of the estate to the same extent as the rest of the property left by the deceased.

428 Disposition of an unclaimed estate. Only the canton chief is qualified to inherit the property of a deceased person having no known relatives.

Rights and Obligations Governing Property in the Family

421 Property is owned individually. Individual property is strictly a private matter. The head of the family has no rights over property acquired individually by the women and children or by other relatives under his rule. They may dispose of their possessions as they see fit. A mother may do some trading to provide savings for her children. The head of the family may not use such property under any circumstances without the consent of the true owner.

428 593 Does a husband inherit from his wife? A husband has no right to his wife's property. He cannot even claim it if she dies childless, since in that case it goes to her own relatives (brothers or sisters) or, failing that, to their children.

428 Aside from their rights in their father's estate, children inherit their mother's property.

[426] When the head of a family borrows cowries from [260] a member of his compound, he must repay the loan with a given time. His own property is inalienably his as long as he lives, and then it makes up his estate, along with his wives.

768 428 Disposition of a house after death. When the head of a compound dies, the establishment is not destroyed. It automatically passes to the heirs, that is, to his sons or, if he has no legitimate

768 heirs, to his brothers. If the deceased was the keeper and guard-
428 ian of the family fetish, it is taken to the home of his eldest brother or to a person designated by custom.

We have seen, however, that the Moaga will not live in a home without consulting a soothsayer. Therefore, if the spirits are not favorable to the heir, the home is turned over to the other sons or to the brothers of the deceased. Besides, in many cases the eldest son is already married and the head of a family and already has his own home. He then lodges his dakompa (young unmarried brothers) or one of his uncles in his father's home.

428 Acceptance or repudiation of inheritances. Consequences.
To accept and receive an inheritance involves the obligation to
426 pay the debts and claims against it. Among the Mossi, an inheri-
672 tance is never refused since a refusal does not free one from the obligation to pay the debts of the deceased. Relatives always collaborate, not because of any feeling for common property -- which [261] does not exist, as we have seen above -- but out of respect for the principle of collective responsibility which has been developed in the interests of public order. Creditors will naturally claim their due first from the legitimate heir, but if the estate cannot meet its obligations, all of the close relatives are jointly responsible.

428 The estate does not include any gifts made to members of the family by the deceased during his lifetime.

Wills. Among the Mossi, a will is always made orally.

In the presence of his relatives -- uncles and brothers -- and of his neighbors, who have been assembled for the occasion, the testator makes known his last wishes to his legitimate heir, who will have full rights as his testamentary successor. However, in the event that the will is intended to disinherit the legitimate heir and if for some reason or other he is not present, the testator will entrust the execution of his last wishes to the oldest member of the family present.

Disinheritance of the heir presumptive. In the presence of witnesses and under the conditions indicated above, the testator explains his reasons for disinheriting the heir presumptive. In the event that the reasons seem insufficient, the witnesses will seek

428 to change his mind. If, however, he absolutely refuses to heed their protests, they will not make an issue of it, but when the time comes to [262] apportion the estate, the testamentary arrangement to disinherit the heir presumptive will simply be declared null and void.

If the heir presumptive was disinherited for any of the causes for disqualification listed above or because he had committed adultery with one of his father's wives or a wife of someone in the family, the estate is given to the next in the line of succession as determined by Moaga custom.

Right to make a will. All who own property may make wills.

Revocation of wills. Wills may be revoked if the testator so desires. He has only to make a simple oral declaration of changed intention in the same manner as that described above.

Chapter 18

Circumcision.- Do the Mossi Practice It?

304 184 Circumcision is highly esteemed among the Mossi. Some colonial officials, because of their ignorance of Mossi customs, have claimed that neither circumcision nor excision was practiced. One must be able, indeed, to distinguish between the Moaga, the Boussanga, and especially the Nionioga. Although the three groups are related, they have different customs.

304 Circumcision, which is done according to precise rules, is carried out here in virtually the same way as it is among the Kassonké of Kayes.

The ceremony must originally have been imposed on the 304 Dagomba (of whom the Mossi are descendants) by Islam. Now, 626 however, young men seek to have themselves circumcised, not for any religious reason, but rather to avoid the ridicule of their friends and, especially, the scorn shown by Mossi women for any uncircumcised man.

304 We shall attempt to describe below the circumcision ceremony among the Mossi.

After the harvest, toward the end of November, the young men state their wish to be circimcised. Since the cost of supporting

584 If the girl absolutely refuses to go to her betrothed, her father
[562] tries to persuade her but does not use force. If the girl persists in her refusal in spite of everything — this is extremely rare — the father returns to the betrothed any money he may have borrowed, but he does not return anything that was given him spontaneously. If the father happens to die after he has pledged his daughter, his heir may not retract the promise and give his sister or niece to another man,
[428] but he will from then on receive the gifts himself. If the betrothed man dies, his heir gets the girl promised to the father, with the condition that he will continue to pay the bride price.

584 Contrary to the situation in European countries, the woman, con-
583 sidered as valuable property, is paid for; it is not she who brings a dowry, but the man who wants her as his wife. If a man has an eye on a friend's daughter, he goes to visit the father even though the girl may still be a babe in arms. He is careful not to state what he has in mind. He comes sometimes with a few cowries, sometimes with a chicken, a piece of salt, perhaps even a sheep. The child's father understands, and when he has some work to be done, a field to be weeded, millet to be threshed, huts to be roofed, he makes it known to the suitor, who hastens to work for the man whose son-in-law he should like to become.

After a time, the father says to the suitor: "You have treated me well. I am pleased with you. I will treat you well." The suitor understands and becomes even more assiduous. He sends his friends and on every festive occasion he presents the father of his intended with a few chickens. There is no outright promise, no betrothal in the usual sense of the term. Sometimes the father has financial difficulties, pressing debts, or he has seen a fine garment he should like to buy, and he has a request for money conveyed to his friend. The latter knows that he is loaning without return, or rather loaning against the girl. He refuses only if he is actually unable to furnish the sum; for if negotiations were ever to be broken, the child's father would have to return the money advanced, and this would greatly embarrass him and thus prevent him from profiting through the transaction. In any case, it is extremely rare for a promised girl not to be given to the man who has made the first advances and who has been favorably received. A father who should promise his daughter to a man after receiving gifts for some time from another would be held in very poor esteem and forced to return any money he might

766 Suicides are buried like our dogs; here, all dogs are eaten. Lepers
[761] are buried at night without festivities. Accidental death, whether
[262] from a fall, snake bite, or any other cause, is attributed to an evil spirit who must not be irked by granting funerary honors to its victim, or else it would return and kill another member of the family. This is why those who die of an accident are buried without ceremonies and without undertakers. Their heads are not shaved, because God has called them with their hair on, as the Mossi say. A pit is dug, they
769 are buried, and that is all. They have no one to represent them; to the anniversary of their death, the kouré, they have no kourita.

Every Mossi who dies of illness, be it man, woman, child, or naba, survives in the person of the kourita. In the case of a married man, the kourita or koutoarsa (who imitates the deceased) is a woman of the dead person's family, usually one of the wives of one of his younger brothers, someone who bears a certain resemblance to the deceased. She is chosen by the family, and sometimes designated by the dying person. She wears the clothes of the deceased, his shirt, his blanket, his hat, his shoes, his bracelets, and his rings; she wears his belt and knives, walks with his staff, his hoe, his doré, and bears his spear, blade pointing toward the ground. She walks like the person she represents. She must imitate him in every way and keep his presence alive in the household. If the deceased was usually accompanied by a /73/ child bearing his satchel, the kourita is followed by the same child bearing the same satchel, but turned inside out. If the deceased was a leper and had no fingers, she pretends not to have any; if he liked to laugh, she laughs; if he was peevish and quarreled with everyone, she maintains a constant state of anger. The children of the deceased call her their father; the wives call her their husband and prepare her millet mush. If the dead man was a naba, she is called naba; if he was not, she is called by the name of the deceased.

769 She acts in this manner until the day of koure. On that day she
428 shaves her head like the other members of the family, and her role ends there. She retains the name kourita, however, and on the day when the inheritance is distributed, she receives a garment in exchange for the clothes of the deceased. If the heir is generous, if the inheritance allows it, she is given some livestock, sometimes a child. It is said that the kourita dies sooner than if she had not played this role, because the ancestral spirits will come and fetch her. For this reason, the position is not in great demand.

428 When the head of a household dies, he leaves an inheritance of varying magnitude. No one touches it until the day of kouré. As soon as the festivities are over, the eldest son summons the head of the family and all his uncles, brothers, and sisters. The partition of the property must be carried out. Theoretically, the whole inheritance, all the women, cattle, and cowries, belongs to the eldest son if he is married [429] or of marriageable age. If he is too young, one of the younger brothers of the deceased must act as his guardian, administer the property, and transfer it to his nephew when he comes of age. Of course, the uncle squanders his ward's property. If the deceased leaves no male heirs, the inheritance devolves to his eldest daughter. If he has no children, /76/ his younger brother, or if there is none, the son of his oldest brother, inherits the property. The oldest brother himself never inherits, except in the case of a naba; in such a case, if there is no other heir, the oldest brother comes into the fortune.

428 587 Although in theory the oldest son is the absolute master of all his father's property, in reality he must share part of it. If he has younger brothers of marriageable age, he gives them one of his father's wives. Every brother who inherits a wife must shave her head. If she refuses to have this done, it means that she does not want this new husband. 428 If the heir's brothers are too young, he gives them some livestock, cattle, sheep, goats. If the inheritance is sufficient to allow it, the uncles also get their share. No one may force the eldest son to share the property. He may state point blank that he intends to keep everything, but this will cause him difficulties and create enemies, especially if his father has squandered a nephew's fortune. Upon his uncle's death, a nephew defrauded of his father's property reminds his cousin of the matter and requests indemnities, which are usually granted in the form of wives or livestock.

428 592 The new heir becomes head of the household in his turn and often inhabits his father's soukala; sometimes he builds himself another one. He is now his own master, subject only to the family head, while his unmarried sisters and younger brothers come under his jurisdiction. He has inherited the property, but he has not inherited the power. If his father was a naba and he wishes to succeed him, he must now solicit the position from the higher naba who is empowered to grant it.

596 Such is the family life of the Mossi. To summarize: marked submission to nabas and family heads, marked freedom toward those who are not in a position of authority. The wives live side by side

belonging to him, he can be relied upon to share with the members of the lineage if this should be necessary.

Capital goods in the form of houses, granaries, and fields are the 613
property of the lineage. Individual rights are limited to temporary use 423
and custodianship but are passed on to others when a general shift in residence and role follows the death of a senior member of the lineage. Although property is passed on in accordance with the rules of descent in the lineage, part of the property redistributed represents the product 428
of the labor of the lineage as a consanguineal kin group. For, as has been 613
indicated, the labor of the wives, who are not lineage members, is as important as that of their husbands and children.

The lineage head discusses the coming year with the other elders, and 241
an over-all production plan is made out. They decide what fields are to 613
be left fallow, what ones are to be planted to cotton and the varieties of millet, what lands may be used by individuals desiring to plant a cash crop, and what, if any, land may be loaned to neighboring lineages or to in-laws. With the approach of the first rains, all economically active men and women go to their fields to prepare them for planting, leaving behind in the village only the old people and the children who are still too small to assist in the fields or tend their fathers' animals.

A considerable portion of the land within the limits of a Mossi village 423
is under the direct control of the village chief (*Tenga Naba*) and the 632
earth custodian (*Tenga Soba*), the local representatives of political and supernatural authority. This land is used for the public way, for the market place, and for burial grounds and latrines. Except for that which is too poor for any purpose, all available land within several miles of a village is put under cultivation.

Ki is the generic name which the Mossi give to the millet, which is the 241
basic product in their economy and which receives the largest single 243
allocation of land and labor of any Mossi economic activity. Two kinds of millet are planted, a large-grained variety (*kenda*) and a small-grained variety (*karua*). Millet is the first crop to be planted after the rains have begun. Small- and large-grained millet seeds are frequently mixed and sown in the same field. Small-grained millet may also be sown in the same field with a white bean (*benga*). A "tired" field may be left fallow for five, ten, or fifteen years. When it is first replanted, it will be seeded to millet for the first three years. The fourth year it may again be put into millet, but if the previous crop was not good, cotton will be planted. Usually, a Mossi farmer plants cotton for two years, millet for three, then groundnuts, more cotton, then two more years of millet. It is 241
believed that cotton renews the soil because of the intensive cultivation [824]
required: the earth is brought up into hillocks and turned over; after picking, the plant may be turned under and left to enrich the soil.

413
323 In order to make this basin the potter takes a kind of earth
[317] called yaoré (the kind from large brown or greyish termite nests). He mixes it with straw and makes this kind of basin, this kind of primitive potter's wheel, called tébélé in Mossi.

2. A kind of short earth pestle, which is held in the fist and called toudoubila.

323 In order to make his canari our potter takes some yarado. To
[428] obtain this kind of clay one must dig at certain spots which are handed down traditionally from father to son. He crushes it with /520/ his pestle in the basin, and then wets it and builds his canari with it, raising the canari like a house wall and making it revolve slowly before him. Incidentally, he only knows how to make small canari.

Those potters who make big jars excavate a sort of large basin in the ground. They use the same short and compact little pestle to work the clay of the canari they are building, but they use a different kind of yarado, the red or reddish kind.

Our potter sells his small canari for 80 to 120 cowries apiece.
[435] He makes them in quantities. People come to him to purchase them, or else he has his wife take them to market.

Skillful potters make four canari a day. Beginners only make two or three.

[435] Large canari are worth 300 cowries apiece.

Those potters who make small canari often make nothing else. Similarly, those who make large canari do not usually make any others. There are some potters who make both kinds, however, for example at Kombisiguiri.

In order to fire the pots, Mossi potters have large round ovens which I have already described. They are completely open at the top, like circular walls 1.50 meters high, with four holes at the bottom. The potters heap up millet stalks within, and lay four canari on top. Upon each of these canari they place others, until the pile reaches the top of the wall. Then they set the millet stalks afire and allow everything to cool off until the following morning.

Every potter does not have his own oven. There is only one
323 oven per quarter. The potters in each quarter get together to build
467 a common oven behind the several soukala. If there are five potters,

596 326 Are those blacksmiths who live in groups unaltered remnants of the ancient population as it existed prior to the Dagomba invasion? Are they autochthonous? Should their statement that they are not Mossi be interpreted in this light? This is probable, although by no means certain. In any case, the family among them is of the purest patriarchal cast.

596 326 592 Among them, all households belonging to a family occupy the same soukala. When a young man marries, he remains in the family soukala.

/543/ During the winter season, the occupants of the soukala work in the fields of the head of the soukala from six in the morning until three in the afternoon. From three o'clock on, they till their own little individual plots.

During the dry season, they all work together at the blacksmith's trade with the head of the soukala, and all profits devolve to the latter. They work from sunrise to sunset.

The head of the soukala provides them with food throughout the year. As for their clothing, they procure it themselves with the returns from their little plots. The same applies to bracelets, jewels, etc. (as for grigris, they do not like them).

The head of the soukala buys each man his first wife, and in return gives in marriage all the daughters of the soukala.

596 428 326 When the head of a soukala dies, it is his younger brother who takes command of the soukala. He also takes all the goods, fields, livestock, slaves, cowries, and the tools used to extract and work the iron. The sons get nothing. Everyone remains in the soukala.

When the supply of brothers has been exhausted, the oldest son in the whole soukala receives the inheritance.

If no males remain in the soukala, the sisters come first in line before the daughters if they have the same father and mother as the deceased, but after /them/ if they were born of the same father only. They take half of the movable property and give half to the daughters. They apportion their share evenly among themselves. The soukala and fields go to the village chief. If there are no sisters born of the same father and mother, the inheritance goes to the daughters, and next in line to the sisters born of the same father as the deceased. If there are neither sisters nor daughters, the whole estate goes to the village chief.

584 To arrange a marriage, one offers gifts to the girl's family on
596 festive days. The gift grows more sizable from year to year. Finally, at the time of marriage, one offers 25 or 30 francs as a bride price.

Girls are also exchanged among families. /545/ One family may pledge one of its daughters to another family for one of its young men, while the second family provides a girl for a boy of the first family.

Even if a man buys a wife at market and has children by her, it is not he but his family head who gives those children in marriage.

If a young man goes himself to a family head, asks for a wife, and obtains her without any payment, without any bride price, it is the girl's father who disposes of the first daughter born of the union. He is entitled to take her with him as soon as she is no longer at the breast, and he will later give her in marriage. The other children are given in marriage by their father's family head.

596 4. The head of the family performs religious sacrifices for the
782 whole family, and acts as its judge.

5. When a family head dies, the headship of the family goes
596 to his younger brother along with the family property, that is,
428 his soukala if it is a family one (built by the family or with the help of the family), the available family fields, the movable family property (livestock, slaves, cowries, clothing, family jewels, etc.). The movable private property of the deceased, on the other hand (livestock, slaves, cowries, clothing, private jewels, etc.) go to the oldest son along with the fields cultivated by the deceased and by his household, that is, the private property of the deceased. Finally, the soukala, if it was built by the deceased all by himself and without the aid of his family, goes to his oldest son as well since it is private property.

The brother who inherits gives some of the movable family property to the other brothers, but only if he feels like doing so.

Here, family property is by far the most important.

Such is the oldest variant of the Mossi family type that prevails at the present day. Actually, this variant still persists in quite a few Mossi localities.

Now, here is the second variant:

592 1. Every household lives separately, works separately (except
596 for the clearing of the family fields), and sees to its own subsistence.

592 People who are thus settled on their own work for themselves and no
596 longer for /546/ their father, with whom they lived and for whom they worked prior to marriage. They nevertheless offer gifts to their father from time to time.

2. As far as the marriage of children belonging to those house-
592 holds is concerned, a distinction must be made among the following
596 possibilities. When they are the children of wives bought by the fam-
584 ily head, it is the latter who gives them in marriage. When they are the children of wives obtained by the husband himself, it is the latter who gives them in marriage.

Or else a rough compromise is made (in Boussouma province, for example). The first son and first daughter of the union are given in marriage by the family head, while the other children are given in marriage by the household.

596 3. It is the head of the family, however, who alone is entitled
782 to offer religious sacrifices for the whole family, and who always acts as its judge.

4. When the head of the family dies, the headship is trans-
596 mitted to his younger brother along with the family property. The
428 private property of the deceased goes to all his sons, but the oldest son is favored. This actually constitutes the difference between this family type and the preceding one as far as inheritance is concerned. While in the preceding type the oldest son alone inherited, in this type all sons inherit but the eldest is heavily favored.

Thus, if the soukala was the private property of the deceased, it goes to the eldest son. If he is able to cultivate them all, the latter also keeps all the fields cultivated by the deceased. If he is not able to do so, he gives the surplus to his brothers.

As for livestock, if there are ten head that belonged privately to the deceased, and if there are three sons and two daughters, the oldest son will get four, each other son will get two, and each daughter will get one.

[56] As for slaves, if the situation is the same, the oldest son will take five out of ten, the second son three, the third son two, and the daughters will get none.

Cowries and grain are apportioned in the same manner.

In addition to these shares given to the younger sons and to the daughters, it must be noted that private property has acquired greater

596 428 significance vis-à-vis family property in this second Mossi family type. /547/ Thus, my informant stresses that here family property still has greater significance than private property, but at the same time he adds that in every inheritance he witnessed, the soukala always went to the oldest son, no matter what its origin. He corroborates this with information about his own family, as follows:

He lives, he says, with five wives, two daughters, two unmarried cousins who are the sons of one of his father's brothers, an unmarried cousin who is the son of one of his father's sisters, a nephew who is the son of his own sister, in short, twelve persons including him.

The soukala where he lives once belonged to his father and was built by the latter alone. He has thus inherited it, even though his father had a younger brother.

Incidentally, the brother got nothing, since my informant's father left nothing beside the soukala, no family property or private worth much.

To whom will the soukala go when he dies? Since he has no son, he replies, it will go to his younger brother (he has a younger brother who lives in a separate soukala). Supposing he had a son, however? Then it would go to his son.

I counter that it should go to his brother, since he did not build it himself but inherited it from his father (that is, from his own and his brother's common father), in accordance with the rule he mentioned earlier. He nevertheless holds, however, that it is not so, that younger brothers never did inherit a soukala, I cannot make him alter his position.

596 423 178 This gives us a living example of how the Mossi family has changed. In the old days, family property went along with the family headship to the younger brother. The soukala, for example, figured in almost every case among the family property, either because the family had given it ready made to the young man, or simply because the family had helped him build it. A soukala was private property only when the young man had built it altogether by himself (a very unusual case). Later, the soukala came to be considered private property when it had been built by the young man

583 591 couscous, which he offers to the relatives. Then he takes the girl away. He asks a neighbor for a hut to harbor the young couple on their wedding night and over the next few weeks. They stay there for only a month or two, until their soukala is built.

583 The bride price actually varies from region to region among the Mossi. We have just seen it range from 2,000 to 50,000 cowries. Earlier, we saw it set at 25,000. At Kombisiguiri it amounts to a mere 1,000. The young man's father visits the young girl's father with a chicken and 500 cowries; then he comes to see him a second time, again with a chicken and 500 cowries. There is no other bride price. Those who do not have a chicken to offer replace it with a bundle of firewood or a straw séko. In short, a girl here is worth 30 sous (the two chickens being worth 0.50 franc between them, and the 1,000 cowries amounting to one franc).

591 Among rich people the young couple may remain seven, nine, or even twelve months in their neighbors' house. They present the [431] latter with gifts, and during this period of time they proceed to build a soukala, or rather to have one built. The young man's father helps his son in this undertaking.

593 The young husband, now settled on his own, will henceforth work on his own account. He has become in turn the head of a 431 soukala, but if he obtains a lot of millet or other grain he offers 626 gifts to his father. If he becomes wealthy and makes no such gifts, the neighbors will insult him. He always makes gifts, therefore, for fear of being insulted. A son who marries, as a rule, builds his soukala as near as possible to that of his father.

593 Finally, let us add that the father usually buys his son's kitchen utensils when the boy settles on his own.

3. When the head of a family dies, the younger brother inevi- 428 tably takes command of the family, but all the property, whatever 593 its nature, goes to the children of the deceased and more especially to his oldest son. There is no longer any family real estate or movable property, or else nothing is regarded as such any longer.

/550/ The eldest son takes his father's soukala and everything that goes with it, fields, slaves, livestock, father's wives. He shares them, however, with his brothers and even with his sisters.

428 As for the soukala itself, he keeps it. He leaves his own
593 soukala, along with everything he owns, to come and live in the soukala of the deceased. In order to put the soukala he is leaving to some use, however, he sends one of his unmarried brothers (that is to say, one who lived up to that time with the deceased) to settle there. He immediately gives this brother one of his father's wives, one of the wives in the estate, and sends him, thus married, to settle in the soukala he is leaving.

593 I asked my informant why the father does not keep his oldest
578 married son with him instead of having him build a new soukala on the outside, since the son returns to the paternal soukala anyway when the father dies. The Mossi chief I was questioning replied that if the father kept his oldest son by his side, the latter, when married and growing older, would wish for his father's death in order to become independent. Wishing for his father's death, he might be tempted to bring it about. If settled in his own soukala, on the other hand, the head of a household and independent, he would nurture no ill thoughts against his father.

593 We shall see later that this feeling of fear and suspicion toward
578 the eldest son is carried to an extreme among the Moro Nabas. This
644 is understandable, since kingship is inherited. Once married, therefore, the eldest son of the prince went far from his father, to a soukala of his own and remained there until the Moro Naba's death.

428 As for the father's fields, the eldest son keeps them all if he is
593 able to work them all. If he is not able to do so, he gives the surplus over and above what he can work to his brothers.

As far as livestock is concerned, the eldest son gives some to his younger brothers and even to his sisters.

The same applies to slaves and cowries.

428 As for wives, if there are many, he gives some to his younger
593 brothers. Thus, for example, if there are ten wives and he has two
587 brothers, he gives two wives to each /551/ brother and keeps six for himself (let us add that the deceased, before dying, often gives a wife to his younger brother or brothers).

428 To summarize, the eldest son gets the soukala and the fields.
593 As for movable property, he takes about 50 percent and leaves the other half to the younger sons and to the daughters. There is a sharing, therefore, although a very uneven one.

428 Actually, those shares vary from region to region among the
593 Mossi. Thus, in certain areas, the oldest son gets the soukala, the
184 fields, two thirds of the livestock, cowries, and money, all the slaves and grain, as well as clothing, jewelry, weapons, horses, etc. The other sons get the remaining goods. The daughters get nothing. As for the wives, the oldest son takes three quarters and the other sons one quarter. In such cases, the eldest son is much more heavily favored than in the cases mentioned earlier.

At Kombisiguiri, this is even more accentuated. The oldest son may keep everything if he wishes. He may also give something to the other sons of the deceased or to the latter's brothers.

In short, at the stage /of evolution/ with which we are dealing, the transmission of property ranges from a complete and absolute law of primogeniture to an uneven sharing heavily tipped toward the eldest son.

593 Let us add that when the eldest son receives an estate, if his
736 brothers are not yet of an age to be married, he keeps them at his home, in his own household (this is why, although Mossi households in principle include only a husband, his wives, children, and slaves, sometimes they also contain young unmarried brothers). In the morning they work for him, and in the afternoon they work their own little plots. The older brother provides them with food at all times, but not with clothes. They must procure their clothing with the returns from their own little plots. When they reach marriageable age, the older brother buys them a wife and helps them settle on their own.

429 When the head of a soukala dies leaving only small sons, his
593 younger brother takes all the property for the time being but saves it for the legitimate heirs. When the eldest son of the deceased has grown up, the brother leaves the soukala and returns to his own former one, taking only his own belongings. /552/ At that time, all the real estate and movable property devolve to the oldest son and partly to the other sons.

If the head of a soukala leaves no sons but only brothers and
428 daughters, the inheritance is shared between his younger brother and
593 his daughters. The younger brother takes the soukala, the fields, and the wives. He leaves his own soukala and settles in that of the deceased, where he brings all his belongings. He puts up either a

458 593 son or a young brother of marriageable age in his former soukala. The daughters, however, get the movable property such as slaves, livestock, grain, cowries, etc. (with the exception of wives).

The oldest daughter takes the largest share. Out of ten beeves she will take six (if there are three daughters, for example) and the two younger daughters will take two each. Out of four slaves she will take two, and the two younger daughters will take one each. Out of 1,000 cowries, the oldest will take 600, the other two 200 each.

The same thing applies if there are no brothers but only daughters and brothers' sons, since the latter have the same rights as their fathers. Thus, it is the eldest son of the younger brother who inherits along with the daughters of the deceased.

593 In this third variant of the Mossi family, in short, the bonds that connect the various households in the family are now of two kinds only:

1. There are the religious bonds, since the head of the entire family remains the high priest of this collectivity.

593 672 2. There are also the judicial bonds (collective responsibility of the family in case of injury done to other people).

"If a man is in debt," says Moulins, p. 34, op. cit. /Monographie du cercle de Ouagadougou/, "his family is held responsible for payment. If he commits a misdemeanor, his family is held responsible for financial reparation.

"If he commits a crime of murder, one of his relatives will be put to death in his place if he has not himself been seized (at least, this is what happened prior to our occupation).

"When the head of the family is served a complaint against one of the individuals under his authority, he appeals first, of course, to the guilty party himself if the latter owns /553/ any property, then to the soukala to which the man belongs, then to the one headed by his nearest relative, etc. Vis-à-vis third parties, however, the family itself, as a whole, is held responsible for reparation.

"The formidable responsibility devolving to the family entails, as its logical counterpart, putting at its disposal, powers sufficient

567 As for the bagaré, they live separately, work for themselves, see to their own subsistence, etc.

Their duties are as follows:

1. To come and work one day a week on their master's field (on that day, as on other days, they provide their own food).

2. To come and work for their master in exceptional circumstances, such as for example when the master gathers all his neighbors to work on his field.

3. To come and greet their master every year after the harvest. They give him a basketful of millet. When the harvest has been poor, they are exempted from this gift.

4. The master may request from his slave chickens, sheep, an ox or a cow. Chickens may not be denied under any circumstances. As for sheep or beeves, the slave may refuse to provide the animal requested, but then he is expected to go and sell it at market right away, and to give half the money to his master. If the slave refuses to go and sell the animal at market, the master has the right to seize his movable property and sell it.

[426] 5. When the master has debts, the bagaré must help him pay them.

● 428 567 As for inheritance, when a bagaré died his master left all the property to the children. The oldest son of the bagaré inherited, but he gave something to the other sons. If there was no son, the younger brother inherited. If the sons were children the younger brother also inherited, at least temporarily. If there were no male heirs, the master inherited the property but gave some to the daughters.

567 In short, the position of the bagaré is more similar to that of /566/ serfs than to that of slaves proper. In this respect, their status is a far cry from the familial status of the slaves we have described up to now, and it is much closer to the status of the Dialonké, [171] Soussou /Susu/, and Foulah slaves of Guinea who are also serfs, work three days a week for their master (six hours a day), and are free the rest of the time on condition of seeing to their own subsistence.

Let us add that since the arrival of the French among the Mossi, 567 the bagaré have gained a considerable amount of freedom. Nowa- 178 days, most of them will not give any of their crops to their master.

567 When a master wants one of the sheep or beeves belonging to his
178 bagaré, the latter refuses to give it, or if he consents to sell the animal at market he gives his master but one-tenth of the cowries paid by the buyer. Nowadays, as a rule, the bagaré only "go
[426] along" when their master's debts are involved, and yet some of them run away with their belongings rather than pay those debts.

567 Let us also add that these slaves, who were mostly of Gourounsi
167 or Boussansé origin, now want to return to their own land, and there is a continuous exodus, slow but sure, of Mossi slaves toward the south. Since the French have strictly forbidden the purchase and sale of slaves, on the other hand, the sources of supply have dried out. All this makes it clear why among the Mossi, as incidentally throughout West Africa, we are progressing toward a slow but certain suppression of slavery and serfdom.

326 In closing, let us say that among the Mossi blacksmiths who
567 live in /special/ quarters or villages and whom we have already mentioned with regard to their patriarchal and nondecommunalized family type, we find true slaves of the common familial type such as we have described up to now, rather than serfs like the bagaré.

These slaves live in the same soukala as their master, whether married or unmarried, trade or house slaves. During the winter season, they all work on the fields of the soukala head from six in the morning to three in the afternoon, with the usual luncheon break. They have small individual plots, which they may work after three o'clock. During /567/ the dry season, they work all day at the blacksmith's trade with their master.

They are provided with food throughout the year by the head of the soukala, but they procure their own clothing, jewelry, grigri, etc. The soukala head buys the first wife for them and disposes of their daughters in return.

567 The estate of a deceased slave goes to his master and to his sons.
428 As far as livestock and cowries are concerned, the master takes half
326 and gives half to the son or sons. As for clothing, bracelets, etc., everything goes to the children. The latter share equally the part of their father's estate that devolves to them.

567 We can see that just as the family type of Mossi blacksmiths
326 bears witness to an older state of affairs, the status of slaves among them also bears witness to the ancient local conditions prior to

634 the nomination of the village chiefs, who were always selected
621 from the family of the preceding chief.

● 428 Let us add that in principle, and all other things being equal,
631 it was the eldest son of the deceased chief who was supposed to succeed his father, and this applied to village chiefs as well as to canton chiefs, province chiefs, and the Moro Naba. This principle ran counter to the true patriarchal principle where the younger brother is always the natural and legitimate heir of the deceased brother. The requirements of a warlike existence had probably forced it upon the Mossi at the time of their conquest of the Dagomba and Mossi territories.

This principle of direct inheritance (rather than collateral inheritance) had been restricted, however, by the powers of higher authorities represented by canton chiefs vis-à-vis village chiefs, province chiefs vis-à-vis canton chiefs, the Moro Naba vis-à-vis the province chiefs, and the electoral college of the high dignitaries vis-à-vis the future Moro Naba. In short, the warriors' principle of inheritance from father to eldest son ruled among the Mossi in the power sphere, but had to give way to the exigencies of government whenever necessary.

631 Let us not believe that the third principle, namely the consent of the people involved, was altogether unknown among the Mossi (the consent of the village inhabitants in the case of a village chief, of the canton notables in the case of a canton chief, of the province notables in the case of a province chief, etc.) This third principle, however, was the least important, the least taken into account, the least actualized from a mere potential. /577/ Whenever it clashed with the others, it had to give way.

635 Let us add that the majority of Mossi chiefs were aided by rep-
634 resentatives called baloum.

"The province chiefs," says the Monographie, "the majority of
624 canton chiefs, and even the chiefs of a few important villages, are aided by one or several baloum or palace masters, whom they choose freely. These are sometimes former captives, but most frequently they are common natives or former soronê, and they are never nakomsê. Their function is not hereditary. It grants them the right to substitute for the naba, to speak and act in his name."

562 When she dies, a woman's property goes to her children. The
428 objects used by women go to the daughters (bracelets, skirt cloths), while other items (animals, etc.) go to the sons. More exactly, the first-born is favored among the sons and the oldest girl among the daughters. If there are no children, the husband does not take anything, and whatever the wife leaves goes to her family, to her sisters and brothers in the first line of descent. Not having had any children by the deceased, the husband would be ashamed to take what she left.

837 Adultery. —The wife owes faithfulness to her spouse. Unfaithfulness, however, is not very important, for unless it occurs repeatedly, it does not usually result in a break. The husband merely beats his wife and scolds her.

837 When the wife has fled to a lover, her husband goes in search of
684 her. The lover will have to provide a sheep (the sheep may be replaced by a goat), a chicken, and two canari of dolo, all of which
782 are to be sacrificed to the ancestors so they will forgive the woman.
769 She cannot re-enter her house until the sacrifice has been performed; without it the ancestors would kill her. They are unbending, more so than the husband to be sure, about the latter's honor. Should a husband know his wife to be guilty and do nothing about it, the ancestors would be furious and they would kill him, hence the necessity for action on the husband's part.

837 If the husband cannot find his runaway wife, the duty of searching
684 for her and bringing her back to him falls to his father-in-law.

Formerly, before the French occupation, if the lover did not want to return the woman, her father appealed to the naba, that is, the chief of the village or canton, or even to the Moro Naba, who sent horsemen to arrest the guilty pair. He restored the wife to her husband and confiscated for his own benefit the lover's animals and millet granaries.

Nowadays, since the French occupation, one appeals to the commanding officer of the circle and to the native provincial court for the wife's return.

684 Sometimes, in the past, the husband killed his wife's lover when
643 he caught him flagrante delicto. He had the right to do so, but this caused him to lose his /246/ wife who became the property of the Moro Naba. The lover's property likewise reverted to the Moro Naba.

684 In any event, the husband did not have the right to kill his wife
643 except when she was caught flagrante delicto, unless he was the
565

567 whenever the master had work to give him. He worked for himself the rest of the time, that is to say, one day out of three during the cultivation period and throughout the dry season when he was not "on duty."

He was fed by the master when he worked for him. When he worked for himself, he procured his own food.

The bingo provided his own clothing, except when he was absolutely incapable of doing so. Then he appealed to his master.

The bingo's daughters were given in marriage by the master, who took them for himself or gave them to his sons, to his brothers, etc. In return, the bingo's sons had to be provided with wives by their master and not by their father. In any case, they worked for him, like their father, and could no more be sold than he could, unless they betrayed the master with his wives.

567 The bingo could own property since he had time to work for him-
●428 self. At his death, his inheritance went not to his master but to his oldest son (unless he had an enslaved brother nearby, but I am considering the case of a former yembraogo, bought by the master, given a wife by him, and thus becoming a bingo, and then having children). At the death of his eldest son /266/ the inheritance went to his younger brother, etc. The master came into the inheritance only when there were no heirs.

567 On the other hand, the master could request from his slave whatever he wished, a chicken, a goat, a beef. The slave could not refuse, since everything belonged to the master on principle, the slave being his also.

The bingo could never free himself or be freed by his master. The number of generations which had elapsed made no difference.

The bingo could belong to the head of a family, the head of a compound, the head of a work group, or to a mere household head. They were owned on an individual basis. When a man who owned a bingo or yembraogo owed labor to another man, for example, to the head of his work group, the bingo or yembraogo likewise owed labor to this man and went to work with his master.

567 It must be noted that the bingo of the Moro Naba, that is, the
644 "Crown bingo," were in a special position from every point of view. As we shall see later under "Public Administration" /not translated/, they came under the authority of the Rassam Naba or Rassoum Naba, one of the four ministers, who was sometimes called Bingo Naba for

428 Now let us deal with the transmission of property or inheritance.
596 Transmission of the property of the total family. —Since such property does not exist, it is not transmitted, except the family charms. The status of family head, however, is transmitted. When a family head dies, it is the oldest remaining man of the family (sometimes his brother, sometimes his cousin, etc.) who takes command of the family.

428 Transmission of the compound and its property. —When the head of
592 a compound dies, it is the oldest man in the compound (brother, cousin, etc.) who takes command of it. At the same time he takes over the management of the property communally owned by the whole compound.

428 Transmission of the property of the work group. —When the head of
571 a work group dies, it is likewise the oldest man in the group (usually the younger brother of the deceased) who assumes leadership and the management of the group's property (fields, work implements, etc.)

Let us note that in all these transmissions, when there are no longer any men of the same generation, then the sons of all the brothers, cousins, etc., are chosen, beginning with the eldest. That is to say, when one generation is exhausted, the next generation is tapped.

428 Transmission of household property. —When a married Mossi who has /271/ children dies, his eldest brother (born of the same father and mother or only of the same father) receives the inheritance. He does not take everything, however. He is expected to share, up to a point, with the other brothers (born of the same father and mother or only of the same father) and with the sons if they are old enough.

The oldest brother takes the huts and the field. The wives, on the other hand, are divided among the brothers and even among the sons if the latter are grown. If the wives are not numerous, the oldest brother does not get any more of them than the other sharers. The livestock is divided among the same people, but this time the largest share goes not to the brother who is unqualifiedly the oldest, but to the oldest brother born of the same father and mother. The cowries, coins, movable property, and jewelry are divided in the same manner. Weapons are apportioned, but the largest share goes to the brother who is unqualifiedly the oldest. The latter takes the dead man's bow and quiver, while dividing the arrows among the brothers and sons without bypassing himself.

As we can see, sharing does take place and is actually quite a complex matter, since it is sometimes the eldest of all the brothers

428 (whether born of the same father and mother or only of the same father) who benefits, and sometimes the eldest brother among those who were born of the same father and mother, but this sharing is very uneven. The two brothers who are the eldest in the senses just described get considerably more than the other cosharers.

428 571 After the distribution, the men usually remain in the same compound and also in the same work group as before. Upon the death of household heads, however, and especially of heads of work groups, the work groups (which have expanded gradually with new births) alter their constitution and divide. These work groups indeed grow constantly (by the natural process of birth) and also dwindle constantly (by the natural process of death and new divisions). As for the zaka, they are not completely stable either since new ones are established as time goes by in proportion to the growth of population.

428 Let us add a few details on inheritance.

Small male children do inherit, but their share is not handed to them. It is handed to the brother who inherits the mother of these children. When they are grown, their mother's new husband will deliver it to them.

[562] Daughters do not inherit.

Women never inherit. On the other hand people do inherit from them.

Transmission of specifically private property. —A case of this type is the inheritance of a wife. As we have seen earlier, the goods of a deceased woman go to her children, sons or daughters. Boys' things go to the boys, girls' things to the girls. All the boys get something, but the oldest son is very much favored. All the girls get something, but the oldest daughter is very much favored. When there are no children, the woman's inheritance goes to her own family and not to her husband or to her husband's family. /272/

Another case of this type is the death of a boy or young man. If he has a brother, the latter inherits. If he has no brother, his father does. Sometimes the father entrusts the goods to the mother to be given to a future child.

In the event of a young girl's death, her sister inherits. If she has no sister, the mother inherits. If the mother died first, her family inherits (that is, the mother's younger sister).

Finally, another case in point is the death of a Mossi bachelor. His brother who inherits or, lacking one, his brother's son.

428 Let us finally add some miscellaneous remarks about inheritance.

848 Concerning the natural child. —"The natural child," says Vadier, "has exactly the same rights as the legitimate child. He inherits from his father or mother concurrently with his brothers and in accordance with the rules we discussed previously." This is correct, but let us not forget that the natural child was sent back to its real father by the legitimate husband as soon as it could leave its mother. Hence, he has all these rights in the household of his actual father and not in that of his mother's husband.

428 Concerning the child in utero. —According to Mossi custom, the child in utero inherits property and is regarded as though it had already left its mother's womb.

Disqualification. —There is cause for disqualification, excluding one from the inheritance. If the deceased was killed, the man who killed him is declared disqualified, but this disqualification does not extend to his children.

Objections to an inheritance. —In cases of ordinary inheritance, if the oldest son is not satisfied with what he received, he may take his grievance to the head of the family who tries to settle the matter. In the event that he does not succeed, the naba intervenes. Such an objection on the part of the eldest son is very unusual. The brothers of the deceased and the other sons cannot object, for only the eldest son has the right to do this.

Wills. —No wills are made, either in theory or in practice. Custom reigns supreme. Sometimes a brother who has some grievance against his brothers decides solemnly before he dies that all his property will go to his sons, but this is a purely platonic manifestation. The dying man is allowed to speak as he pleases, and then, once he is dead and buried, nothing is done about it. One acts in accordance with tradition which asserts itself upon all concerned and overrules, by its own dictates, the special wishes of the deceased.

Acceptance and waiver. —They do not exist here. Custom does not allow people to shirk the exercise of their rights, which are at the same time duties.

428 Restorations. A Mossi is free to dispose of his own property as he
431 sees fit while he is alive, but it is understood that he must give the item before his death for the gift to be effective and acknowledged as such.

428 As a result, an heir may come into his share of the inheritance through a gift received during the lifetime of the deceased.

431 /273/ Gifts inter vivos. —A Mossi may, while alive, give away whatever he pleases of his own property.

Since he is absolute master of these goods and thus entitled to use them as he sees fit, no one has the right to question the gifts he makes.

421 Incidentally, let us recall that heads of families, compounds, work groups, and households are only the managers and not the owners, in the Roman sense, of the family, zaka, work group, or household property, respectively. As for private, individual goods on which the jus utendi et abutendi may be exercised, we know what they amount to among the Mossi. In practice, moreover, the Mossi are far from taking much advantage of this theoretical right. Here, nevertheless, we are concerned with theory, and the following rules pertain to it.

431 A gift made inter vivos must be made before several witnesses in order to be valid.

No special status is required in order to receive a gift.

The wife possesses the same rights as the husband. The gift will [837] nevertheless be worthless if it is proved that the beneficiary is or was her lover.

596 We are now finished with the Mossi family.

To summarize, as we already stated earlier, this family is communal and patriarchal.

Its communalism, however, is quite unstable. People live, not in family groups, but in family subgroups (the zaka). They work, not in family subgroups, but in sub-subgroups (the work groups). In former times, the zaka may have been a community of labor as well as a community of habitation. As we shall see later /not translated/, this is now the case among the Foulsé or Nioniossé /Nyonyose/, where sometimes it is the zaka that constitutes the community of labor and sometimes it is the work group, and where there seems to be an evolution from the former state of affairs to the latter.

As for patriarchy, it is very clearly defined and established. The family revolves around the man and not around the woman. As I have stated, certain signs induce us to believe that the Mossi family, like the Sudanese family in general, was once matriarchal in the very distant past. At all events, this has long ceased to be the case, and we are dealing now with an unstable communalism paired with clearly defined patriarchy.

9:Skinner E-5 (1955-1957)1960 FA28 Mossi FA28

631
643 the sons of the ruling family, the *nakomces*, formed a noble class, above
565 classes of commoners, serfs, and slaves. Classed among the commoners in many villages were the descendants of former district chiefs who had been deposed by the Moro Nabas. The reason that the rulers gave for the deposal of district chiefs was always disloyalty; but everyone recognized that this was an excuse whereby the reigning sublineage deposed older branches and provided positions for its cadet or collateral branches.

631 The governing hierarchy of the Mossi was a lineage with its com-
613 ponent minor and minimal branches. Like most lineages, this ruling lineage possessed an ideology that all of its members had equal access to its corporate assets. The most important asset of this lineage was, of course, its sovereignty, its right to rule. The *nam* is the symbol of Mossi sovereignty and is described by them as "that force of God which enables a mere man to rule over other men." The *nam* was the possession of Wedraogo, the group's founder, and of Moro Naba Wubri, the first ruler of Wagadougou, and this possession became the patrimony of all their descendants. This being the case, the ruling chief of any village, district, principality, or kingdom did not own the *nam* of that area; he was considered the temporary holder of it, and on his death it reverted to the collective descendants of the royal ancestors.
[428 A man did not have the right to pass the *nam* on to any person because
424] it was not his. Whenever a Mossi chief was being considered for office his commoner electors asked him the following questions: "Before his death, did Naba X designate anyone to replace him as chief?" This question was asked three times, and the candidate responded three times: "No! The Naba did not designate anyone. You may name anyone you wish; even if he is a blind man or a leper."

In actuality, this vaunted equality of access to the *nam* by all members of the ruling lineage was a legal fiction. And despite the fact that all the nobles declared that they could go to Wagadougou to seek the *nam* whenever a chief died, in reality only the members of the dead chief's minimal lineage (often the descendants of his grandfather) presented themselves as candidates. Indeed, of all the candidates, the eldest son of the dead ruler was the one most often chosen to be

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all the chaos would come a new appreciation for the task of the chief, and a cessation of the grumbling that the chiefs were greedy.

The Mossi interregnum also served another purpose. It gave the electors the opportunity to exhaust and redistribute much of the patrimony of the dead ruler, which was brought to them by his heirs who were trying to obtain the chieftainship through bribery. Sometimes, a candidate's ability to collect a great deal of goods with which to press his suit often revealed to the electors the strength of his following in the district or village, for had he been an unpopular man he would have had to use only his own resources.

The Mossi electors were always concerned with the health and character of a potential chief, and turned down the most promising candidates who were deficient in any of these qualities. For example, when Moro Naba Sanum died in 1890 without leaving a male heir, his younger brother, Bokary Koutou, was the strongest candidate for the *nam*. Yet he was passed over, at first, by the electors because of his reputation as a bandit and a rebel. We know from Captain Binger, a Frenchman who met Bokary in 1888, that this prince was indeed a bandit and a slave raider. But Binger, although deploring Bokary's conduct, exonerated him on the grounds that the Moro Naba had sent him into exile without any means of support. This was true, but the reason that Moro Naba Sanum did so was because Bokary had raised a rebellion against him as an attempt to obtain their father's position. Bokary was forbidden to appear in the capital; but when he heard that his brother Sanum was dead, he took a force of soldiers and hurried to Wagadougou fearing that an attempt would have been made to prevent his election. When he found that his fears were justified, he became desperate and secreted a force of Gurunsi warriors around the elector's meeting place, threatening to kill them if he was not named Moro Naba. They succumbed to his threat and he received the *nam*. During the customary speech in which a new ruler chose his official name, announced his program for the people and the country, or ridiculed his erstwhile competitors, Bokary Koutou said: "A hundred ghosts cannot frighten an elephant (Wobogo)," meaning that he was not afraid of any of his enemies. He thereafter became known as Moro Naba Wobogo, and he chose to live up to his boast when the French arrived and asked him to sign a treaty of protection with them. He refused

10:Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1964 FA28 Mossi FA28

tween the Mossi and several other ethnic groups. In each instance the structural relationship in which joking occurs is characterized by the five features listed above.

Joking with the Mother's Brother

The relationship with a maternal uncle is marked by all five of the structural features mentioned. Separation results from the rules of patrilineal descent and inheritance rules, from patrisib exogamy, and from the general observance of patrilocal residence. The relationship is reciprocal in that a mother's brother serves throughout Ego's life as an important alternative source of emotional, economic, and social support: he often acts as intermediary in disputes between Ego and his parents or the elders of his lineage; he gives Ego frequent gifts; and residence in the mother's patriclan is the most frequent alternative to patrilocality. In turn Ego, as a result of the permissive relationship he enjoys with the spirits of his deceased cognatic kinsmen, often serves their living descendants as an intermediary in their ritual efforts to maintain a secure relationship with the ancestral spirits.

Ambivalence between Ego and his mother's brother and her other kin results from the conflicting sources of "conjunction" and "dissociation" just mentioned. The conflict between a strong affective bond—a "feeling" of kinship—and a system of inheritance which denies it jural recognition generates frustration. The ambivalence in the relationship is manifested not only by joking, which is asymmetrical—with Ego being the more aggressive—but by theft as well. Perhaps as partial compensation for his inability to inherit matrilaterally, Ego is permitted to steal his mother's brother's property during his lifetime and can also make off with the beer and some of the animals collected for his funeral.

As for equality of status, the descent groups of Ego and mother's brother are structurally equivalent. Although their respective positions within these two groups differ, the permissiveness of Ego's relationship to his maternal uncle absolves him from recognition of the canons of comportment that otherwise prevail among the Mossi in relations between persons of differing status. Indeed, disregard for such status differences is part of the "joke." Independence is assured by the fact that Ego and his mother's brother are members of autonomous descent groups and that each is responsive only to the authority of his respective lineage elders.

Joking with a Mother's Brother's Wife

Joking between Ego and his mother's brother's wife is to be regarded as a separate relationship because of her nonmembership in the mother's brother's descent group, but certain of the structural circumstances are similar. The source of separation from the mother's brother's wife is evident. The reciprocal tie that unites them is indirect; when Ego is received warmly in his mother's brother's household it is the wife of the latter who prepares the food he is given. Similarly, as a member of her husband's patriclan, she benefits

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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tion made by the Mossi between kinship and sovereignty within their governmental system. Kinship was the basis on which the ruling class was formed. However, sovereignty itself, although associated with kinship, was not unalterably linked with it. When a ruling Mossi kin group held the nam, its subgroups were linked by bonds of prestige. But once this group lost the nam or access to the nam, its component subgroups began to drift away. That this situation could exist shows the true nature of the relationship between sovereignty and kinship within the Mossi political system. 602 778

There were other chiefs in Mossi districts who had never had either a lineal or a collateral relationship with any lineage of the ancient royal clan.[8] These men were the descendants of provincial ministers. They became chiefs for the same reasons that the sons of ruling sovereigns became chiefs. When a Mogho Naba sent his sons to replace deposed district chiefs, the young men were usually accompanied by a full complement of administrators. These administrators, mostly younger sons of administrators at Ouagadougou who would not normally succeed their fathers, often automatically replaced the administrators of the former chiefs. But if, for reasons of administrative efficiency, the new chiefs elected to retain the administrators of their predecessors, they assigned village chieftainships to the newcomers. They might also settle them in independent hamlets and furnish them with wives and slaves. For chiefs in this category, kinship did play an initial role in the accession to power; but since they were not related to the district chief, they never gained noble status. Socially, they were comparable to chiefs who were former nobles; as in the latter's case, their kinship ties with the administrators at Ouagadougou gradually lost their significance. 602 554 634 657

There were yet other kinds of chiefs or men who rated the title Naba in Mossi districts. They included: the descendants of aboriginal chiefs, the chiefs of alien groups, and the chiefs of the Mossi refugee groups that had left other districts because of disputes over the nam. In districts where there were large groups of the autochthonous Ninisi, there were Ninisi "chiefs"; in most cases, however, these "chiefs" were really the senior Tengsobadamba of the villages. In most other districts, the sole Ninisi "chief" was the official Tengsoba of the district chief. This man had ritual power but no political power. Yet he was called Naba, because the Mossi thought that all persons in positions of command or prominence must be named chiefs. Villages made up of aliens (Busansi, Gurunsi, Yarse, and occasionally Fulani) had chiefs in the true sense of the word. These men were granted access to the nam by the district chiefs, and their 634 [778] [428]

[428] power and authority were inherited by their families in the same manner as among Mossi lineages.

634 The last important category of Mossi chiefs included men who ruled
622 over slave and serf villages. These men were themselves the descendants of slaves and serfs, for no free-born Mossi were placed in such posts. Needless to say, these chiefs were never lineally or collaterally related to the
[602] district chiefs, and therefore were never nobles. However, they might be affinally related to district chiefs, and in such cases the relationship was often of some political value.

It must be emphasized that once a man was made chief, he was respected, if not honored, by all the people of the district. In some districts, the Dapore Naba and the Baglere Naba, chiefs of two categories of serfs, were among the most valued assistants of the Kombere Naba. The only
[565] people who sometimes refused to honor the village chiefs were the nakomce,
[778] who were the holders of the district nam. Nevertheless, they were censored by the Kombere if they were disrespectful to his subordinates. No district chief could allow his government to be jeopardized by the maltreatment of persons who served it. In any conflict between the nam and the kin group, the supremacy of the nam was always maintained.

613 Every Mossi ruler, whether he held the nam of a kingdom, principality,
631 district, or village, was *ipso facto* also *Boodkasma* (literally, "family head")
622 of the local segment of his boodoo. The word boodoo refers to patrilineal groups that anthropologists would normally call clans, maximal lineages, major lineages, or minor lineages. The Mossi do not make any terminological distinction between these levels of their segmentary lineage system. Nevertheless, they recognize and use the status differences between these units to limit the access of each unit to the corporate assets of the boodoo. Their major social distinction is drawn between the minor lineage, which is also called boodoo, and its component minimal lineages. Each minimal-
[596] lineage unit is called a *babissi* (literally, "father's brother"), and is really a large extended family composed of relatives who had a common ancestor, three, four, or at most five generations ago.

643 The Mogho Naba, for example, was head of his babissi as well as ex
613 officio head of the entire royal clan. Those rulers who claimed equality with him claimed that they, not he, were the true heads of the royal clan and the "direct" descendants of Ouedraogo and Oubri. As a function of their political position, the many princes and district chiefs were heads of their own babissi and of the maximal lineage to which their babissi be-
631 longed. Like the Mogho Naba, they were the ex officio heads of all members
613 of their boodoo who lived in their territory and who claimed descent from the same royal ancestors,

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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fied his sexual desires. Since these women were in the monarch's favor, they were better dressed than the other wives and received more attention from him. The dogunba generally cultivated a large field in common with the aid of the palace retainers, but some insisted on cultivating their own fields instead. Like the other wives, the dogunba usually lived in huts of their own. Childless women sometimes shared the same hut until one of them became pregnant and had to set up a hut for herself and her child. 644 595 [342] [591]

Those wives who lived in special villages under the supervision of eunuchs rarely went to the palace. Usually, they were past childbearing age or had lost favor with the monarch. They cultivated plots of land, spun cotton, and prepared locust-bean flour, locust-bean "balls," and shea butter. They kept a part of the produce for their own use and sent the remainder to the palace stores; the same arrangement obtained for all three categories of palace wives.

The Mogho Naba's heir was usually born while his father was still Crown Prince. He was never born in his father's compound because, unlike other Mossi women, the wife of a Mogho Naba or Crown Prince returned to her father's house for confinement. As soon as she announced her pregnancy, the Pughtiema or one of the older wives held a ceremony to notify the ancestors. Once the rite had been completed, the wife was sent to her relatives for fear that she might be harmed by her less fortunate co-wives. If the child was a boy, the ruler or Crown Prince was notified immediately, because the important privileges of a first-born hinged upon this notification. Since several wives of the Mogho Naba might be pregnant at the same time and errors might be made about the onset and duration of pregnancy, primogeniture had to be established immediately to forestall dynastic conflicts. For example, it is commonly believed that the present Doulougou Naba was born several days before Mogho Naba Sagha II (1942–57) but was deprived of the nam because the messenger who brought news of his birth reached Mogho Naba Kom after the messenger who announced Sagha's birth. Undoubtedly, such allegations were sometimes used to foster and support dynastic rebellions. 644 595 843 428 643 [578]

So strong was the fear that the most likely heir to the nam would be harmed by jealous co-wives that the child and his mother never returned to the palace except for brief visits on ceremonial occasions. The young prince remained with his mother's relatives and was guarded and educated by servants sent from the palace. If his father was on the throne at Ouagadougou when the boy reached the age of ten, he was formally installed as chief of Djiba district, the traditional seat of the Crown Prince. If his father was not on the throne, the boy remained with his mother's relatives and went to Djiba when his grandfather died and his father was installed as Mogho Naba.

The following case, tried in a district court in 1956, 691
illustrates the Mossi 685

concept of justice. To reach the central market, the people of Donse village 634
used a path that ran across the fields belonging to two of their fellow villagers, Zami and Isa. The path was normally open all year round, even during the planting season, because neither man wished to inconvenience the villagers. But one day the two men quarreled, and shortly thereafter Isa announced his decision to close his path during the planting season. He said he feared that "people would steal his growing crops" if he left it open. Moreover, he wanted to use the path to increase his planting area. Zami objected to what he considered an insult, and, believing that Isa had violated a customary rule, used the path. In doing so, he crushed several stalks of millet. Isa witnessed his action, and the men came to blows. When the village chief proved unable to reconcile them, they were brought before the district court.

The district chief ruled that according to Mossi custom, a man could 695
close a path during the planting season to prevent people from stealing his 691
crops. But if he closed a path, he had to provide an alternative route, for no 685
one had the right to restrict the movements of others. The chief sympa- 634
thized with Isa over the small size of his field, but insisted that he provide a path across or around it. However, he persuaded Zami to let Isa use a portion of his land in compensation for the new path.

The chief tried to reconcile the interests of Isa and Zami with those of the entire village. He apparently felt that reconciliation was more useful than judgment. He did uphold the law that the right of passage is mandatory, but also maintained that a man has the right to protect his property from potential thieves. At the same time, he made it clear that although a man may defend his own rights, he may not do so by infringing upon the rights of others.

The same principles seem to have been upheld in the following case, 691
also recorded in 1956, which is interesting because it illustrates the flexi- 428 ●
bility of Mossi law. A man named Hammadou died, leaving fifteen cows as his legacy. Moussa, his eldest son and principal heir, distributed the cows among his father's other sons and male relatives, but did not give any to his father's daughter. Strictly speaking, he was right to exclude her, because a [562]
woman was not supposed to inherit any of her father's property unless he had no living lineal or collateral relatives. In practice, however, a daughter always received part of her father's legacy, especially if he had been wealthy. Hammadou's daughter therefore felt slighted, and when she received no redress from Moussa or her other male relatives, she had the case taken to the village chief. He could not resolve it, and referred it to the district chief. [692]

When Moussa was called before the district chief, he explained that his [634]

691 father had given the woman a silver bracelet before he died, and that the
428 babissi felt that this was sufficient, since she had a husband to provide for
634 her. Furthermore, Moussa said that the inheritance had already been distributed, and that any redistribution would impose a hardship on all concerned.

695 Interpreting the inheritance law according to common practice, the chief
691 ruled that the milk from a man's cattle was for *all* his children, regardless
428 of sex, and that the fact that the father had formerly given the daughter a
634 bracelet should not have influenced the distribution of the inheritance. The chief stated that the woman should receive at least one cow, and that if the defendant did not agree, he (the chief) would recall all the animals and supervise their distribution. He did not feel that he had to state the principles by which he had reached his judgment, for the consensus among the people of the district was that the heir was trying to take advantage of the law for his own selfish interests. Rather than appeal to Ouagadougou, Moussa and his babissi accepted the verdict.

671 On the basis of these and other cases, we are led to the conclusion that the Mossi felt that law and the judicial process should serve to reconcile people and to maintain what was commonly considered to be social justice.

634 Most of the cases at the district court were tried in the same manner as
692 those cited above. Cases involving relations between men and women were
684 the most common. This is paradoxical, because the district chief tried to avoid any involvement with such cases. For every domestic case tried by
593 the district chief, five others were sent back to the village or lineage level. Even so, it is estimated that about 80 per cent of the cases tried by Mossi district chiefs ultimately concerned women. The most common case of this type was the alleged refusal of a woman to return to her husband.[8] If the judge found that another man had encouraged her to leave her husband, he ordered her to return to him and warned her and the man about the possibility of serious difficulty with her husband's relatives. On the other hand, if the chief found that the woman had left a cruel husband who threatened to harm her or her relatives, he warned the husband not to carry out his threats. The Mossi had no bride price; thus, a woman's family was not faced with the problem of restitution. Sometimes, an angry husband did demand that his wife's family return the gifts (*pogopossum*, "thanks for the woman") he had given them from time to time—e.g., at funerals—and they complied.

684 Adultery cases were next in frequency at the district court. A man con-
692 victed of adultery with another man's wife was either warned to leave her
634 alone or fined a sheep or a goat. He was also liable to be put in stocks for

631 because of this delinquency, the Mogho Naba might hesitate to come to
651 the aid of any of his vassals if a general war broke out. It is true that the
643 Mogho Naba did not aid the Yatenga ruler when the French arrived.
114 But whether this was because of his failure to pay taxes, or because the
[648] French conquest of the Yatenga coincided with a civil war there, we shall
[669] probably never know. We do know that many of the Mogho Naba's vassals came to his aid when the French finally arrived at Ouagadougou. It is my opinion that the gifts exchanged between Yatenga and Ouagadougou were not "tributary," but were more in the nature of tokens of friendship between two peers.

643 The Mogho Naba and his provincial ministers also received revenue as
645 a function of their judicial roles. The nature and disposition of the fines
692 levied against legal offenders were discussed in Chapter V. The Mogho
651 Naba's fees came in the form of the traditional gifts the litigants gave him
[431] even before their cases were tried. These gifts were never regarded as bribes, for this would have contradicted the Mossi axiom that "the truth is at Ouagadougou."

643 The Mogho Naba inherited all the property of the Kamsaogho Naba,
651 and claimed all the property of district chiefs who died without close rela-
634 tives. He also received inheritance taxes (fado) from the estates of deceased
768 district chiefs. In collecting the fado, the Mogho Naba first retained the
[428] horse on which the messenger came to announce the chief's death. He reciprocated by sending envoys with cowries and animals to be offered to their common ancestors at the chief's funeral. After the funeral, the envoys claimed the dead chief's quiver of arrows to take to Ouagadougou for deposit with those of other dead chiefs. Then they demanded the fado, and jestingly told the heirs that the Mogho Naba would be satisfied with nothing less than "a thousand of everything" (*tusri bumbu fa*) the deceased had possessed: wives, slaves, horses, cows, goats, chickens, articles of clothing, and so on. The heirs pleaded poverty and jokingly gave the envoys a few old and sickly animals, old chickens, tattered pieces of clothing, etc. Eventually, they handed out the fado, which usually consisted of livestock, clothing, food, weapons, jewelry, cowries, and even slaves. Lastly, they gave the envoys the chief's ceremonial horse and presents for themselves.

643 The Mogho Naba and his ministers collected a considerable amount of
645 revenue from the traders who visited Ouagadougou and the larger market
651 towns and village markets throughout the kingdom.[8] The Mossi (especially
439 the assimilated Yarse) were good traders, and they benefited from their
[487] country's strategic location between the Sahara and the forest regions. According to Barth, some six caravan routes crossed the country, linking

428 When the head of a household dies, he leaves an inheritance of varying magnitude. No one touches it until the day of kouré. As soon as the festivities are over, the eldest son summons the head of the family and all his uncles, brothers, and sisters. The partition of the property must be carried out. Theoretically, the whole inheritance, all the women, cattle, and cowries, belongs to the eldest son if he is married [429] or of marriageable age. If he is too young, one of the younger brothers of the deceased must act as his guardian, administer the property, and transfer it to his nephew when he comes of age. Of course, the uncle squanders his ward's property. If the deceased leaves no male heirs, the inheritance devolves to his eldest daughter. If he has no children, /76/ his younger brother, or if there is none, the son of his oldest brother, inherits the property. The oldest brother himself never inherits, except in the case of a naba; in such a case, if there is no other heir, the oldest brother comes into the fortune.

428 587 Although in theory the oldest son is the absolute master of all his father's property, in reality he must share part of it. If he has younger brothers of marriageable age, he gives them one of his father's wives. Every brother who inherits a wife must shave her head. If she refuses to have this done, it means that she does not want this new husband. 428 If the heir's brothers are too young, he gives them some livestock, cattle, sheep, goats. If the inheritance is sufficient to allow it, the uncles also get their share. No one may force the eldest son to share the property. He may state point blank that he intends to keep everything, but this will cause him difficulties and create enemies, especially if his father has squandered a nephew's fortune. Upon his uncle's death, a nephew defrauded of his father's property reminds his cousin of the matter and requests indemnities, which are usually granted in the form of wives or livestock.

428 592 The new heir becomes head of the household in his turn and often inhabits his father's soukala; sometimes he builds himself another one. He is now his own master, subject only to the family head, while his unmarried sisters and younger brothers come under his jurisdiction. He has inherited the property, but he has not inherited the power. If his father was a naba and he wishes to succeed him, he must now solicit the position from the higher naba who is empowered to grant it.

596 Such is the family life of the Mossi. To summarize: marked submission to nabas and family heads, marked freedom toward those who are not in a position of authority. The wives live side by side

428 Actually, those shares vary from region to region among the
593 Mossi. Thus, in certain areas, the oldest son gets the soukala, the
184 fields, two thirds of the livestock, cowries, and money, all the slaves and grain, as well as clothing, jewelry, weapons, horses, etc. The other sons get the remaining goods. The daughters get nothing. As for the wives, the oldest son takes three quarters and the other sons one quarter. In such cases, the eldest son is much more heavily favored than in the cases mentioned earlier.

At Kombisiguiri, this is even more accentuated. The oldest son may keep everything if he wishes. He may also give something to the other sons of the deceased or to the latter's brothers.

In short, at the stage /of evolution/ with which we are dealing, the transmission of property ranges from a complete and absolute law of primogeniture to an uneven sharing heavily tipped toward the eldest son.

593 Let us add that when the eldest son receives an estate, if his
736 brothers are not yet of an age to be married, he keeps them at his home, in his own household (this is why, although Mossi households in principle include only a husband, his wives, children, and slaves, sometimes they also contain young unmarried brothers). In the morning they work for him, and in the afternoon they work their own little plots. The older brother provides them with food at all times, but not with clothes. They must procure their clothing with the returns from their own little plots. When they reach marriageable age, the older brother buys them a wife and helps them settle on their own.

429 When the head of a soukala dies leaving only small sons, his
593 younger brother takes all the property for the time being but saves it for the legitimate heirs. When the eldest son of the deceased has grown up, the brother leaves the soukala and returns to his own former one, taking only his own belongings. /552/ At that time, all the real estate and movable property devolve to the oldest son and partly to the other sons.

If the head of a soukala leaves no sons but only brothers and
428 daughters, the inheritance is shared between his younger brother and
593 his daughters. The younger brother takes the soukala, the fields, and the wives. He leaves his own soukala and settles in that of the deceased, where he brings all his belongings. He puts up either a

593 861 858 The right to discipline a child belongs principally to the father (but also to the heads of work group, compound, and family) or to the mother, depending on the age of the child.

"The mother," says Vadier, "has the right to discipline boys until they are circumcised, girls until they marry. This does not mean that the father cannot intervene during that time to reprimand or chastise one of his children, but that he nearly always leaves it to the mother.

"After the boy's circumcision and the girl's marriage, the right to punish belongs to the father and no longer to the mother."

593 858 672 The duty of surveillance belongs principally to the father, and secondly to the heads of the work group, compound, and family. One of its consequences is financial liability. If a child steals or commits some reprehensible act which may call for compensation, the father is primarily responsible and must indemnify the injured parties, after seizing whatever property the child may own.

593 858 643 Formerly, when a native could not manage to discipline a son or daughter whose behavior was very bad, he would hand the child over to the Moro Naba after consulting the family head and the family council. From that day forward he would give up his paternal authority, and the Moro Naba alone would hold it with broader prerogatives. If the child continued to commit extortion, the Moro Naba had the right to have him put to death. When it was a girl who was handed to the naba, the latter would give the father a woman of his own household in exchange if he happened to be favorably disposed toward him.

Now, since the French occupation, this is no longer done. In such cases, nowadays, the child is simply expelled from the compound and from the household.

858 593 A father could not give his child as security, nor could he pawn him temporarily as a slave.

593 429 858 Paternal authority is relinquished in two cases, actually very infrequent: (1) when the father goes insane; and (2) when he has committed incest.

In such a case, paternal authority passes to his oldest living brother, or, if there is no brother, to the oldest son. This guardian has exactly the same powers over the child as the father had.

858 In case of insanity, the children are required to help their father and mother /258/ and to attend to their needs. In case of incest, they have no obligations toward the guilty party.

881 adorned, they go in a group to greet the mother of each one in turn,
304 but they do not go out into the village like the boys.

In short, among the Mossi and Foulsé of Yatenga, circumcision and excision are not characterized by the intervention of any powerful religious society like the komo among the Bambara and among the Mandé in general. Nor do we find here those picturesque details which are so strikingly present among the Malinké of Upper Guinea and even more so among the tribes of Lower Guinea (Soussou /Susu/, Landouman /Landuma/, etc.) (3). Nevertheless, circumcision is

3. On this topic, see André Arcin, La Guinée française /French Guinea/, pp. 438-446, and Noirot, A travers le Foutah-Djallon et le Bambouk /Across the Fouta Djallon and Bambouk/, concerning the Landouman.

important in the lives of the Mossi and Foulsé of Yatenga, because it transforms the child into a young man.

591 After circumcision. —Following circumcision or excision, only marriage remains. When a girl married, as we have seen above, she leaves her compound and goes to her husband's residence. The young man, however, remains in his own compound. He is given a cabin, a hut, for himself and his bride if there is one available and empty, or a new one is built for him. When he has a child, he builds a hut near his own for the young mother and son, unless he is given another one which is available.

884 Emancipation and coming of age. —One can scarcely speak of emancipation and coming of age among the Mossi. A man comes of age when he marries, but he always remains a minor to some extent vis-à-vis his work group, his compound, and his family. Emancipation /262/ and coming of age are French concepts which have no equivalent among the Mossi in particular and the Sudanese in general. One might acknowledge, however, as does Vadier in his monograph on Yatenga, a sort of coming of age around the age of 17 or 18 for purposes of buying and selling.

429 Guardianship. —When a Mossi dies, his wives and children revert to his oldest brother. If there are many wives and children, they are apportioned among the brothers of the deceased. The head of the family presides over the distribution.

●429 If the deceased has no brother or grown son, the family head apportions the children among various members of the family.

The guardian has the same obligations toward his ward and enjoys the same rights over them as did their deceased father. By the same token, the wards have the same duties toward their guardian as they did toward their father.

The child inherits from his guardian just like the latter's legitimate children.

[672] Like the father, the guardian is liable for damages caused by his ward.

597 Adoption. —Adoption occurs in Yatenga.

When two spouses have no progeny (this is quite unusual) or simply fail to have any right away, they sometimes adopt a child. The child must be taken into their family. Adoption does not require any formalities.

The child, adopted at a very young age, is never consulted.

The matter is adjusted between the adoptive father, the child's father, and the family head.

Either a girl or boy may be adopted, but actually boys are adopted for the most part.

From the day of his adoption the child enters the household of his adoptive father and mother as a legitimate child.

Actually, this manner of adoption differs from the French one in that it is limited to the family, to the total family.

In addition to this method of adoption and pertaining to the same category, let us point out a curious custom among the Mossi.

The oldest son, according to custom, must not be brought up by his father. As soon as he leaves his mother's breast or sometimes following circumcision, he is handed over to the /father's/ younger or older brother, who raises him and gives him a wife. Upon the death of his father, however, he comes into the latter's inheritance and thus does not really leave the household to which he was born.

672 Interdiction. —"Only the insane are subject to interdiction," says Vadier.

"When a native is afflicted with insanity, the family head and other members of the family meet to discuss the case of the sick person. If he is recognized as irresponsible, the head of the family has all the inhabitants of the village warned to have no dealings with him. Indeed, according to custom, no one /263/ could be held civilly liable for agreements made by a native afflicted with insanity.

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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175 fitto, levied upon each ass by the petty chiefs on the road is very consider-
437 able. From 5,000 to 6,000 guro, or kola nuts, constitute an assload.
435 Selga, the market place for this important article, being, it appears, a
[651] most miserable town, where even water is very scarce and can only be
[346] purchased at an exorbitant price, the merchants always manage to make their stay here as short as possible, awaiting the proper season in Yendi, a town said to be as large as Timbuktu, or in Kulfela, the great market place of Mosi; and they are especially obliged to wait in case they arrive at the beginning of the rainy season, there being no kola nuts before the latter part of the Kharif. The price of this nut in Timbuktu varies from 20 to
[239] 100 shells each, and it always constitutes a luxury; so that, even on great festivals, alms consisting of this article are distributed by the rich people of the town. (Barth 1859 : II, 364)

175 The other data we have on prices paid for goods come from the
43 period between 1890 and 1910, at which time French francs had been introduced. At this time the official value of one franc was 1,000 cowries. Around 1904, a trader paid about 50 francs or 50,000 cowries for a head of cattle in Mossi country and sold it for about double the price at Salaga. With the proceeds of this transaction he bought kola nuts at the rate of one franc or 100 cowries per hundred. Thus with the sale of one cow a trader could obtain 10,000 kolas, these being valued at about 500 francs or 500,000 cowries in Mossi country and at 20 or 200 cowries each at Sarfere and Timbuktu (Marc 1909 : 173–4). At Timbuktu about this same period, 1895, traders could buy salt at about 30 francs for a slab weighing between 60 and 100 pounds and sell it for 45 francs at Sarafere, for 60 francs at Djenne, for between 70 and 80 francs at San, and "thus progressively more until they reached Mossi country" (Dubois 1899 : 276). In 1910, Mossi traders bought cattle for about 40 to 100 francs, horses for about 90 francs, donkeys for 25 francs, and so on, and sold these animals in Salaga for three times the prices. There they bought kolas at 2 Fr. 50 per thousand, and sold them at 20 per thousand at Leo on the Mossi border, 35 francs per thousand at Wagadougou, 50 francs at Wahigouya, 60 francs at Saravere, and 100 francs per thousand at Timbuktu. Here these traders bought bars of salt weighing about 75 pounds for between 10 and 12 francs a piece, and sold them for between 40 to 60 francs at Wahigouya, and for from 80 to 100 francs a piece at Dedougou and points as far down as Wagadougou (Tauxier 1917 : 221).

175 Not all the profit from this trade went into the pockets of the
437 traders. We have the report of Binger that the chiefs, besides com-
486 mandering the goods at less than one-hundredth their purchase
651 price, received taxes on each caravan which passed through their territory.

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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The migrants bring back all types of goods with them. According 439
to Dufour: "Money as such is not brought back in very large pro- 167
portion because manufactured products of the English colony (Gold Coast) cost less. Consequently, each year there is a great introduction of bicycles, sewing machines, fabrics". (Dufour 1956 : 140). One might add to this list kerosene lamps, zinc buckets, all types of wearing apparel, and all manner of household goods. An inventory of the common trunk of two returning migrants revealed the following merchandise: two kerosene lamps, two bottles of kerosene, two burnoose of black serge trimmed with pink silk, one white burnoose, two blue shirts, two khaki shorts, two tubes of Thermogene (a medicated rub), eight women's headkerchiefs, two Moslem fezes, two hand mirrors, two jars of Vaseline petroleum jelly, two pairs of sandals, one black scarf, packs of camphor balls, and one bottle of perfume. These goods represent the migrant's work over one season, from [464]
October to the following April, in the cacao fields of Ghana. Other migrants return with more, but few return with less. The actual value of these goods has been estimated by Dufour at about one billion francs C.F.A. per year. The custom duties which the migrants pay [648]
amount to more than 150 million francs C.F.A. annually—the sum they actually paid into the treasury of the Haute Volta in 1953 (Rouch 1956 : 139 ff.).

The migrants distribute to their relatives a good part of the goods 43
they bring back, but a large proportion gets into the hands of other [602]
people either through the market or through more direct channels. Here is an example taken from my notes of March 24, 1956: "*Trading in bicycles:* Moussa gave Souliman a cow and an old bicycle for a new bicycle which Souliman had bought for 5,000 francs from a passing migrant. Souliman was trying to sell this same cycle for 6,250 francs, thus trying to make a profit of 1,250 francs just two or three days after he had bought it . . . Souliman slaughtered the cow which he received from Moussa and sold the beef to the local *restaurateur* at an additional profit. Souliman appears to be a sharp individual. He recently bought another bicycle for 5,000 francs from a migrant and resold it for 7,500 francs." This type of trading is not unusual, but the most typical articles resold by migrants in the local markets are lamps, worn shirts, shoes and other articles of clothing.

The growth of migration among Mossi men has led to a new type 485
of commercial activity in the country. This is the selling of cooked 265
food by the women to passing migrants. These women and young [462]
girls prepare food such as chicken, rice, millet balls, millet flour water [262]
and fried cakes which they bring to the principal thoroughfares to sell. Many of them arrive at the central village areas as early as four

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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175 436 437 Cowries used to be chief medium of exchange in Mossi markets until the Europeans arrived. In addition the people bartered specific goods for other products. The prices of goods in these markets fluc- 175 435 tuated from time to time. Prices were highest during the planting season when most goods were scarce, and lowest during the harvest periods, but we have little precise information about the prices of goods in the traditional markets. Even Barth's information is too sketchy to deal with. Our first reliable data come from Tauxier, whose writings cover the first decade (1896-1906) of the conquest. Using the then official rate of one franc equals 1,000 cowries, the prices of a few representative products were: horses, 40 to 100 francs (40,000 to 100,000 cowries); cattle, 30 to 40 francs (30,000 to 40,000 cowries); chickens, 250 cowries; guinea fowls, 250 to 300 cowries; hides, 3,000 cowries; pottery jars, 300 cowries; cotton trousers, 200 cowries; baskets, 1,500 cowries; and locust-bean balls, 100 cowries (Tauxier 1912 : 466 ff.).

Mangin, whose work covers the period from about 1910 to 1913, when the value of the franc was lowered to one franc equals 700 to 800 cowries, lists the approximate prices for the following goods: "Millet, 0.02 franc a kilogram; rice, 0.10 franc a kilogram; *fabirama*, 0.05 franc a kilogram; shea butter, 0.50 franc a kilogram; milk butter, 1.50 francs a kilogram; peanuts, 0.07 franc a kilogram; peanut oil, 0.50 franc a liter; one jar of ordinary millet beer, containing about six to eight liters, 0.20 franc; one jar of strong millet beer *(tose)*, containing about six to eight liters, 0.40 franc; hydromel *(bese)*, 0.15 franc a liter; chicken, 0.40 franc; average goat, 3 to 4 francs; large goat, 8 to 10 francs; average sheep, 3.50 francs for a ram, 4 francs, for an ewe; large sheep, 8 to 10 francs; donkey, 25 to 30 francs; horse, 150 francs; small cow (no hump), 50 francs; zebu cow, 70 francs; goat skin, 0.30 franc: cow skin, 1 franc; salt bars, from 1.50 to 2 francs a kilogram; kola nuts, from 0.03 to 0.10 franc apiece; one hoe, about 0.60 franc; cloth: strip of white cloth, 0.05 franc, about 0.60 franc a cubit; white blanket, 2 francs; indigo-dyed blanket, 3 francs; striped blanket, 4 francs; medium-sized shirt, 2.50 francs" (Mangin 1921 : 53). In dealing with these prices, a number of things should be kept in mind: first of all, these prices fluctuated very much during the year; secondly [436] they varied from region to region within the country; and thirdly, although these prices are given in francs during this period, it was still possible to use cowries to buy a large number of the products.

177 Enormous changes have taken place in the Mossi economic and 436 exchange systems over the decades following the studies of Tauxier [43] and Mangin. Even before, but certainly after World War I, the [42] French pressure on the Mossi to pay taxes in francs finally resulted

II. Military Organization

701 An army, properly speaking, with cadres and hierarchies, did not exist among the Mossi.

721 In the event of war, the Tansoba or Tampsoba (war minister) notified the canton chiefs who promptly assembled with all their able-bodied men and as many horsemen as possible.

705 The villages were charged with feeding the soldiers.

III. Judicial Organization

692 693 Justice was rendered in conformity with local customs which had been handed down from generation to generation and according to local practice.

1. By village chiefs, assisted by some of the elders, for petty affairs, pilfering, and insults.

2. The canton chief, assisted by his court dignitaries and the minister, ruled on matters concerning theft, adultery, and bodily attacks, as well as on other matters.

3. The Mogho Naba took cognizance of all matters of general interest, especially with crimes of assassination and murder. In theory, he could by himself pronounce the death sentence on the [565] nakomsé [descendants of Mogho Naba]. Contrary to general belief, a [56] kombéré (canton chief) also had the power of life and death over his subjects. How many individuals have been put to 661 death merely because they were wealthy! How many village chiefs have been killed by the canton chiefs over their territories without any intervention by the Mogho Naba! The nakomsé could 565 be executed, however, only for very serious crimes, such as 684 adultery with a woman of the nobility. The guilty man was led 762 into the bush by old nakomsé; they gave him a rope with which he was expected to hang himself and thus expiate his crime.

694 Justice was free; no fee was expected or assessed. The plaintiff, however, customarily presented the naba with a white or light gray ● 431 rooster, accompanied by the traditional satchel containing from 200 to 1,000 cowries.

644 The Mogho Naba spends the rest of the day receiving individ-
431 uals who have come to see him, accepting poussoum (gifts to the chief) and giving dam, gouré, foutou (garments), etc., and listening to the praises of his courtiers.

Mogho Naba Na Tough'la, "The Mogho Naba Goes to La" (1)

1. A dependent village in the administrative district of Yako, Koudougou Circle.

173 Tradition relates that a certain Mogho Naba, Naba Warga,
644 had a favorite, the only one who knew that his preferred food was léla (fruit of the léhinga or wild plum tree). It should be added
[267] that ordinarily anything might be chosen as a favorite food, and it should not be supposed that the Mogho Naba eats only the best foods. Obviously he does not lack choice morsels, but he cannot be expected to like everything. One day this woman asked leave to visit her home at Là and failed to return. The Magho Naba, tired of waiting and missing his favorite food, had his horse saddled one morning and announced that he wished to go and join his wife. His ministers begged him to stay at home and asked him to put off his departure until the next day... Every morning the preparations for the departure were repeated and always there was the same pleading, up to the time of the ruler's death. His son, [61] who succeeded him, chose to follow his example. The following paragraph describes the manner in which this custom was still practiced only a few years ago.

When the Mogho Naba appears in the morning, one of his
[492] horses, partially harnessed, is brought into the courtyard bearing a saddle with silver stirrups, but with the girth unbuckled. After the Mogho Naba has responded to the salutations of his ministers and the whole court and has dealt with some minor matters, he declares that he is going to Là. The court officials, especially the Kamsaongo Naba, appear before him and say: "Sire, order them to unsaddle your horse; you shall go tomorrow." The Mogho Naba of course agrees to this, but he retires to his apartments rather

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651 Mossi circle into several administrative districts, still continue to
178 make substantial annual gifts to the Mogho Naba (cowries, cattle, and a considerable amount of grain, millet and rice).

634 Payments Due the Kombemba (canton chiefs). Formerly each
651 canton held one or more ritual feasts each year, and the Mossi subjects, that is, the tengsoba (village elders, notables, and those in comfortable circumstances), regularly made gifts to the canton chief (cowries, goats, sheep, and roosters). The Peulh [Peul] gave cattle.

The canton chiefs also retained a portion of the payment made by the people for the benefit of the Mogho Naba.

[178] At the present time these traditional gifts are still made, but white or light gray roosters are more and more being substituted for livestock. [71]

661 Payments due the Ministers of the Mogho Naba. In order to
431 maintain good relations with the ministers, court officials, and intermediaries between the emperor and his vassals, the canton
644 chiefs in former times used to present unspecified gifts to the
634 high dignitaries at court when they paid their respects to the Mogho Naba. A certain number of cowries was given to the pougtiéma, first wife of the Mogho Naba (500 cowries equals two and a half francs, formerly 50 centimes).

A canton chief who has been called to Ouagadougou for some reason may choose not to call on the emperor, but he is obligated to bring cowries, a sheep, or a rooster to the minister who is head of the province in which his canton is located.

651 Common laws. (a) Regulation of market fees. Before the ar-
443 rival of the French, market fees at Ouagadougou were collected for the benefit of the Mogho Naba by a collector in his employ.

In important villages, fees were collected by Gourounsi [Grunshi] captives on behalf of the canton chiefs (kombemba).

651 (b) Hunting. In former times, before the fields were cleared
224 for seeding, the Mossi used to go out in groups of several villages on hunting drives. Small game (partridges, guinea fowl, hares,
634 etc.) were left to the hunters. On the other hand, a haunch of any quadruped killed (deer, gazelle, coba [a kind of horse antelope], etc.) was reserved for the canton chief.

644 554 576 [101] It is to be noted that a gourdful of this water with millet flour on which a bit of karite butter is floating is a customary courtesy offering among the Mossi. It is most improper to greet or to receive a stranger by offering him plain water.

644 782 On the fourth or fifth day the Djiba Naba proceeds to Zoanghna (a village located two or three kilometers behind the government buildings) and there hands over a sheep and a cow to serve as offerings to the sacred amulets of the ancestors and to protect him from evil spirits and wicked people. He does not spend the night in this village but returns home immediately after the sacrifice.

644 788 Several days later the decision is made to install the new naba in his domain. A large number of soroné, drummers, and followers accompany him on what amounts to a kind of obligatory pilgrimage which we shall describe briefly.

The following itinerary is customary.

First, the Djiba Naba goes to Badnogo where he spends the night. The next day he goes on to Samba where he is offered water with flour in it, and for his part, he gives salt to be shared among the old women of the village.

One may ask why salt is given to the old women and not to the other people. The Mossi call old women nough' pouk ramba, that is, those who, when blessing you, clasp their hands so as to make a higher power hear and grant their prayers. [888]

644 788 431 [102] On the following day he proceeds to Tensobitenga where he remains for three days. Beer is prepared for him; he is given a cow for his followers and a wife for himself. At Nakamtenga, his next stop, the village chief welcomes him with a sheep and many baskets and bowls of sagbo (millet mush).

644 788 He does not remain here for the night but instead goes on to Koubri. This is the village where eunuchs formerly suffered the cruel operation of castration (1). The canton chief meets him, leads

839 304 681 1. Eunuchs. Bandits, thieves, murderers, and slaves or soroné (servitors) convicted of adultery with women of the nobility were the only ones sent to Koubri, a canton in the circle of Ouagadougou, to be castrated. This operation involved only the removal

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of the testicles, until the day when a eunuch managed, no one knows how, to take advantage of some of the women he was supposed to be guarding. From then on it was deemed necessary to remove the penis completely, and a copper cartridge was inserted for purposes of urination.

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As soon as the person fainted after undergoing the operation, a drink was concocted whose ingredients are unknown. When he revived, he was so thirsty that he downed the drink in a single gulp. It is said that the drug stupefied the eunuch to such a degree that he would be incapable of taking vengeance even if he had any weapons at hand.

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It was only after he had completely recovered that the victim was sent to the Mogho Naba. The latter assigned him the duty of guarding a harem or a royal tomb.

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him to his house, seats him by his side, and announces to the populace that he has just been visited by his son (Koubri Naba is a descendant of the Mogho Naba).

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He then offers the crown prince a cow and a great deal of [103] beer, and then, before he leaves, the Djiba Naba has free access to the chief's household where he takes as a wife the first nubile girl he encounters. The stay at Koubri traditionally lasted for seven days, but it could be shortened to two or three in view of the great expense involved in entertaining a prince of such high rank, especially at the present time when the canton chiefs no longer enjoy their former prestige.

The Djiba Naba continues on his way to Kombissiri where he is the guest of the canton chief. For a week, in addition to his food which must, of course, be copious and abundant quantities of beer, the crown prince also receives a cow, a sheep, and, before his departure for Doulougou, a wife.

[i.e. canton chief — Analyst]

644 788 431 The chief of the canton of Doulougou, where the prince is a guest for another week, also gives him beer, a sheep, a cow, a robe, and, finally, a wife.

At Bagamini, where he goes next, he receives from the canton chief a cow, a wife, a quiver, and arrows, presented with these significant words: "Ad locko la pema taon widi, laf ra taon neb'yé ti ya f'ba yemsé" (literally, "Take these arrows to shoot against horses and not against men, for the latter are your father's slaves and the country also belongs to him and therefore to you").

Seven days later he leaves Bagamini and goes to Ipelsé where he receives the same warm welcome. On leaving, he will take with him a cow and a wife.

He likewise remains at Ipelsé for seven days. Passing through Bedgo in the domain of the Peulh chief, the Djiba Naba chooses the finest [104] bull from the herd of cattle which must be presented to him. He likewise takes a girl from the chief's household who becomes his property. He then goes on to Guirgo where he is guest of the canton chief for a whole week. On his departure he receives a cow, a robe, and a wife from the chief.

The inhabitants of the village of Kakamsé, through which the Djiba Naba merely passes, bring him quantities of millet cakes (sagbo) and a gift of their choice (a sheep, a goat, a cow, cowries, beer, etc.).

The crown prince continues on to Kondrin and remains there for three days. In addition to sagho and dam, the chief of Kondrin is required to offer him a cow and a wife before his departure.

From there he proceeds to Béré where the chief, called Rimbissi Kasma (the oldest descendant of the Mogho Naba), gives the Djiba Naba a cow, a robe, and a wife and acts as his host for a week.

644 788 824 During the night of the seventh day, the notables of the canton of Djiba come to Béré to look for the naba. He allows himself to be led away, accompanied by only a single servitor and a groom. The rest of the escort from Ouagadougou remains behind and follows him the next morning (1).

1. Why this departure at night and seeming escape? On the route leading into his

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dominion, the Djiba Naba must pass under a tree whose branches he should be able to touch since he is on horseback. His whole future depends upon his doing so. It is from this day forward that the prince will have a long life and will succeed his father. It is believed that the tree has magical powers and that its branches will withdraw of their own accord as the prince passes by if, even though he is the emperor's eldest son, he is not the successor designated by Wendé (God).

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[105] In advance of his coming, care has been taken to find a nice dwelling suitable to house a prince who is the emperor's eldest son. With this in view, an establishment has been chosen which is well built and fairly large, one belonging to a dakangré (prosperous man), and His Highness is conducted to it. As soon as the Djiba Naba has dismounted, his involuntary host must leave his home and take shelter with one of his neighbors. He takes great care to gather all his property, money (liguidi) and wives, into one part of the house; the rest henceforth belongs to the naba. Indeed, it is not long before the establishment is enlarged and some of the huts demolished to make way for more sumptuous buildings.

As soon as the prince is installed, the displaced host receives some gifts and wives as a kind of indemnity for loss. A suitable house is built for him a few hundred meters away.

For several days, celebrations are the rule throughout the canton of Djib[illegible] All the notables and village chiefs, including neighboring canton chiefs who have not had the honor of receiving the prince, come to pay their respects to the new naba and to bring him large gifts.

The escort from Ouagadougou is then sent back [106] with many gifts. The most important nayirdamba [court dignitaries] receive wives and clothing.

Besides the wives the Djiba Naba may have had before his appointment, it is to be noted that he collected quite a harem

644 during his peregrinations. He will bestow some of these on his followers
788 and keep the prettiest for himself.

431 In the old days, the Boulsa Naba, Boussouma Naba, Konkisitenga Naba, and all the others who were, so to speak, independent "rulers" of their lands never brought annual tribute to the Mogho Naba without sending gifts to his eldest son at Djiba.

In the same way, the canton chiefs were expected to make the same annual gifts to the Djiba Naba as to his father.

644 It should also be noted that chiefs who had quarreled with the
696 Mogho Naba and were in danger of being executed could readily obtain pardons by the expedient of buying the friendship of the Djiba Naba. The emperor, after all, was reluctant to distress his son by putting to death one of his intimates.

[107] Chapter 7

The Mossi Salute. Respect due the Home of a Naba.
The Cap. Precedence among Chiefs.
A Legend Concerning the Origins of Mossi Chiefdom.

Salutation of the Naba (Nab'Pousgho)

647 The kombemba (canton chiefs) and nayirdamba (ministers and other court dignitaries), when calling upon the Mogho Naba, are required to remove their cap when they reach the threshold. They hand it to their soroné (servitors) or followers. If they did not come on horseback, they must give their néoda (shoes) to a page and walk barefoot. In a word, they remove anything which might impede the execution of the very complicated Mossi salute.

The following passages concerning the Mossi salute are taken from Father Mangin.

Mossi Salute

644 "The Moaga puts down everything, load, hat, cap, and sword,
576 removes his shoes, and sits on the ground. He folds his legs slightly and bends the upper part of his body forward. The elbows rest on the ground, spread as far apart as possible. The forearms, folded

63 The Nabitienga notifies the populace of the [140] canton that
43 in view of his father's death he wishes to go to Ouagadougou to lay claim to the succession. He then asks the aid of every man present: 100 cowries from each ykanda (head of compound) and 50 cowries from each dakonré (bachelor). This aid is at once forthcoming unless there is rivalry for the post. In that case the villages give their help to the candidate they wish to have appointed.

When he reaches Ouagadougou, the Nabitienga makes a series of calls and presents numerous gifts.

He gives: 1) 10,000 cowries and a sheep to the minister of the Mogho Naba who has jurisdiction over him; 2) 50,000 to 100,000 cowries, depending on his importance, a horse, and sometimes a cow to the Mogho Naba himself; 3) varying quantities of cowries, depending on the importance of the person visited, to the other ministers and important personages; 4) 1,000 to 2,000 cowries and a rooster to the Zusoaba (chief eunuch) whom he visits the following morning; and finally 5) generous gifts during the rest of his stay to the bonsramba (griot), benda, luinsé, doudissi, and gangando, as well as other courtiers.

63 Nomination. A kombéré candidate may stay at Ouagadougou from twenty to thirty days or even longer. On the eve of the nomination, the Mogho Naba summons the Baloum Naba and orders him to have the Baloum Naba and orders him to have the Nabitienga provide a chicken and a sheep for his sacrifice. This is certain proof that he is going to be appointed the next day, so he very generously rewards the soroné who brings him the message.

[141] The sheep (pesgo) and the rooster (noraogo) are sent to the Mogho Naba, who has them killed in his courtyard.

The next day the Mogho Naba, as soon as he appears, summons the Ouidi Naba, the Larrhallé Naba, the Kamsoro Naba, the Gounga Naba, and the Baloum Naba, and says to them: "Today I wish to make an end of the koubissi ("children of the kouré" or funeral observances); which among the candidates here is really capable of succeeding the late chief?" The Ouidi Naba replies: "Do whatever pleases you, Sire." After this, the Mogho Naba says: "In that case, I designate the Nabitienga, for his father did not forget me an instant during his life and it would not make sense to pass over his son." Then the Mogho Naba returns to his palace.

The Ouidi Naba returns to his place, calls the Baloum Naba, the Bend Naba, and the Poé Naba, and tells them the sovereign's

new naba mounts his horse and goes off with the minister who has jurisdiction over him. The minister offers him some zom kom (water with flour in it) and then welcomes him into his courtyard where he is offered a canari of dam (beer) and gouré (kola nuts). He is then escorted back to the home of his gangsoba by a goodly throng of drummers, horsemen, etc.

All the defeated candidates are required to shave their heads at once and to make a formal act of submission to the new naba as soon as he has returned to the home of his gangsoba (host). It should be added that the candidates allow their hair to grow from the day of the death of the naba to the day on which his successor is appointed.

The new appointee must offer dam, saghbo, and cowries to the nayiridamba. He also offers dam, kola nuts, and cowries to the drummers.

On the following day he accompanies the minister to the home of the Mogho Naba. During the monarch's second audience (beg sonré), the minister calls him to salute the Mogho Naba. The new naba goes forward to the tomboko, cries out three times (cries of joy), and then performs the kantissé (the Mossi salute). Thereupon, the Ouidi Naba says to the Mogho Naba: "The chief whom you deigned to honor yesterday wishes to express his gratitude." The Mogho Naba responds to the salute and then, for the first time, offers him a canari of dam.

The new naba then calls upon the ministers and other important personages (Ouidi Naba, Larrhallé Naba, Gounga Naba, [144] Poé Naba, Kamsoro Naba, Samandé Naba, the imam, Daporé Naba, and the next day the Zusoaba).

Seven days later the Mogho Naba gives him a robe, a pougla (red fez), a nagpouré (cushion), and néoda (slippers).

The new naba removes his old ragged clothes (I use the description advisedly, since custom forbids him to change his clothes until he has received those given by the Mogho Naba). He gives the discarded garments to a relative, dresses in the robe from the Mogho Naba, puts on the pougla (fez), and becomes a true naba.

A few days later he asks permission to return to his own lands. Many court representatives (nayirdamba) accompany him. It is the

631 duty of these representatives to assemble the notables of the villages and to order them to submit to the new naba, the only one recognized by the Mogho Naba.

631 In order to show their joy,[1] the people have large quantities of
527 beer prepared, and games are organized which may continue for several days. The village notables come to offer their submission and to swear fealty, bringing gifts (cowries, sheep, etc.) in accordance with the resources of the village and the wealth of the inhabitants.

631 When the nayirdamba leave for Ougadougou, the naba gives:
431 a wife and a robe to the Bilbalga; a wife and a robe to the soroné of the Mogho Naba; a wife and a robe to the soroné or the Baloum-Naba; a wife and a robe to the child of the Bend'Naba; etc.

Any children born to the women [145] so given belong, respectively, to the masters of these representatives.

631 Burial. Their burial is carried out in much the same manner
766 as in the case of the Mogho Naba, except for the specific persons involved. The arrangement of the tomb is also similar, although there is, of course, less pomp displayed. [146]

[1] [i.e. At the appointment of the new naba—Analyst]

Chapter 9

The Two Major Mossi Festivals

Mossi Festivals

796 In actual fact, there is only one annual festival celebrated by
527 the Mossi. It is known as tinsé or tingana. A second festival, which is more a family affair, is called basgha. The latter is variously named, depending on the region: for the Mogho Naba, it is called m'barengma; for the ordinary Moaga, basgha; in certain regions, kinkirga; etc. Although the date for the first festival is fixed by the Mogho Naba, the second festival is celebrated by each canton chief, each village chief, or each ikanda (married man) on any day that suits him, usually after the harvest.

In addition to these principal festivals, every important village has its annual festival, a kind of special market day. On

796 Friday night he stays at the home of Bangr'Naba Sambo. Very early
769 Saturday morning he returns home in time to be present when the Bend'Naba (chief of the drummers) comes to wish him a happy new year and a long life and to pray that Wenam (God) will spare him to [156] offer many more bascé (plural of basgha) in honor of his predecessors.

[431] It goes without saying that during the nights spent away from home the emperor receives many visitors and substantial gifts. The persons at whose homes he spends the night naturally give him the warmest possible welcome.

Preparatory sacrifices. These are performed inside the house of the Mogho Naba, and the details are known only to the following four persons: Mogho Naba, Emperor of the Mossi; Baloum Naba, chief steward and chief of pages; Zussoba Kassanga, chief eunuch and guardian of the harem; the pugtiéma, the first wife of the Mogho Naba.

796 It is known that animals are sacrificed, with the Mogho Naba
769 himself holding the victim and pronouncing the sacramental words. Perhaps there is also worship of certain sacred fetishes. In any
782 event, we are convinced that there is nothing involved in the ceremony which is contrary to the principles of French civilization since there is no human sacrifice. We should have liked very much to describe these ancient practices, but the secret has been well kept.

Celebration of basgha. As soon as the Mogho Naba appears in
796 front of the zango (antechamber), the Bend' Naba beats a drum while
769 calling the names of deceased naba, beginning with Naba Oubri, the
533 founder of the Ouagadougou dynasty. [157]

As soon as the Bend'Naba stops playing, he and his followers are served sagbo (millet cakes), mouf (rice), dam (millet beer), and nemdo (meat).

796 Likewise, the ministers and other court officials who come to
769 greet tabo (the new year) are given dam, sagbo, rice, and meat by
[554] the Mogho Naba. The food is distributed to the dignitaries in the order of precedence, and the rest is reserved for the Bilbalessé and other followers of the ministers.

About eight-thirty, the ministers and court officials say
[576] wennatassé, "God be with us," which means good bye, and then they return home.

769 they return to their homes.
796 The Bend'Naba and other drummers remain in the courtyard until the Sogon' kassanga (chief eunuch) bring to them, on behalf
533 of the emperor, the sum of 10,000 cowries and some beer. In the old days a young captive, seated amidst the cowries, accompanied these gifts. The messengers say to the drummers: "Nab'yet b'wa poustabo (the king sends us to give you these gifts on the occasion of his basgha)."

The chief of the drummers pours a drink for the Zussoba and orders his followers to play together "Tompaongo, Wend'kaouss'Naba nioré, Wenna wilig'vinré" (literally, "We thank the king for his gifts. May God give the Mogho Naba long life and allow us to come back to play here next year").

Before sending them away, the Mogho Naba is obligated to give a karfo (black robe [158] imported by the Haoussa) to the Bend' Naba and a robe to the Loun Naba (chief of the luinsé). Water with flour in it is likewise brought to the Bend'Naba, and he scatters it about the courtyard. The emperor is required by custom to walk upon this water of gnimassem (of good health) as he goes back to his apartments.

When all these formalities have been completed, the Bend'Naba, accompanied by his bards, takes his leave. The festival is over.
[431] On the days following, the drummers call on the ministers and the other court dignitaries and are given many gifts (cowries and livestock).

All of these gifts are retained by the Bend'Naba or by someone chosen by him, and they are distributed later, with due regard for the hierarchy existing among the griot. The share of the older men is always greater than that accorded to the younger ones. [159]

Chapter 10

The Wives of the Naba. The sogoné. The Pogsiouré

Naba Warga and the Origin of the Sogoné

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644 Naba Warga was constantly at war with the Riziam Naba, who
357 was called Mamzi (which means "I myself do not know"). He had

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595 foreigners who are being housed by the naba. [164]

Each sogoné or samanbiga chooses a mother from among the
644 wives of the naba (only those in the first two sections).
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He helps her to cultivate her plot of ground and receives in
357 return a little food over and above the ration of sagbo given to the
608 sogoné as a group.

At Nanore (1), for example, it was formerly the rule that

1. Canton in the administrative district of Koudougou.

when a woman brought some sagbo to her adopted son, she could not simply hand it to him. Instead, holes were dug in the courtyard of the naba, into which the woman put the sagbo and sauce. Then the young man came to eat the food, and later the woman came back for her bowls.

644 Finally, it is still forbidden for anyone to play a guitar when
595 a napagha is passing by unless the player is the naba himself or
533 someone called upon to play by the naba. It should be noted that
687 the Moaga prefers the guitar for intimate occasions. Therefore, to
832 play it when a napagha passes by is actually to court her.

The Pogsiouré, or the Recruitment of Sogoné and Saman'kamba

643 Aside from a few special cases limited by custom which we
562 shall presently describe, the naba can never dispose of the daughters of his subjects, either to make them [165] his own wives or to bestow them on someone else, without the permission of the parents.

Pogsiouré comes from pog', the diminutive of pagha, "woman," and from siouré, diminutive of sioubo, "to give anticipating a profit."

562 As a result of family quarrels or even voluntarily, a Moaga
431 "may give away his daughters and those of his brothers and close
643 relatives to the naba." It is obvious that the naba cannot keep all of these girls, so he gives some of them to his brothers, his uncles, his sons, and even to ordinary Mossi who have done him a service.

In the same way -- and this is more frequent -- every sogoné (page) or samand'biga [singular of samand'kamba] (bodyguard or

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431 groom) who has served his naba satisfactorily receives, at the
643 time he is freed, a young girl who may be nubile, but who may, on the other hand, be just a small child.

In either case, the former servitor is required to call upon the naba from time to time and to take him gifts (cowries or roosters). If the girl is still living with her relatives, in addition to his trifling presents to the naba, the fiancé may make a few presents to his in-laws, although it is not obligatory.

562 Pogsiouré. The first daughter born of a marriage between a
643 Moaga subject (former servitor, son, brother, or uncle of the naba,
644 etc.) and the woman given to him [166] by the naba becomes the
858 "property" of the latter with full rights over her. She is known as "the daughter of the pogsiouré" and is fated to become pogsiouré in her turn.

643 If the first-born is a boy, the naba may bring him to his
644 court as soon as he reaches the age of discretion to make him either
858 a sogoné or a samand'biga, and the child's father cannot make the slightest objection.

357 This does not imply that under Mossi law the sogoné and samand'kamba must be children of the pogsiouré. As absolute master of all his subjects, the naba can recruit his servitors throughout his domain as he needs them, with no opposition by the Mossi to this recruitment.

644 The fate of the daughters of the pogsiouré. The girls are
858 taken from their relatives as soon as they are old enough to work
562 and are entrusted by the naba to his own wives.

The latter, for all practical purposes, become the adoptive mothers of these children and, as such, see to their food and clothing. This does not prevent the real mother from bringing cowries and clothing to her daughter, and to make sure that the child will be well treated by the napagha (wife of the naba), she sometimes
[431] even brings the latter a gift of kalgo (soumbala) or karite butter (kamé).

When the girls reach puberty, the naba chooses the most at-
[584] tractive for his fiancées, and the [167] others are given to some of his administrators or to his own relatives.

562 584 When the girl reaches marriageable age, she usually finds herself with a husband who is sometimes older than her father and whom she cannot possibly love. She must go to him, however, since such is her father's will.

[431 583] [173] The fiancé brings some gifts (cowries, chickens, millet beer) and claims his wife. The girl is sent off to her husband's home with no ceremony being performed.

This second type of forced marriage has the parents' consent.

587 428 562 768 Marriage by inheritance. When the head of a household dies, the women, who are considered a part of his estate, are divided up just as is the rest of the property. They are apportioned to the sons of the deceased, or his brothers if the sons are not of marriageable age. However, unlike the procedure for a chief's estate, in which the wife is just a "thing," these wives may choose their husbands from among the members of the family.

This is semi-free marriage.

587 Besides the type of marriage which we shall later call "free marriage" -- a form which occurs very frequently since it includes the marriages of loose women who may have as many as nine husbands, only stopping at the last one because of old age -- there is also remarriage due to successive widowhoods. Some women are so [177] unlucky as to lose [174] a succession of husbands. They are finally avoided like the plague since they have the reputation of being cursed by the gods (Mossi, kombwinga; Bambara, térédiougou).

584 Marriage after a conventional proposal. When a young man wishes to ask for the hand of a young girl who is not yet engaged, he chooses as his go-between a person who is on good terms with the elders of the girl's village. If the response is favorable, the young man brings a chicken, a secco (dagnopinri) [coarse matting] to close the doorway, and some fagots. He goes back to his village and returns at intervals bearing sprouted millet or millet beer and a chicken for the head of the family. The latter at last tells the go-between: "Tell X... that we accept him as our son and that we shall try to give him satisfaction as soon as possible."

Some time later the young man returns once more with a chicken, sprouted millet, or beer for the elders of the village. He makes

585 The following morning the new wife returns to the hut of her "mother." She is summoned by her husband several nights in a row before he resumes the practice of receiving each wife in turn.

The Bride Price. The Basket of the Fiancée

583 Bride price. Mossi custom does not require a bride price. The one thousand to several thousand cowries that are required, depending on the man's resources, plus chickens, a sheep and beer, are not a bride price, properly speaking, or "selling a daughter." Nothing is asked which could not be repaid one day without too much difficulty.

585 The fiancée's basket. The basket of the fiancée contains the girl's clothes, some soap, some karite butter, some cowries, gourds, and ladles. The basket is carried by one of the women in the cortege.

The cortege. The fiancée's cortege is usually composed of a young girl, a woman who has borne children, and a boy.

They proceed to the house of the village elder. [182] The relatives of the bridegroom provide food for them for several days. Finally, they are given a farewell dinner consisting of baskets of millet cakes and mutton, goat, or merely some chickens. They are also given cowries.

585 431 In addition to these gifts, the sum of 444 or 1,400 cowries (the "virginity price") is sewn into a sack and sent to the girl's mother. If the bride was given by a chief, he is entitled to from 2,000 to 3,000 cowries if the husband is an ordinary Moaga, 10,000 to 50,000 cowries if the husband himself is a naba. In this last case, the women in the cortege receive skirts, and the boy, a robe.

585 152 Note. While it is true that among many peoples a girl goes to her husband joyfully, it is quite the contrary in Mossi country. There is a real struggle to separate the girl from her parents. Many lose sleep and their appetites. On the day of departure they weep bitterly, and those who do not are insulted by the old women.

428 2. Not to be disqualified for the following causes.

a. Murder of the deceased.

b. Failure to avenge his death. In the old days the son had to avenge his father's death before inheriting his property. At present the term "vengeance" should be understood to mean that he must seek satisfaction for the crime in the courts.

c. Failure to celebrate the funeral.

If the legitimate heir is a minor, his guardian must carry out the ceremony in the child's name.

d. Existence of a will whereby the deceased disinherits the heir presumptive.

Order of succession. As a general rule, property is handed down in the direct line, that is, to the eldest son of the deceased. It is handed down in a collateral line only if there is no son. In the case of certain items, however, for example, the family fetish, the heir is the eldest brother of the deceased.

If there is no heir of the first or second degree, the estate goes to the closest relative of the person from whom the deceased inherited the property.

428 431 The eldest in the family excludes the others and has sole possession of the property. Custom demands, however, that he hand over to his brothers and uncles a part [258] of the property. Nevertheless, this is a free gift which he is not actually forced to make.

428 562 184 In the case of the estate of a naba, the eldest son alone usually inherits all the property left by the deceased because of the heavy expenses he must meet to follow custom when he becomes a candidate for the chiefdom. As far as the women are concerned -- they are a part of the property -- he selects the ones he likes, and the rest are left for the nabissi (sons and descendants of naba).

The same is not true for ordinary Mossi, who have begun to realize that there are advantages in allowing all of the children of the deceased to share in the estate. In the chapter dealing with "Marriage" we have already seen that women were allowed some choice of a husband among the sons of the deceased.

428 In any case, however, the eldest son retains the largest share of the estate, and this is easily understandable in view of the

644 with its tall copper stirrups, bears on either side a larger copper tray.
[492] The drums are played when the naba leaves his dwelling, shift to a different tune when he places his foot in the stirrup, and shift once more when he sets out on his way. The whole population over a radius of several kilometers is thus apprised of the Moro Naba's every gesture. A page precedes him bearing his pillow, and another carrying his scepter. The ministers present at the court and the foreign chiefs present at the capital hasten to mount their horses. Several of the Moro Naba's bodyguards accompany him: four strapping fellows walk by his side, their arms leaning against the horse's rump as though to prevent the monarch from falling, while horsemen armed with spears do a fantasia, running 100 meters ahead of the naba, brandishing their spears, returning at full gallop, and setting off again. This constant coming and going entertains the naba who does not gallop.

631 /19/ Every province and canton chief has his court, his ministers,
644 his pages, his drummers. Eunuchs, however, are solely the prerogative of the Moro Naba. In order to qualify for pages, pillow, and spurs, a chief must be invested properly. The present naba of Koupéla who failed to follow the traditions possesses none of these privileges.

The investiture of nabas follows a complex tradition. Each naba invests his own vassals in office. The Moro Naba invests the province chiefs, except for those who hold the title dimma; the province chiefs invest the canton chiefs, and the latter invest the chiefs of villages within their jurisdiction. The right of nomination is an important source of revenue for the nabas.

622 Upon the death of a village chief, several candidates vie for power.
431 They all go to the naba who rules over them, to greet him and to offer him numerous gifts, cowries, chickens, sheep, and, if they are sufficiently wealthy, salt bars, a horse, sometimes even a wife. The one who gives the most has the best chance of being chosen, and the naba decides to announce his choice only when he feels that the candidates are running out of gifts.

622 In Koupéla, a village chief under the direct jurisdiction of the province chief is nominated in the following way. The candidates must apply to the minister who has control over their village. He is the indispensable intermediary between them and the naba who is to make the choice, he is their guide, their sor'soba. When the nomination draws near, the minister goes at night to see the naba, and together they agree on the choice to be made. They may appoint

631 powers to his vassals, the province chiefs, who in turn entrust them to the canton chiefs, and these do likewise with the village chiefs. Thus, when a native wants to move from one canton to another, or
631 even from one village to another, he must be authorized to do so.
166 He must request the permission of the canton or village chief to settle
425 in such-and-such a place, and the chief of the village where he wants to live tells him where he may build his huts and which field he may cultivate. The naba may dispossess one of his subjects, if he so wishes, and give his field to another. After all, he "has the strength." This rarely happens, however, and a native who has cleared a piece of bush, fertilized a plot to sow maize, sowed and weeded the ground, is usually assured of a harvest, except in case of war. If a man is evicted, on the other hand, there is no appeal; neither the canton chief nor the province chief would listen to him; they would do the same thing if the opportunity arose.

421 There is no communal property. Every individual works his fields for his own account; he himself collects the fruit of his labor and remains its undisputed master. Nevertheless, every native owes his
651 chiefs and benefactors a tithe; and at harvest time it is interesting
431 to watch everyone sorting ears of maize, braiding sorghum stems, and measuring out baskets of small millet. The village chief is to get so many ears of maize; the canton chief, if he does not reside too far away, so many others; the father- or fathers-in-law will get theirs, and so will one friend or another to whom one owes cowries, or who has previously granted a favor. However, everyone who deals out goods right and left will in-turn get some from various other people and approximately regain his expenditure. The village chiefs offer more sizable gifts to the canton chiefs, and the latter do likewise to the province chiefs.

651 These were, in fact, taxes, not fixed taxes per capita, but com-
661 pletely arbitrary ones. If the naba found a gift insufficient, he had no compunction about saying so, and the person involved had to comply. It is said that the naba of Koupéla paid annually 500,000 cowries (500 francs) and /23/ three horses to the naba of Bélousa, and a million cowries (1000 francs) in two installments to the Moro Naba, to whom he also gave five horses. The gifts to the Moro Naba were brought first to the naba of Bélousa and from there conveyed to Ouagadougou: ever the hierarchy.

This quasi-official tax, however, was not the only one. Whenever the Moro Naba wanted horses, cattle, or anything whatever, he

651 661 had a province chief notified, and everyone hastened to carry out his wishes. If a province chief in turn wanted something, if he was short of millet or wished to build huts, he had one or several canton chiefs notified, and these in turn advised the village chiefs; through them everything was slowly carried out, for it took time to transmit these orders, but the common man never failed to comply.

Such a system made it impossible for an individual to accumulate wealth. A surplus of goods would have aroused the naba's cupidity, and he would have found some excuse to tax this overly enterprising subject more than the others. This is why those who owned a few cows carefully concealed it by entrusting them to the Peul. The latter could not hope to increase their herds rapidly, because the nabas were always in need of fine, fat cattle for some alleged sacrifice or festivity.

651 661 431 At certain times the canton chiefs and even the village chiefs, as well as people desirous of making a good impression, must go to the naba to greet him and to present him with gifts which never amount to less than 500 cowries (50 francs). When the naba undertakes an important task, such as the building of several huts, the weeding of his field, or the harvesting of his millet, some of the people are summoned to help him, and it is proper for the others to come and offer him gifts. His convalescence from illness is an occasion for gifts also, and, if he has eluded some danger, he must quickly be congratulated and given cowries. On every festive day or on the days following, each naba must go to his province chief to greet him and to bring him gifts in proportion to the importance of his own position. Whenever the naba travels, every village where he stops must give him food and drink, and thus offer him chickens, goats, sheep, or even a cow if the village is sufficiently important. The grooms and other servants in the retinue of the naba manage for themselves at the expense of the inhabitants. This is quite a burden, especially since the naba, when he returns home, expects more greetings and cowries.

726 War was another important source of revenue. Binger describes what he witnessed at the court of Boukari-Koutou, who was later Moro Naba under the name of Naba Wobro and who was deposed by Voulet's arrival. Before leaving for war, the sorcerers were consulted and indicated the tangandé or sacred grove where a sacrifice was to be made in order to insure victory. The province chief then took out his flag, a mere staff with charms and a cow's tail hanging at

582 Marriage is exogamous, that is, relatives do not marry if their
564 kinship is known. There are no sharply defined caste lines. The Mossi marry Yarsé Malinké, Bousanse, and Gourounsi, but cannot marry Peul nor Haoussa. A Mossi who does not belong to a caste may choose his wife among Mossi who do belong to one. The latter do not intermarry freely; iron workers cannot marry from among the drummers.

584 But to go back to our story. The girl has grown. The suitor has already made numerous gifts. In short, the time has come to proceed with the wedding. The girl's father /31/ summons the betrothed and tells him: "Come and see me on such-and-such a day with a chicken." The suitor joyfully returns to his village and tells the elders that he was told to bring a chicken. On the day set, the suitor takes the bird to the girl's family, accompanied by his friends. He hands over the chicken, and everyone goes to the home of the head of the family, or, in his absence, to a village elder. The father states before all present that he wishes to give his daughter to So-and-So. Congratulations are exchanged, and everyone goes home. Now the festivities must be arranged, the relatives and friends must be notified, and the millet beer must be brewed. Meanwhile, the relatives and friends who have heard the good news come to greet the bridegroom and bring him fifty or a hundred cowries to help him meet the expenses of the festivities.

When everything is ready, the bridegroom takes 500 cowries and a rooster to the girl's father and 500 cowries to the elder in whose household the bride shall live until her wedding day. The girl's relatives have prepared dinner, while the bridegroom provides the
[302] drink. A relative of the groom shaves the bride's forehead in a circle, and she retires to the inner courtyard where her father's wives wash her thoroughly and tie a cotton cord around her waist. She dons a white garment and goes to offer a gourd of beer to her betrothed who has remained outside with his friends. Everyone thanks the girl's parents and then they all leave. On the day after next, the groom sends his friends to greet the family of his betrothed with a basket of
[431] millet flour, four kalro pellets, and salt, which are all distributed among the village people. These festivities, with their attendant ceremonies, come closest to a formal betrothal.

585 The girl, however, remains with the head of the family or with the elder who takes his place! When all these preliminary ceremonies are over, the groom sends daily for his bride. Once the trousseau has

585 been gathered together in a basket — clothes varying in number with the family's wealth, gourds, a pot for the sauce, a wooden spoon to stir the millet mush — the father tells the groom's messenger that the wedding date has been set for a certain day, nearly always on a Friday, sometimes Thursday. For the second time, the groom prepares the festivities and again the food and the drink. In the evening, his friends go out to meet the bride who is accompanied by her family. When nearing the village, they all let loose merry cries, "you, you", the bride pretends to run away, and the young men run after her and bear her on their shoulders to the head of the groom's family or to one of his uncles. And the party begins. The men eat millet mush [262] and a chicken; the women, millet mush and a guinea hen. They all drink beer, dance, and sing.

[302] On the following morning, the groom's relatives shave the bride's head, and that of her husband if she is his first wife, because their way of life has changed: the young man has become the master of a hut, and the young girl a wife. In the evening, the friends and relatives of the new husband go to the bride's village bearing in this order: a sheep killed at the husband's house, jars of beer, and finally the sarabo /millet mush/. The bride's relatives follow in complete silence /32/ and without greeting anybody. When they arrive at the home of the bride's family, the bearer of the sheep and the women who carry the millet beer and sarabo go into the inner courtyard and put down their loads; then they come but and dance, while the in-laws have the food transferred to other containers. The jars are returned to the bearers, who are driven away with blows by millet stalks and a sprinkling of water mixed with ashes.

All the while, the bride stays in the soukala of the elder, watched closely by his first wife. She remains shut in for several days, until the elder finally decides to send her to her husband. His wife prepares millet mush, sauce, and meat, and brings a jug of beer. The old women assemble and accompany the bride to the home of her husband. He returns the courtesy to the elder on the following day. Henceforth, they are married at long last.

If the new husband is prosperous, he goes to thank his in-laws a [431] few days after the festivities. In leather pouches sewn all around, he offers 1, 300 cowries to his father-in-law and 1, 400 to his mother-in-law. If he can, he also offers beer, two chickens, and a sheep. These last gifts are less essential, but if he fails to offer the cowries, the in-laws may seize his wife's children and keep them until the thank-you gifts have been received.

585 It should be noted that these ceremonies are often curtailed. They
184 may also vary in ways that will not be described here. Sometimes they may not take place at all. This happens when the girl already has a husband prior to her birth, or when she is part of an inheritance. In such cases her relatives merely take her to her husband.

585 No sacrifices are performed during the marriage ceremonies. The
782 husband does offer a sacrifice on the day he builds a hut for his wife, and at the place where the structure is to be erected. The girl's mother consults the sorcerer a few times to find out if her daughter will be welcomed in her new home, and to know which sacrifice must be offered to ward off illness while she lives with her husband. She communicates the answer to the girl's father, and he himself offers the prescribed sacrifice.

602 In theory, the husband owes nothing else to his in-laws. In practice,
431 he would hold himself in poor esteem if he were not to present them with a few more gifts, especially on important feast days. When his maize is harvested, he sets aside a few ears for his wife's relatives; when his millet is threshed, he is sure to send some to his father-in-law; whenever he organizes any sort of festivity, his in-laws are invited; and he personally helps them in their work.

586 There is no divorce in the formal sense of a judgment rendered by law. A husband may send his wife back to her relatives if she steals, if she is lazy, or especially if she commits adultery, but even in the latter case his action will be regarded with disapproval. It is a husband's duty to watch over his wife and, if necessary, to discipline her. The man who repudiates his wife makes himself unpopular and cannot obtain new wives. It also happens, and this occurs more frequently, that the wife runs away and goes back to her family, /33/ either because she complains of ill treatment, or because she is not happy with her husband, or for some other reason of a more or less dubious character. If the husband manages to catch up with her before she gets home, no great problem is involved. He merely beats her and shuts her in for a few days. If she does reach her relatives, especially if they are in connivance, the husband must present a few gifts to them and even to his wife. The in-laws usually try to convince their daughter to return to her husband, but they do not force her to do so. Even the naba, when called upon to intervene, limits himself to the use of moral authority; his threats usually persuade the woman to return to her husband, who may himself use force if he wishes.

782 Friday evening. The sacrifice is the usual one described earlier, but
769 the invoking formula is replaced with the following: "Soul of my
796 father, stretch out your hand and take this chicken which I offer you; grant me to reach next year in good health, and I will return with another chicken." The chicken killed on the grave is not roasted as in other sacrifices, but cooked in water.

On those days one must be careful not to sleep outside. The souls come to drink beer from the vats, and woe to those who lie in their way. They will kill them or at least make them seriously ill.

782 On the feast day itself, all those who have some obligation toward
769 the naba or toward the man who is holding the festivities, such as
796 those to whom he has given a wife or who have asked him for one,
431 come to greet him with a rooster and cowries if they did not come on the previous day. Many of his subjects, especially the canton chiefs, also come to offer their rooster and cowries. On the other hand, if an important visitor comes on that day, it is an elementary rule of civility to offer him a rooster.

782 Usually, on the very day of the festivities, no sacrifices are offered
769 on the graves. The victims are offered to the protective kikirsi of
796 the hut, of the inner courtyard, of the outer courtyard, of the whole soukala. The number of sacrificed chickens varies in proportion to the number of gifts. When the sacrifices are over, the naba assembles his people, and the beer is brought in and presented to him. He first pours a little on the ground as an offering to the ancestral spirits, then he drinks and distributes the ars among his people. This is not
[273] a good day to discuss important matters, because after noon everybody is more or less drunk.

On the following Monday and Wednesday, the naba proceeds at dawn with great pomp to two neighboring villages (Nakalbo and Sabré) to sacrifice a beef to the tangandé. Much feasting ensues there on those two days; the naba loses a beef /in each village/ but gains many chickens and a few thousand cowries. He also goes to the village of Toulgou on the day when basra is celebrated in that locality, because his family originated there.

527 The kibsa is the Moslem sheep feast, and it is celebrated forty days after the end of the great feast. All Mossi celebrate it in private; every family has brewed millet beer, and on that day millet mush is replaced with rice and meat. These festivities are even more intimate than the previous ones in the sense that they are held

4: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1957
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obligations to the Moro-naba, his lands were raided, his women seized and, if he were caught, he was killed.

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It is difficult to ascertain how the institution of provincial administrators arose among the Mossi. Some of the people still believe that the ministers were formerly slaves of the Moro-naba, but Delobsom claims that the first ministers were warrior companions of Naba Oubri, the founder of the Ouagadougou dynasty.[4] These men were not members of the royal lineage and thus were inferior in status to the members of the royal lineage and sublineages under their supervision. However, as emissaries of the Moro-naba, these ministers were entitled to respect by all the people. The ministers recommended successors to vacant district chieftainships; thus it was incumbent upon a district chief to be friendly with his minister if he wished succession to go to his eldest son.

The minister was the person who carried orders from the Moro-naba to the district chiefs, and he reported back to the Moro-naba on conditions in the district he visited. However, the minister could not interfere in the internal affairs of a district, nor could the district chief complain to the Moro-naba about a minister. Everyone was required to observe the strict hierarchy; the only sanction that the district chief exercised over his minister was to appeal to another minister in the hope that the Moro-naba would come to his aid.

The districts that comprised the provinces of the ministers were scattered around the country and were not equal in size or importance. One minister, the Baloum-naba, controlled the districts ruled over by those chiefs who were the sons of recent rulers. Another, the Kamsoro-naba, a eunuch, had control of the largest and wealthiest districts, but he, in contrast to the other ministers, was not succeeded by sons and, when he died, the Moro-naba inherited all of his property. The ministers frequently became very wealthy because they received gifts whenever their charges went to Ouagadougou to pay homage to the ruler. The people from the districts under their control provided labor for their fields and for the upkeep of their houses. The ministers also received bribes from persons seeking vacant district chieftainships.

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When a district chief or Kombéré died, his heirs sent a horse or a sheep with leaves on its tail to notify the ruler of the death. The Moro-naba always questioned the envoys, and when he was satisfied that his man had not met with foul play, he sent the animal to his chief minister. The Moro-naba then sent his own envoys to the late chief's house with offerings for sacrifices to their common ancestors, and also instructed the envoys to collect the death offerings from the chief's relatives. After the funeral the eldest son of the dead chief and the other pretenders went to Ouagadougou bearing gifts to the district minister and the other important men surrounding the ruler. When the time came to name the new district chief, the Moro-naba called his ministers together and asked them: "Which one of the candidates is really capable of succeeding the late chief?"

583 couscous, which he offers to the relatives. Then he takes the girl
591 away. He asks a neighbor for a hut to harbor the young couple on their wedding night and over the next few weeks. They stay there for only a month or two, until their soukala is built.

583 The bride price actually varies from region to region among the Mossi. We have just seen it range from 2,000 to 50,000 cowries. Earlier, we saw it set at 25,000. At Kombisiguiri it amounts to a mere 1,000. The young man's father visits the young girl's father with a chicken and 500 cowries; then he comes to see him a second time, again with a chicken and 500 cowries. There is no other bride price. Those who do not have a chicken to offer replace it with a bundle of firewood or a straw séko. In short, a girl here is worth 30 sous (the two chickens being worth 0.50 franc between them, and the 1,000 cowries amounting to one franc).

591 Among rich people the young couple may remain seven, nine,
[431] or even twelve months in their neighbors' house. They present the latter with gifts, and during this period of time they proceed to build a soukala, or rather to have one built. The young man's father helps his son in this undertaking.

593 The young husband, now settled on his own, will henceforth
431 work on his own account. He has become in turn the head of a soukala, but if he obtains a lot of millet or other grain he offers
626 gifts to his father. If he becomes wealthy and makes no such gifts, the neighbors will insult him. He always makes gifts, therefore, for fear of being insulted. A son who marries, as a rule, builds his soukala as near as possible to that of his father.

593 Finally, let us add that the father usually buys his son's kitchen utensils when the boy settles on his own.

3. When the head of a family dies, the younger brother inevi-
428 tably takes command of the family, but all the property, whatever
593 its nature, goes to the children of the deceased and more especially to his oldest son. There is no longer any family real estate or movable property, or else nothing is regarded as such any longer.

/550/ The eldest son takes his father's soukala and everything that goes with it, fields, slaves, livestock, father's wives. He shares them, however, with his brothers and even with his sisters.

565 171 were, conquerors. This represents a higher level of social complexity and development, in short, a higher level of civilization.

566 556 The nakomsé were and still are gathered in separate villages scattered throughout the territory. They did the same work as other Mossi, but prior to the French occupation they also practiced looting, which was their chief expedient, their major source of wealth. True, this manner of acquiring wealth had lent them improvident habits. Nowadays they own no more small livestock than the Mossi populace, and only a little more large livestock, while they should own much more in view of their former opportunities to acquire wealth. They immediately "ate up" what they looted, however, counting on future pillage. Nowadays they no longer loot, but they seem to have preserved their former improvident habits. It should be noted, however, that they own considerably more horses than other Mossi.

565 142 I saw at Pirigui, in January, 1909, one of those villages of chiefs' sons. There were altogether 841 inhabitants of the nobility with their families and their slaves. Those people would be interesting to study from the point of view of physical anthropology. There were faces totally at variance with Negro faces, truly distinguished physiognomies, oriental and semitic casts of features, in short, enough /579/ to strike an observer even though unfamiliar with physical anthropology.

642 The superstructure of the Mossi state thus consisted of a supreme chief, a carefully established hierarchy of chiefs, and a class of nobles to whom important privileges were granted.

651 As for taxes, "every year at the end of the winter season, prior to our occupation," says Moulins, "the canton chiefs had to come, greet the Moro Naba, and offer him certain gifts (beeves, sheep, millet) which constituted a sort of fixed due." This was the common tax levied after each harvest.

"In addition, whenever the sovereign needed anything whatever, he requested the province chiefs to secure it for him. They summoned the canton chiefs, who in turn gathered the village chiefs, who secured through the soukala chiefs the animals, grain, cowries, and other items requested.

[431] "Finally, whenever a native, chief or common man, came to the Moro Naba, he offered a present to the latter.

793 never offers sacrifices himself to the Earth at Ouagadougou, nor does
174 he have them offered by the Gandé Naba, his minister of religion. He entrusts with this task the Ouagadougou Naba, who is a grandson of the autochtonous inhabitants and thus favorably regarded by the local divinities. Similarly, when the Moro Naba sacrifices to the hillocks surrounding Ouagadougou, he entrusts the local chief with the offerings and the physical sacrifice. Now, what the Moro Naba still does at Ouagadougou was no doubt done by other Mossi chiefs throughout the land after conquest, once the submission of the autochtonous inhabitants had been ensured by force of arms. Hence, the institution of the Tensoba.

One might object that Earth chiefs are also to be found in Gourounsi territory, although the Gourounsi are independent. We know, however, that the present-day Gourounsi cantons were not the achievement of the Gourounsi themselves but of minor Mossi dynasties established in the territory. Under the circumstances, the same substitution of conquering chiefs for conquered chiefs has occurred there as in Mossi territory, with the same consequences.

"The Tensoba," says Marc, p. 157, "whose title means 'Master
793 of the Earth,' stands in opposition to the naba who is a military chief....

"The Tensoba is the indispensable mediator between the ancestors and their living descendants. It is he who conducts the funeral ceremonies and who decides on the honors to be rendered on the Day of the Dead. It is to him that one appeals in case of an epidemic or any public misfortune, since misfortunes are always due to the evil inclinations of ancestors that must be allayed."

/596/ Actually, the institution of the Earth chief does not strip
793 the village and canton chiefs of all religious powers. In some areas,
643 as Marc pointed out, the Earth chiefs have gradually vanished, and
839 the political chiefs have become religious chiefs as well. They per-
778 form sacrifices on the bara's advice, without failing to make a gift
[431] of some sort (100 or 1,000 cowries) to the latter also. By the same token and up to a point, the Moro Naba is invested with a religious character and with religious attributes. It is he, as we have already seen, who orders the performance of sacrifices to the Earth, to the hills. Every year during the dry season, he has a donkey sacrificed to Naba Koutou, a former Moro Naba, in the hut where the latter is buried. Prior to our occupation it was a eunuch who performed

584 daughter; (2) when the father is in extreme penury, he gives his still
596 unpromised daughter to some rich native who, with the customary gifts, will help him in his need, since the gifts of the fiancé go to the man who promised the young girl; (3) the first daughter in a household,
[603] whether or not she is the only daughter, must be promised by her maternal grandfather and not by the head of the family."

This constitutes, I believe, a curious vestige of matriarchy which doubtless refers to those very distant times when the Mossi family revolved around the maternal rather than the paternal line.

4. The mother of the young girl. "The girl's mother," says Vadier, "is sometimes consulted. Her husband merely asks her if she is satisfied with the choice he has made in agreement with the head of the family. Her answer, however, is given no weight whatever.

"The fiancé's mother is not even consulted."

Such at least is the theory. In reality, no doubt, the mother of the young girl often has more authority than the theory supposes.

431 Gifts.—Bride price is nonexistent in Mossi marriage. This is a very
583 important point which differentiates the Mossi and even, I believe,
[71] the Voltaic /237/ tribes in general, from the Mandé groups, such as the Bambara and Malinké, where bride price does exist and is actually quite high (I say quite high, considering the general poverty of the Sudanese). I did not emphasize this sufficiently in my Noir du Soudan in the chapter concerning the Mossi family, pages 548 and 549. I did mention that the price paid to win a Mossi girl of the Ouagadougou region ranged from 1, 500 cowries (1. 50 francs) to 50, 000 cowries (50 francs). In fact, these are gifts rather than bride price.

Although there is no bride price, properly speaking, the gifts have an important role.

"After the promise of marriage," says Vadier, "the future husband must come every year, after the filikienga /a feast/, to bring a few small gifts to the head of the family and to the girl's mother. These consist as a rule of a little millet, salt, a few hundred cowries, a mat, or two or three crudely made séko /coarse matting/.

"As for the father, he receives no gifts, which does not mean that he does not benefit from those received by his wife or by the head of the family.

"Likewise, the girl receives no gifts. Moreover, she may not utilize the commodities or foodstuffs given to her mother.

"The gifts offered during the long betrothal period cannot be of great value. A prospective husband who should bring 5, 000 or 6, 000

431 cowries to the head of the family would be rejected. The head of the
583 family would certainly not fail to tell him that in promising a girl he intended to give her as a bride and not to sell her. Should the husband insist, he would simply be driven away."

581 Marriage, therefore, is not regarded as purchase among the Mossi,
contrary to Malinké and Bambara practices, and in this sense it is
586 imbued among them with greater dignity. Unfortunately, this absence of a bride price permits an easy rupture of the marriage ties, while this is not the case among the Bambara and Malinké where the woman is bound more firmly to her duties. The household, therefore, is less securely grounded among the Mossi than among the Mandé, and thus evil results from good.

581 As a rule, the marriage bond is much looser and more fragile among
the Voltaic tribes (Bobo, Gourounsi, Mossi, Habbé/Habe/, etc.)
583 than among the Mandé groups (Bambara, Malinké, etc.), and this is related to the lack of a real bride price. Where there is a bride price, the young girl is sold. If she wishes to leave her husband once she is married, however, considering that a bride price of some importance is difficult to refund (since improvident family heads immediately set out to squander it, while more serious people use it right away to buy a girl for some young man of the family), it has become customary to oppose categorically any demands to break the marriage bond. Thus, while betrothal has greater dignity among the Voltaic tribes, marriage itself has more staying power and more seriousness among the Mandé, and the household has greater soundness. /238/

Now to return to the Mossi.

431 Let us note first that the offering of gifts allows for some flexibility.
583 A rich young man will make much more important gifts than a poor
556 man. He will not give a large sum of cowries, but he may give significant amounts of clothing, foodstuffs (salt, etc.), and animals to the head of his fiancée's family or to her mother. On the other hand, a poor man will give a bundle of firewood which he has just gathered in the bush and a chicken, and this payment will be considered sufficient.

431 Although the girl is not sold, her fiancé or his father are required
to make the gifts prescribed by custom.
583 "The failure to make those gifts prescribed by custom," says Vadier, "has serious consequences. Let us examine the various situations which might arise.

431 583 "I. If by negligence, forgetfulness, or because of an absence (journey), the prospective husband does not make the annual gifts, he will be refused the girl on the day when he comes to have her taken to his home, and he will lose all his rights over her.

"Nevertheless, he will regain all his privileges if in one installment he pays to the head of the girl's family and to her mother all the gifts which he ought to have made during the period of his absence or forgetfulness.

"The head of the family cannot refuse this collective gift and thereby oppose the marriage.

"II. The husband has forgotten to make the gifts and does not come to the home of the family head when the young girl has reached puberty.

"A. If he lives in the area, the failure to call on the head of the family at the required time is regarded as a relinquishment of his rights over the girl. The head of the family may then dispose of her again.

"B. The fiancé has been away on a journey for a long time and is still absent when the girl reaches puberty.

"The head of the family has the fiancé's brother called to him. He offers the girl to him as his bride. The brother is not required to accept, and if he does not, the head of the family recovers all his rights over the girl."

582 Celebration of the marriage. Consummation. —"The girl must have reached puberty (15 or 16 years) in order to be taken to her husband's hut. It is even customary to wait six months or a year after she was first in a state of zim (zim means "blood" in Mossi).

As for the husband, it is equally necessary that he must have attained the age of 17 or 18.

585 The formalities of the marriage ceremony are very simple in Yatenga.

When the betrothed girl has reached puberty, the husband calls on the family head to ask for her. The family head can tell him /239/ to wait six months or a year at most, a delay which the fiancé is required to observe, but usually the head of the family replies that his future wife may be fetched in a few days. The fiancé then hands him a bag and two goatskins full of millet and withdraws. This grain is used to make dolo which is drunk by the girl's entire family.

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585 431 Each woman living in the same soukala makes a gift of one or two gourds to the girl's mother. The father and the head of the family give her two large baskets. These objects will make up the bride's trousseau.

585 On the appointed day the fiancé sends two men of his family, one of whom is usually his brother, to fetch his bride. These two natives [431] come to the home of the family head with 13 canari /jars/ of dolo. Then the feasting begins.

[782] The father takes his daughter to the hut of the ancestors, cuts the throat of a chicken on the fetish stone so the future marriage will be happy, and discloses to her the name of her husband.

The young fiancée, escorted by two old women of her family and the two emissaries of her fiancé, proceeds to the latter's home.

For four days the young bride will stay in a hut alone with the old women. During this period, the old women give her all the customary advice and show her the course of behavior she must follow to please her future spouse.

The bridegroom comes every day to greet the old women, but during this interview the young girl takes great care to hide her face from him.

On the third day, in the evening, the husband has a sheep and goat slaughtered. He chooses a leg of mutton which he puts aside with the [252] animal's skin, and he has a large quantity of sarabou /millet mush/ cooked along with the remaining meat. He takes the whole thing to the old women. They distribute the sarabou among all the members of the family and carefully put aside the leg of mutton and the skin which they will take on the following day to the girl's mother to show her that her daughter has indeed been delivered to her husband.

Then the husband has his bride brought to his hut where the marriage is consummated.

There is nothing compulsory about this four-day waiting period. It happens frequently that the consummation of the marriage takes place on the day following the young girl's arrival. Occasionally it is delayed for several days when, as sometimes happens, an elderly fiancé gives the bride who was originally intended for him to his son or to some other member of the family.

The marriage is valid from the day of the departure of the old women who brought the girl to her husband's soukala.

The consummation of the marriage is by no means necessary to validate the union. If the husband neglects his new bride for too long, however (a year, for example), she may demand explanations." /240/

582 Impediments to marriage. —"The impediments to marriage," says Vadier, "are as follows.

842 How children are welcomed. —The Mossi are very happy to have children and want by all means to have some. This is indeed to their full advantage, since children work from the age of seven or eight, since they make sacrifices for their parents when the latter are dead, and since the daughters, by marrying, bring in gifts for the family. The more children one has, the happier one is.

842 789 "Under these circumstances, " says Vadier, "a barren woman is very poorly regarded by her husband and not greatly esteemed by her neighbors. To overcome this sterility when it occurs, both spouses appeal to the gods. They both go to the tengasoba, the religious chief of the village, with a chicken, a goat, or a sheep, according to their means. The tengasoba cuts the animal's throat on a special stone, collects its blood, and boils it in a vessel along with various tree barks which have certain properties.

"This concoction is then given to the woman, who must mix it with her sarabou. If the spouses later have a child, they must, under threat of calling forth the vengeance of the divinity (the Earth, in [431] this case), offer the tengasoba a gift of 3, 000 cowries if they had a boy or 4, 000 cowries if they had a girl.

"The tengasoba also overcome sterility by cutting the animal's throat in the sacred grove (kango). "

847 Abortions. —Abortions nevertheless occur. Sometimes Mossi women cause an abortion in the event of an illegitimate pregnancy which occurred in the husband's absence. In addition, abortions are rather frequent among unmarried mothers. To conceal their lapse, [791] they appeal to the tipa or timisoba (makers of charms, medicines, and poisons) who give them a special brew of which they hold the secret.

[586] These practices are, of course, very poorly regarded by the Mossi. Married women who resort to them are turned out by their husband's. In addition, if a woman dies as the result of an abortion, her husband is likely to manifest joy and to state that the woman received a just punishment for her transgression. Finally, in former times after the [684] death of the guilty woman, the husband would go to the Moro Naba and denounce her lover to him. The naba confiscated all the lover's property.

843 Childbirth. —Among wealthy Mossi, the pregnant woman is treated with a certain regard. She does not work after the third month /252/ of pregnancy if this is her first, or after the sixth month if she has

843 already borne children. Among the common people, the woman works up to the time of her delivery. Like other Sudanese women, the Mossi woman is inured to the pains of childbirth and devoid of any nervousness.

843 787 When their wives are pregnant, the Mossi often go to consult the baga /sorcerer/ to find out what sacrifices should be made so the event will turn out well. As he is wont to do, the baga indicates such-and-such a sacrifice. He also prognosticates on request whether to expect a boy or a girl.

843 755 If the pregnant woman has been frightened by an evil spirit (kinkirga), she summons the tipa who washes her body with a specially prepared liquid or merely administers violent blows on her head with tarakanré (cowhide sandals of which we spoke earlier /not translated/) to drive out the evil spirit.

844 The Mossi woman may give birth only in her own hut. She would consider it a shameful thing if the child were born in her husband's private hut.

When a woman gives birth, she makes a confession to the old women who assist her, because she fears too much suffering or an unsuccessful delivery if she does not confess the faults she has committed. The old women go and repeat them to the husband, who says, "That's all right, I knew it all," and forgives her. In short, the torments of childbirth are put to use by the old women to procure a confession.

There are midwives among the Mossi (in Mossi, pougourorosa). They are paid by the husband. However, they do not receive a [43] salary, properly speaking, but rather a gift (a piece of salt, a skirt cloth, etc.). If nothing is given to them, they cannot and do not make any demands.

In addition to the midwife, the old women of the compound, quarter, or village come and help the patient.

844 576 For the delivery itself, the Mossi woman goes down on hands and knees, her arms stretched out upon the ground, her body slightly inclined from head to hips, in the posture ordinarily used to salute or to remain before a chief. The midwife stays behind her.

844 When the child is born, the women present heat up a very strong concoction with red pepper, soumbara /locust bean/, etc. The woman is made to swallow this, and it is supposed to foster the emission of blood and all other impure matter. Then she is washed with warm water. Her loins are also rubbed vigorously so that the strain undergone in childbirth will not be felt there later. Likewise,

881 It seems that among the Mossi and Foulsé, the nané does not give
304 moral lessons to the bankonsé, contrary to the procedure among the Bambara where the custom has been preserved.

At the end of a month, the bankonsé are healed. The families are notified, and each household prepares a new pair of breeches and a boubou /robe/ for the young circumcised boys.

On the evening preceding the day when they make their reappearance in the village, around seven o'clock, the skirts of the circumcised boys are heaped into a pile and burned. The following morning the nané leads the bankonsé to the well to wash from head to toe before donning their new clothes. Before leaving camp, the firewood gathered by the boys is distributed among their mothers and the straw among their family heads. The nané also keeps a certain amount for himself. This is his allowance, aside from his being provided with food throughout the month, along with the circumcised boys, by the latter's
[833] relatives. (On the other hand, he had to remain separated from his wife, for there is a superstition that should he approach her, the bankonsé would fail to heal.) When the distribution of straw and firewood has been completed, our circumcised boys make their triumphal entry into the village at seven o'clock in the morning in their /261/ beautiful new garments. To the sound of the tom-tom, they visit
[431] all the compounds, calling on everyone. Gifts are offered to them (kola nuts, cowries, peanuts, cotton, dolo, etc.). When the visits are completed, the celebration is over, and the bankonsé return home.
[551] They may henceforth be called by name again; this could not be done during their retreat.

Excision. ——Girls are excised when they are eight, nine, or ten, depending on how mature they are. As with the boys, this is done during the month of December, but instead of being carried out on a village or quarter basis, it is done on a compound basis. The operation itself is performed by an old woman who knows how to do it. It is not she, however, who watches over the girls afterwards, But an old woman of the compound who has them under her supervision for twenty-five or thirty days. During that time, the girls are kept apart, sleeping in their guardian's hut and taking care of themselves. As soon as they can walk, they go and gather wood in the bush for her, they fetch water, spin cotton, etc. At nightfall, they sing in chorus, clapping their hands in rhythm.

When they are healed, they deck themselves with all the bracelets and jewelry they can find in the compound. Thus dressed up and

428 Let us finally add some miscellaneous remarks about inheritance.
848 Concerning the natural child. —"The natural child," says Vadier, "has exactly the same rights as the legitimate child. He inherits from his father or mother concurrently with his brothers and in accordance with the rules we discussed previously." This is correct, but let us not forget that the natural child was sent back to its real father by the legitimate husband as soon as it could leave its mother. Hence, he has all these rights in the household of his actual father and not in that of his mother's husband.

428 Concerning the child in utero. —According to Mossi custom, the child in utero inherits property and is regarded as though it had already left its mother's womb.

Disqualification. —There is cause for disqualification, excluding one from the inheritance. If the deceased was killed, the man who killed him is declared disqualified, but this disqualification does not extend to his children.

Objections to an inheritance. —In cases of ordinary inheritance, if the oldest son is not satisfied with what he received, he may take his grievance to the head of the family who tries to settle the matter. In the event that he does not succeed, the naba intervenes. Such an objection on the part of the eldest son is very unusual. The brothers of the deceased and the other sons cannot object, for only the eldest son has the right to do this.

Wills. —No wills are made, either in theory or in practice. Custom reigns supreme. Sometimes a brother who has some grievance against his brothers decides solemnly before he dies that all his property will go to his sons, but this is a purely platonic manifestation. The dying man is allowed to speak as he pleases, and then, once he is dead and buried, nothing is done about it. One acts in accordance with tradition which asserts itself upon all concerned and overrules, by its own dictates, the special wishes of the deceased.

Acceptance and waiver. —They do not exist here. Custom does not allow people to shirk the exercise of their rights, which are at the same time duties.

428 Restorations. A Mossi is free to dispose of his own property as he
431 sees fit while he is alive, but it is understood that he must give the item before his death for the gift to be effective and acknowledged as such.

428 As a result, an heir may come into his share of the inheritance through a gift received during the lifetime of the deceased.

431 /273/ Gifts inter vivos. —A Mossi may, while alive, give away whatever he pleases of his own property.

Since he is absolute master of these goods and thus entitled to use them as he sees fit, no one has the right to question the gifts he makes.

421 Incidentally, let us recall that heads of families, compounds, work groups, and households are only the managers and not the owners, in the Roman sense, of the family, zaka, work group, or household property, respectively. As for private, individual goods on which the jus utendi et abutendi may be exercised, we know what they amount to among the Mossi. In practice, moreover, the Mossi are far from taking much advantage of this theoretical right. Here, nevertheless, we are concerned with theory, and the following rules pertain to it.

431 A gift made inter vivos must be made before several witnesses in order to be valid.

No special status is required in order to receive a gift.

The wife possesses the same rights as the husband. The gift will [837] nevertheless be worthless if it is proved that the beneficiary is or was her lover.

596 We are now finished with the Mossi family.

To summarize, as we already stated earlier, this family is communal and patriarchal.

Its communalism, however, is quite unstable. People live, not in family groups, but in family subgroups (the zaka). They work, not in family subgroups, but in sub-subgroups (the work groups). In former times, the zaka may have been a community of labor as well as a community of habitation. As we shall see later /not translated/, this is now the case among the Foulsé or Nioniossé /Nyonyose/, where sometimes it is the zaka that constitutes the community of labor and sometimes it is the work group, and where there seems to be an evolution from the former state of affairs to the latter.

As for patriarchy, it is very clearly defined and established. The family revolves around the man and not around the woman. As I have stated, certain signs induce us to believe that the Mossi family, like the Sudanese family in general, was once matriarchal in the very distant past. At all events, this has long ceased to be the case, and we are dealing now with an unstable communalism paired with clearly defined patriarchy.

643 La, a village near Koudougou district. His eldest wife, the *Pughtiema*,
796 appeared carrying her household utensils in order to accompany her husband. However, all the ministers, led by the Kamsaogho Naba, implored the monarch to have his horse unsaddled and to postpone the trip until the following day. Feigning anger, the Mogho Naba reluctantly agreed to remain in the capital, ordered his horse unsaddled, dismissed his wife, and re-entered the palace.[8]

173 The tradition about the origin of this ritual reveals something of the
643 Mossi attitude toward the human frailties of their rulers. It appears that
796 Poko, the favorite wife of Mogho Naba Waraga (ca. 1660–80), asked permission to visit her father at La, and that he refused to grant her request because of his love and admiration for her. Nevertheless, she continued to ask him for permission, and after her third request he granted her wish and sent a page and a small girl with her as chaperons. When Poko did not return to the palace on the third day, Naba Waraga sent two pages to her father's compound to fetch her, and here they discovered that she had died. Fearing the king's wrath toward persons who brought bad tidings, the pages did not report back to him but notified the ministers of Poko's death. When subsequent messengers also failed to return, the king decided to go to La. The following day, after the morning ceremonies, he ordered his horse saddled and commanded the Pughtiema to get ready to accompany him on his journey. But the ministers, anxious to protect him from grief, told him that a great king never followed a mere woman under any circumstances and persuaded him not to depart. The monarch went back into the palace, and the dignitaries ordered the horse unsaddled and sent it away. Shortly afterwards, the king changed his mind and decided to go to La, but he was beseeched not to do so. He swore that he would leave the following morning, and that if he were prevented from doing so, he would advise all his descendants to try to go to La every morning until one of them succeeded.[9]

643 At the end of this ceremony, a page gave the ministers an ample supply
644 of beer and kola nuts. The Moslems were given presents of kola nuts and
692 millet water (*som kom*) sweetened with honey, since they were forbidden
576 to drink millet beer. Later in the morning, the Mogho Naba left the palace
[431] and entered the zongo, where he greeted his visitors, accepted gifts from visiting chiefs and subjects, dispensed gifts in turn, and presided over the court of justice. Anyone who went to see the ruler had to be accompanied by his provincial minister or his host—regardless of whether it was his purpose to pay a courtesy visit, to pledge allegiance, to plead for aid, or to give
643 testimony in a lawsuit. Pages moved back and forth between the palace
644 and the courtyard, dispensing kola nuts and beer or millet water prepared
576

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The Mogho Naba had an elaborate court composed of many officials, relatives, and servants. The most important courtiers were the five ministers, who appeared daily at court and took part in all important ceremonies in addition to administering their own provinces. Aside from these men, the Mogho Naba had a number of other officials called Naba whose responsibilities covered the full range of duties in the palace and in the capital. One of the most interesting was the Pwe Naba, a royal diviner and court chaperon. His chief duty was to guard the morals of the pages and the royal wives; he also administered the ordeal to persons accused of treason. The pages were required to be chaste until they were discharged from the palace, lest their amorous adventures lead them to compromise the virtue of the royal wives, with whom they were constantly in contact. A wife and a page suspected of adultery were tested by the Pwe Naba. He forced them to look into a mirror or a calabash of water, and declared them guilty or innocent according to the way their faces were reflected. If they were found guilty, the wife was executed and the page was either executed or discharged in disgrace. The Pwe Naba also saw to it that strangers did not address the ruler's wives either on the street or in the market. Offenders were executed.

The Dapore Naba served as the court's chief executioner and as head of a group of the Mogho Naba's hereditary serfs. Members of the royal clan were executed by strangulation, since royal blood could not be shed; all other persons were executed either with a sword, by hanging, or with heavy clubs. Another palace official was the Ouedrango Naba, the head groom. It was he who saddled and presented the king's ceremonial horse to him at the morning ceremony. The Kambo Naba commanded the palace guard; only he and his guards were permitted to carry guns. The Samande Naba and the Samande Nabila supervised the work of the samande-kamba, young men who worked around the palace courtyard and kept watch with heavy batons to enforce order during ceremonies. A lesser palace official was the Zusoaba Kasanga, who, as chief of the palace eunuchs, ruled over the guardians of the royal harem. The Gande Naba made sacrifices for the ruler and also distributed gifts from the king to the royal officials and the royal household.

Another courtier, and one who played an important role during the installation of the new ruler, was the Ouagadougou Naba. As a direct descendant of the Ninisi, he was all but indispensable at sacrifices propitiating or honoring his ancestors. The Bendere Naba was the chief musician and court historian; according to some reports, a Bendere Naba was killed instantly if he made a mistake while reciting the ruler's genealogy. The Raga Naba was chief of the markets in the capital. Under him were

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vincial minister for Djiba, and rendered homage to the sovereign. After 634
this reception the prince went to the Gounga Naba's compound, which 644
henceforth was his headquarters whenever he visited Ouagadougou; for, like other district chiefs, he had to consult with this minister before seeing the monarch. Everyone in the kingdom had to follow the political hierarchy, even the ruler's heir.

The young prince remained at his host's house and from there visited the other important officials, in the order of their rank, receiving from each presents of sheep, millet beer, kola nuts, and sometimes wives. He then [795]
visited the Imam of the Ouagadougou Moslem community, where he received a blessing in the name of Allah and was given kola nuts and millet water sweetened with honey. On the fourth or fifth day the prince went to [769]
a small village called Zoangha, where he made a sacrifice to his ancestors and requested their protection against all enemies.[29] He returned to Ouagadougou on the same day and was given a palace escort to accompany him to his district.

During his journey, the royal heir had the opportunity to establish or 634
re-establish friendly relations with district chiefs who were now his peers, 644
but who might someday become his subjects. He visited in turn the war leader at Tansobatenga, the Koubri Naba, the Ipelse Naba, and the Kon- 431
drin Naba. Each of these chiefs offered him livestock, slaves, and wives. He, in turn, distributed salt (a valuable commodity) to the old women and gave kola nuts and other commodities to the chiefs' head wives. The Baganmini Naba presented the prince with a special quiver of arrows, and the chief of the Fulani at Bedego gave him a pretty maiden and one of his best bulls. The prince spent a few days with each of his hosts, but stayed for seven days in Bere, a district bordering on his own. The Bere Naba gave him a wife, a robe, and a cow, and sent messengers to the village chiefs of Djiba to announce that their chief had arrived in Bere. The chiefs then journeyed to Bere, pledged allegiance to their ruler, and presented gifts to him. On the seventh night there was a ritual (whose main features are 634
unclear), in the course of which the prince entered Djiba secretly on horse- 644
back, accompanied only by one servant, one groom, and the nobles and [788]
chiefs of Djiba.[30] Most members of the escort who had accompanied him from the capital were left behind at Bere, and followed only when the prince had established himself in his district. When the prince's band entered Djiba under cover of darkness, it was met by the local Ouidi Naba, who ruled the district in the absence of a Crown Prince. The Ouidi Naba now became the prince's protector if the boy were still young, or his most trusted adviser if he were old enough to rule by himself.

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634 As soon as the prince arrived, the Ouidi Naba made preparations to
644 receive the chiefs of such local districts as Manga, Nobere, and Basgana, who visited the prince and brought him wives, livestock, and money. During a seven-day period, other chiefs and well-wishers visited the new chief
[431] and offered him gifts. When this period was over, the new Djiba Naba gave wives to the noble members of his escort and livestock, money, and kola nuts to the commoners and serfs, and sent the group back to Ouagadougou. Then he settled down to the life of a typical district chief, governing his villages in the name of the Mogho Naba, paying him tribute, and settling disputes among his villagers. Dim Delobson reports that the other
[431] district chiefs and the heads of such principalities as Boussouma and Con-
[651] quizitenga formerly sent presents to the Djiba Naba when they sent their annual tribute to the Mogho Naba.[31] But this contradicts all that I heard and saw of the relationship between the royal heir and the other district chiefs. They treated him as an equal and showed no deference to him either in private or on ceremonial occasions. As a matter of fact, in the presence of the Mogho Naba, the royal heir actually effaced himself before the other district chiefs. This behavior served to preserve the concept of equal access
[643] of all members of the ruling clan to the ancestral nam. The Mogho Naba was head of the ruling group as well as political leader of the Mossi. His son, on the other hand, was often a junior in terms of age and generation within the ruling group, but politically he was on the same level as the other district chiefs. The sovereign could not show by his behavior that his son was either actually or potentially superior to the other Nanamse; nor could the prince presume to be haughty because of his strategic but accidental relationship to the actual possessor of the nam. Had he tried to do so, he might have ruined his chances of being selected to take over the "house" of his father and his father's fathers.

643 The relations between the Mogho Naba and his children, including his
644 heir, were characterized by formality—at least in public. Nevertheless, the ruler took a vital interest in the training and welfare of the youthful Djiba
593 Naba. Mogho Naba Wobogo (1890-96) reportedly had the Ouidi Naba
634 and the Baloum Naba of Djiba executed because the Crown Prince died under strange circumstances while under their care. Yet the Mogho Naba was not expected to enjoy seeing his son and heir, because of the Mossi father's traditional anxiety regarding those individuals who would profit most from his death. At the assemblies of district chiefs called by the Mogho Naba, the royal heir was not even greeted by his father; moreover, the heir usually stood at the edge of the assembly and left without attending the customary feast. However, there is considerable evidence that the Mogho

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mal lineage segment except the pretenders to the throne shaved their heads as a sign of mourning. The royal pretenders donned sheepskin mantles to signify that they were willing to "eat the nam." Once the ruler had been buried, the country settled down to an uneasy peace until the eighth day, when the funeral ceremonies took place. In the meantime, the Napoko symbolically held daily court, and the Tansoba's army acted as a check against the attempts of ambitious princes to seize power by force of arms.

Two days before the funeral, the Kamsaogho Naba selected the Kourita, who was to replace the Napoko as the living symbolic representative of the dead Mogho Naba. The person chosen to be Kourita was usually a young son of the deceased king, but since this person was banished from the capital, most of the royal wives hid their young children or fled the palace with them.[33] Once the Kourita had been chosen, the Kamsaogho Naba performed a ceremony (similar to those connected with the divine kings of the Near East) during which the youth was given one of his father's horses, dressed in his father's clothes, and given his father's youngest widow as a wife. He was then paid the homage due the Mogho Naba, and after receiving many gifts from the dignitaries, he was banished from Ouagadougou forever. As he went through the country, he was treated like the Mogho Naba and given many wives and presents. If he should chance to return to Ouagadougou or see the new Mogho Naba, either or both of them would be killed by the ancestors. Many Mossi districts seem to have been founded by exiled Kouritadamba. These men were undoubtedly among the numerous "elder" sons of past kings who are said to have "refused" the nam and gone to live in the districts now governed by their descendants.

The choice and banishment of the Kourita heralded the funeral rites, which were characterized by numerous animal sacrifices to the ancestors in the name of the deceased ruler. On the afternoon of the first day of the funeral, the Crown Prince mounted a horse and left the palace by the women's door. The Napoko then took the bridle of her brother's horse and led him and an immense crowd of cavalry, armed warriors, and musicians around the palace walls three times. After the third round, the Napoko demanded that her brother give her a personal servant as a present; he hesitated, but finally granted her request. The Napoko was then lifted up by the warriors, who shouted as they carried her home. The funeral thus came to an end.

All Mossi potentates tried to emulate the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou in matters of pomp, ceremony, and government.[34] Their courts were inferior to his, but only because they were less powerful and less wealthy.

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hoisted him on their shoulders and proceeded to his host's house with loud acclaim. 634

The next morning, the new chief went to the palace to pay homage to the Mogho Naba and receive from him the traditional cowries, three kola nuts, and a small jar of millet water. In the days that followed, he celebrated his good fortune at the house of the important ministers and court officials. About a week later he returned to the palace, and the Baloum Naba's chief assistant invested him with the insignia of office: a white gown, a cushion, a pair of slippers, and, most important, a bonnet—the true symbol of chieftainship. Soon afterward, the new chief asked the Mogho Naba and his provincial minister for permission to return home. He was then provided with an escort to accompany him to his district.

The journey of a new chief to his district was marked by pomp and ceremony. The Nobere Naba stopped at such districts as Toudou and Twili, where he was entertained by the chiefs and presented with wives and other gifts. Some districts he would never be allowed to visit again, and others he had to bypass during his joyful journey. The reasons for these restrictions and prohibitions have long since been forgotten, but they were probably instituted to prevent conflicts among Kombemba and to prevent the new chief from coming into contact with the descendants of the Kouritadamba of former Mogho Nanamse. 634 574

As the new Nobere Naba neared his district, he was met by a welcoming committee of village chiefs, nobles, and commoners, who pledged allegiance to him and gave him wives, goods, clothing, money, grain, and livestock. He was then taken to the Soulougre Naba, a descendant of the aboriginal Ninisi, at whose hands he had to undergo another series of rites before he could set up his new compound and begin his rule. These ceremonies were rather simple in comparison with those at Ouagadougou, but they represented a ritual re-enactment of the Mossi conquest of the district, and reinforced the status relationship between the Mossi and the aboriginal population. At the end of seven days, the Kombere Naba gave the Soulougre Naba a black cow to be sacrificed at a pool called Yarega, a shrine of the ancient Ninisi on a tributary of the White Volta River. When this final rite was over, an enthusiastic crowd fetched the chief, and the young people of Soulougre village bore him aloft to his compound. A period of celebration now began during which all the heads of villages, lineages, and compounds paid homage and swore allegiance to their ruler. This ended when the chief summoned his escort from Ouagadougou and gave presents to those who wished to return there and wives and land to those who wished to settle in his district. 634 [641] [431] [788]

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634 622 greater number of lineage members eligible for the nam and the shallow genealogical depth. Every man who had the ability or desire to rule was 634 encouraged to seek the post. Many candidates tried to impress the district 622 chief and his advisers with their good qualities; most tried to bribe them. 662 Since the candidates could not openly seek the post during the day, they visited the important officials of the district at night, taking money and cattle as presents. Some candidates even promised wives. The intrigues on this level, such as seeking the friendship of pages to find out about the activities of rivals, paralleled those at Ouagadougou. The more gifts a candidate gave the district chief, the more his rivals tried to surpass him. Consequently, the district chief often kept the office vacant for months or even as long as two or three years in order to enjoy these lucrative gifts. Neither the caretakers of the village, who complained about the administrative problems of a village without a chief, nor the Tengsobadamba, who declared that without the permission of a chief they could not make sacrifices to help the people avoid illness, drought, and sterility, could force the Kombere Naba to name a new village chief. Only when the candidates had exhausted most of their wealth was the process to elect the chief set in motion.

634 The district chief had a better knowledge of the character of candidates 622 for the village chieftainship than the Dimdamba or Mogho Nanamse had about the men whom they selected. The district chiefs were better able than other Mossi rulers to obey the dictum that only those men capable of "keeping" the country should rule. Nevertheless, before making a choice, the Kombere Naba called in the local minister responsible for the village in question and discussed with him the character and capabilities of the various candidates.[42] As on higher levels, the eldest son of the former chief [651] was usually favored, especially if he had sent a large *fado* (death tax) to [662] the district chief and had been generous to him during the interregnum. But it was also possible that one of the dead chief's younger sons or one of his brothers or uncles might be chosen. In some cases, the district chiefs [613] chose men from related sub-lineages that had not held the nam for generations. One district chief chose a man who had lived away from the village for thirty years. He had gone to live in his mother's brother's village as a young man and did not return until he was named chief. Admittedly, such cases were exceptional, but they kept alive in the minds of the local people the concept of the Mossi lineage's corporate possession of the nam.

On the day chosen for the election of a village chief, all the candidates with their unshaved heads and sheepskin mantles reported to the village [431] administrator's house along with all the other men of their lineage. They gave him presents, and he led them to the compound of the district chief.

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because of this delinquency, the Mogho Naba might hesitate to come to the aid of any of his vassals if a general war broke out. It is true that the Mogho Naba did not aid the Yatenga ruler when the French arrived. But whether this was because of his failure to pay taxes, or because the French conquest of the Yatenga coincided with a civil war there, we shall probably never know. We do know that many of the Mogho Naba's vassals came to his aid when the French finally arrived at Ouagadougou. It is my opinion that the gifts exchanged between Yatenga and Ouagadougou were not "tributary," but were more in the nature of tokens of friendship between two peers.

The Mogho Naba and his provincial ministers also received revenue as a function of their judicial roles. The nature and disposition of the fines levied against legal offenders were discussed in Chapter V. The Mogho Naba's fees came in the form of the traditional gifts the litigants gave him even before their cases were tried. These gifts were never regarded as bribes, for this would have contradicted the Mossi axiom that "the truth is at Ouagadougou."

The Mogho Naba inherited all the property of the Kamsaogho Naba, and claimed all the property of district chiefs who died without close relatives. He also received inheritance taxes (fado) from the estates of deceased district chiefs. In collecting the fado, the Mogho Naba first retained the horse on which the messenger came to announce the chief's death. He reciprocated by sending envoys with cowries and animals to be offered to their common ancestors at the chief's funeral. After the funeral, the envoys claimed the dead chief's quiver of arrows to take to Ouagadougou for deposit with those of other dead chiefs. Then they demanded the fado, and jestingly told the heirs that the Mogho Naba would be satisfied with nothing less than "a thousand of everything" (*tusri bumbu fa*) the deceased had possessed: wives, slaves, horses, cows, goats, chickens, articles of clothing, and so on. The heirs pleaded poverty and jokingly gave the envoys a few old and sickly animals, old chickens, tattered pieces of clothing, etc. Eventually, they handed out the fado, which usually consisted of livestock, clothing, food, weapons, jewelry, cowries, and even slaves. Lastly, they gave the envoys the chief's ceremonial horse and presents for themselves.

The Mogho Naba and his ministers collected a considerable amount of revenue from the traders who visited Ouagadougou and the larger market towns and village markets throughout the kingdom.[8] The Mossi (especially the assimilated Yarse) were good traders, and they benefited from their country's strategic location between the Sahara and the forest regions. According to Barth, some six caravan routes crossed the country, linking

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439 Marc, who had the opportunity to check the volume of this trade in 1904 and 1905, estimates that about 16,000 head of cattle and 75,000 sheep and goats passed through the two customs posts in Mossi country. Furthermore, he believes that since "the Mossi also supply in part the markets of Togoland and the market at Bondoukou [Ivory Coast], one may assume a minimum annual export of 20,000 head of cattle and 100,000 sheep or goats. The import of kola nuts is at least 500 tons."[11] It is clear that this volume [174] of trade could not have been achieved so soon after the French conquest. [651] We can only conclude that it existed prior to the coming of the Europeans, and that it brought the Mossi rulers a considerable income.

643 The Mogho Naba's officials collected taxes from all caravans that passed 651 through his capital. The caravaneers also gave the Mogho Naba important gifts, and he apparently traded with them, even if always to his own 439 profit. Binger states that Mogho Naba Sanum forced horse traders from [431] the Yatenga and Hausa merchants to sell him part of their commodities at one-hundredth the purchase price.[12] Crozat reports that Mogho Naba Wobogo

> appears to have had some business relations with white merchants who came to Salaga every dry season. He sent horses to them in exchange for silver. He claims that he had no reason to be pleased with their integrity, and that the silver they sent him contained plenty of copper. Some traders apparently came as far as Ouagadougou, bringing merchandise of German origin. There was one of them there during my stay. I was told that he was an important *marabout*, a shereef, perhaps an Arab or a Moor, for I was assured that he was very light in color. As was repeated to me several times, his relations with the king were limited to the solemn greetings on Fridays. He never entered the royal hut in spite of being an important marabout. He was at Ouagadougou for about three and one-half months, but he was compelled to return to the coast since the merchandise which he had brought was exhausted. He spoke no Mossi.[13]

439 All the caravans that passed through Mossi country were obliged to stop 651 and give presents to the district officials. Those caravaneers who tried to 634 elude taxation by going through the forest ran the risk of being attacked by local nobles, who usually confiscated their goods.

The Mogho Naba and the lesser chiefs had "market officials" who taxed 644 the merchants in the markets of their territories. The officials at Ouaga- 651 dougou, the Kos Naba ("sales chief") and the Raga Naba ("market chief"), 443 were fairly rigorous in their exactions. The Kos Naba collected taxes in cowries for every cow slaughtered at the market, and also took its hump and gave it to the Nemdo Naba ("meat chief") for distribution in the royal household. He also collected taxes on every cow sold in the market, but

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did not usually tax goats and sheep. In lieu of this, he occasionally took one or two of these animals from each herd that passed through the market and sent them to the palace kitchens. Donkeys sold in the market were taxed at the rate of 200 cowries each. Horses sold to the nobility were not taxed, but those exported were.

The Raga Naba collected taxes on the other commodities sold at the market. Cotton weavers paid him according to the size of their bolts of cloth, and cotton growers paid taxes on the sales of their raw produce. The tailors and dyers paid no fixed amounts, but were asked to send clothing to the palace. Every donkey- and ox-load of salt entering the market place was taxed. The smiths were not taxed in cowries, but had to supply the Mogho Naba's wives with hoes and the palace personnel with arrowheads, spear points, and iron clubs. The jewelers also sent bracelets as [431] presents to the ruler. There were no fixed taxes on the cereals, vegetables, and cooked food sold at the market, but each day the Raga Naba, accompanied by several pages or retainers carrying baskets, went from vendor to vendor taking several calabashes of their produce for use in the palace. In addition, the vendors of cooked food had to feed the Mogho Naba's young grooms, who were not normally fed by the palace household. The beer sellers were not formally taxed, but they contributed a substantial percentage of their beverage to palace and market personnel, who demanded the customary *lembgha* ("taste before buying") more frequently and freely than ordinary buyers.

There is some evidence (mainly from European travelers) that the traders occasionally found the caravan and market taxes prohibitive. Binger reports that the high taxes exacted by the Mogho Naba were "one of the reasons why Ouagadougou placed second [as a market town] and Mane was the commercial capital of Mossi country." Binger himself was caught in the institutionalized gift system and wrote sarcastically: "On market day [at Ouagadougou] the receipts are good. People bring everything to the palace, whether it be millet, hoes, or peanuts, and everything is accepted. *All this giving is left to the discretion of the donors.*"[14] The italics are Binger's.

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Some of the later Mogho Nanamse appear to have obtained a great deal of revenue through the sale of slaves. Most of these slaves were captured in raids among the smaller groups surrounding Mossi territory, such as the Samo, Gurunsi, and Busansi populations. According to Mangin, Gurunsi and Busansi countries were true granaries for the Mossi, who drew upon them according to their needs.[15] In early times the Mossi chiefs utilized [464] these slaves (*yemse*, sing. *yamba*) as agricultural workers, until Mogho

566 dreds of persons lived in Ouidin, the ward of the Ouidi Naba. Some of
567 them were related to him; others had been attracted by his wealth and by
62 his ability to obtain wives for his charges. All of them benefited from being attached to him in one way or another, and in return helped him to augment his income.

651 All the district chiefs sent women to their provincial ministers to be
645 kept as wives (and thus as agricultural workers), or to be given out as
634 pughsiudse. The Kamsaogho Naba received more pughsiudse than the
434 other ministers because he was in charge of the wealthier districts, and also of course distributed more. The Baloum Naba was especially favored in
[431] another respect. Each year, he was entitled to call several *seghse* (sing.
[464] *seka*; a corvée or convocation) of his former pages and their relatives to help cultivate his fields. The Ouidi Naba's sources of revenue were about the same as the Baloum Naba's. In addition, his position as chief minister enabled him to obtain numerous gifts from persons who visited Ouagadougou. Moreover, the Mogho Naba often gave him horses from the fado of deceased district chiefs. The Larhalle Naba had full ministerial privileges, and a few other means of obtaining revenue. He was allowed, for instance, to keep the animals that had not been sacrificed on the graves of deceased rulers.

The provincial ministers received many goods and services from the district chiefs of their provinces. Whenever one of these ministers sent a messenger to the district, the chief gave the messenger money and livestock for his master. Furthermore, the district chiefs brought presents for their minister when they paid their annual visit to Ouagadougou to render homage to the Mogho Naba. The provincial ministers used their position as confidants and advisers to obtain as many presents as possible from persons who came to Ouagadougou to ask special favors from the Mogho Naba, to participate in judicial proceedings, or to seek the nam. Moreover, they cooperated with each other in these exactions, so that a person seeking a favor from or through one minister was prudently advised to give presents to or to seek the aid of the others.

634 The district chief played a key role in the procurement of revenue for
651 the central administration, and derived an income for himself in the process.
423 The seignorial rights over the Mossi people delegated by the Mogho Naba
434 to all nam holders were quite obvious on this level. The district chief had rights to all valuable fruit trees, such as locust-bean and shea-butter, that grew within the boundaries of his territory. He instructed the village chiefs to harvest the fruit of these trees and send it to him. The village chiefs even had to send him the wood from the fallen branches of these trees.

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creased his force" and ultimately added to his income. Men who had been compelled to flee from other districts because of crimes or power struggles were granted refuge and given pughsiudse. In this manner, the district chief, like the Mogho Naba, established seignorial rights over his new subjects, incorporated them into the district, and obtained goods and services from them. The better a district chief's reputation, the greater the number of refugees who sought shelter with him and added to his wealth. Conversely, a chief who was known for his injustice, his rascality, and his excessive demands from persons seeking the village nam was shunned by potential subjects and might even be deserted by his own.

Those persons who visited the district chief's compound to settle court cases also contributed to his revenue. When the case dealt with cattle or other livestock, the chief received a few animals. In other cases, he received only the customary gifts from the litigants. He also received gifts from all the families in his district several times a year. One occasion was the "Tense," a festival in honor of the mother of Mogho Naba Oubri, the founder of the Ouagadougou dynasty; the other was the Basgha. During these two ceremonies every village chief, preceded by his district administrator and followed by his subjects, paid homage to the district chief and gave him presents. The district chief retained part of what he received for the upkeep of his household and to fulfill such obligations as hospitality to travelers, and added the remainder to his own annual tribute to the Mogho Naba.

The manner in which the district chief collected his annual tax or tribute for the Mogho Naba is the subject of controversy. Several of my respondents declared that the collection of this tribute was rather informal. The district chief allegedly notified the village chiefs that he wished to give a present to the Mogho Naba, and these chiefs sent word to the family heads, who, in turn, notified every household. The village people then collected chickens and livestock, baskets of grain, and cowries, and sent them up through the hierarchy to the district chief. The district chief's retainers checked the gifts from each village very carefully, and if some villages gave less than was expected of them, the district chief summoned their chiefs for explanations. In most cases the district chief knew exactly how much could be expected of his subjects, because his informers—usually his own pages and courtyard servants, or messengers of the local administrators—kept him informed of the wealth of each hamlet. Usually, a village chief who had withheld too much from the commodities turned over to him, or who had not demanded sufficient goods from his villagers, sought to make amends. It was in his interest to do so, since it was always dangerous to incur the

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tions. Binger, who found Boukary Koutou (the future Mogho Naba Wobogo) living in exile for having led a rebellion against his brother, Mogho Naba Sanum, tells us: 574 579 434

> Boukary has no resources, and does not even have the advantage of receiving periodic tribute from several large villages. In order to subsist and to maintain a certain status, he is compelled to live by pillage and even by brigandage. From time to time, his horsemen make incursions into the outskirts of some Gurunsi or Kipirsi village, and carry off by surprise the inhabitants whom they find working the fields or looking for wood. His people also hide and lie in wait along the roads to capture any persons who may pass within their range. This type of behavior has given Boukary Naba a bad reputation. However, the people who understand his position forgive him, knowing the situation in which his brother has placed him. And, in spite of all this, he has numerous partisans, and many others who would be happy to see him gain power.[25]

Those district chiefs or princes who wished to retain their power legitimately were forced to be generous or run the risk of losing the allegiance and good will of their villagers, who were their ultimate supporters. 634 574

It is very difficult to generalize about the amount of revenue collected by a village chief. He did not receive any revenue from the land used by his villagers. He treated the weogho in his village in the same manner as the district chief. If some families grew too large and wanted to establish permanent residence in the village bush, they asked the chief for permission to settle there. However, many village chiefs had special areas of waste for their own use. They had usually received them as gifts from some district chief, and therefore had the right to collect tribute on any crops, firewood, or fish obtained from these lands. 651 622 634 [361] [431]

The average village chief's main source of revenue was derived from the agricultural and other labor of his wives and relatives. A village chief received a number of wives from his subjects and from aliens living in his village. These women helped cultivate his fields. If their labor was insufficient he called a sosogha, to which he often invited his wives' relatives. Some chiefs also had serfs and slaves who helped cultivate their land and kept their cattle as well. [464] [566] [567]

The village chief did not have the power to tax his subjects. Instead, he functioned as a channel through which commodities and services passed up the hierarchy and on to Ouagadougou. Many villagers voluntarily helped the chief to repair his huts and compound walls and to cut thatch for his roofs. Many gave him baskets of grain and other vegetable products after the harvest. They also visited him and gave him presents during the annual rites to his ancestors. In contrast to higher chiefs, however, the village head [476] [431] [692]

651 did not derive any revenue from his judicial functions. He could not levy
622 a fine against any malefactor. However, his intermediary position between
[692] the villagers and the district chief did permit him to obtain some revenue whenever commodities moved from one level to the other.

634 The officials who administered the villages for the district chief received part of their revenue from the villages under their charge. These local administrators had no courts or retainers comparable to those at the provincial
[595] level. However, they did have a large number of wives who contributed valuable agricultural labor.' These administrators were permitted to ask the
[464] village chiefs for sosose on their own fields several times during the planting season, but—unlike the district chiefs—they were not permitted to have the villagers cultivate special fields for them. In return for any help received, they had to provide food and drink for the workers.

634 The administrator received most of his revenue as a by-product of active
434 duty in the villages. When he visited a village or transmitted a message to
431 a village chief, he almost invariably received a sheep, a goat, a chicken, or some millet, from the village chief. He also acquired large quantities of goods during the village interregnum: he received gifts from the chief's heirs during the chief's funeral; he received additional presents when they took the fado to the district chief; he could prolong the interregnum in order to receive as many bribes as possible from contenders for the nam; and he was handsomely rewarded when the candidate he had backed was finally installed in office.

596 The extended family was the basic socio-economic unit supporting the
613 Mossi political organization. The Yirisoba received land rights in his saka
622 from his Sakakasma, who had obtained his rights from the village chief.
423 An extended family in need of additional land would seek help from its Sakakasma or its Boodkasma. When the family no longer needed this land, it reverted to the lineage. If all the land granted to the lineage was already occupied, the extended family, through its lineage head, asked the village chief for more land. The chief usually granted this request, unless he had no more weogho available. In this case, the needy Yirisoba some-
596 times tried to borrow land from his non-kin neighbors. Such a step was
613 not undertaken lightly, however. If a man borrowed land from his own
423 lineage members or from the chief, the land rights reverted to its donors
426 without difficulty. However, if he borrowed land from another lineage and either he or his benefactor died without assuring the return of the land, litigation often ensued. In some cases a man would seek land from his lineage brothers in another village, who let him use some of their land with their chief's permission. Some Yirisobadamba even asked their district chief for

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596 permission to use weogho in the district, and new hamlets arose in this way. 613 A Yirisoba who could not obtain adequate land on which to grow food for 423 his family left the district and sought land elsewhere, especially among his 426 mother's patrilineage. However, village and district chiefs always tried to prevent this because they did not like to lose any of their subjects.

As director of economic activities in the household, the Yirisoba super- 596 vised the agricultural labor of his charges. It was he who directed the work of his wives, his sons, and his sons' wives, and supervised the care of the family herd. He provided the cotton, which was carded and spun by the women and woven by the men. It was also his task to ensure adequate clothing for the members of his household; and he sold excess commodities in order to buy salt, kola nuts, bracelets, foreign clothes, and other products imported from the forest and desert zones. In each case, the Yirisoba had to balance judiciously the requirements of his household against his obligations to the community and to the political hierarchy. He had to prevent economic rivalry among his sons, and especially among his sons' wives. He had to make sure that every married member of the household had sufficient time to provide goods and services for his own family, and that foodstuffs were distributed equitably among the wives. Finally, he had to use the resources of the household to build and maintain the nexus of socioeconomic relationships that provided wives for the male members of the household, and to meet his obligations to the political hierarchy.

The Yirisoba also had social and economic responsibilities toward the 596 other members of his babissi and boodoo. He furnished labor and goods 613 to needy lineage members and to non-relatives with whom he had marriage 476 arrangements. Since much of this help was given on the basis of ultimate 602 reciprocity, very little loss was involved. However, the relationship between commoner and noble families was quite different. In theory, the nobles had 565 no claims on the property of the commoners; but in practice, they did claim 596 such rights. Furthermore, commoner lineages often gave the nobles many 613 more wives than the nobles returned. This inequality enabled the nobles to receive more goods and services from their marriage partners among the commoners than they gave in return. The nobles thus took advantage of their power as possessors of the nam, but even membership in the royal lineage did not exempt them from supporting the governmental services at all levels. This duty was incumbent upon every Moaga.

The Mossi people could not refuse to support their political organiza- 641 tion, but often complained about having to do so. Many Mossi felt that 431 their rulers were greedy and avaricious and received too many gifts. Some 661 Mossi held that if the chiefs were not placated with goods and services,

they might take the lives and property of their subjects. There are many stories of avaricious chiefs who convicted wealthy commoners of spurious crimes and had them executed or banished in order to seize their wealth. There are also stories of twin tricksters, Raogo, a boy, and Poko, a girl, two *enfants terribles* who always succeeded in outwitting and killing avaricious chiefs. When I asked a district chief to explain the significance of the Raogo and Poko tales, he replied that they were "meaningless stories told by children who do not understand how difficult it is for a chief to command and protect men." This remark prompted one of his officials to add that in olden days, people gladly supported the Mogho Naba and his chiefs in order to be safe from their enemies—a statement which might have been made by a conscientious government official anywhere. However, whether commoners or chiefs, all Mossi believed that men must have government, and that without it chaos would prevail.

The Mossi political organization was subject to severe strains. For one thing, its economic basis was not very strong. True, goods and services were channeled to the capital from the smallest areas, and in time this permitted the establishment of increasingly complex governmental structures. Nevertheless, the Mossi fiscal system was not highly developed, and much of the revenue the rulers received came to them in the form of legal fees and gifts. Moreover, most of these revenues were irregular in nature.

Despite this fact, the Mossi believed that their rulers were wealthy—and there can be no doubt that they were wealthier than their subjects. Nevertheless, visiting Europeans found little difference between the standard of living of the chiefs and that of the people. Binger would have us believe that Mogho Naba Sanum bragged so much about imaginary wealth, including 10,000 horses, that he "managed to convince himself of it."[26] Binger's subsequent remarks about Sanum's resources are illuminating even if somewhat biased, because they throw light on the economic basis of the Ouagadougou kingdom. He tells us that Sanum's revenues were

> not well regulated. He lives on gifts and offerings which people have brought him with the aim of obtaining justice, or to demand something from him. He sometimes sends a band of men to capture slaves in Kipirsi country, or at least supports such ventures. But these revenues, like those of all the black chiefs, are not sufficient, because these men are prone to squander their resources. As a result, these sovereigns are compelled to use expedients in order to procure horses and other commodities. Thus, like the rulers of Tieba, Pegue, and Kong, Naba Sanum still has captives in villages devoted to agriculture, but he does not take proper care of these villages. If he does not receive enough millet in the form of gifts, he must sell his slaves in order to procure it.[27]

went to the home of his Samande Naba, the next to the Gounghin ward, then to Baghin, and subsequently to the homes of other officials. He could not remain long at one place for fear that the ancestors might find him. Every morning, however, when the cock's crow heralded the ancestors' departure, he returned to his palace.

The principal part of the Basgha ceremony was performed on the night when the crescent moon appeared. On that night more than any other, the ruler had to seek refuge elsewhere, because the ancestors visited the palace to accept the sacrifices offered to them by the Pughtiema with the help of the Baloum Naba and the chief eunuch of the harem. The exact nature of this ceremony is unknown, but it is known that the Baloum Naba used the sacred namtibo along with animals and millet-flour water provided by the Pughtiema and the chief eunuch for propitiatory sacrifices to the ancestors. The aim of these sacrifices was to induce the ancestors to grant good crops, health, happiness, and children to their descendants, and to "increase the force of the namtibo."[1] At cock's crow the Bendere Naba sprinkled a flour infusion called *gningmassem* ("water of health") on the palace courtyard so that the ruler might walk upon it when he returned. The Mogho Naba was greeted with drumbeats and escorted to the palace gate. His entry into the antechamber marked the close of this ceremony, and the people retired until later in the day.

The elaborate public ceremony of the Basgha took place in mid-morning. The ministers and important officials, clad in ceremonial garb, arrived at the palace quite early. When the Mogho Naba appeared, the Bendere Naba recited the official genealogy, starting with Ouedraogo and Oubri and ending with elaborate praises of the current ruler. The ministers and their entourage then saluted the Mogho Naba and wished him *Ne tarbo*, which means a happy and prosperous new year for himself and the country. He, in turn, took advantage of this occasion to give many presents to his retinue, and his wives distributed huge amounts of food and drink to the assembly until everyone was satiated. Then all the officials except the Bendere Naba and his group paid homage to the Mogho Naba and departed. The musicians remained at court most of the day, beating their drums and singing praises to their sovereign and his illustrious ancestors. The royal pages kept them well supplied with food and beer, and now and again during the day the ruler sent them gifts among which robes were often included. Whenever the drummers received a gift, they slipped into a rhythmic pattern that signified: *Tompaongo, Wend'kaouss' Naba niore, Wenne wilig vinre*, or, "We bow in thanksgiving for your gift. May God give the ruler long life. May God grant us to be alive next year so that we may do this again." The

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climax of this gift-giving came when the ruler sent the Bendere Naba about 19,000 cowries and a slave.[8] This ceremony terminated at nightfall.

The close of the Mogho Naba's Basgha heralded the start of similar ceremonies throughout his kingdom. The heads of the other Mossi kingdoms and the Dimdamba were free to hold their own Basgha when they wished; but the Ouagadougou ruler's own subjects, including the provincial ministers, district chiefs, village chiefs, and lineage heads, apparently were not. One reason for this, aside from respect for the ruler, was that the important officials' head wives had to wait for the yeast (*dabili*) from the Mogho Naba's beer before they could prepare the sacrificial offerings for their husbands' ancestors. This dabili went from district to district or to several districts at once, depending on whether the chiefs celebrated Basgha at the same time or successively. Thus, the dabili from the capital united all the wives of the royal clan, and made for both a ritual continuity in the veneration of all ancestors and a strengthening of religious and political bonds.

The Basgha ceremonies on the district level were much less elaborate than those held at Ouagadougou, but just as important. The district chief, too, had his buildings repaired and his grain distributed for sacrifices for the ancestors. A few days before the actual ceremony, he ordered the Gande Naba to pour millet water on the graves of recently deceased chiefs and to sacrifice chickens there. As in Ouagadougou, these sacrifices were offered to induce the chiefly ancestors to grant the villagers health, food, and children. Unlike the Mogho Naba, most district chiefs did not ritually hide from their ancestors for several nights prior to the ceremony. Some of them did change their sleeping place within the compound every night, and the court people always slept indoors during this period. On the night of the Basgha itself, however, the district chiefs did not sleep in their compounds.

As in Ouagadougou, the Pughtiema performed the main ceremony by pouring millet water as a libation to the ancestors who visited her hut. She was assisted by the Baloum Naba, who had possession of the namtibo. Apparently, the district chief remained in hiding and took no part in the ceremony. But he was the main figure in the morning ceremony, which differed little from that of Ouagadougou. In some districts the Tengsoba performed a public sacrifice to the ancestors. He was given the namtibo—sacred objects that had belonged to former district chiefs—and poured libations and sacrificed chickens to all of the chief's ancestors. He also prayed both to these ancestors and to his own on the chief's behalf, and beseeched them to grant long life and happiness to the district population. He also declared that the sacred objects would seek out and kill any enemies of the local ruler, wherever they might be. Once this ritual had been com-

provided the sacrificial animals for the royal tombs in the area of the capital, and the Ouagadougou Naba, as chief Tengsoba, performed the sacrifices. The Larhalle Naba also dispatched his servants to the distant districts where royal tombs were located, with orders to obtain (by force, if necessary) the animals for the sacrifices from the local populations and give them to the special guardians of the tombs. Sacrifices were made on the grave of Naba Oubri at Koudougou and on that of his father, Zoungourana, in the village of Zomtoega in Tenkodogo. However, there is no indication that a sacrifice was made on the grave of Ouedraogo, who is believed to have died in Sagabatenga but whose burial place is unknown. Nor is it clear whether, as some Mossi claim, annual sacrifices were made on the alleged grave of Nyennega in Gambaga. As soon as these preparatory sacrifices had been completed and the Mogho Naba had been notified, preparations were made for the celebration.

The Mogho Naba met with the Larhalle Naba, and the date of the Tense was set for twenty-one days after the meeting. On the following day, the Larhalle Naba made five cords out of tree bark and tied nineteen knots in each of them. The next day, he gave each provincial minister a cord to send to the districts in his province. The provincial ministers then sent their messengers with the cords to the districts, with orders to untie one knot every day the cords were in transit. Thus a district chief, counting the number of knots in the cord on the day it reached him, knew how many days were left before the Tense. As soon as the entire kingdom had been notified of the festival, the envoys returned to Ouagadougou and returned the cords to their ministers.

On the Friday morning before the Tense, the Larhalle Naba went to the palace. Kneeling before the monarch, he untied the last knot on each cord to indicate that the ceremony would begin on the morrow. To acknowledge this fact, the Mogho Naba distributed bars of salt to his courtiers and visitors instead of the customary kola nuts, beer, and millet water. Visitors left the court early in order to provide their families with foodstuffs for the celebration.

Early on Saturday morning, royal servants brought huge quantities of beef and mutton that had been cooked without pepper (this spice being disliked by the ancestors) and other foods, and deposited them in large heaps in the courtyard. Nearby, they also placed numerous large pots of millet beer. As soon as the morning ceremony was over, the Larhalle Naba slowly approached the Mogho Naba, who presented him with a new white robe. The minister donned the robe and walked to the piles of food, from which he took three portions of millet mush, dipped them in a specially

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gift every year to the Imam and to Karamakho Isa, for whom he has great veneration. These are old and wise men who cannot but give him excellent counsel.[18]

The relations between Boukary Koutou and the Moslems of the Sakhaboutenga district show how Mossi chiefs, though pagans, were able to establish viable political bonds with potentially hostile believers of another religion. Boukary Koutou was probably a Moslem "in outward appearance only," as Binger suggests. Nevertheless, it was by being Moslems of this kind that Mossi rulers managed to retain the allegiance of their Moslem subjects. This was their duty as "fathers of their people," and apparently they did it without much hesitation. In this manner, they effectively used religion to bolster their power and sustain their authority.

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Ritual connections between the Mossi rulers and the chiefs of surrounding countries enabled them to protect their subjects from foreign attack and to maintain internal cohesion. The numerous reciprocal gifts between the Mossi and such other Voltaic groups as the Dagomba, Mamprusi, and Gurmanche were based on the belief in descent from a common ancestor or ancestress. Ritual and the supernatural thus played an extremely important role in the cohesiveness of the Mossi kingdoms and in the functioning of their governmental processes. Without these ritual factors, it is doubtful whether the Mossi rulers would have been able to maintain such a relatively high degree of control over their subjects, given the relative weakness of their economic resources, communications, and armed forces. In trying to understand why the Mossi retained their autonomy for so long, one must take into consideration the statement made by a French officer a year after the Mossi were conquered: "We must not lose sight of the fact that [the Mossi] have always presented a common front to strangers, and that a single word of command is sufficient to unite them against the invader in the name of kinship and national unity."[19]

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The phase of Mossi political history that began when Nyennega left Dagomba and moved northward came to an end with the European conquest. Most French scholars believe that the Mossi were in a state of decadence at the time of conquest and might have fallen to such African conquerors as El Hadj Omar, Samory Touré, or Baba To. The fact remains, however, that these conquerors all skirted Mossi country without entering it. If these African rulers believed that the Mossi were invincible in their unity, it was because the Mossi, through mythical bonds of common descent and actual bonds of kinship, had welded themselves into a cohesive and powerful group.

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15. *Ibid.*, p. 673.
16. Delafosse, II, 128-29.
17. Binger, II, 502.
18. Crozat, p. 4849.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 4822.

20. The structure of the Mossi kingdoms and their relationship with the autonomous principalities make it difficult to determine the exact number of districts within each unit. For example, the Mossi people always claimed that the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou was sovereign over "333" chiefs (cf. Binger, I, 502). However, since the Mossi always associate the number 3 with males, any number giving a multiple of threes is suspect. Binger stated that some of the chiefs referred to as part of the 333 were no more than village chiefs. However, Tauxier (*Le Noir du Soudan*, p. 567), describing the kingdom of Ouagadougou, states, "At the top of this hierarchy is the king, the Mogho Naba, paramount chief of the Mossi, residing at Ouagadougou. To give at least an idea of the relative importance of this empire, without going further than, say, the cercle of Ouagadougou, there were eight provinces comprising 300 *cantons* [districts], 5,000 villages or small towns, and 861,700 inhabitants."

While voicing the myth that the Mogho Naba had "under his control 333 chiefs or Nabas," Dim Delobson actually gives only about 150 chiefs in his list of district and other chiefs (pp. 46, 288-97). It was impossible for me to get any idea of the number of chiefs, because the Mossi hierarchy has changed radically since 1905.

21. Dim Delobson, p. 63.
22. Cheron, "Contribution," p. 651.
23. The Mossi did not acknowledge the defeat of Mogho Naba Wobogo by the French until the Ouidi Naba surrendered to the invaders and installed a ruler they had chosen.
24. Archives, Document 1G-334. Lambert describes Karfo as "a curious figure who unfortunately is not well known."
25. Binger, I, 465.
26. Dim Delobson, pp. 15-45, *passim*.
27. It appears that the monarchs found fault with their district chiefs most readily when they had sons or other relatives in need of districts to govern. Since a possessor of the nam could not be deprived of it while alive, he had to be accused of some crime and executed. Koabga was replaced as Doulougou Naba by Lassanne Congo (called Naba Kouliga), a son of the Mogho Naba. On the other hand, when Naba Pusha of Nobere district fled rather than commit suicide or start a civil war, he was replaced by his own brother, who became Naba Soulougou.
28. Dim Delobson, p. 44.
29. Cheron, "Contribution," p. 655.

CHAPTER FIVE

1. Mangin, p. 25.
2. Mangin does not discuss rape, but reported that an "abductor" was beaten and put in irons. The girl was returned to her family, and if she gave birth to a child, it was killed (pp. 26-27).
3. Dim Delobson, p. 55.
4. Most of my informants state quite clearly that the district chiefs did not have the right to impose the death penalty, but could do so if they were discreet about it and did not take advantage of their subjects. But Dim Delobson states: "Contrary to what people generally believe, the Kombere—the chief of the *canton* [district]—also had the power of life and death over his subjects. How many persons have been put to death only because they were wealthy? How many village chiefs have been killed by the district chiefs in their territories without the Mogho Naba's intervention?" (pp. 55-56).
5. Dim Delobson (p. 56) insists that justice was free of charge, but added that

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plaintiffs gave the chiefs the traditional presents of a white cock and a sack containing from 200 to 1,000 cowries.

6. Mangin declares: "Most of the troubles which arise between one Mossi and another derive from their wives and from their debts; yet it may not be said, as a general rule, that women are unhappy or ill treated" (p. 39; see also p. 33). But cf. Dim Delobson, pp. 182, 185.

7. Mangin states that in Koupela a recidivous thief was "led to the market place with a rope around his neck; he was supplied with an abundance of meat and beer, and then clubbed to death at the foot of a tree" (p. 25). I doubt whether this practice was very widespread, because the Mossi were afraid to anger the market Tengkouga (earth spirits) by spilling blood in the market place.

8. Cf. Ruelle, pp. 679 ff.

9. Binger, I, 462.

10. But cf. Marc, p. 134.

CHAPTER SIX

1. Sa'di, pp. 45-46. The date of this battle and the location of Benka are unknown. However, Delafosse (II, 141) believes that it was located in the Massina region on the shores of Lake Debo.

2. Sa'di, pp. 112-13.

3. *Ibid.*, pp. 114-15.

4. *Ibid.*, pp. 121-23. The chronicle also states (p. 168) that these Mossi captives were installed in a special ward of Askia's capital, a practice apparently followed by all victorious Sudanese groups including the Mossi.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 173.

6. See Delafosse, II, 143-45, and Tauxier, *Le Noir du Yatenga*, pp. 88-91.

7. Crozat, p. 4822.

8. Binger, I, 502.

9. Almamy Samory Touré was the last empire-builder in the western Sudan. He was defeated by the French in 1898 and exiled to Gabon, where he died in 1900. See Binger, I, 84ff.

10. Crozat, p. 4837.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 4849.

12. Archives, Document 1G-315 (1903-1904).

13. Crozat, p. 4849.

14. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Soudan*, p. 463.

15. Mangin, p. 13.

16. Cheron, "Contribution," pp. 655, 675-76.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 673.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 676.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 654.

20. *Ibid.*, pp. 685-86.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 674.

22. Ruelle, p. 686.

23. Mangin, p. 62.

24. Binger, I, 473.

25. Cheron, "Contribution," p. 660.

26. Crozat, p. 4849.

27. Mangin, p. 12.

28. For example, when Mogho Naba Sanum's army attacked Boussouma, it made "such a rapid retreat" that Ligidi, the Boussouma Dim, could only counterattack the army's rear guard (Cheron, "Contribution," p. 676).

29. Archives, Document 15G-190 (1897-98).

30. Mangin, p. 12.

31. *Ibid.*

32. Dim Delobson, p. 21.

33. *Ibid.*, p. 29.

34. Cf. Southall (pp. 246-60) for a discussion of the "segmentary" state in Africa.

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837 man even refrains from making overtures to a woman whose husband's female relatives may be married to a member of his own lineage. He fears that a wronged husband may have the wives of his lineage brothers recalled, thus causing dissension within and between the two lineages. If none of these complications are present, a man seeks out a person who knows the woman and sends a message declaring his intentions. If the response is favorable, the man then buys four large kola nuts (four being the number for a woman), wraps them together with 44 francs, and send them to his lady. This procedure may be followed on subsequent market days without the two parties ever coming into direct contact with each other. Finally, however, a rendezvous is arranged, and on the pretense of leaving the market to visit a relative for several days, the woman goes instead to her lover's village.

837 586 These casual affairs started at the market sometimes become quite serious, and if for any reason they are sanctioned by the relatives of either the man or the woman, they often lead to the breakup of a marriage. And since the market is the place where disputants of any sort most likely come into contact, it is here that fights over "stolen" wives break out.

837 443 This pattern of extramarial relationships centering around the market place is so common among the Mossi that the younger men, and even some of the older ones, are disappointed with the "market" when their mistresses do not appear. Mossi men who sit under the shelters around the market place can usually give an inquirer not only the name of a woman, the name and village of her husband and father, but also the name and village of her paramour. Characteristically enough, they are always "ignorant" of the escapades of their own female relatives or of the wives of their lineage members. The only time when men act as though their relatives might be involved in extramarital affairs is when for some purpose or another a man has to recall a wife or daughter who has gone to visit a relative in another village or district. Regardless of how pressing the problem may be, a man will seldom go directly to his father-in-law's house to recall the woman. He goes to the market nearest to his in-laws' village, and seeks his wife there. If he does not find her or any of her relatives, he goes to the part of the market in which people from her village sell their products and sends a message to her family that he will come for her the next day, or that he would like her to come home.

593 443

443 203 A market place is also one of the best places to look for news of a runaway wife, or of any stranger in an area. The Mossi say that women have footprints like an elephant in that they can be found quite easily, but that the footprints are always clearest in the market.

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What this really means is that the market is the main communication 443
center of Mossi society and news of happenings in the region can be 203
heard there. If a person is in an area one can be sure that the people in the market will know about him, or that he will sooner or later visit the market.

The young men who have returned from work in the cacao fields 167
or towns of Ghana and the Ivory Coast add a great deal of color and 443
excitement to the rural markets of contemporary Mossi country. 556
During the time these young men spend away, they give a great deal of thought and planning to the show they hope to put on when they make the grand tour *(mane do)* of their district's market place. The best day for this is the day of the "great market" and regardles of what day many migrants return to their homes, they wait for that Friday before they show themselves publicly.

On the morning of that day, the typical migrant dresses in his best 167
clothes, lends the remainder of his wardrobe to relatives, and together 443
they go to pay homage to the chief during the morning ceremony 556
(Wend pous yan). The migrant offers the chief such presents as a 431
small amount of money, an article of clothing or kola nuts, and replies [576]
to the chief's questions about the health and welfare of all Mossi in the area whence the migrant came, the whereabouts of "lost" migrants, the nature of the work the migrants were doing, and so on. As soon as the young man receives the chief's permission to leave, he [569]
goes to the market where he is quickly surrounded by *griots* who accompany him in periodic circumambulations of the market place, drumming and singing praises in honor of his ancestry. The migrant is also greeted warmly by his many friends to whom he then gives presents of money, beer and kola nuts. He acknowledges the general praise for having brought goods and clothing for his relatives and takes pride in seeing these relatives dressed in the cloths and clothing he has brought them. If young and unmarried, the migrant also seeks to take advantage of his new-found importance to make the first overtures to available young women or to renew his relationship with former paramours. Towards evening before going home, he rewards the *griots* with money and bear. Many a migrant attempts to prolong this feeling of grandeur by visiting other markets and by dressing up on subsequent grand market days, but after a few weeks he is re-incorporated into the ordinary market routine, and has to make room for the other newly-arrived migrants.

The market is also the place where important rites marking the 443
changing social status of individuals are carried out. Under normal 844
circumstances, the ceremonies attending the birth of a Mossi child are performed at home. When a woman has a number of stillbirths or

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443 sages to specific villages, to find the help needed in the event of a
571 fight, and finally to find an escape route by which one can leave in the event of trouble.

443 The vendors in the larger markets of Mossi country include Yoru-
463 ba, Hausa and other ethnic groups, many of whose members were
563 born in Mossi country and have never visited the land of their fathers. The lives of these people are usually centered around the markets; where the markets are held every day, many of the men, women and children of these foreign groups spend almost all of their lives at the
[439] markets. In marked contrast to the Mossi, they usually sell products of foreign provenience, whether African or European, and seldom deal in the local products. These vendors are tolerated by the Mossi and are valued for their commerce, but are always regarded as outsiders. And as outsiders the markets do not belong to them, but only
443 to the Mossi. Even so, the Mossi do not really like the larger markets.
829 True, one can buy all kinds of wonderful goods on the large markets, but to the Mossi, a market is more than a place where one goes to buy and sell, even though everyone who goes there tries to do some of both.

443 There is a marked division of labor among the vendors in a Mossi
462 market—a division which can be seen at its best on the local markets.
438 Here only the women sell cooked food, beer, millet, rice, peanuts,
439 shea-butter, tobacco, and all of the other locally grown vegetables and vegetable products, except cotton which may also be sold by a man. In contrast, women do not sell such local products as cotton cloth, hemp, jewelry, iron implements and leather goods, which are the province of the men. Only men may butcher and sell animals and meat in the market. And they alone control the commerce in foreign food articles such as salt and dried fish. Both men and women sell the valuable imported kola nut, but only men sell goods of European manufacture such as cigarettes, matches, sugar, mirrors and so on.
[857] Small girls sell calabashes of water to everyone, and small boys wander through the market selling single cigarettes, bundles of a few matches, single lumps of sugar, chickens and guinea fowls, and skewers of roasted meat.

443 There is little competition about someone else having "stolen"
437 a customer. The reason for this is mainly that every person in the market is a potential customer of everyone else. Normally, a buyer
● 432 simply moves from seller to seller sampling the goods if that is possible (some unscrupulous men can even get drunk in the process of "sampling" beer) and trying to get the best bargain. No seller would think of running after a customer, and customers seldom, if ever, move away from a vendor in the hope that he would be called back
to be sold the article at a lower price.

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to be sold the article at a lower price. The result is that the pace of commerce in a Mossi market is somewhat relaxed, but the lack of intense competition prevents a great deal of hositility and quarreling among the market people.

The amount of small trading which takes place in a Mossi market is fantastic, so much so that one gains the impression that some people trade simply for the sake of trading. Everyone tries to get money so that he or she can buy some desired object, but it is impossible for one to obtain a clear idea of what kind of profit, if any, people make from their commerce. In fact, the idea of a profit does not seem to be important when people are selling their own products. Most people only think about profit when they buy things to resell—whether these things are of African or European manufacture. This, incidentally, is one of the reasons why the prices of foodstuffs are about 10 per cent lower in the country districts than at Wagadougou, and concommitently, why imported products are 10 to 20 per cent higher in the rural districts than at Wagadougou where they are bought. When a woman takes such products as cotton, beans or millet to market, she may gross about 100 francs in the course of the day. But out of this she may give a few francs to her husband to buy kola nuts, a few francs to her daughter to buy a plastic necklace, and spend the rest for a cotton skirt, a piece of meat and condiments for her sauces. Men whose wives do not bring many goods to market must usually give them about 100 francs to spend on the various products the family needs. There are no official restrictions on the kinds of goods which may or may not be sold in the Mossi markets. In pre-European times slaves and eunuchs were the common stock-in-trade of the major markets and of some of the smaller ones as well. The only active supervision that existed and still exists concerns the butchering of meat. Every person who sells meat in the market must exhibit the skin of the butchered animal in a public place so that there will be no question as to the ownership of the animal. If the meat in question is the remains of a cow killed and half-eaten by a lion, then the village or district chief must be notified before the meat enters the market. The person in charge of this task used to be, and often still is, a man called the Kos Naba, a kind of sales chief. He also formerly doubled as a tax collector for the rulers and chiefs. Another official, the Raga Naba, where he still exists, is more concerned with protecting the lives and property of the people who trade at the markets, but he also supervises the sale of some commodities there and formerly also collected taxes for his superior.

In pre-European times, every important Mossi prince and district chief had the counterpart of a Kos Naba and Raga Naba, to collect taxes in their markets.

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greeting a lower status benefactor, a man will get down and greet him from a kneeling position. It is because of this elaborate system of greeting, with the many opportunities thus provided for one person to slight another, that many important persons never go to the market. As a rule, the failure of any one person to give the required greeting to another when they meet in the market place is always an indication of strained relations between them.

The persons from whom an individual may buy goods, and the kinds of goods which may be purchased by one individual from another, are governed by convention and social relationships. A person may not buy anything from a relative except European goods. A man cannot buy any but cooked food in the market place, and often he asks a female relative or a passing female to buy it for him. To do the contrary is held to be unmanly and indicative of a bad character. A woman will not buy cotton cloth but will send a man to buy it for her. She would hate to have people believe that she has no male relative to weave it for her, or what is more likely, that she is too lazy to spin the cotton thread which would then be woven for her. A woman may purchase any type of commodity from other women, but she must be careful not to patronize men who are known to be libertines or with whom she is suspected of having an affair. She must also be careful about running errands for men, since people know that men often use this device to establish amorous relationships with women. Men also use this device to give presents, or to arrange secret meetings with them. If any man sees a female relative involved in any of these misadventures, he chases her away and more than likely curses the man, if he does not fight him. In any event, he warns the man to leave the woman alone.

The market is one of the few places where men and women can initiate relationships not sanctioned by their relatives. Under normal conditions marriages are arranged between unrelated individuals through the lineage members who establish "friendly" relationships. Two friends might ask their lineage heads for women to exchange as wives or the "friend" who has received more gifts from the other will give over a wife. Because the older men most often have goods and women at their disposal, they are usually the ones who receive wives. The result is that most young men have no wives, and until they inherit wives from lineage members, are continually seeking to establish intimate relations with women whom they meet on the market place. The technique which a young man employes to gain the favors of a woman he sees at market is highly stereotyped. First of all, he must ascertain that the woman in question is not a member of his maximal lineage or married to a member of his own lineage. A responsible

241 Baningha (large white millet or sorghum).

These two types are grown for food, [247] although the large white millet is especially reserved for horses in well-to-do households.

[262 273] Kazinga (large red millet). As a food the poorer Mossi prefer this to the baningha, but it is more especially grown for the making of dam, millet beer.

[256] Mouf (rice) is sought only by the chiefs, notables, and a few families of dakangba (well-to-do men).

Benga (beans).

Souma (peas of either the small green variety or large white or red ones).

Niouyan (from niouri, "yam"), grown only in certain areas.

Nangouri or sounkama (peanuts).

Pèsça (fabirama) [a tuber plant].

Sinni or sili (sesame), grown only by a few people who like it.

Bito (sorrel), used in preparing the sauce served with sagbo.

Mana (gombo [okra]) is also cultivated.

Aside from its food crops, each family has its own plot for cotton (lamdo) which provides for the clothing needed during the year.

311 178 I am told that fields are much more extensive today than in former times, in spite of the abolition of slavery. This is explained by the fact that many areas supposed to be haunted were formerly left uncultivated. It is said, however, that the Moaga used to grow larger crops since in those days he was closer to the soil.

[248] At the present time there is a lack of farm hands. As [857] recently as twenty years ago, the young Moaga followed his parents to the field as soon as he was six or seven years old. He took a liking to the work at a very young age. Before the French [484] occupation, the Moaga rarely left his village because of the dangers on the roads, frequented in those days by bandits (usually descend- [579] ants of naba). People were even afraid to go into the bush alone, for fear of being attacked, captured, and reduced to slavery.

433 178 There was little contact even between adjoining villages. At Ouagadougou, no one ventured from section to section unless he had very good reason and was armed to the teeth. In short, everyone

433 made do with what his own village could produce, and there was
178 really no trade in the ordinary sense of the word. The Moaga, essentially a stay-at-home, depended on the soil for food and clothing.

241 Only two new crops have been added since the coming of the
177 French: yams (na-niouyan, "chiefs' yams") and white potatoes.

The recent increase in the cultivation of cotton makes it easier for the natives to meet their tax, and this encourages them to grow even more.

178 The French occupation has brought many benefits in its wake (creation of a network of roads, peace and the resulting free circulation among the villages, and suppression of banditry and looting), but it has also given the Moaga a desire to leave the country.

167 The extensive recruitment of [249] laborers for the needs of
464 other colonies in the area, for work on the roads, and for the now obligatory military service -- all of which are accepted reluctantly by the Mossi -- has caused many young men to emigrate.

Some of them set out, for the Gold Coast preferably, without the slightest means of support. They go to work in the English colony in order to earn money for clothes. Since they had no money when they started out, they remain there for months or even years, and this seriously diminishes the agricultural labor force at home. It also forces their old and helpless relatives to cultivate their fields alone.

Besides, so many of them never return!

The Native Diet

262 Sagbo (millet mush) is the principal item in the Mossi diet at all social levels. Rice, regarded as a luxury food, is eaten by the naba and notables. It costs from two and a half to three francs a
[435] kilogram at Ouagadougou and is therefore too expensive for most people. It may be added that it rarely is found in the diet of civil service employees.

264 Mossi chiefs usually have two main meals a day: a [250] first meal of sagbo or rice at around nine in the morning, and a second

222 137 261 Séba is a kind of long, poisonous, black turnip which is eaten only in times of famine and after protracted cooking.

Seba and vidiba caused the death of many people during the last Mossi famine by giving them dysentery.

137 231 /511/ As for wild fodder found in Mossi territory, there is first of all kénibédo, that grows in bunches 30 centimeters high in damp hollows. Its leaves are rudimentary. It is severed 20 centimeters from the ground and stored during the dry season.

Then there are the fodder plants belonging to the papilionaceous family, densa and youbenga. The tiny stem of densa or youbenga is not severed from the plant itself, which reaches a height of 0.30 or 0.40 meter in both cases. Horses eat them either green or dry, indiscriminately.

137 314 283 Finally, let us say a word about souga, a sort of wild hemp called thus by the Mossi. The Nounouma call it boupo, and the Kassouna bénédévio. It is found only in certain parts of Mossi territory, but it grows throughout Gourounsi lands. Its bark yields very tough white fibers which the natives use in the manufacture of rope, string or thread for fishing implements. The bark does not keep through the dry season, so it is reduced to fibers during the rainy season. The fibers, on the other hand, can take the most intensive dryness without deteriorating. Souga is not cultivated.

222 433 We are now finished with Mossi gathering activities. They have a certain importance, as we have just seen, the same one on the whole as in other Sudanese populations. They are infinitely less important than cultivation, of course, but only slightly less so than stockbreeding, and they must be placed on the same level as the hunt. They are far more important than fishing or arboriculture.

245 433 The latter deserves no real mention. It hardly exists among the Mossi. It is limited to what we described earlier about the rónier and to the planting, here and there, of a few papaw trees.

433 In short, cultivation comes first, with stockbreeding trailing far behind, then gathering and hunting on the same level, then fishing and finally arboriculture.

010 /512/ Industries flourish among the Mossi. We shall review one by one, in detail, the various trades they exercise.

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177 their younger sons to become Moslems, and soon abandoned their active
*648 resistance to Islam.
63 Hesling did not permit the Mossi chiefs to revive their traditional religio-
[795] political rituals and ceremonies such as the Tense, but he continued to toler-
[797] ate the Basgha. The French banned the Mossi market chiefs, because they believed (with some justification) that these officials used their offices to procure revenue for the chiefs. The difficulty was that the market chiefs were also responsible for arranging sacrifices to the market deities, which in the absence of such sacrifices would not protect the people from quarrels and violence in the market place. Some chiefs covertly retained their market chiefs; others obeyed the administration and remained anxious over the behavior of their subjects in the market. In general, however, most Mossi chiefs tried to adjust to the religious changes that were taking place, and sought to maintain at least surface amicability with all religious groups. Commenting upon the behavior of the Mogho Naba in this regard,
[643] Dim Delobson states:

> The Mogho Naba, above all, is a believer in animism like all his subjects, and it is hard to understand how he manages to reconcile his fetishism with the complex dogmas of Islam and with the many interdictions of Christianity. However, the Mogho Naba is quite capable of being a Catholic or a Moslem on appropriate occasions, while at the same time respecting the traditions of his ancestors. Thus, when the Christians are celebrating Christmas, the emperor of the Mossi devoutly attends midnight Mass. Nevertheless, he wears his fez [really the bonnet which is the symbol of his office],
> [292] just as the bishop wears his miter. He likewise embraces Islam for the three Moslem festivals.[47]

*175 Hesling failed in his attempt to develop the Upper Volta as a viable
*648 colony, and many of the chiefs whom he had used as his auxiliaries lost
[631] not only a great deal of power but also a great deal of prestige in the eyes
[558] of their subjects because of the role they had played vis-à-vis the administration. By 1929 the economy of the Upper Volta was in poor condition:
[433] cotton production had declined; taxes (raised from 5,800,000 francs in
[651] 1921 to 18,274,000 francs in 1927 and scheduled to be raised to 26,400,000
[491] francs in 1930) were unbearable; many of the roads that were too extensive, too little used, and too difficult to maintain had been abandoned; and
[167] more than 46,000 laborers who had worked in the cotton fields and on the roads had fled to the neighboring Gold Coast.[48] The Colonial Minister, Sarraut, ordered that the colony of the Upper Volta be dismembered. He states in his decree of September 1932 that the suppression of the Upper Volta "would permit appreciable savings, and would make the adminis-

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CHAPTER 9 [p.237]

Trade and Markets Among the Mossi People

BY ELLIOTT P. SKINNER

The Mossi represent the dominant population of the Voltaic Republic, numbering about 1,600,000 out of some 3,200,000 inhabitants. They represent the unique example of a group which has preserved its ethnic identity and political autonomy through all the vicissitudes of Sudanic history until it was conquered by the French in 1896. Tradition records that the people who became the Mossi left the Dagomba region in present-day Ghana during the eleventh century and moved into the bend of the Niger River, carving out three large kingdoms and smaller principalities in the process. At the head of these still extant kingdoms are rulers *(Moro Nabas)* who formerly held feudal-like control over the provinces, districts and villages which comprise their domains. The villages, with their patri-local, polygynous, extended family households, formed the basic Mossi settlement pattern. A complex hierarchical administrative apparatus carried the power of the Mossi rulers into the smallest villages, and funneled taxes and tribute back to them. This structure still exists, but of course it has been modified by the French.

The Mossi were and are still divided into stratified royal, noble and commoner patrilineages. Characteristic of this lineage system is a process by which royal sub-lineages descend serially until they merge with the mass of commoner lineages. Below the lineages there once were large non-Mossi groups of serfs and slaves, but these people have now been grouped into lineages and have become Mossicized.

The topography of Mossi country is typical of the Sudanic grasslands. It is an immense plain, some 1,500 feet above sea level and broken only by three low mountain ranges and numerous small hills. The annual total rainfall is between 30 and 40 inches, and falls almost entirely as heavy showers or thundershowers during the period from June to September. So narrow is the margin of rainfall for successful crop cultivation that any variation in the cycle results in low crop yields and a difficult "hungry period" the following year before the new crops are harvested. The Mossi do not practice irrigation, and would have trouble doing so because the three Volta Rivers which drain their territory serve as drainage chiefly during the rainy season. Only the Black Volta has water all year round; the

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439 complained to the district chief. Unfortunately for them the district
648 chief was absent, but his assistants did send out a call for the village chief. However, the chief refused to appear, saying that he would only do so when the district chief returned. The last thing I saw was the agents leaving the district chief's compound still unsatisfied with the whole affair." The sequel to this comes from my notes for December 26, 1955. "I inquired about the aftermath of the contraband case and was told that the whole affair is being referred to the courts at Abidjan. If the village chief is found guilty, he will have to pay a fine of 10,000 francs for the first ass and 3,000 francs for each subsequent ass, or in lieu of this go to jail. Informant said that since the village chief is a poor man, he would probably go to jail."

439 In spite of the contraband, the actual volume of trade appears to
433 be considerable. The production, trade and export of goods largely produced by the Mossi people in 1954 are set forth in Table 29.

TABLE 29

Production, Trade and Export of the Mossi (1954)

Product	*Amount*	*Export*	*Destination*
Almonds	35,000 tons	5,602	France and African countries
Peanuts	50,000 tons	3,031	France and African countries
Cattle	1,560,000 tons	101,000	Ghana, Togo and Ivory Coast
Sheep and Goats	2,115,000 tons	238,255	Ghana, Togo and Ivory Coast

439 These figures do not include the numerous items that drift over
167 the frontiers of Ghana and the Ivory Coast with the thousands of
464 migrants who go to these places each year. While the actual number of such migrants is difficult to ascertain, Pierre Dufour believes that it is "about 150,000 men per year, of whom 100,000 go to the Gold Coast and 50,000 to the Ivory Coast". (Dufour 1956 : 3). And since almost every one of these migrants takes with him some trade item such as a chicken or two, a small sheep or goat, a small sack of cereal or other vegetable produce or a few bands of cotton to defray part of his transportation costs, the amount of goods actually exported is
439 considerable. These statistics rarely enter into the account of goods
167 exported from Mossi country, since custom officers do not usually tax
464 migrants for small items, and do not make any record of them. Of
648 course, when the migrants carry large loads, these are recorded and the migrants must pay export taxes.

Greater attention is paid to the goods which those migrants who work in Ghana (but not in the Ivory Coast) bring back with them after one season or after several years of work, since the government of the Voltaic Republic derives a great deal of its tax revenue from duties on these goods.

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When one asks the Mossi directly, "What is a market?"
the response to this question is: "A market is a place where people 443
meet to buy and sell. People travel from one market place to another 829
market place, and on the way they stop and see their friends in other villages. In the market one often meets and drinks with one's friends. People also go to distant markets to find things which they do not grow themselves or which cannot be found in their own markets."

Lending support to the Mossi contention that markets are places 443
where one goes to buy and sell is the fact that most important markets 487
in their country are found at the intersections of well-traveled routes. These intersections are often the places where chiefs have their capi- [631]
tals or compounds and this leads to the further idea that there is a connection between chiefs and markets, if only because the power of the chiefs makes markets possible. This does not mean, however, 443
that the market is a purely physical entity which can only exist under 571
the aegis of a chief, or that it is a purely economic institution. First of all, some markets, especially the smaller ones, are moved periodically without too much difficulty. Secondly, and of great importance, is the fact that whenever and wherever there is a large gathering of Mossi there is a "market." Indeed one can say that Mossi seldom come together in large numbers without coming to a market, or without creating one. It appears that the Mossi cannot interact with one [437]
another in any circumstance without also exchanging goods of some kind. For example, when a pagan chief holds the annual festival to [769]
his ancestors, the people who attend form a market in the vicinity of his compound. In those districts where the chiefs have become Chris- [797]
tians and celebrate their birthdays rather than the traditional an- [527]
cestors' rites, the people go to pay them homage and also "make a market." Similarly, whenever there is a funeral of an important chief, [766]
the people from the surrounding villages or even districts bring commodities to his hamlet and hold a market during the ceremony. On [796]
Christmas day, 1955, the people of Manga district "moved their market" about 500 yards to the Catholic Mission grounds where the Christians were celebrating their holiday. And after celebrating the prayers of Ramadan, the Moslems and their pagan townsmen repair to the markets to spend the rest of the day.

Most Mossi markets are inaugurated with religious ceremonies ex- 443
cept those which develop by accretion—that is, by more and more per- 433
sons coming voluntarily to trade. When a chief orders that a market be [659]
created or when a market is moved from one place to another place for any reason, the chief is the person who gives the order for the ceremony to be performed. First of all he speaks to his Raga Naba (market [554]
chief), usually a non-Mossi slave, about the need for the market or the desirability of changing its location. This man then consults a *teng-*

645 566 567 62 dreds of persons lived in Ouidin, the ward of the Ouidi Naba. Some of them were related to him; others had been attracted by his wealth and by his ability to obtain wives for his charges. All of them benefited from being attached to him in one way or another, and in return helped him to augment his income.

651 645 634 434 [431] [464] All the district chiefs sent women to their provincial ministers to be kept as wives (and thus as agricultural workers), or to be given out as pughsiudse. The Kamsaogho Naba received more pughsiudse than the other ministers because he was in charge of the wealthier districts, and also of course distributed more. The Baloum Naba was especially favored in another respect. Each year, he was entitled to call several *seghse* (sing. *seka*; a corvée or convocation) of his former pages and their relatives to help cultivate his fields. The Ouidi Naba's sources of revenue were about the same as the Baloum Naba's. In addition, his position as chief minister enabled him to obtain numerous gifts from persons who visited Ouagadougou. Moreover, the Mogho Naba often gave him horses from the fado of deceased district chiefs. The Larhalle Naba had full ministerial privileges, and a few other means of obtaining revenue. He was allowed, for instance, to keep the animals that had not been sacrificed on the graves of deceased rulers.

The provincial ministers received many goods and services from the district chiefs of their provinces. Whenever one of these ministers sent a messenger to the district, the chief gave the messenger money and livestock for his master. Furthermore, the district chiefs brought presents for their minister when they paid their annual visit to Ouagadougou to render homage to the Mogho Naba. The provincial ministers used their position as confidants and advisers to obtain as many presents as possible from persons who came to Ouagadougou to ask special favors from the Mogho Naba, to participate in judicial proceedings, or to seek the nam. Moreover, they cooperated with each other in these exactions, so that a person seeking a favor from or through one minister was prudently advised to give presents to or to seek the aid of the others.

634 651 423 434 The district chief played a key role in the procurement of revenue for the central administration, and derived an income for himself in the process. The seignorial rights over the Mossi people delegated by the Mogho Naba to all nam holders were quite obvious on this level. The district chief had rights to all valuable fruit trees, such as locust-bean and shea-butter, that grew within the boundaries of his territory. He instructed the village chiefs to harvest the fruit of these trees and send it to him. The village chiefs even had to send him the wood from the fallen branches of these trees.

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The district chiefs did not often exercise their rights over fruit trees in the weogho, as the wasteland in their districts was called. If a villager went into the weogho and collected fruit or wood from the chief's trees, he surrendered only part of it to the chief. On the other hand, if he received permission from a district chief to farm in the weogho, he was obliged to gather and send to the chief the fruit on any valuable trees. A district chief sometimes granted the rights over certain fruit trees in the inhabited areas to specific families or individuals, for personal reasons or as a reward for services. In such cases, the chief forfeited his rights to these trees, but retained his rights to the others.[28]

District chiefs also controlled all the resources of creeks and pools within their jurisdiction that were not sacred to certain aboriginal families, or which had not been transferred to specific persons. The aboriginal Ninisi families always notified the district chief when they planned to perform their annual fishing rite to the earth deities. He, in turn, sent representatives to the ceremony, and they were given part of the catch as his share. Persons who were granted permission to fish in the chief's water holes gave him a substantial part of their catch, and even those persons who had private control of fishing places regularly did the same.

The district chiefs also had rights to certain parts of animals caught in their territories. This applied especially to animals caught with such traditional weapons as traps, clubs, bows and arrows, and spears. Men who had obtained flint guns and other firearms from the Ashanti or elsewhere and who had bought their own powder were not obliged to give the chief a part of their game, but it was always prudent to do so. According to a long-standing tradition, the tusk and legs of a slain elephant that were not resting on the ground belonged to the chief, and those that lay on the ground belonged to the Tengsoba in whose ritual jurisdiction the animal had been slain. But the district chief's secular power was so much stronger than the Tengsoba's sacred power that he usually took both tusks, leaving the Tengsoba only two legs. The district chief also received other portions of elephants and parts of all the larger animals killed in his territory. And when hunters in the district were successful in the chase, they usually gave him entire small animals.

Every village in a district contributed to the district chief's revenue by performing special services for him. Certain villages were responsible for keeping specific huts in his compound in good condition; others, whose lands bordered on the woods, had to provide firewood for his compound; and yet others furnished grass and other fodder for his horses. Many villages had the task of cultivating special fields and crops for the district chief.

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621 651 634 243 For example, the villagers of Barkago traditionally cultivated and harvested a field of millet behind his compound for the chief. The people of Pinse, Donse, Passingtenga, and Tewarka cultivated millet for him in their own villages, and those of Togose and Basbedo cultivated rice for him in their excellent lowlands.

243 634 566 567 The district chief had fields both behind his compound and in the bush, which were cultivated for him by his retainers, serfs, and slaves. More than the Mogho Naba and the provincial ministers, the district chief believed that a Moaga must perform agricultural work during the planting season; to show his interest in farming, he often personally supervised the work on his plantations. When the task of weeding or harvesting proved too much for his own people, he asked his villages for a *sosogha*. On that day, each [464] village chief, accompanied by his men, went to the district chief's fields, where, to the accompaniment of drums and chants and with the verbal encouragement of district administrators, the villages vied with each other in their task. The district chief usually sat under a tree and watched the [465] proceedings and occasionally visited the various contingents to observe the progress made. Toward evening, the chief's wives gave the workers large quantities of food and drink in compensation for their services.

651 634 Like the Mogho Naba, the district chief had officials who collected taxes on commodities sold in local markets. These district market officials were usually serfs, Gurunsi captives, or bondsmen from other populations. Mossi [776] rarely served in such capacities because many of the local market places were considered ritually dangerous, and their titular deities, the Tengkouga, were believed to wreak vengeance on market officials who were tardy with sacrifices. The local Kos Naba supervised the slaughtering of every animal killed in the market, kept its skin so that its ownership could be verified if necessary, and collected taxes from the butchers in the form of meat or cowries. The Raga Naba of the district was not as strict as his counterpart in Ouagadougou, and seldom imposed formal taxes on the traders. He usually walked around the market, trailed by the chief's servants, and seized calabashes of grain and other commodities, which he placed in the servants' baskets. The Raga Naba did not tax those itinerant traders or caravaneers who visited the markets in the district, nor did he interfere with them in any other way. These merchants usually had business and personal relations with the chief, and he himself handled revenue from this source. The merchants gave him goods from the forest and Sahara regions, and he in turn often gave them wives, who were thus taken out of the district.

[167] The Mossi district chief was always on the lookout for new sources of [434] revenue, and thus welcomed strangers into his district because they "in-

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creased his force" and ultimately added to his income. Men who had been compelled to flee from other districts because of crimes or power struggles were granted refuge and given pughsiudse. In this manner, the district chief, like the Mogho Naba, established seignorial rights over his new subjects, incorporated them into the district, and obtained goods and services from them. The better a district chief's reputation, the greater the number of refugees who sought shelter with him and added to his wealth. Conversely, a chief who was known for his injustice, his rascality, and his excessive demands from persons seeking the village nam was shunned by potential subjects and might even be deserted by his own.

Those persons who visited the district chief's compound to settle court cases also contributed to his revenue. When the case dealt with cattle or other livestock, the chief received a few animals. In other cases, he received only the customary gifts from the litigants. He also received gifts from all the families in his district several times a year. One occasion was the "Tense," a festival in honor of the mother of Mogho Naba Oubri, the founder of the Ouagadougou dynasty; the other was the Basgha. During these two ceremonies every village chief, preceded by his district administrator and followed by his subjects, paid homage to the district chief and gave him presents. The district chief retained part of what he received for the upkeep of his household and to fulfill such obligations as hospitality to travelers, and added the remainder to his own annual tribute to the Mogho Naba.

The manner in which the district chief collected his annual tax or tribute for the Mogho Naba is the subject of controversy. Several of my respondents declared that the collection of this tribute was rather informal. The district chief allegedly notified the village chiefs that he wished to give a present to the Mogho Naba, and these chiefs sent word to the family heads, who, in turn, notified every household. The village people then collected chickens and livestock, baskets of grain, and cowries, and sent them up through the hierarchy to the district chief. The district chief's retainers checked the gifts from each village very carefully, and if some villages gave less than was expected of them, the district chief summoned their chiefs for explanations. In most cases the district chief knew exactly how much could be expected of his subjects, because his informers—usually his own pages and courtyard servants, or messengers of the local administrators—kept him informed of the wealth of each hamlet. Usually, a village chief who had withheld too much from the commodities turned over to him, or who had not demanded sufficient goods from his villagers, sought to make amends. It was in his interest to do so, since it was always dangerous to incur the

district chief's wrath. Thus, there was some method in the collection of this tribute and certain expectations had to be met, even though many of the contributors may have felt that their gifts were voluntary.

In direct contrast, Dim Delobson, himself a chief, states that Mossi chiefs demanded a stipulated amount from their villagers. He adds, however, that the tribute "varied in amount according to the resources of the contributors," and that the district chief set the "amount of cowries and grain due from each village in accordance with the number of its inhabitants."[34] According to him, the rate of assessment was usually 100 cowries for a married man and 50 for an adult bachelor (apparently, this difference was an acknowledgment of the woman's contribution to her husband's wealth). In addition, each adult male was assessed 10 baskets of millet of about 100 pounds each. Dim Delobson adds that to these exactions the district chief added his own contributions to the Mogho Naba, usually in the form of cattle.

It seems that Dim Delobson rationalized and regularized a rather informal system of contributions. The present-day Mossi declare that soil differences in the villages and variations in rainfall prevented a district chief from demanding a set tribute, because no one could tell whether a crop would be good or bad. Only a ruler's informers could tell him how much he should receive each year, and the chief based his exactions on this report. Several of my respondents agreed with Dim Delobson that the district chief provided mostly cattle for the annual tribute to the Mogho Naba, and that the village people furnished cowries, small animals, and grain.

A district chief was seldom wealthy, because he always had to use his revenue to fulfill unexpected obligations toward his subjects, his superiors in the political hierarchy, and his household. He had to be generous to his subjects, providing millet water, millet beer, and the more expensive imported kola nuts for those who visited and conferred with him daily. He was expected to provide food and shelter for the countless strangers who settled in his district, until they could provide for themselves. He also lodged and fed the messengers who brought him orders from the capital, and gave them gifts to take back to the provincial ministers. And he had to provide goods for the many members of his family who depended upon him. Finally, in the event of crop failure or famine in any of his villages, he had to provide grain from his granaries to feed the hungry. "How could he do otherwise? Was he not a 'father' to his people?"

The expectation that the district chief should provide hospitality to his subjects was so strong that those chiefs or princes who were deprived of an income for any reason often resorted to banditry to fulfil their obliga-

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tions. Binger, who found Boukary Koutou (the future Mogho Naba Wobogo) living in exile for having led a rebellion against his brother, Mogho Naba Sanum, tells us: 574 579 434

> Boukary has no resources, and does not even have the advantage of receiving periodic tribute from several large villages. In order to subsist and to maintain a certain status, he is compelled to live by pillage and even by brigandage. From time to time, his horsemen make incursions into the outskirts of some Gurunsi or Kipirsi village, and carry off by surprise the inhabitants whom they find working the fields or looking for wood. His people also hide and lie in wait along the roads to capture any persons who may pass within their range. This type of behavior has given Boukary Naba a bad reputation. However, the people who understand his position forgive him, knowing the situation in which his brother has placed him. And, in spite of all this, he has numerous partisans, and many others who would be happy to see him gain power.[28]

Those district chiefs or princes who wished to retain their power legitimately were forced to be generous or run the risk of losing the allegiance and good will of their villagers, who were their ultimate supporters. 634 574

It is very difficult to generalize about the amount of revenue collected by a village chief. He did not receive any revenue from the land used by his villagers. He treated the weogho in his village in the same manner as the district chief. If some families grew too large and wanted to establish permanent residence in the village bush, they asked the chief for permission to settle there. However, many village chiefs had special areas of waste for their own use. They had usually received them as gifts from some district chief, and therefore had the right to collect tribute on any crops, firewood, or fish obtained from these lands. 651 622 634 [361] [431]

The average village chief's main source of revenue was derived from the agricultural and other labor of his wives and relatives. A village chief received a number of wives from his subjects and from aliens living in his village. These women helped cultivate his fields. If their labor was insufficient he called a sosogha, to which he often invited his wives' relatives. Some chiefs also had serfs and slaves who helped cultivate their land and kept their cattle as well. [464] [566] [567]

The village chief did not have the power to tax his subjects. Instead, he functioned as a channel through which commodities and services passed up the hierarchy and on to Ouagadougou. Many villagers voluntarily helped the chief to repair his huts and compound walls and to cut thatch for his roofs. Many gave him baskets of grain and other vegetable products after the harvest. They also visited him and gave him presents during the annual rites to his ancestors. In contrast to higher chiefs, however, the village head [476] [431] [692]

651 did not derive any revenue from his judicial functions. He could not levy
622 a fine against any malefactor. However, his intermediary position between
[692] the villagers and the district chief did permit him to obtain some revenue whenever commodities moved from one level to the other.

634 The officials who administered the villages for the district chief received part of their revenue from the villages under their charge. These local administrators had no courts or retainers comparable to those at the provincial
[595] level. However, they did have a large number of wives who contributed valuable agricultural labor. These administrators were permitted to ask the
(464) village chiefs for sosose on their own fields several times during the planting season, but—unlike the district chiefs—they were not permitted to have the villagers cultivate special fields for them. In return for any help received, they had to provide food and drink for the workers.

634 The administrator received most of his revenue as a by-product of active
434 duty in the villages. When he visited a village or transmitted a message to
431 a village chief, he almost invariably received a sheep, a goat, a chicken, or some millet, from the village chief. He also acquired large quantities of goods during the village interregnum: he received gifts from the chief's heirs during the chief's funeral; he received additional presents when they took the fado to the district chief; he could prolong the interregnum in order to receive as many bribes as possible from contenders for the nam; and he was handsomely rewarded when the candidate he had backed was finally installed in office.

596 The extended family was the basic socio-economic unit supporting the
613 Mossi political organization. The Yirisoba received land rights in his saka
622 from his Sakakasma, who had obtained his rights from the village chief.
423 An extended family in need of additional land would seek help from its Sakakasma or its Boodkasma. When the family no longer needed this land, it reverted to the lineage. If all the land granted to the lineage was already occupied, the extended family, through its lineage head, asked the village chief for more land. The chief usually granted this request, unless he had no more weogho available. In this case, the needy Yirisoba some-
596 times tried to borrow land from his non-kin neighbors. Such a step was
613 not undertaken lightly, however. If a man borrowed land from his own
423 lineage members or from the chief, the land rights reverted to its donors
426 without difficulty. However, if he borrowed land from another lineage and either he or his benefactor died without assuring the return of the land, litigation often ensued. In some cases a man would seek land from his lineage brothers in another village, who let him use some of their land with their chief's permission. Some Yirisobadamba even asked their district chief for

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they might take the lives and property of their subjects. There are many stories of avaricious chiefs who convicted wealthy commoners of spurious crimes and had them executed or banished in order to seize their wealth. There are also stories of twin tricksters, Raogo, a boy, and Poko, a girl, two *enfants terribles* who always succeeded in outwitting and killing avaricious chiefs. When I asked a district chief to explain the significance of the Raogo and Poko tales, he replied that they were "meaningless stories told by children who do not understand how difficult it is for a chief to command and protect men." This remark prompted one of his officials to add that in olden days, people gladly supported the Mogho Naba and his chiefs in order to be safe from their enemies—a statement which might have been made by a conscientious government official anywhere. However, whether commoners or chiefs, all Mossi believed that men must have government, and that without it chaos would prevail.

The Mossi political organization was subject to severe strains. For one thing, its economic basis was not very strong. True, goods and services were channeled to the capital from the smallest areas, and in time this permitted the establishment of increasingly complex governmental structures. Nevertheless, the Mossi fiscal system was not highly developed, and much of the revenue the rulers received came to them in the form of legal fees and gifts. Moreover, most of these revenues were irregular in nature.

Despite this fact, the Mossi believed that their rulers were wealthy—and there can be no doubt that they were wealthier than their subjects. Nevertheless, visiting Europeans found little difference between the standard of living of the chiefs and that of the people. Binger would have us believe that Mogho Naba Sanum bragged so much about imaginary wealth, including 10,000 horses, that he "managed to convince himself of it."[26] Binger's subsequent remarks about Sanum's resources are illuminating even if somewhat biased, because they throw light on the economic basis of the Ouagadougou kingdom. He tells us that Sanum's revenues were

> not well regulated. He lives on gifts and offerings which people have brought him with the aim of obtaining justice, or to demand something from him. He sometimes sends a band of men to capture slaves in Kipirsi country, or at least supports such ventures. But these revenues, like those of all the black chiefs, are not sufficient, because these men are prone to squander their resources. As a result, these sovereigns are compelled to use expedients in order to procure horses and other commodities. Thus, like the rulers of Tieba, Pegue, and Kong, Naba Sanum still has captives in villages devoted to agriculture, but he does not take proper care of these villages. If he does not receive enough millet in the form of gifts, he must sell his slaves in order to procure it.[27]

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Binger's statement about the "squandering" to which "all the black chiefs" are prone reveals his ignorance of the nature, role, and function of West African chiefs in general and of Mossi chiefs in particular. These men were often the center of redistribution systems that embraced their entire territory. The Mossi chiefs did not necessarily squander their resources when they used them to support their household, their administrative staff, and even visitors to their realm. A rather large portion of the millet the Mogho Naba received was not even used by his own household, but was held for gifts to visiting strangers. Binger himself benefited from the generosity of Mogho Naba Sanum, and he provides us with excellent data about how Boukary Koutou distributed his resources: "I can say that never has a chief given me food, kola nuts, and beer as often as he did. I received things to eat two or three times a day."[28] No Mossi chief could have done less. This was a role that chiefs had to play, and they lost power and prestige if they proved inhospitable or parsimonious either to visiting strangers or to their own subjects. 631 434 574 [114]

Binger's lack of insight into the economic basis of the Mossi political organization also kept him from obtaining a clear understanding of the political system itself. For example, he saw the loose political organization of the Mossi as a sign of decadence, and felt that the Ouagadougou kingdom was too weak to survive for any length of time: 642 114

> Before long the Mossi empire will break up, and the country will be organized into a confederacy like Beledougou and Yatenga. This is an event that we Europeans can only favor. Experience has shown us that as soon as a Negro chief commands more than 2,000 people, he dreams of empire; his needs grow, and he tries to expand. Since his revenues are small, he labors under a deficit, which he must remedy with slave raids. In a confederacy the chiefs do not reach this point so rapidly. As soon as one of them begins to rise, the others can band together and nip his ambition in the bud.[29]

It is quite true that many of the political systems in the western Sudan had a loose character similar to that of a "confederacy." This was not due to the vigilance of neighboring chiefs, however. From time to time, such powerful rulers as Sundiata, Mansa Musa, Sonni-Ali, El Hadj Omar, and Samory Touré did arise and conquer vast areas, but they were unable to sustain their gains over extended periods.

The political organization of the Mossi was not decadent but structurally weak—its economic base was never strong enough to support a higher degree of centralization. Strong chiefs only tested the limits of the system; they could not change the system itself. 642

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o'clock in the morning to sell food to those migrants who have slept under the trees or in the deserted market place and who are going on towards Ghana or to Wagadougou. At about 8:00 or 9:00 A.M. the majority of the food-sellers leave for home, but some of them remain around all day to sell to those migrants who pass by in the few trucks which can travel during the heat of the day. The food sellers then return at about 5:00 P.M. because from this time until about 1:00 A.M. most of the trucks bearing migrants stop for water and to allow their passengers to eat and rest. The amount of money these women gross varies from day to day depending upon the amount of traffic and the time of year. During the off-season from June to October, when most of the migrants are home planting, a woman may make as little as ten francs per day. In contrast, at the beginning of the dry season when the young men are migrating in droves, the women may make as much as 100 francs a day, even though twenty or thirty women line the road at trucking centers. Many women welcome this opportunity to earn money because by so doing they are free to buy in the local markets the things they need.

MARKET

The Mossi have always conducted most of their commercial activities in market places even though some extra-market trading continually takes place. These markets were and are still divided into two main types: (1) those specializing in external trading, such as Pouitenga, Dakay, Kaya, Mane, Yako, La, Beloussa, Tema, Wagadougou; and (2) those specializing in internal commerce such as the markets in the villages and district centers. Of course, there is an overlap between the two types of markets in the sense that some people from the villages go to the larger markets to dispose of their commodities and, in turn, buy goods which they bring back for resale on the local level. Similarly, in former days some caravaneers visited the local markets to buy commodities and in the process disposed of their goods. However, the main pattern is for local commodities to filter into the large market centers through local markets, and for goods from these centers to filter back down to the local markets. The more goods and traders available, the more numerous and successful the markets are.

The Mossi do not appear to have any legends about the origin of markets in their country. When asked how and why markets first arose, they say that markets developed simply because people wanted to exchange goods with each other, or because the chiefs wanted markets in their own villages so that their people need not go to other districts. When one asks the Mossi directly, "What is a market?"

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to be sold the article at a lower price. The result is that the pace of commerce in a Mossi market is somewhat relaxed, but the lack of intense competition prevents a great deal of hositility and quarreling among the market people.

The amount of small trading which takes place in a Mossi market is fantastic, so much so that one gains the impression that some people trade simply for the sake of trading. Everyone tries to get money so that he or she can buy some desired object, but it is impossible for one to obtain a clear idea of what kind of profit, if any, people make from their commerce. In fact, the idea of a profit does not seem to be important when people are selling their own products. Most people only think about profit when they buy things to resell—whether these things are of African or European manufacture. This, incidentally, is one of the reasons why the prices of foodstuffs are about 10 per cent lower in the country districts than at Wagadougou, and concommitently, why imported products are 10 to 20 per cent higher in the rural districts than at Wagadougou where they are bought. When a woman takes such products as cotton, beans or millet to market, she may gross about 100 francs in the course of the day. But out of this she may give a few francs to her husband to buy kola nuts, a few francs to her daughter to buy a plastic necklace, and spend the rest for a cotton skirt, a piece of meat and condiments for her sauces. Men whose wives do not bring many goods to market must usually give them about 100 francs to spend on the various products the family needs. There are no official restrictions on the kinds of goods which may or may not be sold in the Mossi markets. In pre-European times slaves and eunuchs were the common stock-in-trade of the major markets and of some of the smaller ones as well. The only active supervision that existed and still exists concerns the butchering of meat. Every person who sells meat in the market must exhibit the skin of the butchered animal in a public place so that there will be no question as to the ownership of the animal. If the meat in question is the remains of a cow killed and half-eaten by a lion, then the village or district chief must be notified before the meat enters the market. The person in charge of this task used to be, and often still is, a man called the Kos Naba, a kind of sales chief. He also formerly doubled as a tax collector for the rulers and chiefs. Another official, the Raga Naba, where he still exists, is more concerned with protecting the lives and property of the people who trade at the markets, but he also supervises the sale of some commodities there and formerly also collected taxes for his superior.

In pre-European times, every important Mossi prince and district chief had the counterpart of a Kos Naba and Raga Naba, to collect

551 [134] (b) Kata laghem koagb'kon sirigh tanga. (A hundred
645 barking hyenas cannot shake a mountain.)

6. Kamsoro Naba (Ouene Nongué), Naba Niouga ("cat"). He is chief eunuch. Nioug'nok wendé na pa ne Sabelem. (A cat who trusts in God is sure to preserve his blackness.) In other words, one who is protected by the Mogho Naba, his "God," will never lack for anything; everything will come to him as if by magic.

551 7. Naba Gnighnemdo (Mogho Naba). Naba Oubri, the founder
643 of the Ouagadougou dynasty, fell in love with one of his own daugh-
835 ters and had intercourse with her. The girl became pregnant and gave birth to a son. The wives of Naba Oubri wanted to put both the child and the mother to death. They asked the girl the name of the child's father, and she replied, "Ask my father, he ought to know." When Oubri was questioned, he answered: "Bassi yan ya mam lam gnighnemdo (Do nothing, this is my own flesh)."

The child of this incestuous union was thus named Gnighnemdo and later succeeded his relative, Naba Nasbiré.

The Placing of Statues at Loumbi-Raogo

211 Ganlougdou. In the old days, upon the death of a Mogho
306 Naba or soon after, a jeweler was called in [135] to make a wax
532 statuette, later to be cast in bronze, in the likeness of the late chief. The jeweler also made statuettes of one soroné, one napagha, one bendré, and one lounga, and all were deposited at the home
[177] of the Loumbila Naba. This practice was suppressed upon the arrival of the French, and it appears that there is no statue of Naba Siguiri, father of Naba Kom, the present naba, at Loumbila.

The acting Mogho Naba is never supposed to see these statues, and the jeweler who made the likeness of his father must not see
[435] them either. The jeweler was paid 100,000 cowries, a horse, a donkey, a cow, a wife, a large robe, and 1,000 kola nuts, and he was then sent away from Ouagadougou. He must never return and must never see the new Mogho Naba.

These gifts represented a considerable sum in the old days, even today for that matter. They were given to aid the jeweler in consulting seers and charlatans for the purpose of prolonging his life. Tradition has it that unless he followed faithfully the prescriptions given by the seers, he would die within a year after completing the statues.

343 Chicken house and pens. Every head of a compound has a
235 small straw hut for fowl within his establishment. There is also a
231 small round hut of clay for the sheep and goats.

Repair of houses. When an establishment is damaged by rain
356 or is in need of repair, the work is done by the residents (the head of the family and the dakompa, as well as the father's wives and brothers) with no help from outsiders. There is no pay beyond the usual meals. The head of the family merely says to the workers when the work has been completed: "N'fa nel toumtogo, imaou nian (thanks for the hard work, many thanks for the labor)."

[223] Chapter 14

Mossi Clothing

Dress of the Naba

291 In this chapter we shall examine the various modifications
554 and improvements in the dress of Mossi chiefs.
435 1. Before and during the first twenty years of the French occupation. (a) Zangoego pelga: a large robe made of narrow bands of cotton fabric, rather expertly woven. These robes, which are made and embroidered by specialists, used to cost from 70,000 to 100,000 cowries (1).

1. One hundred francs. The five-franc note is now worth 1,000 cowries. The silver five-franc piece was worth from 5,000 to 7,000 cowries, depending on the fluctuations of exchange.

(b) Karfo: a large robe, dark blue in color, made of the same material as the preceding (50,000 to 70,000 cowries).

(c) Noufa: a large robe and trousers, made of very fine fabric in a dark gray color. It had the value of two slaves or 70,000 cowries for the robe and 50,000 for the trousers.

291 554 435 (d) Zag'banko: a colored garment, varying in price between 40,000 and 50,000 cowries.

(e) Baourou ganga: a light gray blanket, valued [224] at 50,000 to 60,000 cowries, which can easily be made into robes and trousers.

[439] All these garments were imported by traveling Haoussa (Zangoéto) and a few Yarcé, the only traders at the time, who bought them in Gambaga (Gold Coast), the only known trading center at that time. As we have pointed out in an earlier chapter, the Mossi knew of no country other than their own.

There were, of course, some naba who wore only rough garments made of cotton strips woven locally.

Headgear. The inhabitants of Béré (a village of the province now ruled by the Gounga Naba) used to make caps, called manfo, which were highly prized by Mossi chiefs (priced at 2,000 to 3,000 cowries).

Some notables wore caps made at Wéogtinga (province of the Ouidi Naba) by the descendants of Naba Zombré, the twentieth successor of Oubri.

291 554 177 2. Modifications and improvements introduced since the establishment of the government of Upper Volta (1919). The various fabrics available in the European outlets and the fine white or blue bazin [fabric] are more and more being used to replace the clothing of former times. [225] These fabrics are made into robes, trousers, blouses, and forkia (this last is a kind of long blouse with wide sleeves, much prized by Senegalese traders). [362] Shirts of every conceivable color and style are hoarded in trunks and chests bought at the commissary or made locally by carpenters trained in European shops.

Many chiefs claim that garments made of cotton strips are heavy and cumbersome and impede walking.

[439] Oriental caps imported from the Gold Coast, dark red velvet hats, and even sun helmets are replacing the headgear of old.

The markatassé and mougou, rustic leather boots made by Mossi shoemakers are giving way to shoes, puttees, and leggings, [494] or to new types of boots and slippers -- the shoemakers of Djenné are now well known among the Mossi.

291 554 177 Finally, many chiefs (particularly province chiefs and dignitaries at the emperor's court) appear on feast days dressed in costumes ornately embroidered in gold and silver, products of Moroccan industry. Two of these ministers even wear with pride European costumes on these occasions.

Dress of the Mossi Subjects

292 Men. The accouterments and weapons of a Moaga who wished to be admired on festive occasions used to include the following: the koiglinga and the dandaogo (kinds of long blouses with sleeves); koursi(trousers) in dark blue; the karfo (seldom worn, [226] however, because of its high cost); a zangoégo [411] (large Haoussa knife); a manyanfo (cap); a logwaoga (quiver and arrows); and a boussan-zandé (iron club).

292 177 Today he wears the same garments made from cotton strips woven locally (except the karfo), but it should be noted that young men who return from the Gold Coast or neighboring colonies nearly always have clothing made of commercial fabrics. They may even -- and this often happens -- parade a second-hand overcoat. In the villages out in the bush, the large knife (zangoégo) is still worn, hanging from the shoulder by an albolé (ornament).

Some young men, however, usually traders in prosperous circumstances, dress in the fashion of the Sudanese who live in cities.

291 Women. A Moaga woman usually had only three skirts: (a) the skirt worn at home which was her working costume; (b) an indigo-blue skirt (fou-sablaga) which was reserved for holidays and for trips to the market; and (c) a white or dark-blue skirt cloth, trimmed with long fringes -- a kind of bambara dissa -- which she wore over her shoulders or over her head on ceremonial occasions. She replaced these articles whenever necessary.

[554 435] Only the wives of naba and of certain notables [227] were able to own, in addition to the forementioned skirts, a godé, a skirt of Haoussa origin and quite expensive (1).

1. Even today it costs between 55 and 100 francs.

301 As ornaments the Moaga woman had only red or yellow copper bracelets and the kindifou (a bright red bead). Even then only women of means could procure such ornaments. The [435] kindifou cost only 50 cowries a bead, but since cowries were monopolized by the naba, notables, and rakangba (prosperous Mossi), the beads were far too expensive for the small resources of the average Moaga woman.

Bracelets made of a special stone (a mixture of gray and white) and called manekagcé (manekaka in the singular) were worn only by the Yarbi (young Yarcé of both sexes). It is said [439] that these bracelets were peddled by the Kibissi (Habé), and they seem to have come from the Timbuktu area.

301 554 Silver bracelets were worn only by the dimbissi (descendants of dima, that is, the family of the Mogho Naba), by kombemba (canton and province chiefs) and their descendants, and, finally, by prominent persons who were in favor at court.

291 177 At the present time, especially at Ouagadougou, the women adorn themselves with garments of all kinds (skirts of native material, bazin, godé, and other fabrics, as well as skirts from stores). Some have even adopted the blouse and ample robe affected by elegant Sudanese [228] women. Many now own trunks which [352] replace the sacks formerly used to store their clothing.

291 178 The Senegalese handkerchief, a head scarf, is now considered absolutely indispensable. In rural areas there is an increasing desire to dress better. More cotton is grown. Girls and women from the bush buy glass beads of all colors when they come to Ouagadougou to work, and they wear them around their necks or around their hips in the manner of Bambara women.

416 Although the "mirror" used to be the clear water of springs and brooks, there is hardly a woman today who does not have one or two mirrors. Finally, a bit of elegance is added to the wild 301 beauty of the women by silver earrings, bracelets, and amulets sewed in a panther skin -- these are becoming a passion with Mossi peasant women.

291 It should not be inferred from the above that the Moaga always feels obliged to wear clothing at home. Any time that he has no need to go out or to visit a friend or relative at some

433 made do with what his own village could produce, and there was
178 really no trade in the ordinary sense of the word. The Moaga, essentially a stay-at-home, depended on the soil for food and clothing.

241 Only two new crops have been added since the coming of the
177 French: yams (na-niouyan, "chiefs' yams") and white potatoes. The recent increase in the cultivation of cotton makes it easier for the natives to meet their tax, and this encourages them to grow even more.

178 The French occupation has brought many benefits in its wake (creation of a network of roads, peace and the resulting free circulation among the villages, and suppression of banditry and looting), but it has also given the Moaga a desire to leave the country.

167 The extensive recruitment of [249] laborers for the needs of other colonies in the area, for work on the roads, and for the now
444 obligatory military service -- all of which are accepted reluctantly by the Mossi -- has caused many young men to emigrate.

Some of them set out, for the Gold Coast preferably, without the slightest means of support. They go to work in the English colony in order to earn money for clothes. Since they had no money when they started out, they remain there for months or even years, and this seriously diminishes the agricultural labor force at home. It also forces their old and helpless relatives to cultivate their fields alone.

Besides, so many of them never return!

The Native Diet

262 Sagbo (millet mush) is the principal item in the Mossi diet at all social levels. Rice, regarded as a luxury food, is eaten by the naba and notables. It costs from two and a half to three francs a
[436] kilogram at Ouagadougou and is therefore too expensive for most people. It may be added that it rarely is found in the diet of civil service employees.

264 Mossi chiefs usually have two main meals a day: a [250] first meal of sagbo or rice at around nine in the morning, and a second

669 The last wars in the Koupéla area, therefore, were all civil wars that broke out upon the death of chiefs in the adjacent regions of Koupéla, Fada, and Tenkodogo.

721 The most usual theater of warfare, however, was Bousanga /Busansi/ country. If a Bousanga woman enslaved to the naba of Koupéla ran away, the naba demanded her return. If his request was turned down, this meant war. When the Mossi ran short of millet, when their herds had been decimated by an epizootic disease, or even simply when they wished to obtain slaves, the naba would assemble his ministers and direct them to raid the Bousansé. The Saman'Naba would take [701] charge of the war. The Trabana, an experienced warrior, acted as chief of staff, and all the other chiefs, heads of cantons and villages; assembled their men. This was a festive occasion, and its abolition is still lamented by many people, especially among the chiefs.

721 Everything was looted; the harvest and herds were shared, and the 567 population was reduced to slavery. Since we have mentioned slaves, we shall provide some details on the subject.

567 Slavery existed in Mossi country, but in a very mild form. The agricultural Mossi kept slaves to till their fields. It was to their advantage to treat them well and thus turn them to good account. [435] Slaves constituted a source of wealth. An adult slave sold for 50 to 100 francs according to his strength, and no distinction was made between men and women. It was, therefore, unusual for a Mossi to kill a slave. Custom certainly sanctioned his right to do so, and no one, not even his chief, could call him to account for his act; his slave was his property, and he could do with him as he pleased. When he wished to get rid of a slave, however, he found it more lucrative to sell him. Besides, a slave should be attached to the household; a [278] maltreated slave might run away, even at the risk of being caught and in spite of the drug he was forced to drink, which, like the Lethean waters, was supposed to cause him to lose his memory. On the other hand, a well-treated, well-fed slave had the hope of obtaining a wife and becoming in turn the master of a hut. When his master was pleased with him, when he had rendered an important service, he was sometimes given one of the master's daughters in marriage; this made him free, and his children were not born slaves. Slaves could also be freed if their family agreed to redeem them. They were freed most frequently by means of an exchange: one of their daughters, sisters, or nieces was given in their place. This custom persisted until quite recently.

443 why only a native who is used to the transactions and who frequents the market regularly would be able to estimate the amount of business carried out on the marketplace itself and in its neighborhood; he would also have to take into account the off season, which exists here as in any other trading center. (1)

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1. I shall list below, for what they are worth, the approximate prices of some goods; they apply to a year of average yield and were recorded shortly after the harvest. Prices increase rapidly as harvest time recedes into the past, and during famine years there is no set price.

Millet, 0.02 franc a kilogram; rice, 0.10 franc a kilogram; fabirama, 0.05 franc a kilogram; karite butter, 0.50 franc a kilogram; milk butter, 1.50 francs a kilogram; peanuts, 0.07 franc a kilogram; peanut oil, 0.50 franc a liter; one jar of ordinary millet beer, containing about six to eight liters, 0.20 franc; one jar of strong millet beer (tõsé), containing about six to eight liters, 0.40 franc; hydromel (bẽsé), 0.15 franc a liter; chicken, 0.40 franc; average sheep, 3.50 francs for a ram, 4 francs for a ewe; large sheep, 8 to 10 francs; donkey, 25 to 30 francs; horse, 150 francs; a head of small cattle (no hump), 50 francs; zebu, 70 francs; goat skin, 0.30 franc; sheep skin, 0.50 franc; cowhide, 1 franc; salt bars, from 1.50 to 2 francs a kilogram; kola nuts, from 0.03 to 0.10 franc a piece; one hoe, 0.50 franc; clothes: strip of white cloth, 0.05 franc, about 0.60 franc a cubit; white blanket, 2 francs; indigo blanket, 3 francs; striped blanket, 4 francs; shirt, medium size, 2.50 francs.

443 /54/ These large markets are in the minority. In the village markets the transactions are carried out between natives who know each other, and they deal almost exclusively in native goods: millet,

439 As far as onions are concerned, the Mossi are familiar with
262 them and call them albasalé, but do not cultivate them. It is the Haoussa, on their way in from Bandiagara, who buy them from the Habé and bring them to the Mossi. The growers themselves sometimes come in large caravans and sell them at Ouagadougou.

248 /484/ We are now finished with the Mossi food crops. Let us proceed to other crops.

Cotton (lamdo or lango in Mossi) is a dry-season crop here rather than a rainy-season crop.

It is planted near the soukala, or else in the bush along the watercourses.

During the winter season, grass along watercourses is cut down and left lying there to fertilize the ground. Then cotton is planted at the end of the rainy season. Holes are made into the earth with the koutiaga, three or four cotton seeds are placed in each hole and then covered up. The cotton emerges from the ground at the end of five or six days. Weeds are pulled out every fortnight. The cotton ripens at the end of 100 days. The stem may reach 75 centimeters or 1.50 meters in height, depending on the quality of the soil. Then comes the harvesting, which extends over a period of thirty or forty days, because one must wait for the pod to burst and the boll to appear before plucking. The women, girls, and small boys do this plucking.

The Mossi grow a considerable amount of cotton and take very good care of their fields. In any case, the soil and climate of the region are rather propitious to this crop. The harvesting is done in February and March. The average local price of cotton is one franc
●[435] a kilogram.

249 Tobacco is also partly a dry-season crop. At least its cultivation begins during the rainy season, extends into the dry season, and ends only in the latter. Tobacco is grown near the soukala like maize, large red millet, hemp, etc.

Tobacco is sown during the rainy season near the soukala. Twenty-five days are allowed to elapse, and then the plants are dug out and transplanted to another spot near the soukala. When the

563 From a political standpoint, they were subject to the high Mossi powers just like the Yarsé, but like the latter and aside from this, they had preserved all their personal and economic freedom.

231 Let us add a few words about the various races of livestock which are to be found in Mossi territory.

As far as cattle is concerned, there are three races in the Ouagadougou circle:

1. Humped cattle, which is found mostly in the northern and eastern parts of the circle. This beef is tall, with a short dewlap and large horns. It is well suited to porterage, and furnishes excellent butcher's meat. There are some 5,000 head of humped cattle in the circle, 2,000 males and 3,000 females.

2. Humpless or local cattle. This beef has small horns, is found chiefly in the western and southwestern regions, and is usually designated by the name of Kipirsi cattle. It is not suited to porterage and yields inferior meat, but it is much stronger than the humped beef and better adapted to the climate.

3. Ordinary cattle, the result of a cross between the two preceding species. This beef has the strength of the Kipirsi cattle and is considerably taller. It is, furthermore, capable of being fattened, and can thus furnish meat of very good quality. This type predominates among the Tenkodogo Mossi. It comprises about 20,000 head, 8,000 males and 12,000 females.

It is therefore the local cattle (71,000 head), which is most numerous. The humped beeves are worth from 40 to 100 francs, [435] /489/ and the humpless beeves from 30 to 40 francs. The natives are familiar with castration but practice it at random on any subject [232] that comes to hand.

231 Prior to the arrival of the French, the Mossi used their cattle for meat and for sacrifices, but the two uses really amounted to one 782 (the former) since the animals offered to a dead person are always 651 eaten by the living. Nowadays, the Mossi sell their cattle to pay their tax. They still eat meat, although apparently not as much as before. The need to pay a tax which has been understood imperfectly, raised too rapidly and levied too harshly over the past few years, has forced them to save their cattle in order to sell it on the southern kola markets.

231 Donkeys are relatively numerous in Mossi territory. They are light grey in color, with a handsome black strip on the withers which extends down the right and left sides. The Mossi are very fond of [492] riding them. They do this, incidentally, all the way back, sitting on the donkey's rump, and it is a rather comical sight. They are beginning to use their donkeys in trading. Formerly they did not do this, since they did not engage in trading.

[435] The average price of a donkey is 25 francs.

Mule breeding is unknown among the Mossi. It is practiced in [232 439] Sokoto lands among the Haoussa, who sometimes bring mules into /Mossi/ territory.

As for horses, the Mossi have three races.

1. In the northeast there is a horse of rather large stature, from 1.50 to 1.60 meters in height, elegant, with delicate joints and lines recalling the true Arab horse. These horses, ridden too early and too recklessly by the natives, are soon worn out.

2. The southern horse, which is to be found in the southern part of the Ouagadougou circle and in the Tenkodogo residency. It is small in stature, thin, rather stocky. Better adapted to /491/ the Sudanese climate than the large northern horse, it possesses greater strength and endurance.

3. The Mossi horse proper, which seems to derive from a cross between the northern and southern races. It is small in stature, but strong-backed, vigorous, tough, and frugal. It is less handsome than the northern horse, but more attractive than the Boussansé horse. On the other hand, it endures the climate better than the former, less well than the latter.

231 A southern horse is worth from 80 to 100 francs, a Mossi horse 435 is worth about 150 francs, and finally, a northern horse is worth from 200 to 400 francs. There are about 7,000 horses in the Ouagadougou circle.

231 The horses are kept in the villages during the dry season. They are given millet and peanut greens to eat. Grass is cut down in the bush and given to them when it dries. During the rainy season, the [554] horses are usually taken to the bush. Only the chiefs keep their horses in the soukala, where the animals are brought fresh grass, millet, water and salt. Other people take their horses to the bush and tie them beside their field so they may browse on the grass.

231 We mentioned earlier the karyanga, which is gathered wild or cultivated for horses. It is given to them at the height of the winter season.

Many Mossi own dogs. They use them to guard the soukala, to hunt in the bush, or for consumption. In the latter case, the [262 animal is fattened. Dog meat was sold on Mossi markets in the 435] old days, but the Yarsé, who are Moslems as we know, found it improper to exhibit dog meat alongside mutton or beef, and the custom was abandoned. Dogs are still killed inside the soukala, however, for consumption purposes.

[435] A dog is worth from 2 to 5 francs.

The Mossi have chickens and guinea fowl. The chickens are 235 worth 250 cowries. The eggs are not sold.

It is the men who care for the chickens. They /492/ look in the bush for termite nests which they break to pieces so that the chickens may eat the termites. Sometimes, instead of one ration only, the chickens are issued two a day, one in the morning and one in the evening.

The guinea fowl are less numerous than the chickens. Accord- [435 ing to their weight, they are worth from 250 to 300 cowries. Their 462] eggs are eaten. It is the men who care for the guinea fowl as for the chickens.

The Mossi place beehives in the trees. The hives consist of 231 elongated straw cylinders shaped like a tom-tom. One of the sides is completely closed, while the other is perforated to allow the bees to come and go.

These hives are placed in the trees at the time when the warm 231 season begins (March), and then the honey is gathered every month 237 except at the height of the rainy season, when the downpours are too heavy. The children are in charge of this. They climb the tree with a straw torch on fire, and frighten the bees away. Then they take the honey and come down. In order to separate the honey from the wax, the honeycombs are placed in a large canari full of water. Another canari is heated intensely, and its burning-hot base is brought close to the surface of the jar where the combs are floating. The wax melts and sinks to the bottom, while the honey floats. The wax is sold to jewelers, who use it in the [306] manufacture of copper objects made by the lost-wax process. It is

231 also sold to shoemakers, who need it to rub and soften their hides.
237 In former days wax was given rather than sold. Nowadays it is sold because of the need for cash occasioned by the tax. As for honey, [262] it is eaten pure, or with milk, or mixed with sarabout. It is also 272 made into a drink called bésou, béci, or bici, which is no other than hydromel. The latter is known, incidentally, throughout West Africa.

The Nounouma call it torosana, from sana, "drink" and toro, "honey." The Kassouna call it by the same name.

The women make hydromel as follows. They boil water, pour the honey into it, and stir. Then they add small-millet flour. The mixture is stirred with a piece of wood and then strained to rid the drink of /493/ all impurities. It is poured into a clean canari, [435] which is carefully covered. At the end of two days, one has a yellowish drink which is worth 400 cowries or 0.40 franc a liter at Ouagadougou. Among the Nounouma, where honey is more abundant than among the Mossi, the liter is worth 0.20 franc (at Leo, for example). Hydromel is stronger and more potent than dolo, and one must be careful not to drink too much.

252 The Mossi also make little cakes with honey and millet flour. They call them baradaré. These cakes are not made by the Gourounsi.

231 This concludes our review of Mossi stockbreeding. Generally speaking, as we have seen, it is quite mediocre with the exception of two specialities, donkeys and horses. As far as donkeys are concerned, although the Mossi are no traders and have only begun to do a little trading since we occupied their territory, they have always liked the animals and used them either for their own transport or to carry grain. They have an average of one donkey per 42 inhabitants, while the Dagari only have one per 1,000, the Nounouma one per 166, the Sissala one per 55, the Kassonboura one per 50. In this respect, the Mossi run second only to the traders, the Yarsé, who have a pressing need for donkeys in connection with their trade and who have one per 23 inhabitants.

As for horse raising, the Mossi have left it to the Foulbé of Mossi territory. The Mossi nevertheless have an average of one horse per 166 inhabitants among the common people, and one per

231 64 inhabitants among the nakomsé (nobles, descendants of chiefs, true Mossi). The Dagari and Nounouma, on the other hand, have one horse per 1,000 inhabitants, the Sissala one per 400, the Kassonboura one per 300. The Yarsé, who are in better circumstances than the common Mossi but less fond of horses than the nakomsé, have one horse per 100 people. Finally, the Foulbé of Mossi territory, who raise horses, have one for every 26 people.

To summarize, Mossi stockbreeding is mediocre except for donkeys and horses. Let us proceed to the hunt.

224 First of all, like the Gourounsi and all other populations of West Africa, the Mossi hunt collectively during the dry, warm season.

/494/ This collective endeavor is their chief hunting method.

Aside from this, the cultivators hunt individually with bow and arrow, chiefly during the dry season although sometimes also during the damp season.

Finally, there are a few elephant hunters in the southern regions. They are to be found only in the south, for in Mossi territory proper the relative density of the population and resulting extent of cultivated land make for a nearly total absence of elephants. Gourounsi and Boussansé lands, on the other hand, which are much less densely populated, include some deserted areas where elephants may be found. Mossi hunters, therefore, have settled in the southern part of the territory, on the borders of Gourounsi and Boussansé lands, to scour both regions /for elephants/.

At Kombisiguiri, for example, there are ten of them, ten soukala heads. They kill one or two elephants a year on the average. They sell the meat to the village that stands nearest to the spot [435] where the animal was killed. This nets them about 50,000 cowries. As for the tusks, they sell them for 120,000 or 140,000 cowries, sometimes 200,000. They always give a piece of the meat to the chief of the canton where the animal was killed. They hunt with [411] guns, while in the old days they hunted with poisoned spears but on the same individual basis as they do now.

[463] Elephant hunters do not cultivate the soil during the winter season, but their wives and children do.

224 435 At Kombisiguiri, as we have just seen, there are 10 elephant hunters out of about 70 chiefs of compounds. Among the latter there are also some 20 men who hunt other animals, but they are cultivators who hunt on the side. They seek buffalo. When they kill one, they sell the meat to the village that stands nearest to the spot of the kill for 35,000 cowries. They also hunt the koba antelope, whose meat is worth from 20,000 cowries, the striped deer worth 6,500, the pig deer worth 5,000, the wart hog worth 10,000. They also hunt hares, bustards, guinea fowl, partridges, turtle-doves, etc.

224 262 The Mossi do not hunt monkeys and do not eat them. /495/ Actually, there are very few in Mossi territory, except for the red-haired monkeys who are great lovers of millet and maize.

224 825 778 The Mossi do not hunt crocodiles because the latter are held sacred. If one were to kill a crocodile, one would become ill, one's head would swell and one's teeth would fall out. Snakes, on the other hand, are killed and eaten, but in Mossi territory proper there are few large ones (pythons, boas) because the climate is not sufficiently humid. They are more numerous in Boussansé and Gourounsi lands.

226 Fishing is less important than hunting among the Mossi, for the simple reason that the land, with its low rainfall, only has muddy ponds during the dry season (on this subject, see our Introduction /not translated/). Thus, not only do the Mossi lack professional fishermen, but the villages do not even undertake collective fishing during the dry season (with the exception of some southern localities, in Kombisiguiri for example). Only children attempt to catch the mudfish which are always present in large quantities in small ponds, even when they are nearly dry.

222 Gathering, on the other hand, plays the same role among the Mossi as among the other Sudanese Blacks, and we shall study it here in some detail, since we have only described it in broad outline so far.

222 137 The tree most widespread throughout Mossi territory, and which grows wild, is the karité. Its leaves are a pleasant green, and it is somewhat similar to our Normandy apple tree. Its bark is whitish and made of small juxtaposed quadrilaterals. It is the karité which

252 261 boiling water and eaten in this fashion. This is an important source of food in times of famine which, when they come among the Blacks, usually come in May, June, and the first half of July. The néré gathered in March and April comes just in time to combat the famine.

/498/ As for the seeds of the fruit, they are removed and set 252 aside before the sweet meal is mashed. They are preserved to make 263 kologo (the Mossi name) or soumbara (the Mandé name), a pungent condiment highly prized by the Blacks. In order to make this, the women boil the seeds, allow them to cool, stamp on them to remove the skin, and wash them carefully at the watercourse. Sometimes the skin is removed by hand. Then they are cooked for 24 hours, and steeped in water for another 48 in a well-covered canari, in the shade, in a damp spot, to rot the seeds. Then they are laid to dry in the sun on a mat for two days, and pressed with the hands into balls of varying size. It is in this shape that the soumbara is utilized or sold. In Mossi territory, small balls are [435] worth 100 cowries apiece and large ones 300. At Leo, in Nounouma territory, all balls are the same size and worth 100 cowries. In appearance, the kologo is rather similar to that black coloring matter used by French housewives to add substance to the broth. Whenever a woman wants to use some kologo, to add some to the sauce, she pries loose a small piece from the ball with the tip of a knife and mashes it with the crushing stone. She pours the resulting powder into the sauce.

356 Let us note further that the bark of the néré pod is also used, although not for eating purposes. The Mossi and Gourounsi use it to blacken and polish the floor of their huts and clay roofs. The néré bark is seeped in water for one day, and then the water is tossed on the surface to be polished, that has been tamped down carefully first. The floor is tamped again with the water, and then allowed to dry. This is done three or four times, and in the end the clay surface acquires a handsome black or grey polish. It almost becomes a mirror if the procedure is carried out properly.

284 Finally, to close our list of the uses to which néré is put, we 291 have seen that the brown filaments that grow on the bark of the néré pod are used among the Gourounsi to make belts for /499/ the women, or rather cords to hold up the bunches of leaves that constitute the sole garment of local ladies.

222 and very peculiar fruit. The latter, which grows at the tip of
137 young boughs, is shaped like a huge pod whose pulpy valves open when pressure is exercised along the convex ridge. Its free tip is equipped with a sort of pulpy appendage shaped like a thorn, about 0.06 meter in length. When ripe, the fruit is of a distinctive light-red color. It contains a dozen polyhedral seeds immersed in a yellowish flesh which is tasty and highly fragrant. It is one of the best desserts I came across in the Sudan, and we often feasted on it. The fruits are clustered in bunches of three, five, or seven, and strongly fastened to the peduncle and stem that hold them. They rarely fall, and in order to gather them one must break the bough that bears them."

André Rançon adds (page 36) that the n'taba is related to the kola nut. It is apparently a sort of false kola tree.

The n'taba fruits ripen from December to April. The Mossi and Gourounsi eat them when they have dried out on the tree, or
652 else as they come /fresh/, or after boiling them for a quarter of an
435 hour. They are sold on Mossi markets at the price of three for 1 cowrie, six for 2 cowries, etc., that is to say, 150 for 1 sou.

272 These fruits are also used to prepare a drink among the Mossi and Gourounsi. They are boiled, mashed, placed in a canari filter, that is, a canari perforated at the bottom which is placed on top of another canari. Water is poured upon the fruits /507/, becomes permeated with the juice, and passes on to the bottom canari. This drink is sweet and tastes like honey.

222 Let us cite also the kamsoro (n'kodo in Bambara). It is a very
137 big, thickset tree, with characteristic leaves. The latter are very tough, very large, very thick, their shape ovoidal or rather a little more elongated than an egg, and their color a brilliant green.

The fruits of this tree are eaten throughout the year, especially by children, because ripe ones are to be found at all times.

There are no kamsoro in Gourounga territory.

Let us also cite the véda or ouéda, the caoutchouc liana, called n'saba in Mandé, fôgui in Peuhl, fittigné in Sarakolé, which is also called laré and Vahea senegalensis. This liana bears fruits that ripen in March and April. They might best be compared to oranges. They are green before they ripen and orange-yellow when ripe. Rançon claims that they are delicious. These fruits are eaten as they

222 chiefly in times of famine, but occasionally at other times also.
137 The silikoré fruits are not eaten among the Gourounsi and Bam-
261 bara.
252 Gonsé is called sofarangoni in Bambara. It is a shrub, the height of a man, that yields kéména. The latter is a pod containing small flat beans of a sort, very thin, that ripen at the time of the millet harvest. These /beans/ are boiled twice, and the water is discarded both times. Then they are washed in cold water and boiled again, for the last time, in a canari covered with a straw lid. Once this is done karité butter is added, and the mixture is eaten. Kéména
[435] is sold at market ready made. A handful is worth 5 cowries (1/2 centime). Kéména is also mixed with /true/ beans and either eaten or sold in this fashion.

Lamboye is called béré in Bambara, guidili in Peuhl. It is found almost everywhere in the Sudan. Its fruits, or rather seeds, are eaten only in times of famine. They are round, very /509/ tiny, and they ripen during the dry and warm season. They are gathered, laid out in the sun, and then crushed in a small mortar to break the outer membrane. Once this is done, they are soaked in water for eight days. This water is discarded, and the seeds are washed twice. Then they are boiled, salt is added, and they are eaten. This is done only in times of famine. These seeds are poisonous, as we can see, and would be toxic if they were not submitted to these various processes.

222 Sabatouli (bembé in Bambara and Sôninké) is a tree whose fruits
137 ripen one month after the first rains (that is, in May). The fruit is very tiny, no larger than a grain of maize. One eats it as it comes, when passing by or clearing land in the bush, or else one takes it to the village children. Nothing else is done with it. Sabatouli is found almost everywhere in the Sudan.

Vâka is a tree which is called goumou or goumbou in Bambara. The flowers of this tree, which are red, are used to make sauce when there is no gombo left. It is called fofo in Nounouma and Sissala, kafro in Kassouna. Its fruits are not eaten.

We overlooked the jujube tree above. It is called mourouga in Mossi, n'tomono in Bambara, gouésso in Nounouma and Kassouna. The Mossi eat the fruits only when traveling through the bush. The Gourounsi do not eat them at all.

326 Mossi blacksmiths make ouaka, koutiaga, axes, knives, daggers, swords, spearheads, arrowheads, razors, iron bracelets for women, men, nobles, spoons, horse bits, stirrups, spurs, etc. They also make needles of considerable thickness which are worth [435] 10 cowries apiece, or five for 1 sou.

During the winter season, they hardly make anything beside ouaka.[1] During the dry season, they make all the other items.

411 They also make zandé, or clubs with iron tips. Let us say
326 a word about clubs, which are in a way the Mossi national weapon. A Mossi would believe himself dishonored if he were not to bear a club solemnly on his right shoulder wherever he goes. Even small boys carry them, proportioned to size, and they do this with no less solemnity than their elders.

Mossi clubs are of three kinds:

1. Some made wholly of wood, handle and body both, and carved all of one piece. They are called dori.

2. Others whose handle is made of wood, but whose head consists of a large round stone imbedded at the tip of the handle. These clubs are called gougou.

3. Finally, the clubs with a wooden handle and an iron mallet inserted perpendicularly at the tip of the handle. These are the zandé or zann'dé. Sometimes the handle is covered with hide, and this makes it richer and more handsome.

326 Blacksmiths make only the iron part of the zandé. The other kinds of clubs are made by the owners themselves.

Blacksmiths only make zandé on order. While they make ouaka and koutiaga in advance and have them taken /514/ to market in quantities, they only make zandé when someone comes and asks for one.

The Mossi blacksmiths, therefore, work sometimes on order and sometimes to build up their stock. They sell this stock at market through their children, just as their wives go there to sell the pottery they manufacture.

325 The tools used by Mossi blacksmiths are as follows:
413 1. A small anvil called kissiguiré, with a pointed iron piece underneath, which can be held in the hand or thrust into the ground.

[1] [i.e. A kind of large hoe, see p. 32. —Analyst]

325 413 2. An iron mallet called zinré which is used as a hammer to strike the above-mentioned anvil. These items are very small. The anvil is held in one hand and the mallet in the other.

3. A pair of tongs (iéougo) to pick the iron from the fire and put it on the anvil.

4. A hammer called kouadara, made of a thick, short, and solid wooden handle into which a long and narrow iron mallet has been driven to make a hammer.

5. A rasp (sodara or chandara), slightly curved, and hafted to a wooden handle.

6. A sort of small wedge to cut the iron (kitéga). This wedge is placed on the piece of iron to be cut, and it is hit with the mallet.

7. A small-sized tool called karé that consists of a curved blade, 3 centimeters long by 2 wide, hafted to a short piece of wood. The karé is used to sharpen knives.

8. The goatskin bellows (zougoudou).

Such are the tools of the Mossi blacksmith which, incidentally, he makes himself.

325 435 The mallet is worth	5,000	cowries	(5 francs)
The anvil	10,000	"	(10 francs)
The hammer	1,000	"	(1 franc)
The nippers	700	"	(0.70 francs)
The rasp	500	"	(0.50 francs)
The iron wedge	200	"	(0.20 francs)
The sharpener	200	"	(0.20 francs)

323 The wives of Mossi blacksmiths make pottery. They are not the only ones to do this, as we shall see later, but they do it, at least in the special blacksmith's villages and quarters.

They make pottery with bérédo, that special black earth, a kind of clay we have already mentioned/in a previous chapter, not translated/. They crush and mash old canari and add this powder to the bérédo. This makes the pots stronger than if fresh bérédo were used. When the pots have been fashioned, the women leave them to dry in the sun for six or seven days. While this drying process is taking place, they gather firewood in the bush. Then they place a layer of wood in a round oven (about 1 1/2 meters high, very

326 In short, the blacksmith's profession is of greater consequence to him than anything else, although he avails himself of several other occupations.

[564] Mossi blacksmiths do not form a caste. That is to say, anyone can marry among them.

306 Let us proceed to the jewelers or copper workers (niaka in Mossi).
439 The Mossi have been familiar with copper for a long time, although West Africa does not produce it. The Yarsé have sought it at Ouanké, Kintampo, and even Kumasi from times immemorial. It comes from the coastal area, where it is brought by the Whites in the form of brass rods 30 or 40 centimeters long (like curtain rods). Nowadays, it is the British who supply the Gold Coast with copper, no doubt in the wake of the Portuguese and Dutch.

306 The niaka earns more money than the blacksmith. He buys the
301 copper rods from the Dioula and makes them into various items /517/ such as women's copper leggings adorned with crocodiles, and thick copper bracelets worn at the wrists and ankles by women and soroné (pages). Depending on their thickness, these bracelets sell for 2,500
● [435] to 20,000 cowries. He also makes women's copper hairpins, and low-price rings worth from 100 to 200 cowries.

306 Prior to the arrival of the French, these jewelers also made
532 copper objects depicting everyday scenes, landscapes, huts. The chiefs bought them, but now these objects, at least the more ancient ones, have become very difficult to obtain. It seems that the German physician Frobenius, when he passed through Mossi territory at the end of 1908, acquired some very beautiful specimens of ancient Mossi manufacture for an exorbitant price. Nowadays, one
[439] can imagine what the old industry was like by looking at the small items made at Ouagadougou by a few Europeanized Mossi who sell them on the spot for the benefit of local Whites. It might almost be said, therefore, that they manufacture them for export purposes. These items, made by the lost-wax process, are rather interesting and quite artistic for Blacks.

325 The tools of the niaka are about the same as those of the black-
306 smith:
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1. The small portable anvil or kissiguiré.
2. The hammer or kouadara.
3. Shears (niougou) to pick copper pieces from the fire.

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[317] In order to make this basin the potter takes a kind of earth called yaoré (the kind from large brown or greyish termite nests). He mixes it with straw and makes this kind of basin, this kind of primitive potter's wheel, called tébélé in Mossi.

2. A kind of short earth pestle, which is held in the fist and called toudoubila.

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[428] In order to make his canari our potter takes some yarado. To obtain this kind of clay one must dig at certain spots which are handed down traditionally from father to son. He crushes it with /520/ his pestle in the basin, and then wets it and builds his canari with it, raising the canari like a house wall and making it revolve slowly before him. Incidentally, he only knows how to make small canari.

Those potters who make big jars excavate a sort of large basin in the ground. They use the same short and compact little pestle to work the clay of the canari they are building, but they use a different kind of yarado, the red or reddish kind.

[435] Our potter sells his small canari for 80 to 120 cowries apiece. He makes them in quantities. People come to him to purchase them, or else he has his wife take them to market.

Skillful potters make four canari a day. Beginners only make two or three.

[435] Large canari are worth 300 cowries apiece.

Those potters who make small canari often make nothing else. Similarly, those who make large canari do not usually make any others. There are some potters who make both kinds, however, for example at Kombisiguiri.

In order to fire the pots, Mossi potters have large round ovens which I have already described. They are completely open at the top, like circular walls 1.50 meters high, with four holes at the bottom. The potters heap up millet stalks within, and lay four canari on top. Upon each of these canari they place others, until the pile reaches the top of the wall. Then they set the millet stalks afire and allow everything to cool off until the following morning.

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467 Every potter does not have his own oven. There is only one oven per quarter. The potters in each quarter get together to build a common oven behind the several soukala. If there are five potters,

323 467 the oven is built in one day. All those who cooperated in building it have the right to use it.

323 At Kombisiguiri, some potters have no ovens. They merely spread out millet stalks on the ground and place the canari on top. They light the millet, and the pots are fired in this fashion.

/521/ It is the potter himself who makes his tools, his crude basin, and his pestle.

Let us point out that the baouré, huge jars where the threshed millet is stored and which are about 2.50 meters high and proportionately wide, which look like enormous sandstone ink bottles and which I saw in the northern part of Mossi territory, are not made by the potters. They are built in each soukala by the inhabitants.

After the potters come the pipe makers. It is the old women who make pipes among the Mossi. They fetch the appropriate clay, [435] fashion the bowl of the pipe, and fire it. They sell it for 5 cowries.

333 Let us not forget the bricklayers, who are called tammétéba in Mossi. Like Gourounsi bricklayers, Mossi ones are primarily cultivators, and their fields net them much more than their trade. As among the Gourounsi, the bricklayers are not paid. They are merely fed for the duration of their work.

322 Following work with earth and clay, let us proceed to woodworking. It is represented among the Mossi by the koukouperséba and séta.

Among certain populations of West Africa, the woodworker's trade is exercised by the blacksmiths (for example, among the Malinké, Dialonké, etc.). Among the Mossi, as among the Gourounsi, it is sharply distinct from the blacksmith's trade and exercised by the koukouperséba, who are counterparts of the Gourounsi voguésara and Mandé debakala-lésemba. The koukouperséba make daba handles, axe handles, small chairs which are very nicely tooled with a hot iron and which represent a horse's back with two crude heads, two outlines of a head, on either side.

Actually, the koukouperséba are primarily cultivators. They work the soil during the rainy season. During the dry season, they make the various items just mentioned.

322 563 In addition to these people, there are the Laobé among the Mossi, that is to say, /522/ those men who are employed by the

322 563 Foulbé as makers of wooden gourds and other items of a similar nature. The Mossi call them séta. Since there are many Foulbé in Mossi territory, there are Laobé also. Some of them have left their masters to settle independently, and they are now free.

May we present one, by the name of Louri. During the winter season he works the soil, although very slightly like all other Laobé and Foulbé, and he also makes wooden gourds. During the dry season, he only makes gourds. Owing to his very mediocre cultivating abilities, his trade nets him more than his fields.

His tools are as follows:

322 413 1. First, a large ax called diendé, which he uses to cut heavy timber.

2. The saotaré, a kind of well-sharpened hoe with a very short handle, which is used to fashion the gourd on the outside.

3. The tépotondé, a kind of hoe with a very short handle and a very sharp blade, which is used to hollow out the gourd.

4. The menkéré, which is also used to hollow out the inside of the gourd.

5. The kéfirga, a long-handled tool with a curved, sharp blade, which is used for the same purpose as the two preceding tools.

It is the blacksmith who makes the iron parts of these tools.

322 563 435 Their value is as follows:

The axe is worth	2,000	cowries
The saotaré is worth	500	"
The tépotondé is worth	500	"
The menkéré is worth	1,500	"
The kéfirga is worth	200	"

322 563 In order to make his gourds, our Laobé uses the wood of the following trees: hèdè, bouagaï, saboutoungaï, and bembé.

This Laobé comes from Badongo (a village located 31 kilometers from /523/ Ouagadougou). He has a wife and two children. [567] He is a former slave, a captive from Laobé, whose masters had settled at Badongo. The master left, and now he is free. Formerly he worked for his master, and now he works for himself. He makes gourds in advance and has them sold at market by his wife. He [435] sells the small ones for 100 cowries, the medium ones for 300, the large ones for 500 (0.10, 0.30, 0.50 franc).

322 As for plots, he cultivates a field of small millet, a little
563 maize around his hut, a few peanuts and underground peas.

His soukala consists of a single and lone hut where he lives with his wife and two children.

Here is another example of a Laobé or séta, this one living at Kombisiguiri. He has left the Foulbé to settle among the Mossi.

[413] His woodworking tools are the same as those we mentioned above: diendé, tépotondé, menkéré, saotaré, and kéfirga.

To make his gourds, he cuts down a whole tree, either hèdè
[313] or n'kouna, which yields the best wood, or bembé, sibi, or n'pékou, or else saboutoungal', sanktougal', or satantoulougal', or finally bouagal', which is less good. Gourds made of hèdè wood sell for more than others.

[435] He makes two kinds of gourds, small ones worth 50 cowries and large ones, some of which sell for up to 1,000 cowries. He makes his gourds without waiting for an order and has them taken to market by his wives.

Our Laobé does not work in the fields at all. From one end of the year to another, he makes his wooden gourds and they bring him enough to live on.

322 In addition, he makes mortars and pestles to crush grain. A
563 small mortar and pestle is worth 1,000 cowries, a large mortar
435 and pestle 2,000. He also makes large wooden spoons which he sells for 50 cowries, and clogs or wooden sandals of a sort which are worn during the rainy season and which he sells for 100 cowries.

/524/ There are eight people in his soukala, himself, his two wives, and his five children.

322 Let us add that a few, a very few, Mossi have begun to make wooden gourds like the Laobé, but contrary to the habits of the latter, they spend more time in the fields than at their trade. There are a few at Polsogo, a village located 12 kilometers from Ouagadougou. They must not be confused with the koukouperséba mentioned above.

There are also bow makers among the Mossi. They are called tempéséda. They are primarily cultivators, and their fields net them much more than their trade. They exercise the latter only for the purpose of getting a few cowries to buy condiments such as

322 salt, etc. Small bows are worth 20 cowries, medium ones 70, and [435] large ones 100.

285 We have just reviewed woodworking. Let us proceed to basketry. Here the latter gives rise to two major trades, the basket maker's and the hat maker's. Let us study them in turn.

As an example, here is Niandé Zango, a basket maker and head of a soukala. He has two wives and three children. His soukala numbers five huts.

He works in the fields during the winter season, and at his trade during the dry season. His fields bring him the larger returns.

He makes his baskets at home without waiting for an order, and he has his wives sell them at market.

He gets doudouma straw in the bush and cultivates mono in his maize field.

[314] Doudouma is a tall grass that is left to dry and that furnishes excellent straw for the manufacture of baskets and trays.

Doudoumidou is doudouma straw dyed red with mono.

249 386 285 Mono (faraoro in Bambara) is a plant grown by the Mossi in their maize fields, around the soukala. It looks a great deal like large red millet, but it is /525/ not the same thing. It is probably a variety of large millet, however. Mono is sown along with maize when the first rains begin to fall. Holes are made with the koutiaga, mono grains placed within and covered up. When mono has emerged from the ground, the weeds are pulled out. The harvesting is done about two and a half months after sowing. The stalks are severed at the base and left to dry in the sun, and then the sheaths and culms are torn off. The latter are the parts used to dye the straw red.

The sheaths and culms are crushed by rubbing them by hand in a canari full of water. Then the doudouma straw is left to soak in this canari. The canari is placed on the fire, where it is kept for six hours. When this is over, the straw, now dyed red, is removed.

386 285 Doudousabalé is doudouma straw dyed black by immersion in bérédo. The straw is gathered, taken to a watercourse, and buried in bérédo. It is left there for a whole day, and this gives it a shiny grey hue.

285 314 Gansacé is a gramineous plant that grows wild along the banks of watercourses. The natives do not cultivate it. Dried gansacé provides a kind of straw that is used in the manufacture of straw trays. The Foulbé settled in the area also use it in the manufacture of hats.

Boulouvaka is a shrub that grows along watercourses. The boulouvaka stem is sectioned in two or four, yielding small flexible twigs that are dyed black by immersion in bérédo. Once dyed, these twigs are used in the manufacture of Mossi baskets.

Koué is a tall gramineous plant that provides straw used in the manufacture of certain baskets. Koué grows wild all over the bush, in dry spots as well as watered areas.

Dana is a shrub the wood of which is used in the manufacture of the Mossi baskets made of koué straw. It grows everywhere in the bush.

Sepso, semso, semsoro or semsogo is the Mossi name for the bark filaments taken from the néré pods. /526/ They are used in making straw trays. Sepso may be dyed red with mono, or black with bérédo.

All these elements are used by basket makers in the manufacture of their baskets and straw trays.

285 435 Now, here are some samples of Mossi basketry:

1. Large yellow baskets made of koué straw. The rims are made of dana stalks. These baskets are sold at local markets for 250 cowries apiece. They are crude baskets used to carry millet or to bring it to horses. They are quadrangular and shaped like upside-down pyramids sectioned at the base.

2. Large deluxe baskets shaped like the above but distinct in that instead of being solid yellow, straw- yellow, they are multi-colored. They are made of koué straw (yellow), doudoumidou straw (red), and boulouvaka straw (black). They are worth about 1,500 cowries apiece.

3. Straw trays, straw dishes of a sort, made with doudouma (yellow) and doudoumidou (red). They sell for 250 cowries when small, 300 when large.

4. Ordinary straw dishes made with doudouma only (undyed straw). They are worth 150 cowries.

285 5. Straw dishes made with doudouma (yellow), doudoumidou
435 (red), and doudousabalé (shiny grey). They are worth 300 cowries.

6. Dishes made of gansacé straw (yellow) and doudoumidou straw (red) worth 250 cowries.

7. Dishes made of gansacé and sepso straw (sepso is dyed red with mono). The larger ones are worth 350 cowries, the smaller ones 250.

There are no basket makers at Ouagadougou proper, but there are many people in neighboring villages who work at this trade.

The basket maker's only tool is the lépéré-pime, a thick iron needle hooked at the head and adorned with small stripes, /527/ which serves to stitch the straw used for baskets and trays. The lépéré-pime is made by the blacksmith, and it is worth 50 cowries.

Gansacé is also used in the manufacture of bracelets, cords, and lids.

285 The maker of straw hats must be included with the basket
294 maker. Both trades belong together.

To present one of them, here is Tenda Ouidiraogo, a Mossi. He tills the soil during the rainy season, and he makes straw hats during the dry season.

Hats are made with kansé, a gramineous plant that grows along watercourses and ponds.

283 This grass is made into string. First it is placed in water to be
285 softened, and then it is sectioned into two sprigs which are also im-
294 mersed in water. They are rubbed and twisted by hand upon the thigh. The two sprigs coil together and make string that is fairly strong, although breakable by hand.

First, enough of this string is prepared for the manufacture of a hat.

The hat makers have a sort of block called dogoma, made of
285 a tripod stick with a vertical stem. They use it to make their hats,
294 which are the ordinary pointed straw hats common to all of West Africa, and which are found in the Sudan as well as in Guinea. These hats come way down on the back of the neck and make their wearers look like Calabrian bandits. It must be said, however, that among the Mossi there is another type of straw hat, which is swollen, rounded, and partly covered with leather patches. It is

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294 closer to our European hats and vaguely recalls a very fat and swollen straw bowler with wide rims.

In order to make the former kind, our hat maker begins by bringing together a hundred strings. He ties them at one end, an end left in its original straw state, and thus fashions the tip of the hat. Then he interlaces these strings by hand with bits of unmodified kansé straw. The strings hang vertically, the straw pieces are interlaced horizontally, and this makes up the web of the hat.

[386] /528/ The bits of kansé are often dyed black beforehand by immersion in the mud of a watercourse. This is how black lines and designs are obtained in certain parts of the hat.

[435] Six days are needed to make a hat. It is sold for 1,000 cowries, of course without the ornaments, straps, and strips of leather that will be added by the shoemaker.

Hat makers fashion these hats in advance and have their wives well them at market.

248 Bérenga or hemp (also called tamora among the Mossi) goes into the manufacture of straw hats as well. We saw above, when discussing cultivation, how bérenga is grown. It is sown either among maize or among large red millet, that is to say around the soukala, or even in fields in the bush among small millet or large white millet. If sown among maize, it is sown three days afterwards; if among large red millet, four days later; if among large white millet, ten days later; and if among small millet, ten or twelve days afterward.

Bérenga is harvested ten or twenty days after maize, if it stands in a maize field. If it has been sown among millet, it is harvested seven days afterwards. Bérenga stalks are severed at the base, and the fibrous bark is removed and dried. Bérenga is green when fresh and reddish brown when dry. It is usually made into strings and cords. It is also used for the thatch roofing of huts. When it is to go into
285 the making of a hat, it is dyed black by immersion in bérédo and used
294 along with kansé to furnish the black lines of the hats.

Here are some sample products of the Mossi hat-making industry:

1. Pointed straw hats made of kansé (yellow) and bérenga (black). They sport leather ornaments and straps added by the
[435] shoemaker. They are worth 2,500 cowries.

285 294 435 2. Similar but smaller hats, worth from 1,000 to 1,500 cowries.

/529/ 3. Round straw hats with wide brims, mentioned above. These are worth 1,700 cowries.

285 All the leather parts on those hats are added by the shoemaker.

294 241 We have already mentioned that our hat makers are not exclusively manufacturers, that they also till the soil. It must be added that the latter activity nets them more than their trade. The man I mentioned cultivates a field of small millet and one of large red millet in the bush. He also grows maize, peanuts, and underground peas around his soukala. He owns neither large nor small livestock, but only chickens.

285 294 592 In his soukala he has two wives, four children, two married brothers who have one wife apiece but no children, and two unmarried brothers, as well as a father. They all make hats.

He lives at Saponé, where there are many hat manufacturers.

282 294 [564] After straw work, let us mention leatherwork.

Mossi shoemakers do not form a caste. Anyone who wants to may marry among them, and anyone who wishes to do so may exercise their trade.

As an example, here is Kinoga Kologo, a Mossi, and the head [592] of a soukala. He lives with two wives, two children, and an unmarried brother. His soukala consists of three huts.

His tools are as follows:

282 294 1. The pongo, a kind of broad little knife with a flaring blade hafted to a very short handle. It is used to cut hide.

413 2. The gansiouba, a wooden knife used to scrape and rub hides, clean them and smooth them.

3. The désara, a small tool with a wooden handle and a curved iron stem. It is used red hot to trace designs on hides.

4. The pime, a small awl used to sew hides.

5. The large tirisiga. This is an iron seal used to imprint hides with small circles.

6. The small tirisiga. This is a smaller seal, /530/ an iron rod whose tip makes a very tiny seal.

282 294 435 As among nearly all Blacks, the Mossi shoemaker is his own tanner. He buys sheepskins and goatskins at market (small ones

282 sell for 200 cowries, large ones for 400). He leaves them to soak
294 in a large canari with yogré seeds for twelve hours. Then he re-
435 moves the hair by hand, washes the skin thoroughly, and places it again in a canari with seeds of pélanaga (a tree that grows in the bush). He washes and rubs the hide with these seeds. Then he leaves it to dry in the sun after covering it with butter, real butter rather than karité butter. The skin may then be used to make various items.

Kinoga also buys cowhide at market to make sandals. One cowhide is worth 3,000 cowries. He puts it in a large canari where he leaves it soaking for three days, then he takes it out, removes the hair with a knife, and strikes the skin with a small stick to soften it. Whatever amount of leather is needed to make sandals is then removed from the hide, which is used up gradually as the need arises.

The shoemaker's tools are made by the blacksmith. These tools are worth 100 cowries apiece, except for the awl that is worth 20 and the wooden knife that is made by the shoemaker himself and worth 50. All of the shoemaker's tools taken together are thus worth 470 cowries, or only 50 centimes.

Our shoemaker makes the following items:

1. Sandals, first and foremost. The most expensive ones are worth 2,500 cowries a pair, the less expensive ones 1,500 cowries.

2. Leather grigris, bracelets, pouches, etc. The pouches are worth 100 cowries, the bracelets 50. He only makes them on order. It must be said that other shoemakers stock them up beforehand and have them taken to market.

Of course, what the shoemaker prepares is the physical part of the grigri, its outer covering. It is not he who gives the grigri its power, its soul.

3. Kinoga does not make satchels, goatskin bags, but other shoemakers do.

[415] /531/ There are goatskins used to store millet. Large ones are worth 1 franc and small ones 0.50 franc. Then, there are goatskins used to hold water. They are worth from 0.30 to 1 franc. Finally, there are small goatskins used as purses or coin bags and worth 0.20 franc.

[372] 4. Shoemakers also make leather cases for strike-a-light steel
[326] (200 cowries) and for needles (50 cowries). Both strike-a-light steel and needles are made by blacksmiths.

282 294 435 and needles are made by blacksmiths. A strike-a-light steel is worth 200 cowries.

5. They make sheaths for knives and swords. Knife sheaths are worth 200 cowries, sword sheaths 3,000.

6. Bridles and saddles. Saddles are worth 3,000 cowries, bridles 5,000.

Shoemakers also work with deerskin and leopardskin. They adorn Mossi truncheons or clubs with leopardskin. They also adorn spears with it. The leopardskin is provided by the customer. The shoemaker does not purchase it directly.

Leopardskin is sold at market in small pieces worth 100 cowries. A large leopardskin is worth 10 francs, a small one 7 francs.

Crocodile skin is also used by shoemakers. People who have killed a crocodile go and sell its skin at market, or else someone purchases the skin from the hunter and retails it at market. The skin of a small crocodile (hardly any but these are to be found in Mossi territory, owing to the scarcity of water) is worth 1,000 cowries. People who wish the shoemaker to work one of these skins purchase it at market and take it to him.

282 294 There are no hippopotamus skins in Mossi territory, because water is scarce and watercourses are small. As for elephant skin, it is too tough to be worked and remains unused.

282 294 241 The shoemaker I am describing exercises his trade only during the dry season. During the rainy season he tills the soil, and this nets him more than his trade. /532/ The same thing applies, incidentally, to all Mossi shoemakers. During the winter season, our man cultivates a field of small millet and one of large red millet, a small rice field, and a little maize around his soukala. He plants beans in his two millet fields. He owns neither large nor small livestock, not even a chicken or a dog.

There are no makers of headcrests among the Mossi, and the Boussouma chief I questioned about it told me there never were any.

286 Let us now proceed to the cotton industry, and study in turn the weaver's, tailor's and dyer's trades.

The Mossi weaver (soulouga) is a weaver-cultivator. He tills the soil during the rainy season and exercises his trade during the dry season. In fact he is primarily a cultivator, for cultivation rather than weaving comes first and foremost to him.

286 There may be five weaver-cultivators in a small village, or fifteen in a large one.

286 283 Customers bring the weaver the cotton thread spun by their wives, for spinning is a family affair. The women spread out the tufts of raw cotton on a small board and extract the seeds by pressing upon them. Then they spin small quantities of cotton between their fingers and thus make it into threads which they coil around a twig. The threads are handed to the weaver in this form.

286 The weaver uncoils the threads and sets them on his loom, which is very primitive. It is the same one used throughout West Africa, and it is called niri in Mossi. The cotton strips are usually from 8 to 10 centimeters wide. Their length, which is quite variable, may reach 50 meters. The weaver makes his loom himself.

Let us present an Ouagadougou weaver, Beïdou Ninkéma, the head of a soukala. He has two wives and no children. He tills the soil during the rainy season and weaves during the dry season. His fields net him more than his trade, because the Yarsé also work at the weaver's trade, and since they are more skillful at it than the Mossi their competition is formidable. /533/ The customers bring him thread, and he makes it into cotton strips. He is paid 500 [435] cowries to make the strips needed for a skirt. Sixty strips are needed to make one skirt.

[294] Our weaver is also a tailor, but only on occasion, and incidentally a tailor of the lowest order for he can only make skirts and cloaks. [435] He cannot make trousers. He makes a cloak for 0.50 franc, a skirt for 0.20 franc, with the fabric supplied, of course.

286 857 291 Let us add that child-weavers are also to be found among the Mossi. They make pétala.

"Pétala," says the Cahier des Rapports of the circle /of Ouagadougou/, "are small, very narrow strips, from 10 to 25 millimeters wide, made of multicolored threads, yellow, red, blue, green, etc., dyed in the territory and woven by children on simplified looms.

"Those strips, which are very strong, are used as trouser belts.

[435] "Pétala is worth a little under 0.10 franc a meter, and its sale nets a small profit to the children who make it and who sell it themselves on Mossi markets.

286 291 "This kind of braiding is not exported."

294 563 There are tailors as well as weavers among the Mossi. The tailor's trade, incidentally, is exercised in Mossi lands not only by the Mossi but also by the Yarsé and by some of the Haoussa who are settled in the territory.

294 Mossi tailors till the soil during the winter season and work as tailors during the dry season. Their fields net them more than their trade.

Most Mossi tailors do custom work. Cotton strips are brought to them, and they sew them into the required garment. Others purchase cotton strips, make them into various garments (skirts, cloaks, trousers, caps) and have their wives sell them at market. Those, however, are in the minority.

A cloak is called fougou in Mossi, a skirt fougoupoko from poko, "woman" and fougou, "cloak." Trousers are called koulouga.

/534/ Let us add that garment manufacture has remained a family industry in much of Mossi territory. Many Mossi can sew, and they make their own clothes by sewing up cotton strips. Let [462] us note here that as in nearly all of West Africa, it is the men who sew rather than the women. In this area of Africa, indeed, sewing is essentially a male occupation rather than a female one.

Now to present a Ouagadougou tailor, Mohammadi Bagaré.

He tills the soil and does nothing else during the winter season. He exercises his tailor's trade during the dry season.

He does custom work. Those who want a garment bring him cotton strips in sufficient numbers, and he makes the requested gar- [435] ment. He asks 1,000 cowries to make a large cloak, 500 for a small one, 200 for a skirt. To make a cap he asks only for one kola nut, which is worth 50 cowries at Ouagadougou. He takes 200 cowries for a pair of trousers.

It takes him five days' work to make a large cloak, two days for a small one, one day for a skirt, two days for a pair of trousers, one hour for a cap.

[412 439] His only working tool is the needle. Mohammadi uses European needles.

386 There are dyers as well as weavers and tailors among the Mossi.
177 "Dyer" is garalosadaba in Mossi, from gara, "indigo" and sadaba, "maker." There are no dyers in the southern part of Mossi territory but only in the north, from Ouagadougou upward. This would tend to prove that just as the Mossi probably learned cotton weaving from the Yarsé, they must have learned the dyer's craft from the Songhay, with whom they have had contact toward the north. Actually, Songhay emigrants have established villages in the northern part of the Ouagadougou circle, and the dyer's craft is their chief industry. This strongly corroborates our theory. Let us add that /535/ the Mossi practice dyeing in certain places, at certain spots, so to speak. One may not find a single dyer in a large number of Mossi villages, and then all at once come upon a locality with thirty dyers' wells, such as Yakki for example.

386 To present a Ouagadougou dyer, here is a Mossi by the name
249 of Gomdounguiba Nangakoré. He does not himself cultivate indigo. He buys it at market in loaves or balls. Anyone may grow indigo among the Mossi (see the section on cultivation above). When it is ripe, the leaves are gathered, heaped in a wooden gourd, and [435] pressed to make loaves worth 50, 100, or 500 cowries. The dyer buys the loaves at market.

386 He dyes either cotton threads or strips, or even garments (cloaks, etc.). The item to be dyed is brought to him. In short, he usually does custom work.

Sometimes, nevertheless, he buys thread, strips, cloaks, or skirts, dyes them, and has them sold at market by his wife or wives.

Every dyer sinks a dyeing well outside, but right beside, his soukala. He makes a neatly squared hole, quadrangular, about 60 centimeters long by 60 wide and 1 meter deep. This hole is tamped carefully several times, and the clay walls are polished with water prepared with néré bark. Finally, water is poured in to see whether it is watertight. About three days are needed to make one of those wells. Every dyer has one.

In order to dye thread, strips or garments, millet-stalk ashes are placed in water, strained, and tossed to the bottom of the dyeing hole. Then come the ashes of a tree called gouara by the Mossi (the ashes themselves are called zato or iato). They are laid

386 at the bottom of the hole. A loaf of indigo is added, and then water. The ingredients are left to blend for three days, and then the thread, strips, etc., may be immersed.

The coloring mixture is replaced every twenty days. It leaves at the bottom of the dyeing well a sort of yellow-grey crust which is removed and allowed to dry in the sun. Once dry, it /536/ is reduced to powder and added to the next mixture.

Cotton threads, in order to be dyed, are immersed in the mixture and crumpled with the fingers. At nighttime they are removed and left to dry on the hut roof. The dyeing is resumed on the morrow. At the end of three days, the threads are black. Only two days are needed to obtain dark-blue threads, and one day is sufficient for light-blue threads. The same applies to cotton strips and garments.

Our dyer does not exercise his trade during the winter season. At that time, he undertakes nothing but cultivation. It is during the dry season that he is a dyer. He claims, however, that his trade nets him more than his fields.

386 To dye cotton threads he asks 200 cowries to dye a bundle black, 435 from 60 to 100 to dye it dark blue, or 50 cowries to dye it light blue.

When he buys a cloak to dye it (he buys it for 1,500 cowries, for example) he resells it dyed black for 3,000 cowries, dark blue for 2,000, or light blue for 1,700.

Mossi fabrics are as follows:

386 435 1. White or off-white fabric, undyed. It is called pempéla. It is worth 25 cowries a cubit, that is, the length from the elbow to the tip of the fingers.

2. The white fabric with blue strips called nakoré. It is made of white threads and threads dyed blue. It is worth 50 cowries a cubit.

3. The fabric with small blue and white checks called arkilla. It is worth 50 cowries a cubit.

4. The dark-blue fabric with scattered white stripes. It is called ganga, and it is worth 50 cowries a cubit.

5. Finally, the blue fabric with blue and white stripes called oulambala or oulambalé, which costs 75 cowries or one sou and a half a cubit.

727 Only the sons of the two warring chiefs were spared. They were returned to their families for ransom. The women were also spared and returned to their husbands in exchange for other women or livestock. If their husbands did not come and claim them, the conquerors took them as wives and not as slaves.

567 Let us say a few words about the price of a slave. A man was worth 40, 000 cowries; a woman, 50, 000 or 60, 000; a young man, 435 50, 000; a young girl, 80, 000. We can see that the qualities most valued were, on the one hand, membership in the female sex and, on the other hand, youth.

567 4. Name. A slave is called yemba in Mossi (pl., yembésé) when no distinction is made between the sexes. When a male slave is meant, /265/ the word yembraogo is used (yembraodo or yembrâdo in the plural). For a female slave, one uses yempoka (yempokosé in the plural).

5. Kinds of slaves. The yembraogo, once bought or captured, was placed in irons, or to put it more precisely, irons were fastened to his feet in order to prevent him from escaping, but leaving him free to work. These irons were left on him for two or three years. When it was certain that he would not run away, the irons were removed. He spent all his time working for his master during the cultivating season, or he worked the small private fields belonging to his master's wives. In return, he was clothed and fed at all times. He could be resold, and this was done if there was dissatisfaction with him or his work.

If the master was satisfied with him, he bought him a wife. Then the slave became a bingo man, a "bingo," and was no longer a yembraogo. He passed from the status of a captive by trade or war to that of a house slave. Bingo is the name given to house slaves among the Mossi of Yatenga. At Ouagadougou they are called daparé or deporé (poré or paré meaning "back"); the daparé or daporé is the man who walks behind his master, the attendant, the slave. The bingo could not be resold except in unusual circumstances, such as when he committed fornication with his master's wife.

[342] When the master had but a few of them, the bingo lived in the same compound, with a door of their own leading outside. When there was a number of them, they had a small compound next to the one of the family.

During the season of cultivation, the bingo worked for his master two days out of three. During the dry season, he also worked for him

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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relationship between the people and their chiefs. One of the principal contributing factors was the demand of the French administration that Mossi country not only share in the over-all development of French West Africa, but pay for its own administration as well. The resources of Mossi country were largely limited to agricultural production and stock raising, however, and revenue from these activities was slight. The full weight of administrative expenses thus fell on the Mossi people. Apparently, the first taxation was of a collective nature, for according to the official government report for June 1899, "No regular tax has been levied, but taxes have been collected from the Mogho Naba and the other chiefs."[9]

Decrees of July and November, 1903, authorized "native chiefs to collect taxes, and granted them a commission on the tax yield to arouse their interest in the regular payment of taxes."[10] Accustomed as they were to giving taxes (gifts) to their rulers with the knowledge that subordinate chiefs would extract a share before sending the remainder up the hierarchy, the Mossi were not averse to paying taxes through their traditional rulers to the "new chiefs," the French administration. However, when taxes grew to excessive proportions and chiefs continued to get a percentage, the people accused their rulers of cheating them. The reasons for the Mossi complaints about taxation are described by Tauxier, himself an administrator:

> This tax, light at first, has grown rapidly over the last few years. In 1906 it was 311,000 francs for the territory of Ouagadougou, which had a population of 861,000 inhabitants. In 1907, the tax was raised to 360,000 francs; in 1909, to 355,000 francs; and in 1910, to 656,000 francs. Furthermore, from 1908 onward this tax was exacted with such rigor and on such short notice that it was exactly as though the amount had been tripled. Under the circumstances, the Mossi were compelled to resort to trade in order to obtain the French money they did not have, since the local currency is the cowry and the French administration does not wish to receive it. . . . To meet this difficult situation the Mossi now organize small caravans in the villages, and send the young men to Wanke to sell cattle, sheep, goats, asses, horses, and bolts of cotton. They bring back with them either French money or kola nuts.[11]

Many Mossi had a great deal of difficulty in securing French currency. Maugin, a White Father who arrived in Mossi country in 1904, writes:

> The Europeans who live among the Mossi, including all the riflemen and circle guards, do not put into circulation a quarter of the five-franc pieces that are required each year from the natives. At first the Mossi were taken by surprise and had to give 10,000 or even 15,000 cowries to obtain this famous coin, this charm which was to free them from all difficulties with the white man. At the official rate of exchange this coin is worth 5,000 cowries.[12]

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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175 stopped at "Fura, a large market place." On the fourth day it stopped
437 at Dullugu (probably present-day Doulougou), and on the fifth day
487 at "Dakay [or Rakay] a place belonging to the territory of Mosi."
103 Finally, on the thirteenth day it arrived at Mane.[4] The last caravan route that Barth reported ran from:

> Kaye to Belussa [Boulsa], and thence to Belanga [Bilanga] ... From Belussa a person on horseback reaches Belanga comfortably the second day, the great station between these two towns being Alitinga, still belonging to Mosi, and an important place, inhabited by Mosi and Hausa traders; but common native travellers generally halt twice between Belanga and Alitinga, in Nyennyega and Koburi [Kouri], and once between Alitinga and Belanga, in a Gurma village called Yamba.

175 The goods which these caravans carried appear to have varied a
437 great deal. Barth met a Mossi caravan at Dori, southeast of Timbuktu,
439 and reported that to this market:

> [23] The people of Mosi bring chiefly their fine donkeys, which are greatly sought after; and a numerous body of people of the Sheikh A'hmedu, of Hamda-Ailahi, had left a few days before with a number of asses which
> [438] they had brought here. Besides asses, the people of Mosi supply this market
> [439] with gabaga [cotton strips] or tari, as the Arabs near Timbuktu call them, cotton being extremely cheap in their country, so that in the great market place of that country, especially in Kulfela [Koupela, but really at Pouitenga a few miles away] an indigo-colored shirt is not worth more than from 700 to 800 [cowry] shells ... Besides salt, cotton strips, dyed cloth, Kola nuts, corn, and asses, some copper manufactured chiefly into large drinking vessels is also brought into the market by the people of Mosi. However, I do not think they manufacture the copper vessels themselves, but bring them from Asanti. (Barth 1859 : III, 203–4)

Adolphe Krause, a German who was actually the first European to enter Mossi country, went through Wagadougou with a load of kola nuts destined for Timbuktu. He joined the caravan at Salaga on July 7, 1885, stopped at the Bere market in Mossi country during August, and then proceeded to their capital where he remained until October 26 before resuming his northward journey (Krause 1887–8).

Felix Dubois, who visited Timbuktu in 1895, gives us some information on the actual products which the Mossi traded there. He reported that the Mossi came to the market organized into caravans of oxen, donkeys and porters, and brought such commodities as livestock, millet, rice, manioc, peanuts, honey, kola nuts, peppers, dried onions, tobacco, dried fish, soap, iron, antimony, lead, cotton bands, straw hats, mats, jars, pots and calabashes. These goods the Mossi

(4) Barth's skill as a reporter is evident here. He is quite correct in disbelieving that the caravans could have reached Keng on the tenth day. Marc. 1969, agrees with Barth.

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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It is clear that the volume of this trade could not have been enlarged since the French conquest which, as we know, had disrupted Mossi society. Therefore our conclusion must be that it must have existed prior to the coming of the Europeans.

The caravaneers used cowries and cloth as trade currency and in some cases even bartered one type of commodity for another. Cowries appear to have been the chief currency used and came close to being used for all purposes. Evidence for the use of cloth as currency comes from Barth and Marc. Barth met a trader who had

> . . . a good quantity of the gabaga, or cotton strips, of Mosi with him, which form the staple currency in the whole tract of country from Libta to Timbuktu, ten Dr'a being reckoned equal to one hundred shells. (Barth 1859 : III, 198)

The big rolls of cotton cloth which Marc saw being loaded by Mossi caravaneers were said by them to serve the purpose of buying food ("They are for eating") in regions where cloth was the necessary currency (Marc 1909 : 172 f.n.). The traders apparently resorted to barter whenever and wherever they could or when their currency was in short supply. This appears to have been the case when Binger visited the Mossi in 1888. Cowries were then in short supply and the people were using slaves, valued at 50,000 to 65,000 cowries apiece, to obtain goods. Horses could be bought for as many as two or four slaves apiece. Traders apparently kept the cowry equivalence in mind when using other commodities to barter with, but we cannot be sure of this since Binger himself, and not the traders, may have been conscious of the equivalence (Binger 1892 : II, 498).

The prices which the traders paid and received for their goods differed greatly from place to place, according to the season of the year and over a span of several years. The earliest price data are given by Barth for the 1850's:

> As regards Selga [Salaga], the district to which the Hausa traders go for their supply of this article, three points are considered essential to the business of the Kola trade; first, that the people of Mosi bring their asses; secondly, that the Tonawa, or natives of Asanti, bring the nut in sufficient quantities; and thirdly, that the state of the road is such as not to prevent the Hausa people from arriving. If one of these conditions is wanting, the trade is not flourishing. The price of the asses rises with the cheapness of the guro [kola nut]. The average price of an ass in the market of Selga is 15,000 [cowry] Shell: While in Hausa the general price does not exceed 5,000. But the fataki, or native traders, take only as many asses with them from Hausa as are necessary for transporting their luggage, as the toll, or

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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175 fitto, levied upon each ass by the petty chiefs on the road is very consider-
437 able. From 5,000 to 6,000 guro, or kola nuts, constitute an assload.
435 Selga, the market place for this important article, being, it appears, a
[651] most miserable town, where even water is very scarce and can only be
[316] purchased at an exorbitant price, the merchants always manage to make their stay here as short as possible, awaiting the proper season in Yendi, a town said to be as large as Timbuktu, or in Kulfela, the great market place of Mosi; and they are especially obliged to wait in case they arrive at the beginning of the rainy season, there being no kola nuts before the latter part of the Kharif. The price of this nut in Timbuktu varies from 20 to
[235] 100 shells each, and it always constitutes a luxury; so that, even on great festivals, alms consisting of this article are distributed by the rich people of the town. (Barth 1859 : II, 364)

175 The other data we have on prices paid for goods come from the
43 period between 1890 and 1910, at which time French francs had been introduced. At this time the official value of one franc was 1,000 cowries. Around 1904, a trader paid about 50 francs or 50,000 cowries for a head of cattle in Mossi country and sold it for about double the price at Salaga. With the proceeds of this transaction he bought kola nuts at the rate of one franc or 100 cowries per hundred. Thus with the sale of one cow a trader could obtain 10,000 kolas, these being valued at about 500 francs or 500,000 cowries in Mossi country and at 20 or 200 cowries each at Sarfere and Timbuktu (Marc 1909 : 173–4). At Timbuktu about this same period, 1895, traders could buy salt at about 30 francs for a slab weighing between 60 and 100 pounds and sell it for 45 francs at Sarafere, for 60 francs at Djenne, for between 70 and 80 francs at San, and "thus progressively more until they reached Mossi country" (Dubois 1899 : 276). In 1910, Mossi traders bought cattle for about 40 to 100 francs, horses for about 90 francs, donkeys for 25 francs, and so on, and sold these animals in Salaga for three times the prices. There they bought kolas at 2 Fr. 50 per thousand, and sold them at 20 per thousand at Leo on the Mossi border, 35 francs per thousand at Wagadougou, 50 francs at Wahigouya, 60 francs at Saravere, and 100 francs per thousand at Timbuktu. Here these traders bought bars of salt weighing about 75 pounds for between 10 and 12 francs a piece, and sold them for between 40 to 60 francs at Wahigouya, and for from 80 to 100 francs a piece at Dedougou and points as far down as Wagadougou (Tauxier 1917 : 221).

175 Not all the profit from this trade went into the pockets of the
437 traders. We have the report of Binger that the chiefs, besides com-
486 mandering the goods at less than one-hundredth their purchase
651 price, received taxes on each caravan which passed through their
territory.

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territory. This report is substantiated by Barth. Marc adds that the caravaneers had

> ... a considerable amount of incidental expenses. Ten thousand kolas called for two asses or four porters for whom it was necessary to provide food during close to two months. Formerly there had been a certain number of local exactions to pay each time that the caravans crossed a new country. Now there are taxes on the caravans in the Gold Coast and also in French territory. It is also necessary to pay for ferryman who transports the livestock across the Volta [River]. There are risks, and occasionally cattle, fatigued by the trip, arrive in such bad shape that they are sold more cheaply than they had cost. Finally, the realization of profits is often difficult, the kola market being, in the commercial centers of the Mossi, subject to considerable fluctuations at the time when the caravans return. (Marc 1909 : 174)[7]

Sometimes the caravaneers made extensive use of middlemen and did not realize all the profits. Marc, who was stationed at the customs post at Leo on the Mossi border with the Gold Coast, wrote:

> The livestock is bought upon arrival by interpreter-brokers, middlemen between the butchers and the meat merchants, to whom the caravaneers are practically forced to resort. These men buy all the kola nuts brought by the forest natives, and control the market prices ... These interpreter-brokers apparently speculate on livestock in a most curious way. They have scouts who go out to meet the caravans, sometimes two days' march to the north. These scouts attempt to alarm the travellers with tendentious remarks, until they are willing to cede their herds at a low price. Some times, at the height of the business season—that is, in January and February—the livestock prices may fluctuate by one hundred per cent within a few weeks. The Mande-Dioula vie in eloquence, the Yarse and Mossi in politeness, the Hausa in friendliness. In reality, there is here, an embryonic trading center, a veritable stock exchange, using extensively indigenous methods. ((Marc 1909 : 173)

According to most reports, all the larger market centers of Mossi country were like this.

Caravan centers, like all the lesser market centers in Mossi country, provided merchants not only with trading opportunities but also with occasions for conviviality after hectic days of travel. At Dakay south of Wagadougou, livestock traders found musicians, singers, and the most beautiful dancers in the country. And according to Marc, during the whole caravan season the market was abundantly furnished with beer (Marc 1909 : 175). But if the Mossi enjoyed themselves at

(7) Tauxier (1912 : 539) states that each porter was paid 35 francs for the thirty-five days of travels or at the rate of one franc per day. In addition a caravaneer spent about 300 cowries a day on food for each of his bearers.

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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443 such individuals to find a market everyday in one neighboring district or another.

Every Mossi market not only has its own schedule but is also part of a cycle of markets in the sense that its main customers can and do regularly attend two other markets on the two nonmarket days without missing their "own" market. Table 30 takes the district market at Nobere as the home market and lists the markets which Nobere's people can attend and the reasons they themselves give for going there.

443 366 438 484

[103]

TABLE 30

Markets near Nobere

		Distance Away	*Reasons for Going*
First Day:			
	Nobere		Home Market
	Manga	12 kilometers	Good Pottery
	Vooko	15 kilometers	Butter and Millet
	Twese	20 kilometers	Millet and Sorghum
	Binde	35 kilometers	Good Pottery and Mats "Very far and people do not go there very often"
Second Day:			
	Basgana	10 kilometers	Good Pottery
	Sakouliga	15 kilometers	"To Have Fun"
	Giba	10 kilometers	"To Have Fun"
Third Day:			
	Nobili	27 kilometers	"Good Millet"
	Pinse	6 kilometers	"Small Market; to have fun"
	Parougre	10 kilometers	"Good Millet and Pottery"

Nobere people scarcely ever go to Manga because the market there conflicts with their own and its one unique product, pottery, can be bought at Basgana on a day when there is no market at Nobere. A [435] person is likely to go do Vooko when he wishes to buy butter and millet at cheaper prices than he can obtain in his own market. But he scarcely visits the Binde market unless he is there visiting a friend [517] or relative. Nobere people think nothing of going to Giba or to Pinse to show off their clothes or to have fun at those markets. If any [436] commodity is cheap there they take advantage of the prices, but in general they believe that they can obtain better and cheaper products at their own market.

443 438 It is now possible to find a great variety of products at Mossi markets, and the larger the market the more varied its merchandise. Apparently this was not always so. Crozart (1891 : 4848), who visited the country just before it was conquered, reported that in the market at Wagadougou, he found "millet, rice, millet beer, butchered meat, small cutlery, morocco-leather goods, basketwork and jewelry items,

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all of local manufacture and in great abundance. Local cloth is also very abundant. However, there are scarcely any imported objects salt, kola nuts, copper rings and extremely rare European fabrics. The salt always comes from the north. During my stay at Wagadougou I saw the arrival of a convoy of five or six small-sized mules loaded with this merchandise." Crozat felt that the Wagadougou market with its mainly local products was inferior to the markets at Woroudoy and Bobo-Dioulasso which he found less crowded, but which were, in his words, "true *entrepots* of imported merchandise."

Tauxier gives us a better picture of the goods found in the markets of Mossi country before the Europeans arrived. His reports list few imported products except salt and kola nuts. The preponderance of goods sold were such local foodstuffs as maize, manioc, peppers, tomatoes, squash, karite or shea butter, locust-bean balls, locust-bean flour, rice and a local variety of potatoes. Other foodstuffs included were honey, beer, butchered meat, chickens, and guinea fowls. Tobacco both for chewing and smoking was also available, and so was hemp for making rope. Raw cotton, cotton thread, cloth and tailored cotton garments were also present, and so was indigo for dyeing the cotton materials. Other goods included hides, sandals, pouches, amulets, iron items such as axes, hoes, knives, scythes, locks, clubs and spearpoints, bracelets and anklets made of copper by the lost-wax process, baskets, mats and hats made out of local grasses, pottery, pipes and wooden stools (Tauxier 1912 : 466 ff.). By 1914 Mangin could add little to this list of local products, sold in the markets, but added such foreign items as "matches, glass trinkets, handkerchiefs, basins, dishes, perfumes, and even firecrackers" (Mangin 1921 : 53).

The markets of contemporary Mossi society contain all of the articles found in pre-European times and those seen there by Mangin in 1914. In the larger markets one now can find such additional items as bicycles, razor blades, plastic raincoats and other plastic products, and the latest "rock 'n roll" records from the United States. The goods found in the smaller district and village markets tend to be of the traditional variety. But even here it is possible to buy refined cane sugar, matches, plastic necklaces, shoe polish, nail polish, toilet water, glass beads, costume jewelry, chinaware, and glass and enamel containers. In some of the smaller markets it is even possible to buy wheat bread made of imported flour, and bottled beer and soda water. The more different types of goods entering the larger markets, the richer the variety found in the smaller markets, since local merchants are quick to take advantage of the prestige value of any new produce and introduce it into the rural areas. The only barrier to this type of commercial activity is the relative poverty of the rural people.

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175 436 437 Cowries used to be chief medium of exchange in Mossi markets until the Europeans arrived. In addition the people bartered specific goods for other products. The prices of goods in these markets fluc- 175 435 tuated from time to time. Prices were highest during the planting season when most goods were scarce, and lowest during the harvest periods, but we have little precise information about the prices of goods in the traditional markets. Even Barth's information is too sketchy to deal with. Our first reliable data come from Tauxier, whose writings cover the first decade (1896-1906) of the conquest. Using the then official rate of one franc equals 1,000 cowries, the prices of a few representative products were: horses, 40 to 100 francs (40,000 to 100,000 cowries); cattle, 30 to 40 francs (30,000 to 40,000 cowries); chickens, 250 cowries; guinea fowls, 250 to 300 cowries; hides, 3,000 cowries; pottery jars, 300 cowries; cotton trousers, 200 cowries; baskets, 1,500 cowries; and locust-bean balls, 100 cowries (Tauxier 1912 : 466 ff.).

Mangin, whose work covers the period from about 1910 to 1913, when the value of the franc was lowered to one franc equals 700 to 800 cowries, lists the approximate prices for the following goods: "Millet, 0.02 franc a kilogram; rice, 0.10 franc a kilogram; *fabirama,* 0.05 franc a kilogram; shea butter, 0.50 franc a kilogram; milk butter, 1.50 francs a kilogram; peanuts, 0.07 franc a kilogram; peanut oil, 0.50 franc a liter; one jar of ordinary millet beer, containing about six to eight liters, 0.20 franc; one jar of strong millet beer *(tose),* containing about six to eight liters, 0.40 franc; hydromel *(bese),* 0.15 franc a liter; chicken, 0.40 franc; average goat, 3 to 4 francs; large goat, 8 to 10 francs; average sheep, 3.50 francs for a ram, 4 francs, for an ewe; large sheep, 8 to 10 francs; donkey, 25 to 30 francs; horse, 150 francs; small cow (no hump), 50 francs; zebu cow, 70 francs; goat skin, 0.30 franc; cow skin, 1 franc; salt bars, from 1.50 to 2 francs a kilogram; kola nuts, from 0.03 to 0.10 franc apiece; one hoe, about 0.60 franc; cloth: strip of white cloth, 0.05 franc, about 0.60 franc a cubit; white blanket, 2 francs; indigo-dyed blanket, 3 francs; striped blanket, 4 francs; medium-sized shirt, 2.50 francs" (Mangin 1921 : 53). In dealing with these prices, a number of things should be kept in mind: first of all, these prices fluctuated very much during the year; secondly [436] they varied from region to region within the country; and thirdly, although these prices are given in francs during this period, it was still possible to use cowries to buy a large number of the products.

177 436 [437] [438] Enormous changes have taken place in the Mossi economic and exchange systems over the decades following the studies of Tauxier and Mangin. Even before, but certainly after World War I, the French pressure on the Mossi to pay taxes in francs finally resulted

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in the adoption of this currency as the medium of exchange in most markets.[11] The one-franc piece and coins of smaller denominations were those most often used because they were ideally suited to the petty trading that took place in the markets. The franc even became the standard of value in the larger markets, but one receives only 3 local francs for a five-franc note C.F.A. or seven francs for a ten-franc note C.F.A. These changes in value seem to occur by common concensus, since it is impossible to discover who it was that changed the exchange rate. A further fact is that many Europeans remain unaware of these changes since they seldom go to the local markets themselves. When they do go and insist upon the official exchange rate, the "unofficial" market chief appears and takes over the situation, giving the *nansaro* ("conqueror" or "master," the way in which every European is regarded) what he wishes.

While the equivalence between the cowrie, the old brass franc, and the franc C.F.A. works splendidly when products are sold in small quantities, I found the system difficult to understand when more expensive goods are traded. For example, when one buys meat, an expensive item, the butcher accepts either the official francs or the local currency and gives change in both. The difficulty here is that since the butcher uses no scales, one is never sure about the price or about the system of value the butcher is using. The most that can be done if one does not receive as much meat as expected is to haggle with the butcher until he adds more. However, this haggling leaves unresolved the problem of the value of one's official money in terms of the unofficial money, and the product which it is intended to buy. One is thus left with the *impression* that there must be an internal consistency to the exchange system, or barring this, that the local people accept the system as it is as a matter of expediency. On the other hand, the vendors of products with fixed prices such as matches, cigarettes and the like appear to make differential profits when they

(11) Mangin (1921 : 61–62) reports that the Mossi had great difficulty obtaining the five-franc piece which they needed to pay their taxes because the "Europeans who live in Mossi country, including all the riflemen and provincial guards do not put into circulation a quarter of the five-franc pieces which are required each year from the natives. At first the Mossi were taken by surprise and had to give 10 or even 15,000 cowries to obtain this famous coin, this *greegree* which was to free them from all difficulties with the white man. And yet at the official rate of exchange this coin is worth 5,000 cowries. Nowadays it is very difficult to find a native willing to give this much for one of the coins. The usual exchange rate varies from 3,500 to 4,000 cowries: the French currency has been depreciated. This must mean that the natives find elsewhere —through trading— this indispensable coin. They know that the tax must be paid every year, and instead of waiting till the last minute, as soon as they have accumulated the necessary cowries they secure the five-franc pieces from those who have fetched them from far away. The coins flow into the country, and the rate of exchange goes down."

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use one type of currency rather than another. For example, a petty trader often buys a package of European cigarettes for 20 francs C.F.A. in the Wagadougou market for retail in the local markets. Here he sells some individual cigarettes at the price of two for 5 francs C.F.A., some at two for 3 old-fashioned francs (making a total of about 21 francs C.F.A.). The vendors are fully aware of this profit differential, but make no attempt to insist on one currency over the other. Furthermore, they appeared indifferent when I suggested that I planned to take advantage of the price differential which I suspected in the two systems. It appears that they believe it would be a waste of time to try to obtain the profit differential.

Barter as a form of exchange had just about disappeared from the larger markets in Mossi country, but it exists alongside the use of currency in the local markets, especially in connection with foodstuffs and other vegetable commodities. People tend to resort to barter when they wish to exchange a specific product for another. Thus, a woman who normally sells rice for currency sometimes will suddenly refuse to accept money and insist on exchanging the rice for cotton or peanuts. The bartering then takes the form of a half-calabash of rice for a half-calabash of either peanuts or cotton, depending upon which products are desired. This equivalence seems always to be maintained regardless of the currency value of rice, cotton, or peanuts at the market on the day in question. For example, a woman who was looking for persons with whom she could exchange peanuts for rice and she refused to sell peanuts to me. I asked why she would not sell the peanuts and then take the money and buy rice with it. She said that if she did so, she would suffer a dual loss: first, in selling the peanuts, each valued at 100 cowries (one-half franc of unofficial currency) for 5 francs. I counted the nuts, which amounted to about 120, and then asked for the customary *lenga* (bonus) and received 36 more peanuts worth 1.5 franc. On the next market day I observed that peanuts were not being sold but only bartered for cotton which was being sold. I decided to test the system. I bought 2 old-fashioned francs' worth of cotton at 100 cowries a ball, and took them over to the woman bartering peanuts for cotton. She accepted the balls of cotton, measured them in a calabash, and then gave me the same volume of peanuts in exchange. I counted the nuts and discovered that I had received some 200 nuts for only 2 francs. When I discussed this experiment with some of the people, they admitted knowing about this practice and said that they did this at times. I then suggested that it would be possible to manipulate the system to one's advantage, but was again greeted with a show of indifference by most of my auditors. One man eventually said that I would lose because prices

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changed. I remain ignorant of what the real facts are, but still suspect 439
that it may be possible to speculate on the system. 435

Barter is very specific in Mossi markets in the sense that not every 443
product can be bartered against every other product. Some days rice would be bartered for cotton, and on other days only for peanuts and vice versa. It is not possible either to exchange vegetable produce for livestock, even though livestock may be exchanged for livestock. Sometimes people take chickens or guinea hens to market to exchange for goats or sheep, and often these animals are exchanged for young cattle. What is not at all clear, however, is whether or not the people see the value of the things exchanged in terms of currency value, or in terms of some value which has no reference to the European currency system. The ordinary people in the markets, like ordinary people everywhere, are not concerned with these problems as long as they believe that they are conducting their commercial activities with equity and are deriving satisfaction from them.

The most significant feature of all the Mossi markets is the segre- 443
gation of certain merchants into certain areas. The makers and sellers 571
of one product are found only in one part of the market, and anyone wishing to buy or sell these products must go to the place where they are traded. The other type of segregation is by reference to the trader's place of origin. For example, a woman who sells beer would be found in the section of the market where beer is sold, but she would be found sitting with her back towards the village or facing toward the direction from which she came. There are often some variations on this pattern. For example, if there are a large number of traders with one type of product, they will form a large open circle in which each person will sit with his or her back towards the point of origin. Inside of this circle, and separated by a few feet, would be another circle of people selling another product with their faces toward the general direction from which they came. Sitting with their backs to the people of this circle would be other people forming another circle and selling one type of product. These people would have their backs towards the region from which they came. When the group of persons selling one type of product is very small, they may form a small circle in a corner of the market with their backs towards their points of origin. All of these patterns often exist simultaneously in Mossi markets, but it is obvious that two basic configurations prevail. One configuration is in terms of goods, and facilitates trading. The other configuration is a social one and facilitates the social interaction which is an integral part of the Mossi market. This seating pattern makes it easier to find one's friends, to converse and drink with them, to find someone through whom to send mes-

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to be sold the article at a lower price. The result is that the pace of 443
commerce in a Mossi market is somewhat relaxed, but the lack of 437
intense competition prevents a great deal of hositility and quarreling [378]
among the market people.

The amount of small trading which takes place in a Mossi market 443
is fantastic, so much so that one gains the impression that some people 434
trade simply for the sake of trading. Everyone tries to get money so 435
that he or she can buy some desired object, but it is impossible for
one to obtain a clear idea of what kind of profit, if any, people make
from their commerce. In fact, the idea of a profit does not seem to
be important when people are selling their own products. Most
people only think about profit when they buy things to resell—whether
these things are of African or European manufacture. This, inci-
dentally, is one of the reasons why the prices of foodstuffs are about
10 per cent lower in the country districts than at Wagadougou, and
concommitently, why imported products are 10 to 20 per cent higher
in the rural districts than at Wagadougou where they are bought.
When a woman takes such products as cotton, beans or millet to
market, she may gross about 100 francs in the course of the day. But
out of this she may give a few francs to her husband to buy kola nuts,
a few francs to her daughter to buy a plastic necklace, and spend the
rest for a cotton skirt, a piece of meat and condiments for her sauces.
Men whose wives do not bring many goods to market must usually
give them about 100 francs to spend on the various products the
family needs. There are no official restrictions on the kinds of goods 443
which may or may not be sold in the Mossi markets. In pre-European 432
times slaves and eunuchs were the common stock-in-trade of the
major markets and of some of the smaller ones as well. The only
active supervision that existed and still exists concerns the butchering
of meat: Every person who sells meat in the market must exhibit the
skin of the butchered animal in a public place so that there will be no
question as to the ownership of the animal. If the meat in question is
the remains of a cow killed and half-eaten by a lion, then the village
or district chief must be notified before the meat enters the market.
The person in charge of this task used to be, and often still is, a man 443
called the Kos Naba, a kind of sales chief. He also formerly doubled 554
as a tax collector for the rulers and chiefs. Another official, the Raga 651
Naba, where he still exists, is more concerned with protecting the 656
lives and property of the people who trade at the markets, but he also
supervises the sale of some commodities there and formerly also
collected taxes for his superior.

In pre-European times, every important Mossi prince and district [375]
chief had the counterpart of a Kos Naba and Raga Naba, to collect
taxes in their markets.

651 There is proof that trade tends to grow year by year in the ease with
436 which the natives now secure the five-franc piece needed to pay their
457 tax. The Europeans who live among the Mossi, including all the riflemen and circle /an administrative district/ guards, do not put into circulation a quarter of the five-franc pieces which are required each year from the natives. At first the Mossi were taken by surprise and had to give 10, 000 or even 15, 000 cowries to obtain /62/ this famous coin, this charm, which was to free them from all difficulties with the Whites. At the official rate of exchange this coin is worth 5, 000 cowries. Nowadays it is very difficult to find a native willing to give this much for one of the coins. The usual exchange rate is from 3, 500 to 4, 000 cowries; French currency has depreciated. This must mean that the natives find elsewhere, through trading, this indispensable coin. They know that the tax must be paid every year, and instead of waiting until the last minute, as soon as they have accumulated the necessary cowries, they secure the five-franc pieces from those who have fetched them from afar. The coins flow in; the rate of exchange goes down.

439 Nowadays, trading is less active toward the north. Formerly the
567 Mossi supplied Timbuktu, the desert regions, and even Morocco with slaves. The Gourounsi and Bousansé were frequently raided with the sole intent of obtaining slaves. The Mossi even sold each other into slavery, and prior to the French occupation a woman and even more a young girl or boy did not dare venture alone a few hundred meters from the village; they were too afraid that they might not return. It is said that the Mossi even supplied the Constantinople court with eunuchs; and when the great Cardinal Lavigerie was head of the Algerian Arab Orphanage, officers once brought him small children rescued in the desert. They were very young Mossi who had been sold in Saraféré or Timbuktu and whom our officers had found enclosed in bags carried by camels in a caravan halted by our troops. These children were raised in Malta, and they returned to Mossi country where they rendered significant services. Now the establishment of an administrative center in Kaya, near the important market of Salmatenga, will no doubt promote trade in this northern region.

439 Nowadays the trade between Ouagadougou and Tenkodogo on the one hand, and Ouahigouya (in Mossi country), Saraféré, and Timbuktu or Dori (called Gyémaré by the natives) on the other hand, amounts to very little. The Mossi export kola nuts which they have brought

439 We must add without further delay, however, that it is not the Mossi who do this trading but the Yarsé we know so /538/ well, and the Haoussa settled in Mossi territory. Mossi trade, therefore, is not really Mossi, or at least it was not in the past. If it has now begun to be to some extent, it is thanks to French settlement in the territory.

After conquering Mossi lands (1896), indeed, we levied a tax
439 on the population. This tax, low at first, rose rapidly over the last
651 few years. In 1906 it amounted to 311,000 francs in the Ouagadougou circle itself, for a population of 861,000 inhabitants. In 1907 it rose to 366,000 francs, in 1909 to 555,000 francs, in 1910 to 656,000 francs. Furthermore, beginning in 1908, it was exacted with so much strictness and on such short notice that it was exactly as though its amount had been increased threefold. Under the circumstances, the Mossi were forced to take to trading in order to secure the French money they did not have, since the local
[436] currency is the cowrie and the French administration will not take it. They were forced to go and sell their oxen, even their cows, something the Black will only consent to do when hard pressed and in the direst need. In short, the Mossi now organize small caravans on a village basis. Local young men are sent in groups to Ouanké to
[484] sell cattle, sheep, goats, donkeys, local horses, and cotton strips. They bring back either French currency or kola nuts. When they bring nuts, they go and sell them at Saraféré or Sofara and get salt or 5-franc pieces. In other words, the Mossi are taking to trade, owing to a pressing need.

The Mossi, nevertheless, may hardly be regarded as a trader.
439 He has been one for an extremely short time, and he is not much of a trader yet.

To summarize, there is a strong current of exchange trading in Mossi territory from north to south and south to north. There are also important market towns in the territory, or rather large market villages, as we already know. This exchange trading and those important markets, however, are the creation and achievement of the Yarsé and of a small number of Haoussa. The Mossi themselves, in the past, had no part in all this, except /539/ for the fact that the

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stopped at "Fura, a large market place." On the fourth day it stopped at Dullugu (probably present-day Doulougou), and on the fifth day at "Dakay [or Rakay] a place belonging to the territory of Mosi." Finally, on the thirteenth day it arrived at Mane.[4] The last caravan route that Barth reported ran from:

> Kaye to Belussa [Boulsa], and thence to Belanga [Bilanga] ... From Belussa a person on horseback reaches Belanga comfortably the second day, the great station between these two towns being Alitinga, still belonging to Mosi, and an important place, inhabited by Mosi and Hausa traders; but common native travellers generally halt twice between Belanga and Alitinga, in Nyennyega and Koburi [Kouri], and once between Alitinga and Belanga, in a Gurma village called Yamba.

The goods which these caravans carried appear to have varied a great deal. Barth met a Mossi caravan at Dori, southeast of Timbuktu, and reported that to this market:

> The people of Mosi bring chiefly their fine donkeys, which are greatly sought after; and a numerous body of people of the Sheikh A'hmedu, of Hamda-Ailahi, had left a few days before with a number of asses which they had brought here. Besides asses, the people of Mosi supply this market with gabaga [cotton strips] or tari, as the Arabs near Timbuktu call them, cotton being extremely cheap in their country, so that in the great market place of that country, especially in Kulfela [Koupela, but really at Pouitenga a few miles away] an indigo-colored shirt is not worth more than from 700 to 800 [cowry] shells ... Besides salt, cotton strips, dyed cloth, Kola nuts, corn, and asses, some copper manufactured chiefly into large drinking vessels is also brought into the market by the people of Mosi. However, I do not think they manufacture the copper vessels themselves, but bring them from Asanti. (Barth 1859 : III, 203–4)

Adolphe Krause, a German who was actually the first European to enter Mossi country, went through Wagadougou with a load of kola nuts destined for Timbuktu. He joined the caravan at Salaga on July 7, 1885, stopped at the Bere market in Mossi country during August, and then proceeded to their capital where he remained until October 26 before resuming his northward journey (Krause 1887–8).

Felix Dubois, who visited Timbuktu in 1895, gives us some information on the actual products which the Mossi traded there. He reported that the Mossi came to the market organized into caravans of oxen, donkeys and porters, and brought such commodities as livestock, millet, rice, manioc, peanuts, honey, kola nuts, peppers, dried onions, tobacco, dried fish, soap, iron, antimony, lead, cotton bands, straw hats, mats, jars, pots and calabashes. These goods the Mossi

(4) Barth's skill as a reporter is evident here. He is quite correct in disbelieving that the caravans could have reached Kong on the tenth day. Marc, 1908, agrees with Barth.

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people also assemble sheep of

the Mossi variety, which are very puny. The larger variety of long-haired Macina sheep are seldom exported. Once the livestock has been assembled, the chief of the caravan would also provide himself with cotton bands. This native fabric has often been described; it is commonly used on the caravan routes to pay for the food of the travellers. (Marc 1909 : 172) 175 437 439 [437] [436]

Most of the caravans through Mossi country traveled as much as fifteen or twenty miles a day. They left at the first sign of dawn, traveled steadily until the heat became too intense, and then stopped to rest. They resumed their march when the sun was midway between the zenith and the horizon, and then stopped at some village or stream for the night. This schedule was followed on the next day if the caravan was far from a market center, but in the vicinity of a large market the caravan might remain stationary as many as six days while its merchants traded for more livestock or merchandise. This being the case, it is difficult to gauge how long it took the caravans to make the journey from Salaga in Ghana to Timbuktu. Our best data come from an analysis of Krauss' itinerary. He left Salaga with a caravan on July 7, 1885, heading north through Walwale, and arrived in Bere, a distance of some 250 miles (today's road mileage) towards the end of August. Famine delayed the caravan at Bere for some time, and he did not complete the 50 miles or so to Wagadougou until September 24. He remained in the Mossi capital until October 26, some thirty-two days, before his caravan headed north again through Tema, Yatenga and Bandiagara. Krauss does not tell us when he reached Douentza, some 400 miles northweast of Wagadougou, or how long he remained there, but on December 7, a few days after he had left Douenzta on the last 200- or 250-mile leg of his voyage to Timbuktu, the Moro Naba ordered him to return to Wagadougou. It is possible that it took Krauss' caravan some thirty-five odd days to make the trip from Wagadougou to Douentza. His return to Wagadougou took him only about thirty days, since he arrived there on January 7, 1886. He apparently had to wait some fifteen days there for a caravan going south, because he did not leave the Mossi capital until January 22, 1886 (Krause 1887–88). Judging from this itinerary, it probably took caravans between five and six months to travel from the forest zones to the desert, a distance of about a thousand miles at the most. This averages about six or seven miles a day, with the normal stops for rest and marketing, instead of the fifteen or twenty miles a day which the average caravan covered when it was on the road. 175 437 484 487 103 [731]

The caravans did not encounter many dangers or difficulties during their voyage. When the caravaneers had friends along the way they stopped at their friends' homes for the night, and when they camped in uninhabited places men were posted to protect the goods and live-
stock against marauding beasts and thieves. 175 437 484

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It is clear that the volume of this trade could not have been enlarged since the French conquest which, as we know, had disrupted Mossi society. Therefore our conclusion must be that it must have existed prior to the coming of the Europeans.

The caravaneers used cowries and cloth as trade currency and in some cases even bartered one type of commodity for another. Cowries appear to have been the chief currency used and came close to being used for all purposes. Evidence for the use of cloth as currency comes from Barth and Marc. Barth met a trader who had

> ... a good quantity of the gabaga, or cotton strips, of Mosi with him, which form the staple currency in the whole tract of country from Libta to Timbuktu, ten Dr'a being reckoned equal to one hundred shells. (Barth 1859 : III, 198)

The big rolls of cotton cloth which Marc saw being loaded by Mossi caravaneers were said by them to serve the purpose of buying food ("They are for eating") in regions where cloth was the necessary currency (Marc 1909 : 172 f.n.). The traders apparently resorted to barter whenever and wherever they could or when their currency was in short supply. This appears to have been the case when Binger visited the Mossi in 1888. Cowries were then in short supply and the people were using slaves, valued at 50,000 to 65,000 cowries apiece, to obtain goods. Horses could be bought for as many as two or four slaves apiece. Traders apparently kept the cowry equivalence in mind when using other commodities to barter with, but we cannot be sure of this since Binger himself, and not the traders, may have been conscious of the equivalence (Binger 1892 : II, 498).

The prices which the traders paid and received for their goods differed greatly from place to place, according to the season of the year and over a span of several years. The earliest price data are given by Barth for the 1850's:

> As regards Selga [Salaga], the district to which the Hausa traders go for their supply of this article, three points are considered essential to the business of the Kola trade; first, that the people of Mosi bring their asses; secondly, that the Tonawa, or natives of Asanti, bring the nut in sufficient quantities; and thirdly, that the state of the road is such as not to prevent the Hausa people from arriving. If one of these conditions is wanting, the trade is not flourishing. The price of the asses rises with the cheapness of the guro [kola nut]. The average price of an ass in the market of Selga is 15,000 [cowry] Shell: While in Hausa the general price does not exceed 5,000. But the fataki, or native traders, take only as many asses with them from Hausa as are necessary for transporting their luggage, as the toll, or

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175 436 437 Cowries used to be chief medium of exchange in Mossi markets until the Europeans arrived. In addition the people bartered specific goods for other products. The prices of goods in these markets fluc- 175 435 tuated from time to time. Prices were highest during the planting season when most goods were scarce, and lowest during the harvest periods, but we have little precise information about the prices of goods in the traditional markets. Even Barth's information is too sketchy to deal with. Our first reliable data come from Tauxier, whose writings cover the first decade (1896-1906) of the conquest. Using the then official rate of one franc equals 1,000 cowries, the prices of a few representative products were: horses, 40 to 100 francs (40,000 to 100,000 cowries); cattle, 30 to 40 francs (30,000 to 40,000 cowries); chickens, 250 cowries; guinea fowls, 250 to 300 cowries; hides, 3,000 cowries; pottery jars, 300 cowries; cotton trousers, 200 cowries; baskets, 1,500 cowries; and locust-bean balls, 100 cowries (Tauxier 1912 : 466 ff.).

Mangin, whose work covers the period from about 1910 to 1913, when the value of the franc was lowered to one franc equals 700 to 800 cowries, lists the approximate prices for the following goods; "Millet, 0.02 franc a kilogram; rice, 0.10 franc a kilogram; *fabirama*, 0.05 franc a kilogram; shea butter, 0.50 franc a kilogram; milk butter, 1.50 francs a kilogram; peanuts, 0.07 franc a kilogram; peanut oil, 0.50 franc a liter; one jar of ordinary millet beer, containing about six to eight liters, 0.20 franc; one jar of strong millet beer *(tose)*, containing about six to eight liters, 0.40 franc; hydromel *(bese)*, 0.15 franc a liter; chicken, 0.40 franc; average goat, 3 to 4 francs; large goat, 8 to 10 francs; average sheep, 3.50 francs for a ram, 4 francs, for an ewe; large sheep, 8 to 10 francs; donkey, 25 to 30 francs; horse, 150 francs; small cow (no hump), 50 francs; zebu cow, 70 francs; goat skin, 0.30 franc; cow skin, 1 franc; salt bars, from 1.50 to 2 francs a kilogram; kola nuts, from 0.03 to 0.10 franc apiece; one hoe, about 0.60 franc; cloth: strip of white cloth, 0.05 franc, about 0.60 franc a cubit; white blanket, 2 francs; indigo-dyed blanket, 3 francs; striped blanket, 4 francs; medium-sized shirt, 2.50 francs" (Mangin 1921 : 53). In dealing with these prices, a number of things should be kept in mind: first of all, these prices fluctuated very much during the year; secondly [436] they varied from region to region within the country; and thirdly, although these prices are given in francs during this period, it was still possible to use cowries to buy a large number of the products.

177 Enormous changes have taken place in the Mossi economic and 436 exchange systems over the decades following the studies of Tauxier [437] and Mangin. Even before, but certainly after World War I, the [438] French pressure on the Mossi to pay taxes in francs finally resulted

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in the adoption of this currency as the medium of exchange in most markets.[11] The one-franc piece and coins of smaller denominations were those most often used because they were ideally suited to the petty trading that took place in the markets. The franc even became the standard of value in the larger markets, but one receives only 3 local francs for a five-franc note C.F.A. or seven francs for a ten-franc note C.F.A. These changes in value seem to occur by common concensus, since it is impossible to discover who it was that changed the exchange rate. A further fact is that many Europeans remain unaware of these changes since they seldom go to the local markets themselves. When they do go and insist upon the official exchange rate, the "unofficial" market chief appears and takes over the situation, giving the *nansaro* ("conqueror" or "master," the way in which every European is regarded) what he wishes.

While the equivalence between the cowrie, the old brass franc, and the franc C.F.A. works splendidly when products are sold in small quantities, I found the system difficult to understand when more expensive goods are traded. For example, when one buys meat, an expensive item, the butcher accepts either the official francs or the local currency and gives change in both. The difficulty here is that since the butcher uses no scales, one is never sure about the price or about the system of value the butcher is using. The most that can be done if one does not receive as much meat as expected is to haggle with the butcher until he adds more. However, this haggling leaves unresolved the problem of the value of one's official money in terms of the unofficial money, and the product which it is intended to buy. One is thus left with the *impression* that there must be an internal consistency to the exchange system, or barring this, that the local people accept the system as it is as a matter of expediency. On the other hand, the vendors of products with fixed prices such as matches, cigarettes and the like appear to make differential profits when they

(11) Mangin (1921 : 61-62) reports that the Mossi had great difficulty obtaining the five-franc pieces which they needed to pay their taxes because the "Europeans who live in Mossi country, including all the riflemen and provincial guards do not put into circulation a quarter of the five-franc pieces which are required each year from the natives. At first the Mossi were taken by surprise and had to give 10 or even 15,000 cowries to obtain this famous coin, this *greegree* which was to free them from all difficulties with the white man. And yet at the official rate of exchange this coin is worth 5,000 cowries. Nowadays it is very difficult to find a native willing to give this much for one of the coins. The usual exchange rate varies from 3,500 to 4,000 cowries: the French currency has been depreciated. This must mean that the natives find elsewhere —through trading— this indispensable coin. They know that the tax must be paid every year, and instead of waiting till the last minute, as soon as they have accumulated the necessary cowries they secure the five-franc pieces from those who have fetched them from far away. The coins flow into the country, and the rate of exchange goes down."

● 434 use one type of currency rather than another. For example, a petty
435 trader often buys a package of European cigarettes for 20 francs
443 C.F.A. in the Wagadougou market for retail in the local markets. Here he sells some individual cigarettes at the price of two for 5 francs C.F.A., some at two for 5 old-fashioned francs (making a total of about 21 francs C.F.A.). The vendors are fully aware of this profit differential, but make no attempt to insist on one currency over the other. Furthermore, they appeared indifferent when I suggested that I planned to take advantage of the price differential which I suspected in the two systems. It appears that they believe it would be a waste of time to try to obtain the profit differential.

437 Barter as a form of exchange had just about disappeared from the
435 larger markets in Mossi country, but it exists alongside the use of
443 currency in the local markets, especially in connection with foodstuffs
[178] and other vegetable commodities. People tend to resort to barter when they wish to exchange a specific product for another. Thus, a woman who normally sells rice for currency sometimes will suddenly refuse to accept money and insist on exchanging the rice for cotton or peanuts. The bartering then takes the form of a half-calabash of rice for a half-calabash of either peanuts or cotton, depending upon which products are desired. This equivalence seems always to be maintained regardless of the currency value of rice, cotton, or peanuts at the market on the day in question. For example, a woman who was looking for persons with whom she could exchange peanuts for rice and she refused to sell peanuts to me. I asked why she would not sell the peanuts and then take the money and buy rice with it. She said that if she did so, she would suffer a dual loss: first, in selling the peanuts, each valued at 100 cowries (one-half franc of unofficial currency) for 5 francs. I counted the nuts, which amounted to about 120, and then asked for the customary *lenga* (bonus) and received 36 more peanuts worth 1.5 franc. On the next market day I observed that peanuts were not being sold but only bartered for cotton which was being sold. I decided to test the system. I bought 2 old-fashioned francs' worth of cotton at 100 cowries a ball, and took them over to the woman bartering peanuts for cotton. She accepted the balls of cotton, measured them in a calabash, and then gave me the same volume of peanuts in exchange. I counted the nuts and discovered that I had received some 200 nuts for only 2 francs. When I discussed this experiment with some of the people, they admitted knowing
[123] about this practice and said that they did this at times. I then suggested that it would be possible to manipulate the system to one's advantage, but was again greeted with a show of indifference by most of my audiences. One man eventually said that I would lose because prices

changed.

231 bother to raise them; as a result the number of horses has decreased, and this country, formerly renowned for its mounts, may have none in a not too distant future.

Unfortunately, horses do not thrive in every part of the country; Ouagadougou is particularly deadly for them, although, to my knowledge, the true reason for this insalubrity has not yet been found. The natives attribute it to the water, and there is no doubt that horses watered at the wells are in better health than those watered at the streams; it is also true that horses thrive in areas only a few kilometers [136] from Ouagadougou. Europeans tend to attribute this mortality to the tsetse fly. The two opinions are easy to reconcile, for, on the one hand, tsetse flies prefer damp places, and, on the other hand, the [312] Ouagadougou wells contain salt of magnesium which purges the horses and thus checks the disease.

231 The Peul own fine herds of bovines, some rather small and without 563 humps (small cattle), others large and humped (zebu). Traders also use the zebu as a beast of burden. Much of this cattle belongs to the 437 Mossi who seldom tend their own herds but prefer to entrust them to the Peul shepherds who keep the milk in payment. An adult cow yields from two to four liters a day during the good season. The guardians, however, know how to make the best of this near slavery. When an animal dies it is never one of theirs, and if the owner of the herd /a Mossi/ dies without telling his heirs where his cattle is to be found and how many head he owns, the Peul carefully refrain from disclosing the herd entrusted to them. In former days they were slightly more conscientious because they feared retaliation, but now they bless the French occupation.

231 The herds are sometimes decimated by an epizootic disease, as happened in 1910 and 1911 when the Koupéla area was ravaged by what must have been the bovine plague or peripneumonia. The cows would cough, entirely lose their appetites, and die within a few days.

The Mossi also raise bees. The hives are made of straw or flexible sticks and placed in the trees; sometimes swarms of bees also settle in the hollow trunks of baobabs. The honey is gathered at the end and at the beginning of the winter season; the hive is smoked out and the bees destroyed. Honey is used primarily to make bésé, a kind of [273] hydromel which the Moslem Yarsé, Peul, and Haoussa like very much, and which they are allowed to drink in spite of its fermentation; [237 whereas, in principle, millet beer is forbidden to them. The wax 306] is sold to the jewelry-makers who use it to make bracelets by the lost wax process.

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long been famous. The former are sometimes ridden but are used primarily as beasts of burden. Horses were and are still important for military and ceremonial purposes and for external trade to other areas.

The Mossi have never excelled in metalworking. The people in the northern part of the country have worked indigenous ores since aboriginal times. Those in the south get iron mainly from traders and caravans. The other metals which the Mossi smiths manufacture into tools and ornaments are also obtained from traders.

TRADE IN HISTORICAL TIMES

The geographic position of Mossi country has much to do with its being an important trade and market center. The country itself has always produced grain, cotton and livestock for export. And for several centuries caravans have passed through this region carrying Sudanese and Saharan products to the forest zones to the south, and carrying forest products back to the arid north. The beginning of this trade is lost in the dim past, but it safe to say that it developed shortly after or along with the founding of Timbuktu about 1100 A.D. The Mossi themselves were not definitely linked to this important *entrepot* until they raided it in 1328, but we can assume that they had been trading there for some time before that event took place. Similarly, we have no record of when the Mossi began trading with the forest zones, but we can also assume that this trade began around the same period or even before.

Our first evidence of Mossi trade and commerce comes from Europeans who were themselves interested in conducting their own trading activities with the peoples in the Bend of the Niger. Bowditch, an Englishman who had journeyed to Ashanti to sign a treaty facilitating the reopening of a profitable trade with the coast, wangled the first important piece of information about the Mossi from his reluctant hosts:

> Five journies from Yngwa is Mosee, a more warlike but less visited kingdom: it consists of many states, but the superior monarch is named Billa, and the capital Kookoopella. I place it to the N.W. because its merchants pass by Yngwa; they do not cross the Karhalla [White Volta] nor any river which is not fordable. (Bowditch 1819 : 180)

This information is not strictly correct since Koupela was not the capital of any of the Mossi kingdoms, but Bowditch's informant had probably heard of Koupela because it was the largest political entity near the large caravan center at Pouitenga.

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175 Dupuis, who replaced Bowditch in Kumasi in 1817, obtained sur-
437 prisingly good data on trade relations between the Ashanti and the Mossi, considering the reluctance of the middlemen traders to furnish any help in this matter. He discovered that Ashanti traders

[103] . . . sometimes travel as far as Aughoa, the Magho, and to the east of Kasogho. Aughoa is distant from Coomassie twenty-five journies by the Salgha and Yandy Roads, which would give a distance of three hundred that vegetable substance . . . by the name of Shea butter. (Dupuis 1824 : App. cvii)[1]

The Hausa merchants and caravaneers knew a great deal about the Mossi and their resources, but it was only with great difficulty that Clapperton persuaded Sultan Mohammed Bello of Sokoto to give him the following information:

[101] The country of Mouchier or Mouchi is situated to the west of Ghurma. It is vast and possesses a gold mine, rivers, forests and mountains. It is inhabited by tribes of the Sudan who possess many fast horses, and large donkeys. Their king is called Wagadougou; their asses are sent down to the Gondja to carry the drums of the army. (Clapperton 1829 : 323)

It is obvious that either Clapperton or his informant confused the capital of the Mossi with their king, and included parts of Ghana in
[23] their territory. Nevertheless, one does get an indication of the importance of livestock in Mossi trading.

The great bulk of the trade between the Mossi and their neighbors to the north and to the south was done through the medium of
175 caravans which crisscrossed their territory. The first person to signal
437 the existence of these caravans was Barth (1859 : III, 646–648) who,
487 although he did not enter Mossi country during his extensive travels in the Sudan from 1849 to 1855, reported the existence of several caravan routes which traversed the Mossi from the desert to the
[103] forest. The first route he described proceeded from "Kirotashi, a town on the east side of the Niger, one day south of Say, to Woghodogho."
[366] Ten days out of Kirotashi caravans usually reached Tengkodogo, and on the thirteenth day they arrived at Koupela which according to

(1) The Aughoa referred to here is really "Wagha," the term often used by the Mossi
[63] when talking about their capital, Waghadougou. Magho is really "Mogho" the name of Mossi country itself, and Kasoagho is the name of a province of Wagadougou commanded by a minister of the Moro Naba, the Kasoagho Naba. Dupuis' report on the actual distance between Kumasis and Waghadougou is almost the same mileage as that
[366] of today. Koelle (1854 : 6) received a report from a slave liberated in Sierra Leone in
[648] 1854 that the great Mossi trading center "Kupesla is four days from Wardugu, the Mossi capital, whither the king of Asante often sends presents; and one month from Salak (Salaga), an Asante town, where they bring their cola-nuts."

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Barth was "a well-frequented market place of Mosi, and of greater importance than all the other towns of Mosi; the governor's name is Nabere Gager. The inhabitants are celebrated archers." Barth states that by the fifteenth day, or two days later, the caravans usually arrived at Wagadougou, but he tells us in a note that:

> Other people, in going slowly from Kulfela to Woghodogho, spend eight days on the road, sleeping the first night in Pashipanga, the second in Tangay, the third in Zorogo, the next in a place ruled by a man called Mane Bogonje, the fifth in another village called Tangay, and reach Woghodogho on the eighth. (Marc 1909 : 27)[3]

Finally, he reports that another spur of this caravan route ran from Tengkodogo to Sansanne Mangho, in what is now Togoland. This journey took five days.

The second caravan route described by Barth ran from Djibo, the capital of the province of Gilgohi or Jilgodi (about 60 miles south from Montdoro, 55 miles West-Southwest from Aribinda and 35 miles South-Southwest from Tinie) by way of Kaya, to Mane and finally to Wagadougou. A caravan leaving Djibo entered Kelbo, the first village of the territory of Mossi on the eighth day, but according to Barth the "border district in general is regarded as very unsafe." On the fourteenth day the caravan entered Kaya;

> ... an important place where several roads meet. And from Kaya the route went to Wagadougou by way of Boussouma, Mane and Yako. It took a caravan ten days to traverse it.[3]

The third major caravan route that Barth described lay entirely within Mossi country. It ran from Mane to "Yadega" (probably Wahigouya, the capital of the kingdom of Yatenga) by way of Yako, and it took a caravan eight days to travel it. The fourth caravan route lay between Mane and a place called Kong by way of Tema, Yako, La and other places. On the tenth day a caravan reached Kong;

> ... a large place, according to my informant, inhabited by Bambara. It can scarcely be identical with the well-known Kong, if the itinerary be correct; but nevertheless it may be the case.

The first day after the caravan left Kong to return to Mane, it

(3) Barth received fairly accurate information about the caravan routes, and Marc was impressed with his data. Nevertheless, Marc finds it impossible to believe that caravans took two days to travel the twenty-five miles between Tengkodogo and Koupela, and only two more days to travel the ninety odd miles from Koupela to Wagadougou. Barth obviously erred here, but the timetable he gives for those persons "going slowly" from Koupela to Wagadougou appears to be quite correct.

(3) It is highly unlikely that a caravan going to Wagadougou from Kaya would have gone through Mane and Yako unless the caravaneers were interested in tapping the resources of these two western towns before heading straight south to their destination.

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175 stopped at "Fura, a large market place." On the fourth day it stopped
437 at Dullugu (probably present-day Doulougou), and on the fifth day
487 at "Dakay [or Rakay] a place belonging to the territory of Mosi."
103 Finally, on the thirteenth day it arrived at Mane.[4] The last caravan route that Barth reported ran from:

> Kaye to Belussa [Boulsa], and thence to Belanga [Bilanga] ... From Belussa a person on horseback reaches Belanga comfortably the second day, the great station between these two towns being Alitinga, still belonging to Mosi, and an important place, inhabited by Mosi and Hausa traders; but common native travellers generally halt twice between Belanga and Alitinga, in Nyennyega and Koburi [Kouri], and once between Alitinga and Belanga, in a Gurma village called Yamba.

175 The goods which these caravans carried appear to have varied a
437 great deal. Barth met a Mossi caravan at Dori, southeast of Timbuktu,
439 and reported that to this market:

> [23] The people of Mosi bring chiefly their fine donkeys, which are greatly sought after; and a numerous body of people of the Sheikh A'hmedu, of Hamda-Ailahi, had left a few days before with a number of asses which
> [435] they had brought here. Besides asses, the people of Mosi supply this market
> [436] with gabaga [cotton strips] or tari, as the Arabs near Timbuktu call them, cotton being extremely cheap in their country, so that in the great market place of that country, especially in Kulfela [Koupela, but really at Pouitenga a few miles away] an indigo-colored shirt is not worth more than from 700 to 800 [cowry] shells ... Besides salt, cotton strips, dyed cloth, Kola nuts, corn, and asses, some copper manufactured chiefly into large drinking vessels is also brought into the market by the people of Mosi. However, I do not think they manufacture the copper vessels themselves, but bring them from Asanti. (Barth 1859 : III, 203–4)

Adolphe Krause, a German who was actually the first European to enter Mossi country, went through Wagadougou with a load of kola nuts destined for Timbuktu. He joined the caravan at Salaga on July 7, 1885, stopped at the Bere market in Mossi country during August, and then proceeded to their capital where he remained until October 26 before resuming his northward journey (Krause 1887–8).

Felix Dubois, who visited Timbuktu in 1895, gives us some information on the actual products which the Mossi traded there. He reported that the Mossi came to the market organized into caravans of oxen, donkeys and porters, and brought such commodities as livestock, millet, rice, manioc, peanuts, honey, kola nuts, peppers, dried onions, tobacco, dried fish, soap, iron, antimony, lead, cotton bands, straw hats, mats, jars, pots and calabashes. These goods the Mossi

(4) Barth's skill as a reporter is evident here. He is quite correct in disbelieving that the caravans could have reached Kong on the tenth day. Marc. 1900, agrees with Barth.

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traded for such articles as needles, mirrors, beads, coral and amber, tea, coffee, fezes, tailored robes, and most important of all, salt (Dubois 1899 : 292–304). Presumably, by the time Dubois reported on this trade, the Mossi had stopped trading slaves and eunuchs into this region, because we know from other sources that these people were sold through Timbuktu as far north as Algeria and Constantinople.[8]

The caravans which brought desert and northern goods into Mossi country collected grain, cotton cloth, livestock and slaves to be sold in the forest areas. Captain Lonsdale, an Englishman who visited Salaga in 1881 and gave a good description of its markets and traders, includes among the latter

> ... the Mossi with his cattle, sheep and slaves—these latter, generally Gurunsi, are not exposed for sale in the street or market, but can be seen where the owner resides. (Lonsdale 1882)

The extent to which the Mossi people themselves participated in all aspects of the caravan trade which crossed their country is far from clear. Barth, Lonsdale and Dubois all report that the Mossi were members of the caravans both in the forest zone and in Timbuktu, and my own informants agree with these reports. In contrast, however, both Marc and Tauxier believe that the Mossi were seldom the actual caravaneers. Marc declares that the Yarse

> ... are the most numerous group devoting itself to commerce in the region which we occupy. This is equally true of the Hausa, but probably only over the last years. Moors come sometimes from Dori as far as Wagadougou. One seldom meets Mande-Dioulas. As for the pure Mossi, it was only a short while ago that they themselves began to follow the caravans. (Marc 1909 : 170–71)

Similarly, Tauxier states that

> ... it is not the Mossi who do this [caravan] trading but the Yarse we know so well, and the Hausa settled in Mossi territory. Mossi trade, therefore, is not really Mossi, or at least it was not in the past. If it has now begun to be to some extent, it is thanks to the French settlement in the territory. (Tauxier 1912 : 538)

In the face of the early reports by Barth and others, how does one resolve the contradiction apparent in Tauxier's comments? These early travelers might have mistaken the Yarse for Mossi since these

(8) Marc, 1909 : 170–171. "We met in Mossi country two natives who, when children, had been seized [as slaves] and led through Timbuktu as far as Algeria ... The commerce in slaves was doubled among the Mossi by commerce in eunuchs. Mossi country was one of those rare countries where people knew how to make them, and the Moro Nabas exported with great profit as far as Constantinople those whom they had had mutilated."

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175 people have become Mossicized in language and culture, but it is
437 doubtful whether they would have taken the Hausa for Mossi. The
441 true Mossi may have played a minor role in the caravan trade, but I am certain that they took part in it and that they did so before the French conquest of their country.

175 There is little doubt that the Mossi traded with the caravans that
437 passed *through* their country. Crozat, who visited Moro Naba Wobogo
439 six years before the conquest, reported that the king

[649] . . . appeared to have had some business relations with white merchants who came up to Salaga every dry season. He sent horses to them in exchange for silver. He claims that he had no reasons to be pleased with their integrity and that the silver which they sent to him contained plenty of copper. It happens also that traders may come as far as Wagadougou, bringing merchandise of German origin. There was one of them on hand during my stay at Wagadougou. I was told that he was an important marabout, a shereef, perhaps an Arab or a Moor, for I was assured that he was very light in color. As was repeated to me several times, his relations with the king were limited to the solemn greetings on Fridays. He has never entered the royal hut in spite of being an important marabout. He was at Wagadougou for about three and one-half months, but he was compelled to return to the coast since the merchandise which he had brought was exhausted. He spoke no Mossi. (Crozat 1891)

The caravans which passed through Mossi country were well organized but seemed to have lacked the regularity which was characteristic of the trans-Sahara ones. Those caravans coming from the north were apparently more regular since they had to await the coming of the great trans-Sahara caravans, which brought them salt and other
[366] valuable merchandise. Those coming from Salaga and points south
[221] traveled at all times of the year, a fact which is corroborated by the voyage of Krauss, who arrived at the Bere market during August and the height of the Mossi planting season. This was a period of scarcity or "hungry period" as Krauss himself observed, and it is doubtful whether the Mossi had much to trade at this time. Nevertheless, caravaneers always found some trade goods at the larger Mossi market centers all through the year, even if only cloth and cotton bands.

[221] The main season for external trade in Mossi country came after the harvest. In the words of Marc, who served there shortly after the conquest:

Towards the end of the rainy season, in September or October, the
[34] Yarse begin to assemble the livestock in order to leave for the south. In certain large commercial centers like Kaya, Pouitenga, Dakay, one finds
[422] around this period the owners of livestock: Mossi chiefs, Fulani or rich natives, who are ready to sell their animals. People also assemble sheep of

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People also assemble sheep of
the Mossi variety, which are very puny. The larger variety of long-haired 175
Macina sheep are seldom exported. Once the livestock has been assembled, 437
the chief of the caravan would also provide himself with cotton bands. 439
This native fabric has often been described; it is commonly used on the [231]
caravan routes to pay for the food of the travellers. (Marc 1909 : 172) [436]

Most of the caravans through Mossi country traveled as much as 175
fifteen or twenty miles a day. They left at the first sign of dawn, 437
traveled steadily until the heat became too intense, and then stopped 484
to rest. They resumed their march when the sun was midway between
the zenith and the horizon, and then stopped at some village or stream
for the night. This schedule was followed on the next day if the
caravan was far from a market center, but in the vicinity of a large
market the caravan might remain stationary as many as six days while
its merchants traded for more livestock or merchandise. This being 175
the case, it is difficult to gauge how long it took the caravans to make 437
the journey from Salaga in Ghana to Timbuktu. Our best data come 484
from an analysis of Krauss' itinerary. He left Salaga with a caravan 487
on July 7, 1885, heading north through Walwale, and arrived in Bere, 103
a distance of some 250 miles (today's road mileage) towards the end
of August. Famine delayed the caravan at Bere for some time, and he [231]
did not complete the 50 miles or so to Wagadougou until September
24. He remained in the Mossi capital until October 26, some thirty-
two days, before his caravan headed north again through Tema,
Yatenga and Bandiagara. Krauss does not tell us when he reached
Douentza, some 400 miles northweast of Wagadougou, or how long
he remained there, but on December 7, a few days after he had left
Douenzta on the last 200- or 250-mile leg of his voyage to Timbuktu,
the Moro Naba ordered him to return to Wagadougou. It is possible
that it took Krauss' caravan some thirty-five odd days to make the
trip from Wagadougou to Douentza. His return to Wagadougou took
him only about thirty days, since he arrived there on January 7, 1886.
He apparently had to wait some fifteen days there for a caravan going
south, because he did not leave the Mossi capital until January 22,
1886 (Krause 1887–88). Judging from this itinerary, it probably took
caravans between five and six months to travel from the forest zones
to the desert, a distance of about a thousand miles at the most. This
averages about six or seven miles a day, with the normal stops for rest
and marketing, instead of the fifteen or twenty miles a day which the
average caravan covered when it was on the road.

The caravans did not encounter many dangers or difficulties during 175
their voyage. When the caravaneers had friends along the way they 437
stopped at their friends' homes for the night, and when they camped 484
in uninhabited places men were posted to protect the goods and live-
stock against marauding beasts and thieves.

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175 stock against marauding beasts and thieves. All caravaneers had to
437 pay a tax to the local chiefs to cross their borders or to stop in their
486 markets to trade. Binger reported that the caravans which passed
651 through the market center of Wagadougou had to give the Moro
[66] Naba a share of their merchandise, aside from the presents which they gave to him. He also reported that the horse traders from the Yatenga, in the north of Mossi country, and the Hausa caravaneers, were sometimes forced to sell part of their wares to the Moro Naba at one-hundredth the purchase price (Binger 1892 : II, 292–300). Not all the caravaneers submitted to extortion, however, and at one period many of them traded with Mane instead of passing through Wagadougou where the tariffs were too high. On the other hand, the Mossi chiefs did not tolerate any trespassing on their territories by
[685] caravans that did not pay taxes. Those who tried to avoid doing so
[565] were subjected to attack by the mounted nobles *(nakomce)* on behalf of the district chiefs. Wise caravan leaders not only paid their taxes but established close relationships with the chiefs in order to receive adequate protection from some nobles who illegally attacked and looted the caravans.

175 It is impossible to know the actual volume of caravan trade which
437 passed through Mossi country, but we can get a fairly good idea of it
439 by examining the customs reports on goods crossing the border between Mossi country and the northern territories of the Gold Coast in the few years just following European conquest.[6] For 1901 and 1903 the official figures were:

TABLE 28A
Mossi Trade (1901–3)

Year	*Horses*	*Cattle*	*Sheep and Goats*	*Loaded Donkeys*	*Bales of Cotton Cloth*
1901	126	5,111	18,181	2,095	236
1903	196	6,624	36,892	4,294	369

Lucien Marc, who had the opportunity to check the volume of this trade for 1904 and 1905, guessed that about 16,000 cattle and 75,000 sheep and goats passed through the customs post in Mossi country. Furthermore, he believed that since

> ... the Mossi also supply in part the markets of Togoland and the market at Bondoukou [Ivory Coast], one can estimate at least an annual export of 20,000 cattle and 100,000 sheep or goats. The import of kola nuts is at least 500 tons. (Marc 1909 : 178)

[113] (6) Great Britain Parliamentary Papers: Cd. 788–27, no. 357, Northern territories of Gold Coast, report of 1901 in Acc. and Papers, vol. LXIV 1902. Cd. 2238–6, no. 429, N.Ts of Gold Coast, report of 1903 in Acc. and Papers, 1904, and 1905, vol. LI.

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It is clear that the volume of this trade could not have been enlarged since the French conquest which, as we know, had disrupted Mossi society. Therefore our conclusion must be that it must have existed prior to the coming of the Europeans.

The caravaneers used cowries and cloth as trade currency and in some cases even bartered one type of commodity for another. Cowries appear to have been the chief currency used and came close to being used for all purposes. Evidence for the use of cloth as currency comes from Barth and Marc. Barth met a trader who had

> . . . a good quantity of the gabaga, or cotton strips, of Mosi with him, which form the staple currency in the whole tract of country from Libta to Timbuktu, ten Dr'a being reckoned equal to one hundred shells. (Barth 1859 : III, 198)

The big rolls of cotton cloth which Marc saw being loaded by Mossi caravaneers were said by them to serve the purpose of buying food ("They are for eating") in regions where cloth was the necessary currency (Marc 1909 : 172 f.n.). The traders apparently resorted to barter whenever and wherever they could or when their currency was in short supply. This appears to have been the case when Binger visited the Mossi in 1888. Cowries were then in short supply and the people were using slaves, valued at 50,000 to 65,000 cowries apiece, to obtain goods. Horses could be bought for as many as two or four slaves apiece. Traders apparently kept the cowry equivalence in mind when using other commodities to barter with, but we cannot be sure of this since Binger himself, and not the traders, may have been conscious of the equivalence (Binger 1892 : II, 498).

The prices which the traders paid and received for their goods differed greatly from place to place, according to the season of the year and over a span of several years. The earliest price data are given by Barth for the 1850's:

> As regards Selga [Salaga], the district to which the Hausa traders go for their supply of this article, three points are considered essential to the business of the Kola trade; first, that the people of Mosi bring their asses; secondly, that the Tonawa, or natives of Asanti, bring the nut in sufficient quantities; and thirdly, that the state of the road is such as not to prevent the Hausa people from arriving. If one of these conditions is wanting, the trade is not flourishing. The price of the asses rises with the cheapness of the guro [kola nut]. The average price of an ass in the market of Selga is 15,000 [cowry] Shell: While in Hausa the general price does not exceed 5,000. But the fataki, or native traders, take only as many asses with them from Hausa as are necessary for transporting their luggage, as the toll, or

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175 fitto, levied upon each ass by the petty chiefs on the road is very consider-
437 able. From 5,000 to 6,000 guro, or kola nuts, constitute an assload.
435 Selga, the market place for this important article, being, it appears, a
[35] most miserable town, where even water is very scarce and can only be
[36] purchased at an exorbitant price, the merchants always manage to make their stay here as short as possible, awaiting the proper season in Yendi, a town said to be as large as Timbuktu, or in Kulfela, the great market place of Mosi; and they are especially obliged to wait in case they arrive at the beginning of the rainy season, there being no kola nuts before the latter part of the Kharif. The price of this nut in Timbuktu varies from 20 to
[238] 100 shells each, and it always constitutes a luxury; so that, even on great festivals, alms consisting of this article are distributed by the rich people of the town. (Barth 1859 : II, 364)

175 The other data we have on prices paid for goods come from the
43 period between 1890 and 1910, at which time French francs had been introduced. At this time the official value of one franc was 1,000 cowries. Around 1904, a trader paid about 50 francs or 50,000 cowries for a head of cattle in Mossi country and sold it for about double the price at Salâga. With the proceeds of this transaction he bought kola nuts at the rate of one franc or 100 cowries per hundred. Thus with the sale of one cow a trader could obtain 10,000 kolas, these being valued at about 500 francs or 500,000 cowries in Mossi country and at 20 or 200 cowries each at Sarfere and Timbuktu (Marc 1909 : 173–4). At Timbuktu about this same period, 1895, traders could buy salt at about 30 francs for a slab weighing between 60 and 100 pounds and sell it for 45 francs at Sarafere, for 60 francs at Djenne, for between 70 and 80 francs at San, and "thus progressively more until they reached Mossi country" (Dubois 1899 : 276). In 1910, Mossi traders bought cattle for about 40 to 100 francs, horses for about 90 francs, donkeys for 25 francs, and so on, and sold these animals in Salaga for three times the prices. There they bought kolas at 2 Fr. 50 per thousand, and sold them at 20 per thousand at Leo on the Mossi border, 35 francs per thousand at Wagadougou, 50 francs at Wahigouya, 60 francs at Saravere, and 100 francs per thousand at Timbuktu. Here these traders bought bars of salt weighing about 75 pounds for between 10 and 12 francs a piece, and sold them for between 40 to 60 francs at Wahigouya, and for from 80 to 100 francs a piece at Dedougou and points as far down as Wagadougou (Tauxier 1917 : 221).

175 Not all the profit from this trade went into the pockets of the
437 traders. We have the report of Binger that the chiefs, besides com-
416 mandering the goods at less than one-hundredth their purchase
651 price, received taxes on each caravan which passed through their
territory.

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territory. This report is substantiated by Barth. Marc adds that the caravaneers had

> ... a considerable amount of incidental expenses. Ten thousand kolas called for two asses or four porters for whom it was necessary to provide food during close to two months. Formerly there had been a certain number of local exactions to pay each time that the caravans crossed a new country. Now there are taxes on the caravans in the Gold Coast and also in French territory. It is also necessary to pay for ferryman who transports the livestock across the Volta [River]. There are risks, and occasionally cattle, fatigued by the trip, arrive in such bad shape that they are sold more cheaply than they had cost. Finally, the realization of profits is often difficult, the kola market being, in the commercial centers of the Mossi, subject to considerable fluctuations at the time when the caravans return. (Marc 1909 : 174)[7]

Sometimes the caravaneers made extensive use of middlemen and did not realize all the profits. Marc, who was stationed at the customs post at Leo on the Mossi border with the Gold Coast, wrote:

> The livestock is bought upon arrival by interpreter-brokers, middlemen between the butchers and the meat merchants, to whom the caravaneers are practically forced to resort. These men buy all the kola nuts brought by the forest natives, and control the market prices ... These interpreter-brokers apparently speculate on livestock in a most curious way. They have scouts who go out to meet the caravans, sometimes two days' march to the north. These scouts attempt to alarm the travellers with tendentious remarks, until they are willing to cede their herds at a low price. Some times, at the height of the business season—that is, in January and February—the livestock prices may fluctuate by one hundred per cent within a few weeks. The Mande-Dioula vie in eloquence, the Yarse and Mossi in politeness, the Hausa in friendliness. In reality, there is here, an embryonic trading center, a veritable stock exchange, using extensively indigenous methods. ((Marc 1909 : 173)

According to most reports, all the larger market centers of Mossi country were like this.

Caravan centers, like all the lesser market centers in Mossi country, provided merchants not only with trading opportunities but also with occasions for conviviality after hectic days of travel. At Dakay south of Wagadougou, livestock traders found musicians, singers, and the most beautiful dancers in the country. And according to Marc, during the whole caravan season the market was abundantly furnished with beer (Marc 1909 : 175). But if the Mossi enjoyed themselves at

(7) Tauxier (1912 : 539) states that each porter was paid 35 francs for the thirty-five days of travels or at the rate of one franc per day. In addition a caravaneer spent about 300 cowries a day on food for each of his bearers.

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their own commercial centers, they acted quite differently outside their country. Dubois reports that at Timbuktu, "the great town of pleasure" with the freest morals in the Sudan, the merchants from Bamako, Djenne, Sansanding and Touat spent a great deal of money in pleasure and in gifts to the beautiful women, but the "Mossi did not waste their money and left as soon as they had finished their affairs" (Dubois 1899 : 292–300).

The days of the caravans are now over in Mossi country, even though large groups of traders carry on the traditional commerce in livestock, cotton, kola nuts, some dried fish, and salt. As soon as the French conquered th country they formulated plants to control the caravans. One of the earliest reports, for June 1899, reads:

> The country is calm and direct administration was established at Koupela, Mane, Yake . . . The Mossi trade is mainly with the English colony of the Gold Coast. It consists mainly of livestock, very plentiful in Mossi country, which is exchanged for merchandise from England; copper and material goods . . . Our task will be to discover the materials of the northern Ivory Coast which could be exchanged for cattle, and when this information is forthcoming we should be able to direct the caravans quite easily to the Ivory Coast. At the same time the English will see their provisions of cattle and sheep diminish. They will flood us less with their cotton cloth, with their glass beads, and with their kola nuts. In their place, the products of French manufacture can arrive to us through the Ivory Coast after being exchanged for the products of our colony there.[8]

These plans did not succeed. The Mossi still export a great deal of their products towards the forest zones of Ghana, including their "numerous laborers" which, according to Beauminy writing in 1919, were "the principal riches actually utilizable in Mossi country". (Beauminy 1919 : 71–78). The migrants themselves are, in a sense, the greatest traders in contemporary Mossi society.

PRESENT-DAY TRADE

There is a constant flow of goods between Mossi country and the Ivory Coast and Ghana. Much of the trade to the former region is in the hands of the large commercial companies and as such is beyond the purview of this paper. What is of interest here is the trade which is conducted by the ordinary people. A great deal of this trade is highly unorganized and the result of one or two men, or as many as five men, joining together to trade goods to and from Ghana and the Ivory Coast. The types of goods sent down to these two areas are the same as those traded in pre-European times.

(8) Unpublished document in the archives of *Institut Français d'Afrique Noire*, Wagadougou, Voltaic Republic.

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When one asks the Mossi directly, "What is a market?"
the response to this question is: "A market is a place where people 443
meet to buy and sell. People travel from one market place to another 829
market place, and on the way they stop and see their friends in other villages. In the market one often meets and drinks with one's friends. People also go to distant markets to find things which they do not grow themselves or which cannot be found in their own markets."

Lending support to the Mossi contention that markets are places 443
where one goes to buy and sell is the fact that most important markets 487
in their country are found at the intersections of well-traveled routes. These intersections are often the places where chiefs have their capi- [631]
tals or compounds and this leads to the further idea that there is a connection between chiefs and markets, if only because the power of the chiefs makes markets possible. This does not mean, however, 443
that the market is a purely physical entity which can only exist under 571
the aegis of a chief, or that it is a purely economic institution. First of all, some markets, especially the smaller ones, are moved periodically without too much difficulty. Secondly, and of great importance, is the fact that whenever and wherever there is a large gathering of Mossi there is a "market." Indeed one can say that Mossi seldom come together in large numbers without coming to a market, or without creating one. It appears that the Mossi cannot interact with one [437]
another in any circumstance without also exchanging goods of some kind. For example, when a pagan chief holds the annual festival to [769]
his ancestors, the people who attend form a market in the vicinity of his compound. In those districts where the chiefs have become Chris- [797]
tians and celebrate their birthdays rather than the traditional an- [527]
cestors' rites, the people go to pay them homage and also "make a market." Similarly, whenever there is a funeral of an important chief, [766]
the people from the surrounding villages or even districts bring commodities to his hamlet and hold a market during the ceremony. On [796]
Christmas day, 1955, the people of Manga district "moved their market" about 500 yards to the Catholic Mission grounds where the Christians were celebrating their holiday. And after celebrating the prayers of Ramadan, the Moslems and their pagan townsmen repair to the markets to spend the rest of the day.

Most Mossi markets are inaugurated with religious ceremonies ex- 443
cept those which develop by accretion—that is, by more and more per- 433
sons coming voluntarily to trade. When a chief orders that a market be [652]
created or when a market is moved from one place to another place for any reason, the chief is the person who gives the order for the ceremony to be performed. First of all he speaks to his Raga Naba (market [554]
chief), usually a non-Mossi slave, about the need for the market or the desirability of changing its location. This man then consults a *teng-*

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175 436 437 175 435 Cowries used to be chief medium of exchange in Mossi markets until the Europeans arrived. In addition the people bartered specific goods for other products. The prices of goods in these markets fluctuated from time to time. Prices were highest during the planting season when most goods were scarce, and lowest during the harvest periods, but we have little precise information about the prices of goods in the traditional markets. Even Barth's information is too sketchy to deal with. Our first reliable data come from Tauxier, whose writings cover the first decade (1896-1906) of the conquest. Using the then official rate of one franc equals 1,000 cowries, the prices of a few representative products were: horses, 40 to 100 francs (40,000 to 100,000 cowries); cattle, 30 to 40 francs (30,000 to 40,000 cowries); chickens, 250 cowries; guinea fowls, 250 to 300 cowries; hides, 3,000 cowries; pottery jars, 300 cowries; cotton trousers, 200 cowries; baskets, 1,500 cowries; and locust-bean balls, 100 cowries (Tauxier 1912 : 466 ff.).

Mangin, whose work covers the period from about 1910 to 1913, when the value of the franc was lowered to one franc equals 700 to 800 cowries, lists the approximate prices for the following goods; "Millet, 0.02 franc a kilogram; rice, 0.10 franc a kilogram; *fabirama*, 0.05 franc a kilogram; shea butter, 0.50 franc a kilogram; milk butter, 1.50 francs a kilogram; peanuts, 0.07 franc a kilogram; peanut oil, 0.50 franc a liter; one jar of ordinary millet beer, containing about six to eight liters, 0.20 franc; one jar of strong millet beer *(tose)*, containing about six to eight liters, 0.40 franc; hydromel *(bese)*, 0.15 franc a liter; chicken, 0.40 franc; average goat, 3 to 4 francs; large goat, 8 to 10 francs; average sheep, 3.50 francs for a ram, 4 francs, for an ewe; large sheep, 8 to 10 francs; donkey, 25 to 30 francs; horse, 150 francs; small cow (no hump), 50 francs; zebu cow, 70 francs; goat skin, 0.30 franc; cow skin, 1 franc; salt bars, from 1.50 to 2 francs a kilogram; kola nuts, from 0.03 to 0.10 franc apiece; one hoe, about 0.60 franc; cloth: strip of white cloth, 0.05 franc, about 0.60 franc a cubit; white blanket, 2 francs; indigo-dyed blanket, 3 francs; striped blanket, 4 francs; medium-sized shirt, 2.50 francs" (Mangin 1921 : 53). In dealing with these prices, a number of things should be kept in mind: first of all, these prices fluctuated very much during the year; secondly [436] they varied from region to region within the country; and thirdly, although these prices are given in francs during this period, it was still possible to use cowries to buy a large number of the products.

177 436 [437] [438] Enormous changes have taken place in the Mossi economic and exchange systems over the decades following the studies of Tauxier and Mangin. Even before, but certainly after World War I, the French pressure on the Mossi to pay taxes in francs finally resulted

436 use one type of currency rather than another. For example, a petty
435 trader often buys a package of European cigarettes for 20 francs
443 C.F.A. in the Wagadougou market for retail in the local markets. Here he sells some individual cigarettes at the price of two for 5 francs C.F.A., some at two for 3 old-fashioned francs (making a total of about 21 francs C.F.A.). The vendors are fully aware of this profit differential, but make no attempt to insist on one currency over the other. Furthermore, they appeared indifferent when I suggested that I planned to take advantage of the price differential which I suspected in the two systems. It appears that they believe it would be a waste of time to try to obtain the profit differential.

● 437 Barter as a form of exchange had just about disappeared from the
435 larger markets in Mossi country, but it exists alongside the use of
443 currency in the local markets, especially in connection with foodstuffs
[178] and other vegetable commodities. People tend to resort to barter when they wish to exchange a specific product for another. Thus, a woman who normally sells rice for currency sometimes will suddenly refuse to accept money and insist on exchanging the rice for cotton or peanuts. The bartering then takes the form of a half-calabash of rice for a half-calabash of either peanuts or cotton, depending upon which products are desired. This equivalence seems always to be maintained regardless of the currency value of rice, cotton, or peanuts at the market on the day in question. For example, a woman who was looking for persons with whom she could exchange peanuts for rice and she refused to sell peanuts to me. I asked why she would not sell the peanuts and then take the money and buy rice with it. She said that if she did so, she would suffer a dual loss: first, in selling the peanuts, each valued at 100 cowries (one-half franc of unofficial currency) for 5 francs. I counted the nuts, which amounted to about 120, and then asked for the customary *lengs* (bonus) and received 36 more peanuts worth 1.5 franc. On the next market day I observed that peanuts were not being sold but only bartered for cotton which was being sold. I decided to test the system. I bought 2 old-fashioned francs' worth of cotton at 100 cowries a ball, and took them over to the woman bartering peanuts for cotton. She accepted the balls of cotton, measured them in a calabash, and then gave me the same volume of peanuts in exchange. I counted the nuts and discovered that I had received some 200 nuts for only 2 francs. When I discussed this experiment with some of the people, they admitted knowing
[123] about this practice and said that they did this at times. I then suggested that it would be possible to manipulate the system to one's advantage, but was again greeted with a show of indifference by most of my auditors. One man eventually said that I would lose because prices

changed.

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changed. I remain ignorant of what the real facts are, but still suspect that it may be possible to speculate on the system.

Barter is very specific in Mossi markets in the sense that not every product can be bartered against every other product. Some days rice would be bartered for cotton, and on other days only for peanuts and vice versa. It is not possible either to exchange vegetable produce for livestock, even though livestock may be exchanged for livestock. Sometimes people take chickens or guinea hens to market to exchange for goats or sheep, and often these animals are exchanged for young cattle. What is not at all clear, however, is whether or not the people see the value of the things exchanged in terms of currency value, or in terms of some value which has no reference to the European currency system. The ordinary people in the markets, like ordinary people everywhere, are not concerned with these problems as long as they believe that they are conducting their commercial activities with equity and are deriving satisfaction from them.

The most significant feature of all the Mossi markets is the segregation of certain merchants into certain areas. The makers and sellers of one product are found only in one part of the market, and anyone wishing to buy or sell these products must go to the place where they are traded. The other type of segregation is by reference to the trader's place of origin. For example, a woman who sells beer would be found in the section of the market where beer is sold, but she would be found sitting with her back towards the village or facing toward the direction from which she came. There are often some variations on this pattern. For example, if there are a large number of traders with one type of product, they will form a large open circle in which each person will sit with his or her back towards the point of origin. Inside of this circle, and separated by a few feet, would be another circle of people selling another product with their faces toward the general direction from which they came. Sitting with their backs to the people of this circle would be other people forming another circle and selling one type of product. These people would have their backs towards the region from which they came. When the group of persons selling one type of product is very small, they may form a small circle in a corner of the market with their backs towards their points of origin. All of these patterns often exist simultaneously in Mossi markets, but it is obvious that two basic configurations prevail. One configuration is in terms of goods, and facilitates trading. The other configuration is a social one and facilitates the social interaction which is an integral part of the Mossi market. This seating pattern makes it easier to find one's friends, to converse and drink with them, to find someone through whom to send mes-

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443 sages to specific villages, to find the help needed in the event of a
571 fight, and finally to find an escape route by which one can leave in the event of trouble.

443 The vendors in the larger markets of Mossi country include Yoru-
463 ba, Hausa and other ethnic groups, many of whose members were
563 born in Mossi country and have never visited the land of their fathers. The lives of these people are usually centered around the markets; where the markets are held every day, many of the men, women and children of these foreign groups spend almost all of their lives at the
[439] markets. In marked contrast to the Mossi, they usually sell products of foreign provenience, whether African or European, and seldom deal in the local products. These vendors are tolerated by the Mossi and are valued for their commerce, but are always regarded as outsiders. And as outsiders the markets do not belong to them, but only
443 to the Mossi. Even so, the Mossi do not really like the larger markets.
829 True, one can buy all kinds of wonderful goods on the large markets, but to the Mossi, a market is more than a place where one goes to buy and sell, even though everyone who goes there tries to do some of both.

443 There is a marked division of labor among the vendors in a Mossi
462 market—a division which can be seen at its best on the local markets.
438 Here only the women sell cooked food, beer, millet, rice, peanuts,
439 shea-butter, tobacco, and all of the other locally grown vegetables and vegetable products, except cotton which may also be sold by a man. In contrast, women do not sell such local products as cotton cloth, hemp, jewelry, iron implements and leather goods, which are the province of the men. Only men may butcher and sell animals and meat in the market. And they alone control the commerce in foreign food articles such as salt and dried fish. Both men and women sell the valuable imported kola nut, but only men sell goods of European manufacture such as cigarettes, matches, sugar, mirrors and so on.
[857] Small girls sell calabashes of water to everyone, and small boys wander through the market selling single cigarettes, bundles of a few matches, single lumps of sugar, chickens and guinea fowls, and skewers of roasted meat.

443 There is little competition about someone else having "stolen"
437 a customer. The reason for this is mainly that every person in the market is a potential customer of everyone else. Normally, a buyer
432 simply moves from seller to seller sampling the goods if that is possible (some unscrupulous men can even get drunk in the process of "sampling" beer) and trying to get the best bargain. No seller would think of running after a customer, and customers seldom, if ever, move away from a vendor in the hope that he would be called back to be sold the article at a lower price.

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to be sold the article at a lower price. The result is that the pace of commerce in a Mossi market is somewhat relaxed, but the lack of intense competition prevents a great deal of hositility and quarreling among the market people.

The amount of small trading which takes place in a Mossi market is fantastic, so much so that one gains the impression that some people trade simply for the sake of trading. Everyone tries to get money so that he or she can buy some desired object, but it is impossible for one to obtain a clear idea of what kind of profit, if any, people make from their commerce. In fact, the idea of a profit does not seem to be important when people are selling their own products. Most people only think about profit when they buy things to resell—whether these things are of African or European manufacture. This, incidentally, is one of the reasons why the prices of foodstuffs are about 10 per cent lower in the country districts than at Wagadougou, and concommitently, why imported products are 10 to 20 per cent higher in the rural districts than at Wagadougou where they are bought. When a woman takes such products as cotton, beans or millet to market, she may gross about 100 francs in the course of the day. But out of this she may give a few francs to her husband to buy kola nuts, a few francs to her daughter to buy a plastic necklace, and spend the rest for a cotton skirt, a piece of meat and condiments for her sauces. Men whose wives do not bring many goods to market must usually give them about 100 francs to spend on the various products the family needs. There are no official restrictions on the kinds of goods which may or may not be sold in the Mossi markets. In pre-European times slaves and eunuchs were the common stock-in-trade of the major markets and of some of the smaller ones as well. The only active supervision that existed and still exists concerns the butchering of meat. Every person who sells meat in the market must exhibit the skin of the butchered animal in a public place so that there will be no question as to the ownership of the animal. If the meat in question is the remains of a cow killed and half-eaten by a lion, then the village or district chief must be notified before the meat enters the market. The person in charge of this task used to be, and often still is, a man called the Kos Naba, a kind of sales chief. He also formerly doubled as a tax collector for the rulers and chiefs. Another official, the Raga Naba, where he still exists, is more concerned with protecting the lives and property of the people who trade at the markets, but he also supervises the sale of some commodities there and formerly also collected taxes for his superior.

In pre-European times, every important Mossi prince and district chief had the counterpart of a Kos Naba and Raga Naba, to collect

246 following year seeds fall to the ground and the grass grows back once more. It is cut down, but not at ground level, so that it will perpetuate itself.

The Gourounsi call it keulo. They merely cut it down in the bush, and do not replant it among the maize. It grows in sufficient quantities in the open bush of Gourounsi territory, which is more extensive than that of Mossi country, to preclude the need of replanting.

244 The Mossi cultivate gombo (mana in Mossi, pora in Nounouma and Kassouna, gouan in Mandé). Every Mossi grows some for the sauce.

They sow it during the damp season at the same time as the millet, in small separate plots. They turn up the soil a little with the ouaka, make holes with the koutiaga, put in gombo seeds, and cover up the holes. One allows the plant to grow, digs out the weeds with the ouaka, and then waits for two months. At that time the enormous gombo stalk, which is even higher and sturdier than maize, has grown out and borne its greenish, slightly elongated and ribbed pods. Then, the ripest pods are gathered and cut up for the sauce. The harvesting is done gradually, from September 15 until the end of December.

252 To prepare gombo, one cuts the pods into pieces and leaves them to dry. When some gombo is needed, these pieces are crushed /479/ and reduced to a sort of powder which is boiled in water. The fresh gombo pods may also be utilized. They are cut into pieces and boiled in the same fashion. Salt and soumbara are added. This makes a sort of paste, greenish and sticky, which is highly prized by the natives.

244 We stated above that the Mossi grow gombo in small isolated plots along the watercourses. This does happen, but often, like other Blacks, they merely sow a few stalks of gombo among their maize.

438 The gombo is sold in dried pieces at Mossi markets.

252 Let us add that gombo leaves, when tender, are also used in sauce.

244 Some people, before they sow millet, lay out small plots of tomatoes in the fields reserved for millet, and water them morning and evening. They do this when the field is cleared just before sowing. Then they dig up the seedlings at the first rainfall and plant them elsewhere. Their tomatoes are ripe before the maize.

The three other kinds of tomatoes are cultivated in the same fashion.

The Mossi are familiar with the native eggplant. It is called bovo in Mossi, baulo in Nounouma, bio in Kassouna, boroma /482/ in Sissala. These eggplants are planted when the large red millet is sown. They are placed around the soukala, or in the bush near the watercourses. They are harvested in September at the same time as the large red millet.

The Mossi also cultivate pimentos (kiparé).

The seeds are sown near the soukala, without any preparatory work, at the beginning of the winter season. The weeds are removed after fifteen or twenty days. Two months after sowing, the young shoot produces offspring. The pimento may be gathered at that time. They are removed as the need arises and added to the sauce.

The Mossi are fond of pimento. Those who grow it in large [438] quantities sell the surplus at market.

249 415 As for gourds and calabashes, the Mossi have three kinds as listed below:

1. The ordinary calabash, which is very large and which is cut in two to make household calabashes. They call it vandé.

The Mossi plant it at the beginning of the winter season, in patches of good soil near the huts, or in similar spots in the bush. Holes are made in the ground with the koutiaga, in which seeds are placed and then covered up. The calabashes only ripen at the end of six or seven months, that is to say, when the winter season is over. Then they are cut in two, and the inner part is removed. This is how the household calabashes are fashioned.

2. The drinking calabash. This one has the natural shape of a swollen gourd with a neck widening toward the top. The Mossi call it binga. It is sown by the huts and made to climb upon the roofs.

231 We mentioned earlier the karyanga, which is gathered wild or cultivated for horses. It is given to them at the height of the winter season.

Many Mossi own dogs. They use them to guard the soukala, to hunt in the bush, or for consumption. In the latter case, the [262 animal is fattened. Dog meat was sold on Mossi markets in the [438] old days, but the Yarsé, who are Moslems as we know, found it improper to exhibit dog meat alongside mutton or beef, and the custom was abandoned. Dogs are still killed inside the soukala, however, for consumption purposes.

[435] A dog is worth from 2 to 5 francs.

The Mossi have chickens and guinea fowl. The chickens are 235 worth 250 cowries. The eggs are not sold.

It is the men who care for the chickens. They /492/ look in the bush for termite nests which they break to pieces so that the chickens may eat the termites. Sometimes, instead of one ration only, the chickens are issued two a day, one in the morning and one in the evening.

The guinea fowl are less numerous than the chickens. Accord- [435 ing to their weight, they are worth from 250 to 300 cowries. Their [462] eggs are eaten. It is the men who care for the guinea fowl as for the chickens.

231 The Mossi place beehives in the trees. The hives consist of elongated straw cylinders shaped like a tom-tom. One of the sides is completely closed, while the other is perforated to allow the bees to come and go.

231 These hives are placed in the trees at the time when the warm 237 season begins (March), and then the honey is gathered every month except at the height of the rainy season, when the downpours are too heavy. The children are in charge of this. They climb the tree with a straw torch on fire, and frighten the bees away. Then they take the honey and come down. In order to separate the honey from the wax, the honeycombs are placed in a large canari full of water. Another canari is heated intensely, and its burning-hot base is brought close to the surface of the jar where the combs are floating. The wax melts and sinks to the bottom, while the honey floats. The wax is sold to jewelers, who use it in the [306] manufacture of copper objects made by the lost-wax process. It is

222 Let us now proceed to the baobab.
137 It is called touéra or touéga in Mossi (sira or izira in Bambara). It is to be found most everywhere in the Mossi bush, and especially in rocky, hilly spots near large streams.

The fruit of the baobab is gathered from December to April. It is a sort of huge green almond hanging from a stem that often
252 reaches 25 or 30 centimeters in length. One breaks the shell, removes the flesh, and mashes it in the mortar (this, of course, is done by the women). Once this is done, the resulting meal is strained through a straw strainer. It is now ready to eat.

This is called toïdésoum in Mossi, tiondé-boé in Peuhl, siramogou in Mandé (from sira, "baobab" and mogou, "flour"). [438] Colloquially, Europeans call it "monkey bread." It is sold on Mossi markets as on the markets of Bambara country.

To prepare it for consumption, this meal is thinned with milk, or water if there is no milk, or else mixed with millet flour. The latter mixture is called sangaré ni siramogou in Bambara ("millet flour and baobab flour"). The meal may also be mixed with néré flour.

It is not only the fruit of the baobab, however, that is utilized. The fresh green leaves are used as a sauce ingredient. The dried leaves are used to make tonéra (lalo in Foutanké /Futajalonke?/, namourou or namougou in Bambara, oro in Peuhl). The leaves are dried and crushed in a mortar to make a powder that is added to sauce.

283 Finally, let us add that the bark of the baobab is used to make rope.

222 After the karité, néré, and baobab, we must list the tamarind
137 tree (Tamarindus indica), koussouga or poussouga in Mossi, n'tomi in Bambara.

222 The fruit of the tamarind is a pod, longer than a finger /500/
137 and about the same thickness, that ripens between January and April.
263 It is a yellow-green brown. When cut along its length, it is found to contain some ten little round fruits, the size of half a hazelnut, lying in a row within the greenish pulp. Only the dried pod is used, after removing the little fruits which have a rather pleasing taste when fresh, something between the kola nut and the hazelnut. When the pod is dry, however, the fruits are also dried out and hard, and they are discarded.

323 wide, 2 meters in diameter, and open at the top), then some straw on which the pots are laid, and then more straw and firewood. They set this afire and keep it burning for twelve hours.

In order to polish their pots, the women take the bark of the [314] nobora or n'kouna. They soak it in huge canari for a whole day. The water acquires a reddish hue. The fired and cooled pots are immersed in these canari for a while, and then allowed to dry in the open air. When this is over, the pots may be taken to market and sold.

The blacksmiths' wives make their pottery during the dry season. During the winter season, they work in their husbands' fields.

326 241 During the winter season, Mossi blacksmiths work both at cultivation and at their trade, but mostly at cultivation. During the dry season, on the other hand, they work only at the blacksmith's trade.

As far as cultivation is concerned, they mostly grow small millet, followed by large white millet and large red millet, maize, peanuts, underground peas, sesame, and beans. They cultivate cotton and tobacco, but no indigo. Their wives sow gombo, etc.

326 231 /516/ They own livestock which their children herd. As a rule, they have a little more livestock than other Mossi, except for goats and donkeys. This, incidentally, should not surprise us, for the Negro blacksmiths of West Africa often display an ability for stockbreeding and especially for horse trading. Among the Mossi, however, this is not very pronounced.

326 The blacksmiths neither hunt nor fish, but they do engage in gathering activities like other Mossi. They exercise no industries other than those of iron and pottery. They do not work copper, silver, or gold. They do not work as weavers, either. They entrust their wives with the task of gathering and spinning whatever cotton they grow and then they hand it over to the weavers.

326 438 They do undertake a little trading, slightly more in fact than the average Mossi. When a blacksmith has smelted a large quantity of iron, he sometimes purchases some livestock, leads it to Ouanké, buys kola nuts which he takes to Saraféré, and brings back salt from that locality. This is not done very frequently, however.

000 We are now finished with Mossi industries, not because this work is complete or definitive of course, nor because I have listed and thoroughly studied all this people's trades. I have said enough, however, to draw a significant outline /537/ of these industries and to show that they are flourishing. We may now proceed to trading.

438 Among the Mossi, as everywhere else in West Africa, one must
443 distinguish the internal trade of the territory from its external trade.

As among other Blacks, the internal trade formerly was, and still is, ensured by village markets which are held at the most important localities on set days, for example every three days, every five days, etc. Thus at Ouagadougou, before the arrival of the Whites, the market was held every three days. Now it is a daily affair.

443 At every village where a market was held, there was a "mar-
782 ket chief" named by the village chief. The market chief performed a sacrifice for the market. On a large consecrated stone he killed a chicken, a goat, or a sheep which he provided himself.
[776] The animal was offered to the sky divinity (Ounam) to preclude fights on the market place. When this was over, our chief gave a hand to Ounam in his pacifying role, with the aid of a club if necessary.

443 All internal and external products of the territory were retailed at those markets, largely by women whom the Blacks, as we know, are in the habit of sending to market with surplus goods to sell. We shall not dwell on the internal Mossi trade, which is the same as in all black countries, a small retail trade nourished and vitalized by the external trade. Let us, therefore, proceed to the latter.

439 The external Mossi trade is the usual trade of the Sudan, which we have already described and which operates from north to south and south to north. Livestock is led toward the south, kola nuts are brought toward the north, salt is brought back toward the south, etc. We should add to this the cotton strips which constitute one of the important Mossi products (they are made by the Yarsé and by the Mossi themselves, as we saw). Those cotton strips, like livestock, are taken south where cotton is poorly grown.

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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such individuals to find a market everyday in one neighboring district or another.

Every Mossi market not only has its own schedule but is also part of a cycle of markets in the sense that its main customers can and do regularly attend two other markets on the two nonmarket days without missing their "own" market. Table 30 takes the district market at Nobere as the home market and lists the markets which Nobere's people can attend and the reasons they themselves give for going there.

TABLE 30

Markets near Nobere

		Distance Away	*Reasons for Going*
First Day:			
	Nobere		Home Market
	Manga	12 kilometers	Good Pottery
	Vooko	15 kilometers	Butter and Millet
	Twese	20 kilometers	Millet and Sorghum
	Binde	35 kilometers	Good Pottery and Mats "Very far and people do not go there very often"
Second Day:			
	Basgana	10 kilometers	Good Pottery
	Sakouliga	15 kilometers	"To Have Fun"
	Giba	10 kilometers	"To Have Fun"
Third Day:			
	Nobili	27 kilometers	"Good Millet"
	Pinse	6 kilometers	"Small Market; to have fun"
	Parougre	10 kilometers	"Good Millet and Pottery"

Nobere people scarcely ever go to Manga because the market there conflicts with their own and its one unique product, pottery, can be bought at Basgana on a day when there is no market at Nobere. A person is likely to go do Vooko when he wishes to buy butter and millet at cheaper prices than he can obtain in his own market. But he scarcely visits the Binde market unless he is there visiting a friend or relative. Nobere people think nothing of going to Giba or to Pinse to show off their clothes or to have fun at those markets. If any commodity is cheap there they take advantage of the prices, but in general they believe that they can obtain better and cheaper products at their own market.

It is now possible to find a great variety of products at Mossi markets, and the larger the market the more varied its merchandise. Apparently this was not always so. Crozart (1891 : 4848), who visited the country just before it was conquered, reported that in the market at Wagadougou, he found "millet, rice, millet beer, butchered meat, small cutlery, morocco-leather goods, basketwork and jewelry items,

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all of local manufacture and in great abundance. Local cloth is also very abundant. However, there are scarcely any imported objects salt, kola nuts, copper rings and extremely rare European fabrics. The salt always comes from the north. During my stay at Wagadougou I saw the arrival of a convoy of five or six small-sized mules loaded with this merchandise." Crozat felt that the Wagadougou market with its mainly local products was inferior to the markets at Woroudoy and Bobo-Dioulasso which he found less crowded, but which were, in his words, "true *entrepots* of imported merchandise."

Tauxier gives us a better picture of the goods found in the markets of Mossi country before the Europeans arrived. His reports list few imported products except salt and kola nuts. The preponderance of goods sold were such local foodstuffs as maize, manioc, peppers, tomatoes, squash, karite or shea butter, locust-bean balls, locust-bean flour, rice and a local variety of potatoes. Other foodstuffs included were honey, beer, butchered meat, chickens, and guinea fowls. Tobacco both for chewing and smoking was also available, and so was hemp for making rope. Raw cotton, cotton thread, cloth and tailored cotton garments were also present, and so was indigo for dyeing the cotton materials. Other goods included hides, sandals, pouches, amulets, iron items such as axes, hoes, knives, scythes, locks, clubs and spearpoints, bracelets and anklets made of copper by the lost-wax process, baskets, mats and hats made out of local grasses, pottery, pipes and wooden stools (Tauxier 1912 : 466 ff.). By 1914 Mangin could add little to this list of local products, sold in the markets, but added such foreign items as "matches, glass trinkets, handkerchiefs, basins, dishes, perfumes, and even firecrackers" (Mangin 1921 : 53).

The markets of contemporary Mossi society contain all of the articles found in pre-European times and those seen there by Mangin in 1914. In the larger markets one now can find such additional items as bicycles, razor blades, plastic raincoats and other plastic products, and the latest "rock 'n roll" records from the United States. The goods found in the smaller district and village markets tend to be of the traditional variety. But even here it is possible to buy refined cane sugar, matches, plastic necklaces, shoe polish, nail polish, toilet water, glass beads, costume jewelry, chinaware, and glass and enamel containers. In some of the smaller markets it is even possible to buy wheat bread made of imported flour, and bottled beer and soda water. The more different types of goods entering the larger markets, the richer the variety found in the smaller markets, since local merchants are quick to take advantage of the prestige value of any new produce and introduce it into the rural areas. The only barrier to this type of commercial activity is the relative poverty of the rural people.

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443 sages to specific villages, to find the help needed in the event of a
571 fight, and finally to find an escape route by which one can leave in the event of trouble.

443 The vendors in the larger markets of Mossi country include Yoru-
463 ba, Hausa and other ethnic groups, many of whose members were
563 born in Mossi country and have never visited the land of their fathers. The lives of these people are usually centered around the markets; where the markets are held every day, many of the men, women and children of these foreign groups spend almost all of their lives at the
[439] markets. In marked contrast to the Mossi, they usually sell products of foreign provenience, whether African or European, and seldom deal in the local products. These vendors are tolerated by the Mossi and are valued for their commerce, but are always regarded as outsiders. And as outsiders the markets do not belong to them, but only
443 to the Mossi. Even so, the Mossi do not really like the larger markets.
829 True, one can buy all kinds of wonderful goods on the large markets, but to the Mossi, a market is more than a place where one goes to buy and sell, even though everyone who goes there tries to do some of both.

443 There is a marked division of labor among the vendors in a Mossi
462 market—a division which can be seen at its best on the local markets.
438 Here only the women sell cooked food, beer, millet, rice, peanuts,
439 shea-butter, tobacco, and all of the other locally grown vegetables and vegetable products, except cotton which may also be sold by a man. In contrast, women do not sell such local products as cotton cloth, hemp, jewelry, iron implements and leather goods, which are the province of the men. Only men may butcher and sell animals and meat in the market. And they alone control the commerce in foreign food articles such as salt and dried fish. Both men and women sell the valuable imported kola nut, but only men sell goods of European manufacture such as cigarettes, matches, sugar, mirrors and so on.
[857] Small girls sell calabashes of water to everyone, and small boys wander through the market selling single cigarettes, bundles of a few matches, single lumps of sugar, chickens and guinea fowls, and skewers of roasted meat.

443 There is little competition about someone else having "stolen"
437 a customer. The reason for this is mainly that every person in the market is a potential customer of everyone else. Normally, a buyer
432 simply moves from seller to seller sampling the goods if that is possible (some unscrupulous men can even get drunk in the process of "sampling" beer) and trying to get the best bargain. No seller would think of running after a customer, and customers seldom, if ever, move away from a vendor in the hope that he would be called back
to be sold the article at a lower price.

567 The only slaves who have remained faithful to their masters or, more exactly, who have preferred to remain in Mossi territory after their emancipation, are nearly all Gourounsi.

The Gourounsi Captives

567 Sonrhaï [Songhai] forces led by Alpha Haïhon, Gazeré, and
727 Babato used to raid Gourounsi country. They reduced a large num-
648 ber of Gourounsi to slavery, immediately making soldiers of the more enterprising among them to fight against their own people and selling or exchanging the rest for horses. Mossi country has al-
[439] ways had a large supply of horses, so the Mossi used to go to Léo to trade their horses for slaves or simply to trade their slaves to the Sonrhaï for cowries.

567 The Sonrhaï chiefs maintained good relations with the em-
648 peror of the Mossi, Naba Sanum. That is why they spared the Gourounsi village chiefs who had taken refuge with the Mogho Naba.

Boukary-koutou, the future Naba Wobgo, enjoyed the [87] regard and friendship of the Sonrhaï since he aided them in their wars against the Gourounsi in exchange for an ample share of the booty and slaves. We have shown that the large number of Gourounsi whom he brought with him to Ouagadougou contributed mightily to his being named emperor of the Mossi.

567 During the reigns of Naba Koutou, Sanum, and Wobgo, there
651 were special slave markets attached to the regular markets at Ouagadougou and other large centers. A fee of 1,000 cowries was collected for the benefit of the naba for each captive sold, regardless of sex.

567 When owners desired to sell a slave, they first shaved his
302 head, and it was only after the hair had begun to grow again that he
787 was taken to market. The cutting of the hair derives from a superstition among the Mossi.

Depending on where the hair starts to grow, whether well back on the head, at the forehead, or near the ears, the interpretation varies as to how the slave is to be regarded: as a dangerous being; as a lucky or unlucky influence on the family owning him.

We shall not now go into details since such beliefs will be discussed in a special section.

567 control by the canton chiefs in whose territories they are located.
622 The inhabitants pay nothing to the kombéré nor can the chief require any labor service in his fields or for the upkeep of his houses. They recognize only the Mogho Naba as chief.

567 Kamboinsé. True Kamboinsé are not Mossi; they came from the west during the reign of Naba Waraga (nineteenth successor of Oubri). Like the dapobi of the Dapoya section they came with guns (their chief even had a [ceremonial] stool) to put themselves under the authority of the Mogho Naba. Their chief, Gambaré by name, told the emperor that they had come to offer themselves as soldiers and slaves to help him pacify his territory. The Kamboinsé occupy a section of the town behind the Catholic mission on the right side of the road to Pô.

When the emperor's native gunners found themselves faced with competition from foreigners, they countered by appointing their own chief who took the title of Kamboin Naba. They are, however, different from the true Kamboinsé, and they live a dozen or so kilometers from Ouagadougou in the villages of Kamboinsé and Wobrigré.

While the first-mentioned Kamboinsé are voluntary slaves, the others are true slaves captured in war or bought by the emperor.

567 426 [92] Use of slaves as security for debt. Captives might be used to settle debts. It should be noted that the right to own slaves was not limited to the emperor and his vassals. Any prosperous Moaga (dakangré) might own them.

[612] If the head of a household died leaving debts, the heirs could sell a few slaves to pay off the obligation. If, however, the creditor preferred to have the slaves, the latter were put up for appraisal just as though they were livestock.

In the same way, slaves could be traded for horses, garments, or even loads of kola nuts.

567 If slaves were maltreated by their owners, providing that the latter were not of the nobility, they could put themselves under the protection of the naba. In that event they ceased to belong to their former owners. On the other hand, if a Moaga took it upon himself [682] to kill a slave, he at once had to pay a fine of 100,000 cowries to his canton chief as a blood price.

567 439 Ordinarily, captives who were brought back from the wars were at once sold to the Haoussa [Hausa] or Yarcé [Yarse] who traded

567 them for kola nuts with the Achanti [Ashanti] or for loaves of salt
439 at Timbuktu. Although they were always transported by roundabout routes to prevent them from finding their way back to their homes, still some of them always managed to escape.

492 The naba used the young yemdado as soroné or grooms, and
567 they would often [93] take the young and attractive women (yempoksé) as wives.

641 The sale of free men. Neither the emperor of the Mossi nor
681 his vassals sold their subjects. Individuals who were regarded as dangerous were simply put to death unless they took refuge in a bangaré to avoid being executed, as has been noted above. Some were sent to the emperor to be made into eunuchs.

304 The facial tattoos worn by the Mossi clearly distinguished them
567 from neighboring peoples. However, if by accident or because of
629 need a naba sold a free man and the latter was claimed by his relatives, the chief was required to buy back the slave or to indemnify his family. We have described above how a canton chief was exiled by the emperor for having sold free Mossi.

583 Concealed selling of women and children. In the chapter on
562 marriage customs among the Mossi we shall show that a native Moaga did not demand a bride price because he did not want to feel that
567 he was selling his daughter. There is no doubt that this rule has exceptions. Indeed, we shall show that the failure to pay a debt, a bout of drunkenness, or a favor received might suffice to mortgage the future of a daughter, even though at the time she might be a small child and quite unaware of her fate. In any event, there would be no question of her expressing any opinion, since her wishes are never taken into account. During periods of famine -- which have been
[131] occurring almost [94] regularly for some years -- a small basket of millet is enough to make a father promise his daughter. In the same way, we regret to say, a great many girls are promised in exchange for trifling sums at the time the poll tax is paid.

567 Rights of slaves. Since he is regarded as an inferior being, the yemdaogo (slave) has no well-defined rights. He is required to perform all kinds of domestic work and must give unquestioning obedience to his master and the master's family. Besides his essential duties, however, he is permitted to do some farming for himself, practice some trade, or to raise cattle, with the proceeds constituting

291 554 435 (d) Zag'banko: a colored garment, varying in price between 40,000 and 50,000 cowries.

(e) Baourou ganga: a light gray blanket, valued [224] at 50,000 to 60,000 cowries, which can easily be made into robes and trousers.

[439] All these garments were imported by traveling Haoussa (Zangoéto) and a few Yarcé, the only traders at the time, who bought them in Gambaga (Gold Coast), the only known trading center at that time. As we have pointed out in an earlier chapter, the Mossi knew of no country other than their own.

There were, of course, some naba who wore only rough garments made of cotton strips woven locally.

Headgear. The inhabitants of Béré (a village of the province now ruled by the Gounga Naba) used to make caps, called manfo, which were highly prized by Mossi chiefs (priced at 2,000 to 3,000 cowries).

Some notables wore caps made at Wéogtinga (province of the Ouidi Naba) by the descendants of Naba Zombré, the twentieth successor of Oubri.

291 554 177 2. Modifications and improvements introduced since the establishment of the government of Upper Volta (1919). The various fabrics available in the European outlets and the fine white or blue bazin [fabric] are more and more being used to replace the clothing of former times. [225] These fabrics are made into robes, trousers, blouses, and forkia (this last is a kind of long blouse with wide sleeves, much prized by Senegalese [352] traders). Shirts of every conceivable color and style are hoarded in trunks and chests bought at the commissary or made locally by carpenters trained in European shops.

Many chiefs claim that garments made of cotton strips are heavy and cumbersome and impede walking.

[439] Oriental caps imported from the Gold Coast, dark red velvet hats, and even sun helmets are replacing the headgear of old.

The markatassé and mougou, rustic leather boots made by Mossi shoemakers are giving way to shoes, puttees, and leggings, [494] or to new types of boots and slippers -- the shoemakers of Djenné are now well known among the Mossi.

301 As ornaments the Moaga woman had only red or yellow copper bracelets and the kindifou (a bright red bead). Even then only women of means could procure such ornaments. The [435] kindifou cost only 50 cowries a bead, but since cowries were monopolized by the naba, notables, and rakangba (prosperous Mossi), the beads were far too expensive for the small resources of the average Moaga woman.

Bracelets made of a special stone (a mixture of gray and white) and called manekagcé (manekaka in the singular) were worn only by the Yarbi (young Yarcé of both sexes). It is said [439] that these bracelets were peddled by the Kibissi (Habé), and they seem to have come from the Timbuktu area.

301 554 Silver bracelets were worn only by the dimbissi (descendants of dima, that is, the family of the Mogho Naba), by kombemba (canton and province chiefs) and their descendants, and, finally, by prominent persons who were in favor at court.

291 177 At the present time, especially at Ouagadougou, the women adorn themselves with garments of all kinds (skirts of native material, bazin, godé, and other fabrics, as well as skirts from stores). Some have even adopted the blouse and ample robe affected by [352] elegant Sudanese [228] women. Many now own trunks which replace the sacks formerly used to store their clothing.

291 178 The Senegalese handkerchief, a head scarf, is now considered absolutely indispensable. In rural areas there is an increasing desire to dress better. More cotton is grown. Girls and women from the bush buy glass beads of all colors when they come to Ouagadougou to work, and they wear them around their necks or around their hips in the manner of Bambara women.

416 Although the "mirror" used to be the clear water of springs and brooks, there is hardly a woman today who does not have one or two mirrors. Finally, a bit of elegance is added to the wild 301 beauty of the women by silver earrings, bracelets, and amulets sewed in a panther skin -- these are becoming a passion with Mossi peasant women.

291 It should not be inferred from the above that the Moaga always feels obliged to wear clothing at home. Any time that he has no need to go out or to visit a friend or relative at some

264 meal of sagbo in the evening.

What we call breakfast is hardly known. Between the two main meals, however, the chiefs have meat grilled or roasted. They are very fond of it and have it seasoned with enough salt and pepper to make it possible to consume the endless number of [273] small gourds of beer which they drink from morning to night.

The Moaga has only one real meal a day, the evening meal. A large millet cake satisfies the day's hunger. If there is any left over, he keeps it carefully for his morning meal. If there is none left, a frequent state of affairs, he makes do with his zompanrga, crushed millet diluted with water and sometimes eaten with a bit of vegetable fat or a few peanuts.

He rarely eats any rice, and if he has no sagbo, he contents himself with benga and souma.

261 It is during the festivals that the Moaga eats his fill. At such
527 times the head of the compound kills a goat, a sheep, or some chickens and has sagbo and fabirama prepared, or beans with copious amounts of karite butter. This is the feast. The members of the family stuff themselves to the point where attacks of diarrhea are inevitable. The results of the attacks are all the more serious in that they are never cared for properly.

The only seasonings known to the Moaga are kalgo (soumbala),
263 red pepper, okra, and salt. No more than a few years ago, how-
439 ever, before the [251] development of trade in the colony, salt was brought from Timbuktu and Mopti by the Dioula and Yarcé and was so expensive that the Mossi people who lived in the countryside often went for six months without tasting salted food.

241 There is reason to believe that the time is not far off when the Moaga will devote his efforts much more intensively to cash crops, such as cotton, potatoes, peanuts, etc. In this domain, the province chiefs at Ouagadougou have made real progress.

Mogh 'Nab' Kawinré (Threshing the Grain of the Mogho Naba)

241 Sacrifices. For this ceremony, the emperor summons the
643 Mankougoudougou Tengsoba (a descendant of the autochthonous
782 Nioniossé, masters of the land) to Ouagadougou and gives him a

241 tuber, Coleus coffini, which Europeans call oussounifing or fabirama,
262 and which may replace potatoes in a pinch, are cultivated in the soils most propitious to them.

221 The precious karite /shea/ tree (Butyrospermum parkii) grows in
262 most fields; its fruit, prized for its cool and slightly sweet flesh, con-
137 tains a pit which yields karite butter, the fat most widely used in
[388] cooking and to make soap. Around the villages, and sometimes even within them, the néré /locust bean/ tree (Parkia africana) produces
[356] elongated pods; its bark, mashed in water, yields a paste that is used to harden the floors of the huts. Its flour makes a cooling drink when
[272] mixed in water, and it may also be eaten; its seeds /8/ are used to make kalro /kalre in the original/, the soumbara of the Bambara, an ingredient /made from locust beans, héré/ of all carefully prepared
137 sauces. The doubalé and silk-cotton or kapokiero trees spread their shade over the weavers, numerous among the Mossi, and over the talkers who are even more. Bamboo grows well in the damp southern regions, and the palm oil tree is occasionally found. The caoutchouc liana, however, has not yet been introduced.

231 Small chickens run in all directions through the villages, along with domesticated guinea hens. Everywhere in the bush near the huts,
[857] little boys herd goats and sheep; this is the task of youngsters here at the age when their contemporaries among us /in France/ begin to learn the alphabet. The most common sheep and goats are small in size. The sheep have short hair. Sometimes, especially in the larger villages where markets are held, goats and sheep are to be seen with
[439] long legs and long, curled horns. They are imported from the northeast and fattened to be sold as butcher's meat. The height of fashion for the wife or a prosperous naba is to be followed by a Touareg /Tuareg/ sheep, well washed and very white. It is fed on millet leftovers and bean mush, and its mistress often presents it with a bit of salt to lick. In short, it is well cared for and agreeably fat; on some important feast day, it will embellish the menu.

The huts are usually guarded by very commonplace dogs, often ill-tempered, but cowardly. A stick is enough to drive them away.
[224] They are mostly used in the hunt, the great Mossi pastime during the dry season. Domesticated ducks are sometimes found in nabas' households, as well as pigeons, but these birds are not widespread and not within the reach of everyone. Finally, almost every group of huts has cats which belong to the women and which are difficult

442 hundred percent within a few weeks. The Mandé-Dioula vie in eloquence, the Yarsé and Mossi in politeness, the Haoussa in friendliness. In fact, with exclusively native methods, this is a trading center in embryo, a veritable stock exchange." (4)

4. Marc, Au pays des Mossi /In Mossi Country/, p. 173.

484 The traders travel in all directions. The roads most commonly
487 followed are those which run from Ouagadougou south to the Gold Coast, to Gambaga, Daboya, Salaga, Kintampo, Sékondi; from Léo through Oua and Salaga; and from Tenkodogo through Bitou to rejoin the Gambaga road. Contact also occurs, though less frequently, with German Togoland and the markets of Sansané-Mango and even Lomé on the coast.

439 These two British and German colonies are supplied with livestock and native fabrics by the Mossi. They completely lack butcher's meat, for the tsetse fly does not permit cattle to survive within the confines of the rain forest. Imported fabrics do not withstand a few washings, so the native fabric strips, although less bright in color, are preferred by the Gourounsi and forest dwellers. They formerly wore only a sheep or goat skin, but they have taken to clothes since the arrival of the Europeans. Their scant clothing does not embarrass them when they are among themselves, but they are ashamed when Europeans see them. The Mossi bring back from their journeys the kola nuts which are the basis of their import trade, but they also bring copper, European goods of all sorts, fabrics usually of inferior quality, matches, perfumes, pearls, sugar, and basins of all shapes and kinds. Trade is very active in the coastal areas, and Lt. Marc writes on the subject as follows: "The Gold Coast administration, which commands a network of posts denser than ours, recorded in 1904 and 1905 about 16,000 beeves and 75,000 sheep or goats coming from Mossi country. Considering that the Mossi also supply in part the Togoland markets and the Boudoukou market, their annual export may be estimated at a minimum of 20,000 beeves and 100,000 sheep. Their kola nut imports amount to at least 500 tons." (5)

5. Marc, op. cit., p. 178.

651 There is proof that trade tends to grow year by year in the ease with
436 which the natives now secure the five-franc piece needed to pay their
457 tax. The Europeans who live among the Mossi, including all the riflemen and circle /an administrative district/ guards, do not put into circulation a quarter of the five-franc pieces which are required each year from the natives. At first the Mossi were taken by surprise and had to give 10, 000 or even 15, 000 cowries to obtain /62/ this famous coin, this charm, which was to free them from all difficulties with the Whites. At the official rate of exchange this coin is worth 5, 000 cowries. Nowadays it is very difficult to find a native willing to give this much for one of the coins. The usual exchange rate is from 3, 500 to 4, 000 cowries; French currency has depreciated. This must mean that the natives find elsewhere, through trading, this indispensable coin. They know that the tax must be paid every year, and instead of waiting until the last minute, as soon as they have accumulated the necessary cowries, they secure the five-franc pieces from those who have fetched them from afar. The coins flow in; the rate of exchange goes down.

439 Nowadays, trading is less active toward the north. Formerly the
567 Mossi supplied Timbuktu, the desert regions, and even Morocco with slaves. The Gourounsi and Bousansé were frequently raided with the sole intent of obtaining slaves. The Mossi even sold each other into slavery, and prior to the French occupation a woman and even more a young girl or boy did not dare venture alone a few hundred meters from the village; they were too afraid that they might not return. It is said that the Mossi even supplied the Constantinople court with eunuchs; and when the great Cardinal Lavigerie was head of the Algerian Arab Orphanage, officers once brought him small children rescued in the desert. They were very young Mossi who had been sold in Saraféré or Timbuktu and whom our officers had found enclosed in bags carried by camels in a caravan halted by our troops. These children were raised in Malta, and they returned to Mossi country where they rendered significant services. Now the establishment of an administrative center in Kaya, near the important market of Salmatenga, will no doubt promote trade in this northern region.

439 Nowadays the trade between Ouagadougou and Tenkodogo on the one hand, and Ouahigouya (in Mossi country), Saraféré, and Timbuktu or Dori (called Gyémaré by the natives) on the other hand, amounts to very little. The Mossi export kola nuts which they have brought

439 from the south, bracelets, and fabric strips, and they import salt and hoes. Often they take only money with them and return with salt bars which sell on the market for one to one and a half, sometimes even two francs, a kilogram. Around Fada N'Gourma (Binge /sic/ to the natives), Say, and Niamey, Karite butter, locust bean flour, and especially kalro pellets are exported, while onions, garlic, and sometimes horses are imported. There is no trade with Dahomey.

484 The natives travel in short stages of 20, 25, or at most 30 kilometers a day. They set out at dawn or whenever the moon sheds sufficient light and stop when the sun becomes too hot. They set out again when the sun dips on the horizon and stop in time to prepare a meal if their wives accompany them, which is rare, or to buy something to eat if they are alone. They spend the night with a friend if [574] they /63/ have one in the locality and lengthen or shorten their day's march if they expect to find an acquaintance in a certain village. The livestock feed as they walk, and donkeys carry the exchange goods and especially the kola nuts on the way back.

482 Nearly all travellers bear part of their load on their head. Since we have come to mention this, let us again quote Delafosse: "Portage has been much slandered in France these past few years. It has been cited as a barbarous custom, a form of slavery which we had supposedly introduced in Africa and imposed on the unfortunate Negroes. This merely proves that the French people like to discuss things of which they know little. The very first geographers and travellers who spoke of the Sudanic Negroes—Herodotus among the Greeks, El Bekri among the Arabs—said that beyond the Sahara, where horses and camels cannot stand the climate, the natives themselves carried burdens on their heads over very long distances." (6) These remarks

6. Delafosse, Le peuple Siéna/ The Siena People/, p. 53.

are strictly true. Abuses on our part lie in forcing the pace and making the natives run with their loads in the hot sun or in exceeding the regulation weight. If reasonable limits are observed, the Blacks accustomed from infancy to the bearing of heavy burdens on their heads—in their country, everything is carried in this fashion—are no more to be pitied than our soldiers burdened on long marches with

000 help each other. If they are sometimes, indeed too often, fleeced by middlemen—and it would seem that the various European administrations, no matter what their nationality, should prevent such speculations in their own best interests—if the natives are fleeced, a European ignorant of the customs and the language would be fleeced all the more. Who would guard his herds during his absence; who would lead them to far markets if he stayed home? It is difficult to find a native [181] who can be fully trusted. At present, however, trading in livestock is the only possible source of profit in the country.

The forthcoming railroad will soon change trade conditions and promote the interests of the Europeans without undermining those of the natives. This is to be desired, because Mossi country will only come fully into its own when its products can be exported. The natives were too long isolated as a result of their continuous warfare, and the nabas, it must be said, were too inclined to monopolize all the goods, for trade to develop in a significant way. The French peace, by making the roads safe, has already done much for the country; it will achieve even more when the railroad which is now cutting across Mossi country links it on the one hand to the Ivory Coast and on the other hand to the Niger Colony. Trade will then no longer be carried out exclusively with the Germans and the British, and as soon as native products find sure channels of export, the raising of livestock and agriculture itself will be greatly extended. The Mossi are not averse to trade. [181 They actually seem to possess a real knack for it, which until now 439] they have had no opportunity to exercise freely. They have not yet taken full advantage of their transactions, and this is why they seemed to some observers to have no aptitude for trade. They will adapt to it, as they already are.

/65/ Chapter 3. Hygiene, Disease, Death, and Burial

828 Part of life, especially the life of a Black, is spent in sleep, but 774 the slumberer is sometimes disturbed by dreams that are more or less 787 extraordinary. The Mossi attribute dreams to ancestral and other spirits. They also say that the soul leaves the body during sleep and does the things witnessed in the dream. Sorcerers are consulted to find out what caused the dreams and how to cope with the bad omens.

439 As far as onions are concerned, the Mossi are familiar with
262 them and call them albasalé, but do not cultivate them. It is the Haoussa, on their way in from Bandiagara, who buy them from the Habé and bring them to the Mossi. The growers themselves sometimes come in large caravans and sell them at Ouagadougou.

248 /484/ We are now finished with the Mossi food crops. Let us proceed to other crops.

Cotton (lamdo or lango in Mossi) is a dry-season crop here rather than a rainy-season crop.

It is planted near the soukala, or else in the bush along the watercourses.

During the winter season, grass along watercourses is cut down and left lying there to fertilize the ground. Then cotton is planted at the end of the rainy season. Holes are made into the earth with the koutiaga, three or four cotton seeds are placed in each hole and then covered up. The cotton emerges from the ground at the end of five or six days. Weeds are pulled out every fortnight. The cotton ripens at the end of 100 days. The stem may reach 75 centimeters or 1.50 meters in height, depending on the quality of the soil. Then comes the harvesting, which extends over a period of thirty or forty days, because one must wait for the pod to burst and the boll to appear before plucking. The women, girls, and small boys do this plucking.

The Mossi grow a considerable amount of cotton and take very good care of their fields. In any case, the soil and climate of the region are rather propitious to this crop. The harvesting is done in February and March. The average local price of cotton is one franc
[435] a kilogram.

249 Tobacco is also partly a dry-season crop. At least its cultivation begins during the rainy season, extends into the dry season, and ends only in the latter. Tobacco is grown near the soukala like maize, large red millet, hemp, etc.

Tobacco is sown during the rainy season near the soukala. Twenty-five days are allowed to elapse, and then the plants are dug out and transplanted to another spot near the soukala. When the

231 Donkeys are relatively numerous in Mossi territory. They are light grey in color, with a handsome black strip on the withers which extends down the right and left sides. The Mossi are very fond of [492] riding them. They do this, incidentally, all the way back, sitting on the donkey's rump, and it is a rather comical sight. They are beginning to use their donkeys in trading. Formerly they did not do this, since they did not engage in trading.

[435] The average price of a donkey is 25 francs.

Mule breeding is unknown among the Mossi. It is practiced in [232 439] Sokoto lands among the Haoussa, who sometimes bring mules into /Mossi/ territory.

As for horses, the Mossi have three races.

1. In the northeast there is a horse of rather large stature, from 1.50 to 1.60 meters in height, elegant, with delicate joints and lines recalling the true Arab horse. These horses, ridden too early and too recklessly by the natives, are soon worn out.

2. The southern horse, which is to be found in the southern part of the Ouagadougou circle and in the Tenkodogo residency. It is small in stature, thin, rather stocky. Better adapted to /491/ the Sudanese climate than the large northern horse, it possesses greater strength and endurance.

3. The Mossi horse proper, which seems to derive from a cross between the northern and southern races. It is small in stature, but strong-backed, vigorous, tough, and frugal. It is less handsome than the northern horse, but more attractive than the Boussansé horse. On the other hand, it endures the climate better than the former, less well than the latter.

231 A southern horse is worth from 80 to 100 francs, a Mossi horse 435 is worth about 150 francs, and finally, a northern horse is worth from 200 to 400 francs. There are about 7,000 horses in the Ouagadougou circle.

231 The horses are kept in the villages during the dry season. They are given millet and peanut greens to eat. Grass is cut down in the bush and given to them when it dries. During the rainy season, the [554] horses are usually taken to the bush. Only the chiefs keep their horses in the soukala, where the animals are brought fresh grass, millet, water and salt. Other people take their horses to the bush and tie them beside their field so they may browse on the grass.

326 In short, the blacksmith's profession is of greater consequence to him than anything else, although he avails himself of several other occupations.

[564] Mossi blacksmiths do not form a caste. That is to say, anyone can marry among them.

306 Let us proceed to the jewelers or copper workers (niaka in Mossi).

●439 The Mossi have been familiar with copper for a long time, although West Africa does not produce it. The Yarsé have sought it at Ouanké, Kintampo, and even Kumasi from times immemorial. It comes from the coastal area, where it is brought by the Whites in the form of brass rods 30 or 40 centimeters long (like curtain rods). Nowadays, it is the British who supply the Gold Coast with copper, no doubt in the wake of the Portuguese and Dutch.

306 The niaka earns more money than the blacksmith. He buys the copper rods from the Dioula and makes them into various items /517/ 301 such as women's copper leggings adorned with crocodiles, and thick copper bracelets worn at the wrists and ankles by women and soroné (pages). Depending on their thickness, these bracelets sell for 2,500 [435] to 20,000 cowries. He also makes women's copper hairpins, and low-price rings worth from 100 to 200 cowries.

306 Prior to the arrival of the French, these jewelers also made copper objects depicting everyday scenes, landscapes, huts. The 532 chiefs bought them, but now these objects, at least the more ancient ones, have become very difficult to obtain. It seems that the German physician Frobenius, when he passed through Mossi territory at the end of 1908, acquired some very beautiful specimens of ancient Mossi manufacture for an exorbitant price. Nowadays, one [439] can imagine what the old industry was like by looking at the small items made at Ouagadougou by a few Europeanized Mossi who sell them on the spot for the benefit of local Whites. It might almost be said, therefore, that they manufacture them for export purposes. These items, made by the lost-wax process, are rather interesting and quite artistic for Blacks.

325 The tools of the niaka are about the same as those of the black-306 smith:

413

1. The small portable anvil or kissiguiré.
2. The hammer or kouadara.
3. Shears (niougou) to pick copper pieces from the fire.

286 "This kind of braiding is not exported."
291

294 There are tailors as well as weavers among the Mossi. The
563 tailor's trade, incidentally, is exercised in Mossi lands not only by the Mossi but also by the Yarsé and by some of the Haoussa who are settled in the territory.

294 Mossi tailors till the soil during the winter season and work as tailors during the dry season. Their fields net them more than their trade.

Most Mossi tailors do custom work. Cotton strips are brought to them, and they sew them into the required garment. Others purchase cotton strips, make them into various garments (skirts, cloaks, trousers, caps) and have their wives sell them at market. Those, however, are in the minority.

A cloak is called fougou in Mossi, a skirt fougoupoko from poko, "woman" and fougou, "cloak." Trousers are called koulouga.

/534/ Let us add that garment manufacture has remained a family industry in much of Mossi territory. Many Mossi can sew, and they make their own clothes by sewing up cotton strips. Let
[462] us note here that as in nearly all of West Africa, it is the men who sew rather than the women. In this area of Africa, indeed, sewing is essentially a male occupation rather than a female one.

Now to present a Ouagadougou tailor, Mohammadi Bagaré.

He tills the soil and does nothing else during the winter season. He exercises his tailor's trade during the dry season.

He does custom work. Those who want a garment bring him cotton strips in sufficient numbers, and he makes the requested gar-
[435] ment. He asks 1,000 cowries to make a large cloak, 500 for a small one, 200 for a skirt. To make a cap he asks only for one kola nut, which is worth 50 cowries at Ouagadougou. He takes 200 cowries for a pair of trousers.

It takes him five days' work to make a large cloak, two days for a small one, one day for a skirt, two days for a pair of trousers, one hour for a cap.

[412 His only working tool is the needle. Mohammadi uses European
439] needles.

000 We are now finished with Mossi industries, not because this work is complete or definitive of course, nor because I have listed and thoroughly studied all this people's trades. I have said enough, however, to draw a significant outline /537/ of these industries and to show that they are flourishing. We may now proceed to trading.

438 443 Among the Mossi, as everywhere else in West Africa, one must distinguish the internal trade of the territory from its external trade.

As among other Blacks, the internal trade formerly was, and still is, ensured by village markets which are held at the most important localities on set days, for example every three days, every five days, etc. Thus at Ouagadougou, before the arrival of the Whites, the market was held every three days. Now it is a daily affair.

443 782 At every village where a market was held, there was a "market chief" named by the village chief. The market chief performed a sacrifice for the market. On a large consecrated stone he killed a chicken, a goat, or a sheep which he provided himself. [776] The animal was offered to the sky divinity (Ounam) to preclude fights on the market place. When this was over, our chief gave a hand to Ounam in his pacifying role, with the aid of a club if necessary.

443 All internal and external products of the territory were retailed at those markets, largely by women whom the Blacks, as we know, are in the habit of sending to market with surplus goods to sell. We shall not dwell on the internal Mossi trade, which is the same as in all black countries, a small retail trade nourished and vitalized by the external trade. Let us, therefore, proceed to the latter.

439 The external Mossi trade is the usual trade of the Sudan, which we have already described and which operates from north to south and south to north. Livestock is led toward the south, kola nuts are brought toward the north, salt is brought back toward the south, etc. We should add to this the cotton strips which constitute one of the important Mossi products (they are made by the Yarsé and by the Mossi themselves, as we saw). Those cotton strips, like livestock, are taken south where cotton is poorly grown.

439 We must add without further delay, however, that it is not the Mossi who do this trading but the Yarsé we know so /538/ well, and the Haoussa settled in Mossi territory. Mossi trade, therefore, is not really Mossi, or at least it was not in the past. If it has now begun to be to some extent, it is thanks to French settlement in the territory.

439 After conquering Mossi lands (1896), indeed, we levied a tax
651 on the population. This tax, low at first, rose rapidly over the last few years. In 1906 it amounted to 311,000 francs in the Ouagadougou circle itself, for a population of 861,000 inhabitants. In 1907 it rose to 366,000 francs, in 1909 to 555,000 francs, in 1910 to 656,000 francs. Furthermore, beginning in 1908, it was exacted with so much strictness and on such short notice that it was exactly as though its amount had been increased threefold. Under the circumstances, the Mossi were forced to take to trading in order to secure the French money they did not have, since the local
[436] currency is the cowrie and the French administration will not take it. They were forced to go and sell their oxen, even their cows, something the Black will only consent to do when hard pressed and in the direst need. In short, the Mossi now organize small caravans on a village basis. Local young men are sent in groups to Ouanké to
[484] sell cattle, sheep, goats, donkeys, local horses, and cotton strips. They bring back either French currency or kola nuts. When they bring nuts, they go and sell them at Saraféré or Sofara and get salt or 5-franc pieces. In other words, the Mossi are taking to trade, owing to a pressing need.

439 The Mossi, nevertheless, may hardly be regarded as a trader. He has been one for an extremely short time, and he is not much of a trader yet.

To summarize, there is a strong current of exchange trading in Mossi territory from north to south and south to north. There are also important market towns in the territory, or rather large market villages, as we already know. This exchange trading and those important markets, however, are the creation and achievement of the Yarsé and of a small number of Haoussa. The Mossi themselves, in the past, had no part in all this, except /539/ for the fact that the

M 439 centralized structure of the Mossi empire ensured the necessary safety for exchanges and trade. Nowadays they still have a very small part in it, and only when forced and pressed by the need to pay taxes.

M 439 183 To corroborate this Mossi incapacity for trade, I need only select from my field notes of December, 1908. Here is a significant one concerning a Mossi village in the northern part of the /Ouagadougou/ circle, "No trade in this village. It is the Yarsé from Téma who come and buy the cotton bands dyed blue and sell them at Salaga (Gold Coast). Our Mossi would profit by doing this themselves. They agree but nevertheless fail to do it, saying that their forebears did not do it either. They do no trading, therefore." In another village, Yakki, where industries flourish, I made the following note, "Trade, on the other hand, is nil, as among all Mossi."

M. H 441 439 I stated above that higher trade among the Mossi was confined to a few Haoussa colonies. Concerning this, and in order to give an idea of this trading, I shall record here a short profile of a Haoussa trader from Ouagadougou, Maïguisiri Dangaori, who has been there for fifteen years although his family lives at Iko in Haoussa territory.

He has no fields, of course. He does nothing but trade.

He buys cattle and sheep locally. He takes them to Kumasi on the Gold Coast (this is not usually done by the Yarsé, who do not go so far south). He sells them there, and with the returns he buys kola nuts, European fabrics, glass trinkets, sugar, cast-iron pots, etc. On the way back, he hires needy Haoussa who live on the Gold Coast as bearers and takes them to Ouagadougou. Each bearer is paid 35 francs on arrival for the fifty days of travel. In addition, he feeds them along the way. Their food costs him 300 cowries a day.

H [482 465]

He sells the goods he brought back, or rather has them sold at the Ouagadougou market, for he has an employee who /540/ sells for him at market. This employee is not a member of his family. He is a Haoussa, to whom he gives 5 percent of the sales. That is all. Beyond this he gives him nothing, not even food.

Our trader usually waits until everything is sold before returning to the Gold Coast. If the merchandise does not sell quickly enough, he picks up what is left and disposes of it on the way back.

M H 441 439 484 The journey takes six months from the time he leaves Ouagadougou to the time he returns. On his way to the Gold Coast he needs no bearers. He merely takes a Peuhl to herd the cattle, and provides him with food and 300 cowries a day, plus 1 franc on arrival per head of cattle herded.

Our trader stays with another Haoussa from Ouagadougou, another trader of course, who is wealthier than he. He does not pay rent, but offers him gifts from time to time in return for his hospitality.

His family lives at Iko in Haoussa territory, and consists of three wives and three children. He goes and sees them every two years.

M H 441 439 We can see that the Haoussa do their trading in grander and more forceful fashion than the Yarsé. They do not hesitate to expatriate themselves in order to carry out their trade, and in this fashion they have actually colonized southern Nigeria, Dahomey, Togoland, the Gold Coast, Mossi country, etc. Once settled there, they carry their trading operations farther than local merchants, and they hardly do anything else. While the Yarsé is an example of cultivator-trader, the Haoussa of Mossi territory is in most cases an example of pure trader who specializes completely in trading. This is why he towers above the whole trading structure of the country. Bent on gain, a speculator in cowries and French currency, more intelligent than the Mossi and Yarsé, he amasses large fortunes.

M 567 439 In order to be quite thorough on the subject of present and past trading in Mossi territory, it should be added that formerly the slave trade was carried out alongside that in livestock, cotton fabric, kola nut, and salt. The slaves came chiefly from Gourounsi, /541/, Boussansé, and Kipirsi lands. The Djermabé /Zerma?/, especially, sold slaves to the Mossi in very large numbers when they pillaged Gourounsi territory. This trade, like the others, was in the hands of the Yarsé and Haoussa.

M 839 439 304 Let us also add a word about the now-abolished eunuch trade. Formerly, the Mossi furnished some to the Haoussa, who forwarded them to Turkey via Egypt. The operated men were Gourounsi sold to the Mossi by the Zaberma and by their chief Baba-Tô. Some Mossi villages specialized in this kind of work. The village of Koubry,

839 especially, subsisted upon it. The victims, children from twelve
439 to fifteen years old, were provided by the Moro Naba, who kept
304 them afterward or sold them to the Haoussa.

In 1900 our ambassador to Turkey learned that a shipment of eunuchs which had reached Constantinople had originated in Mossi territory, which we had occupied since 1896. He warned the Minister of Foreign Affairs, who notified his colleague the Minister of the Colonies. Strict orders were issued to put an end to this Mossi industry, which has since ceased to exist.

439 Let us finally add the grain trade, which is unusual in Mossi territory. In the years 1906, 1907, and 1908 which saw poor harvests, however, the Mossi were forced to acquire grain in Yatenga (Ouahigouya circle) and in Gourounsi territory by selling livestock.

We have now concluded our discussion of Mossi occupations. Let us proceed to a study of the family and the superposed social organisms.

Chapter II

The Mossi: The Family, Public Powers, and Religion

593 We must state first that the Mossi family is a partly decommunalized family. This may come as a surprise in view of the foregoing section on work (cultivation predominates, stockbreeding is poor, industries flourish, trade is nonexistent), which had led us to expect something altogether different. Nevertheless, this is a fact.

The family is even highly decommunalized, although not everywhere to the same degree. In this respect, five different family types are to be found.

596 The first two are quite rare. They would seem to be witnesses
326 to an ancient state of affairs which has now vanished. Thus, one finds the common patriarchal type among those blacksmiths who are gathered into /special/ quarters or even villages and whom we mentioned in the section on industries. This type is found only among them and not among isolated blacksmiths, where only the common Mossi family type occurs.

The Mossi grow tobacco in fields around their

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248 homesteads, where they also cultivate their most important cash crops, cotton and indigo, which are used in the manufacture and dyeing of cotton cloth.

136 The wild fauna of Mossi country include several species of antelope, deer, monkeys, rabbits, snakes, and wild pigs. Elephants roam the beds of rivers and streams and often destroy cultivated fields, while lions and hyenas distress the people by attacking livestock. The pools and rivers of Mossi country are inhabited by turtles, crocodiles, and various species of scaled and scaleless fish. Chickens, muscovy ducks, and half-domesticated guinea fowl are the most valuable species of birds.

231 The Mossi have long been famous for their splendid donkeys and [492] horses. Donkeys are sometimes ridden, but they are used primarily as [439] beasts of burden. Horses are important for military and ceremonial purposes and for export to the tsetse-fly zones to the south. The Mossi raise two main types of cattle: a zebu-like animal in the northern regions and a [439] dwarf variety in the south. These animals are raised primarily for their milk and for export, and are seldom killed for meat until they are fairly old. Goats and sheep provide the main source of meat. Hog-raising is not widespread, and seems to be declining in importance with the increased ob- [771] [178] servance of Islamic food taboos, which is on the uprise even among people who are still pagans.

135 The subsoil of Mossi country is not well known, but so far there have been no major discoveries of mineral deposits. The only known gold field [301] remained unworked in aboriginal times. The Mossi do not like to wear [325] gold ornaments, preferring jewelry worked from imported copper and [439] silver. The northern Mossi worked their local iron in aboriginal times, but those in the south obtained this metal from caravan traders.

175 The nineteenth-century reports of Barth and other European travelers 439 indicate that the Mossi conducted a rather extensive foreign trade. At least six caravan routes passed through their territory, and traders such as the [443] Hausa and Mandingo visited the important Mossi trading centers at Yako, Pouitenga, and Ouagadougou, where they exchanged Saharan and forest products for Mossi livestock and cloth.[8]

101 The Mossi belong to the Voltaic culture area, a name given by Delafosse to the regions drained by the Black, Red, and White Voltas and their tributaries. The area embraces parts of Mali, the Ivory Coast, Dahomey, the Upper Volta, and northern Ghana.[4] It includes a vast congeries of peoples such [197] as the Dagomba, Mamprusi, Dagari, Birifo, Senufo, Gurmanche, Gurunsi, Lobi, Bobo, Tallensi, Konkomba, Dogon, Somba, Fulse, and Ninisi, all of whom speak languages belonging to the Gur or Moshi-Grunshi group of

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because of this delinquency, the Mogho Naba might hesitate to come to the aid of any of his vassals if a general war broke out. It is true that the Mogho Naba did not aid the Yatenga ruler when the French arrived. But whether this was because of his failure to pay taxes, or because the French conquest of the Yatenga coincided with a civil war there, we shall probably never know. We do know that many of the Mogho Naba's vassals came to his aid when the French finally arrived at Ouagadougou. It is my opinion that the gifts exchanged between Yatenga and Ouagadougou were not "tributary," but were more in the nature of tokens of friendship between two peers.

The Mogho Naba and his provincial ministers also received revenue as a function of their judicial roles. The nature and disposition of the fines levied against legal offenders were discussed in Chapter V. The Mogho Naba's fees came in the form of the traditional gifts the litigants gave him even before their cases were tried. These gifts were never regarded as bribes, for this would have contradicted the Mossi axiom that "the truth is at Ouagadougou."

The Mogho Naba inherited all the property of the Kamsaogho Naba, and claimed all the property of district chiefs who died without close relatives. He also received inheritance taxes (fado) from the estates of deceased district chiefs. In collecting the fado, the Mogho Naba first retained the horse on which the messenger came to announce the chief's death. He reciprocated by sending envoys with cowries and animals to be offered to their common ancestors at the chief's funeral. After the funeral, the envoys claimed the dead chief's quiver of arrows to take to Ouagadougou for deposit with those of other dead chiefs. Then they demanded the fado, and jestingly told the heirs that the Mogho Naba would be satisfied with nothing less than "a thousand of everything" (*tusri bumbu fa*) the deceased had possessed: wives, slaves, horses, cows, goats, chickens, articles of clothing, and so on. The heirs pleaded poverty and jokingly gave the envoys a few old and sickly animals, old chickens, tattered pieces of clothing, etc. Eventually, they handed out the fado, which usually consisted of livestock, clothing, food, weapons, jewelry, cowries, and even slaves. Lastly, they gave the envoys the chief's ceremonial horse and presents for themselves.

The Mogho Naba and his ministers collected a considerable amount of revenue from the traders who visited Ouagadougou and the larger market towns and village markets throughout the kingdom.[4] The Mossi (especially the assimilated Yarse) were good traders, and they benefited from their country's strategic location between the Sahara and the forest regions. According to Barth, some six caravan routes crossed the country, linking

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the Niger River area to the Gold Coast and Togoland. Important stops were made at such Mossi centers as Ouagadougou, Bere, Dakay, La, Mane, Yako, and Koupela.[7] At Dori, northwest of Ouagadougou, Barth found Mossi with "their fine donkeys, which are greatly sought after." He adds that in addition,

> the people of Mossi supply this market with gabaga, or "tari" [cotton bands], as Arabs near Timbuktu call them, cotton being extremely cheap in their country, so that in the great market places of that country, especially in Kulfela [Koupela, but really at Poitenga a few miles away], an indigo-colored shirt is not worth more than from 700 to 800 [cowry] shells. . . . Besides salt, cotton strips, dyed cloth, kola nuts, corn, and asses, some copper manufactured chiefly into large drinking-vessels is also brought into the market by the people of Mossi. However, I do not think they manufacture the copper vessels themselves, but bring them from Ashanti.[8]

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Dubois, one of the early visitors to Timbuktu, tells us that he saw Mossi men carrying on their traditional trade in that city. Mossi traders dealt in such diverse commodities as millet, rice, manioc, peanuts, honey, kola nuts, peppers, dried onions, tobacco, dried fish, soap, iron, antimony, lead, cotton bands, straw hats, mats, jars, pots, and calabashes. They traded these articles for needles, mirrors, beads, coral, amber, tea, coffee, perfumes, carpets, fezzes, tailored robes, and salt. What impressed Dubois most was that while the merchants from Bamako, Djenne, Sansanding, and Touat enjoyed themselves at Timbuktu, "the great town of pleasures with the freest morals in the Sudan," and spent a great deal of money in gifts to beautiful women, "the Mossi did not waste their money, and left as soon as they had finished their business."[9] On the way south, Mossi and other caravaneers picked up goods from the Yatenga and other northern Ouagadougou provinces before stopping at the capital and then proceeding to the forest regions.

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It is impossible to determine the exact volume of caravan trade that passed through Mossi country, and the amount of revenue it brought to the Mossi rulers. We can get some idea of this trade, however, by examining the customs reports on goods crossing the border between Mossi country and the northern territories of the Gold Coast in the few years just following European conquest.

The official figures for 1901 and 1903 are as follows:[10]

Year	Horses	Head of Cattle	Sheep and Goats	Loaded Donkeys	Bales of Cotton Cloth
1901	126	3,111	18,181	2,095	236
1903	196	6,624	30,392	4,294	269

439 Marc, who had the opportunity to check the volume of this trade in 1904 and 1905, estimates that about 16,000 head of cattle and 75,000 sheep and goats passed through the two customs posts in Mossi country. Furthermore, he believes that since "the Mossi also supply in part the markets of Togoland and the market at Bondoukou [Ivory Coast], one may assume a minimum annual export of 20,000 head of cattle and 100,000 sheep or goats. The import of kola nuts is at least 500 tons."[11] It is clear that this volume [174] of trade could not have been achieved so soon after the French conquest. [651] We can only conclude that it existed prior to the coming of the Europeans, and that it brought the Mossi rulers a considerable income.

643 The Mogho Naba's officials collected taxes from all caravans that passed 651 through his capital. The caravaneers also gave the Mogho Naba important gifts, and he apparently traded with them, even if always to his own 439 profit. Binger states that Mogho Naba Sanum forced horse traders from [431] the Yatenga and Hausa merchants to sell him part of their commodities at one-hundredth the purchase price.[12] Crozat reports that Mogho Naba Wobogo

> appears to have had some business relations with white merchants who came to Salaga every dry season. He sent horses to them in exchange for silver. He claims that he had no reason to be pleased with their integrity, and that the silver they sent him contained plenty of copper. Some traders apparently came as far as Ouagadougou, bringing merchandise of German origin. There was one of them there during my stay. I was told that he was an important *marabout*, a shereef, perhaps an Arab or a Moor, for I was assured that he was very light in color. As was repeated to me several times, his relations with the king were limited to the solemn greetings on Fridays. He never entered the royal hut in spite of being an important marabout. He was at Ouagadougou for about three and one-half months, but he was compelled to return to the coast since the merchandise which he had brought was exhausted. He spoke no Mossi.[13]

439 All the caravans that passed through Mossi country were obliged to stop 651 and give presents to the district officials. Those caravaneers who tried to 634 elude taxation by going through the forest ran the risk of being attacked by local nobles, who usually confiscated their goods.

The Mogho Naba and the lesser chiefs had "market officials" who taxed 649 the merchants in the markets of their territories. The officials at Ouaga- 651 dougou, the Kos Naba ("sales chief") and the Raga Naba ("market chief"), 443 were fairly rigorous in their exactions. The Kos Naba collected taxes in cowries for every cow slaughtered at the market, and also took its hump and gave it to the Nemdo Naba ("meat chief") for distribution in the royal household. He also collected taxes on every cow sold in the market, but

Naba Baongo (ca. 1800–30) decided that it was more profitable to sell them.[16] Subsequent rulers, especially the two Mogho Nanamse who ruled just prior to the French conquest, sold most of their captives to passing caravans or in special sections of the larger markets. When other persons sold slaves in the market, the Raga Naba collected some 1,000 cowries on each transaction—the largest tax on any market commodity.

The Mossi rulers seem to have benefited even more from the sale of eunuchs, for they had a monopoly over them. The Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou sent some captured slaves and all recidivous thieves to Teemetenga village in Koubri district, some 13 miles south of the capital, to be operated upon.[17] So successful were the Mossi surgeons that—in contrast to specialists in other areas, who lost nine lives for every successful castration—the mortality among the Mossi was only one out of ten.[18] Some of the eunuchs furnished by the Mossi were sold as far away as Constantinople, a fact which surprised the French ambassador to Turkey who saw them there in 1900.[19]

In addition to slaves and eunuchs, the Mogho Naba kept a large number of bondsmen to provide services for him. One group, the Dapore, lived in a ward of the capital called Dapoya, and had a chief, the Dapore Naba, who was himself a Dapore. The origin of these people is obscure, but they seem to have been the children of foreign captives who were brought to Ouagadougou and placed in the ruler's service. Some of them even claimed that their ancestors had come to Ouagadougou voluntarily and had placed themselves under the care and protection of the ruler. This seems unlikely, however, since the status of these people resembles that of persons captured by Sudanese rulers and installed in special wards as serfs.[20] Some of the Dapore lived in villages of their own and cultivated fields for the Mogho Naba. Others lived in a ward of Ouagadougou, served in the palace household, and provided the royal executioners. Some were selected to serve as palace eunuchs, and placed under the charge of the Kamsaogho Naba. The Dapore were hardly ever sold unless they were convicted criminals. The Mogho Naba and his chiefs refrained from selling serfs or captives who had been born in Mossi country. However, they often claimed the sons and daughters of these people as pages or pughsiudse.

The Baglere made up the second group of bondsmen providing services for the Mogho Naba. They, too, lived in a special ward and were headed by the Baglere Naba, one of their own people. Their origin is also obscure: some of them claimed to be descended from Fulani slaves who had run away from their masters and sought asylum in Mossi country; others believed that they were the descendants of foreign captives. The Baglere

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not enter Mossi territory. Nevertheless, he obtained rather precise information on the important caravan routes leading from Timbuktu through the Mossi trade centers of Ouagadougou, Kaya, Yako, and Koupela, down to Salaga and other towns in Ghana, and even across to Sansane Mango in Togoland. His data on the Mossi are invaluable: 175* 177 [114]

> The whole triangle interposed between the Niger toward the north, and the country of the Eastern Mandingoes or Wangarawa toward the south, appears to be inhabited by a single race of people whose language, although they are divided into several states and nations, nevertheless appears originally to have been the same stock. It is very probable that this race in ancient times occupied the whole upper course of the Niger, and that this tract may have been wrested from it in later times by the Songhai and the Mandingoes, especially that section of the latter which is generally called Bambara. These are the Gourma toward the N.E., the Tombo toward the N.W., and between them the Mossi. . . . The strongest among these pagan kingdoms five centuries ago, and even at the present moment, is that of the Mossi, although the country is split into a number of small principalities, almost totally independent of each other, and paying only some slight homage to the ruler of the principality of Woghodogo.[7] [101] [631]

Europe learned more about the Mossi from Sigismund Koelle, who visited Sierra Leone in 1854. His informant was one Andrew Dixon, who had lived in Koupela before being captured and sold into slavery. He furnished information on the location of the Mossi, their wars with the Busansi, and their important commercial and political relations with the Ashanti.[8] Koelle's report, taken in conjunction with the reports of Dupuis, Bowdich, Clapperton, and Barth, shows that the Ashanti, like the Hausa and other coastal peoples, were protecting their trade when they attempted to isolate the peoples of the interior from the Europeans. But as soon as the British defeated the Ashanti in the war of 1873–74, the Sudan was opened and adventurers poured in. In 1877 and 1878, two missionaries of the Basel Mission visited the northern regions of Ghana, and subsequently gave a good description of Mossi commerce in that area.[9] Lonsdale, who visited Salaga in 1881, found among the traders in the market "the Mossi with his cattle, sheep, and slaves—these latter, generally Gurunsi, are not exposed for sale in the street or market, but can be seen where the owner resides."[10] [115] [797] [439] [567]

The activities of the various European nations in West Africa and other regions at this time led to military and diplomatic difficulties, which the Berlin Conference of 1884–85 was convened to resolve. Agreement was reached to assign "spheres of influence" to the various European nations, to regulate trade, and to provide for arbitration between rival claimants of conquered or "protected" territories. In West Africa, this meant the end

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133 Red and White Voltas are merely a series of small stagnant pools during the dry season. In some low-lying areas around the main water courses, trapped water provides the moisture for dank riverine vegetation.

134 The soils of Mossi country are mainly ferruginous with red argils and pure silicates of aluminum predominating in the northern region. The soils in the south are thin, sandy, and formed from the decom-
137 position of crystalline rocks and sandstones. During the dry season the Mossi landscape appears too sterile to produce plant life, but with the first drops of rain the entire country soon becomes covered with the grasses and shrubs which are characteristic of this Sudanese region. The uncultivated but valuable trees of this area include the Baobab *(Adansonia digitata)*, the locust bean *(Parkia biglobosa)*, the shea-butter *(Butyrospermum parkii)*, the tamarind *(Tamarindus*
241 *indica)* and the kapok *(Bombax costatum)*. The plants which the Mossi cultivate include varieties of cereals, roots and legumes. Sorghums *(Sorghum vulgare)* and millets *(Pennisetum typhoides)* are their staples, with maize *(Zea mays)* filling the role of a secondary but rather useful crop because its growing cycle is shorter than that of other important crops and it breaks the "hungry period." Maize would be a more important crop to the Mossi if it could grow on soil less fertile than what is normally available around the Mossi compound—the area where it brings the greatest yield. Peanuts, onions,
249 rice, beans, okra, peas and sweet potatoes are other food crops. To-
248 bacco is grown for local consumption, but the crops which have the greatest export value are cotton and indigo, used for making cloth and dyeing it.

224 The wild fauna of the country does not provide a major part of the
262 food needs of the Mossi people. The several species of deer and antelope, monkeys, rabbits and wild pig are hunted and used for food.
136 But the elephants and lions which are also found in the country are sources of great distress to the people because the former decimate the growing crops and the latter attack and kill the grazing animals.

231 The Mossi rear two main types of cattle: a zebu-like one in the north-
[231] ern regions and a small dwarf variety in the south. These animals are kept primarily for their milk and for export, and are seldom killed
231 for meat until they are very old. The animals which provide the
262 Mossi with meat are goats, sheep, chickens and guinea fowls. Pig-
[177] raising is not widespread and seems to be declining in importance with the increasing observance of Islamic food taboos, even among
262 people who are still pagan. Fish forms only a minor part of the Mossi
187 diet and is obtained mainly from traders rather than from local activ-
231 ities. The Mossi also rear donkeys and horses for which they have

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long been famous. The former are sometimes ridden but are used 231
primarily as beasts of burden. Horses were and are still important 492
for military and ceremonial purposes and for external trade to other 432
areas.

The Mossi have never excelled in metalworking. The people in 326
the northern part of the country have worked indigenous ores since 435
aboriginal times. Those in the south get iron mainly from traders 438
and caravans. The other metals which the Mossi smiths manufacture into tools and ornaments are also obtained from traders.

TRADE IN HISTORICAL TIMES

The geographic position of Mossi country has much to do with its 131
being an important trade and market center. The country itself has 437
always produced grain, cotton and livestock for export. And for 487
several centuries caravans have passed through this region carrying Sudanese and Saharan products to the forest zones to the south, and carrying forest products back to the arid north. The beginning of 174
this trade is lost in the dim past, but it safe to say that it developed 437
shortly after or along with the founding of Timbuktu about 1100 A.D. The Mossi themselves were not definitely linked to this important *entrepot* until they raided it in 1328, but we can assume that they had been trading there for some time before that event took place. Similarly, we have no record of when the Mossi began trading with the forest zones, but we can also assume that this trade began around the same period or even before.

Our first evidence of Mossi trade and commerce comes from Europ- 125
eans who were themselves interested in conducting their own trading 437
activities with the peoples in the Bend of the Niger. Bowditch, an Englishman who had journeyed to Ashanti to sign a treaty facilitating the reopening of a profitable trade with the coast, wangled the first important piece of information about the Mossi from his reluctant hosts:

> Five journies from Yngwa is Mosee, a more warlike but less visited 101
> kingdom: it consists of many states, but the superior monarch is named 631
> Billa, and the capital Kookoopella. I place it to the N.W. because its merchants pass by Yngwa; they do not cross the Karhalla [White Volta] nor any river which is not fordable. (Bowditch 1819 : 180)

This information is not strictly correct since Koupela was not the 366
capital of any of the Mossi kingdoms, but Bowditch's informant had probably heard of Koupela because it was the largest political entity near the large caravan center at Pouitenga.

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175 stopped at "Fura, a large market place." On the fourth day it stopped
437 at Dullugu (probably present-day Doulougou), and on the fifth day
487 at "Dakay [or Rakay] a place belonging to the territory of Mosi."
103 Finally, on the thirteenth day it arrived at Mane.[4] The last caravan route that Barth reported ran from:

> Kaye to Belussa [Boulsa], and thence to Belanga [Bilanga] ... From Belussa a person on horseback reaches Belanga comfortably the second day, the great station between these two towns being Alitinga, still belonging to Mosi, and an important place, inhabited by Mosi and Hausa traders; but common native travellers generally halt twice between Belanga and Alitinga, in Nyennyega and Koburi [Kouri], and once between Alitinga and Belanga, in a Gurma village called Yamba.

175 The goods which these caravans carried appear to have varied a
437 great deal. Barth met a Mossi caravan at Dori, southeast of Timbuktu,
439 and reported that to this market:

> [231] The people of Mosi bring chiefly their fine donkeys, which are greatly sought after; and a numerous body of people of the Sheikh A'hmedu, of Hamda-Ailahi, had left a few days before with a number of asses which
> [435] they had brought here. Besides asses, the people of Mosi supply this market
> [434] with gabaga [cotton strips] or tari, as the Arabs near Timbuktu call them, cotton being extremely cheap in their country, so that in the great market place of that country, especially in Kulfela [Koupela, but really at Pouitenga a few miles away] an indigo-colored shirt is not worth more than from 700 to 800 [cowry] shells ... Besides salt, cotton strips, dyed cloth, Kola nuts, corn, and asses, some copper manufactured chiefly into large drinking vessels is also brought into the market by the people of Mosi. However, I do not think they manufacture the copper vessels themselves, but bring them from Asanti. (Barth 1859 : III, 203–4)

Adolphe Krause, a German who was actually the first European to enter Mossi country, went through Wagadougou with a load of kola nuts destined for Timbuktu. He joined the caravan at Salaga on July 7, 1885, stopped at the Bere market in Mossi country during August, and then proceeded to their capital where he remained until October 26 before resuming his northward journey (Krause 1887–8).

Felix Dubois, who visited Timbuktu in 1895, gives us some information on the actual products which the Mossi traded there. He reported that the Mossi came to the market organized into caravans of oxen, donkeys and porters, and brought such commodities as livestock, millet, rice, manioc, peanuts, honey, kola nuts, peppers, dried onions, tobacco, dried fish, soap, iron, antimony, lead, cotton bands, straw hats, mats, jars, pots and calabashes. These goods the Mossi

(4) Barth's skill as a reporter is evident here. He is quite correct in disbelieving that the caravans could have reached Kong on the tenth day. Marc, 1900, agrees with Barth.

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traded for such articles as needles, mirrors, beads, coral and amber, tea, coffee, fezes, tailored robes, and most important of all, salt (Dubois 1899 : 292–304). Presumably, by the time Dubois reported on this trade, the Mossi had stopped trading slaves and eunuchs into this region, because we know from other sources that these people were sold through Timbuktu as far north as Algeria and Constantinople.[8]

The caravans which brought desert and northern goods into Mossi country collected grain, cotton cloth, livestock and slaves to be sold in the forest areas. Captain Lonsdale, an Englishman who visited Salaga in 1881 and gave a good description of its markets and traders, includes among the latter

> ... the Mossi with his cattle, sheep and slaves—these latter, generally Gurunsi, are not exposed for sale in the street or market, but can be seen where the owner resides. (Lonsdale 1882)

The extent to which the Mossi people themselves participated in all aspects of the caravan trade which crossed their country is far from clear. Barth, Lonsdale and Dubois all report that the Mossi were members of the caravans both in the forest zone and in Timbuktu, and my own informants agree with these reports. In contrast, however, both Marc and Tauxier believe that the Mossi were seldom the actual caravaneers. Marc declares that the Yarse

> ... are the most numerous group devoting itself to commerce in the region which we occupy. This is equally true of the Hausa, but probably only over the last years. Moors come sometimes from Dori as far as Wagadougou. One seldom meets Mande-Dioulas. As for the pure Mossi, it was only a short while ago that they themselves began to follow the caravans. (Marc 1909 : 170–71)

Similarly, Tauxier states that

> ... it is not the Mossi who do this [caravan] trading but the Yarse we know so well, and the Hausa settled in Mossi territory. Mossi trade, therefore, is not really Mossi, or at least it was not in the past. If it has now begun to be to some extent, it is thanks to the French settlement in the territory. (Tauxier 1912 : 538)

In the face of the early reports by Barth and others, how does one resolve the contradiction apparent in Tauxier's comments? These early travelers might have mistaken the Yarse for Mossi since these

(8) Marc, 1909 : 170–171. "We met in Mossi country two natives who, when children, had been seized [as slaves] and led through Timbuktu as far as Algeria ... The commerce in slaves was doubled among the Mossi by commerce in eunuchs. Mossi country was one of those rare countries where people knew how to make them, and the Moro Nabas exported with great profit as far as Constantinople those whom they had had mutilated."

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175 people have become Mossicized in language and culture, but it is
437 doubtful whether they would have taken the Hausa for Mossi. The
441 true Mossi may have played a minor role in the caravan trade, but I am certain that they took part in it and that they did so before the French conquest of their country.

175 There is little doubt that the Mossi traded with the caravans that
437 passed *through* their country. Crozat, who visited Moro Naba Wobogo
439 six years before the conquest, reported that the king

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> . . . appeared to have had some business relations with white merchants who came up to Salaga every dry season. He sent horses to them in exchange for silver. He claims that he had no reasons to be pleased with their integrity and that the silver which they sent to him contained plenty of copper. It happens also that traders may come as far as Wagadougou, bringing merchandise of German origin. There was one of them on hand during my stay at Wagadougou. I was told that he was an important marabout, a shereef, perhaps an Arab or a Moor, for I was assured that he was very light in color. As was repeated to me several times, his relations with the king were limited to the solemn greetings on Fridays. He has never entered the royal hut in spite of being an important marabout. He was at Wagadougou for about three and one-half months, but he was compelled to return to the coast since the merchandise which he had brought was exhausted. He spoke no Mossi. (Crozat 1891)

The caravans which passed through Mossi country were well organized but seemed to have lacked the regularity which was characteristic of the trans-Sahara ones. Those caravans coming from the north were apparently more regular since they had to await the coming of the great trans-Sahara caravans, which brought them salt and other
[366] valuable merchandise. Those coming from Salaga and points south
[221] traveled at all times of the year, a fact which is corroborated by the voyage of Krauss, who arrived at the Bere market during August and the height of the Mossi planting season. This was a period of scarcity or "hungry period" as Krauss himself observed, and it is doubtful whether the Mossi had much to trade at this time. Nevertheless, caravaneers always found some trade goods at the larger Mossi market centers all through the year, even if only cloth and cotton bands.

[22] The main season for external trade in Mossi country came after the harvest. In the words of Marc, who served there shortly after the conquest:

> Towards the end of the rainy season, in September or October, the
> [344] Yarse begin to assemble the livestock in order to leave for the south. In certain large commercial centers like Kaya, Pouitenga, Dakay, one finds
> [422] around this period the owners of livestock: Mossi chiefs, Fulani or rich natives, who are ready to sell their animals. People also assemble sheep of

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people also assemble sheep of
the Mossi variety, which are very puny. The larger variety of long-haired 175
Macina sheep are seldom exported. Once the livestock has been assembled, 437
the chief of the caravan would also provide himself with cotton bands. 439
This native fabric has often been described; it is commonly used on the [231]
caravan routes to pay for the food of the travellers. (Marc 1909 : 172) [436]

Most of the caravans through Mossi country traveled as much as 175
fifteen or twenty miles a day. They left at the first sign of dawn, 437
traveled steadily until the heat became too intense, and then stopped 484
to rest. They resumed their march when the sun was midway between the zenith and the horizon, and then stopped at some village or stream for the night. This schedule was followed on the next day if the caravan was far from a market center, but in the vicinity of a large market the caravan might remain stationary as many as six days while its merchants traded for more livestock or merchandise. This being 175
the case, it is difficult to gauge how long it took the caravans to make 437
the journey from Salaga in Ghana to Timbuktu. Our best data come 484
from an analysis of Krauss' itinerary. He left Salaga with a caravan 487
on July 7, 1885, heading north through Walwale, and arrived in Bere, 103
a distance of some 250 miles (today's road mileage) towards the end of August. Famine delayed the caravan at Bere for some time, and he [231]
did not complete the 50 miles or so to Wagadougou until September 24. He remained in the Mossi capital until October 26, some thirty-two days, before his caravan headed north again through Tema, Yatenga and Bandiagara. Krauss does not tell us when he reached Douentza, some 400 miles northwest of Wagadougou, or how long he remained there, but on December 7, a few days after he had left Douenzta on the last 200- or 250-mile leg of his voyage to Timbuktu, the Moro Naba ordered him to return to Wagadougou. It is possible that it took Krauss' caravan some thirty-five odd days to make the trip from Wagadougou to Douentza. His return to Wagadougou took him only about thirty days, since he arrived there on January 7, 1886. He apparently had to wait some fifteen days there for a caravan going south, because he did not leave the Mossi capital until January 22, 1886 (Krause 1887–88). Judging from this itinerary, it probably took caravans between five and six months to travel from the forest zones to the desert, a distance of about a thousand miles at the most. This averages about six or seven miles a day, with the normal stops for rest and marketing, instead of the fifteen or twenty miles a day which the average caravan covered when it was on the road.

The caravans did not encounter many dangers or difficulties during 175
their voyage. When the caravaneers had friends along the way they 437
stopped at their friends' homes for the night, and when they camped 484
in uninhabited places men were posted to protect the goods and live-
stock against marauding beasts and thieves.

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175 stock against marauding beasts and thieves. All caravaneers had to
437 pay a tax to the local chiefs to cross their borders or to stop in their
486 markets to trade. Binger reported that the caravans which passed
651 through the market center of Wagadougou had to give the Moro
661 Naba a share of their merchandise, aside from the presents which they gave to him. He also reported that the horse traders from the Yatenga, in the north of Mossi country, and the Hausa caravaneers, were sometimes forced to sell part of their wares to the Moro Naba at one-hundredth the purchase price (Binger 1892 : II, 292–300). Not all the caravaneers submitted to extortion, however, and at one period many of them traded with Mane instead of passing through Wagadougou where the tariffs were too high. On the other hand, the Mossi chiefs did not tolerate any trespassing on their territories by
[685] caravans that did not pay taxes. Those who tried to avoid doing so
565 were subjected to attack by the mounted nobles *(nakomce)* on behalf of the district chiefs. Wise caravan leaders not only paid their taxes but established close relationships with the chiefs in order to receive adequate protection from some nobles who illegally attacked and looted the caravans.

175 It is impossible to know the actual volume of caravan trade which
437 passed through Mossi country, but we can get a fairly good idea of it
439 by examining the customs reports on goods crossing the border between Mossi country and the northern territories of the Gold Coast in the few years just following European conquest.[9] For 1901 and 1903 the official figures were:

TABLE 28A
Mossi Trade (1901–3)

Year	*Horses*	*Cattle*	*Sheep and Goats*	*Loaded Donkeys*	*Bales of Cotton Cloth*
1901	126	3,111	18,181	2,005	236
1903	196	6,624	30,892	4,294	369

Lucien Marc, who had the opportunity to check the volume of this trade for 1904 and 1905, guessed that about 16,000 cattle and 75,000 sheep and goats passed through the customs post in Mossi country. Furthermore, he believed that since

> ... the Mossi also supply in part the markets of Togoland and the market at Bondoukou [Ivory Coast], one can estimate at least an annual export of 20,000 cattle and 100,000 sheep or goats. The import of kola nuts is at least 500 tons. (Marc 1909 : 178)

[113] (9) Great Britain Parliamentary Papers: Cd. 788–27, no. 357, Northern territories of Gold Coast, report of 1901 in Acc. and Papers, vol. LXIV 1902. Cd. 2238–6, no. 429, N.Ts of Gold Coast, report of 1903 in Acc. and Papers, 1904, and 1905, vol. LI.

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It is clear that the volume of this trade could not have been enlarged since the French conquest which, as we know, had disrupted Mossi society. Therefore our conclusion must be that it must have existed prior to the coming of the Europeans.

The caravaneers used cowries and cloth as trade currency and in some cases even bartered one type of commodity for another. Cowries appear to have been the chief currency used and came close to being used for all purposes. Evidence for the use of cloth as currency comes from Barth and Marc. Barth met a trader who had

> . . . a good quantity of the gabaga, or cotton strips, of Mosi with him, which form the staple currency in the whole tract of country from Libta to Timbuktu, ten Dr'a being reckoned equal to one hundred shells. (Barth 1859 : III, 198)

The big rolls of cotton cloth which Marc saw being loaded by Mossi caravaneers were said by them to serve the purpose of buying food ("They are for eating") in regions where cloth was the necessary currency (Marc 1909 : 172 f.n.). The traders apparently resorted to barter whenever and wherever they could or when their currency was in short supply. This appears to have been the case when Binger visited the Mossi in 1888. Cowries were then in short supply and the people were using slaves, valued at 50,000 to 65,000 cowries apiece, to obtain goods. Horses could be bought for as many as two or four slaves apiece. Traders apparently kept the cowry equivalence in mind when using other commodities to barter with, but we cannot be sure of this since Binger himself, and not the traders, may have been conscious of the equivalence (Binger 1892 : II, 498).

The prices which the traders paid and received for their goods differed greatly from place to place, according to the season of the year and over a span of several years. The earliest price data are given by Barth for the 1850's:

> As regards Selga [Salaga], the district to which the Hausa traders go for their supply of this article, three points are considered essential to the business of the Kola trade; first, that the people of Mosi bring their asses; secondly, that the Tonawa, or natives of Asanti, bring the nut in sufficient quantities; and thirdly, that the state of the road is such as not to prevent the Hausa people from arriving. If one of these conditions is wanting, the trade is not flourishing. The price of the asses rises with the cheapness of the guro [kola nut]. The average price of an ass in the market of Selga is 15,000 [cowry] Shell: While in Hausa the general price does not exceed 5,000. But the fataki, or native traders, take only as many asses with them from Hausa as are necessary for transporting their luggage, as the toll, or

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their own commercial centers, they acted quite differently outside their country. Dubois reports that at Timbuktu, "the great town of pleasure" with the freest morals in the Sudan, the merchants from Bamako, Djenne, Sansanding and Touat spent a great deal of money in pleasure and in gifts to the beautiful women, but the "Mossi did not waste their money and left as soon as they had finished their affairs" (Dubois 1899 : 292–300).

The days of the caravans are now over in Mossi country, even though large groups of traders carry on the traditional commerce in livestock, cotton, kola nuts, some dried fish, and salt. As soon as the French conquered th country they formulated plants to control the caravans. One of the earliest reports, for June 1899, reads:

> The country is calm and direct administration was established at Koupela, Mane, Yake . . . The Mossi trade is mainly with the English colony of the Gold Coast. It consists mainly of livestock, very plentiful in Mossi country, which is exchanged for merchandise from England; copper and material goods . . . Our task will be to discover the materials of the northern Ivory Coast which could be exchanged for cattle, and when this information is forthcoming we should be able to direct the caravans quite easily to the Ivory Coast. At the same time the English will see their provisions of cattle and sheep diminish. They will flood us less with their cotton cloth, with their glass beads, and with their kola nuts. In their place, the products of French manufacture can arrive to us through the Ivory Coast after being exchanged for the products of our colony there.[8]

These plans did not succeed. The Mossi still export a great deal of their products towards the forest zones of Ghana, including their "numerous laborers" which, according to Beauminy writing in 1919, were "the principal riches actually utilizable in Mossi country". (Beauminy 1919 : 71–78). The migrants themselves are, in a sense, the greatest traders in contemporary Mossi society.

PRESENT-DAY TRADE

There is a constant flow of goods between Mossi country and the Ivory Coast and Ghana. Much of the trade to the former region is in the hands of the large commercial companies and as such is beyond the purview of this paper. What is of interest here is the trade which is conducted by the ordinary people. A great deal of this trade is highly unorganized and the result of one or two men, or as many as five men, joining together to trade goods to and from Ghana and the Ivory Coast. The types of goods sent down to these two areas are the same as those traded in pre-European times.

(8) Unpublished document in the archives of *Institut Français d'Afrique Noire*, Wagadougou, Voltaic Republic.

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same as those traded in pre-European times. For example, my notes for March 22, 1956, record that five young men were transporting 50-kilogram sacks of onions on their bicycles for trade in Ghana. On March 23, the next day, I wrote the following: "This appears to be the season of increased trade and the donkey trains are passing to and from Wagadougou and the Yatenga to Po (a town on the Ghana-Voltaic Republic border) and Bolgatenga in northern Ghana. Very often the donkeys carry nothing down, and at other times they are loaded with beans, millet, cotton bands, onions, peanuts and other vegetable produce. On the return trip they are laden with kola nuts going northward. This afternoon I counted twenty-eight asses coming from Ghana and going towards Wagadougou. Eighteen of them were laden with kolas, and ten were carrying long pieces of scrap iron which I was told, were to be converted into hoes for use during the coming planting season."

There is also a steady trade in livestock between Mossi country and the southern lands but the height of this trade occurs just prior to Ramadan. Beginning from one month to one week before this important Moslem feast day, the roads of Mossi country are clogged with thousands of sheep and goats being driven south for the use of religious households in Ghana and the Ivory Coast. Cattle are also shipped during this period, but not in the same volume since they are most often used collectively by Moslem families too poor to have their own sheep or goat.

The total volume of trade between Mossi country and Ghana and the Ivory Coasts is difficult to ascertain since despite the existence of Customs Posts a great deal of contraband trading takes place. My notes for December 12, 1955, read "*Contraband*": Two customs men came into the village to complain to the district chief about the behavior of Naba, one of his village chiefs. This is what happened: About two days ago, two agents saw in the forests the tracks of some thirty-five asses (heavily laden as can be seen by the depth of the tracks) and the marks of a bicycle with new tires. The agents followed the tracks all day and rested during the night. Yesterday they had to interrupt their search when the bicycle of one of the agents broke down, and when they resumed the search later in the day they came across five asses laden with kola nuts inside the compound of a man in Naba's village. Since they were forbidden by law to go into the man's compound and seize the animals, they went to the village chief in an attempt to have him tell the man to put the animals outside so that they could be seized. This the village chief refused to do, stating that it was not his affair, and adding that the agents should have seized the animals in the forest. The agents, now helpless, came and

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439 complained to the district chief. Unfortunately for them the district
648 chief was absent, but his assistants did send out a call for the village chief. However, the chief refused to appear, saying that he would only do so when the district chief returned. The last thing I saw was the agents leaving the district chief's compound still unsatisfied with the whole affair." The sequel to this comes from my notes for December 26, 1955. "I inquired about the aftermath of the contraband case and was told that the whole affair is being referred to the courts at Abidjan. If the village chief is found guilty, he will have to pay a fine of 10,000 francs for the first ass and 3,000 francs for each subsequent ass, or in lieu of this go to jail. Informant said that since the village chief is a poor man, he would probably go to jail."

439 In spite of the contraband, the actual volume of trade appears to
433 be considerable. The production, trade and export of goods largely produced by the Mossi people in 1954 are set forth in Table 29.

TABLE 29

Production, Trade and Export of the Mossi (1954)

Product	*Amount*	*Export*	*Destination*
Almonds	35,000 tons	3,602	France and African countries
Peanuts	50,000 tons	3,031	France and African countries
Cattle	1,560,000 tons	101,000	Ghana, Togo and Ivory Coast
Sheep and Goats	2,115,000 tons	238,255	Ghana, Togo and Ivory Coast

439 These figures do not include the numerous items that drift over
167 the frontiers of Ghana and the Ivory Coast with the thousands of
464 migrants who go to these places each year. While the actual number of such migrants is difficult to ascertain, Pierre Dufour believes that it is "about 150,000 men per year, of whom 100,000 go to the Gold Coast and 50,000 to the Ivory Coast". (Dufour 1956 : 3). And since almost every one of these migrants takes with him some trade item such as a chicken or two, a small sheep or goat, a small sack of cereal or other vegetable produce or a few bands of cotton to defray part of his transportation costs, the amount of goods actually exported is
439 considerable. These statistics rarely enter into the account of goods
167 exported from Mossi country, since custom officers do not usually tax
464 migrants for small items, and do not make any record of them. Of
648 course, when the migrants carry large loads, these are recorded and the migrants must pay export taxes.

Greater attention is paid to the goods which those migrants who work in Ghana (but not in the Ivory Coast) bring back with them after one season or after several years of work, since the government of the Voltaic Republic derives a great deal of its tax revenue from duties on these goods.

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The migrants bring back all types of goods with them. According to Dufour: "Money as such is not brought back in very large proportion because manufactured products of the English colony (Gold Coast) cost less. Consequently, each year there is a great introduction of bicycles, sewing machines, fabrics". (Dufour 1956 : 140). One might add to this list kerosene lamps, zinc buckets, all types of wearing apparel, and all manner of household goods. An inventory of the common trunk of two returning migrants revealed the following merchandise: two kerosene lamps, two bottles of kerosene, two burnoose of black serge trimmed with pink silk, one white burnoose, two blue shirts, two khaki shorts, two tubes of Thermogene (a medicated rub), eight women's headkerchiefs, two Moslem fezes, two hand mirrors, two jars of Vaseline petroleum jelly, two pairs of sandals, one black scarf, packs of camphor balls, and one bottle of perfume. These goods represent the migrant's work over one season, from October to the following April, in the cacao fields of Ghana. Other migrants return with more, but few return with less. The actual value of these goods has been estimated by Dufour at about one billion francs C.F.A. per year. The custom duties which the migrants pay amount to more than 150 million francs C.F.A. annually—the sum they actually paid into the treasury of the Haute Volta in 1953 (Rouch 1956 : 139 ff.).

The migrants distribute to their relatives a good part of the goods they bring back, but a large proportion gets into the hands of other people either through the market or through more direct channels. Here is an example taken from my notes of March 24, 1956: "*Trading in bicycles:* Moussa gave Souliman a cow and an old bicycle for a new bicycle which Souliman had bought for 5,000 francs from a passing migrant. Souliman was trying to sell this same cycle for 6,250 francs, thus trying to make a profit of 1,250 francs just two or three days after he had bought it . . . Souliman slaughtered the cow which he received from Moussa and sold the beef to the local *restaurateur* at an additional profit. Souliman appears to be a sharp individual. He recently bought another bicycle for 5,000 francs from a migrant and resold it for 7,500 francs." This type of trading is not unusual, but the most typical articles resold by migrants in the local markets are lamps, worn shirts, shoes and other articles of clothing.

The growth of migration among Mossi men has led to a new type of commercial activity in the country. This is the selling of cooked food by the women to passing migrants. These women and young girls prepare food such as chicken, rice, millet balls, millet flour water and fried cakes which they bring to the principal thoroughfares to sell. Many of them arrive at the central village areas as early as four

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all of local manufacture and in great abundance. Local cloth is also very abundant. However, there are scarcely any imported objects salt, kola nuts, copper rings and extremely rare European fabrics. The salt always comes from the north. During my stay at Wagadougou I saw the arrival of a convoy of five or six small-sized mules loaded with this merchandise." Crozat felt that the Wagadougou market with its mainly local products was inferior to the markets at Woroudoy and Bobo-Dioulasso which he found less crowded, but which were, in his words, "true *entrepots* of imported merchandise."

Tauxier gives us a better picture of the goods found in the markets of Mossi country before the Europeans arrived. His reports list few imported products except salt and kola nuts. The preponderance of goods sold were such local foodstuffs as maize, manioc, peppers, tomatoes, squash, karite or shea butter, locust-bean balls, locust-bean flour, rice and a local variety of potatoes. Other foodstuffs included were honey, beer, butchered meat, chickens, and guinea fowls. Tobacco both for chewing and smoking was also available, and so was hemp for making rope. Raw cotton, cotton thread, cloth and tailored cotton garments were also present, and so was indigo for dyeing the cotton materials. Other goods included hides, sandals, pouches, amulets, iron items such as axes, hoes, knives, scythes, locks, clubs and spearpoints, bracelets and anklets made of copper by the lost-wax process, baskets, mats and hats made out of local grasses, pottery, pipes and wooden stools (Tauxier 1912 : 466 ff.). By 1914 Mangin could add little to this list of local products, sold in the markets, but added such foreign items as "matches, glass trinkets, handkerchiefs, basins, dishes, perfumes, and even firecrackers" (Mangin 1921 : 53).

The markets of contemporary Mossi society contain all of the articles found in pre-European times and those seen there by Mangin in 1914. In the larger markets one now can find such additional items as bicycles, razor blades, plastic raincoats and other plastic products, and the latest "rock 'n roll" records from the United States. The goods found in the smaller district and village markets tend to be of the traditional variety. But even here it is possible to buy refined cane sugar, matches, plastic necklaces, shoe polish, nail polish, toilet water, glass beads, costume jewelry, chinaware, and glass and enamel containers. In some of the smaller markets it is even possible to buy wheat bread made of imported flour, and bottled beer and soda water. The more different types of goods entering the larger markets, the richer the variety found in the smaller markets, since local m chants are quick to take advantage of the prestige value of any new produce and introduce it into the rural areas. The only barrier to this type of commercial activity is the relative poverty of the rural people.

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443 sages to specific villages, to find the help needed in the event of a
571 fight, and finally to find an escape route by which one can leave in the event of trouble.

443 The vendors in the larger markets of Mossi country include Yoru-
463 ba, Hausa and other ethnic groups, many of whose members were
563 born in Mossi country and have never visited the land of their fathers. The lives of these people are usually centered around the markets; where the markets are held every day, many of the men, women and children of these foreign groups spend almost all of their lives at the
[439] markets. In marked contrast to the Mossi, they usually sell products of foreign provenience, whether African or European, and seldom deal in the local products. These vendors are tolerated by the Mossi and are valued for their commerce, but are always regarded as outsiders. And as outsiders the markets do not belong to them, but only
443 to the Mossi. Even so, the Mossi do not really like the larger markets.
829 True, one can buy all kinds of wonderful goods on the large markets, but to the Mossi, a market is more than a place where one goes to buy and sell, even though everyone who goes there tries to do some of both.

443 There is a marked division of labor among the vendors in a Mossi
462 market—a division which can be seen at its best on the local markets.
438 Here only the women sell cooked food, beer, millet, rice, peanuts,
439 shea-butter, tobacco, and all of the other locally grown vegetables and vegetable products, except cotton which may also be sold by a man. In contrast, women do not sell such local products as cotton cloth, hemp, jewelry, iron implements and leather goods, which are the province of the men. Only men may butcher and sell animals and meat in the market. And they alone control the commerce in foreign food articles such as salt and dried fish. Both men and women sell the valuable imported kola nut, but only men sell goods of European manufacture such as cigarettes, matches, sugar, mirrors and so on.
[857] Small girls sell calabashes of water to everyone, and small boys wander through the market selling single cigarettes, bundles of a few matches, single lumps of sugar, chickens and guinea fowls, and skewers of roasted meat.

443 There is little competition about someone else having "stolen"
437 a customer. The reason for this is mainly that every person in the market is a potential customer of everyone else. Normally, a buyer
432 simply moves from seller to seller sampling the goods if that is possible (some unscrupulous men can even get drunk in the process of "sampling" beer) and trying to get the best bargain. No seller would think of running after a customer, and customers seldom, if ever, move away from a vendor in the hope that he would be called back
to be sold the article at a lower price.

M 439 centralized structure of the Mossi empire ensured the necessary safety for exchanges and trade. Nowadays they still have a very small part in it, and only when forced and pressed by the need to pay taxes.

M 439 183 To corroborate this Mossi incapacity for trade, I need only select from my field notes of December, 1908. Here is a significant one concerning a Mossi village in the northern part of the /Ouagadougou/ circle, "No trade in this village. It is the Yarsé from Téma who come and buy the cotton bands dyed blue and sell them at Salaga (Gold Coast). Our Mossi would profit by doing this themselves. They agree but nevertheless fail to do it, saying that their forebears did not do it either. They do no trading, therefore." In another village, Yakki, where industries flourish, I made the following note, "Trade, on the other hand, is nil, as among all Mossi."

M H 441 439 I stated above that higher trade among the Mossi was confined to a few Haoussa colonies. Concerning this, and in order to give an idea of this trading, I shall record here a short profile of a Haoussa trader from Ouagadougou, Maïguisiri Dangaori, who has been there for fifteen years although his family lives at Iko in Haoussa territory.

He has no fields, of course. He does nothing but trade.

He buys cattle and sheep locally. He takes them to Kumasi on the Gold Coast (this is not usually done by the Yarsé, who do not go so far south). He sells them there, and with the returns he buys kola nuts, European fabrics, glass trinkets, sugar, cast-iron pots, etc. On the way back, he hires needy Haoussa who live on the Gold Coast as bearers and takes them to Ouagadougou. Each bearer is paid 35 francs on arrival for the fifty days of travel. In addition, he feeds them along the way. Their food costs him 300 cowries a day.

H [482 465]

He sells the goods he brought back, or rather has them sold at the Ouagadougou market, for he has an employee who /540/ sells for him at market. This employee is not a member of his family. He is a Haoussa, to whom he gives 5 percent of the sales. That is all. Beyond this he gives him nothing, not even food.

Our trader usually waits until everything is sold before returning to the Gold Coast. If the merchandise does not sell quickly enough, he picks up what is left and disposes of it on the way back.

M H 441 439 484 The journey takes six months from the time he leaves Ouagadougou to the time he returns. On his way to the Gold Coast he needs no bearers. He merely takes a Peuhl to herd the cattle, and provides him with food and 300 cowries a day, plus 1 franc on arrival per head of cattle herded.

Our trader stays with another Haoussa from Ouagadougou, another trader of course, who is wealthier than he. He does not pay rent, but offers him gifts from time to time in return for his hospitality.

His family lives at Iko in Haoussa territory, and consists of three wives and three children. He goes and sees them every two years.

M H 441 439 We can see that the Haoussa do their trading in grander and more forceful fashion than the Yarsé. They do not hesitate to expatriate themselves in order to carry out their trade, and in this fashion they have actually colonized southern Nigeria, Dahomey, Togoland, the Gold Coast, Mossi country, etc. Once settled there, they carry their trading operations farther than local merchants, and they hardly do anything else. While the Yarsé is an example of cultivator-trader, the Haoussa of Mossi territory is in most cases an example of pure trader who specializes completely in trading. This is why he towers above the whole trading structure of the country. Bent on gain, a speculator in cowries and French currency, more intelligent than the Mossi and Yarsé, he amasses large fortunes.

M 567 439 In order to be quite thorough on the subject of present and past trading in Mossi territory, it should be added that formerly the slave trade was carried out alongside that in livestock, cotton fabric, kola nut, and salt. The slaves came chiefly from Gourounsi, /541/, Boussansé, and Kipirsi lands. The Djermabé /Zerma?/, especially, sold slaves to the Mossi in very large numbers when they pillaged Gourounsi territory. This trade, like the others, was in the hands of the Yarsé and Haoussa.

M 839 439 304 Let us also add a word about the now-abolished eunuch trade. Formerly, the Mossi furnished some to the Haoussa, who forwarded them to Turkey via Egypt. The operated men were Gourounsi sold to the Mossi by the Zaberma and by their chief Baba-Tô. Some Mossi villages specialized in this kind of work. The village of Koubry,

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traded for such articles as needles, mirrors, beads, coral and amber, tea, coffee, fezes, tailored robes, and most important of all, salt (Dubois 1899 : 292–304). Presumably, by the time Dubois reported on this trade, the Mossi had stopped trading slaves and eunuchs into this region, because we know from other sources that these people were sold through Timbuktu as far north as Algeria and Constantinople.[5]

The caravans which brought desert and northern goods into Mossi country collected grain, cotton cloth, livestock and slaves to be sold in the forest areas. Captain Lonsdale, an Englishman who visited Salaga in 1881 and gave a good description of its markets and traders, includes among the latter

> ... the Mossi with his cattle, sheep and slaves—these latter, generally Gurunsi, are not exposed for sale in the street or market, but can be seen where the owner resides. (Lonsdale 1882)

The extent to which the Mossi people themselves participated in all aspects of the caravan trade which crossed their country is far from clear. Barth, Lonsdale and Dubois all report that the Mossi were members of the caravans both in the forest zone and in Timbuktu, and my own informants agree with these reports. In contrast, however, both Marc and Tauxier believe that the Mossi were seldom the actual caravaneers. Marc declares that the Yarse

> ... are the most numerous group devoting itself to commerce in the region which we occupy. This is equally true of the Hausa, but probably only over the last years. Moors come sometimes from Dori as far as Wagadougou. One seldom meets Mande-Dioulas. As for the pure Mossi, it was only a short while ago that they themselves began to follow the caravans. (Marc 1909 : 170–71)

Similarly, Tauxier states that

> ... it is not the Mossi who do this [caravan] trading but the Yarse we know so well, and the Hausa settled in Mossi territory. Mossi trade, therefore, is not really Mossi, or at least it was not in the past. If it has now begun to be to some extent, it is thanks to the French settlement in the territory. (Tauxier 1912 : 538)

In the face of the early reports by Barth and others, how does one resolve the contradiction apparent in Tauxier's comments? These early travelers might have mistaken the Yarse for Mossi since these

(5) Marc, 1909 : 170–171. "We met in Mossi country two natives who, when children, had been seized [as slaves] and led through Timbuktu as far as Algeria ... The commerce in slaves was doubled among the Mossi by commerce in eunuchs. Mossi country was one of those rare countries where people knew how to make them, and the Moro Nabas exported with great profit as far as Constantinople those whom they had had mutilated."

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175 people have become Mossicized in language and culture, but it is
437 doubtful whether they would have taken the Hausa for Mossi. The
441 true Mossi may have played a minor role in the caravan trade, but I am certain that they took part in it and that they did so before the French conquest of their country.

175 There is little doubt that the Mossi traded with the caravans that
437 passed *through* their country. Crozat, who visited Moro Naba Wobogo
439 six years before the conquest, reported that the king

[649]

> . . . appeared to have had some business relations with white merchants who came up to Salaga every dry season. He sent horses to them in exchange for silver. He claims that he had no reasons to be pleased with their integrity and that the silver which they sent to him contained plenty of copper. It happens also that traders may come as far as Wagadougou, bringing merchandise of German origin. There was one of them on hand during my stay at Wagadougou. I was told that he was an important marabout, a shereef, perhaps an Arab or a Moor, for I was assured that he was very light in color. As was repeated to me several times, his relations with the king were limited to the solemn greetings on Fridays. He has never entered the royal hut in spite of being an important marabout. He was at Wagadougou for about three and one-half months, but he was compelled to return to the coast since the merchandise which he had brought was exhausted. He spoke no Mossi. (Crozat 1891)

The caravans which passed through Mossi country were well organized but seemed to have lacked the regularity which was characteristic of the trans-Sahara ones. Those caravans coming from the north were apparently more regular since they had to await the coming of the great trans-Sahara caravans, which brought them salt and other
[366] valuable merchandise. Those coming from Salaga and points south
[221] traveled at all times of the year, a fact which is corroborated by the voyage of Krauss, who arrived at the Bere market during August and the height of the Mossi planting season. This was a period of scarcity or "hungry period" as Krauss himself observed, and it is doubtful whether the Mossi had much to trade at this time. Nevertheless, caravaneers always found some trade goods at the larger Mossi market centers all through the year, even if only cloth and cotton bands.

[22] The main season for external trade in Mossi country came after the harvest. In the words of Marc, who served there shortly after the conquest:

> Towards the end of the rainy season, in September or October, the
> [344] Yarse begin to assemble the livestock in order to leave for the south. In certain large commercial centers like Kaya, Pouitenga, Dakay, one finds
> [422] around this period the owners of livestock: Mossi chiefs, Fulani or rich natives, who are ready to sell their animals. People also assemble sheep of

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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territory. This report is substantiated by Barth. Marc adds that the caravaneers had

> . . . a considerable amount of incidental expenses. Ten thousand kolas called for two asses or four porters for whom it was necessary to provide food during close to two months. Formerly there had been a certain number of local exactions to pay each time that the caravans crossed a new country. Now there are taxes on the caravans in the Gold Coast and also in French territory. It is also necessary to pay for ferryman who transports the livestock across the Volta [River]. There are risks, and occasionally cattle, fatigued by the trip, arrive in such bad shape that they are sold more cheaply than they had cost. Finally, the realization of profits is often difficult, the kola market being, in the commercial centers of the Mossi, subject to considerable fluctuations at the time when the caravans return. (Marc 1909 : 174)[7]

Sometimes the caravaneers made extensive use of middlemen and did not realize all the profits. Marc, who was stationed at the customs post at Leo on the Mossi border with the Gold Coast, wrote:

> The livestock is bought upon arrival by interpreter-brokers, middlemen between the butchers and the meat merchants, to whom the caravaneers are practically forced to resort. These men buy all the kola nuts brought by the forest natives, and control the market prices . . . These interpreter-brokers apparently speculate on livestock in a most curious way. They have scouts who go out to meet the caravans, sometimes two days' march to the north. These scouts attempt to alarm the travellers with tendentious remarks, until they are willing to cede their herds at a low price. Some times, at the height of the business season—that is, in January and February—the livestock prices may fluctuate by one hundred per cent within a few weeks. The Mande-Dioula vie in eloquence, the Yarse and Mossi in politeness, the Hausa in friendliness. In reality, there is here, an embryonic trading center, a veritable stock exchange, using extensively indigenous methods. ((Marc 1909 : 175)

According to most reports, all the larger market centers of Mossi country were like this.

Caravan centers, like all the lesser market centers in Mossi country, provided merchants not only with trading opportunities but also with occasions for conviviality after hectic days of travel. At Dakay south of Wagadougou, livestock traders found musicians, singers, and the most beautiful dancers in the country. And according to Marc, during the whole caravan season the market was abundantly furnished with beer (Marc 1909 : 175). But if the Mossi enjoyed themselves at

(7) Tauxier (1912 : 589) states that each porter was paid 35 francs for the thirty-five days of travels or at the rate of one franc per day. In addition a caravaneer spent about 300 cowries a day on food for each of his bearers.

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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175 366 437 54 their own commercial centers, they acted quite differently outside their country. Dubois reports that at Timbuktu, "the great town of pleasure" with the freest morals in the Sudan, the merchants from Bamako, Djenne, Sansanding and Tourat spent a great deal of money in pleasure and in gifts to the beautiful women, but the "Mossi did not waste their money and left as soon as they had finished their affairs" (Dubois 1899 : 292–300).

175 437 439 648 The days of the caravans are now over in Mossi country, even though large groups of traders carry on the traditional commerce in livestock, cotton, kola nuts, some dried fish, and salt. As soon as the French conquered th country they formulated plants to control the caravans. One of the earliest reports, for June 1899, reads:

> The country is calm and direct administration was established at Koupela, Mane, Yake . . . The Mossi trade is mainly with the English colony of the Gold Coast. It consists mainly of livestock, very plentiful in Mossi country, which is exchanged for merchandise from England; copper and material goods . . . Our task will be to discover the materials of the northern Ivory Coast which could be exchanged for cattle, and when this information is forthcoming we should be able to direct the caravans quite easily to the Ivory Coast. At the same time the English will see their provisions of cattle and sheep diminish. They will flood us less with their cotton cloth, with their glass beads, and with their kola nuts. In their place, the products of French manufacture can arrive to us through the Ivory Coast after being exchanged for the products of our colony there.[8]

439 167 464 These plans did not succeed. The Mossi still export a great deal of their products towards the forest zones of Ghana, including their "numerous laborers" which, according to Beauminy writing in 1919, were "the principal riches actually utilizable in Mossi country". (Beauminy 1919 : 71–78). The migrants themselves are, in a sense, the greatest traders in contemporary Mossi society.

PRESENT-DAY TRADE

439 [441] [472] [178] [113] There is a constant flow of goods between Mossi country and the Ivory Coast and Ghana. Much of the trade to the former region is in the hands of the large commercial companies and as such is beyond the purview of this paper. What is of interest here is the trade which is conducted by the ordinary people. A great deal of this trade is highly unorganized and the result of one or two men, or as many as five men, joining together to trade goods to and from Ghana and the Ivory Coast. The types of goods sent down to these two areas are the same as those traded in pre-European times.

(8) Unpublished document in the archives of *Institut Français d'Afrique Noire*, Wagadougou, Voltaic Republic.

491 builds bridges, but as they are made exclusively with materials found in the country, forked sticks and beams covered with pounded earth, the first swelling of the water carries the whole structure away, and after a heavy rain one must wait for the waters to subside and resort to ferrymen who justifiably charge for their work.

481 The ferrymen proceed as follows. The person who wishes to cross holds on to a thick beam, a gourd, or a simple clay jar, which holds 484 him out of the water; sometimes two large sticks under his arms serve 501 as a life belt. In a few places rafts are available, made of sticks connected with séko and covered with dry grass. The ferryman swims next to him and prevents him from being carried too far by the current. At certain favored fords near the French posts, ferryboats are available. 484 Livestock swim across, and the ferryman holds their muzzles out of the water to prevent them from drowning. These crossings take a long time and add up to considerable expense, and animals are often carried away by the current or snatched by crocodiles. Woe to the man who dispenses with ferrymen, if he is not familiar with the bottom of the river and the strength of the current! He often drowns, and those whose aid he scorned do nothing to help him. On the other hand, if the caravans postpone their departure for too long, the rivers will be dry, the grass burned off, and the animals will die of hunger or thirst, or they will arrive at the markets exhausted and lean and will sell poorly.

These journeys thus entail a number of hazards; in addition, although imported goods sell high, living expenses run equally high, and if a profit is to be made, one cannot grow fat along the way. He will make up for it when he returns to the village.

442 The need for middlemen brings other hazards. Lt. Marc, who was well qualified to discuss the subject because he was twice in command of the Léo Post, described the situation as follows: "The livestock upon arrival is bought by interpreter-brokers, middlemen between the butchers and the meat merchants, to whom the caravaneers are practically forced to resort. These men buy all the kola nuts brought by the forest natives and control the market prices... These interpreter-brokers apparently speculate on livestock in a most curious way. They have scouts who go out to meet the caravans, sometimes two days' march to the north. /61/ These scouts attempt to alarm the cattle owners with tendentious remarks, until they are willing to cede their herds at a low price. Sometimes, at the height of the business season, in January and February, livestock prices may fluctuate by one

442 hundred percent within a few weeks. The Mandé-Dioula vie in eloquence, the Yarsé and Mossi in politeness, the Haoussa in friendliness. In fact, with exclusively native methods, this is a trading center in embryo, a veritable stock exchange." (4)

4. Marc, Au pays des Mossi /In Mossi Country/, p. 173.

484 The traders travel in all directions. The roads most commonly
487 followed are those which run from Ouagadougou south to the Gold Coast, to Gambaga, Daboya, Salaga, Kintampo, Sékondi; from Leó through Oua and Salaga; and from Tenkodogo through Bitou to rejoin the Gambaga road. Contact also occurs, though less frequently, with German Togoland and the markets of Sansané-Mango and even Lomé on the coast.

439 These two British and German colonies are supplied with livestock and native fabrics by the Mossi. They completely lack butcher's meat, for the tsetse fly does not permit cattle to survive within the confines of the rain forest. Imported fabrics do not withstand a few washings, so the native fabric strips, although less bright in color, are preferred by the Gourounsi and forest dwellers. They formerly wore only a sheep or goat skin, but they have taken to clothes since the arrival of the Europeans. Their scant clothing does not embarrass them when they are among themselves, but they are ashamed when Europeans see them. The Mossi bring back from their journeys the kola nuts which are the basis of their import trade, but they also bring copper, European goods of all sorts, fabrics usually of inferior quality, matches, perfumes, pearls, sugar, and basins of all shapes and kinds. Trade is very active in the coastal areas, and Lt. Marc writes on the subject as follows: "The Gold Coast administration, which commands a network of posts denser than ours, recorded in 1904 and 1905 about 16,000 beeves and 75,000 sheep or goats coming from Mossi country. Considering that the Mossi also supply in part the Togoland markets and the Boudoukou market, their annual export may be estimated at a minimum of 20,000 beeves and 100,000 sheep. Their kola nut imports amount to at least 500 tons." (5)

5. Marc, op. cit., p. 178.

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(7) Tauxier (1912 : 539) states that each porter was paid 35 francs for the thirty-five days of travels or at the rate of one franc per day. In addition a caravaneer spent about 300 cowries a day on food for each of his bearers. [465]

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651 Mossi circle into several administrative districts, still continue to
178 make substantial annual gifts to the Mogho Naba (cowries, cattle, and a considerable amount of grain, millet and rice).

634 Payments Due the Kombemba (canton chiefs). Formerly each
651 canton held one or more ritual feasts each year, and the Mossi subjects, that is, the tengsoba (village elders, notables, and those in comfortable circumstances), regularly made gifts to the canton chief (cowries, goats, sheep, and roosters). The Peulh [Peul] gave cattle.

The canton chiefs also retained a portion of the payment made by the people for the benefit of the Mogho Naba.

[178] At the present time these traditional gifts are still made, but white or light gray roosters are more and more being substituted for livestock. [71]

661 Payments due the Ministers of the Mogho Naba. In order to
431 maintain good relations with the ministers, court officials, and intermediaries between the emperor and his vassals, the canton
644 chiefs in former times used to present unspecified gifts to the
634 high dignitaries at court when they paid their respects to the Mogho Naba. A certain number of cowries was given to the pougtiéma, first wife of the Mogho Naba (500 cowries equals two and a half francs, formerly 50 centimes).

A canton chief who has been called to Ouagadougou for some reason may choose not to call on the emperor, but he is obligated to bring cowries, a sheep, or a rooster to the minister who is head of the province in which his canton is located.

651 Common laws. (a) Regulation of market fees. Before the ar-
443 rival of the French, market fees at Ouagadougou were collected for the benefit of the Mogho Naba by a collector in his employ.

In important villages, fees were collected by Gourounsi [Grunshi] captives on behalf of the canton chiefs (kombemba).

651 (b) Hunting. In former times, before the fields were cleared
224 for seeding, the Mossi used to go out in groups of several villages on hunting drives. Small game (partridges, guinea fowl, hares,
634 etc.) were left to the hunters. On the other hand, a haunch of any quadruped killed (deer, gazelle, coba [a kind of horse antelope], etc.) was reserved for the canton chief.

366 for good fortune and health. Prevent all bloodshed in this market.
782 We also fear those who are quarrelsome and those who talk too much, those who provoke disorder." The chicken is the first victim to be sacrificed, and if the offering is accepted, it must have first fallen on its back and only then turned over face downward (this means that the gods of the place will protect the naba and the persons who will frequent the market). Next the goat or sheep is killed.

The new market is opened immediately after the sacrifice. Those present buy the women's fritters. Ordinarily, Mossi markets
[443] are held every three days. The news travels rapidly that such-and-such a village has a market, and thus the business of the market gradually grows.

Collection of fees. It is only later on, one or even two years
366 after the installation of his new market and when [79] it is success-
651 ful, that the canton chief appoints a yaguinga (grandson, or, more
[601] accurately in native terms, a sister's son (nephew)or son's son (grandson), of the naba or of a member of his family) or a Gourounsi captive to act as collector of market fees. (We shall list below the various fees for a place in the market as they were collected for the benefit of the naba before the arrival of the French.)

366 Transfer of the market. Upon the death of a naba (the emperor, a vassal chief, or even the chief of the village where the market is held), the market is temporarily set up in another place. In large towns, such as Ouagadougou, for example, there may be as many markets as there are sections. These temporary markets are called kim'dagha (market of the kimsé, that is, of the deceased).

When a new naba has been named, the market is moved back
366 to its former site and the reinstallation calls for new sacrifices of
782 fowl and livestock. That was why in 1897, when the market at Ouagadougou was being re-established, the emperor asked the captain who was in command of the post to provide a cow to be sacrificed along with a sheep and a rooster which he himself provided.

Likewise, whenever a hyena has run through the market (its
366 presence is discovered either by the tracks left by the animal or by
825 consulting the soothsayers), just as happens when a naba dies, the
787 market must be moved elsewhere for a few days. It is believed that if [80] a brawl should occur after a hyena had passed through the market, there would certainly be a death.

Scale of Market Fees Collected by the Mogho Naba and the Canton Chiefs Before the French Occupation

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At Ouagadougou two collectors had the duty of gathering market fees.

The Kos Naba (from kossé "to sell," and naba, "chief") collected a tax on every animal slaughtered whose meat was sold at the market.

The Ragh' Naba (from ragha, "market," and naba, "chief") collected fees on all other produce.

The fees were as follows.

Captives. 1,000 cowries per captive sold; fee paid by the seller.

Large animals. (a) Oxen, 250 cowries per ox slaughtered; cows, 250 cowries per cow slaughtered. (In addition, the hump of every head of cattle slaughtered was taken for the Mogho Naba and delivered to him that evening.)

(b) Donkeys: 200 cowries per donkey sold, paid by the seller.

(c) Horses: no tax was collected. Horses, being luxury animals and sought only by chiefs and a few [81] well-to-do persons (rakangba) were not put up for sale at the market.

Small animals. No special tax on sheep, goats, etc.

Dam (dolo, beer). No tax. The seller was supposed to present a gourd or canari of beer to the chief of her section (the emperor's minister) whenever she made some. This was called the lenga, that is, a "taste." This practice no doubt explains the lack of any tax on the beer merchants.

Cotton strips. Taxes graded from 20 to 100 cowries according to the size of the rolls of cloth.

Cotton. First collected in kind and then a tax of 20 cowries paid after the sale.

Grains and fats. Small millets, sorghum, rice, peanuts, millet that is sprouted to be used for beer, beans, and peas: for these kinds of produce, the Ragh' Naba and his assistants had special measuring devices, bowls of a sort, made of wood and used to collect payments in kind. All of the grains, including the millet used to make beer, were stored by the Ragh' Naba in granaries for disposal by the emperor.

443 Ready-made clothing, beads. No tax collected.
651 [82] Soumbala (kalgo in Mossi) [locust beans pressed into balls]. Payment in kind (one ball per seller).

Other spices. No fee paid.

Karite [shea] butter. Collected with a soutga (a kind of ladle), karite butter was used almost exclusively for the horses of the Mogho Naba.

Fritters and other cooked foods. Actually no fee was called for on these products, but the collectors demanded the payment of a tax in kind to provide their own food or that of the samand'kamba (servitors of the outer courtyard).

Salt. 300 cowries for each load (ox or donkey).

Hoes, axes. Each merchant provided a daba or an axe for work in the field of the naba. Nothing was collected at the subsequent market if all of the tools had not been sold in one day.

Jewelry. No tax was collected. The jewelers who made
[306] bracelets and other jewels for the wives of the naba, as well as various harness parts, were exempt from all taxes.

Other markets. Fees collected for the benefit of the canton chiefs were about the same as [83] those paid at the market of Ouagadougou. In small markets, however, payments were made in kind. The edible products made up the food of the collectors, Gourounsi captives for the most part, who were prevented by their social status from having wives and so had no one to prepare food for them.

Chapter 5

Slavery Among the Mossi

567 We shall endeavor in the following lines to describe slavery as it existed among the Mossi before the French occupation.

567 We know that slavery has existed for a very long time in the
173 land of the Mogho Naba, but, because of the total lack of dates in Mossi history -- handed down from generation to generation by the griot [heralds, drummers] of the naba -- it is difficult to determine when it was first introduced.

567 It is known, however, that the first slaves of the Mossi were all of Boussanga [Busansi] origin. The canton of Garango in what is

593 reprimand them, while the mother's role, here as elsewhere, is to indulge her children.

595 The children of different wives are quite fond of one another and often exchange help. When the father dies, the eldest son make no distinction among his brothers and helps them all as best he can. Polygamy seems to present no drawbacks in this respect.

When a man has several wives, his first wife (porkyéma) is mistress of the household rather than his mother. All the other wives are on an equal footing, even the slaves, excepting, of course, those for whom the husband has a special preference. As the number of wives increases, so does the authority of the first wife, who wants /39/ her husband to have as many wives as possible. Each wife has a separate hut where she lives with her children, and this avoids many a quarrel. The husband goes to the hut of the woman he desires, or he has her come to his own hut. When a man works in his field, all his wives and children must help him, because he feeds them all and gives them a daily millet ration; it is, accordingly, only fair that all should take part in agricultural work within the limits of their capacity.

593 443 421 Provided that a woman remain at her husband's disposal and help him in the fields, she is free to do as she pleases. She goes to market to sell the grain, the spices for sauce, and the thread to weave cloth; but the husband sells the fabric strips and the raw cotton. During the winter each woman may have her own field to cultivate with her children, and the harvest belongs wholly to her. The husband has no say in the matter. If the woman spins cotton, she sells it at the market or even to her husband; if she brews beer, she offers one jar to her husband, but if he entertains friends and wants additional jars, he must pay cash for them. It is not unusual for a woman to refuse her husband credit, for who knows when he would pay?

593 574 A woman may visit her relatives with the permission of her husband, who sets a return date. The woman rarely comes back on the date set, and the husband goes to fetch her himself, or he sends one of his friends with a piece of salt or a small gift. A woman especially likes to visit her relatives when she is pregnant or shortly after the baby's birth. She knows that she will be well cared for and especially that she will enjoy complete freedom. As a result, it is not unusual for a woman to leave her husband for several months and to return only after considerable coaxing. Most quarrels between one Mossi and [578] another derive from their wives and from their debts; yet it may not be said, as a general rule, that women are unhappy or ill treated.

Chapter 2. Industries and Trading

●443 Such are the everyday tasks of all Mossi. To these must be added visits to the marketplace all through the year, and during the dry season work performed by certain guilds or certain individuals, in short, the various industries practiced by the Mossi.

443 571 /53/ Every self-respecting Mossi, be it man or woman, child or elder, must go to market at least once in a while, were it only to look... and to be looked at if he can don some handsome new clothes. To see the natives in their best finery, one must go to the markets which follow important feast days. At those times the marketplace is thronged with Yarsé and Peul as well as Mossi, and they all vie with each other in the richness and originality of their costumes. At other times people go to market on business, except for a few individuals who go there only to be admired even on ordinary days.

443 Every community of any importance holds a market every three days. Everything is arranged so the markets will not be too far distant from each other, and the villages near to one another will not hold markets on the same day to avoid competition. A native may, if he wishes, spend all his time at market, sometimes in one village, sometimes in another, for a market is always being held not far from where he lives. All the markets are not of equal importance. Some [554] villages of no great consequence in themselves are located at the crossroads of several routes followed by caravans and become important trading centers. The following Mossi markets are said to be especially popular: Pwitenga, Kaya, Rakay, Bélousa, Mané, Téma, Yako, and La.

Formerly these markets were slave-trading centers. Nowadays they deal mostly in horses, cattle, donkeys, sheep, goats, salt, kola nuts, native or European fabrics, and petty imported wares, such as matches, glass trinkets, handkerchiefs, basins, dishes, perfumes, and even firecrackers. Every important article has a section of its own. Butchers have theirs, and so have the traders in salt, fabrics, and kola nuts. All the millet beer is sold in one place, the sauce condiments and grain in another. The most important transactions, however, are carried on outside the marketplace, in the huts that travellers who intend to stay for awhile have hastily built in the Haoussa or Yarga quarter and sometimes among the Mossi. This is

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Above: Inside a Soukala. Above: The Occupants of a Soukala.
Middle: Load-bearers. Middle: Weaver.
Below: Marketplace.

●443 why only a native who is used to the transactions and who frequents the market regularly would be able to estimate the amount of business carried out on the marketplace itself and in its neighborhood; he would also have to take into account the off season, which exists here as in any other trading center. (1)

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1. I shall list below, for what they are worth, the approximate prices of some goods; they apply to a year of average yield and were recorded shortly after the harvest. Prices increase rapidly as harvest time recedes into the past, and during famine years there is no set price.

Millet, 0.02 franc a kilogram; rice, 0.10 franc a kilogram; fabirama, 0.05 franc a kilogram; karite butter, 0.50 franc a kilogram; milk butter, 1.50 francs a kilogram; peanuts, 0.07 franc a kilogram; peanut oil, 0.50 franc a liter; one jar of ordinary millet beer, containing about six to eight liters, 0.20 franc; one jar of strong millet beer (tōsé), containing about six to eight liters, 0.40 franc; hydromel (bēsé), 0.15 franc a liter; chicken, 0.40 franc; average sheep, 3.50 francs for a ram, 4 francs for a ewe; large sheep, 8 to 10 francs; donkey, 25 to 30 francs; horse, 150 francs; a head of small cattle (no hump), 50 francs; zebu, 70 francs; goat skin, 0.30 franc; sheep skin, 0.50 franc; cowhide, 1 franc; salt bars, from 1.50 to 2 francs a kilogram; kola nuts, from 0.03 to 0.10 franc a piece; one hoe, 0.50 franc; clothes: strip of white cloth, 0.05 franc, about 0.60 franc a cubit; white blanket, 2 francs; indigo blanket, 3 francs; striped blanket, 4 francs; shirt, medium size, 2.50 francs.

443 /54/ These large markets are in the minority. In the village markets the transactions are carried out between natives who know each other, and they deal almost exclusively in native goods: millet,

443 rice, beans, karite butter, roasted peanuts sold in little heaps for one centime, raw peanuts, and all the spices for the sauce. Yarsé or Haoussa girls walk from group to group with small basins full of kola nuts, and chiefs and rich men buy one or two nuts which they usually share with their followers. Foreign traders sit under shelters of foliage or millet stalks and sell a few pearls, salt or copper bars, henna or blue dye, while bald-headed vultures hovering above the butchers point out their location to everyone. The meat on sale consists of a goat or sheep, sometimes a beef found dead in the bush or more rarely one slaughtered especially for the occasion. Some people bring chicks and occasionally a hen. This is about all that is to be found.

443 To these comestibles drink must be added. The women who sell
273 millet beer occupy a whole section of the market, and this section is not the least frequented nor the quietest spot. While butchers may be located by watching the vultures, it is possible to spot the tavern-keepers merely by cocking one's ears. Their presence is revealed by the cries, the beating of drums, the hubbub inevitably connected with a crowd slightly the worse for drink. The Mossi undoubtedly drink a lot of millet beer, but the beverage sold at the marketplace does not easily go to the head. The beer that is boiled again (tēsé /sic/) is far more dangerous with its rather high percentage of alcohol, and hydromel (bésé) is even more so. The latter is made of honey and millet flour boiled in water, to which barm is added to induce fermentation. These two beverages are truly potent, especially when drunk
[579] alternately. This is why brawls occur rather frequently, and sometimes real battles in which people are wounded. These are drunkards' quarrels. Men are indeed the same everywhere, and how many fairs without a drunk or two are to be found in our own country? It must be said, however, that more intoxicated natives are to be met with in Mossi country than in France.

443 The market begins at about ten o'clock and usually closes at two; the important ones open around noon and last until nightfall. When we discuss the industries, we shall mention the other products which are sold there.

283 Weaving is the most widespread industry, the one that all men may
286 practice and all do practice to some extent. The cotton is ginned,
462 and the thread prepared by the women. Delafosse, in his work on the Siéna, has described the process accurately: "When the cotton has been separated from the husk, the seeds are removed with an iron rod

527 victorious heroes that they were only mortals. The thought of death is wholesome and beneficial.

The "bean feast" is so named because on that day the naba eats bean sauce for the first time in the year.

The naba's hoeing ceremony (na-kobo) is celebrated twenty-one days after the previous one, and like it, like the naky, always on a Saturday. When the naba of Koupéla was solemnly invested by the naba of Bélousa, he used to go with a large number of horsemen and much pomp to hoe a field located some distance from Koupéla. Nowadays he merely breaks ground on a path which connects his huts with those of his two prime ministers. He gives the first blows with the [526] hoe to the sound of drums, and his men take up from there. If the Peul and the horsemen have come in sufficient numbers, they run [273] races. As is usual in such circumstances, beer flows freely, and at the end of the day everyone is drunk. These festivities bring the naba a few thousand cowries offered by his subjects.

There ceremonies, naky, nakobo, do they not constitute a sort of homage to agriculture, do they not recall similar festivities celebrated long ago by the Romans and even today by the Chinese?

443 The market which follows each of these feasts is always crowded. Several beeves and large numbers of sheep are killed. Everyone makes a point of attending in his very best clothes, and the sight of this motley crowd is quite interesting indeed.

Chapter 3. Magic

Mgr. Le Roy, as already mentioned, defines magic as "the art of coercing into one's service the forces of nature, or harnessing the powers of the invisible world, through certain occult practices of a more or less religious character." This is what we shall now study. To put some order into a subject which is wholly lacking in it in the mind of the native, we shall first discuss the superstitions, then the sorcerers.

[181] Like all primitive people, black or white, the Mossi are very superstitious. Were not our own ancestors, in the Middle Ages? Have superstitious beliefs, such as those concerning thirteen people at table,

5: Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1959
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they are so exclusively occupied with political or religious duties. In every case, they own fields and are dependent upon their produce for an important part of their subsistence.

Each Mossi village in the Yatenga holds a market every third day; markets operate in nearby villages on the intermediate days. There are few full-time merchants; men usually market their wares themselves and trade in items of European manufacture. Except for the sale of meat, it is a man's wives who sell farm produce. For marketing her husband's surplus millet, a woman receives a gift when the market closes.

Markets are most active in the early hours of the morning when meat and farm produce are fresh. By afternoon only a few merchants stay on, trying to sell their remaining produce to late-comers at greatly reduced prices. Social satisfactions derived from participation in the market are greatly valued; it provides an opportunity for meeting friends and kinsmen and for exchanging gossip and observations on one another's dress, the crops, and current political developments. The market is a place for making loans and receiving small gifts from kinsmen and friends, for flirtations and the arrangement of rendezvous, and for that casual sort of social interaction which is one of the principal pleasures of life in the Yatenga.

The Mossi farmer is dependent on the co-operation of the members of his lineage both for the success of his individual economic endeavor and for their support if his crop should fail. To be assured of this support, he must contribute generously to the maintenance of his position in the intricate network of rights and obligations which describes the relationship of the individual to his kin group. A constant exchange of visits and presents, ceremonial and economic assistance, and presence and participation in the affairs of the lineage are necessary to maintain his status within this group.

The nature of the social, economic, and emotional dependence of the individual on his kinsmen, his affinal relations, and his neighbors is such that his social well-being and economic success may properly be regarded as depending as much on his skill in manipulating this complex web of relationships as on his specifically economic endeavors. When a man decides to forego a second weeding of his fields in order to prepare presents and make the journey to the funeral of a kinsman, he is making a choice which, considered in the total context of the culture, is realistically in accord with his own economic best interest.

The farmer feels equally dependent on the deceased members of his lineage, the ancestral spirits (*kiemse*). If he feeds them a chicken, they may steal the soul from a neighboring stand of millet and bring it to enrich his own field. If properly treated, they can be depended upon to protect his shea nut trees from the high winds which might otherwise

000 We are now finished with Mossi industries, not because this work is complete or definitive of course, nor because I have listed and thoroughly studied all this people's trades. I have said enough, however, to draw a significant outline /537/ of these industries and to show that they are flourishing. We may now proceed to trading.

438 443 Among the Mossi, as everywhere else in West Africa, one must distinguish the internal trade of the territory from its external trade.

As among other Blacks, the internal trade formerly was, and still is, ensured by village markets which are held at the most important localities on set days, for example every three days, every five days, etc. Thus at Ouagadougou, before the arrival of the Whites, the market was held every three days. Now it is a daily affair.

443 782 At every village where a market was held, there was a "market chief" named by the village chief. The market chief performed a sacrifice for the market. On a large consecrated stone he killed a chicken, a goat, or a sheep which he provided himself. [776] The animal was offered to the sky divinity (Ounam) to preclude fights on the market place. When this was over, our chief gave a hand to Ounam in his pacifying role, with the aid of a club if necessary.

443 All internal and external products of the territory were retailed at those markets, largely by women whom the Blacks, as we know, are in the habit of sending to market with surplus goods to sell. We shall not dwell on the internal Mossi trade, which is the same as in all black countries, a small retail trade nourished and vitalized by the external trade. Let us, therefore, proceed to the latter.

439 The external Mossi trade is the usual trade of the Sudan, which we have already described and which operates from north to south and south to north. Livestock is led toward the south, kola nuts are brought toward the north, salt is brought back toward the south, etc. We should add to this the cotton strips which constitute one of the important Mossi products (they are made by the Yarsé and by the Mossi themselves, as we saw). Those cotton strips, like livestock, are taken south where cotton is poorly grown.

The Mossi grow tobacco in fields around their

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249 homesteads, where they also cultivate their most important cash crops, cotton and indigo, which are used in the manufacture and dyeing of cotton cloth.

136 The wild fauna of Mossi country include several species of antelope, deer, monkeys, rabbits, snakes, and wild pigs. Elephants roam the beds of rivers and streams and often destroy cultivated fields, while lions and hyenas distress the people by attacking livestock. The pools and rivers of Mossi country are inhabited by turtles, crocodiles, and various species of scaled and scaleless fish. Chickens, muscovy ducks, and half-domesticated guinea fowl are the most valuable species of birds.

231 The Mossi have long been famous for their splendid donkeys and [492] horses. Donkeys are sometimes ridden, but they are used primarily as [439] beasts of burden. Horses are important for military and ceremonial purposes and for export to the tsetse-fly zones to the south. The Mossi raise two main types of cattle: a zebu-like animal in the northern regions and a [439] dwarf variety in the south. These animals are raised primarily for their milk and for export, and are seldom killed for meat until they are fairly old. Goats and sheep provide the main source of meat. Hog-raising is not wide- [771] spread, and seems to be declining in importance with the increased ob- [178] servance of Islamic food taboos, which is on the uprise even among people who are still pagans.

135 The subsoil of Mossi country is not well known, but so far there have been no major discoveries of mineral deposits. The only known gold field [301] remained unworked in aboriginal times. The Mossi do not like to wear gold ornaments, preferring jewelry worked from imported copper and [325] silver. The northern Mossi worked their local iron in aboriginal times, but [439] those in the south obtained this metal from caravan traders.

175 The nineteenth-century reports of Barth and other European travelers 439 indicate that the Mossi conducted a rather extensive foreign trade. At least six caravan routes passed through their territory, and traders such as the [443] Hausa and Mandingo visited the important Mossi trading centers at Yako, Pouitenga, and Ouagadougou, where they exchanged Saharan and forest products for Mossi livestock and cloth.[3]

101 The Mossi belong to the Voltaic culture area, a name given by Delafosse to the regions drained by the Black, Red, and White Voltas and their tributaries. The area embraces parts of Mali, the Ivory Coast, Dahomey, the Upper Volta, and northern Ghana.[4] It includes a vast congeries of peoples such [199] as the Dagomba, Mamprusi, Dagari, Birifo, Senufo, Gurmanche, Gurunsi, Lobi, Bobo, Tallensi, Konkomba, Dogon, Somba, Fulse, and Ninisi, all of whom speak languages belonging to the Gur or Moshi-Grunshi group of

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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marauding animals. Just twenty years ago, the six villages that lay closest to the river were gradually abandoned and their populations absorbed by other villages. As of 1955, three of these populations were still paying allegiance to their former chiefs—a fact that bears out the Mossi axiom that chiefs govern people rather than land. The three other chiefs had lost control over their followers, who had placed themselves under the protection of the chiefs of their host villages. On occasion, Nobere also lost villages to other districts. One such village, Rissoma, was taken away from Nobere and given to Djiba when one of the Nobere district chiefs had a dispute with the Mogho Naba. 634 621

The hub or center of Nobere district, like that of all Mossi districts, was Nab'tenga (also called Nobere Naba Tenga, or Na-tenga), the village of the district chief. This village was rather large and in many respects a replica in miniature of the capital of Ouagadougou. Like most Mossi villages, Nab'tenga was divided into sections, quarters, or neighborhoods called *saghse* (sing. *saka*), which included a number of compounds (*yiya*, sing. *yiri*; or *zaghse*, sing. *zaka*). The district chief's compound was called Nab'yiri. He lived there surrounded by his wives, unmarried daughters, younger children, and pages. His older male children lived in separate compounds within the same saka. The saghse of Nab'tenga included Ouidi, the saka of the Ouidi Naba; Balbalse, the saka of the Baloum Naba; Tansoba, the saka of the local war minister (Tansoba or Tampsobo); Baglere, the saka of the chief's serfs; Bendere, the saka of the chief's musicians; Ouedrange, the saka of the chief's grooms; and Pwese, the saka of the guardians of the chief's wives. Scattered among them were the saghse of noble families, smiths, the Moslem Imam, and other persons. The most important market place in the district was located about four hundred yards from the chief's compound. [592] [591] [443]

The number and types of social and ethnic groups within the district and its villages reflected Nobere's history. When the French arrived, the district chief was Kaglere, a descendant of Ngado, who was a son of Mogho Naba Sagha I (ca. 1787–1803). Ngado had been sent to Nobere at the end of the eighteenth century to replace Naba Peka (a descendant of Naba Biligo), who had been deposed and killed by Mogho Naba Sagha during a civil war. The other chiefly descendants of Biligo, however, were not deposed by Ngado; they remained in charge of all but five or six of the major villages in the district. The chiefs of such villages as Ronse, Barkago, Tewarka, and Pinse are *yagense* (descendants) of Naba Biligo. The village called Passintenga was ruled by the descendants of a Busanga from Lenga called Passentre, who allegedly had been given a wife by Biligo. It is not 634 622 175

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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the Niger River area to the Gold Coast and Togoland. Important stops were made at such Mossi centers as Ouagadougou, Bere, Dakay, La, Mane, Yako, and Koupela.[7] At Dori, northwest of Ouagadougou, Barth found Mossi with "their fine donkeys, which are greatly sought after." He adds that in addition,

> the people of Mossi supply this market with gabaga, or "tari" [cotton bands], as Arabs near Timbuktu call them, cotton being extremely cheap in their country, so that in the great market places of that country, especially in Kulfela [Koupela, but really at Poitenga a few miles away], an indigo-colored shirt is not worth more than from 700 to 800 [cowry] shells. . . . Besides salt, cotton strips, dyed cloth, kola nuts, corn, and asses, some copper manufactured chiefly into large drinking-vessels is also brought into the market by the people of Mossi. However, I do not think they manufacture the copper vessels themselves, but bring them from Ashanti.[8]

Dubois, one of the early visitors to Timbuktu, tells us that he saw Mossi men carrying on their traditional trade in that city. Mossi traders dealt in such diverse commodities as millet, rice, manioc, peanuts, honey, kola nuts, peppers, dried onions, tobacco, dried fish, soap, iron, antimony, lead, cotton bands, straw hats, mats, jars, pots, and calabashes. They traded these articles for needles, mirrors, beads, coral, amber, tea, coffee, perfumes, carpets, fezzes, tailored robes, and salt. What impressed Dubois most was that while the merchants from Bamako, Djenne, Sansanding, and Touat enjoyed themselves at Timbuktu, "the great town of pleasures with the freest morals in the Sudan," and spent a great deal of money in gifts to beautiful women, "the Mossi did not waste their money, and left as soon as they had finished their business."[9] On the way south, Mossi and other caravaneers picked up goods from the Yatenga and other northern Ouagadougou provinces before stopping at the capital and then proceeding to the forest regions.

It is impossible to determine the exact volume of caravan trade that passed through Mossi country, and the amount of revenue it brought to the Mossi rulers. We can get some idea of this trade, however, by examining the customs reports on goods crossing the border between Mossi country and the northern territories of the Gold Coast in the few years just following European conquest.

The official figures for 1901 and 1903 are as follows:[10]

Year	Horses	Head of Cattle	Sheep and Goats	Loaded Donkeys	Bales of Cotton Cloth
1901	126	3,111	18,181	2,095	236
1903	196	6,624	30,392	4,294	269

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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439 Marc, who had the opportunity to check the volume of this trade in 1904 and 1905, estimates that about 16,000 head of cattle and 75,000 sheep and goats passed through the two customs posts in Mossi country. Furthermore, he believes that since "the Mossi also supply in part the markets of Togoland and the market at Bondoukou [Ivory Coast], one may assume a minimum annual export of 20,000 head of cattle and 100,000 sheep or goats. The import of kola nuts is at least 500 tons."[11] It is clear that this volume [174] of trade could not have been achieved so soon after the French conquest. [651] We can only conclude that it existed prior to the coming of the Europeans, and that it brought the Mossi rulers a considerable income.

643 The Mogho Naba's officials collected taxes from all caravans that passed 651 through his capital. The caravaneers also gave the Mogho Naba important gifts, and he apparently traded with them, even if always to his own 439 profit. Binger states that Mogho Naba Sanum forced horse traders from [431] the Yatenga and Hausa merchants to sell him part of their commodities at one-hundredth the purchase price.[12] Crozat reports that Mogho Naba Wobogo

> appears to have had some business relations with white merchants who came to Salaga every dry season. He sent horses to them in exchange for silver. He claims that he had no reason to be pleased with their integrity, and that the silver they sent him contained plenty of copper. Some traders apparently came as far as Ouagadougou, bringing merchandise of German origin. There was one of them there during my stay. I was told that he was an important *marabout*, a shereef, perhaps an Arab or a Moor, for I was assured that he was very light in color. As was repeated to me several times, his relations with the king were limited to the solemn greetings on Fridays. He never entered the royal hut in spite of being an important marabout. He was at Ouagadougou for about three and one-half months, but he was compelled to return to the coast since the merchandise which he had brought was exhausted. He spoke no Mossi.[13]

439 All the caravans that passed through Mossi country were obliged to stop 651 and give presents to the district officials. Those caravaneers who tried to 634 elude taxation by going through the forest ran the risk of being attacked by local nobles, who usually confiscated their goods.

The Mogho Naba and the lesser chiefs had "market officials" who taxed 649 the merchants in the markets of their territories. The officials at Ouaga- 651 dougou, the Kos Naba ("sales chief") and the Raga Naba ("market chief"), 443 were fairly rigorous in their exactions. The Kos Naba collected taxes in cowries for every cow slaughtered at the market, and also took its hump and gave it to the Nemdo Naba ("meat chief") for distribution in the royal household. He also collected taxes on every cow sold in the market, but

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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did not usually tax goats and sheep. In lieu of this, he occasionally took one or two of these animals from each herd that passed through the market and sent them to the palace kitchens. Donkeys sold in the market were taxed at the rate of 200 cowries each. Horses sold to the nobility were not taxed, but those exported were.

The Raga Naba collected taxes on the other commodities sold at the market. Cotton weavers paid him according to the size of their bolts of cloth, and cotton growers paid taxes on the sales of their raw produce. The tailors and dyers paid no fixed amounts, but were asked to send clothing to the palace. Every donkey- and ox-load of salt entering the market place was taxed. The smiths were not taxed in cowries, but had to supply the Mogho Naba's wives with hoes and the palace personnel with arrowheads, spear points, and iron clubs. The jewelers also sent bracelets as presents to the ruler. There were no fixed taxes on the cereals, vegetables, and cooked food sold at the market, but each day the Raga Naba, accompanied by several pages or retainers carrying baskets, went from vendor to vendor taking several calabashes of their produce for use in the palace. In addition, the vendors of cooked food had to feed the Mogho Naba's young grooms, who were not normally fed by the palace household. The beer sellers were not formally taxed, but they contributed a substantial percentage of their beverage to palace and market personnel, who demanded the customary *lembgha* ("taste before buying") more frequently and freely than ordinary buyers.

There is some evidence (mainly from European travelers) that the traders occasionally found the caravan and market taxes prohibitive. Binger reports that the high taxes exacted by the Mogho Naba were "one of the reasons why Ouagadougou placed second [as a market town] and Mane was the commercial capital of Mossi country." Binger himself was caught in the institutionalized gift system and wrote sarcastically: "On market day [at Ouagadougou] the receipts are good. People bring everything to the palace, whether it be millet, hoes, or peanuts, and everything is accepted. *All this giving is left to the discretion of the donors.*"[14] The italics are Binger's.

Some of the later Mogho Nanamse appear to have obtained a great deal of revenue through the sale of slaves. Most of these slaves were captured in raids among the smaller groups surrounding Mossi territory, such as the Samo, Gurunsi, and Busansi populations. According to Mangin, Gurunsi and Busansi countries were true granaries for the Mossi, who drew upon them according to their needs.[15] In early times the Mossi chiefs utilized these slaves (*yemse*, sing. *yemba*) as agricultural workers, until Mogho

485 o'clock in the morning to sell food to those migrants who have slept
265 under the trees or in the deserted market place and who are going on towards Ghana or to Wagadougou. At about 8:00 or 9:00 A.M. the majority of the food-sellers leave for home, but some of them remain around all day to sell to those migrants who pass by in the few trucks which can travel during the heat of the day. The food sellers then return at about 5:00 P.M. because from this time until about 1:00 A.M. most of the trucks bearing migrants stop for water and to allow
485 their passengers to eat and rest. The amount of money these women
265 gross varies from day to day depending upon the amount of traffic
434 and the time of year. During the off-season from June to October, when most of the migrants are home planting, a woman may make as
221 little as ten francs per day. In contrast, at the beginning of the dry season when the young men are migrating in droves, the women may make as much as 100 francs a day, even though twenty or thirty women line the road at trucking centers. Many women welcome this opportunity to earn money because by so doing they are free to buy in the local markets the things they need.

MARKET

366 The Mossi have always conducted most of their commercial activities
443 in market places even though some extra-market trading continually takes place. These markets were and are still divided into two main
[103] types: (1) those specializing in external trading, such as Pouitenga, Dakay, Kaya, Mane, Yako, La, Beloussa, Tema, Wagadougou; and (2) those specializing in internal commerce such as the markets in the villages and district centers. Of course, there is an overlap between the two types of markets in the sense that some people from the villages go to the larger markets to dispose of their commodities and, in turn, buy goods which they bring back for resale on the local level. Similarly, in former days some caravaneers visited the local markets to buy commodities and in the process disposed of their goods. However, the main pattern is for local commodities to filter into the large market centers through local markets, and for goods from these centers to filter back down to the local markets. The more goods and traders available, the more numerous and successful the markets are.

443 The Mossi do not appear to have any legends about the origin of
173 markets in their country. When asked how and why markets first arose, they say that markets developed simply because people wanted to exchange goods with each other, or because the chiefs wanted markets in their own villages so that their people need not go to
443 other districts. When one asks the Mossi directly, "What is a market?"

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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When one asks the Mossi directly, "What is a market?" the response to this question is: "A market is a place where people meet to buy and sell. People travel from one market place to another market place, and on the way they stop and see their friends in other villages. In the market one often meets and drinks with one's friends. People also go to distant markets to find things which they do not grow themselves or which cannot be found in their own markets." 443 829

Lending support to the Mossi contention that markets are places where one goes to buy and sell is the fact that most important markets in their country are found at the intersections of well-traveled routes. These intersections are often the places where chiefs have their capitals or compounds and this leads to the further idea that there is a connection between chiefs and markets, if only because the power of the chiefs makes markets possible. This does not mean, however, that the market is a purely physical entity which can only exist under the aegis of a chief, or that it is a purely economic institution. First of all, some markets, especially the smaller ones, are moved periodically without too much difficulty. Secondly, and of great importance, is the fact that whenever and wherever there is a large gathering of Mossi there is a "market." Indeed one can say that Mossi seldom come together in large numbers without coming to a market, or without creating one. It appears that the Mossi cannot interact with one another in any circumstance without also exchanging goods of some kind. For example, when a pagan chief holds the annual festival to his ancestors, the people who attend form a market in the vicinity of his compound. In those districts where the chiefs have become Christians and celebrate their birthdays rather than the traditional ancestors' rites, the people go to pay them homage and also "make a market." Similarly, whenever there is a funeral of an important chief, the people from the surrounding villages or even districts bring commodities to his hamlet and hold a market during the ceremony. On Christmas day, 1955, the people of Manga district "moved their market" about 500 yards to the Catholic Mission grounds where the Christians were celebrating their holiday. And after celebrating the prayers of Ramadan, the Moslems and their pagan townsmen repair to the markets to spend the rest of the day.

443 487 [531] 443 571 [437] [268] [297] [527] [266] [296]

Most Mossi markets are inaugurated with religious ceremonies except those which develop by accretion—that is, by more and more persons coming voluntarily to trade. When a chief orders that a market be created or when a market is moved from one place to another place for any reason, the chief is the person who gives the order for the ceremony to be performed. First of all he speaks to his Raga Naba (market chief), usually a non-Mossi slave, about the need for the market or the desirability of changing its location. This man then consults a *teng-*

443 433 [559] [554]

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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This man then consults a teng-

443 *sobu* (earth priest) who must be also a *barga* (soothsayer) to find out
787 where in a certain area it would be most propitious to locate the new
[791] market. After the *tengsoba* has ascertained the number and nature of
[776] the *tengkouga* (earth deities, plural of *Tengkougri)* in the designated spot, he tells the *Raga Naba* what type of sacrifice would be appropri-
443 ate. A few days later the *Raga Naba*, his young assistant and the *teng-*
782 *soba* take *zom kom* (milletflour), *dam* (sorghum beer), and a chicken (or goat) of the designated color, and go to the new market place.
[776] Here they pick out the stone or three which is the abode of the spirit or spirits, if there are several of them, and prepare to make the offering. The *Raga Naba* takes the millet water and pours some on the ground saying: "Good God, take this water, drink it, and take this other water (here he pours the beer), and give it to all the *tengkouga* in the villages so that the market will aways be good and there will be no fighting in the market!" Then the *Raga Naba* takes the sacrificial animal, and in the case of a chicken pulls off the neck feathers and cuts its throat, saying: "Good God, take this chicken and heed all the prayers of the people of this market!" He releases the chicken and waits to see whether it will fall on its back, thereby indicating whether the petition has been accepted. Of course, if it has not been accepted, a new site is chosen. If the sacrifice has been accepted, then the *Raga Naba* gives the chicken to his young helper to be cleaned and roasted. He then prays to the *tengkouga* who live in the market place and begs them to help with the market. When the boy brings back the dissected chicken, the *Raga Naba* cuts the liver into two parts; one for God and the other for the local *tengkouga*. He then says, "Now that God and the *Tengkouga* have eaten, they should drink," and forthwith pours out the remainder of the millet water. The *Raga Naba* then distributes the remainder of the roasted chicken among those present saying, "*Winnam dege* (God has accepted the sacrifice)." Only after this ceremony is completed can the market be opened.[9]

443 All Mossi markets, except those which specialize in one type of
366 trading, have the same basic physical structure even though they vary in size from one-eighth of an acre to as much as four or five acres. We do not know the size of some of the traditional markets such as Pouitenga, La, Yako, Dakay, Belousa, Mane, and Tema, but we have Crozat's report that "The market at Wagadougou, which is found at Kounkounbissi, the royal residence . . . is large" (Crozat 1891 : 4848). Since the market at Wagadougou was smaller than some of the other important ones, we may assume that some of the markets must have been quite large. At the same time, the physical appurtenances of Mossi markets are not elaborate, or were not so until today. In the

(9) See Zahan (1954 : 371) and Mangin (1921 : 55).

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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larger markets there were and are solid stalls which are built and tenanted by merchants. In the small district and village markets, these stalls are built out of millet stalks which offer little but protection against the noonday sun on market days. Men build these structures for their womenfolk and for themselves. Some of the shelters which are not used for trading serve as galleries where the young blades look out and comment on the passing scene. Others are used as meeting places by adult men who sit and discuss all sorts of affairs. Still others are used by the older men, who gather there to arrange marriages between their several families, wait for gifts from younger men who seek wives, or spend a great deal of time reminiscing about their youthful adventures. Those persons who do not have such shelters sit in the sun or use grass lean-tos as protection from the sun.

Except in the large towns, Mossi markets are held between the hours of 10:00 A.M. and 4:00 P.M. every fourth day. In the larger towns there are daily markets, but these remained unimportant until today when they serve a growing urban population. The capital city of Wagadougou now even has an "evening" market which opens about 4:00 P.M. and closes at about 9:00 P.M. In addition, numerous daily markets have sprung up in many of its wards. The three-day markets are, however, the traditional type, and they are still the most numerous through the country. By "three-day market" I mean that a market is held one day, not held over the two following days, and then held again on the next day. These markets also have a 21-day cycle from one *Ragakasanga* or *Rag'kasanga* ("larger market") on a Friday to another *Rag'kasanga* on a Friday three weeks later, a total of seven markets between the two important ones. The people give no adequate explanation for the observance of the three-day cycle or the 21-day cycle. One man did suggest that it took the women three days to prepare beer and this was why markets could not be held more often, but even he did not speculate about the 21-day cycle.[10] This same man did point out, however, that the cycle made little difference to persons who really liked to go to market, since it was possible for

(10) Zahan (1954 : 373) apparently found one of the few Mossi informants with a mystical bent; he reports that the seven three-day cycles of markets in the 21-day cycle have the following significance for the Yatenga people: "The first of these numbers explains the cycle of the person (7 symbolizes the complete person: male [to which the Mossi assign the number 3] and female [to which they assign the number 4], the second that of the creation." He believes that each market starts a new cycle, a beginning and an end: "the seventh market signifies the most perfect equilibrium: the one which exists between the universe, mankind, and the divinity." In a footnote he suggests that this sybolism is not too different among the Dogon, who are "ideologically and geographically close to the Mossi." Peter Hammond, who worked in Yatenga, could not find this kind of symbolism.

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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443 such individuals to find a market everyday in one neighboring district or another.

Every Mossi market not only has its own schedule but is also part of a cycle of markets in the sense that its main customers can and do regularly attend two other markets on the two nonmarket days without missing their "own" market. Table 30 takes the district market at Nobere as the home market and lists the markets which Nobere's people can attend and the reasons they themselves give for going there.

443 366 438 484

[103]

TABLE 30

Markets near Nobere

		Distance Away	*Reasons for Going*
First Day:			
	Nobere		Home Market
	Manga	12 kilometers	Good Pottery
	Vooko	15 kilometers	Butter and Millet
	Twese	20 kilometers	Millet and Sorghum
	Binde	35 kilometers	Good Pottery and Mats "Very far and people do not go there very often"
Second Day:			
	Basgana	10 kilometers	Good Pottery
	Sakouliga	15 kilometers	"To Have Fun"
	Giba	10 kilometers	"To Have Fun"
Third Day:			
	Nobili	27 kilometers	"Good Millet"
	Pinse	6 kilometers	"Small Market; to have fun"
	Parougre	10 kilometers	"Good Millet and Pottery"

Nobere people scarcely ever go to Manga because the market there conflicts with their own and its one unique product, pottery, can be bought at Basgana on a day when there is no market at Nobere. A [435] person is likely to go do Vooko when he wishes to buy butter and millet at cheaper prices than he can obtain in his own market. But he scarcely visits the Binde market unless he is there visiting a friend [517] or relative. Nobere people think nothing of going to Giba or to Pinse to show off their clothes or to have fun at those markets. If any [436] commodity is cheap there they take advantage of the prices, but in general they believe that they can obtain better and cheaper products at their own market.

443 438 It is now possible to find a great variety of products at Mossi markets, and the larger the market the more varied its merchandise. Apparently this was not always so. Crozart (1891 : 4848), who visited the country just before it was conquered, reported that in the market at Wagadougou, he found "millet, rice, millet beer, butchered meat, small cutlery, morocco-leather goods, basketwork and jewelry items,

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all of local manufacture and in great abundance. Local cloth is also very abundant. However, there are scarcely any imported objects salt, kola nuts, copper rings and extremely rare European fabrics. The salt always comes from the north. During my stay at Wagadougou I saw the arrival of a convoy of five or six small-sized mules loaded with this merchandise." Crozat felt that the Wagadougou market with its mainly local products was inferior to the markets at Woroudoy and Bobo-Dioulasso which he found less crowded, but which were, in his words, "true *entrepots* of imported merchandise."

Tauxier gives us a better picture of the goods found in the markets of Mossi country before the Europeans arrived. His reports list few imported products except salt and kola nuts. The preponderance of goods sold were such local foodstuffs as maize, manioc, peppers, tomatoes, squash, karite or shea butter, locust-bean balls, locust-bean flour, rice and a local variety of potatoes. Other foodstuffs included were honey, beer, butchered meat, chickens, and guinea fowls. Tobacco both for chewing and smoking was also available, and so was hemp for making rope. Raw cotton, cotton thread, cloth and tailored cotton garments were also present, and so was indigo for dyeing the cotton materials. Other goods included hides, sandals, pouches, amulets, iron items such as axes, hoes, knives, scythes, locks, clubs and spearpoints, bracelets and anklets made of copper by the lost-wax process, baskets, mats and hats made out of local grasses, pottery, pipes and wooden stools (Tauxier 1912 : 466 ff.). By 1914 Mangin could add little to this list of local products, sold in the markets, but added such foreign items as "matches, glass trinkets, handkerchiefs, basins, dishes, perfumes, and even firecrackers" (Mangin 1921 : 53).

The markets of contemporary Mossi society contain all of the articles found in pre-European times and those seen there by Mangin in 1914. In the larger markets one now can find such additional items as bicycles, razor blades, plastic raincoats and other plastic products, and the latest "rock 'n roll" records from the United States. The goods found in the smaller district and village markets tend to be of the traditional variety. But even here it is possible to buy refined cane sugar, matches, plastic necklaces, shoe polish, nail polish, toilet water, glass beads, costume jewelry, chinaware, and glass and enamel containers. In some of the smaller markets it is even possible to buy wheat bread made of imported flour, and bottled beer and soda water. The more different types of goods entering the larger markets, the richer the variety found in the smaller markets, since local merchants are quick to take advantage of the prestige value of any new produce and introduce it into the rural areas. The only barrier to this type of commercial activity is the relative poverty of the rural people.

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in the adoption of this currency as the medium of exchange in most markets.[11] The one-franc piece and coins of smaller denominations were those most often used because they were ideally suited to the petty trading that took place in the markets. The franc even became the standard of value in the larger markets, but one receives only 3 local francs for a five-franc note C.F.A. or seven francs for a ten-franc note C.F.A. These changes in value seem to occur by common concensus, since it is impossible to discover who it was that changed the exchange rate. A further fact is that many Europeans remain unaware of these changes since they seldom go to the local markets themselves. When they do go and insist upon the official exchange rate, the "unofficial" market chief appears and takes over the situation, giving the *nansara* ("conqueror" or "master," the way in which every European is regarded) what he wishes.

While the equivalence between the cowrie, the old brass franc, and the franc C.F.A. works splendidly when products are sold in small quantities, I found the system difficult to understand when more expensive goods are traded. For example, when one buys meat, an expensive item, the butcher accepts either the official francs or the local currency and gives change in both. The difficulty here is that since the butcher uses no scales, one is never sure about the price or about the system of value the butcher is using. The most that can be done if one does not receive as much meat as expected is to haggle with the butcher until he adds more. However, this haggling leaves unresolved the problem of the value of one's official money in terms of the unofficial money, and the product which it is intended to buy. One is thus left with the *impression* that there must be an internal consistency to the exchange system, or barring this, that the local people accept the system as it is as a matter of expediency. On the other hand, the vendors of products with fixed prices such as matches, cigarettes and the like appear to make differential profits when they

(11) Mangin (1921 : 61–62) reports that the Mossi had great difficulty obtaining the five-franc piece which they needed to pay their taxes because the "Europeans who live in Mossi country, including all the riflemen and provincial guards do not put into circulation a quarter of the five-franc pieces which are required each year from the natives. At first the Mossi were taken by surprise and had to give 10 or even 15,000 cowries to obtain this famous coin, this *greegree* which was to free them from all difficulties with the white man. And yet at the official rate of exchange this coin is worth 5,000 cowries. Nowadays it is very difficult to find a native willing to give this much for one of the coins. The usual exchange rate varies from 3,500 to 4,000 cowries: the French currency has been depreciated. This must mean that the natives find elsewhere —through trading— this indispensable coin. They know that the tax must be paid every year, and instead of waiting till the last minute, as soon as they have accumulated the necessary cowries they secure the five-franc pieces from those who have fetched them from far away. The coins flow into the country, and the rate of exchange goes down."

436 use one type of currency rather than another. For example, a petty
435 trader often buys a package of European cigarettes for 20 francs
443 C.F.A. in the Wagadougou market for retail in the local markets. Here he sells some individual cigarettes at the price of two for 5 francs C.F.A., some at two for 3 old-fashioned francs (making a total of about 21 francs C.F.A.). The vendors are fully aware of this profit differential, but make no attempt to insist on one currency over the other. Furthermore, they appeared indifferent when I suggested that I planned to take advantage of the price differential which I suspected in the two systems. It appears that they believe it would be a waste of time to try to obtain the profit differential.

437 Barter as a form of exchange had just about disappeared from the
435 larger markets in Mossi country, but it exists alongside the use of
443 currency in the local markets, especially in connection with foodstuffs
[178] and other vegetable commodities. People tend to resort to barter when they wish to exchange a specific product for another. Thus, a woman who normally sells rice for currency sometimes will suddenly refuse to accept money and insist on exchanging the rice for cotton or peanuts. The bartering then takes the form of a half-calabash of rice for a half-calabash of either peanuts or cotton, depending upon which products are desired. This equivalence seems always to be maintained regardless of the currency value of rice, cotton, or peanuts at the market on the day in question. For example, a woman who was looking for persons with whom she could exchange peanuts for rice and she refused to sell peanuts to me. I asked why she would not sell the peanuts and then take the money and buy rice with it. She said that if she did so, she would suffer a dual loss: first, in selling the peanuts, each valued at 100 cowries (one-half franc of unofficial currency) for 5 francs. I counted the nuts, which amounted to about 120, and then asked for the customary *lenga* (bonus) and received 36 more peanuts worth 1.5 franc. On the next market day I observed that peanuts were not being sold but only bartered for cotton which was being sold. I decided to test the system. I bought 2 old-fashioned francs' worth of cotton at 100 cowries a ball, and took them over to the woman bartering peanuts for cotton. She accepted the balls of cotton, measured them in a calabash, and then gave me the same volume of peanuts in exchange. I counted the nuts and discovered that I had received some 200 nuts for only 2 francs. When I discussed this experiment with some of the people, they admitted knowing
[123] about this practice and said that they did this at times. I then suggested that it would be possible to manipulate the system to one's advantage, but was again greeted with a show of indifference by most of my auditors. One man eventually said that I would lose because prices

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changed. I remain ignorant of what the real facts are, but still suspect that it may be possible to speculate on the system. 439 435

Barter is very specific in Mossi markets in the sense that not every product can be bartered against every other product. Some days rice would be bartered for cotton, and on other days only for peanuts and vice versa. It is not possible either to exchange vegetable produce for livestock, even though livestock may be exchanged for livestock. Sometimes people take chickens or guinea hens to market to exchange for goats or sheep, and often these animals are exchanged for young cattle. What is not at all clear, however, is whether or not the people see the value of the things exchanged in terms of currency value, or in terms of some value which has no reference to the European currency system. The ordinary people in the markets, like ordinary people everywhere, are not concerned with these problems as long as they believe that they are conducting their commercial activities with equity and are deriving satisfaction from them. 443

The most significant feature of all the Mossi markets is the segregation of certain merchants into certain areas. The makers and sellers of one product are found only in one part of the market, and anyone wishing to buy or sell these products must go to the place where they are traded. The other type of segregation is by reference to the trader's place of origin. For example, a woman who sells beer would be found in the section of the market where beer is sold, but she would be found sitting with her back towards the village and facing toward the direction from which she came. There are often some variations on this pattern. For example, if there are a large number of traders with one type of product, they will form a large open circle in which each person will sit with his or her back towards the point of origin. Inside of this circle, and separated by a few feet, would be another circle of people selling another product with their faces toward the general direction from which they came. Sitting with their backs to the people of this circle would be other people forming another circle and selling one type of product. These people would have their backs towards the region from which they came. When the group of persons selling one type of product is very small, they may form a small circle in a corner of the market with their backs towards their points of origin. All of these patterns often exist simultaneously in Mossi markets, but it is obvious that two basic configurations prevail. One configuration is in terms of goods, and facilitates trading. The other configuration is a social one and facilitates the social interaction which is an integral part of the Mossi market. This seating pattern makes it easier to find one's friends, to converse and drink with them, to find someone through whom to send mes- 443 571

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443 sages to specific villages, to find the help needed in the event of a
571 fight, and finally to find an escape route by which one can leave in the event of trouble.

443 The vendors in the larger markets of Mossi country include Yoru-
463 ba, Hausa and other ethnic groups, many of whose members were
563 born in Mossi country and have never visited the land of their fathers. The lives of these people are usually centered around the markets; where the markets are held every day, many of the men, women and children of these foreign groups spend almost all of their lives at the [439] markets. In marked contrast to the Mossi, they usually sell products of foreign provenience, whether African or European, and seldom deal in the local products. These vendors are tolerated by the Mossi and are valued for their commerce, but are always regarded as outsiders. And as outsiders the markets do not belong to them, but only
443 to the Mossi. Even so, the Mossi do not really like the larger markets.
829 True, one can buy all kinds of wonderful goods on the large markets, but to the Mossi, a market is more than a place where one goes to buy and sell, even though everyone who goes there tries to do some of both.

443 There is a marked division of labor among the vendors in a Mossi
462 market—a division which can be seen at its best on the local markets.
438 Here only the women sell cooked food, beer, millet, rice, peanuts,
439 shea-butter, tobacco, and all of the other locally grown vegetables and vegetable products, except cotton which may also be sold by a man. In contrast, women do not sell such local products as cotton cloth, hemp, jewelry, iron implements and leather goods, which are the province of the men. Only men may butcher and sell animals and meat in the market. And they alone control the commerce in foreign food articles such as salt and dried fish. Both men and women sell the valuable imported kola nut, but only men sell goods of European manufacture such as cigarettes, matches, sugar, mirrors and so on. [857] Small girls sell calabashes of water to everyone, and small boys wander through the market selling single cigarettes, bundles of a few matches, single lumps of sugar, chickens and guinea fowls, and skewers of roasted meat.

443 There is little competition about someone else having "stolen"
437 a customer. The reason for this is mainly that every person in the market is a potential customer of everyone else. Normally, a buyer
432 simply moves from seller to seller sampling the goods if that is possible (some unscrupulous men can even get drunk in the process of "sampling" beer) and trying to get the best bargain. No seller would think of running after a customer, and customers seldom, if ever, move away from a vendor in the hope that he would be called back to be sold the article at a lower price.

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to be sold the article at a lower price. The result is that the pace of commerce in a Mossi market is somewhat relaxed, but the lack of intense competition prevents a great deal of hositility and quarreling among the market people.

The amount of small trading which takes place in a Mossi market is fantastic, so much so that one gains the impression that some people trade simply for the sake of trading. Everyone tries to get money so that he or she can buy some desired object, but it is impossible for one to obtain a clear idea of what kind of profit, if any, people make from their commerce. In fact, the idea of a profit does not seem to be important when people are selling their own products. Most people only think about profit when they buy things to resell—whether these things are of African or European manufacture. This, incidentally, is one of the reasons why the prices of foodstuffs are about 10 per cent lower in the country districts than at Wagadougou, and concommitently, why imported products are 10 to 20 per cent higher in the rural districts than at Wagadougou where they are bought. When a woman takes such products as cotton, beans or millet to market, she may gross about 100 francs in the course of the day. But out of this she may give a few francs to her husband to buy kola nuts, a few francs to her daughter to buy a plastic necklace, and spend the rest for a cotton skirt, a piece of meat and condiments for her sauces. Men whose wives do not bring many goods to market must usually give them about 100 francs to spend on the various products the family needs. There are no official restrictions on the kinds of goods which may or may not be sold in the Mossi markets. In pre-European times slaves and eunuchs were the common stock-in-trade of the major markets and of some of the smaller ones as well. The only active supervision that existed and still exists concerns the butchering of meat. Every person who sells meat in the market must exhibit the skin of the butchered animal in a public place so that there will be no question as to the ownership of the animal. If the meat in question is the remains of a cow killed and half-eaten by a lion, then the village or district chief must be notified before the meat enters the market. The person in charge of this task used to be, and often still is, a man called the Kos Naba, a kind of sales chief. He also formerly doubled as a tax collector for the rulers and chiefs. Another official, the Raga Naba, where he still exists, is more concerned with protecting the lives and property of the people who trade at the markets, but he also supervises the sale of some commodities there and formerly also collected taxes for his superior.

In pre-European times, every important Mossi prince and district chief had the counterpart of a Kos Naba and Raga Naba, to collect

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443 taxes in their markets. The French abolished both of these offices
554 when they took over the country, because they looked upon them as
651 purely exploitative rather than regulatory agents. But like so many
656 other Mossi political institutions which the French have "abolished,"
178 the Kos Naga and Raga Naba persist in many of the districts, and per-
[649] haps even in such large centers as Wagadougou. These officials persist
[829] because one of the basic assumptions of the Mossi is that everything
[825] must have a "chief." They believe that even the animals in the bush have chiefs, and if men, too, did not have chiefs then social life would be chaos. Thus, in the rural areas many or most district chiefs have retained their market officials even though the roles of these officials have become highly attenuated and so secretive that their existence is often denied.

175 Taxes collected at the market places played an important part in
443 supporting the traditional political hierarchy of the Mossi people.
651 The Kos Naba collected 250 cowries in taxes for every beef cattle
[649] slaughtered at the market and took their humps and gave them to a palace official called the Nemdo Naba (meat chief) for distribution in the royal household. He also collected 250 cowries on every cow sold there, but did not usually tax goats and sheep. In lieu of this he occasionally took a head or two of these animals from each herd that passed through the market and sent them to the palace kitchens. Donkeys were also taxed at the rate of 200 cowries per head sold in the market. Horses sold to the nobility were not taxed, but those exported were taxed about 300 cowries.

175 The Raga Naba collected the taxes on other commodities sold at
443 market. Cotton weavers paid him taxes according to the size of their
651 bolts of cloth, and cotton producers paid as much as 20 cowries on
463 especially large sales of their raw produce. The tailors and dyers paid no fixed tax on their wares, but were asked to send clothing to the palace. Every donkey- or ox-load of salt which entered the market place was assessed a tax of 300 cowries. The smiths were not taxed in cowries, but had to supply the wives of the Moro Naba with hoes and the palace personnel with arrowheads, spearpoints and iron clubs. The jewelers also sent bracelets as presents to the ruler. There were no fixed taxes on cereals, vegetables and cooked food sold at market, but each day the Raga Naba, accompanied by several pages or retainers carrying baskets, went from vendor to vendor taking several calabash-fuls of their produce for use in the palace. In addition, the vendors of cooked food had to feed the young grooms of the Moro Naba who were not regularly fed by the palace household. The beer sellers, too, while they were not assessed taxes, contributed a good percentage of their beverage to palace and market personnel who demanded the

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customary "taste" with greater frequency and freedom than did ordinary buyers. But the most valuable tax collected by the Raga Naba was on the sale of slaves, whose buyers paid a tax of 1,000 cowries per head.

There is some evidence, mainly from Europeans, that the Mossi occasionally may have found the market taxes prohibitive. Binger reports that during his visit to the Mossi in 1888, the high taxes exacted by the Moro Naba were "one of the causes which placed Wagadougou in second place [as a market town] and which made Mane the commercial capital of Mossi country" (Binger 1892 : 467). Binger, himself, was caught in the institutionalized gift system and wrote sarcastically: "The day of the market [at Wagadougou] the receipts are good. People bring every thing to the palace including millet as well as hoes or peanuts, and everything is accepted. *All this giving is left to the generosity of the customers . . .*" (Binger 1892 : 465) (his italics). Even so, one cannot be sure that the Mossi felt the same way about paying taxes to their rulers as Binger felt. There is, incidentally, always an air of mutual recriminations among the Mossi and their rulers about the level of reciprocation between them. The people admit that the chiefs are indispensable; yet they complain that they are greedy—they "eat" too much. The chiefs insist that it is difficult to rule a territory and complain that the people are ungrateful.

SOCIAL AND RITUAL ASPECTS OF THE MARKETPLACE

Although the offices of Kos Naba and Raga Naba have been abolished officially, these officials still exist in many Mossi districts, and even when they do not exist, some men acting in their stead appropriate commodities in the markets for the chiefs. Furthermore, the *nakomce* (plural of *nabiga*—chief's child) or nobles still wander about the market places taking handfuls of kola nuts, peanuts and everything they need without the people becoming angry or complaining to the French about it. Once when I visited a market in the company of a *nabiga*, the local Raga Naba came up to where we were buying meat and indicated to the butcher that one of his customers was a *nabiga* and that he should treat him accordingly. It is not because of ignorance that the market people continue to grant these privileges to the nobles and the chiefs, but rather because they believe that only the market officials, and not the Europeans, can take care of the markets.

One of the most important tasks of the Raga Naba (or in the absence of this official, the Kos Naba) is to propitiate the *tengkouga* in the market place, or supervise the sacrifices which the *tengsobas* make to them. The task of the market spirits is believed to be so difficult—

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443 554 776 782 due to the bickering, quarreling and even fighting they have to prevent by cooling the tempers of the market people—that they become quite angry. When the spirits are not satisfied, they fail in their tasks and real trouble breaks out in the market, disrupting the trading; and if they are not pacified they may even cause the death of the market officials.[12]

In the days before the market officials were banned, these sacrifices were performed regularly. At that time the Raga Naba simply asked the Kos Naba to seize the appropriate animal in the market to perform the rite. The problem today is that the French have abolished [648] the office of Raga Naba, and in some districts have prevented the chief from even naming one secretly, the markets in the latter local- [208] ities are considered "dangerous markets." Once a market acquires such a reputation, people do not like to visit it because they fear that they would get into fights or quarrels. Not only this, but it is believed that if a market has been without a Raga Naba for a long time, the *tengkquga* there become so angry for being neglected that they kill [123] the first chief appointed to it. This was the reality or belief behind a series of misadventures of which I was the victim.

123 443 554 656 I had spent an entire day in a market, and on returning home could not find my pen. The next morning I sent an assistant to the chief telling him about the loss and asking him to have an announcement made in the market on the next market day that I would pay a handsome reward to whomever should find and deliver the pen. The chief sent back a reply saying that since there was no Raga Naba, he would have the Kos Naba acquaint the people with my loss. On the day of the market, I waited until midday, when most of the people had arrived, and then went to see whether the Kos Naba had any news of the pen. I checked with several of my friends to see whether they had heard about the pen and discovered, to my chagrin, that no an- [564] nouncement had been made about it. I went and told the Kos Naba that the people were not hearing about the pen and suggested that one way to do so would be to have the Binderes (drummers and griots) circulate through the market announcing the loss. The Kos Naba refused to do this, and when I enlisted the aid of the chief's secretary, he, too, said that it could not be done because there was no Raga Naba. I had some notes on the institution of the Raga Naba, but as I did not know everything about it, I was, therefore, frankly puzzled

(12) Zahan (1954 : 371) states that "the place where all kinds of merchandise accumulate and where strangers come is a place charged with forces. In time, these forces build up to such a point within the precincts of the market that some purifications are necessary to liberate them. To omit making them would expose the participants to excitements leading to brawls and compromising the place of the transactions."

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and a bit peeved at not being able to put my idea into practice. I next sought the advice and consolation of an elder noble who listened quite calmly and then said: "The customs of these kafirs (heathens) are foolish." Being a Moslem, my friend was very often critical of the pagans, and could be relied upon to explain why their customs were "foolish." He said that in former days the Raga Naba would have climbed a tree and announced to the crowd any message from the district chief. Moreover, he was the custodian of all lost articles and restored them to their owners. The Moslem said that my request could not be granted because there was no Raga Naba, and that probably there would never be another. When the French first banned the institution, the local chief dismissed the Raga Naba. With the passage of years, however, the market became so dangerous that the chief tried to appoint another ex-serf to the job. This man soon died, and his successor died shortly after being appointed. Since that time the chief has made no attempt to name a new market chief.

With this new knowledge I called my aide and inquired from him whether this information was true and if so, why did he not tell me the true state of affairs. His reply was that he did not wish to say that the market was bad because the local people believed that they had solved the problem of the lack of a Raga Naba. When the last Raga Naba died, the chief decided not to name a new one, but in order to placate the market *tengkouga,* he ordered his *tengsoba* to make sacrifices to it. It was believed that these sacrifices would be acceptable as long as the officiant did not bear the title of Raga Naba. The other functions of the Raga Naba, such as collecting goods for the chief and preserving peace in the market, were taken over by the Kos Naba and another servant of the chief. However, the Kos Naba had to be careful lest he overstep his authority in such a way as would acquaint the *tengkouga* with the real situation. In my case, the chief was acting by trying to get the Kos Naba to acquaint the people with my loss in as inconspicuous a manner as possible. The consensus was that the Kos Naba would have risked his life had he made any kind of announcement to the market people, because the *tengkouga* would have thought that he was the new Raga Naba, and if not contented with the people would have killed him. Under these circumstances, I withdrew my request. I discovered later that my pen was not lost but had been in the hut all the time.

Those chiefs who have succeeded in retaining their market officials even secretly have been able to maintain their control over public behavior there. The Mossi are fairly law-abiding despite the persistence among them of a warrior tradition. Every man who goes to market, or anywhere for that matter, usually carries a baton over his

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shoulder; but when he arrives in the market, he calmly places his weapon on top of one of the sheds before he makes his rounds. The women do not carry any weapons to market except their "words" but even these are not often used because of the desire to avoid hostility—which the Mossi do not like to have disrupt one of their major institutions.

The rural market is the center of Mossi social life, and friends as well as enemies meet within its confines. What Mangin wrote some forty years ago is still true: "Every self-respecting Mossi—man or woman, child or elder—must go to market at least once in a while, . . . handsome clothes" (Mangin 1921 : 53). Except for the Moslems who are now experimenting with a form of Purdah, there are few persons who do not go to market. The absence of someone from the market for more than two consecutive occasions is a sure sign of illness, travel, or family crisis. As one man said to me, "I must go to market, and when I get there I look for three persons: my girl friend, my debtor and my enemy. If I do now know whether any of them are at the market I am ill at ease. And when I go to the market and do not see them all, the market is not good."

The lively character of the Mossi market will be discussed later, but throughout this kaleidoscope of activities certain consistencies can be discerned. For example, one notices many different kinds of greetings and salutations in the market place, but each one of them correctly indicates the exact relation or relationship between the persons involved. Young girls on passing each other on one of their innumerable circuits of the market bend their knees slightly and place both of their cupped hands on their own breasts. Only then will they stop and exchange news. At the end of the conversation they repeat the same greeting and continue their rounds. Both girls and women greet casual male acquaintances in the same way, but invariably kneel if the male stops and talks to them. Women sometime kneel when speaking to each other, but always do so when addressing any male relative of a respected category, who may then send them on errands such as buying tobacco from the vendors. A man who meets a female benefactor, such as a woman who has given medicine to one of his children, invariably kneels down before her. She may do the same thing out of respect for his male status. However, when a man meets either his mother-in-law or his father's sister, he is the one to kneel down in order to greet her. Two men who are equals normally shake hands, but if not, the junior in status or in age kneels down before his elder or superior. Sometimes a high status man will prevent his greeter from kneeling by raising him. When

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greeting a lower status benefactor, a man will get down and greet him from a kneeling position. It is because of this elaborate system of greeting, with the many opportunities thus provided for one person to slight another, that many important persons never go to the market. As a rule, the failure of any one person to give the required greeting to another when they meet in the market place is always an indication of strained relations between them.

The persons from whom an individual may buy goods, and the kinds of goods which may be purchased by one individual from another, are governed by convention and social relationships. A person may not buy anything from a relative except European goods. A man cannot buy any but cooked food in the market place, and often he asks a female relative or a passing female to buy it for him. To do the contrary is held to be unmanly and indicative of a bad character. for her. She would hate to have people believe that she has no male relative to weave it for her, or what is more likely, that she is too lazy to spin the cotton thread which would then be woven for her. A woman may purchase any type of commodity from other women, but she must be careful not to patronize men who are known to be libertines or with whom she is suspected of having an affair. She must also be careful about running errands for men, since people know that men often use this device to establish amorous relationships with women. Men also use this device to give presents, or to arrange secret meetings with them. If any man sees a female relative involved in any of these misadventures, he chases her away and more than likely curses the man, if he does not fight him. In any event, he warns the man to leave the woman alone.

The market is one of the few places where men and women can initiate relationships not sanctioned by their relatives. Under normal conditions marriages are arranged between unrelated individuals through the lineage members who establish "friendly" relationships. Two friends might ask their lineage heads for women to exchange as wives or the "friend" who has received more gifts from the other will give over a wife. Because the older men most often have goods and women at their disposal, they are usually the ones who receive wives. The result is that most young men have no wives, and until they inherit wives from lineage members, are continually seeking to establish intimate relations with women whom they meet on the market place. The technique which a young man employes to gain the favors of a woman he sees at market is highly stereotyped. First of all, he must ascertain that the woman in question is not a member of his maximal lineage or married to a member of his own lineage. A responsible

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man even refrains from making overtures to a woman whose husband's female relatives may be married to a member of his own lineage. He fears that a wronged husband may have the wives of his lineage brothers recalled, thus causing dissension within and between the two lineages. If none of these complications are present, a man seeks out a person who knows the woman and sends a message declaring his intentions. If the response is favorable, the man then buys four large kola nuts (four being the number for a woman), wraps them together with 44 francs, and send them to his lady. This properties ever coming into direct contact with each other. Finally, however, a rendezvous is arranged, and on the pretense of leaving the market to visit a relative for several days, the woman goes instead to her lover's village.

These casual affairs started at the market sometimes become quite serious, and if for any reason they are sanctioned by the relatives of either the man or the woman, they often lead to the breakup of a marriage. And since the market is the place where disputants of any sort most likely come into contact, it is here that fights over "stolen" wives break out.

This pattern of extramarial relationships centering around the market place is so common among the Mossi that the younger men, and even some of the older ones, are disappointed with the "market" when their mistresses do not appear. Mossi men who sit under the shelters around the market place can usually give an inquirer not only the name of a woman, the name and village of her husband and father, but also the name and village of her paramour. Characteristically enough, they are always "ignorant" of the escapades of their own female relatives or of the wives of their lineage members. The only time when men act as though their relatives might be involved in extramarital affairs is when for some purpose or another a man has to recall a wife or daughter who has gone to visit a relative in another village or district. Regardless of how pressing the problem may be, a man will seldom go directly to his father-in-law's house to recall the woman. He goes to the market nearest to his in-laws' village, and seeks his wife there. If he does not find her or any of her relatives, he goes to the part of the market in which people from her village sell their products and sends a message to her family that he will come for her the next day, or that he would like her to come home.

A market place is also one of the best places to look for news of a runaway wife, or of any stranger in an area. The Mossi say that women have footprints like an elephant in that they can be found quite easily, but that the footprints are always clearest in the market.

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What this really means is that the market is the main communication center of Mossi society and news of happenings in the region can be heard there. If a person is in an area one can be sure that the people in the market will know about him, or that he will sooner or later visit the market.

The young men who have returned from work in the cacao fields or towns of Ghana and the Ivory Coast add a great deal of color and excitement to the rural markets of contemporary Mossi country. During the time these young men spend away, they give a great deal of thought and planning to the show they hope to put on when they make the grand tour (*mane do*) of their district's markets upon their day many migrants return to their homes, they wait for that Friday before they show themselves publicly.

On the morning of that day, the typical migrant dresses in his best clothes, lends the remainder of his wardrobe to relatives, and together they go to pay homage to the chief during the morning ceremony (*Wend pous yan*). The migrant offers the chief such presents as a small amount of money, an article of clothing or kola nuts, and replies to the chief's questions about the health and welfare of all Mossi in the area whence the migrant came, the whereabouts of "lost" migrants, the nature of the work the migrants were doing, and so on. As soon as the young man receives the chief's permission to leave, he goes to the market where he is quickly surrounded by *griots* who accompany him in periodic circumambulations of the market place, drumming and singing praises in honor of his ancestry. The migrant is also greeted warmly by his many friends to whom he then gives presents of money, beer and kola nuts. He acknowledges the general praise for having brought goods and clothing for his relatives and takes pride in seeing these relatives dressed in the cloths and clothing he has brought them. If young and unmarried, the migrant also seeks to take advantage of his new-found importance to make the first overtures to available young women or to renew his relationship with former paramours. Towards evening before going home, he rewards the *griots* with money and bear. Many a migrant attempts to prolong this feeling of grandeur by visiting other markets and by dressing up on subsequent grand market days, but after a few weeks he is re-incorporated into the ordinary market routine, and has to make room for the other newly-arrived migrants.

The market is also the place where important rites marking the changing social status of individuals are carried out. Under normal circumstances, the ceremonies attending the birth of a Mossi child are performed at home. When a woman has a number of stillbirths or

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When a woman has a number of stillbirths or
845 loses her children when they are still babies, however, it is believed
761 than these children were embodiments of the same *kinkirsi* (spirits)
776 who must be tricked into remaining on earth when it returns, and
443 the market place is chosen as the site for this trickery. As soon as such
851 a woman gives birth to a child, and old woman places it in a basket
443 and on the next market day takes it to the market place. Her intention is to "sell" the child in the hope that it would not die if owned by someone other than its mother. The old woman walks around the market place shouting: "I have something to sell!" Invariably a man offer to buy it. The price varies with the fortune of the man, but traditionally the amount paid has been 500 cowries or their equivalent. The man takes the child for a few minutes and then returns it to its vendor, telling her in a loud voice so that the kinkirsi will hear: "I would like you to give this child to 'X' (the child's mother) to be reared for me and I will pay for its upbringing and will come
[551] for the child in a few years. He then gives the child the name *Yamba*
[553] (slave), or *Yemdaogo* (male slave) if male and *Yempoko* (female slave) if a girl. The old woman then returns the child to its mother, relating what has passed in the market and indicating who the "owner" of her child is. The "owner" of the child may not even see the child again, and naturally does not take this ownership seriously. In many cases the money with which he bought the child was given to him by the child's father.

852 The market also plays an important part in the circumcision and
443 incision ceremonies of Mossi boys and girls. For about two to three months after the actual operations the young children, especially the boys are secluded in the circumcision lodges or compounds and have almost no contact with the village population. Their re-introduction to society always takes place on the great market day. The parents of the children buy new clothing for them this occasion, and on the appointed day the boys or girls parade together in the market and are offered gifts by the market people. Later in the day, they are dismissed and individually feted by their relatives.

585 Owing to the relatively unceremonious nature of Mossi marriages,
76 the market does not play a role in Mossi weddings. However, the
554 same thing cannot be said about the last important *rite de passage*,
443 especially the funeral of a chief, or important elder. Prior to the intervention of the French, and to a lesser extent even today, the announcement of the death of an important ruler was seen as the breakdown of law and order and was ritually dramatized by a popular raid
[565] on the markets throughout the territories (Skinner : ms). During the interregnum the vendors are subject to constant raids by members of

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the noble class, whose actions embody the ideology that the exercise of sovereignty is a corporate right which reverts to all of them when the head ruler dies. Much of this raiding is symbolic and does not interrupt market activities.

Many of the ceremonies connected with the funeral of chiefs and respected deceased elders take place in the market. Sometime between the interment of the dead person, the *keema,* and the first burial ceremonies, the sister-in-law *(dakia)* of the dead man in her role as joking relative—a role she plays until the funeral ceremonies are completed—impersonates him in the market place. On the day chosen for this rite the *dakia* dresses in the clothes of the *keema* and goes to market. While there, she acts as she observed her brother-in-law to have acted in the past: she circles the market and buys goods; she buys beer from his favorite beer seller and drinks with his friends; and for a moment, at least, she sits with his old cronies in their favorite haunts and takes part in their discussions. She may even be serenaded by *griots* who sing praises in honor of "her" ancestors, and she rewards them before leaving the market place that evening.

The market is the scene of an important ritual during the final funeral ceremonies, which are held about one year after a man was buried. On the morning of this ceremony the female relatives of the *keema,* led by his eldest daughter and his *dakia,* appear in the market and go from stall to stall buying all the things the deceased used in his lifetime. These include meat, *zumbala* (locust bean balls), cotton, tobacco, salt, kola nuts, peppers, *kumba* (a tomato), cakes, cooked millet-mush balls, potatoes, etc. When they have gathered all of these things, they retire to a spot near the market where they lay out all the foodstuff in baskets. In the meantime, the drummers play the royal airs, if the dead man was a chief, or ordinary rhythms if he was a commoner. Then the *keema's* eldest daughter places a basket on her head and, accompanied by four men, leads a procession of drummers and of the other women, also with their baskets, around the market. While this procession is circling the market three times in honor of the deceased, the *dakia,* carrying a very old basket containing the stalest food she could find, weaves back and forth through the marching throng making a nuisance of herself. After the third round the marchers return to their assembly point whence the eldest daughter and some of the older women now rush into the market, stealing merchandise from the stalls and placing it in their baskets. This assault is often so quickly done that it is fairly successful. The raiders then join the other mourners at the assembly point, where with bowed heads they listen respectfully while the chief drummer recites the genealogy of the *keema* and tells him that the people from the surrounding villages

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and districts were present to honor him. This being completed, the *griots* are paid, everyone rises and shouts *Ne Wardo* (the salutation at funerals), and that part of the funeral ceremony during which a man takes leave of the market community is concluded. Now his relatives, descendants and friends all return to the market, whose sights and sounds make it an integral part of the life cycle of the Mossi—the one institution of their society in which almost everyone participates actively.

Preparation for a market day, especially the tri-weekly Friday market or *Raga kasanga*, usually begins on Thursday. This day is characterized by a great deal of activity: preparing the commodities which are to be sold the next day, washing body and clothes, and combing hair. The women who prepare the beer and fried foods work late into the night preparing their wares, and a visit to the homes of the *griots* finds them preparing their drums. The little boys who go to the roadside to chant Moslem prayers to the passers-by, and the little girls who sell water to these strangers redouble their efforts until late on Thursday night to get enough money to buy presents in the market the next day. Finally, when it is quite late and the beer-making fires are out, everyone retires until the morning of the market.

At 7:00 A.M. on Friday the market is deserted except for a leper who sweeps out the stalls of the sellers in return for bits of food or presents of money. Looking at the empty stalls, one has a certain amount of difficulty imagining that this spot will be crowded with human beings five hours hence. But one is also conscious of the fact that even at this early hour scores of persons have already left their homes in distant villages and are on their way to market loaded with produce and with high hopes for the day. About 9:00 A.M. the first women arrive, balancing net-covered bundles on their heads, and take their positions in the various sections of the market with either face or back pointing to the direction from which they came. By 9:30 A.M. the butchers have arrived with their bleating sheep and goats and an aged cow. The first beer sellers have also arrived and are giving "sips" to men before they settle down to sustained drinking.

The pace of the market quickens about 10:30, and in the distance the first tap of the Bindere's drum resounds. All of a sudden, the market seems to have become a giant magnet, drawing long lines of people towards it along every path and from every direction. Women dressed in brightly colored print cloths and dresses, with babies straddling their backs and the inevitable bundles on their head, saunter into their places. Young children run ahead of their mothers or stumble behind them. Those vendors of European products who customarily transport their goods in boxes on bicycles arrive in the

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market and set up their small tables to display all types of goods from trinkets to single lumps of sugar. And the more numerous young men, who have no goods but have money in their pockets, go to the leaf-covered sheds, place their weapons on top of them, and take seats from which to view the passing parade. Imperceptibly, the hum in the market increases as people find their places and greet one another with *Ne Raga*, the market greeting, until by 11:30 A.M. the whole market reverberates with sounds of drumming, cries of vendors, and the shrill voice of water hawkers and juvenile vendors. Now the market is in full swing.

From midday until about 3:30 P.M., the Mossi market is a sea of humanity—talking, laughing, arranging rendezvous, quarreling, selling, buying, parading, and (where youngsters are concerned) often crying for want of money to buy a desired object. The return of migrants lends additional color and excitement to the market as these young people walk about in their new clothes, encouraging the drummers to sing louder praises, the maidens to feel jealous of the clothes of the migrants' female relatives, the former migrants to reminisce about the days when they too had bright new clothes, and the young boys to dream of going off one day to obtain the things they need.

Men, noting that their female relatives are spending too much time looking over the wares of a vendor of European products or of the kola-nut seller, wander over ostensibly to help in the purchase but really to prevent love affairs. The failure to observe such a precaution may be the cause of the shouting a man hears in the distance, and off he hurries to see whether a lineage brother or a friend may need his aid. He may either get into the battle himself, or aid the Raga Naba and the other elders to chase the battlers out of the market place, or to take them to the chief. This may indeed restore some peace and good fellowship to the market.

Elders, now more interested in beer than in other pleasures, pass the heat of the market day under the beer sellers' shed. From time to time one of them may be interrupted by a young man bringing him three kola nuts, one or two of which are immediately broken and given to friends. However, when an oldster, whether a drinking pagan or a Moslem teetotaler, sees or overhears a young man buying four kolas, he may frown or smile in the knowledge that mischief is afoot. Loud-voiced predictions of the consequences of evil-doing may suddenly disturb the merrymakers as American missionaries speaking in perfect More (the language of the Mossi) appear and harangue the market people. Then, as suddenly, the *Americadamba* depart in their large cars, and the curious pagans, amused Catholics or hostile Moslems who had gathered to hear the gospel return to

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443 512 571 [640] [493] their "evil" and "non-evil" ways. A little later the young men who possess bicycles may be seen suddenly hurrying to avoid the other *nansara*, this time, the French official, who comes into the market to apprehend those individuals who have not bought a bicycle license. All the *nansara* know that the market is the best place to find a Mossi.

Towards 3:00 P.M. the matrons in the market, having sold most of their own goods and bought those which they need, make the last rounds to see whether there are any bargains to be had. In their rounds the women may be badgered by sons, daughters and other relatives, but seldom by husbands, for extra francs to buy kolas or tobacco to bridge them over the two non-market days. Or the women themselves may seek out their male relatives to buy kola or goods, from the stranger who is making the rounds of the local markets. By this time of day the market place is emptying—at first this happens so imperceptibly that one does not notice it. However, by 4:00 P.M. a mass exodus begins as women collect their little children, hitch their babies on their backs, place baskets on their head and set out in the direction of their own villages or to the villages of relatives where [564] they plan to spend time. By this hour also the Bendere are drunk, [273] and for an extra calabash of beer are willing to recount genealogies for which, if sober, they would demand a sheep or goat.

[231] Evening finds the market deserted except for scavenging dogs which hunt the scraps of food dropped by the now departed human [485] beings. The market place finally falls silent, until late at night passing migrants retire there to sleep. These persons leave the market place at dawn to buy food from the women whose hawking cries herald another day of roadside commerce. The women use the profit from this trade to buy goods on the following market days.

[pp 279-738 not processed]

651 There is proof that trade tends to grow year by year in the ease with
436 which the natives now secure the five-franc piece needed to pay their
457 tax. The Europeans who live among the Mossi, including all the riflemen and circle /an administrative district/ guards, do not put into circulation a quarter of the five-franc pieces which are required each year from the natives. At first the Mossi were taken by surprise and had to give 10, 000 or even 15, 000 cowries to obtain /62/ this famous coin, this charm, which was to free them from all difficulties with the Whites. At the official rate of exchange this coin is worth 5, 000 cowries. Nowadays it is very difficult to find a native willing to give this much for one of the coins. The usual exchange rate is from 3, 500 to 4, 000 cowries; French currency has depreciated. This must mean that the natives find elsewhere, through trading, this indispensable coin. They know that the tax must be paid every year, and instead of waiting until the last minute, as soon as they have accumulated the necessary cowries, they secure the five-franc pieces from those who have fetched them from afar. The coins flow in; the rate of exchange goes down.

439 Nowadays, trading is less active toward the north. Formerly the
567 Mossi supplied Timbuktu, the desert regions, and even Morocco with slaves. The Gourounsi and Bousansé were frequently raided with the sole intent of obtaining slaves. The Mossi even sold each other into slavery, and prior to the French occupation a woman and even more a young girl or boy did not dare venture alone a few hundred meters from the village; they were too afraid that they might not return. It is said that the Mossi even supplied the Constantinople court with eunuchs; and when the great Cardinal Lavigerie was head of the Algerian Arab Orphanage, officers once brought him small children rescued in the desert. They were very young Mossi who had been sold in Saraféré or Timbuktu and whom our officers had found enclosed in bags carried by camels in a caravan halted by our troops. These children were raised in Malta, and they returned to Mossi country where they rendered significant services. Now the establishment of an administrative center in Kaya, near the important market of Salmatenga, will no doubt promote trade in this northern region.

439 Nowadays the trade between Ouagadougou and Tenkodogo on the one hand, and Ouahigouya (in Mossi country), Saraféré, and Timbuktu or Dori (called Gyémaré by the natives) on the other hand, amounts to very little. The Mossi export kola nuts which they have brought

312 hour for the impurities and the residue to settle to the bottom of
271 the vessel. Then the water is poured off into another container and is ready to be used for drinking or cooking.

[824] (b) It is also possible to use an additive known as missim (crushed tamarind leaves). The water becomes clear, but it is, of course, somewhat sour. Although it may be drunk, it is
[552] ideally suited to cooking since the Mossi add missim (from miki, "to make sour") even to the water of springs and wells before they use it to prepare their principal food, sagbo.

744 In the town of Ouagadougou frequent visits by the sanitary
312 officers remind the natives of the necessity of keeping fresh water in their containers. They are also encouraged to fill in during the winter the low places holding water where mosquitoes might breed.

515 Laundering. There is no doubt [231] that the Moaga is care-
296 less about the cleanliness of his clothing. There is no shortage of soap -- karite butter, of which it is made, is plentiful -- but he believes that frequent laundering will wear out his clothes too quickly. He also thinks -- which is childish -- that the dirtier a garment is, the cleaner it will wash. He thinks it completely ridiculous for clothes to be ironed. It must be admitted that among the Mossi only a married man can require his wives to wash his clothes. A mother also takes care of her children's clothes, but a bachelor is forced to wash his own things. This, we think, explains the extreme negligence shown by some of them
[461] who let their clothes get dirtier and dirtier. Indolence, alas, is one of the dominant defects of the native of Mossi country.

514 Toilet arrangements. In general the Mossi have no regular latrines. Men, women, in short, everyone, simply goes into the bush. The only exception is the very young children who take care of their needs on the threshold. At night, especially during the winter when the grain is fairly tall, grownups themselves go to the kamanga or karaga (millet or maize field near the living quarters).

364 When the town of Ouagadougou was made a mixed commune [Ed., smallest French territorial subdivision, with both French and native representation in the municipal council], it was possible to install, at municipal expense, a number of lavatories in certain

576 they send their friend once again to indicate what they desire, or they go and bring up the matter themselves.

181 Being sensitive and capable of attachment, even of affection, the
577 Mossi readily acknowledge the good done to them and seek to express their gratitude. If they can offer a gift, such as eggs, millet, honey, a chicken, they offer it unobtrusively. "Take this millet for your horse; give this chicken to your child." If they have nothing to give, they watch for every opportunity to spare their benefactor work or trouble. They take the hoe from him to weed his field or help him lift a load. They show their gratitude as they can, through action rather than words.

181 The Mossi are not lazy. As a rule it may even be said that they
461 like work. Lazy people are pointed at, avoided, and despised. During the winter season everyone must be in the fields from morning to night, men, women and children alike. Only those who cannot work or who have household tasks to perform stay home. The Mossi work very hard at this time of year. During the dry season, on the other hand, they enjoy some leisure. Although most of them weave during these months or travel for trading purposes, while the children cut grass to thatch the roofs and the millet is threshed, it must be said that it is not possible to work in these sun-scorched lands as it is in our temperate European counties. Besides, why work when there are so few outlets? Since the time when the French peace made the roads safe, trade has been on the upsurge. Now, sure of reaping the fruit of their toil, the natives are expanding their crops and every year the fields encroach further upon the bush. All the important villages are surrounded with cultivated fields as far as the eye can reach. If the Mossi do not work more then they do, therefore, it is not from laziness but from /115/ lack of outlets. It seems likely that the country will develop quite rapidly as soon as channels of communication open it to European trade.

181 Such are, in succinct and impartial outline, the qualities and defects of this people. Which of the two preponderate? It is for the reader to judge. In our opinion the Mossi are a very worthy people capable of a brilliant future, but under one condition, that they become Christians. Their most striking characteristics, as we have stated over and again, are their religious sense and their absolute submission to all that bears the stamp of authority.

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241 picking, the plant may be turned under and left to enrich the soil.

241 476 Apart from the co-operative cultivation of fields under the proprietorship of the lineage elder, each farmer works for himself. He aids his relatives, and they in turn assist him with his work, but the results of their communal effort are not shared. This applies not only to the work of planting but also to cultivation and harvest. The decision about what is to be planted in a particular field and how it shall be cultivated rests finally with the individual farmer.

Communal or co-operative effort is much more characteristic of the work of cultivation than of the planting period, when everyone is in a hurry to get his own seeds into the ground and requests for assistance are not welcomed. A strong note of competition is evident at this time. A [461] man takes pride in his efficiency as a farmer, and there is a race to see who can get farthest along with his work. In the earliest phase of prepa- [572] rations for the approaching rainy season it is the individual's best friend upon whom he relies most for assistance. He is the first person to be called on for assistance in clearing the field for planting. If a Mossi farmer is unmarried, he may also ask the other unmarried men of his lineage for help. If a long day must be spent in the field in order to clear and clean it properly, his mother will offer the helpers the midday meal, which is carried out to them as they work.

622 651 241 *Naba koba* (chief's cultivation) is the name given to the work which the villagers do in the fields belonging to the village chief. A village elder is charged with announcing when and where work in the chief's fields is to be done, and each lineage head relays the news to his kinsmen. This contribution of labor is no longer obligatory, as it was formerly, but only [626] a question of social pressure and recognition that individual well-being and the welfare of the village "depend on the chief."

241 463 Every Mossi is an agriculturist. Although agriculture is the principal source of income, everyone also engages in crafts, particularly during the dry season when the work in the fields is finished. However, there are no full-time crafts specialists. Even the African functionaries in the European administration and the teachers, clerks, and merchants all work in their fields part of the time during the rainy season. The activities of the blacksmiths, leather workers, butchers, wood workers, herbalists, and small merchants are carried out on a much smaller scale and are fitted into the routine established by the rains and the growth of their millet. Only elders whose age keeps them from the fields might be thought of as specialists who do not participate in agriculture, but their land is worked by younger members of the family, and they take a keen interest in the course of its cultivation. The village chief, the earth custodian, and certain other elderly and important members of the community do not cultivate; this is because of their position and age rather than because

144 This is all we shall say by way of introduction to our study of Mossi customs. The main point to be remembered is that the bulk of the present Mossi population is not of "pure" origin, but results from a mixture between the Mossi conquerors and antecedent primitive groups.

000 Let us now turn our attention to work, and first of all to cultivation. We shall study the various types of labor in greater detail than we did so far in relation to the populations previously studied, and the reader will get a better idea of the work performed by the Blacks in these regions.

243 Millet is the most important item of cultivation among the Mossi, who call it ki. They cultivate various kinds of millet, and we shall take them up one by one.

First of all, the ordinary small millet, which is most widely cultivated. It is the Bambara sanio or Mossi kasui. It requires good black soil with low sand content.

243 242 Let us make the general statement that the Mossi, whenever they can, change plots every four years. That is, they clear a new field or take over an old one which has lain fallow. If they have little land, they cultivate the same plot indefinitely. In other words, they may till the same field for some twenty years.

243 When a new plot is cleared, the clearing is done in March or April. The head of the soukala goes to work with all his men. Daba /hoe/ and hatchets are used to cut down the trees. The women come along, but only to serve drink to the men, because they do not take part in the clearing.

[461 512] The workers go into the bush in the morning and remain there all day. They rest around the middle of the day (from noon to /467/ two or three o'clock), and then take up their work again until sundown. The women return home first to prepare dinner, and then the men follow. After the clearing proper has been completed, all that was torn up from the ground is gathered in a heap and set afire. The ashes are left on the soil to fertilize it. It should be noted that the roots of the trees are not removed. The trees, in fact, are merely cut about one meter from the ground, so that the field is dotted with stumps. Sometimes, instead of cutting down a tree, a small fire of branches and dry leaves is lit at its base and the

592 1. Husband.
2. Wife or wives.
3. Unmarried children, sons or daughters.
4. Slaves.

Sometimes, it also includes young unmarried brothers (see above).

592 As a rule, every soukala-household has only one large bush
241 field in addition to the garden plot surrounding the soukala (where
461 maize and large red millet are grown during the rainy season, tobacco and cotton during the dry season).

The head of the household, his unmarried sons and unmarried brothers, work on those fields during the rainy season from six in the morning to three in the afternoon, with a long rest period around noon. The women work there also, but their hours are different owing to their household tasks.

The unmarried sons and brothers also have small individual plots of cotton and large red millet. They work them in the afternoon after three o'clock. During the rainy season, as a rule, there are no rest days. A few Mossi, however, have adopted the customs
[527] of their Yarsé neighbors and rest on Friday. Others, who are Moslemized, and incidentally very few, rest both on Friday and on Monday.

During the dry season the members of the household repair hut roofs, go hunting, or else participate in the clearing of family fields, etc. In addition to this they work for themselves, as weavers for example. The money earned in this fashion goes to them and not to the soukala head.

/556/ It is the head of the soukala-household, the husband
592 and father, who provides all occupants of the soukala with food throughout the year, morning and evening. He also provides clothing for those who cannot provide their own, but those who can do so procure it themselves.

We know that it is sometimes the head of the family and some-
592 times the head of the household who gives the children of the house-
584 hold in marriage. It sometimes happens, however, that a son
464 leaves the soukala without his father's permission. He usually does
565 this in order to win a wife, when the head of the family or the

443 rice, beans, karite butter, roasted peanuts sold in little heaps for one centime, raw peanuts, and all the spices for the sauce. Yarsé or Haoussa girls walk from group to group with small basins full of kola nuts, and chiefs and rich men buy one or two nuts which they usually share with their followers. Foreign traders sit under shelters of foliage or millet stalks and sell a few pearls, salt or copper bars, henna or blue dye, while bald-headed vultures hovering above the butchers point out their location to everyone. The meat on sale consists of a goat or sheep, sometimes a beef found dead in the bush or more rarely one slaughtered especially for the occasion. Some people bring chicks and occasionally a hen. This is about all that is to be found.

443 To these comestibles drink must be added. The women who sell
273 millet beer occupy a whole section of the market, and this section is not the least frequented nor the quietest spot. While butchers may be located by watching the vultures, it is possible to spot the tavern-keepers merely by cocking one's ears. Their presence is revealed by the cries, the beating of drums, the hubbub inevitably connected with a crowd slightly the worse for drink. The Mossi undoubtedly drink a lot of millet beer, but the beverage sold at the marketplace does not easily go to the head. The beer that is boiled again (tẽsé /sic/) is far more dangerous with its rather high percentage of alcohol, and hydromel (bésé) is even more so. The latter is made of honey and millet flour boiled in water, to which barm is added to induce fermentation. These two beverages are truly potent, especially when drunk
[579] alternately. This is why brawls occur rather frequently, and sometimes real battles in which people are wounded. These are drunkards' quarrels. Men are indeed the same everywhere, and how many fairs without a drunk or two are to be found in our own country? It must be said, however, that more intoxicated natives are to be met with in Mossi country than in France.

443 The market begins at about ten o'clock and usually closes at two; the important ones open around noon and last until nightfall. When we discuss the industries, we shall mention the other products which are sold there.

283 Weaving is the most widespread industry, the one that all men may
[286] practice and all do practice to some extent. The cotton is ginned,
462 and the thread prepared by the women. Delafosse, in his work on the Siéna, has described the process accurately: "When the cotton has been separated from the husk, the seeds are removed with an iron rod

285 The art of basketry, however, is exercised primarily to produce woven containers. These serve many purposes and come in all shapes and sizes from large wicker containers used to protect chicks against birds of prey and small wicker baskets for collecting refuse to baskets of plaited grass for carrying millet, rice, and most other goods. Some baskets are made with greater care, decorated with designs made by mixing dyed grasses and thin leather strips and edged with cowries.

[462] Only the men do basketry, and only they work with leather; some
281 of them make leather objects which are almost artistic and very well sewn. Unfortunately the natives do not know how to tan skins properly, and their leather has no strength. The hide is simply stretched out and dried by the sun; sometimes it is briefly immersed in water containing tamarind bark. The hair is removed by pouring hot water onto the skin and then scraping it off with a knife. To make it softer, the skin is moved back and forth over a stake planted in the ground and slightly sharpened at the tip, or it is simply crumpled /57/ between the hands. When it has been softened, it is stretched once more to dry in the sun, held with small wooden pegs driven into the
[386] ground. It may be dyed red, green, or black with special herbs.

Some men make knife or saber sheaths; others specialize in the long gaiters which are tied to the belt and worn by every horseman in full regalia; still others make saddle rugs stuffed with kapok or cotton and decorated with designs. They also make the various parts of the harness: the leather strip which runs across the horse's chest, and the
294 large rug which covers its rump. Leather is also used to make all kinds
281 of footgear, from the mere piece of hide held to the feet by leather strips running between the big and second toes and all round the foot, to the Turkish-type slipper and the ornamented boots with spurs attached which are a natural complement to the long gaiters. Some of the shoemakers are truly skillful and could make quite satisfactory shoes if they had lasts and especially if they had better leather.

281 Hide is also used in the manufacture of belts adorned with cowries, pouches, amulets, bags which are sometimes nicely adorned, etc. The designs are usually made as follows: small leather strips of various colors are sewn onto a skin of solid color which serves as a base; more rarely, as in Morocco, the top layer of skin is removed.

The above-mentioned industries are performed exclusively by men,
462 and any male individual may practice them. The preparation of gun powder and tobacco is also male work. The industries listed below,

462 on the other hand, are female prerogatives; every woman knows how to make millet beer, soap, karite butter, and kalro (soumbara) with varying effectiveness.

273 Millet beer is brewed with sprouted millet, which is boiled and reboiled in a volume of water proportionate to the amount of grain; yeast is added to the brew on the last day. The liquid is strained through twigs to remove the residue of millet. The more the beer is boiled, the stronger it is; when hops are added, the beverage recalls our own beer.

388 Soap is made with karite butter to which the ashes of millet stalks are added for potash.

252 Oil is extracted from peanuts, previously roasted and crushed between two stones; the women have no press and therefore lose a considerable amount of oil, but it remains in the residue, which is also sold.

Kalro is made from the beans found in the pods of néré /locust bean tree/. It has a strong and characteristic odor, but it enhances the sauce with a not unpleasant flavor.

463 The pottery, wood, and copper industries are carried out by specialists. This does not mean that only the members of a caste may exercise them, but that an apprenticeship is required which is not undergone by everyone, and that people bequeath to their children the secrets of the trade.

323 /58/ Pottery is chiefly made by women, although the men may
462 also work with clay and actually often make jars (canari), while the women make the large jars which are used in brewing millet beer, small pots in which they cook sarabo and sauce, and shallow dishes which are used to serve food.

323 The molding and firing methods are similar. A shallow pit is dug into the ground, larger or smaller depending on the size desired for the jar. The walls of the hole are pounded smooth. The woman places in this mold the prepared clay, previously kneaded with the feet and any stones removed. The clay is slightly damp, and the pit is dusted with dry earth. The woman spreads the clay with a well-polished granite stone and makes it revolve so that every portion of the clay is worked between the stone and the pit wall. After a while, she obtains the jar she wants in the proper thickness.

When several potters live in the same village, as usually happens, they get together for the firing. The jars are marked and gathered in

5: Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1959
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they are so exclusively occupied with political or religious duties. In every case, they own fields and are dependent upon their produce for an important part of their subsistence.

Each Mossi village in the Yatenga holds a market every third day; markets operate in nearby villages on the intermediate days. There are few full-time merchants; men usually market their wares themselves and trade in items of European manufacture. Except for the sale of meat, it is a man's wives who sell farm produce. For marketing her husband's surplus millet, a woman receives a gift when the market closes.

Markets are most active in the early hours of the morning when meat and farm produce are fresh. By afternoon only a few merchants stay on, trying to sell their remaining produce to late-comers at greatly reduced prices. Social satisfactions derived from participation in the market are greatly valued; it provides an opportunity for meeting friends and kinsmen and for exchanging gossip and observations on one another's dress, the crops, and current political developments. The market is a place for making loans and receiving small gifts from kinsmen and friends, for flirtations and the arrangement of rendezvous, and for that casual sort of social interaction which is one of the principal pleasures of life in the Yatenga.

The Mossi farmer is dependent on the co-operation of the members of his lineage both for the success of his individual economic endeavor and for their support if his crop should fail. To be assured of this support, he must contribute generously to the maintenance of his position in the intricate network of rights and obligations which describes the relationship of the individual to his kin group. A constant exchange of visits and presents, ceremonial and economic assistance, and presence and participation in the affairs of the lineage are necessary to maintain his status within this group.

The nature of the social, economic, and emotional dependence of the individual on his kinsmen, his affinal relations, and his neighbors is such that his social well-being and economic success may properly be regarded as depending as much on his skill in manipulating this complex web of relationships as on his specifically economic endeavors. When a man decides to forego a second weeding of his fields in order to prepare presents and make the journey to the funeral of a kinsman, he is making a choice which, considered in the total context of the culture, is realistically in accord with his own economic best interest.

The farmer feels equally dependent on the deceased members of his lineage, the ancestral spirits (*kiemse*). If he feeds them a chicken, they may steal the soul from a neighboring stand of millet and bring it to enrich his own field. If properly treated, they can be depended upon to protect his shea nut trees from the high winds which might otherwise

231 We mentioned earlier the karyanga, which is gathered wild or cultivated for horses. It is given to them at the height of the winter season.

Many Mossi own dogs. They use them to guard the soukala, to hunt in the bush, or for consumption. In the latter case, the [262 animal is fattened. Dog meat was sold on Mossi markets in the 438] old days, but the Yarsé, who are Moslems as we know, found it improper to exhibit dog meat alongside mutton or beef, and the custom was abandoned. Dogs are still killed inside the soukala, however, for consumption purposes.

[435] A dog is worth from 2 to 5 francs.

The Mossi have chickens and guinea fowl. The chickens are 235 worth 250 cowries. The eggs are not sold.

It is the men who care for the chickens. They /492/ look in the bush for termite nests which they break to pieces so that the chickens may eat the termites. Sometimes, instead of one ration only, the chickens are issued two a day, one in the morning and one in the evening.

The guinea fowl are less numerous than the chickens. Accord- [435 ing to their weight, they are worth from 250 to 300 cowries. Their 462] eggs are eaten. It is the men who care for the guinea fowl as for the chickens.

The Mossi place beehives in the trees. 231 The hives consist of elongated straw cylinders shaped like a tom-tom. One of the sides is completely closed, while the other is perforated to allow the bees to come and go.

These hives are placed in the trees at the time when the warm 231 season begins (March), 237 and then the honey is gathered every month except at the height of the rainy season, when the downpours are too heavy. The children are in charge of this. They climb the tree with a straw torch on fire, and frighten the bees away. Then they take the honey and come down. In order to separate the honey from the wax, the honeycombs are placed in a large canari full of water. Another canari is heated intensely, and its burning-hot base is brought close to the surface of the jar where the combs are floating. The wax melts and sinks to the bottom, while the honey floats. The wax is sold to jewelers, who use it in the [306] manufacture of copper objects made by the lost-wax process. It is

286 291 "This kind of braiding is not exported."

294 563 There are tailors as well as weavers among the Mossi. The tailor's trade, incidentally, is exercised in Mossi lands not only by the Mossi but also by the Yarsé and by some of the Haoussa who are settled in the territory.

294 Mossi tailors till the soil during the winter season and work as tailors during the dry season. Their fields net them more than their trade.

Most Mossi tailors do custom work. Cotton strips are brought to them, and they sew them into the required garment. Others purchase cotton strips, make them into various garments (skirts, cloaks, trousers, caps) and have their wives sell them at market. Those, however, are in the minority.

A cloak is called fougou in Mossi, a skirt fougoupoko from poko, "woman" and fougou, "cloak." Trousers are called koulouga.

/534/ Let us add that garment manufacture has remained a family industry in much of Mossi territory. Many Mossi can sew, and they make their own clothes by sewing up cotton strips. Let [462] us note here that as in nearly all of West Africa, it is the men who sew rather than the women. In this area of Africa, indeed, sewing is essentially a male occupation rather than a female one.

Now to present a Ouagadougou tailor, Mohammadi Bagaré.

He tills the soil and does nothing else during the winter season. He exercises his tailor's trade during the dry season.

He does custom work. Those who want a garment bring him cotton strips in sufficient numbers, and he makes the requested gar- [435] ment. He asks 1,000 cowries to make a large cloak, 500 for a small one, 200 for a skirt. To make a cap he asks only for one kola nut, which is worth 50 cowries at Ouagadougou. He takes 200 cowries for a pair of trousers.

It takes him five days' work to make a large cloak, two days for a small one, one day for a skirt, two days for a pair of trousers, one hour for a cap.

[412 439] His only working tool is the needle. Mohammadi uses European needles.

592 only one or two meters apart, close together. It is true that there
361 is sometimes a small plot within the séko....
171 The soukala or compound is called iri in Mossi, the hut rogo or dogo, and the soukala head irisoba (from soba, "chief" and iri, "compound").

462 We shall close this analysis of the Mossi family with a few notes
562 on the status of women and that of slaves.

First of all, Mossi women help with the tilling. They do not clear the fields, it is true, but they participate in all other field tasks along with the men. They do this only in the morning, however, since they spend the afternoon on household tasks or on their little individual plots, for they have small fields of large white millet, underground peas, beans, or peanuts.

They also do household tasks: they pound and crush the grain. Large millet or sorghum is, as we know, pounded first and then crushed, while small millet is crushed after being threshed.

462 The Mossi set their crushing stones in huge round clay /banco/
252 tables which are built outside the soukala and which are used by
412 the whole quarter. This is a strictly Mossi characteristic which is not found among the /558/ Bobo, Gourounsi, etc., in short, among any of the other groups who nevertheless use the same stones. Those large round tables are not high. They are about 1 or 1.20 meters in height and approximately 6 meters in diameter, with a correspondingly large circumference. The Mossi set in their crushing stones all around the circumference, and each table can thus hold ten, twelve, or even more. Every evening at nightfall the women of the soukala which are around it, women, young girls, etc., come together to crush their grain. They are usually in the simplest of garb, bare as the back of my hand, for the work is hard and demands a continuous back-and-forth motion of the arms, the upper part of the body, and the body as a whole.

To make those tables, they first build a circular wall to the desired height of the table, and then the whole inner space is filled up with earth almost to the top. This earth is pounded thoroughly, and then well-tamped casings are fashioned on the horizontal circumference in which are set the stones on which the crushing is done. The stones are firmly ensheathed in the clay, which is then allowed to dry.

462 Those large tables are called niénouga in Mossi, the stones on
252 which the crushing is done are called néré, and the movable stones
412 used for crushing are called nérébila "little néré"/.

171 We stated above that those large clay tables are peculiarly
252 Mossi and are not to be found among the Bobo, Habé, or Gourounsi.
412 Actually the latter, as we saw earlier, set their stones in small clay tables which are only 1 meter high and 1 meter in diameter and thus quite small, and which stand in every soukala inside each woman's room. They also make slightly larger tables, long ones that look like large earthen bathtubs of a sort or that even bear a certain resemblance to crude sarcophagi, and into which the stones are set. Those, too, stand within the soukala, in dark, dirty rooms. Sometimes, the Gourounsi merely set down their crushing stones under a shelter covered with wood and straw, built at the gate of their citadel-soukala. Three or four stones are placed upon two thick and solid parallel sticks which in turn are held /559/ about 50 centimeters from the ground on four solid forks thrust into the ground. In this case the woman must kneel down in order to crush the grain. I have observed this method chiefly among the Menkiéra, that is to say, in the northern part of the Leo residency.

462 To go back to female work among the Mossi. Along with the crushing of grain, they do the cooking, fetch firewood and water, do the gathering, prepare the products derived from gathering, etc. We saw earlier how those products are made, and we shall not go over it again.

252 Among the Mossi, the only known millet dishes are sarabout
171 and vessala. Couscous is unknown. This is rather strange, since the dish thus called is known practically throughout West Africa.

Sarabout (the Mossi word) is what the Malinké and Bambara call tô, the Foulbé, Toucouleur, and Foulah niri, the Sarakolé souré, the Maure /Moors/ lisi.

As for couscous, the Malinké and Bambara call it baci, the Foulbé, Toucouleur, and Foulah lakiri, the Sarakole fouto, the Moors and Arabs couscous.

To or sarabout is prepared for immediate consumption. Couscous is prepared for relatively long storage.

252 This is how their methods of preparation differ. To make to or sarabout, one simply leaves the millet flour to cook in boiling water, stirring occasionally with a piece of wood or a spoon. To make couscous, on the other hand, one takes a canari, fills it with water, sets it to boil on the fire, and then puts the millet into a gourd which is perforated at the bottom and thus makes a sort of strainer. This gourd is placed over the canari where the water is boiling, and covered with a straw dish. The steam emanating from the canari comes through the holes into the gourd, and since the latter is covered the steam remains there a long time. The millet flour is thus cooked by steaming. At the end of a period of time, the gourd is removed and its contents are left to cool and to dry in the sun. Once the millet flour has thus been cooked and dried, it will keep /560/ almost indefinitely. It is eaten either with water or with milk, which is better, or else, if one has some meat, by boiling the latter and pouring the sarabout into the pot.

The Mossi may not be familiar with couscous, but they are familiar with vessala. This method of preparing millet consists of boiling the flour as it is boiled for sarabout. The difference lies in the amount of flour used. When the mush has been cooked it is allowed to cool, and then fresh or curdled milk is bought and mixed in with it. This kind of mush is made only for the purpose of mixing [171] it with milk. The Bambara are familiar with vessala and call it by name of fisan or finsan.

484 The Mossi, when they are traveling, often cook millet grains 252 which have not been reduced to flour. This is called honandourou-ki 171 ("cooked millet"). The Bambara call it niobalabala, the Foulbe m'bafna-gaouri, the Sarakolé ilé-n'kioro, and all these words have the same meaning. This method of preparing millet is quite unusual, and is resorted to only when the time or means to reduce millet grains to flour are lacking.

[462] Mossi women also make dolo (dama). To do this, they soak the 273 grains of large red millet in water for two days, and then expose them to the sun and crush them. The flour is boiled for two hours, and then strained and boiled in the necessary amount of water for a whole day. This is transferred to another canari and allowed to cool.

462 Beside cooking tasks, Mossi women have cleaning tasks. They
356 sweep the huts and soukala with handfuls of straw, small primitive brooms 30 or 40 centimeters long. They wash and bleach clothes and make soap. Finally, it is the women who spin cotton and tamp the floor of the huts.

356 This tamping is done as follows. "The natives spread on the surface to be tamped a layer, 10 centimeters thick, of a special black earth that consists chiefly /561/ of ashes and humus resulting from the decomposition of plants and household refuse.

"Above this, the Mossi spread a second layer consisting of clayey ferruginous gravel, from 3 to 5 centimeters thick. The small pebbles are subsequently reduced by heavy tamping to very fine material. Then, the natives spread a little water over this material and tamp again. Once this is done, they allow the floor to dry.

"This procedure is repeated several times, but ordinary water is replaced with néré water (the latter resulting from the infusion in hot water of the fragments of néré fruit, dondo in Mossi) or water into which cow dung has been mixed. When the last tamping and the last drying have been completed, the natives pour néré water in large quantities onto the new floor.

"Finally, the last procedure consists of polishing the surface with flat stones." (Cahier des rapports of the Ouagadougou circle).

593 The duties of Mossi women toward their husband are as follows:
833 1. The fulfillment of the conjugal duty.
562 "The wife," says Moulins, "must never shirk her conjugal duty except when she is pregnant or nursing.

"Should a woman evade her husband from newlywed shyness or for any other reason, he would use at first all means of persuasion within his command, and especially beg the wife's relatives to have a word with her. Should their exhortations prove vain, coercion would be used by beating the woman or putting her in irons. Finally, should those means fail to bring the wife to compliance, she could be turned out by her husband."

593 2. Faithfulness.
562 "The wife must live with her husband. If she abandons the conjugal domicile, her spouse has the absolute right to force her to return. /562/ If she takes refuge with her relatives, the latter must

462 Women's tasks.—First of all, Mossi women help with the cultivation of the soil. They do not clear land for tillage, but during the winter season they do all the other agricultural tasks in competition with the men. Since they must also pound the grain, cook, and do other household tasks, however, they cannot work in the fields as long as the men. When there are several wives, they share the labor. Some devote themselves to housework while others work in the fields. When there are not enough of them to permit such a division of labor, they allow the men to leave in the morning and do not join them with the food until about 10 or 11 o'clock. After the meal and the noonday rest, they work with the men, but they leave the fields earlier to prepare the evening meal. Before returning to the village, however, the women work on their little individual plots, but only for a short time, while the men, after leaving the communal fields, linger in their own small fields until nightfall.

Besides working in the fields, the women do household chores. [252] They pound the grain in mortars and crush it on the crushing stones. We shall speak again about these mortars, pestles, and stones under "The Mode of Subsistence" /not translated/.

They do the cooking and prepare the various Mossi dishes which we shall describe later /not translated/. They go to get wood in the bush and water at the wells. /244/

Let us add that it is the women who pick the karite /shea/ nuts during the rainy season and the pods of the néré /locust bean/ in the spring (end of March, April). They, too, prepare the karite butter and the néré flour. They also brew dolo and, if need be, the various other drinks of which we have already spoken in the section on crops /not translated/ and to which we shall return under "The Mode of Subsistence" /not translated/.

In addition to their cooking tasks, the Mossi women of Yatenga must perform cleaning chores. They sweep the huts and the whole [556] establishment with bunches of straw tied in the middle with a rope. [412] This makes a small primitive broom without a handle, 30 or 40 centimeters long. They launder the clothes and make soap. They spin the cotton, whereas the men weave it. Finally, it is they who tamp the earthen floors and walls of the huts with wooden clappers (in Mossi, silimpandé in the singular, silimpama in the plural) after adding néré water. We shall see later in "Mode of Subsistence (construction of the compound)" how this is done.

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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The migrants bring back all types of goods with them. According to Dufour: "Money as such is not brought back in very large proportion because manufactured products of the English colony (Gold Coast) cost less. Consequently, each year there is a great introduction of bicycles, sewing machines, fabrics". (Dufour 1956 : 140). One might add to this list kerosene lamps, zinc buckets, all types of wearing apparel, and all manner of household goods. An inventory of the common trunk of two returning migrants revealed the following merchandise: two kerosene lamps, two bottles of kerosene, two burnoose of black serge trimmed with pink silk, one white burnoose, two blue shirts, two khaki shorts, two tubes of Thermogene (a medicated rub), eight women's headkerchiefs, two Moslem fezes, two hand mirrors, two jars of Vaseline petroleum jelly, two pairs of sandals, one black scarf, packs of camphor balls, and one bottle of perfume. These goods represent the migrant's work over one season, from October to the following April, in the cacao fields of Ghana. Other migrants return with more, but few return with less. The actual value of these goods has been estimated by Dufour at about one billion francs C.F.A. per year. The custom duties which the migrants pay amount to more than 150 million francs C.F.A. annually—the sum they actually paid into the treasury of the Haute Volta in 1953 (Rouch 1956 : 139 ff.).

The migrants distribute to their relatives a good part of the goods they bring back, but a large proportion gets into the hands of other people either through the market or through more direct channels. Here is an example taken from my notes of March 24, 1956: "*Trading in bicycles:* Moussa gave Souliman a cow and an old bicycle for a new bicycle which Souliman had bought for 5,000 francs from a passing migrant. Souliman was trying to sell this same cycle for 6,250 francs, thus trying to make a profit of 1,250 francs just two or three days after he had bought it . . . Souliman slaughtered the cow which he received from Moussa and sold the beef to the local *restaurateur* at an additional profit. Souliman appears to be a sharp individual. He recently bought another bicycle for 5,000 francs from a migrant and resold it for 7,500 francs." This type of trading is not unusual, but the most typical articles resold by migrants in the local markets are lamps, worn shirts, shoes and other articles of clothing.

The growth of migration among Mossi men has led to a new type of commercial activity in the country. This is the selling of cooked food by the women to passing migrants. These women and young girls prepare food such as chicken, rice, millet balls, millet flour water and fried cakes which they bring to the principal thoroughfares to sell. Many of them arrive at the central village areas as early as four

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443 sages to specific villages, to find the help needed in the event of a
571 fight, and finally to find an escape route by which one can leave in the event of trouble.

443 The vendors in the larger markets of Mossi country include Yoru-
463 ba, Hausa and other ethnic groups, many of whose members were
563 born in Mossi country and have never visited the land of their fathers. The lives of these people are usually centered around the markets; where the markets are held every day, many of the men, women and children of these foreign groups spend almost all of their lives at the [439] markets. In marked contrast to the Mossi, they usually sell products of foreign provenience, whether African or European, and seldom deal in the local products. These vendors are tolerated by the Mossi and are valued for their commerce, but are always regarded as outsiders. And as outsiders the markets do not belong to them, but only
443 to the Mossi. Even so, the Mossi do not really like the larger markets.
829 True, one can buy all kinds of wonderful goods on the large markets, but to the Mossi, a market is more than a place where one goes to buy and sell, even though everyone who goes there tries to do some of both.

443 There is a marked division of labor among the vendors in a Mossi
462 market—a division which can be seen at its best on the local markets.
438 Here only the women sell cooked food, beer, millet, rice, peanuts,
439 shea-butter, tobacco, and all of the other locally grown vegetables and vegetable products, except cotton which may also be sold by a man. In contrast, women do not sell such local products as cotton cloth, hemp, jewelry, iron implements and leather goods, which are the province of the men. Only men may butcher and sell animals and meat in the market. And they alone control the commerce in foreign food articles such as salt and dried fish. Both men and women sell the valuable imported kola nut, but only men sell goods of European manufacture such as cigarettes, matches, sugar, mirrors and so on. [257] Small girls sell calabashes of water to everyone, and small boys wander through the market selling single cigarettes, bundles of a few matches, single lumps of sugar, chickens and guinea fowls, and skewers of roasted meat.

443 There is little competition about someone else having "stolen"
437 a customer. The reason for this is mainly that every person in the market is a potential customer of everyone else. Normally, a buyer
432 simply moves from seller to seller sampling the goods if that is possible (some unscrupulous men can even get drunk in the process of "sampling" beer) and trying to get the best bargain. No seller would think of running after a customer, and customers seldom, if ever, move away from a vendor in the hope that he would be called back to be sold the article at a lower price.

241 At noon (wend'to souka, "the middle of the day") the family
512 rests in the shade of a tree. There are always some fruit trees in every field. Work is resumed at about two in the afternoon. At five the women return home to prepare food, and the men stop work at nightfall.

241 The sisoaga. When the family fields are too extensive to be
476 cultivated without help, all the able-bodied young men in the village are called to help with the weeding.

At such a time the head of the family gives several baskets of sprouted millet to his wives to make large quantities of dam, millet beer. He also orders them to prepare sagbo (millet cakes).

On the day set for the work, the young men go to the fields, where their enthusiasm is aroused by singing and the beating of drums. For their work they receive sagbo and dam. This is what is known as the sisoaga.

It is a kind of mutual aid, and without this indispensable system of solidarity, many fields would remain uncultivated.

[572] It should be noted, finally, that when a person falls [246] ill during the winter, his friends arrange to cultivate his fields, sometimes without any pay and simply out of a sense of solidarity.

241 Farm implements. As is the case everywhere in French West Africa, the natives have only the most primitive implements. Among the Mossi these include: the wanka or kounri, a hoe or Bambara daba to cultivate the soil; the sitoaga (small pickaxe) for sowing; and the laré (ax) to clear the site of brush and shrubs.

463 Other types of work. Aside from work in the fields, everyone goes about his own affairs. Some make baskets, hampers, and fans, while others weave cotton strips. It is perhaps of some
[564 interest to note that there is no caste distinction among the Mossi,
326] except for the blacksmiths; each person may practice the trade that suits him. This is why shoemakers mostly come from among the nakomsé (descendants of naba).

Food Crops

241 The principal foods grown by the Mossi are as follows.
Kazouf (small white or gray millet).

462 on the other hand, are female prerogatives; every woman knows how to make millet beer, soap, karite butter, and kalro (soumbara) with varying effectiveness.

273 Millet beer is brewed with sprouted millet, which is boiled and reboiled in a volume of water proportionate to the amount of grain; yeast is added to the brew on the last day. The liquid is strained through twigs to remove the residue of millet. The more the beer is boiled, the stronger it is; when hops are added, the beverage recalls our own beer.

388 Soap is made with karite butter to which the ashes of millet stalks are added for potash.

252 Oil is extracted from peanuts, previously roasted and crushed between two stones; the women have no press and therefore lose a considerable amount of oil, but it remains in the residue, which is also sold.

Kalro is made from the beans found in the pods of néré /locust bean tree/. It has a strong and characteristic odor, but it enhances the sauce with a not unpleasant flavor.

463 The pottery, wood, and copper industries are carried out by specialists. This does not mean that only the members of a caste may exercise them, but that an apprenticeship is required which is not undergone by everyone, and that people bequeath to their children the secrets of the trade.

323 /58/ Pottery is chiefly made by women, although the men may
462 also work with clay and actually often make jars (canari), while the women make the large jars which are used in brewing millet beer, small pots in which they cook sarabo and sauce, and shallow dishes which are used to serve food.

323 The molding and firing methods are similar. A shallow pit is dug into the ground, larger or smaller depending on the size desired for the jar. The walls of the hole are pounded smooth. The woman places in this mold the prepared clay, previously kneaded with the feet and any stones removed. The clay is slightly damp, and the pit is dusted with dry earth. The woman spreads the clay with a well-polished granite stone and makes it revolve so that every portion of the clay is worked between the stone and the pit wall. After a while, she obtains the jar she wants in the proper thickness.

When several potters live in the same village, as usually happens, they get together for the firing. The jars are marked and gathered in

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241 picking, the plant may be turned under and left to enrich the soil.

241 Apart from the co-operative cultivation of fields under the proprietor-
ship of the lineage elder, each farmer works for himself. He aids his
476 relatives, and they in turn assist him with his work, but the results of their communal effort are not shared. This applies not only to the work of planting but also to cultivation and harvest. The decision about what is to be planted in a particular field and how it shall be cultivated rests finally with the individual farmer.

Communal or co-operative effort is much more characteristic of the work of cultivation than of the planting period, when everyone is in a hurry to get his own seeds into the ground and requests for assistance are not welcomed. A strong note of competition is evident at this time. A [461] man takes pride in his efficiency as a farmer, and there is a race to see who can get farthest along with his work. In the earliest phase of prepa- [572] rations for the approaching rainy season it is the individual's best friend upon whom he relies most for assistance. He is the first person to be called on for assistance in clearing the field for planting. If a Mossi farmer is unmarried, he may also ask the other unmarried men of his lineage for help. If a long day must be spent in the field in order to clear and clean it properly, his mother will offer the helpers the midday meal, which is carried out to them as they work.

622 *Naba koba* (chief's cultivation) is the name given to the work which the
651 villagers do in the fields belonging to the village chief. A village elder is
241 charged with announcing when and where work in the chief's fields is to be done, and each lineage head relays the news to his kinsmen. This contribution of labor is no longer obligatory, as it was formerly, but only [626] a question of social pressure and recognition that individual well-being and the welfare of the village "depend on the chief."

241 Every Mossi is an agriculturist. Although agriculture is the principal
source of income, everyone also engages in crafts, particularly during the
463 dry season when the work in the fields is finished. However, there are no full-time crafts specialists. Even the African functionaries in the European administration and the teachers, clerks, and merchants all work in their fields part of the time during the rainy season. The activities of the blacksmiths, leather workers, butchers, wood workers, herbalists, and small merchants are carried out on a much smaller scale and are fitted into the routine established by the rains and the growth of their millet. Only elders whose age keeps them from the fields might be thought of as specialists who do not participate in agriculture, but their land is worked by younger members of the family, and they take a keen interest in the course of its cultivation. The village chief, the earth custodian, and certain other elderly and important members of the community do not cultivate; this is because of their position and age rather than because

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they are so exclusively occupied with political or religious duties. In every case, they own fields and are dependent upon their produce for an important part of their subsistence.

Each Mossi village in the Yatenga holds a market every third day; markets operate in nearby villages on the intermediate days. There are few full-time merchants; men usually market their wares themselves and trade in items of European manufacture. Except for the sale of meat, it is a man's wives who sell farm produce. For marketing her husband's surplus millet, a woman receives a gift when the market closes.

Markets are most active in the early hours of the morning when meat and farm produce are fresh. By afternoon only a few merchants stay on, trying to sell their remaining produce to late-comers at greatly reduced prices. Social satisfactions derived from participation in the market are greatly valued; it provides an opportunity for meeting friends and kinsmen and for exchanging gossip and observations on one another's dress, the crops, and current political developments. The market is a place for making loans and receiving small gifts from kinsmen and friends, for flirtations and the arrangement of rendezvous, and for that casual sort of social interaction which is one of the principal pleasures of life in the Yatenga.

The Mossi farmer is dependent on the co-operation of the members of his lineage both for the success of his individual economic endeavor and for their support if his crop should fail. To be assured of this support, he must contribute generously to the maintenance of his position in the intricate network of rights and obligations which describes the relationship of the individual to his kin group. A constant exchange of visits and presents, ceremonial and economic assistance, and presence and participation in the affairs of the lineage are necessary to maintain his status within this group.

The nature of the social, economic, and emotional dependence of the individual on his kinsmen, his affinal relations, and his neighbors is such that his social well-being and economic success may properly be regarded as depending as much on his skill in manipulating this complex web of relationships as on his specifically economic endeavors. When a man decides to forego a second weeding of his fields in order to prepare presents and make the journey to the funeral of a kinsman, he is making a choice which, considered in the total context of the culture, is realistically in accord with his own economic best interest.

The farmer feels equally dependent on the deceased members of his lineage, the ancestral spirits (*kiemse*). If he feeds them a chicken, they may steal the soul from a neighboring stand of millet and bring it to enrich his own field. If properly treated, they can be depended upon to protect his shea nut trees from the high winds which might otherwise

231 64 inhabitants among the nakomsé (nobles, descendants of chiefs, true Mossi). The Dagari and Nounouma, on the other hand, have one horse per 1,000 inhabitants, the Sissala one per 400, the Kassonboura one per 300. The Yarsé, who are in better circumstances than the common Mossi but less fond of horses than the nakomsé, have one horse per 100 people. Finally, the Foulbé of Mossi territory, who raise horses, have one for every 26 people.

To summarize, Mossi stockbreeding is mediocre except for donkeys and horses. Let us proceed to the hunt.

224 First of all, like the Gourounsi and all other populations of West Africa, the Mossi hunt collectively during the dry, warm season.

/494/ This collective endeavor is their chief hunting method.

Aside from this, the cultivators hunt individually with bow and arrow, chiefly during the dry season although sometimes also during the damp season.

Finally, there are a few elephant hunters in the southern regions. They are to be found only in the south, for in Mossi territory proper the relative density of the population and resulting extent of cultivated land make for a nearly total absence of elephants. Gourounsi and Boussansé lands, on the other hand, which are much less densely populated, include some deserted areas where elephants may be found. Mossi hunters, therefore, have settled in the southern part of the territory, on the borders of Gourounsi and Boussansé lands, to scour both regions /for elephants/.

At Kombisiguiri, for example, there are ten of them, ten soukala heads. They kill one or two elephants a year on the average. They sell the meat to the village that stands nearest to the spot where the animal was killed. This nets them about 50,000 cowries. [435] As for the tusks, they sell them for 120,000 or 140,000 cowries, sometimes 200,000. They always give a piece of the meat to the chief of the canton where the animal was killed. They hunt with [411] guns, while in the old days they hunted with poisoned spears but on the same individual basis as they do now.

[463] Elephant hunters do not cultivate the soil during the winter season, but their wives and children do.

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443 sages to specific villages, to find the help needed in the event of a
571 fight, and finally to find an escape route by which one can leave in the event of trouble.

443 The vendors in the larger markets of Mossi country include Yoru-
463 ba, Hausa and other ethnic groups, many of whose members were
563 born in Mossi country and have never visited the land of their fathers. The lives of these people are usually centered around the markets; where the markets are held every day, many of the men, women and children of these foreign groups spend almost all of their lives at the
[439] markets. In marked contrast to the Mossi, they usually sell products of foreign provenience, whether African or European, and seldom deal in the local products. These vendors are tolerated by the Mossi and are valued for their commerce, but are always regarded as outsiders. And as outsiders the markets do not belong to them, but only
443 to the Mossi. Even so, the Mossi do not really like the larger markets.
829 True, one can buy all kinds of wonderful goods on the large markets, but to the Mossi, a market is more than a place where one goes to buy and sell, even though everyone who goes there tries to do some of both.

443 There is a marked division of labor among the vendors in a Mossi
462 market—a division which can be seen at its best on the local markets.
438 Here only the women sell cooked food, beer, millet, rice, peanuts,
439 shea-butter, tobacco, and all of the other locally grown vegetables and vegetable products, except cotton which may also be sold by a man. In contrast, women do not sell such local products as cotton cloth, hemp, jewelry, iron implements and leather goods, which are the province of the men. Only men may butcher and sell animals and meat in the market. And they alone control the commerce in foreign food articles such as salt and dried fish. Both men and women sell the valuable imported kola nut, but only men sell goods of European manufacture such as cigarettes, matches, sugar, mirrors and so on.
[857] Small girls sell calabashes of water to everyone, and small boys wander through the market selling single cigarettes, bundles of a few matches, single lumps of sugar, chickens and guinea fowls, and skewers of roasted meat.

443 There is little competition about someone else having "stolen"
437 a customer. The reason for this is mainly that every person in the market is a potential customer of everyone else. Normally, a buyer
432 simply moves from seller to seller sampling the goods if that is possible (some unscrupulous men can even get drunk in the process of "sampling" beer) and trying to get the best bargain. No seller would think of running after a customer, and customers seldom, if ever, move away from a vendor in the hope that he would be called back
to be sold the article at a lower price.

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443 taxes in their markets. The French abolished both of these offices
554 when they took over the country, because they looked upon them as
651 purely exploitative rather than regulatory agents. But like so many
656 other Mossi political institutions which the French have "abolished,"
178 the Kos Naga and Raga Naba persist in many of the districts, and per-
[649] haps even in such large centers as Wagadougou. These officials persist
[829] because one of the basic assumptions of the Mossi is that everything
[825] must have a "chief." They believe that even the animals in the bush have chiefs, and if men, too, did not have chiefs then social life would be chaos. Thus, in the rural areas many or most district chiefs have retained their market officials even though the roles of these officials have become highly attenuated and so secretive that their existence is often denied.

175 Taxes collected at the market places played an important part in
443 supporting the traditional political hierarchy of the Mossi people.
651 The Kos Naba collected 250 cowries in taxes for every beef cattle
[649] slaughtered at the market and took their humps and gave them to a palace official called the Nemdo Naba (meat chief) for distribution in the royal household. He also collected 250 cowries on every cow sold there, but did not usually tax goats and sheep. In lieu of this he occasionally took a head or two of these animals from each herd that passed through the market and sent them to the palace kitchens. Donkeys were also taxed at the rate of 200 cowries per head sold in the market. Horses sold to the nobility were not taxed, but those exported were taxed about 300 cowries.

175 The Raga Naba collected the taxes on other commodities sold at
443 market. Cotton weavers paid him taxes according to the size of their
651 bolts of cloth, and cotton producers paid as much as 20 cowries on
463 especially large sales of their raw produce. The tailors and dyers paid no fixed tax on their wares, but were asked to send clothing to the palace. Every donkey- or ox-load of salt which entered the market place was assessed a tax of 300 cowries. The smiths were not taxed in cowries, but had to supply the wives of the Moro Naba with hoes and the palace personnel with arrowheads, spearpoints and iron clubs. The jewelers also sent bracelets as presents to the ruler. There were no fixed taxes on cereals, vegetables and cooked food sold at market, but each day the Raga Naba, accompanied by several pages or retainers carrying baskets, went from vendor to vendor taking several calabash-fuls of their produce for use in the palace. In addition, the vendors of cooked food had to feed the young grooms of the Moro Naba who were not regularly fed by the palace household. The beer sellers, too, while they were not assessed taxes, contributed a good percentage of their beverage to palace and market personnel who demanded the

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customary "taste" with greater frequency and freedom than did ordinary buyers. But the most valuable tax collected by the Raga Naba was on the sale of slaves, whose buyers paid a tax of 1,000 cowries per head.

There is some evidence, mainly from Europeans, that the Mossi occasionally may have found the market taxes prohibitive. Binger reports that during his visit to the Mossi in 1888, the high taxes exacted by the Moro Naba were "one of the causes which placed Wagadougou in second place [as a market town] and which made Mane the commercial capital of Mossi country" (Binger 1892 : 467). Binger, himself, was caught in the institutionalized gift system and wrote sarcastically: "The day of the market [at Wagadougou] the receipts are good. People bring every-thing to the palace including millet as well as hoes or peanuts, and everything is accepted. *All this giving is left to the generosity of the customers . . .*" (Binger 1892 : 465) (his italics). Even so, one cannot be sure that the Mossi felt the same way about paying taxes to their rulers as Binger felt. There is, incidentally, always an air of mutual recriminations among the Mossi and their rulers about the level of reciprocation between them. The people admit that the chiefs are indispensable; yet they complain that they are greedy—they "eat" too much. The chiefs insist that it is difficult to rule a territory and complain that the people are ungrateful.

SOCIAL AND RITUAL ASPECTS OF THE MARKETPLACE

Although the offices of Kos Naba and Raga Naba have been abolished officially, these officials still exist in many Mossi districts, and even when they do not exist, some men acting in their stead appropriate commodities in the markets for the chiefs. Furthermore, the *nakomce* (plural of *nabiga*—chief's child) or nobles still wander about the market places taking handfuls of kola nuts, peanuts and everything they need without the people becoming angry or complaining to the French about it. Once when I visited a market in the company of a *nabiga*, the local Raga Naba came up to where we were buying meat and indicated to the butcher that one of his customers was a *nabiga* and that he should treat him accordingly. It is not because of ignorance that the market people continue to grant these privileges to the nobles and the chiefs, but rather because they believe that only the market officials, and not the Europeans, can take care of the markets.

One of the most important tasks of the Raga Naba (or in the absence of this official, the Kos Naba) is to propitiate the *tengkouga* in the market place, or supervise the sacrifices which the *tengsobas* make to them. The task of the market spirits is believed to be so difficult—

433 made do with what his own village could produce, and there was
178 really no trade in the ordinary sense of the word. The Moaga, essentially a stay-at-home, depended on the soil for food and clothing.

241 Only two new crops have been added since the coming of the
177 French: yams (na-niouyan, "chiefs' yams") and white potatoes. The recent increase in the cultivation of cotton makes it easier for the natives to meet their tax, and this encourages them to grow even more.

178 The French occupation has brought many benefits in its wake (creation of a network of roads, peace and the resulting free circulation among the villages, and suppression of banditry and looting), but it has also given the Moaga a desire to leave the country.

167 The extensive recruitment of [249] laborers for the needs of other colonies in the area, for work on the roads, and for the now
464 obligatory military service -- all of which are accepted reluctantly by the Mossi -- has caused many young men to emigrate.

Some of them set out, for the Gold Coast preferably, without the slightest means of support. They go to work in the English colony in order to earn money for clothes. Since they had no money when they started out, they remain there for months or even years, and this seriously diminishes the agricultural labor force at home. It also forces their old and helpless relatives to cultivate their fields alone.

Besides, so many of them never return!

The Native Diet

262 Sagbo (millet mush) is the principal item in the Mossi diet at all social levels. Rice, regarded as a luxury food, is eaten by the naba and notables. It costs from two and a half to three francs a
[435] kilogram at Ouagadougou and is therefore too expensive for most people. It may be added that it rarely is found in the diet of civil service employees.

264 Mossi chiefs usually have two main meals a day: a [250] first meal of sagbo or rice at around nine in the morning, and a second

326 iron bar on an iron stump planted in the ground or on a stone. Copper
306 and zinc are smelted in small clay crucibles, the size of which varies with the desired thickness of the bracelet. The bracelet is first made in wax and coated with well-kneaded clayey earth which acquires the same shape. The wax is then removed with boiling water, and copper is poured into the clay mold. With a crude file the jewelry-maker removes the dross which clings to the metal, polishes the bracelet, and carves designs into it. The most skillful among them make attractive twisted ornaments of iron and red and yellow copper. One Ouagadougou Christian, deft at modeling wax, makes all sorts of objects, such as napkin rings, paper weights, inkwells, figurines, etc., which are not lacking in style.

The Mossi have always travelled a little, and they used to go quite
484 regularly to Timbuktu; now, thanks to the French peace, journeys have become increasingly frequent. The European settlers in Tenkodogo, Ouagadougou, Léo, and Koudougou hire the Mossi as house boys and
[464] take them to Ségou, sometimes to Kayes, and even to Saint-Louis. These boys, when they return, fill their friends with wonder and arouse their desire to take such great journeys also.

484 The recruitment of Black troops has also fostered this desire to see
464 new lands. Many natives have made the trip to Bandiagara to enlist as riflemen; others went to Kati, and when they found that no further enlistments were being made there, they went on to Saint-Louis.

484 During the dry season the Mossi are more often lured away by trading ventures. In October and November many young men who have managed to secure a sheep or two or a few goats and the wealthier natives who own cattle organize caravans in the hope of selling their livestock at a profit in faraway markets. In former times the Yarsé and Haoussa had a monopoly on trade. Nowadays the Mossi compete
[651 with them, for they must find money to pay taxes to the Whites, the
648 famous five-franc piece. /60/ Besides, now the roads are safe. Highway robbers are no longer to be feared, and one no longer has to pay tolls every time he enters the territory of a new chief. From this point of view, and from it alone, the French peace is valued by the natives, although they find it onerous to pay taxes, to build roads and bridges, and to pay customs duties on leaving and re-entering French territory. Is a man ever pleased when something is required of him, even for his greatest good?

491 Now only the watercourses present some difficulty when they are full. The Administration, which does all it can to facilitate trade,

231 Mossi are very mediocre breeders by describing their manner of
563 caring for their animals. Instead of tending them or having this done by their young men, they nearly always hand them over to the Foulbé for herding. This is also done whenever possible by the Bobo, Nounouma, and Sissala in the Leo residency, but it is not done by the Kassonboura, Nankana, or Dagari. If the head of a Mossi
231 soukala is wealthy, he employs his own private Peuhl herder. If he
563 is of average means or poor, he makes an arrangement with other
464 Mossi in the same circumstances, and they all get together to pay a single herder for their cattle. It is the poorer Foulbé, for their part, who agree to herd Mossi cattle in this fashion.

The agreement that binds both parties grants the milk and butter to the Peuhl, but the increase of the herd devolves to the owner. This agreement is made without any definite time limits, and it is only broken if the herder fails to tend the animals properly. If he does his job well, on the other hand, he herds them indefinitely, and when he dies his son succeeds him. By the same token, when the Mossi owner dies, his son leaves the animals in the hands of the same Peuhl.

The Foulbé in charge of tending the herds live in low, conical straw huts at the back of the Mossi villages that own the herds. Not far from their huts, they build an enclosure where they leave the cattle during the night. They take the animals to graze in the bush in the morning, and bring them back in the evening. Whenever one of the Mossi owners wants milk or butter, he buys it from the Peuhl. Sometimes the latter offers him milk as a gift.

We shall see later, when we discuss the Foulbé, that in former
[567] times the Mossi often enslaved the small Foulbé bands that /488/ came with the intention of settling in Mossi territory. The Mossi chiefs would confiscate the herds, and then, since they were unwilling to care for them themselves, they would return them to the dispossessed Foulbé in usufruct and in accordance with the agreement we have just described. It must nevertheless be said that all
563 Foulbé in Mossi territory were not subjected to this high-handed procedure. When we occupied Mossi territory, there were some free and wealthy Foulbé, some Foulbé villages with chiefs of their own. Actually, those Foulbé were by far the more numerous.

592 1. Husband.
2. Wife or wives.
3. Unmarried children, sons or daughters.
4. Slaves.

Sometimes, it also includes young unmarried brothers (see above).

592 As a rule, every soukala-household has only one large bush
241 field in addition to the garden plot surrounding the soukala (where
461 maize and large red millet are grown during the rainy season, tobacco and cotton during the dry season).

The head of the household, his unmarried sons and unmarried brothers, work on those fields during the rainy season from six in the morning to three in the afternoon, with a long rest period around noon. The women work there also, but their hours are different owing to their household tasks.

The unmarried sons and brothers also have small individual plots of cotton and large red millet. They work them in the afternoon after three o'clock. During the rainy season, as a rule, there are no rest days. A few Mossi, however, have adopted the customs
[527] of their Yarsé neighbors and rest on Friday. Others, who are Moslemized, and incidentally very few, rest both on Friday and on Monday.

During the dry season the members of the household repair hut roofs, go hunting, or else participate in the clearing of family fields, etc. In addition to this they work for themselves, as weavers for example. The money earned in this fashion goes to them and not to the soukala head.

/556/ It is the head of the soukala-household, the husband
592 and father, who provides all occupants of the soukala with food throughout the year, morning and evening. He also provides clothing for those who cannot provide their own, but those who can do so procure it themselves.

We know that it is sometimes the head of the family and some-
592 times the head of the household who gives the children of the house-
584 hold in marriage. It sometimes happens, however, that a son
● 444 leaves the soukala without his father's permission. He usually does
565 this in order to win a wife, when the head of the family or the

592 father cannot procure one or delays too long in doing so. The son
584 who secedes in this fashion goes to work for a chief or noble who
464 will later give him a wife as a reward. The first male child and the
565 first female child born of this union, however, will devolve to the chief or noble who gave the wife. He will use the male child as a servant, and the girl to be handed out as a reward to someone working for him. This is a side effect of the political organization on the family. This secession on the part of sons can only occur, indeed, thanks to the existence of chiefs and nobles in sufficient numbers to permit the secessionists to find work and employment among them without difficulty. Among the Bobo and Nounouma, such a situation could not exist.

Let us note that this institution, while restricting the authority of the family head or household head, has strengthened the power of the Mossi aristocracy.

592 In closing, let us note a few details about the Mossi soukala
361 from a physical standpoint. It is a cluster of round huts, about five or six of them, usually built of red earth with a straw roof and connected to each other by a concave wall made likewise of red earth. The soukala is thus fortified, as it were, and sheltered from the outside.

592 The Mossi soukala is quite similar to the Malinké or Dialonké
361 "compound" /literally, "square"/, which also consists of a cluster
171 of clay huts with straw roofs. Among the Malinké and Dialonké, however, the huts are often connected by a palisade or a mere séko instead of a red earth wall as they are here. Another difference is /557/ that the doors of the huts of the Mossi soukala are so low that one must often creep in on all fours. Furthermore, there are no porches such as are found among the Malinké and Dialonké. In spite of those differences, however, the Mossi soukala bear a general resemblance to the Guinean soukala, while they are in no way related to the massive citadels of the Gourounsi and Kipirsi.

The Mossi soukala, on the other hand, are set about 50 meters apart. The maize plot surrounding the soukala lies directly around it, as among the Bobo, Gourounsi, Kipirsi, etc., while among the Malinké and Dialonké of Guinea the garden plot of each compound is located outside the village boundaries, since the compounds stand

672 "If the insane person still has a father, it is his duty to warn the people of the neighborhood.

"All the deeds made, the debts contracted, and the commercial transactions effected by the insane person are declared void. No third parties may appeal against members of the insane person's family."

000 Now let us deal with the appendages of the family.

We shall divide this section into the following headings.

1. Clients.
2. Domestic servants.
3. Slaves. Their origins.
4. Slaves. Name.
5. Slaves. Kinds of slaves.
6. Serfs.

Let us begin with the clients.

464 1. Clients. The usual clientage involving a household which requests support, protection, food, and shelter from a rich family, in return for which the household will labor for the family and live with it, is not to be found among the Mossi and Foulsé of Yatenga. It does happen, however, that a young man who desires to acquire quickly a wife, a horse, some property, or an amount of authority which does not usually revert to young men decides to leave his family and his compound to place himself in the service of some chief (Moro Naba, canton chief, village chief, tengasoba, etc.). It is the young men, rasamba, who make such decisions. Once they have won what they sought to obtain, however, they return to their families. When one goes to a tengasoba, he usually expects only a wife from him, and he does not leave until the tengasoba dies. Then, provided with a wife, he returns to his family. Naturally, these "temporary volunteers" preserve all their rights in their respective families.

464 Let us note further that during times of famine some Mossi request
T31 work from people of better means. The duration of their work is usually very short, scarcely more than a few days (two or three days, for example).

464 The employee and employer (if these terms may be used here) are in no way bound to each other. The former may leave whenever he wishes, and the latter may dismiss him as he pleases. He must, however, pay for the employee's work days in full. The daily

• 447 salary consists either of 100 cowries (10 centimes) or a basket of unthreshed millet. In addition to this, the employer feeds the employee. This is limited, I repeat, to times of famine.

/264/ True clientage, such as we described among the Malinké, does not occur among the Mossi.

356 2. Domestic servants. The domestic servant, such as exists in France and other civilized societies, does not and never did exist among the Mossi. Actually, domestic tasks (cleaning, cooking, and washing) are performed by the women in Yatenga society. For a corroboration of this, we refer the reader to what we said above about women's tasks.

567 3. Slaves. Origins. The Mossi owned slaves prior to the French occupation. They still own some nowadays, although far fewer, only those, in fact, who did not run away. Since recruitment dried up at its source through the prohibition bearing on the purchase and sale of slaves, reinforced by severe penalties, the number of captives has dwindled day by day, and it is obvious that eventually they will disappear completely. At present, this has not yet come to pass.

[727] The Mossi used to obtain their slaves through raids on the Samo, Bobo, Kipirsi, Gourounsi, Habbé, and Rimaïbe /slaves of the Peul/. The Yarsé also brought some from the southern markets (Sikasso, Samory states, etc.) and sold them all over Yatenga. They kept many for their own benefit, and they possessed more slaves than the Mossi (as merchants, indeed, they always owned more slaves than the Mossi). The Peul of Yatenga also had many slaves, more than the Mossi, which they obtained through raid or purchase.

Voluntary slavery and debt slavery provided no captives, since these two kinds of slavery never existed in the region.

The Mossi of Yatenga themselves did not constitute a source of slaves for other Mossi of Yatenga. One Mossi of the region could not be the slave of another Mossi. Only members of the alien groups listed above could be enslaved (including the Mossi of Ouagadougou). The Peul were not enslaved, but only held for ransom, since they were both rich (in cattle) and lazy. Their Rimaïbe, however, as we have said, were taken as captives (a Peul would certainly not be willing to pay any ransom for them).

727 When two factions were at war in Yatenga, the Mossi who were made prisoners were killed immediately, including small children of the male sex, even those who were still at their mother's breast.

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position of the set in Mossi society. In the years immediately following initiation the members are much involved in group activities, e.g., the arrangement of social dances, courtship, and co-operation in work groups composed of male and female age-sets, and during this period joking is important. As the members attain adult status the groups tend to lose their structural integrity; their minor corporate functions dwindle and ultimately disappear as the responsibility of the young people to their kin groups increases. With this shift in emphasis, joking behavior also diminishes.

While it lasts, however, this type of joking likewise has a structural context characterized by the attributes already identified. Age-sets are structurally separate within the age-grade. Their relations are reciprocal: individual members co-operate in the arrangement of one another's sexual liaisons; they pool their labor and share the profits they earn as members of their co-operative work organizations; and young men often leave Yatenga as migrant laborers in groups organized on the basis of age-grade membership, thereby reinforcing many of the reciprocal ties established in the work groups. The ambivalence characteristic of the relationship is perhaps best explained as the rivalry of peers. Since there is no status hierarchy within a Mossi age-grade, the age-sets are structurally equivalent and independent.

Intervillage Joking

When intervillage joking is institutionalized it may involve all the members of each community. However, I believe it is particularly expected of their respective chiefs. In either case, the participants are separated by their differing political affiliations. The inhabitants of each village are expected to reciprocate in one another's defense, to be mutually hospitable, and to co-operate in the regulation of land tenure at their frontiers. Ambivalence derives from a history of past hostility, dating perhaps from an earlier period when competition for new land was keener and the expanding kingdom did not yet encompass all the villages now within its borders. Such villages are always structurally equivalent in status within the political system, and each is independent of the other.

Joking Between Ethnic Groups

The joking relationship which the Mossi maintain with the Gurunsi and the Samogho peoples, among others, appears to involve the same structural characteristics. However, I learned of this relationship only shortly before I left Yatenga, and a more certain statement concerning it must therefore await further research. It is certain that such joking occurs; I am unsure only of the number of other ethnic groups involved[8] and of the relevant details of their historical relations to the Mossi of Yatenga. The groups involved are again separate. There is an expectation that members of each group should extend hospitality and assistance to members of the other. As with villages whose inhabitants joke, the participants in this relationship are ambivalent in their attitudes; the present expectation of co-operation is coupled with a past

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643 651 796 become overgrown with grass and weeds during the rainy season. This clearing was done to within a few yards of the palace, but was not completed. Early in the morning of the day chosen for the actual rendering of the agricultural tribute, the retainers placed baskets of produce along these paths. During the morning ceremony, the Ouidi Naba presented a basket of millet to the Mogho Naba. Then the Bendere Naba, acting as Sore Naba ("chief of the road"), signaled on his drum, and the men with baskets who were waiting on the uncleared portion of the paths, preceded by drummers and men with hoes, axes, and other tools, began to move forward. The men in the processions raised a din, shouting, singing, drumming, and pretending that the task of clearing was very difficult. From time to time, the more energetic among those who were not carrying bundles ran ahead of the others, turned somersaults, and then, going through the motions of warriors in battle, pranced back into the procession. All the processions came to the shed occupied by the royal drummers and deposited their burdens. These were later retrieved by the palace staff and stored for use in the royal household.

643 644 241 The royal household was also supplied with produce grown by the royal wives. Foodstuffs for guests and fodder for the ruler's horses were provided by the people of the Bilbalgo and Dapoya wards, which were under the general supervision of the Kam Naba. Two or three times during the agricultural season, this official recruited extra help from these wards to help [464] [465] cultivate the fields. In recompense for this *sosogha* (work bee), the laborers were given food, drink, and kola nuts from the royal household. At the 243 643 644 end of the year, the harvesting and threshing of the grain from the Mogho Naba's fields was the occasion for an elaborate ceremony, "Mogh Nab' kawinre" ("threshing the ruler's grain").[2]

796 [791] [792] To begin this ceremony, the Mogho Naba summoned a local earth-priest, the Manougoudougou Tengsoba, to the court. This man, a descendant of the Ninisi, had to perform the propitiatory sacrifices to the earth deity who was symbolized by the threshing floor. After the sacrifices were completed, the Kam Naba went to the threshing floor with the young men of the Bilbalgo and Dapoya wards, who threshed the millet gathered there. The next morning they all returned to the threshing floor with the Bendere Naba and his minstrels, who recited the Mogho Naba's genealogy and sang praises to his ancestors. The drummers then beat out work rhythms and traditional drum patterns to which the workers danced while scattering the millet far and wide. Finally, the dancing stopped, and the Kam Naba drew a line on the threshing floor, dividing the pile of millet in two; the Bilbalgo people gathered one half, the Dapoya people the other. Regard-

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did not usually tax goats and sheep. In lieu of this, he occasionally took one or two of these animals from each herd that passed through the market and sent them to the palace kitchens. Donkeys sold in the market were taxed at the rate of 200 cowries each. Horses sold to the nobility were not taxed, but those exported were.

The Raga Naba collected taxes on the other commodities sold at the market. Cotton weavers paid him according to the size of their bolts of cloth, and cotton growers paid taxes on the sales of their raw produce. The tailors and dyers paid no fixed amounts, but were asked to send clothing to the palace. Every donkey- and ox-load of salt entering the market place was taxed. The smiths were not taxed in cowries, but had to supply the Mogho Naba's wives with hoes and the palace personnel with arrowheads, spear points, and iron clubs. The jewelers also sent bracelets as presents to the ruler. There were no fixed taxes on the cereals, vegetables, and cooked food sold at the market, but each day the Raga Naba, accompanied by several pages or retainers carrying baskets, went from vendor to vendor taking several calabashes of their produce for use in the palace. In addition, the vendors of cooked food had to feed the Mogho Naba's young grooms, who were not normally fed by the palace household. The beer sellers were not formally taxed, but they contributed a substantial percentage of their beverage to palace and market personnel, who demanded the customary *lembgha* ("taste before buying") more frequently and freely than ordinary buyers.

There is some evidence (mainly from European travelers) that the traders occasionally found the caravan and market taxes prohibitive. Binger reports that the high taxes exacted by the Mogho Naba were "one of the reasons why Ouagadougou placed second [as a market town] and Mane was the commercial capital of Mossi country." Binger himself was caught in the institutionalized gift system and wrote sarcastically: "On market day [at Ouagadougou] the receipts are good. People bring everything to the palace, whether it be millet, hoes, or peanuts, and everything is accepted. *All this giving is left to the discretion of the donors.*"[14] The italics are Binger's.

Some of the later Mogho Nanamse appear to have obtained a great deal of revenue through the sale of slaves. Most of these slaves were captured in raids among the smaller groups surrounding Mossi territory, such as the Samo, Gurunsi, and Busansi populations. According to Mangin, Gurunsi and Busansi countries were true granaries for the Mossi, who drew upon them according to their needs.[15] In early times the Mossi chiefs utilized these slaves (*yemse*, sing. *yamba*) as agricultural workers, until Mogho

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567 643 651 [464] [439] Naba Baongo (ca. 1800–30) decided that it was more profitable to sell them.[16] Subsequent rulers, especially the two Mogho Nanamse who ruled just prior to the French conquest, sold most of their captives to passing caravans or in special sections of the larger markets. When other persons sold slaves in the market, the Raga Naba collected some 1,000 cowries on each transaction—the largest tax on any market commodity.

567 839 [752] [439] [175] The Mossi rulers seem to have benefited even more from the sale of eunuchs, for they had a monopoly over them. The Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou sent some captured slaves and all recidivous thieves to Teemetenga village in Koubri district, some 13 miles south of the capital, to be operated upon.[17] So successful were the Mossi surgeons that—in contrast to specialists in other areas, who lost nine lives for every successful castration—the mortality among the Mossi was only one out of ten.[18] Some of the eunuchs furnished by the Mossi were sold as far away as Constantinople, a fact which surprised the French ambassador to Turkey who saw them there in 1900.[19]

566 643 563 621 In addition to slaves and eunuchs, the Mogho Naba kept a large number of bondsmen to provide services for him. One group, the Dapore, lived in a ward of the capital called Dapoya, and had a chief, the Dapore Naba, who was himself a Dapore. The origin of these people is obscure, but they seem to have been the children of foreign captives who were brought to Ouagadougou and placed in the ruler's service. Some of them even claimed that their ancestors had come to Ouagadougou voluntarily and had placed themselves under the care and protection of the ruler. This seems unlikely, however, since the status of these people resembles that of persons captured by Sudanese rulers and installed in special wards as serfs.[20] Some of the Dapore lived in villages of their own and cultivated fields for the Mogho Naba. Others lived in a ward of Ouagadougou, served in the palace household, and provided the royal executioners. Some were selected to serve as palace eunuchs, and placed under the charge of the Kamsaogho Naba. The Dapore were hardly ever sold unless they were convicted criminals. The Mogho Naba and his chiefs refrained from selling serfs or captives who had been born in Mossi country. However, they often claimed the sons and daughters of these people as pages or pughsiudse.

[839] [567]

The Baglere made up the second group of bondsmen providing services for the Mogho Naba. They, too, lived in a special ward and were headed by the Baglere Naba, one of their own people. Their origin is also obscure: some of them claimed to be descended from Fulani slaves who had run away from their masters and sought asylum in Mossi country; others believed that they were the descendants of foreign captives. The Baglere

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dreds of persons lived in Ouidin, the ward of the Ouidi Naba. Some of them were related to him; others had been attracted by his wealth and by his ability to obtain wives for his charges. All of them benefited from being attached to him in one way or another, and in return helped him to augment his income.

All the district chiefs sent women to their provincial ministers to be kept as wives (and thus as agricultural workers), or to be given out as pughsiudse. The Kamsogho Naba received more pughsiudse than the other ministers because he was in charge of the wealthier districts, and also of course distributed more. The Baloum Naba was especially favored in another respect. Each year, he was entitled to call several *seghse* (sing. *seka*; a corvée or convocation) of his former pages and their relatives to help cultivate his fields. The Ouidi Naba's sources of revenue were about the same as the Baloum Naba's. In addition, his position as chief minister enabled him to obtain numerous gifts from persons who visited Ouagadougou. Moreover, the Mogho Naba often gave him horses from the fado of deceased district chiefs. The Larhalle Naba had full ministerial privileges, and a few other means of obtaining revenue. He was allowed, for instance, to keep the animals that had not been sacrificed on the graves of deceased rulers.

The provincial ministers received many goods and services from the district chiefs of their provinces. Whenever one of these ministers sent a messenger to the district, the chief gave the messenger money and livestock for his master. Furthermore, the district chiefs brought presents for their minister when they paid their annual visit to Ouagadougou to render homage to the Mogho Naba. The provincial ministers used their position as confidants and advisers to obtain as many presents as possible from persons who came to Ouagadougou to ask special favors from the Mogho Naba, to participate in judicial proceedings, or to seek the nam. Moreover, they cooperated with each other in these exactions, so that a person seeking a favor from or through one minister was prudently advised to give presents to or to seek the aid of the others.

The district chief played a key role in the procurement of revenue for the central administration, and derived an income for himself in the process. The seignorial rights over the Mossi people delegated by the Mogho Naba to all nam holders were quite obvious on this level. The district chief had rights to all valuable fruit trees, such as locust-bean and shea-butter, that grew within the boundaries of his territory. He instructed the village chiefs to harvest the fruit of these trees and send it to him. The village chiefs even had to send him the wood from the fallen branches of these trees.

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621 651 634 243 For example, the villagers of Barkago traditionally cultivated and harvested a field of millet behind his compound for the chief. The people of Pinse, Donse, Passingtenga, and Tewarka cultivated millet for him in their own villages, and those of Togose and Basbedo cultivated rice for him in their excellent lowlands.

243 634 566 567 The district chief had fields both behind his compound and in the bush, which were cultivated for him by his retainers, serfs, and slaves. More than the Mogho Naba and the provincial ministers, the district chief believed that a Moaga must perform agricultural work during the planting season; to show his interest in farming, he often personally supervised the work on his plantations. When the task of weeding or harvesting proved too much for his own people, he asked his villages for a *sosogha*. On that day, each [464] village chief, accompanied by his men, went to the district chief's fields, where, to the accompaniment of drums and chants and with the verbal encouragement of district administrators, the villages vied with each other in their task. The district chief usually sat under a tree and watched the [465] proceedings and occasionally visited the various contingents to observe the progress made. Toward evening, the chief's wives gave the workers large quantities of food and drink in compensation for their services.

651 634 Like the Mogho Naba, the district chief had officials who collected taxes on commodities sold in local markets. These district market officials were usually serfs, Gurunsi captives, or bondsmen from other populations. Mossi [776] rarely served in such capacities because many of the local market places were considered ritually dangerous, and their titular deities, the Tengkouga, were believed to wreak vengeance on market officials who were tardy with sacrifices. The local Kos Naba supervised the slaughtering of every animal killed in the market, kept its skin so that its ownership could be verified if necessary, and collected taxes from the butchers in the form of meat or cowries. The Raga Naba of the district was not as strict as his counterpart in Ouagadougou, and seldom imposed formal taxes on the traders. He usually walked around the market, trailed by the chief's servants, and seized calabashes of grain and other commodities, which he placed in the servants' baskets. The Raga Naba did not tax those itinerant traders or caravaneers who visited the markets in the district, nor did he interfere with them in any other way. These merchants usually had business and personal relations with the chief, and he himself handled revenue from this source. The merchants gave him goods from the forest and Sahara regions, and he in turn often gave them wives, who were thus taken out of the district.

[167] [434] The Mossi district chief was always on the lookout for new sources of revenue, and thus welcomed strangers into his district because they "in-

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tions. Binger, who found Boukary Koutou (the future Mogho Naba Wobogo) living in exile for having led a rebellion against his brother, Mogho Naba Sanum, tells us:

> Boukary has no resources, and does not even have the advantage of receiving periodic tribute from several large villages. In order to subsist and to maintain a certain status, he is compelled to live by pillage and even by brigandage. From time to time, his horsemen make incursions into the outskirts of some Gurunsi or Kipirsi village, and carry off by surprise the inhabitants whom they find working the fields or looking for wood. His people also hide and lie in wait along the roads to capture any persons who may pass within their range. This type of behavior has given Boukary Naba a bad reputation. However, the people who understand his position forgive him, knowing the situation in which his brother has placed him. And, in spite of all this, he has numerous partisans, and many others who would be happy to see him gain power.[28]

Those district chiefs or princes who wished to retain their power legitimately were forced to be generous or run the risk of losing the allegiance and good will of their villagers, who were their ultimate supporters.

It is very difficult to generalize about the amount of revenue collected by a village chief. He did not receive any revenue from the land used by his villagers. He treated the weogho in his village in the same manner as the district chief. If some families grew too large and wanted to establish permanent residence in the village bush, they asked the chief for permission to settle there. However, many village chiefs had special areas of waste for their own use. They had usually received them as gifts from some district chief, and therefore had the right to collect tribute on any crops, firewood, or fish obtained from these lands.

The average village chief's main source of revenue was derived from the agricultural and other labor of his wives and relatives. A village chief received a number of wives from his subjects and from aliens living in his village. These women helped cultivate his fields. If their labor was insufficient he called a sosogha, to which he often invited his wives' relatives. Some chiefs also had serfs and slaves who helped cultivate their land and kept their cattle as well.

The village chief did not have the power to tax his subjects. Instead, he functioned as a channel through which commodities and services passed up the hierarchy and on to Ouagadougou. Many villagers voluntarily helped the chief to repair his huts and compound walls and to cut thatch for his roofs. Many gave him baskets of grain and other vegetable products after the harvest. They also visited him and gave him presents during the annual rites to his ancestors. In contrast to higher chiefs, however, the village head

did not derive any revenue from his judicial functions. He could not levy a fine against any malefactor. However, his intermediary position between the villagers and the district chief did permit him to obtain some revenue whenever commodities moved from one level to the other.

The officials who administered the villages for the district chief received part of their revenue from the villages under their charge. These local administrators had no courts or retainers comparable to those at the provincial level. However, they did have a large number of wives who contributed valuable agricultural labor. These administrators were permitted to ask the village chiefs for sosose on their own fields several times during the planting season, but—unlike the district chiefs—they were not permitted to have the villagers cultivate special fields for them. In return for any help received, they had to provide food and drink for the workers.

The administrator received most of his revenue as a by-product of active duty in the villages. When he visited a village or transmitted a message to a village chief, he almost invariably received a sheep, a goat, a chicken, or some millet, from the village chief. He also acquired large quantities of goods during the village interregnum: he received gifts from the chief's heirs during the chief's funeral; he received additional presents when they took the fado to the district chief; he could prolong the interregnum in order to receive as many bribes as possible from contenders for the nam; and he was handsomely rewarded when the candidate he had backed was finally installed in office.

The extended family was the basic socio-economic unit supporting the Mossi political organization. The Yirisoba received land rights in his saka from his Sakakasma, who had obtained his rights from the village chief. An extended family in need of additional land would seek help from its Sakakasma or its Boodkasma. When the family no longer needed this land, it reverted to the lineage. If all the land granted to the lineage was already occupied, the extended family, through its lineage head, asked the village chief for more land. The chief usually granted this request, unless he had no more weogho available. In this case, the needy Yirisoba sometimes tried to borrow land from his non-kin neighbors. Such a step was not undertaken lightly, however. If a man borrowed land from his own lineage members or from the chief, the land rights reverted to its donors without difficulty. However, if he borrowed land from another lineage and either he or his benefactor died without assuring the return of the land, litigation often ensued. In some cases a man would seek land from his lineage brothers in another village, who let him use some of their land with their chief's permission. Some Yirisobadamba even asked their district chief for

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What Mangin referred to euphemistically as "difficulties with the white man" was, to the Mossi, rather drastic punishment for non-payment of taxes. If a man refused to pay his taxes, the Mossi chief was permitted to sequester his goods and sell them. If the man had neither the taxes nor the goods, the chief had to send him and his wife (or wives) to the administrative post to be punished. Sometimes, a man and his wife would be made to look at the sun from sunrise to sunset while intoning the prayer *Ouennam co mam ligidi* ("God, give me money"). Other times, a man would be made to run around the administrative post with his wife on his back; if he had several wives, he had to take each one in turn. Then his wife or wives had to carry him around. The Mossi claim that a man had to run around the post three times, and his wife four. This is probably an exaggeration, however, because the numbers 3 and 4 are symbolically associated with men and women, respectively.

A further source of difficulty for the Mossi chiefs, and one which became more serious as time went by, was that they were charged by the administration to recruit men for both labor and military service. Initially, the chiefs had to supply men to transport grain for the French-organized agricultural societies from one region to another; later, they were commanded to supply labor for private and public works. Labouret states:

> The initial recruitment, which took place in 1912, was carried out without any difficulty, thanks to the unexpected afflux of volunteers. This was not the case in subsequent years. The reason for this was that the credulous natives of these distant regions, lacking any contact with the world, believed that the Europeans were carrying off their most robust youths to sell them to the Men of the Sea [mythical cannibalistic beings].[13]

The Mossi were alarmed at the high rate of mortality among the young men who went away to work. They had a saying, *Nansara toumde di Mossi* ("White man's work eats [kills] people"), and resisted the recruiting attempts of their chiefs. There was, however, less opposition to recruitment for military service, owing in part to the Mossi tradition of warfare. Many Mossi youths served in France during World War I, and additional hundreds served in an African contingent recruited "by an administrator named d'Arboussier, and with the cooperation of the Mogho Naba, to take possession of northern Togoland."[14]

The manner in which the Mossi chiefs administered their territories before the First World War was conditioned by the colonial administrators even when it was not directly controlled by them. The Mogho Naba had gradually lost most of his power, and he had no authority to act without the specific authorization of the French. He retained most of his cere-

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economic development should take precedence over everything else in the colonies. The Mossi were to be directly affected by the policies of both Van Vollenhoven and Sarraut. The colony of Haut-Sénégal et Niger was suppressed in March 1919, and replaced by the new colony of Upper Volta, in which the Mossi were the chief ethnic group. Moreover, Ouagadougou was chosen as the administrative center of this new colony.[19]

The new Governor of the Upper Volta, Edouard Hesling, who arrived in Ouagadougou in November 1919, sympathized with Van Vollenhoven's views, but was even more interested in economic development. He was determined to transform Ouagadougou from a small town with an indigenous population of about 8,000 and some 76 European soldiers, merchants, and missionaries, into a capital worthy of a colony. Shortly after he arrived, he summoned the Mogho Naba and the traditional ministers and had them recruit some 2,000 salaried and unsalaried men to provide enough mud bricks and wooden beams to complete the construction of eleven administrative buildings before the rainy season began the following May.

Hesling and his administrators believed that the Upper Volta, a country "with such diverse products and such a dense population, could attain an exceptional level of development by acquiring those economic elements which ensure prosperity."[20] Cotton was one of those elements. They believed that the Upper Volta "can and should export thousands of tons as soon as an easy and economical way of shipping is established."[21] By 1925, Hesling had constructed 6,000 kilometers of roads in the Upper Volta, about one-eighth the entire road network of French West Africa. Travelers in the Upper Volta at this time wrote of "the enforced enthusiasm with which the natives, under M. E. Hesling, have thrown themselves into agricultural labor and in particular into the planting of cotton."[22]

The administration of the Upper Volta continued to furnish Mossi manpower for the development of the other colonies as well as for the colonial army. In 1922, it was asked to furnish "6,000 workers for the Thies-Kayes railway, renewable every six months; and under the same conditions to furnish 2,000 laborers to build the railways in the Ivory Coast. Similarly, with the consent of the chief administrat[illegible] colony, it was possible to recruit a thousand workers in the regio[illegible]gadougou and Bobo-Dioulasso for private business in the Ivory C[illegible] Londres, who visited the Upper Volta in the late 1920's, reports that Mossi country was known as "a 'reservoir' of manpower."[24] Burthe d'Annelet reports that during this same period, "The Minister of War [took] 45,000 men each year to compensate for the weakness of our metropolitan recruitment, and

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*177 648 to cut down the length of service of our draftees as much as possible."[25]

The Governor of the Upper Volta made full use of the Mossi chiefs to develop the colony, and although some chiefs may have objected to the labor imposed on their subjects, others seemingly approved. In commenting upon cotton production in the Upper Volta, Ossendowski writes:

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> Cotton is an artificial crop and one the value of which is not entirely clear to the natives. The chiefs with their superior intellect, seeing the profit to be obtained from the plantation of cotton, are continually enlarging the area of the fields, and resort to draft animals, ploughs, manures, and even partial irrigation of the fields; nevertheless, the great mass of the population submit rather unwillingly to those instructions of the administration which aim at the development of cotton cultivation in the colony.[26]

[631] Delavignette's comment on the role of the chiefs in cotton production seems to indicate that they, like their subjects, had to conform to the desires of the French:

[464] [622] [465]

> [The French] lived at Ouagadougou in the shade of the great Nabas, and because [the latter] possessed servitors and were at the head of docile provinces, [the French] dignified by the name of "custom," and in any case adjudged convenient, this domestication of the peasants whereby they were forced to work in a common field under the authority of the village chief, and for a salary which was theoretically to be distributed among them afterwards. Sometimes cercle guards were stationed in these fields.[27]

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The Governor carried out many of Van Vollenhoven's reforms concerning the Mossi chiefs, and instructed his district administrators to respect the chiefs and to seek their aid in governing the people. De Beauminy, an administrator in the Upper Volta, contrasts the old policy with the new:

[643]

> Not without reason, we followed the rule of regarding the great black chiefs as exploiters of their peoples, and this caused us to introduce and to maintain a policy aimed at reducing their authority. Later on we were compelled to abandon this policy in the face of discouraging results. During the past few years we have restored power and prestige to the Mogho Naba and to his vassals, the Mossi chiefs. They are now paid by us, and they administer their kingdoms and territories under our guidance and under the supervision of an extremely small European staff (one official for every 60,000 inhabitants). The rulers are now helping us to restore, on a newer and sounder basis, a political edifice which had once appeared to be on the point of collapse.[28]

An official report also stated that the Mossi chiefs

> understand that the time of their absolute power, and the privileges of their "medieval lordships," are fated to wear away gradually. Certainly, the main-

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*648 official, M. Louveau, to relieve the Mossi of excessive prestations and taxation. Louveau cut taxes from 33,000,000 to 24,000,000 francs, a decision [651] which, according to Burthe d'Annelet,

> forward-looking as it was, represented only an amelioration of the past situation. In effect, the natives had exhausted all their reserves, sold their animals dirt cheap, and could not pay their taxes in an honest manner. This represents quite clearly an abuse of taxation. One must conclude from these facts that taxes had been raised too rapidly, and that these excesses had long surpassed the resources of the natives, even though it is the present depression that brings this out.[53]

[464] The administration continued to require the Mossi chiefs to supply laborers, but [167] found that many potential workers were leaving for the Gold Coast instead.

Despite the fact that Abidjan, the capital of the Ivory Coast, is far removed from Mossi country, the administration of the Ivory Coast hesitated at first to maintain an administrative center in Ouagadougou or to return to the Mossi chiefs any of their lost authority for administrative purposes. The situation had become so chaotic by the mid-1930's that Pierre Boisson, the Governor-General of French West Africa, issued a decree making the Ouagadougou region part of an administrative unit called the Upper Ivory Coast. He says:

> In acting thus we wish, on the one hand, to facilitate relations between the Upper and Lower Ivory Coast, and, on the other hand, to ensure for the Mossi population an effective representation of their particular interests, which do not always coincide with those of their neighbors. It also seems to us that in order to ensure this simultaneous liaison and separation, the Governor of the Ivory Coast ought to be seconded by a delegate in Mossi country who would be responsible for coordinating the local interests of [the Mossi] with the general interests of the colony.[53]

Boisson was under increasing pressure from such officials as Delavignette and Labouret to improve the administration of his territories, but when World War II broke out all plans for reform had to be shelved.[54]

The Mossi chiefs, especially the Mogho Naba, swiftly came to the support of France in her hour of need, and several thousand Mossi and other Voltaics were sent to the lines as soon as war broke out. According to Balima:

> In 1940, the old and popular Mogho Naba Kom II, shocked by the spectacle of the French disaster, . . . took his two eldest sons by the hand and declared to the Mossi people in the presence of General Barraud, senior commander of the troops: "Here are my two sons; my eldest sons, to fight for France." Soon afterward this French general was able to recruit more than

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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*175 648 642 gions to ascertain whether the people desired reunification. Duglas reported his findings to the National Assembly:

> You know as well as I do that the Mossi are proud of their past. Thanks to a political and social organization without peer in West Africa, they have known peace since the Middle Ages, in an Africa ravaged by war and depopulated by the slave trade. . . . This ancient land also desires prosperity and modernization. To achieve this its voice must be heard, not only in the National Assembly but particularly in the Grand Council [the highest consultative body] of French West Africa. The Upper Volta must have its own General Council.[20]

*175 *648 The law authorizing the reconstitution of the Upper Volta as a separate territory was promulgated on September 4, 1947. The non-Mossi populations of the projected territory feared Mossi domination and voiced their opposition in the Assembly, but in the end an accord was reached. The Mossi chiefs next petitioned the French government to pay for the rebuilding and refurbishing of Ouagadougou. François Bouda, one of the few traditional Mossi nakomce to become an elected representative of the Mossi, reminded the members of the Council of the French Union of what had occurred in 1919. He stated that his own father had recruited thousands of men to make bricks for "Bancoville" (an epithet for Ouagadougou; most of its buildings were of sun-dried bricks called *banco*) because Governor Hesling "never considered the possibility of purchasing cement, which was [464] not even expensive. Forced labor was easy to recruit, and no one thought that the day would come when it would be gone."[21] Bouda said that the Government should now help the new territory to modernize the capital.

D'Arboussier, an RDA delegate in the Assembly, declared that he would support the bill, if only because in the past the French government had attempted "to make a crack race horse out of an ordinary horse, and in so doing had made it a decrepit mare."[22] Funds for rebuilding Ouagadougou were finally voted, and the "Bancoville" of French West Africa began to take on a new look with wide avenues, large administrative buildings, official residences, and even a new palace for the Mogho Naba.

*175 643 631 554 *648 With the reconstitution of the Upper Volta, the Mogho Naba and his chiefs attained their highest prestige since the conquest. The chiefs even had strong influence over the Mossi representatives to the organs of the French Union, because of the decisive support they had granted them in the elections. But this increase in prestige was to be short-lived. The chiefs were no longer the sole representatives of their people, and the Mossi were no longer isolated from events in other parts of the Upper Volta, or for that

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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ity in local matters, even though the Indigénat had been abolished. They adjudicated minor offenses committed in their territories or referred to them on appeal by the districts and villages. They attempted to settle family quarrels and commercial cases, and ordered that restitution be made in cases of theft. However, they had to send any difficult case or major crime up the hierarchy until it reached the officials authorized to deal with it.

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The French administrators also continued to act as intermediaries between the large commercial enterprises in Ouagadougou who wished to recruit men for labor or to buy local produce and enterprises in the larger Mossi towns. Thus, if a private firm in Ouagadougou wanted men to work on the roads, it asked the *chef de poste* (administrator) of a region to tell the district chiefs that its representatives would come to recruit men on a certain date. If a large business was planning to canvass a certain area in order to buy shea nuts, it asked the local administrators to notify the chiefs. No one was ever quite certain whether these activities were legal, but no one questioned them. The *chefs de poste* might simply have been giving the people information that they could not have obtained by any other means.

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The Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou, like the supreme chiefs of the other Mossi regions, continued to perform both the administrative role assigned to him by the colonial government and his traditional politico-ceremonial role. He was partly responsible, through his active cooperation with the administration, for the rapidity with which the Upper Volta became a functioning entity. For example, in his anxiety to make his capital worthy of being the territory's administrative center, he gave his full support to the extension of the Abidjan-Bobo-Dioulasso railroad to Ouagadougou. But he always succeeded in giving the impression (to foreigners at least) of detachment and dissociation from the French administration. His behavior was quite different when he functioned as Mogho Naba of the Ouagadougou Mossi. The following is a brief description of a visit he made to one of the districts:

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> The Mogho Naba arrived unexpectedly at the district chief's headquarters, where no preparations had been made for his visit. It appears that he was on a tour of his domains to consult with the local chiefs about the forthcoming elections, and had simply dropped in to visit the district chief. However, as soon as his presence became known around the district, important village chiefs and the heads of lineages all put on their robes and appeared to pay homage to him. Meanwhile, he was consulting with his host. But as soon as the conversation was over he came out into the compound, where he was saluted by the chief's Bendere, who praised the royal ancestors by reciting

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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their own commercial centers, they acted quite differently outside their country. Dubois reports that at Timbuktu, "the great town of pleasure" with the freest morals in the Sudan, the merchants from Bamako, Djenne, Sansanding and Touat spent a great deal of money in pleasure and in gifts to the beautiful women, but the "Mossi did not waste their money and left as soon as they had finished their affairs" (Dubois 1899 : 292–300).

The days of the caravans are now over in Mossi country, even though large groups of traders carry on the traditional commerce in livestock, cotton, kola nuts, some dried fish, and salt. As soon as the French conquered th country they formulated plants to control the caravans. One of the earliest reports, for June 1899, reads:

> The country is calm and direct administration was established at Koupela, Mane, Yake . . . The Mossi trade is mainly with the English colony of the Gold Coast. It consists mainly of livestock, very plentiful in Mossi country, which is exchanged for merchandise from England; copper and material goods . . . Our task will be to discover the materials of the northern Ivory Coast which could be exchanged for cattle, and when this information is forthcoming we should be able to direct the caravans quite easily to the Ivory Coast. At the same time the English will see their provisions of cattle and sheep diminish. They will flood us less with their cotton cloth, with their glass beads, and with their kola nuts. In their place, the products of French manufacture can arrive to us through the Ivory Coast after being exchanged for the products of our colony there.[8]

These plans did not succeed. The Mossi still export a great deal of their products towards the forest zones of Ghana, including their "numerous laborers" which, according to Beauminy writing in 1919, were "the principal riches actually utilizable in Mossi country". (Beauminy 1919 : 71–78). The migrants themselves are, in a sense, the greatest traders in contemporary Mossi society.

PRESENT-DAY TRADE

There is a constant flow of goods between Mossi country and the Ivory Coast and Ghana. Much of the trade to the former region is in the hands of the large commercial companies and as such is beyond the purview of this paper. What is of interest here is the trade which is conducted by the ordinary people. A great deal of this trade is highly unorganized and the result of one or two men, or as many as five men, joining together to trade goods to and from Ghana and the Ivory Coast. The types of goods sent down to these two areas are the same as those traded in pre-European times.

(8) Unpublished document in the archives of *Institut Français d'Afrique Noire*, Wagadougou, Voltaic Republic.

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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439 complained to the district chief. Unfortunately for them the district
648 chief was absent, but his assistants did send out a call for the village chief. However, the chief refused to appear, saying that he would only do so when the district chief returned. The last thing I saw was the agents leaving the district chief's compound still unsatisfied with the whole affair." The sequel to this comes from my notes for December 26, 1955. "I inquired about the aftermath of the contraband case and was told that the whole affair is being referred to the courts at Abidjan. If the village chief is found guilty, he will have to pay a fine of 10,000 francs for the first ass and 3,000 francs for each subsequent ass, or in lieu of this go to jail. Informant said that since the village chief is a poor man, he would probably go to jail."

439 In spite of the contraband, the actual volume of trade appears to
433 be considerable. The production, trade and export of goods largely produced by the Mossi people in 1954 are set forth in Table 29.

TABLE 29

Production, Trade and Export of the Mossi (1954)

Product	*Amount*	*Export*	*Destination*
Almonds	35,000 tons	5,602	France and African countries
Peanuts	50,000 tons	3,051	France and African countries
Cattle	1,560,000 tons	101,000	Ghana, Togo and Ivory Coast
Sheep and Goats	2,115,000 tons	238,255	Ghana, Togo and Ivory Coast

439 These figures do not include the numerous items that drift over
167 the frontiers of Ghana and the Ivory Coast with the thousands of
464 migrants who go to these places each year. While the actual number of such migrants is difficult to ascertain, Pierre Dufour believes that it is "about 150,000 men per year, of whom 100,000 go to the Gold Coast and 50,000 to the Ivory Coast". (Dufour 1956 : 3). And since almost every one of these migrants takes with him some trade item such as a chicken or two, a small sheep or goat, a small sack of cereal or other vegetable produce or a few bands of cotton to defray part of his transportation costs, the amount of goods actually exported is
439 considerable. These statistics rarely enter into the account of goods
167 exported from Mossi country, since custom officers do not usually tax
464 migrants for small items, and do not make any record of them. Of
648 course, when the migrants carry large loads, these are recorded and the migrants must pay export taxes.

Greater attention is paid to the goods which those migrants who work in Ghana (but not in the Ivory Coast) bring back with them after one season or after several years of work, since the government of the Voltaic Republic derives a great deal of its tax revenue from duties on these goods.

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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The migrants bring back all types of goods with them. According to Dufour: "Money as such is not brought back in very large proportion because manufactured products of the English colony (Gold Coast) cost less. Consequently, each year there is a great introduction of bicycles, sewing machines, fabrics". (Dufour 1956 : 140). One might add to this list kerosene lamps, zinc buckets, all types of wearing apparel, and all manner of household goods. An inventory of the common trunk of two returning migrants revealed the following merchandise: two kerosene lamps, two bottles of kerosene, two burnoose of black serge trimmed with pink silk, one white burnoose, two blue shirts, two khaki shorts, two tubes of Thermogene (a medicated rub), eight women's headkerchiefs, two Moslem fezes, two hand mirrors, two jars of Vaseline petroleum jelly, two pairs of sandals, one black scarf, packs of camphor balls, and one bottle of perfume. These goods represent the migrant's work over one season, from October to the following April, in the cacao fields of Ghana. Other migrants return with more, but few return with less. The actual value of these goods has been estimated by Dufour at about one billion francs C.F.A. per year. The custom duties which the migrants pay amount to more than 150 million francs C.F.A. annually—the sum they actually paid into the treasury of the Haute Volta in 1953 (Rouch 1956 : 139 ff.).

The migrants distribute to their relatives a good part of the goods they bring back, but a large proportion gets into the hands of other people either through the market or through more direct channels. Here is an example taken from my notes of March 24, 1956: "*Trading in bicycles:* Moussa gave Souliman a cow and an old bicycle for a new bicycle which Souliman had bought for 5,000 francs from a passing migrant. Souliman was trying to sell this same cycle for 6,250 francs, thus trying to make a profit of 1,250 francs just two or three days after he had bought it . . . Souliman slaughtered the cow which he received from Moussa and sold the beef to the local *restaurateur* at an additional profit. Souliman appears to be a sharp individual. He recently bought another bicycle for 5,000 francs from a migrant and resold it for 7,500 francs." This type of trading is not unusual, but the most typical articles resold by migrants in the local markets are lamps, worn shirts, shoes and other articles of clothing.

The growth of migration among Mossi men has led to a new type of commercial activity in the country. This is the selling of cooked food by the women to passing migrants. These women and young girls prepare food such as chicken, rice, millet balls, millet flour water and fried cakes which they bring to the principal thoroughfares to sell. Many of them arrive at the central village areas as early as four

567 his personal fortune. The management of any such property is left entirely to him. If the master becomes indebted [to the slave], he is required to pay the debt within a fixed time limit.

Emancipation from slavery. As was indicated in the foregoing paragraph, it was possible for a slave to amass property through his own efforts. He might then free himself by paying his master 100,000 cowries. He then might either return to his native village or settle in his master's village. There have been slaves who not only freed themselves in this way, but also became slave owners in their turn.

If, however, slaves marry female slaves given to them by their masters and become fathers of families, they do not usually leave their masters. [95] They acquire a certain standing and are counted as members of the family. It is understood that they do not have the right to dispose of their children since the latter are dogyiri (house slaves).

465 Various types of unpaid work. Aside from the labor and other obligations required of all Mossi subjects for their naba -- we have described the forced labor in a previous chapter -- it may be said that, in general, no work is required without pay, even from slaves. In an area that is predominantly agricultural there can be no question of payment in money as would be the case in private or official enterprises where contracts specify the obligations of an employer to his employees. On the purely native level, the employer is obligated only to feed the workers.

In sum, what are the duties of a Moaga?

1. Cultivation of the family fields.

2. Construction and repair of huts and roofs.

3. Private work: basketry, shoemaking, weaving cotton strips, pottery, sewing, etc.

The head of the household is required to feed the workers who 592 cultivate the family plots or repair the huts. In a later chapter we 476 shall see that when the [96] members of a family could not complete a task without help, they called on other young men in the village. In that case, animals were slaughtered, dolo (millet beer) was brewed, and sagbo (millet mush) or benga (beans) was prepared.

567 On the other hand, it should be stated that when yemdago were used for hard labor, they were very well fed and were even given double rations.

482 their pack, their full cartridge pouches, and their gun. This is proved by the fact that it is very easy to find volunteer porters nowadays who [465] agree to carry a box weighing 25 or 30 kilograms for 200 or 400 kilometers, or even farther, for half a franc a day.

[492] The fabrics are coiled into huge rolls which hang on either side of the ox or donkey, or, when the man carries them himself, they are folded in baskets from one and a half to two meters long, made of [285] bamboo stems slit lengthwise in two. These baskets are semi-cylindrical in shape and are used to carry kola nuts on the way back. A small pillow is attached to the center of the basket, and when the traveller stops to rest, he looks for a thick tree, leans one tip of the [481] basket on the crotch of two branches and the other tip on the bamboo he uses as a staff. He can thus pick up his load effortlessly when the resting period is over.

484 The traveller always returns to his village at night to avoid those prying persons who would rush out to see what he brought back. The goods are carefully put away, and on the following day the man takes up village life as though he had never left it. It is only gradually, at the evening gatherings, that he relates his adventures. At the first subsequent festivity, however, he dons his new, bright clothes and a red tarboosh, sometimes stockings and shoes, and proudly displays them. Those who have tasted /64/ the life of travel and adventure cannot do without it, and they set out again every year. Some of the independent and carefree young men even live all winter on the [178] profits of their distant journey and no longer cultivate the soil. This is shocking to the elders, who do not understand it at all but are aware that something has changed in their country.

500 Some Europeans have attempted to engage in livestock trading like the natives. One enterprising and courageous European settled in Ouahigouya, and another near Mané; a trading house sent one of its representatives to Ouagadougou, and a Syrian settled there. None of them seems to have succeeded. We are not in their confidence and cannot say just why this happened, but would it not be, at least in part, because a European cannot easily adapt himself to the native way of life? The Blacks manage to make a profit because they do not spend much along the way; they subsist on very little and carry part of the goods themselves instead of hiring porters. Also, the natives

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643 651 796 become overgrown with grass and weeds during the rainy season. This clearing was done to within a few yards of the palace, but was not completed. Early in the morning of the day chosen for the actual rendering of the agricultural tribute, the retainers placed baskets of produce along these paths. During the morning ceremony, the Ouidi Naba presented a basket of millet to the Mogho Naba. Then the Bendere Naba, acting as Sore Naba ("chief of the road"), signaled on his drum, and the men with baskets who were waiting on the uncleared portion of the paths, preceded by drummers and men with hoes, axes, and other tools, began to move forward. The men in the processions raised a din, shouting, singing, drumming, and pretending that the task of clearing was very difficult. From time to time, the more energetic among those who were not carrying bundles ran ahead of the others, turned somersaults, and then, going through the motions of warriors in battle, pranced back into the procession. All the processions came to the shed occupied by the royal drummers and deposited their burdens. These were later retrieved by the palace staff and stored for use in the royal household.

643 644 241 The royal household was also supplied with produce grown by the royal wives. Foodstuffs for guests and fodder for the ruler's horses were provided by the people of the Bilbalgo and Dapoya wards, which were under the general supervision of the Kam Naba. Two or three times during the agricultural season, this official recruited extra help from these wards to help [464] cultivate the fields. In recompense for this *sosogha* (work bee), the laborers [465] were given food, drink, and kola nuts from the royal household. At the 243 end of the year, the harvesting and threshing of the grain from the Mogho 643 Naba's fields was the occasion for an elaborate ceremony, "Mogh Nab' 644 kawinre" ("threshing the ruler's grain").[2]

796 To begin this ceremony, the Mogho Naba summoned a local earth- [791] priest, the Manougoudougou Tengsoba, to the court. This man, a descend- [792] ant of the Ninisi, had to perform the propitiatory sacrifices to the earth deity who was symbolized by the threshing floor. After the sacrifices were completed, the Kam Naba went to the threshing floor with the young men of the Bilbalgo and Dapoya wards, who threshed the millet gathered there. The next morning they all returned to the threshing floor with the Bendere Naba and his minstrels, who recited the Mogho Naba's genealogy and sang praises to his ancestors. The drummers then beat out work rhythms and traditional drum patterns to which the workers danced while scattering the millet far and wide. Finally, the dancing stopped, and the Kam Naba drew a line on the threshing floor, dividing the pile of millet in two; the Bilbalgo people gathered one half, the Dapoya people the other. Regard-

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less of the amount of millet harvested from the Mogho Naba's fields, there had to be one hundred baskets full of grain. If the number of baskets filled with the Mogho Naba's grain fell short of the mark, the serfs and slaves had to make up the difference with the produce of their own fields. The ceremony concluded with sacrifices to the royal ancestors, after which the Mogho Naba's wives, daughters, and sisters gave beer and kola nuts to the laborers.

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As head of the central government, the Mogho Naba received revenue in the form of money and livestock which the district chiefs collected from the village people. These were given to him during an elaborate annual ceremony called the "Baagha" ("feast of the royal ancestors"). Several days before this post-harvest festival, the district chiefs and their retainers arrived in the capital and lodged with their provincial ministers. At a designated time during the ceremony, the district chiefs and nobles went to the palace. In provincial contingents and led by their ministers, they walked up to the sovereign's throne and gave the Mossi salute. After they had returned to their places, their servants gave the royal pages the presents they had brought to the palace.

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The Dimdamba apparently made their annual contribution to the Mogho Naba at the time of the Baagha. There is one report that they took this opportunity to send gifts to the ruler's son, the Djiba Naba, as well. The Dimdamba customarily sent the Mogho Naba part of the goods they had seized in combat against non-Mossi peoples, as well as a tax (*fado*) out of the goods they had inherited from their predecessors.[3] There is also some evidence that the Mogho Naba solicited goods from the Dimdamba at other times. Cronat says:

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> During my first visit to Yako, three envoys from Ouagadougou were at the chief's house. They were tax collectors. They had come to offer the vassal a silver bracelet sent by the sovereign. The Yako Naba responded by sending horses, captives, and cowries to Ouagadougou.[4]

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Cronat could not understand this reciprocity between the Mogho Naba and his vassals, and questions whether the Mogho Naba really collected taxes from them. He concludes that the Mogho Naba did receive taxes, "but these are never given to him except in the form of presents which are reciprocated."[5] Cronat found it puzzling and disturbing that many of the Dimdamba had not given the Mogho Naba any "taxes" for several years. He indicated, moreover, that they did not wish to pay taxes to the Ouagadougou ruler even under the guise of an exchange of presents. This was especially true of the Yatenga Naba, who had not sent the Mogho Naba any presents for six or seven years prior to 1890. Cronat surmised that

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621 651 634 243 For example, the villagers of Barkago traditionally cultivated and harvested a field of millet behind his compound for the chief. The people of Pinse, Donse, Passingtenga, and Tewarka cultivated millet for him in their own villages, and those of Togose and Basbedo cultivated rice for him in their excellent lowlands.

243 634 566 567 The district chief had fields both behind his compound and in the bush, which were cultivated for him by his retainers, serfs, and slaves. More than the Mogho Naba and the provincial ministers, the district chief believed that a Moaga must perform agricultural work during the planting season; to show his interest in farming, he often personally supervised the work on his plantations. When the task of weeding or harvesting proved too much for his own people, he asked his villages for a *sosogha*. On that day, each [464] village chief, accompanied by his men, went to the district chief's fields, where, to the accompaniment of drums and chants and with the verbal encouragement of district administrators, the villages vied with each other in their task. The district chief usually sat under a tree and watched the [465] proceedings and occasionally visited the various contingents to observe the progress made. Toward evening, the chief's wives gave the workers large quantities of food and drink in compensation for their services.

651 634 Like the Mogho Naba, the district chief had officials who collected taxes on commodities sold in local markets. These district market officials were usually serfs, Gurunsi captives, or bondsmen from other populations. Mossi [776] rarely served in such capacities because many of the local market places were considered ritually dangerous, and their titular deities, the Teng'zouga, were believed to wreak vengeance on market officials who were tardy with sacrifices. The local Kos Naba supervised the slaughtering of every animal killed in the market, kept its skin so that its ownership could be verified if necessary, and collected taxes from the butchers in the form of meat or cowries. The Raga Naba of the district was not as strict as his counterpart in Ouagadougou, and seldom imposed formal taxes on the traders. He usually walked around the market, trailed by the chief's servants, and seized calabashes of grain and other commodities, which he placed in the servants' baskets. The Raga Naba did not tax those itinerant traders or caravaneers who visited the markets in the district, nor did he interfere with them in any other way. These merchants usually had business and personal relations with the chief, and he himself handled revenue from this source. The merchants gave him goods from the forest and Sahara regions, and he in turn often gave them wives, who were thus taken out of the district.

[167] [434] The Mossi district chief was always on the lookout for new sources of revenue, and thus welcomed strangers into his district because they "in-

*177 to cut down the length of service of our draftees as much as possible."[25]
*648 The Governor of the Upper Volta made full use of the Mossi chiefs to develop the colony, and although some chiefs may have objected to the labor imposed on their subjects, others seemingly approved. In commenting upon cotton production in the Upper Volta, Ossendowski writes:

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> Cotton is an artificial crop and one the value of which is not entirely clear to the natives. The chiefs with their superior intellect, seeing the profit to be obtained from the plantation of cotton, are continually enlarging the area of the fields, and resort to draft animals, ploughs, manures, and even partial irrigation of the fields; nevertheless, the great mass of the population submit rather unwillingly to those instructions of the administration which aim at the development of cotton cultivation in the colony.[26]

[631] Delavignette's comment on the role of the chiefs in cotton production seems to indicate that they, like their subjects, had to conform to the desires of the French:

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> [The French] lived at Ouagadougou in the shade of the great Nabas, and because [the latter] possessed servitors and were at the head of docile provinces, [the French] dignified by the name of "custom," and in any case adjudged convenient, this domestication of the peasants whereby they were forced to work in a common field under the authority of the village chief, and for a salary which was theoretically to be distributed among them afterwards. Sometimes cercle guards were stationed in these fields.[27]

*175 The Governor carried out many of Van Vollenhoven's reforms con-
[177 cerning the Mossi chiefs, and instructed his district administrators to
*648 respect the chiefs and to seek their aid in governing the people. De Beau-
631 miny, an administrator in the Upper Volta, contrasts the old policy with the new:

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> Not without reason, we followed the rule of regarding the great black chiefs as exploiters of their peoples, and this caused us to introduce and to maintain a policy aimed at reducing their authority. Later on we were compelled to abandon this policy in the face of discouraging results. During the past few years we have restored power and prestige to the Mogho Naba and to his vassals, the Mossi chiefs. They are now paid by us, and they administer their kingdoms and territories under our guidance and under the supervision of an extremely small European staff (one official for every 60,000 inhabitants). The rulers are now helping us to restore, on a newer and sounder basis, a political edifice which had once appeared to be on the point of collapse.[28]

An official report also stated that the Mossi chiefs

> understand that the time of their absolute power, and the privileges of their "medieval lordships," are fated to wear away gradually. Certainly, the main-

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tenance of their authority and prestige is indispensable, and the local administration is firmly resolved not only to preserve it but even to strengthen it. Henceforth, however, this authority and prestige will be upheld on the basis of principles and methods better suited to the new order of things which has been established.[29]

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The administration tried to educate some of the sons of the chiefs "in order to attune them to progress and to the fundamental principles of our policy."[30] It encountered some resistance from chiefs who resented what they considered the "recruitment" of their children for education, and from other chiefs who were afraid that, if educated, their sons might be converted to Catholicism and thus would be unable to perform the traditional religio-political ceremonies. Nevertheless, one official states quite proudly that "Despite some resistance, the results obtained so far are encouraging and of such a nature as to allay our anxiety: 671 sons of chiefs are now attending our schools, among them 52 sons of provincial chiefs and 342 sons of district chiefs."[31] However, very few of these boys even learned French well enough to take part in the government of their society.

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Hesling also made an effort to improve the material welfare of the Mossi chiefs. He felt that under the previous administration the chiefs had been "inadequately remunerated," and he considered this bad for their morale. He therefore increased the appropriation for the salaries of chiefs from 86,000 francs in the 1919 budget to 190,000 francs in the 1924 budget, and counted on their receiving an additional 163,260 francs from tax commissions during the year. The Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou, considered the emperor of the Mossi and judged loyal, efficient, and capable by the French, was granted a stipend of 25,000 francs, while the Yatenga Naba, considered his subordinate and judged less capable, was granted only 8,700 francs.[32] Only 276 chiefs out of a total of 497 in the territory received any stipend at all that year, because even an augmented budget was too small to provide funds for the lesser chiefs. These chiefs, in the words of one official, "were often inadequate or incapable, but . . . could not be replaced, either because they had no qualified successors or because the traditional system placed an obstacle in the way."[33] Instead of salaries, they received seeds of new plant species such as mangoes, and they were helped in building dams to irrigate their fields and in sinking deep wells near their compounds. In addition to these material rewards, the Governor increased the prestige of the chiefs by giving them medals and honors.

631 465 [643]

175* 177 648* 631 643

Despite these increased salaries and honors, and the more important role they now played in the administration of their subjects, the Mossi

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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[post-world war II period]

175* 666 631

ing educated at mission-sponsored schools, few were qualified to run for office.[17]

More serious for the position of the Mossi chiefs, perhaps, was the fact that many of them either were ill informed about the election or refused to take it seriously. Balima states that a surprisingly large number of Mossi chiefs "could not understand very well the importance of this novelty—which is understandable; had no interest in the formalities, which they nevertheless carried out; and somewhat haphazardly designated as candidates African civil servants to whom they were not even tied by close bonds of friendship."[18] Of course, another reason for this choice of "African civil servants" was that they were among the only persons with the training and education required for candidacy. Nevertheless, the candidates included a few educated members of chiefly families—persons who, not being in the main line of descent or being otherwise ineligible for office in the traditional system, had been "given" to the Europeans to be educated.

The partisans of the Mossi chiefs were victorious in the northern part of the Ivory Coast in an election that saw the emergence of such Voltaic politicians of later fame as Blaise Benon, François Bouda, Zinda Kaboré, Christophe Kalenzaga, Tindougou Ouédraogo, Zebango Pohi, and Maurice Yaméogo. However, the Second College was dominated by Houphouët-Boigny and his RDA colleagues. Despite the Mogho Naba's opposition, RDA delegates set out to ameliorate conditions in the Volta region. For example, the RDA secured the passage of bills to raise the Mogho Naba's salary from 60,000 francs a year, a trifling sum in view of his official and private expenses, to about 500,000 francs a year. Similarly, it ensured that Mossi and other Voltaic students would receive a fair share of the scholarships which France had assigned to colonial students.[19]

175* 643 668 [465]

These gestures did not dampen the ardor of the Mossi chiefs for the reintegration of the Upper Volta. In April 1947, when French President Auriol, touring the territories to observe the operation of the new political institutions, visited the Upper Volta, the Yatenga Naba, the Tenkodogo Naba, and the head ruler of Fada-N'Gourma met the presidential party at Ouagadougou and pressed their claim for separate territorial status. The French reportedly welcomed this petition because it gave them an opportunity to clip the wings of Houphouët-Boigny, as well as to ensure the aid of the chiefs in procuring adequate manpower for a projected extension of the Abidjan–Bobo-Dioulasso railroad to Ouagadougou. The problem was to convince the National Assembly in Paris that the reunification of the Upper Volta was in the best interests of all concerned.

175* 648* 642 [631]

The French government set up a Parliamentary Commission and sent its chairman, Jean Jacques Duglas, to Ouagadougou and other Voltaic re-

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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territory. This report is substantiated by Barth. Marc adds that the caravaneers had 175 437

> . . . a considerable amount of incidental expenses. Ten thousand kolas called for two asses or four porters for whom it was necessary to provide food during close to two months. Formerly there had been a certain number of local exactions to pay each time that the caravans crossed a new country. Now there are taxes on the caravans in the Gold Coast and also in French territory. It is also necessary to pay for ferryman who transports the livestock across the Volta [River]. There are risks, and occasionally cattle, fatigued by the trip, arrive in such bad shape that they are sold more cheaply than they had cost. Finally, the realization of profits is often difficult, the kola market being, in the commercial centers of the Mossi, subject to considerable fluctuations at the time when the caravans return. (Marc 1909 : 174)[7]

484 486 651 [435]

Sometimes the caravaneers made extensive use of middlemen and did not realize all the profits. Marc, who was stationed at the customs post at Leo on the Mossi border with the Gold Coast, wrote: 175 435 437 441

> The livestock is bought upon arrival by interpreter-brokers, middlemen between the butchers and the meat merchants, to whom the caravaneers are practically forced to resort. These men buy all the kola nuts brought by the forest natives, and control the market prices . . . These interpreter-brokers apparently speculate on livestock in a most curious way. They have scouts who go out to meet the caravans, sometimes two days' march to the north. These scouts attempt to alarm the travellers with tendentious remarks, until they are willing to cede their herds at a low price. Some times, at the height of the business season—that is, in January and February—the livestock prices may fluctuate by one hundred per cent within a few weeks. The Mande-Dioula vie in eloquence, the Yarse and Mossi in politeness, the Hausa in friendliness. In reality, there is here, an embryonic trading center, a veritable stock exchange, using extensively indigenous methods. ((Marc 1909 : 175)

442 [221]

According to most reports, all the larger market centers of Mossi country were like this. 175

Caravan centers, like all the lesser market centers in Mossi country, provided merchants not only with trading opportunities but also with occasions for conviviality after hectic days of travel. At Dakay south of Wagadougou, livestock traders found musicians, singers, and the most beautiful dancers in the country. And according to Marc, during the whole caravan season the market was abundantly furnished with beer (Marc 1909 : 175). But if the Mossi enjoyed themselves at

366 437 54 [273]

(7) Tauxier (1912 : 539) states that each porter was paid 35 francs for the thirty-five days of travels or at the rate of one franc per day. In addition a caravaneer spent about 300 cowries a day on food for each of his bearers. [465]

5: Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1959
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221 796 their continued reliance upon his political power and intercession with his noble ancestors, in order that the village may enjoy peace through the coming months of the dry season and early rains at the beginning of the next economic cycle.

With this observance all of the sources of power—both social and supernatural—upon which the Mossis' well-being is dependent have been thanked for their support throughout the year just ended and have been encouraged, by the generosity of their supplicants, to continue their benevolence for the year to come. The Mossi understand the nature of these forces and the manner in which they can be controlled. They know them as manifestations of a deity who will reward their observance of ceremonial obligations with the soft winds and heavy rains that bring a rich harvest. The individual is intellectually and emotionally absorbed in maintaining a balance in his relationship to a world he understands. His efforts to maintain this balance are occasionally frustrated by sorcery or the contrary will of his deity, but he enjoys, nonetheless, a very real security.

CULTURAL ADJUSTMENTS AT THE NIGER IRRIGATION PROJECT

177 241 Given the nature of these interrelationships between the organization of economic activity and the social and religious institutions of their culture, the adjustment of the Mossi who have been resettled at the Niger Irrigation Project has implications which go beyond mere technological adaptation. The settlers must, in fact, adjust to a totally changed cultural setting.

Arriving at the Niger project, they fail to find the institutions upon which they have always depended for their security; they find instead a natural environment governed by forces they do not know. Their water supply is no longer dependent on the supernatural controls of the earth custodians but comes from a dam built by Europeans. They are socially isolated from their kinsmen and their ancestral spirits in the Yatenga, and they derive little comfort from the presence of fellow Mossi with whom they have neither consanguineal nor affinal relationship.

[466] Settlers were forcibly recruited for the Niger Irrigation Project until 1944, when forced labor was abolished throughout the French Union. Now a recruitment program brings Mossi families to the project each year; every family head receives a house, oxen, a plow, and a plot of land proportionate to the number of active workers accompanying him. Under the supervision of European agronomists, they apply modern methods to the production of rice and cotton. The project administration buys their crop for cash after deducting fees for seed, irrigation, mechanized cultivation, transportation, and processing. In theory, ten years of

8: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1958
FA28 Mossi FA28

how important is the conversion of the chiefs, or, at least, their sympathy for our religion, in the spread of Catholicism." The missionaries may have been successful in the village of the Manga district chief because he was sympathetic to them, but they made few converts in the villages far from the district center or in the neighboring districts. In the Béré district, a few miles from Manga, the Catholics have made only 22 converts despite more than 15 years' work. In Manga, however, they were able to "recruit" most of the young children for their church and school. When an old man was asked why his children became Catholic, he tried to evade the question but finally replied that he did not control the minds of his children. Knowing the nature of administrative practice in the upper Volta before 1946, and the nature of Mossi family structure, we looked further for the answer. 797 797 626 [871]

Paradoxically, it comes from a Catholic missionary, André Dupont, who, seeking to discover the reason for the decrease of patients in the Catholic-controlled maternity clinics, asked: [743]

> Why have the maternity clinics which in 1942 served more than seventy mothers a month now serve only two or three? "We are no longer forced to go," reply the villagers. Was it the fear of sanction which accounted for the unanimous use of the clinics? Alas! It would seem to be so. The use of force and sanction have rendered odious an institution of charity. It would have been better if the mothers were only encouraged to use the clinics. "These natives do not understand," I am told sometimes. But how does one expect them to understand? (Dupont 1949:4)

Fear was certainly one of the reasons why the people in Manga embraced Catholicism. Before 1946 (the Brazzaville conference in 1944 abolished forced labor), men and women were recruited for work on the roads and on Ivory Coast plantations, and children were recruited for the schools. The district chiefs often gathered orphans and the children of their former serfs and sent them to the mission to fill the quotas, but many children and whole families voluntarily attached themselves to the missions. The reasons for so doing are legion, but in some cases it was simply the desire to accept the new religious faith. 797 [466]

Once at the mission the children were taught French and the tenets of Catholicism. Many of the boys later became catechists or priests and several girls went into the nunnery. However, the largest group of educated youths became the clerical personnel of the administration and were lost to missionary activity. Because the administration lacked French-speaking Mossi, the young people received good jobs. This desertion to the administration has become so serious that the missionaries at Manga have ceased to teach French to their catechists and now use the vernacular. 797 555 [871]

Conversion to Catholicism, bringing with it the knowledge of French, was formerly one of the sure roads to upward social mobility. Most Catholic teachers at Manga (and at Nobéré) are individuals who were recruited as unwilling school-boys but today are the highest paid members of their lineages. Other gains have accrued to persons who become Catholics. For example, the people at Manga believe that the missionaries used their influence with the

586 It nevertheless happens, though very rarely, that the husband is unable to convince his wife and returns home alone. No one troubles the wife from then on, and her relatives give her full freedom. The grudge of the rejected husband may be persistent, however, and his vengeance frightful. The bride price is not returned; the husband should have known how to keep his wife. It is nevertheless acknowledged that the children born of the union, boys or girls, belong to the father, and he does not fail to claim them when they are grown, or if they run away to their mother.

564 467 Negro populations often contain caste groups, set apart from each other by tight barriers. The most outstanding of these are the rules prohibiting marriage between members of the same caste or between those who belong to a caste and those who do not. Such prohibitions do not exist among the Mossi, except in the sense mentioned earlier. Although three caste-like groups exist among them, drummers, smiths, and undertakers, they are castes only in the sense that those who do not belong to such a family cannot exercise the profession. It might be more accurate to call them guilds.

533 [534] The drummers (binda) are those who play the bindré, a sort of large gourd with an aperture about 40 centimeters in diameter and covered with hide. Only those who belong to the drummers' family may play on this drum, which apparently is peculiar to the Mossi, but anyone may play on the other drums. The drummers are present [782] at all sacrifices offered by the naba; on Friday, the day of sacrifice, they go and pay their respects to him. When sacrifices are offered, they are entitled to the head of the victim. They are present at all [764] burials, where they play their drum and receive a remuneration which varies with the wealth of the deceased. If it is one of their members who died, they receive neither cowries nor food. They go to war [727] with their drums. If they are so unfortunate as to be made prisoners, they are never sold but ruthlessly killed; this is done either to prevent them from going back into the fray and stirring the warriors to sack the village, or because no one would want to buy them since they belong to a naba who would retaliate against their captors, or for both reasons at once. The drummers are the country's griot, a term hallowed by custom. They know the genealogy of every naba and sing his praises. Each province chief has a number of drummers and never travels without taking some of them with him. At other times they go to /34/ the market and follow the best-dressed people, singing

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[317] In order to make this basin the potter takes a kind of earth called yaoré (the kind from large brown or greyish termite nests). He mixes it with straw and makes this kind of basin, this kind of primitive potter's wheel, called tébélé in Mossi.

2. A kind of short earth pestle, which is held in the fist and called toudoubila.

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[428] In order to make his canari our potter takes some yarado. To obtain this kind of clay one must dig at certain spots which are handed down traditionally from father to son. He crushes it with /520/ his pestle in the basin, and then wets it and builds his canari with it, raising the canari like a house wall and making it revolve slowly before him. Incidentally, he only knows how to make small canari.

Those potters who make big jars excavate a sort of large basin in the ground. They use the same short and compact little pestle to work the clay of the canari they are building, but they use a different kind of yarado, the red or reddish kind.

[435] Our potter sells his small canari for 80 to 120 cowries apiece. He makes them in quantities. People come to him to purchase them, or else he has his wife take them to market.

Skillful potters make four canari a day. Beginners only make two or three.

[435] Large canari are worth 300 cowries apiece.

Those potters who make small canari often make nothing else. Similarly, those who make large canari do not usually make any others. There are some potters who make both kinds, however, for example at Kombisiguiri.

In order to fire the pots, Mossi potters have large round ovens which I have already described. They are completely open at the top, like circular walls 1.50 meters high, with four holes at the bottom. The potters heap up millet stalks within, and lay four canari on top. Upon each of these canari they place others, until the pile reaches the top of the wall. Then they set the millet stalks afire and allow everything to cool off until the following morning.

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467 Every potter does not have his own oven. There is only one oven per quarter. The potters in each quarter get together to build a common oven behind the several soukala. If there are five potters,

323 the oven is built in one day. All those who cooperated in building
467 it have the right to use it.

323 At Kombisiguiri, some potters have no ovens. They merely spread out millet stalks on the ground and place the canari on top. They light the millet, and the pots are fired in this fashion.

/521/ It is the potter himself who makes his tools, his crude basin, and his pestle.

Let us point out that the baouré, huge jars where the threshed millet is stored and which are about 2.50 meters high and proportionately wide, which look like enormous sandstone ink bottles and which I saw in the northern part of Mossi territory, are not made by the potters. They are built in each soukala by the inhabitants.

After the potters come the pipe makers. It is the old women who make pipes among the Mossi. They fetch the appropriate clay,
[435] fashion the bowl of the pipe, and fire it. They sell it for 5 cowries.

333 Let us not forget the bricklayers, who are called tammétéba in Mossi. Like Gourounsi bricklayers, Mossi ones are primarily cultivators, and their fields net them much more than their trade. As among the Gourounsi, the bricklayers are not paid. They are merely fed for the duration of their work.

322 Following work with earth and clay, let us proceed to woodworking. It is represented among the Mossi by the koukouperséba and séta.

Among certain populations of West Africa, the woodworker's trade is exercised by the blacksmiths (for example, among the Malinké, Dialonké, etc.). Among the Mossi, as among the Gourounsi, it is sharply distinct from the blacksmith's trade and exercised by the koukouperséba, who are counterparts of the Gourounsi voguésara and Mandé debakala-lésemba. The koukouperséba make daba handles, axe handles, small chairs which are very nicely tooled with a hot iron and which represent a horse's back with two crude heads, two outlines of a head, on either side.

Actually, the koukouperséba are primarily cultivators. They work the soil during the rainy season. During the dry season, they make the various items just mentioned.

322 In addition to these people, there are the Laobé among the
563 Mossi, that is to say, /522/ those men who are employed by the

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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their own commercial centers, they acted quite differently outside their country. Dubois reports that at Timbuktu, "the great town of pleasure" with the freest morals in the Sudan, the merchants from Bamako, Djenne, Sansanding and Touat spent a great deal of money in pleasure and in gifts to the beautiful women, but the "Mossi did not waste their money and left as soon as they had finished their affairs" (Dubois 1899 : 292–300).

The days of the caravans are now over in Mossi country, even though large groups of traders carry on the traditional commerce in livestock, cotton, kola nuts, some dried fish, and salt. As soon as the French conquered th country they formulated plants to control the caravans. One of the earliest reports, for June 1899, reads:

> The country is calm and direct administration was established at Koupela, Mane, Yake . . . The Mossi trade is mainly with the English colony of the Gold Coast. It consists mainly of livestock, very plentiful in Mossi country, which is exchanged for merchandise from England; copper and material goods . . . Our task will be to discover the materials of the northern Ivory Coast which could be exchanged for cattle, and when this information is forthcoming we should be able to direct the caravans quite easily to the Ivory Coast. At the same time the English will see their provisions of cattle and sheep diminish. They will flood us less with their cotton cloth, with their glass beads, and with their kola nuts. In their place, the products of French manufacture can arrive to us through the Ivory Coast after being exchanged for the products of our colony there.[8]

These plans did not succeed. The Mossi still export a great deal of their products towards the forest zones of Ghana, including their "numerous laborers" which, according to Beauminy writing in 1919, were "the principal riches actually utilizable in Mossi country". (Beauminy 1919 : 71–78). The migrants themselves are, in a sense, the greatest traders in contemporary Mossi society.

PRESENT-DAY TRADE

There is a constant flow of goods between Mossi country and the Ivory Coast and Ghana. Much of the trade to the former region is in the hands of the large commercial companies and as such is beyond the purview of this paper. What is of interest here is the trade which is conducted by the ordinary people. A great deal of this trade is highly unorganized and the result of one or two men, or as many as five men, joining together to trade goods to and from Ghana and the Ivory Coast. The types of goods sent down to these two areas are the

(8) Unpublished document in the archives of *Institut Français d'Afrique Noire*, Wagadougou, Voltaic Republic.

10:Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1964 FA28 Mossi FA28
Yatenga

position of the set in Mossi society. In the years immediately following initiation the members are much involved in group activities, e.g., the arrangement of social dances, courtship, and co-operation in work groups composed of male and female age-sets, and during this period joking is important. As the members attain adult status the groups tend to lose their structural integrity; their minor corporate functions dwindle and ultimately disappear as the responsibility of the young people to their kin groups increases. With this shift in emphasis, joking behavior also diminishes.

While it lasts, however, this type of joking likewise has a structural context characterized by the attributes already identified. Age-sets are structurally separate within the age-grade. Their relations are reciprocal: individual members co-operate in the arrangement of one another's sexual liaisons; they pool their labor and share the profits they earn as members of their co-operative work organizations; and young men often leave Yatenga as migrant laborers in groups organized on the basis of age-grade membership, thereby reinforcing many of the reciprocal ties established in the work groups. The ambivalence characteristic of the relationship is perhaps best explained as the rivalry of peers. Since there is no status hierarchy within a Mossi age-grade, the age-sets are structurally equivalent and independent.

Intervillage Joking

When intervillage joking is institutionalized it may involve all the members of each community. However, I believe it is particularly expected of their respective chiefs. In either case, the participants are separated by their differing political affiliations. The inhabitants of each village are expected to reciprocate in one another's defense, to be mutually hospitable, and to co-operate in the regulation of land tenure at their frontiers. Ambivalence derives from a history of past hostility, dating perhaps from an earlier period when competition for new land was keener and the expanding kingdom did not yet encompass all the villages now within its borders. Such villages are always structurally equivalent in status within the political system, and each is independent of the other.

Joking Between Ethnic Groups

The joking relationship which the Mossi maintain with the Gurunsi and the Samogho peoples, among others, appears to involve the same structural characteristics. However, I learned of this relationship only shortly before I left Yatenga, and a more certain statement concerning it must therefore await further research. It is certain that such joking occurs; I am unsure only of the number of other ethnic groups involved[3] and of the relevant details of their historical relations to the Mossi of Yatenga. The groups involved are again separate. There is an expectation that members of each group should extend hospitality and assistance to members of the other. As with villages whose inhabitants joke, the participants in this relationship are ambivalent in their attitudes; the present expectation of co-operation is coupled with a past

651 For the Baloum Naba, the work was done by all the bilbalsé.
645 The Kam Naba set the day for the sekka (gathering), and all the
241 young and able-bodied men were required to report. They received the food they required from the Baloum Naba. The number of work days was not fixed. The sekka might be held once or several times, depending on the acreage.

For the other ministers, the Ouidi Naba, Gounga Naba, and Larrhallé Naba, the field work was done by the people in their entourage (that is, the inhabitants of their respective sections) and in the neighboring villages which were formerly under their jurisdiction. Since the formation of the canton of Ouagadougou and its outskirts, the area has been under the exclusive authority of the Baloum Naba (fourth minister of the emperor).

645 If, however, the fields were so extensive that their cultiva-
476 tion could not be taken care of solely by the above system -- the
241 laborers also had to care for their own fields -- the ministers [76] called for volunteers from among the young men in the neighboring villages and paid them with food and drink. This is the sissoaga, a system commonly in use among the Mossi.

645 (b) Construction and repair of houses. As a general rule, re-
651 pair of the roofs of huts in the establishments of the province chiefs
356 was the duty of the inhabitants of their respective sections and of the neighboring villages under their jurisdiction.

651 The canton chiefs. The cultivation of the fields of the naba
634 and the repair of the huts in their establishments were wholly in-
241 cumbent on their subjects. Each village had a fixed number of
356 huts to be repaired or roofed; this is known as sough'pilli, and it is still in effect annually.

651 Today, perhaps in the interests of tranquillity, canton chiefs require labor service in their fields only from their sogoné and samand'kamba and sometimes even resort to the sissoaga.

The local administration, with respect for local customs, has the policy of organizing the system in a way that, in our opinion, will safeguard the interests of the natives, overburdened due to the negligence of the province chiefs, and at the same time will enhance the prestige of the Mossi chiefs.

653 The naba is not entitled to any other labor services. The building of dams to provide water for the villages cannot be

567 his personal fortune. The management of any such property is left entirely to him. If the master becomes indebted [to the slave], he is required to pay the debt within a fixed time limit.

Emancipation from slavery. As was indicated in the foregoing paragraph, it was possible for a slave to amass property through his own efforts. He might then free himself by paying his master 100,000 cowries. He then might either return to his native village or settle in his master's village. There have been slaves who not only freed themselves in this way, but also became slave owners in their turn.

If, however, slaves marry female slaves given to them by their masters and become fathers of families, they do not usually leave their masters. [95] They acquire a certain standing and are counted as members of the family. It is understood that they do not have the right to dispose of their children since the latter are dogyiri (house slaves).

465 Various types of unpaid work. Aside from the labor and other obligations required of all Mossi subjects for their naba -- we have described the forced labor in a previous chapter -- it may be said that, in general, no work is required without pay, even from slaves. In an area that is predominantly agricultural there can be no question of payment in money as would be the case in private or official enterprises where contracts specify the obligations of an employer to his employees. On the purely native level, the employer is obligated only to feed the workers.

In sum, what are the duties of a Moaga?

1. Cultivation of the family fields.

2. Construction and repair of huts and roofs.

3. Private work: basketry, shoemaking, weaving cotton strips, pottery, sewing, etc.

The head of the household is required to feed the workers who 592 cultivate the family plots or repair the huts. In a later chapter we 476 shall see that when the [96] members of a family could not complete a task without help, they called on other young men in the village. In that case, animals were slaughtered, dolo (millet beer) was brewed, and sagbo (millet mush) or benga (beans) was prepared.

567 On the other hand, it should be stated that when yemdago were used for hard labor, they were very well fed and were even given double rations.

241 brothers of the family heads who died childless (zig'tinguin damba),
782 and to the ancestors and grandparents. May they see to it that these offerings are accepted by the kinkirsi (spirits of the fields) and that the latter favor X with [242] good health and large crops of millet and beans."

[787] Once these sacrifices have been made -- if they are accepted, the rooster falls on its back -- the new owner has his land cleared and awaits the winter season.

Field work. As soon as the first rains have come, the owner goes once more to the field and has another rooster killed and offered to the kinkirga [singular of kinkirsi] with a plea for gnimassem (good health) and large harvests which he will consume with new wives and new children (pog'palla, la bipalla). Afterward he sows large and small millet, peanuts, beans, etc.

If the year has been a good one and the Moaga has had fine crops, he is happy and in good time will remember the spirit of the fields. For the moment he is busy transporting the millet to the temporary granary (lourgho).

Threshing millet. Before his millet is threshed, the Moaga must make a sacrifice to the zéiga (threshing floor). The ritual words differ from those described above only in the following words: "X asks that this millet, which he will eat, be good for him and that he eat it in peace and good health with his family." (Kita ri ki wan ne lafi layelsomdé né a zak'ramba.)

241 [243] He then appeals to the young men of the village for help
● 476 in threshing his grain. For the occasion he has a great deal of beer prepared and quantities of beans (benga) cooked. The beans are
[252] prepared with sesame (sinni). After the job is done, two children between the ages of six and seven are called, and their hands filled with the bean mixture. They must run around the threshing floor while eating some of the beans. The rest will be scattered to the winds. They must stop three times for breath and look at each other. Then the remaining beans are distributed among the workers. They are also given beer.

423 Do owners retain rights over abandoned land? In order to occupy abandoned land; permission must first be obtained from the former owner, who retains his rights over the land. He may reclaim it at

241 At noon (wend'to souka, "the middle of the day") the family
512 rests in the shade of a tree. There are always some fruit trees in every field. Work is resumed at about two in the afternoon. At five the women return home to prepare food, and the men stop work at nightfall.

241 The sisoaga. When the family fields are too extensive to be
476 cultivated without help, all the able-bodied young men in the village are called to help with the weeding.

At such a time the head of the family gives several baskets of sprouted millet to his wives to make large quantities of dam, millet beer. He also orders them to prepare sagbo (millet cakes).

On the day set for the work, the young men go to the fields, where their enthusiasm is aroused by singing and the beating of drums. For their work they receive sagbo and dam. This is what is known as the sisoaga.

It is a kind of mutual aid, and without this indispensable system of solidarity, many fields would remain uncultivated.

It should be noted, finally, that when a person falls [246]
[572] ill during the winter, his friends arrange to cultivate his fields, sometimes without any pay and simply out of a sense of solidarity.

241 Farm implements. As is the case everywhere in French West Africa, the natives have only the most primitive implements. Among the Mossi these include: the wanka or kounri; a hoe or Bambara daba to cultivate the soil; the sitoaga (small pickaxe) for sowing; and the laré (ax) to clear the site of brush and shrubs.

463 Other types of work. Aside from work in the fields, everyone goes about his own affairs. Some make baskets, hampers, and fans, while others weave cotton strips. It is perhaps of some
[564 interest to note that there is no caste distinction among the Mossi,
326] except for the blacksmiths; each person may practice the trade that suits him. This is why shoemakers mostly come from among the nakomsé (descendants of naba).

Food Crops

241 The principal foods grown by the Mossi are as follows.
Kazouf (small white or gray millet).

221 they will be working, they open the door of the cage and the mother
235 hen comes out. She is tied to the basket with a string, and the chicks run around her. If their master finds a good termite nest, he takes it to his little charges and breaks it in two. In the evening he puts the hen and chicks back into the basket and carries it home suspended from his shoulder.

[805] The heavy rains fall in July and August. This is summer (seoro).
221 Whenever the ground is not too soggy, everybody runs to the fields at
241 dawn and works until nightfall. One or two women stay home to pre-
476 pare food for the laborers, whose strength must be maintained for all this hard work. No one may rest. Only the sick and the helpless old people stay home, and even they are put to work, looking after the babies. This is the time when wealthy people call friends to their aid. The owner of a vast field has every member of the village notified — especially the young men, those who own some obligation toward him, those who have an eye on his daughters — that on a certain date he will be weeding his field, and at dawn of that day everyone gathers and labors while the drums spur them on. On another occasion, this man in turn will help those who have worked for him. This practice of mutual aid is very advantageous because a field overgrown with weeds is cleaned in a single day, but it becomes onerous when people must appeal to their neighbors several times in the course of a season.

221 The heavy rains stop in August or September, the maize is ripe,
241 and feasting begins. Roasted corn ears are a prized tidbit, especially
262 when the kernels are still tender. There is one kind of maize, faintly sweet, which when sautéed in butter recalls our garden peas. Everywhere the children and even the elders feast on maize; everywhere people offer a visitor a few ears of maize, which are often roasted on the spot. When the maize harvest is completed, maize gruel, which recalls the famous Italian polenta, advantageously replaces millet mush and brings a pleasant change to the daily fare, especially since gombo is ripening and adds variety to the sauce as well. Bellies fill out, faces glow with health, and as a very natural sequence, hearts are flooded with joy. The end of the dry season may have been difficult because millet was running low; the winter tasks may have been laborious; but now everyone makes up for it. The harvested maize is replaced in the fields by tobacco; its seedlings were prepared as the harvest drew near.

[805] At the end of September or beginning of October, the large red millet is ripe. This is autumn (houpéla). Maize is now too tough

221 the men bring bunches of peanuts. While nibbling on the green nuts
241 and talking, they all separate the pods from the leaves. The latter
are carefully set aside along with the bean leaves. They make ex-
[231] cellent fodder for the horses during the dry season, when the sun has
burned off all the grass in the bush.

221 By November harvesting is completed. The sun has already dried
241 out the grass, and the time has come to cut straw for séko and roofing.
356 /48/ This task is usually reserved for children and servants (dakonré).
857 The head of the household tells each one of them the number of straw
bundles he is to cut, and every morning the children set off in groups,
a sickle on their shoulders. They look for straw on the banks of the
watercourses and return when the sun begins to scorch. This marks
the end of the working day, and there is nothing to do now but rest.
The dry season is indeed a time of rest, and from November to May
there are no pressing tasks.

[805] It gets cold in December. This is winter (sapolro). The natives
221 gather at dawn around fires of millet stalks, twigs, or straw; anything
241 combustible serves. Every newcomer must contribute an armful; it
[372] is the price of admission to a seat near the fire. At the end of December
476 all the straw for roofing has been stored, and then the small millet
is threshed. Every inhabitant of the village has the use of the thresh-
ing floor in turn. He notifies his friends and acquaintances as he did
when he weeded his field. The millet beer is ready, and on the pre-
vious day the women have covered the area with cow dung diluted in
water to harden the floor. At dawn the friends arrive, and the millet
is removed from the granary and spread out on the floor. This is done
with the help of millet stalks tied together in bundles and dragged
along the ground with ropes while a man bears down upon them.
The flail is merely a stick cut in the bush, a tree branch shaped in
such a way that the part which is held in the hand is rather thin and
flexible, while the part which is used for threshing is quite thick and
forms an obtuse angle with the part in the hand. The boys line up in
a row, with the tots at either end; the drummers stand before or behind
them; and the flails fall with the beat, crushing the ears of millet
and separating the very dry grain from the stalks. All the while the
old men sit in the shade of the granaries, talking, smoking, and
sewing clothes. When the threshers get to the end of the floor, they
retrace their steps and rest, while the old men gather with straw brooms
the grain which has been scattered outside the pile.

221 After a few hours when the millet has been sufficiently threshed,
241 the emptied and broken husks are swept to the side. The grain is
476 gathered in a heap, and a strong fellow tosses it into the air with a
788 wooden shovel to separate the chaff from the good grain, which is put in a heap. When all the grain has thus been winnowed, it is surrounded with a ring of ashes to protect it against evil spirits. Then one of the threshers, who is not a member of the family, puts some millet in a gourd and sprinkles it with water. He proceeds to throw it by the handful onto the millet pile, saying: "So-and-So fears rain," mentioning the name of the owner of the harvest and the name of every member of his family. He ends by saying: "When we are finished weeding, let the drought come. When we are finished planting, let the heavy rains come." If the owner of a horse is present, he receives a gourd of millet for his mount. Each of the elders also takes some for his chicken. If this ceremony is not carried out, the millet may not be used as seed the following year.

221 /49/ The women come with their baskets; a man takes one of the
251 brooms and sinks it into the millet heap in various places; then the
[482] men fill the baskets and help the women place them on their heads. At the house the millet is unloaded into granaries made of clay mixed with finely cut straw. These granaries have the shape of large jars 1.50 meters high; they usually rest on large stones, and they are
[343] smoked out beforehand to get rid of termites. They are closed with a lid of the same material and covered with a small thatch roof as a protection against rain, for they usually stand in the open air in the inner courtyard. Millet beer is brought and drunk on the spot while the millet is being winnowed. Sometimes the festivities end with dancing, and then everyone goes home, to begin again another day. The month of January goes by in this fashion.

221 February, March, and April are vacation months, months for hunting and fishing.

224 Actually no Mossi is a hunter, yet all Mossi are hunters to some
411 degree. Since the French occupation, men armed with very primitive flint guns are sometimes seen on the fringes of the heavy bush which borders the Volta and contains large game. These flint guns are so crude that they frequently burst and wound the man who recklessly
224 loaded it with too much powder. These natives know the bush thoroughly and are very helpful to the adventurers who wish to hunt koba, buffalo, elephant, leopard, or even lion, although the latter is to the

342 received, gossip exchanged, and social and ceremonial obligations dis-
592 cussed in its shade. Here, also, the men of the lineage take their meals,
[264] brought out to them from the kitchens of their wives and set before them by their sons, who first attend their fathers and then dine on what remains.

592 A few paces away is the grinding platform (*nere*) where the women
252 gather to prepare the grain for their families' meals. This great circular mud table, some twenty feet in diameter, is raised about three feet from the ground. Its surface is beaten hard and worked over with cinders and manure to make it rainproof. Each woman has her assigned place at this
[512] platform where she keeps her pestle and where she stations herself at dawn and again at dusk to grind her millet and learn the news of the day.

Frequently found at the outer perimeter of the dwelling of the Mossi
592 kin group is the house of the son of a lineage woman who has returned from his father's household to live in the benevolent presence of his mother's family, with whom he enjoys an especially permissive relationship. The house set aside for the residence of the young unmarried men of the lineage is also located on the outer edge of the compound dwelling.

A recent addition to the traditional pattern of village organization
555 described above is the independent households of socially ambitious
184 individuals who have chosen to separate themselves from the residences of their lineages in order to profit from their own economic or religious enterprises. Many have become independently wealthy through successful commercial ventures; others, as a result of conversion to Islam, have gained prestige through religious authority and wealth through the tuition and services provided by the Koranic students. Often these people are much younger than their lineage elders, not in line for the inheritance of political or religious authority through traditional channels, and unwilling either to accept the authority of their seniors or to share economically with the less prosperous members of their lineages. They are deviants, in conflict with the communal patterns of consumption and with the emphasis on accepting established authority which characterizes the traditional social organization of the Mossi.

THE TRADITIONAL ECONOMY

613 Much agricultural endeavor is necessarily co-operative. Each farmer
476 is dependent on the assistance of his kinsmen to get his fields seeded, cultivated, and harvested in the short time during which each of these
293 operations must take place. However, the yield from his field remains his own, to be shared only with his own wives and children. Members of the lineage also work in the fields under the specific control of the lineage elder. Although the harvest from these fields is stored in the granary
1 [i.e. at a sun shelter in the entrance-way. — Analyst]
242

5: Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1959
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476 613 243

belonging to him, he can be relied upon to share with the members of the lineage if this should be necessary.

Capital goods in the form of houses, granaries, and fields are the property of the lineage. Individual rights are limited to temporary use and custodianship but are passed on to others when a general shift in residence and role follows the death of a senior member of the lineage. Although property is passed on in accordance with the rules of descent in the lineage, part of the property redistributed represents the product of the labor of the lineage as a consanguineal kin group. For, as has been indicated, the labor of the wives, who are not lineage members, is as important as that of their husbands and children.

613 423 428 613

The lineage head discusses the coming year with the other elders, and an over-all production plan is made out. They decide what fields are to be left fallow, what ones are to be planted to cotton and the varieties of millet, what lands may be used by individuals desiring to plant a cash crop, and what, if any, land may be loaned to neighboring lineages or to in-laws. With the approach of the first rains, all economically active men and women go to their fields to prepare them for planting, leaving behind in the village only the old people and the children who are still too small to assist in the fields or tend their fathers' animals.

241 613

A considerable portion of the land within the limits of a Mossi village is under the direct control of the village chief (*Tenga Naba*) and the earth custodian (*Tenga Soba*), the local representatives of political and supernatural authority. This land is used for the public way, for the market place, and for burial grounds and latrines. Except for that which is too poor for any purpose, all available land within several miles of a village is put under cultivation.

423 632

Ki is the generic name which the Mossi give to the millet, which is the basic product in their economy and which receives the largest single allocation of land and labor of any Mossi economic activity. Two kinds of millet are planted, a large-grained variety (*kenda*) and a small-grained variety (*kazua*). Millet is the first crop to be planted after the rains have begun. Small- and large-grained millet seeds are frequently mixed and sown in the same field. Small-grained millet may also be sown in the same field with a white bean (*benga*). A "tired" field may be left fallow for five, ten, or fifteen years. When it is first replanted, it will be seeded to millet for the first three years. The fourth year it may again be put into millet, but if the previous crop was not good, cotton will be planted. Usually, a Mossi farmer plants cotton for two years, millet for three, then groundnuts, more cotton, then two more years of millet. It is believed that cotton renews the soil because of the intensive cultivation required: the earth is brought up into hillocks and turned over; after picking, the plant may be turned under and left to enrich the soil.

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5: Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1959
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241 picking, the plant may be turned under and left to enrich the soil.

241 Apart from the co-operative cultivation of fields under the proprietor-
476 ship of the lineage elder, each farmer works for himself. He aids his relatives, and they in turn assist him with his work, but the results of their communal effort are not shared. This applies not only to the work of planting but also to cultivation and harvest. The decision about what is to be planted in a particular field and how it shall be cultivated rests finally with the individual farmer.

Communal or co-operative effort is much more characteristic of the work of cultivation than of the planting period, when everyone is in a hurry to get his own seeds into the ground and requests for assistance are not welcomed. A strong note of competition is evident at this time. A [461] man takes pride in his efficiency as a farmer, and there is a race to see who can get farthest along with his work. In the earliest phase of prepa- [572] rations for the approaching rainy season it is the individual's best friend upon whom he relies most for assistance. He is the first person to be called on for assistance in clearing the field for planting. If a Mossi farmer is unmarried, he may also ask the other unmarried men of his lineage for help. If a long day must be spent in the field in order to clear and clean it properly, his mother will offer the helpers the midday meal, which is carried out to them as they work.

622 *Naba koba* (chief's cultivation) is the name given to the work which the
651 villagers do in the fields belonging to the village chief. A village elder is
241 charged with announcing when and where work in the chief's fields is to be done, and each lineage head relays the news to his kinsmen. This contribution of labor is no longer obligatory, as it was formerly, but only [626] a question of social pressure and recognition that individual well-being and the welfare of the village "depend on the chief."

Every Mossi is an agriculturist. Although agriculture is the principal
241 source of income, everyone also engages in crafts, particularly during the
463 dry season when the work in the fields is finished. However, there are no full-time crafts specialists. Even the African functionaries in the European administration and the teachers, clerks, and merchants all work in their fields part of the time during the rainy season. The activities of the blacksmiths, leather workers, butchers, wood workers, herbalists, and small merchants are carried out on a much smaller scale and are fitted into the routine established by the rains and the growth of their millet. Only elders whose age keeps them from the fields might be thought of as specialists who do not participate in agriculture, but their land is worked by younger members of the family, and they take a keen interest in the course of its cultivation. The village chief, the earth custodian, and certain other elderly and important members of the community do not cultivate; this is because of their position and age rather than because

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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tions. Binger, who found Boukary Koutou (the future Mogho Naba Wobogo) living in exile for having led a rebellion against his brother, Mogho Naba Sanum, tells us:

> Boukary has no resources, and does not even have the advantage of receiving periodic tribute from several large villages. In order to subsist and to maintain a certain status, he is compelled to live by pillage and even by brigandage. From time to time, his horsemen make incursions into the outskirts of some Gurunsi or Kipirsi village, and carry off by surprise the inhabitants whom they find working the fields or looking for wood. His people also hide and lie in wait along the roads to capture any persons who may pass within their range. This type of behavior has given Boukary Naba a bad reputation. However, the people who understand his position forgive him, knowing the situation in which his brother has placed him. And, in spite of all this, he has numerous partisans, and many others who would be happy to see him gain power.[25]

Those district chiefs or princes who wished to retain their power legitimately were forced to be generous or run the risk of losing the allegiance and good will of their villagers, who were their ultimate supporters.

It is very difficult to generalize about the amount of revenue collected by a village chief. He did not receive any revenue from the land used by his villagers. He treated the weogho in his village in the same manner as the district chief. If some families grew too large and wanted to establish permanent residence in the village bush, they asked the chief for permission to settle there. However, many village chiefs had special areas of waste for their own use. They had usually received them as gifts from some district chief, and therefore had the right to collect tribute on any crops, firewood, or fish obtained from these lands.

The average village chief's main source of revenue was derived from the agricultural and other labor of his wives and relatives. A village chief received a number of wives from his subjects and from aliens living in his village. These women helped cultivate his fields. If their labor was insufficient he called a sosogha, to which he often invited his wives' relatives. Some chiefs also had serfs and slaves who helped cultivate their land and kept their cattle as well.

The village chief did not have the power to tax his subjects. Instead, he functioned as a channel through which commodities and services passed up the hierarchy and on to Ouagadougou. Many villagers voluntarily helped the chief to repair his huts and compound walls and to cut thatch for his roofs. Many gave him baskets of grain and other vegetable products after the harvest. They also visited him and gave him presents during the annual rites to his ancestors. In contrast to higher chiefs, however, the village head

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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596 permission to use weogho in the district, and new hamlets arose in this way. 613 A Yirisoba who could not obtain adequate land on which to grow food for 423 his family left the district and sought land elsewhere, especially among his 426 mother's patrilineage. However, village and district chiefs always tried to prevent this because they did not like to lose any of their subjects.

As director of economic activities in the household, the Yirisoba super- 596 vised the agricultural labor of his charges. It was he who directed the work of his wives, his sons, and his sons' wives, and supervised the care of the family herd. He provided the cotton, which was carded and spun by the women and woven by the men. It was also his task to ensure adequate clothing for the members of his household; and he sold excess commodities in order to buy salt, kola nuts, bracelets, foreign clothes, and other products imported from the forest and desert zones. In each case, the Yirisoba had to balance judiciously the requirements of his household against his obligations to the community and to the political hierarchy. He had to prevent economic rivalry among his sons, and especially among his sons' wives. He had to make sure that every married member of the household had sufficient time to provide goods and services for his own family, and that foodstuffs were distributed equitably among the wives. Finally, he had to use the resources of the household to build and maintain the nexus of socioeconomic relationships that provided wives for the male members of the household, and to meet his obligations to the political hierarchy.

The Yirisoba also had social and economic responsibilities toward the 596 other members of his babissi and boodoo. He furnished labor and goods 613 to needy lineage members and to non-relatives with whom he had marriage 476 arrangements. Since much of this help was given on the basis of ultimate 602 reciprocity, very little loss was involved. However, the relationship between commoner and noble families was quite different. In theory, the nobles had 565 no claims on the property of the commoners; but in practice, they did claim 596 such rights. Furthermore, commoner lineages often gave the nobles many 613 more wives than the nobles returned. This inequality enabled the nobles to receive more goods and services from their marriage partners among the commoners than they gave in return. The nobles thus took advantage of their power as possessors of the nam, but even membership in the royal lineage did not exempt them from supporting the governmental services at all levels. This duty was incumbent upon every Moaga.

The Mossi people could not refuse to support their political organiza- 641 tion, but often complained about having to do so. Many Mossi felt that 431 their rulers were greedy and avaricious and received too many gifts. Some 661 Mossi held that if the chiefs were not placated with goods and services,

304 day the one in charge of the circumcision, a wealthy Yarga or Mossi
563 who has the means to feed several of the people to be circumcised,
852 chooses a tree to serve as shelter for the operation. Rain need not be taken into account, for circumcision is always performed during the dry season from December to April, when agricultural work is at a
[778] standstill. The tree is surrounded with straw mats, forming the téoo or sacred enclosure which no one who is not circumcised may come near without running the risk of being insulted and often beaten; if he should dare to step inside it, he would be stricken by the greatest misfortunes. The Peul sets out a flat stone, sacrifices a chicken in order to make the spirit of the tree benevolent toward those to be circumcised, and operates on the boys one by one. Drums are played throughout the operation to drown the cries of the victims.

852 For three days afterwards the newly circumcised boys do nothing. They rest and tend their wounds. They remain isolated from the rest
[535] of the community for two or three months, sometimes even longer. Judging by the dances which close the festivities, dancing must be their primary concern during that period of time. They also thresh the millet of those who invite them to do so, but no uncircumcised person may join them, no uninitiated individual may come near them.
[198] They do not speak the Mossi language at this time, but a special tongue of which they learn enough to serve them in their everyday needs. Woe to those who forget and use their native tongue; they are
[551] beaten with switches made of a kind of willow. Even their names are changed, and no one may call them by their Mossi names.

The circumcised boys are divided in two groups, one "male" and one "female." One of the groups bears the name of the hyena (kwara in their language) and the other is called masalro, whose French equivalent we do not know. The hyena group must strain their wits to snatch food, even from the other circumcised boys, who are kept constantly on the alert. The other group makes improper gestures during the dance.

852 The circumcised boys are covered with gray dust to alter their
293 appearance completely. A tail is fastened to the back of their breech-
776 cloth, hanging to the ground. It is made of plaited cotton thread and
481 ends in a pompon. Its function is to drive off the kikirsi spirits, who apparently do not like circumcised persons. The boys walk bent over and leaning on sticks like old men. This is done to test their obedience and to see if they listen carefully to what they are told.

852 shaved strips on top of the head, while the sides are shaved similarly
[302] in semi-circular strips. On the seventh day, people who were previously circumcised bring chickens to sacrifice to the spirits of the paths so that all will go well, but the newly circumcised take no part in the proceedings. The children wash, oil themselves, and put on their
852 beautiful clothes. Everything is brand new, the breechcloth, the
292 trousers, the shirt, the blanket, and the headgear. The belt is adorned
301 with a knife in a leather sheath and with a needle case which has at the end a tuft of leather strips with cowries attached to them. They
[776] hold a cow's tail, also adorned with cowries, to drive off the scheuyan spirits who dislike little rascals and people who dress too well. Both wrists are adorned with copper bracelets. Needless to say, this flashy new outfit with its cowries that clang like bells lures the eye and bewitches the young boys, who decide to be circumcised at the first opportunity so they too may eat well and wear beautiful clothes.

852 /44/ The circumcised boys continue to walk bent over, leaning on
[481] their sticks, but their crude staff is replaced with two sticks decorated with burnt designs and tied together. They no longer wear a tail. They go to greet the chiefs, and they thank those who have given them gifts. They walk to the sound of the large drum, since the bindré is forbidden at circumcision ceremonies, and sing plaintive chants to the spirits. They parade in the marketplace and display their clothes in the villages. They dance before the chiefs, and their dances are very
[535] graceful indeed. They dance in unison to the beat of the drum, making the same gestures all together or two by two, varying the figures in accordance with the beat. After seven days the festivities are over, and they all return to their families and take up everyday life as though nothing had happened.

We shall now study this everyday life.

/45/ BOOK III. DAILY WORK AND TRADES

Chapter 1. Occupations of a Mossi

221 The Mossi are essentially cultivators, and it may be said that no
241 Mossi who works at a trade will fail to cultivate his fields when the

224 Each village goes there in a group, burning the bush and driving on the game. If the plan is carried out properly, the animals are eventually enclosed within a circle of fire behind which stand the natives, some on horseback and armed with spears, others on foot with their dogs and equipped merely with sticks or sometimes with bows and arrows. The bows are of medium size and made of hard wood. The 411 224 string is usually made from a rattan stem or a millet stalk. Arrows are made of the tough and light stems of tall reeds; they are not barbed, but the tip is made of iron and shaped like a harpoon, with two and sometimes three pairs of teeth. The leather quiver hangs from the shoulder.

224 The panic-stricken hares, deer, antelope of various kinds, guinea hens, and partridges run all around the fiery circle, and those who manage to cross this first obstacle are felled by the blows of the hunters. These hunts are sometimes quite fruitful, and buffalo and koba are 224 occasionally caught. Unfortunately, every animal killed in the bush 661 belongs by right to the naba, who searches the hunters' bags and takes what he pleases. If he learns that a lucky hunter has killed an antelope and failed to bring it, he summons him to his presence, reproves him harshly for his lack of consideration, and thrashes him soundly. It must nevertheless be said that such cases are constantly growing rarer, and now the natives flatly refuse to yield their catch.

224 Often no game is caught because one of the villages has failed to appear and the animals have fled through the unguarded opening. In short, these hunting parties are mostly a pastime and entertainment. The hunters who bring back a catch are few, owing to the large number of men who participate. It is true that when they set out for the hunt they all hope they will be lucky. They all are thirsty, for at this time of year the sun is very hot and it is better to hunt in the middle of the day when the game lies down in the bushes and cannot run very far. These hunting parties dwindle year by year. The cultivated fields are more extensive, and the game has withdrawn deeper into the bush. Also, the natives find it more difficult to reaching an agreement for large parties of beaters; /51/ they prefer to hunt in small groups, far from the chiefs' sight, so that nothing will be taken from them.

226 In addition to hunting, fishing is the great pastime at this time of year. Professional fishermen are as rare as professional hunters. Of [48] course, those who live on the banks of streams usually know how to swim, especially when they live near those watercourses which are most difficult to ford.

[i.e., February - April. - Analyst]

491 builds bridges, but as they are made exclusively with materials found in the country, forked sticks and beams covered with pounded earth, the first swelling of the water carries the whole structure away, and after a heavy rain one must wait for the waters to subside and resort to ferrymen who justifiably charge for their work.

The ferrymen proceed as follows. The person who wishes to cross 481 holds on to a thick beam, a gourd, or a simple clay jar, which holds 484 him out of the water; sometimes two large sticks under his arms serve 501 as a life belt. In a few places rafts are available, made of sticks connected with séko and covered with dry grass. The ferryman swims next to him and prevents him from being carried too far by the current. At certain favored fords near the French posts, ferryboats are available. 484 Livestock swim across, and the ferryman holds their muzzles out of the water to prevent them from drowning. These crossings take a long time and add up to considerable expense, and animals are often carried away by the current or snatched by crocodiles. Woe to the man who dispenses with ferrymen, if he is not familiar with the bottom of the river and the strength of the current! He often drowns, and those whose aid he scorned do nothing to help him. On the other hand, if the caravans postpone their departure for too long, the rivers will be dry, the grass burned off, and the animals will die of hunger or thirst, or they will arrive at the markets exhausted and lean and will sell poorly.

These journeys thus entail a number of hazards; in addition, although imported goods sell high, living expenses run equally high, and if a profit is to be made, one cannot grow fat along the way. He will make up for it when he returns to the village.

442 The need for middlemen brings other hazards. Lt. Marc, who was well qualified to discuss the subject because he was twice in command of the Léo Post, described the situation as follows: "The livestock upon arrival is bought by interpreter-brokers, middlemen between the butchers and the meat merchants, to whom the caravaneers are practically forced to resort. These men buy all the kola nuts brought by the forest natives and control the market prices... These interpreter-brokers apparently speculate on livestock in a most curious way. They have scouts who go out to meet the caravans, sometimes two days' march to the north. /61/ These scouts attempt to alarm the cattle owners with tendentious remarks, until they are willing to cede their herds at a low price. Sometimes, at the height of the business season, in January and February, livestock prices may fluctuate by one

482 their pack, their full cartridge pouches, and their gun. This is proved by the fact that it is very easy to find volunteer porters nowadays who [465] agree to carry a box weighing 25 or 30 kilograms for 200 or 400 kilometers, or even farther, for half a franc a day.

[492] The fabrics are coiled into huge rolls which hang on either side of the ox or donkey, or, when the man carries them himself, they are folded in baskets from one and a half to two meters long, made of [285] bamboo stems slit lengthwise in two. These baskets are semi-cylindrical in shape and are used to carry kola nuts on the way back. A small pillow is attached to the center of the basket, and when the traveller stops to rest, he looks for a thick tree, leans one tip of the basket on the crotch of two branches and the other tip on the bamboo [481] he uses as a staff. He can thus pick up his load effortlessly when the resting period is over.

484 The traveller always returns to his village at night to avoid those prying persons who would rush out to see what he brought back. The goods are carefully put away, and on the following day the man takes up village life as though he had never left it. It is only gradually, at the evening gatherings, that he relates his adventures. At the first subsequent festivity, however, he dons his new, bright clothes and a red tarboosh, sometimes stockings and shoes, and proudly displays them. Those who have tasted /64/ the life of travel and adventure cannot do without it, and they set out again every year. Some of the independent and carefree young men even live all winter on the [178] profits of their distant journey and no longer cultivate the soil. This is shocking to the elders, who do not understand it at all but are aware that something has changed in their country.

600 Some Europeans have attempted to engage in livestock trading like the natives. One enterprising and courageous European settled in Ouahigouya, and another near Mané; a trading house sent one of its representatives to Ouagadougou, and a Syrian settled there. None of them seems to have succeeded. We are not in their confidence and cannot say just why this happened, but would it not be, at least in part, because a European cannot easily adapt himself to the native way of life? The Blacks manage to make a profit because they do not spend much along the way; they subsist on very little and carry part of the goods themselves instead of hiring porters. Also, the natives

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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sented the sun itself. The toilet was performed in complete silence, for no 644 one was allowed to speak to the monarch until after the ceremony. Mean- 796 while, in the courtyard, the court dignitaries, visitors, and the musicians and minstrels (*bendere*) took their places. The provincial ministers sat on their [645] respective stones (*coganaramse*), and the visitors sat by their hosts. The pages at the door of the zongo awaited the moment when the Mogho Naba and his escort would emerge from the zongo. On seeing the two pages who preceded the monarch, they snapped their fingers as a signal to the still silent bendere.

On seeing the monarch, the chief musician, the Bendere Naba, rubbed [533] his fingers across the top of his drum to produce the sound of a lion's growl, and the other drummers and violinists played the royal air, "Ouend pous yan." The head guard, the Kambo Naba, and his men, carrying guns, walked up from the side and knelt down facing the assembly. And the *samande-kamba*, the "servants of the courtyard," came with heavy batons to guard against crimes of lese majesty. From the wings came a groom with a partly saddled ceremonial horse. As soon as the monarch was seated on his throne, his two pages moved to the front and knelt down facing the courtyard. The salutations now began. The first group of ministers, led 643 by the Baloum Naba and including the Samande Naba, the Samande Na- 645 bila, the Ouedrange Naba, the Kamsaogho Naba, and the Zusoaba Kasan- 796 ga, left their stones and came to the throne with slow steps and bowed 576 heads. A few yards from the monarch, they knelt on the ground, and with their fingers folded and their thumbs in the air, leaned forward, struck the ground with both hands three times, and then rubbed the palms of their left hands with the fingers of their right. Then they arose, and with heads still bowed walked backwards to their places.[6] With the music still playing, another group of ministers, led by the Ouidi Naba and including such men as the Gounga Naba, the Larhalle Naba, and the Pwe Naba, saluted the ruler in the same manner. On Fridays and other Islamic holy days, the [792] Moslem Imam representing the Ouagadougou congregation read aloud from the Koran. This part of the ceremony ended when the Mogho Naba [481] rose, and, with the measured steps and swaying gait that signified royalty, retired to the zongo, preceded by his two pages.[7]

A few minutes later, the monarch returned to the courtyard without his red robe and glittering headdress. There was a second round of salutations comparable to the first, but this time the Ouidi Naba and his group did not appear unless it was an important occasion or important guests were present. When this part of the ceremony was over, the monarch 643 called for his half-saddled horse and announced that he wished to go to 796

Social Status of the Moaga Woman and Work Assigned to Her

562 The Moaga woman is regarded as a veritable beast of burden. Household duties and the weaving of cotton for her own and her husband's clothes are not her only occupations. [183] She helps her husband cultivate the family field, and she has her own plots for peanuts, beans, etc.

She endures wretched treatment and must always submit to her husband's whims. She enjoys no consideration whatever and is never called upon to give an opinion. The husband alone rules the home.

[842] If she is so unfortunate as to have no children, she is regarded with scorn. She carries the loads when a move is in progress. A [483] basket and a pyramid of gourds containing her effects and those of her husband are balanced on her head, while the husband canters beside her on a horse or takes his ease on a donkey. If he is afoot, he carries only his quiver, his arrows, his bow, and a club.

To be sure, the Moaga woman may express in unpleasant words her resentment of the maltreatment to which she is subjected, because the Mossi admit that she has no weapon other than her tongue. This is what is meant by the saying, "A woman's mouth is her quiver."

Conjugal Life

834 Interdictions and permissible acts. The couple is forbidden to have sexual relations at the following times.

1. For a period of not less than two years and a half after the 834 birth of a child to safeguard the baby's life. Indeed, it is believed 853 that each child comes into the world with its own supply of milk, and if another child were to be conceived during the nursing period, [184] the first would die because the milk of the newborn child would be fatal to him.

2. During the menstrual period. The reason for this prohibition 834 that the husband's fetishes and charms lose part of their "power" after 841 relations at this time.

3. A pregnant woman visits her husband during the first six or 834 seven months. All relations then cease until some time after the 843 delivery, as indicated above.

593 cases are rare. Less rare are the children who care little for their parents. Nevertheless, old people are usually treated well and with [888] great respect. A son who abandons his old father or mother is held in very poor esteem. A woman prefers to bear daughters who will help her in her daily work, but she hopes for one or two sons with whom she may live when she is old.

857 The girls live with their mother. As soon as they can walk, they 883 follow her to the stream and return with a gourd of water on their heads. As they grow, so does the gourd, and little girls carry water [482 312] jars weighing from fifteen to twenty kilograms. At home, young girls mill grain to feed the whole family, tend the fire, stir the sauce, wash the dishes and the clothes, sweep, in short, attend to all the household tasks under their mother's guidance. The only task of a woman with two or three half-grown daughters is to supervise their work. Because they are always with their mother, the young girls are usually more responsible and better behaved than the boys. Unfortunately they make up for this later, and more often than not, it is on their own initiative that they go at night to the young men's huts. A young man may give presents to a girl who has already been promised in marriage, and he may do so in front of her mother, who says nothing.

857 Boys help their father as soon as they are strong enough. Younger 883 boys follow their older brothers into the bush as soon as they can and 231 help them herd the sheep and goats. These boys go out every morning before the sun has dried the dew, to look for new termite nests full of insects which the chicks are fond of eating. During the dry season, they cut down and plait grass to cover the roofs; if they are old enough, they even cut the firewood. When a little older, if their father or the person with whom they live owns a horse, they watch over it, take it to the stream to water it and to wash it, go into the bush to cut grass for it, and clean the stables. During the winter when the grass is green, each of the horses of a rich naba is cared for by three or four children. Some of them cut the grass, others /37/ stuff it almost by force into the horse's mouth, while one little boy drives the flies away with a stick to which a sort of flexible leather sole is attached. The winter season is a fine time for horses, who grow fat and heavy. Unfortunately, the Black does not think of the future and does not foresee how much dry grass will be needed to bridge the dry season; as a result, the horses suffer a great deal from hunger at that time.

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Above: Water Carriers.
Below: Youths Returning from the Bush with Bundles of Straw.

Above: Threshing Millet.
Below: Winnowing Millet. Millet Granaries in the Background.

221 After a few hours when the millet has been sufficiently threshed,
241 the emptied and broken husks are swept to the side. The grain is
476 gathered in a heap, and a strong fellow tosses it into the air with a
788 wooden shovel to separate the chaff from the good grain, which is put in a heap. When all the grain has thus been winnowed, it is surrounded with a ring of ashes to protect it against evil spirits. Then one of the threshers, who is not a member of the family, puts some millet in a gourd and sprinkles it with water. He proceeds to throw it by the handful onto the millet pile, saying: "So-and-So fears rain," mentioning the name of the owner of the harvest and the name of every member of his family. He ends by saying: "When we are finished weeding, let the drought come. When we are finished planting, let the heavy rains come." If the owner of a horse is present, he receives a gourd of millet for his mount. Each of the elders also takes some for his chicken. If this ceremony is not carried out, the millet may not be used as seed the following year.

221 /49/ The women come with their baskets; a man takes one of the
251 brooms and sinks it into the millet heap in various places; then the
[482] men fill the baskets and help the women place them on their heads. At the house the millet is unloaded into granaries made of clay mixed with finely cut straw. These granaries have the shape of large jars 1.50 meters high; they usually rest on large stones, and they are
[343] smoked out beforehand to get rid of termites. They are closed with a lid of the same material and covered with a small thatch roof as a protection against rain, for they usually stand in the open air in the inner courtyard. Millet beer is brought and drunk on the spot while the millet is being winnowed. Sometimes the festivities end with dancing, and then everyone goes home, to begin again another day. The month of January goes by in this fashion.

221 February, March, and April are vacation months, months for hunting and fishing.

224 Actually no Mossi is a hunter, yet all Mossi are hunters to some
411 degree. Since the French occupation, men armed with very primitive flint guns are sometimes seen on the fringes of the heavy bush which borders the Volta and contains large game. These flint guns are so crude that they frequently burst and wound the man who recklessly
224 loaded it with too much powder. These natives know the bush thoroughly and are very helpful to the adventurers who wish to hunt koba, buffalo, elephant, leopard, or even lion, although the latter is to the

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Above: Inside a Soukala. Above: The Occupants of a Soukala.
Middle: Load-bearers. Middle: Weaver.
Below: Marketplace.

439 from the south, bracelets, and fabric strips, and they import salt and hoes. Often they take only money with them and return with salt bars which sell on the market for one to one and a half, sometimes even two francs, a kilogram. Around Fada N'Gourma (Binge /sic/ to the natives), Say, and Niamey, Karite butter, locust bean flour, and especially kalro pellets are exported, while onions, garlic, and sometimes horses are imported. There is no trade with Dahomey.

484 The natives travel in short stages of 20, 25, or at most 30 kilometers a day. They set out at dawn or whenever the moon sheds sufficient light and stop when the sun becomes too hot. They set out again when the sun dips on the horizon and stop in time to prepare a meal if their wives accompany them, which is rare, or to buy something to eat if they are alone. They spend the night with a friend if [574] they /63/ have one in the locality and lengthen or shorten their day's march if they expect to find an acquaintance in a certain village. The livestock feed as they walk, and donkeys carry the exchange goods and especially the kola nuts on the way back.

482 Nearly all travellers bear part of their load on their head. Since we have come to mention this, let us again quote Delafosse: "Portage has been much slandered in France these past few years. It has been cited as a barbarous custom, a form of slavery which we had supposedly introduced in Africa and imposed on the unfortunate Negroes. This merely proves that the French people like to discuss things of which they know little. The very first geographers and travellers who spoke of the Sudanic Negroes—Herodotus among the Greeks, El Bekri among the Arabs—said that beyond the Sahara, where horses and camels cannot stand the climate, the natives themselves carried burdens on their heads over very long distances." (6) These remarks

6. Delafosse, Le peuple Siéna/ The Siena People/, p. 53.

are strictly true. Abuses on our part lie in forcing the pace and making the natives run with their loads in the hot sun or in exceeding the regulation weight. If reasonable limits are observed, the Blacks accustomed from infancy to the bearing of heavy burdens on their heads—in their country, everything is carried in this fashion—are no more to be pitied than our soldiers burdened on long marches with

482 their pack, their full cartridge pouches, and their gun. This is proved by the fact that it is very easy to find volunteer porters nowadays who [465] agree to carry a box weighing 25 or 30 kilograms for 200 or 400 kilometers, or even farther, for half a franc a day.

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249 It is gathered when the winter season is over. The upper tip is cut
415 horizontally to create an opening, and water is poured inside to rot the fibrous inner part. When this is accomplished, the calabash is filled with pebbles and shaken until the torn fibers are removed. Once this has been done, the binga is ready to use. When they go
[482] on a trip, the Mossi carry it suspended from the shoulder as a drinking gourd, like all Blacks of West Africa. /483/ They use a cork of green leaves to prevent the water from escaping.

3. The green gourds properly so called (kamboudou in Mossi) which are made to grow on the roofs. The Mossi do not eat them any more than they eat the two previous species. They cut them in two and fashion them into small household calabashes.

249 Calabashes are not cultivated as a food crop, therefore, but as a crop ranking with karnyanga, cotton, tobacco, hemp, indigo, etc.

244 The Mossi also grow a kind of large cucumber, yorolé. The Gourounsi call it gango and the Bambara dié.

At the beginning of the winter season, yorolé are planted around the soukala where the household refuse is discarded. Yorolé are planted by the women. Weeds, when they come out, are cleared with the ouaka. The yorolé are harvested immediately
[252] after the millet and stored in the huts. They are cooked in water and eaten as they are, without seasoning or salt.

As for niri (the Mossi word) or yergan (the Nounouma word), it is a small gourd the size of an orange, green or yellowish green, that grows in the fields along the ground. The yergan are gathered when they are ripe, placed in a hole in the ground where they are left to rot, and then washed. Then the seeds are removed and used
[252] in the sauce, or else they are eaten roasted and seasoned with salt. One does not eat the yergan themselves, therefore, but only their seeds.

The Mossi grow them in the south, at Nobéré and Rakaye. The yergan are sown at the same time as millet, around the soukala, in the fields of maize and large red millet. They are gathered during the first half of October.

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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and districts were present to honor him. This being completed, the *griots* are paid, everyone rises and shouts *Ne Wardo* (the salutation at funerals), and that part of the funeral ceremony during which a man takes leave of the market community is concluded. Now his relatives, descendants and friends all return to the market, whose sights and sounds make it an integral part of the life cycle of the Mossi—the one institution of their society in which almost everyone participates actively.

Preparation for a market day, especially the tri-weekly Friday market or *Raga kasanga,* usually begins on Thursday. This day is characterized by a great deal of activity: preparing the commodities which are to be sold the next day, washing body and clothes, and combing hair. The women who prepare the beer and fried foods work late into the night preparing their wares, and a visit to the homes of the *griots* finds them preparing their drums. The little boys who go to the roadside to chant Moslem prayers to the passers-by, and the little girls who sell water to these strangers redouble their efforts until late on Thursday night to get enough money to buy presents in the market the next day. Finally, when it is quite late and the beer-making fires are out, everyone retires until the morning of the market.

At 7:00 A.M. on Friday the market is deserted except for a leper who sweeps out the stalls of the sellers in return for bits of food or presents of money. Looking at the empty stalls, one has a certain amount of difficulty imagining that this spot will be crowded with human beings five hours hence. But one is also conscious of the fact that even at this early hour scores of persons have already left their homes in distant villages and are on their way to market loaded with produce and with high hopes for the day. About 9:00 A.M. the first women arrive, balancing net-covered bundles on their heads, and take their positions in the various sections of the market with either face or back pointing to the direction from which they came. By 9:30 A.M. the butchers have arrived with their bleating sheep and goats and an aged cow. The first beer sellers have also arrived and are giving "sips" to men before they settle down to sustained drinking.

The pace of the market quickens about 10:30, and in the distance the first tap of the Bindere's drum resounds. All of a sudden, the market seems to have become a giant magnet, drawing long lines of people towards it along every path and from every direction. Women dressed in brightly colored print cloths and dresses, with babies straddling their backs and the inevitable bundles on their head, saunter into their places. Young children run ahead of their mothers or stumble behind them. Those vendors of European products who customarily transport their goods in boxes on bicycles arrive in the

241 Baningha (large white millet or sorghum).

These two types are grown for food, [247] although the large white millet is especially reserved for horses in well-to-do households.

[262 273] Kazinga (large red millet). As a food the poorer Mossi prefer this to the baningha, but it is more especially grown for the making of dam, millet beer.

[556] Mouf (rice) is sought only by the chiefs, notables, and a few families of dakangba (well-to-do men).

Benga (beans).

Souma (peas of either the small green variety or large white or red ones).

Niouyan (from niouri, "yam"), grown only in certain areas.

Nangouri or sounkama (peanuts).

Pèsça (fabirama) [a tuber plant].

Sinni or sili (sesame), grown only by a few people who like it.

Bito (sorrel), used in preparing the sauce served with sagbo.

Mana (gombo [okra]) is also cultivated.

Aside from its food crops, each family has its own plot for cotton (lamdo) which provides for the clothing needed during the year.

311 178 I am told that fields are much more extensive today than in former times, in spite of the abolition of slavery. This is explained by the fact that many areas supposed to be haunted were formerly left uncultivated. It is said, however, that the Moaga used to grow larger crops since in those days he was closer to the soil.

[248] At the present time there is a lack of farm hands. As [857] recently as twenty years ago, the young Moaga followed his parents to the field as soon as he was six or seven years old. He took a liking to the work at a very young age. Before the French [484] occupation, the Moaga rarely left his village because of the dangers on the roads, frequented in those days by bandits (usually descend- [579] ants of naba). People were even afraid to go into the bush alone, for fear of being attacked, captured, and reduced to slavery.

433 178 There was little contact even between adjoining villages. At Ouagadougou, no one ventured from section to section unless he had very good reason and was armed to the teeth. In short, everyone

326 iron bar on an iron stump planted in the ground or on a stone. Copper
306 and zinc are smelted in small clay crucibles, the size of which varies with the desired thickness of the bracelet. The bracelet is first made in wax and coated with well-kneaded clayey earth which acquires the same shape. The wax is then removed with boiling water, and copper is poured into the clay mold. With a crude file the jewelry-maker removes the dross which clings to the metal, polishes the bracelet, and carves designs into it. The most skillful among them make attractive twisted ornaments of iron and red and yellow copper. One Ouagadougou Christian, deft at modeling wax, makes all sorts of objects, such as napkin rings, paper weights, inkwells, figurines, etc., which are not lacking in style.

The Mossi have always travelled a little, and they used to go quite
484 regularly to Timbuktu; now, thanks to the French peace, journeys have become increasingly frequent. The European settlers in Tenkodogo, Ouagadougou, Léo, and Koudougou hire the Mossi as house boys and
[464] take them to Ségou, sometimes to Kayes, and even to Saint-Louis. These boys, when they return, fill their friends with wonder and arouse their desire to take such great journeys also.

484 The recruitment of Black troops has also fostered this desire to see
464 new lands. Many natives have made the trip to Bandiagara to enlist as riflemen; others went to Kati, and when they found that no further enlistments were being made there, they went on to Saint-Louis.

During the dry season the Mossi are more often lured away by trading
484 ventures. In October and November many young men who have managed to secure a sheep or two or a few goats and the wealthier natives who own cattle organize caravans in the hope of selling their livestock at a profit in faraway markets. In former times the Yarsé and Haoussa had a monopoly on trade. Nowadays the Mossi compete
[651 with them, for they must find money to pay taxes to the Whites, the
648] famous five-franc piece. /60/ Besides, now the roads are safe. Highway robbers are no longer to be feared, and one no longer has to pay tolls every time he enters the territory of a new chief. From this point of view, and from it alone, the French peace is valued by the natives, although they find it onerous to pay taxes, to build roads and bridges, and to pay customs duties on leaving and re-entering French territory. Is a man ever pleased when something is required of him, even for his greatest good?

491 Now only the watercourses present some difficulty when they are full. The Administration, which does all it can to facilitate trade,

491 builds bridges, but as they are made exclusively with materials found in the country, forked sticks and beams covered with pounded earth, the first swelling of the water carries the whole structure away, and after a heavy rain one must wait for the waters to subside and resort to ferrymen who justifiably charge for their work.

481 The ferrymen proceed as follows. The person who wishes to cross holds on to a thick beam, a gourd, or a simple clay jar, which holds 484 him out of the water; sometimes two large sticks under his arms serve 501 as a life belt. In a few places rafts are available, made of sticks connected with séko and covered with dry grass. The ferryman swims next to him and prevents him from being carried too far by the current. At certain favored fords near the French posts, ferryboats are available. 484 Livestock swim across, and the ferryman holds their muzzles out of the water to prevent them from drowning. These crossings take a long time and add up to considerable expense, and animals are often carried away by the current or snatched by crocodiles. Woe to the man who dispenses with ferrymen, if he is not familiar with the bottom of the river and the strength of the current! He often drowns, and those whose aid he scorned do nothing to help him. On the other hand, if the caravans postpone their departure for too long, the rivers will be dry, the grass burned off, and the animals will die of hunger or thirst, or they will arrive at the markets exhausted and lean and will sell poorly.

These journeys thus entail a number of hazards; in addition, although imported goods sell high, living expenses run equally high, and if a profit is to be made, one cannot grow fat along the way. He will make up for it when he returns to the village.

442 The need for middlemen brings other hazards. Lt. Marc, who was well qualified to discuss the subject because he was twice in command of the Léo Post, described the situation as follows: "The livestock upon arrival is bought by interpreter-brokers, middlemen between the butchers and the meat merchants, to whom the caravaneers are practically forced to resort. These men buy all the kola nuts brought by the forest natives and control the market prices... These interpreter-brokers apparently speculate on livestock in a most curious way. They have scouts who go out to meet the caravans, sometimes two days' march to the north. /61/ These scouts attempt to alarm the cattle owners with tendentious remarks, until they are willing to cede their herds at a low price. Sometimes, at the height of the business season, in January and February, livestock prices may fluctuate by one

442 hundred percent within a few weeks. The Mandé-Dioula vie in eloquence, the Yarsé and Mossi in politeness, the Haoussa in friendliness. In fact, with exclusively native methods, this is a trading center in embryo, a veritable stock exchange." (4)

4. Marc, Au pays des Mossi /In Mossi Country/, p. 173.

484 The traders travel in all directions. The roads most commonly
487 followed are those which run from Ouagadougou south to the Gold Coast, to Gambaga, Daboya, Salaga, Kintampo, Sékondi; from Léo through Oua and Salaga; and from Tenkodogo through Bitou to rejoin the Gambaga road. Contact also occurs, though less frequently, with German Togoland and the markets of Sansané-Mango and even Lomé on the coast.

439 These two British and German colonies are supplied with livestock and native fabrics by the Mossi. They completely lack butcher's meat, for the tsetse fly does not permit cattle to survive within the confines of the rain forest. Imported fabrics do not withstand a few washings, so the native fabric strips, although less bright in color, are preferred by the Gourounsi and forest dwellers. They formerly wore only a sheep or goat skin, but they have taken to clothes since the arrival of the Europeans. Their scant clothing does not embarrass them when they are among themselves, but they are ashamed when Europeans see them. The Mossi bring back from their journeys the kola nuts which are the basis of their import trade, but they also bring copper, European goods of all sorts, fabrics usually of inferior quality, matches, perfumes, pearls, sugar, and basins of all shapes and kinds. Trade is very active in the coastal areas, and Lt. Marc writes on the subject as follows: "The Gold Coast administration, which commands a network of posts denser than ours, recorded in 1904 and 1905 about 16,000 beeves and 75,000 sheep or goats coming from Mossi country. Considering that the Mossi also supply in part the Togoland markets and the Boudoukou market, their annual export may be estimated at a minimum of 20,000 beeves and 100,000 sheep. Their kola nut imports amount to at least 500 tons." (5)

5. Marc, op. cit., p. 178.

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482 Nearly all travellers bear part of their load on their head. Since we have come to mention this, let us again quote Delafosse: "Portage has been much slandered in France these past few years. It has been cited as a barbarous custom, a form of slavery which we had supposedly introduced in Africa and imposed on the unfortunate Negroes. This merely proves that the French people like to discuss things of which they know little. The very first geographers and travellers who spoke of the Sudanic Negroes—Herodotus among the Greeks, El Bekri among the Arabs—said that beyond the Sahara, where horses and camels cannot stand the climate, the natives themselves carried burdens on their heads over very long distances." (6) These remarks

6. Delafosse, Le peuple Siéna/ The Siena People/, p. 53.

are strictly true. Abuses on our part lie in forcing the pace and making the natives run with their loads in the hot sun or in exceeding the regulation weight. If reasonable limits are observed, the Blacks accustomed from infancy to the bearing of heavy burdens on their heads—in their country, everything is carried in this fashion—are no more to be pitied than our soldiers burdened on long marches with

482 their pack, their full cartridge pouches, and their gun. This is proved by the fact that it is very easy to find volunteer porters nowadays who [465] agree to carry a box weighing 25 or 30 kilograms for 200 or 400 kilometers, or even farther, for half a franc a day.

[492] The fabrics are coiled into huge rolls which hang on either side of the ox or donkey, or, when the man carries them himself, they are folded in baskets from one and a half to two meters long, made of [285] bamboo stems slit lengthwise in two. These baskets are semi-cylindrical in shape and are used to carry kola nuts on the way back. A small pillow is attached to the center of the basket, and when the traveller stops to rest, he looks for a thick tree, leans one tip of the basket on the crotch of two branches and the other tip on the bamboo [481] he uses as a staff. He can thus pick up his load effortlessly when the resting period is over.

484 The traveller always returns to his village at night to avoid those prying persons who would rush out to see what he brought back. The goods are carefully put away, and on the following day the man takes up village life as though he had never left it. It is only gradually, at the evening gatherings, that he relates his adventures. At the first subsequent festivity, however, he dons his new, bright clothes and a red tarboosh, sometimes stockings and shoes, and proudly displays them. Those who have tasted /64/ the life of travel and adventure cannot do without it, and they set out again every year. Some of the independent and carefree young men even live all winter on the [178] profits of their distant journey and no longer cultivate the soil. This is shocking to the elders, who do not understand it at all but are aware that something has changed in their country.

600 Some Europeans have attempted to engage in livestock trading like the natives. One enterprising and courageous European settled in Ouahigouya, and another near Mané; a trading house sent one of its representatives to Ouagadougou, and a Syrian settled there. None of them seems to have succeeded. We are not in their confidence and cannot say just why this happened, but would it not be, at least in part, because a European cannot easily adapt himself to the native way of life? The Blacks manage to make a profit because they do not spend much along the way; they subsist on very little and carry part of the goods themselves instead of hiring porters. Also, the natives

439 We must add without further delay, however, that it is not the Mossi who do this trading but the Yarsé we know so /538/ well, and the Haoussa settled in Mossi territory. Mossi trade, therefore, is not really Mossi, or at least it was not in the past. If it has now begun to be to some extent, it is thanks to French settlement in the territory.

439 After conquering Mossi lands (1896), indeed, we levied a tax
651 on the population. This tax, low at first, rose rapidly over the last few years. In 1906 it amounted to 311,000 francs in the Ouagadougou circle itself, for a population of 861,000 inhabitants. In 1907 it rose to 366,000 francs, in 1909 to 555,000 francs, in 1910 to 656,000 francs. Furthermore, beginning in 1908, it was exacted with so much strictness and on such short notice that it was exactly as though its amount had been increased threefold. Under the circumstances, the Mossi were forced to take to trading in order to secure the French money they did not have, since the local
[436] currency is the cowrie and the French administration will not take it. They were forced to go and sell their oxen, even their cows, something the Black will only consent to do when hard pressed and in the direst need. In short, the Mossi now organize small caravans on a village basis. Local young men are sent in groups to Ouanké to
[484] sell cattle, sheep, goats, donkeys, local horses, and cotton strips. They bring back either French currency or kola nuts. When they bring nuts, they go and sell them at Saraféré or Sofara and get salt or 5-franc pieces. In other words, the Mossi are taking to trade, owing to a pressing need.

439 The Mossi, nevertheless, may hardly be regarded as a trader. He has been one for an extremely short time, and he is not much of a trader yet.

To summarize, there is a strong current of exchange trading in Mossi territory from north to south and south to north. There are also important market towns in the territory, or rather large market villages, as we already know. This exchange trading and those important markets, however, are the creation and achievement of the Yarsé and of a small number of Haoussa. The Mossi themselves, in the past, had no part in all this, except /539/ for the fact that the

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The journey takes six months from the time he leaves Ouagadougou to the time he returns. On his way to the Gold Coast he needs no bearers. He merely takes a Peuhl to herd the cattle, and provides him with food and 300 cowries a day, plus 1 franc on arrival per head of cattle herded.

Our trader stays with another Haoussa from Ouagadougou, another trader of course, who is wealthier than he. He does not pay rent, but offers him gifts from time to time in return for his hospitality.

His family lives at Iko in Haoussa territory, and consists of three wives and three children. He goes and sees them every two years.

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We can see that the Haoussa do their trading in grander and more forceful fashion than the Yarsé. They do not hesitate to expatriate themselves in order to carry out their trade, and in this fashion they have actually colonized southern Nigeria, Dahomey, Togoland, the Gold Coast, Mossi country, etc. Once settled there, they carry their trading operations farther than local merchants, and they hardly do anything else. While the Yarsé is an example of cultivator-trader, the Haoussa of Mossi territory is in most cases an example of pure trader who specializes completely in trading. This is why he towers above the whole trading structure of the country. Bent on gain, a speculator in cowries and French currency, more intelligent than the Mossi and Yarsé, he amasses large fortunes.

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In order to be quite thorough on the subject of present and past trading in Mossi territory, it should be added that formerly the slave trade was carried out alongside that in livestock, cotton fabric, kola nut, and salt. The slaves came chiefly from Gourounsi, /541/, Boussansé, and Kipirsi lands. The Djermabé /Zerma?/, especially, sold slaves to the Mossi in very large numbers when they pillaged Gourounsi territory. This trade, like the others, was in the hands of the Yarsé and Haoussa.

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Let us also add a word about the now-abolished eunuch trade. Formerly, the Mossi furnished some to the Haoussa, who forwarded them to Turkey via Egypt. The operated men were Gourounsi sold to the Mossi by the Zaberma and by their chief Baba-Tô. Some Mossi villages specialized in this kind of work. The village of Koubry,

252 This is how their methods of preparation differ. To make to or sarabout, one simply leaves the millet flour to cook in boiling water, stirring occasionally with a piece of wood or a spoon. To make couscous, on the other hand, one takes a canari, fills it with water, sets it to boil on the fire, and then puts the millet into a gourd which is perforated at the bottom and thus makes a sort of strainer. This gourd is placed over the canari where the water is boiling, and covered with a straw dish. The steam emanating from the canari comes through the holes into the gourd, and since the latter is covered the steam remains there a long time. The millet flour is thus cooked by steaming. At the end of a period of time, the gourd is removed and its contents are left to cool and to dry in the sun. Once the millet flour has thus been cooked and dried, it will keep /560/ almost indefinitely. It is eaten either with water or with milk, which is better, or else, if one has some meat, by boiling the latter and pouring the sarabout into the pot.

The Mossi may not be familiar with couscous, but they are familiar with vessala. This method of preparing millet consists of boiling the flour as it is boiled for sarabout. The difference lies in the amount of flour used. When the mush has been cooked it is allowed to cool, and then fresh or curdled milk is bought and mixed in with it. This kind of mush is made only for the purpose of mixing [171] it with milk. The Bambara are familiar with vessala and call it by name of fisan or finsan.

484 252 171 The Mossi, when they are traveling, often cook millet grains which have not been reduced to flour. This is called honandourou-ki ("cooked millet"). The Bambara call it niobalabala, the Foulbe m'baïna-gaouri, the Sarakolé ilé-n'kioro, and all these words have the same meaning. This method of preparing millet is quite unusual, and is resorted to only when the time or means to reduce millet grains to flour are lacking.

[462] 273 Mossi women also make dolo (dama). To do this, they soak the grains of large red millet in water for two days, and then expose them to the sun and crush them. The flour is boiled for two hours, and then strained and boiled in the necessary amount of water for a whole day. This is transferred to another canari and allowed to cool.

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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8. Cf. Marc, p. 156. 9. Cf. Fortes, pp. 258–71. 840
10. Skinner, "The Diffusion of Islam," pp. 659–69.
11. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Soudan*, pp. 585–86.
12. Dim Delobson, p. 205. 13. Crozat, p. 4820.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 4822. 15. *Ibid.*, p. 4835.
16. Binger, I, 452. 17. *Ibid.*, p. 456.
18. *Ibid.*, pp. 452–56.
19. Archives, Document 15G-190 (1897–98). Instructions left to Captain Scal by Destenave, June 1897.

CHAPTER NINE

1. Marc, p. 17.
2. Barth, III, 595. Although it is possible that the Wolof prince Bemoy did hear about the Mossi, he was mistaken about the name of their ruler. Interestingly enough, the title "Ogane" is not too dissimilar from Hogon, the title of head men among the Dogon (Habe or Kado) whom the Mossi had pushed into the hills of Bandiagara. Cf. Bascom, p. 24. [114] [174]
3. Barth, III, 606. 4. Bowdich, p. 180.
5. Dupuis, Appendix CVII. 6. Clapperton, II, 323.
7. Barth, III, 643–49. As cited earlier, Barth states that the Portuguese got reports about the Mossi in the year 1533 "from the wrong side, namely from Benin." This may not have been altogether "the wrong side," however, for Barth gives us data on caravans from Mossi country to Sansane Mango in Togoland that indicate how news about the Mossi might have traveled from the interior to Benin city in Nigeria.
8. Koelle, p. 6. Dixon, who seems to have been one of the few captured Mossi sold to the West, reports: "Mose is west of Gurma, east of Andemtenga, where a different language is spoken. Mose is also two days journey from Butmera, where the same language is spoken; four days from Bulega [Bolga tanga], the language still the same, and confederate with Kambonse, i.e. Asante; two days from Yaongo, with still the same language; six days from Bosanse which is at enmity with Mose and where people bore their lips, and often tie them together with grass, and whose language is different from Mose; four days from Busma also a different language, and in which country there is a very high mountain (Tanga) from which those who ascend never come back again [probably a reference to Plimpikou, the Mossi holy mountain]; three or four weeks from Kambonse, i.e. Asante. Kupeala is four days from Wardyga [Ouagadougou] the Mossi capital, whither the king of Asante often sent presents; and one month from Salak [Salaga], an Asante town, where they bring kola nuts." [131] [101] [197] [484]
9. Marc, p. 30.
10. Great Britain, Parliamentary papers xlvi, 1882.
11. The people of Nobere, Manga, and other districts surrounding Bere have traditions about Krause, who is remembered as the first white-skinned person ever seen in those parts. The color of his skin was attributed to the fact that, "like the fish," he had come out of the sea. [826]
12. Krause, pp. 92 ff. Although there is no evidence to this effect in the literature, it appears certain that Mossi government officials knew of Krause's visit. They treated most travelers in the following manner: "After entering a town the party is given in charge of a man usually termed 'housemaster.' It is his duty to exercise surveillance over the action of the stranger and to report the result to the authorities. . . . The trader conducts his business through his 'housemaster,' who usually makes a handsome gain by acting as middleman (G. E. Ferguson, quoted in Wolfson, p. 199). [574]

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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Barth was "a well-frequented market place of Mosi, and of greater importance than all the other towns of Mosi; the governor's name is Nabere Gager. The inhabitants are celebrated archers." Barth states that by the fifteenth day, or two days later, the caravans usually arrived at Wagadougou, but he tells us in a note that:

> Other people, in going slowly from Kulfela to Woghodogho, spend eight days on the road, sleeping the first night in Pashipanga, the second in Tangay, the third in Zorogo, the next in a place ruled by a man called Mane Bogonje, the fifth in another village called Tangay, and reach Woghodogho on the eighth. (Marc 1909 : 27)[8]

Finally, he reports that another spur of this caravan route ran from Tengkodogo to Sansanne Mangho, in what is now Togoland. This journey took five days.

The second caravan route described by Barth ran from Djibo, the capital of the province of Gilgohi or Jilgodi (about 60 miles south from Montdoro, 55 miles West-Southwest from Aribinda and 35 miles South-Southwest from Tinie) by way of Kaya, to Mane and finally to Wagadougou. A caravan leaving Djibo entered Kelbo, the first village of the territory of Mossi on the eighth day, but according to Barth the "border district in general is regarded as very unsafe." On the fourteenth day the caravan entered Kaya;

> ... an important place where several roads meet. And from Kaya the route went to Wagadougou by way of Boussouma, Mane and Yako. It took a caravan ten days to traverse it.[9]

The third major caravan route that Barth described lay entirely within Mossi country. It ran from Mane to "Yadega" (probably Wahigouya, the capital of the kingdom of Yatenga) by way of Yako, and it took a caravan eight days to travel it. The fourth caravan route lay between Mane and a place called Kong by way of Tema, Yako, La and other places. On the tenth day a caravan reached Kong;

> ... a large place, according to my informant, inhabited by Bambara. It can scarcely be identical with the well-known Kong, if the itinerary be correct; but nevertheless it may be the case.

The first day after the caravan left Kong to return to Mane, it

(8) Barth received fairly accurate information about the caravan routes, and Marc was impressed with his data. Nevertheless, Marc finds it impossible to believe that caravans took two days to travel the twenty-five miles between Tengkodogo and Koupela, and only two more days to travel the ninety odd miles from Koupela to Wagadougou. Barth obviously erred here, but the timetable he gives for those persons "going slowly" from Koupela to Wagadougou appears to be quite correct.

(9) It is highly unlikely that a caravan going to Wagadougou from Kaya would have gone through Mane and Yako unless the caravaneers were interested in tapping the resources of these two western towns before heading straight south to their destination.

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people also assemble sheep of
the Mossi variety, which are very puny. The larger variety of long-haired 175
Macina sheep are seldom exported. Once the livestock has been assembled, 437
the chief of the caravan would also provide himself with cotton bands. 439
This native fabric has often been described; it is commonly used on the [231]
caravan routes to pay for the food of the travellers. (Marc 1909 : 172) [436]

Most of the caravans through Mossi country traveled as much as 175
fifteen or twenty miles a day. They left at the first sign of dawn, 437
traveled steadily until the heat became too intense, and then stopped 484
to rest. They resumed their march when the sun was midway between the zenith and the horizon, and then stopped at some village or stream for the night. This schedule was followed on the next day if the caravan was far from a market center, but in the vicinity of a large market the caravan might remain stationary as many as six days while its merchants traded for more livestock or merchandise. This being 175
the case, it is difficult to gauge how long it took the caravans to make 437
the journey from Salaga in Ghana to Timbuktu. Our best data come 484
from an analysis of Krauss' itinerary. He left Salaga with a caravan 487
on July 7, 1885, heading north through Walwale, and arrived in Bere, 103
a distance of some 250 miles (today's road mileage) towards the end of August. Famine delayed the caravan at Bere for some time, and he [231]
did not complete the 50 miles or so to Wagadougou until September 24. He remained in the Mossi capital until October 26, some thirty-two days, before his caravan headed north again through Tema, Yatenga and Bandiagara. Krauss does not tell us when he reached Douentza, some 400 miles northweast of Wagadougou, or how long he remained there, but on December 7, a few days after he had left Douenzta on the last 200- or 250-mile leg of his voyage to Timbuktu, the Moro Naba ordered him to return to Wagadougou. It is possible that it took Krauss' caravan some thirty-five odd days to make the trip from Wagadougou to Douentza. His return to Wagadougou took him only about thirty days, since he arrived there on January 7, 1886. He apparently had to wait some fifteen days there for a caravan going south, because he did not leave the Mossi capital until January 22, 1886 (Krause 1887–88). Judging from this itinerary, it probably took caravans between five and six months to travel from the forest zones to the desert, a distance of about a thousand miles at the most. This averages about six or seven miles a day, with the normal stops for rest and marketing, instead of the fifteen or twenty miles a day which the average caravan covered when it was on the road.

The caravans did not encounter many dangers or difficulties during 175
their voyage. When the caravaneers had friends along the way they 437
stopped at their friends' homes for the night, and when they camped 484
in uninhabited places men were posted to protect the goods and live-
stock against marauding beasts and thieves.

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territory. This report is substantiated by Barth. Marc adds that the caravaneers had

> . . . a considerable amount of incidental expenses. Ten thousand kolas called for two asses or four porters for whom it was necessary to provide food during close to two months. Formerly there had been a certain number of local exactions to pay each time that the caravans crossed a new country. Now there are taxes on the caravans in the Gold Coast and also in French territory. It is also necessary to pay for ferryman who transports the livestock across the Volta [River]. There are risks, and occasionally cattle, fatigued by the trip, arrive in such bad shape that they are sold more cheaply than they had cost. Finally, the realization of profits is often difficult, the kola market being, in the commercial centers of the Mossi, subject to considerable fluctuations at the time when the caravans return. (Marc 1909 : 174)[7]

Sometimes the caravaneers made extensive use of middlemen and did not realize all the profits. Marc, who was stationed at the customs post at Leo on the Mossi border with the Gold Coast, wrote:

> The livestock is bought upon arrival by interpreter-brokers, middlemen between the butchers and the meat merchants, to whom the caravaneers are practically forced to resort. These men buy all the kola nuts brought by the forest natives, and control the market prices . . . These interpreter-brokers apparently speculate on livestock in a most curious way. They have scouts who go out to meet the caravans, sometimes two days' march to the north. These scouts attempt to alarm the travellers with tendentious remarks, until they are willing to cede their herds at a low price. Some times, at the height of the business season—that is, in January and February—the livestock prices may fluctuate by one hundred per cent within a few weeks. The Mande-Dioula vie in eloquence, the Yarse and Mossi in politeness, the Hausa in friendliness. In reality, there is here, an embryonic trading center, a veritable stock exchange, using extensively indigenous methods. ((Marc 1909 : 173)

According to most reports, all the larger market centers of Mossi country were like this.

Caravan centers, like all the lesser market centers in Mossi country, provided merchants not only with trading opportunities but also with occasions for conviviality after hectic days of travel. At Dakay, south of Wagadougou, livestock traders found musicians, singers, and the most beautiful dancers in the country. And according to Marc, during the whole caravan season the market was abundantly furnished with beer (Marc 1909 : 175). But if the Mossi enjoyed themselves at

(7) Tauxier (1912 : 589) states that each porter was paid 35 francs for the thirty-five days of travels or at the rate of one franc per day. In addition a caravaneer spent about 300 cowries a day on food for each of his bearers.

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443 such individuals to find a market everyday in one neighboring district or another.

Every Mossi market not only has its own schedule but is also part of a cycle of markets in the sense that its main customers can and do regularly attend two other markets on the two nonmarket days without missing their "own" market. Table 30 takes the district market at Nobere as the home market and lists the markets which Nobere's people can attend and the reasons they themselves give for going there.

443 366 438 484 [103]

TABLE 30

Markets near Nobere

		Distance Away	*Reasons for Going*
First Day:			
	Nobere		Home Market
	Manga	12 kilometers	Good Pottery
	Vooko	15 kilometers	Butter and Millet
	Twese	20 kilometers	Millet and Sorghum
	Binde	35 kilometers	Good Pottery and Mats "Very far and people do not go there very often"
Second Day:			
	Basgana	10 kilometers	Good Pottery
	Sakouliga	15 kilometers	"To Have Fun"
	Giba	10 kilometers	"To Have Fun"
Third Day:			
	Nobili	27 kilometers	"Good Millet"
	Pinse	6 kilometers	"Small Market; to have fun"
	Parougre	10 kilometers	"Good Millet and Pottery"

Nobere people scarcely ever go to Manga because the market there conflicts with their own and its one unique product, pottery, can be bought at Basgana on a day when there is no market at Nobere. A person is likely to go do Vooko when he wishes to buy butter and millet at cheaper prices than he can obtain in his own market. But he scarcely visits the Binde market unless he is there visiting a friend or relative. Nobere people think nothing of going to Giba or to Pinse to show off their clothes or to have fun at those markets. If any commodity is cheap there they take advantage of the prices, but in general they believe that they can obtain better and cheaper products at their own market.

[435] [517] [436]

443 438 It is now possible to find a great variety of products at Mossi markets, and the larger the market the more varied its merchandise. Apparently this was not always so. Crozart (1891 : 4848), who visited the country just before it was conquered, reported that in the market at Wagadougou, he found "millet, rice, millet beer, butchered meat, small cutlery, morocco-leather goods, basketwork and jewelry items,

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The migrants bring back all types of goods with them. According 439
to Dufour: "Money as such is not brought back in very large pro- 167
portion because manufactured products of the English colony (Gold Coast) cost less. Consequently, each year there is a great introduction of bicycles, sewing machines, fabrics". (Dufour 1956 : 140). One might add to this list kerosene lamps, zinc buckets, all types of wearing apparel, and all manner of household goods. An inventory of the common trunk of two returning migrants revealed the following merchandise: two kerosene lamps, two bottles of kerosene, two burnoose of black serge trimmed with pink silk, one white burnoose, two blue shirts, two khaki shorts, two tubes of Thermogene (a medicated rub), eight women's headkerchiefs, two Moslem fezes, two hand mirrors, two jars of Vaseline petroleum jelly, two pairs of sandals, one black scarf, packs of camphor balls, and one bottle of perfume. These goods represent the migrant's work over one season, from [464]
October to the following April, in the cacao fields of Ghana. Other migrants return with more, but few return with less. The actual value of these goods has been estimated by Dufour at about one billion francs C.F.A. per year. The custom duties which the migrants pay [648]
amount to more than 150 million francs C.F.A. annually—the sum they actually paid into the treasury of the Haute Volta in 1953 (Rouch 1956 : 139 ff.).

The migrants distribute to their relatives a good part of the goods 43
they bring back, but a large proportion gets into the hands of other [602]
people either through the market or through more direct channels. Here is an example taken from my notes of March 24, 1956: "*Trading in bicycles:* Moussa gave Souliman a cow and an old bicycle for a new bicycle which Souliman had bought for 5,000 francs from a passing migrant. Souliman was trying to sell this same cycle for 6,250 francs, thus trying to make a profit of 1,250 francs just two or three days after he had bought it . . . Souliman slaughtered the cow which he received from Moussa and sold the beef to the local *restaurateur* at an additional profit. Souliman appears to be a sharp individual. He recently bought another bicycle for 5,000 francs from a migrant and resold it for 7,500 francs." This type of trading is not unusual, but the most typical articles resold by migrants in the local markets are lamps, worn shirts, shoes and other articles of clothing.

The growth of migration among Mossi men has led to a new type 485 ●
of commercial activity in the country. This is the selling of cooked 265
food by the women to passing migrants. These women and young [462]
girls prepare food such as chicken, rice, millet balls, millet flour water [262]
and fried cakes which they bring to the principal thoroughfares to sell. Many of them arrive at the central village areas as early as four

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485 o'clock in the morning to sell food to those migrants who have slept
265 under the trees or in the deserted market place and who are going on towards Ghana or to Wagadougou. At about 8:00 or 9:00 A.M. the majority of the food-sellers leave for home, but some of them remain around all day to sell to those migrants who pass by in the few trucks which can travel during the heat of the day. The food sellers then return at about 5:00 P.M. because from this time until about 1:00 A.M. most of the trucks bearing migrants stop for water and to allow
485 their passengers to eat and rest. The amount of money these women
265 gross varies from day to day depending upon the amount of traffic
434 and the time of year. During the off-season from June to October,
221 when most of the migrants are home planting, a woman may make as little as ten francs per day. In contrast, at the beginning of the dry season when the young men are migrating in droves, the women may make as much as 100 francs a day, even though twenty or thirty women line the road at trucking centers. Many women welcome this opportunity to earn money because by so doing they are free to buy in the local markets the things they need.

MARKET

366 The Mossi have always conducted most of their commercial activities
443 in market places even though some extra-market trading continually takes place. These markets were and are still divided into two main
[103] types: (1) those specializing in external trading, such as Pouitenga, Dakay, Kaya, Mane, Yako, La, Beloussa, Tema, Wagadougou; and (2) those specializing in internal commerce such as the markets in the villages and district centers. Of course, there is an overlap between the two types of markets in the sense that some people from the villages go to the larger markets to dispose of their commodities and, in turn, buy goods which they bring back for resale on the local level. Similarly, in former days some caravaneers visited the local markets to buy commodities and in the process disposed of their goods. However, the main pattern is for local commodities to filter into the large market centers through local markets, and for goods from these centers to filter back down to the local markets. The more goods and traders available, the more numerous and successful the markets are.

443 The Mossi do not appear to have any legends about the origin of
173 markets in their country. When asked how and why markets first arose, they say that markets developed simply because people wanted to exchange goods with each other, or because the chiefs wanted markets in their own villages so that their people need not go to
443 other districts. When one asks the Mossi directly, "What is a market?"

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their "evil" and "non-evil" ways. A little later the young men who possess bicycles may be seen suddenly hurrying to avoid the other *nansara*, this time, the French official, who comes into the market to apprehend those individuals who have not bought a bicycle license. All the *nansara* know that the market is the best place to find a Mossi.

Towards 3:00 P.M. the matrons in the market, having sold most of their own goods and bought those which they need, make the last rounds to see whether there are any bargains to be had. In their rounds the women may be badgered by sons, daughters and other relatives, but seldom by husbands, for extra francs to buy kolas or tobacco to bridge them over the two non-market days. Or the women themselves may seek out their male relatives to buy kola or goods, from the stranger who is making the rounds of the local markets. By this time of day the market place is emptying—at first this happens so imperceptibly that one does not notice it. However, by 4:00 P.M. a mass exodus begins as women collect their little children, hitch their babies on their backs, place baskets on their head and set out in the direction of their own villages or to the villages of relatives where they plan to spend time. By this hour also the Bendere are drunk, and for an extra calabash of beer are willing to recount genealogies for which, if sober, they would demand a sheep or goat.

Evening finds the market deserted except for scavenging dogs which hunt the scraps of food dropped by the now departed human beings. The market place finally falls silent, until late at night passing migrants retire there to sleep. These persons leave the market place at dawn to buy food from the women whose hawking cries herald another day of roadside commerce. The women use the profit from this trade to buy goods on the following market days.

[pp. 279–738 not processed]

Binger reports that the Mossi were divided into "a number of confederacies, more or less independent of each other, whose chiefs were vassals of Naba Sanum, the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou." He found, nevertheless, that although the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou claimed suzerainty over the Yatenga, he could not grant travelers permission to enter that territory.[2]

Crozat, who visited the Mossi in 1890, just two years after Binger, was told repeatedly that the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou had the right to control the destinies of all chiefs who claimed descent from Ouedraogo and Oubri. But he, too, found that the principalities were self-governing and mutually independent, and were united only by the weak bond that attached them all to Ouagadougou. Noting the claims of the people he encountered that Ouagadougou was still supreme, Crozat suggests that "time and circumstances have weakened this sovereignty. The ruler of Ouagadougou is regarded by the other chiefs merely as their senior and the head of their family. They seldom obey him, yet they recognize that in certain cases he has the right to give them orders." Like many Frenchmen who came after him, Crozat concludes, "One will be struck, as I have been, by this political organization in which the waning of the central authority has led to a true feudal system closely reminiscent of a certain period in our own history."[3]

Delafosse tells us that "the authority of the emperor [of Ouagadougou] does not seem to have been ignored within his borders except in very rare instances. The vassal kings, who were brothers, sons, or nephews of the emperor, usually obeyed him. In any case, the emperor did not interfere with the administration [of their territories], and required nothing from them except the payment of taxes and the raising of contingents for any expeditions he might have to organize against outside enemies (the emperors of Mali, Gao, or Segou; Moroccan pashas; etc.). In return, the emperor granted his support to those of his vassals who were unable to command the obedience of their subjects or tributaries."[4]

It appears, then, that although the independent rulers and autonomous princes sometimes recognized the supremacy (if not the seniority) of the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou, they were relatively free to rule as they wished. As possessors of the nam, they claimed and exercised the right to administer the peoples of their realms. It appears, furthermore, that the rulers of Ouagadougou seldom challenged the independence of their confreres in Yatenga, although the latter often disturbed them. For example, when Yatenga Naba Kango (ca. 1754–89) sacked and burned the Ouagadougou district of Yako for sheltering refugees from a civil war, the Mogho Naba did not come to the aid of the Yako Naba. Nor did he take offense when this chief, in order to regain his seat, was compelled to switch his

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175 stock against marauding beasts and thieves. All caravaneers had to
437 pay a tax to the local chiefs to cross their borders or to stop in their
486 markets to trade. Binger reported that the caravans which passed
651 through the market center of Wagadougou had to give the Moro
[661] Naba a share of their merchandise, aside from the presents which they gave to him. He also reported that the horse traders from the Yatenga, in the north of Mossi country, and the Hausa caravaneers, were sometimes forced to sell part of their wares to the Moro Naba at one-hundredth the purchase price (Binger 1892 : II, 292–300). Not all the caravaneers submitted to extortion, however, and at one period many of them traded with Mane instead of passing through Wagadougou where the tariffs were too high. On the other hand, the Mossi chiefs did not tolerate any trespassing on their territories by
[685] caravans that did not pay taxes. Those who tried to avoid doing so
365 were subjected to attack by the mounted nobles *(nakomce)* on behalf of the district chiefs. Wise caravan leaders not only paid their taxes but established close relationships with the chiefs in order to receive adequate protection from some nobles who illegally attacked and looted the caravans.

175 It is impossible to know the actual volume of caravan trade which
437 passed through Mossi country, but we can get a fairly good idea of it
439 by examining the customs reports on goods crossing the border between Mossi country and the northern territories of the Gold Coast in the few years just following European conquest.[6] For 1901 and 1903 the official figures were:

TABLE 28A
Mossi Trade (1901–3)

Year	*Horses*	*Cattle*	*Sheep and Goats*	*Loaded Donkeys*	*Bales of Cotton Cloth*
1901	126	3,111	18,181	2,095	236
1903	196	6,624	30,892	4,294	369

Lucien Marc, who had the opportunity to check the volume of this trade for 1904 and 1905, guessed that about 16,000 cattle and 75,000 sheep and goats passed through the customs post in Mossi country. Furthermore, he believed that since

> ... the Mossi also supply in part the markets of Togoland and the market at Bondoukou [Ivory Coast], one can estimate at least an annual export of 20,000 cattle and 100,000 sheep or goats. The import of kola nuts is at least 500 tons. (Marc 1909 : 178)

[113] (6) Great Britain Parliamentary Papers: Cd. 788–27, no. 357, Northern territories of Gold Coast, report of 1901 in Acc. and Papers, vol. LXIV 1902. Cd. 2238–6, no. 429, N.Ts of Gold Coast, report of 1903 in Acc. and Papers, 1904, and 1905, vol. LI.

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175 fitto, levied upon each ass by the petty chiefs on the road is very consider-
437 able. From 5,000 to 6,000 guro, or kola nuts, constitute an assload.
435 Selga, the market place for this important article, being, it appears, a
[651] most miserable town, where even water is very scarce and can only be
[346] purchased at an exorbitant price, the merchants always manage to make their stay here as short as possible, awaiting the proper season in Yendi, a town said to be as large as Timbuktu, or in Kulfela, the great market place of Mosi; and they are especially obliged to wait in case they arrive at the beginning of the rainy season, there being no kola nuts before the latter part of the Kharif. The price of this nut in Timbuktu varies from 20 to
[735] 100 shells each, and it always constitutes a luxury; so that, even on great festivals, alms consisting of this article are distributed by the rich people of the town. (Barth 1859 : II, 364)

175 The other data we have on prices paid for goods come from the
43 period between 1890 and 1910, at which time French francs had been introduced. At this time the official value of one franc was 1,000 cowries. Around 1904, a trader paid about 50 francs or 50,000 cowries for a head of cattle in Mossi country and sold it for about double the price at Salaga. With the proceeds of this transaction he bought kola nuts at the rate of one franc or 100 cowries per hundred. Thus with the sale of one cow a trader could obtain 10,000 kolas, these being valued at about 500 francs or 500,000 cowries in Mossi country and at 20 or 200 cowries each at Sarfere and Timbuktu (Marc 1909 : 173–4). At Timbuktu about this same period, 1895, traders could buy salt at about 30 francs for a slab weighing between 60 and 100 pounds and sell it for 45 francs at Sarafere, for 60 francs at Djenne, for between 70 and 80 francs at San, and "thus progressively more until they reached Mossi country" (Dubois 1899 : 276). In 1910, Mossi traders bought cattle for about 40 to 100 francs, horses for about 90 francs, donkeys for 25 francs, and so on, and sold these animals in Salaga for three times the prices. There they bought kolas at 2 Fr. 50 per thousand, and sold them at 20 per thousand at Leo on the Mossi border, 35 francs per thousand at Wagadougou, 50 francs at Wahigouya, 60 francs at Saravere, and 100 francs per thousand at Timbuktu. Here these traders bought bars of salt weighing about 75 pounds for between 10 and 12 francs a piece, and sold them for between 40 to 60 francs at Wahigouya, and for from 80 to 100 francs a piece at Dedougou and points as far down as Wagadougou (Tauxier 1917 : 221).

175 Not all the profit from this trade went into the pockets of the
437 traders. We have the report of Binger that the chiefs, besides com-
486 mandering the goods at less than one-hundredth their purchase
651 price, received taxes on each caravan which passed through their
territory.

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territory. This report is substantiated by Barth. Marc adds that the caravaneers had

> . . . a considerable amount of incidental expenses. Ten thousand kolas called for two asses or four porters for whom it was necessary to provide food during close to two months. Formerly there had been a certain number of local exactions to pay each time that the caravans crossed a new country. Now there are taxes on the caravans in the Gold Coast and also in French territory. It is also necessary to pay for ferryman who transports the livestock across the Volta [River]. There are risks, and occasionally cattle, fatigued by the trip, arrive in such bad shape that they are sold more cheaply than they had cost. Finally, the realization of profits is often difficult, the kola market being, in the commercial centers of the Mossi, subject to considerable fluctuations at the time when the caravans return. (Marc 1909 : 174)[7]

Sometimes the caravaneers made extensive use of middlemen and did not realize all the profits. Marc, who was stationed at the customs post at Leo on the Mossi border with the Gold Coast, wrote:

> The livestock is bought upon arrival by interpreter-brokers, middlemen between the butchers and the meat merchants, to whom the caravaneers are practically forced to resort. These men buy all the kola nuts brought by the forest natives, and control the market prices . . . These interpreter-brokers apparently speculate on livestock in a most curious way. They have scouts who go out to meet the caravans, sometimes two days' march to the north. These scouts attempt to alarm the travellers with tendentious remarks, until they are willing to cede their herds at a low price. Some times, at the height of the business season—that is in January and February—the livestock prices may fluctuate by one hundred per cent within a few weeks. The Mande-Dioula vie in eloquence, the Yarse and Mossi in politeness, the Hausa in friendliness. In reality, there is here, an embryonic trading center, a veritable stock exchange, using extensively indigenous methods. ((Marc 1909 : 173)

According to most reports, all the larger market centers of Mossi country were like this.

Caravan centers, like all the lesser market centers in Mossi country, provided merchants not only with trading opportunities but also with occasions for conviviality after hectic days of travel. At Dakay south of Wagadougou, livestock traders found musicians, singers, and the most beautiful dancers in the country. And according to Marc, during the whole caravan season the market was abundantly furnished with beer (Marc 1909 : 175). But if the Mossi enjoyed themselves at

(7) Tauxier (1912 : 539) states that each porter was paid 35 francs for the thirty-five days of travels or at the rate of one franc per day. In addition a caravaneer spent about 300 cowries a day on food for each of his bearers.

442 hundred percent within a few weeks. The Mandé-Dioula vie in eloquence, the Yarsé and Mossi in politeness, the Haoussa in friendliness. In fact, with exclusively native methods, this is a trading center in embryo, a veritable stock exchange." (4)

4. Marc, Au pays des Mossi /In Mossi Country/, p. 173.

484 487 The traders travel in all directions. The roads most commonly followed are those which run from Ouagadougou south to the Gold Coast, to Gambaga, Daboya, Salaga, Kintampo, Sékondi; from Léo through Oua and Salaga; and from Tenkodogo through Bitou to rejoin the Gambaga road. Contact also occurs, though less frequently, with German Togoland and the markets of Sansané-Mango and even Lomé on the coast.

439 These two British and German colonies are supplied with livestock and native fabrics by the Mossi. They completely lack butcher's meat, for the tsetse fly does not permit cattle to survive within the confines of the rain forest. Imported fabrics do not withstand a few washings, so the native fabric strips, although less bright in color, are preferred by the Gourounsi and forest dwellers. They formerly wore only a sheep or goat skin, but they have taken to clothes since the arrival of the Europeans. Their scant clothing does not embarrass them when they are among themselves, but they are ashamed when Europeans see them. The Mossi bring back from their journeys the kola nuts which are the basis of their import trade, but they also bring copper, European goods of all sorts, fabrics usually of inferior quality, matches, perfumes, pearls, sugar, and basins of all shapes and kinds. Trade is very active in the coastal areas, and Lt. Marc writes on the subject as follows: "The Gold Coast administration, which commands a network of posts denser than ours, recorded in 1904 and 1905 about 16,000 beeves and 75,000 sheep or goats coming from Mossi country. Considering that the Mossi also supply in part the Togoland markets and the Boudoukou market, their annual export may be estimated at a minimum of 20,000 beeves and 100,000 sheep. Their kola nut imports amount to at least 500 tons." (5)

5. Marc, op. cit., p. 178.

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631 because of this delinquency, the Mogho Naba might hesitate to come to
651 the aid of any of his vassals if a general war broke out. It is true that the
643 Mogho Naba did not aid the Yatenga ruler when the French arrived.
114 But whether this was because of his failure to pay taxes, or because the
[648] French conquest of the Yatenga coincided with a civil war there, we shall
[669] probably never know. We do know that many of the Mogho Naba's vassals came to his aid when the French finally arrived at Ouagadougou. It is my opinion that the gifts exchanged between Yatenga and Ouagadougou were not "tributary," but were more in the nature of tokens of friendship between two peers.

643 The Mogho Naba and his provincial ministers also received revenue as
645 a function of their judicial roles. The nature and disposition of the fines
692 levied against legal offenders were discussed in Chapter V. The Mogho
651 Naba's fees came in the form of the traditional gifts the litigants gave him
[431] even before their cases were tried. These gifts were never regarded as bribes, for this would have contradicted the Mossi axiom that "the truth is at Ouagadougou."

643 The Mogho Naba inherited all the property of the Kamsaogho Naba,
651 and claimed all the property of district chiefs who died without close rela-
634 tives. He also received inheritance taxes (fado) from the estates of deceased
768 district chiefs. In collecting the fado, the Mogho Naba first retained the
[428] horse on which the messenger came to announce the chief's death. He reciprocated by sending envoys with cowries and animals to be offered to their common ancestors at the chief's funeral. After the funeral, the envoys claimed the dead chief's quiver of arrows to take to Ouagadougou for deposit with those of other dead chiefs. Then they demanded the fado, and jestingly told the heirs that the Mogho Naba would be satisfied with nothing less than "a thousand of everything" (*tusri bumbu fa*) the deceased had possessed: wives, slaves, horses, cows, goats, chickens, articles of clothing, and so on. The heirs pleaded poverty and jokingly gave the envoys a few old and sickly animals, old chickens, tattered pieces of clothing, etc. Eventually, they handed out the fado, which usually consisted of livestock, clothing, food, weapons, jewelry, cowries, and even slaves. Lastly, they gave the envoys the chief's ceremonial horse and presents for themselves.

643 The Mogho Naba and his ministers collected a considerable amount of
645 revenue from the traders who visited Ouagadougou and the larger market
651 towns and village markets throughout the kingdom.[8] The Mossi (especially
439 the assimilated Yarse) were good traders, and they benefited from their
[487] country's strategic location between the Sahara and the forest regions. According to Barth, some six caravan routes crossed the country, linking

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 643

the Niger River area to the Gold Coast and Togoland. Important stops were made at such Mossi centers as Ouagadougou, Bere, Dakay, La, Mane, Yako, and Koupela.[7] At Dori, northwest of Ouagadougou, Barth found Mossi with "their fine donkeys, which are greatly sought after." He adds that in addition, 645 651 439 [487] [443]

> the people of Mossi supply this market with gabaga, or "tari" [cotton bands], as Arabs near Timbuktu call them, cotton being extremely cheap in their country, so that in the great market places of that country, especially in Kulfela [Koupela, but really at Poitenga a few miles away], an indigo-colored shirt is not worth more than from 700 to 800 [cowry] shells. . . . Besides salt, cotton strips, dyed cloth, kola nuts, corn, and asses, some copper manufactured chiefly into large drinking-vessels is also brought into the market by the people of Mossi. However, I do not think they manufacture the copper vessels themselves, but bring them from Ashanti.[8]

Dubois, one of the early visitors to Timbuktu, tells us that he saw Mossi men carrying on their traditional trade in that city. Mossi traders dealt in such diverse commodities as millet, rice, manioc, peanuts, honey, kola nuts, peppers, dried onions, tobacco, dried fish, soap, iron, antimony, lead, cotton bands, straw hats, mats, jars, pots, and calabashes. They traded these articles for needles, mirrors, beads, coral, amber, tea, coffee, perfumes, carpets, fezzes, tailored robes, and salt. What impressed Dubois most was that while the merchants from Bamako, Djenne, Sansanding, and Touat enjoyed themselves at Timbuktu, "the great town of pleasures with the freest morals in the Sudan," and spent a great deal of money in gifts to beautiful women, "the Mossi did not waste their money, and left as soon as they had finished their business."[9] On the way south, Mossi and other caravaneers picked up goods from the Yatenga and other northern Ouagadougou provinces before stopping at the capital and then proceeding to the forest regions. 175 439

It is impossible to determine the exact volume of caravan trade that passed through Mossi country, and the amount of revenue it brought to the Mossi rulers. We can get some idea of this trade, however, by examining the customs reports on goods crossing the border between Mossi country and the northern territories of the Gold Coast in the few years just following European conquest. 439 [651]

The official figures for 1901 and 1903 are as follows:[10]

Year	Horses	Head of Cattle	Sheep and Goats	Loaded Donkeys	Bales of Cotton Cloth
1901	126	3,111	18,181	2,095	236
1903	196	6,624	30,392	4,294	269

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long been famous. The former are sometimes ridden but are used primarily as beasts of burden. Horses were and are still important for military and ceremonial purposes and for external trade to other areas.

The Mossi have never excelled in metalworking. The people in the northern part of the country have worked indigenous ores since aboriginal times. Those in the south get iron mainly from traders and caravans. The other metals which the Mossi smiths manufacture into tools and ornaments are also obtained from traders.

TRADE IN HISTORICAL TIMES

The geographic position of Mossi country has much to do with its being an important trade and market center. The country itself has always produced grain, cotton and livestock for export. And for several centuries caravans have passed through this region carrying Sudanese and Saharan products to the forest zones to the south, and carrying forest products back to the arid north. The beginning of this trade is lost in the dim past, but it safe to say that it developed shortly after or along with the founding of Timbuktu about 1100 A.D. The Mossi themselves were not definitely linked to this important *entrepot* until they raided it in 1328, but we can assume that they had been trading there for some time before that event took place. Similarly, we have no record of when the Mossi began trading with the forest zones, but we can also assume that this trade began around the same period or even before.

Our first evidence of Mossi trade and commerce comes from Europeans who were themselves interested in conducting their own trading activities with the peoples in the Bend of the Niger. Bowditch, an Englishman who had journeyed to Ashanti to sign a treaty facilitating the reopening of a profitable trade with the coast, wangled the first important piece of information about the Mossi from his reluctant hosts:

> Five journies from Yngwa is Mosee, a more warlike but less visited kingdom: it consists of many states, but the superior monarch is named Billa, and the capital Kookoopella. I place it to the N.W. because its merchants pass by Yngwa; they do not cross the Karhalla [White Volta] nor any river which is not fordable. (Bowditch 1819 : 180)

This information is not strictly correct since Koupela was not the capital of any of the Mossi kingdoms, but Bowditch's informant had probably heard of Koupela because it was the largest political entity near the large caravan center at Pouitenga.

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175 437 Dupuis, who replaced Bowditch in Kumasi in 1817, obtained surprisingly good data on trade relations between the Ashanti and the Mossi, considering the reluctance of the middlemen traders to furnish any help in this matter. He discovered that Ashanti traders

[103] . . . sometimes travel as far as Aughoa, the Magho, and to the east of Kasogho. Aughoa is distant from Coomassie twenty-five journies by the Salgha and Yandy Roads, which would give a distance of three hundred that vegetable substance . . . by the name of Shea butter. (Dupuis 1824 : App. cvii)[1]

The Hausa merchants and caravaneers knew a great deal about the Mossi and their resources, but it was only with great difficulty that Clapperton persuaded Sultan Mohammed Bello of Sokoto to give him the following information:

[101] The country of Mouchier or Mouchi is situated to the west of Ghurma. It is vast and possesses a gold mine, rivers, forests and mountains. It is inhabited by tribes of the Sudan who possess many fast horses, and large donkeys. Their king is called Wagadougou; their asses are sent down to the Gondja to carry the drums of the army. (Clapperton 1829 : 323)

It is obvious that either Clapperton or his informant confused the capital of the Mossi with their king, and included parts of Ghana in [23] their territory. Nevertheless, one does get an indication of the importance of livestock in Mossi trading.

The great bulk of the trade between the Mossi and their neighbors to the north and to the south was done through the medium of 175 caravans which crisscrossed their territory. The first person to signal 437 the existence of these caravans was Barth (1859 : III, 646–648) who, 487 although he did not enter Mossi country during his extensive travels in the Sudan from 1849 to 1855, reported the existence of several caravan routes which traversed the Mossi from the desert to the [103] forest. The first route he described proceeded from "Kirotashi, a town on the east side of the Niger, one day south of Say, to Woghodogho." [366] Ten days out of Kirotashi caravans usually reached Tengkodogo, and on the thirteenth day they arrived at Koupela which according to

(1) The Aughoa referred to here is really "Wagha," the term often used by the Mossi [63] when talking about their capital, Waghadougou. Magho is really "Mogho" the name of Mossi country itself, and Kasoagho is the name of a province of Wagadougou commanded by a minister of the Moro Naba, the Kasoagho Naba. Dupuis' report on the actual distance between Kumasis and Waghadougou is almost the same mileage as that [366] of today. Koelle (1854 : 6) received a report from a slave liberated in Sierra Leone in [648] 1854 that the great Mossi trading center "Kupeala is four days from Wardugu, the Mossi capital, whither the king of Asante often sends presents; and one month from Salak (Salaga), an Asante town, where they bring their cola-nuts."

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Barth was "a well-frequented market place of Mosi, and of greater importance than all the other towns of Mosi; the governor's name is Nabere Gager. The inhabitants are celebrated archers." Barth states that by the fifteenth day, or two days later, the caravans usually arrived at Wagadougou, but he tells us in a note that:

> Other people, in going slowly from Kulfela to Woghodogho, spend eight days on the road, sleeping the first night in Pashipanga, the second in Tangay, the third in Zorogo, the next in a place ruled by a man called Mane Bogonje, the fifth in another village called Tangay, and reach Woghodogho on the eighth. (Marc 1909 : 27)[2]

Finally, he reports that another spur of this caravan route ran from Tengkodogo to Sansanne Mangho, in what is now Togoland. This journey took five days.

The second caravan route described by Barth ran from Djibo, the capital of the province of Gilgohi or Jilgodi (about 60 miles south from Montdoro, 55 miles West-Southwest from Aribinda and 35 miles South-Southwest from Tinie) by way of Kaya, to Mane and finally to Wagadougou. A caravan leaving Djibo entered Kelbo, the first village of the territory of Mossi on the eighth day, but according to Barth the "border district in general is regarded as very unsafe." On the fourteenth day the caravan entered Kaya;

> . . . an important place where several roads meet. And from Kaya the route went to Wagadougou by way of Boussouma, Mane and Yako. It took a caravan ten days to traverse it.[3]

The third major caravan route that Barth described lay entirely within Mossi country. It ran from Mane to "Yadega" (probably Wahigouya, the capital of the kingdom of Yatenga) by way of Yako, and it took a caravan eight days to travel it. The fourth caravan route lay between Mane and a place called Kong by way of Tema, Yako, La and other places. On the tenth day a caravan reached Kong;

> . . . a large place, according to my informant, inhabited by Bambara. It can scarcely be identical with the well-known Kong, if the itinerary be correct; but nevertheless it may be the case.

The first day after the caravan left Kong to return to Mane, it

(2) Barth received fairly accurate information about the caravan routes, and Marc was impressed with his data. Nevertheless, Marc finds it impossible to believe that caravans took two days to travel the twenty-five miles between Tengkodogo and Koupela, and only two more days to travel the ninety odd miles from Koupela to Wagadougou. Barth obviously erred here, but the timetable he gives for those persons "going slowly" from Koupela to Wagadougou appears to be quite correct.

(3) It is highly unlikely that a caravan going to Wagadougou from Kaya would have gone through Mane and Yako unless the caravaneers were interested in tapping the resources of these two western towns before heading straight south to their destination.

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175 stopped at "Fura, a large market place." On the fourth day it stopped
437 at Dullugu (probably present-day Doulougou), and on the fifth day
487 at "Dakay [or Rakay] a place belonging to the territory of Mosi."
103 Finally, on the thirteenth day it arrived at Mane.[4] The last caravan route that Barth reported ran from:

> Kaye to Belussa [Boulsa], and thence to Belanga [Bilanga] ... From Belussa a person on horseback reaches Belanga comfortably the second day, the great station between these two towns being Alitinga, still belonging to Mosi, and an important place, inhabited by Mosi and Hausa traders; but common native travellers generally halt twice between Belanga and Alitinga, in Nyennyega and Koburi [Kouri], and once between Alitinga and Belanga, in a Gurma village called Yamba.

175 The goods which these caravans carried appear to have varied a
437 great deal. Barth met a Mossi caravan at Dori, southeast of Timbuktu,
439 and reported that to this market:

> [231] The people of Mosi bring chiefly their fine donkeys, which are greatly sought after; and a numerous body of people of the Sheikh A'hmedu, of Hamda-Ailahi, had left a few days before with a number of asses which they had brought here. Besides asses, the people of Mosi supply this market
> [435] with gabaga [cotton strips] or tari, as the Arabs near Timbuktu call them,
> [436] cotton being extremely cheap in their country, so that in the great market place of that country, especially in Kulfela [Koupela, but really at Pouitenga a few miles away] an indigo-colored shirt is not worth more than from 700 to 800 [cowry] shells ... Besides salt, cotton strips, dyed cloth, Kola nuts, corn, and asses, some copper manufactured chiefly into large drinking vessels is also brought into the market by the people of Mosi. However, I do not think they manufacture the copper vessels themselves, but bring them from Asanti. (Barth 1859 : III, 203–4)

Adolphe Krause, a German who was actually the first European to enter Mossi country, went through Wagadougou with a load of kola nuts destined for Timbuktu. He joined the caravan at Salaga on July 7, 1885, stopped at the Bere market in Mossi country during August, and then proceeded to their capital where he remained until October 26 before resuming his northward journey (Krause 1887–8).

Felix Dubois, who visited Timbuktu in 1895, gives us some information on the actual products which the Mossi traded there. He reported that the Mossi came to the market organized into caravans of oxen, donkeys and porters, and brought such commodities as livestock, millet, rice, manioc, peanuts, honey, kola nuts, peppers, dried onions, tobacco, dried fish, soap, iron, antimony, lead, cotton bands, straw hats, mats, jars, pots and calabashes. These goods the Mossi

(4) Barth's skill as a reporter is evident here. He is quite correct in disbelieving that the caravans could have reached Kong on the tenth day. Marc. 1909, agrees with Barth.

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
FA28 Mossi FA28

people also assemble sheep of

the Mossi variety, which are very puny. The larger variety of long-haired Macina sheep are seldom exported. Once the livestock has been assembled, the chief of the caravan would also provide himself with cotton bands. This native fabric has often been described; it is commonly used on the caravan routes to pay for the food of the travellers. (Marc 1909 : 172) 175 437 439 [231] [436]

Most of the caravans through Mossi country traveled as much as fifteen or twenty miles a day. They left at the first sign of dawn, traveled steadily until the heat became too intense, and then stopped to rest. They resumed their march when the sun was midway between the zenith and the horizon, and then stopped at some village or stream for the night. This schedule was followed on the next day if the caravan was far from a market center, but in the vicinity of a large market the caravan might remain stationary as many as six days while its merchants traded for more livestock or merchandise. This being the case, it is difficult to gauge how long it took the caravans to make the journey from Salaga in Ghana to Timbuktu. Our best data come from an analysis of Krauss' itinerary. He left Salaga with a caravan on July 7, 1885, heading north through Walwale, and arrived in Bere, a distance of some 250 miles (today's road mileage) towards the end of August. Famine delayed the caravan at Bere for some time, and he did not complete the 50 miles or so to Wagadougou until September 24. He remained in the Mossi capital until October 26, some thirty-two days, before his caravan headed north again through Tema, Yatenga and Bandiagara. Krauss does not tell us when he reached Douentza, some 400 miles northwest of Wagadougou, or how long he remained there, but on December 7, a few days after he had left Douenzta on the last 200- or 250-mile leg of his voyage to Timbuktu, the Moro Naba ordered him to return to Wagadougou. It is possible that it took Krauss' caravan some thirty-five odd days to make the trip from Wagadougou to Douentza. His return to Wagadougou took him only about thirty days, since he arrived there on January 7, 1886. He apparently had to wait some fifteen days there for a caravan going south, because he did not leave the Mossi capital until January 22, 1886 (Krause 1887–88). Judging from this itinerary, it probably took caravans between five and six months to travel from the forest zones to the desert, a distance of about a thousand miles at the most. This averages about six or seven miles a day, with the normal stops for rest and marketing, instead of the fifteen or twenty miles a day which the average caravan covered when it was on the road. 175 437 484 175 437 484 487 103 [231]

The caravans did not encounter many dangers or difficulties during their voyage. When the caravaneers had friends along the way they stopped at their friends' homes for the night, and when they camped in uninhabited places men were posted to protect the goods and live-
stock against marauding beasts and thieves. 175 437 484

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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When one asks the Mossi directly, "What is a market?"
the response to this question is: "A market is a place where people 443
meet to buy and sell. People travel from one market place to another 829
market place, and on the way they stop and see their friends in other villages. In the market one often meets and drinks with one's friends. People also go to distant markets to find things which they do not grow themselves or which cannot be found in their own markets."

Lending support to the Mossi contention that markets are places 443
where one goes to buy and sell is the fact that most important markets 487
in their country are found at the intersections of well-traveled routes. These intersections are often the places where chiefs have their capi- [531]
tals or compounds and this leads to the further idea that there is a connection between chiefs and markets, if only because the power of the chiefs makes markets possible. This does not mean, however, 443
that the market is a purely physical entity which can only exist under 571
the aegis of a chief, or that it is a purely economic institution. First of all, some markets, especially the smaller ones, are moved periodically without too much difficulty. Secondly, and of great importance, is the fact that whenever and wherever there is a large gathering of Mossi there is a "market." Indeed one can say that Mossi seldom come together in large numbers without coming to a market, or without creating one. It appears that the Mossi cannot interact with one [437]
another in any circumstance without also exchanging goods of some kind. For example, when a pagan chief holds the annual festival to [769]
his ancestors, the people who attend form a market in the vicinity of his compound. In those districts where the chiefs have become Chris- [772]
tians and celebrate their birthdays rather than the traditional an- [527]
cestors' rites, the people go to pay them homage and also "make a market." Similarly, whenever there is a funeral of an important chief, [766]
the people from the surrounding villages or even districts bring commodities to his hamlet and hold a market during the ceremony. On [794]
Christmas day, 1955, the people of Manga district "moved their market" about 500 yards to the Catholic Mission grounds where the Christians were celebrating their holiday. And after celebrating the prayers of Ramadan, the Moslems and their pagan townsmen repair to the markets to spend the rest of the day.

Most Mossi markets are inaugurated with religious ceremonies ex- 443
cept those which develop by accretion—that is, by more and more per- 433
sons coming voluntarily to trade. When a chief orders that a market be [557]
created or when a market is moved from one place to another place for any reason, the chief is the person who gives the order for the ceremony to be performed. First of all he speaks to his Raga Naba (market [554]
chief), usually a non-Mossi slave, about the need for the market or the desirability of changing its location. This man then consults a *teng-*

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964

FA28 Mossi FA28

[post-world War II period]

As the politicians grew skillful at the game of metropolitan politics, their power increasingly eclipsed that of their chiefly benefactors 175* and of local French administrators. For example: 631 554

> A local chef de poste summoned the district chiefs to bring their potential 665 draftees for the war in Algeria early in the morning on a specific date to be 634 examined by medical officers. Those chiefs who looked upon any summons with a trepidation born of their past experience with prewar administrators, arrived at the headquarters as early as 5:30 A.M. on the morning in question, bringing their young men with them. Many of these chiefs, whose only [489] means of transportation was their slow-moving ceremonial horse, spent the [492] night en route to be there at dawn. More sophisticated chiefs coming from similar distances left on the same morning and arrived at about 8:00 A.M., the hour when the administrator himself was first seen stirring in his residence. One chief, a war veteran, rode up on his bicycle at about 8:45 A.M. [493] in a most unchiefly manner and became the butt of jokes from the other waiting chiefs. Another district chief, who was an elected representative, did not arrive until about 9:30 A.M., and he was greeted on arrival by the administrator. This man had only about half a mile to travel, and he did so in his car. His colleagues greeted him with a mixture of jokes, feigned awe, and surprise, and some of them addressed him as "Mogho Naba" and "Governor."[29]

Another example of the shift in the balance of power was the relationship that developed between Joseph Conombo and the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou. The Mogho Naba had nominated and supported Conombo as a candidate for deputy to the National Assembly. He was elected, and later became Secretary of the Interior in the Mendès-France Government of 1954. He thus had access to power undreamed of by the Mogho Naba. Being a Moaga as well as a good politician, he never flaunted his authority before his traditional chief; nor did the Mogho Naba try to exercise his traditional powers over him. But their behavior toward each other clearly demonstrated that they were both aware of the shift in power, even though they were both too wise and too polite to make an issue of it. 175* 643 554 648* 646

Other political forces also jeopardized the position of the chiefs. For example, as head of the Union Voltaïque, Conombo had an honored position within a Paris-based African parliamentary group called the Indépendants d'Outre-Mer (IOM). He would have held an even more important position within this group if he had had wider support among the non-Mossi in the Upper Volta. But his power was limited by the presence and competition of the MDV, which, while Mossi-supported, was anti-chief; the Mouvement Populaire de la Révolution Africaine (MPA), an anti-Mossi and anti-RDA party formed in 1954 by Nazi Boni of the Bobo ethnic group and supported by some officials in the administration; and the Parti Démocratique Voltaïque (PDV), a local branch of a now less radical RDA 175* 646 648* 665 554

The Basgha of the Mogho Naba, or the Nights the Emperor M'ba (Rarengma) Sleeps Away from Home

(May my father not arrive before I do.)

769 The basgha. Before making use of his newly harvested crops,
782 the Moaga ikanda (married man, head of a family) is obligated to
796 offer this new produce to his ancestors. Therefore, he has dam (dolo, millet beer) prepared with the large red [153] millet, already sprouted, and cakes made with the millet or the sorghum. He kills chickens and a goat, or a ram, and invites his neighbors and relatives to the feast. He is convinced that the manes of his ancestors share the feast.

The emperor of the Mossi is no exception to this rule. The basgha of the Mogho Naba is celebrated with more pomp, and we shall describe it briefly below.

It should first be noted that there is no particular date set by custom for the basgha, either for the Mogho Naba or for the ordinary Moaga. Everyone celebrates it whenever he can after the harvest.

491 The sotasgo (completion of the road). Before the French came
653 and the administration took over road building, each minister had a road or, more accurately, a broad path which led straight to the king's courtyard and which had to be maintained by the minister. Since everyone is busy in the fields during the winter months, it is easily understandable that the roads are somewhat neglected during that season. When the Mogho Naba decides to put everything to rights with his ancestors, he notifies the Ouidi Naba, his first minister, who sends word to the other ministers that they must clear their soyan (from soré, "path"). The ministers order the inhabitants of their respective sections to do the work, but put off completing the last stretch leading into the courtyard, samandé, [154] until the date for sotasgo is known.

653 Sotasgo takes place on a Saturday.

The Ouidi Naba makes a large pile of several loads of millet (kaguindi) and chooses about forty strong young men to carry it into the court of the king. His colleagues (Larhallé Naba, Gounga

326 iron bar on an iron stump planted in the ground or on a stone. Copper
306 and zinc are smelted in small clay crucibles, the size of which varies with the desired thickness of the bracelet. The bracelet is first made in wax and coated with well-kneaded clayey earth which acquires the same shape. The wax is then removed with boiling water, and copper is poured into the clay mold. With a crude file the jewelry-maker removes the dross which clings to the metal, polishes the bracelet, and carves designs into it. The most skillful among them make attractive twisted ornaments of iron and red and yellow copper. One Ouagadougou Christian, deft at modeling wax, makes all sorts of objects, such as napkin rings, paper weights, inkwells, figurines, etc., which are not lacking in style.

The Mossi have always travelled a little, and they used to go quite
484 regularly to Timbuktu; now, thanks to the French peace, journeys have become increasingly frequent. The European settlers in Tenkodogo, Ouagadougou, Léo, and Koudougou hire the Mossi as house boys and
[464] take them to Ségou, sometimes to Kayes, and even to Saint-Louis. These boys, when return, fill their friends with wonder and arouse their desire to take such great journeys also.

484 The recruitment of Black troops has also fostered this desire to see
464 new lands. Many natives have made the trip to Bandiagara to enlist as riflemen; others went to Kati, and when they found that no further enlistments were being made there, they went on to Saint-Louis.

484 During the dry season the Mossi are more often lured away by trading ventures. In October and November many young men who have managed to secure a sheep or two or a few goats and the wealthier natives who own cattle organize caravans in the hope of selling their livestock at a profit in faraway markets. In former times the Yarsé and Haoussa had a monopoly on trade. Nowadays the Mossi compete
[651] with them, for they must find money to pay taxes to the Whites, the
648 famous five-franc piece. /60/ Besides, now the roads are safe. Highway robbers are no longer to be feared, and one no longer has to pay tolls every time he enters the territory of a new chief. From this point of view, and from it alone, the French peace is valued by the natives, although they find it onerous to pay taxes, to build roads and bridges, and to pay customs duties on leaving and re-entering French territory. Is a man ever pleased when something is required of him, even for his greatest good?

491 Now only the watercourses present some difficulty when they are full. The Administration, which does all it can to facilitate trade,

491 builds bridges, but as they are made exclusively with materials found in the country, forked sticks and beams covered with pounded earth, the first swelling of the water carries the whole structure away, and after a heavy rain one must wait for the waters to subside and resort to ferrymen who justifiably charge for their work.

481 The ferrymen proceed as follows. The person who wishes to cross holds on to a thick beam, a gourd, or a simple clay jar, which holds 484 him out of the water; sometimes two large sticks under his arms serve 501 as a life belt. In a few places rafts are available, made of sticks connected with séko and covered with dry grass. The ferryman swims next to him and prevents him from being carried too far by the current. At certain favored fords near the French posts, ferryboats are available. 484 Livestock swim across, and the ferryman holds their muzzles out of the water to prevent them from drowning. These crossings take a long time and add up to considerable expense, and animals are often carried away by the current or snatched by crocodiles. Woe to the man who dispenses with ferrymen, if he is not familiar with the bottom of the river and the strength of the current! He often drowns, and those whose aid he scorned do nothing to help him. On the other hand, if the caravans postpone their departure for too long, the rivers will be dry, the grass burned off, and the animals will die of hunger or thirst, or they will arrive at the markets exhausted and lean and will sell poorly.

These journeys thus entail a number of hazards; in addition, although imported goods sell high, living expenses run equally high, and if a profit is to be made, one cannot grow fat along the way. He will make up for it when he returns to the village.

442 The need for middlemen brings other hazards. Lt. Marc, who was well qualified to discuss the subject because he was twice in command of the Léo Post, described the situation as follows: "The livestock upon arrival is bought by interpreter-brokers, middlemen between the butchers and the meat merchants, to whom the caravaneers are practically forced to resort. These men buy all the kola nuts brought by the forest natives and control the market prices... These interpreter-brokers apparently speculate on livestock in a most curious way. They have scouts who go out to meet the caravans, sometimes two days' march to the north. /61/ These scouts attempt to alarm the cattle owners with tendentious remarks, until they are willing to cede their herds at a low price. Sometimes, at the height of the business season, in January and February, livestock prices may fluctuate by one

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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[Pre-World War II Period]

economic development should take precedence over everything else in the colonies. The Mossi were to be directly affected by the policies of both Van Vollenhoven and Sarraut. The colony of Haut-Sénégal et Niger was suppressed in March 1919, and replaced by the new colony of Upper Volta, in which the Mossi were the chief ethnic group. Moreover, Ouagadougou was chosen as the administrative center of this new colony.[19]

175* 177 648*

The new Governor of the Upper Volta, Edouard Hesling, who arrived in Ouagadougou in November 1919, sympathized with Van Vollenhoven's views, but was even more interested in economic development. He was determined to transform Ouagadougou from a small town with an indigenous population of about 8,000 and some 76 European soldiers, merchants, and missionaries, into a capital worthy of a colony. Shortly after he arrived, he summoned the Mogho Naba and the traditional ministers and had them recruit some 2,000 salaried and unsalaried men to provide enough mud bricks and wooden beams to complete the construction of eleven administrative buildings before the rainy season began the following May.

[162]

Hesling and his administrators believed that the Upper Volta, a country "with such diverse products and such a dense population, could attain an exceptional level of development by acquiring those economic elements which ensure prosperity."[20] Cotton was one of those elements. They believed that the Upper Volta "can and should export thousands of tons as soon as an easy and economical way of shipping is established."[21] By 1925, Hesling had constructed 6,000 kilometers of roads in the Upper Volta, about one-eighth the entire road network of French West Africa. Travelers in the Upper Volta at this time wrote of "the enforced enthusiasm with which the natives, under M. E. Hesling, have thrown themselves into agricultural labor and in particular into the planting of cotton."[22]

[491] [241] [248]

The administration of the Upper Volta continued to furnish Mossi manpower for the development of the other colonies as well as for the colonial army. In 1922, it was asked to furnish "6,000 workers for the Thies-Kayes railway, renewable every six months; and under the same conditions to furnish 2,000 laborers to build the railways in the Ivory Coast. Similarly, with the consent of the chief administrator of the colony, it was possible to recruit a thousand workers in the regions of Ouagadougou and Bobo-Dioulasso for private business in the Ivory Coast."[23] Londres, who visited the Upper Volta in the late 1920's, reports that Mossi country was known as "a 'reservoir' of manpower."[24] Burthe d'Annelet reports that during this same period, "The Minister of War [took] 45,000 men each year to compensate for the weakness of our metropolitan recruitment, and

175* 177 648* 464

177 their younger sons to become Moslems, and soon abandoned their active
*648 resistance to Islam.

63 Hesling did not permit the Mossi chiefs to revive their traditional religio-
[795] political rituals and ceremonies such as the Tense, but he continued to toler-
[797] ate the Basgha. The French banned the Mossi market chiefs, because they believed (with some justification) that these officials used their offices to procure revenue for the chiefs. The difficulty was that the market chiefs were also responsible for arranging sacrifices to the market deities, which in the absence of such sacrifices would not protect the people from quarrels and violence in the market place. Some chiefs covertly retained their market chiefs; others obeyed the administration and remained anxious over the behavior of their subjects in the market. In general, however, most Mossi chiefs tried to adjust to the religious changes that were taking place, and sought to maintain at least surface amicability with all religious groups. Commenting upon the behavior of the Mogho Naba in this regard,
[643] Dim Delobson states:

> The Mogho Naba, above all, is a believer in animism like all his subjects, and it is hard to understand how he manages to reconcile his fetishism with the complex dogmas of Islam and with the many interdictions of Christianity. However, the Mogho Naba is quite capable of being a Catholic or a Moslem on appropriate occasions, while at the same time respecting the traditions of his ancestors. Thus, when the Christians are celebrating Christmas, the emperor of the Mossi devoutly attends midnight Mass. Nevertheless, he wears his fez [really the bonnet, which is the symbol of his office],
> [292] just as the bishop wears his miter. He likewise embraces Islam for the three Moslem festivals.[47]

+175 Hesling failed in his attempt to develop the Upper Volta as a viable
+648 colony, and many of the chiefs whom he had used as his auxiliaries lost
[631] not only a great deal of power but also a great deal of prestige in the eyes
[558] of their subjects because of the role they had played vis-à-vis the administration. By 1929 the economy of the Upper Volta was in poor condition:
[433] cotton production had declined; taxes (raised from 5,800,000 francs in
[651] 1921 to 18,274,000 francs in 1927 and scheduled to be raised to 26,400,000
● [491] francs in 1930) were unbearable; many of the roads that were too extensive, too little used, and too difficult to maintain had been abandoned; and
[167] more than 46,000 laborers who had worked in the cotton fields and on the roads had fled to the neighboring Gold Coast.[48] The Colonial Minister, Sarraut, ordered that the colony of the Upper Volta be dismembered. He states in his decree of September 1932 that the suppression of the Upper Volta "would permit appreciable savings, and would make the adminis-

644 431 The Mogho Naba spends the rest of the day receiving individuals who have come to see him, accepting poussoum (gifts to the chief) and giving dam, gouré, foutou (garments), etc., and listening to the praises of his courtiers.

Mogho Naba Na Tough'la, "The Mogho Naba Goes to La" (1)

1. A dependent village in the administrative district of Yako, Koudougou Circle.

173 644 [267] Tradition relates that a certain Mogho Naba, Naba Warga, had a favorite, the only one who knew that his preferred food was léla (fruit of the léhinga or wild plum tree). It should be added that ordinarily anything might be chosen as a favorite food, and it should not be supposed that the Mogho Naba eats only the best foods. Obviously he does not lack choice morsels, but he cannot be expected to like everything. One day this woman asked leave to visit her home at La and failed to return. The Magho Naba, tired of waiting and missing his favorite food, had his horse saddled one morning and announced that he wished to go and join his wife. His ministers begged him to stay at home and asked him to put off his departure until the next day... Every morning the preparations for the departure were repeated and always there was the same pleading, up to the time of the ruler's death. His son, [61] who succeeded him, chose to follow his example. The following paragraph describes the manner in which this custom was still practiced only a few years ago.

[492] When the Mogho Naba appears in the morning, one of his horses, partially harnessed, is brought into the courtyard bearing a saddle with silver stirrups, but with the girth unbuckled. After the Mogho Naba has responded to the salutations of his ministers and the whole court and has dealt with some minor matters, he declares that he is going to La. The court officials, especially the Kamsaongo Naba, appear before him and say: "Sire, order them to unsaddle your horse; you shall go tomorrow." The Mogho Naba of course agrees to this, but he retires to his apartments rather

567 now the circle of Tenkodogo constituted a reservoir (figuratively called lambagré, "cotton reserve") from which the warriors and vassals of the emperor brought back hundreds of young slaves. This was because Garango recognized no authority; it was dependent neither on the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou nor on the king of Tenkodogo. Tradition has it that the warriors of the Mossi chiefs were always surprising the people of Garango on market days. The memory of these raids is why, even today the markets at Garango [366] are open only from six in the morning until noon.

The Mossi considered themselves to be free men, and no one, [644] not even naba, had the [85] right to reduce a Moaga subject to slavery. The facial tattoos made it easy to distinguish the Moaga [304] from foreigners.

Since there were few contacts between neighboring villages, 567 it was difficult even for highwaymen to sell young people from near- 674 by areas. This does not mean that there were not, all the same, captives of Mossi origin. Bandits rode, for instance, from Ouagadougou to Boussouma. They always carried large leather [492] sacks tied to their saddles and into them thrust children and women who were taken by surprise while gathering fruit in the bush. Such captives were always sold far from their home villages. Naturally such practices were severely dealt with by the naba. Naba Wobgo drove the canton chief of Bilgotenga, Warongo, from his territory because he enslaved Mossi people. Warongo was forced to take refuge in Yatenga and returned home only after the coming of the French.

567 Some of the slaves brought back from Garango were kept by the emperor, and the rest were distributed among the warriors. Up to that time no one thought of using them for anything but field work and domestic labor.

It was Naba Baongo, the twenty-sixth successor of Oubri, who first thought of selling the slaves. He said: "Id kossi bazas kamba tib boude nan wa saĩ" (literally, "let us sell these slave dogs; perhaps, one day, [86] there will be no more of them"). It is as if the emperor had foreseen the suppression of slavery and the emancipation of the slaves.

Today one seldom encounters former Boussanga slaves. They have no doubt returned to their villages since the arrival of the [304] French. Their descendants (house slaves, dogyiri) now wear the same facial tattoos as the Mossi.

567 them for kola nuts with the Achanti [Ashanti] or for loaves of salt
439 at Timbuktu. Although they were always transported by roundabout routes to prevent them from finding their way back to their homes, still some of them always managed to escape.

492 The naba used the young yemdado as soroné or grooms, and
567 they would often [93] take the young and attractive women (yempoksé) as wives.

641 The sale of free men. Neither the emperor of the Mossi nor
681 his vassals sold their subjects. Individuals who were regarded as dangerous were simply put to death unless they took refuge in a bangaré to avoid being executed, as has been noted above. Some were sent to the emperor to be made into eunuchs.

304 The facial tattoos worn by the Mossi clearly distinguished them
567 from neighboring peoples. However, if by accident or because of
689 need a naba sold a free man and the latter was claimed by his relatives, the chief was required to buy back the slave or to indemnify his family. We have described above how a canton chief was exiled by the emperor for having sold free Mossi.

583 Concealed selling of women and children. In the chapter on marriage customs among the Mossi we shall show that a native
562 Moaga did not demand a bride price because he did not want to feel that
567 he was selling his daughter. There is no doubt that this rule has exceptions. Indeed, we shall show that the failure to pay a debt, a bout of drunkenness, or a favor received might suffice to mortgage the future of a daughter, even though at the time she might be a small child and quite unaware of her fate. In any event, there would be no question of her expressing any opinion, since her wishes are never taken into account. During periods of famine -- which have been
[131] occurring almost [94] regularly for some years -- a small basket of millet is enough to make a father promise his daughter. In the same way, we regret to say, a great many girls are promised in exchange for trifling sums at the time the poll tax is paid.

567 Rights of slaves. Since he is regarded as an inferior being, the yemdaogo (slave) has no well-defined rights. He is required to perform all kinds of domestic work and must give unquestioning obedience to his master and the master's family. Besides his essential duties, however, he is permitted to do some farming for himself, practice some trade, or to raise cattle, with the proceeds constituting

1: Delobsom--153 I-5 (no date) 1933 FA28 Mossi FA28

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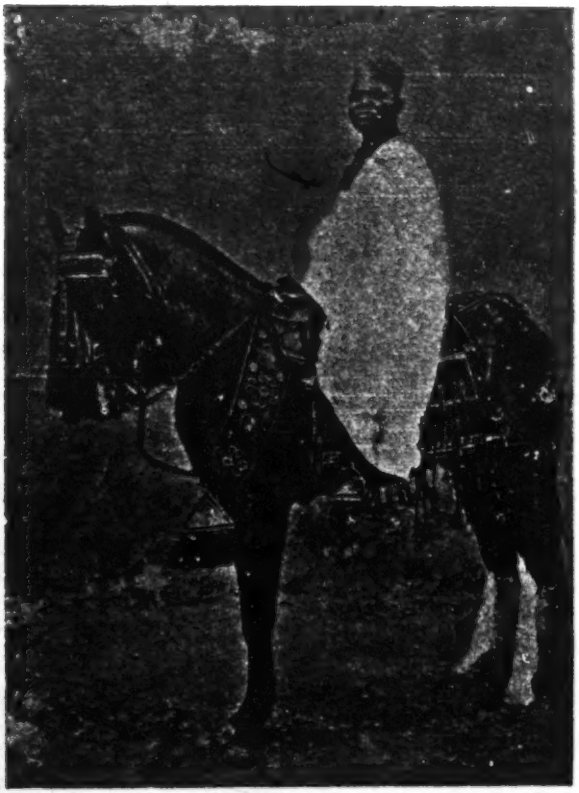

Gounga Naba
Third Minister of the Mogho Naba.

From the Mission of the White Fathers at Ouagadougou.

1: Delobsom--155 I-5 (no date) 1933 FA28 Mossi FA28

The Baloum Naba on horseback among his Courtiers.
From the Mission of the White
Fathers at Ouagadougou.

231 to approach because they are half wild. The donkeys are of medium
[192] size, but strong and stout; they will carry loads of sixty kilograms for days on end, and their help is priceless to those who trade in fabrics, kola nuts, and salt. There are some donkeys in practically every village.

Horses are quite common throughout the country, and every naba of any importance possesses one or several. Two distinct races are to be found. They are described by Binger as follows: "The most common has all the characteristics of the Arab horse without its qualities: slender head, short neck, thin limbs, receding rump, and very long mane and tail. The coats most frequently seen are bay, chestnut, gray, light bay, and roan; the last three always have patches on the forehead. Horses without white stockings are rare. The other race bears no likeness to the Arab horse. The animal is strong and beautiful, with the characteristics of our cavalry horse; it is about 1.57 to 1.62 meters /in height/. The head is slender and well joined, the limbs strong and muscular, the hooves broad with firm horn, the breast wide, and the mane and tail hair short. The most usual coats are various shades of bay and chestnut." (3) /9/ The Mossi, however,

3. Binger, Du Niger au Golfe de Guinée /From the Niger to the Gulf of Guinea/, Vol. 1, p. 485. It seems exaggerated, however, to ascribe 1.57 meters to a Mossi horse. A horse of 1.52 meters /in height/ is a large horse here, and the average hardly exceeds 1.44 meters. For his part, Meniaud (Haut-Sénégal et Niger, Géographie economique II /Upper Senegal and Niger. Economic Geography, Series II, Vol. 2/, p. 106) states that "the horses of Upper Senegal and Niger seem to possess the characteristics of the Aryan and Mongolian races, occasionally modified by the Germanic race." Further on (p. 110) he includes the Mossi horse in the Mongolian race (Dougolawi or Nubian variety).

accustomed no doubt to getting horses in the course of raids, do not

644 The arms of the soroné are ornamented with two, three, or four copper
[301] bracelets, often of alternate yellow and red metal. Sometimes they wear them at the wrists and above the elbow, and occasionally both ankles are adorned with thick bracelets or even with copper gaiters which make walking quite difficult but which are prized very highly.
[201] All these pages wait on the monarch hand and foot. If he coughs, they all rub the palms of their hands together and snap their fingers. This is repeated /18/ even when he drinks, sneezes, or spits. If he rises, the whole court rises, and when he feels those needs common to all mortals, the whole court follows and squats as he does.

644 On important feast days, the naba is followed by music, and every
533 time he makes a gesture, says a word, or takes a step, the musicians
534 play on various kinds of drums. The typical drum peculiar to Mossi country, bindré, which only the members of the drummers' guild are allowed to play, is made of a gourd which may reach 70 or 80 centimeters in diameter. The calabash is emptied, and the side where the stem was attached is removed and replaced with a tightly stretched
533 goat skin. By hitting this skin with his hands, the artist draws many different sounds from his instrument. It is quite an art to play this drum well, and the members of the guild are trained to it from childhood. They are the troubadours, the griot of the country; they sing the praises of chiefs whose genealogies they know by heart, they frequent the markets, they follow the rich and proclaim them to be the bravest, the most generous, the most handsome men this world has ever known, for the sake of a few gifts. They attend all festivities.

534 Another instrument is the lounga, made of a hollowed piece of wood shaped like an hourglass; the two ends are rather broad and joined by a narrow cylinder. This drum is carried under the arm, and its two openings are closed with goat skins joined by cords. The artist stretches these cords more or less tightly by clasping the drum between his arm and the left side of his body, while he hits one of the skins with a small curved stick ending in a little ball and held in his right hand.

The naba's orchestra also includes flutes, from which the natives, especially the Peul, draw pretty but monotonous sounds, and small one-string violins which give forth pleasing tones under a skillful bow.

644 If the Moro Naba is to ride on horseback, the grooms bring his
492 mount magnificently decked out in a copper headstall and a large embroidered rug which covers its back and rump completely. A piece of embroidered cloth hides the horse's chest, and the Arab-type saddle,

644 with its tall copper stirrups, bears on either side a larger copper tray.
[492] The drums are played when the naba leaves his dwelling, shift to a different tune when he places his foot in the stirrup, and shift once more when he sets out on his way. The whole population over a radius of several kilometers is thus apprised of the Moro Naba's every gesture. A page precedes him bearing his pillow, and another carrying his scepter. The ministers present at the court and the foreign chiefs present at the capital hasten to mount their horses. Several of the Moro Naba's bodyguards accompany him: four strapping fellows walk by his side, their arms leaning against the horse's rump as though to prevent the monarch from falling, while horsemen armed with spears do a fantasia, running 100 meters ahead of the naba, brandishing their spears, returning at full gallop, and setting off again. This constant coming and going entertains the naba who does not gallop.

631 /19/ Every province and canton chief has his court, his ministers,
644 his pages, his drummers. Eunuchs, however, are solely the prerogative of the Moro Naba. In order to qualify for pages, pillow, and spurs, a chief must be invested properly. The present naba of Koupéla who failed to follow the traditions possesses none of these privileges.

The investiture of nabas follows a complex tradition. Each naba invests his own vassals in office. The Moro Naba invests the province chiefs, except for those who hold the title dimma; the province chiefs invest the canton chiefs, and the latter invest the chiefs of villages within their jurisdiction. The right of nomination is an important source of revenue for the nabas.

622 Upon the death of a village chief, several candidates vie for power.
431 They all go to the naba who rules over them, to greet him and to offer him numerous gifts, cowries, chickens, sheep, and, if they are sufficiently wealthy, salt bars, a horse, sometimes even a wife. The one who gives the most has the best chance of being chosen, and the naba decides to announce his choice only when he feels that the candidates are running out of gifts.

622 In Koupéla, a village chief under the direct jurisdiction of the province chief is nominated in the following way. The candidates must apply to the minister who has control over their village. He is the indispensable intermediary between them and the naba who is to make the choice, he is their guide, their sor'soba. When the nomination draws near, the minister goes at night to see the naba, and together they agree on the choice to be made. They may appoint

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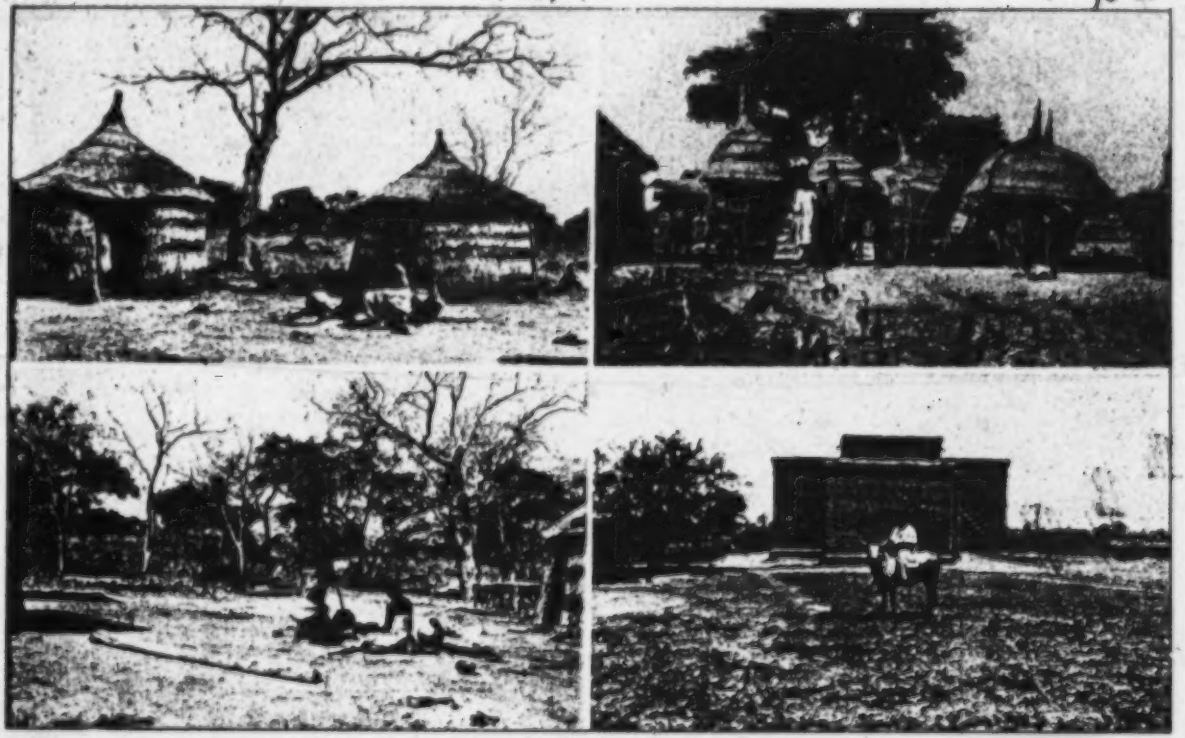

Above: Cooking Sarabo.
Below: Outdoor Kitchen.

Above: Millet Granaries.
Below: Riding an Ox.

482 their pack, their full cartridge pouches, and their gun. This is proved by the fact that it is very easy to find volunteer porters nowadays who [465] agree to carry a box weighing 25 or 30 kilograms for 200 or 400 kilometers, or even farther, for half a franc a day.

[482] The fabrics are coiled into huge rolls which hang on either side of the ox or donkey, or, when the man carries them himself, they are folded in baskets from one and a half to two meters long, made of [285] bamboo stems slit lengthwise in two. These baskets are semi-cylindrical in shape and are used to carry kola nuts on the way back. A small pillow is attached to the center of the basket, and when the traveller stops to rest, he looks for a thick tree, leans one tip of the basket on the crotch of two branches and the other tip on the bamboo [481] he uses as a staff. He can thus pick up his load effortlessly when the resting period is over.

484 The traveller always returns to his village at night to avoid those prying persons who would rush out to see what he brought back. The goods are carefully put away, and on the following day the man takes up village life as though he had never left it. It is only gradually, at the evening gatherings, that he relates his adventures. At the first subsequent festivity, however, he dons his new, bright clothes and a red tarboosh, sometimes stockings and shoes, and proudly displays them. Those who have tasted /64/ the life of travel and adventure cannot do without it, and they set out again every year. Some of the independent and carefree young men even live all winter on the [178] profits of their distant journey and no longer cultivate the soil. This is shocking to the elders, who do not understand it at all but are aware that something has changed in their country.

600 Some Europeans have attempted to engage in livestock trading like the natives. One enterprising and courageous European settled in Ouahigouya, and another near Mané; a trading house sent one of its representatives to Ouagadougou, and a Syrian settled there. None of them seems to have succeeded. We are not in their confidence and cannot say just why this happened, but would it not be, at least in part, because a European cannot easily adapt himself to the native way of life? The Blacks manage to make a profit because they do not spend much along the way; they subsist on very little and carry part of the goods themselves instead of hiring porters. Also, the natives

231 Donkeys are relatively numerous in Mossi territory. They are light grey in color, with a handsome black strip on the withers which extends down the right and left sides. The Mossi are very fond of [492] riding them. They do this, incidentally, all the way back, sitting on the donkey's rump, and it is a rather comical sight. They are beginning to use their donkeys in trading. Formerly they did not do this, since they did not engage in trading.

[435] The average price of a donkey is 25 francs.

Mule breeding is unknown among the Mossi. It is practiced in [532 439] Sokoto lands among the Haoussa, who sometimes bring mules into /Mossi/ territory.

As for horses, the Mossi have three races.

1. In the northeast there is a horse of rather large stature, from 1.50 to 1.60 meters in height, elegant, with delicate joints and lines recalling the true Arab horse. These horses, ridden too early and too recklessly by the natives, are soon worn out.

2. The southern horse, which is to be found in the southern part of the Ouagadougou circle and in the Tenkodogo residency. It is small in stature, thin, rather stocky. Better adapted to /491/ the Sudanese climate than the large northern horse, it possesses greater strength and endurance.

3. The Mossi horse proper, which seems to derive from a cross between the northern and southern races. It is small in stature, but strong-backed, vigorous, tough, and frugal. It is less handsome than the northern horse, but more attractive than the Boussansé horse. On the other hand, it endures the climate better than the former, less well than the latter.

231 A southern horse is worth from 80 to 100 francs, a Mossi horse 435 is worth about 150 francs, and finally, a northern horse is worth from 200 to 400 francs. There are about 7,000 horses in the Ouagadougou circle.

231 The horses are kept in the villages during the dry season. They are given millet and peanut greens to eat. Grass is cut down in the bush and given to them when it dries. During the rainy season, the [554] horses are usually taken to the bush. Only the chiefs keep their horses in the soukala, where the animals are brought fresh grass, millet, water and salt. Other people take their horses to the bush and tie them beside their field so they may browse on the grass.

The Mossi grow tobacco in fields around their

INTRODUCTION

248 homesteads, where they also cultivate their most important cash crops, cotton and indigo, which are used in the manufacture and dyeing of cotton cloth.

136 The wild fauna of Mossi country include several species of antelope, deer, monkeys, rabbits, snakes, and wild pigs. Elephants roam the beds of rivers and streams and often destroy cultivated fields, while lions and hyenas distress the people by attacking livestock. The pools and rivers of Mossi country are inhabited by turtles, crocodiles, and various species of scaled and scaleless fish. Chickens, muscovy ducks, and half-domesticated guinea fowl are the most valuable species of birds.

231 The Mossi have long been famous for their splendid donkeys and [492] horses. Donkeys are sometimes ridden, but they are used primarily as [439] beasts of burden. Horses are important for military and ceremonial purposes and for export to the tsetse-fly zones to the south. The Mossi raise two main types of cattle: a zebu-like animal in the northern regions and a [439] dwarf variety in the south. These animals are raised primarily for their milk and for export, and are seldom killed for meat until they are fairly old. Goats and sheep provide the main source of meat. Hog-raising is not wide- [771] spread, and seems to be declining in importance with the increased ob- [178] servance of Islamic food taboos, which is on the uprise even among people who are still pagans.

135 The subsoil of Mossi country is not well known, but so far there have been no major discoveries of mineral deposits. The only known gold field [301] remained unworked in aboriginal times. The Mossi do not like to wear [325] gold ornaments, preferring jewelry worked from imported copper and [439] silver. The northern Mossi worked their local iron in aboriginal times, but those in the south obtained this metal from caravan traders.

175 The nineteenth-century reports of Barth and other European travelers 439 indicate that the Mossi conducted a rather extensive foreign trade. At least six caravan routes passed through their territory, and traders such as the [443] Hausa and Mandingo visited the important Mossi trading centers at Yako, Pouitenga, and Ouagadougou, where they exchanged Saharan and forest products for Mossi livestock and cloth.[8]

101 The Mossi belong to the Voltaic culture area, a name given by Delafosse to the regions drained by the Black, Red, and White Voltas and their tributaries. The area embraces parts of Mali, the Ivory Coast, Dahomey, the Upper Volta, and northern Ghana.[4] It includes a vast congeries of peoples such [197] as the Dagomba, Mamprusi, Dagari, Birifo, Senufo, Gurmanche, Gurunsi, Lobi, Bobo, Tallensi, Konkomba, Dogon, Somba, Fulse, and Ninisi, all of whom speak languages belonging to the Gur or Moshi-Grunshi group of

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964

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[post-world War II period]

As the politicians grew skillful at the game of metropolitan politics, their power increasingly eclipsed that of their chiefly benefactors 175* and of local French administrators. For example: 631 554 665

> A local chef de poste summoned the district chiefs to bring their potential draftees for the war in Algeria early in the morning on a specific date to be 634 examined by medical officers. Those chiefs who looked upon any summons with a trepidation born of their past experience with prewar administrators, arrived at the headquarters as early as 5:30 A.M. on the morning in question, bringing their young men with them. Many of these chiefs, whose only [489] means of transportation was their slow-moving ceremonial horse, spent the [492] night en route to be there at dawn. More sophisticated chiefs coming from similar distances left on the same morning and arrived at about 8:00 A.M., the hour when the administrator himself was first seen stirring in his residence. One chief, a war veteran, rode up on his bicycle at about 8:45 A.M. [493] in a most unchiefly manner and became the butt of jokes from the other waiting chiefs. Another district chief, who was an elected representative, did not arrive until about 9:30 A.M., and he was greeted on arrival by the administrator. This man had only about half a mile to travel, and he did so in his car. His colleagues greeted him with a mixture of jokes, feigned awe, and surprise, and some of them addressed him as "Mogho Naba" and "Governor."[20]

Another example of the shift in the balance of power was the relationship that developed between Joseph Conombo and the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou. The Mogho Naba had nominated and supported Conombo as a candidate for deputy to the National Assembly. He was elected, and later became Secretary of the Interior in the Mendès-France Government of 1954. He thus had access to power undreamed of by the Mogho Naba. Being a Moaga as well as a good politician, he never flaunted his authority before his traditional chief; nor did the Mogho Naba try to exercise his traditional powers over him. But their behavior toward each other clearly demonstrated that they were both aware of the shift in power, even though they were both too wise and too polite to make an issue of it. 175* 643 554 648* 646

Other political forces also jeopardized the position of the chiefs. For example, as head of the Union Voltaïque, Conombo had an honored position within a Paris-based African parliamentary group called the Indépendants d'Outre-Mer (IOM). He would have held an even more important position within this group if he had had wider support among the non-Mossi in the Upper Volta. But his power was limited by the presence and competition of the MDV, which, while Mossi-supported, was anti-chief; the Mouvement Populaire de la Révolution Africaine (MPA), an anti-Mossi and anti-RDA party formed in 1954 by Nazi Boni of the Bobo ethnic group and supported by some officials in the administration; and the Parti Démocratique Voltaïque (PDV), a local branch of a now less radical RDA 175* 646 648* 665 554

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primarily as beasts of burden. Horses were and are still important 492
for military and ceremonial purposes and for external trade to other 439
areas.

The Mossi have never excelled in metalworking. The people in 326
the northern part of the country have worked indigenous ores since 335
aboriginal times. Those in the south get iron mainly from traders 439
and caravans. The other metals which the Mossi smiths manufacture
into tools and ornaments are also obtained from traders.

TRADE IN HISTORICAL TIMES

The geographic position of Mossi country has much to do with its 131
being an important trade and market center. The country itself has 437
always produced grain, cotton and livestock for export. And for 487
several centuries caravans have passed through this region carrying
Sudanese and Saharan products to the forest zones to the south, and
carrying forest products back to the arid north. The beginning of 174
this trade is lost in the dim past, but it safe to say that it developed 437
shortly after or along with the founding of Timbuktu about 1100
A.D. The Mossi themselves were not definitely linked to this impor-
tant *entrepot* until they raided it in 1328, but we can assume that they
had been trading there for some time before that event took place.
Similarly, we have no record of when the Mossi began trading with
the forest zones, but we can also assume that this trade began around
the same period or even before.

Our first evidence of Mossi trade and commerce comes from Europ- 125
eans who were themselves interested in conducting their own trading 437
activities with the peoples in the Bend of the Niger. Bowditch, an
Englishman who had journeyed to Ashanti to sign a treaty facilitating
the reopening of a profitable trade with the coast, wangled the first
important piece of information about the Mossi from his reluctant
hosts:

> Five journies from Yngwa is Mosee, a more warlike but less visited 101
> kingdom: it consists of many states, but the superior monarch is named 331
> Billa, and the capital Kookoopella. I place it to the N.W. because its
> merchants pass by Yngwa; they do not cross the Karhalla [White Volta]
> nor any river which is not fordable. (Bowditch 1819 : 180)

This information is not strictly correct since Koupela was not the 366
capital of any of the Mossi kingdoms, but Bowditch's informant had
probably heard of Koupela because it was the largest political entity
near the large caravan center at Pouitenga.

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same as those traded in pre-European times. For example, my notes 439
for March 22, 1956, record that five young men were transporting [494]
50-kilogram sacks of onions on their bicycles for trade in Ghana. On 439
March 23, the next day, I wrote the following: "This appears to be 492
the season of increased trade and the donkey trains are passing to and from Wagadougou and the Yatenga to Po (a town on the Ghana-Voltaic Republic border) and Bolgatenga in northern Ghana. Very often the donkeys carry nothing down, and at other times they are loaded with beans, millet, cotton bands, onions, peanuts and other vegetable produce. On the return trip they are laden with kola nuts going northward. This afternoon I counted twenty-eight asses coming from Ghana and going towards Wagadougou. Eighteen of them were laden with kolas, and ten were carrying long pieces of scrap iron which I was told, were to be converted into hoes for use during the coming planting season."

There is also a steady trade in livestock between Mossi country 439
and the southern lands but the height of this trade occurs just prior 231
to Ramadan. Beginning from one month to one week before this [22]
important Moslem feast day, the roads of Mossi country are clogged with thousands of sheep and goats being driven south for the use of religious households in Ghana and the Ivory Coast. Cattle are also shipped during this period, but not in the same volume since they are most often used collectively by Moslem families too poor to have their own sheep or goat.

The total volume of trade between Mossi country and Ghana and 439
the Ivory Coasts is difficult to ascertain since despite the existence of 648
Customs Posts a great deal of contraband trading takes place. My notes for December 12, 1955, read *"Contraband":* Two customs men came into the village to complain to the district chief about the behavior of Naba, one of his village chiefs. This is what happened: About two days ago, two agents saw in the forests the tracks of some thirty-five asses (heavily laden as can be seen by the depth of the tracks) and the marks of a bicycle with new tires. The agents followed the tracks all day and rested during the night. Yesterday they had to interrupt their search when the bicycle of one of the agents broke down, and when they resumed the search later in the day they came across five asses laden with kola nuts inside the compound of a man in Naba's village. Since they were forbidden by law to go into the man's compound and seize the animals, they went to the village chief in an attempt to have him tell the man to put the animals outside so that they could be seized. This the village chief refused to do, stating that it was not his affair, and adding that the agents should have seized the animals in the forest. The agents, now helpless, came and

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[post-world War II period]

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443 their "evil" and "non-evil" ways. A little later the young men who
512 possess bicycles may be seen suddenly hurrying to avoid the other
571 *nansara*, this time, the French official, who comes into the market to
[640] apprehend those individuals who have not bought a bicycle license.
[443] All the *nansara* know that the market is the best place to find a Mossi.

Towards 3:00 P.M. the matrons in the market, having sold most of their own goods and bought those which they need, make the last rounds to see whether there are any bargains to be had. In their rounds the women may be badgered by sons, daughters and other relatives, but seldom by husbands, for extra francs to buy kolas or tobacco to bridge them over the two non-market days. Or the women themselves may seek out their male relatives to buy kola or goods, from the stranger who is making the rounds of the local markets. By this time of day the market place is emptying—at first this happens so imperceptibly that one does not notice it. However, by 4:00 P.M. a mass exodus begins as women collect their little children, hitch their babies on their backs, place baskets on their head and set out in the direction of their own villages or to the villages of relatives where
[564] they plan to spend time. By this hour also the Bendere are drunk,
[273] and for an extra calabash of beer are willing to recount genealogies for which, if sober, they would demand a sheep or goat.

[231] Evening finds the market deserted except for scavenging dogs which hunt the scraps of food dropped by the now departed human
[485] beings. The market place finally falls silent, until late at night passing migrants retire there to sleep. These persons leave the market place at dawn to buy food from the women whose hawking cries herald another day of roadside commerce. The women use the profit from this trade to buy goods on the following market days.

[pp. 279–738 not processed]

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The total volume of trade between Mossi country and Ghana and the Ivory Coasts is difficult to ascertain since despite the existence of Customs Posts a great deal of contraband trading takes place. My notes for December 12, 1955, read *"Contraband"*: Two customs men came into the village to complain to the district chief about the behavior of Naba, one of his village chiefs. This is what happened: About two days ago, two agents saw in the forests the tracks of some thirty-five asses (heavily laden as can be seen by the depth of the tracks) and the marks of a bicycle with new tires. The agents followed the tracks all day and rested during the night. Yesterday they had to interrupt their search when the bicycle of one of the agents broke down, and when they resumed the search later in the day they came across five asses laden with kola nuts inside the compound of a man in Naba's village. Since they were forbidden by law to go into the man's compound and seize the animals, they went to the village chief in an attempt to have him tell the man to put the animals outside so that they could be seized. This the village chief refused to do, stating that it was not his affair, and adding that the agents should have seized the animals in the forest. The agents, now helpless, came and

491 builds bridges, but as they are made exclusively with materials found in the country, forked sticks and beams covered with pounded earth, the first swelling of the water carries the whole structure away, and after a heavy rain one must wait for the waters to subside and resort to ferrymen who justifiably charge for their work.

481 The ferrymen proceed as follows. The person who wishes to cross
484 holds on to a thick beam, a gourd, or a simple clay jar, which holds
501 him out of the water; sometimes two large sticks under his arms serve as a life belt. In a few places rafts are available, made of sticks connected with séko and covered with dry grass. The ferryman swims next to him and prevents him from being carried too far by the current. At certain favored fords near the French posts, ferryboats are available.
484 Livestock swim across, and the ferryman holds their muzzles out of the water to prevent them from drowning. These crossings take a long time and add up to considerable expense, and animals are often carried away by the current or snatched by crocodiles. Woe to the man who dispenses with ferrymen, if he is not familiar with the bottom of the river and the strength of the current! He often drowns, and those whose aid he scorned do nothing to help him. On the other hand, if the caravans postpone their departure for too long, the rivers will be dry, the grass burned off, and the animals will die of hunger or thirst, or they will arrive at the markets exhausted and lean and will sell poorly.

These journeys thus entail a number of hazards; in addition, although imported goods sell high, living expenses run equally high, and if a profit is to be made, one cannot grow fat along the way. He will make up for it when he returns to the village.

442 The need for middlemen brings other hazards. Lt. Marc, who was well qualified to discuss the subject because he was twice in command of the Léo Post, described the situation as follows: "The livestock upon arrival is bought by interpreter-brokers, middlemen between the butchers and the meat merchants, to whom the caravaneers are practically forced to resort. These men buy all the kola nuts brought by the forest natives and control the market prices... These interpreter-brokers apparently speculate on livestock in a most curious way. They have scouts who go out to meet the caravans, sometimes two days' march to the north. /61/ These scouts attempt to alarm the cattle owners with tendentious remarks, until they are willing to cede their herds at a low price. Sometimes, at the height of the business season, in January and February, livestock prices may fluctuate by one

they might take the lives and property of their subjects. There are many stories of avaricious chiefs who convicted wealthy commoners of spurious crimes and had them executed or banished in order to seize their wealth. There are also stories of twin tricksters, Raogo, a boy, and Poko, a girl, two *enfants terribles* who always succeeded in outwitting and killing avaricious chiefs. When I asked a district chief to explain the significance of the Raogo and Poko tales, he replied that they were "meaningless stories told by children who do not understand how difficult it is for a chief to command and protect men." This remark prompted one of his officials to add that in olden days, people gladly supported the Mogho Naba and his chiefs in order to be safe from their enemies—a statement which might have been made by a conscientious government official anywhere. However, whether commoners or chiefs, all Mossi believed that men must have government, and that without it chaos would prevail.

The Mossi political organization was subject to severe strains. For one thing, its economic basis was not very strong. True, goods and services were channeled to the capital from the smallest areas, and in time this permitted the establishment of increasingly complex governmental structures. Nevertheless, the Mossi fiscal system was not highly developed, and much of the revenue the rulers received came to them in the form of legal fees and gifts. Moreover, most of these revenues were irregular in nature.

Despite this fact, the Mossi believed that their rulers were wealthy—and there can be no doubt that they were wealthier than their subjects. Nevertheless, visiting Europeans found little difference between the standard of living of the chiefs and that of the people. Binger would have us believe that Mogho Naba Sanum bragged so much about imaginary wealth, including 10,000 horses, that he "managed to convince himself of it."[26] Binger's subsequent remarks about Sanum's resources are illuminating even if somewhat biased, because they throw light on the economic basis of the Ouagadougou kingdom. He tells us that Sanum's revenues were

> not well regulated. He lives on gifts and offerings which people have brought him with the aim of obtaining justice, or to demand something from him. He sometimes sends a band of men to capture slaves in Kipirsi country, or at least supports such ventures. But these revenues, like those of all the black chiefs, are not sufficient, because these men are prone to squander their resources. As a result, these sovereigns are compelled to use expedients in order to procure horses and other commodities. Thus, like the rulers of Tieba, Pegue, and Kong, Naba Sanum still has captives in villages devoted to agriculture, but he does not take proper care of these villages. If he does not receive enough millet in the form of gifts, he must sell his slaves in order to procure it.[27]

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CHAPTER 9

Trade and Markets Among the Mossi People

BY ELLIOTT P. SKINNER

The Mossi represent the dominant population of the Voltaic Republic, numbering about 1,600,000 out of some 3,200,000 inhabitants. They represent the unique example of a group which has preserved its ethnic identity and political autonomy through all the vicissitudes of Sudanic history until it was conquered by the French in 1896. Tradition records that the people who became the Mossi left the Dagomba region in present-day Ghana during the eleventh century and moved into the bend of the Niger River, carving out three large kingdoms and smaller principalities in the process. At the head of these still extant kingdoms are rulers *(Moro Nabas)* who formerly held feudal-like control over the provinces, districts and villages which comprise their domains. The villages, with their patri-local, polygynous, extended family households, formed the basic Mossi settlement pattern. A complex hierarchical administrative apparatus carried the power of the Mossi rulers into the smallest villages, and funneled taxes and tribute back to them. This structure still exists, but of course it has been modified by the French.

The Mossi were and are still divided into stratified royal, noble and commoner patrilineages. Characteristic of this lineage system is a process by which royal sub-lineages descend serially until they merge with the mass of commoner lineages. Below the lineages there once were large non-Mossi groups of serfs and slaves, but these people have now been grouped into lineages and have become Mossicized.

The topography of Mossi country is typical of the Sudanic grasslands. It is an immense plain, some 1,500 feet above sea level and broken only by three low mountain ranges and numerous small hills. The annual total rainfall is between 30 and 40 inches, and falls almost entirely as heavy showers or thundershowers during the period from June to September. So narrow is the margin of rainfall for successful crop cultivation that any variation in the cycle results in low crop yields and a difficult "hungry period" the following year before the new crops are harvested. The Mossi do not practice irrigation, and would have trouble doing so because the three Volta Rivers which drain their territory serve as drainage chiefly during the rainy season. Only the Black Volta has water all year round; the

423 will, and the new occupant cannot make the slightest protest.

It should be pointed out, however, that since land is most often abandoned because it was thought to be unproductive or haunted, there is rarely a claim to it by a former owner. In any event the matter is settled by the interested parties. The local administration and the canton chief rarely intervene in such cases.

Owners' rights over fruit trees in cultivated fields. Donsé
423 or néré [locust bean] trees whose fruits contain a yellowish, sweet
263 powder that is edible and [244] whose seeds are used to make soumbala, a fetid condiment much prized by the natives, remain the exclusive property of the former occupant. On the other hand, the tamsé (karite tree) belong to the new owner.

423 This is because the karite tree is found almost everywhere in the bush, while the néré is less common.

Rights of the chiefs over cultivated land. As a general rule,
425 since the principle of right by possession is honored among the
423 Mossi, a canton chief will not confiscate without reason cultivated land belonging to one of his subjects if the land has always been occupied by the occupant's grandparents.

When the land is unoccupied, however, or newly occupied, the canton chief may, by virtue of his absolute authority over his territory, take possession, and the new owner may not claim any compensation.

Field Work

241 In principle, a family field is held in common. When a woman
562 grows old, however, she no longer does field work with her hus-
595 band. She has her own field and feeds herself as best she may, since her husband pays no further attention to her and no longer supports her. The work is done by the family as a group, and the size of the field varies with the size of the family.

241 Early in the morning, usually before [245] sunrise, the head
512 of the family wakens the young people. They go out to the field, which may be five to ten kilometers away. Around ten o'clock, the women bring the remains of last night's sagbo or, lacking that, some millet flour which is taken in water.

241 At noon (wend'to souka, "the middle of the day") the family
512 rests in the shade of a tree. There are always some fruit trees in every field. Work is resumed at about two in the afternoon. At five the women return home to prepare food, and the men stop work at nightfall.

241 The sisoaga. When the family fields are too extensive to be
476 cultivated without help, all the able-bodied young men in the village are called to help with the weeding.

At such a time the head of the family gives several baskets of sprouted millet to his wives to make large quantities of dam, millet beer. He also orders them to prepare sagbo (millet cakes).

On the day set for the work, the young men go to the fields, where their enthusiasm is aroused by singing and the beating of drums. For their work they receive sagbo and dam. This is what is known as the sisoaga.

It is a kind of mutual aid, and without this indispensable system of solidarity, many fields would remain uncultivated.

[572] It should be noted, finally, that when a person falls [246] ill during the winter, his friends arrange to cultivate his fields, sometimes without any pay and simply out of a sense of solidarity.

241 Farm implements. As is the case everywhere in French West Africa, the natives have only the most primitive implements. Among the Mossi these include: the wanka or kounri, a hoe or Bambara daba to cultivate the soil; the sitoaga (small pickaxe) for sowing; and the laré (ax) to clear the site of brush and shrubs.

463 Other types of work. Aside from work in the fields, everyone goes about his own affairs. Some make baskets, hampers, and fans, while others weave cotton strips. It is perhaps of some
[564 interest to note that there is no caste distinction among the Mossi,
326] except for the blacksmiths; each person may practice the trade that suits him. This is why shoemakers mostly come from among the nakomsé (descendants of naba).

Food Crops

241 The principal foods grown by the Mossi are as follows.
Kazouf (small white or gray millet).

592 A typical soukala consists of the master's hut, a hut for each wife, one hut for the sheep and goats, another for the horse if he has one, a hut for the family mill, and, finally, a receiving hut with two doors sufficiently high to permit entrance without stooping and set sometimes as an entrance way and sometimes within the cluster of huts. All [351] these dwellings stand in a circle and are joined either by a cob wall or by /11/ mat fences taller than a man and held up by stakes. The master's hut, which usually stands beside the huts for the horses and sheep, is set off from the others by mats to insure his privacy. A low wall describes an arc within the inner courtyard; this is the kitchen when it is not raining. Big jars of fired clay which are used to brew [273 415] millet beer rest between the huts. In front of this cluster of huts, a shelter is built, usually high enough to permit standing and consisting basically of forked stakes with branches and séko resting upon them; this shelter serves as a refuge during the hot part of the day. Small boys and unmarried girls live with their mother, while older boys, servants, and slaves each have their separate huts which face the dwellings of the master and his wives.

The term yri or soukala covers this whole complex of structures. [591] Each soukala is a distinct unit, and, some time after they marry, the children build their own residence, set completely apart from that of their parents, often in another part of the village and sometimes in [361] another village altogether. The soukala stand fifteen to twenty meters apart, and, because of this, the villages, though adequately concentrated, cover a rather extensive area. The heads of cantons 392 place an ostrich egg at the peak of the roof on their own dwellings, [239] and some even build terraced huts higher than the surrounding dwell- [559] ings. They keep their riches in these huts and a prison in the base- [617] ment. An earthen stairway leads to the terrace where the master of [592] the house receives his guests when the sun begins to sink on the horizon.

721 These people, apparently so peaceful today, were formerly quite warlike and went off to war at the slightest pretext. Foreign to the land they now occupy, the Mossi must have conquered it by force of arms. The Tarik-es-Soudan /History of Sudan/ relates that the people of Yatenga seized Timbuktu in the fourteenth century, and in 721 the fifteenth they probably carried their incursions as far as Lake 701 Bébo and even Oualata. (4) The Mossi army was greatly feared.

4. Delafosse, op. cit., Vol. 2, p. 80.

342 received, gossip exchanged, and social and ceremonial obligations dis-
592 cussed in its shade. Here, also, the men of the lineage take their meals,
brought out to them from the kitchens of their wives and set before them
[264] by their sons, who first attend their fathers and then dine on what remains.

592 A few paces away is the grinding platform (*nere*) where the women
252 gather to prepare the grain for their families' meals. This great circular mud table, some twenty feet in diameter, is raised about three feet from the ground. Its surface is beaten hard and worked over with cinders and manure to make it rainproof. Each woman has her assigned place at this
[512] platform where she keeps her pestle and where she stations herself at dawn and again at dusk to grind her millet and learn the news of the day.

Frequently found at the outer perimeter of the dwelling of the Mossi
592 kin group is the house of the son of a lineage woman who has returned from his father's household to live in the benevolent presence of his mother's family, with whom he enjoys an especially permissive relationship. The house set aside for the residence of the young unmarried men of the lineage is also located on the outer edge of the compound dwelling.

A recent addition to the traditional pattern of village organization
555 described above is the independent households of socially ambitious
184 individuals who have chosen to separate themselves from the residences of their lineages in order to profit from their own economic or religious enterprises. Many have become independently wealthy through successful commercial ventures; others, as a result of conversion to Islam, have gained prestige through religious authority and wealth through the tuition and services provided by the Koranic students. Often these people are much younger than their lineage elders, not in line for the inheritance of political or religious authority through traditional channels, and unwilling either to accept the authority of their seniors or to share economically with the less prosperous members of their lineages. They are deviants, in conflict with the communal patterns of consumption and with the emphasis on accepting established authority which characterizes the traditional social organization of the Mossi.

THE TRADITIONAL ECONOMY

613 Much agricultural endeavor is necessarily co-operative. Each farmer
476 is dependent on the assistance of his kinsmen to get his fields seeded,
cultivated, and harvested in the short time during which each of these
243 operations must take place. However, the yield from his field remains his own, to be shared only with his own wives and children. Members of the lineage also work in the fields under the specific control of the lineage elder. Although the harvest from these fields is stored in the granary
[i.e. at a saw shelter in the outbuilding. — Analyst]

144 This is all we shall say by way of introduction to our study of Mossi customs. The main point to be remembered is that the bulk of the present Mossi population is not of "pure" origin, but results from a mixture between the Mossi conquerors and antecedent primitive groups.

000 Let us now turn our attention to work, and first of all to cultivation. We shall study the various types of labor in greater detail than we did so far in relation to the populations previously studied, and the reader will get a better idea of the work performed by the Blacks in these regions.

243 Millet is the most important item of cultivation among the Mossi, who call it ki. They cultivate various kinds of millet, and we shall take them up one by one.

First of all, the ordinary small millet, which is most widely cultivated. It is the Bambara sanio or Mossi kasui. It requires good black soil with low sand content.

243 242 Let us make the general statement that the Mossi, whenever they can, change plots every four years. That is, they clear a new field or take over an old one which has lain fallow. If they have little land, they cultivate the same plot indefinitely. In other words, they may till the same field for some twenty years.

243 When a new plot is cleared, the clearing is done in March or April. The head of the soukala goes to work with all his men. Daba /hoe/ and hatchets are used to cut down the trees. The women come along, but only to serve drink to the men, because they do not take part in the clearing.

[461 512] The workers go into the bush in the morning and remain there all day. They rest around the middle of the day (from noon to /467/ two or three o'clock), and then take up their work again until sundown. The women return home first to prepare dinner, and then the men follow. After the clearing proper has been completed, all that was torn up from the ground is gathered in a heap and set afire. The ashes are left on the soil to fertilize it. It should be noted that the roots of the trees are not removed. The trees, in fact, are merely cut about one meter from the ground, so that the field is dotted with stumps. Sometimes, instead of cutting down a tree, a small fire of branches and dry leaves is lit at its base and the

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larger markets there were and are solid stalls which are built and tenanted by merchants. In the small district and village markets, these stalls are built out of millet stalks which offer little but protection against the noonday sun on market days. Men build these structures for their womenfolk and for themselves. Some of the shelters which are not used for trading serve as galleries where the young blades look out and comment on the passing scene. Others are used as meeting places by adult men who sit and discuss all sorts of affairs. Still others are used by the older men, who gather there to arrange marriages between their several families, wait for gifts from younger men who seek wives, or spend a great deal of time reminiscing about their youthful adventures. Those persons who do not have such shelters sit in the sun or use grass lean-tos as protection from the sun.

Except in the large towns, Mossi markets are held between the hours of 10:00 A.M. and 4:00 P.M. every fourth day. In the larger towns there are daily markets, but these remained unimportant until today when they serve a growing urban population. The capital city of Wagadougou now even has an "evening" market which opens about 4:00 P.M. and closes at about 9:00 P.M. In addition, numerous daily markets have sprung up in many of its wards. The three-day markets are, however, the traditional type, and they are still the most numerous through the country. By "three-day market" I mean that a market is held one day, not held over the two following days, and then held again on the next day. These markets also have a 21-day cycle from one *Ragakasanga* or *Rag'kasanga* ("larger market") on a Friday to another *Rag'kasanga* on a Friday three weeks later, a total of seven markets between the two important ones. The people give no adequate explanation for the observance of the three-day cycle or the 21-day cycle. One man did suggest that it took the women three days to prepare beer and this was why markets could not be held more often, but even he did not speculate about the 21-day cycle.[10] This same man did point out, however, that the cycle made little difference to persons who really liked to go to market, since it was possible for

(10) Zahan (1954 : 373) apparently found one of the few Mossi informants with a mystical bent; he reports that the seven three-day cycles of markets in the 21-day cycle have the following significance for the Yatenga people: "The first of these numbers explains the cycle of the person (7 symbolizes the complete person: male [to which the Mossi assign the number 3] and female [to which they assign the number 4], the second that of the creation." He believes that each market starts a new cycle, a beginning and an end: "the seventh market signifies the most perfect equilibrium: the one which exists between the universe, mankind, and the divinity." In a footnote he suggests that this sybolism is not too different among the Dogon, who are "ideologically and geographically close to the Mossi." Peter Hammond, who worked in Yatenga, could not find this kind of symbolism.

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and districts were present to honor him. This being completed, the *griots* are paid, everyone rises and shouts *Ne Wardo* (the salutation at funerals), and that part of the funeral ceremony during which a man takes leave of the market community is concluded. Now his relatives, descendants and friends all return to the market, whose sights and sounds make it an integral part of the life cycle of the Mossi—the one institution of their society in which almost everyone participates actively.

Preparation for a market day, especially the tri-weekly Friday market or *Raga kasanga,* usually begins on Thursday. This day is characterized by a great deal of activity: preparing the commodities which are to be sold the next day, washing body and clothes, and combing hair. The women who prepare the beer and fried foods work late into the night preparing their wares, and a visit to the homes of the *griots* finds them preparing their drums. The little boys who go to the roadside to chant Moslem prayers to the passers-by, and the little girls who sell water to these strangers redouble their efforts until late on Thursday night to get enough money to buy presents in the market the next day. Finally, when it is quite late and the beer-making fires are out, everyone retires until the morning of the market.

At 7:00 A.M. on Friday the market is deserted except for a leper who sweeps out the stalls of the sellers in return for bits of food or presents of money. Looking at the empty stalls, one has a certain amount of difficulty imagining that this spot will be crowded with human beings five hours hence. But one is also conscious of the fact that even at this early hour scores of persons have already left their homes in distant villages and are on their way to market loaded with produce and with high hopes for the day. About 9:00 A.M. the first women arrive, balancing net-covered bundles on their heads, and take their positions in the various sections of the market with either face or back pointing to the direction from which they came. By 9:30 A.M. the butchers have arrived with their bleating sheep and goats and an aged cow. The first beer sellers have also arrived and are giving "sips" to men before they settle down to sustained drinking.

The pace of the market quickens about 10:30, and in the distance the first tap of the Bindere's drum resounds. All of a sudden, the market seems to have become a giant magnet, drawing long lines of people towards it along every path and from every direction. Women dressed in brightly colored print cloths and dresses, with babies straddling their backs and the inevitable bundles on their head, saunter into their places. Young children run ahead of their mothers or stumble behind them. Those vendors of European products who customarily transport their goods in boxes on bicycles arrive in the

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market and set up their small tables to display all types of goods from trinkets to single lumps of sugar. And the more numerous young men, who have no goods but have money in their pockets, go to the leaf-covered sheds, place their weapons on top of them, and take seats from which to view the passing parade. Imperceptibly, the hum in the market increases as people find their places and greet one another with *Ne Raga*, the market greeting, until by 11:30 A.M. the whole market reverberates with sounds of drumming, cries of vendors, and the shrill voice of water hawkers and juvenile vendors. Now the market is in full swing.

From midday until about 3:30 P.M., the Mossi market is a sea of humanity—talking, laughing, arranging rendezvous, quarreling, selling, buying, parading, and (where youngsters are concerned) often crying for want of money to buy a desired object. The return of migrants lends additional color and excitement to the market as these young people walk about in their new clothes, encouraging the drummers to sing louder praises, the maidens to feel jealous of the clothes of the migrants' female relatives, the former migrants to reminisce about the days when they too had bright new clothes, and the young boys to dream of going off one day to obtain the things they need.

Men, noting that their female relatives are spending too much time looking over the wares of a vendor of European products or of the kola-nut seller, wander over ostensibly to help in the purchase but really to prevent love affairs. The failure to observe such a precaution may be the cause of the shouting a man hears in the distance, and off he hurries to see whether a lineage brother or a friend may need his aid. He may either get into the battle himself, or aid the Raga Naba and the other elders to chase the battlers out of the market place, or to take them to the chief. This may indeed restore some peace and good fellowship to the market.

Elders, now more interested in beer than in other pleasures, pass the heat of the market day under the beer sellers' shed. From time to time one of them may be interrupted by a young man bringing him three kola nuts, one or two of which are immediately broken and given to friends. However, when an oldster, whether a drinking pagan or a Moslem teetotaler, sees or overhears a young man buying four kolas, he may frown or smile in the knowledge that mischief is afoot. Loud-voiced predictions of the consequences of evil-doing may suddenly disturb the merrymakers as American missionaries speaking in perfect More (the language of the Mossi) appear and harangue the market people. Then, as suddenly, the *Americadamba* depart in their large cars, and the curious pagans, amused Catholics or hostile Moslems who had gathered to hear the gospel return to

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their "evil" and "non-evil" ways. A little later the young men who possess bicycles may be seen suddenly hurrying to avoid the other *nansara*, this time, the French official, who comes into the market to apprehend those individuals who have not bought a bicycle license. All the *nansara* know that the market is the best place to find a Mossi.

Towards 3:00 P.M. the matrons in the market, having sold most of their own goods and bought those which they need, make the last rounds to see whether there are any bargains to be had. In their rounds the women may be badgered by sons, daughters and other relatives, but seldom by husbands, for extra francs to buy kolas or tobacco to bridge them over the two non-market days. Or the women themselves may seek out their male relatives to buy kola or goods, from the stranger who is making the rounds of the local markets. By this time of day the market place is emptying—at first this happens so imperceptibly that one does not notice it. However, by 4:00 P.M. a mass exodus begins as women collect their little children, hitch their babies on their backs, place baskets on their head and set out in the direction of their own villages or to the villages of relatives where they plan to spend time. By this hour also the Bendere are drunk, and for an extra calabash of beer are willing to recount genealogies for which, if sober, they would demand a sheep or goat.

Evening finds the market deserted except for scavenging dogs which hunt the scraps of food dropped by the now departed human beings. The market place finally falls silent, until late at night passing migrants retire there to sleep. These persons leave the market place at dawn to buy food from the women whose hawking cries herald another day of roadside commerce. The women use the profit from this trade to buy goods on the following market days.

[pp. 279-738 not processed]

776 kikiriga, in turn, are to ward off anything that might harm the crop,
241 birds, caterpillars, thieves, and the like, and to fill with millet a granary of the size drawn on the ground with ashes at the time of harvest. If the kikiriga has properly carried out his duties, he gets another chicken when all the grain has been gathered in a heap.
776 Pregnant women are under the protection of a special kikiriga, and
[843] small children have one of their own to ward off illness and danger. Do we not say ourselves that a special Providence watches over the very young?

776 Actually, everyone has his kikiriga. Some have an evil one, and
828 those are the people who quarrel with everybody, the ones who are never successful, whose livestock dies, for the kikirsi often kill the goats, sheep, and horses that die of illness. Other people have a
[577] good kikiriga, and for them everything goes well; they were born under a lucky star. These are the engaging, sweet, good-natured people who get rich and who have many children. When a Mossi lies down
[513] to sleep in his hut, he rests his head on a stone or a small mound of beaten earth. This is where his kikiriga dwells, and from time to time, especially when he feels the need for special protection, he
[782] sacrifices a guinea hen or sometimes even a goat, with the understanding that the spirit will chase away all fellow spirits who might want to harm him and will avert all illness and all danger from his path.

/83/ The tangandé is a spirit who has the shape of an animal and
776 who is regarded as the protector of a village. The term is also ex-
778 tended to designate the spirit's place of residence, usually the sacred
825 grove but sometimes a mere stone or even an open space. The tangandé may be a crocodile, a boa, a leopard, a turtle, a deer, a hare, etc. The animal is sacred to the whole village and may not be killed in the sacred grove, but it may be killed elsewhere, even a short distance from the thicket.

776 The tangandé is a guardian spirit because it protects men and sends
755 its servants to accompany the village people on trips when they request it to do so. The natives incessantly turn to it for protection, and the sorcerers incessantly refer those who consult them to the tangandé to obtain cures and to request the release of souls held captive
776 by evil sorcerers. When someone dies, sacrifices are made to the
782 tangandé with requests to protect the survivors and to ward off illness.
[774] When souls leave the body during sleep, they often go to the sacred grove. Anyone may sacrifice to the tangandé and in the tangandé.

859 868 The girls remain by their mother's side. They fetch water with her, learn how to pound millet, how to cook, etc. When they are eight or nine, they are taught how to spin cotton.

●513 882 The boys sleep in their mother's hut until they are circumcised, that is, until they are about thirteen years old. Thereafter, they sleep in a special hut, kombarogo, with all the other circumcised boys of the compound. The girls sleep in their mother's hut until they are married.

561 Little boys are called kondibili kirisé, biribili kirisé, or komkirisé (komkiriga in the singular). Little girls are called kompougouli kirisé or bipougouli kirisé. The older girls are kompougouli beda or bipougouli beda. The older boys or young men (they are considered as such once they are circumcised) are rasamba (rasanga in the singular). Young girls are called pourousada or pougousada (pourousadaba in the plural).

Education of children among themselves. Societies. —Mossi 859 575 children form societies among themselves. These are called nam (they are the same as the Bambara ton or flambolo). There is a society for boys and one for girls in the small villages. In the large villages, as in Ouahigouya, for example, these societies are formed by village quarters.

Each society has its chief and its high dignitaries: its Moro Naba who rules over it with his four ministers. The girls also have their Pourousada Moro Naba and four female ministers. These societies are devoted to play, drinking, tom-tom playing, and dancing.

Each member must furnish a certain number of cowries: the chiefs /256/ give 200 or 300; the mere rasamba, 100; the kondibili, 50; the kondibili-kirise, 30. The Moro Naba of the society collects the dues, and he is also the treasurer.

Another source of income for the society derives from work performed for the people of the village, the owners of fields. The boys do not merely go and offer their services. When someone needs a helping hand with his field, he goes to the Moro Naba of the society who places the whole group at his disposal for a fee. Payment is made in millet which the society uses to make dolo for its celebrations.

Another source of income derives from fining members for lapses in their duties to the society. The Moro Naba of the nam fines those who arrive late when called for work on someone's field or those who go on an errand or a short trip without notifying him in advance.

513 The Mogho Naba slept in a grass hut in the palace compound. Two
643 reasons are given for the choice of a grass hut over a brick building: first,
[342] the grass hut was considered better protection against sorcerers, who were
[754] believed to induce storms that destroy buildings and their occupants; sec-
[775] ond, it was believed that the ruler's ancestors preferred to visit grass huts because it was easier for them to enter through the interstices in the walls.
[644] When the monarch retired for the night, one of his pages stood guard at the door. The Mogho Naba usually slept all night, but he occasionally made the rounds with a page to check on the palace guards or the safety (and virtue) of his wives.

643 The routine of the Mogho Naba seldom varied. Only in times of danger
[644] or on great ceremonial occasions did protocol permit any major changes in court procedure. Normally, pages, ministers, and other court officials adhered very strictly to their traditional tasks.

The Mossi considered the king's office to be such a difficult one that even today they say, *Mogho Naba toumde ya yida fa* ("The Mogho Naba's task is the most difficult of all"). Nevertheless, the Mogho Naba's office was always eagerly sought, and considerable care had to be exercised to ensure that the right person was chosen. As soon as the incumbent Mogho
[645] Naba died, and even before he was buried, the Ouidi Naba, as prime minister, began the consultations leading to the selection of a new monarch. Mossi custom decreed that the eldest son of a previous ruler be chosen as the new Mogho Naba. This choice was not automatic, however, in view of the primary consideration that the person selected should have the skill to "keep" the country. Other qualifications for office were membership in the royal minimal lineage, soundness of body and mind, and sufficient age to command universal respect. Given these requirements and the lack of any provisions for a regency, it is not surprising that a dead ruler's sons, brothers, uncles, and even grandchildren—that is, his entire babissi—should have competed to "eat the nam" (accede to power).[12] Of the thirty-four kings who have ruled since Oubri, the founder of the Ouagadougou dynasty, twelve succeeded their brothers and twenty-two their fathers. Interestingly enough, there is some indication that at the beginning of the Ouagadougou dynasty, the successor of a king was usually chosen from among his brothers before the nam was passed on to the next generation.[13] For example, Oubri's four sons all reigned in turn before the kingship descended to the son of the last brother in office. Then, two of this brother's sons reigned before the nam descended to a new generation. Initially, then, seniority within the royal lineage, like seniority within the local ruling lineages, may have been determined by generation. On the other hand, accidental factors may have governed: a weak state organization may have

312 hour for the impurities and the residue to settle to the bottom of
271 the vessel. Then the water is poured off into another container and is ready to be used for drinking or cooking.

[824] (b) It is also possible to use an additive known as missim (crushed tamarind leaves). The water becomes clear, but it is, of course, somewhat sour. Although it may be drunk, it is
[55] ideally suited to cooking since the Mossi add missim (from miki, "to make sour") even to the water of springs and wells before they use it to prepare their principal food, sagbo.

744 In the town of Ouagadougou frequent visits by the sanitary
312 officers remind the natives of the necessity of keeping fresh water in their containers. They are also encouraged to fill in during the winter the low places holding water where mosquitoes might breed.

515 Laundering. There is no doubt [231] that the Moaga is care-
296 less about the cleanliness of his clothing. There is no shortage of soap -- karite butter, of which it is made, is plentiful -- but he believes that frequent laundering will wear out his clothes too quickly. He also thinks -- which is childish -- that the dirtier a garment is, the cleaner it will wash. He thinks it completely ridiculous for clothes to be ironed. It must be admitted that among the Mossi only a married man can require his wives to wash his clothes. A mother also takes care of her children's clothes, but a bachelor is forced to wash his own things. This, we think, explains the extreme negligence shown by some of them
[46] who let their clothes get dirtier and dirtier. Indolence, alas, is one of the dominant defects of the native of Mossi country.

514 Toilet arrangements. In general the Mossi have no regular latrines. Men, women, in short, everyone, simply goes into the bush. The only exception is the very young children who take care of their needs on the threshold. At night, especially during the winter when the grain is fairly tall, grownups themselves go to the kamanga or karaga (millet or maize field near the living quarters).

364 When the town of Ouagadougou was made a mixed commune [Ed., smallest French territorial subdivision, with both French and native representation in the municipal council], it was possible to install, at municipal expense, a number of lavatories in certain

364 For the Mossi, as for all other men, life ends in death, with or without illness. The Blacks do not know how to prevent diseases, and they know very little about fighting them. Hygiene is almost unknown. The huts are poorly aired, the chickens and in general all the animals in the inner courtyard walk everywhere and foul everything. The courtyard is swept often, but the hut of the sheep and goats is located in the midst of the other dwellings; the horse is kept within the soukala [514] itself; and people relieve themselves anywhere, wherever they find a convenient spot. The manure is gathered in a heap, but it is kept next to the huts and gives off a nauseating smell and noxious miasmas, especially at the beginning of the rainy season.

515 The Mossi are not dirty, but they cannot be called clean. Those who dwell in villages abundantly supplied with water at all times are the cleanest. The women, who fetch water every day and thus have an opportunity to wash, are usually cleaner than the men. A Mossi never passes a pond without drinking copiously and washing all over, and this would seem to prove that those who go dirty do so unwillingly; they have no water nearby, and it would be too much trouble to go to the river to bathe. Clothing, especially breechcloths, is often repulsively dirty. This is because washing wears out clothes, and who knows when new ones will be available? No wonder disease has such a hold on this people.

855 Child care is quite rudimentary: a few baths; enemas two or three
165 times a day, without which it is said their bowels would not move; and that is all. At the slightest indisposition the sorcerer is consulted, or else the child is left to himself; he will get well or die, and nothing is done about it. As a consequence, child mortality is very high.

758 Those who fall prey to a contagious disease are not isolated. A healthy child lies on the same mat as one with smallpox, a leper drinks from the common gourd unless his lips are covered with sores. People do, however, hesitate to sit where a syphilitic person with sores previously sat. The education of the Mossi in matters of hygiene is wholly yet to be learned.

576 On meeting someone, Mossi politeness requires that an inquiry be made about his health and that of all his relatives. The response invariably is "So-and-So is well," and the other in turn responds, "May God permit his health to wax." It is only after a little conversation that a certain person is said to be ill or to be getting better.

195 It is not said that someone died, but that he ran short of strength, that he passed away, that he left us.

291 distance from his home, he wears only a benda (loincloth), which does not even cover his buttocks, and a blanket.

He goes about with torso uncovered and likes to show that he is [229] well muscled. When the women are inside their huts, especially when they are engaged in the laborious task of removing the seeds from cotton with their gourça, they pull their skirts up to the hips, making themselves half-naked.

Young girls who have not yet reached puberty and are not yet excised often go about completely nude, unless they hide their sex behind the rags of an old skirt.

Personal Grooming

Ablutions and Care of the Body

515 Married persons and women are fastidious about body cleanliness and therefore have a regular morning routine. This involves washing the face, hands, arms, and legs. During the cool season (end of November to February 15), a little karite butter is added [271] to warm water to soften the skin. Since water is scarce, people take few baths. In villages where there is abundant water, however, the inhabitants bathe two or three times a week.

Unlike their elders, young people and children are careless about cleanliness and may go about all day long without washing [164] their faces. This gives rise, incidentally, to serious cases of conjunctivitis among the children.

Sanitation

312 Drinking water. Water for general use is obtained from 271 water holes created [230] by the inhabitants with dams in order to supplement the wells which often run dry during the dry season. The natives make no effort to purify the water which they often keep for days in containers where mosquito larvae flourish. Pond water is used for drinking. In some villages, however, where the water is actually muddy, the following measure are taken to clear it.

(a) The oil is extracted from crushed peanuts, and the residue is put into the muddy water. It takes about three-quarters of an

312 hour for the impurities and the residue to settle to the bottom of
271 the vessel. Then the water is poured off into another container and is ready to be used for drinking or cooking.

[524] (b) It is also possible to use an additive known as missim (crushed tamarind leaves). The water becomes clear, but it is, of course, somewhat sour. Although it may be drunk, it is
[552] ideally suited to cooking since the Mossi add missim (from miki, "to make sour") even to the water of springs and wells before they use it to prepare their principal food, sagbo.

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8: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1958
FA28 Mossi FA28

797 sands of Mossi who fled their homeland to escape forced labor or military serv-
ice ultimately returned as Moslems, but the majority of seasonal migrants do
167 not have enough contact with foreign populations for them to become Mos-
lems. Most of the Mossi who migrate to Ghana work on cocoa farms far re-
moved from large centers of population. It is also true that even those Mossi
who worked for Moslems on the farms and found it expedient to "pray" (as
the Mossi refer to conversion to Islam) soon reverted to paganism on their re-
turn in order to escape the displeasure of their lineage members. I have re-
corded several cases of pagans who became Moslems only when they returned
from abroad to find their relatives all converted to Islam.

571 Today there are obvious rewards for those Mossi who embrace Islam; be-
797 sides such tangible rewards as getting wives and children, there are the intan-
554 gible ones of upward social mobility and greater prestige. It is important to
566 note that most liberated slaves and serfs are now Moslems. Formerly these non-
[567] Mossi had low status, but today those who have been to Mecca bear such
proud titles as *Hadji*. On the night before Ramadan, one of these men gave a
talk before the Nobéré chief during which he chided the chief for his impiety
and voiced the hope that the next chief would be a true Moslem. He admitted
that the chief might interpret such a speech from a former serf as impertinence, but he begged him to accept the censure as coming from the servant of *Nabiyama* (the prophet). This same man had refused to pay homage to the chief at the annual sacrifice to the ancestors, and when admonished returned the daughter which the chief had given him as a wife. In earlier days a chief would not have given a daughter to a serf, and moreover, a disrespectful serf could be killed instantly.

797 Many French administrators and Christian missionaries allege that Mossi
youth embrace Islam because they like the beautiful robes and red fezzes of the
291 Moslems, but this is a naive explanation for the conduct of a highly sophisti-
●515 cated people. Most young men in Nobéré wear Moslem-type clothes because
such clothes are the mode. Now that sun helmets, dark glasses, and women's
raincoats with hoods are in vogue, pagans as well as Moslems wear them. What
is of interest, however, is that when pagans become Moslems they wear cleaner
clothes and affect a different style of life.

794 The local consensus is that Moslems are much better behaved than pagans
because they do not swear, fight, or get drunk in public. The man chosen as
577 Imam is required to have such characteristics as mercy toward evil-doers,
benevolence, magnanimity, physical beauty, and virility. Yet many Mossi say
that the Moslems can be worse than any other people. They accuse them of
being charlatans, of selling Koranic verses as charms, and of committing mur-
der by the use of magical formulae. Neither pagans nor Moslems believe that
a man is necessarily good because he recites his daily prayers or goes to Mecca.

Moslems in the district follow most precepts of their religion: they recite
794 the five daily prayers according to the rites of Tidjani (there are only two Mos-
lems of the Hamada sect in the district and no members of the Hamallist sect),
give alms to the poor, observe the month-long fast (called by the Mossi the

1: Delobsom--149 I-5 (no date) 1933 FA28 Mossi FA28

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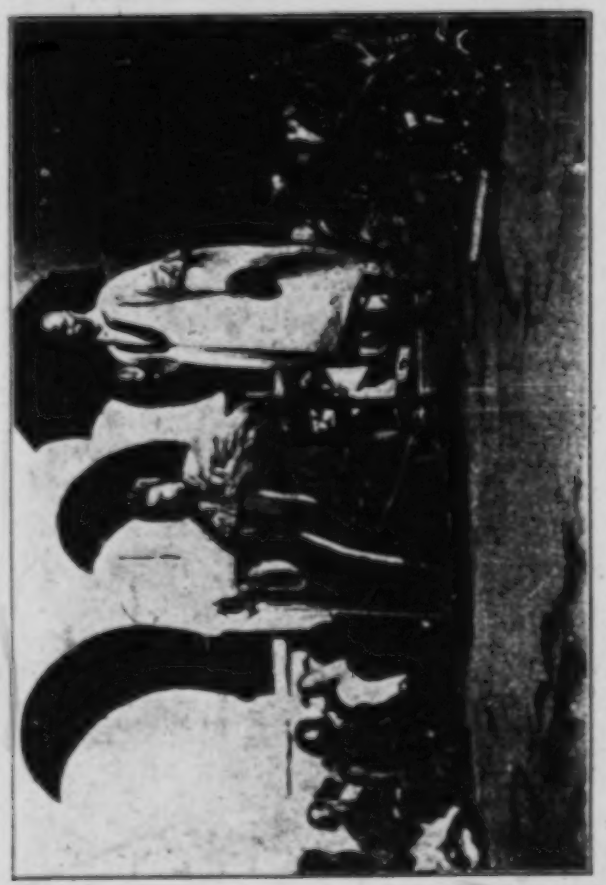

1: Deloboom--151 I-5 (no date) 1933 FA28 Mossi FA28

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Mogho Naba
The Ruler of all the Mossi and a Servitor.

From the Mission of the White Fathers
at Ouagadougou.

1: Delobsom--156 I-5 (no date) 1933 FA28 Mossi FA28

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Native Blacksmith.

From the Mission of the White Fathers at Ouagadougou.

1: Delobsom--157 I-5 (no date) 1933 FA28 Mossi FA28

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The Third Minister of the Mogho Naba (Gounga Naba) among his Servitors.
(The latter wear Christian medals)
From the Mission of the White Fathers at Ouagadougou.

1: Delobsom--159 I-5 (no date) 1933 FA28 Mossi FA28

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Mossi Woman Spinning.

From the Mission of the White Fathers at Ouagadougou.

1: Delobsom--161 I-5 (no date) 1933 FA28 Mossi FA28

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Mossi Weaver.

From the Mission of the White Fathers at Ouagadougou.

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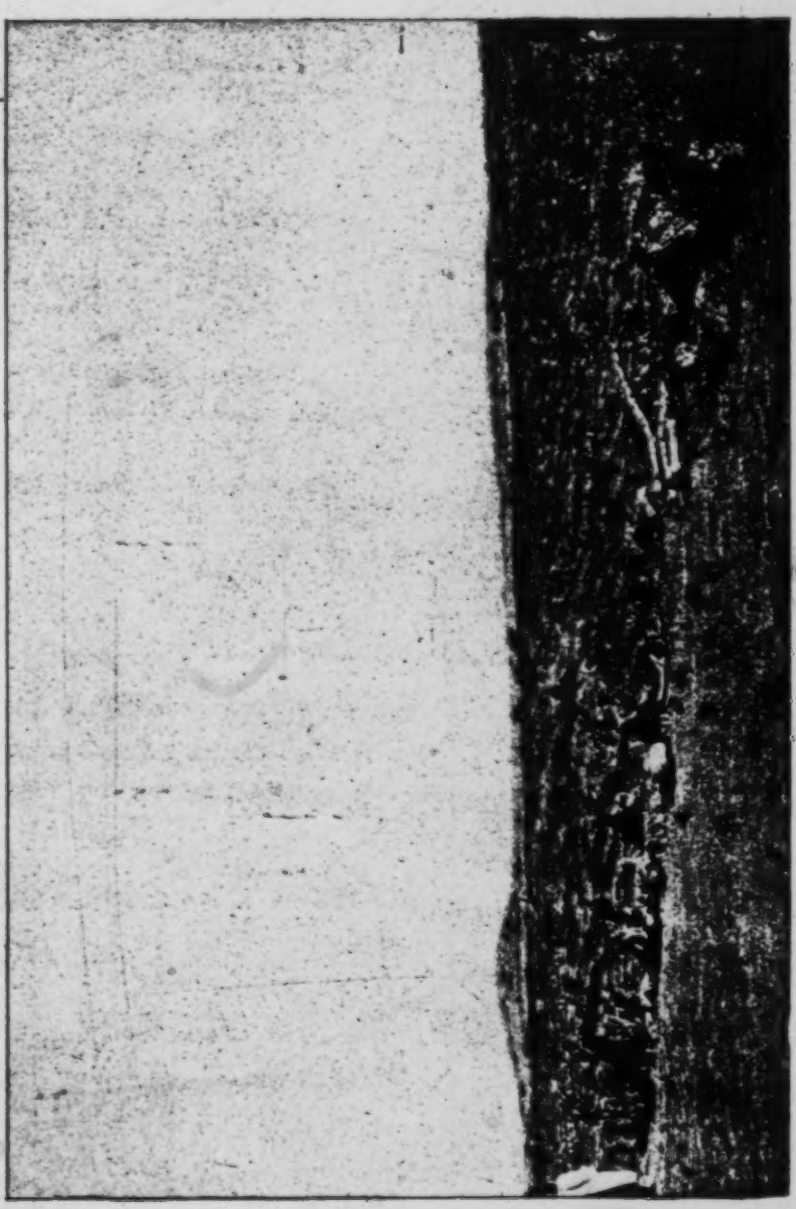

The Bush in Mossi Country.

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2:Mangin--19a M-5 (ca. 1910) 1921 FA28 Mossi FA28

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A Mossi Province Chief.

The Moro Naba of the Mossi.

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Above: The Moro Naba. Behind him, his brother, about twelve years old and the head of a large province, flanked by two pages.

Below: The Bullom Naba and his Pages. Behind him, his two Christian sons.

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Above: A Naba and his Men.
Below: Mossi Elders.

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28

[P.31]

III

KINGSHIP AND CHIEFSHIP

Mossi traditional government revolved around the Nanamse, as all Mossi 642
rulers were called. Sometimes the title was also given on an honorific basis to commoners, serfs, or slaves who performed specific duties for a Mogho Naba or a district chief; but the only true Nanamse were persons who traced their descent from Ouedraogo and Oubri.

The heads of the four Mossi kingdoms—the Mogho Naba of Ouaga- 642
dougou, the Yatenga Naba, the Tenkodogo Naba, and the Fada-N'Gourma 643
Naba—were supreme in their own realms, but there was considerable rivalry among them throughout Mossi history.[1] In terms of closeness of descent from the nation's founders, the Tenkodogo Naba came first, the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou second, and the Yatenga Naba third. The Naba of Fada-N'Gourma was outside the hierarchy. As time passed, the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou gradually became more powerful than the other rulers, even though he recognized the seniority of Tenkodogo and, as we shall see, had difficulty exercising his seniority and supremacy over the Yatenga. Because he was the pre-eminent Mossi ruler, the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou set the general pattern of kingship and chiefship. The heads of the other kingdoms, principalities, districts, and villages tried to approximate the pomp and ceremony of the Ouagadougou court as closely as their resources and etiquette permitted. The pattern of chiefship among the Mossi in general thus differed little from that of the Ouagadougou kingdom.

The Mossi of Ouagadougou believed that their Mogho Naba was supe- 643
rior to all other kings. They believed that his realm was the largest in the world, and that no other king was so rich and powerful. He was so awe-inspiring, so "like the sun," that no one dared to look upon his face. It was [516]
forbidden to touch his hand, or speak to him from any but a kneeling posi- [576]
tion with the forehead touching the ground. People were expected to hesitate before pronouncing his name, and no other person was allowed to bear

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28

643 the name of the current ruler. When Crozat asked one of his Mossi bearers why Boukary Koutou had chosen a title that means "elephant," the man declared, "He is an elephant; he is king of all kings as the elephant is king of all animals; a great elephant-king he is."[2] Another Moaga, meeting Crozat on the road to Ouagadougou, told him to be prepared to meet a monarch "whose riches are inexhaustible and whose splendor is marvelous. [644] He and his family wear only the most admirable European clothes; a thousand horses stand before his door, and there are more than a thousand women in his house. He is served by one hundred eunuchs; he commands as master 333 chiefs; and when he speaks to them it is as though God himself had spoken; everyone bows down before him and obeys."[3] Crozat, looking at the Mogho Naba through European eyes, did not find the "great [576] king" he had expected. Yet he and later European visitors to the Mossi [516] capital did affirm that all Mossi officials and district chiefs prostrated themselves in obeisance to their sovereign, even if they did not subsequently follow his instructions.[4]

643 Many rituals associated with the person and court of the Mogho Naba 796 served to emphasize the high esteem in which he was held by his subjects. For example, the sovereign showed himself every morning at a ceremony called "Ouend pous yan" (literally, "God rises," or "the sun rises") that survives to this day. The name of this ceremony has led many scholars [114] and travelers to assert that traditionally the Mogho Naba was considered a divine king. Dim Delobson states that this ceremony "shows the regard which the Mossi have for their chief, since they compare him to the sun, and thus to a 'god.'"[5] However, the Mossi do not now and probably never did regard their monarchs either as gods or as divine kings. There is a great deal of difference between regarding a man as "powerful and brilliant" like the sun and regarding him as divine. As a matter of fact, the [522] Mossi very often dramatize in humorous fashion the all-too-human frailties of their rulers, without ever considering it sacrilegious to do so. On the other hand, the Mogho Naba, as the supreme ruler, was expected to follow faithfully the strict etiquette demanded by his exalted position.

643 The morning ceremony was opened by the ruler's chief page, the *so-* 796 *ghone-kasanga*, who sprinkled a phylacteric solution around a throne 644 (*guere*) in the courtyard in front of a reception room called the *zongo*. Other pages (*soghondamba*) brought out a large cushion (*naghpure*), the ruler's sword, and other personal accouterments, and placed them on the [292] throne. Still other pages aided the Mogho Naba in his toilet. He was clothed in a large red robe, which symbolized the rising sun; he wore a bonnet surmounted by silver streamers (*wazourfou sebere*), which repre-
-sented the sun itself-

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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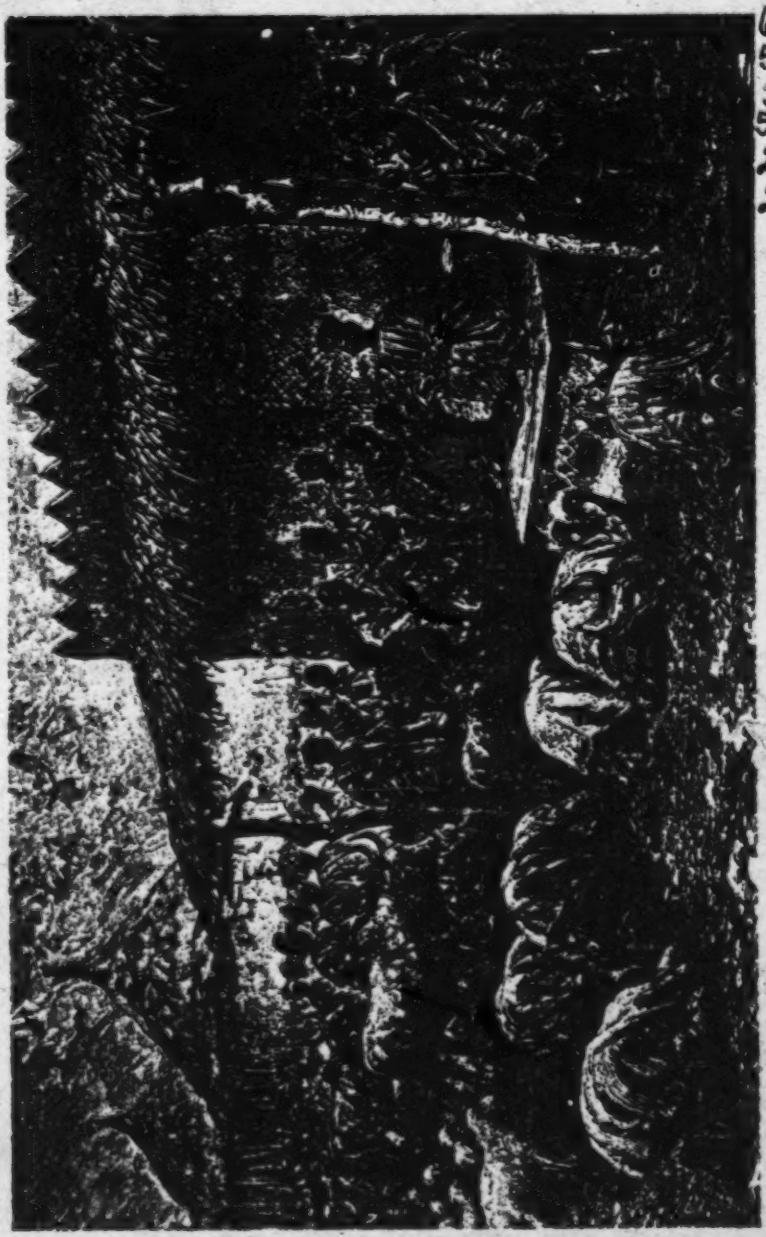

Visiters to the court of Moogho Naba Baoum salute him in the traditional Mossi manner.
From Louis Binger, *Du Niger au Golfe de Guinée par le pays Kong et le Mossi, 1887–1889* (Paris, 1892).

[p. 178 - A]

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28

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The Mogho Naba's daughter, the Napoko, impersonates her deceased father at his funeral ceremonies. Note that she wears one of his robes, his slippers, and his bonnet, and has his sword behind her.

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Mogho Naba Saghn II (1941-57), who was instrumental in reunifying the Mossi people into one territory, the Upper Volta.

[p. 178-8]

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28

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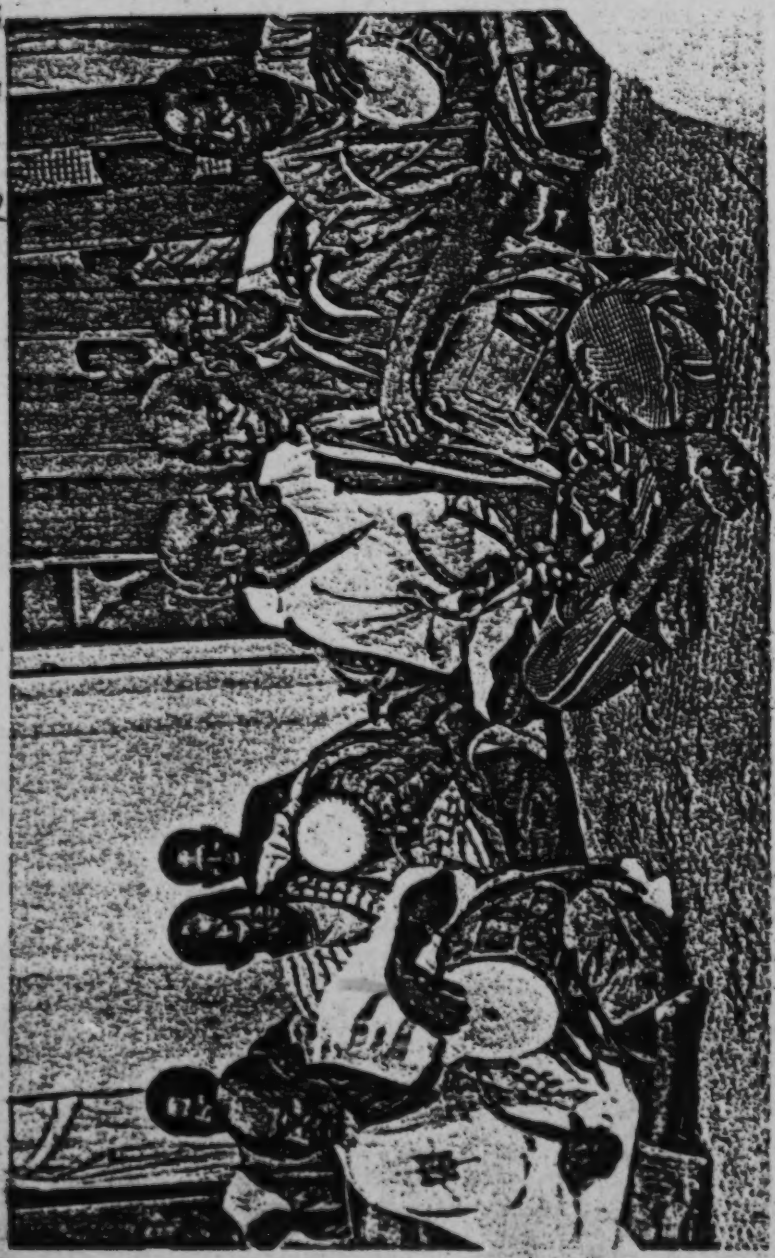

The musicians of the royal court, the Bandas.

[p. 178-C]

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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Mogho Naba Kouguri at court. He is flanked on the right by his pages and musicians, and on the left by members of the Muslim community.

[p. 171-E]

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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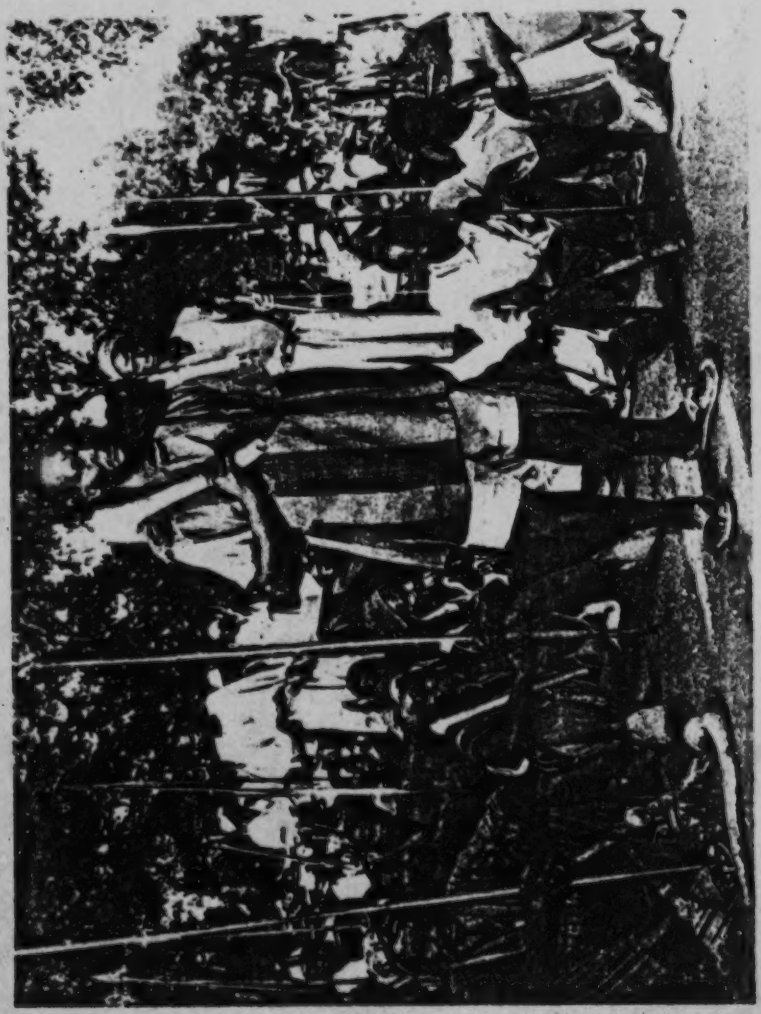

Mogho Naba Kougri's warriors, many bearing traditional weapons, respond to their sovereign's call for aid against the new French administration.

[p 178 - G]

5: Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1959
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they are so exclusively occupied with political or religious duties. In every case, they own fields and are dependent upon their produce for an important part of their subsistence.

Each Mossi village in the Yatenga holds a market every third day; markets operate in nearby villages on the intermediate days. There are few full-time merchants; men usually market their wares themselves and trade in items of European manufacture. Except for the sale of meat, it is a man's wives who sell farm produce. For marketing her husband's surplus millet, a woman receives a gift when the market closes.

Markets are most active in the early hours of the morning when meat and farm produce are fresh. By afternoon only a few merchants stay on, trying to sell their remaining produce to late-comers at greatly reduced prices. Social satisfactions derived from participation in the market are greatly valued; it provides an opportunity for meeting friends and kinsmen and for exchanging gossip and observations on one another's dress, the crops, and current political developments. The market is a place for making loans and receiving small gifts from kinsmen and friends, for flirtations and the arrangement of rendezvous, and for that casual sort of social interaction which is one of the principal pleasures of life in the Yatenga.

The Mossi farmer is dependent on the co-operation of the members of his lineage both for the success of his individual economic endeavor and for their support if his crop should fail. To be assured of this support, he must contribute generously to the maintenance of his position in the intricate network of rights and obligations which describes the relationship of the individual to his kin group. A constant exchange of visits and presents, ceremonial and economic assistance, and presence and participation in the affairs of the lineage are necessary to maintain his status within this group.

The nature of the social, economic, and emotional dependence of the individual on his kinsmen, his affinal relations, and his neighbors is such that his social well-being and economic success may properly be regarded as depending as much on his skill in manipulating this complex web of relationships as on his specifically economic endeavors. When a man decides to forego a second weeding of his fields in order to prepare presents and make the journey to the funeral of a kinsman, he is making a choice which, considered in the total context of the culture, is realistically in accord with his own economic best interest.

The farmer feels equally dependent on the deceased members of his lineage, the ancestral spirits (*kiemse*). If he feeds them a chicken, they may steal the soul from a neighboring stand of millet and bring it to enrich his own field. If properly treated, they can be depended upon to protect his shea nut trees from the high winds which might otherwise

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
FA28 Mossi FA28

443 such individuals to find a market everyday in one neighboring district or another.

Every Mossi market not only has its own schedule but is also part of a cycle of markets in the sense that its main customers can and do regularly attend two other markets on the two nonmarket days without missing their "own" market. Table 30 takes the district market at Nobere as the home market and lists the markets which Nobere's people can attend and the reasons they themselves give for going there.

443 366 438 484

[103]

TABLE 30

Markets near Nobere

		Distance Away	*Reasons for Going*
First Day:			
	Nobere		Home Market
	Manga	12 kilometers	Good Pottery
	Vooko	15 kilometers	Butter and Millet
	Twese	20 kilometers	Millet and Sorghum
	Binde	35 kilometers	Good Pottery and Mats "Very far and people do not go there very often"
Second Day:			
	Basgana	10 kilometers	Good Pottery
	Sakouliga	15 kilometers	"To Have Fun"
	Giba	10 kilometers	"To Have Fun"
Third Day:			
	Nobili	27 kilometers	"Good Millet"
	Pinse	6 kilometers	"Small Market; to have fun"
	Parougre	10 kilometers	"Good Millet and Pottery"

Nobere people scarcely ever go to Manga because the market there conflicts with their own and its one unique product, pottery, can be bought at Basgana on a day when there is no market at Nobere. A [435] person is likely to go do Vooko when he wishes to buy butter and millet at cheaper prices than he can obtain in his own market. But he scarcely visits the Binde market unless he is there visiting a friend [517] or relative. Nobere people think nothing of going to Giba or to [436] Pinse to show off their clothes or to have fun at those markets. If any commodity is cheap there they take advantage of the prices, but in general they believe that they can obtain better and cheaper products at their own market.

443 438 It is now possible to find a great variety of products at Mossi markets, and the larger the market the more varied its merchandise. Apparently this was not always so. Crozart (1891 : 4848), who visited the country just before it was conquered, reported that in the market at Wagadougou, he found "millet, rice, millet beer, butchered meat, small cutlery, morocco-leather goods, basketwork and jewelry items,

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
FA28 Mossi FA28

larger markets there were and are solid stalls which are built and tenanted by merchants. In the small district and village markets, these stalls are built out of millet stalks which offer little but protection against the noonday sun on market days. Men build these structures for their womenfolk and for themselves. Some of the shelters which are not used for trading serve as galleries where the young blades look out and comment on the passing scene. Others are used as meeting places by adult men who sit and discuss all sorts of affairs. Still others are used by the older men, who gather there to arrange marriages between their several families, wait for gifts from younger men who seek wives, or spend a great deal of time reminiscing about their youthful adventures. Those persons who do not have such shelters sit in the sun or use grass lean-tos as protection from the sun.

Except in the large towns, Mossi markets are held between the hours of 10:00 A.M. and 4:00 P.M. every fourth day. In the larger towns there are daily markets, but these remained unimportant until today when they serve a growing urban population. The capital city of Wagadougou now even has an "evening" market which opens about 4:00 P.M. and closes at about 9:00 P.M. In addition, numerous daily markets have sprung up in many of its wards. The three-day markets are, however, the traditional type, and they are still the most numerous through the country. By "three-day market" I mean that a market is held one day, not held over the two following days, and then held again on the next day. These markets also have a 21-day cycle from one *Ragakasanga* or *Rag'kasanga* ("larger market") on a Friday to another *Rag'kasanga* on a Friday three weeks later, a total of seven markets between the two important ones. The people give no adequate explanation for the observance of the three-day cycle or the 21-day cycle. One man did suggest that it took the women three days to prepare beer and this was why markets could not be held more often, but even he did not speculate about the 21-day cycle.[10] This same man did point out, however, that the cycle made little difference to persons who really liked to go to market, since it was possible for

(10) Zahan (1954 : 373) apparently found one of the few Mossi informants with a mystical bent; he reports that the seven three-day cycles of markets in the 21-day cycle have the following significance for the Yatenga people: "The first of these numbers explains the cycle of the person (7 symbolizes the complete person: male [to which the Mossi assign the number 3] and female [to which they assign the number 4], the second that of the creation." He believes that each market starts a new cycle, a beginning and an end: "the seventh market signifies the most perfect equilibrium: the one which exists between the universe, mankind, and the divinity." In a footnote he suggests that this sybolism is not too different among the Dogon, who are "ideologically and geographically close to the Mossi." Peter Hammond, who worked in Yatenga, could not find this kind of symbolism.

539 15. Sosra sen kaosda, wata ne korg' wenbsego.
When a conversation lingers, the bag is fingered.
(Familiarity breeds contempt.)

16. Pu' pidya, bango luéya.
Full belly, gagged indiscretion.
(Those who need you are discreet).

17. Sad' no' o, yid noa' karga.
A good laugh is better than a chicken leg.
(A warm reception is better than a good meal.)

18. Ned' kon wok' a bâka, ti pemsom yi ye.
You don't cut open your shoulder just for the air to come out.
(Never abandon a friend in need.)

19. Bunbundi ka dod' zalol'n yé.
Those who give their best do not go away empty-handed.
(Work hard, do your best, there is no lack of true wealth.)

181 153 The Mossi likes to talk. Although he has few ideas of his own, if one knows how to make use of his familiar experiences to bring him to a higher level, he follows the reasoning easily, understands quite promptly what is told him, and grasps the train of ideas and even the finer gradations of meaning. In short, he has quite a noteworthy aptitude for assimilation. Often I explained to a chief in broad outline the handling of a gun or the mechanism of a watch or bicycle. If an outsider came by, the naba relayed the explanations to show that he was intelligent and that he had grasped them properly. Indeed, I was often surprised at how well most of them did this.

They like pictures. At first they often hold them upside down, but a few explanations are usually sufficient to make them grasp their meaning. First they recognize familiar things, such as people, horses, dogs, and trees, and they explain them to each other. They come to understand the scene and the reasons for the attitudes of the figures pictured.

181 /112/ In conversations, when they are not ill at ease, they are lively, merry, and they like to laugh. It is a compliment on their ●522 576 part when they say that someone laughs easily. They are sometimes humorous, they understand innuendoes, but they know how to keep their distance and do not permit themselves any familiarities, even in words, toward their superiors.

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28

643 the name of the current ruler. When Crozat asked one of his Mossi bearers why Boukary Koutou had chosen a title that means "elephant," the man declared, "He is an elephant; he is king of all kings as the elephant is king of all animals; a great elephant-king he is."[2] Another Moaga, meeting Crozat on the road to Ouagadougou, told him to be prepared to meet a monarch "whose riches are inexhaustible and whose splendor is marvelous. [644] He and his family wear only the most admirable European clothes; a thousand horses stand before his door, and there are more than a thousand women in his house. He is served by one hundred eunuchs; he commands as master 333 chiefs; and when he speaks to them it is as though God himself had spoken; everyone bows down before him and obeys."[3] Crozat, looking at the Mogho Naba through European eyes, did not find the "great [576] king" he had expected. Yet he and later European visitors to the Mossi [516] capital did affirm that all Mossi officials and district chiefs prostrated themselves in obeisance to their sovereign, even if they did not subsequently follow his instructions.[4]

643 Many rituals associated with the person and court of the Mogho Naba 796 served to emphasize the high esteem in which he was held by his subjects. For example, the sovereign showed himself every morning at a ceremony called "Ouend pous yan" (literally, "God rises," or "the sun rises") that [114] survives to this day. The name of this ceremony has led many scholars and travelers to assert that traditionally the Mogho Naba was considered a divine king. Dim Delobson states that this ceremony "shows the regard which the Mossi have for their chief, since they compare him to the sun, and thus to a 'god.'"[5] However, the Mossi do not now and probably never did regard their monarchs either as gods or as divine kings. There is a great deal of difference between regarding a man as "powerful and brilliant" like the sun and regarding him as divine. As a matter of fact, the [522] Mossi very often dramatize in humorous fashion the all-too-human frailties of their rulers, without ever considering it sacrilegious to do so. On the other hand, the Mogho Naba, as the supreme ruler, was expected to follow faithfully the strict etiquette demanded by his exalted position.

643 The morning ceremony was opened by the ruler's chief page, the *so-* 796 *ghone-kasanga*, who sprinkled a phylacteric solution around a throne 644 (*guere*) in the courtyard in front of a reception room called the *zongo*. Other pages (*soghondamba*) brought out a large cushion (*naghpure*), the ruler's sword, and other personal accouterments, and placed them on the [292] throne. Still other pages aided the Mogho Naba in his toilet. He was clothed in a large red robe, which symbolized the rising sun; he wore a bonnet surmounted by silver streamers (*wazourfou sebere*), which repre- sented the sun itself.

857 The young Mossi, like children in our own country, like to play.
524 Babies have bone hatchets on which they chew; little girls have wooden dolls, and on important feast days they hand them out graciously with a curtsy; whoever takes the doll must give the child a few cowries when he returns it. The boys mold horses, saddles, and horsemen in clay and draw figures in the dust with their fingers, just as we at the same age used to make mud pies and draw funny figures in the margins of our spelling books. Of course, all this is done rather crudely, but it shows that human beings are the same and have similar tastes all over the earth.

857 All children like noise, and the Mossi are no exception. When
534 the stalks of millet are still green, they fashion a kind of harmonica with a vibrating tongue made of a piece of millet stem tied with a thread; or they cut a millet stalk in two and hollow it out, leaving a mere slat which vibrates under the repeated blows of a stick. The sound is augmented by a broken gourd that serves as resonator. These are expendable toys which are thrown away the following day when they have dried out, but it is so easy to make more! The children
857 also make straw rings which are usually worn around the wrist as
524 bracelets, but which may also be used in a game. They are placed on the ground before the players who take turns rolling one of the little hoops. If the ring falls on that of another child, the player who propelled it wins the hoop; if it falls at a certain distance, it is won by the opponent; and if it rolls past that distance, the throw must be repeated.

The older boys and the men have more complicated games.
524 They have a kind of checkers; the board is formed by making small holes [in the ground] by hand, and the pawns are represented by stones. Above all, they have the cowry game, a game of chance,
525 a game of winnings and losses, and like every gamble involving money, a thrilling game. Those who take to it go as far as their European counterparts. They become cheaters, liars, thieves, and indebted. Some have gambled away everything up to their last pair of trousers, their last breechcloth, and have ended up gambling themselves away. This game should be forbidden as strictly as our own games of chance.

535 The game of games, the pastime of pastimes, that which is resorted to on every occasion, happy or sad, and sometimes without any special reason, is the dance. If the Mossi happened to know her, the muse Terpsichore would have no more devoted followers. No man, woman, or child can remain still when dance music fills the air.

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304 to look into the enclosure. If he should commit such an indiscretion which is considered a gross blunder, he at once suffers the consequences. He is immediately dragged into the circle undressed, and circumcised without any consultation with his relatives.

It is strictly forbidden to enter the kéogo, with néoda (shoes), a pougla [269] (red fez), and kandé (spears). If a canton chief should take it into his head to visit the circumcised boys -- an unlikely situation -- he would have to leave all his insignia of rank outside.

304 834 Since it has been observed that young men who have had sexual intercourse before their circumcision had difficulty in being healed after the operation, they are advised to avoid sexual intercourse for the first few months after the scars form.

304 262 They do not eat wagha sauce (a sauce made of the immature fruit of the wagka, a tree of the kapok family).

304 526 Required exercises for the bankoensé. The bankoensé are required to perform painful and tiring exercises, which considerably retards their recovery. We shall describe the principal ones below.

Very early in the morning when it is very cool -- we have pointed out that the ceremony takes place at the beginning of the cool season -- the boys are awakened and forced to lie prone on the cold sand without any covering. This is the bourga. Naturally enough, the limbs become a bit stiff, so they are roundly whipped with berrella (branches of certain trees), ostensibly to give them warmth and strength. Then, to the beat of the tom-toms, they must do the exercise called guella. This difficult feat involves jumping like a frog from a crouching position [270] and at intervals making a circular movement with the legs. They may also be required to do the even more difficult nagda, an exercise which involves walking on the hands with the legs in the air. Another exercise requires the boys, starting from an erect position, to bend backwards until the hands touch the ground. This is called kaougsèga, "back breaker." The unfortunates whose hands fail to reach the ground get a bump on the head. There are also movements of the head called zouanka, like those made by Kassonké girls and the Wiskamba of Mossi country.

527 victorious heroes that they were only mortals. The thought of death is wholesome and beneficial.

The "bean feast" is so named because on that day the naba eats bean sauce for the first time in the year.

The naba's hoeing ceremony (na-kobo) is celebrated twenty-one days after the previous one, and like it, like the naky, always on a Saturday. When the naba of Koupéla was solemnly invested by the naba of Bélousa, he used to go with a large number of horsemen and much pomp to hoe a field located some distance from Koupéla. Nowadays he merely breaks ground on a path which connects his huts with those of his two prime ministers. He gives the first blows with the [526] hoe to the sound of drums, and his men take up from there. If the Peul and the horsemen have come in sufficient numbers, they run [273] races. As is usual in such circumstances, beer flows freely, and at the end of the day everyone is drunk. These festivities bring the naba a few thousand cowries offered by his subjects.

000 There ceremonies, naky, nakobo, do they not constitute a sort of homage to agriculture, do they not recall similar festivities celebrated long ago by the Romans and even today by the Chinese?

443 The market which follows each of these feasts is always crowded. Several beeves and large numbers of sheep are killed. Everyone makes a point of attending in his very best clothes, and the sight of this motley crowd is quite interesting indeed.

Chapter 3. Magic

000 Mgr. Le Roy, as already mentioned, defines magic as "the art of coercing into one's service the forces of nature, or harnessing the powers of the invisible world, through certain occult practices of a more or less religious character." This is what we shall now study. To put some order into a subject which is wholly lacking in it in the mind of the native, we shall first discuss the superstitions, then the sorcerers.

[181] Like all primitive people, black or white, the Mossi are very superstitious. Were not our own ancestors, in the Middle Ages? Have superstitious beliefs, such as those concerning thirteen people at table,

644 2. Next come the Ouidi Naba, the Larralé Naba, the Kamsaogo Naba, the Gounga Naba, the Nemdo Naba, and the Poé Naba.

[527 788] 3. On Friday and other Moslem holidays, the imam who represents Islam at Ouagadougou comes to give the doua, a kind of benediction which consists of reciting verses from the Koran, in the morning as well as in the evening.

Lebeg'sonre. As soon as these honors have been completed, the Mogho Naba goes back into his house to put on a less dazzling costume. Shortly thereafter he once more returns to the courtyard.

[59] Next the Baloum Naba and his retinue present their respects as described above. The Ouidi Naba and his followers are not required to do so unless they have foreigners to present to His Majesty.

[533] Then, the Bend'Naba, gangando, and luinsé (drummers) and the doudissi (violin players) play together in praise of the Mogho Naba.

It should be noted that the Mogho Naba speaks to no one before his morning appearance. It is not until he has finished his ceremonial duties and returned to his apartments that his tampa (sisters) greet him.

644 273 Before the officials and ministers of the court return to their homes and as soon as the Mogho Naba has withdrawn, the Sogon'-kassanga, that is, the ranking servitor, offers them some dam (known as dolo or fermented millet beer).

1. One canari [jar] of dam is offered to the Baloum Naba, who is obligated to give a gourdful to the Zusoaba, one to the Wedkim Naba (chief groom), and one to the Soré Naba (Bendré, "chief of the path").

2. A canari of dam is then offered to the Ouidi Naba who is obligated to give a gourdful to the Poé Naba (chief confessor for the wives and pages of the Mogho Naba) and one koré [gourd] to the Bend'Naba. He drinks the remainder with the other ministers in his retinue.

[276] 3. On Fridays and holidays, kola nuts, gouré are offered to the imam after he has given his doua and before the Mogho Naba goes to renew his pledge of loyalty [60] to France before the representative of the Republic in Upper Volta.

631 duty of these representatives to assemble the notables of the villages and to order them to submit to the new naba, the only one recognized by the Mogho Naba.

631 In order to show their joy,[1] the people have large quantities of
527 beer prepared, and games are organized which may continue for several days. The village notables come to offer their submission and to swear fealty, bringing gifts (cowries, sheep, etc.) in accordance with the resources of the village and the wealth of the inhabitants.

631 When the nayirdamba leave for Ougadougou, the naba gives:
431 a wife and a robe to the Bilbalga; a wife and a robe to the soroné of the Mogho Naba; a wife and a robe to the soroné or the Baloum-Naba; a wife and a robe to the child of the Bend'Naba; etc.

Any children born to the women [145] so given belong, respectively, to the masters of these representatives.

631 Burial. Their burial is carried out in much the same manner
766 as in the case of the Mogho Naba, except for the specific persons involved. The arrangement of the tomb is also similar, although there is, of course, less pomp displayed. [146]

[1] [i.e. At the appointement of the new naba—Analyst]

Chapter 9

The Two Major Mossi Festivals

Mossi Festivals

796 In actual fact, there is only one annual festival celebrated by
527 the Mossi. It is known as tinsé or tingana. A second festival, which is more a family affair, is called basgha. The latter is variously named, depending on the region: for the Mogho Naba, it is called m'barengma; for the ordinary Moaga, basgha; in certain regions, kinkirga; etc. Although the date for the first festival is fixed by the Mogho Naba, the second festival is celebrated by each canton chief, each village chief, or each ikanda (married man) on any day that suits him, usually after the harvest.

In addition to these principal festivals, every important village has its annual festival, a kind of special market day. On

796 that day there is dam (beer) in every house and abundant meat,
527 and the inhabitants of nearby villages come to the festivities.

Here we shall describe only the two major festivals, tinsé and basgha.

Tinsé (Mossi Ritual Festival), or Naba Oubri Ma Kouré
(The Funeral of Naba Oubri's Mother)

796 Origin. Naba Oubri, son of Zoungrana and [147] founder of
769 the Ouagadougou dynasty, gave his mother a very impressive kouré (funeral). The kouré took on the appearance of a great festival because of the large number of animals sacrificed, the generous supply of food, and the great quantity of beer (dam) prepared. Since Oubri was very powerful, he ordered that the anniversary of his mother's funeral should be celebrated every year, even after his death. His mother was Pogh'toe Hinga (literally, "bearded woman").

For this reason and also to obtain health for his people and abundant rain for their crops, the Mogho Naba still quite regularly celebrates this annual festival known as tinsé (from tinga "earth"). There is no set date for it; it is celebrated whenever possible, usually after the harvest.

796 Preparatory sacrifices. Before setting the date for the tinsé,
769 the Mogho Naba has livestock (cows, sheep) and roosters killed on the tombs of his predecessors.

782 According to precedence, the sacrifices begin with Naba Zoungrana, Oubri's father, whose tomb is at Komtoega in the circle of Tenkodogo. The Mogho Naba sends a cow to the Loumbi-Raogo Naba to be sacrificed on the tomb of Naba Oubri. Oubriyaogo Naba (the guardian of Oubri's tomb) has the duty of sacrificing the animal.

The other animals are sacrificed by the Ouagadougou Naba, representing the family of the Ninissi (first [148] inhabitants of the country). He is accompanied by the eunuchs who are the guardians of the tombs (yad'nanamsé).

In order to honor emperors whose tombs are in various parts of the colony, representatives of the Mogho Naba are sent out with

264 meal of sagbo in the evening.

What we call breakfast is hardly known. Between the two main meals, however, the chiefs have meat grilled or roasted. They are very fond of it and have it seasoned with enough salt and pepper to make it possible to consume the endless number of [273] small gourds of beer which they drink from morning to night.

The Moaga has only one real meal a day, the evening meal. A large millet cake satisfies the day's hunger. If there is any left over, he keeps it carefully for his morning meal. If there is none left, a frequent state of affairs, he makes do with his zompanrga, crushed millet diluted with water and sometimes eaten with a bit of vegetable fat or a few peanuts.

He rarely eats any rice, and if he has no sagbo, he contents himself with benga and souma.

261 It is during the festivals that the Moaga eats his fill. At such times the head of the compound kills a goat, a sheep, or some 527 chickens and has sagbo and fabirama prepared, or beans with copious amounts of karite butter. This is the feast. The members of the family stuff themselves to the point where attacks of diarrhea are inevitable. The results of the attacks are all the more serious in that they are never cared for properly.

The only seasonings known to the Moaga are kalgo (soumbala), 263 red pepper, okra, and salt. No more than a few years ago, how- 439 ever, before the [251] development of trade in the colony, salt was brought from Timbuktu and Mopti by the Dioula and Yarcé and was so expensive that the Mossi people who lived in the countryside often went for six months without tasting salted food.

241 There is reason to believe that the time is not far off when the Moaga will devote his efforts much more intensively to cash crops, such as cotton, potatoes, peanuts, etc. In this domain, the province chiefs at Ouagadougou have made real progress.

Mogh'Nab' Kawinré (Threshing the Grain of the Mogho Naba)

241 Sacrifices. For this ceremony, the emperor summons the 643 Mankougoudougou Tengsoba (a descendant of the autochthonous 782 Nioniossé, masters of the land) to Ouagadougou and gives him a

782 Friday evening. The sacrifice is the usual one described earlier, but
769 the invoking formula is replaced with the following: "Soul of my
796 father, stretch out your hand and take this chicken which I offer you; grant me to reach next year in good health, and I will return with another chicken." The chicken killed on the grave is not roasted as in other sacrifices, but cooked in water.

On those days one must be careful not to sleep outside. The souls come to drink beer from the vats, and woe to those who lie in their way. They will kill them or at least make them seriously ill.

782 On the feast day itself, all those who have some obligation toward
769 the naba or toward the man who is holding the festivities, such as
796 those to whom he has given a wife or who have asked him for one,
431 come to greet him with a rooster and cowries if they did not come on the previous day. Many of his subjects, especially the canton chiefs, also come to offer their rooster and cowries. On the other hand, if an important visitor comes on that day, it is an elementary rule of civility to offer him a rooster.

782 Usually, on the very day of the festivities, no sacrifices are offered
769 on the graves. The victims are offered to the protective kikirsi of
796 the hut, of the inner courtyard, of the outer courtyard, of the whole soukala. The number of sacrificed chickens varies in proportion to the number of gifts. When the sacrifices are over, the naba assembles his people, and the beer is brought in and presented to him. He first pours a little on the ground as an offering to the ancestral spirits, then he drinks and distributes the ars among his people. This is not
[273] a good day to discuss important matters, because after noon everybody is more or less drunk.

On the following Monday and Wednesday, the naba proceeds at dawn with great pomp to two neighboring villages (Nakalbo and Sabré) to sacrifice a beef to the tangandé. Much feasting ensues there on those two days; the naba loses a beef /in each village/ but gains many chickens and a few thousand cowries. He also goes to the village of Toulgou on the day when basra is celebrated in that locality, because his family originated there.

527 The kibsa is the Moslem sheep feast, and it is celebrated forty days after the end of the great feast. All Mossi celebrate it in private; every family has brewed millet beer, and on that day millet mush is replaced with rice and meat. These festivities are even more intimate than the previous ones in the sense that they are held

[574] everywhere on the same day, and by and large people stay home to eat and drink. They go visiting on the days which follow.[1]

On the morrow of the day when the moon appears on the horizon, that is, nine days before the feast, the chief of the Kalmodo Yarsé solemnly comes to greet /97/ the naba of Koupéla. He bears in his hand the spear of Naba Silga, one of the predecessors of the present naba, and speaks approximately as follows. Naba Gado (the naba of the Kalmodo Yarsé) and Naba Silga were friends. The slave of Naba Gado ran away, and the naba looked for him everywhere but could not find him. Naba Gado went to Naba Silga and said; "My slave has run away, and I have looked for him everywhere in vain." Naba Silga replied, "I have not seen him either." And Naba Gado went on looking for his slave. Finally he found him and came to tell Naba Silga, who had the slave returned to him. To show his gratitude, Naba Gado offered Naba Silga the feast of fire. The latter refused, saying, "It is fire, and fire burns." Then Naba Gado suggested the fast, Ramadan. Naba Silga refused again, for fasting is hunger and thirst, and would a friend make such a gift to his friend? Then Naba Gado suggested the kibsa, but with the condition that every year Naba Silga should prepare abundant food for him and all his people, that all should come and celebrate the festivities here and make merry with their hearts full of joy. Naba Silga readily agreed.

When the naba of Kalmodo finishes this little speech, the first wife of the naba of Koupéla offers him a gourd of water, for Moslems do not drink fermented beer, and the naba of Kalmodo sings the praises of all the predecessors of the present naba of Koupéla. Then everyone makes noise and dances. A week later, the naba of Kalmodo always returns with the spear and the war drum. The naba of Koupéla offers him a beef which the naba of Kalmodo slaughters. He pours the blood on the spear and says, "May God grant health to the naba and to his ministers!" The naba has the victuals brought in. When all have eaten, they come to greet the naba, saying, "May God grant you another year!" and then they depart.

These two festive days, basra and kibsa, are observed by all Mossi. (3) There are others peculiar to the naba of Koupéla, which we shall

3. To be exact, it must be said that the name basra is not used everywhere in Mossi country, but the feast itself appears to be

[1] [i.e., following the Kibsa, the Moslem sheep feast. - Analyst]

527

observed everywhere. In Bélousa, it is called kytouara. The name kibsa, on the other hand, is known everywhere, but special circumstances may prevent its celebration. Thus the warriors of one canton were defeated on that day, consider the kibsa unpropitious, and no longer celebrate it.

mention briefly.

The naky (naba ky, "naba's millet") is the naba's personal feast. It is always celebrated on a Saturday, like all the naba's ceremonies. It is proclaimed at market by the village-crier twenty-one days be-
[782] forehand. Seven days before the feast, the naba sacrifices a goat on the threshing floor and eats it on the spot after it has been roasted. The three nabas assigned as keepers of the naba's millet thresh a little grain, and every day they return to the grounds to thresh a little more until the day of the festivities. The quantity of millet thus flailed does not fill more than two baskets.

On the day of the feast, early in the morning, the high ministers go with their retinues to greet the naba: "May God be with you; may God grant you to see the year through!" A procession is formed and proceeds to the naba's threshing floor. His sisters and wives take part of the millet threshed on the previous days and carry it /98/, shrieking and dancing, to a granary located outside the naba's soukala. Then everyone drinks copiously.

Two days later, in the evening, another ceremony takes place. The naba's relatives go to the threshing floor and wrap the remaining millet in grass stalks; the bundle is carried to the sound of drums with jesting, shrieks, and dancing, as on the day of a burial. The millet is placed in the granary alongside the grain brought in on the day of the feast, and a sheep and a chicken are sacrificed nearby and
[782] shared among those present. The naba does not partake of this flesh. Actually he hides throughout the ceremony, for if he saw the pro-
[784] cession he would die.

What is the origin of this custom, which reminds the naba that in spite of all his power he is mortal like his subjects? What is the origin of that other custom, mentioned earlier, of building near his dwelling the hut where he will be buried? The Romans used to remind their

527 victorious heroes that they were only mortals. The thought of death is wholesome and beneficial.

The "bean feast" is so named because on that day the naba eats bean sauce for the first time in the year.

The naba's hoeing ceremony (na-kobo) is celebrated twenty-one days after the previous one, and like it, like the naky, always on a Saturday. When the naba of Koupéla was solemnly invested by the naba of Bélousa, he used to go with a large number of horsemen and much pomp to hoe a field located some distance from Koupéla. Nowadays he merely breaks ground on a path which connects his huts with those of his two prime ministers. He gives the first blows with the [526] hoe to the sound of drums, and his men take up from there. If the Peul and the horsemen have come in sufficient numbers, they run [273] races. As is usual in such circumstances, beer flows freely, and at the end of the day everyone is drunk. These festivities bring the naba a few thousand cowries offered by his subjects.

There ceremonies, naky, nakobo, do they not constitute a sort of homage to agriculture, do they not recall similar festivities celebrated long ago by the Romans and even today by the Chinese?

443 The market which follows each of these feasts is always crowded. Several beeves and large numbers of sheep are killed. Everyone makes a point of attending in his very best clothes, and the sight of this motley crowd is quite interesting indeed.

Chapter 3. Magic

Mgr. Le Roy, as already mentioned, defines magic as "the art of coercing into one's service the forces of nature, or harnessing the powers of the invisible world, through certain occult practices of a more or less religious character." This is what we shall now study. To put some order into a subject which is wholly lacking in it in the mind of the native, we shall first discuss the superstitions, then the sorcerers.

[181] Like all primitive people, black or white, the Mossi are very superstitious. Were not our own ancestors, in the Middle Ages? Have superstitious beliefs, such as those concerning thirteen people at table,

592 1. Husband.
2. Wife or wives.
3. Unmarried children, sons or daughters.
4. Slaves.

Sometimes, it also includes young unmarried brothers (see above).

592 As a rule, every soukala-household has only one large bush
241 field in addition to the garden plot surrounding the soukala (where
461 maize and large red millet are grown during the rainy season, tobacco and cotton during the dry season).

The head of the household, his unmarried sons and unmarried brothers, work on those fields during the rainy season from six in the morning to three in the afternoon, with a long rest period around noon. The women work there also, but their hours are different owing to their household tasks.

The unmarried sons and brothers also have small individual plots of cotton and large red millet. They work them in the afternoon after three o'clock. During the rainy season, as a rule, there are no rest days. A few Mossi, however, have adopted the customs
[527] of their Yarsé neighbors and rest on Friday. Others, who are Moslemized, and incidentally very few, rest both on Friday and on Monday.

During the dry season the members of the household repair hut roofs, go hunting, or else participate in the clearing of family fields, etc. In addition to this they work for themselves, as weavers for example. The money earned in this fashion goes to them and not to the soukala head.

592 /556/ It is the head of the soukala-household, the husband and father, who provides all occupants of the soukala with food throughout the year, morning and evening. He also provides clothing for those who cannot provide their own, but those who can do so procure it themselves.

592 We know that it is sometimes the head of the family and sometimes the head of the household who gives the children of the house-
584 hold in marriage. It sometimes happens, however, that a son
464 leaves the soukala without his father's permission. He usually does
565 this in order to win a wife, when the head of the family or the

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
FA28 Mossi FA28

When one asks the Mossi directly, "What is a market?" the response to this question is: "A market is a place where people 443 meet to buy and sell. People travel from one market place to another 829 market place, and on the way they stop and see their friends in other villages. In the market one often meets and drinks with one's friends. People also go to distant markets to find things which they do not grow themselves or which cannot be found in their own markets."

Lending support to the Mossi contention that markets are places 443 where one goes to buy and sell is the fact that most important markets 487 in their country are found at the intersections of well-traveled routes. These intersections are often the places where chiefs have their capi- [631] tals or compounds and this leads to the further idea that there is a connection between chiefs and markets, if only because the power of the chiefs makes markets possible. This does not mean, however, 443 that the market is a purely physical entity which can only exist under 571 the aegis of a chief, or that it is a purely economic institution. First of all, some markets, especially the smaller ones, are moved periodically without too much difficulty. Secondly, and of great importance, is the fact that whenever and wherever there is a large gathering of Mossi there is a "market." Indeed one can say that Mossi seldom come together in large numbers without coming to a market, or without creating one. It appears that the Mossi cannot interact with one [437] another in any circumstance without also exchanging goods of some kind. For example, when a pagan chief holds the annual festival to [769] his ancestors, the people who attend form a market in the vicinity of his compound. In those districts where the chiefs have become Chris- [797] tians and celebrate their birthdays rather than the traditional an- [527] cestors' rites, the people go to pay them homage and also "make a market." Similarly, whenever there is a funeral of an important chief, [766] the people from the surrounding villages or even districts bring commodities to his hamlet and hold a market during the ceremony. On [796] Christmas day, 1955, the people of Manga district "moved their market" about 500 yards to the Catholic Mission grounds where the Christians were celebrating their holiday. And after celebrating the prayers of Ramadan, the Moslems and their pagan townsmen repair to the markets to spend the rest of the day.

Most Mossi markets are inaugurated with religious ceremonies ex- 443 cept those which develop by accretion—that is, by more and more per- 433 sons coming voluntarily to trade. When a chief orders that a market be [659] created or when a market is moved from one place to another place for any reason, the chief is the person who gives the order for the ceremony to be performed. First of all he speaks to his Raga Naba (market [554] chief), usually a non-Mossi slave, about the need for the market or the desirability of changing its location. This man then consults a *teng-*

643 are placed in the tomb: two sheep skins (gando); some cushions
766 (nagpouya); several bolsters (fourkamsé); and a zoukougré -- all made of leather. All of these are arranged as though the chief were to lie down to rest.

After the corpse has been washed (Naba Siguire, father of the present Mogho Naba, was washed by marabouts [125] since he was the son of a naba who was a Moslem believer), it is clothed all in white. In the house of every Mogho Naba a corner of the wall is
[531 decorated with rather attractive designs, and the dead Mogho Naba
761] is carried through it on his way to the tomb. The sight of this corner, which is seldom visited, reminds the chief still living of the mortality of all beings and makes him realize that in the same way as he succeeded someone, so will he, in turn, be replaced by another; the corner will one day become an opening through which his own body will pass at the end of his lifetime.

In addition to the garments in which he is clothed, the following items are placed in the grave beside him: a folded white robe (fou yorgo); a pair of trousers (kourga); a blanket (fou gobga); a pair of slippers (néoda); a small knife (souga); a sword (zangoégo); a gourd of beer (dam) with a calabash over the neck and a small cloth (leppré) over it; a loaf of salt (yamsem); a gourd filled with a hundred kola nuts (gouré wamdé); a sewn sack filled with cowries (liguide ne yolmoumdi); napaga ornaments (douamba and zuyan); and tobacco if the chief smoked or chewed it.

[767] The undertaker is entitled to take the salt, some kola nuts, and some meat when he departs.

[126] When the burial is over, one walks around the house of the deceased.

643 It should be noted that before the burial or sometimes when the death of the king is first known, all of his wives who have children take flight for fear that their son will be made kourita.

The kourita is a child of the deceased and must bear the latter's name. He is exiled and must never, so long as he lives, look upon the new Mogho Naba. Until the emperor is represented on earth by his kourita, his successor cannot be named. This explains the general flight of all of the wives who have children.

2:Mangin--19a M-5 (ca. 1910) 1921 FA28 Mossi FA28

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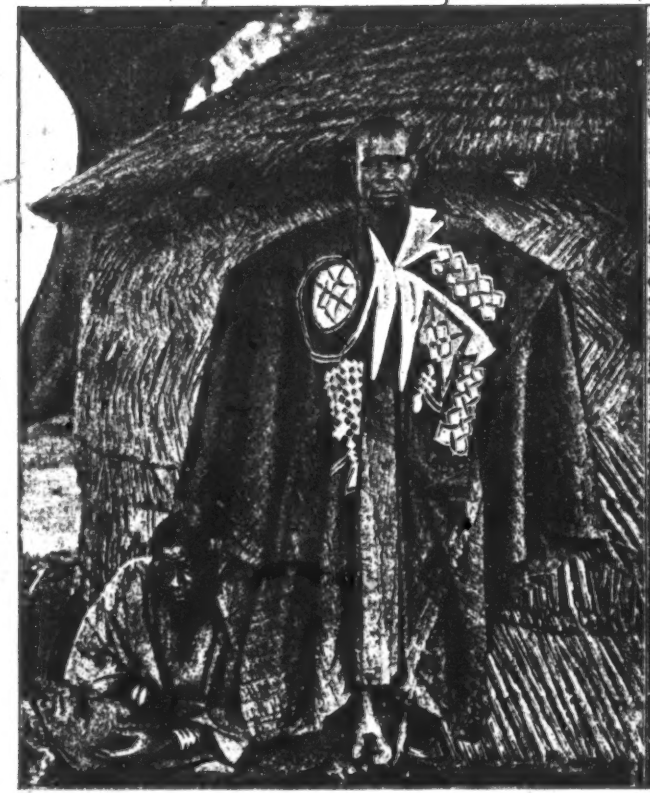

A Mossi Province Chief.

The Moro Naba of the Mossi.

283 which is rolled with both hands on the boll lying on a flat stone; /55/ the seeds are thus driven forward and picked up by hand... The cotton is coiled around a wooden rod which the woman holds in her left hand; with her right hand she grasps and stretches a strand of cotton from the distaff and winds it around the upper tip of a wooden needle, which bears at its lower end a sort of heavy clay ball and which is caused to spin rapidly, like a top, on the bottom of a wooden dish by the motion of the right hand. Extended between the left hand which holds the distaff and the right hand which secures and spins the top, the cotton stretches and becomes thread, which coils around the needle of the top... The thread is later uncoiled, then wound again around a wooden rod to make a thick cylindro-conical ball. When the thread is to be used for weaving, it is stretched around four stakes set in the ground in the shape of a very elongated quadrilateral." (2)

2. Delafosse, Le peuple Siéna /The Siena People/, p. 58.

286 All the young men learn how to weave; it is part of their education. The loom, like the spindle described above, is the kind used by all the Negroes of West Africa, and it is described by Delafosse as follows: "The slat loom is suspended from a piece of wood resting on two forked stakes; the shuttle is canoe-shaped and hollow; the treadled lever permits alternate crossing of the two rows of slats /heddles/; the threads are stretched by means of a large stone resting on the ground in front of the weaver who sits on a crude stool placed behind the trestle which supports the loom (here usually the weaver sits on the ground), so that his feet come to rest on the pedals. This apparatus is usually set up in the shade of the large trees which stand on the village grounds, or else under shelters of foliage built especially for the purpose. The cotton fabric is woven in strips 10 to 15 centimeters wide; several of them are sewn together to reach the width required for breechcloths and garments." (3)

3. Ibid., p. 59.

The fabric strips are not always solid in color. Often the warp consists of threads dyed red or dark blue and mixed with white strands, [531] while the woof is white. Some people know how to make strips with small blue or red checks which are quite attractive. All weavers are

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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The Mogho Naba's daughter, the Napoko, impersonates her deceased father at his funeral ceremonies. Note that she wears one of his robes, his slippers, and his bonnet, and has his sword behind her.

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Mogho Naba Saghe II (1942-57), who was instrumental in reuniting the Mossi people into one territory, the Upper Volta.

[p. 178-8]

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964

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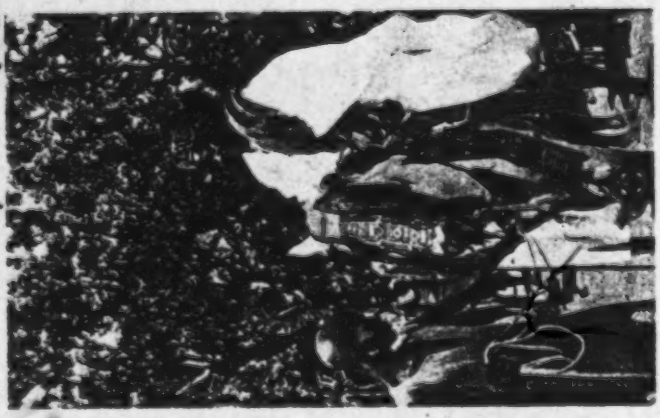

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(*Left*) Maghe Nabe Kouguri and Ouezzin Coulibaly, who became Vice President of the Government Council of the Upper Volta in 1957. (*Center*) Maurice Yameogo, President of the Republic of Upper Volta. (*Right*) Maghe Nabe Kouguri (1957–) on his ceremonial horse at his installation.

[p. 178-D]

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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Mogho Naba Kouguri as court. He is flanked on the right by his pages and musicians, and on the left by members of the Mouhin community.

[p. 178-E]

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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Moogho Naba Kougri (*ववाव*) and, from left, the Kambo Naba, the Goungo Naba, the Ouidi Naba, the Larhalle Naba, the Baloum Naba, and the Nemdo Naba.

[N. 178-E]

551 645 [134] (b) Kata laghem koagb'kon sirigh tanga. (A hundred barking hyenas cannot shake a mountain.)

6. Kamsoro Naba (Ouene Nongué), Naba Niouga ("cat"). He is chief eunuch. Nioug'nok wendé na pa ne Sabelem. (A cat who trusts in God is sure to preserve his blackness.) In other words, one who is protected by the Mogho Naba, his "God," will never lack for anything; everything will come to him as if by magic.

551 643 835 7. Naba Gnighnemdo (Mogho Naba). Naba Oubri, the founder of the Ouagadougou dynasty, fell in love with one of his own daughters and had intercourse with her. The girl became pregnant and gave birth to a son. The wives of Naba Oubri wanted to put both the child and the mother to death. They asked the girl the name of the child's father, and she replied, "Ask my father, he ought to know." When Oubri was questioned, he answered: "Bassi yan ya mam lam gnighnemdo (Do nothing, this is my own flesh)."

The child of this incestuous union was thus named Gnighnemdo and later succeeded his relative, Naba Nasbiré.

The Placing of Statues at Loumbi-Raogo

211 306 532 Ganlougdou. In the old days, upon the death of a Mogho Naba or soon after, a jeweler was called in [135] to make a wax statuette, later to be cast in bronze, in the likeness of the late chief. The jeweler also made statuettes of one soroné, one napagha, one bendré, and one lounga, and all were deposited at the home of the Loumbila Naba. This practice was suppressed upon the arrival of the French, and it appears that there is no statue of Naba Siguiri, father of Naba Kom, the present naba, at Loumbila. [177]

The acting Mogho Naba is never supposed to see these statues, and the jeweler who made the likeness of his father must not see them either. The jeweler was paid 100,000 cowries, a horse, a donkey, a cow, a wife, a large robe, and 1,000 kola nuts, and he was then sent away from Ouagadougou. He must never return and must never see the new Mogho Naba. [435]

These gifts represented a considerable sum in the old days, even today for that matter. They were given to aid the jeweler in consulting seers and charlatans for the purpose of prolonging his life. Tradition has it that unless he followed faithfully the prescriptions given by the seers, he would die within a year after completing the statues.

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And you do not want to let her go!
Are you perchance this child's mother or father?
You are not the God who created her."

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832 The wennega consists mostly of back-and-forth movements of the hips in slow rhythm. Various figures are performed, but there is always the same rhythm and the same swaying of the hips. The sweetheart herself begins to dance, a curious fact, since women do not usually take part in the men's dances.

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776 We have noted that another form of Mossi dance is religious, the waongo. The waongo is a mysterious being, half animal, half spirit.

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776 Origin of the waongo. Tradition has it that this being was one day found all alone on a plain. Those who first saw him took fright and ran away. They went to tell the village elders, who assembled a goodly number of young men, armed [236] with arrows and sticks, to overcome this strange being.

He was not found at the place where he had first been seen. He had moved some distance away. The villagers surrounded him, and the elders, who had brought him a rooster, began to question him: "If he should be taken to the village, would he hurt the villagers? Would he bring misfortune?" The chicken was then sacrificed, but it is told that the sacrifice was not accepted.

The elders returned to the village and brought back a white rooster (norapelga), a he-goat (boéga), and a dog (bâga). Then they addressed the waongo, saying: "We were perhaps mistaken just now. Perhaps you wanted an animal in addition to the rooster we offered to you? If, by becoming our guest, you can bring us happiness, good health, and children, accept these offerings!" They slaughtered the rooster and the goat and killed the dog. This time the sacrifices were accepted.

What the waongo is. The waongo consists of a mask, usually [532] representing the head of an animal, and a bindou (a kind of long cloak made from the bark of the béringa shrub which is soaked in water for a long time to blacken it or from baobab fibers).

326 In short, the blacksmith's profession is of greater consequence to him than anything else, although he avails himself of several other occupations.

[564] Mossi blacksmiths do not form a caste. That is to say, anyone can marry among them.

306 Let us proceed to the jewelers or copper workers (niaka in Mossi).

439 The Mossi have been familiar with copper for a long time, although West Africa does not produce it. The Yarsé have sought it at Ouanké, Kintampo, and even Kumasi from times immemorial. It comes from the coastal area, where it is brought by the Whites in the form of brass rods 30 or 40 centimeters long (like curtain rods). Nowadays, it is the British who supply the Gold Coast with copper, no doubt in the wake of the Portuguese and Dutch.

306 The niaka earns more money than the blacksmith. He buys the copper rods from the Dioula and makes them into various items /517/

301 such as women's copper leggings adorned with crocodiles, and thick copper bracelets worn at the wrists and ankles by women and soroné (pages). Depending on their thickness, these bracelets sell for 2,500

[435] to 20,000 cowries. He also makes women's copper hairpins, and low-price rings worth from 100 to 200 cowries.

306 Prior to the arrival of the French, these jewelers also made copper objects depicting everyday scenes, landscapes, huts. The

● 532 chiefs bought them, but now these objects, at least the more ancient ones, have become very difficult to obtain. It seems that the German physician Frobenius, when he passed through Mossi territory at the end of 1908, acquired some very beautiful specimens of ancient Mossi manufacture for an exorbitant price. Nowadays, one

[439] can imagine what the old industry was like by looking at the small items made at Ouagadougou by a few Europeanized Mossi who sell them on the spot for the benefit of local Whites. It might almost be said, therefore, that they manufacture them for export purposes. These items, made by the lost-wax process, are rather interesting and quite artistic for Blacks.

325 The tools of the niaka are about the same as those of the black-

306 smith:

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1. The small portable anvil or kissiguiré.
2. The hammer or kouadara.
3. Shears (niougou) to pick copper pieces from the fire.

789 If someone tells you that you own many animals, or that they are
791 very handsome, this gives bad luck, as you know. So, to ward it off,
777 /593/ you grasp your grigri by slipping two fingers into the iron hook and two others into the curve of the horn, and then you hang it in your hut, or better still, you hang it from the neck of one of the threatened animals.

789 11. A small turtle completely enclosed in a small leather bag
791 along with a powdered aquatic leaf called kouri. If you have a
755 stomach-ache, you cover the flat side of the object with butter and rub your stomach with it.

789 12. A small piece of wood covered with lizardskin in the middle
791 and leather at the ends and prolonged at one end by an iron tip.
832 If one wishes for the favors of a woman who refuses to grant them, one comes near the cruel woman while gripping the grigri in the left fist, its tip pointing up. At the same time, one presses the woman's hand tightly with the right hand. This method of seduction is claimed to be infallible.

789 13. A koba horn covered with leather and prolonged at the broad
791 end with a chicken foot. Inside, the horn contains rice, salt, and
754 soumbara. If you were threatened by a spell performed against you, you would slip the horn upon your head, with the thick end between the eyes and the pointed end behind the head. Then you would have nothing to fear.

14. A deer horn containing barkoundi leaves and closed with a lid adorned with a cowrie.

To prevent a sorcerer from eating the soul of a third party, you lift the lid with the aid of a knife covered with karité butter, you take with this knife a little of the contents of the horn, and you spread it on your forehead.

535 In addition to the bara and timisoba, the Mossi also have ouango.
532 "The ouango," says Marc (op. cit., pages 152 and 155), "are
575 dancers whose costume consists of a huge liana robe which covers the entire body and which is surmounted by a wooden mask painted red and black and usually representing /594/ the head of an animal. The ouango are members of a rather mysterious brotherhood. They have a special language, and the Mossi believe that anyone who says a word

535 while the ouango are singing will surely die within the year. (The
532 ouango sing at the funeral ceremonies of important personages, at the
575 second ceremony performed a month or a year after the burial). The masks of the ouango are made in the greatest secrecy. They have to be carved out of a single piece of wood, and the man who is making one must not be seen as long as his task has not been completed.

535 "In our opinion it would be most interesting to try and study
575 the ouango and their customs more closely than we succeeded in
171 doing. We believe, indeed, that theirs is a very old institution
174 antedating the arrival of the Mossi in the Volta basin, an institution which they found among the peoples they conquered and which they preserved, no doubt because they did not dare fight it. Ouango are to be found throughout Gourounsi territory, and the dou noticed by Binger among the Bobo would seem to have the same origin. The dancers with totemic masks who appear in some of Desplagnes' photographs are quite similar to the Mossi ouango."

The Mossi ouango are thus no different from the Bobo dou, the Khassonké mamadiombo, the Habé and Bambara namakoro, the Malinké dokho, the Landouman /Landuma/ simo, etc.

173 The Earth chief or Tensoba is also part of the Mossi priestly
174 organization. We are already familiar with Earth chiefs, whom we encountered among the Gourounsi. They exercise no political authority in the village, but they are entrusted with the performance of sacrifices to the Earth and to other local divinities.

The presence of those Earth chiefs among the Mossi is no doubt to be explained by the superposition of the conquering group over the conquered group. When the Mossi invaded and conquered the country, they placed their own men at the head of all the villages and all the cantons in the course of conquest, /595/ to ensure the submission of the vanquished population. They never felt, however, (and they hold this in common with the rest of West Africa) that they were themselves qualified to offer sacrifices to the Earth and other divinities of the place. Only the vanquished, former owners of the latter and on good terms with it, were qualified to do this. The former autochtonous political chief thus naturally became a religious chief under Mossi authority. We have already seen that the Moro Naba

[57] Chapter 4

The Court of the Mogho Naba. Tribute and Payments Due. Obligations of Mossi Subjects to their Naba.

Morning Honors Paid to the Emperor of the Mossi

644 The council of the emperor of the Mossi is held every morning in front of an antechamber called zango which opens out upon a very large courtyard.

831 The Mossi have for a long time regarded the sun as a "god."
776 Wend'pous yan, "God shows himself," refers to the rising of
643 the sun, but it is used in a figurative sense to refer to the emergence of the Mogho Naba. This illustrates the regard held by the Mossi people for their chief since he is compared to the star of daylight and thus to a "god."

643 The Mogho Naba appears each morning dressed in an ample red robe and with a red gourmousga (a kind of burnoose) folded and
292 thrown over his shoulders. On his head he wears a cap, a fez, topped with a wazourfou sebré (literally, "silver paper" [streamers], that is to say, silver amulet). Red represents the light that comes
[822] with the appearance of the sun, while the silver on the cap represents the brilliance of the star itself.

644 Before the time set for the start of the ceremony, the three sogon'kassemsé (great servitors) bring into the courtyard the [58] cushion, nagpouré, and all the other insignia of office. As soon as
[201] the Mogho Naba appears, they arise and make a snapping sound with thumb and index finger to indicate that the naba is coming.

"Wend'pous yan" is also cried out by the gagando and luinsé
[533] (drummers) as soon as His Majesty sits down. The Bend'Naba [chief drummer] is the only one who does not beat his drum; instead, he rubs his finger back and forth over the waxed part of the drum head to imitate the roar of the lion. Four or five young men bearing loaded rifles take their places in front of the emperor.

Honors are rendered to the Mogho Naba in the following order.

1. The Samandé Naba, Baloum Naba, Wedranga Naba, and Simandé Nabila, as well as the Zusoabin'kassanga (chief eunuch and guardian of the emperor's household), are the first to greet His Majesty and to inquire about his health.

644 2. Next come the Ouidi Naba, the Larraié Naba, the Kamsaogo Naba, the Gounga Naba, the Nemdo Naba, and the Poé Naba.

[527 788] 3. On Friday and other Moslem holidays, the imam who represents Islam at Ouagadougou comes to give the doua, a kind of benediction which consists of reciting verses from the Koran, in the morning as well as in the evening.

Lebeg'sonre. As soon as these honors have been completed, the Mogho Naba goes back into his house to put on a less dazzling costume. Shortly thereafter he once more returns to the courtyard.

[59] Next the Baloum Naba and his retinue present their respects as described above. The Ouidi Naba and his followers are not required to do so unless they have foreigners to present to His Majesty.

[533] Then, the Bend'Naba, gangando, and luinsé (drummers) and the doudissi (violin players) play together in praise of the Mogho Naba.

It should be noted that the Mogho Naba speaks to no one before his morning appearance. It is not until he has finished his ceremonial duties and returned to his apartments that his tampa (sisters) greet him.

644 273 Before the officials and ministers of the court return to their homes and as soon as the Mogho Naba has withdrawn, the Sogon'-kassanga, that is, the ranking servitor, offers them some dam (known as dolo or fermented millet beer).

1. One canari [jar] of dam is offered to the Baloum Naba, who is obligated to give a gourdful to the Zusoaba, one to the Wedkim Naba (chief groom), and one to the Soré Naba (Bendré, "chief of the path").

2. A canari of dam is then offered to the Ouidi Naba who is obligated to give a gourdful to the Poé Naba (chief confessor for the wives and pages of the Mogho Naba) and one koré [gourd] to the Bend'Naba. He drinks the remainder with the other ministers in his retinue.

[276] 3. On Fridays and holidays, kola nuts, gouré are offered to the imam after he has given his doua and before the Mogho Naba goes to renew his pledge of loyalty [60] to France before the representative of the Republic in Upper Volta.

653 Naba, and Baloum Naba) do the same thing. (We have seen in an earlier chapter, under "Payments to the Mogho Naba" that the millet brought by the ministers and vassals makes up the food supply for the emperor and his wives; the harvest from his own fields is used to feed foreigners and to make beer for the basgha.)

In order to arouse the young men to greater efforts, drummers [533] accompany them, playing "pang'rog'kamga, kamba komsomba (these young men were born of strength; they are worthy of their parents)."

Loads of millet are presented to the emperor during his first audience (wend'pous yan), after the ministers have paid their respects. The Soré Naba (literally, "chief of the path"), taking his place before the Mogho Naba, but with his back to him, orders the young men by the sound of drums to finish clearing the roads of the naba up to the king's courtyard. Since the work was virtually completed, this is a mere formality.

The ministers' followers and the bearers who brought in the millet, equipped with axes, daba, and even sticks, pretend to work energetically. They gesticulate, cry out, and [155] sing. The Soré Naba then goes under a shelter reserved for him, and the young men join him there.

796 769 The Ouidi Naba, the Larrhallé Naba, the Gounga Naba, and the Kamsaoug' Naba salute the emperor, and it is only then that the latter sets the date for the celebration of his basgha.

Once the date is set, the bodyguards of the Mogho Nabo (samand' kamba), whose chiefs are Samandé and Rakogdo, are ordered to start at once to repairing the shelters in the courtyard where the daily audiences are held.

Sleeping away from home. Three days before the Feast of the Dead and as soon as he has given his pugtiéma (first wife) the sprouted millet for making dam (beer), the Mogho Naba becomes uneasy. This is because the kimsé (manes of his ancestors) are present in the house. He must find more peaceful lodgings.

On Wednesday evening, therefore, he goes to the home of the Samand'Naba of Kamsaoghin. He spends the night there, but at cockcrow the following morning he returns to his home where he spends the day. That night he goes to Gounghin and spends the night in a house near the home of the Gounga Naba, his third minister.

796 Friday night he stays at the home of Bangr'Naba Sambo. Very early
769 Saturday morning he returns home in time to be present when the Bend'Naba (chief of the drummers) comes to wish him a happy new year and a long life and to pray that Wenam (God) will spare him to [156] offer many more bascé (plural of basgha) in honor of his predecessors.

[431] It goes without saying that during the nights spent away from home the emperor receives many visitors and substantial gifts. The persons at whose homes he spends the night naturally give him the warmest possible welcome.

Preparatory sacrifices. These are performed inside the house of the Mogho Naba, and the details are known only to the following four persons: Mogho Naba, Emperor of the Mossi; Baloum Naba, chief steward and chief of pages; Zussoba Kassanga, chief eunuch and guardian of the harem; the pugtiéma, the first wife of the Mogho Naba.

It is known that animals are sacrificed, with the Mogho Naba
796 himself holding the victim and pronouncing the sacramental words.
769 Perhaps there is also worship of certain sacred fetishes. In any
782 event, we are convinced that there is nothing involved in the ceremony which is contrary to the principles of French civilization since there is no human sacrifice. We should have liked very much to describe these ancient practices, but the secret has been well kept.

Celebration of basgha. As soon as the Mogho Naba appears in
796 front of the zango (antechamber), the Bend' Naba beats a drum while
769 calling the names of deceased naba, beginning with Naba Oubri, the
● 533 founder of the Ouagadougou dynasty. [157]

As soon as the Bend'Naba stops playing, he and his followers are served sagbo (millet cakes), mouf (rice), dam (millet beer), and nemdo (meat).

Likewise, the ministers and other court officials who come to
796 greet tabo (the new year) are given dam, sagbo, rice, and meat by
769 the Mogho Naba. The food is distributed to the dignitaries in the
[554] order of precedence, and the rest is reserved for the Bilbalessé and other followers of the ministers.

About eight-thirty, the ministers and court officials say
[576] wennatassé, "God be with us," which means good bye, and then they return home.

769 they return to their homes.

796 The Bend'Naba and other drummers remain in the courtyard until the Sogon' kassanga (chief eunuch) bring to them, on behalf

533 of the emperor, the sum of 10,000 cowries and some beer. In the old days a young captive, seated amidst the cowries, accompanied these gifts. The messengers say to the drummers: "Nab'yet b'wa poustabo (the king sends us to give you these gifts on the occasion of his basgha)."

The chief of the drummers pours a drink for the Zussoba and orders his followers to play together "Tompaongo, Wend'kaouss'Naba nioré, Wenna wilig'vinré" (literally, "We thank the king for his gifts. May God give the Mogho Naba long life and allow us to come back to play here next year").

Before sending them away, the Mogho Naba is obligated to give a karfo (black robe [158] imported by the Haoussa) to the Bend' Naba and a robe to the Loun Naba (chief of the luinsé). Water with flour in it is likewise brought to the Bend'Naba, and he scatters it about the courtyard. The emperor is required by custom to walk upon this water of gnimassem (of good health) as he goes back to his apartments.

When all these formalities have been completed, the Bend'Naba, accompanied by his bards, takes his leave. The festival is over. On the days following, the drummers call on the ministers and

[431] the other court dignitaries and are given many gifts (cowries and livestock).

All of these gifts are retained by the Bend'Naba or by someone chosen by him, and they are distributed later, with due regard for the hierarchy existing among the griot. The share of the older men is always greater than that accorded to the younger ones. [159]

Chapter 10

The Wives of the Naba. The sogoné. The Pogsiouré

Naba Warga and the Origin of the Sogoné

173 Naba Warga was constantly at war with the Riziam Naba, who

644 was called Mamzi (which means "I myself do not know"). He had

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595 foreigners who are being housed by the naba. [164]

Each sogoné or samanbiga chooses a mother from among the
644 wives of the naba (only those in the first two sections).
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He helps her to cultivate her plot of ground and receives in
357 return a little food over and above the ration of sagbo given to the
608 sogoné as a group.

At Nanore (1), for example, it was formerly the rule that

1. Canton in the administrative district of Koudougou.

when a woman brought some sagbo to her adopted son, she could not simply hand it to him. Instead, holes were dug in the courtyard of the naba, into which the woman put the sagbo and sauce. Then the young man came to eat the food, and later the woman came back for her bowls.

644 Finally, it is still forbidden for anyone to play a guitar when
595 a napagha is passing by unless the player is the naba himself or
533 someone called upon to play by the naba. It should be noted that
687 the Moaga prefers the guitar for intimate occasions. Therefore, to
832 play it when a napagha passes by is actually to court her.

The Pogsiouré, or the Recruitment of Sogoné and Saman'kamba

643 Aside from a few special cases limited by custom which we
562 shall presently describe, the naba can never dispose of the daughters of his subjects, either to make them [165] his own wives or to bestow them on someone else, without the permission of the parents.

Pogsiouré comes from pog', the diminutive of pagha, "woman," and from siouré, diminutive of sioubo, "to give anticipating a profit."

562 As a result of family quarrels or even voluntarily, a Moaga
431 "may give away his daughters and those of his brothers and close
643 relatives to the naba." It is obvious that the naba cannot keep all of these girls, so he gives some of them to his brothers, his uncles, his sons, and even to ordinary Mossi who have done him a service.

In the same way -- and this is more frequent -- every sogoné (page) or samand'biga [singular of samand'kamba] (bodyguard or

364 sections and especially around the market. Now formal regulations require the inhabitants [232] to dig latrine ditches in the compounds, but it will be a long time before the native loses the habit of relieving himself in the open air.

Chapter 15

Mossi Dances and their Significance (1)

1. An excerpt, revised and completed, from a lecture delivered by the author on December 24, 1926.

535 In this chapter, we shall describe the Mossi dances, explain their meaning, and tell of the old beliefs with which they are connected.

Indeed, these dances occupy a place apart in the general category of dances of indigenous peoples.

The latter, for the most part and notably among the Boussancé and the Gourma [Gurma], are only exuberant displays, sometimes exercises in suppleness, sometimes caricatures of the motions of love.

The Mossi dances, on the other hand, are actually performed in accordance with fixed rules. There are three types: 1) dances which we shall call sentimental, known as wennega; 2) dances that are part war dance and part religious, called waongo; and finally 3) funeral dances known as warba.

535 In order of precedence, let us begin with the love dance
533 called wennega. This is executed at gatherings. The lover and
832 his sweetheart -- the latter dressed in black, the ceremonial color -- are receiving their friends. Beer is flowing, and mouths are filled with kola nuts. Soon the musicians strike up [234] their
[534] rustic guitars (kondé) which are accompanied by the beating of gourds. The women sing:

539 M' Ba sida talem néré
533 Talem kan-kaïn, talemti
Pagh ka zaïd koulogh wa mandé

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"My husband, keep me well,
Keep me in proper fashion,
A woman ages as quickly as gombo [okra]."

In Mossi country, indeed, married women are "kept women." Other wennega songs include the following:

Kandin bilin koamba ziyob'
Ade kandin bilin koamb' ziyob ya
La Fer-nan dambin yide
Bamb' data pagha piligh' wa rebre y a
Ti prote-mannaie yaoulin pa yaguedin
Koure yanga-yanga karin kouma
f' san katarin kont'me y é
f' san katarin kont'me bif ramodeguema

"Those who work in the circle (subdivision of the circle) (1)

1. In the old days Ouagadougou was both the headquarters for the Mossi circle and a subdivision of the circle.

do not know how to chase women. Those in the big circle, the company of the Fernands, are even more ignorant of the art of pleasing. They all want to take off the womens' skirts as though they were unrolling a mat, but they keep their pocketbooks hermetically closed. Wearers of trousers in whose folds hide [235] lice, if you have nothing to give me, at least do not try to take me by force."

F' Nian néré yetta pa nan
logh là
Fola biga ma bé ba
f' ka yi wenin nana y è

"You admire this girl,
Her beauty has won you

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And you do not want to let her go!
Are you perchance this child's mother or father?
You are not the God who created her."

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The wennega consists mostly of back-and-forth movements of the hips in slow rhythm. Various figures are performed, but there is always the same rhythm and the same swaying of the hips. The sweetheart herself begins to dance, a curious fact, since women do not usually take part in the men's dances.

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We have noted that another form of Mossi dance is religious, the waongo. The waongo is a mysterious being, half animal, half spirit.

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Origin of the waongo. Tradition has it that this being was one day found all alone on a plain. Those who first saw him took fright and ran away. They went to tell the village elders, who assembled a goodly number of young men, armed [236] with arrows and sticks, to overcome this strange being.

He was not found at the place where he had first been seen. He had moved some distance away. The villagers surrounded him, and the elders, who had brought him a rooster, began to question him: "If he should be taken to the village, would he hurt the villagers? Would he bring misfortune?" The chicken was then sacrificed, but it is told that the sacrifice was not accepted.

The elders returned to the village and brought back a white rooster (norapelga), a he-goat (boéga), and a dog (bâga). Then they addressed the waongo, saying: "We were perhaps mistaken just now. Perhaps you wanted an animal in addition to the rooster we offered to you? If, by becoming our guest, you can bring us happiness, good health, and children, accept these offerings!" They slaughtered the rooster and the goat and killed the dog. This time the sacrifices were accepted.

[532]

What the waongo is. The waongo consists of a mask, usually representing the head of an animal, and a bindou (a kind of long cloak made from the bark of the béringa shrub which is soaked in water for a long time to blacken it or from baobab fibers).

644 The arms of the soroné are ornamented with two, three, or four copper
[301] bracelets, often of alternate yellow and red metal. Sometimes they wear them at the wrists and above the elbow, and occasionally both ankles are adorned with thick bracelets or even with copper gaiters which make walking quite difficult but which are prized very highly.
[201] All these pages wait on the monarch hand and foot. If he coughs, they all rub the palms of their hands together and snap their fingers. This is repeated /18/ even when he drinks, sneezes, or spits. If he rises, the whole court rises, and when he feels those needs common to all mortals, the whole court follows and squats as he does.

644 On important feast days, the naba is followed by music, and every
533 time he makes a gesture, says a word, or takes a step, the musicians
534 play on various kinds of drums. The typical drum peculiar to Mossi country, bindré, which only the members of the drummers' guild are allowed to play, is made of a gourd which may reach 70 or 80 centimeters in diameter. The calabash is emptied, and the side where the stem was attached is removed and replaced with a tightly stretched
533 goat skin. By hitting this skin with his hands, the artist draws many different sounds from his instrument. It is quite an art to play this drum well, and the members of the guild are trained to it from childhood. They are the troubadours, the griot of the country; they sing the praises of chiefs whose genealogies they know by heart, they frequent the markets, they follow the rich and proclaim them to be the bravest, the most generous, the most handsome men this world has ever known, for the sake of a few gifts. They attend all festivities.

534 Another instrument is the lounga, made of a hollowed piece of wood shaped like an hourglass; the two ends are rather broad and joined by a narrow cylinder. This drum is carried under the arm, and its two openings are closed with goat skins joined by cords. The artist stretches these cords more or less tightly by clasping the drum between his arm and the left side of his body, while he hits one of the skins with a small curved stick ending in a little ball and held in his right hand.

The naba's orchestra also includes flutes, from which the natives, especially the Peul, draw pretty but monotonous sounds, and small one-string violins which give forth pleasing tones under a skillful bow.

644 If the Moro Naba is to ride on horseback, the grooms bring his
492 mount magnificently decked out in a copper headstall and a large embroidered rug which covers its back and rump completely. A piece of embroidered cloth hides the horse's chest, and the Arab-type saddle,

586 It nevertheless happens, though very rarely, that the husband is unable to convince his wife and returns home alone. No one troubles the wife from then on, and her relatives give her full freedom. The grudge of the rejected husband may be persistent, however, and his vengeance frightful. The bride price is not returned; the husband should have known how to keep his wife. It is nevertheless acknowledged that the children born of the union, boys or girls, belong to the father, and he does not fail to claim them when they are grown, or if they run away to their mother.

564 467 Negro populations often contain caste groups, set apart from each other by tight barriers. The most outstanding of these are the rules prohibiting marriage between members of the same caste or between those who belong to a caste and those who do not. Such prohibitions do not exist among the Mossi, except in the sense mentioned earlier. Although three caste-like groups exist among them, drummers, smiths, and undertakers, they are castes only in the sense that those who do not belong to such a family cannot exercise the profession. It might be more accurate to call them guilds.

533 [534] The drummers (binda) are those who play the bindré, a sort of large gourd with an aperture about 40 centimeters in diameter and covered with hide. Only those who belong to the drummers' family may play on this drum, which apparently is peculiar to the Mossi, but anyone may play on the other drums. [782] The drummers are present at all sacrifices offered by the naba; on Friday, the day of sacrifice, they go and pay their respects to him. When sacrifices are offered, they are entitled to the head of the victim. They are present at all [764] burials, where they play their drum and receive a remuneration which varies with the wealth of the deceased. If it is one of their members who died, they receive neither cowries nor food. They go to war [727] with their drums. If they are so unfortunate as to be made prisoners, they are never sold but ruthlessly killed; this is done either to prevent them from going back into the fray and stirring the warriors to sack the village, or because no one would want to buy them since they belong to a naba who would retaliate against their captors, or for both reasons at once. The drummers are the country's griot, a term hallowed by custom. They know the genealogy of every naba and sing his praises. Each province chief has a number of drummers and never travels without taking some of them with him. At other times they go to /34/ the market and follow the best-dressed people, singing

●533 their praises and beating fiercely on their drums in the hope of receiving a few cowries, kola nuts, or at least some beer.

326 The smiths (saba), by which is meant those who work with iron,
306 extract the metal from the ore and make it into hoes and hatchets. They sometimes work with wood, as in other parts of the Sudan, but usually this industry is carried out by members of another guild. The jewellers make bracelets, file teeth, repair worn hoes, etc. They are not smiths, properly speaking, and anyone may exercise their trade.

767 The undertakers (lada) offer gifts to the spirits of the deceased on the day of death or its anniversary (kouré). They also lay the corpse in the grave, and if death was due to illness, it is impossible to proceed with the burial without them. But anyone may dig the grave and carry the corpse. We shall discuss the undertakers again when funerals are described.

Chapter 2. The Family

596 The structure of the Roman family and the power granted to the paterfamilias, its very foundation, have been greatly and justly admired. Something like the paterfamilias is to be found among the Mossi. Would that we also found the Roman matron! As we have seen above, every Mossi is subject to the Moro Naba, a province chief, a canton chief, and a village chief. He is also subject in a more immediate sense to the head of his family, and he can do nothing without his consent. If he wishes to marry, he consults the family head, in whose household his bride will lodge when she arrives in the village. On the other hand, the man who wishes to give his daughter in marriage never does so without consulting his family head, at whose house the girl will stay before she goes to live with her husband.

[551] The family is thus very tightly organized among the Mossi. Each family has a name which is seldom used; if one of its members was ever naba, the name derives from that of the first naba. Members of
[582 the same family may not intermarry, and usually they all have the
784] same kisgou (prohibition), whether the term designates a totem, a taboo, or something else altogether. The head of the family is its oldest member. Upon his death, the authority is transferred not to his

sented the sun itself. The toilet was performed in complete silence, for no one was allowed to speak to the monarch until after the ceremony. Meanwhile, in the courtyard, the court dignitaries, visitors, and the musicians and minstrels (*bendere*) took their places. The provincial ministers sat on their respective stones (*coganarámse*), and the visitors sat by their hosts. The pages at the door of the zongo awaited the moment when the Mogho Naba and his escort would emerge from the zongo. On seeing the two pages who preceded the monarch, they snapped their fingers as a signal to the still silent bendere.

On seeing the monarch, the chief musician, the Bendere Naba, rubbed his fingers across the top of his drum to produce the sound of a lion's growl, and the other drummers and violinists played the royal air, "Ouend pous yan." The head guard, the Kambo Naba, and his men, carrying guns, walked up from the side and knelt down facing the assembly. And the *samande-kamba*, the "servants of the courtyard," came with heavy batons to guard against crimes of lese majesty. From the wings came a groom with a partly saddled ceremonial horse. As soon as the monarch was seated on his throne, his two pages moved to the front and knelt down facing the courtyard. The salutations now began. The first group of ministers, led by the Baloum Naba and including the Samande Naba, the Samande Nabila, the Ouedrange Naba, the Kamsaogho Naba, and the Zusoaba Kasanga, left their stones and came to the throne with slow steps and bowed heads. A few yards from the monarch, they knelt on the ground, and with their fingers folded and their thumbs in the air, leaned forward, struck the ground with both hands three times, and then rubbed the palms of their left hands with the fingers of their right. Then they arose, and with heads still bowed walked backwards to their places.[6] With the music still playing, another group of ministers, led by the Ouidi Naba and including such men as the Gounga Naba, the Larhalle Naba, and the Pwe Naba, saluted the ruler in the same manner. On Fridays and other Islamic holy days, the Moslem Imam representing the Ouagadougou congregation read aloud from the Koran. This part of the ceremony ended when the Mogho Naba rose, and, with the measured steps and swaying gait that signified royalty, retired to the zongo, preceded by his two pages.[7]

A few minutes later, the monarch returned to the courtyard without his red robe and glittering headdress. There was a second round of salutations comparable to the first, but this time the Ouidi Naba and his group did not appear unless it was an important occasion or important guests were present. When this part of the ceremony was over, the monarch called for his half-saddled horse and announced that he wished to go to

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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pleted, the remainder of the ceremony followed the pattern of the Ouagadougou ritual.

During the weeks that followed, the village chiefs and the heads of the larger lineage segments all offered sacrifices to their ancestors. The Pughtiema of each prominent local administrator, chief, or lineage head prepared and poured the millet water as a libation to the ancestors. Whenever possible, each of these personages invited musicians to sing praises to his ancestors. He dressed in his best robe and sat outside his hut to receive presents from his relatives, friends, and subjects, along with their best wishes for the new year, and for long life and prosperity. In return he gave them kola nuts, beer, and food. Thus, in celebrating the Basgha, all the Mossi were united in prayers and supplications to the ancestors, upon whom rested the future of their country and the successful reign of the descendants of Ouedraogo and Oubri.

The earth deity, Tenga, held the central place in the second major religio-political ceremony which linked all Mossi. This ritual, called *Tense* (from *tenga*, "earth") and sometimes *Naba Oubri ma koure* ("the anniversary of the funeral of Mogho Naba Oubri's mother"), was so important to Mossi cohesion that it was banned by the French, and as a result its main features are now unclear. According to tradition, Naba Oubri loved Poughtoenga, his Ninisi mother, so much, and was so pleased with the elaborate funeral he gave her, that he decided to repeat this ceremony each year in the hope that his subjects would be blessed with the bountiful crops and herds which had made the first one possible. Curiously enough, Oubri's mother was not a central figure in the Tense celebration. Instead, great stress was placed on the fructifying powers of the earth and on the importance of the royal ancestors in Mossi life. The juxtaposition and association of the earth deity with Oubri's mother has important implications for the Mossi political organization. Mossi tradition holds that a Ninisi woman was the ancestress of the Mossi of Ouagadougou. Her people probably celebrated the Tense as a fertility rite to their earth goddess, Tenga. The Mossi apparently took over the ceremony and used it both as a fertility rite and as a memorial festival, thus symbolically uniting the conquerors and the conquered.[8]

In contrast to the Basgha, no special date appears to have been set for the celebration of the Tense. It was held sometime before the crops were sowed, but according to Tauxier it was not celebrated at all in Ouagadougou when the previous year's harvest had been poor.[6] Before setting the date for the festival, the Mogho Naba summoned the Larhalle Naba and ordered him to have sacrifices made on the graves of all former rulers. This minister

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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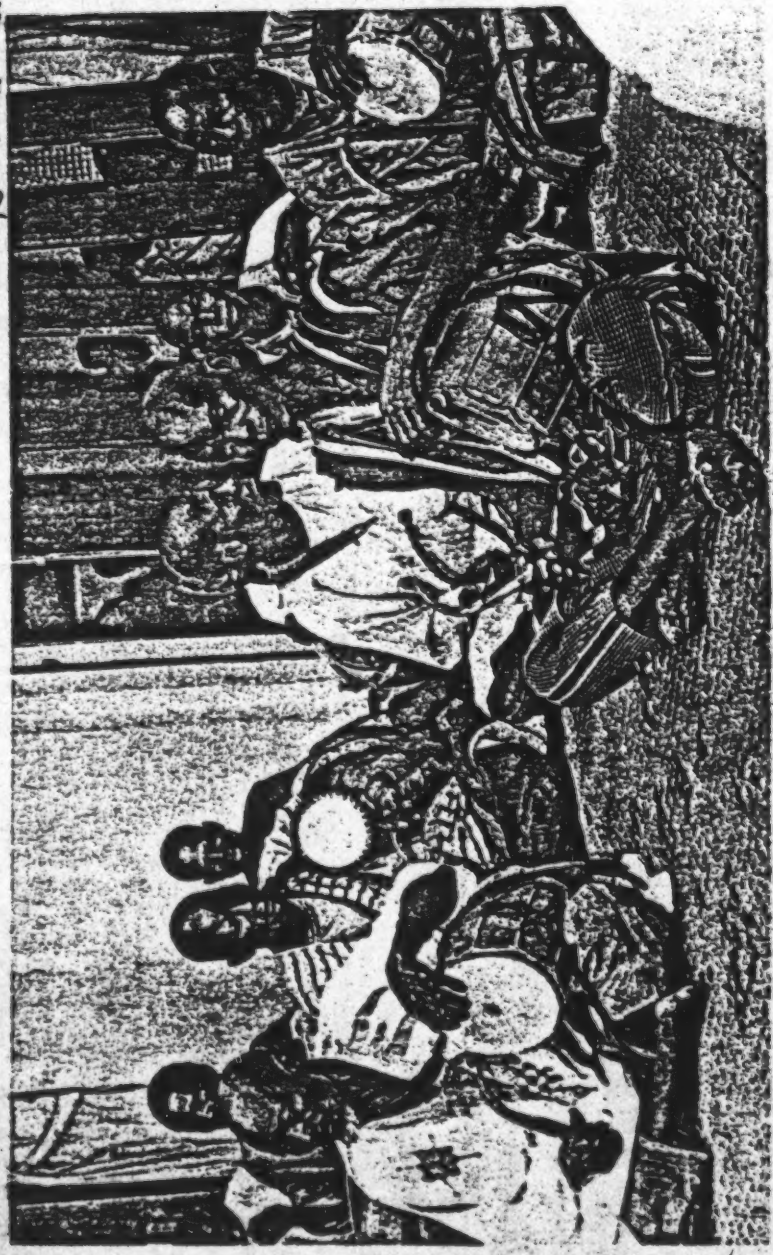

The musicians of the royal court, the Bendera.

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Mogho Naba Kouyri at court. He is flanked on the right by his pages and musicians, and on the left by members of the Moslem community.

[p. 171-E]

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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the noble class, whose actions embody the ideology that the exercise of sovereignty is a corporate right which reverts to all of them when the head ruler dies. Much of this raiding is symbolic and does not interrupt market activities.

Many of the ceremonies connected with the funeral of chiefs and respected deceased elders take place in the market. Sometime between the interment of the dead person, the *keema,* and the first burial ceremonies, the sister-in-law *(dakia)* of the dead man in her role as joking relative—a role she plays until the funeral ceremonies are completed—impersonates him in the market place. On the day chosen for this rite the *dakia* dresses in the clothes of the *keema* and goes to market. While there, she acts as she observed her brother-in-law to have acted in the past: she circles the market and buys goods; she buys beer from his favorite beer seller and drinks with his friends; and for a moment, at least, she sits with his old cronies in their favorite haunts and takes part in their discussions. She may even be serenaded by *griots* who sing praises in honor of "her" ancestors, and she rewards them before leaving the market place that evening.

The market is the scene of an important ritual during the final funeral ceremonies, which are held about one year after a man was buried. On the morning of this ceremony the female relatives of the *keema,* led by his eldest daughter and his *dakia,* appear in the market and go from stall to stall buying all the things the deceased used in his lifetime. These include meat, *zumbala* (locust bean balls), cotton, tobacco, salt, kola nuts, peppers, *kumba* (a tomato), cakes, cooked millet-mush balls, potatoes, etc. When they have gathered all of these things, they retire to a spot near the market where they lay out all the foodstuff in baskets. In the meantime, the drummers play the royal airs, if the dead man was a chief, or ordinary rhythms if he was a commoner. Then the *keema's* eldest daughter places a basket on her head and, accompanied by four men, leads a procession of drummers and of the other women, also with their baskets, around the market. While this procession is circling the market three times in honor of the deceased, the *dakia,* carrying a very old basket containing the stalest food she could find, weaves back and forth through the marching throng making a nuisance of herself. After the third round the marchers return to their assembly point whence the eldest daughter and some of the older women now rush into the market, stealing merchandise from the stalls and placing it in their baskets. This assault is often so quickly done that it is fairly successful. The raiders then join the other mourners at the assembly point, where with bowed heads they listen respectfully while the chief drummer recites the genealogy of the *keema* and tells him that the people from the surrounding villages

364 sections and especially around the market. Now formal regulations require the inhabitants [232] to dig latrine ditches in the compounds, but it will be a long time before the native loses the habit of relieving himself in the open air.

Chapter 15

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539 M' Ba sida talem néré
533 Talem kan-kaïn, talemti
Pagh ka zaïd koulogh wa mandé

773 According to tradition, he had beside him a toabga (a kind of
535 magic axe) and a tibo (a sacred object, fetish).
776 The people captured him and put him in a safe place. But of what possible use could he be to them? Nobody knew. [237] He was something unknown and fearful.

One day the people had gone off to hold the kouré (funeral observances) of an old man and were on their way back home. They were warba dancers. They were all singing as they approached the house of the waongo, who came out. The dancers were terrified and ran away. Only one of the singers had the courage to remain behind.

He went on with the songs and the waongo followed him right up to the house of the deceased, and there he began to dance.

From this it was concluded that the waongo had something to do with funerals. Since that time the waongo is summoned whenever an old man or woman of the Nioniossé (soukoaba) dies. He never dances for deceased young people.

Since the waongo or, rather, the soukou is considered to be sacred and to embody a sort of religion which possesses secrets that should not be made known to everyone, a special language --
[198] a deformation of the môré [Mossi] language -- has been invented. It is understood only by the initiates.

535 The waongo dances to the sound of a special tom-tom, accompanied by songs and praises in the secret language. The dance is of no special interest; it involves more or less frenetic movements, such as characterize most of the dances of the indigenous peoples.

The waongo is always accompanied by a circle of young men dressed in a narrow strip of cotton, decorated with cowries, and carrying satchels at their sides. These boys make movements with their heads which [238] are precisely like those made by circus
[534] horses. In addition to the tom-tom, flute players (wissé) accompany the dances.

535 We shall now speak of the true funeral dance, called warba.
764 It is performed by men wearing skirts, a kind of net shirt dyed blue, and headdresses made of cowrie shells. A long fringe, weighted

535 764 with metal and worn around the hips, distinguishes this costume from others. The movements of the fringe follow the movements of the body. It soon is revolving so rapidly that it looks like a top.

Many people, however, do not own the special costume just described, and they merely tie a blanket around their loins. During the movements of the dance, this produces a very comical effect since it looks like the wagging tail of a monkey.

[534] The musical instruments which accompany this dance are long tom-toms (gangando); some of them are narrower at the middle and look like long, thin spools for thread.

The dancers also accompany themselves with tiny metal instruments which are like Spanish castanets.

The dance itself is performed in a circle under the direction of the chief of the warba whose costume is [239] richer than the others. All of the dancers usually wear many charms on their [789] heads (tail of an ox and heads of birds stained with the blood of sacrificed chickens).

[775] The warba proves that the Mossi believe in the immortality of the soul. They believe that the dance is necessary to enable the soul of the departed to join the souls of his ancestors. They hope in this way to earn the good favor of the new spirit.

Thus, this dance has a moral basis. However, it seems that the same cannot be said for the other dances which are performed so widely today.

535 In addition to these three national Mossi dances, there are some other dances performed only by women and girls which are actually exercises in physical culture rather than true dances. We shall speak only of the principal one, the kiguibtobo ("dance of the bumping buttocks").

The kiguibtobo. This dance is performed by a group of women, usually at the beginning of cool weather after the harvests are in. The dancers clap their hands while singers raise their melodious voices. The dance is rhythmic. Two dancers leave the group and take their places in the center of the circle. They go back and forth, and then suddenly at a given point in the song [240] they turn back to back so that their buttocks touch and bump each other in time to the music. The dancers must be equally strong

304 wound with warm water which often is not scrupulously clean
752 since the gourd in which it is kept is not always washed. The
[278] wound is dusted with a charred substance (made by burning the bark or leaves of the baguem-baga plant) mixed with karite butter. It is bandaged with a leaf from the kantonga bush, tied on with a bit of thread. Once the wound has begun to heal, it is wrapped in cotton strips. The water used to wash the wound is thrown into a hole that is covered with a stone.

304 Special language of the kéogo. In order to prevent the Moaga
198 (here meaning an uncircumcised person) from understanding what is said within the kéogo or between the boys and the guards, a special language has been developed. Some of its words are as follows:

Water (kom in ordinary Mossi language), hargo;
Millet cake (saghbo in Mossi), lâbo;
Sauce (zindo in Mossi), kirou;
Fire (bougoum in Mossi), nionom;
Beer (dam in Mossi), sonnom;
A robe or blanket (fougou in Mossi), pilli;
Mat (pinri in Mossi), wanghé. [268]

304 Distinctive attire of the circumcised boys (bankoanga). His
292 costume, wallimba or zougba, consists of a fringed loincloth with pockets. He carries a rough stick (zâbré) with which he hunts rabbits and other small game.

He accompanies his evening dance with an instrument called
304 wassimba, a curved stick on the end of which are strung four or
293 five pieces of gourd, roughly circular in shape, with holes bored through them.

Tom-toms. The bankoensé (newly circumcised boys) dance
304 to the beat of two drums like those used in the warba and waongo
●534 (see the chapter on native dances). The drums are called
535 gangango when they accompany other dances, but here they are called gallyans.

304 Prohibitions in the kéogo. A Moaga (1) is strictly forbidden

1. "Moaga" is used here in a pejorative sense and means an uncircumcised man.

1: Delobsom--147 I-5 (no date) 1933 FA28 Mossi FA28

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Drummer (bendré).

From the Mission of the
White Fathers at
Ouagadougou.

644 The arms of the sorone are ornamented with two, three, or four copper
[301] bracelets, often of alternate yellow and red metal. Sometimes they wear them at the wrists and above the elbow, and occasionally both ankles are adorned with thick bracelets or even with copper gaiters which make walking quite difficult but which are prized very highly.
[201] All these pages wait on the monarch hand and foot. If he coughs, they all rub the palms of their hands together and snap their fingers. This is repeated /18/ even when he drinks, sneezes, or spits. If he rises, the whole court rises, and when he feels those needs common to all mortals, the whole court follows and squats as he does.

644 On important feast days, the naba is followed by music, and every
533 time he makes a gesture, says a word, or takes a step, the musicians
534 play on various kinds of drums. The typical drum peculiar to Mossi country, bindré, which only the members of the drummers' guild are allowed to play, is made of a gourd which may reach 70 or 80 centimeters in diameter. The calabash is emptied, and the side where the stem was attached is removed and replaced with a tightly stretched
533 goat skin. By hitting this skin with his hands, the artist draws many different sounds from his instrument. It is quite an art to play this drum well, and the members of the guild are trained to it from childhood. They are the troubadours, the griot of the country; they sing the praises of chiefs whose genealogies they know by heart, they frequent the markets, they follow the rich and proclaim them to be the bravest, the most generous, the most handsome men this world has ever known, for the sake of a few gifts. They attend all festivities.

534 Another instrument is the lounga, made of a hollowed piece of wood shaped like an hourglass; the two ends are rather broad and joined by a narrow cylinder. This drum is carried under the arm, and its two openings are closed with goat skins joined by cords. The artist stretches these cords more or less tightly by clasping the drum between his arm and the left side of his body, while he hits one of the skins with a small curved stick ending in a little ball and held in his right hand.

The naba's orchestra also includes flutes, from which the natives, especially the Peul, draw pretty but monotonous sounds, and small one-string violins which give forth pleasing tones under a skillful bow.

644 If the Moro Naba is to ride on horseback, the grooms bring his
492 mount magnificently decked out in a copper headstall and a large embroidered rug which covers its back and rump completely. A piece of embroidered cloth hides the horse's chest, and the Arab-type saddle,

586 It nevertheless happens, though very rarely, that the husband is unable to convince his wife and returns home alone. No one troubles the wife from then on, and her relatives give her full freedom. The grudge of the rejected husband may be persistent, however, and his vengeance frightful. The bride price is not returned; the husband should have known how to keep his wife. It is nevertheless acknowledged that the children born of the union, boys or girls, belong to the father, and he does not fail to claim them when they are grown, or if they run away to their mother.

564 467 Negro populations often contain caste groups, set apart from each other by tight barriers. The most outstanding of these are the rules prohibiting marriage between members of the same caste or between those who belong to a caste and those who do not. Such prohibitions do not exist among the Mossi, except in the sense mentioned earlier. Although three caste-like groups exist among them, drummers, smiths, and undertakers, they are castes only in the sense that those who do not belong to such a family cannot exercise the profession. It might be more accurate to call them guilds.

533 [534] The drummers (binda) are those who play the bindré, a sort of large gourd with an aperture about 40 centimeters in diameter and covered with hide. Only those who belong to the drummers' family may play on this drum, which apparently is peculiar to the Mossi, [782] but anyone may play on the other drums. The drummers are present at all sacrifices offered by the naba; on Friday, the day of sacrifice, they go and pay their respects to him. When sacrifices are offered, they are entitled to the head of the victim. They are present at all [764] burials, where they play their drum and receive a remuneration which varies with the wealth of the deceased. If it is one of their members who died, they receive neither cowries nor food. They go to war [727] with their drums. If they are so unfortunate as to be made prisoners, they are never sold but ruthlessly killed; this is done either to prevent them from going back into the fray and stirring the warriors to sack the village, or because no one would want to buy them since they belong to a naba who would retaliate against their captors, or for both reasons at once. The drummers are the country's griot, a term hallowed by custom. They know the genealogy of every naba and sing his praises. Each province chief has a number of drummers and never travels without taking some of them with him. At other times they go to /34/ the market and follow the best-dressed people, singing

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The Large Mossi Drums.

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Dance of Young Mossi Girls.

857 The young Mossi, like children in our own country, like to play.
524 Babies have bone hatchets on which they chew; little girls have wooden dolls, and on important feast days they hand them out graciously with a curtsy; whoever takes the doll must give the child a few cowries when he returns it. The boys mold horses, saddles, and horsemen in clay and draw figures in the dust with their fingers, just as we at the same age used to make mud pies and draw funny figures in the margins of our spelling books. Of course, all this is done rather crudely, but it shows that human beings are the same and have similar tastes all over the earth.

857 All children like noise, and the Mossi are no exception. When
534 the stalks of millet are still green, they fashion a kind of harmonica with a vibrating tongue made of a piece of millet stem tied with a thread; or they cut a millet stalk in two and hollow it out, leaving a mere slat which vibrates under the repeated blows of a stick. The sound is augmented by a broken gourd that serves as resonator. These are expendable toys which are thrown away the following day when they have dried out, but it is so easy to make more! The children
857 also make straw rings which are usually worn around the wrist as
524 bracelets, but which may also be used in a game. They are placed on the ground before the players who take turns rolling one of the little hoops. If the ring falls on that of another child, the player who propelled it wins the hoop; if it falls at a certain distance, it is won by the opponent; and if it rolls past that distance, the throw must be repeated.

The older boys and the men have more complicated games.
524 They have a kind of checkers; the board is formed by making small holes [in the ground] by hand, and the pawns are represented by stones. Above all, they have the cowry game, a game of chance,
525 a game of winnings and losses, and like every gamble involving money, a thrilling game. Those who take to it go as far as their European counterparts. They become cheaters, liars, thieves, and indebted. Some have gambled away everything up to their last pair of trousers, their last breechcloth, and have ended up gambling themselves away. This game should be forbidden as strictly as our own games of chance.

535 The game of games, the pastime of pastimes, that which is resorted to on every occasion, happy or sad, and sometimes without any special reason, is the dance. If the Mossi happened to know her, the muse Terpsichore would have no more devoted followers. No man, woman, or child can remain still when dance music fills the air.

776 makes noise in the bush under certain leafy trees, his cheeks will swell
753 out. The tisé talk, even during the day. It is their voices which are heard when the wind stirs the leaves. We had /81/ papaw seeds planted all around our dwelling. They had sprouted and grown well; the fruit was already ripening. One morning, no papaw trees were left in
[824] Koupéla! The naba had decreed that these were talking trees, that they would cause illness to those who had them in their soukala ... and the papaws had been cut down!

776 Fortunately, it is possible to protect oneself against the tisé. First,
782 those trees which shelter them may be felled, and the spirits will move elsewhere. Some very beautiful trees vanish thus from the villages. The tisé may also be appeased with sacrifices. Does this result in tree cult, dendrolatry? Indeed not! The Mossi clearly make the distinction between the tree and the spirit that inhabits it, and they sacrifice to the spirit. Sometimes also, a tree was planted on the
[769] grave of the elder who founded the village, and sacrifices are made to the ancestral spirit at the foot of the tree. Finally, there are fetishes more powerful than the tisé. It is enough to know which roots and barks the tisé do not like, to steep them in water, and to place the pot at the door of the hut. When a tiga sees this fetish, he invariably runs away. Some Peul are said to have the power to distinguish between those trees where spirits dwell and those where they do not, and to kill the former trees merely by rubbing them with butter! This must be done in a special way.

776 The kikirsi are imps, red or black all over, and only a few centi-
754 meters high. Their body has the same shape as ours, but it is much nimbler and more tenuous—something ethereal and impalpable that only the sorcerers can discern. The latter call them with a low whistle or by shaking a peculiarly shaped gourd that looks like a handle
[534] ending in a sphere. This gourd is dried without being opened, and the seeds gather in the sphere. The sorcerer makes noise by shaking this instrument, and the kikirsi flock to him singing.

776 There are good and evil kikirsi, and the good ones only do evil when forced to do so; for instance, when someone puts pepper in their sauce. They abhor pepper but they love honey, and every good housewife who wishes to preserve her honey covers it carefully with pepper to prevent the kikirsi from eating it. They are inordinately fond of sesame, and they dote on millet cakes (samsa); every woman who makes millet cakes offers them a few. People who eat samsa while walking are careful to drop a few crumbs to the ground. On the

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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The musicians of the royal court, the Bendera.

[p. 178-C]

364 sections and especially around the market. Now formal regulations require the inhabitants [232] to dig latrine ditches in the compounds, but it will be a long time before the native loses the habit of relieving himself in the open air.

Chapter 15

Mossi Dances and their Significance (1)

1. An excerpt, revised and completed, from a lecture delivered by the author on December 24, 1926.

535 In this chapter, we shall describe the Mossi dances, explain their meaning, and tell of the old beliefs with which they are connected.

Indeed, these dances occupy a place apart in the general category of dances of indigenous peoples.

The latter, for the most part and notably among the Boussancé and the Gourma [Gurma], are only exuberant displays, sometimes exercises in suppleness, sometimes caricatures of the motions of love.

The Mossi dances, on the other hand, are actually performed in accordance with fixed rules. There are three types: 1) dances which we shall call sentimental, known as wennega; 2) dances that are part war dance and part religious, called waongo; and finally 3) funeral dances known as warba.

535 In order of precedence, let us begin with the love dance
533 called wennega. This is executed at gatherings. The lover and
832 his sweetheart -- the latter dressed in black, the ceremonial color -- are receiving their friends. Beer is flowing, and mouths are filled with kola nuts. Soon the musicians strike up [234] their
[534] rustic guitars (kondé) which are accompanied by the beating of gourds. The women sing:

539 M' Ba sida talem néré
533 Talem kan-kaïn, talemti
Pagh ka zaïd koulogh wa mandé

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And you do not want to let her go!
Are you perchance this child's mother or father?
You are not the God who created her."

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832 The wennega consists mostly of back-and-forth movements of the hips in slow rhythm. Various figures are performed, but there is always the same rhythm and the same swaying of the hips. The sweetheart herself begins to dance, a curious fact, since women do not usually take part in the men's dances.

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776 We have noted that another form of Mossi dance is religious, the waongo. The waongo is a mysterious being, half animal, half spirit.

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776 Origin of the waongo. Tradition has it that this being was one day found all alone on a plain. Those who first saw him took fright and ran away. They went to tell the village elders, who assembled a goodly number of young men, armed [236] with arrows and sticks, to overcome this strange being.

He was not found at the place where he had first been seen. He had moved some distance away. The villagers surrounded him, and the elders, who had brought him a rooster, began to question him: "If he should be taken to the village, would he hurt the villagers? Would he bring misfortune?" The chicken was then sacrificed, but it is told that the sacrifice was not accepted.

The elders returned to the village and brought back a white rooster (norapelga), a he-goat (boéga), and a dog (bâga). Then they addressed the waongo, saying: "We were perhaps mistaken just now. Perhaps you wanted an animal in addition to the rooster we offered to you? If, by becoming our guest, you can bring us happiness, good health, and children, accept these offerings!" They slaughtered the rooster and the goat and killed the dog. This time the sacrifices were accepted.

[532] What the waongo is. The waongo consists of a mask, usually representing the head of an animal, and a bindou (a kind of long cloak made from the bark of the béringa shrub which is soaked in water for a long time to blacken it or from baobab fibers).

773 According to tradition, he had beside him a toabga (a kind of
●535 magic axe) and a tibo (a sacred object, fetish).
776 The people captured him and put him in a safe place. But of what possible use could he be to them? Nobody knew. [237] He was something unknown and fearful.

One day the people had gone off to hold the kouré (funeral observances) of an old man and were on their way back home. They were warba dancers. They were all singing as they approached the house of the waongo, who came out. The dancers were terrified and ran away. Only one of the singers had the courage to remain behind.

He went on with the songs and the waongo followed him right up to the house of the deceased, and there he began to dance.

From this it was concluded that the waongo had something to do with funerals. Since that time the waongo is summoned whenever an old man or woman of the Nioniossé (soukoaba) dies. He never dances for deceased young people.

Since the waongo or, rather, the soukou is considered to be sacred and to embody a sort of religion which possesses secrets that should not be made known to everyone, a special language --
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The waongo is always accompanied by a circle of young men dressed in a narrow strip of cotton, decorated with cowries, and carrying satchels at their sides. These boys make movements with their heads which [238] are precisely like those made by circus
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535 We shall now speak of the true funeral dance, called warba.
764 It is performed by men wearing skirts, a kind of net shirt dyed blue, and headdresses made of cowrie shells. A long fringe, weighted

535 764 with metal and worn around the hips, distinguishes this costume from others. The movements of the fringe follow the movements of the body. It soon is revolving so rapidly that it looks like a top.

Many people, however, do not own the special costume just described, and they merely tie a blanket around their loins. During the movements of the dance, this produces a very comical effect since it looks like the wagging tail of a monkey.

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The dancers also accompany themselves with tiny metal instruments which are like Spanish castanets.

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Thus, this dance has a moral basis. However, it seems that the same cannot be said for the other dances which are performed so widely today.

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The kiguibtobo. This dance is performed by a group of women, usually at the beginning of cool weather after the harvests are in. The dancers clap their hands while singers raise their melodious voices. The dance is rhythmic. Two dancers leave the group and take their places in the center of the circle. They go back and forth, and then suddenly at a given point in the song [240] they turn back to back so that their buttocks touch and bump each other in time to the music. The dancers must be equally strong

535 or there will be falls which are inevitable when one of the girls is too robust.

535 539 Here, chosen at random, is one of the kiguibtobo songs:

M'Ma ho, kà M'Ma warla y e
Lebin wa regh'big' tim boudguin
n'di Mossa yarbate ribo

"Mother, oh, my mother,
Come quickly and take my child,
For I am going to the next village
To consume pitilessly the goods of
these wretched Mossé." (1)

1. Mossi.

[241] Chapter 16

Agriculture

241 787 Selection of land to be tilled. As he is wont to do in all important matters, the Moaga entrusts to a soothsayer the responsibility of choosing the land to be cultivated. In actual fact, he chooses it himself, but the diviner must tell him whether or not it is haunted by spirits and what sacrifices are advisable to protect him from evil spirits.

The soothsayer always warns him of the presence of spirits (kinkirsi) and prescribes the necessary sacrifices and alms.

241 782 Sacrifices. The new occupant calls for the head of the family or, if he is a Nionioga, for the Tengsoba, who is in charge of sacrifices. The following sacramental words are pronounced: "A zaguel tib reg' noag'la zom kom kon Naba zidwende, tib kon zig'tinguin damba, tib kon timpelem, tib kon yaramba, kon saramba, tib reg'kon zig, kinkirga ta wa me nan baou ki, on -- on tib reg'koin gnimassem, lass' pogh'banga, lasse zoug'banga, naore banga ..." Translation: "On the part of X, I offer this rooster and this water with flour to the sun god (Zidwendé), to the

304 wound with warm water which often is not scrupulously clean
752 since the gourd in which it is kept is not always washed. The
wound is dusted with a charred substance (made by burning the
[278] bark or leaves of the baguem-baga plant) mixed with karite butter.
It is bandaged with a leaf from the kantonga bush, tied on with a
bit of thread. Once the wound has begun to heal, it is wrapped
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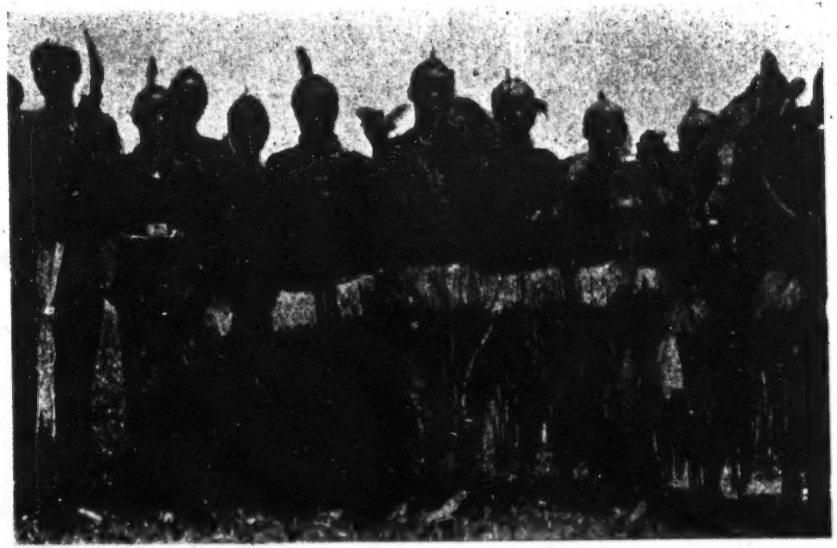
1: Delobsom--162 I-5 (no date) 1933 FA28 Mossi FA28



Mossi Warba Dancers.

From the Mission of the White Fathers at Ouagadougou.

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The Large Mossi Drums.

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Dance of Young Mossi Girls.

857 The young Mossi, like children in our own country, like to play.
524 Babies have bone hatchets on which they chew; little girls have wooden dolls, and on important feast days they hand them out graciously with a curtsy; whoever takes the doll must give the child a few cowries when he returns it. The boys mold horses, saddles, and horsemen in clay and draw figures in the dust with their fingers, just as we at the same age used to make mud pies and draw funny figures in the margins of our spelling books. Of course, all this is done rather crudely, but it shows that human beings are the same and have similar tastes all over the earth.

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525 a game of winnings and losses, and like every gamble involving money, a thrilling game. Those who take to it go as far as their European counterparts. They become cheaters, liars, thieves, and indebted. Some have gambled away everything up to their last pair of trousers, their last breechcloth, and have ended up gambling themselves away. This game should be forbidden as strictly as our own games of chance.

535 The game of games, the pastime of pastimes, that which is resorted to on every occasion, happy or sad, and sometimes without any special reason, is the dance. If the Mossi happened to know her, the muse Terpsichore would have no more devoted followers. No man, woman, or child can remain still when dance music fills the air.

535 /38/ To tell the truth, however, the Mossi do not know how to dance. With the exception of the circumcision dance and of some villages of dancers where people devote themselves methodically to choreography, the greater part of the population do not know how to dance gracefully. This does not prevent them, one and all, from indulging in the dance. Men and women dance separately. The most common male dance consists of a rapid motion of the upper part of the body, from left to right and right to left; the feet do not leave the ground, and they are moved forward very slowly. The arms are bent up to shoulder height and away from the body; the fingers are extended, and arms and hands shake along with the rest of the body. When performed by professionals, who are sometimes found in the villages, this motion is rather graceful but lacks breadth of style. [292] The dancers wear a cardboard headpiece, its crest adorned with a band of cowries and its sides often embellished with bits of mirror fragments, feathers, and all sorts of small, gaudy articles. The upper part of the body is covered with a tight, wide-meshed garment, decorated at the waist with pompons or cowries and small bells. The dancer wears [301] on the middle finger a piece of iron which looks like a large clam shell, and on his thumb an iron ring. He strikes one against the other in rhythm. His wrist is often adorned with a bracelet made of several of these iron shells; hanging from them are small strips of the same metal which clang at the slightest motion. Those who do not have a costume deck themselves out in tawdry finery.

The women dance two at a time, each by herself, spinning around and assuming whatever poses they consider most graceful. When they come near one another, they turn around and strike their backs together; then one of the two withdraws, and another takes her place. All the while, the women spectators clap their hands in rhythm and sing. Sometimes one of them utters a shrill cry to arouse the dancers or to laud one who has proved unusually graceful and lithe.

[831] There are no special dances for the dead, and Mossi dances apparently do not have the obscenity of some Negro dances.

857 But to return to the children. It may be stated, as a general rule, that children can do as they please as long as they help out with everyday tasks, as long as the son helps his father and the daughter her mother. Happily there are exceptions to this, and some parents watch their children quite closely, but these are exceptions. Boys 543 prefer their mother to their father, because the latter must often

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Mossi Dancers.

Mossi Dancers.

304 day the one in charge of the circumcision, a wealthy Yarga or Mossi
563 who has the means to feed several of the people to be circumcised,
852 chooses a tree to serve as shelter for the operation. Rain need not be taken into account, for circumcision is always performed during the dry season from December to April, when agricultural work is at a
[778] standstill. The tree is surrounded with straw mats, forming the téoo or sacred enclosure which no one who is not circumcised may come near without running the risk of being insulted and often beaten; if he should dare to step inside it, he would be stricken by the greatest misfortunes. The Peul sets out a flat stone, sacrifices a chicken in order to make the spirit of the tree benevolent toward those to be circumcised, and operates on the boys one by one. Drums are played throughout the operation to drown the cries of the victims.

852 For three days afterwards the newly circumcised boys do nothing. They rest and tend their wounds. They remain isolated from the rest
[535] of the community for two or three months, sometimes even longer. Judging by the dances which close the festivities, dancing must be their primary concern during that period of time. They also thresh the millet of those who invite them to do so, but no uncircumcised person may join them, no uninitiated individual may come near them.
[198] They do not speak the Mossi language at this time, but a special tongue of which they learn enough to serve them in their everyday needs. Woe to those who forget and use their native tongue; they are
[551] beaten with switches made of a kind of willow. Even their names are changed, and no one may call them by their Mossi names.

The circumcised boys are divided in two groups, one "male" and one "female." One of the groups bears the name of the hyena (kwara in their language) and the other is called masalro, whose French equivalent we do not know. The hyena group must strain their wits to snatch food, even from the other circumcised boys, who are kept constantly on the alert. The other group makes improper gestures during the dance.

852 The circumcised boys are covered with gray dust to alter their
293 appearance completely. A tail is fastened to the back of their breech-
776 cloth, hanging to the ground. It is made of plaited cotton thread and
481 ends in a pompon. Its function is to drive off the kikirsi spirits, who apparently do not like circumcised persons. The boys walk bent over and leaning on sticks like old men. This is done to test their obedience and to see if they listen carefully to what they are told.

852 shaved strips on top of the head, while the sides are shaved similarly
[302] in semi-circular strips. On the seventh day, people who were previously circumcised bring chickens to sacrifice to the spirits of the paths so that all will go well, but the newly circumcised take no part in the proceedings. The children wash, oil themselves, and put on their
852 beautiful clothes. Everything is brand new, the breechcloth, the
292 trousers, the shirt, the blanket, and the headgear. The belt is adorned
301 with a knife in a leather sheath and with a needle case which has at the end a tuft of leather strips with cowries attached to them. They
[776] hold a cow's tail, also adorned with cowries, to drive off the scheuyan spirits who dislike little rascals and people who dress too well. Both wrists are adorned with copper bracelets. Needless to say, this flashy new outfit with its cowries that clang like bells lures the eye and bewitches the young boys, who decide to be circumcised at the first opportunity so they too may eat well and wear beautiful clothes.

852 /44/ The circumcised boys continue to walk bent over, leaning on
[481] their sticks, but their crude staff is replaced with two sticks decorated with burnt designs and tied together. They no longer wear a tail. They go to greet the chiefs, and they thank those who have given them gifts. They walk to the sound of the large drum, since the bindré is forbidden at circumcision ceremonies, and sing plaintive chants to the spirits. They parade in the marketplace and display their clothes in the villages. They dance before the chiefs, and their dances are very
[535] graceful indeed. They dance in unison to the beat of the drum, making the same gestures all together or two by two, varying the figures in accordance with the beat. After seven days the festivities are over, and they all return to their families and take up everyday life as though nothing had happened.

We shall now study this everyday life.

/45/ BOOK III. DAILY WORK AND TRADES

Chapter 1. Occupations of a Mossi

221 The Mossi are essentially cultivators, and it may be said that no
241 Mossi who works at a trade will fail to cultivate his fields when the

754 accused of eating the souls of little children, and I have known some who boasted of possessing this power!

The tibo are a family of sorcerers. People are born tibo, and the village they inhabit is called Tibin. The naba of this village has the special faculty of discerning all sorts of things, especially whether someone has an enemy, merely by gazing into a gourd filled with water in which a certain charm has been placed. A chicken was previously sacrificed on the gourd. This naba, and he alone, can also kill at a distance. To obtain his protection, it is necessary to bring him a goat, a chicken, millet flour mixed with water, and millet beer. Sooner or later the one designated will die! If it takes too long, the sorcerer always has an excuse handy..

754 778 The village of Tibin contains a hut where the tibo fetishes are lined in a row. These fetishes consist basically of clay pots containing water, branches, and tree leaves.. They are covered with clay gourds of the kind used to cook sauce, and the sacrifices are made on these gourds. It is said that there are snakes and turtles in the pots, but only the tibo sorcerers can see them. Every village has its tibo jar in the naba's household, either at the door of his hut or hanging inside. These tibo are the dwellings of powerful kikirsi.

754 781 535 /106/ The bartibo are professional dancers. They have the faculty of distinguishing while dancing those who have the power of killing people, whether poison-givers or seuya. The bartibo themselves claim to have the power of riding the wind and going to kill anyone they wish. They specialize, however, in child-bearing charms for the benefit of sterile women.

754 292 The waongo also belong to a special family. People are born tibo, bartibo, waongo, or nyonnyonga. For their ceremonies, the waongo don garments made of the bark of baobabs which cover them completely. These strange garments completely conceal the person. A figure may be seen walking, but the person cannot be recognized, and a dreadful illness threatens those who dare to strike it. This is why people, when they see these shapeless forms, run away as fast as they can. [761] The waongo wear masks when they celebrate the koure (death anniversary) of another waongo. They can ride the wind and inflict diseases; they can even kill if they wish.

789 If someone tells you that you own many animals, or that they are
791 very handsome, this gives bad luck, as you know. So, to ward it off,
777 /593/ you grasp your grigri by slipping two fingers into the iron hook and two others into the curve of the horn, and then you hang it in your hut, or better still, you hang it from the neck of one of the threatened animals.

789 11. A small turtle completely enclosed in a small leather bag
791 along with a powdered aquatic leaf called kouri. If you have a
755 stomach-ache, you cover the flat side of the object with butter and rub your stomach with it.

789 12. A small piece of wood covered with lizardskin in the middle
791 and leather at the ends and prolonged at one end by an iron tip.
832 If one wishes for the favors of a woman who refuses to grant them, one comes near the cruel woman while gripping the grigri in the left fist, its tip pointing up. At the same time, one presses the woman's hand tightly with the right hand. This method of seduction is claimed to be infallible.

789 13. A koba horn covered with leather and prolonged at the broad
791 end with a chicken foot. Inside, the horn contains rice, salt, and
754 soumbara. If you were threatened by a spell performed against you, you would slip the horn upon your head, with the thick end between the eyes and the pointed end behind the head. Then you would have nothing to fear.

14. A deer horn containing barkoundi leaves and closed with a lid adorned with a cowrie.

To prevent a sorcerer from eating the soul of a third party, you lift the lid with the aid of a knife covered with karité butter, you take with this knife a little of the contents of the horn, and you spread it on your forehead.

535 In addition to the bara and timisoba, the Mossi also have ouango.
532 "The ouango," says Marc (op. cit., pages 152 and 155), "are
575 dancers whose costume consists of a huge liana robe which covers the entire body and which is surmounted by a wooden mask painted red and black and usually representing /594/ the head of an animal. The ouango are members of a rather mysterious brotherhood. They have a special language, and the Mossi believe that anyone who says a word

535 while the ouango are singing will surely die within the year. (The
532 ouango sing at the funeral ceremonies of important personages, at the
575 second ceremony performed a month or a year after the burial).
The masks of the ouango are made in the greatest secrecy. They have to be carved out of a single piece of wood, and the man who is making one must not be seen as long as his task has not been completed.

535 "In our opinion it would be most interesting to try and study
575 the ouango and their customs more closely than we succeeded in
171 doing. We believe, indeed, that theirs is a very old institution
174 antedating the arrival of the Mossi in the Volta basin, an institution which they found among the peoples they conquered and which they preserved, no doubt because they did not dare fight it. Ouango are to be found throughout Gourounsi territory, and the dou noticed by Binger among the Bobo would seem to have the same origin. The dancers with totemic masks who appear in some of Desplagnes' photographs are quite similar to the Mossi ouango."

The Mossi ouango are thus no different from the Bobo dou, the Khassonké mamadiombo, the Habé and Bambara namakoro, the Malinké dokho, the Landouman /Landuma/ simo, etc.

173 The Earth chief or Tensoba is also part of the Mossi priestly
174 organization. We are already familiar with Earth chiefs, whom we encountered among the Gourounsi. They exercise no political authority in the village, but they are entrusted with the performance of sacrifices to the Earth and to other local divinities.

The presence of those Earth chiefs among the Mossi is no doubt to be explained by the superposition of the conquering group over the conquered group. When the Mossi invaded and conquered the country, they placed their own men at the head of all the villages and all the cantons in the course of conquest, /595/ to ensure the submission of the vanquished population. They never felt, however, (and they hold this in common with the rest of West Africa) that they were themselves qualified to offer sacrifices to the Earth and other divinities of the place. Only the vanquished, former owners of the latter and on good terms with it, were qualified to do this. The former autochtonous political chief thus naturally became a religious chief under Mossi authority. We have already seen that the Moro Naba

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The entire assembly saluted the district chief, and the official declared the reason for his visit. Then the district chief sent a page for a chief's bonnet, which he gave to a samande. This youth took the bonnet, came up to the kneeling candidates, and jokingly attempted to place it on the head of each one in turn while asking, "Whom did the *keema* ["dead person"; in this case, the dead chief] say should be chief?" When no one answered he gave up the game, ran to the successful candidate, and placed the bonnet on his head. As soon as this happened, all the unsuccessful candidates and men of the lineage ran away, followed by other samande-kamba, who waved big clubs and feigned violence if they should catch them. The men of the lineage soon returned while the new chief did homage and pledged allegiance to the Kombere Naba by prostrating himself on the ground and by putting sand from the tomboko on his head. By this act the Tenga Naba became the district chief's subordinate and the lowest elected official in a ruling hierarchy that extended from the Mogho Naba down to the least village chief.

Once the oath-taking ceremony was over, the new chief's followers saluted the district chief, lifted their new leader onto their shoulders, and bore him triumphantly back to his village, shouting for joy. Here, in imitation of his superiors, the new chief made a speech in which he ridiculed his competitors, reviewed his background, and made known his chiefly intentions. Here, too, the people seized upon some significant point in his speech as an indication of the name "he had named." However, this name was seldom used, since people referred to him as the Naba of such-and-such village, e.g., Barkago Naba, and addressed him simply as "Naba." The village Tengsoba then performed propitiatory sacrifices to the Ninisi ancestors and to the local earth deity in the chief's name, and "gave him back the village" of which he had been the temporary caretaker. Only after these rites had been performed could the chief assume command of the village without incurring supernatural sanctions of the ancient Ninisi.

The typical village chief had no court. His compound was only slightly larger than that of a village family. He had no officials, but some of his companions who assumed special duties similar to those of the Ouidi Naba and the Tansoba were sometimes jokingly referred to by these honorific titles. The village chief had neither soghondamba nor samande-kamba, and he permitted his wives to serve refreshments to his visitors. In general, everything was on a smaller scale than on the district level, including all ceremonies even to the burial of the village chief.

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 175*

according to the Mossi, the imminent death of an important chief; secondly, 648*
a meteor had passed unexpectedly over Ouagadougou between 8 and 9 P.M. 643
[on March 12th], vividly impressing the Mogho Naba himself. [821]

It is quite possible that the emotions induced by these phenomena aggra- [763]
vated the heart condition that felled him. Certain people have maintained that the Mogho Naba, being opposed to all foreign domination and convinced that serious developments were imminent, voluntarily commited suicide by poison in order to elude them. So far, there is no proof that such a rumor has really been adrift. The matter is under strict investigation.[80]

The Mossi people practiced as best they could the traditional rituals connected with the death of a Mogho Naba. During the interregnum, however, the administration did not permit the usual chaos, ritual or otherwise. One administration report states: "Young people tried to steal things in the market, taking advantage of the old customs, but they were checked."[81] A later report adds that the traditions of the Napoko and the Kourita were honored, and that one hundred persons were arrested for the ritual larceny of small objects.

The traditional Mossi authorities allegedly requested that the deceased Mogho Naba, as one who had worn the Legion of Honor, be given full military honors. This required the placing of his body in a coffin so that [766] the funeral cortege could move through the streets, a fact which introduced [177] a new ritual element in royal funerals. Once this ceremony was over, however, the representatives of the administration withdrew, and the body was buried according to customary rites.

The traditional electoral college then proceeded with the task of choos- [666] ing a new ruler. The choice was between Issoufou Congo, Kom's eldest son, who was then a lieutenant in the French Colonial Army in the Ivory Coast, and his younger brother, Etienne Congo, chief of the Doulougou district. With the administration's permission, the college elected Issoufou Congo. He took the title "Sagha" (the second Mogho Naba to bear that name), and was installed with traditional ceremonies.

The message Sagha sent to the French High Commissioner bears quot- 175*
ing. Like the traditional speeches of newly elected Mogho Nanamse, it 648*
was believed by the Mossi people to contain subtle jibes at enemies, praises 643
to benefactors and friends, and portents of future plans. The Mogho Naba 537
said:

> At the moment when I take command of the Mossi people, I must thank you for having placed me on the throne of my father. I give you assurance of my fidelity toward France in all circumstances. Be assured by this testimony that my father will remain for me an honored person and a guide. I will walk in the footsteps of my father. In these difficult times, my people and I re-

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175 main attached to the French cause. My father is dead, but the soul of Mossi
*648 country lives on. I beg you to transmit to Marshal Pétain, Admiral Platon,
643 Governor-General Boisson, and Governor Deschamps the expression of my
[537] profound attachment to France and the assurance of my full devotion."[88]

Some contemporary Mossi claim to see the Mogho Naba's appreciation of General de Gaulle, his rejection of the Pétain regime, and his desire to regain power over the Mossi people, in the words, "I will walk in the footsteps of my father. In these difficult times, my people and I remain attached to the French cause. My father is dead, but the soul of Mossi country lives on." No one could be sure that this was indeed the Mogho Naba's true sentiment, but this too is according to custom.

Nine months after Issoufou became Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou, the situation in French West Africa changed radically. The Allied forces invaded North Africa, and, after more than two years of resistance, Governor-General Boisson shifted West African support to the Free French. Forced labor and product requisitions continued, but now the Mogho Naba and his chiefs were told that the aim was to help General de Gaulle. M. Cournarie, who had replaced Boisson as Governor-General in 1943, made no significant changes either in the administration of Mossi country or in its traditional political organization. Nevertheless, the pressures for fundamental changes in European colonial territories were steadily building up
*175 throughout the colonial world. De Gaulle, with the foresight he was to
*648 show time and again, realized that the prewar colonial system was dead. He attempted to set the stage for the progress of the African peoples by calling a conference of high French colonial officials at Brazzaville in the Moyen-Congo, to open in January 1944. This conference was to effect great changes throughout French Africa and to set the stage for an irrevocable change in the position of the Mossi chiefs.

634 among the other ministers. The rich and important cantons
645 were entrusted to the Kamsaogo Naba, chief eunuch. This was
[839] because the emperor wanted to be sure that he would recover the fortune left by this minister at his death. Since the latter was merely the guardian of the king's wives, he had no legitimate heirs. The eunuch appointed to replace him had to establish his own personal fortunes. Only the horses or women which the late minister might have given [49] during his lifetime to persons in his section were left with their owners. [Ed., Mossi villages are
[621] divided into sections (Fr., quartier), which are really hamlets containing several households or compounds. These sections are indigenous, not colonial subdivisions.]

Powers of the Ministers over the Vassal Chiefs of the Mogho Naba

634 It would be a mistake to think that before the French occu-
645 pation the ministers had any great authority over the canton chief.
642 Actually, the ministers' role, as has been pointed out, was to act as intermediaries between the emperor and the canton chiefs. They could not, however, under any right or pretext, intervene in canton affairs, since the kombéré was the only lord in the area whose command had been conferred upon him as an appanage by the Mogho Naba.

That is why it has been possible for canton chiefs who were dissatisfied with the minister under whose rule they found themselves to report, henceforth, to another minister. Furthermore, the Mogho Naba saw no objection to this. The Mossi expression,
[638] Gansobend'ka sambiri n'tont vigri yé ("hospitality is not like kinship; you can evade it") amply illustrates the accuracy of the foregoing. If it is further noted that before the French occupation
[651] the naba came to Ouagadougou only once a year to pay their respects to the emperor and to bring him annual tribute, one will readily understand the insignificance of the ministers' authority over them.

This does not mean, of course, that it was possible to [50] do without any intermediaries, but rather that it was possible to choose them freely. In any case, one of the incentives to

651 [72] (c) Fishing. Fishing in the larger water holes could take
226 place only by authorization of the canton chiefs. The day on
634 which fishing took place was treated as a holiday. All the young men in the village and their neighbors, even if the latter did not belong to the canton, came out on the day set by the canton chief and fished for the benefit of the naba. All large fish were reserved for him, and only the small ones were left to the fishermen.

This practice still prevails.

776 Other common laws. Many deities are worshipped by the
782 Mossi. Groves, fields, mountains, etc., all have their "god."
661 It often happens that the naba (canton chief), at the behest of the soothsayers, offers an animal. This may be a sheep, a goat, or even a cow, and it is offered to one or another of the deities, either for his personal interests or for those of his people, or perhaps to ask for rain. The naba dispatches some sogoné [servitor] or samand'kamba [people of the outer courtyard] to one of the villages in his canton to find a victim. The animal is taken without its owner having any right to complain or to ask for compensation. Is there not a Mossi saying to the effect, Talagh-gounda
[538] Naba'gninga the serf raises livestock for the benefit of his naba)"?

For sacrifices prescribed for the Mogho Naba, the animals are provided either by the inhabitants of the [73] town of Ouagadougou and its environs or by the canton chiefs.

Labor Service Customarily Required of the Mossi on Behalf of their Chiefs

651 Forced labor was used to cultivate the fields of the naba and to repair or construct their houses.

647 The Mogho Naba. (a) Cultivation of fields. The duty of
651 cultivating the fields of the Mogho Naba fell entirely on the Bilbalsé,
241 the residents of Bilbalogo (section of the Baloum Naba) and on all former servitors and descendants of former servitors. The Kam Naba (chief of the young men), charged with assembling the workers, had a crier announce in all the important markets that on such-and-such a day the Bilbalsé were to assemble in the emperor's

181 They are very susceptible to teaching. The little slaves raised in
153 Malta learned the French language well, and all those who have met them say that they are quite intelligent. We had children in our school who quicly learned writing, reading, and arithmetic, and who did not forget what they had learned when they got married and had to leave school to work in the fields. Reading remains a pastime to them, and they keep up their knowledge of the French language. We did not notice among them what has so often been pointed out about the little Arabs, who give great promise when young, signs of real intelligence, and who do not live up to this promise when they grow up. The intelligence of the Mossi develops with the years, and this would make it possible to exercise considerable influence over them.
000 Teaching that opens their minds, however, should not cause them to lose their religious sense without contributing anything in its place. Within a short period of time this would bring about the demoralization and downfall of this people who seem capable of rapid progress, and it would be a pity.

538 They like to tell fables, and a volume of Mossi literature could easily be compiled by gathering the historical legends, proverbs, and fables which are to be found among this people. As an example, we shall now recount a few stories we have been told. As in all primitive tales, animals play the role of intelligent actors. The Romaunt of the Rose has long since familiarized us with this kind of literature.

The Bad Vulture and the White Hawk

539 A bald vulture was wandering about the bush. A white hawk came by and said to the vulture, "Why have you nothing to eat?" The vulture replied, "It is true, I have nothing to eat. May God help me find something." The hawk said, "God cannot give people enough food to satisfy their hunger." The vulture answered, "If God does not give me something to eat, I shall not eat."

The white hawk saw a dove alighting on a stick. The hawk swooped down upon her, but the stick pierced his breast and came out behind his head. The vulture came and ate the hawk.

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they might take the lives and property of their subjects. There are many stories of avaricious chiefs who convicted wealthy commoners of spurious crimes and had them executed or banished in order to seize their wealth. There are also stories of twin tricksters, Raogo, a boy, and Poko, a girl, two *enfants terribles* who always succeeded in outwitting and killing avaricious chiefs. When I asked a district chief to explain the significance of the Raogo and Poko tales, he replied that they were "meaningless stories told by children who do not understand how difficult it is for a chief to command and protect men." This remark prompted one of his officials to add that in olden days, people gladly supported the Mogho Naba and his chiefs in order to be safe from their enemies—a statement which might have been made by a conscientious government official anywhere. However, whether commoners or chiefs, all Mossi believed that men must have government, and that without it chaos would prevail.

The Mossi political organization was subject to severe strains. For one thing, its economic basis was not very strong. True, goods and services were channeled to the capital from the smallest areas, and in time this permitted the establishment of increasingly complex governmental structures. Nevertheless, the Mossi fiscal system was not highly developed, and much of the revenue the rulers received came to them in the form of legal fees and gifts. Moreover, most of these revenues were irregular in nature.

Despite this fact, the Mossi believed that their rulers were wealthy—and there can be no doubt that they were wealthier than their subjects. Nevertheless, visiting Europeans found little difference between the standard of living of the chiefs and that of the people. Binger would have us believe that Mogho Naba Sanum bragged so much about imaginary wealth, including 10,000 horses, that he "managed to convince himself of it."[26] Binger's subsequent remarks about Sanum's resources are illuminating even if somewhat biased, because they throw light on the economic basis of the Ouagadougou kingdom. He tells us that Sanum's revenues were

> not well regulated. He lives on gifts and offerings which people have brought him with the aim of obtaining justice, or to demand something from him. He sometimes sends a band of men to capture slaves in Kipirsi country, or at least supports such ventures. But these revenues, like those of all the black chiefs, are not sufficient, because these men are prone to squander their resources. As a result, these sovereigns are compelled to use expedients in order to procure horses and other commodities. Thus, like the rulers of Tieba, Pegue, and Kong, Naba Sanum still has captives in villages devoted to agriculture, but he does not take proper care of these villages. If he does not receive enough millet in the form of gifts, he must sell his slaves in order to procure it.[27]

364 sections and especially around the market. Now formal regulations require the inhabitants [232] to dig latrine ditches in the compounds, but it will be a long time before the native loses the habit of relieving himself in the open air.

Chapter 15

Mossi Dances and their Significance (1)

1. An excerpt, revised and completed, from a lecture delivered by the author on December 24, 1926.

535 In this chapter, we shall describe the Mossi dances, explain their meaning, and tell of the old beliefs with which they are connected.

Indeed, these dances occupy a place apart in the general category of dances of indigenous peoples.

The latter, for the most part and notably among the Boussancé and the Gourma [Gurma], are only exuberant displays, sometimes exercises in suppleness, sometimes caricatures of the motions of love.

The Mossi dances, on the other hand, are actually performed in accordance with fixed rules. There are three types: 1) dances which we shall call sentimental, known as wennega; 2) dances that are part war dance and part religious, called waongo; and finally 3) funeral dances known as warba.

535 In order of precedence, let us begin with the love dance
533 called wennega. This is executed at gatherings. The lover and
832 his sweetheart -- the latter dressed in black, the ceremonial color -- are receiving their friends. Beer is flowing, and mouths are filled with kola nuts. Soon the musicians strike up [234] their
[534] rustic guitars (kondé) which are accompanied by the beating of gourds. The women sing:

539 M' Ba sida talem néré
533 Talem kan-kaïn, talemti
Pagh ka zaïd koulogh wa mandé

●539
533

"My husband, keep me well,
Keep me in proper fashion,
A woman ages as quickly as gombo [okra]."

In Mossi country, indeed, married women are "kept women." Other wennega songs include the following:

Kandin bilin koamba ziyob'
Ade kandin bilin koamb' ziyob ya
La Fer-nan dambin yide
Bamb' data pagha piligh' wa rebre y a
Ti prote-mannaie yaoulin pa yaguedin
Koure yanga-yanga karin kouma
f' san katarin kont'me y é
f' san katarin kont'me bif ramodeguema

"Those who work in the circle (subdivision of the circle) (1)

1. In the old days Ouagadougou was both the headquarters for the Mossi circle and a subdivision of the circle.

do not know how to chase women. Those in the big circle, the company of the Fernands, are even more ignorant of the art of pleasing. They all want to take off the womens' skirts as though they were unrolling a mat, but they keep their pocketbooks hermetically closed. Wearers of trousers in whose folds hide [235] lice, if you have nothing to give me, at least do not try to take me by force."

F' Nian néré yetta pa nan
logh là
Fola biga ma bé ba
f' ka yi wenin nana y è

"You admire this girl,
Her beauty has won you

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And you do not want to let her go!
Are you perchance this child's mother or father?
You are not the God who created her."

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The wennega consists mostly of back-and-forth movements of the hips in slow rhythm. Various figures are performed, but there is always the same rhythm and the same swaying of the hips. The sweetheart herself begins to dance, a curious fact, since women do not usually take part in the men's dances.

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We have noted that another form of Mossi dance is religious, the waongo. The waongo is a mysterious being, half animal, half spirit.

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Origin of the waongo. Tradition has it that this being was one day found all alone on a plain. Those who first saw him took fright and ran away. They went to tell the village elders, who assembled a goodly number of young men, armed [236] with arrows and sticks, to overcome this strange being.

He was not found at the place where he had first been seen. He had moved some distance away. The villagers surrounded him, and the elders, who had brought him a rooster, began to question him: "If he should be taken to the village, would he hurt the villagers? Would he bring misfortune?" The chicken was then sacrificed, but it is told that the sacrifice was not accepted.

The elders returned to the village and brought back a white rooster (norapelga), a he-goat (boéga), and a dog (bâga). Then they addressed the waongo, saying: "We were perhaps mistaken just now. Perhaps you wanted an animal in addition to the rooster we offered to you? If, by becoming our guest, you can bring us happiness, good health, and children, accept these offerings!" They slaughtered the rooster and the goat and killed the dog. This time the sacrifices were accepted.

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What the waongo is. The waongo consists of a mask, usually representing the head of an animal, and a bindou (a kind of long cloak made from the bark of the béringa shrub which is soaked in water for a long time to blacken it or from baobab fibers).

535 or there will be falls which are inevitable when one of the girls is too robust.

535 539 Here, chosen at random, is one of the kiguibtobo songs:

M'Ma ho, ka M'Ma warla y e
Lebin wa regh'big' tim boudguin
n'di Mossa yarbate ribo

"Mother, oh, my mother,
Come quickly and take my child,
For I am going to the next village
To consume pitilessly the goods of
these wretched Mossé." (1)

1. Mossi.

[241] Chapter 16

Agriculture

241 787 Selection of land to be tilled. As he is wont to do in all important matters, the Moaga entrusts to a soothsayer the responsibility of choosing the land to be cultivated. In actual fact, he chooses it himself, but the diviner must tell him whether or not it is haunted by spirits and what sacrifices are advisable to protect him from evil spirits.

The soothsayer always warns him of the presence of spirits (kinkirsi) and prescribes the necessary sacrifices and alms.

241 782 Sacrifices. The new occupant calls for the head of the family or, if he is a Nionioga, for the Tengsoba, who is in charge of sacrifices. The following sacramental words are pronounced: "A zaguel tib reg' noag'la zom kom kon Naba zidwende, tib kon zig'tinguin damba, tib kon timpelem, tib kon yaramba, kon saramba, tib reg'kon zig, kinkirga ta wa me nan baou ki, on -- on tib reg'koin gnimassem, lass' pogh'banga, lasse zoug'banga, naore banga ..." Translation: "On the part of X, I offer this rooster and this water with flour to the sun god (Zidwendé), to the

622 only a relative of the deceased or of a previously deceased naba. Once they have come to an agreement, the naba sets a date and notifies the candidates. Each of them, full of hope, comes toward evening with his men. He is dressed in trousers, a skin worn diagonally across the chest and back, and a blanket thrown over the shoulder in the classic way, leaving the right shoulder and the right arm free. Before each of them stands a young girl, holding a staff which may become a scepter a few moments later. This girl is supposed to receive power at the same time as the chosen candidate, and throughout the investiture ceremonies she will care for the objects used by the new naba and everyone will give her cowries. She will return home after the ceremonies.

All the candidates having arrived, they are seated in the outer courtyard. The naba remains in his hut, and the minister goes to him. The naba names the man of his choice, and the minister goes out, grabs the man's blanket, and tells him that he has been chosen by the naba. The defeated candidates leave hastily, while their men carry the chosen man on their shoulders, which serve for the shield of old, and sing his praises, calling him wobro, "elephant." The Trabrana /sic/, bravest of the brave, then comes to him with a leather satchel, and the chosen man must give him cowries. He also gives some to the minister to get back his blanket, and throughout the three festive days that follow his appointment he must provide large quantities of millet beer. These expenses are alleviated by his new subjects, who come to greet him and offer him gifts as soon as they get the news. /20/ The defeated candidates return on the following day, with shaved heads, to make obeisance to their fortunate competitor. For three days there is much merry-making at the household of the minister who acted as intermediary. Drums are played, the people dance, and they sing as follows:

622 Sen kong'nam, lébra sonkam ysa.	Those who were not chosen will gather peanuts.
539 Bamb'naba y minimini biga, ka zué waodo, dem kom.	Their naba is like the young of the wild duck: he does not fear the cold, he plays in the water.
Sérénde wobro, n'béla.	Come to the elephant and greet him.

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Sen damma nyébra, baryoro nan wa. If someone attempts to kill the crocodile, the serpent appears immediately. (1)

1. That is, to say, if someone threatens the new naba, the province chief will come to his aid.

622 On the third day the new naba is shaved. His sister, or in her absence an old woman, begins the procedure, but anyone may complete it. Everybody then goes to the naba: the chosen man is to re-
[55] ceive a name, and from now on it will be forbidden to call him by his previous name. Each naba receives three names, or rather three mottoes, chosen by his sister or by an old woman of the family. These mottoes allude to a historical event or to the chosen man's position. When everyone has arrived at the naba's house, the man's sister discloses the mottoes to the naba, who proclaims them, and the drums in turn repeat them to the people. Then the dancing, singing, and drinking are resumed. On the following day the new naba, duly invested, returns to his village to take up his duties.

Here are some of the mottoes:

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I. The mottoes of the naba of Koupéla allude to the war which took place at the time of his father's appointment between the latter, Naba Ibri, and the people of Kazem'bouanga:

1. Wadra yerda né kyougou. Wadra gousa menga, t'a péleum ka yd kyougou. The star glows in spite of the moon. But it should beware, for its brilliance does not obliterate that of the moon. (The star stands for the Kazem'bouanga pretender. The moon is the naba of Koupéla.)

2. Kalébdo kanenga, la son boulwaka. Kalebodd sauce is not good, but it is better than boulwaka sauce. (The naba of Koupéla is not very powerful, but he is more powerful than the people of Kazem'bouanga.)

3. Néda gwanga nan samma. The lame man claims that he will kill him. (The pretender, the lame man, intends to kill the naba of Koupéla.)

II. The mottoes of the Saman'Naba, prime minister of Koupéla, allude to his position vis-à-vis the naba, to whom he owes everything and who supports him:

622 1. Ti'douda béleum villi n'pam n'dou. Those who wish to
539 climb a tree seize the branches for support. /21/

2. Gigemdé sen touka séolro, wenniginamma, walpélronamma, nonga morbo, la'b zuéta gemdé. The lion digs up the salty earth (good to eat); the buffalo and koba /a kind of horse antelope/ like to eat it, but fear the lion. (The enemies of the Saman'Naba would like to take his place, but fear the naba.)

3. Kong'pánga, bar'bala. Those who lack strength remain servants.

645 The appointment of the high ministers involves only a few gifts,
635 offered during the festive days which last from the death of the minister to the nomination of his successor. The eldest son usually inherits the position, but the province chief may designate anyone he pleases.

636 Upon the death of the naba of Koupéla, a province chief, the ministers hold a council and decide among themselves who is to be his successor. The eldest son is nearly always chosen. Before the name of the man selected is announced, the head of the village section that bears the name Koupéla notifies the canton chiefs, who gather in the village of Koupéla. When everyone has arrived, the Tabrana /sic/ proclaims the name of the man chosen, and they all proceed to Bélousa to disclose their choice to the naba and to request his investiture. The naba of Bélousa usually accepts the man thus formally designated. If there is disagreement, or if he himself would prefer a different choice, he notifies the Moro Naba accordingly and indicates his own preferences; when his messenger returns, he proclaims the appointment, and everyone submits to his will. After all, he "has the strength." As badges of investiture, the naba of Bélousa presents the chosen man with a cap, a pair of shoes, and a scepter. The new naba still may not wear the cap, put on the shoes, or hold
[769] the scepter. He must proceed first to the grave of the ancestor of the people, Naba Kourita, where he offers sacrifices, especially that of a cow. The festivities last for seven days, in the course of which millet beer flows freely and cattle is slaughtered in large numbers. In the course of these festivities the head of the chosen man is shaved, and he receives from the messengers of the naba of Bélousa the cap, shoes, and scepter; only then does he truly become a naba, with the right to

782 a hut for one's wife. Sacrifices are made for every purpose, for everybody, and practically to everything.

Sacrifices are made everywhere. The sacred grove is the place most frequently chosen, along with the dwelling-stone of the kikiriga who protects the house. Sacrifices may be made, however, in the fields, in open spaces where nothing grows, or on the path which leads to the tangandé either from the village where one lives or from one's village of origin, if it is learned that the spirit requires a sacrifice and one cannot go there in person.

Any man may offer a sacrifice once he has reached the age of reason, and children of about ten are sometimes seen offering their sacrifices with as much solemnity as their elders. Women cannot [562] themselves make sacrifices; they must resort to the agency of men. They may, however, furnish the victim and partake of it when it is eaten. Nabas and men of some wealth have their own appointed sacrificer or sacrificers. This is compulsory for province chiefs, who themselves never sacrifice in public ceremonies and quite rarely in private.

There are several kinds of sacrifices, and we shall study each one of them in turn, the better to understand how the Mossi communicate with the invisible world.

First, the characteristic sacrifice which serves as basis to all the others, the mand'zallé.

The sacrificer, accompanied by his son bearing a white or otherwise colored rooster and a gourd containing millet flour mixed with water, proceeds to the place of the sacrifice, for example, to the tangandé.

Upon arriving he says:

782 Kabré, kabré. — Excuse me, pardon me.

539 /91/ Then he sits down, his face turned to the west, and taking the victim in his hands, he says:

Na-Wend'daogo, sak'a tan!	God-king male, answer thrice!
Na-Wend'poko, sak'a nasé!	God-king female, answer four times!
Na-Wend'ka kou ned'yé, kon ky yé.	If God-king does not kill, we do not die.
Na-Wendé ka léo, ned'kon lu'yé. — Pilimpik'dim n'yélé; Iila kom'dim n'yélé t'eb y noara, ti	If God-king does not bind, we are not bound. — The butterflies have told us; the spirits of the water have told us to take a

782 no'pelra t'eb kis'tangandé t'a déé n'di né teng'kikirsi lé teng'portapa.
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bird, a white rooster, and to offer it to the tangandé, so that he may take it and it with the kikirsi of the village and their wives.

782 This formula may vary with the circumstances. This is when the
539 sacrificer sets forth his wishes. He tells the tangandé, for instance,
755 that his son is ill and that he has consulted the sorcerer, who has told him to take a white rooster and offer it to the tangandé with water, so that the tangandé may restore his son's health. Then he pours the water behind his back, toward the east, and says:

Na-wendé, déé a ybou kom! God-king, receive the water of your rising!

Then he pours water before him, to the west, and says:

Na-wendé, déé a kyenbo kom! God-king, receive the water of your setting!

Finally he pours water on the sacrificial stone or before his feet, saying:

Tangandé, yk'n'déé kom nyou la kwen la biga lafi! Tangandé, arise, receive the water and drink it, and grant health to my son!

Nyé lé zouanga, nini ka yé. He is like a blind man, he no longer has eyes.

Tangandé nyé youngo né wintoro la ko biga lafi. The tangandé, he sees night and day and grants health to my child.

If the sacrifice includes an offering of millet beer, he pours some on the sacrificial stone, saying:

Na-Wendé ka nyou dam yé, la porédimma nyouda. God-king does not drink beer, but those of his retinue do.

Then he seizes the rooster with his left hand, bends its head back by pulling the comb, and slits its throat. He allows the blood to flow upon the stone where the water was poured, while saying:

Tangandé déé noara n'di, la kwen la biga lafi né sounoro! Tangandé, receive this rooster and eat it, and grant my child health and joy!

Then he tosses the rooster before him, saying:

Noara bé Wennam, ba souk' ba'a. This rooster is for God; may He dispell the illness.

Then he sends his child to get the rooster. The boy grasps the bird when it is lying on its back and if necessary helps it to achieve this

782 position. /92/ He drags it along the ground by the feet to the
●539 sacrificer, who says:
755 T'a vouda bemdaoge. Drag me enemies along the ground.

The sacrificer then seizes the chicken and sets it upon its feet, holding its head straight:

T'a timma biga! May He grant health to my child!

He turns the rooster around, with its head down and its legs up in the air:

T'a terida bema! May He cause my enemies to bite the dust!

With his left hand he tears feathers from the neck, spits on them, and glues them to the stone or to the ground with the victims's blood, saying:

Yelbandé tou sébro! May all that is evil go with the wind!

Ta toubré oum! May his /my enemy's/ ears catch (my curses)!

Ta nif ka nya yé! May he /my enemy's/ eyes go blind!

He breaks one of the chicken's legs:

T'a kao bemdaogo karga! Break the leg of my male enemies!

He breaks the other leg:

T'a kao bempoko karga! Break the leg of my female enemies!

He returns the bird to the child, who carries it away. The remaining water and beer are poured on the very spot of the sacrifice.

The rooster is plucked there or at home and roasted or cooked in water according to the sacrifice. The sacrificer removes the claws, beak, pinions, and liver, and he places them in the left hand of his child who lays them by the path some distance away, saying:

Mand'déé gobra, la kwen détogo nyé masem. The sacrifice is received with the left hand, but grant him health with the right hand.

He returns to the place where the people are gathered, and the victim is shared among all present. When all have eaten, they gather in a group before the sacrificer and greet him as follows:

Wennam déé mando! May God receive /Tr., the Mossi word means "eat"/ your sacrifice!

Wennam tou taoré! May God accept it!

The sacrifice is over.

181 who speak little; there are the choleric people, more liable than others
157 to anger, more spiteful, but also endowed with more energy.

Energy is not the chief quality of these people, who are trained by
181 their leaders to blind and faithful obedience. The tight organization
156 we have described has its unhappy consequences, atrophy of the will and destruction of the spirit of initiative. Such is the price. A Mossi cannot resist those who are more powerful. Flexible and almost cowardly before his superiors, he makes up for it with his inferiors and shows great arrogance and disdain toward those who are weaker.

181 /110/ The Mossi do not exercise their will, and they do not exer-
153 cise their thinking faculty. This is not because they lack intelligence, but because they are not accustomed to thought except when their interests are at stake, at which time some of them demonstrate true intelligence and diplomacy.

The Mossi do not question the why of things. While small children in our country like to argue and often perplex us with their questions, the Mossi never ask themselves, "How can this be? Why is it so and not otherwise?" The first answer that comes to mind satisfies them.

This lack of thought is the cause of their lagging civilization, for is it not true that we move forward unceasingly only because we seek to investigate the cause of everything? It also results in a paucity of ideas. Conversations turn mainly upon women, food, and agriculture during the rainy season. Their sphere of ideas is quite restricted, but it is capable of expansion, for the Mossi may be considered quite intelligent.

539 If proverbs express the wisdom of a people, the Mossi certainly do not lack wisdom and often couch it with great subtlety. Permit us to prove this by quoting a few proverbs, culled in the course of conversations by Fr. Thueux, who kindly conveyed them to us and who gathered explanations, since some of them are real enigmas to our European minds.

1. Kota ningri, ka kot' sen kong'ye.
   Give above you, not below.
   (If you give to someone who is more powerful, you will always get something out of it.)
2. Maokasankaré ñarda kon lo'é naobi taoré.
   No matter how much it may hurry, the heel never catches up with the toes.
   (Who is the hen to sing before the rooster?)

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3. Pang'sen tu soré, bũm buta mo'en.
When Strength walks the path, Justice steps aside into the bush.
(Might makes right.)

4. Ka suét'nil ba'a, nan ñóka.
The dog will grab you if you don't respect its nose.
(Don't laugh, for you might pay for it.)

5. Soam' garedga, wamma n' so.
The master of the hunt is master of the disputed hare.
(Every disputed hare devolves to the master of the hunt.)

6. M'ba di sarabo, n' long'zom.
My father ate the millet mush, he is moving toward the flour.
(He who has drunk will drink /The rich get richer./.)

7. Fo nan ka suk'korgo, l'e kurn sa'a.
You have not yet searched the bag, and you weep about the lightning.
(You cry before you are hit.)

8. Dunna benda, saon beo' kurga.
A breechcloth today is better than trousers tomorrow.
(One thing that is yours, it is said, is worth more than two things you may have in the future /A bird in hand is better than two in the bush./.)

9. Kobré sen kyama, ya kob' kaodga.
A hard bone is a brittle bone.
(Your strength will ultimately betray your courage.)

/111/ 10. Sarab' ki n' beng' a menga.
Mush that spoils turns to water by itself.
(He has done harm to himself.)

11. Yind' kondro, ka bé sokr'ye.
Old songs are not questioned.
(No explanation is needed for familiar things.)

12. Abra kud' ka leb n' tut' bé ias' yé.
An old leopard would not go back there.
(One does not return to a person one has wronged.)

13. Katré yi no'o, ka ginn' yé.
When the hyena was good, one does not turn aside.
(One returns to those places where he was welcomed.)

14. F' sen ka nong' néda, a kurga ya yobro.
If you don't like a man, his trousers are a bag.
(An enemy does everything badly.)

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15. Sosra sen kaosda, wata ne korg' wenbsego.
When a conversation lingers, the bag is fingered.
(Familiarity breeds contempt.)

16. Pu' pidya, bango luéya.
Full belly, gagged indiscretion.
(Those who need you are discreet).

17. Sad' no' o, yid noa' karga.
A good laugh is better than a chicken leg.
(A warm reception is better than a good meal.)

18. Ned' kon wok' a bâka, ti pemsom yi ye.
You don't cut open your shoulder just for the air to come out.
(Never abandon a friend in need.)

19. Bunbundi ka dod' zalol'n yé.
Those who give their best do not go away empty-handed.
(Work hard, do your best, there is no lack of true wealth.)

181 153 The Mossi likes to talk. Although he has few ideas of his own, if one knows how to make use of his familiar experiences to bring him to a higher level, he follows the reasoning easily, understands quite promptly what is told him, and grasps the train of ideas and even the finer gradations of meaning. In short, he has quite a noteworthy aptitude for assimilation. Often I explained to a chief in broad outline the handling of a gun or the mechanism of a watch or bicycle. If an outsider came by, the naba relayed the explanations to show that he was intelligent and that he had grasped them properly. Indeed, I was often surprised at how well most of them did this.

They like pictures. At first they often hold them upside down, but a few explanations are usually sufficient to make them grasp their meaning. First they recognize familiar things, such as people, horses, dogs, and trees, and they explain them to each other. They come to understand the scene and the reasons for the attitudes of the figures pictured.

181 522 576 /112/ In conversations, when they are not ill at ease, they are lively, merry, and they like to laugh. It is a compliment on their part when they say that someone laughs easily. They are sometimes humorous, they understand innuendoes, but they know how to keep their distance and do not permit themselves any familiarities, even in words, toward their superiors.

181 153 They are very susceptible to teaching. The little slaves raised in Malta learned the French language well, and all those who have met them say that they are quite intelligent. We had children in our school who quicly learned writing, reading, and arithmetic, and who did not forget what they had learned when they got married and had to leave school to work in the fields. Reading remains a pastime to them, and they keep up their knowledge of the French language. We did not notice among them what has so often been pointed out about the little Arabs, who give great promise when young, signs of real intelligence, and who do not live up to this promise when they grow up. The intelligence of the Mossi develops with the years, and this would make it possible to exercise considerable influence over them. 000 Teaching that opens their minds, however, should not cause them to lose their religious sense without contributing anything in its place. Within a short period of time this would bring about the demoralization and downfall of this people who seem capable of rapid progress, and it would be a pity.

538 They like to tell fables, and a volume of Mossi literature could easily be compiled by gathering the historical legends, proverbs, and fables which are to be found among this people. As an example, we shall now recount a few stories we have been told. As in all primitive tales, animals play the role of intelligent actors. The Romaunt of the Rose has long since familiarized us with this kind of literature.

The Bad Vulture and the White Hawk

539 A bald vulture was wandering about the bush. A white hawk came by and said to the vulture, "Why have you nothing to eat?" The vulture replied, "It is true, I have nothing to eat. May God help me find something." The hawk said, "God cannot give people enough food to satisfy their hunger." The vulture answered, "If God does not give me something to eat, I shall not eat."

The white hawk saw a dove alighting on a stick. The hawk swooped down upon her, but the stick pierced his breast and came out behind his head. The vulture came and ate the hawk.

The Monkey and the Turtle

539 The monkey told the turtle to come with him on his walk through the bush. They saw karite fruits, and the monkey climbed into the tree, shook it, and all the fruit fell down. The turtle told him, "Monkey, this fruit is green." The monkey abused the turtle because she had called him by his name, and he feared the dog. Finally the turtle called the monkey, who came down and told her to fetch some fire in order to roast some meat. The turtle /113/ went to get the fire and found a dog lying near the hearth. The dog asked the turtle, "Who sent you to get fire?" The turtle replied, "The monkey sent me to look for fire." The dog told her, "Is this really true?" The turtle said, "It is true." Then the dog pretended to be dead. The turtle grabbed him by the tail, took some fire, and went back to the bush.

The monkey asked, "Is the dog dead, or is he alive?" The turtle said that he was dead. Then the monkey told her to bring the dog. The monkey seized the dog by the legs to lift him and took a stone to break his teeth. But the dog opened his eyes. Then the monkey said to the turtle, "Come and get hold of this chief's son, so I'll be able to get up." The turtle answered that she would not come. The monkey pushed the dog to make him fall, got up, and ran away. But the dog ran after him, caught him and killed him, and the turtle ran away and found a place to hide.

The Goat and the Hyena

A goat had gone to Dori to buy salt. The hyena met him along the way and felt like taking his salt. As soon as she saw him, she became panicky and started running. She found a lion who was lying down because he had a stomach-ache, and she told him that she knew a man who had a medicine for stomach-ache. The hyena went and fetched the goat. The goat came and greeted the lion, who said that he had a stomach-ache and that the hyena had told him that the goat knew a medicine. The goat answered, "Indeed I know a medicine, but it is made with hyena liver." The lion said to the hyena, "Take a piece of your flesh and give it to me." The hyena took a piece of her own flesh and gave it to the goat, who cooked it with salt and gave it to the lion. The lion asked him, "Should we add some more?"

539 The goat replied, "The hyena should give all of herself." The lion told the hyena to remove her own leg. The hyena bit herself. It hurt, and she ran away. The lion caught her and killed her. The goat ran away with his salt and went home.

This is why the hyena attacks livestock.

181 576 The Mossi are polite. This is the quality that first strikes all those who have dealings with them. We mentioned earlier that the natives always greet one another. In fear of their nabas, the Mossi maintain before them a respectful, almost humiliating posture. They are very attentive to important outsiders and see to it that they should lack nothing a Mossi might wish: a sitting stool and mat are brought in immediately along with the drink; the food is abundant and usually clean and carefully prepared.

181 574 The Mossi are very hospitable and willingly give alms for its own sake, that is, to poor people who cannot repay. They are generous and always share with their neighbors, and when they have millet beer, they hand it out liberally. No woman who is brewing beer would allow a stranger of some importance to go by without offering him a gourdful, and she is displeased if he refuses. An object once offered is never retrieved, and stratagems must be used to make a native take back under some pretext what he has given away.

576 /114/ The Mossi always offer things with the right hand. It is an insult to pass the gourd or to take it with the left hand. The oldest person in a group helps himself from a dish first, and all those present follow in order of seniority, down to the youngest. On the other 264 hand, the eldest stops eating first, and it is the youngest who eats the 27 last bits and cleans the gourd. When drinking, however, the most eminent person drinks the last drop.

576 574 Children do not greet their parents in the home, because it is their home; but if a properly brought-up girl sees her mother coming with a full jar or a basket, she rushes to take the load from her, even if the woman is only a few yards from the soukala. When a friend has come to visit, it is considered good manners to carry her load for some distance when she leaves. In any case, visitors are always seen on their way, sometimes to the outskirts of the village.

576 The Mossi do not lack tact and sensibility. When they want something, they first delegate a friend with a gift, then send word that they have a small matter to discuss; sometimes they hint at what it may be and leave without waiting for an answer. Some time later

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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VII

THE ECONOMIC FOUNDATION

THE REVENUE for the support of the Mossi chiefs and their governmental system came from many sources in a variety of forms. The Mossi of Ouagadougou held that "the Mogho Naba is master of everything" (*Mogh Nab n so fa*), and when they referred to the control he and his chiefs exercised over their goods and services, they said, "The commoner rears his livestock for the chief," and cited the proverb "The snake gets whatever is in the belly of the frog."

Since the Mossi were, and still are, primarily an agricultural people, the products of the soil were the main source of revenue. The Mossi chiefs did not own the land, but they controlled it and assigned land rights to their subjects. The Mossi believed that land had no value apart from people, and, conversely, that people could not exist without land. As they said, "Land is the mother; it fed the ancestors of this generation; it feeds the present generation and its children; and it provides the final resting place for all men." Therefore, a Mossi chief never hesitated to give anyone permission to use unoccupied land. It was in his interest to do so, because the more subjects he commanded, the greater were his revenue and prestige. An unpopular chief was censured not by a withholding of tribute and presents, but by a mass exodus of his subjects to another area.

Through the administrative hierarchy, the common people contributed to the support of the various levels of government. The Mogho Naba periodically received agricultural produce from all his subjects. Through the village chiefs, the village people sent part of their produce to the district chiefs, who forwarded it to the provincial ministers. They, in turn, delivered it to the central government during a ceremony appropriately called "Soretasgho" ("completion of the road"). This event occurred at the end of the harvest festival, after all the crops had been gathered in.[1]

To open the ceremony, the provincial governors' retainers began to clear the paths leading from the governors' compounds to the palace, for they had

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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*175 643 666 go, Sagha's eldest son, and Etienne Congo, Sagha's brother. Etienne Congo allegedly had the support of some politicians, but he was rejected in favor of Moussa. The new ruler was accepted by the Government Council as the "supreme chief of the Mossi" and was installed in the traditional manner. He indicated in his acceptance speech that he was "like a rock [*kougri*] that nothing can move," and became known as Mogho Naba Kougri. A few days after his installation, he appeared in full regalia before the members of the Territorial Assembly to deliver what was probably the most *175 643 difficult inauguration speech ever composed by a Mogho Naba. This speech will be quoted in full, because it may well be a eulogy for the Mossi chief:

● 539 Over and above the signs of respect shown to the mortal remains of my father, and later the expressions of keen satisfaction on the people's part for the choice of which I have been the object—over and above all this, I see the great interest that the governmental and administrative authorities attach to the role which my ancestors have always fulfilled, and which I am called upon to fulfill anew. Over and above all of these external manifestations, I see the unfailing love of all the Mossi for the throne I occupy and for the tradition I represent along with my confreres. Because the importance of my position, as well as the honor that befalls me, surpasses the meager reality and the possibilities of one man, it is with conviction, sincerity, and faith that I present myself to all of you to tell you that while I accept with fortitude these responsibilities and these honors for the love of my people, I count upon the cooperation and friendship of all, the faithfulness, devotion, and courage of all the Mossi, to acquit myself worthily and to preside not in a passive but in an active and decisive way over the social and economic evolution of our country.

Although I represent tradition and custom in this country; although I must ensure the survival of venerable customs, concerning which we shall be intransigent; I am aware, nevertheless, that there are customs which adapt themselves with difficulty to the exigencies of the modern times in which we live.

*175 643 631 539 This is why, in addressing myself to all the customary chiefs, and especially to my closest associates, I shall say that we have no right to remain passive observers of the reconstruction of our country and of the multiple transformations of the society over whose destiny we have always presided. We must move along with the tide, but in order not to be swept along at a headlong pace and risk failure before reaching our goal, we must stand in the vanguard of the race and lead it at a vigorous and satisfying pace, but one which does not stifle the weak, for they too have a right to life, to progress, to well-being, and to our protection.

As recently as ten years ago, it was easy to be a chief, just as it was easy to be a cercle commander. It was enough to give orders for everything to run smoothly. But today, the chief must add to his title a real merit, a knowledge of men, a true devotion, an integrity, and, above all, a commitment to the welfare of the people under his jurisdiction. It is under these conditions alone

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the: the customary chiefs will preserve and extend their influence, and it is our task to extend this influence. For, if the new institutions are meant for the progress and welfare of the Africans, then they must also be meant for that of the chieftainship.

Our intention, then, is not to leave the management of the country to the elected representatives alone, but to remain in close collaboration with them; for, if the elected representatives of yesterday have rights, the representatives of several centuries' standing retain theirs also.

Intent as I mean to be on curbing all the abuses for which the people have customarily blamed the chiefs, I will not cease to remind the Chief of the Territory, the members of the Government Council, and the elected representatives at all levels, that they themselves must remain, before God and man, the ones truly responsible for these abuses. For, while the lot of the civil servant has improved considerably, and that of the elected representative is at the summit of the pyramid, that of the chief has remained quite modest and quite comparable to that of the still miserable peasant—riches for the others, poverty for himself.

Your Excellency the Governor, Honorable Ministers, and Parliamentarians, I am sure that you understand me. I am equally sure that you think of the meager outlook for the territory, but it is necessary that everyone live well during the period of the seven fat cows, and meagerly during that of the seven lean cows. The cooperation of the chieftainship will be granted to you increasingly for the economic and social betterment of our territory. It devolves upon you, as agents of superior authority, to rid the chiefs of the arbitrary vexations to which no civil servant is subjected any longer, and to send them forth, not as mercenaries but as true captains, into the battle which we all have joined against the human misery that weighs so heavily upon our people.

We are all aware of the magnitude of the struggle, and the cooperation of the chiefs, who influence the entire Voltaic population, may be needed to crown it with success.

Moreover, your Excellency the Governor, the chieftainship has always served well—perhaps has served France, or at least its representatives, too well, at the expense of its own interests.

But I will deliberately forget the errors of the past. I shall remember only the true fidelity which my fathers and their associates have always displayed toward France. I shall look only for the gratitude of the Government of the French Republic on their behalf, and for the considerable role they played in transforming our country. I shall think only of that Franco-African friendship which under normal circumstances will lead us to success, happiness, and peace. I know that the times are difficult; I know that men today have numerous reasons for quarrels. I know that vast popular or so-called popular movements sometimes topple all that other men have built with much patience and wisdom. But despite all of these things, it is with words of concord and of peace that I wish to close, hoping that throughout our political battles we shall keep in mind the need for peace, because man is only happy insofar as he enjoys social peace, as well as peace of the heart.[39]

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12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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territory. This report is substantiated by Barth. Marc adds that the caravaneers had 175 437

> . . . a considerable amount of incidental expenses. Ten thousand kolas called for two asses or four porters for whom it was necessary to provide food during close to two months. Formerly there had been a certain number of local exactions to pay each time that the caravans crossed a new country. Now there are taxes on the caravans in the Gold Coast and also in French territory. It is also necessary to pay for ferryman who transports the livestock across the Volta [River]. There are risks, and occasionally cattle, fatigued by the trip, arrive in such bad shape that they are sold more cheaply than they had cost. Finally, the realization of profits is often difficult, the kola market being, in the commercial centers of the Mossi, subject to considerable fluctuations at the time when the caravans return. (Marc 1909 : 174)[7] 484 486 651 [435]

Sometimes the caravaneers made extensive use of middlemen and did not realize all the profits. Marc, who was stationed at the customs post at Leo on the Mossi border with the Gold Coast, wrote: 175 435 437 441

> The livestock is bought upon arrival by interpreter-brokers, middlemen between the butchers and the meat merchants, to whom the caravaneers are practically forced to resort. These men buy all the kola nuts brought by the forest natives, and control the market prices . . . These interpreter-brokers apparently speculate on livestock in a most curious way. They have scouts who go out to meet the caravans, sometimes two days' march to the north. These scouts attempt to alarm the travellers with tendentious remarks, until they are willing to cede their herds at a low price. Some times, at the height of the business season—that is, in January and February—the livestock prices may fluctuate by one hundred per cent within a few weeks. The Mande-Dioula vie in eloquence, the Yarse and Mossi in politeness, the Hausa in friendliness. In reality, there is here, an embryonic trading center, a veritable stock exchange, using extensively indigenous methods. ((Marc 1909 : 173) 442 [221]

According to most reports, all the larger market centers of Mossi country were like this. 175

Caravan centers, like all the lesser market centers in Mossi country, provided merchants not only with trading opportunities but also with occasions for conviviality after hectic days of travel. At Dakay south of Wagadougou, livestock traders found musicians, singers, and the most beautiful dancers in the country. And according to Marc, during the whole caravan season the market was abundantly furnished with beer (Marc 1909 : 175). But if the Mossi enjoyed themselves at 366 437 54 [273]

(7) Tauxier (1912 : 530) states that each porter was paid 35 francs for the thirty-five days of travels or at the rate of one franc per day. In addition a caravaneer spent about 300 cowries a day on food for each of his bearers. [465]

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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175 366 437 54 their own commercial centers, they acted quite differently outside their country. Dubois reports that at Timbuktu, "the great town of pleasure" with the freest morals in the Sudan, the merchants from Bamako, Djenne, Sansanding and Touat spent a great deal of money in pleasure and in gifts to the beautiful women, but the "Mossi did not waste their money and left as soon as they had finished their affairs" (Dubois 1899 : 292–300).

175 437 439 648 The days of the caravans are now over in Mossi country, even though large groups of traders carry on the traditional commerce in livestock, cotton, kola nuts, some dried fish, and salt. As soon as the French conquered th country they formulated plants to control the caravans. One of the earliest reports, for June 1899, reads:

> The country is calm and direct administration was established at Koupela, Mane, Yake . . . The Mossi trade is mainly with the English colony of the Gold Coast. It consists mainly of livestock, very plentiful in Mossi country, which is exchanged for merchandise from England; copper and material goods . . . Our task will be to discover the materials of the northern Ivory Coast which could be exchanged for cattle, and when this information is forthcoming we should be able to direct the caravans quite easily to the Ivory Coast. At the same time the English will see their provisions of cattle and sheep diminish. They will flood us less with their cotton cloth, with their glass beads, and with their kola nuts. In their place, the products of French manufacture can arrive to us through the Ivory Coast after being exchanged for the products of our colony there.[8]

439 167 464 These plans did not succeed. The Mossi still export a great deal of their products towards the forest zones of Ghana, including their "numerous laborers" which, according to Beauminy writing in 1919, were "the principal riches actually utilizable in Mossi country". (Beauminy 1919 : 71–78). The migrants themselves are, in a sense, the greatest traders in contemporary Mossi society.

PRESENT-DAY TRADE

439 [441] [442] [178] [113] There is a constant flow of goods between Mossi country and the Ivory Coast and Ghana. Much of the trade to the former region is in the hands of the large commercial companies and as such is beyond the purview of this paper. What is of interest here is the trade which is conducted by the ordinary people. A great deal of this trade is highly unorganized and the result of one or two men, or as many as five men, joining together to trade goods to and from Ghana and the Ivory Coast. The types of goods sent down to these two areas are the same as those traded in pre-European times.

(8) Unpublished document in the archives of *Institut Français d'Afrique Noire*, Wagadougou, Voltaic Republic.

837 588 548 [586] Free Marriage. The only marriage which can be called free, since it is accepted by both parties, is that of a woman who is unable to endure her first husband and leaves her village with the intention of becoming a prostitute. Divorce is quite rare because the Moaga does not readily agree to it. As she passes through a village, she asks for hospitality, and the news soon spreads that a "free" woman is staying at such-and-such a place. The young men hasten to her and seek to win her favors. Gifts are sent to her, and her hostess is used as go-between. Nine times out of ten, the woman accepts the candidate preferred by her hostess. After some questions concerning his origins and circumstances, one of the young men is accepted as a temporary lover. His comrades come to his aid, and for a few days there is a veritable festival in the village. There is a slight change in the [177] regular fare, since meat is added to the mush; chickens, raised with considerable difficulty, are used for this special treat. This semblance of marriage is thus celebrated. As has been pointed out, however, there has been no divorce, and the deserted husband soon learns the whereabouts of his wife. As soon as he finds out what village she is in -- it may be 100 kilometers away -- he promptly sets out, carrying in a sheepskin enough ground millet for the journey and 500 to 1,000 cowries. He also carries a rooster which, along with the shells, will be offered to the chief of the canton where the lover lives, to whom he will make his claim.

[578] Unions of this sort give rise to three-quarters of the quarrels with which the canton or province chiefs have to deal. A young Moaga who desires peace of mind never regularizes the situation by a so-called marriage even though he may not be able to resist the temptation to harbor the woman for a few days. In any event the affair is easily broken off since sooner or later the woman, eager for change, will want a new lover.

583 Thus, it may be said that although forced marriage has the disadvantage of having a girl marry without her consent, still it also has advantages and a degree of security because the woman, fearing [178] her parents' wrath, rarely leaves her husband. Furthermore, this type of marriage is vastly preferable from the standpoint of peace

152 their family, they love it very much, but they love their husband just as much if they love him at all. If they do not love their husband, naturally they love their family infinitely more.

304 When we study the children's life, we shall see that Mossi girls are
833 excised at the age of nine or ten. This barbarous operation naturally removes an important part of a woman's sensual sensitiveness. The Negress is thus a generatrix rather than a lover. One cannot say of her as of the Latin poet's mistress: crispum ... docta movere latus /gracefully moving her slender body/. She is passive in love and content to give herself without resistance to the man's passion.

831 The morality of Mossi women is certainly laxer than that of
577 European women. (Naturally, I compare the Mossi woman to the respectable woman of our occidental societies.) We saw earlier that the breach of virginity prior to marriage was not unusual and was tolerated with considerable leniency by custom. Adultery is also frequent and is punished in crude and rustic fashion. The woman is beaten and then forgiven. In short, morals are certainly less rigid than in our own countries. On the other hand, prostitution does not
[548] exist, and this is a great moral advantage. Briefly, the division of labor in the sexual domain, as in other domains, is far less developed among the Mossi of Yatenga than among the highly evolved civilizations of our European and occidental countries. The same applies to the other Sudanese populations.

000 Now we turn to Children and Education. We shall discuss these matters in the following order. /250/

1. Filiation.
2. Theory of birth.
3. How children are welcomed.
4. Abortion.
5. Childbirth.
6. Baptism.
7. Freaks. Twins.
8. Nursing.
9. Charms for children and tattooings.
10. Children's games.
11. Familial education.
12. Education of children among themselves. Societies.
13. Young people's tasks.
14. Rights and duties of parents toward their children.
15. Duties of children toward their parents.

643 Soon afterward he comes out and seats himself in the shade of a tree at the home of the Samandé Nabila [assistant to the Samandé Naba]. The doudissi are played ensemble, and the whole populace shouts joyfully.

The Ouidi Naba, the Tansoba, and all the other ministers and important personages come to present homage and to swear their fealty and submission. Each one makes a profession of loyalty.

In the evening, the new naba leaves the home of the Samandé Nabila and goes to spend the night at the home of the Ouagadougou Naba.

The next day he goes to Passepanga (from passé, "to increase, to add," and panga, "power, strength") where all other chiefs and descendants of Mogho Naba come to salute him.

At Passepanga the Mogho Naba sits under a tree with thousands of men right and left, all armed with rifles and aligned as for a session of rifle practice. They leave a kind of avenue in front of the new naba so that he is easily seen. Each [130] naba, with his retinue, comes to swear fealty and to make a profession of loyalty. The brothers of the new appointee, even those who were his rivals, come to make obeisance. The Mogho Naba then retires to the home of his gansoba (host) and sees to it that everyone has ample quantities of dam and that nissi (cows) are slaughtered for them.

The Mogho Naba remains at Passepanga for a week, and then he goes to Dimvoussé ("king's rest").

Finally, two or three years later, he chooses the place where he wishes to build his permanent residence.

Certain Names and Their Meaning

●551 When appointed, every chief loses his given name, and he is even forbidden to say it. He chooses a name for himself when he is appointed.

We shall now study some of these names and try to establish the moral precepts that go with them.

551 643 1. Mogho Naba Wobgo (Boukary was his real name). When Mogho Naba Sanum (literally, "gold") drove his brother Boukary from his territory, the latter took refuge at Bassawarga where he conquered the Gourounsi whom he enslaved, although later they became his sofa [guards or military retinue].

551 When Naba Sanum died, several candidates presented themselves to be named Mogho Naba.

Boukary also returned, accompanied by an impressive escort of Gourounsi armed with arrows, rifles, and clubs. He made gifts to the ministers, as all his [131] rivals were doing. However, seeing that the nomination of a successor to his late brother was being delayed, he one day remarked to the Ouidi Naba: "Designate anyone you wish for the throne, but I shall wrest it from him."

The evening of the day set for the nomination arrived (we have already noted that each candidate was put in a hut at the home of the Samandé Nabila), and the future Naba Wobgo assembled all his Gourounsi followers and addressed them more or less in these terms: "The new Mogho Naba is to be appointed tonight; when I go to the home of the Samandé Nabila you follow me, be armed, and surround the place. If by any chance I am not named, I shall say to you when I come out, 'Forward! Spare no one, not even the ministers, the other nabissi, or the new appointee.' "

That night, the Gourounsi, faithful to the commands of their chief, did as he had ordered.

While the ministers were discussing which of the nabissi should be named (of course, the future Naba Wobgo was automatically eliminated), the Larrhallé Naba came out to relieve himself. In the half-darkness he was astonished to see the men armed with arrows, rifles, and clubs. He reported these disquieting developments to the Ouidi Naba, who at once came out to see for himself. Everyone knew that only Boukary could organize such a plot. Fearing that they would otherwise all be murdered, they unanimously appointed him Mogho Naba.

When the time came for him to select the name that would be his until death, he said this: [132] "Kim missi laguem koabga kon bougouss Wobgo (a hundred ghosts cannot frighten an elephant)." I am sure that here he was addressing his competitors. Then he added: "Ni Tiem Koudré Banghe pouiré taloug pa salga (an old man who bequeaths his property wisely avoids strife)." Here he was addressing the ministers. He was aware that he was not liked, so he had prepared for war. The ministers had not wanted to name him and had done so only out of fear of being murdered.

551 643 2. Mogho Naba Kom (kom, "water"). When he was still quite young, Mogho Naba Kom, who is on the throne today, succeeded his father, Naba Siguiri, to the great surprise of his enemies. He took the name of Naba Kom.

(a) Kom sound Tambdo ti koulg'king lad moaghana. (During the rainy season when much water falls, the rivers and seas rejoice to see their water swell.)

(b) Neb san toul béogo bi a balem Wendé. (He who dreams of tomorrow must place his faith in God.)

(c) Sandib, laguem koabga ti pigh'pam nionré. Since he was very young at the time of his nomination, many begrudged him the appointment, and sorcery was used to cause his death. This third name means "A hundred charlatans, makers of charms, cannot prevail against the pigha (rock, i.e., the chief)."

(d) Gonpaniendégha kon nies niédga. (One does not [133] wipe one's bottom with thorns and brambles.) This alludes to his enemies and means that in spite of them he rules all the same.

(e) Tang'niebga belem mogré pamé wek'balbo. (Since the crocodile can only really live and procreate along the banks of watercourses, what is a mountain crocodile to do if he desires many offspring? He must move his dwelling and go to the water.)

551 645 3. The Ouidi Naba (actually named Rabi), Naba Boulga (literally, "well [pit]").

(a) Baning sorr'yoagba n'tilig kinsé la wamsé. (The large white or sorghum grown under the Strophanthus has no fear of being eaten by birds or monkeys.)

(b) Yel somd'boulgh'tont niédbo. (The well of righteousness cannot be filled.)

4. The Gounga Naba (actually named Namébrogo Ilboudo), Naba Yemdé (literally, "hippopotamus"). Yem deng kouilga ti zimbi datin dem yaré. ("When the hippopotamus is first to arrive at the waterhold, the fish can play about at will," or "when fish play around a hippopotamus, they will not be troubled by either big fish or fishermen.")

5. The Baloum Naba (Tenga Ouédraogo), Naba Tanga (literally, "mountain").

(a) "A mountain crowned with trees is soon noticed," or "in order to be respected, one must have good support, good backing."

551 645 [134] (b) Kata laghem koagb'kon sirigh tanga. (A hundred barking hyenas cannot shake a mountain.)

6. Kamsoro Naba (Ouene Nongué), Naba Niouga ("cat"). He is chief eunuch. Nioug'nok wendé na pa ne Sabelem. (A cat who trusts in God is sure to preserve his blackness.) In other words, one who is protected by the Mogho Naba, his "God," will never lack for anything; everything will come to him as if by magic.

551 643 835 7. Naba Gnighnemdo (Mogho Naba). Naba Oubri, the founder of the Ouagadougou dynasty, fell in love with one of his own daughters and had intercourse with her. The girl became pregnant and gave birth to a son. The wives of Naba Oubri wanted to put both the child and the mother to death. They asked the girl the name of the child's father, and she replied, "Ask my father, he ought to know." When Oubri was questioned, he answered: "Bassi yan ya mam lam gnighnemdo (Do nothing, this is my own flesh)."

The child of this incestuous union was thus named Gnighnemdo and later succeeded his relative, Naba Nasbiré.

The Placing of Statues at Loumbi-Raogo

211 306 532 Ganlougdou. In the old days, upon the death of a Mogho Naba or soon after, a jeweler was called in [135] to make a wax statuette, later to be cast in bronze, in the likeness of the late chief. The jeweler also made statuettes of one soroné, one napagha, one bendré, and one lounga, and all were deposited at the home of the Loumbila Naba. This practice was suppressed upon the arrival of the French, and it appears that there is no statue of Naba Siguiri, father of Naba Kom, the present naba, at Loumbila. [177]

The acting Mogho Naba is never supposed to see these statues, and the jeweler who made the likeness of his father must not see them either. The jeweler was paid 100,000 cowries, a horse, a donkey, a cow, a wife, a large robe, and 1,000 kola nuts, and he was then sent away from Ouagadougou. He must never return and must never see the new Mogho Naba. [135]

These gifts represented a considerable sum in the old days, even today for that matter. They were given to aid the jeweler in consulting seers and charlatans for the purpose of prolonging his life. Tradition has it that unless he followed faithfully the prescriptions given by the seers, he would die within a year after completing the statues.

(63) decision. These three personages thank the Ouidi Naba, and the Baloum Naba in turn goes back to his place, summons the Sogoné-kassanga (chief of the sogoné), and orders him to send for a reliable sogoné. The latter, accompanied by a Bilbalga (inhabitant of Bilbalogo, the section of the Baloum Naba), is sent to answer the call of the Ouidi Naba.

The Ouidi Naba says to them: "Yelé Nakomsé, Nabaoudba tib leb saourin (tell the naba candidates to come out into the sun), Laf soki Nabitienga diessé à ba sin nan ki a yela mé ti niondi kon and nam (and ask the Nabitienga which son or relative his father, before he died, designated to succeed him)." The Nabitienga replies: "Yamb yam m'ba ka niak ned [142] yé (act as you see fit; my father designated no one)."

Once more the Ouidi Naba sends a question: "Là ting ramb yé la me tib kon anda (which candidate was chosen by the inhabitants of the canton)?" The Nabitienga replies again: "Ting ramb ka niak ned tib kon yé (the inhabitants have no choice but yours)." When this reply is brought to the Ouidi Naba, he finally says: "Go now and invest the Nabitienga with full powers; he is the choice of the Mogho Naba (Toughin kon nabitieng'nam, ti Mog'Naba yella me tib kon nien)." Then the envoys snatch the sheepskin which the Nabitienga was wearing over his shoulder and turn in one corner of it. They bear him in triumph to the tom-boko (literally, "hole in the dust"), and the appointed naba is now acclaimed by the crowd. He is then taken successively before the Ouidi Naba, the Zusoaba, and the Baloum Naba. Finally he is led to the shelter in which stands the Bend' Naba (chief of all the drummers of the Mogho Naba), who salutes him to the sound of his drum.

[55] The Zabyouré (literally, "pseudonym"). This is the name adopted by each new chief. It replaces his real name which must not be uttered during the lifetime of the naba.

As he stands before the Band'Naba, the Nabitienga says: "Everyone has honored me, respected me, and the Mogho Naba has chosen me to succeed my father. I have no zabyouré, and I cannot, after all, get along without one." He then begins to enumerate some possible ones (for a study of these names, see [143] the special section above). Once all of these formalities are completed, the

553 event associated with it. We shall classify children under two headings: 1) ordinary children; 2) children especially sought.

The second category refers to children born after their parents have consulted the soothsayers, given alms and sacrifices, or employed other magical procedures.

Since the ordinary child is regarded as a spontaneous gift of God, his name is given by the father's close relatives unless some recent or remote event requires a name having particular significance.

551 Some examples of common ordinary names are Bila and Poko.

Names having special meanings are illustrated by the following examples.

Passektale (from passek, "insufficient," and talé, "resentment, hatred") means "I do not know what has caused the hatred which is felt for me."

Paratsida (from paraté, "to be unwilling," and sida, "truth") means "enemy of truth," a name intimating that people dislike the truth.

Dimpougoubnoma (literally, dima, "great chief, king"; pougbo, "to follow"; and noma, "profitable, good") is a name given to a child born of a mother given by a chief or one whose father has been given some important gift by a chief just before the child's birth.

842 [192] If a woman has no children after several years, the husband consults the soothsayers, makes offerings and sacrifices, employs
782 charms, and finally resorts to the tinsé ([sing.] tinkougri, from tinga, "earth," and kougri, "stone") or to the tiga (fetish tree). The woman goes with her husband to the possessor of the god. They take a rooster and some cowries. After they explain the object of their visit, the rooster is killed by the priest, and if the offering is accepted, the couple is dismissed with a formal promise that their prayers will be answered.

553 If, in due course, the wife is delivered of a child, the baby must be named Tinga, and his brothers and sisters will be named Timbila, Timpoko, etc., or if the tiga was appealed to, the baby must be called Tiga, and his siblings, Tibila, Tipoko, etc.

715 It also happens that after successive births, the babies die. Since
583 the Mossi, as we have noted, believe in reincarnation, they assume --

The Moslem Naba

791 1. Virtually all of the inhabitants of Nobéré, Nobila, and
771 Toécé (cantons in the present province of the Gounga Naba) are converts to Islam for reasons of personal convenience. They are the descendants of Naba Saga, twenty-second successor of Oubri.

2. The inhabitants of the villages of Doundoulma (descendants of Naba Kom, twenty-first successor of Oubri), Garpinné, and Kouila (descendants of Naba Doulgou or Roulgou, twenty-third successor of Oubri) are reputed to be devout Moslems. [211]

3. Kombissiri Naba Siguiri, circle of Ouagadougou.

4. Ramongo Naba Baongo, circle of Koudougou. Both of the above were descendants of Naba Warba nineteenth successor of Oubri, and were converted to Islam.

The present chiefs of these cantons are educated Moslems and possess mosques.

5. Sao Naba, a descendant of Naba Ouédraogo, circle of Ouagadougou, was converted nearly thirty years ago. His first teacher was a pilgrim returned from Mecca and a native of the village of Nakamtenga (near Kombissiri). He continued his study of the Koran under the direction of Sayenouné Bathily, a marabout originally from Kaédi (Mauretania) who was such a formidable thaumaturge that the local administration had to send him home in 1916. Sao Naba has a mosque, but it would appear that the Moslem religion has not diminished his animistic beliefs since he continues to make sacrifices to the manes and to drink beer from time to time (on customary feast days, for example).

6. Gourpila Naba (circle of Ouagadougou) is a former samand' biga of the present Mogho Naba and his conversion to Islam is recent, within the last six or seven years.

7. Boala Naba (circle of Ouagadougou) is a devout Moslem.

8. Gaongo Naba (circle of Ouagadougou) is also a devout Moslem. [212]

In conclusion let us point out that the present emperor con-
[551 tinues the tradition of giving Moslem names to his children and
771] has several of his sons in Koranic schools. There is no doubt that more of his children are being educated in these schools than in the official primary school. [213]

304 a boy [264] during the circumcision process is considerable for his family, the latter will not agree to it unless they have had a good harvest.

Besides, since the affair must be quite grandiose in character, thirty to fifty boys from the ages of twelve to fifteen must be ready before permission will be given for the operation. After the relatives have consulted the soothsayers (bagba), they seek out a Yarga (Dioula of Mandé origin) or a Silmimoaga (the Toucouleur [Tukolor] of Mossi country) and ask him to perform the operation.

This surgeon for the occasion is called gounni.

Kéogo. A site is selected where there are no habitations, preferably a sandy area. A circle is laid out and walled with Mossi secco (sogsak' pinri). The size of the enclosure, the keogo, is governed by the number of boys who are going to live in it.

The boys are brought to the gate of the kéogo, which is strictly guarded by zoumsi (men who have already been circumcised). Each boy assumes a serious and defiant manner to give himself courage. Inside the circle there is a milling crowd, and there is such a noise of drums and songs that the following ritual sentence is barely audible: "Moaga wanian konlebin kouli moaga (You came in a Moaga -- here meaning an uncircumcised man -- you will not be a Moaga when you go out)."

The operation. Before the boys are brought in, a hole has been [265] dug for each one. The child is blindfolded and made to sit on a stone in front of the hole. The prepuce, stretched out as far as possible and tied with a string, is placed on a block of wood and cut off with a single slash of a razor (barga). The penis is held up with a split reed to permit the blood to flow into the hole. I believe that there is a special hole into which all the severed prepuces are thrown. A string tied around the boy's hips replaces the reed after the operation to keep the penis away from the body and thus avoid painful rubbing.

304 551 Bankoensé yuiya (names given to circumcised boys). The names vary according to the rank of each boy. The first to be operated upon is called Falinga; the second, Ouanda; the third,

304 Wanzouri; and so on through Nodo, Koulwandé, Wemba, etc.
551 There is even the favorite who is called Ponsom because he is given special privileges.

Zouinsi yuiya (names of the guards of the kéogo and of those
304 who watch over the bankoensé). Seven days after the ceremony some of the zouinsi are chosen to supervise the kéogo, to take care of its organization and to arrange the games. A real hierarchy is involved, beginning with the Soré Naba ("chief of the path"), who is, so to speak, the head of the establishment, and proceeding down in order of [266] precedence through Sobila Naba, Dag'noré, and Dag'Nobila (gatekeepers). The role of the latter is to allow any zounga [singular of zouinsi] to re-enter the enclosure while preventing any of the circumcised boys from leaving the enclosure without their permission. The Galli and Gallibila are in charge of the drums. The Imam and the Imambilla ("chiefs of pardon") protect the bankoensé from ill-treatment by the zouinsi. Then there is Banzambo, a comic character who is always performing all sorts of dances to relieve the monotony of life in the kéogo and give the boys a little fun. His gyrations always amuse the company. The duty of two characters called Wagdré, "chief thief," and Wagd'billa, "little thief," is to steal the meat acquired by the newly circumcised boys during forays or the saghbo brought by the boys' parents. They compensate for their mischief, however, by putting the younger children to bed and feeding them when the games go on too long. They do this in spite of the vigilance of the guards.

The Nané and Nanebilla, along with the Bankoé, are the masters of ceremonies.

Support of the circumcised boys. As we have already pointed out, the relatives of the boys are expected to provide them with morning and evening meals during their recovery. Actually, the boys get very meager rations since more than half of the food--after the choicest bits have been set aside by the lembré (person in charge of tasting the food)-- is reserved [267] for the many zouinsi. Since most of them are bachelors, they welcome a chance to eat their fill.

304 Care given the sick boys. A specially arranged corner of the
752 kéogo serves as an infirmary. Treatment consists of washing the

622
539 Sen damma nyébra, baryoro nan wa. If someone attempts to kill the crocodile, the serpent appears immediately. (1)

1. That is, to say, if someone threatens the new naba, the province chief will come to his aid.

622 On the third day the new nába is shaved. His sister, or in her absence an old woman, begins the procedure, but anyone may complete it. Everybody then goes to the naba: the chosen man is to re-
[551] ceive a name, and from now on it will be forbidden to call him by his previous name. Each naba receives three names, or rather three mottoes, chosen by his sister or by an old woman of the family. These mottoes allude to a historical event or to the chosen man's position. When everyone has arrived at the naba's house, the man's sister discloses the mottoes to the naba, who proclaims them, and the drums in turn repeat them to the people. Then the dancing, singing, and drinking are resumed. On the following day the new naba, duly invested, returns to his village to take up his duties.

Here are some of the mottoes:

622
539 I. The mottoes of the naba of Koupéla allude to the war which took place at the time of his father's appointment between the latter, Naba Ibri, and the people of Kazem'bouanga:

1. Wadra yerda né kyougou. Wadra gousa menga, t'a péleum ka yd kyougou. The star glows in spite of the moon. But it should beware, for its brilliance does not obliterate that of the moon. (The star stands for the Kazem'bouanga pretender. The moon is the naba of Koupéla.)

2. Kalébdo kanenga, la son boulwaka. Kalebodo sauce is not good, but it is better than boulwaka sauce. (The naba of Koupéla is not very powerful, but he is more powerful than the people of Kazem'bouanga.)

3. Néda gwanga nan samma. The lame man claims that he will kill him. (The pretender, the lame man, intends to kill the naba of Koupéla.)

II. The mottoes of the Saman'Naba, prime minister of Koupéla, allude to his position vis-à-vis the naba, to whom he owes everything and who supports him:

533 their praises and beating fiercely on their drums in the hope of receiving a few cowries, kola nuts, or at least some beer.

326 The smiths (saba), by which is meant those who work with iron,
306 extract the metal from the ore and make it into hoes and hatchets. They sometimes work with wood, as in other parts of the Sudan, but usually this industry is carried out by members of another guild. The jewellers make bracelets, file teeth, repair worn hoes, etc. They are not smiths, properly speaking, and anyone may exercise their trade.

767 The undertakers (lada) offer gifts to the spirits of the deceased on the day of death or its anniversary (kouré). They also lay the corpse in the grave, and if death was due to illness, it is impossible to proceed with the burial without them. But anyone may dig the grave and carry the corpse. We shall discuss the undertakers again when funerals are described.

Chapter 2. The Family

596 The structure of the Roman family and the power granted to the paterfamilias, its very foundation, have been greatly and justly admired. Something like the paterfamilias is to be found among the Mossi. Would that we also found the Roman matron! As we have seen above, every Mossi is subject to the Moro Naba, a province chief, a canton chief, and a village chief. He is also subject in a more immediate sense to the head of his family, and he can do nothing without his consent. If he wishes to marry, he consults the family head, in whose household his bride will lodge when she arrives in the village. On the other hand, the man who wishes to give his daughter in marriage never does so without consulting his family head, at whose house the girl will stay before she goes to live with her husband.

[551] The family is thus very tightly organized among the Mossi. Each family has a name which is seldom used; if one of its members was ever naba, the name derives from that of the first naba. Members of
[582 the same family may not intermarry, and usually they all have the
784] same kisgou (prohibition), whether the term designates a totem, a taboo, or something else altogether. The head of the family is its oldest member. Upon his death, the authority is transferred not to his

852 Three days after the birth of a male child, or four days in the case
553 of a daughter, the father and mother invite the relatives to come and rejoice over the new addition to the family. On that day the baby's forehead is shaved in a circle, and he is given a name. The husband's sisters or his other wives choose a name for the first child, and the father himself chooses the names of the others.

551 The name is derived from an event which preceded, attended, or followed the birth. If the mother ever happened to kill a chicken, even by mistake, even in her childhood, her first child is called by the generic name for chickens (noara), or else he will die. If the father or mother have seen two snakes in the same spot, the child will bear the name Ganda. If several previous children died, the newborn takes the name Yéwaya, "he has come." If several reasons for specific names concur, for instance, if he should be named Noara, Ganda, Yéwaya, he is called Ywawa, "one with many names." A child often bears the name of an older sibling with the addition of the adjective Bila, "little, younger." Thus, if the older child is called Tibo, the younger one is called Tibila (Tibo Bila, "the little Tibo fetish"). In other words, names are not given haphazardly. Some names are rather pretty: Zuényendé, "he is shy"; Nongabamba, "she loves them (her parents)"; Danimmamyé, "forget me not." Sometimes the name merely indicates the child's sex: Daore, "male"; Poko, "female"; or else the festive occasion or day of the week when the child was born.

304 Just as names are not given haphazardly, tattooings do not vary without reason. The native tattooing consists basically of three parallel lines on each side of the face, running vertically across the cheek from the temples to the chin, with a fourth line leading from the nose perpendicularly to the other three and crossing the cheek horizontal hatching between them, like a ladder; this is the mark of free men and of chiefs' sons. The three vertical lines may also be interrupted halfway down the cheek by three horizontal stripes, and then continue down to the chin; this is the mark of a child who was born
[844] among the Peul because his older siblings had died and the sorcerer had decreed that his mother should give birth among the Peul. This
[197] tattooing is characteristic of a distinct Mossi tribe, which lives among them but speaks a different language—the Marensé, better known as Marka. If a child has a Yarga /Yarse/ mother or grandmother, he will bear one horizontal stripe on the right cheek in addition to the three vertical lines /on each cheek/; this is the Yarsé tattooing.

304 day the one in charge of the circumcision, a wealthy Yarga or Mossi
563 who has the means to feed several of the people to be circumcised,
852 chooses a tree to serve as shelter for the operation. Rain need not be taken into account, for circumcision is always performed during the dry season from December to April, when agricultural work is at a
[778] standstill. The tree is surrounded with straw mats, forming the téoo or sacred enclosure which no one who is not circumcised may come near without running the risk of being insulted and often beaten; if he should dare to step inside it, he would be stricken by the greatest misfortunes. The Peul sets out a flat stone, sacrifices a chicken in order to make the spirit of the tree benevolent toward those to be circumcised, and operates on the boys one by one. Drums are played throughout the operation to drown the cries of the victims.

852 For three days afterwards the newly circumcised boys do nothing. They rest and tend their wounds. They remain isolated from the rest
[535] of the community for two or three months, sometimes even longer. Judging by the dances which close the festivities, dancing must be their primary concern during that period of time. They also thresh the millet of those who invite them to do so, but no uncircumcised person may join them, no uninitiated individual may come near them.
[198] They do not speak the Mossi language at this time, but a special tongue of which they learn enough to serve them in their everyday needs. Woe to those who forget and use their native tongue; they are beaten with switches made of a kind of willow. Even their names
[551] are changed, and no one may call them by their Mossi names.

The circumcised boys are divided in two groups, one "male" and one "female." One of the groups bears the name of the hyena (kwara in their language) and the other is called masalro, whose French equivalent we do not know. The hyena group must strain their wits to snatch food, even from the other circumcised boys, who are kept constantly on the alert. The other group makes improper gestures during the dance.

852 The circumcised boys are covered with gray dust to alter their
293 appearance completely. A tail is fastened to the back of their breech-
776 cloth, hanging to the ground. It is made of plaited cotton thread and
481 ends in a pompon. Its function is to drive off the kikirsi spirits, who apparently do not like circumcised persons. The boys walk bent over and leaning on sticks like old men. This is done to test their obedience and to see if they listen carefully to what they are told.

776 other hand, the kikirsi do not drink fermented millet beer, but they must be offered some before the yeast (da'nodo) is added. They have their preferences like human beings. They know hatred and jealousy, and sometimes they even kill one another. They are said to have two 776 sexes, to marry, and to procreate. They even have the special faculty 845 of always bearing twins, and this is why twins are called by their 551 name and are dedicated to them; it is believed that spirits dwell within them.

776 The birth of twins causes their mother much trouble. Formerly 845 both were sometimes put to death, while at other times only one was 782 killed. When a woman bears twins, she builds at the door of her hut a tiny miniature house where the spirits dwelling /82/ within her children will take shelter. Three times a year if her means allow it, in the spring, in the winter, and at the height of the rainy season, or at least once a year, a guinea hen must be offered to the kikirsi. This fowl is sacrificed exclusively to them. On that day they must also be offered their favorite foods, and this means that honey, sesame, and millet cakes must be purchased, that beer must be prepared and a jar saved without yeast, that millet mush has to be cooked, and especially that no pepper be added to the sauce. Otherwise the husband, wife, or children will be afflicted with a dreadful eye disease, for [753] such is the illness which the kikirsi have the power of visiting on human beings.

776 As children, twins may wear only the kankabra, a garment made 845 of black and whitish threads, the characteristic clothing of the kikirsi. Happily, they are later allowed to dress as they please. If the mother dies, the twins offer the sacrifices themselves and build the small hut that serves as a dwelling for their little spirit. The later born twin is considered the older of the two. They both wear the same bracelet and share everything given to them. It is not considered proper to make a gift to one without giving the same thing to the other. Actually, these customs are to be found in Africa from Bambara country to Tanganyika.

776 To return to the kikirsi themselves, they are present everywhere. In the bush they are fond of termite nests, large and small. They 241 also like open spaces. They are to be found around the villages; there are ponds set apart for the kikirsi, wells considered to belong to them. There are spirits watching over every field, and before sowing, as also before harvesting millet, the master of the field sacrifices a chicken to the spirit on a stone in the middle of the field. The

844 the child is washed in warm water and theaplaced on a mat in a sort of nest made with old skirt cloths and various bits of fabric. Then the woman is placed on the mat next to the child which can now be suckled. Let us note, however, one final ceremony. Before the
844 woman gives the breast, the child is washed in dolo, especially the
853 inside /253/ of the nose and the genitalia, for the Mossi, like the
826 Bambara, are convinced that mother's milk has an injurious effect on these two parts of a child's anatomy. If the child, while suckling, should breathe in some milk through its nose, this would, it is said, cause the interior of the organ to rot. Likewise, were a few drops to fall on its genitalia, that part would suffer from it. The dolo prevents such lamentable accidents.

846 At the end of three days, the woman leaves the compound and goes to pay a call on the old women who helped her and to thank them. After two weeks or a month, she takes up her usual tasks.

The Mossi and Foulsé women of Yatenga carry their children on
854 the back after the fashion of other Sudanese women, holding them in a skirt cloth which they tie and knot up in front over the breasts.

851 Baptism. —No celebration takes place at birth: The child is bap-
553 tized about a month later. One of the older members of the family, other than the mother and father, chooses the name. In selecting it, the sponsor takes some event into account, whether important or unimportant, which occurred during the mother's pregnancy. If she was frightened by a horse, the child is named Oueyfo. If, by accident, she crushed a chicken to death, the newborn is called Noga. If a sacrifice was made for the expected child on a hill, he is named Tenga; if the sacrifice was made to a bastard mahogany tree, the child is called Kouka, etc.

● 551 Let us note that most Mossi proper names, male or female, are the names of vegetables, trees, animals, etc., that is, precisely those names with which an attempt was made to replace the traditional proper names in France in 1793.

Curiously enough, there are no family names. When one wants to pinpoint someone's individuality, one says, "So-and-So (here, the proper name), son of So-and-So (here, the father's proper name)." If there are two men with the same name in one compound, an agnomen will be used to distinguish them, for example, "Tenga the Big and Tenga the Small." As for the Mossi sondogo (pl., sondéré), which is the same as the Bambara diamou, this is a clan name (we shall return

●551 to the clan later) and not a family name. Ouidiraogo, for example, which is the most widespread clan name among the Mossi, is common to innumerable families.

As for the personal name, proper to the individual, it is quite changeable and variable, for often an individual does not answer to a single name but to two or three: the name his sponsor gave him, the name his mother gives him, the name given him by his friends, and the name given him by his neighbors. On the one hand, the Black likes to conceal his name, while on the other hand he changes it or seems to change it with the greatest ease. We have already seen /in a section not translated/ that the Moro Naba, when ascending the throne, change their proper name to an official name, and from that day forward the former name may never be pronounced. The Mossi who enlist as riflemen (and this is true of all Sudanese men) tend never to sign up under their real name /254/, and this has nothing to do with thoughts of desertion. They give the name of their village or that of their tribe or of a neighboring tribe, or just any name they please. In a word, one cannot look for the same conception of names among the Blacks as is found among Europeans. The European has a name (proper name, family name), and that is the end of it. He is listed, labeled, classified. He cannot do away with it. His name is one with him. The Black is too primitive to have reached this kind of social discipline. He conceals his true personality under the changing names to which he does not want to be linked.

To summarize, the Mossi and Foulsé of Yatenga have (1) a personal name, a first name or proper name as we say in French, along with a certain number of names or agnomina which are used in addition. (2) One says, "So-and-So, son of So-and-So," when wishing to designate someone without confusing him with another person who carries the same name. These two designations provide the proper name and the father's name, but not, properly speaking, the family name. As we already know, the family extends well beyond the household. (3) Although no family names exist, there is the name of the clan, which in turn extends far beyond the family. There is, therefore, both more and less than a family name, but no exact equivalent to it.

845 Freaks. ~~Twins.~~ —Abnormal children frighten the Mossi. Their mothers do not suckle them and thus condemn them to a speedy death.
847 Children born of incest are put to death.

881 It seems that among the Mossi and Foulsé, the nané does not give
304 moral lessons to the bankonsé, contrary to the procedure among the Bambara where the custom has been preserved.

At the end of a month, the bankonsé are healed. The families are notified, and each household prepares a new pair of breeches and a boubou /robe/ for the young circumcised boys.

On the evening preceding the day when they make their reappearance in the village, around seven o'clock, the skirts of the circumcised boys are heaped into a pile and burned. The following morning the nané leads the bankonsé to the well to wash from head to toe before donning their new clothes. Before leaving camp, the firewood gathered by the boys is distributed among their mothers and the straw among their family heads. The nané also keeps a certain amount for himself. This is his allowance, aside from his being provided with food throughout the month, along with the circumcised boys, by the latter's
[833] relatives. (On the other hand, he had to remain separated from his wife, for there is a superstition that should he approach her, the bankonsé would fail to heal.) When the distribution of straw and firewood has been completed, our circumcised boys make their triumphal entry into the village at seven o'clock in the morning in their /261/ beautiful new garments. To the sound of the tom-tom, they visit all the compounds, calling on everyone. Gifts are offered to them
[431] (kola nuts, cowries, peanuts, cotton, dolo, etc.). When the visits are completed, the celebration is over, and the bankonsé return home.
[551] They may henceforth be called by name again; this could not be done during their retreat.

Excision.—Girls are excised when they are eight, nine, or ten, depending on how mature they are. As with the boys, this is done during the month of December, but instead of being carried out on a village or quarter basis, it is done on a compound basis. The operation itself is performed by an old woman who knows how to do it. It is not she, however, who watches over the girls afterwards, but an old woman of the compound who has them under her supervision for twenty-five or thirty days. During that time, the girls are kept apart, sleeping in their guardian's hut and taking care of themselves. As soon as they can walk, they go and gather wood in the bush for her, they fetch water, spin cotton, etc. At nightfall, they sing in chorus, clapping their hands in rhythm.

When they are healed, they deck themselves with all the bracelets and jewelry they can find in the compound. Thus dressed up and

8: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1958
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he received from them. This unequal exchange, plus the nobles' prerogative of seizing the wives of pagans, contributed to the increase of the Moslems. 622 797 582

The conversion of Mossi to Islam is sometimes accompanied by a rupture in the relationships between persons involved in "friendships" with a view of obtaining wives. A great quarrel developed in the district between a pagan chief and a recent convert who refused to give the chief a daughter promised as a wife. The chief became furious and claimed that the Moslem had broken a promise made years ago, but the Moslem claimed that it was against his new religion to give his daughter to a pagan. It is not true that Moslems in the village do not exchange wives with pagans, but the Moslems often try to convert their pagan friends so that the brides will not have to revert to paganism. The chief's difficulty was that he could not become a Moslem because of his ritual and ceremonial relationship with the ancestors. The Moslem men do not have such difficulties with their pagan wives because most women follow their husbands' dictates in religious and other matters. Many Moslem men attempt to prevent their wives from having sacrifices made to the ancestors, but if a woman really wishes such a sacrifice she can easily have it arranged through her pagan relatives. If a woman married to a Moslem refuses to observe Islamic practices, she is liable to divorce and runs the risk of having her children taken away. 572 622 582 797 [562] [593] [586]

Mossi anxiety over children is often instrumental in converting them to Islam. When a woman is barren or her young children die, she consults a soothsayer (*barga*). She is either told that her Tengkougre benefactor was not amply rewarded and recalled the children, or that her "Moslem" children (children who wished to be Moslems) were angry because they were given pagan names. In the latter case she is advised to make a gift to a Moslem and to ask her husband to build a Moslem prayer-circle outside his hut so that when her children "return" (are born again) they will see it. Finally, she is advised to give all her children Moslem names. I could discover no reason why the pagan soothsayers advise these anxious parents to adopt Islam, except that they hope that complicated prescriptions will be more efficacious. Nevertheless, so effective is this technique for gaining converts to Islam that even members of the family of the chief pagan priest are not immune to it. Furthermore, once a woman has a Moslem child, all her other children must be Moslems or they will die. A man whose children are all Moslem has no recourse except to adopt Islam if he wants a funeral, because his Moslem sons may not give him a pagan funeral. 797 842 [787] [551] [764]

Every Mossi, whether Moslem or non-Moslem, wishes a proper funeral, and now that travel has increased the fact of being Moslem or pagan is of great importance. Many young migrants to Ashanti have reported that their dead pagan comrades were unceremoniously disposed of, while the local Christians and Moslems took care of their dead coreligionists. But despite this fact, and the belief of administrators and missionaries, I found no evidence that the seasonal and other migration of Mossi youth to Ghana and the Ivory Coast have contributed very much to the spread of Islam. It is true that some of the thou- 797 167 [764]

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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knew that Boukary Koutou was the only person capable of such a conspiracy. Fearing for their lives if they did not nominate him, they immediately sent a messenger to summon him as the successful candidate.[14] Under normal circumstances, however, there was no coercion of the ministers and the nominee was quietly brought to the councillors.

Wearing a pair of trousers and a sheepskin mantle and carrying a spear in each hand, the nominee entered the courtyard of the compound through the women's door.[15] He was preceded by the Samande Nabila, who sprinkled the earth with water. He came up to the councillors and saluted them, and the Ouidi Naba addressed him as follows: "Before your father [brother] died, did he designate you to be his successor?" The nominee replied, "No, Sire! My father has left you free to choose whom you wish, be he a blind man or a leper!" This question was asked three times, and the nominee responded three times. The Ouidi Naba then made the following declaration: "I am giving you the nam of your father and grandfathers. You must try to conduct yourself as they did when they had the nam." The Ouidi Naba then listed the names of the territories over which the ruler had absolute power and authority. The new monarch raised his two spears in the air, made a speech in which he announced three guiding principles by which he vowed to reign, and "named a name," that is, suggested the title by which he wished to be known. For example, Mogho Naba Sagha II (1942–57) said in his inaugural speech: "Without rain, there is no life. I will be like rain for the country." He then became known as Mogho Naba Sagha ("Rain"), a rather fitting title for a ruler in a country with uncertain rainfall. The present Mogho Naba stressed in his inaugural speech (in 1957) that he was "solid as a rock." His official title is now Mogho Naba Kougri ("Rock").[17]

The taking of a new name was only the first step in the elaborate process through which a man became Mogho Naba. Next, the Ouidi Naba took the two spears from the new monarch and removed his sheepskin mantle. Then he gave him his new white clothes, which included a pair of trousers, a bonnet, and a sleeveless robe, all made for him by the people of the Sculougou ward in the capital. Next, he was given a cushion made by the people of Baramimi. The Baloum Naba then took the closely guarded namtibo, the sacred amulets of the dynasty, and used them in the preparation of a potion of millet beer mixed with millet-flour water, part of which was poured as a libation to the earth goddess, Tenga.[18] The ruler and the assembled ministers all partook of the potion in a kind of communion. The ministers then shook the ruler's hand, an act thereafter forbidden, and departed for their own compounds. The newly elected

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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The newly elected monarch secreted himself either at the Samande Nabila's home or elsewhere in the capital until daybreak. Tradition holds that if he were killed before being officially proclaimed before his subjects as the new ruler, the assassin could become Mogho Naba.[19] 643 [682]

The public ceremonies marking the official proclamation of the new ruler's accession to power took place on the following day. Early that morning, the monarch left his secret sleeping quarters and proceeded to the Koumbi Naba's house. Here he dressed in his white garments and mounted an old, unsaddled horse. The Baloum Naba then gave him a sack containing the namtibo, which he placed over his shoulder, and the Kaizi Naba led him out of the courtyard by the women's door. As the ruler's horse passed through the gate, his sister, the *Napoko* ("female ruler"), cried, "The sun has reappeared! The fire is relighted! The earth lives again!" A large crowd of musicians and warriors who had been alerted by the ministers shouted and danced as they accompanied the monarch, who circled the compound three times.[20] The ruler then re-entered the compound, and this time he came out through the men's door as a sign of his full status. Here he was greeted by the Ouidi Naba, who proclaimed in a loud voice, "Mossi people, here is the Mogho Naba!" The warriors shouted and fired their muskets, and the musicians played. Then all the dignitaries and their followers solemnly prostrated themselves and paid homage and swore allegiance to their monarch. He, in turn, listened attentively when his ministers and some of the elder chiefs gave him advice about how the affairs of state should be conducted. After each declaration of loyalty or word of counsel, the people shouted in praise of their ruler. The Bendere Naba, accompanied by his musicians, then recited the ruler's genealogy, announced the pledges the new monarch had made to his people, and acclaimed him by his royal title, "Mogho Naba [X]." From this moment on, no child born during his reign could bear the ruler's name, and those persons who already bore it called themselves *Nab'yure* ("king's name"). 643 796 [645] [644] [551]

As the next stage in the ceremony the Mogho Naba, accompanied by his retinue, visited the various wards in the capital. In each he was proclaimed ruler and received the allegiance of both Mossi and non-Mossi ward chiefs. He visited the wards controlled by such men as the Loumbila Naba, the Sapone Naba, and the Ouagadougou Naba, and at each stop the ward chief declared, "People of [X], here is your new sovereign." Having been acknowledged by the leading chiefs of the capital, the new ruler then returned to his host's house. He emerged later in the day to visit the compound of a palace attendant, the Samande Nabila, where he sat under a 643 [621] [641] 643 641

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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The entire assembly saluted the district chief, and the official declared the 634
reason for his visit. Then the district chief sent a page for a chief's bonnet, 622
which he gave to a samande. This youth took the bonnet, came up to the kneeling candidates, and jokingly attempted to place it on the head of each one in turn while asking, "Whom did the *keema* ["dead person"; in this case, the dead chief] say should be chief?" When no one answered he gave up the game, ran to the successful candidate, and placed the bonnet on his head. As soon as this happened, all the unsuccessful candidates and men of the lineage ran away, followed by other samande-kamba, who waved big clubs and feigned violence if they should catch them. The men of the line-
age soon returned while the new chief did homage and pledged allegiance [641]
to the Kombere Naba by prostrating himself on the ground and by putting sand from the tomboko on his head. By this act the Tenga Naba became the district chief's subordinate and the lowest elected official in a ruling hierarchy that extended from the Mogho Naba down to the least village chief.

Once the oath-taking ceremony was over, the new chief's followers saluted the district chief, lifted their new leader onto their shoulders, and bore
him triumphantly back to his village, shouting for joy. Here, in imitation [537]
of his superiors, the new chief made a speech in which he ridiculed his competitors, reviewed his background, and made known his chiefly intentions.
Here, too, the people seized upon some significant point in his speech as [551]
an indication of the name "he had named." However, this name was seldom used, since people referred to him as the Naba of such-and-such village, e.g., Barkago Naba, and addressed him simply as "Naba." The village Tengsoba then performed propitiatory sacrifices to the Ninisi ancestors and to the local earth deity in the chief's name, and "gave him back the village" of which he had been the temporary caretaker. Only after these rites had been performed could the chief assume command of the village without incurring supernatural sanctions of the ancient Ninisi.

The typical village chief had no court. His compound was only slightly 622
larger than that of a village family. He had no officials, but some of his companions who assumed special duties similar to those of the Ouidi Naba and the Tansoba were sometimes jokingly referred to by these honorific titles. The village chief had neither soghondamba nor samande-kamba, and he permitted his wives to serve refreshments to his visitors. In general, everything was on a smaller scale than on the district level, including all ceremonies even to the burial of the village chief.

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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443 and on the next market day takes it to the market place. Her intention is to "sell" the child in the hope that it would not die if owned by someone other than its mother. The old woman walks around the market place shouting: "I have something to sell!" Invariably a man will walk up to her, and after ascertaining the contents of the basket, offer to buy it. The price varies with the fortune of the man, but traditionally the amount paid has been 500 cowries or their equivalent. The man takes the child for a few minutes and then returns it to its vendor, telling her in a loud voice so that the kinkirsi will hear: "I would like you to give this child to 'X' (the child's mother) to be reared for me and I will pay for its upbringing and will come
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443 incision ceremonies of Mossi boys and girls. For about two to three months after the actual operations the young children, especially the boys are secluded in the circumcision lodges or compounds and have almost no contact with the village population. Their re-introduction to society always takes place on the great market day. The parents of the children buy new clothing for them this occasion, and on the appointed day the boys or girls parade together in the market and are offered gifts by the market people. Later in the day, they are dismissed and individually feted by their relatives.

585 Owing to the relatively unceremonious nature of Mossi marriages,
76 the market does not play a role in Mossi weddings. However, the
554 same thing cannot be said about the last important *rite de passage*,
443 especially the funeral of a chief, or important elder. Prior to the intervention of the French, and to a lesser extent even today, the announcement of the death of an important ruler was seen as the breakdown of law and order and was ritually dramatized by a popular raid
[565] on the markets throughout the territories (Skinner : ms). During the interregnum the vendors are subject to constant raids by members of

226 most difficult to ford. Each watercourse, or more exactly each pond,
[423 belongs to a naba and bears a special name, so no river has the same name
SSP name all along its course. During the dry season the lelek /bed?/ of
the watercourses is usually dry. Here and there are to be found ponds
of varying depth where the cattle is watered. These ponds are where
the natives fish. They wait until the water level subsides to knee
height, for otherwise fishing would be too difficult.

226 The fishing gear is as crude as the hunting gear. There is a small
227 net held open by three sticks forming a triangle and crossed by a tough
stick that is held in the hand, quite similar to the spoon-nets we use
to gather shrimp. Above all a sort of wicker trap is used, conical in
shape, open at the base and closed at the tip with a movable lid.
This trap sometimes contains a second one made of very flexible sticks
that are attached to the base of the first one. The two traps thus have
a common base, but the second one opens within the first. The fish
enters the trap and is held by the sticks of the smaller cone, which
close in as the fish tries to get out. The fisherman removes the trap
from the water or leaves it sunk in the mud, opens the lid, plunges
in his hand and removes the fish, which is confined and easy to seize.
The fisherman then puts it in a net or in a leather bag.

226 On a set date the owner of the pond offers sacrifices to the crocodiles
825 so they will not bite anybody. This is why the naba of Koupéla, be-
fore he fishes in his pond, must sacrifice a black goat and a chicken.
No one may kill a crocodile while fishing, or the naba will die before
the year is over. Was not a crocodile killed in his father's pond on
[789 the very year when he died? Before they go fishing, the natives make
charms by burning roots and tree bark inside their traps. If the charm
is good, the fish will rush headlong into the net or trap.

226 The fishermen gather at one end of the pond. They stand in a row
across the water and move slowly forward while dipping their nets
and traps over and over again. All the fish caught are put in bags or
tossed to friends who stand on the shore, but, as during the hunt, the
naba takes an ample share and seizes the finest specimens. The ponds
hold mostly silurids anyway, which like mud and retain its odor and
taste even when cooked. The Volta rivers, on the other hand, contain
more abundant and more varied fish. /52/ When the natives have
crossed and recrossed the pond several times, only small fry remain,
and everyone goes home glad to have a little fish for the sauce and
especially to have escaped the teeth of the crocodiles, for in spite of

843 pregnancy in a woman. It is also known that the woman will give birth in nine months, but since it is impossible to be sure of the date of delivery, the pregnant woman is watched over constantly and is under the surveillance of the old women. In a general way, nature is allowed to take its course, but some people prefer to con-
[781 sult the soothsayers and the priests and to give alms and sacrifices
782] to avoid a miscarriage.

During pregnancy, women are forbidden to eat honey and, in general, any sweet foods.

Seguene-vando (from seguene, "to wear a skirt," and vando, "leaves, branches"). A few months after the cessation of menstruation, the pregnant woman is sent into the kim-dogo (hut of the kimsé, manes of the ancestors) at the home of the family elder. There she is completely disrobed, and branches are tied around her loins.

Delivery. Delivery takes place in the woman's own hut. There
844 is no special preparation. [190] Old women who have had much practice help the mother while others heat water in which to cleanse the newborn child of all impurities.

No one except the old women is present during the delivery.
[842] Women who have not yet borne children are sent away, and for good reason since the sight of the birth process might make them sterile.

Finally, if the afterbirth does not come out at the time of birth or soon after, there are certain special measures taken to hasten its emergence.

846 Three or four days after the delivery, depending on whether the child is a boy or a girl, the mother, who has so far remained indoors, goes out for the first time.

She carries a sickle to ward off ghosts and other evil spirits.

The new mother's co-wives and relatives bring her safandé (soap), kamé (karite butter), and kalgo (soumbala); others give her cowries. The father has a sheep or rooster killed and a millet cake prepared.

The woman who acted as midwife is sent a ball of sagbo (millet mush) and a chicken leg. The heads of the mother and child are
[302] partially shaved, and there is nothing else to do but to choose a name for the child. [191]

● 553 Choice of a name. Among the Mossi, a child's personal name depends on circumstances which preceded the birth or on an important

553 event associated with it. We shall classify children under two headings: 1) ordinary children; 2) children especially sought.

The second category refers to children born after their parents have consulted the soothsayers, given alms and sacrifices, or employed other magical procedures.

Since the ordinary child is regarded as a spontaneous gift of God, his name is given by the father's close relatives unless some recent or remote event requires a name having particular significance.

551 Some examples of common ordinary names are Bila and Poko.

Names having special meanings are illustrated by the following examples.

Passektale (from passek, "insufficient," and talé, "resentment, hatred") means "I do not know what has caused the hatred which is felt for me."

Paratsida (from paraté, "to be unwilling," and sida, "truth") means "enemy of truth," a name intimating that people dislike the truth.

Dimpougoubnoma (literally, dima, "great chief, king"; pougbo, "to follow"; and noma, "profitable, good") is a name given to a child born of a mother given by a chief or one whose father has been given some important gift by a chief just before the child's birth.

842 [192] If a woman has no children after several years, the husband consults the soothsayers, makes offerings and sacrifices, employs
782 charms, and finally resorts to the tinsé ([sing.] tinkougri, from tinga, "earth," and kougri, "stone") or to the tiga (fetish tree). The woman goes with her husband to the possessor of the god. They take a rooster and some cowries. After they explain the object of their visit, the rooster is killed by the priest, and if the offering is accepted, the couple is dismissed with a formal promise that their prayers will be answered.

553 If, in due course, the wife is delivered of a child, the baby must be named Tinga, and his brothers and sisters will be named Timbila, Timpoko, etc., or if the tiga was appealed to, the baby must be called Tiga, and his siblings, Tibila, Tipoko, etc.

715 It also happens that after successive births, the babies die. Since
553 the Mossi, as we have noted, believe in reincarnation, they assume --

775 that the same baby is returning. So, in order to induce him to
553 remain on earth, they give him a significant name.

One of these is Yewayan (literally, "one who has returned"), meaning "Here he is, back again; it is he once more, and we recognize him."

The same name is used for all members of the same family.

304 Scars. When a child is a year or two old, the family calls in an old woman who draws more or less straight lines on his face (cheeks, chin, forehead, even the nose) with a razor. These marks vary according to region and are not [193] the same, for example, at Kaya as at Ouagadougou.

The design used most often, however, has three straight lines from forehead to chin and one or two horizontal lines running across the nose and joining the vertical lines on the cheeks.

853 Feeding. If a mother does not have enough milk, she goes
782 very early in the morning to a tree, for example, the kamsaongo or wédega (of the family of gohine lianas), to ask for milk. She falls to her knees, and believing that she is addressing a living person, she makes her request humbly, but with what faith! It appears that the prayer is often granted, but the woman must never again go under the tree or she will lose her milk.

853 The question of choosing a nurse does not arise in Mossi
604 country unless the mother dies. In that case, the little orphan is entrusted to a sister of the child's father. If she has been a mother, she too goes to the tree to ask for milk, as described above, even if her most recent delivery occurred years before. Finally, if the child thus nursed is a girl and survives, she becomes the property of her father's sister who will give her in marriage, later on, to the suitor of her choice.

III. Death

764 The importance of funeral ceremonies depends on the age and
534 rank of the deceased.

Nitiema (aged persons). Upon the death of an [194] old man or woman, all the relatives who live in the village are assembled.

852 Three days after the birth of a male child, or four days in the case
553 of a daughter, the father and mother invite the relatives to come and rejoice over the new addition to the family. On that day the baby's forehead is shaved in a circle, and he is given a name. The husband's sisters or his other wives choose a name for the first child, and the father himself chooses the names of the others.

551 The name is derived from an event which preceded, attended, or followed the birth. If the mother ever happened to kill a chicken, even by mistake, even in her childhood, her first child is called by the generic name for chickens (noara), or else he will die. If the father or mother have seen two snakes in the same spot, the child will bear the name Ganda. If several previous children died, the newborn takes the name Yéwaya, "he has come." If several reasons for specific names concur, for instance, if he should be named Noara, Ganda, Yéwaya, he is called Ywawa, "one with many names." A child often bears the name of an older sibling with the addition of the adjective Bila, "little, younger." Thus, if the older child is called Tibo, the younger one is called Tibila (Tibo Bila, "the little Tibo fetish"). In other words, names are not given haphazardly. Some names are rather pretty: Zuényendé, "he is shy"; Nongabamba, "she loves them (her parents)"; Danimmamyé, "forget me not." Sometimes the name merely indicates the child's sex: Daore, "male"; Poko, "female"; or else the festive occasion or day of the week when the child was born.

304 Just as names are not given haphazardly, tattooings do not vary without reason. The native tattooing consists basically of three parallel lines on each side of the face, running vertically across the cheek from the temples to the chin, with a fourth line leading from the nose perpendicularly to the other three and crossing the cheek horizontal hatching between them, like a ladder; this is the mark of free men and of chiefs' sons. The three vertical lines may also be interrupted halfway down the cheek by three horizontal stripes, and then continue down to the chin; this is the mark of a child who was born
[844] among the Peul because his older siblings had died and the sorcerer had decreed that his mother should give birth among the Peul. This
[197] tattooing is characteristic of a distinct Mossi tribe, which lives among them but speaks a different language—the Marensé, better known as Marka. If a child has a Yarga /Yarse/ mother or grandmother, he will bear one horizontal stripe on the right cheek in addition to the three vertical lines /on each cheek/; this is the Yarsé tattooing.

844 the child is washed in warm water and the placed on a mat in a sort of nest made with old skirt cloths and various bits of fabric. Then the woman is placed on the mat next to the child which can now be suckled. Let us note, however, one final ceremony. Before the
844 woman gives the breast, the child is washed in dolo, especially the
853 inside /253/ of the nose and the genitalia, for the Mossi, like the
826 Bambara, are convinced that mother's milk has an injurious effect on these two parts of a child's anatomy. If the child, while suckling, should breathe in some milk through its nose, this would, it is said, cause the interior of the organ to rot. Likewise, were a few drops to fall on its genitalia, that part would suffer from it. The dolo prevents such lamentable accidents.

846 At the end of three days, the woman leaves the compound and goes to pay a call on the old women who helped her and to thank them. After two weeks or a month, she takes up her usual tasks.

The Mossi and Foulsé women of Yatenga carry their children on
854 the back after the fashion of other Sudanese women, holding them in a skirt cloth which they tie and knot up in front over the breasts.

851 Baptism. —No celebration takes place at birth. The child is bap-
553 tized about a month later. One of the older members of the family, other than the mother and father, chooses the name. In selecting it, the sponsor takes some event into account, whether important or unimportant, which occurred during the mother's pregnancy. If she was frightened by a horse, the child is named Oueyfo. If, by accident, she crushed a chicken to death, the newborn is called Noga. If a sacrifice was made for the expected child on a hill, he is named Tenga; if the sacrifice was made to a bastard mahogany tree, the child is called Kouka, etc.

551 Let us note that most Mossi proper names, male or female, are the names of vegetables, trees, animals, etc., that is, precisely those names with which an attempt was made to replace the traditional proper names in France in 1793.

Curiously enough, there are no family names. When one wants to pinpoint someone's individuality, one says, "So-and-So (here, the proper name), son of So-and-So (here, the father's proper name)." If there are two men with the same name in one compound, an agnomen will be used to distinguish them, for example, "Tenga the Big and Tenga the Small." As for the Mossi sondogo (pl., sondéré), which is the same as the Bambara diamou, this is a clan name (we shall return

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[565] on the markets throughout the territories (Skinner : ms). During the interregnum the vendors are subject to constant raids by members of

644 782 tenpelem (the earth) in order that he may have health, happiness, etc. In addition, he provides a bar of salt which is to be shared among the old women.

As he passes through Nonsin, he gives a sheep, a white rooster, and some salt for a similar sacrifice.

644 On the seventh day he returns to Ouagadougou and stops at Bilbalogo, the home of the Kam Naba (chief of the young men), whose guest he becomes. The Mogho Naba informs his ministers, and the day is set for the appointment.

The customary formalities are nearly identical with those required for the appointment of canton chiefs (kombemba).

[100] After Appointment

On the day following his appointment, the Djiba Naba calls upon his father. A cushion (nagpouré) is placed near a shed in the emperor's courtyard at the foot of a special stake called the "zandaogo of the Djiba Naba." The Djiba Naba becomes the guest of the Gounga Naba, in whose section he will henceforth stay whenever he comes to Ouagadougou. (At the present time, because of the enmity between the emperor and his brothers, the Djiba Naba stays at Kamsaoghin [section of the Kamsaogho Naba], not far from his father's house.)

644 ●557 He then has to call upon his father's ministers, and precedence requires him to visit the Ouidi Naba, the prime minister, first. As soon as the latter is notified of the arrival of the Djiba Naba, he offers him a sheep, some dam (beer) and some kola nuts.

Then the crown prince goes to the Larrhallé Naba, who is required to present him with the same gifts, and thence to the Kamsogo Naba, chief eunuch, where the same honors are rendered to him and where he is also given a sheep, beer, and kola nuts.

He next calls upon the Gounga Naba, the Poé Naba, the Samande Naba and, finally, the Baloum Naba, from whom he receives many gifts.

On the third day he completes his visits by calling upon the imam who represents Islam at Ouagadougou. There he is offered water containing [millet] flour and honey, as well as kola nuts.

644 554 576 [101] It is to be noted that a gourdful of this water with millet flour on which a bit of karite butter is floating is a customary courtesy offering among the Mossi. It is most improper to greet or to receive a stranger by offering him plain water.

644 782 On the fourth or fifth day the Djiba Naba proceeds to Zoanghna (a village located two or three kilometers behind the government buildings) and there hands over a sheep and a cow to serve as offerings to the sacred amulets of the ancestors and to protect him from evil spirits and wicked people. He does not spend the night in this village but returns home immediately after the sacrifice.

644 788 Several days later the decision is made to install the new naba in his domain. A large number of soroné, drummers, and followers accompany him on what amounts to a kind of obligatory pilgrimage which we shall describe briefly.

The following itinerary is customary.

First, the Djiba Naba goes to Badnogo where he spends the night. The next day he goes on to Samba where he is offered water with flour in it, and for his part, he gives salt to be shared among the old women of the village.

One may ask why salt is given to the old women and not to the other people. The Mossi call old women nough' pouk ramba, [888] that is, those who, when blessing you, clasp their hands so as to make a higher power hear and grant their prayers.

644 788 431 [102] On the following day he proceeds to Tensobitenga where he remains for three days. Beer is prepared for him; he is given a cow for his followers and a wife for himself. At Nakamtenga, his next stop, the village chief welcomes him with a sheep and many baskets and bowls of sagbo (millet mush).

644 788 He does not remain here for the night but instead goes on to Koubri. This is the village where eunuchs formerly suffered the cruel operation of castration (1). The canton chief meets him, leads

839 304 681 1. Eunuchs. Bandits, thieves, murderers, and slaves or soroné (servitors) convicted of adultery with women of the nobility were the only ones sent to Koubri, a canton in the circle of Ouagadougou, to be castrated. This operation involved only the removal

Respect Due the Home of the Naba

554 The kombéré is absolute master of his territory. His subjects must show him the same deference as he himself shows to the Mogho Naba.

However, even though he is not a noble, a minister of the emperor need not remove his cap to respond to the salute of a kombéré. On the contrary, the latter is required to humble himself, to give way before him just as he would before the Mogho Naba.

644 The nabiga (son of a naba), nakomsé (descendants of naba) and, still more, an ordinary Moaga are all categorically forbidden to wear their shoes or their caps at the court of the naba. The only exception to the rule is when the person is a Moslem convert, but even then he always leaves his shoes at the door. He may, however, wear his cap or turban. Shoes and headgear may be put on again only after the subject is 300 meters from the house of the naba. Sometimes, in places where custom is rigorously enforced, the person must be out of sight.

[687] Any infraction of these rules was punished severely by the lash and by confiscation of property by the samand'kamba of the naba [110] when the offender was not of the nobility, that is, was neither nabiga nor nakombga.

291 It is interesting to note that wearing the fez, originally one of the badges of chiefdom, was forbidden to the nabiga and all the more to the talga (ordinary Moaga). Today it is commonly worn by men and youths since European traders and shops have made common an article which was once very rare.

576 Shaking hands. One seldom sees a naba extend his hand to one of his subjects or, more especially, to his brothers or fellow nobles (nakomsé).
413

There are two reasons for this prohibition: 1) the naba is supposed to maintain a certain distance between himself and his subjects, a normal practice; and 2) a superstitious belief has it that persons [154] harboring evil intentions toward the chief put magic powders on their hands to cause swellings which may develop into real abscesses.

Hierarchies among the Ministers and Officials at the Court of the King of the Mossi

554 631 There exists a kind of hierarchy among the naba. One chief may have to uncover his head before greeting another because he is his "little brother" (yaoua) or because he is in the presence of a chief of higher rank (for instance, the "petty kings," dima).

It is extremely difficult to determine the hierarchy which exists among the kombemba because there are so many of them, but they respect it even today. It would be difficult to undertake research on the subject which has only local interest and would not benefit our work.

645 554 576 The following paragraphs, therefore, will deal only with the ministers and other officials at the emperor's court.

Mutual relations among the ministers before the French occupation. (a) The Ouidi-Naba, prime minister and chief of the cavalry. [113] After his appointment the Ouidi Naba is required only to call on the Mogho Naba. The other ministers and the notables at Ouagadougou must call on him. Naturally, by virtue of his rank, the Ouidi Naba is expected to offer them large quantities of beer and to have sheep and even cows slaughtered in their honor.

(b) The Larrhallé Naba, a minister also and guardian of the tombs. Despite what happened quite recently (March-April, 1929), the Larrhallé Naba is only required to call on the Ouidi Naba and, if he wishes to do so, on the Gounga Naba. He does not call upon the other ministers and officials.

(c) The Gounga Naba is required to call upon the two higher ministers, the Ouidi Naba and Larrhallé Naba. The other officials at court must call on him, and, like the Ouidi Naba, he offers them beer and meat.

(d) The Baloum Naba, the steward of the Mogho Naba and chief of the pages. Early in his term of office he must call upon the three principal ministers and upon the imam. No other visits are required of him, he does not call upon other court personages.

This stated, let us go on to the most important matter.

644 Ministers and other officials at the court of the Mogho Naba. In the courtyard where the emperor's audiences are held, [114] there are heaps of stones to mark the places of the ministers and their followers.

The Ouidi Naba, Larrhallé Naba, Gounga Naba, and Kamsaongho Naba assemble with their followers. The Baloum Naba, Zusobinkassanga, and the rest also have their fixed places. They are not permitted to leave their places to greet one another until they have saluted the Mogho Naba.

In the old days only the Baloum Naba, the Zusoaba, and the Kamsaogho, together with the servitors and grooms, were allowed to call upon the emperor in his palace courtyard. The other ministers and court officials (Ouidi Naba, Larrhallé Naba, Gounga Naba, etc.) were not, under any pretext or circumstance, permitted to penetrate the interior courtyard of the home of the Mogho Naba. They had their presence announced by soroné and [344] waited under a shelter (benda zandé) in the audience courtyard. Only a few years ago, when the present Gounga Naba succeeded his father, he asked the reason for this prohibition. Since no good reason was given, he asked the emperor for permission to break the rule, and since that time all his colleagues have followed suit.

644 The cap. We have seen that at the time of his appointment [115] each minister, court official, and canton chief is presented 292 with a cap by the Mogho Naba. Obviously he cannot wear the 554 same cap for the rest of his life, so later replacements bought by him are regarded as just as sacred as the original. All his subjects, even the son of a naba, are strictly forbidden to wear this cap. We have also seen that in the old days an ordinary Moaga was expressly forbidden to wear the red fez (1) since this was the type of headgear

[714]

1. Among the Habè [Habe] the hogon is the only one who may wear the red fez. When young Habè men are taken into the [French] army as riflemen, they never again wear the red fez [part of the army uniform] after they are discharged and return to their homes.

644 conferred by the Mogho Naba on the canton chiefs.

292 With the exception of the Tenkodogo Naba and, more re-
554 cently, the Boussouma Naba, neither of whom renders honors to the Mogho Naba, all ministers, other petty dima, and chiefs of Mossi cantons must take off his cap to greet the emperor.

576 (a) Between ministers. The Ouidi Naba does not remove his
554 cap for any of his colleagues.

The Larrhallé Naba, Gounga Naba, and Kamsaongo Naba are
645 equals and greet each other with their caps on.

The Baloum Naba and Samandé Naba are also equals, and they do not take off their caps when greeting each other. However, they were required to remove their caps (pougla) and even to perform the kantissé in the presence of the three principal ministers.

[116] Next in importance are the Nemdo Naba or "chief of the meat" [in charge of slaughtering], the Poé Naba who is confessor to the emperor's wives, the Bend Naba, chief of the drummers, and, finally, a whole string of petty chiefs of no importance who can hardly be distinguished from the general populace and whom it would be fruitless to enumerate here.

The Poé Naba may keep his cap on when he is in the presence of the Baloum Naba or the Samandé Naba, but he must remove it for the other ministers and must even prostrate himself to perform the kantissé.

645 Not very long ago, when the province chiefs of Ouagadougou
574 possessed neither comfortable houses nor furniture, the ministers rarely visited each other. I have even once seen a minister sit on the ground in order to give his seat to one of his colleagues.

645 Whenever matters came up which required a meeting, the ministers met at night in one or another of their homes without the knowledge of the public.

645 Today, the principal ministers have proper reception rooms.
576 They can, therefore, remain seated when a more important colleague calls upon them and limit their special consideration of the visitor to offering him a Morris armchair or a folding chair.

701 The Tensoba, the minister of war, never takes off his cap for a
554 minister or a canton chief. He does so only before the emperor.
645

701 Formerly, when war broke out and he was summoned to [117]
554 Ouagadougou, the Tansoba [sic] assembled the principal ministers
645 of the Mogho Naba at the home of his host, and his word was final.

Aside from this special case, he might call upon a minister, but then a servitor always brought along the cushion on which he would sit until the minister receives him in his private quarters. He was never received in public.

Once inside, the Tansoba occupied the best seat, and the minister got down on the floor and performed the Mossi salute.

In sum, the Tansoba was held in higher esteem than any other personage at the king's court.

(b) At the present time. Today ministers often visit each other.
645 Since they have rapid means of transportation at their disposal, they
574 regularly go about without escorts. Most often their visits are made in order to deal with matters of general interest.

When a minister calls upon another minister, he keeps his cap
645 on and neither removes his shoes nor performs the kantissé. They
576 are equals. This equality has been established by the local admin-
574 istration which has granted the same rights and salary to all. The minister shakes hands with his colleague and takes a seat. He is served copious quantities of beer, and then he takes his leave.

In spite of assertions to the contrary, the Mossi empire is po-
642 litically disorganized. This accounts for the errors committed by the local administration and the [118] mistakes held against the ministers of the Mogho Naba who for a long time were granted too much power.

The Origin of Mossi Chiefdom (Legend), or the Way the Peulh, the Yarcé, and the Blacksmiths Salute Mossi Chiefs

773 The Peulh, the Yarcé, and, to a certain extent, the black-
184 smiths do not perform the kantissé (Mossi salute). They have a dif-
576 ferent way of saluting naba. A curious legend explains this phenomenon. However bizarre it may seem, it is not lacking in interest, and we shall tell it just as it was handed down to us.

796 Friday night he stays at the home of Bangr'Naba Sambo. Very early
769 Saturday morning he returns home in time to be present when the Bend'Naba (chief of the drummers) comes to wish him a happy new year and a long life and to pray that Wenam (God) will spare him to [156] offer many more bascé (plural of basgha) in honor of his predecessors.

[431] It goes without saying that during the nights spent away from home the emperor receives many visitors and substantial gifts. The persons at whose homes he spends the night naturally give him the warmest possible welcome.

Preparatory sacrifices. These are performed inside the house of the Mogho Naba, and the details are known only to the following four persons: Mogho Naba, Emperor of the Mossi; Baloum Naba, chief steward and chief of pages; Zussoba Kassanga, chief eunuch and guardian of the harem; the pugtiéma, the first wife of the Mogho Naba.

796 It is known that animals are sacrificed, with the Mogho Naba
769 himself holding the victim and pronouncing the sacramental words. Perhaps there is also worship of certain sacred fetishes. In any
782 event, we are convinced that there is nothing involved in the ceremony which is contrary to the principles of French civilization since there is no human sacrifice. We should have liked very much to describe these ancient practices, but the secret has been well kept.

Celebration of basgha. As soon as the Mogho Naba appears in
796 front of the zango (antechamber), the Bend' Naba beats a drum while
769 calling the names of deceased naba, beginning with Naba Oubri, the
533 founder of the Ouagadougou dynasty. [157]

As soon as the Bend'Naba stops playing, he and his followers are served sagbo (millet cakes), mouf (rice), dam (millet beer), and nemdo (meat).

796 Likewise, the ministers and other court officials who come to
769 greet tabo (the new year) are given dam, sagbo, rice, and meat by
[554] the Mogho Naba. The food is distributed to the dignitaries in the order of precedence, and the rest is reserved for the Bilbalessé and other followers of the ministers.

About eight-thirty, the ministers and court officials say
[576] wennatassé, "God be with us," which means good bye, and then they return home.

173 to be on the field of battle himself and for five years was unable
644 to vanquish his enemy who was entrenched on a mountain and
357 well supported by the local inhabitants.

After Warga had tried every means at his command to conquer his enemy, he hacked down the crops, which were almost ripe, and captured all the livestock that ventured down the mountain. In short, he devastated the country.

This succeeded so well that at last the local inhabitants, faced with famine, had to choose between the life of the chief they were sheltering and their own lives. Mamzi was therefore handed over and imprisoned at Saponé (1).

1. The principal canton town in the district of Ouagadougou.

During the five years of this difficult campaign, Naba Warga, aside from the warriors, had only a young boy to serve him since his wives were not present. The boy served as cook [160] and personal servant. In short, he performed the duties of a wife so well that Warga decided that he was worthy of some notice and decided to reward him.

When he had returned to his lands, he freed this faithful servitor after first giving him a wife. Then it occurred to him that several children in his court could perform the same services. He therefore ordered them to be recruited on a large scale, and these were the sogoné.

357 Every boy recruited to become a sogoné can expect to be given
644 a wife, however little she may be worth, when he is freed.

The sogoné have the same standing as the napagba,* and they
[554 304] wear the same ornaments. A group of bracelets worn on the wrists, in fact, distinguish the napagba and the sogoné from free women.

It is their duty to serve the naba. They form a half circle around the naba when he appears; they accompany him on his short outings; and they carry the scepter and all of the insignia of chiefdom. They serve drinks to the naba, fan him when he takes a nap
[293] with fans called fika, make his bed, and do various errands. Likewise a naba never sends anyone but a sogoné to take a message to his wives.

*[i.e. royal wives — Analyst]

775 that the same baby is returning. So, in order to induce him to
553 remain on earth, they give him a significant name.

One of these is Yewayan (literally, "one who has returned"), meaning "Here he is, back again; it is he once more, and we recognize him."

The same name is used for all members of the same family.

304 Scars. When a child is a year or two old, the family calls in an old woman who draws more or less straight lines on his face (cheeks, chin, forehead, even the nose) with a razor. These marks vary according to region and are not [193] the same, for example, at Kaya as at Ouagadougou.

The design used most often, however, has three straight lines from forehead to chin and one or two horizontal lines running across the nose and joining the vertical lines on the cheeks.

853 Feeding. If a mother does not have enough milk, she goes very early in the morning to a tree, for example, the kamsaongo
782 or wédega (of the family of gohine lianas), to ask for milk. She falls to her knees, and believing that she is addressing a living person, she makes her request humbly, but with what faith! It appears that the prayer is often granted, but the woman must never again go under the tree or she will lose her milk.

853 The question of choosing a nurse does not arise in Mossi
604 country unless the mother dies. In that case, the little orphan is entrusted to a sister of the child's father. If she has been a mother, she too goes to the tree to ask for milk, as described above, even if her most recent delivery occurred years before. Finally, if the child thus nursed is a girl and survives, she becomes the property of her father's sister who will give her in marriage, later on, to the suitor of her choice.

III. Death

764 The importance of funeral ceremonies depends on the age and
554 rank of the deceased.

Nitiema (aged persons). Upon the death of an [194] old man or woman, all the relatives who live in the village are assembled.

764 554 The body is kept in the funerary chamber for a whole day, and then the burial ceremonies are begun. The eldest son and daughter in the family throw cowries in the tomb (1) so that their father

1. Different types of tombs. Among the Mossi there are several kinds of tombs. The yaobulga (tomb in the form of a well), the highly favored type, is reserved for all those, young or old, who die a natural death.

The sampogyaogo (from sampogré, "wound," and yaogo, "tomb") is rectangular in form and reserved for all those who die following a serious wound, snake bite, lightning, and drowning, or who fall on the field of battle. In these cases there is almost no kouré (funeral ceremony). Only the relatives shave their heads and receive visitors who bring them condolence. There are no celebrations or ceremonies. On the day of the second kouré, a little beer is served to visitors.

or grandfather may buy water "when he is thirsty and pay the tolls on the way to Eternity." The persons in charge of the burial take some of the cowries.

The relatives organize games and dances which go on for three or four days. Finally, everyone has his head shaved, and the date is set for the principal funeral ceremony. On that day, all of the relatives, sons, married daughters, close relatives, and grandsons, bring chickens, livestock, and cowries. All the inhabitants of the village are expected to prepare beer. Livestock and chickens are killed, and the meat is distributed to the people who come for the ceremony. Dances [195] go on for several days, and the dancers, as well as the drummers, receive cowries.

It should be noted that the grandchildren keep their chickens or livestock after slaughtering them and may dispose of them as they wish.

764 554 [187] The sinddo is performed only at the death of an aged person. It involves cutting up a living animal whose meat, as soon as it is cooked, is eaten by all the members of the bereaved family. During this operation a strong person holds the animal's muzzle shut; it is believed that a single cry from the creature means certain death for someone in the family.

The tomb of aged persons has the form of a well at the top; it is rectangular below, or at least wider, so the corpse may lie in it.

Ikanda (married man). The ceremony is much less impressive for a young husband. The deceased is simply washed, wrapped in a Peulh secco, and buried. A few chickens are killed. There are no dances at the second kouré.

Heads of families. After the deceased has been washed, dressed, wrapped in a mat or secco, and [196] laid out on the threshold of his hut (1), the lagda (undertaker) offers him the blood

1. The venré (opening). We have already seen that among the nakomsé a hole was cut through a wall of the house or through the wall surrounding the courtyard and that through this opening the body was carried to its last resting place.

In general, this is done for the father of a family. The body is laid out by the opening, and his eldest son and all his daughters (the daughters of the deceased and those of his brothers) must pass through the opening ahead of the corpse. On this occasion the girls tie branches around their hips in lieu of skirts, and the son removes his loincloth. The children of the deceased are held by the arms and legs and put by turn through the opening, in such a way that their bodies brush against the corpse.

The eldest son, by passing safely through the venré, proves to those present

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that he did not cause his father's death. The daughters who dare go through the opening, even those who are grown women, are greeted with bravos by the crowd. The wives receive generous gifts from their husbands. The reason for this is that no girl who had been pregnant before being led to her husband would dare to pass through the opening because the deceased and other kimsé (ancestral spirits) would strike her dead.

This is why some women disappear at the crucial moment, to the great shame of their husbands.

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The funerary hut is fumigated by burning a certain aromatic plant known as sompiga. The Bambara and the Wolof call it benguefala or benguefira. The same plant was widely used by the Europeans during the recent outbreak of yellow fever, either in an infusion, in a tisane, or mixed with the shower water.

of chickens which are killed at his feet. He pronounces some ritual words which may be summarized as follows: "Accept these chickens and these cowries and do not return; may everything you leave behind profit your heirs!;" etc.

The body is then carried away. On reaching [197] the tomb, the bearers carry the corpse around it three times and then place the body on the ground. The undertaker goes into the tomb and arranges the sleeping place. The mat is removed, and the body is handed in to him. The members of the family and other relatives at once begin to weep as the opening is closed with a stone, and the whole is covered with earth.

The eldest daughter of the deceased and his wives cover their bodies with ashes. The pugtiéma (first wife) and the eldest daughter wrap leafy branches around their waists, and the rest of the family wear vines on their foreheads. This is the first mourning.

Forty or fifty days later the second funeral ceremony is held, accompanied by various games, the playing of tom-toms, killing

764 animals, beer, etc. (see the description above). This is the
● 534 second mourning.

Dakonré (bachelor). Only his father and mother shave their heads. He is wrapped in a Mossi secco and buried without further ceremony. He is not even washed.

Bi-kouré (funeral for a newborn child). If the first-born child of a young mother dies, the girl returns to her family and remains there for thirteen days. Then she comes back to her husband, accompanied by some of her relatives. The latter bring chickens and guinea fowl to be served with the millet cake brought to the girl's husband. In return, the husband has chickens and guinea fowl killed and millet cake prepared, thus making an even exchange with his in-laws.

[198] Custom requires that the girl's relatives spend a night on the road before returning to their village. Even if their village is quite near they spend the night in the bush.

It should be added that if a second child dies at birth, there is no kouré.

Pagh'sin kataré biga (childless woman). There is no ceremony. She is buried in the same manner as the bachelor.

The Existence of God, Heaven, and Hell

776 The Moaga believes in the existence of a superior being, invisible or visible (the sun has long been considered as a "god" by many of them), who created the heavens, the earth, and all living things. This being is called Wende or Wenam (from wende, "world," and nam, "chiefdom"; thus, "Master of the World").

Although the Moaga sometimes attributes his misfortunes to the evil spells of his enemies, nevertheless he recognizes that nothing can be done without the consent of God. Hence he constantly invokes the name in every circumstance of his life, especially when he makes sacrifices.

Even the makers of fetishes, magicians, and sorcerers recognize this power and frequently invoke it.

792 There are certain Mossi who make no charms or fetishes and who are neither Moslems nor Christians. They harm no one, [199] forgive those who offend them, and attribute everything that happens to them -- for good or ill -- solely

Chapter 13

Dwellings of the Mossi Chiefs

342 554 787 We have seen, in an earlier chapter under "Labor Duties and Obligations of Mossi Subjects to their Chiefs," how the dwelling of the naba is built and repaired. We know also that the naba like all his subjects, consults a soothsayer to select the site for his dwelling. He needs to know whether he should keep his father's establishment, build a new one on the site of his grandfather's home, or finally, if the spirits are not favorable, whether he might build on unoccupied land.

342 554 The establishment of a naba differed from those of his subjects in former times in the great number of huts included within it. Also, there was an empty ostrich egg on the roof of each hut.

The sketch which follows shows the home of a naba before the arrival of the French. Such houses exist even today in certain areas.

There were no native houses with terraces or clay roofs. To be sure, the Mogho Naba had one, but although it was copied from the Djenné style, [214] it had, aside from a few doors and tiny windows, only a single opening in the ceiling the size of a canari. This was supposed to admit air to the inhabitants, and it was blocked up during the winter.

The Ouidi Naba (first minister) and the Kamsaongo Naba (chief eunuch) also had tata, but they were smaller. The former kept the sacred water (nam-tibo) and the latter the wealth of his master, the emperor.

342 177 A description of the typical dwelling of the Moaga will be given later. At present, especially since the installation of the [French] government at Ouagadougou, virtually all of the province and canton chiefs have dwellings more or less of the European type. The present tata of the Mogho Naba, the Baloum Naba, and the Ouidi Naba at Ouagadougou, those of the Konkistenga Naba at Imasshoro and at Zoétigomdé, and that of the Lallé Naba at Koudougou -- to mention only the principal ones -- prove that real progress has been made in housing by the Mossi chiefs.

343 Chicken house and pens. Every head of a compound has a
235 small straw hut for fowl within his establishment. There is also a
231 small round hut of clay for the sheep and goats.

Repair of houses. When an establishment is damaged by rain
356 or is in need of repair, the work is done by the residents (the head of the family and the dakompa, as well as the father's wives and brothers) with no help from outsiders. There is no pay beyond the usual meals. The head of the family merely says to the workers when the work has been completed: "N'fa nel toumtogo, imaou nian (thanks for the hard work, many thanks for the labor)."

[223] Chapter 14

Mossi Clothing

Dress of the Naba

291 In this chapter we shall examine the various modifications
●554 and improvements in the dress of Mossi chiefs.
435 1. Before and during the first twenty years of the French occupation. (a) Zangoego pelga: a large robe made of narrow bands of cotton fabric, rather expertly woven. These robes, which are made and embroidered by specialists, used to cost from 70,000 to 100,000 cowries (1).

1. One hundred francs. The five-franc note is now worth 1,000 cowries. The silver five-franc piece was worth from 5,000 to 7,000 cowries, depending on the fluctuations of exchange.

(b) Karfo: a large robe, dark blue in color, made of the same material as the preceding (50,000 to 70,000 cowries).

(c) Noufa: a large robe and trousers, made of very fine fabric in a dark gray color. It had the value of two slaves or 70,000 cowries for the robe and 50,000 for the trousers.

291 554 435 (d) Zag'banko: a colored garment, varying in price between 40,000 and 50,000 cowries.

(e) Baourou ganga: a light gray blanket, valued [224] at 50,000 to 60,000 cowries, which can easily be made into robes and trousers.

[439] All these garments were imported by traveling Haoussa (Zangoéto) and a few Yarcé, the only traders at the time, who bought them in Gambaga (Gold Coast), the only known trading center at that time. As we have pointed out in an earlier chapter, the Mossi knew of no country other than their own.

There were, of course, some naba who wore only rough garments made of cotton strips woven locally.

Headgear. The inhabitants of Béré (a village of the province now ruled by the Gounga Naba) used to make caps, called manfo, which were highly prized by Mossi chiefs (priced at 2,000 to 3,000 cowries).

Some notables wore caps made at Wéogtinga (province of the Ouidi Naba) by the descendants of Naba Zombré, the twentieth successor of Oubri.

291 554 177 2. Modifications and improvements introduced since the establishment of the government of Upper Volta (1919). The various fabrics available in the European outlets and the fine white or blue bazin [fabric] are more and more being used to replace the clothing of former times. [225] These fabrics are made into robes, trousers, blouses, and forkia (this last is a kind of long blouse with wide sleeves, much prized by Senegalese [352] traders). Shirts of every conceivable color and style are hoarded in trunks and chests bought at the commissary or made locally by carpenters trained in European shops.

Many chiefs claim that garments made of cotton strips are heavy and cumbersome and impede walking.

[439] Oriental caps imported from the Gold Coast, dark red velvet hats, and even sun helmets are replacing the headgear of old.

The markatassé and mougou, rustic leather boots made by Mossi shoemakers are giving way to shoes, puttees, and leggings, [294] or to new types of boots and slippers -- the shoemakers of Djenné are now well known among the Mossi.

291 554 177 Finally, many chiefs (particularly province chiefs and dignitaries at the emperor's court) appear on feast days dressed in costumes ornately embroidered in gold and silver, products of Moroccan industry. Two of these ministers even wear with pride European costumes on these occasions.

Dress of the Mossi Subjects

292 Men. The accouterments and weapons of a Moaga who wished to be admired on festive occasions used to include the following: the koiglinga and the dandaogo (kinds of long blouses with sleeves); koursi(trousers) in dark blue; the karfo (seldom worn, [226] however, because of its high cost); a zangoégo [411] (large Haoussa knife); a manyanfo (cap); a logwaoga (quiver and arrows); and a boussan-zandé (iron club).

292 177 Today he wears the same garments made from cotton strips woven locally (except the karfo), but it should be noted that young men who return from the Gold Coast or neighboring colonies nearly always have clothing made of commercial fabrics. They may even -- and this often happens -- parade a second-hand overcoat. In the villages out in the bush, the large knife (zangoégo) is still worn, hanging from the shoulder by an albolé (ornament).

Some young men, however, usually traders in prosperous circumstances, dress in the fashion of the Sudanese who live in cities.

291 Women. A Moaga woman usually had only three skirts: (a) the skirt worn at home which was her working costume; (b) an indigo-blue skirt (fou-sablaga) which was reserved for holidays and for trips to the market; and (c) a white or dark-blue skirt cloth, trimmed with long fringes -- a kind of bambara dissa -- which she wore over her shoulders or over her head on ceremonial occasions. She replaced these articles whenever necessary.

[554 435] Only the wives of naba and of certain notables [227] were able to own, in addition to the forementioned skirts, a godé, a skirt of Haoussa origin and quite expensive (1).

1. Even today it costs between 55 and 100 francs.

301 As ornaments the Moaga woman had only red or yellow copper bracelets and the kindifou (a bright red bead). Even then only women of means could procure such ornaments. The [435] kindifou cost only 50 cowries a bead, but since cowries were monopolized by the naba, notables, and rakangba (prosperous Mossi), the beads were far too expensive for the small resources of the average Moaga woman.

Bracelets made of a special stone (a mixture of gray and white) and called manekagcé (manekaka in the singular) were worn only by the Yarbi (young Yarcé of both sexes). It is said [439] that these bracelets were peddled by the Kibissi (Habé), and they seem to have come from the Timbuktu area.

301 554 Silver bracelets were worn only by the dimbissi (descendants of dima, that is, the family of the Mogho Naba), by kombemba (canton and province chiefs) and their descendants, and, finally, by prominent persons who were in favor at court.

291 177 At the present time, especially at Ouagadougou, the women adorn themselves with garments of all kinds (skirts of native material, bazin, godé, and other fabrics, as well as skirts from stores). Some have even adopted the blouse and ample robe affected by [352] elegant Sudanese [228] women. Many now own trunks which replace the sacks formerly used to store their clothing.

291 178 The Senegalese handkerchief, a head scarf, is now considered absolutely indispensable. In rural areas there is an increasing desire to dress better. More cotton is grown. Girls and women from the bush buy glass beads of all colors when they come to Ouagadougou to work, and they wear them around their necks or around their hips in the manner of Bambara women.

416 Although the "mirror" used to be the clear water of springs and brooks, there is hardly a woman today who does not have one or two mirrors. Finally, a bit of elegance is added to the wild 301 beauty of the women by silver earrings, bracelets, and amulets sewed in a panther skin -- these are becoming a passion with Mossi peasant women.

291 It should not be inferred from the above that the Moaga always feels obliged to wear clothing at home. Any time that he has no need to go out or to visit a friend or relative at some

133 are bordered with hills. Nevertheless, it may be said that Mossi country is flat. It is covered with the classic bush of the Sudan with [137] its small shrubs and tall grass interspersed with bastard mahogany, /7/ huge trunks of the baobabs, and tamarind and silk-cotton trees, thicker on the banks of the Volta rivers, thinner around the villages.

241 The country is quite fertile and easily provides for its inhabitants.
262 The various kinds of millet grow well, especially the small white variety (Pennisetum spicatum) which, mashed and boiled, is the staple of the diet and sorghum, or large red millet, which is used to prepare the famous beer of the country. The horses eat the latter kind, although they prefer the large white millet. Around the huts maize grows well in soil fertilized by the daily accumulation of waste. It is a welcome source of grain when the millet reserves of the previous year are running low and the current harvest has not yet matured. Maize fields are surrounded with a double row of sorghum and often [283] with a double row of a fiber plant called bérensé, a sort of hemp which the natives use to make ropes. After the maize has been harvested, the field is planted with previously prepared tobacco seedlings. Finally, the sunken areas created when huts are built, as well as all slightly damp places, are planted with gombo, okra, which is highly valued as a sauce ingredient.

[311] During the rainy season no piece of land remains unused around the villages, and when the red millet ripens and the ears join across the path, passage becomes difficult. Even the hut roofs bear all kinds [415] of calabash plants. These supply the housewives with gourds that fulfill the purposes served by our plates, dishes, glasses, and basins; the travellers with their flasks; the snuff-takers with their boxes; and the sorcerers with their spirit-calling instruments. The large gourds that are used to make drums grow among the shoots of maize. In the marshes near the watercourses where water lies stagnant, rice fields are planted, but rice is a luxury food, hard to cultivate because of [554] the care it requires. The natives use it only on feast days or when they wish to honor a distinguished guest. Cotton is sown in damp places among the stalks of large red millet, and it is harvested much later. Peanuts and peas also take up part of the cultivated land, while beans creep along the ground between the shoots of small millet. Peppers, sesame, the indigo plant, yams, manioc, sweet potatoes, and a small

592 A typical soukala consists of the master's hut, a hut for each wife, one hut for the sheep and goats, another for the horse if he has one, a hut for the family mill, and, finally, a receiving hut with two doors sufficiently high to permit entrance without stooping and set sometimes as an entrance way and sometimes within the cluster of huts. All [351] these dwellings stand in a circle and are joined either by a cob wall or by /11/ mat fences taller than a man and held up by stakes. The master's hut, which usually stands beside the huts for the horses and sheep, is set off from the others by mats to insure his privacy. A low wall describes an arc within the inner courtyard; this is the kitchen when it is not raining. Big jars of fired clay which are used to brew [273 415] millet beer rest between the huts. In front of this cluster of huts, a shelter is built, usually high enough to permit standing and consisting basically of forked stakes with branches and séko resting upon them; this shelter serves as a refuge during the hot part of the day. Small boys and unmarried girls live with their mother, while older boys, servants, and slaves each have their separate huts which face the dwellings of the master and his wives.

The term yri or soukala covers this whole complex of structures. [591] Each soukala is a distinct unit, and, some time after they marry, the children build their own residence, set completely apart from that of their parents, often in another part of the village and sometimes in [361] another village altogether. The soukala stand fifteen to twenty meters apart, and, because of this, the villages, though adequately concentrated, cover a rather extensive area. The heads of cantons 342 place an ostrich egg at the peak of the roof on their own dwellings, [237] and some even build terraced huts higher than the surrounding dwell- [554] ings. They keep their riches in these huts and a prison in the base- [697] ment. An earthen stairway leads to the terrace where the master of [512] the house receives his guests when the sun begins to sink on the horizon.

721 These people, apparently so peaceful today, were formerly quite warlike and went off to war at the slightest pretext. Foreign to the land they now occupy, the Mossi must have conquered it by force of arms. The Tarik-es-Soudan /History of Sudan/ relates that the people of Yatenga seized Timbuktu in the fourteenth century, and in 721 the fifteenth they probably carried their incursions as far as Lake 701 Bébo and even Oualata. (4) The Mossi army was greatly feared.

4. Delafosse, op. cit., Vol. 2, p. 80.

695 The procedure was the same for all, men and women. The sons
681 of nabas, the nakomsé, however, were neither tried nor punished in
554 public. They were not tied with ropes, but with strips of fabric; and if condemned to death, they were hanged rather than clubbed to death. In any case, complaints against them were extremely rare. The sons of a powerful naba could do anything with impunity.

681 For examples, here are a few crimes and their respective punishments. Of course, there was no written code, no formal scale of penalties. Everything depended on custom and on the whim of the judge. Thus, the wealthy could obtain sentences in their favor by
696 paying the judges, and thieves could avoid punishment by sharing
691 their loot with the naba. Otherwise, a thief caught in the act was
685 flogged, sometimes to death. He was condemned to several months in irons, and exposed to public ridicule before the naba's hut; he had to restore what he had taken, and his family was held responsible. If he repeated the offense, he was led to the marketplace with a rope around his neck; he was supplied with an abundance of meat and dolo /beer/, and then clubbed to death at the foot of a tree. In Ouagadougou he was sometimes made a eunuch instead. This was almost the equivalent of a death sentence, because the operation was carried out in such barbarous fashion that death often ensued. French justice more leniently imprisons the thieves, a cause of complaint by honest people who find the punishment too mild.

682 In case of willful murder, the killer was put to death; if he could
683 not be found, a member of his family was executed in his place.
672 In case of a brawl, no attempt was made to determine who had started the fight or who was in the right. (Manslaughter was punished by a fine paid to the victim's family. The right /26/ of self-defense was, of course, recognized. If blows and wounds had been inflicted, the adversaries were put in irons.)

681 Old women were often accused of being witches and of eating
683 children's souls. If their crime was considered proved, if the sorcerers
888 consulted declared some old woman guilty of a baby's death, she was put to death in very cruel fashion: a second opening was made in a clay pot so that her head could be put completely within it; then the pot was heated intensely and placed over the head of the unfortunate woman.

685 If a goat or sheep caused damage to a field, the animal could be killed on the spot. The owner had to be notified, but he was not

562 girl is used to pay debts; a man borrows on the promise of giving his
587 daughter in marriage. She will be handed over, often with no bride
567 price other than the borrowed sum; and, contrary to the custom noted above, since she is considered a slave, her first daughter does not belong to the grandfather. A girl may also be given in exchange for her enslaved brother or uncle, who thus recovers his freedom. A man may be seriously ill and call a doctor who agrees to treat him on the condition that the patient's daughter be given to him if he gets well. The father does recover, and the girl is given in marriage to the fortunate doctor. Exchange of daughters also takes place: a native may give his daughter in marriage to another, who in turn gives him his own.

562 A girl is given in marriage by her mother only if she was born out
587 of wedlock, and her father is thus theoretically unknown. The sisters
848 of certain nabas are the only ones permitted to choose their husbands
[554] according to their own wishes and to leave them when they please.
593 The fickle existence they lead is easy to imagine! In all other cases the girl is given in marriage by her father, or by his heir if the father is dead. (1) The mother is not consulted, but since she cares for the

[754] 1. It would be onerous and indeed impossible to list all the various situations that may arise. The sorcerers quite often interfere, and who knows what goes through a sorcerer's mind! One case among many: a woman bore a daughter after raising several others who died immediately following marriage; the father consulted the sorcerer to find out whether he should promise this last daughter in marriage. The sorcerer stated that she must be left free to choose her own husband, or else she would die like her sisters. The father left her free.

daughter until the latter marries, she may through advice, promises, or even threats dissuade her from a certain match /29/ or welcome her if she runs away from a husband to whom she was given against her will.

Chapter 2. Industries and Trading

443 Such are the everyday tasks of all Mossi. To these must be added visits to the marketplace all through the year, and during the dry season work performed by certain guilds or certain individuals, in short, the various industries practiced by the Mossi.

443 571 /53/ Every self-respecting Mossi, be it man or woman, child or elder, must go to market at least once in a while, were it only to look... and to be looked at if he can don some handsome new clothes. To see the natives in their best finery, one must go to the markets which follow important feast days. At those times the marketplace is thronged with Yarsé and Peul as well as Mossi, and they all vie with each other in the richness and originality of their costumes. At other times people go to market on business, except for a few individuals who go there only to be admired even on ordinary days.

443 Every community of any importance holds a market every three days. Everything is arranged so the markets will not be too far distant from each other, and the villages near to one another will not hold markets on the same day to avoid competition. A native may, if he wishes, spend all his time at market, sometimes in one village, sometimes in another, for a market is always being held not far from where he lives. All the markets are not of equal importance. Some villages of no great consequence in themselves are located at the [554] crossroads of several routes followed by caravans and become important trading centers. The following Mossi markets are said to be especially popular: Pwitenga, Kaya, Rakay, Bélousa, Mané, Téma, Yako, and La.

Formerly these markets were slave-trading centers. Nowadays they deal mostly in horses, cattle, donkeys, sheep, goats, salt, kola nuts, native or European fabrics, and petty imported wares, such as matches, glass trinkets, handkerchiefs, basins, dishes, perfumes, and even firecrackers. Every important article has a section of its own. Butchers have theirs, and so have the traders in salt, fabrics, and kola nuts. All the millet beer is sold in one place, the sauce condiments and grain in another. The most important transactions, however, are carried on outside the marketplace, in the huts that travellers who intend to stay for awhile have hastily built in the Haoussa or Yarga quarter and sometimes among the Mossi. This is

775 ground; he also pours what is left at the bottom of the gourd, so the
769 souls will rejoice with him. It is considered a great honor when a
[554] naba tells an elder to grasp one side of the gourd and to pour along with him.

775 One must not laugh about the souls of the deceased and their visits
761 to earth. If you doubt their return, listen to what an old naba once told me. "One day, I had gone to visit a naba, my friend and neighbor. We had arranged to meet at his house with another neighboring chief. He gave us a very nice welcome, and the day was most pleasant. We were resting at night in the shelter of his soukala when we were suddenly awakened by the sound of harness bells and horses galloping. On the following day we left our host. No sooner had we left than he took ill. A week later he died. The souls had come to fetch him. Oh! Father, do not laugh about the souls of the deceased!" And the good old man trembled with emotion. This is what our Mossi believe. They firmly believe in all these ghost stories.

775 Are the souls reincarnated? Small children who die before the age of reason are said to return in the person of the first child borne by their mother. This is why, especially if the mother has lost several
[304] children in a row, the baby is marked at birth with distinctive signs, particularly tattooings on the belly and lower back; sometimes, if he
[766] dies, a piece of his ear is cut off, or a toe or finger joint broken. It is said that the child born next will bear the same marks, but no living example of this could be cited. Often, the mother leaves the hut where her baby died. An old woman spreads ashes before the door in the evening, and if small footprints are found in the morning, it is a sign that the child came back and wishes to return to his mother's bosom.

Rebirth is not granted to anyone other than young children, not even to young unmarried people. They remain in the place of the souls for years on end, the number of which cannot be ascertained, and no distinction is made between the rich and the poor, the powerful and their subjects.

775 The soul of suicides, cursed in death, is not entitled as a rule to
762 funeral ceremonies. It wanders through the world without harming anyone, but unable to find rest.

577 Morality is reduced to its simplest expression. Whatever harms
673 other people is bad. Think your own intimate thoughts and desire anything you like; as long as you do no harm to your fellow man, no fault has been committed. Fornication and adultery are faults only

5: Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1959
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they are so exclusively occupied with political or religious duties. In every case, they own fields and are dependent upon their produce for an important part of their subsistence.

Each Mossi village in the Yatenga holds a market every third day; markets operate in nearby villages on the intermediate days. There are few full-time merchants; men usually market their wares themselves and trade in items of European manufacture. Except for the sale of meat, it is a man's wives who sell farm produce. For marketing her husband's surplus millet, a woman receives a gift when the market closes.

Markets are most active in the early hours of the morning when meat and farm produce are fresh. By afternoon only a few merchants stay on, trying to sell their remaining produce to late-comers at greatly reduced prices. Social satisfactions derived from participation in the market are greatly valued; it provides an opportunity for meeting friends and kinsmen and for exchanging gossip and observations on one another's dress, the crops, and current political developments. The market is a place for making loans and receiving small gifts from kinsmen and friends, for flirtations and the arrangement of rendezvous, and for that casual sort of social interaction which is one of the principal pleasures of life in the Yatenga.

The Mossi farmer is dependent on the co-operation of the members of his lineage both for the success of his individual economic endeavor and for their support if his crop should fail. To be assured of this support, he must contribute generously to the maintenance of his position in the intricate network of rights and obligations which describes the relationship of the individual to his kin group. A constant exchange of visits and presents, ceremonial and economic assistance, and presence and participation in the affairs of the lineage are necessary to maintain his status within this group.

The nature of the social, economic, and emotional dependence of the individual on his kinsmen, his affinal relations, and his neighbors is such that his social well-being and economic success may properly be regarded as depending as much on his skill in manipulating this complex web of relationships as on his specifically economic endeavors. When a man decides to forego a second weeding of his fields in order to prepare presents and make the journey to the funeral of a kinsman, he is making a choice which, considered in the total context of the culture, is realistically in accord with his own economic best interest.

The farmer feels equally dependent on the deceased members of his lineage, the ancestral spirits (*kiemse*). If he feeds them a chicken, they may steal the soul from a neighboring stand of millet and bring it to enrich his own field. If properly treated, they can be depended upon to protect his shea nut trees from the high winds which might otherwise

243 Africa as well, have two harvests, one in August and the other in November-December. The latter is by far the more important, but in order to prevent famine while waiting for it, these peoples also have early, quick-growing crops that yield from the second half of July, in August primarily, up to the middle of September. Among these crops, the most important may well be the maize sown in April and harvested in August, but there are others, such as the early millet mentioned above and also the large red millet. The most important crops (small millet, large white millet), on the other hand, are sown in May or earlier, or sometimes not until July, and harvested in November and December.

/472/ The Mossi also grow a little rice (mol in Mossi). The kind they cultivate is water rice /riz d'eau/. It is sown along watercourses and ponds. This is the most difficult crop to cultivate, according to the old men.

At the present day poor people grow a little rice. In former [554] times they did not grow it at all, and chiefs alone cultivated it. Even now, it is largely grown by chiefs.

Rice is sown in May after millet. The field is worked with a special daba, the souga, which is used to turn up the soil. Little holes are made with a koutiaga, and from seven to ten grains of rice are placed in each hole and covered with a little soil. Then, the rice is left to grow. It comes out of the ground at the end of seventeen days. During the rainy season, the waters of the watercourse or pond cover the small rice field. Weeds are removed, inside the water, with the ouaka. The harvesting is done during the second half of October, before the small millet and large white millet are gathered. The rice stalks are cut down with a kind of scythe and spread upon the ground to dry in the sun. Then, both men and women thresh it with sticks. Sometimes the stalks are taken into the soukala instead, left to dry for three days in the courtyard, and then threshed. The straw is discarded. When there is only a little rice, it is kept in [251] a canari. When there is a lot, it is stored in baskets which in turn are placed in little straw huts raised on stakes.

262 The Mossi, who in short grow very little rice, claim that they 252 prefer millet to rice. Millet, they say, provides more energy. Rice is eaten boiled, with meat if possible, and the whole thing is served with peanut or gombo /Tr. okra/ sauce.

231 Donkeys are relatively numerous in Mossi territory. They are light grey in color, with a handsome black strip on the withers which extends down the right and left sides. The Mossi are very fond of [492] riding them. They do this, incidentally, all the way back, sitting on the donkey's rump, and it is a rather comical sight. They are beginning to use their donkeys in trading. Formerly they did not do this, since they did not engage in trading.

[435] The average price of a donkey is 25 francs.

Mule breeding is unknown among the Mossi. It is practiced in [292 434] Sokoto lands among the Haoussa, who sometimes bring mules into /Mossi/ territory.

As for horses, the Mossi have three races.

1. In the northeast there is a horse of rather large stature, from 1.50 to 1.60 meters in height, elegant, with delicate joints and lines recalling the true Arab horse. These horses, ridden too early and too recklessly by the natives, are soon worn out.

2. The southern horse, which is to be found in the southern part of the Ouagadougou circle and in the Tenkodogo residency. It is small in stature, thin, rather stocky. Better adapted to /491/ the Sudanese climate than the large northern horse, it possesses greater strength and endurance.

3. The Mossi horse proper, which seems to derive from a cross between the northern and southern races. It is small in stature, but strong-backed, vigorous, tough, and frugal. It is less handsome than the northern horse, but more attractive than the Boussansé horse. On the other hand, it endures the climate better than the former, less well than the latter.

231 435 A southern horse is worth from 80 to 100 francs, a Mossi horse is worth about 150 francs, and finally, a northern horse is worth from 200 to 400 francs. There are about 7,000 horses in the Ouagadougou circle.

231 The horses are kept in the villages during the dry season. They are given millet and peanut greens to eat. Grass is cut down in the bush and given to them when it dries. During the rainy season, the [554] horses are usually taken to the bush. Only the chiefs keep their horses in the soukala, where the animals are brought fresh grass, millet, water and salt. Other people take their horses to the bush and tie them beside their field so they may browse on the grass.

645 1. The Kamsoro Naba, chief of the eunuchs and prime minister, a sort of minister of the interior.

2. The Ouidi Naba, chief of the cavalry.

3. The Gounga Naba, chief of the infantry.

4. The Laralé Naba, guardian of the tombs of the Moro Nabas.

5. The Baloum Naba, major-domo and chief of the soroné (pages). He might be said to rule over the interior of the palace.

Those five ministers ruled over the five Mossi provinces that
645 were administered directly: Kamsoro, Ouidi, Gounga, Laralé,
635 and Baloum. As we can see, those provinces had no proper names, no names of their own, and each took the name of the dignitary who governed it. Thus, they were not true geographical or ethnic provinces, but artificial districts lifted out of an area that was both too extensively parceled out and too homogeneous to yield spontaneously anything but villages and cantons.

644 In addition to those five ministers, among which the Kamsoro Naba and Baloum Naba seem to have been the most important, there were other dignitaries and servitors, as follows: /569/

1. The Tamsaba or Kinsaba, high chief of the bodyguards.
2. The Samandé Naba, chief of the bodyguards.
3. The Pouy Naba, chief of the fetisheers.
4. The Gandé Naba, high priest and sacrificer.
5. The Dapouy Naba, chief of the servitors.
6. The Kambo Naba, subchief of the servitors.
7. The Bindé Naba, chief of the Moro Naba's drummers.
8. The Ouidianga Naba, chief of the grooms.
9. The Mendo Naba, chief or representative of the butchers.
10. The Dara Haba, chief of the markets.
11. The Kamboué Naba, executioner.
12. Finally, the Yarsé Naba, chief or representative of the Yarsé settled among the Mossi. The prestige he enjoyed actually ranked him immediately beneath the five ministers and the Tamsaba.

"The various functions at the court of the Moro Naba," says
[554] Moulins, "are hereditary in the sense that their holders are always chosen by the sovereign among close relatives of the previous occupant in office.

664 554 "The wives of the Moro Haba never give birth or raise their children at his own place of residence, but only in one of the eunuch villages. In theory they do not stand above the wives of common natives, but in practice they enjoy high consideration among the Mossi, like all that is connected with the Moro Naba.

"The sons of the sovereign, once weaned, are entrusted to a province or canton chief who is put in charge of their education. [582] At the age of ten they are married and settled in a village, where they live, surrounded by a court, but without necessarily being given a territorial command.

"The prerogatives attached to the title of Moro Naba's son are vast as long as the monarch is alive. They grant the right to steal, to loot, and even to kill with impunity.

"Upon the death of the Moro Naba, his sons become mere nakomsé (sons of chiefs) whose position nevertheless remains quite privileged.

643 644 554 "One of the sons of the deceased sovereign, however, is granted special privileges. At the death of the Moro Naba, the latter's wives elect one of his young sons who adopts his name and, so to speak, perpetuates him. He has no /territorial/ command, but he is surrounded by a court similar to that of the Moro Naba, he enjoys respect almost equal to that paid to the latter, and he is a sacred figure. No one has the right to contradict him or to harm him.

644 554 "As for the Moro Naba's daughters, although in principle they do not stand above ordinary Mossi girls, in practice they are treated with the strictest respect by all natives. Once married, they have almost complete freedom of action vis-à-vis their husband, and they often take advantage of this to lead a most unruly existence.

643 766 "When the Moro Naba's death has been verified, his burial is carried out and followed by the funeral ceremonies, which are held in the same fashion as for a common native, with the sole difference /574/ that they have more brilliance and that the sacrifices are more sizable.

642 672 "For the whole duration of the interregnum, the land falls into a state of complete anarchy. Everyone has the right to kill, loot, and steal as he pleases. Convicts who are serving sentence are fully pardoned and set free.

8: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1958
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797 sands of Mossi who fled their homeland to escape forced labor or military serv-
ice ultimately returned as Moslems, but the majority of seasonal migrants do
167 not have enough contact with foreign populations for them to become Mos-
lems. Most of the Mossi who migrate to Ghana work on cocoa farms far re-
moved from large centers of population. It is also true that even those Mossi
who worked for Moslems on the farms and found it expedient to "pray" (as
the Mossi refer to conversion to Islam) soon reverted to paganism on their re-
turn in order to escape the displeasure of their lineage members. I have re-
corded several cases of pagans who became Moslems only when they returned
from abroad to find their relatives all converted to Islam.

571 Today there are obvious rewards for those Mossi who embrace Islam; be-
797 sides such tangible rewards as getting wives and children, there are the intan-
554 gible ones of upward social mobility and greater prestige. It is important to
566 note that most liberated slaves and serfs are now Moslems. Formerly these non-
[567] Mossi had low status, but today those who have been to Mecca bear such
proud titles as *Hadji*. On the night before Ramadan, one of these men gave a
talk before the Nobéré chief during which he chided the chief for his impiety
and voiced the hope that the next chief would be a true Moslem. He admitted
that the chief might interpret such a speech from a former serf as impertinence, but he begged him to accept the censure as coming from the servant of *Nabiyama* (the prophet). This same man had refused to pay homage to the chief at the annual sacrifice to the ancestors, and when admonished returned the daughter which the chief had given him as a wife. In earlier days a chief would not have given a daughter to a serf, and moreover, a disrespectful serf could be killed instantly.

797 Many French administrators and Christian missionaries allege that Mossi
youth embrace Islam because they like the beautiful robes and red fezzes of the
291 Moslems, but this is a naive explanation for the conduct of a highly sophisti-
515 cated people. Most young men in Nobéré wear Moslem-type clothes because
such clothes are the mode. Now that sun helmets, dark glasses, and women's
raincoats with hoods are in vogue, pagans as well as Moslems wear them. What
is of interest, however, is that when pagans become Moslems they wear cleaner
clothes and affect a different style of life.

794 The local consensus is that Moslems are much better behaved than pagans
because they do not swear, fight, or get drunk in public. The man chosen as
577 Imam is required to have such characteristics as mercy toward evil-doers,
benevolence, magnanimity, physical beauty, and virility. Yet many Mossi say
that the Moslems can be worse than any other people. They accuse them of
being charlatans, of selling Koranic verses as charms, and of committing mur-
der by the use of magical formulae. Neither pagans nor Moslems believe that
a man is necessarily good because he recites his daily prayers or goes to Mecca.

794 Moslems in the district follow most precepts of their religion: they recite
the five daily prayers according to the rites of Tidjani (there are only two Mos-
lems of the Hamada sect in the district and no members of the Hamallist sect),
give alms to the poor, observe the month-long fast (called by the Mossi the

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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[P. 13]

II

SOVEREIGNTY, KINSHIP, AND COMMUNITY

THE Mossi restricted all important positions within the traditional political 642
organization to persons who claimed lineal descent from Ouedraogo and 613
Oubri, the ancient founders of the Mossi nation. Thus all the *Mogho Na-* [173]
namse, Dimdamba, Kombemba, and *Tense Nanamse*—the heads of king-
doms, principalities, districts, and villages, respectively—claimed descent
in the royal line. The bond of kinship among all important Mossi rulers [614]
was symbolized by membership in the lion clan (*Gegema*) and affiliated
clans or *boodoo* founded by ancient members of the ruling families. Al- 613
though the Mossi respected clan totems, they did not stress clan organ- 778
ization. They were more interested in membership in the segmentary 642
lineages within the clans.[1] Yet not all Mossi groups stressed lineage affilia-
tion. This was of supreme importance only for nobles whose membership
in particular segments of ruling lineages gave them access to the *nam*—
the power first possessed by the ancient founders, which is described by
the Mossi as "that force of God which enables one man to control another."
So important was the corporate possession of the nam by a ruling lineage [554]
that with few exceptions, membership in such a lineage gave a Moaga
noble status.[2] Lineage segmentation gave some segments easier access to [578]
the nam, however, and resulting conflicts over sovereignty gave rise to the
various Mossi kingdoms, principalities, and even districts.

Every Mossi ruling line attempted to legitimize its position by claiming
the most direct descent from Ouedraogo and Oubri. The descendants of the
founder of a local ruling lineage would claim that he had been an elder son
deprived of his patrimony by unscrupulous younger brothers, or an elder
son disqualified by a physical handicap from receiving the nam. Some rul- 642
ing lineages even claimed that their founders had been elder sons who had 613
voluntarily forsaken the problems of government and established new 173
districts for themselves. Whenever tradition recounted that a younger son 778
had indeed founded a kingdom or district, it was invariably said that he

634 173 tured slaves, whom he settled behind his compound and in separate villages under their own chiefs. He also welcomed refugees from wars in other territories and established them in special villages under their own chiefs.

631 173 The Dimdamba followed a similar practice in establishing power and control. According to Cheron, when Mogho Naba Koudoumie sent his son Tiraongo to conquer the Ninisi of Boussouma, the Ninisi defended themselves fiercely. Tiraongo's advance was thus very slow until he found a Ninisi named Wine, dressed in a panther's skin and hiding in a hole, "who on the promise that his life would be saved, consented to serve as guide to Tiraongo and to make propitiatory sacrifices to the divinities of the country. Thanks to him, the Mossi were able to progress to Somtongande."[6] Boulsa tradition recounts that when Naba Namende left Ouagadougou as the Kourita of Mogho Naba Oubri and took possession of their province, he placed his sons at the head of the principal villages "in order to control it [Boulsa] better."[7] One son was even sent to rule over a village at the request of the local Tengsoba.

634 613 778 [565] The villages that made up a Mossi district were usually ruled by chiefs who belonged to sub-lineages of the local ruling lineage. These village chiefs and the members of their lineage formed a noble class, the *nakomce* ("children of the Naba"). As long as a lineage held the nam of a district, all of its sub-lineages had all the privileges of the noble class, regardless of whether they had charge of villages. But if the Mogho Naba deprived [558] a ruling lineage of the nam by deposing the district chief, all its members were reduced to commoner status. Such people still traced their descent from the Mogho Naba who was the ancestor of their lineage founder, but this relationship ceased to be important unless the lineage recovered the nam of the district. If it did not, the former ruling lineage officially lost its ancient link with the royal clan within a few generations and became a nondescript local group.

634 613 778 557 558 The place of a deposed royal lineage was usually taken by the relatives of the nobles who subsequently acquired the nam of the district. These newcomers were genealogically closer to the ruling Mogho Naba, and formed the new nakomce of the district. The new district chief sometimes sent his sons to rule over the villages under his command. But if the village chiefs did not suffer the same fate as their lineage head at the hands of the Mogho Naba, the new district chief often permitted them to retain their posts. Thus they retained possession of the nam but lost their noble status. They served the new district chief in a political sense much as the Tengsoba served him in a ritual sense.

554 602 778 The plight of deposed district nakomce shows quite clearly the distinc-

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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tion made by the Mossi between kinship and sovereignty within their governmental system. Kinship was the basis on which the ruling class was formed. However, sovereignty itself, although associated with kinship, was not unalterably linked with it. When a ruling Mossi kin group held the nam, its subgroups were linked by bonds of prestige. But once this group lost the nam or access to the nam, its component subgroups began to drift away. That this situation could exist shows the true nature of the relationship between sovereignty and kinship within the Mossi political system. 602 778

There were other chiefs in Mossi districts who had never had either a lineal or a collateral relationship with any lineage of the ancient royal clan.[8] These men were the descendants of provincial ministers. They became chiefs for the same reasons that the sons of ruling sovereigns became chiefs. When a Mogho Naba sent his sons to replace deposed district chiefs, the young men were usually accompanied by a full complement of administrators. These administrators, mostly younger sons of administrators at Ouagadougou who would not normally succeed their fathers, often automatically replaced the administrators of the former chiefs. But if, for reasons of administrative efficiency, the new chiefs elected to retain the administrators of their predecessors, they assigned village chieftainships to the newcomers. They might also settle them in independent hamlets and furnish them with wives and slaves. For chiefs in this category, kinship did play an initial role in the accession to power; but since they were not related to the district chief, they never gained noble status. Socially, they were comparable to chiefs who were former nobles; as in the latter's case, their kinship ties with the administrators at Ouagadougou gradually lost their significance. 602 554 634 557

There were yet other kinds of chiefs or men who rated the title Naba in Mossi districts. They included: the descendants of aboriginal chiefs, the chiefs of alien groups, and the chiefs of the Mossi refugee groups that had left other districts because of disputes over the nam. In districts where there were large groups of the autochthonous Ninisi, there were Ninisi "chiefs"; in most cases, however, these "chiefs" were really the senior Tengsobadamba of the villages. In most other districts, the sole Ninisi "chief" was the official Tengsoba of the district chief. This man had ritual power but no political power. Yet he was called Naba, because the Mossi thought that all persons in positions of command or prominence must be named chiefs. Villages made up of aliens (Busansi, Gurunsi, Yarse, and occasionally Fulani) had chiefs in the true sense of the word. These men were granted access to the nam by the district chiefs, and their 634 [778] [428]

1k: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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the same royal ancestors. A Mossi village chief was likewise the head of his babissi and ex officio head of all the other babissi in his village that belonged to his boodoo. As the official Boodkasma of his village's ruling lineage, the village chief held junior or senior status in relation to other village chiefs of the same boodoo who were also the Boodkasemdamba of their respective lineage segments.

Possession of the nam influenced the pattern of seniority within lineages and lineage segments. In most cases, seniority was based on age and generation. Thus, the oldest man of the oldest generation was the Boodkasma, and his office devolved upon the next oldest man when he died. But within the ruling lineages and their segments, the man who held the nam, whether young or old, was automatically senior to all others. This does not mean that these ruling lineages did not recognize age and generational seniority. For example, whenever a chief died and sovereignty returned to the lineage as a corporate group, the senior noble of the senior generation became the acting Boodkasma and lineage head. Like all Boodkasemdamba, he managed the affairs of his group, but only until a new chief was elected. The new Boodkasma, however, sometimes delegated some of his social rights and ritual obligations to this elder, who was often regarded as the unofficial or semi-official Boodkasma of his lineage. Similarly, the senior nobles of all segments of the ruling lineage were also regarded as Boodkasemdamba. Because they were so regarded and because of the role they played, these men seldom came into conflict with the district chief. He gave them a certain amount of leeway in dealing with the everyday affairs of their group. It was understood by all, however, that nothing should jeopardize the most important asset of the lineage—the nam. Therefore, the chief was obeyed in all important matters involving the noble lineage of the district. In such matters he listened to no one; for, as one district chief said, "Once I have received the nam from the Mogho Naba, no man in this district stands above me!"

This dominance of political relations over social relations was made clear by the behavior of commoners toward ruling nobles on the one hand, and of nobles among themselves on the other. Commoners showed greater respect and deference toward members of the ruling babissi than toward persons belonging to other noble babissi. Thus, they were more respectful to the district chief's father's brothers, his siblings, and his children than to his more distant relatives. Within the noble lineage itself, everyone had to respect the chief as the holder of the nam, but otherwise the generational principle of respect and deference was maintained. The eldest nobleman of the eldest generation received deference from all others (excluding the

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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613 chief), and the hierarchy of respect descended to the youngest nobleman
571 of the youngest generation. Very often, the full-grown son and presumed
778 heir of the district chief had to kneel in respect to a distantly related younger man of an elder generation. Of course, this deference ceased if and when he became chief. If he did not receive the nam, he continued to show deference to all his lineage elders. This distinction between nam and boodoo was
[578] a source of potential conflict within the ruling lineages. The people usually accepted the implications of both principles, but when they did not, there were dynastic quarrels and territorial secessions.

622 The age and generational principles also operated within non-noble
613 ruling lineages, but here too they were often complicated by the possession
554 of the nam. Those village chiefs who had lost their noble status but re-
778 tained the nam acted as official Boodkasemdamba of their local lineage
571 segments and had considerable influence over their lineage although they did not control all its segments. Each lineage segment had its own Boodkasma, who normally ran its affairs. But because of the importance of the nam in Mossi life, the Boodkasemdamba deferred to the village chief in
[565] important matters pertaining to their own boodoo. However, the generational principle was followed within the local boodoo. Almost no one deferred to the children of the village chief, who, after all, were not nakomce.

613 The situation within commoner lineages that did not hold the nam was
571 quite different. The age and generational principles obtained within the
778 lineage segments of these boodoo, but never *across* the segments, as they did across the babissi. These segments were more autonomous. Each had its own Boodkasma, who looked after it without deferring to anyone. This autonomy was all the more pronounced since the segments of non-noble lineages tended to be scattered throughout a district. They interacted socially and politically only when they were physically close. In any case, in the absence of the nam, the segments of non-noble lineages had no reason to remain together; they tended to lose their hierarchical quality and to become equal and separate.

613 As would be expected in such circumstances, not all Mossi lineages paid
173 the same attention to their genealogies. Noble lineages kept track of their
778 actual or putative ancestors, whereas non-noble lineages tended to ignore them and to let geographical proximity determine meaningful kinship ties. This loss of interest in exact genealogies was found even among lineages that had lost the nam of a district and with it their nobility, but still retained the nam of a village. Members of the minimal units in such lineages competed actively for the village nam and were interested in fairly recent an-

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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613 173 778

cestors. They did not remember how they were related unless they happened to have a common grandfather or great-grandfather who had held the nam. The differential value thus placed on genealogies by the noble and non-noble lineages was due in most cases to the differential access of these lineages to the strategic resources of Mossi society. People who held the nam [554] and belonged to noble lineages enjoyed special claims to goods and services. Those whose lineages did not hold the nam had no such privileges.

613 554

Because Mossi society was basically patrilineal, a man shared in the status and the corporate assets of his patrilineage. Conversely, a man had no access to the status or resources of his mother's patrilineage except for some ritual rights and duties that accrued to him as a *yagenga* (a sister's or daughter's son). These rights and duties included residence in the home of a maternal patrilineage during childhood, attendance at sacrifices to the mother's patrilineal ancestors, the settling of quarrels between maternal kinsmen, and ritual license to seize specific items of property from these relatives. This license dramatized the *lack* of access rather than *freedom* of access to the property of maternal relatives. [591]

613 778 602 554 [175]

When a man's maternal relatives controlled the nam of the territory in which he lived, he could improve his social and economic position. In many cases, a young man who had gone to live as a "stranger" with a noble uncle or grandfather remained with these relatives. His privilege to remain was sanctioned by the Mossi belief that a boy's maternal ancestors would wreak vengeance on any person who tried to evict him from the village from which his mother had been "sent into the bush" (given away as a wife). By using various strategies and subterfuges, the "stranger" obtained wives through his maternal relatives and used their land and other resources. After several generations the lineal descendants of the "stranger" frequently became indistinguishable from their maternal relatives, although such cases were not often formally acknowledged. Whether these "sisters' children" ever managed to obtain the nam of their mother's patrilineage is a moot point, because in theory they could not. Yet, also by Mossi definition, a man could never inherit rights and duties in his mother's patrilineage; however, it is known that this did happen. It is possible that the close check kept by the ruling lineage on its genealogy made usurpation impossible. Yet I know of several cases in which candidates for chiefship feared competition from men whose descent actually barred them from the nam.

The son of a nobleman and a commoner woman seldom attached himself permanently to his maternal patrilineage, although he retained all of his customary rights, privileges, and duties in it. Occasionally, noblemen did attach themselves to their maternal relatives, but those who did had

613 usually been banished from their patrilineage for some illegal act or had
778 voluntarily left home after a dispute over inheritance of the nam, goods, or
602 women.
554

The fact that noble lineages often absorbed sisters' sons was only one of the reasons why such lineages survived and expanded, even if only at the expense of other lineages within the local society. Another reason for this growth was that the nobles, possessing the nam and its prerogatives, received more wives than the commoners. They had more children and thus multiplied more rapidly. Mossi lineages were generally exogamous through their whole depth, but exogamy became increasingly mandatory as the segments became smaller. Marriage within a maximal lineage was permitted only when some of its members had moved so far away from its original locality that the original ties were either forgotten or ignored. The Mossi
[773] have myths in which the lineage founder gives his overly numerous descendants permission to marry certain of their relatives. Even so, if a marriage was actually found to have occurred between distant relatives, appropriate sacrifices had to be made to the ancestors.

613 Marriage was also forbidden between persons who could trace a common maternal ancestor. But because the time depth here was very shallow, total bilateral exogamy was practiced to a depth of only four or five generations. Of course, the differential concern with genealogies between those who had access to the nam and those who did not, had an effect on the extent to which exogamy was practiced.

613 Most Mossi marriages were based on an exchange of women between
583 two lineages linked by a long-term series of reciprocal exchanges of goods and services. Women were regarded as the most valuable part of this system. In theory, only the Boodkasma of a babissi had the right to give a woman as a wife to another lineage. However, the initiators of the reciprocal relations between lineage segments were often babissi heads, Yirisobadamba (heads of nuclear families), or individual lineage members. When a man from one lineage "made friends" with a member of another and rendered him a service or received a favor from him, their respective lineages were considered to be involved. The corporate nature of the lineage segment was acknowledged by all persons engaged in reciprocal relations, and the relations between two individuals were seen as relations between their lineages.

When a man wished to give a daughter to a friend as a wife, he had to consult his Boodkasma, who then gave the woman to the friend's Boodkasma. The latter accepted the woman as a wife for the lineage rather than for the man involved. The lineage retained its rights *in gene-*

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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*175 gions to ascertain whether the people desired reunification. Duglas re-
648 ported his findings to the National Assembly:
642

> You know as well as I do that the Mossi are proud of their past. Thanks to a political and social organization without peer in West Africa, they have known peace since the Middle Ages, in an Africa ravaged by war and depopulated by the slave trade. . . . This ancient land also desires prosperity and modernization. To achieve this its voice must be heard, not only in the National Assembly but particularly in the Grand Council [the highest consultative body] of French West Africa. The Upper Volta must have its own General Council.[20]

*175 The law authorizing the reconstitution of the Upper Volta as a separate
*648 territory was promulgated on September 4, 1947. The non-Mossi populations of the projected territory feared Mossi domination and voiced their opposition in the Assembly, but in the end an accord was reached. The Mossi chiefs next petitioned the French government to pay for the rebuilding and refurbishing of Ouagadougou. François Bouda, one of the few traditional Mossi nakomce to become an elected representative of the Mossi, reminded the members of the Council of the French Union of what had occurred in 1919. He stated that his own father had recruited thousands of men to make bricks for "Bancoville" (an epithet for Ouagadougou; most of its buildings were of sun-dried bricks called *banco*) because Governor Hesling "never considered the possibility of purchasing cement, which was
[464] not even expensive. Forced labor was easy to recruit, and no one thought that the day would come when it would be gone."[21] Bouda said that the Government should now help the new territory to modernize the capital.

D'Arboussier, an RDA delegate in the Assembly, declared that he would support the bill, if only because in the past the French government had attempted "to make a crack race horse out of an ordinary horse, and in so doing had made it a decrepit mare."[22] Funds for rebuilding Ouagadougou were finally voted, and the "Bancoville" of French West Africa began to take on a new look with wide avenues, large administrative buildings, official residences, and even a new palace for the Mogho Naba.

*175 With the reconstitution of the Upper Volta, the Mogho Naba and his
643 chiefs attained their highest prestige since the conquest. The chiefs even
631 had strong influence over the Mossi representatives to the organs of the
●554 French Union, because of the decisive support they had granted them in
*648 the elections. But this increase in prestige was to be short-lived. The chiefs were no longer the sole representatives of their people, and the Mossi were no longer isolated from events in other parts of the Upper Volta, or for that

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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 175*

matter from events in French West Africa and the rest of Overseas France. 643
All projects undertaken in the Upper Volta became of interest to the other 631
units of the French Union because the funds to support them had to be 554
voted on by representatives of the whole, including not only local Mossi 648*
and non-Mossi, but also Africans in other territories, French colonial populations outside Africa, and the metropolitan French.

The conditions that were to have the greatest effect on the position of 175*
Mossi chiefs were created in January 1949, when elections were held to 631
choose the Upper Volta's first General Council. The major parties involved 666
in the election were the Mossi-dominated Union Voltaïque; the Entente 665
Voltaïque, a local section of the RDA representing the interests of such [646]
non-Mossi populations as the Lobi, Fulani, Bobo, Senufo, and Gurunsi;
and a group of smaller ethnic parties such as the Union Lobie and the Indépendants. The campaign reflected all the tensions and conflicts prevalent among the administration, the RDA, the non-Mossi parties, and the Union Voltaïque. Both the Union Lobie and the Indépendants spoke out against what they feared to be Mossi domination, and accused the Mossi chiefs of "neo-feudalism." The Union Voltaïque accused the RDA of radicalism, of associating with communists, and of hostility to the chiefs. It cited as evidence the deposal of several Agni and Senufo chiefs in the Ivory Coast by partisans of the RDA. The RDA, in turn, charged the Union Voltaïque with supporting reactionary, feudal-minded chiefs, and thus with opposing the true interests of the Mossi and other Voltaic peoples. Furthermore, it accused Masson (Governor Mouragues's executive officer) of encouraging the cercle commanders to fight against the RDA, and of jailing about 300 RDA members at Bobo-Dioulasso.[28]

As expected, the Union Voltaïque won most of the seats in the more populous Mossi section of the Upper Volta, and thus was able to dominate the political institutions created by the administration. Nevertheless, the election produced deep political scars in the Upper Volta, and lasting enmity between the RDA and the Mossi chiefs.

During the years that followed the reunification of the Upper Volta, the 175*
Mossi chiefs as such were not accorded any specific status by the administra- 648*
tion. Beginning in 1953, bills designed to regularize the status of the chiefs 631
were submitted by Mossi delegates to the Assembly of the French Union [646]
and to various other organs of the French Union, but to no effect. The
Mossi chiefs meanwhile sought to define their own position. In 1952, under 175*
the leadership of the Mogho Naba, they formed an organization called the 631
Union of the Traditional Chiefs of the Upper Volta. Article IV of the stat- 647
utes which they filed with the territorial administration reads as follows: [643]

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964

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175 their genealogies and traditions. The Mogho Naba was pleased by the reci-
643 tation and thanked the drummer.

639 Later that day, the Mogho Naba presented himself in the courtyard of
574 the district chief's compound to be saluted by the village chiefs and by the
182 heads of lineages. They came to him in the traditional way, rubbing their palms and bending their foreheads to the ground. He addressed them, and in response they snapped their fingers in the customary manner. Then, one by one, the village chiefs and the lineage elders came to their monarch and gave him presents of money which ranged from 50 to 200 francs. The Mogho Naba paid little attention to the sums given, being more interested in this act of homage and fealty. However, he listened carefully as each donor announced his name and rank within the official hierarchy or village. He later thanked them collectively and departed. This ceremony, while not very elaborate, differed little in detail from those characteristic of the traditional Mossi's relationship to their Mogho Naba. The new element here was that the monarch was traveling around his domain, establishing a close relationship with his chiefs and subjects, whose support he needed for his modern political alliances.[28]

*175
643 The Mogho Naba continued to hold the morning ceremony at court,
796 even though it was rapidly losing its traditional function and becoming of
182 major interest only to visitors. He also continued to hold those ceremonies associated with individual appointments to the nam and with traditional
[692] sacrifices. Unknown to many was the fact that traditional authorities at court still judged legal cases which many Mossi refused to take to the Europeans.

*175 In contrast to the Mogho Naba, the traditional provincial ministers now
645 lost most of the power they had held in the pre-conquest period, and all the
182 duties they had acquired in the immediate post-conquest era. As we have seen, one minister, the Baloum Naba, had entered politics at the suggestion of the Mogho Naba, but even he was now relegated to the entourage that accompanied the Mogho Naba and the European administrators on visits to the ministers' former provinces. The increased number of European administrators had made these ministers superfluous.

178 The district chiefs retained some prestige after the war. They could still
*175 judge legal cases, with the understanding that the litigants were free to go
● 554 to the Europeans if they so desired and had to be sent there in serious cases.
634 Their major problem was that a more efficient administration was taking
[692] a greater interest in district affairs. For the first time since the conquest, officials were visiting some of the more remote villages. No longer were they said to "act as locusts"—that is, to appear periodically to garner supplies and men from the districts and then disappear until the next onslaught. Instead, they appeared regularly to collect taxes and to take censuses, and

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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they were kept informed of almost everything that occurred in the districts by their secretaries and "friends" (usually war veterans who visited the administrative headquarters on business).

Not all the district chiefs accepted with equanimity their gradual loss of power. Many of them had accepted at face value the joyful refrain of the elite and the politicians that the "land was cooling"—i.e., that the rigors of colonialism were over. They welcomed the liberal laws of 1946, and believed that they would regain the power lost by their fathers. Thus, they were among the most surprised persons in the Upper Volta when the easing of colonial rule brought with it more French supervision rather than less. From the standpoint of political power, most district chiefs had been better off in the days of the "locusts." At least the locusts came and went, whereas progressive government slowly but irrevocably eroded their power.

The village chiefs, as those members of the traditional Mossi hierarchy who had the closest contact with the people, felt the postwar administrative changes much more keenly than the other chiefs. They found it increasingly difficult to deal with war veterans, adherents of formal religions, and other people who had lost respect for traditional values and practices.[28] Whereas few Mossi would have refused to visit or to pay allegiance to the Mogho Naba or to their district chief, with whom they had little personal contact, many did refuse to have political relationships with those village chiefs whom they neither liked nor respected.

The rural Mossi, upon whom the position of the Mogho Naba and his chiefs ultimately depended, did not fully comprehend the postwar changes in the Upper Volta, and were initially willing to look to their chiefs for guidance. Most of them referred to their newly won civil rights in the French Union by what they called *soguem minga,* which may be translated as "possession of one's self," "liberty," or "liberation." To the majority of them, however, the reforms meant chiefly the end of forced labor. They were more than willing to leave the new political affairs to their chiefs, despite the assurance of the elite that they could now participate in the governmental processes. Dupont wrote in a romantic vein about the introduction of political reforms in the Upper Volta:

> Can we truly speak of a change for the better in this country? Yes! A page has been turned, the last in a chapter. A new chapter has just begun, and I was the amazed witness of this beginning. . . . One must say, in France's favor, that she did not merely engage in beautiful speeches, but that her liberating decrees deeply modified the life of the natives. Gone is the export of laborers; gone are the uncontrolled prestations; gone the requisitions of produce which the peasants had to buy elsewhere at a higher price and resell at a loss; gone the sales in which the collective price given to the district

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As the politicians grew skillful at the game of metropolitan politics, their power increasingly eclipsed that of their chiefly benefactors and of local French administrators. For example: 175* 631 554 665 634

> A local chef de poste summoned the district chiefs to bring their potential draftees for the war in Algeria early in the morning on a specific date to be examined by medical officers. Those chiefs who looked upon any summons with a trepidation born of their past experience with prewar administrators, arrived at the headquarters as early as 5:30 A.M. on the morning in question, bringing their young men with them. Many of these chiefs, whose only [489] means of transportation was their slow-moving ceremonial horse, spent the [492] night en route to be there at dawn. More sophisticated chiefs coming from similar distances left on the same morning and arrived at about 8:00 A.M., the hour when the administrator himself was first seen stirring in his residence. One chief, a war veteran, rode up on his bicycle at about 8:45 A.M. [493] in a most unchiefly manner and became the butt of jokes from the other waiting chiefs. Another district chief, who was an elected representative, did not arrive until about 9:30 A.M., and he was greeted on arrival by the administrator. This man had only about half a mile to travel, and he did so in his car. His colleagues greeted him with a mixture of jokes, feigned awe, and surprise, and some of them addressed him as "Mogho Naba" and "Governor."[29]

Another example of the shift in the balance of power was the relationship that developed between Joseph Conombo and the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou. The Mogho Naba had nominated and supported Conombo as a candidate for deputy to the National Assembly. He was elected, and later became Secretary of the Interior in the Mendès-France Government of 1954. He thus had access to power undreamed of by the Mogho Naba. Being a Moaga as well as a good politician, he never flaunted his authority before his traditional chief; nor did the Mogho Naba try to exercise his traditional powers over him. But their behavior toward each other clearly demonstrated that they were both aware of the shift in power, even though they were both too wise and too polite to make an issue of it. 175* 643 554 648* 646

Other political forces also jeopardized the position of the chiefs. For example, as head of the Union Voltaïque, Conombo had an honored position within a Paris-based African parliamentary group called the Indépendants d'Outre-Mer (IOM). He would have held an even more important position within this group if he had had wider support among the non-Mossi in the Upper Volta. But his power was limited by the presence and competition of the MDV, which, while Mossi-supported, was anti-chief; the Mouvement Populaire de la Révolution Africaine (MPA), an anti-Mossi and anti-RDA party formed in 1954 by Nazi Boni of the Bobo ethnic group and supported by some officials in the administration; and the Parti Démocratique Voltaïque (PDV), a local branch of a now less radical RDA 175* 646 648* 665 554

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* 175 created out of the defunct Entente Voltaïque. In an attempt to gain the sup-
+646 port of these parties and of the young Mossi intellectuals who, while anti-
648 chief, were not yet willing to join the PDV, Conombo officially scrapped
665 the Union Voltaïque in 1955 and formed the Parti Social d'Education des
● 554 Masses Africaines (PSEMA).[50] The party pledged to promote social reform and the right of Africans to manage their own affairs, and to struggle against family, regional, and racial hatreds. But it did not win the support of the non-Mossi; nor did it attract many young Mossi, who did not believe that it had discarded the mantle of the chiefs. Conombo's readiness to ally himself with anti-chief forces, however, did make it obvious to the chiefs that when politicians were out to gain power, they did not always take the interests of the chiefs into account.

* 175 In 1956, when a *loi-cadre* granting almost complete autonomy to the
642 French African territories was approved by the National Assembly, it made
631 no provision for the participation of the traditional chiefs in the projected
578 governmental structure.[51] In fact, as preparations were being made to implement the new reforms, a number of politicians and educated Africans launched an attack on the chiefs which seems to have been a step toward edging them out of power altogether. The newspaper *Afrique Nouvelle*, published in Dakar but read by the educated elite throughout French West Africa, carried a series of articles that proclaimed: "The district chiefs should be given neither a position nor a salary!" "Let us democratize the chieftainship!" and "Let us decapitate the district!" (i.e., let us do away with the district chief). Over a photo showing the traditional chiefs, *Afrique Nouvelle* ran the caption, "Are they still chiefs of the territories?"[52]

[554] The Mossi chiefs, who had retained more power and prestige than any other chiefs in French West Africa, bore the brunt of these attacks and rose to defend the rights of all the chiefs. Their most able spokesman was Bouda, a Councillor of the French Union and a district chief in his own right. He wrote in *Afrique Nouvelle*:

> The Mossi [socio-political] organization, by its simplicity and cohesiveness, aroused the admiration of France, which respected and retained it.
>
> The power of the Mossi chief may be great, but it is not used to oppose the progress which is being made. The Mossi chief is not as much of a conformist as people have a tendency to believe. The social and political revolution which, since 1946, has made Mossi country so different from what it was before the war, is effecting the transition from a society largely encompassed by Nabas possessing real authority, an authority sanctioned by custom, to a more progressive way of life whose essential characteristics are underlined by the growth of towns, the uprooting of a large part of the population, and the triumph of the desire to be on one's own. . . .

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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When one asks the Mossi directly, "What is a market?" the response to this question is: "A market is a place where people meet to buy and sell. People travel from one market place to another market place, and on the way they stop and see their friends in other villages. In the market one often meets and drinks with one's friends. People also go to distant markets to find things which they do not grow themselves or which cannot be found in their own markets."

Lending support to the Mossi contention that markets are places where one goes to buy and sell is the fact that most important markets in their country are found at the intersections of well-traveled routes. These intersections are often the places where chiefs have their capitals or compounds and this leads to the further idea that there is a connection between chiefs and markets, if only because the power of the chiefs makes markets possible. This does not mean, however, that the market is a purely physical entity which can only exist under the aegis of a chief, or that it is a purely economic institution. First of all, some markets, especially the smaller ones, are moved periodically without too much difficulty. Secondly, and of great importance, is the fact that whenever and wherever there is a large gathering of Mossi there is a "market." Indeed one can say that Mossi seldom come together in large numbers without coming to a market, or without creating one. It appears that the Mossi cannot interact with one another in any circumstance without also exchanging goods of some kind. For example, when a pagan chief holds the annual festival to his ancestors, the people who attend form a market in the vicinity of his compound. In those districts where the chiefs have become Christians and celebrate their birthdays rather than the traditional ancestors' rites, the people go to pay them homage and also "make a market." Similarly, whenever there is a funeral of an important chief, the people from the surrounding villages or even districts bring commodities to his hamlet and hold a market during the ceremony. On Christmas day, 1955, the people of Manga district "moved their market" about 500 yards to the Catholic Mission grounds where the Christians were celebrating their holiday. And after celebrating the prayers of Ramadan, the Moslems and their pagan townsmen repair to the markets to spend the rest of the day.

Most Mossi markets are inaugurated with religious ceremonies except those which develop by accretion—that is, by more and more persons coming voluntarily to trade. When a chief orders that a market be created or when a market is moved from one place to another place for any reason, the chief is the person who gives the order for the ceremony to be performed. First of all he speaks to his Raga Naba (market chief), usually a non-Mossi slave, about the need for the market or the desirability of changing its location. This man then consults a *teng-*

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to be sold the article at a lower price. The result is that the pace of commerce in a Mossi market is somewhat relaxed, but the lack of intense competition prevents a great deal of hositility and quarreling among the market people.

The amount of small trading which takes place in a Mossi market is fantastic, so much so that one gains the impression that some people trade simply for the sake of trading. Everyone tries to get money so that he or she can buy some desired object, but it is impossible for one to obtain a clear idea of what kind of profit, if any, people make from their commerce. In fact, the idea of a profit does not seem to be important when people are selling their own products. Most people only think about profit when they buy things to resell—whether these things are of African or European manufacture. This, incidentally, is one of the reasons why the prices of foodstuffs are about 10 per cent lower in the country districts than at Wagadougou, and concommitently, why imported products are 10 to 20 per cent higher in the rural districts than at Wagadougou where they are bought. When a woman takes such products as cotton, beans or millet to market, she may gross about 100 francs in the course of the day. But out of this she may give a few francs to her husband to buy kola nuts, a few francs to her daughter to buy a plastic necklace, and spend the rest for a cotton skirt, a piece of meat and condiments for her sauces. Men whose wives do not bring many goods to market must usually give them about 100 francs to spend on the various products the family needs. There are no official restrictions on the kinds of goods which may or may not be sold in the Mossi markets. In pre-European times slaves and eunuchs were the common stock-in-trade of the major markets and of some of the smaller ones as well. The only active supervision that existed and still exists concerns the butchering of meat: Every person who sells meat in the market must exhibit the skin of the butchered animal in a public place so that there will be no question as to the ownership of the animal. If the meat in question is the remains of a cow killed and half-eaten by a lion, then the village or district chief must be notified before the meat enters the market. The person in charge of this task used to be, and often still is, a man called the Kos Naba, a kind of sales chief. He also formerly doubled as a tax collector for the rulers and chiefs. Another official, the Raga Naba, where he still exists, is more concerned with protecting the lives and property of the people who trade at the markets, but he also supervises the sale of some commodities there and formerly also collected taxes for his superior.

In pre-European times, every important Mossi prince and district chief had the counterpart of a Kos Naba and Raga Naba, to collect taxes in their markets.

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443 taxes in their markets. The French abolished both of these offices
554 when they took over the country, because they looked upon them as
651 purely exploitative rather than regulatory agents. But like so many
656 other Mossi political institutions which the French have "abolished,"
178 the Kos Naga and Raga Naba persist in many of the districts, and per-
[649] haps even in such large centers as Wagadougou. These officials persist
[829] because one of the basic assumptions of the Mossi is that everything
[825] must have a "chief." They believe that even the animals in the bush have chiefs, and if men, too, did not have chiefs then social life would be chaos. Thus, in the rural areas many or most district chiefs have retained their market officials even though the roles of these officials have become highly attenuated and so secretive that their existence is often denied.

175 Taxes collected at the market places played an important part in
443 supporting the traditional political hierarchy of the Mossi people.
651 The Kos Naba collected 250 cowries in taxes for every beef cattle
[644] slaughtered at the market and took their humps and gave them to a palace official called the Nemdo Naba (meat chief) for distribution in the royal household. He also collected 250 cowries on every cow sold there, but did not usually tax goats and sheep. In lieu of this he occasionally took a head or two of these animals from each herd that passed through the market and sent them to the palace kitchens. Donkeys were also taxed at the rate of 200 cowries per head sold in the market. Horses sold to the nobility were not taxed, but those exported were taxed about 300 cowries.

175 The Raga Naba collected the taxes on other commodities sold at
443 market. Cotton weavers paid him taxes according to the size of their
651 bolts of cloth, and cotton producers paid as much as 20 cowries on
463 especially large sales of their raw produce. The tailors and dyers paid no fixed tax on their wares, but were asked to send clothing to the palace. Every donkey- or ox-load of salt which entered the market place was assessed a tax of 300 cowries. The smiths were not taxed in cowries, but had to supply the wives of the Moro Naba with hoes and the palace personnel with arrowheads, spearpoints and iron clubs. The jewelers also sent bracelets as presents to the ruler. There were no fixed taxes on cereals, vegetables and cooked food sold at market, but each day the Raga Naba, accompanied by several pages or retainers carrying baskets, went from vendor to vendor taking several calabash-fuls of their produce for use in the palace. In addition, the vendors of cooked food had to feed the young grooms of the Moro Naba who were not regularly fed by the palace household. The beer sellers, too, while they were not assessed taxes, contributed a good percentage of their beverage to palace and market personnel who demanded the

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customary "taste" with greater frequency and freedom than did ordinary buyers. But the most valuable tax collected by the Raga Naba was on the sale of slaves, whose buyers paid a tax of 1,000 cowries per head.

There is some evidence, mainly from Europeans, that the Mossi occasionally may have found the market taxes prohibitive. Binger reports that during his visit to the Mossi in 1888, the high taxes exacted by the Moro Naba were "one of the causes which placed Wagadougou in second place [as a market town] and which made Mane the commercial capital of Mossi country" (Binger 1892 : 467). Binger, himself, was caught in the institutionalized gift system and wrote sarcastically: "The day of the market [at Wagadougou] the receipts are good. People bring every-thing to the palace including millet as well as hoes or peanuts, and everything is accepted. *All this giving is left to the generosity of the customers . . .*" (Binger 1892 : 465) (his italics). Even so, one cannot be sure that the Mossi felt the same way about paying taxes to their rulers as Binger felt. There is, incidentally, always an air of mutual recriminations among the Mossi and their rulers about the level of reciprocation between them. The people admit that the chiefs are indispensable; yet they complain that they are greedy—they "eat" too much. The chiefs insist that it is difficult to rule a territory and complain that the people are ungrateful.

SOCIAL AND RITUAL ASPECTS OF THE MARKETPLACE

Although the offices of Kos Naba and Raga Naba have been abolished officially, these officials still exist in many Mossi districts, and even when they do not exist, some men acting in their stead appropriate commodities in the markets for the chiefs. Furthermore, the *nakomce* (plural of *nabiga*—chief's child) or nobles still wander about the market places taking handfuls of kola nuts, peanuts and everything they need without the people becoming angry or complaining to the French about it. Once when I visited a market in the company of a *nabiga*, the local Raga Naba came up to where we were buying meat and indicated to the butcher that one of his customers was a *nabiga* and that he should treat him accordingly. It is not because of ignorance that the market people continue to grant these privileges to the nobles and the chiefs, but rather because they believe that only the market officials, and not the Europeans, can take care of the markets.

One of the most important tasks of the Raga Naba (or in the absence of this official, the Kos Naba) is to propitiate the *tengkouga* in the market place, or supervise the sacrifices which the *tengsobas* make to them. The task of the market spirits is believed to be so difficult—

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443 due to the bickering, quarreling and even fighting they have to
554 prevent by cooling the tempers of the market people—that they
776 become quite angry. When the spirits are not satisfied, they fail in
782 their tasks and real trouble breaks out in the market, disrupting the trading; and if they are not pacified they may even cause the death of the market officials.[12]

In the days before the market officials were banned, these sacrifices were performed regularly. At that time the Raga Naba simply asked the Kos Naba to seize the appropriate animal in the market to perform
[648] the rite. The problem today is that since the French have abolished the office of Raga Naba, and in some districts have prevented the chief from even naming one secretly, the markets in the latter local-
[208] ities are considered "dangerous markets." Once a market acquires such a reputation, people do not like to visit it because they fear that they would get into fights or quarrels. Not only this, but it is believed that if a market has been without a Raga Naba for a long time, the *tengkouga* there become so angry for being neglected that they kill
[123] the first chief appointed to it. This was the reality or belief behind a series of misadventures of which I was the victim.

123 I had spent an entire day in a market, and on returning home could
443 not find my pen. The next morning I sent an assistant to the chief
554 telling him about the loss and asking him to have an announcement
656 made in the market on the next market day that I would pay a handsome reward to whomever should find and deliver the pen. The chief sent back a reply saying that since there was no Raga Naba, he would have the Kos Naba acquaint the people with my loss. On the day of the market, I waited until midday, when most of the people had arrived, and then went to see whether the Kos Naba had any news of the pen. I checked with several of my friends to see whether they had heard about the pen and discovered, to my chagrin, that no an-
[564] nouncement had been made about it. I went and told the Kos Naba that the people were not hearing about the pen and suggested that one way to do so would be to have the Binderes (drummers and griots) circulate through the market announcing the loss. The Kos Naba refused to do this, and when I enlisted the aid of the chief's secretary, he, too, said that it could not be done because there was no Raga Naba. I had some notes on the institution of the Raga Naba, but as I did not know everything about it, I was, therefore, frankly puzzled

(12) Zahan (1954 : 371) states that "the place where all kinds of merchandise accumulate and where strangers come is a place charged with forces. In time, these forces build up to such a point within the precincts of the market that some purifications are necessary to liberate them. To omit making them would expose the participants to excitements leading to brawls and compromising the place of the transactions."

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and a bit peeved at not being able to put my idea into practice. I next sought the advice and consolation of an elder noble who listened quite calmly and then said: "The customs of these kafirs (heathens) are foolish." Being a Moslem, my friend was very often critical of the pagans, and could be relied upon to explain why their customs were "foolish." He said that in former days the Raga Naba would have climbed a tree and announced to the crowd any message from the district chief. Moreover, he was the custodian of all lost articles and restored them to their owners. The Moslem said that my request could not be granted because there was no Raga Naba, and that probably there would never be another. When the French first banned the institution, the local chief dismissed the Raga Naba. With the passage of years, however, the market became so dangerous that the chief tried to appoint another ex-serf to the job. This man soon died, and his successor died shortly after being appointed. Since that time the chief has made no attempt to name a new market chief.

With this new knowledge I called my aide and inquired from him whether this information was true and if so, why did he not tell me the true state of affairs. His reply was that he did not wish to say that the market was bad because the local people believed that they had solved the problem of the lack of a Raga Naba. When the last Raga Naba died, the chief decided not to name a new one, but in order to placate the market *tengkouga,* he ordered his *tengsoba* to make sacrifices to it. It was believed that these sacrifices would be acceptable as long as the officiant did not bear the title of Raga Naba. The other functions of the Raga Naba, such as collecting goods for the chief and preserving peace in the market, were taken over by the Kos Naba and another servant of the chief. However, the Kos Naba had to be careful lest he overstep his authority in such a way as would acquaint the *tengkouga* with the real situation. In my case, the chief was acting by trying to get the Kos Naba to acquaint the people with my loss in as inconspicuous a manner as possible. The consensus was that the Kos Naba would have risked his life had he made any kind of announcement to the market people, because the *tengkouga* would have thought that he was the new Raga Naba, and if not contented with the people would have killed him. Under these circumstances, I withdrew my request. I discovered later that my pen was not lost but had been in the hut all the time.

Those chiefs who have succeeded in retaining their market officials even secretly have been able to maintain their control over public behavior there. The Mossi are fairly law-abiding despite the persistence among them of a warrior tradition. Every man who goes to market, or anywhere for that matter, usually carries a baton over his

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When a woman has a number of stillbirths or
845 loses her children when they are still babies, however, it is believed
761 than these children were embodiments of the same *kinkirsi* (spirits)
776 who must be tricked into remaining on earth when it returns, and
443 the market place is chosen as the site for this trickery. As soon as such
851 a woman gives birth to a child, and old woman places it in a basket
443 and on the next market day takes it to the market place. Her intention is to "sell" the child in the hope that it would not die if owned by someone other than its mother. The old woman walks around the market place shouting: "I have something to sell!" Invariably a man will walk up to her, and after ascertaining the contents of the basket, offer to buy it. The price varies with the fortune of the man, but traditionally the amount paid has been 500 cowries or their equivalent. The man takes the child for a few minutes and then returns it to its vendor, telling her in a loud voice so that the kinkirsi will hear: "I would like you to give this child to 'X' (the child's mother) to be reared for me and I will pay for its upbringing and will come
[551] for the child in a few years. He then gives the child the name *Yamba*
[553] (slave), or *Yemdaogo* (male slave) if male and *Yempoko* (female slave) if a girl. The old woman then returns the child to its mother, relating what has passed in the market and indicating who the "owner" of her child is. The "owner" of the child may not even see the child again, and naturally does not take this ownership seriously. In many cases the money with which he bought the child was given to him by the child's father.

852 The market also plays an important part in the circumcision and
443 incision ceremonies of Mossi boys and girls. For about two to three months after the actual operations the young children, especially the boys are secluded in the circumcision lodges or compounds and have almost no contact with the village population. Their re-introduction to society always takes place on the great market day. The parents of the children buy new clothing for them this occasion, and on the appointed day the boys or girls parade together in the market and are offered gifts by the market people. Later in the day, they are dismissed and individually feted by their relatives.

585 Owing to the relatively unceremonious nature of Mossi marriages,
76 the market does not play a role in Mossi weddings. However, the
554 same thing cannot be said about the last important *rite de passage,*
443 especially the funeral of a chief, or important elder. Prior to the intervention of the French, and to a lesser extent even today, the announcement of the death of an important ruler was seen as the breakdown of law and order and was ritually dramatized by a popular raid
[565] on the markets throughout the territories (Skinner : ms). During the interregnum the vendors are subject to constant raids by members of

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the noble class, whose actions embody the ideology that the exercise of sovereignty is a corporate right which reverts to all of them when the head ruler dies. Much of this raiding is symbolic and does not interrupt market activities.

Many of the ceremonies connected with the funeral of chiefs and respected deceased elders take place in the market. Sometime between the interment of the dead person, the *keema,* and the first burial ceremonies, the sister-in-law *(dakia)* of the dead man in her role as joking relative—a role she plays until the funeral ceremonies are completed—impersonates him in the market place. On the day chosen for this rite the *dakia* dresses in the clothes of the *keema* and goes to market. While there, she acts as she observed her brother-in-law to have acted in the past: she circles the market and buys goods; she buys beer from his favorite beer seller and drinks with his friends; and for a moment, at least, she sits with his old cronies in their favorite haunts and takes part in their discussions. She may even be serenaded by *griots* who sing praises in honor of "her" ancestors, and she rewards them before leaving the market place that evening.

The market is the scene of an important ritual during the final funeral ceremonies, which are held about one year after a man was buried. On the morning of this ceremony the female relatives of the *keema,* led by his eldest daughter and his *dakia,* appear in the market and go from stall to stall buying all the things the deceased used in his lifetime. These include meat, *zumbala* (locust bean balls), cotton, tobacco, salt, kola nuts, peppers, *kumba* (a tomato), cakes, cooked millet-mush balls, potatoes, etc. When they have gathered all of these things, they retire to a spot near the market where they lay out all the foodstuff in baskets. In the meantime, the drummers play the royal airs, if the dead man was a chief, or ordinary rhythms if he was a commoner. Then the *keema's* eldest daughter places a basket on her head and, accompanied by four men, leads a procession of drummers and of the other women, also with their baskets, around the market. While this procession is circling the market three times in honor of the deceased, the *dakia,* carrying a very old basket containing the stalest food she could find, weaves back and forth through the marching throng making a nuisance of herself. After the third round the marchers return to their assembly point whence the eldest daughter and some of the older women now rush into the market, stealing merchandise from the stalls and placing it in their baskets. This assault is often so quickly done that it is fairly successful. The raiders then join the other mourners at the assembly point, where with bowed heads they listen respectfully while the chief drummer recites the genealogy of the *keema* and tells him that the people from the surrounding villages

342 received, gossip exchanged, and social and ceremonial obligations dis-
592 cussed in its shade. Here, also, the men of the lineage take their meals,
brought out to them from the kitchens of their wives and set before them
[264] by their sons, who first attend their fathers and then dine on what remains.

592 A few paces away is the grinding platform (*nere*) where the women
252 gather to prepare the grain for their families' meals. This great circular mud table, some twenty feet in diameter, is raised about three feet from the ground. Its surface is beaten hard and worked over with cinders and manure to make it rainproof. Each woman has her assigned place at this
[512] platform where she keeps her pestle and where she stations herself at dawn and again at dusk to grind her millet and learn the news of the day.

Frequently found at the outer perimeter of the dwelling of the Mossi
592 kin group is the house of the son of a lineage woman who has returned from his father's household to live in the benevolent presence of his mother's family, with whom he enjoys an especially permissive relationship. The house set aside for the residence of the young unmarried men of the lineage is also located on the outer edge of the compound dwelling.

A recent addition to the traditional pattern of village organization
555 described above is the independent households of socially ambitious
184 individuals who have chosen to separate themselves from the residences of their lineages in order to profit from their own economic or religious enterprises. Many have become independently wealthy through successful commercial ventures; others, as a result of conversion to Islam, have gained prestige through religious authority and wealth through the tuition and services provided by the Koranic students. Often these people are much younger than their lineage elders, not in line for the inheritance of political or religious authority through traditional channels, and unwilling either to accept the authority of their seniors or to share economically with the less prosperous members of their lineages. They are deviants, in conflict with the communal patterns of consumption and with the emphasis on accepting established authority which characterizes the traditional social organization of the Mossi.

THE TRADITIONAL ECONOMY

613 Much agricultural endeavor is necessarily co-operative. Each farmer
476 is dependent on the assistance of his kinsmen to get his fields seeded, cultivated, and harvested in the short time during which each of these
243 operations must take place. However, the yield from his field remains his own, to be shared only with his own wives and children. Members of the lineage also work in the fields under the specific control of the lineage elder. Although the harvest from these fields is stored in the granary
242 [i.e. at a sun shelter in the entrance-way. — Analyst]

how important is the conversion of the chiefs, or, at least, their sympathy for our religion, in the spread of Catholicism." The missionaries may have been successful in the village of the Manga district chief because he was sympathetic to them, but they made few converts in the villages far from the district center or in the neighboring districts. In the Béré district, a few miles from Manga, the Catholics have made only 22 converts despite more than 15 years' work. In Manga, however, they were able to "recruit" most of the young children for their church and school. When an old man was asked why his children became Catholic, he tried to evade the question but finally replied that he did not control the minds of his children. Knowing the nature of administrative practice in the upper Volta before 1946, and the nature of Mossi family structure, we looked further for the answer. 797 797 626 [871]

Paradoxically, it comes from a Catholic missionary, André Dupont, who, seeking to discover the reason for the decrease of patients in the Catholic-controlled maternity clinics, asked: [743]

> Why have the maternity clinics which in 1942 served more than seventy mothers a month now serve only two or three? "We are no longer forced to go," reply the villagers. Was it the fear of sanction which accounted for the unanimous use of the clinics? Alas! It would seem to be so. The use of force and sanction have rendered odious an institution of charity. It would have been better if the mothers were only encouraged to use the clinics. "These natives do not understand," I am told sometimes. But how does one expect them to understand? (Dupont 1949:4)

Fear was certainly one of the reasons why the people in Manga embraced Catholicism. Before 1946 (the Brazzaville conference in 1944 abolished forced labor), men and women were recruited for work on the roads and on Ivory Coast plantations, and children were recruited for the schools. The district chiefs often gathered orphans and the children of their former serfs and sent them to the mission to fill the quotas, but many children and whole families voluntarily attached themselves to the missions. The reasons for so doing are legion, but in some cases it was simply the desire to accept the new religious faith. 797 [466]

Once at the mission the children were taught French and the tenets of Catholicism. Many of the boys later became catechists or priests and several girls went into the nunnery. However, the largest group of educated youths became the clerical personnel of the administration and were lost to missionary activity. Because the administration lacked French-speaking Mossi, the young people received good jobs. This desertion to the administration has become so serious that the missionaries at Manga have ceased to teach French to their catechists and now use the vernacular. 797 555 [871]

Conversion to Catholicism, bringing with it the knowledge of French, was formerly one of the sure roads to upward social mobility. Most Catholic teachers at Manga (and at Nobéré) are individuals who were recruited as unwilling school-boys but today are the highest paid members of their lineages. Other gains have accrued to persons who become Catholics. For example, the people at Manga believe that the missionaries used their influence with the

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797 administration to have one of their converts, a younger son of the late chief, elected to the district chieftainship over his elder brother. This belief is prob-
555 ably unfounded, since the Moro Naba seems to be electing the literate sons of chiefs to their fathers' positions so that educated chiefs, and not educated commoners, can serve as members of French parliamentary bodies. Unfortunately, the people of Manga do not understand modern political problems, and have accepted the new chief only because of their traditional respect for the chieftainship.

634 The conversion of the Manga chief to Catholicism has not engendered many problems for his pagan subjects. The chief's primary duty—to begin
797 the yearly ceremonial cycle of sacrifices to the ancestors—has been taken over
769 by his father's brother, who is now considered the ritual head of the chiefly
[602] lineage. Nevertheless, to the chief still accrue the gains of this ceremony because his followers pay him homage and bring him gifts on his birthday, which comes at this period. Moslems in the community also pay their respects at this time, and they prefer his Catholic birthday celebration to the bloody sacrifices of chickens to the ancestors. On the other hand, the chief shows little of the common Catholic disapproval of Moslems and sends gifts to their leaders on the Moslem feast days. He also entertains the district Moslems when they come to pay him homage.

797 The Catholic chief does not act as a pivot in the exchange of wives be-
tween pagans of his lineage and the other lineages. This task now falls to his
634 father's brothers. Nevertheless, as district chief he is constantly involved
582 with the marital problems involving pagan parents and their Catholic children. The main source of the difficulty is that Catholic girls are encouraged to refuse to join their pagan husbands when so ordered by their parents. The mission not only insists that the girl freely choose her own husband, but encourages her to reject a polygynous union. Catholicism thereby interposes it-
[562] self between the girls and their society, not only impairing the prestige of their fathers and lineages but also giving the girls more freedom than they would ordinarily possess.

The pagans claim that by encouraging girls to choose mates without parental consent, the Catholics are really taking the opportunity to obtain wives for young Catholic men. Paradoxically, there seems to be some truth in this, since Bouniol, a White Father, states:

> A Mossi who is unable to acquire a wife by [traditional] means must either remain unmarried or seduce another man's wife . . . they must choose between celibacy and immorality.
>
> Such a state of affairs creates many problems for the missions, especially as the system is recognized and sanctioned by the colonial authorities. . . . Young native Christians are obviously placed in a very awkward position. Their conversion angers their parents, who refuse to give them a wife; neither will their friends bestow a daughter upon them, because they know that they will not receive one in return, since a Christian may not give a daughter in marriage to a pagan. . . . *Consequently, unless the missionaries help them to find a wife, they must remain unmarried—a very discouraging prospect!* (1920:160 italics mine)

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643 We Mossi cannot say that the Europeans have introduced
636 chieftainship among us; for we are old hands at it. Chieftainship has always existed among us, and we intend to conserve it in spite of anything one may say about it.

Who better than we chiefs can hope for a rapid evolution of our country? However, because of the pride we have
[185] in the organized society that we have known well before French occupation, we wish this evolution to take place within our specific cultural pattern, to harmonize with, and to take into consideration the wisdom which has permitted us to conserve the integrity of our homeland until French occupation.

Without wishing to place ourselves against the demands of those who are wedded to an overthrow of local traditions, we endeavor to state our position clearly: Let everyone scratch whatever itches him.[8]

643 It is too early to predict what will be the fate of the traditional
178 Mossi chiefs. The factors which made for such weaknesses in their political system—hazardous interregnums and flexibility in succession—have certainly ceased to operate. But, as I have shown, by a curious coincidence, a form of succession which evolved to meet a particular set of circumstances served the Mossi in good stead during French occupation, and is now being adapted to serve the needs of a new political environment. This flexibility in succession may even provide the Mossi with a wide enough choice of candidates to preserve the traditional ruling lineages in the face of a changing political system. Furthermore, this flexibility in political succession appears to be more compatible and less in conflict with the principles of universal suffrage which have been introduced in this society to serve the needs of the developing parliamentary system.

The growing use of Mossi traditional chiefs as modern politicians has not precluded the opportunity of Mossi commoners to take part in the governmental organization of the territory in which their group resides. As a matter of fact, there are a number of commoners who
[555] are well educated, and individually have held high administrative offices. However, despite a number of them who have been critical of the traditional ruling hierarchy, they have not succeeded in breaking the strong hold of the traditional ruling lineage on the people. Some commoners have even found it to their advantage to ally themselves

241 Baningha (large white millet or sorghum).

These two types are grown for food, [247] although the large white millet is especially reserved for horses in well-to-do households.

[262 273] Kazinga (large red millet). As a food the poorer Mossi prefer this to the baningha, but it is more especially grown for the making of dam, millet beer.

[556] Mouï (rice) is sought only by the chiefs, notables, and a few families of dakangba (well-to-do men).

Benga (beans).

Souma (peas of either the small green variety or large white or red ones).

Niouyan (from niouri, "yam"), grown only in certain areas.

Nangouri or sounkama (peanuts).

Pèsça (fabirama) [a tuber plant].

Sinni or sili (sesame), grown only by a few people who like it.

Bito (sorrel), used in preparing the sauce served with sagbo.

Mana (gombo [okra]) is also cultivated.

Aside from its food crops, each family has its own plot for cotton (lamdo) which provides for the clothing needed during the year.

311 178 I am told that fields are much more extensive today than in former times, in spite of the abolition of slavery. This is explained by the fact that many areas supposed to be haunted were formerly left uncultivated. It is said, however, that the Moaga used to grow larger crops since in those days he was closer to the soil.

[248] At the present time there is a lack of farm hands. As [857] recently as twenty years ago, the young Moaga followed his parents to the field as soon as he was six or seven years old. He took a liking to the work at a very young age. Before the French [484] occupation, the Moaga rarely left his village because of the dangers on the roads, frequented in those days by bandits (usually descend- [579] ants of naba). People were even afraid to go into the bush alone, for fear of being attacked, captured, and reduced to slavery.

433 178 There was little contact even between adjoining villages. At Ouagadougou, no one ventured from section to section unless he had very good reason and was armed to the teeth. In short, everyone

584
583 have borrowed. In addition, he would expose himself and the preferred suitor to the vengeance of the rejected one.

583 The bride price is not exorbitant. The total gifts, spread over a period of years, amount to some fifty francs, without counting the work days. Nevertheless, it requires sufficient means to secure at least the necessary cowries. Besides, the child's father prefers to give her to someone who already boasts a certain fame and some wealth, in short, to an elderly man. /30/ This is why children are promised to old dotards, and white-haired men are paired with young girls; while the old men's sons of marriageable age cannot get wives. If the father has the means to pay the bride price, he carefully refrains from helping his son, even if the latter has found a match to his liking.
587 It is true that all the father's wives are inherited by the oldest son,
578 who gives some to his younger brothers; but this occurs only at the old man's death, and this may not happen for a long time. This ex-
593 plains why the oldest son wishes for his father's death, and why the father sends the son away for fear of a premature end. It is only fair to add that some men, with a better understanding of their own interests, marry off their sons as soon as they are old enough.

595 Polygamy exists among the Mossi as in all Black countries. The wealth of a man is gauged by the number of his wives. Women
[556] furnish hands to till the soil, for the wife works in the fields like the husband. Women also furnish children, and if these are daughters, young men will come to offer their services (dakonré) and one day take the girls in marriage; or the father will receive gifts. If the children are boys, they will later aid the father in his work. In these countries where each lives for himself alone, where selfishness reigns supreme, polygamy is easily explained, but it undoubtedly results in a lower birth rate. White-bearded old men cannot have children as numerous and sound as young men in their prime, and the latter, deprived of wives, wear themselves out with their excesses. It is true that those who can afford a dozen wives are few; most have to be content with two, three, or four. Some nabas, nevertheless, own veritable herds of women, and this is certainly a grievous abuse. Their wives are numbered in the hundreds. The greatest moral dis-
[837] order reigns in those harems, where the boys who serve as grooms and pages spend most of their time among their master's wives. This explains the precautions taken by the women's owners and the eunuchs of the Moro Naba, as well as the Poënaba and his sinister duties.

114 distant past, since we must place Rawa, the first conqueror of
174 Ouagadougou and Ouahigouya (see further on), in the twelfth century A. D., and his parents came from Dagomba where it is clear the Mossi have lived for some time. The crossing of Haoussa and Djerma by the forefathers of the Dagomba Mossi takes us back to a period that obviously cannot be precisely established, but which is definitely earlier than the fourteenth century (when the Mossi conquered Timbuktu), and one must recognize, contrary to Captain Lambert's opinion, that the Mossi who took Timbuktu came from the south (probably from Ouahigouya) and not from the east (the Say region). We would like to point out /5/ also that they were a great deal closer to Timbuktu in Ouahigouya than in Say. Once this point has been cleared up and the ensuing mistakes corrected, the plausibility of the discovery of the road followed by the Mossi who came from Bornu (if they came from there), which was re-traced by Captain Lambert, is acceptable.

These observations also apply to the continuation of Captain Lambert's report. He says that the wars waged by the second Songhaï empire against the Mossi (sixteenth century) forced the latter to leave the Djerma country to go southwest toward Dagomba. Obviously, all of this is quite inaccurate, but, without accepting Captain Lambert's cause for the emigration and his establishing it further in the past, we can accept the route he traces.

174 "This movement," says Captain Lambert, speaking of the march from Djerma to Dagomba, "took place in a southerly direction, and the Mossi, after having followed the Niger River, crossed it at a point located between Say and Ilo, but much closer to Ilo.

"North of Ilo, the custom of shaving the heads of the chieftains'
[301] [302] wives still persists. These women also wear metal leggings (1), par-

[556]

1. Captain Lambert undoubtedly is referring to the beautiful copper leggings, about 20 centimeters high, worn by the rich Mossi women.

ticularly characteristic of the Mossi peoples and sometimes encountered among peoples who have been in contact with them.

"From this point, the migration, leaving the Bariba country on the left (2), went in a straight line through Gourma and the Pama region

565 171 were, conquerors. This represents a higher level of social complexity and development, in short, a higher level of civilization.

565 556 The nakomsé were and still are gathered in separate villages scattered throughout the territory. They did the same work as other Mossi, but prior to the French occupation they also practiced looting, which was their chief expedient, their major source of wealth. True, this manner of acquiring wealth had lent them improvident habits. Nowadays they own no more small livestock than the Mossi populace, and only a little more large livestock, while they should own much more in view of their former opportunities to acquire wealth. They immediately "ate up" what they looted, however, counting on future pillage. Nowadays they no longer loot, but they seem to have preserved their former improvident habits. It should be noted, however, that they own considerably more horses than other Mossi.

565 142 I saw at Pirigui, in January, 1909, one of those villages of chiefs' sons. There were altogether 841 inhabitants of the nobility with their families and their slaves. Those people would be interesting to study from the point of view of physical anthropology. There were faces totally at variance with Negro faces, truly distinguished physiognomies, oriental and semitic casts of features, in short, enough /579/ to strike an observer even though unfamiliar with physical anthropology.

642 The superstructure of the Mossi state thus consisted of a supreme chief, a carefully established hierarchy of chiefs, and a class of nobles to whom important privileges were granted.

651 As for taxes, "every year at the end of the winter season, prior to our occupation," says Moulins, "the canton chiefs had to come, greet the Moro Naba, and offer him certain gifts (beeves, sheep, millet) which constituted a sort of fixed due." This was the common tax levied after each harvest.

"In addition, whenever the sovereign needed anything whatever, he requested the province chiefs to secure it for him. They summoned the canton chiefs, who in turn gathered the village chiefs, who secured through the soukala chiefs the animals, grain, cowries, and other items requested.

[431] "Finally, whenever a native, chief or common man, came to the Moro Naba, he offered a present to the latter.

764 down on the chest of the deceased. Then they spread out on the boards a layer of clay, and add earth until the hole is filled. A small canari is placed on the grave to mark its location.

Other members of the soukala are buried around it in the maize field. A canari is also placed upon the grave. The same applies to slaves. Only people stricken with sleeping sickness are buried [766] in the bush, to prevent the spread of the disease.

The deceased is buried on the morning following the day of his death. The heir of the deceased soukala chief and the family elders kill chickens upon the grave. They take the animals by the legs and crush their skull on the floor of the grave. This is the liturgical procedure for such killings. Nine chickens are thus killed ● [536] in succession and set aside to be eaten. If the soukala is wealthy, sheep are killed instead of chickens. They are seized by their hind legs and their head is struck three times on the floor of the grave, then their throat is cut with a knife. The souls of all those animals go to the deceased.

On the night following the burial, people people play drums, shriek, dance, shoot guns. When day breaks everyone returns home to wash, rest, and eat. Then they return when the sun sets, and this goes on for three successive nights.

765 When the ceremony is over, the date of a new reunion is set for 30, 40, 60 days or even a year later. This second ceremony is often made to coincide with the time of the millet harvest. The children of the deceased have their heads shaved. Much to is prepared. The sisters and daughters who have married away come on the date set, bringing sheep and dolo. The family and the whole village come to greet the successor of the deceased soukala head, to drink and to eat. The griot and large drums are sent for. People make music, dance, sing, and drink for two days, and /587/ this time there is no weeping. This second reunion ends the funeral ceremonies occasioned by someone's death.

769 The Mossi have a yearly feast for their dead and their ancestors. It is the Tiougou or Bassara, which is also called Péléga in other areas. This feast is celebrated in December, when all the millet has been harvested and the cold weather has come. The family and soukala heads have much dolo prepared and pour it onto the graves

431 cowries to the head of the family would be rejected. The head of the
583 family would certainly not fail to tell him that in promising a girl he intended to give her as a bride and not to sell her. Should the husband insist, he would simply be driven away."

581 Marriage, therefore, is not regarded as purchase among the Mossi,
586 contrary to Malinké and Bambara practices, and in this sense it is imbued among them with greater dignity. Unfortunately, this absence of a bride price permits an easy rupture of the marriage ties, while this is not the case among the Bambara and Malinké where the woman is bound more firmly to her duties. The household, therefore, is less securely grounded among the Mossi than among the Mandé, and thus evil results from good.

581 As a rule, the marriage bond is much looser and more fragile among
583 the Voltaic tribes (Bobo, Gourounsi, Mossi, Habbé/Habe/, etc.) than among the Mandé groups (Bambara, Malinké, etc.), and this is related to the lack of a real bride price. Where there is a bride price, the young girl is sold. If she wishes to leave her husband once she is married, however, considering that a bride price of some importance is difficult to refund (since improvident family heads immediately set out to squander it, while more serious people use it right away to buy a girl for some young man of the family), it has become customary to oppose categorically any demands to break the marriage bond. Thus, while betrothal has greater dignity among the Voltaic tribes, marriage itself has more staying power and more seriousness among the Mandé, and the household has greater soundness. /238/

Now to return to the Mossi.

431 Let us note first that the offering of gifts allows for some flexibility.
583 A rich young man will make much more important gifts than a poor
556 man. He will not give a large sum of cowries, but he may give significant amounts of clothing, foodstuffs (salt, etc.), and animals to the head of his fiancée's family or to her mother. On the other hand, a poor man will give a bundle of firewood which he has just gathered in the bush and a chicken, and this payment will be considered sufficient.

431 Although the girl is not sold, her fiancé or his father are required
583 to make the gifts prescribed by custom.

"The failure to make those gifts prescribed by custom," says Vadier, "has serious consequences. Let us examine the various situations which might arise.

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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What this really means is that the market is the main communication 443
center of Mossi society and news of happenings in the region can be 203
heard there. If a person is in an area one can be sure that the people in the market will know about him, or that he will sooner or later visit the market.

The young men who have returned from work in the cacao fields 167
or towns of Ghana and the Ivory Coast add a great deal of color and 443
excitement to the rural markets of contemporary Mossi country. 556
During the time these young men spend away, they give a great deal of thought and planning to the show they hope to put on when they make the grand tour *(mane do)* of their district's market place. The best day for this is the day of the "great market" and regardles of what day many migrants return to their homes, they wait for that Friday before they show themselves publicly.

On the morning of that day, the typical migrant dresses in his best 167
clothes, lends the remainder of his wardrobe to relatives, and together 443
they go to pay homage to the chief during the morning ceremony 556
(Wend pous yan). The migrant offers the chief such presents as a 431
small amount of money, an article of clothing or kola nuts, and replies 576
to the chief's questions about the health and welfare of all Mossi in the area whence the migrant came, the whereabouts of "lost" migrants, the nature of the work the migrants were doing, and so on. As soon as the young man receives the chief's permission to leave, he 569
goes to the market where he is quickly surrounded by *griots* who accompany him in periodic circumambulations of the market place, drumming and singing praises in honor of his ancestry. The migrant is also greeted warmly by his many friends to whom he then gives presents of money, beer and kola nuts. He acknowledges the general praise for having brought goods and clothing for his relatives and takes pride in seeing these relatives dressed in the cloths and clothing he has brought them. If young and unmarried, the migrant also seeks to take advantage of his new-found importance to make the first overtures to available young women or to renew his relationship with former paramours. Towards evening before going home, he rewards the *griots* with money and bear. Many a migrant attempts to prolong this feeling of grandeur by visiting other markets and by dressing up on subsequent grand market days, but after a few weeks he is re-incorporated into the ordinary market routine, and has to make room for the other newly-arrived migrants.

The market is also the place where important rites marking the 443
changing social status of individuals are carried out. Under normal 844
circumstances, the ceremonies attending the birth of a Mossi child are performed at home. When a woman has a number of stillbirths or

634 tured slaves, whom he settled behind his compound and in separate villages
173 under their own chiefs. He also welcomed refugees from wars in other territories and established them in special villages under their own chiefs.

631 The Dimdamba followed a similar practice in establishing power and
173 control. According to Cheron, when Mogho Naba Koudoumie sent his son Tiraongo to conquer the Ninisi of Boussouma, the Ninisi defended themselves fiercely. Tiraongo's advance was thus very slow until he found a Ninisi named Wine, dressed in a panther's skin and hiding in a hole, "who on the promise that his life would be saved, consented to serve as guide to Tiraongo and to make propitiatory sacrifices to the divinities of the country. Thanks to him, the Mossi were able to progress to Somtongande."[6] Boulsa tradition recounts that when Naba Namende left Ouagadougou as the Kourita of Mogho Naba Oubri and took possession of their province, he placed his sons at the head of the principal villages "in order to control it [Boulsa] better."[7] One son was even sent to rule over a village at the request of the local Tengsoba.

634 The villages that made up a Mossi district were usually ruled by chiefs
613 who belonged to sub-lineages of the local ruling lineage. These village
778 chiefs and the members of their lineage formed a noble class, the *nakomce*
[565] ("children of the Naba"). As long as a lineage held the nam of a district, all of its sub-lineages had all the privileges of the noble class, regardless of whether they had charge of villages. But if the Mogho Naba deprived
[558] a ruling lineage of the nam by deposing the district chief, all its members were reduced to commoner status. Such people still traced their descent from the Mogho Naba who was the ancestor of their lineage founder, but this relationship ceased to be important unless the lineage recovered the nam of the district. If it did not, the former ruling lineage officially lost its ancient link with the royal clan within a few generations and became a nondescript local group.

634 The place of a deposed royal lineage was usually taken by the relatives
613 of the nobles who subsequently acquired the nam of the district. These
778 newcomers were genealogically closer to the ruling Mogho Naba, and
557 formed the new nakomce of the district. The new district chief sometimes sent his sons to rule over the villages under his command. But if the village
558 chiefs did not suffer the same fate as their lineage head at the hands of the Mogho Naba, the new district chief often permitted them to retain their pos. . Thus they retained possession of the nam but lost their noble status. They served the new district chief in a political sense much as the Tengsoba served him in a ritual sense.

554 The plight of deposed district nakomce shows quite clearly the distinc-
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11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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 554

tion made by the Mossi between kinship and sovereignty within their governmental system. Kinship was the basis on which the ruling class was formed. However, sovereignty itself, although associated with kinship, was not unalterably linked with it. When a ruling Mossi kin group held the nam, its subgroups were linked by bonds of prestige. But once this group lost the nam or access to the nam, its component subgroups began to drift away. That this situation could exist shows the true nature of the relationship between sovereignty and kinship within the Mossi political system. 602 778

There were other chiefs in Mossi districts who had never had either a lineal or a collateral relationship with any lineage of the ancient royal clan.[8] These men were the descendants of provincial ministers. They became chiefs for the same reasons that the sons of ruling sovereigns became chiefs. When a Mogho Naba sent his sons to replace deposed district chiefs, the young men were usually accompanied by a full complement of administrators. These administrators, mostly younger sons of administrators at Ouagadougou who would not normally succeed their fathers, often automatically replaced the administrators of the former chiefs. But if, for reasons of administrative efficiency, the new chiefs elected to retain the administrators of their predecessors, they assigned village chieftainships to the newcomers. They might also settle them in independent hamlets and furnish them with wives and slaves. For chiefs in this category, kinship did play an initial role in the accession to power; but since they were not related to the district chief, they never gained noble status. Socially, they were comparable to chiefs who were former nobles; as in the latter's case, their kinship ties with the administrators at Ouagadougou gradually lost their significance. 602 554 634 557

There were yet other kinds of chiefs or men who rated the title Naba in Mossi districts. They included: the descendants of aboriginal chiefs, the chiefs of alien groups, and the chiefs of the Mossi refugee groups that had left other districts because of disputes over the nam. In districts where there were large groups of the autochthonous Ninisi, there were Ninisi "chiefs"; in most cases, however, these "chiefs" were really the senior Tengsobadamba of the villages. In most other districts, the sole Ninisi "chief" was the official Tengsoba of the district chief. This man had ritual power but no political power. Yet he was called Naba, because the Mossi thought that all persons in positions of command or prominence must be named chiefs. Villages made up of aliens (Busansi, Gurunsi, Yarse, and occasionally Fulani) had chiefs in the true sense of the word. These men were granted access to the nam by the district chiefs, and their 634 [778] [428]

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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778

000 went to Djiba when his grandfather died and his father was installed as Mogho Naba.

The origin of Djiba's status as the seat of the Crown Prince is rather 634 obscure. The people of the neighboring district of Nobere say that Djiba 644 was founded by a "companion" of their own founder, Naba Biligo, one of 173 the numerous "eldest" sons of Mogho Naba Oubri, the implication being that Djiba was supervised by Nobere. However, no one seems to know when Djiba's status changed or what happened to the ancient family who used to govern it. The consensus is that in earlier times the heir presumptive to Ouagadougou did not necessarily become chief of Djiba, but was given any district whose chieftainship was vacant when he came of age. Dim Delobson reports that Djiba became the district of the Crown Prince some- [114] time during the seventeenth century, when Mogho Naba Zombere, who had reigned for sixty years, found it necessary to establish a permanent seat for his heir.[28] However, Dim Delobson does not report under what conditions Djiba was chosen, nor does he say what happened to the local ruling lineage when this transfer took place. That the transfer was carried out in the manner reported by Dim Delobson is not doubted, because each new Mogho Naba obtained districts for his relatives in this way. Through this [558] process, the people of the ancient ruling lineages were usually reduced to [613] the level of commoners, and this is apparently what happened to the rulers of Djiba.

634 The first public sign that the young prince was being prepared for the 643 nam came in the form of a summons commanding him to go to Ouagadougou to be installed as Djiba Naba. On his way to the capital, he visited several villages where the local Tengsobadamba made sacrifices to the earth goddess in his name. He took this opportunity to meet with the district chiefs and their assembled village chiefs; he was entertained by them; and in turn he distributed gifts to the old women, whose praises were considered especially effective in bringing health and long life. When the boy finally arrived at the capital, he lodged at the compound of the Kambo Naba, head of the palace guard, until the Mogho Naba and his ministers installed him as chief of Djiba.

The installation rites for the Crown Prince were very similar to those already described for the Mogho Naba, and identical to those for the district chiefs. During the ceremony, no mention was made of the fact that the prince was the son of the Mogho Naba. The only special feature was that when the prince went into the courtyard after the ceremony to render homage to the Mogho Naba, he sat in an area assigned to him by custom. When the ruler appeared, the prince followed the Gounga Naba, who was pro-

177 their younger sons to become Moslems, and soon abandoned their active
*648 resistance to Islam.

63 Hesling did not permit the Mossi chiefs to revive their traditional religio-
[795] political rituals and ceremonies such as the Tense, but he continued to toler-
[797] ate the Basgha. The French banned the Mossi market chiefs, because they believed (with some justification) that these officials used their offices to procure revenue for the chiefs. The difficulty was that the market chiefs were also responsible for arranging sacrifices to the market deities, which in the absence of such sacrifices would not protect the people from quarrels and violence in the market place. Some chiefs covertly retained their market chiefs; others obeyed the administration and remained anxious over the behavior of their subjects in the market. In general, however, most Mossi chiefs tried to adjust to the religious changes that were taking place, and sought to maintain at least surface amicability with all religious groups. Commenting upon the behavior of the Mogho Naba in this regard,
[643] Dim Delobson states:

> The Mogho Naba, above all, is a believer in animism like all his subjects, and it is hard to understand how he manages to reconcile his fetishism with the complex dogmas of Islam and with the many interdictions of Christianity. However, the Mogho Naba is quite capable of being a Catholic or a Moslem on appropriate occasions, while at the same time respecting the traditions of his ancestors. Thus, when the Christians are celebrating Christmas, the emperor of the Mossi devoutly attends midnight Mass. Nevertheless, he wears his fez [really the bonnet which is the symbol of his office], just as the bishop wears his miter. He likewise embraces Islam for the three Moslem festivals.[47]
> [292]

+175 Hesling failed in his attempt to develop the Upper Volta as a viable
+648 colony, and many of the chiefs whom he had used as his auxiliaries lost
[631] not only a great deal of power but also a great deal of prestige in the eyes
[558] of their subjects because of the role they had played vis-à-vis the administra-
[433] tion. By 1929 the economy of the Upper Volta was in poor condition:
[651] cotton production had declined; taxes (raised from 5,800,000 francs in
[491] 1921 to 18,274,000 francs in 1927 and scheduled to be raised to 26,400,000
[167] francs in 1930) were unbearable; many of the roads that were too extensive, too little used, and too difficult to maintain had been abandoned; and more than 46,000 laborers who had worked in the cotton fields and on the roads had fled to the neighboring Gold Coast.[48] The Colonial Minister, Sarraut, ordered that the colony of the Upper Volta be dismembered. He states in his decree of September 1932 that the suppression of the Upper Volta "would permit appreciable savings, and would make the adminis-

5: Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1959
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which requires sharing and compliance with the authority of kinsmen in the Yatenga whom they have never known. Forced to return to the Yatenga to assist the extended family there, they are frustrated in their efforts to form a permanent identification with their residence at the irrigation project. More efficient than their elders in communicating with the Europeans and in learning their techniques, they are thwarted by a social organization which denies expression to their initiative. The older men, given no share in the administration of the project and with little understanding of its objectives, believe that they are being exploited by the Europeans and that they would be more successful if they were to follow their own system of production and marketing. 177 182

The Mossi have learned that the official policy of the Niger Irrigation Project specifies their participation in administration through "indigenous agricultural associations," and even through their "collaboration" within the board of directors; but they do not actually participate in either of these. Possibly the fact that the Mossi have had no previous experience of participation in democratic forms discouraged the Europeans in their early efforts to include them in the administration of the project, but such participation implies a profound cultural adjustment and would require patience on the part of the Europeans. Whatever the case, the fact that the colonists know they have a right to participate in the administration and yet are denied it only serves to increase their conviction that they are being exploited.

Unsure of their rights to the land, unaware of the goals of the project, and inhibited by their artificially maintained tradition from forming meaningful social relationships in the area of resettlement, the Mossi make little permanent identification with the Niger project and its objectives. They say that it is like the hut a man builds in his fields during the rainy season; when the crop is harvested, he will return to the house of his fathers.

The relatively rapid and easy adaptation to the new natural setting and the supernatural forces which govern it is probably due both to the lack of European interference in this aspect of the colonists' lives and to the traditional permissiveness of West African religions. On the other hand, the greatest obstacle to adjustment seems to be just that aspect of the changed situation which was designed to facilitate it: the reconstruction and artificial maintenance of a social structure which cannot be efficiently integrated with the new economic organization. This structure has been maintained with such rigidity that it actually impedes Mossi efforts to reinterpret their institutions in terms of their new situation.

The Mossi who have returned from the Niger project have had little effect on their kinsmen in the Yatenga. Islamized colonists are often [561]

5: Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1959
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177 too young to be listened to seriously by their elders. If they are returning
182 as senior members of their lineages, and since their power and prestige
561 are dependent on the maintenance of the socio-religious status quo, they are unlikely to be innovators. For these same reasons the few changes in the social organization which have occurred at the Niger project have had little effect on the social environment of the Yatenga.

177 Most of the agricultural techniques acquired in the Sudan are useless
241 in the Yatenga because of the absence of irrigation. Even were this not so, the rationale of the modern agricultural methods employed at the Niger project is not explained to the settlers; they are required to follow the instructions of the European agronomists or be penalized. As a result, the improved agricultural techniques of the Europeans are regarded as just another of the white man's incomprehensible ways and are quickly forgotten.

177 The response of the Mossi to resettlement at the Niger Irrigation
182 Project shows that in a situation of rapid cultural change, retentions or changes on the superficial level of form are misleading; nor is a brief statement of the functional interrelationship between institutions sufficient. The final reality of an institution lies in its meaning for the members of the society in which it exists, and its final evaluation must be based on its capacity to fulfil the changing needs of individuals. This concept is essential to an understanding of the colonists' dissatisfaction with the effort of the Niger project administration to reproduce artificially a static model of their traditional social structure. This can also be seen in their reaction to a changed supernatural order; an analysis which failed to descend beneath the level of form would miss the significant fact that their psychological response to religion and the basic premises of their theology have remained unaffected by an "Islamization" which amounts to little more than adopting certain new propitiatory usages.

Apparently not understanding the interrelationship of cultural institutions and the sanctions which give them meaning, the administration of the Niger Irrigation Project sought to modify the Mossi organization of economic activity without referring to the traditional values to which it is vitally related. Seeming to regard the indigenous culture as little more than a compendium of savage rites upon which superior European usages need only be imposed in order to prevail, such an approach reveals a failure to comprehend both the complexity and the tenacity of the Mossi cultural heritage.

857 868 The girls remain by their mother's side. They fetch water with her, learn how to pound millet, how to cook, etc. When they are eight or nine, they are taught how to spin cotton.

513 882 The boys sleep in their mother's hut until they are circumcised, that is, until they are about thirteen years old. Thereafter, they sleep in a special hut, kombarogo, with all the other circumcised boys of the compound. The girls sleep in their mother's hut until they are married.

•561 Little boys are called kondibili kirisé, biribili kirisé, or komkirisé (komkiriga in the singular). Little girls are called kompougouli kirisé or bipougouli kirisé. The older girls are kompougouli beda or bipougouli beda. The older boys or young men (they are considered as such once they are circumcised) are rasamba (rasanga in the singular). Young girls are called pourousada or pougousada (pourousadaba in the plural).

857 575 Education of children among themselves. Societies. —Mossi children form societies among themselves. These are called nam (they are the same as the Bambara ton or flambolo). There is a society for boys and one for girls in the small villages. In the large villages, as in Ouahigouya, for example, these societies are formed by village quarters.

Each society has its chief and its high dignitaries: its Moro Naba who rules over it with his four ministers. The girls also have their Pourousada Moro Naba and four female ministers. These societies are devoted to play, drinking, tom-tom playing, and dancing.

Each member must furnish a certain number of cowries: the chiefs /256/ give 200 or 300; the mere rasamba, 100; the kondibili, 50; the kondibili-kirisé, 30. The Moro Naba of the society collects the dues, and he is also the treasurer.

Another source of income for the society derives from work performed for the people of the village, the owners of fields. The boys do not merely go and offer their services. When someone needs a helping hand with his field, he goes to the Moro Naba of the society who places the whole group at his disposal for a fee. Payment is made in millet which the society uses to make dolo for its celebrations.

Another source of income derives from fining members for lapses in their duties to the society. The Moro Naba of the nam fines those who arrive late when called for work on someone's field or those who go on an errand or a short trip without notifying him in advance.

10:Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1964 FA28 Mossi FA28
Yatenga

571 604 indirectly from the good will of his ancestral spirits whose benevolence Ego often invokes.

Ambivalence follows from other characteristics of the relationship. Resentment of Ego's depredations of her husband's property and jealous concern for the inheritance rights of her own children appear to be at least partially balanced by a share of the affection her husband shows for Ego. However, joking in this relationship is asymmetrical. The mother's brother's wife takes the more aggressive role, and from the vehemence of her joking, and the [153] structural nature of the relationship, it appears likely that amity lies less heavily in the balance than hostility. The groups to which the two parties belong are equal in status. Their respective positions within them, of course, are not, and this is reflected in the aforementioned asymmetry. Each party is obviously independent of the authority system of the other.

571 607 *Joking Between Siblings-in-Law*

[44] Siblings-in-law who joke are separated by the rule of sib exogamy observed among the Mossi. Reciprocity is basic to the marriage contract that unites their respective kin groups. Several factors tend to create ambivalence in the relationship. Both kin groups—in particular, the extended families of the two marriage partners—profit from the reciprocal tie established between them, but possible failure on the part of either group to reciprocate adequately, [87] particularly with regard to marriage payments, constitutes a persistent source [38] of potential friction. Moreover, the Mossi observe the levirate. Joking between siblings-in-law who are potential spouses, yet are presently constrained by a [137] prohibition against adultery, has frequently been ascribed the function of reducing tension in a situation of conflict. The kin groups of siblings-in-law [64] are always structurally equivalent because groups occupying significantly dif- [562] ferent strata in Mossi society do not intermarry. As members of autonomous descent groups the participants are obviously independent of one another.

571 614 *Joking Between Sibs*

Sibs (or lineages) whose members joke with one another are, of course, also separate groups.[2] They are always united by a strong tradition of reciprocal social and economic aid. Ambivalence apparently stems from the conflict between this tradition of reciprocity and actual competing claims to land. The origin of joking relationships between two descent groups is often ascribed to the alleged fact that, when they first arrived in the village, leaders of both falsely claimed to the chief that he and his kinsmen had arrived first, [423] and thus had a prior right to land, and that the members of the other group were their slaves. Despite their jocular allegations, both groups are in fact structurally equal and independent.

571 561 *Joking Between Age-Sets*

Joking between age-sets within an age-grade varies with the generational

10:Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1964 FA28 Mossi FA28
Yatenga

571/561 position of the set in Mossi society. In the years immediately following initiation the members are much involved in group activities, e.g., the arrangement of social dances, courtship, and co-operation in work groups composed of male and female age-sets, and during this period joking is important. As the members attain adult status the groups tend to lose their structural integrity; their minor corporate functions dwindle and ultimately disappear as the responsibility of the young people to their kin groups increases. With this shift in emphasis, joking behavior also diminishes.

While it lasts, however, this type of joking likewise has a structural context characterized by the attributes already identified. Age-sets are structurally separate within the age-grade. Their relations are reciprocal: individual members co-operate in the arrangement of one another's sexual liaisons; they pool their labor and share the profits they earn as members of [477] their co-operative work organizations; and young men often leave Yatenga [464] as migrant laborers in groups organized on the basis of age-grade membership, thereby reinforcing many of the reciprocal ties established in the work groups. The ambivalence characteristic of the relationship is perhaps best explained as the rivalry of peers. Since there is no status hierarchy within a Mossi age-grade, the age-sets are structurally equivalent and independent.

571/628 *Intervillage Joking*

When intervillage joking is institutionalized it may involve all the members of each community. However, I believe it is particularly expected of their respective chiefs. In either case, the participants are separated by their differing political affiliations. The inhabitants of each village are expected to reciprocate in one another's defense, to be mutually hospitable, and to co-operate in the regulation of land tenure at their frontiers. Ambivalence derives from a history of past hostility, dating perhaps from an earlier period when competition for new land was keener and the expanding kingdom did not yet encompass all the villages now within its borders. Such villages are always structurally equivalent in status within the political system, and each is independent of the other.

571/648 *Joking Between Ethnic Groups*

The joking relationship which the Mossi maintain with the Gurunsi and the Samogho peoples, among others, appears to involve the same structural characteristics. However, I learned of this relationship only shortly before I [114] left Yatenga, and a more certain statement concerning it must therefore await further research. It is certain that such joking occurs; I am unsure only of the number of other ethnic groups involved[3] and of the relevant details of their historical relations to the Mossi of Yatenga. The groups involved are again separate. There is an expectation that members of each group should extend hospitality and assistance to members of the other. As with villages whose inhabitants joke, the participants in this relationship are ambivalent in their attitudes; the present expectation of co-operation is coupled with a past

567 them for kola nuts with the Achanti [Ashanti] or for loaves of salt
439 at Timbuktu. Although they were always transported by roundabout routes to prevent them from finding their way back to their homes, still some of them always managed to escape.

492 The naba used the young yemdado as soroné or grooms, and
567 they would often [93] take the young and attractive women (yempoksé) as wives.

641 The sale of free men. Neither the emperor of the Mossi nor
681 his vassals sold their subjects. Individuals who were regarded as dangerous were simply put to death unless they took refuge in a bangaré to avoid being executed, as has been noted above. Some were sent to the emperor to be made into eunuchs.

304 The facial tattoos worn by the Mossi clearly distinguished them
567 from neighboring peoples. However, if by accident or because of need a naba sold a free man and the latter was claimed by his rela-
689 tives, the chief was required to buy back the slave or to indemnify his family. We have described above how a canton chief was exiled by the emperor for having sold free Mossi.

583 Concealed selling of women and children. In the chapter on marriage customs among the Mossi we shall show that a native
●562 Moaga did not demand a bride price because he did not want to feel that
567 he was selling his daughter. There is no doubt that this rule has exceptions. Indeed, we shall show that the failure to pay a debt, a bout of drunkenness, or a favor received might suffice to mortgage the future of a daughter, even though at the time she might be a small child and quite unaware of her fate. In any event, there would be no question of her expressing any opinion, since her wishes are never taken into account. During periods of famine -- which have been
[731] occurring almost [94] regularly for some years -- a small basket of millet is enough to make a father promise his daughter. In the same way, we regret to say, a great many girls are promised in exchange for trifling sums at the time the poll tax is paid.

567 Rights of slaves. Since he is regarded as an inferior being, the yemdaogo (slave) has no well-defined rights. He is required to perform all kinds of domestic work and must give unquestioning obedience to his master and the master's family. Besides his essential duties, however, he is permitted to do some farming for himself, practice some trade, or to raise cattle, with the proceeds constituting

567 Were slaves part of an estate? Among the Mossi, the wives
428 are part of an estate on the same footing as the rest of the property
562 of the deceased. The same thing applies to the captives (yemsé) and dogyiri (house slaves) who constitute and integral part of the estate. They constitute a patrimony to be handed down from father to son in accordance with the customary order of succession. They remain the exclusive property of the legitimate heir and are not distributed as are the wives of the deceased.

[97] Chapter 6

Djiba Naba, Crown Prince of the Mossi Empire

Preliminary Remarks

644 In writing on this subject we have not tried to ascertain whether the canton of Djiba was once independent or whether it was under the direct authority of the Mogho Naba.

At the outbreak of the World War in 1914 the Djiba Naba, a brother of the present emperor, Naba Kom, was drafted into the army, and another brother had to be appointed to take his place. The latter's administration was in many ways unsatisfactory, so when the Djiba Naba, on his return from the front, had to be sent to Doulougou to replace a deceased son of Naba Wobgo, the Mogho Naba retained direct authority over the canton of Djiba. Meanwhile, his eldest son had returned from Tunis and had been officially named the chief of Djiba, but he had had to leave again for military service at Salonika. Thus, it can be said that even before the canton of Djiba had been made the prerogative of the eldest son of Naba Zombré, it had already been under the latter's authority.

It was during the reign of Naba Zombré, twenty-third Mogho Naba, that the eldest son of the emperor was given jurisdiction over the canton of Djiba. Naba Zombré, after Naba Niandeffo, had one of the longest reigns in the history of the country. He actually ruled for sixty years.

643 [98] An old tradition requires an emperor who has ruled for
782 thirty years to go to Oubritenga to celebrate zom'bika (literally,

644 It should be said that the napagha, who is regarded as a
595 piece of property, is part of the estate of a deceased chief. The
562 new naba takes some of the old and young wives, and the rest are
587 kept in the family of the nabissi. It is therefore not unusual to find women in the household of a naba who have been married to two or even three deceased chiefs. If they are not too old, they may give birth to children of the chief who is their second or third husband.

644 The establishment of a naba is often divided into three sec-
595 tions.

1. The zagkas sanga (the great house). All the old women, the unwanted ones, live here. Their mistress and guardian is the pugtiéma, who has charge of the house where the kimsé or manes of the ancestors live.

2. Zagbilin. The middle-aged women [163] who are still occasionally visited by their husband live here.

3. Dogoundba. This is the assemblage of several young and beautiful wives grouped around the favorite. They are called dogoundba, "guardians of the hut of the naba." These women receive all the favors, wear the finest ornaments, and are dressed in
[291] godé (1). Most of the time the dogoundba live in one or several

1. A skirt that is highly valued among the Mossi.

huts, depending on their number.

Each of the women in the other two sections has her own hut.

Since the naba has too many wives to be able to look after all of them, they must provide their own clothing and food. Hence, they are forced to cultivate plots and sell some of their produce. Each napagha has her own small field of millet, peanuts, beans, and peas.

The dogoundba have a collective plot. They help their husband who not only has to feed them, but is also required to support
[357] the sogoné and the samand'kamba (the latter are "people of the outer courtyard," another category of servitors who are sent on errands to the villages or who serve as grooms).

In the homes of the kombemba (plural of kombéré), it is the duty of the dogoundba to prepare food for the sogoné and for any

644
595 foreigners who are being housed by the naba. [164]

Each sogoné or samanbiga chooses a mother from among the
644 wives of the naba (only those in the first two sections).
595

He helps her to cultivate her plot of ground and receives in
357 return a little food over and above the ration of sagbo given to the
608 sogoné as a group.

At Nanore (1), for example, it was formerly the rule that

1. Canton in the administrative district of Koudougou.

when a woman brought some sagbo to her adopted son, she could not simply hand it to him. Instead, holes were dug in the courtyard of the naba, into which the woman put the sagbo and sauce. Then the young man came to eat the food, and later the woman came back for her bowls.

644 Finally, it is still forbidden for anyone to play a guitar when
595 a napagha is passing by unless the player is the naba himself or
533 someone called upon to play by the naba. It should be noted that
687 the Moaga prefers the guitar for intimate occasions. Therefore, to
832 play it when a napagha passes by is actually to court her.

The Pogsiouré, or the Recruitment of Sogoné and Saman'kamba

643 Aside from a few special cases limited by custom which we
562 shall presently describe, the naba can never dispose of the daughters of his subjects, either to make them [165] his own wives or to bestow them on someone else, without the permission of the parents.

Pogsiouré comes from pog', the diminutive of pagha, "woman," and from siouré, diminutive of sioubo, "to give anticipating a profit."

562 As a result of family quarrels or even voluntarily, a Moaga
431 "may give away his daughters and those of his brothers and close
643 relatives to the naba." It is obvious that the naba cannot keep all of these girls, so he gives some of them to his brothers, his uncles, his sons, and even to ordinary Mossi who have done him a service.

In the same way -- and this is more frequent -- every sogoné (page) or samand'biga [singular of samand'kamba] (bodyguard or

562
431 groom) who has served his naba satisfactorily receives, at the
643 time he is freed, a young girl who may be nubile, but who may, on the other hand, be just a small child.

In either case, the former servitor is required to call upon the naba from time to time and to take him gifts (cowries or roosters). If the girl is still living with her relatives, in addition to his trifling presents to the naba, the fiancé may make a few presents to his in-laws, although it is not obligatory.

562 Pogsiouré. The first daughter born of a marriage between a
643 Moaga subject (former servitor, son, brother, or uncle of the naba,
644 etc.) and the woman given to him [166] by the naba becomes the
858 "property" of the latter with full rights over her. She is known as "the daughter of the pogsiouré" and is fated to become pogsiouré in her turn.

643 If the first-born is a boy, the naba may bring him to his
644 court as soon as he reaches the age of discretion to make him either
858 a sogoné or a samand'biga, and the child's father cannot make the slightest objection.

357 This does not imply that under Mossi law the sogoné and samand'kamba must be children of the pogsiouré. As absolute master of all his subjects, the naba can recruit his servitors throughout his domain as he needs them, with no opposition by the Mossi to this recruitment.

644 The fate of the daughters of the pogsiouré. The girls are
858 taken from their relatives as soon as they are old enough to work
562 and are entrusted by the naba to his own wives.

The latter, for all practical purposes, become the adoptive mothers of these children and, as such, see to their food and clothing. This does not prevent the real mother from bringing cowries and clothing to her daughter, and to make sure that the child will be well treated by the napagha (wife of the naba), she sometimes
[431] even brings the latter a gift of kalgo (soumbala) or karite butter (kamé).

When the girls reach puberty, the naba chooses the most at-
[584] tractive for his fiancées, and the [167] others are given to some of his administrators or to his own relatives.

562 593 644 Rights of parents over their daughters. Although, as has already been noted, the parents retain the right to help their daughters in small ways, they may not, under any circumstances or pretext, break off their engagement nor prevent their marriage. Still less can they promise the daughter to a third party or expect any sort of gifts from the naba.

Later on, in the event that there is agreement between the parties, the husbands may give trifling presents to their in-laws, but there is neither obligation nor coercion to do so.

562 858 Exceptions. Girls given to the marabouts by the naba are considered a kind of alms (saraka), and any children born of such unions belong to the true fathers and may not be disposed of by the chief.

644 357 858 Disposition of boys. Boys recruited as sogoné or samand'kamba are required to serve the naba faithfully, but they continue to belong to their real relatives from whom they annually receive cowries and particularly the fougoibga (blanket).

Although the sogoné are regularly fed and clothed by the 644 naba -- because [168] a naba must always be surrounded by many 357 pages -- this is not done for the samand'kamba. In many cantons 661 and especially in Ouagadougou at the emperor's court, they receive only a meager pittance every two, three, four, or seven days since their role as "vagabond" or groom is supposed to provide them with ample opportunities to rob or rather to pillage the natives. During the winter the grooms and other samand'kamba go out into fields of maize and millet at night or in the morning, and there is general looting. As for any fowl lingering in the karaga (fields of millet near the huts), they are killed and hidden in the bundles of hay used to feed the horses. There are exceptions to this rule: some ministers of the emperor and canton chiefs give their samand'kamba at least one meal per day -- at night -- and during the winter, because they are doing field work, they are given cooked beans or sagbo (millet cakes) at noon.

644 357 608 In general way, however, it may be said that this type of servitor is not supported by the naba. Like the sogoné, the samand'biga chooses a mother at the court of the naba. He helps her cultivate her plot and performs other small services for her (weaving her clothes,

[171] Chapter 11

Marriage, Birth, and Death

Marriage

000 In this chapter we shall review all aspects of marriage throughout Mossi country. The customs are the same everywhere, ranging from the marriage of girls reared in the household of the naba to the institution of concubinage. We shall first deal with the most common forms of marriage, then discuss the matter of bride price, and finally conclude with a discussion of the social status of the Moaga woman.

587 Girls are married between the ages of seventeen and nineteen. With certain rare exceptions, a girl of sixteen or eighteen is never sent to her husband. Such an age is considered very unfavorable [843] for child-bearing, and it is even thought that children whose mothers are too young will not survive.

Young men marry between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five. [172]

562 584 Marriage of a girl reared in the household of a naba. Girls born of the marriage of a woman given to a former servitor by either province or canton chiefs became by right the property of the latter. These girls are taken from their parents when they are old enough to do some work and are entrusted by the naba to his wives. They are henceforth regarded as betrothed to the naba and are obliged to submit to all of the conditions of servitude which are imposed on the other wives.

When they reach marriageable age, they may be given, without either their own or their parents' consent, to freed servitors or to any individual who may have rendered some service to the naba.

This is the first type of forced marriage.

Marriage of a girl given by her parents. Since the girl is regarded as simply a "thing," a being without volition, she may be promised at birth. Very often gratitude for hospitality or the existence of an old debt is sufficient reason for promising a daughter.

562 584 When the girl reaches marriageable age, she usually finds herself with a husband who is sometimes older than her father and whom she cannot possibly love. She must go to him, however, since such is her father's will.

[431 585] [173] The fiancé brings some gifts (cowries, chickens, millet beer) and claims his wife. The girl is sent off to her husband's home with no ceremony being performed.

This second type of forced marriage has the parents' consent.

587 428 562 768 Marriage by inheritance. When the head of a household dies, the women, who are considered a part of his estate, are divided up just as is the rest of the property. They are apportioned to the sons of the deceased, or his brothers if the sons are not of marriageable age. However, unlike the procedure for a chief's estate, in which the wife is just a "thing," these wives may choose their husbands from among the members of the family.

This is semi-free marriage.

587 Besides the type of marriage which we shall later call "free marriage" -- a form which occurs very frequently since it includes the marriages of loose women who may have as many as nine husbands, only stopping at the last one because of old age -- there is also remarriage due to successive widowhoods. Some women are so [777] unlucky as to lose [174] a succession of husbands. They are finally avoided like the plague since they have the reputation of being cursed by the gods (Mossi, kombwinga; Bambara, térédiougou).

584 Marriage after a conventional proposal. When a young man wishes to ask for the hand of a young girl who is not yet engaged, he chooses as his go-between a person who is on good terms with the elders of the girl's village. If the response is favorable, the young man brings a chicken, a secco (dagnopinri) [coarse matting] to close the doorway, and some fagots. He goes back to his village and returns at intervals bearing sprouted millet or millet beer and a chicken for the head of the family. The latter at last tells the go-between: "Tell X... that we accept him as our son and that we shall try to give him satisfaction as soon as possible."

Some time later the young man returns once more with a chicken, sprouted millet, or beer for the elders of the village. He makes

Social Status of the Moaga Woman and Work Assigned to Her

562 The Moaga woman is regarded as a veritable beast of burden. Household duties and the weaving of cotton for her own and her husband's clothes are not her only occupations. [183] She helps her husband cultivate the family field, and she has her own plots for peanuts, beans, etc.

She endures wretched treatment and must always submit to her husband's whims. She enjoys no consideration whatever and is never called upon to give an opinion. The husband alone rules the home.

[842] If she is so unfortunate as to have no children, she is regarded with scorn. She carries the loads when a move is in progress. A [483] basket and a pyramid of gourds containing her effects and those of her husband are balanced on her head, while the husband canters beside her on a horse or takes his ease on a donkey. If he is afoot, he carries only his quiver, his arrows, his bow, and a club.

To be sure, the Moaga woman may express in unpleasant words her resentment of the maltreatment to which she is subjected, because the Mossi admit that she has no weapon other than her tongue. This is what is meant by the saying, "A woman's mouth is her quiver."

Conjugal Life

834 Interdictions and permissible acts. The couple is forbidden to have sexual relations at the following times.

1. For a period of not less than two years and a half after the 834 birth of a child to safeguard the baby's life. Indeed, it is believed 853 that each child comes into the world with its own supply of milk, and if another child were to be conceived during the nursing period, [184] the first would die because the milk of the newborn child would be fatal to him.

2. During the menstrual period. The reason for this prohibition 834 that the husband's fetishes and charms lose part of their "power" after 841 relations at this time.

3. A pregnant woman visits her husband during the first six or 834 seven months. All relations then cease until some time after the 843 delivery, as indicated above.

423 will, and the new occupant cannot make the slightest protest.

It should be pointed out, however, that since land is most often abandoned because it was thought to be unproductive or haunted, there is rarely a claim to it by a former owner. In any event the matter is settled by the interested parties. The local administration and the canton chief rarely intervene in such cases.

Owners' rights over fruit trees in cultivated fields. Donsé
423 or néré [locust bean] trees whose fruits contain a yellowish, sweet
263 powder that is edible and [244] whose seeds are used to make soumbala, a fetid condiment much prized by the natives, remain the exclusive property of the former occupant. On the other hand, the tamsé (karite tree) belong to the new owner.

423 This is because the karite tree is found almost everywhere in the bush, while the néré is less common.

Rights of the chiefs over cultivated land. As a general rule,
425 since the principle of right by possession is honored among the
423 Mossi, a canton chief will not confiscate without reason cultivated land belonging to one of his subjects if the land has always been occupied by the occupant's grandparents.

When the land is unoccupied, however, or newly occupied, the canton chief may, by virtue of his absolute authority over his territory, take possession, and the new owner may not claim any compensation.

Field Work

241 In principle, a family field is held in common. When a woman
562 grows old, however, she no longer does field work with her hus-
595 band. She has her own field and feeds herself as best she may, since her husband pays no further attention to her and no longer supports her. The work is done by the family as a group, and the size of the field varies with the size of the family.

241 Early in the morning, usually before [245] sunrise, the head
512 of the family wakens the young people. They go out to the field, which may be five to ten kilometers away. Around ten o'clock, the women bring the remains of last night's sagbo or, lacking that, some millet flour which is taken in water.

428 2. Not to be disqualified for the following causes.

a. Murder of the deceased.

b. Failure to avenge his death. In the old days the son had to avenge his father's death before inheriting his property. At present the term "vengeance" should be understood to mean that he must seek satisfaction for the crime in the courts.

c. Failure to celebrate the funeral.

If the legitimate heir is a minor, his guardian must carry out the ceremony in the child's name.

d. Existence of a will whereby the deceased disinherits the heir presumptive.

Order of succession. As a general rule, property is handed down in the direct line, that is, to the eldest son of the deceased. It is handed down in a collateral line only if there is no son. In the case of certain items, however, for example, the family fetish, the heir is the eldest brother of the deceased.

If there is no heir of the first or second degree, the estate goes to the closest relative of the person from whom the deceased inherited the property.

428 431 The eldest in the family excludes the others and has sole possession of the property. Custom demands, however, that he hand over to his brothers and uncles a part [258] of the property. Nevertheless, this is a free gift which he is not actually forced to make.

428 562 184 In the case of the estate of a naba, the eldest son alone usually inherits all the property left by the deceased because of the heavy expenses he must meet to follow custom when he becomes a candidate for the chiefdom. As far as the women are concerned -- they are a part of the property -- he selects the ones he likes, and the rest are left for the nabissi (sons and descendants of naba).

The same is not true for ordinary Mossi, who have begun to realize that there are advantages in allowing all of the children of the deceased to share in the estate. In the chapter dealing with "Marriage" we have already seen that women were allowed some choice of a husband among the sons of the deceased.

428 In any case, however, the eldest son retains the largest share of the estate, and this is easily understandable in view of the

428 custom which decrees that he likewise inherits all of his father's responsibilities as head of the family.

428 Do daughters and wives share in an estate? Daughters have no share in an estate although their brothers may give them
562 trifling gifts.

Wives never inherit from their husbands. They can only benefit indirectly as the representatives of their young sons. On the contrary, since the wife is considered a piece of property, [259] she is actually a part of the estate to the same extent as the rest of the property left by the deceased.

428 Disposition of an unclaimed estate. Only the canton chief is qualified to inherit the property of a deceased person having no known relatives.

Rights and Obligations Governing Property in the Family

421 Property is owned individually. Individual property is strictly a private matter. The head of the family has no rights over property acquired individually by the women and children or by other relatives under his rule. They may dispose of their possessions as they see fit. A mother may do some trading to provide savings for her children. The head of the family may not use such property under any circumstances without the consent of the true owner.

428 Does a husband inherit from his wife? A husband has no right
593 to his wife's property. He cannot even claim it if she dies childless, since in that case it goes to her own relatives (brothers or sisters) or, failing that, to their children.

428 Aside from their rights in their father's estate, children inherit their mother's property.

[426] When the head of a family borrows cowries from [260] a member of his compound, he must repay the loan with a given time. His own property is inalienably his as long as he lives, and then it makes up his estate, along with his wives.

768 Disposition of a house after death. When the head of a com-
428 pound dies, the establishment is not destroyed. It automatically passes to the heirs, that is, to his sons or, if he has no legitimate

643 of his successor. He presides over the election and proclaims the new-
645 ly elected chief. The Larale is the guardian of the Moro Naba's ancestral tombs, and the Ballum is the head of the pages and dancers. When the Moro Naba gives one of his pages in marriage, the latter settles near the huts of the Ballum Naba. This is the least important minister; prior to the French occupation, he was given no province to rule.

631 The Moro Naba ruled directly over a large part of the Mossi territories. The part under his immediate jurisdiction was apportioned among his four principal ministers, who each had under him the heads of the cantons. Those territories not directly subject to the Moro Naba were placed under the authority of powerful chiefs who might be called province chiefs, assuredly vassals of the Moro Naba, but very independent vassals, somewhat similar to the dukes of Brittany and Burgundy vis-à-vis the King of France. Such are the nabas of Ouahigouya, Yako, Boussouma, Bélousa, etc.; there are many of them outside the territory reserved to the Moro Naba, especially to the north, east, and south. These province chiefs could also have independent vassals who, nevertheless, acknowledged their authority, such as the naba of Koupéla, a true province chief, but a vassal of the naba of Bélousa, in turn a vassal of the Moro Naba. The naba of Salmatenga stands in the same position with reference to the naba of Boussouma.

Each province is divided into cantons, each headed by a naba, and the canton includes several villages, each of which usually has its naba. Some of the villages are directly controlled by the province chief who apportions them among his ministers. Some villages may not even have a true naba. These are usually villages established by the children of an important naba. In this case an old man is entrusted with the administrative functions. These villages without a naba may nevertheless obtain one. For example, if the province chief has a son who settles in the community and the inhabitants are pleased with his presence, his father may name him naba of the
562 village. A very few villages are ruled by women who are assisted by the elders when a case is to be judged.

The power of each chief is tempered by his council. The Moro Naba himself does not act without consulting his ministers. Each province /17/ chief has a council. The titles of the ministers vary from one province to another, but their functions are the same.

177 The preceding pages deal wholly with past history. The French occupation has profoundly modified the whole administrative set-up and curtailed the rights of nabas, who are now mere civil servants. The people are slowly learning not to fear them; their authority is weakening; the gifts dwindle; and the nabas have been put on short allowance and forced to cultivate their fields like everybody else. Their judicial power is practically gone, and those few who have preserved real authority were able to do so because of their remoteness from administrative centers and their past. They were in charge before the French occupation, and they have managed to keep up their prestige in spite of everything. Yet little by little attitudes 600 change and respect vanishes. Is this good? Is it bad? The matter could be argued at great length. Although this administrative system led to regrettable abuses which had to be checked, it also had its favorable aspects, and it made the Mossi into one of the most feared and most homogeneous peoples in the bend of the Niger.

/28/ BOOK II. FAMILY LIFE

Chapter 1. Establishment of the Family Through Marriage

562 584 567 The family is established through marriage. We shall, therefore, first study the marriage bond. Obviously, since Christianity was introduced in the country only a short time ago, virginity is unknown there even as a concept. Every nubile girl must marry. She is given in marriage by the person to whom she belongs, and her own tastes are not taken into account. She belongs primarily to her father, but sometimes even before her birth she belongs to the person who gave her mother away on the condition — a common clause in free marriage contracts — that the first girl she bears will be given in marriage by her grandfather. Or the woman may belong to her father's master, and this may be her father's only remaining obligation toward the man who formerly owned him as a slave. Thus, nearly all girls born in Koupéla belong by right to the naba, for the inhabitants of this locality were formerly his slaves. Sometimes a

562 girl is used to pay debts; a man borrows on the promise of giving his
584 daughter in marriage. She will be handed over, often with no bride
567 price other than the borrowed sum; and, contrary to the custom noted above, since she is considered a slave, her first daughter does not belong to the grandfather. A girl may also be given in exchange for her enslaved brother or uncle, who thus recovers his freedom. A man may be seriously ill and call a doctor who agrees to treat him on the condition that the patient's daughter be given to him if he gets well. The father does recover, and the girl is given in marriage to the fortunate doctor. Exchange of daughters also takes place: a native may give his daughter in marriage to another, who in turn gives him his own.

562 A girl is given in marriage by her mother only if she was born out
584 of wedlock, and her father is thus theoretically unknown. The sisters
848 of certain nabas are the only ones permitted to choose their husbands
[554] according to their own wishes and to leave them when they please.
593 The fickle existence they lead is easy to imagine! In all other cases the girl is given in marriage by her father, or by his heir if the father is dead. (1) The mother is not consulted, but since she cares for the

[754]

1. It would be onerous and indeed impossible to list all the various situations that may arise. The sorcerers quite often interfere, and who knows what goes through a sorcerer's mind! One case among many: a woman bore a daughter after raising several others who died immediately following marriage; the father consulted the sorcerer to find out whether he should promise this last daughter in marriage. The sorcerer stated that she must be left free to choose her own husband, or else she would die like her sisters. The father left her free.

daughter until the latter marries, she may through advice, promises, or even threats dissuade her from a certain match /29/ or welcome her if she runs away from a husband to whom she was given against her will.

584 If the girl absolutely refuses to go to her betrothed, her father
[582] tries to persuade her but does not use force. If the girl persists in her refusal in spite of everything — this is extremely rare — the father returns to the betrothed any money he may have borrowed, but he does not return anything that was given him spontaneously. If the father happens to die after he has pledged his daughter, his heir may not retract the promise and give his sister or niece to another man,
[428] but he will from then on receive the gifts himself. If the betrothed man dies, his heir gets the girl promised to the father, with the condition that he will continue to pay the bride price.

584 Contrary to the situation in European countries, the woman, con-
583 sidered as valuable property, is paid for; it is not she who brings a dowry, but the man who wants her as his wife. If a man has an eye on a friend's daughter, he goes to visit the father even though the girl may still be a babe in arms. He is careful not to state what he has in mind. He comes sometimes with a few cowries, sometimes with a chicken, a piece of salt, perhaps even a sheep. The child's father understands, and when he has some work to be done, a field to be weeded, millet to be threshed, huts to be roofed, he makes it known to the suitor, who hastens to work for the man whose son-in-law he should like to become.

After a time, the father says to the suitor: "You have treated me well. I am pleased with you. I will treat you well." The suitor understands and becomes even more assiduous. He sends his friends; and on every festive occasion he presents the father of his intended with a few chickens. There is no outright promise, no betrothal in the usual sense of the term. Sometimes the father has financial difficulties, pressing debts, or he has seen a fine garment he should like to buy, and he has a request for money conveyed to his friend. The latter knows that he is loaning without return, or rather loaning against the girl. He refuses only if he is actually unable to furnish the sum; for if negotiations were ever to be broken, the child's father would have to return the money advanced, and this would greatly embarrass him and thus prevent him from profiting through the transaction. In any case, it is extremely rare for a promised girl not to be given to the man who has made the first advances and who has been favorably received. A father who should promise his daughter to a man after receiving gifts for some time from another would be held in very poor esteem and forced to return any money he might

782 a hut for one's wife. Sacrifices are made for every purpose, for everybody, and practically to everything.

Sacrifices are made everywhere. The sacred grove is the place most frequently chosen, along with the dwelling-stone of the kikiriga who protects the house. Sacrifices may be made, however, in the fields, in open spaces where nothing grows, or on the path which leads to tangandé either from the village where one lives or from one's village of origin, if it is learned that the spirit requires a sacrifice and one cannot go there in person.

Any man may offer a sacrifice once he has reached the age of reason, and children of about ten are sometimes seen offering their sacrifices with as much solemnity as their elders. Women cannot [582] themselves make sacrifices; they must resort to the agency of men. They may, however, furnish the victim and partake of it when it is eaten. Nabas and men of some wealth have their own appointed sacrificer or sacrificers. This is compulsory for province chiefs, who themselves never sacrifice in public ceremonies and quite rarely in private.

There are several kinds of sacrifices, and we shall study each one of them in turn, the better to understand how the Mossi communicate with the invisible world.

First, the characteristic sacrifice which serves as basis to all the others, the mand'zallé.

The sacrificer, accompanied by his son bearing a white or otherwise colored rooster and a gourd containing millet flour mixed with water, proceeds to the place of the sacrifice, for example, to the tangandé.

Upon arriving he says:

782 Kabré, kabré.	Excuse me, pardon me.

539 /91/ Then he sits down, his face turned to the west, and taking the victim in his hands, he says:

Na-Wend'daogo, sak'a tan!	God-king male, answer thrice!
Na-Wend'poko, sak'a nasé!	God-king female, answer four times!
Na-Wend'ka kou ned'yé, kon ky yé.	If God-king does not kill, we do not die.
Na-Wendé ka léo, ned'kon lu'yé. — Pilimpik'dim n'yélé; lila kom'dim n'yélé t'eb y noara, ti	If God-king does not bind, we are not bound. — The butterflies have told us; the spirits of the water have told us to take a

5: Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1959
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the ancestral spirits, he is the principal political and religious authority within his lineage. 596

The single term *boodoo* is used to refer to three separate groups: the sib, the lineage, and the local residential kin group described above. Aside from formalized recognition of patrilineal descent and inheritance, the lineage functions most significantly as a local residential kin group in which the economic and social participation of the female non-members is as important as that of the men. Although the men are most prominent in the direction of its affairs, their wives have a considerable, if somewhat indirect, effect upon decisions made. Even in the relationship of the members of the lineage to their ancestral spirits (*kiemse*), the women play an important part in preparing the food and the libations to be offered. They give birth to the members of the lineage, nourish them until weaning (usually at the age of two), and provide them with guidance and training for their ascribed roles. In the education of the female members of the lineage the wives play a more important part than the men. But it is in their economic activities that the significance of the women's role is best seen. In addition to their farm work, they co-operate fully in repairing roofs, flooring the courtyards, and even assisting in the brick-making which precedes house-building. The economic and social contribution of the wives is of equal importance with that of the husbands and sons, and it is more important than that of the daughters, since females born into the lineage marry and leave just as they become fully productive members of their fathers' households. 562 613

Daughters, however, serve their lineage in a different way. As they are successful in winning for themselves a good name in the households of their husbands, so the bond of economic and social co-operation established between the two lineages at the time of marriage is strengthened. When they mature, they return to assist the members of their lineage with ritual obligations to the ancestors. If they are left childless at their husband's death, they may return to their father's household to reside. [602]

Separated from one another by millet fields and the public way, the dwelling of each Mossi kin group has the appearance of a small walled village. Each round mud house with its thatched roof has a separate courtyard which is usually contiguous to the courtyards of the other houses in the residential unit of which it is a part. The individual dwellings are constructed in such a way—the wall of each house or courtyard being contiguous to that of the nearest neighbor—as to form a circular wall whose exterior is closed at all but two points. The dwelling of each kin group has a small exit and a large open entrance way just within which is located a thatch-covered sun shelter (*zande*) where the men of the lineage gather to rest, to work at small crafts, and to talk. Guests are 592 342 [343]

592 only one or two meters apart, close together. It is true that there
361 is sometimes a small plot within the séko....
171 The soukala or compound is called iri in Mossi, the hut rogo or dogo, and the soukala head irisoba (from soba, "chief" and iri, "compound").

462 We shall close this analysis of the Mossi family with a few notes
562 on the status of women and that of slaves.

First of all, Mossi women help with the tilling. They do not clear the fields, it is true, but they participate in all other field tasks along with the men. They do this only in the morning, however, since they spend the afternoon on household tasks or on their little individual plots, for they have small fields of large white millet, underground peas, beans, or peanuts.

They also do household tasks: they pound and crush the grain. Large millet or sorghum is, as we know, pounded first and then crushed, while small millet is crushed after being threshed.

462 The Mossi set their crushing stones in huge round clay /banco/
252 tables which are built outside the soukala and which are used by
412 the whole quarter. This is a strictly Mossi characteristic which is not found among the /558/ Bobo, Gourounsi, etc., in short, among any of the other groups who nevertheless use the same stones. Those large round tables are not high. They are about 1 or 1.20 meters in height and approximately 6 meters in diameter, with a correspondingly large circumference. The Mossi set in their crushing stones all around the circumference, and each table can thus hold ten, twelve, or even more. Every evening at nightfall the women of the soukala which are around it, women, young girls, etc., come together to crush their grain. They are usually in the simplest of garb, bare as the back of my hand, for the work is hard and demands a continuous back-and-forth motion of the arms, the upper part of the body, and the body as a whole.

To make those tables, they first build a circular wall to the desired height of the table, and then the whole inner space is filled up with earth almost to the top. This earth is pounded thoroughly, and then well-tamped casings are fashioned on the horizontal circumference in which are set the stones on which the crushing is done. The stones are firmly ensheathed in the clay, which is then allowed to dry.

462 Beside cooking tasks, Mossi women have cleaning tasks. They
356 sweep the huts and soukala with handfuls of straw, small primitive brooms 30 or 40 centimeters long. They wash and bleach clothes and make soap. Finally, it is the women who spin cotton and tamp the floor of the huts.

356 This tamping is done as follows. "The natives spread on the surface to be tamped a layer, 10 centimeters thick, of a special black earth that consists chiefly /561/ of ashes and humus resulting from the decomposition of plants and household refuse.

"Above this, the Mossi spread a second layer consisting of clayey ferruginous gravel, from 3 to 5 centimeters thick. The small pebbles are subsequently reduced by heavy tamping to very fine material. Then, the natives spread a little water over this material and tamp again. Once this is done, they allow the floor to dry.

"This procedure is repeated several times, but ordinary water is replaced with néré water (the latter resulting from the infusion in hot water of the fragments of néré fruit, dondo in Mossi) or water into which cow dung has been mixed. When the last tamping and the last drying have been completed, the natives pour néré water in large quantities onto the new floor.

"Finally, the last procedure consists of polishing the surface with flat stones." (Cahier des rapports of the Ouagadougou circle).

593 The duties of Mossi women toward their husband are as follows:

833 1. The fulfillment of the conjugal duty.

562 "The wife," says Moulins, "must never shirk her conjugal duty except when she is pregnant or nursing.

"Should a woman evade her husband from newlywed shyness or for any other reason, he would use at first all means of persuasion within his command, and especially beg the wife's relatives to have a word with her. Should their exhortations prove vain, coercion would be used by beating the woman or putting her in irons. Finally, should those means fail to bring the wife to compliance, she could be turned out by her husband."

593 2. Faithfulness.

562 "The wife must live with her husband. If she abandons the conjugal domicile, her spouse has the absolute right to force her to return. /562/ If she takes refuge with her relatives, the latter must

593 not shelter her but must on the contrary return her to her husband.
562 If difficulties arise, the husband appeals to the naba, who forces the wife to return to her husband, at whose hands she will get a beating when she arrives....

"...The powers of a deceived husband over his wife's lover
593 were quite fearsome prior to our occupation. He could, at will,
837 either deal with the culprit himself or defer his complaint to the
684 naba. If he dealt himself with his rival and killed him, he handed out the adulterous woman to the Moro Naba and did not have to answer for his crime. If he merely wounded the man, no matter how seriously, he was regarded as having acted in the fullness of his rights as an injured husband, and he kept the wife and gave her a beating. If he appealed to the naba, the guilty pair were punished by being put in irons for a variable period of time. Furthermore, if the adultery had been committed with the wife of a dapouy naba of the Moro Naba (that is to say, a man to whom the Moro Naba had himself given some girl in marriage), the accomplice was compelled to pay the deceived husband a fine of 100,000 cowries.

"Finally, in case of adultery with a chief's wife, both culprits were put to death."

On this subject I find in my notes that prior to our occupation, when a naba was deceived by one of his wives, he killed her with
[762] poison and ordered the wife's lover to commit suicide. The latter did this by plunging the head of a poisoned arrow into the calf of his leg.

"It is plain," the author of the Monographie goes on to say, "that the lover was dealt with in the most rigorous manner of all. He could be put to death by the deceived husband in every case, while the wives of a chief were alone liable to supreme punishment. The lover could also be punished with a fine, in a single case anticipated by custom. Finally, he was invariably put in irons on the naba's orders if the deceived husband placed a complaint against him.

"As for the adulterous wife, except when she was /563/ handed over to the Moro Naba by her husband as reparation for the murder of her partner, punishment for her misdemeanor amounted merely to a more or less rigorous beating or to irons for a short period of time. She could, it is true, be turned out by her husband, but the latter

584 bearing dolo /millet beer/; they will serve as witnesses. In their presence, the head of the family mentions by name to the suitor the girl he is granting to him and who will be delivered to him as a wife later when she is old enough to take a husband.

"Then the betrothed man with the friends he brought goes to visit every soukala head in the village, greets them in accordance with Mossi custom, and announces to them that such-and-such a family head has promised him a young girl in marriage. The whole village is thus made witnesses."

Persons whose consent is required to validate a promise of marriage.

[562] —"The consent of the young girl," says Vadier, "is by no means required. In fact, she is disposed of without being consulted, and she is always forced to become the wife of the man to whom she has been promised, except if her future husband is a leper or blind. The /236/ young girl is actually supposed to be unacquainted with the name of her prospective husband until she is taken to him.

"To validate the marriage, the following people must express their consent.

"1. The future husband. His consent follows from the transactions undertaken by his father or by himself with the family of his future wife.

"2. The girl's father. When a Mossi has one or several daughters and when he thinks the moment has come for the head of the family to dispose of them, he tells the latter that he can promise them in marriage. In spite of his powers, the head of the family could not betroth a young girl unless her father had told him that he could give her in marriage.

"When he has chosen a husband, he goes to see the father of the girl and makes known to him the offer he has received. The father can accept or refuse as he sees fit. His consent is absolutely indispensable, and the head of the family cannot ignore it.

"The father cannot dispose of his daughter without the consent of the family head, except in circumstances we shall examine later.

584 "3. The head of the family. The consent of the head of the family
596 is inevitably required, since it is he alone who has the power to promise the young girls of his family in marriage under the terms described above. Three cases where the consent of the family head is not indispensable are as follows: (1) when the father of the young girl is at odds with the head of the family, the father alone may dispose of his

593 The wife must obey her husband. The latter has the right to strike
562 her in case of disobedience, adultery, etc. He cannot break one of her limbs, or kill her.

595 Polygamy. —Polygamy is the general rule, at least theoretically. That is to say, the Mossi may have as many spouses as he wishes as long as he can minister to their needs.

595 In actual fact, only rich people have several wives. The majority
589 are monogamous by necessity, and there are even bachelors. As a passing remark, this applies to the Sudanese Negroes in general, for everywhere nature creates approximately as many men as women, and it is hard to visualize how in any one region each man could have several wives. However, in spite of the occurrence of bachelors and a large number of truly monogamous people, the question still stands. It is solved if we bear in mind that girls are married much earlier than men. This results in a much larger number of women than men "in active-service," if I may be permitted to say so. Undoubtedly, this (along with the occurrence of bachelors and a considerable number of monogamists), takes care of the objection which naturally arises when we speak of polygamy. /243/

163 It may be, let us add, that the number of girls born here is a little higher than that of boys, as has been noted in England, for example.

595 By way of figures on polygamy, let us state that the Moro Naba
643 Bango, the last one who reigned before the arrival of the French, had
645 about 80 wives. The Naba Koboga, who ruled from 1902 to 1914, had 30 or 40. The present Rassam Naba, one of the ministers of the Moro Naba, has 30 or 35 wives. These are, of course, exceptional figures if the total population of Yatenga is taken into account. In any case, the rich men, notables, and men in easy circumstances always have several wives.

595 Organization of the polygamous household. —"The first wife," says Vadier, "enjoys a certain authority over the others. It is she who transmits her husband's orders to the other wives and who notifies him of their wants, who supervises the preparation of meals and apportions the food. In addition, it is she who comes and tells the
[841] husband that such-and-such a wife is no longer in a state of zim and can now fulfill her conjugal duties.

"Aside from this special prerogative enjoyed by the first wife, all wives have the same rights and duties. In principle, each wife must share in turn her husband's bed. Nevertheless, he is free to summon his favorite wife during the day."

833 The conjugal duty. —The wife owes her husband the fulfillment of the conjugal duty.

The wife must never evade it except when she is unwell, pregnant, or when she is nursing. We can see, therefore, that among the Mossi in particular and among the Sudanese in general (for the same customs prevail in this area among all Sudanese Negroes) there is great tact-
[853] fulness. One appreciates this all the more if one bears in mind that here the women suckle their children for two or three years.

"If, " says Vadier, "a woman should evade her husband from newly-wed shyness or from any other motive, he would first use all the means of persuasion at his command and, especially, beg the wife's relatives to speak to her. Should their exhortations prove vain, constraint
[573] would be used by giving the wife a beating or putting her in irons. Finally, should these measures fail to bring the spouse to compliance,
[586] she could be turned out by her husband.

"In return, the husband owes the wife the same conjugal duty which he has the right to demand from her.

"Should the husband fail to fulfill it because of impotence, sickness, or simply from ill will, the neglected wife would mention the matter to the family head's first wife, who would in turn notify him.

833 "Should the husband's behavior be caused by physical incapacity,
586 the wife would be taken from him and given to one of his brothers or, if there were none, to his closest male relative, but never to one of his sons. Should it be due merely to ill-feeling, a protest would be made, and should this fail to have any effect after several days, the wife would be allowed to return to her family." /245/

Let us state immediately that these contingencies almost never arise or are so rare as to be practically nonexistent. Custom anticipates them, however, and we have just described what happens when perchance they do arise.

562 Women's property. —Women may own individual property, as we
422 already know, goods which are not shared communally and which belong wholly to them. These goods come from various sources, sometimes the women's small plots of land, sometimes a surplus from the grain they are given to prepare food and which, once made into dolo, is sold for cowries. Sometimes also, the husband's munificence provides them with bracelets and other jewelry. Once given, this jewelry is wholly theirs, and it is added to the trinkets they procure with their own resources.

562 When she dies, a woman's property goes to her children. The
428 objects used by women go to the daughters (bracelets, skirt cloths), while other items (animals, etc.) go to the sons. More exactly, the first-born is favored among the sons and the oldest girl among the daughters. If there are no children, the husband does not take anything, and whatever the wife leaves goes to her family, to her sisters and brothers in the first line of descent. Not having had any children by the deceased, the husband would be ashamed to take what she left.

837 Adultery.—The wife owes faithfulness to her spouse. Unfaithfulness, however, is not very important, for unless it occurs repeatedly it does not usually result in a break. The husband merely beats his wife and scolds her.

837 When the wife has fled to a lover, her husband goes in search of
684 her. The lover will have to provide a sheep (the sheep may be re-
782 placed by a goat), a chicken, and two canari of dolo, all of which
769 are to be sacrificed to the ancestors so they will forgive the woman. She cannot re-enter her house until the sacrifice has been performed; without it the ancestors would kill her. They are unbending, more so than the husband to be sure, about the latter's honor. Should a husband know his wife to be guilty and do nothing about it, the ancestors would be furious and they would kill him, hence the necessity for action on the husband's part.

837 If the husband cannot find his runaway wife, the duty of searching
684 for her and bringing her back to him falls to his father-in-law.

Formerly, before the French occupation, if the lover did not want to return the woman, her father appealed to the naba, that is, the chief of the village or canton, or even to the Moro Naba, who sent horsemen to arrest the guilty pair. He restored the wife to her husband and confiscated for his own benefit the lover's animals and millet granaries.

Nowadays, since the French occupation, one appeals to the commanding officer of the circle and to the native provincial court for the wife's return.

684 Sometimes, in the past, the husband killed his wife's lover when
643 he caught him flagrante delicto. He had the right to do so, but this caused him to lose his /246/ wife who became the property of the Moro Naba. The lover's property likewise reverted to the Moro Naba.

684 In any event, the husband did not have the right to kill his wife
643 except when she was caught flagrante delicto, unless he was the
565

423 also belong to the group, as we shall see later. The group, however,
571 owns neither slaves nor livestock.

Household property. —As we know, during the rainy or cultivating
421 season, the husband works two days out of three for his work group.
571 The third day is his. On that day he works in his small field, helped
592 by his wife or wives. During the dry season, the husband does not work for the group but for himself alone, except for repair work on the compound huts.

571 The household is provided with food by the work group seven months
592 out of twelve and is fed with the produce of its own field for five months.

592 The primary possession of the household, therefore, is its private
423 field.

The field belonging to the household of the head of the work group is marked by a special characteristic. Since the head of the group is busy at all times with the communal field, even on the third day, his small plot is cultivated exclusively by his wives (and by his slaves, if he has any). Hence, his food is procured by his wives five months out of twelve. This only applies, however, to the heads of work groups (as well as zaka and family heads who are necessarily heads of work groups also).

423 Individual property. —Mossi women have tiny cultivated patches
●562 which are wholly theirs, which do not belong to the work group or to
422 the household and which they work after five o'clock in the evening whenever possible. This is private property. Clothing, women's jewelry, etc., are also individually owned.

The husband and children also own private property. Actually,
423 the better to distinguish between individual and communal property (whether belonging to the household, the work group, the compound, or the family), we shall review below each type of property in turn.

Fields. —The fields belong primarily to the work group. (They belong only exceptionally to the compound, when it is so small that there is only one work group.) In addition to the fields of the work group, there is the household field. Finally, beside the household field, there are the private plots, for example, the little patches of the women and young men.

Work implements. —These tools (daba, axes, etc.) belong to the
422 work group. To work their small fields (both household and private),
571 men and women use the daba of their work group, but if they damage

422 591 them, they must repair them at their own expense. Those implements which are worn out are replaced by the head of the work group.

Domestic animals. —Chickens, goats, sheep, donkeys, etc., are 422 all fully owned on an individual basis and not by the group or even 231 by the household. The animal is owned by the man or woman who bought /269/ it. Nevertheless, all the goats and sheep in a compound are gathered together, they sleep in the same place, and they are led to the bush in a flock by the little boys of the compound. The animals of the total family or of the village, on the other hand, are never gathered together.

562 Wives. —I need not emphasize that wives are obviously private property. There are no wives owned in common by the village, the family, the compound, or the work group. The wife, however, is in some measure considered to belong to the compound or even to the family in the sense that a man's wives always go to his brother when he dies.

423 The compound. —We saw earlier what applies here. The compound 592 belongs to the zakasoba, but only as a representative of the zaka, as a manager of the property of this subfamilial group. It does not belong to him as private property, in the Roman sense of jus utendi et abutendi /right of use and abuse/. It belongs, ultimately, to the zaka itself.

If this is so, it is not less true that those habitable portions of the zaka, the cabins or huts, are definitely allocated to specific households which have rights of usufruct over them. Thus, the ownership belongs to the zaka, as represented by its head. The usufruct belongs to the households or individuals.

Finally, we may note, as we did earlier, that a hut built exclusively by a household with its own labor or by a single individual of the zaka may be torn down and destroyed by him since it is household or private property set up on subfamilial property. This case, however, is quite exceptional.

The large cabins or huts for millet belong to the cultivating groups. There are also huts for millet belonging to the household, where the husband stores the harvest from the household field. Finally, the 422 large earthen vases, the jars which stand in the huts, lead us from the compound to the subject of furniture. These jars are made by the women and belong individually to specific women.

Furniture. —The furniture, which we shall study in greater detail under "Mode of Subsistence" /not translated/, is very scanty and crude. It is owned privately.

428 (whether born of the same father and mother or only of the same father) who benefits, and sometimes the eldest brother among those who were born of the same father and mother, but this sharing is very uneven. The two brothers who are the eldest in the senses just described get considerably more than the other cosharers.

428 After the distribution, the men usually remain in the same compound and also in the same work group as before. Upon the death of
571 household heads, however, and especially of heads of work groups, the work groups (which have expanded gradually with new births) alter their constitution and divide. These work groups indeed grow constantly (by the natural process of birth) and also dwindle constantly (by the natural process of death and new divisions). As for the zaka, they are not completely stable either since new ones are established as time goes by in proportion to the growth of population.

428 Let us add a few details on inheritance.

Small male children do inherit, but their share is not handed to them. It is handed to the brother who inherits the mother of these children. When they are grown, their mother's new husband will deliver it to them.

[562] Daughters do not inherit.

Women never inherit. On the other hand people do inherit from them.

Transmission of specifically private property. —A case of this type is the inheritance of a wife. As we have seen earlier, the goods of a deceased woman go to her children, sons or daughters. Boys' things go to the boys, girls' things to the girls. All the boys get something, but the oldest son is very much favored. All the girls get something, but the oldest daughter is very much favored. When there are no children, the woman's inheritance goes to her own family and not to her husband or to her husband's family. /272/

Another case of this type is the death of a boy or young man. If he has a brother, the latter inherits. If he has no brother, his father does. Sometimes the father entrusts the goods to the mother to be given to a future child.

In the event of a young girl's death, her sister inherits. If she has no sister, the mother inherits. If the mother died first, her family inherits (that is, the mother's younger sister).

Finally, another case in point is the death of a Mossi bachelor. His brother who inherits or, lacking one, his brother's son.

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he received from them. This unequal exchange, plus the nobles' prerogative of seizing the wives of pagans, contributed to the increase of the Moslems. 622 797 582

The conversion of Mossi to Islam is sometimes accompanied by a rupture in the relationships between persons involved in "friendships" with a view of obtaining wives. A great quarrel developed in the district between a pagan chief and a recent convert who refused to give the chief a daughter promised as a wife. The chief became furious and claimed that the Moslem had broken a promise made years ago, but the Moslem claimed that it was against his new religion to give his daughter to a pagan. It is not true that Moslems in the village do not exchange wives with pagans, but the Moslems often try to convert their pagan friends so that the brides will not have to revert to paganism. The chief's difficulty was that he could not become a Moslem because of his ritual and ceremonial relationship with the ancestors. The Moslem men do not have such difficulties with their pagan wives because most women follow their husbands' dictates in religious and other matters. Many Moslem men attempt to prevent their wives from having sacrifices made to the ancestors, but if a woman really wishes such a sacrifice she can easily have it arranged through her pagan relatives. If a woman married to a Moslem refuses to observe Islamic practices, she is liable to divorce and runs the risk of having her children taken away. 572 622 582 797 [562] [593] [586]

Mossi anxiety over children is often instrumental in converting them to Islam. When a woman is barren or her young children die, she consults a soothsayer (*barga*). She is either told that her Tengkougre benefactor was not amply rewarded and recalled the children, or that her "Moslem" children (children who wished to be Moslems) were angry because they were given pagan names. In the latter case she is advised to make a gift to a Moslem and to ask her husband to build a Moslem prayer-circle outside his hut so that when her children "return" (are born again) they will see it. Finally, she is advised to give all her children Moslem names. I could discover no reason why the pagan soothsayers advise these anxious parents to adopt Islam, except that they hope that complicated prescriptions will be more efficacious. Nevertheless, so effective is this technique for gaining converts to Islam that even members of the family of the chief pagan priest are not immune to it. Furthermore, once a woman has a Moslem child, all her other children must be Moslems or they will die. A man whose children are all Moslem has no recourse except to adopt Islam if he wants a funeral, because his Moslem sons may not give him a pagan funeral. 797 842 [787] [551] [764]

Every Mossi, whether Moslem or non-Moslem, wishes a proper funeral, and now that travel has increased the fact of being Moslem or pagan is of great importance. Many young migrants to Ashanti have reported that their dead pagan comrades were unceremoniously disposed of, while the local Christians and Moslems took care of their dead coreligionists. But despite this fact, and the belief of administrators and missionaries, I found no evidence that the seasonal and other migration of Mossi youth to Ghana and the Ivory Coast have contributed very much to the spread of Islam. It is true that some of the thou- 797 167 [164]

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794 efficacy of ancestor-veneration and do not "kill chickens" to the ancestors, but
595 they maintain that it is a man's duty to have many wives so that he may have
842 children to succeed him. Furthermore, since Mohammed himself decreed that his followers may keep four wives, provided they treat each with the same degree of kindness, there is no conflict between Islamic tenets and Mossi practice of polygny. The average Moslem has two wives, but even the few men in the district who have more than four wives do not appear overly concerned about transgressing the tenets of their faith. Mossi Moslems have not adopted the [582] paternal parallel cousin marriage so common among other Moslems, and show surprise when told that Islam permits such marriages. However, they have modified their marriage behavior to harmonize with what they consider an Islamic tenet that "a man should not marry the widow of his father." The Moslem Mossi profess to look with horror on these marriages among their pagan brothers, preferring the levirate instead.

794 The Moslems' attitude toward the low status of women in Mossi society has not changed, and in one respect it can even be said that this attitude has
● 562 been strengthened. Many Moslem wives now cover their faces, and many El Hadjis have attempted to place their wives in purdah by preventing them from going to the market for fear they would come in contact with pagan men. The development of this practice is running counter to the growing emancipation of Mossi women, who have just begun to leave their villages for periodic visits to the larger towns. Nevertheless, the important fact is that the Mecca pilgrims have the opportunity to see Moslem women playing roles which are forbidden or unknown to Mossi women. And while it is true that the Mossi pilgrims would not easily adopt and foster monogamy, their receptivity to new Islamic beliefs and customs might have a liberating effect on their treatment of women. Once institutional and cultural changes have been accepted by the El Hadjis, they are likely to spread quite rapidly throughout the society because men who have visited Mecca are believed to have returned filled with wisdom and understanding.

797 Christianity came to the Mossi on January 24, 1900, shortly after French conquest. As noted above, the first missionaries were well treated, but the Mossi balked at the attempts at conversion. Nevertheless, by 1919 the White Fathers of the Catholic missions had established several centers, among which was the district of Manga where this study was conducted. Manga is considered a Catholic district, but there are only 3,000 Catholics out of a population of 124,000—which also includes 9,200 Moslems and five Protestants. [184] Thus, in contrast to Moslem Nobéré, which has no Catholics or Protestants, Manga, like most districts in Mossi territory, has a Moslem community.

The conversion of the Mossi in Manga to Catholicism follows the classical pattern of missionary proselytization in the country. Monsignor Socquet (1956:62) states that the Mossi always react to attempts at conversion with the statement: " 'We are looking at our chief,' that is to say, 'We will follow our chief in conversion as in all other matters. If he is favorable to it, then we will not go against his will.' " Socquet concludes: "It is thus understandable

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797 administration to have one of their converts, a younger son of the late chief,
555 elected to the district chieftainship over his elder brother. This belief is probably unfounded, since the Moro Naba seems to be electing the literate sons of chiefs to their fathers' positions so that educated chiefs, and not educated commoners, can serve as members of French parliamentary bodies. Unfortunately, the people of Manga do not understand modern political problems, and have accepted the new chief only because of their traditional respect for the chieftainship.

634 The conversion of the Manga chief to Catholicism has not engendered
797 many problems for his pagan subjects. The chief's primary duty—to begin
769 the yearly ceremonial cycle of sacrifices to the ancestors—has been taken over
[602] by his father's brother, who is now considered the ritual head of the chiefly lineage. Nevertheless, to the chief still accrue the gains of this ceremony because his followers pay him homage and bring him gifts on his birthday, which comes at this period. Moslems in the community also pay their respects at this time, and they prefer his Catholic birthday celebration to the bloody sacrifices of chickens to the ancestors. On the other hand, the chief shows little of the common Catholic disapproval of Moslems and sends gifts to their leaders on the Moslem feast days. He also entertains the district Moslems when they come to pay him homage.

797 The Catholic chief does not act as a pivot in the exchange of wives be-
634 tween pagans of his lineage and the other lineages. This task now falls to his
582 father's brothers. Nevertheless, as district chief he is constantly involved with the marital problems involving pagan parents and their Catholic children. The main source of the difficulty is that Catholic girls are encouraged to refuse to join their pagan husbands when so ordered by their parents. The mission not only insists that the girl freely choose her own husband, but encourages her to reject a polygynous union. Catholicism thereby interposes it-
[562] self between the girls and their society, not only impairing the prestige of their fathers and lineages but also giving the girls more freedom than they would ordinarily possess.

The pagans claim that by encouraging girls to choose mates without parental consent, the Catholics are really taking the opportunity to obtain wives for young Catholic men. Paradoxically, there seems to be some truth in this, since Bouniol, a White Father, states:

> A Mossi who is unable to acquire a wife by [traditional] means must either remain unmarried or seduce another man's wife . . . they must choose between celibacy and immorality.
>
> Such a state of affairs creates many problems for the missions, especially as the system is recognized and sanctioned by the colonial authorities. . . . Young native Christians are obviously placed in a very awkward position. Their conversion angers their parents, who refuse to give them a wife; neither will their friends bestow a daughter upon them, because they know that they will not receive one in return, since a Christian may not give a daughter in marriage to a pagan. . . . *Consequently, unless the missionaries help them to find a wife, they must remain unmarried—a very discouraging prospect!* (1920:160 italics mine)

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tradition of hostility. Such groups obviously have both equal and mutually independent status.

The Processes of Mossi Joking

I have already suggested that the significance of joking as an adjustive mechanism is derived from the manner in which it provides concurrently for the operation of three interrelated but analytically separable processes. These are *communication, control,* and *catharsis.*

As a means of communication, joking provides a permissive and flexible context in which a grievance can be expressed, thus allowing for its rectification and the restoration of amity. As a means of control, the public nature of most joking serves to shame the object of the jocular offensive, to invoke social pressure for his conformity, and to elicit support for the complainant. As a means of catharsis, the joking expression of aggressive feelings reduces frustration and thus serves indirectly to perpetuate the amicable aspect of the relationship in which it occurs.

Joking also gives pleasure. The feeling of triumphant release that follows the successful—and safe—expression of hostile sentiments probably functions to reinforce reliance on joking as an adjustive mechanism. And the intrinsic pleasure of wit may also explain the persistence of joking behavior in the absence of an immediate "structural need" for it.

A more detailed description of one of the relationships already mentioned—sibling-in-law joking—will serve to illustrate these several points. Because of its relation to the pivotal institution of marriage, sibling-in-law joking is perhaps the most frequently used adjustive mechanism in Mossi social structure. The potential for marital conflict is high. This appears to be due to the combined factors of a sexually differentiated enculturative experience that results in marked dissimilarities in adult male and female personality; to an age difference between husbands and wives of at least ten years; to the classic stresses of polygyny; to the subordinate status of Mossi women, particularly of junior wives within their husband's patriclan; and to the possible dissatisfaction of a woman's parents, particularly her mother, at the loss of their daughter's services or at the inadequacy of bride-wealth payments.

Whatever its origins in a specific instance, it is important that this potential for conflict be controlled, for each marriage extends the network of affinal and cognatic ties that link the patrilineage to the larger community. Given a persistent potential for strife, the preservation of marital stability requires the provision of a means for minimizing its deleterious effects. When conflict occurs, the resultant frustration must be reduced, and accord must be reestablished in a manner that does no serious damage either to the marriage itself or to the larger context of social relations in which it is embedded. Sibling-in-law joking helps to accomplish this.

If, for example, a Mossi is irritated by his wife's performance of some aspect of her duties in the household or the field, he need not address her directly in order to communicate his dissatisfaction and release the tension he feels. To do so in a culture which places a high value on indirection in emo-

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tricem over the woman and turned over the rights *in uxorem* to the man. 613
This point is very important, because, by accepting the woman as a wife 583
for his lineage segment, the Boodkasma accepted the responsibility of giving a woman in return to the other lineage. The stress placed on the lineage in wife-exchange was due to the corporate nature of this kinship group, as well as to the prohibition against a man's exchanging his own sisters or daughters as wives. He had to use other women in the lineage. It was believed that if this rule were violated, the women exchanged would also "exchange lives"—i.e., the fate of one would automatically reflect the fate of the other.

The Mossi marriage system worked to the advantage of both the elder males of the lineage segment and the nobles of the ruling lineage. Since the older men of the various groups controlled the resources of their kinsmen, they usually initiated "friendship" relations and obtained wives for their group. The more impartial elders distributed the women equitably among their fellow kinsmen, but occasionally older men kept the wives for themselves, knowing that in time these wives would be inherited by their younger kinsmen. Younger men had to wait until their elders died, do without wives, or establish "friendly" relations with older men. Some young men and newcomers to the district appealed to the chief for *pughsiudse* (from *pugho*, the diminutive of *pagha*, "woman," and *siubo*, "to give with the hope of profitable return"). These pughsiudse were women whom the chief received from his subjects and whom he subsequently gave out as wives on condition that their husbands give him their eldest daughters as future pughsiudse.[9]

The nobility benefited by the Mossi marriage system because, as a 613
group, they received more women than they gave out in the exchange of 565
wives. Furthermore, this enabled them to make more marriage arrange- 562
ments. This does not mean that a differential value was placed on women of different status groups. The Mossi tended to regard all women as equally valuable, but commoners tended to be more generous to noble friends than vice versa.

The nobles also received wives from their "brother," the district chief. 613
He received women as presents and signs of fealty and homage from most 565
of the groups in his district, and also from groups outside his district. He 583
kept some of these women as wives; others he used as pughsiudse; and still others he gave to his lineage segments. Some nobles had another method of obtaining wives, namely, by abduction. A nobleman who saw the daughter or wife of a commoner in the market place often encouraged her to desert her father or husband and come to him. Her relatives usually

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Naba regularly saw his son in private, and that the prince often interceded 644
successfully with his father for the lives of rebels or criminals. 593

The Mogho Naba seldom saw his younger sons, who usually remained 634
with their mothers' patrilineages until they were old enough to be assigned district chieftainships or sent to live in villages controlled by the Baloum Naba. He was rather suspicious of these boys, who, if certain traditions are believed, were not averse to plotting the death of the Djiba Naba in order to succeed to the nam. The district chiefs also feared these younger sons, in whose favor they were often deposed by the Mogho Naba. Almost all of the dynastic changes that occurred in the Mossi districts seem to have stemmed from a ruler's attempt to find districts for his brothers or his younger sons.

The ruler was less concerned with the welfare of his daughters and 643
female relatives. Their marriages seldom benefited the political system. 644
As a matter of fact, the behavior of a royal princess usually strained the re- 593
lations between her husband and the ruling lineage. The reason for this [562]
was a status conflict: as wives, they had low prestige in Mossi society; but as relatives of the Mogho Naba, they enjoyed high status. This contradiction made it difficult for them to accept the low estate of wives. Consequently, they clashed with their husband and often dominated the women and co-wives in his compound. Since few Mossi men tolerate strife within their household, these noble wives often withdrew from their husband's home and established one of their own. The one exception to this pattern was the ruler's eldest daughter, the Napoko, whose ceremonial duties at his death and during the interregnum compelled her to remain loyal to the husband chosen for her by the king. Like her brother, the Crown Prince, if she violated any of the traditions and thus became ineligible to fulfill her duties to her father and to the state, she endangered the country at its weakest moment, when the government was being transferred from the deceased Mogho Naba to his successor.

The death of a Mogho Naba was usually attributed to foul play or 643
supernatural forces. When Mogho Naba Sagha II died in 1957, a report 761
from Ouagadougou stated that the Governor of the Upper Volta had felt constrained to have an autopsy performed to quell rumors that the monarch had died of poisoning.[22] The obvious function of such rumors was to dramatize the gravity of the situation during the interregnum.

Because the Mogho Naba was usually accompanied by a page, it was 643
often this boy who witnessed his death. It was the page's responsibility to 763
notify the Baloum Naba, who notified, in order, the Ouidi Naba, the Lar- [644]
halle Naba, the Kamsaogho Naba, the Gounga Naba, the ruler's children, [645]

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692 or because the litigants had rejected the village chief's verdict). The chief
634 then asked the plaintiff or "the people of X village" to state their case.
695 Someone usually spoke up, and after he had finished, the chief asked the defendant or defendants to do likewise. The litigants were then asked to produce reputable witnesses to support or refute the testimony.

[641] Witnesses had to be male, adult (to have begun to "push a beard"), and
[562] free. Women and bondsmen had no legal personality before a Mossi court.
[567] A slave was represented at court by his master, and a woman by her husband (and, by extension, by his patrilineage). In marital quarrels or property suits, a woman was usually represented by her patrilineage. Only if
[576] she alone could give the required evidence was she allowed in court. When she was asked to testify, she knelt, and spoke in a high, thin, soft voice, thus showing extreme respect to the chief and proper deference to the court. Except for these restrictions, any person could be called in as a witness.
[578] Tempers often ran fairly high among the litigants' relatives and friends while they gave their testimony and argued the case, but their physical separation and their respect for the chief prevented abuse and fighting. Anyone who started a fight in court was liable to a beating by the samandekamba.

[674] The Mossi believed that most people, given sufficient reason, would commit any crime. Thus they examined the litigants carefully and at great length in an attempt to "get behind" the offense. The district chief interrogated the litigants, but the dignity of the court prevented him from arguing with them. As a matter of fact, most of the cross-examination was done by the litigants themselves. From time to time, the village administrator and the chief's confidants asked brief, direct questions. When a woman was involved, the chief's Pughtiema usually listened to the proceedings from behind a wall and questioned her. When all the evidence was in, the chief either rendered his verdict without delay or retired to the zongo to confer with his confidants and the village administrator. He took the latter course whenever he felt that further discussion was necessary or that false testimony was confusing the issue. Not until he felt that he had the facts well in hand did he return to the court to render his verdict.

The Mossi did not use ordeals in court except in the "chastity trials" conducted by the Pwe Naba. Some litigants called upon the ancestors to kill them if they were not telling the truth; others went to earth shrines and drank an infusion of dust to show that they were not afraid of the spirits who wrought vengeance on the guilty. However, such acts were never carried out in court and thus were of no use to the chief.

The following case, tried in a district court in 1956, illustrates the Mossi

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The following case, tried in a district court in 1956, illustrates the Mossi

concept of justice. To reach the central market, the people of Donse village used a path that ran across the fields belonging to two of their fellow villagers, Zami and Isa. The path was normally open all year round, even during the planting season, because neither man wished to inconvenience the villagers. But one day the two men quarreled, and shortly thereafter Isa announced his decision to close his path during the planting season. He said he feared that "people would steal his growing crops" if he left it open. Moreover, he wanted to use the path to increase his planting area. Zami objected to what he considered an insult, and, believing that Isa had violated a customary rule, used the path. In doing so, he crushed several stalks of millet. Isa witnessed his action, and the men came to blows. When the village chief proved unable to reconcile them, they were brought before the district court.

The district chief ruled that according to Mossi custom, a man could close a path during the planting season to prevent people from stealing his crops. But if he closed a path, he had to provide an alternative route, for no one had the right to restrict the movements of others. The chief sympathized with Isa over the small size of his field, but insisted that he provide a path across or around it. However, he persuaded Zami to let Isa use a portion of his land in compensation for the new path.

The chief tried to reconcile the interests of Isa and Zami with those of the entire village. He apparently felt that reconciliation was more useful than judgment. He did uphold the law that the right of passage is mandatory, but also maintained that a man has the right to protect his property from potential thieves. At the same time, he made it clear that although a man may defend his own rights, he may not do so by infringing upon the rights of others.

The same principles seem to have been upheld in the following case, also recorded in 1956, which is interesting because it illustrates the flexibility of Mossi law. A man named Hammadou died, leaving fifteen cows as his legacy. Moussa, his eldest son and principal heir, distributed the cows among his father's other sons and male relatives, but did not give any to his father's daughter. Strictly speaking, he was right to exclude her, because a woman was not supposed to inherit any of her father's property unless he had no living lineal or collateral relatives. In practice, however, a daughter always received part of her father's legacy, especially if he had been wealthy. Hammadou's daughter therefore felt slighted, and when she received no redress from Moussa or her other male relatives, she had the case taken to the village chief. He could not resolve it, and referred it to the district chief.

When Moussa was called before the district chief, he explained that his

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were seldom able to follow a case higher than the subdivision level. In cases involving long imprisonment or the death penalty, the relatives of the condemned person usually learned about the sentence through rumors from the capital, but seldom through the administration.

One judicial duty which the administration gave the Mossi chiefs and which they had always disliked was the adjudication of domestic cases. They found such cases even more difficult and distasteful after Hesling issued a circular on "The Condition of the Native Woman," which is summarized in a semi-official report as follows:

> [The Governor] is pained to see [the Mossi woman] so often subjected to a special form of slavery which, notably at the time of marriage, reduces her to the role of a domestic animal. Without wishing to interfere with ingrained native traditions, the Governor desires "to prime the desirable evolution by means of judicial decisions." Thus he comes to the decision that in those lawsuits concerning marriage in which formerly the woman was not consulted, she must henceforth be present and must argue the case with her husband. M. Hesling trusts that this procedural reform, which he hopes will give the native woman "a consciousness of her individuality and her rights," will be followed in the courts by further reforms. First of all [the courts] must weaken and then progressively modify those traditions which promote injustice toward women. . . . Questions will no doubt be raised as to whether it is necessary to set up regulations on such matters. However, M. Hesling advises his administrators to adjust [such regulations] to, and apply them with respect for, ancestral traditions. It will be interesting to see the [illegible] "[illegible] proposition denoting Mossi women] of the Upper Volta will acquire some individuality."

The Mossi chiefs were not told that the Governor's circular recommending a change in the status of women stipulated that traditional practices be taken into account. But even if they had been told, they would not have been impressed, because any fundamental change in the status of women would have placed their whole society in jeopardy. Woman exchange stood at the core of a social, economic, and political nexus that held Mossi society together. True, in pre-conquest times most quarrels and lawsuits were caused by trouble over women, but the marriage system was upheld by all the other institutions. Even after the arrival of the French and the weakening of the chiefs' judicial role, the Mossi could punish violators of the marriage system by imposing social sanctions. They now feared that if the French passed laws giving the women free choice in marriage, and the chiefs had to adjudicate on the basis of these laws, all traditional sanctions would become obsolete. Neither the chiefs nor the Mossi on the Council of Native Notables nor the elders welcomed any discussion about

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the status of women. They maintained that the French had conquered the Mossi men, not the women, and that the administration should not interfere with the way in which a Moaga treated his wife. Ironically enough, there was little the administration could do for the Mossi women, since the latter were too timid to approach the Europeans. Most of them continued to react to maltreatment from their husbands by running away, but now they went to the Gold Coast with labor migrants instead of returning to their lineage.

Although the Mossi chiefs had little autonomy in the administration of their subjects, and had to look to the administration for guidance in nearly everything they did, they were not completely powerless. They were the representatives of the colonial administration on the local level, and as such they could control their subjects through the differential allocation of prestations. Those Mossi who had maintained the traditional respect for the chiefs could look forward to less arduous tasks for the administration and to the avoidance of forced labor or army recruitment. Those who by their actions or attitude indicated that they had lost respect for the chiefs were penalized accordingly. Chiefs were also able to retain some control over their subjects because they were still the centers of social, economic, and political relations within their territories. They still received homage and presents from their more loyal or traditionalistic subjects, and with these goods and services they could bind other persons to themselves. Given chiefs were able to manipulate the colonial administration and use it to enhance their traditional position so successfully that the administration and the missionaries had to take these men into account whenever they wished to establish contact with the population.

The desire of the missionaries to establish missions and schools for the purpose of converting the Mossi to Christianity presented the chiefs with a great challenge because, unlike the administration, the missionaries tried to establish direct contact with the people. The chiefs not only did not like to have Europeans living in their midst, but feared that they would lose control over their subjects who went to live near the missions. However, the chiefs could not refuse to grant the missionaries land on which to build missions and schools. They also provided labor for them, just as they did for the construction of administrative buildings and roads. Similarly, the chiefs recruited children for the mission schools in the same spirit as they recruited students for the schools of the administration. The difference between the Catholic missionaries and the administration with respect to education was that while the former were interested in educating the children of chiefs, they were also interested in children from other backgrounds. Nevertheless, the majority of chiefs continued to send to school

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shoulder; but when he arrives in the market, he calmly places his weapon on top of one of the sheds before he makes his rounds. The women do not carry any weapons to market except their "words" but even these are not often used because of the desire to avoid hostility—which the Mossi do not like to have disrupt one of their major institutions.

The rural market is the center of Mossi social life, and friends as well as enemies meet within its confines. What Mangin wrote some forty years ago is still true: "Every self-respecting Mossi—man or woman, child or elder—must go to market at least once in a while, were it only to look . . . and to be looked at, if he can put on some handsome clothes" (Mangin 1921 : 53). Except for the Moslems who are now experimenting with a form of Purdah, there are few persons who do not go to market. The absence of someone from the market for more than two consecutive occasions is a sure sign of illness, travel, or family crisis. As one man said to me, "I must go to market, and when I get there I look for three persons: my girl friend, my debtor and my enemy. If I do now know whether any of them are at the market I am ill at ease. And when I go to the market and do not see them all, the market is not good."

The lively character of the Mossi market will be discussed later, but throughout this kaleidoscope of activities certain consistencies can be discerned. For example, one notices many different kinds of greetings and salutations in the market place, but each one of them correctly indicates the exact relation or relationship between the persons involved. Young girls on passing each other on one of their innumerable circuits of the market bend their knees slightly and place both of their cupped hands on their own breasts. Only then will they stop and exchange news. At the end of the conversation they repeat the same greeting and continue their rounds. Both girls and women greet casual male acquaintances in the same way, but invariably kneel if the male stops and talks to them. Women sometime kneel when speaking to each other, but always do so when addressing any male relative of a respected category, who may then send them on errands such as buying tobacco from the vendors. A man who meets a female benefactor, such as a woman who has given medicine to one of his children, invariably kneels down before her. She may do the same thing out of respect for his male status. However, when a man meets either his mother-in-law or his father's sister, he is the one to kneel down in order to greet her. Two men who are equals normally shake hands, but if not, the junior in status or in age kneels down before his elder or superior. Sometimes a high status man will prevent his greeter from kneeling by raising him. When

567 The several categories of captives are as follows.

1. The Yemdaogo, all of whom are of foreign origin (Boussanga and Gourounsi) and either bought or captured during a war.

2. The daporé or dapobi (house slaves) who are the decendants of slaves. [88]

3. The bengaré, former slaves of the Peulh, who have abandoned their masters and put themselves under the sole authority of the Mogho Naba.

4. The Kamboiensé.

The Various Types of Slaves

567 Daporé ("living behind the house"). (a) The daporé belonging to the Mogho Naba. At Ouagadougou there is a section called
● 563 Dapoya, and its inhabitants are called Dapobi. They are wrongly considered (even by themselves) to be captives. Of Kibissi origin (we have noted that the Kibissi, the Ninissi, and the Gourounsi were the original inhabitants of the present Mossi area), they came of their own volition to Obri-Bangrenaba (Naba Oubri's chief of the bangré slaves), and he presented them to the emperor. It has been impossible to find out who was reigning when they arrived. The Mogho Naba first installed them at Wavoussé and later behind his house where they acted as guards and also were entrusted with important responsibilities.

These are voluntary captives. They are therefore not yemsé in the usual sense of the word, since they were neither bought nor sold, and the emperor did not mistreat them, although he did not grant them, as foreigners, the same rights as those possessed by his
[583] subjects. The dapobi could not marry Mossi girls. They were obliged to marry slaves, and that is perhaps why they are considered slaves themselves. The children of these marriages, called [89] dogyiri ("born in the house") make up the "house slave" class.

567 (b) Daporé of the Kamsaoughin and daporé of the canton chiefs. In addition to the foreign dapobi just mentioned, there are true dapobi who were either captured in battle or bought. The former are slaves of the Mogho Naba and are entrusted to the care of the Kamsaougho Naba, chief eunuch, who is responsible for guarding

231 bother to raise them; as a result the number of horses has decreased, and this country, formerly renowned for its mounts, may have none in a not too distant future.

Unfortunately, horses do not thrive in every part of the country; Ouagadougou is particularly deadly for them, although, to my knowledge, the true reason for this insalubrity has not yet been found. The natives attribute it to the water, and there is no doubt that horses watered at the wells are in better health than those watered at the streams; it is also true that horses thrive in areas only a few kilometers [136] from Ouagadougou. Europeans tend to attribute this mortality to the tsetse fly. The two opinions are easy to reconcile, for, on the one hand, tsetse flies prefer damp places, and, on the other hand, the [312] Ouagadougou wells contain salt of magnesium which purges the horses and thus checks the disease.

231 The Peul own fine herds of bovines, some rather small and without humps (small cattle), others large and humped (zebu). Traders also ● 563 use the zebu as a beast of burden. Much of this cattle belongs to the 437 Mossi who seldom tend their own herds but prefer to entrust them to the Peul shepherds who keep the milk in payment. An adult cow yields from two to four liters a day during the good season. The guardians, however, know how to make the best of this near slavery. When an animal dies it is never one of theirs, and if the owner of the herd /a Mossi/ dies without telling his heirs where his cattle is to be found and how many head he owns, the Peul carefully refrain from disclosing the herd entrusted to them. In former days they were slightly more conscientious because they feared retaliation, but now they bless the French occupation.

231 The herds are sometimes decimated by an epizootic disease, as happened in 1910 and 1911 when the Koupéla area was ravaged by what must have been the bovine plague or peripneumonia. The cows would cough, entirely lose their appetites, and die within a few days.

The Mossi also raise bees. The hives are made of straw or flexible sticks and placed in the trees; sometimes swarms of bees also settle in the hollow trunks of baobabs. The honey is gathered at the end and at the beginning of the winter season; the hive is smoked out and [273] the bees destroyed. Honey is used primarily to make bésé, a kind of hydromel which the Moslem Yarsé, Peul, and Haousa like very much, and which they are allowed to drink in spite of its fermentation; [237] whereas, in principle, millet beer is forbidden to them. The wax 306 is sold to the jewelry-makers who use it to make bracelets by the lost wax process.

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566 may leave his master whenever he pleases, either to devote himself to trade or to enter the service of another man; but often he gets all his work from his master.

M F 563 The Peul shepherds never were slaves of the Mossi, because they only knew how to watch the herds and were incapable of working the land. They were, nevertheless, held in severe vassalage by the Mossi, especially by the nabas, and served as victims in certain sacrifices. Some Mossi sold by the Yarsé or by other Mossi have occasionally been their slaves, especially in the Dori region called Gyémaré by the natives.

/15/ Chapter 2. Administration

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157 The power of the chiefs and the submission of their subjects are characteristic traits of Mossi country. The spirit of submission permeates the whole Mossi mentality. The Mossi are not particularly secretive or incommunicative, as the Bambara are said to be. On the contrary, they talk quite freely to their friends, even of their personal affairs; this does not mean that they are unable to keep a secret, especially if it is the king's secret. Two individuals have to be equals if there is to be some freedom between them; this freedom may develop into a certain closeness, but never into friendship in the highest sense of the term. If the Mossi appears secretive, it is because he is afraid to offend someone more powerful than himself. He always yields before a chief, before someone who "has the strength," as he puts it, while inwardly he may retain his own opinion and act as he pleases. When a chief talks, he hears nothing but these words in reply: bé néré, naba — "That's it, that's right. I agree with you."

M 576 The Mossi salute, formerly used in all the Black empires of the Sudan, especially in the courts of Ghana, Mali, and Gao, provides good evidence of this mentality. When we first enter the country as foreigners, we are shocked to see a man thus lower himself before another man. In order to salute, the Mossi puts down his load, hat, and sword, removes his shoes, sits on the ground, folds his legs slightly, and leans the upper part of his body forward. The elbows rest against the ground, as far apart as possible; the forearms, folded in front of

304 Children are tattooed at any age, sometimes when already grown. Many Yarsé do not tattoo their children, and the Mossi themselves do not seem especially to hold to this barbarous custom which sometimes disfigures an individual. The tattooing is done with a razor, and powdered charcoal is put into the wounds. In order to soften the skin and to alleviate the pain, the whole face is covered with oil until the wounds are healed, leaving more or less accentuated scars depending on the success of the operation. Some natives are completely disfigured by thick excrescences of flesh as the result of a faulty operation.

Sorcerers sometimes have the strange idea of prescribing tattoo marks on the belly or lower back of children whose older siblings have [789] died. For instance, a woman had lost three of her children. She consulted a sorcerer when the fourth was born, and he declared with the greatest seriousness that the child would die if his buttocks were not marked with stripes and his belly with tattooings radiating from the navel. The child was marked accordingly, and he lived! Young girls nearly always tattoo their belly with lines extending radially from the navel; many adorn their chest above the bosom with small stripes running perpendicular to the breasts and parallel between them. The tattooing patterns we have described here are, of course, only the most widespread types, because there is a great variety of markings.

304 Just as there is no set age for tattooing, there is none for circum-
852 cision. Children of seven or eight are circumcised along with youths and even mature men. Circumcision does not seem to be a Mossi [184] custom, for it is not a general practice. In Ouagadougou province most children are circumcised, while in Koupéla province most of them are not. However, the custom is gaining yearly in Koupéla. The head of the family often has himself circumcised because he is ill, and his children follow suit. Thus circumcision is introduced into the family, for once the father has undergone the operation, his children do likewise. Sometimes the mother is a Yarga, thus from a 304 Moslem family, and her children are circumcised, a new gain for the ●563 practice. It also happens that children are drawn to it through sheer 852 curiosity and the enticing assurances of the Peul and Yarsé, who are usually Moslems and thus circumcised, and who spread propaganda all around them. Excision, on the other hand, is universal.

/42/ When there is a group to be circumcised, their relatives set a date with the Peul who is to perform the operation. At dawn of that

304 day the one in charge of the circumcision, a wealthy Yarga or Mossi
563 who has the means to feed several of the people to be circumcised,
852 chooses a tree to serve as shelter for the operation. Rain need not be taken into account, for circumcision is always performed during the dry season from December to April, when agricultural work is at a
[778] standstill. The tree is surrounded with straw mats, forming the téoo or sacred enclosure which no one who is not circumcised may come near without running the risk of being insulted and often beaten; if he should dare to step inside it, he would be stricken by the greatest misfortunes. The Peul sets out a flat stone, sacrifices a chicken in order to make the spirit of the tree benevolent toward those to be circumcised, and operates on the boys one by one. Drums are played throughout the operation to drown the cries of the victims.

852 For three days afterwards the newly circumcised boys do nothing. They rest and tend their wounds. They remain isolated from the rest
[535] of the community for two or three months, sometimes even longer. Judging by the dances which close the festivities, dancing must be their primary concern during that period of time. They also thresh the millet of those who invite them to do so, but no uncircumcised person may join them, no uninitiated individual may come near them.
[198] They do not speak the Mossi language at this time, but a special tongue of which they learn enough to serve them in their everyday needs. Woe to those who forget and use their native tongue; they are
[551] beaten with switches made of a kind of willow. Even their names are changed, and no one may call them by their Mossi names.

The circumcised boys are divided in two groups, one "male" and one "female." One of the groups bears the name of the hyena (kwara in their language) and the other is called masalro, whose French equivalent we do not know. The hyena group must strain their wits to snatch food, even from the other circumcised boys, who are kept constantly on the alert. The other group makes improper gestures during the dance.

852 The circumcised boys are covered with gray dust to alter their
293 appearance completely. A tail is fastened to the back of their breech-
776 cloth, hanging to the ground. It is made of plaited cotton thread and
481 ends in a pompon. Its function is to drive off the kikirsi spirits, who apparently do not like circumcised persons. The boys walk bent over and leaning on sticks like old men. This is done to test their obedience and to see if they listen carefully to what they are told.

852 When they go into the bush, either to cut down straw or for any other reason, they sing invocations to the spirits of the paths and of the trees in order to propitiate them, to draw their blessing, and to avert illness. They chase everyone in their path, approach the villages, and, if they can, seize a few chickens, goats, or sheep as an extra tidbit. This is the custom, and they even steal the animals of their relatives in this fashion. At night they come up near the huts and beat everyone they meet; they take everything they can find, and no one would think of resisting them. /43/ In any case, during that time, people take good care of their children and send them plenty of food. To have a child undergoing circumcision is a burden to a family.

852 563 869 When the circumcised group consists largely of Moslems, Yarsé or Peul, the one in charge of the circumcision assembles them during rest periods, in the evening, or sometimes in the middle of the night, in order to instruct them. There does not seem to be any esoteric doctrine, and the instructions deal with the glorification of ancestors who were also circumcised there. Only those who are circumcised can enter heaven and have many children; those who are not will taste no happiness in the other life and will remain sterile. The group is also taught that God sits under a black tree on a sheep skin, that he eats from a dish and drinks from a bottle. It is all very childish. They are also told that they must not disclose to anyone, under penalty of death or at least of serious illness, what they have seen and learned during the circumcision period. This is to prevent them from revealing the robberies committed during that time and from discouraging those who should like to undergo the operation; for although it is tempting to eat well, to play a great deal, and especially to wear beautiful clothes, it is also unpleasant to be lashed with willows at the slightest slip, or for not dancing well, for quarreling with or insulting someone, for speaking Mossi, for being slow to go to work.

852 Occasionally, at circumcision time, two sticks are found on the path near the market. They were placed there on purpose, and if one looks to the right and left, he will see two children, all covered with dust and wearing dirty breechcloths. They are newly circumcised boys who are begging, and passersby drop a few cowries to the ground.

852 302 All these ceremonies are soon to end. The clothes are ready, and the children are getting tired and restive. The one in charge of the circumcision decides that the boys are to be shaved, that is, that the circumcision period will end in two weeks. The hair of the circumcised boys is not shaved off completely: strips of hair alternate with

782 755 Then the sacrificer and his assistants eat the victim, but the patient does not partake of it.

782 751 [753] The silent sacrifice, mand'moukou—also called "egg sacrifice," mand'gellé, because an egg is offered—is made in the following circumstances. Some diseases have the dismal faculty of talking like people. They call someone, who answers to his name thinking that a human being has called him. This is sufficient, he will fall ill and die.

The sorcerer decrees that such a disease threatens the village, and that a silent sacrifice is in order. The naba and the elders anxiously delegate one of the men among them to offer the sacrifice. On the following day in the morning, the appointed elder takes an egg, often also a kola nut and special roots, and follows the path which the disease would take if it came to the village. He walks in complete silence. When he reaches a certain point, he brings the egg close to his lips and tells it secretly that a disease threatens the village, and that if the disease tries to follow this path, the egg must stop it. Then he places the egg, kola nut, and roots upon the ground or buries them and retraces his steps. /94/ The egg, a chicken-to-be that cannot yet talk, is chosen as a symbol of the silence that must be observed to ward off the disease.

In the procedure called "bad sacrifice," the victim is not eaten by those present but left on the spot, where it rots or is eaten by vultures and hyenas. Any animal may be offered in this fashion, but the sorcerer alone may decide when the sacrifice is called for. It is usually performed to avert a general misfortune, for example, to ward off a contagious disease that will devour the animal and leave the people alone. The victim is sometimes abandoned alive and driven into the bush.

782 Anything may be offered in sacrifice if the sorcerer says so: kola nuts, cowries, the ashes of certain barks or roots, red stones, the inner fruit of the karite tree, etc. Chickens are the victims most commonly chosen, but sacrifices of goats and sheep are not uncommon. We have already mentioned the guinea hen as the sacrifice preferred by the kikirsi. The nabas are sometimes required to sacrifice cows or donkeys in certain cases. Some nabas, but not all, may sacrifice horses. Finally, even men were sacrificed in the old days. Certain tangamma [563] were greedy for human sacrifices, and the Peul were often used for this purpose. Natives with light skins tending to red, thus closer to [826] the color of ancestral spirits which are said to be white, were sacrificed to these spirits in preference to any others.

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from Gambakha in the eleventh century to found small kingdoms in a country which had already been colonized by the Mossi. However, there is a drawback to this opinion: the existence among the Mossi of an autochthonous people (Nioniossé or Foulsé /Fulse/) still extant, who are far from having, always and everywhere, merged with the Mossi. According to my observations made in the area (I spent three years in Yatenga, from 1913 to 1916), there are still more Nioniossé than Mossi in Yatenga, 100, 000 as against 70, 000 (see my Noir du Yatenga, pages 665 and 666). The existence of this earlier people proves that the Mossi colonization is a relatively recent one. Also, the Mossi could not have penetrated and survived in an already inhabited region in any way other than by forming small, conquering military monarchies. I think therefore, that the Mossi came, with their chiefs, from Dagomba, and that they didn't reach the present Mossi country until ... But we are coming back to the chronological question which we will deal with later on.

[563]

174 For the moment, then, we are still reduced to dealing with hypotheses insofar as the origins of the Mossi are concerned. We know that the Mossi come from Dagomba and that they probably entered the country as conquerors. But where did they come from then? From the north-east? From the south? From the east? We cannot yet answer with certainty, just as we cannot for so many other historical, philosophical, and scientific questions, alas!

Grammatici certant et adhuc sub judice lis est.

5: Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1959
FA28 Mossi FA28

composed of two major groups of communities," Fortes goes on to describe this pattern succinctly: 171

> On the one side are those that claim to be descendants of immigrants from parts of the country other than their present habitats. On the other side are communities that claim to be the autochthonous inhabitants. . . . Many of the immigrant communities claim descent from forbears of the Mampuru ruling stock. Though now wholly amalgamated with the alleged aboriginal inhabitants, they have certain ritual observances and a system of chieftainship similar to those of the Mamprusi. . . . The institution distinctive of the autochthonous communities is the office of "Custodian of the Earth." This ritual office, involving priestly functions in connection with the cult of the Earth, is found among many West African peoples from the Senegal to the mouth of the Niger. In the Voltaic region it is the exclusive prerogative of the autochthonous communities.[1] [793]

The inhabitants of the Yatenga at the time of the arrival of the Mossi were the Kurumankobe, or Fulse, as they are called by the Mossi. Their descendants recognize their indigenous origin but have become almost wholly acculturated to the Mossi. While most Mossi bear the sib name Wedraogo and maintain political control in the Yatenga, the descendants of the Kurumankobe usually have the sib name Savadogo and are excluded from the exercise of political authority. They have retained the custodianship of the earth, and the elders of their lineages and sibs are the Mossi's *Tenga Soba namba*, their "earth custodians," charged with propitiating the supernatural forces of nature. 173 563 614 [793]

POLITICAL AND SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

The present king of the Yatenga, the *Yatenga Naba*, is a lineal descendant of the first ruler, Naba Yadiga. The members of the lineage of the king are called "those who maintain themselves upon us" (*riim namba*). Directly subordinate to the authority of the Yatenga Naba are his four grand ministers, each of whom has authority over a particular province (*solum*) of the Yatenga.[2] 631 [644] [635]

The province over which each of the grand ministers presides as lord is divided up into a number of cantons (*tense*), each of which is ruled by a chief who is the central political authority both of the village in which he resides and of the villages within the canton. Like the province, the concept of the canton is not precisely territorial. Some villages may owe 631 634

[1] Meyer Fortes, *The Dynamics of Clanship among the Tallensi* (London: Oxford University Press, 1945), p. 6.

[2] These provinces refer not only to geographical areas of the kingdom but to particular categories of the population. For example, the *Balum Naba* has direct authority over the southern regions of the Yatenga and indirect authority over the cantons of Riziam and Zittenga, political entities which have never fully recognized the central authority of the *Yatenga Naba*. This same minister is also especially charged with maintaining liaison with certain of the more important earth custodians throughout the Yatenga.

/451/ Book Four

Black Warriors and Conquerors

Chapter I

The Mossi -- Occupations

101 The Mossi are settled between the twelfth and fourteenth de-
131 grees of north latitude, and between the second and fifth degrees of west longitude. To the south, they extend slightly beyond the twelfth degree of latitude. They are indeed to be found in Saraboutenga, Rakaye, Béré, and Tenkodogo, but this does not bring them too far south of the twelfth degree. To the north, on the other hand, they do not quite reach the fourteenth degree.

161 The Mossi form a rather large group which occupies, in the
563 center of the area, the circle /an administrative division/ of Ouagadougou; to the northwest, the circle of Ouahigouya; to the southeast, the residency /administrative center/ of Tenkodogo; and to the east of the latter, the circle of Fada N'Gourma. Of course, the Mossi do not make up the total population of these four districts. In the Ouahigouya circle, there are the Habé /Habe/ and Houmbébé /Humbe/ to the northwest, and the Samoro /Samo/ to the south. In the Ouagadougou circle, which may be regarded as the center of Mossi territory, there are the Kipirsi to the east. In the Tenkodogo residency there are the Boussansé /Busansi/ to the south and in the circle of Fada N'Gourma the Gourmantché or Gourmanké /Gurma/ to the east. The Mossi, however, make up
161 the /452/ greater part of the total population in all four areas. In the circle of Ouagadougou, they number 750,000, in the residency of Tenkodogo, 122,000, in the residency of Leo, 1,000. This adds up to 873,000 for the circle of Ouagadougou as a whole. Assuming that there are 200,000 Mossi in the circles of Ouahigouya and Fada N'Gourma (a very approximate figure), a total of 1,073,000 Mossi is obtained. This makes them by far the most numerous group in all of French West Africa. The whole of our Dahomey, for example,

174 "The Yarsé or Ouangarbé," he says in the Monographie of the Ouagadougou circle, "entered the territory during the reign of Koundoumié, sixth Moro Naba.

"At that time, as tradition has it, seven Mandé traders named respectively Bolle, Rambéré, Séré, Pallom, Morebanom, Parirabo, and Mari Konda, were traveling through Mossi territory with their merchandise. They called upon the Moro Naba, and the latter, impressed by their intelligence, conceived the thought of keeping those superior individuals in his own employ. He plied them with gifts, offered them wives, and installed them nearby in a quarter that was given the name of Zoroné. According to this account, the descendants of these men gave rise to the various Yarsé communities which are found today throughout the circle."

According to Moulins, therefore, the Yarsé would have entered Mossi territory toward the end of the thirteenth century or the beginning of the fourteenth, since Naba Koundoumié's time may be set around 1300. I believe that this opinion is more accurate than Marc's, in view of the fact that the Yarsé no longer know the Mandé language and speak only Mossi. It would be surprising if these Mandé had come to forget their mother tongue within a century and a half, although this might occur in five centuries. Nevertheless, one detail disturbs me in the Moulins version: the seven Mandé traders bear Mossi names, Bolle, Rambéré, Pallom, etc., instead of Mandé names as would be natural. No matter what the truth may be, it is more probable that the Yarsé settled in Mossi territory during the thirteenth or fourteenth century A.D. than in the eighteenth century.

174 3. The same problem of a date of settlement applies to the Foulbé /Fulani/, and there again Marc and Moulins are in com-
●563 plete disagreement.

"The Peul probably came to Mossi territory in the footsteps of the Mandé-Dioula," says Marc, page 143. Moulins has a different opinion. /466/ "The Peuhl, he says, "must have settled in the Mossi area at a very remote time. It even seems that they had long been there at the time of the Dagomba invasion." This would take us beyond the twelfth century A.D. In any case, it is probable that the Foulbé were established in Mossi territory in small groups, as they are still today, well before the eighteenth century.

241 2. The sououga, a knife used to cut down the heads of millet.

3. The gouégo, a curved knife, a kind of scythe which is used to cut straw, for example when preparing thatch for hut roofs.

To summarize, cultivation is the most important pursuit among the Mossi. It insures the subsistence of this population which is [161] relatively dense, since there are 25 inhabitants per square kilometer, a very high figure unusual for West Africa. The species of cultivated plants are as numerous as anywhere else, and the agricultural tools tend to be superior. In spite of all this, the Mossi are not very good cultivators, and in this respect I believe that they must be placed beneath the Bobo, Gourounsi, Habé, Bambara, etc. One senses that the Mossi descend at least in part from people who were once familiar with easier and more fruitful ways of procuring food (such as war and attendant loot) or, to put it another way, one senses the meeting of two groups, one of which was truly adept at cultivation while the other was less so. Thus, although the Mossi are cultivators first and foremost and actually subsist on cultivation, the latter is not as basic to them as it is to the Bobo, the Gourounsi, etc. They do practice cultivation, this is even by far their chief subsistence activity, and yet one cannot say that they are, in all respects, good cultivators.

231 Are they at least noteworthy stockbreeders?

To this we may give forthwith a negative answer. The Mossi are very mediocre, not to say worthless breeders. This is not to mean, incidentally, that there is no cattle in Mossi territory. There [563] is a great deal, on the contrary, and this stems from the presence of the Foulbé, who are cattle herders, as much as from the presence of the Yarsé, who /487/ have always owned considerable quantities of cattle, and from the density of the Mossi population. The Mossi themselves, nevertheless, own little cattle. To be more exact, they have a low per capita average of cattle.

We might list over-all or partial figures, but those most recently 231 compiled are vitiated by the fact that Mossi territory lost part of 563 its cattle in recent years due to repeated famines around 1906-1908 and to an overly rigorous tax system that went into effect a little later. We shall, therefore, merely validate our statement that the

231 Mossi are very mediocre breeders by describing their manner of
563 caring for their animals. Instead of tending them or having this done by their young men, they nearly always hand them over to the Foulbé for herding. This is also done whenever possible by the Bobo, Nounouma, and Sissala in the Leo residency, but it is not done by the Kassonboura, Nankana, or Dagari. If the head of a Mossi
231 soukala is wealthy, he employs his own private Peuhl herder. If he
563 is of average means or poor, he makes an arrangement with other
464 Mossi in the same circumstances, and they all get together to pay a single herder for their cattle. It is the poorer Foulbé, for their part, who agree to herd Mossi cattle in this fashion.

The agreement that binds both parties grants the milk and butter to the Peuhl, but the increase of the herd devolves to the owner. This agreement is made without any definite time limits, and it is only broken if the herder fails to tend the animals properly. If he does his job well, on the other hand, he herds them indefinitely, and when he dies his son succeeds him. By the same token, when the Mossi owner dies, his son leaves the animals in the hands of the same Peuhl.

The Foulbé in charge of tending the herds live in low, conical straw huts at the back of the Mossi villages that own the herds. Not far from their huts, they build an enclosure where they leave the cattle during the night. They take the animals to graze in the bush in the morning, and bring them back in the evening. Whenever one of the Mossi owners wants milk or butter, he buys it from the Peuhl. Sometimes the latter offers him milk as a gift.

We shall see later, when we discuss the Foulbé, that in former
[567] times the Mossi often enslaved the small Foulbé bands that /488/ came with the intention of settling in Mossi territory. The Mossi chiefs would confiscate the herds, and then, since they were unwilling to care for them themselves, they would return them to the dispossessed Foulbé in usufruct and in accordance with the agreement we have just described. It must nevertheless be said that all
563 Foulbé in Mossi territory were not subjected to this high-handed procedure. When we occupied Mossi territory, there were some free and wealthy Foulbé, some Foulbé villages with chiefs of their own. Actually, those Foulbé were by far the more numerous.

563 From a political standpoint, they were subject to the high Mossi powers just like the Yarsé, but like the latter and aside from this, they had preserved all their personal and economic freedom.

231 Let us add a few words about the various races of livestock which are to be found in Mossi territory.

As far as cattle is concerned, there are three races in the Ouagadougou circle:

1. Humped cattle, which is found mostly in the northern and eastern parts of the circle. This beef is tall, with a short dewlap and large horns. It is well suited to porterage, and furnishes excellent butcher's meat. There are some 5,000 head of humped cattle in the circle, 2,000 males and 3,000 females.

2. Humpless or local cattle. This beef has small horns, is found chiefly in the western and southwestern regions, and is usually designated by the name of Kipirsi cattle. It is not suited to porterage and yields inferior meat, but it is much stronger than the humped beef and better adapted to the climate.

3. Ordinary cattle, the result of a cross between the two preceding species. This beef has the strength of the Kipirsi cattle and is considerably taller. It is, furthermore, capable of being fattened, and can thus furnish meat of very good quality. This type predominates among the Tenkodogo Mossi. It comprises about 20,000 head, 8,000 males and 12,000 females.

It is therefore the local cattle (71,000 head), which is most numerous. The humped beeves are worth from 40 to 100 francs, [435] /489/ and the humpless beeves from 30 to 40 francs. The natives [232] are familiar with castration but practice it at random on any subject that comes to hand.

231 Prior to the arrival of the French, the Mossi used their cattle for meat and for sacrifices, but the two uses really amounted to one 782 (the former) since the animals offered to a dead person are always 651 eaten by the living. Nowadays, the Mossi sell their cattle to pay their tax. They still eat meat, although apparently not as much as before. The need to pay a tax which has been understood imperfectly, raised too rapidly and levied too harshly over the past few years, has forced them to save their cattle in order to sell it on the southern kola markets.

323 467 the oven is built in one day. All those who cooperated in building it have the right to use it.

323 At Kombisiguiri, some potters have no ovens. They merely spread out millet stalks on the ground and place the canari on top. They light the millet, and the pots are fired in this fashion.

/521/ It is the potter himself who makes his tools, his crude basin, and his pestle.

Let us point out that the baouré, huge jars where the threshed millet is stored and which are about 2.50 meters high and proportionately wide, which look like enormous sandstone ink bottles and which I saw in the northern part of Mossi territory, are not made by the potters. They are built in each soukala by the inhabitants.

After the potters come the pipe makers. It is the old women who make pipes among the Mossi. They fetch the appropriate clay, [495] fashion the bowl of the pipe, and fire it. They sell it for 5 cowries.

333 Let us not forget the bricklayers, who are called tammétéba in Mossi. Like Gourounsi bricklayers, Mossi ones are primarily cultivators, and their fields net them much more than their trade. As among the Gourounsi, the bricklayers are not paid. They are merely fed for the duration of their work.

322 Following work with earth and clay, let us proceed to woodworking. It is represented among the Mossi by the koukouperséba and séta.

Among certain populations of West Africa, the woodworker's trade is exercised by the blacksmiths (for example, among the Malinké, Dialonké, etc.). Among the Mossi, as among the Gourounsi, it is sharply distinct from the blacksmith's trade and exercised by the koukouperséba, who are counterparts of the Gourounsi voguésara and Mandé debakala-lésemba. The koukouperséba make daba handles, axe handles, small chairs which are very nicely tooled with a hot iron and which represent a horse's back with two crude heads, two outlines of a head, on either side.

Actually, the koukouperséba are primarily cultivators. They work the soil during the rainy season. During the dry season, they make the various items just mentioned.

322 563 In addition to these people, there are the Laobé among the Mossi, that is to say, /522/ those men who are employed by the

322 563 Foulbé as makers of wooden gourds and other items of a similar nature. The Mossi call them séta. Since there are many Foulbé in Mossi territory, there are Laobé also. Some of them have left their masters to settle independently, and they are now free.

May we present one, by the name of Louri. During the winter season he works the soil, although very slightly like all other Laobé and Foulbé, and he also makes wooden gourds. During the dry season, he only makes gourds. Owing to his very mediocre cultivating abilities, his trade nets him more than his fields.

His tools are as follows:

322 413 1. First, a large ax called diendé, which he uses to cut heavy timber.

2. The saotaré, a kind of well-sharpened hoe with a very short handle, which is used to fashion the gourd on the outside.

3. The tépotondé, a kind of hoe with a very short handle and a very sharp blade, which is used to hollow out the gourd.

4. The menkéré, which is also used to hollow out the inside of the gourd.

5. The kéfirga, a long-handled tool with a curved, sharp blade, which is used for the same purpose as the two preceding tools.

It is the blacksmith who makes the iron parts of these tools.

322 563 435 Their value is as follows:

The axe is worth	2,000	cowries
The saotaré is worth	500	"
The tépotondé is worth	500	"
The menkéré is worth	1,500	"
The kéfirga is worth	200	"

322 563 In order to make his gourds, our Laobé uses the wood of the following trees: hèdè, bouagaï, saboutoungaï, and bembé.

This Laobé comes from Badongo (a village located 31 kilometers from /523/ Ouagadougou). He has a wife and two children. [561] He is a former slave, a captive from Laobé, whose masters had settled at Badongo. The master left, and now he is free. Formerly he worked for his master, and now he works for himself. He makes gourds in advance and has them sold at market by his wife. He [435] sells the small ones for 100 cowries, the medium ones for 300, the large ones for 500 (0.10, 0.30, 0.50 franc).

322 As for plots, he cultivates a field of small millet, a little
563 maize around his hut, a few peanuts and underground peas.

His soukala consists of a single and lone hut where he lives with his wife and two children.

Here is another example of a Laobé or séta, this one living at Kombisiguiri. He has left the Foulbé to settle among the Mossi.

[413] His woodworking tools are the same as those we mentioned above: diendé, tépotondé, menkéré, saotaré, and kéfirga.

To make his gourds, he cuts down a whole tree, either hèdè
[313] or n'kouna, which yields the best wood, or bembé, sibi, or n'pékou, or else saboutoungaï, sanktougaï, or satantouloungaï, or finally bouagaï, which is less good. Gourds made of hèdè wood sell for more than others.

[435] He makes two kinds of gourds, small ones worth 50 cowries and large ones, some of which sell for up to 1,000 cowries. He makes his gourds without waiting for an order and has them taken to market by his wives.

Our Laobé does not work in the fields at all. From one end of the year to another, he makes his wooden gourds and they bring him enough to live on.

322 In addition, he makes mortars and pestles to crush grain. A
563 small mortar and pestle is worth 1,000 cowries, a large mortar
435 and pestle 2,000. He also makes large wooden spoons which he sells for 50 cowries, and clogs or wooden sandals of a sort which are worn during the rainy season and which he sells for 100 cowries.

/524/ There are eight people in his soukala, himself, his two wives, and his five children.

322 Let us add that a few, a very few, Mossi have begun to make wooden gourds like the Laobé; but contrary to the habits of the latter, they spend more time in the fields than at their trade. There are a few at Polsogo, a village located 12 kilometers from Ouagadougou. They must not be confused with the koukouperséba mentioned above.

There are also bow makers among the Mossi. They are called tempéséda. They are primarily cultivators, and their fields net them much more than their trade. They exercise the latter only for the purpose of getting a few cowries to buy condiments such as

286 291 "This kind of braiding is not exported."

294 563 There are tailors as well as weavers among the Mossi. The tailor's trade, incidentally, is exercised in Mossi lands not only by the Mossi but also by the Yarsé and by some of the Haoussa who are settled in the territory.

294 Mossi tailors till the soil during the winter season and work as tailors during the dry season. Their fields net them more than their trade.

Most Mossi tailors do custom work. Cotton strips are brought to them, and they sew them into the required garment. Others purchase cotton strips, make them into various garments (skirts, cloaks, trousers, caps) and have their wives sell them at market. Those, however, are in the minority.

A cloak is called fougou in Mossi, a skirt fougoupoko from poko, "woman" and fougou, "cloak." Trousers are called koulouga.

/534/ Let us add that garment manufacture has remained a family industry in much of Mossi territory. Many Mossi can sew, and they make their own clothes by sewing up cotton strips. Let [462] us note here that as in nearly all of West Africa, it is the men who sew rather than the women. In this area of Africa, indeed, sewing is essentially a male occupation rather than a female one.

Now to present a Ouagadougou tailor, Mohammadi Bagaré.

He tills the soil and does nothing else during the winter season. He exercises his tailor's trade during the dry season.

He does custom work. Those who want a garment bring him cotton strips in sufficient numbers, and he makes the requested gar- [435] ment. He asks 1,000 cowries to make a large cloak, 500 for a small one, 200 for a skirt. To make a cap he asks only for one kola nut, which is worth 50 cowries at Ouagadougou. He takes 200 cowries for a pair of trousers.

It takes him five days' work to make a large cloak, two days for a small one, one day for a skirt, two days for a pair of trousers, one hour for a cap.

[412 431] His only working tool is the needle. Mohammadi uses European needles.

161 How many inhabitants did this Mossi empire number, with its careful centralization, its hierarchy of chiefs, and its class of nobles, at the time of the French occupation (1896)?

In 1909 the census yielded 861,700 souls in the circle of Ouagadougou itself and 273,000 in the Tenkodogo residency, or a total of 1,135,000 inhabitants. From this figure, however, we must deduct the independent Boussansé (99,000 in the Tenkodogo residency) and also the people of the Kipirsi (Ouagadougou circle; in theory they are ruled by the Mossi, in fact they are independent; they may be estimated at 40,000). This leaves, for the five subject provinces and the four vassal provinces, about 996,000 inhabitants. It may thus be said that the Moro Naba of Ouagadougou ruled over a population of about a million men.

161 Out of this million men, there were roughly /583/ 850,000 Mossi, 40,000 Boussansé, 69,000 Yarsé, 32,000 Foulbé, 5,000 Silmi-Mossi, 1,000 Songhay (in the northern part of the Ouagadougou circle), and 1,000 Haoussa scattered here and there in the same fashion as the Yarsé and Foulbé.

161 We already know that this Ouagadougou empire did not make up the whole Mossi population. There stood alongside it two other kingdoms which must formerly have been subject to Ouagadougou but which had gained their independence long before our occupation. One of them, Yatenga, with Ouahigouya as its capital, was located to the northwest of the Ouagadougou empire. The other one, Gourma, with Fada N'Gourma as its capital, was located to the east. Those two kingdoms may have added up between them to a population of 450,000 in which the Mossi element predominated, with Habé and Samo elements in the Ouahigouya circle, and Gourmanké elements in the circle of Fada N'Gourma.

In short, about a million and a half inhabitants were divided among the Mossi kingdoms in the bend of the Niger, with one million in the most important of those kingdoms, that of Ouagadougou.

161 The population of the Mossi was, and still is, extraordinarily dense as compared with the over-all population density of West Africa. Among the Mossi, indeed, there are about 25 inhabitants per square kilometer, while in French Guinea, for example, there is an average of 6 inhabitants per square kilometer. This stems

596 /234/ The kind of family found in the cantons of Ratenga and
592 Tougo is quite similar in type to the family among the Mossi of
182 Ouagadougou, or in its common types (3) which are characterized by

3. See my Noir du Soudan, pp. 544-553.

the fact that the zaka is identified with the single household, and only the total family and the single household remain.

This leads us to note that the average Mossi family of Yatenga, as we have described it above, is more compact, more communal, more integrated than the Mossi family of Ouagadougou.

182 This results, I believe, from the fact that the primitive element
563 of the population, the Foulsé (the basic element, let us not forget,
592 at Ouagadougou as well as in Yatenga), who are more communal than
596 the Mossi, are still much more numerous in Yatenga than in the Ouagadougou region. While in the latter area the Foulsé blended almost completely with the mass of invaders, in Yatenga they resisted more successfully, did not blend with them, and continued to make up the greater part of the population. In view of these circumstances, they probably exercised considerable influence on the morphology of the Mossi family, just as they gave it their prejudices against the ownership of cattle, etc.

This high proportion of the primitive communal element no doubt caused the structural differences between the Mossi family of the Ouagadougou region and that of Yatenga.

000 Women and the household. —We shall deal now with women and the household. We shall subdivide this section into a number of headings as follows.

1. Promise of marriage.
2. Persons whose consent is required to validate the promise of marriage.
3. Gifts.
4. Celebration and consummation of marriage.
5. Impediments to marriage.
6. Question of virginity.
7. Rights and duties of the husband and wife.
8. Polygamy.
9. Organization of the polygamous household.
10. Women's tasks.
11. The conjugal duty.

10:Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1964 FA28 Mossi FA28
Yatenga

ship itself and the contract of interlineage co-operation and solidarity which every marriage serves to establish or reinforce.[4]

Although this joking interchange is seen in its full implications when there is an immediate source of dissension between marriage partners, it may also occur in the absence of any specific difficulty. Then it is apparently indulged in simply because it is expected, and for the pleasure which the Mossi, like all people, derive from an occasion to exercise their wit. It is this relatively disinterested joking which has been most frequently described in the literature, and this may account for the failure of many scholars to perceive more fully the important social and psychological functions which joking may fulfill.

Conclusion

This paper has been written as a tentative step toward a reformulation of the various and disparate observations on joking contained in the anthropological literature. I have contended that an analysis of this literature indicates that wherever joking is institutionalized the structural relationship between the participants tends to be characterized by five significantly interrelated structural attributes: separation, reciprocity, ambivalence, equality, and independence. I have also indicated that such joking may serve as an adjustive mechanism by providing for the concurrent maintenance of communication, control, and the culturally harmless catharsis of potentially disruptive emotions.

A variety of forms of institutionalized joking found among the Mossi of Yatenga have been cited to illustrate these points. However, I suggest that the factors which cluster with this reliance on joking as an adjustive mechanism are not unique to the Mossi. Institutionalized joking reported for other parts of Africa appears to be structurally and processually similar.

NOTES

1. A shorter version of this paper was read at the annual meeting of the American Anthropological Association held in San Francisco in November, 1963. It is based on field research conducted among the Mossi from 1954 to 1956 with the assistance of a Ford Foundation Fellowship.

2. Marriage between the members of descent groups united by a joking alliance is regarded by the Mossi as highly desirable, apparently in recognition of the useful role of joking as an adjustive mechanism. Once such a marriage is contracted, however, Ego and his wife must take care that their joking insults are directed only at the younger kinsmen of the other and that the insulting remarks are personal. It would, for example, be acceptable for Ego to call his wife's younger sister a disreputable shrew but dangerous to call her a slave (a term of disrespect used frequently in joking between silsa). To refer to her as a slave would cast unflattering aspersions on her entire kin group, including her mother and father, with whom, in their new status as parents-in-law, Ego may no longer joke.

3. I believe that joking is also institutionalized between the Mossi and the Yarse, a highly acculturated ethnic minority of Mande origin who live throughout Yatenga. There is also joking between the Mossi and the indigenous blacksmith caste. Unfortunately my data on these two instances of joking are inadequate.

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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all the people he found there and seizing all the goods he could find, he burned the city and returned to his own country. The peoples of Mali returned afterwards to Timbuktu and remained there for the next hundred years.[20] 175

The Yatenga Mossi subsequently warred upon and defended themselves against the Songhai, who had tried to force Islam upon them. The Mossi were among the strongest peoples in the Niger bend area when the Moroccans arrived in 1591, and there were no wars between these two groups. [648]

There has been a great deal of discussion among scholars of Sudanese history about the relationship between the Mossi expeditions into the Niger area and the power of early Mossi kingdoms. Marc believes that the Mossi reached their zenith late in the fifteenth century, when they attacked Walata and Timbuktu for the second time. He writes, "It was undoubtedly during this period that they extended their influence over all the territories where their language is spoken at the present day."[21] 174 175

On the other hand, Tauxier believes that the Mossi reached their apogee much earlier, toward the end of the fourteenth century. He notes that this was the period when the Mossi were "propelled by a powerful drive of expanding conquest," which carried them to Timbuktu and its neighboring regions.[22] With the recapture of Timbuktu by Mansa Souliman, however, they turned back and firmly established themselves in Gourma and Yange to the east of Ouagadougou, and among non-Mossi populations in Ouahigouya and Ouagadougou. Tauxier believes that this southern drive made the Mossi sufficiently powerful to reinvade the Niger area and thus control a territory extending from Gambaga in the south up to Timbuktu and Djenne in the north. This second period of success came to a close when the Mossi were defeated by Askia the Great of Songhai in 1497, and by Askia Daoud in 1549 and 1561. After these defeats, they not only abandoned their territories north of Ouahigouya but withdrew into their present boundaries. Tauxier concludes that from this time onward, the bonds between the different Mossi kingdoms grew weaker and the power of Ouagadougou waned.

At the same time, the Mossi kingdoms, principalities, and districts developed their internal structure and continued to absorb the Ninisi population. They also welcomed the Moslem Yarse merchants and refugees who settled in their country and adopted most aspects of their culture.[23] These Yarse refugees were joined by Mandingo-Dioula and Soninke Moslem refugees, who entered Mossi country as the result of wars or rebellions in such places as Djenne, Segou, and Timbuktu. The sheltering of these refugees by the Mossi eventually led to a series of wars between them and 175 648 563

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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648 the Bambara in the mid-eighteenth century.[24] In the course of these wars
563 and up into modern times, many Fulani (Peulh or Fulbe) entered Mossi territory. The circumstances surrounding their first coming are not fully known, but many of them claim to have come originally from Fouta-Djalon and Fouta-Toro. They gained the good will of most of the Mossi rulers and spread throughout the territory.[25] Many of them married Mossi women, giving rise to a new group known as Simili-Mossi, who continued to raise cattle but also practiced agriculture and adopted many of the cultural traits of their hosts.[26]

175 There are some reports that Europeans had heard about the Mossi ex-
648 ploits at least from the time of King John II of Portugal, who reigned from 1481 to 1495. Marc states that the Portuguese ambassadors to Mali and Timbuktu convinced their King that the Mossi were Christians, and that he attempted to enter into relations with them. According to Barth, these attempts were made as late as 1533.[27] Unfortunately, we have no way of knowing whether the Mossi even knew about the existence of the Portuguese. After this period, there is no evidence of European interest in the Mossi until the end of the nineteenth century. As we shall see in a later chapter, the Mossi received more than their share of attention when the scramble for Africa began.

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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567 643 651 [464] [439] Naba Baongo (ca. 1800–30) decided that it was more profitable to sell them.[16] Subsequent rulers, especially the two Mogho Nanamse who ruled just prior to the French conquest, sold most of their captives to passing caravans or in special sections of the larger markets. When other persons sold slaves in the market, the Raga Naba collected some 1,000 cowries on each transaction—the largest tax on any market commodity.

567 839 [752] [439] [175] The Mossi rulers seem to have benefited even more from the sale of eunuchs, for they had a monopoly over them. The Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou sent some captured slaves and all recidivous thieves to Teemetenga village in Koubri district, some 13 miles south of the capital, to be operated upon.[17] So successful were the Mossi surgeons that—in contrast to specialists in other areas, who lost nine lives for every successful castration—the mortality among the Mossi was only one out of ten.[18] Some of the eunuchs furnished by the Mossi were sold as far away as Constantinople, a fact which surprised the French ambassador to Turkey who saw them there in 1900.[19]

566 643 563 621 In addition to slaves and eunuchs, the Mogho Naba kept a large number of bondsmen to provide services for him. One group, the Dapore, lived in a ward of the capital called Dapoya, and had a chief, the Dapore Naba, who was himself a Dapore. The origin of these people is obscure, but they seem to have been the children of foreign captives who were brought to Ouagadougou and placed in the ruler's service. Some of them even claimed that their ancestors had come to Ouagadougou voluntarily and had placed themselves under the care and protection of the ruler. This seems unlikely, however, since the status of these people resembles that of persons captured by Sudanese rulers and installed in special wards as serfs.[20] Some of the Dapore lived in villages of their own and cultivated fields for the Mogho Naba. Others lived in a ward of Ouagadougou, served in the palace household, and provided the royal executioners. Some were selected to serve as palace eunuchs, and placed under the charge of the Kamsaogho Naba. The Dapore were hardly ever sold unless they were convicted criminals. The Mogho Naba and his chiefs refrained from selling serfs or captives who had been born in Mossi country. However, they often claimed the sons and daughters of these people as pages or pughsiudse.

[839] [567] The Baglere made up the second group of bondsmen providing services for the Mogho Naba. They, too, lived in a special ward and were headed by the Baglere Naba, one of their own people. Their origin is also obscure: some of them claimed to be descended from Fulani slaves who had run away from their masters and sought asylum in Mossi country; others believed that they were the descendants of foreign captives. The Baglere

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worked for the Mogho Naba in and around the palace courtyard, and in the fields. They also kept his herds and provided him with animals from their own herds. Like the Dapore, they were seldom sold, but they often had to give their sons and daughters to the Mogho Naba.

The last group of persons who contributed their services to the Mogho Naba were the Kámboinse. Their origin is also unclear. Most of my respondents claimed that the Kamboinse and their chief first came to Ouagadougou from the direction of the Gold Coast, that they bore guns, and that they offered their services as guards to the Mogho Naba.[21] Later on, the sovereign allegedly assigned slaves to the Kamboinse unit, with the result that the entire group eventually took on a serf-like character. The Kamboinse guarded the Mogho Naba's palace and seized for him the goods of persons whom he condemned to death.

The services performed for the Mogho Naba by his pages and other youthful retainers also contributed significantly to the support of his administration. We have already seen how these young men and boys took care of his every need and functioned as important messengers within the royal household. The Mogho Naba also had control over the daughters of his serfs, whom he used to obtain revenue from aliens and subjects alike. Periodically, the Mogho Naba gave one of these girls as pughsiudga to a man, thus obligating him to render goods and services to the court. Moreover, the man had to return the eldest daughter he had by this wife to the Mogho Naba as a future pughsiudga. In this way, the sovereign had a revolving store of women through whom he could bind men to himself in a nexus of obligations, and from whom he eventually received additional women.[22]

The provincial ministers of the Ouagadougou kingdom occupied such a strategic position within the central administration that anyone rendering gifts or tribute to the Mogho Naba always gave presents to them as well. Their main source of revenue, however, came from the villages under their direct control, and from the retainers who lived in their compounds and in their wards in the capital. The economic relations between the ministers and their villages were similar to those between the district chiefs and their villages, and will be discussed below. The retainers, serfs, and slaves who served these ministers provided them with many of the services their counterparts rendered to the Mogho Naba. They kept their houses in repair and provided them with firewood and with fodder for their horses. Many of them also cultivated fields for their masters. Whenever the ministers needed extra goods or services, they called on those persons who lived in their compounds or in their wards. For example, hun-

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000 19. There is a curious story among the people of Nobere district that Mogho Naba Mottoba (who reigned in the seventeenth century) was not a Mossi but a Fulani who was given the nam after he chanced upon the installation ceremony and assassinated the newly elected man during the night. This story is denied in Ouagadougou; in fact, it contradicts the genealogical records of the ruling dynasty. However, the genealogy does show that Mottoba's father, Mogho Naba Guiliga, had succeeded his brother, and it is possible that there was dynastic rivalry for the nam between Mottoba and the former Mogho Naba's son. [174]

20. This rite was performed during the installation of the present Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou, although it is hardly recognizable as described in *Newsweek* (December 9, 1957, p. 48): "A man named Moussa Congo assumed the name of Kougri Naba last week and became the 35th Mogho Naba of the Mossi in the capital city of Ouagadougou in the Upper Volta region of French West Africa. Son of Emperor Issoufou Congo, Kougri Naba, as the new Mogho Naba, has one white horse, 200 wives, and 8,000 warriors, who danced around his palace ten times."

21. This practice has apparently lapsed since Mogho Naba Kougri moved into the modern concrete palace built for his father, Mogho Naba Sagha II. [182]

22. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Soudan*, pp. 569–70. Tauxier claims the Mogho Nanamse used the pages for homosexual purposes on Fridays in order to circumvent the Moslem prohibition against intercourse with women on this holy day. Homosexuality is rare among the Mossi, as Tauxier himself admits, and most Mossi deny that the Mogho Nanamse ever resorted to it. However, one respondent did state that he had heard about homosexuality among certain past rulers. [838]

23. Crozat, p. 4849.

24. When Mogho Naba Kom II died under mysterious circumstances in 1942, it was rumored that he had committed suicide rather than reduce the number of his wives as ordered by the administration under the influence of the Catholic missionaries. Kom allegedly held that no one can inherit a sovereign's wife during his lifetime. Therefore, in order to avoid loss of status by seeing his wives go to commoners, he chose death so they would be inherited by nobles. [648] [762] [797]

25. The statement in *Newsweek* (December 9, 1957, p. 48) that Kougri has two hundred wives is untrue. [114]

26. Intermarriage between the Mossi and the Fulani has produced a people known as the Simili-Mossi. Nevertheless, the Mossi are strongly prejudiced against the Fulani, especially against the women, stating that the Moaga who has sexual intercourse with a Fulani woman must bathe in nine different rivers before he becomes clean. The basis of this prejudice appears to be that Fulani women are not cultivators and therefore are unacceptable as Mossi wives. [563]

27. Mossi women know a great deal about the history and traditions of their people. But they never indicate that they do except during such rituals, when they are required to play certain roles.

28. Dim Delobson, p. 96.

29. Dim Delobson (p. 101) states that there are "sacred things" in this village, but I have been unable to substantiate his report.

30. Dim Delobson (p. 104) gives the classic explanation of this nighttime ride. On his ride from Bere to Djiba, the mounted prince must try to touch a certain branch of a certain tree. If he is destined to succeed his father, he will succeed in touching the branch; if he is not, the branch will magically withdraw at his approach. [824]

I visited the area in which this ritual reportedly took place, but the people in the vicinity denied that such a tree existed.

31. *Ibid.*, p. 106.

32. IFAN (Compte Rendu No. 429). There are many other rumors concerning Kom's death. In a book praising the loyalty of the Africans to the Free French Gov- [648]

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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[p.237]

CHAPTER 9

Trade and Markets Among the Mossi People

BY ELLIOTT P. SKINNER

The Mossi represent the dominant population of the Voltaic Republic, numbering about 1,600,000 out of some 3,200,000 inhabitants. They represent the unique example of a group which has preserved its ethnic identity and political autonomy through all the vicissitudes of Sudanic history until it was conquered by the French in 1896. Tradition records that the people who became the Mossi left the Dagomba region in present-day Ghana during the eleventh century and moved into the bend of the Niger River, carving out three large kingdoms and smaller principalities in the process. At the head of these still extant kingdoms are rulers *(Moro Nabas)* who formerly held feudal-like control over the provinces, districts and villages which comprise their domains. The villages, with their patri-local, polygynous, extended family households, formed the basic Mossi settlement pattern. A complex hierarchical administrative apparatus carried the power of the Mossi rulers into the smallest villages, and funneled taxes and tribute back to them. This structure still exists, but of course it has been modified by the French.

The Mossi were and are still divided into stratified royal, noble and commoner patrilineages. Characteristic of this lineage system is a process by which royal sub-lineages descend serially until they merge with the mass of commoner lineages. Below the lineages there once were large non-Mossi groups of serfs and slaves, but these people have now been grouped into lineages and have become Mossicized.

The topography of Mossi country is typical of the Sudanic grasslands. It is an immense plain, some 1,500 feet above sea level and broken only by three low mountain ranges and numerous small hills. The annual total rainfall is between 30 and 40 inches, and falls almost entirely as heavy showers or thundershowers during the period from June to September. So narrow is the margin of rainfall for successful crop cultivation that any variation in the cycle results in low crop yields and a difficult "hungry period" the following year before the new crops are harvested. The Mossi do not practice irrigation, and would have trouble doing so because the three Volta Rivers which drain their territory serve as drainage chiefly during the rainy season. Only the Black Volta has water all year round; the

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443 sages to specific villages, to find the help needed in the event of a
571 fight, and finally to find an escape route by which one can leave in the event of trouble.

443 The vendors in the larger markets of Mossi country include Yoru-
463 ba, Hausa and other ethnic groups, many of whose members were
563 born in Mossi country and have never visited the land of their fathers. The lives of these people are usually centered around the markets; where the markets are held every day, many of the men, women and children of these foreign groups spend almost all of their lives at the
[439] markets. In marked contrast to the Mossi, they usually sell products of foreign provenience, whether African or European, and seldom deal in the local products. These vendors are tolerated by the Mossi and are valued for their commerce, but are always regarded as outsiders. And as outsiders the markets do not belong to them, but only
443 to the Mossi. Even so, the Mossi do not really like the larger markets.
829 True, one can buy all kinds of wonderful goods on the large markets, but to the Mossi, a market is more than a place where one goes to buy and sell, even though everyone who goes there tries to do some of both.

443 There is a marked division of labor among the vendors in a Mossi
462 market—a division which can be seen at its best on the local markets.
438 Here only the women sell cooked food, beer, millet, rice, peanuts,
439 shea-butter, tobacco, and all of the other locally grown vegetables and vegetable products, except cotton which may also be sold by a man. In contrast, women do not sell such local products as cotton-cloth, hemp, jewelry, iron implements and leather goods, which are the province of the men. Only men may butcher and sell animals and meat in the market. And they alone control the commerce in foreign food articles such as salt and dried fish. Both men and women sell the valuable imported kola nut, but only men sell goods of European manufacture such as cigarettes, matches, sugar, mirrors and so on.
[857] Small girls sell calabashes of water to everyone, and small boys wander through the market selling single cigarettes, bundles of a few matches, single lumps of sugar, chickens and guinea fowls, and skewers of roasted meat.

443 There is little competition about someone else having "stolen"
437 a customer. The reason for this is mainly that every person in the market is a potential customer of everyone else. Normally, a buyer
432 simply moves from seller to seller sampling the goods if that is possible (some unscrupulous men can even get drunk in the process of "sampling" beer) and trying to get the best bargain. No seller would think of running after a customer, and customers seldom, if ever, move away from a vendor in the hope that he would be called back
to be sold the article at a lower price.

241 At noon (wend'to souka, "the middle of the day") the family
572 rests in the shade of a tree. There are always some fruit trees in every field. Work is resumed at about two in the afternoon. At five the women return home to prepare food, and the men stop work at nightfall.

241 The sisoaga. When the family fields are too extensive to be
476 cultivated without help, all the able-bodied young men in the village are called to help with the weeding.

At such a time the head of the family gives several baskets of sprouted millet to his wives to make large quantities of dam, millet beer. He also orders them to prepare sagbo (millet cakes).

On the day set for the work, the young men go to the fields, where their enthusiasm is aroused by singing and the beating of drums. For their work they receive sagbo and dam. This is what is known as the sisoaga.

It is a kind of mutual aid, and without this indispensable system of solidarity, many fields would remain uncultivated.

It should be noted, finally, that when a person falls [246]
[573] ill during the winter, his friends arrange to cultivate his fields, sometimes without any pay and simply out of a sense of solidarity.

241 Farm implements. As is the case everywhere in French West Africa, the natives have only the most primitive implements. Among the Mossi these include: the wanka or kounri, a hoe or Bambara daba to cultivate the soil; the sitoaga (small pickaxe) for sowing; and the laré (ax) to clear the site of brush and shrubs.

463 Other types of work. Aside from work in the fields, everyone goes about his own affairs. Some make baskets, hampers, and fans, while others weave cotton strips. It is perhaps of some
● [564 interest to note that there is no caste distinction among the Mossi,
326] except for the blacksmiths; each person may practice the trade that suits him. This is why shoemakers mostly come from among the nakomsé (descendants of naba).

Food Crops

241 The principal foods grown by the Mossi are as follows.
Kazouf (small white or gray millet).

582 Marriage is exogamous, that is, relatives do not marry if their
564 kinship is known. There are no sharply defined caste lines. The Mossi marry Yarsé Malinké, Bousanse, and Gourounsi, but cannot marry Peul nor Haoussa. A Mossi who does not belong to a caste may choose his wife among Mossi who do belong to one. The latter do not intermarry freely; iron workers cannot marry from among the drummers.

584 But to go back to our story. The girl has grown. The suitor has already made numerous gifts. In short, the time has come to proceed with the wedding. The girl's father /31/ summons the betrothed and tells him: "Come and see me on such-and-such a day with a chicken." The suitor joyfully returns to his village and tells the elders that he was told to bring a chicken. On the day set, the suitor takes the bird to the girl's family, accompanied by his friends. He hands over the chicken, and everyone goes to the home of the head of the family, or, in his absence, to a village elder. The father states before all present that he wishes to give his daughter to So-and-So. Congratulations are exchanged, and everyone goes home. Now the festivities must be arranged, the relatives and friends must be notified, and the millet beer must be brewed. Meanwhile, the relatives and friends who have heard the good news come to greet the bridegroom and bring him fifty or a hundred cowries to help him meet the expenses of the festivities.

When everything is ready, the bridegroom takes 500 cowries and a rooster to the girl's father and 500 cowries to the elder in whose household the bride shall live until her wedding day. The girl's relatives have prepared dinner, while the bridegroom provides the
[302] drink. A relative of the groom shaves the bride's forehead in a circle, and she retires to the inner courtyard where her father's wives wash her thoroughly and tie a cotton cord around her waist. She dons a white garment and goes to offer a gourd of beer to her betrothed who has remained outside with his friends. Everyone thanks the girl's parents and then they all leave. On the day after next, the groom sends his friends to greet the family of his betrothed with a basket of
[431] millet flour, four kalro pellets, and salt, which are all distributed among the village people. These festivities, with their attendant ceremonies, come closest to a formal betrothal.

585 The girl, however, remains with the head of the family or with the elder who takes his place! When all these preliminary ceremonies are over, the groom sends daily for his bride. Once the trousseau has

586 It nevertheless happens, though very rarely, that the husband is unable to convince his wife and returns home alone. No one troubles the wife from then on, and her relatives give her full freedom. The grudge of the rejected husband may be persistent, however, and his vengeance frightful. The bride price is not returned; the husband should have known how to keep his wife. It is nevertheless acknowledged that the children born of the union, boys or girls, belong to the father, and he does not fail to claim them when they are grown, or if they run away to their mother.

564 467 Negro populations often contain caste groups, set apart from each other by tight barriers. The most outstanding of these are the rules prohibiting marriage between members of the same caste or between those who belong to a caste and those who do not. Such prohibitions do not exist among the Mossi, except in the sense mentioned earlier. Although three caste-like groups exist among them, drummers, smiths, and undertakers, they are castes only in the sense that those who do not belong to such a family cannot exercise the profession. It might be more accurate to call them guilds.

533 [534] The drummers (binda) are those who play the bindré, a sort of large gourd with an aperture about 40 centimeters in diameter and covered with hide. Only those who belong to the drummers' family may play on this drum, which apparently is peculiar to the Mossi, but anyone may play on the other drums. [782] The drummers are present at all sacrifices offered by the naba; on Friday, the day of sacrifice, they go and pay their respects to him. When sacrifices are offered, they are entitled to the head of the victim. They are present at all [764] burials, where they play their drum and receive a remuneration which varies with the wealth of the deceased. If it is one of their members who died, they receive neither cowries nor food. They go to war with their drums. [727] If they are so unfortunate as to be made prisoners, they are never sold but ruthlessly killed; this is done either to prevent them from going back into the fray and stirring the warriors to sack the village, or because no one would want to buy them since they belong to a naba who would retaliate against their captors, or for both reasons at once. The drummers are the country's griot, a term hallowed by custom. They know the genealogy of every naba and sing his praises. Each province chief has a number of drummers and never travels without taking some of them with him. At other times they go to /34/ the market and follow the best-dressed people, singing

323 a hollow. Straw, twigs, or pieces of bark are laid between the jars and even inside them. Then everything is covered with straw and set afire in the evening. The smaller the jar, the more heat is needed. The women fetch their goods the following morning. Some of the jars are cracked; others, insufficiently fired, would be too porous and must be fired again; the rest are gathered and sold at the market.

322 Woodworking is done by men. They use a hatchet to cut down the trees, an adze and a knife to work the lumber. The mortars and pestles used by the women to crush maize, herbs, peanuts, and sauce ingredients are made of wood, and so are the dishes shaped like gourds, the bowls for sarabo, and the tool handles. There are also stools of a rather peculiar shape. Those women who can afford them close their huts with crude wooden doors. All these industries, however, are quite primitive and of no great interest.

326 [564] [306] The iron and copper work is so distinctive that those who practice it could only be specialists. The smiths, in fact, form a separate caste. One is born a smith, but one becomes a jeweller, since this profession is open to everyone. The smiths extract the metal and make iron tools: hoes, hatchets, adzes, and knives. It is said that no layman is allowed to watch when they extract the iron from the ore, and this would explain why the natives do not know how it is done. As I was unable to visit Yatenga, the area where most iron workers are to be found, I am not familiar with the extracting process.

326 306 [301] /59/ The jewellers occasionally work with iron, but they do so on the sly. They may repair broken tools, sharpen hatchets and arrow tips, and re-use a piece of iron, for instance, make an old hoe into nails, hinges, etc. Their main task, however, is the manufacture of all sorts of bracelets and of all the copper ornaments in a horse's harness: headstall, bit, spurs, stirrups, and the copper plates which hang from the saddle. These plates are a strange ornament which seems peculiar to the Mossi. They may reach 40 centimeters in diameter, and their edge may be as wide as 10 centimeters. The naba and the wealthy horsemen fasten them behind the stirrups, on either [415] side of the saddle, where they hang down the horse's flanks. Servants sometimes use them to drink beer when they have no other containers. To smelt the iron or copper, the Mossi use charcoal which they obtain exactly in the same manner as our /French/ colliers. The fire is kept going with a double bellows made of the skin of goats or sheep and operated by a child. The red-hot iron is hammered with a cylindrical

326 In short, the blacksmith's profession is of greater consequence to him than anything else, although he avails himself of several other occupations.

[564] Mossi blacksmiths do not form a caste. That is to say, anyone can marry among them.

306 Let us proceed to the jewelers or copper workers (niaka in Mossi).
439 The Mossi have been familiar with copper for a long time, although West Africa does not produce it. The Yarsé have sought it at Ouanké, Kintampo, and even Kumasi from times immemorial. It comes from the coastal area, where it is brought by the Whites in the form of brass rods 30 or 40 centimeters long (like curtain rods). Nowadays, it is the British who supply the Gold Coast with copper, no doubt in the wake of the Portuguese and Dutch.

306 The niaka earns more money than the blacksmith. He buys the copper rods from the Dioula and makes them into various items /517/
301 such as women's copper leggings adorned with crocodiles, and thick copper bracelets worn at the wrists and ankles by women and soroné (pages). Depending on their thickness, these bracelets sell for 2,500
[435] to 20,000 cowries. He also makes women's copper hairpins, and low-price rings worth from 100 to 200 cowries.

306 Prior to the arrival of the French, these jewelers also made copper objects depicting everyday scenes, landscapes, huts. The
532 chiefs bought them, but now these objects, at least the more ancient ones, have become very difficult to obtain. It seems that the German physician Frobenius, when he passed through Mossi territory at the end of 1908, acquired some very beautiful specimens of ancient Mossi manufacture for an exorbitant price. Nowadays, one
[439] can imagine what the old industry was like by looking at the small items made at Ouagadougou by a few Europeanized Mossi who sell them on the spot for the benefit of local Whites. It might almost be said, therefore, that they manufacture them for export purposes. These items, made by the lost-wax process, are rather interesting and quite artistic for Blacks.

325 The tools of the niaka are about the same as those of the black-
306 smith:
4B

1. The small portable anvil or kissiguiré.
2. The hammer or kouadara.
3. Shears (niougou) to pick copper pieces from the fire.

285 2. Similar but smaller hats, worth from 1,000 to 1,500
294 cowries.
435

/529/ 3. Round straw hats with wide brims, mentioned above. These are worth 1,700 cowries.

285 All the leather parts on those hats are added by the shoemaker.

294 We have already mentioned that our hat makers are not ex-
241 clusively manufacturers, that they also till the soil. It must be added that the latter activity nets them more than their trade. The man I mentioned cultivates a field of small millet and one of large red millet in the bush. He also grows maize, peanuts, and underground peas around his soukala. He owns neither large nor small livestock, but only chickens.

285 In his soukala he has two wives, four children, two married
294 brothers who have one wife apiece but no children, and two un-
592 married brothers, as well as a father. They all make hats.

He lives at Saponé, where there are many hat manufacturers.

282 After straw work, let us mention leatherwork.

294 Mossi shoemakers do not form a caste. Anyone who wants to
[564] may marry among them, and anyone who wishes to do so may exercise their trade.

As an example, here is Kinoga Kologo, a Mossi, and the head
[592] of a soukala. He lives with two wives, two children, and an unmarried brother. His soukala consists of three huts.

His tools are as follows:

282 1. The pongo, a kind of broad little knife with a flaring blade
294 hafted to a very short handle. It is used to cut hide.
413

2. The gansiouba, a wooden knife used to scrape and rub hides, clean them and smooth them.

3. The désara, a small tool with a wooden handle and a curved iron stem. It is used red hot to trace designs on hides.

4. The pime, a small awl used to sew hides.

5. The large tirisiga. This is an iron seal used to imprint hides with small circles.

6. The small tirisiga. This is a smaller seal, /530/ an iron rod whose tip makes a very tiny seal.

282 As among nearly all Blacks, the Mossi shoemaker is his own
294 tanner. He buys sheepskins and goatskins at market (small ones
435

582 I. Differences of tribe or caste. The Mossi may not contract
326 marriage with blacksmiths. This is absolutely forbidden. However,
564 they may marry among the Foulsé, Samo, Peul, Yarsé, etc."

This calls for several remarks. The blacksmiths of Yatenga are Foulsé and not Mossi. However, it is not a tribal difference which dictates the prohibition under discussion, since the Mossi can marry among the Foulsé as a whole. It is rather a difference in caste. It must be noted, as we said above /not translated/, that the common Foulsé cannot marry blacksmiths either.

[171] Here, as in all of the /French/ Sudan, blacksmiths are both feared and scorned. Basically, they are regarded as fearful sorcerers.

582 II. Kinship. There must be a lapse of 200 years between the time of the betrothed couple and the time when their common ancestor lived. This is likewise an absolute impediment.

III. If a Mossi has relations with a young girl or woman belonging to his fiancée's soukala during the period of his engagement, the marriage cannot take place.

This impediment, however, is not absolute. If the guilty man begs for the forgiveness of the family head and the latter accords it, the union may be effected later."

582 IV. Unnatural practices. The marriage cannot take place: (1) if
839 the betrothed man has been caught in the act of sexual intercourse with a she-ass (a phenomenon none too rare in Yatenga); and (2) if the betrothed girl has relations with a native who had sexual intercourse with a she-ass. These impediments are absolute.

This is why the inhabitants of a Yatenga village (Dénia) who are reputed to have had relations with asses in former times may not marry outside their locality.

582 V. Infirmities. If the fiancé is blind, the marriage may not take
[132] place unless the girl consents to it. No one can constrain her to do so.

VI. Leprosy. The same applies when the fiancé has leprosy.

VII. Impuberty of the betrothed pair. The marriage cannot take place unless both parties are nubile. This is an absolute impediment, but in practice the problem rarely arises.

VIII. Insanity of one of the betrothed."

582 Question of virginity. The girl's virginity is not very important
836 here and, it must be pointed out, far less so than among the Bambara. This is, incidentally, connected with the fact that the marriage bond is less sound and the separation of the spouses easier to obtain. A combination of related facts makes the institution of marriage and

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ship itself and the contract of interlineage co-operation and solidarity which every marriage serves to establish or reinforce.[4]

Although this joking interchange is seen in its full implications when there is an immediate source of dissension between marriage partners, it may also occur in the absence of any specific difficulty. Then it is apparently indulged in simply because it is expected, and for the pleasure which the Mossi, like all people, derive from an occasion to exercise their wit. It is this relatively disinterested joking which has been most frequently described in the literature, and this may account for the failure of many scholars to perceive more fully the important social and psychological functions which joking may fulfill.

Conclusion

This paper has been written as a tentative step toward a reformulation of the various and disparate observations on joking contained in the anthropological literature. I have contended that an analysis of this literature indicates that wherever joking is institutionalized the structural relationship between the participants tends to be characterized by five significantly interrelated structural attributes: separation, reciprocity, ambivalence, equality, and independence. I have also indicated that such joking may serve as an adjustive mechanism by providing for the concurrent maintenance of communication, control, and the culturally harmless catharsis of potentially disruptive emotions.

A variety of forms of institutionalized joking found among the Mossi of Yatenga have been cited to illustrate these points. However, I suggest that the factors which cluster with this reliance on joking as an adjustive mechanism are not unique to the Mossi. Institutionalized joking reported for other parts of Africa appears to be structurally and processually similar.

NOTES

1. A shorter version of this paper was read at the annual meeting of the American Anthropological Association held in San Francisco in November, 1963. It is based on field research conducted among the Mossi from 1954 to 1956 with the assistance of a Ford Foundation Fellowship.

2. Marriage between the members of descent groups united by a joking alliance is regarded by the Mossi as highly desirable, apparently in recognition of the useful role of joking as an adjustive mechanism. Once such a marriage is contracted, however, Ego and his wife must take care that their joking insults are directed only at the younger kinsmen of the other and that the insulting remarks are personal. It would, for example, be acceptable for Ego to call his wife's younger sister a disreputable shrew but dangerous to call her a slave (a term of disrespect used frequently in joking between sibs). To refer to her as a slave would cast unflattering aspersions on her entire kin group, including her mother and father, with whom, in their new status as parents-in-law, Ego may no longer joke.

3. I believe that joking is also institutionalized between the Mossi and the Yarse, a highly acculturated ethnic minority of Mande origin who live throughout Yatenga. There is also joking between the Mossi and the indigenous blacksmith caste. Unfortunately my data on these two instances of joking are inadequate.

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443 554 77: 782 due to the bickering, quarreling and even fighting they have to prevent by cooling the tempers of the market people—that they become quite angry. When the spirits are not satisfied, they fail in their tasks and real trouble breaks out in the market, disrupting the trading; and if they are not pacified they may even cause the death of the market officials.[12]

In the days before the market officials were banned, these sacrifices were performed regularly. At that time the Raga Naba simply asked the Kos Naba to seize the appropriate animal in the market to perform [648] the rite. The problem today is that since the French have abolished the office of Raga Naba, and in some districts have prevented the chief from even naming one secretly, the markets in the latter local- [208] ities are considered "dangerous markets." Once a market acquires such a reputation, people do not like to visit it because they fear that they would get into fights or quarrels. Not only this, but it is believed that if a market has been without a Raga Naba for a long time, the *tengkouga* there become so angry for being neglected that they kill [123] the first chief appointed to it. This was the reality or belief behind a series of misadventures of which I was the victim.

123 443 554 656 I had spent an entire day in a market, and on returning home could not find my pen. The next morning I sent an assistant to the chief telling him about the loss and asking him to have an announcement made in the market on the next market day that I would pay a handsome reward to whomever should find and deliver the pen. The chief sent back a reply saying that since there was no Raga Naba, he would have the Kos Naba acquaint the people with my loss. On the day of the market, I waited until midday, when most of the people had arrived, and then went to see whether the Kos Naba had any news of the pen. I checked with several of my friends to see whether they had heard about the pen and discovered, to my chagrin, that no an- [656] nouncement had been made about it. I went and told the Kos Naba that the people were not hearing about the pen and suggested that one way to do so would be to have the Binderes (drummers and griots) circulate through the market announcing the loss. The Kos Naba refused to do this, and when I enlisted the aid of the chief's secretary, he, too, said that it could not be done because there was no Raga Naba. I had some notes on the institution of the Raga Naba, but as I did not know everything about it, I was, therefore, frankly puzzled

(12) Zahan (1954 : 371) states that "the place where all kinds of merchandise accumulate and where strangers come is a place charged with forces. In time, these forces build up to such a point within the precincts of the market that some purifications are necessary to liberate them. To omit making them would expose the participants to excitements leading to brawls and compromising the place of the transactions."

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What this really means is that the market is the main communication center of Mossi society and news of happenings in the region can be heard there. If a person is in an area one can be sure that the people in the market will know about him, or that he will sooner or later visit the market.

The young men who have returned from work in the cacao fields or towns of Ghana and the Ivory Coast add a great deal of color and excitement to the rural markets of contemporary Mossi country. During the time these young men spend away, they give a great deal of thought and planning to the show they hope to put on when they make the grand tour *(mane do)* of their district's market place. The best day for this is the day of the "great market" and regardles of what day many migrants return to their homes, they wait for that Friday before they show themselves publicly.

On the morning of that day, the typical migrant dresses in his best clothes, lends the remainder of his wardrobe to relatives, and together they go to pay homage to the chief during the morning ceremony *(Wend pous yan)*. The migrant offers the chief such presents as a small amount of money, an article of clothing or kola nuts, and replies to the chief's questions about the health and welfare of all Mossi in the area whence the migrant came, the whereabouts of "lost" migrants, the nature of the work the migrants were doing, and so on. As soon as the young man receives the chief's permission to leave, he goes to the market where he is quickly surrounded by *griots* who accompany him in periodic circumambulations of the market place, drumming and singing praises in honor of his ancestry. The migrant is also greeted warmly by his many friends to whom he then gives presents of money, beer and kola nuts. He acknowledges the general praise for having brought goods and clothing for his relatives and takes pride in seeing these relatives dressed in the cloths and clothing he has brought them. If young and unmarried, the migrant also seeks to take advantage of his new-found importance to make the first overtures to available young women or to renew his relationship with former paramours. Towards evening before going home, he rewards the *griots* with money and bear. Many a migrant attempts to prolong this feeling of grandeur by visiting other markets and by dressing up on subsequent grand market days, but after a few weeks he is re-incorporated into the ordinary market routine, and has to make room for the other newly-arrived migrants.

The market is also the place where important rites marking the changing social status of individuals are carried out. Under normal circumstances, the ceremonies attending the birth of a Mossi child are performed at home. When a woman has a number of stillbirths or

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443 their "evil" and "non-evil" ways. A little later the young men who
512 possess bicycles may be seen suddenly hurrying to avoid the other-
571 *nansara*, this time, the French official, who comes into the market to
[648] apprehend those individuals who have not bought a bicycle license.
[493] All the *nansara* know that the market is the best place to find a Mossi.

Towards 3:00 P.M. the matrons in the market, having sold most of their own goods and bought those which they need, make the last rounds to see whether there are any bargains to be had. In their rounds the women may be badgered by sons, daughters and other relatives, but seldom by husbands, for extra francs to buy kolas or tobacco to bridge them over the two non-market days. Or the women themselves may seek out their male relatives to buy kola or goods, from the stranger who is making the rounds of the local markets. By this time of day the market place is emptying—at first this happens so imperceptibly that one does not notice it. However, by 4:00 P.M. a mass exodus begins as women collect their little children, hitch their babies on their backs, place baskets on their head and set out in the direction of their own villages or to the villages of relatives where
[564] they plan to spend time. By this hour also the Bendere are drunk,
[273] and for an extra calabash of beer are willing to recount genealogies for which, if sober, they would demand a sheep or goat.

[231] Evening finds the market deserted except for scavenging dogs which hunt the scraps of food dropped by the now departed human
[485] beings. The market place finally falls silent, until late at night passing migrants retire there to sleep. These persons leave the market place at dawn to buy food from the women whose hawking cries herald another day of roadside commerce. The women use the profit from this trade to buy goods on the following market days.

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63/ certain amount of independence since they can communicate with the circle commanders with no intermediary other than the interpreter, an indispensable adjunct as long as the chiefs do not attend the [French] schools. On the other hand, the authority of the vassal chiefs still attached to the administrative district of Ouagadougou is, if not entirely lost, at least greatly diminished.

Indeed, their action is thwarted by that of the ministers, the province chiefs, from whom [52] they receive orders, sometimes falsified or amplified by ambitious intermediaries.

It must certainly be conceded that such a state of affairs may have -- it has had -- an unfortunate effect on the progress of these naba. This is an evil which should be remedied without delay.

636 645 565 The local administration at the very beginning made the serious error of failing to take into account the importance of the canton chiefs, most of whom (see the list in the appendix [not translated]) are descendants of the Mogho Naba. On the other hand, virtually all the ministers and other court officials, despite the respect one owes them and the privileges they enjoy, are of humble origin (see Chapter 4 for the origins of the Ouidi Naba and the Larrhallé Naba, for example).

The Petty Kings (Dima) in the Past and Today

643 631 As has been noted in the introductory chapter [not translated], some of the chiefs have gradually freed themselves from the authority of the Mogho Naba and have assumed the title of dima, that is, "king." These chiefs are the Boussouma Naba of the Kaya circle, the Konquizitenga Naba of the Kougoudou circle, the Yako Naba of the Kougoudou circle (Yako subdivision), and the Riziam Naba of the Ouahigouya circle.

These chiefs were, in a sense, independent "rulers," since the emperor's suzerainty over them was so weak [53] that they enjoyed almost complete independence. Some of them, notably the Boussouma Naba and the Yako Naba, have authority over canton chiefs whom they invest in the same way the emperor does.

II. Military Organization

701 An army, properly speaking, with cadres and hierarchies, did not exist among the Mossi.

721 In the event of war, the Tansoba or Tampsoba (war minister) notified the canton chiefs who promptly assembled with all their able-bodied men and as many horsemen as possible.

705 The villages were charged with feeding the soldiers.

III. Judicial Organization

692 693 Justice was rendered in conformity with local customs which had been handed down from generation to generation and according to local practice.

1. By village chiefs, assisted by some of the elders, ~~for~~ petty affairs, pilfering, and insults.

2. The canton chief, assisted by his court dignitaries and the minister, ruled on matters concerning theft, adultery, and bodily attacks, as well as on other matters.

3. The Mogho Naba took cognizance of all matters of general interest, especially with crimes of assassination and murder. In theory, he could by himself pronounce the death sentence on the [565] nakomsé [descendants of Mogho Naba]. Contrary to general belief, a [56] kombéré (canton chief) also had the power of life and 661 death over his subjects. How many individuals have been put to death merely because they were wealthy! How many village chiefs have been killed by the canton chiefs over their territories without any intervention by the Mogho Naba! The nakomsé could 565 be executed, however, only for very serious crimes, such as 684 adultery with a woman of the nobility. The guilty man was led 762 into the bush by old nakomsé; they gave him a rope with which he was expected to hang himself and thus expiate his crime.

694 Justice was free; no fee was expected or assessed. The plaintiff, 431 however, customarily presented the naba with a white or light gray rooster, accompanied by the traditional satchel containing from 200 to 1,000 cowries.

644 357 608 for example), and in return the adoptive mother gives him a bit of food, over and above his regular ration.

644 357 [169] In view of these circumstances, those who are not required at the home of the naba to care for the horses or for some special service spend half the year with their relatives.

644 357 565 It is perhaps of interest to point out that the samand'kamba are mostly sons of the chiefs of villages of nabissi (sons of naba), sons of nakomsé (descendants of naba and nabissi), and sometimes even sons of canton chiefs at the court of the Mogho Naba. There is also the child of the ordinary Moaga, who was not made a sogoné because he was not thought worthy of the position. The rigorous discipline required of the former young men teaches them "to suffer in order to be able to command."

644 357 Anticipation of freedom. If the sogoné or samand'biga is the eldest son and is old enough to marry at the time of his father's death, the naba is required to free him, even though the period of obligatory service has not been completed.

643 844 584 Another custom, the zan-boko. There is another curious custom among the Mossi. If during the course of his journeys the naba stops in a village and during his stay a girl is born to a local Mossi woman, the child is his, with full rights, if he has been told of the birth.

However, the naba often knows nothing about the event, and the father takes care not to speak of it and then makes whatever disposition of the child he wishes.

844 584 [170] This custom, however, is practiced to its fullest extent between Mossi. A Moaga sana (stranger) passing through the village is invited by the elders to dig the zan-boko (hole in which the placenta must be buried). This is his zounogo, "opportunity." He gives a few cowries (100 to 200) to the head of the family and becomes the fiancé of the baby girl. Later on, when she reaches puberty, the man will make the customary gifts to the parents, and nothing will stand in the way of the marriage.

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tion and, when he arrived at the sparsely settled Ninisi village of Nobéré, 173
he decided to stay and make it his home. The Ninisi ran away when they saw Biligo coming, but he persuaded them to return and live in peace under his command. The Tengsoba, or earth priest, of the village refused to return, and Biligo went into the bush and captured him so that the sacrifices to the earth shrines could continue as before. Biligo married a local woman and, when she bore him sons, he sent them to rule those villages not inhabited by the earth priests. These sons and their families formed the noble classes in the district.

About one hundred years ago a district chief called Peka supported the 173
loser in a fight for the supreme chieftainship and was killed when the victorious pretender was installed as chief in Ouagadougou. The victor 565
sent his son, Ngado, to rule over Nobéré and, although the relatives of 631
Peka were scattered, the village chiefs were allowed to retain their posts. These chiefs did lose their noble status, however, because Ngado's sons who went to live in the villages formed the new nobility. The chiefs and their families were submerged into the commoner class. The history of Nobéré is typical of that of most of the Mossi districts and, today, one finds the remnants of many former ruling lineages scattered around the country.

The supreme ruler of the Mossi was called the Moro-naba. He possessed 643
the *nam* which is the symbol of power, and because of this power he had the right of life and death over all his subjects. He also had a religious role in the country because it was his duty to initiate the yearly rites dedicated to the ancestors so that the country would have good crops, and so that the people would be happy and multiply. The Moro-naba was aided in [645]
his rule over the Mossi by five ministers who were responsible for the five provinces grouping 333 villages that made up the territory of the state. These ministers were responsible for the proper administration of the state, and they nominally elected the new Moro-naba.

As soon as the death of the ruler was announced, civil disorder broke out throughout the country and continued until the five ministers and the minister for war took fictive control of the country. When the funeral of the late chief was completed the chief minister, the Ouidi-naba, summoned the lesser ministers to a conference and told them that the country had no chief "because the fire had gone out" and that it now required one. He advised them to consider the qualifications of the late chief's son and of all the other pretenders, and to choose the most worthy individual. The lesser ministers refused to do this, saying: "You are our superior, and the right to make the choice rests on you alone."

The eldest son of the former ruler was usually elected Moro-naba but, as any member of the royal lineage up to the third degree was eligible, many persons tried to bribe the elector. When the Ouidi-naba made his choice he told the minister of war: "My mind is not at ease because I fear that those whose hopes have not been fulfilled will resort to violence."

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635 The Ouidi-naba answered: "Naba, you may do as you desire." The ruler
631 then said, "Under these conditions I will designate the eldest son of the late chief as the new Kombéré because his father has never forgotten me, or gave me any trouble when he was alive. It will not be good to reject his son." The ministers then called the heir and put the following question to him three times: "Before his death, did your father designate anyone to replace him as chief?" The heir replied three times: "No! My father did not designate anyone. You may name anyone you wish; even if he is
[778] a blind man or a leper." The heir was then given a bonnet, the symbol of the nam, and made to swear on drinking the Tibo, a ritual potion, that if he ever betrayed the ruler, may the Tibo kill him. Thereafter, all the members of the new chief's lineage swore to respect and obey him.

635 The power and function of the Kombéré were similar to those of the
631 Moro-naba, but on a much reduced scale. As the person who had received the nam from the Moro-naba, he was supreme in his district, subject only
578 to his obligation to the head ruler. These obligations included the customary gifts and aid in warfare. There is some evidence that many of the Kombérés were lax in paying this tribute and rendering homage to the Moro-naba and consequently were punished or killed. Naba Warga fought a five-year-long civil war against a rebellious vassal before the rebel was killed, and Naba Wobogo was engaged in a three-year civil war with one of his vassals when the French arrived in the country. It is not clear whether the Moro-naba was able to prevent or stop war between his vassals over strayed cattle or stolen women. The Mossi in the district of Nobéré said that the Moro-naba did not often know when neighboring villages were at war. These wars did not involve the loss of territories by the districts, since it was ritually forbidden for one district chief to take lands from another.

631 The district chiefs had ministers who helped them administer the districts. These ministers were descendants of the sons of the Moro-naba's ministers who accompanied the first district chief when he took up his fief. They had control of several villages and they channeled goods and services from the villages to the district heads. The hierarchy of command was also strictly observed on this level, and a village chief who had disputes with other village chiefs, or who had important cases to be judged, was required always to be accompanied by his minister when he
[681 visited the district chief. This official could put any man into stocks for serious crimes, but he could authorize the death only of commoners. It
565] must be pointed out, however, that in many cases the district chief usurped the rights of the Moro-naba, and had a troublesome noble secretly strangled. The district chief, like the Moro-naba, could not be deposed; he was often forced to commit suicide or met death by foul play or in open civil war. The people in the district reacted to an unjust ruler by leaving his territories.

The village chiefs held their fiefs directly from the district chiefs, and

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The village chiefs held their fiefs directly from the district chiefs, and were enfeoffed through the principle of primogeniture on the advice of district chiefs' ministers. They paid homage, and owed fealty, to their district chiefs, although part of their tribute always was sent to the Moro-naba. In the event of war they followed their district chief when he went to serve the Moro-naba. The village chiefs received presents from the heads of the families in the village and settled any local court cases in their villages. They did not have the right, however, either to put men into stocks or to have them executed. They were aided in the administration of the villages by the heads of families. 631 622

Almost every Mossi village had sections in which the nobles lived. As stated above, these people were the relatives or descendants of the district heads, and they lived in a semiparasitic condition upon the commoners in the village. Most of them owned horses and, in addition to furnishing the cavalry for the district chief's contingent during war, they raided and attacked caravans passing through the country. The nobles were subject to the control of the village chiefs, and it was not unusual for them to be under the jurisdiction of chiefs who were members of the commoner class. In such cases the district chiefs had a great deal of difficulty resolving the problems between their vassals and their kinsmen. The nobles could steal the wives and daughters of the commoners, but if a commoner tried to steal the wife of a noble he and the woman were both killed. Whenever a noble threatened to disrupt the life of a district he was secretly strangled by the district chief's men. 565 631

The above is a brief account of the origin and structure of the Mossi political system. Most of the myths regarding the origin of this system seem to suggest that here is a classic conquest state, but one neither founded by Caucasians nor extraordinarily influenced by them. The Mossi state is homogeneous in race, language, and culture, a feature not found in most of the other Sudanic states. This fact is not interesting in itself until we note that the Mossi share many cultural traits with the Voltaic peoples. Marc believes that this cultural homogeneity is the result of the Mossi invasion of the area during which they imposed their languages and customs on the indigenous populations. Apparently not believing the traditions about the Dagomba origin of the Mossi, he explains the fact that such non-Mossi groups as the Nankana, Wala, and Dagari speak Mossi dialects as proof that the Mossi were politically more powerful in ancient times, but "the feudal regime disappeared little by little.... The Mossi language was kept; [it is] the only actual witness of the ancient power of the Mossi" (author's translation).[5] We know, however, that the Mossi were still encroaching on the territories of their neighbors when the French arrived in 1896.[6] 631 692 174 114

Rattray believes that the inhabitants of Mamprussi, Dagomba, and Mossi territories are the same now as they were "centuries before the ancestors of those who are now their rulers appeared on the scene."[7] He states that

592 1. Husband.
2. Wife or wives.
3. Unmarried children, sons or daughters.
4. Slaves.

Sometimes, it also includes young unmarried brothers (see above).

592 As a rule, every soukala-household has only one large bush
241 field in addition to the garden plot surrounding the soukala (where
461 maize and large red millet are grown during the rainy season, tobacco and cotton during the dry season).

The head of the household, his unmarried sons and unmarried brothers, work on those fields during the rainy season from six in the morning to three in the afternoon, with a long rest period around noon. The women work there also, but their hours are different owing to their household tasks.

The unmarried sons and brothers also have small individual plots of cotton and large red millet. They work them in the afternoon after three o'clock. During the rainy season, as a rule, there are no rest days. A few Mossi, however, have adopted the customs
[527] of their Yarsé neighbors and rest on Friday. Others, who are Moslemized, and incidentally very few, rest both on Friday and on Monday.

During the dry season the members of the household repair hut roofs, go hunting, or else participate in the clearing of family fields, etc. In addition to this they work for themselves, as weavers for example. The money earned in this fashion goes to them and not to the soukala head.

/556/ It is the head of the soukala-household, the husband
592 and father, who provides all occupants of the soukala with food throughout the year, morning and evening. He also provides clothing for those who cannot provide their own, but those who can do so procure it themselves.

We know that it is sometimes the head of the family and some-
592 times the head of the household who gives the children of the house-
584 hold in marriage. It sometimes happens, however, that a son
464 leaves the soukala without his father's permission. He usually does
● 565 this in order to win a wife, when the head of the family or the

592 father cannot procure one or delays too long in doing so. The son
584 who secedes in this fashion goes to work for a chief or noble who
464 will later give him a wife as a reward. The first male child and the
565 first female child born of this union, however, will devolve to the chief or noble who gave the wife. He will use the male child as a servant, and the girl to be handed out as a reward to someone working for him. This is a side effect of the political organization on the family. This secession on the part of sons can only occur, indeed, thanks to the existence of chiefs and nobles in sufficient numbers to permit the secessionists to find work and employment among them without difficulty. Among the Bobo and Nounouma, such a situation could not exist.

Let us note that this institution, while restricting the authority of the family head or household head, has strengthened the power of the Mossi aristocracy.

592 In closing, let us note a few details about the Mossi soukala
361 from a physical standpoint. It is a cluster of round huts, about five or six of them, usually built of red earth with a straw roof and connected to each other by a concave wall made likewise of red earth. The soukala is thus fortified, as it were, and sheltered from the outside.

592 The Mossi soukala is quite similar to the Malinké or Dialonké
361 "compound" /literally, "square"/, which also consists of a cluster of clay huts with straw roofs. Among the Malinké and Dialonké,
171 however, the huts are often connected by a palisade or a mere séko instead of a red earth wall as they are here. Another difference is /557/ that the doors of the huts of the Mossi soukala are so low that one must often creep in on all fours. Furthermore, there are no porches such as are found among the Malinké and Dialonké. In spite of those differences, however, the Mossi soukala bear a general resemblance to the Guinean soukala, while they are in no way related to the massive citadels of the Gourounsi and Kipirsi.

The Mossi soukala, on the other hand, are set about 50 meters apart. The maize plot surrounding the soukala lies directly around it, as among the Bobo, Gourounsi, Kipirsi, etc., while among the Malinké and Dialonké of Guinea the garden plot of each compound is located outside the village boundaries, since the compounds stand

687 631 Moulins adds, "Custom does not anticipate the possibility of a chief being, properly speaking, stripped of his rule. A naba who gives the sovereign reasons for complaint is summoned under a pretext of some sort and put to death without further ceremony at the close of the audience granted to him. If the chief, guessing at the true purpose of the Moro Naba's invitation, demurs at going, a column is sent into the region over which he rules with the mission of seizing him and taking him to the Moro Naba, who has him put to death by his pages."

622 Let us add that in the Mossi /language/ a village chief is called tengasoba or tenganaba, from tenga, "earth, place, spot" and by extension "village," and from naba or soba, "chief." There are also chiefs of quarters called sakanaba, sakasoba, or sakakasaman, from saka, "quarter," and naba, soba, or kasaman, "chief." Mossi villages are indeed divided into quarters located some 200, 300, 400, or 500 meters apart and consisting of several soukala which usually stand, as we know, 40 or 50 meters apart. When the head of a quarter dies, it is the oldest soukala chief in the quarter who replaces him.

● 565 Below the Moro Naba and the chiefs of provinces, cantons, and villages, there existed among the Mossi a true aristocracy, a genuine nobility, the nakomsé, or sons of chiefs. "They were granted," says Moulins, "important privileges. They had the right to loot passing caravans and to demand from the common natives gifts of cowries, livestock, grain, etc., which the latter could not deny them. They were forbidden to kill, but if they committed murder, instead of being put to death, they were merely put in irons for a short period of time. Furthermore, they were granted the privilege of being tried only by the Moro Naba, head of their house, for all their crimes and misdemeanors." They are all descended, or supposed to be descended, from Moro Naba Oubry, conqueror of Mossi territory.

565 171 The existence of this aristocracy among the Mossi must be carefully noted, for it distinguishes them sharply from the populations we have studied up to now, Bobo, Nounouma, Kassouna, Sissala, Dagari, etc. Nobles are not found often among the Blacks of West Africa, and they are found only among groups that are, or formerly

565 171 were, conquerors. This represents a higher level of social complexity and development, in short, a higher level of civilization.

565 556 The nakomsé were and still are gathered in separate villages scattered throughout the territory. They did the same work as other Mossi, but prior to the French occupation they also practiced looting, which was their chief expedient, their major source of wealth. True, this manner of acquiring wealth had lent them improvident habits. Nowadays they own no more small livestock than the Mossi population, and only a little more large livestock, while they should own much more in view of their former opportunities to acquire wealth. They immediately "ate up" what they looted, however, counting on future pillage. Nowadays they no longer loot, but they seem to have preserved their former improvident habits. It should be noted, however, that they own considerably more horses than other Mossi.

565 142 I saw at Pirigui, in January, 1909, one of those villages of chiefs' sons. There were altogether 841 inhabitants of the nobility with their families and their slaves. Those people would be interesting to study from the point of view of physical anthropology. There were faces totally at variance with Negro faces, truly distinguished physiognomies, oriental and semitic casts of features, in short, enough /579/ to strike an observer even though unfamiliar with physical anthropology.

642 The superstructure of the Mossi state thus consisted of a supreme chief, a carefully established hierarchy of chiefs, and a class of nobles to whom important privileges were granted.

651 As for taxes, "every year at the end of the winter season, prior to our occupation," says Moulins, "the canton chiefs had to come, greet the Moro Naba, and offer him certain gifts (beeves, sheep, millet) which constituted a sort of fixed due." This was the common tax levied after each harvest.

"In addition, whenever the sovereign needed anything whatever, he requested the province chiefs to secure it for him. They summoned the canton chiefs, who in turn gathered the village chiefs, who secured through the soukala chiefs the animals, grain, cowries, and other items requested.

[431] "Finally, whenever a native, chief or common man, came to the Moro Naba, he offered a present to the latter.

562 When she dies, a woman's property goes to her children. The
428 objects used by women go to the daughters (bracelets, skirt cloths), while other items (animals, etc.) go to the sons. More exactly, the first-born is favored among the sons and the oldest girl among the daughters. If there are no children, the husband does not take anything, and whatever the wife leaves goes to her family, to her sisters and brothers in the first line of descent. Not having had any children by the deceased, the husband would be ashamed to take what she left.

837 Adultery.—The wife owes faithfulness to her spouse. Unfaithfulness, however, is not very important, for unless it occurs repeatedly it does not usually result in a break. The husband merely beats his wife and scolds her.

837 When the wife has fled to a lover, her husband goes in search of
684 her. The lover will have to provide a sheep (the sheep may be re-
792 placed by a goat), a chicken, and two canari of dolo, all of which
769 are to be sacrificed to the ancestors so they will forgive the woman. She cannot re-enter her house until the sacrifice has been performed; without it the ancestors would kill her. They are unbending, more so than the husband to be sure, about the latter's honor. Should a husband know his wife to be guilty and do nothing about it, the ancestors would be furious and they would kill him, hence the necessity for action on the husband's part.

837 If the husband cannot find his runaway wife, the duty of searching
684 for her and bringing her back to him falls to his father-in-law.

Formerly, before the French occupation, if the lover did not want to return the woman, her father appealed to the naba, that is, the chief of the village or canton, or even to the Moro Naba, who sent horsemen to arrest the guilty pair. He restored the wife to her husband and confiscated for his own benefit the lover's animals and millet granaries.

Nowadays, since the French occupation, one appeals to the commanding officer of the circle and to the native provincial court for the wife's return.

684 Sometimes, in the past, the husband killed his wife's lover when
643 he caught him flagrante delicto. He had the right to do so, but this caused him to lose his /246/ wife who became the property of the Moro Naba. The lover's property likewise reverted to the Moro Naba.

684 In any event, the husband did not have the right to kill his wife
643 except when she was caught flagrante delicto, unless he was the
565

684 Moro Naba or a member of the aristocracy. When one of his wives
643 deceived him, the Moro Naba had her killed along with her lover.
565 The guilty pair were strangled with cotton bands. Concerning the nakomsé /descendants of nabas/, the true nakomsé (for the descendants of Naba Rawa and Naba Yadega are no longer considered nakomsé at the present day and have reverted to the mass of the common people), the true nakomsé related to royalty since the time of Naba Nabacéré (1625-1655) and his descendants, Pigo (1720-1739) and Kango (1754-1787), when one of their wives had deceived them, they appealed first to the Basi Naba, head of the nakomsé, and presented the guilty pair to him. The Basi Naba sent them on to the Moro Naba, who had the woman and her lover strangled. The lover's property went to the Rassam Naba, chief of the people of Bingo who were in charge of the execution. The same procedure applied when the people of Bingo (house slaves of the Moro Naba) executed the wife of a Moro Naba and her lover. The property, which could not with decency revert to the deceived Moro Naba, went to the Rassam Naba, chief of Bingo.

837 Just as the wife owes faithfulness to her husband, the husband owes
684 faithfulness to his wife or wives. Violations of this rule are frequent, however, and the husband's escapades are far less important than those of the wife. In all events, the husband's infidelity never entails annulment of the marriage. Although the wives do not have the right to say much when their husband deceives them (provided he does not install his concubine in the conjugal household, and this in fact never happens), they do have two possibilities of revenge. The first is very rarely used by the Mossi women of Yatenga. It consists of notifying the husband of the woman with whom their husband is deceiving them. This results in more or less serious trouble for their husband. If their husband ventures to take into his hut for awhile a woman who does not belong to him, it may happen (and this occurs more frequently) that his wives will gather, wait for the guilty woman at the door of the soukalz, and give her a good thrashing when she comes out. The husband cannot say anything to them. He himself is protected, so to speak, by his status as a husband and left outside the argument, but revenge is taken on his unlucky accomplice, and while nothing is said to him, he can do nothing to protect her.

586 Divorce.—Divorce occurs in Yatenga more frequently than among the Bambara for reasons which were explained above. Here are the

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during a period of transition to effective independence.

The Mossi have the unique distinction of having preserved their ethnic identity and political autonomy throughout all the vicissitudes of Sudanese history until conquered by the French on September 1, 1896. The origin of Mossi society is couched in mythological terms. According to their tradition they came from Dagomba in the Gold Coast (present day Ghana) sometime during the 11th or 12th century and moved northward towards the Niger River. During this migration they carved out three large kingdoms and many small principalities by conquering and absorbing some of the indigenous Ninisi and Foulse and Dogon populations, and by chasing the others into the cliffs of Bandiagara. In 1328, according to Es Sadi in the *Tarikh es Soudan*, the Mossi attacked, burned, and sacked Timbuktu, then held by Mali, and during the following century attacked Walata and Banku. They received their first setback by the Ali, and were severely beaten by Askia the Great, the usurper of the Songhoi throne, who lead a *jihad* against them in 1499. But their attacks into the Niger bend did not cease until the Moroccans became masters of Timbuktu sometime in the early 1590's. From that period until the French conquest, the Mossi remained relatively quiescent. They developed and maintained an economy based on grain cultivation, livestock rearing, cotton production, and trade between the forest zones and the desert. Their political system crystallized into a loose confederacy of fairly autonomous kingdoms and principalities, sometimes tribute to the Moro Naba, the ruler of Wagadougou.

Wagadougou, the most important Mossi political entity, was like the lesser kingdoms, pyramidal in political structure. At the top was and still is the Moro Naba, a lineal descendant of Wedraogo, the Dagomba conqueror who founded the Mossi group and Moro Naba Wubri, the first ruler of the Wagadougou dynasty. Paying allegiance to him, were the princes who ruled such autonomous provinces as Yako, Boulsa, Mane, Riziam, and Boussouma. These princes were all sons or near relatives of the early Moro Nabas. Directly under the Moro Naba were district chiefs who were descended from the cadet branches of the ruling family. The villages within the district were in turn ruled by the chiefs of the indigenous populations. In many of the villages,

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631
643 the sons of the ruling family, the *nakomces*, formed a noble class, above
565 classes of commoners, serfs, and slaves. Classed among the commoners in many villages were the descendants of former district chiefs who had been deposed by the Moro Nabas. The reason that the rulers gave for the deposal of district chiefs was always disloyalty; but everyone recognized that this was an excuse whereby the reigning sublineage deposed older branches and provided positions for its cadet or collateral branches.

631 The governing hierarchy of the Mossi was a lineage with its com-
613 ponent minor and minimal branches. Like most lineages, this ruling lineage possessed an ideology that all of its members had equal access to its corporate assets. The most important asset of this lineage was, of course, its sovereignty, its right to rule. The *nam* is the symbol of Mossi sovereignty and is described by them as "that force of God which enables a mere man to rule over other men." The *nam* was the possession of Wedraogo, the group's founder, and of Moro Naba Wubri, the first ruler of Wagadougou, and this possession became the patrimony of all their descendants. This being the case, the ruling chief of any village, district, principality, or kingdom did not own the *nam* of that area; he was considered the temporary holder of it, and on his death it reverted to the collective descendants of the royal ancestors.
[428 A man did not have the right to pass the *nam* on to any person because
424] it was not his. Whenever a Mossi chief was being considered for office his commoner electors asked him the following questions: "Before his death, did Naba X designate anyone to replace him as chief?" This question was asked three times, and the candidate responded three times: "No! The Naba did not designate anyone. You may name anyone you wish; even if he is a blind man or a leper."

In actuality, this vaunted equality of access to the *nam* by all members of the ruling lineage was a legal fiction. And despite the fact that all the nobles declared that they could go to Wagadougou to seek the *nam* whenever a chief died, in reality only the members of the dead chief's minimal lineage (often the descendants of his grandfather) presented themselves as candidates. Indeed, of all the candidates, the eldest son of the dead ruler was the one most often chosen to be

634 173 tured slaves, whom he settled behind his compound and in separate villages under their own chiefs. He also welcomed refugees from wars in other territories and established them in special villages under their own chiefs.

631 173 The Dimdamba followed a similar practice in establishing power and control. According to Cheron, when Mogho Naba Koudoumie sent his son Tiraongo to conquer the Ninisi of Boussouma, the Ninisi defended themselves fiercely. Tiraongo's advance was thus very slow until he found a Ninisi named Wine, dressed in a panther's skin and hiding in a hole, "who on the promise that his life would be saved, consented to serve as guide to Tiraongo and to make propitiatory sacrifices to the divinities of the country. Thanks to him, the Mossi were able to progress to Somtongande."[6] Boulsa tradition recounts that when Naba Namende left Ouagadougou as the Kourita of Mogho Naba Oubri and took possession of their province, he placed his sons at the head of the principal villages "in order to control it [Boulsa] better."[7] One son was even sent to rule over a village at the request of the local Tengsoba.

634 613 778 The villages that made up a Mossi district were usually ruled by chiefs who belonged to sub-lineages of the local ruling lineage. These village chiefs and the members of their lineage formed a noble class, the *nakomce* [565] ("children of the Naba"). As long as a lineage held the nam of a district, all of its sub-lineages had all the privileges of the noble class, regardless of whether they had charge of villages. But if the Mogho Naba deprived [558] a ruling lineage of the nam by deposing the district chief, all its members were reduced to commoner status. Such people still traced their descent from the Mogho Naba who was the ancestor of their lineage founder, but this relationship ceased to be important unless the lineage recovered the nam of the district. If it did not, the former ruling lineage officially lost its ancient link with the royal clan within a few generations and became a nondescript local group.

634 613 778 557 558 The place of a deposed royal lineage was usually taken by the relatives of the nobles who subsequently acquired the nam of the district. These newcomers were genealogically closer to the ruling Mogho Naba, and formed the new nakomce of the district. The new district chief sometimes sent his sons to rule over the villages under his command. But if the village chiefs did not suffer the same fate as their lineage head at the hands of the Mogho Naba, the new district chief often permitted them to retain their posts. Thus they retained possession of the nam but lost their noble status. They served the new district chief in a political sense much as the Tengsoba served him in a ritual sense.

554 602 778 The plight of deposed district nakomce shows quite clearly the distinc-

[428] power and authority were inherited by their families in the same manner as among Mossi lineages.

634 The last important category of Mossi chiefs included men who ruled
622 over slave and serf villages. These men were themselves the descendants of slaves and serfs, for no free-born Mossi were placed in such posts. Needless to say, these chiefs were never lineally or collaterally related to the
[602] district chiefs, and therefore were never nobles. However, they might be affinally related to district chiefs, and in such cases the relationship was often of some political value.

It must be emphasized that once a man was made chief, he was respected, if not honored, by all the people of the district. In some districts, the Dapore Naba and the Baglere Naba, chiefs of two categories of serfs, were among the most valued assistants of the Kombere Naba. The only
[565] people who sometimes refused to honor the village chiefs were the nakomce,
[778] who were the holders of the district nam. Nevertheless, they were censored by the Kombere if they were disrespectful to his subordinates. No district chief could allow his government to be jeopardized by the maltreatment of persons who served it. In any conflict between the nam and the kin group, the supremacy of the nam was always maintained.

613 Every Mossi ruler, whether he held the nam of a kingdom, principality,
631 district, or village, was *ipso facto* also *Boodkasma* (literally, "family head")
622 of the local segment of his boodoo. The word boodoo refers to patrilineal groups that anthropologists would normally call clans, maximal lineages, major lineages, or minor lineages. The Mossi do not make any terminological distinction between these levels of their segmentary lineage system. Nevertheless, they recognize and use the status differences between these units to limit the access of each unit to the corporate assets of the boodoo. Their major social distinction is drawn between the minor lineage, which is also called boodoo, and its component minimal lineages. Each minimal-
[596] lineage unit is called a *babissi* (literally, "father's brother"), and is really a large extended family composed of relatives who had a common ancestor, three, four, or at most five generations ago.

643 The Mogho Naba, for example, was head of his babissi as well as ex
613 officio head of the entire royal clan. Those rulers who claimed equality with him claimed that they, not he, were the true heads of the royal clan and the "direct" descendants of Ouedraogo and Oubri. As a function of their political position, the many princes and district chiefs were heads of their own babissi and of the maximal lineage to which their babissi be-
631 longed. Like the Mogho Naba, they were the ex officio heads of all members
613 of their boodoo who lived in their territory and who claimed descent from the same royal ancestors,

554 613 571 778 chief), and the hierarchy of respect descended to the youngest nobleman of the youngest generation. Very often, the full-grown son and presumed heir of the district chief had to kneel in respect to a distantly related younger man of an elder generation. Of course, this deference ceased if and when he became chief. If he did not receive the nam, he continued to show deference to all his lineage elders. This distinction between nam and boodoo was [578] a source of potential conflict within the ruling lineages. The people usually accepted the implications of both principles, but when they did not, there were dynastic quarrels and territorial secessions.

622 613 554 778 571 The age and generational principles also operated within non-noble ruling lineages, but here too they were often complicated by the possession of the nam. Those village chiefs who had lost their noble status but retained the nam acted as official Boodkasemdamba of their local lineage segments and had considerable influence over their lineage although they did not control all its segments. Each lineage segment had its own Boodkasma, who normally ran its affairs. But because of the importance of the nam in Mossi life, the Boodkasemdamba deferred to the village chief in [565] important matters pertaining to their own boodoo. However, the generational principle was followed within the local boodoo. Almost no one deferred to the children of the village chief, who, after all, were not nakomce.

613 571 778 The situation within commoner lineages that did not hold the nam was quite different. The age and generational principles obtained within the lineage segments of these boodoo, but never *across* the segments, as they did across the babissi. These segments were more autonomous. Each had its own Boodkasma, who looked after it without deferring to anyone. This autonomy was all the more pronounced since the segments of non-noble lineages tended to be scattered throughout a district. They interacted socially and politically only when they were physically close. In any case, in the absence of the nam, the segments of non-noble lineages had no reason to remain together; they tended to lose their hierarchical quality and to become equal and separate.

613 173 778 As would be expected in such circumstances, not all Mossi lineages paid the same attention to their genealogies. Noble lineages kept track of their actual or putative ancestors, whereas non-noble lineages tended to ignore them and to let geographical proximity determine meaningful kinship ties. This loss of interest in exact genealogies was found even among lineages that had lost the nam of a district and with it their nobility, but still retained the nam of a village. Members of the minimal units in such lineages competed actively for the village nam and were interested in fairly recent an-

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tricem over the woman and turned over the rights *in uxorem* to the man. 613
This point is very important, because, by accepting the woman as a wife 583
for his lineage segment, the Boodkasma accepted the responsibility of giving a woman in return to the other lineage. The stress placed on the lineage in wife-exchange was due to the corporate nature of this kinship group, as well as to the prohibition against a man's exchanging his own sisters or daughters as wives. He had to use other women in the lineage. It was believed that if this rule were violated, the women exchanged would also "exchange lives"—i.e., the fate of one would automatically reflect the fate of the other.

The Mossi marriage system worked to the advantage of both the elder males of the lineage segment and the nobles of the ruling lineage. Since the older men of the various groups controlled the resources of their kinsmen, they usually initiated "friendship" relations and obtained wives for their group. The more impartial elders distributed the women equitably among their fellow kinsmen, but occasionally older men kept the wives for themselves, knowing that in time these wives would be inherited by their younger kinsmen. Younger men had to wait until their elders died, do without wives, or establish "friendly" relations with older men. Some young men and newcomers to the district appealed to the chief for *pughsiudse* (from *pugho*, the diminutive of *pagha*, "woman," and *siubo*, "to give with the hope of profitable return"). These pughsiudse were women whom the chief received from his subjects and whom he subsequently gave out as wives on condition that their husbands give him their eldest daughters as future pughsiudse.[9]

The nobility benefited by the Mossi marriage system because, as a 613
group, they received more women than they gave out in the exchange of 565
wives. Furthermore, this enabled them to make more marriage arrange- 562
ments. This does not mean that a differential value was placed on women of different status groups. The Mossi tended to regard all women as equally valuable, but commoners tended to be more generous to noble friends than vice versa.

The nobles also received wives from their "brother," the district chief. 613
He received women as presents and signs of fealty and homage from most 565
of the groups in his district, and also from groups outside his district. He 583
kept some of these women as wives; others he used as pughsiudse; and still others he gave to his lineage segments. Some nobles had another method of obtaining wives, namely, by abduction. A nobleman who saw the daughter or wife of a commoner in the market place often encouraged her to desert her father or husband and come to him. Her relatives usually

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613 appealed to the district chief, and occasionally the woman was sent back.
565 A nobleman set on having a certain girl as a wife usually had small brace-
583 lets like those worn by all noble wives placed on her ankles. Once this was done, the chief could not be compelled to send her back to her parents, and any man who tried to retrieve her was guilty of interfering with a nobleman's wife and could be killed for it. In fact, only the male relatives of noblemen's wives could converse with them without running the risk of being apprehended and executed.

634 The district was the most important unit in the Mossi principalities and kingdoms. It was on this level that the Mossi nobility came into direct contact with the various social and ethnic groups of the society. Here, kinship and affinal ties linked the conquerors and the conquered, the ancient and recent nobility, the refugees from conflicts over the nam and the resident aliens, in a network of social, ritual, economic, and political relationships. It was also on this level that myths and traditions legitimized most effectively the Mossi socio-economic and political system as well as the relationships between the various social and ethnic groups.

634 The number and size of the Mossi districts varied greatly from one
161 principality or kingdom to another. Some districts were large and wealthy, with a number of large villages; smaller districts had a larger proportion of small villages and hamlets. The average number of these small units was probably between fifty and sixty-five per district. The population of the districts ranged from 10,000 to 35,000 persons. Some *tense* (villages) had as many as 5,000 inhabitants and some as few as 50. The average village had about 500 inhabitants. But regardless of size, all Mossi districts and component villages had basically the same structure and fulfilled the same functions. The structure of Nobere district is representative. Nobere
[131] covered approximately 200 square miles. It was bounded on the east by a district called Manga, on the north by the districts of Toece and Djiba, and on the west and south by the Red Volta River. A census taken in 1905, just nine years after the European conquest, showed the Nobere population to be about 13,200.[10] In 1955 approximately 10,000 persons inhabited 24 villages and hamlets scattered through the more inhabitable part of the district.

634 The number of villages and hamlets in Nobere district apparently fluc-
621 tuated. Villages were occasionally abandoned, while small hamlets grew into prominent settlements. The people of Nobere always tried to establish
[361] their villages as close to the Red Volta as possible in order to utilize the more fertile lands. But they were repeatedly driven back by disease and

634 known, however, whether this woman was Biligo's daughter or one of his
622 pughsiudse. The people of Passintenga claimed descent from Biligo's
175 daughter, but the other groups in the district questioned this ancestry. The village called Bourougna had two chiefs. One, the Tang Naba, was descended from a son of a Ouidi Naba of Ouagadougou who had settled in Nobere; the other, the Yang Naba, claimed descent from an aboriginal Ninisi man and woman of Biligo's lineage. The Yang Naba was thus another of Biligo's yagense in the district. The chief of Nimpwe village was a descendant of the aboriginal Ninisi people and was the principal Tengsoba in the district. He had more ritual power than political power, however. The nam of Basbedo village was held by a man descended from Busansi refugees. Living in this village was a man with the honorific title of Soulougre Naba, who claimed descent from the most important Ninisi family who had lived in the district prior to the arrival of Biligo.

634 Most of the nobles of the local ruling lineage lived either in the saghse
173 of the district villages or in isolated hamlets. Local tradition holds that one
621 of the conditions set by Naba Ngado for allowing Biligo's descendants to remain as village chiefs was the right to settle nineteen of his sons in many
[613] of the villages. He allegedly sent *mabissi* (sons of the same mother) to the
[565] same village. By so doing, he took advantage of the normal lines of fission that are created after the death of a Mossi father and prevented undue rivalries. Yet there was no driving necessity for him to do so, because there were more villages than chief's sons available. In fact, there are still many villages without nobles in Nobere district. The people of Passintenga, for instance, allegedly refused to have nobles live among them, while the people of Nimpwe allegedly killed by sorcery all the nobles who ever tried to live there. The actual reason for the absence of nobles in these villages may have been that the district chief did not wish to send his sons to villages into which his daughters had married or where there lived earth priests who
[565] were thought to be powerful sorcerers. Nobles were often unwelcome, feared, and resisted, because they tended to exploit the village people and to take advantage of the commoners.

621 The villages of Nobere district, like those of other Mossi districts, were
167 populated in part by refugees and strangers. Several saghse in Togese vil-
173 lage were inhabited by Mossi refugees who had fled a district called Guiergo after a fight over the nam of that district. Scattered throughout the district's villages were people of unknown origin called Siamse. The Siamse found in the villages of Tewaka and Nabadogo claimed that their ancestors had "followed" Naba Biligo when he came down from Ouagadougou to found the district. Several saghse in Bourougna village were in-

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 621

also lost much of their interest in preserving their genealogies. Their local 613
lineage segment, which controlled the village nam, still showed interest in 798
its genealogy, but the people of Godin did not quite remember how they were related to the ruling lineage segment. Several times in the recent history of Barkago (and other villages), the men who were given the village nam had to be recalled from distant villages where they were living with maternal patrilineages. So relatively unimportant was possession of the village nam without concomitant noble status that after Naba Ngado took over, the local Biligo people began to ignore all local genealogical records except descent from Biligo. The Ninisi people had the least reason to be interested in their genealogy, and they simply ignored it. They had been separated from the other Ninisi groups in the district for so long that they did not even forbid marriage into those groups.

In villages such as Barkago, the existence of several lineage groupings 613
and families of strangers facilitated local marriages. But in villages with 621
fewer lineage groups, the time came when all groups were so closely linked by marriage and affinal alliances that for all practical purposes the village became an exogamous unit. By 1956, this process had reached such an advanced stage in Barkago that hardly any marriages took place between the Ninisi and Biligo local lineage segments. Both groups were permitted to marry the local descendants of Ngado, because the latter were more recent arrivals in the village. These marriages were of great significance to all villagers because they linked the nobles and the commoners in a series of exchanges. Moreover, because the groups were linked through sisters' sons [565] ●
with special privileges in both groups, problems deriving from status dif- [606]
ferences were more easily solved. Even the most arrogant noble was often [607]
constrained by ancestral sanctions to maintain amicable relations with his in-laws.

The Biligo lineage of Barkago contracted marriages with the other, non-related groups within and without the district. The Ngado people did likewise. Whether these nobles were able to marry noble women of other districts is a moot point. Owing to distance and politics, no such marriages are known to have occurred, and no one seems to know whether they were permissible. The Ninisi, who had always been commoners, had the largest marriage circle of all the village groups. They were able to marry nobles, commoners, and the Ninisi of the district and other districts.

The inhabitants of a Mossi village built their houses and cultivated their 423
crops on land the village chief had granted to their respective lineages. 613
Since the royal lineage, by right of conquest, controlled all of Mossi country, the rights of usufruct of a lineage depended ultimately on the Mogho [643]

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643 longing to other provinces. Provinces also differed with respect to the num- 635 ber of districts they included and the nature and size of these districts. Some 634 provinces were larger than others; some were wealthier; and some were more difficult to administer.

Each province was administered by a governor, who also functioned as 635 an important minister at the court of Ouagadougou. In the order of their 645 importance, these governors were the Ouidi Naba, the Larhalle Naba, the Gounga Naba, the Baloum Naba, and the Kamsaogho Naba. Smaller ad- [643] ministrative units (both districts and villages) were under the direct control of the Mogho Naba himself, or under the supervision of his relatives [565] or lesser officials. None of the governors were nobles or descendants of Ouedraogo and Oubri, but their positions were hereditary. According to 173 one tradition, the first provincial administrators were personal slaves of the 635 early Mossi rulers who were given the task of supervising the activities of 645 district chiefs of noble status. Another, more romantic tradition is that the man who became the first governor or Gounga Naba was a companion of Mogho Naba Oubri during the conquest of Ouagadougou. Later, the Gounga Naba presented one of his friends to Oubri with the request that the man take precedence over him, be made chief governor, and be given the title of Ouidi Naba. Oubri allegedly acceded to this request, and later granted another request of the Gounga Naba that a friend of the Ouidi Naba be named Larhalle Naba and be made the second governor. The Gounga Naba told the Mogho Naba that he preferred to see his friends happy and that he was content to be third minister. This tradition does not state when or how the Baloum Naba and the Kamsaogho Naba were named governors.[21]

With the exception of the Kamsaogho Naba, who was a eunuch and had 635 no heirs, the provincial governors headed administrative lineages. These 613 lineages provided administrators not only for Ouagadougou but also for the principalities and districts. Cheron states that the Ouidi Naba of Boulsa was "a descendant of the Ouidi Naba of Ouagadougou, a great dignitary who rules a province and sits among the electors of the Mogho Naba."[22] Many administrative lineages on the district level were descended from [634] officials sent down by the Mogho Naba with a new district chief in lieu of one deposed. When a chief was deposed, his administrators, like his relatives, lost their importance and their ties to Ouagadougou.

The Ouidi Naba, called *Moss' ba* ("father of the Mossi") and *Sida soba* 645 ("master of the truth"), was the principal administrator and the prime minister. His titles undoubtedly sprang from his important role in the election of the Mogho Naba and from his position as caretaker of the king-

had a group of confidants who acted as an informal council. These men included senior members of his own lineage, elders from other local lineages, and personal friends. Again, like the confidants of the district chiefs, these men visited the village chief whenever they were not busy with their own affairs to talk to him about wives, crops, and village matters. Although protocol was at a minimum on this level, the chief had to maintain a high degree of decorum. As a member of the ruling lineage of the district, he had noble status and had to be treated accordingly. The non-noble village chief was also respected as a recipient of the nam. But all chiefs, whether nobles or commoners, were expected to lead exemplary lives lest the flaws in their characters as revealed by the intimacy of village life should weaken their prestige.

The village chief received his orders from the district chief through the administrator in charge of his village or through one of this official's servants. He, in turn, used his own sons or relatives to transmit messages to the heads of the saghse. If the message was extremely important, the village chief's messenger might be accompanied by the administrator's messenger or by the district chief's personal representatives. The saksobadamba then transmitted the order to the various compound heads. This hierarchy was always followed because, by following it, the officials knew who was responsible for disobeying or frustrating the wishes of the superior chiefs. As on the district level, the orders transmitted to the village and its sections dealt with such things as collecting tribute, picking fruits from the district chief's trees, allocating labor for the district chief or his personal retainers, transferring or summoning cases to the district court, procuring sacrificial animals for the local Tengsoba, and requesting soldiers. The village chief also sent his own messages to the saghse. These messages, however, dealt with such village matters as local sacrifices, quarrels, and court cases.

Misrule and maladministration by a village chief were punished either by the district chief or by the villagers. Like other Mossi rulers, the village chief could not be deposed and allowed to live. However, he had a better chance of fleeing and finding refuge in another district. His presence in a strange district did not challenge the authority of the local chief, and he had no opportunities to seize any of his host's villages. In fact, if the refugee was accompanied by a large number of his subjects, his host might even give him land on which to erect a new village. The proviso was, of course, that he should not "spoil" the district by causing trouble. If a village chief accused of maladministration was seized by the district chief before he could flee, he was invariably executed. If he was a commoner, he was decapitated or even stoned to death; if he was a nobleman, he was taken into the bush and strangled in secret by the district police.

684 offender was caught in the act, he was immediately killed. If he was merely
[613] suspected of guilt both by his own lineage and by the lineage of the wronged woman, he was banished from his lineage and from the village. So swift and sure was this punishment that a rapist always fled if he believed he
[847] would be discovered. The Mossi considered rape such a heinous crime that if the act resulted in pregnancy, an abortion was attempted; if this failed,
[613] the child was killed at birth. Furthermore, the rapist could never hope to
[629] return to his community, because even if the yagenga appealed on his behalf and his lineage forgave him, the community ban still stood.[2]

692 The village chief was usually aware of the torts and crimes that occurred
622 in his village, and of how the families concerned had handled them. He seldom interfered in the internal affairs of a lineage, or in problems between lineages, unless he felt that a case was beyond their legal competence.
[684] In the case of a rapist's expulsion, community feeling usually ran so high that if the chief intervened, it was only to support the will of the community. However, when people could not settle their differences peaceably or when a major crime was committed within a village, the chief usually summoned
622 the offender to his court for trial. His right to do so was sanctioned by his
692 possession of the nam, but the very concept of the nam often made his task
565 difficult. If he was a commoner, the nobles often emphasized their rela-
634 tionship to the holder of the royal nam, the district chief, and objected to
695 being tried by a commoner. They usually appeared at the village court if summoned, but often attempted afterward to find some excuse for taking their case to the district chief. They felt that their local reputation would prevent them from receiving a fair hearing from anyone but their lineage brother. Furthermore, if they were judged and convicted in the lower court and the verdict was confirmed in the district court, they felt that the district chief, in concurring with the village chief, had broken the solidarity of their lineage. But if they took their case directly to the district chief, they knew they were being judged by an equal or a superior, and that an unfavorable judgment would not damage their status.

622 The competence of the village chief to deal with court cases was limited.[3]
692 He did pass on all the legal infractions that occurred in his village, but he tried to adjudicate only the minor cases. Thus, he tried cases involving theft, quarrels, trespassing, adultery, indebtedness, and abuse, and tried to
[695] settle them by reprimanding the guilty ones. He sent cases involving serious injury and homicide to the district court, along with cases he was unable to resolve.

692 The district court was a most efficient and effective judicial organ, and
634 the nature of the Mossi judicial process was most evident on this level. The

634 692 died while he was using it, the owner could not press any claims. However, the borrower was obliged to sell the animal's flesh and give the money to the owner along with the animal's skin as proof of its death. Under no circumstances would a district chief absolve a man from paying the market value of an animal if he failed to return the skin. Such failure would brand him as a thief and involve an additional fine.

685 The Mossi considered theft a major crime. A thief could be killed with [674] impunity if he was caught in the act and in the presence of several witnesses. If these conditions were not met but the man killed was known to have been a thief, the killer was fined several cows. But if he was known to have been a man of good character, the killer ran the risk of being executed. In this way, the Mossi tried to prevent any abuse of an accepted practice. The theft of grain and other foodstuffs was considered especially reprehensible, because it was held to indicate that the thief was so depraved 685 that he would not even grow his own food. During the rule of Naba Kag- 175 lere of Nobere district (1888–1906), a man called Yahiya left his own village of Donse and went to a village called Quitenga to steal sweet potatoes. The people of that village caught him in the act and shot him with a poisoned arrow as he made his escape. Yahiya died without revealing the source of his wound, and his babissi, suspecting foul play, asked Kaglere to investigate. When the Quitenga people learned of the investigation, they went forward voluntarily and reported the circumstances under which they had wounded Yahiya. Kaglere absolved them of all guilt and told the Donse people that Yahiya had deserved to die, not only because he had stolen food (which he might have received if he had asked for it), but because sweet potatoes were the easiest vegetable to cultivate.

685 A thief who was too clever to be caught in the act but who was apprehended afterwards was treated quite harshly by the Mossi court. Here, the [692] penalty of double indemnity was often applied. A man who was brought to court for stealing a chicken or guinea hen was fined a goat or a sheep. Hence the Mossi proverb "Zou noaga ronda bouga"—"He who steals a [696] chicken repays a goat." The thief who stole one cow had to return several. If a thief could not pay the fine, he was placed in stocks until his relatives paid for him. If they refused to do so, the chief's retainers seized their prop- [762] erty, sold it, and made restitution. This often compelled the family of a recidivous thief to make him commit suicide. If the family would not re- [634] sort to this, the district chief had the man seized and clubbed to death.[7] Sometimes the chief sent recidivists to the Mogho Naba, who sent them to a [565] village called Teemetenga to be made into eunuchs.[8]

[579] The Mossi seem to have made a distinction between theft and pillage—

a practice whereby nobles deprived commoners of their property. Those 685
nobles who lived among commoners quite often confiscated their neigh- 579
bors' property. But this was not regarded as theft and was not punishable 565
as such, although a rapacious nobleman could be sanctioned for terrorizing and "spoiling" a village. If a nobleman was caught performing an act that *was* considered theft, or if he was accused and found guilty of theft, he was severely punished. During Kaglere's reign, the people of a small village 686
suffered a series of livestock thefts. One day, while the friends of a village 685
chief were sitting with him, a dog came out of the chief's compound 622
dragging an animal skin. The men recognized the skin as that described for a stolen goat, and decided to investigate. In the chief's courtyard they discovered the hole from which the dog had unearthed the skin. They also found the skins of several other stolen animals. The villagers took the [692]
village chief to the district chief, who found him guilty and exiled him [634]
from the region. In passing judgment, the district chief told him that he had been elected "to care for the village," but that he had betrayed his trust by robbing his own people.

According to Mossi law, willful homicide or murder was punishable by 682
execution. The Mossi did not use wergild or "blood money," but insisted on the *lex talionis,* which they interpreted as "a life for a life." They did not believe that money or any other valuables could compensate for the life of a man, nor would they allow a slave to be executed in place of the murderer. They believed that only by executing the murderer himself could they prevent his victim's relatives from resorting to vengeance and thus "spoiling" the district or village.

A man who grievously wounded another was apprehended, bound, and [696]
taken to the village chief and subsequently to the district chief. Here he was kept in stocks in the serfs' quarter without being tried until his victim either died or recovered. If his victim recovered and the judge found that the wound had been inflicted accidentally, the defendant was fined or had his goods confiscated, but he was released. If the judge found that the victim had been wounded in a fair fight, the prisoner was usually censured and dismissed. The chief often warned the wounded man that he ought to have lived up to the Mossi axiom that a grown man is always able to protect himself. If, however, the trial revealed that the prisoner had ambushed his victim with the intent to kill, he either was fined several cows or had his entire property confiscated. District chiefs are known to have executed [634]
the perpetrators of cowardly ambushes even though their victims recovered. [696]

If a man died at the hands of another, an inquest was held immediately. If the killing had been accidental or committed in self-defense, or if it was

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The torture was seen as a punishment, and not as a form of ordeal to ascertain guilt or innocence. It was designed to cause the culprit as much suffering as possible before he died, and its harshness reflects the Mossi fear of witches and witchcraft. In one form of punishment called *koudgilga*, the culprit was sent to the smith, who tortured him by placing hot iron balls in both his hands. He was then beaten to death. Another type of punishment called *swengalenga* was more painful. A pottery jar from which the bottom had been removed was heated in a fire. Then it was placed over the head of the convicted witch and allowed to burn its way down onto his shoulders. The culprit was subsequently killed. Sometimes a convicted witch was not killed; instead, a man was sent to Ouagadougou to be castrated and sold as a eunuch, and a woman was sold outside the country as a slave.

Gross disrespect toward the chief and crimes of lese majesty were uncommon among the Mossi. These crimes were usually committed by persons who came into close contact with the chief—nobles and court retainers—rather than by commoners, serfs, or slaves. The most common form of lese majesty was adultery with one of the district chief's wives. The penalty for this was death for both violators. Anyone who dared insult the district chief at court was seized and executed. The same fate awaited those who talked about him maliciously in public or threatened to stir a rebellion against him. If the culprits were commoners, they were executed; if they were nobles, they were strangled in secret or were forced to commit suicide.

The district chief was caught in a dilemma whenever nobles committed major crimes or unlawful acts. They could not be imprisoned, and only the Mogho Naba had the legal prerogative to execute them. When a noble committed a major crime such as treason or rebellion, he was sent to the capital to be executed by slaves, who strangled him with a piece of cotton cloth. However, no district chief could allow the nobles to commit crimes with impunity, secure in the knowledge that they could only be punished at Ouagadougou. If a nobleman subverted the chief's rule by repeated acts of cruelty and brigandage, he was executed, although illegally. The executioners were the Baglere Naba and the Dapore Naba. These two men secretly visited the condemned noble, taking with them a bundle as a present from the chief. This bundle contained a new white robe in which were secreted a chief's bonnet and a poisoned arrow. As soon as the noble saw the gift, he knew that he was being ordered to kill himself. If he attempted to raise an alarm or run away, he was instantly strangled and his body was discarded in the bush. If he accepted the sentence, he was allowed to have food prepared, to eat, and then to kill himself. The chief ordered an elaborate funeral for his kinsman as though he had died an ordinary death. Thus, he was able to observe all the proprieties while at the same

565 time safeguarding his position within the district and toward the Mogho
634 Naba. For, as already pointed out, the district chief who failed to protect his subjects as well as to rule them was deposed and executed by the sovereign.

692 The promptness with which the lower courts dealt with litigations left
662 little time for pre-trial bribery, and there is general agreement that the traditional courts were just. Of course, some lower chiefs were known to
[695] have been unfair and to have taken bribes. However, they were always in danger of having their verdicts appealed to Ouagadougou.

695 The Mossi believed in and acted on the dictum that "the truth is at
643 Ouagadougou." They were convinced that they could obtain justice from the Mogho Naba if from no other chief. If a man was not satisfied with
692 the ruling of a lower chief, he was free in theory to seek a higher verdict,
634 and this influenced the kind of justice rendered on the lower level. As a rule, however, the district chiefs did not favor appeals to Ouagadougou. They felt, like most Mossi, that the less their superiors knew about their activities, the better. Thus, the district chief used all of his influence to prevent cases from being appealed to the capital. Some district chiefs were not above coercing litigants into such abstention. They even threatened them with reprisals if the verdict should be unfavorable. But the greatest deterrent against such appeals was the expenditure of time and money. The docket of the Mogho Naba's court was always crowded, and the suitors often had to remain at the capital for as long as three months before they were given a hearing.[9] During this period they often spent more money than the action was worth. Marc states that the word "Ouagadougou" means "the place where one becomes thin," a reference to the amount of money litigants had to spend while waiting for their cases to be heard.[10]

When the object of a lawsuit was the inheritance of cattle, the litigants sustained a double loss. As soon as they asked that the case be taken to the capital, the district chief impounded the cattle. While the case was pending he appropriated the cows' milk, and when the case was settled both he and the Mogho Naba received some animals. Thus, suitors were usually under a great deal of pressure to resolve their problems on the district level. However, if they were determined to go to the capital, they were permitted to do so.

The district chief always sent one of his retainers to the capital with the litigants. The group went directly to the district's provincial minister, who was empowered to hear the appeal and decide whether it should be brought before the Mogho Naba or returned to the district court. If he decided to send it to the Mogho Naba, he placed it on the docket and told the

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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596 permission to use weogho in the district, and new hamlets arose in this way. 613 A Yirisoba who could not obtain adequate land on which to grow food for 423 his family left the district and sought land elsewhere, especially among his 426 mother's patrilineage. However, village and district chiefs always tried to prevent this because they did not like to lose any of their subjects.

As director of economic activities in the household, the Yirisoba super- 596 vised the agricultural labor of his charges. It was he who directed the work of his wives, his sons, and his sons' wives, and supervised the care of the family herd. He provided the cotton, which was carded and spun by the women and woven by the men. It was also his task to ensure adequate clothing for the members of his household; and he sold excess commodities in order to buy salt, kola nuts, bracelets, foreign clothes, and other products imported from the forest and desert zones. In each case, the Yirisoba had to balance judiciously the requirements of his household against his obligations to the community and to the political hierarchy. He had to prevent economic rivalry among his sons, and especially among his sons' wives. He had to make sure that every married member of the household had sufficient time to provide goods and services for his own family, and that foodstuffs were distributed equitably among the wives. Finally, he had to use the resources of the household to build and maintain the nexus of socioeconomic relationships that provided wives for the male members of the household, and to meet his obligations to the political hierarchy.

The Yirisoba also had social and economic responsibilities toward the 596 other members of his babissi and boodoo. He furnished labor and goods 613 to needy lineage members and to non-relatives with whom he had marriage 476 arrangements. Since much of this help was given on the basis of ultimate 602 reciprocity, very little loss was involved. However, the relationship between commoner and noble families was quite different. In theory, the nobles had 565 no claims on the property of the commoners; but in practice, they did claim 596 such rights. Furthermore, commoner lineages often gave the nobles many 613 more wives than the nobles returned. This inequality enabled the nobles to receive more goods and services from their marriage partners among the commoners than they gave in return. The nobles thus took advantage of their power as possessors of the nam, but even membership in the royal lineage did not exempt them from supporting the governmental services at all levels. This duty was incumbent upon every Moaga.

The Mossi people could not refuse to support their political organiza- 641 tion, but often complained about having to do so. Many Mossi felt that 431 their rulers were greedy and avaricious and received too many gifts. Some 661 Mossi held that if the chiefs were not placated with goods and services,

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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CHAPTER 9

Trade and Markets Among the Mossi People

BY ELLIOTT P. SKINNER

The Mossi represent the dominant population of the Voltaic Republic, numbering about 1,600,000 out of some 3,200,000 inhabitants. They represent the unique example of a group which has preserved its ethnic identity and political autonomy through all the vicissitudes of Sudanic history until it was conquered by the French in 1896. Tradition records that the people who became the Mossi left the Dagomba region in present-day Ghana during the eleventh century and moved into the bend of the Niger River, carving out three large kingdoms and smaller principalities in the process. At the head of these still extant kingdoms are rulers *(Moro Nabas)* who formerly held feudal-like control over the provinces, districts and villages which comprise their domains. The villages, with their patri-local, polygynous, extended family households, formed the basic Mossi settlement pattern. A complex hierarchical administrative apparatus carried the power of the Mossi rulers into the smallest villages, and funneled taxes and tribute back to them. This structure still exists, but of course it has been modified by the French.

The Mossi were and are still divided into stratified royal, noble and commoner patrilineages. Characteristic of this lineage system is a process by which royal sub-lineages descend serially until they merge with the mass of commoner lineages. Below the lineages there once were large non-Mossi groups of serfs and slaves, but these people have now been grouped into lineages and have become Mossicized.

The topography of Mossi country is typical of the Sudanic grasslands. It is an immense plain, some 1,500 feet above sea level and broken only by three low mountain ranges and numerous small hills. The annual total rainfall is between 30 and 40 inches, and falls almost entirely as heavy showers or thundershowers during the period from June to September. So narrow is the margin of rainfall for successful crop cultivation that any variation in the cycle results in low crop yields and a difficult "hungry period" the following year before the new crops are harvested. The Mossi do not practice irrigation, and would have trouble doing so because the three Volta Rivers which drain their territory serve as drainage chiefly during the rainy season. Only the Black Volta has water all year round; the

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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stock against marauding beasts and thieves. All caravaneers had to pay a tax to the local chiefs to cross their borders or to stop in their markets to trade. Binger reported that the caravans which passed through the market center of Wagadougou had to give the Moro Naba a share of their merchandise, aside from the presents which they gave to him. He also reported that the horse traders from the Yatenga, in the north of Mossi country, and the Hausa caravaneers, were sometimes forced to sell part of their wares to the Moro Naba at one-hundredth the purchase price (Binger 1892 : II, 292–300). Not all the caravaneers submitted to extortion, however, and at one period many of them traded with Mane instead of passing through Wagadougou where the tariffs were too high. On the other hand, the Mossi chiefs did not tolerate any trespassing on their territories by caravans that did not pay taxes. Those who tried to avoid doing so were subjected to attack by the mounted nobles *(nakomce)* on behalf of the district chiefs. Wise caravan leaders not only paid their taxes but established close relationships with the chiefs in order to receive adequate protection from some nobles who illegally attacked and looted the caravans.

It is impossible to know the actual volume of caravan trade which passed through Mossi country, but we can get a fairly good idea of it by examining the customs reports on goods crossing the border between Mossi country and the northern territories of the Gold Coast in the few years just following European conquest.[6] For 1901 and 1903 the official figures were:

TABLE 28A

Mossi Trade (1901–3)

Year	*Horses*	*Cattle*	*Sheep and Goats*	*Loaded Donkeys*	*Bales of Cotton Cloth*
1901	126	3,111	18,181	2,095	236
1903	196	6,624	30,892	4,294	369

Lucien Marc, who had the opportunity to check the volume of this trade for 1904 and 1905, guessed that about 16,000 cattle and 75,000 sheep and goats passed through the customs post in Mossi country. Furthermore, he believed that since

> ... the Mossi also supply in part the markets of Togoland and the market at Bondoukou [Ivory Coast], one can estimate at least an annual export of 20,000 cattle and 100,000 sheep or goats. The import of kola nuts is at least 500 tons. (Marc 1909 : 178)

(6) Great Britain Parliamentary Papers: Cd. 788–27, no. 357, Northern territories of Gold Coast, report of 1901 in Acc. and Papers, vol. LXIV 1902. Cd. 2238–6, no. 429, N.Ts of Gold Coast, report of 1903 in Acc. and Papers, 1904, and 1905, vol. LI.

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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customary "taste" with greater frequency and freedom than did ordinary buyers. But the most valuable tax collected by the Raga Naba was on the sale of slaves, whose buyers paid a tax of 1,000 cowries per head.

There is some evidence, mainly from Europeans, that the Mossi occasionally may have found the market taxes prohibitive. Binger reports that during his visit to the Mossi in 1888, the high taxes exacted by the Moro Naba were "one of the causes which placed Wagadougou in second place [as a market town] and which made Mane the commercial capital of Mossi country" (Binger 1892 : 467). Binger, himself, was caught in the institutionalized gift system and wrote sarcastically: "The day of the market [at Wagadougou] the receipts are good. People bring every-thing to the palace including millet as well as hoes or peanuts, and everything is accepted. *All this giving is left to the generosity of the customers . . .*" (Binger 1892 : 465) (his italics). Even so, one cannot be sure that the Mossi felt the same way about paying taxes to their rulers as Binger felt. There is, incidentally, always an air of mutual recriminations among the Mossi and their rulers about the level of reciprocation between them. The people admit that the chiefs are indispensable; yet they complain that they are greedy—they "eat" too much. The chiefs insist that it is difficult to rule a territory and complain that the people are ungrateful.

SOCIAL AND RITUAL ASPECTS OF THE MARKETPLACE

Although the offices of Kos Naba and Raga Naba have been abolished officially, these officials still exist in many Mossi districts, and even when they do not exist, some men acting in their stead appropriate commodities in the markets for the chiefs. Furthermore, the *nakomce* (plural of *nabiga*—chief's child) or nobles still wander about the market places taking handfuls of kola nuts, peanuts and everything they need without the people becoming angry or complaining to the French about it. Once when I visited a market in the company of a *nabiga*, the local Raga Naba came up to where we were buying meat and indicated to the butcher that one of his customers was a *nabiga* and that he should treat him accordingly. It is not because of ignorance that the market people continue to grant these privileges to the nobles and the chiefs, but rather because they believe that only the market officials, and not the Europeans, can take care of the markets.

One of the most important tasks of the Raga Naba (or in the absence of this official, the Kos Naba) is to propitiate the *tengkouga* in the market place, or supervise the sacrifices which the *tengsobas* make to them. The task of the market spirits is believed to be so difficult—

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When a woman has a number of stillbirthr or
845 loses her children when they are still babies, however, it is believed
761 than these children were embodiments of the same *kinkirsi* (spirits)
776 who must be tricked into remaining on earth when it returns, and
443 the market place is chosen as the site for this trickery. As soon as such
851 a woman gives birth to a child, and old woman places it in a basket
443 and on the next market day takes it to the market place. Her intention is to "sell" the child in the hope that it would not die if owned by someone other than its mother. The old woman walks around the market place shouting: "I have something to sell!" Invariably a man will walk up to her, and after ascertaining the contents of the basket, offer to buy it. The price varies with the fortune of the man, but traditionally the amount paid has been 500 cowries or their equivalent. The man takes the child for a few minutes and then returns it to its vendor, telling her in a loud voice so that the kinkirsi will hear: "I would like you to give this child to 'X' (the child's mother) to be reared for me and I will pay for its upbringing and will come
[551] for the child in a few years. He then gives the child the name *Yamba*
[553] (slave), or *Yemdaogo* (male slave) if male and *Yempoko* (female slave) if a girl. The old woman then returns the child to its mother, relating what has passed in the market and indicating who the "owner" of her child is. The "owner" of the child may not even see the child again, and naturally does not take this ownership seriously. In many cases the money with which he bought the child was given to him by the child's father.

852 The market also plays an important part in the circumcision and
443 incision ceremonies of Mossi boys and girls. For about two to three months after the actual operations the young children, especially the boys are secluded in the circumcision lodges or compounds and have almost no contact with the village population. Their re-introduction to society always takes place on the great market day. The parents of the children buy new clothing for them this occasion, and on the appointed day the boys or girls parade together in the market and are offered gifts by the market people. Later in the day, they are dismissed and individually feted by their relatives.

585 Owing to the relatively unceremonious nature of Mossi marriages,
76 the market does not play a role in Mossi weddings. However, the
554 same thing cannot be said about the last important *rite de passage*,
443 especially the funeral of a chief, or important elder. Prior to the intervention of the French, and to a lesser extent even today, the announcement of the death of an important ruler was seen as the breakdown of law and order and was ritually dramatized by a popular raid
[565] on the markets throughout the territories (Skinner : ms). During the interregnum the vendors are subject to constant raids by members of

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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the noble class, whose actions embody the ideology that the exercise of sovereignty is a corporate right which reverts to all of them when the head ruler dies. Much of this raiding is symbolic and does not interrupt market activities.

Many of the ceremonies connected with the funeral of chiefs and respected deceased elders take place in the market. Sometime between the interment of the dead person, the *keema,* and the first burial ceremonies, the sister-in-law *(dakia)* of the dead man in her role as joking relative—a role she plays until the funeral ceremonies are completed—impersonates him in the market place. On the day chosen for this rite the *dakia* dresses in the clothes of the *keema* and goes to market. While there, she acts as she observed her brother-in-law to have acted in the past: she circles the market and buys goods; she buys beer from his favorite beer seller and drinks with his friends; and for a moment, at least, she sits with his old cronies in their favorite haunts and takes part in their discussions. She may even be serenaded by *griots* who sing praises in honor of "her" ancestors, and she rewards them before leaving the market place that evening.

The market is the scene of an important ritual during the final funeral ceremonies, which are held about one year after a man was buried. On the morning of this ceremony the female relatives of the *keema,* led by his eldest daughter and his *dakia,* appear in the market and go from stall to stall buying all the things the deceased used in his lifetime. These include meat, *zumbala* (locust bean balls), cotton, tobacco, salt, kola nuts, peppers, *kumba* (a tomato), cakes, cooked millet-mush balls, potatoes, etc. When they have gathered all of these things, they retire to a spot near the market where they lay out all the foodstuff in baskets. In the meantime, the drummers play the royal airs, if the dead man was a chief, or ordinary rhythms if he was a commoner. Then the *keema's* eldest daughter places a basket on her head and, accompanied by four men, leads a procession of drummers and of the other women, also with their baskets, around the market. While this procession is circling the market three times in honor of the deceased, the *dakia,* carrying a very old basket containing the stalest food she could find, weaves back and forth through the marching throng making a nuisance of herself. After the third round the marchers return to their assembly point whence the eldest daughter and some of the older women now rush into the market, stealing merchandise from the stalls and placing it in their baskets. This assault is often so quickly done that it is fairly successful. The raiders then join the other mourners at the assembly point, where with bowed heads they listen respectfully while the chief drummer recites the genealogy of the *keema* and tells him that the people from the surrounding villages

567 /14/ The Mossi obtained slaves by purchase, warfare, or birth. No distinction was made among these various kinds of slaves; they were all treated in the same manner. The Bousansé and Gourounsi furnished the greatest number of slaves, and, as elsewhere, the Moslem Yarsé and Haoussa were the main traffickers. The Mossi sold each other into slavery too, as when a powerful man seized and sold a child or even an adult whom he had found defenseless in the bush. Sometimes a child was separated from its slave mother, but this was unusual. Slaves were part of the family property and devolved to the heir when their master died. When given in marriage by their own master, they acquired a certain freedom: they had their own house and their fields which they cultivated for their own use; they could acquire property and buy beasts of burden, goats, sheep, and cattle. The only vestige of slavery was the obligation to give all their daughters in marriage to their master. This is why whole villages of slaves are to be found, in no way distinguished from other villages. The village of Koupéla, estimated at 2,500 inhabitants, is entirely composed of the naba's slaves with the exception of three families. The prime minister himself, the Saman'Naba, and all the ministers are slaves of the naba. It is true that this designation "slave" includes slaves through indebtedness. Whenever a native had borrowed from the naba an amount of some importance, such as the price of a cow, and was unable to pay it back, an arrangement was made between the debtor and the naba. The former promised all his daughters to the latter and thus pledged all his descendants. It was then said that he had become a slave to the naba.

566 Serfs were another source of hands to work the land. There were two kinds of serfs, or man-servants if one prefers: the dakwaba and the noakansé. A dakonré (singular of dakwaba; etymologically, "one who is not married") has a family who places him in the service of a rich man with the sole purpose of getting him married, of getting him a wife when he comes of age. He labors for his master, works his fields, runs errands for him; he may, with his master's permission, have a field of his own and a few small possessions; yet, though he is free, he may not leave his master to enter someone else's service. A noakanga (singular of noakansé) has no family. He places himself into someone's service of his own free will in order to be fed, housed, sometimes clothed; his master gives him a wife more or less promptly according to region. A noakanga is freer than a dakonré, for he

Fulani MS11

M
566 may leave his master whenever he pleases, either to devote himself
M to trade or to enter the service of another man; but often he gets all
F his work from his master.

563 The Peul shepherds never were slaves of the Mossi, because they
M only knew how to watch the herds and were incapable of working the
F land. They were, nevertheless, held in severe vassalage by the Mossi,
[789] especially by the nabas, and served as victims in certain sacrifices.
Some Mossi sold by the Yarsé or by other Mossi have occasionally been their slaves, especially in the Dori region called Gyémaré by the natives.

/15/ Chapter 2. Administration

M
157 The power of the chiefs and the submission of their subjects are characteristic traits of Mossi country. The spirit of submission permeates the whole Mossi mentality. The Mossi are not particularly secretive or incommunicative, as the Bambara are said to be. On the contrary, they talk quite freely to their friends, even of their personal affairs; this does not mean that they are unable to keep a secret, especially if it is the king's secret. Two individuals have to be equals if there is to be some freedom between them; this freedom may develop into a certain closeness, but never into friendship in the highest sense of the term. If the Mossi appears secretive, it is because he is afraid to offend someone more powerful than himself. He always yields before a chief, before someone who "has the strength," as he puts it, while inwardly he may retain his own opinion and act as he pleases. When a chief talks, he hears nothing but these words
M in reply: bé néré, naba — "That's it, that's right. I agree with you."
576 The Mossi salute, formerly used in all the Black empires of the Sudan, especially in the courts of Ghana, Mali, and Gao, provides good evidence of this mentality. When we first enter the country as foreigners, we are shocked to see a man thus lower himself before another man. In order to salute, the Mossi puts down his load, hat, and sword, removes his shoes, sits on the ground, folds his legs slightly, and leans the upper part of his body forward. The elbows rest against the ground, as far apart as possible; the forearms, folded in front of

567 644 this reason. They did not work for the Moro Naba except seven or eight days a year when they were called along with all the other inhabitants of Ouahigouya, without exception, to the Moro Naba's fields. Actually, they were thus free men as far as work was concerned. Half their daughters, however, reverted to the Moro Naba, who took them for himself or for his close relatives. On the other hand, they supported themselves completely (food, clothing, etc.). The Moro Naba gave them no assistance whatever in this respect.

Let us add that the ordinary captives, the bingo of the common Mossi, found a safe retreat at the court of the Moro Naba. If a slave was dissatisfied with his master, he would run away and take asylum with the chief of Yatenga. The latter handed him to the Rassam Naba, who saw to it that a hut and a field were given to him (if he was married) and a wife as well (if he did not have any). As long as he was not married, he would cultivate the fields of the Moro Naba's wives, who provided him with food in return. Once married, he would work the soil, labor for himself and his wife, and have no obligations other than the general duties of the bingo who belonged to the Moro Naba, as we have seen above. In short, he would acquire the general status of a Crown slave.

Let us add, however, that if the master came and claimed his slave from the Moro Naba, the captive was sometimes returned. This depended on the fairness of the master's case (he had never mistreated his slave, had always been good to him, etc.) and also on the more or less sizable gift which he presented to the Moro Naba in order to gain his good graces.

The bingo of the Riziam Naba, an independent king as we have already noted /not translated/, were in the same position as the bingo of the Moro Naba and not in the position of ordinary bingo. The same applied to the bingo of the three great chiefs /267/ of the canton, the Zitenga Naba, Ratenga Naba, and Roussoum Naba.

• 566 6. Serfs. In Yatenga, there were serfs of a sort, the bagaré, to use the Mossi term. The only ones who had them, however, were the Moro Naba of Yatenga, the Moro Naba of Riziam, and a few great canton chiefs, such as the Zitenga Naba and the Ratenga Naba. Not even the Moro Naba's ministers were entitled to own them, much less the common Mossi. The bagaré was a Peul slave, a dimadio (rimaïbé in the plural) who had been captured from the Peul or who had fled from them to the Mossi, in short, a former rimaïbé who had

566 gone into Mossi hands. The bagaré did not till the soil. They simply minded their master's herds. As for other work, they also built the straw huts where the Moro Naba of Yatenga, the Riziam Naba, and other chiefs slept at the New Year (we shall see under "Religion" /not translated/ to what purpose).

The bagaré saw to their own support (food and clothing). The multiplying herd belonged to the naba, but its yield (milk and butter) went to the bagaré. Out of this yield, however, they gave the naba whatever he needed of milk and butter.

567 In short, we can see that among the Mossi and Foulsé there exist, or rather existed, the two kinds of slaves known throughout the /French/ Sudan, the trade slaves and the house slaves, the former being salable and the latter a part of the family. Nowadays, as a result of the prohibition against their purchase and sale, there remains but a dwindling number of house slaves.

421 Now we come to family property and its transmission.

596 Family property, properly so-called. —There is no family property among our Mossi, since no work is done in common by the whole family. The family property is limited to family charms owned by the boudoukasaman.

423 Property of the compound, or subfamily property. —This does not
592 exist either, for the same reason, except for the compound itself which is the communal property of the zaka group. While each household has huts of its own, these huts are a usufructuary possession which is in accordance with the full ownership of the zaka group. Now, if some household chief wishes to build a new hut, he notifies the zakasoba, who, incidentally, always grants permission. Once the hut is built, the builder may destroy it if he wishes, which goes to prove that he has full ownership over it, having made it. He cannot, however, destroy the hut where he lives which he did not build as it actually belongs to the zaka. In short, there may be in the compound a mixture of communal property (belonging to the zaka) and individual property (hut built by a household or by an individual, millet granary erected in the same circumstances, etc.), but the communal property prevails by far.

423 Property of the work group. —Here, communal property is impor-
571 tant. /268/ It is from the group fields that the group derives most of its sustenance (seven months out of twelve). The work implements

8: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1958
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797 sands of Mossi who fled their homeland to escape forced labor or military serv-
167 ice ultimately returned as Moslems, but the majority of seasonal migrants do not have enough contact with foreign populations for them to become Moslems. Most of the Mossi who migrate to Ghana work on cocoa farms far removed from large centers of population. It is also true that even those Mossi who worked for Moslems on the farms and found it expedient to "pray" (as the Mossi refer to conversion to Islam) soon reverted to paganism on their return in order to escape the displeasure of their lineage members. I have recorded several cases of pagans who became Moslems only when they returned from abroad to find their relatives all converted to Islam.

571 Today there are obvious rewards for those Mossi who embrace Islam; be-
797 sides such tangible rewards as getting wives and children, there are the intan-
554 gible ones of upward social mobility and greater prestige. It is important to
566 note that most liberated slaves and serfs are now Moslems. Formerly these non-
[567] Mossi had low status, but today those who have been to Mecca bear such proud titles as *Hadji*. On the night before Ramadan, one of these men gave a talk before the Nobéré chief during which he chided the chief for his impiety and voiced the hope that the next chief would be a true Moslem. He admitted that the chief might interpret such a speech from a former serf as impertinence, but he begged him to accept the censure as coming from the servant of *Nabiyama* (the prophet). This same man had refused to pay homage to the chief at the annual sacrifice to the ancestors, and when admonished returned the daughter which the chief had given him as a wife. In earlier days a chief would not have given a daughter to a serf, and moreover, a disrespectful serf could be killed instantly.

797 Many French administrators and Christian missionaries allege that Mossi
291 youth embrace Islam because they like the beautiful robes and red fezzes of the Moslems, but this is a naive explanation for the conduct of a highly sophisti-
515 cated people. Most young men in Nobéré wear Moslem-type clothes because such clothes are the mode. Now that sun helmets, dark glasses, and women's raincoats with hoods are in vogue, pagans as well as Moslems wear them. What is of interest, however, is that when pagans become Moslems they wear cleaner clothes and affect a different style of life.

794 The local consensus is that Moslems are much better behaved than pagans
577 because they do not swear, fight, or get drunk in public. The man chosen as Imam is required to have such characteristics as mercy toward evil-doers, benevolence, magnanimity, physical beauty, and virility. Yet many Mossi say that the Moslems can be worse than any other people. They accuse them of being charlatans, of selling Koranic verses as charms, and of committing murder by the use of magical formulae. Neither pagans nor Moslems believe that a man is necessarily good because he recites his daily prayers or goes to Mecca.

794 Moslems in the district follow most precepts of their religion: they recite the five daily prayers according to the rites of Tidjani (there are only two Moslems of the Hamada sect in the district and no members of the Hamallist sect), give alms to the poor, observe the month-long fast (called by the Mossi the

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the original segment of the ruling Biligo lineage had lived in Barkago for some time, it divided into two minor lineages and settled in two saghse, Natenga and Godin. A noble from Godin possessed the nam, but it eventually passed to a noble from Natenga. The new chief then founded a new saka called Kedpalago because he wanted more living space for his own children. As a result, the minor lineage of Natenga now had two babissi living in two saghse. The minor lineage of Godin subsequently declined in size and prestige. The only evidence of its former importance was that its eldest male continued to make separate sacrifices to his own chiefly ancestors, even though the more recent holders of the nam made sacrifices to all former chiefs. These independent sacrifices were made in spite of the fact that this minor lineage kept growing smaller because its male members left to live elsewhere or to join maternal patrilineages with higher status. The sacrifices were expected to cease only if and when the minor lineage were to disappear with the incorporation of the widows and orphans of its last surviving males into the other Biligo groups of the village and district. Of course, if the Godin minor lineage had regained the nam, it undoubtedly would have experienced a rebirth and renewal of strength. It might have attracted its daughter's sons, and even aliens who would have lived in its saghse as they did in those of the ruling lineage segments.

A fourth saka, Nakomgo ("we hunger after the nam"), was inhabited by the noble descendants of Naba Ngado, the district chief who had replaced the descendant of Naba Biligo of Nobere. Since these nobles traced their descent from two full brothers, Kouliga and Kongo, they formed two related minor lineages with five component minimal lineages. The compounds of the two babissi of the Kouliga minor lineage were separate but contiguous. Near them were the compounds of the three babissi of the Kongo minor lineage. Scattered about in the Nakomgo saka were compounds of sisters' sons, strangers, and nobles' slaves.

The people of Narila, the fifth saka of Barkago, were members of the aboriginal Ninisi population, and thus furnished the village's earth-priest. He made sacrifices to the earth shrines in the village, gave ritual permission for building compounds and digging graves, and took control of the village during the period between the death of a chief and the accession of another. Scattered throughout the various saghse were compounds inhabited by people of serf, slave, or refugee origin.

Of all the groups within the village, the Ngado people kept the most exact genealogies. They did so because one of the segments of their maximal lineage held the district nam, and as nobles they had theoretical access to it. Once they had lost the nam of the district, the descendants of Biligo

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567 643 651 [464] [439] Naba Baongo (ca. 1800–30) decided that it was more profitable to sell them.[16] Subsequent rulers, especially the two Mogho Nanamse who ruled just prior to the French conquest, sold most of their captives to passing caravans or in special sections of the larger markets. When other persons sold slaves in the market, the Raga Naba collected some 1,000 cowries on each transaction—the largest tax on any market commodity.

567 839 [752] [439] [195] The Mossi rulers seem to have benefited even more from the sale of eunuchs, for they had a monopoly over them. The Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou sent some captured slaves and all recidivous thieves to Teemetenga village in Koubri district, some 13 miles south of the capital, to be operated upon.[17] So successful were the Mossi surgeons that—in contrast to specialists in other areas, who lost nine lives for every successful castration—the mortality among the Mossi was only one out of ten.[18] Some of the eunuchs furnished by the Mossi were sold as far away as Constantinople, a fact which surprised the French ambassador to Turkey who saw them there in 1900.[18]

566 643 563 621 In addition to slaves and eunuchs, the Mogho Naba kept a large number of bondsmen to provide services for him. One group, the Dapore, lived in a ward of the capital called Dapoya, and had a chief, the Dapore Naba, who was himself a Dapore. The origin of these people is obscure, but they seem to have been the children of foreign captives who were brought to Ouagadougou and placed in the ruler's service. Some of them even claimed that their ancestors had come to Ouagadougou voluntarily and had placed themselves under the care and protection of the ruler. This seems unlikely, however, since the status of these people resembles that of persons captured by Sudanese rulers and installed in special wards as serfs.[19] Some of the Dapore lived in villages of their own and cultivated fields for the Mogho Naba. Others lived in a ward of Ouagadougou, served in the palace household, and provided the royal executioners. Some were selected to serve as palace eunuchs, and placed under the charge of the Kamsaogho Naba. The Dapore were hardly ever sold unless they were convicted criminals. The Mogho Naba and his chiefs refrained from selling serfs or captives who had been born in Mossi country. However, they often claimed the sons and daughters of these people as pages or pughsiudse.

[839] [567]

The Baglere made up the second group of bondsmen providing services for the Mogho Naba. They, too, lived in a special ward and were headed by the Baglere Naba, one of their own people. Their origin is also obscure: some of them claimed to be descended from Fulani slaves who had run away from their masters and sought asylum in Mossi country; others believed that they were the descendants of foreign captives. The Baglere

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worked for the Mogho Naba in and around the palace courtyard, and in the fields. They also kept his herds and provided him with animals from their own herds. Like the Dapore, they were seldom sold, but they often had to give their sons and daughters to the Mogho Naba.

The last group of persons who contributed their services to the Mogho Naba were the Kamboinse. Their origin is also unclear. Most of my respondents claimed that the Kamboinse and their chief first came to Ouagadougou from the direction of the Gold Coast, that they bore guns, and that they offered their services as guards to the Mogho Naba.[21] Later on, the sovereign allegedly assigned slaves to the Kamboinse unit, with the result that the entire group eventually took on a serf-like character. The Kamboinse guarded the Mogho Naba's palace and seized for him the goods of persons whom he condemned to death.

The services performed for the Mogho Naba by his pages and other youthful retainers also contributed significantly to the support of his administration. We have already seen how these young men and boys took care of his every need and functioned as important messengers within the royal household. The Mogho Naba also had control over the daughters of his serfs, whom he used to obtain revenue from aliens and subjects alike. Periodically, the Mogho Naba gave one of these girls as pughsiudga to a man, thus obligating him to render goods and services to the court. Moreover, the man had to return the eldest daughter he had by this wife to the Mogho Naba as a future pughsiudga. In this way, the sovereign had a revolving store of women through whom he could bind men to himself in a nexus of obligations, and from whom he eventually received additional women.[22]

The provincial ministers of the Ouagadougou kingdom occupied such a strategic position within the central administration that anyone rendering gifts or tribute to the Mogho Naba always gave presents to them as well. Their main source of revenue, however, came from the villages under their direct control, and from the retainers who lived in their compounds and in their wards in the capital. The economic relations between the ministers and their villages were similar to those between the district chiefs and their villages, and will be discussed below. The retainers, serfs, and slaves who served these ministers provided them with many of the services their counterparts rendered to the Mogho Naba. They kept their houses in repair and provided them with firewood and with fodder for their horses. Many of them also cultivated fields for their masters. Whenever the ministers needed extra goods or services, they called on those persons who lived in their compounds or in their wards. For example, hun-

dreds of persons lived in Ouidin, the ward of the Ouidi Naba. Some of them were related to him; others had been attracted by his wealth and by his ability to obtain wives for his charges. All of them benefited from being attached to him in one way or another, and in return helped him to augment his income.

All the district chiefs sent women to their provincial ministers to be kept as wives (and thus as agricultural workers), or to be given out as pughsiudse. The Kamsaogho Naba received more pughsiudse than the other ministers because he was in charge of the wealthier districts, and also of course distributed more. The Baloum Naba was especially favored in another respect. Each year, he was entitled to call several *seghse* (sing. *seka*; a corvée or convocation) of his former pages and their relatives to help cultivate his fields. The Ouidi Naba's sources of revenue were about the same as the Baloum Naba's. In addition, his position as chief minister enabled him to obtain numerous gifts from persons who visited Ouagadougou. Moreover, the Mogho Naba often gave him horses from the fado of deceased district chiefs. The Larhalle Naba had full ministerial privileges, and a few other means of obtaining revenue. He was allowed, for instance, to keep the animals that had not been sacrificed on the graves of deceased rulers.

The provincial ministers received many goods and services from the district chiefs of their provinces. Whenever one of these ministers sent a messenger to the district, the chief gave the messenger money and livestock for his master. Furthermore, the district chiefs brought presents for their minister when they paid their annual visit to Ouagadougou to render homage to the Mogho Naba. The provincial ministers used their position as confidants and advisers to obtain as many presents as possible from persons who came to Ouagadougou to ask special favors from the Mogho Naba, to participate in judicial proceedings, or to seek the nam. Moreover, they cooperated with each other in these exactions, so that a person seeking a favor from or through one minister was prudently advised to give presents to or to seek the aid of the others.

The district chief played a key role in the procurement of revenue for the central administration, and derived an income for himself in the process. The seignorial rights over the Mossi people delegated by the Mogho Naba to all nam holders were quite obvious on this level. The district chief had rights to all valuable fruit trees, such as locust-bean and shea-butter, that grew within the boundaries of his territory. He instructed the village chiefs to harvest the fruit of these trees and send it to him. The village chiefs even had to send him the wood from the fallen branches of these trees.

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For example, the villagers of Barkago traditionally cultivated and harvested a field of millet behind his compound for the chief. The people of Pinse, Donse, Passingtenga, and Tewarka cultivated millet for him in their own villages, and those of Togose and Basbedo cultivated rice for him in their excellent lowlands.

The district chief had fields both behind his compound and in the bush, which were cultivated for him by his retainers, serfs, and slaves. More than the Mogho Naba and the provincial ministers, the district chief believed that a Moaga must perform agricultural work during the planting season; to show his interest in farming, he often personally supervised the work on his plantations. When the task of weeding or harvesting proved too much for his own people, he asked his villages for a *sosogha*. On that day, each village chief, accompanied by his men, went to the district chief's fields, where, to the accompaniment of drums and chants and with the verbal encouragement of district administrators, the villages vied with each other in their task. The district chief usually sat under a tree and watched the proceedings and occasionally visited the various contingents to observe the progress made. Toward evening, the chief's wives gave the workers large quantities of food and drink in compensation for their services.

Like the Mogho Naba, the district chief had officials who collected taxes on commodities sold in local markets. These district market officials were usually serfs, Gurunsi captives, or bondsmen from other populations. Mossi rarely served in such capacities because many of the local market places were considered ritually dangerous, and their titular deities, the Tengkouga, were believed to wreak vengeance on market officials who were tardy with sacrifices. The local Kos Naba supervised the slaughtering of every animal killed in the market, kept its skin so that its ownership could be verified if necessary, and collected taxes from the butchers in the form of meat or cowries. The Raga Naba of the district was not as strict as his counterpart in Ouagadougou, and seldom imposed formal taxes on the traders. He usually walked around the market, trailed by the chief's servants, and seized calabashes of grain and other commodities, which he placed in the servants' baskets. The Raga Naba did not tax those itinerant traders or caravaneers who visited the markets in the district, nor did he interfere with them in any other way. These merchants usually had business and personal relations with the chief, and he himself handled revenue from this source. The merchants gave him goods from the forest and Sahara regions, and he in turn often gave them wives, who were thus taken out of the district.

The Mossi district chief was always on the lookout for new sources of revenue, and thus welcomed strangers into his district because they "in-

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tions. Binger, who found Boukary Koutou (the future Mogho Naba Wobogo) living in exile for having led a rebellion against his brother, Mogho Naba Sanum, tells us: 574 579 434

> Boukary has no resources, and does not even have the advantage of receiving periodic tribute from several large villages. In order to subsist and to maintain a certain status, he is compelled to live by pillage and even by brigandage. From time to time, his horsemen make incursions into the outskirts of some Gurunsi or Kipirsi village, and carry off by surprise the inhabitants whom they find working the fields or looking for wood. His people also hide and lie in wait along the roads to capture any persons who may pass within their range. This type of behavior has given Boukary Naba a bad reputation. However, the people who understand his position forgive him, knowing the situation in which his brother has placed him. And, in spite of all this, he has numerous partisans, and many others who would be happy to see him gain power.[25]

Those district chiefs or princes who wished to retain their power legitimately were forced to be generous or run the risk of losing the allegiance and good will of their villagers, who were their ultimate supporters. 634 574

It is very difficult to generalize about the amount of revenue collected by a village chief. He did not receive any revenue from the land used by his villagers. He treated the weogho in his village in the same manner as the district chief. If some families grew too large and wanted to establish permanent residence in the village bush, they asked the chief for permission to settle there. However, many village chiefs had special areas of waste for their own use. They had usually received them as gifts from some district chief, and therefore had the right to collect tribute on any crops, firewood, or fish obtained from these lands. 651 622 634 [361] [431]

The average village chief's main source of revenue was derived from the agricultural and other labor of his wives and relatives. A village chief received a number of wives from his subjects and from aliens living in his village. These women helped cultivate his fields. If their labor was insufficient he called a sosogha, to which he often invited his wives' relatives. Some chiefs also had serfs and slaves who helped cultivate their land and kept their cattle as well. [464] [566] [567]

The village chief did not have the power to tax his subjects. Instead, he functioned as a channel through which commodities and services passed up the hierarchy and on to Ouagadougou. Many villagers voluntarily helped the chief to repair his huts and compound walls and to cut thatch for his roofs. Many gave him baskets of grain and other vegetable products after the harvest. They also visited him and gave him presents during the annual rites to his ancestors. In contrast to higher chiefs, however, the village head [476] [431] [692]

443 Ready-made clothing, beads. No tax collected.
651 [82] Soumbala (kalgo in Mossi) [locust beans pressed into balls]. Payment in kind (one ball per seller).

Other spices. No fee paid.

Karite [shea] butter. Collected with a soutga (a kind of ladle), karite butter was used almost exclusively for the horses of the Mogho Naba.

Fritters and other cooked foods. Actually no fee was called for on these products, but the collectors demanded the payment of a tax in kind to provide their own food or that of the samand'kamba (servitors of the outer courtyard).

Salt. 300 cowries for each load (ox or donkey).

Hoes, axes. Each merchant provided a daba or an axe for work in the field of the naba. Nothing was collected at the subsequent market if all of the tools had not been sold in one day.

Jewelry. No tax was collected. The jewelers who made
[306] bracelets and other jewels for the wives of the naba, as well as various harness parts, were exempt from all taxes.

Other markets. Fees collected for the benefit of the canton chiefs were about the same as [83] those paid at the market of Ouagadougou. In small markets, however, payments were made in kind. The edible products made up the food of the collectors, Gourounsi captives for the most part, who were prevented by their social status from having wives and so had no one to prepare food for them.

Chapter 5

Slavery Among the Mossi

567 We shall endeavor in the following lines to describe slavery as it existed among the Mossi before the French occupation.

567 We know that slavery has existed for a very long time in the
173 land of the Mogho Naba, but, because of the total lack of dates in Mossi history -- handed down from generation to generation by the griot [heralds, drummers] of the naba -- it is difficult to determine when it was first introduced.

567 It is known, however, that the first slaves of the Mossi were all of Boussanga [Busansi] origin. The canton of Garango in what is

567 now the circle of Tenkodogo constituted a reservoir (figuratively called lambagré, "cotton reserve") from which the warriors and vassals of the emperor brought back hundreds of young slaves. This was because Garango recognized no authority; it was dependent neither on the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou nor on the king of Tenkodogo. Tradition has it that the warriors of the Mossi chiefs were always surprising the people of Garango on market days. The memory of these raids is why, even today the markets at Garango [366] are open only from six in the morning until noon.

The Mossi considered themselves to be free men, and no one, [644] not even naba, had the [85] right to reduce a Moaga subject to slavery. The facial tattoos made it easy to distinguish the Moaga [304] from foreigners.

Since there were few contacts between neighboring villages, 567 it was difficult even for highwaymen to sell young people from near- 674 by areas. This does not mean that there were not, all the same, captives of Mossi origin. Bandits rode, for instance, from Ouagadougou to Boussouma. They always carried large leather [492] sacks tied to their saddles and into them thrust children and women who were taken by surprise while gathering fruit in the bush. Such captives were always sold far from their home villages. Naturally such practices were severely dealt with by the naba. Naba Wobgo drove the canton chief of Bilgotenga, Warongo, from his territory because he enslaved Mossi people. Warongo was forced to take refuge in Yatenga and returned home only after the coming of the French.

567 Some of the slaves brought back from Garango were kept by the emperor, and the rest were distributed among the warriors. Up to that time no one thought of using them for anything but field work and domestic labor.

It was Naba Baongo, the twenty-sixth successor of Oubri, who first thought of selling the slaves. He said: "Id kossi bazas kamba tib boude nan wa saï" (literally, "let us sell these slave dogs; perhaps, one day, [86] there will be no more of them"). It is as if the emperor had foreseen the suppression of slavery and the emancipation of the slaves.

Today one seldom encounters former Boussanga slaves. They have no doubt returned to their villages since the arrival of the [304] French. Their descendants (house slaves, dogyiri) now wear the same facial tattoos as the Mossi.

567 The only slaves who have remained faithful to their masters or, more exactly, who have preferred to remain in Mossi territory after their emancipation, are nearly all Gourounsi.

The Gourounsi Captives

567 727 648 [439] Sonrhaï [Songhai] forces led by Alpha Haïnon, Gazeré, and Babato used to raid Gourounsi country. They reduced a large number of Gourounsi to slavery, immediately making soldiers of the more enterprising among them to fight against their own people and selling or exchanging the rest for horses. Mossi country has always had a large supply of horses, so the Mossi used to go to Léo to trade their horses for slaves or simply to trade their slaves to the Sonrhaï for cowries.

567 648 The Sonrhaï chiefs maintained good relations with the emperor of the Mossi, Naba Sanum. That is why they spared the Gourounsi village chiefs who had taken refuge with the Mogho Naba.

Boukary-koutou, the future Naba Wobgo, enjoyed the [87] regard and friendship of the Sonrhaï since he aided them in their wars against the Gourounsi in exchange for an ample share of the booty and slaves. We have shown that the large number of Gourounsi whom he brought with him to Ouagadougou contributed mightily to his being named emperor of the Mossi.

567 651 During the reigns of Naba Koutou, Sanum, and Wobgo, there were special slave markets attached to the regular markets at Ouagadougou and other large centers. A fee of 1,000 cowries was collected for the benefit of the naba for each captive sold, regardless of sex.

567 302 787 When owners desired to sell a slave, they first shaved his head, and it was only after the hair had begun to grow again that he was taken to market. The cutting of the hair derives from a superstition among the Mossi.

Depending on where the hair starts to grow, whether well back on the head, at the forehead, or near the ears, the interpretation varies as to how the slave is to be regarded: as a dangerous being; as a lucky or unlucky influence on the family owning him.

We shall not now go into details since such beliefs will be discussed in a special section.

567 The several categories of captives are as follows.

1. The Yemdaogo, all of whom are of foreign origin (Boussanga and Gourounsi) and either bought or captured during a war.

2. The daporé or dapobi (house slaves) who are the decendants of slaves. [88]

3. The bengaré, former slaves of the Peulh, who have abandoned their masters and put themselves under the sole authority of the Mogho Naba.

4. The Kamboiensé.

The Various Types of Slaves

567 Daporé ("living behind the house"). (a) The daporé belong-
563 ing to the Mogho Naba. At Ouagadougou there is a section called Dapoya, and its inhabitants are called Dapobi. They are wrongly considered (even by themselves) to be captives. Of Kibissi origin (we have noted that the Kibissi, the Ninissi, and the Gourounsi were the original inhabitants of the present Mossi area), they came of their own volition to Obri-Bangrenaba (Naba Oubri's chief of the bangré slaves), and he presented them to the emperor. It has been impossible to find out who was reigning when they arrived. The Mogho Naba first installed them at Wavoussé and later behind his house where they acted as guards and also were entrusted with important responsibilities.

These are voluntary captives. They are therefore not yemsé in the usual sense of the word, since they were neither bought nor sold, and the emperor did not mistreat them, although he did not grant them, as foreigners, the same rights as those possessed by his
[583] subjects. The dapobi could not marry Mossi girls. They were obliged to marry slaves, and that is perhaps why they are considered slaves themselves. The children of these marriages, called [89] dogyiri ("born in the house") make up the "house slave" class.

567 (b) Daporé of the Kamsaoughin and daporé of the canton chiefs. In addition to the foreign dapobi just mentioned, there are true dapobi who were either captured in battle or bought. The former are slaves of the Mogho Naba and are entrusted to the care of the Kamsaougho Naba, chief eunuch, who is responsible for guarding

567 part of the emperor's harem. The dapobi belonging to the canton chiefs, belonging to the kombemba, are of the same origin. While the Mogho Naba could not sell the dapobi of Kibissi origin, the emperor and the canton chiefs could do as they liked with the true dapobi. They were sold for the most trifling faults and their wives and children were either sent away with them or turned over to other deserving captives.

Slaves of the Crown. (a) The bangaré. These are Peulh captives who have gradually cast off the authority of their masters and who have submitted voluntarily to the authority of the Mogho Naba.

A herd of cattle is called nab'bangaré, and it seems likely that the word bangaré, "herd," to designate this type of slave came from that source. However, the bangaré are not solely former Peulh slaves since a free individual who has committed a serious crime in his [90] native village and fears reprisal comes to join the "herd."

Once presented to the Mogho Naba, they were henceforth considered slaves and, as such, immune from prosecution.

567 The principal bangaré villages, generally known as "independent
62 villages," are: Kaïbo (province of Gounga); Manghin, Zaanga (canton of Zorgongo); Zaon'pighin, Payaobtinga (canton of Boudry); Nabasnoghin (canton of Nedogo); Bangar'Nabilin (canton of Zorgo); Gandaogo (canton of Zoungou); Boumintoré, Sidtenga, Mandié, Bougoumbarga, etc.

567 The emperor could supply himself from these "herds" when-
681 ever the need arose. Any bangaré who had committed serious crimes or who had been denounced as dangerous individuals who spread disorder in the villages or committed robbery were castrated and made into eunuchs or sold by order of the emperor.

[582] The bangaré intermarry since no free Mossi father would give them a daughter in marriage. This is solely due to the fact that if the emperor decided to sell a bangaré, his family would share the same fate. The father of the wife would not intervene in such a case, because this might be dangerous for him. So it is easily understandable that, under these circumstances, no father would seek such a match.

567 Bangaré chiefs. The chiefs of bangaré villages [91] are ap-
622 pointed by the Mogho Naba. The villages themselves are free of any

567 control by the canton chiefs in whose territories they are located.
622 The inhabitants pay nothing to the kombéré nor can the chief require any labor service in his fields or for the upkeep of his houses. They recognize only the Mogho Naba as chief.

567 Kamboinsé. True Kamboinsé are not Mossi; they came from the west during the reign of Naba Waraga (nineteenth successor of Oubri). Like the dapobi of the Dapoya section they came with guns (their chief even had a [ceremonial] stool) to put themselves under the authority of the Mogho Naba. Their chief, Gambaré by name, told the emperor that they had come to offer themselves as soldiers and slaves to help him pacify his territory. The Kamboinsé occupy a section of the town behind the Catholic mission on the right side of the road to Pô.

When the emperor's native gunners found themselves faced with competition from foreigners, they countered by appointing their own chief who took the title of Kamboin Naba. They are, however, different from the true Kamboinsé, and they live a dozen or so kilometers from Ouagadougou in the villages of Kamboinsé and Wobrigré.

While the first-mentioned Kamboinsé are voluntary slaves, the others are true slaves captured in war or bought by the emperor.

567 426 [92] Use of slaves as security for debt. Captives might be used to settle debts. It should be noted that the right to own slaves was not limited to the emperor and his vassals. Any prosperous Moaga (dakangré) might own them.

[612] If the head of a household died leaving debts, the heirs could sell a few slaves to pay off the obligation. If, however, the creditor preferred to have the slaves, the latter were put up for appraisal just as though they were livestock.

In the same way, slaves could be traded for horses, garments, or even loads of kola nuts.

567 If slaves were maltreated by their owners, providing that the latter were not of the nobility, they could put themselves under the protection of the naba. In that event they ceased to belong to their former owners. On the other hand, if a Moaga took it upon himself [682] to kill a slave, he at once had to pay a fine of 100,000 cowries to his canton chief as a blood price.

567 439 Ordinarily, captives who were brought back from the wars were at once sold to the Haoussa [Hausa] or Yarcé [Yarse] who traded

567 them for kola nuts with the Achanti [Ashanti] or for loaves of salt
439 at Timbuktu. Although they were always transported by roundabout routes to prevent them from finding their way back to their homes, still some of them always managed to escape.

492 The naba used the young yemdado as soroné or grooms, and
567 they would often [93] take the young and attractive women (yempoksé) as wives.

641 The sale of free men. Neither the emperor of the Mossi nor
681 his vassals sold their subjects. Individuals who were regarded as dangerous were simply put to death unless they took refuge in a bangaré to avoid being executed, as has been noted above. Some were sent to the emperor to be made into eunuchs.

304 The facial tattoos worn by the Mossi clearly distinguished them
567 from neighboring peoples. However, if by accident or because of need a naba sold a free man and the latter was claimed by his rela-
689 tives, the chief was required to buy back the slave or to indemnify his family. We have described above how a canton chief was exiled by the emperor for having sold free Mossi.

583 Concealed selling of women and children. In the chapter on marriage customs among the Mossi we shall show that a native
562 Moaga did not demand a bride price because he did not want to feel that
567 he was selling his daughter. There is no doubt that this rule has exceptions. Indeed, we shall show that the failure to pay a debt, a bout of drunkenness, or a favor received might suffice to mortgage the future of a daughter, even though at the time she might be a small child and quite unaware of her fate. In any event, there would be no question of her expressing any opinion, since her wishes are never taken into account. During periods of famine -- which have been
[131] occurring almost [94] regularly for some years -- a small basket of millet is enough to make a father promise his daughter. In the same way, we regret to say, a great many girls are promised in exchange for trifling sums at the time the poll tax is paid.

567 Rights of slaves. Since he is regarded as an inferior being, the yemdaogo (slave) has no well-defined rights. He is required to perform all kinds of domestic work and must give unquestioning obedience to his master and the master's family. Besides his essential duties, however, he is permitted to do some farming for himself, practice some trade, or to raise cattle, with the proceeds constituting

567 his personal fortune. The management of any such property is left entirely to him. If the master becomes indebted [to the slave], he is required to pay the debt within a fixed time limit.

Emancipation from slavery. As was indicated in the foregoing paragraph, it was possible for a slave to amass property through his own efforts. He might then free himself by paying his master 100,000 cowries. He then might either return to his native village or settle in his master's village. There have been slaves who not only freed themselves in this way, but also became slave owners in their turn.

If, however, slaves marry female slaves given to them by their masters and become fathers of families, they do not usually leave their masters. [95] They acquire a certain standing and are counted as members of the family. It is understood that they do not have the right to dispose of their children since the latter are dogyiri (house slaves).

465 Various types of unpaid work. Aside from the labor and other obligations required of all Mossi subjects for their haba -- we have described the forced labor in a previous chapter -- it may be said that, in general, no work is required without pay, even from slaves. In an area that is predominantly agricultural there can be no question of payment in money as would be the case in private or official enterprises where contracts specify the obligations of an employer to his employees. On the purely native level, the employer is obligated only to feed the workers.

In sum, what are the duties of a Moaga?

1. Cultivation of the family fields.

2. Construction and repair of huts and roofs.

3. Private work: basketry, shoemaking, weaving cotton strips, pottery, sewing, etc.

The head of the household is required to feed the workers who 592 cultivate the family plots or repair the huts. In a later chapter we 476 shall see that when the [96] members of a family could not complete a task without help, they called on other young men in the village. In that case, animals were slaughtered, dolo (millet beer) was brewed, and sagbo (millet mush) or benga (beans) was prepared.

567 On the other hand, it should be stated that when yemdago were used for hard labor, they were very well fed and were even given double rations.

567 Were slaves part of an estate? Among the Mossi, the wi
428 are part of an estate on the same footing as the rest of the prop
562 of the deceased. The same thing applies to the captives (yem and dogyiri (house slaves) who constitute and integral part of t estate. They constitute a patrimony to be handed down from father to son in accordance with the customary order of succes They remain the exclusive property of the legitimate heir and not distributed as are the wives of the deceased.

[97] Chapter 6

Djiba Naba, Crown Prince of the Mossi Empire

Preliminary Remarks

644 In writing on this subject we have not tried to ascertain the canton of Djiba was once independent or whether it was un the direct authority of the Mogho Naba.

At the outbreak of the World War in 1914 the Djiba Nab brother of the present emperor, Naba Kom, was drafted into t army, and another brother had to be appointed to take his pla The latter's administration was in many ways unsatisfactory, s when the Djiba Naba, on his return from the front, had to be to Doulougou to replace a deceased son of Naba Wobgo, the Naba retained direct authority over the canton of Djiba. Mea his eldest son had returned from Tunis and had been officially the chief of Djiba, but he had had to leave again for military at Salonika. Thus, it can be said that even before the canton Djiba had been made the prerogative of the eldest son of Nab Zombré, it had already been under the latter's authority.

It was during the reign of Naba Zombré, twenty-third M Naba, that the eldest son of the emperor was given jurisdictio the canton of Djiba. Naba Zombré, after Naba Niandeffo, h of the longest reigns in the history of the country. He actuall for sixty years.

643 [98] An old tradition requires an emperor who has ruled
782 thirty years to go to Oubritenga to celebrate zom'bika (literal

669 The last wars in the Koupéla area, therefore, were all civil wars that broke out upon the death of chiefs in the adjacent regions of Koupéla, Fada, and Tenkodogo.

721 The most usual theater of warfare, however, was Bousanga /Busansi/ country. If a Bousanga woman enslaved to the naba of Koupéla ran away, the naba demanded her return. If his request was turned down, this meant war. When the Mossi ran short of millet, when their herds had been decimated by an epizootic disease, or even simply when they wished to obtain slaves, the naba would assemble his ministers and direct them to raid the Bousansé. The Saman'Naba would take [70] charge of the war. The Trabana, an experienced warrior, acted as chief of staff, and all the other chiefs, heads of cantons and villages; assembled their men. This was a festive occasion, and its abolition is still lamented by many people, especially among the chiefs.

721 Everything was looted; the harvest and herds were shared, and the ●567 population was reduced to slavery. Since we have mentioned slaves, we shall provide some details on the subject.

567 Slavery existed in Mossi country, but in a very mild form. The agricultural Mossi kept slaves to till their fields. It was to their advantage to treat them well and thus turn them to good account. [435] Slaves constituted a source of wealth. An adult slave sold for 50 to 100 francs according to his strength, and no distinction was made between men and women. It was, therefore, unusual for a Mossi to kill a slave. Custom certainly sanctioned his right to do so, and no one, not even his chief, could call him to account for his act; his slave was his property, and he could do with him as he pleased. When he wished to get rid of a slave, however, he found it more lucrative to sell him. Besides, a slave should be attached to the household; a [278] maltreated slave might run away, even at the risk of being caught and in spite of the drug he was forced to drink, which, like the Lethean waters, was supposed to cause him to lose his memory. On the other hand, a well-treated, well-fed slave had the hope of obtaining a wife and becoming in turn the master of a hut. When his master was pleased with him, when he had rendered an important service, he was sometimes given one of the master's daughters in marriage; this made him free, and his children were not born slaves. Slaves could also be freed if their family agreed to redeem them. They were freed most frequently by means of an exchange: one of their daughters, sisters, or nieces was given in their place. This custom persisted until quite recently.

567 /14/ The Mossi obtained slaves by purchase, warfare, or birth. No distinction was made among these various kinds of slaves; they were all treated in the same manner. The Bousansé and Gourounsi furnished the greatest number of slaves, and, as elsewhere, the Moslem Yarsé and Haoussa were the main traffickers. The Mossi sold each other into slavery too, as when a powerful man seized and sold a child or even an adult whom he had found defenseless in the bush. Sometimes a child was separated from its slave mother, but this was unusual. Slaves were part of the family property and devolved to the heir when their master died. When given in marriage by their own master, they acquired a certain freedom: they had their own house and their fields which they cultivated for their own use; they could acquire property and buy beasts of burden, goats, sheep, and cattle. The only vestige of slavery was the obligation to give all their daughters in marriage to their master. This is why whole villages of slaves are to be found, in no way distinguished from other villages. The village of Koupéla, estimated at 2, 500 inhabitants, is entirely composed of the naba's slaves with the exception of three families. The prime minister himself, the Saman'Naba, and all the ministers are slaves of the naba. It is true that this designation "slave" includes slaves through indebtedness. Whenever a native had borrowed from the naba an amount of some importance, such as the price of a cow, and was unable to pay it back, an arrangement was made between the debtor and the naba. The former promised all his daughters to the latter and thus pledged all his descendants. It was then said that he had become a slave to the naba.

566 Serfs were another source of hands to work the land. There were two kinds of serfs, or man-servants if one prefers: the dakwaba and the noakansé. A dakonré (singular of dakwaba; etymologically, "one who is not married") has a family who places him in the service of a rich man with the sole purpose of getting him married, of getting him a wife when he comes of age. He labors for his master, works his fields, runs errands for him; he may, with his master's permission, have a field of his own and a few small possessions; yet, though he is free, he may not leave his master to enter someone else's service. A noakanga (singular of noakansé) has no family. He places himself into someone's service of his own free will in order to be fed, housed, sometimes clothed; his master gives him a wife more or less promptly according to region. A noakanga is freer than a dakonré, for he

177 The preceding pages deal wholly with past history. The French occupation has profoundly modified the whole administrative set-up and curtailed the rights of nabas, who are now mere civil servants. The people are slowly learning not to fear them; their authority is weakening; the gifts dwindle; and the nabas have been put on short allowance and forced to cultivate their fields like everybody else. Their judicial power is practically gone, and those few who have preserved real authority were able to do so because of their remoteness from administrative centers and their past. They were in charge before the French occupation, and they have managed to keep up their prestige in spite of everything. Yet little by little attitudes
000 change and respect vanishes. Is this good? Is it bad? The matter could be argued at great length. Although this administrative system led to regrettable abuses which had to be checked, it also had its favorable aspects, and it made the Mossi into one of the most feared and most homogeneous peoples in the bend of the Niger.

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BOOK II. FAMILY LIFE

Chapter 1. Establishment of the Family Through Marriage

562 The family is established through marriage. We shall, therefore,
584 first study the marriage bond. Obviously, since Christianity was
567 introduced in the country only a short time ago, virginity is unknown there even as a concept. Every nubile girl must marry. She is given in marriage by the person to whom she belongs, and her own tastes are not taken into account. She belongs primarily to her father, but sometimes even before her birth she belongs to the person who gave her mother away on the condition — a common clause in free marriage contracts — that the first girl she bears will be given in marriage by her grandfather. Or the woman may belong to her father's master, and this may be her father's only remaining obligation toward the man who formerly owned him as a slave. Thus, nearly all girls born in Koupéla belong by right to the naba, for the inhabitants of this locality were formerly his slaves. Sometimes a

562 girl is used to pay debts; a man borrows on the promise of giving his
584 daughter in marriage. She will be handed over, often with no bride
567 price other than the borrowed sum; and, contrary to the custom noted above, since she is considered a slave, her first daughter does not belong to the grandfather. A girl may also be given in exchange for her enslaved brother or uncle, who thus recovers his freedom. A man may be seriously ill and call a doctor who agrees to treat him on the condition that the patient's daughter be given to him if he gets well. The father does recover, and the girl is given in marriage to the fortunate doctor. Exchange of daughters also takes place: a native may give his daughter in marriage to another, who in turn gives him his own.

562 A girl is given in marriage by her mother only if she was born out
584 of wedlock, and her father is thus theoretically unknown. The sisters
848 of certain nabas are the only ones permitted to choose their husbands
[554] according to their own wishes and to leave them when they please.
593 The fickle existence they lead is easy to imagine! In all other cases the girl is given in marriage by her father, or by his heir if the father is dead. (1) The mother is not consulted, but since she cares for the

[754] 1. It would be onerous and indeed impossible to list all the various situations that may arise. The sorcerers quite often interfere, and who knows what goes through a sorcerer's mind! One case among many: a woman bore a daughter after raising several others who died immediately following marriage; the father consulted the sorcerer to find out whether he should promise this last daughter in marriage. The sorcerer stated that she must be left free to choose her own husband, or else she would die like her sisters. The father left her free.

daughter until the latter marries, she may through advice, promises, or even threats dissuade her from a certain match /29/ or welcome her if she runs away from a husband to whom she was given against her will.

651 There is proof that trade tends to grow year by year in the ease with
436 which the natives now secure the five-franc piece needed to pay their
457 tax. The Europeans who live among the Mossi, including all the riflemen and circle /an administrative district/ guards, do not put into circulation a quarter of the five-franc pieces which are required each year from the natives. At first the Mossi were taken by surprise and had to give 10, 000 or even 15, 000 cowries to obtain /62/ this famous coin, this charm, which was to free them from all difficulties with the Whites. At the official rate of exchange this coin is worth 5, 000 cowries. Nowadays it is very difficult to find a native willing to give this much for one of the coins. The usual exchange rate is from 3, 500 to 4, 000 cowries; French currency has depreciated. This must mean that the natives find elsewhere, through trading, this indispensable coin. They know that the tax must be paid every year, and instead of waiting until the last minute, as soon as they have accumulated the necessary cowries, they secure the five-franc pieces from those who have fetched them from afar. The coins flow in; the rate of exchange goes down.

439 Nowadays, trading is less active toward the north. Formerly the
567 Mossi supplied Timbuktu, the desert regions, and even Morocco with slaves. The Gourounsi and Bousansé were frequently raided with the sole intent of obtaining slaves. The Mossi even sold each other into slavery, and prior to the French occupation a woman and even more a young girl or boy did not dare venture alone a few hundred meters from the village; they were too afraid that they might not return. It is said that the Mossi even supplied the Constantinople court with eunuchs; and when the great Cardinal Lavigerie was head of the Algerian Arab Orphanage, officers once brought him small children rescued in the desert. They were very young Mossi who had been sold in Saraféré or Timbuktu and whom our officers had found enclosed in bags carried by camels in a caravan halted by our troops. These children were raised in Malta, and they returned to Mossi country where they rendered significant services. Now the establishment of an administrative center in Kaya, near the important market of Salmatenga, will no doubt promote trade in this northern region.

439 Nowadays the trade between Ouagadougou and Tenkodogo on the one hand, and Ouahigouya (in Mossi country), Saraféré, and Timbuktu or Dori (called Gyémaré by the natives) on the other hand, amounts to very little. The Mossi export kola nuts which they have brought

231 Mossi are very mediocre breeders by describing their manner of
563 caring for their animals. Instead of tending them or having this done by their young men, they nearly always hand them over to the Foulbé for herding. This is also done whenever possible by the Bobo, Nounouma, and Sissala in the Leo residency, but it is not done by the Kassonboura, Nankana, or Dagari. If the head of a Mossi
231 soukala is wealthy, he employs his own private Peuhl herder. If he
563 is of average means or poor, he makes an arrangement with other
464 Mossi in the same circumstances, and they all get together to pay a single herder for their cattle. It is the poorer Foulbé, for their part, who agree to herd Mossi cattle in this fashion.

The agreement that binds both parties grants the milk and butter to the Peuhl, but the increase of the herd devolves to the owner. This agreement is made without any definite time limits, and it is only broken if the herder fails to tend the animals properly. If he does his job well, on the other hand, he herds them indefinitely, and when he dies his son succeeds him. By the same token, when the Mossi owner dies, his son leaves the animals in the hands of the same Peuhl.

The Foulbé in charge of tending the herds live in low, conical straw huts at the back of the Mossi villages that own the herds. Not far from their huts, they build an enclosure where they leave the cattle during the night. They take the animals to graze in the bush in the morning, and bring them back in the evening. Whenever one of the Mossi owners wants milk or butter, he buys it from the Peuhl. Sometimes the latter offers him milk as a gift.

We shall see later, when we discuss the Foulbé, that in former
[567] times the Mossi often enslaved the small Foulbé bands that /488/ came with the intention of settling in Mossi territory. The Mossi chiefs would confiscate the herds, and then, since they were unwilling to care for them themselves, they would return them to the dispossessed Foulbé in usufruct and in accordance with the agreement we have just described. It must nevertheless be said that all
563 Foulbé in Mossi territory were not subjected to this high-handed procedure. When we occupied Mossi territory, there were some free and wealthy Foulbé, some Foulbé villages with chiefs of their own. Actually, those Foulbé were by far the more numerous.

322 563 Foulbé as makers of wooden gourds and other items of a similar nature. The Mossi call them séta. Since there are many Foulbé in Mossi territory, there are Laobé also. Some of them have left their masters to settle independently, and they are now free.

May we present one, by the name of Louri. During the winter season he works the soil, although very slightly like all other Laobé and Foulbé, and he also makes wooden gourds. During the dry season, he only makes gourds. Owing to his very mediocre cultivating abilities, his trade nets him more than his fields.

His tools are as follows:

322 413 1. First, a large ax called diendé, which he uses to cut heavy timber.

2. The saotaré, a kind of well-sharpened hoe with a very short handle, which is used to fashion the gourd on the outside.

3. The tépotondé, a kind of hoe with a very short handle and a very sharp blade, which is used to hollow out the gourd.

4. The menkéré, which is also used to hollow out the inside of the gourd.

5. The kéfirga, a long-handled tool with a curved, sharp blade, which is used for the same purpose as the two preceding tools.

It is the blacksmith who makes the iron parts of these tools.

322 563 435 Their value is as follows:

The axe is worth	2,000	cowries
The saotaré is worth	500	"
The tépotondé is worth	500	"
The menkéré is worth	1,500	"
The kéfirga is worth	200	"

322 563 In order to make his gourds, our Laobé uses the wood of the following trees: hèdè, bouagaï, saboutoungaï, and bembé.

This Laobé comes from Badongo (a village located 31 kilometers from /523/ Ouagadougou). He has a wife and two children. [567] He is a former slave, a captive from Laobé, whose masters had settled at Badongo. The master left, and now he is free. Formerly he worked for his master, and now he works for himself. He makes gourds in advance and has them sold at market by his wife. He [435] sells the small ones for 100 cowries, the medium ones for 300, the large ones for 500 (0.10, 0.30, 0.50 franc).

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The journey takes six months from the time he leaves Ouagadougou to the time he returns. On his way to the Gold Coast he needs no bearers. He merely takes a Peuhl to herd the cattle, and provides him with food and 300 cowries a day, plus 1 franc on arrival per head of cattle herded.

Our trader stays with another Haoussa from Ouagadougou, another trader of course, who is wealthier than he. He does not pay rent, but offers him gifts from time to time in return for his hospitality.

His family lives at Iko in Haoussa territory, and consists of three wives and three children. He goes and sees them every two years.

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We can see that the Haoussa do their trading in grander and more forceful fashion than the Yarsé. They do not hesitate to expatriate themselves in order to carry out their trade, and in this fashion they have actually colonized southern Nigeria, Dahomey, Togoland, the Gold Coast, Mossi country, etc. Once settled there, they carry their trading operations farther than local merchants, and they hardly do anything else. While the Yarsé is an example of cultivator-trader, the Haoussa of Mossi territory is in most cases an example of pure trader who specializes completely in trading. This is why he towers above the whole trading structure of the country. Bent on gain, a speculator in cowries and French currency, more intelligent than the Mossi and Yarsé, he amasses large fortunes.

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In order to be quite thorough on the subject of present and past trading in Mossi territory, it should be added that formerly the slave trade was carried out alongside that in livestock, cotton fabric, kola nut, and salt. The slaves came chiefly from Gourounsi, /541/, Boussansé, and Kipirsi lands. The Djermabé /Zerma?/, especially, sold slaves to the Mossi in very large numbers when they pillaged Gourounsi territory. This trade, like the others, was in the hands of the Yarsé and Haoussa.

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Let us also add a word about the now-abolished eunuch trade. Formerly, the Mossi furnished some to the Haoussa, who forwarded them to Turkey via Egypt. The operated men were Gourounsi sold to the Mossi by the Zaberma and by their chief Baba-Tô. Some Mossi villages specialized in this kind of work. The village of Koubry,

592 People who are thus settled on their own work for themselves and no
596 longer for /546/ their father, with whom they lived and for whom they worked prior to marriage. They nevertheless offer gifts to their father from time to time.

592 2. As far as the marriage of children belonging to those house-
596 holds is concerned, a distinction must be made among the following
584 possibilities. When they are the children of wives bought by the family head, it is the latter who gives them in marriage. When they are the children of wives obtained by the husband himself, it is the latter who gives them in marriage.

Or else a rough compromise is made (in Boussouma province, for example). The first son and first daughter of the union are given in marriage by the family head, while the other children are given in marriage by the household.

596 3. It is the head of the family, however, who alone is entitled
782 to offer religious sacrifices for the whole family, and who always acts as its judge.

596 4. When the head of the family dies, the headship is trans-
428 mitted to his younger brother along with the family property. The private property of the deceased goes to all his sons, but the oldest son is favored. This actually constitutes the difference between this family type and the preceding one as far as inheritance is concerned. While in the preceding type the oldest son alone inherited, in this type all sons inherit but the eldest is heavily favored.

Thus, if the soukala was the private property of the deceased, it goes to the eldest son. If he is able to cultivate them all, the latter also keeps all the fields cultivated by the deceased. If he is not able to do so, he gives the surplus to his brothers.

As for livestock, if there are ten head that belonged privately to the deceased, and if there are three sons and two daughters, the oldest son will get four, each other son will get two, and each daughter will get one.

[567] As for slaves, if the situation is the same, the oldest son will take five out of ten, the second son three, the third son two, and the daughters will get none.

Cowries and grain are apportioned in the same manner.

In addition to these shares given to the younger sons and to the daughters, it must be noted that private property has acquired greater

593 adultery except with a woman who is already married. A deceived
837 wife who wishes to take her revenge need only reveal to the spouse of her husband's partner the criminal relations that victimize them both."

593 Let us add that another of the husband's duties is to render help
602 to his wives' relatives if the latter are in needy circumstances.

Of course, the failure to fulfill these obligations could cause
593 the wife to request a divorce. Divorce thus exists among the Mossi,
586 although women rarely resort to it. The bride price is never claimed back by the husband, even if the woman has remained sterile. The children always devolve to the husband.

The husband, on the other hand, may turn out his wife, but Mossi husbands do not usually make use of this right.

585 Let us add that the matter of the girl's virginity at marriage is settled by the Mossi as by most other Blacks. If a girl is bought
836 or betrothed from a very young age, she must preserve herself intact for her future husband. An unbetrothed girl, however, is free to use her own body when she reaches puberty, and if she marries later she cannot be reprimanded for having become a woman prior to her wedding.

567 Let us now proceed to the status of slaves.

Two kinds of slaves are distinguished among the Mossi, aside from the usual distinction between trade slaves and house slaves.

1. The daparé (etymologically, "followers," "men who walk behind their master," from da, "man" and paré, "behind"). They are unmarried slaves.

2. The bagaré ("men of the enclosure"). Those are married captives.

/565/ The daparé live with their master and always remain at his disposal for any work that may come up. They have no small individual plots, therefore, and their master provides them with food and clothing at all times. When they reach marriageable age, their master buys them a wife (or at least it was so in the old days; she would cost the master about 60,000 or 70,000 cowries), and then they settle on their own.

567 As for the bagaré, they live separately, work for themselves, see to their own subsistence, etc.

Their duties are as follows:

1. To come and work one day a week on their master's field (on that day, as on other days, they provide their own food).

2. To come and work for their master in exceptional circumstances, such as for example when the master gathers all his neighbors to work on his field.

3. To come and greet their master every year after the harvest. They give him a basketful of millet. When the harvest has been poor, they are exempted from this gift.

4. The master may request from his slave chickens, sheep, an ox or a cow. Chickens may not be denied under any circumstances. As for sheep or beeves, the slave may refuse to provide the animal requested, but then he is expected to go and sell it at market right away, and to give half the money to his master. If the slave refuses to go and sell the animal at market, the master has the right to seize his movable property and sell it.

[426] 5. When the master has debts, the bagaré must help him pay them.

428 567 As for inheritance, when a bagaré died his master left all the property to the children. The oldest son of the bagaré inherited, but he gave something to the other sons. If there was no son, the younger brother inherited. If the sons were children the younger brother also inherited, at least temporarily. If there were no male heirs, the master inherited the property but gave some to the daughters.

567 In short, the position of the bagaré is more similar to that of /566/ serfs than to that of slaves proper. In this respect, their status is a far cry from the familial status of the slaves we have described [171] up to now, and it is much closer to the status of the Dialonké, Soussou /Susu/, and Foulah slaves of Guinea who are also serfs, work three days a week for their master (six hours a day), and are free the rest of the time on condition of seeing to their own subsistence.

567 Let us add that since the arrival of the French among the Mossi, the bagaré have gained a considerable amount of freedom. Nowa- 178 days, most of them will not give any of their crops to their master.

567 When a master wants one of the sheep or beeves belonging to his
178 bagaré, the latter refuses to give it, or if he consents to sell the animal at market he gives his master but one-tenth of the cowries paid by the buyer. Nowadays, as a rule, the bagaré only "go
[425] along" when their master's debts are involved, and yet some of them run away with their belongings rather than pay those debts.

567 Let us also add that these slaves, who were mostly of Gourounsi
167 or Boussansé origin, now want to return to their own land, and there is a continuous exodus, slow but sure, of Mossi slaves toward the south. Since the French have strictly forbidden the purchase and sale of slaves, on the other hand, the sources of supply have dried out. All this makes it clear why among the Mossi, as incidentally throughout West Africa, we are progressing toward a slow but certain suppression of slavery and serfdom.

326 In closing, let us say that among the Mossi blacksmiths who
567 live in /special/ quarters or villages and whom we have already mentioned with regard to their patriarchal and nondecommunalized family type, we find true slaves of the common familial type such as we have described up to now, rather than serfs like the bagaré.

These slaves live in the same soukala as their master, whether married or unmarried, trade or house slaves. During the winter season, they all work on the fields of the soukala head from six in the morning to three in the afternoon, with the usual luncheon break. They have small individual plots, which they may work after three o'clock. During /567/ the dry season, they work all day at the blacksmith's trade with their master.

They are provided with food throughout the year by the head of the soukala, but they procure their own clothing, jewelry, grigri, etc. The soukala head buys the first wife for them and disposes of their daughters in return.

567 The estate of a deceased slave goes to his master and to his sons.
428 As far as livestock and cowries are concerned, the master takes half
326 and gives half to the son or sons. As for clothing, bracelets, etc., everything goes to the children. The latter share equally the part of their father's estate that devolves to them.

567 We can see that just as the family type of Mossi blacksmiths
326 bears witness to an older state of affairs, the status of slaves among them also bears witness to the ancient local conditions prior to

567 Dagomba conquest. Both family type and slave status, indeed, re-
326 fer back to the Bobo, Gourounsi, etc.

000 We come now to public powers. We refer the reader to Appendix 32 /not translated/ for a study of property regulations and neighborhood relations, and plunge forthwith into the study of public powers.

631 We already know that the Mossi political organization is centralized. The villages belong to cantons, which are in turn gathered into provinces under direct administration or into mere vassal provinces. At the summit of the hierarchy stands the king, the Moro Naba, the supreme chief of the Mossi, who lives at Ouagadougou. To give an idea of the former importance, or at least relative importance, of this empire, we shall state that in the Ouagadougou
[162] circle alone there were eight provinces including among them 300 cantons, 5,000 villages or small towns, and 861,700 inhabitants.

643 Let us begin our description of this political organism with the head, that is, with the Moro Naba.

Moro Naba means "chief of the Mossi," from naba, "chief" and Moro or Mora which means Mossi in the singular. Moro yields Mossi or Mossé in the plural. (The French have grown accustomed to saying "one Mossi, several Mossi," but this is a barbarism and one should /568/ actually say, "one Moro, several Mossi," just as one says, "one Gourounga, several Gourounsi," "one Kipirga, several Kipirsi," etc.). As for the word for "chief," it is both naba and soba in Mossi. Naba seems to be the word brought by the con-
[192] quering Mossi-Dagomba group, while soba is probably the word that was used by the autochtonous population to designate chiefs.

645 Prior to the French conquest, the Moro Naba was surrounded by a certain number of ministers or eminent dignitaries who were given 1) specific duties /at court/, 2) in addition, part of the territory to govern. This is what accounted for provinces over and above the cantons, at least in those areas that were administered directly, but the heads of those provinces did not reside there. They lived at Ouagadougou, and were first and foremost ministers of the Moro Naba.

They were:

793 the sacrifice and killed the donkey. He also slit the throat of a
643 horse, a beef, and a sheep. (This eunuch in charge of guarding the
839 tomb was called by the name of Naba Koutou, and in a way per-
778 petuated the deceased Moro Naba. He was granted special privi-
leges. If a man who was condemned to death ran away and reached
the tomb, he was safe but became the eunuch's slave. Similarly,
●[567] a captive who ran away from his master gained his freedom from the
latter if he reached the grave, but became the slave of Naba Koutou.
Finally, at that time, it was forbidden to ride by the hut on a donkey.
Naba Koutou would seize the donkey, or at least demand a ransom
in cowries before returning it. This applied to any animals who ran
astray near the tomb. The tomb still exists nowadays, along with
the Naba Koutou who watches over it, but the latter no longer enjoys
the same privileges.)

793 We saw earlier that the Moro Naba had a sort of minister of the
645 cult in the person of the Gandé Naba, high priest and sacrificer.
There was also the Pouy Naba, or chief of the fetisheers, whose
function was probably to mediate between the Mossi bara and
timisoba as a whole and the central authorities.

782 Let us close this study of Mossi religion, which incidentally is
quite incomplete and a mere outline, with a few words on the human
sacrifices that were performed /597/ in the territory prior to our
occupation, and a few words on circumcision as well.

782 "Human sacrifices," says Marc., p. 156, "definitely took place
766 among the Mossi up to the time when we occupied the territory.
Whenever a Moro Naba died at Ouagadougou, one of his wives and
one of his horses were sent to Gambaga in order to be sacrificed on
the tomb of Ouidiraogo (?) who is regarded as the mother of the first
Moro Naba. Soon after the occupation of Ouagadougou by the French,
782 the dethroned Moro Naba, Boukary Koutou, ordered the sacrifice of a
754 black rooster, a black goat, a black donkey, a black beef, and a
black slave on one of the mountains overlooking the White Volta.
This, it seems, was bound to cause the immediate death of the new
Moro Naba enthroned by Voulet."

304 As for circumcision, the Mossi circumcise boys and excise girls.
Boys are circumcised when they are from eight to twelve years
old, and thirty or forty of them are circumcised at one time. The

464 salary consists either of 100 cowries (10 centimes) or a basket of unthreshed millet. In addition to this, the employer feeds the employee. This is limited, I repeat, to times of famine.

/264/ True clientage, such as we described among the Malinké, does not occur among the Mossi.

2. Domestic servants. The domestic servant, such as exists in
356 France and other civilized socieites, does not and never did exist among the Mossi. Actually, domestic tasks (cleaning, cooking, and washing) are performed by the women in Yatenga society. For a corroboration of this, we refer the reader to what we said above about women's tasks.

●567 3. Slaves. Origins. The Mossi owned slaves prior to the French occupation. They still own some nowadays, although far fewer, only those, in fact, who did not run away. Since recruitment dried up at its source through the prohibition bearing on the purchase and sale of slaves, reinforced by severe penalties, the number of captives has dwindled day by day, and it is obvious that eventually they will disappear completely. At present, this has not yet come to pass.

[727] The Mossi used to obtain their slaves through raids on the Samo, Bobo, Kipirsi, Gourounsi, Habbé, and Rimaïbe /slaves of the Peul/. The Yarsé also brought some from the southern markets (Sikasso, Samory states, etc.) and sold them all over Yatenga. They kept many for their own benefit, and they possessed more slaves than the Mossi (as merchants, indeed, they always owned more slaves than the Mossi). The Peul of Yatenga also had many slaves, more than the Mossi, which they obtained through raid or purchase.

Voluntary slavery and debt slavery provided no captives, since these two kinds of slavery never existed in the region.

The Mossi of Yatenga themselves did not constitute a source of slaves for other Mossi of Yatenga. One Mossi of the region could not be the slave of another Mossi. Only members of the alien groups listed above could be enslaved (including the Mossi of Ouagadougou). The Peul were not enslaved, but only held for ransom, since they were both rich (in cattle) and lazy. Their Rimaïbe, however, as we have said, were taken as captives (a Peul would certainly not be willing to pay any ransom for them).

727 When two factions were at war in Yatenga, the Mossi who were made prisoners were killed immediately, including small children of the male sex, even those who were still at their mother's breast.

727 Only the sons of the two warring chiefs were spared. They were returned to their families for ransom. The women were also spared and returned to their husbands in exchange for other women or livestock. If their husbands did not come and claim them, the conquerors took them as wives and not as slaves.

567 435 Let us say a few words about the price of a slave. A man was worth 40, 000 cowries; a woman, 50, 000 or 60, 000; a young man, 50, 000; a young girl, 80, 000. We can see that the qualities most valued were, on the one hand, membership in the female sex and, on the other hand, youth.

567 4. Name. A slave is called yemba in Mossi (pl., yembésé) when no distinction is made between the sexes. When a male slave is meant, /265/ the word yembraogo is used (yembraodo or yembrâdo in the plural). For a female slave, one uses yempoka (yempokosé in the plural).

5. Kinds of slaves. The yembraogo, once bought or captured, was placed in irons, or to put it more precisely, irons were fastened to his feet in order to prevent him from escaping, but leaving him free to work. These irons were left on him for two or three years. When it was certain that he would not run away, the irons were removed. He spent all his time working for his master during the cultivating season, or he worked the small private fields belonging to his master's wives. In return, he was clothed and fed at all times. He could be resold, and this was done if there was dissatisfaction with him or his work.

If the master was satisfied with him, he bought him a wife. Then the slave became a bingo man, a "bingo," and was no longer a yembraogo. He passed from the status of a captive by trade or war to that of a house slave. Bingo is the name given to house slaves among the Mossi of Yatenga. At Ouagadougou they are called daparé or deporé (poré or paré meaning "back"); the daparé or daporé is the man who walks behind his master, the attendant, the slave. The bingo could not be resold except in unusual circumstances, such as when he committed fornication with his master's wife.

[592] When the master had but a few of them, the bingo lived in the same compound, with a door of their own leading outside. When there was a number of them, they had a small compound next to the one of the family.

During the season of cultivation, the bingo worked for his master two days out of three. During the dry season, he also worked for him

567 whenever the master had work to give him. He worked for himself the rest of the time, that is to say, one day out of three during the cultivation period and throughout the dry season when he was not "on duty."

He was fed by the master when he worked for him. When he worked for himself, he procured his own food.

The bingo provided his own clothing, except when he was absolutely incapable of doing so. Then he appealed to his master.

The bingo's daughters were given in marriage by the master, who took them for himself or gave them to his sons, to his brothers, etc. In return, the bingo's sons had to be provided with wives by their master and not by their father. In any case, they worked for him, like their father, and could no more be sold than he could, unless they betrayed the master with his wives.

567 428 The bingo could own property since he had time to work for himself. At his death, his inheritance went not to his master but to his oldest son (unless he had an enslaved brother nearby, but I am considering the case of a former yembraogo, bought by the master, given a wife by him, and thus becoming a bingo, and then having children). At the death of his eldest son /266/ the inheritance went to his younger brother, etc. The master came into the inheritance only when there were no heirs.

567 On the other hand, the master could request from his slave whatever he wished, a chicken, a goat, a beef. The slave could not refuse, since everything belonged to the master on principle, the slave being his also.

The bingo could never free himself or be freed by his master. The number of generations which had elapsed made no difference.

The bingo could belong to the head of a family, the head of a compound, the head of a work group, or to a mere household head. They were owned on an individual basis. When a man who owned a bingo or yembraogo owed labor to another man, for example, to the head of his work group, the bingo or yembraogo likewise owed labor to this man and went to work with his master.

567 644 It must be noted that the bingo of the Moro Naba, that is, the "Crown bingo," were in a special position from every point of view. As we shall see later under "Public Administration" /not translated/, they came under the authority of the Rassam Naba or Rassoum Naba, one of the four ministers, who was sometimes called Bingo Naba for

567 644 this reason. They did not work for the Moro Naba except seven or eight days a year when they were called along with all the other inhabitants of Ouahigouya, without exception, to the Moro Naba's fields. Actually, they were thus free men as far as work was concerned. Half their daughters, however, reverted to the Moro Naba, who took them for himself or for his close relatives. On the other hand, they supported themselves completely (food, clothing, etc.). The Moro Naba gave them no assistance whatever in this respect.

Let us add that the ordinary captives, the bingo of the common Mossi, found a safe retreat at the court of the Moro Naba. If a slave was dissatisfied with his master, he would run away and take asylum with the chief of Yatenga. The latter handed him to the Rassam Naba, who saw to it that a hut and a field were given to him (if he was married) and a wife as well (if he did not have any). As long as he was not married, he would cultivate the fields of the Moro Naba's wives, who provided him with food in return. Once married, he would work the soil, labor for himself and his wife, and have no obligations other than the general duties of the bingo who belonged to the Moro Naba, as we have seen above. In short, he would acquire the general status of a Crown slave.

Let us add, however, that if the master came and claimed his slave from the Moro Naba, the captive was sometimes returned. This depended on the fairness of the master's case (he had never mistreated his slave, had always been good to him, etc.) and also on the more or less sizable gift which he presented to the Moro Naba in order to gain his good graces.

The bingo of the Riziam Naba, an independent king as we have already noted /not translated/, were in the same position as the bingo of the Moro Naba and not in the position of ordinary bingo. The same applied to the bingo of the three great chiefs /267/ of the canton, the Zitenga Naba, Ratenga Naba, and Roussoum Naba.

566 6. Serfs. In Yatenga, there were serfs of a sort, the bagaré, to use the Mossi term. The only ones who had them, however, were the Moro Naba of Yatenga, the Moro Naba of Riziam, and a few great canton chiefs, such as the Zitenga Naba and the Ratenga Naba. Not even the Moro Naba's ministers were entitled to own them, much less the common Mossi. The bagaré was a Peul slave, a dimadio (rimaïbé in the plural) who had been captured from the Peul or who had fled from them to the Mossi, in short, a former rimaïbé who had

566 gone into Mossi hands. The bagaré did not till the soil. They simply minded their master's herds. As for other work, they also built the straw huts where the Moro Naba of Yatenga, the Riziam Naba, and other chiefs slept at the New Year (we shall see under "Religion" /not translated/ to what purpose).

The bagaré saw to their own support (food and clothing). The multiplying herd belonged to the naba, but its yield (milk and butter) went to the bagaré. Out of this yield, however, they gave the naba whatever he needed of milk and butter.

567 In short, we can see that among the Mossi and Foulsé there exist, or rather existed, the two kinds of slaves known throughout the /French/ Sudan, the trade slaves and the house slaves, the former being salable and the latter a part of the family. Nowadays, as a result of the prohibition against their purchase and sale, there remains but a dwindling number of house slaves.

421 Now we come to family property and its transmission.

596 Family property, properly so-called. —There is no family property among our Mossi, since no work is done in common by the whole family. The family property is limited to family charms owned by the boudoukasaman.

423 Property of the compound, or subfamily property. —This does not
592 exist either, for the same reason, except for the compound itself which is the communal property of the zaka group. While each household has huts of its own, these huts are a usufructuary possession which is in accordance with the full ownership of the zaka group. Now, if some household chief wishes to build a new hut, he notifies the zakasoba, who, incidentally, always grants permission. Once the hut is built, the builder may destroy it if he wishes, which goes to prove that he has full ownership over it, having made it. He cannot, however, destroy the hut where he lives which he did not build as it actually belongs to the zaka. In short, there may be in the compound a mixture of communal property (belonging to the zaka) and individual property (hut built by a household or by an individual, millet granary erected in the same circumstances, etc.), but the communal property prevails by far.

423 Property of the work group. —Here, communal property is impor-
571 tant. /268/ It is from the group fields that the group derives most of its sustenance (seven months out of twelve). The work implements

8: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1958
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797 sands of Mossi who fled their homeland to escape forced labor or military serv-
167 ice ultimately returned as Moslems, but the majority of seasonal migrants do not have enough contact with foreign populations for them to become Moslems. Most of the Mossi who migrate to Ghana work on cocoa farms far removed from large centers of population. It is also true that even those Mossi who worked for Moslems on the farms and found it expedient to "pray" (as the Mossi refer to conversion to Islam) soon reverted to paganism on their return in order to escape the displeasure of their lineage members. I have recorded several cases of pagans who became Moslems only when they returned from abroad to find their relatives all converted to Islam.

571 Today there are obvious rewards for those Mossi who embrace Islam; be-
797 sides such tangible rewards as getting wives and children, there are the intan-
554 gible ones of upward social mobility and greater prestige. It is important to
566 note that most liberated slaves and serfs are now Moslems. Formerly these non-
[567] Mossi had low status, but today those who have been to Mecca bear such proud titles as *Hadji*. On the night before Ramadan, one of these men gave a talk before the Nobéré chief during which he chided the chief for his impiety and voiced the hope that the next chief would be a true Moslem. He admitted that the chief might interpret such a speech from a former serf as impertinence, but he begged him to accept the censure as coming from the servant of *Nabiyama* (the prophet). This same man had refused to pay homage to the chief at the annual sacrifice to the ancestors, and when admonished returned the daughter which the chief had given him as a wife. In earlier days a chief would not have given a daughter to a serf, and moreover, a disrespectful serf could be killed instantly.

797 Many French administrators and Christian missionaries allege that Mossi
291 youth embrace Islam because they like the beautiful robes and red fezzes of the Moslems, but this is a naive explanation for the conduct of a highly sophisti-
515 cated people. Most young men in Nobéré wear Moslem-type clothes because such clothes are the mode. Now that sun helmets, dark glasses, and women's raincoats with hoods are in vogue, pagans as well as Moslems wear them. What is of interest, however, is that when pagans become Moslems they wear cleaner clothes and affect a different style of life.

794 The local consensus is that Moslems are much better behaved than pagans
577 because they do not swear, fight, or get drunk in public. The man chosen as Imam is required to have such characteristics as mercy toward evil-doers, benevolence, magnanimity, physical beauty, and virility. Yet many Mossi say that the Moslems can be worse than any other people. They accuse them of being charlatans, of selling Koranic verses as charms, and of committing murder by the use of magical formulae. Neither pagans nor Moslems believe that a man is necessarily good because he recites his daily prayers or goes to Mecca.

794 Moslems in the district follow most precepts of their religion: they recite the five daily prayers according to the rites of Tidjani (there are only two Moslems of the Hamada sect in the district and no members of the Hamallist sect), give alms to the poor, observe the month-long fast (called by the Mossi the

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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habited by Yarse, people of Mandingo origin who had been assimilated by the Mossi. There were no Fulani in Nobere, even though some lived in nearby districts. But in Pinse village there lived people called Simili-Mossi, who claimed descent from Fulani herdsmen and Mossi women. Basbedo village was inhabited and ruled by people of Busansi origin. They claimed that their ancestors had fled from famine and other hardships in Busansi country and had been granted haven by Naba Biligo. The people who lived in the two saghse of Nab'tenga called Dapore (Dapobi) and Baglere (Bangare) were serfs of diverse non-Mossi origin. Saghse or compounds of Gurunsi slaves were found close to the dwellings of nobles and village chiefs throughout the district.

The number of saghse in the villages of Nobere district varied according to the size of the village and the pattern of nam inheritance within the major lineage segment that ruled the village. The saka itself housed a minor-lineage segment. The larger the village's minor lineage segment and the greater this group's genealogical depth, the more numerous were its component segments and thus its saghse. The proliferation of saghse and minor-lineage segments within the ruling lineage of a village was dependent primarily on possession of the nam. As soon as a man received the nam, he obtained control over a large amount of goods and services. He was then in a position to obtain many wives for himself and his immediate relatives, and as a result his minimal lineage grew rapidly. In time this group became so large that it split from its brother babissi within the saka, and formed a new saka of its own. Finally, this babissi became a minor lineage in its own saka, in segmental opposition to the other babissi and minor lineages within the other saghse. If the descendants of one man retained the nam for about three generations, their lineage segment and saka grew larger and in time cast off its own junior segments. However, if the segment lost the nam to a man of another babissi and saka, it ceased to proliferate. Some such groups even declined and disappeared by fusing with other local segments of the same lineage. Here is how the system worked in Barkago village of Nobere district.

Barkago itself was founded sometime in the dim past by a son of Naba Biligo. It had an area of eight or ten square miles and a population of about 650 when the French arrived in 1896. Its boundaries were set by such natural phenomena as clumps of trees, hills, and ravines. The village itself included five distinct saghse separated by footpaths, hills, rocks, and ravines, and an area of wasteland (*weogho*). Three of the saghse, Natenga ("chief's land"), Godin, and Kedpalago, were inhabited by the minor segments of the boodoo of Naba Biligo. Here is how this came about. After

the original segment of the ruling Biligo lineage had lived in Barkago for some time, it divided into two minor lineages and settled in two saghse, Natenga and Godin. A noble from Godin possessed the nam, but it eventually passed to a noble from Natenga. The new chief then founded a new saka called Kedpalago because he wanted more living space for his own children. As a result, the minor lineage of Natenga now had two babissi living in two saghse. The minor lineage of Godin subsequently declined in size and prestige. The only evidence of its former importance was that its eldest male continued to make separate sacrifices to his own chiefly ancestors, even though the more recent holders of the nam made sacrifices to all former chiefs. These independent sacrifices were made in spite of the fact that this minor lineage kept growing smaller because its male members left to live elsewhere or to join maternal patrilineages with higher status. The sacrifices were expected to cease only if and when the minor lineage were to disappear with the incorporation of the widows and orphans of its last surviving males into the other Biligo groups of the village and district. Of course, if the Godin minor lineage had regained the nam, it undoubtedly would have experienced a rebirth and renewal of strength. It might have attracted its daughter's sons, and even aliens who would have lived in its saghse as they did in those of the ruling lineage segments.

A fourth saka, Nakomgo ("we hunger after the nam"), was inhabited by the noble descendants of Naba Ngado, the district chief who had replaced the descendant of Naba Biligo of Nobere. Since these nobles traced their descent from two full brothers, Kouliga and Kongo, they formed two related minor lineages with five component minimal lineages. The compounds of the two babissi of the Kouliga minor lineage were separate but contiguous. Near them were the compounds of the three babissi of the Kongo minor lineage. Scattered about in the Nakomgo saka were compounds of sisters' sons, strangers, and nobles' slaves.

The people of Narila, the fifth saka of Barkago, were members of the aboriginal Ninisi population, and thus furnished the village's earth-priest. He made sacrifices to the earth shrines in the village, gave ritual permission for building compounds and digging graves, and took control of the village during the period between the death of a chief and the accession of another. Scattered throughout the various saghse were compounds inhabited by people of serf, slave, or refugee origin.

Of all the groups within the village, the Ngado people kept the most exact genealogies. They did so because one of the segments of their maximal lineage held the district nam, and as nobles they had theoretical access to it. Once they had lost the nam of the district, the descendants of Biligo

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to render homage to the monarch. This attracted the attention of the Mogho Naba, who investigated the grievance of the district chief. If the provincial minister were found to be in serious error, he might be deposed and executed. The Ouidi Naba was theoretically exempt from such punishment, but it is doubtful that a strong monarch would have allowed even this official to cause trouble. 635 645 634 578

A provincial governor dissatisfied with a district chief under his charge could, under certain conditions, have him deposed and put to death. He achieved this by complaining to the monarch that the chief was either withholding tribute or misgoverning his people. In most cases, however, the minister could curb the district chief by hinting that his son would not receive a recommendation as successor to the nam of the district. This was usually enough to win the cooperation of the most recalcitrant chief, if only because his future status as the honored ancestor of a ruling local line would be jeopardized if he rebelled. These sanctions were thus sufficient to ensure satisfactory relations between the provincial ministers and their district chiefs, at least on the surface. This was to the advantage of both groups, since in the final analysis the failure of either to administer or rule well might result in the death penalty. [687]

Many districts and villages in Ouagadougou were administered not by the provincial ministers but by officials directly responsible to the Mogho Naba. The districts in question were often ruled by close relatives of the Mogho Naba or by persons who had gained his good graces. The villages were often inhabited by slaves and governed by headmen who were themselves slaves. Like the other territories of the Mogho Naba, these districts and villages were not physically contiguous. The districts were mixed in with districts administered by the provincial ministers, and the villages stood within the territorial boundaries of district chiefs. Whenever the Mogho Naba wanted to communicate with a chief of such a village or district, he sent one of his retainers. The chiefs, in turn, used their own people to send messages and goods to Ouagadougou. The general administration of these districts and villages differed little from that of the territories administered by the provincial ministers. The main difference was that the Mogho Naba took a greater interest in their everyday affairs. This called for greater efficiency on the part of local officials; for they, like the other chiefs, faced the penalty of deposition and death for maladministration. 634 621 [567] [203]

Of all Mossi officials, the district chiefs had the most difficult administrative task. They were in direct contact with the people, and thus ran a greater risk of being charged with misgovernment. Countless district chiefs were deposed and executed because they had allegedly disobeyed or rebelled 634 [687]

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The district chief was relatively secure in the control of his territory as long as he maintained amicable relations with his immediate superiors and administered his district to their satisfaction. A less important but more constant source of concern was his relationship with neighboring chiefs. Many people who can remember the pre-conquest period say it was unsafe for a man to trespass into another district unless he was on an official mission from his chief to another chief. It appears that most of the fighting occurred over strayed cattle and stolen women, with constant raids and counter-raids. The cattle were eaten, and the women kept as wives. Captured men were sometimes sold as slaves, but more often were held for ransom. They were not kept as slaves, since the Mossi were forbidden to enslave other Mossi. Needless to say, this fighting was frowned upon by the Mogho Naba. Since all district chiefs believed in their common descent from Ouedraogo and Oubri and paid allegiance to the Mogho Naba, any fighting among them was not only a sin against the ancestors but also an act of disloyalty to the Mogho Naba. When (as was usually the case) this fighting was of short duration and few people were killed, the Mogho Naba took no official notice of it. But when it became serious, he sent the provincial administrator to stop the fighting and to summon the dissident elements to the capital for trial. The speed and severity with which the Mogho Naba dealt with quarrels within his own realm usually depended upon his strength. At some periods in Mossi history there was little internal disorder, because the rulers were strong; at other periods, under weak rulers, disorder practically amounted to internal chaos. During such periods, the Mossi were kept together only by the bonds of kinship and religion which united them against outsiders.

The district chief maintained tight control over his own territory and took an active part in its administration. In a district like Nobere, for example, the chief was aided both by an informal council and by an administrative apparatus similar to but smaller than the one at Ouagadougou. The council included men with whom the chief had grown up, members of his immediate family such as his brothers, and a few formal administrative personnel. These councillors visited him every day, brought him occasional gifts, received gifts from him in turn, and discussed informally all matters of interest. Yet, informal as this communication was, it enabled the district chief to know what was going on in his villages. Moreover, these councillors interceded for various villages and gave the chief valuable advice in administrative matters.

The formal administrative personnel of the district included a Ouidi Naba, a Baloum Naba, a Tansoba, and lesser officials with titles identical

692 or because the litigants had rejected the village chief's verdict). The chief
634 then asked the plaintiff or "the people of X village" to state their case.
695 Someone usually spoke up, and after he had finished, the chief asked the defendant or defendants to do likewise. The litigants were then asked to produce reputable witnesses to support or refute the testimony.

[641] Witnesses had to be male, adult (to have begun to "push a beard"), and
[562] free. Women and bondsmen had no legal personality before a Mossi court.
[567] A slave was represented at court by his master, and a woman by her husband (and, by extension, by his patrilineage). In marital quarrels or property suits, a woman was usually represented by her patrilineage. Only if
[576] she alone could give the required evidence was she allowed in court. When she was asked to testify, she knelt, and spoke in a high, thin, soft voice, thus showing extreme respect to the chief and proper deference to the court. Except for these restrictions, any person could be called in as a witness.
[578] Tempers often ran fairly high among the litigants' relatives and friends while they gave their testimony and argued the case, but their physical separation and their respect for the chief prevented abuse and fighting. Anyone who started a fight in court was liable to a beating by the samandekamba.

[674] The Mossi believed that most people, given sufficient reason, would commit any crime. Thus they examined the litigants carefully and at great length in an attempt to "get behind" the offense. The district chief interrogated the litigants, but the dignity of the court prevented him from arguing with them. As a matter of fact, most of the cross-examination was done by the litigants themselves. From time to time, the village administrator and the chief's confidants asked brief, direct questions. When a woman was involved, the chief's Pughtiema usually listened to the proceedings from behind a wall and questioned her. When all the evidence was in, the chief either rendered his verdict without delay or retired to the zongo to confer with his confidants and the village administrator. He took the latter course whenever he felt that further discussion was necessary or that false testimony was confusing the issue. Not until he felt that he had the facts well in hand did he return to the court to render his verdict.

The Mossi did not use ordeals in court except in the "chastity trials" conducted by the Pwe Naba. Some litigants called upon the ancestors to kill them if they were not telling the truth; others went to earth shrines and drank an infusion of dust to show that they were not afraid of the spirits who wrought vengeance on the guilty. However, such acts were never carried out in court and thus were of no use to the chief.

The following case, tried in a district court in 1956, illustrates the Mossi

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The torture was seen as a punishment, and not as a form of ordeal to 695
ascertain guilt or innocence. It was designed to cause the culprit as much 696
suffering as possible before he died, and its harshness reflects the Mossi fear of witches and witchcraft. In one form of punishment called *koudgilga*, the culprit was sent to the smith, who tortured him by placing hot iron balls in both his hands. He was then beaten to death. Another type of punishment called *swengalenga* was more painful. A pottery jar from which the bottom had been removed was heated in a fire. Then it was placed over the head of the convicted witch and allowed to burn its way down onto his shoulders. The culprit was subsequently killed. Sometimes a convicted witch was [304]
not killed; instead, a man was sent to Ouagadougou to be castrated and [567]
sold as a eunuch, and a woman was sold outside the country as a slave.

Gross disrespect toward the chief and crimes of lese majesty were un- 687
common among the Mossi. These crimes were usually committed by persons who came into close contact with the chief—nobles and court retainers—rather than by commoners, serfs, or slaves. The most common form of [684]
lese majesty was adultery with one of the district chief's wives. The penalty [634]
for this was death for both violators. Anyone who dared insult the district chief at court was seized and executed. The same fate awaited those who talked about him maliciously in public or threatened to stir a rebellion against him. If the culprits were commoners, they were executed; if they were nobles, they were strangled in secret or were forced to commit suicide.

The district chief was caught in a dilemma whenever nobles committed 634
major crimes or unlawful acts. They could not be imprisoned, and only the 565
Mogho Naba had the legal prerogative to execute them. When a noble 681
committed a major crime such as treason or rebellion, he was sent to the capital to be executed by slaves, who strangled him with a piece of cotton cloth. However, no district chief could allow the nobles to commit crimes 634
with impunity, secure in the knowledge that they could only be punished 696
at Ouagadougou. If a nobleman subverted the chief's rule by repeated acts 565
of cruelty and brigandage, he was executed, although illegally. The execu-
tioners were the Baglere Naba and the Dapore Naba. These two men [693]
secretly visited the condemned noble, taking with them a bundle as a present from the chief. This bundle contained a new white robe in which were secreted a chief's bonnet and a poisoned arrow. As soon as the noble saw the gift, he knew that he was being ordered to kill himself. If he attempted to raise an alarm or run away, he was instantly strangled and his body was discarded in the bush. If he accepted the sentence, he was allowed to have food prepared, to eat, and then to kill himself. The chief ordered an elaborate funeral for his kinsman as though he had died an ordinary death. Thus, he was able to observe all the proprieties while at the same

11: Skinner. E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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who fought the villagers of other districts over stray livestock, stolen goods, and runaway women, in that order of frequency.

The main reason for these inter-village wars was the lack of local mechanisms (aside from meetings of district chiefs) to deal with problems between villagers of different districts. If the district chiefs refused to meet, they could either refer the matter to the provincial level or allow the villages to resolve the problem among themselves. Many district chiefs preferred the latter course because it saved them from interference by the authorities in the capital. Besides, these problems were usually unimportant and did not pit one entire district against another. People of different districts were often bound to each other by familial and ritual ties, and did not like to fight against relatives. Only when the potential combatants were unrelated or all attempts at reconciliation failed would the people of a village (and occasionally of a district) band together, either secretly without their chiefs or under their chiefs, and go to war. In such cases, persons who had relatives in the enemy villages often remained at home.

The inhabitants of Mossi districts did band together eagerly under their chiefs to participate in slave-raiding expeditions into non-Mossi territories. This type of warfare seems to have been fairly common. Ruelle writes, "Before our [French] occupation, warfare was the chief preoccupation of the chiefs. Moreover, expeditions into Gurunsi country had as their goal pillage and the procurement of slaves for sale."[22] Similarly, Mangin states, "The Gurunsi and Busansi were frequently raided with the sole intent of obtaining slaves."[23] Binger gives the following description of a Mossi slave-catching expedition and the subsequent disposal of the slaves:

> During my second stay at Banema, Boukary [later Mogho Naba Wobogo], knowing my aversion to pillage and slavery and fearing to displease me, sent off two expeditions during the night without warning me—one to Nabouli, and the other towards the south to Baouer'a. By six o'clock in the morning of the following day, the returning horsemen were heralded by gunshots. Soon afterwards, a line of slaves of both sexes appeared, tied to each other by a cord slung around their necks. The expedition to Nabouli brought back seventeen slaves; that to Baouer'a brought only five, along with an ass laden with salt and a little cotton. As soon as these unfortunate people arrived, they were given water to drink, and mallets were used to remove the rings and copper bracelets which they wore on their arms and legs. Then they were classified into three categories:
>
> 1. The men formed a lot destined for immediate sale for fear that they should run away. They were led forthwith to Sakhaboutenga, to be exchanged against sorghum for the horses, millet for the personnel, and gunpowder.
> 2. A second lot, composed of women, was kept as a reserve to trade for horses.

634 721 ●567 175

3. Finally, a third lot, composed of young girls and young boys, was distributed among the warriors and put into their charge. The boys will be employed until further notice as grooms to the warriors; later on, those who prove themselves useful and docile will be kept. The others will be sold at the first opportunity. The girls will be given in marriage to warriors who distinguish themselves.[24]

721 643 644 701 [645] The military campaigns of the Mossi, in contrast to their slave-raiding expeditions, appear to have been well organized. When the Mogho Naba felt that a war was necessary, he summoned his five provincial ministers and the Tansoba to a parley. If war was decided upon, the Tansoba was given full charge of all operations. This man, chosen from a hereditary clan of warriors who lived in a village called Tansob'tenga in Sapone district, was listed among the Mogho Naba's courtiers but seldom appeared at court unless war was imminent. His duties as chief warrior were considered so dangerous that he constantly sought out religious practitioners for supernatural aid. Nevertheless, a war minister who was good and brave was not expected to live very long. If he did live to become gray-haired, the other courtiers made fun of him by pretending that his graying head could only be the result of his having carried a sheep captured in warfare on his head as a present to the ruler.

701 721 644 [202] [411] Once given a mandate for war, the Tansoba collected his magico-religious apparatus and prepared the requisite sacrifices. He then asked the provincial ministers to notify the district chiefs to assemble with their warriors under the leadership of the local Tansobadamba, who were often members of the Tansoba clan. When the district chiefs received this notice, they beat their *zongagondo* (war drums), and the local administrators sent orders for men to the village chiefs. The village chiefs, in turn, beat their war drums to summon their noble cavalrymen and commoner foot soldiers, who came armed with bows and arrows, spears, swords, and clubs, with or [278] without iron tips. The tips of the sharp weapons were often covered with a vegetable poison derived from a shrub of the Strophanthus species. Some [411] of the men also carried guns after firearms were introduced among the [177] Mossi from the desert region and from the coast. Many carried rawhide [714] shields.

701 726 [648] As soon as the village contingents had assembled and had gathered their provisions, they marched to the district centers. Then they proceeded either to the place of battle or to Ouagadougou. In the latter case, they became part of the royal army and were joined by the forces of those princes who were prepared to honor their obligation to the Mogho Naba. For example, when the French invaded Ouagadougou in 1896, the Boulsa Dim sent his prime minister "at the head of an army to aid Mogho Naba

726 with leaves and branches and crawling upon the ground, can be witnessed
[764] even today at Mossi funerals where men re-enact warfare practices. Whenever possible, the Mossi preferred to take the enemy by surprise, but this was seldom possible when large-scale fighting and massive preparations were involved.

When two Mossi armies drew up to each other, the heralds from both sides issued such challenges and epithets as: "If you men do not wish to die, you should run or you will never eat again. We will have your blood to wash with." In the meantime, the Tansobadamba on both sides deployed their forces in accordance with the number of men available, the spirit of
[723] the enemy, and the nature of the terrain. From the description of warfare given to me by an old Tansoba in Nobere district, it appears that the strategy most commonly used was to split the infantry in two while attacking, thus making room for the cavalry to charge through. If the initial charge was successful, the attack was maintained, but if it failed, the army usually turned about and fled. Despite their braggadocio, Mossi commanders seldom insisted that their troops fight against overwhelming odds.
[644] However, shame over impending defeat often induced such officers as the
[645] Tansoba and the Gounga Naba to fight to the death. For example, during the war between Boulsa and Fada-N'Gourma in 1897, the Boulsa army lost so many men that the Boulsa Dim wanted to commit suicide in his humiliation. However, he was prevented from doing so by one of his subordinates.[27]

Soldiers wounded by poisoned spears or arrows extracted the projectiles if possible, and kept on fighting until they died. Even if they were wounded
[789] by an unpoisoned weapon, they did not seek medical aid. Most wounded men believed that they were doomed, because their protective amulets had
[727] failed them. For the same reason, a defeated army fleeing a battlefield made no attempt to retrieve its dead and dying, but left them to the vultures. When an army was victorious, however, the Mossi either carried their dead home for burial or buried them on the battlefield, saving some item of their clothing or equipment for the funeral.

Victorious Mossi armies usually pursued the enemy, burning villages as
[648] they went. The soldiers killed all the infants and the infirm, and when they
[567] fought against non-Mossi, they captured young people to be sold as slaves. Then they collected all the available booty and departed hurriedly, fearing
[727] that the confiscated cattle and slaves would slow their return and enable the rallied enemy to catch up with them.[28] If the army could not return home before dark, camp was set up for the night near a body of water so that the Tansobadamba could offer thanksgiving sacrifices. Pickets were later

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did not usually tax goats and sheep. In lieu of this, he occasionally took one or two of these animals from each herd that passed through the market and sent them to the palace kitchens. Donkeys sold in the market were taxed at the rate of 200 cowries each. Horses sold to the nobility were not taxed, but those exported were.

The Raga Naba collected taxes on the other commodities sold at the market. Cotton weavers paid him according to the size of their bolts of cloth, and cotton growers paid taxes on the sales of their raw produce. The tailors and dyers paid no fixed amounts, but were asked to send clothing to the palace. Every donkey- and ox-load of salt entering the market place was taxed. The smiths were not taxed in cowries, but had to supply the Mogho Naba's wives with hoes and the palace personnel with arrowheads, spear points, and iron clubs. The jewelers also sent bracelets as presents to the ruler. There were no fixed taxes on the cereals, vegetables, and cooked food sold at the market, but each day the Raga Naba, accompanied by several pages or retainers carrying baskets, went from vendor to vendor taking several calabashes of their produce for use in the palace. In addition, the vendors of cooked food had to feed the Mogho Naba's young grooms, who were not normally fed by the palace household. The beer sellers were not formally taxed, but they contributed a substantial percentage of their beverage to palace and market personnel, who demanded the customary *lembgha* ("taste before buying") more frequently and freely than ordinary buyers. [431]

There is some evidence (mainly from European travelers) that the traders occasionally found the caravan and market taxes prohibitive. Binger reports that the high taxes exacted by the Mogho Naba were "one of the reasons why Ouagadougou placed second [as a market town] and Mane was the commercial capital of Mossi country." Binger himself was caught in the institutionalized gift system and wrote sarcastically: "On market day [at Ouagadougou] the receipts are good. People bring everything to the palace, whether it be millet, hoes, or peanuts, and everything is accepted. *All this giving is left to the discretion of the donors.*"[14] The italics are Binger's.

567 651 643 [464]

Some of the later Mogho Nanamse appear to have obtained a great deal of revenue through the sale of slaves. Most of these slaves were captured in raids among the smaller groups surrounding Mossi territory, such as the Samo, Gurunsi, and Busansi populations. According to Mangin, Gurunsi and Busansi countries were true granaries for the Mossi, who drew upon them according to their needs.[15] In early times the Mossi chiefs utilized these slaves (*yemse*, sing. *yamba*) as agricultural workers, until Mogho

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567 643 651 [464] [439] Naba Baongo (ca. 1800–30) decided that it was more profitable to sell them.[16] Subsequent rulers, especially the two Mogho Nanamse who ruled just prior to the French conquest, sold most of their captives to passing caravans or in special sections of the larger markets. When other persons sold slaves in the market, the Raga Naba collected some 1,000 cowries on each transaction—the largest tax on any market commodity.

567 839 [752] [439] [175] The Mossi rulers seem to have benefited even more from the sale of eunuchs, for they had a monopoly over them. The Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou sent some captured slaves and all recidivous thieves to Teemetenga village in Koubri district, some 13 miles south of the capital, to be operated upon.[17] So successful were the Mossi surgeons that—in contrast to specialists in other areas, who lost nine lives for every successful castration—the mortality among the Mossi was only one out of ten.[18] Some of the eunuchs furnished by the Mossi were sold as far away as Constantinople, a fact which surprised the French ambassador to Turkey who saw them there in 1900.[19]

566 643 563 621 In addition to slaves and eunuchs, the Mogho Naba kept a large number of bondsmen to provide services for him. One group, the Dapore, lived in a ward of the capital called Dapoya, and had a chief, the Dapore Naba, who was himself a Dapore. The origin of these people is obscure, but they seem to have been the children of foreign captives who were brought to Ouagadougou and placed in the ruler's service. Some of them even claimed that their ancestors had come to Ouagadougou voluntarily and had placed themselves under the care and protection of the ruler. This seems unlikely, however, since the status of these people resembles that of persons captured by Sudanese rulers and installed in special wards as serfs.[20] Some of the Dapore lived in villages of their own and cultivated fields for the Mogho Naba. Others lived in a ward of Ouagadougou, served in the palace household, and provided the royal executioners. Some were selected to serve as palace eunuchs, and placed under the charge of the Kamsaogho Naba. The Dapore were hardly ever sold unless they were convicted criminals. The Mogho Naba and his chiefs refrained from selling serfs or captives who had been born in Mossi country. However, they often claimed the sons and daughters of these people as pages or pughsiudse.

[839] [567]

The Baglere made up the second group of bondsmen providing services for the Mogho Naba. They, too, lived in a special ward and were headed by the Baglere Naba, one of their own people. Their origin is also obscure: some of them claimed to be descended from Fulani slaves who had run away from their masters and sought asylum in Mossi country; others believed that they were the descendants of foreign captives. The Baglere

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worked for the Mogho Naba in and around the palace courtyard, and in the fields. They also kept his herds and provided him with animals from their own herds. Like the Dapore, they were seldom sold, but they often had to give their sons and daughters to the Mogho Naba.

The last group of persons who contributed their services to the Mogho Naba were the Kamboinse. Their origin is also unclear. Most of my respondents claimed that the Kamboinse and their chief first came to Ouagadougou from the direction of the Gold Coast, that they bore guns, and that they offered their services as guards to the Mogho Naba.[21] Later on, the sovereign allegedly assigned slaves to the Kamboinse unit, with the result that the entire group eventually took on a serf-like character. The Kamboinse guarded the Mogho Naba's palace and seized for him the goods of persons whom he condemned to death.

The services performed for the Mogho Naba by his pages and other youthful retainers also contributed significantly to the support of his administration. We have already seen how these young men and boys took care of his every need and functioned as important messengers within the royal household. The Mogho Naba also had control over the daughters of his serfs, whom he used to obtain revenue from aliens and subjects alike. Periodically, the Mogho Naba gave one of these girls as pughsiudga to a man, thus obligating him to render goods and services to the court. Moreover, the man had to return the eldest daughter he had by this wife to the Mogho Naba as a future pughsiudga. In this way, the sovereign had a revolving store of women through whom he could bind men to himself in a nexus of obligations, and from whom he eventually received additional women.[22]

The provincial ministers of the Ouagadougou kingdom occupied such a strategic position within the central administration that anyone rendering gifts or tribute to the Mogho Naba always gave presents to them as well. Their main source of revenue, however, came from the villages under their direct control, and from the retainers who lived in their compounds and in their wards in the capital. The economic relations between the ministers and their villages were similar to those between the district chiefs and their villages, and will be discussed below. The retainers, serfs, and slaves who served these ministers provided them with many of the services their counterparts rendered to the Mogho Naba. They kept their houses in repair and provided them with firewood and with fodder for their horses. Many of them also cultivated fields for their masters. Whenever the ministers needed extra goods or services, they called on those persons who lived in their compounds or in their wards. For example, hun-

dreds of persons lived in Ouidin, the ward of the Ouidi Naba. Some of them were related to him; others had been attracted by his wealth and by his ability to obtain wives for his charges. All of them benefited from being attached to him in one way or another, and in return helped him to augment his income.

All the district chiefs sent women to their provincial ministers to be kept as wives (and thus as agricultural workers), or to be given out as pughsiudse. The Kamsaogho Naba received more pughsiudse than the other ministers because he was in charge of the wealthier districts, and also of course distributed more. The Baloum Naba was especially favored in another respect. Each year, he was entitled to call several *seghse* (sing. *seka*; a corvée or convocation) of his former pages and their relatives to help cultivate his fields. The Ouidi Naba's sources of revenue were about the same as the Baloum Naba's. In addition, his position as chief minister enabled him to obtain numerous gifts from persons who visited Ouagadougou. Moreover, the Mogho Naba often gave him horses from the fado of deceased district chiefs. The Larhalle Naba had full ministerial privileges, and a few other means of obtaining revenue. He was allowed, for instance, to keep the animals that had not been sacrificed on the graves of deceased rulers.

The provincial ministers received many goods and services from the district chiefs of their provinces. Whenever one of these ministers sent a messenger to the district, the chief gave the messenger money and livestock for his master. Furthermore, the district chiefs brought presents for their minister when they paid their annual visit to Ouagadougou to render homage to the Mogho Naba. The provincial ministers used their position as confidants and advisers to obtain as many presents as possible from persons who came to Ouagadougou to ask special favors from the Mogho Naba, to participate in judicial proceedings, or to seek the nam. Moreover, they cooperated with each other in these exactions, so that a person seeking a favor from or through one minister was prudently advised to give presents to or to seek the aid of the others.

The district chief played a key role in the procurement of revenue for the central administration, and derived an income for himself in the process. The seignorial rights over the Mossi people delegated by the Mogho Naba to all nam holders were quite obvious on this level. The district chief had rights to all valuable fruit trees, such as locust-bean and shea-butter, that grew within the boundaries of his territory. He instructed the village chiefs to harvest the fruit of these trees and send it to him. The village chiefs even had to send him the wood from the fallen branches of these trees.

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621 For example, the villagers of Barkago traditionally cultivated and harvested
651 a field of millet behind his compound for the chief. The people of Pinse,
634 Donse, Passingtenga, and Tewarka cultivated millet for him in their own
243 villages, and those of Togose and Basbedo cultivated rice for him in their excellent lowlands.

243 The district chief had fields both behind his compound and in the bush,
634 which were cultivated for him by his retainers, serfs, and slaves. More than the Mogho Naba and the provincial ministers, the district chief believed
566 that a Moaga must perform agricultural work during the planting season;
567 to show his interest in farming, he often personally supervised the work on his plantations. When the task of weeding or harvesting proved too much for his own people, he asked his villages for a *sosogha*. On that day, each
[464] village chief, accompanied by his men, went to the district chief's fields, where, to the accompaniment of drums and chants and with the verbal encouragement of district administrators, the villages vied with each other in their task. The district chief usually sat under a tree and watched the
[465] proceedings and occasionally visited the various contingents to observe the progress made. Toward evening, the chief's wives gave the workers large quantities of food and drink in compensation for their services.

651 Like the Mogho Naba, the district chief had officials who collected taxes
634 on commodities sold in local markets. These district market officials were usually serfs, Gurunsi captives, or bondsmen from other populations. Mossi
[776] rarely served in such capacities because many of the local market places were considered ritually dangerous, and their titular deities, the Tengkouga, were believed to wreak vengeance on market officials who were tardy with sacrifices. The local Kos Naba supervised the slaughtering of every animal killed in the market, kept its skin so that its ownership could be verified if necessary, and collected taxes from the butchers in the form of meat or cowries. The Raga Naba of the district was not as strict as his counterpart in Ouagadougou, and seldom imposed formal taxes on the traders. He usually walked around the market, trailed by the chief's servants, and seized calabashes of grain and other commodities, which he placed in the servants' baskets. The Raga Naba did not tax those itinerant traders or caravaneers who visited the markets in the district, nor did he interfere with them in any other way. These merchants usually had business and personal relations with the chief, and he himself handled revenue from this source. The merchants gave him goods from the forest and Sahara regions, and he in turn often gave them wives, who were thus taken out of the district.

[167] The Mossi district chief was always on the lookout for new sources of
[434] revenue, and thus welcomed strangers into his district because they "in-

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tions. Binger, who found Boukary Koutou (the future Mogho Naba Wobogo) living in exile for having led a rebellion against his brother, Mogho Naba Sanum, tells us: 574 579 434

> Boukary has no resources, and does not even have the advantage of receiving periodic tribute from several large villages. In order to subsist and to maintain a certain status, he is compelled to live by pillage and even by brigandage. From time to time, his horsemen make incursions into the outskirts of some Gurunsi or Kipirsi village, and carry off by surprise the inhabitants whom they find working the fields or looking for wood. His people also hide and lie in wait along the roads to capture any persons who may pass within their range. This type of behavior has given Boukary Naba a bad reputation. However, the people who understand his position forgive him, knowing the situation in which his brother has placed him. And, in spite of all this, he has numerous partisans, and many others who would be happy to see him gain power.[25]

Those district chiefs or princes who wished to retain their power legitimately were forced to be generous or run the risk of losing the allegiance and good will of their villagers, who were their ultimate supporters. 634 574

It is very difficult to generalize about the amount of revenue collected by a village chief. He did not receive any revenue from the land used by his villagers. He treated the weogho in his village in the same manner as the district chief. If some families grew too large and wanted to establish permanent residence in the village bush, they asked the chief for permission to settle there. However, many village chiefs had special areas of waste for their own use. They had usually received them as gifts from some district chief, and therefore had the right to collect tribute on any crops, firewood, or fish obtained from these lands. 651 622 634 [361] [431]

The average village chief's main source of revenue was derived from the agricultural and other labor of his wives and relatives. A village chief received a number of wives from his subjects and from aliens living in his village. These women helped cultivate his fields. If their labor was insufficient he called a sosogha, to which he often invited his wives' relatives. Some chiefs also had serfs and slaves who helped cultivate their land and kept their cattle as well. [464] [566] [567]

The village chief did not have the power to tax his subjects. Instead, he functioned as a channel through which commodities and services passed up the hierarchy and on to Ouagadougou. Many villagers voluntarily helped the chief to repair his huts and compound walls and to cut thatch for his roofs. Many gave him baskets of grain and other vegetable products after the harvest. They also visited him and gave him presents during the annual rites to his ancestors. In contrast to higher chiefs, however, the village head [476] [431] [692]

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not enter Mossi territory. Nevertheless, he obtained rather precise information on the important caravan routes leading from Timbuktu through the Mossi trade centers of Ouagadougou, Kaya, Yako, and Koupela, down to Salaga and other towns in Ghana, and even across to Sansane Mango in Togoland. His data on the Mossi are invaluable:

> The whole triangle interposed between the Niger toward the north, and the country of the Eastern Mandingoes or Wangarawa toward the south, appears to be inhabited by a single race of people whose language, although they are divided into several states and nations, nevertheless appears originally to have been the same stock. It is very probable that this race in ancient times occupied the whole upper course of the Niger, and that this tract may have been wrested from it in later times by the Songhai and the Mandingoes, especially that section of the latter which is generally called Bambara. These are the Gourma toward the N.E., the Tombo toward the N.W., and between them the Mossi. . . . The strongest among these pagan kingdoms five centuries ago, and even at the present moment, is that of the Mossi, although the country is split into a number of small principalities, almost totally independent of each other, and paying only some slight homage to the ruler of the principality of Woghodogo.[7]

Europe learned more about the Mossi from Sigismund Koelle, who visited Sierra Leone in 1854. His informant was one Andrew Dixon, who had lived in Koupela before being captured and sold into slavery. He furnished information on the location of the Mossi, their wars with the Busansi, and their important commercial and political relations with the Ashanti.[8] Koelle's report, taken in conjunction with the reports of Dupuis, Bowdich, Clapperton, and Barth, shows that the Ashanti, like the Hausa and other coastal peoples, were protecting their trade when they attempted to isolate the peoples of the interior from the Europeans. But as soon as the British defeated the Ashanti in the war of 1873–74, the Sudan was opened and adventurers poured in. In 1877 and 1878, two missionaries of the Basel Mission visited the northern regions of Ghana, and subsequently gave a good description of Mossi commerce in that area.[9] Lonsdale, who visited Salaga in 1881, found among the traders in the market "the Mossi with his cattle, sheep, and slaves—these latter, generally Gurunsi, are not exposed for sale in the street or market, but can be seen where the owner resides."[10]

The activities of the various European nations in West Africa and other regions at this time led to military and diplomatic difficulties, which the Berlin Conference of 1884–85 was convened to resolve. Agreement was reached to assign "spheres of influence" to the various European nations, to regulate trade, and to provide for arbitration between rival claimants of conquered or "protected" territories. In West Africa, this meant the end

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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traded for such articles as needles, mirrors, beads, coral and amber, tea, coffee, fezes, tailored robes, and most important of all, salt (Dubois 1899 : 292–304). Presumably, by the time Dubois reported on this trade, the Mossi had stopped trading slaves and eunuchs into this region, because we know from other sources that these people were sold through Timbuktu as far north as Algeria and Constantinople.[5]

The caravans which brought desert and northern goods into Mossi country collected grain, cotton cloth, livestock and slaves to be sold in the forest areas. Captain Lonsdale, an Englishman who visited Salaga in 1881 and gave a good description of its markets and traders, includes among the latter

> ... the Mossi with his cattle, sheep and slaves—these latter, generally Gurunsi, are not exposed for sale in the street or market, but can be seen where the owner resides. (Lonsdale 1882)

The extent to which the Mossi people themselves participated in all aspects of the caravan trade which crossed their country is far from clear. Barth, Lonsdale and Dubois all report that the Mossi were members of the caravans both in the forest zone and in Timbuktu, and my own informants agree with these reports. In contrast, however, both Marc and Tauxier believe that the Mossi were seldom the actual caravaneers. Marc declares that the Yarse

> ... are the most numerous group devoting itself to commerce in the region which we occupy. This is equally true of the Hausa, but probably only over the last years. Moors come sometimes from Dori as far as Wagadougou. One seldom meets Mande-Dioulas. As for the pure Mossi, it was only a short while ago that they themselves began to follow the caravans. (Marc 1909 : 170–71)

Similarly, Tauxier states that

> ... it is not the Mossi who do this [caravan] trading but the Yarse we know so well, and the Hausa settled in Mossi territory. Mossi trade, therefore, is not really Mossi, or at least it was not in the past. If it has now begun to be to some extent, it is thanks to the French settlement in the territory. (Tauxier 1912 : 538)

In the face of the early reports by Barth and others, how does one resolve the contradiction apparent in Tauxier's comments? These early travelers might have mistaken the Yarse for Mossi since these

(5) Marc, 1909 : 170–171. "We met in Mossi country two natives who, when children, had been seized [as slaves] and led through Timbuktu as far as Algeria ... The commerce in slaves was doubled among the Mossi by commerce in eunuchs. Mossi country was one of those rare countries where people knew how to make them, and the Moro Nabas exported with great profit as far as Constantinople those whom they had had mutilated."

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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customary "taste" with greater frequency and freedom than did ordinary buyers. But the most valuable tax collected by the Raga Naba was on the sale of slaves, whose buyers paid a tax of 1,000 cowries per head.

There is some evidence, mainly from Europeans, that the Mossi occasionally may have found the market taxes prohibitive. Binger reports that during his visit to the Mossi in 1888, the high taxes exacted by the Moro Naba were "one of the causes which placed Wagadougou in second place [as a market town] and which made Mane the commercial capital of Mossi country" (Binger 1892 : 467). Binger, himself, was caught in the institutionalized gift system and wrote sarcastically: "The day of the market [at Wagadougou] the receipts are good. People bring every-thing to the palace including millet as well as hoes or peanuts, and everything is accepted. *All this giving is left to the generosity of the customers . . .*" (Binger 1892 : 465) (his italics). Even so, one cannot be sure that the Mossi felt the same way about paying taxes to their rulers as Binger felt. There is, incidentally, always an air of mutual recriminations among the Mossi and their rulers about the level of reciprocation between them. The people admit that the chiefs are indispensable; yet they complain that they are greedy—they "eat" too much. The chiefs insist that it is difficult to rule a territory and complain that the people are ungrateful.

SOCIAL AND RITUAL ASPECTS OF THE MARKETPLACE

Although the offices of Kos Naba and Raga Naba have been abolished officially, these officials still exist in many Mossi districts, and even when they do not exist, some men acting in their stead appropriate commodities in the markets for the chiefs. Furthermore, the *nakomce* (plural of *nabiga*—chief's child) or nobles still wander about the market places taking handfuls of kola nuts, peanuts and everything they need without the people becoming angry or complaining to the French about it. Once when I visited a market in the company of a *nabiga*, the local Raga Naba came up to where we were buying meat and indicated to the butcher that one of his customers was a *nabiga* and that he should treat him accordingly. It is not because of ignorance that the market people continue to grant these privileges to the nobles and the chiefs, but rather because they believe that only the market officials, and not the Europeans, can take care of the markets.

One of the most important tasks of the Raga Naba (or in the absence of this official, the Kos Naba) is to propitiate the *tengkouga* in the market place, or supervise the sacrifices which the *tengsobas* make to them. The task of the market spirits is believed to be so difficult—

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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It is clear that the volume of this trade could not have been enlarged since the French conquest which, as we know, had disrupted Mossi society. Therefore our conclusion must be that it must have existed prior to the coming of the Europeans.

The caravaneers used cowries and cloth as trade currency and in some cases even bartered one type of commodity for another. Cowries appear to have been the chief currency used and came close to being used for all purposes. Evidence for the use of cloth as currency comes from Barth and Marc. Barth met a trader who had

> . . . a good quantity of the gabaga, or cotton strips, of Mosi with him, which form the staple currency in the whole tract of country from Libta to Timbuktu, ten Dr'a being reckoned equal to one hundred shells. (Barth 1859 : III, 198)

The big rolls of cotton cloth which Marc saw being loaded by Mossi caravaneers were said by them to serve the purpose of buying food ("They are for eating") in regions where cloth was the necessary currency (Marc 1909 : 172 f.n.). The traders apparently resorted to barter whenever and wherever they could or when their currency was in short supply. This appears to have been the case when Binger visited the Mossi in 1888. Cowries were then in short supply and the people were using slaves, valued at 50,000 to 65,000 cowries apiece, to obtain goods. Horses could be bought for as many as two or four slaves apiece. Traders apparently kept the cowry equivalence in mind when using other commodities to barter with, but we cannot be sure of this since Binger himself, and not the traders, may have been conscious of the equivalence (Binger 1892 : II, 498).

The prices which the traders paid and received for their goods differed greatly from place to place, according to the season of the year and over a span of several years. The earliest price data are given by Barth for the 1850's:

> As regards Selga [Salaga], the district to which the Hausa traders go for their supply of this article, three points are considered essential to the business of the Kola trade; first, that the people of Mosi bring their asses; secondly, that the Tonawa, or natives of Asanti, bring the nut in sufficient quantities; and thirdly, that the state of the road is such as not to prevent the Hausa people from arriving. If one of these conditions is wanting, the trade is not flourishing. The price of the asses rises with the cheapness of the guro [kola nut]. The average price of an ass in the market of Selga is 15,000 [cowry] Shell: While in Hausa the general price does not exceed 5,000. But the fataki, or native traders, take only as many asses with them from Hausa as are necessary for transporting their luggage, as the toll, or

Chapter 2. Industries and Trading

443 Such are the everyday tasks of all Mossi. To these must be added visits to the marketplace all through the year, and during the dry season work performed by certain guilds or certain individuals, in short, the various industries practiced by the Mossi.

443 /53/ Every self-respecting Mossi, be it man or woman, child or
571 elder, must go to market at least once in a while, were it only to look... and to be looked at if he can don some handsome new clothes. To see the natives in their best finery, one must go to the markets which follow important feast days. At those times the marketplace is thronged with Yarsé and Peul as well as Mossi, and they all vie with each other in the richness and originality of their costumes. At other times people go to market on business, except for a few individuals who go there only to be admired even on ordinary days.

443 Every community of any importance holds a market every three days. Everything is arranged so the markets will not be too far distant from each other, and the villages near to one another will not hold markets on the same day to avoid competition. A native may, if he wishes, spend all his time at market, sometimes in one village, sometimes in another, for a market is always being held not far from where he lives. All the markets are not of equal importance. Some villages of no great consequence in themselves are located at the [554] crossroads of several routes followed by caravans and become important trading centers. The following Mossi markets are said to be especially popular: Pwitenga, Kaya, Rakay, Bélousa, Mané, Téma, Yako, and La.

Formerly these markets were slave-trading centers. Nowadays they deal mostly in horses, cattle, donkeys, sheep, goats, salt, kola nuts, native or European fabrics, and petty imported wares, such as matches, glass trinkets, handkerchiefs, basins, dishes, perfumes, and even firecrackers. Every important article has a section of its own. Butchers have theirs, and so have the traders in salt, fabrics, and kola nuts. All the millet beer is sold in one place, the sauce condiments and grain in another. The most important transactions, however, are carried on outside the marketplace, in the huts that travellers who intend to stay for awhile have hastily built in the Haoussa or Yarga quarter and sometimes among the Mossi. This is

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BOOK IV

The Family

596 We shall divide this study of the family among the Mossi o
into several subdivisions.

1. Generalities on the family.
2. Groupings larger than the single household.
3. Women and the household.
4. Children and education.
5. Apendages of the family.
6. Family property.
7. Transmission of family property or inheritance.

First, let us look at the generalities which include in turn t
following subdivisions.

1. The composition of the family.
2. Its name.
3. Its nature.
4. Examples.

The Mossi family of Yatenga is one of several layers, if I c
describe it. First, one may consider the total family, the fam
its fullest extension, which usually includes from 100 to 150 pe
and several separate compounds. The compounds themselves u
[592] include several households. Each compound does not form a ti
economic entity, as many other Sudanese compounds do. On t
●[571] contrary, it is divided into two or more work groups according t
numerical size. Finally, below the work group there is the sin
household (father, mother or mothers, and unmarried children).
shall examine these groupings one by one.

Name. —The family in its fullest extension, the total family
called boudou in Yatenga Mossi. The compound is called zaka
word iri, used especially by the Mossi of Ouagadougou, is also
ployed, while the word zaka is used chiefly in Yatenga. Final
[571] there is no word to designate the household, nor is there a word
designate the work group. One says: "the people of So-and-So
name of the head of the group)." /224/

Nature of the family. —In the first place, the family is com
up to a certain point. The whole family does not work together

592 The compound, from an intellectual point of view, is a kind of subfamily. It is not the whole family; it is not the equivalent of the total family. It is, however, quite superior to the single household.

592 If the Mossi family of Yatenga were completely communal and
182 perfectly integrated, the 100 or 125 persons or so who make up a
●571 Mossi family would live and work together. A less marked but still quite appreciable degree of community would exist if the compound were a tight economic unit (this does occur among many blacks of the /French/ Sudan, especially among the Bobo /230/ of the Residency of Léo, the Menkiéra, the Nounouma /Nunuma/, the Kassonfra /Awuna/, etc., and also among the Samo of Yatenga as we shall see later), with all the people who live in it working and consuming together under the authority and guidance of the head of the home. Actually, there is even more disintegration of the family among our Mossi of Yatenga. In each home there are work groups which vary in number according to the importance of the compound and the number of its occupants.

592 Work groups. —We must proceed to the work group, then, in order
571 to deal with the actual economic unit. This group has the communal
241 fields which are not, therefore, properly speaking, familial fields or even subfamilial fields. They belong to a subordinate unit. It is the head of the work group who supplies food for all the people in his group during the greater part of the year (seven months out of twelve). In return, they owe him the larger part of their time during the rainy season (two days out of three) but little work during the dry season. Each member of the group also has his own little field which he cultivates on the third day, as we shall see later on.

592 Consumption. Meals. —People do not assemble for meals in the
264 same fashion during the rainy season as during the dry season.

During the rainy season the members of each work group eat together at noon in the fields, but men and women are always apart. The boys eat with the men, the girls and small children with the women. In the evening they gather for meals in the same manner as during the dry season.

During the dry season the members of each compound, the whole zaka, eat together, but they are divided into several groups. First, there is the basic division between men and women. Then, if the compound is a large one, there are on the male side the groupings of old men, married men, and young unmarried men. There are also three groups on the female side: old women, married women,

596 In the sense of integration, we must mention primarily the families
592 of great chiefs. For example, there is the family of Gombiraogo, a
182 former Baloum Naba, a very wealthy and important personage. He
591 has five brothers. Two of them live together in the village of Kalo and another two, similarly, in the village of Bembéla. Gombiraogo lives in Ouahigouya with the fifth brother. With this brother he has three zaka where 70 or 80 people live, all of whom work for him and form a single work group under his direction (that is to say, during the rainy season they work for him two days out of three, and during the dry season they do so only when he has exceptional need of them; in return, he provides them with food seven months out of twelve, according to custom, and does not provide them with clothes unless they are unmarried).

What should be noted here is the strength of this work group (70 to 80 people). As a result, it includes several compounds, while it is the compound as a rule that contains several or at least two work groups.

[445] The present Baloum Naba, the prime minister, likewise has two zaka working for him. Moreover, the total family of the Baloum Naba is not assembled in Ouahigouya but scattered throughout Yatenga.

[443] In the same connection, the Rassam Naba has a zaka of 157 people who form a single work group under his direction. In return, he provides them with food all year.

/232/ Again, there is a zaka of shoemakers at Ouahigouya which
294 includes nearly 100 people altogether, among them 15 or 20 full-
592 grown men, all of them shoemakers. They all work for the zakasoba,
182 who provides them all with food. This zaka, of exceptional numerical strength, is at the same time completely integrated.

596 At the other end of the scale, we find the Mossi family of Yatenga
evolving toward complete disintegration in certain parts of the terri-
182 tory, that is to say, evolving toward a state of affairs where nothing
592 remains except the total family on the one hand and the single household on the other (that is, the compound has only a single household).

Thus, in the course of a journey through the canton of Ratenga, I noted in the village of Tangué a family of 110 persons distributed among 14 homes. This gives an average of only seven or eight persons per home. In Kargo (another village) there are five Mossi families for 22 homes sheltering 181 persons, or only eight persons per home.

566 gone into Mossi hands. The bagaré did not till the soil. They simply minded their master's herds. As for other work, they also built the straw huts where the Moro Naba of Yatenga, the Riziam Naba, and other chiefs slept at the New Year (we shall see under "Religion" /not translated/ to what purpose).

The bagaré saw to their own support (food and clothing). The multiplying herd belonged to the naba, but its yield (milk and butter) went to the bagaré. Out of this yield, however, they gave the naba whatever he needed of milk and butter.

567 In short, we can see that among the Mossi and Foulsé there exist, or rather existed, the two kinds of slaves known throughout the /French/ Sudan, the trade slaves and the house slaves, the former being salable and the latter a part of the family. Nowadays, as a result of the prohibition against their purchase and sale, there remains but a dwindling number of house slaves.

421 Now we come to family property and its transmission.

596 Family property, properly so-called. —There is no family property among our Mossi, since no work is done in common by the whole family. The family property is limited to family charms owned by the boudoukasaman.

423 Property of the compound, or subfamily property. —This does not
592 exist either, for the same reason, except for the compound itself which is the communal property of the zaka group. While each household has huts of its own, these huts are a usufructuary possession which is in accordance with the full ownership of the zaka group. Now, if some household chief wishes to build a new hut, he notifies the zakasoba, who, incidentally, always grants permission. Once the hut is built, the builder may destroy it if he wishes, which goes to prove that he has full ownership over it, having made it. He cannot, however, destroy the hut where he lives which he did not build as it actually belongs to the zaka. In short, there may be in the compound a mixture of communal property (belonging to the zaka) and individual property (hut built by a household or by an individual, millet granary erected in the same circumstances, etc.), but the communal property prevails by far.

423 Property of the work group. —Here, communal property is impor-
●571 tant. /268/ It is from the group fields that the group derives most of its sustenance (seven months out of twelve). The work implements

423 also belong to the group, as we shall see later. The group, however,
571 owns neither slaves nor livestock.

Household property. —As we know, during the rainy or cultivating
421 season, the husband works two days out of three for his work group.
571 The third day is his. On that day he works in his small field, helped
592 by his wife or wives. During the dry season, the husband does not work for the group but for himself alone, except for repair work on the compound huts.

571 The household is provided with food by the work group seven months
592 out of twelve and is fed with the produce of its own field for five months.

592 The primary possession of the household, therefore, is its private
423 field.

The field belonging to the household of the head of the work group is marked by a special characteristic. Since the head of the group is busy at all times with the communal field, even on the third day, his small plot is cultivated exclusively by his wives (and by his slaves, if he has any). Hence, his food is procured by his wives five months out of twelve. This only applies, however, to the heads of work groups (as well as zaka and family heads who are necessarily heads of work groups also).

423 Individual property. —Mossi women have tiny cultivated patches
562 which are wholly theirs, which do not belong to the work group or to
422 the household and which they work after five o'clock in the evening whenever possible. This is private property. Clothing, women's jewelry, etc., are also individually owned.

The husband and children also own private property. Actually,
423 the better to distinguish between individual and communal property (whether belonging to the household, the work group, the compound, or the family), we shall review below each type of property in turn.

Fields. —The fields belong primarily to the work group. (They belong only exceptionally to the compound, when it is so small that there is only one work group.) In addition to the fields of the work group, there is the household field. Finally, beside the household field, there are the private plots, for example, the little patches of the women and young men.

Work implements. —These tools (daba, axes, etc.) belong to the
422 work group. To work their small fields (both household and private),
571 men and women use the daba of their work group, but if they damage

422 391 them, they must repair them at their own expense. Those implements which are worn out are replaced by the head of the work group.

Domestic animals. —Chickens, goats, sheep, donkeys, etc., are 422 231 all fully owned on an individual basis and not by the group or even by the household. The animal is owned by the man or woman who bought /269/ it. Nevertheless, all the goats and sheep in a compound are gathered together, they sleep in the same place, and they are led to the bush in a flock by the little boys of the compound. The animals of the total family or of the village, on the other hand, are never gathered together.

562 Wives. —I need not emphasize that wives are obviously private property. There are no wives owned in common by the village, the family, the compound, or the work group. The wife, however, is in some measure considered to belong to the compound or even to the family in the sense that a man's wives always go to his brother when he dies.

423 592 The compound. —We saw earlier what applies here. The compound belongs to the zakasoba, but only as a representative of the zaka, as a manager of the property of this subfamilial group. It does not belong to him as private property, in the Roman sense of jus utendi et abutendi /right of use and abuse/. It belongs, ultimately, to the zaka itself.

If this is so, it is not less true that those habitable portions of the zaka, the cabins or huts, are definitely allocated to specific households which have rights of usufruct over them. Thus, the ownership belongs to the zaka, as represented by its head. The usufruct belongs to the households or individuals.

Finally, we may note, as we did earlier, that a hut built exclusively by a household with its own labor or by a single individual of the zaka may be torn down and destroyed by him since it is household or private property set up on subfamilial property. This case, however, is quite exceptional.

The large cabins or huts for millet belong to the cultivating groups. There are also huts for millet belonging to the household, where the husband stores the harvest from the household field. Finally, the 422 large earthen vases, the jars which stand in the huts, lead us from the compound to the subject of furniture. These jars are made by the women and belong individually to specific women.

Furniture. —The furniture, which we shall study in greater detail under "Mode of Subsistence" /not translated/, is very scanty and crude. It is owned privately.

422 415 Household utensils. —The large earthen slabs set up to crush the grain belong to the compound, but the rectangular granitic stones set into the slabs are owned by individual women, as are the movable pestles used to pound grain on the stones.

422 412 592 571 The wooden mortars and pestles, which are very useful and, besides, are heavy, cumbersome, and difficult to destroy, belong to the compound and sometimes to the head of the work group, in other words, to the group itself. In fact, the head of the work group provides part of these implements when the ones purchased by the zakasoba are insufficient.

422 415 592 As for the canari, the largest, which are like small vats and may be as high as one or one and a half meters, are used to hold the dolo /270/ made by the women. They belong to the compound, and they are bought by the compound head. The ordinary canari (25 to 30 centimeters high and used to fetch water or to cook) belong privately to each woman of the compound. The same applies to gourds. The women often buy their canari or gourds with their husband's cowries, but the object, once bought, belongs to them.

422 Clothing. —Clothes are owned fully on a private basis, no matter what their origin. Thus, the skirt cloth bought by the husband for his wife belongs to her.

Ornaments and jewelry. —These are also owned privately, no matter what their origin. Hence, they belong to each man, each woman, each child.

Weapons. —They are likewise owned privately.

Amulets, charms. —The case is the same as for weapons. If, however, we use the word "charm" in its broadest sense, as any object pertaining to the cult, there are family charms which are owned by the family.

Cowries, metal coins, etc. —These are likewise private property.

421 In short, property belonging to the total family is practically nonexistent among the Mossi of Yatenga. There is subfamilial (compound) property and the property of that economic section of the subfamily which is called a work group. In addition to this communal property, there are household property and strictly private property.

428 Now let us deal with the transmission of property or inheritance.
596 Transmission of the property of the total family. —Since such property does not exist, it is not transmitted, except the family charms. The status of family head, however, is transmitted. When a family head dies, it is the oldest remaining man of the family (sometimes his brother, sometimes his cousin, etc.) who takes command of the family.

428 Transmission of the compound and its property. —When the head of a compound dies, it is the oldest man in the compound (brother,
592 cousin, etc.) who takes command of it. At the same time he takes over the management of the property communally owned by the whole compound.

428 Transmission of the property of the work group. —When the head of a work group dies, it is likewise the oldest man in the group (usually
● 571 the younger brother of the deceased) who assumes leadership and the management of the group's property (fields, work implements, etc.)

Let us note that in all these transmissions, when there are no longer any men of the same generation, then the sons of all the brothers, cousins, etc., are chosen, beginning with the eldest. That is to say, when one generation is exhausted, the next generation is tapped.

428 Transmission of household property. —When a married Mossi who has /271/ children dies, his eldest brother (born of the same father and mother or only of the same father) receives the inheritance. He does not take everything, however. He is expected to share, up to a point, with the other brothers (born of the same father and mother or only of the same father) and with the sons if they are old enough.

The oldest brother takes the huts and the field. The wives, on the other hand, are divided among the brothers and even among the sons if the latter are grown. If the wives are not numerous, the oldest brother does not get any more of them than the other sharers. The livestock is divided among the same people, but this time the largest share goes not to the brother who is unqualifiedly the oldest, but to the oldest brother born of the same father and mother. The cowries, coins, movable property, and jewelry are divided in the same manner. Weapons are apportioned, but the largest share goes to the brother who is unqualifiedly the oldest. The latter takes the dead man's bow and quiver, while dividing the arrows among the brothers and sons without bypassing himself.

As we can see, sharing does take place and is actually quite a complex matter, since it is sometimes the eldest of all the brothers

428 (whether born of the same father and mother or only of the same father) who benefits, and sometimes the eldest brother among those who were born of the same father and mother, but this sharing is very uneven. The two brothers who are the eldest in the senses just described get considerably more than the other cosharers.

428 After the distribution, the men usually remain in the same compound and also in the same work group as before. Upon the death of
●571 household heads, however, and especially of heads of work groups, the work groups (which have expanded gradually with new births) alter their constitution and divide. These work groups indeed grow constantly (by the natural process of birth) and also dwindle constantly (by the natural process of death and new divisions). As for the zaka, they are not completely stable either since new ones are established as time goes by in proportion to the growth of population.

428 Let us add a few details on inheritance.

Small male children do inherit, but their share is not handed to them. It is handed to the brother who inherits the mother of these children. When they are grown, their mother's new husband will deliver it to them.

[562] Daughters do not inherit.

Women never inherit. On the other hand people do inherit from them.

Transmission of specifically private property. —A case of this type is the inheritance of a wife. As we have seen earlier, the goods of a deceased woman go to her children, sons or daughters. Boys' things go to the boys, girls' things to the girls. All the boys get something, but the oldest son is very much favored. All the girls get something, but the oldest daughter is very much favored. When there are no children, the woman's inheritance goes to her own family and not to her husband or to her husband's family. /272/

Another case of this type is the death of a boy or young man. If he has a brother, the latter inherits. If he has no brother, his father does. Sometimes the father entrusts the goods to the mother to be given to a future child.

In the event of a young girl's death, her sister inherits. If she has no sister, the mother inherits. If the mother died first, her family inherits (that is, the mother's younger sister).

Finally, another case in point is the death of a Mossi bachelor. His brother who inherits or, lacking one, his brother's son.

8: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1958
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797 sands of Mossi who fled their homeland to escape forced labor or military serv-
167 ice ultimately returned as Moslems, but the majority of seasonal migrants do not have enough contact with foreign populations for them to become Moslems. Most of the Mossi who migrate to Ghana work on cocoa farms far removed from large centers of population. It is also true that even those Mossi who worked for Moslems on the farms and found it expedient to "pray" (as the Mossi refer to conversion to Islam) soon reverted to paganism on their return in order to escape the displeasure of their lineage members. I have recorded several cases of pagans who became Moslems only when they returned from abroad to find their relatives all converted to Islam.

574 797 Today there are obvious rewards for those Mossi who embrace Islam; be-
554 sides such tangible rewards as getting wives and children, there are the intan-
566 gible ones of upward social mobility and greater prestige. It is important to
[567] note that most liberated slaves and serfs are now Moslems. Formerly these non-Mossi had low status, but today those who have been to Mecca bear such proud titles as *Hadji*. On the night before Ramadan, one of these men gave a talk before the Nobéré chief during which he chided the chief for his impiety and voiced the hope that the next chief would be a true Moslem. He admitted that the chief might interpret such a speech from a former serf as impertinence, but he begged him to accept the censure as coming from the servant of *Nabiyama* (the prophet). This same man had refused to pay homage to the chief at the annual sacrifice to the ancestors, and when admonished returned the daughter which the chief had given him as a wife. In earlier days a chief would not have given a daughter to a serf, and moreover, a disrespectful serf could be killed instantly.

797 Many French administrators and Christian missionaries allege that Mossi
291 youth embrace Islam because they like the beautiful robes and red fezzes of the
515 Moslems, but this is a naive explanation for the conduct of a highly sophisticated people. Most young men in Nobéré wear Moslem-type clothes because such clothes are the mode. Now that sun helmets, dark glasses, and women's raincoats with hoods are in vogue, pagans as well as Moslems wear them. What is of interest, however, is that when pagans become Moslems they wear cleaner clothes and affect a different style of life.

794 The local consensus is that Moslems are much better behaved than pagans
577 because they do not swear, fight, or get drunk in public. The man chosen as Imam is required to have such characteristics as mercy toward evil-doers, benevolence, magnanimity, physical beauty, and virility. Yet many Mossi say that the Moslems can be worse than any other people. They accuse them of being charlatans, of selling Koranic verses as charms, and of committing murder by the use of magical formulae. Neither pagans nor Moslems believe that a man is necessarily good because he recites his daily prayers or goes to Mecca.

794 Moslems in the district follow most precepts of their religion: they recite the five daily prayers according to the rites of Tidjani (there are only two Moslems of the Hamada sect in the district and no members of the Hamallist sect), give alms to the poor, observe the month-long fast (called by the Mossi the

10:Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1964 FA28 Mossi FA28
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121 vented by the "playful antagonism of teasing," and he argued that the regular repetition of joking serves as a reminder of the social "disjunction" of the relation, while "conjunction" is simultaneously maintained by friendliness.

Such an analysis is insightful but inadequate. The social structural sources of the need for reliance on joking and the social and psychological processes which joking involves are more complex than Radcliffe-Brown recognized. More occurs in joking than the symbolic reification of "separateness" and the concurrent assertion of intergroup amity.

The Structural Context of Joking

In support of this contention I would like first to consider the characteristics of the structural contexts in which joking tends to be institutionalized. For it is from the nature of certain social structural situations that joking derives its reason for being.

I suggest that wherever joking is institutionalized, the relations between the participants will tend to be characterized by five interrelated factors:

(1) *separation:* either social or spatial or both;
(2) *reciprocity:* a traditionally sanctioned exchange of economic, social, or ceremonial goods and/or services;
(3) *ambivalence:* an equivocal melange of amity and hostility;
(4) *equality:* analogous individual or group status;
(5) *independence:* the absence of relevant allegiance to a single authority.

Obviously the comparative weight of these several factors will vary with the relationships of which they are a part. Where, for example, spatial separation is great, and/or the reciprocal tie is weak, joking is likely to be mild. Where ambivalence is strong, joking may be relied on more frequently and may be more hostile in content. Where the status of the participants is unequal, joking may tend to be asymmetrical. And so on.

I further suggest that as an adjustive mechanism joking derives its significance from the manner in which it provides concurrently for the operation of three interrelated but analytically separable processes: communication, control, and catharsis. These will be considered later.

Joking Among the Mossi

101 The points in the argument just outlined may be illustrated by a brief discussion of the varieties of joking found among the Mossi living in Yatenga, an indigenous kingdom in the Voltaic Republic of West Africa.
● 57/ Among the Mossi, joking is institutionalized as an adjustive mechanism in
104 the following relationships: (1) between Ego and his mother's agnatic kin, particularly his mother's elder brother; (2) between Ego and his mother's brother's wife; (3) between siblings-in-law; (4) between sibs; (5) between age-sets in the same age-grade; (6) between certain villages; and (7) be-

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571 tween the Mossi and several other ethnic groups. In each instance the structural relationship in which joking occurs is characterized by the five features listed above.

571 604 *Joking with the Mother's Brother*

The relationship with a maternal uncle is marked by all five of the structural features mentioned. Separation results from the rules of patrilineal descent and inheritance rules, from patrisib exogamy, and from the general observance of patrilocal residence. The relationship is reciprocal in that a mother's brother serves throughout Ego's life as an important alternative source of emotional, economic, and social support: he often acts as intermediary in disputes between Ego and his parents or the elders of his lineage; he gives Ego frequent gifts; and residence in the mother's patriclan is the most frequent alternative to patrilocality. In turn Ego, as a result of the permissive relationship he enjoys with the spirits of his deceased cognatic kinsmen, often serves their living descendants as an intermediary in their ritual efforts to maintain a secure relationship with the ancestral spirits.

Ambivalence between Ego and his mother's brother and her other kin results from the conflicting sources of "conjunction" and "dissociation" just mentioned. The conflict between a strong affective bond—a "feeling" of kinship—and a system of inheritance which denies it jural recognition generates frustration. The ambivalence in the relationship is manifested not only by joking, which is asymmetrical—with Ego being the more aggressive—but by theft as well. Perhaps as partial compensation for his inability to inherit matrilaterally, Ego is permitted to steal his mother's brother's property during his lifetime and can also make off with the beer and some of the animals collected for his funeral.

As for equality of status, the descent groups of Ego and mother's brother are structurally equivalent. Although their respective positions within these two groups differ, the permissiveness of Ego's relationship to his maternal uncle absolves him from recognition of the canons of comportment that otherwise prevail among the Mossi in relations between persons of differing status. Indeed, disregard for such status differences is part of the "joke." Independence is assured by the fact that Ego and his mother's brother are members of autonomous descent groups and that each is responsive only to the authority of his respective lineage elders.

Joking with a Mother's Brother's Wife

Joking between Ego and his mother's brother's wife is to be regarded as a separate relationship because of her nonmembership in the mother's brother's descent group, but certain of the structural circumstances are similar. The source of separation from the mother's brother's wife is evident. The reciprocal tie that unites them is indirect; when Ego is received warmly in his mother's brother's household it is the wife of the latter who prepares the food he is given. Similarly, as a member of her husband's patriclan, she benefits

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571 604 indirectly from the good will of his ancestral spirits whose benevolence Ego often invokes.

Ambivalence follows from other characteristics of the relationship. Resentment of Ego's depredations of her husband's property and jealous concern for the inheritance rights of her own children appear to be at least partially balanced by a share of the affection her husband shows for Ego. However, joking in this relationship is asymmetrical. The mother's brother's wife takes the more aggressive role, and from the vehemence of her joking, and the [152] structural nature of the relationship, it appears likely that amity lies less heavily in the balance than hostility. The groups to which the two parties belong are equal in status. Their respective positions within them, of course, are not, and this is reflected in the aforementioned asymmetry. Each party is obviously independent of the authority system of the other.

571 607 *Joking Between Siblings-in-Law*

[144] Siblings-in-law who joke are separated by the rule of sib exogamy observed among the Mossi. Reciprocity is basic to the marriage contract that unites their respective kin groups. Several factors tend to create ambivalence in the relationship. Both kin groups—in particular, the extended families of the two marriage partners—profit from the reciprocal tie established between them, but possible failure on the part of either group to reciprocate adequately, [574] particularly with regard to marriage payments, constitutes a persistent source [587] of potential friction. Moreover, the Mossi observe the levirate. Joking between siblings-in-law who are potential spouses, yet are presently constrained by a [137] prohibition against adultery, has frequently been ascribed the function of reducing tension in a situation of conflict. The kin groups of siblings-in-law [614] are always structurally equivalent because groups occupying significantly dif- [582] ferent strata in Mossi society do not intermarry. As members of autonomous descent groups the participants are obviously independent of one another.

571 614 *Joking Between Sibs*

Sibs (or lineages) whose members joke with one another are, of course, also separate groups.[2] They are always united by a strong tradition of reciprocal social and economic aid. Ambivalence apparently stems from the conflict between this tradition of reciprocity and actual competing claims to land. The origin of joking relationships between two descent groups is often ascribed to the alleged fact that, when they first arrived in the village, leaders of both falsely claimed to the chief that he and his kinsmen had arrived first, [423] and thus had a prior right to land, and that the members of the other group were their slaves. Despite their jocular allegations, both groups are in fact structurally equal and independent.

571 561 *Joking Between Age-Sets*

Joking between age-sets within an age-grade varies with the generational

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position of the set in Mossi society. In the years immediately following initiation the members are much involved in group activities, e.g., the arrangement of social dances, courtship, and co-operation in work groups composed of male and female age-sets, and during this period joking is important. As the members attain adult status the groups tend to lose their structural integrity; their minor corporate functions dwindle and ultimately disappear as the responsibility of the young people to their kin groups increases. With this shift in emphasis, joking behavior also diminishes.

While it lasts, however, this type of joking likewise has a structural context characterized by the attributes already identified. Age-sets are structurally separate within the age-grade. Their relations are reciprocal: individual members co-operate in the arrangement of one another's sexual liaisons; they pool their labor and share the profits they earn as members of their co-operative work organizations; and young men often leave Yatenga as migrant laborers in groups organized on the basis of age-grade membership, thereby reinforcing many of the reciprocal ties established in the work groups. The ambivalence characteristic of the relationship is perhaps best explained as the rivalry of peers. Since there is no status hierarchy within a Mossi age-grade, the age-sets are structurally equivalent and independent.

Intervillage Joking

When intervillage joking is institutionalized it may involve all the members of each community. However, I believe it is particularly expected of their respective chiefs. In either case, the participants are separated by their differing political affiliations. The inhabitants of each village are expected to reciprocate in one another's defense, to be mutually hospitable, and to co-operate in the regulation of land tenure at their frontiers. Ambivalence derives from a history of past hostility, dating perhaps from an earlier period when competition for new land was keener and the expanding kingdom did not yet encompass all the villages now within its borders. Such villages are always structurally equivalent in status within the political system, and each is independent of the other.

Joking Between Ethnic Groups

The joking relationship which the Mossi maintain with the Gurunsi and the Samogho peoples, among others, appears to involve the same structural characteristics. However, I learned of this relationship only shortly before I left Yatenga, and a more certain statement concerning it must therefore await further research. It is certain that such joking occurs; I am unsure only of the number of other ethnic groups involved[3] and of the relevant details of their historical relations to the Mossi of Yatenga. The groups involved are again separate. There is an expectation that members of each group should extend hospitality and assistance to members of the other. As with villages whose inhabitants joke, the participants in this relationship are ambivalent in their attitudes; the present expectation of co-operation is coupled with a past

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571 548 tradition of hostility. Such groups obviously have both equal and mutually independent status.

The Processes of Mossi Joking

121 I have already suggested that the significance of joking as an adjustive mechanism is derived from the manner in which it provides concurrently for the operation of three interrelated but analytically separable processes. These are *communication, control,* and *catharsis.*

As a means of communication, joking provides a permissive and flexible context in which a grievance can be expressed, thus allowing for its rectification and the restoration of amity. As a means of control, the public nature of most joking serves to shame the object of the jocular offensive, to invoke social pressure for his conformity, and to elicit support for the complainant. As a means of catharsis, the joking expression of aggressive feelings reduces frustration and thus serves indirectly to perpetuate the amicable aspect of the relationship in which it occurs.

Joking also gives pleasure. The feeling of triumphant release that follows the successful—and safe—expression of hostile sentiments probably functions to reinforce reliance on joking as an adjustive mechanism. And the intrinsic pleasure of wit may also explain the persistence of joking behavior in the absence of an immediate "structural need" for it.

571 607 A more detailed description of one of the relationships already mentioned 573 —sibling-in-law joking—will serve to illustrate these several points. Because 152 of its relation to the pivotal institution of marriage, sibling-in-law joking is perhaps the most frequently used adjustive mechanism in Mossi social structure. The potential for marital conflict is high. This appears to be due to the combined factors of a sexually differentiated enculturative experience that 157 results in marked dissimilarities in adult male and female personality; to an age difference between husbands and wives of at least ten years; to the classic 563 stresses of polygyny; to the subordinate status of Mossi women, particularly of junior wives within their husband's patriclan; and to the possible dissatisfaction of a woman's parents, particularly her mother, at the loss of their daughter's services or at the inadequacy of bride-wealth payments.

Whatever its origins in a specific instance, it is important that this potential for conflict be controlled, for each marriage extends the network of affinal 613 and cognatic ties that link the patrilineage to the larger community. Given a persistent potential for strife, the preservation of marital stability requires the provision of a means for minimizing its deleterious effects. When conflict occurs, the resultant frustration must be reduced, and accord must be reestablished in a manner that does no serious damage either to the marriage itself or to the larger context of social relations in which it is embedded. Sibling-in-law joking helps to accomplish this.

If, for example, a Mossi is irritated by his wife's performance of some aspect of her duties in the household or the field, he need not address her directly in order to communicate his dissatisfaction and release the tension he feels. To do so in a culture which places a high value on indirection in emo-

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tionally charged relationships would be such a serious breach of etiquette as to threaten permanent damage, if not actual dissolution, of the marriage relationship (Hammond 1959: 187; 1963: 21). Thus if he has been angered over his wife's frequent failure to prepare his food properly, or to present it to him before his kinsmen with a proper show of deference, he need not and should not reprimand her directly. He need only wait until she is visited by one of her younger sisters when he can call out:

> Eh! Here come women more worthless than my wife! What do you want here? Are you looking for *sacabo* (a millet cake)? Who eats well here? Do you want an old groundnut? No one here has tasted *sacabo* with sauce since your sister came to my house!

By expressing his resentment of his wife in this way the husband is able—indirectly—to communicate the cause of his displeasure, to elicit support for himself and social pressure against her, and to achieve harmlessly the reduction of his hostile feelings. All this he accomplishes without risking the sort of direct and angry confrontation which might have a permanently damaging effect on their relationship. The wife's younger sisters cannot take offense at this joking, and they can be relied upon to relay the husband's complaints to their sister—if, indeed, she does not herself overhear the joking exchange. Furthermore, since a wife's younger sisters are usually aware of the sources of her grievance with her husband, they can use the same means to communicate to him the reason for her resentment and consequent failure to perform her domestic tasks to his satisfaction.

Similarly, when a man's younger brothers come into the presence of his wife, she is expected to insult them in the same way—to deride with humor their appearance, their lack of energy, their skill at their work, or their intelligence. The expectation and acceptance of such joking provides her with an indirect means of criticizing her husband as well. By saving her grievances until she is in the company of her husband's younger siblings, she may, within the context of joking, pour out her resentment at the way she is treated, revealing succinctly the causes of her dissatisfaction. His brothers can be relied upon to relay to her husband what she has said, if he has not himself overheard the exchange. If he recognizes as valid the criticism implied by her joking remarks, he may correct those aspects of his behavior which are frustrating or unsatisfactory to her. Indeed, if the criticisms are justified, his kinsmen are likely to exert pressure on him to do so. The joking provides the woman with a means of channeling in a culturally acceptable manner the aggressive feelings generated by her frustrations. And her husband's younger brothers, by retorting with hostile banter of the same sort, can convey to her the dissatisfaction of both her husband and their other kinsmen with her comportment, thus providing her, too, with a chance to mend her ways.

By these means both marriage partners have an equal opportunity to evaluate the content of the other's criticism and, if necessary, to alter their behavior accordingly. Since this is achieved through joking, the result of such an exchange is the maintenance of communication, the exercise of a measure of social control, and the mutual reduction of frustration without the face-to-face conflict that might result in permanent damage to both the marriage relation-

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ship itself and the contract of interlineage co-operation and solidarity which every marriage serves to establish or reinforce.[4]

Although this joking interchange is seen in its full implications when there is an immediate source of dissension between marriage partners, it may also occur in the absence of any specific difficulty. Then it is apparently indulged in simply because it is expected, and for the pleasure which the Mossi, like all people, derive from an occasion to exercise their wit. It is this relatively disinterested joking which has been most frequently described in the literature, and this may account for the failure of many scholars to perceive more fully the important social and psychological functions which joking may fulfill.

Conclusion

This paper has been written as a tentative step toward a reformulation of the various and disparate observations on joking contained in the anthropological literature. I have contended that an analysis of this literature indicates that wherever joking is institutionalized the structural relationship between the participants tends to be characterized by five significantly interrelated structural attributes: separation, reciprocity, ambivalence, equality, and independence. I have also indicated that such joking may serve as an adjustive mechanism by providing for the concurrent maintenance of communication, control, and the culturally harmless catharsis of potentially disruptive emotions.

A variety of forms of institutionalized joking found among the Mossi of Yatenga have been cited to illustrate these points. However, I suggest that the factors which cluster with this reliance on joking as an adjustive mechanism are not unique to the Mossi. Institutionalized joking reported for other parts of Africa appears to be structurally and processually similar.

NOTES

1. A shorter version of this paper was read at the annual meeting of the American Anthropological Association held in San Francisco in November, 1963. It is based on field research conducted among the Mossi from 1954 to 1956 with the assistance of a Ford Foundation Fellowship.

2. Marriage between the members of descent groups united by a joking alliance is regarded by the Mossi as highly desirable, apparently in recognition of the useful role of joking as an adjustive mechanism. Once such a marriage is contracted, however, Ego and his wife must take care that their joking insults are directed only at the younger kinsmen of the other and that the insulting remarks are personal. It would, for example, be acceptable for Ego to call his wife's younger sister a disreputable shrew but dangerous to call her a slave (a term of disrespect used frequently in joking between sibs). To refer to her as a slave would cast unflattering aspersions on her entire kin group, including her mother and father, with whom, in their new status as parents-in-law, Ego may no longer joke.

3. I believe that joking is also institutionalized between the Mossi and the Yarse, a highly acculturated ethnic minority of Mande origin who live throughout Yatenga. There is also joking between the Mossi and the indigenous blacksmith caste. Unfortunately my data on these two instances of joking are inadequate.

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571/607/593/154 4. The importance of sibling-in-law joking as a means of regulating conflict in the Mossi marriage relationship is further substantiated by the results of comparative research conducted among the Mossi resettled at the Office du Niger in the neighboring Republic of Mali.

[166] The Mossi, who were first forcibly and later voluntarily resettled in Mali, were allocated farm land as elementary family units without regard for their extended kinship affiliations. Thus a man often found himself living in unaccustomed "isolation," in the company only of his wife or wives and children, and otherwise surrounded by total strangers. Although the potential for conflict in the marriage relationship remained high, or was even augmented by the stresses of adjusting to a changed milieu, sibling-in-law joking, the institution through which such tension is traditionally regulated among the Mossi, was no longer operative. Unless the younger siblings of each spouse had accompanied them to the resettlement area, those individuals were absent to whom they might have communicated their grievances and expressed their aggressive sentiments in a socially harmless, psychologically satisfactory, and culturally acceptable way.

[570/589] As the traditionally sanctioned means of dealing with tension resulting from marital conflict was no longer available to the Mossi resettled in Mali, there occurred an increase in the incidence both of violence in marital disputes and of separation and divorce.

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the same royal ancestors. A Mossi village chief was likewise the head of his babissi and ex officio head of all the other babissi in his village that belonged to his boodoo. As the official Boodkasma of his village's ruling lineage, the village chief held junior or senior status in relation to other village chiefs of the same boodoo who were also the Boodkasemdamba of their respective lineage segments.

Possession of the nam influenced the pattern of seniority within lineages and lineage segments. In most cases, seniority was based on age and generation. Thus, the oldest man of the oldest generation was the Boodkasma, and his office devolved upon the next oldest man when he died. But within the ruling lineages and their segments, the man who held the nam, whether young or old, was automatically senior to all others. This does not mean that these ruling lineages did not recognize age and generational seniority. For example, whenever a chief died and sovereignty returned to the lineage as a corporate group, the senior noble of the senior generation became the acting Boodkasma and lineage head. Like all Boodkasemdamba, he managed the affairs of his group, but only until a new chief was elected. The new Boodkasma, however, sometimes delegated some of his social rights and ritual obligations to this elder, who was often regarded as the unofficial or semi-official Boodkasma of his lineage. Similarly, the senior nobles of all segments of the ruling lineage were also regarded as Boodkasemdamba. Because they were so regarded and because of the role they played, these men seldom came into conflict with the district chief. He gave them a certain amount of leeway in dealing with the everyday affairs of their group. It was understood by all, however, that nothing should jeopardize the most important asset of the lineage—the nam. Therefore, the chief was obeyed in all important matters involving the noble lineage of the district. In such matters he listened to no one; for, as one district chief said, "Once I have received the nam from the Mogho Naba, no man in this district stands above me!"

This dominance of political relations over social relations was made clear by the behavior of commoners toward ruling nobles on the one hand, and of nobles among themselves on the other. Commoners showed greater respect and deference toward members of the ruling babissi than toward persons belonging to other noble babissi. Thus, they were more respectful to the district chief's father's brothers, his siblings, and his children than to his more distant relatives. Within the noble lineage itself, everyone had to respect the chief as the holder of the nam, but otherwise the generational principle of respect and deference was maintained. The eldest nobleman of the eldest generation received deference from all others (excluding the

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554 613 571 778 chief), and the hierarchy of respect descended to the youngest nobleman of the youngest generation. Very often, the full-grown son and presumed heir of the district chief had to kneel in respect to a distantly related younger man of an elder generation. Of course, this deference ceased if and when he became chief. If he did not receive the nam, he continued to show deference to all his lineage elders. This distinction between nam and boodoo was [578] a source of potential conflict within the ruling lineages. The people usually accepted the implications of both principles, but when they did not, there were dynastic quarrels and territorial secessions.

622 613 554 778 571 The age and generational principles also operated within non-noble ruling lineages, but here too they were often complicated by the possession of the nam. Those village chiefs who had lost their noble status but retained the nam acted as official Boodkasemdamba of their local lineage segments and had considerable influence over their lineage although they did not control all its segments. Each lineage segment had its own Boodkasma, who normally ran its affairs. But because of the importance of the nam in Mossi life, the Boodkasemdamba deferred to the village chief in [565] important matters pertaining to their own boodoo. However, the generational principle was followed within the local boodoo. Almost no one deferred to the children of the village chief, who, after all, were not nakomce.

613 571 778 The situation within commoner lineages that did not hold the nam was quite different. The age and generational principles obtained within the lineage segments of these boodoo, but never *across* the segments, as they did across the babissi. These segments were more autonomous. Each had its own Boodkasma, who looked after it without deferring to anyone. This autonomy was all the more pronounced since the segments of non-noble lineages tended to be scattered throughout a district. They interacted socially and politically only when they were physically close. In any case, in the absence of the nam, the segments of non-noble lineages had no reason to remain together; they tended to lose their hierarchical quality and to become equal and separate.

613 173 778 As would be expected in such circumstances, not all Mossi lineages paid the same attention to their genealogies. Noble lineages kept track of their actual or putative ancestors, whereas non-noble lineages tended to ignore them and to let geographical proximity determine meaningful kinship ties. This loss of interest in exact genealogies was found even among lineages that had lost the nam of a district and with it their nobility, but still retained the nam of a village. Members of the minimal units in such lineages competed actively for the village nam and were interested in fairly recent an-

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When one asks the Mossi directly, "What is a market?" the response to this question is: "A market is a place where people 443 meet to buy and sell. People travel from one market place to another 829 market place, and on the way they stop and see their friends in other villages. In the market one often meets and drinks with one's friends. People also go to distant markets to find things which they do not grow themselves or which cannot be found in their own markets."

Lending support to the Mossi contention that markets are places 443 where one goes to buy and sell is the fact that most important markets 487 in their country are found at the intersections of well-traveled routes. These intersections are often the places where chiefs have their capi- [631] tals or compounds and this leads to the further idea that there is a connection between chiefs and markets, if only because the power of the chiefs makes markets possible. This does not mean, however, 443 that the market is a purely physical entity which can only exist under 571 the aegis of a chief, or that it is a purely economic institution. First of all, some markets, especially the smaller ones, are moved periodically without too much difficulty. Secondly, and of great importance, is the fact that whenever and wherever there is a large gathering of Mossi there is a "market." Indeed one can say that Mossi seldom come together in large numbers without coming to a market, or without creating one. It appears that the Mossi cannot interact with one [437] another in any circumstance without also exchanging goods of some kind. For example, when a pagan chief holds the annual festival to [769] his ancestors, the people who attend form a market in the vicinity of his compound. In those districts where the chiefs have become Chris- [797] tians and celebrate their birthdays rather than the traditional an- [527] cestors' rites, the people go to pay them homage and also "make a market." Similarly, whenever there is a funeral of an important chief, [766] the people from the surrounding villages or even districts bring commodities to his hamlet and hold a market during the ceremony. On [796] Christmas day, 1955, the people of Manga district "moved their market" about 500 yards to the Catholic Mission grounds where the Christians were celebrating their holiday. And after celebrating the prayers of Ramadan, the Moslems and their pagan townsmen repair to the markets to spend the rest of the day.

Most Mossi markets are inaugurated with religious ceremonies ex- 443 cept those which develop by accretion—that is, by more and more per- 433 sons coming voluntarily to trade. When a chief orders that a market be [659] created or when a market is moved from one place to another place for any reason, the chief is the person who gives the order for the ceremony to be performed. First of all he speaks to his Raga Naba (market [554] chief), usually a non-Mossi slave, about the need for the market or the desirability of changing its location. This man then consults a *teng-*

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changed. I remain ignorant of what the real facts are, but still suspect that it may be possible to speculate on the system.

Barter is very specific in Mossi markets in the sense that not every product can be bartered against every other product. Some days rice would be bartered for cotton, and on other days only for peanuts and vice versa. It is not possible either to exchange vegetable produce for livestock, even though livestock may be exchanged for livestock. Sometimes people take chickens or guinea hens to market to exchange for goats or sheep, and often these animals are exchanged for young cattle. What is not at all clear, however, is whether or not the people see the value of the things exchanged in terms of currency value, or in terms of some value which has no reference to the European currency system. The ordinary people in the markets, like ordinary people everywhere, are not concerned with these problems as long as they believe that they are conducting their commercial activities with equity and are deriving satisfaction from them.

The most significant feature of all the Mossi markets is the segregation of certain merchants into certain areas. The makers and sellers of one product are found only in one part of the market, and anyone wishing to buy or sell these products must go to the place where they are traded. The other type of segregation is by reference to the trader's place of origin. For example, a woman who sells beer would be found in the section of the market where beer is sold, but she would be found sitting with her back towards the village or facing toward the direction from which she came. There are often some variations on this pattern. For example, if there are a large number of traders with one type of product, they will form a large open circle in which each person will sit with his or her back towards the point of origin. Inside of this circle, and separated by a few feet, would be another circle of people selling another product with their faces toward the general direction from which they came. Sitting with their backs to the people of this circle would be other people forming another circle and selling one type of product. These people would have their backs towards the region from which they came. When the group of persons selling one type of product is very small, they may form a small circle in a corner of the market with their backs towards their points of origin. All of these patterns often exist simultaneously in Mossi markets, but it is obvious that two basic configurations prevail. One configuration is in terms of goods, and facilitates trading. The other configuration is a social one and facilitates the social interaction which is an integral part of the Mossi market. This seating pattern makes it easier to find one's friends, to converse and drink with them, to find someone through whom to send me

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443 sages to specific villages, to find the help needed in the event of a
571 fight, and finally to find an escape route by which one can leave in the event of trouble.

443 The vendors in the larger markets of Mossi country include Yoru-
463 ba, Hausa and other ethnic groups, many of whose members were
563 born in Mossi country and have never visited the land of their fathers. The lives of these people are usually centered around the markets; where the markets are held every day, many of the men, women and children of these foreign groups spend almost all of their lives at the [439] markets. In marked contrast to the Mossi, they usually sell products of foreign provenience, whether African or European, and seldom deal in the local products. These vendors are tolerated by the Mossi and are valued for their commerce, but are always regarded as outsiders. And as outsiders the markets do not belong to them, but only
443 to the Mossi. Even so, the Mossi do not really like the larger markets.
829 True, one can buy all kinds of wonderful goods on the large markets, but to the Mossi, a market is more than a place where one goes to buy and sell, even though everyone who goes there tries to do some of both.

443 There is a marked division of labor among the vendors in a Mossi
462 market—a division which can be seen at its best on the local markets.
438 Here only the women sell cooked food, beer, millet, rice, peanuts,
439 shea-butter, tobacco, and all of the other locally grown vegetables and vegetable products, except cotton which may also be sold by a man. In contrast, women do not sell such local products as cotton cloth, hemp, jewelry, iron implements and leather goods, which are the province of the men. Only men may butcher and sell animals and meat in the market. And they alone control the commerce in foreign food articles such as salt and dried fish. Both men and women sell the valuable imported kola nut, but only men sell goods of European manufacture such as cigarettes, matches, sugar, mirrors and so on. [185] Small girls sell calabashes of water to everyone, and small boys wander through the market selling single cigarettes, bundles of a few matches, single lumps of sugar, chickens and guinea fowls, and skewers of roasted meat.

443 There is little competition about someone else having "stolen"
437 a customer. The reason for this is mainly that every person in the market is a potential customer of everyone else. Normally, a buyer
432 simply moves from seller to seller sampling the goods if that is possible (some unscrupulous men can even get drunk in the process of "sampling" beer) and trying to get the best bargain. No seller would think of running after a customer, and customers seldom, if ever, move away from a vendor in the hope that he would be called back to be sold the article at a lower price.

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shoulder; but when he arrives in the market, he calmly places his weapon on top of one of the sheds before he makes his rounds. The women do not carry any weapons to market except their "words" but even these are not often used because of the desire to avoid hostility—which the Mossi do not like to have disrupt one of their major institutions.

The rural market is the center of Mossi social life, and friends as well as enemies meet within its confines. What Mangin wrote some forty years ago is still true: "Every self-respecting Mossi—man or woman, child or elder—must go to market at least once in a while, were it only to look . . . and to be looked at, if he can put on some handsome clothes" (Mangin 1921 : 53). Except for the Moslems who are now experimenting with a form of Purdah, there are few persons who do not go to market. The absence of someone from the market for more than two consecutive occasions is a sure sign of illness, travel, or family crisis. As one man said to me, "I must go to market, and when I get there I look for three persons: my girl friend, my debtor and my enemy. If I do now know whether any of them are at the market I am ill at ease. And when I go to the market and do not see them all, the market is not good."

The lively character of the Mossi market will be discussed later, but throughout this kaleidoscope of activities certain consistencies can be discerned. For example, one notices many different kinds of greetings and salutations in the market place, but each one of them correctly indicates the exact relation or relationship between the persons involved. Young girls on passing each other on one of their innumerable circuits of the market bend their knees slightly and place both of their cupped hands on their own breasts. Only then will they stop and exchange news. At the end of the conversation they repeat the same greeting and continue their rounds. Both girls and women greet casual male acquaintances in the same way, but invariably kneel if the male stops and talks to them. Women sometime kneel when speaking to each other, but always do so when addressing any male relative of a respected category, who may then send them on errands such as buying tobacco from the vendors. A man who meets a female benefactor, such as a woman who has given medicine to one of his children, invariably kneels down before her. She may do the same thing out of respect for his male status. However, when a man meets either his mother in-law or his father's sister, he is the one to kneel down in order to greet her. Two men who are equals normally shake hands, but if not, the junior in status or in age kneels down before his elder or superior. Sometimes a high status man will prevent his greeter from kneeling by raising him. When

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greeting a lower status benefactor, a man will get down and greet him from a kneeling position. It is because of this elaborate system of greeting, with the many opportunities thus provided for one person to slight another, that many important persons never go to the market. As a rule, the failure of any one person to give the required greeting to another when they meet in the market place is always an indication of strained relations between them.

The persons from whom an individual may buy goods, and the kinds of goods which may be purchased by one individual from another, are governed by convention and social relationships. A person may not buy anything from a relative except European goods. A man cannot buy any but cooked food in the market place, and often he asks a female relative or a passing female to buy it for him. To do the contrary is held to be unmanly and indicative of a bad character. A woman will not buy cotton cloth but will send a man to buy it for her. She would hate to have people believe that she has no male relative to weave it for her, or what is more likely, that she is too lazy to spin the cotton thread which would then be woven for her. A woman may purchase any type of commodity from other women, but she must be careful not to patronize men who are known to be libertines or with whom she is suspected of having an affair. She must also be careful about running errands for men, since people know that men often use this device to establish amorous relationships with women. Men also use this device to give presents, or to arrange secret meetings with them. If any man sees a female relative involved in any of these misadventures, he chases her away and more than likely curses the man, if he does not fight him. In any event, he warns the man to leave the woman alone.

The market is one of the few places where men and women can initiate relationships not sanctioned by their relatives. Under normal conditions marriages are arranged between unrelated individuals through the lineage members who establish "friendly" relationships. Two friends might ask their lineage heads for women to exchange as wives or the "friend" who has received more gifts from the other will give over a wife. Because the older men most often have goods and women at their disposal, they are usually the ones who receive wives. The result is that most young men have no wives, and until they inherit wives from lineage members, are continually seeking to establish intimate relations with women whom they meet on the market place. The technique which a young man employes to gain the favors of a woman he sees at market is highly stereotyped. First of all, he must ascertain that the woman in question is not a member of his maximal lineage or married to a member of his own lineage. A responsible

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and districts were present to honor him. This being completed, the *griots* are paid, everyone rises and shouts *Ne Wardo* (the salutation at funerals), and that part of the funeral ceremony during which a man takes leave of the market community is concluded. Now his relatives, descendants and friends all return to the market, whose sights and sounds make it an integral part of the life cycle of the Mossi—the one institution of their society in which almost everyone participates actively.

Preparation for a market day, especially the tri-weekly Friday market or *Raga kasanga*, usually begins on Thursday. This day is characterized by a great deal of activity: preparing the commodities which are to be sold the next day, washing body and clothes, and combing hair. The women who prepare the beer and fried foods work late into the night preparing their wares, and a visit to the homes of the *griots* finds them preparing their drums. The little boys who go to the roadside to chant Moslem prayers to the passers-by, and the little girls who sell water to these strangers redouble their efforts until late on Thursday night to get enough money to buy presents in the market the next day. Finally, when it is quite late and the beer-making fires are out, everyone retires until the morning of the market.

At 7:00 A.M. on Friday the market is deserted except for a leper who sweeps out the stalls of the sellers in return for bits of food or presents of money. Looking at the empty stalls, one has a certain amount of difficulty imagining that this spot will be crowded with human beings five hours hence. But one is also conscious of the fact that even at this early hour scores of persons have already left their homes in distant villages and are on their way to market loaded with produce and with high hopes for the day. About 9:00 A.M. the first women arrive, balancing net-covered bundles on their heads, and take their positions in the various sections of the market with either face or back pointing to the direction from which they came. By 9:30 A.M. the butchers have arrived with their bleating sheep and goats and an aged cow. The first beer sellers have also arrived and are giving "sips" to men before they settle down to sustained drinking.

The pace of the market quickens about 10:30, and in the distance the first tap of the Bindere's drum resounds. All of a sudden, the market seems to have become a giant magnet, drawing long lines of people towards it along every path and from every direction. Women dressed in brightly colored print cloths and dresses, with babies straddling their backs and the inevitable bundles on their head, saunter into their places. Young children run ahead of their mothers or stumble behind them. Those vendors of European products who customarily transport their goods in boxes on bicycles arrive in the

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market and set up their small tables to display all types of goods from trinkets to single lumps of sugar. And the more numerous young men, who have no goods but have money in their pockets, go to the leaf-covered sheds, place their weapons on top of them, and take seats from which to view the passing parade. Imperceptibly, the hum in the market increases as people find their places and greet one another with *Ne Raga*, the market greeting, until by 11:30 A.M. the whole market reverberates with sounds of drumming, cries of vendors, and the shrill voice of water hawkers and juvenile vendors. Now the market is in full swing.

From midday until about 3:30 P.M., the Mossi market is a sea of humanity—talking, laughing, arranging rendezvous, quarreling, selling, buying, parading, and (where youngsters are concerned) often crying for want of money to buy a desired object. The return of migrants lends additional color and excitement to the market as these young people walk about in their new clothes, encouraging the drummers to sing louder praises, the maidens to feel jealous of the clothes of the migrants' female relatives, the former migrants to reminisce about the days when they too had bright new clothes, and the young boys to dream of going off one day to obtain the things they need.

Men, noting that their female relatives are spending too much time looking over the wares of a vendor of European products or of the kola-nut seller, wander over ostensibly to help in the purchase but really to prevent love affairs. The failure to observe such a precaution may be the cause of the shouting a man hears in the distance, and off he hurries to see whether a lineage brother or a friend may need his aid. He may either get into the battle himself, or aid the Raga Naba and the other elders to chase the battlers out of the market place, or to take them to the chief. This may indeed restore some peace and good fellowship to the market.

Elders, now more interested in beer than in other pleasures, pass the heat of the market day under the beer sellers' shed. From time to time one of them may be interrupted by a young man bringing him three kola nuts, one or two of which are immediately broken and given to friends. However, when an oldster, whether a drinking pagan or a Moslem teetotaler, sees or overhears a young man buying four kolas, he may frown or smile in the knowledge that mischief is afoot. Loud-voiced predictions of the consequences of evil-doing may suddenly disturb the merrymakers as American missionaries speaking in perfect More (the language of the Mossi) appear and harangue the market people. Then, as suddenly, the *Americadamba* depart in their large cars, and the curious pagans, amused Catholics or hostile Moslems who had gathered to hear the gospel return to

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their "evil" and "non-evil" ways. A little later the young men who possess bicycles may be seen suddenly hurrying to avoid the other *nansara*, this time, the French official, who comes into the market to apprehend those individuals who have not bought a bicycle license. All the *nansara* know that the market is the best place to find a Mossi.

Towards 3:00 P.M. the matrons in the market, having sold most of their own goods and bought those which they need, make the last rounds to see whether there are any bargains to be had. In their rounds the women may be badgered by sons, daughters and other relatives, but seldom by husbands, for extra francs to buy kolas or tobacco to bridge them over the two non-market days. Or the women themselves may seek out their male relatives to buy kola or goods, from the stranger who is making the rounds of the local markets. By this time of day the market place is emptying—at first this happens so imperceptibly that one does not notice it. However, by 4:00 P.M. a mass exodus begins as women collect their little children, hitch their babies on their backs, place baskets on their head and set out in the direction of their own villages or to the villages of relatives where they plan to spend time. By this hour also the Bendere are drunk, and for an extra calabash of beer are willing to recount genealogies for which, if sober, they would demand a sheep or goat.

Evening finds the market deserted except for scavenging dogs which hunt the scraps of food dropped by the now departed human beings. The market place finally falls silent, until late at night passing migrants retire there to sleep. These persons leave the market place at dawn to buy food from the women whose hawking cries herald another day of roadside commerce. The women use the profit from this trade to buy goods on the following market days.

[pp 279-738 not processed]

241 At noon (wend'to souka, "the middle of the day") the family
572 rests in the shade of a tree. There are always some fruit trees in every field. Work is resumed at about two in the afternoon. At five the women return home to prepare food, and the men stop work at nightfall.

241 The sisoaga. When the family fields are too extensive to be
476 cultivated without help, all the able-bodied young men in the village are called to help with the weeding.

At such a time the head of the family gives several baskets of sprouted millet to his wives to make large quantities of dam, millet beer. He also orders them to prepare sagbo (millet cakes).

On the day set for the work, the young men go to the fields, where their enthusiasm is aroused by singing and the beating of drums. For their work they receive sagbo and dam. This is what is known as the sisoaga.

It is a kind of mutual aid, and without this indispensable system of solidarity, many fields would remain uncultivated.

[572] It should be noted, finally, that when a person falls [246] ill during the winter, his friends arrange to cultivate his fields, sometimes without any pay and simply out of a sense of solidarity.

241 Farm implements. As is the case everywhere in French West Africa, the natives have only the most primitive implements. Among the Mossi these include: the wanka or kounri, a hoe or Bambara daba to cultivate the soil; the sitoaga (small pickaxe) for sowing; and the laré (ax) to clear the site of brush and shrubs.

463 Other types of work. Aside from work in the fields, everyone goes about his own affairs. Some make baskets, hampers, and fans, while others weave cotton strips. It is perhaps of some
[564 interest to note that there is no caste distinction among the Mossi,
326] except for the blacksmiths; each person may practice the trade that suits him. This is why shoemakers mostly come from among the nakomsé (descendants of naba).

Food Crops

241 The principal foods grown by the Mossi are as follows.
Kazouf (small white or gray millet).

304 Release. The stay in the kéogo lasts from 90 to 100 days. Around the eightieth day, when all the boys have recovered, their heads are shaved and they are told that they will be released a week later. Chickens (koug'nossé, "chickens of the stone") are killed, and each boy is given half a chicken.

Actually, the ceremony of liberation will not take place until fourteen days after this ceremony. All of the boys' belongings (loincloth, bandages, sticks, etc.) are burned by the zouinsi in a great fire near the kéogo. The bankoensé, completely naked, must jump over the fire and run straight to the house of the Bankoé without looking back. A new enclosure has been built there, and the boys are given skirts, robes, trousers, and caps of various colors which their relatives bought or [271] had made for them. Everyone on this occasion wants his son to be distinguished by the richness of his costume. The procession of the circumcised boys is a motley and picturesque sight. One or two days after this, the boys must go back toward the kéogo at nightfall for the last time. They stop before reaching it, however, and return to the house of the Bankoé with their backs slightly bent; this is called lé'ssé-bourgou.

The boys enjoy a veritable festival for a week. They are in high spirits from the admiration they receive, from being able to perform dances other than those peculiar to the circumcision ceremony, from drinking beer, and especially from eating their fill, since their parents have sacrificed chickens and sheep for the occasion.

Finally, very early one morning, some zouinsi collect the boys' handsomely decorated sticks (wangha or dibissi) and go off to bury them in holes dug outside the village. This is the end of the cremony, and now the boys may return to their homes.

304 All of the boys have undergone the same rough treatment and
572 have led the same life for about 100 days. During this time of trial, friendships and lasting attachments have been formed. They will henceforth call each other by their "circumcision names" and will help each other since they are now friends.

304 In order to forestall possible reprisals -- since in the kéogo no distinction is made between the son of a naba and a peasant's son -- custom forbids the [272] new initiates to hold a grudge against the zouinsi for the ill-treatment to which they were subjected.

751 it. It is recognized that smallpox does not hit the same place twice (obviously, when it has already killed all those who could be killed), and fear of catching the disease prevents many natives from undergoing the operation. The Administration is rendering great services
744 with its vaccination tours, which will be all the more successful since the experiments carried out by our Fathers some years ago, with tubes of vaccine kindly sent by the Administrator of Ouagadougou, bore excellent results and checked an epidemic which was decimating the population. Smallpox victims are nursed /67/ as carefully as possible.
757 They are laid on a bed of sand which retains heat. When the pocks are ripe, they are punctured with a thorn, and then the patient is rubbed with sand. The eyes are washed with an antiseptic decoction, and the patient gargles frequently with peppered water.

Medicinal herbs, tree leaves, and barks are the basis of all remedies, in the form of infusions or poultices. The study of these medicines would no doubt be of interest to a specialist. But would the natives who hold the secret of their preparation be willing to surrender it?

[572] When a friend is ill, even if he lives far away, the right thing is to
755 visit him, offer him sympathy, and even more appropriately bring him some gifts. The relatives of the sick person consult the sorcerer, for it is necessary to determine the agency that caused the disease. Sorcerers rarely prescribe a medicine. Their role is to point out the part of the body which is afflicted and especially to indicate the spirit who should receive the sacrifice. Another man, who in most cases has nothing to do with witchcraft, knows the medicines. If the patient improves after the prescribed sacrifices have been offered, it means that the sorcerer knows his business well; if not, it means that he has cheated.

758 Every self-respecting sorcerer must prescribe a negative treatment, in the sense of pointing out certain things the patient must not eat. Sometimes goat or chicken flesh is forbidden for the duration of the illness or permanently. Sometimes it is a certain kind of sauce, or millet or bean fritters. On the other hand, since the Mossi eat no eggs, especially not raw, and drink hardly any milk, they sustain the sick with plenty of millet beer and with an unappetizing mush of coarsely ground millet, often mixed with powdered charcoal. Patients have difficulty absorbing such a mixture and occasionally die of
755 starvation. Sometimes the sorcerer also indicates an amulet that

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241 picking, the plant may be turned under and left to enrich the soil.

241 476 Apart from the co-operative cultivation of fields under the proprietorship of the lineage elder, each farmer works for himself. He aids his relatives, and they in turn assist him with his work, but the results of their communal effort are not shared. This applies not only to the work of planting but also to cultivation and harvest. The decision about what is to be planted in a particular field and how it shall be cultivated rests finally with the individual farmer.

Communal or co-operative effort is much more characteristic of the work of cultivation than of the planting period, when everyone is in a hurry to get his own seeds into the ground and requests for assistance are not welcomed. A strong note of competition is evident at this time. A [461] man takes pride in his efficiency as a farmer, and there is a race to see who can get farthest along with his work. In the earliest phase of prepa- [572] rations for the approaching rainy season it is the individual's best friend upon whom he relies most for assistance. He is the first person to be called on for assistance in clearing the field for planting. If a Mossi farmer is unmarried, he may also ask the other unmarried men of his lineage for help. If a long day must be spent in the field in order to clear and clean it properly, his mother will offer the helpers the midday meal, which is carried out to them as they work.

622 651 241 *Naba koba* (chief's cultivation) is the name given to the work which the villagers do in the fields belonging to the village chief. A village elder is charged with announcing when and where work in the chief's fields is to be done, and each lineage head relays the news to his kinsmen. This contribution of labor is no longer obligatory, as it was formerly, but only [626] a question of social pressure and recognition that individual well-being and the welfare of the village "depend on the chief."

241 463 Every Mossi is an agriculturist. Although agriculture is the principal source of income, everyone also engages in crafts, particularly during the dry season when the work in the fields is finished. However, there are no full-time crafts specialists. Even the African functionaries in the European administration and the teachers, clerks, and merchants all work in their fields part of the time during the rainy season. The activities of the blacksmiths, leather workers, butchers, wood workers, herbalists, and small merchants are carried out on a much smaller scale and are fitted into the routine established by the rains and the growth of their millet. Only elders whose age keeps them from the fields might be thought of as specialists who do not participate in agriculture, but their land is worked by younger members of the family, and they take a keen interest in the course of its cultivation. The village chief, the earth custodian, and certain other elderly and important members of the community do not cultivate; this is because of their position and age rather than because

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he received from them. This unequal exchange, plus the nobles' prerogative of seizing the wives of pagans, contributed to the increase of the Moslems. 622 797 582

The conversion of Mossi to Islam is sometimes accompanied by a rupture in the relationships between persons involved in "friendships" with a view of obtaining wives. A great quarrel developed in the district between a pagan chief and a recent convert who refused to give the chief a daughter promised as a wife. The chief became furious and claimed that the Moslem had broken a promise made years ago, but the Moslem claimed that it was against his new religion to give his daughter to a pagan. It is not true that Moslems in the village do not exchange wives with pagans, but the Moslems often try to convert their pagan friends so that the brides will not have to revert to paganism. The chief's difficulty was that he could not become a Moslem because of his ritual and ceremonial relationship with the ancestors. The Moslem men do not have such difficulties with their pagan wives because most women follow their husbands' dictates in religious and other matters. Many Moslem men attempt to prevent their wives from having sacrifices made to the ancestors, but if a woman really wishes such a sacrifice she can easily have it arranged through her pagan relatives. If a woman married to a Moslem refuses to observe Islamic practices, she is liable to divorce and runs the risk of having her children taken away. 572 622 582 797 [562] [593] [586]

Mossi anxiety over children is often instrumental in converting them to Islam. When a woman is barren or her young children die, she consults a soothsayer (*barga*). She is either told that her Tengkougre benefactor was not amply rewarded and recalled the children, or that her "Moslem" children (children who wished to be Moslems) were angry because they were given pagan names. In the latter case she is advised to make a gift to a Moslem and to ask her husband to build a Moslem prayer-circle outside his hut so that when her children "return" (are born again) they will see it. Finally, she is advised to give all her children Moslem names. I could discover no reason why the pagan soothsayers advise these anxious parents to adopt Islam, except that they hope that complicated prescriptions will be more efficacious. Nevertheless, so effective is this technique for gaining converts to Islam that even members of the family of the chief pagan priest are not immune to it. Furthermore, once a woman has a Moslem child, all her other children must be Moslems or they will die. A man whose children are all Moslem has no recourse except to adopt Islam if he wants a funeral, because his Moslem sons may not give him a pagan funeral. 797 842 [787] [551] [164]

Every Mossi, whether Moslem or non-Moslem, wishes a proper funeral, and now that travel has increased the fact of being Moslem or pagan is of great importance. Many young migrants to Ashanti have reported that their dead pagan comrades were unceremoniously disposed of, while the local Christians and Moslems took care of their dead coreligionists. But despite this fact, and the belief of administrators and missionaries, I found no evidence that the seasonal and other migration of Mossi youth to Ghana and the Ivory Coast have contributed very much to the spread of Islam. It is true that some of the thou- 797 167 [164]

644 fields. On that day, the Mogho Naba had one or two cows
651 slaughtered and a large quantity of sagbo (millet cakes) prepared
241 for the workers. If the latter, after being assembled two or three times in the manner indicated above, were not finished with all the fields, the work was carried on by the samand'kamba (the people who dwelt in the outer courtyard of the Mogho Naba).

644 The emperor, however, received none of the millet grown in
574 his own fields, which, incidentally, did not have their present boundaries. This millet was reserved exclusively [74] for use as food for foreign visitors and for the feeding of horses (1).

1. For the ceremony of threshing this millet (kawinré), see the special chapter below [Chapter 16].

644 It was the duty of the canton chiefs and the ministers to pro-
651 vide loads of millet for the use of the Mogho Naba and his harem ("harem" should be understood to mean all young or middle-aged women, but to exclude the elderly women who have to support themselves and who have their private fields).

644 (b) Repair of the houses of the Mogho Naba. The work of
651 building and repairing the houses actually belonging to the em-
356 peror fell entirely upon the inhabitants of Bilbalogo (section of the Baloum Naba), Kamsaonghin (section of the chief eunuch), and Dapoya (section of the slaves of the Mogho Naba).

[343] The outbuildings, wédanga, four round huts with thatched roofs located outside the emperor's house, served as stables for the horses given to the Mogho Naba by canton chiefs or other personages and were built and maintained by three ministers, the Ouidi Naba, Larrhallé Naba, and Gounga Naba, with the help of the people in their sections.

The tamping of the floors and clay roofs was done wholly by the wives of the persons responsible for [75] the construction or repair, that is, the wives of the ministers and of the inhabitants of their sections.

Labor service due the province chiefs, ministers of the emperor.

651 (a) Cultivation of fields. The fields belonging to the ministers
645 of the Mogho Naba were cultivated by a system of payments in kind
241 as follows.

644 conferred by the Mogho Naba on the canton chiefs.

292 With the exception of the Tenkodogo Naba and, more re-
554 cently, the Boussouma Naba, neither of whom renders honors to the Mogho Naba, all ministers, other petty dima, and chiefs of Mossi cantons must take off his cap to greet the emperor.

576 (a) Between ministers. The Ouidi Naba does not remove his
554 cap for any of his colleagues.

645 The Larrhallé Naba, Gounga Naba, and Kamsaongo Naba are equals and greet each other with their caps on.

The Baloum Naba and Samandé Naba are also equals, and they do not take off their caps when greeting each other. However, they were required to remove their caps (pougla) and even to perform the kantissé in the presence of the three principal ministers.

[116] Next in importance are the Nemdo Naba or "chief of the meat" [in charge of slaughtering], the Poé Naba who is confessor to the emperor's wives, the Bend Naba, chief of the drummers, and, finally, a whole string of petty chiefs of no importance who can hardly be distinguished from the general populace and whom it would be fruitless to enumerate here.

The Poé Naba may keep his cap on when he is in the presence of the Baloum Naba or the Samandé Naba, but he must remove it for the other ministers and must even prostrate himself to perform the kantissé.

645 Not very long ago, when the province chiefs of Ouagadougou
574 possessed neither comfortable houses nor furniture, the ministers rarely visited each other. I have even once seen a minister sit on the ground in order to give his seat to one of his colleagues.

645 Whenever matters came up which required a meeting, the ministers met at night in one or another of their homes without the knowledge of the public.

645 Today, the principal ministers have proper reception rooms.
576 They can, therefore, remain seated when a more important colleague calls upon them and limit their special consideration of the visitor to offering him a Morris armchair or a folding chair.

701 The Tensoba, the minister of war, never takes off his cap for a
554 minister or a canton chief. He does so only before the emperor.
645

701 Formerly, when war broke out and he was summoned to [117]
554 Ouagadougou, the Tansoba [sic] assembled the principal ministers
645 of the Mogho Naba at the home of his host, and his word was final.

Aside from this special case, he might call upon a minister, but then a servitor always brought along the cushion on which he would sit until the minister receives him in his private quarters. He was never received in public.

Once inside, the Tansoba occupied the best seat, and the minister got down on the floor and performed the Mossi salute.

In sum, the Tansoba was held in higher esteem than any other personage at the king's court.

(b) At the present time. Today ministers often visit each other.
645 Since they have rapid means of transportation at their disposal, they
574 regularly go about without escorts. Most often their visits are made in order to deal with matters of general interest.

When a minister calls upon another minister, he keeps his cap
645 on and neither removes his shoes nor performs the kantissé. They
576 are equals. This equality has been established by the local admin-
574 istration which has granted the same rights and salary to all. The minister shakes hands with his colleague and takes a seat. He is served copious quantities of beer, and then he takes his leave.

In spite of assertions to the contrary, the Mossi empire is po-
642 litically disorganized. This accounts for the errors committed by the local administration and the [118] mistakes held against the ministers of the Mogho Naba who for a long time were granted too much power.

The Origin of Mossi Chiefdom (Legend), or the Way the Peulh, the Yarcé, and the Blacksmiths Salute Mossi Chiefs

713 The Peulh, the Yarcé, and, to a certain extent, the black-
184 smiths do not perform the kantissé (Mossi salute). They have a dif-
576 ferent way of saluting naba. A curious legend explains this phenomenon. However bizarre it may seem, it is not lacking in interest, and we shall tell it just as it was handed down to us.

584 visits and presents a few small gifts. This state of affairs goes on for one or several years. Finally the head of the family calls together his little council and makes known his intention of giving So-and-So's daughter to X... from such-and-such village. There is seldom a refusal since he has sole authority to give the girls in marriage. The young man is then sent to make the acquaintance of his prospective in-laws. As soon as he is presented, he makes a small gift (usually [175] 100 to 1,000 cowries are given).

If the girl is the oldest daughter, her fiancé is expected to bring a sheep, a hoe, a guinea hen, and some beer.

585 The young man is then told the date on which he may send for his fiancée. He has nothing further to do, except to make some preparations and to wait. When the girl is brought to him, he kills some chickens and a goat if he has one, and he has food prepared for the girl's escort. He must also give cowries to them, the amount depending on his own resources.

In many villages the girls married in this way never leave their husbands for fear of being cursed by their parents and condemned never to see their native villages again.

574 Finally, if the wife gives birth, the husband sends a chicken to
851 the village elder and the wife goes there to visit.

787 Girls who are hostile to a husband. These are girls whom the
584 soothsayers point out as hostile to a husband.

Although these girls are promised at an early age, just like other girls, they must not know that they are engaged, and if their fiancés should by chance come to visit, they are treated like ordinary guests who have just happened by.

583 When such a girl reaches seventeen, her fiancé arranges with her family to send her to the waterhole, the well, or the nearest market.

[176] The fiancé selects a group of his strongest friends, plies them with beer, and sends them off with instructions to abduct his fiancée on the way. The latter, accompanied by a woman or by other girls, is surrounded unexpectedly and seized by strong arms despite the resistance, often quite vigorous, of her brothers or her companions. She is then taken to the home of her husband.

A few days later some people are designated to take the girl's effects to her husband's home and to receive the traditional gifts.

593 reprimand them, while the mother's role, here as elsewhere, is to indulge her children.

595 The children of different wives are quite fond of one another and often exchange help. When the father dies, the eldest son make no distinction among his brothers and helps them all as best he can. Polygamy seems to present no drawbacks in this respect.

When a man has several wives, his first wife (porkyéma) is mistress of the household rather than his mother. All the other wives are on an equal footing, even the slaves, excepting, of course, those for whom the husband has a special preference. As the number of wives increases, so does the authority of the first wife, who wants /39/ her husband to have as many wives as possible. Each wife has a separate hut where she lives with her children, and this avoids many a quarrel. The husband goes to the hut of the woman he desires, or he has her come to his own hut. When a man works in his field, all his wives and children must help him, because he feeds them all and gives them a daily millet ration; it is, accordingly, only fair that all should take part in agricultural work within the limits of their capacity.

593 443 421 Provided that a woman remain at her husband's disposal and help him in the fields, she is free to do as she pleases. She goes to market to sell the grain, the spices for sauce, and the thread to weave cloth; but the husband sells the fabric strips and the raw cotton. During the winter each woman may have her own field to cultivate with her children, and the harvest belongs wholly to her. The husband has no say in the matter. If the woman spins cotton, she sells it at the market or even to her husband; if she brews beer, she offers one jar to her husband, but if he entertains friends and wants additional jars, he must pay cash for them. It is not unusual for a woman to refuse her husband credit, for who knows when he would pay?

593 574 A woman may visit her relatives with the permission of her husband, who sets a return date. The woman rarely comes back on the date set, and the husband goes to fetch her himself, or he sends one of his friends with a piece of salt or a small gift. A woman especially likes to visit her relatives when she is pregnant or shortly after the baby's birth. She knows that she will be well cared for and especially that she will enjoy complete freedom. As a result, it is not unusual for a woman to leave her husband for several months and to return only after considerable coaxing. Most quarrels between one Mossi and [578] another derive from their wives and from their debts; yet it may not be said, as a general rule, that women are unhappy or ill treated.

439 from the south, bracelets, and fabric strips, and they import salt and hoes. Often they take only money with them and return with salt bars which sell on the market for one to one and a half, sometimes even two francs, a kilogram. Around Fada N'Gourma (Binge /sic/ to the natives), Say, and Niamey, Karite butter, locust bean flour, and especially kalro pellets are exported, while onions, garlic, and sometimes horses are imported. There is no trade with Dahomey.

484 The natives travel in short stages of 20, 25, or at most 30 kilometers a day. They set out at dawn or whenever the moon sheds sufficient light and stop when the sun becomes too hot. They set out again when the sun dips on the horizon and stop in time to prepare a meal if their wives accompany them, which is rare, or to buy something to eat if they are alone. They spend the night with a friend if [574] they /63/ have one in the locality and lengthen or shorten their day's march if they expect to find an acquaintance in a certain village. The livestock feed as they walk, and donkeys carry the exchange goods and especially the kola nuts on the way back.

482 Nearly all travellers bear part of their load on their head. Since we have come to mention this, let us again quote Delafosse: "Portage has been much slandered in France these past few years. It has been cited as a barbarous custom, a form of slavery which we had supposedly introduced in Africa and imposed on the unfortunate Negroes. This merely proves that the French people like to discuss things of which they know little. The very first geographers and travellers who spoke of the Sudanic Negroes—Herodotus among the Greeks, El Bekri among the Arabs—said that beyond the Sahara, where horses and camels cannot stand the climate, the natives themselves carried burdens on their heads over very long distances." (6) These remarks

6. Delafosse, Le peuple Siéna/ The Siena People/, p. 53.

are strictly true. Abuses on our part lie in forcing the pace and making the natives run with their loads in the hot sun or in exceeding the regulation weight. If reasonable limits are observed, the Blacks accustomed from infancy to the bearing of heavy burdens on their heads—in their country, everything is carried in this fashion—are no more to be pitied than our soldiers burdened on long marches with

527 [574] everywhere on the same day, and by and large people stay home to eat and drink. They go visiting on the days which follow.[1]

On the morrow of the day when the moon appears on the horizon, that is, nine days before the feast, the chief of the Kalmodo Yarsé solemnly comes to greet /97/ the naba of Koupéla. He bears in his hand the spear of Naba Silga, one of the predecessors of the present naba, and speaks approximately as follows. Naba Gado (the naba of the Kalmodo Yarsé) and Naba Silga were friends. The slave of Naba Gado ran away, and the naba looked for him everywhere but could not find him. Naba Gado went to Naba Silga and said; "My slave has run away, and I have looked for him everywhere in vain." Naba Silga replied, "I have not seen him either." And Naba Gado went on looking for his slave. Finally he found him and came to tell Naba Silga, who had the slave returned to him. To show his gratitude, Naba Gado offered Naba Silga the feast of fire. The latter refused, saying, "It is fire, and fire burns." Then Naba Gado suggested the fast, Ramadan. Naba Silga refused again, for fasting is hunger and thirst, and would a friend make such a gift to his friend? Then Naba Gado suggested the kibsa, but with the condition that every year Naba Silga should prepare abundant food for him and all his people, that all should come and celebrate the festivities here and make merry with their hearts full of joy. Naba Silga readily agreed.

When the naba of Kalmodo finishes this little speech, the first wife of the naba of Koupéla offers him a gourd of water, for Moslems do not drink fermented beer, and the naba of Kalmodo sings the praises of all the predecessors of the present naba of Koupéla. Then everyone makes noise and dances. A week later, the naba of Kalmodo always returns with the spear and the war drum. The naba of Koupéla offers him a beef which the naba of Kalmodo slaughters. He pours the blood on the spear and says, "May God grant health to the naba and to his ministers!" The naba has the victuals brought in. When all have eaten, they come to greet the naba, saying, "May God grant you another year!" and then they depart.

These two festive days, basra and kibsa, are observed by all Mossi. (3) There are others peculiar to the naba of Koupéla, which we shall

3. To be exact, it must be said that the name basra is not used everywhere in Mossi country, but the feast itself appears to be

1 [i.e., following the Kibsa, the Moslem sheep feast. - Analyst]

539 The goat replied, "The hyena should give all of herself." T
told the hyena to remove her own leg. The hyena bit hersel
and she ran away. The lion caught her and killed her. The
ran away with his salt and went home.

This is why the hyena attacks livestock.

181 The Mossi are polite. This is the quality that first strikes
576 who have dealings with them. We mentioned earlier that th
always greet one another. In fear of their nabas, the Mossi
before them a respectful, almost humiliating posture. They
attentive to important outsiders and see to it that they shoul
nothing a Mossi might wish: a sitting stool and mat are brou
immediately along with the drink; the food is abundant an
clean and carefully prepared.

181 The Mossi are very hospitable and willingly give alms fo
574 sake, that is, to poor people who cannot repay. They are g
and always share with their neighbors, and when they have
beer, they hand it out liberally. No woman who is brewing
allow a stranger of some importance to go by without offeri
gourdful, and she is displeased if he refuses. An object on
is never retrieved, and stratagems must be used to make a n
back under some pretext what he has given away.

576 /114/ The Mossi always offer things with the right hand.
insult to pass the gourd or to take it with the left hand. The
person in a group helps himself from a dish first, and all tho
follow in order of seniority, down to the youngest. On the
264 hand, the eldest stops eating first, and it is the youngest wh
27 last bits and cleans the gourd. When drinking, however, th
eminent person drinks the last drop.

576 Children do not greet their parents in the home, because
574 home; but if a properly brought-up girl sees her mother com
a full jar or a basket, she rushes to take the load from her,
the woman is only a few yards from the soukala. When a fr
come to visit, it is considered good manners to carry her lo
some distance when she leaves. In any case, visitors are al
on their way, sometimes to the outskirts of the village.

576 The Mossi do not lack tact and sensibility. When they w
thing, they first delegate a friend with a gift, then send wo
they have a small matter to discuss; sometimes they hint at
may be and leave without waiting for an answer. Some tim

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hoisted him on their shoulders and proceeded to his host's house with loud acclaim. 634

The next morning, the new chief went to the palace to pay homage to the Mogho Naba and receive from him the traditional cowries, three kola nuts, and a small jar of millet water. In the days that followed, he celebrated his good fortune at the house of the important ministers and court officials. About a week later he returned to the palace, and the Baloum Naba's chief assistant invested him with the insignia of office: a white gown, a cushion, a pair of slippers, and, most important, a bonnet—the true symbol of chieftainship. Soon afterward, the new chief asked the Mogho Naba and his provincial minister for permission to return home. He was then provided with an escort to accompany him to his district.

The journey of a new chief to his district was marked by pomp and ceremony. The Nobere Naba stopped at such districts as Toudou and Twili, where he was entertained by the chiefs and presented with wives and other gifts. Some districts he would never be allowed to visit again, and others he had to bypass during his joyful journey. The reasons for these restrictions and prohibitions have long since been forgotten, but they were probably instituted to prevent conflicts among Kombemba and to prevent the new chief from coming into contact with the descendants of the Kouritadamba of former Mogho Nanamse. 634 574

As the new Nobere Naba neared his district, he was met by a welcoming committee of village chiefs, nobles, and commoners, who pledged allegiance to him and gave him wives, goods, clothing, money, grain, and livestock. He was then taken to the Soulougre Naba, a descendant of the aboriginal Ninisi, at whose hands he had to undergo another series of rites before he could set up his new compound and begin his rule. These ceremonies were rather simple in comparison with those at Ouagadougou, but they represented a ritual re-enactment of the Mossi conquest of the district, and reinforced the status relationship between the Mossi and the aboriginal population. At the end of seven days, the Kombere Naba gave the Soulougre Naba a black cow to be sacrificed at a pool called Yarega, a shrine of the ancient Ninisi on a tributary of the White Volta River. When this final rite was over, an enthusiastic crowd fetched the chief, and the young people of Soulougre village bore him aloft to his compound. A period of celebration now began during which all the heads of villages, lineages, and compounds paid homage and swore allegiance to their ruler. This ended when the chief summoned his escort from Ouagadougou and gave presents to those who wished to return there and wives and land to those who wished to settle in his district. 634 [641] [431] [788]

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creased his force" and ultimately added to his income. Men who had been compelled to flee from other districts because of crimes or power struggles were granted refuge and given pughsiudse. In this manner, the district chief, like the Mogho Naba, established seignorial rights over his new subjects, incorporated them into the district, and obtained goods and services from them. The better a district chief's reputation, the greater the number of refugees who sought shelter with him and added to his wealth. Conversely, a chief who was known for his injustice, his rascality, and his excessive demands from persons seeking the village nam was shunned by potential subjects and might even be deserted by his own.

Those persons who visited the district chief's compound to settle court cases also contributed to his revenue. When the case dealt with cattle or other livestock, the chief received a few animals. In other cases, he received only the customary gifts from the litigants. He also received gifts from all the families in his district several times a year. One occasion was the "Tense," a festival in honor of the mother of Mogho Naba Oubri, the founder of the Ouagadougou dynasty; the other was the Basgha. During these two ceremonies every village chief, preceded by his district administrator and followed by his subjects, paid homage to the district chief and gave him presents. The district chief retained part of what he received for the upkeep of his household and to fulfill such obligations as hospitality to travelers, and added the remainder to his own annual tribute to the Mogho Naba.

The manner in which the district chief collected his annual tax or tribute for the Mogho Naba is the subject of controversy. Several of my respondents declared that the collection of this tribute was rather informal. The district chief allegedly notified the village chiefs that he wished to give a present to the Mogho Naba, and these chiefs sent word to the family heads, who, in turn, notified every household. The village people then collected chickens and livestock, baskets of grain, and cowries, and sent them up through the hierarchy to the district chief. The district chief's retainers checked the gifts from each village very carefully, and if some villages gave less than was expected of them, the district chief summoned their chiefs for explanations. In most cases the district chief knew exactly how much could be expected of his subjects, because his informers—usually his own pages and courtyard servants, or messengers of the local administrators—kept him informed of the wealth of each hamlet. Usually, a village chief who had withheld too much from the commodities turned over to him, or who had not demanded sufficient goods from his villagers, sought to make amends. It was in his interest to do so, since it was always dangerous to incur the

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district chief's wrath. Thus, there was some method in the collection of this tribute and certain expectations had to be met, even though many of the contributors may have felt that their gifts were voluntary.

In direct contrast, Dim Delobson, himself a chief, states that Mossi chiefs demanded a stipulated amount from their villagers. He adds, however, that the tribute "varied in amount according to the resources of the contributors," and that the district chief set the "amount of cowries and grain due from each village in accordance with the number of its inhabitants."[56] According to him, the rate of assessment was usually 100 cowries for a married man and 50 for an adult bachelor (apparently, this difference was an acknowledgment of the woman's contribution to her husband's wealth). In addition, each adult male was assessed 10 baskets of millet of about 100 pounds each. Dim Delobson adds that to these exactions the district chief added his own contributions to the Mogho Naba, usually in the form of cattle.

It seems that Dim Delobson rationalized and regularized a rather informal system of contributions. The present-day Mossi declare that soil differences in the villages and variations in rainfall prevented a district chief from demanding a set tribute, because no one could tell whether a crop would be good or bad. Only a ruler's informers could tell him how much he should receive each year, and the chief based his exactions on this report. Several of my respondents agreed with Dim Delobson that the district chief provided mostly cattle for the annual tribute to the Mogho Naba, and that the village people furnished cowries, small animals, and grain.

A district chief was seldom wealthy, because he always had to use his revenue to fulfill unexpected obligations toward his subjects, his superiors in the political hierarchy, and his household. He had to be generous to his subjects, providing millet water, millet beer, and the more expensive imported kola nuts for those who visited and conferred with him daily. He was expected to provide food and shelter for the countless strangers who settled in his district, until they could provide for themselves. He also lodged and fed the messengers who brought him orders from the capital, and gave them gifts to take back to the provincial ministers. And he had to provide goods for the many members of his family who depended upon him. Finally, in the event of crop failure or famine in any of his villages, he had to provide grain from his granaries to feed the hungry. "How could he do otherwise? Was he not a 'father' to his people?"

The expectation that the district chief should provide hospitality to his subjects was so strong that those chiefs or princes who were deprived of an income for any reason often resorted to banditry to fulfil their obliga-

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tions. Binger, who found Boukary Koutou (the future Mogho Naba Wobogo) living in exile for having led a rebellion against his brother, Mogho Naba Sanum, tells us: 574 579 434

> Boukary has no resources, and does not even have the advantage of receiving periodic tribute from several large villages. In order to subsist and to maintain a certain status, he is compelled to live by pillage and even by brigandage. From time to time, his horsemen make incursions into the outskirts of some Gurunsi or Kipirsi village, and carry off by surprise the inhabitants whom they find working the fields or looking for wood. His people also hide and lie in wait along the roads to capture any persons who may pass within their range. This type of behavior has given Boukary Naba a bad reputation. However, the people who understand his position forgive him, knowing the situation in which his brother has placed him. And, in spite of all this, he has numerous partisans, and many others who would be happy to see him gain power.[25]

Those district chiefs or princes who wished to retain their power legitimately were forced to be generous or run the risk of losing the allegiance and good will of their villagers, who were their ultimate supporters. 634 574

It is very difficult to generalize about the amount of revenue collected by a village chief. He did not receive any revenue from the land used by his villagers. He treated the weogho in his village in the same manner as the district chief. If some families grew too large and wanted to establish permanent residence in the village bush, they asked the chief for permission to settle there. However, many village chiefs had special areas of waste for their own use. They had usually received them as gifts from some district chief, and therefore had the right to collect tribute on any crops, firewood, or fish obtained from these lands. 651 622 634 [361] [431]

The average village chief's main source of revenue was derived from the agricultural and other labor of his wives and relatives. A village chief received a number of wives from his subjects and from aliens living in his village. These women helped cultivate his fields. If their labor was insufficient he called a sosogha, to which he often invited his wives' relatives. Some chiefs also had serfs and slaves who helped cultivate their land and kept their cattle as well. [464] [566] [567]

The village chief did not have the power to tax his subjects. Instead, he functioned as a channel through which commodities and services passed up the hierarchy and on to Ouagadougou. Many villagers voluntarily helped the chief to repair his huts and compound walls and to cut thatch for his roofs. Many gave him baskets of grain and other vegetable products after the harvest. They also visited him and gave him presents during the annual rites to his ancestors. In contrast to higher chiefs, however, the village head [476] [431] [692]

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Binger's statement about the "squandering" to which "all the black chiefs" are prone reveals his ignorance of the nature, role, and function of West African chiefs in general and of Mossi chiefs in particular. These men were often the center of redistribution systems that embraced their entire territory. The Mossi chiefs did not necessarily squander their resources when they used them to support their household, their administrative staff, and even visitors to their realm. A rather large portion of the millet the Mogho Naba received was not even used by his own household, but was held for gifts to visiting strangers. Binger himself benefited from the generosity of Mogho Naba Sanum, and he provides us with excellent data about how Boukary Koutou distributed his resources: "I can say that never has a chief given me food, kola nuts, and beer as often as he did. I received things to eat two or three times a day."[28] No Mossi chief could have done less. This was a role that chiefs had to play, and they lost power and prestige if they proved inhospitable or parsimonious either to visiting strangers or to their own subjects.

Binger's lack of insight into the economic basis of the Mossi political organization also kept him from obtaining a clear understanding of the political system itself. For example, he saw the loose political organization of the Mossi as a sign of decadence, and felt that the Ouagadougou kingdom was too weak to survive for any length of time:

> Before long the Mossi empire will break up, and the country will be organized into a confederacy like Beledougou and Yatenga. This is an event that we Europeans can only favor. Experience has shown us that as soon as a Negro chief commands more than 2,000 people, he dreams of empire; his needs grow, and he tries to expand. Since his revenues are small, he labors under a deficit, which he must remedy with slave raids. In a confederacy the chiefs do not reach this point so rapidly. As soon as one of them begins to rise, the others can band together and nip his ambition in the bud.[29]

It is quite true that many of the political systems in the western Sudan had a loose character similar to that of a "confederacy." This was not due to the vigilance of neighboring chiefs, however. From time to time, such powerful rulers as Sundiata, Mansa Musa, Sonni-Ali, El Hadj Omar, and Samory Touré did arise and conquer vast areas, but they were unable to sustain their gains over extended periods.

The political organization of the Mossi was not decadent but structurally weak—its economic base was never strong enough to support a higher degree of centralization. Strong chiefs only tested the limits of the system; they could not change the system itself.

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provided the sacrificial animals for the royal tombs in the area of the capital, and the Ouagadougou Naba, as chief Tengsoba, performed the sacrifices. The Larhalle Naba also dispatched his servants to the distant districts where royal tombs were located, with orders to obtain (by force, if necessary) the animals for the sacrifices from the local populations and give them to the special guardians of the tombs. Sacrifices were made on the grave of Naba Oubri at Koudougou and on that of his father, Zoungourana, in the village of Zomtoega in Tenkodogo. However, there is no indication that a sacrifice was made on the grave of Ouedraogo, who is believed to have died in Sagabatenga but whose burial place is unknown. Nor is it clear whether, as some Mossi claim, annual sacrifices were made on the alleged grave of Nyennega in Gambaga. As soon as these preparatory sacrifices had been completed and the Mogho Naba had been notified, preparations were made for the celebration.

The Mogho Naba met with the Larhalle Naba, and the date of the Tense was set for twenty-one days after the meeting. On the following day, the Larhalle Naba made five cords out of tree bark and tied nineteen knots in each of them. The next day, he gave each provincial minister a cord to send to the districts in his province. The provincial ministers then sent their messengers with the cords to the districts, with orders to untie one knot every day the cords were in transit. Thus a district chief, counting the number of knots in the cord on the day it reached him, knew how many days were left before the Tense. As soon as the entire kingdom had been notified of the festival, the envoys returned to Ouagadougou and returned the cords to their ministers.

On the Friday morning before the Tense, the Larhalle Naba went to the palace. Kneeling before the monarch, he untied the last knot on each cord to indicate that the ceremony would begin on the morrow. To acknowledge this fact, the Mogho Naba distributed bars of salt to his courtiers and visitors instead of the customary kola nuts, beer, and millet water. Visitors left the court early in order to provide their families with foodstuffs for the celebration.

Early on Saturday morning, royal servants brought huge quantities of beef and mutton that had been cooked without pepper (this spice being disliked by the ancestors) and other foods, and deposited them in large heaps in the courtyard. Nearby, they also placed numerous large pots of millet beer. As soon as the morning ceremony was over, the Larhalle Naba slowly approached the Mogho Naba, who presented him with a new white robe. The minister donned the robe and walked to the piles of food, from which he took three portions of millet mush, dipped them in a specially

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175*
ity in local matters, even though the Indigénat had been abolished. They 631
adjudicated minor offenses committed in their territories or referred to 647
them on appeal by the districts and villages. They attempted to settle family
quarrels and commercial cases, and ordered that restitution be made in cases [692]
of theft. However, they had to send any difficult case or major crime up the hierarchy until it reached the officials authorized to deal with it.

The French administrators also continued to act as intermediaries be- [648]*
tween the large commercial enterprises in Ouagadougou who wished to recruit men for labor or to buy local produce and enterprises in the larger Mossi towns. Thus, if a private firm in Ouagadougou wanted men to work [464]
on the roads, it asked the *chef de poste* (administrator) of a region to tell the district chiefs that its representatives would come to recruit men on a certain date. If a large business was planning to canvass a certain area in order to buy shea nuts, it asked the local administrators to notify the chiefs. No one was ever quite certain whether these activities were legal, but no one questioned them. The *chefs de poste* might simply have been giving the people information that they could not have obtained by any other means.

The Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou, like the supreme chiefs of the other 175*
Mossi regions, continued to perform both the administrative role assigned 648*
to him by the colonial government and his traditional politico-ceremonial 643
role. He was partly responsible, through his active cooperation with the administration, for the rapidity with which the Upper Volta became a functioning entity. For example, in his anxiety to make his capital worthy of being the territory's administrative center, he gave his full support to the extension of the Abidjan-Bobo-Dioulasso railroad to Ouagadougou. But he always succeeded in giving the impression (to foreigners at least) of detachment and dissociation from the French administration. His behavior was quite different when he functioned as Mogho Naba of the Ouagadougou Mossi. The following is a brief description of a visit he made to one of the districts:

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> The Mogho Naba arrived unexpectedly at the district chief's headquarters, where no preparations had been made for his visit. It appears that he was on a tour of his domains to consult with the local chiefs about the forthcoming elections, and had simply dropped in to visit the district chief. However, as soon as his presence became known around the district, important village chiefs and the heads of lineages all put on their robes and appeared to pay homage to him. Meanwhile, he was consulting with his host. But as soon as the conversation was over he came out into the compound, where he was saluted by the chief's Bendere, who praised the royal ancestors by reciting

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175 their genealogies and traditions. The Mogho Naba was pleased by the recitation and thanked the drummer.
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634 Later that day, the Mogho Naba presented himself in the courtyard of the district chief's compound to be saluted by the village chiefs and by the
● 574 heads of lineages. They came to him in the traditional way, rubbing their
182 palms and bending their foreheads to the ground. He addressed them, and in response they snapped their fingers in the customary manner. Then, one by one, the village chiefs and the lineage elders came to their monarch and gave him presents of money which ranged from 50 to 200 francs. The Mogho Naba paid little attention to the sums given, being more interested in this act of homage and fealty. However, he listened carefully as each donor announced his name and rank within the official hierarchy or village. He later thanked them collectively and departed. This ceremony, while not very elaborate, differed little in detail from those characteristic of the traditional Mossi's relationship to their Mogho Naba. The new element here was that the monarch was traveling around his domain, establishing a close relationship with his chiefs and subjects, whose support he needed for his modern political alliances.[28]

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643 The Mogho Naba continued to hold the morning ceremony at court,
796 even though it was rapidly losing its traditional function and becoming of
182 major interest only to visitors. He also continued to hold those ceremonies associated with individual appointments to the nam and with traditional
[692] sacrifices. Unknown to many was the fact that traditional authorities at court still judged legal cases which many Mossi refused to take to the Europeans.

*175 In contrast to the Mogho Naba, the traditional provincial ministers now
645 lost most of the power they had held in the pre-conquest period, and all the
182 duties they had acquired in the immediate post-conquest era. As we have seen, one minister, the Baloum Naba, had entered politics at the suggestion of the Mogho Naba, but even he was now relegated to the entourage that accompanied the Mogho Naba and the European administrators on visits to the ministers' former provinces. The increased number of European administrators had made these ministers superfluous.

178 The district chiefs retained some prestige after the war. They could still
*175 judge legal cases, with the understanding that the litigants were free to go
554 to the Europeans if they so desired and had to be sent there in serious cases.
634 Their major problem was that a more efficient administration was taking
[692] greater interest in district affairs. For the first time since the conquest, officials were visiting some of the more remote villages. No longer were they said to "act as locusts"—that is, to appear periodically to garner supplies and men from the districts and then disappear until the next onslaught. Instead, they appeared regularly to collect taxes and to take censuses, and

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8. Cf. Marc, p. 156. 9. Cf. Fortes, pp. 258–71. 64-0
10. Skinner, "The Diffusion of Islam," pp. 659–69.
11. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Soudan*, pp. 585–86.
12. Dim Delobson, p. 205. 13. Crozat, p. 4820.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 4822. 15. *Ibid.*, p. 4835.
16. Binger, I, 452. 17. *Ibid.*, p. 456.
18. *Ibid.*, pp. 452–56.
19. Archives, Document 15G-190 (1897–98). Instructions left to Captain Scal by Destenave, June 1897.

CHAPTER NINE

1. Marc, p. 17.
2. Barth, III, 595. Although it is possible that the Wolof prince Bemoy did hear about the Mossi, he was mistaken about the name of their ruler. Interestingly enough, the title "Ogane" is not too dissimilar from Hogon, the title of head men among the Dogon (Habe or Kado) whom the Mossi had pushed into the hills of Bandiagara. Cf. Bascom, p. 24. [114] [176]
3. Barth, III, 606. 4. Bowdich, p. 180.
5. Dupuis, Appendix CVII. 6. Clapperton, II, 323.
7. Barth, III, 643–49. As cited earlier, Barth states that the Portuguese got reports about the Mossi in the year 1533 "from the wrong side, namely from Benin." This may not have been altogether "the wrong side," however, for Barth gives us data on caravans from Mossi country to Sansane Mango in Togoland that indicate how news about the Mossi might have traveled from the interior to Benin city in Nigeria.
8. Koelle, p. 6. Dixon, who seems to have been one of the few captured Mossi sold to the West, reports: "Mose is west of Gurma, east of Andemtenga, where a different language is spoken. Mose is also two days journey from Butmera, where the same language is spoken; four days from Bulega [Bolga tanga], the language still the same, and confederate with Kambonse, i.e. Asante; two days from Yaongo, with still the same language; six days from Bosanse which is at enmity with Mose and where people bore their lips, and often tie them together with grass, and whose language is different from Mose; four days from Busma also a different language, and in which country there is a very high mountain (Tanga) from which those who ascend never come back again [probably a reference to Plimpikou, the Mossi holy mountain]; three or four weeks from Kambonse, i.e. Asante. Kupeala is four days from Wardyga [Ouagadougou] the Mossi capital, whither the king of Asante often sent presents; and one month from Salak [Salaga], an Asante town, where they bring kola nuts." [131] [101] [197] [484]
9. Marc, p. 30.
10. Great Britain, Parliamentary papers xlvi, 1882.
11. The people of Nobere, Manga, and other districts surrounding Bere have traditions about Krause, who is remembered as the first white-skinned person ever seen in those parts. The color of his skin was attributed to the fact that, "like the fish," he had come out of the sea. [826]
12. Krause, pp. 92 ff. Although there is no evidence to this effect in the literature, it appears certain that Mossi government officials knew of Krause's visit. They treated most travelers in the following manner: "After entering a town the party is given in charge of a man usually termed 'housemaster.' It is his duty to exercise surveillance over the action of the stranger and to report the result to the authorities. . . . The trader conducts his business through his 'housemaster,' who usually makes a handsome gain by acting as middleman (G. E. Ferguson, quoted in Wolfson, p. 199). [574]

754 The nyonnyonsé also ride the wind. The members of this family of sorcerers can kill anyone pointed out to them. People who wish to do away with an enemy go to a nyonnyonga and ask him how much he wants to kill the person they designate. The sorcerer asks for a cow, a sheep, anything whatever, and a chicken. The chicken is sacrificed on the handle of a hatchet, at the end where the iron is hafted, which is pierced with three holes and wrapped with thin cords. Following this sacrifice the sorcerer goes to sleep, and night or day his soul goes off with the wind, head down, hatchet in hand. When it meets the soul of the person who is to be killed, the sorcerer's soul strikes it with the hatchet and kills it, then returns to its own body. It seems that the female sorcerers are the most ferocious!

Anyone who wants it may obtain this power, but a fee is required. The lifespan of these sorcerers increases in proportion to the number of people they have killed, and those who wish to be initiated must offer them the life of one of their children or at least of a relative, for the sorcerers are not satisfied with a stranger or a slave.

It would be interesting to investigate the sacrifices and ceremonies which attend these initiations. It does seem that these tibo, waongo, and nyonnyonsé sorcerers belong to the realm of black magic, for the natives tell dreadful stories about them and list their victims by name. We must confess, however, that we were unable to secure any further trustworthy details about these sorcerers, and that we had no personal contact with any of them. We could not verify all that was told us about them, and therefore we shall not discuss the subject any further. In any case, these sorcerers if questioned would have told us nothing unless they had come to be converted.

754 575 These families of sorcerers are a small minority among the Mossi, and if they can be called closed sects, secret societies, /107/ they are to our knowledge the sole ones extant. In Mossi country, therefore, there are properly speaking no secret societies, nothing like the sects found in Bambara country, (1) and this is a good thing.

1. Abbé Henry, L'ame d'un peuple africain /The Soul of an African People/, Bibliothèque Anthropos 1, 2, passim.

Likewise, there are no initiations, no secret cults celebrated at night, no esoteric doctrines. Is this because the nabas, intent on remaining the sole masters, would not allow a power greater than theirs to develop? Or is it for some other reason?

859 The girls remain by their mother's side. They fetch water with
868 her, learn how to pound millet, how to cook, etc. When they are eight or nine, they are taught how to spin cotton.

513 The boys sleep in their mother's hut until they are circumcised,
882 that is, until they are about thirteen years old. Thereafter, they sleep in a special hut, kombarogo, with all the other circumcised boys of the compound. The girls sleep in their mother's hut until they are married.

561 Little boys are called kondibili kirisé, biribili kirisé, or komkirisé (komkiriga in the singular). Little girls are called kompougouli kirisé or bipougouli kirisé. The older girls are kompougouli beda or bipougouli beda. The older boys or young men (they are considered as such once they are circumcised) are rasamba (rasanga in the singular). Young girls are called pourousada or pougousada (pourousadaba in the plural).

Education of children among themselves. Societies. —Mossi
859 children form societies among themselves. These are called nam
●575 (they are the same as the Bambara ton or flambolo). There is a society for boys and one for girls in the small villages. In the large villages, as in Ouahigouya, for example, these societies are formed by village quarters.

Each society has its chief and its high dignitaries: its Moro Naba who rules over it with his four ministers. The girls also have their Pourousada Moro Naba and four female ministers. These societies are devoted to play, drinking, tom-tom playing, and dancing.

Each member must furnish a certain number of cowries: the chiefs /256/ give 200 or 300; the mere rasamba, 100; the kondibili, 50; the kondibili-kirise, 30. The Moro Naba of the society collects the dues, and he is also the treasurer.

Another source of income for the society derives from work performed for the people of the village, the owners of fields. The boys do not merely go and offer their services. When someone needs a helping hand with his field, he goes to the Moro Naba of the society who places the whole group at his disposal for a fee. Payment is made in millet which the society uses to make dolo for its celebrations.

Another source of income derives from fining members for lapses in their duties to the society. The Moro Naba of the nam fines those who arrive late when called for work on someone's field or those who go on an errand or a short trip without notifying him in advance.

857 The people fined must give three or four canari of dolo (the usual
575 canari of dolo is worth 150 cowries, or three sous).

The members assemble to eat, to drink dolo, and to dance to the sound of the tom-tom at the compound belonging to the father of the society's Moro Naba. The girls are invited to come and dance.

[71] Among the Mossi of Yatenga, the nam do not have their own huts as do the Bambara ton and flambolo.

Little mock weddings are performed in the societies between the girls and boys. The young spouses offer each other small gifts of cowries, peanuts, cotton, etc.

Once married, the young girls withdraw from their society on account of their husband's jealousy. Married men, on the other hand, may remain in theirs and quite frequently do while they are young. Old men, however, are no longer members of the nam.

883 Young people's tasks. —Young men, after they are circumcised (at the age of 13 or 14), work in the compound or rather in the work group to which they belong on the same days and at the same hours as other members of the group.

They are provided with food by the head of the group seven months out of twelve and by their father five months out of twelve, and they are clothed by the latter.

They have their own little plots, but the produce does not belong exclusively to them. Their father and mother take what they need to feed or clothe the youth. The remainder is his. Boys can thus accumulate a little property of their own before they marry.

Young girls have no little plots of their own to cultivate. They learn how to till the soil by working with their mother in the fields of the work group and in the mother's little private plots. Hence, they are fed by the group seven months out of twelve and by their father and mother for five months, and they are clothed by their parents. The individual property they own consists mostly of trifling jewels usually received as gifts. /257/

593 Rights and duties of parents toward their children. —Paternal authority rests largely with the father of the child, but also partly with the head of the work group, the head of the compound, and the family head. This is understandable, since the child's support is ensured for the greater part of the time, except for clothing, by the work group and since lodging is ensured by the compound.

789 If someone tells you that you own many animals, or that they are
791 very handsome, this gives bad luck, as you know. So, to ward it off,
777 /593/ you grasp your grigri by slipping two fingers into the iron hook and two others into the curve of the horn, and then you hang it in your hut, or better still, you hang it from the neck of one of the threatened animals.

789 11. A small turtle completely enclosed in a small leather bag
791 along with a powdered aquatic leaf called kouri. If you have a
755 stomach-ache, you cover the flat side of the object with butter and rub your stomach with it.

789 12. A small piece of wood covered with lizardskin in the middle
791 and leather at the ends and prolonged at one end by an iron tip.
832 If one wishes for the favors of a woman who refuses to grant them, one comes near the cruel woman while gripping the grigri in the left fist, its tip pointing up. At the same time, one presses the woman's hand tightly with the right hand. This method of seduction is claimed to be infallible.

789 13. A koba horn covered with leather and prolonged at the broad
791 end with a chicken foot. Inside, the horn contains rice, salt, and
754 soumbara. If you were threatened by a spell performed against you, you would slip the horn upon your head, with the thick end between the eyes and the pointed end behind the head. Then you would have nothing to fear.

14. A deer horn containing barkoundi leaves and closed with a lid adorned with a cowrie.

To prevent a sorcerer from eating the soul of a third party, you lift the lid with the aid of a knife covered with karité butter, you take with this knife a little of the contents of the horn, and you spread it on your forehead.

535 In addition to the bara and timisoba, the Mossi also have ouango.
532 "The ouango," says Marc (op. cit., pages 152 and 155), "are
575 dancers whose costume consists of a huge liana robe which covers the entire body and which is surmounted by a wooden mask painted red and black and usually representing /594/ the head of an animal. The ouango are members of a rather mysterious brotherhood. They have a special language, and the Mossi believe that anyone who says a word

535 while the ouango are singing will surely die within the year. (The
532 ouango sing at the funeral ceremonies of important personages, at the
575 second ceremony performed a month or a year after the burial).
The masks of the ouango are made in the greatest secrecy. They have to be carved out of a single piece of wood, and the man who is making one must not be seen as long as his task has not been completed.

535 "In our opinion it would be most interesting to try and study
575 the ouango and their customs more closely than we succeeded in
171 doing. We believe, indeed, that theirs is a very old institution
174 antedating the arrival of the Mossi in the Volta basin, an institution which they found among the peoples they conquered and which they preserved, no doubt because they did not dare fight it. Ouango are to be found throughout Gourounsi territory, and the dou noticed by Binger among the Bobo would seem to have the same origin. The dancers with totemic masks who appear in some of Desplagnes' photographs are quite similar to the Mossi ouango."

The Mossi ouango are thus no different from the Bobo dou, the Khassonké mamadiombo, the Habé and Bambara namakoro, the Malinké dokho, the Landouman /Landuma/ simo, etc.

173 The Earth chief or Tensoba is also part of the Mossi priestly
174 organization. We are already familiar with Earth chiefs, whom we encountered among the Gourounsi. They exercise no political authority in the village, but they are entrusted with the performance of sacrifices to the Earth and to other local divinities.

The presence of those Earth chiefs among the Mossi is no doubt to be explained by the superposition of the conquering group over the conquered group. When the Mossi invaded and conquered the country, they placed their own men at the head of all the villages and all the cantons in the course of conquest, /595/ to ensure the submission of the vanquished population. They never felt, however, (and they hold this in common with the rest of West Africa) that they were themselves qualified to offer sacrifices to the Earth and other divinities of the place. Only the vanquished, former owners of the latter and on good terms with it, were qualified to do this. The former autochtonous political chief thus naturally became a religious chief under Mossi authority. We have already seen that the Moro Naba

644 [101] It is to be noted that a gourdful of this water with
557 millet flour on which a bit of karite butter is floating is a custom-
576 ary courtesy offering among the Mossi. It is most improper to greet or to receive a stranger by offering him plain water.

644 On the fourth or fifth day the Djiba Naba proceeds to Zoanghna
782 (a village located two or three kilometers behind the government buildings) and there hands over a sheep and a cow to serve as offerings to the sacred amulets of the ancestors and to protect him from evil spirits and wicked people. He does not spend the night in this village but returns home immediately after the sacrifice.

644 Several days later the decision is made to install the new naba
788 in his domain. A large number of soroné, drummers, and followers accompany him on what amounts to a kind of obligatory pilgrimage which we shall describe briefly.

The following itinerary is customary.

First, the Djiba Naba goes to Badnogo where he spends the night. The next day he goes on to Samba where he is offered water with flour in it, and for his part, he gives salt to be shared among the old women of the village.

One may ask why salt is given to the old women and not to
[888] the other people. The Mossi call old women nough' pouk ramba, that is, those who, when blessing you, clasp their hands so as to make a higher power hear and grant their prayers.

644 [102] On the following day he proceeds to Tensobitenga
788 where he remains for three days. Beer is prepared for him; he is
431 given a cow for his followers and a wife for himself. At Nakamtenga, his next stop, the village chief welcomes him with a sheep and many baskets and bowls of sagbo (millet mush).

644 He does not remain here for the night but instead goes on to
788 Koubri. This is the village where eunuchs formerly suffered the cruel operation of castration (1). The canton chief meets him, leads

839 1. Eunuchs. Bandits, thieves, murderers,
304 and slaves or soroné (servitors) convicted
681 of adultery with women of the nobility were the only ones sent to Koubri, a canton in the circle of Ouagadougou, to be castrated. This operation involved only the removal

644 during his peregrinations. He will bestow some of these on his followers
788 and keep the prettiest for himself.
431 In the old days, the Boulsa Naba, Boussouma Naba, Konkisitenga Naba, and all the others who were, so to speak, independent "rulers" of their lands never brought annual tribute to the Mogho Naba without sending gifts to his eldest son at Djiba.

In the same way, the canton chiefs were expected to make the same annual gifts to the Djiba Naba as to his father.

644 It should also be noted that chiefs who had quarreled with the
696 Mogho Naba and were in danger of being executed could readily obtain pardons by the expedient of buying the friendship of the Djiba Naba. The emperor, after all, was reluctant to distress his son by putting to death one of his intimates.

[107] Chapter 7

The Mossi Salute. Respect due the Home of a Naba.
The Cap. Precedence among Chiefs.
A Legend Concerning the Origins of Mossi Chiefdom.

Salutation of the Naba (Nab'Pousgho)

647 The kombemba (canton chiefs) and nayirdamba (ministers and other court dignitaries), when calling upon the Mogho Naba, are required to remove their cap when they reach the threshold. They hand it to their sorone (servitors) or followers. If they did not come on horseback, they must give their néoda (shoes) to a page and walk barefoot. In a word, they remove anything which might impede the execution of the very complicated Mossi salute.

The following passages concerning the Mossi salute are taken from Father Mangin.

Mossi Salute

644 "The Moaga puts down everything, load, hat, cap, and sword,
576 removes his shoes, and sits on the ground. He folds his legs slightly and bends the upper part of his body forward. The elbows rest on the ground, spread as far apart as possible. The forearms, folded

644 in front of the chest, and the half-closed hands with thumbs raised
576 together strike [108] the ground three or four times. Then the Mossi raises his body a little and rubs the palms of his hands together. He never looks at the face of the person he is saluting, but keeps his eyes slightly lowered. It is truly a very humiliating posture, especially when the chief who is being saluted remains standing or on horseback, towering above his subordinate and barely according him a glance.

"The women, instead of striking the ground with their forearms, hit it with the elbows and raise their open hands, fingers extended, to shoulder height.

"The grand salute, (1) very rarely used, consists of turning

1. Father Mangin neglected to mention that this salute is used only when the chief or other personage has given a wife, a robe, or some other gift to the person who is saluting him. Furthermore, those present cover their foreheads with dust.

around after the ordinary salute has been completed, taking some dust in both hands, spreading it on the forehead, and then saluting once more.

576 "When two natives who know each other meet along the way, the younger of the two squats first and begins the salute, which the other acknowledges by squatting in turn. If they are carrying loads, they set them down before saluting. They are never in a hurry. Servants and women, when they walk before a chief, bow slightly and join their hands in front of the chest. Though complicated, the Mossi salute is rendered easily and gracefully by the natives; they are used to it from an early [109] age and never perform it in the clumsy and awkward manner which is theirs when they attempt to imitate the military salute."

1: Delobsom--42 I-5 (no date) 1933 FA28 Mossi FA28

Respect Due the Home of the Naba

554 The kombéré is absolute master of his territory. His subjects must show him the same deference as he himself shows to the Mogho Naba.

However, even though he is not a noble, a minister of the emperor need not remove his cap to respond to the salute of a kombéré. On the contrary, the latter is required to humble himself, to give way before him just as he would before the Mogho Naba.

644 The nabiga (son of a naba), nakomsé (descendants of naba) and, still more, an ordinary Moaga are all categorically forbidden to wear their shoes or their caps at the court of the naba. The only exception to the rule is when the person is a Moslem convert, but even then he always leaves his shoes at the door. He may, however, wear his cap or turban. Shoes and headgear may be put on again only after the subject is 300 meters from the house of the naba. Sometimes, in places where custom is rigorously enforced, the person must be out of sight.

[687] Any infraction of these rules was punished severely by the lash and by confiscation of property by the samand'kamba of the naba [110] when the offender was not of the nobility, that is, was neither nabiga nor nakombga.

291 It is interesting to note that wearing the fez, originally one of the badges of chiefdom, was forbidden to the nabiga and all the more to the talga (ordinary Moaga). Today it is commonly worn by men and youths since European traders and shops have made common an article which was once very rare.

576 Shaking hands. One seldom sees a naba extend his hand to one
643 of his subjects or, more especially, to his brothers or fellow nobles (nakomsé).

There are two reasons for this prohibition: 1) the naba is supposed to maintain a certain distance between himself and his subjects, a normal practice; and 2) a superstitious belief has it that persons
[154] harboring evil intentions toward the chief put magic powders on their hands to cause swellings which may develop into real abscesses.

576 643 Thus, although the Mogho Naba would not in the le to shaking hands with a Bambara or a Djerma, he would ished if a native Moaga -- even an official -- should off hand.

573 576 As soon as the children of a naba have reached the a cretion, they may no longer play with their "papa," eve shake hands with him. They must henceforth follow the rule which requires the Mossi salute, kantissé.

576 602 [111] Nowadays naba (kombemba) and nayiridamba of the emperor) understand the uselessness of such signs o Therefore, even though they continue to be less familiar relatives (brothers, uncles, and sons -- whom they regard they willingly offer their hands to Mossi of any standing a eigners.

644 Reception by the naba. 1) Up to the present time a some thirty-five years of French occupation, the way one ceived at the court of the emperor, which, of course, be servitors, has altered very little. Natives who are now of the administration and in business enterprises are still tre same footing as their less highly placed compatriots. No they required to perform the kantissé (Mossi salute) as des Father Mangin, but also afterwards they must sit on the g position that is difficult in European clothes. Foreigners ([648] Djerma, even Gourounsi) are offered seats because the so regard them as fellow countrymen.

645 576 352 177 2) By the ministers. At the present time all the emp ministers have comfortable houses and splendid drawing r furnished with Morris chairs and folding chairs. These se offered [112] to visitors of any standing, while benches t three meters long are reserved for persons of less conseque boys, cooks, circle guards, notables, etc.).

631 576 352 3) By the kombemba. Benches are always reserved f note or, if there are none, mats are provided. Some of t even own a few commonplace chairs and perhaps one or t chairs.

Hierarchies among the Ministers and Officials at the Court of the King of the Mossi

554 631 There exists a kind of hierarchy among the naba. One chief may have to uncover his head before greeting another because he is his "little brother" (yaoua) or because he is in the presence of a chief of higher rank (for instance, the "petty kings," dima).

It is extremely difficult to determine the hierarchy which exists among the kombemba because there are so many of them, but they respect it even today. It would be difficult to undertake research on the subject which has only local interest and would not benefit our work.

645 557 576 The following paragraphs, therefore, will deal only with the ministers and other officials at the emperor's court.

Mutual relations among the ministers before the French occupation. (a) The Ouidi-Naba, prime minister and chief of the cavalry. [113] After his appointment the Ouidi Naba is required only to call on the Mogho Naba. The other ministers and the notables at Ouagadougou must call on him. Naturally, by virtue of his rank, the Ouidi Naba is expected to offer them large quantities of beer and to have sheep and even cows slaughtered in their honor.

(b) The Larrhallé Naba, a minister also and guardian of the tombs. Despite what happened quite recently (March-April, 1929), the Larrhallé Naba is only required to call on the Ouidi Naba and, if he wishes to do so, on the Gounga Naba. He does not call upon the other ministers and officials.

(c) The Gounga Naba is required to call upon the two higher ministers, the Ouidi Naba and Larrhallé Naba. The other officials at court must call on him, and, like the Ouidi Naba, he offers them beer and meat.

(d) The Baloum Naba, the steward of the Mogho Naba and chief of the pages. Early in his term of office he must call upon the three principal ministers and upon the imam. No other visits are required of him, he does not call upon other court personages.

This stated, let us go on to the most important matter.

644 conferred by the Mogho Naba on the canton chiefs.

292 554 With the exception of the Tenkodogo Naba and, more recently, the Boussouma Naba, neither of whom renders honors to the Mogho Naba, all ministers, other petty dima, and chiefs of Mossi cantons must take off his cap to greet the emperor.

576 554 (a) Between ministers. The Ouidi Naba does not remove his cap for any of his colleagues.

645 The Larrhallé Naba, Gounga Naba, and Kamsaongo Naba are equals and greet each other with their caps on.

The Baloum Naba and Samandé Naba are also equals, and they do not take off their caps when greeting each other. However, they were required to remove their caps (pougla) and even to perform the kantissé in the presence of the three principal ministers.

[116] Next in importance are the Nemdo Naba or "chief of the meat" [in charge of slaughtering], the Poé Naba who is confessor to the emperor's wives, the Bend Naba, chief of the drummers, and, finally, a whole string of petty chiefs of no importance who can hardly be distinguished from the general populace and whom it would be fruitless to enumerate here.

The Poé Naba may keep his cap on when he is in the presence of the Baloum Naba or the Samandé Naba, but he must remove it for the other ministers and must even prostrate himself to perform the kantissé.

645 574 Not very long ago, when the province chiefs of Ouagadougou possessed neither comfortable houses nor furniture, the ministers rarely visited each other. I have even once seen a minister sit on the ground in order to give his seat to one of his colleagues.

645 Whenever matters came up which required a meeting, the ministers met at night in one or another of their homes without the knowledge of the public.

645 576 Today, the principal ministers have proper reception rooms. They can, therefore, remain seated when a more important colleague calls upon them and limit their special consideration of the visitor to offering him a Morris armchair or a folding chair.

701 554 645 The Tensoba, the minister of war, never takes off his cap for a minister or a canton chief. He does so only before the emperor.

701 Formerly, when war broke out and he was summoned to [117]
554 Ouagadougou, the Tansoba [sic] assembled the principal ministers
645 of the Mogho Naba at the home of his host, and his word was final.

Aside from this special case, he might call upon a minister, but then a servitor always brought along the cushion on which he would sit until the minister receives him in his private quarters. He was never received in public.

Once inside, the Tansoba occupied the best seat, and the minister got down on the floor and performed the Mossi salute.

In sum, the Tansoba was held in higher esteem than any other personage at the king's court.

(b) At the present time. Today ministers often visit each other.
645 Since they have rapid means of transportation at their disposal, they
574 regularly go about without escorts. Most often their visits are made in order to deal with matters of general interest.

When a minister calls upon another minister, he keeps his cap
645 on and neither removes his shoes nor performs the kantissé. They
576 are equals. This equality has been established by the local admin-
574 istration which has granted the same rights and salary to all. The minister shakes hands with his colleague and takes a seat. He is served copious quantities of beer, and then he takes his leave.

In spite of assertions to the contrary, the Mossi empire is po-
642 litically disorganized. This accounts for the errors committed by the local administration and the [118] mistakes held against the ministers of the Mogho Naba who for a long time were granted too much power.

The Origin of Mossi Chiefdom (Legend), or the Way the Peulh, the Yarcé, and the Blacksmiths Salute Mossi Chiefs

713 The Peulh, the Yarcé, and, to a certain extent, the black-
184 smiths do not perform the kantissé (Mossi salute). They have a dif-
576 ferent way of saluting naba. A curious legend explains this phenomenon. However bizarre it may seem, it is not lacking in interest, and we shall tell it just as it was handed down to us.

796 Friday night he stays at the home of Bangr'Naba Sambo. Very early
769 Saturday morning he returns home in time to be present when the Bend'Naba (chief of the drummers) comes to wish him a happy new year and a long life and to pray that Wenam (God) will spare him to [156] offer many more bascé (plural of basgha) in honor of his predecessors.

[431] It goes without saying that during the nights spent away from home the emperor receives many visitors and substantial gifts. The persons at whose homes he spends the night naturally give him the warmest possible welcome.

Preparatory sacrifices. These are performed inside the house of the Mogho Naba, and the details are known only to the following four persons: Mogho Naba, Emperor of the Mossi; Baloum Naba, chief steward and chief of pages; Zussoba Kassanga, chief eunuch and guardian of the harem; the pugtiéma, the first wife of the Mogho Naba.

796 It is known that animals are sacrificed, with the Mogho Naba
769 himself holding the victim and pronouncing the sacramental words. Perhaps there is also worship of certain sacred fetishes. In any
782 event, we are convinced that there is nothing involved in the ceremony which is contrary to the principles of French civilization since there is no human sacrifice. We should have liked very much to describe these ancient practices, but the secret has been well kept.

Celebration of basgha. As soon as the Mogho Naba appears in
796 front of the zango (antechamber), the Bend' Naba beats a drum while
769 calling the names of deceased naba, beginning with Naba Oubri, the
533 founder of the Ouagadougou dynasty. [157]

As soon as the Bend'Naba stops playing, he and his followers are served sagbo (millet cakes); mouf (rice), dam (millet beer), and nemdo (meat).

796 Likewise, the ministers and other court officials who come to
769 greet tabo (the new year) are given dam, sagbo, rice, and meat by
[554] the Mogho Naba. The food is distributed to the dignitaries in the order of precedence, and the rest is reserved for the Bilbalessé and other followers of the ministers.

About eight-thirty, the ministers and court officials say
[576] wennatassé, "God be with us," which means good bye, and then they return home.

2:Mangin--16a M-5 (ca. 1910) 1921 FA28 Mossi FA28

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Above: The Mossi Salute.
Below: A Naba and his Horsemen.

Fulani MS11

M
566 may leave his master whenever he pleases, either to devote himself
M to trade or to enter the service of another man; but often he gets all
F his work from his master.

563 The Peul shepherds never were slaves of the Mossi, because they
M only knew how to watch the herds and were incapable of working the
F land. They were, nevertheless, held in severe vassalage by the Mossi,
[788] especially by the nabas, and served as victims in certain sacrifices.
Some Mossi sold by the Yarsé or by other Mossi have occasionally been
their slaves, especially in the Dori region called Gyémaré by the
natives.

/15/ Chapter 2. Administration

M
157 The power of the chiefs and the submission of their subjects are
characteristic traits of Mossi country. The spirit of submission
permeates the whole Mossi mentality. The Mossi are not particularly
secretive or incommunicative, as the Bambara are said to be. On
the contrary, they talk quite freely to their friends, even of their
personal affairs; this does not mean that they are unable to keep a
secret, especially if it is the king's secret. Two individuals have to
be equals if there is to be some freedom between them; this freedom
may develop into a certain closeness, but never into friendship in the
highest sense of the term. If the Mossi appears secretive, it is because
he is afraid to offend someone more powerful than himself. He al-
ways yields before a chief, before someone who "has the strength,"
as he puts it, while inwardly he may retain his own opinion and act
as he pleases. When a chief talks, he hears nothing but these words
M in reply: bé néré, naba — "That's it, that's right. I agree with you."
576 The Mossi salute, formerly used in all the Black empires of the
Sudan, especially in the courts of Ghana, Mali, and Gao, provides
good evidence of this mentality. When we first enter the country as
foreigners, we are shocked to see a man thus lower himself before
another man. In order to salute, the Mossi puts down his load, hat,
and sword, removes his shoes, sits on the ground, folds his legs slightly,
and leans the upper part of his body forward. The elbows rest against
the ground, as far apart as possible; the forearms, folded in front of

576 the chest with the hands half-closed and the thumbs raised, strike the ground together three or four times. The Mossi then raises his body a little and rubs the palms of his hands together. He never looks the person he is saluting straight in the face, but keeps his eyes slightly lowered. It is a truly humbled posture, especially when the chief who is being saluted remains standing or on horseback, towering above his subordinate, and barely according him a glance. The women, instead of beating upon the ground with their forearms, strike it with the elbows and raise their open hands, fingers extended, to shoulder height. The grand salute, very rarely used, consists of turning around after the ordinary salute has been completed, seizing some dust with both hands, spreading it on the forehead, and saluting once more.

When two natives who know each other meet along the way, the younger of the two squats first and begins the salute, which the other acknowledges by squatting in turn. If they are carrying loads, they set them down before saluting. They are never in a hurry. Servants and women, when they walk before a chief, bow slightly and join their hands in front of the chest, palms together. Though complicated, the Mossi salute is rendered easily and gracefully by the natives; they are used to it from an early age, and never perform it in the clumsy and awkward manner which is theirs when they attempt to imitate the military salute, so fine and noble when well done and so ludicrous when distorted by a Black.

622 Chiefs are designated by the generic term naba, but a distinction
643 is made between naba and dimma. The latter is elected /16/ according to very precise rules, which we shall mention later, and his authority stems directly from this election. There are only five dimma among the Mossi: the Moro Naba, and the nabas of Fada, Tenkodogo, Boussouma, and Yatenga. The naba, on the other hand, receives his power from another chief more powerful than himself who has chosen him from several candidates.

643 Mossi country lies wholly under the authority of the Moro Naba
645 who is assisted by five high ministers: the Widi Naba, Larale Naba, Gounga Naba, Kamisoro Naba and Ballum Naba. The respective functions of these ministers are somewhat ill-defined. The Kamisoro
[839] is a eunuch and chief of the eunuchs. Upon his death, since he leaves no heirs, all his property devolves to the Moro Naba. It was thus to the latter's advantage to make him wealthy and to present him with the finest district in the country. The Widi Nâba takes the place of the Moro Naba from the time of his death until the investiture

364 For the Mossi, as for all other men, life ends in death, with or without illness. The Blacks do not know how to prevent diseases, and they know very little about fighting them. Hygiene is almost unknown. The huts are poorly aired, the chickens and in general all the animals in the inner courtyard walk everywhere and foul everything. The courtyard is swept often, but the hut of the sheep and goats is located in the midst of the other dwellings; the horse is kept within the soukala [514] itself; and people relieve themselves anywhere, wherever they find a convenient spot. The manure is gathered in a heap, but it is kept next to the huts and gives off a nauseating smell and noxious miasmas, especially at the beginning of the rainy season.

515 The Mossi are not dirty, but they cannot be called clean. Those who dwell in villages abundantly supplied with water at all times are the cleanest. The women, who fetch water every day and thus have an opportunity to wash, are usually cleaner than the men. A Mossi never passes a pond without drinking copiously and washing all over, and this would seem to prove that those who go dirty do so unwillingly; they have no water nearby, and it would be too much trouble to go to the river to bathe. Clothing, especially breechcloths, is often repulsively dirty. This is because washing wears out clothes, and who knows when new ones will be available? No wonder disease has such a hold on this people.

855 Child care is quite rudimentary: a few baths; enemas two or three 165 times a day, without which it is said their bowels would not move; and that is all. At the slightest indisposition the sorcerer is consulted, or else the child is left to himself; he will get well or die, and nothing is done about it. As a consequence, child mortality is very high. 758 Those who fall prey to a contagious disease are not isolated. A healthy child lies on the same mat as one with smallpox, a leper drinks from the common gourd unless his lips are covered with sores. People do, however, hesitate to sit where a syphilitic person with sores previously sat. The education of the Mossi in matters of hygiene is wholly yet to be learned.

576 On meeting someone, Mossi politeness requires that an inquiry be made about his health and that of all his relatives. The response invariably is "So-and-So is well," and the other in turn responds, "May God permit his health to wax." It is only after a little conversation that a certain person is said to be ill or to be getting better. 195 It is not said that someone died, but that he ran short of strength, that he passed away, that he left us.

124 The problem is aggravated by the fact that the Mossi possess no religious theories and are not in the habit of discussing their beliefs. They are bewildered by the slightest "Why," the most elementary "how is it so." To fulfill the needs of our European minds, therefore, it proved necessary to put a little order and clarity into the ideas we gleaned here and there. In this area especially we have avoided as much as possible any tendency to systematize, and we can say that there is nothing of our own in the two chapters that follow. We have listened to the natives, elicited explanations, asked questions, and made note of the answers. We shall now transcribe the results. Of course the answers did not always agree, and we /78/ were forced to make choices on the basis of those testimonies which appeared most worthy of trust. The disagreements were on matters of detail only, and on the whole the statements persistently agreed on the most important points. In any case, whenever a serious doubt arises, we shall be careful to point it out.

776 576 How could Lt. Marc ever write, "We do not believe that the Mossi have the concept of a single God and Creator"? (1) The idea of God

1. Marc, Au pays des Mossi /In Mossi Country/, p. 158.

is everywhere to be found among this people. The merest wish, the simplest greeting, includes the name of God. When someone is going away, the person who is leaving and those who are staying hold the following exchange: "May God be with me," says the one who goes; "May God see you home! May God cause you to return! May God move your legs!" answer those who remain.

Persons who receive gifts tell their benefactor: "May God keep you! May God cause you to remain a long time (on this earth)! May God reward you! May God repay you!"

If a friend is seen wearing a new garment, this occasions another greeting: "May God allow you to wear it out before you discard it!"

If he is eating, he is told: "May God cause you to profit by it!"

If he comes to announce the birth of an heir: "God grant that you may suspend him from your shoulder!" /Tr., Mossi children from age [854] two or thereabouts are often carried astraddle the hip and holding on to the shoulder./

If he is leaving to return on the same day: "May God grant us the pleasure of talking to each other!"

776 At the end of the day, the Mossi greet each other as follows: "May
576 God grant you a tommorrow!" To which they must reply: "May God
give you a good morrow!"

On festive days those who meet tell each other: "May God lead you to the next year! May God allow you to see a new year!"

God gives health, maintains it, and restores it to the sick:

"May God give you health!" they wish each other, "May God increase your health! May God make you happy!"

Those who are in danger, or ill, are told:

"May God keep you from misfortune! May God restore your health! May God come with health and a cooling breeze!"

When death has struck, sympathy is offered to the family as follows:

"May God hinder the day (of death)!"

An arriving horseman is told: "May God help you dismount!" And to the man who has just lost a horse: "May God restore your tethering post!" (For only those who own a horse have a tethering post.)

When asked, "Who gives power to the medicines and to the amulets?"
776 a Mossi invariably replies that it is God.

God knows everything and is called upon as a witness: "By God!" If unjustly accused, the Mossi calls upon God: "God sees inside me, /79/ and He knows that there is nothing there!" And if someone does not know the name for something, he adds immediately, "But God knows it."

God disposes of everything, and the Mossi often say among themselves:

"If God grants me the day after tomorrow, I shall come"; "he was about to fall, but God came to his aid"; "we start talking in the morning and request God's protection."

God is everywhere, and it is impossible to hide from Him. God preserves us, and one naba who bore no trace of Islamism once told me: "We are in God's hand; we are God's sheep, and He watches over us as my son watches over my own sheep." It sounds like an echo of the Gospels: "I am the good shepherd." It would be easy to furnish other examples. God is superior to all spirits. He created them and He sends them to man, but He did not make them evil. Nevertheless, God may help us obtain revenge from our enemies, and His sacred name often recurs in curses: "May God suspend from your neck the bag of poverty! May God destroy you! May He destroy him completely! May God burn him in the fire!" (2) Every

539 15. Sosra sen kaosda, wata ne korg' wenbsego.
When a conversation lingers, the bag is fingered.
(Familiarity breeds contempt.)

16. Pu' pidya, bango luéya.
Full belly, gagged indiscretion.
(Those who need you are discreet).

17. Sad' no' o, yid noa' karga.
A good laugh is better than a chicken leg.
(A warm reception is better than a good meal.)

18. Ned' kon wok' a bâka, ti pemsom yi ye.
You don't cut open your shoulder just for the air to come out.
(Never abandon a friend in need.)

19. Bunbundi ka dod' zalol'n yé.
Those who give their best do not go away empty-handed.
(Work hard, do your best, there is no lack of true wealth.)

181 153 The Mossi likes to talk. Although he has few ideas of his own, if one knows how to make use of his familiar experiences to bring him to a higher level, he follows the reasoning easily, understands quite promptly what is told him, and grasps the train of ideas and even the finer gradations of meaning. In short, he has quite a noteworthy aptitude for assimilation. Often I explained to a chief in broad outline the handling of a gun or the mechanism of a watch or bicycle. If an outsider came by, the naba relayed the explanations to show that he was intelligent and that he had grasped them properly. Indeed, I was often surprised at how well most of them did this.

They like pictures. At first they often hold them upside down, but a few explanations are usually sufficient to make them grasp their meaning. First they recognize familiar things, such as people, horses, dogs, and trees, and they explain them to each other. They come to understand the scene and the reasons for the attitudes of the figures pictured.

181 522 576 /112/ In conversations, when they are not ill at ease, they are lively, merry, and they like to laugh. It is a compliment on their part when they say that someone laughs easily. They are sometimes humorous, they understand innuendoes, but they know how to keep their distance and do not permit themselves any familiarities, even in words, toward their superiors.

539 The goat replied, "The hyena should give all of herself." The lion told the hyena to remove her own leg. The hyena bit herself. It hurt, and she ran away. The lion caught her and killed her. The goat ran away with his salt and went home.

This is why the hyena attacks livestock.

181 576 The Mossi are polite. This is the quality that first strikes all those who have dealings with them. We mentioned earlier that the natives always greet one another. In fear of their nabas, the Mossi maintain before them a respectful, almost humiliating posture. They are very attentive to important outsiders and see to it that they should lack nothing a Mossi might wish: a sitting stool and mat are brought in immediately along with the drink; the food is abundant and usually clean and carefully prepared.

181 574 The Mossi are very hospitable and willingly give alms for its own sake, that is, to poor people who cannot repay. They are generous and always share with their neighbors, and when they have millet beer, they hand it out liberally. No woman who is brewing beer would allow a stranger of some importance to go by without offering him a gourdful, and she is displeased if he refuses. An object once offered is never retrieved, and stratagems must be used to make a native take back under some pretext what he has given away.

576 /114/ The Mossi always offer things with the right hand. It is an insult to pass the gourd or to take it with the left hand. The oldest person in a group helps himself from a dish first, and all those present follow in order of seniority, down to the youngest. On the other 264 hand, the eldest stops eating first, and it is the youngest who eats the 27 last bits and cleans the gourd. When drinking, however, the most eminent person drinks the last drop.

576 574 Children do not greet their parents in the home, because it is their home; but if a properly brought-up girl sees her mother coming with a full jar or a basket, she rushes to take the load from her, even if the woman is only a few yards from the soukala. When a friend has come to visit, it is considered good manners to carry her load for some distance when she leaves. In any case, visitors are always seen on their way, sometimes to the outskirts of the village.

576 The Mossi do not lack tact and sensibility. When they want something, they first delegate a friend with a gift, then send word that they have a small matter to discuss; sometimes they hint at what it may be and leave without waiting for an answer. Some time later

576 they send their friend once again to indicate what they desire, or they go and bring up the matter themselves.

181 577 Being sensitive and capable of attachment, even of affection, the Mossi readily acknowledge the good done to them and seek to express their gratitude. If they can offer a gift, such as eggs, millet, honey, a chicken, they offer it unobtrusively. "Take this millet for your horse; give this chicken to your child." If they have nothing to give, they watch for every opportunity to spare their benefactor work or trouble. They take the hoe from him to weed his field or help him lift a load. They show their gratitude as they can, through action rather than words.

181 46d The Mossi are not lazy. As a rule it may even be said that they like work. Lazy people are pointed at, avoided, and despised. During the winter season everyone must be in the fields from morning to night, men, women and children alike. Only those who cannot work or who have household tasks to perform stay home. The Mossi work very hard at this time of year. During the dry season, on the other hand, they enjoy some leisure. Although most of them weave during these months or travel for trading purposes, while the children cut grass to thatch the roofs and the millet is threshed, it must be said that it is not possible to work in these sun-scorched lands as it is in our temperate European counties. Besides, why work when there are so few outlets? Since the time when the French peace made the roads safe, trade has been on the upsurge. Now, sure of reaping the fruit of their toil, the natives are expanding their crops and every year the fields encroach further upon the bush. All the important villages are surrounded with cultivated fields as far as the eye can reach. If the Mossi do not work more then they do, therefore, it is not from laziness but from /115/ lack of outlets. It seems likely that the country will develop quite rapidly as soon as channels of communication open it to European trade.

181 Such are, in succinct and impartial outline, the qualities and defects of this people. Which of the two preponderate? It is for the reader to judge. In our opinion the Mossi are a very worthy people capable of a brilliant future, but under one condition, that they become Christians. Their most striking characteristics, as we have stated over and again, are their religious sense and their absolute submission to all that bears the stamp of authority.

843 already borne children. Among the common people, the woman works up to the time of her delivery. Like other Sudanese women, the Mossi woman is inured to the pains of childbirth and devoid of any nervousness.

843 787 When their wives are pregnant, the Mossi often go to consult the baga /sorcerer/ to find out what sacrifices should be made so the event will turn out well. As he is wont to do, the baga indicates such-and-such a sacrifice. He also prognosticates on request whether to expect a boy or a girl.

843 755 If the pregnant woman has been frightened by an evil spirit (kinkirga), she summons the tipa who washes her body with a specially prepared liquid or merely administers violent blows on her head with tarakanré (cowhide sandals of which we spoke earlier /not translated/) to drive out the evil spirit.

844 The Mossi woman may give birth only in her own hut. She would consider it a shameful thing if the child were born in her husband's private hut.

When a woman gives birth, she makes a confession to the old women who assist her, because she fears too much suffering or an unsuccessful delivery if she does not confess the faults she has committed. The old women go and repeat them to the husband, who says, "That's all right, I knew it all," and forgives her. In short, the torments of childbirth are put to use by the old women to procure a confession.

There are midwives among the Mossi (in Mossi, pougourorosa). They are paid by the husband. However, they do not receive a [431] salary, properly speaking, but rather a gift (a piece of salt, a skirt cloth, etc.). If nothing is given to them, they cannot and do not make any demands.

In addition to the midwife, the old women of the compound, quarter, or village come and help the patient.

844 576 For the delivery itself, the Mossi woman goes down on hands and knees, her arms stretched out upon the ground, her body slightly inclined from head to hips, in the posture ordinarily used to salute or to remain before a chief. The midwife stays behind her.

844 When the child is born, the women present heat up a very strong concoction with red pepper, soumbara /locust bean/, etc. The woman is made to swallow this, and it is supposed to foster the emission of blood and all other impure matter. Then she is washed with warm water. Her loins are also rubbed vigorously so that the strain undergone in childbirth will not be felt there later. Likewise,

10:Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1964 FA28 Mossi FA28
Yatenga

571 tween the Mossi and several other ethnic groups. In each instance the structural relationship in which joking occurs is characterized by the five features listed above.

571 604 *Joking with the Mother's Brother*

The relationship with a maternal uncle is marked by all five of the structural features mentioned. Separation results from the rules of patrilineal descent and inheritance rules, from patrisib exogamy, and from the general observance of patrilocal residence. The relationship is reciprocal in that a mother's brother serves throughout Ego's life as an important alternative source of emotional, economic, and social support: he often acts as intermediary in disputes between Ego and his parents or the elders of his lineage; he gives Ego frequent gifts; and residence in the mother's patriclan is the most frequent alternative to patrilocality. In turn Ego, as a result of the permissive relationship he enjoys with the spirits of his deceased cognatic kinsmen, often serves their living descendants as an intermediary in their ritual efforts to maintain a secure relationship with the ancestral spirits.

Ambivalence between Ego and his mother's brother and her other kin results from the conflicting sources of "conjunction" and "dissociation" just mentioned. The conflict between a strong affective bond—a "feeling" of kinship—and a system of inheritance which denies it jural recognition generates frustration. The ambivalence in the relationship is manifested not only by joking, which is asymmetrical—with Ego being the more aggressive—but by theft as well. Perhaps as partial compensation for his inability to inherit matrilaterally, Ego is permitted to steal his mother's brother's property during his lifetime and can also make off with the beer and some of the animals collected for his funeral.

As for equality of status, the descent groups of Ego and mother's brother are structurally equivalent. Although their respective positions within these two groups differ, the permissiveness of Ego's relationship to his maternal uncle absolves him from recognition of the canons of comportment that otherwise prevail among the Mossi in relations between persons of differing status. Indeed, disregard for such status differences is part of the "joke." Independence is assured by the fact that Ego and his mother's brother are members of autonomous descent groups and that each is responsive only to the authority of his respective lineage elders.

Joking with a Mother's Brother's Wife

Joking between Ego and his mother's brother's wife is to be regarded as a separate relationship because of her nonmembership in the mother's brother's descent group, but certain of the structural circumstances are similar. The source of separation from the mother's brother's wife is evident. The reciprocal tie that unites them is indirect; when Ego is received warmly in his mother's brother's household it is the wife of the latter who prepares the food he is given. Similarly, as a member of her husband's patriclan, she benefits

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28

[P.31]

III

KINGSHIP AND CHIEFSHIP

MOSSI TRADITIONAL government revolved around the Nanamse, as all Mossi 642
rulers were called. Sometimes the title was also given on an honorific basis to commoners, serfs, or slaves who performed specific duties for a Mogho Naba or a district chief; but the only true Nanamse were persons who traced their descent from Ouedraogo and Oubri.

The heads of the four Mossi kingdoms—the Mogho Naba of Ouaga- 642
dougou, the Yatenga Naba, the Tenkodogo Naba, and the Fada-N'Gourma 643
Naba—were supreme in their own realms, but there was considerable rivalry among them throughout Mossi history.[1] In terms of closeness of descent from the nation's founders, the Tenkodogo Naba came first, the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou second, and the Yatenga Naba third. The Naba of Fada-N'Gourma was outside the hierarchy. As time passed, the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou gradually became more powerful than the other rulers, even though he recognized the seniority of Tenkodogo and, as we shall see, had difficulty exercising his seniority and supremacy over the Yatenga. Because he was the pre-eminent Mossi ruler, the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou set the general pattern of kingship and chiefship. The heads of the other kingdoms, principalities, districts, and villages tried to approximate the pomp and ceremony of the Ouagadougou court as closely as their resources and etiquette permitted. The pattern of chiefship among the Mossi in general thus differed little from that of the Ouagadougou kingdom.

The Mossi of Ouagadougou believed that their Mogho Naba was supe- 643
rior to all other kings. They believed that his realm was the largest in the world, and that no other king was so rich and powerful. He was so awe-inspiring, so "like the sun," that no one dared to look upon his face. It was [516]
forbidden to touch his hand, or speak to him from any but a kneeling position with the forehead touching the ground. People were expected to hesi- [576]
tate before pronouncing his name, and no other person was allowed to bear

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28

643 the name of the current ruler. When Crozat asked one of his Mossi bearers why Boukary Koutou had chosen a title that means "elephant," the man declared, "He is an elephant; he is king of all kings as the elephant is king of all animals; a great elephant-king he is."[2] Another Moaga, meeting Crozat on the road to Ouagadougou, told him to be prepared to meet a monarch "whose riches are inexhaustible and whose splendor is marvelous. [644] He and his family wear only the most admirable European clothes; a thousand horses stand before his door, and there are more than a thousand women in his house. He is served by one hundred eunuchs; he commands as master 333 chiefs; and when he speaks to them it is as though God himself had spoken; everyone bows down before him and obeys."[3] Crozat, looking at the Mogho Naba through European eyes, did not find the "great [576] king" he had expected. Yet he and later European visitors to the Mossi [516] capital did affirm that all Mossi officials and district chiefs prostrated themselves in obeisance to their sovereign, even if they did not subsequently follow his instructions.[4]

643 Many rituals associated with the person and court of the Mogho Naba 796 served to emphasize the high esteem in which he was held by his subjects. For example, the sovereign showed himself every morning at a ceremony called "Ouend pous yan" (literally, "God rises," or "the sun rises") that [114] survives to this day. The name of this ceremony has led many scholars and travelers to assert that traditionally the Mogho Naba was considered a divine king. Dim Delobson states that this ceremony "shows the regard which the Mossi have for their chief, since they compare him to the sun, and thus to a 'god.'"[5] However, the Mossi do not now and probably never did regard their monarchs either as gods or as divine kings. There is a great deal of difference between regarding a man as "powerful and brilliant" like the sun and regarding him as divine. As a matter of fact, the [522] Mossi very often dramatize in humorous fashion the all-too-human frailties of their rulers, without ever considering it sacrilegious to do so. On the other hand, the Mogho Naba, as the supreme ruler, was expected to follow faithfully the strict etiquette demanded by his exalted position.

643 The morning ceremony was opened by the ruler's chief page, the *so-* 796 *ghone-kasanga,* who sprinkled a phylacteric solution around a throne 644 (*guere*) in the courtyard in front of a reception room called the *zongo.* Other pages (*soghondamba*) brought out a large cushion (*naghpure*), the ruler's sword, and other personal accouterments, and placed them on the [292] throne. Still other pages aided the Mogho Naba in his toilet. He was clothed in a large red robe, which symbolized the rising sun; he wore a bonnet surmounted by silver streamers (*wazourfou sebere*), which repre- -sented the sun itself.

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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 643

sented the sun itself. The toilet was performed in complete silence, for no 644
one was allowed to speak to the monarch until after the ceremony. Mean- 796
while, in the courtyard, the court dignitaries, visitors, and the musicians and minstrels (*bendere*) took their places. The provincial ministers sat on their [645]
respective stones (*coganaramse*), and the visitors sat by their hosts. The pages at the door of the zongo awaited the moment when the Mogho Naba and his escort would emerge from the zongo. On seeing the two pages who preceded the monarch, they snapped their fingers as a signal to the still silent bendere.

On seeing the monarch, the chief musician, the Bendere Naba, rubbed [533]
his fingers across the top of his drum to produce the sound of a lion's growl, and the other drummers and violinists played the royal air, "Ouend pous yan." The head guard, the Kambo Naba, and his men, carrying guns, walked up from the side and knelt down facing the assembly. And the *samande-kamba*, the "servants of the courtyard," came with heavy batons to guard against crimes of lese majesty. From the wings came a groom with a partly saddled ceremonial horse. As soon as the monarch was seated on his throne, his two pages moved to the front and knelt down facing the 643
courtyard. The salutations now began. The first group of ministers, led 645
by the Baloum Naba and including the Samande Naba, the Samande Na- 796
bila, the Ouedrange Naba, the Kamsaogho Naba, and the Zusoaba Kasan- 576
ga, left their stones and came to the throne with slow steps and bowed heads. A few yards from the monarch, they knelt on the ground, and with their fingers folded and their thumbs in the air, leaned forward, struck the ground with both hands three times, and then rubbed the palms of their left hands with the fingers of their right. Then they arose, and with heads still bowed walked backwards to their places.[6] With the music still playing, another group of ministers, led by the Ouidi Naba and including such men as the Gounga Naba, the Larhalle Naba, and the Pwe Naba, saluted the ruler in the same manner. On Fridays and other Islamic holy days, the [792]
Moslem Imam representing the Ouagadougou congregation read aloud from the Koran. This part of the ceremony ended when the Mogho Naba [481]
rose, and, with the measured steps and swaying gait that signified royalty, retired to the zongo, preceded by his two pages.[7]

A few minutes later, the monarch returned to the courtyard without his red robe and glittering headdress. There was a second round of salutations comparable to the first, but this time the Ouidi Naba and his group did not appear unless it was an important occasion or important guests
were present. When this part of the ceremony was over, the monarch 643
called for his half-saddled horse and announced that he wished to go to 796

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28

643 La, a village near Koudougou district. His eldest wife, the *Pughtiema*,
796 appeared carrying her household utensils in order to accompany her husband. However, all the ministers, led by the Kamsaogho Naba, implored the monarch to have his horse unsaddled and to postpone the trip until the following day. Feigning anger, the Mogho Naba reluctantly agreed to remain in the capital, ordered his horse unsaddled, dismissed his wife, and re-entered the palace.[8]

173 The tradition about the origin of this ritual reveals something of the
643 Mossi attitude toward the human frailties of their rulers. It appears that
796 Poko, the favorite wife of Mogho Naba Waraga (ca. 1660–80), asked permission to visit her father at La, and that he refused to grant her request because of his love and admiration for her. Nevertheless, she continued to ask him for permission, and after her third request he granted her wish and sent a page and a small girl with her as chaperons. When Poko did not return to the palace on the third day, Naba Waraga sent two pages to her father's compound to fetch her, and here they discovered that she had died. Fearing the king's wrath toward persons who brought bad tidings, the pages did not report back to him but notified the ministers of Poko's death. When subsequent messengers also failed to return, the king decided to go to La. The following day, after the morning ceremonies, he ordered his horse saddled and commanded the Pughtiema to get ready to accompany him on his journey. But the ministers, anxious to protect him from grief, told him that a great king never followed a mere woman under any circumstances and persuaded him not to depart. The monarch went back into the palace, and the dignitaries ordered the horse unsaddled and sent it away. Shortly afterwards, the king changed his mind and decided to go to La, but he was beseeched not to do so. He swore that he would leave the following morning, and that if he were prevented from doing so, he would advise all his descendants to try to go to La every morning until one of them succeeded.[9]

643 At the end of this ceremony, a page gave the ministers an ample supply
644 of beer and kola nuts. The Moslems were given presents of kola nuts and
692 millet water (*zom kom*) sweetened with honey, since they were forbidden
576 to drink millet beer. Later in the morning, the Mogho Naba left the palace
[431] and entered the zongo, where he greeted his visitors, accepted gifts from visiting chiefs and subjects, dispensed gifts in turn, and presided over the court of justice. Anyone who went to see the ruler had to be accompanied by his provincial minister or his host—regardless of whether it was his purpose to pay a courtesy visit, to pledge allegiance, to plead for aid, or to give
643 testimony in a lawsuit. Pages moved back and forth between the palace
644 and the courtyard, dispensing kola nuts and beer or millet water prepared
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by the sovereign's wives. Other pages waited upon the monarch, and accompanied him when he moved about the courtyard. When the ruler drank any liquid, the pages rubbed the palm of one hand with the fingers of the other; when he sneezed, everyone clapped; and when he stepped out to urinate, a page accompanied him, turned his back to him, knelt down, and saluted by rubbing his palm.

When the Mogho Naba had finished his morning audiences, he entered his palace for a solitary meal. This meal was prepared by one of his young wives, who tasted it in his presence before giving it to the page who served him.[10] After eating, the monarch rested for a few hours; then he emerged into the courtyard to grant audiences and hear court cases until sunset. At that time he retired to his palace, and those courtiers who were not connected with the evening ceremonies returned to their homes.

The ceremony that closed the day at the monarch's court was called "Kwaga Basgha" (literally, "final meal"). This ceremony still survives. As soon as the sun began to set, the samande-kamba took their heavy batons and stood guard to prevent unauthorized persons from coming near the *namtibo* (royal amulets). The Baloum Naba and the Bendere Naba entered the palace courtyard and knelt before the zongo. The chief page then brought out the *kwaga*, a pottery vessel containing a fire ritually associated with the namtibo.[11] The vessel was placed on the ground, and the page blew on the fire to make it burn brightly. Meanwhile, the Bendere Naba rubbed his fingers across his drum to make the growl of a lion. When the fire finally died out, the Zusoaba Kasanga and the Baloum Naba closed the ceremony by rising, coming together, and saluting the namtibo in the traditional Mossi manner. (The Mogho Naba did not attend this ceremony.) Before the officials left for the night, the pages gave them pots of beer prepared by the royal wives. Sometimes these officials visited the Mogho Naba before they retired to their compounds. Once these men had departed, the pages served the ruler his evening meal, which again had been prepared by one of his young wives.

During the hours of darkness the Mogho Naba conducted many secret affairs of state and conversed with the members of his household. Persons seeking the nam of a deceased relative were often granted audience at night, as were litigants in court cases. When there were no pressing matters of state, the ruler gathered some of the royal wives around him and discussed family affairs, which protocol forbade him to discuss during the day. Some rulers reportedly disguised themselves and visited the wards of the town in the company of a young man from the palace, in an effort to learn things that did not ordinarily come to a ruler's attention.

The Mogho Naba slept in a grass hut in the palace compound. Two

634 A man usually heard about his nomination through his "friends" (usu-
645 ally pages) long before the Baloum Naba had received instructions from the
Ouidi Naba to summon him to the palace. Nevertheless, protocol demanded
[576] that he show proper humility and surprise at receiving the news, and that
he be tardy in arriving at court. When he arrived, he was taken before the
Ouidi Naba, who asked him three times, "Did your [father] say who should
be his successor?" To this the nominee replied each time, "No, Naba! My
[father] did not say who should replace him. You may appoint anyone you
wish, even if he is a blind man or a leper." The Ouidi Naba then asked the
candidate, "Which of the nakomce do the district people prefer?" The can-
didate's standard reply was, "That is the affair of the Mogho Naba. The
people will accept anyone, even a blind man or a leper." This question was
asked three times, and each time the candidate gave the same answer. The
Ouidi Naba then declared, "The Mogho Naba has given you the nam of
your [father]." Upon hearing these words, the Samande Kasma (head ser-
vant of the palace) came up to the new chief and removed his sheepskin
mantle, while the samande-kamba took their heavy batons and chased away
the other pretenders who, having heard about the election, had come to the
palace. The samande-kamba then bore the new chief on their shoulders to
the *tomboko* (a circle filled with sand in the courtyard). To the accompani-
ment of the royal airs played by musicians under the direction of the Ben-
dere Naba, he took sand and poured it on his head as a sign of submission
to the Mogho Naba. The ruler's wives and the courtiers surrounded the
new chief, raised their hands over his head, and shouted their praises to the
Mogho Naba. Then the new chief showed his respect for all the ministers
[576] and important men, in order of rank, by falling on his knees before them in
the traditional Mossi salute. He then went to the Bendere Naba's shed,
where he stood in the middle of the musicians and made a speech, the leit-
motiv of which became his ruling title. The present chief of Nobere, whose
name is Naba Boulga ("Well"), says that he made the following speech
when he was nominated: "I am like a well; he who opens me will profit
greatly." After the new chief had thus "taken a name," he came to the
zongo to "drink the namtibo."

634 The drinking of the namtibo was the highlight of the election ceremony
[778] because it strengthened the link between the new chief and his ancestors
and provided the ritual sanction for loyalty, obedience, and service to the
Mogho Naba.[40] After the new chief had drunk the namtibo, he called upon
the ancestors to kill him if he should ever betray the Mogho Naba or fail to
[641] render him homage and faithful service. This oath was the sign for the un-
successful candidates to pledge their allegiance to the new chief. Then they

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634 The Kombere Naba, as the person who had "eaten the nam" of the district, was infused with some of the power and authority of the Mogho Naba and had the right to use force to maintain this power and authority. He was [576] respected, and people uncovered their heads and removed their slippers in his presence. Unlike the Mogho Naba, the Kombere Naba was permitted to eat with his peers. But whenever he drank the musicians made a roar-like sound with their instruments, and when he sneezed his attendants clapped. These rituals were rigidly adhered to because the Kombere Naba was readily accessible to the populace and might easily have lost their respect if he behaved in an undignified manner. He emphasized his social distance from them by never visiting the market place, and he did not go anywhere without a large entourage.

The Kombere Naba performed ceremonies and duties that were similar to but simpler than those of the Mogho Naba, and he was surrounded by officers bearing the same titles as those in the capital. But, as will be shown later, these officials had fewer and sometimes different duties than the courtiers at Ouagadougou. Some district chiefs had as many pages and wives as the Mogho Naba, but this was as much a result of their own desires as of their popularity with the local people. The death and funeral rites of a [766] district chief were not as elaborate as those of a Mogho Naba. They included the circumambulation of the chief's compound by the principal heir and [788] heiress, the symbolic reign of the Napoko, and the banishment of the Kourita.[41]

634 Every district chief, whether a Mogho Naba's vassal or a Dim's subordi-
778 nate, was empowered to bestow the nam on his own subordinates. These [622] might be other district chiefs; but most often they were village chiefs. The circumstances under which a Kombere Naba received the authority to grant the nam to another Kombere Naba were usually complex and sprang from rebellions and dynastic changes. Once granted, this authority was seldom revoked, but the district chief had to report to his immediate superior, a Mogho Naba or Dim, whenever he wished to confer the nam upon another district chief.

634 In some cases the Mogho Naba invested a district chief himself, and
175 afterward placed him under the control of a neighboring district chief. For
669 example, the chiefs of two districts, Vooko and Nobila, were always installed
778 by the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou, but were supervised by the Nobere district chief. This practice dates back to the civil war involving Mogho Naba Sagha I (ca. 1787–1803), in which chiefs of Vooko and Nobere sided with the loser. The Mogho Naba executed the local rebels and placed one of his sons in Nobere. He then divided Vooko into two districts, placing a younger son in the one he called Nobila (little Nobere) and subjecting him

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692 634 695 or because the litigants had rejected the village chief's verdict). The chief then asked the plaintiff or "the people of X village" to state their case. Someone usually spoke up, and after he had finished, the chief asked the defendant or defendants to do likewise. The litigants were then asked to produce reputable witnesses to support or refute the testimony.

[641] Witnesses had to be male, adult (to have begun to "push a beard"), and [562] free. Women and bondsmen had no legal personality before a Mossi court. [567] A slave was represented at court by his master, and a woman by her husband (and, by extension, by his patrilineage). In marital quarrels or property suits, a woman was usually represented by her patrilineage. Only if [576] she alone could give the required evidence was she allowed in court. When she was asked to testify, she knelt, and spoke in a high, thin, soft voice, thus showing extreme respect to the chief and proper deference to the court. Except for these restrictions, any person could be called in as a witness. [578] Tempers often ran fairly high among the litigants' relatives and friends while they gave their testimony and argued the case, but their physical separation and their respect for the chief prevented abuse and fighting. Anyone who started a fight in court was liable to a beating by the samandekamba.

[674] The Mossi believed that most people, given sufficient reason, would commit any crime. Thus they examined the litigants carefully and at great length in an attempt to "get behind" the offense. The district chief interrogated the litigants, but the dignity of the court prevented him from arguing with them. As a matter of fact, most of the cross-examination was done by the litigants themselves. From time to time, the village administrator and the chief's confidants asked brief, direct questions. When a woman was involved, the chief's Pughtiema usually listened to the proceedings from behind a wall and questioned her. When all the evidence was in, the chief either rendered his verdict without delay or retired to the zongo to confer with his confidants and the village administrator. He took the latter course whenever he felt that further discussion was necessary or that false testimony was confusing the issue. Not until he felt that he had the facts well in hand did he return to the court to render his verdict.

The Mossi did not use ordeals in court except in the "chastity trials" conducted by the Pwe Naba. Some litigants called upon the ancestors to kill them if they were not telling the truth; others went to earth shrines and drank an infusion of dust to show that they were not afraid of the spirits who wrought vengeance on the guilty. However, such acts were never carried out in court and thus were of no use to the chief.

The following case, tried in a district court in 1956, illustrates the Mossi

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vals. Being monarchs of the Mossi, they could not do otherwise. A few days before the Moslem feast of Tabaski (called *Kibsa* by the Mossi), the Mogho Naba sent the Imam of Ouagadougou cattle and sheep to be sacrificed on the holy day. On the day of the festival, the Mogho Naba and his entourage went to the mosque and joined the Imam and his flock in prayer. After the ceremony the sovereign returned to his palace and ordered that a well-washed sheep be given to the Imam for a sacrifice. This Moslem sacrifice was performed in the palace courtyard, and the Mogho Naba himself held the tail of the animal while the Imam officiated. The Mogho Naba afterward ordered his servants to provide millet water and food for his Moslem subjects. Similar ceremonies were held in all of the districts and villages where Moslems lived.

The feast at the end of the Moslem month of Ramadan was also celebrated by the Mogho Naba and most of the people within the kingdom—a fact that so surprised Binger that he wrote, "It is a most curious fact that, whether Moslem or not, all the blacks celebrate this feast."[16] The Moslems usually flattered the Mogho Naba and the other chiefs by pretending to believe that they had observed the month-long fast (which the Mossi called *no-lwere*, from *nore*, "mouth," and *lwere*, "to tie up") during Ramadan. [576] Thus, whenever they visited the Mogho Naba or another chief during this period, they greeted him with the salutation *Ne no-lwere*, which means, "I greet you who are fasting." Similarly, the morning after the end of the fasting period, the ruler and his officials were ritually given millet water "to break their fast." The important point here is that everyone knew that the Mogho Naba's fast was a ritual fiction. Binger, who was with Boukary Naba at the end of Ramadan before this prince became Mogho Naba Wobogo, commented: "Boukary Naba is a Moslem in outward appearance only. When the prayers were about to begin, he asked me whether I was going to worship. I told him that this festival was not in accord with those of the Christians. He seemed to be delighted by the idea that the whites are not Moslems."[17]

Most Mossi chiefs celebrated the end of Ramadan in a grander manner than they did Tabaski. The members of the royal household joined the other inhabitants of the capital in their anxious vigil for the crescent moon that was to herald the start of the ceremonies. There was general rejoicing when the moon appeared, and all through the night palace guards fired shots and launched arrows into the air. The following morning, the Mogho Naba went to the mosque with his courtiers to attend prayers. Then he returned to his palace to await the Imam, who came to offer prayers of thanksgiving. The Mogho Naba gave him presents, and was visited by gift-bearing

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Visitors to the court of Moghn Naba Sanum salute him in the traditional Mossi manner.
From Louis Binger, *Du Niger au Golfe de Guinée par le pays Kong et le Mossi, 1887–1889* (Paris, 1892).

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9. In Dim Delobson's account (p. 60), an unnamed wife of the Mogho Naba ran away, and he allegedly tried to follow her because she was the only person in his household who knew how to cook his favorite food. 000

It is interesting that the Mossi have a tradition in which their ruler undergoes the same experience as many a Mossi husband, namely, being betrayed by his wife. It is also interesting that Mogho Naba Waraga is the ruler named in this incident. He is the ruler who waged a five-year-long civil war with one of his vassals. It may well be that his ministers devised the myth about his wife in order to prevent him from leaving the capital to fight. [837]

10. The Mossi practice of tasting food before giving it to another person is obviously connected with the fear of poison. The Mossi believe that only a boorish person would give another person something to eat without first tasting it himself. [576]

11. The full significance of this ceremony is unclear, for the Mossi hesitate to talk about it. It is known that the "sacred fire" is linked to the nocturnal visits of the royal ancestors. But the relationship of the fire to another sacred fire kept in Koubri district (about seventeen miles from Ouagadougou) is not known. [372]

Faithful to Mossi tradition or ignorant of the true nature of the ceremony, Dim Delobson says nothing about the ceremony and does not mention the presence of the namtibo. However, he does report that the palace guards would kill anyone who approached the place where the rite was being performed (p. 62). [114]

12. There are several traditions concerning female regents. However, I believe that they may have their basis in the role the Mogho Naba's daughter played during the interregnum.

13. Mossi genealogies show that only in one case in which the nam passed from a Mogho Naba to his brother did the former Mogho Naba's sons receive districts from their uncle, the new ruler. Since it is difficult to believe that the eleven other Mogho Nanamse who were succeeded by their brothers died without issue, it can only be concluded that the descendants of a ruler who did not inherit the nam were ignored by their uncles in power.

14. To this council could be added other men whose experience was valued. For example, the Baloum Naba was called upon in 1942 to give advice about a successor to Kom.

15. Dim Delobson, pp. 130–32.

16. It is interesting that the sheepskin garb of the Mossi pretenders is similar to the dress of the chiefs among the smaller tribal groups of the Voltaic culture area. If we can assume that culture traits characteristic of ritual and ceremonial practices tend to persist longer than most other traits, we might have evidence that the complex Mossi state evolved from the political organizations found among the smaller local groups. [171] [174]

17. The "naming of a name" speech is part of most Mossi *rites de passage*, and is often used to brag about some achievement or to cast aspersions on one's enemies. Most newly elected monarchs pledge good government, brag about their elevation, and vilify their enemies.

In his inaugural speech Naba Kom II said, "When plenty of water falls during the rainy season, the rivers and seas are glad because they are enlarged." "Kom" means "water," and Kom's speech meant that he pledged to bring happiness to all his subjects.

Boukary Koutou insulted his listeners by declaring, "Even if a hundred ghosts join together, they cannot harm an elephant." He was called Mogho Naba Wobogo ("elephant").

18. It is said that if the amulets were stolen during the interregnum, the thief had to be elected Mogho Naba; if they were stolen afterwards, the ruler lost the basis for the mystical quality of leadership and authority he had inherited from his ancestors.

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443 shoulder; but when he arrives in the market, he calmly places his
651 weapon on top of one of the sheds before he makes his rounds. The
626 women do not carry any weapons to market except their "words" but
411 even these are not often used because of the desire to avoid hostility—
[578] which the Mossi do not like to have disrupt one of their major institutions.

443 The rural market is the center of Mossi social life, and friends
571 as well as enemies meet within its confines. What Mangin wrote some forty years ago is still true: "Every self-respecting Mossi—man or woman, child or elder—must go to market at least once in a while, were it only to look . . . and to be looked at, if he can put on some
[292] handsome clothes" (Mangin 1921 : 53). Except for the Moslems who
[184] are now experimenting with a form of Purdah, there are few persons who do not go to market. The absence of someone from the market for more than two consecutive occasions is a sure sign of illness, travel, or family crisis. As one man said to me, "I must go to market, and when I get there I look for three persons: my girl friend, my debtor and my enemy. If I do now know whether any of them are at the market I am ill at ease. And when I go to the market and do not see them all, the market is not good."

443 The lively character of the Mossi market will be discussed later,
571 but throughout this kaleidoscope of activities certain consistencies
576 can be discerned. For example, one notices many different kinds of greetings and salutations in the market place, but each one of them correctly indicates the exact relation or relationship between the persons involved. Young girls on passing each other on one of their innumerable circuits of the market bend their knees slightly and place both of their cupped hands on their own breasts. Only then will they stop and exchange news. At the end of the conversation they repeat the same greeting and continue their rounds. Both girls and women greet casual male acquaintances in the same way, but
[562] invariably kneel if the male stops and talks to them. Women some-
[602] time kneel when speaking to each other, but always do so when addressing any male relative of a respected category, who may then send them on errands such as buying tobacco from the vendors. A man who meets a female benefactor, such as a woman who has given medi-
[562] cine to one of his children, invariably kneels down before her. She
[601] may do the same thing out of respect for his male status. However,
[604] when a man meets either his mother-in-law or his father's sister, he is the one to kneel down in order to greet her. Two men who are equals normally shake hands, but if not, the junior in status or in age kneels down before his elder or superior. Sometimes a high status man will prevent his greeter from kneeling by raising him. When

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greeting a lower status benefactor, a man will get down and greet him from a kneeling position. It is because of this elaborate system of greeting, with the many opportunities thus provided for one person to slight another, that many important persons never go to the market. As a rule, the failure of any one person to give the required greeting to another when they meet in the market place is always an indication of strained relations between them.

The persons from whom an individual may buy goods, and the kinds of goods which may be purchased by one individual from another, are governed by convention and social relationships. A person may not buy anything from a relative except European goods. A man cannot buy any but cooked food in the market place, and often he asks a female relative or a passing female to buy it for him. To do the contrary is held to be unmanly and indicative of a bad character. A woman will not buy cotton cloth but will send a man to buy it for her. She would hate to have people believe that she has no male relative to weave it for her, or what is more likely, that she is too lazy to spin the cotton thread which would then be woven for her. A woman may purchase any type of commodity from other women, but she must be careful not to patronize men who are known to be libertines or with whom she is suspected of having an affair. She must also be careful about running errands for men, since people know that men often use this device to establish amorous relationships with women. Men also use this device to give presents, or to arrange secret meetings with them. If any man sees a female relative involved in any of these misadventures, he chases her away and more than likely curses the man, if he does not fight him. In any event, he warns the man to leave the woman alone.

The market is one of the few places where men and women can initiate relationships not sanctioned by their relatives. Under normal conditions marriages are arranged between unrelated individuals through the lineage members who establish "friendly" relationships. Two friends might ask their lineage heads for women to exchange as wives or the "friend" who has received more gifts from the other will give over a wife. Because the older men most often have goods and women at their disposal, they are usually the ones who receive wives. The result is that most young men have no wives, and until they inherit wives from lineage members, are continually seeking to establish intimate relations with women whom they meet on the market place. The technique which a young man employes to gain the favors of a woman he sees at market is highly stereotyped. First of all, he must ascertain that the woman in question is not a member of his maximal lineage or married to a member of his own lineage. A responsible

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What this really means is that the market is the main communication 443
center of Mossi society and news of happenings in the region can be 203
heard there. If a person is in an area one can be sure that the people in the market will know about him, or that he will sooner or later visit the market.

The young men who have returned from work in the cacao fields 167
or towns of Ghana and the Ivory Coast add a great deal of color and 443
excitement to the rural markets of contemporary Mossi country. 556
During the time these young men spend away, they give a great deal of thought and planning to the show they hope to put on when they make the grand tour *(mane do)* of their district's market place. The best day for this is the day of the "great market" and regardles of what day many migrants return to their homes, they wait for that Friday before they show themselves publicly.

On the morning of that day, the typical migrant dresses in his best 167
clothes, lends the remainder of his wardrobe to relatives, and together 443
they go to pay homage to the chief during the morning ceremony, 556
(Wend pous yan). The migrant offers the chief such presents as a 431
small amount of money, an article of clothing or kola nuts, and replies 576
to the chief's questions about the health and welfare of all Mossi in the area whence the migrant came, the whereabouts of "lost" migrants, the nature of the work the migrants were doing, and so on. As soon as the young man receives the chief's permission to leave, he 569
goes to the market where he is quickly surrounded by *griots* who accompany him in periodic circumambulations of the market place, drumming and singing praises in honor of his ancestry. The migrant is also greeted warmly by his many friends to whom he then gives presents of money, beer and kola nuts. He acknowledges the general praise for having brought goods and clothing for his relatives and takes pride in seeing these relatives dressed in the cloths and clothing he has brought them. If young and unmarried, the migrant also seeks to take advantage of his new-found importance to make the first overtures to available young women or to renew his relationship with former paramours. Towards evening before going home, he rewards the *griots* with money and bear. Many a migrant attempts to prolong this feeling of grandeur by visiting other markets and by dressing up on subsequent grand market days, but after a few weeks he is re-incorporated into the ordinary market routine, and has to make room for the other newly-arrived migrants.

The market is also the place where important rites marking the 443
changing social status of individuals are carried out. Under normal 844
circumstances, the ceremonies attending the birth of a Mossi child are performed at home. When a woman has a number of stillbirths or

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market and set up their small tables to display all types of goods from trinkets to single lumps of sugar. And the more numerous young men, who have no goods but have money in their pockets, go to the leaf-covered sheds, place their weapons on top of them, and take seats from which to view the passing parade. Imperceptibly, the hum in the market increases as people find their places and greet one another with *Ne Raga*, the market greeting, until by 11:30 A.M. the whole market reverberates with sounds of drumming, cries of vendors, and the shrill voice of water hawkers and juvenile vendors. Now the market is in full swing.

From midday until about 3:30 P.M., the Mossi market is a sea of humanity—talking, laughing, arranging rendezvous, quarreling, selling, buying, parading, and (where youngsters are concerned) often crying for want of money to buy a desired object. The return of migrants lends additional color and excitement to the market as these young people walk about in their new clothes, encouraging the drummers to sing louder praises, the maidens to feel jealous of the clothes of the migrants' female relatives, the former migrants to reminisce about the days when they too had bright new clothes, and the young boys to dream of going off one day to obtain the things they need.

Men, noting that their female relatives are spending too much time looking over the wares of a vendor of European products or of the kola-nut seller, wander over ostensibly to help in the purchase but really to prevent love affairs. The failure to observe such a precaution may be the cause of the shouting a man hears in the distance, and off he hurries to see whether a lineage brother or a friend may need his aid. He may either get into the battle himself, or aid the Raga Naba and the other elders to chase the battlers out of the market place, or to take them to the chief. This may indeed restore some peace and good fellowship to the market.

Elders, now more interested in beer than in other pleasures, pass the heat of the market day under the beer sellers' shed. From time to time one of them may be interrupted by a young man bringing him three kola nuts, one or two of which are immediately broken and given to friends. However, when an oldster, whether a drinking pagan or a Moslem teetotaler, sees or overhears a young man buying four kolas, he may frown or smile in the knowledge that mischief is afoot. Loud-voiced predictions of the consequences of evil-doing may suddenly disturb the merrymakers as American missionaries speaking in perfect More (the language of the Mossi) appear and harangue the market people. Then, as suddenly, the *Americadamba* depart in their large cars, and the curious pagans, amused Catholics or hostile Moslems who had gathered to hear the gospel return to

701 oppose me. I therefore demand that his fez be returned to me."
687 To take away the fez of a naba is to dethrone him and reduce him to the level of his subjects.

The court officials, including the Tansoba, at once send emissaries to the chief at fault, asking him to choose between suicide (some take a poison called sounadré, while others kill themselves with a poisoned arrow) and war with the Mogho Naba.

If the chief is not prepared for such a summons, he kills himself, and the envoys return with the news.

669 If, on the other hand, he declares that he wants pouwega, that
701 is, war and a noble death, he sends back the representatives of the ministers. A few days later, with drums beating and the Tansoba, chief of the army, at its head, the whole warrior band appears before his walls.

The Tansoba sends the Samandé Naba to the chief to ask him to confirm his declaration of war. If the naba still wants war, he usually replies: "Ya yingri bala la ka sakénian."

The Tansoba withdraws, sending word to the chief [68] to expect him back on a stated day (seven or eight days later); this period of time will enable the chief to assemble his warriors also. When the day arrives, it is a merciless battle, a massacre.

Often the forces of the Mogho Naba are victorious, and in that
727 event the slaves, livestock, and other property go to those who seized them. Only the corpses belong to the Tansoba.

701 If an arrow, even a poisoned one, wounds the Tansoba, he
● 577 must under no circumstances pull it out. Indeed, he must often endure thirst and hunger, and it is only when he is at rest in an enclosed place that the arrows are removed from his body. It should
[789] be noted that since the Tansoba's costume is virtually covered with amulets and other charms, he is not very likely to be wounded seriously by an arrow. This is not, of course, to belittle his bravery and composure in the face of danger, since he is expected
[762] never to retreat and, if the enemy is victorious, often prefers to kill himself rather than to report a defeat to the Mogho Naba.

644 There are, in addition to the foregoing, a great many petty naba whose role is not clearly defined and of whom it seems needless to speak.

775 ground; he also pours what is left at the bottom of the gourd, so the
769 souls will rejoice with him. It is considered a great honor when a
[554] naba tells an elder to grasp one side of the gourd and to pour along with him.

775 One must not laugh about the souls of the deceased and their visits
761 to earth. If you doubt their return, listen to what an old naba once told me. "One day, I had gone to visit a naba, my friend and neighbor. We had arranged to meet at his house with another neighboring chief. He gave us a very nice welcome, and the day was most pleasant. We were resting at night in the shelter of his soukala when we were suddenly awakened by the sound of harness bells and horses galloping. On the following day we left our host. No sooner had we left than he took ill. A week later he died. The souls had come to fetch him. Oh! Father, do not laugh about the souls of the deceased!" And the good old man trembled with emotion. This is what our Mossi believe. They firmly believe in all these ghost stories.

775 Are the souls reincarnated? Small children who die before the age of reason are said to return in the person of the first child borne by their mother. This is why, especially if the mother has lost several
[304] children in a row, the baby is marked at birth with distinctive signs, particularly tattooings on the belly and lower back; sometimes, if he
[766] dies, a piece of his ear is cut off, or a toe or finger joint broken. It is said that the child born next will bear the same marks, but no living example of this could be cited. Often, the mother leaves the hut where her baby died. An old woman spreads ashes before the door in the evening, and if small footprints are found in the morning, it is a sign that the child came back and wishes to return to his mother's bosom.

Rebirth is not granted to anyone other than young children, not even to young unmarried people. They remain in the place of the souls for years on end, the number of which cannot be ascertained, and no distinction is made between the rich and the poor, the powerful and their subjects.

775 The soul of suicides, cursed in death, is not entitled as a rule to
762 funeral ceremonies. It wanders through the world without harming anyone, but unable to find rest.

577 Morality is reduced to its simplest expression. Whatever harms
673 other people is bad. Think your own intimate thoughts and desire anything you like; as long as you do no harm to your fellow man, no fault has been committed. Fornication and adultery are faults only

577 673 [839] insofar as they involve an offense to justice. /88/ I do not speak of unnatural practices, which are almost unknown. When theft, murder, even insults, blows and wounds are punished, they are punished as injustices. Calumny is abhorred, and it is a very serious insult to say that someone has slandered someone else. A Mossi will not forgive an insult against his mother, because it is prejudicial to the family honor and hence to himself. In dealing with the natives, therefore, it is necessary to be careful and not to commit any injustices. They are very sensitive to this; while they accept a just punishment without complaint when the offense has been proved, they reject indignantly any accusation which cannot be proved, even when it is well founded.

577 784 In addition to this general morality, many things are forbidden not because they are evil, but because they entail baleful consequences. The taboos (kisgou to the Mossi, from kise, "to forbid") are almost innumerable. They may be divided into two classes: permanent kisgou, which affect the whole family, and personal and transitory kisgou.

784 The former usually consist of a prohibition to eat a certain animal or to do a certain thing. Thus some nabas are forbidden to meet, to see one another, and if they disregard this prohibition, one of them will die before the year is over. This prohibition is easily explained by the incessant wars which were formerly waged between important chiefs, and their fear of being poisoned or done away with in some other way by one of their enemies. Another instance: a Mossi goes to war on a frisky horse and he is forced to flee. His foes are about to seize him, and he owes his escape to the swiftness of his mount. When he returns home, he decrees that the horse will be a sacred animal to him and to his descendants, and that henceforth all his children and their children must treat horses well and may not eat their flesh under penalty of blindness or leprosy. This is the extent of the prohibition. The horse is not considered a guardian animal, no sacrifices are offered to it, and the Mossi do not call it tangande (guardian animal of the village) or siga ((soul-animal), but kisgou (prohibition).

784 262 Sometimes the kisgou affects only certain members of the family. A father has been ill after eating dog flesh on two or three occasions. He consults the sorcerer, who states that dog flesh is forbidden to him and to his children, but not to other members of his family. A person

181 The Mossi are a mixture of defects and qualities. As a rule they
●577 are not overly scrupulous about stealing and lying, but these deficiencies
674 are not so deeply rooted that they could not be corrected with the development of a more refined conscience. The Mossi are thievish because they often have the opportunity to take what belongs to others, especially cowries which are handled in a very intricate manner. It is so easy, when counting cowries, to slip a few into a pocket without the master's notice! There are some highway robbers, who are greatly feared, and many of them are very skillful. They are, of course, a very small minority.

181 Debts are the most frequent cause of theft. As a rule every Mossi
577 is both a debtor and a creditor, and when he borrows only God knows
426 when he will repay. If someone owes him a debt, he borrows, saying, "So-and-So owes me such-and-such an amount; when he pays me back, I will repay you," and he always finds someone who is willing to lend. Who can deny a friend such a favor? In order to be repaid numerous steps will prove necessary, and the day when the sum is refunded will be a happy one. This shortcoming is so ingrained among them that the wealthiest people are not exempt from it, and although able to return what they have borrowed without difficulty, they do not return it.

181 The Mossi lie easily, but they especially practice the method of
577 mental reservation. When questioned, they excel at posing another question, to find out whether their questioner is really acquainted with the facts. If they can mislead one, they do; on the other hand, if they feel that to confess would be to their advantage, they do so even if their confession implicates their accomplices; but they only do so if they are quite sure of coming through safely.

The Mossi are not false or deceitful, but they often fail to tell the truth for fear of displeasing a more powerful person. They try to guess the reply expected by their questioner, and much caution is needed when a precise piece of information is required. They also deceive by telling only half the truth; when queried, they sometimes reply to a question but suppress a detail which would have modified the answer or opened the way to another question.

They are discreet and know how to keep a secret, especially the king's secrets. When they do not wish to tell anything, they say "I don't know." This is not incriminating, and it cuts short any prying question.

576 they send their friend once again to indicate what they desire, or they go and bring up the matter themselves.

181 577 Being sensitive and capable of attachment, even of affection, the Mossi readily acknowledge the good done to them and seek to express their gratitude. If they can offer a gift, such as eggs, millet, honey, a chicken, they offer it unobtrusively. "Take this millet for your horse; give this chicken to your child." If they have nothing to give, they watch for every opportunity to spare their benefactor work or trouble. They take the hoe from him to weed his field or help him lift a load. They show their gratitude as they can, through action rather than words.

181 46 The Mossi are not lazy. As a rule it may even be said that they like work. Lazy people are pointed at, avoided, and despised. During the winter season everyone must be in the fields from morning to night, men, women and children alike. Only those who cannot work or who have household tasks to perform stay home. The Mossi work very hard at this time of year. During the dry season, on the other hand, they enjoy some leisure. Although most of them weave during these months or travel for trading purposes, while the children cut grass to thatch the roofs and the millet is threshed, it must be said that it is not possible to work in these sun-scorched lands as it is in our temperate European counties. Besides, why work when there are so few outlets? Since the time when the French peace made the roads safe, trade has been on the upsurge. Now, sure of reaping the fruit of their toil, the natives are expanding their crops and every year the fields encroach further upon the bush. All the important villages are surrounded with cultivated fields as far as the eye can reach. If the Mossi do not work more then they do, therefore, it is not from laziness but from /115/ lack of outlets. It seems likely that the country will develop quite rapidly as soon as channels of communication open it to European trade.

181 Such are, in succinct and impartial outline, the qualities and defects of this people. Which of the two preponderate? It is for the reader to judge. In our opinion the Mossi are a very worthy people capable of a brilliant future, but under one condition, that they become Christians. Their most striking characteristics, as we have stated over and again, are their religious sense and their absolute submission to all that bears the stamp of authority.

152 their family, they love it very much, but they love their husband just as much if they love him at all. If they do not love their husband, naturally they love their family infinitely more.

304 When we study the children's life, we shall see that Mossi girls are
833 excised at the age of nine or ten. This barbarous operation naturally removes an important part of a woman's sensual sensitiveness. The Negress is thus a generatrix rather than a lover. One cannot say of her as of the Latin poet's mistress: crispum ... docta movere latus /gracefully moving her slender body/. She is passive in love and content to give herself without resistance to the man's passion.

831 The morality of Mossi women is certainly laxer than that of
577 European women. (Naturally, I compare the Mossi woman to the respectable woman of our occidental societies.) We saw earlier that the breach of virginity prior to marriage was not unusual and was tolerated with considerable leniency by custom. Adultery is also frequent and is punished in crude and rustic fashion. The woman is beaten and then forgiven. In short, morals are certainly less rigid than in our own countries. On the other hand, prostitution does not
[548] exist, and this is a great moral advantage. Briefly, the division of labor in the sexual domain, as in other domains, is far less developed among the Mossi of Yatenga than among the highly evolved civilizations of our European and occidental countries. The same applies to the other Sudanese populations.

000 Now we turn to Children and Education. We shall discuss these matters in the following order. /250/

1. Filiation.
2. Theory of birth.
3. How children are welcomed.
4. Abortion.
5. Childbirth.
6. Baptism.
7. Freaks. Twins.
8. Nursing.
9. Charms for children and tattooings.
10. Children's games.
11. Familial education.
12. Education of children among themselves. Societies.
13. Young people's tasks.
14. Rights and duties of parents toward their children.
15. Duties of children toward their parents.

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797 sands of Mossi who fled their homeland to escape forced labor or military serv-
ice ultimately returned as Moslems, but the majority of seasonal migrants do
167 not have enough contact with foreign populations for them to become Mos-
lems. Most of the Mossi who migrate to Ghana work on cocoa farms far re-
moved from large centers of population. It is also true that even those Mossi
who worked for Moslems on the farms and found it expedient to "pray" (as
the Mossi refer to conversion to Islam) soon reverted to paganism on their re-
turn in order to escape the displeasure of their lineage members. I have re-
corded several cases of pagans who became Moslems only when they returned
from abroad to find their relatives all converted to Islam.

574 Today there are obvious rewards for those Mossi who embrace Islam; be-
797 sides such tangible rewards as getting wives and children, there are the intan-
554 gible ones of upward social mobility and greater prestige. It is important to
566 note that most liberated slaves and serfs are now Moslems. Formerly these non-
[567] Mossi had low status, but today those who have been to Mecca bear such
proud titles as *Hadji*. On the night before Ramadan, one of these men gave a
talk before the Nobéré chief during which he chided the chief for his impiety
and voiced the hope that the next chief would be a true Moslem. He admitted
that the chief might interpret such a speech from a former serf as impertinence, but he begged him to accept the censure as coming from the servant of *Nabiyama* (the prophet). This same man had refused to pay homage to the chief at the annual sacrifice to the ancestors, and when admonished returned the daughter which the chief had given him as a wife. In earlier days a chief would not have given a daughter to a serf, and moreover, a disrespectful serf could be killed instantly.

797 Many French administrators and Christian missionaries allege that Mossi
youth embrace Islam because they like the beautiful robes and red fezzes of the
291 Moslems, but this is a naive explanation for the conduct of a highly sophisti-
515 cated people. Most young men in Nobéré wear Moslem-type clothes because
such clothes are the mode. Now that sun helmets, dark glasses, and women's
raincoats with hoods are in vogue, pagans as well as Moslems wear them. What
is of interest, however, is that when pagans become Moslems they wear cleaner
clothes and affect a different style of life.

794 The local consensus is that Moslems are much better behaved than pagans
because they do not swear, fight, or get drunk in public. The man chosen as
● 577 Imam is required to have such characteristics as mercy toward evil-doers,
benevolence, magnanimity, physical beauty, and virility. Yet many Mossi say
that the Moslems can be worse than any other people. They accuse them of
being charlatans, of selling Koranic verses as charms, and of committing mur-
der by the use of magical formulae. Neither pagans nor Moslems believe that
a man is necessarily good because he recites his daily prayers or goes to Mecca.

Moslems in the district follow most precepts of their religion: they recite
794 the five daily prayers according to the rites of Tidjani (there are only two Mos-
lems of the Hamada sect in the district and no members of the Hamallist sect),
give alms to the poor, observe the month-long fast (called by the Mossi the

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greeting a lower status benefactor, a man will get down and greet him from a kneeling position. It is because of this elaborate system of greeting, with the many opportunities thus provided for one person to slight another, that many important persons never go to the market. As a rule, the failure of any one person to give the required greeting to another when they meet in the market place is always an indication of strained relations between them.

The persons from whom an individual may buy goods, and the kinds of goods which may be purchased by one individual from another, are governed by convention and social relationships. A person may not buy anything from a relative except European goods. A man cannot buy any but cooked food in the market place, and often he asks a female relative or a passing female to buy it for him. To do the contrary is held to be unmanly and indicative of a bad character. A woman will not buy cotton cloth but will send a man to buy it for her. She would hate to have people believe that she has no male relative to weave it for her, or what is more likely, that she is too lazy to spin the cotton thread which would then be woven for her. A woman may purchase any type of commodity from other women, but she must be careful not to patronize men who are known to be libertines or with whom she is suspected of having an affair. She must also be careful about running errands for men, since people know that men often use this device to establish amorous relationships with women. Men also use this device to give presents, or to arrange secret meetings with them. If any man sees a female relative involved in any of these misadventures, he chases her away and more than likely curses the man, if he does not fight him. In any event, he warns the man to leave the woman alone.

The market is one of the few places where men and women can initiate relationships not sanctioned by their relatives. Under normal conditions marriages are arranged between unrelated individuals through the lineage members who establish "friendly" relationships. Two friends might ask their lineage heads for women to exchange as wives or the "friend" who has received more gifts from the other will give over a wife. Because the older men most often have goods and women at their disposal, they are usually the ones who receive wives. The result is that most young men have no wives, and until they inherit wives from lineage members, are continually seeking to establish intimate relations with women whom they meet on the market place. The technique which a young man employes to gain the favors of a woman he sees at market is highly stereotyped. First of all, he must ascertain that the woman in question is not a member of his maximal lineage or married to a member of his own lineage. A responsible

837 588 548 [586] Free Marriage. The only marriage which can be called free, since it is accepted by both parties, is that of a woman who is unable to endure her first husband and leaves her village with the intention of becoming a prostitute. Divorce is quite rare because the Moaga does not readily agree to it. As she passes through a village, she asks for hospitality, and the news soon spreads that a "free" woman is staying at such-and-such a place. The young men hasten to her and seek to win her favors. Gifts are sent to her, and her hostess is used as go-between. Nine times out of ten, the woman accepts the candidate preferred by her hostess. After some questions concerning his origins and circumstances, one of the young men is accepted as a temporary lover. His comrades come to his aid, and for a few days there is a veritable festival in the village. There is a slight change in the [177] regular fare, since meat is added to the mush; chickens, raised with considerable difficulty, are used for this special treat. This semblance of marriage is thus celebrated. As has been pointed out, however, there has been no divorce, and the deserted husband soon learns the whereabouts of his wife. As soon as he finds out what village she is in -- it may be 100 kilometers away -- he promptly sets out, carrying in a sheepskin enough ground millet for the journey and 500 to 1,000 cowries. He also carries a rooster which, along with the shells, will be offered to the chief of the canton where the lover lives, to whom he will make his claim.

[578] Unions of this sort give rise to three-quarters of the quarrels with which the canton or province chiefs have to deal. A young Moaga who desires peace of mind never regularizes the situation by a so-called marriage even though he may not be able to resist the temptation to harbor the woman for a few days. In any event the affair is easily broken off since sooner or later the woman, eager for change, will want a new lover.

583 Thus, it may be said that although forced marriage has the disadvantage of having a girl marry without her consent, still it also has advantages and a degree of security because the woman, fearing [178] her parents' wrath, rarely leaves her husband. Furthermore, this type of marriage is vastly preferable from the standpoint of peace

584
583 have borrowed. In addition, he would expose himself and the preferred suitor to the vengeance of the rejected one.

The bride price is not exorbitant. The total gifts, spread over a
583 period of years, amount to some fifty francs, without counting the work days. Nevertheless, it requires sufficient means to secure at least the necessary cowries. Besides, the child's father prefers to give her to someone who already boasts a certain fame and some wealth, in short, to an elderly man. /30/ This is why children are promised to old dotards, and white-haired men are paired with young girls; while the old men's sons of marriageable age cannot get wives. If the father has the means to pay the bride price, he carefully refrains from helping his son, even if the latter has found a match to his liking.
587 It is true that all the father's wives are inherited by the oldest son, who gives some to his younger brothers; but this occurs only at the
578 old man's death, and this may not happen for a long time. This ex-
593 plains why the oldest son wishes for his father's death, and why the father sends the son away for fear of a premature end. It is only fair to add that some men, with a better understanding of their own interests, marry off their sons as soon as they are old enough.

Polygamy exists among the Mossi as in all Black countries. The
595 wealth of a man is gauged by the number of his wives. Women
[556] furnish hands to till the soil, for the wife works in the fields like the husband. Women also furnish children, and if these are daughters, young men will come to offer their services (dakonré) and one day take the girls in marriage; or the father will receive gifts. If the children are boys, they will later aid the father in his work. In these countries where each lives for himself alone, where selfishness reigns supreme, polygamy is easily explained, but it undoubtedly results in a lower birth rate. White-bearded old men cannot have children as numerous and sound as young men in their prime, and the latter, deprived of wives, wear themselves out with their excesses. It is true that those who can afford a dozen wives are few; most have to be content with two, three, or four. Some nabas, nevertheless, own veritable herds of women, and this is certainly a grievous abuse. Their wives are numbered in the hundreds. The greatest moral dis-
[837] order reigns in those harems, where the boys who serve as grooms and pages spend most of their time among their master's wives. This explains the precautions taken by the women's owners and the eunuchs of the Moro Naba, as well as the Poënaba and his sinister duties.

593 reprimand them, while the mother's role, here as elsewhere, is to indulge her children.

595 The children of different wives are quite fond of one another and often exchange help. When the father dies, the eldest son make no distinction among his brothers and helps them all as best he can. Polygamy seems to present no drawbacks in this respect.

When a man has several wives, his first wife (porkyéma) is mistress of the household rather than his mother. All the other wives are on an equal footing, even the slaves, excepting, of course, those for whom the husband has a special preference. As the number of wives increases, so does the authority of the first wife, who wants /39/ her husband to have as many wives as possible. Each wife has a separate hut where she lives with her children, and this avoids many a quarrel. The husband goes to the hut of the woman he desires, or he has her come to his own hut. When a man works in his field, all his wives and children must help him, because he feeds them all and gives them a daily millet ration; it is, accordingly, only fair that all should take part in agricultural work within the limits of their capacity.

593 443 421 Provided that a woman remain at her husband's disposal and help him in the fields, she is free to do as she pleases. She goes to market to sell the grain, the spices for sauce, and the thread to weave cloth, but the husband sells the fabric strips and the raw cotton. During the winter each woman may have her own field to cultivate with her children, and the harvest belongs wholly to her. The husband has no say in the matter. If the woman spins cotton, she sells it at the market or even to her husband; if she brews beer, she offers one jar to her husband, but if he entertains friends and wants additional jars, he must pay cash for them. It is not unusual for a woman to refuse her husband credit, for who knows when he would pay?

593 574 A woman may visit her relatives with the permission of her husband, who sets a return date. The woman rarely comes back on the date set, and the husband goes to fetch her himself, or he sends one of his friends with a piece of salt or a small gift. A woman especially likes to visit her relatives when she is pregnant or shortly after the baby's birth. She knows that she will be well cared for and especially that she will enjoy complete freedom. As a result, it is not unusual for a woman to leave her husband for several months and to return only after considerable coaxing. Most quarrels between one Mossi and [578] another derive from their wives and from their debts; yet it may not be said, as a general rule, that women are unhappy or ill treated.

791 Anyone may become a sorcerer, and those who take up the call
756 are usually poor chaps who have nothing to live on, who do not have the strength to till the soil, or who simply want to live without working. When someone enters the brotherhood of bara, people say that he wants to learn how to be idle, and they laugh about it.

791 During the dry season the country is overrun with hordes of Gourounsi and Nankana, filthy and ragged, who claim to know everything and to possess a charm for every purpose, even to make peanuts grow. Led by a chief who speaks a few words of Mossi, they wander from one village to another, dancing and singing for the nabas like the mountebanks who perform at the wagon door of fortune tellers to attract the public... They are consulted, and they return home well rigged out thanks to the cowries they have gathered in Mossi country.

754 /105/ The seuya or soul-eaters are greatly feared. The death of
774 a native, especially that of a child, is often ascribed to them. They have the power of leaving the human body they inhabit and wandering about everywhere in search of a soul to eat. Fire is their vehicle, and they travel about at night on the will-o'-the-wisps that wander in the fields around the huts. They may be stopped by the trees and thrown to the ground, and those who possess an amulet more powerful than their can drive them away.

The seuya are extremely dangerous, for complete protection against them is impossible. They work by night. Every mortal soul leaves the body often during the night and goes wandering about. Woe to it if it should come upon a seuya. He will pounce upon the soul or put it under a big stone, and the unfortunate body that owns it will fall ill and eventually die. The only remedy is to offer a sacrifice to the tangandé, and the guardian animal of the village will go on a search until it locates and releases the unhappy soul; the tangandé causes it to re-enter the body, and the sick person gets well. If, however, the seuya ate the soul, or if he is in connivance with the tangandé, nothing can be done, and death swiftly ensues.

791 The bagré sorcerers can tell who is a seuya and who is not. Some
754 of them have a tim which permits them to distinguish the seuya in a crowd of people. They need only smoke a pipe, and the eyes of the soul-eating man will redden and fill with tears. Those accused of
754 being seuya usually deny the charge, and to call someone a seuya is
[578] one of the worst insults. We have already described the heinous death inflicted on these unfortunate people. Old women especially are

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635 The Ouidi-naba answered: "Naba, you may do as you desire." The ruler
631 then said, "Under these conditions I will designate the eldest son of the late chief as the new Kombéré because his father has never forgotten me, or gave me any trouble when he was alive. It will not be good to reject his son." The ministers then called the heir and put the following question to him three times: "Before his death, did your father designate anyone to replace him as chief?" The heir replied three times: "No! My father did not designate anyone. You may name anyone you wish; even if he is
[778] a blind man or a leper." The heir was then given a bonnet, the symbol of the *nam*, and made to swear on drinking the Tibo, a ritual potion, that if he ever betrayed the ruler, may the Tibo kill him. Thereafter, all the members of the new chief's lineage swore to respect and obey him.

635 The power and function of the Kombéré were similar to those of the
631 Moro-naba, but on a much reduced scale. As the person who had received the *nam* from the Moro-naba, he was supreme in his district, subject only
578 to his obligation to the head ruler. These obligations included the customary gifts and aid in warfare. There is some evidence that many of the Kombérés were lax in paying this tribute and rendering homage to the Moro-naba and consequently were punished or killed. Naba Warga fought a five-year-long civil war against a rebellious vassal before the rebel was killed, and Naba Wobogo was engaged in a three-year civil war with one of his vassals when the French arrived in the country. It is not clear whether the Moro-naba was able to prevent or stop war between his vassals over strayed cattle or stolen women. The Mossi in the district of Nobéré said that the Moro-naba did not often know when neighboring villages were at war. These wars did not involve the loss of territories by the districts, since it was ritually forbidden for one district chief to take lands from another.

631 The district chiefs had ministers who helped them administer the districts. These ministers were descendants of the sons of the Moro-naba's ministers who accompanied the first district chief when he took up his fief. They had control of several villages and they channeled goods and services from the villages to the district heads. The hierarchy of command was also strictly observed on this level, and a village chief who had disputes with other village chiefs, or who had important cases to be judged, was required always to be accompanied by his minister when he visited the district chief. This official could put any man into stocks for
[681 serious crimes, but he could authorize the death only of commoners. It
565] must be pointed out, however, that in many cases the district chief usurped the rights of the Moro-naba, and had a troublesome noble secretly strangled. The district chief, like the Moro-naba, could not be deposed; he was often forced to commit suicide or met death by foul play or in open civil war. The people in the district reacted to an unjust ruler by leaving his territories.

The village chiefs held their fiefs directly from the district chiefs, and

428 As for the soukala itself, he keeps it. He leaves his own
593 soukala, along with everything he owns, to come and live in the soukala of the deceased. In order to put the soukala he is leaving to some use, however, he sends one of his unmarried brothers (that is to say, one who lived up to that time with the deceased) to settle there. He immediately gives this brother one of his father's wives, one of the wives in the estate, and sends him, thus married, to settle in the soukala he is leaving.

593 I asked my informant why the father does not keep his oldest
578 married son with him instead of having him build a new soukala on the outside, since the son returns to the paternal soukala anyway when the father dies. The Mossi chief I was questioning replied that if the father kept his oldest son by his side, the latter, when married and growing older, would wish for his father's death in order to become independent. Wishing for his father's death, he might be tempted to bring it about. If settled in his own soukala, on the other hand, the head of a household and independent, he would nurture no ill thoughts against his father.

593 We shall see later that this feeling of fear and suspicion toward
578 the eldest son is carried to an extreme among the Moro Nabas. This
644 is understandable, since kingship is inherited. Once married, therefore, the eldest son of the prince went far from his father, to a soukala of his own and remained there until the Moro Naba's death.

428 As for the father's fields, the eldest son keeps them all if he is
593 able to work them all. If he is not able to do so, he gives the surplus over and above what he can work to his brothers.

As far as livestock is concerned, the eldest son gives some to his younger brothers and even to his sisters.

The same applies to slaves and cowries.

428 As for wives, if there are many, he gives some to his younger
593 brothers. Thus, for example, if there are ten wives and he has two
587 brothers, he gives two wives to each /551/ brother and keeps six for himself (let us add that the deceased, before dying, often gives a wife to his younger brother or brothers).

428 To summarize, the eldest son gets the soukala and the fields.
593 As for movable property, he takes about 50 percent and leaves the other half to the younger sons and to the daughters. There is a sharing, therefore, although a very uneven one.

586 8. Incest. In case incest is committed by one of the spouses, the other has the right to request a divorce. The gifts remain in the husband's possession if the wife is guilty, or revert to her if it was the husband who commited incest."

Such are the major theoretical cases which may result in divorce. Let us first return to one of them: nonfulfillment of the conjugal duty on the husband's part. The results noted by Vadier seem contradictory to those which we mentioned above (under "conjugal duty"). Actually, no contradiction is involved. When a husband does not fulfill his conjugal duty toward his wife (this, incidentally, occurs quite rarely), either the woman has only praise for her husband in all /248/ other respects, or he is cruel and mean and she is dissatisfied with him on other counts. In the first instance, she takes a lover outside her husband's compound, a liaison to which he voluntarily shuts his eyes, and she does not request a divorce. In the second case, she does request one. That is how the situation is actually resolved.

[837]

586 837 Among the instances of divorce enumerated by Vadier, the most frequent, or rather the least rare, are as follows. (1) Continual infidelity on the part of the wife. I say "continual," for as we have already noted, while in principle a single infidelity on the woman's part enables the husband to ask for a divorce, in actual fact a wife is never sent back for a single breach of the marriage contract. Instead, she is merely beaten. If the woman persists in betraying her husband, however, he eventually sends her away. (2) Insults passed between each other by the husband and wife in a moment of anger do not count, but insults by the husband about his wife's relatives or by a wife about the husband's relatives are serious. (Incidentally, this sensitivity on the subject of relatives is not peculiar to the Mossi. It is common to all the Sudanese Negroes I have seen, Bambara, Malinké, etc.) Thus, if the husband insults his wife's relatives, she may request a divorce. Actually, a woman who loves her husband does not tell her relatives about insults which he may have aimed at them in a moment of anger. She says nothing and does not ask for a divorce. If she holds other grudges against her husband, however, or secretly wishes for a separation, she will eagerly take advantage of this motive which is considered to be serious. As regards the wife's insults against her husband's relatives (like the preceding, an unusual case among the Mossi), the same thing applies. Either the husband loves his wife and says nothing, or he does not love her and takes this opportunity to get rid of her.

586 578 602 [171]

10:Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1964 FA28 Mossi FA28
Yatenga

571 604 indirectly from the good will of his ancestral spirits whose benevolence Ego often invokes.

Ambivalence follows from other characteristics of the relationship. Resentment of Ego's depredations of her husband's property and jealous concern for the inheritance rights of her own children appear to be at least partially balanced by a share of the affection her husband shows for Ego. However, joking in this relationship is asymmetrical. The mother's brother's wife takes the more aggressive role, and from the vehemence of her joking, and the [159] structural nature of the relationship, it appears likely that amity lies less heavily in the balance than hostility. The groups to which the two parties belong are equal in status. Their respective positions within them, of course, are not, and this is reflected in the aforementioned asymmetry. Each party is obviously independent of the authority system of the other.

571 607 *Joking Between Siblings-in-Law*

[144] Siblings-in-law who joke are separated by the rule of sib exogamy observed among the Mossi. Reciprocity is basic to the marriage contract that unites their respective kin groups. Several factors tend to create ambivalence in the relationship. Both kin groups—in particular, the extended families of the two marriage partners—profit from the reciprocal tie established between them, but possible failure on the part of either group to reciprocate adequately, [87] particularly with regard to marriage payments, constitutes a persistent source [58] of potential friction. Moreover, the Mossi observe the levirate. Joking between siblings-in-law who are potential spouses, yet are presently constrained by a [83] prohibition against adultery, has frequently been ascribed the function of reducing tension in a situation of conflict. The kin groups of siblings-in-law [64] are always structurally equivalent because groups occupying significantly dif- [58] ferent strata in Mossi society do not intermarry. As members of autonomous descent groups the participants are obviously independent of one another.

571 614 *Joking Between Sibs*

Sibs (or lineages) whose members joke with one another are, of course, also separate groups.[2] They are always united by a strong tradition of reciprocal social and economic aid. Ambivalence apparently stems from the conflict between this tradition of reciprocity and actual competing claims to land. The origin of joking relationships between two descent groups is often ascribed to the alleged fact that, when they first arrived in the village, leaders of both falsely claimed to the chief that he and his kinsmen had arrived first, [423] and thus had a prior right to land, and that the members of the other group were their slaves. Despite their jocular allegations, both groups are in fact structurally equal and independent.

571 561 *Joking Between Age-Sets*

Joking between age-sets within an age-grade varies with the generational

10:Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1964 FA28 Mossi FA28

4. The importance of sibling-in-law joking as a means of regulating conflict in the Mossi marriage relationship is further substantiated by the results of comparative research conducted among the Mossi resettled at the Office du Niger in the neighboring Republic of Mali.

The Mossi, who were first forcibly and later voluntarily resettled in Mali, were allocated farm land as elementary family units without regard for their extended kinship affiliations. Thus a man often found himself living in unaccustomed "isolation," in the company only of his wife or wives and children, and otherwise surrounded by total strangers. Although the potential for conflict in the marriage relationship remained high, or was even augmented by the stresses of adjusting to a changed milieu, sibling-in-law joking, the institution through which such tension is traditionally regulated among the Mossi, was no longer operative. Unless the younger siblings of each spouse had accompanied them to the resettlement area, those individuals were absent to whom they might have communicated their grievances and expressed their aggressive sentiments in a socially harmless, psychologically satisfactory, and culturally acceptable way.

As the traditionally sanctioned means of dealing with tension resulting from marital conflict was no longer available to the Mossi resettled in Mali, there occurred an increase in the incidence both of violence in marital disputes and of separation and divorce.

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[P. 13]

II

SOVEREIGNTY, KINSHIP, AND COMMUNITY

THE Mossi restricted all important positions within the traditional political 642
organization to persons who claimed lineal descent from Ouedraogo and 613
Oubri, the ancient founders of the Mossi nation. Thus all the *Mogho Na-* [173]
namse, Dimdamba, Kombemba, and *Tense Nanamse*—the heads of king-
doms, principalities, districts, and villages, respectively—claimed descent
in the royal line. The bond of kinship among all important Mossi rulers [614]
was symbolized by membership in the lion clan (*Gegema*) and affiliated
clans or *boodoo* founded by ancient members of the ruling families. Al- 613
though the Mossi respected clan totems, they did not stress clan organ- 778
ization. They were more interested in membership in the segmentary 642
lineages within the clans.[1] Yet not all Mossi groups stressed lineage affilia-
tion. This was of supreme importance only for nobles whose membership
in particular segments of ruling lineages gave them access to the *nam*—
the power first possessed by the ancient founders, which is described by
the Mossi as "that force of God which enables one man to control another."
So important was the corporate possession of the nam by a ruling lineage [554]
that with few exceptions, membership in such a lineage gave a Moaga
noble status.[2] Lineage segmentation gave some segments easier access to [578]
the nam, however, and resulting conflicts over sovereignty gave rise to the
various Mossi kingdoms, principalities, and even districts.

Every Mossi ruling line attempted to legitimize its position by claiming
the most direct descent from Ouedraogo and Oubri. The descendants of the
founder of a local ruling lineage would claim that he had been an elder son
deprived of his patrimony by unscrupulous younger brothers, or an elder
son disqualified by a physical handicap from receiving the nam. Some rul- 642
ing lineages even claimed that their founders had been elder sons who had 613
voluntarily forsaken the problems of government and established new 173
districts for themselves. Whenever tradition recounted that a younger son 778
had indeed founded a kingdom or district, it was invariably said that he

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28

the same royal ancestors. A Mossi village chief was likewise the head of his babissi and ex officio head of all the other babissi in his village that belonged to his boodoo. As the official Boodkasma of his village's ruling lineage, the village chief held junior or senior status in relation to other village chiefs of the same boodoo who were also the Boodkasemdamba of their respective lineage segments.

Possession of the nam influenced the pattern of seniority within lineages and lineage segments. In most cases, seniority was based on age and generation. Thus, the oldest man of the oldest generation was the Boodkasma, and his office devolved upon the next oldest man when he died. But within the ruling lineages and their segments, the man who held the nam, whether young or old, was automatically senior to all others. This does not mean that these ruling lineages did not recognize age and generational seniority. For example, whenever a chief died and sovereignty returned to the lineage as a corporate group, the senior noble of the senior generation became the acting Boodkasma and lineage head. Like all Boodkasemdamba, he managed the affairs of his group, but only until a new chief was elected. The new Boodkasma, however, sometimes delegated some of his social rights and ritual obligations to this elder, who was often regarded as the unofficial or semi-official Boodkasma of his lineage. Similarly, the senior nobles of all segments of the ruling lineage were also regarded as Boodkasemdamba. Because they were so regarded and because of the role they played, these men seldom came into conflict with the district chief. He gave them a certain amount of leeway in dealing with the everyday affairs of their group. It was understood by all, however, that nothing should jeopardize the most important asset of the lineage—the nam. Therefore, the chief was obeyed in all important matters involving the noble lineage of the district. In such matters he listened to no one; for, as one district chief said, "Once I have received the nam from the Mogho Naba, no man in this district stands above me!"

This dominance of political relations over social relations was made clear by the behavior of commoners toward ruling nobles on the one hand, and of nobles among themselves on the other. Commoners showed greater respect and deference toward members of the ruling babissi than toward persons belonging to other noble babissi. Thus, they were more respectful to the district chief's father's brothers, his siblings, and his children than to his more distant relatives. Within the noble lineage itself, everyone had to respect the chief as the holder of the nam, but otherwise the generational principle of respect and deference was maintained. The eldest nobleman of the eldest generation received deference from all others (excluding the

554 613 571 778 chief), and the hierarchy of respect descended to the youngest nobleman of the youngest generation. Very often, the full-grown son and presumed heir of the district chief had to kneel in respect to a distantly related younger man of an elder generation. Of course, this deference ceased if and when he became chief. If he did not receive the nam, he continued to show deference to all his lineage elders. This distinction between nam and boodoo was [578] a source of potential conflict within the ruling lineages. The people usually accepted the implications of both principles, but when they did not, there were dynastic quarrels and territorial secessions.

622 613 554 778 571 The age and generational principles also operated within non-noble ruling lineages, but here too they were often complicated by the possession of the nam. Those village chiefs who had lost their noble status but retained the nam acted as official Boodkasemdamba of their local lineage segments and had considerable influence over their lineage although they did not control all its segments. Each lineage segment had its own Boodkasma, who normally ran its affairs. But because of the importance of the nam in Mossi life, the Boodkasemdamba deferred to the village chief in [565] important matters pertaining to their own boodoo. However, the generational principle was followed within the local boodoo. Almost no one deferred to the children of the village chief, who, after all, were not nakomce.

613 571 778 The situation within commoner lineages that did not hold the nam was quite different. The age and generational principles obtained within the lineage segments of these boodoo, but never *across* the segments, as they did across the babissi. These segments were more autonomous. Each had its own Boodkasma, who looked after it without deferring to anyone. This autonomy was all the more pronounced since the segments of non-noble lineages tended to be scattered throughout a district. They interacted socially and politically only when they were physically close. In any case, in the absence of the nam, the segments of non-noble lineages had no reason to remain together; they tended to lose their hierarchical quality and to become equal and separate.

613 173 778 As would be expected in such circumstances, not all Mossi lineages paid the same attention to their genealogies. Noble lineages kept track of their actual or putative ancestors, whereas non-noble lineages tended to ignore them and to let geographical proximity determine meaningful kinship ties. This loss of interest in exact genealogies was found even among lineages that had lost the nam of a district and with it their nobility, but still retained the nam of a village. Members of the minimal units in such lineages competed actively for the village nam and were interested in fairly recent an-

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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fied his sexual desires. Since these women were in the monarch's favor, they were better dressed than the other wives and received more attention from him. The dogunba generally cultivated a large field in common with the aid of the palace retainers, but some insisted on cultivating their own fields instead. Like the other wives, the dogunba usually lived in huts of their own. Childless women sometimes shared the same hut until one of them became pregnant and had to set up a hut for herself and her child. 644 595 [342] [591]

Those wives who lived in special villages under the supervision of eunuchs rarely went to the palace. Usually, they were past childbearing age or had lost favor with the monarch. They cultivated plots of land, spun cotton, and prepared locust-bean flour, locust-bean "balls," and shea butter. They kept a part of the produce for their own use and sent the remainder to the palace stores; the same arrangement obtained for all three categories of palace wives.

The Mogho Naba's heir was usually born while his father was still Crown Prince. He was never born in his father's compound because, unlike other Mossi women, the wife of a Mogho Naba or Crown Prince returned to her father's house for confinement. As soon as she announced her pregnancy, the Pughtiema or one of the older wives held a ceremony to notify the ancestors. Once the rite had been completed, the wife was sent to her relatives for fear that she might be harmed by her less fortunate co-wives. If the child was a boy, the ruler or Crown Prince was notified immediately, because the important privileges of a first-born hinged upon this notification. Since several wives of the Mogho Naba might be pregnant at the same time and errors might be made about the onset and duration of pregnancy, primogeniture had to be established immediately to forestall dynastic conflicts. For example, it is commonly believed that the present Doulougou Naba was born several days before Mogho Naba Sagha II (1942–57) but was deprived of the nam because the messenger who brought news of his birth reached Mogho Naba Kom after the messenger who announced Sagha's birth. Undoubtedly, such allegations were sometimes used to foster and support dynastic rebellions. 644 595 843 644 595 843 428 643 [578]

So strong was the fear that the most likely heir to the nam would be harmed by jealous co-wives that the child and his mother never returned to the palace except for brief visits on ceremonial occasions. The young prince remained with his mother's relatives and was guarded and educated by servants sent from the palace. If his father was on the throne at Ouagadougou when the boy reached the age of ten, he was formally installed as chief of Djiba district, the traditional seat of the Crown Prince. If his father was not on the throne, the boy remained with his mother's relatives and went to Djiba when his grandfather died and his father was installed as Mogho Naba.

643 his people. We shall see that these orders ran the gamut from demands for soldiers, tribute, and labor, to requests for sacrifices to the ancestors or to local deities for the welfare of the country.

635 The provincial governors seldom visited the districts under their control
645 more than once or twice a year. They transmitted official orders to the dis-
[203] tricts through retainers. Some ministers such as the Gounga Naba kept the
[634] sons and servants of district chiefs in the capital to be used as messengers. The district chiefs, in turn, used their sons or servants to transmit messages to their provincial governors or through them to the Mogho Naba. The use of intermediaries in the administration served another purpose: it prevented face-to-face contact, with all its potential for personal animosities, from impairing relations between those whose status depended on their political office and those whose status was derived from membership in the royal lineage.

635 Relations between the provincial ministers and the district chiefs were
645 often charged with hostility and suspicion. The district chiefs regarded the
634 provincial ministers as representatives of the Mogho Naba, and thus as
578 persons to be obeyed. Simultaneously, however, they resented this control by social inferiors. They felt that since they were the descendants of Ouedraogo and Oubri, they should receive orders only from the Mogho Naba himself. Thus, while the district chiefs accepted orders from their provincial governors, they never permitted them to forget their social status or to interfere with the internal affairs of the districts. They felt that this was the prerogative of the royal lineage. Most provincial ministers accepted these restrictions on their activities, but nevertheless saw to it that the district chiefs surrendered the goods collected for the Mogho Naba and governed their people well. Sometime in the 1920's, a provincial administrator went to a district and insulted its chief for failing to deliver the quota of millet set by the French colonial government. The accusation of laziness and embezzlement so infuriated the district chief that he asked the provincial minister whether he had taken leave of his senses and forgotten to whom he was speaking. The person who reported this incident said that if the district chief had not been restrained, he would have killed the administrator on the spot.

Both provincial administrators and district chiefs could impose indirect sanctions on each other if the bounds of propriety were overstepped in either direction. A district chief harried by his minister could not complain directly to the Mogho Naba. But he could, and often did, show his dissatisfaction by lodging with another provincial minister when he went to the capital. He would then ask the official to accompany him when he went

to render homage to the monarch. This attracted the attention of the Mogho 635
Naba, who investigated the grievance of the district chief. If the provincial 645
minister were found to be in serious error, he might be deposed and exe- 634
cuted. The Ouidi Naba was theoretically exempt from such punishment, 578
but it is doubtful that a strong monarch would have allowed even this official to cause trouble.

A provincial governor dissatisfied with a district chief under his charge could, under certain conditions, have him deposed and put to death. He achieved this by complaining to the monarch that the chief was either withholding tribute or misgoverning his people. In most cases, however, the minister could curb the district chief by hinting that his son would not receive a recommendation as successor to the nam of the district. This was usually enough to win the cooperation of the most recalcitrant chief, if only because his future status as the honored ancestor of a ruling local line would be jeopardized if he rebelled. These sanctions were thus sufficient to ensure satisfactory relations between the provincial ministers and their district chiefs, at least on the surface. This was to the advantage of both groups, [687]
since in the final analysis the failure of either to administer or rule well might result in the death penalty.

Many districts and villages in Ouagadougou were administered not by 634
the provincial ministers but by officials directly responsible to the Mogho 621
Naba. The districts in question were often ruled by close relatives of the Mogho Naba or by persons who had gained his good graces. The villages [567]
were often inhabited by slaves and governed by headmen who were themselves slaves. Like the other territories of the Mogho Naba, these districts and villages were not physically contiguous. The districts were mixed in with districts administered by the provincial ministers, and the villages stood within the territorial boundaries of district chiefs. Whenever the [203]
Mogho Naba wanted to communicate with a chief of such a village or district, he sent one of his retainers. The chiefs, in turn, used their own people to send messages and goods to Ouagadougou. The general administration of these districts and villages differed little from that of the territories administered by the provincial ministers. The main difference was that the Mogho Naba took a greater interest in their everyday affairs. This called for greater efficiency on the part of local officials; for they, like the other chiefs, faced the penalty of deposition and death for maladministration.

Of all Mossi officials, the district chiefs had the most difficult adminis- 634
trative task. They were in direct contact with the people, and thus ran a greater risk of being charged with misgovernment. Countless district chiefs [687]
were deposed and executed because they had allegedly disobeyed or rebelled

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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The district chief was relatively secure in the control of his territory as long as he maintained amicable relations with his immediate superiors and administered his district to their satisfaction. A less important but more constant source of concern was his relationship with neighboring chiefs. Many people who can remember the pre-conquest period say it was unsafe for a man to trespass into another district unless he was on an official mission from his chief to another chief. It appears that most of the fighting occurred over strayed cattle and stolen women, with constant raids and counter-raids. The cattle were eaten, and the women kept as wives. Captured men were sometimes sold as slaves, but more often were held for ransom. They were not kept as slaves, since the Mossi were forbidden to enslave other Mossi. Needless to say, this fighting was frowned upon by the Mogho Naba. Since all district chiefs believed in their common descent from Ouedraogo and Oubri and paid allegiance to the Mogho Naba, any fighting among them was not only a sin against the ancestors but also an act of disloyalty to the Mogho Naba. When (as was usually the case) this fighting was of short duration and few people were killed, the Mogho Naba took no official notice of it. But when it became serious, he sent the provincial administrator to stop the fighting and to summon the dissident elements to the capital for trial. The speed and severity with which the Mogho Naba dealt with quarrels within his own realm usually depended upon his strength. At some periods in Mossi history there was little internal disorder, because the rulers were strong; at other periods, under weak rulers, disorder practically amounted to internal chaos. During such periods, the Mossi were kept together only by the bonds of kinship and religion which united them against outsiders.

The district chief maintained tight control over his own territory and took an active part in its administration. In a district like Nobere, for example, the chief was aided both by an informal council and by an administrative apparatus similar to but smaller than the one at Ouagadougou. The council included men with whom the chief had grown up, members of his immediate family such as his brothers, and a few formal administrative personnel. These councillors visited him every day, brought him occasional gifts, received gifts from him in turn, and discussed informally all matters of interest. Yet, informal as this communication was, it enabled the district chief to know what was going on in his villages. Moreover, these councillors interceded for various villages and gave the chief valuable advice in administrative matters.

The formal administrative personnel of the district included a Ouidi Naba, a Baloum Naba, a Tansoba, and lesser officials with titles identical

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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difficulty discharging these duties, for, nobles aside, the Mossi usually obeyed 634
orders from their chiefs—a fact verified by most observers. At the same time, a district chief had to be temperate in his demands upon his villagers, and could not take advantage of his obligations to the Mogho Naba as a means of personal enrichment. Similarly, the district administrators could not seek personal gain either by augmenting the demands of the district chief or by withholding part of the goods and services rendered to him. District administrators who were found guilty of maladministration or embezzlement were executed, because activities of this kind could—and often did—jeopardize the life of the district chief.

The Mossi might complain among themselves about the administrative 634
policies of their district chief, but they took no measures against him unless 687
he was very cruel or exploitative. A district chief who by his disregard for 578
the people's welfare was believed to have lost the ability to "command 626
people" jeopardized not only his position but also his life. When the people were dissatisfied with a chief, they either boycotted him or deserted their villages and migrated to another district, thus "increasing the force" (nam) of the chief who gave them sanctuary. This placed the deserted chief in a rather difficult position. Mogho Nanamse are known to have ordered the 634
execution of district chiefs and even autonomous Dimdamba who had lost 687
their subjects through their own fault. In 1863, when Mogho Naba Sanum 626
was informed that the ruler of Boussouma, Naba Zande, had been chased away by his subjects for administrative abuses and had fled to a Ouagadougou village, he had him captured and executed.[29] Thus, the threat that people might leave the district was often strong enough to ensure a just administration, because the district chiefs and officials depended upon the villagers not only for the economic support of the central administration but also for their livelihood and their lives.

Those district chiefs who supervised other district chiefs for the Mogho 634
Naba did not interfere with the internal administration of the districts. 628
The chiefs of the Vooko and Nobila districts, for instance, had administrators of their own to look after their villages. But they were responsible to the chief of Nobere district, not their respective provincial ministers, for their internal affairs. Moreover, they had to follow the Nobere chief when he went to Ouagadougou to pay homage and allegiance to the Mogho Naba. But aside from these prescriptions, the chiefs of these subordinate districts administered their territories in the same manner as the Nobere chief administered his own.

The Mossi village chief had no administrators of his own to help him 622
with day-to-day affairs of his village. However, like the district chief, he 623

692 or because the litigants had rejected the village chief's verdict). The chief
634 then asked the plaintiff or "the people of X village" to state their case.
695 Someone usually spoke up, and after he had finished, the chief asked the defendant or defendants to do likewise. The litigants were then asked to produce reputable witnesses to support or refute the testimony.

[641] Witnesses had to be male, adult (to have begun to "push a beard"), and
[562] free. Women and bondsmen had no legal personality before a Mossi court.
[567] A slave was represented at court by his master, and a woman by her husband (and, by extension, by his patrilineage). In marital quarrels or property suits, a woman was usually represented by her patrilineage. Only if
[576] she alone could give the required evidence was she allowed in court. When she was asked to testify, she knelt, and spoke in a high, thin, soft voice, thus showing extreme respect to the chief and proper deference to the court. Except for these restrictions, any person could be called in as a witness.
[578] Tempers often ran fairly high among the litigants' relatives and friends while they gave their testimony and argued the case, but their physical separation and their respect for the chief prevented abuse and fighting. Anyone who started a fight in court was liable to a beating by the samandekamba.

[674] The Mossi believed that most people, given sufficient reason, would commit any crime. Thus they examined the litigants carefully and at great length in an attempt to "get behind" the offense. The district chief interrogated the litigants, but the dignity of the court prevented him from arguing with them. As a matter of fact, most of the cross-examination was done by the litigants themselves. From time to time, the village administrator and the chief's confidants asked brief, direct questions. When a woman was involved, the chief's Pughtiema usually listened to the proceedings from behind a wall and questioned her. When all the evidence was in, the chief either rendered his verdict without delay or retired to the zongo to confer with his confidants and the village administrator. He took the latter course whenever he felt that further discussion was necessary or that false testimony was confusing the issue. Not until he felt that he had the facts well in hand did he return to the court to render his verdict.

The Mossi did not use ordeals in court except in the "chastity trials" conducted by the Pwe Naba. Some litigants called upon the ancestors to kill them if they were not telling the truth; others went to earth shrines and drank an infusion of dust to show that they were not afraid of the spirits who wrought vengeance on the guilty. However, such acts were never carried out in court and thus were of no use to the chief.

The following case, tried in a district court in 1956, illustrates the Mossi

628 669 175 643 634 cases was over women. The Tema Dim successfully defended his principality against a Zittenga district chief who not only had the effrontery to demand the return of a wife who had fled into Tema but also invaded the principality when she failed to return.[19] The Boulsa Dim attacked and defeated the Salogho Naba when he refused to repatriate a man and woman convicted of adultery who had fled into his district. It is possible that in each case the Mogho Naba refused to become involved in a squabble over women, but it is more likely that he refrained from participating in a local war that did not threaten the security of the entire country.

628 669 175 Many Dimdamba made it a practice to help each other in wars against common enemies. In the middle of the nineteenth century, Naba Zende of Tema and Naba Totoabo of Yako joined in a war against Naba Sebogo of La when Sebogo refused to repatriate one of Totoabo's wives, who had fled into his territory. The two victorious allies burned villages in La and forced Sebogo to flee for his life. They searched for the woman, but she was never found. The successors of the three rulers remained embittered by this war and eventually renewed the fighting. On this occasion, Naba Tanga of Tema and Naba Sagha of Yako fought against Naba Kombase of La. But [643] this time Yako and Tema were unable to defeat La and had to withdraw. There is no evidence that the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou took any part in these wars.[20]

643 648 175 The Mogho Naba appears to have taken a greater interest in wars between his Dimdamba and non-Mossi populations, and to have profited by them occasionally. When the followers of a Fulani chief named Karfo carried off some cattle belonging to the Boussouma people, the Boussouma Dim, Naba Siguiri, threatened war if the animals were not returned. Karfo not only refused to surrender the cattle but insulted Siguiri in his reply. Siguiri marched against the Fulani, killed Karfo, seized all the cattle he could find, and sent some of the "most beautiful animals" to Mogho Naba Koutou.[21]

634 669 578 628 Although the Mogho Naba tolerated wars among his Dimdamba, he apparently forbade the district chiefs under his direct command to fight among themselves. As we saw in Chapter IV, some such fighting did take place, but the Mogho Naba seems to have ignored it in most cases because of its relative unimportance. The Mossi, on the other hand, magnified this local fighting, which they called *tengkom* ("civil war"), and which consisted of mere skirmishes between villages or neighboring districts, with few casualties. In fact, the Gounga Naba once stopped a war between districts after only nineteen persons had died. But as a rule, districts seldom if ever fought among themselves. The actual combatants were villagers

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who fought the villagers of other districts over stray livestock, stolen goods, and runaway women, in that order of frequency.

The main reason for these inter-village wars was the lack of local mechanisms (aside from meetings of district chiefs) to deal with problems between villagers of different districts. If the district chiefs refused to meet, they could either refer the matter to the provincial level or allow the villages to resolve the problem among themselves. Many district chiefs preferred the latter course because it saved them from interference by the authorities in the capital. Besides, these problems were usually unimportant and did not pit one entire district against another. People of different districts were often bound to each other by familial and ritual ties, and did not like to fight against relatives. Only when the potential combatants were unrelated or all attempts at reconciliation failed would the people of a village (and occasionally of a district) band together, either secretly without their chiefs or under their chiefs, and go to war. In such cases, persons who had relatives in the enemy villages often remained at home.

The inhabitants of Mossi districts did band together eagerly under their chiefs to participate in slave-raiding expeditions into non-Mossi territories. This type of warfare seems to have been fairly common. Ruelle writes, "Before our [French] occupation, warfare was the chief preoccupation of the chiefs. Moreover, expeditions into Gurunsi country had as their goal pillage and the procurement of slaves for sale."[22] Similarly, Mangin states, "The Gurunsi and Busansi were frequently raided with the sole intent of obtaining slaves."[23] Binger gives the following description of a Mossi slave-catching expedition and the subsequent disposal of the slaves:

> During my second stay at Banema, Boukary [later Mogho Naba Wobogo], knowing my aversion to pillage and slavery and fearing to displease me, sent off two expeditions during the night without warning me—one to Nabouli, and the other towards the south to Baouer'a. By six o'clock in the morning of the following day, the returning horsemen were heralded by gunshots. Soon afterwards, a line of slaves of both sexes appeared, tied to each other by a cord slung around their necks. The expedition to Nabouli brought back seventeen slaves; that to Baouer'a brought only five, along with an ass laden with salt and a little cotton. As soon as these unfortunate people arrived, they were given water to drink, and mallets were used to remove the rings and copper bracelets which they wore on their arms and legs. Then they were classified into three categories:
>
> 1. The men formed a lot destined for immediate sale for fear that they should run away. They were led forthwith to Sakhaboutenga, to be exchanged against sorghum for the horses, millet for the personnel, and gunpowder.
> 2. A second lot, composed of women, was kept as a reserve to trade for horses.

chief became ridiculously smaller when distributed among the producers; gone the tolls along the roads. Henceforth, all such services will be duly and individually compensated.

Even in the most remote and least accessible villages, people speak of liberty. The old women who go to the pools for water sit down for a moment near their jars in order to talk about it. Even bush fires spread less rapidly than this news.[27]

Very few Mossi in the rural areas were qualified to vote in the first post-war elections, and those who were qualified voted for the candidates preferred by the chiefs. However, as the franchise was progressively broadened after 1951, and many more Mossi and non-Mossi politicians traveled through the rural areas, the politicians favored by the chiefs found that they had to campaign to maintain their position. Both the chiefs and their politicians resented this. One visitor to the Upper Volta reports: "A highly educated Mossi of the Upper Volta told me, 'Citizenship has unsettled and ruined the people. Everyone has become his own master, and believes himself free to do whatever he wishes.'"[28] Opposition to the chiefs and their friends came from the Moslems, who supported their co-religionists for office, and from a growing group of young Mossi who resented the power of the chiefs. In 1955 one such group in Yatenga, composed of mission-educated youths, war veterans, and former workers, broke away from the Union Voltaïque and formed the Mouvement Démocratique Voltaïque (MDV) under the joint leadership of Gérard Ouédraogo and Michel Dorange, a Frenchman, who had been a captain in the colonial army. The partisans of the MDV often came into violent conflict with the supporters of the chiefs, but the organization itself was not banned by the administration, because its members included many veterans, and because Dorange was one of its leaders.

The appearance of the anti-chief MDV was symptomatic of the problems which the Mossi chiefs were to encounter as the people became free to elect their own representatives. For one thing, the people could now censure their chiefs by voting for their opponents, who appealed to them in terms of release from traditional prestations. But more important, even those Mossi politicians who were still friendly to the chiefs and depended on their support for election were becoming increasingly autonomous. The chiefs were operating in one power structure, the politicians in another and more important one. In Dakar, in Paris, and in the Palace of Versailles (where the Assembly of the French Union met) Mossi politicians dealt not only with local African problems but with problems the chiefs knew nothing about. As the politicians grew skillful at the game of metropolitan

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created out of the defunct Entente Voltaïque. In an attempt to gain the support of these parties and of the young Mossi intellectuals who, while anti-chief, were not yet willing to join the PDV, Conombo officially scrapped the Union Voltaïque in 1955 and formed the Parti Social d'Education des Masses Africaines (PSEMA).[30] The party pledged to promote social reform and the right of Africans to manage their own affairs, and to struggle against family, regional, and racial hatreds. But it did not win the support of the non-Mossi; nor did it attract many young Mossi, who did not believe that it had discarded the mantle of the chiefs. Conombo's readiness to ally himself with anti-chief forces, however, did make it obvious to the chiefs that when politicians were out to gain power, they did not always take the interests of the chiefs into account.

In 1956, when a *loi-cadre* granting almost complete autonomy to the French African territories was approved by the National Assembly, it made no provision for the participation of the traditional chiefs in the projected governmental structure.[31] In fact, as preparations were being made to implement the new reforms, a number of politicians and educated Africans launched an attack on the chiefs which seems to have been a step toward edging them out of power altogether. The newspaper *Afrique Nouvelle*, published in Dakar but read by the educated elite throughout French West Africa, carried a series of articles that proclaimed: "The district chiefs should be given neither a position nor a salary!" "Let us democratize the chieftainship!" and "Let us decapitate the district!" (i.e., let us do away with the district chief). Over a photo showing the traditional chiefs, *Afrique Nouvelle* ran the caption, "Are they still chiefs of the territories?"[32]

The Mossi chiefs, who had retained more power and prestige than any other chiefs in French West Africa, bore the brunt of these attacks and rose to defend the rights of all the chiefs. Their most able spokesman was Bouda, a Councillor of the French Union and a district chief in his own right. He wrote in *Afrique Nouvelle*:

> The Mossi [socio-political] organization, by its simplicity and cohesiveness, aroused the admiration of France, which respected and retained it.
>
> The power of the Mossi chief may be great, but it is not used to oppose the progress which is being made. The Mossi chief is not as much of a conformist as people have a tendency to believe. The social and political revolution which, since 1946, has made Mossi country so different from what it was before the war, is effecting the transition from a society largely encompassed by Nabas possessing real authority, an authority sanctioned by custom, to a more progressive way of life whose essential characteristics are underlined by the growth of towns, the uprooting of a large part of the population, and the triumph of the desire to be on one's own. . . .

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The Mossi chiefs indeed understand today that a tradition, no matter how respected, is not immutable. It is susceptible to change and evolution; it will evolve. 642 631

In all truth, and with due deference to those who systematically denigrate everything connected with them, the chiefs have borne positive witness to the characteristic spirit of this country, and it is as unfair as it is stupid to deny the important role they have played in certain cases in the cause of tranquility and peace. 578

As the natural spokesmen for their people, they have been, in many instances, the first to pay a heavy price for the common cause. Without them, demagoguery would have plunged the country into irreparable decadence.

. . .

The demands of the traditional chiefs are justified and deserve to be heeded, because, in the face of the inertia of the Government and the rapid development of events, it is to be feared that the chiefs, although disposed by nature to be patient and to wait quietly, might run rather than walk in the days to come.[33]

In December 1956, the Mossi chiefs, supported by the other traditional chiefs in French West Africa, convoked a Congress of Chiefs at Dakar. This Congress approved a constitution for an organization called the Federal Union of the Syndicates of the Traditional Chiefs, and adopted a proposal on the need for a statute governing the status and material well-being of the chiefs. The Congress did underline the apolitical character of the chieftainship, but asked that the chiefs be given some recognition in the new structures being created by the loi-cadre. 175* 642 631 665

On the local level, the Mossi chiefs convoked a Syndicate of the Traditional Chiefs of the Upper Volta at Tenkodogo a month later. Its president, Etienne Congo, brother of Mogho Naba Sagha II of Ouagadougou, declared:

At this time, when vast changes are under way, it would be inconceivable for us, the traditional chiefs, not to take an active part in the new developments, of whose urgent and precarious nature we are fully aware.

Our position is clear: we are not opposed in any way to this evolution.

As for statutory matters, I wish to express our concern over the fact that at the very moment when the loi-cadre is turning an important page in the history of Africa, our group has been left out.[34]

The Mossi chiefs had indeed been abandoned by the French administration. Although they continued to receive the support of some politicians, it soon became clear that the latter were mainly interested in maneuvering for power under the loi-cadre and in uniting their parties to this end. Conombo, the leader of the PSEMA, was induced by his supporters and by a 668 175* 631 642 665 [648]*

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For all its occasional eloquence, the new Mogho Naba's speech was clearly self-serving; moreover, the French officials to whom it was addressed were withdrawing from the territory, and the young Mossi elite had other ideas about the distribution of power. It is no wonder, then, that most of the politicians listened to his speech in respectful silence and then "calmly went ahead with their tasks," confident, it seems, in their new status as the elected representatives of the people.[40]

The new Mogho Naba was faced with a political situation in which he could play only a limited role. His strength now lay exclusively among the more conservative elements of the newly enfranchised rural masses. The political representative of this group was Conombo, who in November 1957 went ahead with his plans to rebuild the PSEMA. In December Conombo saw a chance to embarrass and perhaps defeat the Coulibaly Government when the Territorial Assembly decided to vote on the budget of the Upper Volta; he and his followers withheld their vote of confidence in the Government and tried to force it to resign. But the conditions under which the members of the Territorial Assembly could force a government to resign were not clearly defined by the loi-cadre. The various parliamentary groups appealed in vain to Paris and to Houphouët-Boigny to resolve the problem. Coulibaly broke the impasse by forming a new coalition and giving Maurice Yaméogo, an Indépendant candidate who had been a member of the RDA and later of the MDV but had switched back to the RDA, the important portfolio of Minister of the Interior. Finally, the Assembly, which had been adjourned, reconvened in April 1958 and confirmed Coulibaly in power. In a speech to the Assembly, Coulibaly declared: "It is my imperative task to tell you that each one of you is faced today with a decisive choice. You must choose either a pooling of efforts and good will in the interests of the country, or the pursuit of personal quarrels and partisan rivalries that will undermine the public welfare."[41]

The Mogho Naba and his political allies suffered yet another defeat with the Assembly's approval of the Coulibaly Government. However, Kougri had other strings to his bow. In June 1958, when de Gaulle returned to power, Kougri sought to gain the General's favor, and to raise his own status, by pledging his support and that of the Mossi chiefs. This astute political move infuriated many Voltaics, Mossi and non-Mossi, politicians and non-politicians. Amadou Tamboura, a member of the MDV, replied to the Mogho Naba in the newspaper *Paris-Dakar*. Under the headline, "The Message of the Mogho Naba to General de Gaulle Commits Only Himself," he wrote:

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It will be well if the Mogho Naba understands that he owns but the vestige of a past whose hour has irrevocably tolled, and that his message to the President of the Council [de Gaulle] commits no one in the Upper Volta but himself, a mere citizen like the others.

I deplore the discrimination which the message of the Mogho Naba implicitly contains. I should like to say to the Mogho Naba that in the Upper Volta there are no Mossi, Fulani, or Bobo people, but only Black people struggling for their liberty. No Mossi or any other Voltaic would agree to the Mogho Naba's expression of fidelity to France in his name. If this must be done, then the Territorial Assembly and the Government Council alone are qualified to do so.[42]

Despite these attacks and numerous suggestions in the press that the Mogho Naba and the Mossi chiefs were developing a "Touré complex" (i.e., the fear of suffering the same fate as the Fulani chiefs of Fouta Djallon, who had been deposed by Sékou Touré, Vice-President of the Guinea Government Council), the Mossi ruler actively supported acceptance of the constitution of the Fifth French Republic, which promised the colonies full internal self-government within the "French Community." Since the constitution was adopted by the Upper Volta population by an overwhelming favorable vote of 99.1 per cent, no one could estimate how effective the Mogho Naba's support had been.[43] [177] [642]

Coulibaly died just before the referendum, and was replaced on an interim basis by Yaméogo. The parliamentarians accordingly had to choose a new leader, now to be President of the Government Council, as well as to draw up a constitution for the new republic and determine whether it would join any of the regional federations then being considered by several territories. The Territorial Assembly was scheduled to meet in extraordinary session on October 17, 1958, to select a successor to Coulibaly. The Mogho Naba, anticipating dissension and perhaps once again seeking the limelight, sent a message to the representatives on October 15, urging "a government of union and public safety." But the politicians resented what they regarded as his interference in matters that did not concern him; few, if any, took his message seriously, and none replied.

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The Mogho Naba therefore decided to force the issue. He summoned his traditional ministers to a conference, and, despite the objections of the Baloum Naba, obtained their permission to order his Tansoba to muster his warriors and lay siege to the Territorial Assembly. Early in the morning of October 17, about 3,000 Mossi warriors, armed with bows and arrows, swords, spears, and ancient flint guns, converged on the Assembly. Later that morning, the Mogho Naba himself, accompanied by his Tansoba,

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arrived on the scene, dressed in his dark-brown cotton war cloak and his war bonnet, the symbol of his power. The demonstration lasted until 11 A.M., when the French Army undertook to scatter the warriors. Finally, the Ouidi Naba ordered the warriors to return to the palace. Only then did Max Berthet, the High Commissioner, open the Assembly session with an expression of regret for the "unacceptable and incomprehensible" demonstrations.[44]

The Assembly adjourned that afternoon and did not meet again until October 20. In the interim, the parliamentarians took measures to deal with this challenge to their power. On October 18, the Government Council issued a communiqué "stigmatizing Friday's demonstration." The Council regretted that the demonstration had prevented a democratically elected body from sitting, but affirmed that "order and public security, indispensable to everyday life, will be maintained."[45] On the following day a longer communiqué was issued, declaring that a truce had been signed by the authorized representatives of the Union Démocratique (Voltaic section of the RDA) and the Mouvement de Regroupement Africain (Voltaic section of the PRA) after a three-day meeting in Ouagadougou. According to the communiqué, the two groups had agreed that "the unity of the democratic forces of the country" was "the decisive question of the hour."

[646] The Territorial Assembly met in Plenary Session on October 20, and on the basis of the political truce, 68 representatives unanimously elected Maurice Yaméogo as President of the Government Council. The politicians further showed their disdain for the Mogho Naba by adopting the following motion:

> The Territorial Assembly, in the unanimous assurance that it alone has the mandate of the Voltaic people to legislate in their name, solemnly declares that, in the face of all opposition, it will work to give the Voltaic State democratic institutions conforming to the aspirations of the population, within the framework of the constitution which they approved by such a strong majority on September 28. Furthermore, it is insistent in its demands that the authorities responsible for public order do everything in their power to determine the persons responsible for the demonstration and to see what should be done to avoid a recurrence of such an event.[46]

The Mogho Naba soon found to his chagrin that even some of his own vassal chiefs had turned against him. They had been persuaded by the politicians that the French Government would never allow the Mogho Naba to take over the country, and furthermore that he had overstepped his bounds and had thereby endangered further the institution of the chieftainship. The Bureau of the Syndicate of the Traditional Chiefs of

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the Upper Volta met, discussed "the affair of October 17," and issued a statement dissociating itself from the Mogho Naba's action, reaffirming its desire to collaborate with the established authority, and requesting a clarification of the status of chiefs in the new order. The Government Council of the Upper Volta welcomed this statement, and hastened to reassure the chiefs that their status was not in danger: "It is not a question of damaging the traditional chiefs as a group, but rather of stigmatizing vigorously an act emanating from a superior chief like Mogho Naba Kougri, the consequences of which, unforeseen as they were, could have placed all the Mossi chiefs in a regrettable and irreparable position."[47]

The Mogho Naba had obviously reached a political impasse, and he next turned his attention to creating a new image of the chieftainship. To this end, he married a young Mossi woman in accordance with the civil statutes of the state, thus becoming the first Mogho Naba and the first important Mossi chief to do so. A spokesman at the wedding placed this act in its proper perspective with the following words:

> I should now like to underscore the fact that this date, November 22 [1958], will be inscribed officially in the annals of the Upper Volta. For the first time in the history of our country, an Emperor, the person who best symbolizes tradition, has upset ancestral habits in the interest of progress. For the first time a woman will be given consideration in a royal court where she will be able to feel at her ease. For the first time, the spouse of a traditional chief will have her place near her husband as an equal and steady companion.[48]

The politicians were apparently prepared to recognize the eminence of the chiefs as long as they did not attempt to intervene in the affairs of the state, and a number of them attended the Mogho Naba's wedding. Among those present were the Presidents of both the Government Council and the Territorial Assembly, parliamentarians from various parties, and the mayors of Bobo-Dioulasso and Ouagadougou. On December 10, 1958, the Territorial Assembly confirmed Yaméogo as President of the Government Council. The Assembly also approved his slate of ministers, among them Bouda, the Mossi chief who had once been a strong supporter of the traditional political hierarchy but who now belonged to the UDV-RDA. Then, on December 11, the Assembly decided to adopt the draft of a proposed constitution for the Upper Volta. Articles 2 and 3 of Paragraph I of this constitution state explicitly:

> The Republic of the Upper Volta is one and indivisible, secular, democratic, and social. Its principle is that the government is *of the people, by the people, and for the people. . . .*
>
> *Sovereignty belongs to the people. No section of the population, and no individual, may usurp it.* [Italics mine.][49]

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to be sold the article at a lower price. The result is that the pace of commerce in a Mossi market is somewhat relaxed, but the lack of intense competition prevents a great deal of hositility and quarreling among the market people.

The amount of small trading which takes place in a Mossi market is fantastic, so much so that one gains the impression that some people trade simply for the sake of trading. Everyone tries to get money so that he or she can buy some desired object, but it is impossible for one to obtain a clear idea of what kind of profit, if any, people make from their commerce. In fact, the idea of a profit does not seem to be important when people are selling their own products. Most people only think about profit when they buy things to resell—whether these things are of African or European manufacture. This, incidentally, is one of the reasons why the prices of foodstuffs are about 10 per cent lower in the country districts than at Wagadougou, and concommitently, why imported products are 10 to 20 per cent higher in the rural districts than at Wagadougou where they are bought. When a woman takes such products as cotton, beans or millet to market, she may gross about 100 francs in the course of the day. But out of this she may give a few francs to her husband to buy kola nuts, a few francs to her daughter to buy a plastic necklace, and spend the rest for a cotton skirt, a piece of meat and condiments for her sauces. Men whose wives do not bring many goods to market must usually give them about 100 francs to spend on the various products the family needs. There are no official restrictions on the kinds of goods which may or may not be sold in the Mossi markets. In pre-European times slaves and eunuchs were the common stock-in-trade of the major markets and of some of the smaller ones as well. The only active supervision that existed and still exists concerns the butchering of meat: Every person who sells meat in the market must exhibit the skin of the butchered animal in a public place so that there will be no question as to the ownership of the animal. If the meat in question is the remains of a cow killed and half-eaten by a lion, then the village or district chief must be notified before the meat enters the market. The person in charge of this task used to be, and often still is, a man called the Kos Naba, a kind of sales chief. He also formerly doubled as a tax collector for the rulers and chiefs. Another official, the Raga Naba, where he still exists, is more concerned with protecting the lives and property of the people who trade at the markets, but he also supervises the sale of some commodities there and formerly also collected taxes for his superior.

In pre-European times, every important Mossi prince and district chief had the counterpart of a Kos Naba and Raga Naba, to collect taxes in their markets.

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443 shoulder; but when he arrives in the market, he calmly places his
651 weapon on top of one of the sheds before he makes his rounds. The
626 women do not carry any weapons to market except their "words" but
411 even these are not often used because of the desire to avoid hostility—
[578] which the Mossi do not like to have disrupt one of their major institutions.

443 The rural market is the center of Mossi social life, and friends
571 as well as enemies meet within its confines. What Mangin wrote some forty years ago is still true: "Every self-respecting Mossi—man or woman, child or elder—must go to market at least once in a while, were it only to look . . . and to be looked at, if he can put on some
[79] handsome clothes" (Mangin 1921 : 53). Except for the Moslems who
[184] are now experimenting with a form of Purdah, there are few persons who do not go to market. The absence of someone from the market for more than two consecutive occasions is a sure sign of illness, travel, or family crisis. As one man said to me, "I must go to market, and when I get there I look for three persons: my girl friend, my debtor and my enemy. If I do now know whether any of them are at the market I am ill at ease. And when I go to the market and do not see them all, the market is not good."

443 The lively character of the Mossi market will be discussed later,
571 but throughout this kaleidoscope of activities certain consistencies
576 can be discerned. For example, one notices many different kinds of greetings and salutations in the market place, but each one of them correctly indicates the exact relation or relationship between the persons involved. Young girls on passing each other on one of their innumerable circuits of the market bend their knees slightly and place both of their cupped hands on their own breasts. Only then will they stop and exchange news. At the end of the conversation they repeat the same greeting and continue their rounds. Both girls and women greet casual male acquaintances in the same way, but
[562] invariably kneel if the male stops and talks to them. Women some-
[602] time kneel when speaking to each other, but always do so when addressing any male relative of a respected category, who may then send them on errands such as buying tobacco from the vendors. A man who meets a female benefactor, such as a woman who has given medi-
[562] cine to one of his children, invariably kneels down before her. She may do the same thing out of respect for his male status. However,
[604] when a man meets either his mother-in-law or his father's sister, he is the one to kneel down in order to greet her. Two men who are equals normally shake hands, but if not, the junior in status or in age kneels down before his elder or superior. Sometimes a high status man will prevent his greeter from kneeling by raising him. When

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greeting a lower status benefactor, a man will get down and greet him from a kneeling position. It is because of this elaborate system of greeting, with the many opportunities thus provided for one person to slight another, that many important persons never go to the market. As a rule, the failure of any one person to give the required greeting to another when they meet in the market place is always an indication of strained relations between them.

The persons from whom an individual may buy goods, and the kinds of goods which may be purchased by one individual from another, are governed by convention and social relationships. A person may not buy anything from a relative except European goods. A man cannot buy any but cooked food in the market place, and often he asks a female relative or a passing female to buy it for him. To do the contrary is held to be unmanly and indicative of a bad character. A woman will not buy cotton cloth but will send a man to buy it for her. She would hate to have people believe that she has no male relative to weave it for her, or what is more likely, that she is too lazy to spin the cotton thread which would then be woven for her. A woman may purchase any type of commodity from other women, but she must be careful not to patronize men who are known to be libertines or with whom she is suspected of having an affair. She must also be careful about running errands for men, since people know that men often use this device to establish amorous relationships with women. Men also use this device to give presents, or to arrange secret meetings with them. If any man sees a female relative involved in any of these misadventures, he chases her away and more than likely curses the man, if he does not fight him. In any event, he warns the man to leave the woman alone.

The market is one of the few places where men and women can initiate relationships not sanctioned by their relatives. Under normal conditions marriages are arranged between unrelated individuals through the lineage members who establish "friendly" relationships. Two friends might ask their lineage heads for women to exchange as wives or the "friend" who has received more gifts from the other will give over a wife. Because the older men most often have goods and women at their disposal, they are usually the ones who receive wives. The result is that most young men have no wives, and until they inherit wives from lineage members, are continually seeking to establish intimate relations with women whom they meet on the market place. The technique which a young man employes to gain the favors of a woman he sees at market is highly stereotyped. First of all, he must ascertain that the woman in question is not a member of his maximal lineage or married to a member of his own lineage. A responsible

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837 man even refrains from making overtures to a woman whose husband's female relatives may be married to a member of his own [689] lineage. He fears that a wronged husband may have the wives of his [613] lineage brothers recalled, thus causing dissension within and between the two lineages. If none of these complications are present, a man seeks out a person who knows the woman and sends a message de- [431] claring his intentions. If the response is favorable, the man then buys four large kola nuts (four being the number for a woman), wraps [801] them together with 44 francs, and send them to his lady. This procedure may be followed on subsequent market days without the two parties ever coming into direct contact with each other. Finally, however, a rendezvous is arranged, and on the pretense of leaving the market to visit a relative for several days, the woman goes instead to her lover's village.

837 These casual affairs started at the market sometimes become quite 586 serious, and if for any reason they are sanctioned by the relatives of either the man or the woman, they often lead to the breakup of a [443] marriage. And since the market is the place where disputants of any [570] sort most likely come into contact, it is here that fights over "stolen" wives break out.

837 This pattern of extramarial relationships centering around the 443 market place is so common among the Mossi that the younger men, and even some of the older ones, are disappointed with the "market" when their mistresses do not appear. Mossi men who sit under the shelters around the market place can usually give an inquirer not only the name of a woman, the name and village of her husband and father, but also the name and village of her paramour. Characteristically enough, they are always "ignorant" of the escapades of their own female relatives or of the wives of their lineage members. The only 593 time when men act as though their relatives might be involved in 443 extramarital affairs is when for some purpose or another a man has to recall a wife or daughter who has gone to visit a relative in another village or district. Regardless of how pressing the problem may be, a man will seldom go directly to his father-in-law's house to recall the woman. He goes to the market nearest to his in-laws' village, and seeks his wife there. If he does not find her or any of her relatives, he goes to the part of the market in which people from her village sell their products and sends a message to her family that he will come for her the next day, or that he would like her to come home.

443 A market place is also one of the best places to look for news of a 203 runaway wife, or of any stranger in an area. The Mossi say that women have footprints like an elephant in that they can be found quite easily, but that the footprints are always clearest in the market.

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market and set up their small tables to display all types of goods from trinkets to single lumps of sugar. And the more numerous young men, who have no goods but have money in their pockets, go to the leaf-covered sheds, place their weapons on top of them, and take seats from which to view the passing parade. Imperceptibly, the hum in the market increases as people find their places and greet one another with *Ne Raga,* the market greeting, until by 11:30 A.M. the whole market reverberates with sounds of drumming, cries of vendors, and the shrill voice of water hawkers and juvenile vendors. Now the market is in full swing.

From midday until about 3:30 P.M., the Mossi market is a sea of humanity—talking, laughing, arranging rendezvous, quarreling, selling, buying, parading, and (where youngsters are concerned) often crying for want of money to buy a desired object. The return of migrants lends additional color and excitement to the market as these young people walk about in their new clothes, encouraging the drummers to sing louder praises, the maidens to feel jealous of the clothes of the migrants' female relatives, the former migrants to reminisce about the days when they too had bright new clothes, and the young boys to dream of going off one day to obtain the things they need.

Men, noting that their female relatives are spending too much time looking over the wares of a vendor of European products or of the kola-nut seller, wander over ostensibly to help in the purchase but really to prevent love affairs. The failure to observe such a precaution may be the cause of the shouting a man hears in the distance, and off he hurries to see whether a lineage brother or a friend may need his aid. He may either get into the battle himself, or aid the Raga Naba and the other elders to chase the battlers out of the market place, or to take them to the chief. This may indeed restore some peace and good fellowship to the market.

Elders, now more interested in beer than in other pleasures, pass the heat of the market day under the beer sellers' shed. From time to time one of them may be interrupted by a young man bringing him three kola nuts, one or two of which are immediately broken and given to friends. However, when an oldster, whether a drinking pagan or a Moslem teetotaler, sees or overhears a young man buying four kolas, he may frown or smile in the knowledge that mischief is afoot. Loud-voiced predictions of the consequences of evil-doing may suddenly disturb the merrymakers as American missionaries speaking in perfect More (the language of the Mossi) appear and harangue the market people. Then, as suddenly, the *Americadamba* depart in their large cars, and the curious pagans, amused Catholics or hostile Moslems who had gathered to hear the gospel return to

241 Baningha (large white millet or sorghum).

These two types are grown for food, [247] although the large white millet is especially reserved for horses in well-to-do households.

[262 273] Kazinga (large red millet). As a food the poorer Mossi prefer this to the baningha, but it is more especially grown for the making of dam, millet beer.

[556] Mouï (rice) is sought only by the chiefs, notables, and a few families of dakangba (well-to-do men).

Benga (beans).

Souma (peas of either the small green variety or large white or red ones).

Niouyan (from niouri, "yam"), grown only in certain areas.

Nangouri or sounkama (peanuts).

Pèsça (fabirama) [a tuber plant].

Sinni or sili (sesame), grown only by a few people who like it.

Bito (sorrel), used in preparing the sauce served with sagbo.

Mana (gombo [okra]) is also cultivated.

Aside from its food crops, each family has its own plot for cotton (lamdo) which provides for the clothing needed during the year.

311 178 I am told that fields are much more extensive today than in former times, in spite of the abolition of slavery. This is explained by the fact that many areas supposed to be haunted were formerly left uncultivated. It is said, however, that the Moaga used to grow larger crops since in those days he was closer to the soil.

[248] At the present time there is a lack of farm hands. As [857] recently as twenty years ago, the young Moaga followed his parents to the field as soon as he was six or seven years old. He took a liking to the work at a very young age. Before the French [484] occupation, the Moaga rarely left his village because of the dangers on the roads, frequented in those days by bandits (usually descend- [579] ants of naba). People were even afraid to go into the bush alone, for fear of being attacked, captured, and reduced to slavery.

433 178 There was little contact even between adjoining villages. At Ouagadougou, no one ventured from section to section unless he had very good reason and was armed to the teeth. In short, everyone

443 rice, beans, karite butter, roasted peanuts sold in little heaps for one centime, raw peanuts, and all the spices for the sauce. Yarsé or Haoussa girls walk from group to group with small basins full of kola nuts, and chiefs and rich men buy one or two nuts which they usually share with their followers. Foreign traders sit under shelters of foliage or millet stalks and sell a few pearls, salt or copper bars, henna or blue dye, while bald-headed vultures hovering above the butchers point out their location to everyone. The meat on sale consists of a goat or sheep, sometimes a beef found dead in the bush or more rarely one slaughtered especially for the occasion. Some people bring chicks and occasionally a hen. This is about all that is to be found.

443 To these comestibles drink must be added. The women who sell
273 millet beer occupy a whole section of the market, and this section is not the least frequented nor the quietest spot. While butchers may be located by watching the vultures, it is possible to spot the tavern-keepers merely by cocking one's ears. Their presence is revealed by the cries, the beating of drums, the hubbub inevitably connected with a crowd slightly the worse for drink. The Mossi undoubtedly drink a lot of millet beer, but the beverage sold at the marketplace does not easily go to the head. The beer that is boiled again (tēsé /sic/) is far more dangerous with its rather high percentage of alcohol, and hydromel (bésé) is even more so. The latter is made of honey and millet flour boiled in water, to which barm is added to induce fermentation. These two beverages are truly potent, especially when drunk
[579] alternately. This is why brawls occur rather frequently, and sometimes real battles in which people are wounded. These are drunkards' quarrels. Men are indeed the same everywhere, and how many fairs without a drunk or two are to be found in our own country? It must be said, however, that more intoxicated natives are to be met with in Mossi country than in France.

443 The market begins at about ten o'clock and usually closes at two; the important ones open around noon and last until nightfall. When we discuss the industries, we shall mention the other products which are sold there.

283 Weaving is the most widespread industry, the one that all men may
[286] practice and all do practice to some extent. The cotton is ginned,
462 and the thread prepared by the women. Delafosse, in his work on the Siéna, has described the process accurately: "When the cotton has been separated from the husk, the seeds are removed with an iron rod

766 The death of a naba, as we mentioned earlier, is carefully concealed; the more powerful he was, the more careful the concealment.
● 579 This is done out of fear of the disturbances which would be created by those who aspire to his succession, or by scoundrels who might take advantage of the absence of authority to indulge in every kind of robbery. At the death of the Moro Naba his province was sacked by armed bands, and no one dared to go out unarmed. On the day following the death of Moro Naba Sigri, we had to fetch millet from a village located a few kilometers from Ouagadougou. All the bearers were armed with bows, arrows, and spears. They made an interesting picture in the moonlight.

766 In spite of all their amulets and all their sacrifices, nabas die just like their subjects, and when this happens, his relatives hastily dig a pit in the entrance hut of the soukala and lay the corpse there without any ceremonies. Those wishing to see the naba will be told that he is unwell. The naba of Koupéla is especially favored in this respect. One of the huts in his soukala, standing near the entrance, is set aside for his burial. A pit has been dug within the hut, and every /72/ day the caretaker comes to pour dolo into the hole. This caretaker must not have a wife, and if he happens to have one before his appointment to this post, the naba takes her for himself. On the other hand, the caretaker eats the same food as the naba and drinks the same millet beer. Needless to say, this job is not in great demand. The
[761] naba may not enter the hut, and when the roof is in need of repair, the drummers are sent for, and the naba must flee; woe to him if he should hear the sound of the drums, for he would die within the year. When the naba of Koupéla dies, his hands and feet are immediately pierced with big thorns so that he may not return; should he venture to seize one of his people after his death, the thorns would cause him such pain that he would immediately let go of his prey. The corpse is tossed into the pit to fall as it may. The Mossi, full of respect for their chiefs when they are alive, make up for it when they are dead.

Young unmarried men or girls are buried with a previously deceased old woman of the family, so that someone will take care of them in the other life. Their death is regarded as a true misfortune and mourned accordingly. There are no dances or ceremonies. The father, mother, and younger siblings shave their heads on the second or third day after the burial.

[775] A small child is buried by the path. He will soon return in the person of the first child borne by his mother after his death.

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died while he was using it, the owner could not press any claims. However, the borrower was obliged to sell the animal's flesh and give the money to the owner along with the animal's skin as proof of its death. Under no circumstances would a district chief absolve a man from paying the market value of an animal if he failed to return the skin. Such failure would brand him as a thief and involve an additional fine.

The Mossi considered theft a major crime. A thief could be killed with impunity if he was caught in the act and in the presence of several witnesses. If these conditions were not met but the man killed was known to have been a thief, the killer was fined several cows. But if he was known to have been a man of good character, the killer ran the risk of being executed. In this way, the Mossi tried to prevent any abuse of an accepted practice. The theft of grain and other foodstuffs was considered especially reprehensible, because it was held to indicate that the thief was so depraved that he would not even grow his own food. During the rule of Naba Kaglere of Nobere district (1888–1906), a man called Yahiya left his own village of Donse and went to a village called Quitenga to steal sweet potatoes. The people of that village caught him in the act and shot him with a poisoned arrow as he made his escape. Yahiya died without revealing the source of his wound, and his babissi, suspecting foul play, asked Kaglere to investigate. When the Quitenga people learned of the investigation, they went forward voluntarily and reported the circumstances under which they had wounded Yahiya. Kaglere absolved them of all guilt and told the Donse people that Yahiya had deserved to die, not only because he had stolen food (which he might have received if he had asked for it), but because sweet potatoes were the easiest vegetable to cultivate.

A thief who was too clever to be caught in the act but who was apprehended afterwards was treated quite harshly by the Mossi court. Here, the penalty of double indemnity was often applied. A man who was brought to court for stealing a chicken or guinea hen was fined a goat or a sheep. Hence the Mossi proverb "Zou noaga ronda bouga"—"He who steals a chicken repays a goat." The thief who stole one cow had to return several. If a thief could not pay the fine, he was placed in stocks until his relatives paid for him. If they refused to do so, the chief's retainers seized their property, sold it, and made restitution. This often compelled the family of a recidivous thief to make him commit suicide. If the family would not resort to this, the district chief had the man seized and clubbed to death.[7] Sometimes the chief sent recidivists to the Mogho Naba, who sent them to a village called Teemetenga to be made into eunuchs.[8]

The Mossi seem to have made a distinction between theft and pillage—

a practice whereby nobles deprived commoners of their property. Those 685
nobles who lived among commoners quite often confiscated their neigh- 579
bors' property. But this was not regarded as theft and was not punishable 565
as such, although a rapacious nobleman could be sanctioned for terrorizing and "spoiling" a village. If a nobleman was caught performing an act that *was* considered theft, or if he was accused and found guilty of theft, he was severely punished. During Kaglere's reign, the people of a small village 686
suffered a series of livestock thefts. One day, while the friends of a village 685
chief were sitting with him, a dog came out of the chief's compound 622
dragging an animal skin. The men recognized the skin as that described for a stolen goat, and decided to investigate. In the chief's courtyard they discovered the hole from which the dog had unearthed the skin. They also found the skins of several other stolen animals. The villagers took the [692]
village chief to the district chief, who found him guilty and exiled him [634]
from the region. In passing judgment, the district chief told him that he had been elected "to care for the village," but that he had betrayed his trust by robbing his own people.

According to Mossi law, willful homicide or murder was punishable by 682
execution. The Mossi did not use wergild or "blood money," but insisted on the *lex talionis,* which they interpreted as "a life for a life." They did not believe that money or any other valuables could compensate for the life of a man, nor would they allow a slave to be executed in place of the murderer. They believed that only by executing the murderer himself could they prevent his victim's relatives from resorting to vengeance and thus "spoiling" the district or village.

A man who grievously wounded another was apprehended, bound, and taken to the village chief and subsequently to the district chief. Here he was [696]
kept in stocks in the serfs' quarter without being tried until his victim either died or recovered. If his victim recovered and the judge found that the wound had been inflicted accidentally, the defendant was fined or had his goods confiscated, but he was released. If the judge found that the victim had been wounded in a fair fight, the prisoner was usually censured and dismissed. The chief often warned the wounded man that he ought to have lived up to the Mossi axiom that a grown man is always able to protect himself. If, however, the trial revealed that the prisoner had ambushed his victim with the intent to kill, he either was fined several cows or had his entire property confiscated. District chiefs are known to have executed [634]
the perpetrators of cowardly ambushes even though their victims recovered. [696]

If a man died at the hands of another, an inquest was held immediately. If the killing had been accidental or committed in self-defense, or if it was

634 district chief's wrath. Thus, there was some method in the collection of this
651 tribute and certain expectations had to be met, even though many of the
[622] contributors may have felt that their gifts were voluntary.

In direct contrast, Dim Delobson, himself a chief, states that Mossi chiefs demanded a stipulated amount from their villagers. He adds, however, that the tribute "varied in amount according to the resources of the contributors," and that the district chief set the "amount of cowries and grain due from each village in accordance with the number of its inhabitants."[24] According to him, the rate of assessment was usually 100 cowries for a married man and 50 for an adult bachelor (apparently, this difference was an acknowledgment of the woman's contribution to her husband's wealth). In addition, each adult male was assessed 10 baskets of millet of about 100 pounds each. Dim Delobson adds that to these exactions the district chief added his own contributions to the Mogho Naba, usually in the form of cattle.

[114] It seems that Dim Delobson rationalized and regularized a rather informal system of contributions. The present-day Mossi declare that soil differences in the villages and variations in rainfall prevented a district chief from demanding a set tribute, because no one could tell whether a crop would be good or bad. Only a ruler's informers could tell him how much he should receive each year, and the chief based his exactions on this report. Several of my respondents agreed with Dim Delobson that the district chief provided mostly cattle for the annual tribute to the Mogho Naba, and that the village people furnished cowries, small animals, and grain.

634 A district chief was seldom wealthy, because he always had to use his
652 revenue to fulfill unexpected obligations toward his subjects, his superiors
574 in the political hierarchy, and his household. He had to be generous to his subjects, providing millet water, millet beer, and the more expensive imported kola nuts for those who visited and conferred with him daily. He was expected to provide food and shelter for the countless strangers who settled in his district, until they could provide for themselves. He also lodged and fed the messengers who brought him orders from the capital, and gave them gifts to take back to the provincial ministers. And he had to provide goods for the many members of his family who depended upon him. Finally, in the event of crop failure or famine in any of his villages, he had to provide grain from his granaries to feed the hungry. "How could he do otherwise? Was he not a 'father' to his people?"

634 The expectation that the district chief should provide hospitality to his
574 subjects was so strong that those chiefs or princes who were deprived of
579 an income for any reason often resorted to banditry to fulfil their obliga-
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tions. Binger, who found Boukary Koutou (the future Mogho Naba Wobogo) living in exile for having led a rebellion against his brother, Mogho Naba Sanum, tells us: 574 579 434

> Boukary has no resources, and does not even have the advantage of receiving periodic tribute from several large villages. In order to subsist and to maintain a certain status, he is compelled to live by pillage and even by brigandage. From time to time, his horsemen make incursions into the outskirts of some Gurunsi or Kipirsi village, and carry off by surprise the inhabitants whom they find working the fields or looking for wood. His people also hide and lie in wait along the roads to capture any persons who may pass within their range. This type of behavior has given Boukary Naba a bad reputation. However, the people who understand his position forgive him, knowing the situation in which his brother has placed him. And, in spite of all this, he has numerous partisans, and many others who would be happy to see him gain power.[55]

Those district chiefs or princes who wished to retain their power legitimately were forced to be generous or run the risk of losing the allegiance and good will of their villagers, who were their ultimate supporters. 634 574

It is very difficult to generalize about the amount of revenue collected by a village chief. He did not receive any revenue from the land used by his villagers. He treated the weogho in his village in the same manner as the district chief. If some families grew too large and wanted to establish permanent residence in the village bush, they asked the chief for permission to settle there. However, many village chiefs had special areas of waste for their own use. They had usually received them as gifts from some district chief, and therefore had the right to collect tribute on any crops, firewood, or fish obtained from these lands. 651 622 634 [361] [431]

The average village chief's main source of revenue was derived from the agricultural and other labor of his wives and relatives. A village chief received a number of wives from his subjects and from aliens living in his village. These women helped cultivate his fields. If their labor was insufficient he called a sosogha, to which he often invited his wives' relatives. Some chiefs also had serfs and slaves who helped cultivate their land and kept their cattle as well. [464] [566] [567]

The village chief did not have the power to tax his subjects. Instead, he functioned as a channel through which commodities and services passed up the hierarchy and on to Ouagadougou. Many villagers voluntarily helped the chief to repair his huts and compound walls and to cut thatch for his roofs. Many gave him baskets of grain and other vegetable products after the harvest. They also visited him and gave him presents during the annual rites to his ancestors. In contrast to higher chiefs, however, the village head [476] [431] [692]

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[Post World War II Period]

Mossi chiefs of being a modernist, was elected as the first Vice-President of the new government. Not only was the Mogho Naba deprived of the opportunity to become the African head of the Upper Volta, but such stalwart supporters of the chiefs as Conombo and Bouda were left out of the government. Thus, after twelve years of opposition to Houphouët-Boigny, Mogho Naba Sagha and his chiefs were finally defeated. Their defeat was made even more ignominious by the elevation of a non-Mossi commoner to a position of dominance over the Mossi chiefs.[57]

Having lost out in the Upper Volta, the Mossi chiefs had no spokesman when the new Vice-Presidents of the Government Councils of the French West African territories and the European Presidents of these territories met at Dakar to discuss the problems of the truncated French West Africa Federation. No one mentioned the problem of the position of the traditional chiefs. As far as the politicians were concerned, the issue of the chief on the inter-territorial level was dead. It had relevance only in those territories where the chiefs retained some influence.

In an effort to consolidate their hold on the Upper Volta, the PDV-RDA members in the PDU met in September 1957 and sought to convert the PDU into a territorial subsection of the RDA. This move was resisted by the supporters of the chiefs within the PDU, especially by Conombo, who as leader of the PSEMA, an important faction within the PDU, had been completely eclipsed by Coulibaly and the PDV. Conombo resigned from the PDU and announced his intention to rebuild the PSEMA with the support of the Mossi chiefs. On November 12, however, before his plans could be put into action, Mogho Naba Sagha II died in Ouagadougou and political activities in the Upper Volta came to a standstill. A period of national mourning was proclaimed, and politicians from all parties gathered to pay their last respects and to eulogize the monarch.

Sagha's death, like that of all Mossi princes, was ascribed to foul means, although it was clear that he had succumbed to uremia. The people reacted to the interregnum by looting, and the shopkeepers in Ouagadougou and surrounding areas were compelled to close their establishments. "The people of Ouagadougou ran to Saba, but the merchants there were quite diligent, and needed no police force to protect them."[58] It was reported that those wives of the deceased ruler who were not at the palace at the time of his death took off the brass anklets denoting their royal status and became free women. If this actually happened, it was an unprecedented occurrence.

When the Mossi traditional electoral college convened to choose a new Mogho Naba, it reportedly considered the candidacy of both Moussa Con-

431 cowries to the head of the family would be rejected. The head of the
583 family would certainly not fail to tell him that in promising a girl he intended to give her as a bride and not to sell her. Should the husband insist, he would simply be driven away."

●581 Marriage, therefore, is not regarded as purchase among the Mossi, contrary to Malinké and Bambara practices, and in this sense it is
586 imbued among them with greater dignity. Unfortunately, this absence of a bride price permits an easy rupture of the marriage ties, while this is not the case among the Bambara and Malinké where the woman is bound more firmly to her duties. The household, therefore, is less securely grounded among the Mossi than among the Mandé, and thus evil results from good.

581 As a rule, the marriage bond is much looser and more fragile among
583 the Voltaic tribes (Bobo, Gourounsi, Mossi, Habbé/Habe/, etc.) than among the Mandé groups (Bambara, Malinké, etc.), and this is related to the lack of a real bride price. Where there is a bride price, the young girl is sold. If she wishes to leave her husband once she is married, however, considering that a bride price of some importance is difficult to refund (since improvident family heads immediately set out to squander it, while more serious people use it right away to buy a girl for some young man of the family), it has become customary to oppose categorically any demands to break the marriage bond. Thus, while betrothal has greater dignity among the Voltaic tribes, marriage itself has more staying power and more seriousness among the Mandé, and the household has greater soundness. /238/

Now to return to the Mossi.

431 Let us note first that the offering of gifts allows for some flexibility.
583 A rich young man will make much more important gifts than a poor
556 man. He will not give a large sum of cowries, but he may give significant amounts of clothing, foodstuffs (salt, etc.), and animals to the head of his fiancée's family or to her mother. On the other hand, a poor man will give a bundle of firewood which he has just gathered in the bush and a chicken, and this payment will be considered sufficient.

431 Although the girl is not sold, her fiancé or his father are required
583 to make the gifts prescribed by custom.

"The failure to make those gifts prescribed by custom," says Vadier, "has serious consequences. Let us examine the various situations which might arise.

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who did live at the palace, only a small minority prepared the ruler's meals and shared his bed. Dim Delobson reports that Mogho Naba Kom II (1905–42) had thirty-seven wives. His son, Mogho Naba Sagha II (1942–57), had twenty.[24] The present Mogho Naba, Kougri, recently married according to Western tradition and is officially monogamous.[25] There seems to be a general trend toward fewer wives among Mossi chiefs.

Mossi rulers never married for the purpose of forming state alliances, and their marriages had no political significance. The Mogho Naba's marriages were exogamous with regard to the royal lineage and to his mother's minimal lineage. Aside from these restrictions, however, the Mogho Naba could marry women from any Mossi lineage or group, including serfs, slaves, and foreign populations. It is said that when Mogho Naba Sanum (1850–90) despaired of having an heir by a Mossi woman, he took a Fulani wife.[26]

The Mogho Naba had no formal wedding ceremony. The task of introducing a new wife to the royal harem fell to the Pughtiema. She and her assistants welcomed the wife in a prescribed fashion. First they shaved all the hair from her body. They then bathed her in warm water to which shea butter and ritual herbs had been added, and during the bath they recited the ruler's genealogy to impress her with her new status.[27] The Pughtiema advised her on the need for proper deportment, and warned her that adultery was punished by death. To close the ceremony, a smith fastened to the girl's wrists and ankles the silver or brass bracelets that identified her as a wife of the Mogho Naba. If the bride was still a child, she was often allowed to return to her father's house until she reached childbearing age. If she was past the age of puberty, her marriage was consummated without further ceremony, and she joined the ranks of the ruler's wives.

The wives who lived in the palace were divided into three groups. The first group included the wives who lived with the Pughtiema in a section of the palace harem called the *zaka sanga* ("large courtyard"). These women were all past childbearing age and no longer received nocturnal visits from the Mogho Naba. They had their own fields in the vicinity of the palace and cultivated them with the aid of the samande-kamba, the pages they had adopted, and their own children. The women of the second group, those of the *zagbilin* ("small courtyard"), were mostly in their thirties or forties and still sexually active. They received occasional visits from the Mogho Naba, but fewer than his younger wives. These women also cultivated their fields with the help of the young men of the court.

The third group of wives, the *dogunba* ("keepers of the household"), was the most important. The dogunba prepared the ruler's meals and satis-

567 The several categories of captives are as follows.

1. The Yemdaogo, all of whom are of foreign origin (Boussanga and Gourounsi) and either bought or captured during a war.

2. The daporé or dapobi (house slaves) who are the decendants of slaves. [88]

3. The bengaré, former slaves of the Peulh, who have abandoned their masters and put themselves under the sole authority of the Mogho Naba.

4. The Kamboiensé.

The Various Types of Slaves

567 563 Daporé ("living behind the house"). (a) The daporé belonging to the Mogho Naba. At Ouagadougou there is a section called Dapoya, and its inhabitants are called Dapobi. They are wrongly considered (even by themselves) to be captives. Of Kibissi origin (we have noted that the Kibissi, the Ninissi, and the Gourounsi were the original inhabitants of the present Mossi area), they came of their own volition to Obri-Bangrenaba (Naba Oubri's chief of the bangré slaves), and he presented them to the emperor. It has been impossible to find out who was reigning when they arrived. The Mogho Naba first installed them at Wavoussé and later behind his house where they acted as guards and also were entrusted with important responsibilities.

These are voluntary captives. They are therefore not yemsé in the usual sense of the word, since they were neither bought nor sold, and the emperor did not mistreat them, although he did not grant them, as foreigners, the same rights as those possessed by his [583] subjects. The dapobi could not marry Mossi girls. They were obliged to marry slaves, and that is perhaps why they are considered slaves themselves. The children of these marriages, called [89] dogyiri ("born in the house") make up the "house slave" class.

567 (b) Daporé of the Kamsaoughin and daporé of the canton chiefs. In addition to the foreign dapobi just mentioned, there are true dapobi who were either captured in battle or bought. The former are slaves of the Mogho Naba and are entrusted to the care of the Kamsaougho Naba, chief eunuch, who is responsible for guarding

567 part of the emperor's harem. The dapobi belonging to the canton chiefs, belonging to the kombemba, are of the same origin. While the Mogho Naba could not sell the dapobi of Kibissi origin, the emperor and the canton chiefs could do as they liked with the true dapobi. They were sold for the most trifling faults and their wives and children were either sent away with them or turned over to other deserving captives.

Slaves of the Crown. (a) The bangaré. These are Peulh captives who have gradually cast off the authority of their masters and who have submitted voluntarily to the authority of the Mogho Naba.

A herd of cattle is called nab'bangaré, and it seems likely that the word bangaré, "herd," to designate this type of slave came from that source. However, the bangaré are not solely former Peulh slaves since a free individual who has committed a serious crime in his [90] native village and fears reprisal comes to join the "herd."

Once presented to the Mogho Naba, they were henceforth considered slaves and, as such, immune from prosecution.

567 The principal bangaré villages, generally known as "independent
62 villages," are: Kalbo (province of Gounga); Manghin, Zaanga (canton of Zorgongo); Zaon'pighin, Payaobtinga (canton of Boudry); Nabasnoghin (canton of Nedogo); Bangar'Nabilin (canton of Zorgo); Gandaogo (canton of Zoungou); Boumintoré, Sidtenga, Mandié, Bougoumbarga, etc.

567 The emperor could supply himself from these "herds" when-
68 ever the need arose. Any bangaré who had committed serious crimes or who had been denounced as dangerous individuals who spread disorder in the villages or committed robbery were castrated and made into eunuchs or sold by order of the emperor.

[582] The bangaré intermarry since no free Mossi father would give them a daughter in marriage. This is solely due to the fact that if the emperor decided to sell a bangaré, his family would share the same fate. The father of the wife would not intervene in such a case, because this might be dangerous for him. So it is easily understandable that, under these circumstances, no father would seek such a match.

567 Bangaré chiefs. The chiefs of bangaré villages [91] are ap-
62 pointed by the Mogho Naba. The villages themselves are free of any

[171] Chapter 11

Marriage, Birth, and Death

Marriage

000 In this chapter we shall review all aspects of marriage throughout Mossi country. The customs are the same everywhere, ranging from the marriage of girls reared in the household of the naba to the institution of concubinage. We shall first deal with the most common forms of marriage, then discuss the matter of bride price, and finally conclude with a discussion of the social status of the Moaga woman.

582 Girls are married between the ages of seventeen and nineteen. With certain rare exceptions, a girl of sixteen or eighteen is never sent to her husband. Such an age is considered very unfavorable [843] for child-bearing, and it is even thought that children whose mothers are too young will not survive.

Young men marry between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five. [172]

562 584 Marriage of a girl reared in the household of a naba. Girls born of the marriage of a woman given to a former servitor by either province or canton chiefs became by right the property of the latter. These girls are taken from their parents when they are old enough to do some work and are entrusted by the naba to his wives. They are henceforth regarded as betrothed to the naba and are obliged to submit to all of the conditions of servitude which are imposed on the other wives.

When they reach marriageable age, they may be given, without either their own or their parents' consent, to freed servitors or to any individual who may have rendered some service to the naba.

This is the first type of forced marriage.

Marriage of a girl given by her parents. Since the girl is regarded as simply a "thing," a being without volition, she may be promised at birth. Very often gratitude for hospitality or the existence of an old debt is sufficient reason for promising a daughter.

583 to the sort of concubinage that "free marriage" is, as practiced in Mossi country.

The Situation of the Betrothed Couple during the Engagement

584 Generally speaking, the fiancé is supposed to avoid his betrothed before marriage. They treat each other with a kind of shy reserve.

Aside from the gifts made to the village elders and some cowries given to the future in-laws at the time of his first visit, no further demands are made on the fiancé.

584 684 The young man is formally forbidden to carry on an intrigue with a woman in the girl's village. If he does so, not only may the engagement be broken, but the lover may never again set foot in the village on paid of death.

Breaking the Engagement

584 When an engagement is broken, the gifts received need not be returned. On the other hand, the death of the girl is not regarded as breaking the engagement; the family must, sooner or later, offer another daughter to the young man to replace the girl who died.

An engagement may be broken [179] automatically in case of adultery, discussed below, or in the event of a quarrel between the two families.

Marriage Between First Cousins

582 Marriage between first cousins is not allowed. There can be no valid union between the children of a brother and sister, between a man and the daughter of either his father's or his mother's brother.

588 582 751 However, it sometimes happens -- inadvertently -- that a girl who has been given in marriage in a very distant village may find that her husband is a descendant of a great-grandparent (material or paternal) in the same family as her own. Had this been known, the marriage would not have taken place. Ordinarily, distant relationship is not discovered until long after the marriage, after complicated genealogical research. In that case, one of the pair, usually the wife,

588 582 751 wears a bracelet made of copper and iron intertwined, kalembanga, which is believed to protect the wearer against any disaster due to the technically illegal marriage. The kalembanga is also believed to protect the children born of the union from sudden death.

Polygyny

595 Polygyny is the rule throughout Mossi country. It is true that the number of wives varies with the resources and position of the individual. Mere heads of compounds who are somewhat well off may have [180] from five to eight wives and numerous fiancées. The [584] latter are usually reserved for the dakompa (older sons and younger brothers of the head of the family), assuming that these men will in turn render real service and be completely devoted to the head of the household.

There are many reasons for the practice of polygyny, but the main one is procreation. The under-nourished natives must rely on [853 834] the mother's milk to feed their babies and must therefore wait two or even three years before resuming sexual relations with a wife who is a nursing mother. Therefore, they prefer to have several wives.

Consummation

585 When the young girl is taken to her husband, she is entrusted to a woman whom she will henceforth treat as "mother."

A few days after the departure of the cortege, whose composition we shall describe presently, the man claims his fiancée. She is taken at night to the nuptial hut, which has no special features, and no one is present at the consummation of the marriage. In this respect the Mossi differ from the Bambara, who have a griot or an old woman accompany the couple to help the young man, if necessary, overcome the girl's resistance.

It goes without saying that if the girl is found to be a virgin, the [181] husband is overjoyed. If she is not a virgin, the love which he may have felt for her before possessing her is much diminished. The man shows the girl his anger, certain that she will at least tell her mother about it.

582 Marriage is exogamous, that is, relatives do not marry if their
564 kinship is known. There are no sharply defined caste lines. The Mossi marry Yarsé Malinké, Bousanse, and Gourounsi, but cannot marry Peul nor Haoussa. A Mossi who does not belong to a caste may choose his wife among Mossi who do belong to one. The latter do not intermarry freely; iron workers cannot marry from among the drummers.

584 But to go back to our story. The girl has grown. The suitor has already made numerous gifts. In short, the time has come to proceed with the wedding. The girl's father /31/ summons the betrothed and tells him: "Come and see me on such-and-such a day with a chicken." The suitor joyfully returns to his village and tells the elders that he was told to bring a chicken. On the day set, the suitor takes the bird to the girl's family, accompanied by his friends. He hands over the chicken, and everyone goes to the home of the head of the family, or, in his absence, to a village elder. The father states before all present that he wishes to give his daughter to So-and-So. Congratulations are exchanged, and everyone goes home. Now the festivities must be arranged, the relatives and friends must be notified, and the millet beer must be brewed. Meanwhile, the relatives and friends who have heard the good news come to greet the bridegroom and bring him fifty or a hundred cowries to help him meet the expenses of the festivities.

When everything is ready, the bridegroom takes 500 cowries and a rooster to the girl's father and 500 cowries to the elder in whose household the bride shall live until her wedding day. The girl's relatives have prepared dinner, while the bridegroom provides the
[302] drink. A relative of the groom shaves the bride's forehead in a circle, and she retires to the inner courtyard where her father's wives wash her thoroughly and tie a cotton cord around her waist. She dons a white garment and goes to offer a gourd of beer to her betrothed who has remained outside with his friends. Everyone thanks the girl's parents and then they all leave. On the day after next, the groom
[431] sends his friends to greet the family of his betrothed with a basket of millet flour, four kalro pellets, and salt, which are all distributed among the village people. These festivities, with their attendant ceremonies, come closest to a formal betrothal.

585 The girl, however, remains with the head of the family or with the elder who takes his place! When all these preliminary ceremonies are over, the groom sends daily for his bride. Once the trousseau has

533 their praises and beating fiercely on their drums in the hope of receiving a few cowries, kola nuts, or at least some beer.

326 The smiths (saba), by which is meant those who work with iron,
306 extract the metal from the ore and make it into hoes and hatchets. They sometimes work with wood, as in other parts of the Sudan, but usually this industry is carried out by members of another guild. The jewellers make bracelets, file teeth, repair worn hoes, etc. They are not smiths, properly speaking, and anyone may exercise their trade.

767 The undertakers (lada) offer gifts to the spirits of the deceased on the day of death or its anniversary (kouré). They also lay the corpse in the grave, and if death was due to illness, it is impossible to proceed with the burial without them. But anyone may dig the grave and carry the corpse. We shall discuss the undertakers again when funerals are described.

Chapter 2. The Family

596 The structure of the Roman family and the power granted to the paterfamilias, its very foundation, have been greatly and justly admired. Something like the paterfamilias is to be found among the Mossi. Would that we also found the Roman matron! As we have seen above, every Mossi is subject to the Moro Naba, a province chief, a canton chief, and a village chief. He is also subject in a more immediate sense to the head of his family, and he can do nothing without his consent. If he wishes to marry, he consults the family head, in whose household his bride will lodge when she arrives in the village. On the other hand, the man who wishes to give his daughter in marriage never does so without consulting his family head, at whose house the girl will stay before she goes to live with her husband.

[551] The family is thus very tightly organized among the Mossi. Each family has a name which is seldom used; if one of its members was ever naba, the name derives from that of the first naba. Members of
● [582 the same family may not intermarry, and usually they all have the
784] same kisgou (prohibition), whether the term designates a totem, a taboo, or something else altogether. The head of the family is its oldest member. Upon his death, the authority is transferred not to his

776 tangandé in every detail either, for only the village may have a tangandé, and there does not seem to be any magic pact unless the sacrifices offered are considered as such a pact, which does not seem justified. The tangandé-animal is never sacrificed, and no special initiation takes place.

774 761 [775] The closest thing to totemism among the Mossi seems to be their concept of the human soul, and yet it is not, properly speaking, a totem in the sense indicated by these authors. Every man has a soul that lives on after death and takes the name of kyma, while during life it is called siga. Shortly before death it takes the name of toullé [197] /85/ in Ouagadougou or toundo in Koupela, but siga, toundo, kyma are one and the same thing, one and the same principle. According to the Mossi, this soul is an animal, invisible of course, a snake, a crocodile, a deer, a hare. The soul is related to this animal, it belongs to the same family, so that to kill a snake or a crocodile in a village where the soul of the inhabitants is a snake or a crocodile is to kill an inhabitant of the village; every individual related to the snake has a snake in the village to represent thim, and he will die when his soul-animal dies.

774 784 Yet, and this runs counter to the definitions of totemism, the individual expects no aid from this animal, never sacrifices to it, and never kills it himself to renew the kinship pact. A person whose soul is a crocodile is forbidden to kill crocodiles in his own village, but he may kill them elsewhere, although he may never eat them, while he may kill the tangandé animal as long as he does so outside the tangandé, and he may eat it at any time. Some people, when they [766] find a dead soul-animal of their family near their village, render it funeral honors, weep, wail, and bury it as one of their own, but they offer it no gifts and hold no koureé. Generally it is merely covered with earth. The most widespread soul-animals are a kind of snake (bosombodro) and the crocodile. Several families may have the same [582] one, and marriage, although exogamic, is not forbidden between members of these families.

774 754 The soul may leave the body and in fact leaves it often, especially during the night. If children had a good time in a certain place, if they enjoyed themselves at someone's house, the soul returns there at night. This is when the worst is to be feared from the sorcerers; they may seize the soul by surprise, and its unfortunate owner will die.

5: Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1959
FA28 Mossi FA28

177 specially trained non-Mossi personnel, the use of irrigation, fertilizer,
241 and the plow are their most important technological innovations. Despite their difficulty in communicating with the European agronomists under whose direction they work, they soon master these agricultural techniques. Patterns of consumption are also altered, rice taking the
[261] place of millet as the staple in their diet. After some initial illness they become accustomed to rice but suspect that it is less nourishing than their traditional diet.

177 Far more difficult than adjusting to either the new technology or the
182 diet is adaptation to the changed social organization. Trying to ease this adjustment but with an imperfect understanding of traditional Mossi institutions, the project administration has tried to re-create their forms in the area of resettlement.

Despite this, the new colonist finds himself isolated among social forces he does not understand. The attempt to reproduce the traditional pattern of residential grouping is meaningless in the absence of the lineage. Separated from his kinsmen and his community, the colonist is confused by social institutions whose resemblance to those he has known in the Yatenga exists only on the level of form. He does not like or understand being housed with strangers as if they were his kinsmen. Equally incomprehensible is an approximation of the familiar political organization which, ignoring the traditional sanctions of chieftainship, has a former earth custodian, whose supernatural role has traditionally precluded the exercise of political authority, as paramount chief.

Despite the efforts of the European administration to reproduce their structural appearance, the institutions of Mossi society are so interrelated that the change in the organization of economic activity has created new needs which make alterations in traditional institutions inevitable. Rather than permitting the colonists to modify their indigenous social organization to fit these new needs, the social structure rigidly imposed by the Europeans has impeded the Mossi in their efforts to adjust their institutions to the changed situation. The delegation of authority to inept administrative appointees thinly disguised as chiefs and to the older, least adaptive members of the settler communities only complicates the problem of adjustment.

Isolated from their kinsmen and the protection of their ancestral spirits, the colonists miss the emotional and social satisfactions of extended family living as well as the security of an established position in the community in which they were born. Adherence to the traditional kinship organization, with its emphasis on obedience to the elders who
[582] have remained behind in the Yatenga, makes marriage at the Niger project almost impossible.

The young men born and raised at the project resent the tradition

664 554 "The wives of the Moro Haba never give birth or raise their children at his own place of residence, but only in one of the eunuch villages. In theory they do not stand above the wives of common natives, but in practice they enjoy high consideration among the Mossi, like all that is connected with the Moro Naba.

"The sons of the sovereign, once weaned, are entrusted to a province or canton chief who is put in charge of their education. [582] At the age of ten they are married and settled in a village, where they live, surrounded by a court, but without necessarily being given a territorial command.

"The prerogatives attached to the title of Moro Naba's son are vast as long as the monarch is alive. They grant the right to steal, to loot, and even to kill with impunity.

"Upon the death of the Moro Naba, his sons become mere nakomsé (sons of chiefs) whose position nevertheless remains quite privileged.

643 644 554 "One of the sons of the deceased sovereign, however, is granted special privileges. At the death of the Moro Naba, the latter's wives elect one of his young sons who adopts his name and, so to speak, perpetuates him. He has no /territorial/ command, but he is surrounded by a court similar to that of the Moro Naba, he enjoys respect almost equal to that paid to the latter, and he is a sacred figure. No one has the right to contradict him or to harm him.

644 554 "As for the Moro Naba's daughters, although in principle they do not stand above ordinary Mossi girls, in practice they are treated with the strictest respect by all natives. Once married, they have almost complete freedom of action vis-à-vis their husband, and they often take advantage of this to lead a most unruly existence.

643 766 "When the Moro Naba's death has been verified, his burial is carried out and followed by the funeral ceremonies, which are held in the same fashion as for a common native, with the sole difference /574/ that they have more brilliance and that the sacrifices are more sizable.

642 672 "For the whole duration of the interregnum, the land falls into a state of complete anarchy. Everyone has the right to kill, loot, and steal as he pleases. Convicts who are serving sentence are fully pardoned and set free.

431 "I. If by negligence, forgetfulness, or because of an absence
583 (journey), the prospective husband does not make the annual gifts, he will be refused the girl on the day when he comes to have her taken to his home, and he will lose all his rights over her.

"Nevertheless, he will regain all his privileges if in one installment he pays to the head of the girl's family and to her mother all the gifts which he ought to have made during the period of his absence or forgetfulness.

"The head of the family cannot refuse this collective gift and thereby oppose the marriage.

"II. The husband has forgotten to make the gifts and does not come to the home of the family head when the young girl has reached puberty.

"A. If he lives in the area, the failure to call on the head of the family at the required time is regarded as a relinquishment of his rights over the girl. The head of the family may then dispose of her again.

"B. The fiancé has been away on a journey for a long time and is still absent when the girl reaches puberty.

"The head of the family has the fiancé's brother called to him. He offers the girl to him as his bride. The brother is not required to accept, and if he does not, the head of the family recovers all his rights over the girl."

582 Celebration of the marriage. Consummation. —"The girl must have reached puberty (15 or 16 years) in order to be taken to her husband's hut. It is even customary to wait six months or a year after she was first in a state of zim (zim means "blood" in Mossi).

As for the husband, it is equally necessary that he must have attained the age of 17 or 18.

585 The formalities of the marriage ceremony are very simple in Yatenga.

When the betrothed girl has reached puberty, the husband calls on the family head to ask for her. The family head can tell him /239/ to wait six months or a year at most, a delay which the fiancé is required to observe, but usually the head of the family replies that his
[431 future wife may be fetched in a few days. The fiancé then hands him
273] a bag and two goatskins full of millet and withdraws. This grain is used to make dolo which is drunk by the girl's entire family.

585 Each woman living in the same soukala makes a gift of one or two
431 gourds to the girl's mother. The father and the head of the family give her two large baskets. These objects will make up the bride's trousseau.

585 On the appointed day the fiancé sends two men of his family, one of whom is usually his brother, to fetch his bride. These two natives [431] come to the home of the family head with 13 canari /jars/ of dolo. Then the feasting begins.

[782] The father takes his daughter to the hut of the ancestors, cuts the throat of a chicken on the fetish stone so the future marriage will be happy, and discloses to her the name of her husband.

The young fiancée, escorted by two old women of her family and the two emissaries of her fiancé, proceeds to the latter's home.

For four days the young bride will stay in a hut alone with the old women. During this period, the old women give her all the customary advice and show her the course of behavior she must follow to please her future spouse.

The bridegroom comes every day to greet the old women, but during this interview the young girl takes great care to hide her face from him.

On the third day, in the evening, the husband has a sheep and goat slaughtered. He chooses a leg of mutton which he puts aside with the [252] animal's skin, and he has a large quantity of sarabou /millet mush/ cooked along with the remaining meat. He takes the whole thing to the old women. They distribute the sarabou among all the members of the family and carefully put aside the leg of mutton and the skin which they will take on the following day to the girl's mother to show her that her daughter has indeed been delivered to her husband.

Then the husband has his bride brought to his hut where the marriage is consummated.

There is nothing compulsory about this four-day waiting period. It happens frequently that the consummation of the marriage takes place on the day following the young girl's arrival. Occasionally it is delayed for several days when, as sometimes happens, an elderly fiancé gives the bride who was originally intended for him to his son or to some other member of the family.

The marriage is valid from the day of the departure of the old women who brought the girl to her husband's soukala.

The consummation of the marriage is by no means necessary to validate the union. If the husband neglects his new bride for too long, however (a year, for example), she may demand explanations." /240/

582 Impediments to marriage. —"The impediments to marriage," says Vadier, "are as follows.

582 I. Differences of tribe or caste. The Mossi may not contract
326 marriage with blacksmiths. This is absolutely forbidden. However,
564 they may marry among the Foulsé, Samo, Peul, Yarsé, etc."

This calls for several remarks. The blacksmiths of Yatenga are Foulsé and not Mossi. However, it is not a tribal difference which dictates the prohibition under discussion, since the Mossi can marry among the Foulsé as a whole. It is rather a difference in caste. It must be noted, as we said above /not translated/, that the common Foulsé cannot marry blacksmiths either.

[171] Here, as in all of the /French/ Sudan, blacksmiths are both feared and scorned. Basically, they are regarded as fearful sorcerers.

582 II. Kinship. There must be a lapse of 200 years between the time of the betrothed couple and the time when their common ancestor lived. This is likewise an absolute impediment.

III. If a Mossi has relations with a young girl or woman belonging to his fiancée's soukala during the period of his engagement, the marriage cannot take place.

This impediment, however, is not absolute. If the guilty man begs for the forgiveness of the family head and the latter accords it, the union may be effected later."

582 IV. Unnatural practices. The marriage cannot take place: (1) if
839 the betrothed man has been caught in the act of sexual intercourse with a she-ass (a phenomenon none too rare in Yatenga); and (2) if the betrothed girl has relations with a native who had sexual intercourse with a she-ass. These impediments are absolute.

This is why the inhabitants of a Yatenga village (Dénia) who are reputed to have had relations with asses in former times may not marry outside their locality.

582 V. Infirmities. If the fiancé is blind, the marriage may not take
[132] place unless the girl consents to it. No one can constrain her to do so.

VI. Leprosy. The same applies when the fiancé has leprosy.

VII. Impuberty of the betrothed pair. The marriage cannot take place unless both parties are nubile. This is an absolute impediment, but in practice the problem rarely arises.

VIII. Insanity of one of the betrothed."

582 Question of virginity. The girl's virginity is not very important
836 here and, it must be pointed out, far less so than among the Bambara. This is, incidentally, connected with the fact that the marriage bond is less sound and the separation of the spouses easier to obtain. A combination of related facts makes the institution of marriage and

582 the household a more serious and more binding affair among the
836 Bambara than in this particular region. /241/

Vadier says on the subject, "The fact that a young girl has had relations with a native other than her husband prior to marriage is by no means an impediment to the marriage.

"Many betrothed girls have lovers. It even happens quite frequently that their fathers are forced to go in search of them at the homes of the young men with whom they have run away. Actually, this matter is of no concern to the husband. As long as he gets the woman, the rest matters little to him. It is not unusual for a girl to bring a child
[848] which she had by another man into her husband's home. This child eventually returns to its natural father."

582 This picture is painted in rather bleak colors. In reality, fathers
836 and mothers do try, as best they can, to prevent their daughters from
585 taking lovers. They do not like to see them go to the "tom-tom,"
626 but they can scarcely keep them from going, and often the "tom-tom,"
684 like our own country dances, plays havoc with a young girl's virtue. If the girl says nothing, everything goes well. Since among the Mossi there is no exhibition of the skirt cloth following the consummation of the marriage, there is no evidence. Even if the husband knows ahead of time or finds out at the last moment, he says nothing out of shame, to avoid being scorned. When the father leads his daughter to the hut of the ancestors before sending her to her fiancé, however, she often does not dare enter the hut. Having lost her virginity and fearing that she might be killed by the ancestors, she admits her wrongdoing to her father. Sometimes she may have the courage or the effrontery to enter the ancestral hut, but later, if she falls ill in her husband's hut, she will interpret her condition as the ancestors' vengeance for the sort of moral perjury she committed by entering their hut in a state of transgression, and she will confess to her husband what she has done. In both cases the lover is confronted, in the first instance by the father, in the second by the husband, and a goat, two canari of dolo, and a chicken are demanded from him. A sacrifice will be offered to the ancestors with these various items to ask their forgiveness, they will pardon the wife and the lover, and order will be restored.

848 Sometimes, as mentioned earlier, a child is the fruit of a girl's passion. The lover having made reparation and the ancestors being satisfied, the husband will accept the child along with the girl, but

848 as soon as the baby is old enough to leave its mother, the husband, not wishing to keep it with him, will return the child to its natural father.

582 171 In short, virginity is not rigidly demanded of the girl, although it is considered better and more respectable than non-virginity. The Mossi are not as demanding on this point as the Bambara, and in this, according to my data, they are like all other Voltaic peoples.

684 Let us note one further detail. If the lover from whom reparation is demanded for the damage caused, that is to say, the payment of the goat, chicken, and two canari of dolo, does not want to give them, the husband would formerly appeal /242/ to the Moro Naba, who forced the lover to pay what he owed and in addition confiscated for himself a part of his goods for his salary as a judge. If the lover owned nothing, his family paid for him. Nowadays, the village or canton chiefs are still approached about such matters, and they force the lover to make the customary payment.

593 Rights and duties of the husband and wife. —The husband owes assistance and help to his wife. He must protect her and come to her aid whenever necessary.

The husband must support his wife. To secure food, he usually belongs to a work group, as we have seen earlier. The work group sustains the husband and wife for seven months out of twelve. The rest of the time, the husband maintains the wife with the produce of his small fields. The wife also has her own little patches of cultivated land (as big as a handkerchief), but they are not used to procure food for the household unless the husband is completely destitute. Hence, the produce from these little patches of soil usually goes to the wife herself.

In any case, it is the husband and not the group who must provide clothing for his wife. He does this with the earnings from his small fields.

593 586 If the husband should refuse to support his wife, although able to do so, she would take her complaint to the head of her spouse's family. If the husband still refused to support her after the intervention of the family head, the woman would regain her freedom and could return to her family.

593 The husband must see to his ailing or invalid wife's upkeep until her death.

8: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1958
FA28 Mossi FA28

175 schools and 4,000 Moslems in Ouagadougou (seven percent of whom were non-
797 Mossi). By 1944 there were about 240 schools and approximately 25,000
871 Moslems. The last census, 1954, did not record the number of Koranic schools but gave the figure of 60,000 Moslems in the Ouagadougou region.[3] The 4,000 Moslems of Nobéré comprise 42 percent of that district's population. With the exception of one Catholic school master and the Catholic catechist who came to the district during 1956, the population is pagan. It might be relevant to point out that Nobéré has the highest percentage of Moslems in Kombissiri, an administrative unit (a subdivision) which has 152,000 pagans, 23,000 Moslems, 3,000 Catholics, and about 100 Protestants.

797 As noted above, Islam first came into the Nobéré district with Ngado, who
634 replaced a dissident pagan chief, but Ngado's lineal descendants reverted to paganism until a few years ago when the present district chief became a nominal Moslem. The cadet sons of Ngado did not revert to paganism, and today all the noble sublineages of the district are Moslem. We may note here that one of the main aspects of Islamic proselytization in this district, as elsewhere among the Mossi, has been the conversion of persons who do not hold strategic positions vis-à-vis the ancestors. The present chief is no exception to this rule, because he is only a nominal Moslem. His eldest son is the only one in the family who is not a Moslem—a status which is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain in a growing Moslem population. The chief himself became partially converted to Islam in gratitude to a Moslem Hausa trader who cured his illness. He recites the five daily prayers and observes most of the prescriptions of
[769] Islam, but he still drinks European beer, subscribes to many pagan rites and beliefs, and supervises the annual Péléga or sacrifice to the ancestors. This dual allegiance is politically expedient because the chief can function as the head of the Moslem community as well as the traditional head of all the people. He does have occasional difficulty with intolerant Moslems who wish him to become a devout Moslem, and with the traditionalists who claim that today the crops are smaller, the people sicker, and the women barren because of the neglect of the ancestors. However, with the approach of holy days, these differences are resolved in the interest of community harmony.

622 The chiefs of the villages under the overall command of the district chief
797 are mainly pagan, since they are descended from the district chief replaced by
769 Ngado. Yet they command villages inhabited by the noble Moslem sublineages of the ruling house as well as by commoner lineages. The village chief cannot become a Moslem because he too is responsible for sacrifices to the ancestors, without whose help his people would suffer. He does not take an active part in Moslem festivities, but receives the homage due a chief from the Moslems on these and other occasions. However, most village chiefs show an interest in Moslem affairs, and one of them, the chief of Vooko, built a prayer-circle (*misseri*) for Moslems who came to pay homage.

622 The pivotal role which the village chief plays in the exchange of wives be-
797 tween Moslems and pagans has led indirectly to the increase of the Moslem
● 582 population. Before the French conquest he gave the Moslems more wives than

8: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1958
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he received from them. This unequal exchange, plus the nobles' prerogative of seizing the wives of pagans, contributed to the increase of the Moslems. 622 797 582

The conversion of Mossi to Islam is sometimes accompanied by a rupture in the relationships between persons involved in "friendships" with a view of obtaining wives. A great quarrel developed in the district between a pagan chief and a recent convert who refused to give the chief a daughter promised as a wife. The chief became furious and claimed that the Moslem had broken a promise made years ago, but the Moslem claimed that it was against his new religion to give his daughter to a pagan. It is not true that Moslems in the village do not exchange wives with pagans, but the Moslems often try to convert their pagan friends so that the brides will not have to revert to paganism. The chief's difficulty was that he could not become a Moslem because of his ritual and ceremonial relationship with the ancestors. The Moslem men do not have such difficulties with their pagan wives because most women follow their husbands' dictates in religious and other matters. Many Moslem men attempt to prevent their wives from having sacrifices made to the ancestors, but if a woman really wishes such a sacrifice she can easily have it arranged through her pagan relatives. If a woman married to a Moslem refuses to observe Islamic practices, she is liable to divorce and runs the risk of having her children taken away. 572 622 582 797 [562] [593] [586]

Mossi anxiety over children is often instrumental in converting them to Islam. When a woman is barren or her young children die, she consults a soothsayer (*barga*). She is either told that her Tengkougre benefactor was not amply rewarded and recalled the children, or that her "Moslem" children (children who wished to be Moslems) were angry because they were given pagan names. In the latter case she is advised to make a gift to a Moslem and to ask her husband to build a Moslem prayer-circle outside his hut so that when her children "return" (are born again) they will see it. Finally, she is advised to give all her children Moslem names. I could discover no reason why the pagan soothsayers advise these anxious parents to adopt Islam, except that they hope that complicated prescriptions will be more efficacious. Nevertheless, so effective is this technique for gaining converts to Islam that even members of the family of the chief pagan priest are not immune to it. Furthermore, once a woman has a Moslem child, all her other children must be Moslems or they will die. A man whose children are all Moslem has no recourse except to adopt Islam if he wants a funeral, because his Moslem sons may not give him a pagan funeral. 797 842 [787] [551] [764]

Every Mossi, whether Moslem or non-Moslem, wishes a proper funeral, and now that travel has increased the fact of being Moslem or pagan is of great importance. Many young migrants to Ashanti have reported that their dead pagan comrades were unceremoniously disposed of, while the local Christians and Moslems took care of their dead coreligionists. But despite this fact, and the belief of administrators and missionaries, I found no evidence that the seasonal and other migration of Mossi youth to Ghana and the Ivory Coast have contributed very much to the spread of Islam. It is true that some of the thou- 797 167 [764]

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794 efficacy of ancestor veneration and do not "kill chickens" to the ancestors, but
595 they maintain that it is a man's duty to have many wives so that he may have
842 children to succeed him. Furthermore, since Mohammed himself decreed that his followers may keep four wives, provided they treat each with the same degree of kindness, there is no conflict between Islamic tenets and Mossi practice of polygny. The average Moslem has two wives, but even the few men in the district who have more than four wives do not appear overly concerned about transgressing the tenets of their faith. Mossi Moslems have not adopted the [582] paternal parallel cousin marriage so common among other Moslems, and show surprise when told that Islam permits such marriages. However, they have modified their marriage behavior to harmonize with what they consider an Islamic tenet that "a man should not marry the widow of his father." The Moslem Mossi profess to look with horror on these marriages among their pagan brothers, preferring the levirate instead.

794 The Moslems' attitude toward the low status of women in Mossi society has not changed, and in one respect it can even be said that this attitude has
562 been strengthened. Many Moslem wives now cover their faces, and many El Hadjis have attempted to place their wives in purdah by preventing them from going to the market for fear they would come in contact with pagan men. The development of this practice is running counter to the growing emancipation of Mossi women, who have just begun to leave their villages for periodic visits to the larger towns. Nevertheless, the important fact is that the Mecca pilgrims have the opportunity to see Moslem women playing roles which are forbidden or unknown to Mossi women. And while it is true that the Mossi pilgrims would not easily adopt and foster monogamy, their receptivity to new Islamic beliefs and customs might have a liberating effect on their treatment of women. Once institutional and cultural changes have been accepted by the El Hadjis, they are likely to spread quite rapidly throughout the society because men who have visited Mecca are believed to have returned filled with wisdom and understanding.

797 Christianity came to the Mossi on January 24, 1900, shortly after French conquest. As noted above, the first missionaries were well treated, but the Mossi balked at the attempts at conversion. Nevertheless, by 1919 the White Fathers of the Catholic missions had established several centers, among which was the district of Manga where this study was conducted. Manga is considered a Catholic district, but there are only 3,000 Catholics out of a population of 124,000—which also includes 9,200 Moslems and five Protestants. [184] Thus, in contrast to Moslem Nobéré, which has no Catholics or Protestants, Manga, like most districts in Mossi territory, has a Moslem community.

The conversion of the Mossi in Manga to Catholicism follows the classical pattern of missionary proselytization in the country. Monsignor Socquet (1956:62) states that the Mossi always react to attempts at conversion with the statement: " 'We are looking at our chief,' that is to say, 'We will follow our chief in conversion as in all other matters. If he is favorable to it, then we will not go against his will.' " Socquet concludes: "It is thus understandable

8: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1958
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797 administration to have one of their converts, a younger son of the late chief,
555 elected to the district chieftainship over his elder brother. This belief is probably unfounded, since the Moro Naba seems to be electing the literate sons of chiefs to their fathers' positions so that educated chiefs, and not educated commoners, can serve as members of French parliamentary bodies. Unfortunately, the people of Manga do not understand modern political problems, and have accepted the new chief only because of their traditional respect for the chieftainship.

634 The conversion of the Manga chief to Catholicism has not engendered
797 many problems for his pagan subjects. The chief's primary duty—to begin
769 the yearly ceremonial cycle of sacrifices to the ancestors—has been taken over
[602] by his father's brother, who is now considered the ritual head of the chiefly lineage. Nevertheless, to the chief still accrue the gains of this ceremony because his followers pay him homage and bring him gifts on his birthday, which comes at this period. Moslems in the community also pay their respects at this time, and they prefer his Catholic birthday celebration to the bloody sacrifices of chickens to the ancestors. On the other hand, the chief shows little of the common Catholic disapproval of Moslems and sends gifts to their leaders on the Moslem feast days. He also entertains the district Moslems when they come to pay him homage.

797 The Catholic chief does not act as a pivot in the exchange of wives be-
634 tween pagans of his lineage and the other lineages. This task now falls to his
582 father's brothers. Nevertheless, as district chief he is constantly involved with the marital problems involving pagan parents and their Catholic children. The main source of the difficulty is that Catholic girls are encouraged to refuse to join their pagan husbands when so ordered by their parents. The mission not only insists that the girl freely choose her own husband, but encourages her to reject a polygynous union. Catholicism thereby interposes it-
[562] self between the girls and their society, not only impairing the prestige of their fathers and lineages but also giving the girls more freedom than they would ordinarily possess.

The pagans claim that by encouraging girls to choose mates without parental consent, the Catholics are really taking the opportunity to obtain wives for young Catholic men. Paradoxically, there seems to be some truth in this, since Bouniol, a White Father, states:

> A Mossi who is unable to acquire a wife by [traditional] means must either remain unmarried or seduce another man's wife . . . they must choose between celibacy and immorality.
>
> Such a state of affairs creates many problems for the missions, especially as the system is recognized and sanctioned by the colonial authorities. . . . Young native Christians are obviously placed in a very awkward position. Their conversion angers their parents, who refuse to give them a wife; neither will their friends bestow a daughter upon them, because they know that they will not receive one in return, since a Christian may not give a daughter in marriage to a pagan. . . . *Consequently, unless the missionaries help them to find a wife, they must remain unmarried—a very discouraging prospect!* (1920:160 italics mine).

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When a young Catholic receives a wife through the mission, he may visit her father and pay the customary respect by giving him kola nuts and brass coins. The father of a mission girl may accept or reject his son-in-law as he sees fit, but formerly he could not defy the power of the missions. 797 582 634

A pagan youth who wishes to marry one of the mission girls has to discuss the matter with the priests and swear publicly that he will become a Christian. Before 1946 the young man had to fulfill his promise or be intimidated by the chief and the missionaries until he relented or fled the district. Today, however, the priests usually abandon their efforts to obtain the conversion of the young men after three months have passed. In some cases the young men take their wives and move to other districts, and return only after the girls have given up Catholicism. Despite the lure of wives from the mission, not many young men become Christians on this account because the Mossi are still concerned primarily with family relationships and the effect that conversion would have on these relationships. [596]

The church's prohibition of polygyny is by far the most serious bar to the spread of Catholicism. Many men do not adopt Catholicism simply because they fear that monogamous marriages would not produce children. Father Paternot (Considine 1954:103) has cited a study purporting to show that Christian Mossi have more children than the pagans, but the ordinary people of the district would not accept the facts he presented. They cite their personal experience to the contrary. Dim Delobson (1934:136), a Mossi converted to Catholicism, states: 797 595 842

> A certain number of Christians of my acquaintance whose wives did not have children during the first years of marriage had recourse to magical practices in order to get children. These simple people thought that although they had an omnipotent God beside them, they could impudently—after all the good priests will not know about it—ask the little, but also powerful gods to grant them some material favors here on earth. When the gods given children were taken for Holy Baptism, they were given Christian names instead of the names of the earth shrines, and they did not wear magical charms which would have indicated to the priest the real state of affairs. Nevertheless, the children were bathed in water to which magical potions were added, and when the mothers went to visit their parents, sacrifices of chickens were given to the benevolent Tengkougas.

The Mossi's strong desire for children is admittedly one of the main reasons for leaving the Catholic Church so that they can take other spouses in addition to barren ones. The church has now belatedly recognized this problem and, knowing that it cannot prevent men from taking plural wives, allows them to come to church but prohibits them from taking the Mass.

Many cultural factors besides the desire for children make polygyny important for the Mossi, and make conversion detrimental to the functioning of their family system. Because of lineage opposition to their conversions, some converts are forced to establish nuclear households—a practice out of harmony with the normal rhythm of Mossi life. The reason for this disharmony is that Mossi women married to Catholics must work alone instead of with 595 797 182 [594]

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571 604 indirectly from the good will of his ancestral spirits whose benevolence Ego often invokes.

Ambivalence follows from other characteristics of the relationship. Resentment of Ego's depredations of her husband's property and jealous concern for the inheritance rights of her own children appear to be at least partially balanced by a share of the affection her husband shows for Ego. However, joking in this relationship is asymmetrical. The mother's brother's wife takes the more aggressive role, and from the vehemence of her joking, and the [159] structural nature of the relationship, it appears likely that amity lies less heavily in the balance than hostility. The groups to which the two parties belong are equal in status. Their respective positions within them, of course, are not, and this is reflected in the aforementioned asymmetry. Each party is obviously independent of the authority system of the other.

571 607 *Joking Between Siblings-in-Law*

[144] Siblings-in-law who joke are separated by the rule of sib exogamy observed among the Mossi. Reciprocity is basic to the marriage contract that unites their respective kin groups. Several factors tend to create ambivalence in the relationship. Both kin groups—in particular, the extended families of the two marriage partners—profit from the reciprocal tie established between them, but possible failure on the part of either group to reciprocate adequately, [87] particularly with regard to marriage payments, constitutes a persistent source [38] of potential friction. Moreover, the Mossi observe the levirate. Joking between siblings-in-law who are potential spouses, yet are presently constrained by a [137] prohibition against adultery, has frequently been ascribed the function of reducing tension in a situation of conflict. The kin groups of siblings-in-law [144] are always structurally equivalent because groups occupying significantly dif- [58] ferent strata in Mossi society do not intermarry. As members of autonomous descent groups the participants are obviously independent of one another.

571 614 *Joking Between Sibs*

Sibs (or lineages) whose members joke with one another are, of course, also separate groups.[2] They are always united by a strong tradition of reciprocal social and economic aid. Ambivalence apparently stems from the conflict between this tradition of reciprocity and actual competing claims to land. The origin of joking relationships between two descent groups is often ascribed to the alleged fact that, when they first arrived in the village, leaders of both falsely claimed to the chief that he and his kinsmen had arrived first, [423] and thus had a prior right to land, and that the members of the other group were their slaves. Despite their jocular allegations, both groups are in fact structurally equal and independent.

571 561 *Joking Between Age-Sets*

Joking between age-sets within an age-grade varies with the generational

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ship itself and the contract of interlineage co-operation and solidarity which every marriage serves to establish or reinforce.[4]

Although this joking interchange is seen in its full implications when there is an immediate source of dissension between marriage partners, it may also occur in the absence of any specific difficulty. Then it is apparently indulged in simply because it is expected, and for the pleasure which the Mossi, like all people, derive from an occasion to exercise their wit. It is this relatively disinterested joking which has been most frequently described in the literature, and this may account for the failure of many scholars to perceive more fully the important social and psychological functions which joking may fulfill.

Conclusion

This paper has been written as a tentative step toward a reformulation of the various and disparate observations on joking contained in the anthropological literature. I have contended that an analysis of this literature indicates that wherever joking is institutionalized the structural relationship between the participants tends to be characterized by five significantly interrelated structural attributes: separation, reciprocity, ambivalence, equality, and independence. I have also indicated that such joking may serve as an adjustive mechanism by providing for the concurrent maintenance of communication, control, and the culturally harmless catharsis of potentially disruptive emotions.

A variety of forms of institutionalized joking found among the Mossi of Yatenga have been cited to illustrate these points. However, I suggest that the factors which cluster with this reliance on joking as an adjustive mechanism are not unique to the Mossi. Institutionalized joking reported for other parts of Africa appears to be structurally and processually similar.

NOTES

1. A shorter version of this paper was read at the annual meeting of the American Anthropological Association held in San Francisco in November, 1963. It is based on field research conducted among the Mossi from 1954 to 1956 with the assistance of a Ford Foundation Fellowship.

2. Marriage between the members of descent groups united by a joking alliance is regarded by the Mossi as highly desirable, apparently in recognition of the useful role of joking as an adjustive mechanism. Once such a marriage is contracted, however, Ego and his wife must take care that their joking insults are directed only at the younger kinsmen of the other and that the insulting remarks are personal. It would, for example, be acceptable for Ego to call his wife's younger sister a disreputable shrew but dangerous to call her a slave (a term of disrespect used frequently in joking between sibs). To refer to her as a slave would cast unflattering aspersions on her entire kin group, including her mother and father, with whom, in their new status as parents-in-law, Ego may no longer joke.

3. I believe that joking is also institutionalized between the Mossi and the Yarse, a highly acculturated ethnic minority of Mande origin who live throughout Yatenga. There is also joking between the Mossi and the indigenous blacksmith caste. Unfortunately my data on these two instances of joking are inadequate.

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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595 who did live at the palace, only a small minority prepared the ruler's meals
644 and shared his bed. Dim Delobson reports that Mogho Naba Kom II (1905–42) had thirty-seven wives. His son, Mogho Naba Sagha II (1942–
[177] 57), had twenty.[34] The present Mogho Naba, Kougri, recently married
[178] according to Western tradition and is officially monogamous.[35] There seems to be a general trend toward fewer wives among Mossi chiefs.

643 Mossi rulers never married for the purpose of forming state alliances,
581 and their marriages had no political significance. The Mogho Naba's mar-
582 riages were exogamous with regard to the royal lineage and to his mother's minimal lineage. Aside from these restrictions, however, the Mogho Naba could marry women from any Mossi lineage or group, including serfs, slaves, and foreign populations. It is said that when Mogho Naba Sanum (1850–90) despaired of having an heir by a Mossi woman, he took a Fulani wife.[36]

643 The Mogho Naba had no formal wedding ceremony. The task of intro-
585 ducing a new wife to the royal harem fell to the Pughtiema. She and her
[302] assistants welcomed the wife in a prescribed fashion. First they shaved all the hair from her body. They then bathed her in warm water to which shea butter and ritual herbs had been added, and during the bath they recited the ruler's genealogy to impress her with her new status.[37] The Pughtiema advised her on the need for proper deportment, and warned her that
[301] adultery was punished by death. To close the ceremony, a smith fastened to the girl's wrists and ankles the silver or brass bracelets that identified her as a wife of the Mogho Naba. If the bride was still a child, she was often allowed to return to her father's house until she reached childbearing age. If she was past the age of puberty, her marriage was consummated without further ceremony, and she joined the ranks of the ruler's wives.

644 The wives who lived in the palace were divided into three groups. The
595 first group included the wives who lived with the Pughtiema in a section of the palace harem called the *zaka sanga* ("large courtyard"). These women were all past childbearing age and no longer received nocturnal visits from the Mogho Naba. They had their own fields in the vicinity of the palace and cultivated them with the aid of the samande kamba, the pages they had adopted, and their own children. The women of the second group, those of the *zagbilin* ("small courtyard"), were mostly in their thirties or forties and still sexually active. They received occasional visits from the Mogho Naba, but fewer than his younger wives. These women also cultivated their fields with the help of the young men of the court.

The third group of wives, the *dogunba* ("keepers of the household"), was the most important. The dogunba prepared the ruler's meals and satis-

567 them for kola nuts with the Achanti [Ashanti] or for loaves of salt
439 at Timbuktu. Although they were always transported by roundabout routes to prevent them from finding their way back to their homes, still some of them always managed to escape.

492 The naba used the young yemdado as soroné or grooms, and
567 they would often [93] take the young and attractive women (yempoksé) as wives.

641 The sale of free men. Neither the emperor of the Mossi nor
681 his vassals sold their subjects. Individuals who were regarded as dangerous were simply put to death unless they took refuge in a bangaré to avoid being executed, as has been noted above. Some were sent to the emperor to be made into eunuchs.

304 The facial tattoos worn by the Mossi clearly distinguished them
567 from neighboring peoples. However, if by accident or because of need a naba sold a free man and the latter was claimed by his rela-
689 tives, the chief was required to buy back the slave or to indemnify his family. We have described above how a canton chief was exiled by the emperor for having sold free Mossi.

583 Concealed selling of women and children. In the chapter on
562 marriage customs among the Mossi we shall show that a native Moaga did not demand a bride price because he did not want to feel that
567 he was selling his daughter. There is no doubt that this rule has exceptions. Indeed, we shall show that the failure to pay a debt, a bout of drunkenness, or a favor received might suffice to mortgage the future of a daughter, even though at the time she might be a small child and quite unaware of her fate. In any event, there would be no question of her expressing any opinion, since her wishes are never taken into account. During periods of famine -- which have been
[131] occurring almost [94] regularly for some years -- a small basket of millet is enough to make a father promise his daughter. In the same way, we regret to say, a great many girls are promised in exchange for trifling sums at the time the poll tax is paid.

567 Rights of slaves. Since he is regarded as an inferior being, the yemdaogo (slave) has no well-defined rights. He is required to perform all kinds of domestic work and must give unquestioning obedience to his master and the master's family. Besides his essential duties, however, he is permitted to do some farming for himself, practice some trade, or to raise cattle, with the proceeds constituting

584 visits and presents a few small gifts. This state of affairs goes on for one or several years. Finally the head of the family calls together his little council and makes known his intention of giving So-and-So's daughter to X... from such-and-such village. There is seldom a refusal since he has sole authority to give the girls in marriage. The young man is then sent to make the acquaintance of his prospective in-laws. As soon as he is presented, he makes a small gift (usually [175] 100 to 1,000 cowries are given).

If the girl is the oldest daughter, her fiancé is expected to bring a sheep, a hoe, a guinea hen, and some beer.

585 The young man is then told the date on which he may send for his fiancée. He has nothing further to do, except to make some preparations and to wait. When the girl is brought to him, he kills some chickens and a goat if he has one, and he has food prepared for the girl's escort. He must also give cowries to them, the amount depending on his own resources.

In many villages the girls married in this way never leave their husbands for fear of being cursed by their parents and condemned never to see their native villages again.

574 Finally, if the wife gives birth, the husband sends a chicken to
851 the village elder and the wife goes there to visit.

787 Girls who are hostile to a husband. These are girls whom the
584 soothsayers point out as hostile to a husband.

Although these girls are promised at an early age, just like other girls, they must not know that they are engaged, and if their fiancés should by chance come to visit, they are treated like ordinary guests who have just happened by.

●583 When such a girl reaches seventeen, her fiancé arranges with her family to send her to the waterhole, the well, or the nearest market.

[176] The fiancé selects a group of his strongest friends, plies them with beer, and sends them off with instructions to abduct his fiancée on the way. The latter, accompanied by a woman or by other girls, is surrounded unexpectedly and seized by strong arms despite the resistance, often quite vigorous, of her brothers or her companions. She is then taken to the home of her husband.

A few days later some people are designated to take the girl's effects to her husband's home and to receive the traditional gifts.

837 588 548 [586] Free Marriage. The only marriage which can be called free, since it is accepted by both parties, is that of a woman who is unable to endure her first husband and leaves her village with the intention of becoming a prostitute. Divorce is quite rare because the Moaga does not readily agree to it. As she passes through a village, she asks for hospitality, and the news soon spreads that a "free" woman is staying at such-and-such a place. The young men hasten to her and seek to win her favors. Gifts are sent to her, and her hostess is used as go-between. Nine times out of ten, the woman accepts the candidate preferred by her hostess. After some questions concerning his origins and circumstances, one of the young men is accepted as a temporary lover. His comrades come to his aid, and for a few days there is a veritable festival in the village. There is a slight change in the [177] regular fare, since meat is added to the mush; chickens, raised with considerable difficulty, are used for this special treat. This semblance of marriage is thus celebrated. As has been pointed out, however, there has been no divorce, and the deserted husband soon learns the whereabouts of his wife. As soon as he finds out what village she is in -- it may be 100 kilometers away -- he promptly sets out, carrying in a sheepskin enough ground millet for the journey and 500 to 1,000 cowries. He also carries a rooster which, along with the shells, will be offered to the chief of the canton where the lover lives, to whom he will make his claim.

[578] Unions of this sort give rise to three-quarters of the quarrels with which the canton or province chiefs have to deal. A young Moaga who desires peace of mind never regularizes the situation by a so-called marriage even though he may not be able to resist the temptation to harbor the woman for a few days. In any event the affair is easily broken off since sooner or later the woman, eager for change, will want a new lover.

583 Thus, it may be said that although forced marriage has the disadvantage of having a girl marry without her consent, still it also has advantages and a degree of security because the woman, fearing [178] her parents' wrath, rarely leaves her husband. Furthermore, this type of marriage is vastly preferable from the standpoint of peace

583 to the sort of concubinage that "free marriage" is, as practiced in Mossi country.

The Situation of the Betrothed Couple during the Engagement

584 Generally speaking, the fiancé is supposed to avoid his betrothed before marriage. They treat each other with a kind of shy reserve.

Aside from the gifts made to the village elders and some cowries given to the future in-laws at the time of his first visit, no further demands are made on the fiancé.

584 684 The young man is formally forbidden to carry on an intrigue with a woman in the girl's village. If he does so, not only may the engagement be broken, but the lover may never again set foot in the village on paid of death.

Breaking the Engagement

584 When an engagement is broken, the gifts received need not be returned. On the other hand, the death of the girl is not regarded as breaking the engagement; the family must, sooner or later, offer another daughter to the young man to replace the girl who died.

An engagement may be broken [179] automatically in case of adultery, discussed below, or in the event of a quarrel between the two families.

Marriage Between First Cousins

582 Marriage between first cousins is not allowed. There can be no valid union between the children of a brother and sister, between a man and the daughter of either his father's or his mother's brother.

588 582 751 However, it sometimes happens -- inadvertently -- that a girl who has been given in marriage in a very distant village may find that her husband is a descendant of a great-grandparent (material or paternal) in the same family as her own. Had this been known, the marriage would not have taken place. Ordinarily, distant relationship is not discovered until long after the marriage, after complicated genealogical research. In that case, one of the pair, usually the wife,

585 The following morning the new wife returns to the hut of her "mother." She is summoned by her husband several nights in a row before he resumes the practice of receiving each wife in turn.

The Bride Price. The Basket of the Fiancée

583 Bride price. Mossi custom does not require a bride price. The one thousand to several thousand cowries that are required, depending on the man's resources, plus chickens, a sheep and beer, are not a bride price, properly speaking, or "selling a daughter." Nothing is asked which could not be repaid one day without too much difficulty.

585 The fiancée's basket. The basket of the fiancée contains the girl's clothes, some soap, some karite butter, some cowries, gourds, and ladles. The basket is carried by one of the women in the cortege.

The cortege. The fiancée's cortege is usually composed of a young girl, a woman who has borne children, and a boy.

They proceed to the house of the village elder. [182] The relatives of the bridegroom provide food for them for several days. Finally, they are given a farewell dinner consisting of baskets of millet cakes and mutton, goat, or merely some chickens. They are also given cowries.

585 431 In addition to these gifts, the sum of 444 or 1,400 cowries (the "virginity price") is sewn into a sack and sent to the girl's mother. If the bride was given by a chief, he is entitled to from 2,000 to 3,000 cowries if the husband is an ordinary Moaga, 10,000 to 50,000 cowries if the husband himself is a naba. In this last case, the women in the cortege receive skirts, and the boy, a robe.

585 152 Note. While it is true that among many peoples a girl goes to her husband joyfully, it is quite the contrary in Mossi country. There is a real struggle to separate the girl from her parents. Many lose sleep and their appetites. On the day of departure they weep bitterly, and those who do not are insulted by the old women.

584 If the girl absolutely refuses to go to her betrothed, her father
[562] tries to persuade her but does not use force. If the girl persists in her refusal in spite of everything — this is extremely rare — the father returns to the betrothed any money he may have borrowed, but he does not return anything that was given him spontaneously. If the father happens to die after he has pledged his daughter, his heir may not retract the promise and give his sister or niece to another man,
[428] but he will from then on receive the gifts himself. If the betrothed man dies, his heir gets the girl promised to the father, with the condition that he will continue to pay the bride price.

584 Contrary to the situation in European countries, the woman, con-
583 sidered as valuable property, is paid for; it is not she who brings a dowry, but the man who wants her as his wife. If a man has an eye on a friend's daughter, he goes to visit the father even though the girl may still be a babe in arms. He is careful not to state what he has in mind. He comes sometimes with a few cowries, sometimes with a chicken, a piece of salt, perhaps even a sheep. The child's father understands, and when he has some work to be done, a field to be weeded, millet to be threshed, huts to be roofed, he makes it known to the suitor, who hastens to work for the man whose son-in-law he should like to become.

After a time, the father says to the suitor: "You have treated me well. I am pleased with you. I will treat you well." The suitor understands and becomes even more assiduous. He sends his friends; and on every festive occasion he presents the father of his intended with a few chickens. There is no outright promise, no betrothal in the usual sense of the term. Sometimes the father has financial difficulties, pressing debts, or he has seen a fine garment he should like to buy, and he has a request for money conveyed to his friend. The latter knows that he is loaning without return, or rather loaning against the girl. He refuses only if he is actually unable to furnish the sum; for if negotiations were ever to be broken, the child's father would have to return the money advanced, and this would greatly embarrass him and thus prevent him from profiting through the transaction. In any case, it is extremely rare for a promised girl not to be given to the man who has made the first advances and who has been favorably received. A father who should promise his daughter to a man after receiving gifts for some time from another would be held in very poor esteem and forced to return any money he might

584
583 have borrowed. In addition, he would expose himself and the preferred suitor to the vengeance of the rejected one.

583 The bride price is not exorbitant. The total gifts, spread over a period of years, amount to some fifty francs, without counting the work days. Nevertheless, it requires sufficient means to secure at least the necessary cowries. Besides, the child's father prefers to give her to someone who already boasts a certain fame and some wealth, in short, to an elderly man. /30/ This is why children are promised to old dotards, and white-haired men are paired with young girls; while the old men's sons of marriageable age cannot get wives. If the father has the means to pay the bride price, he carefully refrains from helping his son, even if the latter has found a match to his liking.

587 It is true that all the father's wives are inherited by the oldest son, who gives some to his younger brothers; but this occurs only at the
578 old man's death, and this may not happen for a long time. This ex-
593 plains why the oldest son wishes for his father's death, and why the father sends the son away for fear of a premature end. It is only fair to add that some men, with a better understanding of their own interests, marry off their sons as soon as they are old enough.

595 Polygamy exists among the Mossi as in all Black countries. The wealth of a man is gauged by the number of his wives. Women
[556] furnish hands to till the soil, for the wife works in the fields like the husband. Women also furnish children, and if these are daughters, young men will come to offer their services (dakonré) and one day take the girls in marriage; or the father will receive gifts. If the children are boys, they will later aid the father in his work. In these countries where each lives for himself alone, where selfishness reigns supreme, polygamy is easily explained, but it undoubtedly results in a lower birth rate. White-bearded old men cannot have children as numerous and sound as young men in their prime, and the latter, deprived of wives, wear themselves out with their excesses. It is true that those who can afford a dozen wives are few; most have to be content with two, three, or four. Some nabas, nevertheless, own veritable herds of women, and this is certainly a grievous abuse. Their wives are numbered in the hundreds. The greatest moral dis-
[837] order reigns in those harems, where the boys who serve as grooms and pages spend most of their time among their master's wives. This explains the precautions taken by the women's owners and the eunuchs of the Moro Naba, as well as the Poënaba and his sinister duties.

596
326 As we can see, the common patriarchal family is found among those blacksmiths who live in groups.

592 The second Mossi family type is one we had occasion to men-
596 tion here and there in the section on work. Contrary to the first type, which is found only in a special section of the population, this one occurs throughout the Mossi but as a rare /544/ and exceptional case. All the households in the family still live together, but every household works for itself. This is the type we studied among the Nankana and other groups of cultivator-breeders under the name of Nankana type No. 3 /not translated/.

593 We come now to those Mossi family types which are wide-
592 spread rather than exceptional. They correspond to the Nankana type No. 4 (every household lives separately and works separately), or rather they depart from it in the direction of even greater decommunalization. There are three variants, namely, one that corresponds to the pure Nankana type No. 4, and two where decommunalization is more accentuated. Let us describe them in turn.

Here is the first variant:

593 1. The households live separately. As soon as a young man
592 marries, he settles on his own with the help of his family.

596 When a family head gives one of the family's sons a wife, he uses a vacant soukala if there is one available. If there is none, the son builds a new soukala with the help of his father and of the family head.

2. Every household works separately (except for the clearing of family fields), procures its own food, clothing, and subsistence. The married son, however, comes and helps his father a little now and then. During the dry season, for example, he helps him repair the soukala. Or else he offers him small gifts from time to time.

When someone, on marrying, settles separately, the head of the family usually gives him some family field that was once cleared and cultivated and has since lain fallow.

3. Although households work separately, the children of the households are not given in marriage by their father and mother, but by the head of the family. The latter buys wives for the boys,
● [583] but he also gives the daughters in marriage and receives the bride price.

596 with the help of his father and family head (which is by far the
423 most frequent occurrence), /548/ while in such a case it had for-
178 merly been considered family property. Finally, the soukala came to be regarded in every case as personal property and to be transmitted for that reason to the oldest son. This, incidentally, is the same evolution that applied to property in general, as we shall see shortly.

593 Now, here is the third and last variant of the prevailing Mossi family type. Nowadays, this variant is by far the most widespread.

1. Every household lives separately, works separately, and procures its own food and subsistence. The help of neighbors is enlisted to clear the fields.

584 2. Every household gives its own children in marriage. The family head no longer does so.

593 As soon as a man has a son, he chooses a little girl who will go to the boy when he reaches puberty. He visits the girl's relatives from time to time and offers them gifts.

584 When the girl is old enough to be married, he takes 50,000
583 cowries (if he is wealthy), skirt cloths, salt, kola nuts, and gives it
593 all to the relatives. Then, the old women in the daughter's family lead her to the home of the betrothed man's relatives. The father kills a sheep, makes a lot of couscous, buys dolo to celebrate her arrival. Then he offers the girl six or seven baskets containing respectively 1,000, 2,000, 3,000, 4,000, 5,000, 6,000, and 7,000 cowries. The young man himself gives his betrothed four or five skirts. If he is very wealthy, he gives her one or two little girls as slaves.

585 On the evening when the wedding is celebrated, the father asks
[426] one of his neighbors to lend him a hut, and the young married pair are sent there all alone (they will remain there as long as their soukala is not built). On the morrow, the feasting begins. People dance and feast for seven days at the gates of the father's soukala, at least when the girl is a virgin. If she is not, the feasting is curtailed but nevertheless lasts for another three days.

583 When the father is poor, he offers a few kola nuts to the girl's
591 /549/ father (six or ten). He gives the father and mother some firewood he gathered in the bush, straw to make séko /Tr.: mats/ for door, 2,000 cowries, a skirt cloth. He kills a sheep to make

583 couscous, which he offers to the relatives. Then he takes the girl
591 away. He asks a neighbor for a hut to harbor the young couple on their wedding night and over the next few weeks. They stay there for only a month or two, until their soukala is built.

583 The bride price actually varies from region to region among the Mossi. We have just seen it range from 2,000 to 50,000 cowries. Earlier, we saw it set at 25,000. At Kombisiguiri it amounts to a mere 1,000. The young man's father visits the young girl's father with a chicken and 500 cowries; then he comes to see him a second time, again with a chicken and 500 cowries. There is no other bride price. Those who do not have a chicken to offer replace it with a bundle of firewood or a straw séko. In short, a girl here is worth 30 sous (the two chickens being worth 0.50 franc between them, and the 1,000 cowries amounting to one franc).

591 Among rich people the young couple may remain seven, nine, or even twelve months in their neighbors' house. They present the [431] latter with gifts, and during this period of time they proceed to build a soukala, or rather to have one built. The young man's father helps his son in this undertaking.

593 The young husband, now settled on his own, will henceforth
431 work on his own account. He has become in turn the head of a soukala, but if he obtains a lot of millet or other grain he offers
626 gifts to his father. If he becomes wealthy and makes no such gifts, the neighbors will insult him. He always makes gifts, therefore, for fear of being insulted. A son who marries, as a rule, builds his soukala as near as possible to that of his father.

593 Finally, let us add that the father usually buys his son's kitchen utensils when the boy settles on his own.

3. When the head of a family dies, the younger brother inevi-
428 tably takes command of the family, but all the property, whatever
593 its nature, goes to the children of the deceased and more especially to his oldest son. There is no longer any family real estate or movable property, or else nothing is regarded as such any longer.

/550/ The eldest son takes his father's soukala and everything that goes with it, fields, slaves, livestock, father's wives. He shares them, however, with his brothers and even with his sisters.

584 596 daughter; (2) when the father is in extreme penury, he gives his still unpromised daughter to some rich native who, with the customary gifts, will help him in his need, since the gifts of the fiancé go to the man who promised the young girl; (3) the first daughter in a household, [603] whether or not she is the only daughter, must be promised by her maternal grandfather and not by the head of the family."

This constitutes, I believe, a curious vestige of matriarchy which doubtless refers to those very distant times when the Mossi family revolved around the maternal rather than the paternal line.

4. The mother of the young girl. "The girl's mother," says Vadier, "is sometimes consulted. Her husband merely asks her if she is satisfied with the choice he has made in agreement with the head of the family. Her answer, however, is given no weight whatever.

"The fiancé's mother is not even consulted."

Such at least is the theory. In reality, no doubt, the mother of the young girl often has more authority than the theory supposes.

431 583 [171] Gifts.—Bride price is nonexistent in Mossi marriage. This is a very important point which differentiates the Mossi and even, I believe, the Voltaic /237/ tribes in general, from the Mandé groups, such as the Bambara and Malinké, where bride price does exist and is actually quite high (I say quite high, considering the general poverty of the Sudanese). I did not emphasize this sufficiently in my Noir du Soudan in the chapter concerning the Mossi family, pages 548 and 549. I did mention that the price paid to win a Mossi girl of the Ouagadougou region ranged from 1, 500 cowries (1. 50 francs) to 50, 000 cowries (50 francs). In fact, these are gifts rather than bride price.

Although there is no bride price, properly speaking, the gifts have an important role.

"After the promise of marriage," says Vadier, "the future husband must come every year, after the filikienga /a feast/, to bring a few small gifts to the head of the family and to the girl's mother. These consist as a rule of a little millet, salt, a few hundred cowries, a mat, or two or three crudely made séko /coarse matting/.

"As for the father, he receives no gifts, which does not mean that he does not benefit from those received by his wife or by the head of the family.

"Likewise, the girl receives no gifts. Moreover, she may not utilize the commodities or foodstuffs given to her mother.

"The gifts offered during the long betrothal period cannot be of great value. A prospective husband who should bring 5, 000 or 6, 000

431 cowries to the head of the family would be rejected. The head of the
583 family would certainly not fail to tell him that in promising a girl he intended to give her as a bride and not to sell her. Should the husband insist, he would simply be driven away."

581 Marriage, therefore, is not regarded as purchase among the Mossi,
contrary to Malinké and Bambara practices, and in this sense it is
586 imbued among them with greater dignity. Unfortunately, this absence of a bride price permits an easy rupture of the marriage ties, while this is not the case among the Bambara and Malinké where the woman is bound more firmly to her duties. The household, therefore, is less securely grounded among the Mossi than among the Mandé, and thus evil results from good.

581 As a rule, the marriage bond is much looser and more fragile among
the Voltaic tribes (Bobo, Gourounsi, Mossi, Habbé/Habe/, etc.)
583 than among the Mandé groups (Bambara, Malinké, etc.), and this is related to the lack of a real bride price. Where there is a bride price, the young girl is sold. If she wishes to leave her husband once she is married, however, considering that a bride price of some importance is difficult to refund (since improvident family heads immediately set out to squander it, while more serious people use it right away to buy a girl for some young man of the family), it has become customary to oppose categorically any demands to break the marriage bond. Thus, while betrothal has greater dignity among the Voltaic tribes, marriage itself has more staying power and more seriousness among the Mandé, and the household has greater soundness. /238/

Now to return to the Mossi.

431 Let us note first that the offering of gifts allows for some flexibility.
583 A rich young man will make much more important gifts than a poor
556 man. He will not give a large sum of cowries, but he may give significant amounts of clothing, foodstuffs (salt, etc.), and animals to the head of his fiancée's family or to her mother. On the other hand, a poor man will give a bundle of firewood which he has just gathered in the bush and a chicken, and this payment will be considered sufficient.

431 Although the girl is not sold, her fiancé or his father are required
to make the gifts prescribed by custom.
583 "The failure to make those gifts prescribed by custom," says Vadier, "has serious consequences. Let us examine the various situations which might arise.

431 "I. If by negligence, forgetfulness, or because of an absence
583 (journey), the prospective husband does not make the annual gifts, he will be refused the girl on the day when he comes to have her taken to his home, and he will lose all his rights over her.

"Nevertheless, he will regain all his privileges if in one installment he pays to the head of the girl's family and to her mother all the gifts which he ought to have made during the period of his absence or forgetfulness.

"The head of the family cannot refuse this collective gift and thereby oppose the marriage.

"II. The husband has forgotten to make the gifts and does not come to the home of the family head when the young girl has reached puberty.

"A. If he lives in the area, the failure to call on the head of the family at the required time is regarded as a relinquishment of his rights over the girl. The head of the family may then dispose of her again.

"B. The fiancé has been away on a journey for a long time and is still absent when the girl reaches puberty.

"The head of the family has the fiancé's brother called to him. He offers the girl to him as his bride. The brother is not required to accept, and if he does not, the head of the family recovers all his rights over the girl."

582 Celebration of the marriage. Consummation. —"The girl must have reached puberty (15 or 16 years) in order to be taken to her ubsokno y nur. It is even customary to wait six months or a year after she was first in a state of zim (zim means "blood" in Mossi).

As for the husband, it is equally necessary that he must have attained the age of 17 or 18.

585 The formalities of the marriage ceremony are very simple in Yatenga.

When the betrothed girl has reached puberty, the husband calls on the family head to ask for her. The family head can tell him /239/ to wait six months or a year at most, a delay which the fiancé is required to observe, but usually the head of the family replies that his
431 future wife may be fetched in a few days. The fiancé then hands him
273 a bag and two goatskins full of millet and withdraws. This grain is used to make dolo which is drunk by the girl's entire family.

585 Each woman living in the same soukala makes a gift of one or two
431 gourds to the girl's mother. The father and the head of the family give her two large baskets. These objects will make up the bride's trousseau.

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613 778 602 554 usually been banished from their patrilineage for some illegal act or had voluntarily left home after a dispute over inheritance of the nam, goods, or women.

The fact that noble lineages often absorbed sisters' sons was only one of the reasons why such lineages survived and expanded, even if only at the expense of other lineages within the local society. Another reason for this growth was that the nobles, possessing the nam and its prerogatives, received more wives than the commoners. They had more children and thus multiplied more rapidly. Mossi lineages were generally exogamous through their whole depth, but exogamy became increasingly mandatory as the segments became smaller. Marriage within a maximal lineage was permitted only when some of its members had moved so far away from its original locality that the original ties were either forgotten or ignored. The Mossi [773] have myths in which the lineage founder gives his overly numerous descendants permission to marry certain of their relatives. Even so, if a marriage was actually found to have occurred between distant relatives, appropriate sacrifices had to be made to the ancestors.

613 Marriage was also forbidden between persons who could trace a common maternal ancestor. But because the time depth here was very shallow, total bilateral exogamy was practiced to a depth of only four or five generations. Of course, the differential concern with genealogies between those who had access to the nam and those who did not, had an effect on the extent to which exogamy was practiced.

613 587 Most Mossi marriages were based on an exchange of women between two lineages linked by a long-term series of reciprocal exchanges of goods and services. Women were regarded as the most valuable part of this system. In theory, only the Boodkasma of a babissi had the right to give a woman as a wife to another lineage. However, the initiators of the reciprocal relations between lineage segments were often babissi heads, Yirisobodamba (heads of nuclear families), or individual lineage members. When a man from one lineage "made friends" with a member of another and rendered him a service or received a favor from him, their respective lineages were considered to be involved. The corporate nature of the lineage segment was acknowledged by all persons engaged in reciprocal relations, and the relations between two individuals were seen as relations between their lineages.

When a man wished to give a daughter to a friend as a wife, he had to consult his Boodkasma, who then gave the woman to the friend's Boodkasma. The latter accepted the woman as a wife for the lineage rather than for the man involved. The lineage retained its rights *in gene-*

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tricem over the woman and turned over the rights *in uxorem* to the man. 613
This point is very important, because, by accepting the woman as a wife 583
for his lineage segment, the Boodkasma accepted the responsibility of giving a woman in return to the other lineage. The stress placed on the lineage in wife-exchange was due to the corporate nature of this kinship group, as well as to the prohibition against a man's exchanging his own sisters or daughters as wives. He had to use other women in the lineage. It was believed that if this rule were violated, the women exchanged would also "exchange lives"—*i.e.*, the fate of one would automatically reflect the fate of the other.

The Mossi marriage system worked to the advantage of both the elder males of the lineage segment and the nobles of the ruling lineage. Since the older men of the various groups controlled the resources of their kinsmen, they usually initiated "friendship" relations and obtained wives for their group. The more impartial elders distributed the women equitably among their fellow kinsmen, but occasionally older men kept the wives for themselves, knowing that in time these wives would be inherited by their younger kinsmen. Younger men had to wait until their elders died, do without wives, or establish "friendly" relations with older men. Some young men and newcomers to the district appealed to the chief for *pughsiudse* (from *pugho*, the diminutive of *pagha*, "woman," and *siubo*, "to give with the hope of profitable return"). These pughsiudse were women whom the chief received from his subjects and whom he subsequently gave out as wives on condition that their husbands give him their eldest daughters as future pughsiudse.[9]

The nobility benefited by the Mossi marriage system because, as a 613
group, they received more women than they gave out in the exchange of 565
wives. Furthermore, this enabled them to make more marriage arrange- 562
ments. This does not mean that a differential value was placed on women of different status groups. The Mossi tended to regard all women as equally valuable, but commoners tended to be more generous to noble friends than vice versa.

The nobles also received wives from their "brother," the district chief. 613
He received women as presents and signs of fealty and homage from most 565
of the groups in his district, and also from groups outside his district. He 583
kept some of these women as wives; others he used as pughsiudse; and still others he gave to his lineage segments. Some nobles had another method of obtaining wives, namely, by abduction. A nobleman who saw the daughter or wife of a commoner in the market place often encouraged her to desert her father or husband and come to him. Her relatives usually

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appealed to the district chief, and occasionally the woman was sent back. A nobleman set on having a certain girl as a wife usually had small bracelets like those worn by all noble wives placed on her ankles. Once this was done, the chief could not be compelled to send her back to her parents, and any man who tried to retrieve her was guilty of interfering with a nobleman's wife and could be killed for it. In fact, only the male relatives of noblemen's wives could converse with them without running the risk of being apprehended and executed.

The district was the most important unit in the Mossi principalities and kingdoms. It was on this level that the Mossi nobility came into direct contact with the various social and ethnic groups of the society. Here, kinship and affinal ties linked the conquerors and the conquered, the ancient and recent nobility, the refugees from conflicts over the nam and the resident aliens, in a network of social, ritual, economic, and political relationships. It was also on this level that myths and traditions legitimized most effectively the Mossi socio-economic and political system as well as the relationships between the various social and ethnic groups.

The number and size of the Mossi districts varied greatly from one principality or kingdom to another. Some districts were large and wealthy, with a number of large villages; smaller districts had a larger proportion of small villages and hamlets. The average number of these small units was probably between fifty and sixty-five per district. The population of the districts ranged from 10,000 to 35,000 persons. Some *tense* (villages) had as many as 5,000 inhabitants and some as few as 50. The average village had about 500 inhabitants. But regardless of size, all Mossi districts and component villages had basically the same structure and fulfilled the same functions. The structure of Nobere district is representative. Nobere covered approximately 200 square miles. It was bounded on the east by a district called Manga, on the north by the districts of Toece and Djiba, and on the west and south by the Red Volta River. A census taken in 1905, just nine years after the European conquest, showed the Nobere population to be about 13,200.[10] In 1955 approximately 10,000 persons inhabited 24 villages and hamlets scattered through the more inhabitable part of the district.

The number of villages and hamlets in Nobere district apparently fluctuated. Villages were occasionally abandoned, while small hamlets grew into prominent settlements. The people of Nobere always tried to establish their villages as close to the Red Volta as possible in order to utilize the more fertile lands. But they were repeatedly driven back by disease and

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431 groom) who has served his naba satisfactorily receives, at the
643 time he is freed, a young girl who may be nubile, but who may, on the other hand, be just a small child.

In either case, the former servitor is required to call upon the naba from time to time and to take him gifts (cowries or roosters). If the girl is still living with her relatives, in addition to his trifling presents to the naba, the fiancé may make a few presents to his in-laws, although it is not obligatory.

562 Pogsiouré. The first daughter born of a marriage between a
643 Moaga subject (former servitor, son, brother, or uncle of the naba,
644 etc.) and the woman given to him [166] by the naba becomes the
858 "property" of the latter with full rights over her. She is known as "the daughter of the pogsiouré" and is fated to become pogsiouré in her turn.

643 If the first-born is a boy, the naba may bring him to his
644 court as soon as he reaches the age of discretion to make him either
858 a sogoné or a samand'biga, and the child's father cannot make the slightest objection.

357 This does not imply that under Mossi law the sogoné and samand'kamba must be children of the pogsiouré. As absolute master of all his subjects, the naba can recruit his servitors throughout his domain as he needs them, with no opposition by the Mossi to this recruitment.

644 The fate of the daughters of the pogsiouré. The girls are
858 taken from their relatives as soon as they are old enough to work
562 and are entrusted by the naba to his own wives.

The latter, for all practical purposes, become the adoptive mothers of these children and, as such, see to their food and clothing. This does not prevent the real mother from bringing cowries and clothing to her daughter, and to make sure that the child will be well treated by the napagha (wife of the naba), she sometimes
[431] even brings the latter a gift of kalgo (soumbala) or karite butter (kamé).

When the girls reach puberty, the naba chooses the most at-
[584] tractive for his fiancées, and the [167] others are given to some of his administrators or to his own relatives.

644 357 608 for example), and in return the adoptive mother gives him a bit of food, over and above his regular ration.

644 357 [169] In view of these circumstances, those who are not required at the home of the naba to care for the horses or for some special service spend half the year with their relatives.

644 357 565 It is perhaps of interest to point out that the samand'kamba are mostly sons of the chiefs of villages of nabissi (sons of naba), sons of nakomsé (descendants of naba and nabissi), and sometimes even sons of canton chiefs at the court of the Mogho Naba. There is also the child of the ordinary Moaga, who was not made a sogoné because he was not thought worthy of the position. The rigorous discipline required of the former young men teaches them "to suffer in order to be able to command."

644 357 Anticipation of freedom. If the sogoné or samand'biga is the eldest son and is old enough to marry at the time of his father's death, the naba is required to free him, even though the period of obligatory service has not been completed.

643 844 584 Another custom, the zan-boko. There is another curious custom among the Mossi. If during the course of his journeys the naba stops in a village and during his stay a girl is born to a local Mossi woman, the child is his, with full rights, if he has been told of the birth.

However, the naba often knows nothing about the event, and the father takes care not to speak of it and then makes whatever disposition of the child he wishes.

844 584 [170] This custom, however, is practiced to its fullest extent between Mossi. A Moaga sana (stranger) passing through the village is invited by the elders to dig the zan-boko (hole in which the placenta must be buried). This is his zounogo, "opportunity." He gives a few cowries (100 to 200) to the head of the family and becomes the fiancé of the baby girl. Later on, when she reaches puberty, the man will make the customary gifts to the parents, and nothing will stand in the way of the marriage.

[171] Chapter 11

Marriage, Birth, and Death

Marriage

000 In this chapter we shall review all aspects of marriage throughout Mossi country. The customs are the same everywhere, ranging from the marriage of girls reared in the household of the naba to the institution of concubinage. We shall first deal with the most common forms of marriage, then discuss the matter of bride price, and finally conclude with a discussion of the social status of the Moaga woman.

582 Girls are married between the ages of seventeen and nineteen. With certain rare exceptions, a girl of sixteen or eighteen is never sent to her husband. Such an age is considered very unfavorable [843] for child-bearing, and it is even thought that children whose mothers are too young will not survive.

Young men marry between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five. [172]

562 584 Marriage of a girl reared in the household of a naba. Girls born of the marriage of a woman given to a former servitor by either province or canton chiefs became by right the property of the latter. These girls are taken from their parents when they are old enough to do some work and are entrusted by the naba to his wives. They are henceforth regarded as betrothed to the naba and are obliged to submit to all of the conditions of servitude which are imposed on the other wives.

When they reach marriageable age, they may be given, without either their own or their parents' consent, to freed servitors or to any individual who may have rendered some service to the naba.

This is the first type of forced marriage.

Marriage of a girl given by her parents. Since the girl is regarded as simply a "thing," a being without volition, she may be promised at birth. Very often gratitude for hospitality or the existence of an old debt is sufficient reason for promising a daughter.

562 When the girl reaches marriageable age, she usually finds herself
584 with a husband who is sometimes older than her father and whom she cannot possibly love. She must go to him, however, since such is her father's will.

[431 [173] The fiancé brings some gifts (cowries, chickens, millet
585] beer) and claims his wife. The girl is sent off to her husband's home with no ceremony being performed.

This second type of forced marriage has the parents' consent.

587 Marriage by inheritance. When the head of a household dies, the
428 women, who are considered a part of his estate, are divided up just as is the rest of the property. They are apportioned to the sons of
562 the deceased, or his brothers if the sons are not of marriageable age.
768 However, unlike the procedure for a chief's estate, in which the wife is just a "thing," these wives may choose their husbands from among the members of the family.

This is semi-free marriage.

587 Besides the type of marriage which we shall later call "free marriage" -- a form which occurs very frequently since it includes the marriages of loose women who may have as many as nine husbands, only stopping at the last one because of old age -- there is also remarriage due to successive widowhoods. Some women are so
[177] unlucky as to lose [174] a succession of husbands.. They are finally avoided like the plague since they have the reputation of being cursed by the gods (Mossi, kombwinga; Bambara, térédiougou).

584 Marriage after a conventional proposal. When a young man wishes to ask for the hand of a young girl who is not yet engaged, he chooses as his go-between a person who is on good terms with the elders of the girl's village. If the response is favorable, the young man brings a chicken, a secco (dagnopinri) [coarse matting] to close the doorway, and some fagots. He goes back to his village and returns at intervals bearing sprouted millet or millet beer and a chicken for the head of the family. The latter at last tells the go-between: "Tell X... that we accept him as our son and that we shall try to give him satisfaction as soon as possible."

Some time later the young man returns once more with a chicken, sprouted millet, or beer for the elders of the village. He makes

584 visits and presents a few small gifts. This state of affairs goes on for one or several years. Finally the head of the family calls together his little council and makes known his intention of giving So-and-So's daughter to X... from such-and-such village. There is seldom a refusal since he has sole authority to give the girls in marriage. The young man is then sent to make the acquaintance of his prospective in-laws. As soon as he is presented, he makes a small gift (usually [175] 100 to 1,000 cowries are given).

If the girl is the oldest daughter, her fiancé is expected to bring a sheep, a hoe, a guinea hen, and some beer.

585 The young man is then told the date on which he may send for his fiancée. He has nothing further to do, except to make some preparations and to wait. When the girl is brought to him, he kills some chickens and a goat if he has one, and he has food prepared for the girl's escort. He must also give cowries to them, the amount depending on his own resources.

In many villages the girls married in this way never leave their husbands for fear of being cursed by their parents and condemned never to see their native villages again.

574 Finally, if the wife gives birth, the husband sends a chicken to
851 the village elder and the wife goes there to visit.

787 Girls who are hostile to a husband. These are girls whom the
584 soothsayers point out as hostile to a husband.

Although these girls are promised at an early age, just like other girls, they must not know that they are engaged, and if their fiancés should by chance come to visit, they are treated like ordinary guests who have just happened by.

583 When such a girl reaches seventeen, her fiancé arranges with her family to send her to the waterhole, the well, or the nearest market.

[176] The fiancé selects a group of his strongest friends, plies them with beer, and sends them off with instructions to abduct his fiancée on the way. The latter, accompanied by a woman or by other girls, is surrounded unexpectedly and seized by strong arms despite the resistance, often quite vigorous, of her brothers or her companions. She is then taken to the home of her husband.

A few days later some people are designated to take the girl's effects to her husband's home and to receive the traditional gifts.

583 to the sort of concubinage that "free marriage" is, as practiced in Mossi country.

The Situation of the Betrothed Couple during the Engagement

●584 Generally speaking, the fiancé is supposed to avoid his betrothed before marriage. They treat each other with a kind of shy reserve.

Aside from the gifts made to the village elders and some cowries given to the future in-laws at the time of his first visit, no further demands are made on the fiancé.

584 684 The young man is formally forbidden to carry on an intrigue with a woman in the girl's village. If he does so, not only may the engagement be broken, but the lover may never again set foot in the village on paid of death.

Breaking the Engagement

584 When an engagement is broken, the gifts received need not be returned. On the other hand, the death of the girl is not regarded as breaking the engagement; the family must, sooner or later, offer another daughter to the young man to replace the girl who died.

An engagement may be broken [179] automatically in case of adultery, discussed below, or in the event of a quarrel between the two families.

Marriage Between First Cousins

582 Marriage between first cousins is not allowed. There can be no valid union between the children of a brother and sister, between a man and the daughter of either his father's or his mother's brother.

588 582 751 However, it sometimes happens -- inadvertently -- that a girl who has been given in marriage in a very distant village may find that her husband is a descendant of a great-grandparent (material or paternal) in the same family as her own. Had this been known, the marriage would not have taken place. Ordinarily, distant relationship is not discovered until long after the marriage, after complicated genealogical research. In that case, one of the pair, usually the wife,

588 582 751 wears a bracelet made of copper and iron intertwined, kalembanga, which is believed to protect the wearer against any disaster due to the technically illegal marriage. The kalembanga is also believed to protect the children born of the union from sudden death.

Polygyny

595 Polygyny is the rule throughout Mossi country. It is true that the number of wives varies with the resources and position of the individual. Mere heads of compounds who are somewhat well off may have [180] from five to eight wives and numerous fiancées. The [584] latter are usually reserved for the dakompa (older sons and younger brothers of the head of the family), assuming that these men will in turn render real service and be completely devoted to the head of the household.

There are many reasons for the practice of polygyny, but the main one is procreation. The under-nourished natives must rely on [853 134] the mother's milk to feed their babies and must therefore wait two or even three years before resuming sexual relations with a wife who is a nursing mother. Therefore, they prefer to have several wives.

Consummation

585 When the young girl is taken to her husband, she is entrusted to a woman whom she will henceforth treat as "mother."

A few days after the departure of the cortege, whose composition we shall describe presently, the man claims his fiancée. She is taken at night to the nuptial hut, which has no special features, and no one is present at the consummation of the marriage. In this respect the Mossi differ from the Bambara, who have a griot or an old woman accompany the couple to help the young man, if necessary, overcome the girl's resistance.

It goes without saying that if the girl is found to be a virgin, the [181] husband is overjoyed. If she is not a virgin, the love which he may have felt for her before possessing her is much diminished. The man shows the girl his anger, certain that she will at least tell her mother about it.

177 The preceding pages deal wholly with past history. The French occupation has profoundly modified the whole administrative set-up and curtailed the rights of nabas, who are now mere civil servants. The people are slowly learning not to fear them; their authority is weakening; the gifts dwindle; and the nabas have been put on short allowance and forced to cultivate their fields like everybody else. Their judicial power is practically gone, and those few who have preserved real authority were able to do so because of their remoteness from administrative centers and their past. They were in charge before the French occupation, and they have managed to keep up their prestige in spite of everything. Yet little by little attitudes
600 change and respect vanishes. Is this good? Is it bad? The matter could be argued at great length. Although this administrative system led to regrettable abuses which had to be checked, it also had its favorable aspects, and it made the Mossi into one of the most feared and most homogeneous peoples in the bend of the Niger.

/28/ BOOK II. FAMILY LIFE

Chapter 1. Establishment of the Family Through Marriage

562 The family is established through marriage. We shall, therefore,
584 first study the marriage bond. Obviously, since Christianity was
567 introduced in the country only a short time ago, virginity is unknown there even as a concept. Every nubile girl must marry. She is given in marriage by the person to whom she belongs, and her own tastes are not taken into account. She belongs primarily to her father, but sometimes even before her birth she belongs to the person who gave her mother away on the condition — a common clause in free marriage contracts — that the first girl she bears will be given in marriage by her grandfather. Or the woman may belong to her father's master, and this may be her father's only remaining obligation toward the man who formerly owned him as a slave. Thus, nearly all girls born in Koupéla belong by right to the naba, for the inhabitants of this locality were formerly his slaves. Sometimes a

562 girl is used to pay debts; a man borrows on the promise of giving his
584 daughter in marriage. She will be handed over, often with no bride
567 price other than the borrowed sum; and, contrary to the custom noted above, since she is considered a slave, her first daughter does not belong to the grandfather. A girl may also be given in exchange for her enslaved brother or uncle, who thus recovers his freedom. A man may be seriously ill and call a doctor who agrees to treat him on the condition that the patient's daughter be given to him if he gets well. The father does recover, and the girl is given in marriage to the fortunate doctor. Exchange of daughters also takes place: a native may give his daughter in marriage to another, who in turn gives him his own.

562 A girl is given in marriage by her mother only if she was born out
584 of wedlock, and her father is thus theoretically unknown. The sisters
848 of certain nabas are the only ones permitted to choose their husbands
[554] according to their own wishes and to leave them when they please.
593 The fickle existence they lead is easy to imagine! In all other cases the girl is given in marriage by her father, or by his heir if the father is dead. (1) The mother is not consulted, but since she cares for the

[754] 1. It would be onerous and indeed impossible to list all the various situations that may arise. The sorcerers quite often interfere, and who knows what goes through a sorcerer's mind! One case among many: a woman bore a daughter after raising several others who died immediately following marriage; the father consulted the sorcerer to find out whether he should promise this last daughter in marriage. The sorcerer stated that she must be left free to choose her own husband, or else she would die like her sisters. The father left her free.

daughter until the latter marries, she may through advice, promises, or even threats dissuade her from a certain match /29/ or welcome her if she runs away from a husband to whom she was given against her will.

584 If the girl absolutely refuses to go to her betrothed, her father
[562] tries to persuade her but does not use force. If the girl persists in her refusal in spite of everything — this is extremely rare — the father returns to the betrothed any money he may have borrowed, but he does not return anything that was given him spontaneously. If the father happens to die after he has pledged his daughter, his heir may not retract the promise and give his sister or niece to another man,
[428] but he will from then on receive the gifts himself. If the betrothed man dies, his heir gets the girl promised to the father, with the condition that he will continue to pay the bride price.

584 Contrary to the situation in European countries, the woman, con-
583 sidered as valuable property, is paid for; it is not she who brings a dowry, but the man who wants her as his wife. If a man has an eye on a friend's daughter, he goes to visit the father even though the girl may still be a babe in arms. He is careful not to state what he has in mind. He comes sometimes with a few cowries, sometimes with a chicken, a piece of salt, perhaps even a sheep. The child's father understands, and when he has some work to be done, a field to be weeded, millet to be threshed, huts to be roofed, he makes it known to the suitor, who hastens to work for the man whose son-in-law he should like to become.

After a time, the father says to the suitor: "You have treated me well. I am pleased with you. I will treat you well." The suitor understands and becomes even more assiduous. He sends his friends; and on every festive occasion he presents the father of his intended with a few chickens. There is no outright promise, no betrothal in the usual sense of the term. Sometimes the father has financial difficulties, pressing debts, or he has seen a fine garment he should like to buy, and he has a request for money conveyed to his friend. The latter knows that he is loaning without return, or rather loaning against the girl. He refuses only if he is actually unable to furnish the sum; for if negotiations were ever to be broken, the child's father would have to return the money advanced, and this would greatly embarrass him and thus prevent him from profiting through the transaction. In any case, it is extremely rare for a promised girl not to be given to the man who has made the first advances and who has been favorably received. A father who should promise his daughter to a man after receiving gifts for some time from another would be held in very poor esteem and forced to return any money he might

584
583 have borrowed. In addition, he would expose himself and the preferred suitor to the vengeance of the rejected one.

The bride price is not exorbitant. The total gifts, spread over a
583 period of years, amount to some fifty francs, without counting the work days. Nevertheless, it requires sufficient means to secure at least the necessary cowries. Besides, the child's father prefers to give her to someone who already boasts a certain fame and some wealth, in short, to an elderly man. /30/ This is why children are promised to old dotards, and white-haired men are paired with young girls; while the old men's sons of marriageable age cannot get wives. If the father has the means to pay the bride price, he carefully refrains from helping his son, even if the latter has found a match to his liking.
587 It is true that all the father's wives are inherited by the oldest son,
578 who gives some to his younger brothers; but this occurs only at the old man's death, and this may not happen for a long time. This ex-
593 plains why the oldest son wishes for his father's death, and why the father sends the son away for fear of a premature end. It is only fair to add that some men, with a better understanding of their own interests, marry off their sons as soon as they are old enough.

595 Polygamy exists among the Mossi as in all Black countries. The wealth of a man is gauged by the number of his wives. Women
[556] furnish hands to till the soil, for the wife works in the fields like the husband. Women also furnish children, and if these are daughters, young men will come to offer their services (dakonré) and one day take the girls in marriage; or the father will receive gifts. If the children are boys, they will later aid the father in his work. In these countries where each lives for himself alone, where selfishness reigns supreme, polygamy is easily explained, but it undoubtedly results in a lower birth rate. White-bearded old men cannot have children as numerous and sound as young men in their prime, and the latter, deprived of wives, wear themselves out with their excesses. It is true that those who can afford a dozen wives are few; most have to be content with two, three, or four. Some nabas, nevertheless, own veritable herds of women, and this is certainly a grievous abuse. Their wives are numbered in the hundreds. The greatest moral dis-
[837] order reigns in those harems, where the boys who serve as grooms and pages spend most of their time among their master's wives. This explains the precautions taken by the women's owners and the eunuchs of the Moro Naba, as well as the Poënaba and his sinister duties.

582 Marriage is exogamous, that is, relatives do not marry if their
564 kinship is known. There are no sharply defined caste lines. The Mossi marry Yarsé Malinké, Bousanse, and Gourounsi, but cannot marry Peul nor Haoussa. A Mossi who does not belong to a caste may choose his wife among Mossi who do belong to one. The latter do not intermarry freely; iron workers cannot marry from among the drummers.

584 But to go back to our story. The girl has grown. The suitor has already made numerous gifts. In short, the time has come to proceed with the wedding. The girl's father /31/ summons the betrothed and tells him: "Come and see me on such-and-such a day with a chicken." The suitor joyfully returns to his village and tells the elders that he was told to bring a chicken. On the day set, the suitor takes the bird to the girl's family, accompanied by his friends. He hands over the chicken, and everyone goes to the home of the head of the family, or, in his absence, to a village elder. The father states before all present that he wishes to give his daughter to So-and-So. Congratulations are exchanged, and everyone goes home. Now the festivities must be arranged, the relatives and friends must be notified, and the millet beer must be brewed. Meanwhile, the relatives and friends who have heard the good news come to greet the bridegroom and bring him fifty or a hundred cowries to help him meet the expenses of the festivities.

When everything is ready, the bridegroom takes 500 cowries and a rooster to the girl's father and 500 cowries to the elder in whose household the bride shall live until her wedding day. The girl's relatives have prepared dinner, while the bridegroom provides the
[302] drink. A relative of the groom shaves the bride's forehead in a circle, and she retires to the inner courtyard where her father's wives wash her thoroughly and tie a cotton cord around her waist. She dons a white garment and goes to offer a gourd of beer to her betrothed who has remained outside with his friends. Everyone thanks the girl's parents and then they all leave. On the day after next, the groom
[431] sends his friends to greet the family of his betrothed with a basket of millet flour, four kalro pellets, and salt, which are all distributed among the village people. These festivities, with their attendant ceremonies, come closest to a formal betrothal.

585 The girl, however, remains with the head of the family or with the elder who takes his place! When all these preliminary ceremonies are over, the groom sends daily for his bride. Once the trousseau has

584 To arrange a marriage, one offers gifts to the girl's family on
596 festive days. The gift grows more sizable from year to year. Finally, at the time of marriage, one offers 25 or 30 francs as a bride price.

Girls are also exchanged among families. /545/ One family may pledge one of its daughters to another family for one of its young men, while the second family provides a girl for a boy of the first family.

Even if a man buys a wife at market and has children by her, it is not he but his family head who gives those children in marriage.

If a young man goes himself to a family head, asks for a wife, and obtains her without any payment, without any bride price, it is the girl's father who disposes of the first daughter born of the union. He is entitled to take her with him as soon as she is no longer at the breast, and he will later give her in marriage. The other children are given in marriage by their father's family head.

596 4. The head of the family performs religious sacrifices for the
782 whole family, and acts as its judge.

5. When a family head dies, the headship of the family goes
596 to his younger brother along with the family property, that is,
428 his soukala if it is a family one (built by the family or with the help of the family), the available family fields, the movable family property (livestock, slaves, cowries, clothing, family jewels, etc.). The movable private property of the deceased, on the other hand (livestock, slaves, cowries, clothing, private jewels, etc.) go to the oldest son along with the fields cultivated by the deceased and by his household, that is, the private property of the deceased. Finally, the soukala, if it was built by the deceased all by himself and without the aid of his family, goes to his oldest son as well since it is private property.

The brother who inherits gives some of the movable family property to the other brothers, but only if he feels like doing so.

Here, family property is by far the most important.

Such is the oldest variant of the Mossi family type that prevails at the present day. Actually, this variant still persists in quite a few Mossi localities.

Now, here is the second variant:

592 1. Every household lives separately, works separately (except
596 for the clearing of the family fields), and sees to its own subsistence.

592 People who are thus settled on their own work for themselves and no
596 longer for /546/ their father, with whom they lived and for whom they worked prior to marriage. They nevertheless offer gifts to their father from time to time.

2. As far as the marriage of children belonging to those house-
592 holds is concerned, a distinction must be made among the following
596 possibilities. When they are the children of wives bought by the fam-
584 ily head, it is the latter who gives them in marriage. When they are the children of wives obtained by the husband himself, it is the latter who gives them in marriage.

Or else a rough compromise is made (in Boussouma province, for example). The first son and first daughter of the union are given in marriage by the family head, while the other children are given in marriage by the household.

596 3. It is the head of the family, however, who alone is entitled
782 to offer religious sacrifices for the whole family, and who always acts as its judge.

4. When the head of the family dies, the headship is trans-
596 mitted to his younger brother along with the family property. The
428 private property of the deceased goes to all his sons, but the oldest son is favored. This actually constitutes the difference between this family type and the preceding one as far as inheritance is concerned. While in the preceding type the oldest son alone inherited, in this type all sons inherit but the eldest is heavily favored.

Thus, if the soukala was the private property of the deceased, it goes to the eldest son. If he is able to cultivate them all, the latter also keeps all the fields cultivated by the deceased. If he is not able to do so, he gives the surplus to his brothers.

As for livestock, if there are ten head that belonged privately to the deceased, and if there are three sons and two daughters, the oldest son will get four, each other son will get two, and each daughter will get one.

[567] As for slaves, if the situation is the same, the oldest son will take five out of ten, the second son three, the third son two, and the daughters will get none.

Cowries and grain are apportioned in the same manner.

In addition to these shares given to the younger sons and to the daughters, it must be noted that private property has acquired greater

596 with the help of his father and family head (which is by far the
423 most frequent occurrence), /548/ while in such a case it had for-
178 merly been considered family property. Finally, the soukala came to be regarded in every case as personal property and to be transmitted for that reason to the oldest son. This, incidentally, is the same evolution that applied to property in general, as we shall see shortly.

593 Now, here is the third and last variant of the prevailing Mossi family type. Nowadays, this variant is by far the most widespread.

1. Every household lives separately, works separately, and procures its own food and subsistence. The help of neighbors is enlisted to clear the fields.

584 2. Every household gives its own children in marriage. The family head no longer does so.

593 As soon as a man has a son, he chooses a little girl who will go to the boy when he reaches puberty. He visits the girl's relatives from time to time and offers them gifts.

584 When the girl is old enough to be married, he takes 50,000
583 cowries (if he is wealthy), skirt cloths, salt, kola nuts, and gives it
593 all to the relatives. Then, the old women in the daughter's family lead her to the home of the betrothed man's relatives. The father kills a sheep, makes a lot of couscous, buys dolo to celebrate her arrival. Then he offers the girl six or seven baskets containing respectively 1,000, 2,000, 3,000, 4,000, 5,000, 6,000, and 7,000 cowries. The young man himself gives his betrothed four or five skirts. If he is very wealthy, he gives her one or two little girls as slaves.

585 On the evening when the wedding is celebrated, the father asks
[426] one of his neighbors to lend him a hut, and the young married pair are sent there all alone (they will remain there as long as their soukala is not built). On the morrow, the feasting begins. People dance and feast for seven days at the gates of the father's soukala, at least when the girl is a virgin. If she is not, the feasting is curtailed but nevertheless lasts for another three days.

583 When the father is poor, he offers a few kola nuts to the girl's
591 /549/ father (six or ten). He gives the father and mother some firewood he gathered in the bush, straw to make séko /Tr.: mats/ for door, 2,000 cowries, a skirt cloth. He kills a sheep to make

592 1. Husband.
2. Wife or wives.
3. Unmarried children, sons or daughters.
4. Slaves.

Sometimes, it also includes young unmarried brothers (see above).

592 As a rule, every soukala-household has only one large bush
241 field in addition to the garden plot surrounding the soukala (where
461 maize and large red millet are grown during the rainy season, tobacco and cotton during the dry season).

The head of the household, his unmarried sons and unmarried brothers, work on those fields during the rainy season from six in the morning to three in the afternoon, with a long rest period around noon. The women work there also, but their hours are different owing to their household tasks.

The unmarried sons and brothers also have small individual plots of cotton and large red millet. They work them in the afternoon after three o'clock. During the rainy season, as a rule, there are no rest days. A few Mossi, however, have adopted the customs
[527] of their Yarsé neighbors and rest on Friday. Others, who are Moslemized, and incidentally very few, rest both on Friday and on Monday.

During the dry season the members of the household repair hut roofs, go hunting, or else participate in the clearing of family fields, etc. In addition to this they work for themselves, as weavers for example. The money earned in this fashion goes to them and not to the soukala head.

/556/ It is the head of the soukala-household, the husband
592 and father, who provides all occupants of the soukala with food throughout the year, morning and evening. He also provides clothing for those who cannot provide their own, but those who can do so procure it themselves.

We know that it is sometimes the head of the family and some-
592 times the head of the household who gives the children of the house-
584 hold in marriage. It sometimes happens, however, that a son
464 leaves the soukala without his father's permission. He usually does
565 this in order to win a wife, when the head of the family or the

592 father cannot procure one or delays too long in doing so. The son
587 who secedes in this fashion goes to work for a chief or noble who
464 will later give him a wife as a reward. The first male child and the
565 first female child born of this union, however, will devolve to the chief or noble who gave the wife. He will use the male child as a servant, and the girl to be handed out as a reward to someone working for him. This is a side effect of the political organization on the family. This secession on the part of sons can only occur, indeed, thanks to the existence of chiefs and nobles in sufficient numbers to permit the secessionists to find work and employment among them without difficulty. Among the Bobo and Nounouma, such a situation could not exist.

Let us note that this institution, while restricting the authority of the family head or household head, has strengthened the power of the Mossi aristocracy.

592 In closing, let us note a few details about the Mossi soukala
361 from a physical standpoint. It is a cluster of round huts, about five or six of them, usually built of red earth with a straw roof and connected to each other by a concave wall made likewise of red earth. The soukala is thus fortified, as it were, and sheltered from the outside.

592 The Mossi soukala is quite similar to the Malinké or Dialonké
361 "compound" /literally, "square"/, which also consists of a cluster
171 of clay huts with straw roofs. Among the Malinké and Dialonké, however, the huts are often connected by a palisade or a mere séko instead of a red earth wall as they are here. Another difference is /557/ that the doors of the huts of the Mossi soukala are so low that one must often creep in on all fours. Furthermore, there are no porches such as are found among the Malinké and Dialonké. In spite of those differences, however, the Mossi soukala bear a general resemblance to the Guinean soukala, while they are in no way related to the massive citadels of the Gourounsi and Kipirsi.

The Mossi soukala, on the other hand, are set about 50 meters apart. The maize plot surrounding the soukala lies directly around it, as among the Bobo, Gourounsi, Kipirsi, etc., while among the Malinké and Dialonké of Guinea the garden plot of each compound is located outside the village boundaries, since the compounds stand

000 12. Women's property.
13. Adultery.
14. Divorce.
15. Formalities of divorce.
16. Consequences of divorce. /235/
17. Psychology of women. The woman as lover and mother.

•584 First, let us study the promise of marriage.

Promise of marriage. —"It is customary," says Vadier, "for a father to present his son with a first wife. It is the father who takes the first steps and offers the first required gifts. If the son is at least 17 or 18 years old, however, or if he is already married, he fulfills the necessary obligations himself.

"In practice the son always consults his father and marries a woman he has chosen only after he has obtained paternal consent. In theory, the consent of the father is not necessary to validate the marriage. If the son fails to obtain his father's permission, however, the latter drives him out of his soukala (compound), but the marriage nevertheless goes fully into effect.

"The marriage proposal is made without consideration of the girl's age. She is usually six or seven years old when she is asked for, but it frequently happens that she is still at her mother's breast when she is promised to a man. We can see, therefore, that a long period of time inevitably elapses between the marriage proposal and the marriage itself.

"Let us study first those formalities which attend a marriage proposal.

"The Mossi who has an eye on a young girl, either for himself or for his son, pays a visit to the head of the child's family and, according to his means, offers him a gift of a chicken, a mat, a small amount of salt, or merely a bundle of firewood. He makes known to him the object of his visit, taking great care not to mention the name of the young girl he wants. Regarding this, he was careful previously to send a mutual friend to the head of the family, to notify him of the approaching visit and to point out the name of the girl who would be asked for. The head of the family, if he does not wish to comply with this request, declares that he has no daughter to give in marriage. On the other hand, if he agrees, he tells the suitor to return at a later date, which he sets and at which time he will pledge the young girl to him. The suitor returns on the appointed day with several friends

584 bearing dolo /millet beer/; they will serve as witnesses. In their presence, the head of the family mentions by name to the suitor the girl he is granting to him and who will be delivered to him as a wife later when she is old enough to take a husband.

"Then the betrothed man with the friends he brought goes to visit every soukala head in the village, greets them in accordance with Mossi custom, and announces to them that such-and-such a family head has promised him a young girl in marriage. The whole village is thus made witnesses."

Persons whose consent is required to validate a promise of marriage.

[562] —"The consent of the young girl," says Vadier, "is by no means required. In fact, she is disposed of without being consulted, and she is always forced to become the wife of the man to whom she has been promised, except if her future husband is a leper or blind. The /236/ young girl is actually supposed to be unacquainted with the name of her prospective husband until she is taken to him.

"To validate the marriage, the following people must express their consent.

"1. The future husband. His consent follows from the transactions undertaken by his father or by himself with the family of his future wife.

"2. The girl's father. When a Mossi has one or several daughters and when he thinks the moment has come for the head of the family to dispose of them, he tells the latter that he can promise them in marriage. In spite of his powers, the head of the family could not betroth a young girl unless her father had told him that he could give her in marriage.

"When he has chosen a husband, he goes to see the father of the girl and makes known to him the offer he has received. The father can accept or refuse as he sees fit. His consent is absolutely indispensable, and the head of the family cannot ignore it.

"The father cannot dispose of his daughter without the consent of the family head, except in circumstances we shall examine later.

584 "3. The head of the family. The consent of the head of the family
596 is inevitably required, since it is he alone who has the power to promise the young girls of his family in marriage under the terms described above. Three cases where the consent of the family head is not indispensable are as follows: (1) when the father of the young girl is at odds with the head of the family, the father alone may dispose of his

584 daughter; (2) when the father is in extreme penury, he gives his still
596 unpromised daughter to some rich native who, with the customary gifts, will help him in his need, since the gifts of the fiancé go to the man who promised the young girl; (3) the first daughter in a household,
[603] whether or not she is the only daughter, must be promised by her maternal grandfather and not by the head of the family."

This constitutes, I believe, a curious vestige of matriarchy which doubtless refers to those very distant times when the Mossi family revolved around the maternal rather than the paternal line.

4. The mother of the young girl. "The girl's mother," says Vadier, "is sometimes consulted. Her husband merely asks her if she is satisfied with the choice he has made in agreement with the head of the family. Her answer, however, is given no weight whatever.

"The fiancé's mother is not even consulted."

Such at least is the theory. In reality, no doubt, the mother of the young girl often has more authority than the theory supposes.

431 Gifts.—Bride price is nonexistent in Mossi marriage. This is a very
583 important point which differentiates the Mossi and even, I believe,
[71] the Voltaic /237/ tribes in general, from the Mandé groups, such as the Bambara and Malinké, where bride price does exist and is actually quite high (I say quite high, considering the general poverty of the Sudanese). I did not emphasize this sufficiently in my Noir du Soudan in the chapter concerning the Mossi family, pages 548 and 549. I did mention that the price paid to win a Mossi girl of the Ouagadougou region ranged from 1, 500 cowries (1. 50 francs) to 50, 000 cowries (50 francs). In fact, these are gifts rather than bride price.

Although there is no bride price, properly speaking, the gifts have an important role.

"After the promise of marriage," says Vadier, "the future husband must come every year, after the filikienga /a feast/, to bring a few small gifts to the head of the family and to the girl's mother. These consist as a rule of a little millet, salt, a few hundred cowries, a mat, or two or three crudely made séko /coarse matting/.

"As for the father, he receives no gifts, which does not mean that he does not benefit from those received by his wife or by the head of the family.

"Likewise, the girl receives no gifts. Moreover, she may not utilize the commodities or foodstuffs given to her mother.

"The gifts offered during the long betrothal period cannot be of great value. A prospective husband who should bring 5, 000 or 6, 000

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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greeting a lower status benefactor, a man will get down and greet him from a kneeling position. It is because of this elaborate system of greeting, with the many opportunities thus provided for one person to slight another, that many important persons never go to the market. As a rule, the failure of any one person to give the required greeting to another when they meet in the market place is always an indication of strained relations between them.

The persons from whom an individual may buy goods, and the kinds of goods which may be purchased by one individual from another, are governed by convention and social relationships. A person may not buy anything from a relative except European goods. A man cannot buy any but cooked food in the market place, and often he asks a female relative or a passing female to buy it for him. To do the contrary is held to be unmanly and indicative of a bad character. A woman will not buy cotton cloth but will send a man to buy it for her. She would hate to have people believe that she has no male relative to weave it for her, or what is more likely, that she is too lazy to spin the cotton thread which would then be woven for her. A woman may purchase any type of commodity from other women, but she must be careful not to patronize men who are known to be libertines or with whom she is suspected of having an affair. She must also be careful about running errands for men, since people know that men often use this device to establish amorous relationships with women. Men also use this device to give presents, or to arrange secret meetings with them. If any man sees a female relative involved in any of these misadventures, he chases her away and more than likely curses the man, if he does not fight him. In any event, he warns the man to leave the woman alone.

The market is one of the few places where men and women can initiate relationships not sanctioned by their relatives. Under normal conditions marriages are arranged between unrelated individuals through the lineage members who establish "friendly" relationships. Two friends might ask their lineage heads for women to exchange as wives or the "friend" who has received more gifts from the other will give over a wife. Because the older men most often have goods and women at their disposal, they are usually the ones who receive wives. The result is that most young men have no wives, and until they inherit wives from lineage members, are continually seeking to establish intimate relations with women whom they meet on the market place. The technique which a young man employes to gain the favors of a woman he sees at market is highly stereotyped. First of all, he must ascertain that the woman in question is not a member of his maximal lineage or married to a member of his own lineage. A responsible

562 584 When the girl reaches marriageable age, she usually finds herself with a husband who is sometimes older than her father and whom she cannot possibly love. She must go to him, however, since such is her father's will.

[173] The fiancé brings some gifts (cowries, chickens, millet beer) and claims his wife. The girl is sent off to her husband's home with no ceremony being performed.

This second type of forced marriage has the parents' consent.

587 428 562 768 Marriage by inheritance. When the head of a household dies, the women, who are considered a part of his estate, are divided up just as is the rest of the property. They are apportioned to the sons of the deceased, or his brothers if the sons are not of marriageable age. However, unlike the procedure for a chief's estate, in which the wife is just a "thing," these wives may choose their husbands from among the members of the family.

This is semi-free marriage.

587 Besides the type of marriage which we shall later call "free marriage" -- a form which occurs very frequently since it includes the marriages of loose women who may have as many as nine husbands, only stopping at the last one because of old age -- there is also remarriage due to successive widowhoods. Some women are so [177] unlucky as to lose [174] a succession of husbands. They are finally avoided like the plague since they have the reputation of being cursed by the gods (Mossi, kombwinga; Bambara, térédiougou).

584 Marriage after a conventional proposal. When a young man wishes to ask for the hand of a young girl who is not yet engaged, he chooses as his go-between a person who is on good terms with the elders of the girl's village. If the response is favorable, the young man brings a chicken, a secco (dagnopinri) [coarse matting] to close the doorway, and some fagots. He goes back to his village and returns at intervals bearing sprouted millet or millet beer and a chicken for the head of the family. The latter at last tells the go-between: "Tell X... that we accept him as our son and that we shall try to give him satisfaction as soon as possible."

Some time later the young man returns once more with a chicken, sprouted millet, or beer for the elders of the village. He makes

584 visits and presents a few small gifts. This state of affairs goes on for one or several years. Finally the head of the family calls together his little council and makes known his intention of giving So-and-So's daughter to X... from such-and-such village. There is seldom a refusal since he has sole authority to give the girls in marriage. The young man is then sent to make the acquaintance of his prospective in-laws. As soon as he is presented, he makes a small gift (usually [175] 100 to 1,000 cowries are given).

If the girl is the oldest daughter, her fiancé is expected to bring a sheep, a hoe, a guinea hen, and some beer.

●585 The young man is then told the date on which he may send for his fiancée. He has nothing further to do, except to make some preparations and to wait. When the girl is brought to him, he kills some chickens and a goat if he has one, and he has food prepared for the girl's escort. He must also give cowries to them, the amount depending on his own resources.

In many villages the girls married in this way never leave their husbands for fear of being cursed by their parents and condemned never to see their native villages again.

574 Finally, if the wife gives birth, the husband sends a chicken to
851 the village elder and the wife goes there to visit.

787 Girls who are hostile to a husband. These are girls whom the
584 soothsayers point out as hostile to a husband.

Although these girls are promised at an early age, just like other girls, they must not know that they are engaged, and if their fiancés should by chance come to visit, they are treated like ordinary guests who have just happened by.

583 When such a girl reaches seventeen, her fiancé arranges with her family to send her to the waterhole, the well, or the nearest market.

[176] The fiancé selects a group of his strongest friends, plies them with beer, and sends them off with instructions to abduct his fiancée on the way. The latter, accompanied by a woman or by other girls, is surrounded unexpectedly and seized by strong arms despite the resistance, often quite vigorous, of her brothers or her companions. She is then taken to the home of her husband.

A few days later some people are designated to take the girl's effects to her husband's home and to receive the traditional gifts.

588 wears a bracelet made of copper and iron intertwined, kalembanga,
582 which is believed to protect the wearer against any disaster due to
751 the technically illegal marriage. The kalembanga is also believed to protect the children born of the union from sudden death.

Polygyny

595 Polygyny is the rule throughout Mossi country. It is true that the number of wives varies with the resources and position of the individual. Mere heads of compounds who are somewhat well off may have [180] from five to eight wives and numerous fiancées. The
[584] latter are usually reserved for the dakompa (older sons and younger brothers of the head of the family), assuming that these men will in turn render real service and be completely devoted to the head of the household.

There are many reasons for the practice of polygyny, but the main one is procreation. The under-nourished natives must rely on
[853 the mother's milk to feed their babies and must therefore wait two
834] or even three years before resuming sexual relations with a wife who is a nursing mother. Therefore, they prefer to have several wives.

Consummation

● 585 When the young girl is taken to her husband, she is entrusted to a woman whom she will henceforth treat as "mother."

A few days after the departure of the cortege, whose composition we shall describe presently, the man claims his fiancée. She is taken at night to the nuptial hut, which has no special features, and no one is present at the consummation of the marriage. In this respect the Mossi differ from the Bambara, who have a griot or an old woman accompany the couple to help the young man, if necessary, overcome the girl's resistance.

It goes without saying that if the girl is found to be a virgin, the [181] husband is overjoyed. If she is not a virgin, the love which he may have felt for her before possessing her is much diminished. The man shows the girl his anger, certain that she will at least tell her mother about it.

585 The following morning the new wife returns to the hut of her "mother." She is summoned by her husband several nights in a row before he resumes the practice of receiving each wife in turn.

The Bride Price. The Basket of the Fiancée

583 Bride price. Mossi custom does not require a bride price. The one thousand to several thousand cowries that are required, depending on the man's resources, plus chickens, a sheep and beer, are not a bride price, properly speaking, or "selling a daughter." Nothing is asked which could not be repaid one day without too much difficulty.

585 The fiancée's basket. The basket of the fiancée contains the girl's clothes, some soap, some karite butter, some cowries, gourds, and ladles. The basket is carried by one of the women in the cortege.

The cortege. The fiancée's cortege is usually composed of a young girl, a woman who has borne children, and a boy.

They proceed to the house of the village elder. [182] The relatives of the bridegroom provide food for them for several days. Finally, they are given a farewell dinner consisting of baskets of millet cakes and mutton, goat, or merely some chickens. They are also given cowries.

585 431 In addition to these gifts, the sum of 444 or 1,400 cowries (the "virginity price") is sewn into a sack and sent to the girl's mother. If the bride was given by a chief, he is entitled to from 2,000 to 3,000 cowries if the husband is an ordinary Moaga, 10,000 to 50,000 cowries if the husband himself is a naba. In this last case, the women in the cortege receive skirts, and the boy, a robe.

585 152 Note. While it is true that among many peoples a girl goes to her husband joyfully, it is quite the contrary in Mossi country. There is a real struggle to separate the girl from her parents. Many lose sleep and their appetites. On the day of departure they weep bitterly, and those who do not are insulted by the old women.

582 Marriage is exogamous, that is, relatives do not marry if their
564 kinship is known. There are no sharply defined caste lines. The Mossi marry Yarsé Malinké, Bousanse, and Gourounsi, but cannot marry Peul nor Haoussa. A Mossi who does not belong to a caste may choose his wife among Mossi who do belong to one. The latter do not intermarry freely; iron workers cannot marry from among the drummers.

584 But to go back to our story. The girl has grown. The suitor has already made numerous gifts. In short, the time has come to proceed with the wedding. The girl's father /31/ summons the betrothed and tells him: "Come and see me on such-and-such a day with a chicken." The suitor joyfully returns to his village and tells the elders that he was told to bring a chicken. On the day set, the suitor takes the bird to the girl's family, accompanied by his friends. He hands over the chicken, and everyone goes to the home of the head of the family, or, in his absence, to a village elder. The father states before all present that he wishes to give his daughter to So-and-So. Congratulations are exchanged, and everyone goes home. Now the festivities must be arranged, the relatives and friends must be notified, and the millet beer must be brewed. Meanwhile, the relatives and friends who have heard the good news come to greet the bridegroom and bring him fifty or a hundred cowries to help him meet the expenses of the festivities.

When everything is ready, the bridegroom takes 500 cowries and a rooster to the girl's father and 500 cowries to the elder in whose household the bride shall live until her wedding day. The girl's relatives have prepared dinner, while the bridegroom provides the
[302] drink. A relative of the groom shaves the bride's forehead in a circle, and she retires to the inner courtyard where her father's wives wash her thoroughly and tie a cotton cord around her waist. She dons a white garment and goes to offer a gourd of beer to her betrothed who has remained outside with his friends. Everyone thanks the girl's parents and then they all leave. On the day after next, the groom sends his friends to greet the family of his betrothed with a basket of
[431] millet flour, four kalro pellets, and salt, which are all distributed among the village people. These festivities, with their attendant ceremonies, come closest to a formal betrothal.

585 The girl, however, remains with the head of the family or with the elder who takes his place! When all these preliminary ceremonies are over, the groom sends daily for his bride. Once the trousseau has

585 been gathered together in a basket — clothes varying in number with the family's wealth, gourds, a pot for the sauce, a wooden spoon to stir the millet mush — the father tells the groom's messenger that the wedding date has been set for a certain day, nearly always on a Friday, sometimes Thursday. For the second time, the groom prepares the festivities and again the food and the drink. In the evening, his friends go out to meet the bride who is accompanied by her family. When nearing the village, they all let loose merry cries, "you, you", the bride pretends to run away, and the young men run after her and bear her on their shoulders to the head of the groom's family or to one of his uncles. And the party begins. The men eat millet mush [262] and a chicken; the women, millet mush and a guinea hen. They all drink beer, dance, and sing.

[302] On the following morning, the groom's relatives shave the bride's head, and that of her husband if she is his first wife, because their way of life has changed: the young man has become the master of a hut, and the young girl a wife. In the evening, the friends and relatives of the new husband go to the bride's village bearing in this order: a sheep killed at the husband's house, jars of beer, and finally the sarabo /millet mush/. The bride's relatives follow in complete silence /32/ and without greeting anybody. When they arrive at the home of the bride's family, the bearer of the sheep and the women who carry the millet beer and sarabo go into the inner courtyard and put down their loads; then they come out and dance, while the in-laws have the food transferred to other containers. The jars are returned to the bearers, who are driven away with blows by millet stalks and a sprinkling of water mixed with ashes.

All the while, the bride stays in the soukala of the elder, watched closely by his first wife. She remains shut in for several days, until the elder finally decides to send her to her husband. His wife prepares millet mush, sauce, and meat, and brings a jug of beer. The old women assemble and accompany the bride to the home of her husband. He returns the courtesy to the elder on the following day. Henceforth, they are married at long last.

If the new husband is prosperous, he goes to thank his in-laws a [431] few days after the festivities. In leather pouches sewn all around, he offers 1, 300 cowries to his father-in-law and 1, 400 to his mother-in-law. If he can, he also offers beer, two chickens, and a sheep. These last gifts are less essential, but if he fails to offer the cowries, the in-laws may seize his wife's children and keep them until the thank-you gifts have been received.

585 It should be noted that these ceremonies are often curtailed. They
184 may also vary in ways that will not be described here. Sometimes they may not take place at all. This happens when the girl already has a husband prior to her birth, or when she is part of an inheritance. In such cases her relatives merely take her to her husband.

585 No sacrifices are performed during the marriage ceremonies. The
782 husband does offer a sacrifice on the day he builds a hut for his wife, and at the place where the structure is to be erected. The girl's mother consults the sorcerer a few times to find out if her daughter will be welcomed in her new home, and to know which sacrifice must be offered to ward off illness while she lives with her husband. She communicates the answer to the girl's father, and he himself offers the prescribed sacrifice.

602 In theory, the husband owes nothing else to his in-laws. In practice,
431 he would hold himself in poor esteem if he were not to present them with a few more gifts, especially on important feast days. When his maize is harvested, he sets aside a few ears for his wife's relatives; when his millet is threshed, he is sure to send some to his father-in-law; whenever he organizes any sort of festivity, his in-laws are invited; and he personally helps them in their work.

586 There is no divorce in the formal sense of a judgment rendered by law. A husband may send his wife back to her relatives if she steals, if she is lazy, or especially if she commits adultery, but even in the latter case his action will be regarded with disapproval. It is a husband's duty to watch over his wife and, if necessary, to discipline her. The man who repudiates his wife makes himself unpopular and cannot obtain new wives. It also happens, and this occurs more frequently, that the wife runs away and goes back to her family, /33/ either because she complains of ill treatment, or because she is not happy with her husband, or for some other reason of a more or less dubious character. If the husband manages to catch up with her before she gets home, no great problem is involved. He merely beats her and shuts her in for a few days. If she does reach her relatives, especially if they are in connivance, the husband must present a few gifts to them and even to his wife. The in-laws usually try to convince their daughter to return to her husband, but they do not force her to do so. Even the naba, when called upon to intervene, limits himself to the use of moral authority; his threats usually persuade the woman to return to her husband, who may himself use force if he wishes.

596 with the help of his father and family head (which is by far the
423 most frequent occurrence), /548/ while in such a case it had for-
178 merly been considered family property. Finally, the soukala came to be regarded in every case as personal property and to be transmitted for that reason to the oldest son. This, incidentally, is the same evolution that applied to property in general, as we shall see shortly.

593 Now, here is the third and last variant of the prevailing Mossi family type. Nowadays, this variant is by far the most widespread.

1. Every household lives separately, works separately, and procures its own food and subsistence. The help of neighbors is enlisted to clear the fields.

584 2. Every household gives its own children in marriage. The family head no longer does so.

593 As soon as a man has a son, he chooses a little girl who will go to the boy when he reaches puberty. He visits the girl's relatives from time to time and offers them gifts.

584 When the girl is old enough to be married, he takes 50,000
583 cowries (if he is wealthy), skirt cloths, salt, kola nuts, and gives it
593 all to the relatives. Then, the old women in the daughter's family lead her to the home of the betrothed man's relatives. The father kills a sheep, makes a lot of couscous, buys dolo to celebrate her arrival. Then he offers the girl six or seven baskets containing respectively 1,000, 2,000, 3,000, 4,000, 5,000, 6,000, and 7,000 cowries. The young man himself gives his betrothed four or five skirts. If he is very wealthy, he gives her one or two little girls as slaves.

585 On the evening when the wedding is celebrated, the father asks
[426] one of his neighbors to lend him a hut, and the young married pair are sent there all alone (they will remain there as long as their soukala is not built). On the morrow, the feasting begins. People dance and feast for seven days at the gates of the father's soukala, at least when the girl is a virgin. If she is not, the feasting is curtailed but nevertheless lasts for another three days.

583 When the father is poor, he offers a few kola nuts to the girl's
591 /549/ father (six or ten). He gives the father and mother some firewood he gathered in the bush, straw to make séko /Tr.: mats/ for door, 2,000 cowries, a skirt cloth. He kills a sheep to make

593 adultery except with a woman who is already married. A deceived
837 wife who wishes to take her revenge need only reveal to the spouse of her husband's partner the criminal relations that victimize them both."

593 Let us add that another of the husband's duties is to render help
602 to his wives' relatives if the latter are in needy circumstances.

Of course, the failure to fulfill these obligations could cause
593 the wife to request a divorce. Divorce thus exists among the Mossi,
586 although women rarely resort to it. The bride price is never claimed back by the husband, even if the woman has remained sterile. The children always devolve to the husband.

The husband, on the other hand, may turn out his wife, but Mossi husbands do not usually make use of this right.

585 Let us add that the matter of the girl's virginity at marriage
836 is settled by the Mossi as by most other Blacks. If a girl is bought or betrothed from a very young age, she must preserve herself intact for her future husband. An unbetrothed girl, however, is free to use her own body when she reaches puberty, and if she marries later she cannot be reprimanded for having become a woman prior to her wedding.

Let us now proceed to the status of slaves.

567 Two kinds of slaves are distinguished among the Mossi, aside from the usual distinction between trade slaves and house slaves.

1. The daparé (etymologically, "followers," "men who walk behind their master," from da, "man" and paré, "behind"). They are unmarried slaves.

2. The bagaré ("men of the enclosure"). Those are married captives.

/565/ The daparé live with their master and always remain at his disposal for any work that may come up. They have no small individual plots, therefore, and their master provides them with food and clothing at all times. When they reach marriageable age, their master buys them a wife (or at least it was so in the old days; she would cost the master about 60,000 or 70,000 cowries), and then they settle on their own.

431 "I. If by negligence, forgetfulness, or because of an absence
583 (journey), the prospective husband does not make the annual gifts, he will be refused the girl on the day when he comes to have her taken to his home, and he will lose all his rights over her.

"Nevertheless, he will regain all his privileges if in one installment he pays to the head of the girl's family and to her mother all the gifts which he ought to have made during the period of his absence or forgetfulness.

"The head of the family cannot refuse this collective gift and thereby oppose the marriage.

"II. The husband has forgotten to make the gifts and does not come to the home of the family head when the young girl has reached puberty.

"A. If he lives in the area, the failure to call on the head of the family at the required time is regarded as a relinquishment of his rights over the girl. The head of the family may then dispose of her again.

"B. The fiancé has been away on a journey for a long time and is still absent when the girl reaches puberty.

"The head of the family has the fiancé's brother called to him. He offers the girl to him as his bride. The brother is not required to accept, and if he does not, the head of the family recovers all his rights over the girl."

582 Celebration of the marriage. Consummation. —"The girl must have reached puberty (15 or 16 years) in order to be taken to her husband's hut. It is even customary to wait six months or a year after she was first in a state of zim (zim means "blood" in Mossi).

As for the husband, it is equally necessary that he must have attained the age of 17 or 18.

●585 The formalities of the marriage ceremony are very simple in Yatenga.

When the betrothed girl has reached puberty, the husband calls on the family head to ask for her. The family head can tell him /239/ to wait six months or a year at most, a delay which the fiancé is required to observe, but usually the head of the family replies that his
[731 future wife may be fetched in a few days. The fiancé then hands him
273] a bag and two goatskins full of millet and withdraws. This grain is used to make dolo which is drunk by the girl's entire family.

585 Each woman living in the same soukala makes a gift of one or two
431 gourds to the girl's mother. The father and the head of the family give her two large baskets. These objects will make up the bride's trousseau.

585 On the appointed day the fiancé sends two men of his family, one of whom is usually his brother, to fetch his bride. These two natives [431] come to the home of the family head with 13 canari /jars/ of dolo. Then the feasting begins.

The father takes his daughter to the hut of the ancestors, cuts the [782] throat of a chicken on the fetish stone so the future marriage will be happy, and discloses to her the name of her husband.

The young fiancée, escorted by two old women of her family and the two emissaries of her fiancé, proceeds to the latter's home.

For four days the young bride will stay in a hut alone with the old women. During this period, the old women give her all the customary advice and show her the course of behavior she must follow to please her future spouse.

The bridegroom comes every day to greet the old women, but during this interview the young girl takes great care to hide her face from him.

On the third day, in the evening, the husband has a sheep and goat slaughtered. He chooses a leg of mutton which he puts aside with the [252] animal's skin, and he has a large quantity of sarabou /millet mush/ cooked along with the remaining meat. He takes the whole thing to the old women. They distribute the sarabou among all the members of the family and carefully put aside the leg of mutton and the skin which they will take on the following day to the girl's mother to show her that her daughter has indeed been delivered to her husband.

Then the husband has his bride brought to his hut where the marriage is consummated.

There is nothing compulsory about this four-day waiting period. It happens frequently that the consummation of the marriage takes place on the day following the young girl's arrival. Occasionally it is delayed for several days when, as sometimes happens, an elderly fiancé gives the bride who was originally intended for him to his son or to some other member of the family.

The marriage is valid from the day of the departure of the old women who brought the girl to her husband's soukala.

The consummation of the marriage is by no means necessary to validate the union. If the husband neglects his new bride for too long, however (a year, for example), she may demand explanations." /240/

582 Impediments to marriage. —"The impediments to marriage," says Vadier, "are as follows.

582 the household a more serious and more binding affair among the
836 Bambara than in this particular region. /241/

Vadier says on the subject, "The fact that a young girl has had relations with a native other than her husband prior to marriage is by no means an impediment to the marriage.

"Many betrothed girls have lovers. It even happens quite frequently that their fathers are forced to go in search of them at the homes of the young men with whom they have run away. Actually, this matter is of no concern to the husband. As long as he gets the woman, the rest matters little to him. It is not unusual for a girl to bring a child
[848] which she had by another man into her husband's home. This child eventually returns to its natural father."

582 This picture is painted in rather bleak colors. In reality, fathers
836 and mothers do try, as best they can, to prevent their daughters from
585 taking lovers. They do not like to see them go to the "tom-tom," but they can scarcely keep them from going, and often the "tom-tom,"
626 like our own country dances, plays havoc with a young girl's virtue.
684 If the girl says nothing, everything goes well. Since among the Mossi there is no exhibition of the skirt cloth following the consummation of the marriage, there is no evidence. Even if the husband knows ahead of time or finds out at the last moment, he says nothing out of shame, to avoid being scorned. When the father leads his daughter to the hut of the ancestors before sending her to her fiancé, however, she often does not dare enter the hut. Having lost her virginity and fearing that she might be killed by the ancestors, she admits her wrongdoing to her father. Sometimes she may have the courage or the effrontery to enter the ancestral hut, but later, if she falls ill in her husband's hut, she will interpret her condition as the ancestors' vengeance for the sort of moral perjury she committed by entering their hut in a state of transgression, and she will confess to her husband what she has done. In both cases the lover is confronted, in the first instance by the father, in the second by the husband, and a goat, two canari of dolo, and a chicken are demanded from him. A sacrifice will be offered to the ancestors with these various items to ask their forgiveness, they will pardon the wife and the lover, and order will be restored.

848 Sometimes, as mentioned earlier, a child is the fruit of a girl's passion. The lover having made reparation and the ancestors being satisfied, the husband will accept the child along with the girl, but

11: Skinner. E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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595 who did live at the palace, only a small minority prepared the ruler's meals
644 and shared his bed. Dim Delobson reports that Mogho Naba Kom II (1905–42) had thirty-seven wives. His son, Mogho Naba Sagha II (1942–
[177] 57), had twenty.[24] The present Mogho Naba, Kougri, recently married
[178] according to Western tradition and is officially monogamous.[25] There seems to be a general trend toward fewer wives among Mossi chiefs.

643 Mossi rulers never married for the purpose of forming state alliances,
581 and their marriages had no political significance. The Mogho Naba's mar-
582 riages were exogamous with regard to the royal lineage and to his mother's minimal lineage. Aside from these restrictions, however, the Mogho Naba could marry women from any Mossi lineage or group, including serfs, slaves, and foreign populations. It is said that when Mogho Naba Sanum (1850–90) despaired of having an heir by a Mossi woman, he took a Fulani wife.[26]

643
●586 The Mogho Naba had no formal wedding ceremony. The task of intro-
[302] ducing a new wife to the royal harem fell to the Pughtiema. She and her assistants welcomed the wife in a prescribed fashion. First they shaved all the hair from her body. They then bathed her in warm water to which shea butter and ritual herbs had been added, and during the bath they recited the ruler's genealogy to impress her with her new status.[27] The Pughtiema advised her on the need for proper deportment, and warned her that
[301] adultery was punished by death. To close the ceremony, a smith fastened to the girl's wrists and ankles the silver or brass bracelets that identified her as a wife of the Mogho Naba. If the bride was still a child, she was often allowed to return to her father's house until she reached childbearing age. If she was past the age of puberty, her marriage was consummated without further ceremony, and she joined the ranks of the ruler's wives.

644 The wives who lived in the palace were divided into three groups. The
595 first group included the wives who lived with the Pughtiema in a section of the palace harem called the *zaka sanga* ("large courtyard"). These women were all past childbearing age and no longer received nocturnal visits from the Mogho Naba. They had their own fields in the vicinity of the palace and cultivated them with the aid of the samande-kamba, the pages they had adopted, and their own children. The women of the second group, those of the *zagbilin* ("small courtyard"), were mostly in their thirties or forties and still sexually active. They received occasional visits from the Mogho Naba, but fewer than his younger wives. These women also cultivated their fields with the help of the young men of the court.

The third group of wives, the *dogunba* ("keepers of the household"), was the most important. The dogunba prepared the ruler's meals and satis-

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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When a woman has a number of stillbirthr or
845 loses her children when they are still babies, however, it is believed
761 than these children were embodiments of the same *kinkirsi* (spirits)
776 who must be tricked into remaining on earth when it returns, and
443 the market place is chosen as the site for this trickery. As soon as such
851 a woman gives birth to a child, and old woman places it in a basket
443 and on the next market day takes it to the market place. Her intention is to "sell" the child in the hope that it would not die if owned by someone other than its mother. The old woman walks around the market place shouting: "I have something to sell!" Invariably a man will walk up to her, and after ascertaining the contents of the basket, offer to buy it. The price varies with the fortune of the man, but traditionally the amount paid has been 500 cowries or their equivalent. The man takes the child for a few minutes and then returns it to its vendor, telling her in a loud voice so that the kinkirsi will hear: "I would like you to give this child to 'X' (the child's mother) to be reared for me and I will pay for its upbringing and will come
[551] for the child in a few years. He then gives the child the name *Yamba*
[553] (slave), or *Yemdaogo* (male slave) if male and *Yempoko* (female slave) if a girl. The old woman then returns the child to its mother, relating what has passed in the market and indicating who the "owner" of her child is. The "owner" of the child may not even see the child again, and naturally does not take this ownership seriously. In many cases the money with which he bought the child was given to him by the child's father.

852 The market also plays an important part in the circumcision and
443 incision ceremonies of Mossi boys and girls. For about two to three months after the actual operations the young children, especially the boys are secluded in the circumcision lodges or compounds and have almost no contact with the village population. Their re-introduction to society always takes place on the great market day. The parents of the children buy new clothing for them this occasion, and on the appointed day the boys or girls parade together in the market and are offered gifts by the market people. Later in the day, they are dismissed and individually feted by their relatives.

585 Owing to the relatively unceremonious nature of Mossi marriages,
76 the market does not play a role in Mossi weddings. However, the
554 same thing cannot be said about the last important *rite de passage,*
443 especially the funeral of a chief, or important elder. Prior to the intervention of the French, and to a lesser extent even today, the announcement of the death of an important ruler was seen as the breakdown of law and order and was ritually dramatized by a popular raid
[555] on the markets throughout the territories (Skinner : ms). During the interregnum the vendors are subject to constant raids by members of

837 588 548 [586] Free Marriage. The only marriage which can be called free, since it is accepted by both parties, is that of a woman who is unable to endure her first husband and leaves her village with the intention of becoming a prostitute. Divorce is quite rare because the Moaga does not readily agree to it. As she passes through a village, she asks for hospitality, and the news soon spreads that a "free" woman is staying at such-and-such a place. The young men hasten to her and seek to win her favors. Gifts are sent to her, and her hostess is used as go-between. Nine times out of ten, the woman accepts the candidate preferred by her hostess. After some questions concerning his origins and circumstances, one of the young men is accepted as a temporary lover. His comrades come to his aid, and for a few days there is a veritable festival in the village. There is a slight change in the [177] regular fare, since meat is added to the mush; chickens, raised with considerable difficulty, are used for this special treat. This semblance of marriage is thus celebrated. As has been pointed out, however, there has been no divorce, and the deserted husband soon learns the whereabouts of his wife. As soon as he finds out what village she is in -- it may be 100 kilometers away -- he promptly sets out, carrying in a sheepskin enough ground millet for the journey and 500 to 1,000 cowries. He also carries a rooster which, along with the shells, will be offered to the chief of the canton where the lover lives, to whom he will make his claim.

[578] Unions of this sort give rise to three-quarters of the quarrels with which the canton or province chiefs have to deal. A young Moaga who desires peace of mind never regularizes the situation by a so-called marriage even though he may not be able to resist the temptation to harbor the woman for a few days. In any event the affair is easily broken off since sooner or later the woman, eager for change, will want a new lover.

583 Thus, it may be said that although forced marriage has the disadvantage of having a girl marry without her consent, still it also has advantages and a degree of security because the woman, fearing [178] her parents' wrath, rarely leaves her husband. Furthermore, this type of marriage is vastly preferable from the standpoint of peace

843 4. A pregnant woman must not step over her husband; this would make him ill.

833 5. The sexual act may be performed with impunity in the courtyard of a dwelling (at night). Otherwise, it is expressly forbidden to do it outside the house and in any way other than lying on a mat or Peulh secco, in any case never directly on the ground.

845 6. The delivery will be difficult and complicated if the child was conceived in adultery. If the woman is to be delivered, it is
837 absolutely necessary that she confess the name of her accomplice
847 in the presence of witnesses. In this case, if the husband demands it -- and he always does -- the newborn child is killed by the erring wife immediately after it is born (1). [185]

> 1. The procedure is as follows. Some young mothers simply twist its neck and strangle it. Others put the baby in a jar of lukewarm water. The baby instinctively drinks and finally drowns.

837 Adultery. Before the arrival of the French, adultery committed
684 by the nakomsé (descendants of naba) was punished by the death of the guilty couple. Among ordinary Mossi, the culprit was simply banished from the family.

However, if the lover was not a relative of the woman's husband, he was forbidden henceforth to come to the village where the woman lived. If he failed to observe this rule, he risked being killed.

As a general rule, a Moaga woman takes a lover in a village
837 some distance away from her husband's village and not far from her own. When she asks her husband's permission to visit her family, she profits by the opportunity to spend some time with her lover or to let him know that she is going to her parents' home.

Dissolution of Marriage. Divorce.

586 A divorce may be imposed by a husband who no longer loves his wife, but neither ill-health nor sterility may be invoked for the
842 purpose. In the latter case, it is simply assumed that God does not want the woman to have children. She is often regarded with scorn, but sometimes no attention is paid to her lack of children.

586 The new husband of a woman who has been deserted does not [186] and cannot maintain any relations whatever with the former husband. In any event, the latter would never agree to see his successor, even though the divorce had been arranged with his consent. Besides, the new marriage is often contracted in another village.

The Question of Nationality Among the Mossi

641 In Mossi country the child takes the father's nationality, and any child born of a Moaga subject is himself a Moaga.

593 Any child, male or female, is under the authority, first, of his father and, above him, of the head of the family. A mother may never, under any circumstances, give her daughter in marriage.

641 If a Moaga woman happens to marry a foreigner, she does not acquire her husband's nationality. In the same way, a foreign girl (a Bambara or a Djerma, for example) does not lose her own nationality when she marries a Moaga. In the eyes of her husband's relatives, as well as the rest of the populace, she remains a foreigner, required to practice the customs of her husband but nevertheless a foreigner.

Thus, when a Moaga subject chooses to emigrate, the nationality of his children who remain in Mossi territory, whether minor or of age, does not ipso facto change.

A legitimate child takes on his father's nationality [187] even though the foreign-born father may have a Moaga as his wife.

Children born of a Moaga father and either a Moaga or foreign-born mother are Mossi.

[848] As for illegitimate children, they take the mother's nationality unless they are recognized, and this can be done only if the mother marries before the birth of the child.

If the child has not been legitimized until after his birth, he will sooner or later suffer from the omission, since his bastard origin will not long remain a secret.

Loss of nationality. The Mossi may lose their nationality only under the following two conditions.

1. When the Moaga subject has been expelled from his village for some serious crime, sent away by his relatives, and no longer regarded

585 It should be noted that these ceremonies are often curtailed. They
184 may also vary in ways that will not be described here. Sometimes they may not take place at all. This happens when the girl already has a husband prior to her birth, or when she is part of an inheritance. In such cases her relatives merely take her to her husband.

585 No sacrifices are performed during the marriage ceremonies. The
782 husband does offer a sacrifice on the day he builds a hut for his wife, and at the place where the structure is to be erected. The girl's mother consults the sorcerer a few times to find out if her daughter will be welcomed in her new home, and to know which sacrifice must be offered to ward off illness while she lives with her husband. She communicates the answer to the girl's father, and he himself offers the prescribed sacrifice.

602 In theory, the husband owes nothing else to his in-laws. In practice,
431 he would hold himself in poor esteem if he were not to present them with a few more gifts, especially on important feast days. When his maize is harvested, he sets aside a few ears for his wife's relatives; when his millet is threshed, he is sure to send some to his father-in-law; whenever he organizes any sort of festivity, his in-laws are invited; and he personally helps them in their work.

586 There is no divorce in the formal sense of a judgment rendered by law. A husband may send his wife back to her relatives if she steals, if she is lazy, or especially if she commits adultery, but even in the latter case his action will be regarded with disapproval. It is a husband's duty to watch over his wife and, if necessary, to discipline her. The man who repudiates his wife makes himself unpopular and cannot obtain new wives. It also happens, and this occurs more frequently, that the wife runs away and goes back to her family, /33/ either because she complains of ill treatment, or because she is not happy with her husband, or for some other reason of a more or less dubious character. If the husband manages to catch up with her before she gets home, no great problem is involved. He merely beats her and shuts her in for a few days. If she does reach her relatives, especially if they are in connivance, the husband must present a few gifts to them and even to his wife. The in-laws usually try to convince their daughter to return to her husband, but they do not force her to do so. Even the naba, when called upon to intervene, limits himself to the use of moral authority; his threats usually persuade the woman to return to her husband, who may himself use force if he wishes.

586 It nevertheless happens, though very rarely, that the husband is unable to convince his wife and returns home alone. No one troubles the wife from then on, and her relatives give her full freedom. The grudge of the rejected husband may be persistent, however, and his vengeance frightful. The bride price is not returned; the husband should have known how to keep his wife. It is nevertheless acknowledged that the children born of the union, boys or girls, belong to the father, and he does not fail to claim them when they are grown, or if they run away to their mother.

564 467 Negro populations often contain caste groups, set apart from each other by tight barriers. The most outstanding of these are the rules prohibiting marriage between members of the same caste or between those who belong to a caste and those who do not. Such prohibitions do not exist among the Mossi, except in the sense mentioned earlier. Although three caste-like groups exist among them, drummers, smiths, and undertakers, they are castes only in the sense that those who do not belong to such a family cannot exercise the profession. It might be more accurate to call them guilds.

533 [534] The drummers (binda) are those who play the bindré, a sort of large gourd with an aperture about 40 centimeters in diameter and covered with hide. Only those who belong to the drummers' family may play on this drum, which apparently is peculiar to the Mossi, [782] but anyone may play on the other drums. The drummers are present at all sacrifices offered by the naba; on Friday, the day of sacrifice, they go and pay their respects to him. When sacrifices are offered, they are entitled to the head of the victim. They are present at all [764] burials, where they play their drum and receive a remuneration which varies with the wealth of the deceased. If it is one of their members who died, they receive neither cowries nor food. They go to war [727] with their drums. If they are so unfortunate as to be made prisoners, they are never sold but ruthlessly killed; this is done either to prevent them from going back into the fray and stirring the warriors to sack the village, or because no one would want to buy them since they belong to a naba who would retaliate against their captors, or for both reasons at once. The drummers are the country's griot, a term hallowed by custom. They know the genealogy of every naba and sing his praises. Each province chief has a number of drummers and never travels without taking some of them with him. At other times they go to /34/ the market and follow the best-dressed people, singing

593 837 684 made use of this right quite rarely. The woman has productive value in terms of children and labor. And then, in the majority of cases, the husband would merely fulfill the dearest of his wife's desires by doing so."

593 586 While the Mossi wife has duties toward her husband, the latter also has obligations toward his wives.

"A wife," says the Monographie, "has the right to demand from her husband more than mere platonic relations.

"Should the latter prevail, however, owing to the husband's impotence or illness, or simply as a result of ill will, the neglected wife would communicate the situation to the first wife of the family head, who would in turn inform her spouse.

"Should the husband's behavior be caused by physical incapacity, the woman would be taken from him and given to one of his brothers, or if there were none to his nearest relative, his sons excepted. Should his behavior be due merely to ill will, however, remonstrances would be made to him, and should these prove fruitless at the end of a few days, the woman would be considered free to return to her family."

593 837 Just as the husband owes his wives fulfillment of the conjugal duty, he also owes them relative faithfulness.

"The husband has an obligation of relative faithfulness toward his wives, that of not keeping a concubine at the conjugal domicile. [586] Should he transgress this rule, his wives would be fully entitled to obtain a divorce from him, unless he should agree to turn out his partner as a result of his wives' complaint or the intervention of the family head.

"This rule is strictly obeyed, except for the Mossi of the Kipirsi who allow the presence of the husband's concubines among his legitimate wives, and who have rules governing their respective positions.

"In any case the husband is everywhere allowed to /564/ deceive his wives as he pleases outside the conjugal domicile, and they are not entitled to complain about this in any way. Nevertheless, they nearly always have at their disposal a practically infallible although circuitous means of causing the greatest inconvenience to the fickle husband and his partner. As a result of the custom that pledges girls in marriage at a very early age, a husband can hardly commit

593 adultery except with a woman who is already married. A deceived
837 wife who wishes to take her revenge need only reveal to the spouse of her husband's partner the criminal relations that victimize them both."

593 Let us add that another of the husband's duties is to render help
602 to his wives' relatives if the latter are in needy circumstances.

Of course, the failure to fulfill these obligations could cause
593 the wife to request a divorce. Divorce thus exists among the Mossi,
586 although women rarely resort to it. The bride price is never claimed back by the husband, even if the woman has remained sterile. The children always devolve to the husband.

The husband, on the other hand, may turn out his wife, but Mossi husbands do not usually make use of this right.

585 Let us add that the matter of the girl's virginity at marriage
836 is settled by the Mossi as by most other Blacks. If a girl is bought or betrothed from a very young age, she must preserve herself intact for her future husband. An unbetrothed girl, however, is free to use her own body when she reaches puberty, and if she marries later she cannot be reprimanded for having become a woman prior to her wedding.

567 Let us now proceed to the status of slaves.

Two kinds of slaves are distinguished among the Mossi, aside from the usual distinction between trade slaves and house slaves.

1. The daparé (etymologically, "followers," "men who walk behind their master," from da, "man" and paré, "behind"). They are unmarried slaves.

2. The bagaré ("men of the enclosure"). Those are married captives.

/565/ The daparé live with their master and always remain at his disposal for any work that may come up. They have no small individual plots, therefore, and their master provides them with food and clothing at all times. When they reach marriageable age, their master buys them a wife (or at least it was so in the old days; she would cost the master about 60,000 or 70,000 cowries), and then they settle on their own.

431 cowries , the head of the family would be rejected. The head of the
583 family would certainly not fail to tell him that in promising a girl he intended to give her as a bride and not to sell her. Should the husband insist, he would simply be driven away."

581 Marriage, therefore, is not regarded as purchase among the Mossi,
586 contrary to Malinké and Bambara practices, and in this sense it is imbued among them with greater dignity. Unfortunately, this absence of a bride price permits an easy rupture of the marriage ties, while this is not the case among the Bambara and Malinké where the woman is bound more firmly to her duties. The household, therefore, is less securely grounded among the Mossi than among the Mandé, and thus evil results from good.

581 As a rule, the marriage bond is much looser and more fragile among
583 the Voltaic tribes (Bobo, Gourounsi, Mossi, Habbé /Habe/, etc.) than among the Mandé groups (Bambara, Malinké, etc.), and this is related to the lack of a real bride price. Where there is a bride price, the young girl is sold. If she wishes to leave her husband once she is married, however, considering that a bride price of some importance is difficult to refund (since improvident family heads immediately set out to squander it, while more serious people use it right away to buy a girl for some young man of the family), it has become customary to oppose categorically any demands to break the marriage bond. Thus, while betrothal has greater dignity among the Voltaic tribes, marriage itself has more staying power and more seriousness among the Mandé, and the household has greater soundness. /238/

Now to return to the Mossi.

431 Let us note first that the offering of gifts allows for some flexibility.
583 A rich young man will make much more important gifts than a poor
556 man. He will not give a large sum of cowries, but he may give significant amounts of clothing, foodstuffs (salt, etc.), and animals to the head of his fiancée's family or to her mother. On the other hand, a poor man will give a bundle of firewood which he has just gathered in the bush and a chicken, and this payment will be considered sufficient.

431 Although the girl is not sold, her fiancé or his father are required
583 to make the gifts prescribed by custom.

"The failure to make those gifts prescribed by custom," says Vadier, "has serious consequences. Let us examine the various situations which might arise.

848 as soon as the baby is old enough to leave its mother, the husband, not wishing to keep it with him, will return the child to its natural father.

582 171 In short, virginity is not rigidly demanded of the girl, although it is considered better and more respectable than non-virginity. The Mossi are not as demanding on this point as the Bambara, and in this, according to my data, they are like all other Voltaic peoples.

684 Let us note one further detail. If the lover from whom reparation is demanded for the damage caused, that is to say, the payment of the goat, chicken, and two canari of dolo, does not want to give them, the husband would formerly appeal /242/ to the Moro Naba, who forced the lover to pay what he owed and in addition confiscated for himself a part of his goods for his salary as a judge. If the lover owned nothing, his family paid for him. Nowadays, the village or canton chiefs are still approached about such matters, and they force the lover to make the customary payment.

593 Rights and duties of the husband and wife.—The husband owes assistance and help to his wife. He must protect her and come to her aid whenever necessary.

The husband must support his wife. To secure food, he usually belongs to a work group, as we have seen earlier. The work group sustains the husband and wife for seven months out of twelve. The rest of the time, the husband maintains the wife with the produce of his small fields. The wife also has her own little patches of cultivated land (as big as a handkerchief), but they are not used to procure food for the household unless the husband is completely destitute. Hence, the produce from these little patches of soil usually goes to the wife herself.

In any case, it is the husband and not the group who must provide clothing for his wife. He does this with the earnings from his small fields.

593 586 If the husband should refuse to support his wife, although able to do so, she would take her complaint to the head of her spouse's family. If the husband still refused to support her after the intervention of the family head, the woman would regain her freedom and could return to her family.

593 The husband must see to his ailing or invalid wife's upkeep until her death.

833 The conjugal duty. —The wife owes her husband the fulfillment of the conjugal duty.

The wife must never evade it except when she is unwell, pregnant, or when she is nursing. We can see, therefore, that among the Mossi in particular and among the Sudanese in general (for the same customs prevail in this area among all Sudanese Negroes) there is great tactfulness. One appreciates this all the more if one bears in mind that [853] here the women suckle their children for two or three years.

"If," says Vadier, "a woman should evade her husband from newlywed shyness or from any other motive, he would first use all the means of persuasion at his command and, especially, beg the wife's relatives to speak to her. Should their exhortations prove vain, constraint [593] would be used by giving the wife a beating or putting her in irons. Finally, should these measures fail to bring the spouse to compliance, [586] she could be turned out by her husband.

"In return, the husband owes the wife the same conjugal duty which he has the right to demand from her.

"Should the husband fail to fulfill it because of impotence, sickness, or simply from ill will, the neglected wife would mention the matter to the family head's first wife, who would in turn notify him.

833 "Should the husband's behavior be caused by physical incapacity, 586 the wife would be taken from him and given to one of his brothers or, if there were none, to his closest male relative, but never to one of his sons. Should it be due merely to ill-feeling, a protest would be made, and should this fail to have any effect after several days, the wife would be allowed to return to her family." /245/

Let us state immediately that these contingencies almost never arise or are so rare as to be practically nonexistent. Custom anticipates them, however, and we have just described what happens when perchance they do arise.

562 Women's property. —Women may own individual property, as we 422 already know, goods which are not shared communally and which belong wholly to them. These goods come from various sources, sometimes the women's small plots of land, sometimes a surplus from the grain they are given to prepare food and which, once made into dolo, is sold for cowries. Sometimes also, the husband's munificence provides them with bracelets and other jewelry. Once given, this jewelry is wholly theirs, and it is added to the trinkets they procure with their own resources.

684 Moro Naba or a member of the aristocracy. When one of his wives
643 deceived him, the Moro Naba had her killed along with her lover.
565 The guilty pair were strangled with cotton bands. Concerning the nakomsé /descendants of nabas/, the true nakomsé (for the descendants of Naba Rawa and Naba Yadega are no longer considered nakomsé at the present day and have reverted to the mass of the common people), the true nakomsé related to royalty since the time of Naba Nabacéré (1625-1655) and his descendants, Pigo (1720-1739) and Kango (1754-1787), when one of their wives had deceived them, they appealed first to the Basi Naba, head of the nakomsé, and presented the guilty pair to him. The Basi Naba sent them on to the Moro Naba, who had the woman and her lover strangled. The lover's property went to the Rassam Naba, chief of the people of Bingo who were in charge of the execution. The same procedure applied when the people of Bingo (house slaves of the Moro Naba) executed the wife of a Moro Naba and her lover. The property, which could not with decency revert to the deceived Moro Naba, went to the Rassam Naba, chief of Bingo.

837 Just as the wife owes faithfulness to her husband, the husband owes
684 faithfulness to his wife or wives. Violations of this rule are frequent, however, and the husband's escapades are far less important than those of the wife. In all events, the husband's infidelity never entails annulment of the marriage. Although the wives do not have the right to say much when their husband deceives them (provided he does not install his concubine in the conjugal household, and this in fact never happens), they do have two possibilities of revenge. The first is very rarely used by the Mossi women of Yatenga. It consists of notifying the husband of the woman with whom their husband is deceiving them. This results in more or less serious trouble for their husband. If their husband ventures to take into his hut for awhile a woman who does not belong to him, it may happen (and this occurs more frequently) that his wives will gather, wait for the guilty woman at the door of the soukala, and give her a good thrashing when she comes out. The husband cannot say anything to them. He himself is protected, so to speak, by his status as a husband and left outside the argument, but revenge is taken on his unlucky accomplice, and while nothing is said to him, he can do nothing to protect her.

● 58% Divorce.—Divorce occurs in Yatenga more frequently than among the Bambara for reasons which were explained above. Here are the

586 principal theoretical cases which may arise concerning divorce. I borrow them from Vadier.

"Divorce occurs in the following cases.

1. By mutual consent. Spouses may separate if they do not get along. This is very unusual, however, and occurs only after the family heads of both spouses intervene amicably. The /247/ wife keeps whatever gifts her husband may have offered her if it was he who first requested a divorce. On the other hand, she leaves them behind if it was she who asked to leave.

2. Insults. Insults addressed to the husband by the wife, or vice versa, are not grounds for divorce. If the husband insults his wife's relatives, divorce does follow. The wife keeps the gifts.

3. Maltreatment. It is acknowledged that the husband may beat his wife in order to discipline her. If the injuries are serious, however, or if the husband continually beats his wife, she becomes free, but the gifts, sheep, goats, bracelets, etc., which she received from her husband remain in his possession.

4. Nonfulfillment of the conjugal duty. (1) On the husband's part. If the husband does not cohabit with his wife, she cannot say anything, but she is free to have lovers outside of her husband's soukala. If the latter complains, the wife leaves him.

[164] If the husband is infected with a venereal disease, a period of three years is granted him for a cure. If he does not get well after this lapse of time, the wife becomes free.

Verification by the naba takes place, as in the preceding case, if the husband is impotent, and likewise the wife returns to her family. The wife retains the gifts in all three cases.

(2) On the wife's part. If the wife refuses to fulfill her conjugal duty, the husband can turn her out and keep the gifts which he gave to her.

If the wife has a venereal disease, the husband cannot take her back.

5. Infidelity. The husband's infidelity is not grounds for divorce. The infidelity of the wife, however, is sufficient reason to terminate the marriage. The gifts remain with the husband.

6. Lack of support. If the husband refuses to provide food and support for his wife, she may request a divorce, but she must leave to her husband the gifts she received from him.

[839] 7. Guilty relations of one of the spouses with animals or with a person accused of having had intercourse with a she-ass.

586 8. Incest. In case incest is committed by one of the spouses, the other has the right to request a divorce. The gifts remain in the husband's possession if the wife is guilty, or revert to her if it was the husband who commited incest."

Such are the major theoretical cases which may result in divorce. Let us first return to one of them: nonfulfillment of the conjugal duty on the husband's part. The results noted by Vadier seem contradictory to those which we mentioned above (under "conjugal duty"). Actually, no contradiction is involved. When a husband does not fulfill his conjugal duty toward his wife (this, incidentally, occurs quite rarely), either the woman has only praise for her husband in all /248/ other respects, or he is cruel and mean and she is dissatisfied with him on other counts. In the first instance, she takes a lover outside her husband's compound, a liaison to which he voluntarily shuts his eyes, and she does not request a divorce. In the second case, she does request one. That is how the situation is actually resolved.

[837]

586 837 Among the instances of divorce enumerated by Vadier, the most frequent, or rather the least rare, are as follows. (1) Continual infidelity on the part of the wife. I say "continual," for as we have already noted, while in principle a single infidelity on the woman's part enables the husband to ask for a divorce, in actual fact a wife is never sent back for a single breach of the marriage contract. Instead, she is merely beaten. If the woman persists in betraying her husband, however, he eventually sends her away. (2) Insults passed between each other by the husband and wife in a moment of anger do not count, but insults by the husband about his wife's relatives or by a wife about the husband's relatives are serious. (Incidentally, this sensitivity on the subject of relatives is not peculiar to the Mossi. It is common to all the Sudanese Negroes I have seen, Bambara, Malinké, etc.) Thus, if the husband insults his wife's relatives, she may request a divorce. Actually, a woman who loves her husband does not tell her relatives about insults which he may have aimed at them in a moment of anger. She says nothing and does not ask for a divorce. If she holds other grudges against her husband, however, or secretly wishes for a separation, she will eagerly take advantage of this motive which is considered to be serious. As regards the wife's insults against her husband's relatives (like the preceding, an unusual case among the Mossi), the same thing applies. Either the husband loves his wife and says nothing, or he does not love her and takes this opportunity to get rid of her.

586 578 602 [171]

586 As for the other causes of divorce, they occur very rarely, more rarely than the above.

Formalities of divorce. —"There are none," says Vadier. "The husband informs the head of his family and his wife's father of the decision he has taken. Likewise, the wife tells her father and the head of her family.

"If the divorce is contested and things do not work out amicably, the naba intervenes and remains the supreme judge."

Consequences of divorce. —1. Concerning property. "Each spouse," says Vadier, "keeps his or her own property." We have seen in the preceding paragraphs what happened in each case to the gifts given to the wife by her husband.

"As concerns the gifts given by the husband to the girl's family head or mother, there is no possibility of their return under any circumstances.

"2. Concerning the spouses. The spouses are completely freed by the divorce. They no longer have any obligations toward each other. /249/

"They may later marry each other again.

"3. Concerning the children. An important principle settles this question. The children belong to their father and consequently must remain with him.

"Small children accompany the mother, but they must return and live with their father when they reach the age of three (for boys) or six or seven (for girls).

"The divorced woman cannot return to her husband's hut to see her children. She may, however, go to the home of the head of her husband's family where her children may meet her with her husband's permission. The naba can override the father's authorization.

"With paternal consent, the children may go and see their mother at her home."

As Vadier has stated, an important principle governs the consequences of divorce as far as the children are concerned. As among most Sudanese populations, they revert to the father. He married in order to have children. The wife may go away and escape her basic function as generatrix for the husband, as generatrix for the husband's benefit, but the children remain with him. This matter is very important and deserves to be duly noted.

152 Psychology of the women. The woman as lover and as mother. —Mossi women love their children better than their husband. As for

842 How children are welcomed. —The Mossi are very happy to have children and want by all means to have some. This is indeed to their full advantage, since children work from the age of seven or eight, since they make sacrifices for their parents when the latter are dead, and since the daughters, by marrying, bring in gifts for the family. The more children one has, the happier one is.

842 789 "Under these circumstances, " says Vadier, "a barren woman is very poorly regarded by her husband and not greatly esteemed by her neighbors. To overcome this sterility when it occurs, both spouses appeal to the gods. They both go to the tengasoba, the religious chief of the village, with a chicken, a goat, or a sheep, according to their means. The tengasoba cuts the animal's throat on a special stone, collects its blood, and boils it in a vessel along with various tree barks which have certain properties.

"This concoction is then given to the woman, who must mix it with her sarabou. If the spouses later have a child, they must, under threat of calling forth the vengeance of the divinity (the Earth, in [431] this case), offer the tengasoba a gift of 3, 000 cowries if they had a boy or 4, 000 cowries if they had a girl.

"The tengasoba also overcome sterility by cutting the animal's throat in the sacred grove (kango). "

847 Abortions. —Abortions nevertheless occur. Sometimes Mossi women cause an abortion in the event of an illegitimate pregnancy which occurred in the husband's absence. In addition, abortions are rather frequent among unmarried mothers. To conceal their lapse, [791] they appeal to the tipa or timisoba (makers of charms, medicines, and poisons) who give them a special brew of which they hold the secret.

[586] These practices are, of course, very poorly regarded by the Mossi. Married women who resort to them are turned out by their husband's. In addition, if a woman dies as the result of an abortion, her husband is likely to manifest joy and to state that the woman received a just punishment for her transgression. Finally, in former times after the [684] death of the guilty woman, the husband would go to the Moro Naba and denounce her lover to him. The naba confiscated all the lover's property.

843 Childbirth. —Among wealthy Mossi, the pregnant woman is treated with a certain regard. She does not work after the third month /252/ of pregnancy if this is her first, or after the sixth month if she has

8: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1958
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he received from them. This unequal exchange, plus the nobles' prerogative of seizing the wives of pagans, contributed to the increase of the Moslems. 622 797 582

The conversion of Mossi to Islam is sometimes accompanied by a rupture in the relationships between persons involved in "friendships" with a view of obtaining wives. A great quarrel developed in the district between a pagan chief and a recent convert who refused to give the chief a daughter promised as a wife. The chief became furious and claimed that the Moslem had broken a promise made years ago, but the Moslem claimed that it was against his new religion to give his daughter to a pagan. It is not true that Moslems in the village do not exchange wives with pagans, but the Moslems often try to convert their pagan friends so that the brides will not have to revert to paganism. The chief's difficulty was that he could not become a Moslem because of his ritual and ceremonial relationship with the ancestors. The Moslem men do not have such difficulties with their pagan wives because most women follow their husbands' dictates in religious and other matters. Many Moslem men attempt to prevent their wives from having sacrifices made to the ancestors, but if a woman really wishes such a sacrifice she can easily have it arranged through her pagan relatives. If a woman married to a Moslem refuses to observe Islamic practices, she is liable to divorce and runs the risk of having her children taken away. 572 622 582 797 [562] [593] [586]

Mossi anxiety over children is often instrumental in converting them to Islam. When a woman is barren or her young children die, she consults a soothsayer (*barga*). She is either told that her Tengkougre benefactor was not amply rewarded and recalled the children, or that her "Moslem" children (children who wished to be Moslems) were angry because they were given pagan names. In the latter case she is advised to make a gift to a Moslem and to ask her husband to build a Moslem prayer-circle outside his hut so that when her children "return" (are born again) they will see it. Finally, she is advised to give all her children Moslem names. I could discover no reason why the pagan soothsayers advise these anxious parents to adopt Islam, except that they hope that complicated prescriptions will be more efficacious. Nevertheless, so effective is this technique for gaining converts to Islam that even members of the family of the chief pagan priest are not immune to it. Furthermore, once a woman has a Moslem child, all her other children must be Moslems or they will die. A man whose children are all Moslem has no recourse except to adopt Islam if he wants a funeral, because his Moslem sons may not give him a pagan funeral. 797 842 [787] [551] [764]

Every Mossi, whether Moslem or non-Moslem, wishes a proper funeral, and now that travel has increased the fact of being Moslem or pagan is of great importance. Many young migrants to Ashanti have reported that their dead pagan comrades were unceremoniously disposed of, while the local Christians and Moslems took care of their dead coreligionists. But despite this fact, and the belief of administrators and missionaries, I found no evidence that the seasonal and other migration of Mossi youth to Ghana and the Ivory Coast have contributed very much to the spread of Islam. It is true that some of the thou- 797 167 [164]

10:Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1964 FA28 Mossi FA28

571 607 593 154 4. The importance of sibling-in-law joking as a means of regulating conflict in the Mossi marriage relationship is further substantiated by the results of comparative research conducted among the Mossi resettled at the Office du Niger in the neighboring Republic of Mali.

[166] The Mossi, who were first forcibly and later voluntarily resettled in Mali, were allocated farm land as elementary family units without regard for their extended kinship affiliations. Thus a man often found himself living in unaccustomed "isolation," in the company only of his wife or wives and children, and otherwise surrounded by total strangers. Although the potential for conflict in the marriage relationship remained high, or was even augmented by the stresses of adjusting to a changed milieu, sibling-in-law joking, the institution through which such tension is traditionally regulated among the Mossi, was no longer operative. Unless the younger siblings of each spouse had accompanied them to the resettlement area, those individuals were absent to whom they might have communicated their grievances and expressed their aggressive sentiments in a socially harmless, psychologically satisfactory, and culturally acceptable way.

[578 508] As the traditionally sanctioned means of dealing with tension resulting from marital conflict was no longer available to the Mossi resettled in Mali, there occurred an increase in the incidence both of violence in marital disputes and of separation and divorce.

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11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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V

LAW AND THE JUDICIAL PROCESS

671 THE Mossi possessed a comprehensive body of rules governing human conduct. These rules were well known to the people, and violators were punished by the responsible authorities. The Mossi might be said to have had substantive law, but they had no written codes. Nevertheless, the lack of written codes does not warrant Mangin's blanket criticism of Mossi judicial processes: "Of course, there was no written code, no formal scale of penalties. Everything depended on custom and on the whim of the judge. [662] Thus, the wealthy could obtain sentences in their favor by paying the judges, and thieves could avoid punishment by sharing their loot with the Naba."[1] Custom did dictate the penalties, just as "written custom" dictates penalties [692] in all written legal codes. But, as we shall see, the Mossi did have a known [695] scale of penalties. Moreover, a Mossi judge had to be careful in rendering judgment, because his decisions could be reviewed by a higher court.

596 The head of the Mossi extended family, the *Yirisoba*, was responsible 681 for the everyday conduct of his charges. It was his duty to settle all family quarrels, and to punish persons guilty of theft within the compound, disrespect toward elders, and incest. Punishment for the lesser wrongs included 596 reprimands and floggings. A person found guilty of disrespect to the elders 683 or of incest could be banished from the group. But banishment was so severe 684 that it was imposed only if the criminal refused to make the usual conciliatory gestures and was condemned by all the members of his boodoo. Even after this condemnation, however, he could ask a "sister's son," a yagenga, [613] to intercede for him. This man, the son of a female lineage member, had many privileges within his mother's brother's lineage, including the right to mediate between an exile and his boodoo.

593 Amicable relations within the family group were most often disrupted 586 by conjugal difficulties. A Mossi husband could occasionally flog an erring 613 wife, but he was not allowed to maltreat her. When a man became disgusted with his wife and wished to repudiate her, he put her water pots in the compound yard. This rather serious action often led to hostile relations

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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between the lineages concerned. If either the repudiated woman or a member of her husband's lineage wished to initiate a reconciliation, she or he had to summon a yagenga. He alone was permitted to reconcile the couple after the pots had been placed in the courtyard. When a woman felt that she was being maltreated by her husband, she usually fled to her own patrilineage and waited for her husband's patrilineage—usually his brothers—to visit her male relatives and discuss the case. If the woman was judged guilty, she was reprimanded and sometimes flogged by her own relatives for causing trouble between the two lineages, and then sent home to her husband. However, if the man was found guilty, his wife was returned to him, but he was warned that he would forfeit all rights to her if he maltreated her again. A man who lost his wife through repeated maltreatment could not take the matter to court, because chiefs usually refused to deal with purely domestic issues. His only recourse was to induce one of his lineage brothers to recall a daughter who had married into his wife's lineage. This act was usually sufficient to bring about the reconciliation of the estranged couple before innocent persons were hurt.

The Mossi made every effort to solve minor problems without recourse to the chiefs. The local Boodkasemdamba and lineage elders adjudicated quarrels and simple offenses involving members of minimal segments in the various village saghse. They even tried to resolve difficulties between lineage members of larger segments who lived in different villages. The elders often imposed punishments such as reprimands, floggings, and even banishment. The convicted person did not usually appeal to the chief, because he knew that the chief would advise him to settle his problem within the family.

Unrelated villagers also tried to settle difficulties among themselves without appealing to the chief. For example, a man who was caught stealing could be beaten or even killed by his intended victims, and the chief did not punish them for their action. In many cases, villagers simply took the thief back to his relatives, knowing they would punish him. Occasionally, a family disgraced by a thieving member forced him to kill himself. When this happened the chief held an inquest but took no other action.

The Mossi gave a fairly simple explanation for returning a thief to his relatives for punishment. They said that every family had "weak" members, and that by not harming the captured thief they were only protecting themselves against retaliation if one of their own relatives should commit a similar crime. But a more important reason seems to have been their fear of starting a feud that might result in the premeditated murder of a man and the subsequent execution of his murderer.

The one crime that invoked terrible unofficial sanctions was rape. If the

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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837 man even refrains from making overtures to a woman whose husband's female relatives may be married to a member of his own [68] lineage. He fears that a wronged husband may have the wives of his [613] lineage brothers recalled, thus causing dissension within and between the two lineages. If none of these complications are present, a man seeks out a person who knows the woman and sends a message de- [431] claring his intentions. If the response is favorable, the man then buys [80] four large kola nuts (four being the number for a woman), wraps them together with 44 francs, and send them to his lady. This procedure may be followed on subsequent market days without the two parties ever coming into direct contact with each other. Finally, however, a rendezvous is arranged, and on the pretense of leaving the market to visit a relative for several days, the woman goes instead to her lover's village.

837 These casual affairs started at the market sometimes become quite 586 serious, and if for any reason they are sanctioned by the relatives of either the man or the woman, they often lead to the breakup of a [443] marriage. And since the market is the place where disputants of any [578] sort most likely come into contact, it is here that fights over "stolen" wives break out.

837 This pattern of extramarial relationships centering around the 443 market place is so common among the Mossi that the younger men, and even some of the older ones, are disappointed with the "market" when their mistresses do not appear. Mossi men who sit under the shelters around the market place can usually give an inquirer not only the name of a woman, the name and village of her husband and father, but also the name and village of her paramour. Characteristically enough, they are always "ignorant" of the escapades of their own female relatives or of the wives of their lineage members. The only 593 time when men act as though their relatives might be involved in 443 extramarital affairs is when for some purpose or another a man has to recall a wife or daughter who has gone to visit a relative in another village or district. Regardless of how pressing the problem may be, a man will seldom go directly to his father-in-law's house to recall the woman. He goes to the market nearest to his in-laws' village, and seeks his wife there. If he does not find her or any of her relatives, he goes to the part of the market in which people from her village sell their products and sends a message to her family that he will come for her the next day, or that he would like her to come home.

443 A market place is also one of the best places to look for news of a 203 runaway wife, or of any stranger in an area. The Mossi say that women have footprints like an elephant in that they can be found quite easily, but that the footprints are always clearest in the market.

644 It should be said that the napagha, who is regarded as a
595 piece of property, is part of the estate of a deceased chief. The
562 new naba takes some of the old and young wives, and the rest are
587 kept in the family of the nabissi. It is therefore not unusual to find women in the household of a naba who have been married to two or even three deceased chiefs. If they are not too old, they may give birth to children of the chief who is their second or third husband.

644 The establishment of a naba is often divided into three sec-
595 tions.

1. The zagkas sanga (the great house). All the old women, the unwanted ones, live here. Their mistress and guardian is the pugtiéma, who has charge of the house where the kimsé or manes of the ancestors live.

2. Zagbilin. The middle-aged women [163] who are still occasionally visited by their husband live here.

3. Dogoundba. This is the assemblage of several young and beautiful wives grouped around the favorite. They are called dogoundba, "guardians of the hut of the naba." These women receive all the favors, wear the finest ornaments, and are dressed in
[291] godé (1). Most of the time the dogoundba live in one or several

1. A skirt that is highly valued among the Mossi.

huts, depending on their number.

Each of the women in the other two sections has her own hut.

Since the naba has too many wives to be able to look after all of them, they must provide their own clothing and food. Hence, they are forced to cultivate plots and sell some of their produce. Each napagha has her own small field of millet, peanuts, beans, and peas.

The dogoundba have a collective plot. They help their husband who not only has to feed them, but is also required to support
[357] the sogoné and the samand'kamba (the latter are "people of the outer courtyard," another category of servitors who are sent on errands to the villages or who serve as grooms).

In the homes of the kombemba (plural of kombéré), it is the duty of the dogoundba to prepare food for the sogoné and for any

562 584 When the girl reaches marriageable age, she usually finds herself with a husband who is sometimes older than her father and whom she cannot possibly love. She must go to him, however, since such is her father's will.

[173] [431 585] The fiancé brings some gifts (cowries, chickens, millet beer) and claims his wife. The girl is sent off to her husband's home with no ceremony being performed.

This second type of forced marriage has the parents' consent.

587 428 562 768 Marriage by inheritance. When the head of a household dies, the women, who are considered a part of his estate, are divided up just as is the rest of the property. They are apportioned to the sons of the deceased, or his brothers if the sons are not of marriageable age. However, unlike the procedure for a chief's estate, in which the wife is just a "thing," these wives may choose their husbands from among the members of the family.

This is semi-free marriage.

587 Besides the type of marriage which we shall later call "free marriage" -- a form which occurs very frequently since it includes the marriages of loose women who may have as many as nine husbands, only stopping at the last one because of old age -- there is also remarriage due to successive widowhoods. Some women are so [177] unlucky as to lose [174] a succession of husbands. They are finally avoided like the plague since they have the reputation of being cursed by the gods (Mossi, kombwinga; Bambara, térédiougou).

584 Marriage after a conventional proposal. When a young man wishes to ask for the hand of a young girl who is not yet engaged, he chooses as his go-between a person who is on good terms with the elders of the girl's village. If the response is favorable, the young man brings a chicken, a secco (dagnopinri) [coarse matting] to close the doorway, and some fagots. He goes back to his village and returns at intervals bearing sprouted millet or millet beer and a chicken for the head of the family. The latter at last tells the go-between: "Tell X... that we accept him as our son and that we shall try to give him satisfaction as soon as possible."

Some time later the young man returns once more with a chicken, sprouted millet, or beer for the elders of the village. He makes

584
583 have borrowed. In addition, he would expose himself and the preferred suitor to the vengeance of the rejected one.

583 The bride price is not exorbitant. The total gifts, spread over a period of years, amount to some fifty francs, without counting the work days. Nevertheless, it requires sufficient means to secure at least the necessary cowries. Besides, the child's father prefers to give her to someone who already boasts a certain fame and some wealth, in short, to an elderly man. /30/ This is why children are promised to old dotards, and white-haired men are paired with young girls; while the old men's sons of marriageable age cannot get wives. If the father has the means to pay the bride price, he carefully refrains from helping his son, even if the latter has found a match to his liking.

587 It is true that all the father's wives are inherited by the oldest son, who gives some to his younger brothers; but this occurs only at the
578 old man's death, and this may not happen for a long time. This ex-
593 plains why the oldest son wishes for his father's death, and why the father sends the son away for fear of a premature end. It is only fair to add that some men, with a better understanding of their own interests, marry off their sons as soon as they are old enough.

595 Polygamy exists among the Mossi as in all Black countries. The wealth of a man is gauged by the number of his wives. Women
[556] furnish hands to till the soil, for the wife works in the fields like the husband. Women also furnish children, and if these are daughters, young men will come to offer their services (dakonré) and one day take the girls in marriage; or the father will receive gifts. If the children are boys, they will later aid the father in his work. In these countries where each lives for himself alone, where selfishness reigns supreme, polygamy is easily explained, but it undoubtedly results in a lower birth rate. White-bearded old men cannot have children as numerous and sound as young men in their prime, and the latter, deprived of wives, wear themselves out with their excesses. It is true that those who can afford a dozen wives are few; most have to be content with two, three, or four. Some nabas, nevertheless, own veritable herds of women, and this is certainly a grievous abuse. Their wives are numbered in the hundreds. The greatest moral dis-
[837] order reigns in those harems, where the boys who serve as grooms and pages spend most of their time among their master's wives. This explains the precautions taken by the women's owners and the eunuchs of the Moro Naba, as well as the Poënaba and his sinister duties.

428 When the head of a household dies, he leaves an inheritance of varying magnitude. No one touches it until the day of kouré. As soon as the festivities are over, the eldest son summons the head of the family and all his uncles, brothers, and sisters. The partition of the property must be carried out. Theoretically, the whole inheritance, all the women, cattle, and cowries, belongs to the eldest son if he is married [429] or of marriageable age. If he is too young, one of the younger brothers of the deceased must act as his guardian, administer the property, and transfer it to his nephew when he comes of age. Of course, the uncle squanders his ward's property. If the deceased leaves no male heirs, the inheritance devolves to his eldest daughter. If he has no children, /76/ his younger brother, or if there is none, the son of his oldest brother, inherits the property. The oldest brother himself never inherits, except in the case of a naba; in such a case, if there is no other heir, the oldest brother comes into the fortune.

428 587 Although in theory the oldest son is the absolute master of all his father's property, in reality he must share part of it. If he has younger brothers of marriageable age, he gives them one of his father's wives. Every brother who inherits a wife must shave her head. If she refuses to have this done, it means that she does not want this new husband. 428 If the heir's brothers are too young, he gives them some livestock, cattle, sheep, goats. If the inheritance is sufficient to allow it, the uncles also get their share. No one may force the eldest son to share the property. He may state point blank that he intends to keep everything, but this will cause him difficulties and create enemies, especially if his father has squandered a nephew's fortune. Upon his uncle's death, a nephew defrauded of his father's property reminds his cousin of the matter and requests indemnities, which are usually granted in the form of wives or livestock.

428 592 The new heir becomes head of the household in his turn and often inhabits his father's soukala; sometimes he builds himself another one. He is now his own master, subject only to the family head, while his unmarried sisters and younger brothers come under his jurisdiction. He has inherited the property, but he has not inherited the power. If his father was a naba and he wishes to succeed him, he must now solicit the position from the higher naba who is empowered to grant it.

596 Such is the family life of the Mossi. To summarize: marked submission to nabas and family heads, marked freedom toward those who are not in a position of authority. The wives live side by side

428 As for the soukala itself, he keeps it. He leaves his own
593 soukala, along with everything he owns, to come and live in the soukala of the deceased. In order to put the soukala he is leaving to some use, however, he sends one of his unmarried brothers (that is to say, one who lived up to that time with the deceased) to settle there. He immediately gives this brother one of his father's wives, one of the wives in the estate, and sends him, thus married, to settle in the soukala he is leaving.

593 I asked my informant why the father does not keep his oldest
578 married son with him instead of having him build a new soukala on the outside, since the son returns to the paternal soukala anyway when the father dies. The Mossi chief I was questioning replied that if the father kept his oldest son by his side, the latter, when married and growing older, would wish for his father's death in order to become independent. Wishing for his father's death, he might be tempted to bring it about. If settled in his own soukala, on the other hand, the head of a household and independent, he would nurture no ill thoughts against his father.

593 We shall see later that this feeling of fear and suspicion toward
578 the eldest son is carried to an extreme among the Moro Nabas. This
644 is understandable, since kingship is inherited. Once married, therefore, the eldest son of the prince went far from his father, to a soukala of his own and remained there until the Moro Naba's death.

428 As for the father's fields, the eldest son keeps them all if he is
593 able to work them all. If he is not able to do so, he gives the surplus over and above what he can work to his brothers.

As far as livestock is concerned, the eldest son gives some to his younger brothers and even to his sisters.

The same applies to slaves and cowries.

428 As for wives, if there are many, he gives some to his younger
593 brothers. Thus, for example, if there are ten wives and he has two
587 brothers, he gives two wives to each /551/ brother and keeps six for himself (let us add that the deceased, before dying, often gives a wife to his younger brother or brothers).

To summarize, the eldest son gets the soukala and the fields.
428 As for movable property, he takes about 50 percent and leaves the
593 other half to the younger sons and to the daughters. There is a sharing, therefore, although a very uneven one.

10:Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1964 FA28 Mossi FA28
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571 604 indirectly from the good will of his ancestral spirits whose benevolence Ego often invokes.

Ambivalence follows from other characteristics of the relationship. Resentment of Ego's depredations of her husband's property and jealous concern for the inheritance rights of her own children appear to be at least partially balanced by a share of the affection her husband shows for Ego. However, joking in this relationship is asymmetrical. The mother's brother's wife takes the more aggressive role, and from the vehemence of her joking, and the [159] structural nature of the relationship, it appears likely that amity lies less heavily in the balance than hostility. The groups to which the two parties belong are equal in status. Their respective positions within them, of course, are not, and this is reflected in the aforementioned asymmetry. Each party is obviously independent of the authority system of the other.

571 607 *Joking Between Siblings-in-Law*

[144] Siblings-in-law who joke are separated by the rule of sib exogamy observed among the Mossi. Reciprocity is basic to the marriage contract that unites their respective kin groups. Several factors tend to create ambivalence in the relationship. Both kin groups—in particular, the extended families of the two marriage partners—profit from the reciprocal tie established between them, but possible failure on the part of either group to reciprocate adequately, [678] particularly with regard to marriage payments, constitutes a persistent source [38] of potential friction. Moreover, the Mossi observe the levirate. Joking between siblings-in-law who are potential spouses, yet are presently constrained by a [137] prohibition against adultery, has frequently been ascribed the function of reducing tension in a situation of conflict. The kin groups of siblings-in-law [147] are always structurally equivalent because groups occupying significantly dif- [56] ferent strata in Mossi society do not intermarry. As members of autonomous descent groups the participants are obviously independent of one another.

571 614 *Joking Between Sibs*

Sibs (or lineages) whose members joke with one another are, of course, also separate groups.[2] They are always united by a strong tradition of reciprocal social and economic aid. Ambivalence apparently stems from the conflict between this tradition of reciprocity and actual competing claims to land. The origin of joking relationships between two descent groups is often ascribed to the alleged fact that, when they first arrived in the village, leaders of both falsely claimed to the chief that he and his kinsmen had arrived first, [423] and thus had a prior right to land, and that the members of the other group were their slaves. Despite their jocular allegations, both groups are in fact structurally equal and independent.

571 56 *Joking Between Age-Sets*

Joking between age-sets within an age-grade varies with the generational

837 588 548 [586] Free Marriage. The only marriage which can be called free, since it is accepted by both parties, is that of a woman who is unable to endure her first husband and leaves her village with the intention of becoming a prostitute. Divorce is quite rare because the Moaga does not readily agree to it. As she passes through a village, she asks for hospitality, and the news soon spreads that a "free" woman is staying at such-and-such a place. The young men hasten to her and seek to win her favors. Gifts are sent to her, and her hostess is used as go-between. Nine times out of ten, the woman accepts the candidate preferred by her hostess. After some questions concerning his origins and circumstances, one of the young men is accepted as a temporary lover. His comrades come to his aid, and for a few days there is a veritable festival in the village. There is a slight change in the [177] regular fare, since meat is added to the mush; chickens, raised with considerable difficulty, are used for this special treat. This semblance of marriage is thus celebrated. As has been pointed out, however, there has been no divorce, and the deserted husband soon learns the whereabouts of his wife. As soon as he finds out what village she is in -- it may be 100 kilometers away -- he promptly sets out, carrying in a sheepskin enough ground millet for the journey and 500 to 1,000 cowries. He also carries a rooster which, along with the shells, will be offered to the chief of the canton where the lover lives, to whom he will make his claim.

[578] Unions of this sort give rise to three-quarters of the quarrels with which the canton or province chiefs have to deal. A young Moaga who desires peace of mind never regularizes the situation by a so-called marriage even though he may not be able to resist the temptation to harbor the woman for a few days. In any event the affair is easily broken off since sooner or later the woman, eager for change, will want a new lover.

583 Thus, it may be said that although forced marriage has the disadvantage of having a girl marry without her consent, still it also has advantages and a degree of security because the woman, fearing [178] her parents' wrath, rarely leaves her husband. Furthermore, this type of marriage is vastly preferable from the standpoint of peace

583 to the sort of concubinage that "free marriage" is, as practiced in Mossi country.

The Situation of the Betrothed Couple during the Engagement

584 Generally speaking, the fiancé is supposed to avoid his betrothed before marriage. They treat each other with a kind of shy reserve.

Aside from the gifts made to the village elders and some cowries given to the future in-laws at the time of his first visit, no further demands are made on the fiancé.

584 684 The young man is formally forbidden to carry on an intrigue with a woman in the girl's village. If he does so, not only may the engagement be broken, but the lover may never again set foot in the village on paid of death.

Breaking the Engagement

584 When an engagement is broken, the gifts received need not be returned. On the other hand, the death of the girl is not regarded as breaking the engagement; the family must, sooner or later, offer another daughter to the young man to replace the girl who died.

An engagement may be broken [179] automatically in case of adultery, discussed below, or in the event of a quarrel between the two families.

Marriage Between First Cousins

587 Marriage between first cousins is not allowed. There can be no valid union between the children of a brother and sister, between a man and the daughter of either his father's or his mother's brother.

588 587 751 However, it sometimes happens -- inadvertently -- that a girl who has been given in marriage in a very distant village may find that her husband is a descendant of a great-grandparent (material or paternal) in the same family as her own. Had this been known, the marriage would not have taken place. Ordinarily, distant relationship is not discovered until long after the marriage, after complicated genealogical research. In that case, one of the pair, usually the wife,

588 582 751 wears a bracelet made of copper and iron intertwined, kalembanga, which is believed to protect the wearer against any disaster due to the technically illegal marriage. The kalembanga is also believed to protect the children born of the union from sudden death.

Polygyny

595 Polygyny is the rule throughout Mossi country. It is true that the number of wives varies with the resources and position of the individual. Mere heads of compounds who are somewhat well off may have [180] from five to eight wives and numerous fiancées. The [584] latter are usually reserved for the dakompa (older sons and younger brothers of the head of the family), assuming that these men will in turn render real service and be completely devoted to the head of the household.

There are many reasons for the practice of polygyny, but the main one is procreation. The under-nourished natives must rely on [553 834] the mother's milk to feed their babies and must therefore wait two or even three years before resuming sexual relations with a wife who is a nursing mother. Therefore, they prefer to have several wives.

Consummation

585 When the young girl is taken to her husband, she is entrusted to a woman whom she will henceforth treat as "mother."

A few days after the departure of the cortege, whose composition we shall describe presently, the man claims his fiancée. She is taken at night to the nuptial hut, which has no special features, and no one is present at the consummation of the marriage. In this respect the Mossi differ from the Bambara, who have a griot or an old woman accompany the couple to help the young man, if necessary, overcome the girl's resistance.

It goes without saying that if the girl is found to be a virgin, the [181] husband is overjoyed. If she is not a virgin, the love which he may have felt for her before possessing her is much diminished. The man shows the girl his anger, certain that she will at least tell her mother about it.

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1. Pogotoenga, or rather Pogotoéga, means "woman of the baobab," and comes from pogo, meaning "woman," and toéga, meaning "baobab" /a species of tree/. One may wonder what relation there is between this name and the fact that Pogotoenga was dedicated to virginity, if one ignores the customs of the Sudanese. A woman dedicated to a baobab (a powerful vegetal divinity) is considered the spouse of the baobab. Therefore, she cannot enter into marriage with a man, which means forced celibacy. It is true that certain Blacks (for instance, the Dialonké of the Faranah circle, French Guinea) consider that a woman married to a spirit owes him only her spirit or spiritual form, and that her material body is free. From this arises the fact that with those Blacks, and some others as well, women-fetishes, women married to spirits or divinities, are actually prostitutes and practice prostitution. They are, besides, very rare. In short, they are allowed to prostitute themselves but not to marry. It is sacred prostitution, well known to the whole of oriental and Greco-Roman antiquity. Thus, virginity (sacred), on the one hand, and prostitution (sacred), on the other, are rather strangely derived from the same order of ideas.

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[786]

173 her birth as being a stranger to her sex, and he had her given masculine clothes.

"Pogotoenga developed quickly. At the age of ten, she reached a degree of incomparable beauty, and at about the same period, torn by the ardors of puberty, she succeeded—despite the strict vigilance of the old man, anxious to remain faithful to his oath—in fleeing the paternal household.

Although pursued for a long time, she managed to evade all /8/ attempts at capturing her, until the day when, wandering in what is

593 The wife must obey her husband. The latter has the right to strike
562 her in case of disobedience, adultery, etc. He cannot break one of her limbs, or kill her.

595 Polygamy. —Polygamy is the general rule, at least theoretically. That is to say, the Mossi may have as many spouses as he wishes as long as he can minister to their needs.

595 In actual fact, only rich people have several wives. The majority
589 are monogamous by necessity, and there are even bachelors. As a passing remark, this applies to the Sudanese Negroes in general, for everywhere nature creates approximately as many men as women, and it is hard to visualize how in any one region each man could have several wives. However, in spite of the occurrence of bachelors and a large number of truly monogamous people, the question still stands. It is solved if we bear in mind that girls are married much earlier than men. This results in a much larger number of women than men "in active service," if I may be permitted to say so. Undoubtedly, this (along with the occurrence of bachelors and a considerable number of monogamists), takes care of the objection which naturally arises when we speak of polygamy. /243/

163 It may be, let us add, that the number of girls born here is a little higher than that of boys, as has been noted in England, for example.

595 By way of figures on polygamy, let us state that the Moro Naba
643 Bango, the last one who reigned before the arrival of the French, had
645 about 80 wives. The Naba Koboga, who ruled from 1902 to 1914, had 30 or 40. The present Rassam Naba, one of the ministers of the Moro Naba, has 30 or 35 wives. These are, of course, exceptional figures if the total population of Yatenga is taken into account. In any case, the rich men, notables, and men in easy circumstances always have several wives.

595 Organization of the polygamous household. —"The first wife," says Vadier, "enjoys a certain authority over the others. It is she who transmits her husband's orders to the other wives and who notifies him of their wants, who supervises the preparation of meals and apportions the food. In addition, it is she who comes and tells the
[841] husband that such-and-such a wife is no longer in a state of zim and can now fulfill her conjugal duties.

"Aside from this special prerogative enjoyed by the first wife, all wives have the same rights and duties. In principle, each wife must share in turn her husband's bed. Nevertheless, he is free to summon his favorite wife during the day."

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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greeting a lower status benefactor, a man will get down and greet him from a kneeling position. It is because of this elaborate system of greeting, with the many opportunities thus provided for one person to slight another, that many important persons never go to the market. As a rule, the failure of any one person to give the required greeting to another when they meet in the market place is always an indication of strained relations between them.

The persons from whom an individual may buy goods, and the kinds of goods which may be purchased by one individual from another, are governed by convention and social relationships. A person may not buy anything from a relative except European goods. A man cannot buy any but cooked food in the market place, and often he asks a female relative or a passing female to buy it for him. To do the contrary is held to be unmanly and indicative of a bad character. A woman will not buy cotton cloth but will send a man to buy it for her. She would hate to have people believe that she has no male relative to weave it for her, or what is more likely, that she is too lazy to spin the cotton thread which would then be woven for her. A woman may purchase any type of commodity from other women, but she must be careful not to patronize men who are known to be libertines or with whom she is suspected of having an affair. She must also be careful about running errands for men, since people know that men often use this device to establish amorous relationships with women. Men also use this device to give presents, or to arrange secret meetings with them. If any man sees a female relative involved in any of these misadventures, he chases her away and more than likely curses the man, if he does not fight him. In any event, he warns the man to leave the woman alone.

The market is one of the few places where men and women can initiate relationships not sanctioned by their relatives. Under normal conditions marriages are arranged between unrelated individuals through the lineage members who establish "friendly" relationships. Two friends might ask their lineage heads for women to exchange as wives or the "friend" who has received more gifts from the other will give over a wife. Because the older men most often have goods and women at their disposal, they are usually the ones who receive wives. The result is that most young men have no wives, and until they inherit wives from lineage members, are continually seeking to establish intimate relations with women whom they meet on the market place. The technique which a young man employes to gain the favors of a woman he sees at market is highly stereotyped. First of all, he must ascertain that the woman in question is not a member of his maximal lineage or married to a member of his own lineage. A responsible

592 A typical soukala consists of the master's hut, a hut for each wife, one hut for the sheep and goats, another for the horse if he has one, a hut for the family mill, and, finally, a receiving hut with two doors sufficiently high to permit entrance without stooping and set sometimes as an entrance way and sometimes within the cluster of huts. All [351] these dwellings stand in a circle and are joined either by a cob wall or by /11/ mat fences taller than a man and held up by stakes. The master's hut, which usually stands beside the huts for the horses and sheep, is set off from the others by mats to insure his privacy. A low wall describes an arc within the inner courtyard; this is the kitchen when it is not raining. Big jars of fired clay which are used to brew [273 415] millet beer rest between the huts. In front of this cluster of huts, a shelter is built, usually high enough to permit standing and consisting basically of forked stakes with branches and séko resting upon them; this shelter serves as a refuge during the hot part of the day. Small boys and unmarried girls live with their mother, while older boys, servants, and slaves each have their separate huts which face the dwellings of the master and his wives.

The term yri or soukala covers this whole complex of structures. [591] Each soukala is a distinct unit, and, some time after they marry, the children build their own residence, set completely apart from that of their parents, often in another part of the village and sometimes in [361] another village altogether. The soukala stand fifteen to twenty meters apart, and, because of this, the villages, though adequately concentrated, cover a rather extensive area. The heads of cantons 342 place an ostrich egg at the peak of the roof on their own dwellings, [237] and some even build terraced huts higher than the surrounding dwell- [554] ings. They keep their riches in these huts and a prison in the base- [697] ment. An earthen stairway leads to the terrace where the master of [512] the house receives his guests when the sun begins to sink on the horizon.

721 These people, apparently so peaceful today, were formerly quite warlike and went off to war at the slightest pretext. Foreign to the land they now occupy, the Mossi must have conquered it by force of arms. The Tarik-es-Soudan /History of Sudan/ relates that the people of Yatenga seized Timbuktu in the fourteenth century, and in 721 the fifteenth they probably carried their incursions as far as Lake 701 Bébo and even Oualata. (4) The Mossi army was greatly feared.

4. Delafosse, op. cit., Vol. 2, p. 80.

596 with the help of his father and family head (which is by far the
423 most frequent occurrence), /548/ while in such a case it had for-
178 merly been considered family property. Finally, the soukala came to be regarded in every case as personal property and to be transmitted for that reason to the oldest son. This, incidentally, is the same evolution that applied to property in general, as we shall see shortly.

Now, here is the third and last variant of the prevailing Mossi
593 family type. Nowadays, this variant is by far the most widespread.

1. Every household lives separately, works separately, and procures its own food and subsistence. The help of neighbors is enlisted to clear the fields.

2. Every household gives its own children in marriage. The
584 family head no longer does so.
593 As soon as a man has a son, he chooses a little girl who will go to the boy when he reaches puberty. He visits the girl's relatives from time to time and offers them gifts.

584 When the girl is old enough to be married, he takes 50,000
583 cowries (if he is wealthy), skirt cloths, salt, kola nuts, and gives it
593 all to the relatives. Then, the old women in the daughter's family lead her to the home of the betrothed man's relatives. The father kills a sheep, makes a lot of couscous, buys dolo to celebrate her arrival. Then he offers the girl six or seven baskets containing respectively 1,000, 2,000, 3,000, 4,000, 5,000, 6,000, and 7,000 cowries. The young man himself gives his betrothed four or five skirts. If he is very wealthy, he gives her one or two little girls as slaves.

585 On the evening when the wedding is celebrated, the father asks
[426] one of his neighbors to lend him a hut, and the young married pair are sent there all alone (they will remain there as long as their soukala is not built). On the morrow, the feasting begins. People dance and feast for seven days at the gates of the father's soukala, at least when the girl is a virgin. If she is not, the feasting is curtailed but nevertheless lasts for another three days.

583 When the father is poor, he offers a few kola nuts to the girl's
591 /549/ father (six or ten). He gives the father and mother some firewood he gathered in the bush, straw to make séko /Tr.: mats/ for door, 2,000 cowries, a skirt cloth. He kills a sheep to make

583 591 couscous, which he offers to the relatives. Then he takes the girl away. He asks a neighbor for a hut to harbor the young couple on their wedding night and over the next few weeks. They stay there for only a month or two, until their soukala is built.

583 The bride price actually varies from region to region among the Mossi. We have just seen it range from 2,000 to 50,000 cowries. Earlier, we saw it set at 25,000. At Kombisiguiri it amounts to a mere 1,000. The young man's father visits the young girl's father with a chicken and 500 cowries; then he comes to see him a second time, again with a chicken and 500 cowries. There is no other bride price. Those who do not have a chicken to offer replace it with a bundle of firewood or a straw séko. In short, a girl here is worth 30 sous (the two chickens being worth 0.50 franc between them, and the 1,000 cowries amounting to one franc).

591 [431] Among rich people the young couple may remain seven, nine, or even twelve months in their neighbors' house. They present the latter with gifts, and during this period of time they proceed to build a soukala, or rather to have one built. The young man's father helps his son in this undertaking.

593 431 626 The young husband, now settled on his own, will henceforth work on his own account. He has become in turn the head of a soukala, but if he obtains a lot of millet or other grain he offers gifts to his father. If he becomes wealthy and makes no such gifts, the neighbors will insult him. He always makes gifts, therefore, for fear of being insulted. A son who marries, as a rule, builds his soukala as near as possible to that of his father.

593 Finally, let us add that the father usually buys his son's kitchen utensils when the boy settles on his own.

428 593 3. When the head of a family dies, the younger brother inevitably takes command of the family, but all the property, whatever its nature, goes to the children of the deceased and more especially to his oldest son. There is no longer any family real estate or movable property, or else nothing is regarded as such any longer.

/550/ The eldest son takes his father's soukala and everything that goes with it, fields, slaves, livestock, father's wives. He shares them, however, with his brothers and even with his sisters.

881 adorned, they go in a group to greet the mother of each one in turn,
304 but they do not go out into the village like the boys.

In short, among the Mossi and Foulsé of Yatenga, circumcision and excision are not characterized by the intervention of any powerful religious society like the komo among the Bambara and among the Mandé in general. Nor do we find here those picturesque details which are so strikingly present among the Malinké of Upper Guinea and even more so among the tribes of Lower Guinea (Soussou /Susu/, Landouman /Landuma/, etc.) (3). Nevertheless, circumcision is

3. On this topic, see André Arcin, La Guinée française /French Guinea/, pp. 438-446, and Noirot, A travers le Foutah-Djallon et le Bambouk /Across the Fouta Djallon and Bambouk/, concerning the Landouman.

important in the lives of the Mossi and Foulsé of Yatenga, because it transforms the child into a young man.

591 After circumcision. —Following circumcision or excision, only marriage remains. When a girl married, as we have seen above, she leaves her compound and goes to her husband's residence. The young man, however, remains in his own compound. He is given a cabin, a hut, for himself and his bride if there is one available and empty, or a new one is built for him. When he has a child, he builds a hut near his own for the young mother and son, unless he is given another one which is available.

884 Emancipation and coming of age. —One can scarcely speak of emancipation and coming of age among the Mossi. A man comes of age when he marries, but he always remains a minor to some extent vis-à-vis his work group, his compound, and his family. Emancipation /262/ and coming of age are French concepts which have no equivalent among the Mossi in particular and the Sudanese in general. One might acknowledge, however, as does Vadier in his monograph on Yatenga, a sort of coming of age around the age of 17 or 18 for purposes of buying and selling.

429 Guardianship. —When a Mossi dies, his wives and children revert to his oldest brother. If there are many wives and children, they are apportioned among the brothers of the deceased. The head of the family presides over the distribution.

10:Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1964 FA28 Mossi FA28
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571 tween the Mossi and several other ethnic groups. In each instance the structural relationship in which joking occurs is characterized by the five features listed above.

571 604 *Joking with the Mother's Brother*

The relationship with a maternal uncle is marked by all five of the structural features mentioned. Separation results from the rules of patrilineal descent and inheritance rules, from patrisib exogamy, and from the general observance of patrilocal residence. The relationship is reciprocal in that a mother's brother serves throughout Ego's life as an important alternative source of emotional, economic, and social support: he often acts as intermediary in disputes between Ego and his parents or the elders of his lineage; he gives Ego frequent gifts; and residence in the mother's patriclan is the most frequent alternative to patrilocality. In turn Ego, as a result of the permissive relationship he enjoys with the spirits of his deceased cognatic kinsmen, often serves their living descendants as an intermediary in their ritual efforts to maintain a secure relationship with the ancestral spirits.

Ambivalence between Ego and his mother's brother and her other kin results from the conflicting sources of "conjunction" and "dissociation" just mentioned. The conflict between a strong affective bond—a "feeling" of kinship—and a system of inheritance which denies it jural recognition generates frustration. The ambivalence in the relationship is manifested not only by joking, which is asymmetrical—with Ego being the more aggressive—but by theft as well. Perhaps as partial compensation for his inability to inherit matrilaterally, Ego is permitted to steal his mother's brother's property during his lifetime and can also make off with the beer and some of the animals collected for his funeral.

As for equality of status, the descent groups of Ego and mother's brother are structurally equivalent. Although their respective positions within these two groups differ, the permissiveness of Ego's relationship to his maternal uncle absolves him from recognition of the canons of comportment that otherwise prevail among the Mossi in relations between persons of differing status. Indeed, disregard for such status differences is part of the "joke." Independence is assured by the fact that Ego and his mother's brother are members of autonomous descent groups and that each is responsive only to the authority of his respective lineage elders.

Joking with a Mother's Brother's Wife

Joking between Ego and his mother's brother's wife is to be regarded as a separate relationship because of her nonmembership in the mother's brother's descent group, but certain of the structural circumstances are similar. The source of separation from the mother's brother's wife is evident. The reciprocal tie that unites them is indirect; when Ego is received warmly in his mother's brother's household it is the wife of the latter who prepares the food he is given. Similarly, as a member of her husband's patriclan, she benefits

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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613 173 778

cestors. They did not remember how they were related unless they happened to have a common grandfather or great-grandfather who had held the nam. The differential value thus placed on genealogies by the noble and non-noble lineages was due in most cases to the differential access of these lineages to the strategic resources of Mossi society. People who held the nam [554] and belonged to noble lineages enjoyed special claims to goods and services. Those whose lineages did not hold the nam had no such privileges.

613 554

Because Mossi society was basically patrilineal, a man shared in the status and the corporate assets of his patrilineage. Conversely, a man had no access to the status or resources of his mother's patrilineage except for some ritual rights and duties that accrued to him as a *yagenga* (a sister's or daughter's son). These rights and duties included residence in the home of [591] a maternal patrilineage during childhood, attendance at sacrifices to the mother's patrilineal ancestors, the settling of quarrels between maternal kinsmen, and ritual license to seize specific items of property from these relatives. This license dramatized the *lack* of access rather than *freedom* of access to the property of maternal relatives.

613 778 602 554 [795]

When a man's maternal relatives controlled the nam of the territory in which he lived, he could improve his social and economic position. In many cases, a young man who had gone to live as a "stranger" with a noble uncle or grandfather remained with these relatives. His privilege to remain was sanctioned by the Mossi belief that a boy's maternal ancestors would wreak vengeance on any person who tried to evict him from the village from which his mother had been "sent into the bush" (given away as a wife). By using various strategies and subterfuges, the "stranger" obtained wives through his maternal relatives and used their land and other resources. After several generations the lineal descendants of the "stranger" frequently became indistinguishable from their maternal relatives, although such cases were not often formally acknowledged. Whether these "sisters' children" ever managed to obtain the nam of their mother's patrilineage is a moot point, because in theory they could not. Yet, also by Mossi definition, a man could never inherit rights and duties in his mother's patrilineage; however, it is known that this did happen. It is possible that the close check kept by the ruling lineage on its genealogy made usurpation impossible. Yet I know of several cases in which candidates for chiefship feared competition from men whose descent actually barred them from the nam.

The son of a nobleman and a commoner woman seldom attached himself permanently to his maternal patrilineage, although he retained all of his customary rights, privileges, and duties in it. Occasionally, noblemen did attach themselves to their maternal relatives, but those who did had

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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marauding animals. Just twenty years ago, the six villages that lay closest to the river were gradually abandoned and their populations absorbed by other villages. As of 1955, three of these populations were still paying allegiance to their former chiefs—a fact that bears out the Mossi axiom that chiefs govern people rather than land. The three other chiefs had lost control over their followers, who had placed themselves under the protection of the chiefs of their host villages. On occasion, Nobere also lost villages to other districts. One such village, Rissoma, was taken away from Nobere and given to Djiba when one of the Nobere district chiefs had a dispute with the Mogho Naba. 634 621

The hub or center of Nobere district, like that of all Mossi districts, was Nab'tenga (also called Nobere Naba Tenga, or Na-tenga), the village of the district chief. This village was rather large and in many respects a replica in miniature of the capital of Ouagadougou. Like most Mossi villages, Nab'tenga was divided into sections, quarters, or neighborhoods called *saghse* (sing. *saka*), which included a number of compounds (*yiya*, sing. *yiri*; or *zaghse*, sing. *zaka*). The district chief's compound was called Nab'yiri. He lived there surrounded by his wives, unmarried daughters, younger children, and pages. His older male children lived in separate compounds within the same saka. The saghse of Nab'tenga included Ouidi, the saka of the Ouidi Naba; Balbalse, the saka of the Baloum Naba; Tansoba, the saka of the local war minister (Tansoba or Tampsobo); Baglere, the saka of the chief's serfs; Bendere, the saka of the chief's musicians; Ouedrange, the saka of the chief's grooms; and Pwese, the saka of the guardians of the chief's wives. Scattered among them were the saghse of noble families, smiths, the Moslem Imam, and other persons. The most important market place in the district was located about four hundred yards from the chief's compound. [592] [591] [443]

The number and types of social and ethnic groups within the district and its villages reflected Nobere's history. When the French arrived, the district chief was Kaglere, a descendant of Ngado, who was a son of Mogho Naba Sagha I (ca. 1787–1803). Ngado had been sent to Nobere at the end of the eighteenth century to replace Naba Peka (a descendant of Naba Biligo), who had been deposed and killed by Mogho Naba Sagha during a civil war. The other chiefly descendants of Biligo, however, were not deposed by Ngado; they remained in charge of all but five or six of the major villages in the district. The chiefs of such villages as Ronse, Barkago, Tewarka, and Pinse are *yagense* (descendants) of Naba Biligo. The village called Passintenga was ruled by the descendants of a Busanga from Lenga called Passentre, who allegedly had been given a wife by Biligo. It is not 634 622 175

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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fied his sexual desires. Since these women were in the monarch's favor, they were better dressed than the other wives and received more attention from him. The dogunba generally cultivated a large field in common with the aid of the palace retainers, but some insisted on cultivating their own fields instead. Like the other wives, the dogunba usually lived in huts of their own. Childless women sometimes shared the same hut until one of them became pregnant and had to set up a hut for herself and her child. 644 595 [342] [591]

Those wives who lived in special villages under the supervision of eunuchs rarely went to the palace. Usually, they were past childbearing age or had lost favor with the monarch. They cultivated plots of land, spun cotton, and prepared locust-bean flour, locust-bean "balls," and shea butter. They kept a part of the produce for their own use and sent the remainder to the palace stores; the same arrangement obtained for all three categories of palace wives.

The Mogho Naba's heir was usually born while his father was still Crown Prince. He was never born in his father's compound because, unlike other Mossi women, the wife of a Mogho Naba or Crown Prince returned to her father's house for confinement. As soon as she announced her pregnancy, the Pughtiema or one of the older wives held a ceremony to notify the ancestors. Once the rite had been completed, the wife was sent to her relatives for fear that she might be harmed by her less fortunate co-wives. If the child was a boy, the ruler or Crown Prince was notified immediately, because the important privileges of a first-born hinged upon this notification. Since several wives of the Mogho Naba might be pregnant at the same time and errors might be made about the onset and duration of pregnancy, primogeniture had to be established immediately to forestall dynastic conflicts. For example, it is commonly believed that the present Doulougou Naba was born several days before Mogho Naba Sagha II (1942–57) but was deprived of the nam because the messenger who brought news of his birth reached Mogho Naba Kom after the messenger who announced Sagha's birth. Undoubtedly, such allegations were sometimes used to foster and support dynastic rebellions. 644 595 843 644 595 843 428 643 [578]

So strong was the fear that the most likely heir to the nam would be harmed by jealous co-wives that the child and his mother never returned to the palace except for brief visits on ceremonial occasions. The young prince remained with his mother's relatives and was guarded and educated by servants sent from the palace. If his father was on the throne at Ouagadougou when the boy reached the age of ten, he was formally installed as chief of Djiba district, the traditional seat of the Crown Prince. If his father was not on the throne, the boy remained with his mother's relatives and went to Djiba when his grandfather died and his father was installed as Mogho Naba.

567 his personal fortune. The management of any such property is left entirely to him. If the master becomes indebted [to the slave], he is required to pay the debt within a fixed time limit.

Emancipation from slavery. As was indicated in the foregoing paragraph, it was possible for a slave to amass property through his own efforts. He might then free himself by paying his master 100,000 cowries. He then might either return to his native village or settle in his master's village. There have been slaves who not only freed themselves in this way, but also became slave owners in their turn.

If, however, slaves marry female slaves given to them by their masters and become fathers of families, they do not usually leave their masters. [95] They acquire a certain standing and are counted as members of the family. It is understood that they do not have the right to dispose of their children since the latter are dogyiri (house slaves).

465 Various types of unpaid work. Aside from the labor and other obligations required of all Mossi subjects for their naba -- we have described the forced labor in a previous chapter -- it may be said that, in general, no work is required without pay, even from slaves. In an area that is predominantly agricultural there can be no question of payment in money as would be the case in private or official enterprises where contracts specify the obligations of an employer to his employees. On the purely native level, the employer is obligated only to feed the workers.

In sum, what are the duties of a Moaga?

1. Cultivation of the family fields.

2. Construction and repair of huts and roofs.

3. Private work: basketry, shoemaking, weaving cotton strips, pottery, sewing, etc.

The head of the household is required to feed the workers who 592 cultivate the family plots or repair the huts. In a later chapter we 476 shall see that when the [96] members of a family could not complete a task without help, they called on other young men in the village. In that case, animals were slaughtered, dolo (millet beer) was brewed, and sagbo (millet mush) or benga (beans) was prepared.

567 On the other hand, it should be stated that when yemdago were used for hard labor, they were very well fed and were even given double rations.

342
412 Tools. The only tools used are the sitoiga (native pickaxe) and the wanka (hoe).

352 House furnishings. (a) The man's hut. The only furnishings in a man's hut are a mat or thin secco, a bolster made of cotton strips or kapok, a quiver, the club, some arrows, the bow, a large knife (zangoégo), and a spear. Small bags of charms and other amulets hang from the wall here and there, and there is a sort of oval straw basket, pilgou, in which clothing is stored.

(b) The woman's hut. From one end of the hut to the other there are billi, small pieces of wood fastened to the wall to hold gourds, bowls (lensé), earthenware basins (lassé), ladles (soutissi), etc.

In the rear of the room lumps of dried earth, [221] hollowed in the center, hold the vessels, and pots, dougdo, which serve both as storage bins for clothing and as granaries for the produce of the woman's own garden.

● 592 Plan of a compound. As one enters a compound, the huts to left are those of the women and the master's huts stand to the right. Completely outside the establishment, there are one or two straw huts, similar to those already described, which provide sleeping quarters for the dakompa (young men).

[595] The head of the establishment lives alone. It could hardly be otherwise, since he summons his wives in turn.

The women live with their young children or with girls betrothed to their husband, until, of course, these girls receive huts of their own.

343 Kitchen arrangements. It is exceedingly rare among the Mossi to find a hut used specifically for cooking. The wife's bedroom serves also as a kitchen.

Ordinarily the husband issues provisions to the wife who is
592 cooking for the family, but there are exceptions to this rule. At
595 Ouagadougou, for example, most of the wives provide the food for
252 the husband. The latter furnishes provisions only during the winter when the fields are being worked.

[222] The wives take turns preparing the food. The woman on duty is aided by her co-wives in grinding the millet on the millstone (néré) of the section, but she alone prepares the millet cake, sagbo.

361 /10/ The appearance of the villages indicates that their inhabitants feel safe. There are none of those hut clusters bunched together in [171] narrow walled-in areas to withstand the invasions of an El-hadj-Omar or of a Samory, as in Bambara country; none of those family groupings of flat-roofed huts, those strongholds sheltering the whole family from the grandfather to the last of his grandchildren to resist through sheer numbers the incursions of a more powerful neighbor, as in Gourounsi [542] country where the authority of chiefs is so weak. Here every family head, that is, a man with his wives, his unmarried children, and his servants, occupies a certain number of huts that together form his yri, a grouping Europeans call by its Bambara name, soukala.

342 The huts are circular and usually built of mud, but sometimes of 333 stakes driven into the ground and surrounded with séko, a kind of mat of plaited broad straw. The huts are surmounted with a roof, likewise of straw, resting on a wooden framework. When a native wishes to build a hut, he sets a date with a mason expert in laying mud bricks and notifies the village people. On the appointed day everyone comes to him. The women fetch water from the stream; the men excavate the soil a few meters from where the hut is to be erected; the children trample the mortar and carry to the mason the clods prepared by the old men who sit gravely around the mud pile. This is a festive occasion for the village, because the man who builds must supply drink for all, and food as well if he wishes to do things properly.

A circle is traced on the ground to indicate the outline of the hut, and the mason places the mud clods obliquely side by side along the circle. When the first round is finished, he starts another, and he proceeds in this fashion to mid-height. The work is then interrupted until the following day to give the first part a chance to dry. This is why several huts are usually built at the same time. No opening is left in the wall. When it is dry, a door is cut through, usually arched and so low that one must creep on hands and knees in order to get in. Well-to-do women close their hut with a wooden door that opens inward; it is equipped with a wooden latch that works [414] by means of a large key made of a stick with small iron rods perpendicularly attached to it. The children and even the husband usually leave their clothing, their luxury items, and their cowries in these closed huts which are better protected against thieves. Those who cannot afford this luxury of a door drive two stakes into the ground, one on each side of the opening, and slip a mat between the stakes and the wall.

592 A typical soukala consists of the master's hut, a hut for each wife, one hut for the sheep and goats, another for the horse if he has one, a hut for the family mill, and, finally, a receiving hut with two doors sufficiently high to permit entrance without stooping and set sometimes as an entrance way and sometimes within the cluster of huts. All [351] these dwellings stand in a circle and are joined either by a cob wall or by /11/ mat fences taller than a man and held up by stakes. The master's hut, which usually stands beside the huts for the horses and sheep, is set off from the others by mats to insure his privacy. A low wall describes an arc within the inner courtyard; this is the kitchen when it is not raining. Big jars of fired clay which are used to brew [273 415] millet beer rest between the huts. In front of this cluster of huts, a shelter is built, usually high enough to permit standing and consisting basically of forked stakes with branches and séko resting upon them; this shelter serves as a refuge during the hot part of the day. Small boys and unmarried girls live with their mother, while older boys, servants, and slaves each have their separate huts which face the dwellings of the master and his wives.

The term yri or soukala covers this whole complex of structures. [591] Each soukala is a distinct unit, and, some time after they marry, the children build their own residence, set completely apart from that of their parents, often in another part of the village and sometimes in [361] another village altogether. The soukala stand fifteen to twenty meters apart, and, because of this, the villages, though adequately concentrated, cover a rather extensive area. The heads of cantons 342 place an ostrich egg at the peak of the roof on their own dwellings, [237] and some even build terraced huts higher than the surrounding dwell- [554] ings. They keep their riches in these huts and a prison in the base- [697] ment. An earthen stairway leads to the terrace where the master of [512] the house receives his guests when the sun begins to sink on the horizon.

721 These people, apparently so peaceful today, were formerly quite warlike and went off to war at the slightest pretext. Foreign to the land they now occupy, the Mossi must have conquered it by force of arms. The Tarik-es-Soudan /History of Sudan/ relates that the people of Yatenga seized Timbuktu in the fourteenth century, and in 721 the fifteenth they probably carried their incursions as far as Lake 701 Bébo and even Oualata. (4) The Mossi army was greatly feared.

4. Delafosse, op. cit., Vol. 2, p. 80.

428 When the head of a household dies, he leaves an inheritance of varying magnitude. No one touches it until the day of kouré. As soon as the festivities are over, the eldest son summons the head of the family and all his uncles, brothers, and sisters. The partition of the property must be carried out. Theoretically, the whole inheritance, all the women, cattle, and cowries, belongs to the eldest son if he is married [429] or of marriageable age. If he is too young, one of the younger brothers of the deceased must act as his guardian, administer the property, and transfer it to his nephew when he comes of age. Of course, the uncle squanders his ward's property. If the deceased leaves no male heirs, the inheritance devolves to his eldest daughter. If he has no children, /76/ his younger brother, or if there is none, the son of his oldest brother, inherits the property. The oldest brother himself never inherits, except in the case of a naba; in such a case, if there is no other heir, the oldest brother comes into the fortune.

428 587 Although in theory the oldest son is the absolute master of all his father's property, in reality he must share part of it. If he has younger brothers of marriageable age, he gives them one of his father's wives. Every brother who inherits a wife must shave her head. If she refuses to have this done, it means that she does not want this new husband. 428 If the heir's brothers are too young, he gives them some livestock, cattle, sheep, goats. If the inheritance is sufficient to allow it, the uncles also get their share. No one may force the eldest son to share the property. He may state point blank that he intends to keep everything, but this will cause him difficulties and create enemies, especially if his father has squandered a nephew's fortune. Upon his uncle's death, a nephew defrauded of his father's property reminds his cousin of the matter and requests indemnities, which are usually granted in the form of wives or livestock.

428 592 The new heir becomes head of the household in his turn and often inhabits his father's soukala; sometimes he builds himself another one. He is now his own master, subject only to the family head, while his unmarried sisters and younger brothers come under his jurisdiction. He has inherited the property, but he has not inherited the power. If his father was a naba and he wishes to succeed him, he must now solicit the position from the higher naba who is empowered to grant it.

596 Such is the family life of the Mossi. To summarize: marked submission to nabas and family heads, marked freedom toward those who are not in a position of authority. The wives live side by side

their allegiance directly to the *Yatenga Naba* for historical reasons or because their chiefs are related to the royal lineage and superior within the social hierarchy to the local nobility (*nakomse*) to which the canton chiefs belong.

Subordinate, in turn, to the canton chief, is the village chief (*Tenga Naba*), who is the central authority in the aggregation of "quarters" (*sakse*) of which a Mossi village is composed. These quarters are the dwellings of patrilineal extended families and lineages (*boodoose*). Such a residence is called a *saka* if it contains the house of the lineage elder (*sak kasama*) or a *yiri* if it represents only a junior segment. In either case the dwelling of the oldest male in the group is surrounded by the separate houses of his wives, his younger brothers and their wives, and his sons, nephews, cousins, and their wives and children. Each adult individual has a separate house within the *saka*.

The smallest unit within the residence of the lineage is the nuclear family (*zaka*) composed of a man, his wife, and their children. If a man has more than one wife, the term *zaka pedere* (*zaka* half) may be used when the man's relationship with one of his several wives is being considered. He himself is called *zaka soba*. As a young man's family grows, each of his new wives is provided with a house adjoining his. In addition to his house and the houses of his wives, each man's household contains several granaries used to store the produce from the millet fields he has been assigned by his lineage. It is with the members of his own household that a man is in most frequent social and economic interaction. The fields he works with their assistance are the principal source of the food supply for the nuclear family unit.

The *yiri* is the next largest social unit within the *saka*. The term refers to the extended family dwelling inhabited by a man, his wives, his male children, and their wives and children. It may be composed of as many as fifteen separate nuclear families. While its inhabitants usually consist of the married sons of an older man and their nuclear families, it may also be composed of a man, his wife and children, and his younger brothers and their wives and children. Since its members are closely related within the lineage, there is greater social and economic interaction among them than there is with the other lineage members. As the *zaka soba* is the principal and final authority within the *zaka*, the *yiri soba* is most important within the *yiri*.

Composed of the nuclear and extended family dwellings of its members, the Mossi residential unit is typically inhabited by all of the local representatives of the sib. In addition to the dwelling of the lineage elder, it contains the altar (*kiemserogo*) where the ancestral spirits of the lineage are worshiped. The lineage elder has authority over everyone living within his *saka*. As counselor to the village chief and intermediary with

5: Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1959
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the ancestral spirits, he is the principal political and religious authority within his lineage. 596

The single term *boodoo* is used to refer to three separate groups: the sib, the lineage, and the local residential kin group described above. Aside from formalized recognition of patrilineal descent and inheritance, the lineage functions most significantly as a local residential kin group in which the economic and social participation of the female non-members is as important as that of the men. Although the men are most prominent in the direction of its affairs, their wives have a considerable, if somewhat indirect, effect upon decisions made. Even in the relationship of the members of the lineage to their ancestral spirits (*kiemse*), the women play an important part in preparing the food and the libations to be offered. They give birth to the members of the lineage, nourish them until weaning (usually at the age of two), and provide them with guidance and training for their ascribed roles. In the education of the female members of the lineage the wives play a more important part than the men. But it is in their economic activities that the significance of the women's role is best seen. In addition to their farm work, they co-operate fully in repairing roofs, flooring the courtyards, and even assisting in the brick-making which precedes house-building. The economic and social contribution of the wives is of equal importance with that of the husbands and sons, and it is more important than that of the daughters, since females born into the lineage marry and leave just as they become fully productive members of their fathers' households. 562 613

Daughters, however, serve their lineage in a different way. As they are successful in winning for themselves a good name in the households of their husbands, so the bond of economic and social co-operation established between the two lineages at the time of marriage is strengthened. When they mature, they return to assist the members of their lineage with ritual obligations to the ancestors. If they are left childless at their husband's death, they may return to their father's household to reside. [602]

Separated from one another by millet fields and the public way, the dwelling of each Mossi kin group has the appearance of a small walled village. Each round mud house with its thatched roof has a separate courtyard which is usually contiguous to the courtyards of the other houses in the residential unit of which it is a part. The individual dwellings are constructed in such a way—the wall of each house or courtyard being contiguous to that of the nearest neighbor—as to form a circular wall whose exterior is closed at all but two points. The dwelling of each kin group has a small exit and a large open entrance way just within which is located a thatch-covered sun shelter (*zande*) where the men of the lineage gather to rest, to work at small crafts, and to talk. Guests are 592 342 [343]

342 received, gossip exchanged, and social and ceremonial obligations dis-
592 cussed in its shade. Here, also, the men of the lineage take their meals,
[264] brought out to them from the kitchens of their wives and set before them by their sons, who first attend their fathers and then dine on what remains.

592 A few paces away is the grinding platform (*nere*) where the women
252 gather to prepare the grain for their families' meals. This great circular mud table, some twenty feet in diameter, is raised about three feet from the ground. Its surface is beaten hard and worked over with cinders and manure to make it rainproof. Each woman has her assigned place at this
[512] platform where she keeps her pestle and where she stations herself at dawn and again at dusk to grind her millet and learn the news of the day.

Frequently found at the outer perimeter of the dwelling of the Mossi
592 kin group is the house of the son of a lineage woman who has returned from his father's household to live in the benevolent presence of his mother's family, with whom he enjoys an especially permissive relationship. The house set aside for the residence of the young unmarried men of the lineage is also located on the outer edge of the compound dwelling.

A recent addition to the traditional pattern of village organization
555 described above is the independent households of socially ambitious
184 individuals who have chosen to separate themselves from the residences of their lineages in order to profit from their own economic or religious enterprises. Many have become independently wealthy through successful commercial ventures; others, as a result of conversion to Islam, have gained prestige through religious authority and wealth through the tuition and services provided by the Koranic students. Often these people are much younger than their lineage elders, not in line for the inheritance of political or religious authority through traditional channels, and unwilling either to accept the authority of their seniors or to share economically with the less prosperous members of their lineages. They are deviants, in conflict with the communal patterns of consumption and with the emphasis on accepting established authority which characterizes the traditional social organization of the Mossi.

THE TRADITIONAL ECONOMY

613 Much agricultural endeavor is necessarily co-operative. Each farmer
476 is dependent on the assistance of his kinsmen to get his fields seeded,
243 cultivated, and harvested in the short time during which each of these operations must take place. However, the yield from his field remains his own, to be shared only with his own wives and children. Members of the lineage also work in the fields under the specific control of the lineage elder. Although the harvest from these fields is stored in the granary
242 [i.e. at a sun shelter in the entrance-way. — Analyst]

325 4. The iron rasp or sodara.
306 5. The sharpening tool or karé.
413 6. The iron wedge to cut copper (kétouga).
7. Shears to cut copper (mankasaga).
8. A few very primitive goatskin bellows.

306 As an example of a jeweler, may I present Sulémani Déréma, an inhabitant of Ouagadougou. He lives with his older brother, who is the head of the soukala and who has a wife and child. Sulémani himself has two wives and two children. A younger brother lives with them with his wife and child. Finally, there are other brothers in the soukala but they are not married (let us note in passing [592] that this soukala is exceptional, for the general rule among the /518/ Mossi is for every household to live separately; here, although they still live together, every household works separately).

Sulémani Déréma buys his copper at market, or else he works the copper furnished by his customers to order. He makes bracelets, rings, copper stirrups, etc.

306 He also works in the fields during the winter season, and like 241 the other households in the soukala, he does this on his own. Sulémani has two fields in the bush, one of small millet and another of large white millet, and in addition he grows maize around the soukala on the stretch of ground allotted him by the head of the soukala.

He owns neither large nor small livestock, not even chickens, He neither hunts nor fishes.

His jeweler's trade nets him more than his fields.

324 The blacksmith and niaka are representatives of metalworking.
316 Let us now proceed to stonework.

The makers of crushing stones are called nanlora in Mossi, from nan, "crushing stone" and lora, "to shatter."

Our quarrymen look in the bush for large stone slabs resting on the ground, and whenever possible raised in some manner above it. They draw lines on these large flat stones with karité and soumbara, the size of the crushing stones they wish to extract, and then they gather wood under the slab and set it afire. They allow the fire

285 294 435 2. Similar but smaller hats, worth from 1,000 to 1,500 cowries.

/529/ 3. Round straw hats with wide brims, mentioned above. These are worth 1,700 cowries.

285 All the leather parts on those hats are added by the shoemaker.

294 241 We have already mentioned that our hat makers are not exclusively manufacturers, that they also till the soil. It must be added that the latter activity nets them more than their trade. The man I mentioned cultivates a field of small millet and one of large red millet in the bush. He also grows maize, peanuts, and underground peas around his soukala. He owns neither large nor small livestock, but only chickens.

285 294 592 In his soukala he has two wives, four children, two married brothers who have one wife apiece but no children, and two unmarried brothers, as well as a father. They all make hats.

He lives at Saponé, where there are many hat manufacturers.

282 294 [564] After straw work, let us mention leatherwork.

Mossi shoemakers do not form a caste. Anyone who wants to may marry among them, and anyone who wishes to do so may exercise their trade.

[592] As an example, here is Kinoga Kologo, a Mossi, and the head of a soukala. He lives with two wives, two children, and an unmarried brother. His soukala consists of three huts.

His tools are as follows:

282 294 413 1. The pongo, a kind of broad little knife with a flaring blade hafted to a very short handle. It is used to cut hide.

2. The gansiouba, a wooden knife used to scrape and rub hides, clean them and smooth them.

3. The désara, a small tool with a wooden handle and a curved iron stem. It is used red hot to trace designs on hides.

4. The pime, a small awl used to sew hides.

5. The large tirisiga. This is an iron seal used to imprint hides with small circles.

6. The small tirisiga. This is a smaller seal, /530/ an iron rod whose tip makes a very tiny seal.

282 294 435 As among nearly all Blacks, the Mossi shoemaker is his own tanner. He buys sheepskins and goatskins at market (small ones

596 Are those blacksmiths who live in groups unaltered remnants of
326 the ancient population as it existed prior to the Dagomba invasion? Are they autochthonous? Should their statement that they are not Mossi be interpreted in this light? This is probable, although by no means certain. In any case, the family among them is of the purest patriarchal cast.

596 Among them, all households belonging to a family occupy the
326 same soukala. When a young man marries, he remains in the fam-
592 ily soukala.

/543/ During the winter season, the occupants of the soukala work in the fields of the head of the soukala from six in the morning until three in the afternoon. From three o'clock on, they till their own little individual plots.

During the dry season, they all work together at the blacksmith's trade with the head of the soukala, and all profits devolve to the latter. They work from sunrise to sunset.

The head of the soukala provides them with food throughout the year. As for their clothing, they procure it themselves with the returns from their little plots. The same applies to bracelets, jewels, etc. (as for grigris, they do not like them).

The head of the soukala buys each man his first wife, and in return gives in marriage all the daughters of the soukala.

596 When the head of a soukala dies, it is his younger brother who
428 takes command of the soukala. He also takes all the goods, fields,
326 livestock, slaves, cowries, and the tools used to extract and work the iron. The sons get nothing. Everyone remains in the soukala.

When the supply of brothers has been exhausted, the oldest son in the whole soukala receives the inheritance.

If no males remain in the soukala, the sisters come first in line before the daughters if they have the same father and mother as the deceased, but after /them/ if they were born of the same father only. They take half of the movable property and give half to the daughters. They apportion their share evenly among themselves. The soukala and fields go to the village chief. If there are no sisters born of the same father and mother, the inheritance goes to the daughters, and next in line to the sisters born of the same father as the deceased. If there are neither sisters nor daughters, the whole estate goes to the village chief.

596
326 As we can see, the common patriarchal family is found among those blacksmiths who live in groups.

592 The second Mossi family type is one we had occasion to men-
596 tion here and there in the section on work. Contrary to the first type, which is found only in a special section of the population, this one occurs throughout the Mossi but as a rare /544/ and exceptional case. All the households in the family still live together, but every household works for itself. This is the type we studied among the Nankana and other groups of cultivator-breeders under the name of Nankana type No. 3 /not translated/.

593 We come now to those Mossi family types which are wide-
592 spread rather than exceptional. They correspond to the Nankana type No. 4 (every household lives separately and works separately), or rather they depart from it in the direction of even greater decommunalization. There are three variants, namely, one that corresponds to the pure Nankana type No. 4, and two where decommunalization is more accentuated. Let us describe them in turn.

Here is the first variant:

593 1. The households live separately. As soon as a young man
592 marries, he settles on his own with the help of his family.
596 When a family head gives one of the family's sons a wife, he uses a vacant soukala if there is one available. If there is none, the son builds a new soukala with the help of his father and of the family head.

2. Every household works separately (except for the clearing of family fields), procures its own food, clothing, and subsistence. The married son, however, comes and helps his father a little now and then. During the dry season, for example, he helps him repair the soukala. Or else he offers him small gifts from time to time.

When someone, on marrying, settles separately, the head of the family usually gives him some family field that was once cleared and cultivated and has since lain fallow.

3. Although households work separately, the children of the households are not given in marriage by their father and mother, but by the head of the family. The latter buys wives for the boys,
[583] but he also gives the daughters in marriage and receives the bride price.

584 To arrange a marriage, one offers gifts to the girl's family on
596 festive days. The gift grows more sizable from year to year. Finally, at the time of marriage, one offers 25 or 30 francs as a bride price.

Girls are also exchanged among families. /545/ One family may pledge one of its daughters to another family for one of its young men, while the second family provides a girl for a boy of the first family.

Even if a man buys a wife at market and has children by her, it is not he but his family head who gives those children in marriage.

If a young man goes himself to a family head, asks for a wife, and obtains her without any payment, without any bride price, it is the girl's father who disposes of the first daughter born of the union. He is entitled to take her with him as soon as she is no longer at the breast, and he will later give her in marriage. The other children are given in marriage by their father's family head.

596 4. The head of the family performs religious sacrifices for the
782 whole family, and acts as its judge.

5. When a family head dies, the headship of the family goes
596 to his younger brother along with the family property, that is,
428 his soukala if it is a family one (built by the family or with the help of the family), the available family fields, the movable family property (livestock, slaves, cowries, clothing, family jewels, etc.). The movable private property of the deceased, on the other hand (livestock, slaves, cowries, clothing, private jewels, etc.) go to the oldest son along with the fields cultivated by the deceased and by his household, that is, the private property of the deceased. Finally, the soukala, if it was built by the deceased all by himself and without the aid of his family, goes to his oldest son as well since it is private property.

The brother who inherits gives some of the movable family property to the other brothers, but only if he feels like doing so.

Here, family property is by far the most important.

Such is the oldest variant of the Mossi family type that prevails at the present day. Actually, this variant still persists in quite a few Mossi localities.

Now, here is the second variant:

592 1. Every household lives separately, works separately (except
596 for the clearing of the family fields), and sees to its own subsistence.

592 People who are thus settled on their own work for themselves and no
596 longer for /546/ their father, with whom they lived and for whom they worked prior to marriage. They nevertheless offer gifts to their father from time to time.

592 2. As far as the marriage of children belonging to those house-
596 holds is concerned, a distinction must be made among the following
584 possibilities. When they are the children of wives bought by the family head, it is the latter who gives them in marriage. When they are the children of wives obtained by the husband himself, it is the latter who gives them in marriage.

Or else a rough compromise is made (in Boussouma province, for example). The first son and first daughter of the union are given in marriage by the family head, while the other children are given in marriage by the household.

596 3. It is the head of the family, however, who alone is entitled
782 to offer religious sacrifices for the whole family, and who always acts as its judge.

596 4. When the head of the family dies, the headship is trans-
428 mitted to his younger brother along with the family property. The private property of the deceased goes to all his sons, but the oldest son is favored. This actually constitutes the difference between this family type and the preceding one as far as inheritance is concerned. While in the preceding type the oldest son alone inherited, in this type all sons inherit but the eldest is heavily favored.

Thus, if the soukala was the private property of the deceased, it goes to the eldest son. If he is able to cultivate them all, the latter also keeps all the fields cultivated by the deceased. If he is not able to do so, he gives the surplus to his brothers.

As for livestock, if there are ten head that belonged privately to the deceased, and if there are three sons and two daughters, the oldest son will get four, each other son will get two, and each daughter will get one.

[567] As for slaves, if the situation is the same, the oldest son will take five out of ten, the second son three, the third son two, and the daughters will get none.

Cowries and grain are apportioned in the same manner.

In addition to these shares given to the younger sons and to the daughters, it must be noted that private property has acquired greater

593 and very probably of large and small livestock as well. In this
174 respect they must have been strikingly similar to the present-day Toucouleur, who conquered part of West Africa in the nineteenth century and who are, like the Foulah of Guinea, half stockbreeders, half cultivators. (We shall review briefly those very Toucouleur in Chapter 4 of this book, to give the reader an idea of the Black conqueror on the active rather than the potential level, in a "pure state" rather than already fused into a heterogeneous conquered population /not translated/). Now war with its attendant loot, like stockbreeding, augments private property and allows individuals and households to secede from the family, at least to the extent permitted by the problems of cultivation and especially of field clearing. It is a fact that among the Toucouleur and Foulah, as among the Dagomba and Mossi, every household lives separately and works separately (except for that most difficult of all tasks to the Blacks, the clearing of fields). Thus, it must be concluded that the decommunalization of the present-day Mossi family derives from the ancient workaday life of the conquering segment of the population, which imposed its own customs on the conquered group. This workaday life consisted half of stockbreeding, half of cultivation as among the present-day Toucouleur and Foulah, with war and looting in addition as among the same groups up to quite recently.

Of course, we learn nothing that might shed light on the subject by questioning the Mossi themselves. My informants, for example, tell me that the various soukala in a family actually constitute but one family. I ask them why, then, do they not live together and do all their tilling together, like /555/ the Bobo, Gourounsi, Bambara, etc.? Because the women quarrel, they tell me. Those quarrels caused other fights among the men, and people ended up living separately. Of course, this could only have been a pretext for secession, and the true cause which made this secession possible, namely, the increasing individual wealth of the households, was something else again.

592 We shall close with a few details concerning the internal structure of the Mossi household. The latter includes, as we have stated above, the following members:

592 1. Husband.
2. Wife or wives.
3. Unmarried children, sons or daughters.
4. Slaves.

Sometimes, it also includes young unmarried brothers (see above).

592 As a rule, every soukala-household has only one large bush
241 field in addition to the garden plot surrounding the soukala (where
461 maize and large red millet are grown during the rainy season, tobacco and cotton during the dry season).

The head of the household, his unmarried sons and unmarried brothers, work on those fields during the rainy season from six in the morning to three in the afternoon, with a long rest period around noon. The women work there also, but their hours are different owing to their household tasks.

The unmarried sons and brothers also have small individual plots of cotton and large red millet. They work them in the afternoon after three o'clock. During the rainy season, as a rule, there are no rest days. A few Mossi, however, have adopted the customs
[527] of their Yarsé neighbors and rest on Friday. Others, who are Moslemized, and incidentally very few, rest both on Friday and on Monday.

During the dry season the members of the household repair hut roofs, go hunting, or else participate in the clearing of family fields, etc. In addition to this they work for themselves, as weavers for example. The money earned in this fashion goes to them and not to the soukala head.

592 /556/ It is the head of the soukala-household, the husband and father, who provides all occupants of the soukala with food throughout the year, morning and evening. He also provides clothing for those who cannot provide their own, but those who can do so procure it themselves.

592 We know that it is sometimes the head of the family and some-
584 times the head of the household who gives the children of the house-
464 hold in marriage. It sometimes happens, however, that a son
565 leaves the soukala without his father's permission. He usually does this in order to win a wife, when the head of the family or the

592 father cannot procure one or delays too long in doing so. The son
584 who secedes in this fashion goes to work for a chief or noble who
464 will later give him a wife as a reward. The first male child and the
565 first female child born of this union, however, will devolve to the chief or noble who gave the wife. He will use the male child as a servant, and the girl to be handed out as a reward to someone working for him. This is a side effect of the political organization on the family. This secession on the part of sons can only occur, indeed, thanks to the existence of chiefs and nobles in sufficient numbers to permit the secessionists to find work and employment among them without difficulty. Among the Bobo and Nounouma, such a situation could not exist.

Let us note that this institution, while restricting the authority of the family head or household head, has strengthened the power of the Mossi aristocracy.

592 In closing, let us note a few details about the Mossi soukala
361 from a physical standpoint. It is a cluster of round huts, about five or six of them, usually built of red earth with a straw roof and connected to each other by a concave wall made likewise of red earth. The soukala is thus fortified, as it were, and sheltered from the outside.

592 The Mossi soukala is quite similar to the Malinké or Dialonké
361 "compound" /literally, "square"/, which also consists of a cluster of clay huts with straw roofs. Among the Malinké and Dialonké,
171 however, the huts are often connected by a palisade or a mere séko instead of a red earth wall as they are here. Another difference is /557/ that the doors of the huts of the Mossi soukala are so low that one must often creep in on all fours. Furthermore, there are no porches such as are found among the Malinké and Dialonké. In spite of those differences, however, the Mossi soukala bear a general resemblance to the Guinean soukala, while they are in no way related to the massive citadels of the Gourounsi and Kipirsi.

The Mossi soukala, on the other hand, are set about 50 meters apart. The maize plot surrounding the soukala lies directly around it, as among the Bobo, Gourounsi, Kipirsi, etc., while among the Malinké and Dialonké of Guinea the garden plot of each compound is located outside the village boundaries, since the compounds stand

592 only one or two meters apart, close together. It is true that there
361 is sometimes a small plot within the séko....
171 The soukala or compound is called iri in Mossi, the hut rogo or dogo, and the soukala head irisoba (from soba, "chief" and iri, "compound").

462 We shall close this analysis of the Mossi family with a few notes
562 on the status of women and that of slaves.

First of all, Mossi women help with the tilling. They do not clear the fields, it is true, but they participate in all other field tasks along with the men. They do this only in the morning, however, since they spend the afternoon on household tasks or on their little individual plots, for they have small fields of large white millet, underground peas, beans, or peanuts.

They also do household tasks: they pound and crush the grain. Large millet or sorghum is, as we know, pounded first and then crushed, while small millet is crushed after being threshed.

462 The Mossi set their crushing stones in huge round clay /banco/
252 tables which are built outside the soukala and which are used by
412 the whole quarter. This is a strictly Mossi characteristic which is not found among the /558/ Bobo, Gourounsi, etc., in short, among any of the other groups who nevertheless use the same stones. Those large round tables are not high. They are about 1 or 1.20 meters in height and approximately 6 meters in diameter, with a correspondingly large circumference. The Mossi set in their crushing stones all around the circumference, and each table can thus hold ten, twelve, or even more. Every evening at nightfall the women of the soukala which are around it, women, young girls, etc., come together to crush their grain. They are usually in the simplest of garb, bare as the back of my hand, for the work is hard and demands a continuous back-and-forth motion of the arms, the upper part of the body, and the body as a whole.

To make those tables, they first build a circular wall to the desired height of the table, and then the whole inner space is filled up with earth almost to the top. This earth is pounded thoroughly, and then well-tamped casings are fashioned on the horizontal circumference in which are set the stones on which the crushing is done. The stones are firmly ensheathed in the clay, which is then allowed to dry.

/223/ - BOOK IV

The Family

596 We shall divide this study of the family among the Mossi of Yatenga into several subdivisions.

1. Generalities on the family.
2. Groupings larger than the single household.
3. Women and the household.
4. Children and education.
5. Apendages of the family.
6. Family property.
7. Transmission of family property or inheritance.

First, let us look at the generalities which include in turn the following subdivisions.

1. The composition of the family.
2. Its name.
3. Its nature.
4. Examples.

The Mossi family of Yatenga is one of several layers, if I can thus describe it. First, one may consider the total family, the family in its fullest extension, which usually includes from 100 to 150 persons and several separate compounds. The compounds themselves usually [592] include several households. Each compound does not form a tight economic entity, as many other Sudanese compounds do. On the [571] contrary, it is divided into two or more work groups according to its numerical size. Finally, below the work group there is the single household (father, mother or mothers, and unmarried children). We shall examine these groupings one by one.

Name. —The family in its fullest extension, the total family, is called boudou in Yatenga Mossi. The compound is called zaka. The word iri, used especially by the Mossi of Ouagadougou, is also employed, while the word zaka is used chiefly in Yatenga. Finally, [571] there is no word to designate the household, nor is there a word to designate the work group. One says: "the people of So-and-So (the name of the head of the group)." /224/

Nature of the family. —In the first place, the family is communal up to a certain point. The whole family does not work together nor

596 even the compound. As a rule, the work group is not composed of a single household but of two or more. We are dealing here, therefore, with a highly disintegrated communal family. Let us state immediately that the family among the Foulsé /Fulse/ and Yarsé /Yarse/, which we shall describe later /not translated/, is less disintegrated than the Mossi family, while the Samo family is even less so than the Foulsé and Yarsé families.

[611] As far as matriarchy and patriarchy are concerned, the Mossi family of Yatenga is patriarchal, that is to say, the family revolves around the man rather than the woman. This is a clearly documented fact. There are, however, some indications, as we shall see, that permit us to inquire whether once upon a time, very long ago, the Mossi family was not matriarchal. In our Noir du Soudan /The Black Population of the Sudan/ we pointed out various indications of the same sort about the Gourounsi /Grunshi/.

In sum, the Mossi family of Yatenga is (1) communal and quite disintegrated and (2) patriarchal.

592 596 162 Examples. —Let us first list some statistical figures. Here is a table summarizing some important censuses taken among the Mossi of Yatenga.

Localities	Families	Compounds	Number of Persons
Diogoré and Lako (small cantons)	25	78	3, 165
Small canton of Tangay	11	51	1, 241
Village of Dio	7	50	842
Totals	43	179	5, 248

This set of figures yields an average of 122 persons per family, four compounds or iri or zaka per family, and 29 persons per compound.

Now for some details.

In the village of Tangay (canton of Tangay) there are 11 Mossi families. Here are the figures for the persons who compose them and the compounds where they live.

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Families	Compounds	Number of Persons
1st family	1	51
2nd family	6	132
3rd family	2	23
4th family	6	160
5th family	3	59
6th family	5	50
/225/ 7th family	9	136
8th family	3	79
9th family	8	242
10th family	4	158
11th family	4	151
	51	1, 241

592 This gives us an average of 113 persons per family, 5 compounds
596 per family, and 24 persons per compound.
162 Now, here are the villages in the little canton of Lako or Lago.
621

Villages	Families	Compounds	Number of Persons
Bô	2	3	89
Boulounsi	1	3	137
Ninga	2	12	146
Piga-Sorodé	1	2	35
Réga	4	17	484
Viré-Sorodé	3	4	242
Diogoré	1	8	352
Lako	7	25	1, 457
Touba	3	3	216
Nango-Yarsé (Mossi of the village)	1	1	7
Totals	25	78	3, 165

592 This gives us an average of 126 or 127 persons per family, 3 com-
596 pounds per family, and 40 or 41 people per compound.
162 Now, here are some other statistics.
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Villages	Families	Compounds	Households	Number of Persons
Lougouri	2	4	48	157
Oula	2	5	43	149
Réka	1	2	3	46
Noungou	2	14	46	233
Zíré	1	3	36	197
Kindiba	7	35	149	736
Diessiré	5	15	49	286
Bissigaï	4	17	100	510
Bougounam	8	32	151	999
Totals	32	127	625	3, 313

/226/ On an average, this gives us 103 or 104 persons per family, 26 persons per compound, 5 persons per household, 4 compounds or soukala per family.

Here are some statistics collected in the canton of Koussouka and covering those villages which are entirely Mossi as well as those which are predominantly Mossi.

Villages	Families	Compounds	Households	Population
Rondo	7	72	148	975
Bouga-Mossi	1	11	23	152
Sékéba	1	9	28	183
Zandoma	3	24	62	344
Tangué	7	26	67	439
Konga-Mossi	3	23	72	483
Iroum	2	63	159	880
Totals	24	228	559	3, 456

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Here we get an average of 144 persons per family, 15 persons per compound, and 6 persons per household. This gives 2 or 3 households per compound and 9 to 10 compounds per family.

Finally, here are some figures obtained among the Mossi in the northern part of the /Ouahigouya/ circle /a circle is an administrative district/.

Villages	Compounds	Persons	Average per Compound	Observations
Boulzoma	1	39 (1)	39	(1) 7 households
Aoréma	50	672	13	
Bogoya	29	379 (2)	13	(2) 64 households
Yabonsoro	37	494 (3)	13	(3) 74 households
Bagayaloro	14	290	21	
Barélogo	17	317	19	
Lilligondé	12	177	15	
Rikou	33	486	15	
Dinghiri	59	725	12	
Dinghila	44	362	8	
Irigué	17	94	6	
Bahn (Mossi)	3	54	18	
Pogoro	38	334	8	
Ninighé	7	75	11	
Séghé	8	111	14	
Tibo	19	228	12	
Totals	388	4,837	12 to 13	

Here we have only 12 or 13 persons per compound (and 6 per household). This shows an evolution of the Mossi family of Yatenga toward /227/ a more disintegrated form, which we shall discuss later when we mention the exceptions.

If we summarize the preceding statistics, we obtain the following table.

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Locations	Families	Compounds	Persons
Diogoré, etc.	43	179	5, 248
Oula, etc.	32	127	3, 313
Koussouka	24	228	3, 456
Northern part	?	369	4, 609
	?	903	16, 626

This gives us on an average 18 to 19 persons per compound and 121 persons per family (1).

1. This figure of 18 to 19 persons is an average one. Actually, there are some Mossi compounds which contain only 3 persons and others which boast as many as 100. To give a better idea of the matter, I shall provide below a numerical breakdown of the village of Diessiré (canton of Léba) where there are 286 persons and 15 compounds, or an average of 19 persons per compound. In reality, no one compound holds exactly 19 people.

Compounds	Households	Persons
First compound	4	24
Second compound	3	18
Third compound	1	6
Fourth compound	2	11
Fifth compound	4	23
Sixth compound	3	17
Seventh compound	1	5
Eighth compound	2	12
Ninth compound	2	12
Tenth compound	1	6
Eleventh compound	2	12
Twelfth compound	14	81
Thirteenth compound	3	18

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Fourteenth compound	6	36
Fifteenth compound	1	5
	49	286

This gives us, therefore:

Compounds with several households (more than two)..	7
Compounds with several households (two)	4
Compounds with a single household	4
	15

Now that these statistics have been listed, let us examine in detail the groupings larger than the single household, which may be categorized as follows: (1) the total family; (2) the compound; (3) the work group.

596 The total family. —As we stated earlier, the total family /228/ does not occupy one and the same compound. It is divided into a number of zaka or iri of varying size (the average number given by the above statistics is five). One of these compounds is that of the boudoukasaman or head of the family, who governs the whole family and is at the same time the head of his own zaka and head of his work group. As head of the family, he holds definitively only three types of powers: (1) religious powers; (2) judicial powers; (3) the right to give the daughters of the whole family in marriage.

As head of the family, he has no economic powers.

We shall study the religious powers of the boudoukasaman in detail under "Religion (Sacerdotal Organization)" /not translated/. Let us [592] simply state here that although the head of the total family holds the highest religious powers, the zakasoba or heads of compounds are not totally deprived of them, and this contributes to the greater autonomy of these subfamilies.

I am borrowing the following particulars on the family head and the family council which assists him from Vadier's excellent monograph, here and there correcting some inexact details.

"The head of the family, or patriarch," says Vadier, "is the oldest member of the family. It is he who is the head of it.

"He enjoys great authority over all family members, but exclusively in regard to personal matters. To him alone, after obtaining the consent of the fathers, belongs the right to give the young girls of the

596 family in marriage. Likewise, the head of the family, assisted by the family council, settles all the little differences which arise between relatives. He also intervenes when a father fails to secure the obedience of one of his children or cannot manage to discipline him.

"It is he alone who must sacrifice animals for the benefit of the whole family when his relatives bring them to him on the occasion of family feasts.

"All the members of the family owe obedience to the family head. Likewise, they must show him the greatest respect.

"When the family elder dies, his younger brother becomes head of the family. When all his brothers have successively held this office, the eldest son of the eldest brother becomes the family head after the brothers, etc.

"Sometimes the head of the family does not live in the same village as the rest of the family. He may very well live with some of his sons or brothers, away from his other relatives, but his powers remain unchanged.

"In addition to the family head, there is the family council which is made up of all the men and old women of the family. This body has no well-defined role. It meets under the leadership of the family head to settle all matters concerning the family. The council would decide, for example, as to whether an incorrigible child should be sent to a naba /ruler/, as to who should intervene /229/ in case of a quarrel over an inheritance, who should seize the goods of a spendthrift in order to dole them out to him in proportion to his needs, etc."

592 351 The compound. —The Mossi compound consists of a certain number of round earthen huts or cabins surmounted by thatched roofs and huts for millet, all crowded into a rather narrow space cut by passages, hallways, small courtyards, etc. This complex is surrounded by a moderately high earth wall (two meters) which encircles the huts or cabins and encloses the compound.

592 361 The compounds are scattered over the plain, 50 or 100 meters apart. Some are larger than others: some have 15 or 20 huts or even more; others have but four or five (2).

192 2. To designate these compounds, the word soukala or sokala is often used. This word is hallowed by custom in Yatenga, in the Ouagadougou area, in the Léo area, etc., in short, in all Mossi lands and their

192 dependencies, as well as in the language of the European officials who inhabit the territory. Actually, the word sokala is not Mossi but Mandé /Mande/. In Bambara the hut is called so, in Malinké /Malinke/ sou. Soukala or sokala means exactly "the walls of the hut" (from kala, which means "bone" and by extension all elongated things, walls among them, and from so or sou, whose meaning we have learned already). This word was brought here from the shores of the Niger at the time of conquest. It is to some extent equivocal, for although it is usually given the meaning of "compound," some Europeans also use it to designate a whole quarter /a village subdivision including several compounds/. This is the meaning given to it by Delafosse (Le Haut-Sénégal-Niger /Upper Senegal-Niger/, Vol. 3, p. 126). As for myself, I always gave it the meaning of "compound" in my Noir du Soudan, that is to say, the meaning which I gave to the term carré or carrée in my monograph on the Noir de Guinée /The Black Population of (French) Guinea/. This word, however, and analogous words which are not strictly native to the region or whose French meaning is not absolutely clear lead to some confusion. We shall return to this subject later.

592 Let us add that the head of the compound is called zakasoba or irisoba (from zaka or iri, "compound," and soba, "chief, master"). Vadier incorrectly designated the head of the total family as zakasoba [596] in his monograph. The head of the total family is the boudoukasaman. The zakasoba is the head of a compound, of a home, of that cluster of huts and millet granaries encircled by a red wall which makes such a distinct and isolated unit on the Mossi plains.

This compound accommodates varying numbers of people, 18 or 19 being the average (with exceptions), as we have seen above.

592 The compound, from an intellectual point of view, is a kind of subfamily. It is not the whole family; it is not the equivalent of the total family. It is, however, quite superior to the single household.

592 If the Mossi family of Yatenga were completely communal and
182 perfectly integrated, the 100 or 125 persons or so who make up a
571 Mossi family would live and work together. A less marked but still quite appreciable degree of community would exist if the compound were a tight economic unit (this does occur among many blacks of the /French/ Sudan, especially among the Bobo /230/ of the Residency of Léo, the Menkiéra, the Nounouma /Nunuma/, the Kassonfra /Awuna/, etc., and also among the Samo of Yatenga as we shall see later), with all the people who live in it working and consuming together under the authority and guidance of the head of the home. Actually, there is even more disintegration of the family among our Mossi of Yatenga. In each home there are work groups which vary in number according to the importance of the compound and the number of its occupants.

592 Work groups. —We must proceed to the work group, then, in order
571 to deal with the actual economic unit. This group has the communal
241 fields which are not, therefore, properly speaking, familial fields or even subfamilial fields. They belong to a subordinate unit. It is the head of the work group who supplies food for all the people in his group during the greater part of the year (seven months out of twelve). In return, they owe him the larger part of their time during the rainy season (two days out of three) but little work during the dry season. Each member of the group also has his own little field which he cultivates on the third day, as we shall see later on.

592 Consumption. Meals. —People do not assemble for meals in the
264 same fashion during the rainy season as during the dry season.

During the rainy season the members of each work group eat together at noon in the fields, but men and women are always apart. The boys eat with the men, the girls and small children with the women. In the evening they gather for meals in the same manner as during the dry season.

During the dry season the members of each compound, the whole zaka, eat together, but they are divided into several groups. First, there is the basic division between men and women. Then, if the compound is a large one, there are on the male side the groupings of old men, married men, and young unmarried men. There are also three groups on the female side: old women, married women,

592 264 and young girls. Thus, there are six groups altogether, but we must add that when the women do not get along well, each one eats in her own hut with her own children. In the smaller compounds, there cannot be six groups; there are only two basic ones, that of the men and that of the women.

592 252 For the preparation of food during the seven months when millet furnished by the head of the work group is eaten, or in other words the millet from the communal fields (roughly from April to October), each woman is "on duty" for 24 hours and cooks for the whole group. The other women help her, of course, by fetching water, pounding millet for her, etc. During the five months when the millet from the small private fields is eaten (November-March), each woman prepares her husband's food. When a husband has several wives, they take turns preparing the food.

592 252 264 /231/ As we can see, the manner of preparing meals follows the schedule of millet consumption. While the communal grain distributed by the head of the work group or under his supervision is being consumed, cooking is done on a work group basis. During the time when the millet from household fields is being consumed, the preparation of meals is on a household basis. The actual consumption of the meals, however (except when people are working in the fields) involves a larger community, that of the compound. There remains, however, the basic division between men and women, who must not eat together and who always split into two groups at mealtime. In the larger compounds, moreover, each of these two major groups is further divided into subgroups according to natural age lines. Finally, to cap it all, the female spirit of anarchy sometimes causes some of the women to withdraw. Hence, for the consumption and preparation of food as well as for its production, there exists only this very unstable community which is characteristic of the family we are studying.

592 182 Exceptions. —We come now to the Mossi household, which we shall discuss at some length. Before doing so, however, it must be stated that the family as we have just described it has its exceptions here and there.

First, there are exceptions in the sense of community, in the sense of integration; above all, there are exceptions in the sense of greater disintegration.

596 In the sense of integration, we must mention primarily the families
592 of great chiefs. For example, there is the family of Gombiraogo, a
182 former Baloum Naba, a very wealthy and important personage. He
591 has five brothers. Two of them live together in the village of Kalo and another two, similarly, in the village of Bembéla. Gombiraogo lives in Ouahigouya with the fifth brother. With this brother he has three zaka where 70 or 80 people live, all of whom work for him and form a single work group under his direction (that is to say, during the rainy season they work for him two days out of three, and during the dry season they do so only when he has exceptional need of them; in return, he provides them with food seven months out of twelve, according to custom, and does not provide them with clothes unless they are unmarried).

What should be noted here is the strength of this work group (70 to 80 people). As a result, it includes several compounds, while it is the compound as a rule that contains several or at least two work groups.

645] The present Baloum Naba, the prime minister, likewise has two zaka working for him. Moreover, the total family of the Baloum Naba is not assembled in Ouahigouya but scattered throughout Yatenga.

643] In the same connection, the Rassam Naba has a zaka of 157 people who form a single work group under his direction. In return, he provides them with food all year.

/232/ Again, there is a zaka of shoemakers at Ouahigouya which
294 includes nearly 100 people altogether, among them 15 or 20 full-
592 grown men, all of them shoemakers. They all work for the zakasoba,
182 who provides them all with food. This zaka, of exceptional numerical strength, is at the same time completely integrated.

596 At the other end of the scale, we find the Mossi family of Yatenga
182 evolving toward complete disintegration in certain parts of the terri-
592 tory, that is to say, evolving toward a state of affairs where nothing remains except the total family on the one hand and the single household on the other (that is, the compound has only a single household).

Thus, in the course of a journey through the canton of Ratenga, I noted in the village of Tangué a family of 110 persons distributed among 14 homes. This gives an average of only seven or eight persons per home. In Kargo (another village) there are five Mossi families for 22 homes sheltering 181 persons, or only eight persons per home.

596 Here the zaka is quite clearly reduced to the single household,
182 which becomes identified at the same time with the compound and
592 with the work group. Let us state, however, that in the whole of Ratenga there are 4, 637 Mossi for 458 compounds, or ten persons per compound. An average of ten people per compound represents slightly more than a single household (which averages six persons in Yatenga), but not as much as two households. This means that the compounds sometimes contain two households, sometimes only one. Thus, since there are only a few people in each zaka, there is but a single work group.

162 Here is a complete numerical breakdown of the canton of Ratenga.
592
621

Villages	Inhabitants	Compounds	Average per Compound
Napalra	254	20	13
Ouembatenga	61	5	12
Alaga	335	22	15
Boulounga	197	23	9
Bani	387	30	13
Singuitenga	248	18	14
Boudé	69	11	6
Foulgo-Koquin	22	5	4
Zomkalga	88	12	7
Momoné	86	10	9
Toïsi	100	13	8
Denian	4	1	4
Pinsi	145	13	11
Dologa	110	15	7
Kiédéwendé	103	10	10
/233/ Koundi-Bittou	63	9	7
Yalka	56	4	14
Koumbango	221	19	12
Kourpellé	167	15	11
Zimtenga	307	39	8
Battenga	94	11	9
Badnoro	83	10	8
Douré	96	6	16
Yalgatenga	45	8	6

162 592 621

Villages	Inhabitants	Compounds	Average per Compound
Bargo	77	8	10
Lo	127	14	9
Rakoéga-Tenga	33	4	8
Moro-Koquin	37	7	5
Dougouré	41	7	6
Bama	82	7	12
Kora	99	9	11
Tangué	110	14	8
Minima	113	12	9
Kanion	75	10	7
Toukoulounga	124	4	31
Tempelra	35	6	6
Bauda	162	5	32
Kargo-Mossi	181	22	8
	4, 637	458	10

The same applies to the Mossi of the canton of Tougo, located south-southeast of Yatenga. Here are the figures concerning the number of compounds and the number of people in the canton.

Villages	Compounds	Persons	Average per Compound
Tibtenga	9	102	11
Béma	96	792	8
Ouembatenga	9	76	8
Rima	63	347	5 to 6
Tougo	69	937	13 to 14
Lébenga	4	40	10
Danaoua	22	229	10
Rasoumdé	27	189	7
Mangoulouma	2	28	14
Rikéba	52	545	10 to 11
Totals	353	3, 285	9 to 10

596 /234/ The kind of family found in the cantons of Ratenga and
592 Tougo is quite similar in type to the family among the Mossi of
182 Ouagadougou, or in its common types (3) which are characterized by

3. See my Noir du Soudan, pp. 544-553.

the fact that the zaka is identified with the single household, and only the total family and the single household remain.

This leads us to note that the average Mossi family of Yatenga, as we have described it above, is more compact, more communal, more integrated than the Mossi family of Ouagadougou.

182 This results, I believe, from the fact that the primitive element
563 of the population, the Foulsé (the basic element, let us not forget,
592 at Ouagadougou as well as in Yatenga), who are more communal than
596 the Mossi, are still much more numerous in Yatenga than in the Ouagadougou region. While in the latter area the Foulsé blended almost completely with the mass of invaders, in Yatenga they resisted more successfully, did not blend with them, and continued to make up the greater part of the population. In view of these circumstances, they probably exercised considerable influence on the morphology of the Mossi family, just as they gave it their prejudices against the ownership of cattle, etc.

This high proportion of the primitive communal element no doubt caused the structural differences between the Mossi family of the Ouagadougou region and that of Yatenga.

000 Women and the household.—We shall deal now with women and the household. We shall subdivide this section into a number of headings as follows.

1. Promise of marriage.
2. Persons whose consent is required to validate the promise of marriage.
3. Gifts.
4. Celebration and consummation of marriage.
5. Impediments to marriage.
6. Question of virginity.
7. Rights and duties of the husband and wife.
8. Polygamy.
9. Organization of the polygamous household.
10. Women's tasks.
11. The conjugal duty.

727 Only the sons of the two warring chiefs were spared. They were returned to their families for ransom. The women were also spared and returned to their husbands in exchange for other women or livestock. If their husbands did not come and claim them, the conquerors took them as wives and not as slaves.

567 435 Let us say a few words about the price of a slave. A man was worth 40, 000 cowries; a woman, 50, 000 or 60, 000; a young man, 50, 000; a young girl, 80, 000. We can see that the qualities most valued were, on the one hand, membership in the female sex and, on the other hand, youth.

567 4. Name. A slave is called yemba in Mossi (pl., yembésé) when no distinction is made between the sexes. When a male slave is meant, /265/ the word yembraogo is used (yembraodo or yembrâdo in the plural). For a female slave, one uses yempoka (yempokosé in the plural).

5. Kinds of slaves. The yembraogo, once bought or captured, was placed in irons, or to put it more precisely, irons were fastened to his feet in order to prevent him from escaping, but leaving him free to work. These irons were left on him for two or three years. When it was certain that he would not run away, the irons were removed. He spent all his time working for his master during the cultivating season, or he worked the small private fields belonging to his master's wives. In return, he was clothed and fed at all times. He could be resold, and this was done if there was dissatisfaction with him or his work.

If the master was satisfied with him, he bought him a wife. Then the slave became a bingo man, a "bingo," and was no longer a yembraogo. He passed from the status of a captive by trade or war to that of a house slave. Bingo is the name given to house slaves among the Mossi of Yatenga. At Ouagadougou they are called daparé or deporé (poré or paré meaning "back"); the daparé or daporé is the man who walks behind his master, the attendant, the slave. The bingo could not be resold except in unusual circumstances, such as when he committed fornication with his master's wife.

[592] When the master had but a few of them, the bingo lived in the same compound, with a door of their own leading outside. When there was a number of them, they had a small compound next to the one of the family.

During the season of cultivation, the bingo worked for his master two days out of three. During the dry season, he also worked for him

566 gone into Mossi hands. The bagaré did not till the soil. They simply minded their master's herds. As for other work, they also built the straw huts where the Moro Naba of Yatenga, the Riziam Naba, and other chiefs slept at the New Year (we shall see under "Religion" /not translated/ to what purpose).

The bagaré saw to their own support (food and clothing). The multiplying herd belonged to the naba, but its yield (milk and butter) went to the bagaré. Out of this yield, however, they gave the naba whatever he needed of milk and butter.

567 In short, we can see that among the Mossi and Foulsé there exist, or rather existed, the two kinds of slaves known throughout the /French/ Sudan, the trade slaves and the house slaves, the former being salable and the latter a part of the family. Nowadays, as a result of the prohibition against their purchase and sale, there remains but a dwindling number of house slaves.

421 Now we come to family property and its transmission.

596 Family property, properly so-called. —There is no family property among our Mossi, since no work is done in common by the whole family. The family property is limited to family charms owned by the boudoukasaman.

423 Property of the compound, or subfamily property. —This does not exist either, for the same reason, except for the compound itself which is the communal property of the zaka group. While each household has huts of its own, these huts are a usufructuary possession which is in accordance with the full ownership of the zaka group. Now, if some household chief wishes to build a new hut, he notifies the zakasoba, who, incidentally, always grants permission. Once the hut is built, the builder may destroy it if he wishes, which goes to prove that he has full ownership over it, having made it. He cannot, however, destroy the hut where he lives which he did not build as it actually belongs to the zaka. In short, there may be in the compound a mixture of communal property (belonging to the zaka) and individual property (hut built by a household or by an individual, millet granary erected in the same circumstances, etc.), but the communal property prevails by far.

423 Property of the work group. —Here, communal property is important, /268/ It is from the group fields that the group derives most of its sustenance (seven months out of twelve). The work implements

423 also belong to the group, as we shall see later. The group, however,
571 owns neither slaves nor livestock.

Household property. —As we know, during the rainy or cultivating
421 season, the husband works two days out of three for his work group.
571 The third day is his. On that day he works in his small field, helped
592 by his wife or wives. During the dry season, the husband does not work for the group but for himself alone, except for repair work on the compound huts.

571 The household is provided with food by the work group seven months
592 out of twelve and is fed with the produce of its own field for five months.

592 The primary possession of the household, therefore, is its private
423 field.

The field belonging to the household of the head of the work group is marked by a special characteristic. Since the head of the group is busy at all times with the communal field, even on the third day, his small plot is cultivated exclusively by his wives (and by his slaves, if he has any). Hence, his food is procured by his wives five months out of twelve. This only applies, however, to the heads of work groups (as well as zaka and family heads who are necessarily heads of work groups also).

423 Individual property. —Mossi women have tiny cultivated patches
562 which are wholly theirs, which do not belong to the work group or to
422 the household and which they work after five o'clock in the evening whenever possible. This is private property. Clothing, women's jewelry, etc., are also individually owned.

The husband and children also own private property. Actually,
423 the better to distinguish between individual and communal property (whether belonging to the household, the work group, the compound, or the family), we shall review below each type of property in turn.

Fields. —The fields belong primarily to the work group. (They belong only exceptionally to the compound, when it is so small that there is only one work group.) In addition to the fields of the work group, there is the household field. Finally, beside the household field, there are the private plots, for example, the little patches of the women and young men.

Work implements. —These tools (daba, axes, etc.) belong to the
422 work group. To work their small fields (both household and private),
571 men and women use the daba of their work group, but if they damage

422 591 them, they must repair them at their own expense. Those implements which are worn out are replaced by the head of the work group.

Domestic animals. —Chickens, goats, sheep, donkeys, etc., are 422 231 all fully owned on an individual basis and not by the group or even by the household. The animal is owned by the man or woman who bought /269/ it. Nevertheless, all the goats and sheep in a compound are gathered together, they sleep in the same place, and they are led to the bush in a flock by the little boys of the compound. The animals of the total family or of the village, on the other hand, are never gathered together.

562 Wives. —I need not emphasize that wives are obviously private property. There are no wives owned in common by the village, the family, the compound, or the work group. The wife, however, is in some measure considered to belong to the compound or even to the family in the sense that a man's wives always go to his brother when he dies.

423 592 The compound. —We saw earlier what applies here. The compound belongs to the zakasoba, but only as a representative of the zaka, as a manager of the property of this subfamilial group. It does not belong to him as private property, in the Roman sense of jus utendi et abutendi /right of use and abuse/. It belongs, ultimately, to the zaka itself.

If this is so, it is not less true that those habitable portions of the zaka, the cabins or huts, are definitely allocated to specific households which have rights of usufruct over them. Thus, the ownership belongs to the zaka, as represented by its head. The usufruct belongs to the households or individuals.

Finally, we may note, as we did earlier, that a hut built exclusively by a household with its own labor or by a single individual of the zaka may be torn down and destroyed by him since it is household or private property set up on subfamilial property. This case, however, is quite exceptional.

The large cabins or huts for millet belong to the cultivating groups. There are also huts for millet belonging to the household, where the husband stores the harvest from the household field. Finally, the 422 large earthen vases, the jars which stand in the huts, lead us from the compound to the subject of furniture. These jars are made by the women and belong individually to specific women.

Furniture. —The furniture, which we shall study in greater detail under "Mode of Subsistence" /not translated/, is very scanty and crude. It is owned privately.

422 415 Household utensils. —The large earthen slabs set up to crush the grain belong to the compound, but the rectangular granitic stones set into the slabs are owned by individual women, as are the movable pestles used to pound grain on the stones.

422 412 592 571 The wooden mortars and pestles, which are very useful and, besides, are heavy, cumbersome, and difficult to destroy, belong to the compound and sometimes to the head of the work group, in other words, to the group itself. In fact, the head of the work group provides part of these implements when the ones purchased by the zakasoba are insufficient.

422 415 592 As for the canari, the largest, which are like small vats and may be as high as one or one and a half meters, are used to hold the dolo /270/ made by the women. They belong to the compound, and they are bought by the compound head. The ordinary canari (25 to 30 centimeters high and used to fetch water or to cook) belong privately to each woman of the compound. The same applies to gourds. The women often buy their canari or gourds with their husband's cowries, but the object, once bought, belongs to them.

422 Clothing. —Clothes are owned fully on a private basis, no matter what their origin. Thus, the skirt cloth bought by the husband for his wife belongs to her.

Ornaments and jewelry. —These are also owned privately, no matter what their origin. Hence, they belong to each man, each woman, each child.

Weapons. —They are likewise owned privately.

Amulets, charms. —The case is the same as for weapons. If, however, we use the word "charm" in its broadest sense, as any object pertaining to the cult, there are family charms which are owned by the family.

Cowries, metal coins, etc. —These are likewise private property.

421 In short, property belonging to the total family is practically nonexistent among the Mossi of Yatenga. There is subfamilial (compound) property and the property of that economic section of the subfamily which is called a work group. In addition to this communal property, there are household property and strictly private property.

428 Now let us deal with the transmission of property or inheritance.
596 Transmission of the property of the total family. —Since such property does not exist, it is not transmitted, except the family charms. The status of family head, however, is transmitted. When a family head dies, it is the oldest remaining man of the family (sometimes his brother, sometimes his cousin, etc.) who takes command of the family.

428 Transmission of the compound and its property. —When the head of
592 a compound dies, it is the oldest man in the compound (brother, cousin, etc.) who takes command of it. At the same time he takes over the management of the property communally owned by the whole compound.

428 Transmission of the property of the work group. —When the head of
571 a work group dies, it is likewise the oldest man in the group (usually the younger brother of the deceased) who assumes leadership and the management of the group's property (fields, work implements, etc.)

Let us note that in all these transmissions, when there are no longer any men of the same generation, then the sons of all the brothers, cousins, etc., are chosen, beginning with the eldest. That is to say, when one generation is exhausted, the next generation is tapped.

428 Transmission of household property. —When a married Mossi who has /271/ children dies, his eldest brother (born of the same father and mother or only of the same father) receives the inheritance. He does not take everything, however. He is expected to share, up to a point, with the other brothers (born of the same father and mother or only of the same father) and with the sons if they are old enough.

The oldest brother takes the huts and the field. The wives, on the other hand, are divided among the brothers and even among the sons if the latter are grown. If the wives are not numerous, the oldest brother does not get any more of them than the other sharers. The livestock is divided among the same people, but this time the largest share goes not to the brother who is unqualifiedly the oldest, but to the oldest brother born of the same father and mother. The cowries, coins, movable property, and jewelry are divided in the same manner. Weapons are apportioned, but the largest share goes to the brother who is unqualifiedly the oldest. The latter takes the dead man's bow and quiver, while dividing the arrows among the brothers and sons without bypassing himself.

As we can see, sharing does take place and is actually quite a complex matter, since it is sometimes the eldest of all the brothers

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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marauding animals. Just twenty years ago, the six villages that lay closest to the river were gradually abandoned and their populations absorbed by other villages. As of 1955, three of these populations were still paying allegiance to their former chiefs—a fact that bears out the Mossi axiom that chiefs govern people rather than land. The three other chiefs had lost control over their followers, who had placed themselves under the protection of the chiefs of their host villages. On occasion, Nobere also lost villages to other districts. One such village, Rissoma, was taken away from Nobere and given to Djiba when one of the Nobere district chiefs had a dispute with the Mogho Naba. 634 621

The hub or center of Nobere district, like that of all Mossi districts, was Nab'tenga (also called Nobere Naba Tenga, or Na-tenga), the village of the district chief. This village was rather large and in many respects a replica in miniature of the capital of Ouagadougou. Like most Mossi villages, Nab'tenga was divided into sections, quarters, or neighborhoods called *saghse* (sing. *saka*), which included a number of compounds (*yiya*, sing. *yiri*; or *zughse*, sing. *zuka*). The district chief's compound was called Nab'yiri. He lived there surrounded by his wives, unmarried daughters, younger children, and pages. His older male children lived in separate compounds within the same saka. The saghse of Nab'tenga included Ouidi, the saka of the Ouidi Naba; Balbalse, the saka of the Baloum Naba; Tansoba, the saka of the local war minister (Tansoba or Tampsobo); Baglere, the saka of the chief's serfs; Bendere, the saka of the chief's musicians; Ouedrange, the saka of the chief's grooms; and Pwese, the saka of the guardians of the chief's wives. Scattered among them were the saghse of noble families, smiths, the Moslem Imam, and other persons. The most important market place in the district was located about four hundred yards from the chief's compound. [592] [591] [443]

The number and types of social and ethnic groups within the district and its villages reflected Nobere's history. When the French arrived, the district chief was Kaglere, a descendant of Ngado, who was a son of Mogho Naba Sagha I (ca. 1787–1803). Ngado had been sent to Nobere at the end of the eighteenth century to replace Naba Peka (a descendant of Naba Biligo), who had been deposed and killed by Mogho Naba Sagha during a civil war. The other chiefly descendants of Biligo, however, were not deposed by Ngado; they remained in charge of all but five or six of the major villages in the district. The chiefs of such villages as Ronse, Barkago, Tewarka, and Pinse are *yagense* (descendants) of Naba Biligo. The village called Passintenga was ruled by the descendants of a Busanga from Lenga called Passentre, who allegedly had been given a wife by Biligo. It is not 634 622 175

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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CHAPTER 9

Trade and Markets Among the Mossi People

BY ELLIOTT P. SKINNER

The Mossi represent the dominant population of the Voltaic Republic, numbering about 1,600,000 out of some 3,200,000 inhabitants. They represent the unique example of a group which has preserved its ethnic identity and political autonomy through all the vicissitudes of Sudanic history until it was conquered by the French in 1896. Tradition records that the people who became the Mossi left the Dagomba region in present-day Ghana during the eleventh century and moved into the bend of the Niger River, carving out three large kingdoms and smaller principalities in the process. At the head of these still extant kingdoms are rulers *(Moro Nabas)* who formerly held feudal-like control over the provinces, districts and villages which comprise their domains. The villages, with their patri-local, polygynous, extended family households, formed the basic Mossi settlement pattern. A complex hierarchical administrative apparatus carried the power of the Mossi rulers into the smallest villages, and funneled taxes and tribute back to them. This structure still exists, but of course it has been modified by the French.

The Mossi were and are still divided into stratified royal, noble and commoner patrilineages. Characteristic of this lineage system is a process by which royal sub-lineages descend serially until they merge with the mass of commoner lineages. Below the lineages there once were large non-Mossi groups of serfs and slaves, but these people have now been grouped into lineages and have become Mossicized.

The topography of Mossi country is typical of the Sudanic grasslands. It is an immense plain, some 1,500 feet above sea level and broken only by three low mountain ranges and numerous small hills. The annual total rainfall is between 30 and 40 inches, and falls almost entirely as heavy showers or thundershowers during the period from June to September. So narrow is the margin of rainfall for successful crop cultivation that any variation in the cycle results in low crop yields and a difficult "hungry period" the following year before the new crops are harvested. The Mossi do not practice irrigation, and would have trouble doing so because the three Volta Rivers which drain their territory serve as drainage chiefly during the rainy season. Only the Black Volta has water all year round; the

576 Thus, although the Mogho Naba would not in the least object
643 to shaking hands with a Bambara or a Djerma, he would be astonished if a native Moaga -- even an official -- should offer his hand.

543 As soon as the children of a naba have reached the age of dis-
576 cretion, they may no longer play with their "papa," even less shake hands with him. They must henceforth follow the general rule which requires the Mossi salute, kantissé.

[111] Nowadays naba (kombemba) and nayiridamba (ministers
576 of the emperor) understand the uselessness of such signs of distrust.
602 Therefore, even though they continue to be less familiar with their relatives (brothers, uncles, and sons -- whom they regard as rivals), they willingly offer their hands to Mossi of any standing and to foreigners.

644 Reception by the naba. 1) Up to the present time and despite some thirty-five years of French occupation, the way one is received at the court of the emperor, which, of course, befalls his servitors, has altered very little. Natives who are now officials in the administration and in business enterprises are still treated on the same footing as their less highly placed compatriots. Not only are they required to perform the kantissé (Mossi salute) as described by Father Mangin, but also afterwards they must sit on the ground, a position that is difficult in European clothes. Foreigners (Bambara,
[648] Djerma, even Gourounsi) are offered seats because the soroné do not regard them as fellow countrymen.

645 2) By the ministers. At the present time all the emperor's
576 ministers have comfortable houses and splendid drawing rooms
352 furnished with Morris chairs and folding chairs. These seats are
177 offered [112] to visitors of any standing, while benches two or three meters long are reserved for persons of less consequence (house boys, cooks, circle guards, notables, etc.).

631 3) By the kombemba. Benches are always reserved for visitors of
576 note or, if there are none, mats are provided. Some of these chiefs
352 even own a few commonplace chairs and perhaps one or two folding chairs.

562 593 644 Rights of parents over their daughters. Although, as has already been noted, the parents retain the right to help their daughters in small ways, they may not, under any circumstances or pretext, break off their engagement nor prevent their marriage. Still less can they promise the daughter to a third party or expect any sort of gifts from the naba.

Later on, in the event that there is agreement between the parties, the husbands may give trifling presents to their in-laws, but there is neither obligation nor coercion to do so.

562 858 Exceptions. Girls given to the marabouts by the naba are considered a kind of alms (saraka), and any children born of such unions belong to the true fathers and may not be disposed of by the chief.

644 357 858 Disposition of boys. Boys recruited as sogoné or samand'kamba are required to serve the naba faithfully, but they continue to belong to their real relatives from whom they annually receive cowries and particularly the fougoibga (blanket).

644 357 661 Although the sogoné are regularly fed and clothed by the naba -- because [168] a naba must always be surrounded by many pages -- this is not done for the samand'kamba. In many cantons and especially in Ouagadougou at the emperor's court, they receive only a meager pittance every two, three, four, or seven days since their role as "vagabond" or groom is supposed to provide them with ample opportunities to rob or rather to pillage the natives. During the winter the grooms and other samand'kamba go out into fields of maize and millet at night or in the morning, and there is general looting. As for any fowl lingering in the karaga (fields of millet near the huts), they are killed and hidden in the bundles of hay used to feed the horses. There are exceptions to this rule: some ministers of the emperor and canton chiefs give their samand'kamba at least one meal per day -- at night -- and during the winter, because they are doing field work, they are given cooked beans or sagbo (millet cakes) at noon.

644 357 608 In general way, however, it may be said that this type of servitor is not supported by the naba. Like the sogoné, the samand'biga chooses a mother at the court of the naba. He helps her cultivate her plot and performs other small services for her (weaving her clothes,

586 The new husband of a woman who has been deserted does not [186] and cannot maintain any relations whatever with the former husband. In any event, the latter would never agree to see his successor, even though the divorce had been arranged with his consent. Besides, the new marriage is often contracted in another village.

The Question of Nationality Among the Mossi

641 In Mossi country the child takes the father's nationality, and any child born of a Moaga subject is himself a Moaga.

593 Any child, male or female, is under the authority, first, of his father and, above him, of the head of the family. A mother may never, under any circumstances, give her daughter in marriage.

641 If a Moaga woman happens to marry a foreigner, she does not acquire her husband's nationality. In the same way, a foreign girl (a Bambara or a Djerma, for example) does not lose her own nationality when she marries a Moaga. In the eyes of her husband's relatives, as well as the rest of the populace, she remains a foreigner, required to practice the customs of her husband but nevertheless a foreigner.

Thus, when a Moaga subject chooses to emigrate, the nationality of his children who remain in Mossi territory, whether minor or of age, does not ipso facto change.

A legitimate child takes on his father's nationality [187] even though the foreign-born father may have a Moaga as his wife.

Children born of a Moaga father and either a Moaga or foreign-born mother are Mossi.

[848] As for illegitimate children, they take the mother's nationality unless they are recognized, and this can be done only if the mother marries before the birth of the child.

If the child has not been legitimized until after his birth, he will sooner or later suffer from the omission, since his bastard origin will not long remain a secret.

Loss of nationality. The Mossi may lose their nationality only under the following two conditions.

1. When the Moaga subject has been expelled from his village for some serious crime, sent away by his relatives, and no longer regarded

428 custom which decrees that he likewise inherits all of his father's responsibilities as head of the family.

428 Do daughters and wives share in an estate? Daughters have no share in an estate although their brothers may give them
562 trifling gifts.

Wives never inherit from their husbands. They can only benefit indirectly as the representatives of their young sons. On the contrary, since the wife is considered a piece of property, [259] she is actually a part of the estate to the same extent as the rest of the property left by the deceased.

428 Disposition of an unclaimed estate. Only the canton chief is qualified to inherit the property of a deceased person having no known relatives.

Rights and Obligations Governing Property in the Family

421 Property is owned individually. Individual property is strictly a private matter. The head of the family has no rights over property acquired individually by the women and children or by other relatives under his rule. They may dispose of their possessions as they see fit. A mother may do some trading to provide savings for her children. The head of the family may not use such property under any circumstances without the consent of the true owner.

428 Does a husband inherit from his wife? A husband has no right to his wife's property. He cannot even claim it if she dies childless,
●593 since in that case it goes to her own relatives (brothers or sisters) or, failing that, to their children.

428 Aside from their rights in their father's estate, children inherit their mother's property.

When the head of a family borrows cowries from [260] a
[426] member of his compound, he must repay the loan with a given time. His own property is inalienably his as long as he lives, and then it makes up his estate, along with his wives.

768 Disposition of a house after death. When the head of a compound dies, the establishment is not destroyed. It automatically
428 passes to the heirs, that is, to his sons or, if he has no legitimate

695 tomb and force him to drink water in which earth from the grave had been diluted. This test was greatly feared, for the Mossi believe that the deceased will come and take his revenge.

The defendant went free unless his guilt was proved by witnesses. When arguments arose about the ownership of fields, domestic animals, etc., each person concerned would give his arguments and summon his witnesses, and the judges made a decision on the basis of the discussions. If two women quarreled, their husbands were supposed to get together and reach a decision. The province chief judged disputes
692 concerning marriage. For instance, if a girl had been promised to someone and the bride price was paid in part, and then her father changed his mind and gave her to another, the disappointed suitor could appeal to the province chief, who saw to it that the payment was returned. If the defendant ran away to avoid trial, he could only be tried in absentia if witnesses deposed against him.

696 /25/ The sentence was carried out as far as possible, even in the
691 absence of the convicted party; if he returned, the trial was not re-
672 opened but he could appeal to the province chief. The family is held responsible in every case. If the sentence includes a fine, and if the convicted person's property is insufficient, the property of his relatives is seized. People are held accountable for their children's debts, and if the defendant runs away, one of his relatives is seized in his place. On the other hand, the head of the family is the abso-
[513] lute master and the judge of the family. He must pay his children's debts and the fines they have incurred, but he may chastise them, even put them to death, or banish and curse them, a punishment which as a rule is greatly feared. All this indicates the strength of the family ties, which we shall study in the second part of this work. The naba saw to the execution of the sentence pronounced by the court; the executive and judicial powers were vested in the same person. If anyone refused to pay his debts or to pay the inflicted penalty, he was stripped of his property. No commutation of the sentence was allowed, and the person condemned to irons or to death had to suffer the sentence himself and could not go free by paying a fine or by substituting a slave. Capital punishment was carried out in public. The province chief was entitled to grant a pardon, but,
[761] of course, he made use of this right quite rarely. A man's life counts for so little in the eyes of the Black!

562 girl is used to pay debts; a man borrows on the promise of giving his
584 daughter in marriage. She will be handed over, often with no bride
567 price other than the borrowed sum; and, contrary to the custom noted above, since she is considered a slave, her first daughter does not belong to the grandfather. A girl may also be given in exchange for her enslaved brother or uncle, who thus recovers his freedom. A man may be seriously ill and call a doctor who agrees to treat him on the condition that the patient's daughter be given to him if he gets well. The father does recover, and the girl is given in marriage to the fortunate doctor. Exchange of daughters also takes place: a native may give his daughter in marriage to another, who in turn gives him his own.

562 A girl is given in marriage by her mother only if she was born out
584 of wedlock, and her father is thus theoretically unknown. The sisters
848 of certain nabas are the only ones permitted to choose their husbands
[554] according to their own wishes and to leave them when they please.
593 The fickle existence they lead is easy to imagine! In all other cases the girl is given in marriage by her father, or by his heir if the father is dead. (1) The mother is not consulted, but since she cares for the

[754] 1. It would be onerous and indeed impossible to list all the various situations that may arise. The sorcerers quite often interfere, and who knows what goes through a sorcerer's mind! One case among many: a woman bore a daughter after raising several others who died immediately following marriage; the father consulted the sorcerer to find out whether he should promise this last daughter in marriage. The sorcerer stated that she must be left free to choose her own husband, or else she would die like her sisters. The father left her free.

daughter until the latter marries, she may through advice, promises, or even threats dissuade her from a certain match /29/ or welcome her if she runs away from a husband to whom she was given against her will.

584
583 have borrowed. In addition, he would expose himself and the preferred suitor to the vengeance of the rejected one.

583 The bride price is not exorbitant. The total gifts, spread over a period of years, amount to some fifty francs, without counting the work days. Nevertheless, it requires sufficient means to secure at least the necessary cowries. Besides, the child's father prefers to give her to someone who already boasts a certain fame and some wealth, in short, to an elderly man. /30/ This is why children are promised to old dotards, and white-haired men are paired with young girls; while the old men's sons of marriageable age cannot get wives. If the father has the means to pay the bride price, he carefully refrains from helping his son, even if the latter has found a match to his liking.

587 It is true that all the father's wives are inherited by the oldest son,
578 who gives some to his younger brothers; but this occurs only at the old man's death, and this may not happen for a long time. This ex-
593 plains why the oldest son wishes for his father's death, and why the father sends the son away for fear of a premature end. It is only fair to add that some men, with a better understanding of their own interests, marry off their sons as soon as they are old enough.

595 Polygamy exists among the Mossi as in all Black countries. The wealth of a man is gauged by the number of his wives. Women
[556] furnish hands to till the soil, for the wife works in the fields like the husband. Women also furnish children, and if these are daughters, young men will come to offer their services (dakonré) and one day take the girls in marriage; or the father will receive gifts. If the children are boys, they will later aid the father in his work. In these countries where each lives for himself alone, where selfishness reigns supreme, polygamy is easily explained, but it undoubtedly results in a lower birth rate. White-bearded old men cannot have children as numerous and sound as young men in their prime, and the latter, deprived of wives, wear themselves out with their excesses. It is true that those who can afford a dozen wives are few; most have to be content with two, three, or four. Some nabas, nevertheless, own veritable herds of women, and this is certainly a grievous abuse. Their wives are numbered in the hundreds. The greatest moral dis-
[837] order reigns in those harems, where the boys who serve as grooms and pages spend most of their time among their master's wives. This explains the precautions taken by the women's owners and the eunuchs of the Moro Naba, as well as the Poënaba and his sinister duties.

596 heir but to the oldest member of the family. Nothing is done without consulting the family head, and even if a member of the family occupies an important post, he continues to show the greatest deference toward his family head, his elder. This is why the present prime minister of Koupéla, the Saman'Naba, leaves the prerogatives of a family head to his uncle; he does not take the liberty of offering sacrifices on the Day of the Dead, and he consults his elder on all
596 matters which fall within his jurisdiction. The head of the family,
681 however, does not have the right of life or death over its members or over his own wives. Even if the latter steal or commit adultery, they may not be put to death; only the district chiefs may kill their own wives. A husband or family elder may beat them, put them in irons, or even more rarely /35/ turn them out of the household, but he may not kill them. Also, the family head may not dispose of the family property, nor force his kin to hand it over. He may, however, request his relatives to help him pay his debts or obtain a wife, but he may not force them to do so. Nevertheless, they always help him as best they can.

593 Children are directly subject to their father. While the latter
596 consults the family head whenever he must make a serious decision, the children consult their father, who in turn goes to the family head, who often goes to the village chief, who resorts to the canton chief, who consults the head of the province if the matter warrants it. Mature reflection thus precedes every serious decision.

593 The father is the absolute master of his children. He has the right of life or death over them, and sometimes he made use of this right, especially when a child was born deformed or became an incorrigible thief. He sees to the marriage of his daughters. He may exchange them for other women, or he may give them in marriage to a creditor in order to pay his debts. He may place his sons in the service of a relative or friend. The eldest son seldom remains in his father's household, especially if the father is wealthy or a naba; the father is too afraid that his son may do away with him, the sooner to come into his inheritance. To give one's son to another man is a convenient way to get rid of the problem of his marriage; it will become the concern of the boy's master.

861 Fathers take little part in the education of their children. Daughters always remain with their mothers until their marriage. Sons help their father as soon as they are old enough to work, but they never

861 receive any advice from him. The Mossi, fathers and mothers alike, do not know how to train their children. Under the pretext that a small child does not know what he is doing, the parents allow him to do as he pleases and to carry out his every whim without punishment. Tots who can barely articulate two words utter the coarsest insults to their mother and beat her with their small fists without being punished. The onlookers merely remark that some day he will be a fighter. To chastise him would be to make him cry, and a child's tears are always an embarrassment to be avoided as much as possible. When a child behaves badly, when he fights, steals, seeks out the company of professional thieves or young scamps, when he tells everybody what he has seen and heard and cannot keep a secret, when complaints are made against him, then his father and mother punish him and warn him not to do it again; but they do not prevent wrong doing, and [672] if necessary they will pay his debts, because all members of the family, especially the father, are held liable. The father does not teach his son the cult and the sacrifices, but he does request the boy's help. The child watches his father, and when he grows up, he does as his father did.

857 Boys of twelve or fifteen may fail to return home in the evening for any reason whatever, without warning, and no one worries about it: "He will come soon enough." The young man of twenty builds 884 himself a hut apart from his father's house, in order to have greater 593 freedom and to receive any visitors he may want. Besides his father's field, he cultivates his own piece of land and sells the produce /36/ himself in order to buy clothes. His father feeds him but rarely presents him with gifts of clothing when he is old enough to work for himself. If he weaves cloth during the dry season, he may do with it as he pleases, sell it or make clothing. His father has no say in the matter. It is the father, however, who teaches his sons how to 868 593 cultivate the soil, how to plait mats, and sometimes how to weave. If the father works at a trade, he teaches it to his sons: the drummers teach their children to beat the drum and to sing the chief's praises; the jewellers and smiths teach their sons their respective professions.

593 The father usually is fond of his children and likes to play with them when they are small. He watches over them while the mother does her household tasks. Parents sincerely lament their children's death, and children that of their siblings. Undoubtedly there are parents with the greatest indifference toward their offspring, but such

593 cases are rare. Less rare are the children who care little for their parents. Nevertheless, old people are usually treated well and with [888] great respect. A son who abandons his old father or mother is held in very poor esteem. A woman prefers to bear daughters who will help her in her daily work, but she hopes for one or two sons with whom she may live when she is old.

857 The girls live with their mother. As soon as they can walk, they 883 follow her to the stream and return with a gourd of water on their [482 heads. As they grow, so does the gourd, and little girls carry water 312] jars weighing from fifteen to twenty kilograms. At home, young girls mill grain to feed the whole family, tend the fire, stir the sauce, wash the dishes and the clothes, sweep, in short, attend to all the household tasks under their mother's guidance. The only task of a woman with two or three half-grown daughters is to supervise their work. Because they are always with their mother, the young girls are usually more responsible and better behaved than the boys. Unfortunately they make up for this later, and more often than not, it is on their own initiative that they go at night to the young men's huts. A young man may give presents to a girl who has already been promised in marriage, and he may do so in front of her mother, who says nothing.

857 Boys help their father as soon as they are strong enough. Younger 883 boys follow their older brothers into the bush as soon as they can and 231 help them herd the sheep and goats. These boys go out every morning, before the sun has dried the dew, to look for new termite nests full of insects which the chicks are fond of eating. During the dry season, they cut down and plait grass to cover the roofs; if they are old enough, they even cut the firewood. When a little older, if their father or the person with whom they live owns a horse, they watch over it, take it to the stream to water it and to wash it, go into the bush to cut grass for it, and clean the stables. During the winter when the grass is green, each of the horses of a rich naba is cared for by three or four children. Some of them cut the grass, others /37/ stuff it almost by force into the horse's mouth, while one little boy drives the flies away with a stick to which a sort of flexible leather sole is attached. The winter season is a fine time for horses, who grow fat and heavy. Unfortunately, the Black does not think of the future and does not foresee how much dry grass will be needed to bridge the dry season; as a result, the horses suffer a great deal from hunger at that time.

535 /38/ To tell the truth, however, the Mossi do not know how to dance. With the exception of the circumcision dance and of some villages of dancers where people devote themselves methodically to choreography, the greater part of the population do not know how to dance gracefully. This does not prevent them, one and all, from indulging in the dance. Men and women dance separately. The most common male dance consists of a rapid motion of the upper part of the body, from left to right and right to left; the feet do not leave the ground, and they are moved forward very slowly. The arms are bent up to shoulder height and away from the body; the fingers are extended, and arms and hands shake along with the rest of the body. When performed by professionals, who are sometimes found in the villages, this motion is rather graceful but lacks breadth of style.
[292] The dancers wear a cardboard headpiece, its crest adorned with a band of cowries and its sides often embellished with bits of mirror fragments, feathers, and all sorts of small, gaudy articles. The upper part of the body is covered with a tight, wide-meshed garment, decorated at the waist with pompons or cowries and small bells. The dancer wears
[301] on the middle finger a piece of iron which looks like a large clam shell, and on his thumb an iron ring. He strikes one against the other in rhythm. His wrist is often adorned with a bracelet made of several of these iron shells; hanging from them are small strips of the same metal which clang at the slightest motion. Those who do not have a costume deck themselves out in tawdry finery.

The women dance two at a time, each by herself, spinning around and assuming whatever poses they consider most graceful. When they come near one another, they turn around and strike their backs together; then one of the two withdraws, and another takes her place. All the while, the women spectators clap their hands in rhythm and sing. Sometimes one of them utters a shrill cry to arouse the dancers or to laud one who has proved unusually graceful and lithe.

[831] There are no special dances for the dead, and Mossi dances apparently do not have the obscenity of some Negro dances.

857 But to return to the children. It may be stated, as a general rule, that children can do as they please as long as they help out with everyday tasks, as long as the son helps his father and the daughter her mother. Happily there are exceptions to this, and some parents watch their children quite closely, but these are exceptions. Boys
● 593 prefer their mother to their father, because the latter must often

593 reprimand them, while the mother's role, here as elsewhere, is to indulge her children.

595 The children of different wives are quite fond of one another and often exchange help. When the father dies, the eldest son make no distinction among his brothers and helps them all as best he can. Polygamy seems to present no drawbacks in this respect.

When a man has several wives, his first wife (porkyéma) is mistress of the household rather than his mother. All the other wives are on an equal footing, even the slaves, excepting, of course, those for whom the husband has a special preference. As the number of wives increases, so does the authority of the first wife, who wants /39/ her husband to have as many wives as possible. Each wife has a separate hut where she lives with her children, and this avoids many a quarrel. The husband goes to the hut of the woman he desires, or he has her come to his own hut. When a man works in his field, all his wives and children must help him, because he feeds them all and gives them a daily millet ration; it is, accordingly, only fair that all should take part in agricultural work within the limits of their capacity.

593 443 421 Provided that a woman remain at her husband's disposal and help him in the fields, she is free to do as she pleases. She goes to market to sell the grain, the spices for sauce, and the thread to weave cloth, but the husband sells the fabric strips and the raw cotton. During the winter each woman may have her own field to cultivate with her children, and the harvest belongs wholly to her. The husband has no say in the matter. If the woman spins cotton, she sells it at the market or even to her husband; if she brews beer, she offers one jar to her husband, but if he entertains friends and wants additional jars, he must pay cash for them. It is not unusual for a woman to refuse her husband credit, for who knows when he would pay?

593 574 A woman may visit her relatives with the permission of her husband, who sets a return date. The woman rarely comes back on the date set, and the husband goes to fetch her himself, or he sends one of his friends with a piece of salt or a small gift. A woman especially likes to visit her relatives when she is pregnant or shortly after the baby's birth. She knows that she will be well cared for and especially that she will enjoy complete freedom. As a result, it is not unusual for a woman to leave her husband for several months and to return only after considerable coaxing. Most quarrels between one Mossi and [578] another derive from their wives and from their debts; yet it may not be said, as a general rule, that women are unhappy or ill treated.

839 especially, subsisted upon it. The victims, children from twelve
439 to fifteen years old, were provided by the Moro Naba, who kept
304 them afterward or sold them to the Haoussa.

In 1900 our ambassador to Turkey learned that a shipment of eunuchs which had reached Constantinople had originated in Mossi territory, which we had occupied since 1896. He warned the Minister of Foreign Affairs, who notified his colleague the Minister of the Colonies. Strict orders were issued to put an end to this Mossi industry, which has since ceased to exist.

439 Let us finally add the grain trade, which is unusual in Mossi territory. In the years 1906, 1907, and 1908 which saw poor harvests, however, the Mossi were forced to acquire grain in Yatenga (Ouahigouya circle) and in Gourounsi territory by selling livestock.

We have now concluded our discussion of Mossi occupations. Let us proceed to a study of the family and the superposed social organisms.

Chapter II

The Mossi: The Family, Public Powers, and Religion

593 We must state first that the Mossi family is a partly decommunalized family. This may come as a surprise in view of the foregoing section on work (cultivation predominates, stockbreeding is poor, industries flourish, trade is nonexistent), which had led us to expect something altogether different. Nevertheless, this is a fact.

The family is even highly decommunalized, although not everywhere to the same degree. In this respect, five different family types are to be found.

596 The first two are quite rare. They would seem to be witnesses
326 to an ancient state of affairs which has now vanished. Thus, one finds the common patriarchal type among those blacksmiths who are gathered into /special/ quarters or even villages and whom we mentioned in the section on industries. This type is found only among them and not among isolated blacksmiths, where only the common Mossi family type occurs.

596
326 As we can see, the common patriarchal family is found among those blacksmiths who live in groups.

The second Mossi family type is one we had occasion to men-
592 tion here and there in the section on work. Contrary to the first
596 type, which is found only in a special section of the population, this one occurs throughout the Mossi but as a rare /544/ and exceptional case. All the households in the family still live together, but every household works for itself. This is the type we studied among the Nankana and other groups of cultivator-breeders under the name of Nankana type No. 3 /not translated/.

593 We come now to those Mossi family types which are wide-
592 spread rather than exceptional. They correspond to the Nankana type No. 4 (every household lives separately and works separately), or rather they depart from it in the direction of even greater decommunalization. There are three variants, namely, one that corresponds to the pure Nankana type No. 4, and two where decommunalization is more accentuated. Let us describe them in turn.

Here is the first variant:

593 1. The households live separately. As soon as a young man
592 marries, he settles on his own with the help of his family.
596 When a family head gives one of the family's sons a wife, he uses a vacant soukala if there is one available. If there is none, the son builds a new soukala with the help of his father and of the family head.

2. Every household works separately (except for the clearing of family fields), procures its own food, clothing, and subsistence. The married son, however, comes and helps his father a little now and then. During the dry season, for example, he helps him repair the soukala. Or else he offers him small gifts from time to time.

When someone, on marrying, settles separately, the head of the family usually gives him some family field that was once cleared and cultivated and has since lain fallow.

3. Although households work separately, the children of the households are not given in marriage by their father and mother, but by the head of the family. The latter buys wives for the boys,
[583] but he also gives the daughters in marriage and receives the bride price.

596 with the help of his father and family head (which is by far the
423 most frequent occurrence), /548/ while in such a case it had for-
178 merly been considered family property. Finally, the soukala came to be regarded in every case as personal property and to be transmitted for that reason to the oldest son. This, incidentally, is the same evolution that applied to property in general, as we shall see shortly.

593 Now, here is the third and last variant of the prevailing Mossi family type. Nowadays, this variant is by far the most widespread.

1. Every household lives separately, works separately, and procures its own food and subsistence. The help of neighbors is enlisted to clear the fields.

2. Every household gives its own children in marriage. The
584 family head no longer does so.
593 As soon as a man has a son, he chooses a little girl who will go to the boy when he reaches puberty. He visits the girl's relatives from time to time and offers them gifts.

584 When the girl is old enough to be married, he takes 50,000
583 cowries (if he is wealthy), skirt cloths, salt, kola nuts, and gives it
593 all to the relatives. Then, the old women in the daughter's family lead her to the home of the betrothed man's relatives. The father kills a sheep, makes a lot of couscous, buys dolo to celebrate her arrival. Then he offers the girl six or seven baskets containing respectively 1,000, 2,000, 3,000, 4,000, 5,000, 6,000, and 7,000 cowries. The young man himself gives his betrothed four or five skirts. If he is very wealthy, he gives her one or two little girls as slaves.

585 On the evening when the wedding is celebrated, the father asks
[426] one of his neighbors to lend him a hut, and the young married pair are sent there all alone (they will remain there as long as their soukala is not built). On the morrow, the feasting begins. People dance and feast for seven days at the gates of the father's soukala, at least when the girl is a virgin. If she is not, the feasting is curtailed but nevertheless lasts for another three days.

583 When the father is poor, he offers a few kola nuts to the girl's
591 /549/ father (six or ten). He gives the father and mother some firewood he gathered in the bush, straw to make séko /Tr.: mats/ for door, 2,000 cowries, a skirt cloth. He kills a sheep to make

583 couscous, which he offers to the relatives. Then he takes the girl
591 away. He asks a neighbor for a hut to harbor the young couple on their wedding night and over the next few weeks. They stay there for only a month or two, until their soukala is built.

583 The bride price actually varies from region to region among the Mossi. We have just seen it range from 2,000 to 50,000 cowries. Earlier, we saw it set at 25,000. At Kombisiguiri it amounts to a mere 1,000. The young man's father visits the young girl's father with a chicken and 500 cowries; then he comes to see him a second time, again with a chicken and 500 cowries. There is no other bride price. Those who do not have a chicken to offer replace it with a bundle of firewood or a straw séko. In short, a girl here is worth 30 sous (the two chickens being worth 0.50 franc between them, and the 1,000 cowries amounting to one franc).

591 Among rich people the young couple may remain seven, nine, or even twelve months in their neighbors' house. They present the
[431] latter with gifts, and during this period of time they proceed to build a soukala, or rather to have one built. The young man's father helps his son in this undertaking.

593 The young husband, now settled on his own, will henceforth work on his own account. He has become in turn the head of a
431 soukala, but if he obtains a lot of millet or other grain he offers
626 gifts to his father. If he becomes wealthy and makes no such gifts, the neighbors will insult him. He always makes gifts, therefore, for fear of being insulted. A son who marries, as a rule, builds his soukala as near as possible to that of his father.

593 Finally, let us add that the father usually buys his son's kitchen utensils when the boy settles on his own.

3. When the head of a family dies, the younger brother inevi-
428 tably takes command of the family, but all the property, whatever
593 its nature, goes to the children of the deceased and more especially to his oldest son. There is no longer any family real estate or movable property, or else nothing is regarded as such any longer.

/550/ The eldest son takes his father's soukala and everything that goes with it, fields, slaves, livestock, father's wives. He shares them, however, with his brothers and even with his sisters.

428 As for the soukala itself, he keeps it. He leaves his own
593 soukala, along with everything he owns, to come and live in the soukala of the deceased. In order to put the soukala he is leaving to some use, however, he sends one of his unmarried brothers (that is to say, one who lived up to that time with the deceased) to settle there. He immediately gives this brother one of his father's wives, one of the wives in the estate, and sends him, thus married, to settle in the soukala he is leaving.

593 I asked my informant why the father does not keep his oldest
578 married son with him instead of having him build a new soukala on the outside, since the son returns to the paternal soukala anyway when the father dies. The Mossi chief I was questioning replied that if the father kept his oldest son by his side, the latter, when married and growing older, would wish for his father's death in order to become independent. Wishing for his father's death, he might be tempted to bring it about. If settled in his own soukala, on the other hand, the head of a household and independent, he would nurture no ill thoughts against his father.

593 We shall see later that this feeling of fear and suspicion toward
578 the eldest son is carried to an extreme among the Moro Nabas. This
644 is understandable, since kingship is inherited. Once married, therefore, the eldest son of the prince went far from his father, to a soukala of his own and remained there until the Moro Naba's death.

428 As for the father's fields, the eldest son keeps them all if he is
593 able to work them all. If he is not able to do so, he gives the surplus over and above what he can work to his brothers.

As far as livestock is concerned, the eldest son gives some to his younger brothers and even to his sisters.

The same applies to slaves and cowries.

428 As for wives, if there are many, he gives some to his younger
593 brothers. Thus, for example, if there are ten wives and he has two
587 brothers, he gives two wives to each /551/ brother and keeps six for himself (let us add that the deceased, before dying, often gives a wife to his younger brother or brothers).

428 To summarize, the eldest son gets the soukala and the fields.
593 As for movable property, he takes about 50 percent and leaves the other half to the younger sons and to the daughters. There is a sharing, therefore, although a very uneven one.

428 593 184 Actually, those shares vary from region to region among the Mossi. Thus, in certain areas, the oldest son gets the soukala, the fields, two thirds of the livestock, cowries, and money, all the slaves and grain, as well as clothing, jewelry, weapons, horses, etc. The other sons get the remaining goods. The daughters get nothing. As for the wives, the oldest son takes three quarters and the other sons one quarter. In such cases, the eldest son is much more heavily favored than in the cases mentioned earlier.

At Kombisiguiri, this is even more accentuated. The oldest son may keep everything if he wishes. He may also give something to the other sons of the deceased or to the latter's brothers.

In short, at the stage /of evolution/ with which we are dealing, the transmission of property ranges from a complete and absolute law of primogeniture to an uneven sharing heavily tipped toward the eldest son.

593 736 Let us add that when the eldest son receives an estate, if his brothers are not yet of an age to be married, he keeps them at his home, in his own household (this is why, although Mossi households in principle include only a husband, his wives, children, and slaves, sometimes they also contain young unmarried brothers). In the morning they work for him, and in the afternoon they work their own little plots. The older brother provides them with food at all times, but not with clothes. They must procure their clothing with the returns from their own little plots. When they reach marriageable age, the older brother buys them a wife and helps them settle on their own.

429 593 When the head of a soukala dies leaving only small sons, his younger brother takes all the property for the time being but saves it for the legitimate heirs. When the eldest son of the deceased has grown up, the brother leaves the soukala and returns to his own former one, taking only his own belongings. /552/ At that time, all the real estate and movable property devolve to the oldest son and partly to the other sons.

428 593 If the head of a soukala leaves no sons but only brothers and daughters, the inheritance is shared between his younger brother and his daughters. The younger brother takes the soukala, the fields, and the wives. He leaves his own soukala and settles in that of the deceased, where he brings all his belongings. He puts up either a

428 593 son or a young brother of marriageable age in his former soukala. The daughters, however, get the movable property such as slaves, livestock, grain, cowries, etc. (with the exception of wives).

The oldest daughter takes the largest share. Out of ten beeves she will take six (if there are three daughters, for example) and the two younger daughters will take two each. Out of four slaves she will take two, and the two younger daughters will take one each. Out of 1,000 cowries, the oldest will take 600, the other two 200 each.

The same thing applies if there are no brothers but only daughters and brothers' sons, since the latter have the same rights as their fathers. Thus, it is the eldest son of the younger brother who inherits along with the daughters of the deceased.

593 In this third variant of the Mossi family, in short, the bonds that connect the various households in the family are now of two kinds only:

1. There are the religious bonds, since the head of the entire family remains the high priest of this collectivity.

593 672 2. There are also the judicial bonds (collective responsibility of the family in case of injury done to other people).

"If a man is in debt," says Moulins, p. 34, op. cit. /Monographie du cercle de Ouagadougou/, "his family is held responsible for payment. If he commits a misdemeanor, his family is held responsible for financial reparation.

"If he commits a crime of murder, one of his relatives will be put to death in his place if he has not himself been seized (at least, this is what happened prior to our occupation).

"When the head of the family is served a complaint against one of the individuals under his authority, he appeals first, of course, to the guilty party himself if the latter owns /553/ any property, then to the soukala to which the man belongs, then to the one headed by his nearest relative, etc. Vis-à-vis third parties, however, the family itself, as a whole, is held responsible for reparation.

"The formidable responsibility devolving to the family entails, as its logical counterpart, putting at its disposal, powers sufficient

593 672 to guard against dangers resulting from the obligation to make reparation for injuries committed by one of its members. This has led naturally to a recognition of the family's right, in the person of its head, to take whatever measures are necessary for the preservation of its common interests. Prior to our occupation, such measures could go as far as putting in irons or even putting to death an individual who called upon the collective responsibility of the family too frequently or too onerously, and thus threatened to endanger its equilibrium. The decision of a family head involving the [643] death sentence or putting in irons for life for one of his people, however, only became final with the naba's approval. The latter could oppose it by assuming financial responsibility, in the family's stead, for all future misdemeanors committed by the person he had pardoned."

593 174 We come now to an interesting although extremely ticklish subject, namely, the causes of the partial decommunalization of the Mossi family.

If we look at the present workaday life of these people, their decommunalization seems inexplicable in view of the fact that we are dealing with a group of cultivators, somewhat indolent to be sure, but nevertheless cultivators first and foremost. The Mossi, on the other hand, are not herdsmen. They are very mediocre stock-breeders. Among them as among other Blacks of West Africa, hunting merely accounts for a small percentage of their total food-producing activities. They are not traders, either. We see nothing here, therefore, that might explain the decommunalization of the family, and we must refer back to the previous workaday life of this people. We saw earlier, however, that while the present Mossi population originated /554/ from the fusion of two disparate elements, one of those elements was similar to the Bobo, Gourounsi, Habé, Kipirsi, etc., and thus deeply communal and patriarchal. It is obviously not from this element that the present decommunalization might stem.

Fortunately, there exists another and very different element. The Mossi who came from the Dagomba were, as we know, Blacks who were 1) warriors and conquerors, 2) breeders of horses, no doubt,

593 and very probably of large and small livestock as well. In this
174 respect they must have been strikingly similar to the present-day Toucouleur, who conquered part of West Africa in the nineteenth century and who are, like the Foulah of Guinea, half stockbreeders, half cultivators. (We shall review briefly those very Toucouleur in Chapter 4 of this book, to give the reader an idea of the Black conqueror on the active rather than the potential level, in a "pure state" rather than already fused into a heterogeneous conquered population /not translated/). Now war with its attendant loot, like stockbreeding, augments private property and allows individuals and households to secede from the family, at least to the extent permitted by the problems of cultivation and especially of field clearing. It is a fact that among the Toucouleur and Foulah, as among the Dagomba and Mossi, every household lives separately and works separately (except for that most difficult of all tasks to the Blacks, the clearing of fields). Thus, it must be concluded that the decommunalization of the present-day Mossi family derives from the ancient workaday life of the conquering segment of the population, which imposed its own customs on the conquered group. This workaday life consisted half of stockbreeding, half of cultivation as among the present-day Toucouleur and Foulah, with war and looting in addition as among the same groups up to quite recently.

Of course, we learn nothing that might shed light on the subject by questioning the Mossi themselves. My informants, for example, tell me that the various soukala in a family actually constitute but one family. I ask them why, then, do they not live together and do all their tilling together, like /555/ the Bobo, Gourounsi, Bambara, etc.? Because the women quarrel, they tell me. Those quarrels caused other fights among the men, and people ended up living separately. Of course, this could only have been a pretext for secession, and the true cause which made this secession possible, namely, the increasing individual wealth of the households, was something else again.

592 We shall close with a few details concerning the internal structure of the Mossi household. The latter includes, as we have stated above, the following members:

462 Beside cooking tasks, Mossi women have cleaning tasks. They
356 sweep the huts and soukala with handfuls of straw, small primitive brooms 30 or 40 centimeters long. They wash and bleach clothes and make soap. Finally, it is the women who spin cotton and tamp the floor of the huts.

356 This tamping is done as follows. "The natives spread on the surface to be tamped a layer, 10 centimeters thick, of a special black earth that consists chiefly /561/ of ashes and humus resulting from the decomposition of plants and household refuse.

"Above this, the Mossi spread a second layer consisting of clayey ferruginous gravel, from 3 to 5 centimeters thick. The small pebbles are subsequently reduced by heavy tamping to very fine material. Then, the natives spread a little water over this material and tamp again. Once this is done, they allow the floor to dry.

"This procedure is repeated several times, but ordinary water is replaced with néré water (the latter resulting from the infusion in hot water of the fragments of néré fruit, dondo in Mossi) or water into which cow dung has been mixed. When the last tamping and the last drying have been completed, the natives pour néré water in large quantities onto the new floor.

"Finally, the last procedure consists of polishing the surface with flat stones." (Cahier des rapports of the Ouagadougou circle).

593 The duties of Mossi women toward their husband are as follows:
833 1. The fulfillment of the conjugal duty.
562 "The wife," says Moulins, "must never shirk her conjugal duty except when she is pregnant or nursing.

"Should a woman evade her husband from newlywed shyness or for any other reason, he would use at first all means of persuasion within his command, and especially beg the wife's relatives to have a word with her. Should their exhortations prove vain, coercion would be used by beating the woman or putting her in irons. Finally, should those means fail to bring the wife to compliance, she could be turned out by her husband."

593 2. Faithfulness.
562 "The wife must live with her husband. If she abandons the conjugal domicile, her spouse has the absolute right to force her to return. /562/ If she takes refuge with her relatives, the latter must

593 not shelter her but must on the contrary return her to her husband.
562 If difficulties arise, the husband appeals to the naba, who forces the wife to return to her husband, at whose hands she will get a beating when she arrives....

"...The powers of a deceived husband over his wife's lover
593 were quite fearsome prior to our occupation. He could, at will,
837 either deal with the culprit himself or defer his complaint to the
684 naba. If he dealt himself with his rival and killed him, he handed out the adulterous woman to the Moro Naba and did not have to answer for his crime. If he merely wounded the man, no matter how seriously, he was regarded as having acted in the fullness of his rights as an injured husband, and he kept the wife and gave her a beating. If he appealed to the naba, the guilty pair were punished by being put in irons for a variable period of time. Furthermore, if the adultery had been committed with the wife of a dapouy naba of the Moro Naba (that is to say, a man to whom the Moro Naba had himself given some girl in marriage), the accomplice was compelled to pay the deceived husband a fine of 100,000 cowries.

"Finally, in case of adultery with a chief's wife, both culprits were put to death."

On this subject I find in my notes that prior to our occupation, when a naba was deceived by one of his wives, he killed her with
[762] poison and ordered the wife's lover to commit suicide. The latter did this by plunging the head of a poisoned arrow into the calf of his leg.

"It is plain," the author of the Monographie goes on to say, "that the lover was dealt with in the most rigorous manner of all. He could be put to death by the deceived husband in every case, while the wives of a chief were alone liable to supreme punishment. The lover could also be punished with a fine, in a single case anticipated by custom. Finally, he was invariably put in irons on the naba's orders if the deceived husband placed a complaint against him.

"As for the adulterous wife, except when she was /563/ handed over to the Moro Naba by her husband as reparation for the murder of her partner, punishment for her misdemeanor amounted merely to a more or less rigorous beating or to irons for a short period of time. She could, it is true, be turned out by her husband, but the latter

593 837 684 made use of this right quite rarely. The woman has productive value in terms of children and labor. And then, in the majority of cases, the husband would merely fulfill the dearest of his wife's desires by doing so."

593 586 While the Mossi wife has duties toward her husband, the latter also has obligations toward his wives.

"A wife," says the Monographie, "has the right to demand from her husband more than mere platonic relations.

"Should the latter prevail, however, owing to the husband's impotence or illness, or simply as a result of ill will, the neglected wife would communicate the situation to the first wife of the family head, who would in turn inform her spouse.

"Should the husband's behavior be caused by physical incapacity, the woman would be taken from him and given to one of his brothers, or if there were none to his nearest relative, his sons excepted. Should his behavior be due merely to ill will, however, remonstrances would be made to him, and should these prove fruitless at the end of a few days, the woman would be considered free to return to her family."

593 837 Just as the husband owes his wives fulfillment of the conjugal duty, he also owes them relative faithfulness.

"The husband has an obligation of relative faithfulness toward his wives, that of not keeping a concubine at the conjugal domicile. [586] Should he transgress this rule, his wives would be fully entitled to obtain a divorce from him, unless he should agree to turn out his partner as a result of his wives' complaint or the intervention of the family head.

"This rule is strictly obeyed, except for the Mossi of the Kipirsi who allow the presence of the husband's concubines among his legitimate wives, and who have rules governing their respective positions.

"In any case the husband is everywhere allowed to /564/ deceive his wives as he pleases outside the conjugal domicile, and they are not entitled to complain about this in any way. Nevertheless, they nearly always have at their disposal a practically infallible although circuitous means of causing the greatest inconvenience to the fickle husband and his partner. As a result of the custom that pledges girls in marriage at a very early age, a husband can hardly commit

593 adultery except with a woman who is already married. A deceived
837 wife who wishes to take her revenge need only reveal to the spouse of her husband's partner the criminal relations that victimize them both."

593 Let us add that another of the husband's duties is to render help
602 to his wives' relatives if the latter are in needy circumstances.

Of course, the failure to fulfill these obligations could cause
593 the wife to request a divorce. Divorce thus exists among the Mossi,
586 although women rarely resort to it. The bride price is never claimed back by the husband, even if the woman has remained sterile. The children always devolve to the husband.

The husband, on the other hand, may turn out his wife, but Mossi husbands do not usually make use of this right.

585 Let us add that the matter of the girl's virginity at marriage
is settled by the Mossi as by most other Blacks. If a girl is bought
836 or betrothed from a very young age, she must preserve herself intact for her future husband. An unbetrothed girl, however, is free to use her own body when she reaches puberty, and if she marries later she cannot be reprimanded for having become a woman prior to her wedding.

567 Let us now proceed to the status of slaves.

Two kinds of slaves are distinguished among the Mossi, aside from the usual distinction between trade slaves and house slaves.

1. The daparé (etymologically, "followers," "men who walk behind their master," from da, "man" and paré, "behind"). They are unmarried slaves.

2. The bagaré ("men of the enclosure"). Those are married captives.

/565/ The daparé live with their master and always remain at his disposal for any work that may come up. They have no small individual plots, therefore, and their master provides them with food and clothing at all times. When they reach marriageable age, their master buys them a wife (or at least it was so in the old days; she would cost the master about 60,000 or 70,000 cowries), and then they settle on their own.

848 as soon as the baby is old enough to leave its mother, the husband, not wishing to keep it with him, will return the child to its natural father.

582 171 In short, virginity is not rigidly demanded of the girl, although it is considered better and more respectable than non-virginity. The Mossi are not as demanding on this point as the Bambara, and in this, according to my data, they are like all other Voltaic peoples.

684 Let us note one further detail. If the lover from whom reparation is demanded for the damage caused, that is to say, the payment of the goat, chicken, and two canari of dolo, does not want to give them, the husband would formerly appeal /242/ to the Moro Naba, who forced the lover to pay what he owed and in addition confiscated for himself a part of his goods for his salary as a judge. If the lover owned nothing, his family paid for him. Nowadays, the village or canton chiefs are still approached about such matters, and they force the lover to make the customary payment.

593 Rights and duties of the husband and wife. —The husband owes assistance and help to his wife. He must protect her and come to her aid whenever necessary.

The husband must support his wife. To secure food, he usually belongs to a work group, as we have seen earlier. The work group sustains the husband and wife for seven months out of twelve. The rest of the time, the husband maintains the wife with the produce of his small fields. The wife also has her own little patches of cultivated land (as big as a handkerchief), but they are not used to procure food for the household unless the husband is completely destitute. Hence, the produce from these little patches of soil usually goes to the wife herself.

In any case, it is the husband and not the group who must provide clothing for his wife. He does this with the earnings from his small fields.

593 586 If the husband should refuse to support his wife, although able to do so, she would take her complaint to the head of her spouse's family. If the husband still refused to support her after the intervention of the family head, the woman would regain her freedom and could return to her family.

593 The husband must see to his ailing or invalid wife's upkeep until her death.

593 The wife must obey her husband. The latter has the right to strike
562 her in case of disobedience, adultery, etc. He cannot break one of her limbs, or kill her.

595 Polygamy. —Polygamy is the general rule, at least theoretically. That is to say, the Mossi may have as many spouses as he wishes as long as he can minister to their needs.

595 In actual fact, only rich people have several wives. The majority
589 are monogamous by necessity, and there are even bachelors. As a passing remark, this applies to the Sudanese Negroes in general, for everywhere nature creates approximately as many men as women, and it is hard to visualize how in any one region each man could have several wives. However, in spite of the occurrence of bachelors and a large number of truly monogamous people, the question still stands. It is solved if we bear in mind that girls are married much earlier than men. This results in a much larger number of women than men "in active service," if I may be permitted to say so. Undoubtedly, this (along with the occurrence of bachelors and a considerable number of monogamists), takes care of the objection which naturally arises when we speak of polygamy. /243/

163 It may be, let us add, that the number of girls born here is a little higher than that of boys, as has been noted in England, for example.

595 By way of figures on polygamy, let us state that the Moro Naba
643 Bango, the last one who reigned before the arrival of the French, had
645 about 80 wives. The Naba Koboga, who ruled from 1902 to 1914, had 30 or 40. The present Rassam Naba, one of the ministers of the Moro Naba, has 30 or 35 wives. These are, of course, exceptional figures if the total population of Yatenga is taken into account. In any case, the rich men, notables, and men in easy circumstances always have several wives.

595 Organization of the polygamous household. —"The first wife," says Vadier, "enjoys a certain authority over the others. It is she who transmits her husband's orders to the other wives and who notifies him of their wants, who supervises the preparation of meals and apportions the food. In addition, it is she who comes and tells the
[841] husband that such-and-such a wife is no longer in a state of zim and can now fulfill her conjugal duties.

"Aside from this special prerogative enjoyed by the first wife, all wives have the same rights and duties. In principle, each wife must share in turn her husband's bed. Nevertheless, he is free to summon his favorite wife during the day."

833 The conjugal duty. —The wife owes her husband the fulfillment of the conjugal duty.

The wife must never evade it except when she is unwell, pregnant, or when she is nursing. We can see, therefore, that among the Mossi in particular and among the Sudanese in general (for the same customs prevail in this area among all Sudanese Negroes) there is great tactfulness. One appreciates this all the more if one bears in mind that [853] here the women suckle their children for two or three years.

"If, " says Vadier, "a woman should evade her husband from newlywed shyness or from any other motive, he would first use all the means of persuasion at his command and, especially, beg the wife's relatives to speak to her. Should their exhortations prove vain, constraint [573] would be used by giving the wife a beating or putting her in irons. Finally, should these measures fail to bring the spouse to compliance, [586] she could be turned out by her husband.

"In return, the husband owes the wife the same conjugal duty which he has the right to demand from her.

"Should the husband fail to fulfill it because of impotence, sickness, or simply from ill will, the neglected wife would mention the matter to the family head's first wife, who would in turn notify him.

833 "Should the husband's behavior be caused by physical incapacity, 586 the wife would be taken from him and given to one of his brothers or, if there were none, to his closest male relative, but never to one of his sons. Should it be due merely to ill-feeling, a protest would be made, and should this fail to have any effect after several days, the wife would be allowed to return to her family." /245/

Let us state immediately that these contingencies almost never arise or are so rare as to be practically nonexistent. Custom anticipates them, however, and we have just described what happens when perchance they do arise.

562 Women's property. —Women may own individual property, as we 422 already know, goods which are not shared communally and which belong wholly to them. These goods come from various sources, sometimes the women's small plots of land, sometimes a surplus from the grain they are given to prepare food and which, once made into dolo, is sold for cowries. Sometimes also, the husband's munificence provides them with bracelets and other jewelry. Once given, this jewelry is wholly theirs, and it is added to the trinkets they procure with their own resources.

857 The people fined must give three or four canari of dolo (the usual
575 canari of dolo is worth 150 cowries, or three sous).

The members assemble to eat, to drink dolo, and to dance to the sound of the tom-tom at the compound belonging to the father of the society's Moro Naba. The girls are invited to come and dance.

[71] Among the Mossi of Yatenga, the nam do not have their own huts as do the Bambara ton and flambolo.

Little mock weddings are performed in the societies between the girls and boys. The young spouses offer each other small gifts of cowries, peanuts, cotton, etc.

Once married, the young girls withdraw from their society on account of their husband's jealousy. Married men, on the other hand, may remain in theirs and quite frequently do while they are young. Old men, however, are no longer members of the nam.

883 Young people's tasks. —Young men, after they are circumcised (at the age of 13 or 14), work in the compound or rather in the work group to which they belong on the same days and at the same hours as other members of the group.

They are provided with food by the head of the group seven months out of twelve and by their father five months out of twelve, and they are clothed by the latter.

They have their own little plots, but the produce does not belong exclusively to them. Their father and mother take what they need to feed or clothe the youth. The remainder is his. Boys can thus accumulate a little property of their own before they marry.

Young girls have no little plots of their own to cultivate. They learn how to till the soil by working with their mother in the fields of the work group and in the mother's little private plots. Hence, they are fed by the group seven months out of twelve and by their father and mother for five months, and they are clothed by their parents. The individual property they own consists mostly of trifling jewels usually received as gifts. /257/

• 593 Rights and duties of parents toward their children. —Paternal authority rests largely with the father of the child, but also partly with the head of the work group, the head of the compound, and the family head. This is understandable, since the child's support is ensured for the greater part of the time, except for clothing, by the work group and since lodging is ensured by the compound.

593 861 858 The right to discipline a child belongs principally to the father (but also to the heads of work group, compound, and family) or to the mother, depending on the age of the child.

"The mother," says Vadier, "has the right to discipline boys until they are circumcised, girls until they marry. This does not mean that the father cannot intervene during that time to reprimand or chastise one of his children, but that he nearly always leaves it to the mother.

"After the boy's circumcision and the girl's marriage, the right to punish belongs to the father and no longer to the mother."

593 858 672 The duty of surveillance belongs principally to the father, and secondly to the heads of the work group, compound, and family. One of its consequences is financial liability. If a child steals or commits some reprehensible act which may call for compensation, the father is primarily responsible and must indemnify the injured parties, after seizing whatever property the child may own.

593 858 613 Formerly, when a native could not manage to discipline a son or daughter whose behavior was very bad, he would hand the child over to the Moro Naba after consulting the family head and the family council. From that day forward he would give up his paternal authority, and the Moro Naba alone would hold it with broader prerogatives. If the child continued to commit extortion, the Moro Naba had the right to have him put to death. When it was a girl who was handed to the naba, the latter would give the father a woman of his own household in exchange if he happened to be favorably disposed toward him.

Now, since the French occupation, this is no longer done. In such cases, nowadays, the child is simply expelled from the compound and from the household.

858 593 A father could not give his child as security, nor could he pawn him temporarily as a slave.

593 429 858 Paternal authority is relinquished in two cases, actually very infrequent: (1) when the father goes insane; and (2) when he has committed incest.

In such a case, paternal authority passes to his oldest living brother, or, if there is no brother, to the oldest son. This guardian has exactly the same powers over the child as the father had.

858 In case of insanity, the children are required to help their father and mother /258/ and to attend to their needs. In case of incest, they have no obligations toward the guilty party.

593 684 The Moro Naba, after he has been notified by the family council, pronounces the forfeiture of paternal authority. In case of incest, the guilty party was driven out of the territory.

593 Duties of children toward their parents. —The children owe obedience to their father and mother. They also owe them respect.

Their labor obligations are distributed among the fields of the work group, the father's private fields, the mother's small private plots, and their own little plots. Naturally they work most on the large fields belonging to the work group.

304 881 Circumcision. —Circumcision is performed at the age of 13 or 14. It takes place in the month of December, hence during the dry, cool season. At this time the children are not needed to help in the fields, as they are in the winter season. This is also the case in the hot, dry season, but at that time the wounds would heal less quickly. This leaves the dry, cold season, which is excellently suited to the treatment of the circumcised, a time when the children have nothing whatever to do and the grown-ups very little.

304 621 593 881 Circumcision is performed on a certain number of children at the same time. When a small village is involved, all the children in the village are circumcised at once. When a large village is involved, the children in each quarter are circumcised together. The children themselves ask their big brother if they may be circumcised when they feel that they have reached a suitable age for this operation. The big brother decides and says yes or no.

304 326 881 The children also set the exact date for the circumcision and go to the man who has charge of the operation to make the arrangements. In Yatenga, as a rule, he is a blacksmith (at Ouahigouya, for example, from the quarter of the Baloum-Naba). Sometimes, however, non-blacksmiths, either Foulsé or Mossi, perform the operation. When a performer of operations dies, he is replaced by someone who knows how to circumcise, either a brother or a son of the deceased or someone from another family.

304 881 Circumcision is not performed in the evening or at night, as happens among other Blacks of West Africa, but at six o'clock in the morning. A particularly kind man among the people of the quarter or of the village has been chosen by the children who are to be circumcised. He wakes them up on that morning and takes them to the man who is to perform the operation. Big brothers accompany their younger brothers, but the father and mother do not witness the operation and are not even

8: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1958
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he received from them. This unequal exchange, plus the nobles' prerogative of seizing the wives of pagans, contributed to the increase of the Moslems. 622 797 582

The conversion of Mossi to Islam is sometimes accompanied by a rupture in the relationships between persons involved in "friendships" with a view of obtaining wives. A great quarrel developed in the district between a pagan chief and a recent convert who refused to give the chief a daughter promised as a wife. The chief became furious and claimed that the Moslem had broken a promise made years ago, but the Moslem claimed that it was against his new religion to give his daughter to a pagan. It is not true that Moslems in the village do not exchange wives with pagans, but the Moslems often try to convert their pagan friends so that the brides will not have to revert to paganism. The chief's difficulty was that he could not become a Moslem because of his ritual and ceremonial relationship with the ancestors. The Moslem men do not have such difficulties with their pagan wives because most women follow their husbands' dictates in religious and other matters. Many Moslem men attempt to prevent their wives from having sacrifices made to the ancestors, but if a woman really wishes such a sacrifice she can easily have it arranged through her pagan relatives. If a woman married to a Moslem refuses to observe Islamic practices, she is liable to divorce and runs the risk of having her children taken away. 572 622 582 797 [562] [593] [586]

Mossi anxiety over children is often instrumental in converting them to Islam. When a woman is barren or her young children die, she consults a soothsayer (*barga*). She is either told that her Tengkougre benefactor was not amply rewarded and recalled the children, or that her "Moslem" children (children who wished to be Moslems) were angry because they were given pagan names. In the latter case she is advised to make a gift to a Moslem and to ask her husband to build a Moslem prayer-circle outside his hut so that when her children "return" (are born again) they will see it. Finally, she is advised to give all her children Moslem names. I could discover no reason why the pagan soothsayers advise these anxious parents to adopt Islam, except that they hope that complicated prescriptions will be more efficacious. Nevertheless, so effective is this technique for gaining converts to Islam that even members of the family of the chief pagan priest are not immune to it. Furthermore, once a woman has a Moslem child, all her other children must be Moslems or they will die. A man whose children are all Moslem has no recourse except to adopt Islam if he wants a funeral, because his Moslem sons may not give him a pagan funeral. 797 842 [787] [551] [764]

Every Mossi, whether Moslem or non-Moslem, wishes a proper funeral, and now that travel has increased the fact of being Moslem or pagan is of great importance. Many young migrants to Ashanti have reported that their dead pagan comrades were unceremoniously disposed of, while the local Christians and Moslems took care of their dead coreligionists. But despite this fact, and the belief of administrators and missionaries, I found no evidence that the seasonal and other migration of Mossi youth to Ghana and the Ivory Coast have contributed very much to the spread of Islam. It is true that some of the thou- 797 167 [764]

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tradition of hostility. Such groups obviously have both equal and mutually independent status.

The Processes of Mossi Joking

I have already suggested that the significance of joking as an adjustive mechanism is derived from the manner in which it provides concurrently for the operation of three interrelated but analytically separable processes. These are *communication, control,* and *catharsis.*

As a means of communication, joking provides a permissive and flexible context in which a grievance can be expressed, thus allowing for its rectification and the restoration of amity. As a means of control, the public nature of most joking serves to shame the object of the jocular offensive, to invoke social pressure for his conformity, and to elicit support for the complainant. As a means of catharsis, the joking expression of aggressive feelings reduces frustration and thus serves indirectly to perpetuate the amicable aspect of the relationship in which it occurs.

Joking also gives pleasure. The feeling of triumphant release that follows the successful—and safe—expression of hostile sentiments probably functions to reinforce reliance on joking as an adjustive mechanism. And the intrinsic pleasure of wit may also explain the persistence of joking behavior in the absence of an immediate "structural need" for it.

A more detailed description of one of the relationships already mentioned—sibling-in-law joking—will serve to illustrate these several points. Because of its relation to the pivotal institution of marriage, sibling-in-law joking is perhaps the most frequently used adjustive mechanism in Mossi social structure. The potential for marital conflict is high. This appears to be due to the combined factors of a sexually differentiated enculturative experience that results in marked dissimilarities in adult male and female personality; to an age difference between husbands and wives of at least ten years; to the classic stresses of polygyny; to the subordinate status of Mossi women, particularly of junior wives within their husband's patriclan; and to the possible dissatisfaction of a woman's parents, particularly her mother, at the loss of their daughter's services or at the inadequacy of bride-wealth payments.

Whatever its origins in a specific instance, it is important that this potential for conflict be controlled, for each marriage extends the network of affinal and cognatic ties that link the patrilineage to the larger community. Given a persistent potential for strife, the preservation of marital stability requires the provision of a means for minimizing its deleterious effects. When conflict occurs, the resultant frustration must be reduced, and accord must be reestablished in a manner that does no serious damage either to the marriage itself or to the larger context of social relations in which it is embedded. Sibling-in-law joking helps to accomplish this.

If, for example, a Mossi is irritated by his wife's performance of some aspect of her duties in the household or the field, he need not address her directly in order to communicate his dissatisfaction and release the tension he feels. To do so in a culture which places a high value on indirection in emo-

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tionally charged relationships would be such a serious breach of etiquette as to threaten permanent damage, if not actual dissolution, of the marriage relationship (Hammond 1959: 187; 1963: 21). Thus if he has been angered over his wife's frequent failure to prepare his food properly, or to present it to him before his kinsmen with a proper show of deference, he need not and should not reprimand her directly. He need only wait until she is visited by one of her younger sisters when he can call out:

> Eh! Here come women more worthless than my wife! What do you want here? Are you looking for *sacabo* (a millet cake)? Who eats well here? Do you want an old groundnut? No one here has tasted *sacabo* with sauce since your sister came to my house!

By expressing his resentment of his wife in this way the husband is able—indirectly—to communicate the cause of his displeasure, to elicit support for himself and social pressure against her, and to achieve harmlessly the reduction of his hostile feelings. All this he accomplishes without risking the sort of direct and angry confrontation which might have a permanently damaging effect on their relationship. The wife's younger sisters cannot take offense at this joking, and they can be relied upon to relay the husband's complaints to their sister—if, indeed, she does not herself overhear the joking exchange. Furthermore, since a wife's younger sisters are usually aware of the sources of her grievance with her husband, they can use the same means to communicate to him the reason for her resentment and consequent failure to perform her domestic tasks to his satisfaction.

Similarly, when a man's younger brothers come into the presence of his wife, she is expected to insult them in the same way—to deride with humor their appearance, their lack of energy, their skill at their work, or their intelligence. The expectation and acceptance of such joking provides her with an indirect means of criticizing her husband as well. By saving her grievances until she is in the company of her husband's younger siblings, she may, within the context of joking, pour out her resentment at the way she is treated, revealing succinctly the causes of her dissatisfaction. His brothers can be relied upon to relay to her husband what she has said, if he has not himself overheard the exchange. If he recognizes as valid the criticism implied by her joking remarks, he may correct those aspects of his behavior which are frustrating or unsatisfactory to her. Indeed, if the criticisms are justified, his kinsmen are likely to exert pressure on him to do so. The joking provides the woman with a means of channeling in a culturally acceptable manner the aggressive feelings generated by her frustrations. And her husband's younger brothers, by retorting with hostile banter of the same sort, can convey to her the dissatisfaction of both her husband and their other kinsmen with her comportment, thus providing her, too, with a chance to mend her ways.

By these means both marriage partners have an equal opportunity to evaluate the content of the other's criticism and, if necessary, to alter their behavior accordingly. Since this is achieved through joking, the result of such an exchange is the maintenance of communication, the exercise of a measure of social control, and the mutual reduction of frustration without the face-to-face conflict that might result in permanent damage to both the marriage relation-

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ship itself and the contract of interlineage co-operation and solidarity which every marriage serves to establish or reinforce.[4]

Although this joking interchange is seen in its full implications when there is an immediate source of dissension between marriage partners, it may also occur in the absence of any specific difficulty. Then it is apparently indulged in simply because it is expected, and for the pleasure which the Mossi, like all people, derive from an occasion to exercise their wit. It is this relatively disinterested joking which has been most frequently described in the literature, and this may account for the failure of many scholars to perceive more fully the important social and psychological functions which joking may fulfill.

Conclusion

This paper has been written as a tentative step toward a reformulation of the various and disparate observations on joking contained in the anthropological literature. I have contended that an analysis of this literature indicates that wherever joking is institutionalized the structural relationship between the participants tends to be characterized by five significantly interrelated structural attributes: separation, reciprocity, ambivalence, equality, and independence. I have also indicated that such joking may serve as an adjustive mechanism by providing for the concurrent maintenance of communication, control, and the culturally harmless catharsis of potentially disruptive emotions.

A variety of forms of institutionalized joking found among the Mossi of Yatenga have been cited to illustrate these points. However, I suggest that the factors which cluster with this reliance on joking as an adjustive mechanism are not unique to the Mossi. Institutionalized joking reported for other parts of Africa appears to be structurally and processually similar.

NOTES

1. A shorter version of this paper was read at the annual meeting of the American Anthropological Association held in San Francisco in November, 1963. It is based on field research conducted among the Mossi from 1954 to 1956 with the assistance of a Ford Foundation Fellowship.

2. Marriage between the members of descent groups united by a joking alliance is regarded by the Mossi as highly desirable, apparently in recognition of the useful role of joking as an adjustive mechanism. Once such a marriage is contracted, however, Ego and his wife must take care that their joking insults are directed only at the younger kinsmen of the other and that the insulting remarks are personal. It would, for example, be acceptable for Ego to call his wife's younger sister a disreputable shrew but dangerous to call her a slave (a term of disrespect used frequently in joking between sibs). To refer to her as a slave would cast unflattering aspersions on her entire kin group, including her mother and father, with whom, in their new status as parents-in-law, Ego may no longer joke.

3. I believe that joking is also institutionalized between the Mossi and the Yarse, a highly acculturated ethnic minority of Mande origin who live throughout Yatenga. There is also joking between the Mossi and the indigenous blacksmith caste. Unfortunately my data on these two instances of joking are inadequate.

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4. The importance of sibling-in-law joking as a means of regulating conflict in the Mossi marriage relationship is further substantiated by the results of comparative research conducted among the Mossi resettled at the Office du Niger in the neighboring Republic of Mali.

The Mossi, who were first forcibly and later voluntarily resettled in Mali, were allocated farm land as elementary family units without regard for their extended kinship affiliations. Thus a man often found himself living in unaccustomed "isolation," in the company only of his wife or wives and children, and otherwise surrounded by total strangers. Although the potential for conflict in the marriage relationship remained high, or was even augmented by the stresses of adjusting to a changed milieu, sibling-in-law joking, the institution through which such tension is traditionally regulated among the Mossi, was no longer operative. Unless the younger siblings of each spouse had accompanied them to the resettlement area, those individuals were absent to whom they might have communicated their grievances and expressed their aggressive sentiments in a socially harmless, psychologically satisfactory, and culturally acceptable way.

As the traditionally sanctioned means of dealing with tension resulting from marital conflict was no longer available to the Mossi resettled in Mali, there occurred an increase in the incidence both of violence in marital disputes and of separation and divorce.

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had done so with full permission of his father and in place of an unadventurous elder brother.

For example, the ruling family of the Boulsa province claimed that its ancestor, Naba Namende, was the eldest son of Mogho Naba Oubri and chose to become his father's *Kourita* (a young son of a deceased Mogho Naba chosen as his father's personal representative on earth) and go into exile rather than subject his younger brother to the ordeal. At the same time, Namende sought to retain royal power equal to that of his brother, the new Mogho Naba, by taking Oubri's royal amulets with him.[3]

Mane province, too, was founded by one Nyaseme, a son of Koudoumie, who felt that he should have been given the nam. When routed in battle by his elder brother Kouda, he moved into the region of Mane, where he defeated the indigenous Ninisi and ruled over them. The princes who broke away from Ouagadougou during Koudoumie's reign considered themselves theoretically equal to the supreme ruler. Thus, they took the title of Dim. By so doing, they dramatized their claim to equality of status, if not of power, with the Mogho Naba, and their determination to "submit only to God."[4]

The Mossi insist that the relationship between the Mogho Naba and the Dimdamba was similar to that between father and sons, since the Dimdamba were "really the sons of the Mogho Naba" and are said to have acted as such. This analogy is interesting in view of the Mossi traditional pattern of avoidance—combined with love and tolerance—between fathers and elder sons.[5] The Dimdamba were often allowed to act at variance with the Mogho Naba. Some of them shifted allegiance from kingdom to kingdom; others usurped the power of the Mogho Naba over smaller districts, or claimed that they had been given this power; and most of them regulated their own affairs with little interference from their sovereign. He, as "father," interfered on occasion in their internal affairs, demanding help from them and often chastising them if they failed to comply.

The Mogho Naba and the Dimdamba often appointed their younger sons or brothers as rulers (Kombemba) of the districts that made up their kingdoms and principalities. In this way, power and authority were kept within the royal clan and its lineages. Nevertheless, in keeping with the concept of corporate access to the nam, the rulers of these dependencies had traditions that served to reconcile their claims to kingly or princely status with their actual subordinate position. District founders, too, were often portrayed as eldest sons who had been cheated out of their patrimony or had voluntarily left it to establish new districts. In some cases, the legendary heroes were granted miraculous births as well.

634 As soon as the prince arrived, the Ouidi Naba made preparations to
644 receive the chiefs of such local districts as Manga, Nobere, and Basgana, who visited the prince and brought him wives, livestock, and money. During a seven-day period, other chiefs and well-wishers visited the new chief
[431] and offered him gifts. When this period was over, the new Djiba Naba gave wives to the noble members of his escort and livestock, money, and kola nuts to the commoners and serfs, and sent the group back to Ouagadougou. Then he settled down to the life of a typical district chief, governing his villages in the name of the Mogho Naba, paying him tribute, and settling disputes among his villagers. Dim Delobson reports that the other
[431] district chiefs and the heads of such principalities as Boussouma and Con-
[651] quizitenga formerly sent presents to the Djiba Naba when they sent their annual tribute to the Mogho Naba.[35] But this contradicts all that I heard and saw of the relationship between the royal heir and the other district chiefs. They treated him as an equal and showed no deference to him either in private or on ceremonial occasions. As a matter of fact, in the presence of the Mogho Naba, the royal heir actually effaced himself before the other district chiefs. This behavior served to preserve the concept of equal access
[643] of all members of the ruling clan to the ancestral nam. The Mogho Naba was head of the ruling group as well as political leader of the Mossi. His son, on the other hand, was often a junior in terms of age and generation within the ruling group, but politically he was on the same level as the other district chiefs. The sovereign could not show by his behavior that his son was either actually or potentially superior to the other Nanamse; nor could the prince presume to be haughty because of his strategic but accidental relationship to the actual possessor of the nam. Had he tried to do so, he might have ruined his chances of being selected to take over the "house" of his father and his father's fathers.

643 The relations between the Mogho Naba and his children, including his
644 heir, were characterized by formality—at least in public. Nevertheless, the ruler took a vital interest in the training and welfare of the youthful Djiba
593 Naba. Mogho Naba Wobogo (1890-96) reportedly had the Ouidi Naba
634 and the Baloum Naba of Djibu executed because the Crown Prince died under strange circumstances while under their care. Yet the Mogho Naba was not expected to enjoy seeing his son and heir, because of the Mossi father's traditional anxiety regarding those individuals who would profit most from his death. At the assemblies of district chiefs called by the Mogho Naba, the royal heir was not even greeted by his father; moreover, the heir usually stood at the edge of the assembly and left without attending the customary feast. However, there is considerable evidence that the Mogho

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Naba regularly saw his son in private, and that the prince often interceded successfully with his father for the lives of rebels or criminals.

The Mogho Naba seldom saw his younger sons, who usually remained with their mothers' patrilineages until they were old enough to be assigned district chieftainships or sent to live in villages controlled by the Baloum Naba. He was rather suspicious of these boys, who, if certain traditions are believed, were not averse to plotting the death of the Djiba Naba in order to succeed to the nam. The district chiefs also feared these younger sons, in whose favor they were often deposed by the Mogho Naba. Almost all of the dynastic changes that occurred in the Mossi districts seem to have stemmed from a ruler's attempt to find districts for his brothers or his younger sons.

The ruler was less concerned with the welfare of his daughters and female relatives. Their marriages seldom benefited the political system. As a matter of fact, the behavior of a royal princess usually strained the relations between her husband and the ruling lineage. The reason for this was a status conflict: as wives, they had low prestige in Mossi society; but as relatives of the Mogho Naba, they enjoyed high status. This contradiction made it difficult for them to accept the low estate of wives. Consequently, they clashed with their husband and often dominated the women and co-wives in his compound. Since few Mossi men tolerate strife within their household, these noble wives often withdrew from their husband's home and established one of their own. The one exception to this pattern was the ruler's eldest daughter, the Napoko, whose ceremonial duties at his death and during the interregnum compelled her to remain loyal to the husband chosen for her by the king. Like her brother, the Crown Prince, if she violated any of the traditions and thus became ineligible to fulfill her duties to her father and to the state, she endangered the country at its weakest moment, when the government was being transferred from the deceased Mogho Naba to his successor.

The death of a Mogho Naba was usually attributed to foul play or supernatural forces. When Mogho Naba Sagha II died in 1957, a report from Ouagadougou stated that the Governor of the Upper Volta had felt constrained to have an autopsy performed to quell rumors that the monarch had died of poisoning.[48] The obvious function of such rumors was to dramatize the gravity of the situation during the interregnum.

Because the Mogho Naba was usually accompanied by a page, it was often this boy who witnessed his death. It was the page's responsibility to notify the Baloum Naba, who notified, in order, the Ouidi Naba, the Larhalle Naba, the Kamsaogho Naba, the Gounga Naba, the ruler's children,

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V

LAW AND THE JUDICIAL PROCESS

671 THE Mossi possessed a comprehensive body of rules governing human conduct. These rules were well known to the people, and violators were punished by the responsible authorities. The Mossi might be said to have had substantive law, but they had no written codes. Nevertheless, the lack of written codes does not warrant Mangin's blanket criticism of Mossi judicial processes: "Of course, there was no written code, no formal scale of penalties. Everything depended on custom and on the whim of the judge. [662] Thus, the wealthy could obtain sentences in their favor by paying the judges, and thieves could avoid punishment by sharing their loot with the Naba."[1] Custom did dictate the penalties, just as "written custom" dictates penalties [692] in all written legal codes. But, as we shall see, the Mossi did have a known [695] scale of penalties. Moreover, a Mossi judge had to be careful in rendering judgment, because his decisions could be reviewed by a higher court.

596 The head of the Mossi extended family, the *Yirisoba,* was responsible 681 for the everyday conduct of his charges. It was his duty to settle all family quarrels, and to punish persons guilty of theft within the compound, disrespect toward elders, and incest. Punishment for the lesser wrongs included 596 reprimands and floggings. A person found guilty of disrespect to the elders 683 or of incest could be banished from the group. But banishment was so severe 684 that it was imposed only if the criminal refused to make the usual conciliatory gestures and was condemned by all the members of his boodoo. Even after this condemnation, however, he could ask a "sister's son," a yagenga, [613] to intercede for him. This man, the son of a female lineage member, had many privileges within his mother's brother's lineage, including the right to mediate between an exile and his boodoo.

593 Amicable relations within the family group were most often disrupted 586 by conjugal difficulties. A Mossi husband could occasionally flog an erring 613 wife, but he was not allowed to maltreat her. When a man became disgusted with his wife and wished to repudiate her, he put her water pots in the compound yard. This rather serious action often led to hostile relations

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between the lineages concerned. If either the repudiated woman or a member of her husband's lineage wished to initiate a reconciliation, she or he had to summon a yagenga. He alone was permitted to reconcile the couple after the pots had been placed in the courtyard. When a woman felt that she was being maltreated by her husband, she usually fled to her own patrilineage and waited for her husband's patrilineage—usually his brothers—to visit her male relatives and discuss the case. If the woman was judged guilty, she was reprimanded and sometimes flogged by her own relatives for causing trouble between the two lineages, and then sent home to her husband. However, if the man was found guilty, his wife was returned to him, but he was warned that he would forfeit all rights to her if he maltreated her again. A man who lost his wife through repeated maltreatment could not take the matter to court, because chiefs usually refused to deal with purely domestic issues. His only recourse was to induce one of his lineage brothers to recall a daughter who had married into his wife's lineage. This act was usually sufficient to bring about the reconciliation of the estranged couple before innocent persons were hurt.

The Mossi made every effort to solve minor problems without recourse to the chiefs. The local Boodkasemdamba and lineage elders adjudicated quarrels and simple offenses involving members of minimal segments in the various village saghse. They even tried to resolve difficulties between lineage members of larger segments who lived in different villages. The elders often imposed punishments such as reprimands, floggings, and even banishment. The convicted person did not usually appeal to the chief, because he knew that the chief would advise him to settle his problem within the family.

Unrelated villagers also tried to settle difficulties among themselves without appealing to the chief. For example, a man who was caught stealing could be beaten or even killed by his intended victims, and the chief did not punish them for their action. In many cases, villagers simply took the thief back to his relatives, knowing they would punish him. Occasionally, a family disgraced by a thieving member forced him to kill himself. When this happened the chief held an inquest but took no other action.

The Mossi gave a fairly simple explanation for returning a thief to his relatives for punishment. They said that every family had "weak" members, and that by not harming the captured thief they were only protecting themselves against retaliation if one of their own relatives should commit a similar crime. But a more important reason seems to have been their fear of starting a feud that might result in the premeditated murder of a man and the subsequent execution of his murderer.

The one crime that invoked terrible unofficial sanctions was rape. If the

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691 father had given the woman a silver bracelet before he died, and that the
428 babissi felt that this was sufficient, since she had a husband to provide for
634 her. Furthermore, Moussa said that the inheritance had already been distributed, and that any redistribution would impose a hardship on all concerned.

695 Interpreting the inheritance law according to common practice, the chief
691 ruled that the milk from a man's cattle was for *all* his children, regardless
428 of sex, and that the fact that the father had formerly given the daughter a
634 bracelet should not have influenced the distribution of the inheritance. The chief stated that the woman should receive at least one cow, and that if the defendant did not agree, he (the chief) would recall all the animals and supervise their distribution. He did not feel that he had to state the principles by which he had reached his judgment, for the consensus among the people of the district was that the heir was trying to take advantage of the law for his own selfish interests. Rather than appeal to Ouagadougou, Moussa and his babissi accepted the verdict.

671 On the basis of these and other cases, we are led to the conclusion that the Mossi felt that law and the judicial process should serve to reconcile people and to maintain what was commonly considered to be social justice.

634 Most of the cases at the district court were tried in the same manner as
692 those cited above. Cases involving relations between men and women were
684 the most common. This is paradoxical, because the district chief tried to avoid any involvement with such cases. For every domestic case tried by
593 the district chief, five others were sent back to the village or lineage level. Even so, it is estimated that about 80 per cent of the cases tried by Mossi district chiefs ultimately concerned women. The most common case of this type was the alleged refusal of a woman to return to her husband.[8] If the judge found that another man had encouraged her to leave her husband, he ordered her to return to him and warned her and the man about the possibility of serious difficulty with her husband's relatives. On the other hand, if the chief found that the woman had left a cruel husband who threatened to harm her or her relatives, he warned the husband not to carry out his threats. The Mossi had no bride price; thus, a woman's family was not faced with the problem of restitution. Sometimes, an angry husband did demand that his wife's family return the gifts (*pogopossum*, "thanks for the woman") he had given them from time to time—e.g., at funerals—and they complied.

684 Adultery cases were next in frequency at the district court. A man con-
692 victed of adultery with another man's wife was either warned to leave her
634 alone or fined a sheep or a goat. He was also liable to be put in stocks for

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the status of women. They maintained that the French had conquered the Mossi men, not the women, and that the administration should not interfere with the way in which a Moaga treated his wife. Ironically enough, there was little the administration could do for the Mossi women, since the latter were too timid to approach the Europeans. Most of them continued to react to maltreatment from their husbands by running away, but now they went to the Gold Coast with labor migrants instead of returning to their lineage.

Although the Mossi chiefs had little autonomy in the administration of their subjects, and had to look to the administration for guidance in nearly everything they did, they were not completely powerless. They were the representatives of the colonial administration on the local level, and as such they could control their subjects through the differential allocation of prestations. Those Mossi who had maintained the traditional respect for the chiefs could look forward to less arduous tasks for the administration and to the avoidance of forced labor or army recruitment. Those who by their actions or attitude indicated that they had lost respect for the chiefs were penalized accordingly. Chiefs were also able to retain some control over their subjects because they were still the centers of social, economic, and political relations within their territories. They still received homage and presents from their more loyal or traditionalistic subjects, and with these goods and services they could bind other persons to themselves. Clever chiefs were able to manipulate the colonial administration and use it to enhance their traditional position so successfully that the administration and the missionaries had to take these men into account whenever they wished to establish contact with the population.

The desire of the missionaries to establish missions and schools for the purpose of converting the Mossi to Christianity presented the chiefs with a great challenge because, unlike the administration, the missionaries tried to establish direct contact with the people. The chiefs not only did not like to have Europeans living in their midst, but feared that they would lose control over their subjects who went to live near the missions. However, the chiefs could not refuse to grant the missionaries land on which to build missions and schools. They also provided labor for them, just as they did for the construction of administrative buildings and roads. Similarly, the chiefs recruited children for the mission schools in the same spirit as they recruited students for the schools of the administration. The difference between the Catholic missionaries and the administration with respect to education was that while the former were interested in educating the children of chiefs, they were also interested in children from other backgrounds. Nevertheless, the majority of chiefs continued to send to school

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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837 man even refrains from making overtures to a woman whose husband's female relatives may be married to a member of his own [609] lineage. He fears that a wronged husband may have the wives of his [613] lineage brothers recalled, thus causing dissension within and between the two lineages. If none of these complications are present, a man seeks out a person who knows the woman and sends a message de- [431] claring his intentions. If the response is favorable, the man then buys [801] four large kola nuts (four being the number for a woman), wraps them together with 44 francs, and send them to his lady. This procedure may be followed on subsequent market days without the two parties ever coming into direct contact with each other. Finally, however, a rendezvous is arranged, and on the pretense of leaving the market to visit a relative for several days, the woman goes instead to her lover's village.

837 These casual affairs started at the market sometimes become quite 586 serious, and if for any reason they are sanctioned by the relatives of either the man or the woman, they often lead to the breakup of a [443] marriage. And since the market is the place where disputants of any [574] sort most likely come into contact, it is here that fights over "stolen" wives break out.

837 This pattern of extramarial relationships centering around the 443 market place is so common among the Mossi that the younger men, and even some of the older ones, are disappointed with the "market" when their mistresses do not appear. Mossi men who sit under the shelters around the market place can usually give an inquirer not only the name of a woman, the name and village of her husband and father, but also the name and village of her paramour. Characteristically enough, they are always "ignorant" of the escapades of their own 593 female relatives or of the wives of their lineage members. The only 443 time when men act as though their relatives might be involved in extramarital affairs is when for some purpose or another a man has to recall a wife or daughter who has gone to visit a relative in another village or district. Regardless of how pressing the problem may be, a man will seldom go directly to his father-in-law's house to recall the woman. He goes to the market nearest to his in-laws' village, and seeks his wife there. If he does not find her or any of her relatives, he goes to the part of the market in which people from her village sell their products and sends a message to her family that he will come for her the next day, or that he would like her to come home.

443 A market place is also one of the best places to look for news of a 203 runaway wife, or of any stranger in an area. The Mossi say that women have footprints like an elephant in that they can be found quite easily, but that the footprints are always clearest in the market.

8: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1958
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When a young Catholic receives a wife through the mission, he may visit her father and pay the customary respect by giving him kola nuts and brass coins. The father of a mission girl may accept or reject his son-in-law as he sees fit, but formerly he could not defy the power of the missions. 797 582 634

A pagan youth who wishes to marry one of the mission girls has to discuss the matter with the priests and swear publicly that he will become a Christian. Before 1946 the young man had to fulfill his promise or be intimidated by the chief and the missionaries until he relented or fled the district. Today, however, the priests usually abandon their efforts to obtain the conversion of the young men after three months have passed. In some cases the young men take their wives and move to other districts, and return only after the girls have given up Catholicism. Despite the lure of wives from the mission, not many young men become Christians on this account because the Mossi are still concerned primarily with family relationships and the effect that conversion would have on these relationships. [596]

The church's prohibition of polygyny is by far the most serious bar to the spread of Catholicism. Many men do not adopt Catholicism simply because they fear that monogamous marriages would not produce children. Father Paternot (Considine 1954:103) has cited a study purporting to show that Christian Mossi have more children than the pagans, but the ordinary people of the district would not accept the facts he presented. They cite their personal experience to the contrary. Dim Delobson (1934:136), a Mossi converted to Catholicism, states: 797 595 842

> A certain number of Christians of my acquaintance whose wives did not have children during the first years of marriage had recourse to magical practices in order to get children. These simple people thought that although they had an omnipotent God beside them, they could impudently—after all the good priests will not know about it—ask the little, but also powerful gods to grant them some material favors here on earth. When the gods given children were taken for Holy Baptism, they were given Christian names instead of the names of the earth shrines, and they did not wear magical charms which would have indicated to the priest the real state of affairs. Nevertheless, the children were bathed in water to which magical potions were added, and when the mothers went to visit their parents, sacrifices of chickens were given to the benevolent Tengkougas.

The Mossi's strong desire for children is admittedly one of the main reasons for leaving the Catholic Church so that they can take other spouses in addition to barren ones. The church has now belatedly recognized this problem and, knowing that it cannot prevent men from taking plural wives, allows them to come to church but prohibits them from taking the Mass.

Many cultural factors besides the desire for children make polygyny important for the Mossi, and make conversion detrimental to the functioning of their family system. Because of lineage opposition to their conversions, some converts are forced to establish nuclear households—a practice out of harmony with the normal rhythm of Mossi life. The reason for this disharmony is that Mossi women married to Catholics must work alone instead of with 595 797 182 [594]

644 The sogoné may not wear trousers. He wears a type of
357 drawers called benda. All the nanamsé (plural of naba) have
292 followed the example of Naba Warga, and nowadays the most insignificant kombéré has at least a dozen sogoné.

[161]

The Napogré. General Conditions. Number of Wives of the Emperor Today. Ornaments.

644 Depending on whether the napagha is destined for the chief
595 himself or for one of his brothers or sons, the instruction of the napogré are given either in the quarters of the pugtiéma (first wife of the naba) or at the home of one of the old nabissi.

644 Water is heated and in it is put a bit of karite butter and other
595 ingredients. After the girl's head, armpits, and pubic hair have
302 been shaved by some old women, the pugtiéma or the old man dips a hand into the water, utters certain cabalistic words, and gives the names of all the chiefs who have succeeded each other up to the father of the current ruler.

644 The water is then given to the old women who bathe the
595 young napagha. It is at this time that she is instructed in the duties and obligations of the napogré, what she may do and what she should avoid.

[301] The new wife is then adorned with bracelets, kouaba (plural of kobré), and with rouamba [ankle rings], or with only bracelets. The chief may marry her at once or, depending on the circumstances, send her to the man for whom she is destined.

[684] The napagha must never have relations with any man other than her husband as long as she lives. Formerly she was pitilessly killed if she broke this rule. [162]

[302 As we have just seen, the napagha has no hair, and this is
30[illegible] the primary distinctive mark. Also, she wears bracelets on her wrists, sometimes even on her arms and some on her ankles (this is done mostly by favorites). Finally some wear kouaba, ornaments most often worn by old women.

The number of wives or napagha varies according to the importance of the naba and especially according to the desires of naba. According to the 1926 census, the present Mogho Naba had thirty-seven wives.

644 It should be said that the napagha, who is regarded as a
595 piece of property, is part of the estate of a deceased chief. The
562 new naba takes some of the old and young wives, and the rest are
587 kept in the family of the nabissi. It is therefore not unusual to find women in the household of a naba who have been married to two or even three deceased chiefs. If they are not too old, they may give birth to children of the chief who is their second or third husband.

644 The establishment of a naba is often divided into three sec-
595 tions.

1. The zagkas sanga (the great house). All the old women, the unwanted ones, live here. Their mistress and guardian is the pugtiéma, who has charge of the house where the kimsé or manes of the ancestors live.

2. Zagbilin. The middle-aged women [163] who are still occasionally visited by their husband live here.

3. Dogoundba. This is the assemblage of several young and beautiful wives grouped around the favorite. They are called dogoundba, "guardians of the hut of the naba." These women receive all the favors, wear the finest ornaments, and are dressed in
[291] godé (1). Most of the time the dogoundba live in one or several

1. A skirt that is highly valued among the Mossi.

huts, depending on their number.

Each of the women in the other two sections has her own hut.

Since the naba has too many wives to be able to look after all of them, they must provide their own clothing and food. Hence, they are forced to cultivate plots and sell some of their produce. Each napagha has her own small field of millet, peanuts, beans, and peas.

The dogoundba have a collective plot. They help their husband who not only has to feed them, but is also required to support
[357] the sogoné and the samand'kamba (the latter are "people of the outer courtyard," another category of servitors who are sent on errands to the villages or who serve as grooms).

In the homes of the kombemba (plural of kombéré), it is the duty of the dogoundba to prepare food for the sogoné and for any

644
595 foreigners who are being housed by the naba. [164]

Each sogoné or samanbiga chooses a mother from among the
644 wives of the naba (only those in the first two sections).
595 He helps her to cultivate her plot of ground and receives in
357 return a little food over and above the ration of sagbo given to the
608 sogoné as a group.

At Nanore (1), for example, it was formerly the rule that

1. Canton in the administrative district of Koudougou.

when a woman brought some sagbo to her adopted son, she could not simply hand it to him. Instead, holes were dug in the courtyard of the naba, into which the woman put the sagbo and sauce. Then the young man came to eat the food, and later the woman came back for her bowls.

644 Finally, it is still forbidden for anyone to play a guitar when
595 a napagha is passing by unless the player is the naba himself or
533 someone called upon to play by the naba. It should be noted that
687 the Moaga prefers the guitar for intimate occasions. Therefore, to
832 play it when a napagha passes by is actually to court her.

The Pogsiouré, or the Recruitment of Sogoné and Saman'kamba

643 Aside from a few special cases limited by custom which we
562 shall presently describe, the naba can never dispose of the daughters of his subjects, either to make them [165] his own wives or to bestow them on someone else, without the permission of the parents.

Pogsiouré comes from pog', the diminutive of pagha, "woman," and from siouré, diminutive of sioubo, "to give anticipating a profit."

562 As a result of family quarrels or even voluntarily, a Moaga
431 "may give away his daughters and those of his brothers and close
643 relatives to the naba." It is obvious that the naba cannot keep all of these girls, so he gives some of them to his brothers, his uncles, his sons, and even to ordinary Mossi who have done him a service.

In the same way -- and this is more frequent -- every sogoné (page) or samand'biga [singular of samand'kamba] (bodyguard or

588 582 751 wears a bracelet made of copper and iron intertwined, kalembanga, which is believed to protect the wearer against any disaster due to the technically illegal marriage. The kalembanga is also believed to protect the children born of the union from sudden death.

Polygyny

595 Polygyny is the rule throughout Mossi country. It is true that the number of wives varies with the resources and position of the individual. Mere heads of compounds who are somewhat well off may have [180] from five to eight wives and numerous fiancées. The [584] latter are usually reserved for the dakompa (older sons and younger brothers of the head of the family), assuming that these men will in turn render real service and be completely devoted to the head of the household.

There are many reasons for the practice of polygyny, but the main one is procreation. The under-nourished natives must rely on [853] the mother's milk to feed their babies and must therefore wait two [834] or even three years before resuming sexual relations with a wife who is a nursing mother. Therefore, they prefer to have several wives.

Consummation

585 When the young girl is taken to her husband, she is entrusted to a woman whom she will henceforth treat as "mother."

A few days after the departure of the cortege, whose composition we shall describe presently, the man claims his fiancée. She is taken at night to the nuptial hut, which has no special features, and no one is present at the consummation of the marriage. In this respect the Mossi differ from the Bambara, who have a griot or an old woman accompany the couple to help the young man, if necessary, overcome the girl's resistance.

It goes without saying that if the girl is found to be a virgin, the [181] husband is overjoyed. If she is not a virgin, the love which he may have felt for her before possessing her is much diminished. The man shows the girl his anger, certain that she will at least tell her mother about it.

342
412 Tools. The only tools used are the sitoiga (native pickaxe) and the wanka (hoe).

352 House furnishings. (a) The man's hut. The only furnishings in a man's hut are a mat or thin secco, a bolster made of cotton strips or kapok, a quiver, the club, some arrows, the bow, a large knife (zangoégo), and a spear. Small bags of charms and other amulets hang from the wall here and there, and there is a sort of oval straw basket, pilgou, in which clothing is stored.

(b) The woman's hut. From one end of the hut to the other there are billi, small pieces of wood fastened to the wall to hold gourds, bowls (lensé), earthenware basins (lassé), ladles (soutissi), etc.

In the rear of the room lumps of dried earth, [221] hollowed in the center, hold the vessels, and pots, dougdo, which serve both as storage bins for clothing and as granaries for the produce of the woman's own garden.

592 Plan of a compound. As one enters a compound, the huts to left are those of the women and the master's huts stand to the right. Completely outside the establishment, there are one or two straw huts, similar to those already described, which provide sleeping quarters for the dakompa (young men).

[595] The head of the establishment lives alone. It could hardly be otherwise, since he summons his wives in turn.

The women live with their young children or with girls betrothed to their husband, until, of course, these girls receive huts of their own.

343 Kitchen arrangements. It is exceedingly rare among the Mossi to find a hut used specifically for cooking. The wife's bedroom serves also as a kitchen.

Ordinarily the husband issues provisions to the wife who is
592 cooking for the family, but there are exceptions to this rule. At
595 Ouagadougou, for example, most of the wives provide the food for
252 the husband. The latter furnishes provisions only during the winter when the fields are being worked.

[222] The wives take turns preparing the food. The woman on duty is aided by her co-wives in grinding the millet on the millstone (néré) of the section, but she alone prepares the millet cake, sagbo.

423 will, and the new occupant cannot make the slightest protest.

It should be pointed out, however, that since land is most often abandoned because it was thought to be unproductive or haunted, there is rarely a claim to it by a former owner. In any event the matter is settled by the interested parties. The local administration and the canton chief rarely intervene in such cases.

Owners' rights over fruit trees in cultivated fields. Donsé
423 or néré [locust bean] trees whose fruits contain a yellowish, sweet
263 powder that is edible and [244] whose seeds are used to make soumbala, a fetid condiment much prized by the natives, remain the exclusive property of the former occupant. On the other hand, the tamsé (karite tree) belong to the new owner.

423 This is because the karite tree is found almost everywhere in the bush, while the néré is less common.

Rights of the chiefs over cultivated land. As a general rule,
425 since the principle of right by possession is honored among the
423 Mossi, a canton chief will not confiscate without reason cultivated land belonging to one of his subjects if the land has always been occupied by the occupant's grandparents.

When the land is unoccupied, however, or newly occupied, the canton chief may, by virtue of his absolute authority over his territory, take possession, and the new owner may not claim any compensation.

Field Work

241 In principle, a family field is held in common. When a woman
562 grows old, however, she no longer does field work with her hus-
595 band. She has her own field and feeds herself as best she may, since her husband pays no further attention to her and no longer supports her. The work is done by the family as a group, and the size of the field varies with the size of the family.

241 Early in the morning, usually before [245] sunrise, the head
512 of the family wakens the young people. They go out to the field, which may be five to ten kilometers away. Around ten o'clock, the women bring the remains of last night's sagbo or, lacking that, some millet flour which is taken in water.

584
583 have borrowed. In addition, he would expose himself and the preferred suitor to the vengeance of the rejected one.

583 The bride price is not exorbitant. The total gifts, spread over a period of years, amount to some fifty francs, without counting the work days. Nevertheless, it requires sufficient means to secure at least the necessary cowries. Besides, the child's father prefers to give her to someone who already boasts a certain fame and some wealth, in short, to an elderly man. /30/ This is why children are promised to old dotards, and white-haired men are paired with young girls; while the old men's sons of marriageable age cannot get wives. If the father has the means to pay the bride price, he carefully refrains from helping his son, even if the latter has found a match to his liking.
587 It is true that all the father's wives are inherited by the oldest son,
578 who gives some to his younger brothers; but this occurs only at the old man's death, and this may not happen for a long time. This ex-
593 plains why the oldest son wishes for his father's death, and why the father sends the son away for fear of a premature end. It is only fair to add that some men, with a better understanding of their own interests, marry off their sons as soon as they are old enough.

595 Polygamy exists among the Mossi as in all Black countries. The wealth of a man is gauged by the number of his wives. Women
[556] furnish hands to till the soil, for the wife works in the fields like the husband. Women also furnish children, and if these are daughters, young men will come to offer their services (dakonré) and one day take the girls in marriage; or the father will receive gifts. If the children are boys, they will later aid the father in his work. In these countries where each lives for himself alone, where selfishness reigns supreme, polygamy is easily explained, but it undoubtedly results in a lower birth rate. White-bearded old men cannot have children as numerous and sound as young men in their prime, and the latter, deprived of wives, wear themselves out with their excesses. It is true that those who can afford a dozen wives are few; most have to be content with two, three, or four. Some nabas, nevertheless, own veritable herds of women, and this is certainly a grievous abuse. Their wives are numbered in the hundreds. The greatest moral dis-
[837] order reigns in those harems, where the boys who serve as grooms and pages spend most of their time among their master's wives. This explains the precautions taken by the women's owners and the eunuchs of the Moro Naba, as well as the Poënaba and his sinister duties.

593 reprimand them, while the mother's role, here as elsewhere, is to indulge her children.

595 The children of different wives are quite fond of one another and often exchange help. When the father dies, the eldest son make no distinction among his brothers and helps them all as best he can. Polygamy seems to present no drawbacks in this respect.

When a man has several wives, his first wife (porkyéma) is mistress of the household rather than his mother. All the other wives are on an equal footing, even the slaves, excepting, of course, those for whom the husband has a special preference. As the number of wives increases, so does the authority of the first wife, who wants /39/ her husband to have as many wives as possible. Each wife has a separate hut where she lives with her children, and this avoids many a quarrel. The husband goes to the hut of the woman he desires, or he has her come to his own hut. When a man works in his field, all his wives and children must help him, because he feeds them all and gives them a daily millet ration; it is, accordingly, only fair that all should take part in agricultural work within the limits of their capacity.

593 443 421 Provided that a woman remain at her husband's disposal and help him in the fields, she is free to do as she pleases. She goes to market to sell the grain, the spices for sauce, and the thread to weave cloth; but the husband sells the fabric strips and the raw cotton. During the winter each woman may have her own field to cultivate with her children, and the harvest belongs wholly to her. The husband has no say in the matter. If the woman spins cotton, she sells it at the market or even to her husband; if she brews beer, she offers one jar to her husband, but if he entertains friends and wants additional jars, he must pay cash for them. It is not unusual for a woman to refuse her husband credit, for who knows when he would pay?

593 594 A woman may visit her relatives with the permission of her husband, who sets a return date. The woman rarely comes back on the date set, and the husband goes to fetch her himself, or he sends one of his friends with a piece of salt or a small gift. A woman especially likes to visit her relatives when she is pregnant or shortly after the baby's birth. She knows that she will be well cared for and especially that she will enjoy complete freedom. As a result, it is not unusual for a woman to leave her husband for several months and to return only after considerable coaxing. Most quarrels between one Mossi and [578] another derive from their wives and from their debts; yet it may not be said, as a general rule, that women are unhappy or ill treated.

5: Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1959
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their allegiance directly to the *Yatenga Naba* for historical reasons or because their chiefs are related to the royal lineage and superior within the social hierarchy to the local nobility (*nakomse*) to which the canton chiefs belong.

Subordinate, in turn, to the canton chief, is the village chief (*Tenga Naba*), who is the central authority in the aggregation of "quarters" (*sakse*) of which a Mossi village is composed. These quarters are the dwellings of patrilineal extended families and lineages (*boodoose*). Such a residence is called a *saka* if it contains the house of the lineage elder (*sak kasama*) or a *yiri* if it represents only a junior segment. In either case the dwelling of the oldest male in the group is surrounded by the separate houses of his wives, his younger brothers and their wives, and his sons, nephews, cousins, and their wives and children. Each adult individual has a separate house within the *saka*.

The smallest unit within the residence of the lineage is the nuclear family (*zaka*) composed of a man, his wife, and their children. If a man has more than one wife, the term *zaka pedere* (*zaka* half) may be used when the man's relationship with one of his several wives is being considered. He himself is called *zaka soba*. As a young man's family grows, each of his new wives is provided with a house adjoining his. In addition to his house and the houses of his wives, each man's household contains several granaries used to store the produce from the millet fields he has been assigned by his lineage. It is with the members of his own household that a man is in most frequent social and economic interaction. The fields he works with their assistance are the principal source of the food supply for the nuclear family unit.

The *yiri* is the next largest social unit within the *saka*. The term refers to the extended family dwelling inhabited by a man, his wives, his male children, and their wives and children. It may be composed of as many as fifteen separate nuclear families. While its inhabitants usually consist of the married sons of an older man and their nuclear families, it may also be composed of a man, his wife and children, and his younger brothers and their wives and children. Since its members are closely related within the lineage, there is greater social and economic interaction among them than there is with the other lineage members. As the *zaka soba* is the principal and final authority within the *zaka*, the *yiri soba* is most important within the *yiri*.

Composed of the nuclear and extended family dwellings of its members, the Mossi residential unit is typically inhabited by all of the local representatives of the sib. In addition to the dwelling of the lineage elder, it contains the altar (*kiemserógo*) where the ancestral spirits of the lineage are worshiped. The lineage elder has authority over everyone living within his *saka*. As counselor to the village chief and intermediary with

644 "The Moro Naba, assisted by his ministers and with the help of frequent libations of dolo, listens to the requests which are made /572/ to him and passes sentence on the trials which are referred to him.

"Around eleven o'clock he withdraws into his hut and rests until three o'clock, at which time he comes and seats himself on his throne again.

"The Moro Naba's every gesture is prescribed by a minute protocol and accompanied by flute and drum music and finger snappings by his entourage.

"Is he riding out for a short stroll around Ouagadougou? The whole court follows him, either on foot or on horseback. His griot make the air re-echo with their shouts, to the accompaniment of drums and flutes. A groom leads his horse by the rein, while two soronś hold his stirrups and a third one, on horseback by his side, shelters him with a huge umbrella. Other pages follow carrying his pillow, his sword, and canari of dolo from which the sovereign draws frequent and abundant libations along the way.

"At night the Moro Naba, in disguise and accompanied by a single soronś, wanders incognito through the various village quarters in order to find out what is going on without being recognized.

[TP2] "On certain set dates, he goes to localities named Sabaye and Saraboutenga, not far from Ouagadougou, where he sacrifices beeves, sheep, and chickens.

644 595 "The Moro Naba has very numerous wives. In addition to those he marries himself, there are those of his predecessor and all those that devolve to him in the course of his reign, among them, in certain cases, the adulterous wives of his subjects.

644 595 684 "The sovereign's wives do not all live with him. They are settled in villages ruled by eunuchs and near which no one could come, on pain of death, prior to our occupation. Every year the faithfulness of the Moro Naba's wives is checked by submitting them to the same test as the soronś. Adultery is punished by death for the wife as well as her partner. It even seems that adultery with one of the sovereign's wives is regarded /573/ as the least pardonable crime a man can commit. In fact, the nakomsé or sons of chiefs are liable to the death penalty only in this case.

593 The wife must obey her husband. The latter has the right to strike
562 her in case of disobedience, adultery, etc. He cannot break one of her limbs, or kill her.

595 Polygamy. —Polygamy is the general rule, at least theoretically. That is to say, the Mossi may have as many spouses as he wishes as long as he can minister to their needs.

585 In actual fact, only rich people have several wives. The majority
589 are monogamous by necessity, and there are even bachelors. As a passing remark, this applies to the Sudanese Negroes in general, for everywhere nature creates approximately as many men as women, and it is hard to visualize how in any one region each man could have several wives. However, in spite of the occurrence of bachelors and a large number of truly monogamous people, the question still stands. It is solved if we bear in mind that girls are married much earlier than men. This results in a much larger number of women than men "in active service," if I may be permitted to say so. Undoubtedly, this (along with the occurrence of bachelors and a considerable number of monogamists), takes care of the objection which naturally arises when we speak of polygamy. /243/

163 It may be, let us add, that the number of girls born here is a little higher than that of boys, as has been noted in England, for example.

595 By way of figures on polygamy, let us state that the Moro Naba
643 Bango, the last one who reigned before the arrival of the French, had
645 about 80 wives. The Naba Koboga, who ruled from 1902 to 1914, had 30 or 40. The present Rassam Naba, one of the ministers of the Moro Naba, has 30 or 35 wives. These are, of course, exceptional figures if the total population of Yatenga is taken into account. In any case, the rich men, notables, and men in easy circumstances always have several wives.

595 Organization of the polygamous household. —"The first wife," says Vadier, "enjoys a certain authority over the others. It is she who transmits her husband's orders to the other wives and who notifies him of their wants, who supervises the preparation of meals and apportions the food. In addition, it is she who comes and tells the
[641] husband that such-and-such a wife is no longer in a state of zim and can now fulfill her conjugal duties.

"Aside from this special prerogative enjoyed by the first wife, all wives have the same rights and duties. In principle, each wife must share in turn her husband's bed. Nevertheless, he is free to summon his favorite wife during the day."

8: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1958
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Karême), celebrate the great festival of Ramadan and the lesser festivals, and 794
aspire to make the pilgrimage to Mecca. Most of the Moslems can lead prayers, but only about one-tenth of their number can read and recite the Koran. [212]
However, today the masters (*karasambas*) of the 32 Koranic schools in the district are endeavoring to instruct the many boys and few girls in reading the [871]
Koran and understanding Moslem theology.

The Karême is observed by most adult Moslems in the community with the exception of invalids and working men. Moslems say that the fast is intended to turn the minds of the people to God, and they distinguish between the Moslems "of the mouth" who break the fast and those "of the heart" who [184]
fast until Ramadan. The crescent moon of Ramadan is greeted with guns and general rejoicing and the following morning the Moslems gather at the tomb of Ngado to give praises to God; during the rest of the day they pay homage to the chief and visit their friends. However, a change in the traditional observance of Ramadan is expected, because one of the Moslem leaders objects to the [178]
ceremony at the tomb of Ngado. He feels that some Moslems are beginning to regard the tomb of the first Moslem as an earth shrine or Tengkougre.

So far, only five of the more prominent Moslems in the district have made 794
or are making the pilgrimage to Mecca. The first man made the voyage about 788
seven years ago, and is now conducting a Koranic school in a neighboring district. His brother went to Mecca about two years ago and is now the senior *El Hadj* in the district. Of the two men who were on the pilgrimage when I arrived in the district, one has since died near the Red Sea and the other is still away. One other man left for Mecca and returned to the district during my stay. Most of the pilgrims now fly to Mecca; only two men followed the traditional route through Ghana, Kano, Lake Chad, the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan (now Sudan), and on to Mecca. In general, all pilgrims have used their own re- [613]
sources for the trip, but they receive some help from their lineage brothers and from the other Moslems in the district and in Ouagadougou.

The pilgrimage to Mecca represents the greatest event in the lives of the district Moslems. When the last pilgrim left, a great crowd gathered at his house and prayed for his safe journey, and some even accompanied him to [621]
Ouagadougou and remained there until he left. The Moslems and many pagans of the district, under the command of the district chief, cultivated his fields during his absence. And when the new El Hadj returned, a large crowd accompanied him to his house with shouts of joy. There he killed a sheep in thanks- [782]
giving, sprinkled the crowd with holy water from Mecca, and recounted his experiences. His listeners were impressed by his airplane flight and the description of Mecca, but they showed the greatest interest when he said that Mecca women covered their faces and that most Meccan men were monogamous. The local Moslems smiled when they heard this bit of news from one of their members, but I have seen them scowl when discussing the monogamous practice desired by the Christians.

The attitudes of Moslems differ very little from those of the other Mossi 794 595 842
as regards children and polygyny. They say that they do not believe in the

8: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1958
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794 efficacy of ancestor veneration and do not "kill chickens" to the ancestors, but
595 they maintain that it is a man's duty to have many wives so that he may have
842 children to succeed him. Furthermore, since Mohammed himself decreed that his followers may keep four wives, provided they treat each with the same degree of kindness, there is no conflict between Islamic tenets and Mossi practice of polygny. The average Moslem has two wives, but even the few men in the district who have more than four wives do not appear overly concerned about transgressing the tenets of their faith. Mossi Moslems have not adopted the [582] paternal parallel cousin marriage so common among other Moslems, and show surprise when told that Islam permits such marriages. However, they have modified their marriage behavior to harmonize with what they consider an Islamic tenet that "a man should not marry the widow of his father." The Moslem Mossi profess to look with horror on these marriages among their pagan brothers, preferring the levirate instead.

794 The Moslems' attitude toward the low status of women in Mossi society has not changed, and in one respect it can even be said that this attitude has
562 been strengthened. Many Moslem wives now cover their faces, and many El Hadjis have attempted to place their wives in purdah by preventing them from going to the market for fear they would come in contact with pagan men. The development of this practice is running counter to the growing emancipation of Mossi women, who have just begun to leave their villages for periodic visits to the larger towns. Nevertheless, the important fact is that the Mecca pilgrims have the opportunity to see Moslem women playing roles which are forbidden or unknown to Mossi women. And while it is true that the Mossi pilgrims would not easily adopt and foster monogamy, their receptivity to new Islamic beliefs and customs might have a liberating effect on their treatment of women. Once institutional and cultural changes have been accepted by the El Hadjis, they are likely to spread quite rapidly throughout the society because men who have visited Mecca are believed to have returned filled with wisdom and understanding.

797 Christianity came to the Mossi on January 24, 1900, shortly after French conquest. As noted above, the first missionaries were well treated, but the Mossi balked at the attempts at conversion. Nevertheless, by 1919 the White Fathers of the Catholic missions had established several centers, among which was the district of Manga where this study was conducted. Manga is considered a Catholic district, but there are only 3,000 Catholics out of a population of 124,000—which also includes 9,200 Moslems and five Protestants. [184] Thus, in contrast to Moslem Nobéré, which has no Catholics or Protestants, Manga, like most districts in Mossi territory, has a Moslem community.

The conversion of the Mossi in Manga to Catholicism follows the classical pattern of missionary proselytization in the country. Monsignor Socquet (1956:62) states that the Mossi always react to attempts at conversion with the statement: " 'We are looking at our chief,' that is to say, 'We will follow our chief in conversion as in all other matters. If he is favorable to it, then we will not go against his will.' " Socquet concludes: "It is thus understandable

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When a young Catholic receives a wife through the mission, he may visit her father and pay the customary respect by giving him kola nuts and brass coins. The father of a mission girl may accept or reject his son-in-law as he sees fit, but formerly he could not defy the power of the missions. 797 582 634

A pagan youth who wishes to marry one of the mission girls has to discuss the matter with the priests and swear publicly that he will become a Christian. Before 1946 the young man had to fulfill his promise or be intimidated by the chief and the missionaries until he relented or fled the district. Today, however, the priests usually abandon their efforts to obtain the conversion of the young men after three months have passed. In some cases the young men take their wives and move to other districts, and return only after the girls have given up Catholicism. Despite the lure of wives from the mission, not many young men become Christians on this account because the Mossi are still concerned primarily with family relationships and the effect that conversion would have on these relationships. [596]

The church's prohibition of polygyny is by far the most serious bar to the spread of Catholicism. Many men do not adopt Catholicism simply because they fear that monogamous marriages would not produce children. Father Paternot (Considine 1954:103) has cited a study purporting to show that Christian Mossi have more children than the pagans, but the ordinary people of the district would not accept the facts he presented. They cite their personal experience to the contrary. Dim Delobson (1934:136), a Mossi converted to Catholicism, states: 797 595 842

> A certain number of Christians of my acquaintance whose wives did not have children during the first years of marriage had recourse to magical practices in order to get children. These simple people thought that although they had an omnipotent God beside them, they could impudently—after all the good priests will not know about it—ask the little, but also powerful gods to grant them some material favors here on earth. When the gods given children were taken for Holy Baptism, they were given Christian names instead of the names of the earth shrines, and they did not wear magical charms which would have indicated to the priest the real state of affairs. Nevertheless, the children were bathed in water to which magical potions were added, and when the mothers went to visit their parents, sacrifices of chickens were given to the benevolent Tengkougas.

The Mossi's strong desire for children is admittedly one of the main reasons for leaving the Catholic Church so that they can take other spouses in addition to barren ones. The church has now belatedly recognized this problem and, knowing that it cannot prevent men from taking plural wives, allows them to come to church but prohibits them from taking the Mass.

Many cultural factors besides the desire for children make polygyny important for the Mossi, and make conversion detrimental to the functioning of their family system. Because of lineage opposition to their conversions, some converts are forced to establish nuclear households—a practice out of harmony with the normal rhythm of Mossi life. The reason for this disharmony is that Mossi women married to Catholics must work alone instead of with 595 797 182 [594]

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595 co-wives and other women of the extended families. Even the Catholic hus-
797 bands would not help their wives with household tasks requiring more than
182 one person, nor would they violate tradition by chatting with their wives except at night in their huts. Another factor is that after the Mossi Christian
[846] woman has given birth to a child, she follows the traditional custom and goes back to her parents' home to remain there during the two or three years' lactation period. This imposes a great hardship on a Catholic husband because during this time he is left without wife or helpmate. In the extended family household there would have been women to take care of a man's material needs, and his mistresses would have taken care of his sexual needs. The Catholic can and does ask the mission for a young girl to take care of his material needs, but of course she is not expected to satisfy his sexual de-
[837] sires. Obviously this arrangement is not satisfactory, and many Catholic men, with the acquiescence of their wives, keep mistresses. Dim Delobson comments:

> Ouagadougou has a large number of Christians, but does this mean that these people in their love for the church respect all her rules? Alas! there are a large number of Christians who oblige their lawful wives to leave the conjugal couch and make way for the accommodation of mistresses . . . in conformity with the old custom. But this is a subject which is too delicate to discuss further. I only note it in passing: *Noli me tangere* (1934:169).

797 Despite the influence of tradition on Mossi Catholics, I feel it would be a
794 mistake to say that the complexity of Catholic dogma is one of the drawbacks to missionary success in this country. One Mossi has already been made a bishop of the Catholic Church, and most of the proselytizing in Manga falls on the two Mossi priests and the five Mossi nuns. Under the supervision of two White Fathers, the Catholic children and adults are acquainted with the dogma and rituals of the church. The festivals are well attended and celebrated with as much pomp as possible. Although the Mass is sung in Latin, the Mossi have adapted some of their traditional tunes to the Mass, and use their own language for prayers and hymns. Catholics observe all the sacraments including Confession—a sacrament which is hazardous from the Mossi point of view, because man must lay bare his innermost thoughts to the priests, who, in the final analysis, are Europeans and thus administrators.

It is true that even the staunchest Catholics in Manga have not abandoned all belief in traditional rituals and religious credos. For example, many Mossi Catholics believe in the existence of sorcerers, but the Catholic Church
[754] does not recognize the existence of sorcerers or such evil forces (I have met White Fathers who believe that there are unexplainable psychic and physical phenomena in Africa), and moreover has no way of dealing with them. "But," says Dim Delobson (1934:136), "the Mossi believe so strongly in the power of such entities, that even those converted to Christianity cannot always escape the action of malevolent practitioners." The result is that many Catholics desert the church when they believe that only traditional specialists can help them with personal problems. Catholic families easily aban-

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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fathers died. In this way the rulers not only retained the allegiance of the boys' fathers but had a unique opportunity to determine whether these boys were qualified to succeed to the nam. 644

The life of a page was confining, even if sometimes very rewarding. Pages were bound by the demands of the ruler, whose every wish had to be satisfied immediately. A quarrelsome ruler was a terror to his pages, who had to bear silently his insults and blows. On the other hand, a considerate monarch permitted or encouraged his pages to profit from the small political intrigues in which they were invariably involved. Prospective district chiefs "made friends" with pages to find out whether their suits were progressing, or to whom they might usefully offer gifts. The pages used any money they might procure to buy clothes for themselves, to supplement the clothing and presents they received from their relatives. Every page was "adopted" by one of the royal wives, who prepared his meals and took care of him. In return, he helped this woman cultivate her field when his presence was not required by the monarch. When a page completed his service satisfactorily, he received a pughsiudga as a wife. If his work had not been satisfactory, he was simply dismissed. [662]

The only woman who played any significant role at the court of the Mogho Naba was the Pughtiema, his head wife. She was the only wife to whom he presented his friends, and whom he allowed his subjects to visit. This woman, who was commonly the widow of the former Mogho Naba, was often chosen because she was past childbearing age: she was thus older and wiser than the other wives, less preoccupied with children, and above the sexual jealousies that may often develop in polygynous households. She arbitrated among the wives and stood *in loco parentis* to the younger ones, whom she instructed and advised. She served also as official hostess to the ancestors during the annual propitiatory rituals. It was her duty to prepare the millet beer and millet water for the sacrifices to the ancestors, who were believed to feast at her hut before they visited the rest of the household. In addition, it was she who prepared to accompany the Mogho Naba to La each day. Lastly, it was her duty to introduce any new royal wife to the ancestors, and to ask them to watch over this potential mother of their descendants. 644 595 643 [782]

The ruler inherited some of his wives from his father; some he received from his many friends and vassals; and others he selected from among his pughsiudse. Crozat reports that Mogho Naba Wobogo (1890-96) allegedly had a hundred wives. Crozat did not see this many women at Wobogo's court, understandably, since most of a ruler's wives lived in villages, where they were guarded by eunuchs.[23] Of the substantial number of royal wives [114]

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595 who did live at the palace, only a small minority prepared the ruler's meals
644 and shared his bed. Dim Delobson reports that Mogho Naba Kom II (1905–42) had thirty-seven wives. His son, Mogho Naba Sagha II (1942–
[177] 57), had twenty.[34] The present Mogho Naba, Kougri, recently married
[178] according to Western tradition and is officially monogamous.[35] There seems to be a general trend toward fewer wives among Mossi chiefs.

643 Mossi rulers never married for the purpose of forming state alliances,
581 and their marriages had no political significance. The Mogho Naba's mar-
582 riages were exogamous with regard to the royal lineage and to his mother's minimal lineage. Aside from these restrictions, however, the Mogho Naba could marry women from any Mossi lineage or group, including serfs, slaves, and foreign populations. It is said that when Mogho Naba Sanum (1850–90) despaired of having an heir by a Mossi woman, he took a Fulani
643 wife.[36]
586 The Mogho Naba had no formal wedding ceremony. The task of intro-
[302] ducing a new wife to the royal harem fell to the Pughtiema. She and her assistants welcomed the wife in a prescribed fashion. First they shaved all the hair from her body. They then bathed her in warm water to which shea butter and ritual herbs had been added, and during the bath they recited the ruler's genealogy to impress her with her new status.[37] The Pughtiema advised her on the need for proper deportment, and warned her that
[301] adultery was punished by death. To close the ceremony, a smith fastened to the girl's wrists and ankles the silver or brass bracelets that identified her as a wife of the Mogho Naba. If the bride was still a child, she was often allowed to return to her father's house until she reached childbearing age. If she was past the age of puberty, her marriage was consummated without further ceremony, and she joined the ranks of the ruler's wives.

644 The wives who lived in the palace were divided into three groups. The
595 first group included the wives who lived with the Pughtiema in a section of the palace harem called the *zaka sanga* ("large courtyard"). These women were all past childbearing age and no longer received nocturnal visits from the Mogho Naba. They had their own fields in the vicinity of the palace and cultivated them with the aid of the samande-kamba, the pages they had adopted, and their own children. The women of the second group, those of the *zugbilin* ("small courtyard"), were mostly in their thirties or forties and still sexually active. They received occasional visits from the Mogho Naba, but fewer than his younger wives. These women also cultivated their fields with the help of the young men of the court.

The third group of wives, the *dogunba* ("keepers of the household"), was the most important. The dogunba prepared the ruler's meals and satis-

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fied his sexual desires. Since these women were in the monarch's favor, they were better dressed than the other wives and received more attention from him. The dogunba generally cultivated a large field in common with the aid of the palace retainers, but some insisted on cultivating their own fields instead. Like the other wives, the dogunba usually lived in huts of their own. Childless women sometimes shared the same hut until one of them became pregnant and had to set up a hut for herself and her child.

Those wives who lived in special villages under the supervision of eunuchs rarely went to the palace. Usually, they were past childbearing age or had lost favor with the monarch. They cultivated plots of land, spun cotton, and prepared locust-bean flour, locust-bean "balls," and shea butter. They kept a part of the produce for their own use and sent the remainder to the palace stores; the same arrangement obtained for all three categories of palace wives.

The Mogho Naba's heir was usually born while his father was still Crown Prince. He was never born in his father's compound because, unlike other Mossi women, the wife of a Mogho Naba or Crown Prince returned to her father's house for confinement. As soon as she announced her pregnancy, the Pughtiema or one of the older wives held a ceremony to notify the ancestors. Once the rite had been completed, the wife was sent to her relatives for fear that she might be harmed by her less fortunate co-wives. If the child was a boy, the ruler or Crown Prince was notified immediately, because the important privileges of a first-born hinged upon this notification. Since several wives of the Mogho Naba might be pregnant at the same time and errors might be made about the onset and duration of pregnancy, primogeniture had to be established immediately to forestall dynastic conflicts. For example, it is commonly believed that the present Doulougou Naba was born several days before Mogho Naba Sagha II (1942–57) but was deprived of the nam because the messenger who brought news of his birth reached Mogho Naba Kom after the messenger who announced Sagha's birth. Undoubtedly, such allegations were sometimes used to foster and support dynastic rebellions.

So strong was the fear that the most likely heir to the nam would be harmed by jealous co-wives that the child and his mother never returned to the palace except for brief visits on ceremonial occasions. The young prince remained with his mother's relatives and was guarded and educated by servants sent from the palace. If his father was on the throne at Ouagadougou when the boy reached the age of ten, he was formally installed as chief of Djiba district, the traditional seat of the Crown Prince. If his father was not on the throne, the boy remained with his mother's relatives and

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did not derive any revenue from his judicial functions. He could not levy a fine against any malefactor. However, his intermediary position between the villagers and the district chief did permit him to obtain some revenue whenever commodities moved from one level to the other.

The officials who administered the villages for the district chief received part of their revenue from the villages under their charge. These local administrators had no courts or retainers comparable to those at the provincial level. However, they did have a large number of wives who contributed valuable agricultural labor. These administrators were permitted to ask the village chiefs for sosose on their own fields several times during the planting season, but—unlike the district chiefs—they were not permitted to have the villagers cultivate special fields for them. In return for any help received, they had to provide food and drink for the workers.

The administrator received most of his revenue as a by-product of active duty in the villages. When he visited a village or transmitted a message to a village chief, he almost invariably received a sheep, a goat, a chicken, or some millet, from the village chief. He also acquired large quantities of goods during the village interregnum: he received gifts from the chief's heirs during the chief's funeral; he received additional presents when they took the fado to the district chief; he could prolong the interregnum in order to receive as many bribes as possible from contenders for the nam; and he was handsomely rewarded when the candidate he had backed was finally installed in office.

The extended family was the basic socio-economic unit supporting the Mossi political organization. The Yirisoba received land rights in his saka from his Sakakasma, who had obtained his rights from the village chief. An extended family in need of additional land would seek help from its Sakakasma or its Boodkasma. When the family no longer needed this land, it reverted to the lineage. If all the land granted to the lineage was already occupied, the extended family, through its lineage head, asked the village chief for more land. The chief usually granted this request, unless he had no more weogho available. In this case, the needy Yirisoba sometimes tried to borrow land from his non-kin neighbors. Such a step was not undertaken lightly, however. If a man borrowed land from his own lineage members or from the chief, the land rights reverted to its donors without difficulty. However, if he borrowed land from another lineage and either he or his benefactor died without assuring the return of the land, litigation often ensued. In some cases a man would seek land from his lineage brothers in another village, who let him use some of their land with their chief's permission. Some Yirisobadamba even asked their district chief for

533 their praises and beating fiercely on their drums in the hope of receiving a few cowries, kola nuts, or at least some beer.

326 The smiths (saba), by which is meant those who work with iron,
306 extract the metal from the ore and make it into hoes and hatchets. They sometimes work with wood, as in other parts of the Sudan, but usually this industry is carried out by members of another guild. The jewellers make bracelets, file teeth, repair worn hoes, etc. They are not smiths, properly speaking, and anyone may exercise their trade.

767 The undertakers (lada) offer gifts to the spirits of the deceased on the day of death or its anniversary (koure). They also lay the corpse in the grave, and if death was due to illness, it is impossible to proceed with the burial without them. But anyone may dig the grave and carry the corpse. We shall discuss the undertakers again when funerals are described.

Chapter 2. The Family

596 The structure of the Roman family and the power granted to the paterfamilias, its very foundation, have been greatly and justly admired. Something like the paterfamilias is to be found among the Mossi. Would that we also found the Roman matron! As we have seen above, every Mossi is subject to the Moro Naba, a province chief, a canton chief, and a village chief. He is also subject in a more immediate sense to the head of his family, and he can do nothing without his consent. If he wishes to marry, he consults the family head, in whose household his bride will lodge when she arrives in the village. On the other hand, the man who wishes to give his daughter in marriage never does so without consulting his family head, at whose house the girl will stay before she goes to live with her husband.

[551] The family is thus very tightly organized among the Mossi. Each family has a name which is seldom used; if one of its members was ever naba, the name derives from that of the first naba. Members of
[582 the same family may not intermarry, and usually they all have the
784] same kisgou (prohibition), whether the term designates a totem, a taboo, or something else altogether. The head of the family is its oldest member. Upon his death, the authority is transferred not to his

596 heir but to the oldest member of the family. Nothing is done without consulting the family head, and even if a member of the family occupies an important post, he continues to show the greatest deference toward his family head, his elder. This is why the present prime minister of Koupéla, the Saman'Naba, leaves the prerogatives of a family head to his uncle; he does not take the liberty of offering sacrifices on the Day of the Dead, and he consults his elder on all
596 matters which fall within his jurisdiction. The head of the family,
681 however, does not have the right of life or death over its members or over his own wives. Even if the latter steal or commit adultery, they may not be put to death; only the district chiefs may kill their own wives. A husband or family elder may beat them, put them in irons, or even more rarely /35/ turn them out of the household, but he may not kill them. Also, the family head may not dispose of the family property, nor force his kin to hand it over. He may, however, request his relatives to help him pay his debts or obtain a wife, but he may not force them to do so. Nevertheless, they always help him as best they can.

593 Children are directly subject to their father. While the latter
596 consults the family head whenever he must make a serious decision, the children consult their father, who in turn goes to the family head, who often goes to the village chief, who resorts to the canton chief, who consults the head of the province if the matter warrants it. Mature reflection thus precedes every serious decision.

593 The father is the absolute master of his children. He has the right of life or death over them, and sometimes he made use of this right, especially when a child was born deformed or became an incorrigible thief. He sees to the marriage of his daughters. He may exchange them for other women, or he may give them in marriage to a creditor in order to pay his debts. He may place his sons in the service of a relative or friend. The eldest son seldom remains in his father's household, especially if the father is wealthy or a naba; the father is too afraid that his son may do away with him, the sooner to come into his inheritance. To give one's son to another man is a convenient way to get rid of the problem of his marriage; it will become the concern of the boy's master.

861 Fathers take little part in the education of their children. Daughters always remain with their mothers until their marriage. Sons help their father as soon as they are old enough to work, but they never

428 When the head of a household dies, he leaves an inheritance of varying magnitude. No one touches it until the day of koure. As soon as the festivities are over, the eldest son summons the head of the family and all his uncles, brothers, and sisters. The partition of the property must be carried out. Theoretically, the whole inheritance, all the women, cattle, and cowries, belongs to the eldest son if he is married [428] or of marriageable age. If he is too young, one of the younger brothers of the deceased must act as his guardian, administer the property, and transfer it to his nephew when he comes of age. Of course, the uncle squanders his ward's property. If the deceased leaves no male heirs, the inheritance devolves to his eldest daughter. If he has no children, /76/ his younger brother, or if there is none, the son of his oldest brother, inherits the property. The oldest brother himself never inherits, except in the case of a naba; in such a case, if there is no other heir, the oldest brother comes into the fortune.

428 587 Although in theory the oldest son is the absolute master of all his father's property, in reality he must share part of it. If he has younger brothers of marriageable age, he gives them one of his father's wives. Every brother who inherits a wife must shave her head. If she refuses to have this done, it means that she does not want this new husband. 428 If the heir's brothers are too young, he gives them some livestock, cattle, sheep, goats. If the inheritance is sufficient to allow it, the uncles also get their share. No one may force the eldest son to share the property. He may state point blank that he intends to keep everything, but this will cause him difficulties and create enemies, especially if his father has squandered a nephew's fortune. Upon his uncle's death, a nephew defrauded of his father's property reminds his cousin of the matter and requests indemnities, which are usually granted in the form of wives or livestock.

428 592 The new heir becomes head of the household in his turn and often inhabits his father's soukala; sometimes he builds himself another one. He is now his own master, subject only to the family head, while his unmarried sisters and younger brothers come under his jurisdiction. He has inherited the property, but he has not inherited the power. If his father was a naba and he wishes to succeed him, he must now solicit the position from the higher naba who is empowered to grant it.

596 Such is the family life of the Mossi. To summarize: marked submission to nabas and family heads, marked freedom toward those who are not in a position of authority. The wives live side by side

596 under the supervision of the husband's first wife; the daughters are never their own masters at any age and thus live in semi-slavery. The children do not spend much time together. They undoubtedly have affection for each other and show it at times, and their parents love them, but there does not exist among them that bond, that family spirit which only Christianity can bring them.

/77/ BOOK IV. RELIGIOUS LIFE

Chapter 1. Beliefs and Ethics

000 We have studied so far the external manifestations of Mossi life: the political structure and its hierarchy, the family structure and all its derivatives, marriage, birth, life, and death. We must now take a further step and carry our investigation to a more intimate level, to analyze the deepest and most persistent feelings and attitudes of these people. It is very difficult to understand one individual and to grasp the motives for his actions in everyday life; it is all the more difficult to do so in the case of a people, especially when this people does not practice self-analysis and when no writings exist to reflect its soul, which must be detected in its most spontaneous manifestations, in the most commonplace conversations. We would, however, know almost nothing about the Mossi if we did not know their ideas about God, the world, and ancestral and other spirits, as well as the relationships they have established with this invisible world. Religious life plays a very important role in the life of any people. Would it be an exaggeration to state that the significance of its role increases with the primitiveness of the people and their resulting tendency to attribute all they cannot explain to preternatural intervention?

124 The Mossi do not like to broach these subjects with foreigners, especially with Whites, whose beliefs they know to be so different from theirs. Not only are they afraid to offend the spirits by revealing their secrets, but they fear the derisive smile. One must be careful not to laugh at their ideas, no matter how childish they may seem to us. To laugh at them is the surest way of hurting their feelings and of making them hopelessly secretive. In any case, is not sincere belief worthy of some respect, even if this respect is mixed with a certain amount of pity?

their allegiance directly to the *Yatenga Naba* for historical reasons or because their chiefs are related to the royal lineage and superior within the social hierarchy to the local nobility (*nakomse*) to which the canton chiefs belong.

Subordinate, in turn, to the canton chief, is the village chief (*Tenga Naba*), who is the central authority in the aggregation of "quarters" (*sakse*) of which a Mossi village is composed. These quarters are the dwellings of patrilineal extended families and lineages (*boodoose*). Such a residence is called a *saka* if it contains the house of the lineage elder (*sak kasama*) or a *yiri* if it represents only a junior segment. In either case the dwelling of the oldest male in the group is surrounded by the separate houses of his wives, his younger brothers and their wives, and his sons, nephews, cousins, and their wives and children. Each adult individual has a separate house within the *saka*.

The smallest unit within the residence of the lineage is the nuclear family (*zaka*) composed of a man, his wife, and their children. If a man has more than one wife, the term *zaka pedere* (*zaka* half) may be used when the man's relationship with one of his several wives is being considered. He himself is called *zaka soba*. As a young man's family grows, each of his new wives is provided with a house adjoining his. In addition to his house and the houses of his wives, each man's household contains several granaries used to store the produce from the millet fields he has been assigned by his lineage. It is with the members of his own household that a man is in most frequent social and economic interaction. The fields he works with their assistance are the principal source of the food supply for the nuclear family unit.

The *yiri* is the next largest social unit within the *saka*. The term refers to the extended family dwelling inhabited by a man, his wives, his male children, and their wives and children. It may be composed of as many as fifteen separate nuclear families. While its inhabitants usually consist of the married sons of an older man and their nuclear families, it may also be composed of a man, his wife and children, and his younger brothers and their wives and children. Since its members are closely related within the lineage, there is greater social and economic interaction among them than there is with the other lineage members. As the *zaka soba* is the principal and final authority within the *zaka*, the *yiri soba* is most important within the *yiri*.

Composed of the nuclear and extended family dwellings of its members, the Mossi residential unit is typically inhabited by all of the local representatives of the sib. In addition to the dwelling of the lineage elder, it contains the altar (*kiemserogo*) where the ancestral spirits of the lineage are worshiped. The lineage elder has authority over everyone living within his *saka*. As counselor to the village chief and intermediary with

the ancestral spirits, he is the principal political and religious authority within his lineage. 596

The single term *boodoo* is used to refer to three separate groups: the sib, the lineage, and the local residential kin group described above. Aside from formalized recognition of patrilineal descent and inheritance, the lineage functions most significantly as a local residential kin group in which the economic and social participation of the female non-members is as important as that of the men. Although the men are most prominent in the direction of its affairs, their wives have a considerable, if somewhat indirect, effect upon decisions made. Even in the relationship of the members of the lineage to their ancestral spirits (*kiemse*), the women play an important part in preparing the food and the libations to be offered. They give birth to the members of the lineage, nourish them until weaning (usually at the age of two), and provide them with guidance and training for their ascribed roles. In the education of the female members of the lineage the wives play a more important part than the men. But it is in their economic activities that the significance of the women's role is best seen. In addition to their farm work, they co-operate fully in repairing roofs, flooring the courtyards, and even assisting in the brick-making which precedes house-building. The economic and social contribution of the wives is of equal importance with that of the husbands and sons, and it is more important than that of the daughters, since females born into the lineage marry and leave just as they become fully productive members of their fathers' households. 562 613

Daughters, however, serve their lineage in a different way. As they are successful in winning for themselves a good name in the households of their husbands, so the bond of economic and social co-operation established between the two lineages at the time of marriage is strengthened. When they mature, they return to assist the members of their lineage with ritual obligations to the ancestors. If they are left childless at their husband's death, they may return to their father's household to reside. [602]

Separated from one another by millet fields and the public way, the dwelling of each Mossi kin group has the appearance of a small walled village. Each round mud house with its thatched roof has a separate courtyard which is usually contiguous to the courtyards of the other houses in the residential unit of which it is a part. The individual dwellings are constructed in such a way—the wall of each house or courtyard being contiguous to that of the nearest neighbor—as to form a circular wall whose exterior is closed at all but two points. The dwelling of each kin group has a small exit and a large open entrance way just within which is located a thatch-covered sun shelter (*zande*) where the men of the lineage gather to rest, to work at small crafts, and to talk. Guests are 592 342 [343]

839 especially, subsisted upon it. The victims, children from twelve
439 to fifteen years old, were provided by the Moro Naba, who kept
304 them afterward or sold them to the Haoussa.

In 1900 our ambassador to Turkey learned that a shipment of eunuchs which had reached Constantinople had originated in Mossi territory, which we had occupied since 1896. He warned the Minister of Foreign Affairs, who notified his colleague the Minister of the Colonies. Strict orders were issued to put an end to this Mossi industry, which has since ceased to exist.

439 Let us finally add the grain trade, which is unusual in Mossi territory. In the years 1906, 1907, and 1908 which saw poor harvests, however, the Mossi were forced to acquire grain in Yatenga (Ouahigouya circle) and in Gourounsi territory by selling livestock.

We have now concluded our discussion of Mossi occupations. Let us proceed to a study of the family and the superposed social organisms.

Chapter II

The Mossi: The Family, Public Powers, and Religion

593 We must state first that the Mossi family is a partly decommunalized family. This may come as a surprise in view of the foregoing section on work (cultivation predominates, stockbreeding is poor, industries flourish, trade is nonexistent), which had led us to expect something altogether different. Nevertheless, this is a fact.

The family is even highly decommunalized, although not everywhere to the same degree. In this respect, five different family types are to be found.

596 The first two are quite rare. They would seem to be witnesses
326 to an ancient state of affairs which has now vanished. Thus, one finds the common patriarchal type among those blacksmiths who are gathered into /special/ quarters or even villages and whom we mentioned in the section on industries. This type is found only among them and not among isolated blacksmiths, where only the common Mossi family type occurs.

596 Are those blacksmiths who live in groups unaltered remnants of
326 the ancient population as it existed prior to the Dagomba invasion? Are they autochthonous? Should their statement that they are not Mossi be interpreted in this light? This is probable, although by no means certain. In any case, the family among them is of the purest patriarchal cast.

596 Among them, all households belonging to a family occupy the
326 same soukala. When a young man marries, he remains in the fam-
592 ily soukala.

/543/ During the winter season, the occupants of the soukala work in the fields of the head of the soukala from six in the morning until three in the afternoon. From three o'clock on, they till their own little individual plots.

During the dry season, they all work together at the blacksmith's trade with the head of the soukala, and all profits devolve to the latter. They work from sunrise to sunset.

The head of the soukala provides them with food throughout the year. As for their clothing, they procure it themselves with the returns from their little plots. The same applies to bracelets, jewels, etc. (as for grigris, they do not like them).

The head of the soukala buys each man his first wife, and in return gives in marriage all the daughters of the soukala.

596 When the head of a soukala dies, it is his younger brother who
428 takes command of the soukala. He also takes all the goods, fields,
326 livestock, slaves, cowries, and the tools used to extract and work the iron. The sons get nothing. Everyone remains in the soukala.

When the supply of brothers has been exhausted, the oldest son in the whole soukala receives the inheritance.

If no males remain in the soukala, the sisters come first in line before the daughters if they have the same father and mother as the deceased, but after /them/ if they were born of the same father only. They take half of the movable property and give half to the daughters. They apportion their share evenly among themselves. The soukala and fields go to the village chief. If there are no sisters born of the same father and mother, the inheritance goes to the daughters, and next in line to the sisters born of the same father as the deceased. If there are neither sisters nor daughters, the whole estate goes to the village chief.

596
326 As we can see, the common patriarchal family is found among those blacksmiths who live in groups.

592 The second Mossi family type is one we had occasion to mention here and there in the section on work. Contrary to the first
596 type, which is found only in a special section of the population, this one occurs throughout the Mossi but as a rare /544/ and exceptional case. All the households in the family still live together, but every household works for itself. This is the type we studied among the Nankana and other groups of cultivator-breeders under the name of Nankana type No. 3 /not translated/.

593 We come now to those Mossi family types which are widespread rather than exceptional. They correspond to the Nankana type
592 No. 4 (every household lives separately and works separately), or rather they depart from it in the direction of even greater decommunalization. There are three variants, namely, one that corresponds to the pure Nankana type No. 4, and two where decommunalization is more accentuated. Let us describe them in turn.

Here is the first variant:

593 1. The households live separately. As soon as a young man
592 marries, he settles on his own with the help of his family.

596 When a family head gives one of the family's sons a wife, he uses a vacant soukala if there is one available. If there is none, the son builds a new soukala with the help of his father and of the family head.

2. Every household works separately (except for the clearing of family fields), procures its own food, clothing, and subsistence. The married son, however, comes and helps his father a little now and then. During the dry season, for example, he helps him repair the soukala. Or else he offers him small gifts from time to time.

When someone, on marrying, settles separately, the head of the family usually gives him some family field that was once cleared and cultivated and has since lain fallow.

3. Although households work separately, the children of the households are not given in marriage by their father and mother, but by the head of the family. The latter buys wives for the boys,
[583] but he also gives the daughters in marriage and receives the bride price.

584 To arrange a marriage, one offers gifts to the girl's family on
596 festive days. The gift grows more sizable from year to year. Finally, at the time of marriage, one offers 25 or 30 francs as a bride price.

Girls are also exchanged among families. /545/ One family may pledge one of its daughters to another family for one of its young men, while the second family provides a girl for a boy of the first family.

Even if a man buys a wife at market and has children by her, it is not he but his family head who gives those children in marriage.

If a young man goes himself to a family head, asks for a wife, and obtains her without any payment, without any bride price, it is the girl's father who disposes of the first daughter born of the union. He is entitled to take her with him as soon as she is no longer at the breast, and he will later give her in marriage. The other children are given in marriage by their father's family head.

596 4. The head of the family performs religious sacrifices for the
782 whole family, and acts as its judge.

5. When a family head dies, the headship of the family goes
596 to his younger brother along with the family property, that is,
428 his soukala if it is a family one (built by the family or with the help of the family), the available family fields, the movable family property (livestock, slaves, cowries, clothing, family jewels, etc.). The movable private property of the deceased, on the other hand (livestock, slaves, cowries, clothing, private jewels, etc.) go to the oldest son along with the fields cultivated by the deceased and by his household, that is, the private property of the deceased. Finally, the soukala, if it was built by the deceased all by himself and without the aid of his family, goes to his oldest son as well since it is private property.

The brother who inherits gives some of the movable family property to the other brothers, but only if he feels like doing so.

Here, family property is by far the most important.

Such is the oldest variant of the Mossi family type that prevails at the present day. Actually, this variant still persists in quite a few Mossi localities.

Now, here is the second variant:

592 1. Every household lives separately, works separately (except
596 for the clearing of the family fields), and sees to its own subsistence.

592 People who are thus settled on their own work for themselves and no
596 longer for /546/ their father, with whom they lived and for whom they worked prior to marriage. They nevertheless offer gifts to their father from time to time.

2. As far as the marriage of children belonging to those house-
592 holds is concerned, a distinction must be made among the following
596 possibilities. When they are the children of wives bought by the fam-
584 ily head, it is the latter who gives them in marriage. When they are the children of wives obtained by the husband himself, it is the latter who gives them in marriage.

Or else a rough compromise is made (in Boussouma province, for example). The first son and first daughter of the union are given in marriage by the family head, while the other children are given in marriage by the household.

596 3. It is the head of the family, however, who alone is entitled
782 to offer religious sacrifices for the whole family, and who always acts as its judge.

4. When the head of the family dies, the headship is trans-
596 mitted to his younger brother along with the family property. The
428 private property of the deceased goes to all his sons, but the oldest son is favored. This actually constitutes the difference between this family type and the preceding one as far as inheritance is concerned. While in the preceding type the oldest son alone inherited, in this type all sons inherit but the eldest is heavily favored.

Thus, if the soukala was the private property of the deceased, it goes to the eldest son. If he is able to cultivate them all, the latter also keeps all the fields cultivated by the deceased. If he is not able to do so, he gives the surplus to his brothers.

As for livestock, if there are ten head that belonged privately to the deceased, and if there are three sons and two daughters, the oldest son will get four, each other son will get two, and each daughter will get one.

[567] As for slaves, if the situation is the same, the oldest son will take five out of ten, the second son three, the third son two, and the daughters will get none.

Cowries and grain are apportioned in the same manner.

In addition to these shares given to the younger sons and to the daughters, it must be noted that private property has acquired greater

596 428 significance vis-à-vis family property in this second Mossi family type. /547/ Thus, my informant stresses that here family property still has greater significance than private property, but at the same time he adds that in every inheritance he witnessed, the soukala always went to the oldest son, no matter what its origin. He corroborates this with information about his own family, as follows:

He lives, he says, with five wives, two daughters, two unmarried cousins who are the sons of one of his father's brothers, an unmarried cousin who is the son of one of his father's sisters, a nephew who is the son of his own sister, in short, twelve persons including him.

The soukala where he lives once belonged to his father and was built by the latter alone. He has thus inherited it, even though his father had a younger brother.

Incidentally, the brother got nothing, since my informant's father left nothing beside the soukala, no family property or private worth much.

To whom will the soukala go when he dies? Since he has no son, he replies, it will go to his younger brother (he has a younger brother who lives in a separate soukala). Supposing he had a son, however? Then it would go to his son.

I counter that it should go to his brother, since he did not build it himself but inherited it from his father (that is, from his own and his brother's common father), in accordance with the rule he mentioned earlier. He nevertheless holds, however, that it is not so, that younger brothers never did inherit a soukala, I cannot make him alter his position.

596 423 178 This gives us a living example of how the Mossi family has changed. In the old days, family property went along with the family headship to the younger brother. The soukala, for example, figured in almost every case among the family property, either because the family had given it ready made to the young man, or simply because the family had helped him build it. A soukala was private property only when the young man had built it altogether by himself (a very unusual case). Later, the soukala came to be considered private property when it had been built by the young man

596 with the help of his father and family head (which is by far the
423 most frequent occurrence), /548/ while in such a case it had for-
178 merly been considered family property. Finally, the soukala came to be regarded in every case as personal property and to be transmitted for that reason to the oldest son. This, incidentally, is the same evolution that applied to property in general, as we shall see shortly.

593 Now, here is the third and last variant of the prevailing Mossi family type. Nowadays, this variant is by far the most widespread.

1. Every household lives separately, works separately, and procures its own food and subsistence. The help of neighbors is enlisted to clear the fields.

584 2. Every household gives its own children in marriage. The family head no longer does so.

593 As soon as a man has a son, he chooses a little girl who will go to the boy when he reaches puberty. He visits the girl's relatives from time to time and offers them gifts.

584 When the girl is old enough to be married, he takes 50,000
583 cowries (if he is wealthy), skirt cloths, salt, kola nuts, and gives it
593 all to the relatives. Then, the old women in the daughter's family lead her to the home of the betrothed man's relatives. The father kills a sheep, makes a lot of couscous, buys dolo to celebrate her arrival. Then he offers the girl six or seven baskets containing respectively 1,000, 2,000, 3,000, 4,000, 5,000, 6,000, and 7,000 cowries. The young man himself gives his betrothed four or five skirts. If he is very wealthy, he gives her one or two little girls as slaves.

585 On the evening when the wedding is celebrated, the father asks
[426] one of his neighbors to lend him a hut, and the young married pair are sent there all alone (they will remain there as long as their soukala is not built). On the morrow, the feasting begins. People dance and feast for seven days at the gates of the father's soukala, at least when the girl is a virgin. If she is not, the feasting is curtailed but nevertheless lasts for another three days.

583 When the father is poor, he offers a few kola nuts to the girl's
591 /549/ father (six or ten). He gives the father and mother some firewood he gathered in the bush, straw to make séko /Tr.: mats/ for door, 2,000 cowries, a skirt cloth. He kills a sheep to make

592 Here we get an average of 144 persons per family, 15 persons per
596 compound, and 6 persons per household. This gives 2 or 3 households
162 per compound and 9 to 10 compounds per family.
261 Finally, here are some figures obtained among the Mossi in the northern part of the /Ouahigouya/ circle /a circle is an administrative district/.

Villages	Compounds	Persons	Average per Compound	Observations
Boulzoma	1	39 (1)	39	(1) 7 households
Aoréma	50	672	13	
Bogoya	[illegible]	379 (2)	13	(2) 64 households
Yabonsoro	37	494 (3)	13	(3) 74 households
Bagayaloro	14	290	21	
Barélogo	17	317	19	
Lilligondé	12	177	15	
Rikou	33	486	15	
Dinghiri	59	725	12	
Dinghila	44	362	8	
Irigué	17	94	6	
Bahn (Mossi)	3	54	18	
Pogoro	38	334	8	
Ninighé	7	75	11	
Séghé	8	111	14	
Tibo	19	228	12	
Totals	388	4,837	12 to 13	

Here we have only 12 or 18 persons per compound (and 6 per household). This shows an evolution of the Mossi family of Yatenga toward /227/ a more disintegrated form, which we shall discuss later when we mention the exceptions.

If we summarize the preceding statistics, we obtain the following table.

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Locations	Families	Compounds	Persons
Diogoré, etc.	43	179	5, 248
Oula, etc.	32	127	3, 313
Koussouka	24	228	3, 456
Northern part	?	369	4, 609
	?	903	16, 626

This gives us on an average 18 to 19 persons per compound and 121 persons per family (1).

1. This figure of 18 to 19 persons is an average one. Actually, there are some Mossi compounds which contain only 3 persons and others which boast as many as 100. To give a better idea of the matter, I shall provide below a numerical breakdown of the village of Diessiré (canton of Léba) where there are 286 persons and 15 compounds, or an average of 19 persons per compound. In reality, no one compound holds exactly 19 people.

Compounds	Households	Persons
First compound	4	24
Second compound	3	18
Third compound	1	6
Fourth compound	2	11
Fifth compound	4	23
Sixth compound	3	17
Seventh compound	1	5
Eighth compound	2	12
Ninth compound	2	12
Tenth compound	1	6
Eleventh compound	2	12
Twelfth compound	14	81
Thirteenth compound	3	18

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Fourteenth compound	6	36
Fifteenth compound	1	5
	49	286

This gives us, therefore:

Compounds with several households (more than two)	7
Compounds with several households (two)	4
Compounds with a single household	4
	15

Now that these statistics have been listed, let us examine in detail the groupings larger than the single household, which may be categorized as follows: (1) the total family; (2) the compound; (3) the work group.

596 The total family. —As we stated earlier, the total family /228/ does not occupy one and the same compound. It is divided into a number of zaka or iri of varying size (the average number given by the above statistics is five). One of these compounds is that of the boudoukasaman or head of the family, who governs the whole family and is at the same time the head of his own zaka and head of his work group. As head of the family, he holds definitively only three types of powers: (1) religious powers; (2) judicial powers; (3) the right to give the daughters of the whole family in marriage.

As head of the family, he has no economic powers.

We shall study the religious powers of the boudoukasaman in detail under "Religion (Sacerdotal Organization)" /not translated/. Let us [592] simply state here that although the head of the total family holds the highest religious powers, the zakasoba or heads of compounds are not totally deprived of them, and this contributes to the greater autonomy of these subfamilies.

I am borrowing the following particulars on the family head and the family council which assists him from Vadier's excellent monograph, here and there correcting some inexact details.

"The head of the family, or patriarch, " says Vadier, "is the oldest member of the family. It is he who is the head of it.

"He enjoys great authority over all family members, but exclusively in regard to personal matters. To him alone, after obtaining the consent of the fathers, belongs the right to give the young girls of the

596 family in marriage. Likewise, the head of the family, assisted by the family council, settles all the little differences which arise between relatives. He also intervenes when a father fails to secure the obedience of one of his children or cannot manage to discipline him.

"It is he alone who must sacrifice animals for the benefit of the whole family when his relatives bring them to him on the occasion of family feasts.

"All the members of the family owe obedience to the family head. Likewise, they must show him the greatest respect.

"When the family elder dies, his younger brother becomes head of the family. When all his brothers have successively held this office, the eldest son of the eldest brother becomes the family head after the brothers, etc.

"Sometimes the head of the family does not live in the same village as the rest of the family. He may very well live with some of his sons or brothers, away from his other relatives, but his powers remain unchanged.

"In addition to the family head, there is the family council which is made up of all the men and old women of the family. This body has no well-defined role. It meets under the leadership of the family head to settle all matters concerning the family. The council would decide, for example, as to whether an incorrigible child should be sent to a naba /ruler/, as to who should intervene /229/ in case of a quarrel over an inheritance, who should seize the goods of a spendthrift in order to dole them out to him in proportion to his needs, etc."

592 351 The compound. —The Mossi compound consists of a certain number of round earthen huts or cabins surmounted by thatched roofs and huts for millet, all crowded into a rather narrow space cut by passages, hallways, small courtyards, etc. This complex is surrounded by a moderately high earth wall (two meters) which encircles the huts or cabins and encloses the compound.

592 361 The compounds are scattered over the plain, 50 or 100 meters apart. Some are larger than others: some have 15 or 20 huts or even more; others have but four or five (2).

192 2. To designate these compounds, the word soukala or sokala is often used. This word is hallowed by custom in Yatenga, in the Ouagadougou area, in the Léo area, etc., in short, in all Mossi lands and their

192 dependencies, as well as in the language of the European officials who inhabit the territory. Actually, the word sokala is not Mossi but Mandé /Mande/. In Bambara the hut is called so, in Malinké /Malinke/ sou. Soukala or sokala means exactly "the walls of the hut" (from kala, which means "bone" and by extension all elongated things, walls among them, and from so or sou, whose meaning we have learned already). This word was brought here from the shores of the Niger at the time of conquest. It is to some extent equivocal, for although it is usually given the meaning of "compound," some Europeans also use it to designate a whole quarter /a village subdivision including several compounds/. This is the meaning given to it by Delafosse (Le Haut-Sénégal-Niger /Upper Senegal-Niger/, Vol. 3, p. 126). As for myself, I always gave it the meaning of "compound" in my Noir du Soudan, that is to say, the meaning which I gave to the term carré or carrée in my monograph on the Noir de Guinée /The Black Population of (French) Guinea/. This word, however, and analogous words which are not strictly native to the region or whose French meaning is not absolutely clear lead to some confusion. We shall return to this subject later.

592 Let us add that the head of the compound is called zakasoba or irisoba (from zaka or iri, "compound," and soba, "chief, master"). Vadier incorrectly designated the head of the total family as zakasoba in his monograph. [596] The head of the total family is the boudoukasaman. The zakasoba is the head of a compound, of a home, of that cluster of huts and millet granaries encircled by a red wall which makes such a distinct and isolated unit on the Mossi plains.

This compound accommodates varying numbers of people, 18 or 19 being the average (with exceptions), as we have seen above.

596 In the sense of integration, we must mention primarily the families
592 of great chiefs. For example, there is the family of Gombiraogo, a
182 former Baloum Naba, a very wealthy and important personage. He
591 has five brothers. Two of them live together in the village of Kalo and another two, similarly, in the village of Bembéla. Gombiraogo lives in Ouahigouya with the fifth brother. With this brother he has three zaka where 70 or 80 people live, all of whom work for him and form a single work group under his direction (that is to say, during the rainy season they work for him two days out of three, and during the dry season they do so only when he has exceptional need of them; in return, he provides them with food seven months out of twelve, according to custom, and does not provide them with clothes unless they are unmarried).

What should be noted here is the strength of this work group (70 to 80 people). As a result, it includes several compounds, while it is the compound as a rule that contains several or at least two work groups.

[345] The present Baloum Naba, the prime minister, likewise has two zaka working for him. Moreover, the total family of the Baloum Naba is not assembled in Ouahigouya but scattered throughout Yatenga.

[343] In the same connection, the Rassam Naba has a zaka of 157 people who form a single work group under his direction. In return, he provides them with food all year.

/232/ Again, there is a zaka of shoemakers at Ouahigouya which
294 includes nearly 100 people altogether, among them 15 or 20 full-
592 grown men, all of them shoemakers. They all work for the zakasoba,
182 who provides them all with food. This zaka, of exceptional numerical strength, is at the same time completely integrated.

596 At the other end of the scale, we find the Mossi family of Yatenga
182 evolving toward complete disintegration in certain parts of the terri-
592 tory, that is to say, evolving toward a state of affairs where nothing remains except the total family on the one hand and the single household on the other (that is, the compound has only a single household).

Thus, in the course of a journey through the canton of Ratenga, I noted in the village of Tangué a family of 110 persons distributed among 14 homes. This gives an average of only seven or eight persons per home. In Kargo (another village) there are five Mossi families for 22 homes sheltering 181 persons, or only eight persons per home.

596 182 592 Here the zaka is quite clearly reduced to the single household, which becomes identified at the same time with the compound and with the work group. Let us state, however, that in the whole of Ratenga there are 4, 637 Mossi for 458 compounds, or ten persons per compound. An average of ten people per compound represents slightly more than a single household (which averages six persons in Yatenga), but not as much as two households. This means that the compounds sometimes contain two households, sometimes only one. Thus, since there are only a few people in each zaka, there is but a single work group.

162 592 621 Here is a complete numerical breakdown of the canton of Ratenga.

Villages	Inhabitants	Compounds	Average per Compound
Napalra	254	20	13
Ouembatenga	61	5	12
Alaga	335	22	15
Bouloungа	197	23	9
Bani	387	30	13
Singuitenga	248	18	14
Boudé	69	11	6
Foulgo-Koquin	22	5	4
Zomkalga	88	12	7
Momoné	86	10	9
Toïsi	100	13	8
Denian	4	1	4
Pinsi	145	13	11
Dologa	110	15	7
Kiédéwendé	103	10	10
/233/ Koundi-Bittou	63	9	7
Yalka	56	4	14
Koumbango	221	19	12
Kourpellé	167	15	11
Zimtenga	307	39	8
Battenga	94	11	9
Badnoro	83	10	8
Douré	96	6	16
Yalgatenga	45	8	6

596 /234/ The kind of family found in the cantons of Ratenga and
592 Tougo is quite similar in type to the family among the Mossi of
182 Ouagadougou, or in its common types (3) which are characterized by

3. See my Noir du Soudan, pp. 544-553.

the fact that the zaka is identified with the single household, and only the total family and the single household remain.

This leads us to note that the average Mossi family of Yatenga, as we have described it above, is more compact, more communal, more integrated than the Mossi family of Ouagadougou.

182 This results, I believe, from the fact that the primitive element
563 of the population, the Foulsé (the basic element, let us not forget,
592 at Ouagadougou as well as in Yatenga), who are more communal than
596 the Mossi, are still much more numerous in Yatenga than in the Ouagadougou region. While in the latter area the Foulsé blended almost completely with the mass of invaders, in Yatenga they resisted more successfully, did not blend with them, and continued to make up the greater part of the population. In view of these circumstances, they probably exercised considerable influence on the morphology of the Mossi family, just as they gave it their prejudices against the ownership of cattle, etc.

This high proportion of the primitive communal element no doubt caused the structural differences between the Mossi family of the Ouagadougou region and that of Yatenga.

000 Women and the household.—We shall deal now with women and the household. We shall subdivide this section into a number of headings as follows.

1. Promise of marriage.
2. Persons whose consent is required to validate the promise of marriage.
3. Gifts.
4. Celebration and consummation of marriage.
5. Impediments to marriage.
6. Question of virginity.
7. Rights and duties of the husband and wife.
8. Polygamy.
9. Organization of the polygamous household.
10. Women's tasks.
11. The conjugal duty.

584 bearing dolo /millet beer/; they will serve as witnesses. In their presence, the head of the family mentions by name to the suitor the girl he is granting to him and who will be delivered to him as a wife later when she is old enough to take a husband.

"Then the betrothed man with the friends he brought goes to visit every soukala head in the village, greets them in accordance with Mossi custom, and announces to them that such-and-such a family head has promised him a young girl in marriage. The whole village is thus made witnesses."

Persons whose consent is required to validate a promise of marriage.

[562] —"The consent of the young girl," says Vadier, "is by no means required. In fact, she is disposed of without being consulted, and she is always forced to become the wife of the man to whom she has been promised, except if her future husband is a leper or blind. The /236/ young girl is actually supposed to be unacquainted with the name of her prospective husband until she is taken to him.

"To validate the marriage, the following people must express their consent.

"1. The future husband. His consent follows from the transactions undertaken by his father or by himself with the family of his future wife.

"2. The girl's father. When a Mossi has one or several daughters and when he thinks the moment has come for the head of the family to dispose of them, he tells the latter that he can promise them in marriage. In spite of his powers, the head of the family could not betroth a young girl unless her father had told him that he could give her in marriage.

"When he has chosen a husband, he goes to see the father of the girl and makes known to him the offer he has received. The father can accept or refuse as he sees fit. His consent is absolutely indispensable, and the head of the family cannot ignore it.

"The father cannot dispose of his daughter without the consent of the family head, except in circumstances we shall examine later.

584 "3. The head of the family. The consent of the head of the family
● 596 is inevitably required, since it is he alone who has the power to promise the young girls of his family in marriage under the terms described above. Three cases where the consent of the family head is not indispensable are as follows: (1) when the father of the young girl is at odds with the head of the family, the father alone may dispose of his

584 daughter; (2) when the father is in extreme penury, he gives his still
596 unpromised daughter to some rich native who, with the customary gifts, will help him in his need, since the gifts of the fiancé go to the man who promised the young girl; (3) the first daughter in a household,
[603] whether or not she is the only daughter, must be promised by her maternal grandfather and not by the head of the family."

This constitutes, I believe, a curious vestige of matriarchy which doubtless refers to those very distant times when the Mossi family revolved around the maternal rather than the paternal line.

The mother of the young girl. "The girl's mother," says Vadier, "is sometimes consulted. Her husband merely asks her if she is satisfied with the choice he has made in agreement with the head of the family. Her answer, however, is given no weight whatever.

"The fiancé's mother is not even consulted."

Such at least is the theory. In reality, no doubt, the mother of the young girl often has more authority than the theory supposes.

431 Gifts.—Bride price is nonexistent in Mossi marriage. This is a very
583 important point which differentiates the Mossi and even, I believe,
[71] the Voltaic /237/ tribes in general, from the Mandé groups, such as the Bambara and Malinké, where bride price does exist and is actually quite high (I say quite high, considering the general poverty of the Sudanese). I did not emphasize this sufficiently in my Noir du Soudan in the chapter concerning the Mossi family, pages 548 and 549. I did mention that the price paid to win a Mossi girl of the Ouagadougou region ranged from 1, 500 cowries (1. 50 francs) to 50, 000 cowries (50 francs). In fact, these are gifts rather than bride price.

Although there is no bride price, properly speaking, the gifts have an important role.

"After the promise of marriage," says Vadier, "the future husband must come every year, after the filikienga /a feast/, to bring a few small gifts to the head of the family and to the girl's mother. These consist as a rule of a little millet, salt, a few hundred cowries, a mat, or two or three crudely made séko /coarse matting/.

"As for the father, he receives no gifts, which does not mean that he does not benefit from those received by his wife or by the head of the family.

"Likewise, the girl receives no gifts. Moreover, she may not utilize the commodities or foodstuffs given to her mother.

"The gifts offered during the long betrothal period cannot be of great value. A prospective husband who should bring 5, 000 or 6, 000

566 gone into Mossi hands. The bagaré did not till the soil. They simply minded their master's herds. As for other work, they also built the straw huts where the Moro Naba of Yatenga, the Riziam Naba, and other chiefs slept at the New Year (we shall see under "Religion" /not translated/ to what purpose).

The bagaré saw to their own support (food and clothing). The multiplying herd belonged to the naba, but its yield (milk and butter) went to the bagaré. Out of this yield, however, they gave the naba whatever he needed of milk and butter.

567 In short, we can see that among the Mossi and Foulsé there exist, or rather existed, the two kinds of slaves known throughout the /French/ Sudan, the trade slaves and the house slaves, the former being salable and the latter a part of the family. Nowadays, as a result of the prohibition against their purchase and sale, there remains but a dwindling number of house slaves.

421 Now we come to family property and its transmission.

596 Family property, properly so-called. —There is no family property among our Mossi, since no work is done in common by the whole family. The family property is limited to family charms owned by the boudoukasaman.

423 Property of the compound, or subfamily property. —This does not
592 exist either, for the same reason, except for the compound itself which is the communal property of the zaka group. While each household has huts of its own, these huts are a usufructuary possession which is in accordance with the full ownership of the zaka group. Now, if some household chief wishes to build a new hut, he notifies the zakasoba, who, incidentally, always grants permission. Once the hut is built, the builder may destroy it if he wishes, which goes to prove that he has full ownership over it, having made it. He cannot, however, destroy the hut where he lives which he did not build as it actually belongs to the zaka. In short, there may be in the compound a mixture of communal property (belonging to the zaka) and individual property (hut built by a household or by an individual, millet granary erected in the same circumstances, etc.), but the communal property prevails by far.

423 Property of the work group. —Here, communal property is impor-
571 tant. /268/ It is from the group fields that the group derives most of its sustenance (seven months out of twelve). The work implements

428 Now let us deal with the transmission of property or inheritance.

●596 Transmission of the property of the total family. —Since such property does not exist, it is not transmitted, except the family charms. The status of family head, however, is transmitted. When a family head dies, it is the oldest remaining man of the family (sometimes his brother, sometimes his cousin, etc.) who takes command of the family.

428 Transmission of the compound and its property. —When the head of
592 a compound dies, it is the oldest man in the compound (brother, cousin, etc.) who takes command of it. At the same time he takes over the management of the property communally owned by the whole compound.

428 Transmission of the property of the work group. —When the head of
571 a work group dies, it is likewise the oldest man in the group (usually the younger brother of the deceased) who assumes leadership and the management of the group's property (fields, work implements, etc.)

Let us note that in all these transmissions, when there are no longer any men of the same generation, then the sons of all the brothers, cousins, etc., are chosen, beginning with the eldest. That is to say, when one generation is exhausted, the next generation is tapped.

428 Transmission of household property. —When a married Mossi who has /271/ children dies, his eldest brother (born of the same father and mother or only of the same father) receives the inheritance. He does not take everything, however. He is expected to share, up to a point, with the other brothers (born of the same father and mother or only of the same father) and with the sons if they are old enough.

The oldest brother takes the huts and the field. The wives, on the other hand, are divided among the brothers and even among the sons if the latter are grown. If the wives are not numerous, the oldest brother does not get any more of them than the other sharers. The livestock is divided among the same people, but this time the largest share goes not to the brother who is unqualifiedly the oldest, but to the oldest brother born of the same father and mother. The cowries, coins, movable property, and jewelry are divided in the same manner. Weapons are apportioned, but the largest share goes to the brother who is unqualifiedly the oldest. The latter takes the dead man's bow and quiver, while dividing the arrows among the brothers and sons without bypassing himself.

As we can see, sharing does take place and is actually quite a complex matter, since it is sometimes the eldest of all the brothers

428 As a result, an heir may come into his share of the inheritance through a gift received during the lifetime of the deceased.

431 /273/ Gifts inter vivos. —A Mossi may, while alive, give away whatever he pleases of his own property.

Since he is absolute master of these goods and thus entitled to use them as he sees fit, no one has the right to question the gifts he makes.

421 Incidentally, let us recall that heads of families, compounds, work groups, and households are only the managers and not the owners, in the Roman sense, of the family, zaka, work group, or household property, respectively. As for private, individual goods on which the jus utendi et abutendi may be exercised, we know what they amount to among the Mossi. In practice, moreover, the Mossi are far from taking much advantage of this theoretical right. Here, nevertheless, we are concerned with theory, and the following rules pertain to it.

431 A gift made inter vivos must be made before several witnesses in order to be valid.

No special status is required in order to receive a gift.

The wife possesses the same rights as the husband. The gift will [837] nevertheless be worthless if it is proved that the beneficiary is or was her lover.

•596 We are now finished with the Mossi family.

To summarize, as we already stated earlier, this family is communal and patriarchal.

Its communalism, however, is quite unstable. People live, not in family groups, but in family subgroups (the zaka). They work, not in family subgroups, but in sub-subgroups (the work groups). In former times, the zaka may have been a community of labor as well as a community of habitation. As we shall see later /not translated/, this is now the case among the Foulsé or Nioniossé /Nyonyose/, where sometimes it is the zaka that constitutes the community of labor and sometimes it is the work group, and where there seems to be an evolution from the former state of affairs to the latter.

As for patriarchy, it is very clearly defined and established. The family revolves around the man and not around the woman. As I have stated, certain signs induce us to believe that the Mossi family, like the Sudanese family in general, was once matriarchal in the very distant past. At all events, this has long ceased to be the case, and we are dealing now with an unstable communalism paired with clearly defined patriarchy.

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When a young Catholic receives a wife through the mission, he may visit her father and pay the customary respect by giving him kola nuts and brass coins. The father of a mission girl may accept or reject his son-in-law as he sees fit, but formerly he could not defy the power of the missions. 797 582 634

A pagan youth who wishes to marry one of the mission girls has to discuss the matter with the priests and swear publicly that he will become a Christian. Before 1946 the young man had to fulfill his promise or be intimidated by the chief and the missionaries until he relented or fled the district. Today, however, the priests usually abandon their efforts to obtain the conversion of the young men after three months have passed. In some cases the young men take their wives and move to other districts, and return only after the girls have given up Catholicism. Despite the lure of wives from the mission, not many young men become Christians on this account because the Mossi are still concerned primarily with family relationships and the effect that conversion would have on these relationships. [596]

The church's prohibition of polygyny is by far the most serious bar to the spread of Catholicism. Many men do not adopt Catholicism simply because they fear that monogamous marriages would not produce children. Father Paternot (Considine 1954:103) has cited a study purporting to show that Christian Mossi have more children than the pagans, but the ordinary people of the district would not accept the facts he presented. They cite their personal experience to the contrary. Dim Delobson (1934:136), a Mossi converted to Catholicism, states: 797 595 842

> A certain number of Christians of my acquaintance whose wives did not have children during the first years of marriage had recourse to magical practices in order to get children. These simple people thought that although they had an omnipotent God beside them, they could impudently—after all the good priests will not know about it—ask the little, but also powerful gods to grant them some material favors here on earth. When the gods given children were taken for Holy Baptism, they were given Christian names instead of the names of the earth shrines, and they did not wear magical charms which would have indicated to the priest the real state of affairs. Nevertheless, the children were bathed in water to which magical potions were added, and when the mothers went to visit their parents, sacrifices of chickens were given to the benevolent Tengkougas.

The Mossi's strong desire for children is admittedly one of the main reasons for leaving the Catholic Church so that they can take other spouses in addition to barren ones. The church has now belatedly recognized this problem and, knowing that it cannot prevent men from taking plural wives, allows them to come to church but prohibits them from taking the Mass.

Many cultural factors besides the desire for children make polygyny important for the Mossi, and make conversion detrimental to the functioning of their family system. Because of lineage opposition to their conversions, some converts are forced to establish nuclear households—a practice out of harmony with the normal rhythm of Mossi life. The reason for this disharmony is that Mossi women married to Catholics must work alone instead of with 595 797 182 [594]

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[428] power and authority were inherited by their families in the same manner as among Mossi lineages.

634 The last important category of Mossi chiefs included men who ruled
622 over slave and serf villages. These men were themselves the descendants of slaves and serfs, for no free-born Mossi were placed in such posts. Needless to say, these chiefs were never lineally or collaterally related to the
[602] district chiefs, and therefore were never nobles. However, they might be affinally related to district chiefs, and in such cases the relationship was often of some political value.

It must be emphasized that once a man was made chief, he was respected, if not honored, by all the people of the district. In some districts, the Dapore Naba and the Baglere Naba, chiefs of two categories of serfs, were among the most valued assistants of the Kombere Naba. The only
[565] people who sometimes refused to honor the village chiefs were the nakomce,
[778] who were the holders of the district nam. Nevertheless, they were censored by the Kombere if they were disrespectful to his subordinates. No district chief could allow his government to be jeopardized by the maltreatment of persons who served it. In any conflict between the nam and the kin group, the supremacy of the nam was always maintained.

613 Every Mossi ruler, whether he held the nam of a kingdom, principality,
631 district, or village, was *ipso facto* also *Boodkasma* (literally, "family head")
622 of the local segment of his boodoo. The word boodoo refers to patrilineal groups that anthropologists would normally call clans, maximal lineages, major lineages, or minor lineages. The Mossi do not make any terminological distinction between these levels of their segmentary lineage system. Nevertheless, they recognize and use the status differences between these units to limit the access of each unit to the corporate assets of the boodoo. Their major social distinction is drawn between the minor lineage, which is also called boodoo, and its component minimal lineages. Each minimal-
[596] lineage unit is called a *babissi* (literally, "father's brother"), and is really a large extended family composed of relatives who had a common ancestor, three, four, or at most five generations ago.

643 The Mogho Naba, for example, was head of his babissi as well as ex
613 officio head of the entire royal clan. Those rulers who claimed equality with him claimed that they, not he, were the true heads of the royal clan and the "direct" descendants of Ouedraogo and Oubri. As a function of their political position, the many princes and district chiefs were heads of their own babissi and of the maximal lineage to which their babissi be-
631 longed. Like the Mogho Naba, they were the ex officio heads of all members
613 of their boodoo who lived in their territory and who claimed descent from the same royal ancestors,

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V

LAW AND THE JUDICIAL PROCESS

671 THE Mossi possessed a comprehensive body of rules governing human conduct. These rules were well known to the people, and violators were punished by the responsible authorities. The Mossi might be said to have had substantive law, but they had no written codes. Nevertheless, the lack of written codes does not warrant Mangin's blanket criticism of Mossi judicial processes: "Of course, there was no written code, no formal scale of penalties. Everything depended on custom and on the whim of the judge. [662] Thus, the wealthy could obtain sentences in their favor by paying the judges, and thieves could avoid punishment by sharing their loot with the Naba."[1] Custom did dictate the penalties, just as "written custom" dictates penalties [692] in all written legal codes. But, as we shall see, the Mossi did have a known [695] scale of penalties. Moreover, a Mossi judge had to be careful in rendering judgment, because his decisions could be reviewed by a higher court.

596 The head of the Mossi extended family, the *Yirisoba*, was responsible 681 for the everyday conduct of his charges. It was his duty to settle all family quarrels, and to punish persons guilty of theft within the compound, disrespect toward elders, and incest. Punishment for the lesser wrongs included 596 reprimands and floggings. A person found guilty of disrespect to the elders 683 or of incest could be banished from the group. But banishment was so severe 684 that it was imposed only if the criminal refused to make the usual conciliatory gestures and was condemned by all the members of his boodoo. Even after this condemnation, however, he could ask a "sister's son," a yagenga, [613] to intercede for him. This man, the son of a female lineage member, had many privileges within his mother's brother's lineage, including the right to mediate between an exile and his boodoo.

593 Amicable relations within the family group were most often disrupted 586 by conjugal difficulties. A Mossi husband could occasionally flog an erring 613 wife, but he was not allowed to maltreat her. When a man became disgusted with his wife and wished to repudiate her, he put her water pots in the compound yard. This rather serious action often led to hostile relations

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did not derive any revenue from his judicial functions. He could not levy a fine against any malefactor. However, his intermediary position between the villagers and the district chief did permit him to obtain some revenue whenever commodities moved from one level to the other.

The officials who administered the villages for the district chief received part of their revenue from the villages under their charge. These local administrators had no courts or retainers comparable to those at the provincial level. However, they did have a large number of wives who contributed valuable agricultural labor. These administrators were permitted to ask the village chiefs for sosose on their own fields several times during the planting season, but—unlike the district chiefs—they were not permitted to have the villagers cultivate special fields for them. In return for any help received, they had to provide food and drink for the workers.

The administrator received most of his revenue as a by-product of active duty in the villages. When he visited a village or transmitted a message to a village chief, he almost invariably received a sheep, a goat, a chicken, or some millet, from the village chief. He also acquired large quantities of goods during the village interregnum: he received gifts from the chief's heirs during the chief's funeral; he received additional presents when they took the fado to the district chief; he could prolong the interregnum in order to receive as many bribes as possible from contenders for the nam; and he was handsomely rewarded when the candidate he had backed was finally installed in office.

The extended family was the basic socio-economic unit supporting the Mossi political organization. The Yirisoba received land rights in his saka from his Sakakasma, who had obtained his rights from the village chief. An extended family in need of additional land would seek help from its Sakakasma or its Boodkasma. When the family no longer needed this land, it reverted to the lineage. If all the land granted to the lineage was already occupied, the extended family, through its lineage head, asked the village chief for more land. The chief usually granted this request, unless he had no more weogho available. In this case, the needy Yirisoba sometimes tried to borrow land from his non-kin neighbors. Such a step was not undertaken lightly, however. If a man borrowed land from his own lineage members or from the chief, the land rights reverted to its donors without difficulty. However, if he borrowed land from another lineage and either he or his benefactor died without assuring the return of the land, litigation often ensued. In some cases a man would seek land from his lineage brothers in another village, who let him use some of their land with their chief's permission. Some Yirisobadamba even asked their district chief for

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permission to use weogho in the district, and new hamlets arose in this way. A Yirisoba who could not obtain adequate land on which to grow food for his family left the district and sought land elsewhere, especially among his mother's patrilineage. However, village and district chiefs always tried to prevent this because they did not like to lose any of their subjects.

As director of economic activities in the household, the Yirisoba supervised the agricultural labor of his charges. It was he who directed the work of his wives, his sons, and his sons' wives, and supervised the care of the family herd. He provided the cotton, which was carded and spun by the women and woven by the men. It was also his task to ensure adequate clothing for the members of his household; and he sold excess commodities in order to buy salt, kola nuts, bracelets, foreign clothes, and other products imported from the forest and desert zones. In each case, the Yirisoba had to balance judiciously the requirements of his household against his obligations to the community and to the political hierarchy. He had to prevent economic rivalry among his sons, and especially among his sons' wives. He had to make sure that every married member of the household had sufficient time to provide goods and services for his own family, and that foodstuffs were distributed equitably among the wives. Finally, he had to use the resources of the household to build and maintain the nexus of socioeconomic relationships that provided wives for the male members of the household, and to meet his obligations to the political hierarchy.

The Yirisoba also had social and economic responsibilities toward the other members of his babissi and boodoo. He furnished labor and goods to needy lineage members and to non-relatives with whom he had marriage arrangements. Since much of this help was given on the basis of ultimate reciprocity, very little loss was involved. However, the relationship between commoner and noble families was quite different. In theory, the nobles had no claims on the property of the commoners; but in practice, they did claim such rights. Furthermore, commoner lineages often gave the nobles many more wives than the nobles returned. This inequality enabled the nobles to receive more goods and services from their marriage partners among the commoners than they gave in return. The nobles thus took advantage of their power as possessors of the nam, but even membership in the royal lineage did not exempt them from supporting the governmental services at all levels. This duty was incumbent upon every Moaga.

The Mossi people could not refuse to support their political organization, but often complained about having to do so. Many Mossi felt that their rulers were greedy and avaricious and received too many gifts. Some Mossi held that if the chiefs were not placated with goods and services,

429 If the deceased has no brother or grown son, the family head apportions the children among various members of the family.

The guardian has the same obligations toward his ward and enjoys the same rights over them as did their deceased father. By the same token, the wards have the same duties toward their guardian as they did toward their father.

The child inherits from his guardian just like the latter's legitimate children.

[672] Like the father, the guardian is liable for damages caused by his ward.

591 Adoption. —Adoption occurs in Yatenga.

When two spouses have no progeny (this is quite unusual) or simply fail to have any right away, they sometimes adopt a child. The child must be taken into their family. Adoption does not require any formalities.

The child, adopted at a very young age, is never consulted.

The matter is adjusted between the adoptive father, the child's father, and the family head.

Either a girl or boy may be adopted, but actually boys are adopted for the most part.

From the day of his adoption the child enters the household of his adoptive father and mother as a legitimate child.

Actually, this manner of adoption differs from the French one in that it is limited to the family, to the total family.

In addition to this method of adoption and pertaining to the same category, let us point out a curious custom among the Mossi.

The oldest son, according to custom, must not be brought up by his father. As soon as he leaves his mother's breast or sometimes following circumcision, he is handed over to the /father's/ younger or older brother, who raises him and gives him a wife. Upon the death of his father, however, he comes into the latter's inheritance and thus does not really leave the household to which he was born.

672 Interdiction. —"Only the insane are subject to interdiction," says Vadier.

"When a native is afflicted with insanity, the family head and other members of the family meet to discuss the case of the sick person. If he is recognized as irresponsible, the head of the family has all the inhabitants of the village warned to have no dealings with him. Indeed, according to custom, no one /263/ could be held civilly liable for agreements made by a native afflicted with insanity.

366 for good fortune and health. Prevent all bloodshed in this market.
782 We also fear those who are quarrelsome and those who talk too much, those who provoke disorder." The chicken is the first victim to be sacrificed, and if the offering is accepted, it must have first fallen on its back and only then turned over face downward (this means that the gods of the place will protect the naba and the persons who will frequent the market). Next the goat or sheep is killed.

The new market is opened immediately after the sacrifice. Those present buy the women's fritters. Ordinarily, Mossi markets
[443] are held every three days. The news travels rapidly that such-and-such a village has a market, and thus the business of the market gradually grows.

Collection of fees. It is only later on, one or even two years
366 after the installation of his new market and when [79] it is success-
651 ful, that the canton chief appoints a yaguinga (grandson, or, more
[601] accurately in native terms, a sister's son (nephew)or son's son (grandson), of the naba or of a member of his family) or a Gourounsi captive to act as collector of market fees. (We shall list below the various fees for a place in the market as they were collected for the benefit of the naba before the arrival of the French.)

366 Transfer of the market. Upon the death of a naba (the emperor, a vassal chief, or even the chief of the village where the market is held), the market is temporarily set up in another place. In large towns, such as Ouagadougou, for example, there may be as many markets as there are sections. These temporary markets are called kim'dagha (market of the kimsé, that is, of the deceased).

When a new naba has been named, the market is moved back
366 to its former site and the reinstallation calls for new sacrifices of
782 fowl and livestock. That was why in 1897, when the market at Ouagadougou was being re-established, the emperor asked the captain who was in command of the post to provide a cow to be sacrificed along with a sheep and a rooster which he himself provided.

Likewise, whenever a hyena has run through the market (its
366 presence is discovered either by the tracks left by the animal or by
825 consulting the soothsayers), just as happens when a naba dies, the
787 market must be moved elsewhere for a few days. It is believed that if [80] a brawl should occur after a hyena had passed through the market, there would certainly be a death.

576 Thus, although the Mogho Naba would not in the least object
643 to shaking hands with a Bambara or a Djerma, he would be astonished if a native Moaga -- even an official -- should offer his hand.

543 As soon as the children of a naba have reached the age of dis-
576 cretion, they may no longer play with their "papa," even less shake hands with him. They must henceforth follow the general rule which requires the Mossi salute, kantissé.

576 [111] Nowadays naba (kombemba) and nayiridamba (ministers
602 of the emperor) understand the uselessness of such signs of distrust. Therefore, even though they continue to be less familiar with their relatives (brothers, uncles, and sons -- whom they regard as rivals), they willingly offer their hands to Mossi of any standing and to foreigners.

644 Reception by the naba. 1) Up to the present time and despite some thirty-five years of French occupation, the way one is received at the court of the emperor, which, of course, befalls his servitors, has altered very little. Natives who are now officials in the administration and in business enterprises are still treated on the same footing as their less highly placed compatriots. Not only are they required to perform the kantissé (Mossi salute) as described by Father Mangin, but also afterwards they must sit on the ground, a position that is difficult in European clothes. Foreigners (Bambara,
[648] Djerma, even Gourounsi) are offered seats because the soronê do not regard them as fellow countrymen.

645 2) By the ministers. At the present time all the emperor's
576 ministers have comfortable houses and splendid drawing rooms
352 furnished with Morris chairs and folding chairs. These seats are
177 offered [112] to visitors of any standing, while benches two or three meters long are reserved for persons of less consequence (house boys, cooks, circle guards, notables, etc.).

631 3) By the kombemba. Benches are always reserved for visitors of
576 note or, if there are none, mats are provided. Some of these chiefs
352 even own a few commonplace chairs and perhaps one or two folding chairs.

585 It should be noted that these ceremonies are often curtailed. They
184 may also vary in ways that will not be described here. Sometimes they may not take place at all. This happens when the girl already has a husband prior to her birth, or when she is part of an inheritance. In such cases her relatives merely take her to her husband.

585 No sacrifices are performed during the marriage ceremonies. The
782 husband does offer a sacrifice on the day he builds a hut for his wife, and at the place where the structure is to be erected. The girl's mother consults the sorcerer a few times to find out if her daughter will be welcomed in her new home, and to know which sacrifice must be offered to ward off illness while she lives with her husband. She communicates the answer to the girl's father, and he himself offers the prescribed sacrifice.

602 In theory, the husband owes nothing else to his in-laws. In practice,
431 he would hold himself in poor esteem if he were not to present them with a few more gifts, especially on important feast days. When his maize is harvested, he sets aside a few ears for his wife's relatives; when his millet is threshed, he is sure to send some to his father-in-law; whenever he organizes any sort of festivity, his in-laws are invited; and he personally helps them in their work.

586 There is no divorce in the formal sense of a judgment rendered by law. A husband may send his wife back to her relatives if she steals, if she is lazy, or especially if she commits adultery, but even in the latter case his action will be regarded with disapproval. It is a husband's duty to watch over his wife and, if necessary, to discipline her. The man who repudiates his wife makes himself unpopular and cannot obtain new wives. It also happens, and this occurs more frequently, that the wife runs away and goes back to her family, /33/ either because she complains of ill treatment, or because she is not happy with her husband, or for some other reason of a more or less dubious character. If the husband manages to catch up with her before she gets home, no great problem is involved. He merely beats her and shuts her in for a few days. If she does reach her relatives, especially if they are in connivance, the husband must present a few gifts to them and even to his wife. The in-laws usually try to convince their daughter to return to her husband, but they do not force her to do so. Even the naba, when called upon to intervene, limits himself to the use of moral authority; his threats usually persuade the woman to return to her husband, who may himself use force if he wishes.

the ancestral spirits, he is the principal political and religious authority 596
within his lineage.

The single term *boodoo* is used to refer to three separate groups: the 562
sib, the lineage, and the local residential kin group described above.
Aside from formalized recognition of patrilineal descent and inheritance, 613
the lineage functions most significantly as a local residential kin group in which the economic and social participation of the female non-members is as important as that of the men. Although the men are most prominent in the direction of its affairs, their wives have a considerable, if somewhat indirect, effect upon decisions made. Even in the relationship of the members of the lineage to their ancestral spirits (*kiemse*), the women play an important part in preparing the food and the libations to be offered. They give birth to the members of the lineage, nourish them until weaning (usually at the age of two), and provide them with guidance and training for their ascribed roles. In the education of the female members of the lineage the wives play a more important part than the men. But it is in their economic activities that the significance of the women's role is best seen. In addition to their farm work, they co-operate fully in repairing roofs, flooring the courtyards, and even assisting in the brick-making which precedes house-building. The economic and social contribution of the wives is of equal importance with that of the husbands and sons, and it is more important than that of the daughters, since females born into the lineage marry and leave just as they become fully productive members of their fathers' households.

Daughters, however, serve their lineage in a different way. As they [602]
are successful in winning for themselves a good name in the households of their husbands, so the bond of economic and social co-operation established between the two lineages at the time of marriage is strengthened. When they mature, they return to assist the members of their lineage with ritual obligations to the ancestors. If they are left childless at their husband's death, they may return to their father's household to reside.

Separated from one another by millet fields and the public way, the 592
dwelling of each Mossi kin group has the appearance of a small walled 342
village. Each round mud house with its thatched roof has a separate courtyard which is usually contiguous to the courtyards of the other houses in the residential unit of which it is a part. The individual dwellings are constructed in such a way—the wall of each house or courtyard being contiguous to that of the nearest neighbor—as to form a circular wall whose exterior is closed at all but two points. The dwelling of each kin group has a small exit and a large open entrance way just within [343]
which is located a thatch-covered sun shelter (*zande*) where the men of the lineage gather to rest, to work at small crafts, and to talk. Guests are

593 adultery except with a woman who is already married. A deceived
837 wife who wishes to take her revenge need only reveal to the spouse of her husband's partner the criminal relations that victimize them both."

593 Let us add that another of the husband's duties is to render help
602 to his wives' relatives if the latter are in needy circumstances.

Of course, the failure to fulfill these obligations could cause
593 the wife to request a divorce. Divorce thus exists among the Mossi,
586 although women rarely resort to it. The bride price is never claimed back by the husband, even if the woman has remained sterile. The children always devolve to the husband.

The husband, on the other hand, may turn out his wife, but Mossi husbands do not usually make use of this right.

585 Let us add that the matter of the girl's virginity at marriage
836 is settled by the Mossi as by most other Blacks. If a girl is bought or betrothed from a very young age, she must preserve herself intact for her future husband. An unbetrothed girl, however, is free to use her own body when she reaches puberty, and if she marries later she cannot be reprimanded for having become a woman prior to her wedding.

567 Let us now proceed to the status of slaves.

Two kinds of slaves are distinguished among the Mossi, aside from the usual distinction between trade slaves and house slaves.

1. The daparé (etymologically, "followers," "men who walk behind their master," from da, "man" and paré, "behind"). They are unmarried slaves.

2. The bagaré ("men of the enclosure"). Those are married captives.

/565/ The daparé live with their master and always remain at his disposal for any work that may come up. They have no small individual plots, therefore, and their master provides them with food and clothing at all times. When they reach marriageable age, their master buys them a wife (or at least it was so in the old days; she would cost the master about 60,000 or 70,000 cowries), and then they settle on their own.

586 8. Incest. In case incest is committed by one of the spouses, the other has the right to request a divorce. The gifts remain in the husband's possession if the wife is guilty, or revert to her if it was the husband who commited incest."

Such are the major theoretical cases which may result in divorce. Let us first return to one of them: nonfulfillment of the conjugal duty on the husband's part. The results noted by Vadier seem contradictory to those which we mentioned above (under "conjugal duty"). Actually, no contradiction is involved. When a husband does not fulfill his conjugal duty toward his wife (this, incidentally, occurs quite rarely), either the woman has only praise for her husband in all /248/ other respects, or he is cruel and mean and she is dissatisfied with him on other counts. In the first instance, she takes a lover outside her husband's compound, a liaison to which he voluntarily shuts his eyes, and she does not request a divorce. In the second case, she does request one. That is how the situation is actually resolved. [837]

586 837 Among the instances of divorce enumerated by Vadier, the most frequent, or rather the least rare, are as follows. (1) Continual infidelity on the part of the wife. I say "continual," for as we have already noted, while in principle a single infidelity on the woman's part enables the husband to ask for a divorce, in actual fact a wife is never sent back for a single breach of the marriage contract. Instead, she is merely beaten. If the woman persists in betraying her husband, however, he eventually sends her away. (2) Insults passed between each other by the husband and wife in a moment of anger do not count, but insults by the husband about his wife's relatives or by a wife about the husband's relatives are serious. (Incidentally, this sensitivity on the subject of relatives is not peculiar to the Mossi. It is common to all the Sudanese Negroes I have seen, Bambara, Malinké, etc.) Thus, if the husband insults his wife's relatives, she may request a divorce. Actually, a woman who loves her husband does not tell her relatives about insults which he may have aimed at them in a moment of anger. She says nothing and does not ask for a divorce. If she holds other grudges against her husband, however, or secretly wishes for a separation, she will eagerly take advantage of this motive which is considered to be serious. As regards the wife's insults against her husband's relatives (like the preceding, an unusual case among the Mossi), the same thing applies. Either the husband loves his wife and says nothing, or he does not love her and takes this opportunity to get rid of her.

586 578 602 [17]

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797 administration to have one of their converts, a younger son of the late chief,
555 elected to the district chieftainship over his elder brother. This belief is probably unfounded, since the Moro Naba seems to be electing the literate sons of chiefs to their fathers' positions so that educated chiefs, and not educated commoners, can serve as members of French parliamentary bodies. Unfortunately, the people of Manga do not understand modern political problems, and have accepted the new chief only because of their traditional respect for the chieftainship.

634 The conversion of the Manga chief to Catholicism has not engendered
797 many problems for his pagan subjects. The chief's primary duty—to begin
769 the yearly ceremonial cycle of sacrifices to the ancestors—has been taken over by his father's brother, who is now considered the ritual head of the chiefly
[602] lineage. Nevertheless, to the chief still accrue the gains of this ceremony because his followers pay him homage and bring him gifts on his birthday, which comes at this period. Moslems in the community also pay their respects at this time, and they prefer his Catholic birthday celebration to the bloody sacrifices of chickens to the ancestors. On the other hand, the chief shows little of the common Catholic disapproval of Moslems and sends gifts to their leaders on the Moslem feast days. He also entertains the district Moslems when they come to pay him homage.

797 The Catholic chief does not act as a pivot in the exchange of wives be-
634 tween pagans of his lineage and the other lineages. This task now falls to his father's brothers. Nevertheless, as district chief he is constantly involved
582 with the marital problems involving pagan parents and their Catholic children. The main source of the difficulty is that Catholic girls are encouraged to refuse to join their pagan husbands when so ordered by their parents. The mission not only insists that the girl freely choose her own husband, but encourages her to reject a polygynous union. Catholicism thereby interposes it-
[562] self between the girls and their society, not only impairing the prestige of their fathers and lineages but also giving the girls more freedom than they would ordinarily possess.

The pagans claim that by encouraging girls to choose mates without parental consent, the Catholics are really taking the opportunity to obtain wives for young Catholic men. Paradoxically, there seems to be some truth in this, since Bouniol, a White Father, states:

> A Mossi who is unable to acquire a wife by [traditional] means must either remain unmarried or seduce another man's wife . . . they must choose between celibacy and immorality.
>
> Such a state of affairs creates many problems for the missions, especially as the system is recognized and sanctioned by the colonial authorities. . . . Young native Christians are obviously placed in a very awkward position. Their conversion angers their parents, who refuse to give them a wife; neither will their friends bestow a daughter upon them, because they know that they will not receive one in return, since a Christian may not give a daughter in marriage to a pagan. . . . *Consequently, unless the missionaries help them to find a wife, they must remain unmarried—a very discouraging prospect!* (1920:160 italics mine)

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121 vented by the "playful antagonism of teasing," and he argued that the regular repetition of joking serves as a reminder of the social "disjunction" of the relation, while "conjunction" is simultaneously maintained by friendliness.

Such an analysis is insightful but inadequate. The social structural sources of the need for reliance on joking and the social and psychological processes which joking involves are more complex than Radcliffe-Brown recognized. More occurs in joking than the symbolic reification of "separateness" and the concurrent assertion of intergroup amity.

The Structural Context of Joking

In support of this contention I would like first to consider the characteristics of the structural contexts in which joking tends to be institutionalized. For it is from the nature of certain social structural situations that joking derives its reason for being.

I suggest that wherever joking is institutionalized, the relations between the participants will tend to be characterized by five interrelated factors:

(1) *separation:* either social or spatial or both;
(2) *reciprocity:* a traditionally sanctioned exchange of economic, social, or ceremonial goods and/or services;
(3) *ambivalence:* an equivocal melange of amity and hostility;
(4) *equality:* analogous individual or group status;
(5) *independence:* the absence of relevant allegiance to a single authority.

Obviously the comparative weight of these several factors will vary with the relationships of which they are a part. Where, for example, spatial separation is great, and/or the reciprocal tie is weak, joking is likely to be mild. Where ambivalence is strong, joking may be relied on more frequently and may be more hostile in content. Where the status of the participants is unequal, joking may tend to be asymmetrical. And so on.

I further suggest that as an adjustive mechanism joking derives its significance from the manner in which it provides concurrently for the operation of three interrelated but analytically separable processes: communication, control, and catharsis. These will be considered later.

Joking Among the Mossi

101 The points in the argument just outlined may be illustrated by a brief discussion of the varieties of joking found among the Mossi living in Yatenga, an indigenous kingdom in the Voltaic Republic of West Africa.
571 Among the Mossi, joking is institutionalized as an adjustive mechanism in
● the following relationships: (1) between Ego and his mother's agnatic kin, particularly his mother's elder brother; (2) between Ego and his mother's brother's wife; (3) between siblings-in-law; (4) between sibs; (5) between age-sets in the same age-grade; (6) between certain villages; and (7) be-

10:Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1964 FA28 Mossi FA28
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ship itself and the contract of interlineage co-operation and solidarity which every marriage serves to establish or reinforce.[4]

Although this joking interchange is seen in its full implications when there is an immediate source of dissension between marriage partners, it may also occur in the absence of any specific difficulty. Then it is apparently indulged in simply because it is expected, and for the pleasure which the Mossi, like all people, derive from an occasion to exercise their wit. It is this relatively disinterested joking which has been most frequently described in the literature, and this may account for the failure of many scholars to perceive more fully the important social and psychological functions which joking may fulfill.

Conclusion

This paper has been written as a tentative step toward a reformulation of the various and disparate observations on joking contained in the anthropological literature. I have contended that an analysis of this literature indicates that wherever joking is institutionalized the structural relationship between the participants tends to be characterized by five significantly interrelated structural attributes: separation, reciprocity, ambivalence, equality, and independence. I have also indicated that such joking may serve as an adjustive mechanism by providing for the concurrent maintenance of communication, control, and the culturally harmless catharsis of potentially disruptive emotions.

A variety of forms of institutionalized joking found among the Mossi of Yatenga have been cited to illustrate these points. However, I suggest that the factors which cluster with this reliance on joking as an adjustive mechanism are not unique to the Mossi. Institutionalized joking reported for other parts of Africa appears to be structurally and processually similar.

NOTES

1. A shorter version of this paper was read at the annual meeting of the American Anthropological Association held in San Francisco in November, 1963. It is based on field research conducted among the Mossi from 1954 to 1956 with the assistance of a Ford Foundation Fellowship.

2. Marriage between the members of descent groups united by a joking alliance is regarded by the Mossi as highly desirable, apparently in recognition of the useful role of joking as an adjustive mechanism. Once such a marriage is contracted, however, Ego and his wife must take care that their joking insults are directed only at the younger kinsmen of the other and that the insulting remarks are personal. It would, for example, be acceptable for Ego to call his wife's younger sister a disreputable shrew but dangerous to call her a slave (a term of disrespect used frequently in joking between sibs). To refer to her as a slave would cast unflattering aspersions on her entire kin group, including her mother and father, with whom, in their new status as parents-in-law, Ego may no longer joke.

3. I believe that joking is also institutionalized between the Mossi and the Yarse, a highly acculturated ethnic minority of Mande origin who live throughout Yatenga. There is also joking between the Mossi and the indigenous blacksmith caste. Unfortunately my data on these two instances of joking are inadequate.

634 tured slaves, whom he settled behind his compound and in separate villages
173 under their own chiefs. He also welcomed refugees from wars in other territories and established them in special villages under their own chiefs.

631 The Dimdamba followed a similar practice in establishing power and
173 control. According to Cheron, when Mogho Naba Koudoumie sent his son Tiraongo to conquer the Ninisi of Boussouma, the Ninisi defended themselves fiercely. Tiraongo's advance was thus very slow until he found a Ninisi named Wine, dressed in a panther's skin and hiding in a hole, "who on the promise that his life would be saved, consented to serve as guide to Tiraongo and to make propitiatory sacrifices to the divinities of the country. Thanks to him, the Mossi were able to progress to Somtongande."[6] Boulsa tradition recounts that when Naba Namende left Ouagadougou as the Kourita of Mogho Naba Oubri and took possession of their province, he placed his sons at the head of the principal villages "in order to control it [Boulsa] better."[7] One son was even sent to rule over a village at the request of the local Tengsoba.

634 The villages that made up a Mossi district were usually ruled by chiefs
613 who belonged to sub-lineages of the local ruling lineage. These village
778 chiefs and the members of their lineage formed a noble class, the *nakomce*
[565] ("children of the Naba"). As long as a lineage held the nam of a district, all of its sub-lineages had all the privileges of the noble class, regardless of whether they had charge of villages. But if the Mogho Naba deprived
[558] a ruling lineage of the nam by deposing the district chief, all its members were reduced to commoner status. Such people still traced their descent from the Mogho Naba who was the ancestor of their lineage founder, but this relationship ceased to be important unless the lineage recovered the nam of the district. If it did not, the former ruling lineage officially lost its ancient link with the royal clan within a few generations and became a nondescript local group.

634 The place of a deposed royal lineage was usually taken by the relatives
613 of the nobles who subsequently acquired the nam of the district. These
778 newcomers were genealogically closer to the ruling Mogho Naba, and
557 formed the new nakomce of the district. The new district chief sometimes sent his sons to rule over the villages under his command. But if the village
558 chiefs did not suffer the same fate as their lineage head at the hands of the Mogho Naba, the new district chief often permitted them to retain their posts. Thus they retained possession of the nam but lost their noble status. They served the new district chief in a political sense much as the Tengsoba served him in a ritual sense.

554 The plight of deposed district nakomce shows quite clearly the distinc-
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tion made by the Mossi between kinship and sovereignty within their 602
governmental system. Kinship was the basis on which the ruling class 778
was formed. However, sovereignty itself, although associated with kinship, was not unalterably linked with it. When a ruling Mossi kin group held the nam, its subgroups were linked by bonds of prestige. But once this group lost the nam or access to the nam, its component subgroups began to drift away. That this situation could exist shows the true nature of the relationship between sovereignty and kinship within the Mossi political system.

There were other chiefs in Mossi districts who had never had either a 602
lineal or a collateral relationship with any lineage of the ancient royal clan.[8] 554
These men were the descendants of provincial ministers. They became 634
chiefs for the same reasons that the sons of ruling sovereigns became 557
chiefs. When a Mogho Naba sent his sons to replace deposed district chiefs, the young men were usually accompanied by a full complement of administrators. These administrators, mostly younger sons of administrators at Ouagadougou who would not normally succeed their fathers, often automatically replaced the administrators of the former chiefs. But if, for reasons of administrative efficiency, the new chiefs elected to retain the administrators of their predecessors, they assigned village chieftainships to the newcomers. They might also settle them in independent hamlets and furnish them with wives and slaves. For chiefs in this category, kinship did play an initial role in the accession to power; but since they were not related to the district chief, they never gained noble status. Socially, they were comparable to chiefs who were former nobles; as in the latter's case, their kinship ties with the administrators at Ouagadougou gradually lost their significance.

There were yet other kinds of chiefs or men who rated the title Naba 634
in Mossi districts. They included: the descendants of aboriginal chiefs, the chiefs of alien groups, and the chiefs of the Mossi refugee groups that had left other districts because of disputes over the nam. In districts where there were large groups of the autochthonous Ninisi, there were Ninisi "chiefs"; in most cases, however, these "chiefs" were really the senior Tengsobadamba of the villages. In most other districts, the sole Ninisi "chief" was the official Tengsoba of the district chief. This man had ritual power but no political power. Yet he was called Naba, because the Mossi thought that all persons in positions of command or prominence must be named chiefs. Villages made up of aliens (Busansi, Gurunsi, Yarse, and occasionally Fulani) had chiefs in the true sense of the word. These men were granted access to the nam by the district chiefs, and their [778] [428]

power and authority were inherited by their families in the same manner as among Mossi lineages.

The last important category of Mossi chiefs included men who ruled over slave and serf villages. These men were themselves the descendants of slaves and serfs, for no free-born Mossi were placed in such posts. Needless to say, these chiefs were never lineally or collaterally related to the district chiefs, and therefore were never nobles. However, they might be affinally related to district chiefs, and in such cases the relationship was often of some political value.

It must be emphasized that once a man was made chief, he was respected, if not honored, by all the people of the district. In some districts, the Dapore Naba and the Baglere Naba, chiefs of two categories of serfs, were among the most valued assistants of the Kombere Naba. The only people who sometimes refused to honor the village chiefs were the nakomce, who were the holders of the district nam. Nevertheless, they were censored by the Kombere if they were disrespectful to his subordinates. No district chief could allow his government to be jeopardized by the maltreatment of persons who served it. In any conflict between the nam and the kin group, the supremacy of the nam was always maintained.

Every Mossi ruler, whether he held the nam of a kingdom, principality, district, or village, was *ipso facto* also *Boodkasma* (literally, "family head") of the local segment of his boodoo. The word boodoo refers to patrilineal groups that anthropologists would normally call clans, maximal lineages, major lineages, or minor lineages. The Mossi do not make any terminological distinction between these levels of their segmentary lineage system. Nevertheless, they recognize and use the status differences between these units to limit the access of each unit to the corporate assets of the boodoo. Their major social distinction is drawn between the minor lineage, which is also called boodoo, and its component minimal lineages. Each minimal-lineage unit is called a *babissi* (literally, "father's brother"), and is really a large extended family composed of relatives who had a common ancestor, three, four, or at most five generations ago.

The Mogho Naba, for example, was head of his babissi as well as ex officio head of the entire royal clan. Those rulers who claimed equality with him claimed that they, not he, were the true heads of the royal clan and the "direct" descendants of Ouedraogo and Oubri. As a function of their political position, the many princes and district chiefs were heads of their own babissi and of the maximal lineage to which their babissi belonged. Like the Mogho Naba, they were the ex officio heads of all members of their boodoo who lived in their territory and who claimed descent from the same royal ancestors.

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613 173 778 [554]

cestors. They did not remember how they were related unless they happened to have a common grandfather or great-grandfather who had held the nam. The differential value thus placed on genealogies by the noble and non-noble lineages was due in most cases to the differential access of these lineages to the strategic resources of Mossi society. People who held the nam and belonged to noble lineages enjoyed special claims to goods and services. Those whose lineages did not hold the nam had no such privileges.

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Because Mossi society was basically patrilineal, a man shared in the status and the corporate assets of his patrilineage. Conversely, a man had no access to the status or resources of his mother's patrilineage except for some ritual rights and duties that accrued to him as a *yagenga* (a sister's or daughter's son). These rights and duties included residence in the home of a maternal patrilineage during childhood, attendance at sacrifices to the mother's patrilineal ancestors, the settling of quarrels between maternal kinsmen, and ritual license to seize specific items of property from these relatives. This license dramatized the *lack* of access rather than *freedom* of access to the property of maternal relatives.

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When a man's maternal relatives controlled the nam of the territory in which he lived, he could improve his social and economic position. In many cases, a young man who had gone to live as a "stranger" with a noble uncle or grandfather remained with these relatives. His privilege to remain was sanctioned by the Mossi belief that a boy's maternal ancestors would wreak vengeance on any person who tried to evict him from the village from which his mother had been "sent into the bush" (given away as a wife). By using various strategies and subterfuges, the "stranger" obtained wives through his maternal relatives and used their land and other resources. After several generations the lineal descendants of the "stranger" frequently became indistinguishable from their maternal relatives, although such cases were not often formally acknowledged. Whether these "sisters' children" ever managed to obtain the nam of their mother's patrilineage is a moot point, because in theory they could not. Yet, also by Mossi definition, a man could never inherit rights and duties in his mother's patrilineage; however, it is known that this did happen. It is possible that the close check kept by the ruling lineage on its genealogy made usurpation impossible. Yet I know of several cases in which candidates for chiefship feared competition from men whose descent actually barred them from the nam.

The son of a nobleman and a commoner woman seldom attached himself permanently to his maternal patrilineage, although he retained all of his customary rights, privileges, and duties in it. Occasionally, noblemen did attach themselves to their maternal relatives, but those who did had

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613 778 602 554 usually been banished from their patrilineage for some illegal act or had voluntarily left home after a dispute over inheritance of the nam, goods, or women.

The fact that noble lineages often absorbed sisters' sons was only one of the reasons why such lineages survived and expanded, even if only at the expense of other lineages within the local society. Another reason for this growth was that the nobles, possessing the nam and its prerogatives, received more wives than the commoners. They had more children and thus multiplied more rapidly. Mossi lineages were generally exogamous through their whole depth, but exogamy became increasingly mandatory as the segments became smaller. Marriage within a maximal lineage was permitted only when some of its members had moved so far away from its original locality that the original ties were either forgotten or ignored. The Mossi [173] have myths in which the lineage founder gives his overly numerous descendants permission to marry certain of their relatives. Even so, if a marriage was actually found to have occurred between distant relatives, appropriate sacrifices had to be made to the ancestors.

613 Marriage was also forbidden between persons who could trace a common maternal ancestor. But because the time depth here was very shallow, total bilateral exogamy was practiced to a depth of only four or five generations. Of course, the differential concern with genealogies between those who had access to the nam and those who did not, had an effect on the extent to which exogamy was practiced.

613 583 Most Mossi marriages were based on an exchange of women between two lineages linked by a long-term series of reciprocal exchanges of goods and services. Women were regarded as the most valuable part of this system. In theory, only the Boodkasma of a babissi had the right to give a woman as a wife to another lineage. However, the initiators of the reciprocal relations between lineage segments were often babissi heads, Yirisobadamba (heads of nuclear families), or individual lineage members. When a man from one lineage "made friends" with a member of another and rendered him a service or received a favor from him, their respective lineages were considered to be involved. The corporate nature of the lineage segment was acknowledged by all persons engaged in reciprocal relations, and the relations between two individuals were seen as relations between their lineages.

When a man wished to give a daughter to a friend as a wife, he had to consult his Boodkasma, who then gave the woman to the friend's Boodkasma. The latter accepted the woman as a wife for the lineage rather than for the man involved. The lineage retained its rights *in gene-*

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permission to use weogho in the district, and new hamlets arose in this way. A Yirisoba who could not obtain adequate land on which to grow food for his family left the district and sought land elsewhere, especially among his mother's patrilineage. However, village and district chiefs always tried to prevent this because they did not like to lose any of their subjects.

As director of economic activities in the household, the Yirisoba supervised the agricultural labor of his charges. It was he who directed the work of his wives, his sons, and his sons' wives, and supervised the care of the family herd. He provided the cotton, which was carded and spun by the women and woven by the men. It was also his task to ensure adequate clothing for the members of his household; and he sold excess commodities in order to buy salt, kola nuts, bracelets, foreign clothes, and other products imported from the forest and desert zones. In each case, the Yirisoba had to balance judiciously the requirements of his household against his obligations to the community and to the political hierarchy. He had to prevent economic rivalry among his sons, and especially among his sons' wives. He had to make sure that every married member of the household had sufficient time to provide goods and services for his own family, and that foodstuffs were distributed equitably among the wives. Finally, he had to use the resources of the household to build and maintain the nexus of socioeconomic relationships that provided wives for the male members of the household, and to meet his obligations to the political hierarchy.

The Yirisoba also had social and economic responsibilities toward the other members of his babissi and boodoo. He furnished labor and goods to needy lineage members and to non-relatives with whom he had marriage arrangements. Since much of this help was given on the basis of ultimate reciprocity, very little loss was involved. However, the relationship between commoner and noble families was quite different. In theory, the nobles had no claims on the property of the commoners; but in practice, they did claim such rights. Furthermore, commoner lineages often gave the nobles many more wives than the nobles returned. This inequality enabled the nobles to receive more goods and services from their marriage partners among the commoners than they gave in return. The nobles thus took advantage of their power as possessors of the nam, but even membership in the royal lineage did not exempt them from supporting the governmental services at all levels. This duty was incumbent upon every Moaga.

The Mossi people could not refuse to support their political organization, but often complained about having to do so. Many Mossi felt that their rulers were greedy and avaricious and received too many gifts. Some Mossi held that if the chiefs were not placated with goods and services,

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The migrants bring back all types of goods with them. According to Dufour: "Money as such is not brought back in very large proportion because manufactured products of the English colony (Gold Coast) cost less. Consequently, each year there is a great introduction of bicycles, sewing machines, fabrics". (Dufour 1956 : 140). One might add to this list kerosene lamps, zinc buckets, all types of wearing apparel, and all manner of household goods. An inventory of the common trunk of two returning migrants revealed the following merchandise: two kerosene lamps, two bottles of kerosene, two burnoose of black serge trimmed with pink silk, one white burnoose, two blue shirts, two khaki shorts, two tubes of Thermogene (a medicated rub), eight women's headkerchiefs, two Moslem fezes, two hand mirrors, two jars of Vaseline petroleum jelly, two pairs of sandals, one black scarf, packs of camphor balls, and one bottle of perfume. These goods represent the migrant's work over one season, from October to the following April, in the cacao fields of Ghana. Other migrants return with more, but few return with less. The actual value of these goods has been estimated by Dufour at about one billion francs C.F.A. per year. The custom duties which the migrants pay amount to more than 150 million francs C.F.A. annually—the sum they actually paid into the treasury of the Haute Volta in 1953 (Rouch 1956 : 139 ff.).

The migrants distribute to their relatives a good part of the goods they bring back, but a large proportion gets into the hands of other people either through the market or through more direct channels. Here is an example taken from my notes of March 24, 1956: "*Trading in bicycles:* Moussa gave Souliman a cow and an old bicycle for a new bicycle which Souliman had bought for 5,000 francs from a passing migrant. Souliman was trying to sell this same cycle for 6,250 francs, thus trying to make a profit of 1,250 francs just two or three days after he had bought it . . . Souliman slaughtered the cow which he received from Moussa and sold the beef to the local *restaurateur* at an additional profit. Souliman appears to be a sharp individual. He recently bought another bicycle for 5,000 francs from a migrant and resold it for 7,500 francs." This type of trading is not unusual, but the most typical articles resold by migrants in the local markets are lamps, worn shirts, shoes and other articles of clothing.

The growth of migration among Mossi men has led to a new type of commercial activity in the country. This is the selling of cooked food by the women to passing migrants. These women and young girls prepare food such as chicken, rice, millet balls, millet flour water and fried cakes which they bring to the principal thoroughfares to sell. Many of them arrive at the central village areas as early as four

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656 weapon on top of one of the sheds before he makes his rounds. The
626 women do not carry any weapons to market except their "words" but
411 even these are not often used because of the desire to avoid hostility—
[578] which the Mossi do not like to have disrupt one of their major institutions.

443 The rural market is the center of Mossi social life, and friends
571 as well as enemies meet within its confines. What Mangin wrote some forty years ago is still true: "Every self-respecting Mossi—man or woman, child or elder—must go to market at least once in a while, were it only to look . . . and to be looked at, if he can put on some
[79] handsome clothes" (Mangin 1921 : 53). Except for the Moslems who
[84] are now experimenting with a form of Purdah, there are few persons who do not go to market. The absence of someone from the market for more than two consecutive occasions is a sure sign of illness, travel, or family crisis. As one man said to me, "I must go to market, and when I get there I look for three persons: my girl friend, my debtor and my enemy. If I do now know whether any of them are at the market I am ill at ease. And when I go to the market and do not see them all, the market is not good."

443 The lively character of the Mossi market will be discussed later,
571 but throughout this kaleidoscope of activities certain consistencies
576 can be discerned. For example, one notices many different kinds of greetings and salutations in the market place, but each one of them correctly indicates the exact relation or relationship between the persons involved. Young girls on passing each other on one of their innumerable circuits of the market bend their knees slightly and place both of their cupped hands on their own breasts. Only then will they stop and exchange news. At the end of the conversation they repeat the same greeting and continue their rounds. Both girls and women greet casual male acquaintances in the same way, but
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greeting a lower status benefactor, a man will get down and greet him from a kneeling position. It is because of this elaborate system of greeting, with the many opportunities thus provided for one person to slight another, that many important persons never go to the market. As a rule, the failure of any one person to give the required greeting to another when they meet in the market place is always an indication of strained relations between them.

The persons from whom an individual may buy goods, and the kinds of goods which may be purchased by one individual from another, are governed by convention and social relationships. A person may not buy anything from a relative except European goods. A man cannot buy any but cooked food in the market place, and often he asks a female relative or a passing female to buy it for him. To do the contrary is held to be unmanly and indicative of a bad character. A woman will not buy cotton cloth but will send a man to buy it for her. She would hate to have people believe that she has no male relative to weave it for her, or what is more likely, that she is too lazy to spin the cotton thread which would then be woven for her. A woman may purchase any type of commodity from other women, but she must be careful not to patronize men who are known to be libertines or with whom she is suspected of having an affair. She must also be careful about running errands for men, since people know that men often use this device to establish amorous relationships with women. Men also use this device to give presents, or to arrange secret meetings with them. If any man sees a female relative involved in any of these misadventures, he chases her away and more than likely curses the man, if he does not fight him. In any event, he warns the man to leave the woman alone.

The market is one of the few places where men and women can initiate relationships not sanctioned by their relatives. Under normal conditions marriages are arranged between unrelated individuals through the lineage members who establish "friendly" relationships. Two friends might ask their lineage heads for women to exchange as wives or the "friend" who has received more gifts from the other will give over a wife. Because the older men most often have goods and women at their disposal, they are usually the ones who receive wives. The result is that most young men have no wives, and until they inherit wives from lineage members, are continually seeking to establish intimate relations with women whom they meet on the market place. The technique which a young man employes to gain the favors of a woman he sees at market is highly stereotyped. First of all, he must ascertain that the woman in question is not a member of his maximal lineage or married to a member of his own lineage. A responsible

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the noble class, whose actions embody the ideology that the exercise of sovereignty is a corporate right which reverts to all of them when the head ruler dies. Much of this raiding is symbolic and does not interrupt market activities.

Many of the ceremonies connected with the funeral of chiefs and respected deceased elders take place in the market. Sometime between the interment of the dead person, the *keema,* and the first burial ceremonies, the sister-in-law *(dakia)* of the dead man in her role as joking relative—a role she plays until the funeral ceremonies are completed—impersonates him in the market place. On the day chosen for this rite the *dakia* dresses in the clothes of the *keema* and goes to market. While there, she acts as she observed her brother-in-law to have acted in the past: she circles the market and buys goods; she buys beer from his favorite beer seller and drinks with his friends; and for a moment, at least, she sits with his old cronies in their favorite haunts and takes part in their discussions. She may even be serenaded by *griots* who sing praises in honor of "her" ancestors, and she rewards them before leaving the market place that evening.

The market is the scene of an important ritual during the final funeral ceremonies, which are held about one year after a man was buried. On the morning of this ceremony the female relatives of the *keema,* led by his eldest daughter and his *dakia,* appear in the market and go from stall to stall buying all the things the deceased used in his lifetime. These include meat, *zumbala* (locust bean balls), cotton, tobacco, salt, kola nuts, peppers, *kumba* (a tomato), cakes, cooked millet-mush balls, potatoes, etc. When they have gathered all of these things, they retire to a spot near the market where they lay out all the foodstuff in baskets. In the meantime, the drummers play the royal airs, if the dead man was a chief, or ordinary rhythms if he was a commoner. Then the *keema's* eldest daughter places a basket on her head and, accompanied by four men, leads a procession of drummers and of the other women, also with their baskets, around the market. While this procession is circling the market three times in honor of the deceased, the *dakia,* carrying a very old basket containing the stalest food she could find, weaves back and forth through the marching throng making a nuisance of herself. After the third round the marchers return to their assembly point whence the eldest daughter and some of the older women now rush into the market, stealing merchandise from the stalls and placing it in their baskets. This assault is often so quickly done that it is fairly successful. The raiders then join the other mourners at the assembly point, where with bowed heads they listen respectfully while the chief drummer recites the genealogy of the *keema* and tells him that the people from the surrounding villages

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765 and districts were present to honor him. This being completed, the
602 *griots* are paid, everyone rises and shouts *Ne Wardo* (the salutation at
443 funerals), and that part of the funeral ceremony during which a man
[871] takes leave of the market community is concluded. Now his relatives, descendants and friends all return to the market, whose sights and sounds make it an integral part of the life cycle of the Mossi—the one institution of their society in which almost everyone participates actively.

443 Preparation for a market day, especially the tri-weekly Friday
512 market or *Raga kasanga,* usually begins on Thursday. This day is
571 characterized by a great deal of activity: preparing the commodities which are to be sold the next day, washing body and clothes, and combing hair. The women who prepare the beer and fried foods work late into the night preparing their wares, and a visit to the homes of the
[857] *griots* finds them preparing their drums. The little boys who go to the roadside to chant Moslem prayers to the passers-by, and the little girls who sell water to these strangers redouble their efforts until late on Thursday night to get enough money to buy presents in the market the next day. Finally, when it is quite late and the beer-making fires are out, everyone retires until the morning of the market.

At 7:00 A.M. on Friday the market is deserted except for a leper who sweeps out the stalls of the sellers in return for bits of food or presents of money. Looking at the empty stalls, one has a certain amount of difficulty imagining that this spot will be crowded with human beings five hours hence. But one is also conscious of the fact that even at this early hour scores of persons have already left their homes in distant villages and are on their way to market loaded with prod-
[462] uce and with high hopes for the day. About 9:00 A.M. the first women arrive, balancing net-covered bundles on their heads, and take their positions in the various sections of the market with either face or back pointing to the direction from which they came. By 9:30 A.M. the butchers have arrived with their bleating sheep and goats and an
[273] aged cow. The first beer sellers have also arrived and are giving "sips" to men before they settle down to sustained drinking.

The pace of the market quickens about 10:30, and in the distance the first tap of the Bindere's drum resounds. All of a sudden, the market seems to have become a giant magnet, drawing long lines of
[854] people towards it along every path and from every direction. Women dressed in brightly colored print cloths and dresses, with babies straddling their backs and the inevitable bundles on their head, saunter into their places. Young children run ahead of their mothers or stumble behind them. Those vendors of European products who customarily transport their goods in boxes on bicycles arrive in the

584 daughter; (2) when the father is in extreme penury, he gives his still
596 unpromised daughter to some rich native who, with the customary gifts, will help him in his need, since the gifts of the fiancé go to the man who promised the young girl; (3) the first daughter in a household,
[603] whether or not she is the only daughter, must be promised by her maternal grandfather and not by the head of the family."

This constitutes, I believe, a curious vestige of matriarchy which doubtless refers to those very distant times when the Mossi family revolved around the maternal rather than the paternal line.

4. The mother of the young girl. "The girl's mother," says Vadier, "is sometimes consulted. Her husband merely asks her if she is satisfied with the choice he has made in agreement with the head of the family. Her answer, however, is given no weight whatever.

"The fiancé's mother is not even consulted."

Such at least is the theory. In reality, no doubt, the mother of the young girl often has more authority than the theory supposes.

431 Gifts.—Bride price is nonexistent in Mossi marriage. This is a very
583 important point which differentiates the Mossi and even, I believe,
[71] the Voltaic /237/ tribes in general, from the Mandé groups, such as the Bambara and Malinké, where bride price does exist and is actually quite high (I say quite high, considering the general poverty of the Sudanese). I did not emphasize this sufficiently in my Noir du Soudan in the chapter concerning the Mossi family, pages 548 and 549. I did mention that the price paid to win a Mossi girl of the Ouagadougou region ranged from 1, 500 cowries (1. 50 francs) to 50, 000 cowries (50 francs). In fact, these are gifts rather than bride price.

Although there is no bride price, properly speaking, the gifts have an important role.

"After the promise of marriage," says Vadier, "the future husband must come every year, after the filikienga /a feast/, to bring a few small gifts to the head of the family and to the girl's mother. These consist as a rule of a little millet, salt, a few hundred cowries, a mat, or two or three crudely made séko /coarse matting/.

"As for the father, he receives no gifts, which does not mean that he does not benefit from those received by his wife or by the head of the family.

"Likewise, the girl receives no gifts. Moreover, she may not utilize the commodities or foodstuffs given to her mother.

"The gifts offered during the long betrothal period cannot be of great value. A prospective husband who should bring 5, 000 or 6, 000

775 that the same baby is returning. So, in order to induce him to
553 remain on earth, they give him a significant name.

One of these is Yewayan (literally, "one who has returned"), meaning "Here he is, back again; it is he once more, and we recognize him."

The same name is used for all members of the same family.

304 Scars. When a child is a year or two old, the family calls in an old woman who draws more or less straight lines on his face (cheeks, chin, forehead, even the nose) with a razor. These marks vary according to region and are not [193] the same, for example, at Kaya as at Ouagadougou.

The design used most often, however, has three straight lines from forehead to chin and one or two horizontal lines running across the nose and joining the vertical lines on the cheeks.

853 Feeding. If a mother does not have enough milk, she goes very early in the morning to a tree, for example, the kamsaongo
782 or wédega (of the family of gohine lianas), to ask for milk. She falls to her knees, and believing that she is addressing a living person, she makes her request humbly, but with what faith! It appears that the prayer is often granted, but the woman must never again go under the tree or she will lose her milk.

853 The question of choosing a nurse does not arise in Mossi
● 604 country unless the mother dies. In that case, the little orphan is entrusted to a sister of the child's father. If she has been a mother, she too goes to the tree to ask for milk, as described above, even if her most recent delivery occurred years before. Finally, if the child thus nursed is a girl and survives, she becomes the property of her father's sister who will give her in marriage, later on, to the suitor of her choice.

III. Death

764 The importance of funeral ceremonies depends on the age and
554 rank of the deceased.

Nitiema (aged persons). Upon the death of an [194] old man or woman, all the relatives who live in the village are assembled.

tween the Mossi and several other ethnic groups. In each instance the structural relationship in which joking occurs is characterized by the five features listed above.

Joking with the Mother's Brother

The relationship with a maternal uncle is marked by all five of the structural features mentioned. Separation results from the rules of patrilineal descent and inheritance rules, from patrisib exogamy, and from the general observance of patrilocal residence. The relationship is reciprocal in that a mother's brother serves throughout Ego's life as an important alternative source of emotional, economic, and social support: he often acts as intermediary in disputes between Ego and his parents or the elders of his lineage; he gives Ego frequent gifts; and residence in the mother's patriclan is the most frequent alternative to patrilocality. In turn Ego, as a result of the permissive relationship he enjoys with the spirits of his deceased cognatic kinsmen, often serves their living descendants as an intermediary in their ritual efforts to maintain a secure relationship with the ancestral spirits.

Ambivalence between Ego and his mother's brother and her other kin results from the conflicting sources of "conjunction" and "dissociation" just mentioned. The conflict between a strong affective bond—a "feeling" of kinship—and a system of inheritance which denies it jural recognition generates frustration. The ambivalence in the relationship is manifested not only by joking, which is asymmetrical—with Ego being the more aggressive—but by theft as well. Perhaps as partial compensation for his inability to inherit matrilaterally, Ego is permitted to steal his mother's brother's property during his lifetime and can also make off with the beer and some of the animals collected for his funeral.

As for equality of status, the descent groups of Ego and mother's brother are structurally equivalent. Although their respective positions within these two groups differ, the permissiveness of Ego's relationship to his maternal uncle absolves him from recognition of the canons of comportment that otherwise prevail among the Mossi in relations between persons of differing status. Indeed, disregard for such status differences is part of the "joke." Independence is assured by the fact that Ego and his mother's brother are members of autonomous descent groups and that each is responsive only to the authority of his respective lineage elders.

Joking with a Mother's Brother's Wife

Joking between Ego and his mother's brother's wife is to be regarded as a separate relationship because of her nonmembership in the mother's brother's descent group, but certain of the structural circumstances are similar. The source of separation from the mother's brother's wife is evident. The reciprocal tie that unites them is indirect; when Ego is received warmly in his mother's brother's household it is the wife of the latter who prepares the food he is given. Similarly, as a member of her husband's patriclan, she benefits

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571 604 indirectly from the good will of his ancestral spirits whose benevolence Ego often invokes.

Ambivalence follows from other characteristics of the relationship. Resentment of Ego's depredations of her husband's property and jealous concern for the inheritance rights of her own children appear to be at least partially balanced by a share of the affection her husband shows for Ego. However, joking in this relationship is asymmetrical. The mother's brother's wife takes the more aggressive role, and from the vehemence of her joking, and the [152] structural nature of the relationship, it appears likely that amity lies less heavily in the balance than hostility. The groups to which the two parties belong are equal in status. Their respective positions within them, of course, are not, and this is reflected in the aforementioned asymmetry. Each party is obviously independent of the authority system of the other.

571 607 *Joking Between Siblings-in-Law*

[144] Siblings-in-law who joke are separated by the rule of sib exogamy observed among the Mossi. Reciprocity is basic to the marriage contract that unites their respective kin groups. Several factors tend to create ambivalence in the relationship. Both kin groups—in particular, the extended families of the two marriage partners—profit from the reciprocal tie established between them, but possible failure on the part of either group to reciprocate adequately, [378] particularly with regard to marriage payments, constitutes a persistent source [381] of potential friction. Moreover, the Mossi observe the levirate. Joking between siblings-in-law who are potential spouses, yet are presently constrained by a [133] prohibition against adultery, has frequently been ascribed the function of reducing tension in a situation of conflict. The kin groups of siblings-in-law [144] are always structurally equivalent because groups occupying significantly dif- [580] ferent strata in Mossi society do not intermarry. As members of autonomous descent groups the participants are obviously independent of one another.

571 614 *Joking Between Sibs*

Sibs (or lineages) whose members joke with one another are, of course, also separate groups.[2] They are always united by a strong tradition of reciprocal social and economic aid. Ambivalence apparently stems from the conflict between this tradition of reciprocity and actual competing claims to land. The origin of joking relationships between two descent groups is often ascribed to the alleged fact that, when they first arrived in the village, leaders of both falsely claimed to the chief that he and his kinsmen had arrived first, [423] and thus had a prior right to land, and that the members of the other group were their slaves. Despite their jocular allegations, both groups are in fact structurally equal and independent.

571 561 *Joking Between Age-Sets*

Joking between age-sets within an age-grade varies with the generational

shoulder; but when he arrives in the market, he calmly places his weapon on top of one of the sheds before he makes his rounds. The women do not carry any weapons to market except their "words" but even these are not often used because of the desire to avoid hostility—which the Mossi do not like to have disrupt one of their major institutions.

The rural market is the center of Mossi social life, and friends as well as enemies meet within its confines. What Mangin wrote some forty years ago is still true: "Every self-respecting Mossi—man or woman, child or elder—must go to market at least once in a while, were it only to look . . . and to be looked at, if he can put on some handsome clothes" (Mangin 1921 : 53). Except for the Moslems who are now experimenting with a form of Purdah, there are few persons who do not go to market. The absence of someone from the market for more than two consecutive occasions is a sure sign of illness, travel, or family crisis. As one man said to me, "I must go to market, and when I get there I look for three persons: my girl friend, my debtor and my enemy. If I do now know whether any of them are at the market I am ill at ease. And when I go to the market and do not see them all, the market is not good."

The lively character of the Mossi market will be discussed later, but throughout this kaleidoscope of activities certain consistencies can be discerned. For example, one notices many different kinds of greetings and salutations in the market place, but each one of them correctly indicates the exact relation or relationship between the persons involved. Young girls on passing each other on one of their innumerable circuits of the market bend their knees slightly and place both of their cupped hands on their own breasts. Only then will they stop and exchange news. At the end of the conversation they repeat the same greeting and continue their rounds. Both girls and women greet casual male acquaintances in the same way, but invariably kneel if the male stops and talks to them. Women sometime kneel when speaking to each other, but always do so when addressing any male relative of a respected category, who may then send them on errands such as buying tobacco from the vendors. A man who meets a female benefactor, such as a woman who has given medicine to one of his children, invariably kneels down before her. She may do the same thing out of respect for his male status. However, when a man meets either his mother-in-law or his father's sister, he is the one to kneel down in order to greet her. Two men who are equals normally shake hands, but if not, the junior in status or in age kneels down before his elder or superior. Sometimes a high status man will prevent his greeter from kneeling by raising him. When

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also lost much of their interest in preserving their genealogies. Their local 613
lineage segment, which controlled the village nam, still showed interest in 798
its genealogy, but the people of Godin did not quite remember how they were related to the ruling lineage segment. Several times in the recent history of Barkago (and other villages), the men who were given the village nam had to be recalled from distant villages where they were living with maternal patrilineages. So relatively unimportant was possession of the village nam without concomitant noble status that after Naba Ngado took over, the local Biligo people began to ignore all local genealogical records except descent from Biligo. The Ninisi people had the least reason to be interested in their genealogy, and they simply ignored it. They had been separated from the other Ninisi groups in the district for so long that they did not even forbid marriage into those groups.

In villages such as Barkago, the existence of several lineage groupings 613
and families of strangers facilitated local marriages. But in villages with 621
fewer lineage groups, the time came when all groups were so closely linked by marriage and affinal alliances that for all practical purposes the village became an exogamous unit. By 1956, this process had reached such an advanced stage in Barkago that hardly any marriages took place between the Ninisi and Biligo local lineage segments. Both groups were permitted to marry the local descendants of Ngado, because the latter were more recent arrivals in the village. These marriages were of great significance to all villagers because they linked the nobles and the commoners in a series of exchanges. Moreover, because the groups were linked through sisters' sons [565]
with special privileges in both groups, problems deriving from status dif- [606]
ferences were more easily solved. Even the most arrogant noble was often [607]
constrained by ancestral sanctions to maintain amicable relations with his in-laws.

The Biligo lineage of Barkago contracted marriages with the other, non-related groups within and without the district. The Ngado people did likewise. Whether these nobles were able to marry noble women of other districts is a moot point. Owing to distance and politics, no such marriages are known to have occurred, and no one seems to know whether they were permissible. The Ninisi, who had always been commoners, had the largest marriage circle of all the village groups. They were able to marry nobles, commoners, and the Ninisi of the district and other districts.

The inhabitants of a Mossi village built their houses and cultivated their 423
crops on land the village chief had granted to their respective lineages. 613
Since the royal lineage, by right of conquest, controlled all of Mossi country, the rights of usufruct of a lineage depended ultimately on the Mogho [643]

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571
614 *Joking Between Sibs*

Sibs (or lineages) whose members joke with one another are, of course, also separate groups.[2] They are always united by a strong tradition of reciprocal social and economic aid. Ambivalence apparently stems from the conflict between this tradition of reciprocity and actual competing claims to land. The origin of joking relationships between two descent groups is often ascribed to the alleged fact that, when they first arrived in the village, leaders of both falsely claimed to the chief that he and his kinsmen had arrived first, [423] and thus had a prior right to land, and that the members of the other group were their slaves. Despite their jocular allegations, both groups are in fact structurally equal and independent.

571
361 *Joking Between Age-Sets*

Joking between age-sets within an age-grade varies with the generational

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tradition of hostility. Such groups obviously have both equal and mutually independent status.

The Processes of Mossi Joking

I have already suggested that the significance of joking as an adjustive mechanism is derived from the manner in which it provides concurrently for the operation of three interrelated but analytically separable processes. These are *communication, control,* and *catharsis.*

As a means of communication, joking provides a permissive and flexible context in which a grievance can be expressed, thus allowing for its rectification and the restoration of amity. As a means of control, the public nature of most joking serves to shame the object of the jocular offensive, to invoke social pressure for his conformity, and to elicit support for the complainant. As a means of catharsis, the joking expression of aggressive feelings reduces frustration and thus serves indirectly to perpetuate the amicable aspect of the relationship in which it occurs.

Joking also gives pleasure. The feeling of triumphant release that follows the successful—and safe—expression of hostile sentiments probably functions to reinforce reliance on joking as an adjustive mechanism. And the intrinsic pleasure of wit may also explain the persistence of joking behavior in the absence of an immediate "structural need" for it.

A more detailed description of one of the relationships already mentioned—sibling-in-law joking—will serve to illustrate these several points. Because of its relation to the pivotal institution of marriage, sibling-in-law joking is perhaps the most frequently used adjustive mechanism in Mossi social structure. The potential for marital conflict is high. This appears to be due to the combined factors of a sexually differentiated enculturative experience that results in marked dissimilarities in adult male and female personality; to an age difference between husbands and wives of at least ten years; to the classic stresses of polygyny; to the subordinate status of Mossi women, particularly of junior wives within their husband's patriclan; and to the possible dissatisfaction of a woman's parents, particularly her mother, at the loss of their daughter's services or at the inadequacy of bride-wealth payments.

Whatever its origins in a specific instance, it is important that this potential for conflict be controlled, for each marriage extends the network of affinal and cognatic ties that link the patrilineage to the larger community. Given a persistent potential for strife, the preservation of marital stability requires the provision of a means for minimizing its deleterious effects. When conflict occurs, the resultant frustration must be reduced, and accord must be reestablished in a manner that does no serious damage either to the marriage itself or to the larger context of social relations in which it is embedded. Sibling-in-law joking helps to accomplish this.

If, for example, a Mossi is irritated by his wife's performance of some aspect of her duties in the household or the field, he need not address her directly in order to communicate his dissatisfaction and release the tension he feels. To do so in a culture which places a high value on indirection in emo-

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ship itself and the contract of interlineage co-operation and solidarity which every marriage serves to establish or reinforce.[4]

Although this joking interchange is seen in its full implications when there is an immediate source of dissension between marriage partners, it may also occur in the absence of any specific difficulty. Then it is apparently indulged in simply because it is expected, and for the pleasure which the Mossi, like all people, derive from an occasion to exercise their wit. It is this relatively disinterested joking which has been most frequently described in the literature, and this may account for the failure of many scholars to perceive more fully the important social and psychological functions which joking may fulfill.

Conclusion

This paper has been written as a tentative step toward a reformulation of the various and disparate observations on joking contained in the anthropological literature. I have contended that an analysis of this literature indicates that wherever joking is institutionalized the structural relationship between the participants tends to be characterized by five significantly interrelated structural attributes: separation, reciprocity, ambivalence, equality, and independence. I have also indicated that such joking may serve as an adjustive mechanism by providing for the concurrent maintenance of communication, control, and the culturally harmless catharsis of potentially disruptive emotions.

A variety of forms of institutionalized joking found among the Mossi of Yatenga have been cited to illustrate these points. However, I suggest that the factors which cluster with this reliance on joking as an adjustive mechanism are not unique to the Mossi. Institutionalized joking reported for other parts of Africa appears to be structurally and processually similar.

NOTES

1. A shorter version of this paper was read at the annual meeting of the American Anthropological Association held in San Francisco in November, 1963. It is based on field research conducted among the Mossi from 1954 to 1956 with the assistance of a Ford Foundation Fellowship.

2. Marriage between the members of descent groups united by a joking alliance is regarded by the Mossi as highly desirable, apparently in recognition of the useful role of joking as an adjustive mechanism. Once such a marriage is contracted, however, Ego and his wife must take care that their joking insults are directed only at the younger kinsmen of the other and that the insulting remarks are personal. It would, for example, be acceptable for Ego to call his wife's younger sister a disreputable shrew but dangerous to call her a slave (a term of disrespect used frequently in joking between sibs). To refer to her as a slave would cast unflattering aspersions on her entire kin group, including her mother and father, with whom, in their new status as parents-in-law, Ego may no longer joke.

3. I believe that joking is also institutionalized between the Mossi and the Yarse, a highly acculturated ethnic minority of Mande origin who live throughout Yatenga. There is also joking between the Mossi and the indigenous blacksmith caste. Unfortunately my data on these two instances of joking are inadequate.

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571 607 593 154 4. The importance of sibling-in-law joking as a means of regulating conflict in the Mossi marriage relationship is further substantiated by the results of comparative research conducted among the Mossi resettled at the Office du Niger in the neighboring Republic of Mali.

[166] The Mossi, who were first forcibly and later voluntarily resettled in Mali, were allocated farm land as elementary family units without regard for their extended kinship affiliations. Thus a man often found himself living in unaccustomed "isolation," in the company only of his wife or wives and children, and otherwise surrounded by total strangers. Although the potential for conflict in the marriage relationship remained high, or was even augmented by the stresses of adjusting to a changed milieu, sibling-in-law joking, the institution through which such tension is traditionally regulated among the Mossi, was no longer operative. Unless the younger siblings of each spouse had accompanied them to the resettlement area, those individuals were absent to whom they might have communicated their grievances and expressed their aggressive sentiments in a socially harmless, psychologically satisfactory, and culturally acceptable way.

[57] [58] As the traditionally sanctioned means of dealing with tension resulting from marital conflict was no longer available to the Mossi resettled in Mali, there occurred an increase in the incidence both of violence in marital disputes and of separation and divorce.

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also lost much of their interest in preserving their genealogies. Their local 613
lineage segment, which controlled the village nam, still showed interest in 798
its genealogy, but the people of Godin did not quite remember how they were related to the ruling lineage segment. Several times in the recent history of Barkago (and other villages), the men who were given the village nam had to be recalled from distant villages where they were living with maternal patrilineages. So relatively unimportant was possession of the village nam without concomitant noble status that after Naba Ngado took over, the local Biligo people began to ignore all local genealogical records except descent from Biligo. The Ninisi people had the least reason to be interested in their genealogy, and they simply ignored it. They had been separated from the other Ninisi groups in the district for so long that they did not even forbid marriage into those groups.

In villages such as Barkago, the existence of several lineage groupings 613
and families of strangers facilitated local marriages. But in villages with 621
fewer lineage groups, the time came when all groups were so closely linked by marriage and affinal alliances that for all practical purposes the village became an exogamous unit. By 1956, this process had reached such an advanced stage in Barkago that hardly any marriages took place between the Ninisi and Biligo local lineage segments. Both groups were permitted to marry the local descendants of Ngado, because the latter were more recent arrivals in the village. These marriages were of great significance to all villagers because they linked the nobles and the commoners in a series of exchanges. Moreover, because the groups were linked through sisters' sons [565] with special privileges in both groups, problems deriving from status dif- [606] ferences were more easily solved. Even the most arrogant noble was often [607] constrained by ancestral sanctions to maintain amicable relations with his in-laws.

The Biligo lineage of Barkago contracted marriages with the other, non-related groups within and without the district. The Ngado people did likewise. Whether these nobles were able to marry noble women of other districts is a moot point. Owing to distance and politics, no such marriages are known to have occurred, and no one seems to know whether they were permissible. The Ninisi, who had always been commoners, had the largest marriage circle of all the village groups. They were able to marry nobles, commoners, and the Ninisi of the district and other districts.

The inhabitants of a Mossi village built their houses and cultivated their 423
crops on land the village chief had granted to their respective lineages. 613
Since the royal lineage, by right of conquest, controlled all of Mossi country, the rights of usufruct of a lineage depended ultimately on the Mogho [643]

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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the noble class, whose actions embody the ideology that the exercise of sovereignty is a corporate right which reverts to all of them when the head ruler dies. Much of this raiding is symbolic and does not interrupt market activities.

Many of the ceremonies connected with the funeral of chiefs and respected deceased elders take place in the market. Sometime between the interment of the dead person, the *keema,* and the first burial ceremonies, the sister-in-law *(dakia)* of the dead man in her role as joking relative—a role she plays until the funeral ceremonies are completed—impersonates him in the market place. On the day chosen for this rite the *dakia* dresses in the clothes of the *keema* and goes to market. While there, she acts as she observed her brother-in-law to have acted in the past: she circles the market and buys goods; she buys beer from his favorite beer seller and drinks with his friends; and for a moment, at least, she sits with his old cronies in their favorite haunts and takes part in their discussions. She may even be serenaded by *griots* who sing praises in honor of "her" ancestors, and she rewards them before leaving the market place that evening.

The market is the scene of an important ritual during the final funeral ceremonies, which are held about one year after a man was buried. On the morning of this ceremony the female relatives of the *keema,* led by his eldest daughter and his *dakia,* appear in the market and go from stall to stall buying all the things the deceased used in his lifetime. These include meat, *zumbala* (locust bean balls), cotton, tobacco, salt, kola nuts, peppers, *kumba* (a tomato), cakes, cooked millet-mush balls, potatoes, etc. When they have gathered all of these things, they retire to a spot near the market where they lay out all the foodstuff in baskets. In the meantime, the drummers play the royal airs, if the dead man was a chief, or ordinary rhythms if he was a commoner. Then the *keema's* eldest daughter places a basket on her head and, accompanied by four men, leads a procession of drummers and of the other women, also with their baskets, around the market. While this procession is circling the market three times in honor of the deceased, the *dakia,* carrying a very old basket containing the stalest food she could find, weaves back and forth through the marching throng making a nuisance of herself. After the third round the marchers return to their assembly point whence the eldest daughter and some of the older women now rush into the market, stealing merchandise from the stalls and placing it in their baskets. This assault is often so quickly done that it is fairly successful. The raiders then join the other mourners at the assembly point, where with bowed heads they listen respectfully while the chief drummer recites the genealogy of the *keema* and tells him that the people from the surrounding villages

644
595 foreigners who are being housed by the naba. [164]

Each sogoné or samanbiga chooses a mother from among the
644 wives of the naba (only those in the first two sections).
595

He helps her to cultivate her plot of ground and receives in
357 return a little food over and above the ration of sagbo given to the
608 sogoné as a group.

At Nanore (1), for example, it was formerly the rule that

1. Canton in the administrative district of Koudougou.

when a woman brought some sagbo to her adopted son, she could not simply hand it to him. Instead, holes were dug in the courtyard of the naba, into which the woman put the sagbo and sauce. Then the young man came to eat the food, and later the woman came back for her bowls.

644 Finally, it is still forbidden for anyone to play a guitar when
595 a napagha is passing by unless the player is the naba himself or
533 someone called upon to play by the naba. It should be noted that
687 the Moaga prefers the guitar for intimate occasions. Therefore, to
832 play it when a napagha passes by is actually to court her.

The Pogsiouré, or the Recruitment of Sogoné and Saman'kamba

643 Aside from a few special cases limited by custom which we
562 shall presently describe, the naba can never dispose of the daughters of his subjects, either to make them [165] his own wives or to bestow them on someone else, without the permission of the parents.

Pogsiouré comes from pog', the diminutive of pagha, "woman," and from siouré, diminutive of sioubo, "to give anticipating a profit."

562 As a result of family quarrels or even voluntarily, a Moaga
431 "may give away his daughters and those of his brothers and close
643 relatives to the naba." It is obvious that the naba cannot keep all of these girls, so he gives some of them to his brothers, his uncles, his sons, and even to ordinary Mossi who have done him a service.

In the same way -- and this is more frequent -- every sogoné (page) or samand'biga [singular of samand'kamba] (bodyguard or

562 593 644 Rights of parents over their daughters. Although, as has already been noted, the parents retain the right to help their daughters in small ways, they may not, under any circumstances or pretext, break off their engagement nor prevent their marriage. Still less can they promise the daughter to a third party or expect any sort of gifts from the naba.

Later on, in the event that there is agreement between the parties, the husbands may give trifling presents to their in-laws, but there is neither obligation nor coercion to do so.

562 858 Exceptions. Girls given to the marabouts by the naba are considered a kind of alms (saraka), and any children born of such unions belong to the true fathers and may not be disposed of by the chief.

644 357 858 Disposition of boys. Boys recruited as sogoné or samand'kamba are required to serve the naba faithfully, but they continue to belong to their real relatives from whom they annually receive cowries and particularly the fougoibga (blanket).

Although the sogoné are regularly fed and clothed by the 644 naba -- because [168] a naba must always be surrounded by many 357 pages -- this is not done for the samand'kamba. In many cantons 661 and especially in Ouagadougou at the emperor's court, they receive only a meager pittance every two, three, four, or seven days since their role as "vagabond" or groom is supposed to provide them with ample opportunities to rob or rather to pillage the natives. During the winter the grooms and other samand'kamba go out into fields of maize and millet at night or in the morning, and there is general looting. As for any fowl lingering in the karaga (fields of millet near the huts), they are killed and hidden in the bundles of hay used to feed the horses. There are exceptions to this rule: some ministers of the emperor and canton chiefs give their samand'kamba at least one meal per day -- at night -- and during the winter, because they are doing field work, they are given cooked beans or sagbo (millet cakes) at noon.

644 357 608 In general way, however, it may be said that this type of servitor is not supported by the naba. Like the sogoné, the samand'biga chooses a mother at the court of the naba. He helps her cultivate her plot and performs other small services for her (weaving her clothes,

644 357 for example), and in return the adoptive mother gives him a bit of
608 food, over and above his regular ration.

644 357 [169] In view of these circumstances, those who are not required at the home of the naba to care for the horses or for some special service spend half the year with their relatives.

It is perhaps of interest to point out that the samand'kamba are
644 mostly sons of the chiefs of villages of nabissi (sons of naba), sons
357 of nakomsé (descendants of naba and nabissi), and sometimes even
565 sons of canton chiefs at the court of the Mogho Naba. There is also the child of the ordinary Moaga, who was not made a sogoné because he was not thought worthy of the position. The rigorous discipline required of the former young men teaches them "to suffer in order to be able to command."

644 357 Anticipation of freedom. If the sogoné or samand'biga is the eldest son and is old enough to marry at the time of his father's death, the naba is required to free him, even though the period of obligatory service has not been completed.

643 844 584 Another custom, the zan-boko. There is another curious custom among the Mossi. If during the course of his journeys the naba stops in a village and during his stay a girl is born to a local Mossi woman, the child is his, with full rights, if he has been told of the birth.

However, the naba often knows nothing about the event, and the father takes care not to speak of it and then makes whatever disposition of the child he wishes.

844 584 [170] This custom, however, is practiced to its fullest extent between Mossi. A Moaga sana (stranger) passing through the village is invited by the elders to dig the zan-boko (hole in which the placenta must be buried). This is his zounogo, "opportunity." He gives a few cowries (100 to 200) to the head of the family and becomes the fiancé of the baby girl. Later on, when she reaches puberty, the man will make the customary gifts to the parents, and nothing will stand in the way of the marriage.

8: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1958
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don Christianity when told by shamans that to do so is necessary in order to have children. Unfortunately, the panoply of saints in modern French Catholicism does not seem to be able to syncretize with or displace the local deities, and thus come to the aid of the Mossi. This weakness of modern Catholicism in West Africa appears to make it unable to deal with many of the insecurities which arise in the daily lives of its adherents. 797 794

The American Protestant missionaries were never able to establish stations in either Manga or Nobéré because of the relative strengths of Catholicism and Islam in these two districts. However, they do have stations in Po and Koubri, 30 and 50 miles away. The 1954 census lists five Protestants in Manga, but I could find only one family head who had been a Protestant and that during the period when he worked for missionaries. It is interesting to note that when he returned to his native Manga he did not become a Catholic but embraced Islam instead. Although Protestants among the Mossi are trying very hard, they are working under three handicaps: (1) the opposition of the local administration, (2) their own explicit cultural bias, and (3) the puritanical nature of their brand of American Midwestern Protestantism. 797

The first Protestant missionaries to arrive in 1926 reported: "There has often been opposition to the preaching of the Gospel in the district, and there is a continual under-current which has hindered many from accepting Christ" (Assemblies of God Mission 1934:14). Americans who wished to train the young Mossi to read and write found official opposition to the use of the vernacular for such purposes, and were obliged to receive French teaching certificates. When one recognizes that in those days less than one-tenth of one percent of the Mossi children were in schools (today the number is just over three percent) one cannot help feeling that any kind of education would have been useful to the Mossi. During the war the Pétain-oriented administration restricted the movements of the Americans and frightened off their converts. And finally, the Americans come under the general disapprobation with which the Mossi view most Europeans. [871] [609]

American Protestants are fairly well insulated from the Mossi population, and have only now begun to show any interest in Mossi culture and problems. Geoffrey Gorer, who visited the Mossi in 1935, wrote:

> There were some American missionaries in this village, a whole family living in a house filled with texts; I do not know what creed they preached, or with what success; they looked more like American missionaries than I had thought anyone could have done off the films . . . they spoke with a dispassionate "none of our business" disapproval of the ill treatment of the negroes, who they said were ruled entirely by fear (1935:149).

Many of the Protestant missionaries who are now working with the Mossi are still inclined to agree with the first missionaries' ethnocentric judgement of their customs:

> Moral standards are very low. Nothing is wrong until it is found out. Chastity is unknown . . . we questioned in vain many natives in search of a suitable Mossi word for "virgin." They all declared there was no such word in their language. . . . Many

596 even the compound. As a rule, the work group is not composed of a single household but of two or more. We are dealing here, therefore, with a highly disintegrated communal family. Let us state immediately that the family among the Foulsé /Fulse/ and Yarsé /Yarse/, which we shall describe later /not translated/, is less disintegrated than the Mossi family, while the Samo family is even less so than the Foulsé and Yarsé families.

● [611] As far as matriarchy and patriarchy are concerned, the Mossi family of Yatenga is patriarchal, that is to say, the family revolves around the man rather than the woman. This is a clearly documented fact. There are, however, some indications, as we shall see, that permit us to inquire whether once upon a time, very long ago, the Mossi family was not matriarchal. In our Noir du Soudan /The Black Population of the Sudan/ we pointed out various indications of the same sort about the Gourounsi /Grunshi/.

In sum, the Mossi family of Yatenga is (1) communal and quite disintegrated and (2) patriarchal.

592 596 162 Examples. —Let us first list some statistical figures. Here is a table summarizing some important censuses taken among the Mossi of Yatenga.

Localities	Families	Compounds	Number of Persons
Diogoré and Lako (small cantons)	25	78	3, 165
Small canton of Tangay	11	51	1, 241
Village of Dio	7	50	842
Totals	43	179	5, 248

This set of figures yields an average of 122 persons per family, four compounds or iri or zaka per family, and 29 persons per compound.

Now for some details.

In the village of Tangay (canton of Tangay) there are 11 Mossi families. Here are the figures for the persons who compose them and the compounds where they live.

tween the Mossi and several other ethnic groups. In each instance the structural relationship in which joking occurs is characterized by the five features listed above.

Joking with the Mother's Brother

The relationship with a maternal uncle is marked by all five of the structural features mentioned. Separation results from the rules of patrilineal descent and inheritance rules, from patrisib exogamy, and from the general observance of patrilocal residence. The relationship is reciprocal in that a mother's brother serves throughout Ego's life as an important alternative source of emotional, economic, and social support: he often acts as intermediary in disputes between Ego and his parents or the elders of his lineage; he gives Ego frequent gifts; and residence in the mother's patriclan is the most frequent alternative to patrilocality. In turn Ego, as a result of the permissive relationship he enjoys with the spirits of his deceased cognatic kinsmen, often serves their living descendants as an intermediary in their ritual efforts to maintain a secure relationship with the ancestral spirits.

Ambivalence between Ego and his mother's brother and her other kin results from the conflicting sources of "conjunction" and "dissociation" just mentioned. The conflict between a strong affective bond—a "feeling" of kinship—and a system of inheritance which denies it jural recognition generates frustration. The ambivalence in the relationship is manifested not only by joking, which is asymmetrical—with Ego being the more aggressive—but by theft as well. Perhaps as partial compensation for his inability to inherit matrilaterally, Ego is permitted to steal his mother's brother's property during his lifetime and can also make off with the beer and some of the animals collected for his funeral.

As for equality of status, the descent groups of Ego and mother's brother are structurally equivalent. Although their respective positions within these two groups differ, the permissiveness of Ego's relationship to his maternal uncle absolves him from recognition of the canons of comportment that otherwise prevail among the Mossi in relations between persons of differing status. Indeed, disregard for such status differences is part of the "joke." Independence is assured by the fact that Ego and his mother's brother are members of autonomous descent groups and that each is responsive only to the authority of his respective lineage elders.

Joking with a Mother's Brother's Wife

Joking between Ego and his mother's brother's wife is to be regarded as a separate relationship because of her nonmembership in the mother's brother's descent group, but certain of the structural circumstances are similar. The source of separation from the mother's brother's wife is evident. The reciprocal tie that unites them is indirect; when Ego is received warmly in his mother's brother's household it is the wife of the latter who prepares the food he is given. Similarly, as a member of her husband's patriclan, she benefits

5: Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1959
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the ancestral spirits, he is the principal political and religious authority within his lineage. 596

The single term *boodoo* is used to refer to three separate groups: the sib, the lineage, and the local residential kin group described above. Aside from formalized recognition of patrilineal descent and inheritance, the lineage functions most significantly as a local residential kin group in which the economic and social participation of the female non-members is as important as that of the men. Although the men are most prominent in the direction of its affairs, their wives have a considerable, if somewhat indirect, effect upon decisions made. Even in the relationship of the members of the lineage to their ancestral spirits (*kiemse*), the women play an important part in preparing the food and the libations to be offered. They give birth to the members of the lineage, nourish them until weaning (usually at the age of two), and provide them with guidance and training for their ascribed roles. In the education of the female members of the lineage the wives play a more important part than the men. But it is in their economic activities that the significance of the women's role is best seen. In addition to their farm work, they co-operate fully in repairing roofs, flooring the courtyards, and even assisting in the brick-making which precedes house-building. The economic and social contribution of the wives is of equal importance with that of the husbands and sons, and it is more important than that of the daughters, since females born into the lineage marry and leave just as they become fully productive members of their fathers' households. 562 613

Daughters, however, serve their lineage in a different way. As they are successful in winning for themselves a good name in the households of their husbands, so the bond of economic and social co-operation established between the two lineages at the time of marriage is strengthened. When they mature, they return to assist the members of their lineage with ritual obligations to the ancestors. If they are left childless at their husband's death, they may return to their father's household to reside. [602]

Separated from one another by millet fields and the public way, the dwelling of each Mossi kin group has the appearance of a small walled village. Each round mud house with its thatched roof has a separate courtyard which is usually contiguous to the courtyards of the other houses in the residential unit of which it is a part. The individual dwellings are constructed in such a way—the wall of each house or courtyard being contiguous to that of the nearest neighbor—as to form a circular wall whose exterior is closed at all but two points. The dwelling of each kin group has a small exit and a large open entrance way just within which is located a thatch-covered sun shelter (*zande*) where the men of the lineage gather to rest, to work at small crafts, and to talk. Guests are 592 342 [343]

5: Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1959
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342 received, gossip exchanged, and social and ceremonial obligations dis-
592 cussed in its shade. Here, also, the men of the lineage take their meals,
brought out to them from the kitchens of their wives and set before them
[264] by their sons, who first attend their fathers and then dine on what remains.

592 A few paces away is the grinding platform (*nere*) where the women
252 gather to prepare the grain for their families' meals. This great circular mud table, some twenty feet in diameter, is raised about three feet from the ground. Its surface is beaten hard and worked over with cinders and manure to make it rainproof. Each woman has her assigned place at this
[512] platform where she keeps her pestle and where she stations herself at dawn and again at dusk to grind her millet and learn the news of the day.

Frequently found at the outer perimeter of the dwelling of the Mossi
592 kin group is the house of the son of a lineage woman who has returned from his father's household to live in the benevolent presence of his mother's family, with whom he enjoys an especially permissive relationship. The house set aside for the residence of the young unmarried men of the lineage is also located on the outer edge of the compound dwelling.

555 A recent addition to the traditional pattern of village organization described above is the independent households of socially ambitious
184 individuals who have chosen to separate themselves from the residences of their lineages in order to profit from their own economic or religious enterprises. Many have become independently wealthy through successful commercial ventures; others, as a result of conversion to Islam, have gained prestige through religious authority and wealth through the tuition and services provided by the Koranic students. Often these people are much younger than their lineage elders, not in line for the inheritance of political or religious authority through traditional channels, and unwilling either to accept the authority of their seniors or to share economically with the less prosperous members of their lineages. They are deviants, in conflict with the communal patterns of consumption and with the emphasis on accepting established authority which characterizes the traditional social organization of the Mossi.

THE TRADITIONAL ECONOMY

613 Much agricultural endeavor is necessarily co-operative. Each farmer
476 is dependent on the assistance of his kinsmen to get his fields seeded,
cultivated, and harvested in the short time during which each of these
243 operations must take place. However, the yield from his field remains his own, to be shared only with his own wives and children. Members of the lineage also work in the fields under the specific control of the lineage elder. Although the harvest from these fields is stored in the granary
242 [i.e. at a sun shelter in the entrance-way. — Analyst]

5: Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1959
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belonging to him, he can be relied upon to share with the members of the lineage if this should be necessary.

Capital goods in the form of houses, granaries, and fields are the property of the lineage. Individual rights are limited to temporary use and custodianship but are passed on to others when a general shift in residence and role follows the death of a senior member of the lineage. Although property is passed on in accordance with the rules of descent in the lineage, part of the property redistributed represents the product of the labor of the lineage as a consanguineal kin group. For, as has been indicated, the labor of the wives, who are not lineage members, is as important as that of their husbands and children.

The lineage head discusses the coming year with the other elders, and an over-all production plan is made out. They decide what fields are to be left fallow, what ones are to be planted to cotton and the varieties of millet, what lands may be used by individuals desiring to plant a cash crop, and what, if any, land may be loaned to neighboring lineages or to in-laws. With the approach of the first rains, all economically active men and women go to their fields to prepare them for planting, leaving behind in the village only the old people and the children who are still too small to assist in the fields or tend their fathers' animals.

A considerable portion of the land within the limits of a Mossi village is under the direct control of the village chief (*Tenga Naba*) and the earth custodian (*Tenga Soba*), the local representatives of political and supernatural authority. This land is used for the public way, for the market place, and for burial grounds and latrines. Except for that which is too poor for any purpose, all available land within several miles of a village is put under cultivation.

Ki is the generic name which the Mossi give to the millet, which is the basic product in their economy and which receives the largest single allocation of land and labor of any Mossi economic activity. Two kinds of millet are planted, a large-grained variety (*kenda*) and a small-grained variety (*karua*). Millet is the first crop to be planted after the rains have begun. Small- and large-grained millet seeds are frequently mixed and sown in the same field. Small-grained millet may also be sown in the same field with a white bean (*benga*). A "tired" field may be left fallow for five, ten, or fifteen years. When it is first replanted, it will be seeded to millet for the first three years. The fourth year it may again be put into millet, but if the previous crop was not good, cotton will be planted. Usually, a Mossi farmer plants cotton for two years, millet for three, then groundnuts, more cotton, then two more years of millet. It is believed that cotton renews the soil because of the intensive cultivation required: the earth is brought up into hillocks and turned over; after picking, the plant may be turned under and left to enrich the soil.

5: Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1959
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they are so exclusively occupied with political or religious duties. In every case, they own fields and are dependent upon their produce for an important part of their subsistence.

Each Mossi village in the Yatenga holds a market every third day; markets operate in nearby villages on the intermediate days. There are few full-time merchants; men usually market their wares themselves and trade in items of European manufacture. Except for the sale of meat, it is a man's wives who sell farm produce. For marketing her husband's surplus millet, a woman receives a gift when the market closes.

Markets are most active in the early hours of the morning when meat and farm produce are fresh. By afternoon only a few merchants stay on, trying to sell their remaining produce to late-comers at greatly reduced prices. Social satisfactions derived from participation in the market are greatly valued; it provides an opportunity for meeting friends and kinsmen and for exchanging gossip and observations on one another's dress, the crops, and current political developments. The market is a place for making loans and receiving small gifts from kinsmen and friends, for flirtations and the arrangement of rendezvous, and for that casual sort of social interaction which is one of the principal pleasures of life in the Yatenga.

The Mossi farmer is dependent on the co-operation of the members of his lineage both for the success of his individual economic endeavor and for their support if his crop should fail. To be assured of this support, he must contribute generously to the maintenance of his position in the intricate network of rights and obligations which describes the relationship of the individual to his kin group. A constant exchange of visits and presents, ceremonial and economic assistance, and presence and participation in the affairs of the lineage are necessary to maintain his status within this group.

The nature of the social, economic, and emotional dependence of the individual on his kinsmen, his affinal relations, and his neighbors is such that his social well-being and economic success may properly be regarded as depending as much on his skill in manipulating this complex web of relationships as on his specifically economic endeavors. When a man decides to forego a second weeding of his fields in order to prepare presents and make the journey to the funeral of a kinsman, he is making a choice which, considered in the total context of the culture, is realistically in accord with his own economic best interest.

The farmer feels equally dependent on the deceased members of his lineage, the ancestral spirits (*kiemse*). If he feeds them a chicken, they may steal the soul from a neighboring stand of millet and bring it to enrich his own field. If properly treated, they can be depended upon to protect his shea nut trees from the high winds which might otherwise

8: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1958
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Karême), celebrate the great festival of Ramadan and the lesser festivals, and 794
aspire to make the pilgrimage to Mecca. Most of the Moslems can lead prayers, but only about one-tenth of their number can read and recite the Koran. [212]
However, today the masters (*karasambas*) of the 32 Koranic schools in the district are endeavoring to instruct the many boys and few girls in reading the [871]
Koran and understanding Moslem theology.

The Karême is observed by most adult Moslems in the community with the exception of invalids and working men. Moslems say that the fast is intended to turn the minds of the people to God, and they distinguish between the Moslems "of the mouth" who break the fast and those "of the heart" who [184]
fast until Ramadan. The crescent moon of Ramadan is greeted with guns and general rejoicing and the following morning the Moslems gather at the tomb of Ngado to give praises to God; during the rest of the day they pay homage to the chief and visit their friends. However, a change in the traditional observance of Ramadan is expected, because one of the Moslem leaders objects to the [178]
ceremony at the tomb of Ngado. He feels that some Moslems are beginning to regard the tomb of the first Moslem as an earth shrine or Tengkougre.

So far, only five of the more prominent Moslems in the district have made 794
or are making the pilgrimage to Mecca. The first man made the voyage about seven years ago, and is now conducting a Koranic school in a neighboring district. 788
His brother went to Mecca about two years ago and is now the senior *El Hadj* in the district. Of the two men who were on the pilgrimage when I arrived in the district, one has since died near the Red Sea and the other is still away. One other man left for Mecca and returned to the district during my stay. Most of the pilgrims now fly to Mecca; only two men followed the traditional route through Ghana, Kano, Lake Chad, the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan (now Sudan), and on to Mecca. In general, all pilgrims have used their own re- [613]
sources for the trip, but they receive some help from their lineage brothers and from the other Moslems in the district and in Ouagadougou.

The pilgrimage to Mecca represents the greatest event in the lives of the district Moslems. When the last pilgrim left, a great crowd gathered at his house and prayed for his safe journey, and some even accompanied him to Ouagadougou and remained there until he left. The Moslems and many pagans [621]
of the district, under the command of the district chief, cultivated his fields during his absence. And when the new El Hadj returned, a large crowd accompanied him to his house with shouts of joy. There he killed a sheep in thanks- [782]
giving, sprinkled the crowd with holy water from Mecca, and recounted his experiences. His listeners were impressed by his airplane flight and the description of Mecca, but they showed the greatest interest when he said that Mecca women covered their faces and that most Meccan men were monogamous. The local Moslems smiled when they heard this bit of news from one of their members, but I have seen them scowl when discussing the monogamous practice desired by the Christians.

The attitudes of Moslems differ very little from those of the other Mossi 794
as regards children and polygyny. They say that they do not believe in the 595 842

9:Skinner E-5 (1955-1957)1960 FA28 Mossi FA28

631 643 565 the sons of the ruling family, the *nakomces*, formed a noble class, above classes of commoners, serfs, and slaves. Classed among the commoners in many villages were the descendants of former district chiefs who had been deposed by the Moro Nabas. The reason that the rulers gave for the deposal of district chiefs was always disloyalty; but everyone recognized that this was an excuse whereby the reigning sublineage deposed older branches and provided positions for its cadet or collateral branches.

631 613 The governing hierarchy of the Mossi was a lineage with its component minor and minimal branches. Like most lineages, this ruling lineage possessed an ideology that all of its members had equal access to its corporate assets. The most important asset of this lineage was, of course, its sovereignty, its right to rule. The *nam* is the symbol of Mossi sovereignty and is described by them as "that force of God which enables a mere man to rule over other men." The *nam* was the possession of Wedraogo, the group's founder, and of Moro Naba Wubri, the first ruler of Wagadougou, and this possession became the patrimony of all their descendants. This being the case, the ruling chief of any village, district, principality, or kingdom did not own the *nam* of that area; he was considered the temporary holder of it, and on his death it reverted to the collective descendants of the royal ancestors. [428 424] A man did not have the right to pass the *nam* on to any person because it was not his. Whenever a Mossi chief was being considered for office his commoner electors asked him the following questions: "Before his death, did Naba X designate anyone to replace him as chief?" This question was asked three times, and the candidate responded three times: "No! The Naba did not designate anyone. You may name anyone you wish; even if he is a blind man or a leper."

In actuality, this vaunted equality of access to the *nam* by all members of the ruling lineage was a legal fiction. And despite the fact that all the nobles declared that they could go to Wagadougou to seek the *nam* whenever a chief died, in reality only the members of the dead chief's minimal lineage (often the descendants of his grandfather) presented themselves as candidates. Indeed, of all the candidates, the eldest son of the dead ruler was the one most often chosen to be

9:Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1960 FA28 Mossi FA28

chief. If he was not qualified then one of his younger brothers, or 631
one of father's brothers or uncles was chosen. Yet, the fiction of 613
equal access to the *nam* was important to the Mossi because it enabled them to adhere to their most important political axiom which was that "The only man who should rule is one who can keep the country." Regencies were avoided, and persons with physical and character defects were barred. Moreover, this flexibility gave the electors a wide choice of candidates from which to choose the person best fitted for chieftainship at any given period. The Mossi have always believed that it is difficult to rule men and this is what they mean when they declare: "Nanamsè toumdè ya yida fa fa"—"The work of the chiefs is the most difficult of all."[3] For example, it does not seem like an accident that the first ruler, Moro Naba Wubri, was succeeded by four of his brothers in turn instead of by his sons. The Mossi had not completely conquered the territory, and the young sons were incapable of handling the complex political situation. The graves of each of the successors to Wubri in different parts of the country remain as markers to testify to the difficult task which the early rulers had in controlling their realm.

The Mossi believed, and still do believe, that it was only when con- [812]
flict developed after a ruler died, that the people realized how necessary
and valuable a chief was. The death of a chief, especially of the Moro [764]
Naba, was kept a secret until the war minister arrived at the capital
with his troops. Only then did the cry go up: "The fire has gone
out!"; and as soon as it was heard, violence broke out throughout the
land. Prisoners were released, thieves rifled the markets, and the [669]
nakomces, or nobles, rode about the countryside doing whatever they
wished. This custom persisted as late as 1942. Reporting to his
superior in Abijan about the events that transpired in Wagadougou
when Moro Naba Kom died, the French commander wrote: "On
Friday, March 13, 1942, young people, profiting from old custom, tried
to steal things, but they were stopped and about one hundred were
arrested."[4] Throughout all the chaos which attended the death of a 645
king, the war minister remained calm unless an attempt was actually 696
made to seize power. He never attempted to stop the public disorder
or to catch thieves or murderers, because everyone believed that out of

10:Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1964 FA28 Mossi FA28
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tween the Mossi and several other ethnic groups. In each instance the structural relationship in which joking occurs is characterized by the five features listed above.

Joking with the Mother's Brother

The relationship with a maternal uncle is marked by all five of the structural features mentioned. Separation results from the rules of patrilineal descent and inheritance rules, from patrisib exogamy, and from the general observance of patrilocal residence. The relationship is reciprocal in that a mother's brother serves throughout Ego's life as an important alternative source of emotional, economic, and social support: he often acts as intermediary in disputes between Ego and his parents or the elders of his lineage; he gives Ego frequent gifts; and residence in the mother's patriclan is the most frequent alternative to patrilocality. In turn Ego, as a result of the permissive relationship he enjoys with the spirits of his deceased cognatic kinsmen, often serves their living descendants as an intermediary in their ritual efforts to maintain a secure relationship with the ancestral spirits.

Ambivalence between Ego and his mother's brother and her other kin results from the conflicting sources of "conjunction" and "dissociation" just mentioned. The conflict between a strong affective bond—a "feeling" of kinship—and a system of inheritance which denies it jural recognition generates frustration. The ambivalence in the relationship is manifested not only by joking, which is asymmetrical—with Ego being the more aggressive—but by theft as well. Perhaps as partial compensation for his inability to inherit matrilaterally, Ego is permitted to steal his mother's brother's property during his lifetime and can also make off with the beer and some of the animals collected for his funeral.

As for equality of status, the descent groups of Ego and mother's brother are structurally equivalent. Although their respective positions within these two groups differ, the permissiveness of Ego's relationship to his maternal uncle absolves him from recognition of the canons of comportment that otherwise prevail among the Mossi in relations between persons of differing status. Indeed, disregard for such status differences is part of the "joke." Independence is assured by the fact that Ego and his mother's brother are members of autonomous descent groups and that each is responsive only to the authority of his respective lineage elders.

Joking with a Mother's Brother's Wife

Joking between Ego and his mother's brother's wife is to be regarded as a separate relationship because of her nonmembership in the mother's brother's descent group, but certain of the structural circumstances are similar. The source of separation from the mother's brother's wife is evident. The reciprocal tie that unites them is indirect; when Ego is received warmly in his mother's brother's household it is the wife of the latter who prepares the food he is given. Similarly, as a member of her husband's patriclan, she benefits

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tradition of hostility. Such groups obviously have both equal and mutually independent status.

The Processes of Mossi Joking

I have already suggested that the significance of joking as an adjustive mechanism is derived from the manner in which it provides concurrently for the operation of three interrelated but analytically separable processes. These are *communication, control,* and *catharsis.*

As a means of communication, joking provides a permissive and flexible context in which a grievance can be expressed, thus allowing for its rectification and the restoration of amity. As a means of control, the public nature of most joking serves to shame the object of the jocular offensive, to invoke social pressure for his conformity, and to elicit support for the complainant. As a means of catharsis, the joking expression of aggressive feelings reduces frustration and thus serves indirectly to perpetuate the amicable aspect of the relationship in which it occurs.

Joking also gives pleasure. The feeling of triumphant release that follows the successful—and safe—expression of hostile sentiments probably functions to reinforce reliance on joking as an adjustive mechanism. And the intrinsic pleasure of wit may also explain the persistence of joking behavior in the absence of an immediate "structural need" for it.

A more detailed description of one of the relationships already mentioned—sibling-in-law joking—will serve to illustrate these several points. Because of its relation to the pivotal institution of marriage, sibling-in-law joking is perhaps the most frequently used adjustive mechanism in Mossi social structure. The potential for marital conflict is high. This appears to be due to the combined factors of a sexually differentiated enculturative experience that results in marked dissimilarities in adult male and female personality; to an age difference between husbands and wives of at least ten years; to the classic stresses of polygyny; to the subordinate status of Mossi women, particularly of junior wives within their husband's patriclan; and to the possible dissatisfaction of a woman's parents, particularly her mother, at the loss of their daughter's services or at the inadequacy of bride-wealth payments.

Whatever its origins in a specific instance, it is important that this potential for conflict be controlled, for each marriage extends the network of affinal and cognatic ties that link the patrilineage to the larger community. Given a persistent potential for strife, the preservation of marital stability requires the provision of a means for minimizing its deleterious effects. When conflict occurs, the resultant frustration must be reduced, and accord must be reestablished in a manner that does no serious damage either to the marriage itself or to the larger context of social relations in which it is embedded. Sibling-in-law joking helps to accomplish this.

If, for example, a Mossi is irritated by his wife's performance of some aspect of her duties in the household or the field, he need not address her directly in order to communicate his dissatisfaction and release the tension he feels. To do so in a culture which places a high value on indirection in emo-

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II

SOVEREIGNTY, KINSHIP, AND COMMUNITY

THE Mossi restricted all important positions within the traditional political organization to persons who claimed lineal descent from Ouedraogo and Oubri, the ancient founders of the Mossi nation. Thus all the *Mogho Nanamse, Dimdamba, Kombemba,* and *Tense Nanamse*—the heads of kingdoms, principalities, districts, and villages, respectively—claimed descent in the royal line. The bond of kinship among all important Mossi rulers was symbolized by membership in the lion clan (*Gegema*) and affiliated clans or *boodoo* founded by ancient members of the ruling families. Although the Mossi respected clan totems, they did not stress clan organization. They were more interested in membership in the segmentary lineages within the clans.[1] Yet not all Mossi groups stressed lineage affiliation. This was of supreme importance only for nobles whose membership in particular segments of ruling lineages gave them access to the *nam*—the power first possessed by the ancient founders, which is described by the Mossi as "that force of God which enables one man to control another." So important was the corporate possession of the nam by a ruling lineage that with few exceptions, membership in such a lineage gave a Moaga noble status.[2] Lineage segmentation gave some segments easier access to the nam, however, and resulting conflicts over sovereignty gave rise to the various Mossi kingdoms, principalities, and even districts.

Every Mossi ruling line attempted to legitimize its position by claiming the most direct descent from Ouedraogo and Oubri. The descendants of the founder of a local ruling lineage would claim that he had been an elder son deprived of his patrimony by unscrupulous younger brothers, or an elder son disqualified by a physical handicap from receiving the nam. Some ruling lineages even claimed that their founders had been elder sons who had voluntarily forsaken the problems of government and established new districts for themselves. Whenever tradition recounted that a younger son had indeed founded a kingdom or district, it was invariably said that he

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613 173 778 had done so with full permission of his father and in place of an unadventurous elder brother.

For example, the ruling family of the Boulsa province claimed that its 635 ancestor, Naba Namende, was the eldest son of Mogho Naba Oubri and 642 chose to become his father's *Kourita* (a young son of a deceased Mogho 613 Naba chosen as his father's personal representative on earth) and go into 173 exile rather than subject his younger brother to the ordeal. At the same 778 time, Namende sought to retain royal power equal to that of his brother, the new Mogho Naba, by taking Oubri's royal amulets with him.[8]

635 Mane province, too, was founded by one Nyaseme, a son of Koudoumie, who felt that he should have been given the nam. When routed in battle 642 by his elder brother Kouda, he moved into the region of Mane, where he 613 defeated the indigenous Ninisi and ruled over them. The princes who 631 broke away from Ouagadougou during Koudoumie's reign considered themselves theoretically equal to the supreme ruler. Thus, they took the title of Dim. By so doing, they dramatized their claim to equality of status, if not of power, with the Mogho Naba, and their determination to "submit only to God."[9]

642 The Mossi insist that the relationship between the Mogho Naba and 643 the Dimdamba was similar to that between father and sons, since the 613 Dimdamba were "really the sons of the Mogho Naba" and are said to have 631 acted as such. This analogy is interesting in view of the Mossi traditional [593] pattern of avoidance—combined with love and tolerance—between fathers and elder sons.[5] The Dimdamba were often allowed to act at variance with the Mogho Naba. Some of them shifted allegiance from kingdom to kingdom; others usurped the power of the Mogho Naba over smaller districts, or claimed that they had been given this power; and most of them regulated their own affairs with little interference from their sovereign. He, as "father," interfered on occasion in their internal affairs, demanding help from them and often chastising them if they failed to comply.

634 The Mogho Naba and the Dimdamba often appointed their younger 631 sons or brothers as rulers (Kombemba) of the districts that made up their 613 kingdoms and principalities. In this way, power and authority were kept 642 within the royal clan and its lineages. Nevertheless, in keeping with the concept of corporate access to the nam, the rulers of these dependencies had traditions that served to reconcile their claims to kingly or princely status with their actual subordinate position. District founders, too, were often portrayed as eldest sons who had been cheated out of their patrimony or had voluntarily left it to establish new districts. In some cases, the legendary heroes were granted miraculous births as well.

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634 173 tured slaves, whom he settled behind his compound and in separate villages under their own chiefs. He also welcomed refugees from wars in other territories and established them in special villages under their own chiefs.

631 173 The Dimdamba followed a similar practice in establishing power and control. According to Cheron, when Mogho Naba Koudoumie sent his son Tiraongo to conquer the Ninisi of Boussouma, the Ninisi defended themselves fiercely. Tiraongo's advance was thus very slow until he found a Ninisi named Wine, dressed in a panther's skin and hiding in a hole, "who on the promise that his life would be saved, consented to serve as guide to Tiraongo and to make propitiatory sacrifices to the divinities of the country. Thanks to him, the Mossi were able to progress to Somtongande."[6] Boulsa tradition recounts that when Naba Namende left Ouagadougou as the Kourita of Mogho Naba Oubri and took possession of their province, he placed his sons at the head of the principal villages "in order to control it [Boulsa] better."[7] One son was even sent to rule over a village at the request of the local Tengsoba.

634 613 778 [565] The villages that made up a Mossi district were usually ruled by chiefs who belonged to sub-lineages of the local ruling lineage. These village chiefs and the members of their lineage formed a noble class, the *nakomce* ("children of the Naba"). As long as a lineage held the nam of a district, all of its sub-lineages had all the privileges of the noble class, regardless of whether they had charge of villages. But if the Mogho Naba deprived [558] a ruling lineage of the nam by deposing the district chief, all its members were reduced to commoner status. Such people still traced their descent from the Mogho Naba who was the ancestor of their lineage founder, but this relationship ceased to be important unless the lineage recovered the nam of the district. If it did not, the former ruling lineage officially lost its ancient link with the royal clan within a few generations and became a nondescript local group.

634 613 778 557 558 The place of a deposed royal lineage was usually taken by the relatives of the nobles who subsequently acquired the nam of the district. These newcomers were genealogically closer to the ruling Mogho Naba, and formed the new nakomce of the district. The new district chief sometimes sent his sons to rule over the villages under his command. But if the village chiefs did not suffer the same fate as their lineage head at the hands of the Mogho Naba, the new district chief often permitted them to retain their posts. Thus they retained possession of the nam but lost their noble status. They served the new district chief in a political sense much as the Tengsoba served him in a ritual sense.

554 602 778 The plight of deposed district nakomce shows quite clearly the distinc-

[428] power and authority were inherited by their families in the same manner as among Mossi lineages.

634 The last important category of Mossi chiefs included men who ruled
622 over slave and serf villages. These men were themselves the descendants of slaves and serfs, for no free-born Mossi were placed in such posts. Needless to say, these chiefs were never lineally or collaterally related to the
[602] district chiefs, and therefore were never nobles. However, they might be affinally related to district chiefs, and in such cases the relationship was often of some political value.

It must be emphasized that once a man was made chief, he was respected, if not honored, by all the people of the district. In some districts, the Dapore Naba and the Baglere Naba, chiefs of two categories of serfs, were among the most valued assistants of the Kombere Naba. The only
[565] people who sometimes refused to honor the village chiefs were the nakomce,
[778] who were the holders of the district nam. Nevertheless, they were censored by the Kombere if they were disrespectful to his subordinates. No district chief could allow his government to be jeopardized by the maltreatment of persons who served it. In any conflict between the nam and the kin group, the supremacy of the nam was always maintained.

● 613 Every Mossi ruler, whether he held the nam of a kingdom, principality,
631 district, or village, was *ipso facto* also *Boodkasma* (literally, "family head")
622 of the local segment of his boodoo. The word boodoo refers to patrilineal groups that anthropologists would normally call clans, maximal lineages, major lineages, or minor lineages. The Mossi do not make any terminological distinction between these levels of their segmentary lineage system. Nevertheless, they recognize and use the status differences between these units to limit the access of each unit to the corporate assets of the boodoo. Their major social distinction is drawn between the minor lineage, which is also called boodoo, and its component minimal lineages. Each minimal-
[596] lineage unit is called a *babissi* (literally, "father's brother"), and is really a large extended family composed of relatives who had a common ancestor, three, four, or at most five generations ago.

643 The Mogho Naba, for example, was head of his babissi as well as ex
613 officio head of the entire royal clan. Those rulers who claimed equality with him claimed that they, not he, were the true heads of the royal clan and the "direct" descendants of Ouedraogo and Oubri. As a function of their political position, the many princes and district chiefs were heads of their own babissi and of the maximal lineage to which their babissi be-
631 longed. Like the Mogho Naba, they were the ex officio heads of all members
613 of their boodoo who lived in their territory and who claimed descent from the same royal ancestors,

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the same royal ancestors. A Mossi village chief was likewise the head of his babissi and ex officio head of all the other babissi in his village that belonged to his boodoo. As the official Boodkasma of his village's ruling lineage, the village chief held junior or senior status in relation to other village chiefs of the same boodoo who were also the Boodkasemdamba of their respective lineage segments.

Possession of the nam influenced the pattern of seniority within lineages and lineage segments. In most cases, seniority was based on age and generation. Thus, the oldest man of the oldest generation was the Boodkasma, and his office devolved upon the next oldest man when he died. But within the ruling lineages and their segments, the man who held the nam, whether young or old, was automatically senior to all others. This does not mean that these ruling lineages did not recognize age and generational seniority. For example, whenever a chief died and sovereignty returned to the lineage as a corporate group, the senior noble of the senior generation became the acting Boodkasma and lineage head. Like all Boodkasemdamba, he managed the affairs of his group, but only until a new chief was elected. The new Boodkasma, however, sometimes delegated some of his social rights and ritual obligations to this elder, who was often regarded as the unofficial or semi-official Boodkasma of his lineage. Similarly, the senior nobles of all segments of the ruling lineage were also regarded as Boodkasemdamba. Because they were so regarded and because of the role they played, these men seldom came into conflict with the district chief. He gave them a certain amount of leeway in dealing with the everyday affairs of their group. It was understood by all, however, that nothing should jeopardize the most important asset of the lineage—the nam. Therefore, the chief was obeyed in all important matters involving the noble lineage of the district. In such matters he listened to no one; for, as one district chief said, "Once I have received the nam from the Mogho Naba, no man in this district stands above me!"

This dominance of political relations over social relations was made clear by the behavior of commoners toward ruling nobles on the one hand, and of nobles among themselves on the other. Commoners showed greater respect and deference toward members of the ruling babissi than toward persons belonging to other noble babissi. Thus, they were more respectful to the district chief's father's brothers, his siblings, and his children than to his more distant relatives. Within the noble lineage itself, everyone had to respect the chief as the holder of the nam, but otherwise the generational principle of respect and deference was maintained. The eldest nobleman of the eldest generation received deference from all others (excluding the

chief), and the hierarchy of respect descended to the youngest nobleman of the youngest generation. Very often, the full-grown son and presumed heir of the district chief had to kneel in respect to a distantly related younger man of an elder generation. Of course, this deference ceased if and when he became chief. If he did not receive the nam, he continued to show deference to all his lineage elders. This distinction between nam and boodoo was a source of potential conflict within the ruling lineages. The people usually accepted the implications of both principles, but when they did not, there were dynastic quarrels and territorial secessions.

The age and generational principles also operated within non-noble ruling lineages, but here too they were often complicated by the possession of the nam. Those village chiefs who had lost their noble status but retained the nam acted as official Boodkasemdamba of their local lineage segments and had considerable influence over their lineage although they did not control all its segments. Each lineage segment had its own Boodkasma, who normally ran its affairs. But because of the importance of the nam in Mossi life, the Boodkasemdamba deferred to the village chief in important matters pertaining to their own boodoo. However, the generational principle was followed within the local boodoo. Almost no one deferred to the children of the village chief, who, after all, were not nakomce.

The situation within commoner lineages that did not hold the nam was quite different. The age and generational principles obtained within the lineage segments of these boodoo, but never *across* the segments, as they did across the babissi. These segments were more autonomous. Each had its own Boodkasma, who looked after it without deferring to anyone. This autonomy was all the more pronounced since the segments of non-noble lineages tended to be scattered throughout a district. They interacted socially and politically only when they were physically close. In any case, in the absence of the nam, the segments of non-noble lineages had no reason to remain together; they tended to lose their hierarchical quality and to become equal and separate.

As would be expected in such circumstances, not all Mossi lineages paid the same attention to their genealogies. Noble lineages kept track of their actual or putative ancestors, whereas non-noble lineages tended to ignore them and to let geographical proximity determine meaningful kinship ties. This loss of interest in exact genealogies was found even among lineages that had lost the nam of a district and with it their nobility, but still retained the nam of a village. Members of the minimal units in such lineages competed actively for the village nam and were interested in fairly recent an-

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cestors. They did not remember how they were related unless they happened to have a common grandfather or great-grandfather who had held the nam. The differential value thus placed on genealogies by the noble and non-noble lineages was due in most cases to the differential access of these lineages to the strategic resources of Mossi society. People who held the nam [554] and belonged to noble lineages enjoyed special claims to goods and services. Those whose lineages did not hold the nam had no such privileges.

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Because Mossi society was basically patrilineal, a man shared in the status and the corporate assets of his patrilineage. Conversely, a man had no access to the status or resources of his mother's patrilineage except for some ritual rights and duties that accrued to him as a *yagenga* (a sister's or daughter's son). These rights and duties included residence in the home of [591] a maternal patrilineage during childhood, attendance at sacrifices to the mother's patrilineal ancestors, the settling of quarrels between maternal kinsmen, and ritual license to seize specific items of property from these relatives. This license dramatized the *lack* of access rather than *freedom* of access to the property of maternal relatives.

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When a man's maternal relatives controlled the nam of the territory in which he lived, he could improve his social and economic position. In many cases, a young man who had gone to live as a "stranger" with a noble uncle or grandfather remained with these relatives. His privilege to remain was sanctioned by the Mossi belief that a boy's maternal ancestors would [175] wreak vengeance on any person who tried to evict him from the village from which his mother had been "sent into the bush" (given away as a wife). By using various strategies and subterfuges, the "stranger" obtained wives through his maternal relatives and used their land and other resources. After several generations the lineal descendants of the "stranger" frequently became indistinguishable from their maternal relatives, although such cases were not often formally acknowledged. Whether these "sisters' children" ever managed to obtain the nam of their mother's patrilineage is a moot point, because in theory they could not. Yet, also by Mossi definition, a man could never inherit rights and duties in his mother's patrilineage; however, it is known that this did happen. It is possible that the close check kept by the ruling lineage on its genealogy made usurpation impossible. Yet I know of several cases in which candidates for chiefship feared competition from men whose descent actually barred them from the nam.

The son of a nobleman and a commoner woman seldom attached himself permanently to his maternal patrilineage, although he retained all of his customary rights, privileges, and duties in it. Occasionally, noblemen did attach themselves to their maternal relatives, but those who did had

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usually been banished from their patrilineage for some illegal act or had voluntarily left home after a dispute over inheritance of the nam, goods, or women.

The fact that noble lineages often absorbed sisters' sons was only one of the reasons why such lineages survived and expanded, even if only at the expense of other lineages within the local society. Another reason for this growth was that the nobles, possessing the nam and its prerogatives, received more wives than the commoners. They had more children and thus multiplied more rapidly. Mossi lineages were generally exogamous through their whole depth, but exogamy became increasingly mandatory as the segments became smaller. Marriage within a maximal lineage was permitted only when some of its members had moved so far away from its original locality that the original ties were either forgotten or ignored. The Mossi have myths in which the lineage founder gives his overly numerous descendants permission to marry certain of their relatives. Even so, if a marriage was actually found to have occurred between distant relatives, appropriate sacrifices had to be made to the ancestors.

Marriage was also forbidden between persons who could trace a common maternal ancestor. But because the time depth here was very shallow, total bilateral exogamy was practiced to a depth of only four or five generations. Of course, the differential concern with genealogies between those who had access to the nam and those who did not, had an effect on the extent to which exogamy was practiced.

Most Mossi marriages were based on an exchange of women between two lineages linked by a long-term series of reciprocal exchanges of goods and services. Women were regarded as the most valuable part of this system. In theory, only the Boodkasma of a babissi had the right to give a woman as a wife to another lineage. However, the initiators of the reciprocal relations between lineage segments were often babissi heads, Yirisobadamba (heads of nuclear families), or individual lineage members. When a man from one lineage "made friends" with a member of another and rendered him a service or received a favor from him, their respective lineages were considered to be involved. The corporate nature of the lineage segment was acknowledged by all persons engaged in reciprocal relations, and the relations between two individuals were seen as relations between their lineages.

When a man wished to give a daughter to a friend as a wife, he had to consult his Boodkasma, who then gave the woman to the friend's Boodkasma. The latter accepted the woman as a wife for the lineage rather than for the man involved. The lineage retained its rights *in gene-*

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tricem over the woman and turned over the rights *in uxorem* to the man. 613
This point is very important, because, by accepting the woman as a wife 583
for his lineage segment, the Boodkasma accepted the responsibility of giving a woman in return to the other lineage. The stress placed on the lineage in wife-exchange was due to the corporate nature of this kinship group, as well as to the prohibition against a man's exchanging his own sisters or daughters as wives. He had to use other women in the lineage. It was believed that if this rule were violated, the women exchanged would also "exchange lives"—i.e., the fate of one would automatically reflect the fate of the other.

The Mossi marriage system worked to the advantage of both the elder males of the lineage segment and the nobles of the ruling lineage. Since the older men of the various groups controlled the resources of their kinsmen, they usually initiated "friendship" relations and obtained wives for their group. The more impartial elders distributed the women equitably among their fellow kinsmen, but occasionally older men kept the wives for themselves, knowing that in time these wives would be inherited by their younger kinsmen. Younger men had to wait until their elders died, do without wives, or establish "friendly" relations with older men. Some young men and newcomers to the district appealed to the chief for *pughsiudse* (from *pugho*, the diminutive of *pagha*, "woman," and *siubo*, "to give with the hope of profitable return"). These pughsiudse were women whom the chief received from his subjects and whom he subsequently gave out as wives on condition that their husbands give him their eldest daughters as future pughsiudse.[9]

The nobility benefited by the Mossi marriage system because, as a 613
group, they received more women than they gave out in the exchange of 565
wives. Furthermore, this enabled them to make more marriage arrange- 562
ments. This does not mean that a differential value was placed on women of different status groups. The Mossi tended to regard all women as equally valuable, but commoners tended to be more generous to noble friends than vice versa.

The nobles also received wives from their "brother," the district chief. 613
He received women as presents and signs of fealty and homage from most 565
of the groups in his district, and also from groups outside his district. He 583
kept some of these women as wives; others he used as pughsiudse; and still others he gave to his lineage segments. Some nobles had another method of obtaining wives, namely, by abduction. A nobleman who saw the daughter or wife of a commoner in the market place often encouraged her to desert her father or husband and come to him. Her relatives usually

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613 appealed to the district chief, and occasionally the woman was sent back.
565 A nobleman set on having a certain girl as a wife usually had small brace-
583 lets like those worn by all noble wives placed on her ankles. Once this was done, the chief could not be compelled to send her back to her parents, and any man who tried to retrieve her was guilty of interfering with a nobleman's wife and could be killed for it. In fact, only the male relatives of noblemen's wives could converse with them without running the risk of being apprehended and executed.

634 The district was the most important unit in the Mossi principalities and kingdoms. It was on this level that the Mossi nobility came into direct contact with the various social and ethnic groups of the society. Here, kinship and affinal ties linked the conquerors and the conquered, the ancient and recent nobility, the refugees from conflicts over the nam and the resident aliens, in a network of social, ritual, economic, and political relationships. It was also on this level that myths and traditions legitimized most effectively the Mossi socio-economic and political system as well as the relationships between the various social and ethnic groups.

634 The number and size of the Mossi districts varied greatly from one
161 principality or kingdom to another. Some districts were large and wealthy, with a number of large villages; smaller districts had a larger proportion of small villages and hamlets. The average number of these small units was probably between fifty and sixty-five per district. The population of the districts ranged from 10,000 to 35,000 persons. Some *tense* (villages) had as many as 5,000 inhabitants and some as few as 50. The average village had about 500 inhabitants. But regardless of size, all Mossi districts and component villages had basically the same structure and fulfilled the same functions. The structure of Nobere district is representative. Nobere
[131] covered approximately 200 square miles. It was bounded on the east by a district called Manga, on the north by the districts of Toece and Djiba, and on the west and south by the Red Volta River. A census taken in 1905, just nine years after the European conquest, showed the Nobere population to be about 13,200.[10] In 1955 approximately 10,000 persons inhabited 24 villages and hamlets scattered through the more inhabitable part of the district.

634 The number of villages and hamlets in Nobere district apparently fluc-
621 tuated. Villages were occasionally abandoned, while small hamlets grew
[361] into prominent settlements. The people of Nobere always tried to establish their villages as close to the Red Volta as possible in order to utilize the more fertile lands. But they were repeatedly driven back by disease and

634 known, however, whether this woman was Biligo's daughter or one of his
622 pughsiudse. The people of Passintenga claimed descent from Biligo's
175 daughter, but the other groups in the district questioned this ancestry. The village called Bourougna had two chiefs. One, the Tang Naba, was descended from a son of a Ouidi Naba of Ouagadougou who had settled in Nobere; the other, the Yang Naba, claimed descent from an aboriginal Ninisi man and woman of Biligo's lineage. The Yang Naba was thus another of Biligo's yagense in the district. The chief of Nimpwe village was a descendant of the aboriginal Ninisi people and was the principal Tengsoba in the district. He had more ritual power than political power, however. The nam of Basbedo village was held by a man descended from Busansi refugees. Living in this village was a man with the honorific title of Soulougre Naba, who claimed descent from the most important Ninisi family who had lived in the district prior to the arrival of Biligo.

634 Most of the nobles of the local ruling lineage lived either in the saghse
173 of the district villages or in isolated hamlets. Local tradition holds that one
621 of the conditions set by Naba Ngado for allowing Biligo's descendants to
[613] remain as village chiefs was the right to settle nineteen of his sons in many of the villages. He allegedly sent *mabissi* (sons of the same mother) to the
[565] same village. By so doing, he took advantage of the normal lines of fission that are created after the death of a Mossi father and prevented undue rivalries. Yet there was no driving necessity for him to do so, because there were more villages than chief's sons available. In fact, there are still many villages without nobles in Nobere district. The people of Passintenga, for instance, allegedly refused to have nobles live among them, while the people of Nimpwe allegedly killed by sorcery all the nobles who ever tried to live there. The actual reason for the absence of nobles in these villages may have been that the district chief did not wish to send his sons to villages into which his daughters had married or where there lived earth priests who
[565] were thought to be powerful sorcerers. Nobles were often unwelcome, feared, and resisted, because they tended to exploit the village people and to take advantage of the commoners.

621 The villages of Nobere district, like those of other Mossi districts, were populated in part by refugees and strangers. Several saghse in Togese vil-
167 lage were inhabited by Mossi refugees who had fled a district called Guiergo
173 after a fight over the nam of that district. Scattered throughout the district's villages were people of unknown origin called Siamse. The Siamse found in the villages of Tewaka and Nabadogo claimed that their ancestors had "followed" Naba Biligo when he came down from Ouagadougou to found the district. Several saghse in Bourougna village were in-

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habited by Yarse, people of Mandingo origin who had been assimilated by the Mossi. There were no Fulani in Nobere, even though some lived in nearby districts. But in Pinse village there lived people called Simili-Mossi, who claimed descent from Fulani herdsmen and Mossi women. Basbedo village was inhabited and ruled by people of Busansi origin. They claimed that their ancestors had fled from famine and other hardships in Busansi country and had been granted haven by Naba Biligo. The people who lived in the two saghse of Nab'tenga called Dapore (Dapobi) and Baglere (Bangare) were serfs of diverse non-Mossi origin. Saghse or compounds of Gurunsi slaves were found close to the dwellings of nobles and village chiefs throughout the district.

The number of saghse in the villages of Nobere district varied according to the size of the village and the pattern of nam inheritance within the major lineage segment that ruled the village. The saka itself housed a minor-lineage segment. The larger the village's minor lineage segment and the greater this group's genealogical depth, the more numerous were its component segments and thus its saghse. The proliferation of saghse and minor-lineage segments within the ruling lineage of a village was dependent primarily on possession of the nam. As soon as a man received the nam, he obtained control over a large amount of goods and services. He was then in a position to obtain many wives for himself and his immediate relatives, and as a result his minimal lineage grew rapidly. In time this group became so large that it split from its brother babissi within the saka, and formed a new saka of its own. Finally, this babissi became a minor lineage in its own saka, in segmental opposition to the other babissi and minor lineages within the other saghse. If the descendants of one man retained the nam for about three generations, their lineage segment and saka grew larger and in time cast off its own junior segments. However, if the segment lost the nam to a man of another babissi and saka, it ceased to proliferate. Some such groups even declined and disappeared by fusing with other local segments of the same lineage. Here is how the system worked in Barkago village of Nobere district.

Barkago itself was founded sometime in the dim past by a son of Naba Biligo. It had an area of eight or ten square miles and a population of about 650 when the French arrived in 1896. Its boundaries were set by such natural phenomena as clumps of trees, hills, and ravines. The village itself included five distinct saghse separated by footpaths, hills, rocks, and ravines, and an area of wasteland (*weogho*). Three of the saghse, Natenga ("chief's land"), Godin, and Kedpalago, were inhabited by the minor segments of the boodoo of Naba Biligo. Here is how this came about. After

the original segment of the ruling Biligo lineage had lived in Barkago for some time, it divided into two minor lineages and settled in two saghse, Natenga and Godin. A noble from Godin possessed the nam, but it eventually passed to a noble from Natenga. The new chief then founded a new saka called Kedpalago because he wanted more living space for his own children. As a result, the minor lineage of Natenga now had two babissi living in two saghse. The minor lineage of Godin subsequently declined in size and prestige. The only evidence of its former importance was that its eldest male continued to make separate sacrifices to his own chiefly ancestors, even though the more recent holders of the nam made sacrifices to all former chiefs. These independent sacrifices were made in spite of the fact that this minor lineage kept growing smaller because its male members left to live elsewhere or to join maternal patrilineages with higher status. The sacrifices were expected to cease only if and when the minor lineage were to disappear with the incorporation of the widows and orphans of its last surviving males into the other Biligo groups of the village and district. Of course, if the Godin minor lineage had regained the nam, it undoubtedly would have experienced a rebirth and renewal of strength. It might have attracted its daughter's sons, and even aliens who would have lived in its saghse as they did in those of the ruling lineage segments.

A fourth saka, Nakomgo ("we hunger after the nam"), was inhabited by the noble descendants of Naba Ngado, the district chief who had replaced the descendant of Naba Biligo of Nobere. Since these nobles traced their descent from two full brothers, Kouliga and Kongo, they formed two related minor lineages with five component minimal lineages. The compounds of the two babissi of the Kouliga minor lineage were separate but contiguous. Near them were the compounds of the three babissi of the Kongo minor lineage. Scattered about in the Nakomgo saka were compounds of sisters' sons, strangers, and nobles' slaves.

The people of Narila, the fifth saka of Barkago, were members of the aboriginal Ninisi population, and thus furnished the village's earth-priest. He made sacrifices to the earth shrines in the village, gave ritual permission for building compounds and digging graves, and took control of the village during the period between the death of a chief and the accession of another. Scattered throughout the various saghse were compounds inhabited by people of serf, slave, or refugee origin.

Of all the groups within the village, the Ngado people kept the most exact genealogies. They did so because one of the segments of their maximal lineage held the district nam, and as nobles they had theoretical access to it. Once they had lost the nam of the district, the descendants of Biligo

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also lost much of their interest in preserving their genealogies. Their local 613
lineage segment, which controlled the village nam, still showed interest in 798
its genealogy, but the people of Godin did not quite remember how they were related to the ruling lineage segment. Several times in the recent history of Barkago (and other villages), the men who were given the village nam had to be recalled from distant villages where they were living with maternal patrilineages. So relatively unimportant was possession of the village nam without concomitant noble status that after Naba Ngado took over, the local Biligo people began to ignore all local genealogical records except descent from Biligo. The Ninisi people had the least reason to be interested in their genealogy, and they simply ignored it. They had been separated from the other Ninisi groups in the district for so long that they did not even forbid marriage into those groups.

In villages such as Barkago, the existence of several lineage groupings 613
and families of strangers facilitated local marriages. But in villages with 621
fewer lineage groups, the time came when all groups were so closely linked by marriage and affinal alliances that for all practical purposes the village became an exogamous unit. By 1956, this process had reached such an advanced stage in Barkago that hardly any marriages took place between the Ninisi and Biligo local lineage segments. Both groups were permitted to marry the local descendants of Ngado, because the latter were more recent arrivals in the village. These marriages were of great significance to all villagers because they linked the nobles and the commoners in a series of exchanges. Moreover, because the groups were linked through sisters' sons [565]
with special privileges in both groups, problems deriving from status dif- [606]
ferences were more easily solved. Even the most arrogant noble was often [607]
constrained by ancestral sanctions to maintain amicable relations with his in-laws.

The Biligo lineage of Barkago contracted marriages with the other, non-related groups within and without the district. The Ngado people did likewise. Whether these nobles were able to marry noble women of other districts is a moot point. Owing to distance and politics, no such marriages are known to have occurred, and no one seems to know whether they were permissible. The Ninisi, who had always been commoners, had the largest marriage circle of all the village groups. They were able to marry nobles, commoners, and the Ninisi of the district and other districts.

The inhabitants of a Mossi village built their houses and cultivated their 423
crops on land the village chief had granted to their respective lineages. 613
Since the royal lineage, by right of conquest, controlled all of Mossi country, the rights of usufruct of a lineage depended ultimately on the Mogho [643]

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613 [643]

Naba. This did not mean, however, that either the Mogho Naba or any of his chiefs owned the land of Mossi country. The Mossi chiefs and their ruling lineage controlled the Mossi people and thus were able to decide who should use the land. However, there is no evidence that Mossi chiefs ever thought of controlling people by controlling land. The land appears to have been a public good, the utilization of which was in the rulers' interests. Rulers tried to attract more people, but they hardly ever tried to get more land. The people within a Mossi community who might have been said to "own" the land were the Ninisi, whose rights were derived from first occupancy and from their special association with the soil in which their ancestors were buried. When they were conquered, they did not lose their "ritual" rights over the land of their communities, but they were persuaded or forced to "care for" them in the name of the ruling group.

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000 went to Djiba when his grandfather died and his father was installed as Mogho Naba.

The origin of Djiba's status as the seat of the Crown Prince is rather 634 obscure. The people of the neighboring district of Nobere say that Djiba 644 was founded by a "companion" of their own founder, Naba Biligo, one of 173 the numerous "eldest" sons of Mogho Naba Oubri, the implication being that Djiba was supervised by Nobere. However, no one seems to know when Djiba's status changed or what happened to the ancient family who used to govern it. The consensus is that in earlier times the heir presumptive to Ouagadougou did not necessarily become chief of Djiba, but was given any district whose chieftainship was vacant when he came of age. Dim Delobson reports that Djiba became the district of the Crown Prince some- [114] time during the seventeenth century, when Mogho Naba Zombere, who had reigned for sixty years, found it necessary to establish a permanent seat for his heir.[28] However, Dim Delobson does not report under what conditions Djiba was chosen, nor does he say what happened to the local ruling lineage when this transfer took place. That the transfer was carried out in the manner reported by Dim Delobson is not doubted, because each new [558] Mogho Naba obtained districts for his relatives in this way. Through this process, the people of the ancient ruling lineages were usually reduced to [613] the level of commoners, and this is apparently what happened to the rulers of Djiba.

634 The first public sign that the young prince was being prepared for the 643 nam came in the form of a summons commanding him to go to Ouagadougou to be installed as Djiba Naba. On his way to the capital, he visited several villages where the local Tengsobadamba made sacrifices to the earth goddess in his name. He took this opportunity to meet with the district chiefs and their assembled village chiefs; he was entertained by them; and in turn he distributed gifts to the old women, whose praises were considered especially effective in bringing health and long life. When the boy finally arrived at the capital, he lodged at the compound of the Kambo Naba, head of the palace guard, until the Mogho Naba and his ministers installed him as chief of Djiba.

The installation rites for the Crown Prince were very similar to those already described for the Mogho Naba, and identical to those for the district chiefs. During the ceremony, no mention was made of the fact that the prince was the son of the Mogho Naba. The only special feature was that when the prince went into the courtyard after the ceremony to render homage to the Mogho Naba, he sat in an area assigned to him by custom. When the ruler appeared, the prince followed the Gounga Naba, who was pro-

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It was only when this man had returned to the capital that all the nobles in the local ruling lineage were invited to Ouagadougou to press their claims. Only the dead chief's babissi went to Ouagadougou, even though all nobles subscribed to the traditional concept that "the nam does not belong to any one sub-lineage; it can be given to any nobleman." Unlike the others, these nobles did not shave their heads in mourning, thus indicating their candidacy for the nam. When they donned sheepskin cloaks and carried spears on their shoulders, they indicated that they were interested in the nam of the district. 634 [613] [302] [765]

Before a candidate for the district chieftainship left for Ouagadougou, he collected livestock, money, clothing, and grain from his friends to give as gifts or bribes to important officials in the capital. When he arrived there, he lived with friends and conducted his campaign from their home. He and the other candidates visited their provincial minister and his colleagues, the Mogho Naba, and other courtiers, giving presents ostensibly as a sign of friendship but actually with the ultimate aim of impressing these people with their generosity. These activities were often very costly; for if the Ouagadougou officials suspected that the candidates were wealthy, they made every effort to obtain as many presents as possible. It was not unusual for candidates for the district chieftainship to remain at the capital as long as "thirty-three" or "sixty-six" days before the officials were satisfied with their generosity and made preparations for the election. 634 662

The evening before the election, the Baloum Naba asked each candidate to provide a chicken and a sheep for the evening sacrifices to the namtibo.[28] After the morning ceremony on the following day, the Ouidi Naba reminded the sovereign that a new chief had to be chosen for Nobere district. The Mogho Naba summoned the Gounga Naba and asked him which candidate had the best character and was most capable of taking care of the district—a question which shows that the Mossi never placed primogeniture above the ability to rule.[29] The Gounga Naba had already consulted his friends about the matter, but he recounted both the good and the bad qualities of each candidate. At the same time, he hinted which one would make the best chief. He finally told the Mogho Naba that all of the candidates were worthy men, adding, "You can give the nam to any of them." The Mogho Naba then looked around to ascertain whether the other ministers had concurred in the Gounga Naba's implied choice before declaring, "I will give the nam to X, because when his [father, grandfather, or brother, used in the generic or classificatory sense] was alive, he was good to me. The ancestors would be angry if I did not give his [son, grandson, or brother] the nam." With these words the selection was made, and the ministers now prepared to install the successful candidate. 634 645 643 [782]

634 622 greater number of lineage members eligible for the nam and the shallow genealogical depth. Every man who had the ability or desire to rule was 634 encouraged to seek the post. Many candidates tried to impress the district 622 chief and his advisers with their good qualities; most tried to bribe them. 662 Since the candidates could not openly seek the post during the day, they visited the important officials of the district at night, taking money and cattle as presents. Some candidates even promised wives. The intrigues on this level, such as seeking the friendship of pages to find out about the activities of rivals, paralleled those at Ouagadougou. The more gifts a candidate gave the district chief, the more his rivals tried to surpass him. Consequently, the district chief often kept the office vacant for months or even as long as two or three years in order to enjoy these lucrative gifts. Neither the caretakers of the village, who complained about the administrative problems of a village without a chief, nor the Tengsobadamba, who declared that without the permission of a chief they could not make sacrifices to help the people avoid illness, drought, and sterility, could force the Kombere Naba to name a new village chief. Only when the candidates had exhausted most of their wealth was the process to elect the chief set in motion.

634 The district chief had a better knowledge of the character of candidates 622 for the village chieftainship than the Dimdamba or Mogho Nanamse had about the men whom they selected. The district chiefs were better able than other Mossi rulers to obey the dictum that only those men capable of "keeping" the country should rule. Nevertheless, before making a choice, the Kombere Naba called in the local minister responsible for the village in question and discussed with him the character and capabilities of the various candidates.[42] As on higher levels, the eldest son of the former chief [651] was usually favored, especially if he had sent a large *fado* (death tax) to [662] the district chief and had been generous to him during the interregnum. But it was also possible that one of the dead chief's younger sons or one of his brothers or uncles might be chosen. In some cases, the district chiefs [613] chose men from related sub-lineages that had not held the nam for generations. One district chief chose a man who had lived away from the village for thirty years. He had gone to live in his mother's brother's village as a young man and did not return until he was named chief. Admittedly, such cases were exceptional, but they kept alive in the minds of the local people the concept of the Mossi lineage's corporate possession of the nam.

On the day chosen for the election of a village chief, all the candidates with their unshaved heads and sheepskin mantles reported to the village administrator's house along with all the other men of their lineage. They [431] gave him presents, and he led them to the compound of the district chief.

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longing to other provinces. Provinces also differed with respect to the number of districts they included and the nature and size of these districts. Some provinces were larger than others; some were wealthier; and some were more difficult to administer.

635 645 [643] [565] 173 635 645

Each province was administered by a governor, who also functioned as an important minister at the court of Ouagadougou. In the order of their importance, these governors were the Ouidi Naba, the Larhalle Naba, the Gounga Naba, the Baloum Naba, and the Kamsaogho Naba. Smaller administrative units (both districts and villages) were under the direct control of the Mogho Naba himself, or under the supervision of his relatives or lesser officials. None of the governors were nobles or descendants of Ouedraogo and Oubri, but their positions were hereditary. According to one tradition, the first provincial administrators were personal slaves of the early Mossi rulers who were given the task of supervising the activities of district chiefs of noble status. Another, more romantic tradition is that the man who became the first governor or Gounga Naba was a companion of Mogho Naba Oubri during the conquest of Ouagadougou. Later, the Gounga Naba presented one of his friends to Oubri with the request that the man take precedence over him, be made chief governor, and be given the title of Ouidi Naba. Oubri allegedly acceded to this request, and later granted another request of the Gounga Naba that a friend of the Ouidi Naba be named Larhalle Naba and be made the second governor. The Gounga Naba told the Mogho Naba that he preferred to see his friends happy and that he was content to be third minister. This tradition does not state when or how the Baloum Naba and the Kamsaogho Naba were named governors.[21]

635 613 [634]

With the exception of the Kamsaogho Naba, who was a eunuch and had no heirs, the provincial governors headed administrative lineages. These lineages provided administrators not only for Ouagadougou but also for the principalities and districts. Cheron states that the Ouidi Naba of Boulsa was "a descendant of the Ouidi Naba of Ouagadougou, a great dignitary who rules a province and sits among the electors of the Mogho Naba."[22] Many administrative lineages on the district level were descended from officials sent down by the Mogho Naba with a new district chief in lieu of one deposed. When a chief was deposed, his administrators, like his relatives, lost their importance and their ties to Ouagadougou.

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The Ouidi Naba, called *Moss' ba* ("father of the Mossi") and *Sida soba* ("master of the truth"), was the principal administrator and the prime minister. His titles undoubtedly sprang from his important role in the election of the Mogho Naba and from his position as caretaker of the king-

622 had a group of confidants who acted as an informal council. These men
623 included senior members of his own lineage, elders from other local lineages, and personal friends. Again, like the confidants of the district chiefs, these men visited the village chief whenever they were not busy with their own affairs to talk to him about wives, crops, and village matters. Although protocol was at a minimum on this level, the chief had to maintain a high
[613] degree of decorum. As a member of the ruling lineage of the district, he
[565] had noble status and had to be treated accordingly. The non-noble village chief was also respected as a recipient of the nam. But all chiefs, whether
622 nobles or commoners, were expected to lead exemplary lives lest the flaws in their characters as revealed by the intimacy of village life should weaken their prestige.

622 The village chief received his orders from the district chief through the
203 administrator in charge of his village or through one of this official's servants. He, in turn, used his own sons or relatives to transmit messages to the heads of the saghse. If the message was extremely important, the village chief's messenger might be accompanied by the administrator's messenger or by the district chief's personal representatives. The saksobadamba then transmitted the order to the various compound heads. This hierarchy was always followed because, by following it, the officials knew who was responsible for disobeying or frustrating the wishes of the superior chiefs. As on the district level, the orders transmitted to the village and its sections dealt with such things as collecting tribute, picking fruits from the district chief's trees, allocating labor for the district chief or his personal retainers, transferring or summoning cases to the district court, procuring sacrificial animals for the local Tengsoba, and requesting soldiers. The village chief also sent his own messages to the saghse. These messages, however, dealt with such village matters as local sacrifices, quarrels, and court cases.

622 Misrule and maladministration by a village chief were punished either
687 by the district chief or by the villagers. Like other Mossi rulers, the village
634 chief could not be deposed and allowed to live. However, he had a better chance of fleeing and finding refuge in another district. His presence in a strange district did not challenge the authority of the local chief, and he had no opportunities to seize any of his host's villages. In fact, if the refugee was accompanied by a large number of his subjects, his host might even give him land on which to erect a new village. The proviso was, of course, that he should not "spoil" the district by causing trouble. If a village chief accused of maladministration was seized by the district chief before he could
[696] flee, he was invariably executed. If he was a commoner, he was decapitated or even stoned to death; if he was a nobleman, he was taken into the bush and strangled in secret by the district police

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and strangled in secret by the district police. If a district chief hesitated to punish a village chief whose followers had complained, the aggrieved lineage or the entire village simply took its movable property and left. This sanction does not seem to have been applied often, but its threat was normally sufficient to curb the excesses of the worst village chief. 622 687 634 [613] [626]

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V

LAW AND THE JUDICIAL PROCESS

671 THE MOSSI possessed a comprehensive body of rules governing human conduct. These rules were well known to the people, and violators were punished by the responsible authorities. The Mossi might be said to have had substantive law, but they had no written codes. Nevertheless, the lack of written codes does not warrant Mangin's blanket criticism of Mossi judicial processes: "Of course, there was no written code, no formal scale of penalties. Everything depended on custom and on the whim of the judge. [662] Thus, the wealthy could obtain sentences in their favor by paying the judges, and thieves could avoid punishment by sharing their loot with the Naba."[1] Custom did dictate the penalties, just as "written custom" dictates penalties [692] in all written legal codes. But, as we shall see, the Mossi did have a known [695] scale of penalties. Moreover, a Mossi judge had to be careful in rendering judgment, because his decisions could be reviewed by a higher court.

596 The head of the Mossi extended family, the *Yirisoba,* was responsible 681 for the everyday conduct of his charges. It was his duty to settle all family quarrels, and to punish persons guilty of theft within the compound, disrespect toward elders, and incest. Punishment for the lesser wrongs included 596 reprimands and floggings. A person found guilty of disrespect to the elders 683 or of incest could be banished from the group. But banishment was so severe 684 that it was imposed only if the criminal refused to make the usual conciliatory gestures and was condemned by all the members of his boodoo. Even after this condemnation, however, he could ask a "sister's son," a yagenga, [613] to intercede for him. This man, the son of a female lineage member, had many privileges within his mother's brother's lineage, including the right to mediate between an exile and his boodoo.

593 Amicable relations within the family group were most often disrupted 586 by conjugal difficulties. A Mossi husband could occasionally flog an erring 613 wife, but he was not allowed to maltreat her. When a man became disgusted with his wife and wished to repudiate her, he put her water pots in the compound yard. This rather serious action often led to hostile relations

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between the lineages concerned. If either the repudiated woman or a member of her husband's lineage wished to initiate a reconciliation, she or he had to summon a yagenga. He alone was permitted to reconcile the couple after the pots had been placed in the courtyard. When a woman felt that she was being maltreated by her husband, she usually fled to her own patrilineage and waited for her husband's patrilineage—usually his brothers—to visit her male relatives and discuss the case. If the woman was judged guilty, she was reprimanded and sometimes flogged by her own relatives for causing trouble between the two lineages, and then sent home to her husband. However, if the man was found guilty, his wife was returned to him, but he was warned that he would forfeit all rights to her if he maltreated her again. A man who lost his wife through repeated maltreatment could not take the matter to court, because chiefs usually refused to deal with purely domestic issues. His only recourse was to induce one of his lineage brothers to recall a daughter who had married into his wife's lineage. This act was usually sufficient to bring about the reconciliation of the estranged couple before innocent persons were hurt.

The Mossi made every effort to solve minor problems without recourse to the chiefs. The local Boodkasemdamba and lineage elders adjudicated quarrels and simple offenses involving members of minimal segments in the various village saghse. They even tried to resolve difficulties between lineage members of larger segments who lived in different villages. The elders often imposed punishments such as reprimands, floggings, and even banishment. The convicted person did not usually appeal to the chief, because he knew that the chief would advise him to settle his problem within the family.

Unrelated villagers also tried to settle difficulties among themselves without appealing to the chief. For example, a man who was caught stealing could be beaten or even killed by his intended victims, and the chief did not punish them for their action. In many cases, villagers simply took the thief back to his relatives, knowing they would punish him. Occasionally, a family disgraced by a thieving member forced him to kill himself. When this happened the chief held an inquest but took no other action.

The Mossi gave a fairly simple explanation for returning a thief to his relatives for punishment. They said that every family had "weak" members, and that by not harming the captured thief they were only protecting themselves against retaliation if one of their own relatives should commit a similar crime. But a more important reason seems to have been their fear of starting a feud that might result in the premeditated murder of a man and the subsequent execution of his murderer.

The one crime that invoked terrible unofficial sanctions was rape. If the

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offender was caught in the act, he was immediately killed. If he was merely suspected of guilt both by his own lineage and by the lineage of the wronged woman, he was banished from his lineage and from the village. So swift and sure was this punishment that a rapist always fled if he believed he would be discovered. The Mossi considered rape such a heinous crime that if the act resulted in pregnancy, an abortion was attempted; if this failed, the child was killed at birth. Furthermore, the rapist could never hope to return to his community, because even if the yagenga appealed on his behalf and his lineage forgave him, the community ban still stood.[8]

The village chief was usually aware of the torts and crimes that occurred in his village, and of how the families concerned had handled them. He seldom interfered in the internal affairs of a lineage, or in problems between lineages, unless he felt that a case was beyond their legal competence. In the case of a rapist's expulsion, community feeling usually ran so high that if the chief intervened, it was only to support the will of the community. However, when people could not settle their differences peaceably or when a major crime was committed within a village, the chief usually summoned the offender to his court for trial. His right to do so was sanctioned by his possession of the nam, but the very concept of the nam often made his task difficult. If he was a commoner, the nobles often emphasized their relationship to the holder of the royal nam, the district chief, and objected to being tried by a commoner. They usually appeared at the village court if summoned, but often attempted afterward to find some excuse for taking their case to the district chief. They felt that their local reputation would prevent them from receiving a fair hearing from anyone but their lineage brother. Furthermore, if they were judged and convicted in the lower court and the verdict was confirmed in the district court, they felt that the district chief, in concurring with the village chief, had broken the solidarity of their lineage. But if they took their case directly to the district chief, they knew they were being judged by an equal or a superior, and that an unfavorable judgment would not damage their status.

The competence of the village chief to deal with court cases was limited.[8] He did pass on all the legal infractions that occurred in his village, but he tried to adjudicate only the minor cases. Thus, he tried cases involving theft, quarrels, trespassing, adultery, indebtedness, and abuse, and tried to settle them by reprimanding the guilty ones. He sent cases involving serious injury and homicide to the district court, along with cases he was unable to resolve.

The district court was a most efficient and effective judicial organ, and the nature of the Mossi judicial process was most evident on this level. The

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district court did not deal with all cases referred to it. Many cases, especially those concerning the behavior of women, were referred back to the village to be resolved by the respective lineages. The district chief considered it beneath his dignity to deal with such cases, and his guards ostentatiously chased away the litigants. He consented to try such cases only when he suspected that more serious trouble would develop if he did not. Theoretically, district courts could not try cases involving the death penalty, but in practice most of them did. Higher chiefs tolerated this as long as district chiefs did not abuse their usurpation of power.[4]

When a major crime was committed in a district, the case was usually sent immediately to the district court. The chief of the village where the crime had been committed sent one of his relatives with the accused or with the litigants to the district chief's compound, and dispatched another relative to notify the village administrator. The administrator either went to the district court to await the litigants, or sent his representative to meet the court-bound party on the way and question them about the case. Such parties were often very large, because the Mossi believed that a man should not go to court alone. They felt that the criminal act of a relative reflected on all of them, and that it was important for them to appear with him. To quote a Mossi proverb, "A chicken without its feathers is a very small bird indeed." Therefore, no matter how grievous his crime might be, the accused was accompanied to court by his relatives. If his own lineage members refused to do so, his mother's patrilineage was duty-bound to come to his aid. These relatives believed that they would incur ancestral wrath if they refused to help him.

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As soon as the accused or the litigants arrived at the district chief's compound, a page notified him that the people of such-and-such a village had brought him a case. If it was after dark, the chief told his police to take charge of the litigants until morning; otherwise he prepared to convene the court. When the chief was ready, the page reappeared and alerted the court party, who had been milling about in the courtyard under the watchful eyes of the chief's guards. They ranged themselves at a respectful distance on either side of the chief's chair. When he appeared they arose, and when he sat down they knelt and offered the customary salutation. The litigants and their relatives then gave the chief the customary kola nuts, cowries, and chickens.[5] He, in turn, acknowledged the gifts and inquired about the case. The relatives of the village chief who had accompanied the litigants reported what had allegedly happened; what action, if any, had been taken by the village court; and why the case had been brought to the district court (either because the crime was too serious to be judged on the village level,

He was also liable to be put in stocks for 684
several days, and when released he was warned against visiting the local 692
markets, where he might be tempted to renew his illicit relations. A noble- 634
man convicted of adultery was often merely warned or fined, since his [696]
movements could not be restricted. But if a man caught his wife and an- [682]
other man in *flagrante delicto* and killed them, his act was considered justifiable homicide (even if the slain man was a noble), and he went free. If, however, he killed the lover but spared his wife, he had to send her to the chief's household. Here she was made to perform hard work under the supervision of the palace guards until it was believed that she had reformed. A man who was experiencing difficulties with an unfaithful wife and feared he might eventually kill her or her paramour also sent her to the chief's compound for a few months.

The Mossi have always been great creditors and debtors, and cases con- 686
cerning indebtedness seem to have been next in frequency at the district 692
court. The chief usually dismissed cases of indebtedness brought against 634
minors, because it was considered unseemly for adults to give credit or to loan valuable property to youths not yet of age. Thus, if the minor's family refused to make restitution, the creditor usually had no redress. However, [613]
if a woman borrowed property and refused to return it, her husband's lineage was held responsible. Similarly, if an adult male borrowed anything and refused to return it or to do so on time, the case was taken to the local court and eventually to the district court. The creditor was asked to supply witnesses to the loan, and if the chief was satisfied that the loan had been made under the conditions specified, the debtor was ordered to make restitution. If the debtor claimed bankruptcy, the chief ordered that his goods be seized and sold, and that restitution be made to the creditor. If the debtor 686
was truly destitute, his relatives were compelled to pay his debts. The col- 692
lective responsibility of the babissi for the debts of its members was seen 634
most clearly in cases where men died in a state of indebtedness. The credi- 613
tors were allowed to summon the debtor's babissi to court, and if proof of the debt was established, the relatives were compelled to repay. If they failed to do so, the chief's police seized and sold their goods to repay the debt.

Cases dealing with violations of civil contracts were somewhat similar. 686
The Mossi did not believe in the axiom *caveat emptor*. If a man sold an 634
animal that died within a week for no apparent reason, the chief ordered 692
an investigation. If it was found that the animal had been ill when sold, the chief ordered that the buyer be reimbursed. If the investigation showed that the animal had been healthy when sold, no restitution was made. Similarly, if a man borrowed an ass or an ox to transport goods and the animal

682 found to have been justified—that is, if the victim was a thief or a nocturnal intruder—then the accused was acquitted or simply fined. If, however, the 682 accused was found guilty of murder, he was sentenced to die, and the mode 696 of execution was at the chief's pleasure. The chief surrendered the prisoner to his executioners, serfs who lived in the Baglere ward. They took him into the woods and carried out the sentence by strangulation, hanging, decapitation, clubbing, or stoning.

696 The perpetrator of an unusually heinous crime was often ordered to kill himself with a poisoned arrow. This form of execution was feared most, because it tested the murderer's mettle and called into play the [634] coercive force of his lineage if he proved to be a coward. When such an execution was ordered, the district chief had a poisoned arrow prepared and brought to the murderer's father, his brother, or his father's brother's son. The relative gave the arrow to the condemned man, and, while apologizing for his painful mission, explained that the crime had to be expiated. If the murderer agreed to kill himself, his relatives prepared food and drink for [766] him while his grave was dug. Some proud and brave men helped their relatives dig the oblong-shaped grave required for a murderer; some even insisted on digging it themselves. When both the food and the grave had been prepared, the murderer bade his relatives farewell, took the food and the poisoned arrow, and went into a hut. Here he ate the food and after- 696 ward killed himself by pushing the poisoned arrow into his leg. In some 626 cases he had to be provided with a second arrow to hasten his death. If a cowardly murderer refused to kill himself, one of his relatives offered to 613 die in his stead. He told the murderer that death was preferable to the knowledge that his lineage brother was a coward. What would happen, he asked the murderer, if he saw a relative being harmed? Would he choose his own safety rather than run the risk of death? The other relatives asked the same questions, and this subtle coercion was usually sufficient to induce the most cowardly man to kill himself. There are no reports of a murderer's permitting a relative to die for him; life would have been impossible for him afterward. One suspects that if ever a murderer had attempted to elude his fate, the district chief would have had him executed.

634 The district court also prescribed capital punishment for individuals 681 convicted of arson, abduction, witchcraft, or lese majesty. A person con- [685] victed of willfully setting fire to someone's hut or crops was put to death even if no one was killed in the resulting fire; he was held to have [683] jeopardized the life and livelihood of his victims. Similarly, the rare person convicted of threatening the well-being of others through the practice of [695] witchcraft was usually tortured and killed. Conviction usually followed the testimony of witnesses or the confession of the accused.

be related to her was tried and executed. In some cases, he was put to death without a trial. Adultery with a royal wife was considered so reprehensible that both adulterers were publicly beaten to death. Their bodies were denied burial and were thrown into the bush to be eaten by vultures. The Dapore Naba and the Baglere Naba seized and retained the man's property.

Men who committed treason against the Mogho Naba were usually killed before they could be tried. Chiefs and nobles who were suspected of treason and who consented to come to Ouagadougou for trial were deposed and executed if found guilty. Those who were found innocent were released and sent back to their chiefly duties. The sole exception on record to this general rule was the case of Naba Yemde, a Dim of Boulsa province. He had fought and defeated the forces of Mogho Naba Sanum, and when the Mogho Naba sent a larger army and routed him, he was treacherously delivered to the monarch by another Dim. Sanum found Yemde innocent of treason, but had him executed because he had violated another rule: as the descendant of a Kourita, he had come face to face with the Mogho Naba, thus jeopardizing the monarch's life. This exception is always cited by the Mossi when the inevitability of execution for treason is brought up. Actually, a person accused of treason rarely went to court. He either took poison or died in battle against the royal forces. As a posthumous punishment, his compound was burned, his property seized, and his relatives and servants sold into slavery outside the country. Thus, the supreme penalty was not merely the death of a traitor but the permanent banishment of his entire lineage.

did not derive any revenue from his judicial functions. He could not levy a fine against any malefactor. However, his intermediary position between the villagers and the district chief did permit him to obtain some revenue whenever commodities moved from one level to the other.

The officials who administered the villages for the district chief received part of their revenue from the villages under their charge. These local administrators had no courts or retainers comparable to those at the provincial level. However, they did have a large number of wives who contributed valuable agricultural labor. These administrators were permitted to ask the village chiefs for sosose on their own fields several times during the planting season, but—unlike the district chiefs—they were not permitted to have the villagers cultivate special fields for them. In return for any help received, they had to provide food and drink for the workers.

The administrator received most of his revenue as a by-product of active duty in the villages. When he visited a village or transmitted a message to a village chief, he almost invariably received a sheep, a goat, a chicken, or some millet, from the village chief. He also acquired large quantities of goods during the village interregnum: he received gifts from the chief's heirs during the chief's funeral; he received additional presents when they took the fado to the district chief; he could prolong the interregnum in order to receive as many bribes as possible from contenders for the nam; and he was handsomely rewarded when the candidate he had backed was finally installed in office.

The extended family was the basic socio-economic unit supporting the Mossi political organization. The Yirisoba received land rights in his saka from his Sakakasma, who had obtained his rights from the village chief. An extended family in need of additional land would seek help from its Sakakasma or its Boodkasma. When the family no longer needed this land, it reverted to the lineage. If all the land granted to the lineage was already occupied, the extended family, through its lineage head, asked the village chief for more land. The chief usually granted this request, unless he had no more weogho available. In this case, the needy Yirisoba sometimes tried to borrow land from his non-kin neighbors. Such a step was not undertaken lightly, however. If a man borrowed land from his own lineage members or from the chief, the land rights reverted to its donors without difficulty. However, if he borrowed land from another lineage and either he or his benefactor died without assuring the return of the land, litigation often ensued. In some cases a man would seek land from his lineage brothers in another village, who let him use some of their land with their chief's permission. Some Yirisobadamba even asked their district chief for

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permission to use weogho in the district, and new hamlets arose in this way. A Yirisoba who could not obtain adequate land on which to grow food for his family left the district and sought land elsewhere, especially among his mother's patrilineage. However, village and district chiefs always tried to prevent this because they did not like to lose any of their subjects.

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As director of economic activities in the household, the Yirisoba supervised the agricultural labor of his charges. It was he who directed the work of his wives, his sons, and his sons' wives, and supervised the care of the family herd. He provided the cotton, which was carded and spun by the women and woven by the men. It was also his task to ensure adequate clothing for the members of his household; and he sold excess commodities in order to buy salt, kola nuts, bracelets, foreign clothes, and other products imported from the forest and desert zones. In each case, the Yirisoba had to balance judiciously the requirements of his household against his obligations to the community and to the political hierarchy. He had to prevent economic rivalry among his sons, and especially among his sons' wives. He had to make sure that every married member of the household had sufficient time to provide goods and services for his own family, and that foodstuffs were distributed equitably among the wives. Finally, he had to use the resources of the household to build and maintain the nexus of socioeconomic relationships that provided wives for the male members of the household, and to meet his obligations to the political hierarchy.

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The Yirisoba also had social and economic responsibilities toward the other members of his babissi and boodoo. He furnished labor and goods to needy lineage members and to non-relatives with whom he had marriage arrangements. Since much of this help was given on the basis of ultimate reciprocity, very little loss was involved. However, the relationship between commoner and noble families was quite different. In theory, the nobles had no claims on the property of the commoners; but in practice, they did claim such rights. Furthermore, commoner lineages often gave the nobles many more wives than the nobles returned. This inequality enabled the nobles to receive more goods and services from their marriage partners among the commoners than they gave in return. The nobles thus took advantage of their power as possessors of the nam, but even membership in the royal lineage did not exempt them from supporting the governmental services at all levels. This duty was incumbent upon every Moaga.

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The Mossi people could not refuse to support their political organization, but often complained about having to do so. Many Mossi felt that their rulers were greedy and avaricious and received too many gifts. Some Mossi held that if the chiefs were not placated with goods and services,

[P.126]

VIII

RELIGION AND GOVERNMENT

796
642 RELIGION AND RITUAL played an important role in supporting and preserv-
[769] ing the Mossi political system. Religio-political ceremonies were centered
[776] around the ancestors (Keemse) and the earth deities (Tengkouga); the otiose high god (Ouennam or Naba Zid Ouende) had a very minor role.

769 The political importance of ancestor veneration lay in the fact that every
642 Mossi chief claimed Nyennega of Dagomba and her descendants, Ouedra-
778 ogo and Oubri, as his ancestors. Furthermore, possession of the amulets of Rialle, Nyennega's husband and Ouedraogo's father, legitimized possession of the nam. In order to rule, a Moaga had either to be a member of a royal
[613] lineage still in possession of the nam or to have received the nam from such
669 a lineage. No Moaga ever tried to usurp the nam of a kingdom or princi-
778 pality without trying to steal the royal amulets at the same time; nor, if his rebellion was successful, did he ever fail to claim that he had stolen the
642 amulets or had received them as a gift. Thus Yadega, who rebelled against
769 his father's brother, Mogho Naba Koudoumie, and founded the Yatenga kingdom, declared that he had obtained Rialle's amulets. He claimed that they had been given to him by his sister, Pabre, who had stolen them from Ouagadougou and had thus deprived that kingdom of any legitimate sanctions for power. Thus, when the Yatenga people declare that they are equal to Ouagadougou, they add that the only "amulets" that still legitimize the nam of the Ouagadougou dynasty are the droppings left behind by Pabre's horse as she fled northward.

769 Similarly, all the princes who founded principalities and proclaimed
642 their independence of Ouagadougou defended their action on the grounds
643 that they, being as close to the main line of descent as the Mogho Naba, were also entitled to rule. The younger sons of deceased Mogho Nanamse
[631] who were banished from the capital as Kouritadamba and who subse-
[634] quently became provincial Dimdamba also stressed their relationship to the royal ancestors. Even those district chiefs whose ancestors had prob-

11: Skinner E.-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28

769 642 613 [634]

ably been younger sons sent to rule in conquered territories claimed that their ancestors were direct descendants of Ouedraogo and Oubri. Thus, to the Mossi, the power to rule was intimately linked to closeness of descent from the royal ancestors. The supernatural power of these ancestors, and the vigilance they were believed to maintain over the affairs of their descendants, were regarded as important factors in Mossi government.

796 631 643 769 [778] [782]

From the moment when the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou or any other Mossi ruler "drank the namtibo" and thereby received the nam of his ancestors, he had the right—indeed, the duty—to offer sacrifices to these ancestors in the name of his subjects. Every night, throughout Mossi country, the Baloum Naba of every ruler performed an act of supplication (Kwaga Basgha) to the ancestors. He beseeched them to protect the subjects of their descendants through the night, to maintain peace in Mossi country, and to grant health, children, and prosperity to all Mossi. This nightly ceremony was climaxed yearly by an elaborate ritual in honor of the ancestors (called the Basgha in some areas, and the Pelegha, Filigha, or Kinkiriga in others) that began at the highest levels of the government and ultimately linked every Mossi chief and lineage head.

643 769 241 782 796 [644]

The Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou, like the other Mogho Nanamse and Dimdamba, initiated this ceremony in his own kingdom. His celebration, called "M'barengma," was held at the end of the Mossi agricultural year and after the Soretasgho. Thus, the M'barengma was a New Year's festival in thanksgiving for good crops, as well as the annual Feast of the Dead. A few weeks before the first moon of the new year (the *ki-basgha* or *ki-pelegha*), the Mogho Naba ordered his soghondamba and samande-kamba to clean up the palace buildings and courtyards—an activity intended to notify the ever-vigilant ancestors that preparations were being made to offer sacrifices in their honor. A short time later, the Mogho Naba gave grain from his fields to the Pughtiema so she could prepare millet water for the sacrifices. Present-day Mossi insist that part of the grain came from the first ears harvested that year and part from those of the previous year. This was supposed to symbolize the continuity between crops, mirroring the continuity between the ruler and his ancestors. A few days before the principal ceremony, the Mogho Naba ordered the Larhalle Naba to pour millet water and sacrifice chickens on the graves of former Mogho Nanamse.

[645]

Shortly before the ki-basgha moon appeared, the ruler had to leave his palace at night to elude the ancestors, who had been attracted by the preparations and who were expected to be angry when they discovered that the sacrifices were not yet ready. The unjust ruler feared ancestral sanctions; the just ruler that his ancestors might want him to join them. One night he

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11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28

pleted, the remainder of the ceremony followed the pattern of the Ouagadougou ritual.

During the weeks that followed, the village chiefs and the heads of the larger lineage segments all offered sacrifices to their ancestors. The Pughtiema of each prominent local administrator, chief, or lineage head prepared and poured the millet water as a libation to the ancestors. Whenever possible, each of these personages invited musicians to sing praises to his ancestors. He dressed in his best robe and sat outside his hut to receive presents from his relatives, friends, and subjects, along with their best wishes for the new year, and for long life and prosperity. In return he gave them kola nuts, beer, and food. Thus, in celebrating the Basgha, all the Mossi were united in prayers and supplications to the ancestors, upon whom rested the future of their country and the successful reign of the descendants of Ouedraogo and Oubri.

The earth deity, Tenga, held the central place in the second major religio-political ceremony which linked all Mossi. This ritual, called *Tense* (from *tenga*, "earth") and sometimes *Naba Oubri ma koure* ("the anniversary of the funeral of Mogho Naba Oubri's mother"), was so important to Mossi cohesion that it was banned by the French, and as a result its main features are now unclear. According to tradition, Naba Oubri loved Poughtoenga, his Ninisi mother, so much, and was so pleased with the elaborate funeral he gave her, that he decided to repeat this ceremony each year in the hope that his subjects would be blessed with the bountiful crops and herds which had made the first one possible. Curiously enough, Oubri's mother was not a central figure in the Tense celebration. Instead, great stress was placed on the fructifying powers of the earth and on the importance of the royal ancestors in Mossi life. The juxtaposition and association of the earth deity with Oubri's mother has important implications for the Mossi political organization. Mossi tradition holds that a Ninisi woman was the ancestress of the Mossi of Ouagadougou. Her people probably celebrated the Tense as a fertility rite to their earth goddess, Tenga. The Mossi apparently took over the ceremony and used it both as a fertility rite and as a memorial festival, thus symbolically uniting the conquerors and the conquered.[8]

In contrast to the Basgha, no special date appears to have been set for the celebration of the Tense. It was held sometime before the crops were sowed, but according to Tauxier it was not celebrated at all in Ouagadougou when the previous year's harvest had been poor.[4] Before setting the date for the festival, the Mogho Naba summoned the Larhalle Naba and ordered him to have sacrifices made on the graves of all former rulers. This minister

634 795 796 771 184

gift every year to the Imam and to Karamakho Isa, for whom he has great veneration. These are old and wise men who cannot but give him excellent counsel.[18]

The relations between Boukary Koutou and the Moslems of the Sakhaboutenga district show how Mossi chiefs, though pagans, were able to establish viable political bonds with potentially hostile believers of another religion. Boukary Koutou was probably a Moslem "in outward appearance only," as Binger suggests. Nevertheless, it was by being Moslems of this kind that Mossi rulers managed to retain the allegiance of their Moslem subjects. This was their duty as "fathers of their people," and apparently they did it without much hesitation. In this manner, they effectively used religion to bolster their power and sustain their authority.

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Ritual connections between the Mossi rulers and the chiefs of surrounding countries enabled them to protect their subjects from foreign attack and to maintain internal cohesion. The numerous reciprocal gifts between the Mossi and such other Voltaic groups as the Dagomba, Mamprusi, and Gurmanche were based on the belief in descent from a common ancestor or ancestress. Ritual and the supernatural thus played an extremely important role in the cohesiveness of the Mossi kingdoms and in the functioning of their governmental processes. Without these ritual factors, it is doubtful whether the Mossi rulers would have been able to maintain such a relatively high degree of control over their subjects, given the relative weakness of their economic resources, communications, and armed forces. In trying to understand why the Mossi retained their autonomy for so long, one must take into consideration the statement made by a French officer a year after the Mossi were conquered: "We must not lose sight of the fact that [the Mossi] have always presented a common front to strangers, and that a single word of command is sufficient to unite them against the invader in the name of kinship and national unity."[19]

[648] [431] [613] [771] [648] [619]

642 648 182

The phase of Mossi political history that began when Nyennega left Dagomba and moved northward came to an end with the European conquest. Most French scholars believe that the Mossi were in a state of decadence at the time of conquest and might have fallen to such African conquerors as El Hadj Omar, Samory Touré, or Baba To. The fact remains, however, that these conquerors all skirted Mossi country without entering it. If these African rulers believed that the Mossi were invincible in their unity, it was because the Mossi, through mythical bonds of common descent and actual bonds of kinship, had welded themselves into a cohesive and powerful group.

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
FA28 Mossi FA28

CHAPTER 9 [p.237]

Trade and Markets Among the Mossi People

BY ELLIOTT P. SKINNER

The Mossi represent the dominant population of the Voltaic Republic, numbering about 1,600,000 out of some 3,200,000 inhabitants. They represent the unique example of a group which has preserved its ethnic identity and political autonomy through all the vicissitudes of Sudanic history until it was conquered by the French in 1896. Tradition records that the people who became the Mossi left the Dagomba region in present-day Ghana during the eleventh century and moved into the bend of the Niger River, carving out three large kingdoms and smaller principalities in the process. At the head of these still extant kingdoms are rulers *(Moro Nabas)* who formerly held feudal-like control over the provinces, districts and villages which comprise their domains. The villages, with their patri-local, polygynous, extended family households, formed the basic Mossi settlement pattern. A complex hierarchical administrative apparatus carried the power of the Mossi rulers into the smallest villages, and funneled taxes and tribute back to them. This structure still exists, but of course it has been modified by the French.

The Mossi were and are still divided into stratified royal, noble and commoner patrilineages. Characteristic of this lineage system is a process by which royal sub-lineages descend serially until they merge with the mass of commoner lineages. Below the lineages there once were large non-Mossi groups of serfs and slaves, but these people have now been grouped into lineages and have become Mossicized.

The topography of Mossi country is typical of the Sudanic grasslands. It is an immense plain, some 1,500 feet above sea level and broken only by three low mountain ranges and numerous small hills. The annual total rainfall is between 30 and 40 inches, and falls almost entirely as heavy showers or thundershowers during the period from June to September. So narrow is the margin of rainfall for successful crop cultivation that any variation in the cycle results in low crop yields and a difficult "hungry period" the following year before the new crops are harvested. The Mossi do not practice irrigation, and would have trouble doing so because the three Volta Rivers which drain their territory serve as drainage chiefly during the rainy season. Only the Black Volta has water all year round; the

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
FA28 Mossi FA28

837 man even refrains from making overtures to a woman whose husband's female relatives may be married to a member of his own [689] lineage. He fears that a wronged husband may have the wives of his [613] lineage brothers recalled, thus causing dissension within and between the two lineages. If none of these complications are present, a man seeks out a person who knows the woman and sends a message de- [431] claring his intentions. If the response is favorable, the man then buys [801] four large kola nuts (four being the number for a woman), wraps them together with 44 francs, and send them to his lady. This procedure may be followed on subsequent market days without the two parties ever coming into direct contact with each other. Finally, however, a rendezvous is arranged, and on the pretense of leaving the market to visit a relative for several days, the woman goes instead to her lover's village.

837 These casual affairs started at the market sometimes become quite 586 serious, and if for any reason they are sanctioned by the relatives of either the man or the woman, they often lead to the breakup of a [443] marriage. And since the market is the place where disputants of any [570] sort most likely come into contact, it is here that fights over "stolen" wives break out.

837 This pattern of extramarial relationships centering around the 443 market place is so common among the Mossi that the younger men, and even some of the older ones, are disappointed with the "market" when their mistresses do not appear. Mossi men who sit under the shelters around the market place can usually give an inquirer not only the name of a woman, the name and village of her husband and father, but also the name and village of her paramour. Characteristically enough, they are always "ignorant" of the escapades of their own female relatives or of the wives of their lineage members. The only 593 time when men act as though their relatives might be involved in 443 extramarital affairs is when for some purpose or another a man has to recall a wife or daughter who has gone to visit a relative in another village or district. Regardless of how pressing the problem may be, a man will seldom go directly to his father-in-law's house to recall the woman. He goes to the market nearest to his in-laws' village, and seeks his wife there. If he does not find her or any of her relatives, he goes to the part of the market in which people from her village sell their products and sends a message to her family that he will come for her the next day, or that he would like her to come home.

443 A market place is also one of the best places to look for news of a 203 runaway wife, or of any stranger in an area. The Mossi say that women have footprints like an elephant in that they can be found quite easily, but that the footprints are always clearest in the market.

5: Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1959
FA28 Mossi FA28

composed of two major groups of communities," Fortes goes on to describe this pattern succinctly: 171

> On the one side are those that claim to be descendants of immigrants from parts of the country other than their present habitats. On the other side are communities that claim to be the autochthonous inhabitants. . . . Many of the immigrant communities claim descent from forbears of the Mampuru ruling stock. Though now wholly amalgamated with the alleged aboriginal inhabitants, they have certain ritual observances and a system of chieftainship similar to those of the Mamprusi. . . . The institution distinctive of the autochthonous communities is the office of "Custodian of the Earth." This ritual office, involving priestly functions in connection with the cult of the Earth, is found among many West African peoples from the Senegal to the mouth of the Niger. In the Voltaic region it is the exclusive prerogative of the autochthonous communities.[1] [793]

The inhabitants of the Yatenga at the time of the arrival of the Mossi were the Kurumankobe, or Fulse, as they are called by the Mossi. Their descendants recognize their indigenous origin but have become almost wholly acculturated to the Mossi. While most Mossi bear the sib name Wedraogo and maintain political control in the Yatenga, the descendants of the Kurumankobe usually have the sib name Savadogo and are excluded from the exercise of political authority. They have retained the custodianship of the earth, and the elders of their lineages and sibs are the Mossi's *Tenga Soba namba*, their "earth custodians," charged with propitiating the supernatural forces of nature. 173 563 614 [793]

POLITICAL AND SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

The present king of the Yatenga, the *Yatenga Naba*, is a lineal descendant of the first ruler, Naba Yadiga. The members of the lineage of the king are called "those who maintain themselves upon us" (*riim namba*). Directly subordinate to the authority of the Yatenga Naba are his four grand ministers, each of whom has authority over a particular province (*solum*) of the Yatenga.[2] 631 [644] [635]

The province over which each of the grand ministers presides as lord is divided up into a number of cantons (*tense*), each of which is ruled by a chief who is the central political authority both of the village in which he resides and of the villages within the canton. Like the province, the concept of the canton is not precisely territorial. Some villages may owe 631 634

[1] Meyer Fortes, *The Dynamics of Clanship among the Tallensi* (London: Oxford University Press, 1945), p. 6.

[2] These provinces refer not only to geographical areas of the kingdom but to particular categories of the population. For example, the *Balum Naba* has direct authority over the southern regions of the Yatenga and indirect authority over the cantons of Riziam and Zittenga, political entities which have never fully recognized the central authority of the *Yatenga Naba*. This same minister is also especially charged with maintaining liaison with certain of the more important earth custodians throughout the Yatenga.

tween the Mossi and several other ethnic groups. In each instance the structural relationship in which joking occurs is characterized by the five features listed above.

Joking with the Mother's Brother

The relationship with a maternal uncle is marked by all five of the structural features mentioned. Separation results from the rules of patrilineal descent and inheritance rules, from patrisib exogamy, and from the general observance of patrilocal residence. The relationship is reciprocal in that a mother's brother serves throughout Ego's life as an important alternative source of emotional, economic, and social support: he often acts as intermediary in disputes between Ego and his parents or the elders of his lineage; he gives Ego frequent gifts; and residence in the mother's patriclan is the most frequent alternative to patrilocality. In turn Ego, as a result of the permissive relationship he enjoys with the spirits of his deceased cognatic kinsmen, often serves their living descendants as an intermediary in their ritual efforts to maintain a secure relationship with the ancestral spirits.

Ambivalence between Ego and his mother's brother and her other kin results from the conflicting sources of "conjunction" and "dissociation" just mentioned. The conflict between a strong affective bond—a "feeling" of kinship—and a system of inheritance which denies it jural recognition generates frustration. The ambivalence in the relationship is manifested not only by joking, which is asymmetrical—with Ego being the more aggressive—but by theft as well. Perhaps as partial compensation for his inability to inherit matrilaterally, Ego is permitted to steal his mother's brother's property during his lifetime and can also make off with the beer and some of the animals collected for his funeral.

As for equality of status, the descent groups of Ego and mother's brother are structurally equivalent. Although their respective positions within these two groups differ, the permissiveness of Ego's relationship to his maternal uncle absolves him from recognition of the canons of comportment that otherwise prevail among the Mossi in relations between persons of differing status. Indeed, disregard for such status differences is part of the "joke." Independence is assured by the fact that Ego and his mother's brother are members of autonomous descent groups and that each is responsive only to the authority of his respective lineage elders.

Joking with a Mother's Brother's Wife

Joking between Ego and his mother's brother's wife is to be regarded as a separate relationship because of her nonmembership in the mother's brother's descent group, but certain of the structural circumstances are similar. The source of separation from the mother's brother's wife is evident. The reciprocal tie that unites them is indirect; when Ego is received warmly in his mother's brother's household it is the wife of the latter who prepares the food he is given. Similarly, as a member of her husband's patriclan, she benefits

10:Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1964 FA28 Mossi FA28
Yatenga

571 604 indirectly from the good will of his ancestral spirits whose benevolence Ego often invokes.

Ambivalence follows from other characteristics of the relationship. Resentment of Ego's depredations of her husband's property and jealous concern for the inheritance rights of her own children appear to be at least partially balanced by a share of the affection her husband shows for Ego. However, joking in this relationship is asymmetrical. The mother's brother's wife takes the more aggressive role, and from the vehemence of her joking, and the [159] structural nature of the relationship, it appears likely that amity lies less heavily in the balance than hostility. The groups to which the two parties belong are equal in status. Their respective positions within them, of course, are not, and this is reflected in the aforementioned asymmetry. Each party is obviously independent of the authority system of the other.

571 607 *Joking Between Siblings-in-Law*

[144] Siblings-in-law who joke are separated by the rule of sib exogamy observed among the Mossi. Reciprocity is basic to the marriage contract that unites their respective kin groups. Several factors tend to create ambivalence in the relationship. Both kin groups—in particular, the extended families of the two marriage partners—profit from the reciprocal tie established between them, but possible failure on the part of either group to reciprocate adequately, [574] particularly with regard to marriage payments, constitutes a persistent source [587] of potential friction. Moreover, the Mossi observe the levirate. Joking between siblings-in-law who are potential spouses, yet are presently constrained by a [137] prohibition against adultery, has frequently been ascribed the function of reducing tension in a situation of conflict. The kin groups of siblings-in-law [147] are always structurally equivalent because groups occupying significantly dif- [582] ferent strata in Mossi society do not intermarry. As members of autonomous descent groups the participants are obviously independent of one another.

571 614 *Joking Between Sibs*

Sibs (or lineages) whose members joke with one another are, of course, also separate groups.[2] They are always united by a strong tradition of reciprocal social and economic aid. Ambivalence apparently stems from the conflict between this tradition of reciprocity and actual competing claims to land. The origin of joking relationships between two descent groups is often ascribed to the alleged fact that, when they first arrived in the village, leaders of both falsely claimed to the chief that he and his kinsmen had arrived first, [423] and thus had a prior right to land, and that the members of the other group were their slaves. Despite their jocular allegations, both groups are in fact structurally equal and independent.

571 561 *Joking Between Age-Sets*

Joking between age-sets within an age-grade varies with the generational

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28

[P. 13]

II

SOVEREIGNTY, KINSHIP, AND COMMUNITY

THE Mossi restricted all important positions within the traditional political 642 organization to persons who claimed lineal descent from Ouedraogo and 613 Oubri, the ancient founders of the Mossi nation. Thus all the *Mogho Na-* [173] *namse, Dimdamba, Kombemba,* and *Tense Nanamse*—the heads of kingdoms, principalities, districts, and villages, respectively—claimed descent in the royal line. The bond of kinship among all important Mossi rulers [614] was symbolized by membership in the lion clan (*Gegema*) and affiliated clans or *boodoo* founded by ancient members of the ruling families. Al- 613 though the Mossi respected clan totems, they did not stress clan organization. They were more interested in membership in the segmentary 778 lineages within the clans.[1] Yet not all Mossi groups stressed lineage affiliation. 642 This was of supreme importance only for nobles whose membership in particular segments of ruling lineages gave them access to the *nam*—the power first possessed by the ancient founders, which is described by the Mossi as "that force of God which enables one man to control another." So important was the corporate possession of the nam by a ruling lineage [554] that with few exceptions, membership in such a lineage gave a Moaga noble status.[2] Lineage segmentation gave some segments easier access to [578] the nam, however, and resulting conflicts over sovereignty gave rise to the various Mossi kingdoms, principalities, and even districts.

Every Mossi ruling line attempted to legitimize its position by claiming the most direct descent from Ouedraogo and Oubri. The descendants of the founder of a local ruling lineage would claim that he had been an elder son deprived of his patrimony by unscrupulous younger brothers, or an elder son disqualified by a physical handicap from receiving the nam. Some rul- 642 ing lineages even claimed that their founders had been elder sons who had 613 voluntarily forsaken the problems of government and established new 173 districts for themselves. Whenever tradition recounted that a younger son 778 had indeed founded a kingdom or district, it was invariably said that he

174 viewpoint of ethnographic research, text similarities do not mean
197 very much, and idioms that are not fixed by writing may, within a few centuries, become deformed to the extent of being unrecognizable. While the value of grammatical comparisons is much more important, we have unfortunately had neither the time nor the means to make use of this method. We will, therefore, merely indicate this point of view which, in our opinion, could lead to fruitful observations. On
174 the other hand, missionaries have claimed that the Mossi traditionally would have preserved the symbolic notion of the Christian cross, a fact we have been unable to verify and which, without being impossible a priori, seems unlikely."

After this parenthesis about the distant origins of the Mossi, Captain Lambert continues:

"It is indeed highly probable, and here again, lacking written documents, we have only oral traditions to base our opinions on, that the Mossi people, split up by the impact of a Moslem invasion from the east, must have, through successive waves and losing ground in the opposite direction, spread further toward the west, so that the Mossi-bé (1), who still form several agglomerations in the western

1. Mossi-bé is simply the plural of the word Mossi in Peuhle /Peul/ language.

part of Sokoto and even in the Dounzou circle and who also show striking analogies with the Mossi proper, can also be used as a reference. (Captain Lambert adds in a note: "Among the Mossi-bé we
[304 171 64] find the circumflex accent which would complete the ethnic tatooing of the Mossi as it is today. This mark rightly belongs to the natives of the left bank of the Niger river up to the angle formed by the Dollol-Maouri.") These agglomerations indicate, in a very approximate fashion, the location of the Mossi empire at the historical period that evidently marks its apogee of power; toward 1350, as we saw /4/ in the Tarikh, Timbuktu was conquered by the sultan of Mossi."

174 The incident to which Captain Lambert refers here is the con-
114 quest of Timbuktu by the Mossi (in 1333 exactly, according to the most advanced calculations) (1), which is mentioned by Es-Sadi in

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28

The district chief was relatively secure in the control of his territory as long as he maintained amicable relations with his immediate superiors and administered his district to their satisfaction. A less important but more constant source of concern was his relationship with neighboring chiefs. Many people who can remember the pre-conquest period say it was unsafe for a man to trespass into another district unless he was on an official mission from his chief to another chief. It appears that most of the fighting occurred over strayed cattle and stolen women, with constant raids and counter-raids. The cattle were eaten, and the women kept as wives. Captured men were sometimes sold as slaves, but more often were held for ransom. They were not kept as slaves, since the Mossi were forbidden to enslave other Mossi. Needless to say, this fighting was frowned upon by the Mogho Naba. Since all district chiefs believed in their common descent from Ouedraogo and Oubri and paid allegiance to the Mogho Naba, any fighting among them was not only a sin against the ancestors but also an act of disloyalty to the Mogho Naba. When (as was usually the case) this fighting was of short duration and few people were killed, the Mogho Naba took no official notice of it. But when it became serious, he sent the provincial administrator to stop the fighting and to summon the dissident elements to the capital for trial. The speed and severity with which the Mogho Naba dealt with quarrels within his own realm usually depended upon his strength. At some periods in Mossi history there was little internal disorder, because the rulers were strong; at other periods, under weak rulers, disorder practically amounted to internal chaos. During such periods, the Mossi were kept together only by the bonds of kinship and religion which united them against outsiders.

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The district chief maintained tight control over his own territory and took an active part in its administration. In a district like Nobere, for example, the chief was aided both by an informal council and by an administrative apparatus similar to but smaller than the one at Ouagadougou. The council included men with whom the chief had grown up, members of his immediate family such as his brothers, and a few formal administrative personnel. These councillors visited him every day, brought him occasional gifts, received gifts from him in turn, and discussed informally all matters of interest. Yet, informal as this communication was, it enabled the district chief to know what was going on in his villages. Moreover, these councillors interceded for various villages and gave the chief valuable advice in administrative matters.

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The formal administrative personnel of the district included a Ouidi Naba, a Balsum Naba, a Tansoba, and lesser officials with titles identical

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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gift every year to the Imam and to Karamakho Isa, for whom he has great veneration. These are old and wise men who cannot but give him excellent counsel.[18]

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634 among the other ministers. The rich and important cantons
645 were entrusted to the Kamsaogo Naba, chief eunuch. This was
[839] because the emperor wanted to be sure that he would recover the fortune left by this minister at his death. Since the latter was merely the guardian of the king's wives, he had no legitimate heirs. The eunuch appointed to replace him had to establish his own personal fortunes. Only the horses or women which the late minister might have given [49] during his lifetime to persons in his section were left with their owners. [Ed., Mossi villages are
[621] divided into sections (Fr., quartier), which are really hamlets containing several households or compounds. These sections are indigenous, not colonial subdivisions.]

Powers of the Ministers over the Vassal Chiefs of the Mogho Naba

634 It would be a mistake to think that before the French occu-
645 pation the ministers had any great authority over the canton chief.
642 Actually, the ministers' role, as has been pointed out, was to act as intermediaries between the emperor and the canton chiefs. They could not, however, under any right or pretext, intervene in canton affairs, since the kombéré was the only lord in the area whose command had been conferred upon him as an appanage by the Mogho Naba.

That is why it has been possible for canton chiefs who were dissatisfied with the minister under whose rule they found themselves to report, henceforth, to another minister. Furthermore, the Mogho Naba saw no objection to this. The Mossi expression,
[638] Gansobend'ka sambiri n'tont vigri yé ("hospitality is not like kinship; you can evade it") amply illustrates the accuracy of the foregoing. If it is further noted that before the French occupation
[651] the naba came to Ouagadougou only once a year to pay their respects to the emperor and to bring him annual tribute, one will readily understand the insignificance of the ministers' authority over them.

This does not mean, of course, that it was possible to [50] do without any intermediaries, but rather that it was possible to choose them freely. In any case, one of the incentives to

567 part of the emperor's harem. The dapobi belonging to the canton chiefs, belonging to the kombemba, are of the same origin. While the Mogho Naba could not sell the dapobi of Kibissi origin, the emperor and the canton chiefs could do as they liked with the true dapobi. They were sold for the most trifling faults and their wives and children were either sent away with them or turned over to other deserving captives.

Slaves of the Crown. (a) The bangaré. These are Peulh captives who have gradually cast off the authority of their masters and who have submitted voluntarily to the authority of the Mogho Naba.

A herd of cattle is called nab'bangaré, and it seems likely that the word bangaré, "herd," to designate this type of slave came from that source. However, the bangaré are not solely former Peulh slaves since a free individual who has committed a serious crime in his [90] native village and fears reprisal comes to join the "herd."

Once presented to the Mogho Naba, they were henceforth considered slaves and, as such, immune from prosecution.

567 The principal bangaré villages, generally known as "independent
●62 villages," are: Kaïbo (province of Gounga); Manghin, Zaanga (canton of Zorgongo); Zaon'pighin, Payaobtinga (canton of Boudry); Nabasnoghin (canton of Nedogo); Bangar'Nabilin (canton of Zorgo); Gandaogo (canton of Zoungou); Boumintoré, Sidtenga, Mandié, Bougoumbarga, etc.

567 The emperor could supply himself from these "herds" when-
681 ever the need arose. Any bangaré who had committed serious crimes or who had been denounced as dangerous individuals who spread disorder in the villages or committed robbery were castrated and made into eunuchs or sold by order of the emperor.

[582] The bangaré intermarry since no free Mossi father would give them a daughter in marriage. This is solely due to the fact that if the emperor decided to sell a bangaré, his family would share the same fate. The father of the wife would not intervene in such a case, because this might be dangerous for him. So it is easily understandable that, under these circumstances, no father would seek such a match.

567 Bangaré chiefs. The chiefs of bangaré villages [91] are ap-
622 pointed by the Mogho Naba. The villages themselves are free of any

776 find the leopard, which had suddenly vanished. The puzzled elders,
778 like the good Mossi they were, consulted the sorcerer who stated that
787 the leopard was their tangandé, and the thicket to which it had repaired was its sacred grove. He also prescribed the sacrifices to be offered.

776 As the blood of the victims flowed, the children saw a turtle
787 walking toward the sacred grove and tried to seize it. The elder prevented then from doing so and again resorted to the superior knowledge of the sorcerer to find out what this might possibly mean: a turtle entering the sacred grove during a sacrifice to the tangandé! The sorcerer pronounced the following oracle: the turtle is the child of the tangandé and thus becomes sacred to our village. Since that time the village has had the leopard and turtle as its tangandé /sic/.

776 The tangandé may actually be a stone or a tree which is regarded as the guardian of the village, but this is more unusual. The tangandé might perhaps be considered as a sort of village totem. If we take Salomon Reinach's definition of the totem as "the animal, plant, or more rarely mineral or heavenly body which the clan acknowledges as an ancestor, a protector, and a rallying sign," (3) we find that the

3. Salomon Reinach, Cultes, mythes et religion /Cults, Myths, and Religion/, p. 81.

tangandé is usually an animal, a guardian animal, but that it is not regarded as an ancestor and it does not serve as a rallying sign, for
[621] several villages may have the same tangamma /sic/—many have the crocodile and boa—without considering this as a bond between them.

Monseigneur Le Roy defines totemism as follows: "An institution consisting essentially of a magic pact, which reflects and constitutes a kinship, mystical and supernatural in nature, by which an invisible spirit in the visible shape of an animal, or, in exceptional cases, of a plant, mineral, or astral body, is associated with an individual, a family, a clan, a tribe, or a secret society for the purpose of reciprocal services." (4) This definition does not correspond to the

4. Mgr. Le Roy, La religion des primitifs /Primitive Religion/, p. 132.

643 of the electoral college was not accepted by the populace and dis-
669 turbances occurred in spite of the proclamation of the king-elect. This was when Naba Sagha, the son of Naba Kom, was chosen. The people would have liked to see Kaoko, son of Naba Zombéré, nominated. Dissatisfied because the sovereign of their choice had not reached the throne, they would not acknowledge the man chosen by the college. The new monarch managed to take over the throne only after waging a bloody battle at the head of his followers against his unlucky rival.

645 The province chiefs who are ministers are nominated by the
635 Moro Naba, who selects the man most deserving of the succession among the closest relatives of the chief to be replaced. Province chiefs enjoy considerable power in the administration of their provinces, they are surrounded with a large court, but they stand under the direct control of the Moro Naba.

635 It must be added that aside from the five provinces lying under the direct rule of the Moro Naba of Ouagadougou, there were four others (Boussouma and Béloussa to the northeast, Yako to the northwest, Tenkodogo to the southeast) that were mere vassal provinces and that actually enjoyed nearly complete autonomy prior to our occupation. Tenkodogo province was especially important.

The chiefs of these /latter/ provinces were true monarchs selected in the same fashion as the Moro Naba by the electoral college of their province. Once elected, they enjoyed all the prerogatives of sovereignty, nominating the canton chiefs and administering their provinces as they saw fit.

Their power was as absolute in their own sphere as that of the Moro Naba over the whole of his subject provinces, but they ac-
[631] knowledged his sovereignty and offered him a gift as a token of their vassalage at the time when their powers were handed over to them.

/576/ Within the subject provinces, the canton chiefs were
634 nominated by the Moro Naba on the basis of an introduction by the
624 province chief. They were always selected among the closest relatives of the chief they were to replace, always descendants of Oubry, the first Moro Naba. They stood under the direct orders of the province chief, whom they had to use as an intermediary to communicate with the Moro Naba. It was their task to proceed with

634 621 the nomination of the village chiefs, who were always selected from the family of the preceding chief.

428 631 Let us add that in principle, and all other things being equal, it was the eldest son of the deceased chief who was supposed to succeed his father, and this applied to village chiefs as well as to canton chiefs, province chiefs, and the Moro Naba. This principle ran counter to the true patriarchal principle where the younger brother is always the natural and legitimate heir of the deceased brother. The requirements of a warlike existence had probably forced it upon the Mossi at the time of their conquest of the Dagomba and Mossi territories.

This principle of direct inheritance (rather than collateral inheritance) had been restricted, however, by the powers of higher authorities represented by canton chiefs vis-à-vis village chiefs, province chiefs vis-à-vis canton chiefs, the Moro Naba vis-à-vis the province chiefs, and the electoral college of the high dignitaries vis-à-vis the future Moro Naba. In short, the warriors' principle of inheritance from father to eldest son ruled among the Mossi in the power sphere, but had to give way to the exigencies of government whenever necessary.

631 Let us not believe that the third principle, namely the consent of the people involved, was altogether unknown among the Mossi (the consent of the village inhabitants in the case of a village chief, of the canton notables in the case of a canton chief, of the province notables in the case of a province chief, etc.) This third principle, however, was the least important, the least taken into account, the least actualized from a mere potential. /577/ Whenever it clashed with the others, it had to give way.

635 Let us add that the majority of Mossi chiefs were aided by representatives called baloum.

634 624 "The province chiefs," says the Monographie, "the majority of canton chiefs, and even the chiefs of a few important villages, are aided by one or several baloum or palace masters, whom they choose freely. These are sometimes former captives, but most frequently they are common natives or former soroné, and they are never nakomsé. Their function is not hereditary. It grants them the right to substitute for the naba, to speak and act in his name."

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Families	Compounds	Number of Persons
1st family	1	51
2nd family	6	132
3rd family	2	23
4th family	6	160
5th family	3	59
6th family	5	50
/225/ 7th family	9	136
8th family	3	79
9th family	8	242
10th family	4	158
11th family	4	151
	51	1, 241

592 This gives us an average of 113 persons per family, 5 compounds
596 per family, and 24 persons per compound.
162 Now, here are the villages in the little canton of Lako or Lago.
621

Villages	Families	Compounds	Number of Persons
Bô	2	3	89
Boulounsi	1	3	137
Ninga	2	12	146
Piga-Sorodé	1	2	35
Réga	4	17	484
Viré-Sorodé	3	4	242
Diogoré	1	8	352
Lako	7	25	1, 457
Touba	3	3	216
Nango-Yarsé (Mossi of the village)	1	1	7
Totals	25	78	3, 165

592 This gives us an average of 126 or 127 persons per family, 3 com-
596 pounds per family, and 40 or 41 people per compound.
162 Now, here are some other statistics.
621

Villages	Families	Compounds	Households	Number of Persons
Lougouri	2	4	48	157
Oula	2	5	43	149
Réka	1	2	3	46
Noungou	2	14	46	233
Ziré	1	3	36	197
Kindiba	7	35	149	736
Diessiré	5	15	49	286
Bissigaï	4	17	100	510
Bougounam	8	32	151	999
Totals	32	127	625	3,313

/226/ On an average, this gives us 103 or 104 persons per family, 26 persons per compound, 5 persons per household, 4 compounds or soukala per family.

Here are some statistics collected in the canton of Koussouka and covering those villages which are entirely Mossi as well as those which are predominantly Mossi.

Villages	Families	Compounds	Households	Population
Rondo	7	72	148	975
Bouga-Mossi	1	11	23	152
Sékéba	1	9	28	183
Zandoma	3	24	62	344
Tangué	7	26	67	439
Konga-Mossi	3	23	72	483
Iroum	2	63	159	880
Totals	24	228	559	3,456

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Fourteenth compound	6	36
Fifteenth compound	1	5
	49	286

This gives us, therefore:

Compounds with several households (more than two)..	7
Compounds with several households (two)	4
Compounds with a single household	4
	15

Now that these statistics have been listed, let us examine in detail the groupings larger than the single household, which may be categorized as follows: (1) the total family; (2) the compound; (3) the work group.

596 The total family. —As we stated earlier, the total family /228/ does not occupy one and the same compound. It is divided into a number of zaka or iri of varying size (the average number given by the above statistics is five). One of these compounds is that of the boudoukasaman or head of the family, who governs the whole family and is at the same time the head of his own zaka and head of his work group. As head of the family, he holds definitively only three types of powers: (1) religious powers; (2) judicial powers; (3) the right to give the daughters of the whole family in marriage.

As head of the family, he has no economic powers.

We shall study the religious powers of the boudoukasaman in detail under "Religion (Sacerdotal Organization)" /not translated/. Let us [592] simply state here that although the head of the total family holds the highest religious powers, the zakasoba or heads of compounds are not totally deprived of them, and this contributes to the greater autonomy of these subfamilies.

I am borrowing the following particulars on the family head and the family council which assists him from Vadier's excellent monograph, here and there correcting some inexact details.

"The head of the family, or patriarch," says Vadier, "is the oldest member of the family. It is he who is the head of it.

"He enjoys great authority over all family members, but exclusively in regard to personal matters. To him alone, after obtaining the consent of the fathers, belongs the right to give the young girls of the

596 Here the zaka is quite clearly reduced to the single household,
182 which becomes identified at the same time with the compound and
592 with the work group. Let us state, however, that in the whole of Ratenga there are 4, 637 Mossi for 458 compounds, or ten persons per compound. An average of ten people per compound represents slightly more than a single household (which averages six persons in Yatenga), but not as much as two households. This means that the compounds sometimes contain two households, sometimes only one. Thus, since there are only a few people in each zaka, there is but a single work group.

162 Here is a complete numerical breakdown of the canton of Ratenga.
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Villages	Inhabitants	Compounds	Average per Compound
Napalra	254	20	13
Ouembatenga	61	5	12
Alaga	335	22	15
Boulounga	197	23	9
Bani	387	30	13
Singuitenga	248	18	14
Boudé	69	11	6
Foulgo-Koquin	22	5	4
Zomkalga	88	12	7
Momoné	86	10	9
Toïsi	100	13	8
Denian	4	1	4
Pinsi	145	13	11
Dologa	110	15	7
Kiédéwendé	103	10	10
/233/ Koundi-Bittou	63	9	7
Yalka	56	4	14
Koumbango	221	19	12
Kourpellé	167	15	11
Zimtenga	307	39	8
Battenga	94	11	9
Badnoro	83	10	8
Douré	96	6	16
Yalgatenga	45	8	6

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Villages	Inhabitants	Compounds	Average per Compound
Bargo	77	8	10
Lo	127	14	9
Rakoéga-Tenga	33	4	8
Moro-Koquin	37	7	5
Dougouré	41	7	6
Bama	82	7	12
Kora	99	9	11
Tangué	110	14	8
Minima	113	12	9
Kanion	75	10	7
Toukoulounga	124	4	31
Tempelra	35	6	6
Bauda	162	5	32
Kargo-Mossi	181	22	8
	4,637	458	10

The same applies to the Mossi of the canton of Tougo, located south-southeast of Yatenga. Here are the figures concerning the number of compounds and the number of people in the canton.

Villages	Compounds	Persons	Average per Compound
Tibtenga	9	102	11
Béma	96	792	8
Ouembatenga	9	76	8
Rima	63	347	5 to 6
Tougo	69	937	13 to 14
Lébenga	4	40	10
Danaoua	22	229	10
Rasoumdé	27	189	7
Mangoulouma	2	28	14
Rikéba	52	545	10 to 11
Totals	353	3,285	9 to 10

593 The Moro Naba, after he has been notified by the family council,
684 pronounces the forfeiture of paternal authority. In case of incest, the guilty party was driven out of the territory.

593 Duties of children toward their parents. —The children owe obedience to their father and mother. They also owe them respect.

Their labor obligations are distributed among the fields of the work group, the father's private fields, the mother's small private plots, and their own little plots. Naturally they work most on the large fields belonging to the work group.

304 Circumcision. —Circumcision is performed at the age of 13 or 14.
881 It takes place in the month of December, hence during the dry, cool season. At this time the children are not needed to help in the fields, as they are in the winter season. This is also the case in the hot, dry season, but at that time the wounds would heal less quickly. This leaves the dry, cold season, which is excellently suited to the treatment of the circumcised, a time when the children have nothing whatever to do and the grown-ups very little.

304 Circumcision is performed on a certain number of children at the same time. When a small village is involved, all the children in the
621 village are circumcised at once. When a large village is involved,
593 the children in each quarter are circumcised together. The children
881 themselves ask their big brother if they may be circumcised when they feel that they have reached a suitable age for this operation. The big brother decides and says yes or no.

304 The children also set the exact date for the circumcision and go to
326 the man who has charge of the operation to make the arrangements.
881 In Yatenga, as a rule, he is a blacksmith (at Ouahigouya, for example, from the quarter of the Baloum-Naba). Sometimes, however, non-blacksmiths, either Foulsé or Mossi, perform the operation. When a performer of operations dies, he is replaced by someone who knows how to circumcise, either a brother or a son of the deceased or someone from another family.

304 Circumcision is not performed in the evening or at night, as happens
881 among other Blacks of West Africa, but at six o'clock in the morning. A particularly kind man among the people of the quarter or of the village has been chosen by the children who are to be circumcised. He wakes them up on that morning and takes them to the man who is to perform the operation. Big brothers accompany their younger brothers, but the father and mother do not witness the operation and are not even

Karême), celebrate the great festival of Ramadan and the lesser festivals, and 794
aspire to make the pilgrimage to Mecca. Most of the Moslems can lead prayers, but only about one-tenth of their number can read and recite the Koran. [212]
However, today the masters (*karasambas*) of the 32 Koranic schools in the district are endeavoring to instruct the many boys and few girls in reading the [871]
Koran and understanding Moslem theology.

The Karême is observed by most adult Moslems in the community with the exception of invalids and working men. Moslems say that the fast is intended to turn the minds of the people to God, and they distinguish between the Moslems "of the mouth" who break the fast and those "of the heart" who [184]
fast until Ramadan. The crescent moon of Ramadan is greeted with guns and general rejoicing and the following morning the Moslems gather at the tomb of Ngado to give praises to God; during the rest of the day they pay homage to the chief and visit their friends. However, a change in the traditional observance of Ramadan is expected, because one of the Moslem leaders objects to the [178]
ceremony at the tomb of Ngado. He feels that some Moslems are beginning to regard the tomb of the first Moslem as an earth shrine or Tengkougre.

So far, only five of the more prominent Moslems in the district have made 794
or are making the pilgrimage to Mecca. The first man made the voyage about 788
seven years ago, and is now conducting a Koranic school in a neighboring district. His brother went to Mecca about two years ago and is now the senior *El Hadj* in the district. Of the two men who were on the pilgrimage when I arrived in the district, one has since died near the Red Sea and the other is still away. One other man left for Mecca and returned to the district during my stay. Most of the pilgrims now fly to Mecca; only two men followed the traditional route through Ghana, Kano, Lake Chad, the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan (now Sudan), and on to Mecca. In general, all pilgrims have used their own re- [613]
sources for the trip, but they receive some help from their lineage brothers and from the other Moslems in the district and in Ouagadougou.

The pilgrimage to Mecca represents the greatest event in the lives of the district Moslems. When the last pilgrim left, a great crowd gathered at his house and prayed for his safe journey, and some even accompanied him to [621]
Ouagadougou and remained there until he left. The Moslems and many pagans of the district, under the command of the district chief, cultivated his fields during his absence. And when the new El Hadj returned, a large crowd accompanied him to his house with shouts of joy. There he killed a sheep in thanks- [782]
giving, sprinkled the crowd with holy water from Mecca, and recounted his experiences. His listeners were impressed by his airplane flight and the description of Mecca, but they showed the greatest interest when he said that Mecca women covered their faces and that most Meccan men were monogamous. The local Moslems smiled when they heard this bit of news from one of their members, but I have seen them scowl when discussing the monogamous practice desired by the Christians.

The attitudes of Moslems differ very little from those of the other Mossi 794
as regards children and polygyny. They say that they do not believe in the 595 842

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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613 appealed to the district chief, and occasionally the woman was sent back.
565 A nobleman set on having a certain girl as a wife usually had small brace-
583 lets like those worn by all noble wives placed on her ankles. Once this was done, the chief could not be compelled to send her back to her parents, and any man who tried to retrieve her was guilty of interfering with a nobleman's wife and could be killed for it. In fact, only the male relatives of noblemen's wives could converse with them without running the risk of being apprehended and executed.

634 The district was the most important unit in the Mossi principalities and kingdoms. It was on this level that the Mossi nobility came into direct contact with the various social and ethnic groups of the society. Here, kinship and affinal ties linked the conquerors and the conquered, the ancient and recent nobility, the refugees from conflicts over the nam and the resident aliens, in a network of social, ritual, economic, and political relationships. It was also on this level that myths and traditions legitimized most effectively the Mossi socio-economic and political system as well as the relationships between the various social and ethnic groups.

634 The number and size of the Mossi districts varied greatly from one
161 principality or kingdom to another. Some districts were large and wealthy, with a number of large villages; smaller districts had a larger proportion of small villages and hamlets. The average number of these small units was probably between fifty and sixty-five per district. The population of the districts ranged from 10,000 to 35,000 persons. Some *tense* (villages) had as many as 5,000 inhabitants and some as few as 50. The average village had about 500 inhabitants. But regardless of size, all Mossi districts and component villages had basically the same structure and fulfilled the same functions. The structure of Nobere district is representative. Nobere
[131] covered approximately 200 square miles. It was bounded on the east by a district called Manga, on the north by the districts of Toece and Djiba, and on the west and south by the Red Volta River. A census taken in 1905, just nine years after the European conquest, showed the Nobere population to be about 13,200.[10] In 1955 approximately 10,000 persons inhabited 24 villages and hamlets scattered through the more inhabitable part of the district.

634 The number of villages and hamlets in Nobere district apparently fluc-
● 621 tuated. Villages were occasionally abandoned, while small hamlets grew
[361] into prominent settlements. The people of Nobere always tried to establish their villages as close to the Red Volta as possible in order to utilize the more fertile lands. But they were repeatedly driven back by disease and

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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marauding animals. Just twenty years ago, the six villages that lay closest to the river were gradually abandoned and their populations absorbed by other villages. As of 1955, three of these populations were still paying allegiance to their former chiefs—a fact that bears out the Mossi axiom that chiefs govern people rather than land. The three other chiefs had lost control over their followers, who had placed themselves under the protection of the chiefs of their host villages. On occasion, Nobere also lost villages to other districts. One such village, Rissoma, was taken away from Nobere and given to Djiba when one of the Nobere district chiefs had a dispute with the Mogho Naba. 634 621

The hub or center of Nobere district, like that of all Mossi districts, was Nab'tenga (also called Nobere Naba Tenga, or Na-tenga), the village of the district chief. This village was rather large and in many respects a replica in miniature of the capital of Ouagadougou. Like most Mossi villages, Nab'tenga was divided into sections, quarters, or neighborhoods called *saghse* (sing. *saka*), which included a number of compounds (*yiya*, sing. *yiri*; or *zaghse*, sing. *zaka*). The district chief's compound was called Nab'yiri. He lived there surrounded by his wives, unmarried daughters, younger children, and pages. His older male children lived in separate compounds within the same saka. The saghse of Nab'tenga included Ouidi, the saka of the Ouidi Naba; Balbalse, the saka of the Baloum Naba; Tansoba, the saka of the local war minister (Tansoba or Tampsobo); Baglere, the saka of the chief's serfs; Bendere, the saka of the chief's musicians; Ouedrange, the saka of the chief's grooms; and Pwese, the saka of the guardians of the chief's wives. Scattered among them were the saghse of noble families, smiths, the Moslem Imam, and other persons. The most important market place in the district was located about four hundred yards from the chief's compound. [592] [591] [443]

The number and types of social and ethnic groups within the district and its villages reflected Nobere's history. When the French arrived, the district chief was Kaglere, a descendant of Ngado, who was a son of Mogho Naba Sagha I (ca. 1787–1803). Ngado had been sent to Nobere at the end of the eighteenth century to replace Naba Peka (a descendant of Naba Biligo), who had been deposed and killed by Mogho Naba Sagha during a civil war. The other chiefly descendants of Biligo, however, were not deposed by Ngado; they remained in charge of all but five or six of the major villages in the district. The chiefs of such villages as Ronse, Barkago, Tewarka, and Pinse are *yagense* (descendants) of Naba Biligo. The village called Passintenga was ruled by the descendants of a Busanga from Lenga called Passentre, who allegedly had been given a wife by Biligo. It is not 634 622 175

634 known, however, whether this woman was Biligo's daughter or one of his
622 pughsiudse. The people of Passintenga claimed descent from Biligo's
175 daughter, but the other groups in the district questioned this ancestry. The village called Bourougna had two chiefs. One, the Tang Naba, was descended from a son of a Ouidi Naba of Ouagadougou who had settled in Nobere; the other, the Yang Naba, claimed descent from an aboriginal Ninisi man and woman of Biligo's lineage. The Yang Naba was thus another of Biligo's yagense in the district. The chief of Nimpwe village was a descendant of the aboriginal Ninisi people and was the principal Tengsoba in the district. He had more ritual power than political power, however. The nam of Basbedo village was held by a man descended from Busansi refugees. Living in this village was a man with the honorific title of Soulougre Naba, who claimed descent from the most important Ninisi family who had lived in the district prior to the arrival of Biligo.

634 Most of the nobles of the local ruling lineage lived either in the saghse
173 of the district villages or in isolated hamlets. Local tradition holds that one
621 of the conditions set by Naba Ngado for allowing Biligo's descendants to
[613] remain as village chiefs was the right to settle nineteen of his sons in many
[565] of the villages. He allegedly sent *mabissi* (sons of the same mother) to the same village. By so doing, he took advantage of the normal lines of fission that are created after the death of a Mossi father and prevented undue rivalries. Yet there was no driving necessity for him to do so, because there were more villages than chief's sons available. In fact, there are still many villages without nobles in Nobere district. The people of Passintenga, for instance, allegedly refused to have nobles live among them, while the people of Nimpwe allegedly killed by sorcery all the nobles who ever tried to live there. The actual reason for the absence of nobles in these villages may have been that the district chief did not wish to send his sons to villages into which his daughters had married or where there lived earth priests who
[565] were thought to be powerful sorcerers. Nobles were often unwelcome, feared, and resisted, because they tended to exploit the village people and to take advantage of the commoners.

621 The villages of Nobere district, like those of other Mossi districts, were
167 populated in part by refugees and strangers. Several saghse in Togese vil-
173 lage were inhabited by Mossi refugees who had fled a district called Guiergo after a fight over the nam of that district. Scattered throughout the district's villages were people of unknown origin called Siamse. The Siamse found in the villages of Tewaka and Nabadogo claimed that their ancestors had "followed" Naba Biligo when he came down from Ouagadougou to found the district. Several saghse in Bourougna village were in-

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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habited by Yarse, people of Mandingo origin who had been assimilated by the Mossi. There were no Fulani in Nobere, even though some lived in nearby districts. But in Pinse village there lived people called Simili-Mossi, who claimed descent from Fulani herdsmen and Mossi women. Basbedo village was inhabited and ruled by people of Busansi origin. They claimed that their ancestors had fled from famine and other hardships in Busansi country and had been granted haven by Naba Biligo. The people who lived in the two saghse of Nab'tenga called Dapore (Dapobi) and Baglere (Bangare) were serfs of diverse non-Mossi origin. Saghse or compounds of Gurunsi slaves were found close to the dwellings of nobles and village chiefs throughout the district.

The number of saghse in the villages of Nobere district varied according to the size of the village and the pattern of nam inheritance within the major lineage segment that ruled the village. The saka itself housed a minor-lineage segment. The larger the village's minor lineage segment and the greater this group's genealogical depth, the more numerous were its component segments and thus its saghse. The proliferation of saghse and minor-lineage segments within the ruling lineage of a village was dependent primarily on possession of the nam. As soon as a man received the nam, he obtained control over a large amount of goods and services. He was then in a position to obtain many wives for himself and his immediate relatives, and as a result his minimal lineage grew rapidly. In time this group became so large that it split from its brother babissi within the saka, and formed a new saka of its own. Finally, this babissi became a minor lineage in its own saka, in segmental opposition to the other babissi and minor lineages within the other saghse. If the descendants of one man retained the nam for about three generations, their lineage segment and saka grew larger and in time cast off its own junior segments. However, if the segment lost the nam to a man of another babissi and saka, it ceased to proliferate. Some such groups even declined and disappeared by fusing with other local segments of the same lineage. Here is how the system worked in Barkago village of Nobere district.

Barkago itself was founded sometime in the dim past by a son of Naba Biligo. It had an area of eight or ten square miles and a population of about 650 when the French arrived in 1896. Its boundaries were set by such natural phenomena as clumps of trees, hills, and ravines. The village itself included five distinct saghse separated by footpaths, hills, rocks, and ravines, and an area of wasteland (*weogho*). Three of the saghse, Natenga ("chief's land"), Godin, and Kedpalago, were inhabited by the minor segments of the boodoo of Naba Biligo. Here is how this came about. After

the original segment of the ruling Biligo lineage had lived in Barkago for some time, it divided into two minor lineages and settled in two saghse, Natenga and Godin. A noble from Godin possessed the nam, but it eventually passed to a noble from Natenga. The new chief then founded a new saka called Kedpalago because he wanted more living space for his own children. As a result, the minor lineage of Natenga now had two babissi living in two saghse. The minor lineage of Godin subsequently declined in size and prestige. The only evidence of its former importance was that its eldest male continued to make separate sacrifices to his own chiefly ancestors, even though the more recent holders of the nam made sacrifices to all former chiefs. These independent sacrifices were made in spite of the fact that this minor lineage kept growing smaller because its male members left to live elsewhere or to join maternal patrilineages with higher status. The sacrifices were expected to cease only if and when the minor lineage were to disappear with the incorporation of the widows and orphans of its last surviving males into the other Biligo groups of the village and district. Of course, if the Godin minor lineage had regained the nam, it undoubtedly would have experienced a rebirth and renewal of strength. It might have attracted its daughter's sons, and even aliens who would have lived in its saghse as they did in those of the ruling lineage segments.

A fourth saka, Nakomgo ("we hunger after the nam"), was inhabited by the noble descendants of Naba Ngado, the district chief who had replaced the descendant of Naba Biligo of Nobere. Since these nobles traced their descent from two full brothers, Kouliga and Kongo, they formed two related minor lineages with five component minimal lineages. The compounds of the two babissi of the Kouliga minor lineage were separate but contiguous. Near them were the compounds of the three babissi of the Kongo minor lineage. Scattered about in the Nakomgo saka were compounds of sisters' sons, strangers, and nobles' slaves.

The people of Narila, the fifth saka of Barkago, were members of the aboriginal Ninisi population, and thus furnished the village's earth-priest. He made sacrifices to the earth shrines in the village, gave ritual permission for building compounds and digging graves, and took control of the village during the period between the death of a chief and the accession of another. Scattered throughout the various saghse were compounds inhabited by people of serf, slave, or refugee origin.

Of all the groups within the village, the Ngado people kept the most exact genealogies. They did so because one of the segments of their maximal lineage held the district nam, and as nobles they had theoretical access to it. Once they had lost the nam of the district, the descendants of Biligo

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also lost much of their interest in preserving their genealogies. Their local 613
lineage segment, which controlled the village nam, still showed interest in 778
its genealogy, but the people of Godin did not quite remember how they were related to the ruling lineage segment. Several times in the recent history of Barkago (and other villages), the men who were given the village nam had to be recalled from distant villages where they were living with maternal patrilineages. So relatively unimportant was possession of the village nam without concomitant noble status that after Naba Ngado took over, the local Biligo people began to ignore all local genealogical records except descent from Biligo. The Ninisi people had the least reason to be interested in their genealogy, and they simply ignored it. They had been separated from the other Ninisi groups in the district for so long that they did not even forbid marriage into those groups.

In villages such as Barkago, the existence of several lineage groupings 613
and families of strangers facilitated local marriages. But in villages with 621
fewer lineage groups, the time came when all groups were so closely linked by marriage and affinal alliances that for all practical purposes the village became an exogamous unit. By 1956, this process had reached such an advanced stage in Barkago that hardly any marriages took place between the Ninisi and Biligo local lineage segments. Both groups were permitted to marry the local descendants of Ngado, because the latter were more recent arrivals in the village. These marriages were of great significance to all villagers because they linked the nobles and the commoners in a series of exchanges. Moreover, because the groups were linked through sisters' sons [565] with special privileges in both groups, problems deriving from status dif- [606] ferences were more easily solved. Even the most arrogant noble was often [607] constrained by ancestral sanctions to maintain amicable relations with his in-laws.

The Biligo lineage of Barkago contracted marriages with the other, non-related groups within and without the district. The Ngado people did likewise. Whether these nobles were able to marry noble women of other districts is a moot point. Owing to distance and politics, no such marriages are known to have occurred, and no one seems to know whether they were permissible. The Ninisi, who had always been commoners, had the largest marriage circle of all the village groups. They were able to marry nobles, commoners, and the Ninisi of the district and other districts.

The inhabitants of a Mossi village built their houses and cultivated their 423
crops on land the village chief had granted to their respective lineages. 613
Since the royal lineage, by right of conquest, controlled all of Mossi country, the rights of usufruct of a lineage depended ultimately on the Mogho [643]

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The newly elected monarch secreted himself either at the Samande Nabila's home or elsewhere in the capital until daybreak. Tradition holds that if he were killed before being officially proclaimed before his subjects as the new ruler, the assassin could become Mogho Naba.[19] 643 [682]

The public ceremonies marking the official proclamation of the new ruler's accession to power took place on the following day. Early that morning, the monarch left his secret sleeping quarters and proceeded to the Koumbi Naba's house. Here he dressed in his white garments and mounted an old, unsaddled horse. The Baloum Naba then gave him a sack containing the namtibo, which he placed over his shoulder, and the Kaizi Naba led him out of the courtyard by the women's door. As the ruler's horse passed through the gate, his sister, the *Napoko* ("female ruler"), cried, "The sun has reappeared! The fire is relighted! The earth lives again!" A large crowd of musicians and warriors who had been alerted by the ministers shouted and danced as they accompanied the monarch, who circled the compound three times.[20] The ruler then reentered the compound, and this time he came out through the men's door as a sign of his full status. Here he was greeted by the Ouidi Naba, who proclaimed in a loud voice, "Mossi people, here is the Mogho Naba!" The warriors shouted and fired their muskets, and the musicians played. Then all the dignitaries and their followers solemnly prostrated themselves and paid homage and swore allegiance to their monarch. He, in turn, listened attentively when his ministers and some of the elder chiefs gave him advice about how the affairs of state should be conducted. After each declaration of loyalty or word of counsel, the people shouted in praise of their ruler. The Bendere Naba, accompanied by his musicians, then recited the ruler's genealogy, announced the pledges the new monarch had made to his people, and acclaimed him by his royal title, "Mogho Naba [X]." From this moment on, no child born during his reign could bear the ruler's name, and those persons who already bore it called themselves *Nab'yure* ("king's name"). 643 796 [645] [644] [551]

As the next stage in the ceremony the Mogho Naba, accompanied by his retinue, visited the various wards in the capital. In each he was proclaimed ruler and received the allegiance of both Mossi and non-Mossi ward chiefs. He visited the wards controlled by such men as the Loumbila Naba, the Sapone Naba, and the Ouagadougou Naba, and at each stop the ward chief declared, "People of [X], here is your new sovereign." Having been acknowledged by the leading chiefs of the capital, the new ruler then returned to his host's house. He emerged later in the day to visit the compound of a palace attendant, the Samande Nabila, where he sat under a 643 [621] [641] 643 641

to render homage to the monarch. This attracted the attention of the Mogho 635
Naba, who investigated the grievance of the district chief. If the provincial 645
minister were found to be in serious error, he might be deposed and exe- 634
cuted. The Ouidi Naba was theoretically exempt from such punishment, 578
but it is doubtful that a strong monarch would have allowed even this official to cause trouble.

A provincial governor dissatisfied with a district chief under his charge could, under certain conditions, have him deposed and put to death. He achieved this by complaining to the monarch that the chief was either withholding tribute or misgoverning his people. In most cases, however, the minister could curb the district chief by hinting that his son would not receive a recommendation as successor to the nam of the district. This was usually enough to win the cooperation of the most recalcitrant chief, if only because his future status as the honored ancestor of a ruling local line would be jeopardized if he rebelled. These sanctions were thus sufficient to ensure satisfactory relations between the provincial ministers and their district chiefs, at least on the surface. This was to the advantage of both groups, [687] since in the final analysis the failure of either to administer or rule well might result in the death penalty.

Many districts and villages in Ouagadougou were administered not by 634
the provincial ministers but by officials directly responsible to the Mogho 621
Naba. The districts in question were often ruled by close relatives of the Mogho Naba or by persons who had gained his good graces. The villages [567] were often inhabited by slaves and governed by headmen who were themselves slaves. Like the other territories of the Mogho Naba, these districts and villages were not physically contiguous. The districts were mixed in with districts administered by the provincial ministers, and the villages stood within the territorial boundaries of district chiefs. Whenever the [203] Mogho Naba wanted to communicate with a chief of such a village or district, he sent one of his retainers. The chiefs, in turn, used their own people to send messages and goods to Ouagadougou. The general administration of these districts and villages differed little from that of the territories administered by the provincial ministers. The main difference was that the Mogho Naba took a greater interest in their everyday affairs. This called for greater efficiency on the part of local officials; for they, like the other chiefs, faced the penalty of deposition and death for maladministration.

Of all Mossi officials, the district chiefs had the most difficult adminis- 634
trative task. They were in direct contact with the people, and thus ran a
greater risk of being charged with misgovernment. Countless district chiefs [687]
were deposed and executed because they had allegedly disobeyed or rebelled

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567 643 651 [464] [439] Naba Baongo (ca. 1800–30) decided that it was more profitable to sell them.[15] Subsequent rulers, especially the two Mogho Nanamse who ruled just prior to the French conquest, sold most of their captives to passing caravans or in special sections of the larger markets. When other persons sold slaves in the market, the Raga Naba collected some 1,000 cowries on each transaction—the largest tax on any market commodity.

567 839 [752] [439] [195] The Mossi rulers seem to have benefited even more from the sale of eunuchs, for they had a monopoly over them. The Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou sent some captured slaves and all recidivous thieves to Teemetenga village in Koubri district, some 13 miles south of the capital, to be operated upon.[17] So successful were the Mossi surgeons that—in contrast to specialists in other areas, who lost nine lives for every successful castration—the mortality among the Mossi was only one out of ten.[18] Some of the eunuchs furnished by the Mossi were sold as far away as Constantinople, a fact which surprised the French ambassador to Turkey who saw them there in 1900.[19]

566 643 563 621 In addition to slaves and eunuchs, the Mogho Naba kept a large number of bondsmen to provide services for him. One group, the Dapore, lived in a ward of the capital called Dapoya, and had a chief, the Dapore Naba, who was himself a Dapore. The origin of these people is obscure, but they seem to have been the children of foreign captives who were brought to Ouagadougou and placed in the ruler's service. Some of them even claimed that their ancestors had come to Ouagadougou voluntarily and had placed themselves under the care and protection of the ruler. This seems unlikely, however, since the status of these people resembles that of persons captured by Sudanese rulers and installed in special wards as serfs.[20] Some of the Dapore lived in villages of their own and cultivated fields for the Mogho Naba. Others lived in a ward of Ouagadougou, served in the palace household, and provided the royal executioners. Some were selected to serve as palace eunuchs, and placed under the charge of the Kamsaogho Naba. The Dapore were hardly ever sold unless they were convicted criminals. The Mogho Naba and his chiefs refrained from selling serfs or captives who had been born in Mossi country. However, they often claimed the sons and daughters of these people as pages or pughsiudse.

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The Baglere made up the second group of bondsmen providing services for the Mogho Naba. They, too, lived in a special ward and were headed by the Baglere Naba, one of their own people. Their origin is also obscure: some of them claimed to be descended from Fulani slaves who had run away from their masters and sought asylum in Mossi country; others believed that they were the descendants of foreign captives. The Baglere

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worked for the Mogho Naba in and around the palace courtyard, and in the fields. They also kept his herds and provided him with animals from their own herds. Like the Dapore, they were seldom sold, but they often had to give their sons and daughters to the Mogho Naba.

The last group of persons who contributed their services to the Mogho Naba were the Kamboinse. Their origin is also unclear. Most of my respondents claimed that the Kamboinse and their chief first came to Ouagadougou from the direction of the Gold Coast, that they bore guns, and that they offered their services as guards to the Mogho Naba.[21] Later on, the sovereign allegedly assigned slaves to the Kamboinse unit, with the result that the entire group eventually took on a serf-like character. The Kamboinse guarded the Mogho Naba's palace and seized for him the goods of persons whom he condemned to death.

The services performed for the Mogho Naba by his pages and other youthful retainers also contributed significantly to the support of his administration. We have already seen how these young men and boys took care of his every need and functioned as important messengers within the royal household. The Mogho Naba also had control over the daughters of his serfs, whom he used to obtain revenue from aliens and subjects alike. Periodically, the Mogho Naba gave one of these girls as pughsiudga to a man, thus obligating him to render goods and services to the court. Moreover, the man had to return the eldest daughter he had by this wife to the Mogho Naba as a future pughsiudga. In this way, the sovereign had a revolving store of women through whom he could bind men to himself in a nexus of obligations, and from whom he eventually received additional women.[22]

The provincial ministers of the Ouagadougou kingdom occupied such a strategic position within the central administration that anyone rendering gifts or tribute to the Mogho Naba always gave presents to them as well. Their main source of revenue, however, came from the villages under their direct control, and from the retainers who lived in their compounds and in their wards in the capital. The economic relations between the ministers and their villages were similar to those between the district chiefs and their villages, and will be discussed below. The retainers, serfs, and slaves who served these ministers provided them with many of the services their counterparts rendered to the Mogho Naba. They kept their houses in repair and provided them with firewood and with fodder for their horses. Many of them also cultivated fields for their masters. Whenever the ministers needed extra goods or services, they called on those persons who lived in their compounds or in their wards. For example, hun-

645 566 567 62 dreds of persons lived in Ouidin, the ward of the Ouidi Naba. Some of them were related to him; others had been attracted by his wealth and by his ability to obtain wives for his charges. All of them benefited from being attached to him in one way or another, and in return helped him to augment his income.

651 645 634 434 [431] [464] All the district chiefs sent women to their provincial ministers to be kept as wives (and thus as agricultural workers), or to be given out as pughsiudse. The Kamsaogho Naba received more pughsiudse than the other ministers because he was in charge of the wealthier districts, and also of course distributed more. The Baloum Naba was especially favored in another respect. Each year, he was entitled to call several *seghse* (sing. *seka*; a corvée or convocation) of his former pages and their relatives to help cultivate his fields. The Ouidi Naba's sources of revenue were about the same as the Baloum Naba's. In addition, his position as chief minister enabled him to obtain numerous gifts from persons who visited Ouagadougou. Moreover, the Mogho Naba often gave him horses from the fado of deceased district chiefs. The Larhalle Naba had full ministerial privileges, and a few other means of obtaining revenue. He was allowed, for instance, to keep the animals that had not been sacrificed on the graves of deceased rulers.

The provincial ministers received many goods and services from the district chiefs of their provinces. Whenever one of these ministers sent a messenger to the district, the chief gave the messenger money and livestock for his master. Furthermore, the district chiefs brought presents for their minister when they paid their annual visit to Ouagadougou to render homage to the Mogho Naba. The provincial ministers used their position as confidants and advisers to obtain as many presents as possible from persons who came to Ouagadougou to ask special favors from the Mogho Naba, to participate in judicial proceedings, or to seek the nam. Moreover, they cooperated with each other in these exactions, so that a person seeking a favor from or through one minister was prudently advised to give presents to or to seek the aid of the others.

634 651 423 434 The district chief played a key role in the procurement of revenue for the central administration, and derived an income for himself in the process. The seignorial rights over the Mossi people delegated by the Mogho Naba to all nam holders were quite obvious on this level. The district chief had rights to all valuable fruit trees, such as locust-bean and shea-butter, that grew within the boundaries of his territory. He instructed the village chiefs to harvest the fruit of these trees and send it to him. The village chiefs even had to send him the wood from the fallen branches of these trees.

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The district chiefs did not often exercise their rights over fruit trees in the weogho, as the wasteland in their districts was called. If a villager went into the weogho and collected fruit or wood from the chief's trees, he surrendered only part of it to the chief. On the other hand, if he received permission from a district chief to farm in the weogho, he was obliged to gather and send to the chief the fruit on any valuable trees. A district chief sometimes granted the rights over certain fruit trees in the inhabited areas to specific families or individuals, for personal reasons or as a reward for services. In such cases, the chief forfeited his rights to these trees, but retained his rights to the others.[18]

District chiefs also controlled all the resources of creeks and pools within their jurisdiction that were not sacred to certain aboriginal families, or which had not been transferred to specific persons. The aboriginal Ninisi [226] families always notified the district chief when they planned to perform [796] their annual fishing rite to the earth deities. He, in turn, sent representatives to the ceremony, and they were given part of the catch as his share. Persons who were granted permission to fish in the chief's water holes gave him a substantial part of their catch, and even those persons who had private control of fishing places regularly did the same.

224 651 634 [411] [177] [793]

The district chiefs also had rights to certain parts of animals caught in their territories. This applied especially to animals caught with such traditional weapons as traps, clubs, bows and arrows, and spears. Men who had obtained flint guns and other firearms from the Ashanti or elsewhere and who had bought their own powder were not obliged to give the chief a part of their game, but it was always prudent to do so. According to a long-standing tradition, the tusk and legs of a slain elephant that were not resting on the ground belonged to the chief, and those that lay on the ground belonged to the Tengsoba in whose ritual jurisdiction the animal had been slain. But the district chief's secular power was so much stronger than the Tengsoba's sacred power that he usually took both tusks, leaving the Tengsoba only two legs. The district chief also received other portions of elephants and parts of all the larger animals killed in his territory. And when hunters in the district were successful in the chase, they usually gave him entire small animals.

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Every village in a district contributed to the district chief's revenue by performing special services for him. Certain villages were responsible for keeping specific huts in his compound in good condition; others, whose lands bordered on the woods, had to provide firewood for his compound; and yet others furnished grass and other fodder for his horses. Many villages had the task of cultivating special fields and crops for the district chief.

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621 651 634 243 For example, the villagers of Barkago traditionally cultivated and harvested a field of millet behind his compound for the chief. The people of Pinse, Donse, Passingtenga, and Tewarka cultivated millet for him in their own villages, and those of Togose and Basbedo cultivated rice for him in their excellent lowlands.

243 634 566 567 The district chief had fields both behind his compound and in the bush, which were cultivated for him by his retainers, serfs, and slaves. More than the Mogho Naba and the provincial ministers, the district chief believed that a Moaga must perform agricultural work during the planting season; to show his interest in farming, he often personally supervised the work on his plantations. When the task of weeding or harvesting proved too much for his own people, he asked his villages for a *sosogha*. On that day, each [464] village chief, accompanied by his men, went to the district chief's fields, where, to the accompaniment of drums and chants and with the verbal encouragement of district administrators, the villages vied with each other in their task. The district chief usually sat under a tree and watched the [465] proceedings and occasionally visited the various contingents to observe the progress made. Toward evening, the chief's wives gave the workers large quantities of food and drink in compensation for their services.

651 634 Like the Mogho Naba, the district chief had officials who collected taxes on commodities sold in local markets. These district market officials were usually serfs, Gurunsi captives, or bondsmen from other populations. Mossi [776] rarely served in such capacities because many of the local market places were considered ritually dangerous, and their titular deities, the Tengkouga, were believed to wreak vengeance on market officials who were tardy with sacrifices. The local Kos Naba supervised the slaughtering of every animal killed in the market, kept its skin so that its ownership could be verified if necessary, and collected taxes from the butchers in the form of meat or cowries. The Raga Naba of the district was not as strict as his counterpart in Ouagadougou, and seldom imposed formal taxes on the traders. He usually walked around the market, trailed by the chief's servants, and seized calabashes of grain and other commodities, which he placed in the servants' baskets. The Raga Naba did not tax those itinerant traders or caravaneers who visited the markets in the district, nor did he interfere with them in any other way. These merchants usually had business and personal relations with the chief, and he himself handled revenue from this source. The merchants gave him goods from the forest and Sahara regions, and he in turn often gave them wives, who were thus taken out of the district.

[167] The Mossi district chief was always on the lookout for new sources of [434] revenue, and thus welcomed strangers into his district because they "in-

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prepared sauce, and flung them in three directions to the waiting ancestral spirits. He then beseeched the royal spirits, the spirits of former provincial ministers, and the spirits of the ancient people (the Ninisi) to grant a long life to the Mogho Naba and peace to all the Mossi. He repeated the ritual with three morsels of meat and with the contents of a pot of beer. When he had finished, the Gande Naba picked up the food thrown to the ancestors and carried it away. He did not look backward for fear that he should see the ancestors and die as a result. The departure of the Gande Naba was the signal for the palace retainers to rush toward the food. They seized and ate what they could, spilling and wasting a good deal in the process.[8]

Meanwhile, chiefs and headmen held similar ceremonies in every district, village, hamlet, and compound in the Ouagadougou kingdom. District and village chiefs offered sacrifices to their ancestors in the name of their subjects. The sacrifices on the hamlet and compound level were more specific. Every grown man had to take a sheep, goat, or chicken to his elder and request that it be offered to the ancestors in his name. The elder sacrificed the animal and beseeched the ancestors to grant the petitioner good health, bountiful crops, and many children during the coming year. The women and children did not take part in the ritual, but they did participate in the general feasting that followed.

The festivities of the Tense lasted only a few days in the districts and villages, but in the capital it did not end officially until about four weeks had elapsed. At the end of this period, the Larhalle Naba gave the Mogho Naba all the cords that had been used to mark the coming of the Tense. A few days later, the chief Tengsoba of Guillingou, the native village of Oubri's mother, and the Tengsobadamba of other important ceremonial centers, visited the Mogho Naba in the palace courtyard. Here they all sacrificed white cocks and placed the blood and feathers of their victims on their ceremonial axes in order to "increase the power" of these objects. Later on, they were given cooked mutton, millet cakes, and other presents. Their departure for home later in the day marked the close of the Tense.

The religio-political function of the Tense is quite explicit, despite the statement by Dim Delobson, himself a Mossi chief (but also a convert to Catholicism), that "it is apparent that this festival has no outstanding features. Its sole aim is to make peace between the living and the dead, and, in the process, to allow everyone to enjoy the food."[9] Judging by the reports of old men who participated in the festival before it was banned, the people did have a good time and enjoyed the food. What is important, however, is that like the Basgha, the Tense served not only "to make peace

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administration, and failed to serve as an administrative training ground for either the Mossi ministers or the commoner representatives.[88]

During the Hesling period, the Mossi district chiefs remained in power, but the French, through their African administrative assistants, kept a stricter watch on district affairs. The chiefs regained some of their judicial (or, rather, conciliatory) power in 1921 when the Governor, dissatisfied with the territory's legal system, promulgated a decree reorganizing the courts and giving the Mossi district and village chiefs the right of adjudication in minor cases involving civil and commercial matters.[89] However, they had to send all cases involving serious crimes and all appeals from other cases to higher courts. Because their subjects could appeal to the subdivision courts and because they risked reprimand by administrators when their verdicts were deemed unjust, many Mossi chiefs complied. They tried to do so even when the litigants themselves would have preferred not to deal with the administrators. Often the chiefs overtly told the litigants to go to the administrators but covertly persuaded them not to do so. In this manner they observed all proprieties toward both the French and their subjects.

The village and district courts had to send all criminal offenses such as assault and battery cases and major thefts, as well as appeals against their verdicts, to a "tribunal of the first degree," which was presided over by a subdivision commander and his Mossi assessors. Cases were taken to the tribunal only when the dispute was extremely serious or when people were gravely injured, because Mossi villagers hesitated to take their cases to officials who, when not swamped with work, had little patience with the complexities of Mossi litigation. Moreover, the Mossi feared to subject their fellows to the rigors of the Indigénat, which was still in existence, because, as one official source declares, "If this regime subsists, it is because the Voltaic populations have not yet reached a level of development that would permit the withdrawal of a weapon which is so readily useful to the commanders of administrative units. Besides, when judiciously managed, it does not present any danger in these underdeveloped regions."

Cases which the subdivision commanders considered too serious for their courts were sent to "tribunals of the second degree" at the cercle level. From there, cases were sent to a "colonial court of appeal," which was presided over by the Chief Officer of Political Affairs of the territory and which could sentence a criminal to three to ten years in prison. More serious crimes carrying longer prison terms or the death penalty were sent up to the Supreme Court at Dakar. Owing in part to the lack of communication between the rural districts and the higher courts, the Mossi

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were seldom able to follow a case higher than the subdivision level. In cases involving long imprisonment or the death penalty, the relatives of the condemned person usually learned about the sentence through rumors from the capital, but seldom through the administration.

One judicial duty which the administration gave the Mossi chiefs and which they had always disliked was the adjudication of domestic cases. They found such cases even more difficult and distasteful after Hesling issued a circular on "The Condition of the Native Woman," which is summarized in a semi-official report as follows:

> [The Governor] is pained to see [the Mossi woman] so often subjected to a special form of slavery which, notably at the time of marriage, reduces her to the role of a domestic animal. Without wishing to interfere with ingrained native traditions, the Governor desires "to prime the desirable evolution by means of judicial decisions." Thus he comes to the decision that in those lawsuits concerning marriage in which formerly the woman was not consulted, she must henceforth be present and must argue the case with her husband. M. Hesling trusts that this procedural reform, which he hopes will give the native woman "a consciousness of her individuality and her rights," will be followed in the courts by further reforms. First of all [the courts] must weaken and then progressively modify those traditions which promote injustice toward women. . . . Questions will no doubt be raised as to whether it is necessary to set up regulations on such matters. However, M. Hesling advises his administrators to adjust [such regulations] to, and apply them with respect for, ancestral traditions. It will be interesting to see the results obtained in this attempt, and to see whether the "moussos" [a malapropism denoting Mossi women] of the Upper Volta will acquire some individuality.[60]

The Mossi chiefs were not told that the Governor's circular recommending a change in the status of women stipulated that traditional practices be taken into account. But even if they had been told, they would not have been impressed, because any fundamental change in the status of women would have placed their whole society in jeopardy. Woman exchange stood at the core of a social, economic, and political nexus that held Mossi society together. True, in pre-conquest times most quarrels and lawsuits were caused by trouble over women, but the marriage system was upheld by all the other institutions. Even after the arrival of the French and the weakening of the chiefs' judicial role, the Mossi could punish violators of the marriage system by imposing social sanctions. They now feared that if the French passed laws giving the women free choice in marriage, and the chiefs had to adjudicate on the basis of these laws, all traditional sanctions would become obsolete. Neither the chiefs nor the Mossi on the Councils of Native Notables nor the elders welcomed any discussion about

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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CHAPTER 9

Trade and Markets Among the Mossi People

BY ELLIOTT P. SKINNER

The Mossi represent the dominant population of the Voltaic Republic, numbering about 1,600,000 out of some 3,200,000 inhabitants. They represent the unique example of a group which has preserved its ethnic identity and political autonomy through all the vicissitudes of Sudanic history until it was conquered by the French in 1896. Tradition records that the people who became the Mossi left the Dagomba region in present-day Ghana during the eleventh century and moved into the bend of the Niger River, carving out three large kingdoms and smaller principalities in the process. At the head of these still extant kingdoms are rulers *(Moro Nabas)* who formerly held feudal-like control over the provinces, districts and villages which comprise their domains. The villages, with their patri-local, polygynous, extended family households, formed the basic Mossi settlement pattern. A complex hierarchical administrative apparatus carried the power of the Mossi rulers into the smallest villages, and funneled taxes and tribute back to them. This structure still exists, but of course it has been modified by the French.

The Mossi were and are still divided into stratified royal, noble and commoner patrilineages. Characteristic of this lineage system is a process by which royal sub-lineages descend serially until they merge with the mass of commoner lineages. Below the lineages there once were large non-Mossi groups of serfs and slaves, but these people have now been grouped into lineages and have become Mossicized.

The topography of Mossi country is typical of the Sudanic grasslands. It is an immense plain, some 1,500 feet above sea level and broken only by three low mountain ranges and numerous small hills. The annual total rainfall is between 30 and 40 inches, and falls almost entirely as heavy showers or thundershowers during the period from June to September. So narrow is the margin of rainfall for successful crop cultivation that any variation in the cycle results in low crop yields and a difficult "hungry period" the following year before the new crops are harvested. The Mossi do not practice irrigation, and would have trouble doing so because the three Volta Rivers which drain their territory serve as drainage chiefly during the rainy season. Only the Black Volta has water all year round; the

567 part of the emperor's harem. The dapobi belonging to the canton chiefs, belonging to the kombemba, are of the same origin. While the Mogho Naba could not sell the dapobi of Kibissi origin, the emperor and the canton chiefs could do as they liked with the true dapobi. They were sold for the most trifling faults and their wives and children were either sent away with them or turned over to other deserving captives.

Slaves of the Crown. (a) The bangaré. These are Peulh captives who have gradually cast off the authority of their masters and who have submitted voluntarily to the authority of the Mogho Naba.

A herd of cattle is called nab'bangaré, and it seems likely that the word bangaré, "herd," to designate this type of slave came from that source. However, the bangaré are not solely former Peulh slaves since a free individual who has committed a serious crime in his [90] native village and fears reprisal comes to join the "herd."

Once presented to the Mogho Naba, they were henceforth considered slaves and, as such, immune from prosecution.

567 The principal bangaré villages, generally known as "independent
62 villages," are: Kalbo (province of Gounga); Manghin, Zaanga (canton of Zorgongo); Zaon'pighin, Payaobtinga (canton of Boudry); Nabasnoghin (canton of Nedogo); Bangar'Nabilin (canton of Zorgo); Gandaogo (canton of Zoungou); Boumintoré, Sidtenga, Mandié, Bougoumbarga, etc.

567 The emperor could supply himself from these "herds" when-
681 ever the need arose. Any bangaré who had committed serious crimes or who had been denounced as dangerous individuals who spread disorder in the villages or committed robbery were castrated and made into eunuchs or sold by order of the emperor.

[582] The bangaré intermarry since no free Mossi father would give them a daughter in marriage. This is solely due to the fact that if the emperor decided to sell a bangaré, his family would share the same fate. The father of the wife would not intervene in such a case, because this might be dangerous for him. So it is easily understandable that, under these circumstances, no father would seek such a match.

567 Bangaré chiefs. The chiefs of bangaré villages [91] are ap-
622 pointed by the Mogho Naba. The villages themselves are free of any

567 control by the canton chiefs in whose territories they are located.
622 The inhabitants pay nothing to the kombéré nor can the chief require any labor service in his fields or for the upkeep of his houses. They recognize only the Mogho Naba as chief.

567 Kamboinsé. True Kamboinsé are not Mossi; they came from the west during the reign of Naba Waraga (nineteenth successor of Oubri). Like the dapobi of the Dapoya section they came with guns (their chief even had a [ceremonial] stool) to put themselves under the authority of the Mogho Naba. Their chief, Gambaré by name, told the emperor that they had come to offer themselves as soldiers and slaves to help him pacify his territory. The Kamboinsé occupy a section of the town behind the Catholic mission on the right side of the road to Pô.

When the emperor's native gunners found themselves faced with competition from foreigners, they countered by appointing their own chief who took the title of Kamboin Naba. They are, however, different from the true Kamboinsé, and they live a dozen or so kilometers from Ouagadougou in the villages of Kamboinsé and Wobrigré.

While the first-mentioned Kamboinsé are voluntary slaves, the others are true slaves captured in war or bought by the emperor.

567 426 [92] Use of slaves as security for debt. Captives might be used to settle debts. It should be noted that the right to own slaves was not limited to the emperor and his vassals. Any prosperous Moaga (dakangré) might own them.

[612] If the head of a household died leaving debts, the heirs could sell a few slaves to pay off the obligation. If, however, the creditor preferred to have the slaves, the latter were put up for appraisal just as though they were livestock.

In the same way, slaves could be traded for horses, garments, or even loads of kola nuts.

567 If slaves were maltreated by their owners, providing that the latter were not of the nobility, they could put themselves under the protection of the naba. In that event they ceased to belong to their former owners. On the other hand, if a Moaga took it upon himself [682] to kill a slave, he at once had to pay a fine of 100,000 cowries to his canton chief as a blood price.

567 439 Ordinarily, captives who were brought back from the wars were at once sold to the Haoussa [Hausa] or Yarcé [Yarse] who traded

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Above: The Mossi Salute.
Below: A Naba and his Horsemen.

576 the chest with the hands half-closed and the thumbs raised, strike the ground together three or four times. The Mossi then raises his body a little and rubs the palms of his hands together. He never looks the person he is saluting straight in the face, but keeps his eyes slightly lowered. It is a truly humbled posture, especially when the chief who is being saluted remains standing or on horseback, towering above his subordinate, and barely according him a glance. The women, instead of beating upon the ground with their forearms, strike it with the elbows and raise their open hands, fingers extended, to shoulder height. The grand salute, very rarely used, consists of turning around after the ordinary salute has been completed, seizing some dust with both hands, spreading it on the forehead, and saluting once more.

When two natives who know each other meet along the way, the younger of the two squats first and begins the salute, which the other acknowledges by squatting in turn. If they are carrying loads, they set them down before saluting. They are never in a hurry. Servants and women, when they walk before a chief, bow slightly and join their hands in front of the chest, palms together. Though complicated, the Mossi salute is rendered easily and gracefully by the natives; they are used to it from an early age, and never perform it in the clumsy and awkward manner which is theirs when they attempt to imitate the military salute, so fine and noble when well done and so ludicrous when distorted by a Black.

622 Chiefs are designated by the generic term naba, but a distinction
643 is made between naba and dimma. The latter is elected /16/ according to very precise rules, which we shall mention later, and his authority stems directly from this election. There are only five dimma among the Mossi: the Moro Naba, and the nabas of Fada, Tenkodogo, Boussouma, and Yatenga. The naba, on the other hand, receives his power from another chief more powerful than himself who has chosen him from several candidates.

643 Mossi country lies wholly under the authority of the Moro Naba
645 who is assisted by five high ministers: the Widi Naba, Laralé Naba, Gounga Naba, Kamisoro Naba and Ballum Naba. The respective
[839] functions of these ministers are somewhat ill-defined. The Kamisoro is a eunuch and chief of the eunuchs. Upon his death, since he leaves no heirs, all his property devolves to the Moro Naba. It was thus to the latter's advantage to make him wealthy and to present him with the finest district in the country. The Widi Naba takes the place of the Moro Naba from the time of his death until the investiture

644 with its tall copper stirrups, bears on either side a larger copper tray.
[492] The drums are played when the naba leaves his dwelling, shift to a different tune when he places his foot in the stirrup, and shift once more when he sets out on his way. The whole population over a radius of several kilometers is thus apprised of the Moro Naba's every gesture. A page precedes him bearing his pillow, and another carrying his scepter. The ministers present at the court and the foreign chiefs present at the capital hasten to mount their horses. Several of the Moro Naba's bodyguards accompany him: ' four strapping fellows walk by his side, their arms leaning against the horse's rump as though to prevent the monarch from falling, while horsemen armed with spears do a fantasia, running 100 meters ahead of the naba, brandishing their spears, returning at full gallop, and setting off again. This constant coming and going entertains the naba who does not gallop.

631 /19/ Every province and canton chief has his court, his ministers,
644 his pages, his drummers. Eunuchs, however, are solely the prerogative of the Moro Naba. In order to qualify for pages, pillow, and spurs, a chief must be invested properly. The present naba of Koupéla who failed to follow the traditions possesses none of these privileges.

The investiture of nabas follows a complex tradition. Each naba invests his own vassals in office. The Moro Naba invests the province chiefs, except for those who hold the title dimma; the province chiefs invest the canton chiefs, and the latter invest the chiefs of villages within their jurisdiction. The right of nomination is an important source of revenue for the nabas.

622 Upon the death of a village chief, several candidates vie for power.
431 They all go to the naba who rules over them, to greet him and to offer him numerous gifts, cowries, chickens, sheep, and, if they are sufficiently wealthy, salt bars, a horse, sometimes even a wife. The one who gives the most has the best chance of being chosen, and the naba decides to announce his choice only when he feels that the candidates are running out of gifts.

622 In Koupéla, a village chief under the direct jurisdiction of the province chief is nominated in the following way. The candidates must apply to the minister who has control over their village. He is the indispensable intermediary between them and the naba who is to make the choice, he is their guide, their sor'soba. When the nomination draws near, the minister goes at night to see the naba, and together they agree on the choice to be made. They may appoint

622 only a relative of the deceased or of a previously deceased naba. Once they have come to an agreement, the naba sets a date and notifies the candidates. Each of them, full of hope, comes toward evening with his men. He is dressed in trousers, a skin worn diagonally across the chest and back, and a blanket thrown over the shoulder in the classic way, leaving the right shoulder and the right arm free. Before each of them stands a young girl, holding a staff which may become a scepter a few moments later. This girl is supposed to receive power at the same time as the chosen candidate, and throughout the investiture ceremonies she will care for the objects used by the new naba and everyone will give her cowries. She will return home after the ceremonies.

All the candidates having arrived, they are seated in the outer courtyard. The naba remains in his hut, and the minister goes to him. The naba names the man of his choice, and the minister goes out, grabs the man's blanket, and tells him that he has been chosen by the naba. The defeated candidates leave hastily, while their men carry the chosen man on their shoulders, which serve for the shield of old, and sing his praises, calling him wobro, "elephant." The Trabrana /sic/, bravest of the brave, then comes to him with a leather satchel, and the chosen man must give him cowries. He also gives some to the minister to get back his blanket, and throughout the three festive days that follow his appointment he must provide large quantities of millet beer. These expenses are alleviated by his new subjects, who come to greet him and offer him gifts as soon as they get the news. /20/ The defeated candidates return on the following day, with shaved heads, to make obeisance to their fortunate competitor. For three days there is much merry-making at the household of the minister who acted as intermediary. Drums are played, the people dance, and they sing as follows:

622 539 Sen kong'nam, lébra sonkam ysa.	Those who were not chosen will gather peanuts.
Bamb'naba y minimini biga, ka zué waodo, dem kom.	Their naba is like the young of the wild duck: he does not fear the cold, he plays in the water.
Sérénde wobro, n'béla.	Come to the elephant and greet him.

622 539 Sen damma nyébra, baryoro nan wa. If someone attempts to kill the crocodile, the serpent appears immediately. (1)

1. That is, to say, if someone threatens the new naba, the province chief will come to his aid.

622 On the third day the new naba is shaved. His sister, or in her absence an old woman, begins the procedure, but anyone may complete it. Everybody then goes to the naba: the chosen man is to re-
[55] ceive a name, and from now on it will be forbidden to call him by his previous name. Each naba receives three names, or rather three mottoes, chosen by his sister or by an old woman of the family. These mottoes allude to a historical event or to the chosen man's position. When everyone has arrived at the naba's house, the man's sister discloses the mottoes to the naba, who proclaims them, and the drums in turn repeat them to the people. Then the dancing, singing, and drinking are resumed. On the following day the new naba, duly invested, returns to his village to take up his duties.

Here are some of the mottoes:

622 539 I. The mottoes of the naba of Koupéla allude to the war which took place at the time of his father's appointment between the latter, Naba Ibri, and the people of Kazem'bouanga:

1. Wadra yerda né kyougou. Wadra gousa menga, t'a péleum ka yd kyougou. The star glows in spite of the moon. But it should beware, for its brilliance does not obliterate that of the moon. (The star stands for the Kazem'bouanga pretender. The moon is the naba of Koupéla.)

2. Kalébdo kanenga, la son boulwaka. Kalebodo sauce is not good, but it is better than boulwaka sauce. (The naba of Koupéla is not very powerful, but he is more powerful than the people of Kazem'bouanga.)

3. Néda gwanga nan samma. The lame man claims that he will kill him. (The pretender, the lame man, intends to kill the naba of Koupéla.)

II. The mottoes of the Saman'Naba, prime minister of Koupéla, allude to his position vis-à-vis the naba, to whom he owes everything and who supports him:

622 1. Ti'douda béleum villi n'pam n'dou. Those who wish to
539 climb a tree seize the branches for support. /21/

2. Gigemdé sen touka séolro, wenniginamma, walpélronamma, nonga morbo, la'b zuéta gemdé. The lion digs up the salty earth (good to eat); the buffalo and koba /a kind of horse antelope/ like to eat it, but fear the lion. (The enemies of the Saman'Naba would like to take his place, but fear the naba.)

3. Kong'panga, bar'bala. Those who lack strength remain servants.

645 The appointment of the high ministers involves only a few gifts,
636 offered during the festive days which last from the death of the minister to the nomination of his successor. The eldest son usually inherits the position, but the province chief may designate anyone he pleases.

636 Upon the death of the naba of Koupéla, a province chief, the ministers hold a council and decide among themselves who is to be his successor. The eldest son is nearly always chosen. Before the name of the man selected is announced, the head of the village section that bears the name Koupéla notifies the canton chiefs, who gather in the village of Koupéla. When everyone has arrived, the Tabrana /sic/ proclaims the name of the man chosen, and they all proceed to Bélousa to disclose their choice to the naba and to request his investiture. The naba of Bélousa usually accepts the man thus formally designated. If there is disagreement, or if he himself would prefer a different choice, he notifies the Moro Naba accordingly and indicates his own preferences; when his messenger returns, he proclaims the appointment, and everyone submits to his will. After all, he "has the strength." As badges of investiture, the naba of Bélousa presents the chosen man with a cap, a pair of shoes, and a scepter. The new naba still may not wear the cap, put on the shoes, or hold
[769] the scepter. He must proceed first to the grave of the ancestor of the people, Naba Kourita, where he offers sacrifices, especially that of a cow. The festivities last for seven days, in the course of which millet beer flows freely and cattle is slaughtered in large numbers. In the course of these festivities the head of the chosen man is shaved, and he receives from the messengers of the naba of Bélousa the cap, shoes, and scepter; only then does he truly become a naba, with the right to

4: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1957
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The village chiefs held their fiefs directly from the district chiefs, and were enfeoffed through the principle of primogeniture on the advice of district chiefs' ministers. They paid homage, and owed fealty, to their district chiefs, although part of their tribute always was sent to the Moro-naba. In the event of war they followed their district chief when he went to serve the Moro-naba. The village chiefs received presents from the heads of the families in the village and settled any local court cases in their villages. They did not have the right, however, either to put men into stocks or to have them executed. They were aided in the administration of the villages by the heads of families. 631 622

Almost every Mossi village had sections in which the nobles lived. As stated above, these people were the relatives or descendants of the district heads, and they lived in a semiparasitic condition upon the commoners in the village. Most of them owned horses and, in addition to furnishing the cavalry for the district chief's contingent during war, they raided and attacked caravans passing through the country. The nobles were subject to the control of the village chiefs, and it was not unusual for them to be under the jurisdiction of chiefs who were members of the commoner class. In such cases the district chiefs had a great deal of difficulty resolving the problems between their vassals and their kinsmen. The nobles could steal the wives and daughters of the commoners, but if a commoner tried to steal the wife of a noble he and the woman were both killed. Whenever a noble threatened to disrupt the life of a district he was secretly strangled by the district chief's men. 565 631

The above is a brief account of the origin and structure of the Mossi political system. Most of the myths regarding the origin of this system seem to suggest that here is a classic conquest state, but one neither founded by Caucasians nor extraordinarily influenced by them. The Mossi state is homogeneous in race, language, and culture, a feature not found in most of the other Sudanic states. This fact is not interesting in itself until we note that the Mossi share many cultural traits with the Voltaic peoples. Marc believes that this cultural homogeneity is the result of the Mossi invasion of the area during which they imposed their languages and customs on the indigenous populations. Apparently not believing the traditions about the Dagomba origin of the Mossi, he explains the fact that such non-Mossi groups as the Nankana, Wala, and Dagari speak Mossi dialects as proof that the Mossi were politically more powerful in ancient times, but "the feudal regime disappeared little by little.... The Mossi language was kept; [it is] the only actual witness of the ancient power of the Mossi" (author's translation).[5] We know, however, that the Mossi were still encroaching on the territories of their neighbors when the French arrived in 1896.[6] 631 692 174 114

Rattray believes that the inhabitants of Mamprussi, Dagomba, and Mossi territories are the same now as they were "centuries before the ancestors of those who are now their rulers appeared on the scene."[7] He states that

5: Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1959
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their allegiance directly to the *Yatenga Naba* for historical reasons or because their chiefs are related to the royal lineage and superior within the social hierarchy to the local nobility (*nakomse*) to which the canton chiefs belong.

Subordinate, in turn, to the canton chief, is the village chief (*Tenga Naba*), who is the central authority in the aggregation of "quarters" (*sakse*) of which a Mossi village is composed. These quarters are the dwellings of patrilineal extended families and lineages (*boodoose*). Such a residence is called a *saka* if it contains the house of the lineage elder (*sak kasama*) or a *yiri* if it represents only a junior segment. In either case the dwelling of the oldest male in the group is surrounded by the separate houses of his wives, his younger brothers and their wives, and his sons, nephews, cousins, and their wives and children. Each adult individual has a separate house within the *saka*.

The smallest unit within the residence of the lineage is the nuclear family (*zaka*) composed of a man, his wife, and their children. If a man has more than one wife, the term *zaka pedere* (*zaka* half) may be used when the man's relationship with one of his several wives is being considered. He himself is called *zaka soba*. As a young man's family grows, each of his new wives is provided with a house adjoining his. In addition to his house and the houses of his wives, each man's household contains several granaries used to store the produce from the millet fields he has been assigned by his lineage. It is with the members of his own household that a man is in most frequent social and economic interaction. The fields he works with their assistance are the principal source of the food supply for the nuclear family unit.

The *yiri* is the next largest social unit within the *saka*. The term refers to the extended family dwelling inhabited by a man, his wives, his male children, and their wives and children. It may be composed of as many as fifteen separate nuclear families. While its inhabitants usually consist of the married sons of an older man and their nuclear families, it may also be composed of a man, his wife and children, and his younger brothers and their wives and children. Since its members are closely related within the lineage, there is greater social and economic interaction among them than there is with the other lineage members. As the *zaka soba* is the principal and final authority within the *zaka*, the *yiri soba* is most important within the *yiri*.

Composed of the nuclear and extended family dwellings of its members, the Mossi residential unit is typically inhabited by all of the local representatives of the sib. In addition to the dwelling of the lineage elder, it contains the altar (*kiemserogo*) where the ancestral spirits of the lineage are worshiped. The lineage elder has authority over everyone living within his *saka*. As counselor to the village chief and intermediary with

5: Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1959
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241 picking, the plant may be turned under and left to enrich the soil.

241, 476 Apart from the co-operative cultivation of fields under the proprietorship of the lineage elder, each farmer works for himself. He aids his relatives, and they in turn assist him with his work, but the results of their communal effort are not shared. This applies not only to the work of planting but also to cultivation and harvest. The decision about what is to be planted in a particular field and how it shall be cultivated rests finally with the individual farmer.

Communal or co-operative effort is much more characteristic of the work of cultivation than of the planting period, when everyone is in a hurry to get his own seeds into the ground and requests for assistance are not welcomed. A strong note of competition is evident at this time. A [461] man takes pride in his efficiency as a farmer, and there is a race to see who can get farthest along with his work. In the earliest phase of prepa- [572] rations for the approaching rainy season it is the individual's best friend upon whom he relies most for assistance. He is the first person to be called on for assistance in clearing the field for planting. If a Mossi farmer is unmarried, he may also ask the other unmarried men of his lineage for help. If a long day must be spent in the field in order to clear and clean it properly, his mother will offer the helpers the midday meal, which is carried out to them as they work.

622 651 241 *Naba koba* (chief's cultivation) is the name given to the work which the villagers do in the fields belonging to the village chief. A village elder is charged with announcing when and where work in the chief's fields is to be done, and each lineage head relays the news to his kinsmen. This contribution of labor is no longer obligatory, as it was formerly, but only [626] a question of social pressure and recognition that individual well-being and the welfare of the village "depend on the chief."

241 463 Every Mossi is an agriculturist. Although agriculture is the principal source of income, everyone also engages in crafts, particularly during the dry season when the work in the fields is finished. However, there are no full-time crafts specialists. Even the African functionaries in the European administration and the teachers, clerks, and merchants all work in their fields part of the time during the rainy season. The activities of the blacksmiths, leather workers, butchers, wood workers, herbalists, and small merchants are carried out on a much smaller scale and are fitted into the routine established by the rains and the growth of their millet. Only elders whose age keeps them from the fields might be thought of as specialists who do not participate in agriculture, but their land is worked by younger members of the family, and they take a keen interest in the course of its cultivation. The village chief, the earth custodian, and certain other elderly and important members of the community do not cultivate; this is because of their position and age rather than because

687 Moulins adds, "Custom does not anticipate the possibility of a
631 chief being, properly speaking, stripped of his rule. A naba who gives the sovereign reasons for complaint is summoned under a pretext of some sort and put to death without further ceremony at the close of the audience granted to him. If the chief, guessing at the true purpose of the Moro Naba's invitation, demurs at going, a column is sent into the region over which he rules with the mission of seizing him and taking him to the Moro Naba, who has him put to death by his pages."

622 Let us add that in the Mossi /language/ a village chief is called tengasoba or tenganaba, from tenga, "earth, place, spot" and by extension "village," and from naba or soba, "chief." There are also chiefs of quarters called sakanaba, sakasoba, or sakakasaman, from saka, "quarter," and naba, soba, or kasaman, "chief." Mossi villages are indeed divided into quarters located some 200, 300, 400, or 500 meters apart and consisting of several soukala which usually stand, as we know, 40 or 50 meters apart. When the head of a quarter dies, it is the oldest soukala chief in the quarter who replaces him.

565 Below the Moro Naba and the chiefs of provinces, cantons, and villages, there existed among the Mossi a true aristocracy, a genuine nobility, the nakomsé, or sons of chiefs. "They were granted," says Moulins, "important privileges. They had the right to loot passing caravans and to demand from the common natives gifts of cowries, livestock, grain, etc., which the latter could not deny them. They were forbidden to kill, but if they committed murder, instead of being put to death, they were merely put in irons for a short period of time. Furthermore, they were granted the privilege of being tried only by the Moro Naba, head of their house, for all their crimes and misdemeanors." They are all descended, or supposed to be descended, from Moro Naba Oubry, conqueror of Mossi territory.

565 The existence of this aristocracy among the Mossi must be care-
171 fully noted, for it distinguishes them sharply from the populations we have studied up to now, Bobo, Nounouma, Kassouna, Sissala, Dagari, etc. Nobles are not found often among the Blacks of West Africa, and they are found only among groups that are, or formerly

8: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1958
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175 schools and 4,000 Moslems in Ouagadougou (seven percent of whom were non-
797 Mossi). By 1944 there were about 240 schools and approximately 25,000
871 Moslems. The last census, 1954, did not record the number of Koranic schools but gave the figure of 60,000 Moslems in the Ouagadougou region.[3] The 4,000 Moslems of Nobéré comprise 42 percent of that district's population. With the exception of one Catholic school master and the Catholic catechist who came to the district during 1956, the population is pagan. It might be relevant to point out that Nobéré has the highest percentage of Moslems in Kombissiri, an administrative unit (a subdivision) which has 152,000 pagans, 23,000 Moslems, 3,000 Catholics, and about 100 Protestants.

797 As noted above, Islam first came into the Nobéré district with Ngado, who replaced a dissident pagan chief, but Ngado's lineal descendants reverted to
634 paganism until a few years ago when the present district chief became a nominal Moslem. The cadet sons of Ngado did not revert to paganism, and today all the noble sublineages of the district are Moslem. We may note here that one of the main aspects of Islamic proselytization in this district, as elsewhere among the Mossi, has been the conversion of persons who do not hold strategic positions vis-à-vis the ancestors. The present chief is no exception to this rule, because he is only a nominal Moslem. His eldest son is the only one in the family who is not a Moslem—a status which is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain in a growing Moslem population. The chief himself became partially converted to Islam in gratitude to a Moslem Hausa trader who cured his illness. He recites the five daily prayers and observes most of the prescriptions of Islam, but he still drinks European beer, subscribes to many pagan rites and
[769] beliefs, and supervises the annual Péléga or sacrifice to the ancestors. This dual allegiance is politically expedient because the chief can function as the head of the Moslem community as well as the traditional head of all the people. He does have occasional difficulty with intolerant Moslems who wish him to become a devout Moslem, and with the traditionalists who claim that today the crops are smaller, the people sicker, and the women barren because of the neglect of the ancestors. However, with the approach of holy days, these differences are resolved in the interest of community harmony.

622 The chiefs of the villages under the overall command of the district chief are mainly pagan, since they are descended from the district chief replaced by
797 Ngado. Yet they command villages inhabited by the noble Moslem sublineages
769 of the ruling house as well as by commoner lineages. The village chief cannot become a Moslem because he too is responsible for sacrifices to the ancestors, without whose help his people would suffer. He does not take an active part in Moslem festivities, but receives the homage due a chief from the Moslems on these and other occasions. However, most village chiefs show an interest in Moslem affairs, and one of them, the chief of Vooko, built a prayer-circle (*misseri*) for Moslems who came to pay homage.

622 The pivotal role which the village chief plays in the exchange of wives be-
797 tween Moslems and pagans has led indirectly to the increase of the Moslem
582 population. Before the French conquest he gave the Moslems more wives than

he received from them. This unequal exchange, plus the nobles' prerogative of seizing the wives of pagans, contributed to the increase of the Moslems. 622 797 582

The conversion of Mossi to Islam is sometimes accompanied by a rupture in the relationships between persons involved in "friendships" with a view of obtaining wives. A great quarrel developed in the district between a pagan chief and a recent convert who refused to give the chief a daughter promised as a wife. The chief became furious and claimed that the Moslem had broken a promise made years ago, but the Moslem claimed that it was against his new religion to give his daughter to a pagan. It is not true that Moslems in the village do not exchange wives with pagans, but the Moslems often try to convert their pagan friends so that the brides will not have to revert to paganism. The chief's difficulty was that he could not become a Moslem because of his ritual and ceremonial relationship with the ancestors. The Moslem men do not have such difficulties with their pagan wives because most women follow their husbands' dictates in religious and other matters. Many Moslem men attempt to prevent their wives from having sacrifices made to the ancestors, but if a woman really wishes such a sacrifice she can easily have it arranged through her pagan relatives. If a woman married to a Moslem refuses to observe Islamic practices, she is liable to divorce and runs the risk of having her children taken away. 572 622 582 797 [562] [593] [586]

Mossi anxiety over children is often instrumental in converting them to Islam. When a woman is barren or her young children die, she consults a soothsayer (*barga*). She is either told that her Tengkougre benefactor was not amply rewarded and recalled the children, or that her "Moslem" children (children who wished to be Moslems) were angry because they were given pagan names. In the latter case she is advised to make a gift to a Moslem and to ask her husband to build a Moslem prayer-circle outside his hut so that when her children "return" (are born again) they will see it. Finally, she is advised to give all her children Moslem names. I could discover no reason why the pagan soothsayers advise these anxious parents to adopt Islam, except that they hope that complicated prescriptions will be more efficacious. Nevertheless, so effective is this technique for gaining converts to Islam that even members of the family of the chief pagan priest are not immune to it. Furthermore, once a woman has a Moslem child, all her other children must be Moslems or they will die. A man whose children are all Moslem has no recourse except to adopt Islam if he wants a funeral, because his Moslem sons may not give him a pagan funeral. 797 842 [787] [551] [164]

Every Mossi, whether Moslem or non-Moslem, wishes a proper funeral, and now that travel has increased the fact of being Moslem or pagan is of great importance. Many young migrants to Ashanti have reported that their dead pagan comrades were unceremoniously disposed of, while the local Christians and Moslems took care of their dead coreligionists. But despite this fact, and the belief of administrators and missionaries, I found no evidence that the seasonal and other migration of Mossi youth to Ghana and the Ivory Coast have contributed very much to the spread of Islam. It is true that some of the thou- 797 167 [164]

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[428] power and authority were inherited by their families in the same manner as among Mossi lineages.

634 The last important category of Mossi chiefs included men who ruled over slave and serf villages. These men were themselves the descendants
● 622 of slaves and serfs, for no free-born Mossi were placed in such posts. Needless to say, these chiefs were never lineally or collaterally related to the
[602] district chiefs, and therefore were never nobles. However, they might be affinally related to district chiefs, and in such cases the relationship was often of some political value.

It must be emphasized that once a man was made chief, he was respected, if not honored, by all the people of the district. In some districts, the Dapore Naba and the Baglere Naba, chiefs of two categories of serfs, were among the most valued assistants of the Kombere Naba. The only
[565] people who sometimes refused to honor the village chiefs were the nakomce,
[778] who were the holders of the district nam. Nevertheless, they were censored by the Kombere if they were disrespectful to his subordinates. No district chief could allow his government to be jeopardized by the maltreatment of persons who served it. In any conflict between the nam and the kin group, the supremacy of the nam was always maintained.

613 Every Mossi ruler, whether he held the nam of a kingdom, principality,
631 district, or village, was *ipso facto* also *Boodkasma* (literally, "family head")
622 of the local segment of his boodoo. The word boodoo refers to patrilineal groups that anthropologists would normally call clans, maximal lineages, major lineages, or minor lineages. The Mossi do not make any terminological distinction between these levels of their segmentary lineage system. Nevertheless, they recognize and use the status differences between these units to limit the access of each unit to the corporate assets of the boodoo. Their major social distinction is drawn between the minor lineage, which is also called boodoo, and its component minimal lineages. Each minimal-
[596] lineage unit is called a *babissi* (literally, "father's brother"), and is really a large extended family composed of relatives who had a common ancestor, three, four, or at most five generations ago.

643 The Mogho Naba, for example, was head of his babissi as well as ex
613 officio head of the entire royal clan. Those rulers who claimed equality with him claimed that they, not he, were the true heads of the royal clan and the "direct" descendants of Ouedraogo and Oubri. As a function of their political position, the many princes and district chiefs were heads of their own babissi and of the maximal lineage to which their babissi be-
631 longed. Like the Mogho Naba, they were the ex officio heads of all members
613 of their boodoo who lived in their territory and who claimed descent from the same royal ancestors,

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the same royal ancestors. A Mossi village chief was likewise the head of his babissi and ex officio head of all the other babissi in his village that belonged to his boodoo. As the official Boodkasma of his village's ruling lineage, the village chief held junior or senior status in relation to other village chiefs of the same boodoo who were also the Boodkasemdamba of their respective lineage segments.

Possession of the nam influenced the pattern of seniority within lineages and lineage segments. In most cases, seniority was based on age and generation. Thus, the oldest man of the oldest generation was the Boodkasma, and his office devolved upon the next oldest man when he died. But within the ruling lineages and their segments, the man who held the nam, whether young or old, was automatically senior to all others. This does not mean that these ruling lineages did not recognize age and generational seniority. For example, whenever a chief died and sovereignty returned to the lineage as a corporate group, the senior noble of the senior generation became the acting Boodkasma and lineage head. Like all Boodkasemdamba, he managed the affairs of his group, but only until a new chief was elected. The new Boodkasma, however, sometimes delegated some of his social rights and ritual obligations to this elder, who was often regarded as the unofficial or semi-official Boodkasma of his lineage. Similarly, the senior nobles of all segments of the ruling lineage were also regarded as Boodkasemdamba. Because they were so regarded and because of the role they played, these men seldom came into conflict with the district chief. He gave them a certain amount of leeway in dealing with the everyday affairs of their group. It was understood by all, however, that nothing should jeopardize the most important asset of the lineage—the nam. Therefore, the chief was obeyed in all important matters involving the noble lineage of the district. In such matters he listened to no one; for, as one district chief said, "Once I have received the nam from the Mogho Naba, no man in this district stands above me!"

This dominance of political relations over social relations was made clear by the behavior of commoners toward ruling nobles on the one hand, and of nobles among themselves on the other. Commoners showed greater respect and deference toward members of the ruling babissi than toward persons belonging to other noble babissi. Thus, they were more respectful to the district chief's father's brothers, his siblings, and his children than to his more distant relatives. Within the noble lineage itself, everyone had to respect the chief as the holder of the nam, but otherwise the generational principle of respect and deference was maintained. The eldest nobleman of the eldest generation received deference from all others (excluding the

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554 613 571 778 chief), and the hierarchy of respect descended to the youngest nobleman of the youngest generation. Very often, the full-grown son and presumed heir of the district chief had to kneel in respect to a distantly related younger man of an elder generation. Of course, this deference ceased if and when he became chief. If he did not receive the nam, he continued to show deference to all his lineage elders. This distinction between nam and boodoo was [578] a source of potential conflict within the ruling lineages. The people usually accepted the implications of both principles, but when they did not, there were dynastic quarrels and territorial secessions.

● 622 613 554 778 571 The age and generational principles also operated within non-noble ruling lineages, but here too they were often complicated by the possession of the nam. Those village chiefs who had lost their noble status but retained the nam acted as official Boodkasemdamba of their local lineage segments and had considerable influence over their lineage although they did not control all its segments. Each lineage segment had its own Boodkasma, who normally ran its affairs. But because of the importance of the nam in Mossi life, the Boodkasemdamba deferred to the village chief in [565] important matters pertaining to their own boodoo. However, the generational principle was followed within the local boodoo. Almost no one deferred to the children of the village chief, who, after all, were not nakomce.

613 571 778 The situation within commoner lineages that did not hold the nam was quite different. The age and generational principles obtained within the lineage segments of these boodoo, but never *across* the segments, as they did across the babissi. These segments were more autonomous. Each had its own Boodkasma, who looked after it without deferring to anyone. This autonomy was all the more pronounced since the segments of non-noble lineages tended to be scattered throughout a district. They interacted socially and politically only when they were physically close. In any case, in the absence of the nam, the segments of non-noble lineages had no reason to remain together; they tended to lose their hierarchical quality and to become equal and separate.

613 173 778 As would be expected in such circumstances, not all Mossi lineages paid the same attention to their genealogies. Noble lineages kept track of their actual or putative ancestors, whereas non-noble lineages tended to ignore them and to let geographical proximity determine meaningful kinship ties. This loss of interest in exact genealogies was found even among lineages that had lost the nam of a district and with it their nobility, but still retained the nam of a village. Members of the minimal units in such lineages competed actively for the village nam and were interested in fairly recent an-

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marauding animals. Just twenty years ago, the six villages that lay closest to the river were gradually abandoned and their populations absorbed by other villages. As of 1955, three of these populations were still paying allegiance to their former chiefs—a fact that bears out the Mossi axiom that chiefs govern people rather than land. The three other chiefs had lost control over their followers, who had placed themselves under the protection of the chiefs of their host villages. On occasion, Nobere also lost villages to other districts. One such village, Rissoma, was taken away from Nobere and given to Djiba when one of the Nobere district chiefs had a dispute with the Mogho Naba. 634 621

The hub or center of Nobere district, like that of all Mossi districts, was Nab'tenga (also called Nobere Naba Tenga, or Na-tenga), the village of the district chief. This village was rather large and in many respects a replica in miniature of the capital of Ouagadougou. Like most Mossi villages, Nab'tenga was divided into sections, quarters, or neighborhoods called *saghse* (sing. *saka*), which included a number of compounds (*yiya*, sing. *yiri*; or *zughse*, sing. *zuka*). The district chief's compound was called Nab'yiri. He lived there surrounded by his wives, unmarried daughters, younger children, and pages. His older male children lived in separate compounds within the same saka. The saghse of Nab'tenga included Ouidi, the saka of the Ouidi Naba; Balbalse, the saka of the Baloum Naba; Tansoba, the saka of the local war minister (Tansoba or Tampsobo); Baglere, the saka of the chief's serfs; Bendere, the saka of the chief's musicians; Ouedrange, the saka of the chief's grooms; and Pwese, the saka of the guardians of the chief's wives. Scattered among them were the saghse of noble families, smiths, the Moslem Imam, and other persons. The most important market place in the district was located about four hundred yards from the chief's compound. [592] [591] [443]

The number and types of social and ethnic groups within the district and its villages reflected Nobere's history. When the French arrived, the district chief was Kaglere, a descendant of Ngado, who was a son of Mogho Naba Sagha I (ca. 1787–1803). Ngado had been sent to Nobere at the end of the eighteenth century to replace Naba Peka (a descendant of Naba Biligo), who had been deposed and killed by Mogho Naba Sagha during a civil war. The other chiefly descendants of Biligo, however, were not deposed by Ngado; they remained in charge of all but five or six of the major villages in the district. The chiefs of such villages as Ronse, Barkago, Tewarka, and Pinse are *yagense* (descendants) of Naba Biligo. The village called Passintenga was ruled by the descendants of a Busanga from Lenga called Passentre, who allegedly had been given a wife by Biligo. It is not 634 622 175

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634 known, however, whether this woman was Biligo's daughter or one of his
622 pughsiudse. The people of Passintenga claimed descent from Biligo's
175 daughter, but the other groups in the district questioned this ancestry. The village called Bourougna had two chiefs. One, the Tang Naba, was descended from a son of a Ouidi Naba of Ouagadougou who had settled in Nobere; the other, the Yang Naba, claimed descent from an aboriginal Ninisi man and woman of Biligo's lineage. The Yang Naba was thus another of Biligo's yagense in the district. The chief of Nimpwe village was a descendant of the aboriginal Ninisi people and was the principal Tengsoba in the district. He had more ritual power than political power, however. The nam of Basbedo village was held by a man descended from Busansi refugees. Living in this village was a man with the honorific title of Soulougre Naba, who claimed descent from the most important Ninisi family who had lived in the district prior to the arrival of Biligo.

634 Most of the nobles of the local ruling lineage lived either in the saghse
173 of the district villages or in isolated hamlets. Local tradition holds that one
621 of the conditions set by Naba Ngado for allowing Biligo's descendants to
[613] remain as village chiefs was the right to settle nineteen of his sons in many
[565] of the villages. He allegedly sent *mabissi* (sons of the same mother) to the same village. By so doing, he took advantage of the normal lines of fission that are created after the death of a Mossi father and prevented undue rivalries. Yet there was no driving necessity for him to do so, because there were more villages than chief's sons available. In fact, there are still many villages without nobles in Nobere district. The people of Passintenga, for instance, allegedly refused to have nobles live among them, while the people of Nimpwe allegedly killed by sorcery all the nobles who ever tried to live there. The actual reason for the absence of nobles in these villages may have been that the district chief did not wish to send his sons to villages into which his daughters had married or where there lived earth priests who
[565] were thought to be powerful sorcerers. Nobles were often unwelcome, feared, and resisted, because they tended to exploit the village people and to take advantage of the commoners.

621 The villages of Nobere district, like those of other Mossi districts, were
167 populated in part by refugees and strangers. Several saghse in Togese vil-
173 lage were inhabited by Mossi refugees who had fled a district called Guiergo after a fight over the nam of that district. Scattered throughout the district's villages were people of unknown origin called Siamse. The Siamse found in the villages of Tewaka and Nabadogo claimed that their ancestors had "followed" Naba Biligo when he came down from Ouagadougou to found the district. Several saghse in Bourougna village were in-

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Some of the more important rulers, such as the heads of the Yatenga, Fada-N'Gourma, and Tenkodogo kingdoms, were chosen by local electoral colleges, which did not have to seek the approval of the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou or notify him of the choices made. Their authority, as we have seen, was supported by claims of equality with Ouagadougou. But, with the exception of the Tenkodogo ruler, they were actually farther removed from the main line of royal descent than the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou. The autonomous Dimdamba had their own electoral colleges, which in some cases were made up of men related to the electoral-college members of the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou. (For example, the Ouidi Naba of Boulsa was descended from the Ouidi Naba of Ouagadougou.) These local colleges were usually free to nominate and elect the Dimdamba without consulting the Mogho Naba, even though he ratified many nominations.[33] According to Cheron, "The nomination of the Dim of Boulsa did not become definitive until ratified by the Mogho Naba, who was always consulted by the electors and who could impose his own candidate."[34] This was not always true; nor did every Mogho Naba refrain from interfering in the internal affairs of autonomous provinces. Whether he did or not often depended on his strength relative to that of the Dimdamba. Once the Dimdamba had been chosen, however, they were installed with ceremonies similar to those for the Ouagadougou ruler.

Like their superiors, the Dimdamba had the authority to delegate power to the Kombemba and Tense Nanamse. Some of them also had the right to grant the nam to a fellow Dim. The Boussouma Naba, for instance, could grant it to the Mane Naba.[37] Mogho Nanamse granted such rights to Dimdamba for various reasons. They might do so on the basis of their relative strength vis-à-vis a particular Dim at a particular time, or because they admired him or were closely related to him. However, a Dim exercised sovereignty in his own name, regardless of whether he was subordinate to the Mogho Naba or to another Dim. In contrast, the district chiefs and the village chiefs exercised sovereignty on behalf of the Mogho Naba or of the Dim in whose territory they resided.

The installation ceremonies for the two lower orders of chiefs were not too different from those for the Mogho Nanamse and Dimdamba. For example, when the Nobere district chief died, the provincial minister for Nobere—in this case the Gounga Naba—reported his death to the Mogho Naba. The ruler then summoned one of the deceased chief's officials to the capital to report on the qualifications of all potential candidates for the nam. The provincial minister, in turn, dispatched one of his own representatives to the district to verify the reports he had received. It was only when this

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634 The Kombere Naba, as the person who had "eaten the nam" of the district, was infused with some of the power and authority of the Mogho Naba and had the right to use force to maintain this power and authority. He was [576] respected, and people uncovered their heads and removed their slippers in his presence. Unlike the Mogho Naba, the Kombere Naba was permitted to eat with his peers. But whenever he drank the musicians made a roar-like sound with their instruments, and when he sneezed his attendants clapped. These rituals were rigidly adhered to because the Kombere Naba was readily accessible to the populace and might easily have lost their respect if he behaved in an undignified manner. He emphasized his social distance from them by never visiting the market place, and he did not go anywhere without a large entourage.

The Kombere Naba performed ceremonies and duties that were similar to but simpler than those of the Mogho Naba, and he was surrounded by officers bearing the same titles as those in the capital. But, as will be shown later, these officials had fewer and sometimes different duties than the courtiers at Ouagadougou. Some district chiefs had as many pages and wives as the Mogho Naba, but this was as much a result of their own desires as of their popularity with the local people. The death and funeral rites of a [766] district chief were not as elaborate as those of a Mogho Naba. They included [788] the circumambulation of the chief's compound by the principal heir and heiress, the symbolic reign of the Napoko, and the banishment of the Kourita.[41]

634 Every district chief, whether a Mogho Naba's vassal or a Dim's subordi- 778 nate, was empowered to bestow the nam on his own subordinates. These [622] might be other district chiefs; but most often they were village chiefs. The circumstances under which a Kombere Naba received the authority to grant the nam to another Kombere Naba were usually complex and sprang from rebellions and dynastic changes. Once granted, this authority was seldom revoked, but the district chief had to report to his immediate superior, a Mogho Naba or Dim, whenever he wished to confer the nam upon another district chief.

634 In some cases the Mogho Naba invested a district chief himself, and 175 afterward placed him under the control of a neighboring district chief. For 669 example, the chiefs of two districts, Vooko and Nobila, were always installed 778 by the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou, but were supervised by the Nobere district chief. This practice dates back to the civil war involving Mogho Naba Sagha I (ca. 1787–1803), in which chiefs of Vooko and Nobere sided with the loser. The Mogho Naba executed the local rebels and placed one of his sons in Nobere. He then divided Vooko into two districts, placing a younger son in the one he called Nobila (little Nobere) and subjecting him

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to the control of his brother at Nobere. The other district, still called Vooko but now half its former size, was given to a descendant of its deposed ruler. The relationship between these two rulers and the Nobere Naba was that of vassals and lord. They did not stand up in the presence of the Nobere Naba, but knelt or sat on the ground and uncovered their heads in respect to him. The Nobere Naba traditionally appointed the village chiefs in the Vooko and Nobila districts; however, he sometimes granted that right to the two district chiefs. Furthermore, the traditional provincial administrator could not transmit any orders to those two district chiefs without first notifying the Nobere Naba. In their everyday affairs the two chiefs were autonomous, but the Nobere Naba could challenge and countermand all their actions. Actually, he did seem to exercise greater control over Vooko than over Nobila. One may even say that the relationship between the Nobere district chief and the Vooko chief was like that between the Mogho Naba and his district chiefs, and that the relationship between the Nobere Naba and the Nobila Naba was comparable to the one between the Mogho Naba and the Dimdamba. We have seen that the Dimdamba claimed equality with the Mogho Naba because of their alleged descent from a putative common ancestor. The Nobere Naba was actually more closely related to the Nobila Naba than to the Vooko Naba, and his behavior toward them reflected this fact. In both cases, the relationships involved were determined by the concept of joint possession of the nam by the ruling family.

634 778 [622] [631]

A district chief was not required to notify his superior when he wished to confer the nam upon a village chief. In this choice he was completely autonomous and subject only to tradition. The fact is that on the district and village levels, traditions were more frequently modified in the face of practical political and socio-economic considerations. This occurred primarily because the district chief had closer relations with persons who possessed goods and services or who controlled them directly than did the chiefs on higher levels. Secondly, he was often under great temptation to allow presents or bribes to affect his choice of subordinate chiefs.

634 778 622 [662]

When a Tenga Naba died, the district chief permitted control of the village to revert to its Tengsoba. If there was none, the village was "given" to the eldest man among the aboriginal Ninisi lineages or to the eldest member of the ruling lineage segment. However, none of these persons was considered anything but a trustee of the village, and even when the trustee was a potential candidate for the nam, the Mossi did not feel that this man had any advantage over his competitors. Whoever held control of the village was held responsible for its affairs by the district administrator until the new chief was elected.

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Competition for chieftainship on this level was very keen because of the

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634 622 greater number of lineage members eligible for the nam and the shallow genealogical depth. Every man who had the ability or desire to rule was 634 encouraged to seek the post. Many candidates tried to impress the district 622 chief and his advisers with their good qualities; most tried to bribe them. 662 Since the candidates could not openly seek the post during the day, they visited the important officials of the district at night, taking money and cattle as presents. Some candidates even promised wives. The intrigues on this level, such as seeking the friendship of pages to find out about the activities of rivals, paralleled those at Ouagadougou. The more gifts a candidate gave the district chief, the more his rivals tried to surpass him. Consequently, the district chief often kept the office vacant for months or even as long as two or three years in order to enjoy these lucrative gifts. Neither the caretakers of the village, who complained about the administrative problems of a village without a chief, nor the Tengsobadamba, who declared that without the permission of a chief they could not make sacrifices to help the people avoid illness, drought, and sterility, could force the Kombere Naba to name a new village chief. Only when the candidates had exhausted most of their wealth was the process to elect the chief set in motion.

634 The district chief had a better knowledge of the character of candidates 622 for the village chieftainship than the Dimdamba or Mogho Nanamse had about the men whom they selected. The district chiefs were better able than other Mossi rulers to obey the dictum that only those men capable of "keeping" the country should rule. Nevertheless, before making a choice, the Kombere Naba called in the local minister responsible for the village in question and discussed with him the character and capabilities of the various candidates.[42] As on higher levels, the eldest son of the former chief [651] was usually favored, especially if he had sent a large *fado* (death tax) to [662] the district chief and had been generous to him during the interregnum. But it was also possible that one of the dead chief's younger sons or one of his brothers or uncles might be chosen. In some cases, the district chiefs [613] chose men from related sub-lineages that had not held the nam for generations. One district chief chose a man who had lived away from the village for thirty years. He had gone to live in his mother's brother's village as a young man and did not return until he was named chief. Admittedly, such cases were exceptional, but they kept alive in the minds of the local people the concept of the Mossi lineage's corporate possession of the nam.

On the day chosen for the election of a village chief, all the candidates with their unshaved heads and sheepskin mantles reported to the village [431] administrator's house along with all the other men of their lineage. They gave him presents, and he led them to the compound of the district chief.

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The entire assembly saluted the district chief, and the official declared the reason for his visit. Then the district chief sent a page for a chief's bonnet, which he gave to a samande. This youth took the bonnet, came up to the kneeling candidates, and jokingly attempted to place it on the head of each one in turn while asking, "Whom did the *keema* ["dead person"; in this case, the dead chief] say should be chief?" When no one answered he gave up the game, ran to the successful candidate, and placed the bonnet on his head. As soon as this happened, all the unsuccessful candidates and men of the lineage ran away, followed by other samande-kamba, who waved big clubs and feigned violence if they should catch them. The men of the lineage soon returned while the new chief did homage and pledged allegiance to the Kombere Naba by prostrating himself on the ground and by putting sand from the tomboko on his head. By this act the Tenga Naba became the district chief's subordinate and the lowest elected official in a ruling hierarchy that extended from the Mogho Naba down to the least village chief.

Once the oath-taking ceremony was over, the new chief's followers saluted the district chief, lifted their new leader onto their shoulders, and bore him triumphantly back to his village, shouting for joy. Here, in imitation of his superiors, the new chief made a speech in which he ridiculed his competitors, reviewed his background, and made known his chiefly intentions. Here, too, the people seized upon some significant point in his speech as an indication of the name "he had named." However, this name was seldom used, since people referred to him as the Naba of such-and-such village, e.g., Barkago Naba, and addressed him simply as "Naba." The village Tengsoba then performed propitiatory sacrifices to the Ninisi ancestors and to the local earth deity in the chief's name, and "gave him back the village" of which he had been the temporary caretaker. Only after these rites had been performed could the chief assume command of the village without incurring supernatural sanctions of the ancient Ninisi.

The typical village chief had no court. His compound was only slightly larger than that of a village family. He had no officials, but some of his companions who assumed special duties similar to those of the Ouidi Naba and the Tansoba were sometimes jokingly referred to by these honorific titles. The village chief had neither soghondamba nor samande-kamba, and he permitted his wives to serve refreshments to his visitors. In general, everything was on a smaller scale than on the district level, including all ceremonies even to the burial of the village chief.

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634 to those found at the court of Ouagadougou: Baglere Naba, Dapore Naba, Pwe Naba, Samande Naba, Ouedrange Naba, Raga Naba, etc. However, the officials who bore the same titles as the chief administrators of the Mogho Naba did not necessarily serve in the same capacity. A local historical event often determined which official held which administrative task. In Nobere, the Ouidi Naba and the Tansoba were the two principal administrators. The Ouidi Naba administered those villages north and west of Nab'tenga (the chief's village), and the Tansoba administered the villages south and east of it. The Baloum Naba and other officials had no villages under their jurisdiction, but performed many valuable services for the chief.

Administrative processes on the district level were not as formal as in the capital. Except on Fridays and on important occasions, the district administrators visited the chief's compound only when summoned or when they had an important matter to discuss. (Of course, those administrators who formed part of his unofficial council could visit him at any time.) Their problems differed little from those of the Ouagadougou officials, except that their personal problems were greater, owing to the intimacy of the smaller area. The differences in status between non-noble administrators and noble relatives of the district chief were more keenly felt and caused more difficulties. Whereas the provincial administrator seldom met the district chiefs, the district administrators regularly met nobles in the market place, at ceremonies, and in the course of their everyday work. The latent conflict between official status and royal rank often broke out openly. When it did, the nobles of a village would refuse to obey the orders the administrators had transmitted to their village chief. This compelled the district chief either to summon the nobles for an explanation of their behavior or to use his own relatives to transmit orders to them. He did not like to take either course of action, especially the latter, because both violated hierarchical procedure. Furthermore, when he sent a near relative to a village, the relative often demanded goods and services not authorized by the district chief. Of course, not all the nobles made the administrator's task difficult, but enough of them did to cause him anxiety.

The duties of the district administrators fell into several categories. [203] First, it was their task to transmit to the village chiefs orders which the Kombere Naba had received from the Mogho Naba concerning warfare, [622] special gifts and tribute, and nation-wide ceremonies and rituals. Second, they had similar duties toward the provincial governor and the district chief. Third, and most important from the local viewpoint, they handled those affairs concerning only the district. The administrators seldom had

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difficulty discharging these duties, for, nobles aside, the Mossi usually obeyed 634
orders from their chiefs—a fact verified by most observers. At the same time, a district chief had to be temperate in his demands upon his villagers, and could not take advantage of his obligations to the Mogho Naba as a means of personal enrichment. Similarly, the district administrators could not seek personal gain either by augmenting the demands of the district chief or by withholding part of the goods and services rendered to him. District administrators who were found guilty of maladministration or embezzlement were executed, because activities of this kind could—and often did—jeopardize the life of the district chief.

The Mossi might complain among themselves about the administrative 634
policies of their district chief, but they took no measures against him unless 687
he was very cruel or exploitative. A district chief who by his disregard for 578
the people's welfare was believed to have lost the ability to "command 626
people" jeopardized not only his position but also his life. When the people were dissatisfied with a chief, they either boycotted him or deserted their villages and migrated to another district, thus "increasing the force" (nam) of the chief who gave them sanctuary. This placed the deserted chief in a rather difficult position. Mogho Nanamse are known to have ordered the 634
execution of district chiefs and even autonomous Dimdamba who had lost 687
their subjects through their own fault. In 1863, when Mogho Naba Sanum 626
was informed that the ruler of Boussouma, Naba Zande, had been chased away by his subjects for administrative abuses and had fled to a Ouagadougou village, he had him captured and executed.[29] Thus, the threat that people might leave the district was often strong enough to ensure a just administration, because the district chiefs and officials depended upon the villagers not only for the economic support of the central administration but also for their livelihood and their lives.

Those district chiefs who supervised other district chiefs for the Mogho 634
Naba did not interfere with the internal administration of the districts. 628
The chiefs of the Vooko and Nobila districts, for instance, had administrators of their own to look after their villages. But they were responsible to the chief of Nobere district, not their respective provincial ministers, for their internal affairs. Moreover, they had to follow the Nobere chief when he went to Ouagadougou to pay homage and allegiance to the Mogho Naba. But aside from these prescriptions, the chiefs of these subordinate districts administered their territories in the same manner as the Nobere chief administered his own.

The Mossi village chief had no administrators of his own to help him 622
with day-to-day affairs of his village. However, like the district chief, he 623

622 had a group of confidants who acted as an informal council. These men
623 included senior members of his own lineage, elders from other local lineages, and personal friends. Again, like the confidants of the district chiefs, these men visited the village chief whenever they were not busy with their own affairs to talk to him about wives, crops, and village matters. Although protocol was at a minimum on this level, the chief had to maintain a high
[613] degree of decorum. As a member of the ruling lineage of the district, he
[565] had noble status and had to be treated accordingly. The non-noble village
622 chief was also respected as a recipient of the nam. But all chiefs, whether nobles or commoners, were expected to lead exemplary lives lest the flaws in their characters as revealed by the intimacy of village life should weaken their prestige.

622 The village chief received his orders from the district chief through the
203 administrator in charge of his village or through one of this official's servants. He, in turn, used his own sons or relatives to transmit messages to the heads of the saghse. If the message was extremely important, the village chief's messenger might be accompanied by the administrator's messenger or by the district chief's personal representatives. The saksobadamba then transmitted the order to the various compound heads. This hierarchy was always followed because, by following it, the officials knew who was responsible for disobeying or frustrating the wishes of the superior chiefs. As on the district level, the orders transmitted to the village and its sections dealt with such things as collecting tribute, picking fruits from the district chief's trees, allocating labor for the district chief or his personal retainers, transferring or summoning cases to the district court, procuring sacrificial animals for the local Tengsoba, and requesting soldiers. The village chief also sent his own messages to the saghse. These messages, however, dealt with such village matters as local sacrifices, quarrels, and court cases.

622 Misrule and maladministration by a village chief were punished either
687 by the district chief or by the villagers. Like other Mossi rulers, the village
634 chief could not be deposed and allowed to live. However, he had a better chance of fleeing and finding refuge in another district. His presence in a strange district did not challenge the authority of the local chief, and he had no opportunities to seize any of his host's villages. In fact, if the refugee was accompanied by a large number of his subjects, his host might even give him land on which to erect a new village. The proviso was, of course, that he should not "spoil" the district by causing trouble. If a village chief accused of maladministration was seized by the district chief before he could
[696] flee, he was invariably executed. If he was a commoner, he was decapitated or even stoned to death; if he was a nobleman, he was taken into the bush and strangled in secret by the district police

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and strangled in secret by the district police. If a district chief hesitated to punish a village chief whose followers had complained, the aggrieved lineage or the entire village simply took its movable property and left. This sanction does not seem to have been applied often, but its threat was normally sufficient to curb the excesses of the worst village chief.

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between the lineages concerned. If either the repudiated woman or a member of her husband's lineage wished to initiate a reconciliation, she or he had to summon a yagenga. He alone was permitted to reconcile the couple after the pots had been placed in the courtyard. When a woman felt that she was being maltreated by her husband, she usually fled to her own patrilineage and waited for her husband's patrilineage—usually his brothers—to visit her male relatives and discuss the case. If the woman was judged guilty, she was reprimanded and sometimes flogged by her own relatives for causing trouble between the two lineages, and then sent home to her husband. However, if the man was found guilty, his wife was returned to him, but he was warned that he would forfeit all rights to her if he maltreated her again. A man who lost his wife through repeated maltreatment could not take the matter to court, because chiefs usually refused to deal with purely domestic issues. His only recourse was to induce one of his lineage brothers to recall a daughter who had married into his wife's lineage. This act was usually sufficient to bring about the reconciliation of the estranged couple before innocent persons were hurt.

The Mossi made every effort to solve minor problems without recourse to the chiefs. The local Boodkasemdamba and lineage elders adjudicated quarrels and simple offenses involving members of minimal segments in the various village saghse. They even tried to resolve difficulties between lineage members of larger segments who lived in different villages. The elders often imposed punishments such as reprimands, floggings, and even banishment. The convicted person did not usually appeal to the chief, because he knew that the chief would advise him to settle his problem within the family.

Unrelated villagers also tried to settle difficulties among themselves without appealing to the chief. For example, a man who was caught stealing could be beaten or even killed by his intended victims, and the chief did not punish them for their action. In many cases, villagers simply took the thief back to his relatives, knowing they would punish him. Occasionally, a family disgraced by a thieving member forced him to kill himself. When this happened the chief held an inquest but took no other action.

The Mossi gave a fairly simple explanation for returning a thief to his relatives for punishment. They said that every family had "weak" members, and that by not harming the captured thief they were only protecting themselves against retaliation if one of their own relatives should commit a similar crime. But a more important reason seems to have been their fear of starting a feud that might result in the premeditated murder of a man and the subsequent execution of his murderer.

The one crime that invoked terrible unofficial sanctions was rape. If the

684 offender was caught in the act, he was immediately killed. If he was merely [613] suspected of guilt both by his own lineage and by the lineage of the wronged woman, he was banished from his lineage and from the village. So swift and sure was this punishment that a rapist always fled if he believed he [847] would be discovered. The Mossi considered rape such a heinous crime that if the act resulted in pregnancy, an abortion was attempted; if this failed, [613] the child was killed at birth. Furthermore, the rapist could never hope to [627] return to his community, because even if the yagenga appealed on his behalf and his lineage forgave him, the community ban still stood.[2]

692 The village chief was usually aware of the torts and crimes that occurred 622 in his village, and of how the families concerned had handled them. He seldom interfered in the internal affairs of a lineage, or in problems between lineages, unless he felt that a case was beyond their legal competence. [684] In the case of a rapist's expulsion, community feeling usually ran so high that if the chief intervened, it was only to support the will of the community. However, when people could not settle their differences peaceably or when a major crime was committed within a village, the chief usually summoned 622 the offender to his court for trial. His right to do so was sanctioned by his 692 possession of the nam, but the very concept of the nam often made his task 565 difficult. If he was a commoner, the nobles often emphasized their rela- 634 tionship to the holder of the royal nam, the district chief, and objected to 695 being tried by a commoner. They usually appeared at the village court if summoned, but often attempted afterward to find some excuse for taking their case to the district chief. They felt that their local reputation would prevent them from receiving a fair hearing from anyone but their lineage brother. Furthermore, if they were judged and convicted in the lower court and the verdict was confirmed in the district court, they felt that the district chief, in concurring with the village chief, had broken the solidarity of their lineage. But if they took their case directly to the district chief, they knew they were being judged by an equal or a superior, and that an unfavorable judgment would not damage their status.

622 The competence of the village chief to deal with court cases was limited.[3] 692 He did pass on all the legal infractions that occurred in his village, but he tried to adjudicate only the minor cases. Thus, he tried cases involving theft, quarrels, trespassing, adultery, indebtedness, and abuse, and tried to [695] settle them by reprimanding the guilty ones. He sent cases involving serious injury and homicide to the district court, along with cases he was unable to resolve.

692 The district court was a most efficient and effective judicial organ, and 634 the nature of the Mossi judicial process was most evident on this level. The

a practice whereby nobles deprived commoners of their property. Those 685
nobles who lived among commoners quite often confiscated their neigh- 579
bors' property. But this was not regarded as theft and was not punishable 565
as such, although a rapacious nobleman could be sanctioned for terrorizing and "spoiling" a village. If a nobleman was caught performing an act that *was* considered theft, or if he was accused and found guilty of theft, he was severely punished. During Kaglere's reign, the people of a small village 686
suffered a series of livestock thefts. One day, while the friends of a village 685
chief were sitting with him, a dog came out of the chief's compound 622
dragging an animal skin. The men recognized the skin as that described for a stolen goat, and decided to investigate. In the chief's courtyard they discovered the hole from which the dog had unearthed the skin. They also found the skins of several other stolen animals. The villagers took the [692]
village chief to the district chief, who found him guilty and exiled him [634]
from the region. In passing judgment, the district chief told him that he had been elected "to care for the village," but that he had betrayed his trust by robbing his own people.

According to Mossi law, willful homicide or murder was punishable by 682
execution. The Mossi did not use wergild or "blood money," but insisted on the *lex talionis,* which they interpreted as "a life for a life." They did not believe that money or any other valuables could compensate for the life of a man, nor would they allow a slave to be executed in place of the murderer. They believed that only by executing the murderer himself could they prevent his victim's relatives from resorting to vengeance and thus "spoiling" the district or village.

A man who grievously wounded another was apprehended, bound, and taken to the village chief and subsequently to the district chief. Here he was [696]
kept in stocks in the serfs' quarter without being tried until his victim either died or recovered. If his victim recovered and the judge found that the wound had been inflicted accidentally, the defendant was fined or had his goods confiscated, but he was released. If the judge found that the victim had been wounded in a fair fight, the prisoner was usually censured and dismissed. The chief often warned the wounded man that he ought to have lived up to the Mossi axiom that a grown man is always able to protect himself. If, however, the trial revealed that the prisoner had ambushed his victim with the intent to kill, he either was fined several cows or had his entire property confiscated. District chiefs are known to have executed [634]
the perpetrators of cowardly ambushes even though their victims recovered. [696]

If a man died at the hands of another, an inquest was held immediately. If the killing had been accidental or committed in self-defense, or if it was

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creased his force" and ultimately added to his income. Men who had been compelled to flee from other districts because of crimes or power struggles were granted refuge and given pughsiudse. In this manner, the district chief, like the Mogho Naba, established seignorial rights over his new subjects, incorporated them into the district, and obtained goods and services from them. The better a district chief's reputation, the greater the number of refugees who sought shelter with him and added to his wealth. Conversely, a chief who was known for his injustice, his rascality, and his excessive demands from persons seeking the village nam was shunned by potential subjects and might even be deserted by his own.

Those persons who visited the district chief's compound to settle court cases also contributed to his revenue. When the case dealt with cattle or other livestock, the chief received a few animals. In other cases, he received only the customary gifts from the litigants. He also received gifts from all the families in his district several times a year. One occasion was the "Tense," a festival in honor of the mother of Mogho Naba Oubri, the founder of the Ouagadougou dynasty; the other was the Basgha. During these two ceremonies every village chief, preceded by his district administrator and followed by his subjects, paid homage to the district chief and gave him presents. The district chief retained part of what he received for the upkeep of his household and to fulfill such obligations as hospitality to travelers, and added the remainder to his own annual tribute to the Mogho Naba.

The manner in which the district chief collected his annual tax or tribute for the Mogho Naba is the subject of controversy. Several of my respondents declared that the collection of this tribute was rather informal. The district chief allegedly notified the village chiefs that he wished to give a present to the Mogho Naba, and these chiefs sent word to the family heads, who, in turn, notified every household. The village people then collected chickens and livestock, baskets of grain, and cowries, and sent them up through the hierarchy to the district chief. The district chief's retainers checked the gifts from each village very carefully, and if some villages gave less than was expected of them, the district chief summoned their chiefs for explanations. In most cases the district chief knew exactly how much could be expected of his subjects, because his informers—usually his own pages and courtyard servants, or messengers of the local administrators—kept him informed of the wealth of each hamlet. Usually, a village chief who had withheld too much from the commodities turned over to him, or who had not demanded sufficient goods from his villagers, sought to make amends. It was in his interest to do so, since it was always dangerous to incur the

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634 district chief's wrath. Thus, there was some method in the collection of this
651 tribute and certain expectations had to be met, even though many of the
[622] contributors may have felt that their gifts were voluntary.

In direct contrast, Dim Delobson, himself a chief, states that Mossi chiefs demanded a stipulated amount from their villagers. He adds, however, that the tribute "varied in amount according to the resources of the contributors," and that the district chief set the "amount of cowries and grain due from each village in accordance with the number of its inhabitants."[26] According to him, the rate of assessment was usually 100 cowries for a married man and 50 for an adult bachelor (apparently, this difference was an acknowledgment of the woman's contribution to her husband's wealth). In addition, each adult male was assessed 10 baskets of millet of about 100 pounds each. Dim Delobson adds that to these exactions the district chief added his own contributions to the Mogho Naba, usually in the form of cattle.

[114] It seems that Dim Delobson rationalized and regularized a rather informal system of contributions. The present-day Mossi declare that soil differences in the villages and variations in rainfall prevented a district chief from demanding a set tribute, because no one could tell whether a crop would be good or bad. Only a ruler's informers could tell him how much he should receive each year, and the chief based his exactions on this report. Several of my respondents agreed with Dim Delobson that the district chief provided mostly cattle for the annual tribute to the Mogho Naba, and that the village people furnished cowries, small animals, and grain.

634 A district chief was seldom wealthy, because he always had to use his
652 revenue to fulfill unexpected obligations toward his subjects, his superiors
574 in the political hierarchy, and his household. He had to be generous to his subjects, providing millet water, millet beer, and the more expensive imported kola nuts for those who visited and conferred with him daily. He was expected to provide food and shelter for the countless strangers who settled in his district, until they could provide for themselves. He also lodged and fed the messengers who brought him orders from the capital, and gave them gifts to take back to the provincial ministers. And he had to provide goods for the many members of his family who depended upon him. Finally, in the event of crop failure or famine in any of his villages, he had to provide grain from his granaries to feed the hungry. "How could he do otherwise? Was he not a 'father' to his people?"

634 The expectation that the district chief should provide hospitality to his
574 subjects was so strong that those chiefs or princes who were deprived of
579 an income for any reason often resorted to banditry to fulfil their obliga-
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tions. Binger, who found Boukary Koutou (the future Mogho Naba Wobogo) living in exile for having led a rebellion against his brother, Mogho Naba Sanum, tells us: 574 579 434

> Boukary has no resources, and does not even have the advantage of receiving periodic tribute from several large villages. In order to subsist and to maintain a certain status, he is compelled to live by pillage and even by brigandage. From time to time, his horsemen make incursions into the outskirts of some Gurunsi or Kipirsi village, and carry off by surprise the inhabitants whom they find working the fields or looking for wood. His people also hide and lie in wait along the roads to capture any persons who may pass within their range. This type of behavior has given Boukary Naba a bad reputation. However, the people who understand his position forgive him, knowing the situation in which his brother has placed him. And, in spite of all this, he has numerous partisans, and many others who would be happy to see him gain power.[28]

Those district chiefs or princes who wished to retain their power legitimately were forced to be generous or run the risk of losing the allegiance and good will of their villagers, who were their ultimate supporters. 634 574

It is very difficult to generalize about the amount of revenue collected by a village chief. He did not receive any revenue from the land used by his villagers. He treated the weogho in his village in the same manner as the district chief. If some families grew too large and wanted to establish permanent residence in the village bush, they asked the chief for permission to settle there. However, many village chiefs had special areas of waste for their own use. They had usually received them as gifts from some district chief, and therefore had the right to collect tribute on any crops, firewood, or fish obtained from these lands. 651 622 634 [361] [431]

The average village chief's main source of revenue was derived from the agricultural and other labor of his wives and relatives. A village chief received a number of wives from his subjects and from aliens living in his village. These women helped cultivate his fields. If their labor was insufficient he called a sosogha, to which he often invited his wives' relatives. Some chiefs also had serfs and slaves who helped cultivate their land and kept their cattle as well. [464] [566] [567]

The village chief did not have the power to tax his subjects. Instead, he functioned as a channel through which commodities and services passed up the hierarchy and on to Ouagadougou. Many villagers voluntarily helped the chief to repair his huts and compound walls and to cut thatch for his roofs. Many gave him baskets of grain and other vegetable products after the harvest. They also visited him and gave him presents during the annual rites to his ancestors. In contrast to higher chiefs, however, the village head [476] [431] [692]

did not derive any revenue from his judicial functions. He could not levy a fine against any malefactor. However, his intermediary position between the villagers and the district chief did permit him to obtain some revenue whenever commodities moved from one level to the other.

The officials who administered the villages for the district chief received part of their revenue from the villages under their charge. These local administrators had no courts or retainers comparable to those at the provincial level. However, they did have a large number of wives who contributed valuable agricultural labor. These administrators were permitted to ask the village chiefs for sosose on their own fields several times during the planting season, but—unlike the district chiefs—they were not permitted to have the villagers cultivate special fields for them. In return for any help received, they had to provide food and drink for the workers.

The administrator received most of his revenue as a by-product of active duty in the villages. When he visited a village or transmitted a message to a village chief, he almost invariably received a sheep, a goat, a chicken, or some millet, from the village chief. He also acquired large quantities of goods during the village interregnum: he received gifts from the chief's heirs during the chief's funeral; he received additional presents when they took the fado to the district chief; he could prolong the interregnum in order to receive as many bribes as possible from contenders for the nam; and he was handsomely rewarded when the candidate he had backed was finally installed in office.

The extended family was the basic socio-economic unit supporting the Mossi political organization. The Yirisoba received land rights in his saka from his Sakakasma, who had obtained his rights from the village chief. An extended family in need of additional land would seek help from its Sakakasma or its Boodkasma. When the family no longer needed this land, it reverted to the lineage. If all the land granted to the lineage was already occupied, the extended family, through its lineage head, asked the village chief for more land. The chief usually granted this request, unless he had no more weogho available. In this case, the needy Yirisoba sometimes tried to borrow land from his non-kin neighbors. Such a step was not undertaken lightly, however. If a man borrowed land from his own lineage members or from the chief, the land rights reverted to its donors without difficulty. However, if he borrowed land from another lineage and either he or his benefactor died without assuring the return of the land, litigation often ensued. In some cases a man would seek land from his lineage brothers in another village, who let him use some of their land with their chief's permission. Some Yirisobadamba even asked their district chief for

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pleted, the remainder of the ceremony followed the pattern of the Ouagadougou ritual.

During the weeks that followed, the village chiefs and the heads of the larger lineage segments all offered sacrifices to their ancestors. The Pughtiema of each prominent local administrator, chief, or lineage head prepared and poured the millet water as a libation to the ancestors. Whenever possible, each of these personages invited musicians to sing praises to his ancestors. He dressed in his best robe and sat outside his hut to receive presents from his relatives, friends, and subjects, along with their best wishes for the new year, and for long life and prosperity. In return he gave them kola nuts, beer, and food. Thus, in celebrating the Basgha, all the Mossi were united in prayers and supplications to the ancestors, upon whom rested the future of their country and the successful reign of the descendants of Ouedraogo and Oubri.

The earth deity, Tenga, held the central place in the second major religio-political ceremony which linked all Mossi. This ritual, called *Tense* (from *tenga*, "earth") and sometimes *Naba Oubri ma koure* ("the anniversary of the funeral of Mogho Naba Oubri's mother"), was so important to Mossi cohesion that it was banned by the French, and as a result its main features are now unclear. According to tradition, Naba Oubri loved Poughtoenga, his Ninisi mother, so much, and was so pleased with the elaborate funeral he gave her, that he decided to repeat this ceremony each year in the hope that his subjects would be blessed with the bountiful crops and herds which had made the first one possible. Curiously enough, Oubri's mother was not a central figure in the Tense celebration. Instead, great stress was placed on the fructifying powers of the earth and on the importance of the royal ancestors in Mossi life. The juxtaposition and association of the earth deity with Oubri's mother has important implications for the Mossi political organization. Mossi tradition holds that a Ninisi woman was the ancestress of the Mossi of Ouagadougou. Her people probably celebrated the Tense as a fertility rite to their earth goddess, Tenga. The Mossi apparently took over the ceremony and used it both as a fertility rite and as a memorial festival, thus symbolically uniting the conquerors and the conquered.[8]

In contrast to the Basgha, no special date appears to have been set for the celebration of the Tense. It was held sometime before the crops were sowed, but according to Taurier it was not celebrated at all in Ouagadougou when the previous year's harvest had been poor.[4] Before setting the date for the festival, the Mogho Naba summoned the Larhalle Naba and ordered him to have sacrifices made on the graves of all former rulers. This minister

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between the living and the dead," but also to strengthen the political bonds 796
between the Mogho Naba and his chiefs, down to the humblest elder of a 182
Mossi compound.

In addition to the Basgha and Tense, the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou 769
appears to have offered another yearly sacrifice to Tenga. Each year, after 796
the Basgha, the Mogho Naba, the Baloum Naba, and a large entourage re- 782
portedly visited a large earth shrine called Tantibo in the vicinity of Saba- 643
tenga to offer propitiatory sacrifices in the name of all the people. When [778]
the royal party arrived at Sabatenga, they were joined by the Sabatenga Naba and his Tengsoba. The group proceeded to the foot of the sacred hill, and here the monarch dismounted, took off his bonnet and shoes, and climbed the hill. He made the customary Mossi salute at the shrine and looked on silently while the Tengsoba sacrificed animals and poured libations of millet beer and millet water in supplication for the health and prosperity of the Mogho Naba and all his people.[7]

When evil befell Mossi country in spite of the annual sacrifices to the ancestors and to the earth deity, the Mogho Naba had to offer additional sacrifices. If the country was plagued by drought, the ruler went to an [731]
earth shrine in Ouagadougou itself, called "Kom be paspanga" (literally, "water is strong there"), for a sacrifice. Moreover, he might order all his [634]
district and village chiefs to perform similar sacrifices to the earth shrines [622]
within their territories. In Nobere district, for instance, the district chief went to the village called Barkago, where, standing barefoot and bareheaded on the hilly shrine known as Beta, he ordered the local village chief and the Tengsoba to offer sacrifices for rain and good health.

It is generally believed by the Mossi that when the French attacked 648
Ouagadougou, the deposed Mogho Naba Wobogo made sacrifices to earth 782
shrines. Tradition has it that he sacrificed a black cock, a black ram, a black donkey, and a black slave on a large hill near the White Volta River, beseeching the earth goddess to drive the French away and to destroy the traitor Mazi whom they had placed upon the throne. When Mazi died, the Mossi people believed that he had received his just deserts from the earth shrine for treason. The French believe that Mazi was poisoned.[8]

The district and village chiefs, like the Mogho Naba, were required to 634
make propitiatory sacrifices to the earth shrines on behalf of their subjects. 622
Before taking office, a district chief was ritually shown the major earth 782
shrines in his territory, and he could not ignore their existence and their need for sacrifices. In a country with major local variations in rainfall and localized animal and human epidemics, the Tengsobadamba of stricken
areas always called upon the local chiefs to help them propitiate disgruntled [793]
spirits.

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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spirits. The chiefs could not refuse such requests, especially when the villagers were poor, because they were regarded as "fathers of their people." In some cases, however, district chiefs had to protect their subjects against unscrupulous Tengsobadamba who took advantage of local crises and tried to prey upon the villagers by refusing to perform the requisite sacrifices unless they received substantial gifts. The ensuing struggle was between the secular and the sacred; between the chief as a representative of the conquerors, and the Tengsoba as a member of the conquered group. It was always resolved in favor of the Mossi chief, who never permitted his Tengsobadamba the same privileges held by religious practitioners in neighboring societies.[9] The Mossi chiefs recognized that they needed the Tengsobadamba, and many myths recount how invading Mossi chiefs went into the woods where the Tengsobadamba were hiding to beseech and eventually force them to return to their districts so that sacrifices might be continued. On the other hand, the Mossi chiefs always insisted on the primacy of the nam over any other power. They employed the Tengsobadamba to intercede with Tenga for the welfare of their subjects, but they never allowed the priests to control them.

The coming of Moslems to the kingdom of Ouagadougou had little effect on the way in which the Mogho Nanamse used the traditional religious system to bolster their political power.[10] In fact, the Mossi rulers later used Islam and its adherents in the same manner as they had used the aboriginal religion. The Moslems first tried to subdue the Mossi in the fifteenth century by persuasion, and later by the jihad. Both attempts failed, but the Moslems finally entered Mossi country as refugees from Sudanese wars. Their fortunes waxed and waned, depending on whether they were befriended by the ruler in whose territory they lived. During certain periods, they were subjected to many restrictions and were forbidden by the Mogho Naba to recite their prayers in public places.[11] At other times, they were left free to practice their religion, and even succeeded in converting several Mogho Nanamse to Islam. Under converts such as Savadogo (ca. 1760), Islam spread into many districts and gave rise to such important local centers as Sakhaboutenga (Dakay).

The Moslems in Ouagadougou were represented at the court by their Imam. This person even received his badge of office—a white turban and white robe—from the Mogho Naba, and had to swear in the name of Allah and *Nabiyama* (the prophet Mohammed) to be faithful to him, obey him, and aid him in times of need. However, he did not have to drink the namtibo as suggested by Dim Delobson; nor did he have to observe such non-Moslem customs as drinking the millet beer the Mogho Naba provided for

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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monial activities, especially since they were considered interesting "feudal" anachronisms to be shown to visiting officials and travelers. He also retained the power to appoint district chiefs, but the French often vetoed men they disliked and suggested that other candidates be elected. He also lost all control over his provincial administrators. The administrative chain now extended from the cercle commanders, through the provincial ministers and district chiefs, down to the village chiefs. Many provincial ministers, out of loyalty to the traditional system, occasionally briefed the Mogho Naba on the policies the French had ordered them to carry out, and told him about the state of affairs in the districts. This was completely unofficial if not illegal, but it made little difference to the French.

One serious blow to the power of the Mossi chiefs, especially on the district level, was their loss of judicial autonomy. Mossi country was subjected to the Indigénat, a rather harsh code of law for new colonies, which was promulgated by a decree of September 1887. Under this code, administrators could hold summary trials and punish any Moaga, whether chief or commoner. In June 1905, the Mossi chiefs regained some of their judicial power when a supplementary decree established village, district, and cercle courts throughout Haut-Sénégal et Niger.[14] Mossi village chiefs regained their police powers and the right to reconcile disputes among their people, but their decisions could be appealed to a district court. The district chief heard appeals and judged civil and criminal cases, but in all deliberations he was aided by two assessors appointed by the Governor. His judgment could be appealed to a cercle court, which was presided over by a European, who was assisted by two Africans. They heard appeals and judged crimes for which the penalty could be no more than five years. Penalties handed down by this court could be appealed to the Supreme Court of the Federation of French West Africa in Dakar, which judged all major crimes.

Thus the Mossi chiefs did regain part of their judicial power; but because the decree of 1905 did not abolish the Indigénat, local French administrators could easily countermand this power. Moreover, some administrators, dissatisfied with the Mossi courts and possibly resentful at their own loss of judicial power, sent numerous complaints to Dakar about the incompetence of the chiefs and the injustices perpetrated by village and district courts. As a result, a decree of August 1912 abolished the judicial power of the Mossi and of all other African chiefs, and instructed them to refer all litigation to courts at the poste, subdivision, and cercle levels.[16]

During the period before the First World War, the Mossi chiefs lost not only their judicial power but also much of the economic and religious basis of their political power. The French administration abolished slavery

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to cut down the length of service of our draftees as much as possible."[25] The Governor of the Upper Volta made full use of the Mossi chiefs to develop the colony, and although some chiefs may have objected to the labor imposed on their subjects, others seemingly approved. In commenting upon cotton production in the Upper Volta, Ossendowski writes:

> Cotton is an artificial crop and one the value of which is not entirely clear to the natives. The chiefs with their superior intellect, seeing the profit to be obtained from the plantation of cotton, are continually enlarging the area of the fields, and resort to draft animals, ploughs, manures, and even partial irrigation of the fields; nevertheless, the great mass of the population submit rather unwillingly to those instructions of the administration which aim at the development of cotton cultivation in the colony.[26]

Delavignette's comment on the role of the chiefs in cotton production seems to indicate that they, like their subjects, had to conform to the desires of the French:

> [The French] lived at Ouagadougou in the shade of the great Nabas, and because [the latter] possessed servitors and were at the head of docile provinces, [the French] dignified by the name of "custom," and in any case adjudged convenient, this domestication of the peasants whereby they were forced to work in a common field under the authority of the village chief, and for a salary which was theoretically to be distributed among them afterwards. Sometimes cercle guards were stationed in these fields.[27]

The Governor carried out many of Van Vollenhoven's reforms concerning the Mossi chiefs, and instructed his district administrators to respect the chiefs and to seek their aid in governing the people. De Beauminy, an administrator in the Upper Volta, contrasts the old policy with the new:

> Not without reason, we followed the rule of regarding the great black chiefs as exploiters of their peoples, and this caused us to introduce and to maintain a policy aimed at reducing their authority. Later on we were compelled to abandon this policy in the face of discouraging results. During the past few years we have restored power and prestige to the Mogho Naba and to his vassals, the Mossi chiefs. They are now paid by us, and they administer their kingdoms and territories under our guidance and under the supervision of an extremely small European staff (one official for every 60,000 inhabitants). The rulers are now helping us to restore, on a newer and sounder basis, a political edifice which had once appeared to be on the point of collapse.[28]

An official report also stated that the Mossi chiefs

> understand that the time of their absolute power, and the privileges of their "medieval lordships," are fated to wear away gradually. Certainly, the main-

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they were kept informed of almost everything that occurred in the districts by their secretaries and "friends" (usually war veterans who visited the administrative headquarters on business).

Not all the district chiefs accepted with equanimity their gradual loss of power. Many of them had accepted at face value the joyful refrain of the elite and the politicians that the "land was cooling"—i.e., that the rigors of colonialism were over. They welcomed the liberal laws of 1946, and believed that they would regain the power lost by their fathers. Thus, they were among the most surprised persons in the Upper Volta when the easing of colonial rule brought with it more French supervision rather than less. From the standpoint of political power, most district chiefs had been better off in the days of the "locusts." At least the locusts came and went, whereas progressive government slowly but irrevocably eroded their power.

The village chiefs, as those members of the traditional Mossi hierarchy who had the closest contact with the people, felt the postwar administrative changes much more keenly than the other chiefs. They found it increasingly difficult to deal with war veterans, adherents of formal religions, and other people who had lost respect for traditional values and practices.[20] Whereas few Mossi would have refused to visit or to pay allegiance to the Mogho Naba or to their district chief, with whom they had little personal contact, many did refuse to have political relationships with those village chiefs whom they neither liked nor respected.

The rural Mossi, upon whom the position of the Mogho Naba and his chiefs ultimately depended, did not fully comprehend the postwar changes in the Upper Volta, and were initially willing to look to their chiefs for guidance. Most of them referred to their newly won civil rights in the French Union by what they called *soguem minga,* which may be translated as "possession of one's self," "liberty," or "liberation." To the majority of them, however, the reforms meant chiefly the end of forced labor. They were more than willing to leave the new political affairs to their chiefs, despite the assurance of the elite that they could now participate in the governmental processes. Dupont wrote in a romantic vein about the introduction of political reforms in the Upper Volta:

> Can we truly speak of a change for the better in this country? Yes! A page has been turned, the last in a chapter. A new chapter has just begun, and I was the amazed witness of this beginning. . . . One must say, in France's favor, that she did not merely engage in beautiful speeches, but that her liberating decrees deeply modified the life of the natives. Gone is the export of laborers; gone are the uncontrolled prestations; gone the requisitions of produce which the peasants had to buy elsewhere at a higher price and resell at a loss; gone the sales in which the collective price given to the district

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15. *Ibid.*, p. 673.
16. Delafosse, II, 128–29.
17. Binger, II, 502.
18. Crozat, p. 4849.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 4822.

20. The structure of the Mossi kingdoms and their relationship with the autonomous principalities make it difficult to determine the exact number of districts within each unit. For example, the Mossi people always claimed that the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou was sovereign over "333" chiefs (cf. Binger, I, 502). However, since the Mossi always associate the number 3 with males, any number giving a multiple of threes is suspect. Binger stated that some of the chiefs referred to as part of the 333 were no more than village chiefs. However, Tauxier (*Le Noir du Soudan*, p. 567), describing the kingdom of Ouagadougou, states, "At the top of this hierarchy is the king, the Mogho Naba, paramount chief of the Mossi, residing at Ouagadougou. To give at least an idea of the relative importance of this empire, without going further than, say, the cercle of Ouagadougou, there were eight provinces comprising 300 *cantons* [districts], 5,000 villages or small towns, and 861,700 inhabitants."

While voicing the myth that the Mogho Naba had "under his control 333 chiefs or Nabas," Dim Delobson actually gives only about 150 chiefs in his list of district and other chiefs (pp. 46, 288–97). It was impossible for me to get any idea of the number of chiefs, because the Mossi hierarchy has changed radically since 1905.

21. Dim Delobson, p. 63.
22. Cheron, "Contribution," p. 651.
23. The Mossi did not acknowledge the defeat of Mogho Naba Wobogo by the French until the Ouidi Naba surrendered to the invaders and installed a ruler they had chosen.
24. Archives, Document 1G-334. Lambert describes Karfo as "a curious figure who unfortunately is not well known."
25. Binger, I, 465.
26. Dim Delobson, pp. 15–45, *passim*.
27. It appears that the monarchs found fault with their district chiefs most readily when they had sons or other relatives in need of districts to govern. Since a possessor of the nam could not be deprived of it while alive, he had to be accused of some crime and executed. Koabga was replaced as Doulougou Naba by Lassanne Congo (called Naba Kouliga), a son of the Mogho Naba. On the other hand, when Naba Pusha of Nobere district fled rather than commit suicide or start a civil war, he was replaced by his own brother, who became Naba Soulougou.
28. Dim Delobson, p. 44.
29. Cheron, "Contribution," p. 655.

CHAPTER FIVE

1. Mangin, p. 25.
2. Mangin does not discuss rape, but reported that an "abductor" was beaten and put in irons. The girl was returned to her family, and if she gave birth to a child, it was killed (pp. 26–27).
3. Dim Delobson, p. 55.
4. Most of my informants state quite clearly that the district chiefs did not have the right to impose the death penalty, but could do so if they were discreet about it and did not take advantage of their subjects. But Dim Delobson states: "Contrary to what people generally believe, the Kombere—the chief of the *canton* [district]—also had the power of life and death over his subjects. How many persons have been put to death only because they were wealthy? How many village chiefs have been killed by the district chiefs in their territories without the Mogho Naba's intervention?" (pp. 55–56).
5. Dim Delobson (p. 56) insists that justice was free of charge, but added that

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difficulty discharging these duties, for, nobles aside, the Mossi usually obeyed 634
orders from their chiefs—a fact verified by most observers. At the same time, a district chief had to be temperate in his demands upon his villagers, and could not take advantage of his obligations to the Mogho Naba as a means of personal enrichment. Similarly, the district administrators could not seek personal gain either by augmenting the demands of the district chief or by withholding part of the goods and services rendered to him. District administrators who were found guilty of maladministration or embezzlement were executed, because activities of this kind could—and often did—jeopardize the life of the district chief.

The Mossi might complain among themselves about the administrative 634
policies of their district chief, but they took no measures against him unless 687
he was very cruel or exploitative. A district chief who by his disregard for 578
the people's welfare was believed to have lost the ability to "command 626
people" jeopardized not only his position but also his life. When the people were dissatisfied with a chief, they either boycotted him or deserted their villages and migrated to another district, thus "increasing the force" (nam) of the chief who gave them sanctuary. This placed the deserted chief in a rather difficult position. Mogho Nanamse are known to have ordered the 634
execution of district chiefs and even autonomous Dimdamba who had lost 687
their subjects through their own fault. In 1863, when Mogho Naba Sanum 626
was informed that the ruler of Boussouma, Naba Zande, had been chased away by his subjects for administrative abuses and had fled to a Ouagadougou village, he had him captured and executed.[29] Thus, the threat that people might leave the district was often strong enough to ensure a just administration, because the district chiefs and officials depended upon the villagers not only for the economic support of the central administration but also for their livelihood and their lives.

Those district chiefs who supervised other district chiefs for the Mogho 634
Naba did not interfere with the internal administration of the districts. 628
The chiefs of the Vooko and Nobila districts, for instance, had administrators of their own to look after their villages. But they were responsible to the chief of Nobere district, not their respective provincial ministers, for their internal affairs. Moreover, they had to follow the Nobere chief when he went to Ouagadougou to pay homage and allegiance to the Mogho Naba. But aside from these prescriptions, the chiefs of these subordinate districts administered their territories in the same manner as the Nobere chief administered his own.

The Mossi village chief had no administrators of his own to help him 622
with day-to-day affairs of his village. However, like the district chief, he 623

622 had a group of confidants who acted as an informal council. These men
623 included senior members of his own lineage, elders from other local lineages, and personal friends. Again, like the confidants of the district chiefs, these men visited the village chief whenever they were not busy with their own affairs to talk to him about wives, crops, and village matters. Although protocol was at a minimum on this level, the chief had to maintain a high
[613] degree of decorum. As a member of the ruling lineage of the district, he
[565] had noble status and had to be treated accordingly. The non-noble village chief was also respected as a recipient of the nam. But all chiefs, whether
622 nobles or commoners, were expected to lead exemplary lives lest the flaws in their characters as revealed by the intimacy of village life should weaken their prestige.

622 The village chief received his orders from the district chief through the
203 administrator in charge of his village or through one of this official's servants. He, in turn, used his own sons or relatives to transmit messages to the heads of the saghse. If the message was extremely important, the village chief's messenger might be accompanied by the administrator's messenger or by the district chief's personal representatives. The saksobadamba then transmitted the order to the various compound heads. This hierarchy was always followed because, by following it, the officials knew who was responsible for disobeying or frustrating the wishes of the superior chiefs. As on the district level, the orders transmitted to the village and its sections dealt with such things as collecting tribute, picking fruits from the district chief's trees, allocating labor for the district chief or his personal retainers, transferring or summoning cases to the district court, procuring sacrificial animals for the local Tengsoba, and requesting soldiers. The village chief also sent his own messages to the saghse. These messages, however, dealt with such village matters as local sacrifices, quarrels, and court cases.

622 Misrule and maladministration by a village chief were punished either
687 by the district chief or by the villagers. Like other Mossi rulers, the village
634 chief could not be deposed and allowed to live. However, he had a better chance of fleeing and finding refuge in another district. His presence in a strange district did not challenge the authority of the local chief, and he had no opportunities to seize any of his host's villages. In fact, if the refugee was accompanied by a large number of his subjects, his host might even give him land on which to erect a new village. The proviso was, of course, that he should not "spoil" the district by causing trouble. If a village chief accused of maladministration was seized by the district chief before he could
[696] flee, he was invariably executed. If he was a commoner, he was decapitated or even stoned to death; if he was a nobleman, he was taken into the bush and strangled in secret by the district police

634 the nomination of the village chiefs, who were always selected
621 from the family of the preceding chief.

Let us add that in principle, and all other things being equal,
428 it was the eldest son of the deceased chief who was supposed to suc-
631 ceed his father, and this applied to village chiefs as well as to canton chiefs, province chiefs, and the Moro Naba. This principle ran counter to the true patriarchal principle where the younger brother is always the natural and legitimate heir of the deceased brother. The requirements of a warlike existence had probably forced it upon the Mossi at the time of their conquest of the Dagomba and Mossi territories.

This principle of direct inheritance (rather than collateral inheritance) had been restricted, however, by the powers of higher authorities represented by canton chiefs vis-à-vis village chiefs, province chiefs vis-à-vis canton chiefs, the Moro Naba vis-à-vis the province chiefs, and the electoral college of the high dignitaries vis-à-vis the future Moro Naba. In short, the warriors' principle of inheritance from father to eldest son ruled among the Mossi in the power sphere, but had to give way to the exigencies of government whenever necessary.

631 Let us not believe that the third principle, namely the consent of the people involved, was altogether unknown among the Mossi (the consent of the village inhabitants in the case of a village chief, of the canton notables in the case of a canton chief, of the province notables in the case of a province chief, etc.) This third principle, however, was the least important, the least taken into account, the least actualized from a mere potential. /577/ Whenever it clashed with the others, it had to give way.

635 Let us add that the majority of Mossi chiefs were aided by rep-
634 resentatives called baloum.

"The province chiefs," says the Monographie, "the majority of
624 canton chiefs, and even the chiefs of a few important villages, are aided by one or several baloum or palace masters, whom they choose freely. These are sometimes former captives, but most frequently they are common natives or former soroné, and they are never nakomsé. Their function is not hereditary. It grants them the right to substitute for the naba, to speak and act in his name."

681 As far as penalties were concerned, Mossi justice was stern and thus ran counter to the "patriarchal" justice of the Bobo, Gourounsi, etc. Murder was always punished by death (except in the case of nobles). As for thefts, physical aggression, and matters involving debts, they were adjusted in the manner described when we discussed the Yarsé, who were subject to Mossi justice since they were settled in their territory /not translated/.

[754] We shall not, therefore, go over this again. Let us merely note that the Mossi, being fetishists, were familiar with matters of sorcery.

695 754 At Dembo, in the Yatenga area, when a young person died suddenly, "red powder" would be mixed in water and everyone would drink of it while swearing by Tensé /Tr.: the earth deities/ that he was innocent. The culprits would die. In other villages of the Yatenga area, people suspected of dealing in sorcery had to drink earth taken from the spot where sacrifices were performed and diluted in water. Those /581/ who refused to drink and swear were killed. At Kabayoro, a Mossi village located in the canton of Koumbili, if a man or woman suddendly ill, it was said that it was So-and-So, a sorcerer, who had eaten the soul. If the sick person died, his hands were washed with water and the liquid was given to the sorcerer to drink. He had to swear his innocence and invoke death unto himself if he should lie. If guilty he died; if innocent the water did him no harm. If he refused to swear and drink, he was put in irons and left there to die of hunger and thirst. The bara /soothsayer/ played no role in such occurrences. It was the sick person who pointed out the sorcerer. If the patient failed to desig-

[761] nate someone, however, this meant that he was simply dying of illness.

701 Now for the army and police. "In case of war," says Moulins, "the province chiefs summoned the canton chiefs, who hastened forth with all their able-bodied men. They all gathered behind the Tamsaba and followed him.

625 "As for policing, it was taken care of by village and canton chiefs, who arrested culprits with the help of their own followers, or, if necessary, by summoning the whole male population of the village."

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monial activities, especially since they were considered interesting "feudal" anachronisms to be shown to visiting officials and travelers. He also retained the power to appoint district chiefs, but the French often vetoed men they disliked and suggested that other candidates be elected. He also lost all control over his provincial administrators. The administrative chain now extended from the cercle commanders, through the provincial ministers and district chiefs, down to the village chiefs. Many provincial ministers, out of loyalty to the traditional system, occasionally briefed the Mogho Naba on the policies the French had ordered them to carry out, and told him about the state of affairs in the districts. This was completely unofficial if not illegal, but it made little difference to the French.

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428 to change his mind. If, however, he absolutely refuses to heed their protests, they will not make an issue of it, but when the time comes to [262] apportion the estate, the testamentary arrangement to disinherit the heir presumptive will simply be declared null and void.

If the heir presumptive was disinherited for any of the causes for disqualification listed above or because he had committed adultery with one of his father's wives or a wife of someone in the family, the estate is given to the next in the line of succession as determined by Moaga custom.

Right to make a will. All who own property may make wills.

Revocation of wills. Wills may be revoked if the testator so desires. He has only to make a simple oral declaration of changed intention in the same manner as that described above.

Chapter 18

Circumcision. Do the Mossi Practice It?

304 184 Circumcision is highly esteemed among the Mossi. Some colonial officials, because of their ignorance of Mossi customs, have claimed that neither circumcision nor excision was practiced. One must be able, indeed, to distinguish between the Moaga, the Boussanga, and especially the Nionioga. Although the three groups are related, they have different customs.

304 Circumcision, which is done according to precise rules, is carried out here in virtually the same way as it is among the Kassonké of Kayes.

304 626 The ceremony must originally have been imposed on the Dagomba (of whom the Mossi are descendants) by Islam. Now, however, young men seek to have themselves circumcised, not for any religious reason, but rather to avoid the ridicule of their friends and, especially, the scorn shown by Mossi women for any uncircumcised man.

304 We shall attempt to describe below the circumcision ceremony among the Mossi.

After the harvest, toward the end of November, the young men state their wish to be circimcised. Since the cost of supporting

314 184 The Nioniossé and the Soukoaba do not practice circumcision, and that is why they are called Mossé. In villages inhabited solely by Nioniossé, a kéogo may not be set up. At present some boys of Nionioga origin ignore the prohibition and go to their mother's village (Yastenga) to have the purifying operation (1).

[775] 1. Apparently the Moslems believe that those who are circumcised will not go to hell.

304 832 626 Among the Mossi many Christians voluntarily have themselves circumcised; women -- even Christians -- feel a certain repugnance for the touch of the "Moaga."

Finally, excision is also esteemed among the Mossi, except among the Nioniossé who do not practice it. Girls who are not excised are scorned by their friends and will have no lovers.

241 picking, the plant may be turned under and left to enrich the soil.

241 Apart from the co-operative cultivation of fields under the proprietor-
476 ship of the lineage elder, each farmer works for himself. He aids his relatives, and they in turn assist him with his work, but the results of their communal effort are not shared. This applies not only to the work of planting but also to cultivation and harvest. The decision about what is to be planted in a particular field and how it shall be cultivated rests finally with the individual farmer.

Communal or co-operative effort is much more characteristic of the work of cultivation than of the planting period, when everyone is in a hurry to get his own seeds into the ground and requests for assistance are not welcomed. A strong note of competition is evident at this time. A [461] man takes pride in his efficiency as a farmer, and there is a race to see who can get farthest along with his work. In the earliest phase of prepa- [572] rations for the approaching rainy season it is the individual's best friend upon whom he relies most for assistance. He is the first person to be called on for assistance in clearing the field for planting. If a Mossi farmer is unmarried, he may also ask the other unmarried men of his lineage for help. If a long day must be spent in the field in order to clear and clean it properly, his mother will offer the helpers the midday meal, which is carried out to them as they work.

622 *Naba koba* (chief's cultivation) is the name given to the work which the
651 villagers do in the fields belonging to the village chief. A village elder is
241 charged with announcing when and where work in the chief's fields is to be done, and each lineage head relays the news to his kinsmen. This contribution of labor is no longer obligatory, as it was formerly, but only [626] a question of social pressure and recognition that individual well-being and the welfare of the village "depend on the chief."

241 Every Mossi is an agriculturist. Although agriculture is the principal
463 source of income, everyone also engages in crafts, particularly during the dry season when the work in the fields is finished. However, there are no full-time crafts specialists. Even the African functionaries in the European administration and the teachers, clerks, and merchants all work in their fields part of the time during the rainy season. The activities of the blacksmiths, leather workers, butchers, wood workers, herbalists, and small merchants are carried out on a much smaller scale and are fitted into the routine established by the rains and the growth of their millet. Only elders whose age keeps them from the fields might be thought of as specialists who do not participate in agriculture, but their land is worked by younger members of the family, and they take a keen interest in the course of its cultivation. The village chief, the earth custodian, and certain other elderly and important members of the community do not cultivate; this is because of their position and age rather than because

583 couscous, which he offers to the relatives. Then he takes the girl
591 away. He asks a neighbor for a hut to harbor the young couple on their wedding night and over the next few weeks. They stay there for only a month or two, until their soukala is built.

583 The bride price actually varies from region to region among the Mossi. We have just seen it range from 2,000 to 50,000 cowries. Earlier, we saw it set at 25,000. At Kombisiguiri it amounts to a mere 1,000. The young man's father visits the young girl's father with a chicken and 500 cowries; then he comes to see him a second time, again with a chicken and 500 cowries. There is no other bride price. Those who do not have a chicken to offer replace it with a bundle of firewood or a straw séko. In short, a girl here is worth 30 sous (the two chickens being worth 0.50 franc between them, and the 1,000 cowries amounting to one franc).

591 Among rich people the young couple may remain seven, nine, or even twelve months in their neighbors' house. They present the
[431] latter with gifts, and during this period of time they proceed to build a soukala, or rather to have one built. The young man's father helps his son in this undertaking.

593 The young husband, now settled on his own, will henceforth work on his own account. He has become in turn the head of a
431 soukala, but if he obtains a lot of millet or other grain he offers
626 gifts to his father. If he becomes wealthy and makes no such gifts, the neighbors will insult him. He always makes gifts, therefore, for fear of being insulted. A son who marries, as a rule, builds his soukala as near as possible to that of his father.

593 Finally, let us add that the father usually buys his son's kitchen utensils when the boy settles on his own.

3. When the head of a family dies, the younger brother inevi-
428 tably takes command of the family, but all the property, whatever
593 its nature, goes to the children of the deceased and more especially to his oldest son. There is no longer any family real estate or movable property, or else nothing is regarded as such any longer.

/550/ The eldest son takes his father's soukala and everything that goes with it, fields, slaves, livestock, father's wives. He shares them, however, with his brothers and even with his sisters.

582 the household a more serious and more binding affair among the
836 Bambara than in this particular region. /241/

Vadier says on the subject, "The fact that a young girl has had relations with a native other than her husband prior to marriage is by no means an impediment to the marriage.

"Many betrothed girls have lovers. It even happens quite frequently that their fathers are forced to go in search of them at the homes of the young men with whom they have run away. Actually, this matter is of no concern to the husband. As long as he gets the woman, the rest matters little to him. It is not unusual for a girl to bring a child
[848] which she had by another man into her husband's home. This child eventually returns to its natural father."

582 This picture is painted in rather bleak colors. In reality, fathers
836 and mothers do try, as best they can, to prevent their daughters from
585 taking lovers. They do not like to see them go to the "tom-tom,"
● 626 but they can scarcely keep them from going, and often the "tom-tom,"
684 like our own country dances, plays havoc with a young girl's virtue. If the girl says nothing, everything goes well. Since among the Mossi there is no exhibition of the skirt cloth following the consummation of the marriage, there is no evidence. Even if the husband knows ahead of time or finds out at the last moment, he says nothing out of shame, to avoid being scorned. When the father leads his daughter to the hut of the ancestors before sending her to her fiancé, however, she often does not dare enter the hut. Having lost her virginity and fearing that she might be killed by the ancestors, she admits her wrongdoing to her father. Sometimes she may have the courage or the effrontery to enter the ancestral hut, but later, if she falls ill in her husband's hut, she will interpret her condition as the ancestors' vengeance for the sort of moral perjury she committed by entering their hut in a state of transgression, and she will confess to her husband what she has done. In both cases the lover is confronted, in the first instance by the father, in the second by the husband, and a goat, two canari of dolo, and a chicken are demanded from him. A sacrifice will be offered to the ancestors with these various items to ask their forgiveness, they will pardon the wife and the lover, and order will be restored.

848 Sometimes, as mentioned earlier, a child is the fruit of a girl's passion. The lover having made reparation and the ancestors being satisfied, the husband will accept the child along with the girl, but

8: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1958
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how important is the conversion of the chiefs, or, at least, their sympathy for our religion, in the spread of Catholicism." The missionaries may have been successful in the village of the Manga district chief because he was sympathetic to them, but they made few converts in the villages far from the district center or in the neighboring districts. In the Béré district, a few miles from Manga, the Catholics have made only 22 converts despite more than 15 years' work. In Manga, however, they were able to "recruit" most of the young children for their church and school. When an old man was asked why his children became Catholic, he tried to evade the question but finally replied that he did not control the minds of his children. Knowing the nature of administrative practice in the upper Volta before 1946, and the nature of Mossi family structure, we looked further for the answer.

Paradoxically, it comes from a Catholic missionary, André Dupont, who, seeking to discover the reason for the decrease of patients in the Catholic-controlled maternity clinics, asked:

> Why have the maternity clinics which in 1942 served more than seventy mothers a month now serve only two or three? "We are no longer forced to go," reply the villagers. Was it the fear of sanction which accounted for the unanimous use of the clinics? Alas! It would seem to be so. The use of force and sanction have rendered odious an institution of charity. It would have been better if the mothers were only encouraged to use the clinics. "These natives do not understand," I am told sometimes. But how does one expect them to understand? (Dupont 1949:4)

Fear was certainly one of the reasons why the people in Manga embraced Catholicism. Before 1946 (the Brazzaville conference in 1944 abolished forced labor), men and women were recruited for work on the roads and on Ivory Coast plantations, and children were recruited for the schools. The district chiefs often gathered orphans and the children of their former serfs and sent them to the mission to fill the quotas, but many children and whole families voluntarily attached themselves to the missions. The reasons for so doing are legion, but in some cases it was simply the desire to accept the new religious faith.

Once at the mission the children were taught French and the tenets of Catholicism. Many of the boys later became catechists or priests and several girls went into the nunnery. However, the largest group of educated youths became the clerical personnel of the administration and were lost to missionary activity. Because the administration lacked French-speaking Mossi, the young people received good jobs. This desertion to the administration has become so serious that the missionaries at Manga have ceased to teach French to their catechists and now use the vernacular.

Conversion to Catholicism, bringing with it the knowledge of French, was formerly one of the sure roads to upward social mobility. Most Catholic teachers at Manga (and at Nobéré) are individuals who were recruited as unwilling school-boys but today are the highest paid members of their lineages. Other gains have accrued to persons who become Catholics. For example, the people at Manga believe that the missionaries used their influence with the

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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difficulty discharging these duties, for, nobles aside, the Mossi usually obeyed 634
orders from their chiefs—a fact verified by most observers. At the same time, a district chief had to be temperate in his demands upon his villagers, and could not take advantage of his obligations to the Mogho Naba as a means of personal enrichment. Similarly, the district administrators could not seek personal gain either by augmenting the demands of the district chief or by withholding part of the goods and services rendered to him. District administrators who were found guilty of maladministration or embezzlement were executed, because activities of this kind could—and often did—jeopardize the life of the district chief.

The Mossi might complain among themselves about the administrative 634
policies of their district chief, but they took no measures against him unless 687
he was very cruel or exploitative. A district chief who by his disregard for 578
the people's welfare was believed to have lost the ability to "command 626
people" jeopardized not only his position but also his life. When the people were dissatisfied with a chief, they either boycotted him or deserted their villages and migrated to another district, thus "increasing the force" (nam) of the chief who gave them sanctuary. This placed the deserted chief in a rather difficult position. Mogho Nanamse are known to have ordered the 634
execution of district chiefs and even autonomous Dimdamba who had lost 687
their subjects through their own fault. In 1863, when Mogho Naba Sanum 626
was informed that the ruler of Boussouma, Naba Zande, had been chased away by his subjects for administrative abuses and had fled to a Ouagadougou village, he had him captured and executed.[29] Thus, the threat that people might leave the district was often strong enough to ensure a just administration, because the district chiefs and officials depended upon the villagers not only for the economic support of the central administration but also for their livelihood and their lives.

Those district chiefs who supervised other district chiefs for the Mogho 634
Naba did not interfere with the internal administration of the districts. 628
The chiefs of the Vooko and Nobila districts, for instance, had administrators of their own to look after their villages. But they were responsible to the chief of Nobere district, not their respective provincial ministers, for their internal affairs. Moreover, they had to follow the Nobere chief when he went to Ouagadougou to pay homage and allegiance to the Mogho Naba. But aside from these prescriptions, the chiefs of these subordinate districts administered their territories in the same manner as the Nobere chief administered his own.

The Mossi village chief had no administrators of his own to help him 622
with day-to-day affairs of his village. However, like the district chief, he 623

and strangled in secret by the district police. If a district chief hesitated to punish a village chief whose followers had complained, the aggrieved lineage or the entire village simply took its movable property and left. This sanction does not seem to have been applied often, but its threat was normally sufficient to curb the excesses of the worst village chief. 622 687 634 [613] [626]

682 found to have been justified—that is, if the victim was a thief or a nocturnal
682 intruder—then the accused was acquitted or simply fined. If, however, the accused was found guilty of murder, he was sentenced to die, and the mode
696 of execution was at the chief's pleasure. The chief surrendered the prisoner to his executioners, serfs who lived in the Baglere ward. They took him into the woods and carried out the sentence by strangulation, hanging, decapitation, clubbing, or stoning.

696 The perpetrator of an unusually heinous crime was often ordered to kill himself with a poisoned arrow. This form of execution was feared most, because it tested the murderer's mettle and called into play the
[634] coercive force of his lineage if he proved to be a coward. When such an execution was ordered, the district chief had a poisoned arrow prepared and brought to the murderer's father, his brother, or his father's brother's son. The relative gave the arrow to the condemned man, and, while apologizing for his painful mission, explained that the crime had to be expiated. If the murderer agreed to kill himself, his relatives prepared food and drink for
[766] him while his grave was dug. Some proud and brave men helped their relatives dig the oblong-shaped grave required for a murderer; some even insisted on digging it themselves. When both the food and the grave had been prepared, the murderer bade his relatives farewell, took the food and the poisoned arrow, and went into a hut. Here he ate the food and after-
696 ward killed himself by pushing the poisoned arrow into his leg. In some cases he had to be provided with a second arrow to hasten his death. If a
●626 cowardly murderer refused to kill himself, one of his relatives offered to
613 die in his stead. He told the murderer that death was preferable to the knowledge that his lineage brother was a coward. What would happen, he asked the murderer, if he saw a relative being harmed? Would he choose his own safety rather than run the risk of death? The other relatives asked the same questions, and this subtle coercion was usually sufficient to induce the most cowardly man to kill himself. There are no reports of a murderer's permitting a relative to die for him; life would have been impossible for him afterward. One suspects that if ever a murderer had attempted to elude his fate, the district chief would have had him executed.

634 The district court also prescribed capital punishment for individuals
681 convicted of arson, abduction, witchcraft, or lese majesty. A person con-
[685] victed of willfully setting fire to someone's hut or crops was put to death even if no one was killed in the resulting fire; he was held to have
[683] jeopardized the life and livelihood of his victims. Similarly, the rare person convicted of threatening the well-being of others through the practice of
[695] witchcraft was usually tortured and killed. Conviction usually followed the testimony of witnesses or the confession of the accused.

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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VII

THE ECONOMIC FOUNDATION

THE REVENUE for the support of the Mossi chiefs and their governmental system came from many sources in a variety of forms. The Mossi of Ouagadougou held that "the Mogho Naba is master of everything" (*Mogh Nab n so fa*), and when they referred to the control he and his chiefs exercised over their goods and services, they said, "The commoner rears his livestock for the chief," and cited the proverb "The snake gets whatever is in the belly of the frog."

Since the Mossi were, and still are, primarily an agricultural people, the products of the soil were the main source of revenue. The Mossi chiefs did not own the land, but they controlled it and assigned land rights to their subjects. The Mossi believed that land had no value apart from people, and, conversely, that people could not exist without land. As they said, "Land is the mother; it fed the ancestors of this generation; it feeds the present generation and its children; and it provides the final resting place for all men." Therefore, a Mossi chief never hesitated to give anyone permission to use unoccupied land. It was in his interest to do so, because the more subjects he commanded, the greater were his revenue and prestige. An unpopular chief was censured not by a withholding of tribute and presents, but by a mass exodus of his subjects to another area.

Through the administrative hierarchy, the common people contributed to the support of the various levels of government. The Mogho Naba periodically received agricultural produce from all his subjects. Through the village chiefs, the village people sent part of their produce to the district chiefs, who forwarded it to the provincial ministers. They, in turn, delivered it to the central government during a ceremony appropriately called "Soretasgho" ("completion of the road"). This event occurred at the end of the harvest festival, after all the crops had been gathered in.[1]

To open the ceremony, the provincial governors' retainers began to clear the paths leading from the governors' compounds to the palace, for they had

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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ably been younger sons sent to rule in conquered territories claimed that their ancestors were direct descendants of Ouedraogo and Oubri. Thus, to the Mossi, the power to rule was intimately linked to closeness of descent from the royal ancestors. The supernatural power of these ancestors, and the vigilance they were believed to maintain over the affairs of their descendants, were regarded as important factors in Mossi government.

From the moment when the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou or any other Mossi ruler "drank the namtibo" and thereby received the nam of his ancestors, he had the right—indeed, the duty—to offer sacrifices to these ancestors in the name of his subjects. Every night, throughout Mossi country, the Baloum Naba of every ruler performed an act of supplication (Kwaga Basgha) to the ancestors. He beseeched them to protect the subjects of their descendants through the night, to maintain peace in Mossi country, and to grant health, children, and prosperity to all Mossi. This nightly ceremony was climaxed yearly by an elaborate ritual in honor of the ancestors (called the Basgha in some areas, and the Pelegha, Filigha, or Kinkiriga in others) that began at the highest levels of the government and ultimately linked every Mossi chief and lineage head.

The Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou, like the other Mogho Nanamse and Dimdamba, initiated this ceremony in his own kingdom. His celebration, called "M'barengma," was held at the end of the Mossi agricultural year and after the Soretasgho. Thus, the M'barengma was a New Year's festival in thanksgiving for good crops, as well as the annual Feast of the Dead. A few weeks before the first moon of the new year (the *ki-basgha* or *ki-pelegha*), the Mogho Naba ordered his soghondamba and samande-kamba to clean up the palace buildings and courtyards—an activity intended to notify the ever-vigilant ancestors that preparations were being made to offer sacrifices in their honor. A short time later, the Mogho Naba gave grain from his fields to the Pughtiema so she could prepare millet water for the sacrifices. Present-day Mossi insist that part of the grain came from the first ears harvested that year and part from those of the previous year. This was supposed to symbolize the continuity between crops, mirroring the continuity between the ruler and his ancestors. A few days before the principal ceremony, the Mogho Naba ordered the Larhalle Naba to pour millet water and sacrifice chickens on the graves of former Mogho Nanamse.

Shortly before the ki-basgha moon appeared, the ruler had to leave his palace at night to elude the ancestors, who had been attracted by the preparations and who were expected to be angry when they discovered that the sacrifices were not yet ready. The unjust ruler feared ancestral sanctions; the just ruler that his ancestors might want him to join them. One night he

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chief became ridiculously smaller when distributed among the producers; gone the tolls along the roads. Henceforth, all such services will be duly and individually compensated.

Even in the most remote and least accessible villages, people speak of liberty. The old women who go to the pools for water sit down for a moment near their jars in order to talk about it. Even bush fires spread less rapidly than this news.[27]

Very few Mossi in the rural areas were qualified to vote in the first post-war elections, and those who were qualified voted for the candidates preferred by the chiefs. However, as the franchise was progressively broadened after 1951, and many more Mossi and non-Mossi politicians traveled through the rural areas, the politicians favored by the chiefs found that they had to campaign to maintain their position. Both the chiefs and their politicians resented this. One visitor to the Upper Volta reports: "A highly educated Mossi of the Upper Volta told me, 'Citizenship has unsettled and ruined the people. Everyone has become his own master, and believes himself free to do whatever he wishes.'"[28] Opposition to the chiefs and their friends came from the Moslems, who supported their co-religionists for office, and from a growing group of young Mossi who resented the power of the chiefs. In 1955 one such group in Yatenga, composed of mission-educated youths, war veterans, and former workers, broke away from the Union Voltaïque and formed the Mouvement Démocratique Voltaïque (MDV) under the joint leadership of Gérard Ouédraogo and Michel Dorange, a Frenchman, who had been a captain in the colonial army. The partisans of the MDV often came into violent conflict with the supporters of the chiefs, but the organization itself was not banned by the administration, because its members included many veterans, and because Dorange was one of its leaders.

The appearance of the anti-chief MDV was symptomatic of the problems which the Mossi chiefs were to encounter as the people became free to elect their own representatives. For one thing, the people could now censure their chiefs by voting for their opponents, who appealed to them in terms of release from traditional prestations. But more important, even those Mossi politicians who were still friendly to the chiefs and depended on their support for election were becoming increasingly autonomous. The chiefs were operating in one power structure, the politicians in another and more important one. In Dakar, in Paris, and in the Palace of Versailles (where the Assembly of the French Union met) Mossi politicians dealt not only with local African problems but with problems the chiefs knew nothing about. As the politicians grew skillful at the game of metropolitan

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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and a bit peeved at not being able to put my idea into practice. I next sought the advice and consolation of an elder noble who listened quite calmly and then said: "The customs of these kafirs (heathens) are foolish." Being a Moslem, my friend was very often critical of the pagans, and could be relied upon to explain why their customs were "foolish." He said that in former days the Raga Naba would have climbed a tree and announced to the crowd any message from the district chief. Moreover, he was the custodian of all lost articles and restored them to their owners. The Moslem said that my request could not be granted because there was no Raga Naba, and that probably there would never be another. When the French first banned the institution, the local chief dismissed the Raga Naba. With the passage of years, however, the market became so dangerous that the chief tried to appoint another ex-serf to the job. This man soon died, and his successor died shortly after being appointed. Since that time the chief has made no attempt to name a new market chief.

With this new knowledge I called my aide and inquired from him whether this information was true and if so, why did he not tell me the true state of affairs. His reply was that he did not wish to say that the market was bad because the local people believed that they had solved the problem of the lack of a Raga Naba. When the last Raga Naba died, the chief decided not to name a new one, but in order to placate the market *tengkouga,* he ordered his *tengsoba* to make sacrifices to it. It was believed that these sacrifices would be acceptable as long as the officiant did not bear the title of Raga Naba. The other functions of the Raga Naba, such as collecting goods for the chief and preserving peace in the market, were taken over by the Kos Naba and another servant of the chief. However, the Kos Naba had to be careful lest he overstep his authority in such a way as would acquaint the *tengkouga* with the real situation. In my case, the chief was acting by trying to get the Kos Naba to acquaint the people with my loss in as inconspicuous a manner as possible. The consensus was that the Kos Naba would have risked his life had he made any kind of announcement to the market people, because the *tengkouga* would have thought that he was the new Raga Naba, and if not contented with the people would have killed him. Under these circumstances, I withdrew my request. I discovered later that my pen was not lost but had been in the hut all the time.

Those chiefs who have succeeded in retaining their market officials even secretly have been able to maintain their control over public behavior there. The Mossi are fairly law-abiding despite the persistence among them of a warrior tradition. Every man who goes to market, or anywhere for that matter, usually carries a baton over his

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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shoulder; but when he arrives in the market, he calmly places his weapon on top of one of the sheds before he makes his rounds. The women do not carry any weapons to market except their "words" but even these are not often used because of the desire to avoid hostility—which the Mossi do not like to have disrupt one of their major institutions.

The rural market is the center of Mossi social life, and friends as well as enemies meet within its confines. What Mangin wrote some forty years ago is still true: "Every self-respecting Mossi—man or woman, child or elder—must go to market at least once in a while, were it only to look . . . and to be looked at, if he can put on some handsome clothes" (Mangin 1921 : 53). Except for the Moslems who are now experimenting with a form of Purdah, there are few persons who do not go to market. The absence of someone from the market for more than two consecutive occasions is a sure sign of illness, travel, or family crisis. As one man said to me, "I must go to market, and when I get there I look for three persons: my girl friend, my debtor and my enemy. If I do now know whether any of them are at the market I am ill at ease. And when I go to the market and do not see them all, the market is not good."

The lively character of the Mossi market will be discussed later, but throughout this kaleidoscope of activities certain consistencies can be discerned. For example, one notices many different kinds of greetings and salutations in the market place, but each one of them correctly indicates the exact relation or relationship between the persons involved. Young girls on passing each other on one of their innumerable circuits of the market bend their knees slightly and place both of their cupped hands on their own breasts. Only then will they stop and exchange news. At the end of the conversation they repeat the same greeting and continue their rounds. Both girls and women greet casual male acquaintances in the same way, but invariably kneel if the male stops and talks to them. Women sometime kneel when speaking to each other, but always do so when addressing any male relative of a respected category, who may then send them on errands such as buying tobacco from the vendors. A man who meets a female benefactor, such as a woman who has given medicine to one of his children, invariably kneels down before her. She may do the same thing out of respect for his male status. However, when a man meets either his mother-in-law or his father's sister, he is the one to kneel down in order to greet her. Two men who are equals normally shake hands, but if not, the junior in status or in age kneels down before his elder or superior. Sometimes a high status man will prevent his greeter from kneeling by raising him. When

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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between the lineages concerned. If either the repudiated woman or a member of her husband's lineage wished to initiate a reconciliation, she or he had to summon a yagenga. He alone was permitted to reconcile the couple after the pots had been placed in the courtyard. When a woman felt that she was being maltreated by her husband, she usually fled to her own patrilineage and waited for her husband's patrilineage—usually his brothers—to visit her male relatives and discuss the case. If the woman was judged guilty, she was reprimanded and sometimes flogged by her own relatives for causing trouble between the two lineages, and then sent home to her husband. However, if the man was found guilty, his wife was returned to him, but he was warned that he would forfeit all rights to her if he maltreated her again. A man who lost his wife through repeated maltreatment could not take the matter to court, because chiefs usually refused to deal with purely domestic issues. His only recourse was to induce one of his lineage brothers to recall a daughter who had married into his wife's lineage. This act was usually sufficient to bring about the reconciliation of the estranged couple before innocent persons were hurt.

The Mossi made every effort to solve minor problems without recourse to the chiefs. The local Boodkasemdamba and lineage elders adjudicated quarrels and simple offenses involving members of minimal segments in the various village saghse. They even tried to resolve difficulties between lineage members of larger segments who lived in different villages. The elders often imposed punishments such as reprimands, floggings, and even banishment. The convicted person did not usually appeal to the chief, because he knew that the chief would advise him to settle his problem within the family.

Unrelated villagers also tried to settle difficulties among themselves without appealing to the chief. For example, a man who was caught stealing could be beaten or even killed by his intended victims, and the chief did not punish them for their action. In many cases, villagers simply took the thief back to his relatives, knowing they would punish him. Occasionally, a family disgraced by a thieving member forced him to kill himself. When this happened the chief held an inquest but took no other action.

The Mossi gave a fairly simple explanation for returning a thief to his relatives for punishment. They said that every family had "weak" members, and that by not harming the captured thief they were only protecting themselves against retaliation if one of their own relatives should commit a similar crime. But a more important reason seems to have been their fear of starting a feud that might result in the premeditated murder of a man and the subsequent execution of his murderer.

The one crime that invoked terrible unofficial sanctions was rape. If the

offender was caught in the act, he was immediately killed. If he was merely suspected of guilt both by his own lineage and by the lineage of the wronged woman, he was banished from his lineage and from the village. So swift and sure was this punishment that a rapist always fled if he believed he would be discovered. The Mossi considered rape such a heinous crime that if the act resulted in pregnancy, an abortion was attempted; if this failed, the child was killed at birth. Furthermore, the rapist could never hope to return to his community, because even if the yagenga appealed on his behalf and his lineage forgave him, the community ban still stood.[8]

The village chief was usually aware of the torts and crimes that occurred in his village, and of how the families concerned had handled them. He seldom interfered in the internal affairs of a lineage, or in problems between lineages, unless he felt that a case was beyond their legal competence. In the case of a rapist's expulsion, community feeling usually ran so high that if the chief intervened, it was only to support the will of the community. However, when people could not settle their differences peaceably or when a major crime was committed within a village, the chief usually summoned the offender to his court for trial. His right to do so was sanctioned by his possession of the nam, but the very concept of the nam often made his task difficult. If he was a commoner, the nobles often emphasized their relationship to the holder of the royal nam, the district chief, and objected to being tried by a commoner. They usually appeared at the village court if summoned, but often attempted afterward to find some excuse for taking their case to the district chief. They felt that their local reputation would prevent them from receiving a fair hearing from anyone but their lineage brother. Furthermore, if they were judged and convicted in the lower court and the verdict was confirmed in the district court, they felt that the district chief, in concurring with the village chief, had broken the solidarity of their lineage. But if they took their case directly to the district chief, they knew they were being judged by an equal or a superior, and that an unfavorable judgment would not damage their status.

The competence of the village chief to deal with court cases was limited.[8] He did pass on all the legal infractions that occurred in his village, but he tried to adjudicate only the minor cases. Thus, he tried cases involving theft, quarrels, trespassing, adultery, indebtedness, and abuse, and tried to settle them by reprimanding the guilty ones. He sent cases involving serious injury and homicide to the district court, along with cases he was unable to resolve.

The district court was a most efficient and effective judicial organ, and the nature of the Mossi judicial process was most evident on this level. The

10:Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1964 FA28 Mossi FA28
Yatenga

position of the set in Mossi society. In the years immediately following initiation the members are much involved in group activities, e.g., the arrangement of social dances, courtship, and co-operation in work groups composed of male and female age-sets, and during this period joking is important. As the members attain adult status the groups tend to lose their structural integrity; their minor corporate functions dwindle and ultimately disappear as the responsibility of the young people to their kin groups increases. With this shift in emphasis, joking behavior also diminishes.

While it lasts, however, this type of joking likewise has a structural context characterized by the attributes already identified. Age-sets are structurally separate within the age-grade. Their relations are reciprocal: individual members co-operate in the arrangement of one another's sexual liaisons; they pool their labor and share the profits they earn as members of their co-operative work organizations; and young men often leave Yatenga as migrant laborers in groups organized on the basis of age-grade membership, thereby reinforcing many of the reciprocal ties established in the work groups. The ambivalence chafacteristic of the relationship is perhaps best explained as the rivalry of peers. Since there is no status hierarchy within a Mossi age-grade, the age-sets are structurally equivalent and independent.

Intervillage Joking

When intervillage joking is institutionalized it may involve all the members of each community. However, I believe it is particularly expected of their respective chiefs. In either case, the participants are separated by their differing political affiliations. The inhabitants of each village are expected to reciprocate in one another's defense, to be mutually hospitable, and to co-operate in the regulation of land tenure at their frontiers. Ambivalence derives from a history of past hostility, dating perhaps from an earlier period when competition for new land was keener and the expanding kingdom did not yet encompass all the villages now within its borders. Such villages are always structurally equivalent in status within the political system, and each is independent of the other.

Joking Between Ethnic Groups

The joking relationship which the Mossi maintain with the Gurunsi and the Samogho peoples, among others, appears to involve the same structural characteristics. However, I learned of this relationship only shortly before I left Yatenga, and a more certain statement concerning it must therefore await further research. It is certain that such joking occurs; I am unsure only of the number of other ethnic groups involved[8] and of the relevant details of their historical relations to the Mossi of Yatenga. The groups involved are again separate. There is an expectation that members of each group should extend hospitality and assistance to members of the other. As with villages whose inhabitants joke, the participants in this relationship are ambivalent in their attitudes; the present expectation of co-operation is coupled with a past

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Binger reports that the Mossi were divided into "a number of confederacies, more or less independent of each other, whose chiefs were vassals of Naba Sanum, the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou." He found, nevertheless, that although the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou claimed suzerainty over the Yatenga, he could not grant travelers permission to enter that territory.[2]

Crozat, who visited the Mossi in 1890, just two years after Binger, was told repeatedly that the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou had the right to control the destinies of all chiefs who claimed descent from Ouedraogo and Oubri. But he, too, found that the principalities were self-governing and mutually independent, and were united only by the weak bond that attached them all to Ouagadougou. Noting the claims of the people he encountered that Ouagadougou was still supreme, Crozat suggests that "time and circumstances have weakened this sovereignty. The ruler of Ouagadougou is regarded by the other chiefs merely as their senior and the head of their family. They seldom obey him, yet they recognize that in certain cases he has the right to give them orders." Like many Frenchmen who came after him, Crozat concludes, "One will be struck, as I have been, by this political organization in which the waning of the central authority has led to a true feudal system closely reminiscent of a certain period in our own history."[3]

Delafosse tells us that "the authority of the emperor [of Ouagadougou] does not seem to have been ignored within his borders except in very rare instances. The vassal kings, who were brothers, sons, or nephews of the emperor, usually obeyed him. In any case, the emperor did not interfere with the administration [of their territories], and required nothing from them except the payment of taxes and the raising of contingents for any expeditions he might have to organize against outside enemies (the emperors of Mali, Gao, or Segou; Moroccan pashas; etc.). In return, the emperor granted his support to those of his vassals who were unable to command the obedience of their subjects or tributaries."[4]

It appears, then, that although the independent rulers and autonomous princes sometimes recognized the supremacy (if not the seniority) of the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou, they were relatively free to rule as they wished. As possessors of the nam, they claimed and exercised the right to administer the peoples of their realms. It appears, furthermore, that the rulers of Ouagadougou seldom challenged the independence of their confreres in Yatenga, although the latter often disturbed them. For example, when Yatenga Naba Kango (ca. 1754-89) sacked and burned the Ouagadougou district of Yako for sheltering refugees from a civil war, the Mogho Naba did not come to the aid of the Yako Naba. Nor did he take offense when this chief, in order to regain his seat, was compelled to switch his

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642 allegiance to the Yatenga. The situation lasted throughout Kango's reign,
631 "but as soon as he died, the Yako chiefs ceased to pay allegiance to his suc-
628 cessors and paid homage, as before, to the court of Ouagadougou."[6] About
175 fifty years later, Yako district was again captured by a Yatenga ruler, Naba Tougouri (ca. 1806–22), who deposed the reigning chief and installed his own. The deposed chief fled to his sovereign at Ouagadougou for aid and safety. He did receive sanctuary and eventually reconquered his principality, but there is no evidence that the Mogho Naba gave him any active support. Similarly, when another Yatenga ruler, Naba Totebaldbo (ca. 1834–50), once more conquered Yako as well as Riziam, another dependency of Ouagadougou, the Mogho Naba took no action. It was only after Totebaldbo's death that Riziam seceded from Yatenga and returned its allegiance to Ouagadougou. Yako did not submit to Ouagadougou's rule until some time later, when it revolted against Totebaldbo's son.[8] Similarly, both Mogho Naba Sanum and Mogho Naba Wobogo had difficulty in controlling a civil war between Yatenga and Yako which they felt would cause European travelers to think ill of the Mossi. During Crozat's visit to Ouagadougou, Mogho Naba Wobogo asked the combatants to cease fighting, but his efforts failed because "Yako would have liked to obey, but Yatenga refused."[7]

The Ouagadougou rulers experienced less difficulty with the weaker Tenkodogo kingdom, which seldom attacked their vassals or territories. Instead, the rulers of Tenkodogo often sought the aid of the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou against their enemies or rebellious subjects. For example, when the Busansi subjects of the Tenkodogo Naba rebelled against him in the fifteenth century, Mogho Naba Dawoema of Ouagadougou went to his aid and defeated them.[8] However, when Korongo, the Tenkodogo Naba, asked Mogho Naba Wobogo to help him defeat a contestant for the nam in 1894, the Ouagadougou ruler refused and said he would acknowledge the victor.[9] In this case, personal considerations seem to have dictated the Mogho Naba's reply.

The rulers of Ouagadougou appear to have taken greater interest in the affairs of the Dimdamba. Here again, however, intervention was conditioned by personal considerations, and especially by relative strength. Failure to be prudent in this respect often resulted in disaster. Mogho Naba Doulougou's insistence on punishing Naba Piga (1806–23), a ruler of the Boussouma principality, resulted in his own death. One of Piga's subjects had fled to Ouagadougou to evade punishment, and the Mogho Naba had returned him with the injunction that he should be imprisoned but not killed. Nevertheless, Piga had the prisoner executed. Moreover, he sent a

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disrespectful message to the Mogho Naba asking that a horse which a Fulani had stolen from him and presented to the ruler be returned. Doulougou sent an army to chastise Piga, who quickly fled and later appealed to the Mogho Naba for pardon. No sooner had this pardon been granted than Piga again offended the Mogho Naba by granting refuge to his wayward son, who had been expelled from Ouagadougou. The Mogho Naba subsequently forgave his son, but he decided to punish the recalcitrant Piga once and for all. Piga fled at the approach of the royal army, but Doulougou, who had accompanied his troops, was wounded by an enemy arrow and died shortly after his return to Ouagadougou.[10]

A later Mogho Naba, Sanum (ca. 1861), fought, defeated, and executed Naba Zande of Boulsa for taxing the Boulsa people so heavily that they rebelled. After Zande was succeeded by his brother Yemde (ca. 1863–72), the Mogho Naba continued to intervene in Boulsa's affairs and eventually had Yemde executed. Yemde's undoing was the result of his inability or unwillingness to implement the Mogho Naba's desire—which was contrary to Mossi custom—to elect a ten-year-old boy to the chieftainship of Koupela district. The Koupela chief's brother ignored his young nephew and seized the nam; Yemde sent an army to depose him, but his men were routed. Suspecting treachery on Yemde's part, Mogho Naba Sanum sent an army to defeat and depose him and to place his father's brother in command of Boulsa. Yemde defeated the Mogho Naba's army. His victory was short-lived, however, because the Mogho Naba sent a larger army and routed his forces. Yemde fled to the territory of the Boussouma Dim and requested asylum. The Boussouma ruler, Ligidi, did not wish to incur the wrath of the Mogho Naba and dispatched Yemde to Ouagadougou. Yemde apparently convinced the Mogho Naba of his loyalty, but he was executed because he had inadvertently violated the rule that no descendant of a Kourita might see a Mogho Naba and live.[11]

Ligidi, in turn, found himself in conflict with the Mogho Naba. After surrendering Yemde to his sovereign, he had proceeded to Boulsa and seized some of the prisoner's property. At first the Mogho Naba paid no attention, but when he had made peace with Yemde's son, Kiba, he ordered Ligidi to return the property. Ligidi refused to do so and consequently became involved in a series of wars against Kiba and the Mogho Naba. Ligidi died of natural causes before peace was restored, leaving a legacy of hostility between Ouagadougou and Boussouma. Either in complicity with the ruling Mogho Naba (Wobogo) or in an attempt to gain his favor, the electors named Ligidi's brother, Kom, to the nam and ignored his son and rightful heir, Venewende. This unfortunate young man had no one to

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turn to, and fled to Wobogo for safety. Wishing to maintain good relations with Kom, the Mogho Naba forced Venewende to return to Boussouma, but with the injunction that he should not be killed. Nevertheless, the Boussouma ruler had the young prince executed. The angry Mogho Naba threatened reprisal and declared that "if the Boussouma chief was not careful, it would be too bad for all his people, because they would fare as badly as their chief."[12] He did not have an opportunity to carry out his threats, however, because the French arrived soon afterwards.

Whereas some Mogho Nanamse took an active interest in the affairs of their Dimdamba or even tried to control them, others hesitated to interfere with disobedient or recalcitrant subordinates, especially when they fought and quarreled among themselves. Mogho Naba Oubya did not interfere when a Boussouma ruler, Pougoula (1745-67), bragging that no one in the nation was strong enough to depose him, arrogantly annexed the Ouagadougou province of Pisila and chased its ruler into Yatenga. Pougoula then gave the chieftainship to the fugitive's son, on condition that he should henceforth recognize his sovereignty.[13] On another occasion, a recalcitrant Boussouma Dim called Zabo (ca. 1767-84) defeated and punished the people of the Mane principality for rejecting the ruler he had chosen for them. They insisted that the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou had given Zabo the right to express his preference for a certain ruler, but not the right of choice itself. They appealed to Mogho Naba Waraga for help, but he ignored them. It may well be that Waraga was too involved in a war with the recalcitrant Riziam Naba to interfere, but there is no evidence that he ever censured Zabo. Again, Mogho Naba Sanum apparently took no part when Zende (ca. 1862-76), the ruler of Tema principality, and Totoabo, the ruler of Yako, joined forces against the ruler of La in a dispute over an abducted wife.[14] Perhaps, like other Mossi rulers, he did not care to deal with men who fought over women.

The relationship between the Mogho Naba and the Dimdamba, then, apparently varied in accordance with the persons involved and their relative strength. Sometimes they quarreled and fought; sometimes the Mogho Naba remained aloof from the Dimdamba's affairs; and sometimes the Dimdamba obeyed their sovereign and came to his aid. The one aspect of this relationship that seems to stand out, especially when the Dimdamba had no serious grievance, is their reluctance to fight against the Mogho Naba. Even Piga, the most belligerent in a long line of quarrelsome Boussouma rulers, always fled when Mogho Naba Doulougou attacked him, because "he did not wish to oppose his sovereign."[15] As we have seen, Yemde did fight against Mogho Naba Sanum, but he did so mainly be-

cause he thought Sanum had attacked him unjustly. For such acts of war, the Dimdamba involved usually lost their lives, and in at least one such case a Dim was turned over to the Mogho Naba by another Dim. We have seen that Dimdamba occasionally came to the aid of the Mogho Naba against another Dim.

A question of some importance is whether this relationship between the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou and the rulers of independent kingdoms and autonomous principalities was characteristic of Mossi society or a rather late development. Was warfare the natural concomitant of a system in which the normally powerful Ouagadougou ruler was sometimes too weak to command allegiance from his peers and subordinates? Did the Mogho Naba resort to warfare as the only possible means of exercising his authority when his commands were challenged or ignored? Delafosse states, "Sometimes . . . , especially in very recent times, discord arose between the emperor [of Ouagadougou] and some of his vassal kings: thus Naba Sanum had to fight against the desire for independence of the kings of Boussouma and Boulsa."[16] Delafosse seems to suggest that the Mossi people were undergoing a period of stress when the Europeans arrived, and were faced with significant new administrative problems.

Here Binger appears to support Delafosse's view:

> Ever since he acceded to the throne, [Mogho Naba Sanum] has been compelled to govern the Mossi with unmitigated despotism. His fear of losing power led him to take such severe measures that he was forced to relax them. As soon as his major vassals saw this, they took these concessions as signs of fear and began to conspire secretly against him. Today, the chiefs of Mani, Boussouma, Yako, and Koupela represent forces with which Naba Sanum will have to reckon. . . . Before long, the Mossi empire will break up; the country will organize into confederacies like those of Beledougou and Yatenga.[17]

It is not completely clear, however, whether Binger really understood the intricacies of the Mossi political organization. He lists as "vassals" of the Mogho Naba such territories as Mane, Kaya, Koupela, Bonsa, Boussouma, Djitenga, Boulsa, Dakay, and Doulougou, as though they were all related to Ouagadougou in the same way. In reality, some were autonomous and some were directly dependent on the Ouagadougou ruler. It is possible that at the time of Binger's visit, the relations between the Mogho Naba and his subordinates were so fluid that the outsider had difficulty in understanding them. If this is the case, then the situation in Mossi country had indeed changed when the Europeans came in.

Crozat, who says the Mossi governmental structure was feudal in na-

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631 ture, offers what is probably the best analysis of power relations among the
628 important Mossi chiefs. In commenting upon the Mogho Naba's inability
174 to stop the war between Yako and Yatenga he asks, "How could it be
114 otherwise? With what sanctions could this king without an army back up his orders if he ventured to give any? . . . In short, when the Ouagadougou ruler speaks, he is sometimes obeyed. If he is, all is well; if he is not, all is still well. Everything remains as before."[18] Crozat was mistaken if he believed that the Mogho Naba did not have a fighting force. What he did not have was a standing army to exercise his power whenever he wished. When he was able to summon an army, he was effective; when he was not, he had little power over any territory but his own. Crozat, like Binger, gives a strange picture of the political relationship between the Mogho Naba and the other rulers. He tells us that in the Mossi political hierarchy, "after the ruler of Ouagadougou comes the ruler of Boussouma, then the Yatenga ruler, and then the ruler of Yako."[19] Yatenga was traditionally independent of Ouagadougou, whereas Boussouma and Yako were simply autonomous principalities dependent on the Mogho Naba. It is possible that Crozat mistook the relative power of these various political entities for a hierarchical relationship. It is also possible that at the time of his visit, the Dimdamba felt sufficiently powerful to ignore the traditional hierarchy as far as their political relationship with other rulers was concerned, and were simply acknowledging relative gradations of power.

643 Clearly, the sovereignty of the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou over the
642 independent kingdoms and autonomous principalities depended chiefly on
628 military might. The stronger a Mogho Naba was, the more actively he tried to control the internal administration of the autonomous principalities and to exercise police powers over them or on their behalf. However, most Mogho Nanamse were content to claim superiority or control over the independent kingdoms and refrained from meddling in their affairs.

643 Within the Mogho Naba's own kingdom, however, the situation was
635 different. Here, like other important Mossi rulers, he directed the admin-
634 istrative apparatus. For administrative purposes, the kingdom of Ouaga-
[642] dougou was divided into five large provinces (*weto*; sing. *weogho*; or
[161] *solem*, from *so*, "command"). Together they included some three hundred districts, in which there were over four thousand villages inhabited by some 862,000 persons.[20] (Not included here were districts and villages directly administered by the Mogho Naba.) The provinces were not compact physical entities, because their component units were scattered throughout the country. To be sure, some of the districts within a province were close together or even contiguous, but many others stood alongside districts be-

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The district chief was relatively secure in the control of his territory as long as he maintained amicable relations with his immediate superiors and administered his district to their satisfaction. A less important but more constant source of concern was his relationship with neighboring chiefs. Many people who can remember the pre-conquest period say it was unsafe for a man to trespass into another district unless he was on an official mission from his chief to another chief. It appears that most of the fighting occurred over strayed cattle and stolen women, with constant raids and counter-raids. The cattle were eaten, and the women kept as wives. Captured men were sometimes sold as slaves, but more often were held for ransom. They were not kept as slaves, since the Mossi were forbidden to enslave other Mossi. Needless to say, this fighting was frowned upon by the Mogho Naba. Since all district chiefs believed in their common descent from Ouedraogo and Oubri and paid allegiance to the Mogho Naba, any fighting among them was not only a sin against the ancestors but also an act of disloyalty to the Mogho Naba. When (as was usually the case) this fighting was of short duration and few people were killed, the Mogho Naba took no official notice of it. But when it became serious, he sent the provincial administrator to stop the fighting and to summon the dissident elements to the capital for trial. The speed and severity with which the Mogho Naba dealt with quarrels within his own realm usually depended upon his strength. At some periods in Mossi history there was little internal disorder, because the rulers were strong; at other periods, under weak rulers, disorder practically amounted to internal chaos. During such periods, the Mossi were kept together only by the bonds of kinship and religion which united them against outsiders.

The district chief maintained tight control over his own territory and took an active part in its administration. In a district like Nobere, for example, the chief was aided both by an informal council and by an administrative apparatus similar to but smaller than the one at Ouagadougou. The council included men with whom the chief had grown up, members of his immediate family such as his brothers, and a few formal administrative personnel. These councillors visited him every day, brought him occasional gifts, received gifts from him in turn, and discussed informally all matters of interest. Yet, informal as this communication was, it enabled the district chief to know what was going on in his villages. Moreover, these councillors interceded for various villages and gave the chief valuable advice in administrative matters.

The formal administrative personnel of the district included a Ouidi Naba, a Baloum Naba, a Tansoba, and lesser officials with titles identical

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difficulty discharging these duties, for, nobles aside, the Mossi usually obeyed orders from their chiefs—a fact verified by most observers. At the same time, a district chief had to be temperate in his demands upon his villagers, and could not take advantage of his obligations to the Mogho Naba as a means of personal enrichment. Similarly, the district administrators could not seek personal gain either by augmenting the demands of the district chief or by withholding part of the goods and services rendered to him. District administrators who were found guilty of maladministration or embezzlement were executed, because activities of this kind could—and often did—jeopardize the life of the district chief. 634

The Mossi might complain among themselves about the administrative policies of their district chief, but they took no measures against him unless he was very cruel or exploitative. A district chief who by his disregard for the people's welfare was believed to have lost the ability to "command people" jeopardized not only his position but also his life. When the people were dissatisfied with a chief, they either boycotted him or deserted their villages and migrated to another district, thus "increasing the force" (nam) of the chief who gave them sanctuary. This placed the deserted chief in a rather difficult position. Mogho Nanamse are known to have ordered the execution of district chiefs and even autonomous Dimdamba who had lost their subjects through their own fault. In 1863, when Mogho Naba Sanum was informed that the ruler of Boussouma, Naba Zande, had been chased away by his subjects for administrative abuses and had fled to a Ouagadougou village, he had him captured and executed.[29] Thus, the threat that people might leave the district was often strong enough to ensure a just administration, because the district chiefs and officials depended upon the villagers not only for the economic support of the central administration but also for their livelihood and their lives. 634 687 578 626 634 687 626

Those district chiefs who supervised other district chiefs for the Mogho Naba did not interfere with the internal administration of the districts. The chiefs of the Vooko and Nobila districts, for instance, had administrators of their own to look after their villages. But they were responsible to the chief of Nobere district, not their respective provincial ministers, for their internal affairs. Moreover, they had to follow the Nobere chief when he went to Ouagadougou to pay homage and allegiance to the Mogho Naba. But aside from these prescriptions, the chiefs of these subordinate districts administered their territories in the same manner as the Nobere chief administered his own. 634 628

The Mossi village chief had no administrators of his own to help him with day-to-day affairs of his village. However, like the district chief, he 622 623

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ruler to grant asylum to Mogho Naba Wobogo in 1897. He adds that it was probably the injunction in the pact that they should never meet which prevented the ruler from personally receiving Wobogo.[12] 648 175

A ritual pact also bound the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou to the ruler of Dagomba. He sent him goods from the estate of the previous Mogho Naba as well as gifts for yearly sacrifices on the grave of Nyennega, the Mossi progenitrix. There are reports that the Ouagadougou ruler also exchanged annual presents with the Ashanti ruler, but it is not known whether these were courtesy gifts or goods sanctioning ritual pacts.

The ritual pacts among Mossi kingdoms and between them and their neighbors appear to have derived from actual or putative kinship ties. This seems to be supported not only by the traditions of the Mossi but also by those of the surrounding peoples. Whatever their origin, these pacts seem to have afforded their beneficiaries a remarkable degree of freedom from external aggression. It is possible that the Mossi and their neighbors really believed in the efficacy of supernatural sanctions, for purposes of mutual protection. But one suspects that it was the relative weakness of these various groups that caused them to rely on supernatural agencies rather than military might for protection. As will be pointed out below, the Mossi (and probably all of their important neighbors) had considerable difficulty in building and maintaining a fighting force sufficiently large to wage protracted or large-scale wars against foreign groups. 174 648 776 789

The Mossi kingdoms seldom fought among themselves, although their leaders quarreled over status and committed aggression against each other's territories. For example, the Ouagadougou rulers, who claimed suzerainty over Yatenga, often tried to impose their will on that kingdom. Yet, although they were usually rebuffed by the Yatenga Naba, they never tried to resolve the issue by force of arms. In fact, even when a Yatenga ruler appears to have given the Mogho Naba just cause for war, little fighting actually took place. Several times the Yatenga rulers seized such principalities as Riziam and Yako, which were dependent on Ouagadougou, but in no case did the Ouagadougou rulers wage war against them. In 1890, Crozat witnessed Mogho Naba Wobogo's attempt to stop a war between Yatenga and Yako. The Yako people wanted to obey their sovereign and stop the war, but the Yatenga monarch refused to do so.[13] 628 642 643 175

Crozat attributes the ineffectiveness of the Mogho Naba's authority over brother kingdoms to the fact that he had no standing army with which to enforce his rule. While relative strength may have been and probably was the main reason for the Mogho Naba's lack of aggressiveness, the ritual pact that prevented the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou from meeting the

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628 642 643 175 [648] Yatenga Naba (and other rulers) or treading on his territory should not be overlooked. The suggestion that force was not the only consideration was lent force by later events. The French conquest later reduced the rulers of both Ouagadougou and Yatenga to impotence and obviated war between them, yet they did not meet until 1946—some fifty years after the conquest. They met then only because they had to represent their subjects at a meeting to plan the restoration of the Upper Volta and reunite all the descendants of Oubri and Ouedraogo into one territory.

Relative strength obviously played an important part in determining whether one Mossi kingdom interfered in the internal affairs of another. For example, when a Tenkodogo ruler asked a Mogho Naba to help him suppress Busansi subjects who had rebelled, the Mogho Naba readily complied.[14] But when a fratricidal struggle over the nam broke out in Tenkodogo in 1894, the Mogho Naba decided not to intervene even though he was asked to do so.[15]

628 643 669 175 The central governments of the various kingdoms found it necessary to wage war against their subordinate territories at regular intervals. In the Ouagadougou kingdom, most of these wars seem to have been administrative actions against a prince or district chief who had contravened an order from the Mogho Naba or refused to pay tribute. The Dimdamba were the Mogho Naba's most rebellious subordinates, and it was against them that he fought most of his wars. Characteristic of these wars was the series between Naba Ligidi (1866–90), Dim of Boussouma province, and Mogho Naba Sanum.[16] Ligidi had seized and turned over to the Mogho Naba the recalcitrant Naba Yemde, then Dim of Boulsa, and confiscated the rebel's property. Later on, when the Mogho Naba had made peace with Yemde's son, Naba Kiba, he asked Ligidi to surrender the seized property. Ligidi refused to do so, and the angry Mogho Naba sent the royal army into his territory. The army sacked and burned several villages and retreated. Ligidi's forces skirmished with the rear guard but abandoned pursuit near the Ouagadougou border.

Ligidi took his revenge by helping a district chief who had rebelled against Naba Kiba. While he was thus engaged, the royal army again attacked and defeated him. Four days later, it reinvaded Boussouma, engaged Ligidi's forces at a place called Goudri, and won a brilliant victory. Despite Ligidi's furious counter-attacks, the army captured his capital, Ouayougya. The ruler's army finally returned to Ouagadougou, satisfied that Ligidi was thoroughly beaten. But the Mogho Naba had underestimated Ligidi's tenacity. For the next ten years, this Dim waged war against his fellow Dimdamba. The Mogho Naba finally grew tired of his depreda-

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tions and launched another expedition against Ouayougya. The expedition failed because of a lack of water, and the army was forced to return to Ouagadougou. The war would have continued had not both Mogho Naba Sanum and Ligidi died in 1890.

It appears that the Mogho Naba tolerated fighting among his immediate subordinates, and seldom intervened in local wars unless one of the combatants openly flouted his authority. For example, when the autonomous principality of Riziam attempted to wrest control of Salmetenga district from Boussouma province, Mogho Naba Doulougou did not intervene. He knew that Salmetenga owed allegiance to Boussouma, but was perfectly willing to allow its ruler to transfer allegiance to Riziam. When Boussouma was on the brink of defeat, the Salmetenga Naba fled to Ouagadougou to seek asylum. The Mogho Naba sent him back to Naba Piga, the Boussouma Dim, with the request that he be allowed to live. Piga was so angry with the chief that he ignored the Mogho Naba's request and executed him. This incurred the wrath of Mogho Naba Doulougou, and he sent an army to attack Piga. Fortunately for this disobedient Dim, the Mogho Naba died and the attack was called off.[17]

The reaction of Mogho Naba Koutou to fighting among his subordinates was more typical. He did not interfere in a long series of battles between the principalities of Riziam and Mane which culminated in 1866 when the Riziam people seized, imprisoned, and executed several Mane merchants who had gone to buy salt in Timbuktu. Mane appealed to its brother province of Boussouma for aid, and Riziam appealed to a Fulani chieftain for reinforcements. Before a battle could ensue, however, the Boussouma Dim, Naba Siguiri, died after drinking some millet beer, and the fighting was called off. Naba Kom of Mane then went off alone with his army, defeated the Fulani, and killed their chief, Sekki. When Ligidi (the chief mentioned above) succeeded his father, Naba Siguiri, he elected to continue the war against Riziam with the help of the Mane army, but the battle was inconclusive. The stalemate did not satisfy the bellicose Ligidi, who attacked Riziam once more in 1871, burning villages and seizing property. The Riziam people finally rallied and halted him. They ambushed his soldiers when they tried to retreat, and harried them so thoroughly that Ligidi had to call off the war when slaughter and thirst decimated his ranks.[18]

Similarly, Mogho Naba Sanum did not interfere when one of his own district chiefs, the Salogho Naba, was attacked and defeated by the ruler of Tema principality. Nor did he enter the fray when another of his district chiefs was attacked and defeated by the Boulsa Dim. The fighting in both

669 cases was over women. The Tema Dim successfully defended his prin-
175 cipality against a Zittenga district chief who not only had the effrontery to
643 demand the return of a wife who had fled into Tema but also invaded the
634 principality when she failed to return.[19] The Boulsa Dim attacked and defeated the Salogho Naba when he refused to repatriate a man and woman convicted of adultery who had fled into his district. It is possible that in each case the Mogho Naba refused to become involved in a squabble over women, but it is more likely that he refrained from participating in a local war that did not threaten the security of the entire country.

628 Many Dimdamba made it a practice to help each other in wars against
669 common enemies. In the middle of the nineteenth century, Naba Zende of
175 Tema and Naba Totoabo of Yako joined in a war against Naba Sebogo of La when Sebogo refused to repatriate one of Totoabo's wives, who had fled into his territory. The two victorious allies burned villages in La and forced Sebogo to flee for his life. They searched for the woman, but she was never found. The successors of the three rulers remained embittered by this war and eventually renewed the fighting. On this occasion, Naba Tanga of
[643] Tema and Naba Sagha of Yako fought against Naba Kombase of La. But this time Yako and Tema were unable to defeat La and had to withdraw. There is no evidence that the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou took any part in these wars.[20]

643 The Mogho Naba appears to have taken a greater interest in wars be-
648 tween his Dimdamba and non-Mossi populations, and to have profited by
175 them occasionally. When the followers of a Fulani chief named Karfo carried off some cattle belonging to the Boussouma people, the Boussouma Dim, Naba Siguiri, threatened war if the animals were not returned. Karfo not only refused to surrender the cattle but insulted Siguiri in his reply. Siguiri marched against the Fulani, killed Karfo, seized all the cattle he could find, and sent some of the "most beautiful animals" to Mogho Naba Koutou.[21]

634 Although the Mogho Naba tolerated wars among his Dimdamba, he
669 apparently forbade the district chiefs under his direct command to fight
578 among themselves. As we saw in Chapter IV, some such fighting did take
628 place, but the Mogho Naba seems to have ignored it in most cases because of its relative unimportance. The Mossi, on the other hand, magnified this local fighting, which they called *tengkom* ("civil war"), and which consisted of mere skirmishes between villages or neighboring districts, with few casualties. In fact, the Gounga Naba once stopped a war between districts after only nineteen persons had died. But as a rule, districts seldom if ever fought among themselves. The actual combatants were villagers

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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who fought the villagers of other districts over stray livestock, stolen goods, and runaway women, in that order of frequency.

The main reason for these inter-village wars was the lack of local mechanisms (aside from meetings of district chiefs) to deal with problems between villagers of different districts. If the district chiefs refused to meet, they could either refer the matter to the provincial level or allow the villages to resolve the problem among themselves. Many district chiefs preferred the latter course because it saved them from interference by the authorities in the capital. Besides, these problems were usually unimportant and did not pit one entire district against another. People of different districts were often bound to each other by familial and ritual ties, and did not like to fight against relatives. Only when the potential combatants were unrelated or all attempts at reconciliation failed would the people of a village (and occasionally of a district) band together, either secretly without their chiefs or under their chiefs, and go to war. In such cases, persons who had relatives in the enemy villages often remained at home.

The inhabitants of Mossi districts did band together eagerly under their chiefs to participate in slave-raiding expeditions into non-Mossi territories. This type of warfare seems to have been fairly common. Ruelle writes, "Before our [French] occupation, warfare was the chief preoccupation of the chiefs. Moreover, expeditions into Gurunsi country had as their goal pillage and the procurement of slaves for sale."[23] Similarly, Mangin states, "The Gurunsi and Busansi were frequently raided with the sole intent of obtaining slaves."[23] Binger gives the following description of a Mossi slave-catching expedition and the subsequent disposal of the slaves:

> During my second stay at Banema, Boukary [later Mogho Naba Wobogo], knowing my aversion to pillage and slavery and fearing to displease me, sent off two expeditions during the night without warning me—one to Nabouli, and the other towards the south to Baouer'a. By six o'clock in the morning of the following day, the returning horsemen were heralded by gunshots. Soon afterwards, a line of slaves of both sexes appeared, tied to each other by a cord slung around their necks. The expedition to Nabouli brought back seventeen slaves; that to Baouer'a brought only five, along with an ass laden with salt and a little cotton. As soon as these unfortunate people arrived, they were given water to drink, and mallets were used to remove the rings and copper bracelets which they wore on their arms and legs. Then they were classified into three categories:
>
> 1. The men formed a lot destined for immediate sale for fear that they should run away. They were led forthwith to Sakhaboutenga, to be exchanged against sorghum for the horses, millet for the personnel, and gunpowder.
> 2. A second lot, composed of women, was kept as a reserve to trade for horses.

11: Skinner · E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28

posted to alert the troops in case the enemy should attempt an attack at dawn. If the war was waged against foreigners, individual soldiers were allowed to keep a slave or a cow out of the booty; the remainder was divided between the district chiefs and the central government. In victorious civil wars against the enemies of the Mogho Naba, however, the entire booty was sent to the capital.

When the Mossi had to defend their own territory, their most common tactic was to evacuate the villages. This was the technique most often employed against invading French forces.[29] Other defenses included palisaded villages, barricades of fallen trees, trenches, and hedges, some with poisoned foot traps. Mangin reports that the Boulsa were defeated in their war with Fada-N'Gourma not only because their enemies fought valiantly, but also because they "were favored by very propitious terrain covered with thorny scrub, behind which the besieged men took cover to shoot on the Mossi."[30] Mangin does not say whether the scrub was poisoned, but his data indicate that this type of defense was common in the area. The Mossi say that the use of poisoned prickly plants (*silenage*) against invading forces dates back to the early conquest of the territory. Tradition recounts that Naba Oubri was unable to conquer Ouagadougou until his Ninisi wife advised him to shoe his soldiers against the poisoned foot traps of the aborigines.

Mossi wars or raids were usually limited to the dry season and stopped at the beginning of the planting season. Commenting on the war between Boulsa and Fada-N'Gourma, Mangin tells us: "This was during the dry season. Thirst completed what the courage of the Gyekango people had begun, and many Mossi perished."[31] Tradition recounts that it took Mogho Naba Waraga five successive years of attack before he defeated Ramzi, the rebellious chief of Riziam principality. He finally defeated him when his army attacked the province before its people had been able to harvest their crops and retire into an impregnable fortress for the dry season. Judging by the reports of European visitors, this type of dry-season warfare continued as late as the 1890's. For example, Crozat could not understand why the Mogho Naba did not send an army to defeat the chief of Lalle district, who had imprudently raided a village near Ouagadougou, and he concluded that the ruler did not have an army. The fact is, however, that Crozat was in Ouagadougou between September 9 and September 30, a period when the potential soldiers of the Mogho Naba had not yet harvested their crops. Had Crozat remained in Mossi country for three or four months longer, he would have seen the ruler's army in action; for, as a matter of fact, the Lalle Naba's attack on Mogho Naba Wobogo was but the latest episode in a prolonged struggle between the two rulers.

726 For several years Mogho Naba Sanum had tried unsuccessfully to corner
628 and defeat the rebellious Lalle Naba. Then one dry season the Mogho Naba
669 called his Tansoba and said to him:

> "I want you to assemble immediately an army composed only of courageous men, to go to Lalle and bring me, alive, Tanga [also called Wobogo], chief of that district." Several thousand men, eager for glory, were gathered, and the army advanced against Lalle. It managed to burn Siguele, Tanga's residence, but did not capture the chief, who had fled to Koudougou. The royal army would have pursued him, but because the rainy season was imminent, and the men were needed to work in the fields, the army returned to Ouagadougou with a considerable amount of booty. The king received his war minister very kindly, because he foresaw the impending defeat of his obstinate enemy. The Mogho Naba then said to his warriors, "Go and cultivate your fields, but remember that as soon as the harvest has been stored, you have to capture Tanga. Regardless of the cost, I must have him, even if all of you must die."[33]

Mogho Naba Sanum died before he could capture Tanga, and the task fell to his successor, Mogho Naba Wobogo, who fared no better. One dry season, the royal army chased the rebel into Gurunsi territory but failed to catch him. They would have continued the chase, but "it was during the rainy season, and the royal army was disbanded."[33]

[648] Mogho Naba Wobogo never succeeded in capturing Tanga, because the French came in and conquered the Mossi. Nevertheless, the rebel did not go unpunished. After the French had completed their conquest they asked the Ouidi Naba what steps should be taken to ensure peace. He told them to capture and kill the Lalle Naba. This unfortunate chief was hunted down, captured, placed on an unsaddled colt, and brought to Ouagadougou, where he was publicly humiliated and then executed.

701 The episode with Tanga and the limiting of warfare to the dry season
726 indicate that the Mogho Naba did not have the resources to maintain a standing army, and, therefore, had difficulty exerting his authority by the use of force. There is no doubt that the Mogho Nanamse were able to gather very large armies at specific times against both internal and external enemies, but when the planting period came the soldiers had to attend to their crops. This lack of resources also limited the power and authority of Mogho Nanamse over their autonomous subordinates. As a result, the Mossi kingdoms remained segmentary in nature, and became highly organized only at certain periods of their history.[34] The availability of military resources thus had a significant effect on the nature of the Mossi governmental and political system.

[46] Chapter 3

Political, Administrative, and Judicial Organization of the Mossi Empire

I. Political and Administrative Organization

643 The Mossi empire of Ouagadougou was governed prior to the period of French occupation by a supreme chief, the Mogho Naba, who was revered by all his subjects as a "god" and whose territory, in the minds of his people, had no limits. He had the power of life and death over all his subjects.

[192] The word mogho means "country of the Mossi," but by extension it also means "the world." Thus, in this sense the Mogho Naba was regarded as the master of the world.

643 631 It is said that he had under his rule 333 chiefs, naba, among whom were his ministers, the three sogon'kassemsé (great servitors), and some forty petty chiefs called kougzindba, which refers to the heaps of stones designating the place of each minister or petty naba in the emperor's court.

643 177 The authority of the Mogho Naba over his vassals. In spite of the claims made by a colonial official who was trying to free the canton chiefs of one of the administrative districts of the colony from the authority of the Mogho Naba, the emperor's power never was merely nominal. If it has become so, it is a consequence of the intervention of French [47] administrative authority in the politics of the country -- an intervention which has resulted in assigning too much power to certain chiefs.

643 669 I do not mean to imply that before French penetration into the country there were not real conflicts, wars or mere skirmishes (1), but the chiefs who tried by these means to free themselves from the emperor's authority were usually punished for their temerity.

1. In Chapter 1 [not translated] we described in great detail the war waged by the Mogho Nabas Sanum and Wobgo against Lallé. We said also that Sanum warred with the Boussouma Naba and with Boulsa.

634 submission was based solely on the fact that although the em-
645 peror named new canton chiefs, he was too remote to know any-
642 thing about the children of deceased naba, so, in order to make sure during his own lifetime that his eldest son would succeed him, the kombéré affected some respect toward the emperor's ministers and made gifts to the principal dignitaries at Ouagadougou.

Present situation. It is my belief that the present political
631 and administrative reorganization, which dates back about eighteen
648 years (1912), has taken no account whatsoever of the existing hierarchy of ministers in the distribution of territorial control. Thus, it has come about that a given minister has to pass through numerous villages which are under the authority of another minister in order to reach his own administrative area. In addition, if one examines the situation closely, it seems that the sole aim of the administration ["administration" always refers to French administration] at that time was to reward certain young and capable ministers at the expense of those who were too old.

In point of fact, however, one must go back to 1908 to find the causes of such a state of disorganization. At that time the late Larrhallé Naba, Pawitraogo, a province chief, was sent off on a mission to Koudougou, and his vacated office had to be filled. Later on the emperor dismissed the Kamsogho Naba [51] and replaced him with an "incompetent," so the local administration decided to entrust the province to a more qualified minister.

It would be highly desirable if a new reorganization were put into effect which would 1) progressively eliminate certain insignificant cantons by combining them into larger units; 2) gather the so-called independent villages into cantons; and 3) grant to province chiefs identical material rewards. This last can only be achieved by an equitable allotment of the cantons. The French administration has granted equal salaries to all province chiefs and, as a consequence, has established an equality which did not formerly exist. Three of these officials are now educated men; they enjoy equal consideration, have the same needs, and alike perform valuable services. They should all be accorded equal advantages if jealousy and discontent are to be avoided.

631 Finally, to return to the kombemba, it should be stated that the vassals of the Mogho Naba at Koudougou and Kaya enjoy a

63/ certain amount of independence since they can communicate with the circle commanders with no intermediary other than the interpreter, an indispensable adjunct as long as the chiefs do not attend the [French] schools. On the other hand, the authority of the vassal chiefs still attached to the administrative district of Ouagadougou is, if not entirely lost, at least greatly diminished.

Indeed, their action is thwarted by that of the ministers, the province chiefs, from whom [52] they receive orders, sometimes falsified or amplified by ambitious intermediaries.

It must certainly be conceded that such a state of affairs may have -- it has had -- an unfortunate effect on the progress of these naba. This is an evil which should be remedied without delay.

636 645 565 The local administration at the very beginning made the serious error of failing to take into account the importance of the canton chiefs, most of whom (see the list in the appendix [not translated]) are descendants of the Mogho Naba. On the other hand, virtually all the ministers and other court officials, despite the respect one owes them and the privileges they enjoy, are of humble origin (see Chapter 4 for the origins of the Ouidi Naba and the Larrhallé Naba, for example).

The Petty Kings (Dima) in the Past and Today

643 631 As has been noted in the introductory chapter [not translated], some of the chiefs have gradually freed themselves from the authority of the Mogho Naba and have assumed the title of dima, that is, "king." These chiefs are the Boussouma Naba of the Kaya circle, the Konquizitenga Naba of the Kougoudou circle, the Yako Naba of the Kougoudou circle (Yako subdivision), and the Riziam Naba of the Ouahigouya circle.

These chiefs were, in a sense, independent "rulers," since the emperor's suzerainty over them was so weak [53] that they enjoyed almost complete independence. Some of them, notably the Boussouma Naba and the Yako Naba, have authority over canton chiefs whom they invest in the same way the emperor does.

643 These dima maintain courts which with some exceptions, are like
● 631 that of the emperor of the Mossi.

They were appointed directly by their own ministers; the emperor took no effective role in the proceedings.

Today. The local administration has made these petty kings into simple province chiefs and sometimes -- as happened to the Konquizitenga Naba -- into mere canton chiefs.

Respect due the Mogho Naba. Each year the petty dima sent numerous gifts to the Mogho Naba (horses, cattle, and cowries).

643 An error. The Tenkodogo Naba (1), contrary [54] to what

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1. It should not be assumed that the Tenkodogo Naba controls all the cantons in the administrative district of Tenkodogo.

Several Boussancé [Busansi] cantons were ruled by the Mogho Naba before the French occupation. Out of the 14 cantons which now make up the province called Boussanga, 11 were under the emperor's jurisdiction and their chiefs were appointed by him. Like all vassal chiefs, they were required to visit the emperor once a year and to bring him annual tribute.

Since Tenkodogo has been changed first to a subdivision and then to an autonomous circle, the Boussancé chiefs involved have been appointed directly by the local administration with the consent of the population; the Mogho Naba was no longer consulted. After trouble arose over the appointment of a canton chief, the Mogho Naba had to intervene, and from this affair arose the necessity of putting a relative of the emperor at the head of those cantons organized

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as provinces. The choice fell upon a uterine brother of Naba Kom, Moustapha Kongo.

He was recalled in 1930 after ruling for only three years. His dismissal was certainly due to errors committed in the performance of his duties, but it was also caused by the fact that the Boussancé had been independent too long to take kindly to a master.

Thus, as was pointed out at the beginning of this chapter, the local administration has interfered too much with the organization of the Mossi empire. The position of the Mogho Naba has been completely distorted, and his prestige diminished. This is why the ill-informed official to whom we have already alluded could state that the authority of the Mogho Naba over his vassal chiefs was merely nominal.

A list of Boussancé cantons under the authority of the Mogho Naba follows: (1) Niaogo, (2) Niarba, (3) Lenga, (4) Gon Boussougou, (5) Komtoéga, (6) Beguedo, (7) Ouanragou, (8) Sanogo, (9) Toalla, (10) Zourga, (11) Yakala.

643 has been accepted up to now, is a true king in his territory and as such is absolutely independent of the Mogho Naba at Ouagadougou, to the same degree as the head of the state of Yatenga (Ouahigouya) and the head of Fada N'Gourma.

As was pointed out in an earlier chapter [not translated], the Tenkodogo Naba is the descendant of Naba Zoungrana, the son of Ouedraogo, and is consequently the "elder" of the Mogho Naba, who is a descendant of Naba Oubri, the founder of the Mossi dynasty of Ouagadougou.

631 635 The Boulsa Naba, a direct descendant of the kourita [representative after death] of [55] Naba Oubri, is not a dima but merely a kombéré. He has a vassal, to be sure, the chief of Koupéla in the circle of Tenkodogo who is now considered a province chief, but the Boulsa Naba himself is a vassal of the Mogho Naba.

576 Thus, although the Mogho Naba would not in the least object
643 to shaking hands with a Bambara or a Djerma, he would be astonished if a native Moaga -- even an official -- should offer his hand.

543 As soon as the children of a naba have reached the age of dis-
576 cretion, they may no longer play with their "papa," even less shake hands with him. They must henceforth follow the general rule which requires the Mossi salute, kantissé.

576 [111] Nowadays naba (kombemba) and nayiridamba (ministers
602 of the emperor) understand the uselessness of such signs of distrust. Therefore, even though they continue to be less familiar with their relatives (brothers, uncles, and sons -- whom they regard as rivals), they willingly offer their hands to Mossi of any standing and to foreigners.

644 Reception by the naba. 1) Up to the present time and despite some thirty-five years of French occupation, the way one is received at the court of the emperor, which, of course, befalls his servitors, has altered very little. Natives who are now officials in the administration and in business enterprises are still treated on the same footing as their less highly placed compatriots. Not only are they required to perform the kantissé (Mossi salute) as described by Father Mangin, but also afterwards they must sit on the ground, a position that is difficult in European clothes. Foreigners (Bambara,
[648] Djerma, even Gourounsi) are offered seats because the soroné do not regard them as fellow countrymen.

645 2) By the ministers. At the present time all the emperor's
576 ministers have comfortable houses and splendid drawing rooms
352 furnished with Morris chairs and folding chairs. These seats are
177 offered [112] to visitors of any standing, while benches two or three meters long are reserved for persons of less consequence (house boys, cooks, circle guards, notables, etc.).

631 3) By the kombemba. Benches are always reserved for visitors of
576 note or, if there are none, mats are provided. Some of these chiefs
352 even own a few commonplace chairs and perhaps one or two folding chairs.

Hierarchies among the Ministers and Officials at the Court of the King of the Mossi

554 There exists a kind of hierarchy among the naba. One chief
631 may have to uncover his head before greeting another because he is his "little brother" (yaoua) or because he is in the presence of a chief of higher rank (for instance, the "petty kings," dima).

It is extremely difficult to determine the hierarchy which exists among the kombemba because there are so many of them, but they respect it even today. It would be difficult to undertake research on the subject which has only local interest and would not benefit our work.

645 The following paragraphs, therefore, will deal only with the
554 ministers and other officials at the emperor's court.
576 Mutual relations among the ministers before the French occupation. (a) The Ouidi-Naba, prime minister and chief of the cavalry. [113] After his appointment the Ouidi Naba is required only to call on the Mogho Naba. The other ministers and the notables at Ouagadougou must call on him. Naturally, by virtue of his rank, the Ouidi Naba is expected to offer them large quantities of beer and to have sheep and even cows slaughtered in their honor.

(b) The Larrhallé Naba, a minister also and guardian of the tombs. Despite what happened quite recently (March-April, 1929), the Larrhallé Naba is only required to call on the Ouidi Naba and, if he wishes to do so, on the Gounga Naba. He does not call upon the other ministers and officials.

(c) The Gounga Naba is required to call upon the two higher ministers, the Ouidi Naba and Larrhallé Naba. The other officials at court must call on him, and, like the Ouidi Naba, he offers them beer and meat.

(d) The Baloum Naba, the steward of the Mogho Naba and chief of the pages. Early in his term of office he must call upon the three principal ministers and upon the imam. No other visits are required of him, he does not call upon other court personages.

This stated, let us go on to the most important matter.

The Kombéré: Death, Enthronement

631 763 202 Death. Upon the death of a kombéré two representatives in mourning are sent from the canton to Ouagadougou to deliver the sad news to the Mogho Naba. The envoys are entrusted with a horse or a sheep, depending on the importance of the naba. Tanga branches are tied to the animal's tail (see Ouidi Naba, Chapter 4).

[136] When the first emissary reaches the courtyard of the Mogho Naba, he sits down, taking care to place one hand on the ground and stretching out his arm. Since the very sight of the horse is significant, even before any explanation is offered, the Zusoaba enters the house of the Mogho Naba and comes out again bearing a gourd of water with flour in it (zom kom) which he pours on the envoy's arm.

The horse is then handed over to a representative of the Ouidi Naba who removes the branches and leads the animal to Widhin [Ouidin].

The Zusoaba takes back the gourd, and it is only then that the Ouidi Naba says to the Mogho Naba: "Naba zagl yka sambga le tongalamé (Chief So-and-So has been stricken with such-and-such an illness and has succumbed)." It should be added that before going to see the Mogho Naba, the envoys first inform the ministers of the death of the kombéré.

631 766 The Mogho Naba asks a few appropriate questions and sends the representatives to prepare the kouré. On the day of the ceremony, the Nabitienga (eldest son of the deceased chief) has large quantities of beer and saghbo prepared and sheep and cattle killed to feed the people gathered in great numbers for the occasion.

The house is circled, as was described for the Mogho Naba.

[415] (a) Koupéogo (kouré basket). The koupéogo is a basket, artistically made, into which is put the foutou (clothing of the deceased), [137] koursi (trousers), his pougla (red fez), his néoda (slippers), the zandé (club), and the wed'zouré (horse's tail). This basket is laid upon a pé'gaongo (skin of a sheep) in the zaongo (antechamber).

One of the sisters of the Nabitienga, usually the eldest daughter of the deceased, carries the péogo outside and seats herself at the place where the dead chief held his daily audiences (guéré). The benda, liunsé, and gangando drums are played together, and then

631 766 everyone gives what he can. Everyone from the Nabitienga down through his brothers and sisters, close relatives, and their brothers and sisters, in short, anyone even remotely related to the deceased, comes up and offers something. Most often the gift is made up of cowries.

The koupéogo is then returned to the zaongo. Some zom kom (water with flour in it) and some dam (dolo or fermented millet beer) are poured at the door of the antechamber.

The benda and other drummers gather up all the cowries they have received and go a short distance from the house to divide them up.

The benda are expected to give a few cowries to any Yarga, Silmimoaga, or sayan (1) who happens to pass by during the distribution.

> 1. Yarga: a Dioula [Diula] of the Mandé [Mande] group. Silmimoaga: one who has adopted the customs of the Peulh.

Sayan: blacksmith.

643 428 (b) Fado. This is the share that goes by right to the Mogho Naba from the estate of every kombéré.

[138] The Mogho Naba sends representatives to whom are entrusted a rooster, a sheep, and, depending on the importance of the chief, a cow and 5,000 to 10,000 cowries.

As soon as he has been presented to the Nabitienga, the first envoy of the Mogho Naba says to him: "Nab'kayé ti mog'naba yel tid wa pous' nabitiengh'togo lad reguib' lokon'wa tib laguemb taba ti ya yel koudgo (Such-and-such a chief having died, the Mogho Naba sends us to deliver his condolences to the Nabitienga and to request of him that the quiver of the naba be turned over to us so that it may be placed beside those of his ancestors, as is the custom)."

The Nabitienga thanks them and orders the loko [quiver] to be brought out at once. It is placed on the ground, and sacrifice is made, in turn, of the chicken, the sheep, and even the cow sent by the Mogho Naba.

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All of these preliminaries are only the beginning, and when they are completed, the emperor's first envoy orders the Nabitienga to go out into the sunshine so that the fado [share for the Mogho Naba] may be claimed. The Nabitienga complies with the request. Thereupon the first envoy says to him through a messenger: "Mogh' Naba yé tid wa reg fado, ya nig'tousri (1,000 head of cattle), pissi tousri (1,000 sheep), bouss'tousri (1,000 goats), foutou tousri (1,000 garments)," etc. To which the Nabitienga replies: "Tond ba sin ki a ka bas roumsi ne arzek'yé (our late father left neither animals nor other wealth sufficient to satisfy the demands of the Mogho Naba)."

The messenger reports the reply to the emperor's representatives. The relatives of the Nabitienga go [139] to gather together a wanka (hoe), a laré (ax), and a goégo (sickle), and then they tell the nayiridamba (representatives) to go into the antechamber where all of the wealth is piled up. The nayirdamba [sic] send in some soroné who come back and report on what is there. Then they ask the Nabitienga for the fado a second time, and this time it is given to them in the form of the following articles: a robe, a pair of trousers, bracelets, fodo, rouamba (ornaments of the napagha), an ample robe, a pair of slippers, a knife (zangoégo), some salt, some cowries, kalgo (soumbala) balls, nemdo (dried meat), moui (rice), etc.

The envoys are housed for a whole week by the Mabitienga, aided by the inhabitants and his relatives.

On the eighth day, before taking leave of his guests, the Nabitienga slaughters a cow, has large quantities of saghbo and beer prepared and sheep killed, gives clothing to all the envoys of the Mogho Naba, offers them up to 50,000 cowries, depending on their importance, etc.

He has a horse saddled with his father's saddle, and the animal is tethered in front of the antechamber.

One of the nayirdamba unties the horse and walks three times around the house of the deceased naba. The person who mounts the horse is given liguidi (cowries) and clothing and the fez of the naba. He is entitled to keep all this after his return to Ouagadougou, after he has reported to the authorities. The horse becomes the property of the Mogho Naba and is turned over to the Wedranga Naba (personal equerry of the king).

63 43 The Nabitienga notifies the populace of the [140] canton that in view of his father's death he wishes to go to Ouagadougou to lay claim to the succession. He then asks the aid of every man present: 100 cowries from each ykanda (head of compound) and 50 cowries from each dakonré (bachelor). This aid is at once forthcoming unless there is rivalry for the post. In that case the villages give their help to the candidate they wish to have appointed.

When he reaches Ouagadougou, the Nabitienga makes a series of calls and presents numerous gifts.

He gives: 1) 10,000 cowries and a sheep to the minister of the Mogho Naba who has jurisdiction over him; 2) 50,000 to 100,000 cowries, depending on his importance, a horse, and sometimes a cow to the Mogho Naba himself; 3) varying quantities of cowries, depending on the importance of the person visited, to the other ministers and important personages; 4) 1,000 to 2,000 cowries and a rooster to the Zusoaba (chief eunuch) whom he visits the following morning; and finally 5) generous gifts during the rest of his stay to the bonsramba (griot), benda, luinsé, doudissi, and gangando, as well as other courtiers.

63 Nomination. A kombéré candidate may stay at Ouagadougou from twenty to thirty days or even longer. On the eve of the nomination, the Mogho Naba summons the Baloum Naba and orders him to have the Baloum Naba and orders him to have the Nabitienga provide a chicken and a sheep for his sacrifice. This is certain proof that he is going to be appointed the next day, so he very generously rewards the soroné who brings him the message.

[141] The sheep (pesgo) and the rooster (noraogo) are sent to the Mogho Naba, who has them killed in his courtyard.

The next day the Mogho Naba, as soon as he appears, summons the Ouidi Naba, the Larrhallé Naba, the Kamsoro Naba, the Gounga Naba, and the Baloum Naba, and says to them: "Today I wish to make an end of the koubissi ("children of the kouré" or funeral observances); which among the candidates here is really capable of succeeding the late chief?" The Ouidi Naba replies: "Do whatever pleases you, Sire." After this, the Mogho Naba says: "In that case, I designate the Nabitienga, for his father did not forget me an instant during his life and it would not make sense to pass over his son." Then the Mogho Naba returns to his palace.

The Ouidi Naba returns to his place, calls the Baloum Naba, the Bend Naba, and the Poé Naba, and tells them the sovereign's

63 decision. These three personages thank the Ouidi Naba, and the Baloum Naba in turn goes back to his place, summons the Sogoné-kassanga (chief of the sogoné), and orders him to send for a reliable sogoné. The latter, accompanied by a Bilbalga (inhabitant of Bilbalogo, the section of the Baloum Naba), is sent to answer the call of the Ouidi Naba.

The Ouidi Naba says to them: "Yelé Nakomsé, Nabaoudba tib leb saonrin (tell the naba candidates to come out into the sun), Laï soki Nabitienga diessé à ba sin nan ki a yela mé ti niondi kon and nam (and ask the Nabitienga which son or relative his father, before he died, designated to succeed him)." The Nabitienga replies: "Yamb yam m'ba ka niak ned [142] yé (act as you see fit; my father designated no one)."

Once more the Ouidi Naba sends a question: "Là ting ramb yé la me tib kon anda (which candidate was chosen by the inhabitants of the canton)?" The Nabitienga replies again: "Ting ramb ka niak ned tib kon yé (the inhabitants have no choice but yours)." When this reply is brought to the Ouidi Naba, he finally says: "Go now and invest the Nabitienga with full powers; he is the choice of the Mogho Naba (Toughin kon nabitieng'nam, ti Mog'Naba yella me tib kon nien)." Then the envoys snatch the sheepskin which the Nabitienga was wearing over his shoulder and turn in one corner of it. They bear him in triumph to the tom-boko (literally, "hole in the dust"), and the appointed naba is now acclaimed by the crowd. He is then taken successively before the Ouidi Naba, the Zusoaba, and the Baloum Naba. Finally he is led to the shelter in which stands the Bend' Naba (chief of all the drummers of the Mogho Naba), who salutes him to the sound of his drum.

[551] The Zabyouré (literally, "pseudonym"). This is the name adopted by each new chief. It replaces his real name which must not be uttered during the lifetime of the naba.

As he stands before the Band'Naba, the Nabitienga says: "Everyone has honored me, respected me, and the Mogho Naba has chosen me to succeed my father. I have no zabyouré, and I cannot, after all, get along without one." He then begins to enumerate some possible ones (for a study of these names, see [143] the special section above). Once all of these formalities are completed, the

631 new naba mounts his horse and goes off with the minister who has jurisdiction over him. The minister offers him some zom kom (water with flour in it) and then welcomes him into his courtyard where he is offered a canari of dam (beer) and gouré (kola nuts). He is then escorted back to the home of his gangsoba by a goodly throng of drummers, horsemen, etc.

631 All the defeated candidates are required to shave their heads at once and to make a formal act of submission to the new naba 302 as soon as he has returned to the home of his gangsoba (host). It should be added that the candidates allow their hair to grow from the day of the death of the naba to the day on which his successor is appointed.

631 The new appointee must offer dam, saghbo, and cowries to the 431 nayiridamba. He also offers dam, kola nuts, and cowries to the drummers.

631 On the following day he accompanies the minister to the home of the Mogho Naba. During the monarch's second audience (beg sonré), 644 the minister calls him to salute the Mogho Naba. The new naba goes forward to the tomboko, cries out three times (cries of joy), and then performs the kantissé (the Mossi salute). Thereupon, the Ouidi Naba says to the Mogho Naba: "The chief whom you deigned to honor yesterday wishes to express his gratitude." The Mogho Naba responds to the salute and then, for the first time, offers him a canari of dam.

The new naba then calls upon the ministers and other important personages (Ouidi Naba, Larrhallé Naba, Gounga Naba, [144] Poé Naba, Kamsoro Naba, Samandé Naba, the imam, Daporé Naba, and the next day the Zusoaba).

Seven days later the Mogho Naba gives him a robe, a pougla (red fez), a nagpouré (cushion), and néoda (slippers).

The new naba removes his old ragged clothes (I use the description advisedly, since custom forbids him to change his clothes until he has received those given by the Mogho Naba). He gives the discarded garments to a relative, dresses in the robe from the Mogho Naba, puts on the pougla (fez), and becomes a true naba.

631 A few days later he asks permission to return to his own lands. Many court representatives (nayirdamba) accompany him. It is the

631 duty of these representatives to assemble the notables of the villages and to order them to submit to the new naba, the only one recognized by the Mogho Naba.

631 527 In order to show their joy,[3] the people have large quantities of beer prepared, and games are organized which may continue for several days. The village notables come to offer their submission and to swear fealty, bringing gifts (cowries, sheep, etc.) in accordance with the resources of the village and the wealth of the inhabitants.

631 431 When the nayirdamba leave for Ougadougou, the naba gives: a wife and a robe to the Bilbalga; a wife and a robe to the soroné of the Mogho Naba; a wife and a robe to the soroné or the Baloum-Naba; a wife and a robe to the child of the Bend'Naba; etc.

Any children born to the women [145] so given belong, respectively, to the masters of these representatives.

631 766 Burial. Their burial is carried out in much the same manner as in the case of the Mogho Naba, except for the specific persons involved. The arrangement of the tomb is also similar, although there is, of course, less pomp displayed. [146]

[3] [i.e. At the appointment of the new naba—Analyst]

Chapter 9

The Two Major Mossi Festivals

Mossi Festivals

796 527 In actual fact, there is only one annual festival celebrated by the Mossi. It is known as tinsé or tingana. A second festival, which is more a family affair, is called basgha. The latter is variously named, depending on the region: for the Mogho Naba, it is called m'barengma; for the ordinary Moaga, basgha; in certain regions, kinkirga; etc. Although the date for the first festival is fixed by the Mogho Naba, the second festival is celebrated by each canton chief, each village chief, or each ikanda (married man) on any day that suits him, usually after the harvest.

In addition to these principal festivals, every important village has its annual festival, a kind of special market day. On

643 of his successor. He presides over the election and proclaims the new-
645 ly elected chief. The Laralé is the guardian of the Moro Naba's ancestral tombs, and the Ballum is the head of the pages and dancers. When the Moro Naba gives one of his pages in marriage, the latter settles near the huts of the Ballum Naba. This is the least important minister; prior to the French occupation, he was given no province to rule.

631 The Moro Naba ruled directly over a large part of the Mossi territories. The part under his immediate jurisdiction was apportioned among his four principal ministers, who each had under him the heads of the cantons. Those territories not directly subject to the Moro Naba were placed under the authority of powerful chiefs who might be called province chiefs, assuredly vassals of the Moro Naba, but very independent vassals, somewhat similar to the dukes of Brittany and Burgundy vis-à-vis the King of France. Such are the nabas of Ouahigouya, Yako, Boussouma, Bélousa, etc.; there are many of them outside the territory reserved to the Moro Naba, especially to the north, east, and south. These province chiefs could also have independent vassals who, nevertheless, acknowledged their authority, such as the naba of Koupéla, a true province chief, but a vassal of the naba of Bélousa, in turn a vassal of the Moro Naba. The naba of Salmatenga stands in the same position with reference to the naba of Boussouma.

Each province is divided into cantons, each headed by a naba, and the canton includes several villages, each of which usually has its naba. Some of the villages are directly controlled by the province chief who apportions them among his ministers. Some villages may not even have a true naba. These are usually villages established by the children of an important naba. In this case an old man is entrusted with the administrative functions. These villages without a naba may nevertheless obtain one. For example, if the province chief has a son who settles in the community and the inhabitants are pleased with his presence, his father may name him naba of the
[562] village. A very few villages are ruled by women who are assisted by the elders when a case is to be judged.

The power of each chief is tempered by his council. The Moro Naba himself does not act without consulting his ministers. Each province /17/ chief has a council. The titles of the ministers vary from one province to another, but their functions are the same.

631 The canton chiefs consult the oldest men in the village where they reside, and the village chiefs make no decisions bearing on the community without assembling the elders and listening to their advice.

Everything is carried out through the channels of the hierarchy. A province chief never transmits an order directly to a village ruled by a canton chief, but he advises the latter who notifies the village chief, and the village chief in turn calls the elders together, conveys the orders to them, and through them informs all his subjects. The orders passed down in this formal way are always carried out, but if perchance a canton chief should wish to disobey his province chief, he would be seconded by his people who recognize his authority before any other.

643 645 701 The last Moro Nabas had become to some extent idle kings. The protocol to which they were subjected by custom constantly encumbered them, not unlike European court etiquette. The Moro Naba was surrounded with a veritable court. As mentioned above, his High Council was composed of five chief ministers. To these should be added the Iman who represents the Moslems and who wields a certain influence, and the Teng'Soba. /Tr. Among the Mossi there is both a Teng'Soba, earth priest, and a Tan'Soba, war minister. It would seem that the latter is meant here./ The duties of the latter are quite specialized. He does not live in the same village as the Moro Naba, and he rules a canton. In case of war, he is consulted on the timeliness of the hostilities and on their chances of success. It devolves upon him at this time to make the proper sacrifices and to question the ancestral spirits. When war has been decided on, he takes command of the armies, and everyone, the ministers and the canton chiefs, must obey him. The Moro Naba remains in Ouagadougou.

644 839 A crowd of subalterns gravitate around these high dignitaries. The eunuchs are not very respectable people; sometimes habitual thieves were made eunuchs, as were, in general, those pages guilty of too much familiarity with the naba's wives. Some of them could reach a high position. The Kamisoro were always eunuchs, and several important cantons were set aside for them.

644 The pages are young boys, hand-picked from the country's most gifted children. They must serve the naba, and they bear the name soroné. The naba is never alone; he always has one or several pages by his side. One holds the fan, one stands near the monarch to help him shift his position, another takes care of his shoes, yet another of his scepter; the great cup-bearer constantly holds a gourd filled with strong millet beer and covered by a tray of artistically woven basketry.

644 with its tall copper stirrups, bears on either side a larger copper tray.
[492] The drums are played when the naba leaves his dwelling, shift to a different tune when he places his foot in the stirrup, and shift once more when he sets out on his way. The whole population over a radius of several kilometers is thus apprised of the Moro Naba's every gesture. A page precedes him bearing his pillow, and another carrying his scepter. The ministers present at the court and the foreign chiefs present at the capital hasten to mount their horses. Several of the Moro Naba's bodyguards accompany him: four strapping fellows walk by his side, their arms leaning against the horse's rump as though to prevent the monarch from falling, while horsemen armed with spears do a fantasia, running 100 meters ahead of the naba, brandishing their spears, returning at full gallop, and setting off again. This constant coming and going entertains the naba who does not gallop.

631 /19/ Every province and canton chief has his court, his ministers,
644 his pages, his drummers. Eunuchs, however, are solely the prerogative of the Moro Naba. In order to qualify for pages, pillow, and spurs, a chief must be invested properly. The present naba of Koupéla who failed to follow the traditions possesses none of these privileges.

The investiture of nabas follows a complex tradition. Each naba invests his own vassals in office. The Moro Naba invests the province chiefs, except for those who hold the title dimma; the province chiefs invest the canton chiefs, and the latter invest the chiefs of villages within their jurisdiction. The right of nomination is an important source of revenue for the nabas.

622 Upon the death of a village chief, several candidates vie for power.
431 They all go to the naba who rules over them, to greet him and to offer him numerous gifts, cowries, chickens, sheep, and, if they are sufficiently wealthy, salt bars, a horse, sometimes even a wife. The one who gives the most has the best chance of being chosen, and the naba decides to announce his choice only when he feels that the candidates are running out of gifts.

622 In Koupéla, a village chief under the direct jurisdiction of the province chief is nominated in the following way. The candidates must apply to the minister who has control over their village. He is the indispensable intermediary between them and the naba who is to make the choice, he is their guide, their sor'soba. When the nomination draws near, the minister goes at night to see the naba, and together they agree on the choice to be made. They may appoint

635 wear spurs and to have pages and a pillow. When the festivities are over at Kourit'Yaorin, the naba enters Koupéla where he is to reside.

643 When the Moro Naba died, the country fell prey to revolution and
669 to the servants of the deceased, who looted everything they could. This is why the death of the Moro Naba was carefully concealed until the day of the funeral; this is why, once it had been announced, no one dared go out without a bow and arrows or at least a spear. Women and children stayed home. In order to prevent any disorder, a new
643 election was called as soon as possible. The Widi Naba acted as intermediary and gathered the votes of the electors. The latter numbered twenty-five: the five high ministers and twenty other chiefs, of no great importance in everyday life, who were not canton chiefs and were often mere family heads, but who were high electors by right inherited from father to son since the founding of the Ouagadougou dynasty. These twenty-five electors consulted the people of their entourage and told the Widi Naba which candidate had received their vote. There could be several candidates, but to be elected one had to be a member of the family /22/of Naba Oubri, the founder of the dynasty. Once the funeral ceremonies were over, the Widi Naba rounded up all the canton chiefs and all the nabas present in Ouagadougou, and proclaimed the name of the man chosen, to whom he presented the badges of office. Numerous ceremonies followed, the most solemn of which took place in a small village called Paspanga, two kilometers from Ouagadougou. All the nabas went there in turn, beginning with the defeated candidates, to render their oath of loyalty.

All these customs were followed for the investiture of the present Moro Naba, Naba Kom.

Chapter 3. Rights of Chiefs and Rights of Private Individuals

631 The nabas, whether heads of villages, cantons, or provinces, were all-powerful, and no one could act without their knowledge or own anything beyond what they permitted him to possess.

In theory, Mossi country belongs entirely to the Moro Naba, who may dispose of everything as he wishes and give land to anyone he pleases. In practice, the Moro Naba delegates some of his

631 powers to his vassals, the province chiefs, who in turn entrust them to the canton chiefs, and these do likewise with the village chiefs. Thus, when a native wants to move from one canton to another, or
631 even from one village to another, he must be authorized to do so.
166 He must request the permission of the canton or village chief to settle
425 in such-and-such a place, and the chief of the village where he wants to live tells him where he may build his huts and which field he may cultivate. The naba may dispossess one of his subjects, if he so wishes, and give his field to another. After all, he "has the strength." This rarely happens, however, and a native who has cleared a piece of bush, fertilized a plot to sow maize, sowed and weeded the ground, is usually assured of a harvest, except in case of war. If a man is evicted, on the other hand, there is no appeal; neither the canton chief nor the province chief would listen to him; they would do the same thing if the opportunity arose.

421 There is no communal property. Every individual works his fields for his own account; he himself collects the fruit of his labor and remains its undisputed master. Nevertheless, every native owes his
651 chiefs and benefactors a tithe; and at harvest time it is interesting
431 to watch everyone sorting ears of maize, braiding sorghum stems, and measuring out baskets of small millet. The village chief is to get so many ears of maize; the canton chief, if he does not reside too far away, so many others; the father- or fathers-in-law will get theirs, and so will one friend or another to whom one owes cowries, or who has previously granted a favor. However, everyone who deals out goods right and left will in turn get some from various other people and approximately regain his expenditure. The village chiefs offer more sizable gifts to the canton chiefs, and the latter do likewise to the province chiefs.

651 These were, in fact, taxes, not fixed taxes per capita, but com-
661 pletely arbitrary ones. If the naba found a gift insufficient, he had no compunction about saying so, and the person involved had to comply. It is said that the naba of Koupéla paid annually 500,000 cowries (500 francs) and /23/ three horses to the naba of Bélousa, and a million cowries (1000 francs) in two installments to the Moro Naba, to whom he also gave five horses. The gifts to the Moro Naba were brought first to the naba of Bélousa and from there conveyed to Ouagadougou: ever the hierarchy.

This quasi-official tax, however, was not the only one. Whenever the Moro Naba wanted horses, cattle, or anything whatever, he

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have founded the Fada-N'Gourma dynasty; and Rawa, his eldest brother (in Mossi, "Rawa" means the courageous, the strong), is supposed to have founded the Rawatenga dynasty which has since become the Yatenga. As for the Ouagadougou dynasty, it was indeed Oubri, son of Zoungourana, who is said to have founded it. On this last point, all the traditions are in agreement, the one on which Captain Lambert bases his theories, as well as those of Moulins and Vadier.

most powerful. The relations between the naba of Ouagadougou and [631] those of Tenkodogo and Gourma, their cousins, were always those of a sovereign to his vassal (5).

5. It is unlikely that this situation prevailed from the beginning, since the higher authority should have been that of the Tenkodogo naba. But when the Mossi kingdom of Ouagadougou subsequently became the more powerful, it established its primacy over the neighboring, less powerful kingdoms of Tenkodogo and Fada-N'Gourma.

"Their common ancestor, Zunghrama, died in Komtoéga, where his grave is still shown."

174 In conclusion, Captain Lambert states:

1. That the Mossi come from south of Bornu, an area still inhabited by a people, the Mossah, who greatly resemble them. /9/

2. That the Mossi went through Haoussa and Djerma in order to come to Dagomba.

3. That the Mossi of today come from those of Dagomba.

He also states, but we can ignore this claim as being absolutely contrary to the facts known to us today, that the journey from Djerma to Dagomba was made during or after the sixteenth century A. D. and was occasioned by the crusades that the second Songhaï empire

4: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1957
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tion and, when he arrived at the sparsely settled Ninisi village of Nobéré, 173
he decided to stay and make it his home. The Ninisi ran away when they saw Biligo coming, but he persuaded them to return and live in peace under his command. The Tengsoba, or earth priest, of the village refused to return, and Biligo went into the bush and captured him so that the sacrifices to the earth shrines could continue as before. Biligo married a local woman and, when she bore him sons, he sent them to rule those villages not inhabited by the earth priests. These sons and their families formed the noble classes in the district.

About one hundred years ago a district chief called Peka supported the 173
loser in a fight for the supreme chieftainship and was killed when the 565
victorious pretender was installed as chief in Ouagadougou. The victor 631
sent his son, Ngado, to rule over Nobéré and, although the relatives of Peka were scattered, the village chiefs were allowed to retain their posts. These chiefs did lose their noble status, however, because Ngado's sons who went to live in the villages formed the new nobility. The chiefs and their families were submerged into the commoner class. The history of Nobéré is typical of that of most of the Mossi districts and, today, one finds the remnants of many former ruling lineages scattered around the country.

The supreme ruler of the Mossi was called the Moro-naba. He possessed 643
the *nam* which is the symbol of power, and because of this power he had the right of life and death over all his subjects. He also had a religious role in the country because it was his duty to initiate the yearly rites dedicated to the ancestors so that the country would have good crops, and so that the people would be happy and multiply. The Moro-naba was aided in [645]
his rule over the Mossi by five ministers who were responsible for the five provinces grouping 333 villages that made up the territory of the state. These ministers were responsible for the proper administration of the state, and they nominally elected the new Moro-naba.

As soon as the death of the ruler was announced, civil disorder broke out throughout the country and continued until the five ministers and the minister for war took fictive control of the country. When the funeral of the late chief was completed the chief minister, the Ouidi-naba, summoned the lesser ministers to a conference and told them that the country had no chief "because the fire had gone out" and that it now required one. He advised them to consider the qualifications of the late chief's son and of all the other pretenders, and to choose the most worthy individual. The lesser ministers refused to do this, saying: "You are our superior, and the right to make the choice rests on you alone."

The eldest son of the former ruler was usually elected Moro-naba but, as any member of the royal lineage up to the third degree was eligible, many persons tried to bribe the elector. When the Ouidi-naba made his choice he told the minister of war: "My mind is not at ease because I fear that those whose hopes have not been fulfilled will resort to violence."

4: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1957
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obligations to the Moro-naba, his lands were raided, his women seized and, if he were caught, he was killed.

It is difficult to ascertain how the institution of provincial administrators arose among the Mossi. Some of the people still believe that the ministers were formerly slaves of the Moro-naba, but Delobsom claims that the first ministers were warrior companions of Naba Oubri, the founder of the Ouagadougou dynasty.[4] These men were not members of the royal lineage and thus were inferior in status to the members of the royal lineage and sublineages under their supervision. However, as emissaries of the Moro-naba, these ministers were entitled to respect by all the people. The ministers recommended successors to vacant district chieftainships; thus it was incumbent upon a district chief to be friendly with his minister if he wished succession to go to his eldest son.

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The minister was the person who carried orders from the Moro-naba to the district chiefs, and he reported back to the Moro-naba on conditions in the district he visited. However, the minister could not interfere in the internal affairs of a district, nor could the district chief complain to the Moro-naba about a minister. Everyone was required to observe the strict hierarchy; the only sanction that the district chief exercised over his minister was to appeal to another minister in the hope that the Moro-naba would come to his aid.

The districts that comprised the provinces of the ministers were scattered around the country and were not equal in size or importance. One minister, the Baloum-naba, controlled the districts ruled over by those chiefs who were the sons of recent rulers. Another, the Kamsoro-naba, a eunuch, had control of the largest and wealthiest districts, but he, in contrast to the other ministers, was not succeeded by sons and, when he died, the Moro-naba inherited all of his property. The ministers frequently became very wealthy because they received gifts whenever their charges went to Ouagadougou to pay homage to the ruler. The people from the districts under their control provided labor for their fields and for the upkeep of their houses. The ministers also received bribes from persons seeking vacant district chieftainships.

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When a district chief or Kombéré died, his heirs sent a horse or a sheep with leaves on its tail to notify the ruler of the death. The Moro-naba always questioned the envoys, and when he was satisfied that his man had not met with foul play, he sent the animal to his chief minister. The Moro-naba then sent his own envoys to the late chief's house with offerings for sacrifices to their common ancestors, and also instructed the envoys to collect the death offerings from the chief's relatives. After the funeral the eldest son of the dead chief and the other pretenders went to Ouagadougou bearing gifts to the district minister and the other important men surrounding the ruler. When the time came to name the new district chief, the Moro-naba called his ministers together and asked them: "Which one of the candidates is really capable of succeeding the late chief?"

635 The Ouidi-naba answered: "Naba, you may do as you desire." The ruler
631 then said, "Under these conditions I will designate the eldest son of the late chief as the new Kombéré because his father has never forgotten me, or gave me any trouble when he was alive. It will not be good to reject his son." The ministers then called the heir and put the following question to him three times: "Before his death, did your father designate anyone to replace him as chief?" The heir replied three times: "No! My father did not designate anyone. You may name anyone you wish; even if he is
[778] a blind man or a leper." The heir was then given a bonnet, the symbol of the nam, and made to swear on drinking the Tibo, a ritual potion, that if he ever betrayed the ruler, may the Tibo kill him. Thereafter, all the members of the new chief's lineage swore to respect and obey him.

635 The power and function of the Kombéré were similar to those of the
631 Moro-naba, but on a much reduced scale. As the person who had received the nam from the Moro-naba, he was supreme in his district, subject only
578 to his obligation to the head ruler. These obligations included the customary gifts and aid in warfare. There is some evidence that many of the Kombérés were lax in paying this tribute and rendering homage to the Moro-naba and consequently were punished or killed. Naba Warga fought a five-year-long civil war against a rebellious vassal before the rebel was killed, and Naba Wobogo was engaged in a three-year civil war with one of his vassals when the French arrived in the country. It is not clear whether the Moro-naba was able to prevent or stop war between his vassals over strayed cattle or stolen women. The Mossi in the district of Nobéré said that the Moro-naba did not often know when neighboring villages were at war. These wars did not involve the loss of territories by the districts, since it was ritually forbidden for one district chief to take lands from another.

631 The district chiefs had ministers who helped them administer the districts. These ministers were descendants of the sons of the Moro-naba's ministers who accompanied the first district chief when he took up his fief. They had control of several villages and they channeled goods and services from the villages to the district heads. The hierarchy of command was also strictly observed on this level, and a village chief who had disputes with other village chiefs, or who had important cases to be judged, was required always to be accompanied by his minister when he visited the district chief. This official could put any man into stocks for
[681 serious crimes, but he could authorize the death only of commoners. It
565] must be pointed out, however, that in many cases the district chief usurped the rights of the Moro-naba, and had a troublesome noble secretly strangled. The district chief, like the Moro-naba, could not be deposed; he was often forced to commit suicide or met death by foul play or in open civil war. The people in the district reacted to an unjust ruler by leaving his territories.

The village chiefs held their fiefs directly from the district chiefs, and

4: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1957
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The village chiefs held their fiefs directly from the district chiefs, and were enfeoffed through the principle of primogeniture on the advice of district chiefs' ministers. They paid homage, and owed fealty, to their district chiefs, although part of their tribute always was sent to the Moro-naba. In the event of war they followed their district chief when he went to serve the Moro-naba. The village chiefs received presents from the heads of the families in the village and settled any local court cases in their villages. They did not have the right, however, either to put men into stocks or to have them executed. They were aided in the administration of the villages by the heads of families. 631 622

Almost every Mossi village had sections in which the nobles lived. As stated above, these people were the relatives or descendants of the district heads, and they lived in a semiparasitic condition upon the commoners in the village. Most of them owned horses and, in addition to furnishing the cavalry for the district chief's contingent during war, they raided and attacked caravans passing through the country. The nobles were subject to the control of the village chiefs, and it was not unusual for them to be under the jurisdiction of chiefs who were members of the commoner class. In such cases the district chiefs had a great deal of difficulty resolving the problems between their vassals and their kinsmen. The nobles could steal the wives and daughters of the commoners, but if a commoner tried to steal the wife of a noble he and the woman were both killed. Whenever a noble threatened to disrupt the life of a district he was secretly strangled by the district chief's men. 565 631

The above is a brief account of the origin and structure of the Mossi political system. Most of the myths regarding the origin of this system seem to suggest that here is a classic conquest state, but one neither founded by Caucasians nor extraordinarily influenced by them. The Mossi state is homogeneous in race, language, and culture, a feature not found in most of the other Sudanic states. This fact is not interesting in itself until we note that the Mossi share many cultural traits with the Voltaic peoples. Marc believes that this cultural homogeneity is the result of the Mossi invasion of the area during which they imposed their languages and customs on the indigenous populations. Apparently not believing the traditions about the Dagomba origin of the Mossi, he explains the fact that such non-Mossi groups as the Nankana, Wala, and Dagari speak Mossi dialects as proof that the Mossi were politically more powerful in ancient times, but "the feudal regime disappeared little by little.... The Mossi language was kept; [it is] the only actual witness of the ancient power of the Mossi" (author's translation).[5] We know, however, that the Mossi were still encroaching on the territories of their neighbors when the French arrived in 1896.[6] 631 692 174 114

Rattray believes that the inhabitants of Mamprussi, Dagomba, and Mossi territories are the same now as they were "centuries before the ancestors of those who are now their rulers appeared on the scene."[7] He states that

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631 642 174 114 these conquerors even adopted the language and culture of the indigenous populations, but introduced an "administrative machinery" that welded scattered local groups into loose confederacies without affecting in any great degree the inner life of these groups.[8] Rattray's hypothesis appears to explain quite adequately the reasons for the cultural homogeneity of the Mossi and the other Voltaic peoples. It also conforms to what we know from recent historical times of the organizing and conquering abilities of such figures as Samory and El Hadj Omar. These men carved out veritable empires in this area in remarkably short periods. However, we need not accept Rattray's hypothesis that foreigners were the ones who instituted "administrative machinery" among the Mossi. It is highly possible that the Mossi state might have been the result of internal Voltaic development when one Dagomba lineage established its hegemony over scattered local people in this area. There is some evidence here that the Mossi state had many of the features of the widespread Negro pattern of political structure so common to the other Sudanic states, and this fits in very well with what Professor Greenberg reports about the basic African nature of these states.[9]

631 642 121 171 It is clear that the Mossi state was a complex entity and many persons cannot describe it without calling it feudal.[10] However, the question of feudalism itself is a vexing one, and many scholars limit the use of this term to describe the political system of medieval France and possibly Japan. In fact, not many people would admit the presence of feudal states in Africa although some, such as S. F. Nadel, who worked among the Nupe, call the Sudanic states feudal and talk about fiefs and vassalage. It is now generally agreed that feudalism, despite its other aspects, is basically a form of government. Stephenson gives the classic features of a feudal state as: (1) fief-holding with vassalage; (2) homage and fealty; (3) mutual obligations between lords and vassals; (4) military service from the vassals; (5) inheritance of fiefs by heirs of vassals, usually by primogeniture; (6) subinfeudation; (7) attendance at court; and (8) wardship and marriage arrangements by which fiefs could be held in trust for minors and, in the case of female heirs, husbands who can render homage for them.[11]

An examination of the Mossi political system in terms of the first six characteristics of feudalism shows that this system conforms very well to the specifications for a feudal system. The Mossi did not have an elaborate court structure on the European model and, since only mature males could inherit fiefs, no arrangements for wardships and marriages were necessary. Furthermore, I do not think that these two traits are necessary for feudalism, and they can be considered as cultural content that need not be present in all social processes with similar functions.

Mossi-like societies present a special problem to political theorists because of the importance of kinship in their political systems. Coulborn[12] strongly insists that "A feudal society... is based on contract. It is not

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based on kinship." He contrasts the Geselschaft feudal system with the tribal Gemeinschaft, and recognizes the possible transition from Gemeinschaft relationships to Geselschaft relationships in the evolution of culture. However, this admission places Coulborn on the horns of a dilemma as he does not accept feudalism as a step in the evolution of the state, but as a form of government that develops after the breakdown of a state and is used for state restoration. He states that "The place of feudalism in the rise of civilized societies is not yet complete, but we must pause to notice the profound importance of the substitution of something different for kinship relations."[13] We see from the Mossi data that they used kin bonds instead of warrior-band bonds as the basis for delimiting the persons chosen for government. The warrior-band members were rewarded with hereditary administrative positions. It must be emphasized, however, that despite kinship bonds, it was the loyalty of a man that determined whether his heirs received his fief.... These new vassals were required to renew pledges of allegiance to a ruler sometimes very remotely related. It must be borne in mind that kinship does play a part in political systems that range from feudalism to twentieth century Western democracy.

We cannot fail to observe that it was in regard to the society of the Chou period in China, one similar to that of the Mossi, that Coulborn was compelled to withhold judgment as to the nature of its political system. Shang society seemed to have had many of the tribal characteristics of the people found in the pre-Mossi Voltaic area. Chou had to face the problems of ancestor veneration associated with the tribal lands, and used some of the same techniques as the Mossi. Coulborn found many of these features "foreign to a tribal society" and finally decided to "leave open the decision as to whether Chou China developed a feudal system or a system of city states as its first enduring polity."[14]

In conclusion I shall say that the political system of the Mossi had definite feudal characteristics. These feudal characteristics did not come as a result of the breakdown of a pre-existing state, but served as techniques for building a state from small scattered groups. I should certainly like to keep open the whole qu stion of feudalism, especially as it applies to the question of the origin of the pristine state, until more comparative data from Africa can shed additional light on this important subject.

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composed of two major groups of communities," Fortes goes on to describe this pattern succinctly: 171

> On the one side are those that claim to be descendants of immigrants from parts of the country other than their present habitats. On the other side are communities that claim to be the autochthonous inhabitants. . . . Many of the immigrant communities claim descent from forbears of the Mampuru ruling stock. Though now wholly amalgamated with the alleged aboriginal inhabitants, they have certain ritual observances and a system of chieftainship similar to those of the Mamprusi. . . . The institution distinctive of the autochthonous communities is the office of "Custodian of the Earth." This ritual office, involving priestly functions in connection with the cult of the Earth, is found among many West African peoples from the Senegal to the mouth of the Niger. In the Voltaic region it is the exclusive prerogative of the autochthonous communities.[1] [793]

The inhabitants of the Yatenga at the time of the arrival of the Mossi were the Kurumankobe, or Fulse, as they are called by the Mossi. Their descendants recognize their indigenous origin but have become almost wholly acculturated to the Mossi. While most Mossi bear the sib name Wedraogo and maintain political control in the Yatenga, the descendants of the Kurumankobe usually have the sib name Savadogo and are excluded from the exercise of political authority. They have retained the custodianship of the earth, and the elders of their lineages and sibs are the Mossi's *Tenga Soba namba*, their "earth custodians," charged with propitiating the supernatural forces of nature. 173 563 614 [793]

POLITICAL AND SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

The present king of the Yatenga, the *Yatenga Naba*, is a lineal descendant of the first ruler, Naba Yadiga. The members of the lineage of the king are called "those who maintain themselves upon us" (*riim namba*). Directly subordinate to the authority of the Yatenga Naba are his four grand ministers, each of whom has authority over a particular province (*solum*) of the Yatenga.[2] 631 ● [644] [635]

The province over which each of the grand ministers presides as lord is divided up into a number of cantons (*tense*), each of which is ruled by a chief who is the central political authority both of the village in which he resides and of the villages within the canton. Like the province, the concept of the canton is not precisely territorial. Some villages may owe 631 634

[1] Meyer Fortes, *The Dynamics of Clanship among the Tallensi* (London: Oxford University Press, 1945), p. 6.

[2] These provinces refer not only to geographical areas of the kingdom but to particular categories of the population. For example, the *Balum Naba* has direct authority over the southern regions of the Yatenga and indirect authority over the cantons of Riziam and Zittenga, political entities which have never fully recognized the central authority of the *Yatenga Naba*. This same minister is also especially charged with maintaining liaison with certain of the more important earth custodians throughout the Yatenga.

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their allegiance directly to the *Yatenga Naba* for historical reasons or because their chiefs are related to the royal lineage and superior within the social hierarchy to the local nobility (*nakomse*) to which the canton chiefs belong.

Subordinate, in turn, to the canton chief, is the village chief (*Tenga Naba*), who is the central authority in the aggregation of "quarters" (*sakse*) of which a Mossi village is composed. These quarters are the dwellings of patrilineal extended families and lineages (*boodoose*). Such a residence is called a *saka* if it contains the house of the lineage elder (*sak kasama*) or a *yiri* if it represents only a junior segment. In either case the dwelling of the oldest male in the group is surrounded by the separate houses of his wives, his younger brothers and their wives, and his sons, nephews, cousins, and their wives and children. Each adult individual has a separate house within the *saka*.

The smallest unit within the residence of the lineage is the nuclear family (*zaka*) composed of a man, his wife, and their children. If a man has more than one wife, the term *zaka pedere* (*zaka* half) may be used when the man's relationship with one of his several wives is being considered. He himself is called *zaka soba*. As a young man's family grows, each of his new wives is provided with a house adjoining his. In addition to his house and the houses of his wives, each man's household contains several granaries used to store the produce from the millet fields he has been assigned by his lineage. It is with the members of his own household that a man is in most frequent social and economic interaction. The fields he works with their assistance are the principal source of the food supply for the nuclear family unit.

The *yiri* is the next largest social unit within the *saka*. The term refers to the extended family dwelling inhabited by a man, his wives, his male children, and their wives and children. It may be composed of as many as fifteen separate nuclear families. While its inhabitants usually consist of the married sons of an older man and their nuclear families, it may also be composed of a man, his wife and children, and his younger brothers and their wives and children. Since its members are closely related within the lineage, there is greater social and economic interaction among them than there is with the other lineage members. As the *zaka soba* is the principal and final authority within the *zaka*, the *yiri soba* is most important within the *yiri*.

Composed of the nuclear and extended family dwellings of its members, the Mossi residential unit is typically inhabited by all of the local representatives of the sib. In addition to the dwelling of the lineage elder, it contains the altar (*kiemserogo*) where the ancestral spirits of the lineage are worshiped. The lineage elder has authority over everyone living within his *saka*. As counselor to the village chief and intermediary with

175 at La and waged a series of battles in the Yako region. Naba Koutou, twenty-eighth successor of Oubry, fought in the Sourgou region (Kipirsi). And finally, during the last few years preceding our occupation, Naba Sanom and Bokary Koutou attacked the village of Lallé.

643 631 According to Moulins' data, it was Naba Koundoumié, sixth successor of Oubry, who set three of his sons as heads of the Boussouma, Béloussa and Yako provinces. He made them veritable monarchs who were united to the Moro Naba by a mere bond of vassalage, as was already the case with the chief of Tenkodogo.

Moulins adds, "As a rule, the chiefs of vassal provinces do not seem to have given much thought to enfranchisement from the Moro Naba's suzerainty, which actually did not weigh heavily upon them. We must come all the way to modern times, to Sanom's reign, to find signs of a struggle between the sovereign and the chiefs of Boussouma and Béloussa.

"On the other hand, the important vassals sometimes resorted to the Moro Naba's support to strengthen their authority within their own provinces. We have just mentioned the expeditions directed against Yako. Tradition has also preserved the memory of a series of battles waged by Dawoéma, eighth successor of Oubry, against the Boussansé of Garango who attempted to free themselves from Tenkodogo Naba."

174 Following this brief glance at the history of the Mossi empire, there remain, or should remain, three questions to investigate.

1. The remote origins of the Mossi proper, the conquering Mossi who came from Dagomba to Tenkodogo and then to Ouagadougou. At the present day, however, these origins are unknown. They might be uncovered by studying the Mossi language and comparing it systematically with the ancient or present tongues of north, east, and west Africa. I do not believe that such a piece of research is forthcoming, however. /464/ The Mossi might also be studied from the standpoint of physical anthropology, in which case two distinct studies ought to be made, one of the chiefs and nobles, another of the bulk of the Mossi population. The results would then be compared with those obtained for other populations of north and west Africa. Like the one previously mentioned, however, this would be a tremendous project which is not likely to be undertaken in the near future.

567 Dagomba conquest. Both family type and slave status, indeed, re-
326 fer back to the Bobo, Gourounsi, etc.

000 We come now to public powers. We refer the reader to Appendix 32 /not translated/ for a study of property regulations and neighborhood relations, and plunge forthwith into the study of public powers.

● 631 We already know that the Mossi political organization is centralized. The villages belong to cantons, which are in turn gathered into provinces under direct administration or into mere vassal provinces. At the summit of the hierarchy stands the king, the Moro Naba, the supreme chief of the Mossi, who lives at Ouagadougou. To give an idea of the former importance, or at least relative importance, of this empire, we shall state that in the Ouagadougou
[162] circle alone there were eight provinces including among them 300 cantons, 5,000 villages or small towns, and 861,700 inhabitants.

643 Let us begin our description of this political organism with the head, that is, with the Moro Naba.

Moro Naba means "chief of the Mossi," from naba, "chief" and Moro or Mora which means Mossi in the singular. Moro yields Mossi or Mossé in the plural. (The French have grown accustomed to saying "one Mossi, several Mossi," but this is a barbarism and one should /568/ actually say, "one Moro, several Mossi," just as one says, "one Gourounga, several Gourounsi," "one Kipirga, several Kipirsi," etc.). As for the word for "chief," it is both naba and soba in Mossi. Naba seems to be the word brought by the con-
[192] quering Mossi-Dagomba group, while soba is probably the word that was used by the autochtonous population to designate chiefs.

645 Prior to the French conquest, the Moro Naba was surrounded by a certain number of ministers or eminent dignitaries who were given 1) specific duties /at court/, 2) in addition, part of the territory to govern. This is what accounted for provinces over and above the cantons, at least in those areas that were administered directly, but the heads of those provinces did not reside there. They lived at Ouagadougou, and were first and foremost ministers of the Moro Naba.

They were:

643 669 of the electoral college was not accepted by the populace and disturbances occurred in spite of the proclamation of the king-elect. This was when Naba Sagha, the son of Naba Kom, was chosen. The people would have liked to see Kaoko, son of Naba Zombéré, nominated. Dissatisfied because the sovereign of their choice had not reached the throne, they would not acknowledge the man chosen by the college. The new monarch managed to take over the throne only after waging a bloody battle at the head of his followers against his unlucky rival.

645 635 The province chiefs who are ministers are nominated by the Moro Naba, who selects the man most deserving of the succession among the closest relatives of the chief to be replaced. Province chiefs enjoy considerable power in the administration of their provinces, they are surrounded with a large court, but they stand under the direct control of the Moro Naba.

635 It must be added that aside from the five provinces lying under the direct rule of the Moro Naba of Ouagadougou, there were four others (Boussouma and Béloussa to the northeast, Yako to the northwest, Tenkodogo to the southeast) that were mere vassal provinces and that actually enjoyed nearly complete autonomy prior to our occupation. Tenkodogo province was especially important.

The chiefs of these /latter/ provinces were true monarchs selected in the same fashion as the Moro Naba by the electoral college of their province. Once elected, they enjoyed all the prerogatives of sovereignty, nominating the canton chiefs and administering their provinces as they saw fit.

Their power was as absolute in their own sphere as that of the Moro Naba over the whole of his subject provinces, but they ac- [631] knowledged his sovereignty and offered him a gift as a token of their vassalage at the time when their powers were handed over to them.

634 624 /576/ Within the subject provinces, the canton chiefs were nominated by the Moro Naba on the basis of an introduction by the province chief. They were always selected among the closest relatives of the chief they were to replace, always descendants of Oubry, the first Moro Naba. They stood under the direct orders of the province chief, whom they had to use as an intermediary to communicate with the Moro Naba. It was their task to proceed with

634 the nomination of the village chiefs, who were always selected
621 from the family of the preceding chief.

Let us add that in principle, and all other things being equal,
428 it was the eldest son of the deceased chief who was supposed to suc-
631 ceed his father, and this applied to village chiefs as well as to canton chiefs, province chiefs, and the Moro Naba. This principle ran counter to the true patriarchal principle where the younger brother is always the natural and legitimate heir of the deceased brother. The requirements of a warlike existence had probably forced it upon the Mossi at the time of their conquest of the Dagomba and Mossi territories.

This principle of direct inheritance (rather than collateral inheritance) had been restricted, however, by the powers of higher authorities represented by canton chiefs vis-à-vis village chiefs, province chiefs vis-à-vis canton chiefs, the Moro Naba vis-à-vis the province chiefs, and the electoral college of the high dignitaries vis-à-vis the future Moro Naba. In short, the warriors' principle of inheritance from father to eldest son ruled among the Mossi in the power sphere, but had to give way to the exigencies of government whenever necessary.

631 Let us not believe that the third principle, namely the consent of the people involved, was altogether unknown among the Mossi (the consent of the village inhabitants in the case of a village chief, of the canton notables in the case of a canton chief, of the province notables in the case of a province chief, etc.) This third principle, however, was the least important, the least taken into account, the least actualized from a mere potential. /577/ Whenever it clashed with the others, it had to give way.

635 Let us add that the majority of Mossi chiefs were aided by rep-
634 resentatives called baloum.

"The province chiefs," says the Monographie, "the majority of
624 canton chiefs, and even the chiefs of a few important villages, are aided by one or several baloum or palace masters, whom they choose freely. These are sometimes former captives, but most frequently they are common natives or former sorone, and they are never nakomsé. Their function is not hereditary. It grants them the right to substitute for the naba, to speak and act in his name."

687 631 Moulins adds, "Custom does not anticipate the possibility of a chief being, properly speaking, stripped of his rule. A naba who gives the sovereign reasons for complaint is summoned under a pretext of some sort and put to death without further ceremony at the close of the audience granted to him. If the chief, guessing at the true purpose of the Moro Naba's invitation, demurs at going, a column is sent into the region over which he rules with the mission of seizing him and taking him to the Moro Naba, who has him put to death by his pages."

622 Let us add that in the Mossi /language/ a village chief is called tengasoba or tenganaba, from tenga, "earth, place, spot" and by extension "village," and from naba or soba, "chief." There are also chiefs of quarters called sakanaba, sakasoba, or sakakasaman, from saka, "quarter," and naba, soba, or kasaman, "chief." Mossi villages are indeed divided into quarters located some 200, 300, 400, or 500 meters apart and consisting of several soukala which usually stand, as we know, 40 or 50 meters apart. When the head of a quarter dies, it is the oldest soukala chief in the quarter who replaces him.

565 Below the Moro Naba and the chiefs of provinces, cantons, and villages, there existed among the Mossi a true aristocracy, a genuine nobility, the nakomsé, or sons of chiefs. "They were granted," says Moulins, "important privileges. They had the right to loot passing caravans and to demand from the common natives gifts of cowries, livestock, grain, etc., which the latter could not deny them. They were forbidden to kill, but if they committed murder, instead of being put to death, they were merely put in irons for a short period of time. Furthermore, they were granted the privilege of being tried only by the Moro Naba, head of their house, for all their crimes and misdemeanors." They are all descended, or supposed to be descended, from Moro Naba Oubry, conqueror of Mossi territory.

565 171 The existence of this aristocracy among the Mossi must be carefully noted, for it distinguishes them sharply from the populations we have studied up to now, Bobo, Nounouma, Kassouna, Sissala, Dagari, etc. Nobles are not found often among the Blacks of West Africa, and they are found only among groups that are, or formerly

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during a period of transition to effective independence.

The Mossi have the unique distinction of having preserved their ethnic identity and political autonomy throughout all the vicissitudes of Sudanese history until conquered by the French on September 1, 1896. The origin of Mossi society is couched in mythological terms. According to their tradition they came from Dagomba in the Gold Coast (present day Ghana) sometime during the 11th or 12th century and moved northward towards the Niger River. During this migration they carved out three large kingdoms and many small principalities by conquering and absorbing some of the indigenous Ninisi and Foulse and Dogon populations, and by chasing the others into the cliffs of Bandiagara. In 1328, according to Es Sadi in the *Tarikh es Soudan*, the Mossi attacked, burned, and sacked Timbuktu, then held by Mali, and during the following century attacked Walata and Banku. They received their first setback by the Ali, and were severely beaten by Askia the Great, the usurper of the Songhoi throne, who lead a *jihad* against them in 1499. But their attacks into the Niger bend did not cease until the Moroccans became masters of Timbuktu sometime in the early 1590's. From that period until the French conquest, the Mossi remained relatively quiescent. They developed and maintained an economy based on grain cultivation, livestock rearing, cotton production, and trade between the forest zones and the desert. Their political system crystallized into a loose confederacy of fairly autonomous kingdoms and principalities, sometimes tribute to the Moro Naba, the ruler of Wagadougou.

Wagadougou, the most important Mossi political entity, was like the lesser kingdoms, pyramidal in political structure. At the top was and still is the Moro Naba, a lineal descendant of Wedraogo, the Dagomba conquerer who founded the Mossi group and Moro Naba Wubri, the first ruler of the Wagadougou dynasty. Paying allegiance to him, were the princes who ruled such autonomous provinces as Yako, Boulsa, Mane, Riziam, and Boussouma. These princes were all sons or near relatives of the early Moro Nabas. Directly under the Moro Naba were district chiefs who were descended from the cadet branches of the ruling family. The villages within the district were in turn ruled by the chiefs of the indigenous populations. In many of the villages,

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631
643 the sons of the ruling family, the *nakomces*, formed a noble class, above
565 classes of commoners, serfs, and slaves. Classed among the commoners in many villages were the descendants of former district chiefs who had been deposed by the Moro Nabas. The reason that the rulers gave for the deposal of district chiefs was always disloyalty; but everyone recognized that this was an excuse whereby the reigning sublineage deposed older branches and provided positions for its cadet or collateral branches.

631 The governing hierarchy of the Mossi was a lineage with its com-
613 ponent minor and minimal branches. Like most lineages, this ruling lineage possessed an ideology that all of its members had equal access to its corporate assets. The most important asset of this lineage was, of course, its sovereignty, its right to rule. The *nam* is the symbol of Mossi sovereignty and is described by them as "that force of God which enables a mere man to rule over other men." The *nam* was the possession of Wedraogo, the group's founder, and of Moro Naba Wubri, the first ruler of Wagadougou, and this possession became the patrimony of all their descendants. This being the case, the ruling chief of any village, district, principality, or kingdom did not own the *nam* of that area; he was considered the temporary holder of it, and on his death it reverted to the collective descendants of the royal ancestors.
[428 A man did not have the right to pass the *nam* on to any person because
424] it was not his. Whenever a Mossi chief was being considered for office his commoner electors asked him the following questions: "Before his death, did Naba X designate anyone to replace him as chief?" This question was asked three times, and the candidate responded three times: "No! The Naba did not designate anyone. You may name anyone you wish; even if he is a blind man or a leper."

In actuality, this vaunted equality of access to the *nam* by all members of the ruling lineage was a legal fiction. And despite the fact that all the nobles declared that they could go to Wagadougou to seek the *nam* whenever a chief died, in reality only the members of the dead chief's minimal lineage (often the descendants of his grandfather) presented themselves as candidates. Indeed, of all the candidates, the eldest son of the dead ruler was the one most often chosen to be

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chief. If he was not qualified then one of his younger brothers, or 631
one of father's brothers or uncles was chosen. Yet, the fiction of 613
equal access to the *nam* was important to the Mossi because it enabled them to adhere to their most important political axiom which was that "The only man who should rule is one who can keep the country." Regencies were avoided, and persons with physical and character defects were barred. Moreover, this flexibility gave the electors a wide choice of candidates from which to choose the person best fitted for chieftainship at any given period. The Mossi have always believed that it is difficult to rule men and this is what they mean when they declare: "Nanamsè toumdè ya yida fa fa"—"The work of the chiefs is the most difficult of all."[3] For example, it does not seem like an accident that the first ruler, Moro Naba Wubri, was succeeded by four of his brothers in turn instead of by his sons. The Mossi had not completely conquered the territory, and the young sons were incapable of handling the complex political situation. The graves of each of the successors to Wubri in different parts of the country remain as markers to testify to the difficult task which the early rulers had in controlling their realm.

The Mossi believed, and still do believe, that it was only when con- [812]
flict developed after a ruler died, that the people realized how necessary
and valuable a chief was. The death of a chief, especially of the Moro [764]
Naba, was kept a secret until the war minister arrived at the capital with his troops. Only then did the cry go up: "The fire has gone out!"; and as soon as it was heard, violence broke out throughout the
land. Prisoners were released, thieves rifled the markets, and the [669]
nakomces, or nobles, rode about the countryside doing whatever they wished. This custom persisted as late as 1942. Reporting to his superior in Abijan about the events that transpired in Wagadougou when Moro Naba Kom died, the French commander wrote: "On Friday, March 13, 1942, young people, profiting from old custom, tried to steal things, but they were stopped and about one hundred were arrested."[4] Throughout all the chaos which attended the death of a 645
king, the war minister remained calm unless an attempt was actually 696
made to seize power. He never attempted to stop the public disorder or to catch thieves or murderers, because everyone believed that out of

● 631

/For information on Mossi "kingdoms" see category 642./

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642 613 173 778 had done so with full permission of his father and in place of an unadventurous elder brother.

For example, the ruling family of the Boulsa province claimed that its 635 ancestor, Naba Namende, was the eldest son of Mogho Naba Oubri and 642 chose to become his father's *Kourita* (a young son of a deceased Mogho 613 Naba chosen as his father's personal representative on earth) and go into 173 exile rather than subject his younger brother to the ordeal. At the same 778 time, Namende sought to retain royal power equal to that of his brother, the new Mogho Naba, by taking Oubri's royal amulets with him.[3]

635 Mane province, too, was founded by one Nyaseme, a son of Koudoumie, who felt that he should have been given the nam. When routed in battle 642 by his elder brother Kouda, he moved into the region of Mane, where he 613 defeated the indigenous Ninisi and ruled over them. The princes who ● 631 broke away from Ouagadougou during Koudoumie's reign considered themselves theoretically equal to the supreme ruler. Thus, they took the title of Dim. By so doing, they dramatized their claim to equality of status, if not of power, with the Mogho Naba, and their determination to "submit only to God."[4]

642 The Mossi insist that the relationship between the Mogho Naba and 643 the Dimdamba was similar to that between father and sons, since the 613 Dimdamba were "really the sons of the Mogho Naba" and are said to have 631 acted as such. This analogy is interesting in view of the Mossi traditional [593] pattern of avoidance—combined with love and tolerance—between fathers and elder sons.[5] The Dimdamba were often allowed to act at variance with the Mogho Naba. Some of them shifted allegiance from kingdom to kingdom; others usurped the power of the Mogho Naba over smaller districts, or claimed that they had been given this power; and most of them regulated their own affairs with little interference from their sovereign. He, as "father," interfered on occasion in their internal affairs, demanding help from them and often chastising them if they failed to comply.

634 The Mogho Naba and the Dimdamba often appointed their younger 631 sons or brothers as rulers (Kombemba) of the districts that made up their 613 kingdoms and principalities. In this way, power and authority were kept 642 within the royal clan and its lineages. Nevertheless, in keeping with the concept of corporate access to the nam, the rulers of these dependencies had traditions that served to reconcile their claims to kingly or princely status with their actual subordinate position. District founders, too, were often portrayed as eldest sons who had been cheated out of their patrimony or had voluntarily left it to establish new districts. In some cases, the legendary heroes were granted miraculous births as well.

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634 173 tured slaves, whom he settled behind his compound and in separate villages under their own chiefs. He also welcomed refugees from wars in other territories and established them in special villages under their own chiefs.

631 173 The Dimdamba followed a similar practice in establishing power and control. According to Cheron, when Mogho Naba Koudoumie sent his son Tiraongo to conquer the Ninisi of Boussouma, the Ninisi defended themselves fiercely. Tiraongo's advance was thus very slow until he found a Ninisi named Wine, dressed in a panther's skin and hiding in a hole, "who on the promise that his life would be saved, consented to serve as guide to Tiraongo and to make propitiatory sacrifices to the divinities of the country. Thanks to him, the Mossi were able to progress to Somtongande."[6] Boulsa tradition recounts that when Naba Namende left Ouagadougou as the Kourita of Mogho Naba Oubri and took possession of their province, he placed his sons at the head of the principal villages "in order to control it [Boulsa] better."[7] One son was even sent to rule over a village at the request of the local Tengsoba.

634 613 778 [565] The villages that made up a Mossi district were usually ruled by chiefs who belonged to sub-lineages of the local ruling lineage. These village chiefs and the members of their lineage formed a noble class, the *nakomce* ("children of the Naba"). As long as a lineage held the nam of a district, all of its sub-lineages had all the privileges of the noble class, regardless of whether they had charge of villages. But if the Mogho Naba deprived [558] a ruling lineage of the nam by deposing the district chief, all its members were reduced to commoner status. Such people still traced their descent from the Mogho Naba who was the ancestor of their lineage founder, but this relationship ceased to be important unless the lineage recovered the nam of the district. If it did not, the former ruling lineage officially lost its ancient link with the royal clan within a few generations and became a nondescript local group.

634 613 778 557 558 The place of a deposed royal lineage was usually taken by the relatives of the nobles who subsequently acquired the nam of the district. These newcomers were genealogically closer to the ruling Mogho Naba, and formed the new nakomce of the district. The new district chief sometimes sent his sons to rule over the villages under his command. But if the village chiefs did not suffer the same fate as their lineage head at the hands of the Mogho Naba, the new district chief often permitted them to retain their posts. Thus they retained possession of the nam but lost their noble status. They served the new district chief in a political sense much as the Tengsoba served him in a ritual sense.

554 603 778 The plight of deposed district nakomce shows quite clearly the distinc-

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power and authority were inherited by their families in the same manner as among Mossi lineages.

The last important category of Mossi chiefs included men who ruled over slave and serf villages. These men were themselves the descendants of slaves and serfs, for no free-born Mossi were placed in such posts. Needless to say, these chiefs were never lineally or collaterally related to the district chiefs, and therefore were never nobles. However, they might be affinally related to district chiefs, and in such cases the relationship was often of some political value.

It must be emphasized that once a man was made chief, he was respected, if not honored, by all the people of the district. In some districts, the Dapore Naba and the Baglere Naba, chiefs of two categories of serfs, were among the most valued assistants of the Kombere Naba. The only people who sometimes refused to honor the village chiefs were the nakomse, who were the holders of the district nam. Nevertheless, they were censored by the Kombere if they were disrespectful to his subordinates. No district chief could allow his government to be jeopardized by the maltreatment of persons who served it. In any conflict between the nam and the kin group, the supremacy of the nam was always maintained.

Every Mossi ruler, whether he held the nam of a kingdom, principality, district, or village, was *ipso facto* also *Boodkasma* (literally, "family head") of the local segment of his boodoo. The word boodoo refers to patrilineal groups that anthropologists would normally call clans, maximal lineages, major lineages, or minor lineages. The Mossi do not make any terminological distinction between these levels of their segmentary lineage system. Nevertheless, they recognize and use the status differences between these units to limit the access of each unit to the corporate assets of the boodoo. Their major social distinction is drawn between the minor lineage, which is also called boodoo, and its component minimal lineages. Each minimal-lineage unit is called a *babissi* (literally, "father's brother"), and is really a large extended family composed of relatives who had a common ancestor, three, four, or at most five generations ago.

The Mogho Naba, for example, was head of his babissi as well as ex officio head of the entire royal clan. Those rulers who claimed equality with him claimed that they, not he, were the true heads of the royal clan and the "direct" descendants of Ouedraogo and Oubri. As a function of their political position, the many princes and district chiefs were heads of their own babissi and of the maximal lineage to which their babissi belonged. Like the Mogho Naba, they were the ex officio heads of all members of their boodoo who lived in their territory and who claimed descent from the same royal ancestors,

mal lineage segment except the pretenders to the throne shaved their heads as a sign of mourning. The royal pretenders donned sheepskin mantles to signify that they were willing to "eat the nam." Once the ruler had been buried, the country settled down to an uneasy peace until the eighth day, when the funeral ceremonies took place. In the meantime, the Napoko symbolically held daily court, and the Tansoba's army acted as a check against the attempts of ambitious princes to seize power by force of arms. 766 643 [701]

Two days before the funeral, the Kamsaogho Naba selected the Kourita, who was to replace the Napoko as the living symbolic representative of the dead Mogho Naba. The person chosen to be Kourita was usually a young son of the deceased king, but since this person was banished from the capital, most of the royal wives hid their young children or fled the palace with them.[33] Once the Kourita had been chosen, the Kamsaogho Naba performed a ceremony (similar to those connected with the divine kings of the Near East) during which the youth was given one of his father's horses, dressed in his father's clothes, and given his father's youngest widow as a wife. He was then paid the homage due the Mogho Naba, and after receiving many gifts from the dignitaries, he was banished from Ouagadougou forever. As he went through the country, he was treated like the Mogho Naba and given many wives and presents. If he should chance to return to Ouagadougou or see the new Mogho Naba, either or both of them would be killed by the ancestors. Many Mossi districts seem to have been founded by exiled Kouritadamba. These men were undoubtedly among the numerous "elder" sons of past kings who are said to have "refused" the nam and gone to live in the districts now governed by their descendants. 644 766 783 [171] [431] [634]

The choice and banishment of the Kourita heralded the funeral rites, which were characterized by numerous animal sacrifices to the ancestors in the name of the deceased ruler. On the afternoon of the first day of the funeral, the Crown Prince mounted a horse and left the palace by the women's door. The Napoko then took the bridle of her brother's horse and led him and an immense crowd of cavalry, armed warriors, and musicians around the palace walls three times. After the third round, the Napoko demanded that her brother give her a personal servant as a present; he hesitated, but finally granted her request. The Napoko was then lifted up by the warriors, who shouted as they carried her home. The funeral thus came to an end. 766 644 643 [782] [788]

All Mossi potentates tried to emulate the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou in matters of pomp, ceremony, and government.[34] Their courts were inferior to his, but only because they were less powerful and less wealthy. 631 184 643 644

Some of the more important rulers, such as the heads of the Yatenga, Fada-N'Gourma, and Tenkodogo kingdoms, were chosen by local electoral colleges, which did not have to seek the approval of the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou or notify him of the choices made. Their authority, as we have seen, was supported by claims of equality with Ouagadougou. But, with the exception of the Tenkodogo ruler, they were actually farther removed from the main line of royal descent than the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou. The autonomous Dimdamba had their own electoral colleges, which in some cases were made up of men related to the electoral-college members of the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou. (For example, the Ouidi Naba of Boulsa was descended from the Ouidi Naba of Ouagadougou.) These local colleges were usually free to nominate and elect the Dimdamba without consulting the Mogho Naba, even though he ratified many nominations.[36] According to Cheron, "The nomination of the Dim of Boulsa did not become definitive until ratified by the Mogho Naba, who was always consulted by the electors and who could impose his own candidate."[36] This was not always true; nor did every Mogho Naba refrain from interfering in the internal affairs of autonomous provinces. Whether he did or not often depended on his strength relative to that of the Dimdamba. Once the Dimdamba had been chosen, however, they were installed with ceremonies similar to those for the Ouagadougou ruler.

Like their superiors, the Dimdamba had the authority to delegate power to the Kombemba and Tense Nanamse. Some of them also had the right to grant the nam to a fellow Dim. The Boussouma Naba, for instance, could grant it to the Mane Naba.[37] Mogho Nanamse granted such rights to Dimdamba for various reasons. They might do so on the basis of their relative strength vis-à-vis a particular Dim at a particular time, or because they admired him or were closely related to him. However, a Dim exercised sovereignty in his own name, regardless of whether he was subordinate to the Mogho Naba or to another Dim. In contrast, the district chiefs and the village chiefs exercised sovereignty on behalf of the Mogho Naba or of the Dim in whose territory they resided.

The installation ceremonies for the two lower orders of chiefs were not too different from those for the Mogho Nanamse and Dimdamba. For example, when the Nobere district chief died, the provincial minister for Nobere—in this case the Gounga Naba—reported his death to the Mogho Naba. The ruler then summoned one of the deceased chief's officials to the capital to report on the qualifications of all potential candidates for the nam. The provincial minister, in turn, dispatched one of his own representatives to the district to verify the reports he had received. It was only when this

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to the control of his brother at Nobere. The other district, still called Vooko but now half its former size, was given to a descendant of its deposed ruler. The relationship between these two rulers and the Nobere Naba was that of vassals and lord. They did not stand up in the presence of the Nobere Naba, but knelt or sat on the ground and uncovered their heads in respect to him. The Nobere Naba traditionally appointed the village chiefs in the Vooko and Nobila districts; however, he sometimes granted that right to the two district chiefs. Furthermore, the traditional provincial administrator could not transmit any orders to those two district chiefs without first notifying the Nobere Naba. In their everyday affairs the two chiefs were autonomous, but the Nobere Naba could challenge and countermand all their actions. Actually, he did seem to exercise greater control over Vooko than over Nobila. One may even say that the relationship between the Nobere district chief and the Vooko chief was like that between the Mogho Naba and his district chiefs, and that the relationship between the Nobere Naba and the Nobila Naba was comparable to the one between the Mogho Naba and the Dimdamba. We have seen that the Dimdamba claimed equality with the Mogho Naba because of their alleged descent from a putative common ancestor. The Nobere Naba was actually more closely related to the Nobila Naba than to the Vooko Naba, and his behavior toward them reflected this fact. In both cases, the relationships involved were determined by the concept of joint possession of the nam by the ruling family.

A district chief was not required to notify his superior when he wished to confer the nam upon a village chief. In this choice he was completely autonomous and subject only to tradition. The fact is that on the district and village levels, traditions were more frequently modified in the face of practical political and socio-economic considerations. This occurred primarily because the district chief had closer relations with persons who possessed goods and services or who controlled them directly than did the chiefs on higher levels. Secondly, he was often under great temptation to allow presents or bribes to affect his choice of subordinate chiefs.

When a Tenga Naba died, the district chief permitted control of the village to revert to its Tengsoba. If there was none, the village was "given" to the eldest man among the aboriginal Ninisi lineages or to the eldest member of the ruling lineage segment. However, none of these persons was considered anything but a trustee of the village, and even when the trustee was a potential candidate for the nam, the Mossi did not feel that this man had any advantage over his competitors. Whoever held control of the village was held responsible for its affairs by the district administrator until the new chief was elected.

Competition for chieftainship on this level was very keen because of the

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IV

ADMINISTRATION

642 THE Mossi always looked to their rulers, especially to the Mogho Nanamse,
631 the Dimdamba, and the Kombemba, to determine administrative policies and to pronounce on all relevant issues. All foreigners who requested infor-
[825] mation were told, "You must talk to the chief."[1] The Mossi believed that men cannot live without chiefs, and insisted that even animals have chiefs. Mossi rulers were therefore expected to ensure internal tranquillity in times of peace and to protect their subjects and territories in times of war. The expectation that they would also provide impartial judgment is best expressed by a dictum of the Ouagadougou people: "The truth is at Ouaga-
[769] dougou." Finally, Mossi chiefs were held responsible for inducing the ancestors to bring health and prosperity to their subjects. To this end, they supervised and participated in rituals to their ancestors and encouraged the people in every territory, district, village, and compound to do likewise. In return, the people paid homage and allegiance to their chiefs and provided them with the goods and services they needed to support the administrative process.

643 The nature of the administrative relationship between the Mogho Naba
631 of Ouagadougou, the rulers of Yatenga, Fada-N'Gourma, and Tenkodogo,
642 and the autonomous Dimdamba was not clear to the early visitors to Mossi
175 country, and remains a matter of controversy. Two conflicting principles were always at work: seniority with respect to the nam and claims of close descent from Ouedraogo and Oubri on the one hand, and relative political strength or military power on the other. The stronger a ruler, the less he deferred to his lineal seniors. He might even claim a supremacy over them that came close to a claim of seniority. When Barth visited the Sudan in 1853, he was told that the Mossi country was "split into a number of small principalities, almost totally independent of each other, and paying only slight homage to the principality of Woghodogo." Barth reports, however, that the Dim of Boussouma was "probably the most powerful of the Mossi chiefs at the . . . time, especially with regard to cavalry." Similarly,

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Binger reports that the Mossi were divided into "a number of confederacies, more or less independent of each other, whose chiefs were vassals of Naba Sanum, the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou." He found, nevertheless, that although the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou claimed suzerainty over the Yatenga, he could not grant travelers permission to enter that territory.[2]

Crozat, who visited the Mossi in 1890, just two years after Binger, was told repeatedly that the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou had the right to control the destinies of all chiefs who claimed descent from Ouedraogo and Oubri. But he, too, found that the principalities were self-governing and mutually independent, and were united only by the weak bond that attached them all to Ouagadougou. Noting the claims of the people he encountered that Ouagadougou was still supreme, Crozat suggests that "time and circumstances have weakened this sovereignty. The ruler of Ouagadougou is regarded by the other chiefs merely as their senior and the head of their family. They seldom obey him, yet they recognize that in certain cases he has the right to give them orders." Like many Frenchmen who came after him, Crozat concludes, "One will be struck, as I have been, by this political organization in which the waning of the central authority has led to a true feudal system closely reminiscent of a certain period in our own history."[3]

Delafosse tells us that "the authority of the emperor [of Ouagadougou] does not seem to have been ignored within his borders except in very rare instances. The vassal kings, who were brothers, sons, or nephews of the emperor, usually obeyed him. In any case, the emperor did not interfere with the administration [of their territories], and required nothing from them except the payment of taxes and the raising of contingents for any expeditions he might have to organize against outside enemies (the emperors of Mali, Gao, or Segou; Moroccan pashas; etc.). In return, the emperor granted his support to those of his vassals who were unable to command the obedience of their subjects or tributaries."[4]

It appears, then, that although the independent rulers and autonomous princes sometimes recognized the supremacy (if not the seniority) of the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou, they were relatively free to rule as they wished. As possessors of the nam, they claimed and exercised the right to administer the peoples of their realms. It appears, furthermore, that the rulers of Ouagadougou seldom challenged the independence of their confreres in Yatenga, although the latter often disturbed them. For example, when Yatenga Naba Kango (ca. 1754-89) sacked and burned the Ouagadougou district of Yako for sheltering refugees from a civil war, the Mogho Naba did not come to the aid of the Yako Naba. Nor did he take offense when this chief, in order to regain his seat, was compelled to switch his

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642 allegiance to the Yatenga. The situation lasted throughout Kango's reign,
631 "but as soon as he died, the Yako chiefs ceased to pay allegiance to his suc-
629 cessors and paid homage, as before, to the court of Ouagadougou."[6] About
175 fifty years later, Yako district was again captured by a Yatenga ruler, Naba Tougouri (ca. 1806–22), who deposed the reigning chief and installed his own. The deposed chief fled to his sovereign at Ouagadougou for aid and safety. He did receive sanctuary and eventually reconquered his principality, but there is no evidence that the Mogho Naba gave him any active support. Similarly, when another Yatenga ruler, Naba Totebaldbo (ca. 1834–50), once more conquered Yako as well as Riziam, another dependency of Ouagadougou, the Mogho Naba took no action. It was only after Totebaldbo's death that Riziam seceded from Yatenga and returned its allegiance to Ouagadougou. Yako did not submit to Ouagadougou's rule until some time later, when it revolted against Totebaldbo's son.[8] Similarly, both Mogho Naba Sanum and Mogho Naba Wobogo had difficulty in controlling a civil war between Yatenga and Yako which they felt would cause European travelers to think ill of the Mossi. During Crozat's visit to Ouagadougou, Mogho Naba Wobogo asked the combatants to cease fighting, but his efforts failed because "Yako would have liked to obey, but Yatenga refused."[7]

The Ouagadougou rulers experienced less difficulty with the weaker Tenkodogo kingdom, which seldom attacked their vassals or territories. Instead, the rulers of Tenkodogo often sought the aid of the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou against their enemies or rebellious subjects. For example, when the Busansi subjects of the Tenkodogo Naba rebelled against him in the fifteenth century, Mogho Naba Dawoema of Ouagadougou went to his aid and defeated them.[8] However, when Korongo, the Tenkodogo Naba, asked Mogho Naba Wobogo to help him defeat a contestant for the nam in 1894, the Ouagadougou ruler refused and said he would acknowledge the victor.[9] In this case, personal considerations seem to have dictated the Mogho Naba's reply.

The rulers of Ouagadougou appear to have taken greater interest in the affairs of the Dimdamba. Here again, however, intervention was conditioned by personal considerations, and especially by relative strength. Failure to be prudent in this respect often resulted in disaster. Mogho Naba Doulougou's insistence on punishing Naba Piga (1806–23), a ruler of the Boussouma principality, resulted in his own death. One of Piga's subjects had fled to Ouagadougou to evade punishment, and the Mogho Naba had returned him with the injunction that he should be imprisoned but not killed. Nevertheless, Piga had the prisoner executed. Moreover, he sent a

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disrespectful message to the Mogho Naba asking that a horse which a Fulani had stolen from him and presented to the ruler be returned. Doulougou sent an army to chastise Piga, who quickly fled and later appealed to the Mogho Naba for pardon. No sooner had this pardon been granted than Piga again offended the Mogho Naba by granting refuge to his wayward son, who had been expelled from Ouagadougou. The Mogho Naba subsequently forgave his son, but he decided to punish the recalcitrant Piga once and for all. Piga fled at the approach of the royal army, but Doulougou, who had accompanied his troops, was wounded by an enemy arrow and died shortly after his return to Ouagadougou.[10]

A later Mogho Naba, Sanum (ca. 1861), fought, defeated, and executed Naba Zande of Boulsa for taxing the Boulsa people so heavily that they rebelled. After Zande was succeeded by his brother Yemde (ca. 1863–72), the Mogho Naba continued to intervene in Boulsa's affairs and eventually had Yemde executed. Yemde's undoing was the result of his inability or unwillingness to implement the Mogho Naba's desire—which was contrary to Mossi custom—to elect a ten-year-old boy to the chieftainship of Koupela district. The Koupela chief's brother ignored his young nephew and seized the nam; Yemde sent an army to depose him, but his men were routed. Suspecting treachery on Yemde's part, Mogho Naba Sanum sent an army to defeat and depose him and to place his father's brother in command of Boulsa. Yemde defeated the Mogho Naba's army. His victory was short-lived, however, because the Mogho Naba sent a larger army and routed his forces. Yemde fled to the territory of the Boussouma Dim and requested asylum. The Boussouma ruler, Ligidi, did not wish to incur the wrath of the Mogho Naba and dispatched Yemde to Ouagadougou. Yemde apparently convinced the Mogho Naba of his loyalty, but he was executed because he had inadvertently violated the rule that no descendant of a Kourita might see a Mogho Naba and live.[11]

Ligidi, in turn, found himself in conflict with the Mogho Naba. After surrendering Yemde to his sovereign, he had proceeded to Boulsa and seized some of the prisoner's property. At first the Mogho Naba paid no attention, but when he had made peace with Yemde's son, Kiba, he ordered Ligidi to return the property. Ligidi refused to do so and consequently became involved in a series of wars against Kiba and the Mogho Naba. Ligidi died of natural causes before peace was restored, leaving a legacy of hostility between Ouagadougou and Boussouma. Either in complicity with the ruling Mogho Naba (Wobogo) or in an attempt to gain his favor, the electors named Ligidi's brother, Kom, to the nam and ignored his son and rightful heir, Venewende. This unfortunate young man had no one to

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turn to, and fled to Wobogo for safety. Wishing to maintain good relations with Kom, the Mogho Naba forced Venewende to return to Boussouma, but with the injunction that he should not be killed. Nevertheless, the Boussouma ruler had the young prince executed. The angry Mogho Naba threatened reprisal and declared that "if the Boussouma chief was not careful, it would be too bad for all his people, because they would fare as badly as their chief."[12] He did not have an opportunity to carry out his threats, however, because the French arrived soon afterwards.

Whereas some Mogho Nanamse took an active interest in the affairs of their Dimdamba or even tried to control them, others hesitated to interfere with disobedient or recalcitrant subordinates, especially when they fought and quarreled among themselves. Mogho Naba Oubya did not interfere when a Boussouma ruler, Pougoula (1745-67), bragging that no one in the nation was strong enough to depose him, arrogantly annexed the Ouagadougou province of Pisila and chased its ruler into Yatenga. Pougoula then gave the chieftainship to the fugitive's son, on condition that he should henceforth recognize his sovereignty.[13] On another occasion, a recalcitrant Boussouma Dim called Zabo (ca. 1767-84) defeated and punished the people of the Mane principality for rejecting the ruler he had chosen for them. They insisted that the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou had given Zabo the right to express his preference for a certain ruler, but not the right of choice itself. They appealed to Mogho Naba Waraga for help, but he ignored them. It may well be that Waraga was too involved in a war with the recalcitrant Riziam Naba to interfere, but there is no evidence that he ever censured Zabo. Again, Mogho Naba Sanum apparently took no part when Zende (ca. 1862-76), the ruler of Tema principality, and Totoabo, the ruler of Yako, joined forces against the ruler of La in a dispute over an abducted wife.[14] Perhaps, like other Mossi rulers, he did not care to deal with men who fought over women.

The relationship between the Mogho Naba and the Dimdamba, then, apparently varied in accordance with the persons involved and their relative strength. Sometimes they quarreled and fought; sometimes the Mogho Naba remained aloof from the Dimdamba's affairs; and sometimes the Dimdamba obeyed their sovereign and came to his aid. The one aspect of this relationship that seems to stand out, especially when the Dimdamba had no serious grievance, is their reluctance to fight against the Mogho Naba. Even Piga, the most belligerent in a long line of quarrelsome Boussouma rulers, always fled when Mogho Naba Doulougou attacked him, because "he did not wish to oppose his sovereign."[15] As we have seen, Yemde did fight against Mogho Naba Sanum, but he did so mainly be-

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cause he thought Sanum had attacked him unjustly. For such acts of war, the Dimdamba involved usually lost their lives, and in at least one such case a Dim was turned over to the Mogho Naba by another Dim. We have seen that Dimdamba occasionally came to the aid of the Mogho Naba against another Dim.

A question of some importance is whether this relationship between the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou and the rulers of independent kingdoms and autonomous principalities was characteristic of Mossi society or a rather late development. Was warfare the natural concomitant of a system in which the normally powerful Ouagadougou ruler was sometimes too weak to command allegiance from his peers and subordinates? Did the Mogho Naba resort to warfare as the only possible means of exercising his authority when his commands were challenged or ignored? Delafosse states, "Sometimes . . . , especially in very recent times, discord arose between the emperor [of Ouagadougou] and some of his vassal kings: thus Naba Sanum had to fight against the desire for independence of the kings of Boussouma and Boulsa."[10] Delafosse seems to suggest that the Mossi people were undergoing a period of stress when the Europeans arrived, and were faced with significant new administrative problems.

Here Binger appears to support Delafosse's view:

> Ever since he acceded to the throne, [Mogho Naba Sanum] has been compelled to govern the Mossi with unmitigated despotism. His fear of losing power led him to take such severe measures that he was forced to relax them. As soon as his major vassals saw this, they took these concessions as signs of fear and began to conspire secretly against him. Today, the chiefs of Mani, Boussouma, Yako, and Koupela represent forces with which Naba Sanum will have to reckon. . . . Before long, the Mossi empire will break up; the country will organize into confederacies like those of Beledougou and Yatenga.[11]

It is not completely clear, however, whether Binger really understood the intricacies of the Mossi political organization. He lists as "vassals" of the Mogho Naba such territories as Mane, Kaya, Koupela, Bonsa, Boussouma, Djitenga, Boulsa, Dakay, and Doulougou, as though they were all related to Ouagadougou in the same way. In reality, some were autonomous and some were directly dependent on the Ouagadougou ruler. It is possible that at the time of Binger's visit, the relations between the Mogho Naba and his subordinates were so fluid that the outsider had difficulty in understanding them. If this is the case, then the situation in Mossi country had indeed changed when the Europeans came in.

Crozat, who says the Mossi governmental structure was feudal in na-

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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ture, offers what is probably the best analysis of power relations among the important Mossi chiefs. In commenting upon the Mogho Naba's inability to stop the war between Yako and Yatenga he asks, "How could it be otherwise? With what sanctions could this king without an army back up his orders if he ventured to give any? . . . In short, when the Ouagadougou ruler speaks, he is sometimes obeyed. If he is, all is well; if he is not, all is still well. Everything remains as before."[18] Crozat was mistaken if he believed that the Mogho Naba did not have a fighting force. What he did not have was a standing army to exercise his power whenever he wished. When he was able to summon an army, he was effective; when he was not, he had little power over any territory but his own. Crozat, like Binger, gives a strange picture of the political relationship between the Mogho Naba and the other rulers. He tells us that in the Mossi political hierarchy, "after the ruler of Ouagadougou comes the ruler of Boussouma, then the Yatenga ruler, and then the ruler of Yako."[19] Yatenga was traditionally independent of Ouagadougou, whereas Boussouma and Yako were simply autonomous principalities dependent on the Mogho Naba. It is possible that Crozat mistook the relative power of these various political entities for a hierarchical relationship. It is also possible that at the time of his visit, the Dimdamba felt sufficiently powerful to ignore the traditional hierarchy as far as their political relationship with other rulers was concerned, and were simply acknowledging relative gradations of power.

Clearly, the sovereignty of the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou over the independent kingdoms and autonomous principalities depended chiefly on military might. The stronger a Mogho Naba was, the more actively he tried to control the internal administration of the autonomous principalities and to exercise police powers over them or on their behalf. However, most Mogho Nanamse were content to claim superiority or control over the independent kingdoms and refrained from meddling in their affairs.

Within the Mogho Naba's own kingdom, however, the situation was different. Here, like other important Mossi rulers, he directed the administrative apparatus. For administrative purposes, the kingdom of Ouagadougou was divided into five large provinces (*weto*; sing. *weogho*; or *solem*, from *so*, "command"). Together they included some three hundred districts, in which there were over four thousand villages inhabited by some 862,000 persons.[20] (Not included here were districts and villages directly administered by the Mogho Naba.) The provinces were not compact physical entities, because their component units were scattered throughout the country. To be sure, some of the districts within a province were close together or even contiguous, but many others stood alongside districts be-

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less of the amount of millet harvested from the Mogho Naba's fields, there had to be one hundred baskets full of grain. If the number of baskets filled with the Mogho Naba's grain fell short of the mark, the serfs and slaves had to make up the difference with the produce of their own fields. The ceremony concluded with sacrifices to the royal ancestors, after which the Mogho Naba's wives, daughters, and sisters gave beer and kola nuts to the laborers.

As head of the central government, the Mogho Naba received revenue in the form of money and livestock which the district chiefs collected from the village people. These were given to him during an elaborate annual ceremony called the "Basgha" ("feast of the royal ancestors"). Several days before this post-harvest festival, the district chiefs and their retainers arrived in the capital and lodged with their provincial ministers. At a designated time during the ceremony, the district chiefs and nobles went to the palace. In provincial contingents and led by their ministers, they walked up to the sovereign's throne and gave the Mossi salute. After they had returned to their places, their servants gave the royal pages the presents they had brought to the palace.

The Dimdamba apparently made their annual contribution to the Mogho Naba at the time of the Basgha. There is one report that they took this opportunity to send gifts to the ruler's son, the Djiba Naba, as well. The Dimdamba customarily sent the Mogho Naba part of the goods they had seized in combat against non-Mossi peoples, as well as a tax (*fado*) out of the goods they had inherited from their predecessors.[8] There is also some evidence that the Mogho Naba solicited goods from the Dimdamba at other times. Crozat says:

> During my first visit to Yako, three envoys from Ouagadougou were at the chief's house. They were tax collectors. They had come to offer the vassal a silver bracelet sent by the sovereign. The Yako Naba responded by sending horses, captives, and cowries to Ouagadougou.[9]

Crozat could not understand this reciprocity between the Mogho Naba and his vassals, and questions whether the Mogho Naba really collected taxes from them. He concludes that the Mogho Naba did receive taxes, "but these are never given to him except in the form of presents which are reciprocated."[10] Crozat found it puzzling and disturbing that many of the Dimdamba had not given the Mogho Naba any "taxes" for several years. He indicated, moreover, that they did not wish to pay taxes to the Ouagadougou ruler even under the guise of an exchange of presents. This was especially true of the Yatenga Naba, who had not sent the Mogho Naba any presents for six or seven years prior to 1890. Crozat surmised that

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because of this delinquency, the Mogho Naba might hesitate to come to the aid of any of his vassals if a general war broke out. It is true that the Mogho Naba did not aid the Yatenga ruler when the French arrived. But whether this was because of his failure to pay taxes, or because the French conquest of the Yatenga coincided with a civil war there, we shall probably never know. We do know that many of the Mogho Naba's vassals came to his aid when the French finally arrived at Ouagadougou. It is my opinion that the gifts exchanged between Yatenga and Ouagadougou were not "tributary," but were more in the nature of tokens of friendship between two peers.

The Mogho Naba and his provincial ministers also received revenue as a function of their judicial roles. The nature and disposition of the fines levied against legal offenders were discussed in Chapter V. The Mogho Naba's fees came in the form of the traditional gifts the litigants gave him even before their cases were tried. These gifts were never regarded as bribes, for this would have contradicted the Mossi axiom that "the truth is at Ouagadougou."

The Mogho Naba inherited all the property of the Kamsaogho Naba, and claimed all the property of district chiefs who died without close relatives. He also received inheritance taxes (fado) from the estates of deceased district chiefs. In collecting the fado, the Mogho Naba first retained the horse on which the messenger came to announce the chief's death. He reciprocated by sending envoys with cowries and animals to be offered to their common ancestors at the chief's funeral. After the funeral, the envoys claimed the dead chief's quiver of arrows to take to Ouagadougou for deposit with those of other dead chiefs. Then they demanded the fado, and jestingly told the heirs that the Mogho Naba would be satisfied with nothing less than "a thousand of everything" (*tusri bumbu fa*) the deceased had possessed: wives, slaves, horses, cows, goats, chickens, articles of clothing, and so on. The heirs pleaded poverty and jokingly gave the envoys a few old and sickly animals, old chickens, tattered pieces of clothing, etc. Eventually, they handed out the fado, which usually consisted of livestock, clothing, food, weapons, jewelry, cowries, and even slaves. Lastly, they gave the envoys the chief's ceremonial horse and presents for themselves.

The Mogho Naba and his ministers collected a considerable amount of revenue from the traders who visited Ouagadougou and the larger market towns and village markets throughout the kingdom.[6] The Mossi (especially the assimilated Yarse) were good traders, and they benefited from their country's strategic location between the Sahara and the forest regions. According to Barth, some six caravan routes crossed the country, linking

they might take the lives and property of their subjects. There are many stories of avaricious chiefs who convicted wealthy commoners of spurious crimes and had them executed or banished in order to seize their wealth. There are also stories of twin tricksters, Raogo, a boy, and Poko, a girl, two *enfants terribles* who always succeeded in outwitting and killing avaricious chiefs. When I asked a district chief to explain the significance of the Raogo and Poko tales, he replied that they were "meaningless stories told by children who do not understand how difficult it is for a chief to command and protect men." This remark prompted one of his officials to add that in olden days, people gladly supported the Mogho Naba and his chiefs in order to be safe from their enemies—a statement which might have been made by a conscientious government official anywhere. However, whether commoners or chiefs, all Mossi believed that men must have government, and that without it chaos would prevail.

The Mossi political organization was subject to severe strains. For one thing, its economic basis was not very strong. True, goods and services were channeled to the capital from the smallest areas, and in time this permitted the establishment of increasingly complex governmental structures. Nevertheless, the Mossi fiscal system was not highly developed, and much of the revenue the rulers received came to them in the form of legal fees and gifts. Moreover, most of these revenues were irregular in nature.

Despite this fact, the Mossi believed that their rulers were wealthy—and there can be no doubt that they were wealthier than their subjects. Nevertheless, visiting Europeans found little difference between the standard of living of the chiefs and that of the people. Binger would have us believe that Mogho Naba Sanum bragged so much about imaginary wealth, including 10,000 horses, that he "managed to convince himself of it."[38] Binger's subsequent remarks about Sanum's resources are illuminating even if somewhat biased, because they throw light on the economic basis of the Ouagadougou kingdom. He tells us that Sanum's revenues were

> not well regulated. He lives on gifts and offerings which people have brought him with the aim of obtaining justice, or to demand something from him. He sometimes sends a band of men to capture slaves in Kipirsi country, or at least supports such ventures. But these revenues, like those of all the black chiefs, are not sufficient, because these men are prone to squander their resources. As a result, these sovereigns are compelled to use expedients in order to procure horses and other commodities. Thus, like the rulers of Tieba, Pegue, and Kong, Naba Sanum still has captives in villages devoted to agriculture, but he does not take proper care of these villages. If he does not receive enough millet in the form of gifts, he must sell his slaves in order to procure it.[39]

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Binger's statement about the "squandering" to which "all the black chiefs" are prone reveals his ignorance of the nature, role, and function of West African chiefs in general and of Mossi chiefs in particular. These men were often the center of redistribution systems that embraced their entire territory. The Mossi chiefs did not necessarily squander their resources when they used them to support their household, their administrative staff, and even visitors to their realm. A rather large portion of the millet the Mogho Naba received was not even used by his own household, but was held for gifts to visiting strangers. Binger himself benefited from the generosity of Mogho Naba Sanum, and he provides us with excellent data about how Boukary Koutou distributed his resources: "I can say that never has a chief given me food, kola nuts, and beer as often as he did. I received things to eat two or three times a day."[28] No Mossi chief could have done less. This was a role that chiefs had to play, and they lost power and prestige if they proved inhospitable or parsimonious either to visiting strangers or to their own subjects. 631 434 574 [114]

Binger's lack of insight into the economic basis of the Mossi political organization also kept him from obtaining a clear understanding of the political system itself. For example, he saw the loose political organization of the Mossi as a sign of decadence, and felt that the Ouagadougou kingdom was too weak to survive for any length of time: 642 114

> Before long the Mossi empire will break up, and the country will be organized into a confederacy like Beledougou and Yatenga. This is an event that we Europeans can only favor. Experience has shown us that as soon as a Negro chief commands more than 2,000 people, he dreams of empire; his needs grow, and he tries to expand. Since his revenues are small, he labors under a deficit, which he must remedy with slave raids. In a confederacy the chiefs do not reach this point so rapidly. As soon as one of them begins to rise, the others can band together and nip his ambition in the bud.[29]

It is quite true that many of the political systems in the western Sudan had a loose character similar to that of a "confederacy." This was not due to the vigilance of neighboring chiefs, however. From time to time, such powerful rulers as Sundiata, Mansa Musa, Sonni-Ali, El Hadj Omar, and Samory Touré did arise and conquer vast areas, but they were unable to sustain their gains over extended periods.

The political organization of the Mossi was not decadent but structurally weak—its economic base was never strong enough to support a higher degree of centralization. Strong chiefs only tested the limits of the system; they could not change the system itself. 642

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VIII

RELIGION AND GOVERNMENT

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642 RELIGION AND RITUAL played an important role in supporting and preserv-
[769] ing the Mossi political system. Religio-political ceremonies were centered
[776] around the ancestors (Keemse) and the earth deities (Tengkouga); the otiose high god (Ouennam or Naba Zid Ouende) had a very minor role.

769 The political importance of ancestor veneration lay in the fact that every
642 Mossi chief claimed Nyennega of Dagomba and her descendants, Ouedra-
778 ogo and Oubri, as his ancestors. Furthermore, possession of the amulets of Rialle, Nyennega's husband and Ouedraogo's father, legitimized possession
[613] of the nam. In order to rule, a Moaga had either to be a member of a royal lineage still in possession of the nam or to have received the nam from such
669 a lineage. No Moaga ever tried to usurp the nam of a kingdom or princi-
778 pality without trying to steal the royal amulets at the same time; nor, if his rebellion was successful, did he ever fail to claim that he had stolen the
642 amulets or had received them as a gift. Thus Yadega, who rebelled against
769 his father's brother, Mogho Naba Koudoumie, and founded the Yatenga kingdom, declared that he had obtained Rialle's amulets. He claimed that they had been given to him by his sister, Pabre, who had stolen them from Ouagadougou and had thus deprived that kingdom of any legitimate sanctions for power. Thus, when the Yatenga people declare that they are equal to Ouagadougou, they add that the only "amulets" that still legitimize the nam of the Ouagadougou dynasty are the droppings left behind by Pabre's horse as she fled northward.

769 Similarly, all the princes who founded principalities and proclaimed
642 their independence of Ouagadougou defended their action on the grounds
643 that they, being as close to the main line of descent as the Mogho Naba, were also entitled to rule. The younger sons of deceased Mogho Nanamse
[631] who were banished from the capital as Kouritadamba and who subse-
[634] quently became provincial Dimdamba also stressed their relationship to the royal ancestors. Even those district chiefs whose ancestors had prob-

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ably been younger sons sent to rule in conquered territories claimed that their ancestors were direct descendants of Ouedraogo and Oubri. Thus, to the Mossi, the power to rule was intimately linked to closeness of descent from the royal ancestors. The supernatural power of these ancestors, and the vigilance they were believed to maintain over the affairs of their descendants, were regarded as important factors in Mossi government.

From the moment when the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou or any other Mossi ruler "drank the namtibo" and thereby received the nam of his ancestors, he had the right—indeed, the duty—to offer sacrifices to these ancestors in the name of his subjects. Every night, throughout Mossi country, the Baloum Naba of every ruler performed an act of supplication (Kwaga Basgha) to the ancestors. He beseeched them to protect the subjects of their descendants through the night, to maintain peace in Mossi country, and to grant health, children, and prosperity to all Mossi. This nightly ceremony was climaxed yearly by an elaborate ritual in honor of the ancestors (called the Basgha in some areas, and the Pelegha, Filigha, or Kinkiriga in others) that began at the highest levels of the government and ultimately linked every Mossi chief and lineage head.

The Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou, like the other Mogho Nanamse and Dimdamba, initiated this ceremony in his own kingdom. His celebration, called "M'barengma," was held at the end of the Mossi agricultural year and after the Soretasgho. Thus, the M'barengma was a New Year's festival in thanksgiving for good crops, as well as the annual Feast of the Dead. A few weeks before the first moon of the new year (the *ki-basgha* or *ki-pelegha*), the Mogho Naba ordered his soghondamba and samande-kamba to clean up the palace buildings and courtyards—an activity intended to notify the ever-vigilant ancestors that preparations were being made to offer sacrifices in their honor. A short time later, the Mogho Naba gave grain from his fields to the Pughtiema so she could prepare millet water for the sacrifices. Present-day Mossi insist that part of the grain came from the first ears harvested that year and part from those of the previous year. This was supposed to symbolize the continuity between crops, mirroring the continuity between the ruler and his ancestors. A few days before the principal ceremony, the Mogho Naba ordered the Larhalle Naba to pour millet water and sacrifice chickens on the graves of former Mogho Nanamse.

Shortly before the ki-basgha moon appeared, the ruler had to leave his palace at night to elude the ancestors, who had been attracted by the preparations and who were expected to be angry when they discovered that the sacrifices were not yet ready. The unjust ruler feared ancestral sanctions; the just ruler that his ancestors might want him to join them. One night he

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climax of this gift-giving came when the ruler sent the Bendere Naba about 19,000 cowries and a slave.[8] This ceremony terminated at nightfall.

The close of the Mogho Naba's Basgha heralded the start of similar ceremonies throughout his kingdom. The heads of the other Mossi kingdoms and the Dimdamba were free to hold their own Basgha when they wished; but the Ouagadougou ruler's own subjects, including the provincial ministers, district chiefs, village chiefs, and lineage heads, apparently were not. One reason for this, aside from respect for the ruler, was that the important officials' head wives had to wait for the yeast (*dabili*) from the Mogho Naba's beer before they could prepare the sacrificial offerings for their husbands' ancestors. This dabili went from district to district or to several districts at once, depending on whether the chiefs celebrated Basgha at the same time or successively. Thus, the dabili from the capital united all the wives of the royal clan, and made for both a ritual continuity in the veneration of all ancestors and a strengthening of religious and political bonds.

The Basgha ceremonies on the district level were much less elaborate than those held at Ouagadougou, but just as important. The district chief, too, had his buildings repaired and his grain distributed for sacrifices for the ancestors. A few days before the actual ceremony, he ordered the Gande Naba to pour millet water on the graves of recently deceased chiefs and to sacrifice chickens there. As in Ouagadougou, these sacrifices were offered to induce the chiefly ancestors to grant the villagers health, food, and children. Unlike the Mogho Naba, most district chiefs did not ritually hide from their ancestors for several nights prior to the ceremony. Some of them did change their sleeping place within the compound every night, and the court people always slept indoors during this period. On the night of the Basgha itself, however, the district chiefs did not sleep in their compounds.

As in Ouagadougou, the Pughtiema performed the main ceremony by pouring millet water as a libation to the ancestors who visited her hut. She was assisted by the Baloum Naba, who had possession of the namtibo. Apparently, the district chief remained in hiding and took no part in the ceremony. But he was the main figure in the morning ceremony, which differed little from that of Ouagadougou. In some districts the Tengsoba performed a public sacrifice to the ancestors. He was given the namtibo—sacred objects that had belonged to former district chiefs—and poured libations and sacrificed chickens to all of the chief's ancestors. He also prayed both to these ancestors and to his own on the chief's behalf, and beseeched them to grant long life and happiness to the district population. He also declared that the sacred objects would seek out and kill any enemies of the local ruler, wherever they might be. Once this ritual had been com-

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not enter Mossi territory. Nevertheless, he obtained rather precise information on the important caravan routes leading from Timbuktu through the Mossi trade centers of Ouagadougou, Kaya, Yako, and Koupela, down to Salaga and other towns in Ghana, and even across to Sansane Mango in Togoland. His data on the Mossi are invaluable:

> The whole triangle interposed between the Niger toward the north, and the country of the Eastern Mandingoes or Wangarawa toward the south, appears to be inhabited by a single race of people whose language, although they are divided into several states and nations, nevertheless appears originally to have been the same stock. It is very probable that this race in ancient times occupied the whole upper course of the Niger, and that this tract may have been wrested from it in later times by the Songhai and the Mandingoes, especially that section of the latter which is generally called Bambara. These are the Gourma toward the N.E., the Tombo toward the N.W., and between them the Mossi. . . . The strongest among these pagan kingdoms five centuries ago, and even at the present moment, is that of the Mossi, although the country is split into a number of small principalities, almost totally independent of each other, and paying only some slight homage to the ruler of the principality of Woghodogo.[7]

Europe learned more about the Mossi from Sigismund Koelle, who visited Sierra Leone in 1854. His informant was one Andrew Dixon, who had lived in Koupela before being captured and sold into slavery. He furnished information on the location of the Mossi, their wars with the Busansi, and their important commercial and political relations with the Ashanti.[8] Koelle's report, taken in conjunction with the reports of Dupuis, Bowdich, Clapperton, and Barth, shows that the Ashanti, like the Hausa and other coastal peoples, were protecting their trade when they attempted to isolate the peoples of the interior from the Europeans. But as soon as the British defeated the Ashanti in the war of 1873–74, the Sudan was opened and adventurers poured in. In 1877 and 1878, two missionaries of the Basel Mission visited the northern regions of Ghana, and subsequently gave a good description of Mossi commerce in that area.[9] Lonsdale, who visited Salaga in 1881, found among the traders in the market "the Mossi with his cattle, sheep, and slaves—these latter, generally Gurunsi, are not exposed for sale in the street or market, but can be seen where the owner resides."[10]

The activities of the various European nations in West Africa and other regions at this time led to military and diplomatic difficulties, which the Berlin Conference of 1884–85 was convened to resolve. Agreement was reached to assign "spheres of influence" to the various European nations, to regulate trade, and to provide for arbitration between rival claimants of conquered or "protected" territories. In West Africa, this meant the end

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laborers.[3] In desperation, the French sought help from those very chiefs whose power they wished to curb, especially from the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou, whom they regarded as the supreme ruler of the Mossi. However, they met with the same resistance: 177 648* 643

> The king of the Mossi, Kouka Naba [Mogho Naba Sighiri], is lavish with vows of devotion and fidelity, but these vows are never translated into action. It is impossible to obtain from him any pertinent information about the country—he tries to give the impression that he knows nothing about it—or any information about Boukary Koutou [then in exile, but still a threat to the French], of whom he pretends to have no news.[4]

One cannot tell whether the Mogho Naba knew about Boukary Koutou's activities, but it is highly unlikely that he could have given the French much information about the country even if he had wished to do so. No Mogho Naba ever possessed this kind of information. The Dimdamba and the Kombemba paid allegiance and tribute to their superior ruler, but did not furnish him with specific data on their principalities and districts. [631] [651]

The death of Mogho Naba Sighiri in 1905 enabled the French officials to secure the election of a Mogho Naba they could control and to change the Mossi political organization. Sighiri's principal heir was his sixteen-year-old son, Saidou Congo, who in the opinion of the Mossi electoral college "could not keep the country" because of his youth. The French, keenly aware that they could more easily control a young ruler, insisted that Saidou be given the nam, and he became Mogho Naba Kom. Two years later, in 1907, the French began to reorganize the kingdom of Ouagadougou and the surrounding territories. They suppressed certain districts and principalities, enlarged some, and unified others by granting them control over the smaller political entities that lay near or within their boundaries. These changes were often made without regard for the traditional hierarchies, and many district chiefs found themselves controlling other district chiefs, while Dimdamba were reduced to the level of district chiefs. 175* 177 643 648*

The French also reorganized the provincial administration, replacing the five ministers with persons more favorably disposed toward their rule. The Larhalle Naba was replaced in 1908 after he had mysteriously left the capital for Koudougou. The Kamsaogho Naba was deposed by the Mogho Naba, and was replaced by a nominee of the French. As in the case of the district chiefs, the French shifted the territorial responsibilities of these ministers "without taking into consideration the hierarchy prevailing among [them]. The intention of the administration apparently was to reward certain young and capable ministers to the detriment of those who were old."[5] One commentator concludes: "In view of the youth of the 175* 177 648* 645

*177 to cut down the length of service of our draftees as much as possible."[25]
*648 The Governor of the Upper Volta made full use of the Mossi chiefs to develop the colony, and although some chiefs may have objected to the labor imposed on their subjects, others seemingly approved. In commenting upon cotton production in the Upper Volta, Ossendowski writes:

*175 177 *648 248

> Cotton is an artificial crop and one the value of which is not entirely clear to the natives. The chiefs with their superior intellect, seeing the profit to be obtained from the plantation of cotton, are continually enlarging the area of the fields, and resort to draft animals, ploughs, manures, and even partial irrigation of the fields; nevertheless, the great mass of the population submit rather unwillingly to those instructions of the administration which aim at the development of cotton cultivation in the colony.[26]

[631] Delavignette's comment on the role of the chiefs in cotton production seems to indicate that they, like their subjects, had to conform to the desires of the French:

[464] [622] [465]

> [The French] lived at Ouagadougou in the shade of the great Nabas, and because [the latter] possessed servitors and were at the head of docile provinces, [the French] dignified by the name of "custom," and in any case adjudged convenient, this domestication of the peasants whereby they were forced to work in a common field under the authority of the village chief, and for a salary which was theoretically to be distributed among them afterwards. Sometimes cercle guards were stationed in these fields.[27]

*175 The Governor carried out many of Van Vollenhoven's reforms con-
177 cerning the Mossi chiefs, and instructed his district administrators to
*648 respect the chiefs and to seek their aid in governing the people. De Beau-
631 miny, an administrator in the Upper Volta, contrasts the old policy with the new:

[643]

> Not without reason, we followed the rule of regarding the great black chiefs as exploiters of their peoples, and this caused us to introduce and to maintain a policy aimed at reducing their authority. Later on we were compelled to abandon this policy in the face of discouraging results. During the past few years we have restored power and prestige to the Mogho Naba and to his vassals, the Mossi chiefs. They are now paid by us, and they administer their kingdoms and territories under our guidance and under the supervision of an extremely small European staff (one official for every 60,000 inhabitants). The rulers are now helping us to restore, on a newer and sounder basis, a political edifice which had once appeared to be on the point of collapse.[28]

An official report also stated that the Mossi chiefs

> understand that the time of their absolute power, and the privileges of their "medieval lordships," are fated to wear away gradually. Certainly, the main-

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tenance of their authority and prestige is indispensable, and the local administration is firmly resolved not only to preserve it but even to strengthen it. Henceforth, however, this authority and prestige will be upheld on the basis of principles and methods better suited to the new order of things which has been established.[29]

The administration tried to educate some of the sons of the chiefs "in order to attune them to progress and to the fundamental principles of our policy."[30] It encountered some resistance from chiefs who resented what they considered the "recruitment" of their children for education, and from other chiefs who were afraid that, if educated, their sons might be converted to Catholicism and thus would be unable to perform the traditional religio-political ceremonies. Nevertheless, one official states quite proudly that "Despite some resistance, the results obtained so far are encouraging and of such a nature as to allay our anxiety: 671 sons of chiefs are now attending our schools, among them 52 sons of provincial chiefs and 342 sons of district chiefs."[31] However, very few of these boys even learned French well enough to take part in the government of their society.

Hesling also made an effort to improve the material welfare of the Mossi chiefs. He felt that under the previous administration the chiefs had been "inadequately remunerated," and he considered this bad for their morale. He therefore increased the appropriation for the salaries of chiefs from 86,000 francs in the 1919 budget to 190,000 francs in the 1924 budget, and counted on their receiving an additional 163,260 francs from tax commissions during the year. The Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou, considered the emperor of the Mossi and judged loyal, efficient, and capable by the French, was granted a stipend of 25,000 francs, while the Yatenga Naba, considered his subordinate and judged less capable, was granted only 8,700 francs.[32] Only 276 chiefs out of a total of 497 in the territory received any stipend at all that year, because even an augmented budget was too small to provide funds for the lesser chiefs. These chiefs, in the words of one official, "were often inadequate or incapable, but . . . could not be replaced, either because they had no qualified successors or because the traditional system placed an obstacle in the way."[33] Instead of salaries, they received seeds of new plant species such as mangoes, and they were helped in building dams to irrigate their fields and in sinking deep wells near their compounds. In addition to these material rewards, the Governor increased the prestige of the chiefs by giving them medals and honors.

Despite these increased salaries and honors, and the more important role they now played in the administration of their subjects, the Mossi

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*175 chiefs did not regain any of their traditional power. They remained auxil-
*177 *648 iaries of the administration. Taking Mogho Naba Kom as an example,
631 one report states that this "simple, intelligent, compliant man served as
643 news agent and made himself useful to the political administration" until the arrival of Hesling, when he took a livelier interest in the affairs of the colony.[24] Another source says of the same monarch:

> Free of the ancestral traditions that forbade him to leave his palace, and curious about progress and administration, he travels on all the roads and, under our supervision, busies himself with the settlement of administrative problems, to which he lends the weight of his authority. He makes the proposals for the nomination of province and district chiefs; he encourages his subjects to work and produce. Finally, he fulfills with the greatest dignity the representative functions that devolve upon him at his palace and in the official ceremonies.[25]

While it is true that the Mogho Naba made proposals for the nomination of chiefs, he was powerless to prevent their dismissal if they incurred the displeasure of the administration—a frequent occurrence during the Hesling period. For example, when the administration deposed Naba Boulga of Doulougou district for "incompetence" and placed him in "enforced residence" in a neighboring district, the French officials encouraged the election of Bila Kongo primarily because he was a former cercle guard. Bila Kongo was assassinated in 1924, and the Mogho Naba named Mahama Ouedraogo to take his place. This new chief soon had difficulties with the administration, however, and was deposed for exacting unauthorized taxes from his subjects and for abusing his authority. Mogho Naba Kom then appointed Ousmane Ouedraogo, but he was deposed for "incompetence" and exiled to Sao district.

*175 On the other hand, Hesling made few attempts to change the traditional
*177 political and administrative structures of the Mossi. One contemporary
*648 source says:
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> Since its inception the Government of the Upper Volta has made no changes or innovations, or at best very few, in this connection. The native administrative entities in the cercles of Ouagadougou, Ouahigouya, Kaya, and Fada-N'Gourma have remained the same as those which Haut-Sénégal et Niger transferred to the colony in 1919. . . . Only in 1922 did the cercle of Kou-
> [634] dougou have its "Gurunsi" districts separated from its "Mossi" districts to
> [635] form a new province, which was placed under the command of the Leo Naba, a chief of the same Gurunsi race. Tenkodogo, a cercle made up of a large number of small districts ruled by thoroughly inept chiefs, has been the object of a partial internal reorganization since the beginning of 1923. The number of its native *circonscriptions* [districts] has been reduced from 82 to 73.[26]

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These were minor changes indeed, but they truncated the power of the 177
Mossi chiefs over the Gurunsi and Busansi, which had been on the increase 648*
as recently as the 1880's. Except for these slight changes, however, the Mossi 631
traditional organization remained as it had been since the immediate post-conquest period.

Instead of changing the traditional administrative structure, the Gov- 175*
ernor introduced a new administrative device, the *Conseil de notables* 177
indigènes (Council of Native Notables) in Ouagadougou in April 1920, 648*
and subsequently established similar councils at Ouahigouya, Tenkodogo, 646
Kaya, and Koudougou. By establishing these councils, the administration hoped to provide the Mossi with a better understanding of the ideals and standards of French policy; to place the French administrators in closer contact with the people, who "had been almost totally ignorant of the functioning of [the French] administration"; and to form "an elite who will later be able to contribute in a closer and more personal way to the economic and financial life of the colony."[37] The council at Ouagadougou, which was to serve as a model for Mossi country, was to be presided over by the cercle commanders and to have from ten to sixteen members, including the traditional provincial ministers of the Mossi (with life membership); members of the Moslem community in Ouagadougou; and representatives of foreign groups living in the capital, of French citizens, and of the veterans of World War I. No provision was made to include the Mossi chiefs, but hope was expressed that they would support these councils and work with them.

These councils failed primarily because they turned out to be organs of the French administration and in fact functioned as such, and because their members had varied and often conflicting status. They met two or three times a year at administrative centers and discussed such things as personal taxes, the allocation and execution of prestations, the use of Mossi labor in foreign areas, the licensing and taxation of African traders and merchants, the status of women, the expansion of cultivation, stock breeding, and the collection of shea-butter nuts and kapok pods. None of the Mossi or African representatives had sufficient power or knowledge to challenge the ideas or recommendations of the European members. And the Mossi ministers, while submissive to the Europeans, found it difficult to accept as equals the representatives of non-Mossi peoples who prior to the conquest had lived at Ouagadougou only at the sufferance of the Mogho Naba; nor were they willing to discuss administrative affairs with these people or with the Mossi commoners who represented the war veterans. Ultimately, the councils became rubber stamps for the policies of the

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were seldom able to follow a case higher than the subdivision level. In cases involving long imprisonment or the death penalty, the relatives of the condemned person usually learned about the sentence through rumors from the capital, but seldom through the administration.

One judicial duty which the administration gave the Mossi chiefs and which they had always disliked was the adjudication of domestic cases. They found such cases even more difficult and distasteful after Hesling issued a circular on "The Condition of the Native Woman," which is summarized in a semi-official report as follows:

> [The Governor] is pained to see [the Mossi woman] so often subjected to a special form of slavery which, notably at the time of marriage, reduces her to the role of a domestic animal. Without wishing to interfere with ingrained native traditions, the Governor desires "to prime the desirable evolution by means of judicial decisions." Thus he comes to the decision that in those lawsuits concerning marriage in which formerly the woman was not consulted, she must henceforth be present and must argue the case with her husband. M. Hesling trusts that this procedural reform, which he hopes will give the native woman "a consciousness of her individuality and her rights," will be followed in the courts by further reforms. First of all [the courts] must weaken and then progressively modify those traditions which promote injustice toward women. . . . Questions will no doubt be raised as to whether it is necessary to set up regulations on such matters. However, M. Hesling advises his administrators to adjust [such regulations] to, and apply them with respect for, ancestral traditions. It will be interesting to see the results obtained in this attempt, and to see whether the "mousses" [a malapropism denoting Mossi women] of the Upper Volta will acquire some individuality.[40]

The Mossi chiefs were not told that the Governor's circular recommending a change in the status of women stipulated that traditional practices be taken into account. But even if they had been told, they would not have been impressed, because any fundamental change in the status of women would have placed their whole society in jeopardy. Woman exchange stood at the core of a social, economic, and political nexus that held Mossi society together. True, in pre-conquest times most quarrels and lawsuits were caused by trouble over women, but the marriage system was upheld by all the other institutions. Even after the arrival of the French and the weakening of the chiefs' judicial role, the Mossi could punish violators of the marriage system by imposing social sanctions. They now feared that if the French passed laws giving the women free choice in marriage, and the chiefs had to adjudicate on the basis of these laws, all traditional sanctions would become obsolete. Neither the chiefs nor the Mossi on the Councils of Native Notables nor the elders welcomed any discussion about

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the status of women. They maintained that the French had conquered the Mossi men, not the women, and that the administration should not interfere with the way in which a Moaga treated his wife. Ironically enough, there was little the administration could do for the Mossi women, since the latter were too timid to approach the Europeans. Most of them continued to react to maltreatment from their husbands by running away, but now they went to the Gold Coast with labor migrants instead of returning to their lineage.

Although the Mossi chiefs had little autonomy in the administration of their subjects, and had to look to the administration for guidance in nearly everything they did, they were not completely powerless. They were the representatives of the colonial administration on the local level, and as such they could control their subjects through the differential allocation of prestations. Those Mossi who had maintained the traditional respect for the chiefs could look forward to less arduous tasks for the administration and to the avoidance of forced labor or army recruitment. Those who by their actions or attitude indicated that they had lost respect for the chiefs were penalized accordingly. Chiefs were also able to retain some control over their subjects because they were still the centers of social, economic, and political relations within their territories. They still received homage and presents from their more loyal or traditionalistic subjects, and with these goods and services they could bind other persons to themselves. Clever chiefs were able to manipulate the colonial administration and use it to enhance their traditional position so successfully that the administration and the missionaries had to take these men into account whenever they wished to establish contact with the population.

The desire of the missionaries to establish missions and schools for the purpose of converting the Mossi to Christianity presented the chiefs with a great challenge because, unlike the administration, the missionaries tried to establish direct contact with the people. The chiefs not only did not like to have Europeans living in their midst, but feared that they would lose control over their subjects who went to live near the missions. However, the chiefs could not refuse to grant the missionaries land on which to build missions and schools. They also provided labor for them, just as they did for the construction of administrative buildings and roads. Similarly, the chiefs recruited children for the mission schools in the same spirit as they recruited students for the schools of the administration. The difference between the Catholic missionaries and the administration with respect to education was that while the former were interested in educating the children of chiefs, they were also interested in children from other backgrounds. Nevertheless, the majority of chiefs continued to send to school

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only those children whose parents could not prevent them from being sent away. Many of the boys came from serf and commoner families; a few others were the orphan sons or very young sons of chiefs. As a result, few of the chiefs' sons received an education, and thus they were later unable to compete effectively with commoners who had gained a valuable education at the missions.

Acknowledging the average Moaga's refusal to adopt Catholicism as long as his chiefs remained pagan, the missionaries made a valiant attempt to convert the chiefs. Monsignor Socquet reports that when asked why they did not become Catholics most Mossi replied: " 'We are looking to our chief,' that is to say, 'We will follow our chief in conversion as in all other matters. If he is in favor of it, we will not go against his will.' " Socquet concludes: "It is thus easy to understand how important is the conversion of the chiefs, or at least their sympathy for our religion, to the spread of Catholicism."[41] However, the chiefs and their eldest sons were the most difficult to convert because they were responsible for supervising and carrying out the traditional sacrifices to the royal ancestors, without whose help the Mossi people believed that they could not survive.

The attempts of the missionaries to recruit as many girls as possible for education and conversion alienated the chiefs, because it got them involved in the delicate problem of the status of women and struck at one of the few remaining bulwarks of their traditional power. The problem was that many of the girls whom the missionaries wanted as students were or had been betrothed, or were actually living in their husbands' compounds, when they were taken to the mission. Here the girls were educated and, in the words of Sister Marie-André, "wished to abandon those practices" that were "repugnant to them"—*i.e.*, they rejected polygynous marriages and desired to choose their own spouses.[42] Those men who lost fiancées or wives as a result of missionary activities sought redress from their chiefs. But the chiefs were powerless against the missionaries, and after the promulgation of Heiling's circular nothing could be done. Many Mossi chiefs were also parties to the defeated marriage alliances because of their involvement in the pughaiure system. Because their prestige and power were at stake, and because they were unable to combat the Europeans openly, these chiefs often used devious means to spirit away the girls from the missions and to return them to their fiancés or husbands. Such activities angered the missionaries, who through the administrators either punished the guilty chiefs or sought new legislation in this area.

The chiefs, the missions, and the French administration were perpetually embroiled because both the chiefs and the missions wanted Mossi women for their own purposes. The administration was caught in the

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middle. The Mossi accused the missionaries of being especially anxious to get girls who could become the wives of their converts, and accused them of "stealing" the women. Paradoxically, this charge is supported by a missionary of the White Fathers:

> A Mossi who is unable to acquire a wife by traditional means must either remain unmarried or seduce another man's wife . . . they must choose between celibacy and immorality.
>
> Such a state of affairs creates many problems for the missions, especially since the system is recognized and sanctioned by the colonial authorities. . . . Young native Christians are obviously placed in a very awkward position. Their conversion angers their parents, who refuse to give them a wife; neither will their friends bestow a daughter upon them, because they know that they will not receive one in return, since a Christian may not give a daughter in marriage to a pagan. . . . *Consequently, unless the missionaries help them to find a wife, they must remain unmarried—a very discouraging prospect.* [Italics mine.][48]

The Mossi chiefs objected strongly to these activities of the missionaries on behalf of their converts, for they insisted that marriages could not legally take place outside the traditional pattern of reciprocity in woman exchange. They argued that the priests had no daughters, but that once they had obtained wives for their male converts, the daughters of these converts would in fact be pughsiudse to the priests and would be used by them to obtain further converts. There was some truth in this argument. Some young men, anxious to obtain wives without trouble and hard work, approached the mission girls, only to be told that the missionaries alone could sanction their marriage. The priests asked only that the potential husbands become Catholics. Some young men agreed and became Catholics; others reneged on their promise after they had been baptized and married. When a young man left the Church himself and also forbade his wife to go to church, the missionaries sought help from the district chief. If he did not satisfy them, they asked the district commander to intervene on their behalf. The young man then had to return to the Church with his wife or leave the district. Many men chose the latter course, taking their wives to visit some distant relatives or to the Gold Coast, until the women, burdened by motherhood and reintegrated into the traditional social system, lost all desire to renew their association with the missionaries. Under these circumstances, the missionaries could not summon the couple to the administrative center, because they had not violated any of the tenets of the Governor's circular. Furthermore, most administrators, like the Mossi chiefs, had little interest in such cases.

The Mossi chiefs considered the Catholic missionaries a greater threat

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to Mossi society and to their own authority than the French administration itself. This was primarily due to the fact that these missionaries, as Frenchmen, were very deeply involved not only in preaching Christianity, but also in changing Mossi society by introducing modern medical practices and education. Moreover, as was later brought out, they did not hesitate to use coercion to gain their ends. In seeking to understand why the number of patients in a maternity clinic had declined from an all-time high in the late 1920's and early 1930's to almost zero in the late 1940's, André Dupont, a Catholic missionary, was told by Mossi women, "We are no longer forced to go." He comments: "Was it the fear of sanction that accounted for the unanimous use of the clinic? Alas! It would seem to be so. The use of force and sanction have made a charitable institution odious. It would have been better if the mothers had only been encouraged to use the clinics. 'These natives do not understand,' I am sometimes told. But how are they expected to understand?"[44]

The American Protestant missionaries did little to challenge the authority of either the Mossi chiefs or the French administration. They were interested only in religious education, and concentrated on teaching the Scripture. The British social critic Geoffrey Gorer, who visited the Mossi during the Hesling period, reports: "There were some American missionaries in this village, a whole family living in a house filled with texts; I do not know what creed they preached or with what success. . . . They spoke with a dispassionate 'none of our business' disapproval of the ill treatment of the negroes, who they said were ruled entirely by fear."[45]

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The Moslems, on the other hand, took advantage of the declining power of the Mossi chiefs to spread their doctrines. They pointed out, with little fear of contradiction, that formerly the chiefs had checked the spread of Islam in order to protect their own religion, which supported their political power, but that this power had now been broken by the French. They continued to preach that as soon as all the black people became Moslems the whites would leave, and pointed out that whereas the missionaries had succeeded in getting the administration to attack the marriage customs of the pagan Mossi, they had not interfered with the marriage customs of the Moslem Mossi.[46] Moreover, the Moslems tried to impress upon the chiefs that conversion to Islam brought with it the benefit of being judged according to Koranic principles rather than native law or French statutes. This propaganda was relatively successful, and by the end of the Hesling period the number of Koranic schools and converts among the Mossi had increased eightfold. True to form, however, the Mossi chiefs seldom adopted Islam or permitted their elder sons to do so. But they did allow

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their younger sons to become Moslems, and soon abandoned their active resistance to Islam.

Hesling did not permit the Mossi chiefs to revive their traditional religio-political rituals and ceremonies such as the Tense, but he continued to tolerate the Basgha. The French banned the Mossi market chiefs, because they believed (with some justification) that these officials used their offices to procure revenue for the chiefs. The difficulty was that the market chiefs were also responsible for arranging sacrifices to the market deities, which in the absence of such sacrifices would not protect the people from quarrels and violence in the market place. Some chiefs covertly retained their market chiefs; others obeyed the administration and remained anxious over the behavior of their subjects in the market. In general, however, most Mossi chiefs tried to adjust to the religious changes that were taking place, and sought to maintain at least surface amicability with all religious groups. Commenting upon the behavior of the Mogho Naba in this regard, Dim Delobson states:

> The Mogho Naba, above all, is a believer in animism like all his subjects, and it is hard to understand how he manages to reconcile his fetishism with the complex dogmas of Islam and with the many interdictions of Christianity. However, the Mogho Naba is quite capable of being a Catholic or a Moslem on appropriate occasions, while at the same time respecting the traditions of his ancestors. Thus, when the Christians are celebrating Christmas, the emperor of the Mossi devoutly attends midnight Mass. Nevertheless, he wears his fez [really the bonnet which is the symbol of his office], just as the bishop wears his miter. He likewise embraces Islam for the three Moslem festivals.[47]

Hesling failed in his attempt to develop the Upper Volta as a viable colony, and many of the chiefs whom he had used as his auxiliaries lost not only a great deal of power but also a great deal of prestige in the eyes of their subjects because of the role they had played vis-à-vis the administration. By 1929 the economy of the Upper Volta was in poor condition: cotton production had declined; taxes (raised from 5,800,000 francs in 1921 to 18,274,000 francs in 1927 and scheduled to be raised to 26,400,000 francs in 1930) were unbearable; many of the roads that were too extensive, too little used, and too difficult to maintain had been abandoned; and more than 46,000 laborers who had worked in the cotton fields and on the roads had fled to the neighboring Gold Coast.[48] The Colonial Minister, Sarraut, ordered that the colony of the Upper Volta be dismembered. He states in his decree of September 1932 that the suppression of the Upper Volta "would permit appreciable savings, and would make the adminis-

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XI

CHIEFS AND POLITICIANS

THE MOSSI CHIEFS were neither present nor represented at the Brazzaville Conference, and thus had no voice in the discussions about the postwar political structure of the territories and their place in this structure. The delegates laid the groundwork for the governmental structure, but failed to define the role of the chiefs.[1] Thus, when the first postwar elections were held in August 1945 to select municipal officers (the first elections held in French West Africa outside of Senegal), none of the African chiefs had a role aside from their unofficial influence on their subjects.[2] The Mossi who were in Abidjan, Ivory Coast, and who were qualified to vote took part in the election, but the Mossi in Mogho could not vote because their towns had not yet been granted municipal status. 175* 666 631

The first election in which the Mossi and their chiefs voted was the one held in October 1945 to elect delegates from the Ivory Coast (Ouagadougou was then considered the Upper Ivory Coast) to the Constituent Assembly in Paris, which was to establish the Fourth French Republic. Félix Houphouët-Boigny, a Baulé chief, planter, and founder of the African Agricultural Union (Syndicat Agricole Africain), had won the municipal elections in Abidjan, and now sought the support of the Abidjan Mossi for his candidacy to the Assembly. The Mossi spokesman in Abidjan, Zebango Pohi, stated that the Mossi would vote only for a Voltaic, and that the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou (who because of his father's reputation and his own educational qualifications was now acknowledged as the spokesman for all Mossi chiefs) would decide whom the Mossi would support.[3] Houphouët-Boigny then sought the support of the Mogho Naba, but the ruler was committed to a policy of detaching Mossi country from the Ivory Coast and named one of his own traditional ministers, the Baloum Naba. Houphouët-Boigny and his supporters were reportedly "greatly surprised by the Mogho Naba's choice. They felt that the honest but illiterate Baloum Naba was unqualified for the task, and, moreover, could not hope to gain the sup- 175* 666 648+ [643]

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*175 port of the coastal Ivory Coast population. There was little they could do
*648 about it, however, because 'the decision of the Mogho Naba was irrevo-
666 cable.'"[4]

[643] The election was hotly contested. The candidates based their campaigns
*175 on local issues: taxes, forced labor, the lack of public services, the status of
666 the traditional chiefs, colonialism, racial discrimination, and so on. The
665 Parti Démocratique de la Côte d'Ivoire (PDCI), led by Houphouët-Boigny, stressed the need for combating racial discrimination and exploitation by European planters. The Union pour la Défense des Interêts de la Haute-Volta (UDIHV), formed by the Mogho Naba and a group of mission-educated young men and led by the Baloum Naba, stressed the need to end forced labor, especially among the Mossi, and to place all the Mossi under one territorial government. The UDIHV realized that it had little chance of gaining votes in the south, and therefore concentrated its efforts in the north. However, no credence is to be given to the story that "Whenever [the Baloum Naba] was free from [official] supervision, he told the people, 'Vote for my friend Houphouët. . . . What would I do in Paris, with my forty wives and at my age? I can't speak a blasted word of French.'"[5] Houphouët-Boigny won the election by the surprisingly narrow margin of 12,650 to 11,620.[6]

*175 Houphouët-Boigny played a leading role in persuading the first Con-
*648 stituent Assembly to submit to the voters a number of important liberal
668 colonial reforms. These included the abolition of the Indigénat; the free-
[646] dom of meeting and association; the bestowal of French citizenship on co-
[177] lonial peoples without affecting their traditional personal status; the use of the French Penal Code in all courts dealing with criminal cases; and the abolition of forced labor.[7]

*175 There was some discussion in the Assembly of what role the traditional
631 chiefs should play in the projected political structure of Overseas France.
646 One group of delegates held that "the structure of the local Assemblies
177 should be tied intimately to the existing structure of the overseas societies. Otherwise, they would be bogus Assemblies whose decisions would serve the interests of only one class in the society, the dominant class."[8] These men felt that while many chiefs were conservatives and might incline to "neo-feudalism," the new elite of young educated Africans who aspired to replace the Europeans were, for the most part, European-trained and out of contact with the rural masses. These delegates believed that only the chiefs could provide adequate popular leadership, and that the French Union could not cohere or develop unless the chiefs had some status vis-à-vis the elite and prestige in the eyes of the people.[9]

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Another group held that the chiefs need not be formally associated with the governmental apparatus. A historical precedent was cited: in the early days of colonialism, the chiefs had not become civil servants, and their status had not been impaired. Thus, when a chief collected taxes for the administration, his action was comparable to his former collection of tribute; when he recruited forced labor for the administration and the large plantations, it was similar to the traditional corvée; and when he asked people to plant certain crops, it was like asking them to cultivate his own fields. In a word, as the institution of chieftainship had adjusted to past changes in African societies, so it had the capacity to adjust in the future.[10] [182]

Other delegates, and apparently the French administrators as well, felt that the chiefs should be associated with the administration, but as administrative assistants and not as elected representatives of the masses.[11] Since the position of the chiefs was sacred as well as secular, it was argued, political defeat might impair their position as "the fathers of their people."[12]

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The constitution drafted by the first Constituent Assembly (lacking any provisions concerning the traditional chiefs) was finally submitted to the voters in May 1946. Although it won a majority of overseas votes, it was defeated by the French people. The subsequently convened second Constituent Assembly was subjected to a great deal of pressure by a group of colonialists called Etats Généraux de Colonisation, and as a result many of the provisions of the first constitution, among them the single-college provision and various rights of citizenship, were not included in the second. The revised constitution was accepted by the French voters in October 1946.[13] By this time, however, many of the African delegates had become so disillusioned with the French parliamentarians in the National Assembly that they decided to fend for themselves. They met in Bamako in the French Sudan and formed an inter-territorial grouping called the Rassemblement Démocratique Africain (RDA), led by Houphouët-Boigny. Houphouët-Boigny was strongly anti-imperialist, and the party received the active support of the French Communists. It adopted a violently anti-colonial platform, pledging to rally the peoples of Africa to a world-wide struggle against colonial imperialism, and to try to bring all of the emerging political parties in French Africa under its banner in order to achieve the "emancipation of the African masses."[14]

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The Mogho Naba and the other Mossi chiefs, noting the anti-colonial posture of the RDA and the hostile reaction of the colonial regime to this group, attempted to take advantage of the situation by advocating the reintegration of the Upper Volta under their more conservative auspices. The Mogho Naba had already taken advantage of the Bastille Day celebration

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in 1946 to visit and consult with the Yatenga Naba about Mossi reunification, thus ending a centuries-old tradition whereby the two rulers could not meet for fear of death inflicted by the ancestors. Their project was now received with greater interest by the local Europeans, both *colons* and administrators, who were alarmed by Houphouët-Boigny's radicalism and bent on preventing the spread of virulent anti-colonialism among the well-disciplined Voltaic populations.

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Shortly after the constitution was approved, the administration announced that elections would be held on December 15 for the Second College of the Ivory Coast's General Council or Territorial Assembly (to be composed of Africans and persons without full French citizenship) and for the other organs of the French Union. Once again Houphouët-Boigny and the RDA, having gained the support of the PDCI and the Parti Progressiste de la Côte d'Ivoire (PPCI), tried to obtain the backing of the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou and the Mossi-supported UDIHV (shortly to become the Union Voltaïque).[13] Again the Mogho Naba refused. Gabriel D'Arboussier, one of Houphouët-Boigny's lieutenants and an important official of the RDA, later charged that the ruler had been influenced by the Minister of Overseas France, Coste-Floret, who told him that the RDA "was no more democratic than it was African, that it was not an Assembly, and that Africans should rally to an institution that was truly African."[14] In any event, the Mogho Naba and the UDIHV decided to oppose the RDA. They emphasized the common interests of the Upper Volta and championed Voltaic candidates, Mossi and non-Mossi alike.

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The electoral law of the territories promulgated in October 1946 did not specifically discriminate against the chiefs, but it was heavily weighted in favor of the educated and urban elite. The electorate was confined to civil servants; soldiers and veterans of the armed forces; chiefs; permanent employees of commercial, industrial, craft, or agricultural establishments; members and former members, for at least two years, of cooperatives, trade unions, and committees of provident societies; holders of official decorations; members of prewar courts and councils including the Chambers of Commerce, Agriculture, and Industry, and agricultural unions; Christian priests and ministers; owners of registered real property; holders of driving or shooting licenses; and persons literate in French or Arabic. Candidates for election to the Territorial Assemblies had to be at least twenty-three years of age, to be registered on the electoral list as residents of the territory, to have a good knowledge of French, and to post a bond of 5,000 CFA (Colonies Françaises d'Afrique) francs, which was forfeited if the candidate received less than 5 per cent of the votes in his election district. Many chiefs were eligible to vote, but, because their fathers had opposed their be-

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ing educated at mission-sponsored schools, few were qualified to run for office.[17]

More serious for the position of the Mossi chiefs, perhaps, was the fact that many of them either were ill informed about the election or refused to take it seriously. Balima states that a surprisingly large number of Mossi chiefs "could not understand very well the importance of this novelty—which is understandable; had no interest in the formalities, which they nevertheless carried out; and somewhat haphazardly designated as candidates African civil servants to whom they were not even tied by close bonds of friendship."[18] Of course, another reason for this choice of "African civil servants" was that they were among the only persons with the training and education required for candidacy. Nevertheless, the candidates included a few educated members of chiefly families—persons who, not being in the main line of descent or being otherwise ineligible for office in the traditional system, had been "given" to the Europeans to be educated.

The partisans of the Mossi chiefs were victorious in the northern part of the Ivory Coast in an election that saw the emergence of such Voltaic politicians of later fame as Blaise Benon, François Bouda, Zinda Kaboré, Christophe Kalenzaga, Tindougou Ouédraogo, Zebango Pohi, and Maurice Yaméogo. However, the Second College was dominated by Houphouët-Boigny and his RDA colleagues. Despite the Mogho Naba's opposition, RDA delegates set out to ameliorate conditions in the Volta region. For example, the RDA secured the passage of bills to raise the Mogho Naba's salary from 60,000 francs a year, a trifling sum in view of his official and private expenses, to about 500,000 francs a year. Similarly, it ensured that Mossi and other Voltaic students would receive a fair share of the scholarships which France had assigned to colonial students.[19]

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These gestures did not dampen the ardor of the Mossi chiefs for the reintegration of the Upper Volta. In April 1947, when French President Auriol, touring the territories to observe the operation of the new political institutions, visited the Upper Volta, the Yatenga Naba, the Tenkodogo Naba, and the head ruler of Fada-N'Gourma met the presidential party at Ouagadougou and pressed their claim for separate territorial status. The French reportedly welcomed this petition because it gave them an opportunity to clip the wings of Houphouët-Boigny, as well as to ensure the aid of the chiefs in procuring adequate manpower for a projected extension of the Abidjan–Bobo-Dioulasso railroad to Ouagadougou. The problem was to convince the National Assembly in Paris that the reunification of the Upper Volta was in the best interests of all concerned.

175** 648* 642 [631]

The French government set up a Parliamentary Commission and sent its chairman, Jean Jacques Duglas, to Ouagadougou and other Voltaic re-

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*175 gions to ascertain whether the people desired reunification. Duglas re-
648 ported his findings to the National Assembly:
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> You know as well as I do that the Mossi are proud of their past. Thanks to a political and social organization without peer in West Africa, they have known peace since the Middle Ages, in an Africa ravaged by war and depopulated by the slave trade. . . . This ancient land also desires prosperity and modernization. To achieve this its voice must be heard, not only in the National Assembly but particularly in the Grand Council [the highest consultative body] of French West Africa. The Upper Volta must have its own General Council.[20]

*175 The law authorizing the reconstitution of the Upper Volta as a separate
*648 territory was promulgated on September 4, 1947. The non-Mossi populations of the projected territory feared Mossi domination and voiced their opposition in the Assembly, but in the end an accord was reached. The Mossi chiefs next petitioned the French government to pay for the rebuilding and refurbishing of Ouagadougou. François Bouda, one of the few traditional Mossi nakomce to become an elected representative of the Mossi, reminded the members of the Council of the French Union of what had occurred in 1919. He stated that his own father had recruited thousands of men to make bricks for "Bancoville" (an epithet for Ouagadougou; most of its buildings were of sun-dried bricks called *banco*) because Governor Hesling "never considered the possibility of purchasing cement, which was
[464] not even expensive. Forced labor was easy to recruit, and no one thought that the day would come when it would be gone."[21] Bouda said that the Government should now help the new territory to modernize the capital.

D'Arboussier, an RDA delegate in the Assembly, declared that he would support the bill if only because in the past the French government had attempted "to make a crack race horse out of an ordinary horse, and in so doing had made it a decrepit mare."[22] Funds for rebuilding Ouagadougou were finally voted, and the "Bancoville" of French West Africa began to take on a new look with wide avenues, large administrative buildings, official residences, and even a new palace for the Mogho Naba.

*175 With the reconstitution of the Upper Volta, the Mogho Naba and his
643 chiefs attained their highest prestige since the conquest. The chiefs even
● 631 had strong influence over the Mossi representatives to the organs of the
554 French Union, because of the decisive support they had granted them in
*648 the elections. But this increase in prestige was to be short-lived. The chiefs were no longer the sole representatives of their people, and the Mossi were no longer isolated from events in other parts of the Upper Volta, or for that

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matter from events in French West Africa and the rest of Overseas France. All projects undertaken in the Upper Volta became of interest to the other units of the French Union because the funds to support them had to be voted on by representatives of the whole, including not only local Mossi and non-Mossi, but also Africans in other territories, French colonial populations outside Africa, and the metropolitan French.

The conditions that were to have the greatest effect on the position of Mossi chiefs were created in January 1949, when elections were held to choose the Upper Volta's first General Council. The major parties involved in the election were the Mossi-dominated Union Voltaïque; the Entente Voltaïque, a local section of the RDA representing the interests of such non-Mossi populations as the Lobi, Fulani, Bobo, Senufo, and Gurunsi; and a group of smaller ethnic parties such as the Union Lobie and the Indépendants. The campaign reflected all the tensions and conflicts prevalent among the administration, the RDA, the non-Mossi parties, and the Union Voltaïque. Both the Union Lobie and the Indépendants spoke out against what they feared to be Mossi domination, and accused the Mossi chiefs of "neo-feudalism." The Union Voltaïque accused the RDA of radicalism, of associating with communists, and of hostility to the chiefs. It cited as evidence the deposal of several Agni and Senufo chiefs in the Ivory Coast by partisans of the RDA. The RDA, in turn, charged the Union Voltaïque with supporting reactionary, feudal-minded chiefs, and thus with opposing the true interests of the Mossi and other Voltaic peoples. Furthermore, it accused Masson (Governor Mouragues's executive officer) of encouraging the cercle commanders to fight against the RDA, and of jailing about 300 RDA members at Bobo-Dioulasso.[22] 175* 631 666 665 [646]

As expected, the Union Voltaïque won most of the seats in the more populous Mossi section of the Upper Volta, and thus was able to dominate the political institutions created by the administration. Nevertheless, the election produced deep political scars in the Upper Volta, and lasting enmity between the RDA and the Mossi chiefs.

During the years that followed the reunification of the Upper Volta, the Mossi chiefs as such were not accorded any specific status by the administration. Beginning in 1953, bills designed to regularize the status of the chiefs were submitted by Mossi delegates to the Assembly of the French Union and to various other organs of the French Union, but to no effect. The Mossi chiefs meanwhile sought to define their own position. In 1952, under the leadership of the Mogho Naba, they formed an organization called the Union of the Traditional Chiefs of the Upper Volta. Article IV of the statutes which they filed with the territorial administration reads as follows: 175* 648* 631 [646] 175* 631 647 [643]

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*175 The present Union has as its aims:

●631 1. To establish an alliance and effective solidarity among its members, and to defend their material and moral interests in the face of all difficulties;

647 2. To collaborate closely with the economic and social aims of the French administration;

3. To provide aid to the dependents, wives or minor children, of all deceased members of the society. This aid will be obtained:

a. by drawing from a special reserve fund;

b. by contributions from all members; and

c. by an additional subscription according to the circumstances. The total sum to be granted to each family will be set at the annual meetings of the general assembly.

This organization decided to meet annually in Ouagadougou, Ouahigouya, Tenkodogo, and Koudougou. Member chiefs were to be notified of meetings through the existing traditional political hierarchies. Those chiefs who were unable to attend meetings could send a representative.[24]

*[648] Both the politicians and the French administration welcomed the formation of the Union. The politicians saw it as a forum that would support them in elections and to which they could report on their activities on behalf of their constituents. The French officials welcomed the opportunity to meet periodically with the chiefs and to obtain their help and support for official plans and projects.

One of the new administrative policies was to increase the number of administrative units (the cercles, subdivisions, and postes), and to staff them with European civil servants. Mossi country was given one civil servant for every thousand inhabitants. These officials were thus less isolated from the central administration and more directly responsible to their superiors for the areas under their command. Most of them were assisted by young African civil servants, both Mossi and non-Mossi, who kept administrative records, worked in the agricultural extension programs, acted as interpreters and court assessors, and so on. In addition to these administrative assistants, there were usually junior civil servants who were stationed at the homes of the district chiefs. They were called "secretaries," but they actually served as liaison officers between the administrators and the chiefs.

[634] Thus the administrators notified the district chiefs through these secretaries that certain taxes were being levied, and would be collected on a specific date; that certain laws affecting them had been passed; that an election would be held on a certain date; or that they should summon the potential draftees in their district to be examined at a certain time.

The postwar administrators did much more than communicate with the district chiefs through their secretaries. They still had considerable author-

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ity in local matters, even though the Indigénat had been abolished. They adjudicated minor offenses committed in their territories or referred to them on appeal by the districts and villages. They attempted to settle family quarrels and commercial cases, and ordered that restitution be made in cases of theft. However, they had to send any difficult case or major crime up the hierarchy until it reached the officials authorized to deal with it.

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The French administrators also continued to act as intermediaries between the large commercial enterprises in Ouagadougou who wished to recruit men for labor or to buy local produce and enterprises in the larger Mossi towns. Thus, if a private firm in Ouagadougou wanted men to work on the roads, it asked the *chef de poste* (administrator) of a region to tell the district chiefs that its representatives would come to recruit men on a certain date. If a large business was planning to canvass a certain area in order to buy shea nuts, it asked the local administrators to notify the chiefs. No one was ever quite certain whether these activities were legal, but no one questioned them. The *chefs de poste* might simply have been giving the people information that they could not have obtained by any other means.

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The Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou, like the supreme chiefs of the other Mossi regions, continued to perform both the administrative role assigned to him by the colonial government and his traditional politico-ceremonial role. He was partly responsible, through his active cooperation with the administration, for the rapidity with which the Upper Volta became a functioning entity. For example, in his anxiety to make his capital worthy of being the territory's administrative center, he gave his full support to the extension of the Abidjan–Bobo-Dioulasso railroad to Ouagadougou. But he always succeeded in giving the impression (to foreigners at least) of detachment and dissociation from the French administration. His behavior was quite different when he functioned as Mogho Naba of the Ouagadougou Mossi. The following is a brief description of a visit he made to one of the districts:

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> The Mogho Naba arrived unexpectedly at the district chief's headquarters, where no preparations had been made for his visit. It appears that he was on a tour of his domains to consult with the local chiefs about the forthcoming elections, and had simply dropped in to visit the district chief. However, as soon as his presence became known around the district, important village chiefs and the heads of lineages all put on their robes and appeared to pay homage to him. Meanwhile, he was consulting with his host. But as soon as the conversation was over he came out into the compound, where he was saluted by the chief's Bendere, who praised the royal ancestors by reciting

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chief became ridiculously smaller when distributed among the producers; gone the tolls along the roads. Henceforth, all such services will be duly and individually compensated.

Even in the most remote and least accessible villages, people speak of liberty. The old women who go to the pools for water sit down for a moment near their jars in order to talk about it. Even bush fires spread less rapidly than this news.[27]

Very few Mossi in the rural areas were qualified to vote in the first post-war elections, and those who were qualified voted for the candidates preferred by the chiefs. However, as the franchise was progressively broadened after 1951, and many more Mossi and non-Mossi politicians traveled through the rural areas, the politicians favored by the chiefs found that they had to campaign to maintain their position. Both the chiefs and their politicians resented this. One visitor to the Upper Volta reports: "A highly educated Mossi of the Upper Volta told me, 'Citizenship has unsettled and ruined the people. Everyone has become his own master, and believes himself free to do whatever he wishes.'"[28] Opposition to the chiefs and their friends came from the Moslems, who supported their co-religionists for office, and from a growing group of young Mossi who resented the power of the chiefs. In 1955 one such group in Yatenga, composed of mission-educated youths, war veterans, and former workers, broke away from the Union Voltaïque and formed the Mouvement Démocratique Voltaïque (MDV) under the joint leadership of Gérard Ouédraogo and Michel Dorange, a Frenchman, who had been a captain in the colonial army. The partisans of the MDV often came into violent conflict with the supporters of the chiefs, but the organization itself was not banned by the administration, because its members included many veterans, and because Dorange was one of its leaders.

The appearance of the anti-chief MDV was symptomatic of the problems which the Mossi chiefs were to encounter as the people became free to elect their own representatives. For one thing, the people could now censure their chiefs by voting for their opponents, who appealed to them in terms of release from traditional prestations. But more important, even those Mossi politicians who were still friendly to the chiefs and depended on their support for election were becoming increasingly autonomous. The chiefs were operating in one power structure, the politicians in another and more important one. In Dakar, in Paris, and in the Palace of Versailles (where the Assembly of the French Union met) Mossi politicians dealt not only with local African problems but with problems the chiefs knew nothing about. As the politicians grew skillful at the game of metropolitan

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As the politicians grew skillful at the game of metropolitan politics, their power increasingly eclipsed that of their chiefly benefactors 175* and of local French administrators. For example: 631 554 665

> A local chef de poste summoned the district chiefs to bring their potential draftees for the war in Algeria early in the morning on a specific date to be 634 examined by medical officers. Those chiefs who looked upon any summons with a trepidation born of their past experience with prewar administrators, arrived at the headquarters as early as 5:30 A.M. on the morning in question, bringing their young men with them. Many of these chiefs, whose only [489] means of transportation was their slow-moving ceremonial horse, spent the [492] night en route to be there at dawn. More sophisticated chiefs coming from similar distances left on the same morning and arrived at about 8:00 A.M., the hour when the administrator himself was first seen stirring in his residence. One chief, a war veteran, rode up on his bicycle at about 8:45 A.M. [493] in a most unchiefly manner and became the butt of jokes from the other waiting chiefs. Another district chief, who was an elected representative, did not arrive until about 9:30 A.M., and he was greeted on arrival by the administrator. This man had only about half a mile to travel, and he did so in his car. His colleagues greeted him with a mixture of jokes, feigned awe, and surprise, and some of them addressed him as "Mogho Naba" and "Governor."[28]

Another example of the shift in the balance of power was the relationship that developed between Joseph Conombo and the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou. The Mogho Naba had nominated and supported Conombo as a candidate for deputy to the National Assembly. He was elected, and later became Secretary of the Interior in the Mendès-France Government of 1954. He thus had access to power undreamed of by the Mogho Naba. Being a Moaga as well as a good politician, he never flaunted his authority before his traditional chief; nor did the Mogho Naba try to exercise his traditional powers over him. But their behavior toward each other clearly demonstrated that they were both aware of the shift in power, even though they were both too wise and too polite to make an issue of it. 175* 643 554 648* 646

Other political forces also jeopardized the position of the chiefs. For example, as head of the Union Voltaïque, Conombo had an honored position within a Paris-based African parliamentary group called the Indépendants d'Outre-Mer (IOM). He would have held an even more important position within this group if he had had wider support among the non-Mossi in the Upper Volta. But his power was limited by the presence and competition of the MDV, which, while Mossi-supported, was anti-chief; the Mouvement Populaire de la Révolution Africaine (MPA), an anti-Mossi and anti-RDA party formed in 1954 by Nazi Boni of the Bobo ethnic group and supported by some officials in the administration; and the Parti Démocratique Voltaïque (PDV), a local branch of a now less radical RDA 175* 646 648* 665 554

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created out of the defunct Entente Voltaïque. In an attempt to gain the support of these parties and of the young Mossi intellectuals who, while anti-chief, were not yet willing to join the PDV, Conombo officially scrapped the Union Voltaïque in 1955 and formed the Parti Social d'Education des Masses Africaines (PSEMA).[30] The party pledged to promote social reform and the right of Africans to manage their own affairs, and to struggle against family, regional, and racial hatreds. But it did not win the support of the non-Mossi; nor did it attract many young Mossi, who did not believe that it had discarded the mantle of the chiefs. Conombo's readiness to ally himself with anti-chief forces, however, did make it obvious to the chiefs that when politicians were out to gain power, they did not always take the interests of the chiefs into account.

In 1956, when a *loi-cadre* granting almost complete autonomy to the French African territories was approved by the National Assembly, it made no provision for the participation of the traditional chiefs in the projected governmental structure.[31] In fact, as preparations were being made to implement the new reforms, a number of politicians and educated Africans launched an attack on the chiefs which seems to have been a step toward edging them out of power altogether. The newspaper *Afrique Nouvelle*, published in Dakar but read by the educated elite throughout French West Africa, carried a series of articles that proclaimed: "The district chiefs should be given neither a position nor a salary!" "Let us democratize the chieftainship!" and "Let us decapitate the district!" (i.e., let us do away with the district chief). Over a photo showing the traditional chiefs, *Afrique Nouvelle* ran the caption, "Are they still chiefs of the territories?"[32]

The Mossi chiefs, who had retained more power and prestige than any other chiefs in French West Africa, bore the brunt of these attacks and rose to defend the rights of all the chiefs. Their most able spokesman was Bouda, a Councillor of the French Union and a district chief in his own right. He wrote in *Afrique Nouvelle*:

> The Mossi [socio-political] organization, by its simplicity and cohesiveness, aroused the admiration of France, which respected and retained it.
>
> The power of the Mossi chief may be great, but it is not used to oppose the progress which is being made. The Mossi chief is not as much of a conformist as people have a tendency to believe. The social and political revolution which, since 1946, has made Mossi country so different from what it was before the war, is effecting the transition from a society largely encompassed by Nabas possessing real authority, an authority sanctioned by custom, to a more progressive way of life whose essential characteristics are underlined by the growth of towns, the uprooting of a large part of the population, and the triumph of the desire to be on one's own. . . .

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CHIEFS AND POLITICIANS

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The Mossi chiefs indeed understand today that a tradition, no matter how respected, is not immutable. It is susceptible to change and evolution; it will evolve.

In all truth, and with due deference to those who systematically denigrate everything connected with them, the chiefs have borne positive witness to the characteristic spirit of this country, and it is as unfair as it is stupid to deny the important role they have played in certain cases in the cause of tranquility and peace.

As the natural spokesmen for their people, they have been, in many instances, the first to pay a heavy price for the common cause. Without them, demagoguery would have plunged the country into irreparable decadence.

. . .

The demands of the traditional chiefs are justified and deserve to be heeded, because, in the face of the inertia of the Government and the rapid development of events, it is to be feared that the chiefs, although disposed by nature to be patient and to wait quietly, might run rather than walk in the days to come.[33]

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In December 1956, the Mossi chiefs, supported by the other traditional chiefs in French West Africa, convoked a Congress of Chiefs at Dakar. This Congress approved a constitution for an organization called the Federal Union of the Syndicates of the Traditional Chiefs, and adopted a proposal on the need for a statute governing the status and material well-being of the chiefs. The Congress did underline the apolitical character of the chieftainship, but asked that the chiefs be given some recognition in the new structures being created by the loi-cadre.

On the local level, the Mossi chiefs convoked a Syndicate of the Traditional Chiefs of the Upper Volta at Tenkodogo a month later. Its president, Etienne Congo, brother of Mogho Naba Sagha II of Ouagadougou, declared:

> At this time, when vast changes are under way, it would be inconceivable for us, the traditional chiefs, not to take an active part in the new developments, of whose urgent and precarious nature we are fully aware.
>
> Our position is clear: we are not opposed in any way to this evolution.
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> As for statutory matters, I wish to express our concern over the fact that at the very moment when the loi-cadre is turning an important page in the history of Africa, our group has been left out.[34]

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The Mossi chiefs had indeed been abandoned by the French administration. Although they continued to receive the support of some politicians, it soon became clear that the latter were mainly interested in maneuvering for power under the loi-cadre and in uniting their parties to this end. Cosombo, the leader of the PSEMA, was induced by his supporters and by a

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number of young educated Mossi to merge his party with the PDV-RDA in the hope of gaining a foothold in the Bobo-Dioulasso area and of uniting the Mossi and non-Mossi of the Upper Volta. The two parties did merge in September 1956, becoming the Parti Démocratique Unifié (PDU). The PDU's manifesto roundly condemned the "artificial division of the territory into East and West Volta" and the "classification of the population as Mossi and non-Mossi," and urged all Voltaics to join the new party. In addition, it declared that the Mossi chiefs merited some status in the territory because they had preserved their "political entity throughout African history."[33] The PDU went so far as to make the Mogho Naba its honorary president, and to speculate that he might be made the Governor of an autonomous or independent Upper Volta.

Nevertheless, the merger was to be a greater victory for the opponents of the Mossi chiefs than for their allies in the PSEMA. For one thing, many of the anti-chief Mossi intellectuals now joined the PDU, bringing with them their modernistic views. For another, since former RDA members were running for office in the Upper Volta under the banner of the PDU, the local chiefs had to give up their opposition to these candidates, and the French administration did likewise. This hands-off policy gave all the candidates, even those who were basically hostile to the chiefs, a better chance of being elected.

[666] The PDU won a slight over-all majority and a large Ouagadougou majority in the Upper Volta elections for the Territorial Assembly and the Government Council in March 1957. However, the anti-chief MDV carried the Ouahigouya (Yatenga) area, and an Indépendant candidate, Maurice Yaméogo, defeated a supporter of the Mossi chiefs, Henri Guissou, in the Koudougou area. Of great importance was the election of Ouezzain Coulibaly, one of the early non-Mossi Voltaic supporters of Houphouët-Boigny, who had returned to the Upper Volta after the merger of the PSEMA and the PDV-RDA. Coulibaly was elected on the PDU ticket as a representative for Banfora, a district in the western region.[34]

Unfortunately for the Mossi chiefs, the RDA emerged from the March elections as the strongest party in all the former French West African territories. Because of this, most of the politicians in the Upper Volta sought to establish a modus vivendi with Houphouët-Boigny, the Party's recognized leader. Most of them went to visit him at Yamoussokro, his home in the Ivory Coast, and out of these meetings there emerged a realignment of the MDV and the PDV-RDA wing of the PDU at the expense of Conombo and the PSEMA group. This created a new majority in the Upper Volta, and Coulibaly, an old ally of Houphouët-Boigny long suspected by the

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Mossi chiefs of being a modernist, was elected as the first Vice-President of the new government. Not only was the Mogho Naba deprived of the opportunity to become the African head of the Upper Volta, but such stalwart supporters of the chiefs as Conombo and Bouda were left out of the government. Thus, after twelve years of opposition to Houphouët-Boigny, Mogho Naba Sagha and his chiefs were finally defeated. Their defeat was made even more ignominious by the elevation of a non-Mossi commoner to a position of dominance over the Mossi chiefs.[37]

Having lost out in the Upper Volta, the Mossi chiefs had no spokesman when the new Vice-Presidents of the Government Councils of the French West African territories and the European Presidents of these territories met at Dakar to discuss the problems of the truncated French West Africa Federation. No one mentioned the problem of the position of the traditional chiefs. As far as the politicians were concerned, the issue of the chief on the inter-territorial level was dead. It had relevance only in those territories where the chiefs retained some influence.

In an effort to consolidate their hold on the Upper Volta, the PDV-RDA members in the PDU met in September 1957 and sought to convert the PDU into a territorial subsection of the RDA. This move was resisted by the supporters of the chiefs within the PDU, especially by Conombo, who as leader of the PSEMA, an important faction within the PDU, had been completely eclipsed by Coulibaly and the PDV. Conombo resigned from the PDU and announced his intention to rebuild the PSEMA with the support of the Mossi chiefs. On November 12, however, before his plans could be put into action, Mogho Naba Sagha II died in Ouagadougou and political activities in the Upper Volta came to a standstill. A period of national mourning was proclaimed, and politicians from all parties gathered to pay their last respects and to eulogize the monarch.

Sagha's death, like that of all Mossi princes, was ascribed to foul means, although it was clear that he had succumbed to uremia. The people reacted to the interregnum by looting, and the shopkeepers in Ouagadougou and surrounding areas were compelled to close their establishments. "The people of Ouagadougou ran to Saba, but the merchants there were quite diligent, and needed no police force to protect them."[38] It was reported that those wives of the deceased ruler who were not at the palace at the time of his death took off the brass anklets denoting their royal status and became free women. If this actually happened, it was an unprecedented occurrence.

When the Mossi traditional electoral college convened to choose a new Mogho Naba, it reportedly considered the candidacy of both Moussa Con-

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*175 643 661 go, Sagha's eldest son, and Etienne Congo, Sagha's brother. Etienne Congo allegedly had the support of some politicians, but he was rejected in favor of Moussa. The new ruler was accepted by the Government Council as the "supreme chief of the Mossi" and was installed in the traditional manner. He indicated in his acceptance speech that he was "like a rock [*kougri*] that nothing can move," and became known as Mogho Naba Kougri. A few days after his installation, he appeared in full regalia before the members of the Territorial Assembly to deliver what was probably the most *175 643 difficult inauguration speech ever composed by a Mogho Naba. This speech will be quoted in full, because it may well be a eulogy for the Mossi chief:

539 Over and above the signs of respect shown to the mortal remains of my father, and later the expressions of keen satisfaction on the people's part for the choice of which I have been the object—over and above all this, I see the great interest that the governmental and administrative authorities attach to the role which my ancestors have always fulfilled, and which I am called upon to fulfill anew. Over and above all of these external manifestations, I see the unfailing love of all the Mossi for the throne I occupy and for the tradition I represent along with my confreres. Because the importance of my position, as well as the honor that befalls me, surpasses the meager reality and the possibilities of one man, it is with conviction, sincerity, and faith that I present myself to all of you to tell you that while I accept with fortitude these responsibilities and these honors for the love of my people, I count upon the cooperation and friendship of all, the faithfulness, devotion, and courage of all the Mossi, to acquit myself worthily and to preside not in a passive but in an active and decisive way over the social and economic evolution of our country.

Although I represent tradition and custom in this country; although I must ensure the survival of venerable customs, concerning which we shall be intransigent; I am aware, nevertheless, that there are customs which adapt themselves with difficulty to the exigencies of the modern times in which we live.

*175 643 631 539 This is why, in addressing myself to all the customary chiefs, and especially to my closest associates, I shall say that we have no right to remain passive observers of the reconstruction of our country and of the multiple transformations of the society over whose destiny we have always presided. We must move along with the tide, but in order not to be swept along at a headlong pace and risk failure before reaching our goal, we must stand in the vanguard of the race and lead it at a vigorous and satisfying pace, but one which does not stifle the weak, for they too have a right to life, to progress, to well-being, and to our protection.

As recently as ten years ago, it was easy to be a chief, just as it was easy to be a cercle commander. It was enough to give orders for everything to run smoothly. But today, the chief must add to his title a real merit, a knowledge of men, a true devotion, an integrity, and, above all, a commitment to the welfare of the people under his jurisdiction. It is under these conditions alone

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that the customary chiefs will preserve and extend their influence, and it is our task to extend this influence. For, if the new institutions are meant for the progress and welfare of the Africans, then they must also be meant for that of the chieftainship.

Our intention, then, is not to leave the management of the country to the elected representatives alone, but to remain in close collaboration with them; for, if the elected representatives of yesterday have rights, the representatives of several centuries' standing retain theirs also.

Intent as I mean to be on curbing all the abuses for which the people have customarily blamed the chiefs, I will not cease to remind the Chief of the Territory, the members of the Government Council, and the elected representatives at all levels, that they themselves must remain, before God and man, the ones truly responsible for these abuses. For, while the lot of the civil servant has improved considerably, and that of the elected representative is at the summit of the pyramid, that of the chief has remained quite modest and quite comparable to that of the still miserable peasant—riches for the others, poverty for himself.

Your Excellency the Governor, Honorable Ministers, and Parliamentarians, I am sure that you understand me. I am equally sure that you think of the meager outlook for the territory, but it is necessary that everyone live well during the period of the seven fat cows, and meagerly during that of the seven lean cows. The cooperation of the chieftainship will be granted to you increasingly for the economic and social betterment of our territory. It devolves upon you, as agents of superior authority, to rid the chiefs of the arbitrary vexations to which no civil servant is subjected any longer, and to send them forth, not as mercenaries but as true captains, into the battle which we all have joined against the human misery that weighs so heavily upon our people.

We are all aware of the magnitude of the struggle, and the cooperation of the chiefs, who influence the entire Voltaic population, may be needed to crown it with success.

Moreover, your Excellency the Governor, the chieftainship has always served well—perhaps has served France, or at least its representatives, too well, at the expense of its own interests.

But I will deliberately forget the errors of the past. I shall remember only the true fidelity which my fathers and their associates have always displayed toward France. I shall look only for the gratitude of the Government of the French Republic on their behalf, and for the considerable role they played in transforming our country. I shall think only of that Franco-African friendship which under normal circumstances will lead us to success, happiness, and peace. I know that the times are difficult; I know that men today have numerous reasons for quarrels. I know that vast popular or so-called popular movements sometimes topple all that other men have built with much patience and wisdom. But despite all of these things, it is with words of concord and of peace that I wish to close, hoping that throughout our political battles we shall keep in mind the need for peace, because man is only happy insofar as he enjoys social peace, as well as peace of the heart.[39]

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the Upper Volta met, discussed "the affair of October 17," and issued a statement dissociating itself from the Mogho Naba's action, reaffirming its desire to collaborate with the established authority, and requesting a clarification of the status of chiefs in the new order. The Government Council of the Upper Volta welcomed this statement, and hastened to reassure the chiefs that their status was not in danger: "It is not a question of damaging the traditional chiefs as a group, but rather of stigmatizing vigorously an act emanating from a superior chief like Mogho Naba Kougri, the consequences of which, unforeseen as they were, could have placed all the Mossi chiefs in a regrettable and irreparable position."[47]

The Mogho Naba had obviously reached a political impasse, and he next turned his attention to creating a new image of the chieftainship. To this end, he married a young Mossi woman in accordance with the civil statutes of the state, thus becoming the first Mogho Naba and the first important Mossi chief to do so. A spokesman at the wedding placed this act in its proper perspective with the following words:

> I should now like to underscore the fact that this date, November 22 [1958], will be inscribed officially in the annals of the Upper Volta. For the first time in the history of our country, an Emperor, the person who best symbolizes tradition, has upset ancestral habits in the interest of progress. For the first time a woman will be given consideration in a royal court where she will be able to feel at her ease. For the first time, the spouse of a traditional chief will have her place near her husband as an equal and steady companion.[48]

The politicians were apparently prepared to recognize the eminence of the chiefs as long as they did not attempt to intervene in the affairs of the state, and a number of them attended the Mogho Naba's wedding. Among those present were the Presidents of both the Government Council and the Territorial Assembly, parliamentarians from various parties, and the mayors of Bobo-Dioulasso and Ouagadougou. On December 10, 1958, the Territorial Assembly confirmed Yaméogo as President of the Government Council. The Assembly also approved his slate of ministers, among them Bouda, the Mossi chief who had once been a strong supporter of the traditional political hierarchy but who now belonged to the UDV-RDA. Then, on December 11, the Assembly decided to adopt the draft of a proposed constitution for the Upper Volta. Articles 2 and 3 of Paragraph I of this constitution state explicitly:

> The Republic of the Upper Volta is one and indivisible, secular, democratic, and social. Its principle is that the government is *of the people, by the people, and for the people. . . .*
>
> *Sovereignty belongs to the people. No section of the population, and no individual, may usurp it.* [Italics mine.][49]

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*175 The proposed constitution thus negated any claims of the traditional
631 chiefs over any section of the Voltaic population. Henceforth, the only
642 leaders of the Voltaic people were to be their elected representatives. The constitution did not even mention the traditional chiefs, and no provision was made to give them a special voice in the government. By its silence on these matters, the constitution had reduced the Mossi chiefs to the status of ordinary citizens. Certain parts of this constitution were later changed, but not the sections dealing with the democratic nature of the emerging state. The power of the chiefs was gone. Yaméogo, who had been a commoner among the Mossi of Koudougou, was given the title of "President of the Republic" by what had now become the National Assembly. It was he who traveled to and from Paris with Houphouët-Boigny and the other members of the Conseil de l'Entente, an organization comprising Dahomey, the Ivory Coast, Niger, and the Upper Volta, to parley for the independence of the Upper Volta; and it was he who traveled around the country explaining his policies. Yaméogo did not belabor the issue of the chiefs, but he declared quite firmly that "the days of devotion to certain little Voltaic saints" were over. "Now must begin the era of the cult of the Upper Volta, next only to that of God."[80]

*175 France finally agreed that the Upper Volta should become independent
*648 on August 5, 1960, just 64 years after the conquest. However, sovereignty
642 and power were not to be transferred to those from whom it had been
631 wrested originally. Mogho Naba Kougri was only a spectator at the National Assembly when Yaméogo, praising Houphouët-Boigny and General de Gaulle, announced the coming of independence; and he was only a spectator when the Assembly ratified the independence agreement on July 27, 1960. The President said on that occasion that "Independence is not an end in itself, but a beginning. In effect, from now on we are called upon to assume full responsibility for our destiny."[81] He added that changes in the country would be brought about "in cooperation with the elected representatives, the party [RDA], and the youth organizations." He made no mention of the chiefs, and in fact the only chiefs who played any role during this period did so as politicians. The chiefs were to be honored only on Independence Day, when the President, in a spirit of benevolence, gave thanks to all those who had played a role in recovering the dignity of "Voltaic Man," including not only the French professors, the clergy, the war veterans, and the politicians, but also the "traditional chiefs who safe-
*175 guarded the integrity of our state against external attack."[82]

182 The government of the Upper Volta Republic decided to allow the
631 institution of chieftainship to fade away by preventing the election of new

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chiefs. The Mogho Naba continued to receive a yearly stipend from the government, and local chiefs were still respected by the older people and by the more tradition-minded youths. Nevertheless, the drive toward the elimination of chiefly status in the Upper Volta went on. In January 1962, government decrees prohibited "the wearing of any costume or headgear indicating the status of chief or slave";[33] thus, the remaining Mossi chiefs are to be unrecognizable as such outside their own villages and districts. The chiefs, for their part, seem to have become reconciled to their fate. Many of their young relatives are joining the growing ranks of the new politicians.

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CHAPTER 9

Trade and Markets Among the Mossi People

BY ELLIOTT P. SKINNER

The Mossi represent the dominant population of the Voltaic Re- 105 [31]
public, numbering about 1,600,000 out of some 3,200,000 inhabitants. [16]
They represent the unique example of a group which has preserved its [72]
ethnic identity and political autonomy through all the vicissitudes [64]
of Sudanic history until it was conquered by the French in 1896. Tra- [73]
dition records that the people who became the Mossi left the Dagomba
region in present-day Ghana during the eleventh century and moved
into the bend of the Niger River, carving out three large kingdoms
and smaller principalities in the process. At the head of these still [42]
extant kingdoms are rulers *(Moro Nabas)* who formerly held feudal- [43]
like control over the provinces, districts and villages which comprise [31]
their domains. The villages, with their patri-local, polygynous, ex- [21]
tended family households, formed the basic Mossi settlement pattern. [59]
A complex hierarchical administrative apparatus carried the power [31]
of the Mossi rulers into the smallest villages, and funneled taxes and
tribute back to them. This structure still exists, but of course it has [64]
been modified by the French.

The Mossi were and are still divided into stratified royal, noble [56]
and commoner patrilineages. Characteristic of this lineage system is [61]
a process by which royal sub-lineages descend serially until they
merge with the mass of commoner lineages. Below the lineages there [56]
once were large non-Mossi groups of serfs and slaves, but these people
have now been grouped into lineages and have become Mossicized.

The topography of Mossi country is typical of the Sudanic grass- 133
lands. It is an immense plain, some 1,500 feet above sea level and
broken only by three low mountain ranges and numerous small hills.
The annual total rainfall is between 30 and 40 inches, and falls 132
almost entirely as heavy showers or thundershowers during the period
from June to September. So narrow is the margin of rainfall for [133]
successful crop cultivation that any variation in the cycle results in [51]
low crop yields and a difficult "hungry period" the following year
before the new crops are harvested. The Mossi do not practice irri- 133
gation, and would have trouble doing so because the three Volta [24]
Rivers which drain their territory serve as drainage chiefly during
the rainy season. Only the Black Volta has water all year round; the

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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long been famous. The former are sometimes ridden but are used primarily as beasts of burden. Horses were and are still important for military and ceremonial purposes and for external trade to other areas.

The Mossi have never excelled in metalworking. The people in the northern part of the country have worked indigenous ores since aboriginal times. Those in the south get iron mainly from traders and caravans. The other metals which the Mossi smiths manufacture into tools and ornaments are also obtained from traders.

TRADE IN HISTORICAL TIMES

The geographic position of Mossi country has much to do with its being an important trade and market center. The country itself has always produced grain, cotton and livestock for export. And for several centuries caravans have passed through this region carrying Sudanese and Saharan products to the forest zones to the south, and carrying forest products back to the arid north. The beginning of this trade is lost in the dim past, but it safe to say that it developed shortly after or along with the founding of Timbuktu about 1100 A.D. The Mossi themselves were not definitely linked to this important *entrepot* until they raided it in 1328, but we can assume that they had been trading there for some time before that event took place. Similarly, we have no record of when the Mossi began trading with the forest zones, but we can also assume that this trade began around the same period or even before.

Our first evidence of Mossi trade and commerce comes from Europeans who were themselves interested in conducting their own trading activities with the peoples in the Bend of the Niger. Bowditch, an Englishman who had journeyed to Ashanti to sign a treaty facilitating the reopening of a profitable trade with the coast, wangled the first important piece of information about the Mossi from his reluctant hosts:

> Five journies from Yngwa is Mosee, a more warlike but less visited kingdom: it consists of many states, but the superior monarch is named Billa, and the capital Kookoopella. I place it to the N.W. because its merchants pass by Yngwa; they do not cross the Karhalla [White Volta] nor any river which is not fordable. (Bowditch 1819 : 180)

This information is not strictly correct since Koupela was not the capital of any of the Mossi kingdoms, but Bowditch's informant had probably heard of Koupela because it was the largest political entity near the large caravan center at Pouitenga.

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175 437 Dupuis, who replaced Bowditch in Kumasi in 1817, obtained surprisingly good data on trade relations between the Ashanti and the Mossi, considering the reluctance of the middlemen traders to furnish any help in this matter. He discovered that Ashanti traders

[103] . . . sometimes travel as far as Aughoa, the Magho, and to the east of Kasogho. Aughoa is distant from Coomassie twenty-five journies by the Salgha and Yandy Roads, which would give a distance of three hundred that vegetable substance . . . by the name of Shea butter. (Dupuis 1824 : App. cvii)[1]

The Hausa merchants and caravaneers knew a great deal about the Mossi and their resources, but it was only with great difficulty that Clapperton persuaded Sultan Mohammed Bello of Sokoto to give him the following information:

[101] The country of Mouchier or Mouchi is situated to the west of Ghurma. It is vast and possesses a gold mine, rivers, forests and mountains. It is inhabited by tribes of the Sudan who possess many fast horses, and large donkeys. Their king is called Wagadougou; their asses are sent down to the Gondja to carry the drums of the army. (Clapperton 1829 : 323)

It is obvious that either Clapperton or his informant confused the capital of the Mossi with their king, and included parts of Ghana in [23] their territory. Nevertheless, one does get an indication of the importance of livestock in Mossi trading.

The great bulk of the trade between the Mossi and their neighbors to the north and to the south was done through the medium of 175 caravans which crisscrossed their territory. The first person to signal 437 the existence of these caravans was Barth (1859 : III, 646–648) who, 487 although he did not enter Mossi country during his extensive travels in the Sudan from 1849 to 1855, reported the existence of several caravan routes which traversed the Mossi from the desert to the [103] forest. The first route he described proceeded from "Kirotashi, a town on the east side of the Niger, one day south of Say, to Woghodogho." [366] Ten days out of Kirotashi caravans usually reached Tengkodogo, and on the thirteenth day they arrived at Koupela which according to

(1) The Aughoa referred to here is really "Wagha," the term often used by the Mossi [43] when talking about their capital, Waghadougou. Magho is really "Mogho" the name of Mossi country itself, and Kasoagho is the name of a province of Wagadougou commanded by a minister of the Moro Naba, the Kasoagho Naba. Dupuis' report on the actual distance between Kumasis and Waghadougou is almost the same mileage as that [366] of today. Koelle (1854 : 6) received a report from a slave liberated in Sierra Leone in [648] 1854 that the great Mossi trading center "Kupeala is four days from Wardugu, the Mossi capital, whither the king of Asante often sends presents; and one month from Salak (Salaga), an Asante town, where they bring their cola-nuts."

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When one asks the Mossi directly, "What is a market?" the response to this question is: "A market is a place where people 443 meet to buy and sell. People travel from one market place to another 829 market place, and on the way they stop and see their friends in other villages. In the market one often meets and drinks with one's friends. People also go to distant markets to find things which they do not grow themselves or which cannot be found in their own markets."

Lending support to the Mossi contention that markets are places 443 where one goes to buy and sell is the fact that most important markets 487 in their country are found at the intersections of well-traveled routes. These intersections are often the places where chiefs have their capi- [631] tals or compounds and this leads to the further idea that there is a connection between chiefs and markets, if only because the power of the chiefs makes markets possible. This does not mean, however, 443 that the market is a purely physical entity which can only exist under 571 the aegis of a chief, or that it is a purely economic institution. First of all, some markets, especially the smaller ones, are moved periodically without too much difficulty. Secondly, and of great importance, is the fact that whenever and wherever there is a large gathering of Mossi there is a "market." Indeed one can say that Mossi seldom come together in large numbers without coming to a market, or without creating one. It appears that the Mossi cannot interact with one [437] another in any circumstance without also exchanging goods of some kind. For example, when a pagan chief holds the annual festival to [769] his ancestors, the people who attend form a market in the vicinity of his compound. In those districts where the chiefs have become Chris- [797] tians and celebrate their birthdays rather than the traditional an- [527] cestors' rites, the people go to pay them homage and also "make a market." Similarly, whenever there is a funeral of an important chief, [766] the people from the surrounding villages or even districts bring commodities to his hamlet and hold a market during the ceremony. On [796] Christmas day, 1955, the people of Manga district "moved their market" about 500 yards to the Catholic Mission grounds where the Christians were celebrating their holiday. And after celebrating the prayers of Ramadán, the Moslems and their pagan townsmen repair to the markets to spend the rest of the day.

Most Mossi markets are inaugurated with religious ceremonies ex- 443 cept those which develop by accretion—that is, by more and more per- 433 sons coming voluntarily to trade. When a chief orders that a market be [659] created or when a market is moved from one place to another place for any reason, the chief is the person who gives the order for the ceremony to be performed. First of all he speaks to his Raga Naba (market [554] chief), usually a non-Mossi slave, about the need for the market or the desirability of changing its location. This man then consults a *teng-*

belonging to him, he can be relied upon to share with the members of the lineage if this should be necessary.

Capital goods in the form of houses, granaries, and fields are the 613
property of the lineage. Individual rights are limited to temporary use 423
and custodianship but are passed on to others when a general shift in residence and role follows the death of a senior member of the lineage. Although property is passed on in accordance with the rules of descent in the lineage, part of the property redistributed represents the product 428
of the labor of the lineage as a consanguineal kin group. For, as has been 613
indicated, the labor of the wives, who are not lineage members, is as important as that of their husbands and children.

The lineage head discusses the coming year with the other elders, and 241
an over-all production plan is made out. They decide what fields are to 613
be left fallow, what ones are to be planted to cotton and the varieties of millet, what lands may be used by individuals desiring to plant a cash crop, and what, if any, land may be loaned to neighboring lineages or to in-laws. With the approach of the first rains, all economically active men and women go to their fields to prepare them for planting, leaving behind in the village only the old people and the children who are still too small to assist in the fields or tend their fathers' animals.

A considerable portion of the land within the limits of a Mossi village 423
is under the direct control of the village chief (*Tenga Naba*) and the 632
earth custodian (*Tenga Soba*), the local representatives of political and supernatural authority. This land is used for the public way, for the market place, and for burial grounds and latrines. Except for that which is too poor for any purpose, all available land within several miles of a village is put under cultivation.

Ki is the generic name which the Mossi give to the millet, which is the 241
basic product in their economy and which receives the largest single 243
allocation of land and labor of any Mossi economic activity. Two kinds of millet are planted, a large-grained variety (*kenda*) and a small-grained variety (*karua*). Millet is the first crop to be planted after the rains have begun. Small- and large-grained millet seeds are frequently mixed and sown in the same field. Small-grained millet may also be sown in the same field with a white bean (*benga*). A "tired" field may be left fallow for five, ten, or fifteen years. When it is first replanted, it will be seeded to millet for the first three years. The fourth year it may again be put into millet, but if the previous crop was not good, cotton will be planted. Usually, a Mossi farmer plants cotton for two years, millet for three, then groundnuts, more cotton, then two more years of millet. It is 241
believed that cotton renews the soil because of the intensive cultivation [824]
required: the earth is brought up into hillocks and turned over; after picking, the plant may be turned under and left to enrich the soil

9:Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1960 FA28 Mossi FA28

during a period of transition to effective independence. 000

The Mossi have the unique distinction of having preserved their 173
ethnic identity and political autonomy throughout all the vicissitudes of Sudanese history until conquered by the French on September 1, 1896. The origin of Mossi society is couched in mythological terms. According to their tradition they came from Dagomba in the Gold Coast (present day Ghana) sometime during the 11th or 12th century and moved northward towards the Niger River. During this migration they carved out three large kingdoms and many small principalities by conquering and absorbing some of the indigenous Ninisi and Foulse and Dogon populations, and by chasing the others into the cliffs of Bandiagara. In 1328, according to Es Sadi in the *Tarikh es Soudan*, the Mossi attacked, burned, and sacked Timbuktu, then held by Mali, and during the following century attacked Walata and Banku. They received their first setback by the Ali, and were severely beaten by Askia the Great, the usurper of the Songhoi throne, who lead a *jihad* against them in 1499. But their attacks into the Niger bend did not cease until the Moroccans became masters of Timbuktu sometime in the early 1590's. From that period until the French conquest, the Mossi remained relatively quiescent. They developed and maintained [105
an economy based on grain cultivation, livestock rearing, cotton pro- 631]
duction, and trade between the forest zones and the desert. Their political system crystallized into a loose confederacy of fairly autonomous kingdoms and principalities, sometimes tribute to the Moro Naba, the ruler of Wagadougou.

Wagadougou, the most important Mossi political entity, was like 631
the lesser kingdoms, pyramidal in political structure. At the top was 643
and still is the Moro Naba, a lineal descendant of Wedraogo, the Dagomba conqueror who founded the Mossi group and Moro Naba Wubri, the first ruler of the Wagadougou dynasty. Paying allegiance [635]
to him, were the princes who ruled such autonomous provinces as Yako, Boulsa, Mane, Riziam, and Boussouma. These princes were all sons or near relatives of the early Moro Nabas. Directly under the Moro [634]
Naba were district chiefs who were descended from the cadet branches of the ruling family. The villages within the district were in turn ruled [632]
by the chiefs of the indigenous populations. In many of the villages, [565]

000 Ministers and officials in the court of the emperor of the Mossi. We shall provide a list of the persons making up the emperor's court in a later chapter.

Functions of the Ministers

645 The four ministers, Ouidi Naba, Larallé Naba, Gounga Naba, and Baloum Naba, were charged with the nomination of the kombemba (plural of kombéré, vassal chief), subject to the emperor's approval. At the present time they retain the same prerogatives subject to ratification by the administrative authorities. These ministers further assisted the emperor in deciding important matters whenever he called upon them, and they transmitted the orders of the Mogho Naba to [48] his vassals. Today the Mogho 643 648 Naba is hardly concerned with the regulation of affairs, since these are dealt with by his ministers or by the French authorities. However, the leading court dignitaries always submit to him matters of any importance, they keep him informed about all matters of general interest, and, finally, they report to him any interviews which they may have had with the administrator of the circle, who represents the government of the colony [Ed., the circle (Fr., cercle) is the largest French administrative unit below the colony (Fr., colonie)].

Organization of Territorial Control

634 Each of the emperor's ministers had authority -- we shall 845 presently see under what conditions -- over a group of cantons [Ed., the canton (Fr., canton) is a traditional Mossi administrative unit, containing a number of villages, and several cantons together form a province; the native districts were incorporated into the French administrative system to some extent]. A kombéré naba was head of each canton. Originally and up to the time of Naba Sanum's reign, the Baloum Naba commanded the dimbissi (canton chiefs who were descendants of the recent Mogho Nabas), while the other cantons, except the most thickly populated and hence the richest, such as Zittenga, Manga, etc., were distributed

634 among the other ministers. The rich and important cantons
645 were entrusted to the Kamsaogo Naba, chief eunuch. This was
[839] because the emperor wanted to be sure that he would recover the fortune left by this minister at his death. Since the latter was merely the guardian of the king's wives, he had no legitimate heirs. The eunuch appointed to replace him had to establish his own personal fortunes. Only the horses or women which the late minister might have given [49] during his lifetime to persons in his section were left with their owners. [Ed., Mossi villages are
[621] divided into sections (Fr., quartier), which are really hamlets containing several households or compounds. These sections are indigenous, not colonial subdivisions.]

Powers of the Ministers over the Vassal Chiefs of the Mogho Naba

634 It would be a mistake to think that before the French occu-
645 pation the ministers had any great authority over the canton chief.
642 Actually, the ministers' role, as has been pointed out, was to act as intermediaries between the emperor and the canton chiefs. They could not, however, under any right or pretext, intervene in canton affairs, since the kombéré was the only lord in the area whose command had been conferred upon him as an appanage by the Mogho Naba.

That is why it has been possible for canton chiefs who were dissatisfied with the minister under whose rule they found themselves to report, henceforth, to another minister. Furthermore, the Mogho Naba saw no objection to this. The Mossi expression,
[538] Gansobend'ka sambiri n'tont vigri yé ("hospitality is not like kinship; you can evade it") amply illustrates the accuracy of the foregoing. If it is further noted that before the French occupation
[651] the naba came to Ouagadougou only once a year to pay their respects to the emperor and to bring him annual tribute, one will readily understand the insignificance of the ministers' authority over them.

This does not mean, of course, that it was possible to [50] do without any intermediaries, but rather that it was possible to choose them freely. In any case, one of the incentives to

634 submission was based solely on the fact that although the em-
645 peror named new canton chiefs, he was too remote to know any-
642 thing about the children of deceased naba, so, in order to make sure during his own lifetime that his eldest son would succeed him, the kombéré affected some respect toward the emperor's ministers and made gifts to the principal dignitaries at Ouagadougou.

Present situation. It is my belief that the present political
631 and administrative reorganization, which dates back about eighteen
648 years (1912), has taken no account whatsoever of the existing hierarchy of ministers in the distribution of territorial control. Thus, it has come about that a given minister has to pass through numerous villages which are under the authority of another minister in order to reach his own administrative area. In addition, if one examines the situation closely, it seems that the sole aim of the administration ["administration" always refers to French administration] at that time was to reward certain young and capable ministers at the expense of those who were too old.

In point of fact, however, one must go back to 1908 to find the causes of such a state of disorganization. At that time the late Larrhallé Naba, Pawitraogo, a province chief, was sent off on a mission to Koudougou, and his vacated office had to be filled. Later on the emperor dismissed the Kamsogho Naba [51] and replaced him with an "incompetent," so the local administration decided to entrust the province to a more qualified minister.

It would be highly desirable if a new reorganization were put into effect which would 1) progressively eliminate certain insignificant cantons by combining them into larger units; 2) gather the so-called independent villages into cantons; and 3) grant to province chiefs identical material rewards. This last can only be achieved by an equitable allotment of the cantons. The French administration has granted equal salaries to all province chiefs and, as a consequence, has established an equality which did not formerly exist. Three of these officials are now educated men; they enjoy equal consideration, have the same needs, and alike perform valuable services. They should all be accorded equal advantages if jealousy and discontent are to be avoided.

631 Finally, to return to the kombemba, it should be stated that the vassals of the Mogho Naba at Koudougou and Kaya enjoy a

643 These dima maintain courts which with some exceptions, are like
631 that of the emperor of the Mossi.

They were appointed directly by their own ministers; the emperor took no effective role in the proceedings.

Today. The local administration has made these petty kings into simple province chiefs and sometimes -- as happened to the Konquizitenga Naba -- into mere canton chiefs.

Respect due the Mogho Naba. Each year the petty dima sent numerous gifts to the Mogho Naba (horses, cattle, and cowries).

643 An error. The Tenkodogo Naba (1), contrary [54] to what

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1. It should not be assumed that the Tenkodogo Naba controls all the cantons in the administrative district of Tenkodogo.

Several Boussancé [Busansi] cantons were ruled by the Mogho Naba before the French occupation. Out of the 14 cantons which now make up the province called Boussanga, 11 were under the emperor's jurisdiction and their chiefs were appointed by him. Like all vassal chiefs, they were required to visit the emperor once a year and to bring him annual tribute.

Since Tenkodogo has been changed first to a subdivision and then to an autonomous circle, the Boussancé chiefs involved have been appointed directly by the local administration with the consent of the population; the Mogho Naba was no longer consulted. After trouble arose over the appointment of a canton chief, the Mogho Naba had to intervene, and from this affair arose the necessity of putting a relative of the emperor at the head of those cantons organized

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as provinces. The choice fell upon a uterine brother of Naba Kom, Moustapha Kongo.

He was recalled in 1930 after ruling for only three years. His dismissal was certainly due to errors committed in the performance of his duties, but it was also caused by the fact that the Boussancé had been independent too long to take kindly to a master.

Thus, as was pointed out at the beginning of this chapter, the local administration has interfered too much with the organization of the Mossi empire. The position of the Mogho Naba has been completely distorted, and his prestige diminished. This is why the ill-informed official to whom we have already alluded could state that the authority of the Mogho Naba over his vassal chiefs was merely nominal.

A list of Boussancé cantons under the authority of the Mogho Naba follows: (1) Niaogo, (2) Niarba, (3) Lenga, (4) Gon Boussougou, (5) Komtoéga, (6) Beguedo, (7) Ouanragou, (8) Sanogo, (9) Toalla, (10) Zourga, (11) Yakala.

643 has been accepted up to now, is a true king in his territory and as such is absolutely independent of the Mogho Naba at Ouagadougou, to the same degree as the head of the state of Yatenga (Ouahigouya) and the head of Fada N'Gourma.

As was pointed out in an earlier chapter [not translated], the Tenkodogo Naba is the descendant of Naba Zoungrana, the son of Ouedraogo, and is consequently the "elder" of the Mogho Naba, who is a descendant of Naba Oubri, the founder of the Mossi dynasty of Ouagadougou.

631 635 The Boulsa Naba, a direct descendant of the kourita [representative after death] of [55] Naba Oubri, is not a dima but merely a kombéré. He has a vassal, to be sure, the chief of Koupéla in the circle of Tenkodogo who is now considered a province chief, but the Boulsa Naba himself is a vassal of the Mogho Naba.

643
651 Mossi circle into several administrative districts, still continue to
178 make substantial annual gifts to the Mogho Naba (cowries, cattle, and a considerable amount of grain, millet and rice).

634 Payments Due the Kombemba (canton chiefs). Formerly each
651 canton held one or more ritual feasts each year, and the Mossi subjects, that is, the tengsoba (village elders, notables, and those in comfortable circumstances), regularly made gifts to the canton chief (cowries, goats, sheep, and roosters). The Peulh [Peul] gave cattle.

The canton chiefs also retained a portion of the payment made by the people for the benefit of the Mogho Naba.

[178] At the present time these traditional gifts are still made, but white or light gray roosters are more and more being substituted for livestock. [71]

661 Payments due the Ministers of the Mogho Naba. In order to
431 maintain good relations with the ministers, court officials, and intermediaries between the emperor and his vassals, the canton
644 chiefs in former times used to present unspecified gifts to the
634 high dignitaries at court when they paid their respects to the Mogho Naba. A certain number of cowries was given to the pougtième, first wife of the Mogho Naba (500 cowries equals two and a half francs, formerly 50 centimes).

A canton chief who has been called to Ouagadougou for some reason may choose not to call on the emperor, but he is obligated to bring cowries, a sheep, or a rooster to the minister who is head of the province in which his canton is located.

651 Common laws. (a) Regulation of market fees. Before the ar-
443 rival of the French, market fees at Ouagadougou were collected for the benefit of the Mogho Naba by a collector in his employ.

In important villages, fees were collected by Gourounsi [Grunshi] captives on behalf of the canton chiefs (kombemba).

651 (b) Hunting. In former times, before the fields were cleared
224 for seeding, the Mossi used to go out in groups of several villages on hunting drives. Small game (partridges, guinea fowl, hares,
634 etc.) were left to the hunters. On the other hand, a haunch of any quadruped killed (deer, gazelle, coba [a kind of horse antelope], etc.) was reserved for the canton chief.

651 [72] (c) Fishing. Fishing in the larger water holes could take
226 place only by authorization of the canton chiefs. The day on
634 which fishing took place was treated as a holiday. All the young men in the village and their neighbors, even if the latter did not belong to the canton, came out on the day set by the canton chief and fished for the benefit of the naba. All large fish were reserved for him, and only the small ones were left to the fishermen.

This practice still prevails.

776 Other common laws. Many deities are worshipped by the
782 Mossi. Groves, fields, mountains, etc., all have their "god."
661 It often happens that the naba (canton chief), at the behest of the soothsayers, offers an animal. This may be a sheep, a goat, or even a cow, and it is offered to one or another of the deities, either for his personal interests or for those of his people, or perhaps to ask for rain. The naba dispatches some sogoné [servitor] or samand'kamba [people of the outer courtyard] to one of the villages in his canton to find a victim. The animal is taken without its owner having any right to complain or to ask for compensation. Is there not a Mossi saying to the effect, Talagh-gounda
[538] Naba'gninga the serf raises livestock for the benefit of his naba)"?

For sacrifices prescribed for the Mogho Naba, the animals are provided either by the inhabitants of the [73] town of Ouagadougou and its environs or by the canton chiefs.

Labor Service Customarily Required of the Mossi on Behalf of their Chiefs

651 Forced labor was used to cultivate the fields of the naba and to repair or construct their houses.

647 The Mogho Naba. (a) Cultivation of fields. The duty of
651 cultivating the fields of the Mogho Naba fell entirely on the Bilbalsé,
241 the residents of Bilbalogo (section of the Baloum Naba) and on all former servitors and descendants of former servitors. The Kam Naba (chief of the young men), charged with assembling the workers, had a crier announce in all the important markets that on such-and-such a day the Bilbalsé were to assemble in the emperor's

651 For the Baloum Naba, the work was done by all the bilbalsé.
645 The Kam Naba set the day for the sekka (gathering), and all the
241 young and able-bodied men were required to report. They received the food they required from the Baloum Naba. The number of work days was not fixed. The sekka might be held once or several times, depending on the acreage.

For the other ministers, the Ouidi Naba, Gounga Naba, and Larrhallé Naba, the field work was done by the people in their entourage (that is, the inhabitants of their respective sections) and in the neighboring villages which were formerly under their jurisdiction. Since the formation of the canton of Ouagadougou and its outskirts, the area has been under the exclusive authority of the Baloum Naba (fourth minister of the emperor).

645 If, however, the fields were so extensive that their cultiva-
476 tion could not be taken care of solely by the above system -- the
241 laborers also had to care for their own fields -- the ministers [76] called for volunteers from among the young men in the neighboring villages and paid them with food and drink. This is the sissoaga, a system commonly in use among the Mossi.

645 (b) Construction and repair of houses. As a general rule, re-
651 pair of the roofs of huts in the establishments of the province chiefs
356 was the duty of the inhabitants of their respective sections and of the neighboring villages under their jurisdiction.

651 The canton chiefs. The cultivation of the fields of the naba
634 and the repair of the huts in their establishments were wholly in-
241 cumbent on their subjects. Each village had a fixed number of
356 huts to be repaired or roofed; this is known as sough'pilli, and it is still in effect annually.

651 Today, perhaps in the interests of tranquillity, canton chiefs require labor service in their fields only from their sogoné and samand'kamba and sometimes even resort to the sissoaga.

The local administration, with respect for local customs, has the policy of organizing the system in a way that, in our opinion, will safeguard the interests of the natives, overburdened due to the negligence of the province chiefs, and at the same time will enhance the prestige of the Mossi chiefs.

653 The naba is not entitled to any other labor services. The building of dams to provide water for the villages cannot be

composed of two major groups of communities," Fortes goes on to describe this pattern succinctly: 171

> On the one side are those that claim to be descendants of immigrants from parts of the country other than their present habitats. On the other side are communities that claim to be the autochthonous inhabitants. . . . Many of the immigrant communities claim descent from forbears of the Mampuru ruling stock. Though now wholly amalgamated with the alleged aboriginal inhabitants, they have certain ritual observances and a system of chieftainship similar to those of the Mamprusi. . . . The institution distinctive of the autochthonous communities is the office of "Custodian of the Earth." This ritual office, involving priestly functions in connection with the cult of the Earth, is found among many West African peoples from the Senegal to the mouth of the Niger. In the Voltaic region it is the exclusive prerogative of the autochthonous communities.[2] [793]

The inhabitants of the Yatenga at the time of the arrival of the Mossi were the Kurumankobe, or Fulse, as they are called by the Mossi. Their descendants recognize their indigenous origin but have become almost wholly acculturated to the Mossi. While most Mossi bear the sib name Wedraogo and maintain political control in the Yatenga, the descendants of the Kurumankobe usually have the sib name Savadogo and are excluded from the exercise of political authority. They have retained the custodianship of the earth, and the elders of their lineages and sibs are the Mossi's *Tenga Soba namba*, their "earth custodians," charged with propitiating the supernatural forces of nature. 173 563 614 [793]

POLITICAL AND SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

The present king of the Yatenga, the *Yatenga Naba*, is a lineal descendant of the first ruler, Naba Yadiga. The members of the lineage of the king are called "those who maintain themselves upon us" (*riim namba*). Directly subordinate to the authority of the Yatenga Naba are his four grand ministers, each of whom has authority over a particular province (*solum*) of the Yatenga.[3] 631 [644] [635]

The province over which each of the grand ministers presides as lord is divided up into a number of cantons (*tense*), each of which is ruled by a chief who is the central political authority both of the village in which he resides and of the villages within the canton. Like the province, the concept of the canton is not precisely territorial. Some villages may owe 631 634

[2] Meyer Fortes, *The Dynamics of Clanship among the Tallensi* (London: Oxford University Press, 1945), p. 6.

[3] These provinces refer not only to geographical areas of the kingdom but to particular categories of the population. For example, the *Balum Naba* has direct authority over the southern regions of the Yatenga and indirect authority over the cantons of Riziam and Zittenga, political entities which have never fully recognized the central authority of the *Yatenga Naba*. This same minister is also especially charged with maintaining liaison with certain of the more important earth custodians throughout the Yatenga.

their allegiance directly to the *Yatenga Naba* for historical reasons or because their chiefs are related to the royal lineage and superior within the social hierarchy to the local nobility (*nakomse*) to which the canton chiefs belong.

Subordinate, in turn, to the canton chief, is the village chief (*Tenga Naba*), who is the central authority in the aggregation of "quarters" (*sakse*) of which a Mossi village is composed. These quarters are the dwellings of patrilineal extended families and lineages (*boodoose*). Such a residence is called a *saka* if it contains the house of the lineage elder (*sak kasama*) or a *yiri* if it represents only a junior segment. In either case the dwelling of the oldest male in the group is surrounded by the separate houses of his wives, his younger brothers and their wives, and his sons, nephews, cousins, and their wives and children. Each adult individual has a separate house within the *saka*.

The smallest unit within the residence of the lineage is the nuclear family (*zaka*) composed of a man, his wife, and their children. If a man has more than one wife, the term *zaka pedere* (*zaka* half) may be used when the man's relationship with one of his several wives is being considered. He himself is called *zaka soba*. As a young man's family grows, each of his new wives is provided with a house adjoining his. In addition to his house and the houses of his wives, each man's household contains several granaries used to store the produce from the millet fields he has been assigned by his lineage. It is with the members of his own household that a man is in most frequent social and economic interaction. The fields he works with their assistance are the principal source of the food supply for the nuclear family unit.

The *yiri* is the next largest social unit within the *saka*. The term refers to the extended family dwelling inhabited by a man, his wives, his male children, and their wives and children. It may be composed of as many as fifteen separate nuclear families. While its inhabitants usually consist of the married sons of an older man and their nuclear families, it may also be composed of a man, his wife and children, and his younger brothers and their wives and children. Since its members are closely related within the lineage, there is greater social and economic interaction among them than there is with the other lineage members. As the *zaka soba* is the principal and final authority within the *zaka*, the *yiri soba* is most important within the *yiri*.

Composed of the nuclear and extended family dwellings of its members, the Mossi residential unit is typically inhabited by all of the local representatives of the sib. In addition to the dwelling of the lineage elder, it contains the altar (*kiemserogo*) where the ancestral spirits of the lineage are worshiped. The lineage elder has authority over everyone living within his *saka*. As counselor to the village chief and intermediary with

643 of the electoral college was not accepted by the populace and dis-
669 turbances occurred in spite of the proclamation of the king-elect. This was when Naba Sagha, the son of Naba Kom, was chosen. The people would have liked to see Kaoko, son of Naba Zombéré, nominated. Dissatisfied because the sovereign of their choice had not reached the throne, they would not acknowledge the man chosen by the college. The new monarch managed to take over the throne only after waging a bloody battle at the head of his followers against his unlucky rival.

645 The province chiefs who are ministers are nominated by the
635 Moro Naba, who selects the man most deserving of the succession among the closest relatives of the chief to be replaced. Province chiefs enjoy considerable power in the administration of their provinces, they are surrounded with a large court, but they stand under the direct control of the Moro Naba.

635 It must be added that aside from the five provinces lying under the direct rule of the Moro Naba of Ouagadougou, there were four others (Boussouma and Béloussa to the northeast, Yako to the northwest, Tenkodogo to the southeast) that were mere vassal provinces and that actually enjoyed nearly complete autonomy prior to our occupation. Tenkodogo province was especially important.

The chiefs of these /latter/ provinces were true monarchs selected in the same fashion as the Moro Naba by the electoral college of their province. Once elected, they enjoyed all the prerogatives of sovereignty, nominating the canton chiefs and administering their provinces as they saw fit.

Their power was as absolute in their own sphere as that of the Moro Naba over the whole of his subject provinces, but they ac-
[631] knowledged his sovereignty and offered him a gift as a token of their vassalage at the time when their powers were handed over to them.

634 /576/ Within the subject provinces, the canton chiefs were
621 nominated by the Moro Naba on the basis of an introduction by the province chief. They were always selected among the closest relatives of the chief they were to replace, always descendants of Oubry, the first Moro Naba. They stood under the direct orders of the province chief, whom they had to use as an intermediary to communicate with the Moro Naba. It was their task to proceed with

634 the nomination of the village chiefs, who were always selected
621 from the family of the preceding chief.

Let us add that in principle, and all other things being equal,
408 it was the eldest son of the deceased chief who was supposed to suc-
631 ceed his father, and this applied to village chiefs as well as to canton chiefs, province chiefs, and the Moro Naba. This principle ran counter to the true patriarchal principle where the younger brother is always the natural and legitimate heir of the deceased brother. The requirements of a warlike existence had probably forced it upon the Mossi at the time of their conquest of the Dagomba and Mossi territories.

This principle of direct inheritance (rather than collateral inheritance) had been restricted, however, by the powers of higher authorities represented by canton chiefs vis-à-vis village chiefs, province chiefs vis-à-vis canton chiefs, the Moro Naba vis-à-vis the province chiefs, and the electoral college of the high dignitaries vis-à-vis the future Moro Naba. In short, the warriors' principle of inheritance from father to eldest son ruled among the Mossi in the power sphere, but had to give way to the exigencies of government whenever necessary.

631 Let us not believe that the third principle, namely the consent of the people involved, was altogether unknown among the Mossi (the consent of the village inhabitants in the case of a village chief, of the canton notables in the case of a canton chief, of the province notables in the case of a province chief, etc.) This third principle, however, was the least important, the least taken into account, the least actualized from a mere potential. /577/ Whenever it clashed with the others, it had to give way.

635 Let us add that the majority of Mossi chiefs were aided by rep-
634 resentatives called baloum.

"The province chiefs," says the Monographie, "the majority of
624 canton chiefs, and even the chiefs of a few important villages, are aided by one or several baloum or palace masters, whom they choose freely. These are sometimes former captives, but most frequently they are common natives or former soroné, and they are never nakomsé. Their function is not hereditary. It grants them the right to substitute for the naba, to speak and act in his name."

8: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1958
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175 schools and 4,000 Moslems in Ouagadougou (seven percent of whom were non-
797 Mossi). By 1944 there were about 240 schools and approximately 25,000
871 Moslems. The last census, 1954, did not record the number of Koranic schools but gave the figure of 60,000 Moslems in the Ouagadougou region.[3] The 4,000 Moslems of Nobéré comprise 42 percent of that district's population. With the exception of one Catholic school master and the Catholic catechist who came to the district during 1956, the population is pagan. It might be relevant to point out that Nobéré has the highest percentage of Moslems in Kombissiri, an administrative unit (a subdivision) which has 152,000 pagans, 23,000 Moslems, 3,000 Catholics, and about 100 Protestants.

797 As noted above, Islam first came into the Nobéré district with Ngado, who replaced a dissident pagan chief, but Ngado's lineal descendants reverted to
634 paganism until a few years ago when the present district chief became a nominal Moslem. The cadet sons of Ngado did not revert to paganism, and today all the noble sublineages of the district are Moslem. We may note here that one of the main aspects of Islamic proselytization in this district, as elsewhere among the Mossi, has been the conversion of persons who do not hold strategic positions vis-à-vis the ancestors. The present chief is no exception to this rule, because he is only a nominal Moslem. His eldest son is the only one in the family who is not a Moslem—a status which is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain in a growing Moslem population. The chief himself became partially converted to Islam in gratitude to a Moslem Hausa trader who cured his illness. He recites the five daily prayers and observes most of the prescriptions of Islam, but he still drinks European beer, subscribes to many pagan rites and
[769] beliefs, and supervises the annual Péléga or sacrifice to the ancestors. This dual allegiance is politically expedient because the chief can function as the head of the Moslem community as well as the traditional head of all the people. He does have occasional difficulty with intolerant Moslems who wish him to become a devout Moslem, and with the traditionalists who claim that today the crops are smaller, the people sicker, and the women barren because of the neglect of the ancestors. However, with the approach of holy days, these differences are resolved in the interest of community harmony.

622 The chiefs of the villages under the overall command of the district chief are mainly pagan, since they are descended from the district chief replaced by
797 Ngado. Yet they command villages inhabited by the noble Moslem sublineages
769 of the ruling house as well as by commoner lineages. The village chief cannot become a Moslem because he too is responsible for sacrifices to the ancestors, without whose help his people would suffer. He does not take an active part in Moslem festivities, but receives the homage due a chief from the Moslems on these and other occasions. However, most village chiefs show an interest in Moslem affairs, and one of them, the chief of Vooko, built a prayer-circle (*misseri*) for Moslems who came to pay homage.

622 The pivotal role which the village chief plays in the exchange of wives be-
797 tween Moslems and pagans has led indirectly to the increase of the Moslem
582 population. Before the French conquest he gave the Moslems more wives than

8: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1958
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797 administration to have one of their converts, a younger son of the late chief,
555 elected to the district chieftainship over his elder brother. This belief is probably unfounded, since the Moro Naba seems to be electing the literate sons of chiefs to their fathers' positions so that educated chiefs, and not educated commoners, can serve as members of French parliamentary bodies. Unfortunately, the people of Manga do not understand modern political problems, and have accepted the new chief only because of their traditional respect for the chieftainship.

634 The conversion of the Manga chief to Catholicism has not engendered
797 many problems for his pagan subjects. The chief's primary duty—to begin
769 the yearly ceremonial cycle of sacrifices to the ancestors—has been taken over
[602] by his father's brother, who is now considered the ritual head of the chiefly lineage. Nevertheless, to the chief still accrue the gains of this ceremony because his followers pay him homage and bring him gifts on his birthday, which comes at this period. Moslems in the community also pay their respects at this time, and they prefer his Catholic birthday celebration to the bloody sacrifices of chickens to the ancestors. On the other hand, the chief shows little of the common Catholic disapproval of Moslems and sends gifts to their leaders on the Moslem feast days. He also entertains the district Moslems when they come to pay him homage.

797 The Catholic chief does not act as a pivot in the exchange of wives be-
634 tween pagans of his lineage and the other lineages. This task now falls to his
582 father's brothers. Nevertheless, as district chief he is constantly involved with the marital problems involving pagan parents and their Catholic children. The main source of the difficulty is that Catholic girls are encouraged to refuse to join their pagan husbands when so ordered by their parents. The mission not only insists that the girl freely choose her own husband, but encourages her to reject a polygynous union. Catholicism thereby interposes it-
[562] self between the girls and their society, not only impairing the prestige of their fathers and lineages but also giving the girls more freedom than they would ordinarily possess.

The pagans claim that by encouraging girls to choose mates without parental consent, the Catholics are really taking the opportunity to obtain wives for young Catholic men. Paradoxically, there seems to be some truth in this, since Bouniol, a White Father, states:

> A Mossi who is unable to acquire a wife by [traditional] means must either remain unmarried or seduce another man's wife . . . they must choose between celibacy and immorality.
>
> Such a state of affairs creates many problems for the missions, especially as the system is recognized and sanctioned by the colonial authorities. . . . Young native Christians are obviously placed in a very awkward position. Their conversion angers their parents, who refuse to give them a wife; neither will their friends bestow a daughter upon them, because they know that they will not receive one in return, since a Christian may not give a daughter in marriage to a pagan. . . . *Consequently, unless the missionaries help them to find a wife, they must remain unmarried—a very discouraging prospect!* (1920:160 italics mine)

8: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1958
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When a young Catholic receives a wife through the mission, he may visit her father and pay the customary respect by giving him kola nuts and brass coins. The father of a mission girl may accept or reject his son-in-law as he sees fit, but formerly he could not defy the power of the missions. 797 582 634

A pagan youth who wishes to marry one of the mission girls has to discuss the matter with the priests and swear publicly that he will become a Christian. Before 1946 the young man had to fulfill his promise or be intimidated by the chief and the missionaries until he relented or fled the district. Today, however, the priests usually abandon their efforts to obtain the conversion of the young men after three months have passed. In some cases the young men take their wives and move to other districts, and return only after the girls have given up Catholicism. Despite the lure of wives from the mission, not many young men become Christians on this account because the Mossi are still concerned primarily with family relationships and the effect that conversion would have on these relationships. [596]

The church's prohibition of polygyny is by far the most serious bar to the spread of Catholicism. Many men do not adopt Catholicism simply because they fear that monogamous marriages would not produce children. Father Paternot (Considine 1954:103) has cited a study purporting to show that Christian Mossi have more children than the pagans, but the ordinary people of the district would not accept the facts he presented. They cite their personal experience to the contrary. Dim Delobson (1934:136), a Mossi converted to Catholicism, states: 797 595 842

> A certain number of Christians of my acquaintance whose wives did not have children during the first years of marriage had recourse to magical practices in order to get children. These simple people thought that although they had an omnipotent God beside them, they could impudently—after all the good priests will not know about it—ask the little, but also powerful gods to grant them some material favors here on earth. When the gods given children were taken for Holy Baptism, they were given Christian names instead of the names of the earth shrines, and they did not wear magical charms which would have indicated to the priest the real state of affairs. Nevertheless, the children were bathed in water to which magical potions were added, and when the mothers went to visit their parents, sacrifices of chickens were given to the benevolent Tengkougas.

The Mossi's strong desire for children is admittedly one of the main reasons for leaving the Catholic Church so that they can take other spouses in addition to barren ones. The church has now belatedly recognized this problem and, knowing that it cannot prevent men from taking plural wives, allows them to come to church but prohibits them from taking the Mass.

Many cultural factors besides the desire for children make polygyny important for the Mossi, and make conversion detrimental to the functioning of their family system. Because of lineage opposition to their conversions, some converts are forced to establish nuclear households—a practice out of harmony with the normal rhythm of Mossi life. The reason for this disharmony is that Mossi women married to Catholics must work alone instead of with 595 797 182 [594]

9:Skinner E-5 (1955 1957) 1960 FA28 Mossi FA28

during a period of transition to effective independence. 605

The Mossi have the unique distinction of having preserved their 173
ethnic identity and political autonomy throughout all the vicissitudes of Sudanese history until conquered by the French on September 1, 1896. The origin of Mossi society is couched in mythological terms. According to their tradition they came from Dagomba in the Gold Coast (present day Ghana) sometime during the 11th or 12th century and moved northward towards the Niger River. During this migration they carved out three large kingdoms and many small principalities by conquering and absorbing some of the indigenous Ninisi and Foulse and Dogon populations, and by chasing the others into the cliffs of Bandiagara. In 1328, according to Es Sadi in the *Tarikh es Soudan*, the Mossi attacked, burned, and sacked Timbuktu, then held by Mali, and during the following century attacked Walata and Banku. They received their first setback by the Ali, and were severely beaten by Askia the Great, the usurper of the Songhoi throne, who lead a *jihad* against them in 1499. But their attacks into the Niger bend did not cease until the Moroccans became masters of Timbuktu sometime in the early 1590's. From that period until the French conquest, the Mossi remained relatively quiescent. They developed and maintained [105
an economy based on grain cultivation, livestock rearing, cotton pro- 631]
duction, and trade between the forest zones and the desert. Their political system crystallized into a loose confederacy of fairly autonomous kingdoms and principalities, sometimes tribute to the Moro Naba, the ruler of Wagadougou.

Wagadougou, the most important Mossi political entity, was like 631
the lesser kingdoms, pyramidal in political structure. At the top was 643
and still is the Moro Naba, a lineal descendant of Wedraogo, the Dagomba conquerer who founded the Mossi group and Moro Naba Wubri, the first ruler of the Wagadougou dynasty. Paying allegiance [635]
to him, were the princes who ruled such autonomous provinces as Yako, Boulsa, Mane, Riziam, and Boussouma. These princes were all sons or near relatives of the early Moro Nabas. Directly under the Moro [634]
Naba were district chiefs who were descended from the cadet branches of the ruling family. The villages within the district were in turn ruled [632]
by the chiefs of the indigenous populations. In many of the villages, [565]

613 173 778 had done so with full permission of his father and in place of an unadventurous elder brother.

For example, the ruling family of the Boulsa province claimed that its 635 ancestor, Naba Namende, was the eldest son of Mogho Naba Oubri and 642 chose to become his father's *Kourita* (a young son of a deceased Mogho 613 Naba chosen as his father's personal representative on earth) and go into 173 exile rather than subject his younger brother to the ordeal. At the same 778 time, Namende sought to retain royal power equal to that of his brother, the new Mogho Naba, by taking Oubri's royal amulets with him.[3]

635 Mane province, too, was founded by one Nyaseme, a son of Koudoumie, 642 who felt that he should have been given the nam. When routed in battle 613 by his elder brother Kouda, he moved into the region of Mane, where he 631 defeated the indigenous Ninisi and ruled over them. The princes who broke away from Ouagadougou during Koudoumie's reign considered themselves theoretically equal to the supreme ruler. Thus, they took the title of Dim. By so doing, they dramatized their claim to equality of status, if not of power, with the Mogho Naba, and their determination to "submit only to God."[4]

642 The Mossi insist that the relationship between the Mogho Naba and 643 the Dimdamba was similar to that between father and sons, since the 613 Dimdamba were "really the sons of the Mogho Naba" and are said to have 631 acted as such. This analogy is interesting in view of the Mossi traditional pattern of avoidance—combined with love and tolerance—between fathers [593] and elder sons.[5] The Dimdamba were often allowed to act at variance with the Mogho Naba. Some of them shifted allegiance from kingdom to kingdom; others usurped the power of the Mogho Naba over smaller districts, or claimed that they had been given this power; and most of them regulated their own affairs with little interference from their sovereign. He, as "father," interfered on occasion in their internal affairs, demanding help from them and often chastising them if they failed to comply.

634 The Mogho Naba and the Dimdamba often appointed their younger 631 sons or brothers as rulers (Kombemba) of the districts that made up their 613 kingdoms and principalities. In this way, power and authority were kept 642 within the royal clan and its lineages. Nevertheless, in keeping with the concept of corporate access to the nam, the rulers of these dependencies had traditions that served to reconcile their claims to kingly or princely status with their actual subordinate position. District founders, too, were often portrayed as eldest sons who had been cheated out of their patrimony or had voluntarily left it to establish new districts. In some cases, the legendary heroes were granted miraculous births as well.

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The people of Nobere district have a legend that its founder, Naba Biligo, was sired by a spirit who impregnated the wife of Mogho Naba Oubri. She carried him in her womb for more than a year, and noticed that although her belly was extended during the daytime, it was always flat at night. She became concerned and confided her worries to the ruler's first wife, who asked the other co-wives to keep vigil for the child. When they arrived in the evening, they noticed that the woman's belly was flat. They awakened her and kept watch until dawn. At cock's crow, the child Biligo returned from his nocturnal wanderings. Seeing the women, he fell from the top of the hut into his mother's lap and began to cry as though he had just been born. When Biligo grew to manhood, he went hunting in the Nobere area. He found the region so fertile that when he returned to Ouagadougou, he told his father, Mogho Naba Oubri, that he did not want the nam but preferred to conquer the Ninisi of Nobere and become their chief.

The people of Doulougou give a slightly different account of the founding of their district. Their founder, a man called Moumde, was also said to be a son of Mogho Naba Oubri. He did not like the capital, and rode all over the kingdom until he came to Doulougou. He liked this region so much that he asked his father to name him chief over its indigenous population. Oubri then sent down an army, defeated the Ninisi, and appointed Moumde as Doulougou Naba.

According to some traditions, Mogho Nanamse appointed their sons as chiefs of conquered districts. A more common tradition, represented by the Biligo legend, is that the founders of local districts conquered their territories with or without the permission of the Mogho Naba. Biligo, the founder of Nobere district, is said to have found the area sparsely inhabited by Ninisi, most of whom fled before him. A person of gigantic proportions, he easily defeated those Ninisi who elected to give him battle. He then went into the woods, where he invited the Ninisi leader, an earth-priest (Tengsoba) called Tedego, to return to the district. Biligo promised him and the other refugees safe conduct and good treatment if they agreed to return. Tedego refused, whereupon Biligo captured him and installed him in a special quarter, with the injunction that he and his family should make sacrifices to the local earth shrines (*Tengkouga*) in the name of the new ruling lineage. Naba Biligo went back into the woods, captured the other refugees, and resettled them in their villages. He allowed the local Tengsobadamba to retain their religious duties, but sent his sons to take political control of the villages. Not satisfied with the number of people under his command, Naba Biligo then raided Gurunsi country and cap-

634 tured slaves, whom he settled behind his compound and in separate villages
173 under their own chiefs. He also welcomed refugees from wars in other territories and established them in special villages under their own chiefs.

631 The Dimdamba followed a similar practice in establishing power and
173 control. According to Cheron, when Mogho Naba Koudoumie sent his son Tiraongo to conquer the Ninisi of Boussouma, the Ninisi defended themselves fiercely. Tiraongo's advance was thus very slow until he found a Ninisi named Wine, dressed in a panther's skin and hiding in a hole, "who on the promise that his life would be saved, consented to serve as guide to Tiraongo and to make propitiatory sacrifices to the divinities of the country. Thanks to him, the Mossi were able to progress to Somtongande."[6] Boulsa tradition recounts that when Naba Namende left Ouagadougou as the Kourita of Mogho Naba Oubri and took possession of their province, he placed his sons at the head of the principal villages "in order to control it [Boulsa] better."[7] One son was even sent to rule over a village at the request of the local Tengsoba.

634 The villages that made up a Mossi district were usually ruled by chiefs
613 who belonged to sub-lineages of the local ruling lineage. These village
778 chiefs and the members of their lineage formed a noble class, the *nakomce*
[565] ("children of the Naba"). As long as a lineage held the nam of a district, all of its sub-lineages had all the privileges of the noble class, regardless of whether they had charge of villages. But if the Mogho Naba deprived
[558] a ruling lineage of the nam by deposing the district chief, all its members were reduced to commoner status. Such people still traced their descent from the Mogho Naba who was the ancestor of their lineage founder, but this relationship ceased to be important unless the lineage recovered the nam of the district. If it did not, the former ruling lineage officially lost its ancient link with the royal clan within a few generations and became a nondescript local group.

634 The place of a deposed royal lineage was usually taken by the relatives
613 of the nobles who subsequently acquired the nam of the district. These
778 newcomers were genealogically closer to the ruling Mogho Naba, and
557 formed the new nakomce of the district. The new district chief sometimes sent his sons to rule over the villages under his command. But if the village
558 chiefs did not suffer the same fate as their lineage head at the hands of the Mogho Naba, the new district chief often permitted them to retain their posts. Thus they retained possession of the nam but lost their noble status. They served the new district chief in a political sense much as the Tengsoba served him in a ritual sense.

554 The plight of deposed district nakomce shows quite clearly the distinc-
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tion made by the Mossi between kinship and sovereignty within their 602
governmental system. Kinship was the basis on which the ruling class 778
was formed. However, sovereignty itself, although associated with kinship, was not unalterably linked with it. When a ruling Mossi kin group held the nam, its subgroups were linked by bonds of prestige. But once this group lost the nam or access to the nam, its component subgroups began to drift away. That this situation could exist shows the true nature of the relationship between sovereignty and kinship within the Mossi political system.

There were other chiefs in Mossi districts who had never had either a 602
lineal or a collateral relationship with any lineage of the ancient royal clan.[8] 554
These men were the descendants of provincial ministers. They became 634
chiefs for the same reasons that the sons of ruling sovereigns became 557
chiefs. When a Mogho Naba sent his sons to replace deposed district chiefs, the young men were usually accompanied by a full complement of administrators. These administrators, mostly younger sons of administrators at Ouagadougou who would not normally succeed their fathers, often automatically replaced the administrators of the former chiefs. But if, for reasons of administrative efficiency, the new chiefs elected to retain the administrators of their predecessors, they assigned village chieftainships to the newcomers. They might also settle them in independent hamlets and furnith them with wives and slaves. For chiefs in this category, kinship did play an initial role in the accession to power; but since they were not related to the district chief, they never gained noble status. Socially, they were comparable to chiefs who were former nobles; as in the latter's case, their kinship ties with the administrators at Ouagadougou gradually lost their significance.

There were yet other kinds of chiefs or men who rated the title Naba 634
in Mossi districts. They included: the descendants of aboriginal chiefs, the chiefs of alien groups, and the chiefs of the Mossi refugee groups that had left other districts because of disputes over the nam. In districts where there were large groups of the autochthonous Ninisi, there were Ninisi "chiefs"; in most cases, however, these "chiefs" were really the senior Tengsobadamba of the villages. In most other districts, the sole Ninisi "chief" was the official Tengsoba of the district chief. This man had ritual power but no political power. Yet he was called Naba, because the Mossi thought that all persons in positions of command or prominence must be named chiefs. Villages made up of aliens (Busansi, Gurunsi, Yarse, and occasionally Fulani) had chiefs in the true sense of the word. These men were granted access to the nam by the district chiefs, and their [778] [428]

power and authority were inherited by their families in the same manner as among Mossi lineages.

The last important category of Mossi chiefs included men who ruled over slave and serf villages. These men were themselves the descendants of slaves and serfs, for no free-born Mossi were placed in such posts. Needless to say, these chiefs were never lineally or collaterally related to the district chiefs, and therefore were never nobles. However, they might be affinally related to district chiefs, and in such cases the relationship was often of some political value.

It must be emphasized that once a man was made chief, he was respected, if not honored, by all the people of the district. In some districts, the Dapore Naba and the Baglere Naba, chiefs of two categories of serfs, were among the most valued assistants of the Kombere Naba. The only people who sometimes refused to honor the village chiefs were the nakomce, who were the holders of the district nam. Nevertheless, they were censored by the Kombere if they were disrespectful to his subordinates. No district chief could allow his government to be jeopardized by the maltreatment of persons who served it. In any conflict between the nam and the kin group, the supremacy of the nam was always maintained.

Every Mossi ruler, whether he held the nam of a kingdom, principality, district, or village, was *ipso facto* also *Boodkasma* (literally, "family head") of the local segment of his boodoo. The word boodoo refers to patrilineal groups that anthropologists would normally call clans, maximal lineages, major lineages, or minor lineages. The Mossi do not make any terminological distinction between these levels of their segmentary lineage system. Nevertheless, they recognize and use the status differences between these units to limit the access of each unit to the corporate assets of the boodoo. Their major social distinction is drawn between the minor lineage, which is also called boodoo, and its component minimal lineages. Each minimal-lineage unit is called a *babissi* (literally, "father's brother"), and is really a large extended family composed of relatives who had a common ancestor, three, four, or at most five generations ago.

The Mogho Naba, for example, was head of his babissi as well as ex officio head of the entire royal clan. Those rulers who claimed equality with him claimed that they, not he, were the true heads of the royal clan and the "direct" descendants of Ouedraogo and Oubri. As a function of their political position, the many princes and district chiefs were heads of their own babissi and of the maximal lineage to which their babissi belonged. Like the Mogho Naba, they were the ex officio heads of all members of their boodoo who lived in their territory and who claimed descent from the same royal ancestors,

the same royal ancestors. A Mossi village chief was likewise the head of his babissi and ex officio head of all the other babissi in his village that belonged to his boodoo. As the official Boodkasma of his village's ruling lineage, the village chief held junior or senior status in relation to other village chiefs of the same boodoo who were also the Boodkasemdamba of their respective lineage segments.

Possession of the nam influenced the pattern of seniority within lineages and lineage segments. In most cases, seniority was based on age and generation. Thus, the oldest man of the oldest generation was the Boodkasma, and his office devolved upon the next oldest man when he died. But within the ruling lineages and their segments, the man who held the nam, whether young or old, was automatically senior to all others. This does not mean that these ruling lineages did not recognize age and generational seniority. For example, whenever a chief died and sovereignty returned to the lineage as a corporate group, the senior noble of the senior generation became the acting Boodkasma and lineage head. Like all Boodkasemdamba, he managed the affairs of his group, but only until a new chief was elected. The new Boodkasma, however, sometimes delegated some of his social rights and ritual obligations to this elder, who was often regarded as the unofficial or semi-official Boodkasma of his lineage. Similarly, the senior nobles of all segments of the ruling lineage were also regarded as Boodkasemdamba. Because they were so regarded and because of the role they played, these men seldom came into conflict with the district chief. He gave them a certain amount of leeway in dealing with the everyday affairs of their group. It was understood by all, however, that nothing should jeopardize the most important asset of the lineage—the nam. Therefore, the chief was obeyed in all important matters involving the noble lineage of the district. In such matters he listened to no one; for, as one district chief said, "Once I have received the nam from the Mogho Naba, no man in this district stands above me!"

This dominance of political relations over social relations was made clear by the behavior of commoners toward ruling nobles on the one hand, and of nobles among themselves on the other. Commoners showed greater respect and deference toward members of the ruling babissi than toward persons belonging to other noble babissi. Thus, they were more respectful to the district chief's father's brothers, his siblings, and his children than to his more distant relatives. Within the noble lineage itself, everyone had to respect the chief as the holder of the nam, but otherwise the generational principle of respect and deference was maintained. The eldest nobleman of the eldest generation received deference from all others (excluding the

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613 appealed to the district chief, and occasionally the woman was sent back.
565 A nobleman set on having a certain girl as a wife usually had small brace-
583 lets like those worn by all noble wives placed on her ankles. Once this was done, the chief could not be compelled to send her back to her parents, and any man who tried to retrieve her was guilty of interfering with a nobleman's wife and could be killed for it. In fact, only the male relatives of noblemen's wives could converse with them without running the risk of being apprehended and executed.

634 The district was the most important unit in the Mossi principalities and kingdoms. It was on this level that the Mossi nobility came into direct contact with the various social and ethnic groups of the society. Here, kinship and affinal ties linked the conquerors and the conquered, the ancient and recent nobility, the refugees from conflicts over the nam and the resident aliens, in a network of social, ritual, economic, and political relationships. It was also on this level that myths and traditions legitimized most effectively the Mossi socio-economic and political system as well as the relationships between the various social and ethnic groups.

634 The number and size of the Mossi districts varied greatly from one
161 principality or kingdom to another. Some districts were large and wealthy, with a number of large villages; smaller districts had a larger proportion of small villages and hamlets. The average number of these small units was probably between fifty and sixty-five per district. The population of the districts ranged from 10,000 to 35,000 persons. Some *tense* (villages) had as many as 5,000 inhabitants and some as few as 50. The average village had about 500 inhabitants. But regardless of size, all Mossi districts and component villages had basically the same structure and fulfilled the same functions. The structure of Nobere district is representative. Nobere
[131] covered approximately 200 square miles. It was bounded on the east by a district called Manga, on the north by the districts of Toece and Djiba, and on the west and south by the Red Volta River. A census taken in 1905, just nine years after the European conquest, showed the Nobere population to be about 13,200.[10] In 1955 approximately 10,000 persons inhabited 24 villages and hamlets scattered through the more inhabitable part of the district.

634 The number of villages and hamlets in Nobere district apparently fluc-
621 tuated. Villages were occasionally abandoned, while small hamlets grew
[361] into prominent settlements. The people of Nobere always tried to establish their villages as close to the Red Volta as possible in order to utilize the more fertile lands. But they were repeatedly driven back by disease and

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marauding animals. Just twenty years ago, the six villages that lay closest to the river were gradually abandoned and their populations absorbed by other villages. As of 1955, three of these populations were still paying allegiance to their former chiefs—a fact that bears out the Mossi axiom that chiefs govern people rather than land. The three other chiefs had lost control over their followers, who had placed themselves under the protection of the chiefs of their host villages. On occasion, Nobere also lost villages to other districts. One such village, Rissoma, was taken away from Nobere and given to Djiba when one of the Nobere district chiefs had a dispute with the Mogho Naba. 634 621

The hub or center of Nobere district, like that of all Mossi districts, was Nab'tenga (also called Nobere Naba Tenga, or Na-tenga), the village of the district chief. This village was rather large and in many respects a replica in miniature of the capital of Ouagadougou. Like most Mossi villages, Nab'tenga was divided into sections, quarters, or neighborhoods called *saghse* (sing. *saka*), which included a number of compounds (*yiya*, sing. *yiri*; or *zughse*, sing. *zuka*). The district chief's compound was called Nab'yiri. He lived there surrounded by his wives, unmarried daughters, younger children, and pages. His older male children lived in separate compounds within the same saka. The saghse of Nab'tenga included Ouidi, the saka of the Ouidi Naba; Balbalse, the saka of the Baloum Naba; Tansoba, the saka of the local war minister (Tansoba or Tampsobo); Baglere, the saka of the chief's serfs; Bendere, the saka of the chief's musicians; Ouedrange, the saka of the chief's grooms; and Pwese, the saka of the guardians of the chief's wives. Scattered among them were the saghse of noble families, smiths, the Moslem Imam, and other persons. The most important market place in the district was located about four hundred yards from the chief's compound. [592] [591] [443]

The number and types of social and ethnic groups within the district and its villages reflected Nobere's history. When the French arrived, the district chief was Kaglere, a descendant of Ngado, who was a son of Mogho Naba Sagha I (ca. 1787–1803). Ngado had been sent to Nobere at the end of the eighteenth century to replace Naba Peka (a descendant of Naba Biligo), who had been deposed and killed by Mogho Naba Sagha during a civil war. The other chiefly descendants of Biligo, however, were not deposed by Ngado; they remained in charge of all but five or six of the major villages in the district. The chiefs of such villages as Ronse, Barkago, Tewarka, and Pinse are *yagense* (descendants) of Naba Biligo. The village called Passintenga was ruled by the descendants of a Busanga from Lenga called Passentre, who allegedly had been given a wife by Biligo. It is not 634 622 175

634 known, however, whether this woman was Biligo's daughter or one of his
622 pughsiudse. The people of Passintenga claimed descent from Biligo's
175 daughter, but the other groups in the district questioned this ancestry. The village called Bourougna had two chiefs. One, the Tang Naba, was descended from a son of a Ouidi Naba of Ouagadougou who had settled in Nobere; the other, the Yang Naba, claimed descent from an aboriginal Ninisi man and woman of Biligo's lineage. The Yang Naba was thus another of Biligo's yagense in the district. The chief of Nimpwe village was a descendant of the aboriginal Ninisi people and was the principal Tengsoba in the district. He had more ritual power than political power, however. The nam of Basbedo village was held by a man descended from Busansi refugees. Living in this village was a man with the honorific title of Soulougre Naba, who claimed descent from the most important Ninisi family who had lived in the district prior to the arrival of Biligo.

634 Most of the nobles of the local ruling lineage lived either in the saghse
173 of the district villages or in isolated hamlets. Local tradition holds that one
621 of the conditions set by Naba Ngado for allowing Biligo's descendants to
[613] remain as village chiefs was the right to settle nineteen of his sons in many
[565] of the villages. He allegedly sent *mabissi* (sons of the same mother) to the same village. By so doing, he took advantage of the normal lines of fission that are created after the death of a Mossi father and prevented undue rivalries. Yet there was no driving necessity for him to do so, because there were more villages than chief's sons available. In fact, there are still many villages without nobles in Nobere district. The people of Passintenga, for instance, allegedly refused to have nobles live among them, while the people of Nimpwe allegedly killed by sorcery all the nobles who ever tried to live there. The actual reason for the absence of nobles in these villages may have been that the district chief did not wish to send his sons to villages into which his daughters had married or where there lived earth priests who
[565] were thought to be powerful sorcerers. Nobles were often unwelcome, feared, and resisted, because they tended to exploit the village people and to take advantage of the commoners.

621 The villages of Nobere district, like those of other Mossi districts, were
167 populated in part by refugees and strangers. Several saghse in Togese vil-
173 lage were inhabited by Mossi refugees who had fled a district called Guiergo after a fight over the nam of that district. Scattered throughout the district's villages were people of unknown origin called Siamse. The Siamse found in the villages of Tewaka and Nabadogo claimed that their ancestors had "followed" Naba Biligo when he came down from Ouagadougou to found the district. Several saghse in Bourougna village were in-

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000 went to Djiba when his grandfather died and his father was installed as Mogho Naba.

The origin of Djiba's status as the seat of the Crown Prince is rather 634 obscure. The people of the neighboring district of Nobere say that Djiba 644 was founded by a "companion" of their own founder, Naba Biligo, one of 173 the numerous "eldest" sons of Mogho Naba Oubri, the implication being that Djiba was supervised by Nobere. However, no one seems to know when Djiba's status changed or what happened to the ancient family who used to govern it. The consensus is that in earlier times the heir presumptive to Ouagadougou did not necessarily become chief of Djiba, but was given any district whose chieftainship was vacant when he came of age. Dim [114] Delobson reports that Djiba became the district of the Crown Prince sometime during the seventeenth century, when Mogho Naba Zombere, who had reigned for sixty years, found it necessary to establish a permanent seat for his heir.[88] However, Dim Delobson does not report under what conditions Djiba was chosen, nor does he say what happened to the local ruling lineage when this transfer took place. That the transfer was carried out in the manner reported by Dim Delobson is not doubted, because each new [558] Mogho Naba obtained districts for his relatives in this way. Through this [613] process, the people of the ancient ruling lineages were usually reduced to the level of commoners, and this is apparently what happened to the rulers of Djiba.

634 The first public sign that the young prince was being prepared for the 643 nam came in the form of a summons commanding him to go to Ouagadougou to be installed as Djiba Naba. On his way to the capital, he visited several villages where the local Tengsobadamba made sacrifices to the earth goddess in his name. He took this opportunity to meet with the district chiefs and their assembled village chiefs; he was entertained by them; and in turn he distributed gifts to the old women, whose praises were considered especially effective in bringing health and long life. When the boy finally arrived at the capital, he lodged at the compound of the Kambo Naba, head of the palace guard, until the Mogho Naba and his ministers installed him as chief of Djiba.

The installation rites for the Crown Prince were very similar to those already described for the Mogho Naba, and identical to those for the district chiefs. During the ceremony, no mention was made of the fact that the prince was the son of the Mogho Naba. The only special feature was that when the prince went into the courtyard after the ceremony to render homage to the Mogho Naba, he sat in an area assigned to him by custom. When the ruler appeared, the prince followed the Gounga Naba, who was pro-

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vincial minister for Djiba, and rendered homage to the sovereign. After 634
this reception the prince went to the Gounga Naba's compound, which 644
henceforth was his headquarters whenever he visited Ouagadougou; for, like other district chiefs, he had to consult with this minister before seeing the monarch. Everyone in the kingdom had to follow the political hierarchy, even the ruler's heir.

The young prince remained at his host's house and from there visited the other important officials, in the order of their rank, receiving from each presents of sheep, millet beer, kola nuts, and sometimes wives. He then [795]
visited the Imam of the Ouagadougou Moslem community, where he received a blessing in the name of Allah and was given kola nuts and millet water sweetened with honey. On the fourth or fifth day the prince went to [769]
a small village called Zoanghaa where he made a sacrifice to his ancestors and requested their protection against all enemies.[29] He returned to Ouagadougou on the same day and was given a palace escort to accompany him to his district.

During his journey, the royal heir had the opportunity to establish or 634
re-establish friendly relations with district chiefs who were now his peers, 644
but who might someday become his subjects. He visited in turn the war 431
leader at Tansobatenga, the Koubri Naba, the Ipelse Naba, and the Kondrin Naba. Each of these chiefs offered him livestock, slaves, and wives. He, in turn, distributed salt (a valuable commodity) to the old women and gave kola nuts and other commodities to the chiefs' head wives. The Baganmini Naba presented the prince with a special quiver of arrows, and the chief of the Fulani at Bedego gave him a pretty maiden and one of his best bulls. The prince spent a few days with each of his hosts, but stayed for seven days in Bere, a district bordering on his own. The Bere Naba gave him a wife, a robe, and a cow, and sent messengers to the village chiefs of Djiba to announce that their chief had arrived in Bere. The chiefs then journeyed to Bere, pledged allegiance to their ruler, and presented gifts to him. On the seventh night there was a ritual (whose main features are 634
unclear), in the course of which the prince entered Djiba secretly on horse- 644
back, accompanied only by one servant, one groom, and the nobles and [788]
chiefs of Djiba.[30] Most members of the escort who had accompanied him from the capital were left behind at Bere, and followed only when the prince had established himself in his district. When the prince's band entered Djiba under cover of darkness, it was met by the local Ouidi Naba, who ruled the district in the absence of a Crown Prince. The Ouidi Naba now became the prince's protector if the boy were still young, or his most trusted adviser if he were old enough to rule by himself.

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634 As soon as the prince arrived, the Ouidi Naba made preparations to
644 receive the chiefs of such local districts as Manga, Nobere, and Basgana, who visited the prince and brought him wives, livestock, and money. During a seven-day period, other chiefs and well-wishers visited the new chief
[431] and offered him gifts. When this period was over, the new Djiba Naba gave wives to the noble members of his escort and livestock, money, and kola nuts to the commoners and serfs, and sent the group back to Ouagadougou. Then he settled down to the life of a typical district chief, governing his villages in the name of the Mogho Naba, paying him tribute, and settling disputes among his villagers. Dim Delobson reports that the other
[431] district chiefs and the heads of such principalities as Boussouma and Con-
[651] quizitenga formerly sent presents to the Djiba Naba when they sent their annual tribute to the Mogho Naba.[81] But this contradicts all that I heard and saw of the relationship between the royal heir and the other district chiefs. They treated him as an equal and showed no deference to him either in private or on ceremonial occasions. As a matter of fact, in the presence of the Mogho Naba, the royal heir actually effaced himself before the other district chiefs. This behavior served to preserve the concept of equal access
[643] of all members of the ruling clan to the ancestral nam. The Mogho Naba was head of the ruling group as well as political leader of the Mossi. His son, on the other hand, was often a junior in terms of age and generation within the ruling group, but politically he was on the same level as the other district chiefs. The sovereign could not show by his behavior that his son was either actually or potentially superior to the other Nanamse; nor could the prince presume to be haughty because of his strategic but accidental relationship to the actual possessor of the nam. Had he tried to do so, he might have ruined his chances of being selected to take over the "house" of his father and his father's fathers.

643 The relations between the Mogho Naba and his children, including his
644 heir, were characterized by formality—at least in public. Nevertheless, the
593 ruler took a vital interest in the training and welfare of the youthful Djiba
634 Naba. Mogho Naba Wobogo (1890–96) reportedly had the Ouidi Naba and the Baloum Naba of Djiba executed because the Crown Prince died under strange circumstances while under their care. Yet the Mogho Naba was not expected to enjoy seeing his son and heir, because of the Mossi father's traditional anxiety regarding those individuals who would profit most from his death. At the assemblies of district chiefs called by the Mogho Naba, the royal heir was not even greeted by his father; moreover, the heir usually stood at the edge of the assembly and left without attending the customary feast. However, there is considerable evidence that the Mogho

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Naba regularly saw his son in private, and that the prince often interceded 644
successfully with his father for the lives of rebels or criminals. 593

The Mogho Naba seldom saw his younger sons, who usually remained 634
with their mothers' patrilineages until they were old enough to be assigned district chieftainships or sent to live in villages controlled by the Baloum Naba. He was rather suspicious of these boys, who, if certain traditions are believed, were not averse to plotting the death of the Djiba Naba in order to succeed to the nam. The district chiefs also feared these younger sons, in whose favor they were often deposed by the Mogho Naba. Almost all of the dynastic changes that occurred in the Mossi districts seem to have stemmed from a ruler's attempt to find districts for his brothers or his younger sons.

The ruler was less concerned with the welfare of his daughters and 643
female relatives. Their marriages seldom benefited the political system. 644
As a matter of fact, the behavior of a royal princess usually strained the re- 593
lations between her husband and the ruling lineage. The reason for this [562]
was a status conflict: as wives, they had low prestige in Mossi society; but as relatives of the Mogho Naba, they enjoyed high status. This contradiction made it difficult for them to accept the low estate of wives. Consequently, they clashed with their husband and often dominated the women and co-wives in his compound. Since few Mossi men tolerate strife within their household, these noble wives often withdrew from their husband's home and established one of their own. The one exception to this pattern was the ruler's eldest daughter, the Napoko, whose ceremonial duties at his death and during the interregnum compelled her to remain loyal to the husband chosen for her by the king. Like her brother, the Crown Prince, if she violated any of the traditions and thus became ineligible to fulfill her duties to her father and to the state, she endangered the country at its weakest moment, when the government was being transferred from the deceased Mogho Naba to his successor.

The death of a Mogho Naba was usually attributed to foul play or 643
supernatural forces. When Mogho Naba Sagha II died in 1957, a report 761
from Ouagadougou stated that the Governor of the Upper Volta had felt constrained to have an autopsy performed to quell rumors that the monarch had died of poisoning.[82] The obvious function of such rumors was to dramatize the gravity of the situation during the interregnum.

Because the Mogho Naba was usually accompanied by a page, it was 643
often this boy who witnessed his death. It was the page's responsibility to 763
notify the Baloum Naba, who notified, in order, the Ouidi Naba, the Lar- [644]
halle Naba, the Kamsaogho Naba, the Gounga Naba, the ruler's children, [645]

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mal lineage segment except the pretenders to the throne shaved their heads as a sign of mourning. The royal pretenders donned sheepskin mantles to signify that they were willing to "eat the nam." Once the ruler had been buried, the country settled down to an uneasy peace until the eighth day, when the funeral ceremonies took place. In the meantime, the Napoko symbolically held daily court, and the Tansoba's army acted as a check against the attempts of ambitious princes to seize power by force of arms.

Two days before the funeral, the Kamsaogho Naba selected the Kourita, who was to replace the Napoko as the living symbolic representative of the dead Mogho Naba. The person chosen to be Kourita was usually a young son of the deceased king, but since this person was banished from the capital, most of the royal wives hid their young children or fled the palace with them.[33] Once the Kourita had been chosen, the Kamsaogho Naba performed a ceremony (similar to those connected with the divine kings of the Near East) during which the youth was given one of his father's horses, dressed in his father's clothes, and given his father's youngest widow as a wife. He was then paid the homage due the Mogho Naba, and after receiving many gifts from the dignitaries, he was banished from Ouagadougou forever. As he went through the country, he was treated like the Mogho Naba and given many wives and presents. If he should chance to return to Ouagadougou or see the new Mogho Naba, either or both of them would be killed by the ancestors. Many Mossi districts seem to have been founded by exiled Kouritadamba. These men were undoubtedly among the numerous "elder" sons of past kings who are said to have "refused" the nam and gone to live in the districts now governed by their descendants.

The choice and banishment of the Kourita heralded the funeral rites, which were characterized by numerous animal sacrifices to the ancestors in the name of the deceased ruler. On the afternoon of the first day of the funeral, the Crown Prince mounted a horse and left the palace by the women's door. The Napoko then took the bridle of her brother's horse and led him and an immense crowd of cavalry, armed warriors, and musicians around the palace walls three times. After the third round, the Napoko demanded that her brother give her a personal servant as a present; he hesitated, but finally granted her request. The Napoko was then lifted up by the warriors, who shouted as they carried her home. The funeral thus came to an end.

All Mossi potentates tried to emulate the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou in matters of pomp, ceremony, and government.[34] Their courts were inferior to his, but only because they were less powerful and less wealthy.

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Some of the more important rulers, such as the heads of the Yatenga, Fada-N'Gourma, and Tenkodogo kingdoms, were chosen by local electoral colleges, which did not have to seek the approval of the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou or notify him of the choices made. Their authority, as we have seen, was supported by claims of equality with Ouagadougou. But, with the exception of the Tenkodogo ruler, they were actually farther removed from the main line of royal descent than the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou. The autonomous Dimdamba had their own electoral colleges, which in some cases were made up of men related to the electoral-college members of the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou. (For example, the Ouidi Naba of Boulsa was descended from the Ouidi Naba of Ouagadougou.) These local colleges were usually free to nominate and elect the Dimdamba without consulting the Mogho Naba, even though he ratified many nominations.[35] According to Cheron, "The nomination of the Dim of Boulsa did not become definitive until ratified by the Mogho Naba, who was always consulted by the electors and who could impose his own candidate."[36] This was not always true; nor did every Mogho Naba refrain from interfering in the internal affairs of autonomous provinces. Whether he did or not often depended on his strength relative to that of the Dimdamba. Once the Dimdamba had been chosen, however, they were installed with ceremonies similar to those for the Ouagadougou ruler.

Like their superiors, the Dimdamba had the authority to delegate power to the Kombemba and Tense Nanamse. Some of them also had the right to grant the nam to a fellow Dim. The Boussouma Naba, for instance, could grant it to the Mane Naba.[37] Mogho Nanamse granted such rights to Dimdamba for various reasons. They might do so on the basis of their relative strength vis-à-vis a particular Dim at a particular time, or because they admired him or were closely related to him. However, a Dim exercised sovereignty in his own name, regardless of whether he was subordinate to the Mogho Naba or to another Dim. In contrast, the district chiefs and the village chiefs exercised sovereignty on behalf of the Mogho Naba or of the Dim in whose territory they resided.

The installation ceremonies for the two lower orders of chiefs were not too different from those for the Mogho Nanamse and Dimdamba. For example, when the Nobere district chief died, the provincial minister for Nobere—in this case the Gounga Naba—reported his death to the Mogho Naba. The ruler then summoned one of the deceased chief's officials to the capital to report on the qualifications of all potential candidates for the nam. The provincial minister, in turn, dispatched one of his own representatives to the district to verify the reports he had received. It was only when this

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It was only when this man had returned to the capital that all the nobles in the local ruling lineage were invited to Ouagadougou to press their claims. Only the dead chief's babissi went to Ouagadougou, even though all nobles subscribed to the traditional concept that "the nam does not belong to any one sub-lineage; it can be given to any nobleman." Unlike the others, these nobles did not shave their heads in mourning, thus indicating their candidacy for the nam. When they donned sheepskin cloaks and carried spears on their shoulders, they indicated that they were interested in the nam of the district. 634 [613] [302] [765]

Before a candidate for the district chieftainship left for Ouagadougou, he collected livestock, money, clothing, and grain from his friends to give as gifts or bribes to important officials in the capital. When he arrived there, he lived with friends and conducted his campaign from their home. He and the other candidates visited their provincial minister and his colleagues, the Mogho Naba, and other courtiers, giving presents ostensibly as a sign of friendship but actually with the ultimate aim of impressing these people with their generosity. These activities were often very costly; for if the Ouagadougou officials suspected that the candidates were wealthy, they made every effort to obtain as many presents as possible. It was not unusual for candidates for the district chieftainship to remain at the capital as long as "thirty-three" or "sixty-six" days before the officials were satisfied with their generosity and made preparations for the election. 634 662

The evening before the election, the Baloum Naba asked each candidate to provide a chicken and a sheep for the evening sacrifices to the namtibo.[28] After the morning ceremony on the following day, the Ouidi Naba reminded the sovereign that a new chief had to be chosen for Nobere district. The Mogho Naba summoned the Gounga Naba and asked him which candidate had the best character and was most capable of taking care of the district—a question which shows that the Mossi never placed primogeniture above the ability to rule.[29] The Gounga Naba had already consulted his friends about the matter, but he recounted both the good and the bad qualities of each candidate. At the same time, he hinted which one would make the best chief. He finally told the Mogho Naba that all of the candidates were worthy men, adding, "You can give the nam to any of them." The Mogho Naba then looked around to ascertain whether the other ministers had concurred in the Gounga Naba's implied choice before declaring, "I will give the nam to X, because when his [father, grandfather, or brother, used in the generic or classificatory sense] was alive, he was good to me. The ancestors would be angry if I did not give his [son, grandson, or brother] the nam." With these words the selection was made, and the ministers now prepared to install the successful candidate. 634 645 643 [782]

●634 A man usually heard about his nomination through his "friends" (usu-
645 ally pages) long before the Baloum Naba had received instructions from the
[576] Ouidi Naba to summon him to the palace. Nevertheless, protocol demanded that he show proper humility and surprise at receiving the news, and that he be tardy in arriving at court. When he arrived, he was taken before the Ouidi Naba, who asked him three times, "Did your [father] say who should be his successor?" To this the nominee replied each time, "No, Naba! My [father] did not say who should replace him. You may appoint anyone you wish, even if he is a blind man or a leper." The Ouidi Naba then asked the candidate, "Which of the nakomce do the district people prefer?" The candidate's standard reply was, "That is the affair of the Mogho Naba. The people will accept anyone, even a blind man or a leper." This question was asked three times, and each time the candidate gave the same answer. The Ouidi Naba then declared, "The Mogho Naba has given you the nam of your [father]." Upon hearing these words, the Samande Kasma (head servant of the palace) came up to the new chief and removed his sheepskin mantle, while the samande-kamba took their heavy batons and chased away the other pretenders who, having heard about the election, had come to the palace. The samande-kamba then bore the new chief on their shoulders to the *tomboko* (a circle filled with sand in the courtyard). To the accompaniment of the royal airs played by musicians under the direction of the Bendere Naba, he took sand and poured it on his head as a sign of submission to the Mogho Naba. The ruler's wives and the courtiers surrounded the new chief, raised their hands over his head, and shouted their praises to the Mogho Naba. Then the new chief showed his respect for all the ministers
[576] and important men, in order of rank, by falling on his knees before them in the traditional Mossi salute. He then went to the Bendere Naba's shed, where he stood in the middle of the musicians and made a speech, the leitmotiv of which became his ruling title. The present chief of Nobere, whose name is Naba Boulga ("Well"), says that he made the following speech when he was nominated: "I am like a well; he who opens me will profit greatly." After the new chief had thus "taken a name," he came to the zongo to "drink the namtibo."

634 The drinking of the namtibo was the highlight of the election ceremony
[778] because it strengthened the link between the new chief and his ancestors and provided the ritual sanction for loyalty, obedience, and service to the Mogho Naba.[46] After the new chief had drunk the namtibo, he called upon the ancestors to kill him if he should ever betray the Mogho Naba or fail to
[641] render him homage and faithful service. This oath was the sign for the unsuccessful candidates to pledge their allegiance to the new chief. Then they

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hoisted him on their shoulders and proceeded to his host's house with loud acclaim. 634

The next morning, the new chief went to the palace to pay homage to the Mogho Naba and receive from him the traditional cowries, three kola nuts, and a small jar of millet water. In the days that followed, he celebrated his good fortune at the house of the important ministers and court officials. About a week later he returned to the palace, and the Baloum Naba's chief assistant invested him with the insignia of office: a white gown, a cushion, a pair of slippers, and, most important, a bonnet—the true symbol of chieftainship. Soon afterward, the new chief asked the Mogho Naba and his provincial minister for permission to return home. He was then provided with an escort to accompany him to his district.

The journey of a new chief to his district was marked by pomp and ceremony. The Nobere Naba stopped at such districts as Toudou and Twili, where he was entertained by the chiefs and presented with wives and other gifts. Some districts he would never be allowed to visit again, and others he had to bypass during his joyful journey. The reasons for these restrictions and prohibitions have long since been forgotten, but they were probably instituted to prevent conflicts among Kombemba and to prevent the new chief from coming into contact with the descendants of the Kouritadamba of former Mogho Nanamse. 634 574

As the new Nobere Naba neared his district, he was met by a welcoming committee of village chiefs, nobles, and commoners, who pledged allegiance to him and gave him wives, goods, clothing, money, grain, and livestock. He was then taken to the Soulougre Naba, a descendant of the aboriginal Ninisi, at whose hands he had to undergo another series of rites before he could set up his new compound and begin his rule. These ceremonies were rather simple in comparison with those at Ouagadougou, but they represented a ritual re-enactment of the Mossi conquest of the district, and reinforced the status relationship between the Mossi and the aboriginal population. At the end of seven days, the Kombere Naba gave the Soulougre Naba a black cow to be sacrificed at a pool called Yarega, a shrine of the ancient Ninisi on a tributary of the White Volta River. When this final rite was over, an enthusiastic crowd fetched the chief, and the young people of Soulougre village bore him aloft to his compound. A period of celebration now began during which all the heads of villages, lineages, and compounds paid homage and swore allegiance to their ruler. This ended when the chief summoned his escort from Ouagadougou and gave presents to those who wished to return there and wives and land to those who wished to settle in his district. 634 [641] [431] [788]

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634 The Kombere Naba, as the person who had "eaten the nam" of the district, was infused with some of the power and authority of the Mogho Naba [576] and had the right to use force to maintain this power and authority. He was respected, and people uncovered their heads and removed their slippers in his presence. Unlike the Mogho Naba, the Kombere Naba was permitted to eat with his peers. But whenever he drank the musicians made a roar-like sound with their instruments, and when he sneezed his attendants clapped. These rituals were rigidly adhered to because the Kombere Naba was readily accessible to the populace and might easily have lost their respect if he behaved in an undignified manner. He emphasized his social distance from them by never visiting the market place, and he did not go anywhere without a large entourage.

The Kombere Naba performed ceremonies and duties that were similar to but simpler than those of the Mogho Naba, and he was surrounded by officers bearing the same titles as those in the capital. But, as will be shown later, these officials had fewer and sometimes different duties than the courtiers at Ouagadougou. Some district chiefs had as many pages and wives as the Mogho Naba, but this was as much a result of their own desires as of their popularity with the local people. The death and funeral rites of a [766] district chief were not as elaborate as those of a Mogho Naba. They included the circumambulation of the chief's compound by the principal heir and [788] heiress, the symbolic reign of the Napoko, and the banishment of the Kourita.[41]

634 Every district chief, whether a Mogho Naba's vassal or a Dim's subordi-
778 nate, was empowered to bestow the nam on his own subordinates. These [622] might be other district chiefs; but most often they were village chiefs. The circumstances under which a Kombere Naba received the authority to grant the nam to another Kombere Naba were usually complex and sprang from rebellions and dynastic changes. Once granted, this authority was seldom revoked, but the district chief had to report to his immediate superior, a Mogho Naba or Dim, whenever he wished to confer the nam upon another district chief.

634 In some cases the Mogho Naba invested a district chief himself, and
175 afterward placed him under the control of a neighboring district chief. For
669 example, the chiefs of two districts, Vooko and Nobila, were always installed
778 by the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou, but were supervised by the Nobere district chief. This practice dates back to the civil war involving Mogho Naba Sagha I (ca. 1787–1803), in which chiefs of Vooko and Nobere sided with the loser. The Mogho Naba executed the local rebels and placed one of his sons in Nobere. He then divided Vooko into two districts, placing a younger son in the one he called Nobila (little Nobere) and subjecting him

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to the control of his brother at Nobere. The other district, still called Vooko but now half its former size, was given to a descendant of its deposed ruler. The relationship between these two rulers and the Nobere Naba was that of vassals and lord. They did not stand up in the presence of the Nobere Naba, but knelt or sat on the ground and uncovered their heads in respect to him. The Nobere Naba traditionally appointed the village chiefs in the Vooko and Nobila districts; however, he sometimes granted that right to the two district chiefs. Furthermore, the traditional provincial administrator could not transmit any orders to those two district chiefs without first notifying the Nobere Naba. In their everyday affairs the two chiefs were autonomous, but the Nobere Naba could challenge and countermand all their actions. Actually, he did seem to exercise greater control over Vooko than over Nobila. One may even say that the relationship between the Nobere district chief and the Vooko chief was like that between the Mogho Naba and his district chiefs, and that the relationship between the Nobere Naba and the Nobila Naba was comparable to the one between the Mogho Naba and the Dimdamba. We have seen that the Dimdamba claimed equality with the Mogho Naba because of their alleged descent from a putative common ancestor. The Nobere Naba was actually more closely related to the Nobila Naba than to the Vooko Naba, and his behavior toward them reflected this fact. In both cases, the relationships involved were determined by the concept of joint possession of the nam by the ruling family.

A district chief was not required to notify his superior when he wished to confer the nam upon a village chief. In this choice he was completely autonomous and subject only to tradition. The fact is that on the district and village levels, traditions were more frequently modified in the face of practical political and socio-economic considerations. This occurred primarily because the district chief had closer relations with persons who possessed goods and services or who controlled them directly than did the chiefs on higher levels. Secondly, he was often under great temptation to allow presents or bribes to affect his choice of subordinate chiefs.

When a Tenga Naba died, the district chief permitted control of the village to revert to its Tengsoba. If there was none, the village was "given" to the eldest man among the aboriginal Ninisi lineages or to the eldest member of the ruling lineage segment. However, none of these persons was considered anything but a trustee of the village, and even when the trustee was a potential candidate for the nam, the Mossi did not feel that this man had any advantage over his competitors. Whoever held control of the village was held responsible for its affairs by the district administrator until the new chief was elected.

Competition for chieftainship on this level was very keen because of the

634 622 greater number of lineage members eligible for the nam and the shallow genealogical depth. Every man who had the ability or desire to rule was 634 encouraged to seek the post. Many candidates tried to impress the district 622 chief and his advisers with their good qualities; most tried to bribe them. 662 Since the candidates could not openly seek the post during the day, they visited the important officials of the district at night, taking money and cattle as presents. Some candidates even promised wives. The intrigues on this level, such as seeking the friendship of pages to find out about the activities of rivals, paralleled those at Ouagadougou. The more gifts a candidate gave the district chief, the more his rivals tried to surpass him. Consequently, the district chief often kept the office vacant for months or even as long as two or three years in order to enjoy these lucrative gifts. Neither the caretakers of the village, who complained about the administrative problems of a village without a chief, nor the Tengsobadamba, who declared that without the permission of a chief they could not make sacrifices to help the people avoid illness, drought, and sterility, could force the Kombere Naba to name a new village chief. Only when the candidates had exhausted most of their wealth was the process to elect the chief set in motion.

634 The district chief had a better knowledge of the character of candidates 622 for the village chieftainship than the Dimdamba or Mogho Nanamse had about the men whom they selected. The district chiefs were better able than other Mossi rulers to obey the dictum that only those men capable of "keeping" the country should rule. Nevertheless, before making a choice, the Kombere Naba called in the local minister responsible for the village in question and discussed with him the character and capabilities of the various candidates.[42] As on higher levels, the eldest son of the former chief [651] was usually favored, especially if he had sent a large *fado* (death tax) to the district chief and had been generous to him during the interregnum. [662] But it was also possible that one of the dead chief's younger sons or one of his brothers or uncles might be chosen. In some cases, the district chiefs [613] chose men from related sub-lineages that had not held the nam for generations. One district chief chose a man who had lived away from the village for thirty years. He had gone to live in his mother's brother's village as a young man and did not return until he was named chief. Admittedly, such cases were exceptional, but they kept alive in the minds of the local people the concept of the Mossi lineage's corporate possession of the nam.

On the day chosen for the election of a village chief, all the candidates with their unshaved heads and sheepskin mantles reported to the village administrator's house along with all the other men of their lineage. They [431] gave him presents, and he led them to the compound of the district chief.

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The entire assembly saluted the district chief, and the official declared the reason for his visit. Then the district chief sent a page for a chief's bonnet, which he gave to a samande. This youth took the bonnet, came up to the kneeling candidates, and jokingly attempted to place it on the head of each one in turn while asking, "Whom did the *keema* ["dead person"; in this case, the dead chief] say should be chief?" When no one answered he gave up the game, ran to the successful candidate, and placed the bonnet on his head. As soon as this happened, all the unsuccessful candidates and men of the lineage ran away, followed by other samande-kamba, who waved big clubs and feigned violence if they should catch them. The men of the lineage soon returned while the new chief did homage and pledged allegiance to the Kombere Naba by prostrating himself on the ground and by putting sand from the tomboko on his head. By this act the Tenga Naba became the district chief's subordinate and the lowest elected official in a ruling hierarchy that extended from the Mogho Naba down to the least village chief.

Once the oath-taking ceremony was over, the new chief's followers saluted the district chief, lifted their new leader onto their shoulders, and bore him triumphantly back to his village, shouting for joy. Here, in imitation of his superiors, the new chief made a speech in which he ridiculed his competitors, reviewed his background, and made known his chiefly intentions. Here, too, the people seized upon some significant point in his speech as an indication of the name "he had named." However, this name was seldom used, since people referred to him as the Naba of such-and-such village, e.g., Barkago Naba, and addressed him simply as "Naba." The village Tengsoba then performed propitiatory sacrifices to the Ninisi ancestors and to the local earth deity in the chief's name, and "gave him back the village" of which he had been the temporary caretaker. Only after these rites had been performed could the chief assume command of the village without incurring supernatural sanctions of the ancient Ninisi.

The typical village chief had no court. His compound was only slightly larger than that of a village family. He had no officials, but some of his companions who assumed special duties similar to those of the Ouidi Naba and the Tansoba were sometimes jokingly referred to by these honorific titles. The village chief had neither soghondamba nor samande-kamba, and he permitted his wives to serve refreshments to his visitors. In general, everything was on a smaller scale than on the district level, including all ceremonies even to the burial of the village chief.

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631 ture, offers what is probably the best analysis of power relations among the
628 important Mossi chiefs. In commenting upon the Mogho Naba's inability
174 to stop the war between Yako and Yatenga he asks, "How could it be
114 otherwise? With what sanctions could this king without an army back up his orders if he ventured to give any? . . . In short, when the Ouagadougou ruler speaks, he is sometimes obeyed. If he is, all is well; if he is not, all is still well. Everything remains as before."[18] Crozat was mistaken if he believed that the Mogho Naba did not have a fighting force. What he did not have was a standing army to exercise his power whenever he wished. When he was able to summon an army, he was effective; when he was not, he had little power over any territory but his own. Crozat, like Binger, gives a strange picture of the political relationship between the Mogho Naba and the other rulers. He tells us that in the Mossi political hierarchy, "after the ruler of Ouagadougou comes the ruler of Boussouma, then the Yatenga ruler, and then the ruler of Yako."[19] Yatenga was traditionally independent of Ouagadougou, whereas Boussouma and Yako were simply autonomous principalities dependent on the Mogho Naba. It is possible that Crozat mistook the relative power of these various political entities for a hierarchical relationship. It is also possible that at the time of his visit, the Dimdamba felt sufficiently powerful to ignore the traditional hierarchy as far as their political relationship with other rulers was concerned, and were simply acknowledging relative gradations of power.

643 Clearly, the sovereignty of the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou over the
642 independent kingdoms and autonomous principalities depended chiefly on
628 military might. The stronger a Mogho Naba was, the more actively he tried to control the internal administration of the autonomous principalities and to exercise police powers over them or on their behalf. However, most Mogho Nanamse were content to claim superiority or control over the independent kingdoms and refrained from meddling in their affairs.

643 Within the Mogho Naba's own kingdom, however, the situation was
635 different. Here, like other important Mossi rulers, he directed the admin-
634 istrative apparatus. For administrative purposes, the kingdom of Ouaga-
[642] dougou was divided into five large provinces (*weto*; sing. *weogho*; or
[161] *solem*, from *so*, "command"). Together they included some three hundred districts, in which there were over four thousand villages inhabited by some 862,000 persons.[20] (Not included here were districts and villages directly administered by the Mogho Naba.) The provinces were not compact physical entities, because their component units were scattered throughout the country. To be sure, some of the districts within a province were close together or even contiguous, but many others stood alongside districts be-

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longing to other provinces. Provinces also differed with respect to the number of districts they included and the nature and size of these districts. Some provinces were larger than others; some were wealthier; and some were more difficult to administer.

Each province was administered by a governor, who also functioned as an important minister at the court of Ouagadougou. In the order of their importance, these governors were the Ouidi Naba, the Larhalle Naba, the Gounga Naba, the Baloum Naba, and the Kamsaogho Naba. Smaller administrative units (both districts and villages) were under the direct control of the Mogho Naba himself, or under the supervision of his relatives or lesser officials. None of the governors were nobles or descendants of Ouedraogo and Oubri, but their positions were hereditary. According to one tradition, the first provincial administrators were personal slaves of the early Mossi rulers who were given the task of supervising the activities of district chiefs of noble status. Another, more romantic tradition is that the man who became the first governor or Gounga Naba was a companion of Mogho Naba Oubri during the conquest of Ouagadougou. Later, the Gounga Naba presented one of his friends to Oubri with the request that the man take precedence over him, be made chief governor, and be given the title of Ouidi Naba. Oubri allegedly acceded to this request, and later granted another request of the Gounga Naba that a friend of the Ouidi Naba be named Larhalle Naba and be made the second governor. The Gounga Naba told the Mogho Naba that he preferred to see his friends happy and that he was content to be third minister. This tradition does not state when or how the Baloum Naba and the Kamsaogho Naba were named governors.[21]

With the exception of the Kamsaogho Naba, who was a eunuch and had no heirs, the provincial governors headed administrative lineages. These lineages provided administrators not only for Ouagadougou but also for the principalities and districts. Cheron states that the Ouidi Naba of Boulsa was "a descendant of the Ouidi Naba of Ouagadougou, a great dignitary who rules a province and sits among the electors of the Mogho Naba."[22] Many administrative lineages on the district level were descended from officials sent down by the Mogho Naba with a new district chief in lieu of one deposed. When a chief was deposed, his administrators, like his relatives, lost their importance and their ties to Ouagadougou.

The Ouidi Naba, called *Moss' ba* ("father of the Mossi") and *Sida soba* ("master of the truth"), was the principal administrator and the prime minister. His titles undoubtedly sprang from his important role in the election of the Mogho Naba and from his position as caretaker of the king-

645 dom during the interregnum.[23] The latter task was especially suited to a prime minister, since the Mossi regarded the interregnum as the most difficult period in their political life. The Ouidi Naba's administrative tasks were considered so important that he never went to war and was theoretically immune from punishment or execution by the Mogho Naba. This immunity was necessary, because the Mogho Naba had the right to execute anyone who brought him unwelcome news, and often did so. Since the Ouidi Naba announced good news as well as bad, it would have been folly to subject him to this rule. Some reports in the French colonial archives state that the Mogho Naba was expected to follow the Ouidi Naba's advice at all times, and could not veto any of his actions. These reports add, moreover, that if a Ouidi Naba considered a Mogho Naba dangerous for the welfare of the country, he could rightfully compel the ruler to kill himself. According to Lambert, one Ouidi Naba known as Baba forced Mogho Naba Karfo (ca. 1800) to commit suicide. It appears that aside from waging a long and unpopular war against Naba Djighima of Lalle, this Mogho Naba had seized the riches of his wealthy subjects for distribution among the poor. Moreover, he allegedly dispensed justice without making much distinction between nobles and commoners, which so displeased the nobles that they encouraged the Ouidi Naba to put Karfo to death. Baba sent the sovereign a poisoned arrow and a message consisting of a single word: *ki* (die). Karfo allegedly committed suicide that very night.[24]

645 643 [203] [195] [762]

Thus, it appears that under certain conditions the prime minister could impeach his "all-powerful" sovereign. We cannot assume, however, that all prime ministers were sufficiently powerful to control the Mogho Naba. Many Mogho Nanamse limited their Ouidi Naba to merely giving advice on affairs of state and insisted that he concern himself solely with his own province.

634 The provinces administered by the five ministers were made up of smaller entities or districts. The districts in the provinces of the Ouidi Naba, the Larhalle Naba, and the Gounga Naba were ruled by the sons and other descendants of ancient Mogho Nanamse. The province controlled by the Kamsaogho Naba was more important. His districts were the wealthiest and among the most populous in the nation, and they brought the largest revenues to the Mogho Naba. The reason for this, of course, was that the Kamsaogho Naba was a eunuch and had no heirs; when he died, all his riches reverted to the Mogho Naba. The province controlled by the Baloum Naba was the most difficult to administer. Its districts were ruled by the sons of recent Mogho Nanamse who felt that as holders of the nam they were free to appropriate the goods of the population. The Baloum

635 645 [768]

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Naba was responsible for checking these depredations, but he had little coercive force since these nobles were infinitely superior to him in rank. 634 635

The Mogho Naba held his five ministers responsible for the administration of the districts within their provinces. Therefore they had to function as liaison officers between him and the district chiefs. Every morning, in order of precedence, the ministers reported the news they had received from their provinces since the previous day. At this time, the Mogho Naba also gave them messages for their districts. Later in the day, the ministers presented to the ruler those persons who had come from their provinces to the capital with special grievances, requests, or gifts. Delicate affairs of state were left for the evening, when they were discussed by the Mogho Naba, his minister or ministers, and other important persons. 645

From all reports, these administrative affairs kept both the ministers and the Mogho Naba quite busy. Binger, who could barely conceal his displeasure with Mogho Naba Sanum, gives this critical but otherwise highly illuminating view of the Mossi ruler's administrative activities: 643 644

> The duties of Naba Sanum are not too important. They consist of receiving visits throughout the day. In the morning, at about six o'clock, the drums announce that the ruler has arisen. When he has washed and refreshed himself with a meal, his captives and his wives go to his chamber to salute him. Then comes the turn of strangers, people of the neighborhood, petitioners, and others. They squat before the reception area until the ruler deigns to appear. When a large number of people have gathered, one of the [pages] goes to notify the ruler, who then arrives, sits on his cushion, and casts an amiable glance on the gathering while all present snap their fingers. As soon as Naba Sanum is seated, the petitioners and visitors hurry toward the monarch, throw themselves face down on the earth, and cover their heads with sand. Then each of them gets up and presents a gift of greater or lesser importance, in cowries or foodstuffs, according to what he wishes to ask. Then the [pages] come and say to the ruler, "A certain man has brought a sack of cowries, or a goat, or an ox. He desires to speak to you." The ruler thanks all of them with a *nif kende* (thanks) and retires into his chamber. It is well known that not one out of fifty petitioners was given the opportunity to have his wishes heard. Those who were heard had first spoken to an attendant who, after being paid in advance, had put off their case indefinitely by stating that it would be dealt with next. . . . Since the monarch's days are so well filled, one easily understands why he finds it difficult to deal effectively with the internal and external affairs of his kingdom; in any case, Mossi country is in a period of decadence that will only be aggravated with time.[26] [662]

The activities Binger considered frivolous were, on the contrary, important for the proper administration of the kingdom. The Mogho Naba had to receive petitions from the districts and transmit administrative orders to 643 [114]

643 his people. We shall see that these orders ran the gamut from demands for soldiers, tribute, and labor, to requests for sacrifices to the ancestors or to local deities for the welfare of the country.

635 The provincial governors seldom visited the districts under their control
645 more than once or twice a year. They transmitted official orders to the dis-
[203] tricts through retainers. Some ministers such as the Gounga Naba kept the
[634] sons and servants of district chiefs in the capital to be used as messengers. The district chiefs, in turn, used their sons or servants to transmit messages to their provincial governors or through them to the Mogho Naba. The use of intermediaries in the administration served another purpose: it prevented face-to-face contact, with all its potential for personal animosities, from impairing relations between those whose status depended on their political office and those whose status was derived from membership in the royal lineage.

635 Relations between the provincial ministers and the district chiefs were
645 often charged with hostility and suspicion. The district chiefs regarded the
634 provincial ministers as representatives of the Mogho Naba, and thus as
578 persons to be obeyed. Simultaneously, however, they resented this control by social inferiors. They felt that since they were the descendants of Ouedraogo and Oubri, they should receive orders only from the Mogho Naba himself. Thus, while the district chiefs accepted orders from their provincial governors, they never permitted them to forget their social status or to interfere with the internal affairs of the districts. They felt that this was the prerogative of the royal lineage. Most provincial ministers accepted these restrictions on their activities, but nevertheless saw to it that the district chiefs surrendered the goods collected for the Mogho Naba and governed their people well. Sometime in the 1920's, a provincial administrator went to a district and insulted its chief for failing to deliver the quota of millet set by the French colonial government. The accusation of laziness and embezzlement so infuriated the district chief that he asked the provincial minister whether he had taken leave of his senses and forgotten to whom he was speaking. The person who reported this incident said that if the district chief had not been restrained, he would have killed the administrator on the spot.

Both provincial administrators and district chiefs could impose indirect sanctions on each other if the bounds of propriety were overstepped in either direction. A district chief harried by his minister could not complain directly to the Mogho Naba. But he could, and often did, show his dissatisfaction by lodging with another provincial minister when he went to the capital. He would then ask the official to accompany him when he went

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to render homage to the monarch. This attracted the attention of the Mogho 635
Naba, who investigated the grievance of the district chief. If the provincial 645
minister were found to be in serious error, he might be deposed and exe- 634
cuted. The Ouidi Naba was theoretically exempt from such punishment, 578
but it is doubtful that a strong monarch would have allowed even this official to cause trouble.

A provincial governor dissatisfied with a district chief under his charge could, under certain conditions, have him deposed and put to death. He achieved this by complaining to the monarch that the chief was either withholding tribute or misgoverning his people. In most cases, however, the minister could curb the district chief by hinting that his son would not receive a recommendation as successor to the nam of the district. This was usually enough to win the cooperation of the most recalcitrant chief, if only because his future status as the honored ancestor of a ruling local line would be jeopardized if he rebelled. These sanctions were thus sufficient to ensure satisfactory relations between the provincial ministers and their district chiefs, at least on the surface. This was to the advantage of both groups, [687]
since in the final analysis the failure of either to administer or rule well might result in the death penalty.

Many districts and villages in Ouagadougou were administered not by 634
the provincial ministers but by officials directly responsible to the Mogho 621
Naba. The districts in question were often ruled by close relatives of the Mogho Naba or by persons who had gained his good graces. The villages [567]
were often inhabited by slaves and governed by headmen who were themselves slaves. Like the other territories of the Mogho Naba, these districts and villages were not physically contiguous. The districts were mixed in with districts administered by the provincial ministers, and the villages stood within the territorial boundaries of district chiefs. Whenever the [203]
Mogho Naba wanted to communicate with a chief of such a village or district, he sent one of his retainers. The chiefs, in turn, used their own people to send messages and goods to Ouagadougou. The general administration of these districts and villages differed little from that of the territories administered by the provincial ministers. The main difference was that the Mogho Naba took a greater interest in their everyday affairs. This called for greater efficiency on the part of local officials; for they, like the other chiefs, faced the penalty of deposition and death for maladministration.

Of all Mossi officials, the district chiefs had the most difficult administrative task. They were in direct contact with the people, and thus ran a 634
greater risk of being charged with misgovernment. Countless district chiefs [687]
were deposed and executed because they had allegedly disobeyed or rebelled

634 687 against the Mogho Naba. I say "allegedly" because it was never quite clear whether the district chief was at fault or whether the Mogho Naba wanted to replace him for dynastic reasons. For example, Tanga, a district chief, was accused by Mogho Naba Sanum (1850–90) of withholding tribute and of maladministration. The Ouidi Naba who administered Tanga's district advised him to prove his innocence by making a sacrifice on Naba Oubri's tomb, and then go to Ouagadougou and ask the Mogho Naba's forgiveness. 634 Tanga agreed to do so. But it appears that the Mogho Naba, who wished 687 to place his own father's brother in Tanga's place, did not want a reconciliation. He waged war on Tanga, and seized his relatives, retainers, and 662 cattle. Tanga tried to regain his losses by appealing to his provincial minister, but the minister told him that the Mogho Naba had distributed the livestock and had sold the people to Hausa traders. Moreover, he informed Tanga that he could not help him because the Mogho Naba could do as he [669] pleased. Tanga thereupon decided to take matters into his own hands. He successfully attacked the Mogho Naba's villages, and was still a rebel when the French arrived shortly afterward.[26]

634 Tanga's action was unusual, for district chiefs seldom risked rebelling against the Mogho Naba when accused of maladministration. In 1895, for 687 example, Koabga, chief of Doulougou district in the province of the Gounga 669 Naba, took poison rather than wage war when Mogho Naba Wobogo accused him of misgovernment. Usually, a district chief who disobeyed an order of the Mogho Naba was summoned to the capital to answer the charge of lese majesty. If he was found guilty, the ruler knocked the bonnet off his head, thus deposing him, and had him strangled. The Mossi seldom [762] spilled royal blood. A district chief who refused to go to Ouagadougou could either kill himself (traditionally by taking arsenic) or resort to civil war.[27] If he chose suicide, he was given an honorable burial as though he had died naturally. If the Mogho Naba sent down an army, however, the offending chief was invariably killed. His compound was burned, his slaves and cattle were seized, and his allies and immediate relatives were compelled to flee. The strength of this tradition is borne out by Tanga's case. He had successfully resisted the attempts of two Mogho Nanamse to bring him to heel, and was still at large when the French conquered the country. [648] But Ouidi Naba Koabga, who had deserted his sovereign and selected Kouka Koutou as Mogho Naba under French orders, had not forgiven Tanga. When the French asked him what additional steps they should take to pacify the country, he asked them to capture Tanga. The unfortunate district chief was captured, placed on an unsaddled colt, and taken to Ouagadougou, where he was ignominiously executed.[28]

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The district chief was relatively secure in the control of his territory as 634
long as he maintained amicable relations with his immediate superiors and 628
administered his district to their satisfaction. A less important but more 578
constant source of concern was his relationship with neighboring chiefs. Many people who can remember the pre-conquest period say it was unsafe for a man to trespass into another district unless he was on an official mission from his chief to another chief. It appears that most of the fighting occurred over strayed cattle and stolen women, with constant raids and counter-raids. The cattle were eaten, and the women kept as wives. Captured men were sometimes sold as slaves, but more often were held for [567]
ransom. They were not kept as slaves, since the Mossi were forbidden to enslave other Mossi. Needless to say, this fighting was frowned upon by the Mogho Naba. Since all district chiefs believed in their common descent 634
from Ouedraogo and Oubri and paid allegiance to the Mogho Naba, any 628
fighting among them was not only a sin against the ancestors but also an 578
act of disloyalty to the Mogho Naba. When (as was usually the case) this 643
fighting was of short duration and few people were killed, the Mogho Naba took no official notice of it. But when it became serious, he sent the [645]
provincial administrator to stop the fighting and to summon the dissident [635]
elements to the capital for trial. The speed and severity with which the Mogho Naba dealt with quarrels within his own realm usually depended upon his strength. At some periods in Mossi history there was little internal disorder, because the rulers were strong; at other periods, under weak rulers, disorder practically amounted to internal chaos. During such periods, the [619]
Mossi were kept together only by the bonds of kinship and religion which united them against outsiders.

The district chief maintained tight control over his own territory and 634
took an active part in its administration. In a district like Nobere, for example, the chief was aided both by an informal council and by an administrative apparatus similar to but smaller than the one at Ouagadougou. The council included men with whom the chief had grown up, members of his immediate family such as his brothers, and a few formal administrative personnel. These councillors visited him every day, brought him occasional gifts, received gifts from him in turn, and discussed informally all matters of interest. Yet, informal as this communication was, it enabled the district chief to know what was going on in his villages. Moreover, these councillors interceded for various villages and gave the chief valuable advice in administrative matters.

The formal administrative personnel of the district included a Ouidi Naba, a Baloum Naba, a Tansoba, and lesser officials with titles identical

634 to those found at the court of Ouagadougou: Baglere Naba, Dapore Naba, Pwe Naba, Samande Naba, Ouedrange Naba, Raga Naba, etc. However, the officials who bore the same titles as the chief administrators of the Mogho Naba did not necessarily serve in the same capacity. A local historical event often determined which official held which administrative task. In Nobere, the Ouidi Naba and the Tansoba were the two principal administrators. The Ouidi Naba administered those villages north and west of Nab'tenga (the chief's village), and the Tansoba administered the villages south and east of it. The Baloum Naba and other officials had no villages under their jurisdiction, but performed many valuable services for the chief.

Administrative processes on the district level were not as formal as in the capital. Except on Fridays and on important occasions, the district administrators visited the chief's compound only when summoned or when they had an important matter to discuss. (Of course, those administrators who formed part of his unofficial council could visit him at any time.) Their problems differed little from those of the Ouagadougou officials, except that their personal problems were greater, owing to the intimacy of the smaller area. The differences in status between non-noble administrators and noble relatives of the district chief were more keenly felt and caused more difficulties. Whereas the provincial administrator seldom met the district chiefs, the district administrators regularly met nobles in the market place, at ceremonies, and in the course of their everyday work. The latent conflict between official status and royal rank often broke out openly. When it did, the nobles of a village would refuse to obey the orders the administrators had transmitted to their village chief. This compelled the district chief either to summon the nobles for an explanation of their behavior or to use his own relatives to transmit orders to them. He did not like to take either course of action, especially the latter, because both violated hierarchical procedure. Furthermore, when he sent a near relative to a village, the relative often demanded goods and services not authorized by the district chief. Of course, not all the nobles made the administrator's task difficult, but enough of them did to cause him anxiety.

The duties of the district administrators fell into several categories. [203] First, it was their task to transmit to the village chiefs orders which the Kombere Naba had received from the Mogho Naba concerning warfare, [622] special gifts and tribute, and nation-wide ceremonies and rituals. Second, they had similar duties toward the provincial governor and the district chief. Third, and most important from the local viewpoint, they handled those affairs concerning only the district. The administrators seldom had

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difficulty discharging these duties, for, nobles aside, the Mossi usually obeyed 634
orders from their chiefs—a fact verified by most observers. At the same time, a district chief had to be temperate in his demands upon his villagers, and could not take advantage of his obligations to the Mogho Naba as a means of personal enrichment. Similarly, the district administrators could not seek personal gain either by augmenting the demands of the district chief or by withholding part of the goods and services rendered to him. District administrators who were found guilty of maladministration or embezzlement were executed, because activities of this kind could—and often did—jeopardize the life of the district chief.

The Mossi might complain among themselves about the administrative 634
policies of their district chief, but they took no measures against him unless 687
he was very cruel or exploitative. A district chief who by his disregard for 578
the people's welfare was believed to have lost the ability to "command 626
people" jeopardized not only his position but also his life. When the people were dissatisfied with a chief, they either boycotted him or deserted their villages and migrated to another district, thus "increasing the force" (nam) of the chief who gave them sanctuary. This placed the deserted chief in a rather difficult position. Mogho Nanamse are known to have ordered the 634
execution of district chiefs and even autonomous Dimdamba who had lost 687
their subjects through their own fault. In 1863, when Mogho Naba Sanum 626
was informed that the ruler of Boussouma, Naba Zande, had been chased away by his subjects for administrative abuses and had fled to a Ouagadougou village, he had him captured and executed.[29] Thus, the threat that people might leave the district was often strong enough to ensure a just administration, because the district chiefs and officials depended upon the villagers not only for the economic support of the central administration but also for their livelihood and their lives.

Those district chiefs who supervised other district chiefs for the Mogho 634
Naba did not interfere with the internal administration of the districts. 628
The chiefs of the Vooko and Nobila districts, for instance, had administrators of their own to look after their villages. But they were responsible to the chief of Nobere district, not their respective provincial ministers, for their internal affairs. Moreover, they had to follow the Nobere chief when he went to Ouagadougou to pay homage and allegiance to the Mogho Naba. But aside from these prescriptions, the chiefs of these subordinate districts administered their territories in the same manner as the Nobere chief administered his own.

The Mossi village chief had no administrators of his own to help him 622
with day-to-day affairs of his village. However, like the district chief, he 623

had a group of confidants who acted as an informal council. These men included senior members of his own lineage, elders from other local lineages, and personal friends. Again, like the confidants of the district chiefs, these men visited the village chief whenever they were not busy with their own affairs to talk to him about wives, crops, and village matters. Although protocol was at a minimum on this level, the chief had to maintain a high degree of decorum. As a member of the ruling lineage of the district, he had noble status and had to be treated accordingly. The non-noble village chief was also respected as a recipient of the nam. But all chiefs, whether nobles or commoners, were expected to lead exemplary lives lest the flaws in their characters as revealed by the intimacy of village life should weaken their prestige.

The village chief received his orders from the district chief through the administrator in charge of his village or through one of this official's servants. He, in turn, used his own sons or relatives to transmit messages to the heads of the saghse. If the message was extremely important, the village chief's messenger might be accompanied by the administrator's messenger or by the district chief's personal representatives. The saksobadamba then transmitted the order to the various compound heads. This hierarchy was always followed because, by following it, the officials knew who was responsible for disobeying or frustrating the wishes of the superior chiefs. As on the district level, the orders transmitted to the village and its sections dealt with such things as collecting tribute, picking fruits from the district chief's trees, allocating labor for the district chief or his personal retainers, transferring or summoning cases to the district court, procuring sacrificial animals for the local Tengsoba, and requesting soldiers. The village chief also sent his own messages to the saghse. These messages, however, dealt with such village matters as local sacrifices, quarrels, and court cases.

Misrule and maladministration by a village chief were punished either by the district chief or by the villagers. Like other Mossi rulers, the village chief could not be deposed and allowed to live. However, he had a better chance of fleeing and finding refuge in another district. His presence in a strange district did not challenge the authority of the local chief, and he had no opportunities to seize any of his host's villages. In fact, if the refugee was accompanied by a large number of his subjects, his host might even give him land on which to erect a new village. The proviso was, of course, that he should not "spoil" the district by causing trouble. If a village chief accused of maladministration was seized by the district chief before he could flee, he was invariably executed. If he was a commoner, he was decapitated or even stoned to death; if he was a nobleman, he was taken into the bush and strangled in secret by the district police.

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and strangled in secret by the district police. If a district chief hesitated to punish a village chief whose followers had complained, the aggrieved lineage or the entire village simply took its movable property and left. This sanction does not seem to have been applied often, but its threat was normally sufficient to curb the excesses of the worst village chief.

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684 offender was caught in the act, he was immediately killed. If he was merely
[613] suspected of guilt both by his own lineage and by the lineage of the wronged woman, he was banished from his lineage and from the village. So swift and sure was this punishment that a rapist always fled if he believed he
[847] would be discovered. The Mossi considered rape such a heinous crime that if the act resulted in pregnancy, an abortion was attempted; if this failed,
[613] the child was killed at birth. Furthermore, the rapist could never hope to
[629] return to his community, because even if the yagenga appealed on his behalf and his lineage forgave him, the community ban still stood.[2]

692 The village chief was usually aware of the torts and crimes that occurred
622 in his village, and of how the families concerned had handled them. He seldom interfered in the internal affairs of a lineage, or in problems between lineages, unless he felt that a case was beyond their legal competence.
[684] In the case of a rapist's expulsion, community feeling usually ran so high that if the chief intervened, it was only to support the will of the community. However, when people could not settle their differences peaceably or when a major crime was committed within a village, the chief usually summoned
622 the offender to his court for trial. His right to do so was sanctioned by his
692 possession of the nam, but the very concept of the nam often made his task
565 difficult. If he was a commoner, the nobles often emphasized their rela-
634 tionship to the holder of the royal nam, the district chief, and objected to
695 being tried by a commoner. They usually appeared at the village court if summoned, but often attempted afterward to find some excuse for taking their case to the district chief. They felt that their local reputation would prevent them from receiving a fair hearing from anyone but their lineage brother. Furthermore, if they were judged and convicted in the lower court and the verdict was confirmed in the district court, they felt that the district chief, in concurring with the village chief, had broken the solidarity of their lineage. But if they took their case directly to the district chief, they knew they were being judged by an equal or a superior, and that an unfavorable judgment would not damage their status.

622 The competence of the village chief to deal with court cases was limited.[3]
692 He did pass on all the legal infractions that occurred in his village, but he tried to adjudicate only the minor cases. Thus, he tried cases involving theft, quarrels, trespassing, adultery, indebtedness, and abuse, and tried to
[695] settle them by reprimanding the guilty ones. He sent cases involving serious injury and homicide to the district court, along with cases he was unable to resolve.

692 The district court was a most efficient and effective judicial organ, and
634 the nature of the Mossi judicial process was most evident on this level. The

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district court did not deal with all cases referred to it. Many cases, especially those concerning the behavior of women, were referred back to the village to be resolved by the respective lineages. The district chief considered it beneath his dignity to deal with such cases, and his guards ostentatiously chased away the litigants. He consented to try such cases only when he suspected that more serious trouble would develop if he did not. Theoretically, district courts could not try cases involving the death penalty, but in practice most of them did. Higher chiefs tolerated this as long as district chiefs did not abuse their usurpation of power.[4]

When a major crime was committed in a district, the case was usually sent immediately to the district court. The chief of the village where the crime had been committed sent one of his relatives with the accused or with the litigants to the district chief's compound, and dispatched another relative to notify the village administrator. The administrator either went to the district court to await the litigants, or sent his representative to meet the court-bound party on the way and question them about the case. Such parties were often very large, because the Mossi believed that a man should not go to court alone. They felt that the criminal act of a relative reflected on all of them, and that it was important for them to appear with him. To quote a Mossi proverb, "A chicken without its feathers is a very small bird indeed." Therefore, no matter how grievous his crime might be, the accused was accompanied to court by his relatives. If his own lineage members refused to do so, his mother's patrilineage was duty-bound to come to his aid. These relatives believed that they would incur ancestral wrath if they refused to help him.

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As soon as the accused or the litigants arrived at the district chief's compound, a page notified him that the people of such-and-such a village had brought him a case. If it was after dark, the chief told his police to take charge of the litigants until morning; otherwise he prepared to convene the court. When the chief was ready, the page reappeared and alerted the court party, who had been milling about in the courtyard under the watchful eyes of the chief's guards. They ranged themselves at a respectful distance on either side of the chief's chair. When he appeared they arose, and when he sat down they knelt and offered the customary salutation. The litigants and their relatives then gave the chief the customary kola nuts, cowries, and chickens.[5] He, in turn, acknowledged the gifts and inquired about the case. The relatives of the village chief who had accompanied the litigants reported what had allegedly happened; what action, if any, had been taken by the village court; and why the case had been brought to the district court (either because the crime was too serious to be judged on the village level,

692 or because the litigants had rejected the village chief's verdict). The chief
634 then asked the plaintiff or "the people of X village" to state their case.
695 Someone usually spoke up, and after he had finished, the chief asked the defendant or defendants to do likewise. The litigants were then asked to produce reputable witnesses to support or refute the testimony.

[641] Witnesses had to be male, adult (to have begun to "push a beard"), and
[562] free. Women and bondsmen had no legal personality before a Mossi court.
[567] A slave was represented at court by his master, and a woman by her husband (and, by extension, by his patrilineage). In marital quarrels or property suits, a woman was usually represented by her patrilineage. Only if
[576] she alone could give the required evidence was she allowed in court. When she was asked to testify, she knelt, and spoke in a high, thin, soft voice, thus showing extreme respect to the chief and proper deference to the court. Except for these restrictions, any person could be called in as a witness.
[578] Tempers often ran fairly high among the litigants' relatives and friends while they gave their testimony and argued the case, but their physical separation and their respect for the chief prevented abuse and fighting. Anyone who started a fight in court was liable to a beating by the samandekamba.

[674] The Mossi believed that most people, given sufficient reason, would commit any crime. Thus they examined the litigants carefully and at great length in an attempt to "get behind" the offense. The district chief interrogated the litigants, but the dignity of the court prevented him from arguing with them. As a matter of fact, most of the cross-examination was done by the litigants themselves. From time to time, the village administrator and the chief's confidants asked brief, direct questions. When a woman was involved, the chief's Pughtiema usually listened to the proceedings from behind a wall and questioned her. When all the evidence was in, the chief either rendered his verdict without delay or retired to the zongo to confer with his confidants and the village administrator. He took the latter course whenever he felt that further discussion was necessary or that false testimony was confusing the issue. Not until he felt that he had the facts well in hand did he return to the court to render his verdict.

The Mossi did not use ordeals in court except in the "chastity trials" conducted by the Pwe Naba. Some litigants called upon the ancestors to kill them if they were not telling the truth; others went to earth shrines and drank an infusion of dust to show that they were not afraid of the spirits who wrought vengeance on the guilty. However, such acts were never carried out in court and thus were of no use to the chief.

The following case, tried in a district court in 1956, illustrates the Mossi

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concept of justice. To reach the central market, the people of Donse village 634
used a path that ran across the fields belonging to two of their fellow villagers, Zami and Isa. The path was normally open all year round, even during the planting season, because neither man wished to inconvenience the villagers. But one day the two men quarreled, and shortly thereafter Isa announced his decision to close his path during the planting season. He said he feared that "people would steal his growing crops" if he left it open. Moreover, he wanted to use the path to increase his planting area. Zami objected to what he considered an insult, and, believing that Isa had violated a customary rule, used the path. In doing so, he crushed several stalks of millet. Isa witnessed his action, and the men came to blows. When the village chief proved unable to reconcile them, they were brought before the district court.

The district chief ruled that according to Mossi custom, a man could 695
close a path during the planting season to prevent people from stealing his 691
crops. But if he closed a path, he had to provide an alternative route, for no 685
one had the right to restrict the movements of others. The chief sympa- 634
thized with Isa over the small size of his field, but insisted that he provide a path across or around it. However, he persuaded Zami to let Isa use a portion of his land in compensation for the new path.

The chief tried to reconcile the interests of Isa and Zami with those of the entire village. He apparently felt that reconciliation was more useful than judgment. He did uphold the law that the right of passage is mandatory, but also maintained that a man has the right to protect his property from potential thieves. At the same time, he made it clear that although a man may defend his own rights, he may not do so by infringing upon the rights of others.

The same principles seem to have been upheld in the following case, 691
also recorded in 1956, which is interesting because it illustrates the flexi- 428
bility of Mossi law. A man named Hammadou died, leaving fifteen cows as his legacy. Moussa, his eldest son and principal heir, distributed the cows among his father's other sons and male relatives, but did not give any to his father's daughter. Strictly speaking, he was right to exclude her, because a [562]
woman was not supposed to inherit any of her father's property unless he had no living lineal or collateral relatives. In practice, however, a daughter always received part of her father's legacy, especially if he had been wealthy. Hammadou's daughter therefore felt slighted, and when she received no redress from Moussa or her other male relatives, she had the case taken to [692]
the village chief. He could not resolve it, and referred it to the district chief.

When Moussa was called before the district chief, he explained that his [634]

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father had given the woman a silver bracelet before he died, and that the babissi felt that this was sufficient, since she had a husband to provide for her. Furthermore, Moussa said that the inheritance had already been distributed, and that any redistribution would impose a hardship on all concerned.

Interpreting the inheritance law according to common practice, the chief ruled that the milk from a man's cattle was for *all* his children, regardless of sex, and that the fact that the father had formerly given the daughter a bracelet should not have influenced the distribution of the inheritance. The chief stated that the woman should receive at least one cow, and that if the defendant did not agree, he (the chief) would recall all the animals and supervise their distribution. He did not feel that he had to state the principles by which he had reached his judgment, for the consensus among the people of the district was that the heir was trying to take advantage of the law for his own selfish interests. Rather than appeal to Ouagadougou, Moussa and his babissi accepted the verdict.

On the basis of these and other cases, we are led to the conclusion that the Mossi felt that law and the judicial process should serve to reconcile people and to maintain what was commonly considered to be social justice.

Most of the cases at the district court were tried in the same manner as those cited above. Cases involving relations between men and women were the most common. This is paradoxical, because the district chief tried to avoid any involvement with such cases. For every domestic case tried by the district chief, five others were sent back to the village or lineage level. Even so, it is estimated that about 80 per cent of the cases tried by Mossi district chiefs ultimately concerned women. The most common case of this type was the alleged refusal of a woman to return to her husband.[4] If the judge found that another man had encouraged her to leave her husband, he ordered her to return to him and warned her and the man about the possibility of serious difficulty with her husband's relatives. On the other hand, if the chief found that the woman had left a cruel husband who threatened to harm her or her relatives, he warned the husband not to carry out his threats. The Mossi had no bride price; thus, a woman's family was not faced with the problem of restitution. Sometimes, an angry husband did demand that his wife's family return the gifts (*pogopossum*, "thanks for the woman") he had given them from time to time—e.g., at funerals—and they complied.

Adultery cases were next in frequency at the district court. A man convicted of adultery with another man's wife was either warned to leave her alone or fined a sheep or a goat. He was also liable to be put in stocks for

He was also liable to be put in stocks for 684
several days, and when released he was warned against visiting the local 692
markets, where he might be tempted to renew his illicit relations. A noble- 634
man convicted of adultery was often merely warned or fined, since his [696]
movements could not be restricted. But if a man caught his wife and another man in *flagrante delicto* and killed them, his act was considered justifiable homicide (even if the slain man was a noble), and he went free. [682]
If, however, he killed the lover but spared his wife, he had to send her to the chief's household. Here she was made to perform hard work under the supervision of the palace guards until it was believed that she had reformed. A man who was experiencing difficulties with an unfaithful wife and feared he might eventually kill her or her paramour also sent her to the chief's compound for a few months.

The Mossi have always been great creditors and debtors, and cases con- 686
cerning indebtedness seem to have been next in frequency at the district 692
court. The chief usually dismissed cases of indebtedness brought against 634
minors, because it was considered unseemly for adults to give credit or to loan valuable property to youths not yet of age. Thus, if the minor's family refused to make restitution, the creditor usually had no redress. However, [613]
if a woman borrowed property and refused to return it, her husband's lineage was held responsible. Similarly, if an adult male borrowed anything and refused to return it or to do so on time, the case was taken to the local court and eventually to the district court. The creditor was asked to supply witnesses to the loan, and if the chief was satisfied that the loan had been made under the conditions specified, the debtor was ordered to make restitution. If the debtor claimed bankruptcy, the chief ordered that his goods be seized and sold, and that restitution be made to the creditor. If the debtor 686
was truly destitute, his relatives were compelled to pay his debts. The col- 692
lective responsibility of the babissi for the debts of its members was seen 634
most clearly in cases where men died in a state of indebtedness. The credi- 613
tors were allowed to summon the debtor's babissi to court, and if proof of the debt was established, the relatives were compelled to repay. If they failed to do so, the chief's police seized and sold their goods to repay the debt.

Cases dealing with violations of civil contracts were somewhat similar. 686
The Mossi did not believe in the axiom *caveat emptor*. If a man sold an 634
animal that died within a week for no apparent reason, the chief ordered 692
an investigation. If it was found that the animal had been ill when sold, the chief ordered that the buyer be reimbursed. If the investigation showed that the animal had been healthy when sold, no restitution was made. Similarly, if a man borrowed an ass or an ox to transport goods and the animal

died while he was using it, the owner could not press any claims. However, the borrower was obliged to sell the animal's flesh and give the money to the owner along with the animal's skin as proof of its death. Under no circumstances would a district chief absolve a man from paying the market value of an animal if he failed to return the skin. Such failure would brand him as a thief and involve an additional fine.

The Mossi considered theft a major crime. A thief could be killed with impunity if he was caught in the act and in the presence of several witnesses. If these conditions were not met but the man killed was known to have been a thief, the killer was fined several cows. But if he was known to have been a man of good character, the killer ran the risk of being executed. In this way, the Mossi tried to prevent any abuse of an accepted practice. The theft of grain and other foodstuffs was considered especially reprehensible, because it was held to indicate that the thief was so depraved that he would not even grow his own food. During the rule of Naba Kaglere of Nobere district (1888–1906), a man called Yahiya left his own village of Donse and went to a village called Quitenga to steal sweet potatoes. The people of that village caught him in the act and shot him with a poisoned arrow as he made his escape. Yahiya died without revealing the source of his wound, and his babissi, suspecting foul play, asked Kaglere to investigate. When the Quitenga people learned of the investigation, they went forward voluntarily and reported the circumstances under which they had wounded Yahiya. Kaglere absolved them of all guilt and told the Donse people that Yahiya had deserved to die, not only because he had stolen food (which he might have received if he had asked for it), but because sweet potatoes were the easiest vegetable to cultivate.

A thief who was too clever to be caught in the act but who was apprehended afterwards was treated quite harshly by the Mossi court. Here, the penalty of double indemnity was often applied. A man who was brought to court for stealing a chicken or guinea hen was fined a goat or a sheep. Hence the Mossi proverb "Zou noaga ronda bouga"—"He who steals a chicken repays a goat." The thief who stole one cow had to return several. If a thief could not pay the fine, he was placed in stocks until his relatives paid for him. If they refused to do so, the chief's retainers seized their property, sold it, and made restitution. This often compelled the family of a recidivous thief to make him commit suicide. If the family would not resort to this, the district chief had the man seized and clubbed to death.[7] Sometimes the chief sent recidivists to the Mogho Naba, who sent them to a village called Teemetenga to be made into eunuchs.[8]

The Mossi seem to have made a distinction between theft and pillage—

a practice whereby nobles deprived commoners of their property. Those 685
nobles who lived among commoners quite often confiscated their neigh- 579
bors' property. But this was not regarded as theft and was not punishable 565
as such, although a rapacious nobleman could be sanctioned for terrorizing and "spoiling" a village. If a nobleman was caught performing an act that *was* considered theft, or if he was accused and found guilty of theft, he was severely punished. During Kaglere's reign, the people of a small village 686
suffered a series of livestock thefts. One day, while the friends of a village 685
chief were sitting with him, a dog came out of the chief's compound 622
dragging an animal skin. The men recognized the skin as that described for a stolen goat, and decided to investigate. In the chief's courtyard they discovered the hole from which the dog had unearthed the skin. They also found the skins of several other stolen animals. The villagers took the [692]
village chief to the district chief, who found him guilty and exiled him [634]
from the region. In passing judgment, the district chief told him that he had been elected "to care for the village," but that he had betrayed his trust by robbing his own people.

According to Mossi law, willful homicide or murder was punishable by 682
execution. The Mossi did not use wergild or "blood money," but insisted on the *lex talionis,* which they interpreted as "a life for a life." They did not believe that money or any other valuables could compensate for the life of a man, nor would they allow a slave to be executed in place of the murderer. They believed that only by executing the murderer himself could they prevent his victim's relatives from resorting to vengeance and thus "spoiling" the district or village.

A man who grievously wounded another was apprehended, bound, and taken to the village chief and subsequently to the district chief. Here he was [696]
kept in stocks in the serfs' quarter without being tried until his victim either died or recovered. If his victim recovered and the judge found that the wound had been inflicted accidentally, the defendant was fined or had his goods confiscated, but he was released. If the judge found that the victim had been wounded in a fair fight, the prisoner was usually censured and dismissed. The chief often warned the wounded man that he ought to have lived up to the Mossi axiom that a grown man is always able to protect himself. If, however, the trial revealed that the prisoner had ambushed his victim with the intent to kill, he either was fined several cows or had his entire property confiscated. District chiefs are known to have executed [634]
the perpetrators of cowardly ambushes even though their victims recovered. [696]

If a man died at the hands of another, an inquest was held immediately. If the killing had been accidental or committed in self-defense, or if it was

682 found to have been justified—that is, if the victim was a thief or a nocturnal
682 intruder—then the accused was acquitted or simply fined. If, however, the
696 accused was found guilty of murder, he was sentenced to die, and the mode of execution was at the chief's pleasure. The chief surrendered the prisoner to his executioners, serfs who lived in the Baglere ward. They took him into the woods and carried out the sentence by strangulation, hanging, decapitation, clubbing, or stoning.

696 The perpetrator of an unusually heinous crime was often ordered to kill himself with a poisoned arrow. This form of execution was feared most, because it tested the murderer's mettle and called into play the
[634] coercive force of his lineage if he proved to be a coward. When such an execution was ordered, the district chief had a poisoned arrow prepared and brought to the murderer's father, his brother, or his father's brother's son. The relative gave the arrow to the condemned man, and, while apologizing for his painful mission, explained that the crime had to be expiated. If the murderer agreed to kill himself, his relatives prepared food and drink for
[766] him while his grave was dug. Some proud and brave men helped their relatives dig the oblong-shaped grave required for a murderer; some even insisted on digging it themselves. When both the food and the grave had been prepared, the murderer bade his relatives farewell, took the food and the poisoned arrow, and went into a hut. Here he ate the food and after-
696 ward killed himself by pushing the poisoned arrow into his leg. In some
626 cases he had to be provided with a second arrow to hasten his death. If a
613 cowardly murderer refused to kill himself, one of his relatives offered to die in his stead. He told the murderer that death was preferable to the knowledge that his lineage brother was a coward. What would happen, he asked the murderer, if he saw a relative being harmed? Would he choose his own safety rather than run the risk of death? The other relatives asked the same questions, and this subtle coercion was usually sufficient to induce the most cowardly man to kill himself. There are no reports of a murderer's permitting a relative to die for him; life would have been impossible for him afterward. One suspects that if ever a murderer had attempted to elude his fate, the district chief would have had him executed.

634 The district court also prescribed capital punishment for individuals
681 convicted of arson, abduction, witchcraft, or lese majesty. A person con-
[685] victed of willfully setting fire to someone's hut or crops was put to death even if no one was killed in the resulting fire; he was held to have
[683] jeopardized the life and livelihood of his victims. Similarly, the rare person convicted of threatening the well-being of others through the practice of
[695] witchcraft was usually tortured and killed. Conviction usually followed the testimony of witnesses or the confession of the accused.

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The torture was seen as a punishment, and not as a form of ordeal to 695
ascertain guilt or innocence. It was designed to cause the culprit as much 696
suffering as possible before he died, and its harshness reflects the Mossi fear of witches and witchcraft. In one form of punishment called *koudgilga*, the culprit was sent to the smith, who tortured him by placing hot iron balls in both his hands. He was then beaten to death. Another type of punishment called *swengalenga* was more painful. A pottery jar from which the bottom had been removed was heated in a fire. Then it was placed over the head of the convicted witch and allowed to burn its way down onto his shoulders. The culprit was subsequently killed. Sometimes a convicted witch was [304]
not killed; instead, a man was sent to Ouagadougou to be castrated and [567]
sold as a eunuch, and a woman was sold outside the country as a slave.

Gross disrespect toward the chief and crimes of lese majesty were un- 687
common among the Mossi. These crimes were usually committed by persons who came into close contact with the chief—nobles and court retainers—rather than by commoners, serfs, or slaves. The most common form of [684]
lese majesty was adultery with one of the district chief's wives. The penalty [634]
for this was death for both violators. Anyone who dared insult the district chief at court was seized and executed. The same fate awaited those who talked about him maliciously in public or threatened to stir a rebellion against him. If the culprits were commoners, they were executed; if they were nobles, they were strangled in secret or were forced to commit suicide.

The district chief was caught in a dilemma whenever nobles committed 634
major crimes or unlawful acts. They could not be imprisoned, and only the 565
Mogho Naba had the legal prerogative to execute them. When a noble 681
committed a major crime such as treason or rebellion, he was sent to the capital to be executed by slaves, who strangled him with a piece of cotton cloth. However, no district chief could allow the nobles to commit crimes 634
with impunity, secure in the knowledge that they could only be punished
at Ouagadougou. If a nobleman subverted the chief's rule by repeated acts 696
of cruelty and brigandage, he was executed, although illegally. The execu- 565
tioners were the Baglere Naba and the Dapore Naba. These two men [693]
secretly visited the condemned noble, taking with them a bundle as a present from the chief. This bundle contained a new white robe in which were secreted a chief's bonnet and a poisoned arrow. As soon as the noble saw the gift, he knew that he was being ordered to kill himself. If he attempted to raise an alarm or run away, he was instantly strangled and his body was discarded in the bush. If he accepted the sentence, he was allowed to have food prepared, to eat, and then to kill himself. The chief ordered an elaborate funeral for his kinsman as though he had died an ordinary death. Thus, he was able to observe all the proprieties while at the same

time safeguarding his position within the district and toward the Mogho Naba. For, as already pointed out, the district chief who failed to protect his subjects as well as to rule them was deposed and executed by the sovereign.

The promptness with which the lower courts dealt with litigations left little time for pre-trial bribery, and there is general agreement that the traditional courts were just. Of course, some lower chiefs were known to have been unfair and to have taken bribes. However, they were always in danger of having their verdicts appealed to Ouagadougou.

The Mossi believed in and acted on the dictum that "the truth is at Ouagadougou." They were convinced that they could obtain justice from the Mogho Naba if from no other chief. If a man was not satisfied with the ruling of a lower chief, he was free in theory to seek a higher verdict, and this influenced the kind of justice rendered on the lower level. As a rule, however, the district chiefs did not favor appeals to Ouagadougou. They felt, like most Mossi, that the less their superiors knew about their activities, the better. Thus, the district chief used all of his influence to prevent cases from being appealed to the capital. Some district chiefs were not above coercing litigants into such abstention. They even threatened them with reprisals if the verdict should be unfavorable. But the greatest deterrent against such appeals was the expenditure of time and money. The docket of the Mogho Naba's court was always crowded, and the suitors often had to remain at the capital for as long as three months before they were given a hearing.[9] During this period they often spent more money than the action was worth. Marc states that the word "Ouagadougou" means "the place where one becomes thin," a reference to the amount of money litigants had to spend while waiting for their cases to be heard.[10]

When the object of a lawsuit was the inheritance of cattle, the litigants sustained a double loss. As soon as they asked that the case be taken to the capital, the district chief impounded the cattle. While the case was pending he appropriated the cows' milk, and when the case was settled both he and the Mogho Naba received some animals. Thus, suitors were usually under a great deal of pressure to resolve their problems on the district level. However, if they were determined to go to the capital, they were permitted to do so.

The district chief always sent one of his retainers to the capital with the litigants. The group went directly to the district's provincial minister, who was empowered to hear the appeal and decide whether it should be brought before the Mogho Naba or returned to the district court. If he decided to send it to the Mogho Naba, he placed it on the docket and told the

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litigants when it would be heard. On the day set he took his charges to court, where they waited in the company of the litigants from other districts and from the wards of the capital itself. 643 692 634

The procedure of the Mogho Naba's court differed little from that of the district chief's court. When called upon, the litigant stated his case, called witnesses, and underwent cross-examination by his opponents and by ministers of the Mogho Naba. The litigants were not allowed to look at the Mogho Naba while they spoke, but had to kneel forward on the ground with their faces turned away from him. The Mogho Naba himself seldom looked at the litigants and rarely questioned them. When presented with a complex case, the Mogho Naba, like the district chief, retired with his councillors and canvassed their opinion in order "to ascertain whether or not their verdicts were similar to his own." Nevertheless, he could not follow their advice. He had to make up his own mind, and when he returned to court he rendered his verdict, which could not be appealed. If those who received an unfavorable verdict showed any displeasure, they were taken outside by the palace guards and executed.

The penalties imposed by the Ouagadougou court were usually more severe than those handed down at the district level. The main reason for this was that aside from cases involving residents of Ouagadougou, the lawsuits tried by the Mogho Naba were serious ones and often had been sent to him on appeal. Moreover, the Mogho Naba's court was alone empowered to impose the death penalty within the kingdom of Ouagadougou. [681] It should be noted here once more that district chiefs often executed criminals. But it should also be reiterated that the Mogho Naba never surrendered his prerogative to the district chiefs. They simply usurped it, and if they used it judiciously they were not penalized.

Those nobles and commoners who were convicted for serious crimes at the monarch's court were killed by the royal executioners. Moreover, in contrast to the procedure at the district court, the criminal's property was often seized before his execution. The reason for this is not clear, but it was probably related to the lack of a personal relationship between the court and the relatives of the accused, which enabled the Mogho Naba to impose a harsher penalty. The district chief, it must be remembered, lived in close association with his people and was influenced in his behavior by social relationships. Interestingly enough, the Mogho Naba did not keep the goods seized, but allowed them to be distributed among his executioners. 643 696 692 634

Crimes against the person or office of the Mogho Naba were punished with greater severity than crimes against the district chief. Any man who was seen speaking to one of the ruler's wives and who did not happen to [687]

be related to her was tried and executed. In some cases, he was put to death without a trial. Adultery with a royal wife was considered so reprehensible that both adulterers were publicly beaten to death. Their bodies were denied burial and were thrown into the bush to be eaten by vultures. The Dapore Naba and the Baglere Naba seized and retained the man's property.

Men who committed treason against the Mogho Naba were usually killed before they could be tried. Chiefs and nobles who were suspected of treason and who consented to come to Ouagadougou for trial were deposed and executed if found guilty. Those who were found innocent were released and sent back to their chiefly duties. The sole exception on record to this general rule was the case of Naba Yemde, a Dim of Boulsa province. He had fought and defeated the forces of Mogho Naba Sanum, and when the Mogho Naba sent a larger army and routed him, he was treacherously delivered to the monarch by another Dim. Sanum found Yemde innocent of treason, but had him executed because he had violated another rule: as the descendant of a Kourita, he had come face to face with the Mogho Naba, thus jeopardizing the monarch's life. This exception is always cited by the Mossi when the inevitability of execution for treason is brought up. Actually, a person accused of treason rarely went to court. He either took poison or died in battle against the royal forces. As a posthumous punishment, his compound was burned, his property seized, and his relatives and servants sold into slavery outside the country. Thus, the supreme penalty was not merely the death of a traitor but the permanent banishment of his entire lineage.

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tions and launched another expedition against Ouayougya. The expedition failed because of a lack of water, and the army was forced to return to Ouagadougou. The war would have continued had not both Mogho Naba Sanum and Ligidi died in 1890. 628 669 175 643

It appears that the Mogho Naba tolerated fighting among his immediate subordinates, and seldom intervened in local wars unless one of the combatants openly flouted his authority. For example, when the autonomous principality of Riziam attempted to wrest control of Salmetenga district from Boussouma province, Mogho Naba Doulougou did not intervene. He knew that Salmetenga owed allegiance to Boussouma, but was perfectly willing to allow its ruler to transfer allegiance to Riziam. When Boussouma was on the brink of defeat, the Salmetenga Naba fled to Ouagadougou to seek asylum. The Mogho Naba sent him back to Naba Piga, the Boussouma Dim, with the request that he be allowed to live. Piga was so angry with the chief that he ignored the Mogho Naba's request and executed him. This incurred the wrath of Mogho Naba Doulougou, and he sent an army to attack Piga. Fortunately for this disobedient Dim, the Mogho Naba died and the attack was called off.[17]

The reaction of Mogho Naba Koutou to fighting among his subordinates was more typical. He did not interfere in a long series of battles between the principalities of Riziam and Mane which culminated in 1866 when the Riziam people seized, imprisoned, and executed several Mane merchants who had gone to buy salt in Timbuktu. Mane appealed to its brother province of Boussouma for aid, and Riziam appealed to a Fulani chieftain for reinforcements. Before a battle could ensue, however, the Boussouma Dim, Naba Siguiri, died after drinking some millet beer, and the fighting was called off. Naba Kom of Mane then went off alone with his army, defeated the Fulani, and killed their chief, Sekki. When Ligidi (the chief mentioned above) succeeded his father, Naba Siguiri, he elected to continue the war against Riziam with the help of the Mane army, but the battle was inconclusive. The stalemate did not satisfy the bellicose Ligidi, who attacked Riziam once more in 1871, burning villages and seizing property. The Riziam people finally rallied and halted him. They ambushed his soldiers when they tried to retreat, and harried them so thoroughly that Ligidi had to call off the war when slaughter and thirst decimated his ranks.[18] [648]

Similarly, Mogho Naba Sanum did not interfere when one of his own district chiefs, the Salogho Naba, was attacked and defeated by the ruler of Tema principality. Nor did he enter the fray when another of his district chiefs was attacked and defeated by the Boulsa Dim. The fighting in both 628 669 175 643 634

628 669 175 643 634 cases was over women. The Tema Dim successfully defended his principality against a Zittenga district chief who not only had the effrontery to demand the return of a wife who had fled into Tema but also invaded the principality when she failed to return.[19] The Boulsa Dim attacked and defeated the Salogho Naba when he refused to repatriate a man and woman convicted of adultery who had fled into his district. It is possible that in each case the Mogho Naba refused to become involved in a squabble over women, but it is more likely that he refrained from participating in a local war that did not threaten the security of the entire country.

628 669 175 Many Dimdamba made it a practice to help each other in wars against common enemies. In the middle of the nineteenth century, Naba Zende of Tema and Naba Totoabo of Yako joined in a war against Naba Sebogo of La when Sebogo refused to repatriate one of Totoabo's wives, who had fled into his territory. The two victorious allies burned villages in La and forced Sebogo to flee for his life. They searched for the woman, but she was never found. The successors of the three rulers remained embittered by this war and eventually renewed the fighting. On this occasion, Naba Tanga of Tema and Naba Sagha of Yako fought against Naba Kombase of La. But [643] this time Yako and Tema were unable to defeat La and had to withdraw. There is no evidence that the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou took any part in these wars.[20]

643 648 175 The Mogho Naba appears to have taken a greater interest in wars between his Dimdamba and non-Mossi populations, and to have profited by them occasionally. When the followers of a Fulani chief named Karfo carried off some cattle belonging to the Boussouma people, the Boussouma Dim, Naba Siguiri, threatened war if the animals were not returned. Karfo not only refused to surrender the cattle but insulted Siguiri in his reply. Siguiri marched against the Fulani, killed Karfo, seized all the cattle he could find, and sent some of the "most beautiful animals" to Mogho Naba Koutou.[21]

634 669 578 628 Although the Mogho Naba tolerated wars among his Dimdamba, he apparently forbade the district chiefs under his direct command to fight among themselves. As we saw in Chapter IV, some such fighting did take place, but the Mogho Naba seems to have ignored it in most cases because of its relative unimportance. The Mossi, on the other hand, magnified this local fighting, which they called *tengkom* ("civil war"), and which consisted of mere skirmishes between villages or neighboring districts, with few casualties. In fact, the Gounga Naba once stopped a war between districts after only nineteen persons had died. But as a rule, districts seldom if ever fought among themselves. The actual combatants were villagers

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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who fought the villagers of other districts over stray livestock, stolen goods, and runaway women, in that order of frequency.

The main reason for these inter-village wars was the lack of local mechanisms (aside from meetings of district chiefs) to deal with problems between villagers of different districts. If the district chiefs refused to meet, they could either refer the matter to the provincial level or allow the villages to resolve the problem among themselves. Many district chiefs preferred the latter course because it saved them from interference by the authorities in the capital. Besides, these problems were usually unimportant and did not pit one entire district against another. People of different districts were often bound to each other by familial and ritual ties, and did not like to fight against relatives. Only when the potential combatants were unrelated or all attempts at reconciliation failed would the people of a village (and occasionally of a district) band together, either secretly without their chiefs or under their chiefs, and go to war. In such cases, persons who had relatives in the enemy villages often remained at home.

The inhabitants of Mossi districts did band together eagerly under their chiefs to participate in slave-raiding expeditions into non-Mossi territories. This type of warfare seems to have been fairly common. Ruelle writes, "Before our [French] occupation, warfare was the chief preoccupation of the chiefs. Moreover, expeditions into Gurunsi country had as their goal pillage and the procurement of slaves for sale."[22] Similarly, Mangin states, "The Gurunsi and Busansi were frequently raided with the sole intent of obtaining slaves."[23] Binger gives the following description of a Mossi slave-catching expedition and the subsequent disposal of the slaves:

> During my second stay at Banema, Boukary [later Mogho Naba Wobogo], knowing my aversion to pillage and slavery and fearing to displease me, sent off two expeditions during the night without warning me—one to Nabouli, and the other towards the south to Baouer'a. By six o'clock in the morning of the following day, the returning horsemen were heralded by gunshots. Soon afterwards, a line of slaves of both sexes appeared, tied to each other by a cord slung around their necks. The expedition to Nabouli brought back seventeen slaves; that to Baouer'a brought only five, along with an ass laden with salt and a little cotton. As soon as these unfortunate people arrived, they were given water to drink, and mallets were used to remove the rings and copper bracelets which they wore on their arms and legs. Then they were classified into three categories:
>
> 1. The men formed a lot destined for immediate sale for fear that they should run away. They were led forthwith to Sakhaboutenga, to be exchanged against sorghum for the horses, millet for the personnel, and gunpowder.
> 2. A second lot, composed of women, was kept as a reserve to trade for horses.

634 721 567 175

3. Finally, a third lot, composed of young girls and young boys, was distributed among the warriors and put into their charge. The boys will be employed until further notice as grooms to the warriors; later on, those who prove themselves useful and docile will be kept. The others will be sold at the first opportunity. The girls will be given in marriage to warriors who distinguish themselves.[24]

721 643 644 701 [645] The military campaigns of the Mossi, in contrast to their slave-raiding expeditions, appear to have been well organized. When the Mogho Naba felt that a war was necessary, he summoned his five provincial ministers and the Tansoba to a parley. If war was decided upon, the Tansoba was given full charge of all operations. This man, chosen from a hereditary clan of warriors who lived in a village called Tansob'tenga in Sapone district, was listed among the Mogho Naba's courtiers but seldom appeared at court unless war was imminent. His duties as chief warrior were considered so dangerous that he constantly sought out religious practitioners for supernatural aid. Nevertheless, a war minister who was good and brave was not expected to live very long. If he did live to become gray-haired, the other courtiers made fun of him by pretending that his graying head could only be the result of his having carried a sheep captured in warfare on his head as a present to the ruler.

701 721 644 [202] [411] Once given a mandate for war, the Tansoba collected his magico-religious apparatus and prepared the requisite sacrifices. He then asked the provincial ministers to notify the district chiefs to assemble with their warriors under the leadership of the local Tansobadamba, who were often members of the Tansoba clan. When the district chiefs received this notice, they beat their *zongagondo* (war drums), and the local administrators sent orders for men to the village chiefs. The village chiefs, in turn, beat their war drums to summon their noble cavalrymen and commoner foot soldiers, who came armed with bows and arrows, spears, swords, and clubs, with or [278] without iron tips. The tips of the sharp weapons were often covered with a vegetable poison derived from a shrub of the Strophanthus species. Some [411] of the men also carried guns after firearms were introduced among the [177] Mossi from the desert region and from the coast. Many carried rawhide [714] shields.

701 726 [648] As soon as the village contingents had assembled and had gathered their provisions, they marched to the district centers. Then they proceeded either to the place of battle or to Ouagadougou. In the latter case, they became part of the royal army and were joined by the forces of those princes who were prepared to honor their obligation to the Mogho Naba. For example, when the French invaded Ouagadougou in 1896, the Boulsa Dim sent his prime minister "at the head of an army to aid Mogho Naba

Wobogo. However, he did not have to intervene, because while still en route he heard that Ouagadougou had fallen."[25] Thanks to this type of aid, the Mogho Naba was able to gather quite a large army, a fact that contradicts Crozat's belief that the Mogho Naba was a "king without an army."[26]

The early Mogho Nanamse used to accompany their armies into the field, but this practice was later abandoned and was revived periodically only by the more adventurous rulers. (The last ruler to die in warfare was Mogho Naba Doulougou [ca. 1800].) However, it was the Mogho Naba's duty to greet the army when it came to Ouagadougou, to beat the royal war drum, and to turn the troops over to the Tansoba. This officer served as commander in chief of the army, and was assisted by the Gounga Naba, a provincial minister, who served as his aide-de-camp. The Gounga Naba was expected to die rather than retreat in battle, especially if the Tansoba was killed. Two other ministers, the Kamsaogho Naba and the Larhalle Naba, also accompanied the army. The later Baloum Nanamse did not venture into battle, because they had to attend to the personal needs of the Mogho Naba. In early times, however, they accompanied their sovereigns into battle and fought alongside them. The Ouidi Naba never went to war, because it was his duty to look after the kingdom. He had to ensure the interests of all the people even if the royal army was defeated, the country invaded, and the ruler killed or forced to flee. The Samande Naba went to war and served as chief of the infantry.

Scouts preceded each district contingent as the army marched off to battle. Within the contingent, the younger warriors marched in front, followed by older men. It was the duty of the more experienced warriors to make sure that the younger men did not break ranks and run under the stress of battle. Behind the foot soldiers came the cavalry, composed of nobles and of the few commoners who possessed horses. Behind these came the district chief, surrounded by his own palace guard. Several heralds known as *yumba* (sing. *yuma*) accompanied the district forces to exhort them to fight. As the men marched to battle the yumba shouted:

> Men! Your ancestors were not slaves. They were men. They were stronger than anyone else. They did not bathe with water; they bathed with blood. Do you wish to return home to drink millet water and eat bread? Never! A man does not eat bread or drink millet water; a man fights. Your ancestors were not afraid of anyone; you must not be afraid of anyone. Even if you are killed today, you must march ahead, beat your enemies, and take their villages. You must not be afraid!

Mossi armies on the march used scouts to keep a sharp lookout for the enemy or for any evidence that he was aware of impending attack. The tactics these scouts used to avoid detection, such as camouflaging themselves

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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because of this delinquency, the Mogho Naba might hesitate to come to the aid of any of his vassals if a general war broke out. It is true that the Mogho Naba did not aid the Yatenga ruler when the French arrived. But whether this was because of his failure to pay taxes, or because the French conquest of the Yatenga coincided with a civil war there, we shall probably never know. We do know that many of the Mogho Naba's vassals came to his aid when the French finally arrived at Ouagadougou. It is my opinion that the gifts exchanged between Yatenga and Ouagadougou were not "tributary," but were more in the nature of tokens of friendship between two peers.

The Mogho Naba and his provincial ministers also received revenue as a function of their judicial roles. The nature and disposition of the fines levied against legal offenders were discussed in Chapter V. The Mogho Naba's fees came in the form of the traditional gifts the litigants gave him even before their cases were tried. These gifts were never regarded as bribes, for this would have contradicted the Mossi axiom that "the truth is at Ouagadougou."

The Mogho Naba inherited all the property of the Kamsaogho Naba, and claimed all the property of district chiefs who died without close relatives. He also received inheritance taxes (fado) from the estates of deceased district chiefs. In collecting the fado, the Mogho Naba first retained the horse on which the messenger came to announce the chief's death. He reciprocated by sending envoys with cowries and animals to be offered to their common ancestors at the chief's funeral. After the funeral, the envoys claimed the dead chief's quiver of arrows to take to Ouagadougou for deposit with those of other dead chiefs. Then they demanded the fado, and jestingly told the heirs that the Mogho Naba would be satisfied with nothing less than "a thousand of everything" (*tusri bumbu fa*) the deceased had possessed: wives, slaves, horses, cows, goats, chickens, articles of clothing, and so on. The heirs pleaded poverty and jokingly gave the envoys a few old and sickly animals, old chickens, tattered pieces of clothing, etc. Eventually, they handed out the fado, which usually consisted of livestock, clothing, food, weapons, jewelry, cowries, and even slaves. Lastly, they gave the envoys the chief's ceremonial horse and presents for themselves.

The Mogho Naba and his ministers collected a considerable amount of revenue from the traders who visited Ouagadougou and the larger market towns and village markets throughout the kingdom.[6] The Mossi (especially the assimilated Yarse) were good traders, and they benefited from their country's strategic location between the Sahara and the forest regions. According to Barth, some six caravan routes crossed the country, linking

439 Marc, who had the opportunity to check the volume of this trade in 1904 and 1905, estimates that about 16,000 head of cattle and 75,000 sheep and goats passed through the two customs posts in Mossi country. Furthermore, he believes that since "the Mossi also supply in part the markets of Togoland and the market at Bondoukou [Ivory Coast], one may assume a minimum annual export of 20,000 head of cattle and 100,000 sheep or goats. The import of kola nuts is at least 500 tons."[11] It is clear that this volume [174] of trade could not have been achieved so soon after the French conquest. [651] We can only conclude that it existed prior to the coming of the Europeans, and that it brought the Mossi rulers a considerable income.

643 The Mogho Naba's officials collected taxes from all caravans that passed 651 through his capital. The caravaneers also gave the Mogho Naba important gifts, and he apparently traded with them, even if always to his own 439 profit. Binger states that Mogho Naba Sanum forced horse traders from [431] the Yatenga and Hausa merchants to sell him part of their commodities at one-hundredth the purchase price.[12] Crozat reports that Mogho Naba Wobogo

> appears to have had some business relations with white merchants who came to Salaga every dry season. He sent horses to them in exchange for silver. He claims that he had no reason to be pleased with their integrity, and that the silver they sent him contained plenty of copper. Some traders apparently came as far as Ouagadougou, bringing merchandise of German origin. There was one of them there during my stay. I was told that he was an important *marabout*, a shereef, perhaps an Arab or a Moor, for I was assured that he was very light in color. As was repeated to me several times, his relations with the king were limited to the solemn greetings on Fridays. He never entered the royal hut in spite of being an important marabout. He was at Ouagadougou for about three and one-half months, but he was compelled to return to the coast since the merchandise which he had brought was exhausted. He spoke no Mossi.[13]

439 All the caravans that passed through Mossi country were obliged to stop 651 and give presents to the district officials. Those caravaneers who tried to 634 elude taxation by going through the forest ran the risk of being attacked by local nobles, who usually confiscated their goods.

The Mogho Naba and the lesser chiefs had "market officials" who taxed 644 the merchants in the markets of their territories. The officials at Ouaga- 651 dougou, the Kos Naba ("sales chief") and the Raga Naba ("market chief"), 443 were fairly rigorous in their exactions. The Kos Naba collected taxes in cowries for every cow slaughtered at the market, and also took its hump and gave it to the Nemdo Naba ("meat chief") for distribution in the royal household. He also collected taxes on every cow sold in the market, but

645 566 567 62 dreds of persons lived in Ouidin, the ward of the Ouidi Naba. Some of them were related to him; others had been attracted by his wealth and by his ability to obtain wives for his charges. All of them benefited from being attached to him in one way or another, and in return helped him to augment his income.

651 645 634 434 [431] [464] All the district chiefs sent women to their provincial ministers to be kept as wives (and thus as agricultural workers), or to be given out as pughsiudse. The Kamsaogho Naba received more pughsiudse than the other ministers because he was in charge of the wealthier districts, and also of course distributed more. The Baloum Naba was especially favored in another respect. Each year, he was entitled to call several *seghse* (sing. *seka*; a corvée or convocation) of his former pages and their relatives to help cultivate his fields. The Ouidi Naba's sources of revenue were about the same as the Baloum Naba's. In addition, his position as chief minister enabled him to obtain numerous gifts from persons who visited Ouagadougou. Moreover, the Mogho Naba often gave him horses from the fado of deceased district chiefs. The Larhalle Naba had full ministerial privileges, and a few other means of obtaining revenue. He was allowed, for instance, to keep the animals that had not been sacrificed on the graves of deceased rulers.

The provincial ministers received many goods and services from the district chiefs of their provinces. Whenever one of these ministers sent a messenger to the district, the chief gave the messenger money and livestock for his master. Furthermore, the district chiefs brought presents for their minister when they paid their annual visit to Ouagadougou to render homage to the Mogho Naba. The provincial ministers used their position as confidants and advisers to obtain as many presents as possible from persons who came to Ouagadougou to ask special favors from the Mogho Naba, to participate in judicial proceedings, or to seek the nam. Moreover, they cooperated with each other in these exactions, so that a person seeking a favor from or through one minister was prudently advised to give presents to or to seek the aid of the others.

634 651 423 434 The district chief played a key role in the procurement of revenue for the central administration, and derived an income for himself in the process. The seignorial rights over the Mossi people delegated by the Mogho Naba to all nam holders were quite obvious on this level. The district chief had rights to all valuable fruit trees, such as locust-bean and shea-butter, that grew within the boundaries of his territory. He instructed the village chiefs to harvest the fruit of these trees and send it to him. The village chiefs even had to send him the wood from the fallen branches of these trees.

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The district chiefs did not often exercise their rights over fruit trees in the weogho, as the wasteland in their districts was called. If a villager went into the weogho and collected fruit or wood from the chief's trees, he surrendered only part of it to the chief. On the other hand, if he received permission from a district chief to farm in the weogho, he was obliged to gather and send to the chief the fruit on any valuable trees. A district chief sometimes granted the rights over certain fruit trees in the inhabited areas to specific families or individuals, for personal reasons or as a reward for services. In such cases, the chief forfeited his rights to these trees, but retained his rights to the others.[22]

District chiefs also controlled all the resources of creeks and pools within their jurisdiction that were not sacred to certain aboriginal families, or which had not been transferred to specific persons. The aboriginal Ninisi families always notified the district chief when they planned to perform their annual fishing rite to the earth deities. He, in turn, sent representatives to the ceremony, and they were given part of the catch as his share. Persons who were granted permission to fish in the chief's water holes gave him a substantial part of their catch, and even those persons who had private control of fishing places regularly did the same.

The district chiefs also had rights to certain parts of animals caught in their territories. This applied especially to animals caught with such traditional weapons as traps, clubs, bows and arrows, and spears. Men who had obtained flint guns and other firearms from the Ashanti or elsewhere and who had bought their own powder were not obliged to give the chief a part of their game, but it was always prudent to do so. According to a long-standing tradition, the tusk and legs of a slain elephant that were not resting on the ground belonged to the chief, and those that lay on the ground belonged to the Tengsoba in whose ritual jurisdiction the animal had been slain. But the district chief's secular power was so much stronger than the Tengsoba's sacred power that he usually took both tusks, leaving the Tengsoba only two legs. The district chief also received other portions of elephants and parts of all the larger animals killed in his territory. And when hunters in the district were successful in the chase, they usually gave him entire small animals.

Every village in a district contributed to the district chief's revenue by performing special services for him. Certain villages were responsible for keeping specific huts in his compound in good condition; others, whose lands bordered on the woods, had to provide firewood for his compound; and yet others furnished grass and other fodder for his horses. Many villages had the task of cultivating special fields and crops for the district chief.

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For example, the villagers of Barkago traditionally cultivated and harvested a field of millet behind his compound for the chief. The people of Pinse, Donse, Passingtenga, and Tewarka cultivated millet for him in their own villages, and those of Togose and Basbedo cultivated rice for him in their excellent lowlands.

The district chief had fields both behind his compound and in the bush, which were cultivated for him by his retainers, serfs, and slaves. More than the Mogho Naba and the provincial ministers, the district chief believed that a Moaga must perform agricultural work during the planting season; to show his interest in farming, he often personally supervised the work on his plantations. When the task of weeding or harvesting proved too much for his own people, he asked his villages for a *sosogha*. On that day, each village chief, accompanied by his men, went to the district chief's fields, where, to the accompaniment of drums and chants and with the verbal encouragement of district administrators, the villages vied with each other in their task. The district chief usually sat under a tree and watched the proceedings and occasionally visited the various contingents to observe the progress made. Toward evening, the chief's wives gave the workers large quantities of food and drink in compensation for their services.

Like the Mogho Naba, the district chief had officials who collected taxes on commodities sold in local markets. These district market officials were usually serfs, Gurunsi captives, or bondsmen from other populations. Mossi rarely served in such capacities because many of the local market places were considered ritually dangerous, and their titular deities, the Tengkouga, were believed to wreak vengeance on market officials who were tardy with sacrifices. The local Kos Naba supervised the slaughtering of every animal killed in the market, kept its skin so that its ownership could be verified if necessary, and collected taxes from the butchers in the form of meat or cowries. The Raga Naba of the district was not as strict as his counterpart in Ouagadougou, and seldom imposed formal taxes on the traders. He usually walked around the market, trailed by the chief's servants, and seized calabashes of grain and other commodities, which he placed in the servants' baskets. The Raga Naba did not tax those itinerant traders or caravaneers who visited the markets in the district, nor did he interfere with them in any other way. These merchants usually had business and personal relations with the chief, and he himself handled revenue from this source. The merchants gave him goods from the forest and Sahara regions, and he in turn often gave them wives, who were thus taken out of the district.

The Mossi district chief was always on the lookout for new sources of revenue, and thus welcomed strangers into his district because they "in-

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creased his force" and ultimately added to his income. Men who had been compelled to flee from other districts because of crimes or power struggles were granted refuge and given pughsiudse. In this manner, the district chief, like the Mogho Naba, established seignorial rights over his new subjects, incorporated them into the district, and obtained goods and services from them. The better a district chief's reputation, the greater the number of refugees who sought shelter with him and added to his wealth. Conversely, a chief who was known for his injustice, his rascality, and his excessive demands from persons seeking the village nam was shunned by potential subjects and might even be deserted by his own.

Those persons who visited the district chief's compound to settle court cases also contributed to his revenue. When the case dealt with cattle or other livestock, the chief received a few animals. In other cases, he received only the customary gifts from the litigants. He also received gifts from all the families in his district several times a year. One occasion was the "Tense," a festival in honor of the mother of Mogho Naba Oubri, the founder of the Ouagadougou dynasty; the other was the Basgha. During these two ceremonies every village chief, preceded by his district administrator and followed by his subjects, paid homage to the district chief and gave him presents. The district chief retained part of what he received for the upkeep of his household and to fulfill such obligations as hospitality to travelers, and added the remainder to his own annual tribute to the Mogho Naba.

The manner in which the district chief collected his annual tax or tribute for the Mogho Naba is the subject of controversy. Several of my respondents declared that the collection of this tribute was rather informal. The district chief allegedly notified the village chiefs that he wished to give a present to the Mogho Naba, and these chiefs sent word to the family heads, who, in turn, notified every household. The village people then collected chickens and livestock, baskets of grain, and cowries, and sent them up through the hierarchy to the district chief. The district chief's retainers checked the gifts from each village very carefully, and if some villages gave less than was expected of them, the district chief summoned their chiefs for explanations. In most cases the district chief knew exactly how much could be expected of his subjects, because his informers—usually his own pages and courtyard servants, or messengers of the local administrators—kept him informed of the wealth of each hamlet. Usually, a village chief who had withheld too much from the commodities turned over to him, or who had not demanded sufficient goods from his villagers, sought to make amends. It was in his interest to do so, since it was always dangerous to incur the

634 district chief's wrath. Thus, there was some method in the collection of this
651 tribute and certain expectations had to be met, even though many of the
[622] contributors may have felt that their gifts were voluntary.

In direct contrast, Dim Delobson, himself a chief, states that Mossi chiefs demanded a stipulated amount from their villagers. He adds, however, that the tribute "varied in amount according to the resources of the contributors," and that the district chief set the "amount of cowries and grain due from each village in accordance with the number of its inhabitants."[24] According to him, the rate of assessment was usually 100 cowries for a married man and 50 for an adult bachelor (apparently, this difference was an acknowledgment of the woman's contribution to her husband's wealth). In addition, each adult male was assessed 10 baskets of millet of about 100 pounds each. Dim Delobson adds that to these exactions the district chief added his own contributions to the Mogho Naba, usually in the form of cattle.

[114] It seems that Dim Delobson rationalized and regularized a rather informal system of contributions. The present-day Mossi declare that soil differences in the villages and variations in rainfall prevented a district chief from demanding a set tribute, because no one could tell whether a crop would be good or bad. Only a ruler's informers could tell him how much he should receive each year, and the chief based his exactions on this report. Several of my respondents agreed with Dim Delobson that the district chief provided mostly cattle for the annual tribute to the Mogho Naba, and that the village people furnished cowries, small animals, and grain.

634 A district chief was seldom wealthy, because he always had to use his
652 revenue to fulfill unexpected obligations toward his subjects, his superiors
574 in the political hierarchy, and his household. He had to be generous to his subjects, providing millet water, millet beer, and the more expensive imported kola nuts for those who visited and conferred with him daily. He was expected to provide food and shelter for the countless strangers who settled in his district, until they could provide for themselves. He also lodged and fed the messengers who brought him orders from the capital, and gave them gifts to take back to the provincial ministers. And he had to provide goods for the many members of his family who depended upon him. Finally, in the event of crop failure or famine in any of his villages, he had to provide grain from his granaries to feed the hungry. "How could he do otherwise? Was he not a 'father' to his people?"

634 The expectation that the district chief should provide hospitality to his
574 subjects was so strong that those chiefs or princes who were deprived of
579 an income for any reason often resorted to banditry to fulfil their obliga-
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tions. Binger, who found Boukary Koutou (the future Mogho Naba Wobogo) living in exile for having led a rebellion against his brother, Mogho Naba Sanum, tells us: 574 579 434

> Boukary has no resources, and does not even have the advantage of receiving periodic tribute from several large villages. In order to subsist and to maintain a certain status, he is compelled to live by pillage and even by brigandage. From time to time, his horsemen make incursions into the outskirts of some Gurunsi or Kipirsi village, and carry off by surprise the inhabitants whom they find working the fields or looking for wood. His people also hide and lie in wait along the roads to capture any persons who may pass within their range. This type of behavior has given Boukary Naba a bad reputation. However, the people who understand his position forgive him, knowing the situation in which his brother has placed him. And, in spite of all this, he has numerous partisans, and many others who would be happy to see him gain power.[28]

Those district chiefs or princes who wished to retain their power legitimately were forced to be generous or run the risk of losing the allegiance and good will of their villagers, who were their ultimate supporters. 634 574

It is very difficult to generalize about the amount of revenue collected by a village chief. He did not receive any revenue from the land used by his villagers. He treated the weogho in his village in the same manner as the district chief. If some families grew too large and wanted to establish permanent residence in the village bush, they asked the chief for permission to settle there. However, many village chiefs had special areas of waste for their own use. They had usually received them as gifts from some district chief, and therefore had the right to collect tribute on any crops, firewood, or fish obtained from these lands. 651 622 634 [361] [431]

The average village chief's main source of revenue was derived from the agricultural and other labor of his wives and relatives. A village chief received a number of wives from his subjects and from aliens living in his village. These women helped cultivate his fields. If their labor was insufficient he called a sosogha, to which he often invited his wives' relatives. Some chiefs also had serfs and slaves who helped cultivate their land and kept their cattle as well. [464] [566] [567]

The village chief did not have the power to tax his subjects. Instead, he functioned as a channel through which commodities and services passed up the hierarchy and on to Ouagadougou. Many villagers voluntarily helped the chief to repair his huts and compound walls and to cut thatch for his roofs. Many gave him baskets of grain and other vegetable products after the harvest. They also visited him and gave him presents during the annual rites to his ancestors. In contrast to higher chiefs, however, the village head [476] [431] [692]

651 did not derive any revenue from his judicial functions. He could not levy
622 a fine against any malefactor. However, his intermediary position between
[692] the villagers and the district chief did permit him to obtain some revenue whenever commodities moved from one level to the other.

634 The officials who administered the villages for the district chief received part of their revenue from the villages under their charge. These local administrators had no courts or retainers comparable to those at the provincial
[595] level. However, they did have a large number of wives who contributed valuable agricultural labor. These administrators were permitted to ask the
(464) village chiefs for sosose on their own fields several times during the planting season, but—unlike the district chiefs—they were not permitted to have the villagers cultivate special fields for them. In return for any help received, they had to provide food and drink for the workers.

634 The administrator received most of his revenue as a by-product of active
434 duty in the villages. When he visited a village or transmitted a message to
431 a village chief, he almost invariably received a sheep, a goat, a chicken, or some millet, from the village chief. He also acquired large quantities of goods during the village interregnum: he received gifts from the chief's heirs during the chief's funeral; he received additional presents when they took the fado to the district chief; he could prolong the interregnum in order to receive as many bribes as possible from contenders for the nam; and he was handsomely rewarded when the candidate he had backed was finally installed in office.

596 The extended family was the basic socio-economic unit supporting the
613 Mossi political organization. The Yirisoba received land rights in his saka
622 from his Sakakasma, who had obtained his rights from the village chief.
423 An extended family in need of additional land would seek help from its Sakakasma or its Boodkasma. When the family no longer needed this land, it reverted to the lineage. If all the land granted to the lineage was already occupied, the extended family, through its lineage head, asked the village chief for more land. The chief usually granted this request, unless he had no more weogho available. In this case, the needy Yirisoba some-
596 times tried to borrow land from his non-kin neighbors. Such a step was
613 not undertaken lightly, however. If a man borrowed land from his own
423 lineage members or from the chief, the land rights reverted to its donors
426 without difficulty. However, if he borrowed land from another lineage and either he or his benefactor died without assuring the return of the land, litigation often ensued. In some cases a man would seek land from his lineage brothers in another village, who let him use some of their land with their chief's permission. Some Yirisobadamba even asked their district chief for

[P.126]

VIII

RELIGION AND GOVERNMENT

796
642 RELIGION AND RITUAL played an important role in supporting and preserv-
[769] ing the Mossi political system. Religio-political ceremonies were centered
[776] around the ancestors (Keemse) and the earth deities (Tengkouga); the otiose high god (Ouennam or Naba Zid Ouende) had a very minor role.

769 The political importance of ancestor veneration lay in the fact that every
642 Mossi chief claimed Nyennega of Dagomba and her descendants, Ouedra-
778 ogo and Oubri, as his ancestors. Furthermore, possession of the amulets of Rialle, Nyennega's husband and Ouedraogo's father, legitimized possession
[613] of the nam. In order to rule, a Moaga had either to be a member of a royal lineage still in possession of the nam or to have received the nam from such
669 a lineage. No Moaga ever tried to usurp the nam of a kingdom or princi-
778 pality without trying to steal the royal amulets at the same time; nor, if his rebellion was successful, did he ever fail to claim that he had stolen the
642 amulets or had received them as a gift. Thus Yadega, who rebelled against
769 his father's brother, Mogho Naba Koudoumie, and founded the Yatenga kingdom, declared that he had obtained Rialle's amulets. He claimed that they had been given to him by his sister, Pabre, who had stolen them from Ouagadougou and had thus deprived that kingdom of any legitimate sanctions for power. Thus, when the Yatenga people declare that they are equal to Ouagadougou, they add that the only "amulets" that still legitimize the nam of the Ouagadougou dynasty are the droppings left behind by Pabre's horse as she fled northward.

769 Similarly, all the princes who founded principalities and proclaimed
642 their independence of Ouagadougou defended their action on the grounds
643 that they, being as close to the main line of descent as the Mogho Naba, were also entitled to rule. The younger sons of deceased Mogho Nanamse
[631] who were banished from the capital as Kouritadamba and who subse-
[634] quently became provincial Dimdamba also stressed their relationship to the royal ancestors. Even those district chiefs whose ancestors had prob-

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ably been younger sons sent to rule in conquered territories claimed that their ancestors were direct descendants of Ouedraogo and Oubri. Thus, to the Mossi, the power to rule was intimately linked to closeness of descent from the royal ancestors. The supernatural power of these ancestors, and the vigilance they were believed to maintain over the affairs of their descendants, were regarded as important factors in Mossi government.

From the moment when the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou or any other Mossi ruler "drank the namtibo" and thereby received the nam of his ancestors, he had the right—indeed, the duty—to offer sacrifices to these ancestors in the name of his subjects. Every night, throughout Mossi country, the Baloum Naba of every ruler performed an act of supplication (Kwaga Basgha) to the ancestors. He beseeched them to protect the subjects of their descendants through the night, to maintain peace in Mossi country, and to grant health, children, and prosperity to all Mossi. This nightly ceremony was climaxed yearly by an elaborate ritual in honor of the ancestors (called the Basgha in some areas, and the Pelegha, Filigha, or Kinkiriga in others) that began at the highest levels of the government and ultimately linked every Mossi chief and lineage head.

The Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou, like the other Mogho Nanamse and Dimdamba, initiated this ceremony in his own kingdom. His celebration, called "M'barengma," was held at the end of the Mossi agricultural year and after the Soretasgho. Thus, the M'barengma was a New Year's festival in thanksgiving for good crops, as well as the annual Feast of the Dead. A few weeks before the first moon of the new year (the *ki-basgha* or *ki-pelegha*), the Mogho Naba ordered his soghondamba and samande-kamba to clean up the palace buildings and courtyards—an activity intended to notify the ever-vigilant ancestors that preparations were being made to offer sacrifices in their honor. A short time later, the Mogho Naba gave grain from his fields to the Pughtiema so she could prepare millet water for the sacrifices. Present-day Mossi insist that part of the grain came from the first ears harvested that year and part from those of the previous year. This was supposed to symbolize the continuity between crops, mirroring the continuity between the ruler and his ancestors. A few days before the principal ceremony, the Mogho Naba ordered the Larhalle Naba to pour millet water and sacrifice chickens on the graves of former Mogho Nanamse.

Shortly before the ki-basgha moon appeared, the ruler had to leave his palace at night to elude the ancestors, who had been attracted by the preparations and who were expected to be angry when they discovered that the sacrifices were not yet ready. The unjust ruler feared ancestral sanctions; the just ruler that his ancestors might want him to join them. One night he

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climax of this gift-giving came when the ruler sent the Bendere Naba about 19,000 cowries and a slave.[2] This ceremony terminated at nightfall.

The close of the Mogho Naba's Basgha heralded the start of similar ceremonies throughout his kingdom. The heads of the other Mossi kingdoms and the Dimdamba were free to hold their own Basgha when they wished; but the Ouagadougou ruler's own subjects, including the provincial ministers, district chiefs, village chiefs, and lineage heads, apparently were not. One reason for this, aside from respect for the ruler, was that the important officials' head wives had to wait for the yeast (*dabili*) from the Mogho Naba's beer before they could prepare the sacrificial offerings for their husbands' ancestors. This dabili went from district to district or to several districts at once, depending on whether the chiefs celebrated Basgha at the same time or successively. Thus, the dabili from the capital united all the wives of the royal clan, and made for both a ritual continuity in the veneration of all ancestors and a strengthening of religious and political bonds.

The Basgha ceremonies on the district level were much less elaborate than those held at Ouagadougou, but just as important. The district chief, too, had his buildings repaired and his grain distributed for sacrifices for the ancestors. A few days before the actual ceremony, he ordered the Gande Naba to pour millet water on the graves of recently deceased chiefs and to sacrifice chickens there. As in Ouagadougou, these sacrifices were offered to induce the chiefly ancestors to grant the villagers health, food, and children. Unlike the Mogho Naba, most district chiefs did not ritually hide from their ancestors for several nights prior to the ceremony. Some of them did change their sleeping place within the compound every night, and the court people always slept indoors during this period. On the night of the Basgha itself, however, the district chiefs did not sleep in their compounds.

As in Ouagadougou, the Pughtiema performed the main ceremony by pouring millet water as a libation to the ancestors who visited her hut. She was assisted by the Baloum Naba, who had possession of the namtibo. Apparently, the district chief remained in hiding and took no part in the ceremony. But he was the main figure in the morning ceremony, which differed little from that of Ouagadougou. In some districts the Tengsoba performed a public sacrifice to the ancestors. He was given the namtibo—sacred objects that had belonged to former district chiefs—and poured libations and sacrificed chickens to all of the chief's ancestors. He also prayed both to these ancestors and to his own on the chief's behalf, and beseeched them to grant long life and happiness to the district population. He also declared that the sacred objects would seek out and kill any enemies of the local ruler, wherever they might be. Once this ritual had been com-

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pleted, the remainder of the ceremony followed the pattern of the Ouagadougou ritual.

During the weeks that followed, the village chiefs and the heads of the larger lineage segments all offered sacrifices to their ancestors. The Pughtiema of each prominent local administrator, chief, or lineage head prepared and poured the millet water as a libation to the ancestors. Whenever possible, each of these personages invited musicians to sing praises to his ancestors. He dressed in his best robe and sat outside his hut to receive presents from his relatives, friends, and subjects, along with their best wishes for the new year, and for long life and prosperity. In return he gave them kola nuts, beer, and food. Thus, in celebrating the Basgha, all the Mossi were united in prayers and supplications to the ancestors, upon whom rested the future of their country and the successful reign of the descendants of Ouedraogo and Oubri.

The earth deity, Tenga, held the central place in the second major religio-political ceremony which linked all Mossi. This ritual, called *Tense* (from *tenga*, "earth") and sometimes *Naba Oubri ma koure* ("the anniversary of the funeral of Mogho Naba Oubri's mother"), was so important to Mossi cohesion that it was banned by the French, and as a result its main features are now unclear. According to tradition, Naba Oubri loved Poughtoenga, his Ninisi mother, so much, and was so pleased with the elaborate funeral he gave her, that he decided to repeat this ceremony each year in the hope that his subjects would be blessed with the bountiful crops and herds which had made the first one possible. Curiously enough, Oubri's mother was not a central figure in the Tense celebration. Instead, great stress was placed on the fructifying powers of the earth and on the importance of the royal ancestors in Mossi life. The juxtaposition and association of the earth deity with Oubri's mother has important implications for the Mossi political organization. Mossi tradition holds that a Ninisi woman was the ancestress of the Mossi of Ouagadougou. Her people probably celebrated the Tense as a fertility rite to their earth goddess, Tenga. The Mossi apparently took over the ceremony and used it both as a fertility rite and as a memorial festival, thus symbolically uniting the conquerors and the conquered.[8]

In contrast to the Basgha, no special date appears to have been set for the celebration of the Tense. It was held sometime before the crops were sowed, but according to Tauxier it was not celebrated at all in Ouagadougou when the previous year's harvest had been poor.[4] Before setting the date for the festival, the Mogho Naba summoned the Larhalle Naba and ordered him to have sacrifices made on the graves of all former rulers. This minister

between the living and the dead," but also to strengthen the political bonds between the Mogho Naba and his chiefs, down to the humblest elder of a Mossi compound.

In addition to the Basgha and Tense, the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou appears to have offered another yearly sacrifice to Tenga. Each year, after the Basgha, the Mogho Naba, the Baloum Naba, and a large entourage reportedly visited a large earth shrine called Tantibo in the vicinity of Sabatenga to offer propitiatory sacrifices in the name of all the people. When the royal party arrived at Sabatenga, they were joined by the Sabatenga Naba and his Tengsoba. The group proceeded to the foot of the sacred hill, and here the monarch dismounted, took off his bonnet and shoes, and climbed the hill. He made the customary Mossi salute at the shrine and looked on silently while the Tengsoba sacrificed animals and poured libations of millet beer and millet water in supplication for the health and prosperity of the Mogho Naba and all his people.[1]

When evil befell Mossi country in spite of the annual sacrifices to the ancestors and to the earth deity, the Mogho Naba had to offer additional sacrifices. If the country was plagued by drought, the ruler went to an earth shrine in Ouagadougou itself, called "Kom be paspanga" (literally, "water is strong there"), for a sacrifice. Moreover, he might order all his district and village chiefs to perform similar sacrifices to the earth shrines within their territories. In Nobere district, for instance, the district chief went to the village called Barkago, where, standing barefoot and bareheaded on the hilly shrine known as Beta, he ordered the local village chief and the Tengsoba to offer sacrifices for rain and good health.

It is generally believed by the Mossi that when the French attacked Ouagadougou, the deposed Mogho Naba Wobogo made sacrifices to earth shrines. Tradition has it that he sacrificed a black cock, a black ram, a black donkey, and a black slave on a large hill near the White Volta River, beseeching the earth goddess to drive the French away and to destroy the traitor Mazi whom they had placed upon the throne. When Mazi died, the Mossi people believed that he had received his just deserts from the earth shrine for treason. The French believe that Mazi was poisoned.[2]

The district and village chiefs, like the Mogho Naba, were required to make propitiatory sacrifices to the earth shrines on behalf of their subjects. Before taking office, a district chief was ritually shown the major earth shrines in his territory, and he could not ignore their existence and their need for sacrifices. In a country with major local variations in rainfall and localized animal and human epidemics, the Tengsobadamba of stricken areas always called upon the local chiefs to help them propitiate disgruntled spirits.

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634 spirits. The chiefs could not refuse such requests, especially when the vil-
622 lagers were poor, because they were regarded as "fathers of their people."
782 In some cases, however, district chiefs had to protect their subjects against unscrupulous Tengsobadamba who took advantage of local crises and tried
661 to prey upon the villagers by refusing to perform the requisite sacrifices
793 unless they received substantial gifts. The ensuing struggle was between
634 the secular and the sacred; between the chief as a representative of the con-
782 querors, and the Tengsoba as a member of the conquered group. It was always resolved in favor of the Mossi chief, who never permitted his Tengsobadamba the same privileges held by religious practitioners in neighboring societies.[9] The Mossi chiefs recognized that they needed the Tengsobadamba, and many myths recount how invading Mossi chiefs went into the woods where the Tengsobadamba were hiding to beseech and eventually force them to return to their districts so that sacrifices might be continued. On the other hand, the Mossi chiefs always insisted on the primacy of the nam over any other power. They employed the Tengsobadamba to intercede with Tenga for the welfare of their subjects, but they never allowed the priests to control them.

771 The coming of Moslems to the kingdom of Ouagadougou had little
795 effect on the way in which the Mogho Nanamse used the traditional reli-
643 gious system to bolster their political power.[10] In fact, the Mossi rulers later used Islam and its adherents in the same manner as they had used the
[797] aboriginal religion. The Moslems first tried to subdue the Mossi in the fifteenth century by persuasion, and later by the jihad. Both attempts
[648] failed, but the Moslems finally entered Mossi country as refugees from
[167] Sudanese wars. Their fortunes waxed and waned, depending on whether they were befriended by the ruler in whose territory they lived. During
[798] certain periods, they were subjected to many restrictions and were forbidden by the Mogho Naba to recite their prayers in public places.[11] At other
[797] times, they were left free to practice their religion, and even succeeded in converting several Mogho Nanamse to Islam. Under converts such as Savadogo (ca. 1760), Islam spread into many districts and gave rise to such important local centers as Sakhaboutenga (Dakay).

771 The Moslems in Ouagadougou were represented at the court by their
795 Imam. This person even received his badge of office—a white turban and white robe—from the Mogho Naba, and had to swear in the name of Allah
792 and *Nabiyama* (the prophet Mohammed) to be faithful to him, obey him, and aid him in times of need. However, he did not have to drink the namtibo as suggested by Dim Delobson; nor did he have to observe such non-Moslem customs as drinking the millet beer the Mogho Naba provided for

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Moslems. In return, he gave them millet water sweetened with honey, millet cakes, meat, and kola nuts.

The celebration of the festival in the districts was not as imposing as it was at Ouagadougou, but we have Binger's excellent eyewitness account of the festivities at Sakhaboutenga:

> First of all, Boukary sent word that he would like me to accompany him to Sakhaboutenga, where it is his custom to go on the day of the festival. The chief's men spent the entire day attending to preparations: they distributed powder, cleaned guns, tried on harnesses, and polished copper fittings as we would in France on the eve of a great parade. . . . It was an occasion for revelry, and they took full advantage of it. They ate as much as they could, drank a great deal of beer, and fired many rounds of ammunition. . . . In the evening there was a moment of consternation: no one had seen the crescent; however, they consoled themselves by repeating that although it had not been sighted here, it had certainly shown itself elsewhere, and they sat down to drink beer all night long.
>
> Monday, June 11. Early this morning Boukary sent a horseman to Sakhaboutenga to consult the marabouts. The messenger soon returned and assured the chief that the moon will be seen tonight. "All the marabouts have said so." The much-desired crescent appeared for a few moments this evening; shots were fired through half the night, and beer ran in floods. . . .
>
> Tuesday, June 12. From four o'clock in the morning, the tam-tams sounded everywhere, and everyone was busy; it is obvious that this is the eve of an important event. . . . Half an hour after our departure we arrived at Sakhaboutenga. We dismounted and camped under the trees at the entrance of the village. Some Moslems from the neighborhood came, greeted Boukary, and offered him some kola nuts in lots varying from five to eight. But they always held them out in a fold of their robe [it being forbidden for a commoner to hand a gift directly to a chief]. A village nearby sent twelve large jars of beer.
>
> From afar and from all directions, long files of Moslems emerged from the village on their way to the Imam's for prayers. Several onlookers arrived on donkeys from the surrounding countryside. The religious ceremony took place on a flat expanse to the east of the village. It was an impressive spectacle. The crowd was silent. The faithful, ranged in ranks about 20 feet deep, prostrated themselves and rose again in perfect harmony and with awesome slowness. From time to time the voice of the Imam was raised, and his *amina* [amen] was heard with deep reverence.
>
> There were about three thousand persons of both sexes there, almost all of them dressed in white. The *bournous* [robes], the red tarbooshes, and the multitude of black faces lent to the ceremony the grandiose character of an oriental fete. As soon as the prayers were over, Boukary Naba walked up to the Imam of Sakhaboutenga to the sound of tam-tams to receive his blessing and the good wishes of the Moslems, who wished on my illustrious host many horses and warriors. Boukary Naba ordered that the Imam be given a magnificent sheep and several sheepskins full of cowries. He presents this

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634 795 796 771 184

gift every year to the Imam and to Karamakho Isa, for whom he has great veneration. These are old and wise men who cannot but give him excellent counsel.[18]

The relations between Boukary Koutou and the Moslems of the Sakhaboutenga district show how Mossi chiefs, though pagans, were able to establish viable political bonds with potentially hostile believers of another religion. Boukary Koutou was probably a Moslem "in outward appearance only," as Binger suggests. Nevertheless, it was by being Moslems of this kind that Mossi rulers managed to retain the allegiance of their Moslem subjects. This was their duty as "fathers of their people," and apparently they did it without much hesitation. In this manner, they effectively used religion to bolster their power and sustain their authority.

642 182 Ritual connections between the Mossi rulers and the chiefs of surrounding countries enabled them to protect their subjects from foreign attack and [648] to maintain internal cohesion. The numerous reciprocal gifts between the [431] Mossi and such other Voltaic groups as the Dagomba, Mamprusi, and [613] Gurmanche were based on the belief in descent from a common ancestor or ancestress. Ritual and the supernatural thus played an extremely important [771] role in the cohesiveness of the Mossi kingdoms and in the functioning of their governmental processes. Without these ritual factors, it is doubtful whether the Mossi rulers would have been able to maintain such a relatively high degree of control over their subjects, given the relative weakness of their economic resources, communications, and armed forces. In [648] trying to understand why the Mossi retained their autonomy for so long, one must take into consideration the statement made by a French officer a [619] year after the Mossi were conquered: "We must not lose sight of the fact that [the Mossi] have always presented a common front to strangers, and that a single word of command is sufficient to unite them against the invader in the name of kinship and national unity."[19]

642 648 182 The phase of Mossi political history that began when Nyennega left Dagomba and moved northward came to an end with the European conquest. Most French scholars believe that the Mossi were in a state of decadence at the time of conquest and might have fallen to such African conquerors as El Hadj Omar, Samory Touré, or Baba To. The fact remains, however, that these conquerors all skirted Mossi country without entering it. If these African rulers believed that the Mossi were invincible in their unity, it was because the Mossi, through mythical bonds of common descent and actual bonds of kinship, had welded themselves into a cohesive and powerful group.

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*175 648 Voulet left Ouagadougou in February to establish French control among the Gurunsi, leaving a military commander, Captain Scal, and a Resident Officer at Ouagadougou. But he acted without taking into account the resourcefulness of Wobogo (now once more Boukary Koutou), who [645] had gained the allegiance of chiefs in the Manga area. The Gounga Naba, [634] who was provincial minister for that region, tried to gain the support of the Djiba and Rissouma districts for Mogho Naba Sighiri. He failed, and or- [669] dered the troops of Garanse, Nobere, Toise, and Yake districts to attack Boukary Koutou's supporters. In the ensuing battle the Gounga Naba's forces lost nine men, the rebels ten. The Gounga Naba considered these losses too high and called off the fighting.[46]

*175 *648 643 Meanwhile, Boukary Koutou had sent an appeal to Steward, the commander of a British force that was then on its march of conquest through Gambaga and that had designs on Ouagadougou, "for protection in virtue of the treaty concluded with Mr. Ferguson in 1894." Wishing to avoid conflict with the British, Voulet hastened to Tenkodogo in February 1897 to meet Steward, and the two men established boundaries between the French and British spheres of influence. Boukary Koutou was thus left to fend for himself.[47] Undaunted, he crossed the Gold Coast frontier once more and proceeded toward Ouagadougou. Scal heard about his activities and decided to launch an attack against him. He took Boukary Koutou by surprise in June 1897, and forced him to flee. Boukary passed through Bere district and arrived in the Gold Coast, where he was granted refuge by the British. About a year later, he convinced a Colonel Northcott that he had been unjustly deposed by the French, and that under the treaty of 1894 the British were his protectors and were obliged to restore him to his throne. In May 1898, a British force under Northcott and with Boukary Koutou in tow arrived at Kombissiri, some twenty-five miles from Ouagadougou, but here they were met by French emissaries who brought with them copies of the treaty of protection signed by Sighiri in January 1897. The British troops retreated, taking the dejected ruler with them into permanent exile.[48] Boukary reportedly settled at Zangoiri, a few miles from Gambaga.[49] He was forbidden to enter Gambaga because of the tradition that if he ever saw the Gambaga ruler, both of them would die. Boukary never returned to Mossi country. He died and was buried in the Gold Coast in 1904, but his funeral was held at Ouagadougou.[50]

Boukary Koutou is seen in retrospect as a tragic figure, whose main fault seems to have been that he ruled at the most difficult time in his country's history. Judging by his treatment of Binger, he appears to have [173] been a clever politician, but his resources were of no avail against the

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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monial activities, especially since they were considered interesting "feudal" anachronisms to be shown to visiting officials and travelers. He also retained the power to appoint district chiefs, but the French often vetoed men they disliked and suggested that other candidates be elected. He also lost all control over his provincial administrators. The administrative chain now extended from the cercle commanders, through the provincial ministers and district chiefs, down to the village chiefs. Many provincial ministers, out of loyalty to the traditional system, occasionally briefed the Mogho Naba on the policies the French had ordered them to carry out, and told him about the state of affairs in the districts. This was completely unofficial if not illegal, but it made little difference to the French.

One serious blow to the power of the Mossi chiefs, especially on the district level, was their loss of judicial autonomy. Mossi country was subjected to the Indigénat, a rather harsh code of law for new colonies, which was promulgated by a decree of September 1887. Under this code, administrators could hold summary trials and punish any Moaga, whether chief or commoner. In June 1905, the Mossi chiefs regained some of their judicial power when a supplementary decree established village, district, and cercle courts throughout Haut-Sénégal et Niger.[18] Mossi village chiefs regained their police powers and the right to reconcile disputes among their people, but their decisions could be appealed to a district court. The district chief heard appeals and judged civil and criminal cases, but in all deliberations he was aided by two assessors appointed by the Governor. His judgment could be appealed to a cercle court, which was presided over by a European, who was assisted by two Africans. They heard appeals and judged crimes for which the penalty could be no more than five years. Penalties handed down by this court could be appealed to the Supreme Court of the Federation of French West Africa in Dakar, which judged all major crimes.

Thus the Mossi chiefs did regain part of their judicial power; but because the decree of 1905 did not abolish the Indigénat, local French administrators could easily countermand this power. Moreover, some administrators, dissatisfied with the Mossi courts and possibly resentful at their own loss of judicial power, sent numerous complaints to Dakar about the incompetence of the chiefs and the injustices perpetrated by village and district courts. As a result, a decree of August 1912 abolished the judicial power of the Mossi and of all other African chiefs, and instructed them to refer all litigation to courts at the poste, subdivision, and cercle levels.[19]

During the period before the First World War, the Mossi chiefs lost not only their judicial power but also much of the economic and religious basis of their political power. The French administration abolished slavery

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964

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*175 chiefs did not regain any of their traditional power. They remained auxil-
*177 iaries of the administration. Taking Mogho Naba Kom as an example,
648 one report states that this "simple, intelligent, compliant man served as
631 news agent and made himself useful to the political administration" until
643 the arrival of Hesling, when he took a livelier interest in the affairs of the colony.[84] Another source says of the same monarch:

> Free of the ancestral traditions that forbade him to leave his palace, and curious about progress and administration, he travels on all the roads and, under our supervision, busies himself with the settlement of administrative problems, to which he lends the weight of his authority. He makes the proposals for the nomination of province and district chiefs; he encourages his subjects to work and produce. Finally, he fulfills with the greatest dignity the representative functions that devolve upon him at his palace and in the official ceremonies.[85]

While it is true that the Mogho Naba made proposals for the nomination of chiefs, he was powerless to prevent their dismissal if they incurred the displeasure of the administration—a frequent occurrence during the Hesling period. For example, when the administration deposed Naba Boulga of Doulougou district for "incompetence" and placed him in "enforced residence" in a neighboring district, the French officials encouraged the election of Bila Kongo primarily because he was a former cercle guard. Bila Kongo was assassinated in 1924, and the Mogho Naba named Mahama Ouedraogo to take his place. This new chief soon had difficulties with the administration, however, and was deposed for exacting unauthorized taxes from his subjects and for abusing his authority. Mogho Naba Kom then appointed Ousmane Ouedraogo, but he was deposed for "incompetence" and exiled to Sao district.

*175 On the other hand, Hesling made few attempts to change the traditional
*177 political and administrative structures of the Mossi. One contemporary
648 source says:
631

> Since its inception the Government of the Upper Volta has made no changes or innovations, or at best very few, in this connection. The native administrative entities in the cercles of Ouagadougou, Ouahigouya, Kaya, and Fada-N'Gourma have remained the same as those which Haut-Sénégal et Niger transferred to the colony in 1919. . . . Only in 1922 did the cercle of Kou-
> ●[634] dougou have its "Gurunsi" districts separated from its "Mossi" districts to form a new province, which was placed under the command of the Leo Naba,
> [635] a chief of the same Gurunsi race. Tenkodogo, a cercle made up of a large number of small districts ruled by thoroughly inept chiefs, has been the object of a partial internal reorganization since the beginning of 1923. The number of its native *circonscriptions* [districts] has been reduced from 82 to 73.[86]

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administration, and failed to serve as an administrative training ground for either the Mossi ministers or the commoner representatives.[88]

During the Hesling period, the Mossi district chiefs remained in power, but the French, through their African administrative assistants, kept a stricter watch on district affairs. The chiefs regained some of their judicial (or, rather, conciliatory) power in 1921 when the Governor, dissatisfied with the territory's legal system, promulgated a decree reorganizing the courts and giving the Mossi district and village chiefs the right of adjudication in minor cases involving civil and commercial matters.[89] However, they had to send all cases involving serious crimes and all appeals from other cases to higher courts. Because their subjects could appeal to the subdivision courts and because they risked reprimand by administrators when their verdicts were deemed unjust, many Mossi chiefs complied. They tried to do so even when the litigants themselves would have preferred not to deal with the administrators. Often the chiefs overtly told the litigants to go to the administrators but covertly persuaded them not to do so. In this manner they observed all proprieties toward both the French and their subjects.

The village and district courts had to send all criminal offenses such as assault and battery cases and major thefts, as well as appeals against their verdicts, to a "tribunal of the first degree," which was presided over by a subdivision commander and his Mossi assessors. Cases were taken to the tribunal only when the dispute was extremely serious or when people were gravely injured, because Mossi villagers hesitated to take their cases to officials who, when not swamped with work, had little patience with the complexities of Mossi litigation. Moreover, the Mossi feared to subject their fellows to the rigors of the Indigénat, which was still in existence, because, as one official source declares, "If this regime subsists, it is because the Voltaic populations have not yet reached a level of development that would permit the withdrawal of a weapon which is so readily useful to the commanders of administrative units. Besides, when judiciously managed, it does not present any danger in these underdeveloped regions."

Cases which the subdivision commanders considered too serious for their courts were sent to "tribunals of the second degree" at the cercle level. From there, cases were sent to a "colonial court of appeal," which was presided over by the Chief Officer of Political Affairs of the territory and which could sentence a criminal to three to ten years in prison. More serious crimes carrying longer prison terms or the death penalty were sent up to the Supreme Court at Dakar. Owing in part to the lack of communication between the rural districts and the higher courts, the Mossi

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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were seldom able to follow a case higher than the subdivision level. In cases involving long imprisonment or the death penalty, the relatives of the condemned person usually learned about the sentence through rumors from the capital, but seldom through the administration.

One judicial duty which the administration gave the Mossi chiefs and which they had always disliked was the adjudication of domestic cases. They found such cases even more difficult and distasteful after Hesling issued a circular on "The Condition of the Native Woman," which is summarized in a semi-official report as follows:

> [The Governor] is pained to see [the Mossi woman] so often subjected to a special form of slavery which, notably at the time of marriage, reduces her to the role of a domestic animal. Without wishing to interfere with ingrained native traditions, the Governor desires "to prime the desirable evolution by means of judicial decisions." Thus he comes to the decision that in those lawsuits concerning marriage in which formerly the woman was not consulted, she must henceforth be present and must argue the case with her husband. M. Hesling trusts that this procedural reform, which he hopes will give the native woman "a consciousness of her individuality and her rights," will be followed in the courts by further reforms. First of all [the courts] must weaken and then progressively modify those traditions which promote injustice toward women. . . . Questions will no doubt be raised as to whether it is necessary to set up regulations on such matters. However, M. Hesling advises his administrators to adjust [such regulations] to, and apply them with respect for, ancestral traditions. It will be interesting to see the results obtained in this attempt, and to see whether the "moussos" [a malapropism denoting Mossi women] of the Upper Volta will acquire some individuality.[60]

The Mossi chiefs were not told that the Governor's circular recommending a change in the status of women stipulated that traditional practices be taken into account. But even if they had been told, they would not have been impressed, because any fundamental change in the status of women would have placed their whole society in jeopardy. Woman exchange stood at the core of a social, economic, and political nexus that held Mossi society together. True, in pre-conquest times most quarrels and lawsuits were caused by trouble over women, but the marriage system was upheld by all the other institutions. Even after the arrival of the French and the weakening of the chiefs' judicial role, the Mossi could punish violators of the marriage system by imposing social sanctions. They now feared that if the French passed laws giving the women free choice in marriage, and the chiefs had to adjudicate on the basis of these laws, all traditional sanctions would become obsolete. Neither the chiefs nor the Mossi on the Councils of Native Notables nor the elders welcomed any discussion about

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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[post-world war II period]

*175 The present Union has as its aims:

631 1. To establish an alliance and effective solidarity among its members, and to defend their material and moral interests in the face of all difficulties;

647 2. To collaborate closely with the economic and social aims of the French administration;

3. To provide aid to the dependents, wives or minor children, of all deceased members of the society. This aid will be obtained:

a. by drawing from a special reserve fund;

b. by contributions from all members; and

c. by an additional subscription according to the circumstances. The total sum to be granted to each family will be set at the annual meetings of the general assembly.

This organization decided to meet annually in Ouagadougou, Ouahigouya, Tenkodogo, and Koudougou. Member chiefs were to be notified of meetings through the existing traditional political hierarchies. Those chiefs who were unable to attend meetings could send a representative.[24]

* [648] Both the politicians and the French administration welcomed the formation of the Union. The politicians saw it as a forum that would support them in elections and to which they could report on their activities on behalf of their constituents. The French officials welcomed the opportunity to meet periodically with the chiefs and to obtain their help and support for official plans and projects.

One of the new administrative policies was to increase the number of administrative units (the cercles, subdivisions, and postes), and to staff them with European civil servants. Mossi country was given one civil servant for every thousand inhabitants. These officials were thus less isolated from the central administration and more directly responsible to their superiors for the areas under their command. Most of them were assisted by young African civil servants, both Mossi and non-Mossi, who kept administrative records, worked in the agricultural extension programs, acted as interpreters and court assessors, and so on. In addition to these administrative assistants, there were usually junior civil servants who were stationed at the homes of the district chiefs. They were called "secretaries," but they actually served as liaison officers between the administrators and the chiefs. [634] Thus the administrators notified the district chiefs through these secretaries that certain taxes were being levied, and would be collected on a specific date; that certain laws affecting them had been passed; that an election would be held on a certain date; or that they should summon the potential draftees in their district to be examined at a certain time.

The postwar administrators did much more than communicate with the district chiefs through their secretaries. They still had considerable author-

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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ity in local matters, even though the Indigénat had been abolished. They adjudicated minor offenses committed in their territories or referred to them on appeal by the districts and villages. They attempted to settle family quarrels and commercial cases, and ordered that restitution be made in cases of theft. However, they had to send any difficult case or major crime up the hierarchy until it reached the officials authorized to deal with it.

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The French administrators also continued to act as intermediaries between the large commercial enterprises in Ouagadougou who wished to recruit men for labor or to buy local produce and enterprises in the larger Mossi towns. Thus, if a private firm in Ouagadougou wanted men to work on the roads, it asked the *chef de poste* (administrator) of a region to tell the district chiefs that its representatives would come to recruit men on a certain date. If a large business was planning to canvass a certain area in order to buy shea nuts, it asked the local administrators to notify the chiefs. No one was ever quite certain whether these activities were legal, but no one questioned them. The *chefs de poste* might simply have been giving the people information that they could not have obtained by any other means.

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The Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou, like the supreme chiefs of the other Mossi regions, continued to perform both the administrative role assigned to him by the colonial government and his traditional politico-ceremonial role. He was partly responsible, through his active cooperation with the administration, for the rapidity with which the Upper Volta became a functioning entity. For example, in his anxiety to make his capital worthy of being the territory's administrative center, he gave his full support to the extension of the Abidjan-Bobo-Dioulasso railroad to Ouagadougou. But he always succeeded in giving the impression (to foreigners at least) of detachment and dissociation from the French administration. His behavior was quite different when he functioned as Mogho Naba of the Ouagadougou Mossi. The following is a brief description of a visit he made to one of the districts:

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> The Mogho Naba arrived unexpectedly at the district chief's headquarters, where no preparations had been made for his visit. It appears that he was on a tour of his domains to consult with the local chiefs about the forthcoming elections, and had simply dropped in to visit the district chief. However, as soon as his presence became known around the district, important village chiefs and the heads of lineages all put on their robes and appeared to pay homage to him. Meanwhile, he was consulting with his host. But as soon as the conversation was over he came out into the compound, where he was saluted by the chief's Bendere, who praised the royal ancestors by reciting

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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175 643 their genealogies and traditions. The Mogho Naba was pleased by the recitation and thanked the drummer.

● 634 574 182 Later that day, the Mogho Naba presented himself in the courtyard of the district chief's compound to be saluted by the village chiefs and by the heads of lineages. They came to him in the traditional way, rubbing their palms and bending their foreheads to the ground. He addressed them, and in response they snapped their fingers in the customary manner. Then, one by one, the village chiefs and the lineage elders came to their monarch and gave him presents of money which ranged from 50 to 200 francs. The Mogho Naba paid little attention to the sums given, being more interested in this act of homage and fealty. However, he listened carefully as each donor announced his name and rank within the official hierarchy or village. He later thanked them collectively and departed. This ceremony, while not very elaborate, differed little in detail from those characteristic of the traditional Mossi's relationship to their Mogho Naba. The new element here was that the monarch was traveling around his domain, establishing a close relationship with his chiefs and subjects, whose support he needed for his modern political alliances.[28]

* 175 643 796 182 [692] The Mogho Naba continued to hold the morning ceremony at court, even though it was rapidly losing its traditional function and becoming of major interest only to visitors. He also continued to hold those ceremonies associated with individual appointments to the nam and with traditional sacrifices. Unknown to many was the fact that traditional authorities at court still judged legal cases which many Mossi refused to take to the Europeans.

* 175 645 182 In contrast to the Mogho Naba, the traditional provincial ministers now lost most of the power they had held in the pre-conquest period, and all the duties they had acquired in the immediate post-conquest era. As we have seen, one minister, the Baloum Naba, had entered politics at the suggestion of the Mogho Naba, but even he was now relegated to the entourage that accompanied the Mogho Naba and the European administrators on visits to the ministers' former provinces. The increased number of European administrators had made these ministers superfluous.

* 178 175 554 634 [692] The district chiefs retained some prestige after the war. They could still judge legal cases, with the understanding that the litigants were free to go to the Europeans if they so desired and had to be sent there in serious cases. Their major problem was that a more efficient administration was taking a greater interest in district affairs. For the first time since the conquest, officials were visiting some of the more remote villages. No longer were they said to "act as locusts"—that is, to appear periodically to garner supplies and men from the districts and then disappear until the next onslaught. Instead, they appeared regularly to collect taxes and to take censuses, and

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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they were kept informed of almost everything that occurred in the districts by their secretaries and "friends" (usually war veterans who visited the administrative headquarters on business).

Not all the district chiefs accepted with equanimity their gradual loss of power. Many of them had accepted at face value the joyful refrain of the elite and the politicians that the "land was cooling"—i.e., that the rigors of colonialism were over. They welcomed the liberal laws of 1946, and believed that they would regain the power lost by their fathers. Thus, they were among the most surprised persons in the Upper Volta when the easing of colonial rule brought with it more French supervision rather than less. From the standpoint of political power, most district chiefs had been better off in the days of the "locusts." At least the locusts came and went, whereas progressive government slowly but irrevocably eroded their power. [648]*

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The village chiefs, as those members of the traditional Mossi hierarchy who had the closest contact with the people, felt the postwar administrative changes much more keenly than the other chiefs. They found it increasingly difficult to deal with war veterans, adherents of formal religions, and other people who had lost respect for traditional values and practices.[28] Whereas few Mossi would have refused to visit or to pay allegiance to the Mogho Naba or to their district chief, with whom they had little personal contact, many did refuse to have political relationships with those village chiefs whom they neither liked nor respected.

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The rural Mossi, upon whom the position of the Mogho Naba and his chiefs ultimately depended, did not fully comprehend the postwar changes in the Upper Volta, and were initially willing to look to their chiefs for guidance. Most of them referred to their newly won civil rights in the French Union by what they called *soguem minga,* which may be translated as "possession of one's self," "liberty," or "liberation." To the majority of them, however, the reforms meant chiefly the end of forced labor. They were more than willing to leave the new political affairs to their chiefs, despite the assurance of the elite that they could now participate in the governmental processes. Dupont wrote in a romantic vein about the introduction of political reforms in the Upper Volta:

> Can we truly speak of a change for the better in this country? Yes! A page has been turned, the last in a chapter. A new chapter has just begun, and I was the amazed witness of this beginning. . . . One must say, in France's favor, that she did not merely engage in beautiful speeches, but that her liberating decrees deeply modified the life of the natives. Gone is the export of laborers; gone are the uncontrolled prestations; gone the requisitions of produce which the peasants had to buy elsewhere at a higher price and resell at a loss; gone the sales in which the collective price given to the district

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As the politicians grew skillful at the game of metropolitan politics, their power increasingly eclipsed that of their chiefly benefactors and of local French administrators. For example: 175* 631 554 665

> A local chef de poste summoned the district chiefs to bring their potential draftees for the war in Algeria early in the morning on a specific date to be examined by medical officers. Those chiefs who looked upon any summons with a trepidation born of their past experience with prewar administrators, arrived at the headquarters as early as 5:30 A.M. on the morning in question, bringing their young men with them. Many of these chiefs, whose only means of transportation was their slow-moving ceremonial horse, spent the night en route to be there at dawn. More sophisticated chiefs coming from similar distances left on the same morning and arrived at about 8:00 A.M., the hour when the administrator himself was first seen stirring in his residence. One chief, a war veteran, rode up on his bicycle at about 8:45 A.M. in a most unchiefly manner and became the butt of jokes from the other waiting chiefs. Another district chief, who was an elected representative, did not arrive until about 9:30 A.M., and he was greeted on arrival by the administrator. This man had only about half a mile to travel, and he did so in his car. His colleagues greeted him with a mixture of jokes, feigned awe, and surprise, and some of them addressed him as "Mogho Naba" and "Governor."[29]

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Another example of the shift in the balance of power was the relationship that developed between Joseph Conombo and the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou. The Mogho Naba had nominated and supported Conombo as a candidate for deputy to the National Assembly. He was elected, and later became Secretary of the Interior in the Mendès-France Government of 1954. He thus had access to power undreamed of by the Mogho Naba. Being a Moaga as well as a good politician, he never flaunted his authority before his traditional chief; nor did the Mogho Naba try to exercise his traditional powers over him. But their behavior toward each other clearly demonstrated that they were both aware of the shift in power, even though they were both too wise and too polite to make an issue of it. 175* 643 554 648* 646

Other political forces also jeopardized the position of the chiefs. For example, as head of the Union Voltaïque, Conombo had an honored position within a Paris-based African parliamentary group called the Indépendants d'Outre-Mer (IOM). He would have held an even more important position within this group if he had had wider support among the non-Mossi in the Upper Volta. But his power was limited by the presence and competition of the MDV, which, while Mossi-supported, was anti-chief; the Mouvement Populaire de la Révolution Africaine (MPA), an anti-Mossi and anti-RDA party formed in 1954 by Nazi Boni of the Bobo ethnic group and supported by some officials in the administration; and the Parti Démocratique Voltaïque (PDV), a local branch of a now less radical RDA 175* 646 648* 665 554

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as provinces. The choice fell upon a uterine brother of Naba Kom, Moustapha Kongo.

He was recalled in 1930 after ruling for only three years. His dismissal was certainly due to errors committed in the performance of his duties, but it was also caused by the fact that the Boussancé had been independent too long to take kindly to a master.

Thus, as was pointed out at the beginning of this chapter, the local administration has interfered too much with the organization of the Mossi empire. The position of the Mogho Naba has been completely distorted, and his prestige diminished. This is why the ill-informed official to whom we have already alluded could state that the authority of the Mogho Naba over his vassal chiefs was merely nominal.

A list of Boussancé cantons under the authority of the Mogho Naba follows: (1) Niaogo, (2) Niarba, (3) Lenga, (4) Gon Boussougou, (5) Komtoéga, (6) Beguedo, (7) Ouanragou, (8) Sanogo, (9) Toalla, (10) Zourga, (11) Yakala.

643 has been accepted up to now, is a true king in his territory and as such is absolutely independent of the Mogho Naba at Ouagadougou, to the same degree as the head of the state of Yatenga (Ouahigouya) and the head of Fada N'Gourma.

As was pointed out in an earlier chapter [not translated], the Tenkodogo Naba is the descendant of Naba Zoungrana, the son of Ouedraogo, and is consequently the "elder" of the Mogho Naba, who is a descendant of Naba Oubri, the founder of the Mossi dynasty of Ouagadougou.

631 The Boulsa Naba, a direct descendant of the kourita [representative after death] of [55] Naba Oubri, is not a dima but merely
635 a kombéré. He has a vassal, to be sure, the chief of Koupéla in the circle of Tenkodogo who is now considered a province chief, but the Boulsa Naba himself is a vassal of the Mogho Naba.

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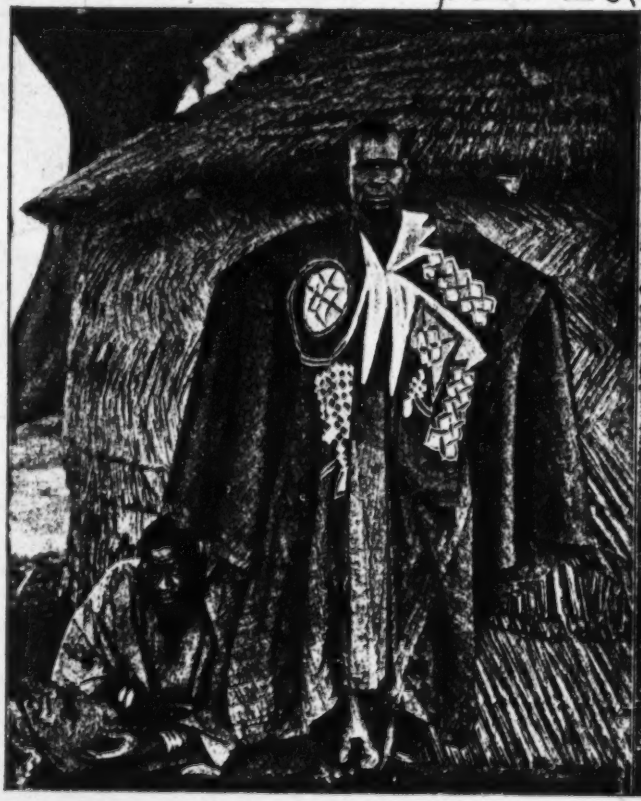

A Mossi Province Chief.

The Moro Naba of the Mossi.

622 1. Ti'douda béleum villi n'pam n'dou. Those who wish to
539 climb a tree seize the branches for support. /21/

2. Gigemdé sen touka séolro, wenniginamma, walpélronamma, nonga morbo, la'b zuéta gemdé. The lion digs up the salty earth (good to eat); the buffalo and koba /a kind of horse antelope/ like to eat it, but fear the lion. (The enemies of the Saman'Naba would like to take his place, but fear the naba.)

3. Kong'panga, bar'bala. Those who lack strength remain servants.

645 The appointment of the high ministers involves only a few gifts,
635 offered during the festive days which last from the death of the minister to the nomination of his successor. The eldest son usually inherits the position, but the province chief may designate anyone he pleases.

636 Upon the death of the naba of Koupéla, a province chief, the ministers hold a council and decide among themselves who is to be his successor. The eldest son is nearly always chosen. Before the name of the man selected is announced, the head of the village section that bears the name Koupéla notifies the canton chiefs, who gather in the village of Koupéla. When everyone has arrived, the Tabrana /sic/ proclaims the name of the man chosen, and they all proceed to Bélousa to disclose their choice to the naba and to request his investiture. The naba of Bélousa usually accepts the man thus formally designated. If there is disagreement, or if he himself would prefer a different choice, he notifies the Moro Naba accordingly and indicates his own preferences; when his messenger returns, he proclaims the appointment, and everyone submits to his will. After all, he "has the strength." As badges of investiture, the naba of Bélousa presents the chosen man with a cap, a pair of shoes, and a scepter. The new naba still may not wear the cap, put on the shoes, or hold
[769] the scepter. He must proceed first to the grave of the ancestor of the people, Naba Kourita, where he offers sacrifices, especially that of a cow. The festivities last for seven days, in the course of which millet beer flows freely and cattle is slaughtered in large numbers. In the course of these festivities the head of the chosen man is shaved, and he receives from the messengers of the naba of Bélousa the cap, shoes, and scepter; only then does he truly become a naba, with the right to

635 wear spurs and to have pages and a pillow. When the festivities are over at Kourit'Yaorin, the naba enters Koupéla where he is to reside.

643 When the Moro Naba died, the country fell prey to revolution and
669 to the servants of the deceased, who looted everything they could. This is why the death of the Moro Naba was carefully concealed until the day of the funeral; this is why, once it had been announced, no one dared go out without a bow and arrows or at least a spear. Women and children stayed home. In order to prevent any disorder, a new
643 election was called as soon as possible. The Widi Naba acted as intermediary and gathered the votes of the electors. The latter numbered twenty-five: the five high ministers and twenty other chiefs, of no great importance in everyday life, who were not canton chiefs and were often mere family heads, but who were high electors by right inherited from father to son since the founding of the Ouagadougou dynasty. These twenty-five electors consulted the people of their entourage and told the Widi Naba which candidate had received their vote. There could be several candidates, but to be elected one had to be a member of the family /22/of Naba Oubri, the founder of the dynasty. Once the funeral ceremonies were over, the Widi Naba rounded up all the canton chiefs and all the nabas present in Ouagadougou, and proclaimed the name of the man chosen, to whom he presented the badges of office. Numerous ceremonies followed, the most solemn of which took place in a small village called Paspanga, two kilometers from Ouagadougou. All the nabas went there in turn, beginning with the defeated candidates, to render their oath of loyalty.

All these customs were followed for the investiture of the present Moro Naba, Naba Kom.

Chapter 3. Rights of Chiefs and Rights of Private Individuals

631 The nabas, whether heads of villages, cantons, or provinces, were all-powerful, and no one could act without their knowledge or own anything beyond what they permitted him to possess.

In theory, Mossi country belongs entirely to the Moro Naba, who may dispose of everything as he wishes and give land to anyone he pleases. In practice, the Moro Naba delegates some of his

4: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1957
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obligations to the Moro-naba, his lands were raided, his women seized and, if he were caught, he was killed.

It is difficult to ascertain how the institution of provincial administrators arose among the Mossi. Some of the people still believe that the ministers were formerly slaves of the Moro-naba, but Delobsom claims that the first ministers were warrior companions of Naba Oubri, the founder of the Ouagadougou dynasty.[4] These men were not members of the royal lineage and thus were inferior in status to the members of the royal lineage and sublineages under their supervision. However, as emissaries of the Moro-naba, these ministers were entitled to respect by all the people. The ministers recommended successors to vacant district chieftainships; thus it was incumbent upon a district chief to be friendly with his minister if he wished succession to go to his eldest son.

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The minister was the person who carried orders from the Moro-naba to the district chiefs, and he reported back to the Moro-naba on conditions in the district he visited. However, the minister could not interfere in the internal affairs of a district, nor could the district chief complain to the Moro-naba about a minister. Everyone was required to observe the strict hierarchy; the only sanction that the district chief exercised over his minister was to appeal to another minister in the hope that the Moro-naba would come to his aid.

The districts that comprised the provinces of the ministers were scattered around the country and were not equal in size or importance. One minister, the Baloum-naba, controlled the districts ruled over by those chiefs who were the sons of recent rulers. Another, the Kamsoro-naba, a eunuch, had control of the largest and wealthiest districts, but he, in contrast to the other ministers, was not succeeded by sons and, when he died, the Moro-naba inherited all of his property. The ministers frequently became very wealthy because they received gifts whenever their charges went to Ouagadougou to pay homage to the ruler. The people from the districts under their control provided labor for their fields and for the upkeep of their houses. The ministers also received bribes from persons seeking vacant district chieftainships.

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When a district chief or Kombéré died, his heirs sent a horse or a sheep with leaves on its tail to notify the ruler of the death. The Moro-naba always questioned the envoys, and when he was satisfied that his man had not met with foul play, he sent the animal to his chief minister. The Moro-naba then sent his own envoys to the late chief's house with offerings for sacrifices to their common ancestors, and also instructed the envoys to collect the death offerings from the chief's relatives. After the funeral the eldest son of the dead chief and the other pretenders went to Ouagadougou bearing gifts to the district minister and the other important men surrounding the ruler. When the time came to name the new district chief, the Moro-naba called his ministers together and asked them: "Which one of the candidates is really capable of succeeding the late chief?"

4: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1957
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635 The Ouidi-naba answered: "Naba, you may do as you desire." The ruler
631 then said, "Under these conditions I will designate the eldest son of the late chief as the new Kombéré because his father has never forgotten me, or gave me any trouble when he was alive. It will not be good to reject his son." The ministers then called the heir and put the following question to him three times: "Before his death, did your father designate anyone to replace him as chief?" The heir replied three times: "No! My father did not designate anyone. You may name anyone you wish; even if he is a blind man or a leper." The heir was then given a bonnet, the symbol of
[778] the *nam*, and made to swear on drinking the Tibo, a ritual potion, that if he ever betrayed the ruler, may the Tibo kill him. Thereafter, all the members of the new chief's lineage swore to respect and obey him.

635 The power and function of the Kombéré were similar to those of the
631 Moro-naba, but on a much reduced scale. As the person who had received the *nam* from the Moro-naba, he was supreme in his district, subject only
578 to his obligation to the head ruler. These obligations included the customary gifts and aid in warfare. There is some evidence that many of the Kombérés were lax in paying this tribute and rendering homage to the Moro-naba and consequently were punished or killed. Naba Warga fought a five-year-long civil war against a rebellious vassal before the rebel was killed, and Naba Wobogo was engaged in a three-year civil war with one of his vassals when the French arrived in the country. It is not clear whether the Moro-naba was able to prevent or stop war between his vassals over strayed cattle or stolen women. The Mossi in the district of Nobéré said that the Moro-naba did not often know when neighboring villages were at war. These wars did not involve the loss of territories by the districts, since it was ritually forbidden for one district chief to take lands from another.

631 The district chiefs had ministers who helped them administer the districts. These ministers were descendants of the sons of the Moro-naba's ministers who accompanied the first district chief when he took up his fief. They had control of several villages and they channeled goods and services from the villages to the district heads. The hierarchy of command was also strictly observed on this level, and a village chief who had disputes with other village chiefs, or who had important cases to be judged, was required always to be accompanied by his minister when he
[681 visited the district chief. This official could put any man into stocks for
565] serious crimes, but he could authorize the death only of commoners. It must be pointed out, however, that in many cases the district chief usurped the rights of the Moro-naba, and had a troublesome noble secretly strangled. The district chief, like the Moro-naba, could not be deposed; he was often forced to commit suicide or met death by foul play or in open civil war. The people in the district reacted to an unjust ruler by leaving his territories.

The village chiefs held their fiefs directly from the district chiefs, and

5: Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1959
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composed of two major groups of communities," Fortes goes on to describe this pattern succinctly: 171

> On the one side are those that claim to be descendants of immigrants from parts of the country other than their present habitats. On the other side are communities that claim to be the autochthonous inhabitants. . . . Many of the immigrant communities claim descent from forbears of the Mampuru ruling stock. Though now wholly amalgamated with the alleged aboriginal inhabitants, they have certain ritual observances and a system of chieftainship similar to those of the Mamprusi. . . . The institution distinctive of the autochthonous communities is the office of "Custodian of the Earth." This ritual office, involving priestly functions in connection with the cult of the Earth, is found among many West African peoples from the Senegal to the mouth of the Niger. In the Voltaic region it is the exclusive prerogative of the autochthonous communities.[2] [793]

The inhabitants of the Yatenga at the time of the arrival of the Mossi were the Kurumankobe, or Fulse, as they are called by the Mossi. Their descendants recognize their indigenous origin but have become almost wholly acculturated to the Mossi. While most Mossi bear the sib name Wedraogo and maintain political control in the Yatenga, the descendants of the Kurumankobe usually have the sib name Savadogo and are excluded from the exercise of political authority. They have retained the custodianship of the earth, and the elders of their lineages and sibs are the Mossi's *Tenga Soba namba*, their "earth custodians," charged with propitiating the supernatural forces of nature. 173 563 614 [793]

POLITICAL AND SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

The present king of the Yatenga, the *Yatenga Naba*, is a lineal descendant of the first ruler, Naba Yadiga. The members of the lineage of the king are called "those who maintain themselves upon us" (*riim namba*). Directly subordinate to the authority of the Yatenga Naba are his four grand ministers, each of whom has authority over a particular province (*solum*) of the Yatenga.[3] 631 [644] [635]

The province over which each of the grand ministers presides as lord is divided up into a number of cantons (*tense*), each of which is ruled by a chief who is the central political authority both of the village in which he resides and of the villages within the canton. Like the province, the concept of the canton is not precisely territorial. Some villages may owe 631 634

[2] Meyer Fortes, *The Dynamics of Clanship among the Tallensi* (London: Oxford University Press, 1945), p. 6.

[3] These provinces refer not only to geographical areas of the kingdom but to particular categories of the population. For example, the *Balum Naba* has direct authority over the southern regions of the Yatenga and indirect authority over the cantons of Risiam and Zittenga, political entities which have never fully recognized the central authority of the *Yatenga Naba*. This same minister is also especially charged with maintaining liaison with certain of the more important earth custodians throughout the Yatenga.

645 1. The Kamsoro Naba, chief of the eunuchs and prime minister, a sort of minister of the interior.

2. The Ouidi Naba, chief of the cavalry.

3. The Gounga Naba, chief of the infantry.

4. The Laralé Naba, guardian of the tombs of the Moro Nabas.

5. The Baloum Naba, major-domo and chief of the soroné (pages). He might be said to rule over the interior of the palace.

Those five ministers ruled over the five Mossi provinces that
645 were administered directly: Kamsoro, Ouidi, Gounga, Laralé,
635 and Baloum. As we can see, those provinces had no proper names, no names of their own, and each took the name of the dignitary who governed it. Thus, they were not true geographical or ethnic provinces, but artificial districts lifted out of an area that was both too extensively parceled out and too homogeneous to yield spontaneously anything but villages and cantons.

644 In addition to those five ministers, among which the Kamsoro Naba and Baloum Naba seem to have been the most important, there were other dignitaries and servitors, as follows: /569/

1. The Tamsaba or Kinsaba, high chief of the bodyguards.
2. The Samandé Naba, chief of the bodyguards.
3. The Pouy Naba, chief of the fetisheers.
4. The Gandé Naba, high priest and sacrificer.
5. The Dapouy Naba, chief of the servitors.
6. The Kambo Naba, subchief of the servitors.
7. The Bindé Naba, chief of the Moro Naba's drummers.
8. The Ouidianga Naba, chief of the grooms.
9. The Mendo Naba, chief or representative of the butchers.
10. The Dara Haba, chief of the markets.
11. The Kamboué Naba, executioner.
12. Finally, the Yarsé Naba, chief or representative of the Yarsé settled among the Mossi. The prestige he enjoyed actually ranked him immediately beneath the five ministers and the Tamsaba.

"The various functions at the court of the Moro Naba," says
[554] Moulins, "are hereditary in the sense that their holders are always chosen by the sovereign among close relatives of the previous occupant in office.

643 669 of the electoral college was not accepted by the populace and disturbances occurred in spite of the proclamation of the king-elect. This was when Naba Sagha, the son of Naba Kom, was chosen. The people would have liked to see Kaoko, son of Naba Zombéré, nominated. Dissatisfied because the sovereign of their choice had not reached the throne, they would not acknowledge the man chosen by the college. The new monarch managed to take over the throne only after waging a bloody battle at the head of his followers against his unlucky rival.

645 635 The province chiefs who are ministers are nominated by the Moro Naba, who selects the man most deserving of the succession among the closest relatives of the chief to be replaced. Province chiefs enjoy considerable power in the administration of their provinces, they are surrounded with a large court, but they stand under the direct control of the Moro Naba.

635 It must be added that aside from the five provinces lying under the direct rule of the Moro Naba of Ouagadougou, there were four others (Boussouma and Béloussa to the northeast, Yako to the northwest, Tenkodogo to the southeast) that were mere vassal provinces and that actually enjoyed nearly complete autonomy prior to our occupation. Tenkodogo province was especially important.

The chiefs of these /latter/ provinces were true monarchs selected in the same fashion as the Moro Naba by the electoral college of their province. Once elected, they enjoyed all the prerogatives of sovereignty, nominating the canton chiefs and administering their provinces as they saw fit.

Their power was as absolute in their own sphere as that of the Moro Naba over the whole of his subject provinces, but they ac- [631] knowledged his sovereignty and offered him a gift as a token of their vassalage at the time when their powers were handed over to them.

634 624 /576/ Within the subject provinces, the canton chiefs were nominated by the Moro Naba on the basis of an introduction by the province chief. They were always selected among the closest relatives of the chief they were to replace, always descendants of Oubry, the first Moro Naba. They stood under the direct orders of the province chief, whom they had to use as an intermediary to communicate with the Moro Naba. It was their task to proceed with

634 the nomination of the village chiefs, who were always selected
621 from the family of the preceding chief.

Let us add that in principle, and all other things being equal,
428 it was the eldest son of the deceased chief who was supposed to suc-
631 ceed his father, and this applied to village chiefs as well as to canton chiefs, province chiefs, and the Moro Naba. This principle ran counter to the true patriarchal principle where the younger brother is always the natural and legitimate heir of the deceased brother. The requirements of a warlike existence had probably forced it upon the Mossi at the time of their conquest of the Dagomba and Mossi territories.

This principle of direct inheritance (rather than collateral inheritance) had been restricted, however, by the powers of higher authorities represented by canton chiefs vis-à-vis village chiefs, province chiefs vis-à-vis canton chiefs, the Moro Naba vis-à-vis the province chiefs, and the electoral college of the high dignitaries vis-à-vis the future Moro Naba. In short, the warriors' principle of inheritance from father to eldest son ruled among the Mossi in the power sphere, but had to give way to the exigencies of government whenever necessary.

631 Let us not believe that the third principle, namely the consent of the people involved, was altogether unknown among the Mossi (the consent of the village inhabitants in the case of a village chief, of the canton notables in the case of a canton chief, of the province notables in the case of a province chief, etc.) This third principle, however, was the least important, the least taken into account, the least actualized from a mere potential. /577/ Whenever it clashed with the others, it had to give way.

635 Let us add that the majority of Mossi chiefs were aided by rep-
634 resentatives called baloum.

"The province chiefs," says the Monographie, "the majority of
624 canton chiefs, and even the chiefs of a few important villages, are aided by one or several baloum or palace masters, whom they choose freely. These are sometimes former captives, but most frequently they are common natives or former sorone, and they are never nakomse. Their function is not hereditary. It grants them the right to substitute for the naba, to speak and act in his name."

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during a period of transition to effective independence. 008

The Mossi have the unique distinction of having preserved their 173
ethnic identity and political autonomy throughout all the vicissitudes of Sudanese history until conquered by the French on September 1, 1896. The origin of Mossi society is couched in mythological terms. According to their tradition they came from Dagomba in the Gold Coast (present day Ghana) sometime during the 11th or 12th century and moved northward towards the Niger River. During this migration they carved out three large kingdoms and many small principalities by conquering and absorbing some of the indigenous Ninisi and Foulse and Dogon populations, and by chasing the others into the cliffs of Bandiagara. In 1328, according to Es Sadi in the *Tarikh es Soudan*, the Mossi attacked, burned, and sacked Timbuktu, then held by Mali, and during the following century attacked Walata and Banku. They received their first setback by the Ali, and were severely beaten by Askia the Great, the usurper of the Songhoi throne, who lead a *jihad* against them in 1469. But their attacks into the Niger bend did not cease until the Moroccans became masters of Timbuktu sometime in the early 1590's. From that period until the French conquest, the Mossi remained relatively quiescent. They developed and maintained [105
an economy based on grain cultivation, livestock rearing, cotton pro- 631]
duction, and trade between the forest zones and the desert. Their political system crystallized into a loose confederacy of fairly autonomous kingdoms and principalities, sometimes tribute to the Moro Naba, the ruler of Wagadougou.

Wagadougou, the most important Mossi political entity, was like 631
the lesser kingdoms, pyramidal in political structure. At the top was 643
and still is the Moro Naba, a lineal descendant of Wedraogo, the Dagomba conquerer who founded the Mossi group and Moro Naba Wubri, the first ruler of the Wagadougou dynasty. Paying allegiance [635]
to him, were the princes who ruled such autonomous provinces as Yako, Boulsa, Mane, Riziam, and Boussouma. These princes were all sons or near relatives of the early Moro Nabas. Directly under the Moro [634]
Naba were district chiefs who were descended from the cadet branches of the ruling family. The villages within the district were in turn ruled [632]
by the chiefs of the indigenous populations. In many of the villages, [565]

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had done so with full permission of his father and in place of an unadventurous elder brother.

For example, the ruling family of the Boulsa province claimed that its ancestor, Naba Namende, was the eldest son of Mogho Naba Oubri and chose to become his father's *Kourita* (a young son of a deceased Mogho Naba chosen as his father's personal representative on earth) and go into exile rather than subject his younger brother to the ordeal. At the same time, Namende sought to retain royal power equal to that of his brother, the new Mogho Naba, by taking Oubri's royal amulets with him.[3]

Mane province, too, was founded by one Nyaseme, a son of Koudoumie, who felt that he should have been given the nam. When routed in battle by his elder brother Kouda, he moved into the region of Mane, where he defeated the indigenous Ninisi and ruled over them. The princes who broke away from Ouagadougou during Koudoumie's reign considered themselves theoretically equal to the supreme ruler. Thus, they took the title of Dim. By so doing, they dramatized their claim to equality of status, if not of power, with the Mogho Naba, and their determination to "submit only to God."[4]

The Mossi insist that the relationship between the Mogho Naba and the Dimdamba was similar to that between father and sons, since the Dimdamba were "really the sons of the Mogho Naba" and are said to have acted as such. This analogy is interesting in view of the Mossi traditional pattern of avoidance—combined with love and tolerance—between fathers and elder sons.[5] The Dimdamba were often allowed to act at variance with the Mogho Naba. Some of them shifted allegiance from kingdom to kingdom; others usurped the power of the Mogho Naba over smaller districts, or claimed that they had been given this power; and most of them regulated their own affairs with little interference from their sovereign. He, as "father," interfered on occasion in their internal affairs, demanding help from them and often chastising them if they failed to comply.

The Mogho Naba and the Dimdamba often appointed their younger sons or brothers as rulers (Kombemba) of the districts that made up their kingdoms and principalities. In this way, power and authority were kept within the royal clan and its lineages. Nevertheless, in keeping with the concept of corporate access to the nam, the rulers of these dependencies had traditions that served to reconcile their claims to kingly or princely status with their actual subordinate position. District founders, too, were often portrayed as eldest sons who had been cheated out of their patrimony or had voluntarily left it to establish new districts. In some cases, the legendary heroes were granted miraculous births as well.

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642 66

631 ture, offers what is probably the best analysis of power relations among the
628 important Mossi chiefs. In commenting upon the Mogho Naba's inability
174 to stop the war between Yako and Yatenga he asks, "How could it be
114 otherwise? With what sanctions could this king without an army back up his orders if he ventured to give any? . . . In short, when the Ouagadougou ruler speaks, he is sometimes obeyed. If he is, all is well; if he is not, all is still well. Everything remains as before."[18] Crozat was mistaken if he believed that the Mogho Naba did not have a fighting force. What he did not have was a standing army to exercise his power whenever he wished. When he was able to summon an army, he was effective; when he was not, he had little power over any territory but his own. Crozat, like Binger, gives a strange picture of the political relationship between the Mogho Naba and the other rulers. He tells us that in the Mossi political hierarchy, "after the ruler of Ouagadougou comes the ruler of Boussouma, then the Yatenga ruler, and then the ruler of Yako."[19] Yatenga was traditionally independent of Ouagadougou, whereas Boussouma and Yako were simply autonomous principalities dependent on the Mogho Naba. It is possible that Crozat mistook the relative power of these various political entities for a hierarchical relationship. It is also possible that at the time of his visit, the Dimdamba felt sufficiently powerful to ignore the traditional hierarchy as far as their political relationship with other rulers was concerned, and were simply acknowledging relative gradations of power.

643 Clearly, the sovereignty of the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou over the
642 independent kingdoms and autonomous principalities depended chiefly on
628 military might. The stronger a Mogho Naba was, the more actively he tried to control the internal administration of the autonomous principalities and to exercise police powers over them or on their behalf. However, most Mogho Nanamse were content to claim superiority or control over the independent kingdoms and refrained from meddling in their affairs.

643 Within the Mogho Naba's own kingdom, however, the situation was
635 different. Here, like other important Mossi rulers, he directed the admin-
634 istrative apparatus. For administrative purposes, the kingdom of Ouaga-
[642] dougou was divided into five large provinces (*weto*; sing. *weogho*; or
[161] *solem*, from *so*, "command"). Together they included some three hundred districts, in which there were over four thousand villages inhabited by some 860,000 persons.[20] (Not included here were districts and villages directly administered by the Mogho Naba.) The provinces were not compact physical entities, because their component units were scattered throughout the country. To be sure, some of the districts within a province were close together or even contiguous, but many others stood alongside districts be-

643 longing to other provinces. Provinces also differed with respect to the num- 635 ber of districts they included and the nature and size of these districts. Some 634 provinces were larger than others; some were wealthier; and some were more difficult to administer.

Each province was administered by a governor, who also functioned as 635 an important minister at the court of Ouagadougou. In the order of their 645 importance, these governors were the Ouidi Naba, the Larhalle Naba, the Gounga Naba, the Baloum Naba, and the Kamsaogho Naba. Smaller ad- [643] ministrative units (both districts and villages) were under the direct control of the Mogho Naba himself, or under the supervision of his relatives [565] or lesser officials. None of the governors were nobles or descendants of Ouedraogo and Oubri, but their positions were hereditary. According to 173 one tradition, the first provincial administrators were personal slaves of the 635 early Mossi rulers who were given the task of supervising the activities of 645 district chiefs of noble status. Another, more romantic tradition is that the man who became the first governor or Gounga Naba was a companion of Mogho Naba Oubri during the conquest of Ouagadougou. Later, the Gounga Naba presented one of his friends to Oubri with the request that the man take precedence over him, be made chief governor, and be given the title of Ouidi Naba. Oubri allegedly acceded to this request, and later granted another request of the Gounga Naba that a friend of the Ouidi Naba be named Larhalle Naba and be made the second governor. The Gounga Naba told the Mogho Naba that he preferred to see his friends happy and that he was content to be third minister. This tradition does not state when or how the Baloum Naba and the Kamsaogho Naba were named governors.[81]

With the exception of the Kamsaogho Naba, who was a eunuch and had 635 no heirs, the provincial governors headed administrative lineages. These 613 lineages provided administrators not only for Ouagadougou but also for the principalities and districts. Cheron states that the Ouidi Naba of Boulsa was "a descendant of the Ouidi Naba of Ouagadougou, a great dignitary who rules a province and sits among the electors of the Mogho Naba."[82] Many administrative lineages on the district level were descended from [634] officials sent down by the Mogho Naba with a new district chief in lieu of one deposed. When a chief was deposed, his administrators, like his relatives, lost their importance and their ties to Ouagadougou.

The Ouidi Naba, called *Mosi' ba* ("father of the Mossi") and *Sida soba* 645 ("master of the truth"), was the principal administrator and the prime minister. His titles undoubtedly sprang from his important role in the election of the Mogho Naba and from his position as caretaker of the king-

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645 dom during the interregnum.[33] The latter task was especially suited to a prime minister, since the Mossi regarded the interregnum as the most difficult period in their political life. The Ouidi Naba's administrative tasks were considered so important that he never went to war and was theoretically immune from punishment or execution by the Mogho Naba. This immunity was necessary, because the Mogho Naba had the right to execute anyone who brought him unwelcome news, and often did so. Since the Ouidi Naba announced good news as well as bad, it would have been folly to subject him to this rule. Some reports in the French colonial archives state that the Mogho Naba was expected to follow the Ouidi Naba's advice at all times, and could not veto any of his actions. These reports add, moreover, that if a Ouidi Naba considered a Mogho Naba dangerous for the welfare of the country, he could rightfully compel the ruler to kill himself. According to Lambert, one Ouidi Naba known as Baba forced Mogho Naba Karfo (ca. 1800) to commit suicide. It appears that aside from waging a long and unpopular war against Naba Djighima of Lalle, this Mogho Naba had seized the riches of his wealthy subjects for distribution among the poor. Moreover, he allegedly dispensed justice without making much distinction between nobles and commoners, which so displeased the nobles that they encouraged the Ouidi Naba to put Karfo to death. Baba sent the sovereign a poisoned arrow and a message consisting of a single word: *ki* (die). Karfo allegedly committed suicide that very night.[34]

645 643 [203] [195] [762]

Thus, it appears that under certain conditions the prime minister could impeach his "all-powerful" sovereign. We cannot assume, however, that all prime ministers were sufficiently powerful to control the Mogho Naba. Many Mogho Nanamse limited their Ouidi Naba to merely giving advice on affairs of state and insisted that he concern himself solely with his own province.

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The provinces administered by the five ministers were made up of smaller entities or districts. The districts in the provinces of the Ouidi Naba, the Larhalle Naba, and the Gounga Naba were ruled by the sons and other descendants of ancient Mogho Nanamse. The province controlled by the Kamsaogho Naba was more important. His districts were the wealthiest and among the most populous in the nation, and they brought the largest revenues to the Mogho Naba. The reason for this, of course, was that the Kamsaogho Naba was a eunuch and had no heirs; when he died, all his riches reverted to the Mogho Naba. The province controlled by the Baloum Naba was the most difficult to administer. Its districts were ruled by the sons of recent Mogho Nanamse who felt that as holders of the nam they were free to appropriate the goods of the population. The Baloum

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Naba was responsible for checking these depredations, but he had little coercive force since these nobles were infinitely superior to him in rank. 634 635 645

The Mogho Naba held his five ministers responsible for the administration of the districts within their provinces. Therefore they had to function as liaison officers between him and the district chiefs. Every morning, in order of precedence, the ministers reported the news they had received from their provinces since the previous day. At this time, the Mogho Naba also gave them messages for their districts. Later in the day, the ministers presented to the ruler those persons who had come from their provinces to the capital with special grievances, requests, or gifts. Delicate affairs of state were left for the evening, when they were discussed by the Mogho Naba, his minister or ministers, and other important persons.

From all reports, these administrative affairs kept both the ministers and the Mogho Naba quite busy. Binger, who could barely conceal his displeasure with Mogho Naba Sanum, gives this critical but otherwise highly illuminating view of the Mossi ruler's administrative activities: 643 644

> The duties of Naba Sanum are not too important. They consist of receiving visits throughout the day. In the morning, at about six o'clock, the drums announce that the ruler has arisen. When he has washed and refreshed himself with a meal, his captives and his wives go to his chamber to salute him. Then comes the turn of strangers, people of the neighborhood, petitioners, and others. They squat before the reception area until the ruler deigns to appear. When a large number of people have gathered, one of the [pages] goes to notify the ruler, who then arrives, sits on his cushion, and casts an amiable glance on the gathering while all present snap their fingers. As soon as Naba Sanum is seated, the petitioners and visitors hurry toward the monarch, throw themselves face down on the earth, and cover their heads with sand. Then each of them gets up and presents a gift of greater or lesser importance, in cowries or foodstuffs, according to what he wishes to ask. Then the [pages] come and say to the ruler, "A certain man has brought a sack of cowries, or a goat, or an ox. He desires to speak to you." The ruler thanks all of them with a *nif kende* (thanks) and retires into his chamber. It is well known that not one out of fifty petitioners was given the opportunity to have his wishes heard. Those who were heard had first spoken to an attendant who, after being paid in advance, had put off their case indefinitely by stating that it would be dealt with next. . . . Since the monarch's days are so well filled, one easily understands why he finds it difficult to deal effectively with the internal and external affairs of his kingdom; in any case, Mossi country is in a period of decadence that will only be aggravated with time.[28] [662]

The activities Binger considered frivolous were, on the contrary, important for the proper administration of the kingdom. The Mogho Naba had to receive petitions from the districts and transmit administrative orders to 643 [114]

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643 his people. We shall see that these orders ran the gamut from demands for soldiers, tribute, and labor, to requests for sacrifices to the ancestors or to local deities for the welfare of the country.

635 The provincial governors seldom visited the districts under their control
645 more than once or twice a year. They transmitted official orders to the dis-
[203] tricts through retainers. Some ministers such as the Gounga Naba kept the
[634] sons and servants of district chiefs in the capital to be used as messengers. The district chiefs, in turn, used their sons or servants to transmit messages to their provincial governors or through them to the Mogho Naba. The use of intermediaries in the administration served another purpose: it prevented face-to-face contact, with all its potential for personal animosities, from impairing relations between those whose status depended on their political office and those whose status was derived from membership in the royal lineage.

635 Relations between the provincial ministers and the district chiefs were
645 often charged with hostility and suspicion. The district chiefs regarded the
634 provincial ministers as representatives of the Mogho Naba, and thus as
578 persons to be obeyed. Simultaneously, however, they resented this control by social inferiors. They felt that since they were the descendants of Ouedraogo and Oubri, they should receive orders only from the Mogho Naba himself. Thus, while the district chiefs accepted orders from their provincial governors, they never permitted them to forget their social status or to interfere with the internal affairs of the districts. They felt that this was the prerogative of the royal lineage. Most provincial ministers accepted these restrictions on their activities, but nevertheless saw to it that the district chiefs surrendered the goods collected for the Mogho Naba and governed their people well. Sometime in the 1920's, a provincial administrator went to a district and insulted its chief for failing to deliver the quota of millet set by the French colonial government. The accusation of laziness and embezzlement so infuriated the district chief that he asked the provincial minister whether he had taken leave of his senses and forgotten to whom he was speaking. The person who reported this incident said that if the district chief had not been restrained, he would have killed the administrator on the spot.

Both provincial administrators and district chiefs could impose indirect sanctions on each other if the bounds of propriety were overstepped in either direction. A district chief harried by his minister could not complain directly to the Mogho Naba. But he could, and often did, show his dissatisfaction by lodging with another provincial minister when he went to the capital. He would then ask the official to accompany him when he went

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to render homage to the monarch. This attracted the attention of the Mogho 635
Naba, who investigated the grievance of the district chief. If the provincial 645
minister were found to be in serious error, he might be deposed and exe- 634
cuted. The Ouidi Naba was theoretically exempt from such punishment, 578
but it is doubtful that a strong monarch would have allowed even this official to cause trouble.

A provincial governor dissatisfied with a district chief under his charge could, under certain conditions, have him deposed and put to death. He achieved this by complaining to the monarch that the chief was either withholding tribute or misgoverning his people. In most cases, however, the minister could curb the district chief by hinting that his son would not receive a recommendation as successor to the nam of the district. This was usually enough to win the cooperation of the most recalcitrant chief, if only because his future status as the honored ancestor of a ruling local line would be jeopardized if he rebelled. These sanctions were thus sufficient to ensure satisfactory relations between the provincial ministers and their district chiefs, at least on the surface. This was to the advantage of both groups, [687]
since in the final analysis the failure of either to administer or rule well might result in the death penalty.

Many districts and villages in Ouagadougou were administered not by 634
the provincial ministers but by officials directly responsible to the Mogho 621
Naba. The districts in question were often ruled by close relatives of the Mogho Naba or by persons who had gained his good graces. The villages [567]
were often inhabited by slaves and governed by headmen who were themselves slaves. Like the other territories of the Mogho Naba, these districts and villages were not physically contiguous. The districts were mixed in with districts administered by the provincial ministers, and the villages stood within the territorial boundaries of district chiefs. Whenever the [203]
Mogho Naba wanted to communicate with a chief of such a village or district, he sent one of his retainers. The chiefs, in turn, used their own people to send messages and goods to Ouagadougou. The general administration of these districts and villages differed little from that of the territories administered by the provincial ministers. The main difference was that the Mogho Naba took a greater interest in their everyday affairs. This called for greater efficiency on the part of local officials; for they, like the other chiefs, faced the penalty of deposition and death for maladministration.

Of all Mossi officials, the district chiefs had the most difficult admini- 634
trative task. They were in direct contact with the people, and thus ran a greater risk of being charged with misgovernment. Countless district chiefs [687]
were deposed and executed because they had allegedly disobeyed or rebelled

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The district chief was relatively secure in the control of his territory as long as he maintained amicable relations with his immediate superiors and administered his district to their satisfaction. A less important but more constant source of concern was his relationship with neighboring chiefs. Many people who can remember the pre-conquest period say it was unsafe for a man to trespass into another district unless he was on an official mission from his chief to another chief. It appears that most of the fighting occurred over strayed cattle and stolen women, with constant raids and counter-raids. The cattle were eaten, and the women kept as wives. Captured men were sometimes sold as slaves, but more often were held for ransom. They were not kept as slaves, since the Mossi were forbidden to enslave other Mossi. Needless to say, this fighting was frowned upon by the Mogho Naba. Since all district chiefs believed in their common descent from Ouedraogo and Oubri and paid allegiance to the Mogho Naba, any fighting among them was not only a sin against the ancestors but also an act of disloyalty to the Mogho Naba. When (as was usually the case) this fighting was of short duration and few people were killed, the Mogho Naba took no official notice of it. But when it became serious, he sent the provincial administrator to stop the fighting and to summon the dissident elements to the capital for trial. The speed and severity with which the Mogho Naba dealt with quarrels within his own realm usually depended upon his strength. At some periods in Mossi history there was little internal disorder, because the rulers were strong; at other periods, under weak rulers, disorder practically amounted to internal chaos. During such periods, the Mossi were kept together only by the bonds of kinship and religion which united them against outsiders.

The district chief maintained tight control over his own territory and took an active part in its administration. In a district like Nobere, for example, the chief was aided both by an informal council and by an administrative apparatus similar to but smaller than the one at Ouagadougou. The council included men with whom the chief had grown up, members of his immediate family such as his brothers, and a few formal administrative personnel. These councillors visited him every day, brought him occasional gifts, received gifts from him in turn, and discussed informally all matters of interest. Yet, informal as this communication was, it enabled the district chief to know what was going on in his villages. Moreover, these councillors interceded for various villages and gave the chief valuable advice in administrative matters.

The formal administrative personnel of the district included a Ouidi Naba, a Baloum Naba, a Tansoba, and lesser officials with titles identical

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[Pre-World War II Period]

chiefs did not regain any of their traditional power. They remained auxiliaries of the administration. Taking Mogho Naba Kom as an example, one report states that this "simple, intelligent, compliant man served as news agent and made himself useful to the political administration" until the arrival of Hesling, when he took a livelier interest in the affairs of the colony.[84] Another source says of the same monarch:

> Free of the ancestral traditions that forbade him to leave his palace, and curious about progress and administration, he travels on all the roads and, under our supervision, busies himself with the settlement of administrative problems, to which he lends the weight of his authority. He makes the proposals for the nomination of province and district chiefs; he encourages his subjects to work and produce. Finally, he fulfills with the greatest dignity the representative functions that devolve upon him at his palace and in the official ceremonies.[85]

While it is true that the Mogho Naba made proposals for the nomination of chiefs, he was powerless to prevent their dismissal if they incurred the displeasure of the administration—a frequent occurrence during the Hesling period. For example, when the administration deposed Naba Boulga of Doulougou district for "incompetence" and placed him in "enforced residence" in a neighboring district, the French officials encouraged the election of Bila Kongo primarily because he was a former cercle guard. Bila Kongo was assassinated in 1924, and the Mogho Naba named Mahama Ouedraogo to take his place. This new chief soon had difficulties with the administration, however, and was deposed for exacting unauthorized taxes from his subjects and for abusing his authority. Mogho Naba Kom then appointed Ousmane Ouedraogo, but he was deposed for "incompetence" and exiled to Sao district.

On the other hand, Hesling made few attempts to change the traditional political and administrative structures of the Mossi. One contemporary source says:

> Since its inception the Government of the Upper Volta has made no changes or innovations, or at best very few, in this connection. The native administrative entities in the cercles of Ouagadougou, Ouahigouya, Kaya, and Fada-N'Gourma have remained the same as those which Haut-Sénégal et Niger transferred to the colony in 1919. . . . Only in 1922 did the cercle of Koudougou have its "Gurunsi" districts separated from its "Mossi" districts to form a new province, which was placed under the command of the Léo Naba, a chief of the same Gurunsi race. Tenkodogo, a cercle made up of a large number of small districts ruled by thoroughly inept chiefs, has been the object of a partial internal reorganization since the beginning of 1923. The number of its native *circonscriptions* [districts] has been reduced from 82 to 73.[86]

63/ certain amount of independence since they can communicate with the circle commanders with no intermediary other than the interpreter, an indispensable adjunct as long as the chiefs do not attend the [French] schools. On the other hand, the authority of the vassal chiefs still attached to the administrative district of Ouagadougou is, if not entirely lost, at least greatly diminished.

Indeed, their action is thwarted by that of the ministers, the province chiefs, from whom [52] they receive orders, sometimes falsified or amplified by ambitious intermediaries.

It must certainly be conceded that such a state of affairs may have -- it has had -- an unfortunate effect on the progress of these naba. This is an evil which should be remedied without delay.

636 645 565 The local administration at the very beginning made the serious error of failing to take into account the importance of the canton chiefs, most of whom (see the list in the appendix [not translated]) are descendants of the Mogho Naba. On the other hand, virtually all the ministers and other court officials, despite the respect one owes them and the privileges they enjoy, are of humble origin (see Chapter 4 for the origins of the Ouidi Naba and the Larrhallé Naba, for example).

The Petty Kings (Dima) in the Past and Today

643 631 As has been noted in the introductory chapter [not translated], some of the chiefs have gradually freed themselves from the authority of the Mogho Naba and have assumed the title of dima, that is, "king." These chiefs are the Boussouma Naba of the Kaya circle, the Konquizitenga Naba of the Kougoudou circle, the Yako Naba of the Kougoudou circle (Yako subdivision), and the Riziam Naba of the Ouahigouya circle.

These chiefs were, in a sense, independent "rulers," since the emperor's suzerainty over them was so weak [53] that they enjoyed almost complete independence. Some of them, notably the Boussouma Naba and the Yako Naba, have authority over canton chiefs whom they invest in the same way the emperor does.

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and chose to fight, and when defeated, fled to the Gold Coast (Ghana). From here he intrigued with the British against the French and even succeeded in having his brother poisoned for accepting the title of Moro Naba. It was only when the British accepted French sovereignty over Mossi country that Bokary accepted his deposition and permanent exile.

Once the traditional electors had chosen one of Bokary's younger relatives, Siguiri as Moro Naba, the Mossi people themselves quietly accepted French rule. Their behavior was in this respect similar to that of many indigenous populations with complex political institutions who had been conquered by the Europeans. In contrast, the neighboring Dogon, Gurunsi, and Lobi, whose political systems were very simple, and who had been constantly raided by the Mossi for slaves, kept on rebelling against French rule, and in some cases shot poisoned arrows at French tax collectors and labor recruiters as late as 1941. The only opposition which they offered the French was in 1910 when an attempt was made to reorganize the Mossi districts for administrative reasons. However, when the French changed their policy of direct administration to a form of indirect rule, the Mossi remained so peaceful that by 1922 there was only one administrator for every 60,000 inhabitants.

Moro Naba Kom who reigned from 1905 to 1942 skillfully preserved the power of the ruling dynasty during a period when the Mossi people were subjected to a rather severe forced labor regime. This was also a period during which the administration deposed chiefs who ran afoul of its wishes or policies. The political ability of this ruler is best exemplified by the order of succession that occurred in the Doulougou district. In 1895 Moro Naba Wobogo had appointed his own son as Doulougou chief in place of Koabga Wedraogo whom he had deposed and killed. However, when Wobogo fled from the French the next year, his son, the Doulougou chief, killed himself because he did not wish to follow his father into exile. The new Moro Naba Siguiri placed a son of the former district chief, Koabga Wodraogo, as chief of Doulougou. This chief died in 1906 and was replaced by a brother. Unfortunately this chief ran afoul of the French, was deposed and placed in "obligatory residence" in another district where he died in 1927. The Moro Naba then elected another son of ex-

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643 Moro Naba Wobogo as chief of Doulougou, but this chief was assas-
636 sinated. Thereafter the Moro Naba placed his own brother as chief
175 of Doulougou district only to have him deposed by the French in 1932
662 for abusing his power. Now the Moro Naba again turned to a descendant of Koabga Wedrago and named him chief, but the French also deposed and jailed this chief for incapacity. Finally in 1935, the Moro Naba named his own son, Etienne Kongo, as chief, and this man was still chief when I left the Mossi in 1957. The interesting feature of this succession is that the Moro Naba confined it to three specific families: his own, that of ex-Moro Naba Wobogo, and that of the ancient chiefly line of Doulougou. In no case did Moro Naba Kom attempt to elevate to chieftainship the son or relative of a man whom the French deposed. He named a chief from another one of the chiefly families, and when a member of this line was deposed, he quickly turned to another one. In this way, the Moro Naba never gave the French any cause for thinking that he disapproved of their action by placing as chief a relative of the man they had deposed. This type of succession was only possible because of the flexibility in the Mossi mode of chiefly succession. Furthermore, the district people readily accepted the chiefs appointed by the Moro Naba because he never deviated from their cultural expectations, or violated the accepted norm of succession.

636 A more serious attempt on the part of the French to influence the
643 traditional political organization of the Mossi came when they tried to enroll the sons of the Moro Naba and those of other chiefs in a special school in order to make these boys adjuncts in their administration. The eldest sons of the Moro Naba and of the officials around Wagadougou were all sent to school because they were well known to the French.
636 However, in the rural districts, the chiefs hesitated to send their eldest
643 sons to school. First of all, they regarded this plan as another form of
186 forced labor from which their sons might never return. And secondly,
662 because they also feared that if these youths did return as educated men, they would have been Christianized, and thereby would have been unable or unwilling to perform the important roles which chiefs had vis-a-vis the ancestors. To palliate the French the chiefs sent their youngest or motherless sons to schools, or in some cases substituted the sons

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of their former serfs and slaves who were theoretically also "their sons." 636

The sons of the chiefs and those boys of commoner, serf, and slave 643
origins who had gone to the mission schools became the first group 186
of educated Mossi. The educated commoners had no function in the 662
traditional political system and were readily absorbed by the local French bureaucracy. However, since these persons were not sufficient to fill the administration's need of literate Mossi, the sons of chiefs and even the carefully coached missionary catechists were encouraged to join the civil service. The result of this policy was that almost no literate Mossi were elected to district and village chieftainship before the end of the second world war.

The relatively rapid political development which came to French 636
Africa as a result of the Brazzaville Conference of 1944 and the after- 646
math of the war presented the traditional Mossi political hierarchy with a grave problem: "Who should represent the Mossi people in the new French assemblies and councils both in Africa and in metropolitan France?" There were three possibilities: They could be represented by educated foreign Africans; by the educated sons of Mossi chiefs whose loyalties were not known; or by the potentially hostile educated Mossi commoners. The first hint of the Moro Naba's policy was re- 636
vealed when the Africans were called upon to select delegates to send 646
to the French Constituent Assembly on October 21, 1945. Houphouet 666
[Boigny], who anticipated the determination of the Mossi to support 662
their own candidate, had vainly taken the precaution of sending an emissary to the Moro Naba prior to the September 8 meeting [which the Africans had called to plan strategy]. The Moro Naba proved unamenable to the suggestion that he support Houphouet's candidacy, and insisted on backing one of his own loyals vassals, Tenga Wedraogo or Baloum Naba.[8] This action showed clearly that the Mossi had planned to use educated chiefs who could also represent them in the assemblies. The flexible pattern of Mossi political succession enabled the Moro Naba and his advisers to meet this new contingency. In three districts, Manga, Sapone, and Kaya, the eldest sons of deceased chiefs were passed over, and their younger educated brothers were elected to the vacant chieftainships. There were some hard feelings over the appointment of Sapone, but the reason given was that the new chief was partially blind in one eye. I have no data for the reaction of

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636 646 666 662 the Kaya people to their new chief. However, in Manga the proposed election of a young chief over his four elder brothers did cause some concern and talk about Catholic machinations because the nominee was of that faith. But there was no overt opposition to him once he had been elected. His elder brother accepted the wishes of the Moro Naba with good graces even though he remains a rather tragic individual.

643 636 The differential treatment that the Manga Naba receives from the administration is obvious to everyone. Whereas the other district chiefs are still summarily summoned to the administrative center, and kept waiting, the Manga Naba sends his assistants to represent him. When the Governor of the Haute Volta came to Manga to make it an administrative subdivision, he was entertained by the Manga Naba while the neighboring district chiefs celebrated outside. It was the political power of this educated chief which was responsible for Manga becoming an administrative subdivision even though it is located several miles from the highway which runs between Wagadougou and Ghana. Furthermore, the population of the neighboring district all complain that Manga's population has gained a disproportionate share of all the services provided by the governmental agencies whose headquarters are there. The fears which the Manga people and the other Mossi have had over their chiefs being Catholic have not materialized in Manga. Of course, the Manga Naba does perform the rituals on the [769] day of the ancestral feasts. These rites are now being performed by his father's brother who has become the ritual head of the ruling lineage (and it is possible that this line may become the line which performs this task for the now "secular" chief). However, when the [797] chief celebrates the anniversary of his conversion to Catholicism at the mission, afterwards he holds court in his house where he receives from Catholics, Moslems, and pagans alike, the gifts he normally would have received in the feast of the ancestors.[8]

The most important function of such Mossi chiefs as the Manga Naba is to defend the interests of the Mossi people in the territorial assemblies and the French councils and assemblies while preserving the ruling tradition of the descendants of Wedraogo and Wubri. In his capacity as politician-chief, the Manga Naba joined a fellow Mossi of rather humble origin in sponsoring several bills in the Assembly of

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the French Union including one to build up the capital of Wagadougou. 643 At home he has taken an active interest in interdistrict politics, and has 636 acted as a liaison between his fellow traditional chiefs and the Mossi politicians of commoner origins. It goes without saying that he only supports those persons who are not opposed to the Moro Naba. As a matter of course, leading Mossi politicians fearing rebuffs from the district chiefs seldom visit any of the districts in the Manga subdivision unless they are accompanied and introduced by the Manga Naba. This kind of co-operation is what made it reasonable for a united block of political parties in Upper Volta, the Unified Democratic Party (Parti Democratique Unifie) to elect the late Moro Naba Sagha as it's honorary president before his death in 1956. At that time, the new party stressed the point that its action was guided by the fact that only the Mossi people had preserved their political identity throughout African history.[7]

The power of the traditional Mossi chiefs has been ably defended by their new politician-chiefs against those Africans who would relegate the institution of the chieftainship to ethnological musuems. The Manga Naba speaking before the Congress of Traditional Chiefs in Dakar in 1956 declared:

> Without wishing to direct any reproach to those who are demanding the abolition of traditional chieftainships, and who severely criticize institutions of whose value they are totally unaware, we ask them to beware of blaming the desert for the grain of sand which falls into the eye. We ask them not to compare the chieftainship instituted among them only a few years ago, chieftainship which perhaps has been imposed upon them, to ours which has existed for centuries.
>
> It is not our fault, if the manufactured chiefs among them have not known how to perform their tasks and have believed that to administer they had to resort to all sorts of extortions. One has never placed at the head of our villages, districts, provinces, or kingdoms persons who have come from elsewhere (former boys, stewards, cooks, or interpreters), because it could not be done. If in our country there are chiefs who are former civil servants [like the speaker, I must add] it is that they are persons who have inherited these positions according to custom, and in the places of their fathers, uncles, or brothers.

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643 636 We Mossi cannot say that the Europeans have introduced chieftainship among us; for we are old hands at it. Chieftainship has always existed among us, and we intend to conserve it in spite of anything one may say about it.

Who better than we chiefs can hope for a rapid evolution of our country? However, because of the pride we have in the organized society that we have known well before [185] French occupation, we wish this evolution to take place within our specific cultural pattern, to harmonize with, and to take into consideration the wisdom which has permitted us to conserve the integrity of our homeland until French occupation.

Without wishing to place ourselves against the demands of those who are wedded to an overthrow of local traditions, we endeavor to state our position clearly: Let everyone scratch whatever itches him.[8]

643 It is too early to predict what will be the fate of the traditional 178 Mossi chiefs. The factors which made for such weaknesses in their political system—hazardous interregnums and flexibility in succession—have certainly ceased to operate. But, as I have shown, by a curious coincidence, a form of succession which evolved to meet a particular set of circumstances served the Mossi in good stead during French occupation, and is now being adapted to serve the needs of a new political environment. This flexibility in succession may even provide the Mossi with a wide enough choice of candidates to preserve the traditional ruling lineages in the face of a changing political system. Furthermore, this flexibility in political succession appears to be more compatible and less in conflict with the principles of universal suffrage which have been introduced in this society to serve the needs of the developing parliamentary system.

The growing use of Mossi traditional chiefs as modern politicians has not precluded the opportunity of Mossi commoners to take part in the governmental organization of the territory in which their group resides. As a matter of fact, there are a number of commoners who [556] are well educated, and individually have held high administrative offices. However, despite a number of them who have been critical of the traditional ruling hierarchy, they have not succeeded in breaking the strong hold of the traditional ruling lineage on the people. Some commoners have even found it to their advantage to ally themselves

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with the Moro Naba and his chiefs. The Mossi commoner who became Minister of the Interior in the Mendes-France government received the treatment fitting to his rank from French officials in Africa, but he bowed humbly and paid homage to the Moro Naba when he visited Wagadougou. In return he still receives political support from the traditional Mossi hierarchy. Whether or not this man and the other Mossi politicians of commoner origin will continue to honor and respect the chiefs in order to obtain their support is not known. It is possible that this situation will change if the growing number of urban Mossi and some of their rural fellows attack the position of the chiefs. But for the foreseeable future it appears as though the traditional dynasty will remain in power, and may even extend its power at the expense of the other non-Mossi groups who are now members of the Voltaic Republic.

The apparent success of the ancient political dynasty of the Mossi people to adapt itself to the requirements of the modern world shows the ability of African institutions to adjust novelty with tradition. It confirms what the anthropologists have always known, that Africa was not a *tabla rasa* on which conquerors could easily impose their ideas and institutions. The cultures of Africa were meaningful to its peoples and when they could not be maintained, they were reinterpreted to meet new situations.[9] It is quite true that because of historical reasons the Mossi did not come into as intensive contact with Europeans as did their neighbors to the south, and that this is possibly why their institutions have persisted. However, the experience of Ghana should make us pause before accepting such a facile answer. A British type of Parliamentary system was imposed upon that country, but it is changing so rapidly that one wonders whether it should have been imposed in the first place. It is still too early to tell what the Ghanaian and other modern African governments will look like; but one might speculate that within the bounds set by the exigencies of the modern world, these governments may resemble the traditional African ones much more than those of their ephemeral conquerors.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. According to C. K. Meek, among the Jukun "The King's demise was and is kept a close secret, and is not, in fact revealed until some months afterwards, when the body is formally buried. Various reasons are assigned for this secrecy, such as that

567 now the circle of Tenkodogo constituted a reservoir (figuratively called lambagré, "cotton reserve") from which the warriors and vassals of the emperor brought back hundreds of young slaves. This was because Garango recognized no authority; it was dependent neither on the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou nor on the king of Tenkodogo. Tradition has it that the warriors of the Mossi chiefs were always surprising the people of Garango on market days. The memory of these raids is why, even today the markets at Garango
[366] are open only from six in the morning until noon.

The Mossi considered themselves to be free men, and no one,
[644] not even naba, had the [85] right to reduce a Moaga subject to slavery. The facial tattoos made it easy to distinguish the Moaga
[304] from foreigners.

Since there were few contacts between neighboring villages,
567 it was difficult even for highwaymen to sell young people from near-
674 by areas. This does not mean that there were not, all the same, captives of Mossi origin. Bandits rode, for instance, from Ouagadougou to Boussouma. They always carried large leather
[492] sacks tied to their saddles and into them thrust children and women who were taken by surprise while gathering fruit in the bush. Such captives were always sold far from their home villages. Naturally such practices were severely dealt with by the naba. Naba Wobgo drove the canton chief of Bilgotenga, Warongo, from his territory because he enslaved Mossi people. Warongo was forced to take refuge in Yatenga and returned home only after the coming of the French.

567 Some of the slaves brought back from Garango were kept by the emperor, and the rest were distributed among the warriors. Up to that time no one thought of using them for anything but field work and domestic labor.

It was Naba Baongo, the twenty-sixth successor of Oubri, who first thought of selling the slaves. He said: "Id kossi bazas kamba tib boude nan wa saΓ" (literally, "let us sell these slave dogs; perhaps, one day, [86] there will be no more of them"). It is as if the emperor had foreseen the suppression of slavery and the emancipation of the slaves.

Today one seldom encounters former Boussanga slaves. They have no doubt returned to their villages since the arrival of the
[304] French. Their descendants (house slaves, dogyiri) now wear the same facial tattoos as the Mossi.

567 them for kola nuts with the Achanti [Ashanti] or for loaves of salt
439 at Timbuktu. Although they were always transported by roundabout routes to prevent them from finding their way back to their homes, still some of them always managed to escape.

492 The naba used the young yemdado as soroné or grooms, and
567 they would often [93] take the young and attractive women (yempoksé) as wives.

641 The sale of free men. Neither the emperor of the Mossi nor
681 his vassals sold their subjects. Individuals who were regarded as dangerous were simply put to death unless they took refuge in a bangaré to avoid being executed, as has been noted above. Some were sent to the emperor to be made into eunuchs.

304 The facial tattoos worn by the Mossi clearly distinguished them
567 from neighboring peoples. However, if by accident or because of need a naba sold a free man and the latter was claimed by his rela-
689 tives, the chief was required to buy back the slave or to indemnify his family. We have described above how a canton chief was exiled by the emperor for having sold free Mossi.

583 Concealed selling of women and children. In the chapter on
562 marriage customs among the Mossi we shall show that a native Moaga did not demand a bride price because he did not want to feel that
567 he was selling his daughter. There is no doubt that this rule has exceptions. Indeed, we shall show that the failure to pay a debt, a bout of drunkenness, or a favor received might suffice to mortgage the future of a daughter, even though at the time she might be a small child and quite unaware of her fate. In any event, there would be no question of her expressing any opinion, since her wishes are never taken into account. During periods of famine -- which have been
[131] occurring almost [94] regularly for some years -- a small basket of millet is enough to make a father promise his daughter. In the same way, we regret to say, a great many girls are promised in exchange for trifling sums at the time the poll tax is paid.

567 Rights of slaves. Since he is regarded as an inferior being, the yemdaogo (slave) has no well-defined rights. He is required to perform all kinds of domestic work and must give unquestioning obedience to his master and the master's family. Besides his essential duties, however, he is permitted to do some farming for himself, practice some trade, or to raise cattle, with the proceeds constituting

586 The new husband of a woman who has been deserted does not [186] and cannot maintain any relations whatever with the former husband. In any event, the latter would never agree to see his successor, even though the divorce had been arranged with his consent. Besides, the new marriage is often contracted in another village.

The Question of Nationality Among the Mossi

641 In Mossi country the child takes the father's nationality, and any child born of a Moaga subject is himself a Moaga.

593 Any child, male or female, is under the authority, first, of his father and, above him, of the head of the family. A mother may never, under any circumstances, give her daughter in marriage.

641 If a Moaga woman happens to marry a foreigner, she does not acquire her husband's nationality. In the same way, a foreign girl (a Bambara or a Djerma, for example) does not lose her own nationality when she marries a Moaga. In the eyes of her husband's relatives, as well as the rest of the populace, she remains a foreigner, required to practice the customs of her husband but nevertheless a foreigner.

Thus, when a Moaga subject chooses to emigrate, the nationality of his children who remain in Mossi territory, whether minor or of age, does not ipso facto change.

A legitimate child takes on his father's nationality [187] even though the foreign-born father may have a Moaga as his wife.

Children born of a Moaga father and either a Moaga or foreign-born mother are Mossi.

As for illegitimate children, they take the mother's nationality [848] unless they are recognized, and this can be done only if the mother marries before the birth of the child.

If the child has not been legitimized until after his birth, he will sooner or later suffer from the omission, since his bastard origin will not long remain a secret.

Loss of nationality. The Mossi may lose their nationality only under the following two conditions.

1. When the Moaga subject has been expelled from his village for some serious crime, sent away by his relatives, and no longer regarded

641 as part of the family.

641 167 2. When a Moaga emigrates and settles permanently in a foreign country, either to take up trading or to study the precepts of Islam. He is forced to abandon his usual customs and to scorn ancestral ways, thus losing his personal status. If he wishes to embrace Islam, he changes his name, and if he should return to his native village, he would no longer try to be identified as a Moaga, whose customs and beliefs he no longer shares and whom he now regards as an inferior.

641 [188] As has been noted, the Moaga woman who marries a foreigner or the foreign woman who marries a Moaga subject retains her own nationality. Thus, marriage does not involve any loss of nationality. Customs may have been modified, but it is certain that even a Moaga woman who had lived abroad for a long time would soon resume the customs and practices of her own country. The same may be said of a foreign woman who might divorce her Moaga husband and return to her own land.

Naturalization. Since naturalization is unknown, children born in Mossi country of a foreign father and either a Moaga or a foreign mother remain foreign. Furthermore, since children take their father's nationality, a divorce will not affect their status.

II. Birth

842 176 Conception. The natives have no very well-defined idea of the process of conception. In their minds, the primary cause is God (Wenam), Master of Heaven and Earth, who gives children. It seems, however, that Wendé or Wenam forces the kinkirsi (spirits) to change into a human egg when the sperm is transmitted at the time of ejaculation.

The kinkirsi are invisible beings said to resemble small children and who live near certain houses or [189] groves. Only a few favored persons can see them.

In the same connection, it is believed that ancestors or certain deceased relatives are reincarnated.

843 Pregnancy. It is known that complete cessation of menstruation and the development and darkening of the breasts are the signs of

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The newly elected monarch secreted himself either at the Samande Nabila's home or elsewhere in the capital until daybreak. Tradition holds that if he were killed before being officially proclaimed before his subjects as the new ruler, the assassin could become Mogho Naba.[19] 643 [682]

The public ceremonies marking the official proclamation of the new ruler's accession to power took place on the following day. Early that morning, the monarch left his secret sleeping quarters and proceeded to the Koumbi Naba's house. Here he dressed in his white garments and mounted an old, unsaddled horse. The Baloum Naba then gave him a sack containing the namtibo, which he placed over his shoulder, and the Kalzi Naba led him out of the courtyard by the women's door. As the ruler's horse passed through the gate, his sister, the *Napoko* ("female ruler"), cried, "The sun has reappeared! The fire is relighted! The earth lives again!" A large crowd of musicians and warriors who had been alerted by the ministers shouted and danced as they accompanied the monarch, who circled the compound three times.[20] The ruler then reentered the compound, and this time he came out through the men's door as a sign of his full status. Here he was greeted by the Ouidi Naba, who proclaimed in a loud voice, "Mossi people, here is the Mogho Naba!" The warriors shouted and fired their muskets, and the musicians played. Then all the dignitaries and their followers solemnly prostrated themselves and paid homage and swore allegiance to their monarch. He, in turn, listened attentively when his ministers and some of the elder chiefs gave him advice about how the affairs of state should be conducted. After each declaration of loyalty or word of counsel, the people shouted in praise of their ruler. The Bendere Naba, accompanied by his musicians, then recited the ruler's genealogy, announced the pledges the new monarch had made to his people, and acclaimed him by his royal title, "Mogho Naba [X]." From this moment on, no child born during his reign could bear the ruler's name, and those persons who already bore it called themselves *Nab'yure* ("king's name"). 643 796 [645] [644] [551]

As the next stage in the ceremony the Mogho Naba, accompanied by his retinue, visited the various wards in the capital. In each he was proclaimed ruler and received the allegiance of both Mossi and non-Mossi ward chiefs. He visited the wards controlled by such men as the Loumbila Naba, the Sapone Naba, and the Ouagadougou Naba, and at each stop the ward chief declared, "People of [X], here is your new sovereign." Having been acknowledged by the leading chiefs of the capital, the new ruler then returned to his host's house. He emerged later in the day to visit the compound of a palace attendant, the Samande Nabila, where he sat under a 643 [621] [641] 643 641

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643 tree and again received oaths of allegiance from his chief ministers and
●641 other dignitaries. He then proceeded to the house of the Ouagadougou Naba (a direct descendant of the aboriginal Ninisi population), where he spent the night. The following morning, his host made sacrifices to his Ninisi ancestors in the name of the new ruler. Once again, the principal ministers and dignitaries appeared and joined in a ceremony of allegiance to their king, but this time they drank a potion prepared with the namtibo and swore that they hoped their ancestors would kill them if they should prove disloyal to the Mogho Naba.

The monarch then left the Ouagadougou Naba's compound, accompanied by the Tansoba and his warriors, and went to Paspanga (a ward in the capital whose name means "to add strength or power") to receive homage and allegiance from his assembled district chiefs. Along the way, he met symbolic opposition from the candidates he had defeated. However, these "hostile" forces were quickly routed by the Tansoba and his
[173] army. According to one Mossi tradition, when Sagha I (ca. 1787–1803) was elected Mogho Naba, his father's brother, Kaoko, tried to kill him during this mock battle. A vigorous civil war ensued, in which some district chiefs joined Kaoko. Sagha defeated and killed Kaoko and many of his supporters, and then swept through the country, executing rebellious district chiefs and placing his own sons in power.

At Paspanga the sovereign sat under a tree, surrounded by his ministers, warriors, and musicians. The onlookers formed two facing ranks in front of the sovereign, between which the district chiefs and their retinues walked up to pledge their allegiance. Those members of the royal sub-lineage who had been put to flight by the Tansoba's army returned and rendered homage to the monarch. Emissaries from the autonomous Mossi princes also greeted him.

When this ceremony was over, the Mogho Naba instructed his retainers to provide food and drink for his subjects and guests, and retired for the night. He remained at Paspanga for a week, during which time he greeted those persons who had not arrived in time for the first day's ceremony. On the seventh day, the monarch and a few courtiers and retainers retired to Dimvousse ("king's resting place"), where the district chiefs who had come to Ouagadougou for the installation brought him presents before returning home. The Mogho Naba remained at Dimvousse for a period ranging from several weeks to three years, depending on whether the earth-priests advised him to inhabit his predecessor's palace or build a new one.[21] When at last he ended his retreat, a large crowd of horsemen, warriors, and musicians accompanied him to his palace, where he set up his permanent court.

634 A man usually heard about his nomination through his "friends" (usu-
645 ally pages) long before the Baloum Naba had received instructions from the
[576] Ouidi Naba to summon him to the palace. Nevertheless, protocol demanded that he show proper humility and surprise at receiving the news, and that he be tardy in arriving at court. When he arrived, he was taken before the Ouidi Naba, who asked him three times, "Did your [father] say who should be his successor?" To this the nominee replied each time, "No, Naba! My [father] did not say who should replace him. You may appoint anyone you wish, even if he is a blind man or a leper." The Ouidi Naba then asked the candidate, "Which of the nakomce do the district people prefer?" The candidate's standard reply was, "That is the affair of the Mogho Naba. The people will accept anyone, even a blind man or a leper." This question was asked three times, and each time the candidate gave the same answer. The Ouidi Naba then declared, "The Mogho Naba has given you the nam of your [father]." Upon hearing these words, the Samande Kasma (head servant of the palace) came up to the new chief and removed his sheepskin mantle, while the samande-kamba took their heavy batons and chased away the other pretenders who, having heard about the election, had come to the palace. The samande-kamba then bore the new chief on their shoulders to the *tomboko* (a circle filled with sand in the courtyard). To the accompaniment of the royal airs played by musicians under the direction of the Bendere Naba, he took sand and poured it on his head as a sign of submission to the Mogho Naba. The ruler's wives and the courtiers surrounded the new chief, raised their hands over his head, and shouted their praises to the Mogho Naba. Then the new chief showed his respect for all the ministers
[576] and important men, in order of rank, by falling on his knees before them in the traditional Mossi salute. He then went to the Bendere Naba's shed, where he stood in the middle of the musicians and made a speech, the leitmotiv of which became his ruling title. The present chief of Nobere, whose name is Naba Boulga ("Well"), says that he made the following speech when he was nominated: "I am like a well; he who opens me will profit greatly." After the new chief had thus "taken a name," he came to the zongo to "drink the namtibo."

634 The drinking of the namtibo was the highlight of the election ceremony
[778] because it strengthened the link between the new chief and his ancestors and provided the ritual sanction for loyalty, obedience, and service to the Mogho Naba.[48] After the new chief had drunk the namtibo, he called upon the ancestors to kill him if he should ever betray the Mogho Naba or fail to
[641] render him homage and faithful service. This oath was the sign for the unsuccessful candidates to pledge their allegiance to the new chief. Then they

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hoisted him on their shoulders and proceeded to his host's house with loud acclaim. 634

The next morning, the new chief went to the palace to pay homage to the Mogho Naba and receive from him the traditional cowries, three kola nuts, and a small jar of millet water. In the days that followed, he celebrated his good fortune at the house of the important ministers and court officials. About a week later he returned to the palace, and the Baloum Naba's chief assistant invested him with the insignia of office: a white gown, a cushion, a pair of slippers, and, most important, a bonnet—the true symbol of chieftainship. Soon afterward, the new chief asked the Mogho Naba and his provincial minister for permission to return home. He was then provided with an escort to accompany him to his district.

The journey of a new chief to his district was marked by pomp and ceremony. The Nobere Naba stopped at such districts as Toudou and Twili, where he was entertained by the chiefs and presented with wives and other gifts. Some districts he would never be allowed to visit again, and others he had to bypass during his joyful journey. The reasons for these restrictions and prohibitions have long since been forgotten, but they were probably instituted to prevent conflicts among Kombemba and to prevent the new chief from coming into contact with the descendants of the Kouritadamba of former Mogho Nanamse. 634 574

As the new Nobere Naba neared his district, he was met by a welcoming committee of village chiefs, nobles, and commoners, who pledged allegiance to him and gave him wives, goods, clothing, money, grain, and livestock. He was then taken to the Soulougre Naba, a descendant of the aboriginal Ninisi, at whose hands he had to undergo another series of rites before he could set up his new compound and begin his rule. These ceremonies were rather simple in comparison with those at Ouagadougou, but they represented a ritual re-enactment of the Mossi conquest of the district, and reinforced the status relationship between the Mossi and the aboriginal population. At the end of seven days, the Kombere Naba gave the Soulougre Naba a black cow to be sacrificed at a pool called Yarega, a shrine of the ancient Ninisi on a tributary of the White Volta River. When this final rite was over, an enthusiastic crowd fetched the chief, and the young people of Soulougre village bore him aloft to his compound. A period of celebration now began during which all the heads of villages, lineages, and compounds paid homage and swore allegiance to their ruler. This ended when the chief summoned his escort from Ouagadougou and gave presents to those who wished to return there and wives and land to those who wished to settle in his district. 634 [641] [431] [788]

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The entire assembly saluted the district chief, and the official declared the 634
reason for his visit. Then the district chief sent a page for a chief's bonnet, 622
which he gave to a samande. This youth took the bonnet, came up to the kneeling candidates, and jokingly attempted to place it on the head of each one in turn while asking, "Whom did the *keema* ["dead person"; in this case, the dead chief] say should be chief?" When no one answered he gave up the game, ran to the successful candidate, and placed the bonnet on his head. As soon as this happened, all the unsuccessful candidates and men of the lineage ran away, followed by other samande-kamba, who waved big clubs and feigned violence if they should catch them. The men of the lineage soon returned while the new chief did homage and pledged allegiance [641] to the Kombere Naba by prostrating himself on the ground and by putting sand from the tomboko on his head. By this act the Tenga Naba became the district chief's subordinate and the lowest elected official in a ruling hierarchy that extended from the Mogho Naba down to the least village chief.

Once the oath-taking ceremony was over, the new chief's followers saluted the district chief, lifted their new leader onto their shoulders, and bore him triumphantly back to his village, shouting for joy. Here, in imitation [537] of his superiors, the new chief made a speech in which he ridiculed his competitors, reviewed his background, and made known his chiefly intentions. Here, too, the people seized upon some significant point in his speech as [651] an indication of the name "he had named." However, this name was seldom used, since people referred to him as the Naba of such-and-such village, e.g., Barkago Naba, and addressed him simply as "Naba." The village Tengsoba then performed propitiatory sacrifices to the Ninisi ancestors and to the local earth deity in the chief's name, and "gave him back the village" of which he had been the temporary caretaker. Only after these rites had been performed could the chief assume command of the village without incurring supernatural sanctions of the ancient Ninisi.

The typical village chief had no court. His compound was only slightly 622
larger than that of a village family. He had no officials, but some of his companions who assumed special duties similar to those of the Ouidi Naba and the Tansoba were sometimes jokingly referred to by these honorific titles. The village chief had neither soghondamba nor samande-kamba, and he permitted his wives to serve refreshments to his visitors. In general, everything was on a smaller scale than on the district level, including all ceremonies even to the burial of the village chief.

692 or because the litigants had rejected the village chief's verdict). The chief
634 then asked the plaintiff or "the people of X village" to state their case.
695 Someone usually spoke up, and after he had finished, the chief asked the defendant or defendants to do likewise. The litigants were then asked to produce reputable witnesses to support or refute the testimony.

[641] Witnesses had to be male, adult (to have begun to "push a beard"), and [562] free. Women and bondsmen had no legal personality before a Mossi court. [567] A slave was represented at court by his master, and a woman by her husband (and, by extension, by his patrilineage). In marital quarrels or property suits, a woman was usually represented by her patrilineage. Only if she alone could give the required evidence was she allowed in court. When [576] she was asked to testify, she knelt, and spoke in a high, thin, soft voice, thus showing extreme respect to the chief and proper deference to the court. Except for these restrictions, any person could be called in as a witness. [578] Tempers often ran fairly high among the litigants' relatives and friends while they gave their testimony and argued the case, but their physical separation and their respect for the chief prevented abuse and fighting. Anyone who started a fight in court was liable to a beating by the samandekamba.

[674] The Mossi believed that most people, given sufficient reason, would commit any crime. Thus they examined the litigants carefully and at great length in an attempt to "get behind" the offense. The district chief interrogated the litigants, but the dignity of the court prevented him from arguing with them. As a matter of fact, most of the cross-examination was done by the litigants themselves. From time to time, the village administrator and the chief's confidants asked brief, direct questions. When a woman was involved, the chief's Pughtiema usually listened to the proceedings from behind a wall and questioned her. When all the evidence was in, the chief either rendered his verdict without delay or retired to the zongo to confer with his confidants and the village administrator. He took the latter course whenever he felt that further discussion was necessary or that false testimony was confusing the issue. Not until he felt that he had the facts well in hand did he return to the court to render his verdict.

The Mossi did not use ordeals in court except in the "chastity trials" conducted by the Pwe Naba. Some litigants called upon the ancestors to kill them if they were not telling the truth; others went to earth shrines and drank an infusion of dust to show that they were not afraid of the spirits who wrought vengeance on the guilty. However, such acts were never carried out in court and thus were of no use to the chief.

The following case, tried in a district court in 1956, illustrates the Mossi

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permission to use weogho in the district, and new hamlets arose in this way. A Yirisoba who could not obtain adequate land on which to grow food for his family left the district and sought land elsewhere, especially among his mother's patrilineage. However, village and district chiefs always tried to prevent this because they did not like to lose any of their subjects.

As director of economic activities in the household, the Yirisoba supervised the agricultural labor of his charges. It was he who directed the work of his wives, his sons, and his sons' wives, and supervised the care of the family herd. He provided the cotton, which was carded and spun by the women and woven by the men. It was also his task to ensure adequate clothing for the members of his household; and he sold excess commodities in order to buy salt, kola nuts, bracelets, foreign clothes, and other products imported from the forest and desert zones. In each case, the Yirisoba had to balance judiciously the requirements of his household against his obligations to the community and to the political hierarchy. He had to prevent economic rivalry among his sons, and especially among his sons' wives. He had to make sure that every married member of the household had sufficient time to provide goods and services for his own family, and that foodstuffs were distributed equitably among the wives. Finally, he had to use the resources of the household to build and maintain the nexus of socioeconomic relationships that provided wives for the male members of the household, and to meet his obligations to the political hierarchy.

The Yirisoba also had social and economic responsibilities toward the other members of his babissi and boodoo. He furnished labor and goods to needy lineage members and to non-relatives with whom he had marriage arrangements. Since much of this help was given on the basis of ultimate reciprocity, very little loss was involved. However, the relationship between commoner and noble families was quite different. In theory, the nobles had no claims on the property of the commoners; but in practice, they did claim such rights. Furthermore, commoner lineages often gave the nobles many more wives than the nobles returned. This inequality enabled the nobles to receive more goods and services from their marriage partners among the commoners than they gave in return. The nobles thus took advantage of their power as possessors of the nam, but even membership in the royal lineage did not exempt them from supporting the governmental services at all levels. This duty was incumbent upon every Moaga.

The Mossi people could not refuse to support their political organization, but often complained about having to do so. Many Mossi felt that their rulers were greedy and avaricious and received too many gifts. Some Mossi held that if the chiefs were not placated with goods and services,

they might take the lives and property of their subjects. There are many stories of avaricious chiefs who convicted wealthy commoners of curious crimes and had them executed or banished in order to seize their wealth. There are also stories of twin tricksters, Raogo, a boy, and Poko, a girl, two *enfants terribles* who always succeeded in outwitting and killing avaricious chiefs. When I asked a district chief to explain the significance of the Raogo and Poko tales, he replied that they were "meaningless stories told by children who do not understand how difficult it is for a chief to command and protect men." This remark prompted one of his officials to add that in olden days, people gladly supported the Mogho Naba and his chiefs in order to be safe from their enemies—a statement which might have been made by a conscientious government official anywhere. However, whether commoners or chiefs, all Mossi believed that men must have government, and that without it chaos would prevail.

The Mossi political organization was subject to severe strains. For one thing, its economic basis was not very strong. True, goods and services were channeled to the capital from the smallest areas, and in time this permitted the establishment of increasingly complex governmental structures. Nevertheless, the Mossi fiscal system was not highly developed, and much of the revenue the rulers received came to them in the form of legal fees and gifts. Moreover, most of these revenues were irregular in nature.

Despite this fact, the Mossi believed that their rulers were wealthy—and there can be no doubt that they were wealthier than their subjects. Nevertheless, visiting Europeans found little difference between the standard of living of the chiefs and that of the people. Binger would have us believe that Mogho Naba Sanum bragged so much about imaginary wealth, including 10,000 horses, that he "managed to convince himself of it."[26] Binger's subsequent remarks about Sanum's resources are illuminating even if somewhat biased, because they throw light on the economic basis of the Ouagadougou kingdom. He tells us that Sanum's revenues were

> not well regulated. He lives on gifts and offerings which people have brought him with the aim of obtaining justice, or to demand something from him. He sometimes sends a band of men to capture slaves in Kipirsi country, or at least supports such ventures. But these revenues, like those of all the black chiefs, are not sufficient, because these men are prone to squander their resources. As a result, these sovereigns are compelled to use expedients in order to procure horses and other commodities. Thus, like the rulers of Tieba, Pegue, and Kong, Naba Sanum still has captives in villages devoted to agriculture, but he does not take proper care of these villages. If he does not receive enough millet in the form of gifts, he must sell his slaves in order to procure it.[27]

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they were kept informed of almost everything that occurred in the districts by their secretaries and "friends" (usually war veterans who visited the administrative headquarters on business).

Not all the district chiefs accepted with equanimity their gradual loss of power. Many of them had accepted at face value the joyful refrain of the elite and the politicians that the "land was cooling"—*i.e.*, that the rigors of colonialism were over. They welcomed the liberal laws of 1946, and believed that they would regain the power lost by their fathers. Thus, they were among the most surprised persons in the Upper Volta when the easing of colonial rule brought with it more French supervision rather than less. From the standpoint of political power, most district chiefs had been better off in the days of the "locusts." At least the locusts came and went, whereas progressive government slowly but irrevocably eroded their power. [648]*

175* 622 554 178

The village chiefs, as those members of the traditional Mossi hierarchy who had the closest contact with the people, felt the postwar administrative changes much more keenly than the other chiefs. They found it increasingly difficult to deal with war veterans, adherents of formal religions, and other people who had lost respect for traditional values and practices.[28] Whereas few Mossi would have refused to visit or to pay allegiance to the Mogho Naba or to their district chief, with whom they had little personal contact, many did refuse to have political relationships with those village chiefs whom they neither liked nor respected.

175* 178 648* 641 ●

The rural Mossi, upon whom the position of the Mogho Naba and his chiefs ultimately depended, did not fully comprehend the postwar changes in the Upper Volta, and were initially willing to look to their chiefs for guidance. Most of them referred to their newly won civil rights in the French Union by what they called *soguem minga*, which may be translated as "possession of one's self," "liberty," or "liberation." To the majority of them, however, the reforms meant chiefly the end of forced labor. They were more than willing to leave the new political affairs to their chiefs, despite the assurance of the elite that they could now participate in the governmental processes. Dupont wrote in a romantic vein about the introduction of political reforms in the Upper Volta:

> Can we truly speak of a change for the better in this country? Yes! A page has been turned, the last in a chapter. A new chapter has just begun, and I was the amazed witness of this beginning. . . . One must say, in France's favor, that she did not merely engage in beautiful speeches, but that her liberating decrees deeply modified the life of the natives. Gone is the export of laborers; gone are the uncontrolled prestations; gone the requisitions of produce which the peasants had to buy elsewhere at a higher price and resell at a loss; gone the sales in which the collective price given to the district

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chief became ridiculously smaller when distributed among the producers; gone the tolls along the roads. Henceforth, all such services will be duly and individually compensated.

Even in the most remote and least accessible villages, people speak of liberty. The old women who go to the pools for water sit down for a moment near their jars in order to talk about it. Even bush fires spread less rapidly than this news.[27]

Very few Mossi in the rural areas were qualified to vote in the first post-war elections, and those who were qualified voted for the candidates preferred by the chiefs. However, as the franchise was progressively broadened after 1951, and many more Mossi and non-Mossi politicians traveled through the rural areas, the politicians favored by the chiefs found that they had to campaign to maintain their position. Both the chiefs and their politicians resented this. One visitor to the Upper Volta reports: "A highly educated Mossi of the Upper Volta told me, 'Citizenship has unsettled and ruined the people. Everyone has become his own master, and believes himself free to do whatever he wishes.'"[28] Opposition to the chiefs and their friends came from the Moslems, who supported their co-religionists for office, and from a growing group of young Mossi who resented the power of the chiefs. In 1955 one such group in Yatenga, composed of mission-educated youths, war veterans, and former workers, broke away from the Union Voltaïque and formed the Mouvement Démocratique Voltaïque (MDV) under the joint leadership of Gérard Ouédraogo and Michel Dorange, a Frenchman, who had been a captain in the colonial army. The partisans of the MDV often came into violent conflict with the supporters of the chiefs, but the organization itself was not banned by the administration, because its members included many veterans, and because Dorange was one of its leaders.

The appearance of the anti-chief MDV was symptomatic of the problems which the Mossi chiefs were to encounter as the people became free to elect their own representatives. For one thing, the people could now censure their chiefs by voting for their opponents, who appealed to them in terms of release from traditional prestations. But more important, even those Mossi politicians who were still friendly to the chiefs and depended on their support for election were becoming increasingly autonomous. The chiefs were operating in one power structure, the politicians in another and more important one. In Dakar, in Paris, and in the Palace of Versailles (where the Assembly of the French Union met) Mossi politicians dealt not only with local African problems but with problems the chiefs knew nothing about. As the politicians grew skillful at the game of metropolitan

634 among the other ministers. The rich and important cantons
645 were entrusted to the Kamsaogo Naba, chief eunuch. This was
[839] because the emperor wanted to be sure that he would recover the fortune left by this minister at his death. Since the latter was merely the guardian of the king's wives, he had no legitimate heirs. The eunuch appointed to replace him had to establish his own personal fortunes. Only the horses or women which the late minister might have given [49] during his lifetime to persons in his section were left with their owners. [Ed., Mossi villages are
[621] divided into sections (Fr., quartier), which are really hamlets containing several households or compounds. These sections are indigenous, not colonial subdivisions.]

Powers of the Ministers over the Vassal Chiefs of the Mogho Naba

634 It would be a mistake to think that before the French occu-
645 pation the ministers had any great authority over the canton chief.
642 Actually, the ministers' role, as has been pointed out, was to act as intermediaries between the emperor and the canton chiefs. They could not, however, under any right or pretext, intervene in canton affairs, since the kombéré was the only lord in the area whose command had been conferred upon him as an appanage by the Mogho Naba.

That is why it has been possible for canton chiefs who were dissatisfied with the minister under whose rule they found themselves to report, henceforth, to another minister. Furthermore, the Mogho Naba saw no objection to this. The Mossi expression,
[638] Gansobend'ka sambiri n'tont vigri yé ("hospitality is not like kinship; you can evade it") amply illustrates the accuracy of the foregoing. If it is further noted that before the French occupation
[651] the naba came to Ouagadougou only once a year to pay their respects to the emperor and to bring him annual tribute, one will readily understand the insignificance of the ministers' authority over them.

This does not mean, of course, that it was possible to [50] do without any intermediaries, but rather that it was possible to choose them freely. In any case, one of the incentives to

634 submission was based solely on the fact that although the em-
645 peror named new canton chiefs, he was too remote to know any-
642 thing about the children of deceased naba, so, in order to make sure during his own lifetime that his eldest son would succeed him, the kombéré affected some respect toward the emperor's ministers and made gifts to the principal dignitaries at Ouagadougou.

Present situation. It is my belief that the present political
631 and administrative reorganization, which dates back about eighteen
648 years (1912), has taken no account whatsoever of the existing hierarchy of ministers in the distribution of territorial control. Thus, it has come about that a given minister has to pass through numerous villages which are under the authority of another minister in order to reach his own administrative area. In addition, if one examines the situation closely, it seems that the sole aim of the administration ["administration" always refers to French administration] at that time was to reward certain young and capable ministers at the expense of those who were too old.

In point of fact, however, one must go back to 1908 to find the causes of such a state of disorganization. At that time the late Larrhallé Naba, Pawitraogo, a province chief, was sent off on a mission to Koudougou, and his vacated office had to be filled. Later on the emperor dismissed the Kamsogho Naba [51] and replaced him with an "incompetent," so the local administration decided to entrust the province to a more qualified minister.

It would be highly desirable if a new reorganization were put into effect which would 1) progressively eliminate certain insignificant cantons by combining them into larger units; 2) gather the so-called independent villages into cantons; and 3) grant to province chiefs identical material rewards. This last can only be achieved by an equitable allotment of the cantons. The French administration has granted equal salaries to all province chiefs and, as a consequence, has established an equality which did not formerly exist. Three of these officials are now educated men; they enjoy equal consideration, have the same needs, and alike perform valuable services. They should all be accorded equal advantages if jealousy and discontent are to be avoided.

631 Finally, to return to the kombemba, it should be stated that the vassals of the Mogho Naba at Koudougou and Kaya enjoy a

701 Formerly, when war broke out and he was summoned to [117]
554 Ouagadougou, the Tansoba [sic] assembled the principal ministers
645 of the Mogho Naba at the home of his host, and his word was final.

Aside from this special case, he might call upon a minister, but then a servitor always brought along the cushion on which he would sit until the minister receives him in his private quarters. He was never received in public.

Once inside, the Tansoba occupied the best seat, and the minister got down on the floor and performed the Mossi salute.

In sum, the Tansoba was held in higher esteem than any other personage at the king's court.

(b) At the present time. Today ministers often visit each other.
645 Since they have rapid means of transportation at their disposal, they
574 regularly go about without escorts. Most often their visits are made in order to deal with matters of general interest.

When a minister calls upon another minister, he keeps his cap
645 on and neither removes his shoes nor performs the kantissé. They
576 are equals. This equality has been established by the local admin-
574 istration which has granted the same rights and salary to all. The minister shakes hands with his colleague and takes a seat. He is served copious quantities of beer, and then he takes his leave.

In spite of assertions to the contrary, the Mossi empire is po-
● 642 litically disorganized. This accounts for the errors committed by the local administration and the [118] mistakes held against the ministers of the Mogho Naba who for a long time were granted too much power.

The Origin of Mossi Chiefdom (Legend), or the Way the Peulh, the Yarcé, and the Blacksmiths Salute Mossi Chiefs

713 The Peulh, the Yarcé, and, to a certain extent, the black-
184 smiths do not perform the kantissé (Mossi salute). They have a dif-
576 ferent way of saluting naba. A curious legend explains this phenomenon. However bizarre it may seem, it is not lacking in interest, and we shall tell it just as it was handed down to us.

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643 The war minister replied, "That will be against tradition and justice to the dead ruler. Do not fear; I am here with my arms to see that your decision is respected" (this was not always an empty gesture, for one man, Wobogo, forced a Ouidi-naba to elect him).[3] When the lesser ministers were notified as to the choice of the new sovereign they said: "You have expressed our will and the will of all the people." The elector then secretly called the new ruler and, taking off the man's goat's skin (the symbol of those seeking the chieftainship) told him: "I am giving you the house of your father and of your grandfather." Then the ministers and the chief musician escorted the new ruler before his subjects, and the Ouidi-naba shouted: "Here is he who has the power of life and death over you." The following day all the members of the ruling lineage and sublineages swore not to betray their new ruler. The minister of war then swore, in the name of all the people, to protect the new ruler with his life if the need ever arose. Next followed ceremonies during which a descendant of the original Ninisi inhabitants made sacrifices, in the name of the new sovereign, to his ancient ancestors.

643 642 [778] In analyzing the power of the Moro-naba we must take into consideration the concept of *nam* which is described as "power" or "the force of God." It is this force of God that enables one man to control another, and gives the sovereign the power of life and death over his subjects. Moreover, once a man had "eaten the *nam*," the Mossi constitution had no provisions for deposing him. The Mossi generally claim that only one of their thirty-three rulers was ever deposed, and that he was the ruler who ran away from the French. However, there is another tradition that states that one sovereign, Karfo, was forced to commit suicide by his Ouidi-naba.

According to the Mossi constitution, the Moro-naba had complete control over the lands of the state, and was the only one empowered to distribute these lands as fiefs. Any attack on the lands of the state was an attack on the Moro-naba and thus a cause for war. The Moro-naba alone had the right to make war, and in this he was helped by his vassals, the district chiefs, and their armies. He was court of final appeal for crimes that carried the death penalty and, theoretically, only he had the right to condemn a nobleman to death.

651 686 Every year the district chiefs under the command of their ministers went to the capital to pay allegiance to the Moro-naba with gifts of cows, goats, sheep, cowries, and grain. The animals were presents from the stock of the district chiefs, but the cowries and grain were collected from the villagers of the districts. The people of the several wards in the capital furnished labor for the cultivation of the sovereign's fields and for the upkeep of his houses. The Moro-naba received substantial sums of money from taxes on the sale of slaves or other merchandise in the Ouagadougou market. He also received presents of slaves when his vassals raided the surrounding countries. If a district chief failed to fulfill all of these

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The village chiefs held their fiefs directly from the district chiefs, and were enfeoffed through the principle of primogeniture on the advice of 631
district chiefs' ministers. They paid homage, and owed fealty, to their 622
district chiefs, although part of their tribute always was sent to the Moro-naba. In the event of war they followed their district chief when he went to serve the Moro-naba. The village chiefs received presents from the heads of the families in the village and settled any local court cases in their villages. They did not have the right, however, either to put men into stocks or to have them executed. They were aided in the administration of the villages by the heads of families.

Almost every Mossi village had sections in which the nobles lived. As 565
stated above, these people were the relatives or descendants of the dis- 631
trict heads, and they lived in a semiparasitic condition upon the commoners in the village. Most of them owned horses and, in addition to furnishing the cavalry for the district chief's contingent during war, they raided and attacked caravans passing through the country. The nobles were subject to the control of the village chiefs, and it was not unusual for them to be under the jurisdiction of chiefs who were members of the commoner class. In such cases the district chiefs had a great deal of difficulty resolving the problems between their vassals and their kinsmen. The nobles could steal the wives and daughters of the commoners, but if a commoner tried to steal the wife of a noble he and the woman were both killed. Whenever a noble threatened to disrupt the life of a district he was secretly strangled by the district chief's men.

The above is a brief account of the origin and structure of the Mossi 631
political system. Most of the myths regarding the origin of this system 692
seem to suggest that here is a classic conquest state, but one neither 174
founded by Caucasians nor extraordinarily influenced by them. The Mossi 114
state is homogeneous in race, language, and culture, a feature not found in most of the other Sudanic states. This fact is not interesting in itself until we note that the Mossi share many cultural traits with the Voltaic peoples. Marc believes that this cultural homogeneity is the result of the Mossi invasion of the area during which they imposed their languages and customs on the indigenous populations. Apparently not believing the traditions about the Dagomba origin of the Mossi, he explains the fact that such non-Mossi groups as the Nankana, Wala, and Dagari speak Mossi dialects as proof that the Mossi were politically more powerful in ancient times, but "the feudal regime disappeared little by little.... The Mossi language was kept; [it is] the only actual witness of the ancient power of the Mossi" (author's translation).[5] We know, however, that the Mossi were still encroaching on the territories of their neighbors when the French arrived in 1896.[6]

Rattray believes that the inhabitants of Mamprussi, Dagomba, and Mossi territories are the same now as they were "centuries before the ancestors of those who are now their rulers appeared on the scene."[7] He states that

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631 642 174 114 these conquerors even adopted the language and culture of the indigenous populations, but introduced an "administrative machinery" that welded scattered local groups into loose confederacies without affecting in any great degree the inner life of these groups.[8] Rattray's hypothesis appears to explain quite adequately the reasons for the cultural homogeneity of the Mossi and the other Voltaic peoples. It also conforms to what we know from recent historical times of the organizing and conquering abilities of such figures as Samory and El Hadj Omar. These men carved out veritable empires in this area in remarkably short periods. However, we need not accept Rattray's hypothesis that foreigners were the ones who instituted "administrative machinery" among the Mossi. It is highly possible that the Mossi state might have been the result of internal Voltaic development when one Dagomba lineage established its hegemony over scattered local people in this area. There is some evidence here that the Mossi state had many of the features of the widespread Negro pattern of political structure so common to the other Sudanic states, and this fits in very well with what Professor Greenberg reports about the basic African nature of these states.[9]

631 642 121 171 It is clear that the Mossi state was a complex entity and many persons cannot describe it without calling it feudal.[10] However, the question of feudalism itself is a vexing one, and many scholars limit the use of this term to describe the political system of medieval France and possibly Japan. In fact, not many people would admit the presence of feudal states in Africa although some, such as S. F. Nadel, who worked among the Nupe, call the Sudanic states feudal and talk about fiefs and vassalage. It is now generally agreed that feudalism, despite its other aspects, is basically a form of government. Stephenson gives the classic features of a feudal state as: (1) fief-holding with vassalage; (2) homage and fealty; (3) mutual obligations between lords and vassals; (4) military service from the vassals; (5) inheritance of fiefs by heirs of vassals, usually by primogeniture; (6) subinfeudation; (7) attendance at court; and (8) wardship and marriage arrangements by which fiefs could be held in trust for minors and, in the case of female heirs, husbands who can render homage for them.[11]

An examination of the Mossi political system in terms of the first six characteristics of feudalism shows that this system conforms very well to the specifications for a feudal system. The Mossi did not have an elaborate court structure on the European model and, since only mature males could inherit fiefs, no arrangements for wardships and marriages were necessary. Furthermore, I do not think that these two traits are necessary for feudalism, and they can be considered as cultural content that need not be present in all social processes with similar functions.

Mossi-like societies present a special problem to political theorists because of the importance of kinship in their political systems. Coulborn[12] strongly insists that "A feudal society... is based on contract. It is not

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based on kinship." He contrasts the Geselschaft feudal system with the tribal Gemeinschaft, and recognizes the possible transition from Gemeinschaft relationships to Geselschaft relationships in the evolution of culture. However, this admission places Coulborn on the horns of a dilemma as he does not accept feudalism as a step in the evolution of the state, but as a form of government that develops after the breakdown of a state and is used for state restoration. He states that "The place of feudalism in the rise of civilized societies is not yet complete, but we must pause to notice the profound importance of the substitution of something different for kinship relations."[13] We see from the Mossi data that they used kin bonds instead of warrior-band bonds as the basis for delimiting the persons chosen for government. The warrior-band members were rewarded with hereditary administrative positions. It must be emphasized, however, that despite kinship bonds, it was the loyalty of a man that determined whether his heirs received his fief.... These new vassals were required to renew pledges of allegiance to a ruler sometimes very remotely related. It must be borne in mind that kinship does play a part in political systems that range from feudalism to twentieth century Western democracy.

We cannot fail to observe that it was in regard to the society of the Chou period in China, one similar to that of the Mossi, that Coulborn was compelled to withhold judgment as to the nature of its political system. Shang society seemed to have had many of the tribal characteristics of the people found in the pre-Mossi Voltaic area. Chou had to face the problems of ancestor veneration associated with the tribal lands, and used some of the same techniques as the Mossi. Coulborn found many of these features "foreign to a tribal society" and finally decided to "leave open the decision as to whether Chou China developed a feudal system or a system of city states as its first enduring polity."[14]

In conclusion I shall say that the political system of the Mossi had definite feudal characteristics. These feudal characteristics did not come as a result of the breakdown of a pre-existing state, but served as techniques for building a state from small scattered groups. I should certainly like to keep open the whole question of feudalism, especially as it applies to the question of the origin of the pristine state, until more comparative data from Africa can shed additional light on this important subject.

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664 554 "The wives of the Moro Haba never give birth or raise their children at his own place of residence, but only in one of the eunuch villages. In theory they do not stand above the wives of common natives, but in practice they enjoy high consideration among the Mossi, like all that is connected with the Moro Naba.

"The sons of the sovereign, once weaned, are entrusted to a province or canton chief who is put in charge of their education. [582] At the age of ten they are married and settled in a village, where they live, surrounded by a court, but without necessarily being given a territorial command.

"The prerogatives attached to the title of Moro Naba's son are vast as long as the monarch is alive. They grant the right to steal, to loot, and even to kill with impunity.

"Upon the death of the Moro Naba, his sons become mere nakomsé (sons of chiefs) whose position nevertheless remains quite privileged.

643 644 554 "One of the sons of the deceased sovereign, however, is granted special privileges. At the death of the Moro Naba, the latter's wives elect one of his young sons who adopts his name and, so to speak, perpetuates him. He has no /territorial/ command, but he is surrounded by a court similar to that of the Moro Naba, he enjoys respect almost equal to that paid to the latter, and he is a sacred figure. No one has the right to contradict him or to harm him.

644 554 "As for the Moro Naba's daughters, although in principle they do not stand above ordinary Mossi girls, in practice they are treated with the strictest respect by all natives. Once married, they have almost complete freedom of action vis-à-vis their husband, and they often take advantage of this to lead a most unruly existence.

643 766 "When the Moro Naba's death has been verified, his burial is carried out and followed by the funeral ceremonies, which are held in the same fashion as for a common native, with the sole difference /574/ that they have more brilliance and that the sacrifices are more sizable.

642 672 "For the whole duration of the interregnum, the land falls into a state of complete anarchy. Everyone has the right to kill, loot, and steal as he pleases. Convicts who are serving sentence are fully pardoned and set free.

565 171 were, conquerors. This represents a higher level of social complexity and development, in short, a higher level of civilization.

The nakomsé were and still are gathered in separate villages 565 scattered throughout the territory. They did the same work as 556 other Mossi, but prior to the French occupation they also practiced looting, which was their chief expedient, their major source of wealth. True, this manner of acquiring wealth had lent them improvident habits. Nowadays they own no more small livestock than the Mossi populace, and only a little more large livestock, while they should own much more in view of their former opportunities to acquire wealth. They immediately "ate up" what they looted, however, counting on future pillage. Nowadays they no longer loot, but they seem to have preserved their former improvident habits. It should be noted, however, that they own considerably more horses than other Mossi.

565 I saw at Pirigui, in January, 1909, one of those villages of 142 chiefs' sons. There were altogether 841 inhabitants of the nobility with their families and their slaves. Those people would be interesting to study from the point of view of physical anthropology. There were faces totally at variance with Negro faces, truly distinguished physiognomies, oriental and semitic casts of features, in short, enough /579/ to strike an observer even though unfamiliar with physical anthropology.

642 The superstructure of the Mossi state thus consisted of a supreme chief, a carefully established hierarchy of chiefs, and a class of nobles to whom important privileges were granted.

651 As for taxes, "every year at the end of the winter season, prior to our occupation," says Moulins, "the canton chiefs had to come, greet the Moro Naba, and offer him certain gifts (beeves, sheep, millet) which constituted a sort of fixed due." This was the common tax levied after each harvest.

"In addition, whenever the sovereign needed anything whatever, he requested the province chiefs to secure it for him. They summoned the canton chiefs, who in turn gathered the village chiefs, who secured through the soukala chiefs the animals, grain, cowries, and other items requested.

[431] "Finally, whenever a native, chief or common man, came to the Moro Naba, he offered a present to the latter.

161 How many inhabitants did this Mossi empire number, with its careful centralization, its hierarchy of chiefs, and its class of nobles, at the time of the French occupation (1896)?

In 1909 the census yielded 861,700 souls in the circle of Ouagadougou itself and 273,000 in the Tenkodogo residency, or a total of 1,135,000 inhabitants. From this figure, however, we must deduct the independent Boussansé (99,000 in the Tenkodogo residency) and also the people of the Kipirsi (Ouagadougou circle; in theory they are ruled by the Mossi, in fact they are independent; they may be estimated at 40,000). This leaves, for the five subject provinces and the four vassal provinces, about 996,000 inhabitants. It may thus be said that the Moro Naba of Ouagadougou ruled over a population of about a million men.

161 563 Out of this million men, there were roughly /583/ 850,000 Mossi, 40,000 Boussansé, 69,000 Yarsé, 32,000 Foulbé, 5,000 Silmi-Mossi, 1,000 Songhay (in the northern part of the Ouagadougou circle), and 1,000 Haoussa scattered here and there in the same fashion as the Yarsé and Foulbé.

161 We already know that this Ouagadougou empire did not make up the whole Mossi population. There stood alongside it two other kingdoms which must formerly have been subject to Ouagadougou but which had gained their independence long before our occupation. One of them, Yatenga, with Ouahigouya as its capital, was located to the northwest of the Ouagadougou empire. The other one, Gourma, with Fada N'Gourma as its capital, was located to the east. Those two kingdoms may have added up between them to a population of 450,000 in which the Mossi element predominated, with Habé and Samo elements in the Ouahigouya circle, and Gourmanké elements in the circle of Fada N'Gourma.

In short, about a million and a half inhabitants were divided among the Mossi kingdoms in the bend of the Niger, with one million in the most important of those kingdoms, that of Ouagadougou.

161 642 648 The population of the Mossi was, and still is, extraordinarily dense as compared with the over-all population density of West Africa. Among the Mossi, indeed, there are about 25 inhabitants per square kilometer, while in French Guinea, for example, there is an average of 6 inhabitants per square kilometer. This stems

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from the fact that the Mossi empire was centralized. The internal struggles which often occur among primitive Blacks (Bobo, Gourounsi, Boussansé, Kipirsi, etc.) between villages, quarters, or even soukala, did not exist among the Mossi. Internal peace and security prevailed. In addition, the same centralized power that prevented Negro anarchy also prevented the territory from being devastated by chance conquerors, founders of empires. Thus, while the Djermabé Songhay devastated Gourounsi territory, a land of independent villages or small cantons, and cast it into a kingdom by force of arms, they did not dare attack their Mossi neighbors for fear of the Moro Naba's ten thousand horsemen. /583/ Thus, both internal and external peace were insured thanks to a centralized power. Hence, the impression made by the territory on various travelers between the time of Barth's trip (he did not see Mossi itself, but followed its northern border) and the French occupation. "Mossi territory is regarded as being untouchable," says Marc (op. cit., p. 28). "No doubt, at that time (the time of Barth's trip), as Crozat verified forty years later, one was struck on entering Mossi territory by the complete safety in which the people lived, while everywhere else war and the hunt for slaves devastated the villages. And one mentioned enviously the Mossi peasants who walked singly to their fields, hoe on shoulder, while everywhere else the head of the family had to keep his weapons at hand night and day."

Marc attributes this safety to the Mossi fear of fetishes. He thus looks far afield for an obvious explanation. The Gourounsi, too, had fetishes, and yet the Djermabé did not spare them and treated them more or less as cranes would treat frogs. The Mossi were spared because they lived in a centralized and thus powerful empire, in spite of Marc's assertion that this power was nil since it could not resist Lt. Voulet's handful of riflemen. Indeed, it was nil against power displayed in European fashion, just as Achanti /Ashanti/ power was nil against British strength, and Toucouleur power could not prevail against the forces of Col. Archinard. This Mossi power was nevertheless considerable within its own sphere, that is to say, in West Africa and against other Blacks. It sufficed to give the Mossi an advantage over the Kipirsi, Gourounsi, Boussansé, etc. It sufficed to prevent Toucouleur or Djermabé attack.

● 442 In short, the Mossi enjoyed the benefits of a strong and cen-
648 tralized government, established no doubt in former times at the price of large-scale massacres and exterminations. And this is what makes us ponder and what is, so to speak, the reverse side of the Black conquerors' coin. It is probable that Oubry, the founder of the Mossi empire in /584/ the twelfth century, was in his time something of a Samory or a Rabah. He probably managed to establish his empire only through the crushing, pillage, and massacre of a tremendous number of small, independent Black villages or small Lélésé, Nounouma, Boussansé, and Habé cantons. Yet in the nineteenth century, on the soil of this empire established at such a price, there were 25 inhabitants per square kilometer, while among the neighboring Gourounsi who have retained their freedom there are the 5 or 6 inhabitants per square kilometer common to West Africa as a whole. In addition, while the Gourounsi were prey to the Songhay, the Habé to the Toucouleur, and the Malinké and Bambara to Samory, our Mossi lived in safety. They had less independence and anarchistic freedom, but they had internal peace and external security. They had to obey their chiefs, but they knew no domestic struggles, no crushing by foreign pillagers. In short, the Mossi had entered upon the course of orderly government, and represented a superior state of civilization.

771 Now, we need only furnish a few details on Mossi religion. The majority of the Mossi population has remained fetishistic.
771 We saw above that the Mossi, at the time of their great ex-
648 pansion in the bend of the Niger, came into conflict with a Moslemized empire, the Mali empire, and that the second Songhay empire also led redoutable religious crusades against the Mossi. Under such circumstances the Mossi were bound to regard Islam as a foe. It is true that later the destruction of the second Songhay empire by the Moroccans (1591) brought peace to the Mossi on their northern frontier and freed them from the fear of Moslem invasion. The Yarsé settled in turn among the Mossi, and owing to their intelligence, industry, and capacity for trade, created for themselves a well-respected position. This was bound to incline the Mossi favorably toward Islam, or at least to lessen their prejudices and

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II

SOVEREIGNTY, KINSHIP, AND COMMUNITY

THE Mossi restricted all important positions within the traditional political organization to persons who claimed lineal descent from Ouedraogo and Oubri, the ancient founders of the Mossi nation. Thus all the *Mogho Nanamse, Dimdamba, Kombemba,* and *Tense Nanamse*—the heads of kingdoms, principalities, districts, and villages, respectively—claimed descent in the royal line. The bond of kinship among all important Mossi rulers was symbolized by membership in the lion clan (*Gegema*) and affiliated clans or *boodoo* founded by ancient members of the ruling families. Although the Mossi respected clan totems, they did not stress clan organization. They were more interested in membership in the segmentary lineages within the clans.[1] Yet not all Mossi groups stressed lineage affiliation. This was of supreme importance only for nobles whose membership in particular segments of ruling lineages gave them access to the *nam*—the power first possessed by the ancient founders, which is described by the Mossi as "that force of God which enables one man to control another." So important was the corporate possession of the nam by a ruling lineage that with few exceptions, membership in such a lineage gave a Moaga noble status.[2] Lineage segmentation gave some segments easier access to the nam, however, and resulting conflicts over sovereignty gave rise to the various Mossi kingdoms, principalities, and even districts.

Every Mossi ruling line attempted to legitimize its position by claiming the most direct descent from Ouedraogo and Oubri. The descendants of the founder of a local ruling lineage would claim that he had been an elder son deprived of his patrimony by unscrupulous younger brothers, or an elder son disqualified by a physical handicap from receiving the nam. Some ruling lineages even claimed that their founders had been elder sons who had voluntarily forsaken the problems of government and established new districts for themselves. Whenever tradition recounted that a younger son had indeed founded a kingdom or district, it was invariably said that he

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had done so with full permission of his father and in place of an unadventurous elder brother.

For example, the ruling family of the Boulsa province claimed that its ancestor, Naba Namende, was the eldest son of Mogho Naba Oubri and chose to become his father's *Kourita* (a young son of a deceased Mogho Naba chosen as his father's personal representative on earth) and go into exile rather than subject his younger brother to the ordeal. At the same time, Namende sought to retain royal power equal to that of his brother, the new Mogho Naba, by taking Oubri's royal amulets with him.[3]

Mane province, too, was founded by one Nyaseme, a son of Koudoumie, who felt that he should have been given the nam. When routed in battle by his elder brother Kouda, he moved into the region of Mane, where he defeated the indigenous Ninisi and ruled over them. The princes who broke away from Ouagadougou during Koudoumie's reign considered themselves theoretically equal to the supreme ruler. Thus, they took the title of Dim. By so doing, they dramatized their claim to equality of status, if not of power, with the Mogho Naba, and their determination to "submit only to God."[4]

The Mossi insist that the relationship between the Mogho Naba and the Dimdamba was similar to that between father and sons, since the Dimdamba were "really the sons of the Mogho Naba" and are said to have acted as such. This analogy is interesting in view of the Mossi traditional pattern of avoidance—combined with love and tolerance—between fathers and elder sons.[5] The Dimdamba were often allowed to act at variance with the Mogho Naba. Some of them shifted allegiance from kingdom to kingdom; others usurped the power of the Mogho Naba over smaller districts, or claimed that they had been given this power; and most of them regulated their own affairs with little interference from their sovereign. He, as "father," interfered on occasion in their internal affairs, demanding help from them and often chastising them if they failed to comply.

The Mogho Naba and the Dimdamba often appointed their younger sons or brothers as rulers (Kombemba) of the districts that made up their kingdoms and principalities. In this way, power and authority were kept within the royal clan and its lineages. Nevertheless, in keeping with the concept of corporate access to the nam, the rulers of these dependencies had traditions that served to reconcile their claims to kingly or princely status with their actual subordinate position. District founders, too, were often portrayed as eldest sons who had been cheated out of their patrimony or had voluntarily left it to establish new districts. In some cases, the legendary heroes were granted miraculous births as well.

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III

KINGSHIP AND CHIEFSHIP

MOSSI TRADITIONAL government revolved around the Nanamse, as all Mossi 642
rulers were called. Sometimes the title was also given on an honorific basis to commoners, serfs, or slaves who performed specific duties for a Mogho Naba or a district chief; but the only true Nanamse were persons who traced their descent from Ouedraogo and Oubri.

The heads of the four Mossi kingdoms—the Mogho Naba of Ouaga- 642
dougou, the Yatenga Naba, the Tenkodogo Naba, and the Fada-N'Gourma 643
Naba—were supreme in their own realms, but there was considerable rivalry among them throughout Mossi history.[1] In terms of closeness of descent from the nation's founders, the Tenkodogo Naba came first, the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou second, and the Yatenga Naba third. The Naba of Fada-N'Gourma was outside the hierarchy. As time passed, the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou gradually became more powerful than the other rulers, even though he recognized the seniority of Tenkodogo and, as we shall see, had difficulty exercising his seniority and supremacy over the Yatenga. Because he was the pre-eminent Mossi ruler, the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou set the general pattern of kingship and chiefship. The heads of the other kingdoms, principalities, districts, and villages tried to approximate the pomp and ceremony of the Ouagadougou court as closely as their resources and etiquette permitted. The pattern of chiefship among the Mossi in general thus differed little from that of the Ouagadougou kingdom.

The Mossi of Ouagadougou believed that their Mogho Naba was supe- 643
rior to all other kings. They believed that his realm was the largest in the world, and that no other king was so rich and powerful. He was so awe-inspiring, so "like the sun," that no one dared to look upon his face. It was [516]
forbidden to touch his hand, or speak to him from any but a kneeling position with the forehead touching the ground. People were expected to hesi- [576]
tate before pronouncing his name, and no other person was allowed to bear

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Some of the more important rulers, such as the heads of the Yatenga, Fada-N'Gourma, and Tenkodogo kingdoms, were chosen by local electoral colleges, which did not have to seek the approval of the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou or notify him of the choices made. Their authority, as we have seen, was supported by claims of equality with Ouagadougou. But, with the exception of the Tenkodogo ruler, they were actually farther removed from the main line of royal descent than the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou. The autonomous Dimdamba had their own electoral colleges, which in some cases were made up of men related to the electoral-college members of the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou. (For example, the Ouidi Naba of Boulsa was descended from the Ouidi Naba of Ouagadougou.) These local colleges were usually free to nominate and elect the Dimdamba without consulting the Mogho Naba, even though he ratified many nominations.[35] According to Cheron, "The nomination of the Dim of Boulsa did not become definitive until ratified by the Mogho Naba, who was always consulted by the electors and who could impose his own candidate."[36] This was not always true; nor did every Mogho Naba refrain from interfering in the internal affairs of autonomous provinces. Whether he did or not often depended on his strength relative to that of the Dimdamba. Once the Dimdamba had been chosen, however, they were installed with ceremonies similar to those for the Ouagadougou ruler.

Like their superiors, the Dimdamba had the authority to delegate power to the Kombemba and Tense Nanamse. Some of them also had the right to grant the nam to a fellow Dim. The Boussouma Naba, for instance, could grant it to the Mane Naba.[37] Mogho Nanamse granted such rights to Dimdamba for various reasons. They might do so on the basis of their relative strength vis-à-vis a particular Dim at a particular time, or because they admired him or were closely related to him. However, a Dim exercised sovereignty in his own name, regardless of whether he was subordinate to the Mogho Naba or to another Dim. In contrast, the district chiefs and the village chiefs exercised sovereignty on behalf of the Mogho Naba or of the Dim in whose territory they resided.

The installation ceremonies for the two lower orders of chiefs were not too different from those for the Mogho Nanamse and Dimdamba. For example, when the Nobere district chief died, the provincial minister for Nobere—in this case the Gounga Naba—reported his death to the Mogho Naba. The ruler then summoned one of the deceased chief's officials to the capital to report on the qualifications of all potential candidates for the nam. The provincial minister, in turn, dispatched one of his own representatives to the district to verify the reports he had received. It was only when this

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IV

ADMINISTRATION

642 631 [825] [769] THE Mossi always looked to their rulers, especially to the Mogho Nanamse, the Dimdamba, and the Kombemba, to determine administrative policies and to pronounce on all relevant issues. All foreigners who requested information were told, "You must talk to the chief."[1] The Mossi believed that men cannot live without chiefs, and insisted that even animals have chiefs. Mossi rulers were therefore expected to ensure internal tranquillity in times of peace and to protect their subjects and territories in times of war. The expectation that they would also provide impartial judgment is best expressed by a dictum of the Ouagadougou people: "The truth is at Ouagadougou." Finally, Mossi chiefs were held responsible for inducing the ancestors to bring health and prosperity to their subjects. To this end, they supervised and participated in rituals to their ancestors and encouraged the people in every territory, district, village, and compound to do likewise. In return, the people paid homage and allegiance to their chiefs and provided them with the goods and services they needed to support the administrative process.

643 631 642 175 The nature of the administrative relationship between the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou, the rulers of Yatenga, Fada-N'Gourma, and Tenkodogo, and the autonomous Dimdamba was not clear to the early visitors to Mossi country, and remains a matter of controversy. Two conflicting principles were always at work: seniority with respect to the nam and claims of close descent from Ouedraogo and Oubri on the one hand, and relative political strength or military power on the other. The stronger a ruler, the less he deferred to his lineal seniors. He might even claim a supremacy over them that came close to a claim of seniority. When Barth visited the Sudan in 1853, he was told that the Mossi country was "split into a number of small principalities, almost totally independent of each other, and paying only slight homage to the principality of Woghododogo." Barth reports, however, that the Dim of Boussouma was "probably the most powerful of the Mossi chiefs at the . . . time, especially with regard to cavalry." Similarly,

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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Binger reports that the Mossi were divided into "a number of confederacies, more or less independent of each other, whose chiefs were vassals of Naba Sanum, the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou." He found, nevertheless, that although the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou claimed suzerainty over the Yatenga, he could not grant travelers permission to enter that territory.[2]

Crozat, who visited the Mossi in 1890, just two years after Binger, was told repeatedly that the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou had the right to control the destinies of all chiefs who claimed descent from Ouedraogo and Oubri. But he, too, found that the principalities were self-governing and mutually independent, and were united only by the weak bond that attached them all to Ouagadougou. Noting the claims of the people he encountered that Ouagadougou was still supreme, Crozat suggests that "time and circumstances have weakened this sovereignty. The ruler of Ouagadougou is regarded by the other chiefs merely as their senior and the head of their family. They seldom obey him, yet they recognize that in certain cases he has the right to give them orders." Like many Frenchmen who came after him, Crozat concludes, "One will be struck, as I have been, by this political organization in which the waning of the central authority has led to a true feudal system closely reminiscent of a certain period in our own history."[3]

Delafosse tells us that "the authority of the emperor [of Ouagadougou] does not seem to have been ignored within his borders except in very rare instances. The vassal kings, who were brothers, sons, or nephews of the emperor, usually obeyed him. In any case, the emperor did not interfere with the administration [of their territories], and required nothing from them except the payment of taxes and the raising of contingents for any expeditions he might have to organize against outside enemies (the emperors of Mali, Gao, or Segou; Moroccan pashas; etc.). In return, the emperor granted his support to those of his vassals who were unable to command the obedience of their subjects or tributaries."[4]

It appears, then, that although the independent rulers and autonomous princes sometimes recognized the supremacy (if not the seniority) of the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou, they were relatively free to rule as they wished. As possessors of the nam, they claimed and exercised the right to administer the peoples of their realms. It appears, furthermore, that the rulers of Ouagadougou seldom challenged the independence of their confreres in Yatenga, although the latter often disturbed them. For example, when Yatenga Naba Kango (ca. 1754-89) sacked and burned the Ouagadougou district of Yako for sheltering refugees from a civil war, the Mogho Naba did not come to the aid of the Yako Naba. Nor did he take offense when this chief, in order to regain his seat, was compelled to switch his

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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642 allegiance to the Yatenga. The situation lasted throughout Kango's reign, 631 "but as soon as he died, the Yako chiefs ceased to pay allegiance to his suc- 628 cessors and paid homage, as before, to the court of Ouagadougou."[5] About 175 fifty years later, Yako district was again captured by a Yatenga ruler, Naba Tougouri (ca. 1806–22), who deposed the reigning chief and installed his own. The deposed chief fled to his sovereign at Ouagadougou for aid and safety. He did receive sanctuary and eventually reconquered his principality, but there is no evidence that the Mogho Naba gave him any active support. Similarly, when another Yatenga ruler, Naba Totebaldbo (ca. 1834–50), once more conquered Yako as well as Riziam, another dependency of Ouagadougou, the Mogho Naba took no action. It was only after Totebaldbo's death that Riziam seceded from Yatenga and returned its allegiance to Ouagadougou. Yako did not submit to Ouagadougou's rule until some time later, when it revolted against Totebaldbo's son.[6] Similarly, both Mogho Naba Sanum and Mogho Naba Wobogo had difficulty in controlling a civil war between Yatenga and Yako which they felt would cause European travelers to think ill of the Mossi. During Crozat's visit to Ouagadougou, Mogho Naba Wobogo asked the combatants to cease fighting, but his efforts failed because "Yako would have liked to obey, but Yatenga refused."[7]

The Ouagadougou rulers experienced less difficulty with the weaker Tenkodogo kingdom, which seldom attacked their vassals or territories. Instead, the rulers of Tenkodogo often sought the aid of the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou against their enemies or rebellious subjects. For example, when the Busansi subjects of the Tenkodogo Naba rebelled against him in the fifteenth century, Mogho Naba Dawoema of Ouagadougou went to his aid and defeated them.[8] However, when Korongo, the Tenkodogo Naba, asked Mogho Naba Wobogo to help him defeat a contestant for the nam in 1894, the Ouagadougou ruler refused and said he would acknowledge the victor.[9] In this case, personal considerations seem to have dictated the Mogho Naba's reply.

The rulers of Ouagadougou appear to have taken greater interest in the affairs of the Dimdamba. Here again, however, intervention was conditioned by personal considerations, and especially by relative strength. Failure to be prudent in this respect often resulted in disaster. Mogho Naba Doulougou's insistence on punishing Naba Piga (1806–23), a ruler of the Boussouma principality, resulted in his own death. One of Piga's subjects had fled to Ouagadougou to evade punishment, and the Mogho Naba had returned him with the injunction that he should be imprisoned but not killed. Nevertheless, Piga had the prisoner executed. Moreover, he sent a

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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disrespectful message to the Mogho Naba asking that a horse which a Fulani had stolen from him and presented to the ruler be returned. Doulougou sent an army to chastise Piga, who quickly fled and later appealed to the Mogho Naba for pardon. No sooner had this pardon been granted than Piga again offended the Mogho Naba by granting refuge to his wayward son, who had been expelled from Ouagadougou. The Mogho Naba subsequently forgave his son, but he decided to punish the recalcitrant Piga once and for all. Piga fled at the approach of the royal army, but Doulougou, who had accompanied his troops, was wounded by an enemy arrow and died shortly after his return to Ouagadougou.[10]

A later Mogho Naba, Sanum (ca. 1861), fought, defeated, and executed Naba Zande of Boulsa for taxing the Boulsa people so heavily that they rebelled. After Zande was succeeded by his brother Yemde (ca. 1863–72), the Mogho Naba continued to intervene in Boulsa's affairs and eventually had Yemde executed. Yemde's undoing was the result of his inability or unwillingness to implement the Mogho Naba's desire—which was contrary to Mossi custom—to elect a ten-year-old boy to the chieftainship of Koupela district. The Koupela chief's brother ignored his young nephew and seized the nam; Yemde sent an army to depose him, but his men were routed. Suspecting treachery on Yemde's part, Mogho Naba Sanum sent an army to defeat and depose him and to place his father's brother in command of Boulsa. Yemde defeated the Mogho Naba's army. His victory was short-lived, however, because the Mogho Naba sent a larger army and routed his forces. Yemde fled to the territory of the Boussouma Dim and requested asylum. The Boussouma ruler, Ligidi, did not wish to incur the wrath of the Mogho Naba and dispatched Yemde to Ouagadougou. Yemde apparently convinced the Mogho Naba of his loyalty, but he was executed because he had inadvertently violated the rule that no descendant of a Kourita might see a Mogho Naba and live.[11]

Ligidi, in turn, found himself in conflict with the Mogho Naba. After surrendering Yemde to his sovereign, he had proceeded to Boulsa and seized some of the prisoner's property. At first the Mogho Naba paid no attention, but when he had made peace with Yemde's son, Kiba, he ordered Ligidi to return the property. Ligidi refused to do so and consequently became involved in a series of wars against Kiba and the Mogho Naba. Ligidi died of natural causes before peace was restored, leaving a legacy of hostility between Ouagadougou and Boussouma. Either in complicity with the ruling Mogho Naba (Wobogo) or in an attempt to gain his favor, the electors named Ligidi's brother, Kom, to the nam and ignored his son and rightful heir, Venewende. This unfortunate young man had no one to

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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turn to, and fled to Wobogo for safety. Wishing to maintain good relations with Kom, the Mogho Naba forced Venewende to return to Boussouma, but with the injunction that he should not be killed. Nevertheless, the Boussouma ruler had the young prince executed. The angry Mogho Naba threatened reprisal and declared that "if the Boussouma chief was not careful, it would be too bad for all his people, because they would fare as badly as their chief."[12] He did not have an opportunity to carry out his threats, however, because the French arrived soon afterwards.

Whereas some Mogho Nanamse took an active interest in the affairs of their Dimdamba or even tried to control them, others hesitated to interfere with disobedient or recalcitrant subordinates, especially when they fought and quarreled among themselves. Mogho Naba Oubya did not interfere when a Boussouma ruler, Pougoula (1745-67), bragging that no one in the nation was strong enough to depose him, arrogantly annexed the Ouagadougou province of Pisila and chased its ruler into Yatenga. Pougoula then gave the chieftainship to the fugitive's son, on condition that he should henceforth recognize his sovereignty.[13] On another occasion, a recalcitrant Boussouma Dim called Zabo (ca. 1767-84) defeated and punished the people of the Mane principality for rejecting the ruler he had chosen for them. They insisted that the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou had given Zabo the right to express his preference for a certain ruler, but not the right of choice itself. They appealed to Mogho Naba Waraga for help, but he ignored them. It may well be that Waraga was too involved in a war with the recalcitrant Riziam Naba to interfere, but there is no evidence that he ever censured Zabo. Again, Mogho Naba Sanum apparently took no part when Zende (ca. 1862-76), the ruler of Tema principality, and Totoabo, the ruler of Yako, joined forces against the ruler of La in a dispute over an abducted wife.[14] Perhaps, like other Mossi rulers, he did not care to deal with men who fought over women.

The relationship between the Mogho Naba and the Dimdamba, then, apparently varied in accordance with the persons involved and their relative strength. Sometimes they quarreled and fought; sometimes the Mogho Naba remained aloof from the Dimdamba's affairs; and sometimes the Dimdamba obeyed their sovereign and came to his aid. The one aspect of this relationship that seems to stand out, especially when the Dimdamba had no serious grievance, is their reluctance to fight against the Mogho Naba. Even Piga, the most belligerent in a long line of quarrelsome Boussouma rulers, always fled when Mogho Naba Doulougou attacked him, because "he did not wish to oppose his sovereign."[15] As we have seen, Yemde did fight against Mogho Naba Sanum, but he did so mainly be-

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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cause he thought Sanum had attacked him unjustly. For such acts of war, the Dimdamba involved usually lost their lives, and in at least one such case a Dim was turned over to the Mogho Naba by another Dim. We have seen that Dimdamba occasionally came to the aid of the Mogho Naba against another Dim.

A question of some importance is whether this relationship between the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou and the rulers of independent kingdoms and autonomous principalities was characteristic of Mossi society or a rather late development. Was warfare the natural concomitant of a system in which the normally powerful Ouagadougou ruler was sometimes too weak to command allegiance from his peers and subordinates? Did the Mogho Naba resort to warfare as the only possible means of exercising his authority when his commands were challenged or ignored? Delafosse states, "Sometimes . . . , especially in very recent times, discord arose between the emperor [of Ouagadougou] and some of his vassal kings: thus Naba Sanum had to fight against the desire for independence of the kings of Boussouma and Boulsa."[16] Delafosse seems to suggest that the Mossi people were undergoing a period of stress when the Europeans arrived, and were faced with significant new administrative problems.

Here Binger appears to support Delafosse's view:

> Ever since he acceded to the throne, [Mogho Naba Sanum] has been compelled to govern the Mossi with unmitigated despotism. His fear of losing power led him to take such severe measures that he was forced to relax them. As soon as his major vassals saw this, they took these concessions as signs of fear and began to conspire secretly against him. Today, the chiefs of Mani, Boussouma, Yako, and Koupela represent forces with which Naba Sanum will have to reckon. . . . Before long, the Mossi empire will break up; the country will organize into confederacies like those of Beledougou and Yatenga.[17]

It is not completely clear, however, whether Binger really understood the intricacies of the Mossi political organization. He lists as "vassals" of the Mogho Naba such territories as Mane, Kaya, Koupela, Bonsa, Boussouma, Djitenga, Boulsa, Dakay, and Doulougou, as though they were all related to Ouagadougou in the same way. In reality, some were autonomous and some were directly dependent on the Ouagadougou ruler. It is possible that at the time of Binger's visit, the relations between the Mogho Naba and his subordinates were so fluid that the outsider had difficulty in understanding them. If this is the case, then the situation in Mossi country had indeed changed when the Europeans came in.

Crozat, who says the Mossi governmental structure was feudal in na-

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631 ture, offers what is probably the best analysis of power relations among the
628 important Mossi chiefs. In commenting upon the Mogho Naba's inability
174 to stop the war between Yako and Yatenga he asks, "How could it be
114 otherwise? With what sanctions could this king without an army back up his orders if he ventured to give any? . . . In short, when the Ouagadougou ruler speaks, he is sometimes obeyed. If he is, all is well; if he is not, all is still well. Everything remains as before."[18] Crozat was mistaken if he believed that the Mogho Naba did not have a fighting force. What he did not have was a standing army to exercise his power whenever he wished. When he was able to summon an army, he was effective; when he was not, he had little power over any territory but his own. Crozat, like Binger, gives a strange picture of the political relationship between the Mogho Naba and the other rulers. He tells us that in the Mossi political hierarchy, "after the ruler of Ouagadougou comes the ruler of Boussouma, then the Yatenga ruler, and then the ruler of Yako."[19] Yatenga was traditionally independent of Ouagadougou, whereas Boussouma and Yako were simply autonomous principalities dependent on the Mogho Naba. It is possible that Crozat mistook the relative power of these various political entities for a hierarchical relationship. It is also possible that at the time of his visit, the Dimdamba felt sufficiently powerful to ignore the traditional hierarchy as far as their political relationship with other rulers was concerned, and were simply acknowledging relative gradations of power.

643 Clearly, the sovereignty of the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou over the
642 independent kingdoms and autonomous principalities depended chiefly on
628 military might. The stronger a Mogho Naba was, the more actively he tried to control the internal administration of the autonomous principalities and to exercise police powers over them or on their behalf. However, most Mogho Nanamse were content to claim superiority or control over the independent kingdoms and refrained from meddling in their affairs.

643 Within the Mogho Naba's own kingdom, however, the situation was
635 different. Here, like other important Mossi rulers, he directed the admin-
634 istrative apparatus. For administrative purposes, the kingdom of Ouaga-
[642] dougou was divided into five large provinces (*weto*; sing. *weogho*; or
[161] *solem*, from *so*, "command"). Together they included some three hundred districts, in which there were over four thousand villages inhabited by some 862,000 persons.[20] (Not included here were districts and villages directly administered by the Mogho Naba.) The provinces were not compact physical entities, because their component units were scattered throughout the country. To be sure, some of the districts within a province were close together or even contiguous, but many others stood alongside districts be-

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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ruler to grant asylum to Mogho Naba Wobogo in 1897. He adds that it was probably the injunction in the pact that they should never meet which prevented the ruler from personally receiving Wobogo.[13] 648 175

A ritual pact also bound the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou to the ruler of Dagomba. He sent him goods from the estate of the previous Mogho Naba as well as gifts for yearly sacrifices on the grave of Nyennega, the Mossi progenitrix. There are reports that the Ouagadougou ruler also exchanged annual presents with the Ashanti ruler, but it is not known whether these were courtesy gifts or goods sanctioning ritual pacts.

The ritual pacts among Mossi kingdoms and between them and their neighbors appear to have derived from actual or putative kinship ties. This seems to be supported not only by the traditions of the Mossi but also by those of the surrounding peoples. Whatever their origin, these pacts seem to have afforded their beneficiaries a remarkable degree of freedom from external aggression. It is possible that the Mossi and their neighbors really believed in the efficacy of supernatural sanctions, for purposes of mutual protection. But one suspects that it was the relative weakness of these various groups that caused them to rely on supernatural agencies rather than military might for protection. As will be pointed out below, the Mossi (and probably all of their important neighbors) had considerable difficulty in building and maintaining a fighting force sufficiently large to wage protracted or large-scale wars against foreign groups. 174 648 776 789

The Mossi kingdoms seldom fought among themselves, although their leaders quarreled over status and committed aggression against each other's territories. For example, the Ouagadougou rulers, who claimed suzerainty over Yatenga, often tried to impose their will on that kingdom. Yet, although they were usually rebuffed by the Yatenga Naba, they never tried to resolve the issue by force of arms. In fact, even when a Yatenga ruler appears to have given the Mogho Naba just cause for war, little fighting actually took place. Several times the Yatenga rulers seized such principalities as Riziam and Yako, which were dependent on Ouagadougou, but in no case did the Ouagadougou rulers wage war against them. In 1890, Crozat witnessed Mogho Naba Wobogo's attempt to stop a war between Yatenga and Yako. The Yako people wanted to obey their sovereign and stop the war, but the Yatenga monarch refused to do so.[14] 628 642 643 175

Crozat attributes the ineffectiveness of the Mogho Naba's authority over brother kingdoms to the fact that he had no standing army with which to enforce his rule. While relative strength may have been and probably was the main reason for the Mogho Naba's lack of aggressiveness, the ritual pact that prevented the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou from meeting the

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628 642 643 175 [648] Yatenga Naba (and other rulers) or treading on his territory should not be overlooked. The suggestion that force was not the only consideration was lent force by later events. The French conquest later reduced the rulers of both Ouagadougou and Yatenga to impotence and obviated war between them, yet they did not meet until 1946—some fifty years after the conquest. They met then only because they had to represent their subjects at a meeting to plan the restoration of the Upper Volta and reunite all the descendants of Oubri and Ouedraogo into one territory.

Relative strength obviously played an important part in determining whether one Mossi kingdom interfered in the internal affairs of another. For example, when a Tenkodogo ruler asked a Mogho Naba to help him suppress Busansi subjects who had rebelled, the Mogho Naba readily complied.[14] But when a fratricidal struggle over the nam broke out in Tenkodogo in 1894, the Mogho Naba decided not to intervene even though he was asked to do so.[15]

628 643 669 175 The central governments of the various kingdoms found it necessary to wage war against their subordinate territories at regular intervals. In the Ouagadougou kingdom, most of these wars seem to have been administrative actions against a prince or district chief who had contravened an order from the Mogho Naba or refused to pay tribute. The Dimdamba were the Mogho Naba's most rebellious subordinates, and it was against them that he fought most of his wars. Characteristic of these wars was the series between Naba Ligidi (1866–90), Dim of Boussouma province, and Mogho Naba Sanum.[16] Ligidi had seized and turned over to the Mogho Naba the recalcitrant Naba Yemde, then Dim of Boulsa, and confiscated the rebel's property. Later on, when the Mogho Naba had made peace with Yemde's son, Naba Kiba, he asked Ligidi to surrender the seized property. Ligidi refused to do so, and the angry Mogho Naba sent the royal army into his territory. The army sacked and burned several villages and retreated. Ligidi's forces skirmished with the rear guard but abandoned pursuit near the Ouagadougou border.

Ligidi took his revenge by helping a district chief who had rebelled against Naba Kiba. While he was thus engaged, the royal army again attacked and defeated him. Four days later, it reinvaded Boussouma, engaged Ligidi's forces at a place called Goudri, and won a brilliant victory. Despite Ligidi's furious counter-attacks, the army captured his capital, Ouayougya. The ruler's army finally returned to Ouagadougou, satisfied that Ligidi was thoroughly beaten. But the Mogho Naba had underestimated Ligidi's tenacity. For the next ten years, this Dim waged war against his fellow Dimdamba. The Mogho Naba finally grew tired of his depreda-

they might take the lives and property of their subjects. There are many stories of avaricious chiefs who convicted wealthy commoners of spurious crimes and had them executed or banished in order to seize their wealth. There are also stories of twin tricksters, Raogo, a boy, and Poko, a girl, two *enfants terribles* who always succeeded in outwitting and killing avaricious chiefs. When I asked a district chief to explain the significance of the Raogo and Poko tales, he replied that they were "meaningless stories told by children who do not understand how difficult it is for a chief to command and protect men." This remark prompted one of his officials to add that in olden days, people gladly supported the Mogho Naba and his chiefs in order to be safe from their enemies—a statement which might have been made by a conscientious government official anywhere. However, whether commoners or chiefs, all Mossi believed that men must have government, and that without it chaos would prevail.

The Mossi political organization was subject to severe strains. For one thing, its economic basis was not very strong. True, goods and services were channeled to the capital from the smallest areas, and in time this permitted the establishment of increasingly complex governmental structures. Nevertheless, the Mossi fiscal system was not highly developed, and much of the revenue the rulers received came to them in the form of legal fees and gifts. Moreover, most of these revenues were irregular in nature.

Despite this fact, the Mossi believed that their rulers were wealthy—and there can be no doubt that they were wealthier than their subjects. Nevertheless, visiting Europeans found little difference between the standard of living of the chiefs and that of the people. Binger would have us believe that Mogho Naba Sanum bragged so much about imaginary wealth, including 10,000 horses, that he "managed to convince himself of it."[26] Binger's subsequent remarks about Sanum's resources are illuminating even if somewhat biased, because they throw light on the economic basis of the Ouagadougou kingdom. He tells us that Sanum's revenues were

> not well regulated. He lives on gifts and offerings which people have brought him with the aim of obtaining justice, or to demand something from him. He sometimes sends a band of men to capture slaves in Kipirsi country, or at least supports such ventures. But these revenues, like those of all the black chiefs, are not sufficient, because these men are prone to squander their resources. As a result, these sovereigns are compelled to use expedients in order to procure horses and other commodities. Thus, like the rulers of Tieba, Pegue, and Kong, Naba Sanum still has captives in villages devoted to agriculture, but he does not take proper care of these villages. If he does not receive enough millet in the form of gifts, he must sell his slaves in order to procure it.[27]

THE ECONOMIC FOUNDATION

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Binger's statement about the "squandering" to which "all the black chiefs" are prone reveals his ignorance of the nature, role, and function of West African chiefs in general and of Mossi chiefs in particular. These men were often the center of redistribution systems that embraced their entire territory. The Mossi chiefs did not necessarily squander their resources when they used them to support their household, their administrative staff, and even visitors to their realm. A rather large portion of the millet the Mogho Naba received was not even used by his own household, but was held for gifts to visiting strangers. Binger himself benefited from the generosity of Mogho Naba Sanum, and he provides us with excellent data about how Boukary Koutou distributed his resources: "I can say that never has a chief given me food, kola nuts, and beer as often as he did. I received things to eat two or three times a day."[28] No Mossi chief could have done less. This was a role that chiefs had to play, and they lost power and prestige if they proved inhospitable or parsimonious either to visiting strangers or to their own subjects.

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Binger's lack of insight into the economic basis of the Mossi political organization also kept him from obtaining a clear understanding of the political system itself. For example, he saw the loose political organization of the Mossi as a sign of decadence, and felt that the Ouagadougou kingdom was too weak to survive for any length of time:

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> Before long the Mossi empire will break up, and the country will be organized into a confederacy like Beledougou and Yatenga. This is an event that we Europeans can only favor. Experience has shown us that as soon as a Negro chief commands more than 2,000 people, he dreams of empire; his needs grow, and he tries to expand. Since his revenues are small, he labors under a deficit, which he must remedy with slave raids. In a confederacy the chiefs do not reach this point so rapidly. As soon as one of them begins to rise, the others can band together and nip his ambition in the bud.[29]

It is quite true that many of the political systems in the western Sudan had a loose character similar to that of a "confederacy." This was not due to the vigilance of neighboring chiefs, however. From time to time, such powerful rulers as Sundiata, Mansa Musa, Sonni-Ali, El Hadj Omar, and Samory Touré did arise and conquer vast areas, but they were unable to sustain their gains over extended periods.

The political organization of the Mossi was not decadent but structurally weak—its economic base was never strong enough to support a higher degree of centralization. Strong chiefs only tested the limits of the system; they could not change the system itself.

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VIII

RELIGION AND GOVERNMENT

796 642 [769] [776] RELIGION AND RITUAL played an important role in supporting and preserving the Mossi political system. Religio-political ceremonies were centered around the ancestors (Keemse) and the earth deities (Tengkouga); the otiose high god (Ouennam or Naba Zid Ouende) had a very minor role.

769 642 778 The political importance of ancestor veneration lay in the fact that every Mossi chief claimed Nyennega of Dagomba and her descendants, Ouedraogo and Oubri, as his ancestors. Furthermore, possession of the amulets of Rialle, Nyennega's husband and Ouedraogo's father, legitimized possession of the nam. In order to rule, a Moaga had either to be a member of a royal [613] lineage still in possession of the nam or to have received the nam from such a lineage. No Moaga ever tried to usurp the nam of a kingdom or principality without trying to steal the royal amulets at the same time; nor, if his 669 778 rebellion was successful, did he ever fail to claim that he had stolen the 642 amulets or had received them as a gift. Thus Yadega, who rebelled against 769 his father's brother, Mogho Naba Koudoumie, and founded the Yatenga kingdom, declared that he had obtained Rialle's amulets. He claimed that they had been given to him by his sister, Pabre, who had stolen them from Ouagadougou and had thus deprived that kingdom of any legitimate sanctions for power. Thus, when the Yatenga people declare that they are equal to Ouagadougou, they add that the only "amulets" that still legitimize the nam of the Ouagadougou dynasty are the droppings left behind by Pabre's horse as she fled northward.

769 642 643 Similarly, all the princes who founded principalities and proclaimed their independence of Ouagadougou defended their action on the grounds that they, being as close to the main line of descent as the Mogho Naba, were also entitled to rule. The younger sons of deceased Mogho Nanamse [631] who were banished from the capital as Kouritadamba and who subsequently became provincial Dimdamba also stressed their relationship to [634] the royal ancestors. Even those district chiefs whose ancestors had prob-

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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ably been younger sons sent to rule in conquered territories claimed that their ancestors were direct descendants of Ouedraogo and Oubri. Thus, to the Mossi, the power to rule was intimately linked to closeness of descent from the royal ancestors. The supernatural power of these ancestors, and the vigilance they were believed to maintain over the affairs of their descendants, were regarded as important factors in Mossi government.

From the moment when the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou or any other Mossi ruler "drank the namtibo" and thereby received the nam of his ancestors, he had the right—indeed, the duty—to offer sacrifices to these ancestors in the name of his subjects. Every night, throughout Mossi country, the Baloum Naba of every ruler performed an act of supplication (Kwaga Basgha) to the ancestors. He beseeched them to protect the subjects of their descendants through the night, to maintain peace in Mossi country, and to grant health, children, and prosperity to all Mossi. This nightly ceremony was climaxed yearly by an elaborate ritual in honor of the ancestors (called the Basgha in some areas, and the Pelegha, Filigha, or Kinkiriga in others) that began at the highest levels of the government and ultimately linked every Mossi chief and lineage head.

The Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou, like the other Mogho Nanamse and Dimdamba, initiated this ceremony in his own kingdom. His celebration, called "M'barengma," was held at the end of the Mossi agricultural year and after the Soretasgho. Thus, the M'barengma was a New Year's festival in thanksgiving for good crops, as well as the annual Feast of the Dead. A few weeks before the first moon of the new year (the *ki-basgha* or *ki-pelegha*), the Mogho Naba ordered his soghondamba and samande-kamba to clean up the palace buildings and courtyards—an activity intended to notify the ever-vigilant ancestors that preparations were being made to offer sacrifices in their honor. A short time later, the Mogho Naba gave grain from his fields to the Pughtiema so she could prepare millet water for the sacrifices. Present-day Mossi insist that part of the grain came from the first ears harvested that year and part from those of the previous year. This was supposed to symbolize the continuity between crops, mirroring the continuity between the ruler and his ancestors. A few days before the principal ceremony, the Mogho Naba ordered the Larhalle Naba to pour millet water and sacrifice chickens on the graves of former Mogho Nanamse.

Shortly before the ki-basgha moon appeared, the ruler had to leave his palace at night to elude the ancestors, who had been attracted by the preparations and who were expected to be angry when they discovered that the sacrifices were not yet ready. The unjust ruler feared ancestral sanctions; the just ruler that his ancestors might want him to join them. One night he

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gift every year to the Imam and to Karamakho Isa, for whom he has great veneration. These are old and wise men who cannot but give him excellent counsel.[18]

The relations between Boukary Koutou and the Moslems of the Sakhabouténga district show how Mossi chiefs, though pagans, were able to establish viable political bonds with potentially hostile believers of another religion. Boukary Koutou was probably a Moslem "in outward appearance only," as Binger suggests. Nevertheless, it was by being Moslems of this kind that Mossi rulers managed to retain the allegiance of their Moslem subjects. This was their duty as "fathers of their people," and apparently they did it without much hesitation. In this manner, they effectively used religion to bolster their power and sustain their authority.

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Ritual connections between the Mossi rulers and the chiefs of surrounding countries enabled them to protect their subjects from foreign attack and to maintain internal cohesion. The numerous reciprocal gifts between the Mossi and such other Voltaic groups as the Dagomba, Mamprusi, and Gurmanche were based on the belief in descent from a common ancestor or ancestress. Ritual and the supernatural thus played an extremely important role in the cohesiveness of the Mossi kingdoms and in the functioning of their governmental processes. Without these ritual factors, it is doubtful whether the Mossi rulers would have been able to maintain such a relatively high degree of control over their subjects, given the relative weakness of their economic resources, communications, and armed forces. In trying to understand why the Mossi retained their autonomy for so long, one must take into consideration the statement made by a French officer a year after the Mossi were conquered: "We must not lose sight of the fact that [the Mossi] have always presented a common front to strangers, and that a single word of command is sufficient to unite them against the invader in the name of kinship and national unity."[19]

[648] [431] [613] [771] [648] [619]

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The phase of Mossi political history that began when Nyennega left Dagomba and moved northward came to an end with the European conquest. Most French scholars believe that the Mossi were in a state of decadence at the time of conquest and might have fallen to such African conquerors as El Hadj Omar, Samory Touré, or Baba To. The fact remains, however, that these conquerors all skirted Mossi country without entering it. If these African rulers believed that the Mossi were invincible in their unity, it was because the Mossi, through mythical bonds of common descent and actual bonds of kinship, had welded themselves into a cohesive and powerful group.

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Another group held that the chiefs need not be formally associated with the governmental apparatus. A historical precedent was cited: in the early days of colonialism, the chiefs had not become civil servants, and their status had not been impaired. Thus, when a chief collected taxes for the administration, his action was comparable to his former collection of tribute; when he recruited forced labor for the administration and the large plantations, it was similar to the traditional corvée; and when he asked people to plant certain crops, it was like asking them to cultivate his own fields. In a word, as the institution of chieftainship had adjusted to past changes in African societies, so it had the capacity to adjust in the future.[10]

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Other delegates, and apparently the French administrators as well, felt that the chiefs should be associated with the administration, but as administrative assistants and not as elected representatives of the masses.[11] Since the position of the chiefs was sacred as well as secular, it was argued, political defeat might impair their position as "the fathers of their people."[12]

The constitution drafted by the first Constituent Assembly (lacking any provisions concerning the traditional chiefs) was finally submitted to the voters in May 1946. Although it won a majority of overseas votes, it was defeated by the French people. The subsequently convened second Constituent Assembly was subjected to a great deal of pressure by a group of colonialists called Etats Généraux de Colonisation, and as a result many of the provisions of the first constitution, among them the single-college provision and various rights of citizenship, were not included in the second. The revised constitution was accepted by the French voters in October 1946.[13] By this time, however, many of the African delegates had become so disillusioned with the French parliamentarians in the National Assembly that they decided to fend for themselves. They met in Bamako in the French Sudan and formed an inter-territorial grouping called the Rassemblement Démocratique Africain (RDA), led by Houphouët-Boigny. Houphouët-Boigny was strongly anti-imperialist, and the party received the active support of the French Communists. It adopted a violently anti-colonial platform, pledging to rally the peoples of Africa to a world-wide struggle against colonial imperialism, and to try to bring all of the emerging political parties in French Africa under its banner in order to achieve the "emancipation of the African masses."[14]

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The Mogho Naba and the other Mossi chiefs, noting the anti-colonial posture of the RDA and the hostile reaction of the colonial regime to this group, attempted to take advantage of the situation by advocating the reintegration of the Upper Volta under their more conservative auspices. The Mogho Naba had already taken advantage of the Bastille Day celebration

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*648 in 1946 to visit and consult with the Yatenga Naba about Mossi reunification, thus ending a centuries-old tradition whereby the two rulers could not
● 642 meet for fear of death inflicted by the ancestors. Their project was now re-
643 ceived with greater interest by the local Europeans, both *colons* and admin-
631 istrators, who were alarmed by Houphouët-Boigny's radicalism and bent
[668] on preventing the spread of virulent anti-colonialism among the well-disciplined Voltaic populations.

*175 Shortly after the constitution was approved, the administration an-
642 nounced that elections would be held on December 15 for the Second Col-
668 lege of the Ivory Coast's General Council or Territorial Assembly (to be
665 composed of Africans and persons without full French citizenship) and for the other organs of the French Union. Once again Houphouët-Boigny and the RDA, having gained the support of the PDCI and the Parti Progressiste de la Côte d'Ivoire (PPCI), tried to obtain the backing of the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou and the Mossi-supported UDIHV (shortly to become the Union Voltaïque).[15] Again the Mogho Naba refused. Gabriel D'Arboussier, one of Houphouët-Boigny's lieutenants and an important official of the RDA, later charged that the ruler had been influenced by the Minister of Overseas France, Coste-Floret, who told him that the RDA "was no more democratic than it was African, that it was not an Assembly, and that Africans should rally to an institution that was truly African."[16] In any event, the Mogho Naba and the UDIHV decided to oppose the RDA. They emphasized the common interests of the Upper Volta and championed Voltaic candidates, Mossi and non-Mossi alike.

*175 The electoral law of the territories promulgated in October 1946 did not
666 specifically discriminate against the chiefs, but it was heavily weighted in
631 favor of the educated and urban elite. The electorate was confined to civil servants; soldiers and veterans of the armed forces; chiefs; permanent employees of commercial, industrial, craft, or agricultural establishments; members and former members, for at least two years, of cooperatives, trade unions, and committees of provident societies; holders of official decorations; members of prewar courts and councils including the Chambers of Commerce, Agriculture, and Industry, and agricultural unions; Christian priests and ministers; owners of registered real property; holders of driving or shooting licenses; and persons literate in French or Arabic. Candidates for election to the Territorial Assemblies had to be at least twenty-three years of age, to be registered on the electoral list as residents of the territory, to have a good knowledge of French, and to post a bond of 5,000 CFA (Colonies Françaises d'Afrique) francs, which was forfeited if the candidate received less than 5 per cent of the votes in his election district. Many chiefs were eligible to vote, but, because their fathers had opposed their be-

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ing educated at mission-sponsored schools, few were qualified to run for office.[17]

More serious for the position of the Mossi chiefs, perhaps, was the fact that many of them either were ill informed about the election or refused to take it seriously. Balima states that a surprisingly large number of Mossi chiefs "could not understand very well the importance of this novelty—which is understandable; had no interest in the formalities, which they nevertheless carried out; and somewhat haphazardly designated as candidates African civil servants to whom they were not even tied by close bonds of friendship."[18] Of course, another reason for this choice of "African civil servants" was that they were among the only persons with the training and education required for candidacy. Nevertheless, the candidates included a few educated members of chiefly families—persons who, not being in the main line of descent or being otherwise ineligible for office in the traditional system, had been "given" to the Europeans to be educated.

The partisans of the Mossi chiefs were victorious in the northern part of the Ivory Coast in an election that saw the emergence of such Voltaic politicians of later fame as Blaise Benon, François Bouda, Zinda Kaboré, Christophe Kalenzaga, Tindougou Ouédraogo, Zebango Pohi, and Maurice Yaméogo. However, the Second College was dominated by Houphouët-Boigny and his RDA colleagues. Despite the Mogho Naba's opposition, RDA delegates set out to ameliorate conditions in the Volta region. For example, the RDA secured the passage of bills to raise the Mogho Naba's salary from 60,000 francs a year, a trifling sum in view of his official and private expenses, to about 500,000 francs a year. Similarly, it ensured that Mossi and other Voltaic students would receive a fair share of the scholarships which France had assigned to colonial students.[19]

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These gestures did not dampen the ardor of the Mossi chiefs for the reintegration of the Upper Volta. In April 1947, when French President Auriol, touring the territories to observe the operation of the new political institutions, visited the Upper Volta, the Yatenga Naba, the Tenkodogo Naba, and the head ruler of Fada-N'Gourma met the presidential party at Ouagadougou and pressed their claim for separate territorial status. The French reportedly welcomed this petition because it gave them an opportunity to clip the wings of Houphouët-Boigny, as well as to ensure the aid of the chiefs in procuring adequate manpower for a projected extension of the Abidjan-Bobo-Dioulasso railroad to Ouagadougou. The problem was to convince the National Assembly in Paris that the reunification of the Upper Volta was in the best interests of all concerned.

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The French government set up a Parliamentary Commission and sent its chairman, Jean Jacques Duglas, to Ouagadougou and other Voltaic re-

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*175 648 642 gions to ascertain whether the people desired reunification. Duglas reported his findings to the National Assembly:

> You know as well as I do that the Mossi are proud of their past. Thanks to a political and social organization without peer in West Africa, they have known peace since the Middle Ages, in an Africa ravaged by war and depopulated by the slave trade. . . . This ancient land also desires prosperity and modernization. To achieve this its voice must be heard, not only in the National Assembly but particularly in the Grand Council [the highest consultative body] of French West Africa. The Upper Volta must have its own General Council.[20]

*175 *648 The law authorizing the reconstitution of the Upper Volta as a separate territory was promulgated on September 4, 1947. The non-Mossi populations of the projected territory feared Mossi domination and voiced their opposition in the Assembly, but in the end an accord was reached. The Mossi chiefs next petitioned the French government to pay for the rebuilding and refurbishing of Ouagadougou. François Bouda, one of the few traditional Mossi nakomce to become an elected representative of the Mossi, reminded the members of the Council of the French Union of what had occurred in 1919. He stated that his own father had recruited thousands of men to make bricks for "Bancoville" (an epithet for Ouagadougou; most of its buildings were of sun-dried bricks called *banco*) because Governor Hesling "never considered the possibility of purchasing cement, which was [464] not even expensive. Forced labor was easy to recruit, and no one thought that the day would come when it would be gone."[21] Bouda said that the Government should now help the new territory to modernize the capital.

D'Arboussier, an RDA delegate in the Assembly, declared that he would support the bill, if only because in the past the French government had attempted "to make a crack race horse out of an ordinary horse, and in so doing had made it a decrepit mare."[22] Funds for rebuilding Ouagadougou were finally voted, and the "Bancoville" of French West Africa began to take on a new look with wide avenues, large administrative buildings, official residences, and even a new palace for the Mogho Naba.

*175 643 631 554 *648 With the reconstitution of the Upper Volta, the Mogho Naba and his chiefs attained their highest prestige since the conquest. The chiefs even had strong influence over the Mossi representatives to the organs of the French Union, because of the decisive support they had granted them in the elections. But this increase in prestige was to be short-lived. The chiefs were no longer the sole representatives of their people, and the Mossi were no longer isolated from events in other parts of the Upper Volta, or for that

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*175 created out of the defunct Entente Voltaïque. In an attempt to gain the sup-
*646 port of these parties and of the young Mossi intellectuals who, while anti-
648 chief, were not yet willing to join the PDV, Conombo officially scrapped
665 the Union Voltaïque in 1955 and formed the Parti Social d'Education des
554 Masses Africaines (PSEMA).[30] The party pledged to promote social reform and the right of Africans to manage their own affairs, and to struggle against family, regional, and racial hatreds. But it did not win the support of the non-Mossi; nor did it attract many young Mossi, who did not believe that it had discarded the mantle of the chiefs. Conombo's readiness to ally himself with anti-chief forces, however, did make it obvious to the chiefs that when politicians were out to gain power, they did not always take the interests of the chiefs into account.

*175 In 1956, when a *loi-cadre* granting almost complete autonomy to the
●642 French African territories was approved by the National Assembly, it made
631 no provision for the participation of the traditional chiefs in the projected
578 governmental structure.[31] In fact, as preparations were being made to implement the new reforms, a number of politicians and educated Africans launched an attack on the chiefs which seems to have been a step toward edging them out of power altogether. The newspaper *Afrique Nouvelle*, published in Dakar but read by the educated elite throughout French West Africa, carried a series of articles that proclaimed: "The district chiefs should be given neither a position nor a salary!" "Let us democratize the chieftainship!" and "Let us decapitate the district!" (i.e., let us do away with the district chief). Over a photo showing the traditional chiefs, *Afrique Nouvelle* ran the caption, "Are they still chiefs of the territories?"[32]

[554] The Mossi chiefs, who had retained more power and prestige than any other chiefs in French West Africa, bore the brunt of these attacks and rose to defend the rights of all the chiefs. Their most able spokesman was Bouda, a Councillor of the French Union and a district chief in his own right. He wrote in *Afrique Nouvelle*:

> The Mossi [socio-political] organization, by its simplicity and cohesiveness, aroused the admiration of France, which respected and retained it.
>
> The power of the Mossi chief may be great, but it is not used to oppose the progress which is being made. The Mossi chief is not as much of a conformist as people have a tendency to believe. The social and political revolution which, since 1946, has made Mossi country so different from what it was before the war, is effecting the transition from a society largely encompassed by Nabas possessing real authority, an authority sanctioned by custom, to a more progressive way of life whose essential characteristics are underlined by the growth of towns, the uprooting of a large part of the population, and the triumph of the desire to be on one's own. . . .

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The Mossi chiefs indeed understand today that a tradition, no matter how respected, is not immutable. It is susceptible to change and evolution; it will evolve.

In all truth, and with due deference to those who systematically denigrate everything connected with them, the chiefs have borne positive witness to the characteristic spirit of this country, and it is as unfair as it is stupid to deny the important role they have played in certain cases in the cause of tranquility and peace.

As the natural spokesmen for their people, they have been, in many instances, the first to pay a heavy price for the common cause. Without them, demagoguery would have plunged the country into irreparable decadence. . . .

The demands of the traditional chiefs are justified and deserve to be heeded, because, in the face of the inertia of the Government and the rapid development of events, it is to be feared that the chiefs, although disposed by nature to be patient and to wait quietly, might run rather than walk in the days to come.[33]

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In December 1956, the Mossi chiefs, supported by the other traditional chiefs in French West Africa, convoked a Congress of Chiefs at Dakar. This Congress approved a constitution for an organization called the Federal Union of the Syndicates of the Traditional Chiefs, and adopted a proposal on the need for a statute governing the status and material well-being of the chiefs. The Congress did underline the apolitical character of the chieftainship, but asked that the chiefs be given some recognition in the new structures being created by the loi-cadre.

On the local level, the Mossi chiefs convoked a Syndicate of the Traditional Chiefs of the Upper Volta at Tenkodogo a month later. Its president, Etienne Congo, brother of Mogho Naba Sagha II of Ouagadougou, declared:

> At this time, when vast changes are under way, it would be inconceivable for us, the traditional chiefs, not to take an active part in the new developments, of whose urgent and precarious nature we are fully aware.
>
> Our position is clear: we are not opposed in any way to this evolution.
>
> As for statutory matters, I wish to express our concern over the fact that at the very moment when the loi-cadre is turning an important page in the history of Africa, our group has been left out.[34]

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The Mossi chiefs had indeed been abandoned by the French administration. Although they continued to receive the support of some politicians, it soon became clear that the latter were mainly interested in maneuvering for power under the loi-cadre and in uniting their parties to this end. Conombo, the leader of the PSEMA, was induced by his supporters and by a

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number of young educated Mossi to merge his party with the PDV-RDA in the hope of gaining a foothold in the Bobo-Dioulasso area and of uniting the Mossi and non-Mossi of the Upper Volta. The two parties did merge in September 1956, becoming the Parti Démocratique Unifié (PDU). The PDU's manifesto roundly condemned the "artificial division of the territory into East and West Volta" and the "classification of the population as Mossi and non-Mossi," and urged all Voltaics to join the new party. In addition, it declared that the Mossi chiefs merited some status in the territory because they had preserved their "political entity throughout African history."[33] The PDU went so far as to make the Mogho Naba its honorary president, and to speculate that he might be made the Governor of an autonomous or independent Upper Volta.

Nevertheless, the merger was to be a greater victory for the opponents of the Mossi chiefs than for their allies in the PSEMA. For one thing, many of the anti-chief Mossi intellectuals now joined the PDU, bringing with them their modernistic views. For another, since former RDA members were running for office in the Upper Volta under the banner of the PDU, the local chiefs had to give up their opposition to these candidates, and the French administration did likewise. This hands-off policy gave all the candidates, even those who were basically hostile to the chiefs, a better chance of being elected.

The PDU won a slight over-all majority and a large Ouagadougou majority in the Upper Volta elections for the Territorial Assembly and the Government Council in March 1957. However, the anti-chief MDV carried the Ouahigouya (Yatenga) area, and an Indépendant candidate, Maurice Yaméogo, defeated a supporter of the Mossi chiefs, Henri Guissou, in the Koudougou area. Of great importance was the election of Ouezzain Coulibaly, one of the early non-Mossi Voltaic supporters of Houphouët-Boigny, who had returned to the Upper Volta after the merger of the PSEMA and the PDV-RDA. Coulibaly was elected on the PDU ticket as a representative for Banfora, a district in the western region.[34]

Unfortunately for the Mossi chiefs, the RDA emerged from the March elections as the strongest party in all the former French West African territories. Because of this, most of the politicians in the Upper Volta sought to establish a modus vivendi with Houphouët-Boigny, the Party's recognized leader. Most of them went to visit him at Yamoussokro, his home in the Ivory Coast, and out of these meetings there emerged a realignment of the MDV and the PDV-RDA wing of the PDU at the expense of Conombo and the PSEMA group. This created a new majority in the Upper Volta, and Coulibaly, an old ally of Houphouët-Boigny long suspected by the

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Mossi chiefs of being a modernist, was elected as the first Vice-President of the new government. Not only was the Mogho Naba deprived of the opportunity to become the African head of the Upper Volta, but such stalwart supporters of the chiefs as Conombo and Bouda were left out of the government. Thus, after twelve years of opposition to Houphouët-Boigny, Mogho Naba Sagha and his chiefs were finally defeated. Their defeat was made even more ignominious by the elevation of a non-Mossi commoner to a position of dominance over the Mossi chiefs.[37]

Having lost out in the Upper Volta, the Mossi chiefs had no spokesman when the new Vice-Presidents of the Government Councils of the French West African territories and the European Presidents of these territories met at Dakar to discuss the problems of the truncated French West Africa Federation. No one mentioned the problem of the position of the traditional chiefs. As far as the politicians were concerned, the issue of the chief on the inter-territorial level was dead. It had relevance only in those territories where the chiefs retained some influence.

In an effort to consolidate their hold on the Upper Volta, the PDV-RDA members in the PDU met in September 1957 and sought to convert the PDU into a territorial subsection of the RDA. This move was resisted by the supporters of the chiefs within the PDU, especially by Conombo, who as leader of the PSEMA, an important faction within the PDU, had been completely eclipsed by Coulibaly and the PDV. Conombo resigned from the PDU and announced his intention to rebuild the PSEMA with the support of the Mossi chiefs. On November 12, however, before his plans could be put into action, Mogho Naba Sagha II died in Ouagadougou and political activities in the Upper Volta came to a standstill. A period of national mourning was proclaimed, and politicians from all parties gathered to pay their last respects and to eulogize the monarch.

Sagha's death, like that of all Mossi princes, was ascribed to foul means, although it was clear that he had succumbed to uremia. The people reacted to the interregnum by looting, and the shopkeepers in Ouagadougou and surrounding areas were compelled to close their establishments. "The people of Ouagadougou ran to Saba, but the merchants there were quite diligent, and needed no police force to protect them."[38] It was reported that those wives of the deceased ruler who were not at the palace at the time of his death took off the brass anklets denoting their royal status and became free women. If this actually happened, it was an unprecedented occurrence.

When the Mossi traditional electoral college convened to choose a new Mogho Naba, it reportedly considered the candidacy of both Moussa Con-

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It will be well if the Mogho Naba understands that he owns but the vestige of a past whose hour has irrevocably tolled, and that his message to the President of the Council [de Gaulle] commits no one in the Upper Volta but himself, a mere citizen like the others.

I deplore the discrimination which the message of the Mogho Naba implicitly contains. I should like to say to the Mogho Naba that in the Upper Volta there are no Mossi, Fulani, or Bobo people, but only Black people struggling for their liberty. No Mossi or any other Voltaic would agree to the Mogho Naba's expression of fidelity to France in his name. If this must be done, then the Territorial Assembly and the Government Council alone are qualified to do so.[42]

Despite these attacks and numerous suggestions in the press that the Mogho Naba and the Mossi chiefs were developing a "Touré complex" (i.e., the fear of suffering the same fate as the Fulani chiefs of Fouta Djallon, who had been deposed by Sékou Touré, Vice-President of the Guinea Government Council), the Mossi ruler actively supported acceptance of the constitution of the Fifth French Republic, which promised the colonies full internal self-government within the "French Community." Since the constitution was adopted by the Upper Volta population by an overwhelming favorable vote of 99.1 per cent, no one could estimate how effective the Mogho Naba's support had been.[43] [177] [642]

Coulibaly died just before the referendum, and was replaced on an interim basis by Yaméogo. The parliamentarians accordingly had to choose a new leader, now to be President of the Government Council, as well as to draw up a constitution for the new republic and determine whether it would join any of the regional federations then being considered by several territories. The Territorial Assembly was scheduled to meet in extraordinary session on October 17, 1958, to select a successor to Coulibaly. The Mogho Naba, anticipating dissension and perhaps once again seeking the limelight, sent a message to the representatives on October 15, urging "a government of union and public safety." But the politicians resented what they regarded as his interference in matters that did not concern him; few, if any, took his message seriously, and none replied.

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The Mogho Naba therefore decided to force the issue. He summoned his traditional ministers to a conference, and, despite the objections of the Baloum Naba, obtained their permission to order his Tansoba to muster his warriors and lay siege to the Territorial Assembly. Early in the morning of October 17, about 3,000 Mossi warriors, armed with bows and arrows, swords, spears, and ancient flint guns, converged on the Assembly. Later that morning, the Mogho Naba himself, accompanied by his Tansoba,

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the Upper Volta met, discussed "the affair of October 17," and issued a statement dissociating itself from the Mogho Naba's action, reaffirming its desire to collaborate with the established authority, and requesting a clarification of the status of chiefs in the new order. The Government Council of the Upper Volta welcomed this statement, and hastened to reassure the chiefs that their status was not in danger: "It is not a question of damaging the traditional chiefs as a group, but rather of stigmatizing vigorously an act emanating from a superior chief like Mogho Naba Kougri, the consequences of which, unforeseen as they were, could have placed all the Mossi chiefs in a regrettable and irreparable position."[47] 175* 643 669 578

The Mogho Naba had obviously reached a political impasse, and he next turned his attention to creating a new image of the chieftainship. To this end, he married a young Mossi woman in accordance with the civil statutes of the state, thus becoming the first Mogho Naba and the first important Mossi chief to do so. A spokesman at the wedding placed this act in its proper perspective with the following words: 643 175* 178

> I should now like to underscore the fact that this date, November 22 [1958], will be inscribed officially in the annals of the Upper Volta. For the first time in the history of our country, an Emperor, the person who best symbolizes tradition, has upset ancestral habits in the interest of progress. For the first time a woman will be given consideration in a royal court where she will be able to feel at her ease. For the first time, the spouse of a traditional chief will have her place near her husband as an equal and steady companion.[48] [644]

The politicians were apparently prepared to recognize the eminence of the chiefs as long as they did not attempt to intervene in the affairs of the state, and a number of them attended the Mogho Naba's wedding. Among those present were the Presidents of both the Government Council and the Territorial Assembly, parliamentarians from various parties, and the mayors of Bobo-Dioulasso and Ouagadougou. On December 10, 1958, the Territorial Assembly confirmed Yaméogo as President of the Government Council. The Assembly also approved his slate of ministers, among them Bouda, the Mossi chief who had once been a strong supporter of the traditional political hierarchy but who now belonged to the UDV-RDA. Then, on December 11, the Assembly decided to adopt the draft of a proposed constitution for the Upper Volta. Articles 2 and 3 of Paragraph I of this constitution state explicitly: 175* 631 642 [646]

> The Republic of the Upper Volta is one and indivisible, secular, democratic, and social. Its principle is that the government is *of the people, by the people, and for the people. . . .*
>
> *Sovereignty belongs to the people. No section of the population, and no individual, may usurp it.* [Italics mine.][49]

[Post World War II Period]

*175 631 642 The proposed constitution thus negated any claims of the traditional chiefs over any section of the Voltaic population. Henceforth, the only leaders of the Voltaic people were to be their elected representatives. The constitution did not even mention the traditional chiefs, and no provision was made to give them a special voice in the government. By its silence on these matters, the constitution had reduced the Mossi chiefs to the status of ordinary citizens. Certain parts of this constitution were later changed, but not the sections dealing with the democratic nature of the emerging state. The power of the chiefs was gone. Yaméogo, who had been a commoner among the Mossi of Koudougou, was given the title of "President of the Republic" by what had now become the National Assembly. It was he who traveled to and from Paris with Houphouët-Boigny and the other members of the Conseil de l'Entente, an organization comprising Dahomey, the Ivory Coast, Niger, and the Upper Volta, to parley for the independence of the Upper Volta; and it was he who traveled around the country explaining his policies. Yaméogo did not belabor the issue of the chiefs, but he declared quite firmly that "the days of devotion to certain little Voltaic saints" were over. "Now must begin the era of the cult of the Upper Volta, next only to that of God."[80]

*175 *648 642 631 France finally agreed that the Upper Volta should become independent on August 5, 1960, just 64 years after the conquest. However, sovereignty and power were not to be transferred to those from whom it had been wrested originally. Mogho Naba Kougri was only a spectator at the National Assembly when Yaméogo, praising Houphouët-Boigny and General de Gaulle, announced the coming of independence; and he was only a spectator when the Assembly ratified the independence agreement on July 27, 1960. The President said on that occasion that "Independence is not an end in itself, but a beginning. In effect, from now on we are called upon to assume full responsibility for our destiny."[81] He added that changes in the country would be brought about "in cooperation with the elected representatives, the party [RDA], and the youth organizations." He made no mention of the chiefs, and in fact the only chiefs who played any role during this period did so as politicians. The chiefs were to be honored only on Independence Day, when the President, in a spirit of benevolence, gave thanks to all those who had played a role in recovering the dignity of "Voltaic Man," including not only the French professors, the clergy, the war veterans, and the politicians, but also the "traditional chiefs who safeguarded the integrity of our state against external attack."[82]

*175 182 631 The government of the Upper Volta Republic decided to allow the institution of chieftainship to fade away by preventing the election of new

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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CHAPTER 9

Trade and Markets Among the Mossi People

BY ELLIOTT P. SKINNER

The Mossi represent the dominant population of the Voltaic Republic, numbering about 1,600,000 out of some 3,200,000 inhabitants. They represent the unique example of a group which has preserved its ethnic identity and political autonomy through all the vicissitudes of Sudanic history until it was conquered by the French in 1896. Tradition records that the people who became the Mossi left the Dagomba region in present-day Ghana during the eleventh century and moved into the bend of the Niger River, carving out three large kingdoms and smaller principalities in the process. At the head of these still extant kingdoms are rulers *(Moro Nabas)* who formerly held feudal-like control over the provinces, districts and villages which comprise their domains. The villages, with their patri-local, polygynous, extended family households, formed the basic Mossi settlement pattern. A complex hierarchical administrative apparatus carried the power of the Mossi rulers into the smallest villages, and funneled taxes and tribute back to them. This structure still exists, but of course it has been modified by the French.

The Mossi were and are still divided into stratified royal, noble and commoner patrilineages. Characteristic of this lineage system is a process by which royal sub-lineages descend serially until they merge with the mass of commoner lineages. Below the lineages there once were large non-Mossi groups of serfs and slaves, but these people have now been grouped into lineages and have become Mossicized.

The topography of Mossi country is typical of the Sudanic grasslands. It is an immense plain, some 1,500 feet above sea level and broken only by three low mountain ranges and numerous small hills. The annual total rainfall is between 30 and 40 inches, and falls almost entirely as heavy showers or thundershowers during the period from June to September. So narrow is the margin of rainfall for successful crop cultivation that any variation in the cycle results in low crop yields and a difficult "hungry period" the following year before the new crops are harvested. The Mossi do not practice irrigation, and would have trouble doing so because the three Volta Rivers which drain their territory serve as drainage chiefly during the rainy season. Only the Black Volta has water all year round; the

[46] Chapter 3

Political, Administrative, and Judicial Organization of the Mossi Empire

I. Political and Administrative Organization

643 The Mossi empire of Ouagadougou was governed prior to the period of French occupation by a supreme chief, the Mogho Naba, who was revered by all his subjects as a "god" and whose territory, in the minds of his people, had no limits. He had the power of life and death over all his subjects.

[192] The word mogho means "country of the Mossi," but by extension it also means "the world." Thus, in this sense the Mogho Naba was regarded as the master of the world.

643 631 It is said that he had under his rule 333 chiefs, naba, among whom were his ministers, the three sogon'kassemsé (great servitors), and some forty petty chiefs called kougzindba, which refers to the heaps of stones designating the place of each minister or petty naba in the emperor's court.

643 177 The authority of the Mogho Naba over his vassals. In spite of the claims made by a colonial official who was trying to free the canton chiefs of one of the administrative districts of the colony from the authority of the Mogho Naba, the emperor's power never was merely nominal. If it has become so, it is a consequence of the intervention of French [47] administrative authority in the politics of the country -- an intervention which has resulted in assigning too much power to certain chiefs.

643 669 I do not mean to imply that before French penetration into the country there were not real conflicts, wars or mere skirmishes (1),

1. In Chapter 1 [not translated] we described in great detail the war waged by the Mogho Nabas Sanum and Wobgo against Lallé. We said also that Sanum warred with the Boussouma Naba and with Boulsa.

but the chiefs who tried by these means to free themselves from the emperor's authority were usually punished for their temerity.

000 Ministers and officials in the court of the emperor of the Mossi. We shall provide a list of the persons making up the emperor's court in a later chapter.

Functions of the Ministers

645 The four ministers, Ouidi Naba, Larallé Naba, Gounga Naba, and Baloum Naba, were charged with the nomination of the kombemba (plural of kombéré, vassal chief), subject to the emperor's approval. At the present time they retain the same prerogatives subject to ratification by the administrative authorities. These ministers further assisted the emperor in deciding important matters whenever he called upon them, and they transmitted the orders of the Mogho Naba to [48] his vassals. Today the Mogho 643 Naba is hardly concerned with the regulation of affairs, since these 648 are dealt with by his ministers or by the French authorities. However, the leading court dignitaries always submit to him matters of any importance, they keep him informed about all matters of general interest, and, finally, they report to him any interviews which they may have had with the administrator of the circle, who represents the government of the colony [Ed., the circle (Fr., cercle) is the largest French administrative unit below the colony (Fr., colonie)].

Organization of Territorial Control

634 Each of the emperor's ministers had authority -- we shall 645 presently see under what conditions -- over a group of cantons [Ed., the canton (Fr., canton) is a traditional Mossi administrative unit, containing a number of villages, and several cantons together form a province; the native districts were incorporated into the French administrative system to some extent]. A kombéré naba was head of each canton. Originally and up to the time of Naba Sanum's reign, the Baloum Naba commanded the dimbissi (canton chiefs who were descendants of the recent Mogho Nabas), while the other cantons, except the most thickly populated and hence the richest, such as Zittenga, Manga, etc., were distributed

631 certain amount of independence since they can communicate with the circle commanders with no intermediary other than the interpreter, an indispensable adjunct as long as the chiefs do not attend the [French] schools. On the other hand, the authority of the vassal chiefs still attached to the administrative district of Ouagadougou is, if not entirely lost, at least greatly diminished.

Indeed, their action is thwarted by that of the ministers, the province chiefs, from whom [52] they receive orders, sometimes falsified or amplified by ambitious intermediaries.

It must certainly be conceded that such a state of affairs may have -- it has had -- an unfortunate effect on the progress of these naba. This is an evil which should be remedied without delay.

636 645 565 The local administration at the very beginning made the serious error of failing to take into account the importance of the canton chiefs, most of whom (see the list in the appendix [not translated]) are descendants of the Mogho Naba. On the other hand, virtually all the ministers and other court officials, despite the respect one owes them and the privileges they enjoy, are of humble origin (see Chapter 4 for the origins of the Ouidi Naba and the Larrhallé Naba, for example).

The Petty Kings (Dima) in the Past and Today

643 631 As has been noted in the introductory chapter [not translated], some of the chiefs have gradually freed themselves from the authority of the Mogho Naba and have assumed the title of dima, that is, "king." These chiefs are the Boussouma Naba of the Kaya circle, the Konquizitenga Naba of the Kougoudou circle, the Yako Naba of the Kougoudou circle (Yako subdivision), and the Riziam Naba of the Ouahigouya circle.

These chiefs were, in a sense, independent "rulers," since the emperor's suzerainty over them was so weak [53] that they enjoyed almost complete independence. Some of them, notably the Boussouma Naba and the Yako Naba, have authority over canton chiefs whom they invest in the same way the emperor does.

643 631 These dima maintain courts which with some exceptions, are like that of the emperor of the Mossi.

They were appointed directly by their own ministers; the emperor took no effective role in the proceedings.

Today. The local administration has made these petty kings into simple province chiefs and sometimes -- as happened to the Konquizitenga Naba -- into mere canton chiefs.

Respect due the Mogho Naba. Each year the petty dima sent numerous gifts to the Mogho Naba (horses, cattle, and cowries).

643 An error. The Tenkodogo Naba (1), contrary [54] to what

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1. It should not be assumed that the Tenkodogo Naba controls all the cantons in the administrative district of Tenkodogo.

Several Boussancé [Busansi] cantons were ruled by the Mogho Naba before the French occupation. Out of the 14 cantons which now make up the province called Boussanga, 11 were under the emperor's jurisdiction and their chiefs were appointed by him. Like all vassal chiefs, they were required to visit the emperor once a year and to bring him annual tribute.

Since Tenkodogo has been changed first to a subdivision and then to an autonomous circle, the Boussancé chiefs involved have been appointed directly by the local administration with the consent of the population; the Mogho Naba was no longer consulted. After trouble arose over the appointment of a canton chief, the Mogho Naba had to intervene, and from this affair arose the necessity of putting a relative of the emperor at the head of those cantons organized

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as provinces. The choice fell upon a uterine brother of Naba Kom, Moustapha Kongo.

He was recalled in 1930 after ruling for only three years. His dismissal was certainly due to errors committed in the performance of his duties, but it was also caused by the fact that the Boussancé had been independent too long to take kindly to a master.

Thus, as was pointed out at the beginning of this chapter, the local administration has interfered too much with the organization of the Mossi empire. The position of the Mogho Naba has been completely distorted, and his prestige diminished. This is why the ill-informed official to whom we have already alluded could state that the authority of the Mogho Naba over his vassal chiefs was merely nominal.

A list of Boussancé cantons under the authority of the Mogho Naba follows: (1) Niaogo, (2) Niarba, (3) Lenga, (4) Gon Boussougou, (5) Komtoéga, (6) Beguedo, (7) Ouanragou, (8) Sanogo, (9) Toalla, (10) Zourga, (11) Yakala.

643 has been accepted up to now, is a true king in his territory and as such is absolutely independent of the Mogho Naba at Ouagadougou, to the same degree as the head of the state of Yatenga (Ouahigouya) and the head of Fada N'Gourma.

As was pointed out in an earlier chapter [not translated], the Tenkodogo Naba is the descendant of Naba Zoungrana, the son of Ouedraogo, and is consequently the "elder" of the Mogho Naba, who is a descendant of Naba Oubri, the founder of the Mossi dynasty of Ouagadougou.

631 The Boulsa Naba, a direct descendant of the kourita [representative after death] of [55] Naba Oubri, is not a dima but merely
635 a kombéré. He has a vassal, to be sure, the chief of Koupéla in the circle of Tenkodogo who is now considered a province chief, but the Boulsa Naba himself is a vassal of the Mogho Naba.

[57] Chapter 4

The Court of the Mogho Naba. Tribute and Payments Due. Obligations of Mossi Subjects to their Naba.

Morning Honors Paid to the Emperor of the Mossi

644 The council of the emperor of the Mossi is held every morning in front of an antechamber called zango which opens out upon a very large courtyard.

831 The Mossi have for a long time regarded the sun as a "god."
776 Wend'pous yan, "God shows himself," refers to the rising of
643 the sun, but it is used in a figurative sense to refer to the emergence of the Mogho Naba. This illustrates the regard held by the Mossi people for their chief since he is compared to the star of daylight and thus to a "god."

643 The Mogho Naba appears each morning dressed in an ample red robe and with a red gourmousga (a kind of burnoose) folded and
292 thrown over his shoulders. On his head he wears a cap, a fez, topped with a wazourfou sebré (literally, "silver paper" [streamers], that is to say, silver amulet). Red represents the light that comes
[822] with the appearance of the sun, while the silver on the cap represents the brilliance of the star itself.

644 Before the time set for the start of the ceremony, the three sogon'kassemsé (great servitors) bring into the courtyard the [58] cushion, nagpouré, and all the other insignia of office. As soon as
[201] the Mogho Naba appears, they arise and make a snapping sound with thumb and index finger to indicate that the naba is coming.

"Wend'pous yan" is also cried out by the gagando and luinsé
[533] (drummers) as soon as His Majesty sits down. The Bend'Naba [chief drummer] is the only one who does not beat his drum; instead, he rubs his finger back and forth over the waxed part of the drum head to imitate the roar of the lion. Four or five young men bearing loaded rifles take their places in front of the emperor.

Honors are rendered to the Mogho Naba in the following order.

1. The Samandé Naba, Baloum Naba, Wedranga Naba, and Simandé Nabila, as well as the Zusoabin'kassanga (chief eunuch and guardian of the emperor's household), are the first to greet His Majesty and to inquire about his health.

Customary Payments by the Mossi to their Chiefs

643 651 To the Mogho Naba. In former times, before the coming of the French, the kombemba (canton chiefs) [69] and the nakomsé (descendants of Mogho Naba) were all required to come to Ouagadougou once a year to pay their respects to the Mogho Naba on this occasion to present gifts to him (cattle, horses, sheep, cowries, and loads of millet).

For all practical purposes, this amounted to a fixed fee which varied in amount, of course, with the resources of the contributors (canton chiefs and nakomsé) and the number of subjects that the administration entrusted to the leaders.

Although the horses, cattle, and sheep were personally contributed by the kombéré, the cowries and millet were furnished by their Mossi subjects. The canton chief set the amounts of cowries and grain due from each village according to the number of its inhabitants.

The assessment was usually 100 cowries for a married man and 50 for a bachelor (adult). The payment in millet was 10 baskets, each averaging 40 kilograms.

Likewise, a kind of fee was paid annually to the Djiba Naba, crown price, in cowries and livestock. This was done to stay in the good graces of his father, the emperor.

643 651 178 Nowadays the canton chiefs (kombemba), who come to Ouagadougou more often than formerly for important feasts and other events, never return to their lands without paying their respects to the Mogho Naba and giving him the traditional gifts (cowries and livestock). Gifts are now made more often, but they no longer have [70] the same importance. As a general rule, certain canton chiefs still require their people to give small amounts of cowries when they visit Ouagadougou for the celebration of July 14. Some chiefs, however, either because they fear penalties from the administration or because they think that their people are already heavily burdened, prefer to give the little they have personally acquired by selling produce (cotton, yams, etc.) or trading.

Some of the vassal chiefs of the Mogho Naba, who, however, are no longer subject to Ouagadougou since the division of the

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651 Mossi circle into several administrative districts, still continue to
178 make substantial annual gifts to the Mogho Naba (cowries, cattle, and a considerable amount of grain, millet and rice).

634 Payments Due the Kombemba (canton chiefs). Formerly each
651 canton held one or more ritual feasts each year, and the Mossi subjects, that is, the tengsoba (village elders, notables, and those in comfortable circumstances), regularly made gifts to the canton chief (cowries, goats, sheep, and roosters). The Peulh [Peul] gave cattle.

The canton chiefs also retained a portion of the payment made by the people for the benefit of the Mogho Naba.

At the present time these traditional gifts are still made, but
[178] white or light gray roosters are more and more being substituted for livestock. [71]

661 Payments due the Ministers of the Mogho Naba. In order to
431 maintain good relations with the ministers, court officials, and
644 intermediaries between the emperor and his vassals, the canton
634 chiefs in former times used to present unspecified gifts to the high dignitaries at court when they paid their respects to the Mogho Naba. A certain number of cowries was given to the pougtiéma, first wife of the Mogho Naba (500 cowries equals two and a half francs, formerly 50 centimes).

A canton chief who has been called to Ouagadougou for some reason may choose not to call on the emperor, but he is obligated to bring cowries, a sheep, or a rooster to the minister who is head of the province in which his canton is located.

651 Common laws. (a) Regulation of market fees. Before the ar-
443 rival of the French, market fees at Ouagadougou were collected for the benefit of the Mogho Naba by a collector in his employ.

In important villages, fees were collected by Gourounsi [Grunshi] captives on behalf of the canton chiefs (kombemba).

651 (b) Hunting. In former times, before the fields were cleared
224 for seeding, the Mossi used to go out in groups of several villages
634 on hunting drives. Small game (partridges, guinea fowl, hares, etc.) were left to the hunters. On the other hand, a haunch of any quadruped killed (deer, gazelle, coba [a kind of horse antelope], etc.) was reserved for the canton chief.

567 Were slaves part of an estate? Among the Mossi, the wives
428 are part of an estate on the same footing as the rest of the property
562 of the deceased. The same thing applies to the captives (yemsé) and dogyiri (house slaves) who constitute and integral part of the estate. They constitute a patrimony to be handed down from father to son in accordance with the customary order of succession. They remain the exclusive property of the legitimate heir and are not distributed as are the wives of the deceased.

[97] Chapter 6

Djiba Naba, Crown Prince of the Mossi Empire

Preliminary Remarks

644 In writing on this subject we have not tried to ascertain whether the canton of Djiba was once independent or whether it was under the direct authority of the Mogho Naba.

At the outbreak of the World War in 1914 the Djiba Naba, a brother of the present emperor, Naba Kom, was drafted into the army, and another brother had to be appointed to take his place. The latter's administration was in many ways unsatisfactory, so when the Djiba Naba, on his return from the front, had to be sent to Doulougou to replace a deceased son of Naba Wobgo, the Mogho Naba retained direct authority over the canton of Djiba. Meanwhile, his eldest son had returned from Tunis and had been officially named the chief of Djiba, but he had had to leave again for military service at Salonika. Thus, it can be said that even before the canton of Djiba had been made the prerogative of the eldest son of Naba Zombré, it had already been under the latter's authority.

It was during the reign of Naba Zombré, twenty-third Mogho Naba, that the eldest son of the emperor was given jurisdiction over the canton of Djiba. Naba Zombré, after Naba Niandeffo, had one of the longest reigns in the history of the country. He actually ruled for sixty years.

643 [98] An old tradition requires an emperor who has ruled for
782 thirty years to go to Oubritenga to celebrate zom'bika (literally,

643 "to mount the bika").

782 Bika. When the emperor goes to Oubritenga, a large pit is dug in which all sorts of provisions are placed and, finally, a living man. Poles cover the opening of the tomb where the suffocated man lies, and the whole thing is covered with earth. A throne (guéré) is placed on the grave, and it is there that the emperor -- with little ceremony -- receives the faithful during his stay at Oubritenga. In carrying out this practice, the emperor is considered as having died and then come to life again. Hence, when he returns to Ouagadougou, after an absence which may last for years, he is welcomed by the populace with the greatest enthusiasm, and he must carry out all sorts of customary obligations just as he did at the beginning of his reign.

This custom is of course bound to disappear. In any event, if it were still an obligatory ceremony today, the man would no doubt be replaced by a rooster.

643 644 Naba Zombré went to Oubritenga to mount the bika and remained there for three years. His eldest son acted for him at Ouagadougou and in the process acquired some fame and the esteem of the populace.

When his father returned, it was obviously necessary to bestow upon this prince, who had already tasted the "joys" of ruling, and developed a real talent for command, a post of real distinction. Djiba was chosen. From that day on, [99] as soon as the eldest son of the Mogho Naba reaches the age of discretion, he is appointed Djiba Naba. It is thus understandable that Naba Kom, enthroned at an early age, was much disturbed when two of his sons were sent to Senegal and then to Tunisia.

644 The appointment of the Djiba Naba differs very little from that of other canton chiefs, but this naba has certain obligations which will be discussed below.

Before Appointment

644 782 Before his appointment, the crown prince of the Mossi empire first proceeds to the village of Zango where he must remain for a week. He must bring with him a sheep, a white rooster, and a cow which are to be given to the village chief for use in a sacrifice to

Respect Due the Home of the Naba

554 The kombéré is absolute master of his territory. His subjects must show him the same deference as he himself shows to the Mogho Naba.

However, even though he is not a noble, a minister of the emperor need not remove his cap to respond to the salute of a kombéré. On the contrary, the latter is required to humble himself, to give way before him just as he would before the Mogho Naba.

644 The nabiga (son of a naba), nakomsé (descendants of naba) and, still more, an ordinary Moaga are all categorically forbidden to wear their shoes or their caps at the court of the naba. The only exception to the rule is when the person is a Moslem convert, but even then he always leaves his shoes at the door. He may, however, wear his cap or turban. Shoes and headgear may be put on again only after the subject is 300 meters from the house of the naba. Sometimes, in places where custom is rigorously enforced, the person must be out of sight.

[687] Any infraction of these rules was punished severely by the lash and by confiscation of property by the samand'kamba of the naba [110] when the offender was not of the nobility, that is, was neither nabiga nor nakombga.

291 It is interesting to note that wearing the fez, originally one of the badges of chieftdom, was forbidden to the nabiga and all the more to the talga (ordinary Moaga). Today it is commonly worn by men and youths since European traders and shops have made common an article which was once very rare.

576 Shaking hands. One seldom sees a naba extend his hand to one of his subjects or, more especially, to his brothers or fellow nobles (nakomsé).

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There are two reasons for this prohibition: 1) the naba is supposed to maintain a certain distance between himself and his subjects, a normal practice; and 2) a superstitious belief has it that persons harboring evil intentions toward the chief put magic powders on their hands to cause swellings which may develop into real abscesses.

[154]

576 Thus, although the Mogho Naba would not in the least object
●643 to shaking hands with a Bambara or a Djerma, he would be astonished if a native Moaga -- even an official -- should offer his hand.

543 As soon as the children of a naba have reached the age of dis-
576 cretion, they may no longer play with their "papa," even less shake hands with him. They must henceforth follow the general rule which requires the Mossi salute, kantissé.

576 [111] Nowadays naba (kombemba) and nayiridamba (ministers
602 of the emperor) understand the uselessness of such signs of distrust. Therefore, even though they continue to be less familiar with their relatives (brothers, uncles, and sons -- whom they regard as rivals), they willingly offer their hands to Mossi of any standing and to foreigners.

644 Reception by the naba. 1) Up to the present time and despite some thirty-five years of French occupation, the way one is received at the court of the emperor, which, of course, befalls his servitors, has altered very little. Natives who are now officials in the administration and in business enterprises are still treated on the same footing as their less highly placed compatriots. Not only are they required to perform the kantissé (Mossi salute) as described by Father Mangin, but also afterwards they must sit on the ground, a position that is difficult in European clothes. Foreigners (Bambara,
[648] Djerma, even Gourounsi) are offered seats because the soroné do not regard them as fellow countrymen.

645 2) By the ministers. At the present time all the emperor's
576 ministers have comfortable houses and splendid drawing rooms
352 furnished with Morris chairs and folding chairs. These seats are offered [112] to visitors of any standing, while benches two or
177 three meters long are reserved for persons of less consequence (house boys, cooks, circle guards, notables, etc.).

631 3) By the kombemba. Benches are always reserved for visitors of
576 note or, if there are none, mats are provided. Some of these chiefs
352 even own a few commonplace chairs and perhaps one or two folding chairs.

773 protection. The Peulh would acquire more cattle by taking charge of the animals belonging to the Mossi, and the Yarga would find better markets for his salt and kola nuts. As for the blacksmith, he would make the many farm implements needed for the cultivation of the vast domains which were either not worked at all or insufficiently exploited because of the lack of tools.

They set the date for their return. Once more the naba received them very cordially, but they showed no greater deference to him than they had shown on their first visit.

And so the legend comes to an end by concluding that this is why the Peulh and the Yarga have retained their spirit of independence. As for the blacksmith, who remained poorer, he came [526] to submit to certain regulations which are common to all the Mossi although he never leaves his forge to salute the naba when he passes. As has already been noted, he merely strikes his zanré against his anvil, just as formerly he struck it on the ground by way of salutation.

[124] Chapter 8

Customs. Enthronement of the Naba. Names.

Death of a Mogho Naba

643 766 The death of a Mogho Naba is kept secret until the arrival at Ouagadougou of the Tansoba, who was forewarned when the illness became grave. On his arrival, the public is told that "the fire has gone out" (bougsaré kimé).

The personages in charge of the burial are Pazany'ting'soba (the undertaker), Tampouy Naba, Kassiri Naba, Benghin Naba, Toghin Naba, Ganin Naba, and Tanghin Naba.

The arrangement of the tomb. The grave in which the mortal remains of the king are buried is really a subterranean hut. Before the king is placed in his final dwelling (1), the following things

1. The body is wrapped in one or several cow hides.

643 are placed in the tomb: two sheep skins (gando); some cushions
766 (nagpouya); several bolsters (fourkamsé); and a zoukougré -- all made of leather. All of these are arranged as though the chief were to lie down to rest.

After the corpse has been washed (Naba Siguire, father of the present Mogho Naba, was washed by marabouts [125] since he was the son of a naba who was a Moslem believer), it is clothed all in white. In the house of every Mogho Naba a corner of the wall is
[531 decorated with rather attractive designs, and the dead Mogho Naba
761] is carried through it on his way to the tomb. The sight of this corner, which is seldom visited, reminds the chief still living of the mortality of all beings and makes him realize that in the same way as he succeeded someone, so will he, in turn, be replaced by another; the corner will one day become an opening through which his own body will pass at the end of his lifetime.

In addition to the garments in which he is clothed, the following items are placed in the grave beside him: a folded white robe (fou yorgo); a pair of trousers (kourga); a blanket (fou gobga); a pair of slippers (néoda); a small knife (souga); a sword (zangoégo); a gourd of beer (dam) with a calabash over the neck and a small cloth (leppré) over it; a loaf of salt (yamsem); a gourd filled with a hundred kola nuts (gouré wamdé); a sewn sack filled with cowries (liguide ne yolmoumdi); napaga ornaments (douamba and zuyan); and tobacco if the chief smoked or chewed it.

[767] The undertaker is entitled to take the salt, some kola nuts, and some meat when he departs.

[126] When the burial is over, one walks around the house of the deceased.

643 It should be noted that before the burial or sometimes when the death of the king is first known, all of his wives who have children take flight for fear that their son will be made kourita.

The kourita is a child of the deceased and must bear the latter's name. He is exiled and must never, so long as he lives, look upon the new Mogho Naba. Until the emperor is represented on earth by his kourita, his successor cannot be named. This explains the general flight of all of the wives who have children.

The Kourita

●143 As we have just seen, the child who is made kourita is exiled and is no longer regarded as a member of the family. He is himself the Naba, and he must never see the new emperor. His brothers may visit him, and he may visit them.

1. The kourita is washed with the remainder of the water that was used to wash the body of the deceased king.

2. He is carried through the same opening (vonré) as was used to carry out the body of the dead naba.

3. He is given the woman with whom the chief last had sexual relations before he was stricken by illness.

4. He is also given the horse which the deceased king rode every Friday.

[127] He is dressed in the last garments worn by the deceased. He is given one or two servitors and as many grooms and is then sent to the Kilwin Naba (chief of a hamlet near Bissiga, three kilometers from Ouagadougou), who is required to give him hospitality for about a month.

In the old days, the power of a kourita was almost unlimited. Indeed, during his stay at Kilwin, he had the right to pillage, to ruin everything, and to live like a true potentate. Naturally he always had plenty of willing helpers to aid him in plundering the property of the unfortunate Mossi. The kourita traveled about through many cantons where the kombemba (plural of kombéré) paid him all the honors due the Mogho Naba. It was during these wanderings that he finally chose a permanent residence.

[187] The new Mogho Naba is obliged to satisfy all the desires of the kourita to avoid being visited by him, an omen of disaster. Indeed, the Mossi believe that if the kourita should visit the new Mogho Naba, the latter would die.

The Enthronement -- Before and After

As we have already seen, once the burial is completed, one walks around the house of the deceased king. Then, the following persons are summoned to Ouagadougou:

1. Loumbila Naba.

43

2. Saponé Naba.
3. Ouagadougou Naba (who lives in Ouagadougou). [128]
4. Zagtouli Naba.
5. Bingo Naba.
6. Gnimdi Naba.
7. Sabtenga Naba.

All of these personages are accompanied by many men, armed with arrows and rifles. They halt before the women's gate (paghnoré) and lie down. They have become guards of the royal household.

At this time the candidates for the position of Mogho Naba are all in Ouagadougou, and each of them is calling on the ministers and presenting many gifts to them. There is often competition for the post, but as a rule the eldest son of the king is named to succeed his father.

On the day of the nomination, the nabiga (from naba, "chief," and biga "son") is taken to the home of the Samandé Naba where the ministers hold council. If they agree unanimously to name the nabiga, they bring him out of the hut in which he has been anxiously awaiting their decision and tell him that Oubritenga, Zound'wéogo, Koudtenga, and so on are his property (that is, that he is recognized as the sole holder of power and that he alone rules all the lands enumerated). This is ordinarily done in the evening. The next morning the new Mogho Naba dresses and mounts his horse in front of the paghnoré (women's gate). The Kalzi Naba takes the bridle, leads the new appointee to the Loumbila Naba, and says to the latter and his followers: "Oubritenga Ramba, adi Naba, adi Kouda (People of Oubritenga, here is your master)."

[129] He is then taken before the Saponé Naba, and the latter and his followers are told: "Koud'tinga Ramba, adi Naba, adi Kouda (People of Koud'tinga, here is your master)."

The new chief is then presented to the Zagtouli Naba and to the Ouagadougou Naba with the words: "Naba Rimba Tenga Ramba, adi Naba, adi Kouda (People of Rimbatenga, here is your master)."

Finally, he is presented to the remaining chiefs with the words: "Zound'wéogo Ramba, adi Naba, adi Kouda (Here is your master)."

The Mogho Naba then returns to his house. He is king.

643 Soon afterward he comes out and seats himself in the shade of a tree at the home of the Samandé Nabila [assistant to the Samandé Naba]. The doudissi are played ensemble, and the whole populace shouts joyfully.

The Ouidi Naba, the Tansoba, and all the other ministers and important personages come to present homage and to swear their fealty and submission. Each one makes a profession of loyalty.

In the evening, the new naba leaves the home of the Samandé Nabila and goes to spend the night at the home of the Ouagadougou Naba.

The next day he goes to Passepanga (from passé, "to increase, to add," and panga, "power, strength") where all other chiefs and descendants of Mogho Naba come to salute him.

At Passepanga the Mogho Naba sits under a tree with thousands of men right and left, all armed with rifles and aligned as for a session of rifle practice. They leave a kind of avenue in front of the new naba so that he is easily seen. Each [130] naba, with his retinue, comes to swear fealty and to make a profession of loyalty. The brothers of the new appointee, even those who were his rivals, come to make obeisance. The Mogho Naba then retires to the home of his gansoba (host) and sees to it that everyone has ample quantities of dam and that nissi (cows) are slaughtered for them.

The Mogho Naba remains at Passepanga for a week, and then he goes to Dimvoussé ("king's rest").

Finally, two or three years later, he chooses the place where he wishes to build his permanent residence.

Certain Names and Their Meaning

551 When appointed, every chief loses his given name, and he is even forbidden to say it. He chooses a name for himself when he is appointed.

We shall now study some of these names and try to establish the moral precepts that go with them.

551 643 1. Mogho Naba Wobgo (Boukary was his real name). When Mogho Naba Sanum (literally, "gold") drove his brother Boukary from his territory, the latter took refuge at Bassawarga where he conquered the Gourounsi whom he enslaved, although later they became his sofa [guards or military retinue].

551 When Naba Sanum died, several candidates presented them-
143 selves to be named Mogho Naba.

Boukary also returned, accompanied by an impressive escort of Gourounsi armed with arrows, rifles, and clubs. He made gifts to the ministers, as all his [131] rivals were doing. However, seeing that the nomination of a successor to his late brother was being delayed, he one day remarked to the Ouidi Naba: "Designate anyone you wish for the throne, but I shall wrest it from him."

The evening of the day set for the nomination arrived (we have already noted that each candidate was put in a hut at the home of the Samandé Nabila), and the future Naba Wobgo assembled all his Gourounsi followers and addressed them more or less in these terms: "The new Mogho Naba is to be appointed tonight; when I go to the home of the Samandé Nabila you follow me, be armed, and surround the place. If by any chance I am not named, I shall say to you when I come out, 'Forward! Spare no one, not even the ministers, the other nabissi, or the new appointee.' "

That night, the Gourounsi, faithful to the commands of their chief, did as he had ordered.

While the ministers were discussing which of the nabissi should be named (of course, the future Naba Wobgo was automatically eliminated), the Larrhallé Naba came out to relieve himself. In the half-darkness he was astonished to see the men armed with arrows, rifles, and clubs. He reported these disquieting developments to the Ouidi Naba, who at once came out to see for himself. Everyone knew that only Boukary could organize such a plot. Fearing that they would otherwise all be murdered, they unanimously appointed him Mogho Naba.

When the time came for him to select the name that would be his until death, he said this: [132] "Kim missi laguem koabga kon bougouss'Wobgo (a hundred ghosts cannot frighten an elephant)." I am sure that here he was addressing his competitors. Then he added: "Ni Tiem Koudré Banghe pouiré taloug'pa salga (an old man who bequeaths his property wisely avoids strife)." Here he was addressing the ministers. He was aware that he was not liked, so he had prepared for war. The ministers had not wanted to name him and had done so only out of fear of being murdered.

551 643 2. Mogho Naba Kom (kom, "water"). When he was still quite young, Mogho Naba Kom, who is on the throne today, succeeded his father, Naba Siguiri, to the great surprise of his enemies. He took the name of Naba Kom.

(a) Kom sound Tambdo ti koulg'king lad moaghana. (During the rainy season when much water falls, the rivers and seas rejoice to see their water swell.)

(b) Neb san toul béogo bi a balem Wendé. (He who dreams of tomorrow must place his faith in God.)

(c) Sandib, laguem koabga ti pigh'pam nionré. Since he was very young at the time of his nomination, many begrudged him the appointment, and sorcery was used to cause his death. This third name means "A hundred charlatans, makers of charms, cannot prevail against the pigha (rock, i.e., the chief)."

(d) Gonpaniendégha kon nies niédga. (One does not [133] wipe one's bottom with thorns and brambles.) This alludes to his enemies and means that in spite of them he rules all the same.

(e) Tang'niebga belem mogré pamé wek'balbo. (Since the crocodile can only really live and procreate along the banks of watercourses, what is a mountain crocodile to do if he desires many offspring? He must move his dwelling and go to the water.)

551 645 3. The Ouidi Naba (actually named Rabi), Naba Boulga (literally, "well [pit]").

(a) Baning sorr'yoagba n'tilig kinsé la wamsé. (The large white or sorghum grown under the Strophanthus has no fear of being eaten by birds or monkeys.)

(b) Yel somd'boulgh'tont niédbo. (The well of righteousness cannot be filled.)

4. The Gounga Naba (actually named Namébrogo Ilboudo), Naba Yemdé (literally, "hippopotamus"). Yem deng kouilga ti zimbi datin dem yaré. ("When the hippopotamus is first to arrive at the waterhold, the fish can play about at will," or "when fish play around a hippopotamus, they will not be troubled by either big fish or fishermen.")

5. The Baloum Naba (Tenga Ouédraogo), Naba Tanga (literally, "mountain").

(a) "A mountain crowned with trees is soon noticed," or "in order to be respected, one must have good support, good backing."

551 645 [134] (b) Kata laghem koagb'kon sirigh tanga. (A hundred barking hyenas cannot shake a mountain.)

6. Kamsoro Naba (Ouene Nongué), Naba Niouga ("cat"). He is chief eunuch. Nioug'nok wendé na pa ne Sabelem. (A cat who trusts in God is sure to preserve his blackness.) In other words, one who is protected by the Mogho Naba, his "God," will never lack for anything; everything will come to him as if by magic.

551 643 835 7. Naba Gnighnemdo (Mogho Naba). Naba Oubri, the founder of the Ouagadougou dynasty, fell in love with one of his own daughters and had intercourse with her. The girl became pregnant and gave birth to a son. The wives of Naba Oubri wanted to put both the child and the mother to death. They asked the girl the name of the child's father, and she replied, "Ask my father, he ought to know." When Oubri was questioned, he answered: "Bassi yan ya mam lam gnighnemdo (Do nothing, this is my own flesh)."

The child of this incestuous union was thus named Gnighnemdo and later succeeded his relative, Naba Nasbiré.

The Placing of Statues at Loumbi-Raogo

211 306 532 Ganlougdou. In the old days, upon the death of a Mogho Naba or soon after, a jeweler was called in [135] to make a wax statuette, later to be cast in bronze, in the likeness of the late chief. The jeweler also made statuettes of one soroné, one napagha, one bendré, and one lounga, and all were deposited at the home [177] of the Loumbila Naba. This practice was suppressed upon the arrival of the French, and it appears that there is no statue of Naba Siguiri, father of Naba Kom, the present naba, at Loumbila.

The acting Mogho Naba is never supposed to see these statues, and the jeweler who made the likeness of his father must not see [435] them either. The jeweler was paid 100,000 cowries, a horse, a donkey, a cow, a wife, a large robe, and 1,000 kola nuts, and he was then sent away from Ouagadougou. He must never return and must never see the new Mogho Naba.

These gifts represented a considerable sum in the old days, even today for that matter. They were given to aid the jeweler in consulting seers and charlatans for the purpose of prolonging his life. Tradition has it that unless he followed faithfully the prescriptions given by the seers, he would die within a year after completing the statues.

631 766 everyone gives what he can. Everyone from the Nabitienga down through his brothers and sisters, close relatives, and their brothers and sisters, in short, anyone even remotely related to the deceased, comes up and offers something. Most often the gift is made up of cowries.

The koupéogo is then returned to the zaongo. Some zom kom (water with flour in it) and some dam (dolo or fermented millet beer) are poured at the door of the antechamber.

The benda and other drummers gather up all the cowries they have received and go a short distance from the house to divide them up.

The benda are expected to give a few cowries to any Yarga, Silmimoaga, or sayan (1) who happens to pass by during the distribution.

1. Yarga: a Dioula [Diula] of the Mandé [Mande] group. Silmimoaga: one who has adopted the customs of the Peulh.

Sayan: blacksmith.

643 428] (b) Fado. This is the share that goes by right to the Mogho Naba from the estate of every kombéré.

[138] The Mogho Naba sends representatives to whom are entrusted a rooster, a sheep, and, depending on the importance of the chief, a cow and 5,000 to 10,000 cowries.

As soon as he has been presented to the Nabitienga, the first envoy of the Mogho Naba says to him: "Nab'kayé ti mog'naba yel tid wa pous' nabitiengh'togo lad reguib' lokon'wa tib laguemb taba ti ya yel koudgo (Such-and-such a chief having died, the Mogho Naba sends us to deliver his condolences to the Nabitienga and to request of him that the quiver of the naba be turned over to us so that it may be placed beside those of his ancestors, as is the custom)."

The Nabitienga thanks them and orders the loko [quiver] to be brought out at once. It is placed on the ground, and sacrifice is made, in turn, of the chicken, the sheep, and even the cow sent by the Mogho Naba.

631 All of these preliminaries are only the beginning, and when
643 they are completed, the emperor's first envoy orders the Nabitienga
428 to go out into the sunshine so that the fado [share for the Mogho
766 Naba] may be claimed. The Nabitienga complies with the request. Thereupon the first envoy says to him through a messenger: "Mogh' Naba yé tid wa reg fado, ya nig'tousri (1,000 head of cattle), pissi tousri (1,000 sheep), bouss'tousri (1,000 goats), foutou tousri (1,000 garments)," etc. To which the Nabitienga replies: "Tond ba sin ki a ka bas roumsi ne arzek'yé (our late father left neither animals nor other wealth sufficient to satisfy the demands of the Mogho Naba)."

The messenger reports the reply to the emperor's representatives. The relatives of the Nabitienga go [139] to gather together a wanka (hoe), a laré (ax), and a goégo (sickle), and then they tell the nayiridamba (representatives) to go into the antechamber where all of the wealth is piled up. The nayirdamba [sic] send in some soroné who come back and report on what is there. Then they ask the Nabitienga for the fado a second time, and this time it is given to them in the form of the following articles: a robe, a pair of trousers, bracelets, fodo, rouamba (ornaments of the napagha), an ample robe, a pair of slippers, a knife (zangoégo), some salt, some cowries, kalgo (soumbala) balls, nemdo (dried meat), moui (rice), etc.

The envoys are housed for a whole week by the Mabitienga, aided by the inhabitants and his relatives.

On the eighth day, before taking leave of his guests, the Nabitienga slaughters a cow, has large quantities of saghbo and beer prepared and sheep killed, gives clothing to all the envoys of the Mogho Naba, offers them up to 50,000 cowries, depending on their importance, etc.

He has a horse saddled with his father's saddle, and the animal is tethered in front of the antechamber.

One of the nayirdamba unties the horse and walks three times around the house of the deceased naba. The person who mounts the horse is given liguidi (cowries) and clothing and the fez of the naba. He is entitled to keep all this after his return to Ouagadougou, after he has reported to the authorities. The horse becomes the property of the Mogho Naba and is turned over to the Wedranga Naba (personal equerry of the king).

644
595 foreigners who are being housed by the naba. [164]

Each sogoné or samanbiga chooses a mother from among the
644 wives of the naba (only those in the first two sections).
595
He helps her to cultivate her plot of ground and receives in
357 return a little food over and above the ration of sagbo given to the
608 sogoné as a group.

At Nanore (1), for example, it was formerly the rule that

> 1. Canton in the administrative district of Koudougou.

when a woman brought some sagbo to her adopted son, she could not simply hand it to him. Instead, holes were dug in the courtyard of the naba, into which the woman put the sagbo and sauce. Then the young man came to eat the food, and later the woman came back for her bowls.

644 Finally, it is still forbidden for anyone to play a guitar when
595 a napagha is passing by unless the player is the naba himself or
533 someone called upon to play by the naba. It should be noted that
687 the Moaga prefers the guitar for intimate occasions. Therefore, to
832 play it when a napagha passes by is actually to court her.

The Pogsiouré, or the Recruitment of Sogoné and Saman'kamba

643 Aside from a few special cases limited by custom which we
562 shall presently describe, the naba can never dispose of the daughters of his subjects, either to make them [165] his own wives or to bestow them on someone else, without the permission of the parents.

Pogsiouré comes from pog', the diminutive of pagha, "woman," and from siouré, diminutive of sioubo, "to give anticipating a profit."

562 As a result of family quarrels or even voluntarily, a Moaga
431 "may give away his daughters and those of his brothers and close
643 relatives to the naba." It is obvious that the naba cannot keep all of these girls, so he gives some of them to his brothers, his uncles, his sons, and even to ordinary Mossi who have done him a service.

In the same way -- and this is more frequent -- every sogoné (page) or samand'biga [singular of samand'kamba] (bodyguard or

562
431 groom) who has served his naba satisfactorily receives, at the
643 time he is freed, a young girl who may be nubile, but who may, on the other hand, be just a small child.

In either case, the former servitor is required to call upon the naba from time to time and to take him gifts (cowries or roosters). If the girl is still living with her relatives, in addition to his trifling presents to the naba, the fiancé may make a few presents to his in-laws, although it is not obligatory.

562 Pogsiouré. The first daughter born of a marriage between a
643 Moaga subject (former servitor, son, brother, or uncle of the naba,
644 etc.) and the woman given to him [166] by the naba becomes the
858 "property" of the latter with full rights over her. She is known as "the daughter of the pogsiouré" and is fated to become pogsiouré in her turn.

643 If the first-born is a boy, the naba may bring him to his
644 court as soon as he reaches the age of discretion to make him either
858 a sogoné or a samand'biga, and the child's father cannot make the
1357 slightest objection.

This does not imply that under Mossi law the sogoné and samand'kamba must be children of the pogsiouré. As absolute master of all his subjects, the naba can recruit his servitors throughout his domain as he needs them, with no opposition by the Mossi to this recruitment.

644 The fate of the daughters of the pogsiouré. The girls are
858 taken from their relatives as soon as they are old enough to work
562 and are entrusted by the naba to his own wives.

The latter, for all practical purposes, become the adoptive mothers of these children and, as such, see to their food and clothing. This does not prevent the real mother from bringing cowries and clothing to her daughter, and to make sure that the child will be well treated by the napagha (wife of the naba), she sometimes
[431] even brings the latter a gift of kalgo (soumbala) or karite butter (kamé).

When the girls reach puberty, the naba chooses the most at-
[584] tractive for his fiancées, and the [167] others are given to some of his administrators or to his own relatives.

644 357 608 for example), and in return the adoptive mother gives him a bit of food, over and above his regular ration.

644 357 [169] In view of these circumstances, those who are not required at the home of the naba to care for the horses or for some special service spend half the year with their relatives.

644 357 565 It is perhaps of interest to point out that the samand'kamba are mostly sons of the chiefs of villages of nabissi (sons of naba), sons of nakomsé (descendants of naba and nabissi), and sometimes even sons of canton chiefs at the court of the Mogho Naba. There is also the child of the ordinary Moaga, who was not made a sogoné because he was not thought worthy of the position. The rigorous discipline required of the former young men teaches them "to suffer in order to be able to command."

644 357 Anticipation of freedom. If the sogoné or samand'biga is the eldest son and is old enough to marry at the time of his father's death, the naba is required to free him, even though the period of obligatory service has not been completed.

643 844 584 Another custom, the zan-boko. There is another curious custom among the Mossi. If during the course of his journeys the naba stops in a village and during his stay a girl is born to a local Mossi woman, the child is his, with full rights, if he has been told of the birth.

However, the naba often knows nothing about the event, and the father takes care not to speak of it and then makes whatever disposition of the child he wishes.

844 584 [170] This custom, however, is practiced to its fullest extent between Mossi. A Moaga sana (stranger) passing through the village is invited by the elders to dig the zan-boko (hole in which the placenta must be buried). This is his zounogo, "opportunity." He gives a few cowries (100 to 200) to the head of the family and becomes the fiancé of the baby girl. Later on, when she reaches puberty, the man will make the customary gifts to the parents, and nothing will stand in the way of the marriage.

Chapter 12

The Penetration of Islam into Mossi Country

Islam in the Land of the Mogho Naba

643 The Mogho Naba, like his subjects, is above all an animist,
794 and it is hard to understand how he reconciles his fetishism with
771 the complex dogmas of Islam and with the many interdictions of Christianity.

The Mogho Naba, however, is quite capable of being a Catholic or a Moslem on appropriate occasions and at the same time respecting the traditions of his ancestors. Thus, when the Christians celebrate Christmas, the emperor of the Mossi devoutly attends Midnight Mass. He keeps his cap on, however, just as the bishop wears his miter. In the same way he embraces Islam during the following three festivals: the moaghrem (the Mossi zembendé); Ramadan (nolokré, "to loosen the mouth"); and, finally, the zoulhési (the Mossi tabaski or kibsa).

797 Before describing how the Mogho Naba celebrates these Moslem festivals, we shall give a brief history of Islam among the Mossi and discuss the appointment of imams.

The Arrival of Islam among the Mossi

797 It was during the reign of Naba Doulgou, the twenty-third
793 Mogho Naba [204] after Oubri, founder of the Ouagadougou dynasty, that Islam took root in the empire of the Mogho Naba, and it was at that time that an imam was appointed at Ouagadougou.

Naba Sawadogo, who succeeded his father, Doulgou, sent his children to the Koranic school. Many of them obtained a fairly good education there, and the eldest son, who later succeeded to the throne under the name of Naba Koutou, even became a marabout. The development of Islam in Mossi country dates from his reign, as does practice of giving children of the Mogho Naba Moslem names such as Saïdou, Mahama, Moumouni, etc.

797 the case for canton chiefs and ministers, this position is handed
793 down in [206] the same family. Obviously a son is not called to succeed his father unless he has been educated well enough to settle, to the satisfaction of the emperor, the few questions which will be submitted to him. In any event, the choice will always fall on a member of the family of Moustapha, the first Imam.

Celebration of the Moslem Festivals by the Mogho Naba

796 Moaghrem (the Mossi zambende). The moaghrem marks the beginning of the new year of the hegira. Every Moslem family must feast on the evening before the holiday. The next morning, that is, on the tenth day of the month of Moaghrem [Muharram], the sourata, book of the year, is read, and one learns the name of the saint who will preside over the destiny of the world for the next 360 days. Alms are stipulated. This festival, which represents a return to joy, solemnly commemorates the day on which the Patriarch, Noe [Noah] (called Nabi Nouhou by the marabouts), alone blessed by the Lord, first set foot on dry land after the flood which exterminated mankind. This was a return to life, and it was the Day of Fire.

The Mossi have never understood the meaning of the Moslem festivals and celebrate them in their own way. They did not understand that the "Day of Fire" meant a return to family life, to cooking food over a fire, but instead made up a curious custom which is more reminiscent of the taking of the Bastille. On that day they light torches, chase each other about, and burn each other. This sometimes results in [207] real injuries which fortunately are easily healed.

The Silmissi (Peulh of Mossi country) do rather better since they sprinkle themselves with cool water. This represents at least a wish for good health.

The tabaski (zoulhési or Mossi kibsa). In the old days the Mogho
796 Naba was required to go to the great mosque at Zoaghna on the day
643 of tabaski.

Yamaba, chief of the Yarcé (Dioula whose ancestor, Koanda, came to Mossi country during the reign of Koumdoumié, the eighth Mogho Naba), has the duty of sacrificing the cattle and sheep

796 provided by the emperor. The meat is distributed among the as-
643 sembled faithful. The salam took place in the mosque, and on this occasion the emperor became a Moslem whether or not he was actually a believer. He was expected to take his place among the faithful immediately behind the Imam. As soon as the Imam finished reciting verses from the sacred books, he turns toward the faithful, says, "A salama leckum," and then shakes the king's hand. When the prayer is ended, the emperor returns home, and the Imam soon follows to sacrifice the tabaski sheep. The Mogho Naba himself is required to hold the animal's tail.

Ramadan (Mossi nolokré). It is well known that Ramadan or Lent of the Moslems (the nolokré of the Mossi, from noré, "mouth," and lokré, "untie the knot, loosen") involves a series of privations and abstinences [208] during which the defenceless body is subjected to all sorts of indispositions, sometimes giving rise to real illness.

It is also obvious that the emperor is subject to so severe a regime and to so many obligations that it would be impossible for him to fast, as do the marabouts, even if he were a believer. Nevertheless, the emperor has been so thoroughly persuaded of the yelsomdé (bliss) attained by the penitent after the thirty days of suffering and since he is by no means indifferent to anything concerning the splendors of the Beyond, he asks for volunteers among his entourage who will practice abstinence in his place. On the day of the festival, they receive many gifts (robes, cowries, etc.).

What follows is a summary of the manner in which the king of the Mossi celebrated Ramadan a few years ago.

On the day of the festival, the Gare-yarga (Yarga in charge
[272] of the saddle) appears early in the morning bearing hydromel in an old gourd which is said to have been used by Naba Rimba. He drinks a little of the liquid to "break the fast" and then offers a gourdful to the Mogho Naba for the same purpose. The remainder is given to the ministers and other court officials.

The emperor offers food to all present (bowls of rice and sagbo). He has had one or two cows and many sheep slaughtered in advance.

Around seven-thirty in the morning the Mogho Naba used to go with his usual entourage to Roundé-yiri (a place of prayers, a kind of outdoor mosque which [209] used to be located northwest

796
643 of the present house of Ouendasida, the police adjutant), and there he attended the salam presided over by the Imam.

After the ceremony, the Imam, surrounded by the faithful, went to call upon the emperor for the doua (a kind of benediction involving the recitation of verses from the Koran). The Imam received kola nuts and sheep or a cow.

[368] At the present time the two mosques exist in name only; the one real mosque is that of the Imam in the ward of the mohémé (marabouts). The present Mogho Naba never attends the salam on feast days. He goes to the Circle [Administration Building], then to the home of the Governor, and finally returns home to await the visit of the representative of Islam in Mossi country.

643 The only Mogho Naba who was truly a Moslem was Naba
368 Koutou, the twenty-seventh successor of Oubri. He was sent to
177 the Koranic school at Sagabtenga and is said to have made a creditable record there. When he succeeded his father, he installed a mosque in front of the women's gate. Since then a mosque has traditionally been located in the same place on the palace grounds of every Mogho Naba, even though, as in the case of the present emperor, he was not a believer.

643 Naba Koutou regularly made his salam in accordance with
177 the rites of the Moslem faith and even observed the thirty days of abstinence during the month of fasting. [210] All his children had Moslem names. All, except his eldest son who succeeded him as Naba Sanum, were sent to Koranic schools, although none did any serious work there since they were more interested in becoming naba.

643 During his lifetime, Naba Koutou himself never sentenced
696 anyone to death, even if he were guilty. He loved peace. When his ministers submitted serious cases to him, he always said: "Go and do what seems best and do not tell me what fate was meted out to the guilty." Like Pontius Pilate, he allowed his ministers to bear the responsibility for the crimes. Since he gave little credence to what the priests said of poéré (confession by the use of magic), he acquitted individuals condemned to death by that barbaric method.

264 meal of sagbo in the evening.

What we call breakfast is hardly known. Between the two main meals, however, the chiefs have meat grilled or roasted. They are very fond of it and have it seasoned with enough salt and pepper to make it possible to consume the endless number of [273] small gourds of beer which they drink from morning to night.

The Moaga has only one real meal a day, the evening meal. A large millet cake satisfies the day's hunger. If there is any left over, he keeps it carefully for his morning meal. If there is none left, a frequent state of affairs, he makes do with his zompanrga, crushed millet diluted with water and sometimes eaten with a bit of vegetable fat or a few peanuts.

He rarely eats any rice, and if he has no sagbo, he contents himself with benga and souma.

261 It is during the festivals that the Moaga eats his fill. At such
527 times the head of the compound kills a goat, a sheep, or some chickens and has sagbo and fabirama prepared, or beans with copious amounts of karite butter. This is the feast. The members of the family stuff themselves to the point where attacks of diarrhea are inevitable. The results of the attacks are all the more serious in that they are never cared for properly.

The only seasonings known to the Moaga are kalgo (soumbala),
263 red pepper, okra, and salt. No more than a few years ago, how-
439 ever, before the [251] development of trade in the colony, salt was brought from Timbuktu and Mopti by the Dioula and Yarcé and was so expensive that the Mossi people who lived in the countryside often went for six months without tasting salted food.

241 There is reason to believe that the time is not far off when the Moaga will devote his efforts much more intensively to cash crops, such as cotton, potatoes, peanuts, etc. In this domain, the province chiefs at Ouagadougou have made real progress.

Mogh'Nab' Kawinré (Threshing the Grain of the Mogho Naba)

241 Sacrifices. For this ceremony, the emperor summons the
643 Mankougoudougou Tengsoba (a descendant of the autochthonous
782 Nioniossé, masters of the land) to Ouagadougou and gives him a

241 sheep to be sacrificed to the threshing floor (zéiga).
643 The work. After this sacrifice, around two-thirty in the after-
782 noon, the Kam Naba (a notable in the section of the Baloum Naba) proceeds to the threshing floor with the young men from Bilbalogo and Dapoya who have been assembled for the occasion. The operation involves beating the millet stalks with tree branches cut to form an obtuse angle and called dabandé or soika.

643 When the job is done, the workers depart, [252] leaving the
241 grain to be gathered up another day.

The next morning they return to the field, preceded by the Bend' Naba (chief drummer), who plays the bouloumbougri kabse nanamsé to which the other drummers respond with bouroum-bouroum (the Bend Naba gives the names of the emperor's ministers, recalling the origins of each one, and wishes a happy new year to Oubri-yiri Naba, "master of the house of Oubri," that is, to the Mogho Naba; bouroum-bouroum has no special meaning).

Immediately thereafter, the Bend Naba invites the young men to the warba (funeral dance), which is actually only a confused stamping on the millet which in the process is scattered far and wide. Suddenly the drums stop, the signal for a rest. Then the Kam Naba from Bilbalogo divides the pile of millet into two parts by tracing a straight line across the center of the zéiga. The people from Bilbalogo (the section of the Baloum Naba) gather one half, and those from Dapoya (section of the house slaves) gather up the other half.

Whether it is a good or bad year, the emperor's harvest is expected to yield 100 baskets (péog' koabga) full of grain.

The Mogho Naba sends 50 to 70 canari of beer to the workers and shortly goes there himself. He also distributes two or three wassé (from waga, load of 1,000 kola nuts) to the ministers and to the workers.

After thanking and encouraging the workers, the [253] emperor returns to his house, escorted by his ministers and all the horsemen.

643 Mankougoudougou Tensoba then uses wet ashes to make three
241 lines on the ground in different parts of the zéiga. Then he takes
782 a lagha (small earthenware jar) and puts some water into it. He

643 241 782 pronounces a few sacramental words and lightly sprinkles the millet, saying: "Zâbre saga Ybéogo sâga, samb'da kôbo la ka toin sameb'la fi yé (the morning and evening rains may put a stop to the cultivation of the fields, but cannot injure the health of the King)." He next takes a straw broom (sagha) and pulls it apart in order to get a bit of millet to put into the lagha mentioned above. He goes then to the temporary granary (lourgho, granary [343] made of Mossi secco) and walks around it three times. An emissary of the emperor gives him a white rooster (nora-pelga), some beer (dam), and zom-kom (water with flour in it). The priest sits down in the shade of the lourgho and before making the sacrifice pronounces the following words: "Naba Siguiri bad'kom, deghin kon Naba Wogbo, tib reg, kon Naba Sanum, tib kon Naba Koutou, tib reg' kon Naba Baongo, tib kon Naba Karfo, tib reg'kon Naba Sawadogo, tib reg la be kon Nab, gnimassem, la lafi," which means literally, "I offer this rooster, this water with flour, and this beer to Naba Siguiri (father of the reigning emperor) in order that he will persuade the Mogho Nabas Wobgo, Sanum, Koukou, Baongo, Karfo, and Sawadogo, to accept them, so that the emperor may enjoy good health and happiness."

The Tengsoba then hands the small quantity of millet [254] which he took earlier to the pugtiéma (first wife of the king) to be made into a millet cake and offered to the spirits (manes of deceased emperors and other spirits of the threshing floor).

643 251 Transporting the millet to the granaries. The wives, daughters, and sisters of the Mogho Naba are alone given the duty of carrying the millet to the granaries (baoré) (1). We have already noted that

1. This baoré granary is made of earth mixed with quantities of straw.

there are supposed to be a hundred loads of grain, even though the harvest may not fill twenty baskets. The number of baskets required by custom is attained by putting a small quantity of millet in each basket.

643 241 The millet intentionally left on the zéiga. A little millet is purposely left here and there on the zéiga, and the Kassiri Naba (village chief) takes it for his own use. This signal favor, however,

643 imposes a heavy obligation on the chief. He is expected to in-
241 vite the emperor's principal bodyguards (samand'kamba) -- and there are many of them -- to a meal. He is also required to furnish a basket of millet for sowing the field of the Mogho Naba when the first rains come.

652 Utilization of the produce of the emperor's fields. As noted
644 in an earlier chapter [255] under Labor required of Mossi subjects by their naba," the Mogho Naba does not use the millet from his own field. The produce is used to feed the horses, to support the pages and samand'kamba, and especially to make beer on the festive days known as the tinsé and basgha of the king.

[256] Chapter 17

Inheritance and Rights of Succession among the Mossi

428 We have dealt with the question of inheritance at considerable length in the chapter on "Customs and Enthronement of Mossi Chiefs." We return to the subject because it seems necessary to clarify certain details of this question which is so important from the legal point of view.

The opening of succession. The succession is open upon the death of an individual, but property is not passed until after the funeral ceremonies (for all that concerns funerals, see the section on "Death").

Why is there a delay in taking possession of the property? As we have seen above in many chapters, the Moaga is superstitious. An old belief has it that to take possession of the property of the deceased before the funeral is celebrated will bring certain death to the heir or will cause some calamity for the whole family.

Further, since all the members of the family must be assembled for the funeral observances, the inheritance is well publicized, and [257] no one can later claim to have been defrauded.

Requirements for succession. In order to inherit, the following requirements must be met.

1. To be born before the succession is opened.

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Mogho Naba Kom Ruler of the Mossi.

From the Mission of the White
Fathers at Ouagadougou.

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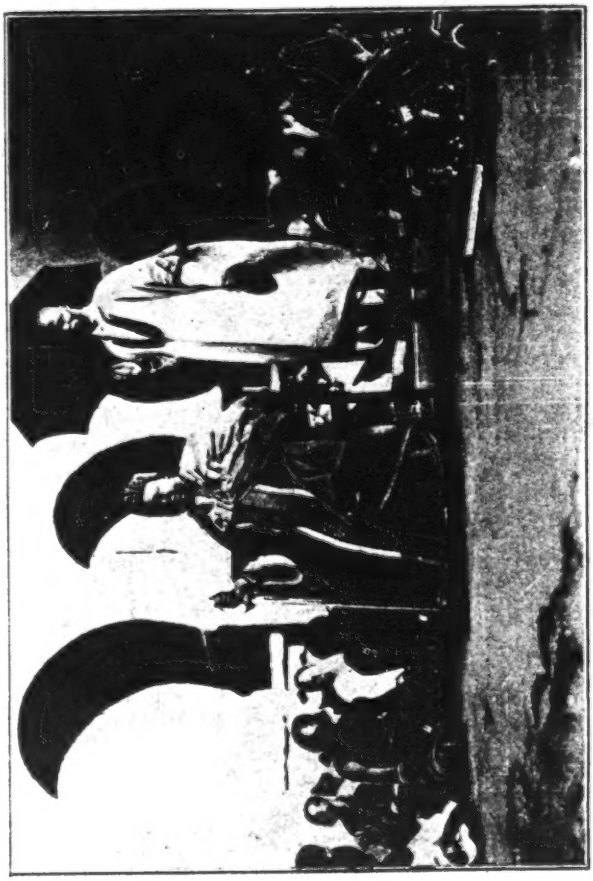

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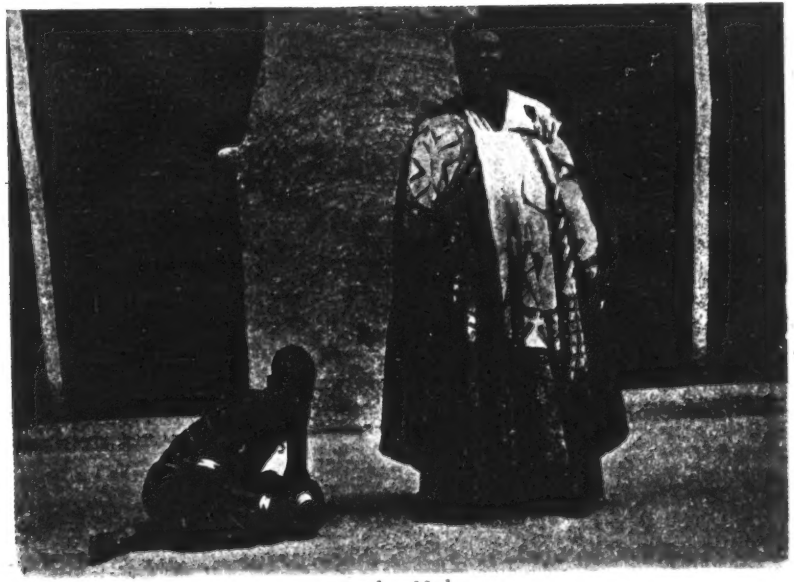

Mogho Naba

Mogho Naba
The Ruler of all the Mossi and a Servitor.

From the Mission of the White Fathers
at Ouagadougou.

/4/ BOOK I. POLITICAL LIFE

Chapter 1. The Country and Its Inhabitants

142 Although the Mossi is not a handsome type of Black, there is nothing disagreeable about him. He is rather tall, with lively eyes, woolly hair, flat nose, occasionally rather fine features, lips which are broad without being too thick, and cheeks heavily marked with three parallel lines running from the temples to the chin and a fourth leading perpendicularly from the nose to the other three. His limbs are muscular, and his color neither ebony nor copper but an intermediate hue.

291 He acquires a truly attractive and resolute air when he dresses in festive clothes, with his broad, dark blue, Zouave-like trousers, his loose shirt made of white and blue fabric strips which falls lightly over the arms, and on the right shoulder his doré, a weapon consisting 411 of a slightly bent iron rod, flattened at one end and terminating at the other in a ring hafted perpendicularly to a short stick. His wrist [301] is often adorned with a copper bracelet, and he nearly always carries at his waist a stiff knife, enclosed in a leather sheath which ends in a tuft of leather strips with cowries attached to them. He wears a 291 cap made of two diamond-shaped pieces of colored fabric half-sewn together; the two free ends may serve to cover the ears and cheeks, but are usually worn raised in the shape of a tiara. A great fighter, he wields the knife with dexterity or strikes with the doré which can become a dangerous club.

173 The Mossi are a conquering people. They have not always lived in the territory they now occupy. But where did they come from? 648 The elders questioned all say that their people came from Gambaga 643 (British Gold Coast), and this is why the Moro Naba Wobro took refuge in Gambaga when he was dethroned by the French conquest; this is also why the naba of Gambaga is notified whenever a Moro Naba dies, and why the shoes, cap, and scepter of command of the deceased are sent to him as gifts to be laid on the ancestral tomb. Gifts are also sent to the naba of Fada N'Gourma, which the Mossi call "Bingo." When the Moro Naba dies, his bow and quiver are presented to the

173 chief of Fada along with his two best horses, saddled, his two youngest
648 wives, twelve head of cattle, one captive, and three bars of salt.
[643] When the naba of Fada dies, however, nothing is sent to the Moro Naba, but his best horse is sent to the chief of Gambaga.

There has been contact, therefore, between the Gourmantché /Gurma/ of Fada, the Mossi, and the Dagomse /Dagomba/ of Gambaga. The Gourmantché claim that they come from Bornu. The first naba of Fada was a slave of the naba of Bornu. The Gourmantché formerly ruled the area as far as Dori. The Peul /Fulani/ came and chased them from the region after a long war. The Gourmantché, however, did not fight either the people of Gambaga or the Mossi. If they ever fought the latter, it was in the course of civil wars; the naba of Fada requested the Mossi to help him against his own subjects.

/5/ This is how the Mossi tell of the conquest of the territory. A
173 daughter of the chief of Gambaga, called Yennenga, had a son by the hunter Riala. This son was given the name Weddaogo. His son, Zougourana, seized Tenkodogo and settled there; in his turn Zougourana's son, Naba Oubri, seized the Ouagadougou area and became master of the whole country. The eldest son of Yennenga had seized Fada and founded the present dynasty, but had been unable to impose his language or his tattoing patterns on the inhabitants. This explains the gifts sent to Gambaga, the cradle of the race, and to the naba of Fada, the eldest son of the family. Part of the autochtonous inhabitants, driven away by the Mossi invasion, withdrew to the southeast and became the Bousansé /Busansi/ and the Gourounsi; the other part, remaining in the country, were assimilated by the Mossi and learned the tongue of their conquerors. A son of Naba Oubri, Naba Namendé, seized Bélousa and its territory.

In the meantime, the naba of Tenkodogo died, leaving only one son who succeeded him. His family requested the naba of Bélousa to give them his own son, who became Kourita, representative after death, of the deceased naba of Tenkodogo. Kourita wished to return to his father in Bélousa, but the latter sent him word not to do so, and Kourita stopped at Zaoré, a day's march from Bélousa, where his immediate successors resided. It was only later that this dynasty came to settle in Koupéla, after defeating and expelling, with the help of the naba of Bélousa, the descendants of Naba Guigma who had settled in Gobro near Soulgou. This is how the province of Koupéla originated, and this is why the naba of Koupéla must be invested by his overlord, the naba of Bélousa.

701 When a chief assembled his men, no one stayed behind. Only the
72 women, children, invalids, and old men guarded the villages. Those who had no horses formed the infantry; they were armed with bow
[411] and arrows, usually poisoned, and a large sword hung from the shoulder. The horsemen carried a sword and a spear that rested on the tip of the foot and was held at mid-height with the right hand. The Mossi cavalry was especially numerous and fearful. The Moro Naba stayed
[643] home when his people went to war. He gathered together as many horses as possible, and, when horsemen lost their mounts, they came to him to get another horse and rejoin the fight.

669 The last wars before the French conquest of Koupéla, which we shall describe briefly, were civil wars that took place either between the people of Tenkodogo and those of Koupéla, or between the Mossi and the Gourmantché.

669 /12/ As generally happened in parallel cases, these wars followed
643 the death of a naba, when several pretenders wrangled over the succession. It was in order to prevent such wars that only the immediate entourage of the naba was informed of his death. Outsiders were to remain in ignorance and believe the naba to be ill in his hut. The fatal news was spread only when the head of the family had gathered all that was necessary to honor the deceased in proper fashion by celebrating the kouré. (5)

5. Kouré, funeral ceremony in honor of the dead. See below.

669 When Naba Kidba died, leaving only a child of five or six to succeed him, a man from Kazem'bouanga who was powerful by virtue of his wealth and the number of his men decided to seize the throne. His followers had taken for themselves the name of Kazem'-bouanga and used to say: "Although the hyena (katré) is not the equal (zéma) of the donkey (bouanga), she nevertheless attacks and kills him if she meets him in the bush: similarly, although we are not as powerful as the inhabitants of Koupéla, we will manage to defeat them." And indeed, they marched on Koupéla. The prime minister, who bears the title, Saman'Naba (head of the outer courtyard), and whose own name was Wenkosgaraga, seized the child and fled with him to Sapara, the nearest village under the direct authority of the Moro Naba, located nine kilometers from Koupéla.

576 the chest with the hands half-closed and the thumbs raised, strike the ground together three or four times. The Mossi then raises his body a little and rubs the palms of his hands together. He never looks the person he is saluting straight in the face, but keeps his eyes slightly lowered. It is a truly humbled posture, especially when the chief who is being saluted remains standing or on horseback, towering above his subordinate, and barely according him a glance. The women, instead of beating upon the ground with their forearms, strike it with the elbows and raise their open hands, fingers extended, to shoulder height. The grand salute, very rarely used, consists of turning around after the ordinary salute has been completed, seizing some dust with both hands, spreading it on the forehead, and saluting once more.

When two natives who know each other meet along the way, the younger of the two squats first and begins the salute, which the other acknowledges by squatting in turn. If they are carrying loads, they set them down before saluting. They are never in a hurry. Servants and women, when they walk before a chief, bow slightly and join their hands in front of the chest, palms together. Though complicated, the Mossi salute is rendered easily and gracefully by the natives; they are used to it from an early age, and never perform it in the clumsy and awkward manner which is theirs when they attempt to imitate the military salute, so fine and noble when well done and so ludicrous when distorted by a Black.

622 643 Chiefs are designated by the generic term naba, but a distinction is made between naba and dimma. The latter is elected /16/ according to very precise rules, which we shall mention later, and his authority stems directly from this election. There are only five dimma among the Mossi: the Moro Naba, and the nabas of Fada, Tenkodogo, Boussouma, and Yatenga. The naba, on the other hand, receives his power from another chief more powerful than himself who has chosen him from several candidates.

643 645 Mossi country lies wholly under the authority of the Moro Naba who is assisted by five high ministers: the Widi Naba, Laralé Naba, Gounga Naba, Kamisoro Naba and Ballum Naba. The respective [839] functions of these ministers are somewhat ill-defined. The Kamisoro is a eunuch and chief of the eunuchs. Upon his death, since he leaves no heirs, all his property devolves to the Moro Naba. It was thus to the latter's advantage to make him wealthy and to present him with the finest district in the country. The Widi Naba takes the place of the Moro Naba from the time of his death until the investiture

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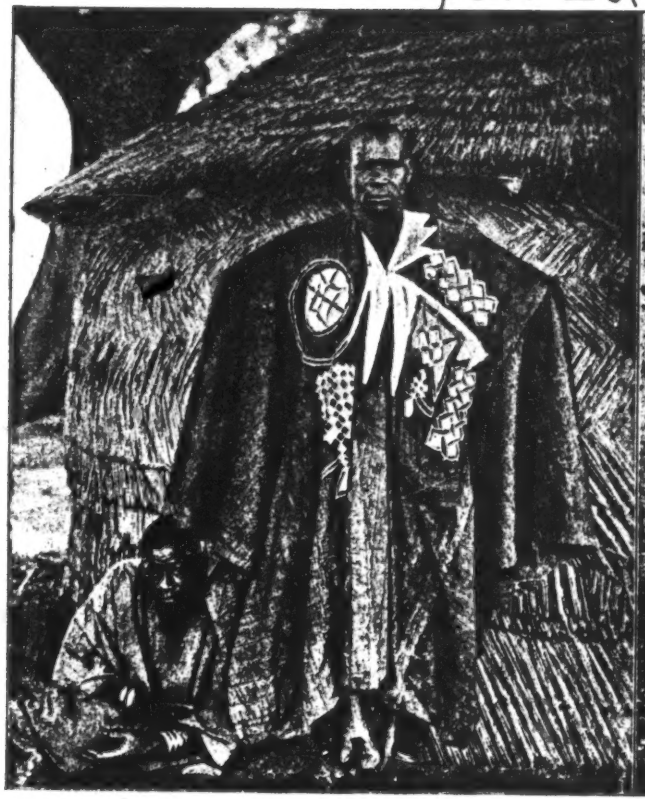

A Mossi Province Chief.

The Moro Naba of the Mossi.

643 of his successor. He presides over the election and proclaims the new-
645 ly elected chief. The Laralé is the guardian of the Moro Naba's ancestral tombs, and the Ballum is the head of the pages and dancers. When the Moro Naba gives one of his pages in marriage, the latter settles near the huts of the Ballum Naba. This is the least important minister; prior to the French occupation, he was given no province to rule.

631 The Moro Naba ruled directly over a large part of the Mossi territories. The part under his immediate jurisdiction was apportioned among his four principal ministers, who each had under him the heads of the cantons. Those territories not directly subject to the Moro Naba were placed under the authority of powerful chiefs who might be called province chiefs, assuredly vassals of the Moro Naba, but very independent vassals, somewhat similar to the dukes of Brittany and Burgundy vis-à-vis the King of France. Such are the nabas of Ouahigouya, Yako, Boussouma, Bélousa, etc.; there are many of them outside the territory reserved to the Moro Naba, especially to the north, east, and south. These province chiefs could also have independent vassals who, nevertheless, acknowledged their authority, such as the naba of Koupéla, a true province chief, but a vassal of the naba of Bélousa, in turn a vassal of the Moro Naba. The naba of Salmatenga stands in the same position with reference to the naba of Boussouma.

Each province is divided into cantons, each headed by a naba, and the canton includes several villages, each of which usually has its naba. Some of the villages are directly controlled by the province chief who apportions them among his ministers. Some villages may not even have a true naba. These are usually villages established by the children of an important naba. In this case an old man is entrusted with the administrative functions. These villages without a naba may nevertheless obtain one. For example, if the province chief has a son who settles in the community and the inhabitants are pleased with his presence, his father may name him naba of the
[562] village. A very few villages are ruled by women who are assisted by the elders when a case is to be judged.

The power of each chief is tempered by his council. The Moro Naba himself does not act without consulting his ministers. Each province /17/ chief has a council. The titles of the ministers vary from one province to another, but their functions are the same.

631 The canton chiefs consult the oldest men in the village where they reside, and the village chiefs make no decisions bearing on the community without assembling the elders and listening to their advice.

Everything is carried out through the channels of the hierarchy. A province chief never transmits an order directly to a village ruled by a canton chief, but he advises the latter who notifies the village chief, and the village chief in turn calls the elders together, conveys the orders to them, and through them informs all his subjects. The orders passed down in this formal way are always carried out, but if perchance a canton chief should wish to disobey his province chief, he would be seconded by his people who recognize his authority before any other.

643 645 701 The last Moro Nabas had become to some extent idle kings. The protocol to which they were subjected by custom constantly encumbered them, not unlike European court etiquette. The Moro Naba was surrounded with a veritable court. As mentioned above, his High Council was composed of five chief ministers. To these should be added the Iman who represents the Moslems and who wields a certain influence, and the Teng'Soba. /Tr. Among the Mossi there is both a Teng'Soba, earth priest, and a Tan'Soba, war minister. It would seem that the latter is meant here./ The duties of the latter are quite specialized. He does not live in the same village as the Moro Naba, and he rules a canton. In case of war, he is consulted on the timeliness of the hostilities and on their chances of success. It devolves upon him at this time to make the proper sacrifices and to question the ancestral spirits. When war has been decided on, he takes command of the armies, and everyone, the ministers and the canton chiefs, must obey him. The Moro Naba remains in Ouagadougou.

644 839 A crowd of subalterns gravitate around these high dignitaries. The eunuchs are not very respectable people; sometimes habitual thieves were made eunuchs, as were, in general, those pages guilty of too much familiarity with the naba's wives. Some of them could reach a high position. The Kamisoro were always eunuchs, and several important cantons were set aside for them.

644 The pages are young boys, hand-picked from the country's most gifted children. They must serve the naba, and they bear the name soroné. The naba is never alone; he always has one or several pages by his side. One holds the fan, one stands near the monarch to help him shift his position, another takes care of his shoes, yet another of his scepter; the great cup-bearer constantly holds a gourd filled with strong millet beer and covered by a tray of artistically woven basketry.

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Above: The Moro Naba. Behind him, his brother, about twelve years old and the head of a large province, flanked by two pages.

Below: The Bullom Naba and his Pages. Behind him, his two Christian sons.

635 wear spurs and to have pages and a pillow. When the festivities are over at Kourit'Yaorin, the naba enters Koupéla where he is to reside.

643 When the Moro Naba died, the country fell prey to revolution and
669 to the servants of the deceased, who looted everything they could. This is why the death of the Moro Naba was carefully concealed until the day of the funeral; this is why, once it had been announced, no one dared go out without a bow and arrows or at least a spear. Women and children stayed home. In order to prevent any disorder, a new
643 election was called as soon as possible. The Widi Naba acted as intermediary and gathered the votes of the electors. The latter numbered twenty-five: the five high ministers and twenty other chiefs, of no great importance in everyday life, who were not canton chiefs and were often mere family heads, but who were high electors by right inherited from father to son since the founding of the Ouagadougou dynasty. These twenty-five electors consulted the people of their entourage and told the Widi Naba which candidate had received their vote. There could be several candidates, but to be elected one had to be a member of the family /22/of Naba Oubri, the founder of the dynasty. Once the funeral ceremonies were over, the Widi Naba rounded up all the canton chiefs and all the nabas present in Ouagadougou, and proclaimed the name of the man chosen, to whom he presented the badges of office. Numerous ceremonies followed, the most solemn of which took place in a small village called Paspanga, two kilometers from Ouagadougou. All the nabas went there in turn, beginning with the defeated candidates, to render their oath of loyalty.

All these customs were followed for the investiture of the present Moro Naba, Naba Kom.

Chapter 3. Rights of Chiefs and Rights of Private Individuals

631 The nabas, whether heads of villages, cantons, or provinces, were all-powerful, and no one could act without their knowledge or own anything beyond what they permitted him to possess.

In theory, Mossi country belongs entirely to the Moro Naba, who may dispose of everything as he wishes and give land to anyone he pleases. In practice, the Moro Naba delegates some of his

769 In addition to this kourita, if the deceased was head of the house-
[184] hold, his oldest daughter, or in her absence, his granddaughter, occasionally plays a role and is also called kourita, but this custom is less widespread. Her mourning clothes are embellished with thin cords of red straw (bini) around the neck and wrists and above the elbow and at the ankles, 13 for a man and 14 for a woman. Around her head she wears cotton threads (pana) which hang down her back like a long tail, ending in a pompon. The first kourita, previously mentioned, sometimes wears these badges also. This second kourita actually has only one task, namely, to plant large millet where her father's huts stood. When the millet is ripe, she sets it aside to use for preparing millet beer on the day of the kouré. Sometimes her position is held for three years, and she cannot shave during this time. To offset this, it is she who brews the beer for the Day of the Dead (basra). At the end of three years, she shaves and takes up her usual way of life. No such kourita is provided for an old woman, since she was not the head of a household.

A mother is kourita for a child who dies before he marries. She wears at her ankle a thin cotton cord to which she adds a knot daily
[801] for the duration of mourning, 33 days for a boy, 44 days for a girl.

The Moro Naba has a kourita like other Mossi, but on the day of the kouré a young boy of his family is appointed to represent him for life. This kourita adopts the name of the dead naba, and all through the dry season he goes from canton to canton, as the true Moro Naba could not do in his lifetime. Everywhere he is greeted and entertained with great honors, he receives many gifts, and his men loot what they can. One place only is closed to him, Ouagadougou, the residence of his successor. If they were to meet, one of them would die within the year. At present there are among the Mossi two kourita of Moro Nabas: that of Naba Sanem, who welcomed Binger, and that of Naba Sigri, enthroned as a result of Voulet's conquest and deceased in 1905. Naba Wobro, deposed by our troops, has no kourita because he was
[643] no longer Moro Naba when he died; he had failed tradition by leaving Ouagadougou and thereby renounced his rights as a sovereign.

/74/ The first funeral is a temporary expedient; the human body decomposes quickly, and the burial has to be held before all the friends and relatives can be assembled. Also, death comes by surprise; there are not enough cowries, the animals have not been gathered in sufficient numbers, and the deceased must be granted the honors due his rank, he must be offered numerous victims. These are the reasons

4: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1957
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tion and, when he arrived at the sparsely settled Ninisi village of Nobéré, 173
he decided to stay and make it his home. The Ninisi ran away when they saw Biligo coming, but he persuaded them to return and live in peace under his command. The Tengsoba, or earth priest, of the village refused to return, and Biligo went into the bush and captured him so that the sacrifices to the earth shrines could continue as before. Biligo married a local woman and, when she bore him sons, he sent them to rule those villages not inhabited by the earth priests. These sons and their families formed the noble classes in the district.

About one hundred years ago a district chief called Peka supported the 173
loser in a fight for the supreme chieftainship and was killed when the 565
victorious pretender was installed as chief in Ouagadougou. The victor 631
sent his son, Ngado, to rule over Nobéré and, although the relatives of Peka were scattered, the village chiefs were allowed to retain their posts. These chiefs did lose their noble status, however, because Ngado's sons who went to live in the villages formed the new nobility. The chiefs and their families were submerged into the commoner class. The history of Nobéré is typical of that of most of the Mossi districts and, today, one finds the remnants of many former ruling lineages scattered around the country.

The supreme ruler of the Mossi was called the Moro-naba. He possessed 643
the *nam* which is the symbol of power, and because of this power he had the right of life and death over all his subjects. He also had a religious role in the country because it was his duty to initiate the yearly rites dedicated to the ancestors so that the country would have good crops, and so that the people would be happy and multiply. The Moro-naba was aided in [645]
his rule over the Mossi by five ministers who were responsible for the five provinces grouping 333 villages that made up the territory of the state. These ministers were responsible for the proper administration of the state, and they nominally elected the new Moro-naba.

As soon as the death of the ruler was announced, civil disorder broke out throughout the country and continued until the five ministers and the minister for war took fictive control of the country. When the funeral of the late chief was completed the chief minister, the Ouidi-naba, summoned the lesser ministers to a conference and told them that the country had no chief "because the fire had gone out" and that it now required one. He advised them to consider the qualifications of the late chief's son and of all the other pretenders, and to choose the most worthy individual. The lesser ministers refused to do this, saying: "You are our superior, and the right to make the choice rests on you alone."

The eldest son of the former ruler was usually elected Moro-naba but, as any member of the royal lineage up to the third degree was eligible, many persons tried to bribe the elector. When the Ouidi-naba made his choice he told the minister of war: "My mind is not at ease because I fear that those whose hopes have not been fulfilled will resort to violence."

4: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1957
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643 The war minister replied, "That will be against tradition and justice to the dead ruler. Do not fear; I am here with my arms to see that your decision is respected" (this was not always an empty gesture, for one man, Wobogo, forced a Ouidi-naba to elect him).[3] When the lesser ministers were notified as to the choice of the new sovereign they said: "You have expressed our will and the will of all the people." The elector then secretly called the new ruler and, taking off the man's goat's skin (the symbol of those seeking the chieftainship) told him: "I am giving you the house of your father and of your grandfather." Then the ministers and the chief musician escorted the new ruler before his subjects, and the Ouidi-naba shouted: "Here is he who has the power of life and death over you." The following day all the members of the ruling lineage and sublineages swore not to betray their new ruler. The minister of war then swore, in the name of all the people, to protect the new ruler with his life if the need ever arose. Next followed ceremonies during which a descendant of the original Ninisi inhabitants made sacrifices, in the name of the new sovereign, to his ancient ancestors.

643 642 [778] In analyzing the power of the Moro-naba we must take into consideration the concept of *nam* which is described as "power" or "the force of God." It is this force of God that enables one man to control another, and gives the sovereign the power of life and death over his subjects. Moreover, once a man had "eaten the *nam*," the Mossi constitution had no provisions for deposing him. The Mossi generally claim that only one of their thirty-three rulers was ever deposed, and that he was the ruler who ran away from the French. However, there is another tradition that states that one sovereign, Karfo, was forced to commit suicide by his Ouidi-naba.

According to the Mossi constitution, the Moro-naba had complete control over the lands of the state, and was the only one empowered to distribute these lands as fiefs. Any attack on the lands of the state was an attack on the Moro-naba and thus a cause for war. The Moro-naba alone had the right to make war, and in this he was helped by his vassals, the district chiefs, and their armies. He was court of final appeal for crimes that carried the death penalty and, theoretically, only he had the right to condemn a nobleman to death.

651 686 Every year the district chiefs under the command of their ministers went to the capital to pay allegiance to the Moro-naba with gifts of cows, goats, sheep, cowries, and grain. The animals were presents from the stock of the district chiefs, but the cowries and grain were collected from the villagers of the districts. The people of the several wards in the capital furnished labor for the cultivation of the sovereign's fields and for the upkeep of his houses. The Moro-naba received substantial sums of money from taxes on the sale of slaves or other merchandise in the Ouagadougou market. He also received presents of slaves when his vassals raided the surrounding countries. If a district chief failed to fulfill all of these

175 at La and waged a series of battles in the Yako region. Naba Koutou, twenty-eighth successor of Oubry, fought in the Sourgou region (Kipirsi). And finally, during the last few years preceding our occupation, Naba Sanom and Bokary Koutou attacked the village of Lallé.

●643 631 According to Moulins' data, it was Naba Koundoumié, sixth successor of Oubry, who set three of his sons as heads of the Boussouma, Béloussa and Yako provinces. He made them veritable monarchs who were united to the Moro Naba by a mere bond of vassalage, as was already the case with the chief of Tenkodogo.

Moulins adds, "As a rule, the chiefs of vassal provinces do not seem to have given much thought to enfranchisement from the Moro Naba's suzerainty, which actually did not weigh heavily upon them. We must come all the way to modern times, to Sanom's reign, to find signs of a struggle between the sovereign and the chiefs of Boussouma and Béloussa.

"On the other hand, the important vassals sometimes resorted to the Moro Naba's support to strengthen their authority within their own provinces. We have just mentioned the expeditions directed against Yako. Tradition has also preserved the memory of a series of battles waged by Dawoéma, eighth successor of Oubry, against the Boussansé of Garango who attempted to free themselves from Tenkodogo Naba."

174 Following this brief glance at the history of the Mossi empire, there remain, or should remain, three questions to investigate.

1. The remote origins of the Mossi proper, the conquering Mossi who came from Dagomba to Tenkodogo and then to Ouagadougou. At the present day, however, these origins are unknown. They might be uncovered by studying the Mossi language and comparing it systematically with the ancient or present tongues of north, east, and west Africa. I do not believe that such a piece of research is forthcoming, however. /464/ The Mossi might also be studied from the standpoint of physical anthropology, in which case two distinct studies ought to be made, one of the chiefs and nobles, another of the bulk of the Mossi population. The results would then be compared with those obtained for other populations of north and west Africa. Like the one previously mentioned, however, this would be a tremendous project which is not likely to be undertaken in the near future.

593 672 to guard against dangers resulting from the obligation to make reparation for injuries committed by one of its members. This has led naturally to a recognition of the family's right, in the person of its head, to take whatever measures are necessary for the preservation of its common interests. Prior to our occupation, such measures could go as far as putting in irons or even putting to death an individual who called upon the collective responsibility of the family too frequently or too onerously, and thus threatened to endanger its equilibrium. The decision of a family head involving the [443] death sentence or putting in irons for life for one of his people, however, only became final with the naba's approval. The latter could oppose it by assuming financial responsibility, in the family's stead, for all future misdemeanors committed by the person he had pardoned."

593 174 We come now to an interesting although extremely ticklish subject, namely, the causes of the partial decommunalization of the Mossi family.

If we look at the present workaday life of these people, their decommunalization seems inexplicable in view of the fact that we are dealing with a group of cultivators, somewhat indolent to be sure, but nevertheless cultivators first and foremost. The Mossi, on the other hand, are not herdsmen. They are very mediocre stock-breeders. Among them as among other Blacks of West Africa, hunting merely accounts for a small percentage of their total food-producing activities. They are not traders, either. We see nothing here, therefore, that might explain the decommunalization of the family, and we must refer back to the previous workaday life of this people. We saw earlier, however, that while the present Mossi population originated /554/ from the fusion of two disparate elements, one of those elements was similar to the Bobo, Gourounsi, Habé, Kipirsi, etc., and thus deeply communal and patriarchal. It is obviously not from this element that the present decommunalization might stem.

Fortunately, there exists another and very different element. The Mossi who came from the Dagomba were, as we know, Blacks who were 1) warriors and conquerors, 2) breeders of horses, no doubt,

567 Dagomba conquest. Both family type and slave status, indeed, re-
326 fer back to the Bobo, Gourounsi, etc.

000 We come now to public powers. We refer the reader to Appendix 32 /not translated/ for a study of property regulations and neighborhood relations, and plunge forthwith into the study of public powers.

631 We already know that the Mossi political organization is centralized. The villages belong to cantons, which are in turn gathered into provinces under direct administration or into mere vassal provinces. At the summit of the hierarchy stands the king, the Moro Naba, the supreme chief of the Mossi, who lives at Ouagadougou. To give an idea of the former importance, or at least relative importance, of this empire, we shall state that in the Ouagadougou
[162] circle alone there were eight provinces including among them 300 cantons, 5,000 villages or small towns, and 861,700 inhabitants.

643 Let us begin our description of this political organism with the head, that is, with the Moro Naba.

Moro Naba means "chief of the Mossi," from naba, "chief" and Moro or Mora which means Mossi in the singular. Moro yields Mossi or Mossé in the plural. (The French have grown accustomed to saying "one Mossi, several Mossi," but this is a barbarism and one should /568/ actually say, "one Moro, several Mossi," just as one says, "one Gourounga, several Gourounsi," "one Kipirga, several Kipirsi," etc.). As for the word for "chief," it is both naba and soba in Mossi. Naba seems to be the word brought by the con-
[192] quering Mossi-Dagomba group, while soba is probably the word that was used by the autochtonous population to designate chiefs.

645 Prior to the French conquest, the Moro Naba was surrounded by a certain number of ministers or eminent dignitaries who were given 1) specific duties /at court/, 2) in addition, part of the territory to govern. This is what accounted for provinces over and above the cantons, at least in those areas that were administered directly, but the heads of those provinces did not reside there. They lived at Ouagadougou, and were first and foremost ministers of the Moro Naba.

They were:

644 who will make him into a soroné if he is a boy, or alone have the right to give her in marriage if she is a girl."

● 643 Moulins also provides interesting details on the manner in which the Moro Naba spends his days, or rather spent them in the past, for this description refers to the state of affairs prior to the French occupation.

"From Ouarga's reign onward, the Moro Nabas, who had previously resided successively in various parts of the empire, settled at Ouagadougou where they have lived ever since. Custom constrains them never to leave /571/ the capital except in unusually serious circumstances. This is because the land falls into anarchy when the sovereign is absent from Ouagadougou. All theft, pillage, and murder committed at that time remain unprosecuted. [674 696]

644 173 "Every morning at seven, the Moro Naba emerges from his hut. His saddled horse waits before the door. He mounts it and pretends to set out on his way, but after riding around his hut he dismounts and goes back into his hut only to come out again immediately.

"This formality of the protocol has the following origin. A long time ago the favorite wife of the Moro Naba having fled to La, the sovereign wished to go and fetch her himself. He mounted his horse and was about to leave when all the court dignitaries rushed to him, admonishing him not to carry out his project, for his absence from Ouagadougou could only result in anarchy. The monarch gave way, and soon afterwards his wife returned of her own accord. It is in memory of the magnanimity of this sovereign, who sacrificed himself in the interests of his people, that every morning since that time the Moro Naba has pretended to prepare for departure and to then give up his plan.

644 "Following this ceremony, the Moro Naba settles himself in a recess sunk into the wall that surrounds his residence, and then, to the strains of abundant music, the whole court comes to the sovereign and prostrates itself before him, brow in the dust, forearms striking the ground in rhythm with a great clicking of bracelets. Then business is attended to.

"First, the five province chiefs come forward in order of precedence, relate to the Moro Naba those events which have taken place since the preceding day, and receive his instructions for the day. Then they present to him the canton and village chiefs and the common natives who wish for an audience.

664 554 "The wives of the Moro Haba never give birth or raise their children at his own place of residence, but only in one of the eunuch villages. In theory they do not stand above the wives of common natives, but in practice they enjoy high consideration among the Mossi, like all that is connected with the Moro Naba.

"The sons of the sovereign, once weaned, are entrusted to a province or canton chief who is put in charge of their education. [582] At the age of ten they are married and settled in a village, where they live, surrounded by a court, but without necessarily being given a territorial command.

"The prerogatives attached to the title of Moro Naba's son are vast as long as the monarch is alive. They grant the right to steal, to loot, and even to kill with impunity.

"Upon the death of the Moro Naba, his sons become mere nakomsé (sons of chiefs) whose position nevertheless remains quite privileged.

643 644 554 "One of the sons of the deceased sovereign, however, is granted special privileges. At the death of the Moro Naba, the latter's wives elect one of his young sons who adopts his name and, so to speak, perpetuates him. He has no /territorial/ command, but he is surrounded by a court similar to that of the Moro Naba, he enjoys respect almost equal to that paid to the latter, and he is a sacred figure. No one has the right to contradict him or to harm him.

644 554 "As for the Moro Naba's daughters, although in principle they do not stand above ordinary Mossi girls, in practice they are treated with the strictest respect by all natives. Once married, they have almost complete freedom of action vis-à-vis their husband, and they often take advantage of this to lead a most unruly existence.

643 766 "When the Moro Naba's death has been verified, his burial is carried out and followed by the funeral ceremonies, which are held in the same fashion as for a common native, with the sole difference /574/ that they have more brilliance and that the sacrifices are more sizable.

642 672 "For the whole duration of the interregnum, the land falls into a state of complete anarchy. Everyone has the right to kill, loot, and steal as he pleases. Convicts who are serving sentence are fully pardoned and set free.

643 "Following the funeral ceremony, an electoral college consisting of the Ouidi Naba as president, assisted by the Gounga Naba, Laralé Naba, and Tamsaba, assembles in the greatest mystery and holds its meetings in a spot as withdrawn or inconspicuous as possible. Owing to the reigning state of anarchy, indeed, the followers of the various candidates would not fail to disturb the deliberations of the electoral college if they were to find out where it is meeting, and to support the candidacy of their respective favorites with arrow shots.

"When the members of the college have come to an agreement on the choice of the new sovereign (who can only be selected among the direct descendants of Oubry, founder of the empire) they secretly warn the chosen man, who also comes to them in secret. Then each of the four electors convokes his warriors, who come and gather around them and the new Moro Naba. On the following morning the informed populace flocks in, and the sovereign is proclaimed king.

"The disturbances of the interregnum come to an end from that moment.

"The Moro Naba, followed by the high dignitaries and the multitude, goes to Tamvilli (a quarter of Ouagadougou), where he spends the first day of his reign. When evening comes, he goes to the chief of the village of Ouagadougou where he spends the night. On the following morning he goes to Paspanga (a quarter of Ouagadougou) where, on the spot where the dwelling of Naba Kom once stood, he receives the canton chiefs and nakomsé, who come and render their oath of fealty. Finally, when this last formality is over, the members of the electoral college depart, and he proceeds along with the Baloum Naba, Kamsoro Naba, and Jussaba Naba to the royal residence.

"The unlucky /575/ pretenders are subjected to the most cruel banter throughout the coronation ceremonies, but once these are over they become kourita, or in other words the highest-ranking nakomsé.

643 669 "We have already stated that as soon as the Moro Naba is proclaimed sovereign, the disturbances of the interregnum come to an end. Mossi history records but a single case where the decision

643 669 of the electoral college was not accepted by the populace and disturbances occurred in spite of the proclamation of the king-elect. This was when Naba Sagha, the son of Naba Kom, was chosen. The people would have liked to see Kaoko, son of Naba Zombéré, nominated. Dissatisfied because the sovereign of their choice had not reached the throne, they would not acknowledge the man chosen by the college. The new monarch managed to take over the throne only after waging a bloody battle at the head of his followers against his unlucky rival.

645 635 The province chiefs who are ministers are nominated by the Moro Naba, who selects the man most deserving of the succession among the closest relatives of the chief to be replaced. Province chiefs enjoy considerable power in the administration of their provinces, they are surrounded with a large court, but they stand under the direct control of the Moro Naba.

635 It must be added that aside from the five provinces lying under the direct rule of the Moro Naba of Ouagadougou, there were four others (Boussouma and Béloussa to the northeast, Yako to the northwest, Tenkodogo to the southeast) that were mere vassal provinces and that actually enjoyed nearly complete autonomy prior to our occupation. Tenkodogo province was especially important.

The chiefs of these /latter/ provinces were true monarchs selected in the same fashion as the Moro Naba by the electoral college of their province. Once elected, they enjoyed all the prerogatives of sovereignty, nominating the canton chiefs and administering their provinces as they saw fit.

Their power was as absolute in their own sphere as that of the Moro Naba over the whole of his subject provinces, but they acknowledged his sovereignty and offered him a gift as a token of [631] their vassalage at the time when their powers were handed over to them.

/576/ Within the subject provinces, the canton chiefs were 634 624 nominated by the Moro Naba on the basis of an introduction by the province chief. They were always selected among the closest relatives of the chief they were to replace, always descendants of Oubry, the first Moro Naba. They stood under the direct orders of the province chief, whom they had to use as an intermediary to communicate with the Moro Naba. It was their task to proceed with

651 "Market-place dues were levied by the Dara Haba, for the sovereign's account, on the markets surrounding Ouagadougou. The Moro Naba also got the tusks of elephants and one haunch of every buffalo or koba killed by hunters.

643 651 425 "Furthermore, the right of confiscation which the sovereign could use for his own benefit without any precise rule imperatively limiting the conditions under which he could exercise it, permitted him to augment, whenever needed, the revenue derived from his usual sources.

651 "Province chiefs, in turn, had the right to demand, through the canton chiefs, whatever they needed for the support of their families and retinues. Canton chiefs held the same rights over the villages within their rule. The village chiefs themselves received from their subjects a certain number of gifts."

692 Justice was rendered as follows: /580/

1. By the family heads, aided by the family elders.
2. By the village chiefs, aided by the village elders.
3. By the canton chiefs, aided by the elders of their own quarter.
4. By the province chiefs, aided by the elders of their own quarter and by the dignitaries of their entourage.
5. By the Moro Naba, aided by his ministers and the dignitaries of his entourage.

"The respective competence /legal authority/ of those various jurisdictions," says Moulins, "were in no way clearly determined or defined. The deed and the circumstances alone were taken into account in bringing up before a certain authority a matter which the lower jurisdiction had proved unable to resolve. A matter which the family council had been unable to solve was brought before the village chief, then the canton chief, the province chief, and finally the Moro Naba.

694 "Justice was free of charge in the sense that procedural expenses were unknown, but custom demanded that a litigant should never appear before a judge empty handed. He had to offer him at least a white chicken. The outcome of a trial must often have depended on the greater or lesser generosity displayed by the respective sides."

793 never offers sacrifices himself to the Earth at Ouagadougou, nor does
174 he have them offered by the Gandé Naba, his minister of religion. He entrusts with this task the Ouagadougou Naba, who is a grandson of the autochtonous inhabitants and thus favorably regarded by the local divinities. Similarly, when the Moro Naba sacrifices to the hillocks surrounding Ouagadougou, he entrusts the local chief with the offerings and the physical sacrifice. Now, what the Moro Naba still does at Ouagadougou was no doubt done by other Mossi chiefs throughout the land after conquest, once the submission of the autochtonous inhabitants had been ensured by force of arms. Hence, the institution of the Tensoba.

One might object that Earth chiefs are also to be found in Gourounsi territory, although the Gourounsi are independent. We know, however, that the present-day Gourounsi cantons were not the achievement of the Gourounsi themselves but of minor Mossi dynasties established in the territory. Under the circumstances, the same substitution of conquering chiefs for conquered chiefs has occurred there as in Mossi territory, with the same consequences.

"The Tensoba," says Marc, p. 157, "whose title means 'Master
793 of the Earth,' stands in opposition to the naba who is a military chief....

"The Tensoba is the indispensable mediator between the ancestors and their living descendants. It is he who conducts the funeral ceremonies and who decides on the honors to be rendered on the Day of the Dead. It is to him that one appeals in case of an epidemic or any public misfortune, since misfortunes are always due to the evil inclinations of ancestors that must be allayed."

/596/ Actually, the institution of the Earth chief does not strip
793 the village and canton chiefs of all religious powers. In some areas,
643 as Marc pointed out, the Earth chiefs have gradually vanished, and
839 the political chiefs have become religious chiefs as well. They per-
778 form sacrifices on the bara's advice, without failing to make a gift
[431] of some sort (100 or 1,000 cowries) to the latter also. By the same token and up to a point, the Moro Naba is invested with a religious character and with religious attributes. It is he, as we have already seen, who orders the performance of sacrifices to the Earth, to the hills. Every year during the dry season, he has a donkey sacrificed to Naba Koutou, a former Moro Naba, in the hut where the latter is buried. Prior to our occupation it was a eunuch who performed

793 the sacrifice and killed the donkey. He also slit the throat of a
643 horse, a beef, and a sheep. (This eunuch in charge of guarding the
839 tomb was called by the name of Naba Koutou, and in a way per-
778 petuated the deceased Moro Naba. He was granted special privi-
leges. If a man who was condemned to death ran away and reached
the tomb, he was safe but became the eunuch's slave. Similarly,
[567] a captive who ran away from his master gained his freedom from the
latter if he reached the grave, but became the slave of Naba Koutou.
Finally, at that time, it was forbidden to ride by the hut on a donkey.
Naba Koutou would seize the donkey, or at least demand a ransom
in cowries before returning it. This applied to any animals who ran
astray near the tomb. The tomb still exists nowadays, along with
the Naba Koutou who watches over it, but the latter no longer enjoys
the same privileges.)

793 We saw earlier that the Moro Naba had a sort of minister of the
645 cult in the person of the Gandé Naba, high priest and sacrificer.
There was also the Pouy Naba, or chief of the fetisheers, whose
function was probably to mediate between the Mossi bara and
timisoba as a whole and the central authorities.

782 Let us close this study of Mossi religion, which incidentally is
quite incomplete and a mere outline, with a few words on the human
sacrifices that were performed /597/ in the territory prior to our
occupation, and a few words on circumcision as well.

782 "Human sacrifices," says Marc., p. 156, "definitely took place
766 among the Mossi up to the time when we occupied the territory.
Whenever a Moro Naba died at Ouagadougou, one of his wives and
one of his horses were sent to Gambaga in order to be sacrificed on
the tomb of Ouidiraogo (?) who is regarded as the mother of the first
Moro Naba. Soon after the occupation of Ouagadougou by the French,
782 the dethroned Moro Naba, Boukary Koutou, ordered the sacrifice of a
754 black rooster, a black goat, a black donkey, a black beef, and a
black slave on one of the mountains overlooking the White Volta.
This, it seems, was bound to cause the immediate death of the new
Moro Naba enthroned by Voulet."

304 As for circumcision, the Mossi circumcise boys and excise girls.
Boys are circumcised when they are from eight to twelve years
old, and thirty or forty of them are circumcised at one time. The

596 In the sense of integration, we must mention primarily the families
592 of great chiefs. For example, there is the family of Gombiraogo, a
182 former Baloum Naba, a very wealthy and important personage. He
571 has five brothers. Two of them live together in the village of Kalo and another two, similarly, in the village of Bembéla. Gombiraogo lives in Ouahigouya with the fifth brother. With this brother he has three zaka where 70 or 80 people live, all of whom work for him and form a single work group under his direction (that is to say, during the rainy season they work for him two days out of three, and during the dry season they do so only when he has exceptional need of them; in return, he provides them with food seven months out of twelve, according to custom, and does not provide them with clothes unless they are unmarried).

What should be noted here is the strength of this work group (70 to 80 people). As a result, it includes several compounds, while it is the compound as a rule that contains several or at least two work groups.

645] The present Baloum Naba, the prime minister, likewise has two zaka working for him. Moreover, the total family of the Baloum Naba is not assembled in Ouahigouya but scattered throughout Yatenga.

643] In the same connection, the Rassam Naba has a zaka of 157 people who form a single work group under his direction. In return, he provides them with food all year.

/232/ Again, there is a zaka of shoemakers at Ouahigouya which
294 includes nearly 100 people altogether, among them 15 or 20 full-
592 grown men, all of them shoemakers. They all work for the zakasoba,
182 who provides them all with food. This zaka, of exceptional numerical strength, is at the same time completely integrated.

596 At the other end of the scale, we find the Mossi family of Yatenga
182 evolving toward complete disintegration in certain parts of the terri-
592 tory, that is to say, evolving toward a state of affairs where nothing remains except the total family on the one hand and the single household on the other (that is, the compound has only a single household).

Thus, in the course of a journey through the canton of Ratenga, I noted in the village of Tangué a family of 110 persons distributed among 14 homes. This gives an average of only seven or eight persons per home. In Kargo (another village) there are five Mossi families for 22 homes sheltering 181 persons, or only eight persons per home.

593 The wife must obey her husband. The latter has the right to strike
562 her in case of disobedience, adultery, etc. He cannot break one of her limbs, or kill her.

595 Polygamy. —Polygamy is the general rule, at least theoretically. That is to say, the Mossi may have as many spouses as he wishes as long as he can minister to their needs.

595 In actual fact, only rich people have several wives. The majority
589 are monogamous by necessity, and there are even bachelors. As a passing remark, this applies to the Sudanese Negroes in general, for everywhere nature creates approximately as many men as women, and it is hard to visualize how in any one region each man could have several wives. However, in spite of the occurrence of bachelors and a large number of truly monogamous people, the question still stands. It is solved if we bear in mind that girls are married much earlier than men. This results in a much larger number of women than men "in active service," if I may be permitted to say so. Undoubtedly, this (along with the occurrence of bachelors and a considerable number of monogamists), takes care of the objection which naturally arises when we speak of polygamy. /243/

163 It may be, let us add, that the number of girls born here is a little higher than that of boys, as has been noted in England, for example.

595 By way of figures on polygamy, let us state that the Moro Naba
643 Bango, the last one who reigned before the arrival of the French, had about 80 wives. The Naba Koboga, who ruled from 1902 to 1914,
445 had 30 or 40. The present Rassam Naba, one of the ministers of the Moro Naba, has 30 or 35 wives. These are, of course, exceptional figures if the total population of Yatenga is taken into account. In any case, the rich men, notables, and men in easy circumstances always have several wives.

595 Organization of the polygamous household. —"The first wife," says Vadier, "enjoys a certain authority over the others. It is she who transmits her husband's orders to the other wives and who notifies him of their wants, who supervises the preparation of meals and apportions the food. In addition, it is she who comes and tells the
[844] husband that such-and-such a wife is no longer in a state of zim and can now fulfill her conjugal duties.

"Aside from this special prerogative enjoyed by the first wife, all wives have the same rights and duties. In principle, each wife must share in turn her husband's bed. Nevertheless, he is free to summon his favorite wife during the day."

562 When she dies, a woman's property goes to her children. The
428 objects used by women go to the daughters (bracelets, skirt cloths), while other items (animals, etc.) go to the sons. More exactly, the first-born is favored among the sons and the oldest girl among the daughters. If there are no children, the husband does not take anything, and whatever the wife leaves goes to her family, to her sisters and brothers in the first line of descent. Not having had any children by the deceased, the husband would be ashamed to take what she left.

837 Adultery. —The wife owes faithfulness to her spouse. Unfaithfulness, however, is not very important, for unless it occurs repeatedly, it does not usually result in a break. The husband merely beats his wife and scolds her.

837 When the wife has fled to a lover, her husband goes in search of
684 her. The lover will have to provide a sheep (the sheep may be replaced by a goat), a chicken, and two canari of dolo, all of which
782 are to be sacrificed to the ancestors so they will forgive the woman.
769 She cannot re-enter her house until the sacrifice has been performed; without it the ancestors would kill her. They are unbending, more so than the husband to be sure, about the latter's honor. Should a husband know his wife to be guilty and do nothing about it, the ancestors would be furious and they would kill him, hence the necessity for action on the husband's part.

837 If the husband cannot find his runaway wife, the duty of searching
684 for her and bringing her back to him falls to his father-in-law.

Formerly, before the French occupation, if the lover did not want to return the woman, her father appealed to the naba, that is, the chief of the village or canton, or even to the Moro Naba, who sent horsemen to arrest the guilty pair. He restored the wife to her husband and confiscated for his own benefit the lover's animals and millet granaries.

Nowadays, since the French occupation, one appeals to the commanding officer of the circle and to the native provincial court for the wife's return.

684 Sometimes, in the past, the husband killed his wife's lover when
643 he caught him flagrante delicto. He had the right to do so, but this caused him to lose his /246/ wife who became the property of the Moro Naba. The lover's property likewise reverted to the Moro Naba.

684 In any event, the husband did not have the right to kill his wife
643 except when she was caught flagrante delicto, unless he was the
565

684 Moro Naba or a member of the aristocracy. When one of his wives
643 deceived him, the Moro Naba had her killed along with her lover.
565 The guilty pair were strangled with cotton bands. Concerning the nakomsé /descendants of nabas/, the true nakomsé (for the descendants of Naba Rawa and Naba Yadega are no longer considered nakomsé at the present day and have reverted to the mass of the common people), the true nakomsé related to royalty since the time of Naba Nabacéré (1625-1655) and his descendants, Pigo (1720-1739) and Kango (1754-1787), when one of their wives had deceived them, they appealed first to the Basi Naba, head of the nakomsé, and presented the guilty pair to him. The Basi Naba sent them on to the Moro Naba, who had the woman and her lover strangled. The lover's property went to the Rassam Naba, chief of the people of Bingo who were in charge of the execution. The same procedure applied when the people of Bingo (house slaves of the Moro Naba) executed the wife of a Moro Naba and her lover. The property, which could not with decency revert to the deceived Moro Naba, went to the Rassam Naba, chief of Bingo.

837 Just as the wife owes faithfulness to her husband, the husband owes
684 faithfulness to his wife or wives. Violations of this rule are frequent, however, and the husband's escapades are far less important than those of the wife. In all events, the husband's infidelity never entails annulment of the marriage. Although the wives do not have the right to say much when their husband deceives them (provided he does not install his concubine in the conjugal household, and this in fact never happens), they do have two possibilities of revenge. The first is very rarely used by the Mossi women of Yatenga. It consists of notifying the husband of the woman with whom their husband is deceiving them. This results in more or less serious trouble for their husband. If their husband ventures to take into his hut for awhile a woman who does not belong to him, it may happen (and this occurs more frequently) that his wives will gather, wait for the guilty woman at the door of the soukala, and give her a good thrashing when she comes out. The husband cannot say anything to them. He himself is protected, so to speak, by his status as a husband and left outside the argument, but revenge is taken on his unlucky accomplice, and while nothing is said to him, he can do nothing to protect her.

586 Divorce. —Divorce occurs in Yatenga more frequently than among the Bambara for reasons which were explained above. Here are the

593 861 858 The right to discipline a child belongs principally to the father (but also to the heads of work group, compound, and family) or to the mother, depending on the age of the child.

"The mother," says Vadier, "has the right to discipline boys until they are circumcised, girls until they marry. This does not mean that the father cannot intervene during that time to reprimand or chastise one of his children, but that he nearly always leaves it to the mother.

"After the boy's circumcision and the girl's marriage, the right to punish belongs to the father and no longer to the mother."

593 858 672 The duty of surveillance belongs principally to the father, and secondly to the heads of the work group, compound, and family. One of its consequences is financial liability. If a child steals or commits some reprehensible act which may call for compensation, the father is primarily responsible and must indemnify the injured parties, after seizing whatever property the child may own.

593 858 ●443 Formerly, when a native could not manage to discipline a son or daughter whose behavior was very bad, he would hand the child over to the Moro Naba after consulting the family head and the family council. From that day forward he would give up his paternal authority, and the Moro Naba alone would hold it with broader prerogatives. If the child continued to commit extortion, the Moro Naba had the right to have him put to death. When it was a girl who was handed to the naba, the latter would give the father a woman of his own household in exchange if he happened to be favorably disposed toward him.

Now, since the French occupation, this is no longer done. In such cases, nowadays, the child is simply expelled from the compound and from the household.

858 593 A father could not give his child as security, nor could he pawn him temporarily as a slave.

593 429 858 Paternal authority is relinquished in two cases, actually very infrequent: (1) when the father goes insane; and (2) when he has committed incest.

In such a case, paternal authority passes to his oldest living brother, or, if there is no brother, to the oldest son. This guardian has exactly the same powers over the child as the father had.

858 In case of insanity, the children are required to help their father and mother /258/ and to attend to their needs. In case of incest, they have no obligations toward the guilty party.

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TRADITIONAL AND MODERN PATTERNS OF SUCCESSION TO POLITICAL OFFICE AMONG THE MOSSI OF THE VOLTAIC REPUBLIC*

ELLIOTT P. SKINNER

643 A characteristic of kingship shared by early European monarchies and many African societies has been the hazardous interregnum. In Europe this period was a time of shifting loyalties, intrigues, and bargained alliances; and the people's cry "the king is dead long live the king" was uttered without pause as if to abolish a hiatus that made them uneasy. The European monarchy later developed a strength and stability which enabled a king to pass on succession quietly to his heir. In African societies where the political power of the court was not strong, and the line of succession was not clearly delineated, the attempt was made to avoid a hazardous interregnum by keeping the people ritually ignorant of the death of a king. Only when the electors were ready to choose his successor were the people told of their monarch's demise. Even then, there was some real or ritual violence as the [462 607] numerous candidates vied for the vacant office.[1] Africans have themselves interpreted these stormy interregnums as being valuable for their societies. According to Oberg, in the Ankole Kingdom of Uganda, "The Bahima demanded that the strongest of the king's sons should be their leader and that the test should be one of war. The brothers must fight among themselves until one of them alone remained alive in Ankole Kingdom of Uganda to claim the drum and the mugabeship."[2] Other African populations believed that violent interregnums served to convince the people that a ruler was necessary. The Mossi of the Western Sudan was one of those societies which had a difficult interregnum. In this paper I shall try to show that this pattern coinciding [121] as it did, with a flexibility of succession to power among the ruling group, enabled this population to elect capable rulers before European conquest, helped them to insure the continuity of the ruling dynasty under European domination, and is now serving them in good stead during a period of transition to effective independence

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during a period of transition to effective independence. 600

The Mossi have the unique distinction of having preserved their 173
ethnic identity and political autonomy throughout all the vicissitudes of Sudanese history until conquered by the French on September 1, 1896. The origin of Mossi society is couched in mythological terms. According to their tradition they came from Dagomba in the Gold Coast (present day Ghana) sometime during the 11th or 12th century and moved northward towards the Niger River. During this migration they carved out three large kingdoms and many small principalities by conquering and absorbing some of the indigenous Ninisi and Foulse and Dogon populations, and by chasing the others into the cliffs of Bandiagara. In 1328, according to Es Sadi in the *Tarikh es Soudan*, the Mossi attacked, burned, and sacked Timbuktu, then held by Mali, and during the following century attacked Walata and Banku. They received their first setback by the Ali, and were severely beaten by Askia the Great, the usurper of the Songhoi throne, who lead a *jihad* against them in 1499. But their attacks into the Niger bend did not cease until the Moroccans became masters of Timbuktu sometime in the early 1590's. From that period until the French conquest, the Mossi remained relatively quiescent. They developed and maintained [105
an economy based on grain cultivation, livestock rearing, cotton pro- 631]
duction, and trade between the forest zones and the desert. Their political system crystallized into a loose confederacy of fairly autonomous kingdoms and principalities, sometimes tribute to the Moro Naba, the ruler of Wagadougou.

Wagadougou, the most important Mossi political entity, was like 631
the lesser kingdoms, pyramidal in political structure. At the top was 643
and still is the Moro Naba, a lineal descendant of Wedraogo, the Dagomba conquerer who founded the Mossi group and Moro Naba Wubri, the first ruler of the Wagadougou dynasty. Paying allegiance [635]
to him, were the princes who ruled such autonomous provinces as Yako, Boulsa, Mane, Riziam, and Boussouma. These princes were all sons or near relatives of the early Moro Nabas. Directly under the Moro [632]
Naba were district chiefs who were descended from the cadet branches of the ruling family. The villages within the district were in turn ruled [632]
by the chiefs of the indigenous populations. In many of the villages, [565]

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631
643 the sons of the ruling family, the *nakomces*, formed a noble class, above
565 classes of commoners, serfs, and slaves. Classed among the commoners in many villages were the descendants of former district chiefs who had been deposed by the Moro Nabas. The reason that the rulers gave for the deposal of district chiefs was always disloyalty; but everyone recognized that this was an excuse whereby the reigning sublineage deposed older branches and provided positions for its cadet or collateral branches.

631 The governing hierarchy of the Mossi was a lineage with its com-
613 ponent minor and minimal branches. Like most lineages, this ruling lineage possessed an ideology that all of its members had equal access to its corporate assets. The most important asset of this lineage was, of course, its sovereignty, its right to rule. The *nam* is the symbol of Mossi sovereignty and is described by them as "that force of God which enables a mere man to rule over other men." The *nam* was the possession of Wedraogo, the group's founder, and of Moro Naba Wubri, the first ruler of Wagadougou, and this possession became the patrimony of all their descendants. This being the case, the ruling chief of any village, district, principality, or kingdom did not own the *nam* of that area; he was considered the temporary holder of it, and on his death it reverted to the collective descendants of the royal ancestors.
[428 A man did not have the right to pass the *nam* on to any person because
424] it was not his. Whenever a Mossi chief was being considered for office his commoner electors asked him the following questions: "Before his death, did Naba X designate anyone to replace him as chief?" This question was asked three times, and the candidate responded three times: "No! The Naba did not designate anyone. You may name anyone you wish; even if he is a blind man or a leper."

In actuality, this vaunted equality of access to the *nam* by all members of the ruling lineage was a legal fiction. And despite the fact that all the nobles declared that they could go to Wagadougou to seek the *nam* whenever a chief died, in reality only the members of the dead chief's minimal lineage (often the descendants of his grandfather) presented themselves as candidates. Indeed, of all the candidates, the eldest son of the dead ruler was the one most often chosen to be

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all the chaos would come a new appreciation for the task of the chief, and a cessation of the grumbling that the chiefs were greedy.

The Mossi interregnum also served another purpose. It gave the electors the opportunity to exhaust and redistribute much of the patrimony of the dead ruler, which was brought to them by his heirs who were trying to obtain the chieftainship through bribery. Sometimes, a candidate's ability to collect a great deal of goods with which to press his suit often revealed to the electors the strength of his following in the district or village, for had he been an unpopular man he would have had to use only his own resources.

The Mossi electors were always concerned with the health and character of a potential chief, and turned down the most promising candidates who were deficient in any of these qualities. For example, when Moro Naba Sanum died in 1890 without leaving a male heir, his younger brother, Bokary Koutou, was the strongest candidate for the *nam*. Yet he was passed over, at first, by the electors because of his reputation as a bandit and a rebel. We know from Captain Binger, a Frenchman who met Bokary in 1888, that this prince was indeed a bandit and a slave raider. But Binger, although deploring Bokary's conduct, exonerated him on the grounds that the Moro Naba had sent him into exile without any means of support. This was true, but the reason that Moro Naba Sanum did so was because Bokary had raised a rebellion against him as an attempt to obtain their father's position. Bokary was forbidden to appear in the capital; but when he heard that his brother Sanum was dead, he took a force of soldiers and hurried to Wagadougou fearing that an attempt would have been made to prevent his election. When he found that his fears were justified, he became desperate and secreted a force of Gurunsi warriors around the elector's meeting place, threatening to kill them if he was not named Moro Naba. They succumbed to his threat and he received the *nam*. During the customary speech in which a new ruler chose his official name, announced his program for the people and the country, or ridiculed his erstwhile competitors, Bokary Koutou said: "A hundred ghosts cannot frighten an elephant (Wobogo)," meaning that he was not afraid of any of his enemies. He thereafter became known as Moro Naba Wobogo, and he chose to live up to his boast when the French arrived and asked him to sign a treaty of protection with them. He refused

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and chose to fight, and when defeated, fled to the Gold Coast (Ghana). From here he intrigued with the British against the French and even succeeded in having his brother poisoned for accepting the title of Moro Naba. It was only when the British accepted French sovereignty over Mossi country that Bokary accepted his deposition and permanent exile.

Once the traditional electors had chosen one of Bokary's younger relatives, Siguiri as Moro Naba, the Mossi people themselves quietly accepted French rule. Their behavior was in this respect similar to that of many indigenous populations with complex political institutions who had been conquered by the Europeans. In contrast, the neighboring Dogon, Gurunsi, and Lobi, whose political systems were very simple, and who had been constantly raided by the Mossi for slaves, kept on rebelling against French rule, and in some cases shot poisoned arrows at French tax collectors and labor recruiters as late as 1941. The only opposition which they offered the French was in 1910 when an attempt was made to reorganize the Mossi districts for administrative reasons. However, when the French changed their policy of direct administration to a form of indirect rule, the Mossi remained so peaceful that by 1922 there was only one administrator for every 60,000 inhabitants.

Moro Naba Kom who reigned from 1905 to 1942 skillfully preserved the power of the ruling dynasty during a period when the Mossi people were subjected to a rather severe forced labor regime. This was also a period during which the administration deposed chiefs who ran afoul of its wishes or policies. The political ability of this ruler is best exemplified by the order of succession that occurred in the Doulougou district. In 1895 Moro Naba Wobogo had appointed his own son as Doulougou chief in place of Koabga Wedraogo whom he had deposed and killed. However, when Wobogo fled from the French the next year, his son, the Doulougou chief, killed himself because he did not wish to follow his father into exile. The new Moro Naba Siguiri placed a son of the former district chief, Koabga Wodraogo, as chief of Doulougou. This chief died in 1906 and was replaced by a brother. Unfortunately this chief ran afoul of the French, was deposed and placed in "obligatory residence" in another district where he died in 1927. The Moro Naba then elected another son of ex-

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643 Moro Naba Wobogo as chief of Doulougou, but this chief was assas-
636 sinated. Thereafter the Moro Naba placed his own brother as chief
175 of Doulougou district only to have him deposed by the French in 1932
662 for abusing his power. Now the Moro Naba again turned to a descendant of Koabga Wedrago and named him chief, but the French also deposed and jailed this chief for incapacity. Finally in 1935, the Moro Naba named his own son, Etienne Kongo, as chief, and this man was still chief when I left the Mossi in 1957. The interesting feature of this succession is that the Moro Naba confined it to three specific families: his own, that of ex-Moro Naba Wobogo, and that of the ancient chiefly line of Doulougou. In no case did Moro Naba Kom attempt to elevate to chieftainship the son or relative of a man whom the French deposed. He named a chief from another one of the chiefly families, and when a member of this line was deposed, he quickly turned to another one. In this way, the Moro Naba never gave the French any cause for thinking that he disapproved of their action by placing as chief a relative of the man they had deposed. This type of succession was only possible because of the flexibility in the Mossi mode of chiefly succession. Furthermore, the district people readily accepted the chiefs appointed by the Moro Naba because he never deviated from their cultural expectations, or violated the accepted norm of succession.

636 A more serious attempt on the part of the French to influence the
643 traditional political organization of the Mossi came when they tried to enroll the sons of the Moro Naba and those of other chiefs in a special school in order to make these boys adjuncts in their administration. The eldest sons of the Moro Naba and of the officials around Wagadougou were all sent to school because they were well known to the French.
636 However, in the rural districts, the chiefs hesitated to send their eldest
643 sons to school. First of all, they regarded this plan as another form of
186 forced labor from which their sons might never return. And secondly,
662 because they also feared that if these youths did return as educated men, they would have been Christianized, and thereby would have been unable or unwilling to perform the important roles which chiefs had vis-a-vis the ancestors. To palliate the French the chiefs sent their youngest or motherless sons to schools, or in some cases substituted the sons

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of their former serfs and slaves who were theoretically also "their sons."

The sons of the chiefs and those boys of commoner, serf, and slave origins who had gone to the mission schools became the first group of educated Mossi. The educated commoners had no function in the traditional political system and were readily absorbed by the local French bureaucracy. However, since these persons were not sufficient to fill the administration's need of literate Mossi, the sons of chiefs and even the carefully coached missionary catechists were encouraged to join the civil service. The result of this policy was that almost no literate Mossi were elected to district and village chieftainship before the end of the second world war.

The relatively rapid political development which came to French Africa as a result of the Brazzaville Conference of 1944 and the aftermath of the war presented the traditional Mossi political hierarchy with a grave problem: "Who should represent the Mossi people in the new French assemblies and councils both in Africa and in metropolitan France?" There were three possibilities: They could be represented by educated foreign Africans; by the educated sons of Mossi chiefs whose loyalties were not known; or by the potentially hostile educated Mossi commoners. The first hint of the Moro Naba's policy was revealed when the Africans were called upon to select delegates to send to the French Constituent Assembly on October 21, 1945. Houphouet [Boigny], who anticipated the determination of the Mossi to support their own candidate, had vainly taken the precaution of sending an emissary to the Moro Naba prior to the September 8 meeting [which the Africans had called to plan strategy]. The Moro Naba proved unamenable to the suggestion that he support Houphouet's candidacy, and insisted on backing one of his own loyals vassals, Tenga Wedraogo or Baloum Naba.[5] This action showed clearly that the Mossi had planned to use educated chiefs who could also represent them in the assemblies. The flexible pattern of Mossi political succession enabled the Moro Naba and his advisers to meet this new contingency. In three districts, Manga, Sapone, and Kaya, the eldest sons of deceased chiefs were passed over, and their younger educated brothers were elected to the vacant chieftainships. There were some hard feelings over the appointment of Sapone, but the reason given was that the new chief was partially blind in one eye. I have no data for the reaction of

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636 646 666 662 the Kaya people to their new chief. However, in Manga the proposed election of a young chief over his four elder brothers did cause some concern and talk about Catholic machinations because the nominee was of that faith. But there was no overt opposition to him once he had been elected. His elder brother accepted the wishes of the Moro Naba with good graces even though he remains a rather tragic individual.

643 636 The differential treatment that the Manga Naba receives from the administration is obvious to everyone. Whereas the other district chiefs are still summarily summoned to the administrative center, and kept waiting, the Manga Naba sends his assistants to represent him. When the Governor of the Haute Volta came to Manga to make it an administrative subdivision, he was entertained by the Manga Naba while the neighboring district chiefs celebrated outside. It was the political power of this educated chief which was responsible for Manga becoming an administrative subdivision even though it is located several miles from the highway which runs between Wagadougou and Ghana. Furthermore, the population of the neighboring district all complain that Manga's population has gained a disproportionate share of all the services provided by the governmental agencies whose headquarters are there. The fears which the Manga people and the other Mossi have had over their chiefs being Catholic have not materialized in Manga. Of course, the Manga Naba does perform the rituals on the [769] day of the ancestral feasts. These rites are now being performed by his father's brother who has become the ritual head of the ruling lineage (and it is possible that this line may become the line which performs this task for the now "secular" chief). However, when the [777] chief celebrates the anniversary of his conversion to Catholicism at the mission, afterwards he holds court in his house where he receives from Catholics, Moslems, and pagans alike, the gifts he normally would have received in the feast of the ancestors.[8]

The most important function of such Mossi chiefs as the Manga Naba is to defend the interests of the Mossi people in the territorial assemblies and the French councils and assemblies while preserving the ruling tradition of the descendants of Wedraogo and Wubri. In his capacity as politician-chief, the Manga Naba joined a fellow Mossi of rather humble origin in sponsoring several bills in the Assembly of

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the French Union including one to build up the capital of Wagadougou. 643 At home he has taken an active interest in interdistrict politics, and has 636 acted as a liaison between his fellow traditional chiefs and the Mossi politicians of commoner origins. It goes without saying that he only supports those persons who are not opposed to the Moro Naba. As a matter of course, leading Mossi politicians fearing rebuffs from the district chiefs seldom visit any of the districts in the Manga subdivision unless they are accompanied and introduced by the Manga Naba. This kind of co-operation is what made it reasonable for a united block of political parties in Upper Volta, the Unified Democratic Party (Parti Democratique Unifie) to elect the late Moro Naba Sagha as it's honorary president before his death in 1956. At that time, the new party stressed the point that its action was guided by the fact that only the Mossi people had preserved their political identity throughout African history.[7]

The power of the traditional Mossi chiefs has been ably defended by their new politician-chiefs against those Africans who would relegate the institution of the chieftainship to ethnological musuems. The Manga Naba speaking before the Congress of Traditional Chiefs in Dakar in 1956 declared:

> Without wishing to direct any reproach to those who are demanding the abolition of traditional chieftainships, and who severely criticize institutions of whose value they are totally unaware, we ask them to beware of blaming the desert for the grain of sand which falls into the eye. We ask them not to compare the chieftainship instituted among them only a few years ago, chieftainship which perhaps has been imposed upon them, to ours which has existed for centuries.
>
> It is not our fault, if the manufactured chiefs among them have not known how to perform their tasks and have believed that to administer they had to resort to all sorts of extortions. One has never placed at the head of our villages, districts, provinces, or kingdoms persons who have come from elsewhere (former boys, stewards, cooks, or interpreters), because it could not be done. If in our country there are chiefs who are former civil servants [like the speaker, I must add] it is that they are persons who have inherited these positions according to custom, and in the places of their fathers, uncles, or brothers.

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643 We Mossi cannot say that the Europeans have introduced
636 chieftainship among us; for we are old hands at it. Chieftainship has always existed among us, and we intend to conserve it in spite of anything one may say about it.

Who better than we chiefs can hope for a rapid evolution of our country? However, because of the pride we have
[185] in the organized society that we have known well before French occupation, we wish this evolution to take place within our specific cultural pattern, to harmonize with, and to take into consideration the wisdom which has permitted us to conserve the integrity of our homeland until French occupation.

Without wishing to place ourselves against the demands of those who are wedded to an overthrow of local traditions, we endeavor to state our position clearly: Let everyone scratch whatever itches him.[8]

643 It is too early to predict what will be the fate of the traditional
178 Mossi chiefs. The factors which made for such weaknesses in their political system—hazardous interregnums and flexibility in succession—have certainly ceased to operate. But, as I have shown, by a curious coincidence, a form of succession which evolved to meet a particular set of circumstances served the Mossi in good stead during French occupation, and is now being adapted to serve the needs of a new political environment. This flexibility in succession may even provide the Mossi with a wide enough choice of candidates to preserve the traditional ruling lineages in the face of a changing political system. Furthermore, this flexibility in political succession appears to be more compatible and less in conflict with the principles of universal suffrage which have been introduced in this society to serve the needs of the developing parliamentary system.

The growing use of Mossi traditional chiefs as modern politicians has not precluded the opportunity of Mossi commoners to take part in the governmental organization of the territory in which their group resides. As a matter of fact, there are a number of commoners who
[556] are well educated, and individually have held high administrative offices. However, despite a number of them who have been critical of the traditional ruling hierarchy, they have not succeeded in breaking the strong hold of the traditional ruling lineage on the people. Some commoners have even found it to their advantage to ally themselves

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with the Moro Naba and his chiefs. The Mossi commoner who became Minister of the Interior in the Mendes-France government received the treatment fitting to his rank from French officials in Africa, but he bowed humbly and paid homage to the Moro Naba when he visited Wagadougou. In return he still receives political support from the traditional Mossi hierarchy. Whether or not this man and the other Mossi politicians of commoner origin will continue to honor and respect the chiefs in order to obtain their support is not known. It is possible that this situation will change if the growing number of urban Mossi and some of their rural fellows attack the position of the chiefs. But for the foreseeable future it appears as though the traditional dynasty will remain in power, and may even extend its power at the expense of the other non-Mossi groups who are now members of the Voltaic Republic.

The apparent success of the ancient political dynasty of the Mossi people to adapt itself to the requirements of the modern world shows the ability of African institutions to adjust novelty with tradition. It confirms what the anthropologists have always known, that Africa was not a *tabla rasa* on which conquerors could easily impose their ideas and institutions. The cultures of Africa were meaningful to its peoples and when they could not be maintained, they were reinterpreted to meet new situations.[9] It is quite true that because of historical reasons the Mossi did not come into as intensive contact with Europeans as did their neighbors to the south, and that this is possibly why their institutions have persisted. However, the experience of Ghana should make us pause before accepting such a facile answer. A British type of Parliamentary system was imposed upon that country, but it is changing so rapidly that one wonders whether it should have been imposed in the first place. It is still too early to tell what the Ghanaian and other modern African governments will look like; but one might speculate that within the bounds set by the exigencies of the modern world, these governments may resemble the traditional African ones much more than those of their ephemeral conquerors.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. According to C. K. Meek, among the Jukun "The King's demise was and is kept a close secret, and is not, in fact revealed until some months afterwards, when the body is formally buried. Various reasons are assigned for this secrecy, such as that

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642 613 173 778 had done so with full permission of his father and in place of an unadventurous elder brother.

For example, the ruling family of the Boulsa province claimed that its 635 ancestor, Naba Namende, was the eldest son of Mogho Naba Oubri and 642 chose to become his father's *Kourita* (a young son of a deceased Mogho 613 Naba chosen as his father's personal representative on earth) and go into 173 exile rather than subject his younger brother to the ordeal. At the same 778 time, Namende sought to retain royal power equal to that of his brother, the new Mogho Naba, by taking Oubri's royal amulets with him.[3]

635 Mane province, too, was founded by one Nyaseme, a son of Koudoumie, 642 who felt that he should have been given the nam. When routed in battle 613 by his elder brother Kouda, he moved into the region of Mane, where he 631 defeated the indigenous Ninisi and ruled over them. The princes who broke away from Ouagadougou during Koudoumie's reign considered themselves theoretically equal to the supreme ruler. Thus, they took the title of Dim. By so doing, they dramatized their claim to equality of status, if not of power, with the Mogho Naba, and their determination to "submit only to God."[4]

642 The Mossi insist that the relationship between the Mogho Naba and 643 the Dimdamba was similar to that between father and sons, since the 613 Dimdamba were "really the sons of the Mogho Naba" and are said to have 631 acted as such. This analogy is interesting in view of the Mossi traditional [593] pattern of avoidance—combined with love and tolerance—between fathers and elder sons.[5] The Dimdamba were often allowed to act at variance with the Mogho Naba. Some of them shifted allegiance from kingdom to kingdom; others usurped the power of the Mogho Naba over smaller districts, or claimed that they had been given this power; and most of them regulated their own affairs with little interference from their sovereign. He, as "father," interfered on occasion in their internal affairs, demanding help from them and often chastising them if they failed to comply.

634 The Mogho Naba and the Dimdamba often appointed their younger 631 sons or brothers as rulers (Kombemba) of the districts that made up their 613 kingdoms and principalities. In this way, power and authority were kept 642 within the royal clan and its lineages. Nevertheless, in keeping with the concept of corporate access to the nam, the rulers of these dependencies had traditions that served to reconcile their claims to kingly or princely status with their actual subordinate position. District founders, too, were often portrayed as eldest sons who had been cheated out of their patrimony or had voluntarily left it to establish new districts. In some cases, the legendary heroes were granted miraculous births as well.

[428] power and authority were inherited by their families in the same manner as among Mossi lineages.

634 The last important category of Mossi chiefs included men who ruled over slave and serf villages. These men were themselves the descendants 622 of slaves and serfs, for no free-born Mossi were placed in such posts. Needless to say, these chiefs were never lineally or collaterally related to the [602] district chiefs, and therefore were never nobles. However, they might be affinally related to district chiefs, and in such cases the relationship was often of some political value.

It must be emphasized that once a man was made chief, he was respected, if not honored, by all the people of the district. In some districts, the Dapore Naba and the Baglere Naba, chiefs of two categories of serfs, were among the most valued assistants of the Kombere Naba. The only [565] people who sometimes refused to honor the village chiefs were the nakomce, [778] who were the holders of the district nam. Nevertheless, they were censored by the Kombere if they were disrespectful to his subordinates. No district chief could allow his government to be jeopardized by the maltreatment of persons who served it. In any conflict between the nam and the kin group, the supremacy of the nam was always maintained.

613 Every Mossi ruler, whether he held the nam of a kingdom, principality, 631 district, or village, was *ipso facto* also *Boodkasma* (literally, "family head") 622 of the local segment of his boodoo. The word boodoo refers to patrilineal groups that anthropologists would normally call clans, maximal lineages, major lineages, or minor lineages. The Mossi do not make any terminological distinction between these levels of their segmentary lineage system. Nevertheless, they recognize and use the status differences between these units to limit the access of each unit to the corporate assets of the boodoo. Their major social distinction is drawn between the minor lineage, which is also called boodoo, and its component minimal lineages. Each minimal- [596] lineage unit is called a *babissi* (literally, "father's brother"), and is really a large extended family composed of relatives who had a common ancestor, three, four, or at most five generations ago.

643 The Mogho Naba, for example, was head of his babissi as well as ex 613 officio head of the entire royal clan. Those rulers who claimed equality with him claimed that they, not he, were the true heads of the royal clan and the "direct" descendants of Ouedraogo and Oubri. As a function of their political position, the many princes and district chiefs were heads of their own babissi and of the maximal lineage to which their babissi be- 631 longed. Like the Mogho Naba, they were the ex officio heads of all members 613 of their boodoo who lived in their territory and who claimed descent from the same royal ancestors,

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also lost much of their interest in preserving their genealogies. Their local 613
lineage segment, which controlled the village nam, still showed interest in 798
its genealogy, but the people of Godin did not quite remember how they were related to the ruling lineage segment. Several times in the recent history of Barkago (and other villages), the men who were given the village nam had to be recalled from distant villages where they were living with maternal patrilineages. So relatively unimportant was possession of the village nam without concomitant noble status that after Naba Ngado took over, the local Biligo people began to ignore all local genealogical records except descent from Biligo. The Ninisi people had the least reason to be interested in their genealogy, and they simply ignored it. They had been separated from the other Ninisi groups in the district for so long that they did not even forbid marriage into those groups.

In villages such as Barkago, the existence of several lineage groupings 613
and families of strangers facilitated local marriages. But in villages with 621
fewer lineage groups, the time came when all groups were so closely linked by marriage and affinal alliances that for all practical purposes the village became an exogamous unit. By 1956, this process had reached such an advanced stage in Barkago that hardly any marriages took place between the Ninisi and Biligo local lineage segments. Both groups were permitted to marry the local descendants of Ngado, because the latter were more recent arrivals in the village. These marriages were of great significance to all villagers because they linked the nobles and the commoners in a series of exchanges. Moreover, because the groups were linked through sisters' sons [565]
with special privileges in both groups, problems deriving from status dif- [606]
ferences were more easily solved. Even the most arrogant noble was often [607]
constrained by ancestral sanctions to maintain amicable relations with his in-laws.

The Biligo lineage of Barkago contracted marriages with the other, non-related groups within and without the district. The Ngado people did likewise. Whether these nobles were able to marry noble women of other districts is a moot point. Owing to distance and politics, no such marriages are known to have occurred, and no one seems to know whether they were permissible. The Ninisi, who had always been commoners, had the largest marriage circle of all the village groups. They were able to marry nobles, commoners, and the Ninisi of the district and other districts.

The inhabitants of a Mossi village built their houses and cultivated their 423
crops on land the village chief had granted to their respective lineages. 613
Since the royal lineage, by right of conquest, controlled all of Mossi country, the rights of usufruct of a lineage depended ultimately on the Mogho [643]

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Naba. This did not mean, however, that either the Mogho Naba or any of his chiefs owned the land of Mossi country. The Mossi chiefs and their ruling lineage controlled the Mossi people and thus were able to decide who should use the land. However, there is no evidence that Mossi chiefs ever thought of controlling people by controlling land. The land appears to have been a public good, the utilization of which was in the rulers' interests. Rulers tried to attract more people, but they hardly ever tried to get more land. The people within a Mossi community who might have been said to "own" the land were the Ninisi, whose rights were derived from first occupancy and from their special association with the soil in which their ancestors were buried. When they were conquered, they did not lose their "ritual" rights over the land of their communities, but they were persuaded or forced to "care for" them in the name of the ruling group.

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III

KINGSHIP AND CHIEFSHIP

MOSSI TRADITIONAL government revolved around the Nanamse, as all Mossi 642
rulers were called. Sometimes the title was also given on an honorific basis to commoners, serfs, or slaves who performed specific duties for a Mogho Naba or a district chief; but the only true Nanamse were persons who traced their descent from Ouedraogo and Oubri.

The heads of the four Mossi kingdoms—the Mogho Naba of Ouaga- 642
dougou, the Yatenga Naba, the Tenkodogo Naba, and the Fada-N'Gourma 643
Naba—were supreme in their own realms, but there was considerable rivalry among them throughout Mossi history.[1] In terms of closeness of descent from the nation's founders, the Tenkodogo Naba came first, the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou second, and the Yatenga Naba third. The Naba of Fada-N'Gourma was outside the hierarchy. As time passed, the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou gradually became more powerful than the other rulers, even though he recognized the seniority of Tenkodogo and, as we shall see, had difficulty exercising his seniority and supremacy over the Yatenga. Because he was the pre-eminent Mossi ruler, the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou set the general pattern of kingship and chiefship. The heads of the other kingdoms, principalities, districts, and villages tried to approximate the pomp and ceremony of the Ouagadougou court as closely as their resources and etiquette permitted. The pattern of chiefship among the Mossi in general thus differed little from that of the Ouagadougou kingdom.

The Mossi of Ouagadougou believed that their Mogho Naba was supe- 643
rior to all other kings. They believed that his realm was the largest in the world, and that no other king was so rich and powerful. He was so awe-
inspiring, so "like the sun," that no one dared to look upon his face. It was [516]
forbidden to touch his hand, or speak to him from any but a kneeling posi-
tion with the forehead touching the ground. People were expected to hesi- [576]
tate before pronouncing his name, and no other person was allowed to bear

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643 the name of the current ruler. When Crozat asked one of his Mossi bearers why Boukary Koutou had chosen a title that means "elephant," the man declared, "He is an elephant; he is king of all kings as the elephant is king of all animals; a great elephant-king he is."[2] Another Moaga, meeting Crozat on the road to Ouagadougou, told him to be prepared to meet a monarch "whose riches are inexhaustible and whose splendor is marvelous. [644] He and his family wear only the most admirable European clothes; a thousand horses stand before his door, and there are more than a thousand women in his house. He is served by one hundred eunuchs; he commands as master 333 chiefs; and when he speaks to them it is as though God himself had spoken; everyone bows down before him and obeys."[3] Crozat, looking at the Mogho Naba through European eyes, did not find the "great [576] king" he had expected. Yet he and later European visitors to the Mossi [516] capital did affirm that all Mossi officials and district chiefs prostrated themselves in obeisance to their sovereign, even if they did not subsequently follow his instructions.[4]

643 Many rituals associated with the person and court of the Mogho Naba 796 served to emphasize the high esteem in which he was held by his subjects. For example, the sovereign showed himself every morning at a ceremony called "Ouend pous yan" (literally, "God rises," or "the sun rises") that survives to this day. The name of this ceremony has led many scholars [114] and travelers to assert that traditionally the Mogho Naba was considered a divine king. Dim Delobson states that this ceremony "shows the regard which the Mossi have for their chief, since they compare him to the sun, and thus to a 'god.'"[5] However, the Mossi do not now and probably never did regard their monarchs either as gods or as divine kings. There is a great deal of difference between regarding a man as "powerful and brilliant" like the sun and regarding him as divine. As a matter of fact, the [522] Mossi very often dramatize in humorous fashion the all-too-human frailties of their rulers, without ever considering it sacrilegious to do so. On the other hand, the Mogho Naba, as the supreme ruler, was expected to follow faithfully the strict etiquette demanded by his exalted position.

643 The morning ceremony was opened by the ruler's chief page, the *so-* 796 *ghone-kasanga,* who sprinkled a phylacteric solution around a throne 644 (*guere*) in the courtyard in front of a reception room called the *zongo.* Other pages (*soghondamba*) brought out a large cushion (*naghpure*), the ruler's sword, and other personal accouterments, and placed them on the [292] throne. Still other pages aided the Mogho Naba in his toilet. He was clothed in a large red robe, which symbolized the rising sun; he wore a bonnet surmounted by silver streamers (*wazourfou sebere*), which repre- -sented the sun itself.

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sented the sun itself. The toilet was performed in complete silence, for no one was allowed to speak to the monarch until after the ceremony. Meanwhile, in the courtyard, the court dignitaries, visitors, and the musicians and minstrels (*bendere*) took their places. The provincial ministers sat on their respective stones (*coganaramse*), and the visitors sat by their hosts. The pages at the door of the zongo awaited the moment when the Mogho Naba and his escort would emerge from the zongo. On seeing the two pages who preceded the monarch, they snapped their fingers as a signal to the still silent bendere.

On seeing the monarch, the chief musician, the Bendere Naba, rubbed his fingers across the top of his drum to produce the sound of a lion's growl, and the other drummers and violinists played the royal air, "Ouend pous yan." The head guard, the Kambo Naba, and his men, carrying guns, walked up from the side and knelt down facing the assembly. And the *samande-kamba*, the "servants of the courtyard," came with heavy batons to guard against crimes of lese majesty. From the wings came a groom with a partly saddled ceremonial horse. As soon as the monarch was seated on his throne, his two pages moved to the front and knelt down facing the courtyard. The salutations now began. The first group of ministers, led by the Baloum Naba and including the Samande Naba, the Samande Nabila, the Ouedrange Naba, the Kamsaogho Naba, and the Zusoaba Kasanga, left their stones and came to the throne with slow steps and bowed heads. A few yards from the monarch, they knelt on the ground, and with their fingers folded and their thumbs in the air, leaned forward, struck the ground with both hands three times, and then rubbed the palms of their left hands with the fingers of their right. Then they arose, and with heads still bowed walked backwards to their places.[6] With the music still playing, another group of ministers, led by the Ouidi Naba and including such men as the Gounga Naba, the Larhalle Naba, and the Pwe Naba, saluted the ruler in the same manner. On Fridays and other Islamic holy days, the Moslem Imam representing the Ouagadougou congregation read aloud from the Koran. This part of the ceremony ended when the Mogho Naba rose, and, with the measured steps and swaying gait that signified royalty, retired to the zongo, preceded by his two pages.[7]

A few minutes later, the monarch returned to the courtyard without his red robe and glittering headdress. There was a second round of salutations comparable to the first, but this time the Ouidi Naba and his group did not appear unless it was an important occasion or important guests were present. When this part of the ceremony was over, the monarch called for his half-saddled horse and announced that he wished to go to

643 La, a village near Koudougou district. His eldest wife, the *Pughtiema,*
796 appeared carrying her household utensils in order to accompany her husband. However, all the ministers, led by the Kamsaogho Naba, implored the monarch to have his horse unsaddled and to postpone the trip until the following day. Feigning anger, the Mogho Naba reluctantly agreed to remain in the capital, ordered his horse unsaddled, dismissed his wife, and re-entered the palace.[8]

173 The tradition about the origin of this ritual reveals something of the
643 Mossi attitude toward the human frailties of their rulers. It appears that
796 Poko, the favorite wife of Mogho Naba Waraga (ca. 1660–80), asked permission to visit her father at La, and that he refused to grant her request because of his love and admiration for her. Nevertheless, she continued to ask him for permission, and after her third request he granted her wish and sent a page and a small girl with her as chaperons. When Poko did not return to the palace on the third day, Naba Waraga sent two pages to her father's compound to fetch her, and here they discovered that she had died. Fearing the king's wrath toward persons who brought bad tidings, the pages did not report back to him but notified the ministers of Poko's death. When subsequent messengers also failed to return, the king decided to go to La. The following day, after the morning ceremonies, he ordered his horse saddled and commanded the Pughtiema to get ready to accompany him on his journey. But the ministers, anxious to protect him from grief, told him that a great king never followed a mere woman under any circumstances and persuaded him not to depart. The monarch went back into the palace, and the dignitaries ordered the horse unsaddled and sent it away. Shortly afterwards, the king changed his mind and decided to go to La, but he was beseeched not to do so. He swore that he would leave the following morning, and that if he were prevented from doing so, he would advise all his descendants to try to go to La every morning until one of them succeeded.[9]

643 At the end of this ceremony, a page gave the ministers an ample supply
644 of beer and kola nuts. The Moslems were given presents of kola nuts and
692 millet water (*zom kom*) sweetened with honey, since they were forbidden
576 to drink millet beer. Later in the morning, the Mogho Naba left the palace
[431] and entered the zongo, where he greeted his visitors, accepted gifts from visiting chiefs and subjects, dispensed gifts in turn, and presided over the court of justice. Anyone who went to see the ruler had to be accompanied by his provincial minister or his host—regardless of whether it was his purpose to pay a courtesy visit, to pledge allegiance, to plead for aid, or to give
643 testimony in a lawsuit. Pages moved back and forth between the palace
644 and the courtyard, dispensing kola nuts and beer or millet water prepared
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by the sovereign's wives. Other pages waited upon the monarch, and accompanied him when he moved about the courtyard. When the ruler drank any liquid, the pages rubbed the palm of one hand with the fingers of the other; when he sneezed, everyone clapped; and when he stepped out to urinate, a page accompanied him, turned his back to him, knelt down, and saluted by rubbing his palm.

When the Mogho Naba had finished his morning audiences, he entered his palace for a solitary meal. This meal was prepared by one of his young wives, who tasted it in his presence before giving it to the page who served him.[10] After eating, the monarch rested for a few hours; then he emerged into the courtyard to grant audiences and hear court cases until sunset. At that time he retired to his palace, and those courtiers who were not connected with the evening ceremonies returned to their homes.

The ceremony that closed the day at the monarch's court was called "Kwaga Basgha" (literally, "final meal"). This ceremony still survives. As soon as the sun began to set, the samande-kamba took their heavy batons and stood guard to prevent unauthorized persons from coming near the *namtibo* (royal amulets). The Baloum Naba and the Bendere Naba entered the palace courtyard and knelt before the zongo. The chief page then brought out the *kwaga*, a pottery vessel containing a fire ritually associated with the namtibo.[11] The vessel was placed on the ground, and the page blew on the fire to make it burn brightly. Meanwhile, the Bendere Naba rubbed his fingers across his drum to make the growl of a lion. When the fire finally died out, the Zusoaba Kasanga and the Baloum Naba closed the ceremony by rising, coming together, and saluting the namtibo in the traditional Mossi manner. (The Mogho Naba did not attend this ceremony.) Before the officials left for the night, the pages gave them pots of beer prepared by the royal wives. Sometimes these officials visited the Mogho Naba before they retired to their compounds. Once these men had departed, the pages served the ruler his evening meal, which again had been prepared by one of his young wives.

During the hours of darkness the Mogho Naba conducted many secret affairs of state and conversed with the members of his household. Persons seeking the nam of a deceased relative were often granted audience at night, as were litigants in court cases. When there were no pressing matters of state, the ruler gathered some of the royal wives around him and discussed family affairs, which protocol forbade him to discuss during the day. Some rulers reportedly disguised themselves and visited the wards of the town in the company of a young man from the palace, in an effort to learn things that did not ordinarily come to a ruler's attention.

The Mogho Naba slept in a grass hut in the palace compound. Two

513 The Mogho Naba slept in a grass hut in the palace compound. Two

643 reasons are given for the choice of a grass hut over a brick building: first, [342] the grass hut was considered better protection against sorcerers, who were [754] believed to induce storms that destroy buildings and their occupants; sec- [775] ond, it was believed that the ruler's ancestors preferred to visit grass huts because it was easier for them to enter through the interstices in the walls. [644] When the monarch retired for the night, one of his pages stood guard at the door. The Mogho Naba usually slept all night, but he occasionally made the rounds with a page to check on the palace guards or the safety (and virtue) of his wives.

643 The routine of the Mogho Naba seldom varied. Only in times of danger [644] or on great ceremonial occasions did protocol permit any major changes in court procedure. Normally, pages, ministers, and other court officials adhered very strictly to their traditional tasks.

The Mossi considered the king's office to be such a difficult one that even today they say, *Mogho Naba toumde ya yida fa* ("The Mogho Naba's task is the most difficult of all"). Nevertheless, the Mogho Naba's office was always eagerly sought, and considerable care had to be exercised to ensure that the right person was chosen. As soon as the incumbent Mogho [645] Naba died, and even before he was buried, the Ouidi Naba, as prime minister, began the consultations leading to the selection of a new monarch. Mossi custom decreed that the eldest son of a previous ruler be chosen as the new Mogho Naba. This choice was not automatic, however, in view of the primary consideration that the person selected should have the skill to "keep" the country. Other qualifications for office were membership in the royal minimal lineage, soundness of body and mind, and sufficient age to command universal respect. Given these requirements and the lack of any provisions for a regency, it is not surprising that a dead ruler's sons, brothers, uncles, and even grandchildren—that is, his entire babissi—should have competed to "eat the nam" (accede to power).[13] Of the thirty-four kings who have ruled since Oubri, the founder of the Ouagadougou dynasty, twelve succeeded their brothers and twenty-two their fathers. Interestingly enough, there is some indication that at the beginning of the Ouagadougou dynasty, the successor of a king was usually chosen from among his brothers before the nam was passed on to the next generation.[14] For example, Oubri's four sons all reigned in turn before the kingship descended to the son of the last brother in office. Then, two of this brother's sons reigned before the nam descended to a new generation. Initially, then, seniority within the royal lineage, like seniority within the local ruling lineages, may have been determined by generation. On the other hand, accidental factors may have governed: a weak state organization may have

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required mature rulers, or an uncle may have vanquished a nephew by physical prowess or force of character. 643

The pretenders to the Mossi nam began to press their claims as soon as propriety allowed. They presented gifts to the Ouidi Naba and to the other ministers in an attempt to sway the issue. The Ouidi Naba finally called a secret council composed of the Gounga Naba, the Larhalle Naba, the Kamsaogho Naba, and the Tansoba, and recited to them the following formula: "The country does not have a chief, and it needs one. Among all the people who wish to be elected [*di nam*, "eat the nam"], it is for you to choose the most worthy."[14] To this the councillors responded: "Naba! You are our superior, and the right to make the choice rests upon you alone." Thus given a free hand, the Ouidi Naba chose the most capable candidate. However, before announcing his choice, he said to the Tansoba, "My heart is heavy because I fear that those persons whose hopes have not been fulfilled will resort to violence to get their way." The Tansoba responded, "That will be against tradition and justice. Do not fear. I am here with my army to see that your decision is respected." Having received the support of the Tansoba, the Ouidi Naba announced his choice to the other councillors. They said to him, "Naba! You have expressed our will, and that of all the people." It is not to be understood from these formulas that the other councillors had no voice in selecting the candidate. They did in fact advise the Ouidi Naba concerning the best candidate, but these formulas emphasized that it was the Ouidi Naba, as prime minister, who was responsible for the choice. 643 645

The Ouidi Naba's choice of a new Mogho Naba was kept secret until the successful candidate was summoned for investiture. This occurred on the second night of the late Mogho Naba's funeral ceremony. Toward nightfall, the Ouidi Naba secretly dispatched a messenger to summon the successful candidate. The need for secrecy was demonstrated in 1890, when Boukary Kouton forced the committee to name him Mogho Naba. The circumstances were as follows: Mogho Naba Sanum died without male issue, and all his brothers vied for the nam. One of them, Boukary Kouton, was felt to be ineligible because he had been exiled for leading a civil war against Sanum, but like his brothers he hastened to Ouagadougou. Boukary feared that the electors would not look favorably upon his claim, and when he failed to ascertain their intentions he decided upon a *coup d'état*. He gathered an army composed of his supporters and his Gurunsi slaves, and surrounded the compound in which the electors were gathered. One of the electors discovered the army during a break in the deliberations and reported his findings to the Ouidi Naba. The chief minister and his aides 175 643 669 645

175 643 669 645 knew that Boukary Koutou was the only person capable of such a conspiracy. Fearing for their lives if they did not nominate him, they immediately sent a messenger to summon him as the successful candidate.[18] Under normal circumstances, however, there was no coercion of the ministers and the nominee was quietly brought to the councillors.

645 643 [292] Wearing a pair of trousers and a sheepskin mantle and carrying a spear in each hand, the nominee entered the courtyard of the compound through the women's door.[18] He was preceded by the Samande Nabila, who sprinkled the earth with water. He came up to the councillors and saluted them, and the Ouidi Naba addressed him as follows: "Before your father [brother] died, did he designate you to be his successor?" The nominee replied, "No, Sire! My father has left you free to choose whom you wish, be he a blind man or a leper!" This question was asked three times, and 645 643 551 the nominee responded three times. The Ouidi Naba then made the following declaration: "I am giving you the nam of your father and grandfathers. You must try to conduct yourself as they did when they had the nam." The Ouidi Naba then listed the names of the territories over which the ruler had absolute power and authority. The new monarch raised his two spears in the air, made a speech in which he announced three guiding principles by which he vowed to reign, and "named a name," that is, suggested the title by which he wished to be known. For example, Mogho Naba Sagha II (1942–57) said in his inaugural speech: "Without rain, there is no life. I will be like rain for the country." He then became known as Mogho Naba Sagha ("Rain"), a rather fitting title for a ruler *in a country with uncertain rainfall. The present Mogho Naba stressed* in his inaugural speech (in 1957) that he was "solid as a rock." His official title is now Mogho Naba Kougri ("Rock").[19]

The taking of a new name was only the first step in the elaborate proc- 645 643 ess through which a man became Mogho Naba. Next, the Ouidi Naba took the two spears from the new monarch and removed his sheepskin mantle. Then he gave him his new white clothes, which included a pair of trousers, a bonnet, and a sleeveless robe, all made for him by the people of the Sculougou ward in the capital. Next, he was given a cushion made by the people of Baramimi. The Baloum Naba then took the closely [789] guarded namtibo, the sacred amulets of the dynasty, and used them in the [782] preparation of a potion of millet beer mixed with millet-flour water, part [776] of which was poured as a libation to the earth goddess, Tenga.[19] The ruler and the assembled ministers all partook of the potion in a kind of communion. The ministers then shook the ruler's hand, an act thereafter forbidden, and departed for their own compounds. The newly elected

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The newly elected monarch secreted himself either at the Samande Nabila's home or elsewhere in the capital until daybreak. Tradition holds that if he were killed before being officially proclaimed before his subjects as the new ruler, the assassin could become Mogho Naba.[19]

643 [682]

The public ceremonies marking the official proclamation of the new ruler's accession to power took place on the following day. Early that morning, the monarch left his secret sleeping quarters and proceeded to the Koumbi Naba's house. Here he dressed in his white garments and mounted an old, unsaddled horse. The Baloum Naba then gave him a sack containing the namtibo, which he placed over his shoulder, and the Kalzi Naba led him out of the courtyard by the women's door. As the ruler's horse passed through the gate, his sister, the *Napoko* ("female ruler"), cried, "The sun has reappeared! The fire is relighted! The earth lives again!" A large crowd of musicians and warriors who had been alerted by the ministers shouted and danced as they accompanied the monarch, who circled the compound three times.[20] The ruler then re-entered the compound, and this time he came out through the men's door as a sign of his full status. Here he was greeted by the Ouidi Naba, who proclaimed in a loud voice, "Mossi people, here is the Mogho Naba!" The warriors shouted and fired their muskets, and the musicians played. Then all the dignitaries and their followers solemnly prostrated themselves and paid homage and swore allegiance to their monarch. He, in turn, listened attentively when his ministers and some of the elder chiefs gave him advice about how the affairs of state should be conducted. After each declaration of loyalty or word of counsel, the people shouted in praise of their ruler. The Bendere Naba, accompanied by his musicians, then recited the ruler's genealogy, announced the pledges the new monarch had made to his people, and acclaimed him by his royal title, "Mogho Naba [X]." From this moment on, no child born during his reign could bear the ruler's name, and those persons who already bore it called themselves *Nab'yure* ("king's name").

643 796 [645] [644] [551]

As the next stage in the ceremony the Mogho Naba, accompanied by his retinue, visited the various wards in the capital. In each he was proclaimed ruler and received the allegiance of both Mossi and non-Mossi ward chiefs. He visited the wards controlled by such men as the Loumbila Naba, the Sapone Naba, and the Ouagadougou Naba, and at each stop the ward chief declared, "People of [X], here is your new sovereign." Having been acknowledged by the leading chiefs of the capital, the new ruler then returned to his host's house. He emerged later in the day to visit the compound of a palace attendant, the Samande Nabila, where he sat under a

643 [621] [641] 643 641

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643 641 tree and again received oaths of allegiance from his chief ministers and other dignitaries. He then proceeded to the house of the Ouagadougou Naba (a direct descendant of the aboriginal Ninisi population), where he spent the night. The following morning, his host made sacrifices to his Ninisi ancestors in the name of the new ruler. Once again, the principal ministers and dignitaries appeared and joined in a ceremony of allegiance to their king, but this time they drank a potion prepared with the namtibo and swore that they hoped their ancestors would kill them if they should prove disloyal to the Mogho Naba.

The monarch then left the Ouagadougou Naba's compound, accompanied by the Tansoba and his warriors, and went to Paspanga (a ward in the capital whose name means "to add strength or power") to receive homage and allegiance from his assembled district chiefs. Along the way, he met symbolic opposition from the candidates he had defeated. However, these "hostile" forces were quickly routed by the Tansoba and his [173] army. According to one Mossi tradition, when Sagha I (ca. 1787–1803) was elected Mogho Naba, his father's brother, Kaoko, tried to kill him during this mock battle. A vigorous civil war ensued, in which some district chiefs joined Kaoko. Sagha defeated and killed Kaoko and many of his supporters, and then swept through the country, executing rebellious district chiefs and placing his own sons in power.

At Paspanga the sovereign sat under a tree, surrounded by his ministers, warriors, and musicians. The onlookers formed two facing ranks in front of the sovereign, between which the district chiefs and their retinues walked up to pledge their allegiance. Those members of the royal sub-lineage who had been put to flight by the Tansoba's army returned and rendered homage to the monarch. Emissaries from the autonomous Mossi princes also greeted him.

When this ceremony was over, the Mogho Naba instructed his retainers to provide food and drink for his subjects and guests, and retired for the night. He remained at Paspanga for a week, during which time he greeted those persons who had not arrived in time for the first day's ceremony. On the seventh day, the monarch and a few courtiers and retainers retired to Djmvousse ("king's resting place"), where the district chiefs who had come to Ouagadougou for the installation brought him presents before returning home. The Mogho Naba remained at Dimvousse for a period ranging from several weeks to three years, depending on whether the earth-priests advised him to inhabit his predecessor's palace or build a new one.[21] When at last he ended his retreat, a large crowd of horsemen, warriors, and musicians accompanied him to his palace, where he set up his permanent court.

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fathers died. In this way the rulers not only retained the allegiance of the boys' fathers but had a unique opportunity to determine whether these boys were qualified to succeed to the nam. 644

The life of a page was confining, even if sometimes very rewarding. Pages were bound by the demands of the ruler, whose every wish had to be satisfied immediately. A quarrelsome ruler was a terror to his pages, who had to bear silently his insults and blows. On the other hand, a considerate monarch permitted or encouraged his pages to profit from the small political intrigues in which they were invariably involved. Prospective district chiefs "made friends" with pages to find out whether their suits were progressing, or to whom they might usefully offer gifts. The pages used any money they might procure to buy clothes for themselves, to supplement the clothing and presents they received from their relatives. Every page was "adopted" by one of the royal wives, who prepared his meals and took care of him. In return, he helped this woman cultivate her field when his presence was not required by the monarch. When a page completed his service satisfactorily, he received a pughsiudga as a wife. If his work had not been satisfactory, he was simply dismissed. [662]

The only woman who played any significant role at the court of the Mogho Naba was the Pughtiema, his head wife. She was the only wife to whom he presented his friends, and whom he allowed his subjects to visit. This woman, who was commonly the widow of the former Mogho Naba, was often chosen because she was past childbearing age: she was thus older and wiser than the other wives, less preoccupied with children, and above the sexual jealousies that may often develop in polygynous households. She arbitrated among the wives and stood *in loco parentis* to the younger ones, whom she instructed and advised. She served also as official hostess to the ancestors during the annual propitiatory rituals. It was her duty to prepare the millet beer and millet water for the sacrifices to the ancestors, who were believed to feast at her hut before they visited the rest of the household. In addition, it was she who prepared to accompany the Mogho Naba to La each day. Lastly, it was her duty to introduce any new royal wife to the ancestors, and to ask them to watch over this potential mother of their descendants. 644 595 643 [782]

The ruler inherited some of his wives from his father; some he received from his many friends and vassals; and others he selected from among his pughsiudse. Crozat reports that Mogho Naba Wobogo (1890-96) allegedly had a hundred wives. Crozat did not see this many women at Wobogo's court, understandably, since most of a ruler's wives lived in villages, where they were guarded by eunuchs.[23] Of the substantial number of royal wives [114]

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595 644 who did live at the palace, only a small minority prepared the ruler's meals and shared his bed. Dim Delobson reports that Mogho Naba Kom II (1905–42) had thirty-seven wives. His son, Mogho Naba Sagha II (1942–[177] 57), had twenty.[24] The present Mogho Naba, Kougri, recently married [178] according to Western tradition and is officially monogamous.[25] There seems to be a general trend toward fewer wives among Mossi chiefs.

643 581 582 Mossi rulers never married for the purpose of forming state alliances, and their marriages had no political significance. The Mogho Naba's marriages were exogamous with regard to the royal lineage and to his mother's minimal lineage. Aside from these restrictions, however, the Mogho Naba could marry women from any Mossi lineage or group, including serfs, slaves, and foreign populations. It is said that when Mogho Naba Sanum (1850–90) despaired of having an heir by a Mossi woman, he took a Fulani wife.[26]

643 585 The Mogho Naba had no formal wedding ceremony. The task of introducing a new wife to the royal harem fell to the Pughtiema. She and her [302] assistants welcomed the wife in a prescribed fashion. First they shaved all the hair from her body. They then bathed her in warm water to which shea butter and ritual herbs had been added, and during the bath they recited the ruler's genealogy to impress her with her new status.[27] The Pughtiema advised her on the need for proper deportment, and warned her that [301] adultery was punished by death. To close the ceremony, a smith fastened to the girl's wrists and ankles the silver or brass bracelets that identified her as a wife of the Mogho Naba. If the bride was still a child, she was often allowed to return to her father's house until she reached childbearing age. If she was past the age of puberty, her marriage was consummated without further ceremony, and she joined the ranks of the ruler's wives.

644 595 The wives who lived in the palace were divided into three groups. The first group included the wives who lived with the Pughtiema in a section of the palace harem called the *zaka sanga* ("large courtyard"). These women were all past childbearing age and no longer received nocturnal visits from the Mogho Naba. They had their own fields in the vicinity of the palace and cultivated them with the aid of the samande-kamba, the pages they had adopted, and their own children. The women of the second group, those of the *zagbilin* ("small courtyard"), were mostly in their thirties or forties and still sexually active. They received occasional visits from the Mogho Naba, but fewer than his younger wives. These women also cultivated their fields with the help of the young men of the court.

The third group of wives, the *dogunba* ("keepers of the household"), was the most important. The dogunba prepared the ruler's meals and satis-

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fied his sexual desires. Since these women were in the monarch's favor, they were better dressed than the other wives and received more attention from him. The dogunba generally cultivated a large field in common with the aid of the palace retainers, but some insisted on cultivating their own fields instead. Like the other wives, the dogunba usually lived in huts of their own. Childless women sometimes shared the same hut until one of them became pregnant and had to set up a hut for herself and her child. 644 595 [342] [591]

Those wives who lived in special villages under the supervision of eunuchs rarely went to the palace. Usually, they were past childbearing age or had lost favor with the monarch. They cultivated plots of land, spun cotton, and prepared locust-bean flour, locust-bean "balls," and shea butter. They kept a part of the produce for their own use and sent the remainder to the palace stores; the same arrangement obtained for all three categories of palace wives.

The Mogho Naba's heir was usually born while his father was still Crown Prince. He was never born in his father's compound because, unlike other Mossi women, the wife of a Mogho Naba or Crown Prince returned to her father's house for confinement. As soon as she announced her pregnancy, the Pughtiema or one of the older wives held a ceremony to notify the ancestors. Once the rite had been completed, the wife was sent to her relatives for fear that she might be harmed by her less fortunate co-wives. If the child was a boy, the ruler or Crown Prince was notified immediately, because the important privileges of a first-born hinged upon this notification. Since several wives of the Mogho Naba might be pregnant at the same time and errors might be made about the onset and duration of pregnancy, primogeniture had to be established immediately to forestall dynastic conflicts. For example, it is commonly believed that the present Doulougou Naba was born several days before Mogho Naba Sagha II (1942–57) but was deprived of the nam because the messenger who brought news of his birth reached Mogho Naba Kom after the messenger who announced Sagha's birth. Undoubtedly, such allegations were sometimes used to foster and support dynastic rebellions. 644 595 843 644 595 843 428 643 [578]

So strong was the fear that the most likely heir to the nam would be harmed by jealous co-wives that the child and his mother never returned to the palace except for brief visits on ceremonial occasions. The young prince remained with his mother's relatives and was guarded and educated by servants sent from the palace. If his father was on the throne at Ouagadougou when the boy reached the age of ten, he was formally installed as chief of Djiba district, the traditional seat of the Crown Prince. If his father was not on the throne, the boy remained with his mother's relatives and went to Djiba when his grandfather died and his father was installed as Mogho Naba.

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000 went to Djiba when his grandfather died and his father was installed as Mogho Naba.

The origin of Djiba's status as the seat of the Crown Prince is rather 634 obscure. The people of the neighboring district of Nobere say that Djiba 644 was founded by a "companion" of their own founder, Naba Biligo, one of 173 the numerous "eldest" sons of Mogho Naba Oubri, the implication being that Djiba was supervised by Nobere. However, no one seems to know when Djiba's status changed or what happened to the ancient family who used to govern it. The consensus is that in earlier times the heir presumptive to Ouagadougou did not necessarily become chief of Djiba, but was given any district whose chieftainship was vacant when he came of age. Dim Delobson reports that Djiba became the district of the Crown Prince some- [114] time during the seventeenth century, when Mogho Naba Zombere, who had reigned for sixty years, found it necessary to establish a permanent seat for his heir.[28] However, Dim Delobson does not report under what conditions Djiba was chosen, nor does he say what happened to the local ruling lineage when this transfer took place. That the transfer was carried out in the manner reported by Dim Delobson is not doubted, because each new [558] Mogho Naba obtained districts for his relatives in this way. Through this [613] process, the people of the ancient ruling lineages were usually reduced to the level of commoners, and this is apparently what happened to the rulers of Djiba.

634 The first public sign that the young prince was being prepared for the 643 nam came in the form of a summons commanding him to go to Ouagadougou to be installed as Djiba Naba. On his way to the capital, he visited several villages where the local Tengsobadamba made sacrifices to the earth goddess in his name. He took this opportunity to meet with the district chiefs and their assembled village chiefs; he was entertained by them; and in turn he distributed gifts to the old women, whose praises were considered especially effective in bringing health and long life. When the boy finally arrived at the capital, he lodged at the compound of the Kambo Naba, head of the palace guard, until the Mogho Naba and his ministers installed him as chief of Djiba.

The installation rites for the Crown Prince were very similar to those already described for the Mogho Naba, and identical to those for the district chiefs. During the ceremony, no mention was made of the fact that the prince was the son of the Mogho Naba. The only special feature was that when the prince went into the courtyard after the ceremony to render homage to the Mogho Naba, he sat in an area assigned to him by custom. When the ruler appeared, the prince followed the Gounga Naba, who was pro-

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634 As soon as the prince arrived, the Ouidi Naba made preparations to
644 receive the chiefs of such local districts as Manga, Nobere, and Basgana, who visited the prince and brought him wives, livestock, and money. During a seven-day period, other chiefs and well-wishers visited the new chief
[431] and offered him gifts. When this period was over, the new Djiba Naba gave wives to the noble members of his escort and livestock, money, and kola nuts to the commoners and serfs, and sent the group back to Ouagadougou. Then he settled down to the life of a typical district chief, governing his villages in the name of the Mogho Naba, paying him tribute, and settling disputes among his villagers. Dim Delobson reports that the other
[431] district chiefs and the heads of such principalities as Boussouma and Con-
[651] quizitenga formerly sent presents to the Djiba Naba when they sent their annual tribute to the Mogho Naba.[31] But this contradicts all that I heard and saw of the relationship between the royal heir and the other district chiefs. They treated him as an equal and showed no deference to him either in private or on ceremonial occasions. As a matter of fact, in the presence of the Mogho Naba, the royal heir actually effaced himself before the other district chiefs. This behavior served to preserve the concept of equal access
[643] of all members of the ruling clan to the ancestral nam. The Mogho Naba was head of the ruling group as well as political leader of the Mossi. His son, on the other hand, was often a junior in terms of age and generation within the ruling group, but politically he was on the same level as the other district chiefs. The sovereign could not show by his behavior that his son was either actually or potentially superior to the other Nanamse; nor could the prince presume to be haughty because of his strategic but accidental relationship to the actual possessor of the nam. Had he tried to do so, he might have ruined his chances of being selected to take over the "house" of his father and his father's fathers.

643 The relations between the Mogho Naba and his children, including his
644 heir, were characterized by formality—at least in public. Nevertheless, the ruler took a vital interest in the training and welfare of the youthful Djiba
593 Naba. Mogho Naba Wobogo (1890-96) reportedly had the Ouidi Naba
634 and the Baloum Naba of Djiba executed because the Crown Prince died under strange circumstances while under their care. Yet the Mogho Naba was not expected to enjoy seeing his son and heir, because of the Mossi father's traditional anxiety regarding those individuals who would profit most from his death. At the assemblies of district chiefs called by the Mogho Naba, the royal heir was not even greeted by his father; moreover, the heir usually stood at the edge of the assembly and left without attending the customary feast. However, there is considerable evidence that the Mogho

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Naba regularly saw his son in private, and that the prince often interceded successfully with his father for the lives of rebels or criminals. 644 593

The Mogho Naba seldom saw his younger sons, who usually remained with their mothers' patrilineages until they were old enough to be assigned district chieftainships or sent to live in villages controlled by the Baloum Naba. He was rather suspicious of these boys, who, if certain traditions are believed, were not averse to plotting the death of the Djiba Naba in order to succeed to the nam. The district chiefs also feared these younger sons, in whose favor they were often deposed by the Mogho Naba. Almost all of the dynastic changes that occurred in the Mossi districts seem to have stemmed from a ruler's attempt to find districts for his brothers or his younger sons. 634

The ruler was less concerned with the welfare of his daughters and female relatives. Their marriages seldom benefited the political system. As a matter of fact, the behavior of a royal princess usually strained the relations between her husband and the ruling lineage. The reason for this was a status conflict: as wives, they had low prestige in Mossi society; but as relatives of the Mogho Naba, they enjoyed high status. This contradiction made it difficult for them to accept the low estate of wives. Consequently, they clashed with their husband and often dominated the women and co-wives in his compound. Since few Mossi men tolerate strife within their household, these noble wives often withdrew from their husband's home and established one of their own. The one exception to this pattern was the ruler's eldest daughter, the Napoko, whose ceremonial duties at his death and during the interregnum compelled her to remain loyal to the husband chosen for her by the king. Like her brother, the Crown Prince, if she violated any of the traditions and thus became ineligible to fulfill her duties to her father and to the state, she endangered the country at its weakest moment, when the government was being transferred from the deceased Mogho Naba to his successor. 643 644 593 [562]

The death of a Mogho Naba was usually attributed to foul play or supernatural forces. When Mogho Naba Sagha II died in 1957, a report from Ouagadougou stated that the Governor of the Upper Volta had felt constrained to have an autopsy performed to quell rumors that the monarch had died of poisoning.[32] The obvious function of such rumors was to dramatize the gravity of the situation during the interregnum. 643 761

Because the Mogho Naba was usually accompanied by a page, it was often this boy who witnessed his death. It was the page's responsibility to notify the Baloum Naba, who notified, in order, the Ouidi Naba, the Larhalle Naba, the Kamsaogho Naba, the Gounga Naba, the ruler's children, 643 763 [644] [645]

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the Tansoba, the members of the royal sub-lineage, and the district chiefs. The Tengsoba of the Ouagadougou area was also notified. Because he was a descendant of the aboriginal Ninisi population that "owned" the land, he supervised the burial ceremony.

The Mogho Naba's death was kept secret, and no mourning was allowed until the Crown Prince had arrived at the capital and the Tansoba had recruited an army to protect the realm against would-be usurpers of power. Then the cry was raised in the palace, to reverberate throughout the land, that "the fire had gone out." Once the ruler's death had been announced, the country was plunged into an interregnum, which was characterized by ritual and often by actual anarchy. The people in the towns immediately looted the markets and stole their neighbors' goods; the prisoners and captives in stocks were released by their guards; the nakomce in all the territories, districts, and villages subjected the local populations to robbery and pillage; and the members of the monarch's babissi began their intrigues for power. The traditional sanction for this anarchy was that only when people suffer during the breakdown of political control do they really appreciate the sovereign's role. The Mossi declare (with some truth) that no one was safe during the interregnum. However, as we shall see, the ruler was symbolically kept alive, and the country was never without effective political leadership.

When the Tengsoba arrived at the palace, he was joined by five hereditary funeral chiefs: the Pazany'tengsoba, the Tampouy Naba, the Benghin Naba, the Toghin Naba, and the Tanghin Naba. In the ceremony that followed, he gave permission for the royal grave to be dug. Meanwhile, the ruler's body was prepared for burial in the traditional manner by his female relatives and laid in state in the zongo. These women kept vigil over the body, shouting and weeping. Only the five ministers of the realm and the male members of the ruler's babissi were allowed to pay homage to the corpse within the zongo. All other mourners had to pay their respects to the monarch's eldest daughter, who, as Napoko, was dressed in the dead sovereign's clothes and sat in his place before the zongo. As her father's symbolic representative, she held daily court and received greetings and homage from all visitors until a new ruler was chosen. The drummer who sat by her side declared to all visitors, "You say that the Mogho Naba is dead! Well, who is that sitting there? Tell me! Is that not the Mogho Naba?"

The ruler was buried the day after he died, at the end of an elaborate ceremony. Libations were poured out to the ancient rulers, and sacrifices made to them. All the important officials and members of the royal mini-

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mal lineage segment except the pretenders to the throne shaved their heads as a sign of mourning. The royal pretenders donned sheepskin mantles to signify that they were willing to "eat the nam." Once the ruler had been buried, the country settled down to an uneasy peace until the eighth day, when the funeral ceremonies took place. In the meantime, the Napoko symbolically held daily court, and the Tansoba's army acted as a check against the attempts of ambitious princes to seize power by force of arms.

Two days before the funeral, the Kamsaogho Naba selected the Kourita, who was to replace the Napoko as the living symbolic representative of the dead Mogho Naba. The person chosen to be Kourita was usually a young son of the deceased king, but since this person was banished from the capital, most of the royal wives hid their young children or fled the palace with them.[23] Once the Kourita had been chosen, the Kamsaogho Naba performed a ceremony (similar to those connected with the divine kings of the Near East) during which the youth was given one of his father's horses, dressed in his father's clothes, and given his father's youngest widow as a wife. He was then paid the homage due the Mogho Naba, and after receiving many gifts from the dignitaries, he was banished from Ouagadougou forever. As he went through the country, he was treated like the Mogho Naba and given many wives and presents. If he should chance to return to Ouagadougou or see the new Mogho Naba, either or both of them would be killed by the ancestors. Many Mossi districts seem to have been founded by exiled Kouritadamba. These men were undoubtedly among the numerous "elder" sons of past kings who are said to have "refused" the nam and gone to live in the districts now governed by their descendants.

The choice and banishment of the Kourita heralded the funeral rites, which were characterized by numerous animal sacrifices to the ancestors in the name of the deceased ruler. On the afternoon of the first day of the funeral, the Crown Prince mounted a horse and left the palace by the women's door. The Napoko then took the bridle of her brother's horse and led him and an immense crowd of cavalry, armed warriors, and musicians around the palace walls three times. After the third round, the Napoko demanded that her brother give her a personal servant as a present; he hesitated, but finally granted her request. The Napoko was then lifted up by the warriors, who shouted as they carried her home. The funeral thus came to an end.

All Mossi potentates tried to emulate the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou in matters of pomp, ceremony, and government.[24] Their courts were inferior to his, but only because they were less powerful and less wealthy.

Some of the more important rulers, such as the heads of the Yatenga, Fada-N'Gourma, and Tenkodogo kingdoms, were chosen by local electoral colleges, which did not have to seek the approval of the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou or notify him of the choices made. Their authority, as we have seen, was supported by claims of equality with Ouagadougou. But, with the exception of the Tenkodogo ruler, they were actually farther removed from the main line of royal descent than the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou. The autonomous Dimdamba had their own electoral colleges, which in some cases were made up of men related to the electoral-college members of the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou. (For example, the Ouidi Naba of Boulsa was descended from the Ouidi Naba of Ouagadougou.) These local colleges were usually free to nominate and elect the Dimdamba without consulting the Mogho Naba, even though he ratified many nominations.[35] According to Cheron, "The nomination of the Dim of Boulsa did not become definitive until ratified by the Mogho Naba, who was always consulted by the electors and who could impose his own candidate."[36] This was not always true; nor did every Mogho Naba refrain from interfering in the internal affairs of autonomous provinces. Whether he did or not often depended on his strength relative to that of the Dimdamba. Once the Dimdamba had been chosen, however, they were installed with ceremonies similar to those for the Ouagadougou ruler.

Like their superiors, the Dimdamba had the authority to delegate power to the Kombemba and Tense Nanamse. Some of them also had the right to grant the nam to a fellow Dim. The Boussouma Naba, for instance, could grant it to the Mane Naba.[37] Mogho Nanamse granted such rights to Dimdamba for various reasons. They might do so on the basis of their relative strength vis-à-vis a particular Dim at a particular time, or because they admired him or were closely related to him. However, a Dim exercised sovereignty in his own name, regardless of whether he was subordinate to the Mogho Naba or to another Dim. In contrast, the district chiefs and the village chiefs exercised sovereignty on behalf of the Mogho Naba or of the Dim in whose territory they resided.

The installation ceremonies for the two lower orders of chiefs were not too different from those for the Mogho Nanamse and Dimdamba. For example, when the Nobere district chief died, the provincial minister for Nobere—in this case the Gounga Naba—reported his death to the Mogho Naba. The ruler then summoned one of the deceased chief's officials to the capital to report on the qualifications of all potential candidates for the nam. The provincial minister, in turn, dispatched one of his own representatives to the district to verify the reports he had received. It was only when this

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It was only when this man had returned to the capital that all the nobles in the local ruling lineage were invited to Ouagadougou to press their claims. Only the dead chief's babissi went to Ouagadougou, even though all nobles subscribed to the traditional concept that "the nam does not belong to any one sub-lineage; it can be given to any nobleman." Unlike the others, these nobles did not shave their heads in mourning, thus indicating their candidacy for the nam. When they donned sheepskin cloaks and carried spears on their shoulders, they indicated that they were interested in the nam of the district. 634 [613] [302] [765]

Before a candidate for the district chieftainship left for Ouagadougou, he collected livestock, money, clothing, and grain from his friends to give as gifts or bribes to important officials in the capital. When he arrived there, he lived with friends and conducted his campaign from their home. He and the other candidates visited their provincial minister and his colleagues, the Mogho Naba, and other courtiers, giving presents ostensibly as a sign of friendship but actually with the ultimate aim of impressing these people with their generosity. These activities were often very costly; for if the Ouagadougou officials suspected that the candidates were wealthy, they made every effort to obtain as many presents as possible. It was not unusual for candidates for the district chieftainship to remain at the capital as long as "thirty-three" or "sixty-six" days before the officials were satisfied with their generosity and made preparations for the election. 634 662

The evening before the election, the Baloum Naba asked each candidate to provide a chicken and a sheep for the evening sacrifices to the namtibo.[28] After the morning ceremony on the following day, the Ouidi Naba reminded the sovereign that a new chief had to be chosen for Nobere district. The Mogho Naba summoned the Gounga Naba and asked him which candidate had the best character and was most capable of taking care of the district—a question which shows that the Mossi never placed primogeniture above the ability to rule.[29] The Gounga Naba had already consulted his friends about the matter, but he recounted both the good and the bad qualities of each candidate. At the same time, he hinted which one would make the best chief. He finally told the Mogho Naba that all of the candidates were worthy men, adding, "You can give the nam to any of them." The Mogho Naba then looked around to ascertain whether the other ministers had concurred in the Gounga Naba's implied choice before declaring, "I will give the nam to X, because when his [father, grandfather, or brother, used in the generic or classificatory sense] was alive, he was good to me. The ancestors would be angry if I did not give his [son, grandson, or brother] the nam." With these words the selection was made, and the ministers now prepared to install the successful candidate. 634 645 643 [782]

[P. 60]

IV

ADMINISTRATION

642 631 The Mossi always looked to their rulers, especially to the Mogho Nanamse, the Dimdamba, and the Kombemba, to determine administrative policies and to pronounce on all relevant issues. All foreigners who requested information were [825] told, "You must talk to the chief."[1] The Mossi believed that men cannot live without chiefs, and insisted that even animals have chiefs. Mossi rulers were therefore expected to ensure internal tranquillity in times of peace and to protect their subjects and territories in times of war. The expectation that they would also provide impartial judgment is best expressed by a dictum of the Ouagadougou people: "The truth is at Ouagadougou." [769] Finally, Mossi chiefs were held responsible for inducing the ancestors to bring health and prosperity to their subjects. To this end, they supervised and participated in rituals to their ancestors and encouraged the people in every territory, district, village, and compound to do likewise. In return, the people paid homage and allegiance to their chiefs and provided them with the goods and services they needed to support the administrative process.

643 631 642 175 The nature of the administrative relationship between the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou, the rulers of Yatenga, Fada-N'Gourma, and Tenkodogo, and the autonomous Dimdamba was not clear to the early visitors to Mossi country, and remains a matter of controversy. Two conflicting principles were always at work: seniority with respect to the nam and claims of close descent from Ouedraogo and Oubri on the one hand, and relative political strength or military power on the other. The stronger a ruler, the less he deferred to his lineal seniors. He might even claim a supremacy over them that came close to a claim of seniority. When Barth visited the Sudan in 1853, he was told that the Mossi country was "split into a number of small principalities, almost totally independent of each other, and paying only slight homage to the principality of Woghododogo." Barth reports, however, that the Dim of Boussouma was "probably the most powerful of the Mossi chiefs at the . . . time, especially with regard to cavalry." Similarly,

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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Binger reports that the Mossi were divided into "a number of confederacies, more or less independent of each other, whose chiefs were vassals of Naba Sanum, the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou." He found, nevertheless, that although the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou claimed suzerainty over the Yatenga, he could not grant travelers permission to enter that territory.[2]

Crozat, who visited the Mossi in 1890, just two years after Binger, was told repeatedly that the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou had the right to control the destinies of all chiefs who claimed descent from Ouedraogo and Oubri. But he, too, found that the principalities were self-governing and mutually independent, and were united only by the weak bond that attached them all to Ouagadougou. Noting the claims of the people he encountered that Ouagadougou was still supreme, Crozat suggests that "time and circumstances have weakened this sovereignty. The ruler of Ouagadougou is regarded by the other chiefs merely as their senior and the head of their family. They seldom obey him, yet they recognize that in certain cases he has the right to give them orders." Like many Frenchmen who came after him, Crozat concludes, "One will be struck, as I have been, by this political organization in which the waning of the central authority has led to a true feudal system closely reminiscent of a certain period in our own history."[3]

Delafosse tells us that "the authority of the emperor [of Ouagadougou] does not seem to have been ignored within his borders except in very rare instances. The vassal kings, who were brothers, sons, or nephews of the emperor, usually obeyed him. In any case, the emperor did not interfere with the administration [of their territories], and required nothing from them except the payment of taxes and the raising of contingents for any expeditions he might have to organize against outside enemies (the emperors of Mali, Gao, or Segou; Moroccan pashas; etc.). In return, the emperor granted his support to those of his vassals who were unable to command the obedience of their subjects or tributaries."[4]

It appears, then, that although the independent rulers and autonomous princes sometimes recognized the supremacy (if not the seniority) of the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou, they were relatively free to rule as they wished. As possessors of the nam, they claimed and exercised the right to administer the peoples of their realms. It appears, furthermore, that the rulers of Ouagadougou seldom challenged the independence of their confreres in Yatenga, although the latter often disturbed them. For example, when Yatenga Naba Kango (ca. 1754-89) sacked and burned the Ouagadougou district of Yako for sheltering refugees from a civil war, the Mogho Naba did not come to the aid of the Yako Naba. Nor did he take offense when this chief, in order to regain his seat, was compelled to switch his

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642 allegiance to the Yatenga. The situation lasted throughout Kango's reign,
631 "but as soon as he died, the Yako chiefs ceased to pay allegiance to his suc-
629 cessors and paid homage, as before, to the court of Ouagadougou."[6] About
175 fifty years later, Yako district was again captured by a Yatenga ruler, Naba Tougouri (ca. 1806–22), who deposed the reigning chief and installed his own. The deposed chief fled to his sovereign at Ouagadougou for aid and safety. He did receive sanctuary and eventually reconquered his principality, but there is no evidence that the Mogho Naba gave him any active support. Similarly, when another Yatenga ruler, Naba Totebaldbo (ca. 1834–50), once more conquered Yako as well as Riziam, another dependency of Ouagadougou, the Mogho Naba took no action. It was only after Totebaldbo's death that Riziam seceded from Yatenga and returned its allegiance to Ouagadougou. Yako did not submit to Ouagadougou's rule until some time later, when it revolted against Totebaldbo's son.[8] Similarly, both Mogho Naba Sanum and Mogho Naba Wobogo had difficulty in controlling a civil war between Yatenga and Yako which they felt would cause European travelers to think ill of the Mossi. During Crozat's visit to Ouagadougou, Mogho Naba Wobogo asked the combatants to cease fighting, but his efforts failed because "Yako would have liked to obey, but Yatenga refused."[7]

The Ouagadougou rulers experienced less difficulty with the weaker Tenkodogo kingdom, which seldom attacked their vassals or territories. Instead, the rulers of Tenkodogo often sought the aid of the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou against their enemies or rebellious subjects. For example, when the Busansi subjects of the Tenkodogo Naba rebelled against him in the fifteenth century, Mogho Naba Dawoema of Ouagadougou went to his aid and defeated them.[8] However, when Korongo, the Tenkodogo Naba, asked Mogho Naba Wobogo to help him defeat a contestant for the nam in 1894, the Ouagadougou ruler refused and said he would acknowledge the victor.[9] In this case, personal considerations seem to have dictated the Mogho Naba's reply.

The rulers of Ouagadougou appear to have taken greater interest in the affairs of the Dimdamba. Here again, however, intervention was conditioned by personal considerations, and especially by relative strength. Failure to be prudent in this respect often resulted in disaster. Mogho Naba Doulougou's insistence on punishing Naba Piga (1806–23), a ruler of the Boussouma principality, resulted in his own death. One of Piga's subjects had fled to Ouagadougou to evade punishment, and the Mogho Naba had returned him with the injunction that he should be imprisoned but not killed. Nevertheless, Piga had the prisoner executed. Moreover, he sent a

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disrespectful message to the Mogho Naba asking that a horse which a Fulani had stolen from him and presented to the ruler be returned. Doulougou sent an army to chastise Piga, who quickly fled and later appealed to the Mogho Naba for pardon. No sooner had this pardon been granted than Piga again offended the Mogho Naba by granting refuge to his wayward son, who had been expelled from Ouagadougou. The Mogho Naba subsequently forgave his son, but he decided to punish the recalcitrant Piga once and for all. Piga fled at the approach of the royal army, but Doulougou, who had accompanied his troops, was wounded by an enemy arrow and died shortly after his return to Ouagadougou.[10]

A later Mogho Naba, Sanum (ca. 1861), fought, defeated, and executed Naba Zande of Boulsa for taxing the Boulsa people so heavily that they rebelled. After Zande was succeeded by his brother Yemde (ca. 1863–72), the Mogho Naba continued to intervene in Boulsa's affairs and eventually had Yemde executed. Yemde's undoing was the result of his inability or unwillingness to implement the Mogho Naba's desire—which was contrary to Mossi custom—to elect a ten-year-old boy to the chieftainship of Koupela district. The Koupela chief's brother ignored his young nephew and seized the nam; Yemde sent an army to depose him, but his men were routed. Suspecting treachery on Yemde's part, Mogho Naba Sanum sent an army to defeat and depose him and to place his father's brother in command of Boulsa. Yemde defeated the Mogho Naba's army. His victory was short-lived, however, because the Mogho Naba sent a larger army and routed his forces. Yemde fled to the territory of the Boussouma Dim and requested asylum. The Boussouma ruler, Ligidi, did not wish to incur the wrath of the Mogho Naba and dispatched Yemde to Ouagadougou. Yemde apparently convinced the Mogho Naba of his loyalty, but he was executed because he had inadvertently violated the rule that no descendant of a Kourita might see a Mogho Naba and live.[11]

Ligidi, in turn, found himself in conflict with the Mogho Naba. After surrendering Yemde to his sovereign, he had proceeded to Boulsa and seized some of the prisoner's property. At first the Mogho Naba paid no attention, but when he had made peace with Yemde's son, Kiba, he ordered Ligidi to return the property. Ligidi refused to do so and consequently became involved in a series of wars against Kiba and the Mogho Naba. Ligidi died of natural causes before peace was restored, leaving a legacy of hostility between Ouagadougou and Boussouma. Either in complicity with the ruling Mogho Naba (Wobogo) or in an attempt to gain his favor, the electors named Ligidi's brother, Kom, to the nam and ignored his son and rightful heir, Venewende. This unfortunate young man had no one to

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turn to, and fled to Wobogo for safety. Wishing to maintain good relations with Kom, the Mogho Naba forced Venewende to return to Boussouma, but with the injunction that he should not be killed. Nevertheless, the Boussouma ruler had the young prince executed. The angry Mogho Naba threatened reprisal and declared that "if the Boussouma chief was not careful, it would be too bad for all his people, because they would fare as badly as their chief."[12] He did not have an opportunity to carry out his threats, however, because the French arrived soon afterwards.

Whereas some Mogho Nanamse took an active interest in the affairs of their Dimdamba or even tried to control them, others hesitated to interfere with disobedient or recalcitrant subordinates, especially when they fought and quarreled among themselves. Mogho Naba Oubya did not interfere when a Boussouma ruler, Pougoula (1745–67), bragging that no one in the nation was strong enough to depose him, arrogantly annexed the Ouagadougou province of Pisila and chased its ruler into Yatenga. Pougoula then gave the chieftainship to the fugitive's son, on condition that he should henceforth recognize his sovereignty.[13] On another occasion, a recalcitrant Boussouma Dim called Zabo (ca. 1767–84) defeated and punished the people of the Mane principality for rejecting the ruler he had chosen for them. They insisted that the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou had given Zabo the right to express his preference for a certain ruler, but not the right of choice itself. They appealed to Mogho Naba Waraga for help, but he ignored them. It may well be that Waraga was too involved in a war with the recalcitrant Riziam Naba to interfere, but there is no evidence that he ever censured Zabo. Again, Mogho Naba Sanum apparently took no part when Zende (ca. 1862–76), the ruler of Tema principality, and Totoabo, the ruler of Yako, joined forces against the ruler of La in a dispute over an abducted wife.[14] Perhaps, like other Mossi rulers, he did not care to deal with men who fought over women.

The relationship between the Mogho Naba and the Dimdamba, then, apparently varied in accordance with the persons involved and their relative strength. Sometimes they quarreled and fought; sometimes the Mogho Naba remained aloof from the Dimdamba's affairs; and sometimes the Dimdamba obeyed their sovereign and came to his aid. The one aspect of this relationship that seems to stand out, especially when the Dimdamba had no serious grievance, is their reluctance to fight against the Mogho Naba. Even Piga, the most belligerent in a long line of quarrelsome Boussouma rulers, always fled when Mogho Naba Doulougou attacked him, because "he did not wish to oppose his sovereign."[15] As we have seen, Yemde did fight against Mogho Naba Sanum, but he did so mainly be-

cause he thought Sanum had attacked him unjustly. For such acts of war, the Dimdamba involved usually lost their lives, and in at least one such case a Dim was turned over to the Mogho Naba by another Dim. We have seen that Dimdamba occasionally came to the aid of the Mogho Naba against another Dim.

A question of some importance is whether this relationship between the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou and the rulers of independent kingdoms and autonomous principalities was characteristic of Mossi society or a rather late development. Was warfare the natural concomitant of a system in which the normally powerful Ouagadougou ruler was sometimes too weak to command allegiance from his peers and subordinates? Did the Mogho Naba resort to warfare as the only possible means of exercising his authority when his commands were challenged or ignored? Delafosse states, "Sometimes . . . , especially in very recent times, discord arose between the emperor [of Ouagadougou] and some of his vassal kings: thus Naba Sanum had to fight against the desire for independence of the kings of Boussouma and Boulsa."[10] Delafosse seems to suggest that the Mossi people were undergoing a period of stress when the Europeans arrived, and were faced with significant new administrative problems.

Here Binger appears to support Delafosse's view:

> Ever since he acceded to the throne, [Mogho Naba Sanum] has been compelled to govern the Mossi with unmitigated despotism. His fear of losing power led him to take such severe measures that he was forced to relax them. As soon as his major vassals saw this, they took these concessions as signs of fear and began to conspire secretly against him. Today, the chiefs of Mani, Boussouma, Yako, and Koupela represent forces with which Naba Sanum will have to reckon. . . . Before long, the Mossi empire will break up; the country will organize into confederacies like those of Beledougou and Yatenga.[11]

It is not completely clear, however, whether Binger really understood the intricacies of the Mossi political organization. He lists as "vassals" of the Mogho Naba such territories as Mane, Kaya, Koupela, Bonsa, Boussouma, Djitenga, Boulsa, Dakay, and Doulougou, as though they were all related to Ouagadougou in the same way. In reality, some were autonomous and some were directly dependent on the Ouagadougou ruler. It is possible that at the time of Binger's visit, the relations between the Mogho Naba and his subordinates were so fluid that the outsider had difficulty in understanding them. If this is the case, then the situation in Mossi country had indeed changed when the Europeans came in.

Crozat, who says the Mossi governmental structure was feudal in na-

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631 ture, offers what is probably the best analysis of power relations among the
628 important Mossi chiefs. In commenting upon the Mogho Naba's inability
174 to stop the war between Yako and Yatenga he asks, "How could it be
114 otherwise? With what sanctions could this king without an army back up his orders if he ventured to give any? . . . In short, when the Ouagadougou ruler speaks, he is sometimes obeyed. If he is, all is well; if he is not, all is still well. Everything remains as before."[18] Crozat was mistaken if he believed that the Mogho Naba did not have a fighting force. What he did not have was a standing army to exercise his power whenever he wished. When he was able to summon an army, he was effective; when he was not, he had little power over any territory but his own. Crozat, like Binger, gives a strange picture of the political relationship between the Mogho Naba and the other rulers. He tells us that in the Mossi political hierarchy, "after the ruler of Ouagadougou comes the ruler of Boussouma, then the Yatenga ruler, and then the ruler of Yako."[19] Yatenga was traditionally independent of Ouagadougou, whereas Boussouma and Yako were simply autonomous principalities dependent on the Mogho Naba. It is possible that Crozat mistook the relative power of these various political entities for a hierarchical relationship. It is also possible that at the time of his visit, the Dimdamba felt sufficiently powerful to ignore the traditional hierarchy as far as their political relationship with other rulers was concerned, and were simply acknowledging relative gradations of power.

643 Clearly, the sovereignty of the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou over the
642 independent kingdoms and autonomous principalities depended chiefly on
628 military might. The stronger a Mogho Naba was, the more actively he tried to control the internal administration of the autonomous principalities and to exercise police powers over them or on their behalf. However, most Mogho Nanamse were content to claim superiority or control over the independent kingdoms and refrained from meddling in their affairs.

643 Within the Mogho Naba's own kingdom, however, the situation was
635 different. Here, like other important Mossi rulers, he directed the admin-
634 istrative apparatus. For administrative purposes, the kingdom of Ouaga-
[642] dougou was divided into five large provinces (*weto*; sing. *weogho*; or
[161] *solem*, from *so*, "command"). Together they included some three hundred districts, in which there were over four thousand villages inhabited by some 862,000 persons.[20] (Not included here were districts and villages directly administered by the Mogho Naba.) The provinces were not compact physical entities, because their component units were scattered throughout the country. To be sure, some of the districts within a province were close together or even contiguous, but many others stood alongside districts be-

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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longing to other provinces. Provinces also differed with respect to the number of districts they included and the nature and size of these districts. Some provinces were larger than others; some were wealthier; and some were more difficult to administer.

Each province was administered by a governor, who also functioned as an important minister at the court of Ouagadougou. In the order of their importance, these governors were the Ouidi Naba, the Larhalle Naba, the Goungo Naba, the Baloum Naba, and the Kamsaogho Naba. Smaller administrative units (both districts and villages) were under the direct control of the Mogho Naba himself, or under the supervision of his relatives or lesser officials. None of the governors were nobles or descendants of Ouedraogo and Oubri, but their positions were hereditary. According to one tradition, the first provincial administrators were personal slaves of the early Mossi rulers who were given the task of supervising the activities of district chiefs of noble status. Another, more romantic tradition is that the man who became the first governor or Gounga Naba was a companion of Mogho Naba Oubri during the conquest of Ouagadougou. Later, the Gounga Naba presented one of his friends to Oubri with the request that the man take precedence over him, be made chief governor, and be given the title of Ouidi Naba. Oubri allegedly acceded to this request, and later granted another request of the Gounga Naba that a friend of the Ouidi Naba be named Larhalle Naba and be made the second governor. The Gounga Naba told the Mogho Naba that he preferred to see his friends happy and that he was content to be third minister. This tradition does not state when or how the Baloum Naba and the Kamsaogho Naba were named governors.[91]

With the exception of the Kamsaogho Naba, who was a eunuch and had no heirs, the provincial governors headed administrative lineages. These lineages provided administrators not only for Ouagadougou but also for the principalities and districts. Cheron states that the Ouidi Naba of Boulsa was "a descendant of the Ouidi Naba of Ouagadougou, a great dignitary who rules a province and sits among the electors of the Mogho Naba."[92] Many administrative lineages on the district level were descended from officials sent down by the Mogho Naba with a new district chief in lieu of one deposed. When a chief was deposed, his administrators, like his relatives, lost their importance and their ties to Ouagadougou.

The Ouidi Naba, called *Mossi ba* ("father of the Mossi") and *Sida soba* ("master of the truth"), was the principal administrator and the prime minister. His titles undoubtedly sprang from his important role in the election of the Mogho Naba and from his position as caretaker of the king-

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645 dom during the interregnum.[83] The latter task was especially suited to a prime minister, since the Mossi regarded the interregnum as the most difficult period in their political life. The Ouidi Naba's administrative tasks 645 were considered so important that he never went to war and was theoreti- 643 cally immune from punishment or execution by the Mogho Naba. This [203] immunity was necessary, because the Mogho Naba had the right to execute anyone who brought him unwelcome news, and often did so. Since the Ouidi Naba announced good news as well as bad, it would have been folly to subject him to this rule. Some reports in the French colonial archives [195] state that the Mogho Naba was expected to follow the Ouidi Naba's advice at all times, and could not veto any of his actions. These reports add, moreover, that if a Ouidi Naba considered a Mogho Naba dangerous for the welfare of the country, he could rightfully compel the ruler to kill him- [762] self. According to Lambert, one Ouidi Naba known as Baba forced Mogho Naba Karfo (ca. 1800) to commit suicide. It appears that aside from waging a long and unpopular war against Naba Djighima of Lalle, this Mogho Naba had seized the riches of his wealthy subjects for distribution among the poor. Moreover, he allegedly dispensed justice without making much distinction between nobles and commoners, which so displeased the nobles that they encouraged the Ouidi Naba to put Karfo to death. Baba sent the sovereign a poisoned arrow and a message consisting of a single word: *ki* (die). Karfo allegedly committed suicide that very night.[84]

Thus, it appears that under certain conditions the prime minister could impeach his "all-powerful" sovereign. We cannot assume, however, that all prime ministers were sufficiently powerful to control the Mogho Naba. Many Mogho Nanamse limited their Ouidi Naba to merely giving advice on affairs of state and insisted that he concern himself solely with his own province.

634 The provinces administered by the five ministers were made up of 635 smaller entities or districts. The districts in the provinces of the Ouidi Naba, the Larhalle Naba, and the Gounga Naba were ruled by the sons 645 and other descendants of ancient Mogho Nanamse. The province controlled by the Kamsaogho Naba was more important. His districts were the wealthiest and among the most populous in the nation, and they brought the largest revenues to the Mogho Naba. The reason for this, of course, was [768] that the Kamsaogho Naba was a eunuch and had no heirs; when he died, all his riches reverted to the Mogho Naba. The province controlled by the Baloum Naba was the most difficult to administer. Its districts were ruled by the sons of recent Mogho Nanamse who felt that as holders of the nam they were free to appropriate the goods of the population. The Baloum

Naba was responsible for checking these depredations, but he had little coercive force since these nobles were infinitely superior to him in rank. 634 635 645

The Mogho Naba held his five ministers responsible for the administration of the districts within their provinces. Therefore they had to function as liaison officers between him and the district chiefs. Every morning, in order of precedence, the ministers reported the news they had received from their provinces since the previous day. At this time, the Mogho Naba also gave them messages for their districts. Later in the day, the ministers presented to the ruler those persons who had come from their provinces to the capital with special grievances, requests, or gifts. Delicate affairs of state were left for the evening, when they were discussed by the Mogho Naba, his minister or ministers, and other important persons.

From all reports, these administrative affairs kept both the ministers and the Mogho Naba quite busy. Binger, who could barely conceal his displeasure with Mogho Naba Sanum, gives this critical but otherwise highly illuminating view of the Mossi ruler's administrative activities: 643 644

> The duties of Naba Sanum are not too important. They consist of receiving visits throughout the day. In the morning, at about six o'clock, the drums announce that the ruler has arisen. When he has washed and refreshed himself with a meal, his captives and his wives go to his chamber to salute him. Then comes the turn of strangers, people of the neighborhood, petitioners, and others. They squat before the reception area until the ruler deigns to appear. When a large number of people have gathered, one of the [pages] goes to notify the ruler, who then arrives, sits on his cushion, and casts an amiable glance on the gathering while all present snap their fingers. As soon as Naba Sanum is seated, the petitioners and visitors hurry toward the monarch, throw themselves face down on the earth, and cover their heads with sand. Then each of them gets up and presents a gift of greater or lesser importance, in cowries or foodstuffs, according to what he wishes to ask. Then the [pages] come and say to the ruler, "A certain man has brought a sack of cowries, or a goat, or an ox. He desires to speak to you." The ruler thanks all of them with a *nif kende* (thanks) and retires into his chamber. It is well known that not one out of fifty petitioners was given the opportunity to have his wishes heard. Those who were heard had first spoken to an attendant who, after being paid in advance, had put off their case indefinitely by stating that it would be dealt with next. . . . Since the monarch's days are so well filled, one easily understands why he finds it difficult to deal effectively with the internal and external affairs of his kingdom; in any case, Mossi country is in a period of decadence that will only be aggravated with time.[35] [662]

The activities Binger considered frivolous were, on the contrary, important for the proper administration of the kingdom. The Mogho Naba had to receive petitions from the districts and transmit administrative orders to 643 [114]

643 his people. We shall see that these orders ran the gamut from demands for soldiers, tribute, and labor, to requests for sacrifices to the ancestors or to local deities for the welfare of the country.

635 The provincial governors seldom visited the districts under their control
645 more than once or twice a year. They transmitted official orders to the dis-
[203] tricts through retainers. Some ministers such as the Gounga Naba kept the
[634] sons and servants of district chiefs in the capital to be used as messengers. The district chiefs, in turn, used their sons or servants to transmit messages to their provincial governors or through them to the Mogho Naba. The use of intermediaries in the administration served another purpose: it prevented face-to-face contact, with all its potential for personal animosities, from impairing relations between those whose status depended on their political office and those whose status was derived from membership in the royal lineage.

635 Relations between the provincial ministers and the district chiefs were
645 often charged with hostility and suspicion. The district chiefs regarded the
634 provincial ministers as representatives of the Mogho Naba, and thus as
578 persons to be obeyed. Simultaneously, however, they resented this control by social inferiors. They felt that since they were the descendants of Ouedraogo and Oubri, they should receive orders only from the Mogho Naba himself. Thus, while the district chiefs accepted orders from their provincial governors, they never permitted them to forget their social status or to interfere with the internal affairs of the districts. They felt that this was the prerogative of the royal lineage. Most provincial ministers accepted these restrictions on their activities, but nevertheless saw to it that the district chiefs surrendered the goods collected for the Mogho Naba and governed their people well. Sometime in the 1920's, a provincial administrator went to a district and insulted its chief for failing to deliver the quota of millet set by the French colonial government. The accusation of laziness and embezzlement so infuriated the district chief that he asked the provincial minister whether he had taken leave of his senses and forgotten to whom he was speaking. The person who reported this incident said that if the district chief had not been restrained, he would have killed the administrator on the spot.

Both provincial administrators and district chiefs could impose indirect sanctions on each other if the bounds of propriety were overstepped in either direction. A district chief harried by his minister could not complain directly to the Mogho Naba. But he could, and often did, show his dissatisfaction by lodging with another provincial minister when he went to the capital. He would then ask the official to accompany him when he went

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The district chief was relatively secure in the control of his territory as long as he maintained amicable relations with his immediate superiors and administered his district to their satisfaction. A less important but more constant source of concern was his relationship with neighboring chiefs. Many people who can remember the pre-conquest period say it was unsafe for a man to trespass into another district unless he was on an official mission from his chief to another chief. It appears that most of the fighting occurred over strayed cattle and stolen women, with constant raids and counter-raids. The cattle were eaten, and the women kept as wives. Captured men were sometimes sold as slaves, but more often were held for ransom. They were not kept as slaves, since the Mossi were forbidden to enslave other Mossi. Needless to say, this fighting was frowned upon by the Mogho Naba. Since all district chiefs believed in their common descent from Ouedraogo and Oubri and paid allegiance to the Mogho Naba, any fighting among them was not only a sin against the ancestors but also an act of disloyalty to the Mogho Naba. When (as was usually the case) this fighting was of short duration and few people were killed, the Mogho Naba took no official notice of it. But when it became serious, he sent the provincial administrator to stop the fighting and to summon the dissident elements to the capital for trial. The speed and severity with which the Mogho Naba dealt with quarrels within his own realm usually depended upon his strength. At some periods in Mossi history there was little internal disorder, because the rulers were strong; at other periods, under weak rulers, disorder practically amounted to internal chaos. During such periods, the Mossi were kept together only by the bonds of kinship and religion which united them against outsiders.

The district chief maintained tight control over his own territory and took an active part in its administration. In a district like Nobere, for example, the chief was aided both by an informal council and by an administrative apparatus similar to but smaller than the one at Ouagadougou. The council included men with whom the chief had grown up, members of his immediate family such as his brothers, and a few formal administrative personnel. These councillors visited him every day, brought him occasional gifts, received gifts from him in turn, and discussed informally all matters of interest. Yet, informal as this communication was, it enabled the district chief to know what was going on in his villages. Moreover, these councillors interceded for various villages and gave the chief valuable advice in administrative matters.

The formal administrative personnel of the district included a Ouidi Naba, a Baloum Naba, a Tansoba, and lesser officials with titles identical

time safeguarding his position within the district and toward the Mogho Naba. For, as already pointed out, the district chief who failed to protect his subjects as well as to rule them was deposed and executed by the sovereign.

The promptness with which the lower courts dealt with litigations left little time for pre-trial bribery, and there is general agreement that the traditional courts were just. Of course, some lower chiefs were known to have been unfair and to have taken bribes. However, they were always in danger of having their verdicts appealed to Ouagadougou.

The Mossi believed in and acted on the dictum that "the truth is at Ouagadougou." They were convinced that they could obtain justice from the Mogho Naba if from no other chief. If a man was not satisfied with the ruling of a lower chief, he was free in theory to seek a higher verdict, and this influenced the kind of justice rendered on the lower level. As a rule, however, the district chiefs did not favor appeals to Ouagadougou. They felt, like most Mossi, that the less their superiors knew about their activities, the better. Thus, the district chief used all of his influence to prevent cases from being appealed to the capital. Some district chiefs were not above coercing litigants into such abstention. They even threatened them with reprisals if the verdict should be unfavorable. But the greatest deterrent against such appeals was the expenditure of time and money. The docket of the Mogho Naba's court was always crowded, and the suitors often had to remain at the capital for as long as three months before they were given a hearing.[9] During this period they often spent more money than the action was worth. Marc states that the word "Ouagadougou" means "the place where one becomes thin," a reference to the amount of money litigants had to spend while waiting for their cases to be heard.[10]

When the object of a lawsuit was the inheritance of cattle, the litigants sustained a double loss. As soon as they asked that the case be taken to the capital, the district chief impounded the cattle. While the case was pending he appropriated the cows' milk, and when the case was settled both he and the Mogho Naba received some animals. Thus, suitors were usually under a great deal of pressure to resolve their problems on the district level. However, if they were determined to go to the capital, they were permitted to do so.

The district chief always sent one of his retainers to the capital with the litigants. The group went directly to the district's provincial minister, who was empowered to hear the appeal and decide whether it should be brought before the Mogho Naba or returned to the district court. If he decided to send it to the Mogho Naba, he placed it on the docket and told the

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litigants when it would be heard. On the day set he took his charges to court, where they waited in the company of the litigants from other districts and from the wards of the capital itself. 643 692 634

The procedure of the Mogho Naba's court differed little from that of the district chief's court. When called upon, the litigant stated his case, called witnesses, and underwent cross-examination by his opponents and by ministers of the Mogho Naba. The litigants were not allowed to look at the Mogho Naba while they spoke, but had to kneel forward on the ground with their faces turned away from him. The Mogho Naba himself seldom looked at the litigants and rarely questioned them. When presented with a complex case, the Mogho Naba, like the district chief, retired with his councillors and canvassed their opinion in order "to ascertain whether or not their verdicts were similar to his own." Nevertheless, he could not follow their advice. He had to make up his own mind, and when he returned to court he rendered his verdict, which could not be appealed. If those who received an unfavorable verdict showed any displeasure, they were taken outside by the palace guards and executed.

The penalties imposed by the Ouagadougou court were usually more severe than those handed down at the district level. The main reason for this was that aside from cases involving residents of Ouagadougou, the lawsuits tried by the Mogho Naba were serious ones and often had been sent to him on appeal. Moreover, the Mogho Naba's court was alone empowered to impose the death penalty within the kingdom of Ouagadougou. [681] It should be noted here once more that district chiefs often executed criminals. But it should also be reiterated that the Mogho Naba never surrendered his prerogative to the district chiefs. They simply usurped it, and if they used it judiciously they were not penalized.

Those nobles and commoners who were convicted for serious crimes at the monarch's court were killed by the royal executioners. Moreover, in contrast to the procedure at the district court, the criminal's property was often seized before his execution. The reason for this is not clear, but it was probably related to the lack of a personal relationship between the court and the relatives of the accused, which enabled the Mogho Naba to impose a harsher penalty. The district chief, it must be remembered, lived in close association with his people and was influenced in his behavior by social relationships. Interestingly enough, the Mogho Naba did not keep the goods seized, but allowed them to be distributed among his executioners. 643 696 692 634

Crimes against the person or office of the Mogho Naba were punished with greater severity than crimes against the district chief. Any man who was seen speaking to one of the ruler's wives and who did not happen to [687]

be related to her was tried and executed. In some cases, he was put to death without a trial. Adultery with a royal wife was considered so reprehensible that both adulterers were publicly beaten to death. Their bodies were denied burial and were thrown into the bush to be eaten by vultures. The Dapore Naba and the Baglere Naba seized and retained the man's property.

Men who committed treason against the Mogho Naba were usually killed before they could be tried. Chiefs and nobles who were suspected of treason and who consented to come to Ouagadougou for trial were deposed and executed if found guilty. Those who were found innocent were released and sent back to their chiefly duties. The sole exception on record to this general rule was the case of Naba Yemde, a Dim of Boulsa province. He had fought and defeated the forces of Mogho Naba Sanum, and when the Mogho Naba sent a larger army and routed him, he was treacherously delivered to the monarch by another Dim. Sanum found Yemde innocent of treason, but had him executed because he had violated another rule: as the descendant of a Kourita, he had come face to face with the Mogho Naba, thus jeopardizing the monarch's life. This exception is always cited by the Mossi when the inevitability of execution for treason is brought up. Actually, a person accused of treason rarely went to court. He either took poison or died in battle against the royal forces. As a posthumous punishment, his compound was burned, his property seized, and his relatives and servants sold into slavery outside the country. Thus, the supreme penalty was not merely the death of a traitor but the permanent banishment of his entire lineage.

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ruler to grant asylum to Mogho Naba Wobogo in 1897. He adds that it was probably the injunction in the pact that they should never meet which prevented the ruler from personally receiving Wobogo.[18] 648 175

A ritual pact also bound the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou to the ruler of Dagomba. He sent him goods from the estate of the previous Mogho Naba as well as gifts for yearly sacrifices on the grave of Nyennega, the Mossi progenitrix. There are reports that the Ouagadougou ruler also exchanged annual presents with the Ashanti ruler, but it is not known whether these were courtesy gifts or goods sanctioning ritual pacts.

The ritual pacts among Mossi kingdoms and between them and their neighbors appear to have derived from actual or putative kinship ties. This seems to be supported not only by the traditions of the Mossi but also by those of the surrounding peoples. Whatever their origin, these pacts seem to have afforded their beneficiaries a remarkable degree of freedom from external aggression. It is possible that the Mossi and their neighbors really believed in the efficacy of supernatural sanctions, for purposes of mutual protection. But one suspects that it was the relative weakness of these various groups that caused them to rely on supernatural agencies rather than military might for protection. As will be pointed out below, the Mossi (and probably all of their important neighbors) had considerable difficulty in building and maintaining a fighting force sufficiently large to wage protracted or large-scale wars against foreign groups. 174 648 776 789

The Mossi kingdoms seldom fought among themselves, although their leaders quarreled over status and committed aggression against each other's territories. For example, the Ouagadougou rulers, who claimed suzerainty over Yatenga, often tried to impose their will on that kingdom. Yet, although they were usually rebuffed by the Yatenga Naba, they never tried to resolve the issue by force of arms. In fact, even when a Yatenga ruler appears to have given the Mogho Naba just cause for war, little fighting actually took place. Several times the Yatenga rulers seized such principalities as Riziam and Yako, which were dependent on Ouagadougou, but in no case did the Ouagadougou rulers wage war against them. In 1890, Crozat witnessed Mogho Naba Wobogo's attempt to stop a war between Yatenga and Yako. The Yako people wanted to obey their sovereign and stop the war, but the Yatenga monarch refused to do so.[19] 628 642 643 175

Crozat attributes the ineffectiveness of the Mogho Naba's authority over brother kingdoms to the fact that he had no standing army with which to enforce his rule. While relative strength may have been and probably was the main reason for the Mogho Naba's lack of aggressiveness, the ritual pact that prevented the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou from meeting the

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628 642 643 175 [648]

Yatenga Naba (and other rulers) or treading on his territory should not be overlooked. The suggestion that force was not the only consideration was lent force by later events. The French conquest later reduced the rulers of both Ouagadougou and Yatenga to impotence and obviated war between them, yet they did not meet until 1946—some fifty years after the conquest. They met then only because they had to represent their subjects at a meeting to plan the restoration of the Upper Volta and reunite all the descendants of Oubri and Ouedraogo into one territory.

Relative strength obviously played an important part in determining whether one Mossi kingdom interfered in the internal affairs of another. For example, when a Tenkodogo ruler asked a Mogho Naba to help him suppress Busansi subjects who had rebelled, the Mogho Naba readily complied.[14] But when a fratricidal struggle over the nam broke out in Tenkodogo in 1894, the Mogho Naba decided not to intervene even though he was asked to do so.[15]

628 643 669 175

The central governments of the various kingdoms found it necessary to wage war against their subordinate territories at regular intervals. In the Ouagadougou kingdom, most of these wars seem to have been administrative actions against a prince or district chief who had contravened an order from the Mogho Naba or refused to pay tribute. The Dimdamba were the Mogho Naba's most rebellious subordinates, and it was against them that he fought most of his wars. Characteristic of these wars was the series between Naba Ligidi (1866-90), Dim of Boussouma province, and Mogho Naba Sanum.[16] Ligidi had seized and turned over to the Mogho Naba the recalcitrant Naba Yemde, then Dim of Boulsa, and confiscated the rebel's property. Later on, when the Mogho Naba had made peace with Yemde's son, Naba Kiba, he asked Ligidi to surrender the seized property. Ligidi refused to do so, and the angry Mogho Naba sent the royal army into his territory. The army sacked and burned several villages and retreated. Ligidi's forces skirmished with the rear guard but abandoned pursuit near the Ouagadougou border.

Ligidi took his revenge by helping a district chief who had rebelled against Naba Kiba. While he was thus engaged, the royal army again attacked and defeated him. Four days later, it reinvaded Boussouma, engaged Ligidi's forces at a place called Goudri, and won a brilliant victory. Despite Ligidi's furious counter-attacks, the army captured his capital, Ouayougya. The ruler's army finally returned to Ouagadougou, satisfied that Ligidi was thoroughly beaten. But the Mogho Naba had underestimated Ligidi's tenacity. For the next ten years, this Dim waged war against his fellow Dimdamba. The Mogho Naba finally grew tired of his depreda-

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tions and launched another expedition against Ouayougya. The expedition failed because of a lack of water, and the army was forced to return to Ouagadougou. The war would have continued had not both Mogho Naba Sanum and Ligidi died in 1890.

It appears that the Mogho Naba tolerated fighting among his immediate subordinates, and seldom intervened in local wars unless one of the combatants openly flouted his authority. For example, when the autonomous principality of Riziam attempted to wrest control of Salmetenga district from Boussouma province, Mogho Naba Doulougou did not intervene. He knew that Salmetenga owed allegiance to Boussouma, but was perfectly willing to allow its ruler to transfer allegiance to Riziam. When Boussouma was on the brink of defeat, the Salmetenga Naba fled to Ouagadougou to seek asylum. The Mogho Naba sent him back to Naba Piga, the Boussouma Dim, with the request that he be allowed to live. Piga was so angry with the chief that he ignored the Mogho Naba's request and executed him. This incurred the wrath of Mogho Naba Doulougou, and he sent an army to attack Piga. Fortunately for this disobedient Dim, the Mogho Naba died and the attack was called off.[17]

The reaction of Mogho Naba Koutou to fighting among his subordinates was more typical. He did not interfere in a long series of battles between the principalities of Riziam and Mane which culminated in 1866 when the Riziam people seized, imprisoned, and executed several Mane merchants who had gone to buy salt in Timbuktu. Mane appealed to its brother province of Boussouma for aid, and Riziam appealed to a Fulani chieftain for reinforcements. Before a battle could ensue, however, the Boussouma Dim, Naba Siguiri, died after drinking some millet beer, and the fighting was called off. Naba Kom of Mane then went off alone with his army, defeated the Fulani, and killed their chief, Sekki. When Ligidi (the chief mentioned above) succeeded his father, Naba Siguiri, he elected to continue the war against Riziam with the help of the Mane army, but the battle was inconclusive. The stalemate did not satisfy the bellicose Ligidi, who attacked Riziam once more in 1871, burning villages and seizing property. The Riziam people finally rallied and halted him. They ambushed his soldiers when they tried to retreat, and harried them so thoroughly that Ligidi had to call off the war when slaughter and thirst decimated his ranks.[18]

Similarly, Mogho Naba Sanum did not interfere when one of his own district chiefs, the Salogho Naba, was attacked and defeated by the ruler of Tema principality. Nor did he enter the fray when another of his district chiefs was attacked and defeated by the Boulsa Dim. The fighting in both

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628 669 175 643 634 cases was over women. The Tema Dim successfully defended his principality against a Zittenga district chief who not only had the effrontery to demand the return of a wife who had fled into Tema but also invaded the principality when she failed to return.[19] The Boulsa Dim attacked and defeated the Salogho Naba when he refused to repatriate a man and woman convicted of adultery who had fled into his district. It is possible that in each case the Mogho Naba refused to become involved in a squabble over women, but it is more likely that he refrained from participating in a local war that did not threaten the security of the entire country.

628 669 175 Many Dimdamba made it a practice to help each other in wars against common enemies. In the middle of the nineteenth century, Naba Zende of Tema and Naba Totoabo of Yako joined in a war against Naba Sebogo of La when Sebogo refused to repatriate one of Totoabo's wives, who had fled into his territory. The two victorious allies burned villages in La and forced Sebogo to flee for his life. They searched for the woman, but she was never found. The successors of the three rulers remained embittered by this war and eventually renewed the fighting. On this occasion, Naba Tanga of Tema and Naba Sagha of Yako fought against Naba Kombase of La. But [643] this time Yako and Tema were unable to defeat La and had to withdraw. There is no evidence that the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou took any part in these wars.[20]

643 648 175 The Mogho Naba appears to have taken a greater interest in wars between his Dimdamba and non-Mossi populations, and to have profited by them occasionally. When the followers of a Fulani chief named Karfo carried off some cattle belonging to the Boussouma people, the Boussouma Dim, Naba Siguiri, threatened war if the animals were not returned. Karfo not only refused to surrender the cattle but insulted Siguiri in his reply. Siguiri marched against the Fulani, killed Karfo, seized all the cattle he could find, and sent some of the "most beautiful animals" to Mogho Naba Koutou.[21]

634 669 578 628 Although the Mogho Naba tolerated wars among his Dimdamba, he apparently forbade the district chiefs under his direct command to fight among themselves. As we saw in Chapter IV, some such fighting did take place, but the Mogho Naba seems to have ignored it in most cases because of its relative unimportance. The Mossi, on the other hand, magnified this local fighting, which they called *tengkom* ("civil war"), and which consisted of mere skirmishes between villages or neighboring districts, with few casualties. In fact, the Gounga Naba once stopped a war between districts after only nineteen persons had died. But as a rule, districts seldom if ever fought among themselves. The actual combatants were villagers

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634 721 567 175 3. Finally, a third lot, composed of young girls and young boys, was distributed among the warriors and put into their charge. The boys will be employed until further notice as grooms to the warriors; later on, those who prove themselves useful and docile will be kept. The others will be sold at the first opportunity. The girls will be given in marriage to warriors who distinguish themselves.[24]

721 643 644 701 [645] The military campaigns of the Mossi, in contrast to their slave-raiding expeditions, appear to have been well organized. When the Mogho Naba felt that a war was necessary, he summoned his five provincial ministers and the Tansoba to a parley. If war was decided upon, the Tansoba was given full charge of all operations. This man, chosen from a hereditary clan of warriors who lived in a village called Tansob'tenga in Sapone district, was listed among the Mogho Naba's courtiers but seldom appeared at court unless war was imminent. His duties as chief warrior were considered so dangerous that he constantly sought out religious practitioners for supernatural aid. Nevertheless, a war minister who was good and brave was not expected to live very long. If he did live to become gray-haired, the other courtiers made fun of him by pretending that his graying head could only be the result of his having carried a sheep captured in warfare on his head as a present to the ruler.

701 721 644 [202] [411] Once given a mandate for war, the Tansoba collected his magico-religious apparatus and prepared the requisite sacrifices. He then asked the provincial ministers to notify the district chiefs to assemble with their warriors under the leadership of the local Tansobadamba, who were often members of the Tansoba clan. When the district chiefs received this notice, they beat their *zongagondo* (war drums), and the local administrators sent orders for men to the village chiefs. The village chiefs, in turn, beat their war drums to summon their noble cavalrymen and commoner foot soldiers, who came armed with bows and arrows, spears, swords, and clubs, with or [278] without iron tips. The tips of the sharp weapons were often covered with a vegetable poison derived from a shrub of the Strophanthus species. Some [411] of the men also carried guns after firearms were introduced among the [177] Mossi from the desert region and from the coast. Many carried rawhide [714] shields.

701 726 [648] As soon as the village contingents had assembled and had gathered their provisions, they marched to the district centers. Then they proceeded either to the place of battle or to Ouagadougou. In the latter case, they became part of the royal army and were joined by the forces of those princes who were prepared to honor their obligation to the Mogho Naba. For example, when the French invaded Ouagadougou in 1896, the Boulsa Dim sent his prime minister "at the head of an army to aid Mogho Naba

Wobogo. However, he did not have to intervene, because while still en route he heard that Ouagadougou had fallen."[28] Thanks to this type of aid, the Mogho Naba was able to gather quite a large army, a fact that contradicts Crozat's belief that the Mogho Naba was a "king without an army."[28]

The early Mogho Nanamse used to accompany their armies into the field, but this practice was later abandoned and was revived periodically only by the more adventurous rulers. (The last ruler to die in warfare was Mogho Naba Doulougou [ca. 1800].) However, it was the Mogho Naba's duty to greet the army when it came to Ouagadougou, to beat the royal war drum, and to turn the troops over to the Tansoba. This officer served as commander in chief of the army, and was assisted by the Gounga Naba, a provincial minister, who served as his aide-de-camp. The Gounga Naba was expected to die rather than retreat in battle, especially if the Tansoba was killed. Two other ministers, the Kamsaogho Naba and the Larhalle Naba, also accompanied the army. The later Baloum Nanamse did not venture into battle, because they had to attend to the personal needs of the Mogho Naba. In early times, however, they accompanied their sovereigns into battle and fought alongside them. The Ouidi Naba never went to war, because it was his duty to look after the kingdom. He had to ensure the interests of all the people even if the royal army was defeated, the country invaded, and the ruler killed or forced to flee. The Samande Naba went to war and served as chief of the infantry.

Scouts preceded each district contingent as the army marched off to battle. Within the contingent, the younger warriors marched in front, followed by older men. It was the duty of the more experienced warriors to make sure that the younger men did not break ranks and run under the stress of battle. Behind the foot soldiers came the cavalry, composed of nobles and of the few commoners who possessed horses. Behind these came the district chief, surrounded by his own palace guard. Several heralds known as *yumba* (sing. *yuma*) accompanied the district forces to exhort them to fight. As the men marched to battle the yumba shouted:

> Men! Your ancestors were not slaves. They were men. They were stronger than anyone else. They did not bathe with water; they bathed with blood. Do you wish to return home to drink millet water and eat bread? Never! A man does not eat bread or drink millet water; a man fights. Your ancestors were not afraid of anyone; you must not be afraid of anyone. Even if you are killed today, you must march ahead, beat your enemies, and take their villages. You must not be afraid!

Mossi armies on the march used scouts to keep a sharp lookout for the enemy or for any evidence that he was aware of impending attack. The tactics these scouts used to avoid detection, such as camouflaging themselves

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VII

THE ECONOMIC FOUNDATION

THE REVENUE for the support of the Mossi chiefs and their governmental system came from many sources in a variety of forms. The Mossi of Ouagadougou held that "the Mogho Naba is master of everything" (*Mogh Nab n so fa*), and when they referred to the control he and his chiefs exercised over their goods and services, they said, "The commoner rears his livestock for the chief," and cited the proverb "The snake gets whatever is in the belly of the frog."

Since the Mossi were, and still are, primarily an agricultural people, the products of the soil were the main source of revenue. The Mossi chiefs did not own the land, but they controlled it and assigned land rights to their subjects. The Mossi believed that land had no value apart from people, and, conversely, that people could not exist without land. As they said, "Land is the mother; it fed the ancestors of this generation; it feeds the present generation and its children; and it provides the final resting place for all men." Therefore, a Mossi chief never hesitated to give anyone permission to use unoccupied land. It was in his interest to do so, because the more subjects he commanded, the greater were his revenue and prestige. An unpopular chief was censured not by a withholding of tribute and presents, but by a mass exodus of his subjects to another area.

Through the administrative hierarchy, the common people contributed to the support of the various levels of government. The Mogho Naba periodically received agricultural produce from all his subjects. Through the village chiefs, the village people sent part of their produce to the district chiefs, who forwarded it to the provincial ministers. They, in turn, delivered it to the central government during a ceremony appropriately called "Soretasgho" ("completion of the road"). This event occurred at the end of the harvest festival, after all the crops had been gathered in.[1]

To open the ceremony, the provincial governors' retainers began to clear the paths leading from the governors' compounds to the palace, for they had

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643 become overgrown with grass and weeds during the rainy season. This
651 clearing was done to within a few yards of the palace, but was not com-
796 pleted. Early in the morning of the day chosen for the actual rendering of the agricultural tribute, the retainers placed baskets of produce along these paths. During the morning ceremony, the Ouidi Naba presented a basket of millet to the Mogho Naba. Then the Bendere Naba, acting as Sore Naba ("chief of the road"), signaled on his drum, and the men with baskets who were waiting on the uncleared portion of the paths, preceded by drummers and men with hoes, axes, and other tools, began to move forward. The men in the processions raised a din, shouting, singing, drumming, and pretending that the task of clearing was very difficult. From time to time, the more energetic among those who were not carrying bundles ran ahead of the others, turned somersaults, and then, going through the motions of warriors in battle, pranced back into the procession. All the processions came to the shed occupied by the royal drummers and deposited their burdens. These were later retrieved by the palace staff and stored for use in the royal household.

643 The royal household was also supplied with produce grown by the royal
644 wives. Foodstuffs for guests and fodder for the ruler's horses were provided
241 by the people of the Bilbalgo and Dapoya wards, which were under the general supervision of the Kam Naba. Two or three times during the agri-
[464] cultural season, this official recruited extra help from these wards to help
[465] cultivate the fields. In recompense for this *sosogha* (work bee), the laborers were given food, drink, and kola nuts from the royal household. At the
243 end of the year, the harvesting and threshing of the grain from the Mogho
643 Naba's fields was the occasion for an elaborate ceremony, "Mogh Nab'
644 kawinre" ("threshing the ruler's grain").[2]

796 To begin this ceremony, the Mogho Naba summoned a local earth-
[791] priest, the Manougoudougou Tengsoba, to the court. This man, a descend-
[792] ant of the Ninisi, had to perform the propitiatory sacrifices to the earth deity who was symbolized by the threshing floor. After the sacrifices were completed, the Kam Naba went to the threshing floor with the young men of the Bilbalgo and Dapoya wards, who threshed the millet gathered there. The next morning they all returned to the threshing floor with the Bendere Naba and his minstrels, who recited the Mogho Naba's genealogy and sang praises to his ancestors. The drummers then beat out work rhythms and traditional drum patterns to which the workers danced while scattering the millet far and wide. Finally, the dancing stopped, and the Kam Naba drew a line on the threshing floor, dividing the pile of millet in two; the Bilbalgo people gathered one half, the Dapoya people the other. Regard-

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less of the amount of millet harvested from the Mogho Naba's fields, there had to be one hundred baskets full of grain. If the number of baskets filled with the Mogho Naba's grain fell short of the mark, the serfs and slaves had to make up the difference with the produce of their own fields. The ceremony concluded with sacrifices to the royal ancestors, after which the Mogho Naba's wives, daughters, and sisters gave beer and kola nuts to the laborers.

As head of the central government, the Mogho Naba received revenue in the form of money and livestock which the district chiefs collected from the village people. These were given to him during an elaborate annual ceremony called the "Basgha" ("feast of the royal ancestors"). Several days before this post-harvest festival, the district chiefs and their retainers arrived in the capital and lodged with their provincial ministers. At a designated time during the ceremony, the district chiefs and nobles went to the palace. In provincial contingents and led by their ministers, they walked up to the sovereign's throne and gave the Mossi salute. After they had returned to their places, their servants gave the royal pages the presents they had brought to the palace.

The Dimdamba apparently made their annual contribution to the Mogho Naba at the time of the Basgha. There is one report that they took this opportunity to send gifts to the ruler's son, the Djiba Naba, as well. The Dimdamba customarily sent the Mogho Naba part of the goods they had seized in combat against non-Mossi peoples, as well as a tax (*fado*) out of the goods they had inherited from their predecessors.[5] There is also some evidence that the Mogho Naba solicited goods from the Dimdamba at other times. Crozat says:

> During my first visit to Yako, three envoys from Ouagadougou were at the chief's house. They were tax collectors. They had come to offer the vassal a silver bracelet sent by the sovereign. The Yako Naba responded by sending horses, captives, and cowries to Ouagadougou.[6]

Crozat could not understand this reciprocity between the Mogho Naba and his vassals, and questions whether the Mogho Naba really collected taxes from them. He concludes that the Mogho Naba did receive taxes, "but these are never given to him except in the form of presents which are reciprocated."[7] Crozat found it puzzling and disturbing that many of the Dimdamba had not given the Mogho Naba any "taxes" for several years. He indicated, moreover, that they did not wish to pay taxes to the Ouagadougou ruler even under the guise of an exchange of presents. This was especially true of the Yatenga Naba, who had not sent the Mogho Naba any presents for six or seven years prior to 1890. Crozat surmised that

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because of this delinquency, the Mogho Naba might hesitate to come to the aid of any of his vassals if a general war broke out. It is true that the Mogho Naba did not aid the Yatenga ruler when the French arrived. But whether this was because of his failure to pay taxes, or because the French conquest of the Yatenga coincided with a civil war there, we shall probably never know. We do know that many of the Mogho Naba's vassals came to his aid when the French finally arrived at Ouagadougou. It is my opinion that the gifts exchanged between Yatenga and Ouagadougou were not "tributary," but were more in the nature of tokens of friendship between two peers.

The Mogho Naba and his provincial ministers also received revenue as a function of their judicial roles. The nature and disposition of the fines levied against legal offenders were discussed in Chapter V. The Mogho Naba's fees came in the form of the traditional gifts the litigants gave him even before their cases were tried. These gifts were never regarded as bribes, for this would have contradicted the Mossi axiom that "the truth is at Ouagadougou."

The Mogho Naba inherited all the property of the Kamsaogho Naba, and claimed all the property of district chiefs who died without close relatives. He also received inheritance taxes (fado) from the estates of deceased district chiefs. In collecting the fado, the Mogho Naba first retained the horse on which the messenger came to announce the chief's death. He reciprocated by sending envoys with cowries and animals to be offered to their common ancestors at the chief's funeral. After the funeral, the envoys claimed the dead chief's quiver of arrows to take to Ouagadougou for deposit with those of other dead chiefs. Then they demanded the fado, and jestingly told the heirs that the Mogho Naba would be satisfied with nothing less than "a thousand of everything" (*tusri bumbu fa*) the deceased had possessed: wives, slaves, horses, cows, goats, chickens, articles of clothing, and so on. The heirs pleaded poverty and jokingly gave the envoys a few old and sickly animals, old chickens, tattered pieces of clothing, etc. Eventually, they handed out the fado, which usually consisted of livestock, clothing, food, weapons, jewelry, cowries, and even slaves. Lastly, they gave the envoys the chief's ceremonial horse and presents for themselves.

The Mogho Naba and his ministers collected a considerable amount of revenue from the traders who visited Ouagadougou and the larger market towns and village markets throughout the kingdom.[8] The Mossi (especially the assimilated Yarse) were good traders, and they benefited from their country's strategic location between the Sahara and the forest regions. According to Barth, some six caravan routes crossed the country, linking

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the Niger River area to the Gold Coast and Togoland. Important stops were made at such Mossi centers as Ouagadougou, Bere, Dakay, La, Mane, Yako, and Koupela.[7] At Dori, northwest of Ouagadougou, Barth found Mossi with "their fine donkeys, which are greatly sought after." He adds that in addition, 645 651 439 [487] [443]

> the people of Mossi supply this market with gabaga, or "tari" [cotton bands], as Arabs near Timbuktu call them, cotton being extremely cheap in their country, so that in the great market places of that country, especially in Kulfela [Koupela, but really at Poitenga a few miles away], an indigo-colored shirt is not worth more than from 700 to 800 [cowry] shells. . . . Besides salt, cotton strips, dyed cloth, kola nuts, corn, and asses, some copper manufactured chiefly into large drinking-vessels is also brought into the market by the people of Mossi. However, I do not think they manufacture the copper vessels themselves, but bring them from Ashanti.[8]

Dubois, one of the early visitors to Timbuktu, tells us that he saw Mossi men carrying on their traditional trade in that city. Mossi traders dealt in such diverse commodities as millet, rice, manioc, peanuts, honey, kola nuts, peppers, dried onions, tobacco, dried fish, soap, iron, antimony, lead, cotton bands, straw hats, mats, jars, pots, and calabashes. They traded these articles for needles, mirrors, beads, coral, amber, tea, coffee, perfumes, carpets, fezzes, tailored robes, and salt. What impressed Dubois most was that while the merchants from Bamako, Djenne, Sansanding, and Touat enjoyed themselves at Timbuktu, "the great town of pleasures with the freest morals in the Sudan," and spent a great deal of money in gifts to beautiful women, "the Mossi did not waste their money, and left as soon as they had finished their business."[9] On the way south, Mossi and other caravaneers picked up goods from the Yatenga and other northern Ouagadougou provinces before stopping at the capital and then proceeding to the forest regions. 175 439

It is impossible to determine the exact volume of caravan trade that passed through Mossi country, and the amount of revenue it brought to the Mossi rulers. We can get some idea of this trade, however, by examining the customs reports on goods crossing the border between Mossi country and the northern territories of the Gold Coast in the few years just following European conquest. 439 [651]

The official figures for 1901 and 1903 are as follows:[10]

Year	Horses	Head of Cattle	Sheep and Goats	Loaded Donkeys	Bales of Cotton Cloth
1901	126	3,111	18,181	2,095	236
1903	196	6,624	30,392	4,294	269

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439 Marc, who had the opportunity to check the volume of this trade in 1904 and 1905, estimates that about 16,000 head of cattle and 75,000 sheep and goats passed through the two customs posts in Mossi country. Furthermore, he believes that since "the Mossi also supply in part the markets of Togoland and the market at Bondoukou [Ivory Coast], one may assume a minimum annual export of 20,000 head of cattle and 100,000 sheep or goats. The import of kola nuts is at least 500 tons."[11] It is clear that this volume of trade could not have been achieved so soon after the French conquest. We can only conclude that it existed prior to the coming of the Europeans, and that it brought the Mossi rulers a considerable income.

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643 The Mogho Naba's officials collected taxes from all caravans that passed through his capital. The caravaneers also gave the Mogho Naba important gifts, and he apparently traded with them, even if always to his own profit. Binger states that Mogho Naba Sanum forced horse traders from the Yatenga and Hausa merchants to sell him part of their commodities at one-hundredth the purchase price.[12] Crozat reports that Mogho Naba Wobogo

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> appears to have had some business relations with white merchants who came to Salaga every dry season. He sent horses to them in exchange for silver. He claims that he had no reason to be pleased with their integrity, and that the silver they sent him contained plenty of copper. Some traders apparently came as far as Ouagadougou, bringing merchandise of German origin. There was one of them there during my stay. I was told that he was an important *marabout*, a shereef, perhaps an Arab or a Moor, for I was assured that he was very light in color. As was repeated to me several times, his relations with the king were limited to the solemn greetings on Fridays. He never entered the royal hut in spite of being an important marabout. He was at Ouagadougou for about three and one-half months, but he was compelled to return to the coast since the merchandise which he had brought was exhausted. He spoke no Mossi.[13]

439 All the caravans that passed through Mossi country were obliged to stop and give presents to the district officials. Those caravaneers who tried to elude taxation by going through the forest ran the risk of being attacked by local nobles, who usually confiscated their goods.

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The Mogho Naba and the lesser chiefs had "market officials" who taxed the merchants in the markets of their territories. The officials at Ouagadougou, the Kos Naba ("sales chief") and the Raga Naba ("market chief"), were fairly rigorous in their exactions. The Kos Naba collected taxes in cowries for every cow slaughtered at the market, and also took its hump and gave it to the Nemdo Naba ("meat chief") for distribution in the royal household. He also collected taxes on every cow sold in the market, but

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did not usually tax goats and sheep. In lieu of this, he occasionally took one or two of these animals from each herd that passed through the market and sent them to the palace kitchens. Donkeys sold in the market were taxed at the rate of 200 cowries each. Horses sold to the nobility were not taxed, but those exported were.

The Raga Naba collected taxes on the other commodities sold at the market. Cotton weavers paid him according to the size of their bolts of cloth, and cotton growers paid taxes on the sales of their raw produce. The tailors and dyers paid no fixed amounts, but were asked to send clothing to the palace. Every donkey- and ox-load of salt entering the market place was taxed. The smiths were not taxed in cowries, but had to supply the Mogho Naba's wives with hoes and the palace personnel with arrowheads, spear points, and iron clubs. The jewelers also sent bracelets as presents to the ruler. There were no fixed taxes on the cereals, vegetables, and cooked food sold at the market, but each day the Raga Naba, accompanied by several pages or retainers carrying baskets, went from vendor to vendor taking several calabashes of their produce for use in the palace. In addition, the vendors of cooked food had to feed the Mogho Naba's young grooms, who were not normally fed by the palace household. The beer sellers were not formally taxed, but they contributed a substantial percentage of their beverage to palace and market personnel, who demanded the customary *lembgha* ("taste before buying") more frequently and freely than ordinary buyers. [431]

There is some evidence (mainly from European travelers) that the traders occasionally found the caravan and market taxes prohibitive. Binger reports that the high taxes exacted by the Mogho Naba were "one of the reasons why Ouagadougou placed second [as a market town] and Mane was the commercial capital of Mossi country." Binger himself was caught in the institutionalized gift system and wrote sarcastically: "On market day [at Ouagadougou] the receipts are good. People bring everything to the palace, whether it be millet, hoes, or peanuts, and everything is accepted. *All this giving is left to the discretion of the donors.*"[14] The italics are Binger's.

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Some of the later Mogho Nanamse appear to have obtained a great deal of revenue through the sale of slaves. Most of these slaves were captured in raids among the smaller groups surrounding Mossi territory, such as the Samo, Gurunsi, and Busansi populations. According to Mangin, Gurunsi and Busansi countries were true granaries for the Mossi, who drew upon them according to their needs.[15] In early times the Mossi chiefs utilized these slaves (*yemse*, sing. *yamba*) as agricultural workers, until Mogho

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Naba Baongo (ca. 1800–30) decided that it was more profitable to sell them.[16] Subsequent rulers, especially the two Mogho Nanamse who ruled just prior to the French conquest, sold most of their captives to passing caravans or in special sections of the larger markets. When other persons sold slaves in the market, the Raga Naba collected some 1,000 cowries on each transaction—the largest tax on any market commodity.

The Mossi rulers seem to have benefited even more from the sale of eunuchs, for they had a monopoly over them. The Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou sent some captured slaves and all recidivous thieves to Teemetenga village in Koubri district, some 13 miles south of the capital, to be operated upon.[17] So successful were the Mossi surgeons that—in contrast to specialists in other areas, who lost nine lives for every successful castration—the mortality among the Mossi was only one out of ten.[18] Some of the eunuchs furnished by the Mossi were sold as far away as Constantinople, a fact which surprised the French ambassador to Turkey who saw them there in 1900.[19]

In addition to slaves and eunuchs, the Mogho Naba kept a large number of bondsmen to provide services for him. One group, the Dapore, lived in a ward of the capital called Dapoya, and had a chief, the Dapore Naba, who was himself a Dapore. The origin of these people is obscure, but they seem to have been the children of foreign captives who were brought to Ouagadougou and placed in the ruler's service. Some of them even claimed that their ancestors had come to Ouagadougou voluntarily and had placed themselves under the care and protection of the ruler. This seems unlikely, however, since the status of these people resembles that of persons captured by Sudanese rulers and installed in special wards as serfs.[20] Some of the Dapore lived in villages of their own and cultivated fields for the Mogho Naba. Others lived in a ward of Ouagadougou, served in the palace household, and provided the royal executioners. Some were selected to serve as palace eunuchs, and placed under the charge of the Kamsaogho Naba. The Dapore were hardly ever sold unless they were convicted criminals. The Mogho Naba and his chiefs refrained from selling serfs or captives who had been born in Mossi country. However, they often claimed the sons and daughters of these people as pages or pughsiudse.

The Baglere made up the second group of bondsmen providing services for the Mogho Naba. They, too, lived in a special ward and were headed by the Baglere Naba, one of their own people. Their origin is also obscure: some of them claimed to be descended from Fulani slaves who had run away from their masters and sought asylum in Mossi country; others believed that they were the descendants of foreign captives. The Baglere

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worked for the Mogho Naba in and around the palace courtyard, and in the fields. They also kept his herds and provided him with animals from their own herds. Like the Dapore, they were seldom sold, but they often had to give their sons and daughters to the Mogho Naba.

The last group of persons who contributed their services to the Mogho Naba were the Kamboinse. Their origin is also unclear. Most of my respondents claimed that the Kamboinse and their chief first came to Ouagadougou from the direction of the Gold Coast, that they bore guns, and that they offered their services as guards to the Mogho Naba.[51] Later on, the sovereign allegedly assigned slaves to the Kamboinse unit, with the result that the entire group eventually took on a serf-like character. The Kamboinse guarded the Mogho Naba's palace and seized for him the goods of persons whom he condemned to death.

The services performed for the Mogho Naba by his pages and other youthful retainers also contributed significantly to the support of his administration. We have already seen how these young men and boys took care of his every need and functioned as important messengers within the royal household. The Mogho Naba also had control over the daughters of his serfs, whom he used to obtain revenue from aliens and subjects alike. Periodically, the Mogho Naba gave one of these girls as pughsiudga to a man, thus obligating him to render goods and services to the court. Moreover, the man had to return the eldest daughter he had by this wife to the Mogho Naba as a future pughsiudga. In this way, the sovereign had a revolving store of women through whom he could bind men to himself in a nexus of obligations, and from whom he eventually received additional women.[52]

The provincial ministers of the Ouagadougou kingdom occupied such a strategic position within the central administration that anyone rendering gifts or tribute to the Mogho Naba always gave presents to them as well. Their main source of revenue, however, came from the villages under their direct control, and from the retainers who lived in their compounds and in their wards in the capital. The economic relations between the ministers and their villages were similar to those between the district chiefs and their villages, and will be discussed below. The retainers, serfs, and slaves who served these ministers provided them with many of the services their counterparts rendered to the Mogho Naba. They kept their houses in repair and provided them with firewood and with fodder for their horses. Many of them also cultivated fields for their masters. Whenever the ministers needed extra goods or services, they called on those persons who lived in their compounds or in their wards. For example, hun-

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they might take the lives and property of their subjects. There are many stories of avaricious chiefs who convicted wealthy commoners of spurious crimes and had them executed or banished in order to seize their wealth. There are also stories of twin tricksters, Raogo, a boy, and Poko, a girl, two *enfants terribles* who always succeeded in outwitting and killing avaricious chiefs. When I asked a district chief to explain the significance of the Raogo and Poko tales, he replied that they were "meaningless stories told by children who do not understand how difficult it is for a chief to command and protect men." This remark prompted one of his officials to add that in olden days, people gladly supported the Mogho Naba and his chiefs in order to be safe from their enemies—a statement which might have been made by a conscientious government official anywhere. However, whether commoners or chiefs, all Mossi believed that men must have government, and that without it chaos would prevail.

The Mossi political organization was subject to severe strains. For one thing, its economic basis was not very strong. True, goods and services were channeled to the capital from the smallest areas, and in time this permitted the establishment of increasingly complex governmental structures. Nevertheless, the Mossi fiscal system was not highly developed, and much of the revenue the rulers received came to them in the form of legal fees and gifts. Moreover, most of these revenues were irregular in nature.

Despite this fact, the Mossi believed that their rulers were wealthy—and there can be no doubt that they were wealthier than their subjects. Nevertheless, visiting Europeans found little difference between the standard of living of the chiefs and that of the people. Binger would have us believe that Mogho Naba Sanum bragged so much about imaginary wealth, including 10,000 horses, that he "managed to convince himself of it."[26] Binger's subsequent remarks about Sanun.'s resources are illuminating even if somewhat biased, because they throw light on the economic basis of the Ouagadougou kingdom. He tells us that Sanum's revenues were

> not well regulated. He lives on gifts and offerings which people have brought him with the aim of obtaining justice, or to demand something from him. He sometimes sends a band of men to capture slaves in Kipirsi country, or at least supports such ventures. But these revenues, like those of all the black chiefs, are not sufficient, because these men are prone to squander their resources. As a result, these sovereigns are compelled to use expedients in order to procure horses and other commodities. Thus, like the rulers of Tieba, Pegue, and Kong, Naba Sanum still has captives in villages devoted to agriculture, but he does not take proper care of these villages. If he does not receive enough millet in the form of gifts, he must sell his slaves in order to procure it.[27]

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THE ECONOMIC FOUNDATION

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Binger's statement about the "squandering" to which "all the black chiefs" are prone reveals his ignorance of the nature, role, and function of West African chiefs in general and of Mossi chiefs in particular. These men were often the center of redistribution systems that embraced their entire territory. The Mossi chiefs did not necessarily squander their resources when they used them to support their household, their administrative staff, and even visitors to their realm. A rather large portion of the millet the Mogho Naba received was not even used by his own household, but was held for gifts to visiting strangers. Binger himself benefited from the generosity of Mogho Naba Sanum, and he provides us with excellent data about how Boukary Koutou distributed his resources: "I can say that never has a chief given me food, kola nuts, and beer as often as he did. I received things to eat two or three times a day."[28] No Mossi chief could have done less. This was a role that chiefs had to play, and they lost power and prestige if they proved inhospitable or parsimonious either to visiting strangers or to their own subjects.

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Binger's lack of insight into the economic basis of the Mossi political organization also kept him from obtaining a clear understanding of the political system itself. For example, he saw the loose political organization of the Mossi as a sign of decadence, and felt that the Ouagadougou kingdom was too weak to survive for any length of time:

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> Before long the Mossi empire will break up, and the country will be organized into a confederacy like Beledougou and Yatenga. This is an event that we Europeans can only favor. Experience has shown us that as soon as a Negro chief commands more than 2,000 people, he dreams of empire; his needs grow, and he tries to expand. Since his revenues are small, he labors under a deficit, which he must remedy with slave raids. In a confederacy the chiefs do not reach this point so rapidly. As soon as one of them begins to rise, the others can band together and nip his ambition in the bud.[29]

It is quite true that many of the political systems in the western Sudan had a loose character similar to that of a "confederacy." This was not due to the vigilance of neighboring chiefs, however. From time to time, such powerful rulers as Sundiata, Mansa Musa, Sonni-Ali, El Hadj Omar, and Samory Touré did arise and conquer vast areas, but they were unable to sustain their gains over extended periods.

The political organization of the Mossi was not decadent but structurally weak—its economic base was never strong enough to support a higher degree of centralization. Strong chiefs only tested the limits of the system; they could not change the system itself.

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VIII

RELIGION AND GOVERNMENT

796 642 [769] [776] RELIGION AND RITUAL played an important role in supporting and preserving the Mossi political system. Religio-political ceremonies were centered around the ancestors (Keemse) and the earth deities (Tengkouga); the otiose high god (Ouennam or Naba Zid Ouende) had a very minor role.

769 642 778 The political importance of ancestor veneration lay in the fact that every Mossi chief claimed Nyennega of Dagomba and her descendants, Ouedraogo and Oubri, as his ancestors. Furthermore, possession of the amulets of Rialle, Nyennega's husband and Ouedraogo's father, legitimized possession of the nam. In order to rule, a Moaga had either to be a member of a royal [613] lineage still in possession of the nam or to have received the nam from such a lineage. No Moaga ever tried to usurp the nam of a kingdom or principality without trying to steal the royal amulets at the same time; nor, if his 669 778 642 769 rebellion was successful, did he ever fail to claim that he had stolen the amulets or had received them as a gift. Thus Yadega, who rebelled against his father's brother, Mogho Naba Koudoumie, and founded the Yatenga kingdom, declared that he had obtained Rialle's amulets. He claimed that they had been given to him by his sister, Pabre, who had stolen them from Ouagadougou and had thus deprived that kingdom of any legitimate sanctions for power. Thus, when the Yatenga people declare that they are equal to Ouagadougou, they add that the only "amulets" that still legitimize the nam of the Ouagadougou dynasty are the droppings left behind by Pabre's horse as she fled northward.

769 642 643 Similarly, all the princes who founded principalities and proclaimed their independence of Ouagadougou defended their action on the grounds that they, being as close to the main line of descent as the Mogho Naba, were also entitled to rule. The younger sons of deceased Mogho Nanamse [631] who were banished from the capital as Kouritadamba and who subsequently became provincial Dimdamba also stressed their relationship to [634] the royal ancestors. Even those district chiefs whose ancestors had prob-

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ably been younger sons sent to rule in conquered territories claimed that their ancestors were direct descendants of Ouedraogo and Oubri. Thus, to the Mossi, the power to rule was intimately linked to closeness of descent from the royal ancestors. The supernatural power of these ancestors, and the vigilance they were believed to maintain over the affairs of their descendants, were regarded as important factors in Mossi government.

From the moment when the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou or any other Mossi ruler "drank the namtibo" and thereby received the nam of his ancestors, he had the right—indeed, the duty—to offer sacrifices to these ancestors in the name of his subjects. Every night, throughout Mossi country, the Baloum Naba of every ruler performed an act of supplication (Kwaga Basgha) to the ancestors. He beseeched them to protect the subjects of their descendants through the night, to maintain peace in Mossi country, and to grant health, children, and prosperity to all Mossi. This nightly ceremony was climaxed yearly by an elaborate ritual in honor of the ancestors (called the Basgha in some areas, and the Pelegha, Filigha, or Kinkiriga in others) that began at the highest levels of the government and ultimately linked every Mossi chief and lineage head.

The Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou, like the other Mogho Nanamse and Dimdamba, initiated this ceremony in his own kingdom. His celebration, called "M'barengma," was held at the end of the Mossi agricultural year and after the Soretasgho. Thus, the M'barengma was a New Year's festival in thanksgiving for good crops, as well as the annual Feast of the Dead. A few weeks before the first moon of the new year (the *ki-basgha* or *ki-pelegha*), the Mogho Naba ordered his soghondamba and samande-kamba to clean up the palace buildings and courtyards—an activity intended to notify the ever-vigilant ancestors that preparations were being made to offer sacrifices in their honor. A short time later, the Mogho Naba gave grain from his fields to the Pughtiema so she could prepare millet water for the sacrifices. Present-day Mossi insist that part of the grain came from the first ears harvested that year and part from those of the previous year. This was supposed to symbolize the continuity between crops, mirroring the continuity between the ruler and his ancestors. A few days before the principal ceremony, the Mogho Naba ordered the Larhalle Naba to pour millet water and sacrifice chickens on the graves of former Mogho Nanamse.

Shortly before the ki-basgha moon appeared, the ruler had to leave his palace at night to elude the ancestors, who had been attracted by the preparations and who were expected to be angry when they discovered that the sacrifices were not yet ready. The unjust ruler feared ancestral sanctions; the just ruler that his ancestors might want him to join them. One night he

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went to the home of his Samande Naba, the next to the Gounghin ward, then to Baghin, and subsequently to the homes of other officials. He could not remain long at one place for fear that the ancestors might find him. Every morning, however, when the cock's crow heralded the ancestors' departure, he returned to his palace.

The principal part of the Basgha ceremony was performed on the night when the crescent moon appeared. On that night more than any other, the ruler had to seek refuge elsewhere, because the ancestors visited the palace to accept the sacrifices offered to them by the Pughtiema with the help of the Baloum Naba and the chief eunuch of the harem. The exact nature of this ceremony is unknown, but it is known that the Baloum Naba used the sacred namtibo along with animals and millet-flour water provided by the Pughtiema and the chief eunuch for propitiatory sacrifices to the ancestors. The aim of these sacrifices was to induce the ancestors to grant good crops, health, happiness, and children to their descendants, and to "increase the force of the namtibo."[1] At cock's crow the Bendere Naba sprinkled a flour infusion called *gningmassem* ("water of health") on the palace courtyard so that the ruler might walk upon it when he returned. The Mogho Naba was greeted with drumbeats and escorted to the palace gate. His entry into the antechamber marked the close of this ceremony, and the people retired until later in the day.

The elaborate public ceremony of the Basgha took place in mid-morning. The ministers and important officials, clad in ceremonial garb, arrived at the palace quite early. When the Mogho Naba appeared, the Bendere Naba recited the official genealogy, starting with Ouedraogo and Oubri and ending with elaborate praises of the current ruler. The ministers and their entourage then saluted the Mogho Naba and wished him *Ne tarbo*, which means a happy and prosperous new year for himself and the country. He, in turn, took advantage of this occasion to give many presents to his retinue, and his wives distributed huge amounts of food and drink to the assembly until everyone was satiated. Then all the officials except the Bendere Naba and his group paid homage to the Mogho Naba and departed. The musicians remained at court most of the day, beating their drums and singing praises to their sovereign and his illustrious ancestors. The royal pages kept them well supplied with food and beer, and now and again during the day the ruler sent them gifts among which robes were often included. Whenever the drummers received a gift, they slipped into a rhythmic pattern that signified: *Tompaongo, Wend'kaouss' Naba niore, Wenne wilig vinre*, or, "We bow in thanksgiving for your gift. May God give the ruler long life. May God grant us to be alive next year so that we may do this again." The

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climax of this gift-giving came when the ruler sent the Bendere Naba about 19,000 cowries and a slave.[8] This ceremony terminated at nightfall.

The close of the Mogho Naba's Basgha heralded the start of similar ceremonies throughout his kingdom. The heads of the other Mossi kingdoms and the Dimdamba were free to hold their own Basgha when they wished; but the Ouagadougou ruler's own subjects, including the provincial ministers, district chiefs, village chiefs, and lineage heads, apparently were not. One reason for this, aside from respect for the ruler, was that the important officials' head wives had to wait for the yeast (*dabili*) from the Mogho Naba's beer before they could prepare the sacrificial offerings for their husbands' ancestors. This dabili went from district to district or to several districts at once, depending on whether the chiefs celebrated Basgha at the same time or successively. Thus, the dabili from the capital united all the wives of the royal clan, and made for both a ritual continuity in the veneration of all ancestors and a strengthening of religious and political bonds.

The Basgha ceremonies on the district level were much less elaborate than those held at Ouagadougou, but just as important. The district chief, too, had his buildings repaired and his grain distributed for sacrifices for the ancestors. A few days before the actual ceremony, he ordered the Gande Naba to pour millet water on the graves of recently deceased chiefs and to sacrifice chickens there. As in Ouagadougou, these sacrifices were offered to induce the chiefly ancestors to grant the villagers health, food, and children. Unlike the Mogho Naba, most district chiefs did not ritually hide from their ancestors for several nights prior to the ceremony. Some of them did change their sleeping place within the compound every night, and the court people always slept indoors during this period. On the night of the Basgha itself, however, the district chiefs did not sleep in their compounds.

As in Ouagadougou, the Pughtiema performed the main ceremony by pouring millet water as a libation to the ancestors who visited her hut. She was assisted by the Baloum Naba, who had possession of the namtibo. Apparently, the district chief remained in hiding and took no part in the ceremony. But he was the main figure in the morning ceremony, which differed little from that of Ouagadougou. In some districts the Tengsoba performed a public sacrifice to the ancestors. He was given the namtibo—sacred objects that had belonged to former district chiefs—and poured libations and sacrificed chickens to all of the chief's ancestors. He also prayed both to these ancestors and to his own on the chief's behalf, and beseeched them to grant long life and happiness to the district population. He also declared that the sacred objects would seek out and kill any enemies of the local ruler, wherever they might be. Once this ritual had been com-

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between the living and the dead," but also to strengthen the political bonds between the Mogho Naba and his chiefs, down to the humblest elder of a Mossi compound.

In addition to the Basgha and Tense, the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou appears to have offered another yearly sacrifice to Tenga. Each year, after the Basgha, the Mogho Naba, the Baloum Naba, and a large entourage reportedly visited a large earth shrine called Tantibo in the vicinity of Sabatenga to offer propitiatory sacrifices in the name of all the people. When the royal party arrived at Sabatenga, they were joined by the Sabatenga Naba and his Tengsoba. The group proceeded to the foot of the sacred hill, and here the monarch dismounted, took off his bonnet and shoes, and climbed the hill. He made the customary Mossi salute at the shrine and looked on silently while the Tengsoba sacrificed animals and poured libations of millet beer and millet water in supplication for the health and prosperity of the Mogho Naba and all his people.[7]

When evil befell Mossi country in spite of the annual sacrifices to the ancestors and to the earth deity, the Mogho Naba had to offer additional sacrifices. If the country was plagued by drought, the ruler went to an earth shrine in Ouagadougou itself, called "Kom be paspanga" (literally, "water is strong there"), for a sacrifice. Moreover, he might order all his district and village chiefs to perform similar sacrifices to the earth shrines within their territories. In Nobere district, for instance, the district chief went to the village called Barkago, where, standing barefoot and bareheaded on the hilly shrine known as Beta, he ordered the local village chief and the Tengsoba to offer sacrifices for rain and good health.

It is generally believed by the Mossi that when the French attacked Ouagadougou, the deposed Mogho Naba Wobogo made sacrifices to earth shrines. Tradition has it that he sacrificed a black cock, a black ram, a black donkey, and a black slave on a large hill near the White Volta River, beseeching the earth goddess to drive the French away and to destroy the traitor Mazi whom they had placed upon the throne. When Mazi died, the Mossi people believed that he had received his just deserts from the earth shrine for treason. The French believe that Mazi was poisoned.[8]

The district and village chiefs, like the Mogho Naba, were required to make propitiatory sacrifices to the earth shrines on behalf of their subjects. Before taking office, a district chief was ritually shown the major earth shrines in his territory, and he could not ignore their existence and their need for sacrifices. In a country with major local variations in rainfall and localized animal and human epidemics, the Tengsobadamba of stricken areas always called upon the local chiefs to help them propitiate disgruntled spirits.

spirits. The chiefs could not refuse such requests, especially when the villagers were poor, because they were regarded as "fathers of their people." In some cases, however, district chiefs had to protect their subjects against unscrupulous Tengsobadamba who took advantage of local crises and tried to prey upon the villagers by refusing to perform the requisite sacrifices unless they received substantial gifts. The ensuing struggle was between the secular and the sacred; between the chief as a representative of the conquerors, and the Tengsoba as a member of the conquered group. It was always resolved in favor of the Mossi chief, who never permitted his Tengsobadamba the same privileges held by religious practitioners in neighboring societies.[9] The Mossi chiefs recognized that they needed the Tengsobadamba, and many myths recount how invading Mossi chiefs went into the woods where the Tengsobadamba were hiding to beseech and eventually force them to return to their districts so that sacrifices might be continued. On the other hand, the Mossi chiefs always insisted on the primacy of the nam over any other power. They employed the Tengsobadamba to intercede with Tenga for the welfare of their subjects, but they never allowed the priests to control them.

The coming of Moslems to the kingdom of Ouagadougou had little effect on the way in which the Mogho Nanamse used the traditional religious system to bolster their political power.[10] In fact, the Mossi rulers later used Islam and its adherents in the same manner as they had used the aboriginal religion. The Moslems first tried to subdue the Mossi in the fifteenth century by persuasion, and later by the jihad. Both attempts failed, but the Moslems finally entered Mossi country as refugees from Sudanese wars. Their fortunes waxed and waned, depending on whether they were befriended by the ruler in whose territory they lived. During certain periods, they were subjected to many restrictions and were forbidden by the Mogho Naba to recite their prayers in public places.[11] At other times, they were left free to practice their religion, and even succeeded in converting several Mogho Nanamse to Islam. Under converts such as Savadogo (ca. 1760), Islam spread into many districts and gave rise to such important local centers as Sakhaboutenga (Dakay).

The Moslems in Ouagadougou were represented at the court by their Imam. This person even received his badge of office—a white turban and white robe—from the Mogho Naba, and had to swear in the name of Allah and *Nabiyama* (the prophet Mohammed) to be faithful to him, obey him, and aid him in times of need. However, he did not have to drink the namtibo as suggested by Dim Delobson; nor did he have to observe such non-Moslem customs as drinking the millet beer the Mogho Naba provided for

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his guests.[12] On the contrary, when the Imam visited the ruler on Fridays or during important festivals to read from the Koran, the sovereign gave him sweetened millet water and appropriate gifts.

Most Mossi rulers at all levels had Moslems among their councillors. These men were often the only persons who had traveled extensively outside the country (on pilgrimages to Mecca), and thus could counsel a ruler about how to deal with foreign visitors. Most early European visitors to Mossi country were either helped or hindered (chiefly the latter, it seems) by these travel-wise councillors. Crozat had difficulties with the Moslems long before he arrived in Mossi country proper. When he got to Lanfiera, the Mossi who lived there were alarmed, and refused to help him proceed to Ouagadougou despite his protestations that "I come for the good of all, white and black, that we may be together like brothers, since the same God has made us all." Crozat reports that his plea was in vain because "El Hadj All-Karl declared that he would not receive me, and he will not receive me. El Hadj is wise, El Hadj is prudent, El Hadj knows all, El Hadj does not make decisions without good foresight, and once made, he keeps them."[13]

Crozat had the same difficulty when he entered Mossi country. He tells us, "At Dounse [near Yako], for example, the marabouts did not look favorably upon my arrival, and it took a great deal of insistence on the part of Moussa to convince the Imam, my unwilling host, to present me to the chief who had expressed the desire to see me."[14] Crozat also found that he had to lodge with the Imam when he arrived at Ouagadougou, and he was assigned the same huts "which had served Captain Binger," who had visited the capital before him. He was disappointed with his reception and declares:

> I already knew from experience what sort of influence these men exercised over the chiefs. As a councillor of the chief, the Imam was overtly acknowledged as the second official in the village, but in reality he often commanded it. The Imam of Ouagadougou, therefore, could do much to help me or to hurt me. My decision to court him might flatter him, and that would be a move in the direction of winning his good graces, which, all things considered, was most important to me. The result was only partly in my favor. I succeeded insofar as the Imam was not hostile to me, but he did not help me as he might have.[15]

These Moslem councillors realized better than most other people what the visits of the Europeans implied for the independence of the country, and they tried their best to counsel the monarchs against receiving such visitors.

Beginning with Mogho Naba Doulougou (ca. 1750) Mossi sovereigns, whether Moslem or pagan, participated in the more important Moslem festi-

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vals. Being monarchs of the Mossi, they could not do otherwise. A few days before the Moslem feast of Tabaski (called *Kibsa* by the Mossi), the Mogho Naba sent the Imam of Ouagadougou cattle and sheep to be sacrificed on the holy day. On the day of the festival, the Mogho Naba and his entourage went to the mosque and joined the Imam and his flock in prayer. After the ceremony the sovereign returned to his palace and ordered that a well-washed sheep be given to the Imam for a sacrifice. This Moslem sacrifice was performed in the palace courtyard, and the Mogho Naba himself held the tail of the animal while the Imam officiated. The Mogho Naba afterward ordered his servants to provide millet water and food for his Moslem subjects. Similar ceremonies were held in all of the districts and villages where Moslems lived.

The feast at the end of the Moslem month of Ramadan was also celebrated by the Mogho Naba and most of the people within the kingdom—a fact that so surprised Binger that he wrote, "It is a most curious fact that, whether Moslem or not, all the blacks celebrate this feast."[16] The Moslems usually flattered the Mogho Naba and the other chiefs by pretending to believe that they had observed the month-long fast (which the Mossi called *no-lwere*, from *nore*, "mouth," and *lwere*, "to tie up") during Ramadan. [576] Thus, whenever they visited the Mogho Naba or another chief during this period, they greeted him with the salutation *Ne no-lwere*, which means, "I greet you who are fasting." Similarly, the morning after the end of the fasting period, the ruler and his officials were ritually given millet water "to break their fast." The important point here is that everyone knew that the Mogho Naba's fast was a ritual fiction. Binger, who was with Boukary Naba at the end of Ramadan before this prince became Mogho Naba Wobogo, commented: "Boukary Naba is a Moslem in outward appearance only. When the prayers were about to begin, he asked me whether I was going to worship. I told him that this festival was not in accord with those of the Christians. He seemed to be delighted by the idea that the whites are not Moslems."[17]

Most Mossi chiefs celebrated the end of Ramadan in a grander manner than they did Tabaski. The members of the royal household joined the other inhabitants of the capital in their anxious vigil for the crescent moon that was to herald the start of the ceremonies. There was general rejoicing when the moon appeared, and all through the night palace guards fired shots and launched arrows into the air. The following morning, the Mogho Naba went to the mosque with his courtiers to attend prayers. Then he returned to his palace to await the Imam, who came to offer prayers of thanksgiving. The Mogho Naba gave him presents, and was visited by gift-bearing

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Moslems. In return, he gave them millet water sweetened with honey, millet cakes, meat, and kola nuts.

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The celebration of the festival in the districts was not as imposing as it was at Ouagadougou, but we have Binger's excellent eyewitness account of the festivities at Sakhaboutenga:

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> First of all, Boukary sent word that he would like me to accompany him to Sakhaboutenga, where it is his custom to go on the day of the festival. The chief's men spent the entire day attending to preparations: they distributed powder, cleaned guns, tried on harnesses, and polished copper fittings as we would in France on the eve of a great parade. . . . It was an occasion for revelry, and they took full advantage of it. They ate as much as they could, drank a great deal of beer, and fired many rounds of ammunition. . . . In the evening there was a moment of consternation: no one had seen the crescent; however, they consoled themselves by repeating that although it had not been sighted here, it had certainly shown itself elsewhere, and they sat down to drink beer all night long.
>
> Monday, June 11. Early this morning Boukary sent a horseman to Sakhaboutenga to consult the marabouts. The messenger soon returned and assured the chief that the moon will be seen tonight. "All the marabouts have said so." The much-desired crescent appeared for a few moments this evening; shots were fired through half the night, and beer ran in floods. . . . [792]
>
> Tuesday, June 12. From four o'clock in the morning, the tam-tams sounded everywhere, and everyone was busy; it is obvious that this is the eve of an important event. . . . Half an hour after our departure we arrived at Sakhaboutenga. We dismounted and camped under the trees at the entrance of the village. Some Moslems from the neighborhood came, greeted Boukary, and offered him some kola nuts in lots varying from five to eight. But they always held them out in a fold of their robe [it being forbidden for a commoner to hand a gift directly to a chief]. A village nearby sent twelve large jars of beer.
>
> From afar and from all directions, long files of Moslems emerged from the village on their way to the Imam's for prayers. Several onlookers arrived on donkeys from the surrounding countryside. The religious ceremony took place on a flat expanse to the east of the village. It was an impressive spectacle. The crowd was silent. The faithful, ranged in ranks about 20 feet deep, prostrated themselves and rose again in perfect harmony and with awesome slowness. From time to time the voice of the Imam was raised, and his *amina* [amen] was heard with deep reverence.
>
> There were about three thousand persons of both sexes there, almost all of them dressed in white. The *bournous* [robes], the red tarbooshes, and the multitude of black faces lent to the ceremony the grandiose character of an oriental fete. As soon as the prayers were over, Boukary Naba walked up to the Imam of Sakhaboutenga to the sound of tam-tams to receive his blessing and the good wishes of the Moslems, who wished on my illustrious host many horses and warriors. Boukary Naba ordered that the Imam be given a magnificent sheep and several sheepskins full of cowries. He presents this

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*175 177 of the long Mossi isolation from European activity. In 1886, a German by the name of Krause became the first European to enter Ouagadougou. He left German-controlled Togoland and joined a caravan at Salaga in July 1886 with a load of kola nuts destined for Timbuktu. He arrived in the Mossi district of Bere sometime in August, and remained there long enough to observe that although this was the period of cultivation, there was a severe food shortage. The caravan proceeded to Ouagadougou and remained there until October, when it continued northward.[11] Krause reports that the journey through the Yatenga and Bandiagara region was uneventful, but that shortly after the caravan left Douentza, in December, he received word from the Mogho Naba to return to Ouagadougou immediately. Afraid to disobey, he returned to Ouagadougou in January 1887, tarried there for about two weeks, and then returned to the Gold Coast. Krause gives only a brief topographic description of Mossi country, and says little about the people and their society.[12] His visit might even be doubted, had Binger not visited Ouagadougou the following year and met the person at whose house Krause had lived.

In 1888 Binger left the French colony of Senegal with the sole purpose of reaching the Mossi and placing their country under the "protection" of France if this proved feasible. In many of the towns he passed through on his way to Mossi country, he encountered Mossi men trading slaves, salt, and kola nuts.[13] He also met a future Mossi ruler, Boukary Koutou, who was then in exile at Banema on the outskirts of the territory of Ouagadougou. Binger thought well of this prince, and described him as having "an honest countenance. His whole appearance denotes intelligence. He seems to be a just man, but firm in his resolutions."[14] Binger got better treatment from Boukary Koutou than he had from any other African ruler. He writes:

> Boukary Naba . . . treated me with plenty of good will, and had edibles and meat sent to me every day. . . . It is a great pity that I did not find Boukary Naba in power upon my arrival in Mossi country. It certainly would have facilitated my journey toward the Niger, and if he ever accedes to the throne, he will help with all the means at his disposal the European traveler who happens to pass through his country. This man has fine ideas; he loves progress, and will be well disposed to hear the counsel of the white man. Although his intelligence is higher than the average among blacks, he considers himself quite inferior to the European.[15]

Boukary Koutou further endeared himself to Binger by providing him with an escort so that he might reach the capital safely.

[643] In contrast, Binger was not impressed with Mogho Naba Sanum. He

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lamented the fact that when Mogho Naba Koutou died in 1850, the youthful Boukary Koutou had not been able to defeat his brother in the struggle for power. He voiced his disappointment with the town of Ouagadougou: 175* 177 643●

> I expected to find something better than the ordinary royal residence in the Sudan, because everywhere I went people bragged to me about the riches of the chief and the number of his wives and eunuchs. I did not have to wait long to find out the true state of affairs, because that very evening I found that what was acknowledged as a palace and seraglio was nothing but a group of miserable huts surrounded by heaps of filth, and a group of straw huts which served as stables and lodgings for captives and *griots* [bards]. In the courtyard were cows, sheep, and donkeys, which had been brought that day as presents for the king, but which had not yet been presented to him.[16]

Binger did say that Sanum had treated him well and had allowed him to remain at Ouagadougou for over a month, but he was angered when the ruler refused to let him pass through Yatenga (which he claimed as part of his realm) to go to Timbuktu. Nor would Sanum consider his request to place the Mossi under French protection. Finally, Sanum sent him a message ordering him to leave the capital immediately. Binger asked the reason for this summary dismissal, and was informed that the Mogho Naba believed that he was an advance guard for Europeans who were coming from the south, and that he did not show sufficient respect for the ruler. Binger scoffed at the first charge, but later found out that a German column under Von François was indeed heading for the Mossi. He violently rejected the charge of disrespect. He states: 175* 177 643 648*

> I feel that a white man traveling in this country, whoever he may be, should not prostrate himself before a black king, however powerful the latter may be. It is necessary that a white man should inspire respect and consideration wherever he goes; for if the Europeans should ever come here, they should come as masters, as the superior class of the society, and not have to bow their heads before indigenous chiefs to whom they are definitely superior in all respects.[17]

Despite these personal sentiments, Binger was compelled to leave Ouagadougou. He stopped briefly to visit his friend Boukary Koutou, and proceeded to the Gold Coast.

For some reason, Von François and his expedition never reached Mossi country. He left Togoland in February 1888 with a sizable force, intending to establish German rule in the Niger bend area, but turned back at Surma on the Mossi border.[18] He was soon followed by numerous British missions from the Gold Coast, German missions from Togoland, and French missions from Dahomey and the Sudan. Marc states: "The three 175* 648*

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*175 *648 European powers established in the vicinity realized that by controlling the markets of the Mossi, they could become masters of all the commercial routes in the interior near the bend of the Niger River."[19] The French pursued a more aggressive policy than any other power, dispatching mission after mission to the Mossi. In August 1890, Crozat was sent "to establish friendly relations between the French Sudan and the Mossi."[20] When he reached Ouagadougou in September, he found that Boukary Koutou had succeeded his brother and was reigning as Mogho Naba Wobogo.

Crozat, like Binger, was disappointed by the appearance of the Mossi capital, which he describes in the following words: "Like the smallest of Mossi hamlets, the capital is but a village surrounded by fields, and except for the absence of forest vegetation, nothing would indicate to the traveler that this is a great center and the home of the sovereign."[21] Most European travelers in the Sudan were disappointed by the capitals of African states. They could not reconcile the glowing reports of the Africans with their own ideas of royal splendor. Crozat was even more disappointed with Boukary Koutou. He states:

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> The king of Ouagadougou is the same Boukary Naba who was Binger's cordial host at Banema; but what I was told about him and what I saw a little later were two different things, and the difference was to the ruler's disadvantage. Binger knew him as friendly, dignified, simple, somewhat opportunistic, and showing very little displeasure at his brother and predecessor who had exiled him from Ouagadougou. I found myself in the presence of a monarch very proud of his newly obtained but long-hoped-for dignity (Boukary, in effect, became king at Ouagadougou only because his brother died without male issue). Yet he was timid, shaky, and lived confined to his palace with his servants and wives, not daring to go out. He spent his time consulting holy men who had him under their control and who used up the resources of the realm to contrive the oddest and most expensive charms in order to allay the ruler's fear that he would be assassinated.[22]

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Mogho Naba Wobogo did little to change Crozat's opinion of him. He hesitated to grant the Frenchman an interview because his councillors had advised against it. When Crozat was finally permitted to see the ruler, he told him:

> I was sent to you by the white chief who rules all the countries of the blacks from Bamako to Kayes, and from Fouta-Djallon to Kaarta. I have come in his name, and in the name of the ruler of all the French, to greet you and congratulate you on your ascension to the throne and to thank you for having received so well my countryman, the white man, who came to the Mossi two years ago. My superior has instructed me to remain with you for several days, so that you may have the opportunity to find out that whites will not harm you, and so that you may become our friend.[23]

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Wobogo thanked Crozat for coming to his country, and expressed his thanks to the chiefs who had sent him to Ouagadougou. But he refused to accept the gifts Crozat had proffered publicly. Crozat states, however, that the Mogho Naba sent a messenger to him explaining that he would accept the gifts if offered in secret, but could not accept them publicly because his ministers distrusted the Europeans. Crozat says that he complied with his host's wishes, and promised him more of "the kind of gifts that will be exchanged between two rich and powerful monarchs in mutual friendship."[24] Nevertheless, the Mossi ruler and his councillors showed by their behavior that they mistrusted the Frenchman. In trying to ascertain the nature of this mistrust, Crozat asked a servant of the king whether it was thought that Europeans would come to Mossi country if they felt that the Mogho Naba did not wish them to do so. The man replied that the monarch was being advised as follows: "The white men always act in the same way. . . . One of them always comes, and if he is well received, they come in large numbers; they establish themselves in the country; and where they establish themselves there are no more black rulers. It is they who rule."[25] The servant added that the Mogho Naba had replied that he was not afraid of the whites since his ancestors had all "died in bed." Crozat was reassured by the ruler's reply.

The Mogho Naba did not grant Crozat another audience, however, until he had stated his intention to leave Mossi country. Then Wobogo sent a messenger to tell him he could come to the palace and discuss any affair he wished before he left. Crozat appeared at court, and, acknowledging the strength of the opposition, attempted to counter its charges with feigned anger and guile:

> I do not have any affairs to discuss; for all that I had to say to you I said during the first meeting. I am not a merchant come here to sell, or to buy. I am a chief, as you can see from the attendants who escort me. I was sent to greet you in the name of the white men who are in the West, and to ask you to be our friend. If you wish to be our friend, that will be good for us, and our chief will be happy to have a great king like you as a friend. I think that such an agreement will be equally good for you. Our merchants will bring you the money and the goods you lack, and you will give us in return those things which you have in excess. Such are the relations that will be established between the Mossi and the French. Our ruler will often send you as gifts the wonderful things we make, and this exchange will make us both greater, richer, and stronger.
>
> There may be some who are trying to prevent you from becoming our friend, saying that we are evil and bad. Those who speak like that are liars. Have you heard of any evil I have done, even to a child, since I came to the Mossi or during my trip? Have you heard of any maltreatment on our part

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*175 of those chiefs whom we like, in those countries on the other side of the Niger
● 643 which have been given to us? Perhaps people will tell you again that every-
*648 where we go, we change everything and wish to be the only masters. Have we changed something in Kenedougou, whose *fama* [chief] has been our friend for a long time? We have, it is true, deposed Ahmadou of Segou, but he waged war upon us, and Segou is not his. . . .

The Mogho Naba listened to Crozat in silence and later sent a servant to him with an equally diplomatic message:

> The Mogho Naba is very happy that you came, and thanks the chiefs who sent you; he wishes to declare his friendship with the white men who are in the West, especially with the French. He will see them with pleasure when they come again to the Mossi. They will be well received by us. . . . The chief declares his alliance and friendship with the French. . . . He will be pleased to see other Frenchmen come here, provided that they are not too numerous. As for your black traders and French merchants, they can come and trade with the Mossi in all security: he will not maltreat them.
>
> On his part, the chief will send his people to trade in your possessions. As for you . . . you are now free to depart whenever you wish, and by whichever route you choose. The chief will give you four men to accompany you to the border.[26]

In his report to his superiors, Crozat suggests that the widespread belief in the Mossi immunity to attack by neighboring populations is based on imperfect knowledge of their actual strength and fighting ability. He questions the Mogho Naba's riches and power, declares that "he does not have an army," and concludes by stating that the commoners are exploited by their rulers and by the Moslem holy men and "would welcome the Europeans as rulers." He thus shows quite clearly that the Mossi were correct in viewing him as an enemy.[27] Marc, who had no reason to be hostile to Crozat, commented: "It seems to us that Crozat is somewhat unfair in his notes on the indigenous culture of the Mossi. It is possible that the total
[114] failure of his mission made him rather intolerant."[28]

Crozat was followed the next year by another French emissary, Lt.-Col. P. L. Monteil. The chief of Yako detained him briefly on the advice of a Moslem who had had unpleasant experiences with Europeans. When Monteil finally reached Ouagadougou and asked for an audience with the Mogho Naba, he was informed that the ruler would not see him and had given orders for him to be expelled from the country. Monteil had no recourse but to leave, but he made this observation: "One important result of this journey augurs well for the future. We were able to travel throughout Mossi country without difficulty."[29] He made a careful survey of the country which was used to good effect by his countrymen five years later.

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of his prime minister, Rimsekedo, and the chiefs of the districts of Bere, Djiba, Manga, Nobere, and Rissouma led their armies to join the royal forces at a rallying point near the White Volta River. Meanwhile, Voulet had expended most of his supplies in trying to bring Wobogo to terms. Having failed to do so, he tried to solve the problems of Mossi government by electing Wobogo's younger brother, Mazi, as ruler of Ouagadougou and emperor of the Mossi. Voulet then marched off to his base at Bandiagara by way of the White Volta, hoping to catch and defeat Wobogo's forces along the way. The monarch fled at Voulet's approach, so that when the forces of Rimsekedo and of the district chiefs arrived at the rendezvous, "they found only the droppings of Wobogo's horses," and angrily returned home. Naba Kaglere, chief of Nobere, was allegedly so infuriated by Wobogo's cowardice that he withdrew his support from his sovereign. However, the chiefs of Djiba and Rissouma remained faithful to their ruler, and the Dim of Mane attempted to intercept Voulet's advance toward Bandiagara, only to be defeated by the French, who burned his villages.

When Wobogo heard that the enemy had left the country, he ordered that the roof of his palace be restored, resumed his traditional duties such as appointing to office the heirs of district chiefs who had died during his absence, and prepared to return to the capital. In the interim Mazi had died (under suspicious circumstances, according to the French), thus leaving the people of Ouagadougou without a ruler and eager for Wobogo's return.[44] Unfortunately for the Mogho Naba, Voulet unexpectedly returned to Ouagadougou in December 1896, thus preventing Wobogo's return. Voulet, too, was in a predicament, for he had few allies among the Mossi, and Wobogo was firmly entrenched near Kombissiri in the south. To prevent many chiefs from coming to the aid of their sovereign, Voulet immediately launched an offensive against Wobogo. He burned several villages along the way, and received the allegiance of Wobogo's two brothers, Tarbega and Mahmadou, of two of his sons, and of two of his important vassals, the Mane Naba and the Boussouma Naba. But he failed to find the sovereign, who had fled to the region of Djiba and Nobere. Voulet then turned back to Ouagadougou, which he reached about a month later, in January 1897. On the following day, the Ouidi Naba surrendered, and two days later the Tansoba followed suit. Voulet now formally deposed Mogho Naba Wobogo. A week later, he obtained the permission and cooperation of the traditional electors and placed Wobogo's brother Mahmadou on the throne as Mogho Naba Sighiri. This sovereign then "solemnly signed a treaty which placed his kingdom under the protection of France."[45]

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*175 Voulet left Ouagadougou in February to establish French control
648 among the Gurunsi, leaving a military commander, Captain Scal, and a Resident Officer at Ouagadougou. But he acted without taking into account the resourcefulness of Wobogo (now once more Boukary Koutou), who
[645] had gained the allegiance of chiefs in the Manga area. The Gounga Naba,
[634] who was provincial minister for that region, tried to gain the support of the Djiba and Rissouma districts for Mogho Naba Sighiri. He failed, and or-
[669] dered the troops of Garanse, Nobere, Toise, and Yake districts to attack Boukary Koutou's supporters. In the ensuing battle the Gounga Naba's forces lost nine men, the rebels ten. The Gounga Naba considered these losses too high and called off the fighting.[46]

*175 Meanwhile, Boukary Koutou had sent an appeal to Steward, the com-
*648 mander of a British force that was then on its march of conquest through Gambaga and that had designs on Ouagadougou, "for protection in virtue
643 of the treaty concluded with Mr. Ferguson in 1894." Wishing to avoid conflict with the British, Voulet hastened to Tenkodogo in February 1897 to meet Steward, and the two men established boundaries between the French and British spheres of influence. Boukary Koutou was thus left to fend for himself.[47] Undaunted, he crossed the Gold Coast frontier once more and proceeded toward Ouagadougou. Scal heard about his activities and decided to launch an attack against him. He took Boukary Koutou by surprise in June 1897, and forced him to flee. Boukary passed through Bere district and arrived in the Gold Coast, where he was granted refuge by the British. About a year later, he convinced a Colonel Northcott that he had been unjustly deposed by the French, and that under the treaty of 1894 the British were his protectors and were obliged to restore him to his throne. In May 1898, a British force under Northcott and with Boukary Koutou in tow arrived at Kombissiri, some twenty-five miles from Ouagadougou, but here they were met by French emissaries who brought with them copies of the treaty of protection signed by Sighiri in January 1897. The British troops retreated, taking the dejected ruler with them into permanent exile.[48] Boukary reportedly settled at Zangoiri, a few miles from Gambaga.[49] He was forbidden to enter Gambaga because of the tradition that if he ever saw the Gambaga ruler, both of them would die. Boukary never returned to Mossi country. He died and was buried in the Gold Coast in 1904, but his funeral was held at Ouagadougou.[50]

Boukary Koutou is seen in retrospect as a tragic figure, whose main fault seems to have been that he ruled at the most difficult time in his country's history. Judging by his treatment of Binger, he appears to have
[173] been a clever politician, but his resources were of no avail against the

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superior might of the French. Like many other African groups, the Mossi have now evolved traditions to account for his fall and for the conquest of their country. They say that Wobogo lost his realm because he was a cruel ruler. According to the Mossi, he executed the noble retainers of Djiba in whose care his heir had died. But most important, the Mossi believe that Boukary was destined to lose his country to foreigners. According to one tradition, a holy man warned the ruler of Tenkodogo that an evil child who would bring harm to the country would be born into his house unless his birth was prevented by oblations to the ancestors. The Tenkodogo Naba made the necessary sacrifices, and the tragedy was averted. The holy man then went to Ouagadougou and gave the same warning to Mogho Naba Koutou. Koutou replied that he was the direct descendant of Ouedraogo and Oubri, and that no child of his could bring harm to the patrimony of the royal ancestors. He made no sacrifices, and a child who had "two teeth like the tusks of an elephant" was born into his house. This child, Boukary Koutou, was disrespectful of his father and made war against his brother, and was eventually defeated by the French.

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laborers.[3] In desperation, the French sought help from those very chiefs whose power they wished to curb, especially from the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou, whom they regarded as the supreme ruler of the Mossi. However, they met with the same resistance: 177 648* 643

> The king of the Mossi, Kouka Naba [Mogho Naba Sighiri], is lavish with vows of devotion and fidelity, but these vows are never translated into action. It is impossible to obtain from him any pertinent information about the country—he tries to give the impression that he knows nothing about it—or any information about Boukary Koutou [then in exile, but still a threat to the French], of whom he pretends to have no news.[4]

One cannot tell whether the Mogho Naba knew about Boukary Koutou's activities, but it is highly unlikely that he could have given the French much information about the country even if he had wished to do so. No Mogho Naba ever possessed this kind of information. The Dimdamba and the Kombemba paid allegiance and tribute to their superior ruler, but did not furnish him with specific data on their principalities and districts. [631] [651]

The death of Mogho Naba Sighiri in 1905 enabled the French officials to secure the election of a Mogho Naba they could control and to change the Mossi political organization. Sighiri's principal heir was his sixteen-year-old son, Saidou Congo, who in the opinion of the Mossi electoral college "could not keep the country" because of his youth. The French, keenly aware that they could more easily control a young ruler, insisted that Saidou be given the nam, and he became Mogho Naba Kom. Two years later, in 1907, the French began to reorganize the kingdom of Ouagadougou and the surrounding territories. They suppressed certain districts and principalities, enlarged some, and unified others by granting them control over the smaller political entities that lay near or within their boundaries. These changes were often made without regard for the traditional hierarchies, and many district chiefs found themselves controlling other district chiefs, while Dimdamba were reduced to the level of district chiefs. 175* 177 643 648*

The French also reorganized the provincial administration, replacing the five ministers with persons more favorably disposed toward their rule. The Larhalle Naba was replaced in 1908 after he had mysteriously left the capital for Koudougou. The Kamsaogho Naba was deposed by the Mogho Naba, and was replaced by a nominee of the French. As in the case of the district chiefs, the French shifted the territorial responsibilities of these ministers "without taking into consideration the hierarchy prevailing among [them]. The intention of the administration apparently was to reward certain young and capable ministers to the detriment of those who were old."[5] One commentator concludes: "In view of the youth of the 175* 177 648* 645

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What Mangin referred to euphemistically as "difficulties with the white man" was, to the Mossi, rather drastic punishment for non-payment of taxes. If a man refused to pay his taxes, the Mossi chief was permitted to sequester his goods and sell them. If the man had neither the taxes nor the goods, the chief had to send him and his wife (or wives) to the administrative post to be punished. Sometimes, a man and his wife would be made to look at the sun from sunrise to sunset while intoning the prayer *Ouennam co mam ligidi* ("God, give me money"). Other times, a man would be made to run around the administrative post with his wife on his back; if he had several wives, he had to take each one in turn. Then his wife or wives had to carry him around. The Mossi claim that a man had to run around the post three times, and his wife four. This is probably an exaggeration, however, because the numbers 3 and 4 are symbolically associated with men and women, respectively.

A further source of difficulty for the Mossi chiefs, and one which became more serious as time went by, was that they were charged by the administration to recruit men for both labor and military service. Initially, the chiefs had to supply men to transport grain for the French-organized agricultural societies from one region to another; later, they were commanded to supply labor for private and public works. Labouret states:

> The initial recruitment, which took place in 1912, was carried out without any difficulty, thanks to the unexpected afflux of volunteers. This was not the case in subsequent years. The reason for this was that the credulous natives of these distant regions, lacking any contact with the world, believed that the Europeans were carrying off their most robust youths to sell them to the Men of the Sea [mythical cannibalistic beings].[13]

The Mossi were alarmed at the high rate of mortality among the young men who went away to work. They had a saying, *Nansara toumde di Mossi* ("White man's work eats [kills] people"), and resisted the recruiting attempts of their chiefs. There was, however, less opposition to recruitment for military service, owing in part to the Mossi tradition of warfare. Many Mossi youths served in France during World War I, and additional hundreds served in an African contingent recruited "by an administrator named d'Arboussier, and with the cooperation of the Mogho Naba, to take possession of northern Togoland."[14]

The manner in which the Mossi chiefs administered their territories before the First World War was conditioned by the colonial administrators even when it was not directly controlled by them. The Mogho Naba had gradually lost most of his power, and he had no authority to act without the specific authorization of the French. He retained most of his cere-

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monial activities, especially since they were considered interesting "feudal" anachronisms to be shown to visiting officials and travelers. He also retained the power to appoint district chiefs, but the French often vetoed men they disliked and suggested that other candidates be elected. He also lost all control over his provincial administrators. The administrative chain now extended from the cercle commanders, through the provincial ministers and district chiefs, down to the village chiefs. Many provincial ministers, out of loyalty to the traditional system, occasionally briefed the Mogho Naba on the policies the French had ordered them to carry out, and told him about the state of affairs in the districts. This was completely unofficial if not illegal, but it made little difference to the French.

One serious blow to the power of the Mossi chiefs, especially on the district level, was their loss of judicial autonomy. Mossi country was subjected to the Indigénat, a rather harsh code of law for new colonies, which was promulgated by a decree of September 1887. Under this code, administrators could hold summary trials and punish any Moaga, whether chief or commoner. In June 1905, the Mossi chiefs regained some of their judicial power when a supplementary decree established village, district, and cercle courts throughout Haut-Sénégal et Niger.[16] Mossi village chiefs regained their police powers and the right to reconcile disputes among their people, but their decisions could be appealed to a district court. The district chief heard appeals and judged civil and criminal cases, but in all deliberations he was aided by two assessors appointed by the Governor. His judgment could be appealed to a cercle court, which was presided over by a European, who was assisted by two Africans. They heard appeals and judged crimes for which the penalty could be no more than five years. Penalties handed down by this court could be appealed to the Supreme Court of the Federation of French West Africa in Dakar, which judged all major crimes.

Thus the Mossi chiefs did regain part of their judicial power; but because the decree of 1905 did not abolish the Indigénat, local French administrators could easily countermand this power. Moreover, some administrators, dissatisfied with the Mossi courts and possibly resentful at their own loss of judicial power, sent numerous complaints to Dakar about the incompetence of the chiefs and the injustices perpetrated by village and district courts. As a result, a decree of August 1912 abolished the judicial power of the Mossi and of all other African chiefs, and instructed them to refer all litigation to courts at the poste, subdivision, and cercle levels.[16]

During the period before the First World War, the Mossi chiefs lost not only their judicial power but also much of the economic and religious basis of their political power. The French administration abolished slavery

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to cut down the length of service of our draftees as much as possible."[25]

The Governor of the Upper Volta made full use of the Mossi chiefs to develop the colony, and although some chiefs may have objected to the labor imposed on their subjects, others seemingly approved. In commenting upon cotton production in the Upper Volta, Ossendowski writes:

> Cotton is an artificial crop and one the value of which is not entirely clear to the natives. The chiefs with their superior intellect, seeing the profit to be obtained from the plantation of cotton, are continually enlarging the area of the fields, and resort to draft animals, ploughs, manures, and even partial irrigation of the fields; nevertheless, the great mass of the population submit rather unwillingly to those instructions of the administration which aim at the development of cotton cultivation in the colony.[26]

Delavignette's comment on the role of the chiefs in cotton production seems to indicate that they, like their subjects, had to conform to the desires of the French:

> [The French] lived at Ouagadougou in the shade of the great Nabas, and because [the latter] possessed servitors and were at the head of docile provinces; [the French] dignified by the name of "custom," and in any case adjudged convenient, this domestication of the peasants whereby they were forced to work in a common field under the authority of the village chief, and for a salary which was theoretically to be distributed among them afterwards. Sometimes cercle guards were stationed in these fields.[27]

The Governor carried out many of Van Vollenhoven's reforms concerning the Mossi chiefs, and instructed his district administrators to respect the chiefs and to seek their aid in governing the people. De Beauminy, an administrator in the Upper Volta, contrasts the old policy with the new:

> Not without reason, we followed the rule of regarding the great black chiefs as exploiters of their peoples, and this caused us to introduce and to maintain a policy aimed at reducing their authority. Later on we were compelled to abandon this policy in the face of discouraging results. During the past few years we have restored power and prestige to the Mogho Naba and to his vassals, the Mossi chiefs. They are now paid by us, and they administer their kingdoms and territories under our guidance and under the supervision of an extremely small European staff (one official for every 60,000 inhabitants). The rulers are now helping us to restore, on a newer and sounder basis, a political edifice which had once appeared to be on the point of collapse.[28]

An official report also stated that the Mossi chiefs

> understand that the time of their absolute power, and the privileges of their "medieval lordships," are fated to wear away gradually. Certainly, the main-

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tenance of their authority and prestige is indispensable, and the local administration is firmly resolved not only to preserve it but even to strengthen it. Henceforth, however, this authority and prestige will be upheld on the basis of principles and methods better suited to the new order of things which has been established.[29]

The administration tried to educate some of the sons of the chiefs "in order to attune them to progress and to the fundamental principles of our policy."[30] It encountered some resistance from chiefs who resented what they considered the "recruitment" of their children for education, and from other chiefs who were afraid that, if educated, their sons might be converted to Catholicism and thus would be unable to perform the traditional religio-political ceremonies. Nevertheless, one official states quite proudly that "Despite some resistance, the results obtained so far are encouraging and of such a nature as to allay our anxiety: 671 sons of chiefs are now attending our schools, among them 52 sons of provincial chiefs and 342 sons of district chiefs."[31] However, very few of these boys even learned French well enough to take part in the government of their society.

Hesling also made an effort to improve the material welfare of the Mossi chiefs. He felt that under the previous administration the chiefs had been "inadequately remunerated," and he considered this bad for their morale. He therefore increased the appropriation for the salaries of chiefs from 86,000 francs in the 1919 budget to 190,000 francs in the 1924 budget, and counted on their receiving an additional 163,260 francs from tax commissions during the year. The Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou, considered the emperor of the Mossi and judged loyal, efficient, and capable by the French, was granted a stipend of 25,000 francs, while the Yatenga Naba, considered his subordinate and judged less capable, was granted only 8,700 francs.[32] Only 276 chiefs out of a total of 497 in the territory received any stipend at all that year, because even an augmented budget was too small to provide funds for the lesser chiefs. These chiefs, in the words of one official, "were often inadequate or incapable, but . . . could not be replaced, either because they had no qualified successors or because the traditional system placed an obstacle in the way."[33] Instead of salaries, they received seeds of new plant species such as mangoes, and they were helped in building dams to irrigate their fields and in sinking deep wells near their compounds. In addition to these material rewards, the Governor increased the prestige of the chiefs by giving them medals and honors.

Despite these increased salaries and honors, and the more important role they now played in the administration of their subjects, the Mossi

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*175 *177 *648 631 643

chiefs did not regain any of their traditional power. They remained auxiliaries of the administration. Taking Mogho Naba Kom as an example, one report states that this "simple, intelligent, compliant man served as news agent and made himself useful to the political administration" until the arrival of Hesling, when he took a livelier interest in the affairs of the colony.[34] Another source says of the same monarch:

> Free of the ancestral traditions that forbade him to leave his palace, and curious about progress and administration, he travels on all the roads and, under our supervision, busies himself with the settlement of administrative problems, to which he lends the weight of his authority. He makes the proposals for the nomination of province and district chiefs; he encourages his subjects to work and produce. Finally, he fulfills with the greatest dignity the representative functions that devolve upon him at his palace and in the official ceremonies.[35]

While it is true that the Mogho Naba made proposals for the nomination of chiefs, he was powerless to prevent their dismissal if they incurred the displeasure of the administration—a frequent occurrence during the Hesling period. For example, when the administration deposed Naba Boulga of Doulougou district for "incompetence" and placed him in "enforced residence" in a neighboring district, the French officials encouraged the election of Bila Kongo primarily because he was a former cercle guard. Bila Kongo was assassinated in 1924, and the Mogho Naba named Mahama Ouedraogo to take his place. This new chief soon had difficulties with the administration, however, and was deposed for exacting unauthorized taxes from his subjects and for abusing his authority. Mogho Naba Kom then appointed Ousmane Ouedraogo, but he was deposed for "incompetence" and exiled to Sao district.

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On the other hand, Hesling made few attempts to change the traditional political and administrative structures of the Mossi. One contemporary source says:

> Since its inception the Government of the Upper Volta has made no changes or innovations, or at best very few, in this connection. The native administrative entities in the cercles of Ouagadougou, Ouahigouya, Kaya, and Fada-N'Gourma have remained the same as those which Haut-Sénégal et Niger transferred to the colony in 1919. . . . Only in 1922 did the cercle of Koudougou have its "Gurunsi" districts separated from its "Mossi" districts to form a new province, which was placed under the command of the Leo Naba, a chief of the same Gurunsi race. Tenkodogo, a cercle made up of a large number of small districts ruled by thoroughly inept chiefs, has been the object of a partial internal reorganization since the beginning of 1923. The number of its native *circonscriptions* [districts] has been reduced from 82 to 73.[36]

[634] [635]

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177 their younger sons to become Moslems, and soon abandoned their active
*648 resistance to Islam.

63 Hesling did not permit the Mossi chiefs to revive their traditional religio-
[795] political rituals and ceremonies such as the Tense, but he continued to toler-
[797] ate the Basgha. The French banned the Mossi market chiefs, because they believed (with some justification) that these officials used their offices to procure revenue for the chiefs. The difficulty was that the market chiefs were also responsible for arranging sacrifices to the market deities, which in the absence of such sacrifices would not protect the people from quarrels and violence in the market place. Some chiefs covertly retained their market chiefs; others obeyed the administration and remained anxious over the behavior of their subjects in the market. In general, however, most Mossi chiefs tried to adjust to the religious changes that were taking place, and sought to maintain at least surface amicability with all religious groups. Commenting upon the behavior of the Mogho Naba in this regard,
[643] Dim Delobson states:

> The Mogho Naba, above all, is a believer in animism like all his subjects, and it is hard to understand how he manages to reconcile his fetishism with the complex dogmas of Islam and with the many interdictions of Christianity. However, the Mogho Naba is quite capable of being a Catholic or a Moslem on appropriate occasions, while at the same time respecting the traditions of his ancestors. Thus, when the Christians are celebrating Christmas, the emperor of the Mossi devoutly attends midnight Mass. Nevertheless, he wears his fez [really the bonnet which is the symbol of his office], just as the bishop wears his miter. He likewise embraces Islam for the three Moslem festivals.[47]
> [292]

*175 Hesling failed in his attempt to develop the Upper Volta as a viable
*648 colony, and many of the chiefs whom he had used as his auxiliaries lost
[631] not only a great deal of power but also a great deal of prestige in the eyes
[558] of their subjects because of the role they had played vis-à-vis the administration. By 1929 the economy of the Upper Volta was in poor condition:
[433] cotton production had declined; taxes (raised from 5,800,000 francs in
[651] 1921 to 18,274,000 francs in 1927 and scheduled to be raised to 26,400,000
[491] francs in 1930) were unbearable; many of the roads that were too extensive, too little used, and too difficult to maintain had been abandoned; and
[167] more than 46,000 laborers who had worked in the cotton fields and on the roads had fled to the neighboring Gold Coast.[48] The Colonial Minister, Sarraut, ordered that the colony of the Upper Volta be dismembered. He states in his decree of September 1932 that the suppression of the Upper Volta "would permit appreciable savings, and would make the adminis-

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*175 *648 French Forces were present there. The official Vichy radio began broadcasts urging discipline, increased production, and "patriotic cooperation in making the Federation [of French West Africa] a military bastion against the encroachment of its British neighbors."[58] In response, local officials ordered Mossi chiefs to provide laborers to build trenches and fortifications between the two areas. The Free French, for their part, used the Gold Coast as a center for the distribution of anti-Pétain propaganda, and tried to employ returning Mossi labor migrants as couriers. The majority of these young men were not interested in politics, however, and those who were prevailed upon to take propaganda leaflets into Mossi country simply discarded them as soon as they crossed the border.

*175 *648 643 The pressures, counter-pressures, and anxieties of this period were apparently too much for Mogho Naba Kom II, who died on March 12, 1942. By the next morning, countless rumors to the effect that the Mogho Naba had committed suicide had spread as far as the Gold Coast. The most widespread rumor was that the Mogho Naba's anti-Pétainist views had become clear to the administration. In reprisal, he was "placed under surveillance on Boisson's orders and separated from his subjects. He died solemnly by his own hand after having summoned his son and commanded him not to take office 'until the true French should return.'"[59] Another widely circulated rumor, probably originated by Moslems, was that the Catholic missionaries, freed from the restraints of Paris, had tried to compel the Mogho Naba to divorce his many wives and become monogamous. The Mogho Naba allegedly could not comply with this demand because it would have been a severe violation of Mossi tradition for a royal wife to become the wife of any other man while her husband was still alive. Faced with this dilemma, the rumor said, the Mogho Naba committed suicide.

The official French report on the Mogho Naba's death reveals that the administration was aware of these and other rumors and of their potential influence on the behavior of the Mossi people. The report also shows that the French officials believed, and credited the Mossi with believing, the classical superstition that "The heavens themselves blaze forth the death of princes." The report states:

> Over the last few years, the health of Saidou Congo [Mogho Naba Kom II] has been impaired by heart trouble, and it was a heart attack which carried him off at about 11 P.M. on March 12th.
>
> [761] [821] [763] The natives have no explanation for sudden deaths, and attribute them either to supernatural intervention or to poison. Besides, two phenomena had occurred just then to strike the imagination: there had been a total eclipse of the moon on the night of March 2d to 3d, which announced,

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according to the Mossi, the imminent death of an important chief; secondly, 648* a meteor had passed unexpectedly over Ouagadougou between 8 and 9 P.M. 643 [on March 12th], vividly impressing the Mogho Naba himself. [821]

It is quite possible that the emotions induced by these phenomena aggravated the heart condition that felled him. [763] Certain people have maintained that the Mogho Naba, being opposed to all foreign domination and convinced that serious developments were imminent, voluntarily commited suicide by poison in order to elude them. So far, there is no proof that such a rumor has really been adrift. The matter is under strict investigation.[80]

The Mossi people practiced as best they could the traditional rituals connected with the death of a Mogho Naba. During the interregnum, however, the administration did not permit the usual chaos, ritual or otherwise. One administration report states: "Young people tried to steal things in the market, taking advantage of the old customs, but they were checked."[81] A later report adds that the traditions of the Napoko and the Kourita were honored, and that one hundred persons were arrested for the ritual larceny of small objects.

The traditional Mossi authorities allegedly requested that the deceased Mogho Naba, as one who had worn the Legion of Honor, be given full military honors. This required the placing of his body in a coffin so that [766] the funeral cortege could move through the streets, a fact which introduced [177] a new ritual element in royal funerals. Once this ceremony was over, however, the representatives of the administration withdrew, and the body was buried according to customary rites.

The traditional electoral college then proceeded with the task of choosing a new ruler. [666] The choice was between Issoufou Congo, Kom's eldest son, who was then a lieutenant in the French Colonial Army in the Ivory Coast, and his younger brother, Etienne Congo, chief of the Doulougou district. With the administration's permission, the college elected Issoufou Congo. He took the title "Sagha" (the second Mogho Naba to bear that name), and was installed with traditional ceremonies.

The message Sagha sent to the French High Commissioner bears quoting. 175* Like the traditional speeches of newly elected Mogho Nanamse, it 648* was believed by the Mossi people to contain subtle jibes at enemies, praises 643 to benefactors and friends, and portents of future plans. The Mogho Naba 537 said:

> At the moment when I take command of the Mossi people, I must thank you for having placed me on the throne of my father. I give you assurance of my fidelity toward France in all circumstances. Be assured by this testimony that my father will remain for me an honored person and a guide. I will walk in the footsteps of my father. In these difficult times, my people and I re-

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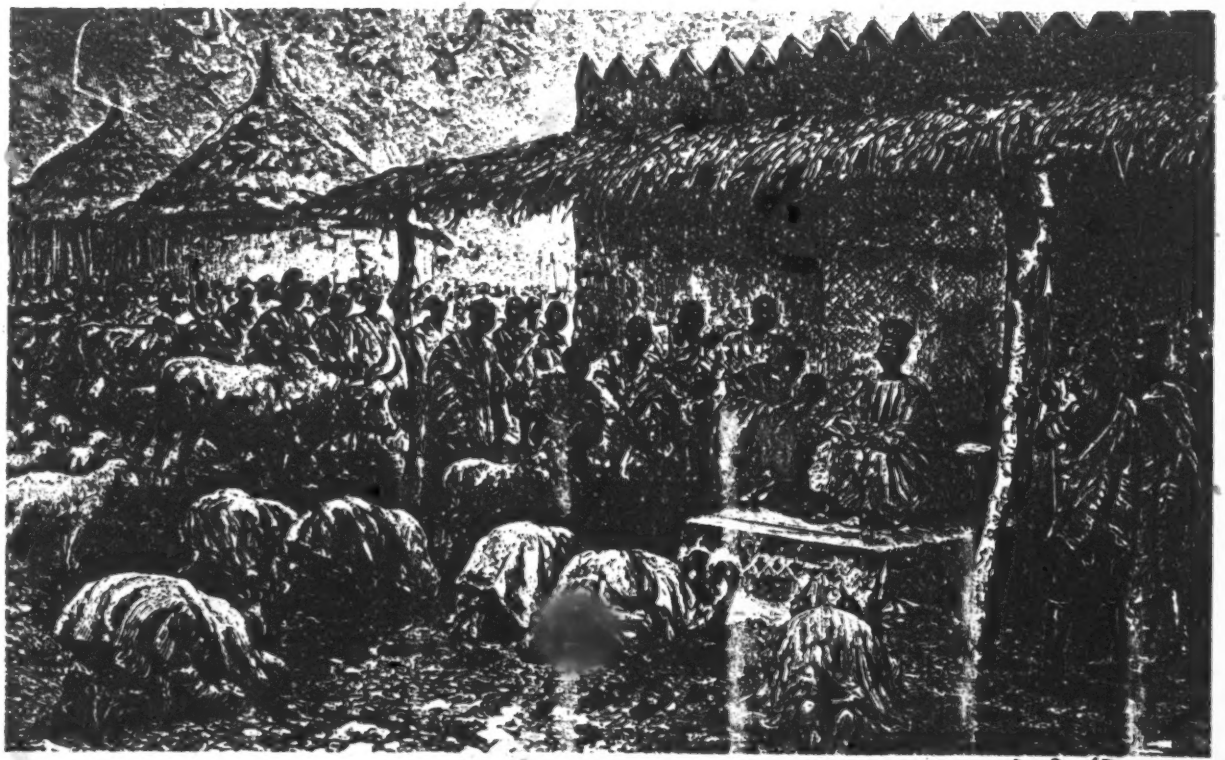
175 main attached to the French cause. My father is dead, but the soul of Mossi
*648 country lives on. I beg you to transmit to Marshal Pétain, Admiral Platon,
Governor-General Boisson, and Governor Deschamps the expression of my
● 643 profound attachment to France and the assurance of my full devotion.[83]
[537]

Some contemporary Mossi claim to see the Mogho Naba's appreciation of General de Gaulle, his rejection of the Pétain regime, and his desire to regain power over the Mossi people, in the words, "I will walk in the footsteps of my father. In these difficult times, my people and I remain attached to the French cause. My father is dead, but the soul of Mossi country lives on." No one could be sure that this was indeed the Mogho Naba's true sentiment, but this too is according to custom.

Nine months after Issoufou became Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou, the situation in French West Africa changed radically. The Allied forces invaded North Africa, and, after more than two years of resistance, Governor-General Boisson shifted West African support to the Free French. Forced labor and product requisitions continued, but now the Mogho Naba and his chiefs were told that the aim was to help General de Gaulle. M. Cournarie, who had replaced Boisson as Governor-General in 1943, made no significant changes either in the administration of Mossi country or in
* its traditional political organization. Nevertheless, the pressures for funda-
175 mental changes in European colonial territories were steadily building up
*648 throughout the colonial world. De Gaulle, with the foresight he was to show time and again, realized that the prewar colonial system was dead. He attempted to set the stage for the progress of the African peoples by calling a conference of high French colonial officials at Brazzaville in the Moyen-Congo, to open in January 1944. This conference was to effect great changes throughout French Africa and to set the stage for an irrevocable change in the position of the Mossi chiefs.

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28



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[r. 178 - A]

Visitors to the court of Mogho Naba Sanum salute him in the traditional Mossi manner.
From Louis Binger, *Du Niger au Golfe de Guinée par le pays Kong et le Mossi, 1887–1889* (Paris, 1892).

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28

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The Mogho Naba's daughter, the Napoko, impersonates her deceased father at his funeral ceremonies. Note that she wears one of his robes, his slippers, and his bonnet, and has his sword behind her.

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Mogho Naba Sagha II (1942–57), who was instrumental in reuniting the Mossi people into one territory, the Upper Volta.

[p. 178-8]

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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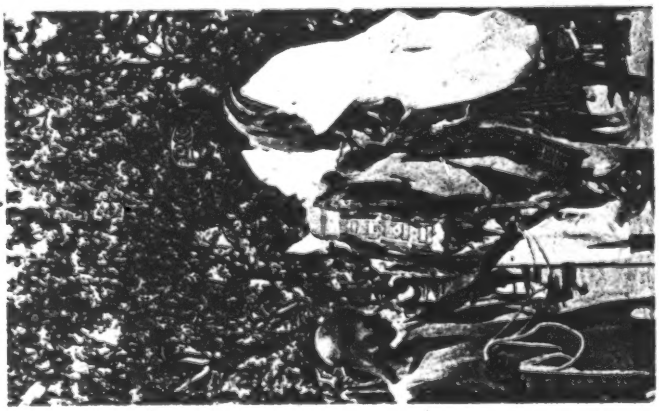

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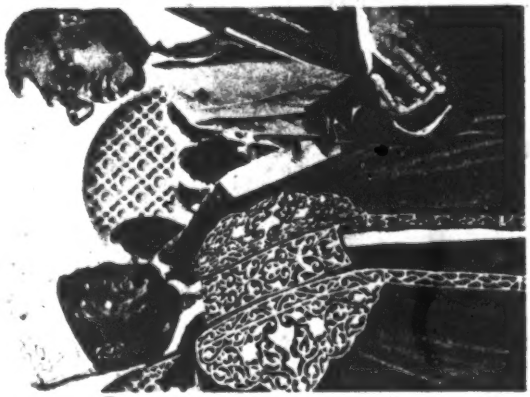

[p. 178-D]

(*Left*) Mogho Naba Kougri and Ouezzasin Coulibaly, who became Vice President of the Government Council of the Upper Volta in 1957. (*Center*) Maurice Yameogo, President of the Republic of Upper Volta. (*Right*) Mogho Naba Kougri (1957–) on his ceremonial horse at his installation.

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28

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Naghe Nabe Kougri at court. He is flanked on the right by his pages and musicians, and on the left by members of the Muslim community.

[p. 171-E]

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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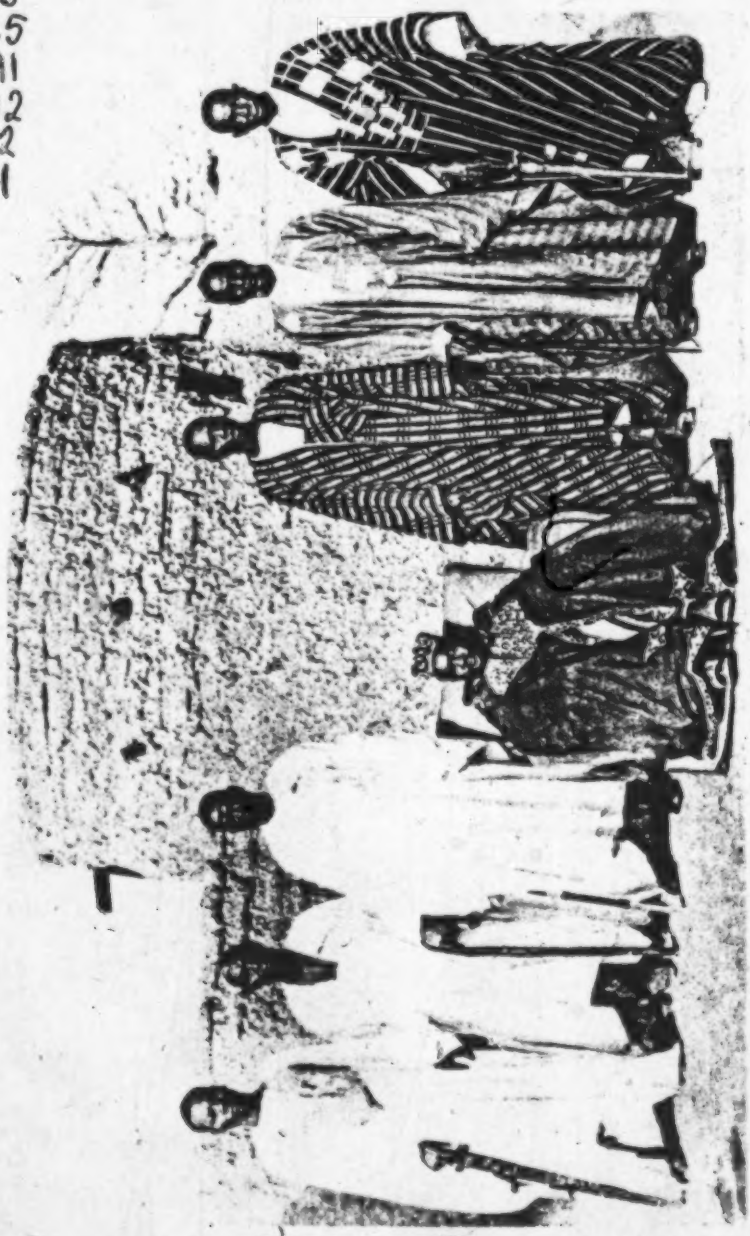

Mogho Naba Kougri (*center*) and, from left, the Kamba Naba, the Gounga Naba, the Ouidi Naba, the Larhalle Naba, the Balsoum Naba, and the Namsio Naba.

[r. 178-F]

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28

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Mogho Naba Kougri concedes to the administration, and orders his warriors to disband.

[p. 178- H]

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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[P. 179]

[post world war II period]

XI

CHIEFS AND POLITICIANS

THE MOSSI CHIEFS were neither present nor represented at the Brazzaville Conference, and thus had no voice in the discussions about the postwar political structure of the territories and their place in this structure. The delegates laid the groundwork for the governmental structure, but failed to define the role of the chiefs.[1] Thus, when the first postwar elections were held in August 1945 to select municipal officers (the first elections held in French West Africa outside of Senegal), none of the African chiefs had a role aside from their unofficial influence on their subjects.[2] The Mossi who were in Abidjan, Ivory Coast, and who were qualified to vote took part in the election, but the Mossi in Mogho could not vote because their towns had not yet been granted municipal status. 175* 666 631

The first election in which the Mossi and their chiefs voted was the one held in October 1945 to elect delegates from the Ivory Coast (Ouagadougou was then considered the Upper Ivory Coast) to the Constituent Assembly in Paris, which was to establish the Fourth French Republic. Félix Houphouët-Boigny, a Baulé chief, planter, and founder of the African Agricultural Union (Syndicat Agricole Africain), had won the municipal elections in Abidjan, and now sought the support of the Abidjan Mossi for his candidacy to the Assembly. The Mossi spokesman in Abidjan, Zebango Pohi, stated that the Mossi would vote only for a Voltaic, and that the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou (who because of his father's reputation and his own educational qualifications was now acknowledged as the spokesman for all Mossi chiefs) would decide whom the Mossi would support.[3] Houphouët-Boigny then sought the support of the Mogho Naba, but the ruler was committed to a policy of detaching Mossi country from the Ivory Coast and named one of his own traditional ministers, the Baloum Naba. Houphouët-Boigny and his supporters were reportedly "greatly surprised by the Mogho Naba's choice. They felt that the honest but illiterate Baloum Naba was unqualified for the task, and, moreover, could not hope to gain the sup- 175* 666 648* [643]

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964

FA28 Mossi FA28

[post-world war II period]

*175 port of the coastal Ivory Coast population. There was little they could do
*648 about it, however, because 'the decision of the Mogho Naba was irrevo-
666 cable.'"[6]

●[643] The election was hotly contested. The candidates based their campaigns
*175 on local issues: taxes, forced labor, the lack of public services, the status of
666 the traditional chiefs, colonialism, racial discrimination, and so on. The
665 Parti Démocratique de la Côte d'Ivoire (PDCI), led by Houphouët-Boigny, stressed the need for combating racial discrimination and exploitation by European planters. The Union pour la Défense des Interêts de la Haute-Volta (UDIHV), formed by the Mogho Naba and a group of mission-educated young men and led by the Baloum Naba, stressed the need to end forced labor, especially among the Mossi, and to place all the Mossi under one territorial government. The UDIHV realized that it had little chance of gaining votes in the south, and therefore concentrated its efforts in the north. However, no credence is to be given to the story that "Whenever [the Baloum Naba] was free from [official] supervision, he told the people, 'Vote for my friend Houphouët. . . . What would I do in Paris, with my forty wives and at my age? I can't speak a blasted word of French.'"[8] Houphouët-Boigny won the election by the surprisingly narrow margin of 12,650 to 11,620.[9]

*175 Houphouët-Boigny played a leading role in persuading the first Con-
*648 stituent Assembly to submit to the voters a number of important liberal
668 colonial reforms. These included the abolition of the Indigénat; the free-
[646] dom of meeting and association; the bestowal of French citizenship on co-
[177] lonial peoples without affecting their traditional personal status; the use of the French Penal Code in all courts dealing with criminal cases; and the abolition of forced labor.[7]

*175 There was some discussion in the Assembly of what role the traditional
631 chiefs should play in the projected political structure of Overseas France.
646 One group of delegates held that "the structure of the local Assemblies
177 should be tied intimately to the existing structure of the overseas societies. Otherwise, they would be bogus Assemblies whose decisions would serve the interests of only one class in the society, the dominant class."[8] These men felt that while many chiefs were conservatives and might incline to "neo-feudalism," the new elite of young educated Africans who aspired to replace the Europeans were, for the most part, European-trained and out of contact with the rural masses. These delegates believed that only the chiefs could provide adequate popular leadership, and that the French Union could not cohere or develop unless the chiefs had some status vis-à-vis the elite and prestige in the eyes of the people.[9]

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28
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Another group held that the chiefs need not be formally associated with the governmental apparatus. A historical precedent was cited: in the early days of colonialism, the chiefs had not become civil servants, and their status had not been impaired. Thus, when a chief collected taxes for the administration, his action was comparable to his former collection of tribute; when he recruited forced labor for the administration and the large plantations, it was similar to the traditional corvée; and when he asked people to plant certain crops, it was like asking them to cultivate his own fields. In a word, as the institution of chieftainship had adjusted to past changes in African societies, so it had the capacity to adjust in the future.[10]

Other delegates, and apparently the French administrators as well, felt that the chiefs should be associated with the administration, but as administrative assistants and not as elected representatives of the masses.[11] Since the position of the chiefs was sacred as well as secular, it was argued, political defeat might impair their position as "the fathers of their people."[12]

The constitution drafted by the first Constituent Assembly (lacking any provisions concerning the traditional chiefs) was finally submitted to the voters in May 1946. Although it won a majority of overseas votes, it was defeated by the French people. The subsequently convened second Constituent Assembly was subjected to a great deal of pressure by a group of colonialists called Etats Généraux de Colonisation, and as a result many of the provisions of the first constitution, among them the single-college provision and various rights of citizenship, were not included in the second. The revised constitution was accepted by the French voters in October 1946.[13] By this time, however, many of the African delegates had become so disillusioned with the French parliamentarians in the National Assembly that they decided to fend for themselves. They met in Bamako in the French Sudan and formed an inter-territorial grouping called the Rassemblement Démocratique Africain (RDA), led by Houphouët-Boigny. Houphouët-Boigny was strongly anti-imperialist, and the party received the active support of the French Communists. It adopted a violently anti-colonial platform, pledging to rally the peoples of Africa to a world-wide struggle against colonial imperialism, and to try to bring all of the emerging political parties in French Africa under its banner in order to achieve the "emancipation of the African masses."[14]

The Mogho Naba and the other Mossi chiefs, noting the anti-colonial posture of the RDA and the hostile reaction of the colonial regime to this group, attempted to take advantage of the situation by advocating the reintegration of the Upper Volta under their more conservative auspices. The Mogho Naba had already taken advantage of the Bastille Day celebration

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28
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*175 *648 642 ●643 631 [668] in 1946 to visit and consult with the Yatenga Naba about Mossi reunification, thus ending a centuries-old tradition whereby the two rulers could not meet for fear of death inflicted by the ancestors. Their project was now received with greater interest by the local Europeans, both *colons* and administrators, who were alarmed by Houphouët-Boigny's radicalism and bent on preventing the spread of virulent anti-colonialism among the well-disciplined Voltaic populations.

*175 642 668 665 Shortly after the constitution was approved, the administration announced that elections would be held on December 15 for the Second College of the Ivory Coast's General Council or Territorial Assembly (to be composed of Africans and persons without full French citizenship) and for the other organs of the French Union. Once again Houphouët-Boigny and the RDA, having gained the support of the PDCI and the Parti Progressiste de la Côte d'Ivoire (PPCI), tried to obtain the backing of the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou and the Mossi-supported UDIHV (shortly to become the Union Voltaïque).[15] Again the Mogho Naba refused. Gabriel D'Arboussier, one of Houphouët-Boigny's lieutenants and an important official of the RDA, later charged that the ruler had been influenced by the Minister of Overseas France, Coste-Floret, who told him that the RDA "was no more democratic than it was African, that it was not an Assembly, and that Africans should rally to an institution that was truly African."[16] In any event, the Mogho Naba and the UDIHV decided to oppose the RDA. They emphasized the common interests of the Upper Volta and championed Voltaic candidates, Mossi and non-Mossi alike.

*175 666 631 The electoral law of the territories promulgated in October 1946 did not specifically discriminate against the chiefs, but it was heavily weighted in favor of the educated and urban elite. The electorate was confined to civil servants; soldiers and veterans of the armed forces; chiefs; permanent employees of commercial, industrial, craft, or agricultural establishments; members and former members, for at least two years, of cooperatives, trade unions, and committees of provident societies; holders of official decorations; members of prewar courts and councils including the Chambers of Commerce, Agriculture, and Industry, and agricultural unions; Christian priests and ministers; owners of registered real property; holders of driving or shooting licenses; and persons literate in French or Arabic. Candidates for election to the Territorial Assemblies had to be at least twenty-three years of age, to be registered on the electoral list as residents of the territory, to have a good knowledge of French, and to post a bond of 5,000 CFA (Colonies Françaises d'Afrique) francs, which was forfeited if the candidate received less than 5 per cent of the votes in his election district. Many chiefs were eligible to vote, but, because their fathers had opposed their be-

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28
[post-world war II period]

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ing educated at mission-sponsored schools, few were qualified to run for office.[17]

More serious for the position of the Mossi chiefs, perhaps, was the fact that many of them either were ill informed about the election or refused to take it seriously. Balima states that a surprisingly large number of Mossi chiefs "could not understand very well the importance of this novelty—which is understandable; had no interest in the formalities, which they nevertheless carried out; and somewhat haphazardly designated as candidates African civil servants to whom they were not even tied by close bonds of friendship."[18] Of course, another reason for this choice of "African civil servants" was that they were among the only persons with the training and education required for candidacy. Nevertheless, the candidates included a few educated members of chiefly families—persons who, not being in the main line of descent or being otherwise ineligible for office in the traditional system, had been "given" to the Europeans to be educated.

The partisans of the Mossi chiefs were victorious in the northern part of the Ivory Coast in an election that saw the emergence of such Voltaic politicians of later fame as Blaise Benon, François Bouda, Zindà Kaboré, Christophe Kalenzaga, Tindougou Ouédraogo, Zebango Pohi, and Maurice Yaméogo. However, the Second College was dominated by Houphouët-Boigny and his RDA colleagues. Despite the Mogho Naba's opposition, RDA delegates set out to ameliorate conditions in the Volta region. For example, the RDA secured the passage of bills to raise the Mogho Naba's salary from 60,000 francs a year, a trifling sum in view of his official and private expenses, to about 500,000 francs a year. Similarly, it ensured that Mossi and other Voltaic students would receive a fair share of the scholarships which France had assigned to colonial students.[19] 175* 643 668 [465]

These gestures did not dampen the ardor of the Mossi chiefs for the reintegration of the Upper Volta. In April 1947, when French President Auriol, touring the territories to observe the operation of the new political institutions, visited the Upper Volta, the Yatenga Naba, the Tenkodogo Naba, and the head ruler of Fada-N'Gourma met the presidential party at Ouagadougou and pressed their claim for separate territorial status. The French reportedly welcomed this petition because it gave them an opportunity to clip the wings of Houphouët-Boigny, as well as to ensure the aid of the chiefs in procuring adequate manpower for a projected extension of the Abidjan–Bobo-Dioulasso railroad to Ouagadougou. The problem was to convince the National Assembly in Paris that the reunification of the Upper Volta was in the best interests of all concerned. 175* 648* 642 [631]

The French government set up a Parliamentary Commission and sent its chairman, Jean Jacques Duglas, to Ouagadougou and other Voltaic re-

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28
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*175 648 642 gions to ascertain whether the people desired reunification. Duglas reported his findings to the National Assembly:

> You know as well as I do that the Mossi are proud of their past. Thanks to a political and social organization without peer in West Africa, they have known peace since the Middle Ages, in an Africa ravaged by war and depopulated by the slave trade. . . . This ancient land also desires prosperity and modernization. To achieve this its voice must be heard, not only in the National Assembly but particularly in the Grand Council [the highest consultative body] of French West Africa. The Upper Volta must have its own General Council.[20]

*175 *648 The law authorizing the reconstitution of the Upper Volta as a separate territory was promulgated on September 4, 1947. The non-Mossi populations of the projected territory feared Mossi domination and voiced their opposition in the Assembly, but in the end an accord was reached. The Mossi chiefs next petitioned the French government to pay for the rebuilding and refurbishing of Ouagadougou. François Bouda, one of the few traditional Mossi nakomce to become an elected representative of the Mossi, reminded the members of the Council of the French Union of what had occurred in 1919. He stated that his own father had recruited thousands of men to make bricks for "Bancoville" (an epithet for Ouagadougou; most of its buildings were of sun-dried bricks called *banco*) because Governor Hesling "never considered the possibility of purchasing cement, which was [464] not even expensive. Forced labor was easy to recruit, and no one thought that the day would come when it would be gone."[21] Bouda said that the Government should now help the new territory to modernize the capital.

D'Arboussier, an RDA delegate in the Assembly, declared that he would support the bill, if only because in the past the French government had attempted "to make a crack race horse out of an ordinary horse, and in so doing had made it a decrepit mare."[22] Funds for rebuilding Ouagadougou were finally voted, and the "Bancoville" of French West Africa began to take on a new look with wide avenues, large administrative buildings, official residences, and even a new palace for the Mogho Naba.

*175 With the reconstitution of the Upper Volta, the Mogho Naba and his ● 643 chiefs attained their highest prestige since the conquest. The chiefs even 631 had strong influence over the Mossi representatives to the organs of the 554 French Union, because of the decisive support they had granted them in *648 the elections. But this increase in prestige was to be short-lived. The chiefs were no longer the sole representatives of their people, and the Mossi were no longer isolated from events in other parts of the Upper Volta, or for that

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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matter from events in French West Africa and the rest of Overseas France. 643 631
All projects undertaken in the Upper Volta became of interest to the other 554
units of the French Union because the funds to support them had to be 648*
voted on by representatives of the whole, including not only local Mossi and non-Mossi, but also Africans in other territories, French colonial populations outside Africa, and the metropolitan French.

The conditions that were to have the greatest effect on the position of 175*
Mossi chiefs were created in January 1949, when elections were held to 631
choose the Upper Volta's first General Council. The major parties involved 666
in the election were the Mossi-dominated Union Voltaïque; the Entente 665
Voltaïque, a local section of the RDA representing the interests of such [646]
non-Mossi populations as the Lobi, Fulani, Bobo, Senufo, and Gurunsi; and a group of smaller ethnic parties such as the Union Lobie and the Indépendants. The campaign reflected all the tensions and conflicts prevalent among the administration, the RDA, the non-Mossi parties, and the Union Voltaïque. Both the Union Lobie and the Indépendants spoke out against what they feared to be Mossi domination, and accused the Mossi chiefs of "neo-feudalism." The Union Voltaïque accused the RDA of radicalism, of associating with communists, and of hostility to the chiefs. It cited as evidence the deposal of several Agni and Senufo chiefs in the Ivory Coast by partisans of the RDA. The RDA, in turn, charged the Union Voltaïque with supporting reactionary, feudal-minded chiefs, and thus with opposing the true interests of the Mossi and other Voltaic peoples. Furthermore, it accused Masson (Governor Mouragues's executive officer) of encouraging the cercle commanders to fight against the RDA, and of jailing about 300 RDA members at Bobo-Dioulasso.[22]

As expected, the Union Voltaïque won most of the seats in the more populous Mossi section of the Upper Volta, and thus was able to dominate the political institutions created by the administration. Nevertheless, the election produced deep political scars in the Upper Volta, and lasting enmity between the RDA and the Mossi chiefs.

During the years that followed the reunification of the Upper Volta, the 175*
Mossi chiefs as such were not accorded any specific status by the administra- 648*
tion. Beginning in 1953, bills designed to regularize the status of the chiefs 631
were submitted by Mossi delegates to the Assembly of the French Union [646]
and to various other organs of the French Union, but to no effect. The Mossi chiefs meanwhile sought to define their own position. In 1952, under 175*
the leadership of the Mogho Naba, they formed an organization called the 631
Union of the Traditional Chiefs of the Upper Volta. Article IV of the stat- 647
utes which they filed with the territorial administration reads as follows: [643]

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28
[post-world war II period]

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ity in local matters, even though the Indigénat had been abolished. They adjudicated minor offenses committed in their territories or referred to them on appeal by the districts and villages. They attempted to settle family quarrels and commercial cases, and ordered that restitution be made in cases of theft. However, they had to send any difficult case or major crime up the hierarchy until it reached the officials authorized to deal with it.

[648]*
[464]

The French administrators also continued to act as intermediaries between the large commercial enterprises in Ouagadougou who wished to recruit men for labor or to buy local produce and enterprises in the larger Mossi towns. Thus, if a private firm in Ouagadougou wanted men to work on the roads, it asked the *chef de poste* (administrator) of a region to tell the district chiefs that its representatives would come to recruit men on a certain date. If a large business was planning to canvass a certain area in order to buy shea nuts, it asked the local administrators to notify the chiefs. No one was ever quite certain whether these activities were legal, but no one questioned them. The *chefs de poste* might simply have been giving the people information that they could not have obtained by any other means.

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The Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou, like the supreme chiefs of the other Mossi regions, continued to perform both the administrative role assigned to him by the colonial government and his traditional politico-ceremonial role. He was partly responsible, through his active cooperation with the administration, for the rapidity with which the Upper Volta became a functioning entity. For example, in his anxiety to make his capital worthy of being the territory's administrative center, he gave his full support to the extension of the Abidjan–Bobo-Dioulasso railroad to Ouagadougou. But he always succeeded in giving the impression (to foreigners at least) of detachment and dissociation from the French administration. His behavior was quite different when he functioned as Mogho Naba of the Ouagadougou Mossi. The following is a brief description of a visit he made to one of the districts:

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> The Mogho Naba arrived unexpectedly at the district chief's headquarters, where no preparations had been made for his visit. It appears that he was on a tour of his domains to consult with the local chiefs about the forthcoming elections, and had simply dropped in to visit the district chief. However, as soon as his presence became known around the district, important village chiefs and the heads of lineages all put on their robes and appeared to pay homage to him. Meanwhile, he was consulting with his host. But as soon as the conversation was over he came out into the compound, where he was saluted by the chief's Bendere, who praised the royal ancestors by reciting

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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175 their genealogies and traditions. The Mogho Naba was pleased by the reci-
● 643 tation and thanked the drummer.

634 Later that day, the Mogho Naba presented himself in the courtyard of the district chief's compound to be saluted by the village chiefs and by the
574 heads of lineages. They came to him in the traditional way, rubbing their
182 palms and bending their foreheads to the ground. He addressed them, and in response they snapped their fingers in the customary manner. Then, one by one, the village chiefs and the lineage elders came to their monarch and gave him presents of money which ranged from 50 to 200 francs. The Mogho Naba paid little attention to the sums given, being more interested in this act of homage and fealty. However, he listened carefully as each donor announced his name and rank within the official hierarchy or village. He later thanked them collectively and departed. This ceremony, while not very elaborate, differed little in detail from those characteristic of the traditional Mossi's relationship to their Mogho Naba. The new element here was that the monarch was traveling around his domain, establishing a close relationship with his chiefs and subjects, whose support he needed for his modern political alliances.[28]

*175
643 The Mogho Naba continued to hold the morning ceremony at court,
796 even though it was rapidly losing its traditional function and becoming of
182 major interest only to visitors. He also continued to hold those ceremonies associated with individual appointments to the nam and with traditional
[692] sacrifices. Unknown to many was the fact that traditional authorities at court still judged legal cases which many Mossi refused to take to the Europeans.

*175 In contrast to the Mogho Naba, the traditional provincial ministers now
645 lost most of the power they had held in the pre-conquest period, and all the
182 duties they had acquired in the immediate post-conquest era. As we have seen, one minister, the Baloum Naba, had entered politics at the suggestion of the Mogho Naba, but even he was now relegated to the entourage that accompanied the Mogho Naba and the European administrators on visits to the ministers' former provinces. The increased number of European administrators had made these ministers superfluous.

*178 The district chiefs retained some prestige after the war. They could still
175 judge legal cases, with the understanding that the litigants were free to go
554 to the Europeans if they so desired and had to be sent there in serious cases.
634 Their major problem was that a more efficient administration was taking
[692] a greater interest in district affairs. For the first time since the conquest, officials were visiting some of the more remote villages. No longer were they said to "act as locusts"—that is, to appear periodically to garner supplies and men from the districts and then disappear until the next onslaught. Instead, they appeared regularly to collect taxes and to take censuses, and

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964

FA28 Mossi FA28

[post-world War II period]

As the politicians grew skillful at the game of metropolitan politics, their power increasingly eclipsed that of their chiefly benefactors 175* and of local French administrators. For example: 631 554

> A local chef de poste summoned the district chiefs to bring their potential 665 draftees for the war in Algeria early in the morning on a specific date to be 634 examined by medical officers. Those chiefs who looked upon any summons with a trepidation born of their past experience with prewar administrators, arrived at the headquarters as early as 5:30 A.M. on the morning in question, bringing their young men with them. Many of these chiefs, whose only [489] means of transportation was their slow-moving ceremonial horse, spent the [492] night en route to be there at dawn. More sophisticated chiefs coming from similar distances left on the same morning and arrived at about 8:00 A.M., the hour when the administrator himself was first seen stirring in his residence. One chief, a war veteran, rode up on his bicycle at about 8:45 A.M. [493] in a most unchiefly manner and became the butt of jokes from the other waiting chiefs. Another district chief, who was an elected representative, did not arrive until about 9:30 A.M., and he was greeted on arrival by the administrator. This man had only about half a mile to travel, and he did so in his car. His colleagues greeted him with a mixture of jokes, feigned awe, and surprise, and some of them addressed him as "Mogho Naba" and "Governor."[28]

Another example of the shift in the balance of power was the relationship that developed between Joseph Conombo and the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou. The Mogho Naba had nominated and supported Conombo as a candidate for deputy to the National Assembly. He was elected, and later became Secretary of the Interior in the Mendès-France Government of 1954. He thus had access to power undreamed of by the Mogho Naba. Being a Moaga as well as a good politician, he never flaunted his authority before his traditional chief; nor did the Mogho Naba try to exercise his traditional powers over him. But their behavior toward each other clearly demonstrated that they were both aware of the shift in power, even though they were both too wise and too polite to make an issue of it. 175* 643 554 648* 646

Other political forces also jeopardized the position of the chiefs. For example, as head of the Union Voltaïque, Conombo had an honored position within a Paris-based African parliamentary group called the Indépendants d'Outre-Mer (IOM). He would have held an even more important position within this group if he had had wider support among the non-Mossi in the Upper Volta. But his power was limited by the presence and competition of the MDV, which, while Mossi-supported, was anti-chief; the Mouvement Populaire de la Révolution Africaine (MPA), an anti-Mossi and anti-RDA party formed in 1954 by Nazi Boni of the Bobo ethnic group and supported by some officials in the administration; and the Parti Démocratique Voltaïque (PDV), a local branch of a now less radical RDA 175* 646 648* 665 554

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Mossi chiefs of being a modernist, was elected as the first Vice-President of the new government. Not only was the Mogho Naba deprived of the opportunity to become the African head of the Upper Volta, but such stalwart supporters of the chiefs as Conombo and Bouda were left out of the government. Thus, after twelve years of opposition to Houphouët-Boigny, Mogho Naba Sagha and his chiefs were finally defeated. Their defeat was made even more ignominious by the elevation of a non-Mossi commoner to a position of dominance over the Mossi chiefs.[37]

Having lost out in the Upper Volta, the Mossi chiefs had no spokesman when the new Vice-Presidents of the Government Councils of the French West African territories and the European Presidents of these territories met at Dakar to discuss the problems of the truncated French West Africa Federation. No one mentioned the problem of the position of the traditional chiefs. As far as the politicians were concerned, the issue of the chief on the inter-territorial level was dead. It had relevance only in those territories where the chiefs retained some influence.

In an effort to consolidate their hold on the Upper Volta, the PDV-RDA members in the PDU met in September 1957 and sought to convert the PDU into a territorial subsection of the RDA. This move was resisted by the supporters of the chiefs within the PDU, especially by Conombo, who as leader of the PSEMA, an important faction within the PDU, had been completely eclipsed by Coulibaly and the PDV. Conombo resigned from the PDU and announced his intention to rebuild the PSEMA with the support of the Mossi chiefs. On November 12, however, before his plans could be put into action, Mogho Naba Sagha II died in Ouagadougou and political activities in the Upper Volta came to a standstill. A period of national mourning was proclaimed, and politicians from all parties gathered to pay their last respects and to eulogize the monarch.

Sagha's death, like that of all Mossi princes, was ascribed to foul means, although it was clear that he had succumbed to uremia. The people reacted to the interregnum by looting, and the shopkeepers in Ouagadougou and surrounding areas were compelled to close their establishments. "The people of Ouagadougou ran to Saba, but the merchants there were quite diligent, and needed no police force to protect them."[38] It was reported that those wives of the deceased ruler who were not at the palace at the time of his death took off the brass anklets denoting their royal status and became free women. If this actually happened, it was an unprecedented occurrence.

When the Mossi traditional electoral college convened to choose a new Mogho Naba, it reportedly considered the candidacy of both Moussa Con-

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*175 ●643 661 go, Sagha's eldest son, and Etienne Congo, Sagha's brother. Etienne Congo allegedly had the support of some politicians, but he was rejected in favor of Moussa. The new ruler was accepted by the Government Council as the "supreme chief of the Mossi" and was installed in the traditional manner. He indicated in his acceptance speech that he was "like a rock [*kougri*] that nothing can move," and became known as Mogho Naba Kougri. A few days after his installation, he appeared in full regalia before the members of the Territorial Assembly to deliver what was probably the most *175 643 difficult inauguration speech ever composed by a Mogho Naba. This speech will be quoted in full, because it may well be a eulogy for the Mossi chief:

539 Over and above the signs of respect shown to the mortal remains of my father, and later the expressions of keen satisfaction on the people's part for the choice of which I have been the object—over and above all this, I see the great interest that the governmental and administrative authorities attach to the role which my ancestors have always fulfilled, and which I am called upon to fulfill anew. Over and above all of these external manifestations, I see the unfailing love of all the Mossi for the throne I occupy and for the tradition I represent along with my confreres. Because the importance of my position, as well as the honor that befalls me, surpasses the meager reality and the possibilities of one man, it is with conviction, sincerity, and faith that I present myself to all of you to tell you that while I accept with fortitude these responsibilities and these honors for the love of my people, I count upon the cooperation and friendship of all, the faithfulness, devotion, and courage of all the Mossi, to acquit myself worthily and to preside not in a passive but in an active and decisive way over the social and economic evolution of our country.

Although I represent tradition and custom in this country; although I must ensure the survival of venerable customs, concerning which we shall be intransigent; I am aware, nevertheless, that there are customs which adapt themselves with difficulty to the exigencies of the modern times in which we live.

*175 643 631 539 This is why, in addressing myself to all the customary chiefs, and especially to my closest associates, I shall say that we have no right to remain passive observers of the reconstruction of our country and of the multiple transformations of the society over whose destiny we have always presided. We must move along with the tide, but in order not to be swept along at a headlong pace and risk failure before reaching our goal, we must stand in the vanguard of the race and lead it at a vigorous and satisfying pace, but one which does not stifle the weak, for they too have a right to life, to progress, to well-being, and to our protection.

As recently as ten years ago, it was easy to be a chief, just as it was easy to be a cercle commander. It was enough to give orders for everything to run smoothly. But today, the chief must add to his title a real merit, a knowledge of men, a true devotion, an integrity, and, above all, a commitment to the welfare of the people under his jurisdiction. It is under these conditions alone

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that the customary chiefs will preserve and extend their influence, and it is our task to extend this influence. For, if the new institutions are meant for the progress and welfare of the Africans, then they must also be meant for that of the chieftainship.

Our intention, then, is not to leave the management of the country to the elected representatives alone, but to remain in close collaboration with them; for, if the elected representatives of yesterday have rights, the representatives of several centuries' standing retain theirs also.

Intent as I mean to be on curbing all the abuses for which the people have customarily blamed the chiefs, I will not cease to remind the Chief of the Territory, the members of the Government Council, and the elected representatives at all levels, that they themselves must remain, before God and man, the ones truly responsible for these abuses. For, while the lot of the civil servant has improved considerably, and that of the elected representative is at the summit of the pyramid, that of the chief has remained quite modest and quite comparable to that of the still miserable peasant—riches for the others, poverty for himself.

Your Excellency the Governor, Honorable Ministers, and Parliamentarians, I am sure that you understand me. I am equally sure that you think of the meager outlook for the territory, but it is necessary that everyone live well during the period of the seven fat cows, and meagerly during that of the seven lean cows. The cooperation of the chieftainship will be granted to you increasingly for the economic and social betterment of our territory. It devolves upon you, as agents of superior authority, to rid the chiefs of the arbitrary vexations to which no civil servant is subjected any longer, and to send them forth, not as mercenaries but as true captains, into the battle which we all have joined against the human misery that weighs so heavily upon our people.

We are all aware of the magnitude of the struggle, and the cooperation of the chiefs, who influence the entire Voltaic population, may be needed to crown it with success.

Moreover, your Excellency the Governor, the chieftainship has always served well—perhaps has served France, or at least its representatives, too well, at the expense of its own interests.

But I will deliberately forget the errors of the past. I shall remember only the true fidelity which my fathers and their associates have always displayed toward France. I shall look only for the gratitude of the Government of the French Republic on their behalf, and for the considerable role they played in transforming our country. I shall think only of that Franco-African friendship which under normal circumstances will lead us to success, happiness, and peace. I know that the times are difficult; I know that men today have numerous reasons for quarrels. I know that vast popular or so-called popular movements sometimes topple all that other men have built with much patience and wisdom. But despite all of these things, it is with words of concord and of peace that I wish to close, hoping that throughout our political battles we shall keep in mind the need for peace, because man is only happy insofar as he enjoys social peace, as well as peace of the heart.[30]

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175 For all its occasional eloquence, the new Mogho Naba's speech was
643 clearly self-serving; moreover, the French officials to whom it was addressed
[648] were withdrawing from the territory, and the young Mossi elite had other ideas about the distribution of power. It is no wonder, then, that most of the politicians listened to his speech in respectful silence and then "calmly went ahead with their tasks," confident, it seems, in their new status as the elected representatives of the people.[40]

175 The new Mogho Naba was faced with a political situation in which
643 he could play only a limited role. His strength now lay exclusively among
668 the more conservative elements of the newly enfranchised rural masses.
578 The political representative of this group was Conombo, who in November 1957 went ahead with his plans to rebuild the PSEMA. In December Conombo saw a chance to embarrass and perhaps defeat the Coulibaly
[646] Government when the Territorial Assembly decided to vote on the budget of the Upper Volta; he and his followers withheld their vote of confidence in the Government and tried to force it to resign. But the conditions under which the members of the Territorial Assembly could force a government to resign were not clearly defined by the loi-cadre. The various parliamentary groups appealed in vain to Paris and to Houphouët-Boigny to resolve the problem. Coulibaly broke the impasse by forming a new coalition and giving Maurice Yaméogo, an Indépendant candidate who had been a member of the RDA and later of the MDV but had switched back to the RDA, the important portfolio of Minister of the Interior. Finally, the Assembly, which had been adjourned, reconvened in April 1958 and confirmed Coulibaly in power. In a speech to the Assembly, Coulibaly declared: "It is my imperative task to tell you that each one of you is faced today with a decisive choice. You must choose either a pooling of efforts and good will in the interests of the country, or the pursuit of personal quarrels and partisan rivalries that will undermine the public welfare."[41]

175 The Mogho Naba and his political allies suffered yet another defeat
643 with the Assembly's approval of the Coulibaly Government. However,
648 Kougri had other strings to his bow. In June 1958, when de Gaulle re-
578 turned to power, Kougri sought to gain the General's favor, and to raise his own status, by pledging his support and that of the Mossi chiefs. This astute political move infuriated many Voltaics, Mossi and non-Mossi, politicians and non-politicians. Amadou Tamboura, a member of the MDV, replied to the Mogho Naba in the newspaper *Paris-Dakar*. Under the headline, "The Message of the Mogho Naba to General de Gaulle Commits Only Himself," he wrote:

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It will be well if the Mogho Naba understands that he owns but the vestige of a past whose hour has irrevocably tolled, and that his message to the President of the Council [de Gaulle] commits no one in the Upper Volta but himself, a mere citizen like the others.

I deplore the discrimination which the message of the Mogho Naba implicitly contains. I should like to say to the Mogho Naba that in the Upper Volta there are no Mossi, Fulani, or Bobo people, but only Black people struggling for their liberty. No Mossi or any other Voltaic would agree to the Mogho Naba's expression of fidelity to France in his name. If this must be done, then the Territorial Assembly and the Government Council alone are qualified to do so.[42]

Despite these attacks and numerous suggestions in the press that the Mogho Naba and the Mossi chiefs were developing a "Touré complex" (i.e., the fear of suffering the same fate as the Fulani chiefs of Fouta Djallon, who had been deposed by Sékou Touré, Vice-President of the Guinea Government Council), the Mossi ruler actively supported acceptance of the constitution of the Fifth French Republic, which promised the colonies full internal self-government within the "French Community." Since the constitution was adopted by the Upper Volta population by an overwhelming favorable vote of 99.1 per cent, no one could estimate how effective the Mogho Naba's support had been.[43] [177] [642]

Coulibaly died just before the referendum, and was replaced on an interim basis by Yaméogo. The parliamentarians accordingly had to choose a new leader, now to be President of the Government Council, as well as to draw up a constitution for the new republic and determine whether it would join any of the regional federations then being considered by several territories. The Territorial Assembly was scheduled to meet in extraordinary session on October 17, 1958, to select a successor to Coulibaly. The Mogho Naba, anticipating dissension and perhaps once again seeking the limelight, sent a message to the representatives on October 15, urging "a government of union and public safety." But the politicians resented what they regarded as his interference in matters that did not concern him; few, if any, took his message seriously, and none replied. [643] [578]

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The Mogho Naba therefore decided to force the issue. He summoned his traditional ministers to a conference, and, despite the objections of the Baloum Naba, obtained their permission to order his Tansoba to muster his warriors and lay siege to the Territorial Assembly. Early in the morning of October 17, about 3,000 Mossi warriors, armed with bows and arrows, swords, spears, and ancient flint guns, converged on the Assembly. Later that morning, the Mogho Naba himself, accompanied by his Tansoba,

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arrived on the scene, dressed in his dark-brown cotton war cloak and his war bonnet, the symbol of his power. The demonstration lasted until 11 A.M., when the French Army undertook to scatter the warriors. Finally, the Ouidi Naba ordered the warriors to return to the palace. Only then did Max Berthet, the High Commissioner, open the Assembly session with an expression of regret for the "unacceptable and incomprehensible" demonstrations.[44]

The Assembly adjourned that afternoon and did not meet again until October 20. In the interim, the parliamentarians took measures to deal with this challenge to their power. On October 18, the Government Council issued a communiqué "stigmatizing Friday's demonstration." The Council regretted that the demonstration had prevented a democratically elected body from sitting, but affirmed that "order and public security, indispensable to everyday life, will be maintained."[45] On the following day a longer communiqué was issued, declaring that a truce had been signed by the authorized representatives of the Union Démocratique (Voltaic section of the RDA) and the Mouvement de Regroupement Africain (Voltaic section of the PRA) after a three-day meeting in Ouagadougou. According to the communiqué, the two groups had agreed that "the unity of the democratic forces of the country" was "the decisive question of the hour."

The Territorial Assembly met in Plenary Session on October 20, and on the basis of the political truce, 68 representatives unanimously elected Maurice Yaméogo as President of the Government Council. The politicians further showed their disdain for the Mogho Naba by adopting the following motion:

> The Territorial Assembly, in the unanimous assurance that it alone has the mandate of the Voltaic people to legislate in their name, solemnly declares that, in the face of all opposition, it will work to give the Voltaic State democratic institutions conforming to the aspirations of the population, within the framework of the constitution which they approved by such a strong majority on September 28. Furthermore, it is insistent in its demands that the authorities responsible for public order do everything in their power to determine the persons responsible for the demonstration and to see what should be done to avoid a recurrence of such an event.[46]

The Mogho Naba soon found to his chagrin that even some of his own vassal chiefs had turned against him. They had been persuaded by the politicians that the French Government would never allow the Mogho Naba to take over the country, and furthermore that he had overstepped his bounds and had thereby endangered further the institution of the chieftainship. The Bureau of the Syndicate of the Traditional Chiefs of

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the Upper Volta met, discussed "the affair of October 17," and issued a statement dissociating itself from the Mogho Naba's action, reaffirming its desire to collaborate with the established authority, and requesting a clarification of the status of chiefs in the new order. The Government Council of the Upper Volta welcomed this statement, and hastened to reassure the chiefs that their status was not in danger: "It is not a question of damaging the traditional chiefs as a group, but rather of stigmatizing vigorously an act emanating from a superior chief like Mogho Naba Kougri, the consequences of which, unforeseen as they were, could have placed all the Mossi chiefs in a regrettable and irreparable position."[47] 175* 643 669 578

The Mogho Naba had obviously reached a political impasse, and he next turned his attention to creating a new image of the chieftainship. To this end, he married a young Mossi woman in accordance with the civil statutes of the state, thus becoming the first Mogho Naba and the first important Mossi chief to do so. A spokesman at the wedding placed this act in its proper perspective with the following words: 643 175* 178

> I should now like to underscore the fact that this date, November 22 [1958], will be inscribed officially in the annals of the Upper Volta. For the first time in the history of our country, an Emperor, the person who best symbolizes tradition, has upset ancestral habits in the interest of progress. For the first time a woman will be given consideration in a royal court where she will be able to feel at her ease. For the first time, the spouse of a traditional chief will have her place near her husband as an equal and steady companion.[48] [644]

The politicians were apparently prepared to recognize the eminence of the chiefs as long as they did not attempt to intervene in the affairs of the state, and a number of them attended the Mogho Naba's wedding. Among those present were the Presidents of both the Government Council and the Territorial Assembly, parliamentarians from various parties, and the mayors of Bobo-Dioulasso and Ouagadougou. On December 10, 1958, the Territorial Assembly confirmed Yaméogo as President of the Government Council. The Assembly also approved his slate of ministers, among them Bouda, the Mossi chief who had once been a strong supporter of the traditional political hierarchy but who now belonged to the UDV-RDA. Then, on December 11, the Assembly decided to adopt the draft of a proposed constitution for the Upper Volta. Articles 2 and 3 of Paragraph I of this constitution state explicitly: 175* 631 642 [646]

> The Republic of the Upper Volta is one and indivisible, secular, democratic, and social. Its principle is that the government is *of the people, by the people, and for the people. . . .*
>
> *Sovereignty belongs to the people. No section of the population, and no individual, may usurp it.* [Italics mine.][49]

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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ernment of Charles de Gaulle, Deveze declares (p. 74): "Moreover, the Mogho Naba, himself king of the Mossi of Ouagadougou, one of the most powerful dynasties of French Africa, who was placed under surveillance by order of Boisson [the local Vichyite commander] and separated from his subjects, committed suicide after calling his son and solemnly commanding him not to take power 'until the true French should return.'" If this is true, the heir to the throne either could not or would not follow his father's advice. 000 [648]

33. Today a girl is usually chosen as Kourita, because it is easier to banish a woman than a man from the capital. Nevertheless, when Mogho Naba Kom II died in 1942, the young girl chosen to be Kourita was hidden by her mother, and as a result the funeral and the investiture of the new ruler were delayed.

34. See Cheron, "La Cour du Boussouma Naba" (pp. 304–12), for a description of the court of the Boussouma Naba, an autonomous provincial ruler.

35. Dim Delobson (p. 8) claims that the Mogho Naba had the right to ratify the nomination of all Dimdamba, and that it was he who gave them their insignia of office. [643]

36. Cheron, "Contribution," p. 651. He also reports (p. 654): "The Boulsa Naba was elected by a special college. In principle, the choice of this college always fell on one of the sons of the deceased, generally the eldest."

37. *Ibid.*, p. 672.

38. Dim Delobson (p. 143) claims that the person who was asked to give a sacrificial animal to the Baloum Naba was thus assured of the nomination. But the Nobere chief with whom I discussed this matter insisted that he and all the other claimants had given sacrificial animals, and that he did not know he had been chosen until he was notified by the Ouidi Naba.

39. Despite a legend which says that a young woman once ruled the Doulougou district as regent for her young son, the choice of district chief was always a man old enough to rule. If a chief's heir was still a boy, the nam was given to another relative and no provision was made for it to return either to the boy or to his descendants. Unless the boy were fortunate, neither he nor his line ever received the nam again.

40. The ingredients used by the Baloum Naba in preparing the namtibo are kept secret. Most people believe that he uses some elements of the royal amulets, blood, and other liquids. It is not known whether the blood used in ancient times was that of a slave or merely of an animal. Most of the district chiefs with whom I discussed this point reacted with horror to the implication of cannibalism, and insisted that the blood was from animals sacrificed the previous day. However, commoners believe that human blood was used.

41. A fact of great importance in understanding Mossi expansion is that the Kouritadamba of the Nobere district chiefs were banished to the Gurunsi region of Gouroungo on the other side of the Red Volta River. The last Kourita from Nobere is now living in that area, where he rules over a Mossi population drawn from Nobere district and Manga district.

42. Cf. Mangin, p. 19.

CHAPTER FOUR

1. Cf. Socquet, p. 62.
2. Barth, III, 643, 648; Binger, II, 479.
3. Crozat, p. 4822.
4. Delafosse, II, 128–29.
5. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Yatenga*, p. 90.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 93, 100.
7. Crozat, p. 4849.
8. Delafosse, II, 29.
9. Mangin, pp. 12 ff.
10. Cheron, "Contribution," pp. 673–74.
11. *Ibid.*, pp. 654–55, 657–58.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 680.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 670.
14. *Ibid.*, pp. 685–86.

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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[p.237]

CHAPTER 9

Trade and Markets Among the Mossi People

BY ELLIOTT P. SKINNER

The Mossi represent the dominant population of the Voltaic Re- 105 [131]
public, numbering about 1,600,000 out of some 3,200,000 inhabitants. [161]
They represent the unique example of a group which has preserved its [128]
ethnic identity and political autonomy through all the vicissitudes [648]
of Sudanic history until it was conquered by the French in 1896. Tra- [173]
dition records that the people who became the Mossi left the Dagomba
region in present-day Ghana during the eleventh century and moved
into the bend of the Niger River, carving out three large kingdoms
and smaller principalities in the process. At the head of these still [642]
extant kingdoms are rulers *(Moro Nabas)* who formerly held feudal- [643] [631]
like control over the provinces, districts and villages which comprise
their domains. The villages, with their patri-local, polygynous, ex- [621]
tended family households, formed the basic Mossi settlement pattern. [592]
A complex hierarchical administrative apparatus carried the power [131]
of the Mossi rulers into the smallest villages, and funneled taxes and
tribute back to them. This structure still exists, but of course it has [648]
been modified by the French.

The Mossi were and are still divided into stratified royal, noble [565]
and commoner patrilineages. Characteristic of this lineage system is [613]
a process by which royal sub-lineages descend serially until they
merge with the mass of commoner lineages. Below the lineages there [563]
once were large non-Mossi groups of serfs and slaves, but these people
have now been grouped into lineages and have become Mossicized.

The topography of Mossi country is typical of the Sudanic grass- 133
lands. It is an immense plain, some 1,500 feet above sea level and
broken only by three low mountain ranges and numerous small hills.
The annual total rainfall is between 30 and 40 inches, and falls 132
almost entirely as heavy showers or thundershowers during the period
from June to September. So narrow is the margin of rainfall for [133]
successful crop cultivation that any variation in the cycle results in [511]
low crop yields and a difficult "hungry period" the following year
before the new crops are harvested. The Mossi do not practice irri- 133
gation, and would have trouble doing so because the three Volta [241]
Rivers which drain their territory serve as drainage chiefly during
the rainy season. Only the Black Volta has water all year round; the

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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175 people have become Mossicized in language and culture, but it is
437 doubtful whether they would have taken the Hausa for Mossi. The
441 true Mossi may have played a minor role in the caravan trade, but I am certain that they took part in it and that they did so before the French conquest of their country.

175 There is little doubt that the Mossi traded with the caravans that
437 passed *through* their country. Crozat, who visited Moro Naba Wobogo
439 six years before the conquest, reported that the king

[643] ... appeared to have had some business relations with white merchants who came up to Salaga every dry season. He sent horses to them in exchange for silver. He claims that he had no reasons to be pleased with their integrity and that the silver which they sent to him contained plenty of copper. It happens also that traders may come as far as Wagadougou, bringing merchandise of German origin. There was one of them on hand during my stay at Wagadougou. I was told that he was an important marabout, a shereef, perhaps an Arab or a Moor, for I was assured that he was very light in color. As was repeated to me several times, his relations with the king were limited to the solemn greetings on Fridays. He has never entered the royal hut in spite of being an important marabout. He was at Wagadougou for about three and one-half months, but he was compelled to return to the coast since the merchandise which he had brought was exhausted. He spoke no Mossi. (Crozat 1891)

The caravans which passed through Mossi country were well organized but seemed to have lacked the regularity which was characteristic of the trans-Sahara ones. Those caravans coming from the north were apparently more regular since they had to await the coming of the great trans-Sahara caravans, which brought them salt and other
[366] valuable merchandise. Those coming from Salaga and points south
[22] traveled at all times of the year, a fact which is corroborated by the voyage of Krauss, who arrived at the Bere market during August and the height of the Mossi planting season. This was a period of scarcity or "hungry period" as Krauss himself observed, and it is doubtful whether the Mossi had much to trade at this time. Nevertheless, caravaneers always found some trade goods at the larger Mossi market centers all through the year, even if only cloth and cotton bands.

[22] The main season for external trade in Mossi country came after the harvest. In the words of Marc, who served there shortly after the conquest:

Towards the end of the rainy season, in September or October, the
[34] Yarse begin to assemble the livestock in order to leave for the south. In certain large commercial centers like Kaya, Pouitenga, Dakay, one finds
[422] around this period the owners of livestock: Mossi chiefs, Fulani or rich natives, who are ready to sell their animals. People also assemble sheep of

[57] Chapter 4

The Court of the Mogho Naba. Tribute and Payments Due. Obligations of Mossi Subjects to their Naba.

Morning Honors Paid to the Emperor of the Mossi

644 The council of the emperor of the Mossi is held every morning in front of an antechamber called zango which opens out upon a very large courtyard.

831 The Mossi have for a long time regarded the sun as a "god."
776 Wend'pous yan, "God shows himself," refers to the rising of
643 the sun, but it is used in a figurative sense to refer to the emergence of the Mogho Naba. This illustrates the regard held by the Mossi people for their chief since he is compared to the star of daylight and thus to a "god."

643 The Mogho Naba appears each morning dressed in an ample red robe and with a red gourmousga (a kind of burnoose) folded and
292 thrown over his shoulders. On his head he wears a cap, a fez, topped with a wazourfou sebré (literally, "silver paper" [streamers], that is to say, silver amulet). Red represents the light that comes
[822] with the appearance of the sun, while the silver on the cap represents the brilliance of the star itself.

644 Before the time set for the start of the ceremony, the three sogon'kassemsé (great servitors) bring into the courtyard the [58] cushion, nagpouré, and all the other insignia of office. As soon as
[201] the Mogho Naba appears, they arise and make a snapping sound with thumb and index finger to indicate that the naba is coming.

"Wend'pous yan" is also cried out by the gagando and luinsé
[533] (drummers) as soon as His Majesty sits down. The Bend'Naba [chief drummer] is the only one who does not beat his drum; instead, he rubs his finger back and forth over the waxed part of the drum head to imitate the roar of the lion. Four or five young men bearing loaded rifles take their places in front of the emperor.

Honors are rendered to the Mogho Naba in the following order.

1. The Samandé Naba, Baloum Naba, Wedranga Naba, and Simandé Nabila, as well as the Zusoabin'kassanga (chief eunuch and guardian of the emperor's household), are the first to greet His Majesty and to inquire about his health.

●644 2. Next come the Ouidi Naba, the Larralé Naba, the Kamsaogo Naba, the Gounga Naba, the Nemdo Naba, and the Poé Naba.

[527 788] 3. On Friday and other Moslem holidays, the imam who represents Islam at Ouagadougou comes to give the doua, a kind of benediction which consists of reciting verses from the Koran, in the morning as well as in the evening.

Lebeg'sonre. As soon as these honors have been completed, the Mogho Naba goes back into his house to put on a less dazzling costume. Shortly thereafter he once more returns to the courtyard.

[59] Next the Baloum Naba and his retinue present their respects as described above. The Ouidi Naba and his followers are not required to do so unless they have foreigners to present to His Majesty.

[533] Then, the Bend'Naba, gangando, and luinsé (drummers) and the doudissi (violin players) play together in praise of the Mogho Naba.

It should be noted that the Mogho Naba speaks to no one before his morning appearance. It is not until he has finished his ceremonial duties and returned to his apartments that his tampa (sisters) greet him.

644 273 Before the officials and ministers of the court return to their homes and as soon as the Mogho Naba has withdrawn, the Sogon'-kassanga, that is, the ranking servitor, offers them some dam (known as dolo or fermented millet beer).

1. One canari [jar] of dam is offered to the Baloum Naba, who is obligated to give a gourdful to the Zusoaba, one to the Wedkim Naba (chief groom), and one to the Soré Naba (Bendré, "chief of the path").

2. A canari of dam is then offered to the Ouidi Naba who is obligated to give a gourdful to the Poé Naba (chief confessor for the wives and pages of the Mogho Naba) and one koré [gourd] to the Bend'Naba. He drinks the remainder with the other ministers in his retinue.

[276] 3. On Fridays and holidays, kola nuts, gouré are offered to the imam after he has given his doua and before the Mogho Naba goes to renew his pledge of loyalty [60] to France before the representative of the Republic in Upper Volta.

644 431 The Mogho Naba spends the rest of the day receiving individuals who have come to see him, accepting poussoum (gifts to the chief) and giving dam, gouré, foutou (garments), etc., and listening to the praises of his courtiers.

Mogho Naba Na Tough'la, "The Mogho Naba Goes to La" (1)

1. A dependent village in the administrative district of Yako, Koudougou Circle.

173 644 Tradition relates that a certain Mogho Naba, Naba Warga, had a favorite, the only one who knew that his preferred food was léla (fruit of the léhinga or wild plum tree). It should be added [262] that ordinarily anything might be chosen as a favorite food, and it should not be supposed that the Mogho Naba eats only the best foods. Obviously he does not lack choice morsels, but he cannot be expected to like everything. One day this woman asked leave to visit her home at Là and failed to return. The Magho Naba, tired of waiting and missing his favorite food, had his horse saddled one morning and announced that he wished to go and join his wife. His ministers begged him to stay at home and asked him to put off his departure until the next day... Every morning the preparations for the departure were repeated and always there was the same pleading, up to the time of the ruler's death. His son, [61] who succeeded him, chose to follow his example. The following paragraph describes the manner in which this custom was still practiced only a few years ago.

When the Mogho Naba appears in the morning, one of his [492] horses, partially harnessed, is brought into the courtyard bearing a saddle with silver stirrups, but with the girth unbuckled. After the Mogho Naba has responded to the salutations of his ministers and the whole court and has dealt with some minor matters, he declares that he is going to Là. The court officials, especially the Kamsaongo Naba, appear before him and say: "Sire, order them to unsaddle your horse; you shall go tomorrow." The Mogho Naba of course agrees to this, but he retires to his apartments rather

173 abruptly, as though he were somewhat provoked by this obstacle
644 to what he wants to do. At the same time the saddle is removed and the horse returned to the stables.

It should also be noted that every morning the pougtiéma (first wife) orders a basket and hamper to be filled with all the things needed for a journey, intending to accompany her husband to Lâ.

As soon as the Mogho Naba postpones his journey to the following day, the pougtiéma, duly warned, unpacks her basket.

Today, the breath of civilization has blown upon these ancient practices, and the present Mogho Naba merely sees his horse, which is walked up and down while he is receiving his ministers. The animal is at once taken back to the stables when the [62] king returns to his palace without having tried to mount it, much less having heard any entreaties from the Kamsaongo Naba.

Koaga Basgo

644 At sundown each day the Baloum Naba goes to the residence
789 of the Mogho Naba for the koaga. Only the Zusobin-Kassanga (chief eunuch) and the Sogon'kassanga (ranking servitor) assist at this performance. The koaga is a sort of earthenware basin into which is put a bit of fire and ... mystery. The head servitor places the koaga in the courtyard in front of the antechamber and blows on the fire, which quickly blazes up and then dies down. Meanwhile, the bendré (drummer) has been rubbing his hand back and forth over the waxed portion of the drumhead.

During the whole performance, no one is allowed either to enter or leave the house of the Mogho Naba. Anyone coming from
[687] the outside is not allowed to pass through the courtyard during the proceedings and anyone caught watching the koaga basgo was severely punished by the lash or even executed. When the performance is over, the Zusoba and the Baloum Naba, each of whom was seated at a particular place, arise, then approach and greet each other, and wait to be served some dam before separating for the rest of the night. They sometimes also salute the Mogho Naba before returning to their quarters.

[63]
Ministers and Officials of the Court of the Mogho Naba

644 645 Ministers. (a) Ouidi Naba (literally, "chief of the horses," or superintendent of His Majesty's stables). In the old days the Ouidi Naba had the duty of choosing the color and kind of horse suitable for the Mogho Naba. He usually had charge of the horses of deceased chiefs.

202 644 If a kombéré (canton chief) owned horses during his lifetime, upon his death one of them is sent to the Mogho Naba in Ouagadougou as bearer of the sad news. Branches of the tahnga (karite [or shea] tree), wound with white rope, are tied to the horse's tail.

[64] The horse thus presented to the Mogho Naba is then handed over to one of the representatives of the Ouidi Naba who, after cutting loose the branches with a knife and leaving them in the courtyard of the Mogho Naba, leads the animal to Ouidin [section of the Ouidi Naba].

Unless the Mogho Naba gives the horse to someone, the Ouidi Naba is free to dispose of it.

645 (b) Larrhallé Naba, second minister of the Mogho Naba. Formerly he accompanied the Tansoba or Tampsoba to war.

In the section where the Larrhallé Naba now lives, there were once enormous trees whose leaves were constantly astir. When he was made a minister, the Larrhallé Naba said that he wished to dwell at the place "where the leaves on the trees are always astir" (tisse vand'sin y a lag, lag zighin wan). From this came the name of Larrhallé, which designates the section.

(c) Gounga Naba, third minister (1). His section stands in a

645 173

1. Originally the Gounga Naba was the prime minister, and the title was his by right since he was a companion of Naba Oubri. One day, as he was attending to a natural need, he met a very handsome young man and offered his friendship to him; the latter accepted. Later he presented the boy to Naba Oubri who adopted him, settled him at court, and put him in charge of the royal stables. The Gounga Naba then said

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to the Mogho Naba: "Since I have come to you, give the first rank to this man. I will show him what he must do to please you. He will be the Ouidi Naba."

A man from Tansobongo, having heard that the Ouidi Naba was living in the greatest ease, came to see him. He, too, was a handsome youth. He was presented to the Mogho Naba (Naba Oubri) by the Gounga Naba who proposed the young man's appointment as second minister, the Larrhallé Naba, and reserved for himself the post of third minister.

So it came about that the Gounga Naba is the emperor's third minister.

645 place where there were once many goumsé (gounga, silk-cotton tree); hence, his name.

[126] He is a brother-in-arms of the Tansoba and always accompanied him to war, where he chose death rather than defeat, especially if the Tansoba had been killed.

644 (d) Baloum Naba, the chief steward of the palace and chief servitor of the Mogho Naba. He never goes to war, but remains always at the side of the Mogho Naba. It is his duty to carry out [182] [65] sacrifices, such as killing the chickens or livestock offered to the manes or to the spirits when such sacrifices are prescribed by the soothsayers or other charlatans for the health and well-being of the Mogho Naba.

(e) Kamsaogho Naba, formerly accompanied the Tansoba to [839] war. The Kamsaogho Naba is a eunuch, and for this reason he is commonly called Mogho Naba na poug'tiéma, "first wife of the Mogho Naba."

Other personages (not ministers). (a) Samandé Naba, in charge of all of the people in the outer courtyard of the Mogho Naba and a brother-in-arms of the Larrhallé Naba.

644 687 661 (b) Poé Naba, formerly the confessor for the wives and pages of the Mogho Naba. His duty, carried out by magical practices, was to denounce those wives or persons guilty of treason or of

644 attempted adultery. This practice (poéré) found many victims,
687 and its suppression by the French was a real service to the Mossi,
661 who were formerly murdered for a trifle. An ogling glance at a chief's wife was punishable by death. A man who met one of the wives of the Mogho Naba on the road was executed along with the wife. If one met a napagha [royal wife], he left the path and took to the bush. The woman herself would run off and return to the road only when she was sure that the man was a long way off.

Such is naturally no longer the case, and the wives of the Mogho Naba on their way to the market at [66] Ouagadougou no longer expect not to be looked at or even jostled. I hasten to add, however, that the Mossi still retain great respect for them and will even swallow serious insults, such as tampiri, "bastard," from a napagha if they are so unlucky as to offend them.

644 (c) Daporé Naba, chief of the section of the free or house
693 slaves. It was formerly the duty of the Daporé Naba and his followers to massacre any pages or other convicted persons whose execution had been ordered by the Mogho Naba.

644 (d) Bend'Naba, chief of the drummers of the Mogho Naba.

(e) Soré Naba (literally, "chief of the path"), the drummer who always accompanies the warriors and who, therefore, even in time of peace, is allotted a horse.

644 If the enemy appears to be winning during a battle, the Soré
726 Naba kindles the courage of the warriors of the Mogho Naba and constantly asks for a head, m'data zougou. This means that he is asking each warrior to forget himself and to think only of victory. In order to have a victory, the enemy must suffer such losses that they decide either to retreat or to surrender. Thus, the expression m'data zougou implies ruthless slaughter.

701 (f) Tansoba or Tampsoba, the war chief. The Tansoba of the Mogho Naba lives in a small village, Moussa, in the province of the Baloum Naba.

701 [67] When there is friction between the Mogho Naba and one
687 of his vassals and there seems to be no hope of agreement, the Mogho Naba sends to the Tansoba for logdo (warriors armed with arrows). The Tansoba at once proceeds to Ouagadougou and stops at Baoghin. The emperor assembles his ministers and the principal dignitaries of his court and says to them: "I never thought that chief X, to whom I myself gave the pougla (red fez) would dare to

701 oppose me. I therefore demand that his fez be returned to me."
687 To take away the fez of a naba is to dethrone him and reduce him to the level of his subjects.

The court officials, including the Tansoba, at once send emissaries to the chief at fault, asking him to choose between suicide (some take a poison called sounadré, while others kill themselves with a poisoned arrow) and war with the Mogho Naba.

If the chief is not prepared for such a summons, he kills himself, and the envoys return with the news.

669 If, on the other hand, he declares that he wants pouwega, that
701 is, war and a noble death, he sends back the representatives of the ministers. A few days later, with drums beating and the Tansoba, chief of the army, at its head, the whole warrior band appears before his walls.

The Tansoba sends the Samandé Naba to the chief to ask him to confirm his declaration of war. If the naba still wants war, he usually replies: "Ya yingri bala la ka sakénian."

The Tansoba withdraws, sending word to the chief [68] to expect him back on a stated day (seven or eight days later); this period of time will enable the chief to assemble his warriors also. When the day arrives, it is a merciless battle, a massacre.

Often the forces of the Mogho Naba are victorious, and in that
727 event the slaves, livestock, and other property go to those who seized them. Only the corpses belong to the Tansoba.

701 If an arrow, even a poisoned one, wounds the Tansoba, he
577 must under no circumstances pull it out. Indeed, he must often endure thirst and hunger, and it is only when he is at rest in an enclosed place that the arrows are removed from his body. It should
[789] be noted that since the Tansoba's costume is virtually covered with amulets and other charms, he is not very likely to be wounded seriously by an arrow. This is not, of course, to belittle his bravery and composure in the face of danger, since he is expected
[762] never to retreat and, if the enemy is victorious, often prefers to kill himself rather than to report a defeat to the Mogho Naba.

644 There are, in addition to the foregoing, a great many petty naba whose role is not clearly defined and of whom it seems needless to speak.

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651 Mossi circle into several administrative districts, still continue to
178 make substantial annual gifts to the Mogho Naba (cowries, cattle, and a considerable amount of grain, millet and rice).

634 Payments Due the Kombemba (canton chiefs). Formerly each
651 canton held one or more ritual feasts each year, and the Mossi subjects, that is, the tengsoba (village elders, notables, and those in comfortable circumstances), regularly made gifts to the canton chief (cowries, goats, sheep, and roosters). The Peulh [Peul] gave cattle.

The canton chiefs also retained a portion of the payment made by the people for the benefit of the Mogho Naba.

[178] At the present time these traditional gifts are still made, but white or light gray roosters are more and more being substituted for livestock. [71]

661 Payments due the Ministers of the Mogho Naba. In order to
431 maintain good relations with the ministers, court officials, and intermediaries between the emperor and his vassals, the canton
● 644 chiefs in former times used to present unspecified gifts to the
634 high dignitaries at court when they paid their respects to the Mogho Naba. A certain number of cowries was given to the pougtiéma, first wife of the Mogho Naba (500 cowries equals two and a half francs, formerly 50 centimes).

A canton chief who has been called to Ouagadougou for some reason may choose not to call on the emperor, but he is obligated to bring cowries, a sheep, or a rooster to the minister who is head of the province in which his canton is located.

651 Common laws. (a) Regulation of market fees. Before the ar-
443 rival of the French, market fees at Ouagadougou were collected for the benefit of the Mogho Naba by a collector in his employ.

In important villages, fees were collected by Gourounsi [Grunshi] captives on behalf of the canton chiefs (kombemba).

651 (b) Hunting. In former times, before the fields were cleared
224 for seeding, the Mossi used to go out in groups of several villages on hunting drives. Small game (partridges, guinea fowl, hares,
634 etc.) were left to the hunters. On the other hand, a haunch of any quadruped killed (deer, gazelle, coba [a kind of horse antelope], etc.) was reserved for the canton chief.

651 [72] (c) Fishing. Fishing in the larger water holes could take
226 place only by authorization of the canton chiefs. The day on
634 which fishing took place was treated as a holiday. All the young men in the village and their neighbors, even if the latter did not belong to the canton, came out on the day set by the canton chief and fished for the benefit of the naba. All large fish were reserved for him, and only the small ones were left to the fishermen.

This practice still prevails.

776 Other common laws. Many deities are worshipped by the
782 Mossi. Groves, fields, mountains, etc., all have their "god."
661 It often happens that the naba (canton chief), at the behest of the soothsayers, offers an animal. This may be a sheep, a goat, or even a cow, and it is offered to one or another of the deities, either for his personal interests or for those of his people, or perhaps to ask for rain. The naba dispatches some sogoné [servitor] or samand'kamba [people of the outer courtyard] to one of the villages in his canton to find a victim. The animal is taken without its owner having any right to complain or to ask for compensa-
[538] tion. Is there not a Mossi saying to the effect, Talagh-gounda Naba'gninga the serf raises livestock for the benefit of his naba)"?

For sacrifices prescribed for the Mogho Naba, the animals are provided either by the inhabitants of the [73] town of Ouagadougou and its environs or by the canton chiefs.

Labor Service Customarily Required of the Mossi on Behalf of their Chiefs

651 Forced labor was used to cultivate the fields of the naba and to repair or construct their houses.

647 The Mogho Naba. (a) Cultivation of fields. The duty of
651 cultivating the fields of the Mogho Naba fell entirely on the Bilbalsé,
241 the residents of Bilbalogo (section of the Baloum Naba) and on all former servitors and descendants of former servitors. The Kam Naba (chief of the young men), charged with assembling the workers, had a crier announce in all the important markets that on such-and-such a day the Bilbalsé were to assemble in the emperor's

644 fields. On that day, the Mogho Naba had one or two cows
651 slaughtered and a large quantity of sagbo (millet cakes) prepared
241 for the workers. If the latter, after being assembled two or three times in the manner indicated above, were not finished with all the fields, the work was carried on by the samand'kamba (the people who dwelt in the outer courtyard of the Mogho Naba).

644 The emperor, however, received none of the millet grown in
574 his own fields, which, incidentally, did not have their present boundaries. This millet was reserved exclusively [74] for use as food for foreign visitors and for the feeding of horses (1).

1. For the ceremony of threshing this millet (kawinré), see the special chapter below [Chapter 16].

644 It was the duty of the canton chiefs and the ministers to pro-
651 vide loads of millet for the use of the Mogho Naba and his harem ("harem" should be understood to mean all young or middle-aged women, but to exclude the elderly women who have to support themselves and who have their private fields).

644 (b) Repair of the houses of the Mogho Naba. The work of
651 building and repairing the houses actually belonging to the em-
356 peror fell entirely upon the inhabitants of Bilbalogo (section of the Baloum Naba), Kamsaonghin (section of the chief eunuch), and Dapoya (section of the slaves of the Mogho Naba).

[343] The outbuildings, wédanga, four round huts with thatched roofs located outside the emperor's house, served as stables for the horses given to the Mogho Naba by canton chiefs or other personages and were built and maintained by three ministers, the Ouidi Naba, Larrhallé Naba, and Gounga Naba, with the help of the people in their sections.

The tamping of the floors and clay roofs was done wholly by the wives of the persons responsible for [75] the construction or repair, that is, the wives of the ministers and of the inhabitants of their sections.

Labor service due the province chiefs, ministers of the emperor.

651 (a) Cultivation of fields. The fields belonging to the ministers
645 of the Mogho Naba were cultivated by a system of payments in kind
241 as follows.

567 Were slaves part of an estate? Among the Mossi, the wives
428 are part of an estate on the same footing as the rest of the property
562 of the deceased. The same thing applies to the captives (yemsé) and dogyiri (house slaves) who constitute and integral part of the estate. They constitute a patrimony to be handed down from father to son in accordance with the customary order of succession. They remain the exclusive property of the legitimate heir and are not distributed as are the wives of the deceased.

[97] Chapter 6

Djiba Naba, Crown Prince of the Mossi Empire

Preliminary Remarks

644 In writing on this subject we have not tried to ascertain whether the canton of Djiba was once independent or whether it was under the direct authority of the Mogho Naba.

At the outbreak of the World War in 1914 the Djiba Naba, a brother of the present emperor, Naba Kom, was drafted into the army, and another brother had to be appointed to take his place. The latter's administration was in many ways unsatisfactory, so when the Djiba Naba, on his return from the front, had to be sent to Doulougou to replace a deceased son of Naba Wobgo, the Mogho Naba retained direct authority over the canton of Djiba. Meanwhile, his eldest son had returned from Tunis and had been officially named the chief of Djiba, but he had had to leave again for military service at Salonika. Thus, it can be said that even before the canton of Djiba had been made the prerogative of the eldest son of Naba Zombré, it had already been under the latter's authority.

It was during the reign of Naba Zombré, twenty-third Mogho Naba, that the eldest son of the emperor was given jurisdiction over the canton of Djiba. Naba Zombré, after Naba Niandeffo, had one of the longest reigns in the history of the country. He actually ruled for sixty years.

643 [98] An old tradition requires an emperor who has ruled for
782 thirty years to go to Oubritenga to celebrate zom'bika (literally,

643 "to mount the bika").

782 Bika. When the emperor goes to Oubritenga, a large pit is dug in which all sorts of provisions are placed and, finally, a living man. Poles cover the opening of the tomb where the suffocated man lies, and the whole thing is covered with earth. A throne (guéré) is placed on the grave, and it is there that the emperor -- with little ceremony -- receives the faithful during his stay at Oubritenga. In carrying out this practice, the emperor is considered as having died and then come to life again. Hence, when he returns to Ouagadougou, after an absence which may last for years, he is welcomed by the populace with the greatest enthusiasm, and he must carry out all sorts of customary obligations just as he did at the beginning of his reign.

This custom is of course bound to disappear. In any event, if it were still an obligatory ceremony today, the man would no doubt be replaced by a rooster.

643 Naba Zombré went to Oubritenga to mount the bika and re-
644 mained there for three years. His eldest son acted for him at Ouagadougou and in the process acquired some fame and the esteem of the populace.

When his father returned, it was obviously necessary to bestow upon this prince, who had already tasted the "joys" of ruling. and developed a real talent for command, a post of real distinction. Djiba was chosen. From that day on, [99] as soon as the eldest son of the Mogho Naba reaches the age of discretion, he is appointed Djiba Naba. It is thus understandable that Naba Kom, enthroned at an early age, was much disturbed when two of his sons were sent to Senegal and then to Tunisia.

644 The appointment of the Djiba Naba differs very little from that of other canton chiefs, but this naba has certain obligations which will be discussed below.

Before Appointment

644 Before his appointment, the crown prince of the Mossi empire
782 first proceeds to the village of Zango where he must remain for a week. He must bring with him a sheep, a white rooster, and a cow which are to be given to the village chief for use in a sacrifice to

644 782 tenpelem (the earth) in order that he may have health, happiness, etc. In addition, he provides a bar of salt which is to be shared among the old women.

As he passes through Nonsin, he gives a sheep, a white rooster, and some salt for a similar sacrifice.

644 On the seventh day he returns to Ouagadougou and stops at Bilbalogo, the home of the Kam Naba (chief of the young men), whose guest he becomes. The Mogho Naba informs his ministers, and the day is set for the appointment.

The customary formalities are nearly identical with those required for the appointment of canton chiefs (kombemba).

[100] After Appointment

On the day following his appointment, the Djiba Naba calls upon his father. A cushion (nagpouré) is placed near a shed in the emperor's courtyard at the foot of a special stake called the "zandaogo of the Djiba Naba." The Djiba Naba becomes the guest of the Gounga Naba, in whose section he will henceforth stay whenever he comes to Ouagadougou. (At the present time, because of the enmity between the emperor and his brothers, the Djiba Naba stays at Kamsaoghin [section of the Kamsaogho Naba], not far from his father's house.)

644 557 He then has to call upon his father's ministers, and precedence requires him to visit the Ouidi Naba, the prime minister, first. As soon as the latter is notified of the arrival of the Djiba Naba, he offers him a sheep, some dam (beer) and some kola nuts.

Then the crown prince goes to the Larrhallé Naba, who is required to present him with the same gifts, and thence to the Kamsogo Naba, chief eunuch, where the same honors are rendered to him and where he is also given a sheep, beer, and kola nuts.

He next calls upon the Gounga Naba, the Poé Naba, the Samande Naba and, finally, the Baloum Naba, from whom he receives many gifts.

On the third day he completes his visits by calling upon the imam who represents Islam at Ouagadougou. There he is offered water containing [millet] flour and honey, as well as kola nuts.

644 554 576 [101] It is to be noted that a gourdful of this water with millet flour on which a bit of karite butter is floating is a customary courtesy offering among the Mossi. It is most improper to greet or to receive a stranger by offering him plain water.

644 782 On the fourth or fifth day the Djiba Naba proceeds to Zoanghna (a village located two or three kilometers behind the government buildings) and there hands over a sheep and a cow to serve as offerings to the sacred amulets of the ancestors and to protect him from evil spirits and wicked people. He does not spend the night in this village but returns home immediately after the sacrifice.

644 788 Several days later the decision is made to install the new naba in his domain. A large number of soroné, drummers, and followers accompany him on what amounts to a kind of obligatory pilgrimage which we shall describe briefly.

The following itinerary is customary.

First, the Djiba Naba goes to Badnogo where he spends the night. The next day he goes on to Samba where he is offered water with flour in it, and for his part, he gives salt to be shared among the old women of the village.

One may ask why salt is given to the old women and not to the other people. The Mossi call old women nough' pouk ramba, [888] that is, those who, when blessing you, clasp their hands so as to make a higher power hear and grant their prayers.

644 788 431 [102] On the following day he proceeds to Tensobitenga where he remains for three days. Beer is prepared for him; he is given a cow for his followers and a wife for himself. At Nakamtenga, his next stop, the village chief welcomes him with a sheep and many baskets and bowls of sagbo (millet mush).

644 788 He does not remain here for the night but instead goes on to Koubri. This is the village where eunuchs formerly suffered the cruel operation of castration (1). The canton chief meets him, leads

839 304 681 1. Eunuchs. Bandits, thieves, murderers, and slaves or soroné (servitors) convicted of adultery with women of the nobility were the only ones sent to Koubri, a canton in the circle of Ouagadougou, to be castrated. This operation involved only the removal

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of the testicles, until the day when a eunuch managed, no one knows how, to take advantage of some of the women he was supposed to be guarding. From then on it was deemed necessary to remove the penis completely, and a copper cartridge was inserted for purposes of urination.

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As soon as the person fainted after undergoing the operation, a drink was concocted whose ingredients are unknown. When he revived, he was so thirsty that he downed the drink in a single gulp. It is said that the drug stupefied the eunuch to such a degree that he would be incapable of taking vengeance even if he had any weapons at hand.

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It was only after he had completely recovered that the victim was sent to the Mogho Naba. The latter assigned him the duty of guarding a harem or a royal tomb.

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him to his house, seats him by his side, and announces to the populace that he has just been visited by his son (Koubri Naba is a descendant of the Mogho Naba).

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He then offers the crown prince a cow and a great deal of [103] beer, and then, before he leaves, the Djiba Naba has free access to the chief's household where he takes as a wife the first nubile girl he encounters. The stay at Koubri traditionally lasted for seven days, but it could be shortened to two or three in view of the great expense involved in entertaining a prince of such high rank, especially at the present time when the canton chiefs no longer enjoy their former prestige.

The Djiba Naba continues on his way to Kombissiri where he is the guest of the canton chief. For a week, in addition to his food which must, of course, be copious and abundant quantities of beer, the crown prince also receives a cow, a sheep, and, before his departure for Doulougou, a wife.

[i.e. canton chief — Analyst]

644 788 431 The chief of the canton of Doulougou, where the prince is a guest for another week, also gives him beer, a sheep, a cow, a robe, and, finally, a wife.

At Bagamini, where he goes next, he receives from the canton chief a cow, a wife, a quiver, and arrows, presented with these significant words: "Ad locko la pema taon widi, laf ra taon neb'yé ti ya f'ba yemsé" (literally, "Take these arrows to shoot against horses and not against men, for the latter are your father's slaves and the country also belongs to him and therefore to you").

Seven days later he leaves Bagamini and goes to Ipelsé where he receives the same warm welcome. On leaving, he will take with him a cow and a wife.

He likewise remains at Ipelsé for seven days. Passing through Bedgo in the domain of the Peulh chief, the Djiba Naba chooses the finest [104] bull from the herd of cattle which must be presented to him. He likewise takes a girl from the chief's household who becomes his property. He then goes on to Guirgo where he is guest of the canton chief for a whole week. On his departure he receives a cow, a robe, and a wife from the chief.

The inhabitants of the village of Kakamsé, through which the Djiba Naba merely passes, bring him quantities of millet cakes (sagbo) and a gift of their choice (a sheep, a goat, a cow, cowries, beer, etc.).

The crown prince continues on to Kondrin and remains there for three days. In addition to sagho and dam, the chief of Kondrin is required to offer him a cow and a wife before his departure.

From there he proceeds to Béré where the chief, called Rimbissi Kasma (the oldest descendant of the Mogho Naba), gives the Djiba Naba a cow, a robe, and a wife and acts as his host for a week.

644 788 824 During the night of the seventh day, the notables of the canton of Djiba come to Béré to look for the naba. He allows himself to be led away, accompanied by only a single servitor and a groom. The rest of the escort from Ouagadougou remains behind and follows him the next morning (1).

1. Why this departure at night and seeming escape? On the route leading into his

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dominion, the Djiba Naba must pass under a tree whose branches he should be able to touch since he is on horseback. His whole future depends upon his doing so. It is from this day forward that the prince will have a long life and will succeed his father. It is believed that the tree has magical powers and that its branches will withdraw of their own accord as the prince passes by if, even though he is the emperor's eldest son, he is not the successor designated by Wendé (God).

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[105] In advance of his coming, care has been taken to find a nice dwelling suitable to house a prince who is the emperor's eldest son. With this in view, an establishment has been chosen which is well built and fairly large, one belonging to a dakangré (prosperous man), and His Highness is conducted to it. As soon as the Djiba Naba has dismounted, his involuntary host must leave his home and take shelter with one of his neighbors. He takes great care to gather all his property, money (liguidi) and wives, into one part of the house; the rest henceforth belongs to the naba. Indeed, it is not long before the establishment is enlarged and some of the huts demolished to make way for more sumptuous buildings.

As soon as the prince is installed, the displaced host receives some gifts and wives as a kind of indemnity for loss. A suitable house is built for him a few hundred meters away.

For several days, celebrations are the rule throughout the canton of Djiba. All the notables and village chiefs, including neighboring canton chiefs who have not had the honor of receiving the prince, come to pay their respects to the new naba and to bring him large gifts.

The escort from Ouagadougou is then sent back [106] with many gifts. The most important nayirdamba [court dignitaries] receive wives and clothing.

Besides the wives the Djiba Naba may have had before his appointment, it is to be noted that he collected quite a harem

644 during his peregrinations. He will bestow some of these on his followers
788 and keep the prettiest for himself.
431 In the old days, the Boulsa Naba, Boussouma Naba, Konkisitenga Naba, and all the others who were, so to speak, independent "rulers" of their lands never brought annual tribute to the Mogho Naba without sending gifts to his eldest son at Djiba.

In the same way, the canton chiefs were expected to make the same annual gifts to the Djiba Naba as to his father.

644 It should also be noted that chiefs who had quarreled with the
696 Mogho Naba and were in danger of being executed could readily obtain pardons by the expedient of buying the friendship of the Djiba Naba. The emperor, after all, was reluctant to distress his son by putting to death one of his intimates.

[107] Chapter 7

The Mossi Salute. Respect due the Home of a Naba.
The Cap. Precedence among Chiefs.
A Legend Concerning the Origins of Mossi Chiefdom.

Salutation of the Naba (Nab'Pousgho)

647 The kombemba (canton chiefs) and nayirdamba (ministers and other court dignitaries), when calling upon the Mogho Naba, are required to remove their cap when they reach the threshold. They hand it to their soroné (servitors) or followers. If they did not come on horseback, they must give their néoda (shoes) to a page and walk barefoot. In a word, they remove anything which might impede the execution of the very complicated Mossi salute.

The following passages concerning the Mossi salute are taken from Father Mangin.

Mossi Salute

644 "The Moaga puts down everything, load, hat, cap, and sword,
576 removes his shoes, and sits on the ground. He folds his legs slightly and bends the upper part of his body forward. The elbows rest on the ground, spread as far apart as possible. The forearms, folded

644 in front of the chest, and the half-closed hands with thumbs raised
576 together strike [108] the ground three or four times. Then the Mossi raises his body a little and rubs the palms of his hands together. He never looks at the face of the person he is saluting, but keeps his eyes slightly lowered. It is truly a very humiliating posture, especially when the chief who is being saluted remains standing or on horseback, towering above his subordinate and barely according him a glance.

"The women, instead of striking the ground with their forearms, hit it with the elbows and raise their open hands, fingers extended, to shoulder height.

"The grand salute, (1) very rarely used, consists of turning

1. Father Mangin neglected to mention that this salute is used only when the chief or other personage has given a wife, a robe, or some other gift to the person who is saluting him. Furthermore, those present cover their foreheads with dust.

around after the ordinary salute has been completed, taking some dust in both hands, spreading it on the forehead, and then saluting once more.

576 "When two natives who know each other meet along the way, the younger of the two squats first and begins the salute, which the other acknowledges by squatting in turn. If they are carrying loads, they set them down before saluting. They are never in a hurry. Servants and women, when they walk before a chief, bow slightly and join their hands in front of the chest. Though complicated, the Mossi salute is rendered easily and gracefully by the natives; they are used to it from an early [109] age and never perform it in the clumsy and awkward manner which is theirs when they attempt to imitate the military salute."

Respect Due the Home of the Naba

554 The kombéré is absolute master of his territory. His subjects must show him the same deference as he himself shows to the Mogho Naba.

However, even though he is not a noble, a minister of the emperor need not remove his cap to respond to the salute of a kombéré. On the contrary, the latter is required to humble himself, to give way before him just as he would before the Mogho Naba.

● 644 The nabiga (son of a naba), nakomsé (descendants of naba) and, still more, an ordinary Moaga are all categorically forbidden to wear their shoes or their caps at the court of the naba. The only exception to the rule is when the person is a Moslem convert, but even then he always leaves his shoes at the door. He may, however, wear his cap or turban. Shoes and headgear may be put on again only after the subject is 300 meters from the house of the naba. Sometimes, in places where custom is rigorously enforced, the person must be out of sight.

[687] Any infraction of these rules was punished severely by the lash and by confiscation of property by the samand'kamba of the naba [110] when the offender was not of the nobility, that is, was neither nabiga nor nakombga.

291 It is interesting to note that wearing the fez, originally one of the badges of chiefdom, was forbidden to the nabiga and all the more to the talga (ordinary Moaga). Today it is commonly worn by men and youths since European traders and shops have made common an article which was once very rare.

576 Shaking hands. One seldom sees a naba extend his hand to one
443 of his subjects or, more especially, to his brothers or fellow nobles (nakomsé).

There are two reasons for this prohibition: 1) the naba is supposed to maintain a certain distance between himself and his subjects, a normal practice; and 2) a superstitious belief has it that persons [154] harboring evil intentions toward the chief put magic powders on their hands to cause swellings which may develop into real abscesses.

576 643 Thus, although the Mogho Naba would not in the least object to shaking hands with a Bambara or a Djerma, he would be astonished if a native Moaga -- even an official -- should offer his hand.

543 576 As soon as the children of a naba have reached the age of discretion, they may no longer play with their "papa," even less shake hands with him. They must henceforth follow the general rule which requires the Mossi salute, kantissé.

576 602 [111] Nowadays naba (kombemba) and nayiridamba (ministers of the emperor) understand the uselessness of such signs of distrust. Therefore, even though they continue to be less familiar with their relatives (brothers, uncles, and sons -- whom they regard as rivals), they willingly offer their hands to Mossi of any standing and to foreigners.

644 Reception by the naba. 1) Up to the present time and despite some thirty-five years of French occupation, the way one is received at the court of the emperor, which, of course, befalls his servitors, has altered very little. Natives who are now officials in the administration and in business enterprises are still treated on the same footing as their less highly placed compatriots. Not only are they required to perform the kantissé (Mossi salute) as described by Father Mangin, but also afterwards they must sit on the ground, a position that is difficult in European clothes. Foreigners (Bambara, [648] Djerma, even Gourounsi) are offered seats because the soroné do not regard them as fellow countrymen.

645 576 352 177 2) By the ministers. At the present time all the emperor's ministers have comfortable houses and splendid drawing rooms furnished with Morris chairs and folding chairs. These seats are offered [112] to visitors of any standing, while benches two or three meters long are reserved for persons of less consequence (house boys, cooks, circle guards, notables, etc.).

631 576 352 3) By the kombemba. Benches are always reserved for visitors of note or, if there are none, mats are provided. Some of these chiefs even own a few commonplace chairs and perhaps one or two folding chairs.

644 Ministers and other officials at the court of the Mogho Naba. In the courtyard where the emperor's audiences are held, [114] there are heaps of stones to mark the places of the ministers and their followers.

The Ouidi Naba, Larrhallé Naba, Gounga Naba, and Kamsaongho Naba assemble with their followers. The Baloum Naba, Zusobinkassanga, and the rest also have their fixed places. They are not permitted to leave their places to greet one another until they have saluted the Mogho Naba.

In the old days only the Baloum Naba, the Zusoaba, and the Kamsaogho, together with the servitors and grooms, were allowed to call upon the emperor in his palace courtyard. The other ministers and court officials (Ouidi Naba, Larrhallé Naba, Gounga Naba, etc.) were not, under any pretext or circumstance, permitted to penetrate the interior courtyard of the home of the Mogho Naba. They had their presence announced by soroné and [344] waited under a shelter (benda zandé) in the audience courtyard. Only a few years ago, when the present Gounga Naba succeeded his father, he asked the reason for this prohibition. Since no good reason was given, he asked the emperor for permission to break the rule, and since that time all his colleagues have followed suit.

644 The cap. We have seen that at the time of his appointment
292 [115] each minister, court official, and canton chief is presented
554 with a cap by the Mogho Naba. Obviously he cannot wear the same cap for the rest of his life, so later replacements bought by him are regarded as just as sacred as the original. All his subjects, even the son of a naba, are strictly forbidden to wear this cap. We have also seen that in the old days an ordinary Moaga was expressly forbidden to wear the red fez (1) since this was the type of headgear

[714]

1. Among the Habè [Habe] the hogon is the [illegible] is the only one who may wear the red fez. When young Habè men are taken into the [French] army as riflemen, they never again wear the red fez [part of the army uniform] after they are discharged and return to their homes.

644 conferred by the Mogho Naba on the canton chiefs.

292 With the exception of the Tenkodogo Naba and, more re-
554 cently, the Boussouma Naba, neither of whom renders honors to the Mogho Naba, all ministers, other petty dima, and chiefs of Mossi cantons must take off his cap to greet the emperor.

576 (a) Between ministers. The Ouidi Naba does not remove his
554 cap for any of his colleagues.

The Larrhallé Naba, Gounga Naba, and Kamsaongo Naba are
645 equals and greet each other with their caps on.

The Baloum Naba and Samandé Naba are also equals, and they do not take off their caps when greeting each other. However, they were required to remove their caps (pougla) and even to perform the kantissé in the presence of the three principal ministers.

[116] Next in importance are the Nemdo Naba or "chief of the meat" [in charge of slaughtering], the Poé Naba who is confessor to the emperor's wives, the Bend Naba, chief of the drummers, and, finally, a whole string of petty chiefs of no importance who can hardly be distinguished from the general populace and whom it would be fruitless to enumerate here.

The Poé Naba may keep his cap on when he is in the presence of the Baloum Naba or the Samandé Naba, but he must remove it for the other ministers and must even prostrate himself to perform the kantissé.

645 Not very long ago, when the province chiefs of Ouagadougou
574 possessed neither comfortable houses nor furniture, the ministers rarely visited each other. I have even once seen a minister sit on the ground in order to give his seat to one of his colleagues.

645 Whenever matters came up which required a meeting, the ministers met at night in one or another of their homes without the knowledge of the public.

645 Today, the principal ministers have proper reception rooms.
576 They can, therefore, remain seated when a more important colleague calls upon them and limit their special consideration of the visitor to offering him a Morris armchair or a folding chair.

701 The Tensoba, the minister of war, never takes off his cap for a
554 minister or a canton chief. He does so only before the emperor.
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631 new naba mounts his horse and goes off with the minister who has jurisdiction over him. The minister offers him some zom kom (water with flour in it) and then welcomes him into his courtyard where he is offered a canari of dam (beer) and gouré (kola nuts). He is then escorted back to the home of his gangsoba by a goodly throng of drummers, horsemen, etc.

631 All the defeated candidates are required to shave their heads
302 at once and to make a formal act of submission to the new naba as soon as he has returned to the home of his gangsoba (host). It should be added that the candidates allow their hair to grow from the day of the death of the naba to the day on which his successor is appointed.

631 The new appointee must offer dam, saghbo, and cowries to the
431 nayiridamba. He also offers dam, kola nuts, and cowries to the drummers.

631 On the following day he accompanies the minister to the home of the Mogho Naba. During the monarch's second audience (beg sonré),
● 644 the minister calls him to salute the Mogho Naba. The new naba goes forward to the tomboko, cries out three times (cries of joy), and then performs the kantissé (the Mossi salute). Thereupon, the Ouidi Naba says to the Mogho Naba: "The chief whom you deigned to honor yesterday wishes to express his gratitude." The Mogho Naba responds to the salute and then, for the [illegible] time, offers him a canari of dam.

The new naba then calls upon the ministers and other important personages (Ouidi Naba, Larrhallé Naba, Gounga Naba, [144] Poé Naba, Kamsoro Naba, Samandé Naba, the imam, Daporé Naba, and the next day the Zusoaba).

Seven days later the Mogho Naba gives him a robe, a pougla (red fez), a nagpouré (cushion), and néoda (slippers).

The new naba removes his old ragged clothes (I use the description advisedly, since custom forbids him to change his clothes until he has received those given by the Mogho Naba). He gives the discarded garments to a relative, dresses in the robe from the Mogho Naba, puts on the pougla (fez), and becomes a true naba.

631 A few days later he asks permission to return to his own lands. Many court representatives (nayirdamba) accompany him. It is the

769 they return to their homes.

796 The Bend'Naba and other drummers remain in the courtyard until the Sogon' kassanga (chief eunuch) bring to them, on behalf
533 of the emperor, the sum of 10,000 cowries and some beer. In the old days a young captive, seated amidst the cowries, accompanied these gifts. The messengers say to the drummers: "Nab'yet b'wa poustabo (the king sends us to give you these gifts on the occasion of his basgha)."

The chief of the drummers pours a drink for the Zussoba and orders his followers to play together "Tompaongo, Wend'kaouss'Naba nioré, Wenna wilig'vinré" (literally, "We thank the king for his gifts. May God give the Mogho Naba long life and allow us to come back to play here next year").

Before sending them away, the Mogho Naba is obligated to give a karfo (black robe [158] imported by the Haoussa) to the Bend' Naba and a robe to the Loun Naba (chief of the luinsé). Water with flour in it is likewise brought to the Bend'Naba, and he scatters it about the courtyard. The emperor is required by custom to walk upon this water of gnimassem (of good health) as he goes back to his apartments.

When all these formalities have been completed, the Bend'Naba, accompanied by his bards, takes his leave. The festival is over. On the days following, the drummers call on the ministers and
[431] the other court dignitaries and are given many gifts (cowries and livestock).

All of these gifts are retained by the Bend'Naba or by someone chosen by him, and they are distributed later, with due regard for the hierarchy existing among the griot. The share of the older men is always greater than that accorded to the younger ones. [159]

Chapter 10

The Wives of the Naba. The sogoné. The Pogsiouré

Naba Warga and the Origin of the Sogoné

173
644 Naba Warga was constantly at war with the Riziam Naba, who
357 was called Mamzi (which means "I myself do not know"). He had

173 644 357 to be on the field of battle himself and for five years was unable to vanquish his enemy who was entrenched on a mountain and well supported by the local inhabitants.

After Warga had tried every means at his command to conquer his enemy, he hacked down the crops, which were almost ripe, and captured all the livestock that ventured down the mountain. In short, he devastated the country.

This succeeded so well that at last the local inhabitants, faced with famine, had to choose between the life of the chief they were sheltering and their own lives. Mamzi was therefore handed over and imprisoned at Saponé (1).

1. The principal canton town in the district of Ouagadougou.

During the five years of this difficult campaign, Naba Warga, aside from the warriors, had only a young boy to serve him since his wives were not present. The boy served as cook [160] and personal servant. In short, he performed the duties of a wife so well that Warga decided that he was worthy of some notice and decided to reward him.

When he had returned to his lands, he freed this faithful servitor after first giving him a wife. Then it occurred to him that several children in his court could perform the same services. He therefore ordered them to be recruited on a large scale, and these were the sogoné.

357 644 Every boy recruited to become a sogoné can expect to be given a wife, however little she may be worth, when he is freed.

[554 304] The sogoné have the same standing as the napagba,[1] and they wear the same ornaments. A group of bracelets worn on the wrists, in fact, distinguish the napagba and the sogoné from free women.

It is their duty to serve the naba. They form a half circle around the naba when he appears; they accompany him on his short outings; and they carry the scepter and all of the insignia of chiefdom. [293] They serve drinks to the naba, fan him when he takes a nap with fans called fika, make his bed, and do various errands. Likewise a naba never sends anyone but a sogoné to take a message to his wives.

1 [i.e. royal wives — Analyst]

644 The sogoné may not wear trousers. He wears a type of
357 drawers called benda. All the nanamsé (plural of naba) have
292 followed the example of Naba Warga, and nowadays the most insignificant kombéré has at least a dozen sogoné.

[161]

The Napogré. General Conditions. Number of Wives of the Emperor Today. Ornaments.

644 Depending on whether the napagha is destined for the chief
595 himself or for one of his brothers or sons, the instruction of the napogré are given either in the quarters of the pugtiéma (first wife of the naba) or at the home of one of the old nabissi.

644 Water is heated and in it is put a bit of karite butter and other
595 ingredients. After the girl's head, armpits, and public hair have
302 been shaved by some old women, the pugtiéma or the old man dips a hand into the water, utters certain cabalistic words, and gives the names of all the chiefs who have succeeded each other up to the father of the current ruler.

644 The water is then given to the old women who bathe the
595 young napagha. It is at this time that she is instructed in the duties and obligations of the napogré, what she may do and what she should avoid.

[301] The new wife is then adorned with bracelets, kouaba (plural of kobré), and with rouamba [ankle rings], or with only bracelets. The chief may marry her at once or, depending on the circumstances, send her to the man for whom she is destined.

[684] The napagha must never have relations with any man other than her husband as long as she lives. Formerly she was pitilessly killed if she broke this rule. [162]

[302 As we have just seen, the napagha has no hair, and this is
301] the primary distinctive mark. Also, she wears bracelets on her wrists, sometimes even on her arms and some on her ankles (this is done mostly by favorites). Finally some wear kouaba, ornaments most often worn by old women.

The number of wives or napagha varies according to the importance of the naba and especially according to the desires of naba. According to the 1926 census, the present Mogho Naba had thirty-seven wives.

644 It should be said that the napagha, who is regarded as a
595 piece of property, is part of the estate of a deceased chief. The
562 new naba takes some of the old and young wives, and the rest are
587 kept in the family of the nabissi. It is therefore not unusual to find women in the household of a naba who have been married to two or even three deceased chiefs. If they are not too old, they may give birth to children of the chief who is their second or third husband.

644 The establishment of a naba is often divided into three sec-
595 tions.

1. The zagkas sanga (the great house). All the old women, the unwanted ones, live here. Their mistress and guardian is the pugtiéma, who has charge of the house where the kimsé or manes of the ancestors live.

2. Zagbilin. The middle-aged women [163] who are still occasionally visited by their husband live here.

3. Dogoundba. This is the assemblage of several young and beautiful wives grouped around the favorite. They are called dogoundba, "guardians of the hut of the naba." These women receive all the favors, wear the finest ornaments, and are dressed in
[291] godé (1). Most of the time the dogoundba live in one or several

1. A skirt that is highly valued among the Mossi.

huts, depending on their number.

Each of the women in the other two sections has her own hut.

Since the naba has too many wives to be able to look after all of them, they must provide their own clothing and food. Hence, they are forced to cultivate plots and sell some of their produce. Each napagha has her own small field of millet, peanuts, beans, and peas.

The dogoundba have a collective plot. They help their husband who not only has to feed them, but is also required to support
[357] the sogoné and the samand'kamba (the latter are "people of the outer courtyard," another category of servitors who are sent on errands to the villages or who serve as grooms).

In the homes of the kombemba (plural of kombéré), it is the duty of the dogoundba to prepare food for the sogoné and for any

644
595 foreigners who are being housed by the naba. [164]

Each sogoné or samanbiga chooses a mother from among the
644 wives of the naba (only those in the first two sections).
595

He helps her to cultivate her plot of ground and receives in
357 return a little food over and above the ration of sagbo given to the
608 sogoné as a group.

At Nanore (1), for example, it was formerly the rule that

> 1. Canton in the administrative district of Koudougou.

when a woman brought some sagbo to her adopted son, she could not simply hand it to him. Instead, holes were dug in the courtyard of the naba, into which the woman put the sagbo and sauce. Then the young man came to eat the food, and later the woman came back for her bowls.

644 Finally, it is still forbidden for anyone to play a guitar when
595 a napagha is passing by unless the player is the naba himself or
533 someone called upon to play by the naba. It should be noted that
687 the Moaga prefers the guitar for intimate occasions. Therefore, to
832 play it when a napagha passes by is actually to court her.

The Pogsiouré, or the Recruitment of Sogoné and Saman'kamba

643 Aside from a few special cases limited by custom which we
562 shall presently describe, the naba can never dispose of the daughters of his subjects, either to make them [165] his own wives or to bestow them on someone else, without the permission of the parents.

Pogsiouré comes from pog', the diminutive of pagha, "woman," and from siouré, diminutive of sioubo, "to give anticipating a profit."

562 As a result of family quarrels or even voluntarily, a Moaga
431 "may give away his daughters and those of his brothers and close
643 relatives to the naba." It is obvious that the naba cannot keep all of these girls, so he gives some of them to his brothers, his uncles, his sons, and even to ordinary Mossi who have done him a service.

In the same way -- and this is more frequent -- every sogoné (page) or samand'biga [singular of samand'kamba] (bodyguard or

562
431 groom) who has served his naba satisfactorily receives, at the
643 time he is freed, a young girl who may be nubile, but who may, on the other hand, be just a small child.

In either case, the former servitor is required to call upon the naba from time to time and to take him gifts (cowries or roosters). If the girl is still living with her relatives, in addition to his trifling presents to the naba, the fiancé may make a few presents to his in-laws, although it is not obligatory.

562 Pogsiouré. The first daughter born of a marriage between a
643 Moaga subject (former servitor, son, brother, or uncle of the naba,
644 etc.) and the woman given to him [166] by the naba becomes the
858 "property" of the latter with full rights over her. She is known as "the daughter of the pogsiouré" and is fated to become pogsiouré in her turn.

643 If the first-born is a boy, the naba may bring him to his
644 court as soon as he reaches the age of discretion to make him either
858 a sogoné or a samand'biga, and the child's father cannot make the slightest objection.

357 This does not imply that under Mossi law the sogoné and samand'kamba must be children of the pogsiouré. As absolute master of all his subjects, the naba can recruit his servitors throughout his domain as he needs them, with no opposition by the Mossi to this recruitment.

644 The fate of the daughters of the pogsiouré. The girls are
858 taken from their relatives as soon as they are old enough to work
562 and are entrusted by the naba to his own wives.

The latter, for all practical purposes, become the adoptive mothers of these children and, as such, see to their food and clothing. This does not prevent the real mother from bringing cowries and clothing to her daughter, and to make sure that the child will be well treated by the napagha (wife of the naba), she sometimes
[431] even brings the latter a gift of kalgo (soumbala) or karite butter (kamé).

When the girls reach puberty, the naba chooses the most at-
[584] tractive for his fiancées, and the [167] others are given to some of his administrators or to his own relatives.

562 593 644 Rights of parents over their daughters. Although, as has already been noted, the parents retain the right to help their daughters in small ways, they may not, under any circumstances or pretext, break off their engagement nor prevent their marriage. Still less can they promise the daughter to a third party or expect any sort of gifts from the naba.

Later on, in the event that there is agreement between the parties, the husbands may give trifling presents to their in-laws, but there is neither obligation nor coercion to do so.

562 858 Exceptions. Girls given to the marabouts by the naba are considered a kind of alms (saraka), and any children born of such unions belong to the true fathers and may not be disposed of by the chief.

644 357 858 Disposition of boys. Boys recruited as sogoné or samand'kamba are required to serve the naba faithfully, but they continue to belong to their real relatives from whom they annually receive cowries and particularly the fougoibga (blanket).

644 357 661 Although the sogoné are regularly fed and clothed by the naba -- because [168] a naba must always be surrounded by many pages -- this is not done for the samand'kamba. In many cantons and especially in Ouagadougou at the emperor's court, they receive only a meager pittance every two, three, four, or seven days since their role as "vagabond" or groom is supposed to provide them with ample opportunities to rob or rather to pillage the natives. During the winter the grooms and other samand'kamba go out into fields of maize and millet at night or in the morning, and there is general looting. As for any fowl lingering in the karaga (fields of millet near the huts), they are killed and hidden in the bundles of hay used to feed the horses. There are exceptions to this rule: some ministers of the emperor and canton chiefs give their samand'kamba at least one meal per day -- at night -- and during the winter, because they are doing field work, they are given cooked beans or sagbo (millet cakes) at noon.

644 357 608 In general way, however, it may be said that this type of servitor is not supported by the naba. Like the sogoné, the samand'biga chooses a mother at the court of the naba. He helps her cultivate her plot and performs other small services for her (weaving her clothes,

644 357 608 for example), and in return the adoptive mother gives him a bit of food, over and above his regular ration.

644 357 [169] In view of these circumstances, those who are not required at the home of the naba to care for the horses or for some special service spend half the year with their relatives.

644 357 565 It is perhaps of interest to point out that the samand'kamba are mostly sons of the chiefs of villages of nabissi (sons of naba), sons of nakomsé (descendants of naba and nabissi), and sometimes even sons of canton chiefs at the court of the Mogho Naba. There is also the child of the ordinary Moaga, who was not made a sogoné because he was not thought worthy of the position. The rigorous discipline required of the former young men teaches them "to suffer in order to be able to command."

644 357 Anticipation of freedom. If the sogoné or samand'biga is the eldest son and is old enough to marry at the time of his father's death, the naba is required to free him, even though the period of obligatory service has not been completed.

643 844 584 Another custom, the zan-boko. There is another curious custom among the Mossi. If during the course of his journeys the naba stops in a village and during his stay a girl is born to a local Mossi woman, the child is his, with full rights, if he has been told of the birth.

However, the naba often knows nothing about the event, and the father takes care not to speak of it and then makes whatever disposition of the child he wishes.

844 584 [170] This custom, however, is practiced to its fullest extent between Mossi. A Moaga sana (stranger) passing through the village is invited by the elders to dig the zan-boko (hole in which the placenta must be buried). This is his zounogo, "opportunity." He gives a few cowries (100 to 200) to the head of the family and becomes the fiancé of the baby girl. Later on, when she reaches puberty, the man will make the customary gifts to the parents, and nothing will stand in the way of the marriage.

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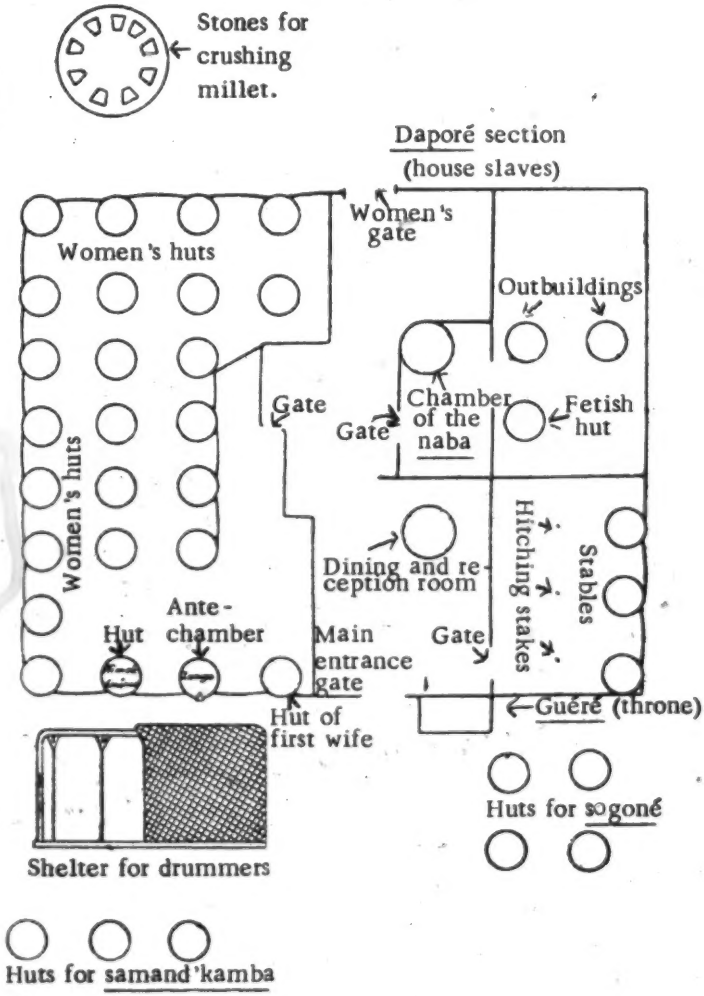

Dwelling of the Naba.

643 imposes a heavy obligation on the chief. He is expected to in-
241 vite the emperor's principal bodyguards (samand'kamba) -- and there are many of them -- to a meal. He is also required to furnish a basket of millet for sowing the field of the Mogho Naba when the first rains come.

652 Utilization of the produce of the emperor's fields. As noted
644 in an earlier chapter [255] under Labor required of Mossi subjects by their naba," the Mogho Naba does not use the millet from his own field. The produce is used to feed the horses, to support the pages and samand'kamba, and especially to make beer on the festive days known as the tinsé and basgha of the king.

[256] Chapter 17

Inheritance and Rights of Succession among the Mossi

428 We have dealt with the question of inheritance at considerable length in the chapter on "Customs and Enthronement of Mossi Chiefs." We return to the subject because it seems necessary to clarify certain details of this question which is so important from the legal point of view.

The opening of succession. The succession is open upon the death of an individual, but property is not passed until after the funeral ceremonies (for all that concerns funerals, see the section on "Death").

Why is there a delay in taking possession of the property? As we have seen above in many chapters, the Moaga is superstitious. An old belief has it that to take possession of the property of the deceased before the funeral is celebrated will bring certain death to the heir or will cause some calamity for the whole family.

Further, since all the members of the family must be assembled for the funeral observances, the inheritance is well publicized, and [257] no one can later claim to have been defrauded.

Requirements for succession. In order to inherit, the following requirements must be met.

1. To be born before the succession is opened.

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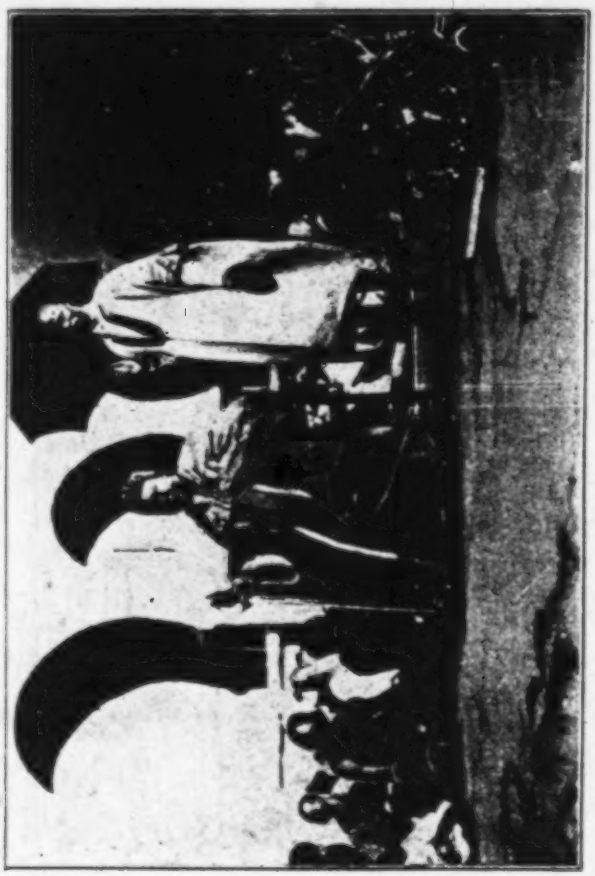

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Mogho Naba
The Ruler of all the Mossi and a Servitor.

From the Mission of the White Fathers
at Ouagadougou.

631 The canton chiefs consult the oldest men in the village where they reside, and the village chiefs make no decisions bearing on the community without assembling the elders and listening to their advice.

Everything is carried out through the channels of the hierarchy. A province chief never transmits an order directly to a village ruled by a canton chief, but he advises the latter who notifies the village chief, and the village chief in turn calls the elders together, conveys the orders to them, and through them informs all his subjects. The orders passed down in this formal way are always carried out, but if perchance a canton chief should wish to disobey his province chief, he would be seconded by his people who recognize his authority before any other.

643 645 701 The last Moro Nabas had become to some extent idle kings. The protocol to which they were subjected by custom constantly encumbered them, not unlike European court etiquette. The Moro Naba was surrounded with a veritable court. As mentioned above, his High Council was composed of five chief ministers. To these should be added the Iman who represents the Moslems and who wields a certain influence, and the Teng'Soba. /Tr. Among the Mossi there is both a Teng'Soba, earth priest, and a Tan'Soba, war minister. It would seem that the latter is meant here./ The duties of the latter are quite specialized. He does not live in the same village as the Moro Naba, and he rules a canton. In case of war, he is consulted on the timeliness of the hostilities and on their chances of success. It devolves upon him at this time to make the proper sacrifices and to question the ancestral spirits. When war has been decided on, he takes command of the armies, and everyone, the ministers and the canton chiefs, must obey him. The Moro Naba remains in Ouagadougou.

644 839 A crowd of subalterns gravitate around these high dignitaries. The eunuchs are not very respectable people; sometimes habitual thieves were made eunuchs, as were, in general, those pages guilty of too much familiarity with the naba's wives. Some of them could reach a high position. The Kamisoro were always eunuchs, and several important cantons were set aside for them.

644 The pages are young boys, hand-picked from the country's most gifted children. They must serve the naba, and they bear the name soroné. The naba is never alone; he always has one or several pages by his side. One holds the fan, one stands near the monarch to help him shift his position, another takes care of his shoes, yet another of his scepter; the great cup-bearer constantly holds a gourd filled with strong millet beer and covered by a tray of artistically woven basketry.

644 The arms of the sorone are ornamented with two, three, or four copper
[301] bracelets, often of alternate yellow and red metal. Sometimes they wear them at the wrists and above the elbow, and occasionally both ankles are adorned with thick bracelets or even with copper gaiters which make walking quite difficult but which are prized very highly.
[201] All these pages wait on the monarch hand and foot. If he coughs, they all rub the palms of their hands together and snap their fingers. This is repeated /18/ even when he drinks, sneezes, or spits. If he rises, the whole court rises, and when he feels those needs common to all mortals, the whole court follows and squats as he does.

644 On important feast days, the naba is followed by music, and every
533 time he makes a gesture, says a word, or takes a step, the musicians
534 play on various kinds of drums. The typical drum peculiar to Mossi country, bindré, which only the members of the drummers' guild are allowed to play, is made of a gourd which may reach 70 or 80 centimeters in diameter. The calabash is emptied, and the side where the stem was attached is removed and replaced with a tightly stretched
533 goat skin. By hitting this skin with his hands, the artist draws many different sounds from his instrument. It is quite an art to play this drum well, and the members of the guild are trained to it from childhood. They are the troubadours, the griot of the country; they sing the praises of chiefs whose genealogies they know by heart, they frequent the markets, they follow the rich and proclaim them to be the bravest, the most generous, the most handsome men this world has ever known, for the sake of a few gifts. They attend all festivities.

534 Another instrument is the lounga, made of a hollowed piece of wood shaped like an hourglass; the two ends are rather broad and joined by a narrow cylinder. This drum is carried under the arm, and its two openings are closed with goat skins joined by cords. The artist stretches these cords more or less tightly by clasping the drum between his arm and the left side of his body, while he hits one of the skins with a small curved stick ending in a little ball and held in his right hand.

The naba's orchestra also includes flutes, from which the natives, especially the Peul, draw pretty but monotonous sounds, and small one-string violins which give forth pleasing tones under a skillful bow.

644 If the Moro Naba is to ride on horseback, the grooms bring his
492 mount magnificently decked out in a copper headstall and a large embroidered rug which covers its back and rump completely. A piece of embroidered cloth hides the horse's chest, and the Arab-type saddle,

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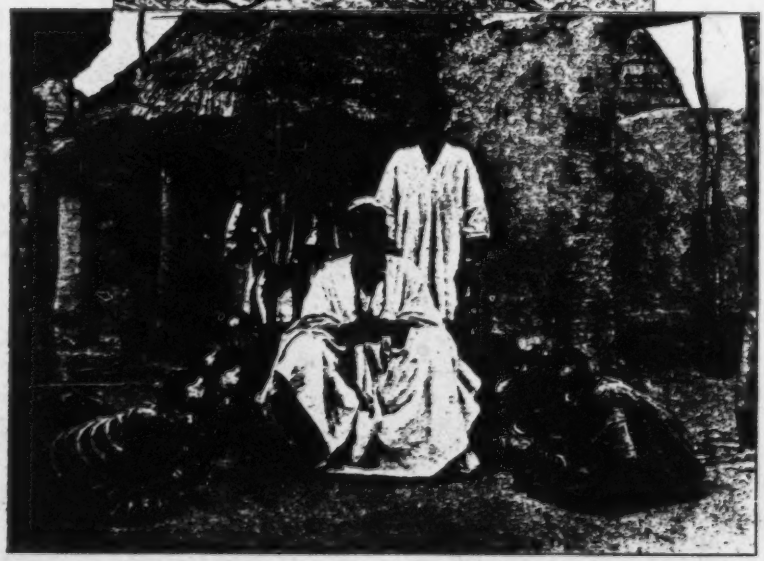

Above: The Moro Naba. Behind him, his brother, about twelve years old and the head of a large province, flanked by two pages.

Below: The Bullom Naba and his Pages. Behind him, his two Christian sons.

644 with its tall copper stirrups, bears on either side a larger copper tray.
[492] The drums are played when the naba leaves his dwelling, shift to a different tune when he places his foot in the stirrup, and shift once more when he sets out on his way. The whole population over a radius of several kilometers is thus apprised of the Moro Naba's every gesture. A page precedes him bearing his pillow, and another carrying his scepter. The ministers present at the court and the foreign chiefs present at the capital hasten to mount their horses. Several of the Moro Naba's bodyguards accompany him: four strapping fellows walk by his side, their arms leaning against the horse's rump as though to prevent the monarch from falling, while horsemen armed with spears do a fantasia, running 100 meters ahead of the naba, brandishing their spears, returning at full gallop, and setting off again. This constant coming and going entertains the naba who does not gallop.

631 /19/ Every province and canton chief has his court, his ministers,
644 his pages, his drummers. Eunuchs, however, are solely the prerogative of the Moro Naba. In order to qualify for pages, pillow, and spurs, a chief must be invested properly. The present naba of Koupéla who failed to follow the traditions possesses none of these privileges.

The investiture of nabas follows a complex tradition. Each naba invests his own vassals in office. The Moro Naba invests the province chiefs, except for those who hold the title dimma; the province chiefs invest the canton chiefs, and the latter invest the chiefs of villages within their jurisdiction. The right of nomination is an important source of revenue for the nabas.

622 Upon the death of a village chief, several candidates vie for power.
431 They all go to the naba who rules over them, to greet him and to offer him numerous gifts, cowries, chickens, sheep, and, if they are sufficiently wealthy, salt bars, a horse, sometimes even a wife. The one who gives the most has the best chance of being chosen, and the naba decides to announce his choice only when he feels that the candidates are running out of gifts.

622 In Koupéla, a village chief under the direct jurisdiction of the province chief is nominated in the following way. The candidates must apply to the minister who has control over their village. He is the indispensable intermediary between them and the naba who is to make the choice, he is their guide, their sor'soba. When the nomination draws near, the minister goes at night to see the naba, and together they agree on the choice to be made. They may appoint

174 Yemen. But the indication that this country is presently inhabited by the Songhay /sic/ certainly points to Djerma or Zaberma, slightly east of the Niger River in the Say and Dosso region. By dissociating the Moslem legend (undoubtedly created by some Yarse Moslem of the Mossi) from the rest of the tale, one still comes back to the temporary and distant occupation of Djerma by the ancestors of the Mossi.

174 Delafosse, on the other hand, contrary to Dr. Ruelle, Captain
114 Lambert, and Lieutenant Marc, although, like the others, he has the Mossi come from Dagomba to their present habitat (see Haut-Sénégal-Niger /Upper Senegal and Niger/, Vol. I, pp. 305-310), seems disinclined to accept the idea of an eastern origin. He says (page 310, in a note), "Lieutenant Marc seems to want to attribute an eastern
174 origin to the Mossi. To strengthen his hypothesis, he says that the
171 organization of the court of the Morho nâba (emperors of the Mossi)
●644 is unique in western Africa, while there are /11/ equivalents in
114 Haoussa, Bornu, etc. I should like to point out that this argument is of little value, precisely because, contrary to Lieutenant Marc's theory, one finds in all ancient states of western Africa (Ghana, Mali, Tekrour, Gao, Dahomey, Benin, etc.) an organization absolutely analogous to that of the Mossi court (see part IV of this work and compare with the reports of Arab geographers and early European
174 travelers)." Of course I agree with Delafosse in not finding Lieutenant
114 Marc's argument very penetrating (1), but Ruelle, Lambert, and

1. Here is the argument as developed by Lieutenant Marc (op. cit., p. 134, 135):

"The feudal organization of the Mossi country, the court of the Moro-Naba, its pages, and its eunuchs, are all unique in western Africa. On the other hand, the black monarchs, as they are known in central Africa, seem to live in a setting that greatly resembles the one in which the Moro-Naba lives. The sultans of Zinder, Bornu, and Wadai have also a court, eunuchs, and pages. The little we know about the organization of their empires seems rather similar to what we have seen among the Mossi. But our

5: Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1959
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composed of two major groups of communities," Fortes goes on to describe this pattern succinctly: 171

> On the one side are those that claim to be descendants of immigrants from parts of the country other than their present habitats. On the other side are communities that claim to be the autochthonous inhabitants. . . . Many of the immigrant communities claim descent from forbears of the Mampuru ruling stock. Though now wholly amalgamated with the alleged aboriginal inhabitants, they have certain ritual observances and a system of chieftainship similar to those of the Mamprusi. . . . The institution distinctive of the autochthonous communities is the office of "Custodian of the Earth." This ritual office, involving priestly functions in connection with the cult of the Earth, is found among many West African peoples from the Senegal to the mouth of the Niger. In the Voltaic region it is the exclusive prerogative of the autochthonous communities.[2] [793]

The inhabitants of the Yatenga at the time of the arrival of the Mossi were the Kurumankobe, or Fulse, as they are called by the Mossi. Their descendants recognize their indigenous origin but have become almost wholly acculturated to the Mossi. While most Mossi bear the sib name Wedraogo and maintain political control in the Yatenga, the descendants of the Kurumankobe usually have the sib name Savadogo and are excluded from the exercise of political authority. They have retained the custodianship of the earth, and the elders of their lineages and sibs are the Mossi's *Tenga Soba namba*, their "earth custodians," charged with propitiating the supernatural forces of nature. 173 563 614 [793]

POLITICAL AND SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

The present king of the Yatenga, the *Yatenga Naba*, is a lineal descendant of the first ruler, Naba Yadiga. The members of the lineage of the king are called "those who maintain themselves upon us" (*riim namba*). Directly subordinate to the authority of the Yatenga Naba are his four grand ministers, each of whom has authority over a particular province (*solum*) of the Yatenga.[3] 631 [644] [635]

The province over which each of the grand ministers presides as lord is divided up into a number of cantons (*tense*), each of which is ruled by a chief who is the central political authority both of the village in which he resides and of the villages within the canton. Like the province, the concept of the canton is not precisely territorial. Some villages may owe 631 634

[2] Meyer Fortes, *The Dynamics of Clanship among the Tallensi* (London: Oxford University Press, 1945), p. 6.

[3] These provinces refer not only to geographical areas of the kingdom but to particular categories of the population. For example, the *Balum Naba* has direct authority over the southern regions of the Yatenga and indirect authority over the cantons of Riziam and Zittenga, political entities which have never fully recognized the central authority of the *Yatenga Naba*. This same minister is also especially charged with maintaining liaison with certain of the more important earth custodians throughout the Yatenga.

428 As for the soukala itself, he keeps it. He leaves his own
593 soukala, along with everything he owns, to come and live in the soukala of the deceased. In order to put the soukala he is leaving to some use, however, he sends one of his unmarried brothers (that is to say, one who lived up to that time with the deceased) to settle there. He immediately gives this brother one of his father's wives, one of the wives in the estate, and sends him, thus married, to settle in the soukala he is leaving.

593 I asked my informant why the father does not keep his oldest
578 married son with him instead of having him build a new soukala on the outside, since the son returns to the paternal soukala anyway when the father dies. The Mossi chief I was questioning replied that if the father kept his oldest son by his side, the latter, when married and growing older, would wish for his father's death in order to become independent. Wishing for his father's death, he might be tempted to bring it about. If settled in his own soukala, on the other hand, the head of a household and independent, he would nurture no ill thoughts against his father.

593 We shall see later that this feeling of fear and suspicion toward
578 the eldest son is carried to an extreme among the Moro Nabas. This
644 is understandable, since kingship is inherited. Once married, therefore, the eldest son of the prince went far from his father, to a soukala of his own and remained there until the Moro Naba's death.

428 As for the father's fields, the eldest son keeps them all if he is
593 able to work them all. If he is not able to do so, he gives the surplus over and above what he can work to his brothers.

As far as livestock is concerned, the eldest son gives some to his younger brothers and even to his sisters.

The same applies to slaves and cowries.

428 As for wives, if there are many, he gives some to his younger
593 brothers. Thus, for example, if there are ten wives and he has two
587 brothers, he gives two wives to each /551/ brother and keeps six for himself (let us add that the deceased, before dying, often gives a wife to his younger brother or brothers).

428 To summarize, the eldest son gets the soukala and the fields.
593 As for movable property, he takes about 50 percent and leaves the other half to the younger sons and to the daughters. There is a sharing, therefore, although a very uneven one.

645 1. The Kamsoro Naba, chief of the eunuchs and prime minister, a sort of minister of the interior.

2. The Ouidi Naba, chief of the cavalry.

3. The Gounga Naba, chief of the infantry.

4. The Laralé Naba, guardian of the tombs of the Moro Nabas.

5. The Baloum Naba, major-domo and chief of the soroné (pages). He might be said to rule over the interior of the palace.

Those five ministers ruled over the five Mossi provinces that
645 were administered directly: Kamsoro, Ouidi, Gounga, Laralé,
635 and Baloum. As we can see, those provinces had no proper names, no names of their own, and each took the name of the dignitary who governed it. Thus, they were not true geographical or ethnic provinces, but artificial districts lifted out of an area that was both too extensively parceled out and too homogeneous to yield spontaneously anything but villages and cantons.

644 In addition to those five ministers, among which the Kamsoro Naba and Baloum Naba seem to have been the most important, there were other dignitaries and servitors, as follows: /569/

1. The Tamsaba or Kinsaba, high chief of the bodyguards.
2. The Samandé Naba, chief of the bodyguards.
3. The Pouy Naba, chief of the fetisheers.
4. The Gandé Naba, high priest and sacrificer.
5. The Dapouy Naba, chief of the servitors.
6. The Kambo Naba, subchief of the servitors.
7. The Bindé Naba, chief of the Moro Naba's drummers.
8. The Ouidianga Naba, chief of the grooms.
9. The Mendo Naba, chief or representative of the butchers.
10. The Dara Haba, chief of the markets.
11. The Kamboué Naba, executioner.
12. Finally, the Yarsé Naba, chief or representative of the Yarsé settled among the Mossi. The prestige he enjoyed actually ranked him immediately beneath the five ministers and the Tamsaba.

"The various functions at the court of the Moro Naba," says
[594] Moulins, "are hereditary in the sense that their holders are always chosen by the sovereign among close relatives of the previous occupant in office.

644 "In addition to these dignitaries, the Moro Naba is surrounded with a veritable army of soroné (pages), samandé (bodyguards), ourkima (grooms), and jussaba (eunuchs)."

Some explanations are in order concerning the soroné. They are young boys or adolescents, from seven or eight to fifteen years old, who are to be found not only around the Moro Naba but around all Mossi chiefs, no matter who they may be, ministers, dignitaries, canton chiefs, and even village chiefs. These chiefs obtain them, as we saw earlier, by claiming the first-born son as well as the first-born daughter of all the men to whom they give a wife. The boy is made into a soroné, and the girl used to perpetuate the recruitment of soroné and servitors by giving her in marriage to one of them.

644 The soroné wear their hair like women. Like them, they wear heavy copper bracelets at the wrists and ankles, and if rumor is to 838 be credited, they not only /570/ bear the attributes of women but also substitute for them occasionally. It seems that the Mossi must 834 not have carnal relations with their wives on Friday. This is a religious ordinance meant to ingratiate the divinities, but it overlooked the soroné.... In any case this corruption does not reach the common masses of the Mossi, who do not have the means to employ soroné. Thus it applies only to chiefs.

644 No matter what the case may be, the soroné are usually selected among the most attractive boys, and some of them have great beauty with their woman's hairdo.

Another duty of their position is to remain virgins... as far as women are concerned.

644 "Every year," says Moulins, "the chastity of the Moro Naba's 789 soroné is put to a test. They are requested by the Pouy Naba to cast their 684 reflection into a gourd full of water, and according to the manner in which the reflection is cast, they are proclaimed free from stain or convicted of carnal relations, in which case, prior to our occupation, they were put to death without further delay. This is because the soroné, as confidants of the Naba, are often entrusted with state secrets and could only maintain the discretion required by their position if they were to avoid the entreaties of love.

644 "When the soroné reach manhood, the Naba gives them a wife and sends them away. The first child born of the union between a soroné and the wife given him by the Naba devolves to the latter,

644 who will make him into a soroné if he is a boy, or alone have the right to give her in marriage if she is a girl."

643 Moulins also provides interesting details on the manner in which the Moro Naba spends his days, or rather spent them in the past, for this description refers to the state of affairs prior to the French occupation.

"From Ouarga's reign onward, the Moro Nabas, who had previously resided successively in various parts of the empire, settled at Ouagadougou where they have lived ever since. Custom constrains them never to leave /571/ the capital except in unusually serious circumstances. This is because the land falls into anarchy [674 when the sovereign is absent from Ouagadougou. All theft, pillage, 696] and murder committed at that time remain unprosecuted.

644 "Every morning at seven, the Moro Naba emerges from his hut. His saddled horse waits before the door. He mounts it and pretends 173 to set out on his way, but after riding around his hut he dismounts and goes back into his hut only to come out again immediately.

"This formality of the protocol has the following origin. A long time ago the favorite wife of the Moro Naba having fled to La, the sovereign wished to go and fetch her himself. He mounted his horse and was about to leave when all the court dignitaries rushed to him, admonishing him not to carry out his project, for his absence from Ouagadougou could only result in anarchy. The monarch gave way, and soon afterwards his wife returned of her own accord. It is in memory of the magnanimity of this sovereign, who sacrificed himself in the interests of his people, that every morning since that time the Moro Naba has pretended to prepare for departure and to then give up his plan.

644 "Following this ceremony, the Moro Naba settles himself in a recess sunk into the wall that surrounds his residence, and then, to the strains of abundant music, the whole court comes to the sovereign and prostrates itself before him, brow in the dust, forearms striking the ground in rhythm with a great clicking of bracelets. Then business is attended to.

"First, the five province chiefs come forward in order of precedence, relate to the Moro Naba those events which have taken place since the preceding day, and receive his instructions for the day. Then they present to him the canton and village chiefs and the common natives who wish for an audience.

●644 "The Moro Naba, assisted by his ministers and with the help of frequent libations of dolo, listens to the requests which are made /572/ to him and passes sentence on the trials which are referred to him.

"Around eleven o'clock he withdraws into his hut and rests until three o'clock, at which time he comes and seats himself on his throne again.

"The Moro Naba's every gesture is prescribed by a minute protocol and accompanied by flute and drum music and finger snappings by his entourage.

"Is he riding out for a short stroll around Ouagadougou? The whole court follows him, either on foot or on horseback. His griot make the air re-echo with their shouts, to the accompaniment of drums and flutes. A groom leads his horse by the rein, while two soronê hold his stirrups and a third one, on horseback by his side, shelters him with a huge umbrella. Other pages follow carrying his pillow, his sword, and canari of dolo from which the sovereign draws frequent and abundant libations along the way.

"At night the Moro Naba, in disguise and accompanied by a single soronê, wanders incognito through the various village quarters in order to find out what is going on without being recognized.

[782] "On certain set dates, he goes to localities named Sabaye and Saraboutenga, not far from Ouagadougou, where he sacrifices beeves, sheep, and chickens.

444 595 "The Moro Naba has very numerous wives. In addition to those he marries himself, there are those of his predecessor and all those that devolve to him in the course of his reign, among them, in certain cases, the adulterous wives of his subjects.

644 595 684 "The sovereign's wives do not all live with him. They are settled in villages ruled by eunuchs and near which no one could come, on pain of death, prior to our occupation. Every year the faithfulness of the Moro Naba's wives is checked by submitting them to the same test as the soronê. Adultery is punished by death for the wife as well as her partner. It even seems that adultery with one of the sovereign's wives is regarded /573/ as the least pardonable crime a man can commit. In fact, the nakomsê or sons of chiefs are liable to the death penalty only in this case.

664 554 "The wives of the Moro Haba never give birth or raise their children at his own place of residence, but only in one of the eunuch villages. In theory they do not stand above the wives of common natives, but in practice they enjoy high consideration among the Mossi, like all that is connected with the Moro Naba.

"The sons of the sovereign, once weaned, are entrusted to a province or canton chief who is put in charge of their education. [582] At the age of ten they are married and settled in a village, where they live, surrounded by a court, but without necessarily being given a territorial command.

"The prerogatives attached to the title of Moro Naba's son are vast as long as the monarch is alive. They grant the right to steal, to loot, and even to kill with impunity.

"Upon the death of the Moro Naba, his sons become mere nakomsé (sons of chiefs) whose position nevertheless remains quite privileged.

643 644 554 "One of the sons of the deceased sovereign, however, is granted special privileges. At the death of the Moro Naba, the latter's wives elect one of his young sons who adopts his name and, so to speak, perpetuates him. He has no /territorial/ command, but he is surrounded by a court similar to that of the Moro Naba, he enjoys respect almost equal to that paid to the latter, and he is a sacred figure. No one has the right to contradict him or to harm him.

644 554 "As for the Moro Naba's daughters, although in principle they do not stand above ordinary Mossi girls, in practice they are treated with the strictest respect by all natives. Once married, they have almost complete freedom of action vis-à-vis their husband, and they often take advantage of this to lead a most unruly existence.

643 766 "When the Moro Naba's death has been verified, his burial is carried out and followed by the funeral ceremonies, which are held in the same fashion as for a common native, with the sole difference /574/ that they have more brilliance and that the sacrifices are more sizable.

642 672 "For the whole duration of the interregnum, the land falls into a state of complete anarchy. Everyone has the right to kill, loot, and steal as he pleases. Convicts who are serving sentence are fully pardoned and set free.

567 whenever the master had work to give him. He worked for himself the rest of the time, that is to say, one day out of three during the cultivation period and throughout the dry season when he was not "on duty."

He was fed by the master when he worked for him. When he worked for himself, he procured his own food.

The bingo provided his own clothing, except when he was absolutely incapable of doing so. Then he appealed to his master.

The bingo's daughters were given in marriage by the master, who took them for himself or gave them to his sons, to his brothers, etc. In return, the bingo's sons had to be provided with wives by their master and not by their father. In any case, they worked for him, like their father, and could no more be sold than he could, unless they betrayed the master with his wives.

567 The bingo could own property since he had time to work for him-
428 self. At his death, his inheritance went not to his master but to his oldest son (unless he had an enslaved brother nearby, but I am considering the case of a former yembraogo, bought by the master, given a wife by him, and thus becoming a bingo, and then having children). At the death of his eldest son /266/ the inheritance went to his younger brother, etc. The master came into the inheritance only when there were no heirs.

567 On the other hand, the master could request from his slave whatever he wished, a chicken, a goat, a beef. The slave could not refuse, since everything belonged to the master on principle, the slave being his also.

The bingo could never free himself or be freed by his master. The number of generations which had elapsed made no difference.

The bingo could belong to the head of a family, the head of a compound, the head of a work group, or to a mere household head. They were owned on an individual basis. When a man who owned a bingo or yembraogo owed labor to another man, for example, to the head of his work group, the bingo or yembraogo likewise owed labor to this man and went to work with his master.

567 It must be noted that the bingo of the Moro Naba, that is, the
644 "Crown bingo," were in a special position from every point of view. As we shall see later under "Public Administration" /not translated/, they came under the authority of the Rassam Naba or Rassoum Naba, one of the four ministers, who was sometimes called Bingo Naba for

567 this reason. They did not work for the Moro Naba except seven or
●644 eight days a year when they were called along with all the other inhabitants of Ouahigouya, without exception, to the Moro Naba's fields. Actually, they were thus free men as far as work was concerned. Half their daughters, however, reverted to the Moro Naba, who took them for himself or for his close relatives. On the other hand, they supported themselves completely (food, clothing, etc.). The Moro Naba gave them no assistance whatever in this respect.

Let us add that the ordinary captives, the bingo of the common Mossi, found a safe retreat at the court of the Moro Naba. If a slave was dissatisfied with his master, he would run away and take asylum with the chief of Yatenga. The latter handed him to the Rassam Naba, who saw to it that a hut and a field were given to him (if he was married) and a wife as well (if he did not have any). As long as he was not married, he would cultivate the fields of the Moro Naba's wives, who provided him with food in return. Once married, he would work the soil, labor for himself and his wife, and have no obligations other than the general duties of the bingo who belonged to the Moro Naba, as we have seen above. In short, he would acquire the general status of a Crown slave.

Let us add, however, that if the master came and claimed his slave from the Moro Naba, the captive was sometimes returned. This depended on the fairness of the master's case (he had never mistreated his slave, had always been good to him, etc.) and also on the more or less sizable gift which he presented to the Moro Naba in order to gain his good graces.

The bingo of the Riziam Naba, an independent king as we have already noted /not translated/, were in the same position as the bingo of the Moro Naba and not in the position of ordinary bingo. The same applied to the bingo of the three great chiefs /267/ of the canton, the Zitenga Naba, Ratenga Naba, and Roussoum Naba.

566 6. Serfs. In Yatenga, there were serfs of a sort, the bagaré, to use the Mossi term. The only ones who had them, however, were the Moro Naba of Yatenga, the Moro Naba of Riziam, and a few great canton chiefs, such as the Zitenga Naba and the Ratenga Naba. Not even the Moro Naba's ministers were entitled to own them, much less the common Mossi. The bagaré was a Peul slave, a dimadio (rimaïbé in the plural) who had been captured from the Peul or who had fled from them to the Mossi, in short, a former rimaïbé who had

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643 the name of the current ruler. When Crozat asked one of his Mossi bearers why Boukary Koutou had chosen a title that means "elephant," the man declared, "He is an elephant; he is king of all kings as the elephant is king of all animals; a great elephant-king he is."[2] Another Moaga, meeting Crozat on the road to Ouagadougou, told him to be prepared to meet a monarch "whose riches are inexhaustible and whose splendor is marvelous. [644] He and his family wear only the most admirable European clothes; a thousand horses stand before his door, and there are more than a thousand women in his house. He is served by one hundred eunuchs; he commands as master 333 chiefs; and when he speaks to them it is as though God himself had spoken; everyone bows down before him and obeys."[3] Crozat, looking at the Mogho Naba through European eyes, did not find the "great [576] king" he had expected. Yet he and later European visitors to the Mossi [516] capital did affirm that all Mossi officials and district chiefs prostrated themselves in obeisance to their sovereign, even if they did not subsequently follow his instructions.[4]

643 Many rituals associated with the person and court of the Mogho Naba 796 served to emphasize the high esteem in which he was held by his subjects. For example, the sovereign showed himself every morning at a ceremony called "Ouend pous yan" (literally, "God rises," or "the sun rises") that survives to this day. The name of this ceremony has led many scholars [114] and travelers to assert that traditionally the Mogho Naba was considered a divine king. Dim Delobson states that this ceremony "shows the regard which the Mossi have for their chief, since they compare him to the sun, and thus to a 'god.'"[5] However, the Mossi do not now and probably never did regard their monarchs either as gods or as divine kings. There is a great deal of difference between regarding a man as "powerful and brilliant" like the sun and regarding him as divine. As a matter of fact, the [522] Mossi very often dramatize in humorous fashion the all-too-human frailties of their rulers, without ever considering it sacrilegious to do so. On the other hand, the Mogho Naba, as the supreme ruler, was expected to follow faithfully the strict etiquette demanded by his exalted position.

643 The morning ceremony was opened by the ruler's chief page, the *so-* 796 *ghone-kasanga,* who sprinkled a phylacteric solution around a throne 644 (*guere*) in the courtyard in front of a reception room called the *zongo.* Other pages (*soghondamba*) brought out a large cushion (*naghpure*), the ruler's sword, and other personal accouterments, and placed them on the [292] throne. Still other pages aided the Mogho Naba in his toilet. He was clothed in a large red robe, which symbolized the rising sun; he wore a bonnet surmounted by silver streamers (*wazourfou sebere*), which repre-
-sented the sun itself.

sented the sun itself. The toilet was performed in complete silence, for no one was allowed to speak to the monarch until after the ceremony. Meanwhile, in the courtyard, the court dignitaries, visitors, and the musicians and minstrels (*bendere*) took their places. The provincial ministers sat on their respective stones (*coganaramse*), and the visitors sat by their hosts. The pages at the door of the zongo awaited the moment when the Mogho Naba and his escort would emerge from the zongo. On seeing the two pages who preceded the monarch, they snapped their fingers as a signal to the still silent bendere.

On seeing the monarch, the chief musician, the Bendere Naba, rubbed his fingers across the top of his drum to produce the sound of a lion's growl, and the other drummers and violinists played the royal air, "Ouend pous yan." The head guard, the Kàmbo Naba, and his men, carrying guns, walked up from the side and knelt down facing the assembly. And the *samande-kamba*, the "servants of the courtyard," came with heavy batons to guard against crimes of lese majesty. From the wings came a groom with a partly saddled ceremonial horse. As soon as the monarch was seated on his throne, his two pages moved to the front and knelt down facing the courtyard. The salutations now began. The first group of ministers, led by the Baloum Naba and including the Samande Naba, the Samande Nabila, the Ouedrange Naba, the Kamsaogho Naba, and the Zusoaba Kasanga, left their stones and came to the throne with slow steps and bowed heads. A few yards from the monarch, they knelt on the ground, and with their fingers folded and their thumbs in the air, leaned forward, struck the ground with both hands three times, and then rubbed the palms of their left hands with the fingers of their right. Then they arose, and with heads still bowed walked backwards to their places.[6] With the music still playing, another group of ministers, led by the Ouidi Naba and including such men as the Gounga Naba, the Larhalle Naba, and the Pwe Naba, saluted the ruler in the same manner. On Fridays and other Islamic holy days, the Moslem Imam representing the Ouagadougou congregation read aloud from the Koran. This part of the ceremony ended when the Mogho Naba rose, and, with the measured steps and swaying gait that signified royalty, retired to the zongo, preceded by his two pages.[7]

A few minutes later, the monarch returned to the courtyard without his red robe and glittering headdress. There was a second round of salutations comparable to the first, but this time the Ouidi Naba and his group did not appear unless it was an important occasion or important guests were present. When this part of the ceremony was over, the monarch called for his half-saddled horse and announced that he wished to go to

643 La, a village near Koudougou district. His eldest wife, the *Pughtiema,*
796 appeared carrying her household utensils in order to accompany her husband. However, all the ministers, led by the Kamsaogho Naba, implored the monarch to have his horse unsaddled and to postpone the trip until the following day. Feigning anger, the Mogho Naba reluctantly agreed to remain in the capital, ordered his horse unsaddled, dismissed his wife, and re-entered the palace.[8]

173 The tradition about the origin of this ritual reveals something of the
643 Mossi attitude toward the human frailties of their rulers. It appears that
796 Poko, the favorite wife of Mogho Naba Waraga (ca. 1660–80), asked permission to visit her father at La, and that he refused to grant her request because of his love and admiration for her. Nevertheless, she continued to ask him for permission, and after her third request he granted her wish and sent a page and a small girl with her as chaperons. When Poko did not return to the palace on the third day, Naba Waraga sent two pages to her father's compound to fetch her, and here they discovered that she had died. Fearing the king's wrath toward persons who brought bad tidings, the pages did not report back to him but notified the ministers of Poko's death. When subsequent messengers also failed to return, the king decided to go to La. The following day, after the morning ceremonies, he ordered his horse saddled and commanded the Pughtiema to get ready to accompany him on his journey. But the ministers, anxious to protect him from grief, told him that a great king never followed a mere woman under any circumstances and persuaded him not to depart. The monarch went back into the palace, and the dignitaries ordered the horse unsaddled and sent it away. Shortly afterwards, the king changed his mind and decided to go to La, but he was beseeched not to do so. He swore that he would leave the following morning, and that if he were prevented from doing so, he would advise all his descendants to try to go to La every morning until one of them succeeded.[9]

643 At the end of this ceremony, a page gave the ministers an ample supply
644 of beer and kola nuts. The Moslems were given presents of kola nuts and
692 millet water (*zom kom*) sweetened with honey, since they were forbidden
576 to drink millet beer. Later in the morning, the Mogho Naba left the palace
[431] and entered the zongo, where he greeted his visitors, accepted gifts from visiting chiefs and subjects, dispensed gifts in turn, and presided over the court of justice. Anyone who went to see the ruler had to be accompanied by his provincial minister or his host—regardless of whether it was his purpose to pay a courtesy visit, to pledge allegiance, to plead for aid, or to give
643 testimony in a lawsuit. Pages moved back and forth between the palace
644 and the courtyard, dispensing kola nuts and beer or millet water prepared
576

by the sovereign's wives. Other pages waited upon the monarch, and accompanied him when he moved about the courtyard. When the ruler drank any liquid, the pages rubbed the palm of one hand with the fingers of the other; when he sneezed, everyone clapped; and when he stepped out to urinate, a page accompanied him, turned his back to him, knelt down, and saluted by rubbing his palm.

When the Mogho Naba had finished his morning audiences, he entered his palace for a solitary meal. This meal was prepared by one of his young wives, who tasted it in his presence before giving it to the page who served him.[10] After eating, the monarch rested for a few hours; then he emerged into the courtyard to grant audiences and hear court cases until sunset. At that time he retired to his palace, and those courtiers who were not connected with the evening ceremonies returned to their homes.

The ceremony that closed the day at the monarch's court was called "Kwaga Basgha" (literally, "final meal"). This ceremony still survives. As soon as the sun began to set, the samande-kamba took their heavy batons and stood guard to prevent unauthorized persons from coming near the *namtibo* (royal amulets). The Baloum Naba and the Bendere Naba entered the palace courtyard and knelt before the zongo. The chief page then brought out the *kwaga*, a pottery vessel containing a fire ritually associated with the namtibo.[11] The vessel was placed on the ground, and the page blew on the fire to make it burn brightly. Meanwhile, the Bendere Naba rubbed his fingers across his drum to make the growl of a lion. When the fire finally died out, the Zusoaba Kasanga and the Baloum Naba closed the ceremony by rising, coming together, and saluting the namtibo in the traditional Mossi manner. (The Mogho Naba did not attend this ceremony.) Before the officials left for the night, the pages gave them pots of beer prepared by the royal wives. Sometimes these officials visited the Mogho Naba before they retired to their compounds. Once these men had departed, the pages served the ruler his evening meal, which again had been prepared by one of his young wives.

During the hours of darkness the Mogho Naba conducted many secret affairs of state and conversed with the members of his household. Persons seeking the nam of a deceased relative were often granted audience at night, as were litigants in court cases. When there were no pressing matters of state, the ruler gathered some of the royal wives around him and discussed family affairs, which protocol forbade him to discuss during the day. Some rulers reportedly disguised themselves and visited the wards of the town in the company of a young man from the palace, in an effort to learn things that did not ordinarily come to a ruler's attention.

The Mogho Naba slept in a grass hut in the palace compound. Two

513 The Mogho Naba slept in a grass hut in the palace compound. Two

643 reasons are given for the choice of a grass hut over a brick building: first, [342] the grass hut was considered better protection against sorcerers, who were [754] believed to induce storms that destroy buildings and their occupants; sec- [775] ond, it was believed that the ruler's ancestors preferred to visit grass huts because it was easier for them to enter through the interstices in the walls. [644] When the monarch retired for the night, one of his pages stood guard at the door. The Mogho Naba usually slept all night, but he occasionally made the rounds with a page to check on the palace guards or the safety (and virtue) of his wives.

643 The routine of the Mogho Naba seldom varied. Only in times of danger [644] or on great ceremonial occasions did protocol permit any major changes in court procedure. Normally, pages, ministers, and other court officials adhered very strictly to their traditional tasks.

The Mossi considered the king's office to be such a difficult one that even today they say, *Mogho Naba toumde ya yida fa* ("The Mogho Naba's task is the most difficult of all"). Nevertheless, the Mogho Naba's office was always eagerly sought, and considerable care had to be exercised to ensure that the right person was chosen. As soon as the incumbent Mogho [645] Naba died, and even before he was buried, the Ouidi Naba, as prime minister, began the consultations leading to the selection of a new monarch. Mossi custom decreed that the eldest son of a previous ruler be chosen as the new Mogho Naba. This choice was not automatic, however, in view of the primary consideration that the person selected should have the skill to "keep" the country. Other qualifications for office were membership in the royal minimal lineage, soundness of body and mind, and sufficient age to command universal respect. Given these requirements and the lack of any provisions for a regency, it is not surprising that a dead ruler's sons, brothers, uncles, and even grandchildren—that is, his entire babissi—should have competed to "eat the nam" (accede to power).[18] Of the thirty-four kings who have ruled since Oubri, the founder of the Ouagadougou dynasty, twelve succeeded their brothers and twenty-two their fathers. Interestingly enough, there is some indication that at the beginning of the Ouagadougou dynasty, the successor of a king was usually chosen from among his brothers before the nam was passed on to the next generation.[19] For example, Oubri's four sons all reigned in turn before the kingship descended to the son of the last brother in office. Then, two of this brother's sons reigned before the nam descended to a new generation. Initially, then, seniority within the royal lineage, like seniority within the local ruling lineages, may have been determined by generation. On the other hand, accidental factors may have governed: a weak state organization may have

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The newly elected monarch secreted himself either at the Samande Nabila's home or elsewhere in the capital until daybreak. Tradition holds that if he were killed before being officially proclaimed before his subjects as the new ruler, the assassin could become Mogho Naba.[19]

The public ceremonies marking the official proclamation of the new ruler's accession to power took place on the following day. Early that morning, the monarch left his secret sleeping quarters and proceeded to the Koumbi Naba's house. Here he dressed in his white garments and mounted an old, unsaddled horse. The Baloum Naba then gave him a sack containing the namtibo, which he placed over his shoulder, and the Kaizi Naba led him out of the courtyard by the women's door. As the ruler's horse passed through the gate, his sister, the *Napoko* ("female ruler"), cried, "The sun has reappeared! The fire is relighted! The earth lives again!" A large crowd of musicians and warriors who had been alerted by the ministers shouted and danced as they accompanied the monarch, who circled the compound three times.[20] The ruler then re-entered the compound, and this time he came out through the men's door as a sign of his full status. Here he was greeted by the Ouidi Naba, who proclaimed in a loud voice, "Mossi people, here is the Mogho Naba!" The warriors shouted and fired their muskets, and the musicians played. Then all the dignitaries and their followers solemnly prostrated themselves and paid homage and swore allegiance to their monarch. He, in turn, listened attentively when his ministers and some of the elder chiefs gave him advice about how the affairs of state should be conducted. After each declaration of loyalty or word of counsel, the people shouted in praise of their ruler. The Bendere Naba, accompanied by his musicians, then recited the ruler's genealogy, announced the pledges the new monarch had made to his people, and acclaimed him by his royal title, "Mogho Naba [X]." From this moment on, no child born during his reign could bear the ruler's name, and those persons who already bore it called themselves *Nab'yure* ("king's name").

As the next stage in the ceremony the Mogho Naba, accompanied by his retinue, visited the various wards in the capital. In each he was proclaimed ruler and received the allegiance of both Mossi and non-Mossi ward chiefs. He visited the wards controlled by such men as the Loumbila Naba, the Sapone Naba, and the Ouagadougou Naba, and at each stop the ward chief declared, "People of [X], here is your new sovereign." Having been acknowledged by the leading chiefs of the capital, the new ruler then returned to his host's house. He emerged later in the day to visit the compound of a palace attendant, the Samande Nabila, where he sat under a

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The Mogho Naba had an elaborate court composed of many officials, relatives, and servants. The most important courtiers were the five ministers, who appeared daily at court and took part in all important ceremonies in addition to administering their own provinces. Aside from these men, the Mogho Naba had a number of other officials called Naba whose responsibilities covered the full range of duties in the palace and in the capital. One of the most interesting was the Pwe Naba, a royal diviner and court chaperon. His chief duty was to guard the morals of the pages and the royal wives; he also administered the ordeal to persons accused of treason. The pages were required to be chaste until they were discharged from the palace, lest their amorous adventures lead them to compromise the virtue of the royal wives, with whom they were constantly in contact. A wife and a page suspected of adultery were tested by the Pwe Naba. He forced them to look into a mirror or a calabash of water, and declared them guilty or innocent according to the way their faces were reflected. If they were found guilty, the wife was executed and the page was either executed or discharged in disgrace. The Pwe Naba also saw to it that strangers did not address the ruler's wives either on the street or in the market. Offenders were executed.

The Dapore Naba served as the court's chief executioner and as head of a group of the Mogho Naba's hereditary serfs. Members of the royal clan were executed by strangulation, since royal blood could not be shed; all other persons were executed either with a sword, by hanging, or with heavy clubs. Another palace official was the Ouedrango Naba, the head groom. It was he who saddled and presented the king's ceremonial horse to him at the morning ceremony. The Kambo Naba commanded the palace guard; only he and his guards were permitted to carry guns. The Samande Naba and the Samande Nabila supervised the work of the samande-kamba, young men who worked around the palace courtyard and kept watch with heavy batons to enforce order during ceremonies. A lesser palace official was the Zusoaba Kasanga, who, as chief of the palace eunuchs, ruled over the guardians of the royal harem. The Gande Naba made sacrifices for the ruler and also distributed gifts from the king to the royal officials and the royal household.

Another courtier, and one who played an important role during the installation of the new ruler, was the Ouagadougou Naba. As a direct descendant of the Ninisi, he was all but indispensable at sacrifices propitiating or honoring his ancestors. The Bendere Naba was the chief musician and court historian; according to some reports, a Bendere Naba was killed instantly if he made a mistake while reciting the ruler's genealogy. The Raga Naba was chief of the markets in the capital. Under him were

644 Under him were the Kos Naba, who levied taxes on general merchandise sold in the markets, and the Nemdo Naba, who collected taxes on meat sold in the markets and was responsible for distributing meat within the royal household. Most of these positions were hereditary, but here primogeniture was not as important as in the ruling and administrative lineages.

The various foreign groups in the capital also sent representatives to the court. Among them were the Zangweoto Naba for the Hausa, a Naba for the Songhai, and an Imam for the Ouagadougou Moslems. Even total strangers such as the early European visitors were placed under the care of a special chief.

The most ubiquitous persons at the Mogho Naba's court were the pages, who were boys between the ages of ten and twenty. These boys were regarded as comparable to the ruler's wives, since they served him in the same manner as ordinary Mossi women serve their husbands at home. They wore women's bracelets and women's clothes, and dressed their hair in the same style as the royal wives. As we have seen, they were forbidden sexual intercourse until they were released from the royal household.[22]

173 The institution of pages is said to have originated sometime in the seventeenth century, during the reign of Mogho Naba Waraga. Before his reign, the wives of the Mogho Naba attended him at court. The change came during a lengthy civil war between Waraga and the chief of Riziam territory, who had refused to pay allegiance to him. During five "dry seasons" (five years) of fighting, the Mogho Naba was attended only by a small boy. He found him so efficient that at the end of the war he resolved to employ only page boys and prohibit his wives from attending him at court. This origin is conjectural. However, the use of pages effectively segregated the royal wives from court intrigues, and, once instituted, the practice spread throughout the country.

644 The Mogho Naba had little difficulty recruiting pages. Many of them were the sons of pughsiudse whom he had given to his subjects as wives. In theory, the Mogho Naba could select boys at will, but in practice the pages were usually selected by the ministers and sent to the palace. Most boys willingly accepted service, but some, often with the support of their parents, resisted confinement to the palace. Some ten-year-olds even ran away to escape their impending fate, but they were soon caught and braceleted with the insignia of their new status. Once this had been done, their lineages encouraged them to remain at the palace. Their period of service terminated when they began to "push beards," usually at about eighteen years of age. One district chief claims that ancient Mogho Nanamse used to take the sons of district chiefs as pages and release them only when their

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fathers died. In this way the rulers not only retained the allegiance of the boys' fathers but had a unique opportunity to determine whether these boys were qualified to succeed to the nam. 644

The life of a page was confining, even if sometimes very rewarding. Pages were bound by the demands of the ruler, whose every wish had to be satisfied immediately. A quarrelsome ruler was a terror to his pages, who had to bear silently his insults and blows. On the other hand, a considerate monarch permitted or encouraged his pages to profit from the small [662] political intrigues in which they were invariably involved. Prospective district chiefs "made friends" with pages to find out whether their suits were progressing, or to whom they might usefully offer gifts. The pages used any money they might procure to buy clothes for themselves, to supplement the clothing and presents they received from their relatives. Every page was "adopted" by one of the royal wives, who prepared his meals and took care of him. In return, he helped this woman cultivate her field when his presence was not required by the monarch. When a page completed his service satisfactorily, he received a pughsiudga as a wife. If his work had not been satisfactory, he was simply dismissed.

The only woman who played any significant role at the court of the Mogho Naba was the Pughtiema, his head wife. She was the only wife to whom he presented his friends, and whom he allowed his subjects to visit. This woman, who was commonly the widow of the former Mogho Naba, was often chosen because she was past childbearing age: she was thus older and wiser than the other wives, less preoccupied with children, and above the sexual jealousies that may often develop in polygynous households. She arbitrated among the wives and stood *in loco parentis* to the younger ones, whom she instructed and advised. She served also as official hostess to the ancestors during the annual propitiatory rituals. It was her duty to prepare the millet beer and millet water for the sacrifices [782] to the ancestors, who were believed to feast at her hut before they visited the rest of the household. In addition, it was she who prepared to accompany the Mogho Naba to La each day. Lastly, it was her duty to introduce any new royal wife to the ancestors, and to ask them to watch over this potential mother of their descendants. 644 595 643

The ruler inherited some of his wives from his father; some he received from his many friends and vassals; and others he selected from among his pughsiudse. Crozat reports that Mogho Naba Wobogo (1890-96) allegedly had a hundred wives. Crozat did not see this many women at Wobogo's [714] court, understandably, since most of a ruler's wives lived in villages, where they were guarded by eunuchs.[28] Of the substantial number of royal wives

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595 who did live at the palace, only a small minority prepared the ruler's meals
● 644 and shared his bed. Dim Delobson reports that Mogho Naba Kom II (1905–42) had thirty-seven wives. His son, Mogho Naba Sagha II (1942–
[177] 57), had twenty.[24] The present Mogho Naba, Kougri, recently married
[178] according to Western tradition and is officially monogamous.[25] There seems to be a general trend toward fewer wives among Mossi chiefs.

643 Mossi rulers never married for the purpose of forming state alliances,
581 and their marriages had no political significance. The Mogho Naba's mar-
582 riages were exogamous with regard to the royal lineage and to his mother's minimal lineage. Aside from these restrictions, however, the Mogho Naba could marry women from any Mossi lineage or group, including serfs, slaves, and foreign populations. It is said that when Mogho Naba Sanum (1850–90) despaired of having an heir by a Mossi woman, he took a Fulani wife.[26]

643 The Mogho Naba had no formal wedding ceremony. The task of intro-
585 ducing a new wife to the royal harem fell to the Pughtiema. She and her
[302] assistants welcomed the wife in a prescribed fashion. First they shaved all the hair from her body. They then bathed her in warm water to which shea butter and ritual herbs had been added, and during the bath they recited the ruler's genealogy to impress her with her new status.[27] The Pughtiema advised her on the need for proper deportment, and warned her that
[301] adultery was punished by death. To close the ceremony, a smith fastened to the girl's wrists and ankles the silver or brass bracelets that identified her as a wife of the Mogho Naba. If the bride was still a child, she was often allowed to return to her father's house until she reached childbearing age. If she was past the age of puberty, her marriage was consummated without further ceremony, and she joined the ranks of the ruler's wives.

644 The wives who lived in the palace were divided into three groups. The
595 first group included the wives who lived with the Pughtiema in a section of the palace harem called the *zaka sanga* ("large courtyard"). These women were all past childbearing age and no longer received nocturnal visits from the Mogho Naba. They had their own fields in the vicinity of the palace and cultivated them with the aid of the samande-kamba, the pages they had adopted, and their own children. The women of the second group, those of the *zagbilin* ("small courtyard"), were mostly in their thirties or forties and still sexually active. They received occasional visits from the Mogho Naba, but fewer than his younger wives. These women also cultivated their fields with the help of the young men of the court.

The third group of wives, the *dogunba* ("keepers of the household"), was the most important. The dogunba prepared the ruler's meals and satis-

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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fied his sexual desires. Since these women were in the monarch's favor, they were better dressed than the other wives and received more attention from him. The dogunba generally cultivated a large field in common with the aid of the palace retainers, but some insisted on cultivating their own fields instead. Like the other wives, the dogunba usually lived in huts of their own. Childless women sometimes shared the same hut until one of them became pregnant and had to set up a hut for herself and her child. 644 595 [342] [591]

Those wives who lived in special villages under the supervision of eunuchs rarely went to the palace. Usually, they were past childbearing age or had lost favor with the monarch. They cultivated plots of land, spun cotton, and prepared locust-bean flour, locust-bean "balls," and shea butter. They kept a part of the produce for their own use and sent the remainder to the palace stores; the same arrangement obtained for all three categories of palace wives.

The Mogho Naba's heir was usually born while his father was still Crown Prince. He was never born in his father's compound because, unlike other Mossi women, the wife of a Mogho Naba or Crown Prince returned to her father's house for confinement. As soon as she announced her pregnancy, the Pughtiema or one of the older wives held a ceremony to notify the ancestors. Once the rite had been completed, the wife was sent to her relatives for fear that she might be harmed by her less fortunate co-wives. If the child was a boy, the ruler or Crown Prince was notified immediately, because the important privileges of a first-born hinged upon this notification. Since several wives of the Mogho Naba might be pregnant at the same time and errors might be made about the onset and duration of pregnancy, primogeniture had to be established immediately to forestall dynastic conflicts. For example, it is commonly believed that the present Doulougou Naba was born several days before Mogho Naba Sagha II (1942–57) but was deprived of the nam because the messenger who brought news of his birth reached Mogho Naba Kom after the messenger who announced Sagha's birth. Undoubtedly, such allegations were sometimes used to foster and support dynastic rebellions. 644 595 843 644 595 843 428 643 [578]

So strong was the fear that the most likely heir to the nam would be harmed by jealous co-wives that the child and his mother never returned to the palace except for brief visits on ceremonial occasions. The young prince remained with his mother's relatives and was guarded and educated by servants sent from the palace. If his father was on the throne at Ouagadougou when the boy reached the age of ten, he was formally installed as chief of Djiba district, the traditional seat of the Crown Prince. If his father was not on the throne, the boy remained with his mother's relatives and went to Djiba when his grandfather died and his father was installed as Mogho Naba.

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000 went to Djiba when his grandfather died and his father was installed as Mogho Naba.

634 644 173 The origin of Djiba's status as the seat of the Crown Prince is rather obscure. The people of the neighboring district of Nobere say that Djiba was founded by a "companion" of their own founder, Naba Biligo, one of the numerous "eldest" sons of Mogho Naba Oubri, the implication being that Djiba was supervised by Nobere. However, no one seems to know when Djiba's status changed or what happened to the ancient family who used to govern it. The consensus is that in earlier times the heir presumptive to Ouagadougou did not necessarily become chief of Djiba, but was given any district whose chieftainship was vacant when he came of age. Dim Delobson reports that Djiba became the district of the Crown Prince sometime during the seventeenth century, when Mogho Naba Zombere, who had reigned for sixty years, found it necessary to establish a permanent seat for his heir.[28] However, Dim Delobson does not report under what conditions Djiba was chosen, nor does he say what happened to the local ruling lineage when this transfer took place. That the transfer was carried out in the manner reported by Dim Delobson is not doubted, because each new Mogho Naba obtained districts for his relatives in this way. Through this process, the people of the ancient ruling lineages were usually reduced to the level of commoners, and this is apparently what happened to the rulers of Djiba.

[114] [558] [613]

634 643 The first public sign that the young prince was being prepared for the nam came in the form of a summons commanding him to go to Ouagadougou to be installed as Djiba Naba. On his way to the capital, he visited several villages where the local Tengsobadamba made sacrifices to the earth goddess in his name. He took this opportunity to meet with the district chiefs and their assembled village chiefs; he was entertained by them; and in turn he distributed gifts to the old women, whose praises were considered especially effective in bringing health and long life. When the boy finally arrived at the capital, he lodged at the compound of the Kambo Naba, head of the palace guard, until the Mogho Naba and his ministers installed him as chief of Djiba.

The installation rites for the Crown Prince were very similar to those already described for the Mogho Naba, and identical to those for the district chiefs. During the ceremony, no mention was made of the fact that the prince was the son of the Mogho Naba. The only special feature was that when the prince went into the courtyard after the ceremony to render homage to the Mogho Naba, he sat in an area assigned to him by custom. When the ruler appeared, the prince followed the Gounga Naba, who was pro-

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vincial minister for Djiba, and rendered homage to the sovereign. After 634
this reception the prince went to the Gounga Naba's compound, which 644
henceforth was his headquarters whenever he visited Ouagadougou; for, like other district chiefs, he had to consult with this minister before seeing the monarch. Everyone in the kingdom had to follow the political hierarchy, even the ruler's heir.

The young prince remained at his host's house and from there visited the other important officials, in the order of their rank, receiving from each presents of sheep, millet beer, kola nuts, and sometimes wives. He then [795]
visited the Imam of the Ouagadougou Moslem community, where he received a blessing in the name of Allah and was given kola nuts and millet water sweetened with honey. On the fourth or fifth day the prince went to [769]
a small village called Zoangha, where he made a sacrifice to his ancestors and requested their protection against all enemies.[29] He returned to Ouagadougou on the same day and was given a palace escort to accompany him to his district.

During his journey, the royal heir had the opportunity to establish or 634
re-establish friendly relations with district chiefs who were now his peers, 644
but who might someday become his subjects. He visited in turn the war 431
leader at Tansobatenga, the Koubri Naba, the Ipelse Naba, and the Kondrin Naba. Each of these chiefs offered him livestock, slaves, and wives. He, in turn, distributed salt (a valuable commodity) to the old women and gave kola nuts and other commodities to the chiefs' head wives. The Baganmini Naba presented the prince with a special quiver of arrows, and the chief of the Fulani at Bedego gave him a pretty maiden and one of his best bulls. The prince spent a few days with each of his hosts, but stayed for seven days in Bere, a district bordering on his own. The Bere Naba gave him a wife, a robe, and a cow, and sent messengers to the village chiefs of Djiba to announce that their chief had arrived in Bere. The chiefs then journeyed to Bere, pledged allegiance to their ruler, and presented gifts to him. On the seventh night there was a ritual (whose main features are 634
unclear), in the course of which the prince entered Djiba secretly on horse- 644
back, accompanied only by one servant, one groom, and the nobles and [788]
chiefs of Djiba.[30] Most members of the escort who had accompanied him from the capital were left behind at Bere, and followed only when the prince had established himself in his district. When the prince's band entered Djiba under cover of darkness, it was met by the local Ouidi Naba, who ruled the district in the absence of a Crown Prince. The Ouidi Naba now became the prince's protector if the boy were still young, or his most trusted adviser if he were old enough to rule by himself.

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634 As soon as the prince arrived, the Ouidi Naba made preparations to
● 644 receive the chiefs of such local districts as Manga, Nobere, and Basgana, who visited the prince and brought him wives, livestock, and money. During a seven-day period, other chiefs and well-wishers visited the new chief
[431] and offered him gifts. When this period was over, the new Djiba Naba gave wives to the noble members of his escort and livestock, money, and kola nuts to the commoners and serfs, and sent the group back to Ouagadougou. Then he settled down to the life of a typical district chief, governing his villages in the name of the Mogho Naba, paying him tribute, and settling disputes among his villagers. Dim Delobson reports that the other
[431] district chiefs and the heads of such principalities as Boussouma and Con-
[651] quizitenga formerly sent presents to the Djiba Naba when they sent their annual tribute to the Mogho Naba.[21] But this contradicts all that I heard and saw of the relationship between the royal heir and the other district chiefs. They treated him as an equal and showed no deference to him either in private or on ceremonial occasions. As a matter of fact, in the presence of the Mogho Naba, the royal heir actually effaced himself before the other district chiefs. This behavior served to preserve the concept of equal access
[643] of all members of the ruling clan to the ancestral nam. The Mogho Naba was head of the ruling group as well as political leader of the Mossi. His son, on the other hand, was often a junior in terms of age and generation within the ruling group, but politically he was on the same level as the other district chiefs. The sovereign could not show by his behavior that his son was either actually or potentially superior to the other Nanamse; nor could the prince presume to be haughty because of his strategic but accidental relationship to the actual possessor of the nam. Had he tried to do so, he might have ruined his chances of being selected to take over the "house" of his father and his father's fathers.

643 The relations between the Mogho Naba and his children, including his
644 heir, were characterized by formality—at least in public. Nevertheless, the
593 ruler took a vital interest in the training and welfare of the youthful Djiba
634 Naba. Mogho Naba Wobogo (1890-96) reportedly had the Ouidi Naba and the Baloum Naba of Djiba executed because the Crown Prince died under strange circumstances while under their care. Yet the Mogho Naba was not expected to enjoy seeing his son and heir, because of the Mossi father's traditional anxiety regarding those individuals who would profit most from his death. At the assemblies of district chiefs called by the Mogho Naba, the royal heir was not even greeted by his father; moreover, the heir usually stood at the edge of the assembly and left without attending the customary feast. However, there is considerable evidence that the Mogho

 643

Naba regularly saw his son in private, and that the prince often interceded 644 successfully with his father for the lives of rebels or criminals. 593

The Mogho Naba seldom saw his younger sons, who usually remained 634 with their mothers' patrilineages until they were old enough to be assigned district chieftainships or sent to live in villages controlled by the Baloum Naba. He was rather suspicious of these boys, who, if certain traditions are believed, were not averse to plotting the death of the Djiba Naba in order to succeed to the nam. The district chiefs also feared these younger sons, in whose favor they were often deposed by the Mogho Naba. Almost all of the dynastic changes that occurred in the Mossi districts seem to have stemmed from a ruler's attempt to find districts for his brothers or his younger sons.

The ruler was less concerned with the welfare of his daughters and 643 female relatives. Their marriages seldom benefited the political system. 644 As a matter of fact, the behavior of a royal princess usually strained the re- 593 lations between her husband and the ruling lineage. The reason for this [562] was a status conflict: as wives, they had low prestige in Mossi society; but as relatives of the Mogho Naba, they enjoyed high status. This contradiction made it difficult for them to accept the low estate of wives. Consequently, they clashed with their husband and often dominated the women and co-wives in his compound. Since few Mossi men tolerate strife within their household, these noble wives often withdrew from their husband's home and established one of their own. The one exception to this pattern was the ruler's eldest daughter, the Napoko, whose ceremonial duties at his death and during the interregnum compelled her to remain loyal to the husband chosen for her by the king. Like her brother, the Crown Prince, if she violated any of the traditions and thus became ineligible to fulfill her duties to her father and to the state, she endangered the country at its weakest moment, when the government was being transferred from the deceased Mogho Naba to his successor.

The death of a Mogho Naba was usually attributed to foul play or 643 supernatural forces. When Mogho Naba Sagha II died in 1957, a report 761 from Ouagadougou stated that the Governor of the Upper Volta had felt constrained to have an autopsy performed to quell rumors that the monarch had died of poisoning.[11] The obvious function of such rumors was to dramatize the gravity of the situation during the interregnum.

Because the Mogho Naba was usually accompanied by a page, it was 643 often this boy who witnessed his death. It was the page's responsibility to 763 notify the Baloum Naba, who notified, in order, the Ouidi Naba, the Lar- [644] halle Naba, the Kamsaogho Naba, the Gounga Naba, the ruler's children, [645]

643 the Tansoba, the members of the royal sub-lineage, and the district chiefs.
763 The Tengsoba of the Ouagadougou area was also notified. Because he was
[645] a descendant of the aboriginal Ninisi population that "owned" the land, he
[793] supervised the burial ceremony.

The Mogho Naba's death was kept secret, and no mourning was allowed
[701] until the Crown Prince had arrived at the capital and the Tansoba had recruited an army to protect the realm against would-be usurpers of power. Then the cry was raised in the palace, to reverberate throughout the land,
643 that "the fire had gone out." Once the ruler's death had been announced,
764 the country was plunged into an interregnum, which was characterized by
669 ritual and often by actual anarchy. The people in the towns immediately looted the markets and stole their neighbors' goods; the prisoners and captives in stocks were released by their guards; the nakomce in all the territories, districts, and villages subjected the local populations to robbery and pillage; and the members of the monarch's babissi began their intrigues for power. The traditional sanction for this anarchy was that only when people suffer during the breakdown of political control do they really appreciate the sovereign's role. The Mossi declare (with some truth) that no one was safe during the interregnum. However, as we shall see, the ruler was symbolically kept alive, and the country was never without effective political leadership.

766 When the Tengsoba arrived at the palace, he was joined by five hereditary funeral chiefs: the Pazany'tengsoba, the Tampouy Naba, the Benghin
644 Naba, the Toghin Naba, and the Tanghin Naba. In the ceremony that fol-
643 lowed, he gave permission for the royal grave to be dug. Meanwhile, the ruler's body was prepared for burial in the traditional manner by his female relatives and laid in state in the zongo. These women kept vigil over the body, shouting and weeping. Only the five ministers of the realm and the male members of the ruler's babissi were allowed to pay homage to the corpse within the zongo. All other mourners had to pay their respects to the monarch's eldest daughter, who, as Napoko, was dressed in the dead sovereign's clothes and sat in his place before the zongo. As her father's symbolic representative, she held daily court and received greetings and homage from all visitors until a new ruler was chosen. The drummer who sat by her side declared to all visitors, "You say that the Mogho Naba is dead! Well, who is that sitting there? Tell me! Is that not the Mogho Naba?"

766 The ruler was buried the day after he died, at the end of an elaborate
643 ceremony. Libations were poured out to the ancient rulers, and sacrifices
[782] made to them. All the important officials and members of the royal mini-

mal lineage segment except the pretenders to the throne shaved their heads as a sign of mourning. The royal pretenders donned sheepskin mantles to signify that they were willing to "eat the nam." Once the ruler had been buried, the country settled down to an uneasy peace until the eighth day, when the funeral ceremonies took place. In the meantime, the Napoko symbolically held daily court, and the Tansoba's army acted as a check against the attempts of ambitious princes to seize power by force of arms.

Two days before the funeral, the Kamsaogho Naba selected the Kourita, who was to replace the Napoko as the living symbolic representative of the dead Mogho Naba. The person chosen to be Kourita was usually a young son of the deceased king, but since this person was banished from the capital, most of the royal wives hid their young children or fled the palace with them.[23] Once the Kourita had been chosen, the Kamsaogho Naba performed a ceremony (similar to those connected with the divine kings of the Near East) during which the youth was given one of his father's horses, dressed in his father's clothes, and given his father's youngest widow as a wife. He was then paid the homage due the Mogho Naba, and after receiving many gifts from the dignitaries, he was banished from Ouagadougou forever. As he went through the country, he was treated like the Mogho Naba and given many wives and presents. If he should chance to return to Ouagadougou or see the new Mogho Naba, either or both of them would be killed by the ancestors. Many Mossi districts seem to have been founded by exiled Kouritadamba. These men were undoubtedly among the numerous "elder" sons of past kings who are said to have "refused" the nam and gone to live in the districts now governed by their descendants.

The choice and banishment of the Kourita heralded the funeral rites, which were characterized by numerous animal sacrifices to the ancestors in the name of the deceased ruler. On the afternoon of the first day of the funeral, the Crown Prince mounted a horse and left the palace by the women's door. The Napoko then took the bridle of her brother's horse and led him and an immense crowd of cavalry, armed warriors, and musicians around the palace walls three times. After the third round, the Napoko demanded that her brother give her a personal servant as a present; he hesitated, but finally granted her request. The Napoko was then lifted up by the warriors, who shouted as they carried her home. The funeral thus came to an end.

All Mossi potentates tried to emulate the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou in matters of pomp, ceremony, and government.[24] Their courts were inferior to his, but only because they were less powerful and less wealthy.

Naba was responsible for checking these depredations, but he had little coercive force since these nobles were infinitely superior to him in rank. 634 635 645

The Mogho Naba held his five ministers responsible for the administration of the districts within their provinces. Therefore they had to function as liaison officers between him and the district chiefs. Every morning, in order of precedence, the ministers reported the news they had received from their provinces since the previous day. At this time, the Mogho Naba also gave them messages for their districts. Later in the day, the ministers presented to the ruler those persons who had come from their provinces to the capital with special grievances, requests, or gifts. Delicate affairs of state were left for the evening, when they were discussed by the Mogho Naba, his minister or ministers, and other important persons.

From all reports, these administrative affairs kept both the ministers and the Mogho Naba quite busy. Binger, who could barely conceal his displeasure with Mogho Naba Sanum, gives this critical but otherwise highly illuminating view of the Mossi ruler's administrative activities: 643 644

> The duties of Naba Sanum are not too important. They consist of receiving visits throughout the day. In the morning, at about six o'clock, the drums announce that the ruler has arisen. When he has washed and refreshed himself with a meal, his captives and his wives go to his chamber to salute him. Then comes the turn of strangers, people of the neighborhood, petitioners, and others. They squat before the reception area until the ruler deigns to appear. When a large number of people have gathered, one of the [pages] goes to notify the ruler, who then arrives, sits on his cushion, and casts an amiable glance on the gathering while all present snap their fingers. As soon as Naba Sanum is seated, the petitioners and visitors hurry toward the monarch, throw themselves face down on the earth, and cover their heads with sand. Then each of them gets up and presents a gift of greater or lesser importance, in cowries or foodstuffs, according to what he wishes to ask. Then the [pages] come and say to the ruler, "A certain man has brought a sack of cowries, or a goat, or an ox. He desires to speak to you." The ruler thanks all of them with a *nif kende* (thanks) and retires into his chamber. It is well known that not one out of fifty petitioners was given the opportunity to have his wishes heard. Those who were heard had first spoken to an attendant who, after being paid in advance, had put off their case indefinitely by stating that it would be dealt with next. . . . Since the monarch's days are so well filled, one easily understands why he finds it difficult to deal effectively with the internal and external affairs of his kingdom; in any case, Mossi country is in a period of decadence that will only be aggravated with time.[25] [662]

The activities Binger considered frivolous were, on the contrary, important for the proper administration of the kingdom. The Mogho Naba had to receive petitions from the districts and transmit administrative orders to 643 [114]

634 721 567 175 3. Finally, a third lot, composed of young girls and young boys, was distributed among the warriors and put into their charge. The boys will be employed until further notice as grooms to the warriors; later on, those who prove themselves useful and docile will be kept. The others will be sold at the first opportunity. The girls will be given in marriage to warriors who distinguish themselves.[24]

721 643 644 701 [645] The military campaigns of the Mossi, in contrast to their slave-raiding expeditions, appear to have been well organized. When the Mogho Naba felt that a war was necessary, he summoned his five provincial ministers and the Tansoba to a parley. If war was decided upon, the Tansoba was given full charge of all operations. This man, chosen from a hereditary clan of warriors who lived in a village called Tansob'tenga in Sapone district, was listed among the Mogho Naba's courtiers but seldom appeared at court unless war was imminent. His duties as chief warrior were considered so dangerous that he constantly sought out religious practitioners for supernatural aid. Nevertheless, a war minister who was good and brave was not expected to live very long. If he did live to become gray-haired, the other courtiers made fun of him by pretending that his graying head could only be the result of his having carried a sheep captured in warfare on his head as a present to the ruler.

701 721 644 [202] [411] Once given a mandate for war, the Tansoba collected his magico-religious apparatus and prepared the requisite sacrifices. He then asked the provincial ministers to notify the district chiefs to assemble with their warriors under the leadership of the local Tansobadamba, who were often members of the Tansoba clan. When the district chiefs received this notice, they beat their *zongagondo* (war drums), and the local administrators sent orders for men to the village chiefs. The village chiefs, in turn, beat their war drums to summon their noble cavalrymen and commoner foot soldiers, who came armed with bows and arrows, spears, swords, and clubs, with or [278] without iron tips. The tips of the sharp weapons were often covered with a vegetable poison derived from a shrub of the Strophanthus species. Some [411] of the men also carried guns after firearms were introduced among the [177] Mossi from the desert region and from the coast. Many carried rawhide [714] shields.

701 726 [648] As soon as the village contingents had assembled and had gathered their provisions, they marched to the district centers. Then they proceeded either to the place of battle or to Ouagadougou. In the latter case, they became part of the royal army and were joined by the forces of those princes who were prepared to honor their obligation to the Mogho Naba. For example, when the French invaded Ouagadougou in 1896, the Boulsa Dim sent his prime minister "at the head of an army to aid Mogho Naba

Wobogo. However, he did not have to intervene, because while still en 701
route he heard that Ouagadougou had fallen."[28] Thanks to this type of aid, 726
the Mogho Naba was able to gather quite a large army, a fact that contra- [648]
dicts Crozat's belief that the Mogho Naba was a "king without an army."[29] [643]
[114]

The early Mogho Nanamse used to accompany their armies into the field, but this practice was later abandoned and was revived periodically only by the more adventurous rulers. (The last ruler to die in warfare was 643
Mogho Naba Doulougou [ca. 1800].) However, it was the Mogho Naba's 701
duty to greet the army when it came to Ouagadougou, to beat the royal war 726
drum, and to turn the troops over to the Tansoba. This officer served as [644]
commander in chief of the army, and was assisted by the Gounga Naba, [645]
a provincial minister, who served as his aide-de-camp. The Gounga Naba was expected to die rather than retreat in battle, especially if the Tansoba was killed. Two other ministers, the Kamsaogho Naba and the Larhalle 645
Naba, also accompanied the army. The later Baloum Nanamse did not 701
venture into battle, because they had to attend to the personal needs of the 726
Mogho Naba. In early times, however, they accompanied their sovereigns [643]
into battle and fought alongside them. The Ouidi Naba never went to war, because it was his duty to look after the kingdom. He had to ensure the interests of all the people even if the royal army was defeated, the country invaded, and the ruler killed or forced to flee. The Samande Naba went to war and served as chief of the infantry.

Scouts preceded each district contingent as the army marched off to 726
battle. Within the contingent, the younger warriors marched in front, 704
followed by older men. It was the duty of the more experienced warriors to make sure that the younger men did not break ranks and run under the stress of battle. Behind the foot soldiers came the cavalry, composed of nobles and of the few commoners who possessed horses. Behind these came the district chief, surrounded by his own palace guard. Several heralds [634]
known as *yumba* (sing. *yuma*) accompanied the district forces to exhort [203]
them to fight. As the men marched to battle the yumba shouted:

> Men! Your ancestors were not slaves. They were men. They were stronger than anyone else. They did not bathe with water; they bathed with blood. Do you wish to return home to drink millet water and eat bread? Never! A man does not eat bread or drink millet water; a man fights. Your ancestors were not afraid of anyone; you must not be afraid of anyone. Even if you are killed today, you must march ahead, beat your enemies, and take their villages. You must not be afraid!

Mossi armies on the march used scouts to keep a sharp lookout for the 726
enemy or for any evidence that he was aware of impending attack. The [764]
tactics these scouts used to avoid detection, such as camouflaging themselves

726 with leaves and branches and crawling upon the ground, can be witnessed
[964] even today at Mossi funerals where men re-enact warfare practices. Whenever possible, the Mossi preferred to take the enemy by surprise, but this was seldom possible when large-scale fighting and massive preparations were involved.

When two Mossi armies drew up to each other, the heralds from both sides issued such challenges and epithets as: "If you men do not wish to die, you should run or you will never eat again. We will have your blood to wash with." In the meantime, the Tansobadamba on both sides deployed their forces in accordance with the number of men available, the spirit of
[723] the enemy, and the nature of the terrain. From the description of warfare given to me by an old Tansoba in Nobere district, it appears that the strategy most commonly used was to split the infantry in two while attacking, thus making room for the cavalry to charge through. If the initial charge was successful, the attack was maintained, but if it failed, the army usually turned about and fled. Despite their braggadocio, Mossi commanders seldom insisted that their troops fight against overwhelming odds.
[644] However, shame over impending defeat often induced such officers as the
[645] Tansoba and the Gounga Naba to fight to the death. For example, during the war between Boulsa and Fada-N'Gourma in 1897, the Boulsa army lost so many men that the Boulsa Dim wanted to commit suicide in his humiliation. However, he was prevented from doing so by one of his subordinates.[27]

Soldiers wounded by poisoned spears or arrows extracted the projectiles if possible, and kept on fighting until they died. Even if they were wounded
[789] by an unpoisoned weapon, they did not seek medical aid. Most wounded men believed that they were doomed, because their protective amulets had
[727] failed them. For the same reason, a defeated army fleeing a battlefield made no attempt to retrieve its dead and dying, but left them to the vultures. When an army was victorious, however, the Mossi either carried their dead home for burial or buried them on the battlefield, saving some item of their clothing or equipment for the funeral.

Victorious Mossi armies usually pursued the enemy, burning villages as
[648] they went. The soldiers killed all the infants and the infirm, and when they
[567] fought against non-Mossi, they captured young people to be sold as slaves. Then they collected all the available booty and departed hurriedly, fearing
[727] that the confiscated cattle and slaves would slow their return and enable the rallied enemy to catch up with them.[28] If the army could not return home before dark, camp was set up for the night near a body of water so that the Tansobadamba could offer thanksgiving sacrifices. Pickets were later

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643 651 796 become overgrown with grass and weeds during the rainy season. This clearing was done to within a few yards of the palace, but was not completed. Early in the morning of the day chosen for the actual rendering of the agricultural tribute, the retainers placed baskets of produce along these paths. During the morning ceremony, the Ouidi Naba presented a basket of millet to the Mogho Naba. Then the Bendere Naba, acting as Sore Naba ("chief of the road"), signaled on his drum, and the men with baskets who were waiting on the uncleared portion of the paths, preceded by drummers and men with hoes, axes, and other tools, began to move forward. The men in the processions raised a din, shouting, singing, drumming, and pretending that the task of clearing was very difficult. From time to time, the more energetic among those who were not carrying bundles ran ahead of the others, turned somersaults, and then, going through the motions of warriors in battle, pranced back into the procession. All the processions came to the shed occupied by the royal drummers and deposited their burdens. These were later retrieved by the palace staff and stored for use in the royal household.

643 644 241 The royal household was also supplied with produce grown by the royal wives. Foodstuffs for guests and fodder for the ruler's horses were provided by the people of the Bilbalgo and Dapoya wards, which were under the general supervision of the Kam Naba. Two or three times during the agricultural season, this official recruited extra help from these wards to help [464] [465] cultivate the fields. In recompense for this *sosogha* (work bee), the laborers were given food, drink, and kola nuts from the royal household. At the 243 end of the year, the harvesting and threshing of the grain from the Mogho 643 Naba's fields was the occasion for an elaborate ceremony, "Mogh Nab' 644 kawinre" ("threshing the ruler's grain").[3]

796 To begin this ceremony, the Mogho Naba summoned a local earth- [791] [792] priest, the Manougoudougou Tengsoba, to the court. This man, a descendant of the Ninisi, had to perform the propitiatory sacrifices to the earth deity who was symbolized by the threshing floor. After the sacrifices were completed, the Kam Naba went to the threshing floor with the young men of the Bilbalgo and Dapoya wards, who threshed the millet gathered there. The next morning they all returned to the threshing floor with the Bendere Naba and his minstrels, who recited the Mogho Naba's genealogy and sang praises to his ancestors. The drummers then beat out work rhythms and traditional drum patterns to which the workers danced while scattering the millet far and wide. Finally, the dancing stopped, and the Kam Naba drew a line on the threshing floor, dividing the pile of millet in two; the Bilbalgo people gathered one half, the Dapoya people the other. Regard-

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less of the amount of millet harvested from the Mogho Naba's fields, there had to be one hundred baskets full of grain. If the number of baskets filled with the Mogho Naba's grain fell short of the mark, the serfs and slaves had to make up the difference with the produce of their own fields. The ceremony concluded with sacrifices to the royal ancestors, after which the Mogho Naba's wives, daughters, and sisters gave beer and kola nuts to the laborers.

As head of the central government, the Mogho Naba received revenue in the form of money and livestock which the district chiefs collected from the village people. These were given to him during an elaborate annual ceremony called the "Basgha" ("feast of the royal ancestors"). Several days before this post-harvest festival, the district chiefs and their retainers arrived in the capital and lodged with their provincial ministers. At a designated time during the ceremony, the district chiefs and nobles went to the palace. In provincial contingents and led by their ministers, they walked up to the sovereign's throne and gave the Mossi salute. After they had returned to their places, their servants gave the royal pages the presents they had brought to the palace.

The Dimdamba apparently made their annual contribution to the Mogho Naba at the time of the Basgha. There is one report that they took this opportunity to send gifts to the ruler's son, the Djiba Naba, as well. The Dimdamba customarily sent the Mogho Naba part of the goods they had seized in combat against non-Mossi peoples, as well as a tax (*fado*) out of the goods they had inherited from their predecessors.[3] There is also some evidence that the Mogho Naba solicited goods from the Dimdamba at other times. Crozat says:

> During my first visit to Yako, three envoys from Ouagadougou were at the chief's house. They were tax collectors. They had come to offer the vassal a silver bracelet sent by the sovereign. The Yako Naba responded by sending horses, captives, and cowries to Ouagadougou.[4]

Crozat could not understand this reciprocity between the Mogho Naba and his vassals, and questions whether the Mogho Naba really collected taxes from them. He concludes that the Mogho Naba did receive taxes, "but these are never given to him except in the form of presents which are reciprocated."[5] Crozat found it puzzling and disturbing that many of the Dimdamba had not given the Mogho Naba any "taxes" for several years. He indicated, moreover, that they did not wish to pay taxes to the Ouagadougou ruler even under the guise of an exchange of presents. This was especially true of the Yatenga Naba, who had not sent the Mogho Naba any presents for six or seven years prior to 1890. Crozat surmised that

439 Marc, who had the opportunity to check the volume of this trade in 1904 and 1905, estimates that about 16,000 head of cattle and 75,000 sheep and goats passed through the two customs posts in Mossi country. Furthermore, he believes that since "the Mossi also supply in part the markets of Togoland and the market at Bondoukou [Ivory Coast], one may assume a minimum annual export of 20,000 head of cattle and 100,000 sheep or goats. [174] The import of kola nuts is at least 500 tons."[11] It is clear that this volume of trade could not have been achieved so soon after the French conquest. [651] We can only conclude that it existed prior to the coming of the Europeans, and that it brought the Mossi rulers a considerable income.

643 The Mogho Naba's officials collected taxes from all caravans that passed 651 through his capital. The caravaneers also gave the Mogho Naba important gifts, and he apparently traded with them, even if always to his own 439 profit. Binger states that Mogho Naba Sanum forced horse traders from [431] the Yatenga and Hausa merchants to sell him part of their commodities at one-hundredth the purchase price.[12] Crozat reports that Mogho Naba Wobogo

> appears to have had some business relations with white merchants who came to Salaga every dry season. He sent horses to them in exchange for silver. He claims that he had no reason to be pleased with their integrity, and that the silver they sent him contained plenty of copper. Some traders apparently came as far as Ouagadougou, bringing merchandise of German origin. There was one of them there during my stay. I was told that he was an important *marabout*, a shereef, perhaps an Arab or a Moor, for I was assured that he was very light in color. As was repeated to me several times, his relations with the king were limited to the solemn greetings on Fridays. He never entered the royal hut in spite of being an important marabout. He was at Ouagadougou for about three and one-half months, but he was compelled to return to the coast since the merchandise which he had brought was exhausted. He spoke no Mossi.[13]

439 All the caravans that passed through Mossi country were obliged to stop 651 and give presents to the district officials. Those caravaneers who tried to 634 elude taxation by going through the forest ran the risk of being attacked by local nobles, who usually confiscated their goods.

The Mogho Naba and the lesser chiefs had "market officials" who taxed 644 the merchants in the markets of their territories. The officials at Ouaga- 651 dougou, the Kos Naba ("sales chief") and the Raga Naba ("market chief"), 443 were fairly rigorous in their exactions. The Kos Naba collected taxes in cowries for every cow slaughtered at the market, and also took its hump and gave it to the Nemdo Naba ("meat chief") for distribution in the royal household. He also collected taxes on every cow sold in the market, but

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did not usually tax goats and sheep. In lieu of this, he occasionally took one or two of these animals from each herd that passed through the market and sent them to the palace kitchens. Donkeys sold in the market were taxed at the rate of 200 cowries each. Horses sold to the nobility were not taxed, but those exported were.

The Raga Naba collected taxes on the other commodities sold at the market. Cotton weavers paid him according to the size of their bolts of cloth, and cotton growers paid taxes on the sales of their raw produce. The tailors and dyers paid no fixed amounts, but were asked to send clothing to the palace. Every donkey- and ox-load of salt entering the market place was taxed. The smiths were not taxed in cowries, but had to supply the Mogho Naba's wives with hoes and the palace personnel with arrowheads, spear points, and iron clubs. The jewelers also sent bracelets as presents to the ruler. There were no fixed taxes on the cereals, vegetables, and cooked food sold at the market, but each day the Raga Naba, accompanied by several pages or retainers carrying baskets, went from vendor to vendor taking several calabashes of their produce for use in the palace. In addition, the vendors of cooked food had to feed the Mogho Naba's young grooms, who were not normally fed by the palace household. The beer sellers were not formally taxed, but they contributed a substantial percentage of their beverage to palace and market personnel, who demanded the customary *lembgha* ("taste before buying") more frequently and freely than ordinary buyers.

There is some evidence (mainly from European travelers) that the traders occasionally found the caravan and market taxes prohibitive. Binger reports that the high taxes exacted by the Mogho Naba were "one of the reasons why Ouagadougou placed second [as a market town] and Mane was the commercial capital of Mossi country." Binger himself was caught in the institutionalized gift system and wrote sarcastically: "On market day [at Ouagadougou] the receipts are good. People bring everything to the palace, whether it be millet, hoes, or peanuts, and everything is accepted. *All this giving is left to the discretion of the donors.*"[14] The italics are Binger's.

Some of the later Mogho Nanamse appear to have obtained a great deal of revenue through the sale of slaves. Most of these slaves were captured in raids among the smaller groups surrounding Mossi territory, such as the Samo, Gurunsi, and Busansi populations. According to Mangin, Gurunsi and Busansi countries were true granaries for the Mossi, who drew upon them according to their needs.[15] In early times the Mossi chiefs utilized these slaves (*yemse*, sing. *yemba*) as agricultural workers, until Mogho

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worked for the Mogho Naba in and around the palace courtyard, and in the fields. They also kept his herds and provided him with animals from their own herds. Like the Dapore, they were seldom sold, but they often had to give their sons and daughters to the Mogho Naba.

The last group of persons who contributed their services to the Mogho Naba were the Kamboinse. Their origin is also unclear. Most of my respondents claimed that the Kamboinse and their chief first came to Ouagadougou from the direction of the Gold Coast, that they bore guns, and that they offered their services as guards to the Mogho Naba.[21] Later on, the sovereign allegedly assigned slaves to the Kamboinse unit, with the result that the entire group eventually took on a serf-like character. The Kamboinse guarded the Mogho Naba's palace and seized for him the goods of persons whom he condemned to death.

The services performed for the Mogho Naba by his pages and other youthful retainers also contributed significantly to the support of his administration. We have already seen how these young men and boys took care of his every need and functioned as important messengers within the royal household. The Mogho Naba also had control over the daughters of his serfs, whom he used to obtain revenue from aliens and subjects alike. Periodically, the Mogho Naba gave one of these girls as pughsiudga to a man, thus obligating him to render goods and services to the court. Moreover, the man had to return the eldest daughter he had by this wife to the Mogho Naba as a future pughsiudga. In this way, the sovereign had a revolving store of women through whom he could bind men to himself in a nexus of obligations, and from whom he eventually received additional women.[22]

The provincial ministers of the Ouagadougou kingdom occupied such a strategic position within the central administration that anyone rendering gifts or tribute to the Mogho Naba always gave presents to them as well. Their main source of revenue, however, came from the villages under their direct control, and from the retainers who lived in their compounds and in their wards in the capital. The economic relations between the ministers and their villages were similar to those between the district chiefs and their villages, and will be discussed below. The retainers, serfs, and slaves who served these ministers provided them with many of the services their counterparts rendered to the Mogho Naba. They kept their houses in repair and provided them with firewood and with fodder for their horses. Many of them also cultivated fields for their masters. Whenever the ministers needed extra goods or services, they called on those persons who lived in their compounds or in their wards. For example, hun-

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ably been younger sons sent to rule in conquered territories claimed that their ancestors were direct descendants of Ouedraogo and Oubri. Thus, to the Mossi, the power to rule was intimately linked to closeness of descent from the royal ancestors. The supernatural power of these ancestors, and the vigilance they were believed to maintain over the affairs of their descendants, were regarded as important factors in Mossi government.

796 631 643 769 [778] [782]

From the moment when the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou or any other Mossi ruler "drank the namtibo" and thereby received the nam of his ancestors, he had the right—indeed, the duty—to offer sacrifices to these ancestors in the name of his subjects. Every night, throughout Mossi country, the Baloum Naba of every ruler performed an act of supplication (Kwaga Basgha) to the ancestors. He beseeched them to protect the subjects of their descendants through the night, to maintain peace in Mossi country, and to grant health, children, and prosperity to all Mossi. This nightly ceremony was climaxed yearly by an elaborate ritual in honor of the ancestors (called the Basgha in some areas, and the Pelegha, Filigha, or Kinkiriga in others) that began at the highest levels of the government and ultimately linked every Mossi chief and lineage head.

643 769 241 782 796 [644]

The Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou, like the other Mogho Nanamse and Dimdamba, initiated this ceremony in his own kingdom. His celebration, called "M'barengma," was held at the end of the Mossi agricultural year and after the Soretasgho. Thus, the M'barengma was a New Year's festival in thanksgiving for good crops, as well as the annual Feast of the Dead. A few weeks before the first moon of the new year (the *ki-basgha* or *ki-pelegha*), the Mogho Naba ordered his soghondamba and samande-kamba to clean up the palace buildings and courtyards—an activity intended to notify the ever-vigilant ancestors that preparations were being made to offer sacrifices in their honor. A short time later, the Mogho Naba gave grain from his fields to the Pughtiema so she could prepare millet water for the sacrifices. Present-day Mossi insist that part of the grain came from the first ears harvested that year and part from those of the previous year. This was supposed to symbolize the continuity between crops, mirroring the continuity between the ruler and his ancestors. A few days before the principal ceremony, the Mogho Naba ordered the Larhalle Naba to pour millet water and sacrifice chickens on the graves of former Mogho Nanamse.

[645]

Shortly before the ki-basgha moon appeared, the ruler had to leave his palace at night to elude the ancestors, who had been attracted by the preparations and who were expected to be angry when they discovered that the sacrifices were not yet ready. The unjust ruler feared ancestral sanctions; the just ruler that his ancestors might want him to join them. One night he

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The Mogho Naba's daughter, the Napnko, impersonates her deceased father at his funeral ceremonies. Note that she wears one of his robes, his slippers, and his bonnet, and has his sword behind her.

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Mogho Naba Sagha II (1942-57), who was instrumental in reuniting the Mossi people into one territory, the Upper Volta.

[p. 178-8]

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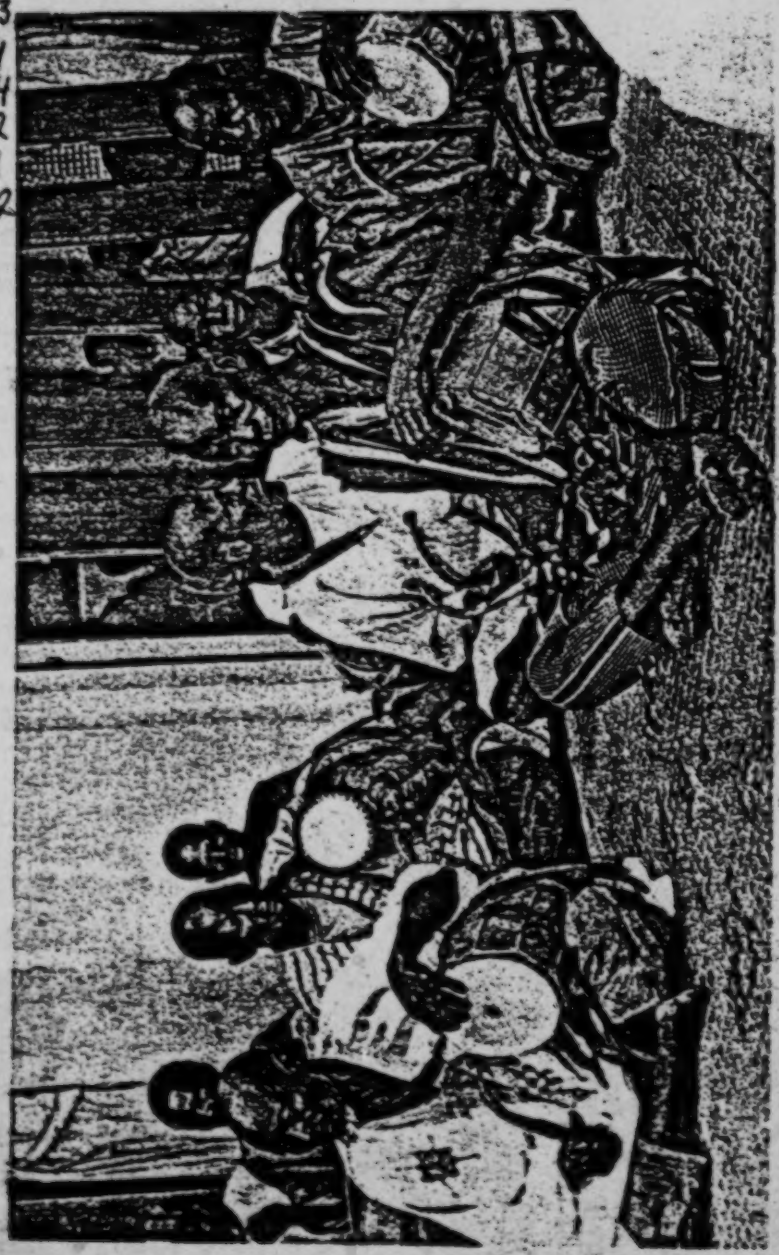

The musicians of the royal court, the Bandere.

[p. 178-C]

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Mogho Naba Kougri at court. He is flanked on the right by his pages and musicians, and on the left by members of the Muslem community.

[p. 171-E]

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Mossi chiefs of being a modernist, was elected as the first Vice-President of the new government. Not only was the Mogho Naba deprived of the opportunity to become the African head of the Upper Volta, but such stalwart supporters of the chiefs as Conombo and Bouda were left out of the government. Thus, after twelve years of opposition to Houphouët-Boigny, Mogho Naba Sagha and his chiefs were finally defeated. Their defeat was made even more ignominious by the elevation of a non-Mossi commoner to a position of dominance over the Mossi chiefs.[37]

Having lost out in the Upper Volta, the Mossi chiefs had no spokesman when the new Vice-Presidents of the Government Councils of the French West African territories and the European Presidents of these territories met at Dakar to discuss the problems of the truncated French West Africa Federation. No one mentioned the problem of the position of the traditional chiefs. As far as the politicians were concerned, the issue of the chief on the inter-territorial level was dead. It had relevance only in those territories where the chiefs retained some influence.

In an effort to consolidate their hold on the Upper Volta, the PDV-RDA members in the PDU met in September 1957 and sought to convert the PDU into a territorial subsection of the RDA. This move was resisted by the supporters of the chiefs within the PDU, especially by Conombo, who as leader of the PSEMA, an important faction within the PDU, had been completely eclipsed by Coulibaly and the PDV. Conombo resigned from the PDU and announced his intention to rebuild the PSEMA with the support of the Mossi chiefs. On November 12, however, before his plans could be put into action, Mogho Naba Sagha II died in Ouagadougou and political activities in the Upper Volta came to a standstill. A period of national mourning was proclaimed, and politicians from all parties gathered to pay their last respects and to eulogize the monarch.

Sagha's death, like that of all Mossi princes, was ascribed to foul means, although it was clear that he had succumbed to uremia. The people reacted to the interregnum by looting, and the shopkeepers in Ouagadougou and surrounding areas were compelled to close their establishments. "The people of Ouagadougou ran to Saba, but the merchants there were quite diligent, and needed no police force to protect them."[38] It was reported that those wives of the deceased ruler who were not at the palace at the time of his death took off the brass anklets denoting their royal status and became free women. If this actually happened, it was an unprecedented occurrence.

When the Mossi traditional electoral college convened to choose a new Mogho Naba, it reportedly considered the candidacy of both Moussa Con-

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the Upper Volta met, discussed "the affair of October 17," and issued a statement dissociating itself from the Mogho Naba's action, reaffirming its desire to collaborate with the established authority, and requesting a clarification of the status of chiefs in the new order. The Government Council of the Upper Volta welcomed this statement, and hastened to reassure the chiefs that their status was not in danger: "It is not a question of damaging the traditional chiefs as a group, but rather of stigmatizing vigorously an act emanating from a superior chief like Mogho Naba Kougri, the consequences of which, unforeseen as they were, could have placed all the Mossi chiefs in a regrettable and irreparable position."[47]

The Mogho Naba had obviously reached a political impasse, and he next turned his attention to creating a new image of the chieftainship. To this end, he married a young Mossi woman in accordance with the civil statutes of the state, thus becoming the first Mogho Naba and the first important Mossi chief to do so. A spokesman at the wedding placed this act in its proper perspective with the following words:

> I should now like to underscore the fact that this date, November 22 [1958], will be inscribed officially in the annals of the Upper Volta. For the first time in the history of our country, an Emperor, the person who best symbolizes tradition, has upset ancestral habits in the interest of progress. For the first time a woman will be given consideration in a royal court where she will be able to feel at her ease. For the first time, the spouse of a traditional chief will have her place near her husband as an equal and steady companion.[48]

The politicians were apparently prepared to recognize the eminence of the chiefs as long as they did not attempt to intervene in the affairs of the state, and a number of them attended the Mogho Naba's wedding. Among those present were the Presidents of both the Government Council and the Territorial Assembly, parliamentarians from various parties, and the mayors of Bobo-Dioulasso and Ouagadougou. On December 10, 1958, the Territorial Assembly confirmed Yaméogo as President of the Government Council. The Assembly also approved his slate of ministers, among them Bouda, the Mossi chief who had once been a strong supporter of the traditional political hierarchy but who now belonged to the UDV-RDA. Then, on December 11, the Assembly decided to adopt the draft of a proposed constitution for the Upper Volta. Articles 2 and 3 of Paragraph I of this constitution state explicitly:

> The Republic of the Upper Volta is one and indivisible, secular, democratic, and social. Its principle is that the government is *of the people, by the people, and for the people. . . .*
>
> *Sovereignty belongs to the people. No section of the population, and no individual, may usurp it.* [Italics mine.][49]

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443 taxes in their markets. The French abolished both of these offices
554 when they took over the country, because they looked upon them as
651 purely exploitative rather than regulatory agents. But like so many
656 other Mossi political institutions which the French have "abolished,"
178 the Kos Naga and Raga Naba persist in many of the districts, and per-
648 haps even in such large centers as Wagadougou. These officials persist
729 because one of the basic assumptions of the Mossi is that everything
825 must have a "chief." They believe that even the animals in the bush have chiefs, and if men, too, did not have chiefs then social life would be chaos. Thus, in the rural areas many or most district chiefs have retained their market officials even though the roles of these officials have become highly attenuated and so secretive that their existence is often denied.

175 Taxes collected at the market places played an important part in
443 supporting the traditional political hierarchy of the Mossi people.
651 The Kos Naba collected 250 cowries in taxes for every beef cattle
648 slaughtered at the market and took their humps and gave them to a palace official called the Nemdo Naba (meat chief) for distribution in the royal household. He also collected 250 cowries on every cow sold there, but did not usually tax goats and sheep. In lieu of this he occasionally took a head or two of these animals from each herd that passed through the market and sent them to the palace kitchens. Donkeys were also taxed at the rate of 200 cowries per head sold in the market. Horses sold to the nobility were not taxed, but those exported were taxed about 300 cowries.

175 The Raga Naba collected the taxes on other commodities sold at
443 market. Cotton weavers paid him taxes according to the size of their
651 bolts of cloth, and cotton producers paid as much as 20 cowries on
463 especially large sales of their raw produce. The tailors and dyers paid no fixed tax on their wares, but were asked to send clothing to the palace. Every donkey- or ox-load of salt which entered the market place was assessed a tax of 300 cowries. The smiths were not taxed in cowries, but had to supply the wives of the Moro Naba with hoes and the palace personnel with arrowheads, spearpoints and iron clubs. The jewelers also sent bracelets as presents to the ruler. There were no fixed taxes on cereals, vegetables and cooked food sold at market, but each day the Raga Naba, accompanied by several pages or retainers carrying baskets, went from vendor to vendor taking several calabash-fuls of their produce for use in the palace. In addition, the vendors of cooked food had to feed the young grooms of the Moro Naba who were not regularly fed by the palace household. The beer sellers, too, while they were not assessed taxes, contributed a good percentage of their beverage to palace and market personnel who demanded the

000 Ministers and officials in the court of the emperor of the Mossi. We shall provide a list of the persons making up the emperor's court in a later chapter.

Functions of the Ministers

645 The four ministers, Ouidi Naba, Larallé Naba, Gounga Naba, and Baloum Naba, were charged with the nomination of the kombemba (plural of kombéré, vassal chief), subject to the emperor's approval. At the present time they retain the same prerogatives subject to ratification by the administrative authorities. These ministers further assisted the emperor in deciding important matters whenever he called upon them, and they transmitted the orders of the Mogho Naba to [48] his vassals. Today the Mogho 643 648 Naba is hardly concerned with the regulation of affairs, since these are dealt with by his ministers or by the French authorities. However, the leading court dignitaries always submit to him matters of any importance, they keep him informed about all matters of general interest, and, finally, they report to him any interviews which they may have had with the administrator of the circle, who represents the government of the colony [Ed., the circle (Fr., cercle) is the largest French administrative unit below the colony (Fr., colonie)].

Organization of Territorial Control

634 Each of the emperor's ministers had authority -- we shall 845 presently see under what conditions -- over a group of cantons [Ed., the canton (Fr., canton) is a traditional Mossi administrative unit, containing a number of villages, and several cantons together form a province; the native districts were incorporated into the French administrative system to some extent]. A kombéré naba was head of each canton. Originally and up to the time of Naba Sanum's reign, the Baloum Naba commanded the dimbissi (canton chiefs who were descendants of the recent Mogho Nabas), while the other cantons, except the most thickly populated and hence the richest, such as Zittenga, Manga, etc., were distributed

634 among the other ministers. The rich and important cantons
645 were entrusted to the Kamsaogo Naba, chief eunuch. This was
[839] because the emperor wanted to be sure that he would recover the fortune left by this minister at his death. Since the latter was merely the guardian of the king's wives, he had no legitimate heirs. The eunuch appointed to replace him had to establish his own personal fortunes. Only the horses or women which the late minister might have given [49] during his lifetime to persons in his section were left with their owners. [Ed., Mossi villages are
[621] divided into sections (Fr., quartier), which are really hamlets containing several households or compounds. These sections are indigenous, not colonial subdivisions.]

Powers of the Ministers over the Vassal Chiefs of the Mogho Naba

634 It would be a mistake to think that before the French occu-
645 pation the ministers had any great authority over the canton chief.
642 Actually, the ministers' role, as has been pointed out, was to act as intermediaries between the emperor and the canton chiefs. They could not, however, under any right or pretext, intervene in canton affairs, since the kombéré was the only lord in the area whose command had been conferred upon him as an appanage by the Mogho Naba.

That is why it has been possible for canton chiefs who were dissatisfied with the minister under whose rule they found themselves to report, henceforth, to another minister. Furthermore, the Mogho Naba saw no objection to this. The Mossi expression,
[538] Gansobend'ka sambiri n'tont vigri yé ("hospitality is not like kinship; 'you can evade it") amply illustrates the accuracy of the foregoing. If it is further noted that before the French occupation
[651] the naba came to Ouagadougou only once a year to pay their respects to the emperor and to bring him annual tribute, one will readily understand the insignificance of the ministers' authority over them.

This does not mean, of course, that it was possible to [50] do without any intermediaries, but rather that it was possible to choose them freely. In any case, one of the incentives to

634 submission was based solely on the fact that although the em-
645 peror named new canton chiefs, he was too remote to know any-
642 thing about the children of deceased naba, so, in order to make sure during his own lifetime that his eldest son would succeed him, the kombéré affected some respect toward the emperor's ministers and made gifts to the principal dignitaries at Ouagadougou.

Present situation. It is my belief that the present political
631 and administrative reorganization, which dates back about eighteen
648 years (1912), has taken no account whatsoever of the existing hierarchy of ministers in the distribution of territorial control. Thus, it has come about that a given minister has to pass through numerous villages which are under the authority of another minister in order to reach his own administrative area. In addition, if one examines the situation closely, it seems that the sole aim of the administration ["administration" always refers to French administration] at that time was to reward certain young and capable ministers at the expense of those who were too old.

In point of fact, however, one must go back to 1908 to find the causes of such a state of disorganization. At that time the late Larrhallé Naba, Pawitraogo, a province chief, was sent off on a mission to Koudougou, and his vacated office had to be filled. Later on the emperor dismissed the Kamsogho Naba [51] and replaced him with an "incompetent," so the local administration decided to entrust the province to a more qualified minister.

It would be highly desirable if a new reorganization were put into effect which would 1) progressively eliminate certain insignificant cantons by combining them into larger units; 2) gather the so-called independent villages into cantons; and 3) grant to province chiefs identical material rewards. This last can only be achieved by an equitable allotment of the cantons. The French administration has granted equal salaries to all province chiefs and, as a consequence, has established an equality which did not formerly exist. Three of these officials are now educated men; they enjoy equal consideration, have the same needs, and alike perform valuable services. They should all be accorded equal advantages if jealousy and discontent are to be avoided.

631 Finally, to return to the kombemba, it should be stated that the vassals of the Mogho Naba at Koudougou and Kaya enjoy a

631 certain amount of independence since they can communicate with the circle commanders with no intermediary other than the interpreter, an indispensable adjunct as long as the chiefs do not attend the [French] schools. On the other hand, the authority of the vassal chiefs still attached to the administrative district of Ouagadougou is, if not entirely lost, at least greatly diminished.

Indeed, their action is thwarted by that of the ministers, the province chiefs, from whom [52] they receive orders, sometimes falsified or amplified by ambitious intermediaries.

It must certainly be conceded that such a state of affairs may have -- it has had -- an unfortunate effect on the progress of these naba. This is an evil which should be remedied without delay.

636 645 565 The local administration at the very beginning made the serious error of failing to take into account the importance of the canton chiefs, most of whom (see the list in the appendix [not translated]) are descendants of the Mogho Naba. On the other hand, virtually all the ministers and other court officials, despite the respect one owes them and the privileges they enjoy, are of humble origin (see Chapter 4 for the origins of the Ouidi Naba and the Larrhallé Naba, for example).

The Petty Kings (Dima) in the Past and Today

643 631 As has been noted in the introductory chapter [not translated], some of the chiefs have gradually freed themselves from the authority of the Mogho Naba and have assumed the title of dima, that is, "king." These chiefs are the Boussouma Naba of the Kaya circle, the Konquizitenga Naba of the Kougoudou circle, the Yako Naba of the Kougoudou circle (Yako subdivision), and the Riziam Naba of the Ouahigouya circle.

These chiefs were, in a sense, independent "rulers," since the emperor's suzerainty over them was so weak [53] that they enjoyed almost complete independence. Some of them, notably the Boussouma Naba and the Yako Naba, have authority over canton chiefs whom they invest in the same way the emperor does.

[63]

Ministers and Officials of the Court of the Mogho Naba

644 645 Ministers. (a) Ouidi Naba (literally, "chief of the horses," or superintendent of His Majesty's stables). In the old days the Ouidi Naba had the duty of choosing the color and kind of horse suitable for the Mogho Naba. He usually had charge of the horses of deceased chiefs.

If a kombéré (canton chief) owned horses during his lifetime, 202 644 upon his death one of them is sent to the Mogho Naba in Ouagadougou as bearer of the sad news. Branches of the tahnga (karite [or shea] tree), wound with white rope, are tied to the horse's tail.

[64] The horse thus presented to the Mogho Naba is then handed over to one of the representatives of the Ouidi Naba who, after cutting loose the branches with a knife and leaving them in the courtyard of the Mogho Naba, leads the animal to Ouidin [section of the Ouidi Naba].

Unless the Mogho Naba gives the horse to someone, the Ouidi Naba is free to dispose of it.

645 (b) Larrhallé Naba, second minister of the Mogho Naba. Formerly he accompanied the Tansoba or Tampsoba to war.

In the section where the Larrhallé Naba now lives, there were once enormous trees whose leaves were constantly astir. When he was made a minister, the Larrhallé Naba said that he wished to dwell at the place "where the leaves on the trees are always astir" (tisse vand'sin y a lag, lag zighin wan). From this came the name of Larrhallé, which designates the section.

(c) Gounga Naba, third minister (1). His section stands in a

645 173

1. Originally the Gounga Naba was the prime minister, and the title was his by right since he was a companion of Naba Oubri. One day, as he was attending to a natural need, he met a very handsome young man and offered his friendship to him; the latter accepted. Later he presented the boy to Naba Oubri who adopted him, settled him at court, and put him in charge of the royal stables. The Gounga Naba then said

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to the Mogho Naba: "Since I have come to you, give the first rank to this man. I will show him what he must do to please you. He will be the Ouidi Naba."

A man from Tansobongo, having heard that the Ouidi Naba was living in the greatest ease, came to see him. He, too, was a handsome youth. He was presented to the Mogho Naba (Naba Oubri) by the Gounga Naba who proposed the young man's appointment as second minister, the Larrhallé Naba, and reserved for himself the post of third minister.

So it came about that the Gounga Naba is the emperor's third minister.

645 place where there were once many goumsé (gounga, silk-cotton tree); hence, his name.

He is a brother-in-arms of the Tansoba and always accom-
[726] panied him to war, where he chose death rather than defeat, especially if the Tansoba had been killed.

644 (d) Baloum Naba, the chief steward of the palace and chief servitor of the Mogho Naba. He never goes to war, but remains always at the side of the Mogho Naba. It is his duty to carry out
[781] [65] sacrifices, such as killing the chickens or livestock offered to the manes or to the spirits when such sacrifices are prescribed by the soothsayers or other charlatans for the health and well-being of the Mogho Naba.

(e) Kamsaogho Naba, formerly accompanied the Tansoba to
[839] war. The Kamsaogho Naba is a eunuch, and for this reason he is commonly called Mogho Naba na poug'tiéma, "first wife of the Mogho Naba."

Other personages (not ministers). (a) Samandé Naba, in charge of all of the people in the outer courtyard of the Mogho Naba and a brother-in-arms of the Larrhallé Naba.

644 (b) Poé Naba, formerly the confessor for the wives and pages
687 of the Mogho Naba. His duty, carried out by magical practices,
661 was to denounce those wives or persons guilty of treason or of

644 fields. On that day, the Mogho Naba had one or two cows
651 slaughtered and a large quantity of sagbo (millet cakes) prepared
241 for the workers. If the latter, after being assembled two or three times in the manner indicated above, were not finished with all the fields, the work was carried on by the samand'kamba (the people who dwelt in the outer courtyard of the Mogho Naba).

644 The emperor, however, received none of the millet grown in
574 his own fields, which, incidentally, did not have their present boundaries. This millet was reserved exclusively [74] for use as food for foreign visitors and for the feeding of horses (1).

1. For the ceremony of threshing this millet (kawinré), see the special chapter below [Chapter 16].

644 It was the duty of the canton chiefs and the ministers to pro-
651 vide loads of millet for the use of the Mogho Naba and his harem ("harem" should be understood to mean all young or middle-aged women, but to exclude the elderly women who have to support themselves and who have their private fields).

644 (b) Repair of the houses of the Mogho Naba. The work of
651 building and repairing the houses actually belonging to the em-
356 peror fell entirely upon the inhabitants of Bilbalogo (section of the Baloum Naba), Kamsaonghin (section of the chief eunuch), and Dapoya (section of the slaves of the Mogho Naba).

[343] The outbuildings, wédanga, four round huts with thatched roofs located outside the emperor's house, served as stables for the horses given to the Mogho Naba by canton chiefs or other personages and were built and maintained by three ministers, the Ouidi Naba, Larrhallé Naba, and Gounga Naba, with the help of the people in their sections.

The tamping of the floors and clay roofs was done wholly by the wives of the persons responsible for [75] the construction or repair, that is, the wives of the ministers and of the inhabitants of their sections.

Labor service due the province chiefs, ministers of the emperor.

651 (a) Cultivation of fields. The fields belonging to the ministers
645 of the Mogho Naba were cultivated by a system of payments in kind
241 as follows.

651 For the Baloum Naba, the work was done by all the bilbalsé.
645 The Kam Naba set the day for the sekka (gathering), and all the
241 young and able-bodied men were required to report. They received the food they required from the Baloum Naba. The number of work days was not fixed. The sekka might be held once or several times, depending on the acreage.

For the other ministers, the Ouidi Naba, Gounga Naba, and Larrhallé Naba, the field work was done by the people in their entourage (that is, the inhabitants of their respective sections) and in the neighboring villages which were formerly under their jurisdiction. Since the formation of the canton of Ouagadougou and its outskirts, the area has been under the exclusive authority of the Baloum Naba (fourth minister of the emperor).

645 If, however, the fields were so extensive that their cultiva-
476 tion could not be taken care of solely by the above system -- the
241 laborers also had to care for their own fields -- the ministers [76] called for volunteers from among the young men in the neighboring villages and paid them with food and drink. This is the sissoaga, a system commonly in use among the Mossi.

645 (b) Construction and repair of houses. As a general rule, re-
651 pair of the roofs of huts in the establishments of the province chiefs
356 was the duty of the inhabitants of their respective sections and of the neighboring villages under their jurisdiction.

651 The canton chiefs. The cultivation of the fields of the naba
634 and the repair of the huts in their establishments were wholly in-
241 cumbent on their subjects. Each village had a fixed number of
356 huts to be repaired or roofed; this is known as sough'pilli, and it is still in effect annually.

651 Today, perhaps in the interests of tranquillity, canton chiefs require labor service in their fields only from their sogoné and samand'kamba and sometimes even resort to the sissoaga.

The local administration, with respect for local customs, has the policy of organizing the system in a way that, in our opinion, will safeguard the interests of the natives, overburdened due to the negligence of the province chiefs, and at the same time will enhance the prestige of the Mossi chiefs.

653 The naba is not entitled to any other labor services. The building of dams to provide water for the villages cannot be

576 643 Thus, although the Mogho Naba would not in the least object to shaking hands with a Bambara or a Djerma, he would be astonished if a native Moaga -- even an official -- should offer his hand.

543 576 As soon as the children of a naba have reached the age of discretion, they may no longer play with their "papa," even less shake hands with him. They must henceforth follow the general rule which requires the Mossi salute, kantissé.

576 602 [111] Nowadays naba (kombemba) and nayiridamba (ministers of the emperor) understand the uselessness of such signs of distrust. Therefore, even though they continue to be less familiar with their relatives (brothers, uncles, and sons -- whom they regard as rivals), they willingly offer their hands to Mossi of any standing and to foreigners.

644 Reception by the naba. 1) Up to the present time and despite some thirty-five years of French occupation, the way one is received at the court of the emperor, which, of course, befalls his servitors, has altered very little. Natives who are now officials in the administration and in business enterprises are still treated on the same footing as their less highly placed compatriots. Not only are they required to perform the kantissé (Mossi salute) as described by Father Mangin, but also afterwards they must sit on the ground, a position that is difficult in European clothes. Foreigners (Bambara, [648] Djerma, even Gourounsi) are offered seats because the soroné do not regard them as fellow countrymen.

645 576 352 177 2) By the ministers. At the present time all the emperor's ministers have comfortable houses and splendid drawing rooms furnished with Morris chairs and folding chairs. These seats are offered [112] to visitors of any standing, while benches two or three meters long are reserved for persons of less consequence (house boys, cooks, circle guards, notables, etc.).

631 576 352 3) By the kombemba. Benches are always reserved for visitors of note or, if there are none, mats are provided. Some of these chiefs even own a few commonplace chairs and perhaps one or two folding chairs.

Hierarchies among the Ministers and Officials at the Court of the King of the Mossi

554 631 There exists a kind of hierarchy among the naba. One chief may have to uncover his head before greeting another because he is his "little brother" (yaoua) or because he is in the presence of a chief of higher rank (for instance, the "petty kings," dima).

It is extremely difficult to determine the hierarchy which exists among the kombemba because there are so many of them, but they respect it even today. It would be difficult to undertake research on the subject which has only local interest and would not benefit our work.

645 557 576 The following paragraphs, therefore, will deal only with the ministers and other officials at the emperor's court.

Mutual relations among the ministers before the French occupation. (a) The Ouidi-Naba, prime minister and chief of the cavalry. [113] After his appointment the Ouidi Naba is required only to call on the Mogho Naba. The other ministers and the notables at Ouagadougou must call on him. Naturally, by virtue of his rank, the Ouidi Naba is expected to offer them large quantities of beer and to have sheep and even cows slaughtered in their honor.

(b) The Larrhallé Naba, a minister also and guardian of the tombs. Despite what happened quite recently (March-April, 1929), the Larrhallé Naba is only required to call on the Ouidi Naba and, if he wishes to do so, on the Gounga Naba. He does not call upon the other ministers and officials.

(c) The Gounga Naba is required to call upon the two higher ministers, the Ouidi Naba and Larrhallé Naba. The other officials at court must call on him, and, like the Ouidi Naba, he offers them beer and meat.

(d) The Baloum Naba, the steward of the Mogho Naba and chief of the pages. Early in his term of office he must call upon the three principal ministers and upon the imam. No other visits are required of him, he does not call upon other court personages.

This stated, let us go on to the most important matter.

644 conferred by the Mogho Naba on the canton chiefs.

292 With the exception of the Tenkodogo Naba and, more re-
554 cently, the Boussouma Naba, neither of whom renders honors to the Mogho Naba, all ministers, other petty dima, and chiefs of Mossi cantons must take off his cap to greet the emperor.

576 (a) Between ministers. The Ouidi Naba does not remove his
554 cap for any of his colleagues.

The Larrhallé Naba, Gounga Naba, and Kamsaongo Naba are
645 equals and greet each other with their caps on.

The Baloum Naba and Samandé Naba are also equals, and they do not take off their caps when greeting each other. However, they were required to remove their caps (pougla) and even to perform the kantissé in the presence of the three principal ministers.

[116] Next in importance are the Nemdo Naba or "chief of the meat" [in charge of slaughtering], the Poé Naba who is confessor to the emperor's wives, the Bend Naba, chief of the drummers, and, finally, a whole string of petty chiefs of no importance who can hardly be distinguished from the general populace and whom it would be fruitless to enumerate here.

The Poé Naba may keep his cap on when he is in the presence of the Baloum Naba or the Samandé Naba, but he must remove it for the other ministers and must even prostrate himself to perform the kantissé.

645 Not very long ago, when the province chiefs of Ouagadougou
574 possessed neither comfortable houses nor furniture, the ministers rarely visited each other. I have even once seen a minister sit on the ground in order to give his seat to one of his colleagues.

645 Whenever matters came up which required a meeting, the ministers met at night in one or another of their homes without the knowledge of the public.

645 Today, the principal ministers have proper reception rooms.
576 They can, therefore, remain seated when a more important colleague calls upon them and limit their special consideration of the visitor to offering him a Morris armchair or a folding chair.

701 The Tensoba, the minister of war, never takes off his cap for a
554 minister or a canton chief. He does so only before the emperor.
645

701 Formerly, when war broke out and he was summoned to [117]
554 Ouagadougou, the Tansoba [sic] assembled the principal ministers
645 of the Mogho Naba at the home of his host, and his word was final.

Aside from this special case, he might call upon a minister, but then a servitor always brought along the cushion on which he would sit until the minister receives him in his private quarters. He was never received in public.

Once inside, the Tansoba occupied the best seat, and the minister got down on the floor and performed the Mossi salute.

In sum, the Tansoba was held in higher esteem than any other personage at the king's court.

(b) At the present time. Today ministers often visit each other.
645 Since they have rapid means of transportation at their disposal, they
574 regularly go about without escorts. Most often their visits are made in order to deal with matters of general interest.

When a minister calls upon another minister, he keeps his cap
645 on and neither removes his shoes nor performs the kantissé. They
576 are equals. This equality has been established by the local admin-
574 istration which has granted the same rights and salary to all. The minister shakes hands with his colleague and takes a seat. He is served copious quantities of beer, and then he takes his leave.

In spite of assertions to the contrary, the Mossi empire is po-
642 litically disorganized. This accounts for the errors committed by the local administration and the [118] mistakes held against the ministers of the Mogho Naba who for a long time were granted too much power.

The Origin of Mossi Chiefdom (Legend), or the Way the Peulh, the Yarcé, and the Blacksmiths Salute Mossi Chiefs

773 The Peulh, the Yarcé, and, to a certain extent, the black-
184 smiths do not perform the kantissé (Mossi salute). They have a dif-
576 ferent way of saluting naba. A curious legend explains this phenomenon. However bizarre it may seem, it is not lacking in interest, and we shall tell it just as it was handed down to us.

551 643 2. Mogho Naba Kom (kom, "water"). When he was still quite young, Mogho Naba Kom, who is on the throne today, succeeded his father, Naba Siguiri, to the great surprise of his enemies. He took the name of Naba Kom.

(a) Kom sound Tambdo ti koulg'king lad moaghana. (During the rainy season when much water falls, the rivers and seas rejoice to see their water swell.)

(b) Neb san toul béogo bi a balem Wendé. (He who dreams of tomorrow must place his faith in God.)

(c) Sandib, laguem koabga ti pigh'pam nionré. Since he was very young at the time of his nomination, many begrudged him the appointment, and sorcery was used to cause his death. This third name means "A hundred charlatans, makers of charms, cannot prevail against the pigha (rock, i.e., the chief)."

(d) Gonpaniendégha kon nies niédga. (One does not [133] wipe one's bottom with thorns and brambles.) This alludes to his enemies and means that in spite of them he rules all the same.

(e) Tang'niebga belem mogré pamé wek'balbo. (Since the crocodile can only really live and procreate along the banks of watercourses, what is a mountain crocodile to do if he desires many offspring? He must move his dwelling and go to the water.)

551 645 3. The Ouidi Naba (actually named Rabi), Naba Boulga (literally, "well [pit]").

(a) Baning sorr'yoagba n'tilig kinsé la wamsé. (The large white or sorghum grown under the Strophanthus has no fear of being eaten by birds or monkeys.)

(b) Yel somd'boulgh'tont niédbo. (The well of righteousness cannot be filled.)

4. The Gounga Naba (actually named Namébrogo Ilboudo), Naba Yemdé (literally, "hippopotamus"). Yem deng kouilga ti zimbi datin dem yaré. ("When the hippopotamus is first to arrive at the waterhold, the fish can play about at will," or "when fish play around a hippopotamus, they will not be troubled by either big fish or fishermen.")

5. The Baloum Naba (Tenga Ouédraogo), Naba Tanga (literally, "mountain").

(a) "A mountain crowned with trees is soon noticed," or "in order to be respected, one must have good support, good backing."

551 [134] (b) Kata laghem koagb'kon sirigh tanga. (A hundred
645 barking hyenas cannot shake a mountain.)

6. Kamsoro Naba (Ouene Nongué), Naba Niouga ("cat"). He is chief eunuch. Nioug'nok wendé na pa ne Sabelem. (A cat who trusts in God is sure to preserve his blackness.) In other words, one who is protected by the Mogho Naba, his "God," will never lack for anything; everything will come to him as if by magic.

551 7. Naba Gnighnemdo (Mogho Naba). Naba Oubri, the founder
643 of the Ouagadougou dynasty, fell in love with one of his own daugh-
835 ters and had intercourse with her. The girl became pregnant and gave birth to a son. The wives of Naba Oubri wanted to put both the child and the mother to death. They asked the girl the name of the child's father, and she replied, "Ask my father, he ought to know." When Oubri was questioned, he answered: "Bassi yan ya mam lam gnighnemdo (Do nothing, this is my own flesh)."

The child of this incestuous union was thus named Gnighnemdo and later succeeded his relative, Naba Nasbiré.

The Placing of Statues at Loumbi-Raogo

211 Ganlougdou. In the old days, upon the death of a Mogho
306 Naba or soon after, a jeweler was called in [135] to make a wax
532 statuette, later to be cast in bronze, in the likeness of the late chief. The jeweler also made statuettes of one soroné, one napagha, one bendré, and one lounga, and all were deposited at the home
[177] of the Loumbila Naba. This practice was suppressed upon the arrival of the French, and it appears that there is no statue of Naba Siguiri, father of Naba Kom, the present naba, at Loumbila.

The acting Mogho Naba is never supposed to see these statues, and the jeweler who made the likeness of his father must not see
[435] them either. The jeweler was paid 100,000 cowries, a horse, a donkey, a cow, a wife, a large robe, and 1,000 kola nuts, and he was then sent away from Ouagadougou. He must never return and must never see the new Mogho Naba.

These gifts represented a considerable sum in the old days, even today for that matter. They were given to aid the jeweler in consulting seers and charlatans for the purpose of prolonging his life. Tradition has it that unless he followed faithfully the prescriptions given by the seers, he would die within a year after completing the statues.

1: Delobsom--153 I-5 (no date) 1933 FA28 Mossi FA28

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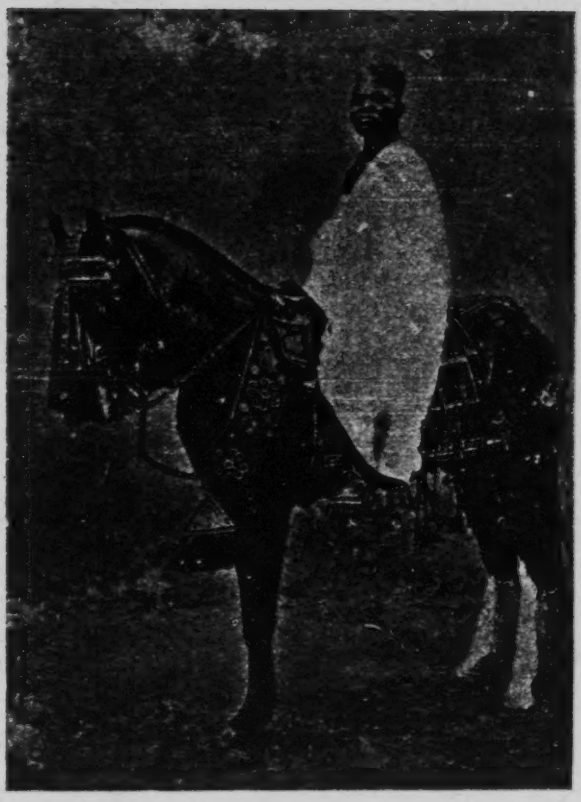

G unga N: Gounga Naba
Third Minister of the Mogho Naba.

From the Mission of the White
Fathers at Ouagadougou.

1: Delobsom--157 I-5 (no date) 1933 FA28 Mossi FA28

The Third Minister of the Mogho Naba (Gounga Naba) among his Servitors.
(The latter wear Christian medals)

From the Mission of the White Fathers at Ouagadougou.

576 the chest with the hands half-closed and the thumbs raised, strike the ground together three or four times. The Mossi then raises his body a little and rubs the palms of his hands together. He never looks the person he is saluting straight in the face; but keeps his eyes slightly lowered. It is a truly humbled posture, especially when the chief who is being saluted remains standing or on horseback, towering above his subordinate, and barely according him a glance. The women, instead of beating upon the ground with their forearms, strike it with the elbows and raise their open hands, fingers extended, to shoulder height. The grand salute, very rarely used, consists of turning around after the ordinary salute has been completed, seizing some dust with both hands, spreading it on the forehead, and saluting once more.

When two natives who know each other meet along the way, the younger of the two squats first and begins the salute, which the other acknowledges by squatting in turn. If they are carrying loads, they set them down before saluting. They are never in a hurry. Servants and women, when they walk before a chief, bow slightly and join their hands in front of the chest, palms together. Though complicated, the Mossi salute is rendered easily and gracefully by the natives; they are used to it from an early age, and never perform it in the clumsy and awkward manner which is theirs when they attempt to imitate the military salute, so fine and noble when well done and so ludicrous when distorted by a Black.

622 Chiefs are designated by the generic term naba, but a distinction
643 is made between naba and dimma. The latter is elected /16/ according to very precise rules, which we shall mention later, and his authority stems directly from this election. There are only five dimma among the Mossi: the Moro Naba, and the nabas of Fada, Tenkodogo, Boussouma, and Yatenga. The naba, on the other hand, receives his power from another chief more powerful than himself who has chosen him from several candidates.

643 Mossi country lies wholly under the authority of the Moro Naba
645 who is assisted by five high ministers: the Widi Naba, Laralé Naba, Gounga Naba, Kamisoro Naba and Ballum Naba. The respective
[839] functions of these ministers are somewhat ill-defined. The Kamisoro is a eunuch and chief of the eunuchs. Upon his death, since he leaves no heirs, all his property devolves to the Moro Naba. It was thus to the latter's advantage to make him wealthy and to present him with the finest district in the country. The Widi Naba takes the place of the Moro Naba from the time of his death until the investiture

643 of his successor. He presides over the election and proclaims the new-
645 ly elected chief. The Laralé is the guardian of the Moro Naba's ancestral tombs, and the Ballum is the head of the pages and dancers. When the Moro Naba gives one of his pages in marriage, the latter settles near the huts of the Ballum Naba. This is the least important minister; prior to the French occupation, he was given no province to rule.

631 The Moro Naba ruled directly over a large part of the Mossi territories. The part under his immediate jurisdiction was apportioned among his four principal ministers, who each had under him the heads of the cantons. Those territories not directly subject to the Moro Naba were placed under the authority of powerful chiefs who might be called province chiefs, assuredly vassals of the Moro Naba, but very independent vassals, somewhat similar to the dukes of Brittany and Burgundy vis-à-vis the King of France. Such are the nabas of Ouahigouya, Yako, Boussouma, Bélousa, etc.; there are many of them outside the territory reserved to the Moro Naba, especially to the north, east, and south. These province chiefs could also have independent vassals who, nevertheless, acknowledged their authority, such as the naba of Koupéla, a true province chief, but a vassal of the naba of Bélousa, in turn a vassal of the Moro Naba. The naba of Salmatenga stands in the same position with reference to the naba of Boussouma.

Each province is divided into cantons, each headed by a naba, and the canton includes several villages, each of which usually has its naba. Some of the villages are directly controlled by the province chief who apportions them among his ministers. Some villages may not even have a true naba. These are usually villages established by the children of an important naba. In this case an old man is entrusted with the administrative functions. These villages without a naba may nevertheless obtain one. For example, if the province chief has a son who settles in the community and the inhabitants are pleased with his presence, his father may name him naba of the
[562] village. A very few villages are ruled by women who are assisted by the elders when a case is to be judged.

The power of each chief is tempered by his council. The Moro Naba himself does not act without consulting his ministers. Each province /17/ chief has a council. The titles of the ministers vary from one province to another, but their functions are the same.

631 The canton chiefs consult the oldest men in the village where they reside, and the village chiefs make no decisions bearing on the community without assembling the elders and listening to their advice.

Everything is carried out through the channels of the hierarchy. A province chief never transmits an order directly to a village ruled by a canton chief, but he advises the latter who notifies the village chief, and the village chief in turn calls the elders together, conveys the orders to them, and through them informs all his subjects. The orders passed down in this formal way are always carried out, but if perchance a canton chief should wish to disobey his province chief, he would be seconded by his people who recognize his authority before any other.

643 The last Moro Nabas had become to some extent idle kings. The
645 protocol to which they were subjected by custom constantly encumbered
701 them, not unlike European court etiquette. The Moro Naba was surrounded with a veritable court. As mentioned above, his High Council was composed of five chief ministers. To these should be added the Iman who represents the Moslems and who wields a certain influence, and the Teng'Soba. /Tr. Among the Mossi there is both a Teng'Soba, earth priest, and a Tan'Soba, war minister. It would seem that the latter is meant here./ The duties of the latter are quite specialized. He does not live in the same village as the Moro Naba, and he rules a canton. In case of war, he is consulted on the timeliness of the hostilities and on their chances of success. It devolves upon him at this time to make the proper sacrifices and to question the ancestral spirits. When war has been decided on, he takes command of the armies, and everyone, the ministers and the canton chiefs, must obey him. The Moro Naba remains in Ouagadougou.

644 A crowd of subalterns gravitate around these high dignitaries. The
839 eunuchs are not very respectable people; sometimes habitual thieves were made eunuchs, as were, in general, those pages guilty of too much familiarity with the naba's wives. Some of them could reach a high position. The Kamisoro were always eunuchs, and several important cantons were set aside for them.

644 The pages are young boys, hand-picked from the country's most gifted children. They must serve the naba, and they bear the name soroné. The naba is never alone; he always has one or several pages by his side. One holds the fan, one stands near the monarch to help him shift his position, another takes care of his shoes, yet another of his scepter; the great cup-bearer constantly holds a gourd filled with strong millet beer and covered by a tray of artistically woven basketry.

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Above: The Moro Naba. Behind him, his brother, about twelve years old and the head of a large province, flanked by two pages.

Below: The Bullom Naba and his Pages. Behind him, his two Christian sons.

622 1. Ti'douda béleum villi n'pam n'dou. Those who wish to
539 climb a tree seize the branches for support. /21/

2. Gigemdé sen touka séolro, wenniginamma, walpélronamma, nonga morbo, la'b zuéta gemdé. The lion digs up the salty earth (good to eat); the buffalo and koba /a kind of horse antelope/ like to eat it, but fear the lion. (The enemies of the Saman'Naba would like to take his place, but fear the naba.)

3. Kong'panga, bar'bala. Those who lack strength remain servants.

● 645 The appointment of the high ministers involves only a few gifts,
635 offered during the festive days which last from the death of the minister to the nomination of his successor. The eldest son usually inherits the position, but the province chief may designate anyone he pleases.

636 Upon the death of the naba of Koupéla, a province chief, the ministers hold a council and decide among themselves who is to be his successor. The eldest son is nearly always chosen. Before the name of the man selected is announced, the head of the village section that bears the name Koupéla notifies the canton chiefs, who gather in the village of Koupéla. When everyone has arrived, the Tabrana /sic/ proclaims the name of the man chosen, and they all proceed to Bélousa to disclose their choice to the naba and to request his investiture. The naba of Bélousa usually accepts the man thus formally designated. If there is disagreement, or if he himself would prefer a different choice, he notifies the Moro Naba accordingly and indicates his own preferences; when his messenger returns, he proclaims the appointment, and everyone submits to his will. After all, he "has the strength." As badges of investiture, the naba of Bélousa presents the chosen man with a cap, a pair of shoes, and a scepter. The new naba still may not wear the cap, put on the shoes, or hold
[769] the scepter. He must proceed first to the grave of the ancestor of the people, Naba Kourita, where he offers sacrifices, especially that of a cow. The festivities last for seven days, in the course of which millet beer flows freely and cattle is slaughtered in large numbers. In the course of these festivities the head of the chosen man is shaved, and he receives from the messengers of the naba of Bélousa the cap, shoes, and scepter; only then does he truly become a naba, with the right to

4: Skinner . E-5 (1955-1957) 1957
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tion and, when he arrived at the sparsely settled Ninisi village of Nobéré, 173
he decided to stay and make it his home. The Ninisi ran away when they saw Biligo coming, but he persuaded them to return and live in peace under his command. The Tengsoba, or earth priest, of the village refused to return, and Biligo went into the bush and captured him so that the sacrifices to the earth shrines could continue as before. Biligo married a local woman and, when she bore him sons, he sent them to rule those villages not inhabited by the earth priests. These sons and their families formed the noble classes in the district.

About one hundred years ago a district chief called Peka supported the 173
loser in a fight for the supreme chieftainship and was killed when the 565
victorious pretender was installed as chief in Ouagadougou. The victor 631
sent his son, Ngado, to rule over Nobéré and, although the relatives of Peka were scattered, the village chiefs were allowed to retain their posts. These chiefs did lose their noble status, however, because Ngado's sons who went to live in the villages formed the new nobility. The chiefs and their families were submerged into the commoner class. The history of Nobéré is typical of that of most of the Mossi districts and, today, one finds the remnants of many former ruling lineages scattered around the country.

The supreme ruler of the Mossi was called the Moro-naba. He possessed 643
the *nam* which is the symbol of power, and because of this power he had the right of life and death over all his subjects. He also had a religious role in the country because it was his duty to initiate the yearly rites dedicated to the ancestors so that the country would have good crops, and so that the people would be happy and multiply. The Moro-naba was aided in [645]
his rule over the Mossi by five ministers who were responsible for the five provinces grouping 333 villages that made up the territory of the state. These ministers were responsible for the proper administration of the state, and they nominally elected the new Moro-naba.

As soon as the death of the ruler was announced, civil disorder broke out throughout the country and continued until the five ministers and the minister for war took fictive control of the country. When the funeral of the late chief was completed the chief minister, the Ouidi-naba, summoned the lesser ministers to a conference and told them that the country had no chief "because the fire had gone out" and that it now required one. He advised them to consider the qualifications of the late chief's son and of all the other pretenders, and to choose the most worthy individual. The lesser ministers refused to do this, saying: "You are our superior, and the right to make the choice rests on you alone."

The eldest son of the former ruler was usually elected Moro-naba but, as any member of the royal lineage up to the third degree was eligible, many persons tried to bribe the elector. When the Ouidi-naba made his choice he told the minister of war: "My mind is not at ease because I fear that those whose hopes have not been fulfilled will resort to violence."

567 Dagomba conquest. Both family type and slave status, indeed, re-
326 fer back to the Bobo, Gourounsi, etc.

000 We come now to public powers. We refer the reader to Appendix 32 /not translated/ for a study of property regulations and neighborhood relations, and plunge forthwith into the study of public powers.

631 We already know that the Mossi political organization is centralized. The villages belong to cantons, which are in turn gathered into provinces under direct administration or into mere vassal provinces. At the summit of the hierarchy stands the king, the Moro Naba, the supreme chief of the Mossi, who lives at Ouagadougou. To give an idea of the former importance, or at least relative importance, of this empire, we shall state that in the Ouagadougou
[162] circle alone there were eight provinces including among them 300 cantons, 5,000 villages or small towns, and 861,700 inhabitants.

643 Let us begin our description of this political organism with the head, that is, with the Moro Naba.

Moro Naba means "chief of the Mossi," from naba, "chief" and Moro or Mora which means Mossi in the singular. Moro yields Mossi or Mossé in the plural. (The French have grown accustomed to saying "one Mossi, several Mossi," but this is a barbarism and one should /568/ actually say, "one Moro, several Mossi," just as one says, "one Gourounga, several Gourounsi," "one Kipirga, several Kipirsi," etc.). As for the word for "chief," it is both naba and soba in Mossi. Naba seems to be the word brought by the con-
[192] quering Mossi-Dagomba group, while soba is probably the word that was used by the autochtonous population to designate chiefs.

645 Prior to the French conquest, the Moro Naba was surrounded by a certain number of ministers or eminent dignitaries who were given 1) specific duties /at court/, 2) in addition, part of the territory to govern. This is what accounted for provinces over and above the cantons, at least in those areas that were administered directly, but the heads of those provinces did not reside there. They lived at Ouagadougou, and were first and foremost ministers of the Moro Naba.

They were

645 1. The Kamsoro Naba, chief of the eunuchs and prime minister, a sort of minister of the interior.

2. The Ouidi Naba, chief of the cavalry.

3. The Gounga Naba, chief of the infantry.

4. The Laralé Naba, guardian of the tombs of the Moro Nabas.

5. The Baloum Naba, major-domo and chief of the soroné (pages). He might be said to rule over the interior of the palace.

Those five ministers ruled over the five Mossi provinces that
645 were administered directly: Kamsoro, Ouidi, Gounga, Laralé,
635 and Baloum. As we can see, those provinces had no proper names, no names of their own, and each took the name of the dignitary who governed it. Thus, they were not true geographical or ethnic provinces, but artificial districts lifted out of an area that was both too extensively parceled out and too homogeneous to yield spontaneously anything but villages and cantons.

644 In addition to those five ministers, among which the Kamsoro Naba and Baloum Naba seem to have been the most important, there were other dignitaries and servitors, as follows: /569/

1. The Tamsaba or Kinsaba, high chief of the bodyguards.
2. The Samandé Naba, chief of the bodyguards.
3. The Pouy Naba, chief of the fetisheers.
4. The Gandé Naba, high priest and sacrificer.
5. The Dapouy Naba, chief of the servitors.
6. The Kambo Naba, subchief of the servitors.
7. The Bindé Naba, chief of the Moro Naba's drummers.
8. The Ouidianga Naba, chief of the grooms.
9. The Mendo Naba, chief or representative of the butchers.
10. The Dara Haba, chief of the markets.
11. The Kamboué Naba, executioner.
12. Finally, the Yarsé Naba, chief or representative of the Yarsé settled among the Mossi. The prestige he enjoyed actually ranked him immediately beneath the five ministers and the Tamsaba.

"The various functions at the court of the Moro Naba," says
[594] Moulins, "are hereditary in the sense that their holders are always chosen by the sovereign among close relatives of the previous occupant in office.

643 of the electoral college was not accepted by the populace and dis-
669 turbances occurred in spite of the proclamation of the king-elect. This was when Naba Sagha, the son of Naba Kom, was chosen. The people would have liked to see Kaoko, son of Naba Zombéré, nominated. Dissatisfied because the sovereign of their choice had not reached the throne, they would not acknowledge the man chosen by the college. The new monarch managed to take over the throne only after waging a bloody battle at the head of his followers against his unlucky rival.

645 The province chiefs who are ministers are nominated by the
635 Moro Naba, who selects the man most deserving of the succession among the closest relatives of the chief to be replaced. Province chiefs enjoy considerable power in the administration of their provinces, they are surrounded with a large court, but they stand under the direct control of the Moro Naba.

635 It must be added that aside from the five provinces lying under the direct rule of the Moro Naba of Ouagadougou, there were four others (Boussouma and Béloussa to the northeast, Yako to the northwest, Tenkodogo to the southeast) that were mere vassal provinces and that actually enjoyed nearly complete autonomy prior to our occupation. Tenkodogo province was especially important.

The chiefs of these /latter/ provinces were true monarchs selected in the same fashion as the Moro Naba by the electoral college of their province. Once elected, they enjoyed all the prerogatives of sovereignty, nominating the canton chiefs and administering their provinces as they saw fit.

Their power was as absolute in their own sphere as that of the Moro Naba over the whole of his subject provinces, but they ac-
[631] knowledged his sovereignty and offered him a gift as a token of their vassalage at the time when their powers were handed over to them.

/576/ Within the subject provinces, the canton chiefs were
634 nominated by the Moro Naba on the basis of an introduction by the
621 province chief. They were always selected among the closest relatives of the chief they were to replace, always descendants of Oubry, the first Moro Naba. They stood under the direct orders of the province chief, whom they had to use as an intermediary to communicate with the Moro Naba. It was their task to proceed with

793 the sacrifice and killed the donkey. He also slit the throat of a
643 horse, a beef, and a sheep. (This eunuch in charge of guarding the
839 tomb was called by the name of Naba Koutou, and in a way per-
778 petuated the deceased Moro Naba. He was granted special privi-
leges. If a man who was condemned to death ran away and reached
the tomb, he was safe but became the eunuch's slave. Similarly,
[567] a captive who ran away from his master gained his freedom from the
latter if he reached the grave, but became the slave of Naba Koutou.
Finally, at that time, it was forbidden to ride by the hut on a donkey.
Naba Koutou would seize the donkey, or at least demand a ransom
in cowries before returning it. This applied to any animals who ran
astray near the tomb. The tomb still exists nowadays, along with
the Naba Koutou who watches over it, but the latter no longer enjoys
the same privileges.)

793 We saw earlier that the Moro Naba had a sort of minister of the
645 cult in the person of the Gandé Naba, high priest and sacrificer.
There was also the Pouy Naba, or chief of the fetisheers, whose
function was probably to mediate between the Mossi bara and
timisoba as a whole and the central authorities.

782 Let us close this study of Mossi religion, which incidentally is
quite incomplete and a mere outline, with a few words on the human
sacrifices that were performed /597/ in the territory prior to our
occupation, and a few words on circumcision as well.

782 "Human sacrifices," says Marc., p. 156, "definitely took place
766 among the Mossi up to the time when we occupied the territory.
Whenever a Moro Naba died at Ouagadougou, one of his wives and
one of his horses were sent to Gambaga in order to be sacrificed on
the tomb of Ouidiraogo (?) who is regarded as the mother of the first
Moro Naba. Soon after the occupation of Ouagadougou by the French,
782 the dethroned Moro Naba, Boukary Koutou, ordered the sacrifice of a
754 black rooster, a black goat, a black donkey, a black beef, and a
black slave on one of the mountains overlooking the White Volta.
This, it seems, was bound to cause the immediate death of the new
Moro Naba enthroned by Voulet."

304 As for circumcision, the Mossi circumcise boys and excise girls.
Boys are circumcised when they are from eight to twelve years
old, and thirty or forty of them are circumcised at one time. The

596 In the sense of integration, we must mention primarily the families
592 of great chiefs. For example, there is the family of Gombiraogo, a
182 former Baloum Naba, a very wealthy and important personage. He
571 has five brothers. Two of them live together in the village of Kalo and another two, similarly, in the village of Bembéla. Gombiraogo lives in Ouahigouya with the fifth brother. With this brother he has three zaka where 70 or 80 people live, all of whom work for him and form a single work group under his direction (that is to say, during the rainy season they work for him two days out of three, and during the dry season they do so only when he has exceptional need of them; in return, he provides them with food seven months out of twelve, according to custom, and does not provide them with clothes unless they are unmarried).

What should be noted here is the strength of this work group (70 to 80 people). As a result, it includes several compounds, while it is the compound as a rule that contains several or at least two work groups.

[645] The present Baloum Naba, the prime minister, likewise has two zaka working for him. Moreover, the total family of the Baloum Naba is not assembled in Ouahigouya but scattered throughout Yatenga.

[643] In the same connection, the Rassam Naba has a zaka of 157 people who form a single work group under his direction. In return, he provides them with food all year.

294 /232/ Again, there is a zaka of shoemakers at Ouahigouya which
592 includes nearly 100 people altogether, among them 15 or 20 full-
182 grown men, all of them shoemakers. They all work for the zakasoba, who provides them all with food. This zaka, of exceptional numerical strength, is at the same time completely integrated.

596 At the other end of the scale, we find the Mossi family of Yatenga
182 evolving toward complete disintegration in certain parts of the terri-
592 tory, that is to say, evolving toward a state of affairs where nothing remains except the total family on the one hand and the single household on the other (that is, the compound has only a single household).

Thus, in the course of a journey through the canton of Ratenga, I noted in the village of Tangué a family of 110 persons distributed among 14 homes. This gives an average of only seven or eight persons per ~~home.~~ In Kargo (another village) there are five Mossi families for 22 homes sheltering 181 persons, or only eight persons per home.

593 The wife must obey her husband. The latter has the right to strike
562 her in case of disobedience, adultery, etc. He cannot break one of her limbs, or kill her.

595 Polygamy. —Polygamy is the general rule, at least theoretically. That is to say, the Mossi may have as many spouses as he wishes as long as he can minister to their needs.

595 In actual fact, only rich people have several wives. The majority
589 are monogamous by necessity, and there are even bachelors. As a passing remark, this applies to the Sudanese Negroes in general, for everywhere nature creates approximately as many men as women, and it is hard to visualize how in any one region each man could have several wives. However, in spite of the occurrence of bachelors and a large number of truly monogamous people, the question still stands. It is solved if we bear in mind that girls are married much earlier than men. This results in a much larger number of women than men "in active service," if I may be permitted to say so. Undoubtedly, this (along with the occurrence of bachelors and a considerable number of monogamists), takes care of the objection which naturally arises when we speak of polygamy. /243/

163 It may be, let us add, that the number of girls born here is a little higher than that of boys, as has been noted in England, for example.

595 By way of figures on polygamy, let us state that the Moro Naba
643 Bango, the last one who reigned before the arrival of the French, had
●645 about 80 wives. The Naba Koboga, who ruled from 1902 to 1914, had 30 or 40. The present Rassam Naba, one of the ministers of the Moro Naba, has 30 or 35 wives. These are, of course, exceptional figures if the total population of Yatenga is taken into account. In any case, the rich men, notables, and men in easy circumstances always have several wives.

595 Organization of the polygamous household. —"The first wife," says Vadier, "enjoys a certain authority over the others. It is she who transmits her husband's orders to the other wives and who notifies him of their wants, who supervises the preparation of meals and apportions the food. In addition, it is she who comes and tells the
[844] husband that such-and-such a wife is no longer in a state of zim and can now fulfill her conjugal duties.

"Aside from this special prerogative enjoyed by the first wife, all wives have the same rights and duties. In principle, each wife must share in turn her husband's bed. Nevertheless, he is free to summon his favorite wife during the day."

9:Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1960 FA28 Mossi FA28

chief. If he was not qualified then one of his younger brothers, or 631
one of father's brothers or uncles was chosen. Yet, the fiction of 613
equal access to the *nam* was important to the Mossi because it enabled them to adhere to their most important political axiom which was that "The only man who should rule is one who can keep the country." Regencies were avoided, and persons with physical and character defects were barred. Moreover, this flexibility gave the electors a wide choice of candidates from which to choose the person best fitted for chieftainship at any given period. The Mossi have always believed that it is difficult to rule men and this is what they mean when they declare: "Nanamsè toumdè ya yida fa fa"—"The work of the chiefs is the most difficult of all."[3] For example, it does not seem like an accident that the first ruler, Moro Naba Wubri, was succeeded by four of his brothers in turn instead of by his sons. The Mossi had not completely conquered the territory, and the young sons were incapable of handling the complex political situation. The graves of each of the successors to Wubri in different parts of the country remain as markers to testify to the difficult task which the early rulers had in controlling their realm.

The Mossi believed, and still do believe, that it was only when con- [812]
flict developed after a ruler died, that the people realized how necessary
and valuable a chief was. The death of a chief, especially of the Moro [764]
Naba, was kept a secret until the war minister arrived at the capital
with his troops. Only then did the cry go up: "The fire has gone
out!"; and as soon as it was heard, violence broke out throughout the
land. Prisoners were released, thieves rifled the markets, and the [669]
nakomces, or nobles, rode about the countryside doing whatever they
wished. This custom persisted as late as 1942. Reporting to his superior in Abijan about the events that transpired in Wagadougou when Moro Naba Kom died, the French commander wrote: "On Friday, March 13, 1942, young people, profiting from old custom, tried to steal things, but they were stopped and about one hundred were arrested."[4] Throughout all the chaos which attended the death of a 645
king, the war minister remained calm unless an attempt was actually 696
made to seize power. He never attempted to stop the public disorder or to catch thieves or murderers, because everyone believed that out of

9:Skinner E-5 (1955-1957)1960 FA28 Mossi FA28

645 696 all the chaos would come a new appreciation for the task of the chief, and a cessation of the grumbling that the chiefs were greedy.

662 428 666 The Mossi interregnum also served another purpose. It gave the electors the opportunity to exhaust and redistribute much of the patrimony of the dead ruler, which was brought to them by his heirs who were trying to obtain the chieftainship through bribery. Sometimes, a candidate's ability to collect a great deal of goods with which to press his suit often revealed to the electors the strength of his following in the district or village, for had he been an unpopular man he would have had to use only his own resources.

666 643 175 The Mossi electors were always concerned with the health and character of a potential chief, and turned down the most promising candidates who were deficient in any of these qualities. For example, when Moro Naba Sanum died in 1890 without leaving a male heir, his younger brother, Bokary Koutou, was the strongest candidate for the *nam*. Yet he was passed over, at first, by the electors because of his reputation as a bandit and a rebel. We know from Captain Binger, a Frenchman who met Bokary in 1888, that this prince was indeed a bandit and a slave raider. But Binger, although deploring Bokary's conduct, exonerated him on the grounds that the Moro Naba had sent him into exile without any means of support. This was true, but the [687] reason that Moro Naba Sanum did so was because Bokary had raised a rebellion against him as an attempt to obtain their father's position. Bokary was forbidden to appear in the capital; but when he heard that his brother Sanum was dead, he took a force of soldiers and hurried to Wagadougou fearing that an attempt would have been made to prevent his election. When he found that his fears were justified, he became [669] desperate and secreted a force of Gurunsi warriors around the elector's meeting place, threatening to kill them if he was not named Moro Naba. They succumbed to his threat and he received the *nam*. During 643 175 the customary speech in which a new ruler chose his official name, announced his program for the people and the country, or ridiculed his erstwhile competitors, Bokary Koutou said: "A hundred ghosts cannot frighten an elephant (Wobogo)," meaning that he was not afraid 648 721 175 of any of his enemies. He thereafter became known as Moro Naba Wobogo, and he chose to live up to his boast when the French arrived and asked him to sign a treaty of protection with them. He refused

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sented the sun itself. The toilet was performed in complete silence, for no one was allowed to speak to the monarch until after the ceremony. Meanwhile, in the courtyard, the court dignitaries, visitors, and the musicians and minstrels (*bendere*) took their places. The provincial ministers sat on their respective stones (*coganaramse*), and the visitors sat by their hosts. The pages at the door of the zongo awaited the moment when the Mogho Naba and his escort would emerge from the zongo. On seeing the two pages who preceded the monarch, they snapped their fingers as a signal to the still silent bendere.

On seeing the monarch, the chief musician, the Bendere Naba, rubbed his fingers across the top of his drum to produce the sound of a lion's growl, and the other drummers and violinists played the royal air, "Ouend pous yan." The head guard, the Kambo Naba, and his men, carrying guns, walked up from the side and knelt down facing the assembly. And the *samande-kamba*, the "servants of the courtyard," came with heavy batons to guard against crimes of lese majesty. From the wings came a groom with a partly saddled ceremonial horse. As soon as the monarch was seated on his throne, his two pages moved to the front and knelt down facing the courtyard. The salutations now began. The first group of ministers, led by the Baloum Naba and including the Samande Naba, the Samande Nabila, the Ouedrange Naba, the Kamsaogho Naba, and the Zusoaba Kasanga, left their stones and came to the throne with slow steps and bowed heads. A few yards from the monarch, they knelt on the ground, and with their fingers folded and their thumbs in the air, leaned forward, struck the ground with both hands three times, and then rubbed the palms of their left hands with the fingers of their right. Then they arose, and with heads still bowed walked backwards to their places.[6] With the music still playing, another group of ministers, led by the Ouidi Naba and including such men as the Gounga Naba, the Larhalle Naba, and the Pwe Naba, saluted the ruler in the same manner. On Fridays and other Islamic holy days, the Moslem Imam representing the Ouagadougou congregation read aloud from the Koran. This part of the ceremony ended when the Mogho Naba rose, and, with the measured steps and swaying gait that signified royalty, retired to the zongo, preceded by his two pages.[7]

A few minutes later, the monarch returned to the courtyard without his red robe and glittering headdress. There was a second round of salutations comparable to the first, but this time the Ouidi Naba and his group did not appear unless it was an important occasion or important guests were present. When this part of the ceremony was over, the monarch called for his half-saddled horse and announced that he wished to go to

644 796 [645] [533] 643 645 796 576 [792] [481] 643 796

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by the sovereign's wives. Other pages waited upon the monarch, and accompanied him when he moved about the courtyard. When the ruler drank any liquid, the pages rubbed the palm of one hand with the fingers of the other; when he sneezed, everyone clapped; and when he stepped out to urinate, a page accompanied him, turned his back to him, knelt down, and saluted by rubbing his palm.

When the Mogho Naba had finished his morning audiences, he entered his palace for a solitary meal. This meal was prepared by one of his young wives, who tasted it in his presence before giving it to the page who served him.[10] After eating, the monarch rested for a few hours; then he emerged into the courtyard to grant audiences and hear court cases until sunset. At that time he retired to his palace, and those courtiers who were not connected with the evening ceremonies returned to their homes.

The ceremony that closed the day at the monarch's court was called "Kwaga Basgha" (literally, "final meal"). This ceremony still survives. As soon as the sun began to set, the samande-kamba took their heavy batons and stood guard to prevent unauthorized persons from coming near the *namtibo* (royal amulets). The Baloum Naba and the Bendere Naba entered the palace courtyard and knelt before the zongo. The chief page then brought out the *kwaga*, a pottery vessel containing a fire ritually associated with the namtibo.[11] The vessel was placed on the ground, and the page blew on the fire to make it burn brightly. Meanwhile, the Bendere Naba rubbed his fingers across his drum to make the growl of a lion. When the fire finally died out, the Zusoaba Kasanga and the Baloum Naba closed the ceremony by rising, coming together, and saluting the namtibo in the traditional Mossi manner. (The Mogho Naba did not attend this ceremony.) Before the officials left for the night, the pages gave them pots of beer prepared by the royal wives. Sometimes these officials visited the Mogho Naba before they retired to their compounds. Once these men had departed, the pages served the ruler his evening meal, which again had been prepared by one of his young wives.

During the hours of darkness the Mogho Naba conducted many secret affairs of state and conversed with the members of his household. Persons seeking the nam of a deceased relative were often granted audience at night, as were litigants in court cases. When there were no pressing matters of state, the ruler gathered some of the royal wives around him and discussed family affairs, which protocol forbade him to discuss during the day. Some rulers reportedly disguised themselves and visited the wards of the town in the company of a young man from the palace, in an effort to learn things that did not ordinarily come to a ruler's attention.

The Mogho Naba slept in a grass hut in the palace compound. Two

513 The Mogho Naba slept in a grass hut in the palace compound. Two
643 reasons are given for the choice of a grass hut over a brick building: first,
[342] the grass hut was considered better protection against sorcerers, who were
[754] believed to induce storms that destroy buildings and their occupants; sec-
[775] ond, it was believed that the ruler's ancestors preferred to visit grass huts because it was easier for them to enter through the interstices in the walls.
[644] When the monarch retired for the night, one of his pages stood guard at the door. The Mogho Naba usually slept all night, but he occasionally made the rounds with a page to check on the palace guards or the safety (and virtue) of his wives.

643 The routine of the Mogho Naba seldom varied. Only in times of danger
[644] or on great ceremonial occasions did protocol permit any major changes in court procedure. Normally, pages, ministers, and other court officials adhered very strictly to their traditional tasks.

The Mossi considered the king's office to be such a difficult one that even today they say, *Mogho Naba toumde ya yida fa* ("The Mogho Naba's task is the most difficult of all"). Nevertheless, the Mogho Naba's office was always eagerly sought, and considerable care had to be exercised to ensure that the right person was chosen. As soon as the incumbent Mogho
[645] Naba died, and even before he was buried, the Ouidi Naba, as prime minister, began the consultations leading to the selection of a new monarch. Mossi custom decreed that the eldest son of a previous ruler be chosen as the new Mogho Naba. This choice was not automatic, however, in view of the primary consideration that the person selected should have the skill to "keep" the country. Other qualifications for office were membership in the royal minimal lineage, soundness of body and mind, and sufficient age to command universal respect. Given these requirements and the lack of any provisions for a regency, it is not surprising that a dead ruler's sons, brothers, uncles, and even grandchildren—that is, his entire babissi—should have competed to "eat the nam" (accede to power).[13] Of the thirty-four kings who have ruled since Oubri, the founder of the Ouagadougou dynasty, twelve succeeded their brothers and twenty-two their fathers. Interestingly enough, there is some indication that at the beginning of the Ouagadougou dynasty, the successor of a king was usually chosen from among his brothers before the nam was passed on to the next generation.[14] For example, Oubri's four sons all reigned in turn before the kingship descended to the son of the last brother in office. Then, two of this brother's sons reigned before the nam descended to a new generation. Initially, then, seniority within the royal lineage, like seniority within the local ruling lineages, may have been determined by generation. On the other hand, accidental factors may have governed: a weak state organization may have

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required mature rulers, or an uncle may have vanquished a nephew by physical prowess or force of character. 643

The pretenders to the Mossi nam began to press their claims as soon as propriety allowed. They presented gifts to the Ouidi Naba and to the other ministers in an attempt to sway the issue. The Ouidi Naba finally called a secret council composed of the Gounga Naba, the Larhalle Naba, the Kamsaogho Naba, and the Tansoba, and recited to them the following formula: "The country does not have a chief, and it needs one. Among all the people who wish to be elected [*di nam*, "eat the nam"], it is for you to choose the most worthy."[14] To this the councillors responded: "Naba! You are our superior, and the right to make the choice rests upon you alone." Thus given a free hand, the Ouidi Naba chose the most capable candidate. However, before announcing his choice, he said to the Tansoba, "My heart is heavy because I fear that those persons whose hopes have not been fulfilled will resort to violence to get their way." The Tansoba responded, "That will be against tradition and justice. Do not fear. I am here with my army to see that your decision is respected." Having received the support of the Tansoba, the Ouidi Naba announced his choice to the other councillors. They said to him, "Naba! You have expressed our will, and that of all the people." It is not to be understood from these formulas that the other councillors had no voice in selecting the candidate. They did in fact advise the Ouidi Naba concerning the best candidate, but these formulas emphasized that it was the Ouidi Naba, as prime minister, who was responsible for the choice. 643 645

The Ouidi Naba's choice of a new Mogho Naba was kept secret until the successful candidate was summoned for investiture. This occurred on the second night of the late Mogho Naba's funeral ceremony. Toward nightfall, the Ouidi Naba secretly dispatched a messenger to summon the successful candidate. The need for secrecy was demonstrated in 1890, when Boukary Koutou forced the committee to name him Mogho Naba. The circumstances were as follows: Mogho Naba Sanum died without male issue, and all his brothers vied for the nam. One of them, Boukary Koutou, was felt to be ineligible because he had been exiled for leading a civil war against Sanum, but like his brothers he hastened to Ouagadougou. Boukary feared that the electors would not look favorably upon his claim, and when he failed to ascertain their intentions he decided upon a *coup d'état*. He gathered an army composed of his supporters and his Gurunsi slaves, and surrounded the compound in which the electors were gathered. One of the electors discovered the army during a break in the deliberations and reported his findings to the Ouidi Naba. The chief minister and his aides 175 643 669 645

175 643 669 645 knew that Boukary Koutou was the only person capable of such a conspiracy. Fearing for their lives if they did not nominate him, they immediately sent a messenger to summon him as the successful candidate.[15] Under normal circumstances, however, there was no coercion of the ministers and the nominee was quietly brought to the councillors.

645 643 [292] Wearing a pair of trousers and a sheepskin mantle and carrying a spear in each hand, the nominee entered the courtyard of the compound through the women's door.[16] He was preceded by the Samande Nabila, who sprinkled the earth with water. He came up to the councillors and saluted them, and the Ouidi Naba addressed him as follows: "Before your father [brother] died, did he designate you to be his successor?" The nominee replied, "No, Sire! My father has left you free to choose whom you wish, be he a blind man or a leper!" This question was asked three times, and 645 643 551 the nominee responded three times. The Ouidi Naba then made the following declaration: "I am giving you the nam of your father and grandfathers. You must try to conduct yourself as they did when they had the nam." The Ouidi Naba then listed the names of the territories over which the ruler had absolute power and authority. The new monarch raised his two spears in the air, made a speech in which he announced three guiding principles by which he vowed to reign, and "named a name," that is, suggested the title by which he wished to be known. For example, Mogho Naba Sagha II (1942–57) said in his inaugural speech: "Without rain, there is no life. I will be like rain for the country." He then became known as Mogho Naba Sagha ("Rain"), a rather fitting title for a ruler in a country with uncertain rainfall. The present Mogho Naba stressed in his inaugural speech (in 1957) that he was "solid as a rock." His official title is now Mogho Naba Kougri ("Rock").[17]

The taking of a new name was only the first step in the elaborate proc- 645 643 ess through which a man became Mogho Naba. Next, the Ouidi Naba took the two spears from the new monarch and removed his sheepskin mantle. Then he gave him his new white clothes, which included a pair of trousers, a bonnet, and a sleeveless robe, all made for him by the people of the Sculougou ward in the capital. Next, he was given a cushion made by the people of Baramimi. The Baloum Naba then took the closely [789] guarded namtibo, the sacred amulets of the dynasty, and used them in the [782] preparation of a potion of millet beer mixed with millet-flour water, part [776] of which was poured as a libation to the earth goddess, Tenga.[18] The ruler and the assembled ministers all partook of the potion in a kind of communion. The ministers then shook the ruler's hand, an act thereafter forbidden, and departed for their own compounds. The newly elected

The newly elected monarch secreted himself either at the Samande Nabila's home or elsewhere in the capital until daybreak. Tradition holds that if he were killed before being officially proclaimed before his subjects as the new ruler, the assassin could become Mogho Naba.[19] 643 [682]

The public ceremonies marking the official proclamation of the new ruler's accession to power took place on the following day. Early that morning, the monarch left his secret sleeping quarters and proceeded to the Koumbi Naba's house. Here he dressed in his white garments and mounted an old, unsaddled horse. The Baloum Naba then gave him a sack containing the namtibo, which he placed over his shoulder, and the Kaizi Naba led him out of the courtyard by the women's door. As the ruler's horse passed through the gate, his sister, the *Napoko* ("female ruler"), cried, "The sun has reappeared! The fire is relighted! The earth lives again!" A large crowd of musicians and warriors who had been alerted by the ministers shouted and danced as they accompanied the monarch, who circled the compound three times.[20] The ruler then reentered the compound, and this time he came out through the men's door as a sign of his full status. Here he was greeted by the Ouidi Naba, who proclaimed in a loud voice, "Mossi people, here is the Mogho Naba!" The warriors shouted and fired their muskets, and the musicians played. Then all the dignitaries and their followers solemnly prostrated themselves and paid homage and swore allegiance to their monarch. He, in turn, listened attentively when his ministers and some of the elder chiefs gave him advice about how the affairs of state should be conducted. After each declaration of loyalty or word of counsel, the people shouted in praise of their ruler. The Bendere Naba, accompanied by his musicians, then recited the ruler's genealogy, announced the pledges the new monarch had made to his people, and acclaimed him by his royal title, "Mogho Naba [X]." From this moment on, no child born during his reign could bear the ruler's name, and those persons who already bore it called themselves *Nab'yure* ("king's name"). 643 796 [645] [644] [551]

As the next stage in the ceremony the Mogho Naba, accompanied by his retinue, visited the various wards in the capital. In each he was proclaimed ruler and received the allegiance of both Mossi and non-Mossi ward chiefs. He visited the wards controlled by such men as the Loumbila Naba, the Sapone Naba, and the Ouagadougou Naba, and at each stop the ward chief declared, "People of [X], here is your new sovereign." Having been acknowledged by the leading chiefs of the capital, the new ruler then returned to his host's house. He emerged later in the day to visit the compound of a palace attendant, the Samande Nabila, where he sat under a 643 [621] [641] 643 641

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The Mogho Naba had an elaborate court composed of many officials, relatives, and servants. The most important courtiers were the five ministers, who appeared daily at court and took part in all important ceremonies in addition to administering their own provinces. Aside from these men, the Mogho Naba had a number of other officials called Naba whose responsibilities covered the full range of duties in the palace and in the capital. One of the most interesting was the Pwe Naba, a royal diviner and court chaperon. His chief duty was to guard the morals of the pages and the royal wives; he also administered the ordeal to persons accused of treason. The pages were required to be chaste until they were discharged from the palace, lest their amorous adventures lead them to compromise the virtue of the royal wives, with whom they were constantly in contact. A wife and a page suspected of adultery were tested by the Pwe Naba. He forced them to look into a mirror or a calabash of water, and declared them guilty or innocent according to the way their faces were reflected. If they were found guilty, the wife was executed and the page was either executed or discharged in disgrace. The Pwe Naba also saw to it that strangers did not address the ruler's wives either on the street or in the market. Offenders were executed.

The Dapore Naba served as the court's chief executioner and as head of a group of the Mogho Naba's hereditary serfs. Members of the royal clan were executed by strangulation, since royal blood could not be shed; all other persons were executed either with a sword, by hanging, or with heavy clubs. Another palace official was the Ouedrango Naba, the head groom. It was he who saddled and presented the king's ceremonial horse to him at the morning ceremony. The Kambo Naba commanded the palace guard; only he and his guards were permitted to carry guns. The Samande Naba and the Samande Nabila supervised the work of the samande-kamba, young men who worked around the palace courtyard and kept watch with heavy batons to enforce order during ceremonies. A lesser palace official was the Zusoaba Kasanga, who, as chief of the palace eunuchs, ruled over the guardians of the royal harem. The Gande Naba made sacrifices for the ruler and also distributed gifts from the king to the royal officials and the royal household.

Another courtier, and one who played an important role during the installation of the new ruler, was the Ouagadougou Naba. As a direct descendant of the Ninisi, he was all but indispensable at sacrifices propitiating or honoring his ancestors. The Bendere Naba was the chief musician and court historian; according to some reports, a Bendere Naba was killed instantly if he made a mistake while reciting the ruler's genealogy. The Raga Naba was chief of the markets in the capital. Under him were

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Naba regularly saw his son in private, and that the prince often interceded 644
successfully with his father for the lives of rebels or criminals. 593

The Mogho Naba seldom saw his younger sons, who usually remained 634
with their mothers' patrilineages until they were old enough to be assigned district chieftainships or sent to live in villages controlled by the Baloum Naba. He was rather suspicious of these boys, who, if certain traditions are believed, were not averse to plotting the death of the Djiba Naba in order to succeed to the nam. The district chiefs also feared these younger sons, in whose favor they were often deposed by the Mogho Naba. Almost all of the dynastic changes that occurred in the Mossi districts seem to have stemmed from a ruler's attempt to find districts for his brothers or his younger sons.

The ruler was less concerned with the welfare of his daughters and 643
female relatives. Their marriages seldom benefited the political system. 644
As a matter of fact, the behavior of a royal princess usually strained the re- 593
lations between her husband and the ruling lineage. The reason for this [562]
was a status conflict: as wives, they had low prestige in Mossi society; but as relatives of the Mogho Naba, they enjoyed high status. This contradiction made it difficult for them to accept the low estate of wives. Consequently, they clashed with their husband and often dominated the women and co-wives in his compound. Since few Mossi men tolerate strife within their household, these noble wives often withdrew from their husband's home and established one of their own. The one exception to this pattern was the ruler's eldest daughter, the Napoko, whose ceremonial duties at his death and during the interregnum compelled her to remain loyal to the husband chosen for her by the king. Like her brother, the Crown Prince, if she violated any of the traditions and thus became ineligible to fulfill her duties to her father and to the state, she endangered the country at its weakest moment, when the government was being transferred from the deceased Mogho Naba to his successor.

The death of a Mogho Naba was usually attributed to foul play or 643
supernatural forces. When Mogho Naba Sagha II died in 1957, a report 761
from Ouagadougou stated that the Governor of the Upper Volta had felt constrained to have an autopsy performed to quell rumors that the monarch had died of poisoning.[82] The obvious function of such rumors was to dramatize the gravity of the situation during the interregnum.

Because the Mogho Naba was usually accompanied by a page, it was 643
often this boy who witnessed his death. It was the page's responsibility to 763
notify the Baloum Naba, who notified, in order, the Ouidi Naba, the Lar- [644]
halle Naba, the Kamsaogho Naba, the Gounga Naba, the ruler's children, [645]

the Tansoba, the members of the royal sub-lineage, and the district chiefs. The Tengsoba of the Ouagadougou area was also notified. Because he was a descendant of the aboriginal Ninisi population that "owned" the land, he supervised the burial ceremony.

The Mogho Naba's death was kept secret, and no mourning was allowed until the Crown Prince had arrived at the capital and the Tansoba had recruited an army to protect the realm against would-be usurpers of power. Then the cry was raised in the palace, to reverberate throughout the land, that "the fire had gone out." Once the ruler's death had been announced, the country was plunged into an interregnum, which was characterized by ritual and often by actual anarchy. The people in the towns immediately looted the markets and stole their neighbors' goods; the prisoners and captives in stocks were released by their guards; the nakomce in all the territories, districts, and villages subjected the local populations to robbery and pillage; and the members of the monarch's babissi began their intrigues for power. The traditional sanction for this anarchy was that only when people suffer during the breakdown of political control do they really appreciate the sovereign's role. The Mossi declare (with some truth) that no one was safe during the interregnum. However, as we shall see, the ruler was symbolically kept alive, and the country was never without effective political leadership.

When the Tengsoba arrived at the palace, he was joined by five hereditary funeral chiefs: the Pazany'tengsoba, the Tampouy Naba, the Benghin Naba, the Toghin Naba, and the Tanghin Naba. In the ceremony that followed, he gave permission for the royal grave to be dug. Meanwhile, the ruler's body was prepared for burial in the traditional manner by his female relatives and laid in state in the zongo. These women kept vigil over the body, shouting and weeping. Only the five ministers of the realm and the male members of the ruler's babissi were allowed to pay homage to the corpse within the zongo. All other mourners had to pay their respects to the monarch's eldest daughter, who, as Napoko, was dressed in the dead sovereign's clothes and sat in his place before the zongo. As her father's symbolic representative, she held daily court and received greetings and homage from all visitors until a new ruler was chosen. The drummer who sat by her side declared to all visitors, "You say that the Mogho Naba is dead! Well, who is that sitting there? Tell me! Is that not the Mogho Naba?"

The ruler was buried the day after he died, at the end of an elaborate ceremony. Libations were poured out to the ancient rulers, and sacrifices made to them. All the important officials and members of the royal mini-

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Some of the more important rulers, such as the heads of the Yatenga, Fada-N'Gourma, and Tenkodogo kingdoms, were chosen by local electoral colleges, which did not have to seek the approval of the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou or notify him of the choices made. Their authority, as we have seen, was supported by claims of equality with Ouagadougou. But, with the exception of the Tenkodogo ruler, they were actually farther removed from the main line of royal descent than the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou. The autonomous Dimdamba had their own electoral colleges, which in some cases were made up of men related to the electoral-college members of the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou. (For example, the Ouidi Naba of Boulsa was descended from the Ouidi Naba of Ouagadougou.) These local colleges were usually free to nominate and elect the Dimdamba without consulting the Mogho Naba, even though he ratified many nominations.[35] According to Cheron, "The nomination of the Dim of Boulsa did not become definitive until ratified by the Mogho Naba, who was always consulted by the electors and who could impose his own candidate."[36] This was not always true; nor did every Mogho Naba refrain from interfering in the internal affairs of autonomous provinces. Whether he did or not often depended on his strength relative to that of the Dimdamba. Once the Dimdamba had been chosen, however, they were installed with ceremonies similar to those for the Ouagadougou ruler.

Like their superiors, the Dimdamba had the authority to delegate power to the Kombemba and Tense Nanamse. Some of them also had the right to grant the nam to a fellow Dim. The Boussouma Naba, for instance, could grant it to the Mane Naba.[37] Mogho Nanamse granted such rights to Dimdamba for various reasons. They might do so on the basis of their relative strength vis-à-vis a particular Dim at a particular time, or because they admired him or were closely related to him. However, a Dim exercised sovereignty in his own name, regardless of whether he was subordinate to the Mogho Naba or to another Dim. In contrast, the district chiefs and the village chiefs exercised sovereignty on behalf of the Mogho Naba or of the Dim in whose territory they resided.

The installation ceremonies for the two lower orders of chiefs were not too different from those for the Mogho Nanamse and Dimdamba. For example, when the Nobere district chief died, the provincial minister for Nobere—in this case the Gounga Naba—reported his death to the Mogho Naba. The ruler then summoned one of the deceased chief's officials to the capital to report on the qualifications of all potential candidates for the nam. The provincial minister, in turn, dispatched one of his own representatives to the district to verify the reports he had received. It was only when this

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It was only when this man had returned to the capital that all the nobles in the local ruling lineage were invited to Ouagadougou to press their claims. Only the dead chief's babissi went to Ouagadougou, even though all nobles subscribed to the traditional concept that "the nam does not belong to any one sub-lineage; it can be given to any nobleman." Unlike the others, these nobles did not shave their heads in mourning, thus indicating their candidacy for the nam. When they donned sheepskin cloaks and carried spears on their shoulders, they indicated that they were interested in the nam of the district. 634 [613] [302] [765]

Before a candidate for the district chieftainship left for Ouagadougou, he collected livestock, money, clothing, and grain from his friends to give as gifts or bribes to important officials in the capital. When he arrived there, he lived with friends and conducted his campaign from their home. He and the other candidates visited their provincial minister and his colleagues, the Mogho Naba, and other courtiers, giving presents ostensibly as a sign of friendship but actually with the ultimate aim of impressing these people with their generosity. These activities were often very costly; for if the Ouagadougou officials suspected that the candidates were wealthy, they made every effort to obtain as many presents as possible. It was not unusual for candidates for the district chieftainship to remain at the capital as long as "thirty-three" or "sixty-six" days before the officials were satisfied with their generosity and made preparations for the election. 634 662

The evening before the election, the Baloum Naba asked each candidate to provide a chicken and a sheep for the evening sacrifices to the namtibo.[88] After the morning ceremony on the following day, the Ouidi Naba reminded the sovereign that a new chief had to be chosen for Nobere district. The Mogho Naba summoned the Gounga Naba and asked him which candidate had the best character and was most capable of taking care of the district—a question which shows that the Mossi never placed primogeniture above the ability to rule.[89] The Gounga Naba had already consulted his friends about the matter, but he recounted both the good and the bad qualities of each candidate. At the same time, he hinted which one would make the best chief. He finally told the Mogho Naba that all of the candidates were worthy men, adding, "You can give the nam to any of them." The Mogho Naba then looked around to ascertain whether the other ministers had concurred in the Gounga Naba's implied choice before declaring, "I will give the nam to X, because when his [father, grandfather, or brother, used in the generic or classificatory sense] was alive, he was good to me. The ancestors would be angry if I did not give his [son, grandson, or brother] the nam." With these words the selection was made, and the ministers now prepared to install the successful candidate. 634 645 643 [782]

634 A man usually heard about his nomination through his "friends" (usu-
●645 ally pages) long before the Baloum Naba had received instructions from the
[576] Ouidi Naba to summon him to the palace. Nevertheless, protocol demanded that he show proper humility and surprise at receiving the news, and that he be tardy in arriving at court. When he arrived, he was taken before the Ouidi Naba, who asked him three times, "Did your [father] say who should be his successor?" To this the nominee replied each time, "No, Naba! My [father] did not say who should replace him. You may appoint anyone you wish, even if he is a blind man or a leper." The Ouidi Naba then asked the candidate, "Which of the nakomée do the district people prefer?" The candidate's standard reply was, "That is the affair of the Mogho Naba. The people will accept anyone, even a blind man or a leper." This question was asked three times, and each time the candidate gave the same answer. The Ouidi Naba then declared, "The Mogho Naba has given you the nam of your [father]." Upon hearing these words, the Samande Kasma (head servant of the palace) came up to the new chief and removed his sheepskin mantle, while the samande-kamba took their heavy batons and chased away the other pretenders who, having heard about the election, had come to the palace. The samande-kamba then bore the new chief on their shoulders to the *tomboko* (a circle filled with sand in the courtyard). To the accompaniment of the royal airs played by musicians under the direction of the Bendere Naba, he took sand and poured it on his head as a sign of submission to the Mogho Naba. The ruler's wives and the courtiers surrounded the new chief, raised their hands over his head, and shouted their praises to the Mogho Naba. Then the new chief showed his respect for all the ministers
[576] and important men, in order of rank, by falling on his knees before them in the traditional Mossi salute. He then went to the Bendere Naba's shed, where he stood in the middle of the musicians and made a speech, the leitmotiv of which became his ruling title. The present chief of Nobere, whose name is Naba Boulga ("Well"), says that he made the following speech when he was nominated: "I am like a well; he who opens me will profit greatly." After the new chief had thus "taken a name," he came to the zongo to "drink the namtibo."

634 The drinking of the namtibo was the highlight of the election ceremony
[778] because it strengthened the link between the new chief and his ancestors and provided the ritual sanction for loyalty, obedience, and service to the Mogho Naba.[40] After the new chief had drunk the namtibo, he called upon the ancestors to kill him if he should ever betray the Mogho Naba or fail to
[641] render him homage and faithful service. This oath was the sign for the unsuccessful candidates to pledge their allegiance to the new chief. Then they

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longing to other provinces. Provinces also differed with respect to the number of districts they included and the nature and size of these districts. Some provinces were larger than others; some were wealthier; and some were more difficult to administer.

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Each province was administered by a governor, who also functioned as an important minister at the court of Ouagadougou. In the order of their importance, these governors were the Ouidi Naba, the Larhalle Naba, the Gounga Naba, the Baloum Naba, and the Kamsaogho Naba. Smaller administrative units (both districts and villages) were under the direct control of the Mogho Naba himself, or under the supervision of his relatives or lesser officials. None of the governors were nobles or descendants of Ouedraogo and Oubri, but their positions were hereditary. According to one tradition, the first provincial administrators were personal slaves of the early Mossi rulers who were given the task of supervising the activities of district chiefs of noble status. Another, more romantic tradition is that the man who became the first governor or Gounga Naba was a companion of Mogho Naba Oubri during the conquest of Ouagadougou. Later, the Gounga Naba presented one of his friends to Oubri with the request that the man take precedence over him, be made chief governor, and be given the title of Ouidi Naba. Oubri allegedly acceded to this request, and later granted another request of the Gounga Naba that a friend of the Ouidi Naba be named Larhalle Naba and be made the second governor. The Gounga Naba told the Mogho Naba that he preferred to see his friends happy and that he was content to be third minister. This tradition does not state when or how the Baloum Naba and the Kamsaogho Naba were named governors.[21]

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With the exception of the Kamsaogho Naba, who was a eunuch and had no heirs, the provincial governors headed administrative lineages. These lineages provided administrators not only for Ouagadougou but also for the principalities and districts. Cheron states that the Ouidi Naba of Boulsa was "a descendant of the Ouidi Naba of Ouagadougou, a great dignitary who rules a province and sits among the electors of the Mogho Naba."[22] Many administrative lineages on the district level were descended from officials sent down by the Mogho Naba with a new district chief in lieu of one deposed. When a chief was deposed, his administrators, like his relatives, lost their importance and their ties to Ouagadougou.

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The Ouidi Naba, called *Moss' ba* ("father of the Mossi") and *Sida soba* ("master of the truth"), was the principal administrator and the prime minister. His titles undoubtedly sprang from his important role in the election of the Mogho Naba and from his position as caretaker of the king-

645 dom during the interregnum.[23] The latter task was especially suited to a prime minister, since the Mossi regarded the interregnum as the most difficult period in their political life. The Ouidi Naba's administrative tasks were considered so important that he never went to war and was theoretically immune from punishment or execution by the Mogho Naba. This immunity was necessary, because the Mogho Naba had the right to execute anyone who brought him unwelcome news, and often did so. Since the Ouidi Naba announced good news as well as bad, it would have been folly to subject him to this rule. Some reports in the French colonial archives state that the Mogho Naba was expected to follow the Ouidi Naba's advice at all times, and could not veto any of his actions. These reports add, moreover, that if a Ouidi Naba considered a Mogho Naba dangerous for the welfare of the country, he could rightfully compel the ruler to kill himself. According to Lambert, one Ouidi Naba known as Baba forced Mogho Naba Karfo (ca. 1800) to commit suicide. It appears that aside from waging a long and unpopular war against Naba Djighima of Lalle, this Mogho Naba had seized the riches of his wealthy subjects for distribution among the poor. Moreover, he allegedly dispensed justice without making much distinction between nobles and commoners, which so displeased the nobles that they encouraged the Ouidi Naba to put Karfo to death. Baba sent the sovereign a poisoned arrow and a message consisting of a single word: *ki* (die). Karfo allegedly committed suicide that very night.[24]

Thus, it appears that under certain conditions the prime minister could impeach his "all-powerful" sovereign. We cannot assume, however, that all prime ministers were sufficiently powerful to control the Mogho Naba. Many Mogho Nanamse limited their Ouidi Naba to merely giving advice on affairs of state and insisted that he concern himself solely with his own province.

The provinces administered by the five ministers were made up of smaller entities or districts. The districts in the provinces of the Ouidi Naba, the Larhalle Naba, and the Gounga Naba were ruled by the sons and other descendants of ancient Mogho Nanamse. The province controlled by the Kamsaogho Naba was more important. His districts were the wealthiest and among the most populous in the nation, and they brought the largest revenues to the Mogho Naba. The reason for this, of course, was that the Kamsaogho Naba was a eunuch and had no heirs; when he died, all his riches reverted to the Mogho Naba. The province controlled by the Baloum Naba was the most difficult to administer. Its districts were ruled by the sons of recent Mogho Nanamse who felt that as holders of the nam they were free to appropriate the goods of the population. The Baloum

Naba was responsible for checking these depredations, but he had little coercive force since these nobles were infinitely superior to him in rank. 634 635 645

The Mogho Naba held his five ministers responsible for the administration of the districts within their provinces. Therefore they had to function as liaison officers between him and the district chiefs. Every morning, in order of precedence, the ministers reported the news they had received from their provinces since the previous day. At this time, the Mogho Naba also gave them messages for their districts. Later in the day, the ministers presented to the ruler those persons who had come from their provinces to the capital with special grievances, requests, or gifts. Delicate affairs of state were left for the evening, when they were discussed by the Mogho Naba, his minister or ministers, and other important persons.

From all reports, these administrative affairs kept both the ministers and the Mogho Naba quite busy. Binger, who could barely conceal his displeasure with Mogho Naba Sanum, gives this critical but otherwise highly illuminating view of the Mossi ruler's administrative activities: 643 644

> The duties of Naba Sanum are not too important. They consist of receiving visits throughout the day. In the morning, at about six o'clock, the drums announce that the ruler has arisen. When he has washed and refreshed himself with a meal, his captives and his wives go to his chamber to salute him. Then comes the turn of strangers, people of the neighborhood, petitioners, and others. They squat before the reception area until the ruler deigns to appear. When a large number of people have gathered, one of the [pages] goes to notify the ruler, who then arrives, sits on his cushion, and casts an amiable glance on the gathering while all present snap their fingers. As soon as Naba Sanum is seated, the petitioners and visitors hurry toward the monarch, throw themselves face down on the earth, and cover their heads with sand. Then each of them gets up and presents a gift of greater or lesser importance, in cowries or foodstuffs, according to what he wishes to ask. Then the [pages] come and say to the ruler, "A certain man has brought a sack of cowries, or a goat, or an ox. He desires to speak to you." The ruler thanks all of them with a *nif kende* (thanks) and retires into his chamber. It is well known that not one out of fifty petitioners was given the opportunity to have his wishes heard. Those who were heard had first spoken to an attendant who, after being paid in advance, had put off their case indefinitely by stating that it would be dealt with next. . . . Since the monarch's days are so well filled, one easily understands why he finds it difficult to deal effectively with the internal and external affairs of his kingdom; in any case, Mossi country is in a period of decadence that will only be aggravated with time.[28] [662]

The activities Binger considered frivolous were, on the contrary, important for the proper administration of the kingdom. The Mogho Naba had to receive petitions from the districts and transmit administrative orders to 643 [114]

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643 his people. We shall see that these orders ran the gamut from demands for soldiers, tribute, and labor, to requests for sacrifices to the ancestors or to local deities for the welfare of the country.

635 The provincial governors seldom visited the districts under their control
645 more than once or twice a year. They transmitted official orders to the dis-
[203] tricts through retainers. Some ministers such as the Gounga Naba kept the
[634] sons and servants of district chiefs in the capital to be used as messengers. The district chiefs, in turn, used their sons or servants to transmit messages to their provincial governors or through them to the Mogho Naba. The use of intermediaries in the administration served another purpose: it prevented face-to-face contact, with all its potential for personal animosities, from impairing relations between those whose status depended on their political office and those whose status was derived from membership in the royal lineage.

635 Relations between the provincial ministers and the district chiefs were
645 often charged with hostility and suspicion. The district chiefs regarded the
634 provincial ministers as representatives of the Mogho Naba, and thus as
578 persons to be obeyed. Simultaneously, however, they resented this control by social inferiors. They felt that since they were the descendants of Ouedraogo and Oubri, they should receive orders only from the Mogho Naba himself. Thus, while the district chiefs accepted orders from their provincial governors, they never permitted them to forget their social status or to interfere with the internal affairs of the districts. They felt that this was the prerogative of the royal lineage. Most provincial ministers accepted these restrictions on their activities, but nevertheless saw to it that the district chiefs surrendered the goods collected for the Mogho Naba and governed their people well. Sometime in the 1920's, a provincial administrator went to a district and insulted its chief for failing to deliver the quota of millet set by the French colonial government. The accusation of laziness and embezzlement so infuriated the district chief that he asked the provincial minister whether he had taken leave of his senses and forgotten to whom he was speaking. The person who reported this incident said that if the district chief had not been restrained, he would have killed the administrator on the spot.

Both provincial administrators and district chiefs could impose indirect sanctions on each other if the bounds of propriety were overstepped in either direction. A district chief harried by his minister could not complain directly to the Mogho Naba. But he could, and often did, show his dissatisfaction by lodging with another provincial minister when he went to the capital. He would then ask the official to accompany him when he went

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to render homage to the monarch. This attracted the attention of the Mogho 635
Naba, who investigated the grievance of the district chief. If the provincial 645
minister were found to be in serious error, he might be deposed and exe- 634
cuted. The Ouidi Naba was theoretically exempt from such punishment, 578
but it is doubtful that a strong monarch would have allowed even this official to cause trouble.

A provincial governor dissatisfied with a district chief under his charge could, under certain conditions, have him deposed and put to death. He achieved this by complaining to the monarch that the chief was either withholding tribute or misgoverning his people. In most cases, however, the minister could curb the district chief by hinting that his son would not receive a recommendation [illegible] successor to the nam of the district. This was usually enough to win the cooperation of the most recalcitrant chief, if only because his future status as the honored ancestor of a ruling local line would be jeopardized if he rebelled. These sanctions were thus sufficient to ensure satisfactory relations between the provincial ministers and their district chiefs, at least on the surface. This was to the advantage of both groups, [687] since in the final analysis the failure of either to administer or rule well might result in the death penalty.

Many districts and villages in Ouagadougou were administered not by 634
the provincial ministers but by officials directly responsible to the Mogho 621
Naba. The districts in question were often ruled by close relatives of the Mogho Naba or by persons who had gained his good graces. The villages [567]
were often inhabited by slaves and governed by headmen who were themselves slaves. Like the other territories of the Mogho Naba, these districts and villages were not physically contiguous. The districts were mixed in with districts administered by the provincial ministers, and the villages stood within the territorial boundaries of district chiefs. Whenever the [203]
Mogho Naba wanted to communicate with a chief of such a village or district, he sent one of his retainers. The chiefs, in turn, used their own people to send messages and goods to Ouagadougou. The general administration of these districts and villages differed little from that of the territories administered by the provincial ministers. The main difference was that the Mogho Naba took a greater interest in their everyday affairs. This called for greater efficiency on the part of local officials; for they, like the other chiefs, faced the penalty of deposition and death for maladministration.

Of all Mossi officials, the district chiefs had the most difficult adminis- 634
trative task. They were in direct contact with the people, and thus ran a greater risk of being charged with misgovernment. Countless district chiefs [687]
were deposed and executed because they had allegedly disobeyed or rebelled

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The district chief was relatively secure in the control of his territory as 634
long as he maintained amicable relations with his immediate superiors and 628
administered his district to their satisfaction. A less important but more 578
constant source of concern was his relationship with neighboring chiefs. Many people who can remember the pre-conquest period say it was unsafe for a man to trespass into another district unless he was on an official mission from his chief to another chief. It appears that most of the fighting occurred over strayed cattle and stolen women, with constant raids and counter-raids. The cattle were eaten, and the women kept as wives. Captured men were sometimes sold as slaves, but more often were held for [567] ransom. They were not kept as slaves, since the Mossi were forbidden to enslave other Mossi. Needless to say, this fighting was frowned upon by the Mogho Naba. Since all district chiefs believed in their common descent 634
from Ouedraogo and Oubri and paid allegiance to the Mogho Naba, any 628
fighting among them was not only a sin against the ancestors but also an 578
act of disloyalty to the Mogho Naba. When (as was usually the case) this 643
fighting was of short duration and few people were killed, the Mogho Naba took no official notice of it. But when it became serious, he sent the [645] provincial administrator to stop the fighting and to summon the dissident [635] elements to the capital for trial. The speed and severity with which the Mogho Naba dealt with quarrels within his own realm usually depended upon his strength. At some periods in Mossi history there was little internal disorder, because the rulers were strong; at other periods, under weak rulers, disorder practically amounted to internal chaos. During such periods, the [619] Mossi were kept together only by the bonds of kinship and religion which united them against outsiders.

The district chief maintained tight control over his own territory and 634
took an active part in its administration. In a district like Nobere, for example, the chief was aided both by an informal council and by an administrative apparatus similar to but smaller than the one at Ouagadougou. The council included men with whom the chief had grown up, members of his immediate family such as his brothers, and a few formal administrative personnel. These councillors visited him every day, brought him occasional gifts, received gifts from him in turn, and discussed informally all matters of interest. Yet, informal as this communication was, it enabled the district chief to know what was going on in his villages. Moreover, these councillors interceded for various villages and gave the chief valuable advice in administrative matters.

The formal administrative personnel of the district included a Ouidi Naba, a Baloum Naba, a Tansoba, and lesser officials with titles identical

634 721 567 175 3. Finally, a third lot, composed of young girls and young boys, was distributed among the warriors and put into their charge. The boys will be employed until further notice as grooms to the warriors; later on, those who prove themselves useful and docile will be kept. The others will be sold at the first opportunity. The girls will be given in marriage to warriors who distinguish themselves.[24]

721 643 644 701 [645] The military campaigns of the Mossi, in contrast to their slave-raiding expeditions, appear to have been well organized. When the Mogho Naba felt that a war was necessary, he summoned his five provincial ministers and the Tansoba to a parley. If war was decided upon, the Tansoba was given full charge of all operations. This man, chosen from a hereditary clan of warriors who lived in a village called Tansob'tenga in Sapone district, was listed among the Mogho Naba's courtiers but seldom appeared at court unless war was imminent. His duties as chief warrior were considered so dangerous that he constantly sought out religious practitioners for supernatural aid. Nevertheless, a war minister who was good and brave was not expected to live very long. If he did live to become gray-haired, the other courtiers made fun of him by pretending that his graying head could only be the result of his having carried a sheep captured in warfare on his head as a present to the ruler.

701 721 644 [202] [411] Once given a mandate for war, the Tansoba collected his magico-religious apparatus and prepared the requisite sacrifices. He then asked the provincial ministers to notify the district chiefs to assemble with their warriors under the leadership of the local Tansobadamba, who were often members of the Tansoba clan. When the district chiefs received this notice, they beat their *zongagondo* (war drums), and the local administrators sent orders for men to the village chiefs. The village chiefs, in turn, beat their war drums to summon their noble cavalrymen and commoner foot soldiers, who came armed with bows and arrows, spears, swords, and clubs, with or [278] without iron tips. The tips of the sharp weapons were often covered with a vegetable poison derived from a shrub of the Strophanthus species. Some [411] of the men also carried guns after firearms were introduced among the [177] Mossi from the desert region and from the coast. Many carried rawhide [714] shields.

As soon as the village contingents had assembled and had gathered their 701 provisions, they marched to the district centers. Then they proceeded 726 either to the place of battle or to Ouagadougou. In the latter case, they became part of the royal army and were joined by the forces of those princes who were prepared to honor their obligation to the Mogho Naba. For [648] example, when the French invaded Ouagadougou in 1896, the Boulsa Dim sent his prime minister "at the head of an army to aid Mogho Naba

Wobogo. However, he did not have to intervene, because while still en route he heard that Ouagadougou had fallen."[25] Thanks to this type of aid, the Mogho Naba was able to gather quite a large army, a fact that contradicts Crozat's belief that the Mogho Naba was a "king without an army."[26]

The early Mogho Nanamse used to accompany their armies into the field, but this practice was later abandoned and was revived periodically only by the more adventurous rulers. (The last ruler to die in warfare was Mogho Naba Doulougou [ca. 1800].) However, it was the Mogho Naba's duty to greet the army when it came to Ouagadougou, to beat the royal war drum, and to turn the troops over to the Tansoba. This officer served as commander in chief of the army, and was assisted by the Gounga Naba, a provincial minister, who served as his aide-de-camp. The Gounga Naba was expected to die rather than retreat in battle, especially if the Tansoba was killed. Two other ministers, the Kamsaogho Naba and the Larhalle Naba, also accompanied the army. The later Baloum Nanamse did not venture into battle, because they had to attend to the personal needs of the Mogho Naba. In early times, however, they accompanied their sovereigns into battle and fought alongside them. The Ouidi Naba never went to war, because it was his duty to look after the kingdom. He had to ensure the interests of all the people even if the royal army was defeated, the country invaded, and the ruler killed or forced to flee. The Samande Naba went to war and served as chief of the infantry.

Scouts preceded each district contingent as the army marched off to battle. Within the contingent, the younger warriors marched in front, followed by older men. It was the duty of the more experienced warriors to make sure that the younger men did not break ranks and run under the stress of battle. Behind the foot soldiers came the cavalry, composed of nobles and of the few commoners who possessed horses. Behind these came the district chief, surrounded by his own palace guard. Several heralds known as *yumba* (sing. *yuma*) accompanied the district forces to exhort them to fight. As the men marched to battle the yumba shouted:

> Men! Your ancestors were not slaves. They were men. They were stronger than anyone else. They did not bathe with water; they bathed with blood. Do you wish to return home to drink millet water and eat bread? Never! A man does not eat bread or drink millet water; a man fights. Your ancestors were not afraid of anyone; you must not be afraid of anyone. Even if you are killed today, you must march ahead, beat your enemies, and take their villages. You must not be afraid!

Mossi armies on the march used scouts to keep a sharp lookout for the enemy or for any evidence that he was aware of impending attack. The tactics these scouts used to avoid detection, such as camouflaging themselves

726 with leaves and branches and crawling upon the ground, can be witnessed
[764] even today at Mossi funerals where men re-enact warfare practices. Whenever possible, the Mossi preferred to take the enemy by surprise, but this was seldom possible when large-scale fighting and massive preparations were involved.

When two Mossi armies drew up to each other, the heralds from both sides issued such challenges and epithets as: "If you men do not wish to die, you should run or you will never eat again. We will have your blood to wash with." In the meantime, the Tansobadamba on both sides deployed their forces in accordance with the number of men available, the spirit of
[723] the enemy, and the nature of the terrain. From the description of warfare given to me by an old Tansoba in Nobere district, it appears that the strategy most commonly used was to split the infantry in two while attacking, thus making room for the cavalry to charge through. If the initial charge was successful, the attack was maintained, but if it failed, the army usually turned about and fled. Despite their braggadocio, Mossi commanders seldom insisted that their troops fight against overwhelming odds.
[644] However, shame over impending defeat often induced such officers as the
[645] Tansoba and the Gounga Naba to fight to the death. For example, during the war between Boulsa and Fada-N'Gourma in 1897, the Boulsa army lost so many men that the Boulsa Dim wanted to commit suicide in his humiliation. However, he was prevented from doing so by one of his subordinates.[27]

Soldiers wounded by poisoned spears or arrows extracted the projectiles if possible, and kept on fighting until they died. Even if they were wounded
[789] by an unpoisoned weapon, they did not seek medical aid. Most wounded men believed that they were doomed, because their protective amulets had
[727] failed them. For the same reason, a defeated army fleeing a battlefield made no attempt to retrieve its dead and dying, but left them to the vultures. When an army was victorious, however, the Mossi either carried their dead home for burial or buried them on the battlefield, saving some item of their clothing or equipment for the funeral.

Victorious Mossi armies usually pursued the enemy, burning villages as
[648] they went. The soldiers killed all the infants and the infirm, and when they
[567] fought against non-Mossi, they captured young people to be sold as slaves. Then they collected all the available booty and departed hurriedly, fearing
[727] that the confiscated cattle and slaves would slow their return and enable the rallied enemy to catch up with them.[28] If the army could not return home before dark, camp was set up for the night near a body of water so that the Tansobadamba could offer thanksgiving sacrifices. Pickets were later

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because of this delinquency, the Mogho Naba might hesitate to come to the aid of any of his vassals if a general war broke out. It is true that the Mogho Naba did not aid the Yatenga ruler when the French arrived. But whether this was because of his failure to pay taxes, or because the French conquest of the Yatenga coincided with a civil war there, we shall probably never know. We do know that many of the Mogho Naba's vassals came to his aid when the French finally arrived at Ouagadougou. It is my opinion that the gifts exchanged between Yatenga and Ouagadougou were not "tributary," but were more in the nature of tokens of friendship between two peers.

The Mogho Naba and his provincial ministers also received revenue as a function of their judicial roles. The nature and disposition of the fines levied against legal offenders were discussed in Chapter V. The Mogho Naba's fees came in the form of the traditional gifts the litigants gave him even before their cases were tried. These gifts were never regarded as bribes, for this would have contradicted the Mossi axiom that "the truth is at Ouagadougou."

The Mogho Naba inherited all the property of the Kamsaogho Naba, and claimed all the property of district chiefs who died without close relatives. He also received inheritance taxes (fado) from the estates of deceased district chiefs. In collecting the fado, the Mogho Naba first retained the horse on which the messenger came to announce the chief's death. He reciprocated by sending envoys with cowries and animals to be offered to their common ancestors at the chief's funeral. After the funeral, the envoys claimed the dead chief's quiver of arrows to take to Ouagadougou for deposit with those of other dead chiefs. Then they demanded the fado, and jestingly told the heirs that the Mogho Naba would be satisfied with nothing less than "a thousand of everything" (*tusri bumbu fa*) the deceased had possessed: wives, slaves, horses, cows, goats, chickens, articles of clothing, and so on. The heirs pleaded poverty and jokingly gave the envoys a few old and sickly animals, old chickens, tattered pieces of clothing, etc. Eventually, they handed out the fado, which usually consisted of livestock, clothing, food, weapons, jewelry, cowries, and even slaves. Lastly, they gave the envoys the chief's ceremonial horse and presents for themselves.

The Mogho Naba and his ministers collected a considerable amount of revenue from the traders who visited Ouagadougou and the larger market towns and village markets throughout the kingdom.[9] The Mossi (especially the assimilated Yarse) were good traders, and they benefited from their country's strategic location between the Sahara and the forest regions. According to Barth, some six caravan routes crossed the country, linking

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the Niger River area to the Gold Coast and Togoland. Important stops 645
were made at such Mossi centers as Ouagadougou, Bere, Dakay, La, Mane, 651
Yako, and Koupela.[7] At Dori, northwest of Ouagadougou, Barth found 439
Mossi with "their fine donkeys, which are greatly sought after." He adds [487]
that in addition, [443]

> the people of Mossi supply this market with gabaga, or "tari" [cotton bands], as Arabs near Timbuktu call them, cotton being extremely cheap in their country, so that in the great market places of that country, especially in Kulfela [Koupela, but really at Poitenga a few miles away], an indigo-colored shirt is not worth more than from 700 to 800 [cowry] shells. . . . Besides salt, cotton strips, dyed cloth, kola nuts, corn, and asses, some copper manufactured chiefly into large drinking-vessels is also brought into the market by the people of Mossi. However, I do not think they manufacture the copper vessels themselves, but bring them from Ashanti.[8]

Dubois, one of the early visitors to Timbuktu, tells us that he saw Mossi 175
men carrying on their traditional trade in that city. Mossi traders dealt in 439
such diverse commodities as millet, rice, manioc, peanuts, honey, kola nuts, peppers, dried onions, tobacco, dried fish, soap, iron, antimony, lead, cotton bands, straw hats, mats, jars, pots, and calabashes. They traded these articles for needles, mirrors, beads, coral, amber, tea, coffee, perfumes, carpets, fezzes, tailored robes, and salt. What impressed Dubois most was that while the merchants from Bamako, Djenne, Sansanding, and Touat enjoyed themselves at Timbuktu, "the great town of pleasures with the freest morals in the Sudan," and spent a great deal of money in gifts to beautiful women, "the Mossi did not waste their money, and left as soon as they had finished their business."[9] On the way south, Mossi and other caravaneers picked up goods from the Yatenga and other northern Ouagadougou provinces before stopping at the capital and then proceeding to the forest regions.

It is impossible to determine the exact volume of caravan trade that 439
passed through Mossi country, and the amount of revenue it brought to the [651]
Mossi rulers. We can get some idea of this trade, however, by examining the customs reports on goods crossing the border between Mossi country and the northern territories of the Gold Coast in the few years just following European conquest.

The official figures for 1901 and 1903 are as follows:[10]

Year	Horses	Head of Cattle	Sheep and Goats	Loaded Donkeys	Bales of Cotton Cloth
1901	126	3,111	18,181	2,095	236
1903	196	6,624	30,392	4,294	269

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worked for the Mogho Naba in and around the palace courtyard, and in the fields. They also kept his herds and provided him with animals from their own herds. Like the Dapore, they were seldom sold, but they often had to give their sons and daughters to the Mogho Naba.

The last group of persons who contributed their services to the Mogho Naba were the Kamboinse. Their origin is also unclear. Most of my respondents claimed that the Kamboinse and their chief first came to Ouagadougou from the direction of the Gold Coast, that they bore guns, and that they offered their services as guards to the Mogho Naba.[21] Later on, the sovereign allegedly assigned slaves to the Kamboinse unit, with the result that the entire group eventually took on a serf-like character. The Kamboinse guarded the Mogho Naba's palace and seized for him the goods of persons whom he condemned to death.

The services performed for the Mogho Naba by his pages and other youthful retainers also contributed significantly to the support of his administration. We have already seen how these young men and boys took care of his every need and functioned as important messengers within the royal household. The Mogho Naba also had control over the daughters of his serfs, whom he used to obtain revenue from aliens and subjects alike. Periodically, the Mogho Naba gave one of these girls as pughsiudga to a man, thus obligating him to render goods and services to the court. Moreover, the man had to return the eldest daughter he had by this wife to the Mogho Naba as a future pughsiudga. In this way, the sovereign had a revolving store of women through whom he could bind men to himself in a nexus of obligations, and from whom he eventually received additional women.[22]

The provincial ministers of the Ouagadougou kingdom occupied such a strategic position within the central administration that anyone rendering gifts or tribute to the Mogho Naba always gave presents to them as well. Their main source of revenue, however, came from the villages under their direct control, and from the retainers who lived in their compounds and in their wards in the capital. The economic relations between the ministers and their villages were similar to those between the district chiefs and their villages, and will be discussed below. The retainers, serfs, and slaves who served these ministers provided them with many of the services their counterparts rendered to the Mogho Naba. They kept their houses in repair and provided them with firewood and with fodder for their horses. Many of them also cultivated fields for their masters. Whenever the ministers needed extra goods or services, they called on those persons who lived in their compounds or in their wards. For example, hun-

dreds of persons lived in Ouidin, the ward of the Ouidi Naba. Some of them were related to him; others had been attracted by his wealth and by his ability to obtain wives for his charges. All of them benefited from being attached to him in one way or another, and in return helped him to augment his income.

All the district chiefs sent women to their provincial ministers to be kept as wives (and thus as agricultural workers), or to be given out as pughsiudse. The Kamsaogho Naba received more pughsiudse than the other ministers because he was in charge of the wealthier districts, and also of course distributed more. The Baloum Naba was especially favored in another respect. Each year, he was entitled to call several *seghse* (sing. *seka*; a corvée or convocation) of his former pages and their relatives to help cultivate his fields. The Ouidi Naba's sources of revenue were about the same as the Baloum Naba's. In addition, his position as chief minister enabled him to obtain numerous gifts from persons who visited Ouagadougou. Moreover, the Mogho Naba often gave him horses from the fado of deceased district chiefs. The Larhalle Naba had full ministerial privileges, and a few other means of obtaining revenue. He was allowed, for instance, to keep the animals that had not been sacrificed on the graves of deceased rulers.

The provincial ministers received many goods and services from the district chiefs of their provinces. Whenever one of these ministers sent a messenger to the district, the chief gave the messenger money and livestock for his master. Furthermore, the district chiefs brought presents for their minister when they paid their annual visit to Ouagadougou to render homage to the Mogho Naba. The provincial ministers used their position as confidants and advisers to obtain as many presents as possible from persons who came to Ouagadougou to ask special favors from the Mogho Naba, to participate in judicial proceedings, or to seek the nam. Moreover, they cooperated with each other in these exactions, so that a person seeking a favor from or through one minister was prudently advised to give presents to or to seek the aid of the others.

The district chief played a key role in the procurement of revenue for the central administration, and derived an income for himself in the process. The seignorial rights over the Mossi people delegated by the Mogho Naba to all nam holders were quite obvious on this level. The district chief had rights to all valuable fruit trees, such as locust-bean and shea-butter, that grew within the boundaries of his territory. He instructed the village chiefs to harvest the fruit of these trees and send it to him. The village chiefs even had to send him the wood from the fallen branches of these trees.

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ably been younger sons sent to rule in conquered territories claimed that their ancestors were direct descendants of Ouedraogo and Oubri. Thus, to the Mossi, the power to rule was intimately linked to closeness of descent from the royal ancestors. The supernatural power of these ancestors, and the vigilance they were believed to maintain over the affairs of their descendants, were regarded as important factors in Mossi government.

From the moment when the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou or any other Mossi ruler "drank the namtibo" and thereby received the nam of his ancestors, he had the right—indeed, the duty—to offer sacrifices to these ancestors in the name of his subjects. Every night, throughout Mossi country, the Baloum Naba of every ruler performed an act of supplication (Kwaga Basgha) to the ancestors. He beseeched them to protect the subjects of their descendants through the night, to maintain peace in Mossi country, and to grant health, children, and prosperity to all Mossi. This nightly ceremony was climaxed yearly by an elaborate ritual in honor of the ancestors (called the Basgha in some areas, and the Pelegha, Filigha, or Kinkiriga in others) that began at the highest levels of the government and ultimately linked every Mossi chief and lineage head.

The Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou, like the other Mogho Nanamse and Dimdamba, initiated this ceremony in his own kingdom. His celebration, called "M'barengma," was held at the end of the Mossi agricultural year and after the Soretasgho. Thus, the M'barengma was a New Year's festival in thanksgiving for good crops, as well as the annual Feast of the Dead. A few weeks before the first moon of the new year (the *ki-basgha* or *ki-pelegha*), the Mogho Naba ordered his soghondamba and samande-kamba to clean up the palace buildings and courtyards—an activity intended to notify the ever-vigilant ancestors that preparations were being made to offer sacrifices in their honor. A short time later, the Mogho Naba gave grain from his fields to the Pughtiema so she could prepare millet water for the sacrifices. Present-day Mossi insist that part of the grain came from the first ears harvested that year and part from those of the previous year. This was supposed to symbolize the continuity between crops, mirroring the continuity between the ruler and his ancestors. A few days before the principal ceremony, the Mogho Naba ordered the Larhalle Naba to pour millet water and sacrifice chickens on the graves of former Mogho Nanamse.

Shortly before the ki-basgha moon appeared, the ruler had to leave his palace at night to elude the ancestors, who had been attracted by the preparations and who were expected to be angry when they discovered that the sacrifices were not yet ready. The unjust ruler feared ancestral sanctions; the just ruler that his ancestors might want him to join them. One night he

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pleted, the remainder of the ceremony followed the pattern of the Ouagadougou ritual.

During the weeks that followed, the village chiefs and the heads of the larger lineage segments all offered sacrifices to their ancestors. The Pughtiema of each prominent local administrator, chief, or lineage head prepared and poured the millet water as a libation to the ancestors. Whenever possible, each of these personages invited musicians to sing praises to his ancestors. He dressed in his best robe and sat outside his hut to receive presents from his relatives, friends, and subjects, along with their best wishes for the new year, and for long life and prosperity. In return he gave them kola nuts, beer, and food. Thus, in celebrating the Basgha, all the Mossi were united in prayers and supplications to the ancestors, upon whom rested the future of their country and the successful reign of the descendants of Ouedraogo and Oubri.

The earth deity, Tenga, held the central place in the second major religio-political ceremony which linked all Mossi. This ritual, called *Tense* (from *tenga*, "earth") and sometimes *Naba Oubri ma koure* ("the anniversary of the funeral of Mogho Naba Oubri's mother"), was so important to Mossi cohesion that it was banned by the French, and as a result its main features are now unclear. According to tradition, Naba Oubri loved Poughtoenga, his Ninisi mother, so much, and was so pleased with the elaborate funeral he gave her, that he decided to repeat this ceremony each year in the hope that his subjects would be blessed with the bountiful crops and herds which had made the first one possible. Curiously enough, Oubri's mother was not a central figure in the Tense celebration. Instead, great stress was placed on the fructifying powers of the earth and on the importance of the royal ancestors in Mossi life. The juxtaposition and association of the earth deity with Oubri's mother has important implications for the Mossi political organization. Mossi tradition holds that a Ninisi woman was the ancestress of the Mossi of Ouagadougou. Her people probably celebrated the Tense as a fertility rite to their earth goddess, Tenga. The Mossi apparently took over the ceremony and used it both as a fertility rite and as a memorial festival, thus symbolically uniting the conquerors and the conquered.[3]

In contrast to the Basgha, no special date appears to have been set for the celebration of the Tense. It was held sometime before the crops were sowed, but according to Tauxier it was not celebrated at all in Ouagadougou when the previous year's harvest had been poor.[4] Before setting the date for the festival, the Mogho Naba summoned the Larhalle Naba and ordered him to have sacrifices made on the graves of all former rulers. This minister

provided the sacrificial animals for the royal tombs in the area of the capital, and the Ouagadougou Naba, as chief Tengsoba, performed the sacrifices. The Larhalle Naba also dispatched his servants to the distant districts where royal tombs were located, with orders to obtain (by force, if necessary) the animals for the sacrifices from the local populations and give them to the special guardians of the tombs. Sacrifices were made on the grave of Naba Oubri at Koudougou and on that of his father, Zoungourana, in the village of Zomtoega in Tenkodogo. However, there is no indication that a sacrifice was made on the grave of Ouedraogo, who is believed to have died in Sagabatenga but whose burial place is unknown. Nor is it clear whether, as some Mossi claim, annual sacrifices were made on the alleged grave of Nyennega in Gambaga. As soon as these preparatory sacrifices had been completed and the Mogho Naba had been notified, preparations were made for the celebration.

The Mogho Naba met with the Larhalle Naba, and the date of the Tense was set for twenty-one days after the meeting. On the following day, the Larhalle Naba made five cords out of tree bark and tied nineteen knots in each of them. The next day, he gave each provincial minister a cord to send to the districts in his province. The provincial ministers then sent their messengers with the cords to the districts, with orders to untie one knot every day the cords were in transit. Thus a district chief, counting the number of knots in the cord on the day it reached him, knew how many days were left before the Tense. As soon as the entire kingdom had been notified of the festival, the envoys returned to Ouagadougou and returned the cords to their ministers.

On the Friday morning before the Tense, the Larhalle Naba went to the palace. Kneeling before the monarch, he untied the last knot on each cord to indicate that the ceremony would begin on the morrow. To acknowledge this fact, the Mogho Naba distributed bars of salt to his courtiers and visitors instead of the customary kola nuts, beer, and millet water. Visitors left the court early in order to provide their families with foodstuffs for the celebration.

Early on Saturday morning, royal servants brought huge quantities of beef and mutton that had been cooked without pepper (this spice being disliked by the ancestors) and other foods, and deposited them in large heaps in the courtyard. Nearby, they also placed numerous large pots of millet beer. As soon as the morning ceremony was over, the Larhalle Naba slowly approached the Mogho Naba, who presented him with a new white robe. The minister donned the robe and walked to the piles of food, from which he took three portions of millet mush, dipped them in a specially

prepared sauce, and flung them in three directions to the waiting ancestral spirits. He then beseeched the royal spirits, the spirits of former provincial ministers, and the spirits of the ancient people (the Ninisi) to grant a long life to the Mogho Naba and peace to all the Mossi. He repeated the ritual with three morsels of meat and with the contents of a pot of beer. When he had finished, the Gande Naba picked up the food thrown to the ancestors and carried it away. He did not look backward for fear that he should see the ancestors and die as a result. The departure of the Gande Naba was the signal for the palace retainers to rush toward the food. They seized and ate what they could, spilling and wasting a good deal in the process.[5]

Meanwhile, chiefs and headmen held similar ceremonies in every district, village, hamlet, and compound in the Ouagadougou kingdom. District and village chiefs offered sacrifices to their ancestors in the name of their subjects. The sacrifices on the hamlet and compound level were more specific. Every grown man had to take a sheep, goat, or chicken to his elder and request that it be offered to the ancestors in his name. The elder sacrificed the animal and beseeched the ancestors to grant the petitioner good health, bountiful crops, and many children during the coming year. The women and children did not take part in the ritual, but they did participate in the general feasting that followed.

The festivities of the Tense lasted only a few days in the districts and villages, but in the capital it did not end officially until about four weeks had elapsed. At the end of this period, the Larhalle Naba gave the Mogho Naba all the cords that had been used to mark the coming of the Tense. A few days later, the chief Tengsoba of Guillingou, the native village of Oubri's mother, and the Tengsobadamba of other important ceremonial centers, visited the Mogho Naba in the palace courtyard. Here they all sacrificed white cocks and placed the blood and feathers of their victims on their ceremonial axes in order to "increase the power" of these objects. Later on, they were given cooked mutton, millet cakes, and other presents. Their departure for home later in the day marked the close of the Tense.

The religio-political function of the Tense is quite explicit, despite the statement by Dim Delobson, himself a Mossi chief (but also a convert to Catholicism), that "it is apparent that this festival has no outstanding features. Its sole aim is to make peace between the living and the dead, and, in the process, to allow everyone to enjoy the food."[6] Judging by the reports of old men who participated in the festival before it was banned, the people did have a good time and enjoyed the food. What is important, however, is that like the Basgha, the Tense served not only "to make peace

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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his guests.[12] On the contrary, when the Imam visited the ruler on Fridays or during important festivals to read from the Koran, the sovereign gave him sweetened millet water and appropriate gifts.

Most Mossi rulers at all levels had Moslems among their councillors. These men were often the only persons who had traveled extensively outside the country (on pilgrimages to Mecca), and thus could counsel a ruler about how to deal with foreign visitors. Most early European visitors to Mossi country were either helped or hindered (chiefly the latter, it seems) by these travel-wise councillors. Crozat had difficulties with the Moslems long before he arrived in Mossi country proper. When he got to Lanfiera, the Mossi who lived there were alarmed, and refused to help him proceed to Ouagadougou despite his protestations that "I come for the good of all, white and black, that we may be together like brothers, since the same God has made us all." Crozat reports that his plea was in vain because "El Hadj All-Karl declared that he would not receive me, and he will not receive me. El Hadj is wise, El Hadj is prudent, El Hadj knows all, El Hadj does not make decisions without good foresight, and once made, he keeps them."[13]

Crozat had the same difficulty when he entered Mossi country. He tells us, "At Dounse [near Yako], for example, the marabouts did not look favorably upon my arrival, and it took a great deal of insistence on the part of Moussa to convince the Imam, my unwilling host, to present me to the chief who had expressed the desire to see me."[14] Crozat also found that he had to lodge with the Imam when he arrived at Ouagadougou, and he was assigned the same huts "which had served Captain Binger," who had visited the capital before him. He was disappointed with his reception and declares:

> I already knew from experience what sort of influence these men exercised over the chiefs. As a councillor of the chief, the Imam was overtly acknowledged as the second official in the village, but in reality he often commanded it. The Imam of Ouagadougou, therefore, could do much to help me or to hurt me. My decision to court him might flatter him, and that would be a move in the direction of winning his good graces, which, all things considered, was most important to me. The result was only partly in my favor. I succeeded insofar as the Imam was not hostile to me, but he did not help me as he might have.[15]

These Moslem councillors realized better than most other people what the visits of the Europeans implied for the independence of the country, and they tried their best to counsel the monarchs against receiving such visitors.

Beginning with Mogho Naba Doulougou (ca. 1750) Mossi sovereigns, whether Moslem or pagan, participated in the more important Moslem festi-

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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With his staff, African infantry, cavalry, and bearers, Voulet left Bandiagara in July 1896 to conquer the Mossi and Gurunsi territories. As the column entered Yatenga it was hailed by Bagare, who had again been chased from his capital by rebel forces. Voulet allowed him to join the invading force, and together they proceeded to Gourcy.[38] According to French sources, the Mossi army offered only token resistance, and the people deserted their villages as the column advanced.[39] In contrast, local tradition states that the Mossi fought valiantly, and that heroes entrenched themselves along the way to die at their posts. However, the French eventually routed the defenders and reinstalled Bagare at Gourcy. Voulet then proceeded to Yako, and the population fled. After capturing this town, Voulet proceeded to Ouagadougou.

175* 648* [669]

The events leading to the capture of the Mossi capital are not clear, because the official sources and the information culled from the memories of witnesses differ a great deal. Noll reports that Voulet sent an emissary to Mogho Naba Wobogo demanding the surrender of the town, and that the emissary was whipped for bringing bad news to the ruler and sent back to Voulet with a rejection of his demand. In the words of Noll, "That insult was immediately punished, and that same evening the French flag flew above the walls of Ouagadougou."[40]

One Mossi version, as related by Dim Delobson, is that a man named Seddo met Voulet's column and, after acting as its guide until nightfall, ran off and notified Mogho Naba Wobogo that the column would arrive at Ouagadougou the following day. The ruler's ministers then held a conference. Some of them counseled him to await the French and show them the flags and the treaty of protection they had received from the British. Others feared that if the Mogho Naba waited for the French, they might seize him, maltreat him, humiliate him before all the people, and probably kill him. They advised him to leave the country. Wobogo decided to be prudent and fled the capital.[41]

According to another tradition, a Moslem from Bere district who had been to Mecca and who had encountered Europeans told Wobogo that it would be folly for the Mossi to try to fight the gun-bearing invaders, and that he should either surrender or flee. The Tansoba who heard this statement became so angry that he wanted to kill the speaker. He declared that no man could enter Mossi country without the ruler's permission, and he swore to die before this happened. However, the other councillors persuaded Wobogo to leave the capital.

[645]

Dim Delobson states that Voulet arrived at Ouagadougou with his column in September 1896, and sent a former Gurunsi slave of the Mossi with

*175 *648 eight soldiers to reconnoiter the town. (This slave might be the emissary referred to by Noll.) The people who had gathered for the market day were unaware that an attack on the capital was imminent, and were frightened when they saw the soldiers. A deaf man named Wanda, who was a tax collector in the market, went home for his gun and his horse in the belief that the Mogho Naba's army was on the march. He went out to meet the French and was killed. Later that day the Mossi army, under the command of Koabga, the Kamsaogho Naba, and the Tansoba, launched an attack on the invaders. Their flint guns, spears, clubs, and poisoned arrows were powerless against superior French arms. Dim Delobson states that when the French guns began to fire, "It was a thorough stampede; all tried to save themselves and fled in all directions. Some of them, in their pre-
[645] cipitous flight, even rode past their homes and villages." According to local tradition, one of the first persons to run was the Tansoba, who had once pledged to defend the Mogho Naba to the death. About five o'clock that afternoon, the French flag flew over Wobogo's palace.[42] The Mogho Naba and his army did not regroup until they reached a village called Bagare, some 25 miles southeast of the capital.

Three days later, Wobogo marched back toward Ouagadougou at the head of a large army in an attempt to crush the relatively few enemy soldiers. But Voulet's men chased him toward the south. It was either during this battle or after he returned from the pursuit of Wobogo that Voulet burned Ouagadougou to punish its inhabitants for helping their sovereign. Meanwhile, Wobogo had regrouped his forces, and although Voulet pursued him and burned Mane and Boussouma, where the sovereign had sought refuge, Wobogo fled rather than sign a treaty with the invaders. This attitude surprised and annoyed Voulet, who is quoted as saying:

> Although we represent peace, safety, security on the trade routes, and thus ease of communication . . . nothing could prevail against their fear that in accepting us, they would also have to accept the suppression of slavery: the principal activity around which everything revolves in this backward country. The majority of the population are kept well in hand [by their chiefs]. Although the central power (I speak of the authority of the chief of Ouagadougou vis-à-vis the other chiefs, his vassals) is *relatively* weak, each of these vassals, on the other hand, is thoroughly obeyed in his own territory. There is not one village chief who would dare to receive us if his superior forbade him to do so. We are told that if anyone permitted himself such a liberty, he would have his head cut off the moment our backs were turned.[43]

After being routed by Voulet's forces for the second time, the Mogho
[701] Naba sent requests for aid to many of the autonomous Dimdamba and to his district chiefs. The Dim of Boulsa sent an army under the command

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of his prime minister, Rimsekedo, and the chiefs of the districts of Bere, Djiba, Manga, Nobere, and Rissouma led their armies to join the royal forces at a rallying point near the White Volta River. Meanwhile, Voulet had expended most of his supplies in trying to bring Wobogo to terms. Having failed to do so, he tried to solve the problems of Mossi government by electing Wobogo's younger brother, Mazi, as ruler of Ouagadougou and emperor of the Mossi. Voulet then marched off to his base at Bandiagara by way of the White Volta, hoping to catch and defeat Wobogo's forces along the way. The monarch fled at Voulet's approach, so that when the forces of Rimsekedo and of the district chiefs arrived at the rendezvous, "they found only the droppings of Wobogo's horses," and angrily returned home. Naba Kaglere, chief of Nobere, was allegedly so infuriated by Wobogo's cowardice that he withdrew his support from his sovereign. However, the chiefs of Djiba and Rissouma remained faithful to their ruler, and the Dim of Mane attempted to intercept Voulet's advance toward Bandiagara, only to be defeated by the French, who burned his villages.

When Wobogo heard that the enemy had left the country, he ordered that the roof of his palace be restored, resumed his traditional duties such as appointing to office the heirs of district chiefs who had died during his absence, and prepared to return to the capital. In the interim Mazi had died (under suspicious circumstances, according to the French), thus leaving the people of Ouagadougou without a ruler and eager for Wobogo's return.[44] Unfortunately for the Mogho Naba, Voulet unexpectedly returned to Ouagadougou in December 1896, thus preventing Wobogo's return. Voulet, too, was in a predicament, for he had few allies among the Mossi, and Wobogo was firmly entrenched near Kombissiri in the south. To prevent many chiefs from coming to the aid of their sovereign, Voulet immediately launched an offensive against Wobogo. He burned several villages along the way, and received the allegiance of Wobogo's two brothers, Tarbega and Mahmadou, of two of his sons, and of two of his important vassals, the Mane Naba and the Boussouma Naba. But he failed to find the sovereign, who had fled to the region of Djiba and Nobere. Voulet then turned back to Ouagadougou, which he reached about a month later, in January 1897. On the following day, the Ouidi Naba surrendered, and two days later the Tansoba followed suit. Voulet now formally deposed Mogho Naba Wobogo. A week later, he obtained the permission and cooperation of the traditional electors and placed Wobogo's brother Mahmadou on the throne as Mogho Naba Sighiri. This sovereign then "solemnly signed a treaty which placed his kingdom under the protection of France."[45]

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*175 Voulet left Ouagadougou in February to establish French control
648 among the Gurunsi, leaving a military commander, Captain Scal, and a Resident Officer at Ouagadougou. But he acted without taking into account the resourcefulness of Wobogo (now once more Boukary Koutou), who
[645] had gained the allegiance of chiefs in the Manga area. The Gounga Naba,
[634] who was provincial minister for that region, tried to gain the support of the Djiba and Rissouma districts for Mogho Naba Sighiri. He failed, and or-
[669] dered the troops of Garanse, Nobere, Toise, and Yake districts to attack Boukary Koutou's supporters. In the ensuing battle the Gounga Naba's forces lost nine men, the rebels ten. The Gounga Naba considered these losses too high and called off the fighting.[46]

*175 Meanwhile, Boukary Koutou had sent an appeal to Steward, the com-
*648 mander of a British force that was then on its march of conquest through Gambaga and that had designs on Ouagadougou, "for protection in virtue
643 of the treaty concluded with Mr. Ferguson in 1894." Wishing to avoid conflict with the British, Voulet hastened to Tenkodogo in February 1897 to meet Steward, and the two men established boundaries between the French and British spheres of influence. Boukary Koutou was thus left to fend for himself.[47] Undaunted, he crossed the Gold Coast frontier once more and proceeded toward Ouagadougou. Scal heard about his activities and decided to launch an attack against him. He took Boukary Koutou by surprise in June 1897, and forced him to flee. Boukary passed through Bere district and arrived in the Gold Coast, where he was granted refuge by the British. About a year later, he convinced a Colonel Northcott that he had been unjustly deposed by the French, and that under the treaty of 1894 the British were his protectors and were obliged to restore him to his throne. In May 1898, a British force under Northcott and with Boukary Koutou in tow arrived at Kombissiri, some twenty-five miles from Ouagadougou, but here they were met by French emissaries who brought with them copies of the treaty of protection signed by Sighiri in January 1897. The British troops retreated, taking the dejected ruler with them into permanent exile.[48] Boukary reportedly settled at Zangoiri, a few miles from Gambaga.[49] He was forbidden to enter Gambaga because of the tradition that if he ever saw the Gambaga ruler, both of them would die. Boukary never returned to Mossi country. He died and was buried in the Gold Coast in 1904, but his funeral was held at Ouagadougou.[50]

Boukary Koutou is seen in retrospect as a tragic figure, whose main fault seems to have been that he ruled at the most difficult time in his country's history. Judging by his treatment of Binger, he appears to have
[173] been a clever politician, but his resources were of no avail against the

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 175*

laborers.[8] In desperation, the French sought help from those very chiefs 177
whose power they wished to curb, especially from the Mogho Naba of 648*
Ouagadougou, whom they regarded as the supreme ruler of the Mossi. 643
However, they met with the same resistance:

> The king of the Mossi, Kouka Naba [Mogho Naba Sighiri], is lavish with vows of devotion and fidelity, but these vows are never translated into action. It is impossible to obtain from him any pertinent information about the country—he tries to give the impression that he knows nothing about it—or any information about Boukary Koutou [then in exile, but still a threat to the French], of whom he pretends to have no news.[6]

One cannot tell whether the Mogho Naba knew about Boukary Koutou's activities, but it is highly unlikely that he could have given the French much information about the country even if he had wished to do so. No Mogho Naba ever possessed this kind of information. The Dimdamba and [631]
the Kombemba paid allegiance and tribute to their superior ruler, but did [651]
not furnish him with specific data on their principalities and districts.

The death of Mogho Naba Sighiri in 1905 enabled the French officials 175*
to secure the election of a Mogho Naba they could control and to change 177
the Mossi political organization. Sighiri's principal heir was his sixteen- 643
year-old son, Saidou Congo, who in the opinion of the Mossi electoral 648*
college "could not keep the country" because of his youth. The French, keenly aware that they could more easily control a young ruler, insisted that Saidou be given the nam, and he became Mogho Naba Kom. Two years later, in 1907, the French began to reorganize the kingdom of Ouagadougou and the surrounding territories. They suppressed certain districts and principalities, enlarged some, and unified others by granting them control over the smaller political entities that lay near or within their boundaries. These changes were often made without regard for the traditional hierarchies, and many district chiefs found themselves controlling other district chiefs, while Dimdamba were reduced to the level of district chiefs.

The French also reorganized the provincial administration, replacing 175*
the five ministers with persons more favorably disposed toward their rule. 177
The Larhalle Naba was replaced in 1908 after he had mysteriously left the 648*
capital for Koudougou. The Kamsaogho Naba was deposed by the Mogho 645
Naba, and was replaced by a nominee of the French. As in the case of the district chiefs, the French shifted the territorial responsibilities of these ministers "without taking into consideration the hierarchy prevailing among [them]. The intention of the administration apparently was to reward certain young and capable ministers to the detriment of those who were old."[9] One commentator concludes: "In view of the youth of the

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175 reigning king, Naba Kom, and also owing to certain difficulties, the ad-
177 ministration was compelled to grant more authority to the five great min-
* 648 isters and to make them true provincial chiefs with whom it could deal and
[645] who would govern their territories directly."[6]

Some of the demoted chiefs and their followers opposed these changes. In 1910, they refused to pay taxes and fought the police. However, they were forced to accept the changes when the police burned their villages, seized their goods and animals to pay the taxes, and deposed uncooperative chiefs. These harsh measures so shocked the Mossi that they remained docile from that time onward, and thereafter the French were able to rule the country with one European administrator for every 60,000 Mossi.[7]

Once the French officials had put down the opposition to their policies of control and had succeeded in installing loyal provincial administrators, they sought to bring Mossi country into the political structure they were creating in West Africa. In 1895, they had installed a Governor-General at Dakar to represent the French Government in the territories of Senegal, the French Sudan, French Guinea, and the Ivory Coast. With the subsequent conquest of Mossi country and other areas, however, this arrangement became obsolete, and a decree was passed in October 1899, dividing the French Sudan in two. One half was attached to the coastal colonies. The other half was combined with the Voltaic region (which included Mossi country), declared a military territory, and placed under the direct control of the Governor-General. In 1900 Niger was also made into a military territory, and two years later, by a decree of October 1902, a new territory called Sénégambie-Niger was set up which included Mossi country. This new arrangement lasted only two years. It was superseded by a decree of October 1904 dismembering Sénégambie-Niger and creating, among others, a territory called Haut-Sénégal et Niger, which included Mossi country. This new colony was similar to the others in that it had its own administration (at Bamako), its own budget, and a Lieutenant-Governor responsible to the Governor-General at Dakar. The territory was divided into administrative units called *cercles,* each with a commander responsible to the Lieutenant-Governor. Each cercle commander was assisted by adjutants who served in smaller units called *subdivisions* and *postes.* Mossi country itself was divided into three cercles: Ouagadougou (including Tenkodogo), Ouahigouya (including Yatenga), and Fada-N'-Gourma. This territorial change was the last to affect the Mossi until the end of World War I.[8]

[651] The implementation of full colonial rule among the Mossi was to have a profound effect on their traditional political organization and on the

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Mogho Naba Kougri (*center*) and, from left, the Kambo Naba, the Gounga Naba, the Ouidi Naba, the Larhalle Naba, the Baloum Naba, and the Nemdo Naba.

[N. 178-E]

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[post-world war II period]

175 643 their genealogies and traditions. The Mogho Naba was pleased by the recitation and thanked the drummer.

634 574 182 Later that day, the Mogho Naba presented himself in the courtyard of the district chief's compound to be saluted by the village chiefs and by the heads of lineages. They came to him in the traditional way, rubbing their palms and bending their foreheads to the ground. He addressed them, and in response they snapped their fingers in the customary manner. Then, one by one, the village chiefs and the lineage elders came to their monarch and gave him presents of money which ranged from 50 to 200 francs. The Mogho Naba paid little attention to the sums given, being more interested in this act of homage and fealty. However, he listened carefully as each donor announced his name and rank within the official hierarchy or village. He later thanked them collectively and departed. This ceremony, while not very elaborate, differed little in detail from those characteristic of the traditional Mossi's relationship to their Mogho Naba. The new element here was that the monarch was traveling around his domain, establishing a close relationship with his chiefs and subjects, whose support he needed for his modern political alliances.[23]

* 175 643 796 182 [692] The Mogho Naba continued to hold the morning ceremony at court, even though it was rapidly losing its traditional function and becoming of major interest only to visitors. He also continued to hold those ceremonies associated with individual appointments to the nam and with traditional sacrifices. Unknown to many was the fact that traditional authorities at court still judged legal cases which many Mossi refused to take to the Europeans.

* 175 645 182 In contrast to the Mogho Naba, the traditional provincial ministers now lost most of the power they had held in the pre-conquest period, and all the duties they had acquired in the immediate post-conquest era. As we have seen, one minister, the Baloum Naba, had entered politics at the suggestion of the Mogho Naba, but even he was now relegated to the entourage that accompanied the Mogho Naba and the European administrators on visits to the ministers' former provinces. The increased number of European administrators had made these ministers superfluous.

* 178 175 554 634 [692] The district chiefs retained some prestige after the war. They could still judge legal cases, with the understanding that the litigants were free to go to the Europeans if they so desired and had to be sent there in serious cases. Their major problem was that a more efficient administration was taking a greater interest in district affairs. For the first time since the conquest, officials were visiting some of the more remote villages. No longer were they said to "act as locusts"—that is, to appear periodically to garner supplies and men from the districts and then disappear until the next onslaught. Instead, they appeared regularly to collect taxes and to take censuses, and

9:Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1960 FA28 Mossi FA28

of their former serfs and slaves who were theoretically also "their sons." 636

The sons of the chiefs and those boys of commoner, serf, and slave 643
origins who had gone to the mission schools became the first group 186
of educated Mossi. The educated commoners had no function in the 662
traditional political system and were readily absorbed by the local French bureaucracy. However, since these persons were not sufficient to fill the administration's need of literate Mossi, the sons of chiefs and even the carefully coached missionary catechists were encouraged to join the civil service. The result of this policy was that almost no literate Mossi were elected to district and village chieftainship before the end of the second world war.

The relatively rapid political development which came to French 636
Africa as a result of the Brazzaville Conference of 1944 and the after- 646
math of the war presented the traditional Mossi political hierarchy with a grave problem: "Who should represent the Mossi people in the new French assemblies and councils both in Africa and in metropolitan France?" There were three possibilities: They could be represented by educated foreign Africans; by the educated sons of Mossi chiefs whose loyalties were not known; or by the potentially hostile educated Mossi commoners. The first hint of the Moro Naba's policy was re- 636
vealed when the Africans were called upon to select delegates to send 646
to the French Constituent Assembly on October 21, 1945. Houphouet 666
[Boigny], who anticipated the determination of the Mossi to support 662
their own candidate, had vainly taken the precaution of sending an emissary to the Moro Naba prior to the September 8 meeting [which the Africans had called to plan strategy]. The Moro Naba proved unamenable to the suggestion that he support Houphouet's candidacy, and insisted on backing one of his own loyals vassals, Tenga Wedraogo or Baloum Naba.[5] This action showed clearly that the Mossi had planned to use educated chiefs who could also represent them in the assemblies. The flexible pattern of Mossi political succession enabled the Moro Naba and his advisers to meet this new contingency. In three districts, Manga, Sapone, and Kaya, the eldest sons of deceased chiefs were passed over, and their younger educated brothers were elected to the vacant chieftainships. There were some hard feelings over the appointment of Sapone, but the reason given was that the new chief was partially blind in one eye. I have no data for the reaction of

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646 the Kaya people to their new chief. However, in Manga the proposed
666 election of a young chief over his four elder brothers did cause some
662 concern and talk about Catholic machinations because the nominee was of that faith. But there was no overt opposition to him once he had been elected. His elder brother accepted the wishes of the Moro Naba with good graces even though he remains a rather tragic individual.

643 The differential treatment that the Manga Naba receives from the
636 administration is obvious to everyone. Whereas the other district chiefs are still summarily summoned to the administrative center, and kept waiting, the Manga Naba sends his assistants to represent him. When the Governor of the Haute Volta came to Manga to make it an administrative subdivision, he was entertained by the Manga Naba while the neighboring district chiefs celebrated outside. It was the political power of this educated chief which was responsible for Manga becoming an administrative subdivision even though it is located several miles from the highway which runs between Wagadougou and Ghana. Furthermore, the population of the neighboring district all complain that Manga's population has gained a disproportionate share of all the services provided by the governmental agencies whose headquarters are there. The fears which the Manga people and the other Mossi have had over their chiefs being Catholic have not materialized in Manga. Of course, the Manga Naba does perform the rituals on the
[769] day of the ancestral feasts. These rites are now being performed by his father's brother who has become the ritual head of the ruling lineage (and it is possible that this line may become the line which performs this task for the now "secular" chief). However, when the
[797] chief celebrates the anniversary of his conversion to Catholicism at the mission, afterwards he holds court in his house where he receives from Catholics, Moslems, and pagans alike, the gifts he normally would have received in the feast of the ancestors.*

The most important function of such Mossi chiefs as the Manga Naba is to defend the interests of the Mossi people in the territorial assemblies and the French councils and assemblies while preserving the ruling tradition of the descendants of Wedraogo and Wubri. In his capacity as politician-chief, the Manga Naba joined a fellow Mossi of rather humble origin in sponsoring several bills in the Assembly of

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These were minor changes indeed, but they truncated the power of the 177
Mossi chiefs over the Gurunsi and Busansi, which had been on the increase 648*
as recently as the 1880's. Except for these slight changes, however, the Mossi 631
traditional organization remained as it had been since the immediate post-conquest period.

Instead of changing the traditional administrative structure, the Gov- 175*
ernor introduced a new administrative device, the *Conseil de notables* 177
indigènes (Council of Native Notables) in Ouagadougou in April 1920, 648*
and subsequently established similar councils at Ouahigouya, Tenkodogo, 646
Kaya, and Koudougou. By establishing these councils, the administration hoped to provide the Mossi with a better understanding of the ideals and standards of French policy; to place the French administrators in closer contact with the people, who "had been almost totally ignorant of the functioning of [the French] administration"; and to form "an elite who will later be able to contribute in a closer and more personal way to the economic and financial life of the colony."[37] The council at Ouagadougou, which was to serve as a model for Mossi country, was to be presided over by the cercle commanders and to have from ten to sixteen members, including the traditional provincial ministers of the Mossi (with life membership); members of the Moslem community in Ouagadougou; and representatives of foreign groups living in the capital, of French citizens, and of the veterans of World War I. No provision was made to include the Mossi chiefs, but hope was expressed that they would support these councils and work with them.

These councils failed primarily because they turned out to be organs of the French administration and in fact functioned as such, and because their members had varied and often conflicting status. They met two or three times a year at administrative centers and discussed such things as personal taxes, the allocation and execution of prestations, the use of Mossi labor in foreign areas, the licensing and taxation of African traders and merchants, the status of women, the expansion of cultivation, stock breeding, and the collection of shea-butter nuts and kapok pods. None of the Mossi or African representatives had sufficient power or knowledge to challenge the ideas or recommendations of the European members. And the Mossi ministers, while submissive to the Europeans, found it difficult to accept as equals the representatives of non-Mossi peoples who prior to the conquest had lived at Ouagadougou only at the sufferance of the Mogho Naba; nor were they willing to discuss administrative affairs with these people or with the Mossi commoners who represented the war veterans. Ultimately, the councils became rubber stamps for the policies of the

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administration, and failed to serve as an administrative training ground for either the Mossi ministers or the commoner representatives.[28]

During the Hesling period, the Mossi district chiefs remained in power, but the French, through their African administrative assistants, kept a stricter watch on district affairs. The chiefs regained some of their judicial (or, rather, conciliatory) power in 1921 when the Governor, dissatisfied with the territory's legal system, promulgated a decree reorganizing the courts and giving the Mossi district and village chiefs the right of adjudication in minor cases involving civil and commercial matters.[29] However, they had to send all cases involving serious crimes and all appeals from other cases to higher courts. Because their subjects could appeal to the subdivision courts and because they risked reprimand by administrators when their verdicts were deemed unjust, many Mossi chiefs complied. They tried to do so even when the litigants themselves would have preferred not to deal with the administrators. Often the chiefs overtly told the litigants to go to the administrators but covertly persuaded them not to do so. In this manner they observed all proprieties toward both the French and their subjects.

The village and district courts had to send all criminal offenses such as assault and battery cases and major thefts, as well as appeals against their verdicts, to a "tribunal of the first degree," which was presided over by a subdivision commander and his Mossi assessors. Cases were taken to the tribunal only when the dispute was extremely serious or when people were gravely injured, because Mossi villagers hesitated to take their cases to officials who, when not swamped with work, had little patience with the complexities of Mossi litigation. Moreover, the Mossi feared to subject their fellows to the rigors of the Indigénat, which was still in existence, because, as one official source declares, "If this regime subsists, it is because the Voltaic populations have not yet reached a level of development that would permit the withdrawal of a weapon which is so readily useful to the commanders of administrative units. Besides, when judiciously managed, it does not present any danger in these underdeveloped regions."

Cases which the subdivision commanders considered too serious for their courts were sent to "tribunals of the second degree" at the cercle level. From there, cases were sent to a "colonial court of appeal," which was presided over by the Chief Officer of Political Affairs of the territory and which could sentence a criminal to three to ten years in prison. More serious crimes carrying longer prison terms or the death penalty were sent up to the Supreme Court at Dakar. Owing in part to the lack of communication between the rural districts and the higher courts, the Mossi

(*Left*) Mogho Naba Kougri and Ouezzain Coulibaly, who became Vice President of the Government Council of the Upper Volta in 1957. (*Center*) Maurice Yaméogo, President of the Republic of Upper Volta. (*Right*) Mogho Naba Kougri (1957–) on his ceremonial horse at his installation.

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*175 port of the coastal Ivory Coast population. There was little they could do
*648 about it, however, because 'the decision of the Mogho Naba was irrevo-
666 cable.' "[4]

[643] The election was hotly contested. The candidates based their campaigns
*175 on local issues: taxes, forced labor, the lack of public services, the status of
666 the traditional chiefs, colonialism, racial discrimination, and so on. The
665 Parti Démocratique de la Côte d'Ivoire (PDCI), led by Houphouët-Boigny, stressed the need for combating racial discrimination and exploitation by European planters. The Union pour la Défense des Interêts de la Haute-Volta (UDIHV), formed by the Mogho Naba and a group of mission-educated young men and led by the Baloum Naba, stressed the need to end forced labor, especially among the Mossi, and to place all the Mossi under one territorial government. The UDIHV realized that it had little chance of gaining votes in the south, and therefore concentrated its efforts in the north. However, no credence is to be given to the story that "Whenever [the Baloum Naba] was free from [official] supervision, he told the people, 'Vote for my friend Houphouët. . . . What would I do in Paris, with my forty wives and at my age? I can't speak a blasted word of French.' "[5] Houphouët-Boigny won the election by the surprisingly narrow margin of 12,650 to 11,620.[6]

*175 Houphouët-Boigny played a leading role in persuading the first Con-
*648 stituent Assembly to submit to the voters a number of important liberal
668 colonial reforms. These included the abolition of the Indigénat; the free-
[646] dom of meeting and association; the bestowal of French citizenship on co-
[177] lonial peoples without affecting their traditional personal status; the use of the French Penal Code in all courts dealing with criminal cases; and the abolition of forced labor.[7]

*175 There was some discussion in the Assembly of what role the traditional
631 chiefs should play in the projected political structure of Overseas France.
646 One group of delegates held that "the structure of the local Assemblies
177 should be tied intimately to the existing structure of the overseas societies. Otherwise, they would be bogus Assemblies whose decisions would serve the interests of only one class in the society, the dominant class."[8] These men felt that while many chiefs were conservatives and might incline to "neo-feudalism," the new elite of young educated Africans who aspired to replace the Europeans were, for the most part, European-trained and out of contact with the rural masses. These delegates believed that only the chiefs could provide adequate popular leadership, and that the French Union could not cohere or develop unless the chiefs had some status vis-à-vis the elite and prestige in the eyes of the people.[9]

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matter from events in French West Africa and the rest of Overseas France. All projects undertaken in the Upper Volta became of interest to the other units of the French Union because the funds to support them had to be voted on by representatives of the whole, including not only local Mossi and non-Mossi, but also Africans in other territories, French colonial populations outside Africa, and the metropolitan French.

The conditions that were to have the greatest effect on the position of Mossi chiefs were created in January 1949, when elections were held to choose the Upper Volta's first General Council. The major parties involved in the election were the Mossi-dominated Union Voltaïque; the Entente Voltaïque, a local section of the RDA representing the interests of such non-Mossi populations as the Lobi, Fulani, Bobo, Senufo, and Gurunsi; and a group of smaller ethnic parties such as the Union Lobie and the Indépendants. The campaign reflected all the tensions and conflicts prevalent among the administration, the RDA, the non-Mossi parties, and the Union Voltaïque. Both the Union Lobie and the Indépendants spoke out against what they feared to be Mossi domination, and accused the Mossi chiefs of "neo-feudalism." The Union Voltaïque accused the RDA of radicalism, of associating with communists, and of hostility to the chiefs. It cited as evidence the deposal of several Agni and Sénufo chiefs in the Ivory Coast by partisans of the RDA. The RDA, in turn, charged the Union Voltaïque with supporting reactionary, feudal-minded chiefs, and thus with opposing the true interests of the Mossi and other Voltaïc peoples. Furthermore, it accused Masson (Governor Mouragues's executive officer) of encouraging the cercle commanders to fight against the RDA, and of jailing about 300 RDA members at Bobo-Dioulasso.[28] 175* 631 666 665 [646]

As expected, the Union Voltaïque won most of the seats in the more populous Mossi section of the Upper Volta, and thus was able to dominate the political institutions created by the administration. Nevertheless, the election produced deep political scars in the Upper Volta, and lasting enmity between the RDA and the Mossi chiefs.

During the years that followed the reunification of the Upper Volta, the Mossi chiefs as such were not accorded any specific status by the administration. Beginning in 1953, bills designed to regularize the status of the chiefs were submitted by Mossi delegates to the Assembly of the French Union and to various other organs of the French Union, but to no effect. The Mossi chiefs meanwhile sought to define their own position. In 1952, under the leadership of the Mogho Naba, they formed an organization called the Union of the Traditional Chiefs of the Upper Volta. Article IV of the statutes which they filed with the territorial administration reads as follows: 175* 648* 631 [646] 175* 631 647 [643]

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As the politicians grew skilful at the game of metropolitan politics, their power increasingly eclipsed that of their chiefly benefactors and of local French administrators. For example: 175* 631 554 665

> A local chef de poste summoned the district chiefs to bring their potential draftees for the war in Algeria early in the morning on a specific date to be examined by medical officers. Those chiefs who looked upon any summons with a trepidation born of their past experience with prewar administrators, arrived at the headquarters as early as 5:30 A.M. on the morning in question, bringing their young men with them. Many of these chiefs, whose only means of transportation was their slow-moving ceremonial horse, spent the night en route to be there at dawn. More sophisticated chiefs coming from similar distances left on the same morning and arrived at about 8:00 A.M., the hour when the administrator himself was first seen stirring in his residence. One chief, a war veteran, rode up on his bicycle at about 8:45 A.M. in a most unchiefly manner and became the butt of jokes from the other waiting chiefs. Another district chief, who was an elected representative, did not arrive until about 9:30 A.M., and he was greeted on arrival by the administrator. This man had only about half a mile to travel, and he did so in his car. His colleagues greeted him with a mixture of jokes, feigned awe, and surprise, and some of them addressed him as "Mogho Naba" and "Governor."[29]

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Another example of the shift in the balance of power was the relationship that developed between Joseph Conombo and the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou. The Mogho Naba had nominated and supported Conombo as a candidate for deputy to the National Assembly. He was elected, and later became Secretary of the Interior in the Mendès-France Government of 1954. He thus had access to power undreamed of by the Mogho Naba. Being a Moaga as well as a good politician, he never flaunted his authority before his traditional chief; nor did the Mogho Naba try to exercise his traditional powers over him. But their behavior toward each other clearly demonstrated that they were both aware of the shift in power, even though they were both too wise and too polite to make an issue of it. 175* 643 554 648* 646

Other political forces also jeopardized the position of the chiefs. For example, as head of the Union Voltaïque, Conombo had an honored position within a Paris-based African parliamentary group called the Indépendants d'Outre-Mer (IOM). He would have held an even more important position within this group if he had had wider support among the non-Mossi in the Upper Volta. But his power was limited by the presence and competition of the MDV, which, while Mossi-supported, was anti-chief; the Mouvement Populaire de la Révolution Africaine (MPA), an anti-Mossi and anti-RDA party formed in 1954 by Nazi Boni of the Bobo ethnic group and supported by some officials in the administration; and the Parti Démocratique Voltaïque (PDV), a local branch of a now less radical RDA 175* 646 648* 665 554

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created out of the defunct Entente Voltaïque. In an attempt to gain the support of these parties and of the young Mossi intellectuals who, while anti-chief, were not yet willing to join the PDV, Conombo officially scrapped the Union Voltaïque in 1955 and formed the Parti Social d'Education des Masses Africaines (PSEMA).[30] The party pledged to promote social reform and the right of Africans to manage their own affairs, and to struggle against family, regional, and racial hatreds. But it did not win the support of the non-Mossi; nor did it attract many young Mossi, who did not believe that it had discarded the mantle of the chiefs. Conombo's readiness to ally himself with anti-chief forces, however, did make it obvious to the chiefs that when politicians were out to gain power, they did not always take the interests of the chiefs into account.

In 1956, when a *loi-cadre* granting almost complete autonomy to the French African territories was approved by the National Assembly, it made no provision for the participation of the traditional chiefs in the projected governmental structure.[31] In fact, as preparations were being made to implement the new reforms, a number of politicians and educated Africans launched an attack on the chiefs which seems to have been a step toward edging them out of power altogether. The newspaper *Afrique Nouvelle,* published in Dakar but read by the educated elite throughout French West Africa, carried a series of articles that proclaimed: "The district chiefs should be given neither a position nor a salary!" "Let us democratize the chieftainship!" and "Let us decapitate the district!" (i.e., let us do away with the district chief). Over a photo showing the traditional chiefs, *Afrique Nouvelle* ran the caption, "Are they still chiefs of the territories?"[32]

The Mossi chiefs, who had retained more power and prestige than any other chiefs in French West Africa, bore the brunt of these attacks and rose to defend the rights of all the chiefs. Their most able spokesman was Bouda, a Councillor of the French Union and a district chief in his own right. He wrote in *Afrique Nouvelle*:

> The Mossi [socio-political] organization, by its simplicity and cohesiveness, aroused the admiration of France, which respected and retained it.
>
> The power of the Mossi chief may be great, but it is not used to oppose the progress which is being made. The Mossi chief is not as much of a conformist as people have a tendency to believe. The social and political revolution which, since 1946, has made Mossi country so different from what it was before the war, is effecting the transition from a society largely encompassed by Nabas possessing real authority, an authority sanctioned by custom, to a more progressive way of life whose essential characteristics are underlined by the growth of towns, the uprooting of a large part of the population, and the triumph of the desire to be on one's own. . . .

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175 For all its occasional eloquence, the new Mogho Naba's speech was
643 clearly self-serving; moreover, the French officials to whom it was addressed
[648] were withdrawing from the territory, and the young Mossi elite had other ideas about the distribution of power. It is no wonder, then, that most of the politicians listened to his speech in respectful silence and then "calmly went ahead with their tasks," confident, it seems, in their new status as the elected representatives of the people.[40]

175 The new Mogho Naba was faced with a political situation in which
643 he could play only a limited role. His strength now lay exclusively among
668 the more conservative elements of the newly enfranchised rural masses.
578 The political representative of this group was Conombo, who in November 1957 went ahead with his plans to rebuild the PSEMA. In December Conombo saw a chance to embarrass and perhaps defeat the Coulibaly
[646] Government when the Territorial Assembly decided to vote on the budget of the Upper Volta; he and his followers withheld their vote of confidence in the Government and tried to force it to resign. But the conditions under which the members of the Territorial Assembly could force a government to resign were not clearly defined by the loi-cadre. The various parliamentary groups appealed in vain to Paris and to Houphouët-Boigny to resolve the problem. Coulibaly broke the impasse by forming a new coalition and giving Maurice Yaméogo, an Indépendant candidate who had been a member of the RDA and later of the MDV but had switched back to the RDA, the important portfolio of Minister of the Interior. Finally, the Assembly, which had been adjourned, reconvened in April 1958 and confirmed Coulibaly in power. In a speech to the Assembly, Coulibaly declared: "It is my imperative task to tell you that each one of you is faced today with a decisive choice. You must choose either a pooling of efforts and good will in the interests of the country, or the pursuit of personal quarrels and partisan rivalries that will undermine the public welfare."[41]

175 The Mogho Naba and his political allies suffered yet another defeat
643 with the Assembly's approval of the Coulibaly Government. However,
648 Kougri had other strings to his bow. In June 1958, when de Gaulle re-
578 turned to power, Kougri sought to gain the General's favor, and to raise his own status, by pledging his support and that of the Mossi chiefs. This astute political move infuriated many Voltaics, Mossi and non-Mossi, politicians and non-politicians. Amadou Tamboura, a member of the MDV, replied to the Mogho Naba in the newspaper *Paris-Dakar*. Under the headline, "The Message of the Mogho Naba to General de Gaulle Commits Only Himself," he wrote:

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It will be well if the Mogho Naba understands that he owns but the vestige of a past whose hour has irrevocably tolled, and that his message to the President of the Council [de Gaulle] commits no one in the Upper Volta but himself, a mere citizen like the others.

I deplore the discrimination which the message of the Mogho Naba implicitly contains. I should like to say to the Mogho Naba that in the Upper Volta there are no Mossi, Fulani, or Bobo people, but only Black people struggling for their liberty. No Mossi or any other Voltaic would agree to the Mogho Naba's expression of fidelity to France in his name. If this must be done, then the Territorial Assembly and the Government Council alone are qualified to do so.[42]

Despite these attacks and numerous suggestions in the press that the Mogho Naba and the Mossi chiefs were developing a "Touré complex" (i.e., the fear of suffering the same fate as the Fulani chiefs of Fouta Djallon, who had been deposed by Sékou Touré, Vice-President of the Guinea Government Council), the Mossi ruler actively supported acceptance of the constitution of the Fifth French Republic, which promised the colonies full internal self-government within the "French Community." Since the constitution was adopted by the Upper Volta population by an overwhelming favorable vote of 99.1 per cent, no one could estimate how effective the Mogho Naba's support had been.[43] [177] [642]

Coulibaly died just before the referendum, and was replaced on an interim basis by Yaméogo. The parliamentarians accordingly had to choose a new leader, now to be President of the Government Council, as well as to draw up a constitution for the new republic and determine whether it would join any of the regional federations then being considered by several territories. The Territorial Assembly was scheduled to meet in extraordinary session on October 17, 1958, to select a successor to Coulibaly. The Mogho Naba, anticipating dissension and perhaps once again seeking the limelight, sent a message to the representatives on October 15, urging "a government of union and public safety." But the politicians resented what they regarded as his interference in matters that did not concern him; few, if any, took his message seriously, and none replied.

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The Mogho Naba therefore decided to force the issue. He summoned his traditional ministers to a conference, and, despite the objections of the Baloum Naba, obtained their permission to order his Tansoba to muster his warriors and lay siege to the Territorial Assembly. Early in the morning of October 17, about 3,000 Mossi warriors, armed with bows and arrows, swords, spears, and ancient flint guns, converged on the Assembly. Later that morning, the Mogho Naba himself, accompanied by his Tansoba,

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arrived on the scene, dressed in his dark-brown cotton war cloak and his war bonnet, the symbol of his power. The demonstration lasted until 11 A.M., when the French Army undertook to scatter the warriors. Finally, the Ouidi Naba ordered the warriors to return to the palace. Only then did Max Berthet, the High Commissioner, open the Assembly session with an expression of regret for the "unacceptable and incomprehensible" demonstrations.[44]

The Assembly adjourned that afternoon and did not meet again until October 20. In the interim, the parliamentarians took measures to deal with this challenge to their power. On October 18, the Government Council issued a communiqué "stigmatizing Friday's demonstration." The Council regretted that the demonstration had prevented a democratically elected body from sitting, but affirmed that "order and public security, indispensable to everyday life, will be maintained."[45] On the following day a longer communiqué was issued, declaring that a truce had been signed by the authorized representatives of the Union Démocratique (Voltaic section of the RDA) and the Mouvement de Regroupement Africain (Voltaic section of the PRA) after a three-day meeting in Ouagadougou. According to the communiqué, the two groups had agreed that "the unity of the democratic forces of the country" was "the decisive question of the hour."

[646] The Territorial Assembly met in Plenary Session on October 20, and on the basis of the political truce, 68 representatives unanimously elected Maurice Yaméogo as President of the Government Council. The politicians further showed their disdain for the Mogho Naba by adopting the following motion:

> The Territorial Assembly, in the unanimous assurance that it alone has the mandate of the Voltaic people to legislate in their name, solemnly declares that, in the face of all opposition, it will work to give the Voltaic State democratic institutions conforming to the aspirations of the population, within the framework of the constitution which they approved by such a strong majority on September 28. Furthermore, it is insistent in its demands that the authorities responsible for public order do everything in their power to determine the persons responsible for the demonstration and to see what should be done to avoid a recurrence of such an event.[46]

The Mogho Naba soon found to his chagrin that even some of his own vassal chiefs had turned against him. They had been persuaded by the politicians that the French Government would never allow the Mogho Naba to take over the country, and furthermore that he had overstepped his bounds and had thereby endangered further the institution of the chieftainship. The Bureau of the Syndicate of the Traditional Chiefs of

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the Upper Volta met, discussed "the affair of October 17," and issued a statement dissociating itself from the Mogho Naba's action, reaffirming its desire to collaborate with the established authority, and requesting a clarification of the status of chiefs in the new order. The Government Council of the Upper Volta welcomed this statement, and hastened to reassure the chiefs that their status was not in danger: "It is not a question of damaging the traditional chiefs as a group, but rather of stigmatizing vigorously an act emanating from a superior chief like Mogho Naba Kougri, the consequences of which, unforeseen as they were, could have placed all the Mossi chiefs in a regrettable and irreparable position."[47]

The Mogho Naba had obviously reached a political impasse, and he next turned his attention to creating a new image of the chieftainship. To this end, he married a young Mossi woman in accordance with the civil statutes of the state, thus becoming the first Mogho Naba and the first important Mossi chief to do so. A spokesman at the wedding placed this act in its proper perspective with the following words:

> I should now like to underscore the fact that this date, November 22 [1958], will be inscribed officially in the annals of the Upper Volta. For the first time in the history of our country, an Emperor, the person who best symbolizes tradition, has upset ancestral habits in the interest of progress. For the first time a woman will be given consideration in a royal court where she will be able to feel at her ease. For the first time, the spouse of a traditional chief will have her place near her husband as an equal and steady companion.[48]

The politicians were apparently prepared to recognize the eminence of the chiefs as long as they did not attempt to intervene in the affairs of the state, and a number of them attended the Mogho Naba's wedding. Among those present were the Presidents of both the Government Council and the Territorial Assembly, parliamentarians from various parties, and the mayors of Bobo-Dioulasso and Ouagadougou. On December 10, 1958, the Territorial Assembly confirmed Yaméogo as President of the Government Council. The Assembly also approved his slate of ministers, among them Bouda, the Mossi chief who had once been a strong supporter of the traditional political hierarchy but who now belonged to the UDV-RDA. Then, on December 11, the Assembly decided to adopt the draft of a proposed constitution for the Upper Volta. Articles 2 and 3 of Paragraph I of this constitution state explicitly:

> The Republic of the Upper Volta is one and indivisible, secular, democratic, and social. Its principle is that the government is *of the people, by the people, and for the people. . . .*
>
> *Sovereignty belongs to the people. No section of the population, and no individual, may usurp it.* [Italics mine.][49]

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matter from events in French West Africa and the rest of Overseas France. All projects undertaken in the Upper Volta became of interest to the other units of the French Union because the funds to support them had to be voted on by representatives of the whole, including not only local Mossi and non-Mossi, but also Africans in other territories, French colonial populations outside Africa, and the metropolitan French.

The conditions that were to have the greatest effect on the position of Mossi chiefs were created in January 1949, when elections were held to choose the Upper Volta's first General Council. The major parties involved in the election were the Mossi-dominated Union Voltaïque; the Entente Voltaïque, a local section of the RDA representing the interests of such non-Mossi populations as the Lobi, Fulani, Bobo, Senufo, and Gurunsi; and a group of smaller ethnic parties such as the Union Lobie and the Indépendants. The campaign reflected all the tensions and conflicts prevalent among the administration, the RDA, the non-Mossi parties, and the Union Voltaïque. Both the Union Lobie and the Indépendants spoke out against what they feared to be Mossi domination, and accused the Mossi chiefs of "neo-feudalism." The Union Voltaïque accused the RDA of radicalism, of associating with communists, and of hostility to the chiefs. It cited as evidence the deposal of several Agni and Senufo chiefs in the Ivory Coast by partisans of the RDA. The RDA, in turn, charged the Union Voltaïque with supporting reactionary, feudal-minded chiefs, and thus with opposing the true interests of the Mossi and other Voltaic peoples. Furthermore, it accused Masson (Governor Mouragues's executive officer) of encouraging the cercle commanders to fight against the RDA, and of jailing about 300 RDA members at Bobo-Dioulasso.[23]

175* 631 666 665 [646]

As expected, the Union Voltaïque won most of the seats in the more populous Mossi section of the Upper Volta, and thus was able to dominate the political institutions created by the administration. Nevertheless, the election produced deep political scars in the Upper Volta, and lasting enmity between the RDA and the Mossi chiefs.

During the years that followed the reunification of the Upper Volta, the Mossi chiefs as such were not accorded any specific status by the administration. Beginning in 1953, bills designed to regularize the status of the chiefs were submitted by Mossi delegates to the Assembly of the French Union and to various other organs of the French Union, but to no effect. The Mossi chiefs meanwhile sought to define their own position. In 1952, under the leadership of the Mogho Naba, they formed an organization called the Union of the Traditional Chiefs of the Upper Volta. Article IV of the statutes which they filed with the territorial administration reads as follows:

175* 648* 631 [646] 175* 631 647 [643]

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28

[post-world war II period]

*175 The present Union has as its aims:

631 1. To establish an alliance and effective solidarity among its members, and to defend their material and moral interests in the face of all difficulties;

● 647 2. To collaborate closely with the economic and social aims of the French administration;

3. To provide aid to the dependents, wives or minor children, of all deceased members of the society. This aid will be obtained:

a. by drawing from a special reserve fund;

b. by contributions from all members; and

c. by an additional subscription according to the circumstances. The total sum to be granted to each family will be set at the annual meetings of the general assembly.

This organization decided to meet annually in Ouagadougou, Ouahigouya, Tenkodogo, and Koudougou. Member chiefs were to be notified of meetings through the existing traditional political hierarchies. Those chiefs who were unable to attend meetings could send a representative.[24]

* [648] Both the politicians and the French administration welcomed the formation of the Union. The politicians saw it as a forum that would support them in elections and to which they could report on their activities on behalf of their constituents. The French officials welcomed the opportunity to meet periodically with the chiefs and to obtain their help and support for official plans and projects.

One of the new administrative policies was to increase the number of administrative units (the cercles, subdivisions, and postes), and to staff them with European civil servants. Mossi country was given one civil servant for every thousand inhabitants. These officials were thus less isolated from the central administration and more directly responsible to their superiors for the areas under their command. Most of them were assisted by young African civil servants, both Mossi and non-Mossi, who kept administrative records, worked in the agricultural extension programs, acted as interpreters and court assessors, and so on. In addition to these administrative assistants, there were usually junior civil servants who were stationed at the homes of the district chiefs. They were called "secretaries," but they actually served as liaison officers between the administrators and the chiefs.

[634] Thus the administrators notified the district chiefs through these secretaries that certain taxes were being levied, and would be collected on a specific date; that certain laws affecting them had been passed; that an election would be held on a certain date; or that they should summon the potential draftees in their district to be examined at a certain time.

The postwar administrators did much more than communicate with the district chiefs through their secretaries. They still had considerable author-

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28
[post-world war II period]

ity in local matters, even though the Indigénat had been abolished. They adjudicated minor offenses committed in their territories or referred to them on appeal by the districts and villages. They attempted to settle family quarrels and commercial cases, and ordered that restitution be made in cases of theft. However, they had to send any difficult case or major crime up the hierarchy until it reached the officials authorized to deal with it.

The French administrators also continued to act as intermediaries between the large commercial enterprises in Ouagadougou who wished to recruit men for labor or to buy local produce and enterprises in the larger Mossi towns. Thus, if a private firm in Ouagadougou wanted men to work on the roads, it asked the *chef de poste* (administrator) of a region to tell the district chiefs that its representatives would come to recruit men on a certain date. If a large business was planning to canvass a certain area in order to buy shea nuts, it asked the local administrators to notify the chiefs. No one was ever quite certain whether these activities were legal, but no one questioned them. The *chefs de poste* might simply have been giving the people information that they could not have obtained by any other means.

The Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou, like the supreme chiefs of the other Mossi regions, continued to perform both the administrative role assigned to him by the colonial government and his traditional politico-ceremonial role. He was partly responsible, through his active cooperation with the administration, for the rapidity with which the Upper Volta became a functioning entity. For example, in his anxiety to make his capital worthy of being the territory's administrative center, he gave his full support to the extension of the Abidjan-Bobo-Dioulasso railroad to Ouagadougou. But he always succeeded in giving the impression (to foreigners at least) of detachment and dissociation from the French administration. His behavior was quite different when he functioned as Mogho Naba of the Ouagadougou Mossi. The following is a brief description of a visit he made to one of the districts:

> The Mogho Naba arrived unexpectedly at the district chief's headquarters, where no preparations had been made for his visit. It appears that he was on a tour of his domains to consult with the local chiefs about the forthcoming elections, and had simply dropped in to visit the district chief. However, as soon as his presence became known around the district, important village chiefs and the heads of lineages all put on their robes and appeared to pay homage to him. Meanwhile, he was consulting with his host. But as soon as the conversation was over he came out into the compound, where he was saluted by the chief's Bendere, who praised the royal ancestors by reciting

000 Ministers and officials in the court of the emperor of the Mossi. We shall provide a list of the persons making up the emperor's court in a later chapter.

Functions of the Ministers

645 The four ministers, Ouidi Naba, Larallé Naba, Gounga Naba, and Baloum Naba, were charged with the nomination of the kombemba (plural of kombéré, vassal chief), subject to the emperor's approval. At the present time they retain the same prerogatives subject to ratification by the administrative authorities. These ministers further assisted the emperor in deciding important matters whenever he called upon them, and they transmitted the orders of the Mogho Naba to [48] his vassals. Today the Mogho 643 Naba is hardly concerned with the regulation of affairs, since these 648 are dealt with by his ministers or by the French authorities. However, the leading court dignitaries always submit to him matters of any importance, they keep him informed about all matters of general interest, and, finally, they report to him any interviews which they may have had with the administrator of the circle, who represents the government of the colony [Ed., the circle (Fr., cercle) is the largest French administrative unit below the colony (Fr., colonie)].

Organization of Territorial Control

634 Each of the emperor's ministers had authority -- we shall 845 presently see under what conditions -- over a group of cantons [Ed., the canton (Fr., canton) is a traditional Mossi administrative unit, containing a number of villages, and several cantons together form a province; the native districts were incorporated into the French administrative system to some extent]. A kombéré naba was head of each canton. Originally and up to the time of Naba Sanum's reign, the Baloum Naba commanded the dimbissi (canton chiefs who were descendants of the recent Mogho Nabas), while the other cantons, except the most thickly populated and hence the richest, such as Zittenga, Manga, etc., were distributed

634 submission was based solely on the fact that although the em-
645 peror named new canton chiefs, he was too remote to know any-
642 thing about the children of deceased naba, so, in order to make sure during his own lifetime that his eldest son would succeed him, the kombéré affected some respect toward the emperor's ministers and made gifts to the principal dignitaries at Ouagadougou.

Present situation. It is my belief that the present political
631 and administrative reorganization, which dates back about eighteen
● 648 years (1912), has taken no account whatsoever of the existing hierarchy of ministers in the distribution of territorial control. Thus, it has come about that a given minister has to pass through numerous villages which are under the authority of another minister in order to reach his own administrative area. In addition, if one examines the situation closely, it seems that the sole aim of the administration ["administration" always refers to French administration] at that time was to reward certain young and capable ministers at the expense of those who were too old.

In point of fact, however, one must go back to 1908 to find the causes of such a state of disorganization. At that time the late Larrhallé Naba, Pawitraogo, a province chief, was sent off on a mission to Koudougou, and his vacated office had to be filled. Later on the emperor dismissed the Kamsogho Naba [51] and replaced him with an "incompetent," so the local administration decided to entrust the province to a more qualified minister.

It would be highly desirable if a new reorganization were put into effect which would 1) progressively eliminate certain insignificant cantons by combining them into larger units; 2) gather the so-called independent villages into cantons; and 3) grant to province chiefs identical material rewards. This last can only be achieved by an equitable allotment of the cantons. The French administration has granted equal salaries to all province chiefs and, as a consequence, has established an equality which did not formerly exist. Three of these officials are now educated men; they enjoy equal consideration, have the same needs, and alike perform valuable services. They should all be accorded equal advantages if jealousy and discontent are to be avoided.

631 Finally, to return to the kombemba, it should be stated that the vassals of the Mogho Naba at Koudougou and Kaya enjoy a

567 The only slaves who have remained faithful to their masters or, more exactly, who have preferred to remain in Mossi territory after their emancipation, are nearly all Gourounsi.

The Gourounsi Captives

567 727 648 Sonrhaï [Songhai] forces led by Alpha Haïnon, Gazeré, and Babato used to raid Gourounsi country. They reduced a large number of Gourounsi to slavery, immediately making soldiers of the more enterprising among them to fight against their own people and selling or exchanging the rest for horses. Mossi country has always had a large supply of horses, so the Mossi used to go to Léo to trade their horses for slaves or simply to trade their slaves to the Sonrhaï for cowries. [439]

567 648 The Sonrhaï chiefs maintained good relations with the emperor of the Mossi, Naba Sanum. That is why they spared the Gourounsi village chiefs who had taken refuge with the Mogho Naba.

Boukary-koutou, the future Naba Wobgo, enjoyed the [87] regard and friendship of the Sonrhaï since he aided them in their wars against the Gourounsi in exchange for an ample share of the booty and slaves. We have shown that the large number of Gourounsi whom he brought with him to Ouagadougou contributed mightily to his being named emperor of the Mossi.

567 651 During the reigns of Naba Koutou, Sanum, and Wobgo, there were special slave markets attached to the regular markets at Ouagadougou and other large centers. A fee of 1,000 cowries was collected for the benefit of the naba for each captive sold, regardless of sex.

567 302 787 When owners desired to sell a slave, they first shaved his head, and it was only after the hair had begun to grow again that he was taken to market. The cutting of the hair derives from a superstition among the Mossi.

Depending on where the hair starts to grow, whether well back on the head, at the forehead, or near the ears, the interpretation varies as to how the slave is to be regarded: as a dangerous being; as a lucky or unlucky influence on the family owning him.

We shall not now go into details since such beliefs will be discussed in a special section.

576 643 Thus, although the Mogho Naba would not in the least object to shaking hands with a Bambara or a Djerma, he would be astonished if a native Moaga -- even an official -- should offer his hand.

543 576 As soon as the children of a naba have reached the age of discretion, they may no longer play with their "papa," even less shake hands with him. They must henceforth follow the general rule which requires the Mossi salute, kantissé.

576 602 [111] Nowadays naba (kombemba) and nayiridamba (ministers of the emperor) understand the uselessness of such signs of distrust. Therefore, even though they continue to be less familiar with their relatives (brothers, uncles, and sons -- whom they regard as rivals), they willingly offer their hands to Mossi of any standing and to foreigners.

644 Reception by the naba. 1) Up to the present time and despite some thirty-five years of French occupation, the way one is received at the court of the emperor, which, of course, befalls his servitors, has altered very little. Natives who are now officials in the administration and in business enterprises are still treated on the same footing as their less highly placed compatriots. Not only are they required to perform the kantissé (Mossi salute) as described by Father Mangin, but also afterwards they must sit on the ground, a position that is difficult in European clothes. Foreigners (Bambara, [648] Djerma, even Gourounsi) are offered seats because the soroné do not regard them as fellow countrymen.

645 576 352 177 2) By the ministers. At the present time all the emperor's ministers have comfortable houses and splendid drawing rooms furnished with Morris chairs and folding chairs. These seats are offered [112] to visitors of any standing, while benches two or three meters long are reserved for persons of less consequence (house boys, cooks, circle guards, notables, etc.).

631 576 352 3) By the kombemba. Benches are always reserved for visitors of note or, if there are none, mats are provided. Some of these chiefs even own a few commonplace chairs and perhaps one or two folding chairs.

/1/ INTRODUCTION

648 On September 1, 1896, Lt. Voulet, who had been sent by Col. de Trentinian to occupy the Mossi and Gourounsi /Grunshi/ countries, entered Ouagadougou, the Mossi capital. The reigning emperor, Naba Wobro, took to flight, and his army was routed. This was a critical hour for our /French/ Sudan. The negotiations opened at the beginning of that year between France and England on the one hand, and Germany and France on the other hand, had just been broken off. In his fine book, L'expansion française et la formation territoriale /French Expansion and Territorial Settlement/, which we are merely outlining, Terrier describes the situation as follows: "The Germans were determined to extend Togoland to the Niger by cutting off our /French/ Dahomey from the Sudan, and the British denied us access to the lower Niger and the rule of Borgu country. Had these demands been met, Dahomey would have become a mere coastal enclave." (1)

1. The achievements of the Third Republic in West Africa, p. 301.

The Germans had already occupied the very important market town of Sansané-Mango and were pressing east toward the Niger, while Fergusson, a mulatto in the service of England, advanced along the Gold Coast toward the north. At the same time, the Royal Nigerian Company seized Bussa, Say, and the surrounding territories, which were then disputed and which we had not attempted to conquer out of respect for the negotiations then underway. When this news reached France through the brilliant offices of Lt. Comm. Hourst, Col. de Trentinian decided in agreement with Mr. Ballot, Governor of Dahomey, to take possession of those territories which would make it possible to link the Sudan to Dahomey, the Niger Colony, and the Ivory Coast.

Capt. Destenave, Resident in Bandiagara, our extreme frontier post in the region, was ordered to move forward and to occupy Ouahigouya in Mossi country, but he ran into the resistance of the naba of Yako and was denied access to Ouagadougou. In May, 1896, Col. de Trentinian entrusted Lt. Voulet with the mission of reaching Mossi country before the British, who were moving forward from the south with the aid of Samory and especially of his son, Sanrankégny

648 Mory, who had occupied Gourounsi country. Lt. Voulet was then to link the Mossi territory to Dahomey by way of Gourma country. His column of some fifty riflemen left Bandiagara on July 30, proceeded to Ouahigouya, subjugated the naba of Yako, and entered Ouagadougou on September 1. Naba Wobro, who had refused to enter into negotiations with Voulet, was deposed on January 20, 1897. Kouka Kountou, a member of the family of the Moro Naba, was enthroned in his place and took the name of Naba Sigri. He signed with Voulet a protectorate treaty which granted France all territories within the jurisdiction of the Moro Naba.

Now that the Mossi were conquered, the British to the south and the Germans to the east had to be checked. Voulet heard that Capt. Donald Stewart, British Resident in Kumasi, was advancing on Tenkodogo. He proceeded there in person, overtook Stewart on February 17, and obtained an agreement that the latter should withdraw 120 kilometers farther south, /2/ outside the Mossi and Manpoursi /Mamprusi/ territories, in view of the treaties the French officer had concluded with the chiefs of those countries. Voulet abandoned Tenkodogo, leaving to the respective governments the task of deciding to whom it should belong.

While these negotiations were underway, Voulet heard that an armed body of men was advancing on Mossi country from the east. He left Tenkodogo and wrote the unknown head of the column that he was to withdraw since all those lands belonged to France in accordance with the treaties signed with the native chiefs. He then advanced with his troops on Fada N'Gourma. Along the way he seized Koupéla, whose panic-stricken population scattered, and on February 27 he arrived in Tigba, where he found Capt. Vermeesch who had been dispatched from Dahomey by Capt. Baud. Hence, the British were held in the south, the Germans in Togoland, and the /French/ Sudan was joined to Dahomey.

The land thus conquered was not unknown in France; several outstanding expeditions had already acquainted us with it. Binger especially, in his work called Du Niger au golfe de Guinée /From the Niger to the Gulf of Guinea/, had drawn attention to its peoples and presented, in the person of Boukary Koutou, a Mossi chief who was intelligent, open, and merry, and at the same time very authoritarian and strictly obeyed by his people. It is to be wondered why this same Boukary Koutou, who was Moro Naba under the name of Naba Wobro, provided such a poor reception for Dr. Crozat and Monteil and refused

●648 to open talks with Voulet. This poor political judgment cost him his crown. Binger had been preceded in Ouagadougou by Dr. Krause, who in 1885 was the first European allowed to enter the capital; Von François, coming from German Togoland in 1887, was stopped at the first Mossi village. As already mentioned, Binger, not without difficulty, managed to reach Ouagadougou in 1888. He stayed there for some time, longer than he had wished, and it was by virtue of his admirable energy that he was able to resume his journey toward the south. In 1890 Dr. Crozat was received for the first time by the Moro Naba, but he had to leave Ouagadougou speedily. The following year Monteil did not even manage to reach the capital. He was stopped a few kilometers from it and forced to depart abruptly. The mulatto Fergusson, in the service of the British, reached Ouagadougou by way of Tenkodogo, Nyaogo, and Kombisgri. Von Carnap, a German, came from Sansané-Mango in 1897 and visited Tenkodogo and Koupéla.

114 Such are, in brief outline, the verified contacts of the Mossi with Europeans. Were they already known by John II of Portugal, and even by John III, in the sixteenth century? Did they come from far to the east, from Sokoto, Bornu, perhaps even from Wadai? There are so many questions that seem quite mysterious to us in the present state of our knowledge of these peoples of the bend of the Niger, who lack written traditions. Lt. Marc discusses at great length the various opinions on this subject in his book, Au pays des Mossi /In Mossi Country/, chapters 1 and 7. Delafosse presents his own opinion in his work on Upper Senegal and Niger (especially in volume 2). We shall limit this account to the traditions gathered from the natives themselves.

124 Our working method, indeed, has been to question as many natives as possible and to gather their statements on all matters which seemed of interest. We have avoided any "interpretation" of the facts. We have allowed the natives to talk, to tell their story, to describe /3/ their customs, to explain the phenomena of nature and of life as they understand them. Our role was limited to a day-to-day record of what we heard, to the inducement of explanations, to the arrangement of these notes. Of course, our questions sometimes remained unanswered. We shall leave them unanswered here. Having no plan to defend, we hope to have been sufficiently objective.

114 We shall, nevertheless, be happy if this modest work makes a small contribution to the study of regional history, so heavily stressed

/4/ BOOK I. POLITICAL LIFE

Chapter 1. The Country and Its Inhabitants

142 Although the Mossi is not a handsome type of Black, there is nothing disagreeable about him. He is rather tall, with lively eyes, woolly hair, flat nose, occasionally rather fine features, lips which are broad without being too thick, and cheeks heavily marked with three parallel lines running from the temples to the chin and a fourth leading perpendicularly from the nose to the other three. His limbs are muscular, and his color neither ebony nor copper but an intermediate hue.

291 He acquires a truly attractive and resolute air when he dresses in festive clothes, with his broad, dark blue, Zouave-like trousers, his loose shirt made of white and blue fabric strips which falls lightly over the arms, and on the right shoulder his doré, a weapon consisting
411 of a slightly bent iron rod, flattened at one end and terminating at the other in a ring hafted perpendicularly to a short stick. His wrist
[301] is often adorned with a copper bracelet, and he nearly always carries at his waist a stiff knife, enclosed in a leather sheath which ends in a tuft of leather strips with cowries attached to them. He wears a
291 cap made of two diamond-shaped pieces of colored fabric half-sewn together; the two free ends may serve to cover the ears and cheeks, but are usually worn raised in the shape of a tiara. A great fighter, he wields the knife with dexterity or strikes with the doré which can become a dangerous club.

173 The Mossi are a conquering people. They have not always lived in the territory they now occupy. But where did they come from?
648 The elders questioned all say that their people came from Gambaga
643 (British Gold Coast), and this is why the Moro Naba Wobro took refuge in Gambaga when he was dethroned by the French conquest; this is also why the naba of Gambaga is notified whenever a Moro Naba dies, and why the shoes, cap, and scepter of command of the deceased are sent to him as gifts to be laid on the ancestral tomb. Gifts are also sent to the naba of Fada N'Gourma, which the Mossi call "Bingo." When the Moro Naba dies, his bow and quiver are presented to the

173 chief of Fada along with his two best horses, saddled, his two youngest
618 wives, twelve head of cattle, one captive, and three bars of salt.
[643] When the naba of Fada dies, however, nothing is sent to the Moro Naba, but his best horse is sent to the chief of Gambaga.

There has been contact, therefore, between the Gourmantché /Gurma/ of Fada, the Mossi, and the Dagomse /Dagomba/ of Gambaga. The Gourmantché claim that they come from Bornu. The first naba of Fada was a slave of the naba of Bornu. The Gourmantché formerly ruled the area as far as Dori. The Peul /Fulani/ came and chased them from the region after a long war. The Gourmantché, however, did not fight either the people of Gambaga or the Mossi. If they ever fought the latter, it was in the course of civil wars; the naba of Fada requested the Mossi to help him against his own subjects.

/5/ This is how the Mossi tell of the conquest of the territory. A
173 daughter of the chief of Gambaga, called Yennenga, had a son by the hunter Riala. This son was given the name Weddaogo. His son, Zougourana, seized Tenkodogo and settled there; in his turn Zougourana's son, Naba Oubri, seized the Ouagadougou area and became master of the whole country. The eldest son of Yennenga had seized Fada and founded the present dynasty, but had been unable to impose his language or his tattoing patterns on the inhabitants. This explains the gifts sent to Gambaga, the cradle of the race, and to the naba of Fada, the eldest son of the family. Part of the autochtonous inhabitants, driven away by the Mossi invasion, withdrew to the southeast and became the Bousansé /Busansi/ and the Gourounsi; the other part, remaining in the country, were assimilated by the Mossi and learned the tongue of their conquerors. A son of Naba Oubri, Naba Namendé, seized Bélousa and its territory.

In the meantime, the naba of Tenkodogo died, leaving only one son who succeeded him. His family requested the naba of Bélousa to give them his own son, who became Kourita, representative after death, of the deceased naba of Tenkodogo. Kourita wished to return to his father in Bélousa, but the latter sent him word not to do so, and Kourita stopped at Zaoré, a day's march from Bélousa, where his immediate successors resided. It was only later that this dynasty came to settle in Koupéla, after defeating and expelling, with the help of the naba of Bélousa, the descendants of Naba Guigma who had settled in Gobro near Soulgou. This is how the province of Koupéla originated, and this is why the naba of Koupéla must be invested by his overlord, the naba of Bélousa.

669 Having learned of this, the men from Kazem'bouanga proceeded to Sapara, but the inhabitants of the village refused to yield the child who had been entrusted to them; meanwhile, the Saman'Naba had returned to his province and gathered all the followers of the young naba. With the aid of the inhabitants of Sapara, the warriors of the Saman'-Naba cut to pieces the pretender's column, killed a great many of his men, and drove them back home. The Saman'Naba then took the child to Ouagadougou, had him invested by the Moro Naba, and returned to Koupéla. The child was Naba Ibri, father of the present naba, who was reigning in Koupéla when Lt. Voulet arrived. His defeated rival killed himself.

669 About the same time, on the death of his father Yenkouaré, ● 648 Batchandé was elected king of Gourma. Some of the villages, Gyékango among them, refused to recognize his authority. Batchandé appealed to the naba of Bélousa who rounded up his warriors and ordered them to join the men of the naba of Fada. Koupéla, a vassal province of Bélousa, took part in the expedition. Gyékango, however, was bravely defended by its chief and its inhabitants, who were favored by very propitious terrain covered with thorny scrub behind which the besieged men took cover to shoot on the Mossi. This was during the dry season. Thirst completed what the courage of the Gyékango people had begun, and many Mossi perished. The naba of Bélousa was so humiliated that he wished to die of thirst, but he was saved by the naba of Pwitenga. At this point Capt. Baud arrived in Fada from Dahomey. Batchandé requested his help against his rebellious subjects, and Capt. Baud seized Gyékango which has since been called Baudéni, "Baud's village."

A war waged in favor of Lébréboundou by the people of Koupéla against those of Tenkodogo /13/ has left vivid memories. Like the preceding, it was a civil war which broke out on the death of a chief. The naba of Tenkodogo having died, the elders elected Naba Korongo as his successor, but Lébréboundou attempted to seize power. He appealed to the people of Fada and to those of Koupéla. The naba of Tenkodogo, at bay, requested in vain the aid of the naba of Bélousa and that of the Moro Naba. Both replied that the winner would be recognized as chief. The men from Tenkodogo were driven back with losses, but this occurred just at the time when the French troops arrived. The elected naba of Tenkodogo appealed to the head of the expedition, who killed the pretender and installed the lawfully elected man in Tenkodogo.

326 iron bar on an iron stump planted in the ground or on a stone. Copper
306 and zinc are smelted in small clay crucibles, the size of which varies with the desired thickness of the bracelet. The bracelet is first made in wax and coated with well-kneaded clayey earth which acquires the same shape. The wax is then removed with boiling water, and copper is poured into the clay mold. With a crude file the jewelry-maker removes the dross which clings to the metal, polishes the bracelet, and carves designs into it. The most skillful among them make attractive twisted ornaments of iron and red and yellow copper. One Ouagadougou Christian, deft at modeling wax, makes all sorts of objects, such as napkin rings, paper weights, inkwells, figurines, etc., which are not lacking in style.

484 The Mossi have always travelled a little, and they used to go quite regularly to Timbuktu; now, thanks to the French peace, journeys have become increasingly frequent. The European settlers in Tenkodogo, Ouagadougou, Léo, and Koudougou hire the Mossi as house boys and [464] take them to Ségou, sometimes to Kayes, and even to Saint-Louis. These boys, when they return, fill their friends with wonder and arouse their desire to take such great journeys also.

484 The recruitment of Black troops has also fostered this desire to see
464 new lands. Many natives have made the trip to Bandiagara to enlist as riflemen; others went to Kati, and when they found that no further enlistments were being made there, they went on to Saint-Louis.

484 During the dry season the Mossi are more often lured away by trading ventures. In October and November many young men who have managed to secure a sheep or two or a few goats and the wealthier natives who own cattle organize caravans in the hope of selling their livestock at a profit in faraway markets. In former times the Yarsé and Haoussa had a monopoly on trade. Nowadays the Mossi compete [651] with them, for they must find money to pay taxes to the Whites, the
648 famous five-franc piece. /60/ Besides, now the roads are safe. Highway robbers are no longer to be feared, and one no longer has to pay tolls every time he enters the territory of a new chief. From this point of view, and from it alone, the French peace is valued by the natives, although they find it onerous to pay taxes, to build roads and bridges, and to pay customs duties on leaving and re-entering French territory. Is a man ever pleased when something is required of him, even for his greatest good?

491 Now only the watercourses present some difficulty when they are full. The Administration, which does all it can to facilitate trade,

174 he entered into Bambarra. The inhabitants of Yenné saw him on the opposite shore of the Niger (2) before they had been told of his march.

2. Djenné is not right on the Niger nor on the Bani, but at a certain distance between the two rivers.

His flotilla joined him that same day, and, after having unloaded his provisions, he crossed the river with one part of his army and took Yenné by assault during the night. This exploit so frightened the Bambarra king that he asked for peace. He agreed to pay the victor an annual tribute of a certain number of slaves and to give back to the Gotto inhabitants all that had been taken away from them. (3)

[721 648]

3. This passage would indicate that the Dyoula of Gottogo (or Bondoukou), having some grievances against the Bambara of the Ségou region (assaulted peddlers, unpaid debts, etc.), went to the king of the Mossi to obtain justice, and that this might have been one of the causes of the war. There doubtless existed reciprocal grievances between Bambara and Mossi or between their natural allies.

Moussee /sic/ returned to Gotto in triumph, and he was proclaimed king. He gave his name to the capital."

As one can see, the important and valuable fact that must be extracted from this thick forest is the capture of Dienné by the king of the northern Mossi, the king of Yatenga (who at that time was Kango), during his struggles with the Bambara, that is, with Ngolo who was his contemporary. Because of his informants, who obviously did not inform him with absolute precision and thus made him commit many small errors or miscalculations, Mungo-Park embellished the true fact with imaginary details. First of all, there is the name of Kango, Moossie, Moussie /sic/, which is the name of the conqueror's country and not his own name. Then, the name of Gotto is given to the Mossi country, undoubtedly because of a confusion, either in the minds of the Blacks who informed Mungo-Park or in the mind of the great

174 114

173 11. Nattia, son of the preceding. He lived at Dazouli.
174 12. Namoëro, son of the preceding.
13. Kida, brother of Nattia. He lived at Ouagadougou.
14. Kimba, brother of the preceding. He lived at the same place.
15. Kobra, son of the preceding. He lived at Uougandé.
16. Sana, son of the preceding. He lived at Ouagadougou, where all his successors resided up to the present day.
17. Guiliga, son of the preceding.
18. Oubia, brother of the preceding.
19. Mottaba, son of the preceding.
20. Ouarga, brother of the preceding.
21. Zombéré, son of the preceding.
22. Kom, son of the preceding.
23. Sagha, son of the preceding.
24. Koulougou, son of the preceding.
25. Savadoro, son of the preceding.
26. Karfo, son of Savadoro.
27. Baoro, brother of Savadoro.
28. Koutou, son of the preceding.
29. Sanom, son of Koutou.
30. Boukary /sic/ Koutou, son of Koutou.
It was Bokary Koutou who was dethroned by Lt. Voulet in 1896.
31. Kouka (Siguiri) with whom Lt. Voulet signed a treaty whereby Mossi territory was placed under the suzerainty of France
32. Kom, the present Moro Naba (1910).

648 As may be seen, therefore, the Moro Nabas continue to exist among the Mossi. France even provides them with a pension, which first amounted to 25,000 francs a year and has since been lowered to 18,000 francs. They no longer hold any powers, however, and they do nothing whatever.

175 I have found in the Monographie of the circle some interesting data on expeditions led by the Moro Nabas into Kipirsi territory, which always resisted Mossi conquest. Naba Koundoumié, sixth successor of Oubry, /463/ first led a bloody expedition to Kayao and Tiou. Naba Dawoéma, eighth successor of Oubry, waged war to the north of Yako. Naba Ouarga, twentieth successor of Oubry, settled

161 How many inhabitants did this Mossi empire number, with its careful centralization, its hierarchy of chiefs, and its class of nobles, at the time of the French occupation (1896)?

In 1909 the census yielded 861,700 souls in the circle of Ouagadougou itself and 273,000 in the Tenkodogo residency, or a total of 1,135,000 inhabitants. From this figure, however, we must deduct the independent Boussansé (99,000 in the Tenkodogo residency) and also the people of the Kipirsi (Ouagadougou circle; in theory they are ruled by the Mossi, in fact they are independent; they may be estimated at 40,000). This leaves, for the five subject provinces and the four vassal provinces, about 996,000 inhabitants. It may thus be said that the Moro Naba of Ouagadougou ruled over a population of about a million men.

161 563 Out of this million men, there were roughly /583/ 850,000 Mossi, 40,000 Boussansé, 69,000 Yarsé, 32,000 Foulbé, 5,000 Silmi-Mossi, 1,000 Songhay (in the northern part of the Ouagadougou circle), and 1,000 Haoussa scattered here and there in the same fashion as the Yarsé and Foulbé.

161 We already know that this Ouagadougou empire did not make up the whole Mossi population. There stood alongside it two other kingdoms which must formerly have been subject to Ouagadougou but which had gained their independence long before our occupation. One of them, Yatenga, with Ouahigouya as its capital, was located to the northwest of the Ouagadougou empire. The other one, Gourma, with Fada N'Gourma as its capital, was located to the east. Those two kingdoms may have added up between them to a population of 450,000 in which the Mossi element predominated, with Habé and Samo elements in the Ouahigouya circle, and Gourmanké elements in the circle of Fada N'Gourma.

In short, about a million and a half inhabitants were divided among the Mossi kingdoms in the bend of the Niger, with one million in the most important of those kingdoms, that of Ouagadougou.

161 642 648 The population of the Mossi was, and still is, extraordinarily dense as compared with the over-all population density of West Africa. Among the Mossi, indeed, there are about 25 inhabitants per square kilometer, while in French Guinea, for example, there is an average of 6 inhabitants per square kilometer. This stems

[161] 642 648

from the fact that the Mossi empire was centralized. The internal struggles which often occur among primitive Blacks (Bobo, Gourounsi, Boussansé, Kipirsi, etc.) between villages, quarters, or even soukala, did not exist among the Mossi. Internal peace and security prevailed. In addition, the same centralized power that prevented Negro anarchy also prevented the territory from being devastated by chance conquerors, founders of empires. Thus, while the Djermabé Songhay devastated Gourounsi territory, a land of independent villages or small cantons, and cast it into a kingdom by force of arms, they did not dare attack their Mossi neighbors for fear of the Moro Naba's ten thousand horsemen. /583/ Thus, both internal and external peace were insured thanks to a centralized power. Hence, the impression made by the territory on various travelers between the time of Barth's trip (he did not see Mossi itself, but followed its northern border) and the French occupation. "Mossi territory is regarded as being untouchable," says Marc (op. cit., p. 28). "No doubt, at that time (the time of Barth's trip), as Crozat verified forty years later, one was struck on entering Mossi territory by the complete safety in which the people lived, while everywhere else war and the hunt for slaves devastated the villages. And one mentioned enviously the Mossi peasants who walked singly to their fields, hoe on shoulder, while everywhere else the head of the family had to keep his weapons at hand night and day."

Marc attributes this safety to the Mossi fear of fetishes. He thus looks far afield for an obvious explanation. The Gourounsi, too, had fetishes, and yet the Djermabé did not spare them and treated them more or less as cranes would treat frogs. The Mossi were spared because they lived in a centralized and thus powerful empire, in spite of Marc's assertion that this power was nil since it could not resist Lt. Voulet's handful of riflemen. Indeed, it was nil against power displayed in European fashion, just as Achanti /Ashanti/ power was nil against British strength, and Toucouleur power could not prevail against the forces of Col. Archinard. This Mossi power was nevertheless considerable within its own sphere, that is to say, in West Africa and against other Blacks. It sufficed to give the Mossi an advantage over the Kipirsi, Gourounsi, Boussansé, etc. It sufficed to prevent Toucouleur or Djermabé attack.

642 In short, the Mossi enjoyed the benefits of a strong and cen-
648 tralized government, established no doubt in former times at the price of large-scale massacres and exterminations. And this is what makes us ponder and what is, so to speak, the reverse side of the Black conquerors' coin. It is probable that Oubry, the founder of the Mossi empire in /584/ the twelfth century, was in his time something of a Samory or a Rabah. He probably managed to establish his empire only through the crushing, pillage, and massacre of a tremendous number of small, independent Black villages or small Lélésé, Nounouma, Boussansé, and Habé cantons. Yet in the nineteenth century, on the soil of this empire established at such a price, there were 25 inhabitants per square kilometer, while among the neighboring Gourounsi who have retained their freedom there are the 5 or 6 inhabitants per square kilometer common to West Africa as a whole. In addition, while the Gourounsi were prey to the Songhay, the Habé to the Toucouleur, and the Malinké and Bambara to Samory, our Mossi lived in safety. They had less independence and anarchistic freedom, but they had internal peace and external security. They had to obey their chiefs, but they knew no domestic struggles, no crushing by foreign pillagers. In short, the Mossi had entered upon the course of orderly government, and represented a superior state of civilization.

771 Now, we need only furnish a few details on Mossi religion. The majority of the Mossi population has remained fetishistic.
771 We saw above that the Mossi, at the time of their great ex-
648 pansion in the bend of the Niger, came into conflict with a Moslemized empire, the Mali empire, and that the second Songhay empire also led redoutable religious crusades against the Mossi. Under such circumstances the Mossi were bound to regard Islam as a foe. It is true that later the destruction of the second Songhay empire by the Moroccans (1591) brought peace to the Mossi on their northern frontier and freed them from the fear of Moslem invasion. The Yarsé settled in turn among the Mossi, and owing to their intelligence, industry, and capacity for trade, created for themselves a well-respected position. This was bound to incline the Mossi favorably toward Islam, or at least to lessen their prejudices and

771 648 [798] their traditional fear. Nevertheless, Captain Lambert says that prior to the French occupation, Moslems were forbidden by the Moro Naba to /585/ say their prayers (kella) publicly. They merely recited their rosary (séki) silently.

797 Since the French occupation, the Mossi have lost all their prejudices against Islam, because they have been conquered by a different foe. In addition the Moslems tell them, as they do everywhere else in West Africa, that the Whites will only be vanquished and will only leave the country when everyone has become a Moslem. This leads the Mossi to start salaaming, and actually it is probable that there have been more conversions to Islam among the Mossi since our occupation than prior to it. This result, which may appear strange at first, is indubitable. Actually these conversions, although more numerous than they used to be, are still rare if we consider that the enormous majority of the Mossi population and the territory as a whole remains fetishistic.

Let us proceed to a description of Mossi religious customs.

787 First, the funeral ceremonies.

755 When a Mossi is ill he summons a soothsayer (bara in Mossi). The latter takes some earth and looks at it to see what will happen to the sick man. Then he states either that the latter will get well, on condition of obliging with a sheep and a chicken, or else that he will die. In the first case the requested chicken and sheep are brought to the bara, and then, if the sick person gets well, he gets something else, a sheep or 5,000 cowries. If the sick person dies, contrary to prediction, the family merely says that the bara was a liar and nothing else happens.

764 If the deceased is a man, it is the family elders who care for him. They stretch his limbs and even his fingers so he will not turn rigid immediately, and they close his eyes. Then one of the elders washes the corpse with cold water in the presence of the whole family. After this, the elders sew a shroud with cotton bands to wrap around the deceased, and then he is rolled up in a mat.

The soukala chiefs (we know that among the Mossi every household head is the head of a soukala) are buried in the courtyard /586/ of their soukala, or else before its gate. The grave diggers are fetched, and they dig a hole the size of a man, lay the corpse at the bottom, and place boards above it to prevent the soil from weighing

9:Skinner E-5 (1955-1957)1960 FA28 Mossi FA28

645
696 all the chaos would come a new appreciation for the task of the chief, and a cessation of the grumbling that the chiefs were greedy.

662 The Mossi interregnum also served another purpose. It gave the
428 electors the opportunity to exhaust and redistribute much of the patri-
666 mony of the dead ruler, which was brought to them by his heirs who were trying to obtain the chieftainship through bribery. Sometimes, a candidate's ability to collect a great deal of goods with which to press his suit often revealed to the electors the strength of his following in the district or village, for had he been an unpopular man he would have had to use only his own resources.

666 The Mossi electors were always concerned with the health and
643 character of a potential chief, and turned down the most promising
175 candidates who were deficient in any of these qualities. For example, when Moro Naba Sanum died in 1890 without leaving a male heir, his younger brother, Bokary Koutou, was the strongest candidate for the *nam*. Yet he was passed over, at first, by the electors because of his reputation as a bandit and a rebel. We know from Captain Binger, a Frenchman who met Bokary in 1888, that this prince was indeed a bandit and a slave raider. But Binger, although deploring Bokary's conduct, exonerated him on the grounds that the Moro Naba had sent him into exile without any means of support. This was true, but the
[687] reason that Moro Naba Sanum did so was because Bokary had raised a rebellion against him as an attempt to obtain their father's position. Bokary was forbidden to appear in the capital; but when he heard that his brother Sanum was dead, he took a force of soldiers and hurried to Wagadougou fearing that an attempt would have been made to prevent his election. When he found that his fears were justified, he became
[669] desperate and secreted a force of Gurunsi warriors around the elector's meeting place, threatening to kill them if he was not named Moro Naba. They succumbed to his threat and he received the *nam*. During
643 the customary speech in which a new ruler chose his official name,
175 announced his program for the people and the country, or ridiculed his erstwhile competitors, Bokary Koutou said: "A hundred ghosts cannot frighten an elephant (Wobogo)," meaning that he was not afraid
648 of any of his enemies. He thereafter became known as Moro Naba
721 Wobogo, and he chose to live up to his boast when the French arrived
175 and asked him to sign a treaty of protection with them. He refused

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and chose to fight, and when defeated, fled to the Gold Coast (Ghana). From here he intrigued with the British against the French and even succeeded in having his brother poisoned for accepting the title of Moro Naba. It was only when the British accepted French sovereignty over Mossi country that Bokary accepted his deposition and permanent exile.

Once the traditional electors had chosen one of Bokary's younger relatives, Siguiri as Moro Naba, the Mossi people themselves quietly accepted French rule. Their behavior was in this respect similar to that of many indigenous populations with complex political institutions who had been conquered by the Europeans. In contrast, the neighboring Dogon, Gurunsi, and Lobi, whose political systems were very simple, and who had been constantly raided by the Mossi for slaves, kept on rebelling against French rule, and in some cases shot poisoned arrows at French tax collectors and labor recruiters as late as 1941. The only opposition which they offered the French was in 1910 when an attempt was made to reorganize the Mossi districts for administrative reasons. However, when the French changed their policy of direct administration to a form of indirect rule, the Mossi remained so peaceful that by 1922 there was only one administrator for every 60,000 inhabitants.

Moro Naba Kom who reigned from 1905 to 1942 skillfully preserved the power of the ruling dynasty during a period when the Mossi people were subjected to a rather severe forced labor regime. This was also a period during which the administration deposed chiefs who ran afoul of its wishes or policies. The political ability of this ruler is best exemplified by the order of succession that occurred in the Doulougou district. In 1895 Moro Naba Wobogo had appointed his own son as Doulougou chief in place of Koabga Wedraogo whom he had deposed and killed. However, when Wobogo fled from the French the next year, his son, the Doulougou chief, killed himself because he did not wish to follow his father into exile. The new Moro Naba Siguiri placed a son of the former district chief, Koabga Wodraogo, as chief of Doulougou. This chief died in 1906 and was replaced by a brother. Unfortunately this chief ran afoul of the French, was deposed and placed in "obligatory residence" in another district where he died in 1927. The Moro Naba then elected another son of ex-

10:Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1964 FA28 Mossi FA28
Yatenga

position of the set in Mossi society. In the years immediately following initiation the members are much involved in group activities, e.g., the arrangement of social dances, courtship, and co-operation in work groups composed of male and female age-sets, and during this period joking is important. As the members attain adult status the groups tend to lose their structural integrity; their minor corporate functions dwindle and ultimately disappear as the responsibility of the young people to their kin groups increases. With this shift in emphasis, joking behavior also diminishes.

While it lasts, however, this type of joking likewise has a structural context characterized by the attributes already identified. Age-sets are structurally separate within the age-grade. Their relations are reciprocal: individual members co-operate in the arrangement of one another's sexual liaisons; they pool their labor and share the profits they earn as members of their co-operative work organizations; and young men often leave Yatenga as migrant laborers in groups organized on the basis of age-grade membership, thereby reinforcing many of the reciprocal ties established in the work groups. The ambivalence characteristic of the relationship is perhaps best explained as the rivalry of peers. Since there is no status hierarchy within a Mossi age-grade, the age-sets are structurally equivalent and independent.

Intervillage Joking

When intervillage joking is institutionalized it may involve all the members of each community. However, I believe it is particularly expected of their respective chiefs. In either case, the participants are separated by their differing political affiliations. The inhabitants of each village are expected to reciprocate in one another's defense, to be mutually hospitable, and to co-operate in the regulation of land tenure at their frontiers. Ambivalence derives from a history of past hostility, dating perhaps from an earlier period when competition for new land was keener and the expanding kingdom did not yet encompass all the villages now within its borders. Such villages are always structurally equivalent in status within the political system, and each is independent of the other.

Joking Between Ethnic Groups

The joking relationship which the Mossi maintain with the Gurunsi and the Samogho peoples, among others, appears to involve the same structural characteristics. However, I learned of this relationship only shortly before I left Yatenga, and a more certain statement concerning it must therefore await further research. It is certain that such joking occurs; I am unsure only of the number of other ethnic groups involved[9] and of the relevant details of their historical relations to the Mossi of Yatenga. The groups involved are again separate. There is an expectation that members of each group should extend hospitality and assistance to members of the other. As with villages whose inhabitants joke, the participants in this relationship are ambivalent in their attitudes; the present expectation of co-operation is coupled with a past

10:Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1964 FA28 Mossi FA28
Yatenga

tradition of hostility. Such groups obviously have both equal and mutually independent status.

The Processes of Mossi Joking

I have already suggested that the significance of joking as an adjustive mechanism is derived from the manner in which it provides concurrently for the operation of three interrelated but analytically separable processes. These are *communication, control,* and *catharsis.*

As a means of communication, joking provides a permissive and flexible context in which a grievance can be expressed, thus allowing for its rectification and the restoration of amity. As a means of control, the public nature of most joking serves to shame the object of the jocular offensive, to invoke social pressure for his conformity, and to elicit support for the complainant. As a means of catharsis, the joking expression of aggressive feelings reduces frustration and thus serves indirectly to perpetuate the amicable aspect of the relationship in which it occurs.

Joking also gives pleasure. The feeling of triumphant release that follows the successful—and safe—expression of hostile sentiments probably functions to reinforce reliance on joking as an adjustive mechanism. And the intrinsic pleasure of wit may also explain the persistence of joking behavior in the absence of an immediate "structural need" for it.

A more detailed description of one of the relationships already mentioned—sibling-in-law joking—will serve to illustrate these several points. Because of its relation to the pivotal institution of marriage, sibling-in-law joking is perhaps the most frequently used adjustive mechanism in Mossi social structure. The potential for marital conflict is high. This appears to be due to the combined factors of a sexually differentiated enculturative experience that results in marked dissimilarities in adult male and female personality; to an age difference between husbands and wives of at least ten years; to the classic stresses of polygyny; to the subordinate status of Mossi women, particularly of junior wives within their husband's patriclan; and to the possible dissatisfaction of a woman's parents, particularly her mother, at the loss of their daughter's services or at the inadequacy of bride-wealth payments.

Whatever its origins in a specific instance, it is important that this potential for conflict be controlled, for each marriage extends the network of affinal and cognatic ties that link the patrilineage to the larger community. Given a persistent potential for strife, the preservation of marital stability requires the provision of a means for minimizing its deleterious effects. When conflict occurs, the resultant frustration must be reduced, and accord must be reestablished in a manner that does no serious damage either to the marriage itself or to the larger context of social relations in which it is embedded. Sibling-in-law joking helps to accomplish this.

If, for example, a Mossi is irritated by his wife's performance of some aspect of her duties in the household or the field, he need not address her directly in order to communicate his dissatisfaction and release the tension he feels. To do so in a culture which places a high value on indirection in emo-

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/For a history of the relations between the Mossi and various European powers, particularly the French, see category 116, pp. 143-193, 197-200, 202./

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all the people he found there and seizing all the goods he could find, he burned the city and returned to his own country. The peoples of Mali returned afterwards to Timbuktu and remained there for the next hundred years.[20] 175

The Yatenga Mossi subsequently warred upon and defended themselves against the Songhai, who had tried to force Islam upon them. The Mossi were among the strongest peoples in the Niger bend area when the Moroccans arrived in 1591, and there were no wars between these two groups. [648]

There has been a great deal of discussion among scholars of Sudanese history about the relationship between the Mossi expeditions into the Niger area and the power of early Mossi kingdoms. Marc believes that the Mossi reached their zenith late in the fifteenth century, when they attacked Walata and Timbuktu for the second time. He writes, "It was undoubtedly during this period that they extended their influence over all the territories where their language is spoken at the present day."[21] 174 175

On the other hand, Tauxier believes that the Mossi reached their apogee much earlier, toward the end of the fourteenth century. He notes that this was the period when the Mossi were "propelled by a powerful drive of expanding conquest," which carried them to Timbuktu and its neighboring regions.[22] With the recapture of Timbuktu by Mansa Souliman, however, they turned back and firmly established themselves in Gourma and Yange to the east of Ouagadougou, and among non-Mossi populations in Ouahigouya and Ouagadougou. Tauxier believes that this southern drive made the Mossi sufficiently powerful to reinvade the Niger area and thus control a territory extending from Gambaga in the south up to Timbuktu and Djenne in the north. This second period of success came to a close when the Mossi were defeated by Askia the Great of Songhai in 1497, and by Askia Daoud in 1549 and 1561. After these defeats, they not only abandoned their territories north of Ouahigouya but withdrew into their present boundaries. Tauxier concludes that from this time onward, the bonds between the different Mossi kingdoms grew weaker and the power of Ouagadougou waned.

At the same time, the Mossi kingdoms, principalities, and districts developed their internal structure and continued to absorb the Ninisi population. They also welcomed the Moslem Yarse merchants and refugees who settled in their country and adopted most aspects of their culture.[23] These Yarse refugees were joined by Mandingo-Dioula and Soninke Moslem refugees, who entered Mossi country as the result of wars or rebellions in such places as Djenne, Segou, and Timbuktu. The sheltering of these refugees by the Mossi eventually led to a series of wars between them and 175 648 563

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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648 563 the Bambara in the mid-eighteenth century.[24] In the course of these wars and up into modern times, many Fulani (Peulh or Fulbe) entered Mossi territory. The circumstances surrounding their first coming are not fully known, but many of them claim to have come originally from Fouta-Djalon and Fouta-Toro. They gained the good will of most of the Mossi rulers and spread throughout the territory.[25] Many of them married Mossi women, giving rise to a new group known as Simili-Mossi, who continued to raise cattle but also practiced agriculture and adopted many of the cultural traits of their hosts.[26]

175 648 There are some reports that Europeans had heard about the Mossi exploits at least from the time of King John II of Portugal, who reigned from 1481 to 1495. Marc states that the Portuguese ambassadors to Mali and Timbuktu convinced their King that the Mossi were Christians, and that he attempted to enter into relations with them. According to Barth, these attempts were made as late as 1533.[27] Unfortunately, we have no way of knowing whether the Mossi even knew about the existence of the Portuguese. After this period, there is no evidence of European interest in the Mossi until the end of the nineteenth century. As we shall see in a later chapter, the Mossi received more than their share of attention when the scramble for Africa began.

644 Under him were the Kos Naba, who levied taxes on general merchandise sold in the mar-
[651] kets, and the Nemdo Naba, who collected taxes on meat sold in the markets and was responsible for distributing meat within the royal household. Most of these positions were hereditary, but here primogeniture was not as important as in the ruling and administrative lineages.

[648] The various foreign groups in the capital also sent representatives to the court. Among them were the Zangweoto Naba for the Hausa, a Naba for the Songhai, and an Imam for the Ouagadougou Moslems. Even total strangers such as the early European visitors were placed under the care of a special chief.

The most ubiquitous persons at the Mogho Naba's court were the pages, who were boys between the ages of ten and twenty. These boys were regarded as comparable to the ruler's wives, since they served him in the same manner as ordinary Mossi women serve their husbands at home. They wore women's bracelets and women's clothes, and dressed their hair in the
[834] same style as the royal wives. As we have seen, they were forbidden sexual intercourse until they were released from the royal household.[22]

173 The institution of pages is said to have originated sometime in the sev-
644 enteenth century, during the reign of Mogho Naba Waraga. Before his reign, the wives of the Mogho Naba attended him at court. The change came during a lengthy civil war between Waraga and the chief of Riziam territory, who had refused to pay allegiance to him. During five "dry seasons" (five years) of fighting, the Mogho Naba was attended only by a small boy. He found him so efficient that at the end of the war he resolved to employ only page boys and prohibit his wives from attending him at court. This origin is conjectural. However, the use of pages effectively segregated the royal wives from court intrigues, and, once instituted, the practice spread throughout the country.

644 The Mogho Naba had little difficulty recruiting pages. Many of them were the sons of pughsiudse whom he had given to his subjects as wives. In theory, the Mogho Naba could select boys at will, but in practice the pages were usually selected by the ministers and sent to the palace. Most boys willingly accepted service, but some, often with the support of their parents, resisted confinement to the palace. Some ten-year-olds even ran away to escape their impending fate, but they were soon caught and braceleted with the insignia of their new status. Once this had been done, their lineages encouraged them to remain at the palace. Their period of service
[145] terminated when they began to "push beards," usually at about eighteen years of age. One district chief claims that ancient Mogho Nanamse used to take the sons of district chiefs as pages and release them only when their

Binger reports that the Mossi were divided into "a number of confederacies, more or less independent of each other, whose chiefs were vassals of Naba Sanum, the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou." He found, nevertheless, that although the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou claimed suzerainty over the Yatenga, he could not grant travelers permission to enter that territory.[2]

Crozat, who visited the Mossi in 1890, just two years after Binger, was told repeatedly that the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou had the right to control the destinies of all chiefs who claimed descent from Ouedraogo and Oubri. But he, too, found that the principalities were self-governing and mutually independent, and were united only by the weak bond that attached them all to Ouagadougou. Noting the claims of the people he encountered that Ouagadougou was still supreme, Crozat suggests that "time and circumstances have weakened this sovereignty. The ruler of Ouagadougou is regarded by the other chiefs merely as their senior and the head of their family. They seldom obey him, yet they recognize that in certain cases he has the right to give them orders." Like many Frenchmen who came after him, Crozat concludes, "One will be struck, as I have been, by this political organization in which the waning of the central authority has led to a true feudal system closely reminiscent of a certain period in our own history."[3]

Delafosse tells us that "the authority of the emperor [of Ouagadougou] does not seem to have been ignored within his borders except in very rare instances. The vassal kings, who were brothers, sons, or nephews of the emperor, usually obeyed him. In any case, the emperor did not interfere with the administration [of their territories], and required nothing from them except the payment of taxes and the raising of contingents for any expeditions he might have to organize against outside enemies (the emperors of Mali, Gao, or Segou; Moroccan pashas; etc.). In return, the emperor granted his support to those of his vassals who were unable to command the obedience of their subjects or tributaries."[4]

It appears, then, that although the independent rulers and autonomous princes sometimes recognized the supremacy (if not the seniority) of the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou, they were relatively free to rule as they wished. As possessors of the nam, they claimed and exercised the right to administer the peoples of their realms. It appears, furthermore, that the rulers of Ouagadougou seldom challenged the independence of their confreres in Yatenga, although the latter often disturbed them. For example, when Yatenga Naba Kango (ca. 1754-89) sacked and burned the Ouagadougou district of Yako for sheltering refugees from a civil war, the Mogho Naba did not come to the aid of the Yako Naba. Nor did he take offense when this chief, in order to regain his seat, was compelled to switch his

634 against the Mogho Naba. I say "allegedly" because it was never quite clear
687 whether the district chief was at fault or whether the Mogho Naba wanted to replace him for dynastic reasons. For example, Tanga, a district chief, was accused by Mogho Naba Sanum (1850–90) of withholding tribute and of maladministration. The Ouidi Naba who administered Tanga's district advised him to prove his innocence by making a sacrifice on Naba Oubri's tomb, and then go to Ouagadougou and ask the Mogho Naba's forgiveness.
634 Tanga agreed to do so. But it appears that the Mogho Naba, who wished
687 to place his own father's brother in Tanga's place, did not want a reconcili-
ation. He waged war on Tanga, and seized his relatives, retainers, and
662 cattle. Tanga tried to regain his losses by appealing to his provincial minister, but the minister told him that the Mogho Naba had distributed the livestock and had sold the people to Hausa traders. Moreover, he informed Tanga that he could not help him because the Mogho Naba could do as he
[669] pleased. Tanga thereupon decided to take matters into his own hands. He successfully attacked the Mogho Naba's villages, and was still a rebel when the French arrived shortly afterward.[26]

634 Tanga's action was unusual, for district chiefs seldom risked rebelling
687 against the Mogho Naba when accused of maladministration. In 1895, for example, Koabga, chief of Doulougou district in the province of the Gounga
669 Naba, took poison rather than wage war when Mogho Naba Wobogo accused him of misgovernment. Usually, a district chief who disobeyed an order of the Mogho Naba was summoned to the capital to answer the charge of lese majesty. If he was found guilty, the ruler knocked the bonnet off his head, thus deposing him, and had him strangled. The Mossi seldom
[762] spilled royal blood. A district chief who refused to go to Ouagadougou could either kill himself (traditionally by taking arsenic) or resort to civil war.[27] If he chose suicide, he was given an honorable burial as though he had died naturally. If the Mogho Naba sent down an army, however, the offending chief was invariably killed. His compound was burned, his slaves and cattle were seized, and his allies and immediate relatives were compelled to flee. The strength of this tradition is borne out by Tanga's case. He had successfully resisted the attempts of two Mogho Nanamse to bring him to heel, and was still at large when the French conquered the country.
[648] But Ouidi Naba Koabga, who had deserted his sovereign and selected Kouka Koutou as Mogho Naba under French orders, had not forgiven Tanga. When the French asked him what additional steps they should take to pacify the country, he asked them to capture Tanga. The unfortunate district chief was captured, placed on an unsaddled colt, and taken to Ouagadougou, where he was ignominiously executed.[28]

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VI

WARFARE

THE Mossi were proud of their warrior tradition, which had earned them 721
their several kingdoms, principalities, and districts. Even the least district [173]
chief had stories about the wars in which his ancestors had wrested their territories from aboriginal populations. These traditions of conquest legitimized to a large extent the power of the Mossi kings and chiefs, who never hesitated to use force in order to obtain tribute, to maintain their rule, and to enforce their authority. The Mossi value fighting ability so [181]
highly that even today, when fighting is no longer necessary, most Mossi males in the rural areas carry sticks and other weapons on their shoulders as symbols of manhood. In their view, every man should know how to fight and should be able to defend his village, his district, and his kingdom.

According to tradition, the northward thrust of the Mossi warriors dur- 648
ing the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries carried them into the region of the Niger River bend. Here, around A.D. 1329, the Yatenga Mossi 173
attacked and sacked the town of Timbuktu, which belongs to the Mali. When Mali was on the decline during the early fifteenth century, the Mossi again attacked its towns. According to the *Tarikh es-Sudan*, when 648
the Mali ruler appointed Amin-ben-Ahmad jurisconsul of Timbuktu, 195

> the sultan of the Mossi led an expedition against Benka. The population of that region went out to engage the enemy, and at that time left others sitting around El Hadj. He pronounced certain words on the millet which was being served and asked those around him to eat of it. All of them ate except the son-in-law of El Hadj, who did not because he was related to him. "Now go and fight," said the holy man, "and you will have nothing to fear from the weapons of the enemy." All, in effect, returned safe and sound, and only those persons who did not eat the millet died in the battle. The king of the Mossi was routed, and his troops were chased without having seized anything from the people of Benka. All this thanks to the protection of the blessed person.[1]

Later, the Mossi attacked towns of the Songhai empire whenever they felt strong enough, only to be driven away later by a stronger adversary. Sa'di describes a Mossi incursion into the Songhai empire as follows:

648 175 Sonni-Ali entered Kabara in the year 882 after the Hegira (1477); and it was during the course of the same year that the king of the Mossi entered Sama. In 884 (1479) Sonni-Ali was at Tosoko. . . .

During the month of Jumada I of that year (July 9 to August 8, 1480), the king of the Mossi entered Biro [the Songhai name for Walata] and did not leave until Jumada II (August 8 to September 7, 1480). The siege lasted one month, and during that time he demanded a woman from the inhabitants. . . . After the siege the Mossi king gave battle to the inhabitants of Biro, vanquished them, and took them and their families into captivity. But, as he was returning to his country with his booty, the inhabitants of Biro followed and fought him, and freed their families. Omar-ben-Mohammed-Nadi, who was at Biro at this time, distinguished himself by his valor and ardor during the battle; for he was the first warrior to attack the Mossi king and thus force him to give up the families which had been captured.[2]

A few years later, the Mossi again invaded the area, this time making war on Sonni-Ali himself. The chronicler writes:

Then the prince Sonni-Ali undertook the task of digging a canal leading from Ras-el-Ma to Biro. He was devoting all his effort and a great deal of energy to this task when word reached him that the king of the Mossi had decided to make war on him, and was then leading the attack at the head of his troops. Sonni-Ali was at a place called Chan-Fenech when he heard this news, and he stopped work on the canal right there. God spared the inhabitants of Biro the misfortune which threatened them; for Sonni-Ali, going out to meet the king of the Mossi, made contact with him at a place called Djiniki-To'oi, situated near the town of Kobi behind the river. The battle took place there, and the victorious Sonni-Ali put the Mossi king to flight, and pursued him into his own country. That battle took place in the year 888 (1483).[3]

This battle seems to have represented the high point in the northern expansion of the Mossi, because the next reference to them in the *Tarikh es-Sudan* tells of Askia-El-Hadj-Mohammed's holy war against them. This man, who had usurped the throne from Sonni-Ali's heir, made a pilgrimage to Mecca, and when he returned he decided to convert the pagan masses of the Sudan to Islam:

During the year 903 (August 1497 to August 1498), he undertook an expedition against Na'asira, the king of the Mossi. He took with him the mallam, Mour-Salih-Djaaura, inviting him to give the necessary indications so that the expedition would be a veritable holy war made in the name of God. Mour did not refuse this request, and explained to the prince all the rules relative to the holy war. The prince of the faithful, Askia-Mohammed, then asked the mallam to be his envoy to the Mossi king. The learned holy man accepted this mission; he went to the country of the Mossi and delivered the letter of his master which called upon the king to embrace Islam. Before [787] replying, the Mossi ruler declared that he wished first of all to consult his

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ancestors who were in the other world. Accompanied by his ministers, he 648
went to the temple of the idol of the country. The learned holy man went 175
there also, in order to see how one went about consulting the dead. They 787
began by making the customary offerings; then a very old man appeared. At his appearance everyone prostrated himself and then the king announced the object of his visit. Calling upon the names of the ancestors, the old man said: "I will never agree to this step for you. On the contrary, you must fight until you or they die to the last man."

Then Na'asira replied to the mallam: "Return to your master and tell 648
him that between us there will be only war and combat." Remaining alone 175
in the temple with the personage who appeared in the form of an old man, the mallam questioned him in these words: "In the name of God Almighty I ask you to declare who you are." "I am Iblis [Satan]," replied the deceiving old man; "I have led them astray so that they will all die in a state of unbelief."

Mour returned to prince Askia-El-Hadj-Mohammed and reported all which had come to pass. "Now," he added, "your duty is to fight them." Straightway he launched his war against them, killed a number of their men, devastated their fields, plundered their habitations, and took their children into captivity. All of the men and women who were taken away as captives were made the object of divine benediction [converted to Islam]. In the entire country, no other expedition outside of this one had the character of a holy war made in the name of God.[4]

The rulers of the Songhai appear to have kept up their attacks on the Mossi during the following hundred years. One of them, Askia Daoud, launched an expedition against the Mossi in 1549 to celebrate his accession to the throne. He attacked and defeated them again in 1561 while on his way to attack Bornou, and their ruler "abandoned the country with all his troops."[5] After this and several other crushing defeats, the Mossi refrained from attacking Songhai territory. Their ardor for external adventures apparently cooled after this period, and there are no reports of their fighting anyone else except the Bambara of Segou in the eighteenth century.[6] Of [721]
course, Mossi chiefs made local forays among smaller neighboring groups such as the Busansi, Gurunsi, and Samogo, but only to catch slaves.

During the nineteenth century—a rather chaotic period in the western Sudan—the Mossi appear to have been immune from outside attacks. Crozat, who visited them in 1890, states: "From the very first, in Mossi country, one feels that one has entered a new land, more peaceful, richer, and more populous [than other African countries he had visited]. . . . The people one meets on the roads are workers on their way to the fields, or are carrying wares to the neighboring market. They are not like the Songhai and the Bobo, who always carry bows on their shoulders."[7] The immunity of the Mossi from attack by such intrepid nineteenth-century

648 warriors as El Hadj Omar and Samory Touré surprised and puzzled many
175 of their early visitors. Binger explains it as follows:

> Thanks to the primitive tribes that surrounded them like a rampart, the Mossi were spared the incursions of their powerful neighbors. This immunity cannot last much longer, because [Mogho Naba] Sanum is weak, has little spirit, and is badly counseled.[8]

Binger was partly correct in attributing the immunity of the Mossi to the presence of weaker groups on their borders. To the military adventurers of the period, the Mossi must have appeared invulnerable when compared to their weaker neighbors. Nevertheless, the Mossi declare that it was their vigilance and willingness to fight that prevented Samory Touré, among others, from invading their country.[9] They claim to have captured and executed nine of the ten spies he sent to survey their territory. The one spy who returned allegedly told Samory Touré that the Mossi were too strong to be attacked, because they banded together against all outsiders.

175 Crozat attributes the Mossi freedom from attack to miraculous and
648 magical factors:
789

> There is widespread belief in surrounding territories that Mossi country is inviolable. Alone amid the troubled populations that surround it, it enjoys
[976] relative peace. It owes this to the very special protection of a deity, and also to the virtues of the special talismans owned by the ruler of Ouagadougou. The terror inspired by these charms is such that some years ago the leader of Gadiari's column suffered a mass desertion of his men when he tried to lead them to the conquest of Mossi country. He himself was killed, perhaps by his own *sofas* [soldiers]. This case cannot be expected to undermine belief in these presumptuous charms.[10]

175 This statement, like Binger's, contains an element of truth, but not in
648 the way that Crozat believed. The Ouagadougou kingdom did have a
[114] series of ritual pacts with neighboring Mossi and non-Mossi groups. Crozat found that Mogho Naba Sanum was on "good terms" with the people of Fada-N'Gourma. He tells us that this friendship was maintained by a "curious custom" whereby the Ouagadougou ruler sent wives, captives, and horses from his predecessor's estate to the ruler of the Gurmanche.[11] Similarly, Pinchon, a British officer stationed in the Gold Coast at the beginning of the century, reports that there existed an ancient pact between the Mossi and the Mamprusi. This pact kept the ruler of each country from attacking the other on pain of death by the ancestors. Like the pact between the Mossi and the Gurmanche, this agreement was sanctioned by an annual gift of a horse, slaves, and cloth from the Mossi to the Mamprusi. Pinchon speculates that it was the existence of this pact that induced the Mamprusi

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ruler to grant asylum to Mogho Naba Wobogo in 1897. He adds that it was probably the injunction in the pact that they should never meet which prevented the ruler from personally receiving Wobogo.[12]

A ritual pact also bound the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou to the ruler of Dagomba. He sent him goods from the estate of the previous Mogho Naba as well as gifts for yearly sacrifices on the grave of Nyennega, the Mossi progenitrix. There are reports that the Ouagadougou ruler also exchanged annual presents with the Ashanti ruler, but it is not known whether these were courtesy gifts or goods sanctioning ritual pacts.

The ritual pacts among Mossi kingdoms and between them and their neighbors appear to have derived from actual or putative kinship ties. This seems to be supported not only by the traditions of the Mossi but also by those of the surrounding peoples. Whatever their origin, these pacts seem to have afforded their beneficiaries a remarkable degree of freedom from external aggression. It is possible that the Mossi and their neighbors really believed in the efficacy of supernatural sanctions, for purposes of mutual protection. But one suspects that it was the relative weakness of these various groups that caused them to rely on supernatural agencies rather than military might for protection. As will be pointed out below, the Mossi (and probably all of their important neighbors) had considerable difficulty in building and maintaining a fighting force sufficiently large to wage protracted or large-scale wars against foreign groups.

The Mossi kingdoms seldom fought among themselves, although their leaders quarreled over status and committed aggression against each other's territories. For example, the Ouagadougou rulers, who claimed suzerainty over Yatenga, often tried to impose their will on that kingdom. Yet, although they were usually rebuffed by the Yatenga Naba, they never tried to resolve the issue by force of arms. In fact, even when a Yatenga ruler appears to have given the Mogho Naba just cause for war, little fighting actually took place. Several times the Yatenga rulers seized such principalities as Riziam and Yako, which were dependent on Ouagadougou, but in no case did the Ouagadougou rulers wage war against them. In 1890, Crozat witnessed Mogho Naba Wobogo's attempt to stop a war between Yatenga and Yako. The Yako people wanted to obey their sovereign and stop the war, but the Yatenga monarch refused to do so.[13]

Crozat attributes the ineffectiveness of the Mogho Naba's authority over brother kingdoms to the fact that he had no standing army with which to enforce his rule. While relative strength may have been and probably was the main reason for the Mogho Naba's lack of aggressiveness, the ritual pact that prevented the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou from meeting the

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628 642 643 175 [648]

Yatenga Naba (and other rulers) or treading on his territory should not be overlooked. The suggestion that force was not the only consideration was lent force by later events. The French conquest later reduced the rulers of both Ouagadougou and Yatenga to impotence and obviated war between them, yet they did not meet until 1946—some fifty years after the conquest. They met then only because they had to represent their subjects at a meeting to plan the restoration of the Upper Volta and reunite all the descendants of Oubri and Ouedraogo into one territory.

Relative strength obviously played an important part in determining whether one Mossi kingdom interfered in the internal affairs of another. For example, when a Tenkodogo ruler asked a Mogho Naba to help him suppress Busansi subjects who had rebelled, the Mogho Naba readily complied.[14] But when a fratricidal struggle over the nam broke out in Tenkodogo in 1894, the Mogho Naba decided not to intervene even though he was asked to do so.[15]

628 643 669 175

The central governments of the various kingdoms found it necessary to wage war against their subordinate territories at regular intervals. In the Ouagadougou kingdom, most of these wars seem to have been administrative actions against a prince or district chief who had contravened an order from the Mogho Naba or refused to pay tribute. The Dimdamba were the Mogho Naba's most rebellious subordinates, and it was against them that he fought most of his wars. Characteristic of these wars was the series between Naba Ligidi (1866–90), Dim of Boussouma province, and Mogho Naba Sanum.[16] Ligidi had seized and turned over to the Mogho Naba the recalcitrant Naba Yemde, then Dim of Boulsa, and confiscated the rebel's property. Later on, when the Mogho Naba had made peace with Yemde's son, Naba Kiba, he asked Ligidi to surrender the seized property. Ligidi refused to do so, and the angry Mogho Naba sent the royal army into his territory. The army sacked and burned several villages and retreated. Ligidi's forces skirmished with the rear guard but abandoned pursuit near the Ouagadougou border.

Ligidi took his revenge by helping a district chief who had rebelled against Naba Kiba. While he was thus engaged, the royal army again attacked and defeated him. Four days later, it reinvaded Boussouma, engaged Ligidi's forces at a place called Goudri, and won a brilliant victory. Despite Ligidi's furious counter-attacks, the army captured his capital, Ouayougya. The ruler's army finally returned to Ouagadougou, satisfied that Ligidi was thoroughly beaten. But the Mogho Naba had underestimated Ligidi's tenacity. For the next ten years, this Dim waged war against his fellow Dimdamba. The Mogho Naba finally grew tired of his depreda-

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tions and launched another expedition against Ouayougya. The expedition failed because of a lack of water, and the army was forced to return to Ouagadougou. The war would have continued had not both Mogho Naba Sanum and Ligidi died in 1890. 628 669 175 643

It appears that the Mogho Naba tolerated fighting among his immediate subordinates, and seldom intervened in local wars unless one of the combatants openly flouted his authority. For example, when the autonomous principality of Riziam attempted to wrest control of Salmetenga district from Boussouma province, Mogho Naba Doulougou did not intervene. He knew that Salmetenga owed allegiance to Boussouma, but was perfectly willing to allow its ruler to transfer allegiance to Riziam. When Boussouma was on the brink of defeat, the Salmetenga Naba fled to Ouagadougou to seek asylum. The Mogho Naba sent him back to Naba Piga, the Boussouma Dim, with the request that he be allowed to live. Piga was so angry with the chief that he ignored the Mogho Naba's request and executed him. This incurred the wrath of Mogho Naba Doulougou, and he sent an army to attack Piga. Fortunately for this disobedient Dim, the Mogho Naba died and the attack was called off.[17]

The reaction of Mogho Naba Koutou to fighting among his subordinates was more typical. He did not interfere in a long series of battles between the principalities of Riziam and Mane which culminated in 1866 when the Riziam people seized, imprisoned, and executed several Mane merchants who had gone to buy salt in Timbuktu. Mane appealed to its brother province of Boussouma for aid, and Riziam appealed to a Fulani chieftain for reinforcements. Before a battle could ensue, however, the Boussouma Dim, Naba Siguiri, died after drinking some millet beer, and the fighting was called off. Naba Kom of Mane then went off alone with his army, defeated the Fulani, and killed their chief, Sekki. When Ligidi (the chief mentioned above) succeeded his father, Naba Siguiri, he elected to continue the war against Riziam with the help of the Mane army, but the battle was inconclusive. The stalemate did not satisfy the bellicose Ligidi, who attacked Riziam once more in 1871, burning villages and seizing property. The Riziam people finally rallied and halted him. They ambushed his soldiers when they tried to retreat, and harried them so thoroughly that Ligidi had to call off the war when slaughter and thirst decimated his ranks.[18] [648]

Similarly, Mogho Naba Sanum did not interfere when one of his own district chiefs, the Salogho Naba, was attacked and defeated by the ruler of Tema principality. Nor did he enter the fray when another of his district chiefs was attacked and defeated by the Boulsa Dim. The fighting in both 628 669 175 643 634

669 cases was over women. The Tema Dim successfully defended his prin-
175 cipality against a Zittenga district chief who not only had the effrontery to
643 demand the return of a wife who had fled into Tema but also invaded the
634 principality when she failed to return.[19] The Boulsa Dim attacked and defeated the Salogho Naba when he refused to repatriate a man and woman convicted of adultery who had fled into his district. It is possible that in each case the Mogho Naba refused to become involved in a squabble over women, but it is more likely that he refrained from participating in a local war that did not threaten the security of the entire country.

628 Many Dimdamba made it a practice to help each other in wars against
669 common enemies. In the middle of the nineteenth century, Naba Zende of
175 Tema and Naba Totoabo of Yako joined in a war against Naba Sebogo of La when Sebogo refused to repatriate one of Totoabo's wives, who had fled into his territory. The two victorious allies burned villages in La and forced Sebogo to flee for his life. They searched for the woman, but she was never found. The successors of the three rulers remained embittered by this war and eventually renewed the fighting. On this occasion, Naba Tanga of
[643] Tema and Naba Sagha of Yako fought against Naba Kombase of La. But this time Yako and Tema were unable to defeat La and had to withdraw. There is no evidence that the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou took any part in these wars.[20]

643 The Mogho Naba appears to have taken a greater interest in wars be-
●648 tween his Dimdamba and non-Mossi populations, and to have profited by
175 them occasionally. When the followers of a Fulani chief named Karfo carried off some cattle belonging to the Boussouma people, the Boussouma Dim, Naba Siguiri, threatened war if the animals were not returned. Karfo not only refused to surrender the cattle but insulted Siguiri in his reply. Siguiri marched against the Fulani, killed Karfo, seized all the cattle he could find, and sent some of the "most beautiful animals" to Mogho Naba Koutou.[21]

634 Although the Mogho Naba tolerated wars among his Dimdamba, he
669 apparently forbade the district chiefs under his direct command to fight
578 among themselves. As we saw in Chapter IV, some such fighting did take
628 place, but the Mogho Naba seems to have ignored it in most cases because of its relative unimportance. The Mossi, on the other hand, magnified this local fighting, which they called *tengkom* ("civil war"), and which consisted of mere skirmishes between villages or neighboring districts, with few casualties. In fact, the Gounga Naba once stopped a war between districts after only nineteen persons had died. But as a rule, districts seldom if ever fought among themselves. The actual combatants were villagers

634 721 567 175

3. Finally, a third lot, composed of young girls and young boys, was distributed among the warriors and put into their charge. The boys will be employed until further notice as grooms to the warriors; later on, those who prove themselves useful and docile will be kept. The others will be sold at the first opportunity. The girls will be given in marriage to warriors who distinguish themselves.[24]

721 643 644 701 [645]

The military campaigns of the Mossi, in contrast to their slave-raiding expeditions, appear to have been well organized. When the Mogho Naba felt that a war was necessary, he summoned his five provincial ministers and the Tansoba to a parley. If war was decided upon, the Tansoba was given full charge of all operations. This man, chosen from a hereditary clan of warriors who lived in a village called Tansob'tenga in Sapone district, was listed among the Mogho Naba's courtiers but seldom appeared at court unless war was imminent. His duties as chief warrior were considered so dangerous that he constantly sought out religious practitioners for supernatural aid. Nevertheless, a war minister who was good and brave was not expected to live very long. If he did live to become gray-haired, the other courtiers made fun of him by pretending that his graying head could only be the result of his having carried a sheep captured in warfare on his head as a present to the ruler.

701 721 644 [202] [411]

Once given a mandate for war, the Tansoba collected his magico-religious apparatus and prepared the requisite sacrifices. He then asked the provincial ministers to notify the district chiefs to assemble with their warriors under the leadership of the local Tansobadamba, who were often members of the Tansoba clan. When the district chiefs received this notice, they beat their *zongagondo* (war drums), and the local administrators sent orders for men to the village chiefs. The village chiefs, in turn, beat their war drums to summon their noble cavalrymen and commoner foot soldiers, who came armed with bows and arrows, spears, swords, and clubs, with or without iron tips. The tips of the sharp weapons were often covered with a vegetable poison derived from a shrub of the Strophanthus species. Some of the men also carried guns after firearms were introduced among the Mossi from the desert region and from the coast. Many carried rawhide shields.

[278] [411] [177] [714]

701 726 [648]

As soon as the village contingents had assembled and had gathered their provisions, they marched to the district centers. Then they proceeded either to the place of battle or to Ouagadougou. In the latter case, they became part of the royal army and were joined by the forces of those princes who were prepared to honor their obligation to the Mogho Naba. For example, when the French invaded Ouagadougou in 1896, the Boulsa Dim sent his prime minister "at the head of an army to aid Mogho Naba

Wobogo. However, he did not have to intervene, because while still en route he heard that Ouagadougou had fallen."[25] Thanks to this type of aid, the Mogho Naba was able to gather quite a large army, a fact that contradicts Crozat's belief that the Mogho Naba was a "king without an army."[26]

The early Mogho Nanamse used to accompany their armies into the field, but this practice was later abandoned and was revived periodically only by the more adventurous rulers. (The last ruler to die in warfare was Mogho Naba Doulougou [ca. 1800].) However, it was the Mogho Naba's duty to greet the army when it came to Ouagadougou, to beat the royal war drum, and to turn the troops over to the Tansoba. This officer served as commander in chief of the army, and was assisted by the Gounga Naba, a provincial minister, who served as his aide-de-camp. The Gounga Naba was expected to die rather than retreat in battle, especially if the Tansoba was killed. Two other ministers, the Kamsaogho Naba and the Larhalle Naba, also accompanied the army. The later Baloum Nanamse did not venture into battle, because they had to attend to the personal needs of the Mogho Naba. In early times, however, they accompanied their sovereigns into battle and fought alongside them. The Ouidi Naba never went to war, because it was his duty to look after the kingdom. He had to ensure the interests of all the people even if the royal army was defeated, the country invaded, and the ruler killed or forced to flee. The Samande Naba went to war and served as chief of the infantry.

Scouts preceded each district contingent as the army marched off to battle. Within the contingent, the younger warriors marched in front, followed by older men. It was the duty of the more experienced warriors to make sure that the younger men did not break ranks and run under the stress of battle. Behind the foot soldiers came the cavalry, composed of nobles and of the few commoners who possessed horses. Behind these came the district chief, surrounded by his own palace guard. Several heralds known as *yumba* (sing. *yuma*) accompanied the district forces to exhort them to fight. As the men marched to battle the yumba shouted:

> Men! Your ancestors were not slaves. They were men. They were stronger than anyone else. They did not bathe with water; they bathed with blood. Do you wish to return home to drink millet water and eat bread? Never! A man does not eat bread or drink millet water; a man fights. Your ancestors were not afraid of anyone; you must not be afraid of anyone. Even if you are killed today, you must march ahead, beat your enemies, and take their villages. You must not be afraid!

Mossi armies on the march used scouts to keep a sharp lookout for the enemy or for any evidence that he was aware of impending attack. The tactics these scouts used to avoid detection, such as camouflaging themselves

726 with leaves and branches and crawling upon the ground, can be witnessed
[964] even today at Mossi funerals where men re-enact warfare practices. Whenever possible, the Mossi preferred to take the enemy by surprise, but this was seldom possible when large-scale fighting and massive preparations were involved.

When two Mossi armies drew up to each other, the heralds from both sides issued such challenges and epithets as: "If you men do not wish to die, you should run or you will never eat again. We will have your blood to wash with." In the meantime, the Tansobadamba on both sides deployed their forces in accordance with the number of men available, the spirit of
[723] the enemy, and the nature of the terrain. From the description of warfare given to me by an old Tansoba in Nobere district, it appears that the strategy most commonly used was to split the infantry in two while attacking, thus making room for the cavalry to charge through. If the initial charge was successful, the attack was maintained, but if it failed, the army usually turned about and fled. Despite their braggadocio, Mossi commanders seldom insisted that their troops fight against overwhelming odds.
[644] However, shame over impending defeat often induced such officers as the
[645] Tansoba and the Gounga Naba to fight to the death. For example, during the war between Boulsa and Fada-N'Gourma in 1897, the Boulsa army lost so many men that the Boulsa Dim wanted to commit suicide in his humiliation. However, he was prevented from doing so by one of his subordinates.[27]

Soldiers wounded by poisoned spears or arrows extracted the projectiles if possible, and kept on fighting until they died. Even if they were wounded
[789] by an unpoisoned weapon, they did not seek medical aid. Most wounded men believed that they were doomed, because their protective amulets had
[727] failed them. For the same reason, a defeated army fleeing a battlefield made no attempt to retrieve its dead and dying, but left them to the vultures. When an army was victorious, however, the Mossi either carried their dead home for burial or buried them on the battlefield, saving some item of their clothing or equipment for the funeral.

Victorious Mossi armies usually pursued the enemy, burning villages as
[648] they went. The soldiers killed all the infants and the infirm, and when they
[567] fought against non-Mossi, they captured young people to be sold as slaves. Then they collected all the available booty and departed hurriedly, fearing
[727] that the confiscated cattle and slaves would slow their return and enable the rallied enemy to catch up with them.[28] If the army could not return home before dark, camp was set up for the night near a body of water so that the Tansobadamba could offer thanksgiving sacrifices. Pickets were later

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posted to alert the troops in case the enemy should attempt an attack at dawn. If the war was waged against foreigners, individual soldiers were allowed to keep a slave or a cow out of the booty; the remainder was divided between the district chiefs and the central government. In victorious civil wars against the enemies of the Mogho Naba, however, the entire booty was sent to the capital.

When the Mossi had to defend their own territory, their most common tactic was to evacuate the villages. This was the technique most often employed against invading French forces.[29] Other defenses included palisaded villages, barricades of fallen trees, trenches, and hedges, some with poisoned foot traps. Mangin reports that the Boulsa were defeated in their war with Fada-N'Gourma not only because their enemies fought valiantly, but also because they "were favored by very propitious terrain covered with thorny scrub, behind which the besieged men took cover to shoot on the Mossi."[30] Mangin does not say whether the scrub was poisoned, but his data indicate that this type of defense was common in the area. The Mossi say that the use of poisoned prickly plants (*silenage*) against invading forces dates back to the early conquest of the territory. Tradition recounts that Naba Oubri was unable to conquer Ouagadougou until his Ninisi wife advised him to shoe his soldiers against the poisoned foot traps of the aborigines.

Mossi wars or raids were usually limited to the dry season and stopped at the beginning of the planting season. Commenting on the war between Boulsa and Fada-N'Gourma, Mangin tells us: "This was during the dry season. Thirst completed what the courage of the Gyekango people had begun, and many Mossi perished."[31] Tradition recounts that it took Mogho Naba Waraga five successive years of attack before he defeated Ramzi, the rebellious chief of Riziam principality. He finally defeated him when his army attacked the province before its people had been able to harvest their crops and retire into an impregnable fortress for the dry season. Judging by the reports of European visitors, this type of dry-season warfare continued as late as the 1890's. For example, Crozat could not understand why the Mogho Naba did not send an army to defeat the chief of Lalle district, who had imprudently raided a village near Ouagadougou, and he concluded that the ruler did not have an army. The fact is, however, that Crozat was in Ouagadougou between September 9 and September 30, a period when the potential soldiers of the Mogho Naba had not yet harvested their crops. Had Crozat remained in Mossi country for three or four months longer, he would have seen the ruler's army in action; for, as a matter of fact, the Lalle Naba's attack on Mogho Naba Wobogo was but the latest episode in a prolonged struggle between the two rulers.

726 For several years Mogho Naba Sanum had tried unsuccessfully to corner
628 and defeat the rebellious Lalle Naba. Then one dry season the Mogho Naba
669 called his Tantoba and said to him:

> "I want you to assemble immediately an army composed only of courageous men, to go to Lalle and bring me, alive, Tanga [also called Wobogo], chief of that district." Several thousand men, eager for glory, were gathered, and the army advanced against Lalle. It managed to burn Siguele, Tanga's residence, but did not capture the chief, who had fled to Koudougou. The royal army would have pursued him, but because the rainy season was imminent, and the men were needed to work in the fields, the army returned to Ouagadougou with a considerable amount of booty. The king received his war minister very kindly, because he foresaw the impending defeat of his obstinate enemy. The Mogho Naba then said to his warriors, "Go and cultivate your fields, but remember that as soon as the harvest has been stored, you have to capture Tanga. Regardless of the cost, I must have him, even if all of you must die."[53]

Mogho Naba Sanum died before he could capture Tanga, and the task fell to his successor, Mogho Naba Wobogo, who fared no better. One dry season, the royal army chased the rebel into Gurunsi territory but failed to catch him. They would have continued the chase, but "it was during the rainy season, and the royal army was disbanded."[53]

[648] Mogho Naba Wobogo never succeeded in capturing Tanga, because the French came in and conquered the Mossi. Nevertheless, the rebel did not go unpunished. After the French had completed their conquest they asked the Ouidi Naba what steps should be taken to ensure peace. He told them to capture and kill the Lalle Naba. This unforeseen chief was hunted down, captured, placed on an unsaddled colt, and brought to Ouagadougou, where he was publicly humiliated and then executed.

701 The episode with Tanga and the limiting of warfare to the dry season
726 indicate that the Mogho Naba did not have the resources to maintain a standing army, and, therefore, had difficulty exerting his authority by the use of force. There is no doubt that the Mogho Nanamse were able to gather very large armies at specific times against both internal and external enemies, but when the planting period came the soldiers had to attend to their crops. This lack of resources also limited the power and authority of Mogho Nanamse over their autonomous subordinates. As a result, the Mossi kingdoms remained segmentary in nature, and became highly organized only at certain periods of their history.[54] The availability of military resources thus had a significant effect on the nature of the Mossi governmental and political system.

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631 because of this delinquency, the Mogho Naba might hesitate to come to
651 the aid of any of his vassals if a general war broke out. It is true that the
643 Mogho Naba did not aid the Yatenga ruler when the French arrived.
114 But whether this was because of his failure to pay taxes, or because the
[648] French conquest of the Yatenga coincided with a civil war there, we shall
[669] probably never know. We do know that many of the Mogho Naba's vassals came to his aid when the French finally arrived at Ouagadougou. It is my opinion that the gifts exchanged between Yatenga and Ouagadougou were not "tributary," but were more in the nature of tokens of friendship between two peers.

643 The Mogho Naba and his provincial ministers also received revenue as
645 a function of their judicial roles. The nature and disposition of the fines
692 levied against legal offenders were discussed in Chapter V. The Mogho
651 Naba's fees came in the form of the traditional gifts the litigants gave him
[431] even before their cases were tried. These gifts were never regarded as bribes, for this would have contradicted the Mossi axiom that "the truth is at Ouagadougou."

643 The Mogho Naba inherited all the property of the Kamsaogho Naba,
651 and claimed all the property of district chiefs who died without close rela-
634 tives. He also received inheritance taxes (fado) from the estates of deceased
768 district chiefs. In collecting the fado, the Mogho Naba first retained the
[428] horse on which the messenger came to announce the chief's death. He reciprocated by sending envoys with cowries and animals to be offered to their common ancestors at the chief's funeral. After the funeral, the envoys claimed the dead chief's quiver of arrows to take to Ouagadougou for deposit with those of other dead chiefs. Then they demanded the fado, and jestingly told the heirs that the Mogho Naba would be satisfied with nothing less than "a thousand of everything" (*tusri bumbu fa*) the deceased had possessed: wives, slaves, horses, cows, goats, chickens, articles of clothing, and so on. The heirs pleaded poverty and jokingly gave the envoys a few old and sickly animals, old chickens, tattered pieces of clothing, etc. Eventually, they handed out the fado, which usually consisted of livestock, clothing, food, weapons, jewelry, cowries, and even slaves. Lastly, they gave the envoys the chief's ceremonial horse and presents for themselves.

643 The Mogho Naba and his ministers collected a considerable amount of
645 revenue from the traders who visited Ouagadougou and the larger market
651 towns and village markets throughout the kingdom.[8] The Mossi (especially
439 the assimilated Yarse) were good traders, and they benefited from their
[487] country's strategic location between the Sahara and the forest regions. According to Barth, some six caravan routes crossed the country, linking

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pleted, the remainder of the ceremony followed the pattern of the Ouagadougou ritual.

During the weeks that followed, the village chiefs and the heads of the larger lineage segments all offered sacrifices to their ancestors. The Pughtiema of each prominent local administrator, chief, or lineage head prepared and poured the millet water as a libation to the ancestors. Whenever possible, each of these personages invited musicians to sing praises to his ancestors. He dressed in his best robe and sat outside his hut to receive presents from his relatives, friends, and subjects, along with their best wishes for the new year, and for long life and prosperity. In return he gave them kola nuts, beer, and food. Thus, in celebrating the Basgha, all the Mossi were united in prayers and supplications to the ancestors, upon whom rested the future of their country and the successful reign of the descendants of Ouedraogo and Oubri.

The earth deity, Tenga, held the central place in the second major religio-political ceremony which linked all Mossi. This ritual, called *Tense* (from *tenga*, "earth") and sometimes *Naba Oubri ma koure* ("the anniversary of the funeral of Mogho Naba Oubri's mother"), was so important to Mossi cohesion that it was banned by the French, and as a result its main features are now unclear. According to tradition, Naba Oubri loved Poughtoenga, his Ninisi mother, so much, and was so pleased with the elaborate funeral he gave her, that he decided to repeat this ceremony each year in the hope that his subjects would be blessed with the bountiful crops and herds which had made the first one possible. Curiously enough, Oubri's mother was not a central figure in the Tense celebration. Instead, great stress was placed on the fructifying powers of the earth and on the importance of the royal ancestors in Mossi life. The juxtaposition and association of the earth deity with Oubri's mother has important implications for the Mossi political organization. Mossi tradition holds that a Ninisi woman was the ancestress of the Mossi of Ouagadougou. Her people probably celebrated the Tense as a fertility rite to their earth goddess, Tenga. The Mossi apparently took over the ceremony and used it both as a fertility rite and as a memorial festival, thus symbolically uniting the conquerors and the conquered.[5]

In contrast to the Basgha, no special date appears to have been set for the celebration of the Tense. It was held sometime before the crops were sowed, but according to Tauxier it was not celebrated at all in Ouagadougou when the previous year's harvest had been poor.[6] Before setting the date for the festival, the Mogho Naba summoned the Larhalle Naba and ordered him to have sacrifices made on the graves of all former rulers. This minister

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 769

between the living and the dead," but also to strengthen the political bonds 796
between the Mogho Naba and his chiefs, down to the humblest elder of a 182
Mossi compound.

In addition to the Basgha and Tense, the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou 769
appears to have offered another yearly sacrifice to Tenga. Each year, after 796
the Basgha, the Mogho Naba, the Baloum Naba, and a large entourage re- 782
portedly visited a large earth shrine called Tantibo in the vicinity of Saba- 543
tenga to offer propitiatory sacrifices in the name of all the people. When [778]
the royal party arrived at Sabatenga, they were joined by the Sabatenga Naba and his Tengsoba. The group proceeded to the foot of the sacred hill, and here the monarch dismounted, took off his bonnet and shoes, and climbed the hill. He made the customary Mossi salute at the shrine and looked on silently while the Tengsoba sacrificed animals and poured libations of millet beer and millet water in supplication for the health and prosperity of the Mogho Naba and all his people.[7]

When evil befell Mossi country in spite of the annual sacrifices to the ancestors and to the earth deity, the Mogho Naba had to offer additional sacrifices. If the country was plagued by drought, the ruler went to an [731]
earth shrine in Ouagadougou itself, called "Kom be paspanga" (literally, "water is strong there"), for a sacrifice. Moreover, he might order all his [634]
district and village chiefs to perform similar sacrifices to the earth shrines [622]
within their territories. In Nobere district, for instance, the district chief went to the village called Barkago, where, standing barefoot and bareheaded on the hilly shrine known as Beta, he ordered the local village chief and the Tengsoba to offer sacrifices for rain and good health.

It is generally believed by the Mossi that when the French attacked 648
Ouagadougou, the deposed Mogho Naba Wobogo made sacrifices to earth 782
shrines. Tradition has it that he sacrificed a black cock, a black ram, a black donkey, and a black slave on a large hill near the White Volta River, beseeching the earth goddess to drive the French away and to destroy the traitor Mazi whom they had placed upon the throne. When Mazi died, the Mossi people believed that he had received his just deserts from the earth shrine for treason. The French believe that Mazi was poisoned.[8]

The district and village chiefs, like the Mogho Naba, were required to 634
make propitiatory sacrifices to the earth shrines on behalf of their subjects. 622
Before taking office, a district chief was ritually shown the major earth 782
shrines in his territory, and he could not ignore their existence and their need for sacrifices. In a country with major local variations in rainfall and localized animal and human epidemics, the Tengsobadamba of stricken areas always called upon the local chiefs to help them propitiate disgruntled [793]
spirits.

634 spirits. The chiefs could not refuse such requests, especially when the vil-
622 lagers were poor, because they were regarded as "fathers of their people."
782 In some cases, however, district chiefs had to protect their subjects against unscrupulous Tengsobadamba who took advantage of local crises and tried
661 to prey upon the villagers by refusing to perform the requisite sacrifices
793 unless they received substantial gifts. The ensuing struggle was between
634 the secular and the sacred; between the chief as a representative of the con-
782 querors, and the Tengsoba as a member of the conquered group. It was always resolved in favor of the Mossi chief, who never permitted his Tengsobadamba the same privileges held by religious practitioners in neighboring societies.[9] The Mossi chiefs recognized that they needed the Tengsobadamba, and many myths recount how invading Mossi chiefs went into the woods where the Tengsobadamba were hiding to beseech and eventually force them to return to their districts so that sacrifices might be continued. On the other hand, the Mossi chiefs always insisted on the primacy of the nam over any other power. They employed the Tengsobadamba to intercede with Tenga for the welfare of their subjects, but they never allowed the priests to control them.

771 The coming of Moslems to the kingdom of Ouagadougou had little
795 effect on the way in which the Mogho Nanamse used the traditional reli-
643 gious system to bolster their political power.[10] In fact, the Mossi rulers later used Islam and its adherents in the same manner as they had used the
[797] aboriginal religion. The Moslems first tried to subdue the Mossi in the fifteenth century by persuasion, and later by the jihad. Both attempts
[648] failed, but the Moslems finally entered Mossi country as refugees from
[167] Sudanese wars. Their fortunes waxed and waned, depending on whether they were befriended by the ruler in whose territory they lived. During
[798] certain periods, they were subjected to many restrictions and were forbidden by the Mogho Naba to recite their prayers in public places.[11] At other
[797] times, they were left free to practice their religion, and even succeeded in converting several Mogho Nanamse to Islam. Under converts such as Savadogo (ca. 1760), Islam spread into many districts and gave rise to such important local centers as Sakhaboutenga (Dakay).

771 The Moslems in Ouagadougou were represented at the court by their
795 Imam. This person even received his badge of office—a white turban and white robe—from the Mogho Naba, and had to swear in the name of Allah
792 and *Nabiyama* (the prophet Mohammed) to be faithful to him, obey him, and aid him in times of need. However, he did not have to drink the namtibo as suggested by Dim Delobson; nor did he have to observe such non-Moslem customs as drinking the millet beer the Mogho Naba provided for

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his guests.[13] On the contrary, when the Imam visited the ruler on Fridays or during important festivals to read from the Koran, the sovereign gave him sweetened millet water and appropriate gifts.

Most Mossi rulers at all levels had Moslems among their councillors. These men were often the only persons who had traveled extensively outside the country (on pilgrimages to Mecca), and thus could counsel a ruler about how to deal with foreign visitors. Most early European visitors to Mossi country were either helped or hindered (chiefly the latter, it seems) by these travel-wise councillors. Crozat had difficulties with the Moslems long before he arrived in Mossi country proper. When he got to Lanfiera, the Mossi who lived there were alarmed, and refused to help him proceed to Ouagadougou despite his protestations that "I come for the good of all, white and black, that we may be together like brothers, since the same God has made us all." Crozat reports that his plea was in vain because "El Hadj All-Karl declared that he would not receive me, and he will not receive me. El Hadj is wise, El Hadj is prudent, El Hadj knows all, El Hadj does not make decisions without good foresight, and once made, he keeps them."[13]

Crozat had the same difficulty when he entered Mossi country. He tells us, "At Dounse [near Yako], for example, the marabouts did not look favorably upon my arrival, and it took a great deal of insistence on the part of Moussa to convince the Imam, my unwilling host, to present me to the chief who had expressed the desire to see me."[14] Crozat also found that he had to lodge with the Imam when he arrived at Ouagadougou, and he was assigned the same huts "which had served Captain Binger," who had visited the capital before him. He was disappointed with his reception and declares:

> I already knew from experience what sort of influence these men exercised over the chiefs. As a councillor of the chief, the Imam was overtly acknowledged as the second official in the village, but in reality he often commanded it. The Imam of Ouagadougou, therefore, could do much to help me or to hurt me. My decision to court him might flatter him, and that would be a move in the direction of winning his good graces, which, all things considered, was most important to me. The result was only partly in my favor. I succeeded insofar as the Imam was not hostile to me, but he did not help me as he might have.[15]

These Moslem councillors realized better than most other people what the visits of the Europeans implied for the independence of the country, and they tried their best to counsel the monarchs against receiving such visitors.

Beginning with Mogho Naba Doulougou (ca. 1750) Mossi sovereigns, whether Moslem or pagan, participated in the more important Moslem festi-

gift every year to the Imam and to Karamakho Isa, for whom he has great veneration. These are old and wise men who cannot but give him excellent counsel.[18]

The relations between Boukary Koutou and the Moslems of the Sakhaboutenga district show how Mossi chiefs, though pagans, were able to establish viable political bonds with potentially hostile believers of another religion. Boukary Koutou was probably a Moslem "in outward appearance only," as Binger suggests. Nevertheless, it was by being Moslems of this kind that Mossi rulers managed to retain the allegiance of their Moslem subjects. This was their duty as "fathers of their people," and apparently they did it without much hesitation. In this manner, they effectively used religion to bolster their power and sustain their authority.

Ritual connections between the Mossi rulers and the chiefs of surrounding countries enabled them to protect their subjects from foreign attack and to maintain internal cohesion. The numerous reciprocal gifts between the Mossi and such other Voltaic groups as the Dagomba, Mamprusi, and Gurmanche were based on the belief in descent from a common ancestor or ancestress. Ritual and the supernatural thus played an extremely important role in the cohesiveness of the Mossi kingdoms and in the functioning of their governmental processes. Without these ritual factors, it is doubtful whether the Mossi rulers would have been able to maintain such a relatively high degree of control over their subjects, given the relative weakness of their economic resources, communications, and armed forces. In trying to understand why the Mossi retained their autonomy for so long, one must take into consideration the statement made by a French officer a year after the Mossi were conquered: "We must not lose sight of the fact that [the Mossi] have always presented a common front to strangers, and that a single word of command is sufficient to unite them against the invader in the name of kinship and national unity."[19]

The phase of Mossi political history that began when Nyennega left Dagomba and moved northward came to an end with the European conquest. Most French scholars believe that the Mossi were in a state of decadence at the time of conquest and might have fallen to such African conquerors as El Hadj Omar, Samory Touré, or Baba To. The fact remains, however, that these conquerors all skirted Mossi country without entering it. If these African rulers believed that the Mossi were invincible in their unity, it was because the Mossi, through mythical bonds of common descent and actual bonds of kinship, had welded themselves into a cohesive and powerful group.

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gions to ascertain whether the people desired reunification. Duglas reported his findings to the National Assembly:

> You know as well as I do that the Mossi are proud of their past. Thanks to a political and social organization without peer in West Africa, they have known peace since the Middle Ages, in an Africa ravaged by war and depopulated by the slave trade. . . . This ancient land also desires prosperity and modernization. To achieve this its voice must be heard, not only in the National Assembly but particularly in the Grand Council [the highest consultative body] of French West Africa. The Upper Volta must have its own General Council.[20]

The law authorizing the reconstitution of the Upper Volta as a separate territory was promulgated on September 4, 1947. The non-Mossi populations of the projected territory feared Mossi domination and voiced their opposition in the Assembly, but in the end an accord was reached. The Mossi chiefs next petitioned the French government to pay for the rebuilding and refurbishing of Ouagadougou. François Bouda, one of the few traditional Mossi nakomce to become an elected representative of the Mossi, reminded the members of the Council of the French Union of what had occurred in 1919. He stated that his own father had recruited thousands of men to make bricks for "Bancoville" (an epithet for Ouagadougou; most of its buildings were of sun-dried bricks called *banco*) because Governor Hesling "never considered the possibility of purchasing cement, which was not even expensive. Forced labor was easy to recruit, and no one thought that the day would come when it would be gone."[21] Bouda said that the Government should now help the new territory to modernize the capital.

D'Arboussier, an RDA delegate in the Assembly, declared that he would support the bill, if only because in the past the French government had attempted "to make a crack race horse out of an ordinary horse, and in so doing had made it a decrepit mare."[22] Funds for rebuilding Ouagadougou were finally voted, and the "Bancoville" of French West Africa began to take on a new look with wide avenues, large administrative buildings, official residences, and even a new palace for the Mogho Naba.

With the reconstitution of the Upper Volta, the Mogho Naba and his chiefs attained their highest prestige since the conquest. The chiefs even had strong influence over the Mossi representatives to the organs of the French Union, because of the decisive support they had granted them in the elections. But this increase in prestige was to be short-lived. The chiefs were no longer the sole representatives of their people, and the Mossi were no longer isolated from events in other parts of the Upper Volta, or for that

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000 19. There is a curious story among the people of Nobere district that Mogho Naba Mottoba (who reigned in the seventeenth century) was not a Mossi but a Fulani who was given the nam after he chanced upon the installation ceremony and assassinated the newly elected man during the night. This story is denied in Ouagadougou; in fact, it contradicts the genealogical records of the ruling dynasty. However, the genealogy does show that Mottoba's father, Mogho Naba Guiliga, had succeeded his brother, and it is possible that there was dynastic rivalry for the nam between Mottoba and the former Mogho Naba's son. [174]

20. This rite was performed during the installation of the present Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou, although it is hardly recognizable as described in *Newsweek* (December 9, 1957, p. 48): "A man named Moussa Congo assumed the name of Kougri Naba last week and became the 35th Mogho Naba of the Mossi in the capital city of Ouagadougou in the Upper Volta region of French West Africa. Son of Emperor Issoufou Congo, Kougri Naba, as the new Mogho Naba, has one white horse, 200 wives, and 8,000 warriors, who danced around his palace ten times."

[182] 21. This practice has apparently lapsed since Mogho Naba Kougri moved into the modern concrete palace built for his father, Mogho Naba Sagha II.

[838] 22. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Soudan*, pp. 569–70. Tauxier claims the Mogho Nanamse used the pages for homosexual purposes on Fridays in order to circumvent the Moslem prohibition against intercourse with women on this holy day. Homosexuality is rare among the Mossi, as Tauxier himself admits, and most Mossi deny that the Mogho Nanamse ever resorted to it. However, one respondent did state that he had heard about homosexuality among certain past rulers.

23. Crozat, p. 4849.

[648] [762] [797] 24. When Mogho Naba Kom II died under mysterious circumstances in 1942, it was rumored that he had committed suicide rather than reduce the number of his wives as ordered by the administration under the influence of the Catholic missionaries. Kom allegedly held that no one can inherit a sovereign's wife during his lifetime. Therefore, in order to avoid loss of status by seeing his wives go to commoners, he chose death so they would be inherited by nobles.

[114] 25. The statement in *Newsweek* (December 9, 1957, p. 48) that Kougri has two hundred wives is untrue.

[563] 26. Intermarriage between the Mossi and the Fulani has produced a people known as the Simili-Mossi. Nevertheless, the Mossi are strongly prejudiced against the Fulani, especially against the women, stating that the Moaga who has sexual intercourse with a Fulani woman must bathe in nine different rivers before he becomes clean. The basis of this prejudice appears to be that Fulani women are not cultivators and therefore are unacceptable as Mossi wives.

27. Mossi women know a great deal about the history and traditions of their people. But they never indicate that they do except during such rituals, when they are required to play certain roles.

28. Dim Delobson, p. 96.

29. Dim Delobson (p. 101) states that there are "sacred things" in this village, but I have been unable to substantiate his report.

[824] 30. Dim Delobson (p. 104) gives the classic explanation of this nighttime ride. On his ride from Bere to Djiba, the mounted prince must try to touch a certain branch of a certain tree. If he is destined to succeed his father, he will succeed in touching the branch; if he is not, the branch will magically withdraw at his approach.

I visited the area in which this ritual reportedly took place, but the people in the vicinity denied that such a tree existed.

31. *Ibid.*, p. 106.

[648] 32. IFAN (Compte Rendu No. 429). There are many other rumors concerning Kom's death. In a book praising the loyalty of the Africans to the Free French Gov-

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erament of Charles de Gaulle, Deveze declares (p. 74): "Moreover, the Mogho Naba, himself king of the Mossi of Ouagadougou, one of the most powerful dynasties of French Africa, who was placed under surveillance by order of Boisson [the local Vichyite commander] and separated from his subjects, committed suicide after calling his son and solemnly commanding him not to take power 'until the true French should return.'" If this is true, the heir to the throne either could not or would not follow his father's advice. 000 [648]

33. Today a girl is usually chosen as Kourita, because it is easier to banish a woman than a man from the capital. Nevertheless, when Mogho Naba Kom II died in 1942, the young girl chosen to be Kourita was hidden by her mother, and as a result the funeral and the investiture of the new ruler were delayed.

34. See Cheron, "La Cour du Boussouma Naba" (pp. 304-12), for a description of the court of the Boussouma Naba, an autonomous provincial ruler.

35. Dim Delobson (p. 8) claims that the Mogho Naba had the right to ratify the nomination of all Dimdamba, and that it was he who gave them their insignia of office. [643]

36. Cheron, "Contribution," p. 651. He also reports (p. 654): "The Boulsa Naba was elected by a special college. In principle, the choice of this college always fell on one of the sons of the deceased, generally the eldest."

37. *Ibid.*, p. 672.

38. Dim Delobson (p. 143) claims that the person who was asked to give a sacrificial animal to the Baloum Naba was thus assured of the nomination. But the Nobere chief with whom I discussed this matter insisted that he and all the other claimants had given sacrificial animals, and that he did not know he had been chosen until he was notified by the Ouidi Naba.

39. Despite a legend which says that a young woman once ruled the Doulougou district as regent for her young son, the choice of district chief was always a man old enough to rule. If a chief's heir was still a boy, the nam was given to another relative and no provision was made for it to return either to the boy or to his descendants. Unless the boy were fortunate, neither he nor his line ever received the nam again.

40. The ingredients used by the Baloum Naba in preparing the namtibo are kept secret. Most people believe that he uses some elements of the royal amulets, blood, and other liquids. It is not known whether the blood used in ancient times was that of a slave or merely of an animal. Most of the district chiefs with whom I discussed this point reacted with horror to the implication of cannibalism, and insisted that the blood was from animals sacrificed the previous day. However, commoners believe that human blood was used.

41. A fact of great importance in understanding Mossi expansion is that the Kouritadamba of the Nobere district chiefs were banished to the Gurunsi region of Gouroungo on the other side of the Red Volta River. The last Kourita from Nobere is now living in that area, where he rules over a Mossi population drawn from Nobere district and Manga district.

42. Cf. Mangin, p. 19.

CHAPTER FOUR

1. Cf. Socquet, p. 62.
2. Barth, III, 643, 648; Binger, II, 479.
3. Crozat, p. 4822.
4. Delafosse, II, 128-29.
5. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Yatenga*, p. 90.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 93, 100.
7. Crozat, p. 4849.
8. Delafosse, II, 29.
9. Mangin, pp. 12 ff.
10. Cheron, "Contribution," pp. 673-74.
11. *Ibid.*, pp. 654-55, 657-58.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 680.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 670.
14. *Ibid.*, pp. 685-86.

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15. *Ibid.*, p. 673.
16. Delafosse, II, 128–29.
17. Binger, II, 502.
18. Crozat, p. 4849.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 4822.

20. The structure of the Mossi kingdoms and their relationship with the autonomous principalities make it difficult to determine the exact number of districts within each unit. For example, the Mossi people always claimed that the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou was sovereign over "333" chiefs (cf. Binger, I, 502). However, since the Mossi always associate the number 3 with males, any number giving a multiple of threes is suspect. Binger stated that some of the chiefs referred to as part of the 333 were no more than village chiefs. However, Tauxier (*Le Noir du Soudan*, p. 567), describing the kingdom of Ouagadougou, states, "At the top of this hierarchy is the king, the Mogho Naba, paramount chief of the Mossi, residing at Ouagadougou. To give at least an idea of the relative importance of this empire, without going further than, say, the cercle of Ouagadougou, there were eight provinces comprising 300 *cantons* [districts], 5,000 villages or small towns, and 861,700 inhabitants."

While voicing the myth that the Mogho Naba had "under his control 333 chiefs or Nabas," Dim Delobson actually gives only about 150 chiefs in his list of district and other chiefs (pp. 46, 288–97). It was impossible for me to get any idea of the number of chiefs, because the Mossi hierarchy has changed radically since 1905.

21. Dim Delobson, p. 63.
22. Cheron, "Contribution," p. 651.
23. The Mossi did not acknowledge the defeat of Mogho Naba Wobogo by the French until the Ouidi Naba surrendered to the invaders and installed a ruler they had chosen.
24. Archives, Document 1G-334. Lambert describes Karfo as "a curious figure who unfortunately is not well known."
25. Binger, I, 465.
26. Dim Delobson, pp. 15–45, *passim*.
27. It appears that the monarchs found fault with their district chiefs most readily when they had sons or other relatives in need of districts to govern. Since a possessor of the nam could not be deprived of it while alive, he had to be accused of some crime and executed. Koabga was replaced as Doulougou Naba by Lassanne Congo (called Naba Kouliga), a son of the Mogho Naba. On the other hand, when Naba Pusha of Nobere district fled rather than commit suicide or start a civil war, he was replaced by his own brother, who became Naba Soulougou.
28. Dim Delobson, p. 44.
29. Cheron, "Contribution," p. 655.

CHAPTER FIVE

1. Mangin, p. 25.
2. Mangin does not discuss rape, but reported that an "abductor" was beaten and put in irons. The girl was returned to her family, and if she gave birth to a child, it was killed (pp. 26–27).
3. Dim Delobson, p. 55.
4. Most of my informants state quite clearly that the district chiefs did not have the right to impose the death penalty, but could do so if they were discreet about it and did not take advantage of their subjects. But Dim Delobson states: "Contrary to what people generally believe, the Kombere—the chief of the *canton* [district]—also had the power of life and death over his subjects. How many persons have been put to death only because they were wealthy? How many village chiefs have been killed by the district chiefs in their territories without the Mogho Naba's intervention?" (pp. 55–56).
5. Dim Delobson (p. 56) insists that justice was free of charge, but added that

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CHAPTER 9 [p.237]

Trade and Markets Among the Mossi People

BY ELLIOTT P. SKINNER

The Mossi represent the dominant population of the Voltaic Re- 105
public, numbering about 1,600,000 out of some 3,200,000 inhabitants. [131] [161]
They represent the unique example of a group which has preserved its [128]
ethnic identity and political autonomy through all the vicissitudes [648]
of Sudanic history until it was conquered by the French in 1896. Tra- [173]
dition records that the people who became the Mossi left the Dagomba
region in present-day Ghana during the eleventh century and moved
into the bend of the Niger River, carving out three large kingdoms
and smaller principalities in the process. At the head of these still [642]
extant kingdoms are rulers *(Moro Nabas)* who formerly held feudal- [643]
like control over the provinces, districts and villages which comprise [631]
their domains. The villages, with their patri-local, polygynous, ex- [821]
tended family households, formed the basic Mossi settlement pattern. [592]
A complex hierarchical administrative apparatus carried the power [131]
of the Mossi rulers into the smallest villages, and funneled taxes and
tribute back to them. This structure still exists, but of course it has [648]
been modified by the French.

The Mossi were and are still divided into stratified royal, noble [565]
and commoner patrilineages. Characteristic of this lineage system is [613]
a process by which royal sub-lineages descend serially until they
merge with the mass of commoner lineages. Below the lineages there [563]
once were large non-Mossi groups of serfs and slaves, but these people
have now been grouped into lineages and have become Mossicized.

The topography of Mossi country is typical of the Sudanic grass- 133
lands. It is an immense plain, some 1,500 feet above sea level and
broken only by three low mountain ranges and numerous small hills.
The annual total rainfall is between 30 and 40 inches, and falls 132
almost entirely as heavy showers or thundershowers during the period
from June to September. So narrow is the margin of rainfall for [133]
successful crop cultivation that any variation in the cycle results in [511]
low crop yields and a difficult "hungry period" the following year
before the new crops are harvested. The Mossi do not practice irri- 133
gation, and would have trouble doing so because the three Volta [241]
Rivers which drain their territory serve as drainage chiefly during
the rainy season. Only the Black Volta has water all year round; the

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175 437 Dupuis, who replaced Bowditch in Kumasi in 1817, obtained surprisingly good data on trade relations between the Ashanti and the Mossi, considering the reluctance of the middlemen traders to furnish any help in this matter. He discovered that Ashanti traders

[103] . . . sometimes travel as far as Aughoa, the Magho, and to the east of Kasogho. Aughoa is distant from Coomassie twenty-five journies by the Salgha and Yandy Roads, which would give a distance of three hundred that vegetable substance . . . by the name of Shea butter. (Dupuis 1824 : App. cvii)[1]

The Hausa merchants and caravaneers knew a great deal about the Mossi and their resources, but it was only with great difficulty that Clapperton persuaded Sultan Mohammed Bello of Sokoto to give him the following information:

[101] The country of Mouchier or Mouchi is situated to the west of Ghurma. It is vast and possesses a gold mine, rivers, forests and mountains. It is inhabited by tribes of the Sudan who possess many fast horses, and large donkeys. Their king is called Wagadougou; their asses are sent down to the Gondja to carry the drums of the army. (Clapperton 1829 : 323)

It is obvious that either Clapperton or his informant confused the capital of the Mossi with their king, and included parts of Ghana in [23] their territory. Nevertheless, one does get an indication of the importance of livestock in Mossi trading.

The great bulk of the trade between the Mossi and their neighbors to the north and to the south was done through the medium of 175 caravans which crisscrossed their territory. The first person to signal 437 the existence of these caravans was Barth (1859 : III, 646–648) who, 487 although he did not enter Mossi country during his extensive travels in the Sudan from 1849 to 1855, reported the existence of several caravan routes which traversed the Mossi from the desert to the [103] forest. The first route he described proceeded from "Kirotashi, a town on the east side of the Niger, one day south of Say, to Woghodogho." [366] Ten days out of Kirotashi caravans usually reached Tengkodogo, and on the thirteenth day they arrived at Koupela which according to

(1) The Aughoa referred to here is really "Wagha," the term often used by the Mossi [43] when talking about their capital, Waghadougou. Magho is really "Mogho" the name of Mossi country itself, and Kasoagho is the name of a province of Wagadougou commanded by a minister of the Moro Naba, the Kasoagho Naba. Dupuis' report on the actual distance between Kumasis and Waghadougou is almost the same mileage as that [366] of today. Koelle (1854 : 6) received a report from a slave liberated in Sierra Leone in 1854 that the great Mossi trading center "Kupeala is four days from Wardugu, the [648] Mossi capital, whither the king of Asante often sends presents; and one month from Salak (Salaga), an Asante town, where they bring their cola-nuts."

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175 366 437 54 their own commercial centers, they acted quite differently outside their country. Dubois reports that at Timbuktu, "the great town of pleasure" with the freest morals in the Sudan, the merchants from Bamako, Djenne, Sansanding and Touat spent a great deal of money in pleasure and in gifts to the beautiful women, but the "Mossi did not waste their money and left as soon as they had finished their affairs" (Dubois 1899 : 292–300).

175 437 439 648 The days of the caravans are now over in Mossi country, even though large groups of traders carry on the traditional commerce in livestock, cotton, kola nuts, some dried fish, and salt. As soon as the French conquered th country they formulated plants to control the caravans. One of the earliest reports, for June 1899, reads:

> The country is calm and direct administration was established at Koupela, Mane, Yake . . . The Mossi trade is mainly with the English colony of the Gold Coast. It consists mainly of livestock, very plentiful in Mossi country, which is exchanged for merchandise from England; copper and material goods . . . Our task will be to discover the materials of the northern Ivory Coast which could be exchanged for cattle, and when this information is forthcoming we should be able to direct the caravans quite easily to the Ivory Coast. At the same time the English will see their provisions of cattle and sheep diminish. They will flood us less with their cotton cloth, with their glass beads, and with their kola nuts. In their place, the products of French manufacture can arrive to us through the Ivory Coast after being exchanged for the products of our colony there.[8]

439 167 464 These plans did not succeed. The Mossi still export a great deal of their products towards the forest zones of Ghana, including their "numerous laborers" which, according to Beauminy writing in 1919, were "the principal riches actually utilizable in Mossi country". (Beauminy 1919 : 71–78). The migrants themselves are, in a sense, the greatest traders in contemporary Mossi society.

PRESENT-DAY TRADE

439 [441] [472] [178] [113] There is a constant flow of goods between Mossi country and the Ivory Coast and Ghana. Much of the trade to the former region is in the hands of the large commercial companies and as such is beyond the purview of this paper. What is of interest here is the trade which is conducted by the ordinary people. A great deal of this trade is highly unorganized and the result of one or two men, or as many as five men, joining together to trade goods to and from Ghana and the Ivory Coast. The types of goods sent down to these two areas are the same as those traded in pre-European times.

(8) Unpublished document in the archives of *Institut Français d'Afrique Noire*, Wagadougou, Voltaic Republic.

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same as those traded in pre-European times. For example, my notes 439
for March 22, 1956, record that five young men were transporting [494]
50-kilogram sacks of onions on their bicycles for trade in Ghana. On 439
March 23, the next day, I wrote the following: "This appears to be 492
the season of increased trade and the donkey trains are passing to and from Wagadougou and the Yatenga to Po (a town on the Ghana-Voltaic Republic border) and Bolgatenga in northern Ghana. Very often the donkeys carry nothing down, and at other times they are loaded with beans, millet, cotton bands, onions, peanuts and other vegetable produce. On the return trip they are laden with kola nuts going northward. This afternoon I counted twenty-eight asses coming from Ghana and going towards Wagadougou. Eighteen of them were laden with kolas, and ten were carrying long pieces of scrap iron which I was told, were to be converted into hoes for use during the coming planting season."

There is also a steady trade in livestock between Mossi country 439
and the southern lands but the height of this trade occurs just prior 231
to Ramadan. Beginning from one month to one week before this [22]
important Moslem feast day, the roads of Mossi country are clogged with thousands of sheep and goats being driven south for the use of religious households in Ghana and the Ivory Coast. Cattle are also shipped during this period, but not in the same volume since they are most often used collectively by Moslem families too poor to have their own sheep or goat.

The total volume of trade between Mossi country and Ghana and 439
the Ivory Coasts is difficult to ascertain since despite the existence of 648
Customs Posts a great deal of contraband trading takes place. My notes for December 12, 1955, read *"Contraband"*: Two customs men came into the village to complain to the district chief about the behavior of Naba, one of his village chiefs. This is what happened: About two days ago, two agents saw in the forests the tracks of some thirty-five asses (heavily laden as can be seen by the depth of the tracks) and the marks of a bicycle with new tires. The agents followed the tracks all day and rested during the night. Yesterday they had to interrupt their search when the bicycle of one of the agents broke down, and when they resumed the search later in the day they came across five asses laden with kola nuts inside the compound of a man in Naba's village. Since they were forbidden by law to go into the man's compound and seize the animals, they went to the village chief in an attempt to have him tell the man to put the animals outside so that they could be seized. This the village chief refused to do, stating that it was not his affair, and adding that the agents should have seized the animals in the forest. The agents, now helpless, came and

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439 complained to the district chief. Unfortunately for them the district
648 chief was absent, but his assistants did send out a call for the village chief. However, the chief refused to appear, saying that he would only do so when the district chief returned. The last thing I saw was the agents leaving the district chief's compound still unsatisfied with the whole affair." The sequel to this comes from my notes for December 26, 1955. "I inquired about the aftermath of the contraband case and was told that the whole affair is being referred to the courts at Abidjan. If the village chief is found guilty, he will have to pay a fine of 10,000 francs for the first ass and 3,000 francs for each subsequent ass, or in lieu of this go to jail. Informant said that since the village chief is a poor man, he would probably go to jail."

439 In spite of the contraband, the actual volume of trade appears to
433 be considerable. The production, trade and export of goods largely produced by the Mossi people in 1954 are set forth in Table 29.

TABLE 29

Production, Trade and Export of the Mossi (1954)

Product	*Amount*	*Export*	*Destination*
Almonds	35,000 tons	3,602	France and African countries
Peanuts	50,000 tons	3,031	France and African countries
Cattle	1,560,000 tons	101,000	Ghana, Togo and Ivory Coast
Sheep and Goats	2,115,000 tons	238,255	Ghana, Togo and Ivory Coast

439 These figures do not include the numerous items that drift over
167 the frontiers of Ghana and the Ivory Coast with the thousands of
464 migrants who go to these places each year. While the actual number of such migrants is difficult to ascertain, Pierre Dufour believes that it is "about 150,000 men per year, of whom 100,000 go to the Gold Coast and 50,000 to the Ivory Coast". (Dufour 1956 : 3). And since almost every one of these migrants takes with him some trade item such as a chicken or two, a small sheep or goat, a small sack of cereal or other vegetable produce or a few bands of cotton to defray part of his transportation costs, the amount of goods actually exported is
439 considerable. These statistics rarely enter into the account of goods
167 exported from Mossi country, since custom officers do not usually tax
464 migrants for small items, and do not make any record of them. Of
648 course, when the migrants carry large loads, these are recorded and the migrants must pay export taxes.

Greater attention is paid to the goods which those migrants who work in Ghana (but not in the Ivory Coast) bring back with them after one season or after several years of work, since the government of the Voltaic Republic derives a great deal of its tax revenue from duties on these goods.

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The migrants bring back all types of goods with them. According to Dufour: "Money as such is not brought back in very large proportion because manufactured products of the English colony (Gold Coast) cost less. Consequently, each year there is a great introduction of bicycles, sewing machines, fabrics". (Dufour 1956 : 140). One might add to this list kerosene lamps, zinc buckets, all types of wearing apparel, and all manner of household goods. An inventory of the common trunk of two returning migrants revealed the following merchandise: two kerosene lamps, two bottles of kerosene, two burnoose of black serge trimmed with pink silk, one white burnoose, two blue shirts, two khaki shorts, two tubes of Thermogene (a medicated rub), eight women's headkerchiefs, two Moslem fezes, two hand mirrors, two jars of Vaseline petroleum jelly, two pairs of sandals, one black scarf, packs of camphor balls, and one bottle of perfume. These goods represent the migrant's work over one season, from October to the following April, in the cacao fields of Ghana. Other migrants return with more, but few return with less. The actual value of these goods has been estimated by Dufour at about one billion francs C.F.A. per year. The custom duties which the migrants pay amount to more than 150 million francs C.F.A. annually—the sum they actually paid into the treasury of the Haute Volta in 1953 (Rouch 1956 : 139 ff.).

The migrants distribute to their relatives a good part of the goods they bring back, but a large proportion gets into the hands of other people either through the market or through more direct channels. Here is an example taken from my notes of March 24, 1956: "*Trading in bicycles:* Moussa gave Souliman a cow and an old bicycle for a new bicycle which Souliman had bought for 5,000 francs from a passing migrant. Souliman was trying to sell this same cycle for 6,250 francs, thus trying to make a profit of 1,250 francs just two or three days after he had bought it . . . Souliman slaughtered the cow which he received from Moussa and sold the beef to the local *restaurateur* at an additional profit. Souliman appears to be a sharp individual. He recently bought another bicycle for 5,000 francs from a migrant and resold it for 7,500 francs." This type of trading is not unusual, but the most typical articles resold by migrants in the local markets are lamps, worn shirts, shoes and other articles of clothing.

The growth of migration among Mossi men has led to a new type of commercial activity in the country. This is the selling of cooked food by the women to passing migrants. These women and young girls prepare food such as chicken, rice, millet balls, millet flour water and fried cakes which they bring to the principal thoroughfares to sell. Many of them arrive at the central village areas as early as four

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175 436 437 Cowries used to be chief medium of exchange in Mossi markets until the Europeans arrived. In addition the people bartered specific goods for other products. The prices of goods in these markets fluc- 175 435 tuated from time to time. Prices were highest during the planting season when most goods were scarce, and lowest during the harvest periods, but we have little precise information about the prices of goods in the traditional markets. Even Barth's information is too sketchy to deal with. Our first reliable data come from Tauxier, whose writings cover the first decade (1896-1906) of the conquest. Using the then official rate of one franc equals 1,000 cowries, the prices of a few representative products were: horses, 40 to 100 francs (40,000 to 100,000 cowries); cattle, 30 to 40 francs (30,000 to 40,000 cowries); chickens, 250 cowries; guinea fowls, 250 to 300 cowries; hides, 3,000 cowries; pottery jars, 300 cowries; cotton trousers, 200 cowries; baskets, 1,500 cowries; and locust-bean balls, 100 cowries (Tauxier 1912 : 466 ff.).

Mangin, whose work covers the period from about 1910 to 1913, when the value of the franc was lowered to one franc equals 700 to 800 cowries, lists the approximate prices for the following goods; "Millet, 0.02 franc a kilogram; rice, 0.10 franc a kilogram; *fabirama*, 0.05 franc a kilogram; shea butter, 0.50 franc a kilogram; milk butter, 1.50 francs a kilogram; peanuts, 0.07 franc a kilogram; peanut oil, 0.50 franc a liter; one jar of ordinary millet beer, containing about six to eight liters, 0.20 franc; one jar of strong millet beer *(tose)*, containing about six to eight liters, 0.40 franc; hydromel *(bese)*, 0.15 franc a liter; chicken, 0.40 franc; average goat, 3 to 4 francs; large goat, 8 to 10 francs; average sheep, 3.50 francs for a ram, 4 francs, for an ewe; large sheep, 8 to 10 francs; donkey, 25 to 30 francs; horse, 150 francs; small cow (no hump), 50 francs; zebu cow, 70 francs; goat skin, 0.30 franc; cow skin, 1 franc; salt bars, from 1.50 to 2 francs a kilogram; kola nuts, from 0.03 to 0.10 franc apiece; one hoe, about 0.60 franc; cloth: strip of white cloth, 0.05 franc, about 0.60 franc a cubit; white blanket, 2 francs; indigo-dyed blanket, 3 francs; striped blanket, 4 francs; medium-sized shirt, 2.50 francs" (Mangin 1921 : 53). In dealing with these prices, a number of things should be kept in mind: first of all, these prices fluctuated very much during the year; secondly [43] they varied from region to region within the country; and thirdly, although these prices are given in francs during this period, it was still possible to use cowries to buy a large number of the products.

177 436 [43] [42] Enormous changes have taken place in the Mossi economic and exchange systems over the decades following the studies of Tauxier and Mangin. Even before, but certainly after World War I, the French pressure on the Mossi to pay taxes in francs finally resulted

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in the adoption of this currency as the medium of exchange in most markets.[11] The one-franc piece and coins of smaller denominations were those most often used because they were ideally suited to the petty trading that took place in the markets. The franc even became the standard of value in the larger markets, but one receives only 3 local francs for a five-franc note C.F.A. or seven francs for a ten-franc note C.F.A. These changes in value seem to occur by common concensus, since it is impossible to discover who it was that changed the exchange rate. A further fact is that many Europeans remain unaware of these changes since they seldom go to the local markets themselves. When they do go and insist upon the official exchange rate, the "unofficial" market chief appears and takes over the situation, giving the *nansara* ("conqueror" or "master," the way in which every European is regarded) what he wishes.

While the equivalence between the cowrie, the old brass franc, and the franc C.F.A. works splendidly when products are sold in small quantities, I found the system difficult to understand when more expensive goods are traded. For example, when one buys meat, an expensive item, the butcher accepts either the official francs or the local currency and gives change in both. The difficulty here is that since the butcher uses no scales, one is never sure about the price or about the system of value the butcher is using. The most that can be done if one does not receive as much meat as expected is to haggle with the butcher until he adds more. However, this haggling leaves unresolved the problem of the value of one's official money in terms of the unofficial money, and the product which it is intended to buy. One is thus left with the *impression* that there must be an internal consistency to the exchange system, or barring this, that the local people accept the system as it is as a matter of expediency. On the other hand, the vendors of products with fixed prices such as matches, cigarettes and the like appear to make differential profits when they

(11) Mangin (1921 : 61–62) reports that the Mossi had great difficulty obtaining the five-franc piece which they needed to pay their taxes because the "Europeans who live in Mossi country, including all the riflemen and provincial guards do not put into circulation a quarter of the five-franc pieces which are required each year from the natives. At first the Mossi were taken by surprise and had to give 10 or even 15,000 cowries to obtain this famous coin, this *greegree* which was to free them from all difficulties with the white man. And yet at the official rate of exchange this coin is worth 5,000 cowries. Nowadays it is very difficult to find a native willing to give this much for one of the coins. The usual exchange rate varies from 3,500 to 4,000 cowries: the French currency has been depreciated. This must mean that the natives find elsewhere —through trading— this indispensable coin. They know that the tax must be paid every year, and instead of waiting till the last minute, as soon as they have accumulated the necessary cowries they secure the five-franc pieces from those who have fetched them from far away. The coins flow into the country, and the rate of exchange goes down."

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443 taxes in their markets. The French abolished both of these offices
554 when they took over the country, because they looked upon them as
651 purely exploitative rather than regulatory agents. But like so many
656 other Mossi political institutions which the French have "abolished,"
178 the Kos Naga and Raga Naba persist in many of the districts, and per-
[648] haps even in such large centers as Wagadougou. These officials persist
[829] because one of the basic assumptions of the Mossi is that everything
[825] must have a "chief." They believe that even the animals in the bush have chiefs, and if men, too, did not have chiefs then social life would be chaos. Thus, in the rural areas many or most district chiefs have retained their market officials even though the roles of these officials have become highly attenuated and so secretive that their existence is often denied.

175 Taxes collected at the market places played an important part in
443 supporting the traditional political hierarchy of the Mossi people.
651 The Kos Naba collected 250 cowries in taxes for every beef cattle
[644] slaughtered at the market and took their humps and gave them to a palace official called the Nemdo Naba (meat chief) for distribution in the royal household. He also collected 250 cowries on every cow sold there, but did not usually tax goats and sheep. In lieu of this he occasionally took a head or two of these animals from each herd that passed through the market and sent them to the palace kitchens. Donkeys were also taxed at the rate of 200 cowries per head sold in the market. Horses sold to the nobility were not taxed, but those exported were taxed about 300 cowries.

175 The Raga Naba collected the taxes on other commodities sold at
443 market. Cotton weavers paid him taxes according to the size of their
651 bolts of cloth, and cotton producers paid as much as 20 cowries on
463 especially large sales of their raw produce. The tailors and dyers paid no fixed tax on their wares, but were asked to send clothing to the palace. Every donkey- or ox-load of salt which entered the market place was assessed a tax of 300 cowries. The smiths were not taxed in cowries, but had to supply the wives of the Moro Naba with hoes and the palace personnel with arrowheads, spearpoints and iron clubs. The jewelers also sent bracelets as presents to the ruler. There were no fixed taxes on cereals, vegetables and cooked food sold at market, but each day the Raga Naba, accompanied by several pages or retainers carrying baskets, went from vendor to vendor taking several calabash-fuls of their produce for use in the palace. In addition, the vendors of cooked food had to feed the young grooms of the Moro Naba who were not regularly fed by the palace household. The beer sellers, too, while they were not assessed taxes, contributed a good percentage of their beverage to palace and market personnel who demanded the

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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443 due to the bickering, quarreling and even fighting they have to
554 prevent by cooling the tempers of the market people—that they
776 become quite angry. When the spirits are not satisfied, they fail in
782 their tasks and real trouble breaks out in the market, disrupting the trading; and if they are not pacified they may even cause the death of the market officials.[12]

In the days before the market officials were banned, these sacrifices were performed regularly. At that time the Raga Naba simply asked the Kos Naba to seize the appropriate animal in the market to perform
[648] the rite. The problem today is that since the French have abolished the office of Raga Naba, and in some districts have prevented the chief from even naming one secretly, the markets in the latter local-
[208] ities are considered "dangerous markets." Once a market acquires such a reputation, people do not like to visit it because they fear that they would get into fights or quarrels. Not only this, but it is believed that if a market has been without a Raga Naba for a long time, the *tengkouga* there become so angry for being neglected that they kill
[123] the first chief appointed to it. This was the reality or belief behind a series of misadventures of which I was the victim.

123 I had spent an entire day in a market, and on returning home could
443 not find my pen. The next morning I sent an assistant to the chief
554 telling him about the loss and asking him to have an announcement
656 made in the market on the next market day that I would pay a handsome reward to whomever should find and deliver the pen. The chief sent back a reply saying that since there was no Raga Naba, he would have the Kos Naba acquaint the people with my loss. On the day of the market, I waited until midday, when most of the people had arrived, and then went to see whether the Kos Naba had any news of the pen. I checked with several of my friends to see whether they had heard about the pen and discovered, to my chagrin, that no an-
[364] nouncement had been made about it. I went and told the Kos Naba that the people were not hearing about the pen and suggested that one way to do so would be to have the Binderes (drummers and griots) circulate through the market announcing the loss. The Kos Naba refused to do this, and when I enlisted the aid of the chief's secretary, he, too, said that it could not be done because there was no Raga Naba. I had some notes on the institution of the Raga Naba, but as I did not know everything about it, I was, therefore, frankly puzzled

(12) Zahan (1954 : 371) states that "the place where all kinds of merchandise accumulate and where strangers come is a place charged with forces. In time, these forces build up to such a point within the precincts of the market that some purifications are necessary to liberate them. To omit making them would expose the participants to excitements leading to brawls and compromising the place of the transactions."

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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their "evil" and "non-evil" ways. A little later the young men who possess bicycles may be seen suddenly hurrying to avoid the other *nansara*, this time, the French official, who comes into the market to apprehend those individuals who have not bought a bicycle license. All the *nansara* know that the market is the best place to find a Mossi.

Towards 3:00 P.M. the matrons in the market, having sold most of their own goods and bought those which they need, make the last rounds to see whether there are any bargains to be had. In their rounds the women may be badgered by sons, daughters and other relatives, but seldom by husbands, for extra francs to buy kolas or tobacco to bridge them over the two non-market days. Or the women themselves may seek out their male relatives to buy kola or goods, from the stranger who is making the rounds of the local markets. By this time of day the market place is emptying—at first this happens so imperceptibly that one does not notice it. However, by 4:00 P.M. a mass exodus begins as women collect their little children, hitch their babies on their backs, place baskets on their head and set out in the direction of their own villages or to the villages of relatives where they plan to spend time. By this hour also the Bendere are drunk, and for an extra calabash of beer are willing to recount genealogies for which, if sober, they would demand a sheep or goat.

Evening finds the market deserted except for scavenging dogs which hunt the scraps of food dropped by the now departed human beings. The market place finally falls silent, until late at night passing migrants retire there to sleep. These persons leave the market place at dawn to buy food from the women whose hawking cries herald another day of roadside commerce. The women use the profit from this trade to buy goods on the following market days.

[pp 279-738 not processed]

634 among the other ministers. The rich and important cantons
645 were entrusted to the Kamsaogo Naba, chief eunuch. This was
[839] because the emperor wanted to be sure that he would recover the fortune left by this minister at his death. Since the latter was merely the guardian of the king's wives, he had no legitimate heirs. The eunuch appointed to replace him had to establish his own personal fortunes. Only the horses or women which the late minister might have given [49] during his lifetime to persons in his section were left with their owners. [Ed., Mossi villages are
[621] divided into sections (Fr., quartier), which are really hamlets containing several households or compounds. These sections are indigenous, not colonial subdivisions.]

Powers of the Ministers over the Vassal Chiefs of the Mogho Naba

634 It would be a mistake to think that before the French occu-
645 pation the ministers had any great authority over the canton chief.
642 Actually, the ministers' role, as has been pointed out, was to act as intermediaries between the emperor and the canton chiefs. They could not, however, under any right or pretext, intervene in canton affairs, since the kombéré was the only lord in the area whose command had been conferred upon him as an appanage by the Mogho Naba.

That is why it has been possible for canton chiefs who were dissatisfied with the minister under whose rule they found themselves to report, henceforth, to another minister. Furthermore, the Mogho Naba saw no objection to this. The Mossi expression,
[538] Gansobend'ka sambiri n'tont vigri yé ("hospitality is not like kinship; you can evade it") amply illustrates the accuracy of the foregoing. If it is further noted that before the French occupation
[651] the naba came to Ouagadougou only once a year to pay their respects to the emperor and to bring him annual tribute, one will readily understand the insignificance of the ministers' authority over them.

This does not mean, of course, that it was possible to [50] do without any intermediaries, but rather that it was possible to choose them freely. In any case, one of the incentives to

Customary Payments by the Mossi to their Chiefs

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To the Mogho Naba. In former times, before the coming of the French, the kombemba (canton chiefs) [69] and the nakomsé (descendants of Mogho Naba) were all required to come to Ouagadougou once a year to pay their respects to the Mogho Naba on this occasion to present gifts to him (cattle, horses, sheep, cowries, and loads of millet).

For all practical purposes, this amounted to a fixed fee which varied in amount, of course, with the resources of the contributors (canton chiefs and nakomsé) and the number of subjects that the administration entrusted to the leaders.

Although the horses, cattle, and sheep were personally contributed by the kombéré, the cowries and millet were furnished by their Mossi subjects. The canton chief set the amounts of cowries and grain due from each village according to the number of its inhabitants.

The assessment was usually 100 cowries for a married man and 50 for a bachelor (adult). The payment in millet was 10 baskets, each averaging 40 kilograms.

Likewise, a kind of fee was paid annually to the Djiba Naba, crown price, in cowries and livestock. This was done to stay in the good graces of his father, the emperor.

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Nowadays the canton chiefs (kombemba), who come to Ouagadougou more often than formerly for important feasts and other events, never return to their lands without paying their respects to the Mogho Naba and giving him the traditional gifts (cowries and livestock). Gifts are now made more often, but they no longer have [70] the same importance. As a general rule, certain canton chiefs still require their people to give small amounts of cowries when they visit Ouagadougou for the celebration of July 14. Some chiefs, however, either because they fear penalties from the administration or because they think that their people are already heavily burdened, prefer to give the little they have personally acquired by selling produce (cotton, yams, etc.) or trading.

Some of the vassal chiefs of the Mogho Naba, who, however, are no longer subject to Ouagadougou since the division of the

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65/ Mossi circle into several administrative districts, still continue to
178 make substantial annual gifts to the Mogho Naba (cowries, cattle, and a considerable amount of grain, millet and rice).

634 Payments Due the Kombemba (canton chiefs). Formerly each
651 canton held one or more ritual feasts each year, and the Mossi subjects, that is, the tengsoba (village elders, notables, and those in comfortable circumstances), regularly made gifts to the canton chief (cowries, goats, sheep, and roosters). The Peulh [Peul] gave cattle.

The canton chiefs also retained a portion of the payment made by the people for the benefit of the Mogho Naba.

[178] At the present time these traditional gifts are still made, but white or light gray roosters are more and more being substituted for livestock. [71]

661 Payments due the Ministers of the Mogho Naba. In order to
431 maintain good relations with the ministers, court officials, and intermediaries between the emperor and his vassals, the canton
644 chiefs in former times used to present unspecified gifts to the
634 high dignitaries at court when they paid their respects to the Mogho Naba. A certain number of cowries was given to the pougtiéma, first wife of the Mogho Naba (500 cowries equals two and a half francs, formerly 50 centimes).

A canton chief who has been called to Ouagadougou for some reason may choose not to call on the emperor, but he is obligated to bring cowries, a sheep, or a rooster to the minister who is head of the province in which his canton is located.

651 Common laws. (a) Regulation of market fees. Before the ar-
443 rival of the French, market fees at Ouagadougou were collected for the benefit of the Mogho Naba by a collector in his employ.

In important villages, fees were collected by Gourounsi [Grunshi] captives on behalf of the canton chiefs (kombemba).

651 (b) Hunting. In former times, before the fields were cleared
224 for seeding, the Mossi used to go out in groups of several villages on hunting drives. Small game (partridges, guinea fowl, hares,
634 etc.) were left to the hunters. On the other hand, a haunch of any quadruped killed (deer, gazelle, coba [a kind of horse antelope], etc.) was reserved for the canton chief.

651 [72] (c) Fishing. Fishing in the larger water holes could take
226 place only by authorization of the canton chiefs. The day on
634 which fishing took place was treated as a holiday. All the young men in the village and their neighbors, even if the latter did not belong to the canton, came out on the day set by the canton chief and fished for the benefit of the naba. All large fish were reserved for him, and only the small ones were left to the fishermen.

This practice still prevails.

776 Other common laws. Many deities are worshipped by the
782 Mossi. Groves, fields, mountains, etc., all have their "god."
661 It often happens that the naba (canton chief), at the behest of the soothsayers, offers an animal. This may be a sheep, a goat, or even a cow, and it is offered to one or another of the deities, either for his personal interests or for those of his people, or perhaps to ask for rain. The naba dispatches some sogoné [servitor] or samand'kamba [people of the outer courtyard] to one of the villages in his canton to find a victim. The animal is taken without its owner having any right to complain or to ask for compensation. [538] Is there not a Mossi saying to the effect, Talagh-gounda Naba'gninga the serf raises livestock for the benefit of his naba)"?

For sacrifices prescribed for the Mogho Naba, the animals are provided either by the inhabitants of the [73] town of Ouagadougou and its environs or by the canton chiefs.

Labor Service Customarily Required of the Mossi on Behalf of their Chiefs

651 Forced labor was used to cultivate the fields of the naba and to repair or construct their houses.

647 The Mogho Naba. (a) Cultivation of fields. The duty of
651 cultivating the fields of the Mogho Naba fell entirely on the Bilbalsé,
241 the residents of Bilbalogo (section of the Baloum Naba) and on all former servitors and descendants of former servitors. The Kam Naba (chief of the young men), charged with assembling the workers, had a crier announce in all the important markets that on such-and-such a day the Bilbalsé were to assemble in the emperor's

644 fields. On that day, the Mogho Naba had one or two cows
651 slaughtered and a large quantity of sagbo (millet cakes) prepared
241 for the workers. If the latter, after being assembled two or three times in the manner indicated above, were not finished with all the fields, the work was carried on by the samand'kamba (the people who dwelt in the outer courtyard of the Mogho Naba).

644 The emperor, however, received none of the millet grown in
574 his own fields, which, incidentally, did not have their present boundaries. This millet was reserved exclusively [74] for use as food for foreign visitors and for the feeding of horses (1).

1. For the ceremony of threshing this millet (kawinré), see the special chapter below [Chapter 16].

644 It was the duty of the canton chiefs and the ministers to pro-
651 vide loads of millet for the use of the Mogho Naba and his harem ("harem" should be understood to mean all young or middle-aged women, but to exclude the elderly women who have to support themselves and who have their private fields).

644 (b) Repair of the houses of the Mogho Naba. The work of
651 building and repairing the houses actually belonging to the em-
356 peror fell entirely upon the inhabitants of Bilbalogo (section of the Baloum Naba), Kamsaonghin (section of the chief eunuch), and Dapoya (section of the slaves of the Mogho Naba).

[343] The outbuildings, wédanga, four round huts with thatched roofs located outside the emperor's house, served as stables for the horses given to the Mogho Naba by canton chiefs or other personages and were built and maintained by three ministers, the Ouidi Naba, Larrhallé Naba, and Gounga Naba, with the help of the people in their sections.

The tamping of the floors and clay roofs was done wholly by the wives of the persons responsible for [75] the construction or repair, that is, the wives of the ministers and of the inhabitants of their sections.

Labor service due the province chiefs, ministers of the emperor.

651 (a) Cultivation of fields. The fields belonging to the ministers
645 of the Mogho Naba were cultivated by a system of payments in kind
241 as follows.

651 For the Baloum Naba, the work was done by all the bilbalsé.
645 The Kam Naba set the day for the sekka (gathering), and all the
241 young and able-bodied men were required to report. They received the food they required from the Baloum Naba. The number of work days was not fixed. The sekka might be held once or several times, depending on the acreage.

For the other ministers, the Ouidi Naba, Gounga Naba, and Larrhallé Naba, the field work was done by the people in their entourage (that is, the inhabitants of their respective sections) and in the neighboring villages which were formerly under their jurisdiction. Since the formation of the canton of Ouagadougou and its outskirts, the area has been under the exclusive authority of the Baloum Naba (fourth minister of the emperor).

645 If, however, the fields were so extensive that their cultiva-
476 tion could not be taken care of solely by the above system -- the
241 laborers also had to care for their own fields -- the ministers [76] called for volunteers from among the young men in the neighboring villages and paid them with food and drink. This is the sissoaga, a system commonly in use among the Mossi.

645 (b) Construction and repair of houses. As a general rule, re-
651 pair of the roofs of huts in the establishments of the province chiefs
356 was the duty of the inhabitants of their respective sections and of the neighboring villages under their jurisdiction.

651 The canton chiefs. The cultivation of the fields of the naba
634 and the repair of the huts in their establishments were wholly in-
241 cumbent on their subjects. Each village had a fixed number of
356 huts to be repaired or roofed; this is known as sough'pilli, and it is still in effect annually.

651 Today, perhaps in the interests of tranquillity, canton chiefs require labor service in their fields only from their sogoné and samand'kamba and sometimes even resort to the sissoaga.

The local administration, with respect for local customs, has the policy of organizing the system in a way that, in our opinion, will safeguard the interests of the natives, overburdened due to the negligence of the province chiefs, and at the same time will enhance the prestige of the Mossi chiefs.

653 The naba is not entitled to any other labor services. The building of dams to provide water for the villages cannot be

366 for good fortune and health. Prevent all bloodshed in this market.
782 We also fear those who are quarrelsome and those who talk too much, those who provoke disorder." The chicken is the first victim to be sacrificed, and if the offering is accepted, it must have first fallen on its back and only then turned over face downward (this means that the gods of the place will protect the naba and the persons who will frequent the market). Next the goat or sheep is killed.

The new market is opened immediately after the sacrifice. Those present buy the women's fritters. Ordinarily, Mossi markets
[443] are held every three days. The news travels rapidly that such-and-such a village has a market, and thus the business of the market gradually grows.

366 Collection of fees. It is only later on, one or even two years after the installation of his new market and when [79], it is success-
● 651 ful, that the canton chief appoints a yaguinga (grandson, or, more
[601] accurately in native terms, a sister's son (nephew)or son's son (grandson), of the naba or of a member of his family) or a Gourounsi captive to act as collector of market fees. (We shall list below the various fees for a place in the market as they were collected for the benefit of the naba before the arrival of the French.)

366 Transfer of the market. Upon the death of a naba (the emperor, a vassal chief, or even the chief of the village where the market is held), the market is temporarily set up in another place. In large towns, such as Ouagadougou, for example, there may be as many markets as there are sections. These temporary markets are called kim'dagha (market of the kimsé, that is, of the deceased).

366 When a new naba has been named, the market is moved back
782 to its former site and the reinstallation calls for new sacrifices of fowl and livestock. That was why in 1897, when the market at Ouagadougou was being re-established, the emperor asked the captain who was in command of the post to provide a cow to be sacrificed along with a sheep and a rooster which he himself provided.

366 Likewise, whenever a hyena has run through the market (its
825 presence is discovered either by the tracks left by the animal or by consulting the soothsayers), just as happens when a naba dies, the
787 market must be moved elsewhere for a few days. It is believed that if [80] a brawl should occur after a hyena had passed through the market, there would certainly be a death.

Scale of Market Fees Collected by the Mogho Naba and the Canton Chiefs Before the French Occupation

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At Ouagadougou two collectors had the duty of gathering market fees.

The Kos Naba (from kossé "to sell," and naba, "chief") collected a tax on every animal slaughtered whose meat was sold at the market.

The Ragh' Naba (from ragha, "market," and naba, "chief") collected fees on all other produce.

The fees were as follows.

Captives. 1,000 cowries per captive sold; fee paid by the seller.

Large animals. (a) Oxen, 250 cowries per ox slaughtered; cows, 250 cowries per cow slaughtered. (In addition, the hump of every head of cattle slaughtered was taken for the Mogho Naba and delivered to him that evening.)

(b) Donkeys: 200 cowries per donkey sold, paid by the seller.

(c) Horses: no tax was collected. Horses, being luxury animals and sought only by chiefs and a few [81] well-to-do persons (rakangba) were not put up for sale at the market.

Small animals. No special tax on sheep, goats, etc.

Dam (dolo, beer). No tax. The seller was supposed to present a gourd or canari of beer to the chief of her section (the emperor's minister) whenever she made some. This was called the lenga, that is, a "taste." This practice no doubt explains the lack of any tax on the beer merchants.

Cotton strips. Taxes graded from 20 to 100 cowries according to the size of the rolls of cloth.

Cotton. First collected in kind and then a tax of 20 cowries paid after the sale.

Grains and fats. Small millets, sorghum, rice, peanuts, millet that is sprouted to be used for beer, beans, and peas: for these kinds of produce, the Ragh' Naba and his assistants had special measuring devices, bowls of a sort, made of wood and used to collect payments in kind. All of the grains, including the millet used to make beer, were stored by the Ragh' Naba in granaries for disposal by the emperor.

443 Ready-made clothing, beads. No tax collected.
651 [82] Soumbala (kalgo in Mossi) [locust beans pressed into balls]. Payment in kind (one ball per seller).

Other spices. No fee paid.

Karite [shea] butter. Collected with a soutga (a kind of ladle), karite butter was used almost exclusively for the horses of the Mogho Naba.

Fritters and other cooked foods. Actually no fee was called for on these products, but the collectors demanded the payment of a tax in kind to provide their own food or that of the samand'kamba (servitors of the outer courtyard).

Salt. 300 cowries for each load (ox or donkey).

Hoes, axes. Each merchant provided a daba or an axe for work in the field of the naba. Nothing was collected at the subsequent market if all of the tools had not been sold in one day.

Jewelry. No tax was collected. The jewelers who made [306] bracelets and other jewels for the wives of the naba, as well as various harness parts, were exempt from all taxes.

Other markets. Fees collected for the benefit of the canton chiefs were about the same as [83] those paid at the market of Ouagadougou. In small markets, however, payments were made in kind. The edible products made up the food of the collectors, Gourounsi captives for the most part, who were prevented by their social status from having wives and so had no one to prepare food for them.

Chapter 5

Slavery Among the Mossi

567 We shall endeavor in the following lines to describe slavery as it existed among the Mossi before the French occupation.

567 173 We know that slavery has existed for a very long time in the land of the Mogho Naba, but, because of the total lack of dates in Mossi history -- handed down from generation to generation by the griot [heralds, drummers] of the naba -- it is difficult to determine when it was first introduced.

567 It is known, however, that the first slaves of the Mossi were all of Boussanga [Busansi] origin. The canton of Garango in what is

567 The only slaves who have remained faithful to their masters or, more exactly, who have preferred to remain in Mossi territory after their emancipation, are nearly all Gourounsi.

The Gourounsi Captives

567 727 648 Sonrhaï [Songhai] forces led by Alpha Haïnon, Gazeré, and Babato used to raid Gourounsi country. They reduced a large number of Gourounsi to slavery, immediately making soldiers of the more enterprising among them to fight against their own people and selling or exchanging the rest for horses. Mossi country has always had a large supply of horses, so the Mossi used to go to Léo to trade their horses for slaves or simply to trade their slaves to the Sonrhaï for cowries. [439]

567 648 The Sonrhaï chiefs maintained good relations with the emperor of the Mossi, Naba Sanum. That is why they spared the Gourounsi village chiefs who had taken refuge with the Mogho Naba.

Boukary-koutou, the future Naba Wobgo, enjoyed the [87] regard and friendship of the Sonrhaï since he aided them in their wars against the Gourounsi in exchange for an ample share of the booty and slaves. We have shown that the large number of Gourounsi whom he brought with him to Ouagadougou contributed mightily to his being named emperor of the Mossi.

567 651 During the reigns of Naba Koutou, Sanum, and Wobgo, there were special slave markets attached to the regular markets at Ouagadougou and other large centers. A fee of 1,000 cowries was collected for the benefit of the naba for each captive sold, regardless of sex.

567 302 787 When owners desired to sell a slave, they first shaved his head, and it was only after the hair had begun to grow again that he was taken to market. The cutting of the hair derives from a superstition among the Mossi.

Depending on where the hair starts to grow, whether well back on the head, at the forehead, or near the ears, the interpretation varies as to how the slave is to be regarded: as a dangerous being; as a lucky or unlucky influence on the family owning him.

We shall not now go into details since such beliefs will be discussed in a special section.

631 powers to his vassals, the province chiefs, who in turn entrust them to the canton chiefs, and these do likewise with the village chiefs. Thus, when a native wants to move from one canton to another, or 631 even from one village to another, he must be authorized to do so. 166 He must request the permission of the canton or village chief to settle 425 in such-and-such a place, and the chief of the village where he wants to live tells him where he may build his huts and which field he may cultivate. The naba may dispossess one of his subjects, if he so wishes, and give his field to another. After all, he "has the strength." This rarely happens, however, and a native who has cleared a piece of bush, fertilized a plot to sow maize, sowed and weeded the ground, is usually assured of a harvest, except in case of war. If a man is evicted, on the other hand, there is no appeal; neither the canton chief nor the province chief would listen to him; they would do the same thing if the opportunity arose.

421 There is no communal property. Every individual works his fields for his own account; he himself collects the fruit of his labor and remains its undisputed master. Nevertheless, every native owes his 651 chiefs and benefactors a tithe; and at harvest time it is interesting 431 to watch everyone sorting ears of maize, braiding sorghum stems, and measuring out baskets of small millet. The village chief is to get so many ears of maize; the canton chief, if he does not reside too far away, so many others; the father- or fathers-in-law will get theirs, and so will one friend or another to whom one owes cowries, or who has previously granted a favor. However, everyone who deals out goods right and left will in turn get some from various other people and approximately regain his expenditure. The village chiefs offer more sizable gifts to the canton chiefs, and the latter do likewise to the province chiefs.

651 These were, in fact, taxes, not fixed taxes per capita, but com- 661 pletely arbitrary ones. If the naba found a gift insufficient, he had no compunction about saying so, and the person involved had to comply. It is said that the naba of Koupéla paid annually 500,000 cowries (500 francs) and /23/ three horses to the naba of Bélousa, and a million cowries (1000 francs) in two installments to the Moro Naba, to whom he also gave five horses. The gifts to the Moro Naba were brought first to the naba of Bélousa and from there conveyed to Ouagadougou: ever the hierarchy.

This quasi-official tax, however, was not the only one. Whenever the Moro Naba wanted horses, cattle, or anything whatever, he

651 661 had a province chief notified, and everyone hastened to carry out his wishes. If a province chief in turn wanted something, if he was short of millet or wished to build huts, he had one or several canton chiefs notified, and these in turn advised the village chiefs; through them everything was slowly carried out, for it took time to transmit these orders, but the common man never failed to comply.

Such a system made it impossible for an individual to accumulate wealth. A surplus of goods would have aroused the naba's cupidity, and he would have found some excuse to tax this overly enterprising subject more than the others. This is why those who owned a few cows carefully concealed it by entrusting them to the Peul. The latter could not hope to increase their herds rapidly, because the nabas were always in need of fine, fat cattle for some alleged sacrifice or festivity.

651 661 431 At certain times the canton chiefs and even the village chiefs, as well as people desirous of making a good impression, must go to the naba to greet him and to present him with gifts which never amount to less than 500 cowries (50 francs). When the naba undertakes an important task, such as the building of several huts, the weeding of his field, or the harvesting of his millet, some of the people are summoned to help him, and it is proper for the others to come and offer him gifts. His convalescence from illness is an occasion for gifts also, and, if he has eluded some danger, he must quickly be congratulated and given cowries. On every festive day or on the days following, each naba must go to his province chief to greet him and to bring him gifts in proportion to the importance of his own position. Whenever the naba travels, every village where he stops must give him food and drink, and thus offer him chickens, goats, sheep, or even a cow if the village is sufficiently important. The grooms and other servants in the retinue of the naba manage for themselves at the expense of the inhabitants. This is quite a burden, especially since the naba, when he returns home, expects more greetings and cowries.

726 War was another important source of revenue. Binger describes what he witnessed at the court of Boukari-Koutou, who was later Moro Naba under the name of Naba Wobro and who was deposed by Voulet's arrival. Before leaving for war, the sorcerers were consulted and indicated the tangandé or sacred grove where a sacrifice was to be made in order to insure victory. The province chief then took out his flag, a mere staff with charms and a cow's tail hanging at

326 iron bar on an iron stump planted in the ground or on a stone. Copper
306 and zinc are smelted in small clay crucibles, the size of which varies with the desired thickness of the bracelet. The bracelet is first made in wax and coated with well-kneaded clayey earth which acquires the same shape. The wax is then removed with boiling water, and copper is poured into the clay mold. With a crude file the jewelry-maker removes the dross which clings to the metal, polishes the bracelet, and carves designs into it. The most skillful among them make attractive twisted ornaments of iron and red and yellow copper. One Ouagadougou Christian, deft at modeling wax, makes all sorts of objects, such as napkin rings, paper weights, inkwells, figurines, etc., which are not lacking in style.

484 The Mossi have always travelled a little, and they used to go quite regularly to Timbuktu; now, thanks to the French peace, journeys have become increasingly frequent. The European settlers in Tenkodogo, Ouagadougou, Léo, and Koudougou hire the Mossi as house boys and [464] take them to Ségou, sometimes to Kayes, and even to Saint-Louis. These boys, when they return, fill their friends with wonder and arouse their desire to take such great journeys also.

484 The recruitment of Black troops has also fostered this desire to see
464 new lands. Many natives have made the trip to Bandiagara to enlist as riflemen; others went to Kati, and when they found that no further enlistments were being made there, they went on to Saint-Louis.

484 During the dry season the Mossi are more often lured away by trading ventures. In October and November many young men who have managed to secure a sheep or two or a few goats and the wealthier natives who own cattle organize caravans in the hope of selling their livestock at a profit in faraway markets. In former times the Yarsé and Haoussa had a monopoly on trade. Nowadays the Mossi compete
[651 with them, for they must find money to pay taxes to the Whites, the
648] famous five-franc piece. /60/ Besides, now the roads are safe. Highway robbers are no longer to be feared, and one no longer has to pay tolls every time he enters the territory of a new chief. From this point of view, and from it alone, the French peace is valued by the natives, although they find it onerous to pay taxes, to build roads and bridges, and to pay customs duties on leaving and re-entering French territory. Is a man ever pleased when something is required of him, even for his greatest good?

491 Now only the watercourses present some difficulty when they are full. The Administration, which does all it can to facilitate trade,

651 There is proof that trade tends to grow year by year in the ease with
436 which the natives now secure the five-franc piece needed to pay their
457 tax. The Europeans who live among the Mossi, including all the riflemen and circle /an administrative district/ guards, do not put into circulation a quarter of the five-franc pieces which are required each year from the natives. At first the Mossi were taken by surprise and had to give 10, 000 or even 15, 000 cowries to obtain /62/ this famous coin, this charm, which was to free them from all difficulties with the Whites. At the official rate of exchange this coin is worth 5, 000 cowries. Nowadays it is very difficult to find a native willing to give this much for one of the coins. The usual exchange rate is from 3, 500 to 4, 000 cowries; French currency has depreciated. This must mean that the natives find elsewhere, through trading, this indispensable coin. They know that the tax must be paid every year, and instead of waiting until the last minute, as soon as they have accumulated the necessary cowries, they secure the five-franc pieces from those who have fetched them from afar. The coins flow in; the rate of exchange goes down.

439 Nowadays, trading is less active toward the north. Formerly the
567 Mossi supplied Timbuktu, the desert regions, and even Morocco with slaves. The Gourounsi and Bousansé were frequently raided with the sole intent of obtaining slaves. The Mossi even sold each other into slavery, and prior to the French occupation a woman and even more a young girl or boy did not dare venture alone a few hundred meters from the village; they were too afraid that they might not return. It is said that the Mossi even supplied the Constantinople court with eunuchs; and when the great Cardinal Lavigerie was head of the Algerian Arab Orphanage, officers once brought him small children rescued in the desert. They were very young Mossi who had been sold in Saraféré or Timbuktu and whom our officers had found enclosed in bags carried by camels in a caravan halted by our troops. These children were raised in Malta, and they returned to Mossi country where they rendered significant services. Now the establishment of an administrative center in Kaya, near the important market of Salmatenga, will no doubt promote trade in this northern region.

439 Nowadays the trade between Ouagadougou and Tenkodogo on the one hand, and Ouahigouya (in Mossi country), Saraféré, and Timbuktu or Dori (called Gyémaré by the natives) on the other hand, amounts to very little. The Mossi export kola nuts which they have brought

4: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1957
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643 The war minister replied, "That will be against tradition and justice to the dead ruler. Do not fear; I am here with my arms to see that your decision is respected" (this was not always an empty gesture, for one man, Wobogo, forced a Ouidi-naba to elect him).[3] When the lesser ministers were notified as to the choice of the new sovereign they said: "You have expressed our will and the will of all the people." The elector then secretly called the new ruler and, taking off the man's goat's skin (the symbol of those seeking the chieftainship) told him: "I am giving you the house of your father and of your grandfather." Then the ministers and the chief musician escorted the new ruler before his subjects, and the Ouidi-naba shouted: "Here is he who has the power of life and death over you." The following day all the members of the ruling lineage and sublineages swore not to betray their new ruler. The minister of war then swore, in the name of all the people, to protect the new ruler with his life if the need ever arose. Next followed ceremonies during which a descendant of the original Ninisi inhabitants made sacrifices, in the name of the new sovereign, to his ancient ancestors.

643 642 [778] In analyzing the power of the Moro-naba we must take into consideration the concept of *nam* which is described as "power" or "the force of God." It is this force of God that enables one man to control another, and gives the sovereign the power of life and death over his subjects. Moreover, once a man had "eaten the *nam*," the Mossi constitution had no provisions for deposing him. The Mossi generally claim that only one of their thirty-three rulers was ever deposed, and that he was the ruler who ran away from the French. However, there is another tradition that states that one sovereign, Karfo, was forced to commit suicide by his Ouidi-naba.

According to the Mossi constitution, the Moro-naba had complete control over the lands of the state, and was the only one empowered to distribute these lands as fiefs. Any attack on the lands of the state was an attack on the Moro-naba and thus a cause for war. The Moro-naba alone had the right to make war, and in this he was helped by his vassals, the district chiefs, and their armies. He was court of final appeal for crimes that carried the death penalty and, theoretically, only he had the right to condemn a nobleman to death.

651 686 Every year the district chiefs under the command of their ministers went to the capital to pay allegiance to the Moro-naba with gifts of cows, goats, sheep, cowries, and grain. The animals were presents from the stock of the district chiefs, but the cowries and grain were collected from the villagers of the districts. The people of the several wards in the capital furnished labor for the cultivation of the sovereign's fields and for the upkeep of his houses. The Moro-naba received substantial sums of money from taxes on the sale of slaves or other merchandise in the Ouagadougou market. He also received presents of slaves when his vassals raided the surrounding countries. If a district chief failed to fulfill all of these

4: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1957
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obligations to the Moro-naba, his lands were raided, his women seized and, if he were caught, he was killed.

It is difficult to ascertain how the institution of provincial administrators arose among the Mossi. Some of the people still believe that the ministers were formerly slaves of the Moro-naba, but Delobsom claims that the first ministers were warrior companions of Naba Oubri, the founder of the Ouagadougou dynasty.[4] These men were not members of the royal lineage and thus were inferior in status to the members of the royal lineage and sublineages under their supervision. However, as emissaries of the Moro-naba, these ministers were entitled to respect by all the people. The ministers recommended successors to vacant district chieftainships; thus it was incumbent upon a district chief to be friendly with his minister if he wished succession to go to his eldest son.

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The minister was the person who carried orders from the Moro-naba to the district chiefs, and he reported back to the Moro-naba on conditions in the district he visited. However, the minister could not interfere in the internal affairs of a district, nor could the district chief complain to the Moro-naba about a minister. Everyone was required to observe the strict hierarchy; the only sanction that the district chief exercised over his minister was to appeal to another minister in the hope that the Moro-naba would come to his aid.

The districts that comprised the provinces of the ministers were scattered around the country and were not equal in size or importance. One minister, the Baloum-naba, controlled the districts ruled over by those chiefs who were the sons of recent rulers. Another, the Kamsoro-naba, a eunuch, had control of the largest and wealthiest districts, but he, in contrast to the other ministers, was not succeeded by sons and, when he died, the Moro-naba inherited all of his property. The ministers frequently became very wealthy because they received gifts whenever their charges went to Ouagadougou to pay homage to the ruler. The people from the districts under their control provided labor for their fields and for the upkeep of their houses. The ministers also received bribes from persons seeking vacant district chieftainships.

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When a district chief or Kombéré died, his heirs sent a horse or a sheep with leaves on its tail to notify the ruler of the death. The Moro-naba always questioned the envoys, and when he was satisfied that his man had not met with foul play, he sent the animal to his chief minister. The Moro-naba then sent his own envoys to the late chief's house with offerings for sacrifices to their common ancestors, and also instructed the envoys to collect the death offerings from the chief's relatives. After the funeral the eldest son of the dead chief and the other pretenders went to Ouagadougou bearing gifts to the district minister and the other important men surrounding the ruler. When the time came to name the new district chief, the Moro-naba called his ministers together and asked them: "Which one of the candidates is really capable of succeeding the late chief?"

241 picking, the plant may be turned under and left to enrich the soil.

241 Apart from the co-operative cultivation of fields under the proprietor-
476 ship of the lineage elder, each farmer works for himself. He aids his relatives, and they in turn assist him with his work, but the results of their communal effort are not shared. This applies not only to the work of planting but also to cultivation and harvest. The decision about what is to be planted in a particular field and how it shall be cultivated rests finally with the individual farmer.

Communal or co-operative effort is much more characteristic of the work of cultivation than of the planting period, when everyone is in a hurry to get his own seeds into the ground and requests for assistance are not welcomed. A strong note of competition is evident at this time. A [461] man takes pride in his efficiency as a farmer, and there is a race to see who can get farthest along with his work. In the earliest phase of prepa- [572] rations for the approaching rainy season it is the individual's best friend upon whom he relies most for assistance. He is the first person to be called on for assistance in clearing the field for planting. If a Mossi farmer is unmarried, he may also ask the other unmarried men of his lineage for help. If a long day must be spent in the field in order to clear and clean it properly, his mother will offer the helpers the midday meal, which is carried out to them as they work.

622 *Naba koba* (chief's cultivation) is the name given to the work which the
651 villagers do in the fields belonging to the village chief. A village elder is
241 charged with announcing when and where work in the chief's fields is to be done, and each lineage head relays the news to his kinsmen. This contribution of labor is no longer obligatory, as it was formerly, but only [626] a question of social pressure and recognition that individual well-being and the welfare of the village "depend on the chief."

241 Every Mossi is an agriculturist. Although agriculture is the principal
463 source of income, everyone also engages in crafts, particularly during the dry season when the work in the fields is finished. However, there are no full-time crafts specialists. Even the African functionaries in the European administration and the teachers, clerks, and merchants all work in their fields part of the time during the rainy season. The activities of the blacksmiths, leather workers, butchers, wood workers, herbalists, and small merchants are carried out on a much smaller scale and are fitted into the routine established by the rains and the growth of their millet. Only elders whose age keeps them from the fields might be thought of as specialists who do not participate in agriculture, but their land is worked by younger members of the family, and they take a keen interest in the course of its cultivation. The village chief, the earth custodian, and certain other elderly and important members of the community do not cultivate; this is because of their position and age rather than because

563 From a political standpoint, they were subject to the high Mossi powers just like the Yarsé, but like the latter and aside from this, they had preserved all their personal and economic freedom.

231 Let us add a few words about the various races of livestock which are to be found in Mossi territory.

As far as cattle is concerned, there are three races in the Ouagadougou circle:

1. Humped cattle, which is found mostly in the northern and eastern parts of the circle. This beef is tall, with a short dewlap and large horns. It is well suited to porterage, and furnishes excellent butcher's meat. There are some 5,000 head of humped cattle in the circle, 2,000 males and 3,000 females.

2. Humpless or local cattle. This beef has small horns, is found chiefly in the western and southwestern regions, and is usually designated by the name of Kipirsi cattle. It is not suited to porterage and yields inferior meat, but it is much stronger than the humped beef and better adapted to the climate.

3. Ordinary cattle, the result of a cross between the two preceding species. This beef has the strength of the Kipirsi cattle and is considerably taller. It is, furthermore, capable of being fattened, and can thus furnish meat of very good quality. This type predominates among the Tenkodogo Mossi. It comprises about 20,000 head, 8,000 males and 12,000 females.

It is therefore the local cattle (71,000 head), which is most numerous. The humped beeves are worth from 40 to 100 francs, [435] /489/ and the humpless beeves from 30 to 40 francs. The natives are familiar with castration but practice it at random on any subject [232] that comes to hand.

231 Prior to the arrival of the French, the Mossi used their cattle for meat and for sacrifices, but the two uses really amounted to one 782 (the former) since the animals offered to a dead person are always 651 eaten by the living. Nowadays, the Mossi sell their cattle to pay their tax. They still eat meat, although apparently not as much as before. The need to pay a tax which has been understood imperfectly, raised too rapidly and levied too harshly over the past few years, has forced them to save their cattle in order to sell it on the southern kola markets.

439 We must add without further delay, however, that it is not the Mossi who do this trading but the Yarsé we know so /538/ well, and the Haoussa settled in Mossi territory. Mossi trade, therefore, is not really Mossi, or at least it was not in the past. If it has now begun to be to some extent, it is thanks to French settlement in the territory.

439 After conquering Mossi lands (1896), indeed, we levied a tax
651 on the population. This tax, low at first, rose rapidly over the last few years. In 1906 it amounted to 311,000 francs in the Ouagadougou circle itself, for a population of 861,000 inhabitants. In 1907 it rose to 366,000 francs, in 1909 to 555,000 francs, in 1910 to 656,000 francs. Furthermore, beginning in 1908, it was exacted with so much strictness and on such short notice that it was exactly as though its amount had been increased threefold. Under the circumstances, the Mossi were forced to take to trading in order to secure the French money they did not have, since the local
[436] currency is the cowrie and the French administration will not take it. They were forced to go and sell their oxen, even their cows, something the Black will only consent to do when hard pressed and in the direst need. In short, the Mossi now organize small caravans on a village basis. Local young men are sent in groups to Ouanké to
[484] sell cattle, sheep, goats, donkeys, local horses, and cotton strips. They bring back either French currency or kola nuts. When they bring nuts, they go and sell them at Saraféré or Sofara and get salt or 5-franc pieces. In other words, the Mossi are taking to trade, owing to a pressing need.

439 The Mossi, nevertheless, may hardly be regarded as a trader. He has been one for an extremely short time, and he is not much of a trader yet.

To summarize, there is a strong current of exchange trading in Mossi territory from north to south and south to north. There are also important market towns in the territory, or rather large market villages, as we already know. This exchange trading and those important markets, however, are the creation and achievement of the Yarsé and of a small number of Haoussa. The Mossi themselves, in the past, had no part in all this, except /539/ for the fact that the

565 171 were, conquerors. This represents a higher level of social complexity and development, in short, a higher level of civilization.

565 556 The nakomsé were and still are gathered in separate villages scattered throughout the territory. They did the same work as other Mossi, but prior to the French occupation they also practiced looting, which was their chief expedient, their major source of wealth. True, this manner of acquiring wealth had lent them improvident habits. Nowadays they own no more small livestock than the Mossi populace, and only a little more large livestock, while they should own much more in view of their former opportunities to acquire wealth. They immediately "ate up" what they looted, however, counting on future pillage. Nowadays they no longer loot, but they seem to have preserved their former improvident habits. It should be noted, however, that they own considerably more horses than other Mossi.

565 142 I saw at Pirigui, in January, 1909, one of those villages of chiefs' sons. There were altogether 841 inhabitants of the nobility with their families and their slaves. Those people would be interesting to study from the point of view of physical anthropology. There were faces totally at variance with Negro faces, truly distinguished physiognomies, oriental and semitic casts of features, in short, enough /579/ to strike an observer even though unfamiliar with physical anthropology.

642 The superstructure of the Mossi state thus consisted of a supreme chief, a carefully established hierarchy of chiefs, and a class of nobles to whom important privileges were granted.

651 As for taxes, "every year at the end of the winter season, prior to our occupation," says Moulins, "the canton chiefs had to come, greet the Moro Naba, and offer him certain gifts (beeves, sheep, millet) which constituted a sort of fixed due." This was the common tax levied after each harvest.

"In addition, whenever the sovereign needed anything whatever, he requested the province chiefs to secure it for him. They summoned the canton chiefs, who in turn gathered the village chiefs, who secured through the soukala chiefs the animals, grain, cowries, and other items requested.

[431] "Finally, whenever a native, chief or common man, came to the Moro Naba, he offered a present to the latter.

651 "Market-place dues were levied by the Dara Haba, for the sovereign's account, on the markets surrounding Ouagadougou. The Moro Naba also got the tusks of elephants and one haunch of every buffalo or koba killed by hunters.

643 651 425 "Furthermore, the right of confiscation which the sovereign could use for his own benefit without any precise rule imperatively limiting the conditions under which he could exercise it, permitted him to augment, whenever needed, the revenue derived from his usual sources.

651 "Province chiefs, in turn, had the right to demand, through the canton chiefs, whatever they needed for the support of their families and retinues. Canton chiefs held the same rights over the villages within their rule. The village chiefs themselves received from their subjects a certain number of gifts."

692 Justice was rendered as follows: /580/

1. By the family heads, aided by the family elders.
2. By the village chiefs, aided by the village elders.
3. By the canton chiefs, aided by the elders of their own quarter.
4. By the province chiefs, aided by the elders of their own quarter and by the dignitaries of their entourage.
5. By the Moro Naba, aided by his ministers and the dignitaries of his entourage.

"The respective competence /legal authority/ of those various jurisdictions," says Moulins, "were in no way clearly determined or defined. The deed and the circumstances alone were taken into account in bringing up before a certain authority a matter which the lower jurisdiction had proved unable to resolve. A matter which the family council had been unable to solve was brought before the village chief, then the canton chief, the province chief, and finally the Moro Naba.

694 "Justice was free of charge in the sense that procedural expenses were unknown, but custom demanded that a litigant should never appear before a judge empty handed. He had to offer him at least a white chicken. The outcome of a trial must often have depended on the greater or lesser generosity displayed by the respective sides."

644 Under him were the Kos Naba, who levied taxes on general merchandise sold in the mar-
[651] kets, and the Nemdo Naba, who collected taxes on meat sold in the markets and was responsible for distributing meat within the royal household. Most of these positions were hereditary, but here primogeniture was not as important as in the ruling and administrative lineages.

[648] The various foreign groups in the capital also sent representatives to the court. Among them were the Zangweoto Naba for the Hausa, a Naba for the Songhai, and an Imam for the Ouagadougou Moslems. Even total strangers such as the early European visitors were placed under the care of a special chief.

The most ubiquitous persons at the Mogho Naba's court were the pages, who were boys between the ages of ten and twenty. These boys were regarded as comparable to the ruler's wives, since they served him in the same manner as ordinary Mossi women serve their husbands at home. They wore women's bracelets and women's clothes, and dressed their hair in the
[834] same style as the royal wives. As we have seen, they were forbidden sexual intercourse until they were released from the royal household.[23]

173 The institution of pages is said to have originated sometime in the sev-
644 enteenth century, during the reign of Mogho Naba Waraga. Before his reign, the wives of the Mogho Naba attended him at court. The change came during a lengthy civil war between Waraga and the chief of Riziam territory, who had refused to pay allegiance to him. During five "dry seasons" (five years) of fighting, the Mogho Naba was attended only by a small boy. He found him so efficient that at the end of the war he resolved to employ only page boys and prohibit his wives from attending him at court. This origin is conjectural. However, the use of pages effectively segregated the royal wives from court intrigues, and, once instituted, the practice spread throughout the country.

644 The Mogho Naba had little difficulty recruiting pages. Many of them were the sons of pughsiudse whom he had given to his subjects as wives. In theory, the Mogho Naba could select boys at will, but in practice the pages were usually selected by the ministers and sent to the palace. Most boys willingly accepted service, but some, often with the support of their parents, resisted confinement to the palace. Some ten-year-olds even ran away to escape their impending fate, but they were soon caught and braceleted with the insignia of their new status. Once this had been done, their lineages encouraged them to remain at the palace. Their period of service
[145] terminated when they began to "push beards," usually at about eighteen years of age. One district chief claims that ancient Mogho Nanamse used to take the sons of district chiefs as pages and release them only when their

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634 As soon as the prince arrived, the Ouidi Naba made preparations to
644 receive the chiefs of such local districts as Manga, Nobere, and Basgana, who visited the prince and brought him wives, livestock, and money. During a seven-day period, other chiefs and well-wishers visited the new chief
[431] and offered him gifts. When this period was over, the new Djiba Naba gave wives to the noble members of his escort and livestock, money, and kola nuts to the commoners and serfs, and sent the group back to Ouagadougou. Then he settled down to the life of a typical district chief, governing his villages in the name of the Mogho Naba, paying him tribute, and settling disputes among his villagers. Dim Delobson reports that the other
[431] district chiefs and the heads of such principalities as Boussouma and Con-
[651] quizitenga formerly sent presents to the Djiba Naba when they sent their annual tribute to the Mogho Naba.[21] But this contradicts all that I heard and saw of the relationship between the royal heir and the other district chiefs. They treated him as an equal and showed no deference to him either in private or on ceremonial occasions. As a matter of fact, in the presence of the Mogho Naba, the royal heir actually effaced himself before the other district chiefs. This behavior served to preserve the concept of equal access
[643] of all members of the ruling clan to the ancestral nam. The Mogho Naba was head of the ruling group as well as political leader of the Mossi. His son, on the other hand, was often a junior in terms of age and generation within the ruling group, but politically he was on the same level as the other district chiefs. The sovereign could not show by his behavior that his son was either actually or potentially superior to the other Nanamse; nor could the prince presume to be haughty because of his strategic but accidental relationship to the actual possessor of the nam. Had he tried to do so, he might have ruined his chances of being selected to take over the "house" of his father and his father's fathers.

643 The relations between the Mogho Naba and his children, including his
644 heir, were characterized by formality—at least in public. Nevertheless, the ruler took a vital interest in the training and welfare of the youthful Djiba
593 Naba. Mogho Naba Wobogo (1890–96) reportedly had the Ouidi Naba
634 and the Baloum Naba of Djiba executed because the Crown Prince died under strange circumstances while under their care. Yet the Mogho Naba was not expected to enjoy seeing his son and heir, because of the Mossi father's traditional anxiety regarding those individuals who would profit most from his death. At the assemblies of district chiefs called by the Mogho Naba, the royal heir was not even greeted by his father; moreover, the heir usually stood at the edge of the assembly and left without attending the customary feast. However, there is considerable evidence that the Mogho

634 622 greater number of lineage members eligible for the nam and the shallow genealogical depth. Every man who had the ability or desire to rule was 634 encouraged to seek the post. Many candidates tried to impress the district 622 chief and his advisers with their good qualities; most tried to bribe them. 662 Since the candidates could not openly seek the post during the day, they visited the important officials of the district at night, taking money and cattle as presents. Some candidates even promised wives. The intrigues on this level, such as seeking the friendship of pages to find out about the activities of rivals, paralleled those at Ouagadougou. The more gifts a candidate gave the district chief, the more his rivals tried to surpass him. Consequently, the district chief often kept the office vacant for months or even as long as two or three years in order to enjoy these lucrative gifts. Neither the caretakers of the village, who complained about the administrative problems of a village without a chief, nor the Tengsobadamba, who declared that without the permission of a chief they could not make sacrifices to help the people avoid illness, drought, and sterility, could force the Kombere Naba to name a new village chief. Only when the candidates had exhausted most of their wealth was the process to elect the chief set in motion.

634 The district chief had a better knowledge of the character of candidates 622 for the village chieftainship than the Dimdamba or Mogho Nanamse had about the men whom they selected. The district chiefs were better able than other Mossi rulers to obey the dictum that only those men capable of "keeping" the country should rule. Nevertheless, before making a choice, the Kombere Naba called in the local minister responsible for the village in question and discussed with him the character and capabilities of the various candidates.[42] As on higher levels, the eldest son of the former chief [651] was usually favored, especially if he had sent a large *fado* (death tax) to the district chief and had been generous to him during the interregnum. [662] But it was also possible that one of the dead chief's younger sons or one of his brothers or uncles might be chosen. In some cases, the district chiefs [613] chose men from related sub-lineages that had not held the nam for generations. One district chief chose a man who had lived away from the village for thirty years. He had gone to live in his mother's brother's village as a young man and did not return until he was named chief. Admittedly, such cases were exceptional, but they kept alive in the minds of the local people the concept of the Mossi lineage's corporate possession of the nam.

On the day chosen for the election of a village chief, all the candidates with their unshaved heads and sheepskin mantles reported to the village administrator's house along with all the other men of their lineage. They [431] gave him presents, and he led them to the compound of the district chief.

ADMINISTRATION

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Binger reports that the Mossi were divided into "a number of confederacies, more or less independent of each other, whose chiefs were vassals of Naba Sanum, the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou." He found, nevertheless, that although the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou claimed suzerainty over the Yatenga, he could not grant travelers permission to enter that territory.[2]

Crozat, who visited the Mossi in 1890, just two years after Binger, was told repeatedly that the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou had the right to control the destinies of all chiefs who claimed descent from Ouedraogo and Oubri. But he, too, found that the principalities were self-governing and mutually independent, and were united only by the weak bond that attached them all to Ouagadougou. Noting the claims of the people he encountered that Ouagadougou was still supreme, Crozat suggests that "time and circumstances have weakened this sovereignty. The ruler of Ouagadougou is regarded by the other chiefs merely as their senior and the head of their family. They seldom obey him, yet they recognize that in certain cases he has the right to give them orders." Like many Frenchmen who came after him, Crozat concludes, "One will be struck, as I have been, by this political organization in which the waning of the central authority has led to a true feudal system closely reminiscent of a certain period in our own history."[3]

Delafosse tells us that "the authority of the emperor [of Ouagadougou] does not seem to have been ignored within his borders except in very rare instances. The vassal kings, who were brothers, sons, or nephews of the emperor, usually obeyed him. In any case, the emperor did not interfere with the administration [of their territories], and required nothing from them except the payment of taxes and the raising of contingents for any expeditions he might have to organize against outside enemies (the emperors of Mali, Gao, or Segou; Moroccan pashas; etc.). In return, the emperor granted his support to those of his vassals who were unable to command the obedience of their subjects or tributaries."[4]

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It appears, then, that although the independent rulers and autonomous princes sometimes recognized the supremacy (if not the seniority) of the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou, they were relatively free to rule as they wished. As possessors of the nam, they claimed and exercised the right to administer the peoples of their realms. It appears, furthermore, that the rulers of Ouagadougou seldom challenged the independence of their confreres in Yatenga, although the latter often disturbed them. For example, when Yatenga Naba Kango (ca. 1754–89) sacked and burned the Ouagadougou district of Yako for sheltering refugees from a civil war, the Mogho Naba did not come to the aid of the Yako Naba. Nor did he take offense when this chief, in order to regain his seat, was compelled to switch his

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VII

THE ECONOMIC FOUNDATION

THE REVENUE for the support of the Mossi chiefs and their governmental system came from many sources in a variety of forms. The Mossi of Ouagadougou held that "the Mogho Naba is master of everything" (*Mogh Nab n so fa*), and when they referred to the control he and his chiefs exercised over their goods and services, they said, "The commoner rears his livestock for the chief," and cited the proverb "The snake gets whatever is in the belly of the frog."

Since the Mossi were, and still are, primarily an agricultural people, the products of the soil were the main source of revenue. The Mossi chiefs did not own the land, but they controlled it and assigned land rights to their subjects. The Mossi believed that land had no value apart from people, and, conversely, that people could not exist without land. As they said, "Land is the mother; it fed the ancestors of this generation; it feeds the present generation and its children; and it provides the final resting place for all men." Therefore, a Mossi chief never hesitated to give anyone permission to use unoccupied land. It was in his interest to do so, because the more subjects he commanded, the greater were his revenue and prestige. An unpopular chief was censured not by a withholding of tribute and presents, but by a mass exodus of his subjects to another area.

Through the administrative hierarchy, the common people contributed to the support of the various levels of government. The Mogho Naba periodically received agricultural produce from all his subjects. Through the village chiefs, the village people sent part of their produce to the district chiefs, who forwarded it to the provincial ministers. They, in turn, delivered it to the central government during a ceremony appropriately called "Soretasgho" ("completion of the road"). This event occurred at the end of the harvest festival, after all the crops had been gathered in.[1]

To open the ceremony, the provincial governors' retainers began to clear the paths leading from the governors' compounds to the palace, for they had

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643 651 796 become overgrown with grass and weeds during the rainy season. This clearing was done to within a few yards of the palace, but was not completed. Early in the morning of the day chosen for the actual rendering of the agricultural tribute, the retainers placed baskets of produce along these paths. During the morning ceremony, the Ouidi Naba presented a basket of millet to the Mogho Naba. Then the Bendere Naba, acting as Sore Naba ("chief of the road"), signaled on his drum, and the men with baskets who were waiting on the uncleared portion of the paths, preceded by drummers and men with hoes, axes, and other tools, began to move forward. The men in the processions raised a din, shouting, singing, drumming, and pretending that the task of clearing was very difficult. From time to time, the more energetic among those who were not carrying bundles ran ahead of the others, turned somersaults, and then, going through the motions of warriors in battle, pranced back into the procession. All the processions came to the shed occupied by the royal drummers and deposited their burdens. These were later retrieved by the palace staff and stored for use in the royal household.

643 644 241 The royal household was also supplied with produce grown by the royal wives. Foodstuffs for guests and fodder for the ruler's horses were provided by the people of the Bilbalgo and Dapoya wards, which were under the general supervision of the Kam Naba. Two or three times during the agricultural season, this official recruited extra help from these wards to help [464] [465] cultivate the fields. In recompense for this *sosogha* (work bee), the laborers were given food, drink, and kola nuts from the royal household. At the 243 643 644 end of the year, the harvesting and threshing of the grain from the Mogho Naba's fields was the occasion for an elaborate ceremony, "Mogh Nab' kawinre" ("threshing the ruler's grain").[2]

796 [791] [792] To begin this ceremony, the Mogho Naba summoned a local earth-priest, the Manougoudougou Tengsoba, to the court. This man, a descendant of the Ninisi, had to perform the propitiatory sacrifices to the earth deity who was symbolized by the threshing floor. After the sacrifices were completed, the Kam Naba went to the threshing floor with the young men of the Bilbalgo and Dapoya wards, who threshed the millet gathered there. The next morning they all returned to the threshing floor with the Bendere Naba and his minstrels, who recited the Mogho Naba's genealogy and sang praises to his ancestors. The drummers then beat out work rhythms and traditional drum patterns to which the workers danced while scattering the millet far and wide. Finally, the dancing stopped, and the Kam Naba drew a line on the threshing floor, dividing the pile of millet in two; the Bilbalgo people gathered one half, the Dapoya people the other. Regard-

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less of the amount of millet harvested from the Mogho Naba's fields, there had to be one hundred baskets full of grain. If the number of baskets filled with the Mogho Naba's grain fell short of the mark, the serfs and slaves had to make up the difference with the produce of their own fields. The ceremony concluded with sacrifices to the royal ancestors, after which the Mogho Naba's wives, daughters, and sisters gave beer and kola nuts to the laborers.

As head of the central government, the Mogho Naba received revenue in the form of money and livestock which the district chiefs collected from the village people. These were given to him during an elaborate annual ceremony called the "Basgha" ("feast of the royal ancestors"). Several days before this post-harvest festival, the district chiefs and their retainers arrived in the capital and lodged with their provincial ministers. At a designated time during the ceremony, the district chiefs and nobles went to the palace. In provincial contingents and led by their ministers, they walked up to the sovereign's throne and gave the Mossi salute. After they had returned to their places, their servants gave the royal pages the presents they had brought to the palace.

The Dimdamba apparently made their annual contribution to the Mogho Naba at the time of the Basgha. There is one report that they took this opportunity to send gifts to the ruler's son, the Djiba Naba, as well. The Dimdamba customarily sent the Mogho Naba part of the goods they had seized in combat against non-Mossi peoples, as well as a tax (*fado*) out of the goods they had inherited from their predecessors.[8] There is also some evidence that the Mogho Naba solicited goods from the Dimdamba at other times. Crozat says:

> During my first visit to Yako, three envoys from Ouagadougou were at the chief's house. They were tax collectors. They had come to offer the vassal a silver bracelet sent by the sovereign. The Yako Naba responded by sending horses, captives, and cowries to Ouagadougou.[9]

Crozat could not understand this reciprocity between the Mogho Naba and his vassals, and questions whether the Mogho Naba really collected taxes from them. He concludes that the Mogho Naba did receive taxes, "but these are never given to him except in the form of presents which are reciprocated."[10] Crozat found it puzzling and disturbing that many of the Dimdamba had not given the Mogho Naba any "taxes" for several years. He indicated, moreover, that they did not wish to pay taxes to the Ouagadougou ruler even under the guise of an exchange of presents. This was especially true of the Yatenga Naba, who had not sent the Mogho Naba any presents for six or seven years prior to 1890. Crozat surmised that

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because of this delinquency, the Mogho Naba might hesitate to come to the aid of any of his vassals if a general war broke out. It is true that the Mogho Naba did not aid the Yatenga ruler when the French arrived. But whether this was because of his failure to pay taxes, or because the French conquest of the Yatenga coincided with a civil war there, we shall probably never know. We do know that many of the Mogho Naba's vassals came to his aid when the French finally arrived at Ouagadougou. It is my opinion that the gifts exchanged between Yatenga and Ouagadougou were not "tributary," but were more in the nature of tokens of friendship between two peers.

The Mogho Naba and his provincial ministers also received revenue as a function of their judicial roles. The nature and disposition of the fines levied against legal offenders were discussed in Chapter V. The Mogho Naba's fees came in the form of the traditional gifts the litigants gave him even before their cases were tried. These gifts were never regarded as bribes, for this would have contradicted the Mossi axiom that "the truth is at Ouagadougou."

The Mogho Naba inherited all the property of the Kamsaogho Naba, and claimed all the property of district chiefs who died without close relatives. He also received inheritance taxes (fado) from the estates of deceased district chiefs. In collecting the fado, the Mogho Naba first retained the horse on which the messenger came to announce the chief's death. He reciprocated by sending envoys with cowries and animals to be offered to their common ancestors at the chief's funeral. After the funeral, the envoys claimed the dead chief's quiver of arrows to take to Ouagadougou for deposit with those of other dead chiefs. Then they demanded the fado, and jestingly told the heirs that the Mogho Naba would be satisfied with nothing less than "a thousand of everything" (*tusri bumbu fa*) the deceased had possessed: wives, slaves, horses, cows, goats, chickens, articles of clothing, and so on. The heirs pleaded poverty and jokingly gave the envoys a few old and sickly animals, old chickens, tattered pieces of clothing, etc. Eventually, they handed out the fado, which usually consisted of livestock, clothing, food, weapons, jewelry, cowries, and even slaves. Lastly, they gave the envoys the chief's ceremonial horse and presents for themselves.

The Mogho Naba and his ministers collected a considerable amount of revenue from the traders who visited Ouagadougou and the larger market towns and village markets throughout the kingdom.[8] The Mossi (especially the assimilated Yarse) were good traders, and they benefited from their country's strategic location between the Sahara and the forest regions. According to Barth, some six caravan routes crossed the country, linking

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the Niger River area to the Gold Coast and Togoland. Important stops were made at such Mossi centers as Ouagadougou, Bere, Dakay, La, Mane, Yako, and Koupela.[7] At Dori, northwest of Ouagadougou, Barth found Mossi with "their fine donkeys, which are greatly sought after." He adds that in addition, 645 651 439 [487] [443]

> the people of Mossi supply this market with gabaga, or "tari" [cotton bands], as Arabs near Timbuktu call them, cotton being extremely cheap in their country, so that in the great market places of that country, especially in Kulfela [Koupela, but really at Poitenga a few miles away], an indigo-colored shirt is not worth more than from 700 to 800 [cowry] shells. . . . Besides salt, cotton strips, dyed cloth, kola nuts, corn, and asses, some copper manufactured chiefly into large drinking-vessels is also brought into the market by the people of Mossi. However, I do not think they manufacture the copper vessels themselves, but bring them from Ashanti.[8]

Dubois, one of the early visitors to Timbuktu, tells us that he saw Mossi men carrying on their traditional trade in that city. Mossi traders dealt in such diverse commodities as millet, rice, manioc, peanuts, honey, kola nuts, peppers, dried onions, tobacco, dried fish, soap, iron, antimony, lead, cotton bands, straw hats, mats, jars, pots, and calabashes. They traded these articles for needles, mirrors, beads, coral, amber, tea, coffee, perfumes, carpets, fezzes, tailored robes, and salt. What impressed Dubois most was that while the merchants from Bamako, Djenne, Sansanding, and Touat enjoyed themselves at Timbuktu, "the great town of pleasures with the freest morals in the Sudan," and spent a great deal of money in gifts to beautiful women, "the Mossi did not waste their money, and left as soon as they had finished their business."[9] On the way south, Mossi and other caravaneers picked up goods from the Yatenga and other northern Ouagadougou provinces before stopping at the capital and then proceeding to the forest regions. 175 439

It is impossible to determine the exact volume of caravan trade that passed through Mossi country, and the amount of revenue it brought to the Mossi rulers. We can get some idea of this trade, however, by examining the customs reports on goods crossing the border between Mossi country and the northern territories of the Gold Coast in the few years just following European conquest. 439 [651]

The official figures for 1901 and 1903 are as follows:[10]

Year	Horses	Head of Cattle	Sheep and Goats	Loaded Donkeys	Bales of Cotton Cloth
1901	126	3,111	18,181	2,095	236
1903	196	6,624	30,392	4,294	269

439 Marc, who had the opportunity to check the volume of this trade in 1904 and 1905, estimates that about 16,000 head of cattle and 75,000 sheep and goats passed through the two customs posts in Mossi country. Furthermore, he believes that since "the Mossi also supply in part the markets of Togoland and the market at Bondoukou [Ivory Coast], one may assume a minimum annual export of 20,000 head of cattle and 100,000 sheep or goats. [M14] The import of kola nuts is at least 500 tons."[11] It is clear that this volume of trade could not have been achieved so soon after the French conquest. [651] We can only conclude that it existed prior to the coming of the Europeans, and that it brought the Mossi rulers a considerable income.

643 The Mogho Naba's officials collected taxes from all caravans that passed through his capital. The caravaneers also gave the Mogho Naba important gifts, and he apparently traded with them, even if always to his own profit. Binger states that Mogho Naba Sanum forced horse traders from the Yatenga and Hausa merchants to sell him part of their commodities at one-hundredth the purchase price.[12] Crozat reports that Mogho Naba Wobogo

> appears to have had some business relations with white merchants who came to Salaga every dry season. He sent horses to them in exchange for silver. He claims that he had no reason to be pleased with their integrity, and that the silver they sent him contained plenty of copper. Some traders apparently came as far as Ouagadougou, bringing merchandise of German origin. There was one of them there during my stay. I was told that he was an important *marabout*, a shereef, perhaps an Arab or a Moor, for I was assured that he was very light in color. As was repeated to me several times, his relations with the king were limited to the solemn greetings on Fridays. He never entered the royal hut in spite of being an important marabout. He was at Ouagadougou for about three and one-half months, but he was compelled to return to the coast since the merchandise which he had brought was exhausted. He spoke no Mossi.[13]

439 All the caravans that passed through Mossi country were obliged to stop and give presents to the district officials. Those caravaneers who tried to elude taxation by going through the forest ran the risk of being attacked by local nobles, who usually confiscated their goods.

The Mogho Naba and the lesser chiefs had "market officials" who taxed the merchants in the markets of their territories. The officials at Ouagadougou, the Kos Naba ("sales chief") and the Raga Naba ("market chief"), were fairly rigorous in their exactions. The Kos Naba collected taxes in cowries for every cow slaughtered at the market, and also took its hump and gave it to the Nemdo Naba ("meat chief") for distribution in the royal household. He also collected taxes on every cow sold in the market, but

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did not usually tax goats and sheep. In lieu of this, he occasionally took one or two of these animals from each herd that passed through the market and sent them to the palace kitchens. Donkeys sold in the market were taxed at the rate of 200 cowries each. Horses sold to the nobility were not taxed, but those exported were.

The Raga Naba collected taxes on the other commodities sold at the market. Cotton weavers paid him according to the size of their bolts of cloth, and cotton growers paid taxes on the sales of their raw produce. The tailors and dyers paid no fixed amounts, but were asked to send clothing to the palace. Every donkey- and ox-load of salt entering the market place was taxed. The smiths were not taxed in cowries, but had to supply the Mogho Naba's wives with hoes and the palace personnel with arrowheads, spear points, and iron clubs. The jewelers also sent bracelets as presents to the ruler. There were no fixed taxes on the cereals, vegetables, and cooked food sold at the market, but each day the Raga Naba, accompanied by several pages or retainers carrying baskets, went from vendor to vendor taking several calabashes of their produce for use in the palace. In addition, the vendors of cooked food had to feed the Mogho Naba's young grooms, who were not normally fed by the palace household. The beer sellers were not formally taxed, but they contributed a substantial percentage of their beverage to palace and market personnel, who demanded the customary *lembgha* ("taste before buying") more frequently and freely than ordinary buyers. [431]

There is some evidence (mainly from European travelers) that the traders occasionally found the caravan and market taxes prohibitive. Binger reports that the high taxes exacted by the Mogho Naba were "one of the reasons why Ouagadougou placed second [as a market town] and Mane was the commercial capital of Mossi country." Binger himself was caught in the institutionalized gift system and wrote sarcastically: "On market day [at Ouagadougou] the receipts are good. People bring everything to the palace, whether it be millet, hoes, or peanuts, and everything is accepted. *All this giving is left to the discretion of the donors.*"[14] The italics are Binger's.

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Some of the later Mogho Nanamse appear to have obtained a great deal of revenue through the sale of slaves. Most of these slaves were captured in raids among the smaller groups surrounding Mossi territory, such as the Samo, Gurunsi, and Busansi populations. According to Mangin, Gurunsi and Busansi countries were true granaries for the Mossi, who drew upon them according to their needs.[15] In early times the Mossi chiefs utilized these slaves (*yemse*, sing. *yamba*) as agricultural workers, until Mogho [464]

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567 643 651 [464] [439] Naba Baongo (ca. 1800–30) decided that it was more profitable to sell them.[16] Subsequent rulers, especially the two Mogho Nanamse who ruled just prior to the French conquest, sold most of their captives to passing caravans or in special sections of the larger markets. When other persons sold slaves in the market, the Raga Naba collected some 1,000 cowries on each transaction—the largest tax on any market commodity.

567 839 [752] [439] [195] The Mossi rulers seem to have benefited even more from the sale of eunuchs, for they had a monopoly over them. The Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou sent some captured slaves and all recidivous thieves to Teemetenga village in Koubri district, some 13 miles south of the capital, to be operated upon.[17] So successful were the Mossi surgeons that—in contrast to specialists in other areas, who lost nine lives for every successful castration—the mortality among the Mossi was only one out of ten.[18] Some of the eunuchs furnished by the Mossi were sold as far away as Constantinople, a fact which surprised the French ambassador to Turkey who saw them there in 1900.[19]

566 643 563 621 In addition to slaves and eunuchs, the Mogho Naba kept a large number of bondsmen to provide services for him. One group, the Dapore, lived in a ward of the capital called Dapoya, and had a chief, the Dapore Naba, who was himself a Dapore. The origin of these people is obscure, but they seem to have been the children of foreign captives who were brought to Ouagadougou and placed in the ruler's service. Some of them even claimed that their ancestors had come to Ouagadougou voluntarily and had placed themselves under the care and protection of the ruler. This seems unlikely, however, since the status of these people resembles that of persons captured by Sudanese rulers and installed in special wards as serfs.[20] Some of the Dapore lived in villages of their own and cultivated fields for the Mogho Naba. Others lived in a ward of Ouagadougou, served in the palace household, and provided the royal executioners. Some were selected to serve as palace eunuchs, and placed under the charge of the Kamsaogho Naba. The Dapore were hardly ever sold unless they were convicted criminals. The Mogho Naba and his chiefs refrained from selling serfs or captives who had been born in Mossi country. However, they often claimed the sons and daughters of these people as pages or pughsiudse.

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The Baglere made up the second group of bondsmen providing services for the Mogho Naba. They, too, lived in a special ward and were headed by the Baglere Naba, one of their own people. Their origin is also obscure: some of them claimed to be descended from Fulani slaves who had run away from their masters and sought asylum in Mossi country; others believed that they were the descendants of foreign captives. The Baglere

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worked for the Mogho Naba in and around the palace courtyard, and in the fields. They also kept his herds and provided him with animals from their own herds. Like the Dapore, they were seldom sold, but they often had to give their sons and daughters to the Mogho Naba.

The last group of persons who contributed their services to the Mogho Naba were the Kamboinse. Their origin is also unclear. Most of my respondents claimed that the Kamboinse and their chief first came to Ouagadougou from the direction of the Gold Coast, that they bore guns, and that they offered their services as guards to the Mogho Naba.[21] Later on, the sovereign allegedly assigned slaves to the Kamboinse unit, with the result that the entire group eventually took on a serf-like character. The Kamboinse guarded the Mogho Naba's palace and seized for him the goods of persons whom he condemned to death.

The services performed for the Mogho Naba by his pages and other youthful retainers also contributed significantly to the support of his administration. We have already seen how these young men and boys took care of his every need and functioned as important messengers within the royal household. The Mogho Naba also had control over the daughters of his serfs, whom he used to obtain revenue from aliens and subjects alike. Periodically, the Mogho Naba gave one of these girls as pughsiudga to a man, thus obligating him to render goods and services to the court. Moreover, the man had to return the eldest daughter he had by this wife to the Mogho Naba as a future pughsiudga. In this way, the sovereign had a revolving store of women through whom he could bind men to himself in a nexus of obligations, and from whom he eventually received additional women.[22]

The provincial ministers of the Ouagadougou kingdom occupied such a strategic position within the central administration that anyone rendering gifts or tribute to the Mogho Naba always gave presents to them as well. Their main source of revenue, however, came from the villages under their direct control, and from the retainers who lived in their compounds and in their wards in the capital. The economic relations between the ministers and their villages were similar to those between the district chiefs and their villages, and will be discussed below. The retainers, serfs, and slaves who served these ministers provided them with many of the services their counterparts rendered to the Mogho Naba. They kept their houses in repair and provided them with firewood and with fodder for their horses. Many of them also cultivated fields for their masters. Whenever the ministers needed extra goods or services, they called on those persons who lived in their compounds or in their wards. For example, hun-

dreds of persons lived in Ouidin, the ward of the Ouidi Naba. Some of them were related to him; others had been attracted by his wealth and by his ability to obtain wives for his charges. All of them benefited from being attached to him in one way or another, and in return helped him to augment his income.

All the district chiefs sent women to their provincial ministers to be kept as wives (and thus as agricultural workers), or to be given out as pughsiudse. The Kamsaogho Naba received more pughsiudse than the other ministers because he was in charge of the wealthier districts, and also of course distributed more. The Baloum Naba was especially favored in another respect. Each year, he was entitled to call several *seghse* (sing. *seka*; a corvée or convocation) of his former pages and their relatives to help cultivate his fields. The Ouidi Naba's sources of revenue were about the same as the Baloum Naba's. In addition, his position as chief minister enabled him to obtain numerous gifts from persons who visited Ouagadougou. Moreover, the Mogho Naba often gave him horses from the fado of deceased district chiefs. The Larhalle Naba had full ministerial privileges, and a few other means of obtaining revenue. He was allowed, for instance, to keep the animals that had not been sacrificed on the graves of deceased rulers.

The provincial ministers received many goods and services from the district chiefs of their provinces. Whenever one of these ministers sent a messenger to the district, the chief gave the messenger money and livestock for his master. Furthermore, the district chiefs brought presents for their minister when they paid their annual visit to Ouagadougou to render homage to the Mogho Naba. The provincial ministers used their position as confidants and advisers to obtain as many presents as possible from persons who came to Ouagadougou to ask special favors from the Mogho Naba, to participate in judicial proceedings, or to seek the nam. Moreover, they cooperated with each other in these exactions, so that a person seeking a favor from or through one minister was prudently advised to give presents to or to seek the aid of the others.

The district chief played a key role in the procurement of revenue for the central administration, and derived an income for himself in the process. The seignorial rights over the Mossi people delegated by the Mogho Naba to all nam holders were quite obvious on this level. The district chief had rights to all valuable fruit trees, such as locust-bean and shea-butter, that grew within the boundaries of his territory. He instructed the village chiefs to harvest the fruit of these trees and send it to him. The village chiefs even had to send him the wood from the fallen branches of these trees.

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The district chiefs did not often exercise their rights over fruit trees in the weogho, as the wasteland in their districts was called. If a villager went into the weogho and collected fruit or wood from the chief's trees, he surrendered only part of it to the chief. On the other hand, if he received permission from a district chief to farm in the weogho, he was obliged to gather and send to the chief the fruit on any valuable trees. A district chief sometimes granted the rights over certain fruit trees in the inhabited areas to specific families or individuals, for personal reasons or as a reward for services. In such cases, the chief forfeited his rights to these trees, but retained his rights to the others.[25]

District chiefs also controlled all the resources of creeks and pools within their jurisdiction that were not sacred to certain aboriginal families, or which had not been transferred to specific persons. The aboriginal Ninisi [226] families always notified the district chief when they planned to perform [796] their annual fishing rite to the earth deities. He, in turn, sent representatives to the ceremony, and they were given part of the catch as his share. Persons who were granted permission to fish in the chief's water holes gave him a substantial part of their catch, and even those persons who had private control of fishing places regularly did the same.

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The district chiefs also had rights to certain parts of animals caught in their territories. This applied especially to animals caught with such traditional weapons as traps, clubs, bows and arrows, and spears. Men who had obtained flint guns and other firearms from the Ashanti or elsewhere and who had bought their own powder were not obliged to give the chief a part of their game, but it was always prudent to do so. According to a long-standing tradition, the tusk and legs of a slain elephant that were not resting on the ground belonged to the chief, and those that lay on the ground belonged to the Tengsoba in whose ritual jurisdiction the animal had been slain. But the district chief's secular power was so much stronger than the Tengsoba's sacred power that he usually took both tusks, leaving the Tengsoba only two legs. The district chief also received other portions of elephants and parts of all the larger animals killed in his territory. And when hunters in the district were successful in the chase, they usually gave him entire small animals.

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Every village in a district contributed to the district chief's revenue by performing special services for him. Certain villages were responsible for keeping specific huts in his compound in good condition; others, whose lands bordered on the woods, had to provide firewood for his compound; and yet others furnished grass and other fodder for his horses. Many villages had the task of cultivating special fields and crops for the district chief.

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621 651 634 243 For example, the villagers of Barkago traditionally cultivated and harvested a field of millet behind his compound for the chief. The people of Pinse, Donse, Passingtenga, and Tewarka cultivated millet for him in their own villages, and those of Togose and Basbedo cultivated rice for him in their excellent lowlands.

243 634 566 567 The district chief had fields both behind his compound and in the bush, which were cultivated for him by his retainers, serfs, and slaves. More than the Mogho Naba and the provincial ministers, the district chief believed that a Moaga must perform agricultural work during the planting season; to show his interest in farming, he often personally supervised the work on his plantations. When the task of weeding or harvesting proved too much for his own people, he asked his villages for a *sosogha*. On that day, each [464] village chief, accompanied by his men, went to the district chief's fields, where, to the accompaniment of drums and chants and with the verbal encouragement of district administrators, the villages vied with each other in their task. The district chief usually sat under a tree and watched the [465] proceedings and occasionally visited the various contingents to observe the progress made. Toward evening, the chief's wives gave the workers large quantities of food and drink in compensation for their services.

651 634 Like the Mogho Naba, the district chief had officials who collected taxes on commodities sold in local markets. These district market officials were usually serfs, Gurunsi captives, or bondsmen from other populations. Mossi [776] rarely served in such capacities because many of the local market places were considered ritually dangerous, and their titular deities, the Tengkouga, were believed to wreak vengeance on market officials who were tardy with sacrifices. The local Kos Naba supervised the slaughtering of every animal killed in the market, kept its skin so that its ownership could be verified if necessary, and collected taxes from the butchers in the form of meat or cowries. The Raga Naba of the district was not as strict as his counterpart in Ouagadougou, and seldom imposed formal taxes on the traders. He usually walked around the market, trailed by the chief's servants, and seized calabashes of grain and other commodities, which he placed in the servants' baskets. The Raga Naba did not tax those itinerant traders or caravaneers who visited the markets in the district, nor did he interfere with them in any other way. These merchants usually had business and personal relations with the chief, and he himself handled revenue from this source. The merchants gave him goods from the forest and Sahara regions, and he in turn often gave them wives, who were thus taken out of the district.

[167] [434] The Mossi district chief was always on the lookout for new sources of revenue, and thus welcomed strangers into his district because they "in-

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creased his force" and ultimately added to his income. Men who had been compelled to flee from other districts because of crimes or power struggles were granted refuge and given pughsiudse. In this manner, the district chief, like the Mogho Naba, established seignorial rights over his new subjects, incorporated them into the district, and obtained goods and services from them. The better a district chief's reputation, the greater the number of refugees who sought shelter with him and added to his wealth. Conversely, a chief who was known for his injustice, his rascality, and his excessive demands from persons seeking the village nam was shunned by potential subjects and might even be deserted by his own.

Those persons who visited the district chief's compound to settle court cases also contributed to his revenue. When the case dealt with cattle or other livestock, the chief received a few animals. In other cases, he received only the customary gifts from the litigants. He also received gifts from all the families in his district several times a year. One occasion was the "Tense," a festival in honor of the mother of Mogho Naba Oubri, the founder of the Ouagadougou dynasty; the other was the Basgha. During these two ceremonies every village chief, preceded by his district administrator and followed by his subjects, paid homage to the district chief and gave him presents. The district chief retained part of what he received for the upkeep of his household and to fulfill such obligations as hospitality to travelers, and added the remainder to his own annual tribute to the Mogho Naba.

The manner in which the district chief collected his annual tax or tribute for the Mogho Naba is the subject of controversy. Several of my respondents declared that the collection of this tribute was rather informal. The district chief allegedly notified the village chiefs that he wished to give a present to the Mogho Naba, and these chiefs sent word to the family heads, who, in turn, notified every household. The village people then collected chickens and livestock, baskets of grain, and cowries, and sent them up through the hierarchy to the district chief. The district chief's retainers checked the gifts from each village very carefully, and if some villages gave less than was expected of them, the district chief summoned their chiefs for explanations. In most cases the district chief knew exactly how much could be expected of his subjects, because his informers—usually his own pages and courtyard servants, or messengers of the local administrators—kept him informed of the wealth of each hamlet. Usually, a village chief who had withheld too much from the commodities turned over to him, or who had not demanded sufficient goods from his villagers, sought to make amends. It was in his interest to do so, since it was always dangerous to incur the

634 district chief's wrath. Thus, there was some method in the collection of this
651 tribute and certain expectations had to be met, even though many of the
[622] contributors may have felt that their gifts were voluntary.

In direct contrast, Dim Delobson, himself a chief, states that Mossi chiefs demanded a stipulated amount from their villagers. He adds, however, that the tribute "varied in amount according to the resources of the contributors," and that the district chief set the "amount of cowries and grain due from each village in accordance with the number of its inhabitants."[24] According to him, the rate of assessment was usually 100 cowries for a married man and 50 for an adult bachelor (apparently, this difference was an acknowledgment of the woman's contribution to her husband's wealth). In addition, each adult male was assessed 10 baskets of millet of about 100 pounds each. Dim Delobson adds that to these exactions the district chief added his own contributions to the Mogho Naba, usually in the form of cattle.

[114] It seems that Dim Delobson rationalized and regularized a rather informal system of contributions. The present-day Mossi declare that soil differences in the villages and variations in rainfall prevented a district chief from demanding a set tribute, because no one could tell whether a crop would be good or bad. Only a ruler's informers could tell him how much he should receive each year, and the chief based his exactions on this report. Several of my respondents agreed with Dim Delobson that the district chief provided mostly cattle for the annual tribute to the Mogho Naba, and that the village people furnished cowries, small animals, and grain.

634 A district chief was seldom wealthy, because he always had to use his
652 revenue to fulfill unexpected obligations toward his subjects, his superiors
574 in the political hierarchy, and his household. He had to be generous to his subjects, providing millet water, millet beer, and the more expensive imported kola nuts for those who visited and conferred with him daily. He was expected to provide food and shelter for the countless strangers who settled in his district, until they could provide for themselves. He also lodged and fed the messengers who brought him orders from the capital, and gave them gifts to take back to the provincial ministers. And he had to provide goods for the many members of his family who depended upon him. Finally, in the event of crop failure or famine in any of his villages, he had to provide grain from his granaries to feed the hungry. "How could he do otherwise? Was he not a 'father' to his people?"

634 The expectation that the district chief should provide hospitality to his
574 subjects was so strong that those chiefs or princes who were deprived of
579 an income for any reason often resorted to banditry to fulfil their obliga-
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 634

tions. Binger, who found Boukary Koutou (the future Mogho Naba Wobogo) living in exile for having led a rebellion against his brother, Mogho Naba Sanum, tells us: 574 579 434

> Boukary has no resources, and does not even have the advantage of receiving periodic tribute from several large villages. In order to subsist and to maintain a certain status, he is compelled to live by pillage and even by brigandage. From time to time, his horsemen make incursions into the outskirts of some Gurunsi or Kipirsi village, and carry off by surprise the inhabitants whom they find working the fields or looking for wood. His people also hide and lie in wait along the roads to capture any persons who may pass within their range. This type of behavior has given Boukary Naba a bad reputation. However, the people who understand his position forgive him, knowing the situation in which his brother has placed him. And, in spite of all this, he has numerous partisans, and many others who would be happy to see him gain power.[25]

Those district chiefs or princes who wished to retain their power legitimately were forced to be generous or run the risk of losing the allegiance and good will of their villagers, who were their ultimate supporters. 634 574

It is very difficult to generalize about the amount of revenue collected by a village chief. He did not receive any revenue from the land used by his villagers. He treated the weogho in his village in the same manner as the district chief. If some families grew too large and wanted to establish permanent residence in the village bush, they asked the chief for permission to settle there. However, many village chiefs had special areas of waste for their own use. They had usually received them as gifts from some district chief, and therefore had the right to collect tribute on any crops, firewood, or fish obtained from these lands. 651 622 634 [361] [431]

The average village chief's main source of revenue was derived from the agricultural and other labor of his wives and relatives. A village chief received a number of wives from his subjects and from aliens living in his village. These women helped cultivate his fields. If their labor was insufficient he called a sosogha, to which he often invited his wives' relatives. Some chiefs also had serfs and slaves who helped cultivate their land and kept their cattle as well. [464] [566] [567]

The village chief did not have the power to tax his subjects. Instead, he functioned as a channel through which commodities and services passed up the hierarchy and on to Ouagadougou. Many villagers voluntarily helped the chief to repair his huts and compound walls and to cut thatch for his roofs. Many gave him baskets of grain and other vegetable products after the harvest. They also visited him and gave him presents during the annual rites to his ancestors. In contrast to higher chiefs, however, the village head [476] [431] [692]

did not derive any revenue from his judicial functions. He could not levy a fine against any malefactor. However, his intermediary position between the villagers and the district chief did permit him to obtain some revenue whenever commodities moved from one level to the other.

The officials who administered the villages for the district chief received part of their revenue from the villages under their charge. These local administrators had no courts or retainers comparable to those at the provincial level. However, they did have a large number of wives who contributed valuable agricultural labor. These administrators were permitted to ask the village chiefs for sosose on their own fields several times during the planting season, but—unlike the district chiefs—they were not permitted to have the villagers cultivate special fields for them. In return for any help received, they had to provide food and drink for the workers.

The administrator received most of his revenue as a by-product of active duty in the villages. When he visited a village or transmitted a message to a village chief, he almost invariably received a sheep, a goat, a chicken, or some millet, from the village chief. He also acquired large quantities of goods during the village interregnum: he received gifts from the chief's heirs during the chief's funeral; he received additional presents when they took the fado to the district chief; he could prolong the interregnum in order to receive as many bribes as possible from contenders for the nam; and he was handsomely rewarded when the candidate he had backed was finally installed in office.

The extended family was the basic socio-economic unit supporting the Mossi political organization. The Yirisoba received land rights in his saka from his Sakakasma, who had obtained his rights from the village chief. An extended family in need of additional land would seek help from its Sakakasma or its Boodkasma. When the family no longer needed this land, it reverted to the lineage. If all the land granted to the lineage was already occupied, the extended family, through its lineage head, asked the village chief for more land. The chief usually granted this request, unless he had no more weogho available. In this case, the needy Yirisoba sometimes tried to borrow land from his non-kin neighbors. Such a step was not undertaken lightly, however. If a man borrowed land from his own lineage members or from the chief, the land rights reverted to its donors without difficulty. However, if he borrowed land from another lineage and either he or his benefactor died without assuring the return of the land, litigation often ensued. In some cases a man would seek land from his lineage brothers in another village, who let him use some of their land with their chief's permission. Some Yirisobadamba even asked their district chief for

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 175*

laborers.[8] In desperation, the French sought help from those very chiefs 177
whose power they wished to curb, especially from the Mogho Naba of 648*
Ouagadougou, whom they regarded as the supreme ruler of the Mossi. 643
However, they met with the same resistance:

> The king of the Mossi, Kouka Naba [Mogho Naba Sighiri], is lavish with vows of devotion and fidelity, but these vows are never translated into action. It is impossible to obtain from him any pertinent information about the country—he tries to give the impression that he knows nothing about it—or any information about Boukary Koutou [then in exile, but still a threat to the French], of whom he pretends to have no news.[9]

One cannot tell whether the Mogho Naba knew about Boukary Koutou's activities, but it is highly unlikely that he could have given the French much information about the country even if he had wished to do so. No Mogho Naba ever possessed this kind of information. The Dimdamba and [631]
the Kombemba paid allegiance and tribute to their superior ruler, but did [651]
not furnish him with specific data on their principalities and districts.

The death of Mogho Naba Sighiri in 1905 enabled the French officials 175*
to secure the election of a Mogho Naba they could control and to change 177
the Mossi political organization. Sighiri's principal heir was his sixteen- 643
year-old son, Saidou Congo, who in the opinion of the Mossi electoral 648*
college "could not keep the country" because of his youth. The French, keenly aware that they could more easily control a young ruler, insisted that Saidou be given the nam, and he became Mogho Naba Kom. Two years later, in 1907, the French began to reorganize the kingdom of Ouagadougou and the surrounding territories. They suppressed certain districts and principalities, enlarged some, and unified others by granting them control over the smaller political entities that lay near or within their boundaries. These changes were often made without regard for the traditional hierarchies, and many district chiefs found themselves controlling other district chiefs, while Dimdamba were reduced to the level of district chiefs.

The French also reorganized the provincial administration, replacing 175*
the five ministers with persons more favorably disposed toward their rule. 177
The Larhalle Naba was replaced in 1908 after he had mysteriously left the 648*
capital for Koudougou. The Kamsaogho Naba was deposed by the Mogho 645
Naba, and was replaced by a nominee of the French. As in the case of the district chiefs, the French shifted the territorial responsibilities of these ministers "without taking into consideration the hierarchy prevailing among [them]. The intention of the administration apparently was to reward certain young and capable ministers to the detriment of those who were old."[10] One commentator concludes: "In view of the youth of the

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175 reigning king, Naba Kom, and also owing to certain difficulties, the ad-
177 ministration was compelled to grant more authority to the five great min-
*648 isters and to make them true provincial chiefs with whom it could deal and
[645] who would govern their territories directly."[6]

Some of the demoted chiefs and their followers opposed these changes. In 1910, they refused to pay taxes and fought the police. However, they were forced to accept the changes when the police burned their villages, seized their goods and animals to pay the taxes, and deposed uncooperative chiefs. These harsh measures so shocked the Mossi that they remained docile from that time onward, and thereafter the French were able to rule the country with one European administrator for every 60,000 Mossi.[7]

Once the French officials had put down the opposition to their policies of control and had succeeded in installing loyal provincial administrators, they sought to bring Mossi country into the political structure they were creating in West Africa. In 1895, they had installed a Governor-General at Dakar to represent the French Government in the territories of Senegal, the French Sudan, French Guinea, and the Ivory Coast. With the subsequent conquest of Mossi country and other areas, however, this arrangement became obsolete, and a decree was passed in October 1899, dividing the French Sudan in two. One half was attached to the coastal colonies. The other half was combined with the Voltaic region (which included Mossi country), declared a military territory, and placed under the direct control of the Governor-General. In 1900 Niger was also made into a military territory, and two years later, by a decree of October 1902, a new territory called Sénégambie-Niger was set up which included Mossi country. This new arrangement lasted only two years. It was superseded by a decree of October 1904 dismembering Sénégambie-Niger and creating, among others, a territory called Haut-Sénégal et Niger, which included Mossi country. This new colony was similar to the others in that it had its own administration (at Bamako), its own budget, and a Lieutenant-Governor responsible to the Governor-General at Dakar. The territory was divided into administrative units called *cercles*, each with a commander responsible to the Lieutenant-Governor. Each cercle commander was assisted by adjutants who served in smaller units called *subdivisions* and *postes*. Mossi country itself was divided into three cercles: Ouagadougou (including Tenkodogo), Ouahigouya (including Yatenga), and Fada-N'-Gourma. This territorial change was the last to affect the Mossi until the end of World War I.[8]

• [651] The implementation of full colonial rule among the Mossi was to have a profound effect on their traditional political organization and on the

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relationship between the people and their chiefs. One of the principal contributing factors was the demand of the French administration that Mossi country not only share in the over-all development of French West Africa, but pay for its own administration as well. The resources of Mossi country were largely limited to agricultural production and stock raising, however, and revenue from these activities was slight. The full weight of administrative expenses thus fell on the Mossi people. Apparently, the first taxation was of a collective nature, for according to the official government report for June 1899, "No regular tax has been levied, but taxes have been collected from the Mogho Naba and the other chiefs."[9]

Decrees of July and November, 1903, authorized "native chiefs to collect taxes, and granted them a commission on the tax yield to arouse their interest in the regular payment of taxes."[10] Accustomed as they were to giving taxes (gifts) to their rulers with the knowledge that subordinate chiefs would extract a share before sending the remainder up the hierarchy, the Mossi were not averse to paying taxes through their traditional rulers to the "new chiefs," the French administration. However, when taxes grew to excessive proportions and chiefs continued to get a percentage, the people accused their rulers of cheating them. The reasons for the Mossi complaints about taxation are described by Tauxier, himself an administrator:

> This tax, light at first, has grown rapidly over the last few years. In 1906 it was 311,000 francs for the territory of Ouagadougou, which had a population of 861,000 inhabitants. In 1907, the tax was raised to 360,000 francs; in 1909, to 555,000 francs; and in 1910, to 656,000 francs. Furthermore, from 1908 onward this tax was exacted with such rigor and on such short notice that it was exactly as though the amount had been tripled. Under the circumstances, the Mossi were compelled to resort to trade in order to obtain the French money they did not have, since the local currency is the cowry and the French administration does not wish to receive it. . . . To meet this difficult situation the Mossi now organize small caravans in the villages, and send the young men to Wanke to sell cattle, sheep, goats, asses, horses, and bolts of cotton. They bring back with them either French money or kola nuts.[11]

Many Mossi had a great deal of difficulty in securing French currency. Mangin, a White Father who arrived in Mossi country in 1904, writes:

> The Europeans who live among the Mossi, including all the riflemen and cercle guards, do not put into circulation a quarter of the five-franc pieces that are required each year from the natives. At first the Mossi were taken by surprise and had to give 10,000 or even 15,000 cowries to obtain this famous coin, this charm which was to free them from all difficulties with the white man. At the official rate of exchange this coin is worth 5,000 cowries.[12]

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What Mangin referred to euphemistically as "difficulties with the white man" was, to the Mossi, rather drastic punishment for non-payment of taxes. If a man refused to pay his taxes, the Mossi chief was permitted to sequester his goods and sell them. If the man had neither the taxes nor the goods, the chief had to send him and his wife (or wives) to the administrative post to be punished. Sometimes, a man and his wife would be made to look at the sun from sunrise to sunset while intoning the prayer *Ouennam co mam ligidi* ("God, give me money"). Other times, a man would be made to run around the administrative post with his wife on his back; if he had several wives, he had to take each one in turn. Then his wife or wives had to carry him around. The Mossi claim that a man had to run around the post three times, and his wife four. This is probably an exaggeration, however, because the numbers 3 and 4 are symbolically associated with men and women, respectively.

A further source of difficulty for the Mossi chiefs, and one which became more serious as time went by, was that they were charged by the administration to recruit men for both labor and military service. Initially, the chiefs had to supply men to transport grain for the French-organized agricultural societies from one region to another; later, they were commanded to supply labor for private and public works. Labouret states:

> The initial recruitment, which took place in 1912, was carried out without any difficulty, thanks to the unexpected afflux of volunteers. This was not the case in subsequent years. The reason for this was that the credulous natives of these distant regions, lacking any contact with the world, believed that the Europeans were carrying off their most robust youths to sell them to the Men of the Sea [mythical cannibalistic beings].[13]

The Mossi were alarmed at the high rate of mortality among the young men who went away to work. They had a saying, *Nansara toumde di Mossi* ("White man's work eats [kills] people"), and resisted the recruiting attempts of their chiefs. There was, however, less opposition to recruitment for military service, owing in part to the Mossi tradition of warfare. Many Mossi youths served in France during World War I, and additional hundreds served in an African contingent recruited "by an administrator named d'Arboussier, and with the cooperation of the Mogho Naba, to take possession of northern Togoland."[14]

The manner in which the Mossi chiefs administered their territories before the First World War was conditioned by the colonial administrators even when it was not directly controlled by them. The Mogho Naba had gradually lost most of his power, and he had no authority to act without the specific authorization of the French. He retained most of his cere-

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177 their younger sons to become Moslems, and soon abandoned their active
*648 resistance to Islam.

63 Hesling did not permit the Mossi chiefs to revive their traditional religio-
[795] political rituals and ceremonies such as the Tense, but he continued to toler-
[797] ate the Basgha. The French banned the Mossi market chiefs, because they believed (with some justification) that these officials used their offices to procure revenue for the chiefs. The difficulty was that the market chiefs were also responsible for arranging sacrifices to the market deities, which in the absence of such sacrifices would not protect the people from quarrels and violence in the market place. Some chiefs covertly retained their market chiefs; others obeyed the administration and remained anxious over the behavior of their subjects in the market. In general, however, most Mossi chiefs tried to adjust to the religious changes that were taking place, and sought to maintain at least surface amicability with all religious groups. Commenting upon the behavior of the Mogho Naba in this regard,
[643] Dim Delobson states:

> The Mogho Naba, above all, is a believer in animism like all his subjects, and it is hard to understand how he manages to reconcile his fetishism with the complex dogmas of Islam and with the many interdictions of Christianity. However, the Mogho Naba is quite capable of being a Catholic or a Moslem on appropriate occasions, while at the same time respecting the traditions of his ancestors. Thus, when the Christians are celebrating Christmas, the emperor of the Mossi devoutly attends midnight Mass. Nevertheless, he wears his fez [really the bonnet which is the symbol of his office],
[292] just as the bishop wears his miter. He likewise embraces Islam for the three Moslem festivals.[47]

*175 Hesling failed in his attempt to develop the Upper Volta as a viable
*648 colony, and many of the chiefs whom he had used as his auxiliaries lost
[631] not only a great deal of power but also a great deal of prestige in the eyes
[558] of their subjects because of the role they had played vis-à-vis the administration. By 1929 the economy of the Upper Volta was in poor condition:
[433] cotton production had declined; taxes (raised from 5,800,000 francs in
[651] 1921 to 18,274,000 francs in 1927 and scheduled to be raised to 26,400,000
[491] francs in 1930) were unbearable; many of the roads that were too extensive, too little used, and too difficult to maintain had been abandoned; and
[167] more than 46,000 laborers who had worked in the cotton fields and on the roads had fled to the neighboring Gold Coast.[48] The Colonial Minister, Sarraut, ordered that the colony of the Upper Volta be dismembered. He states in his decree of September 1932 that the suppression of the Upper Volta "would permit appreciable savings, and would make the adminis-

*648 official, M. Louveau, to relieve the Mossi of excessive prestations and taxation. Louveau cut taxes from 33,000,000 to 24,000,000 francs, a decision [651] which, according to Burthe d'Annelet,

> forward-looking as it was, represented only an amelioration of the past situation. In effect, the natives had exhausted all their reserves, sold their animals dirt cheap, and could not pay their taxes in an honest manner. This represents quite clearly an abuse of taxation. One must conclude from these facts that taxes had been raised too rapidly, and that these excesses had long surpassed the resources of the natives, even though it is the present depression that brings this out.[52]

[464] The administration continued to require the Mossi chiefs to supply labor-[167] ers, but found that many potential workers were leaving for the Gold Coast instead.

Despite the fact that Abidjan, the capital of the Ivory Coast, is far removed from Mossi country, the administration of the Ivory Coast hesitated at first to maintain an administrative center in Ouagadougou or to return to the Mossi chiefs any of their lost authority for administrative purposes. The situation had become so chaotic by the mid-1930's that Pierre Boisson, the Governor-General of French West Africa, issued a decree making the Ouagadougou region part of an administrative unit called the Upper Ivory Coast. He says:

> In acting thus we wish, on the one hand, to facilitate relations between the Upper and Lower Ivory Coast, and, on the other hand, to ensure for the Mossi population an effective representation of their particular interests, which do not always coincide with those of their neighbors. It also seems to us that in order to ensure this simultaneous liaison and separation, the Governor of the Ivory Coast ought to be seconded by a delegate in Mossi country who would be responsible for coordinating the local interests of [the Mossi] with the general interests of the colony.[53]

Boisson was under increasing pressure from such officials as Delavignette and Labouret to improve the administration of his territories, but when World War II broke out all plans for reform had to be shelved.[54]

The Mossi chiefs, especially the Mogho Naba, swiftly came to the support of France in her hour of need, and several thousand Mossi and other Voltaics were sent to the lines as soon as war broke out. According to Balima:

> In 1940, the old and popular Mogho Naba Kom II, shocked by the spectacle of the French disaster, . . . took his two eldest sons by the hand and declared to the Mossi people in the presence of General Barraud, senior commander of the troops: "Here are my two sons, my eldest sons, to fight for France." Soon afterward this French general was able to recruit more than

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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175 stock against marauding beasts and thieves. All caravaneers had to
437 pay a tax to the local chiefs to cross their borders or to stop in their
486 markets to trade. Binger reported that the caravans which passed
651 through the market center of Wagadougou had to give the Moro
[661] Naba a share of their merchandise, aside from the presents which they gave to him. He also reported that the horse traders from the Yatenga, in the north of Mossi country, and the Hausa caravaneers, were sometimes forced to sell part of their wares to the Moro Naba at one-hundredth the purchase price (Binger 1892 : II, 292–300). Not all the caravaneers submitted to extortion, however, and at one period many of them traded with Mane instead of passing through Wagadougou where the tariffs were too high. On the other hand, the Mossi chiefs did not tolerate any trespassing on their territories by
[685] caravans that did not pay taxes. Those who tried to avoid doing so
[565] were subjected to attack by the mounted nobles *(nakomice)* on behalf of the district chiefs. Wise caravan leaders not only paid their taxes but established close relationships with the chiefs in order to receive adequate protection from some nobles who illegally attacked and looted the caravans.

175 It is impossible to know the actual volume of caravan trade which
437 passed through Mossi country, but we can get a fairly good idea of it
439 by examining the customs reports on goods crossing the border between Mossi country and the northern territories of the Gold Coast in the few years just following European conquest.[6] For 1901 and 1903 the official figures were:

TABLE 28A
Mossi Trade (1901–3)

Year	*Horses*	*Cattle*	*Sheep and Goats*	*Loaded Donkeys*	*Bales of Cotton Cloth*
1901	126	3,111	18,181	2,095	236
1903	196	6,624	30,892	4,294	369

Lucien Marc, who had the opportunity to check the volume of this trade for 1904 and 1905, guessed that about 16,000 cattle and 75,000 sheep and goats passed through the customs post in Mossi country. Furthermore, he believed that since

> ... the Mossi also supply in part the markets of Togoland and the market at Bondoukou [Ivory Coast], one can estimate at least an annual export of 20,000 cattle and 100,000 sheep or goats. The import of kola nuts is at least 500 tons. (Marc 1909 : 178)

[113] (6) Great Britain Parliamentary Papers: Cd. 788–27, no. 357, Northern territories of Gold Coast, report of 1901 in Acc. and Papers, vol. LXIV 1902. Cd. 2238–6, no. 429, N.Ts of Gold Coast, report of 1903 in Acc. and Papers, 1904, and 1905, vol. LI.

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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It is clear that the volume of this trade could not have been enlarged since the French conquest which, as we know, had disrupted Mossi society. Therefore our conclusion must be that it must have existed prior to the coming of the Europeans.

The caravaneers used cowries and cloth as trade currency and in some cases even bartered one type of commodity for another. Cowries appear to have been the chief currency used and came close to being used for all purposes. Evidence for the use of cloth as currency comes from Barth and Marc. Barth met a trader who had

> . . . a good quantity of the gabaga, or cotton strips, of Mosi with him, which form the staple currency in the whole tract of country from Libta to Timbuktu, ten Dr'a being reckoned equal to one hundred shells. (Barth 1859 : III, 198)

The big rolls of cotton cloth which Marc saw being loaded by Mossi caravaneers were said by them to serve the purpose of buying food ("They are for eating") in regions where cloth was the necessary currency (Marc 1909 : 172 f.n.). The traders apparently resorted to barter whenever and wherever they could or when their currency was in short supply. This appears to have been the case when Binger visited the Mossi in 1888. Cowries were then in short supply and the people were using slaves, valued at 50,000 to 65,000 cowries apiece, to obtain goods. Horses could be bought for as many as two or four slaves apiece. Traders apparently kept the cowry equivalence in mind when using other commodities to barter with, but we cannot be sure of this since Binger himself, and not the traders, may have been conscious of the equivalence (Binger 1892 : II, 498).

The prices which the traders paid and received for their goods differed greatly from place to place, according to the season of the year and over a span of several years. The earliest price data are given by Barth for the 1850's:

> As regards Selga [Salaga], the district to which the Hausa traders go for their supply of this article, three points are considered essential to the business of the Kola trade; first, that the people of Mosi bring their asses; secondly, that the Tonawa, or natives of Asanti, bring the nut in sufficient quantities; and thirdly, that the state of the road is such as not to prevent the Hausa people from arriving. If one of these conditions is wanting, the trade is not flourishing. The price of the asses rises with the cheapness of the guro [kola nut]. The average price of an ass in the market of Selga is 15,000 [cowry] Shell: While in Hausa the general price does not exceed 5,000. But the fataki, or native traders, take only as many asses with them from Hausa as are necessary for transporting their luggage, as the toll, or

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175 fitto, levied upon each ass by the petty chiefs on the road is very consider-
437 able. From 5,000 to 6,000 guro, or kola nuts, constitute an assload.
435 Selga, the market place for this important article, being, it appears, a
651 most miserable town, where even water is very scarce and can only be
486 purchased at an exorbitant price, the merchants always manage to make their stay here as short as possible, awaiting the proper season in Yendi, a town said to be as large as Timbuktu, or in Kulfela, the great market place of Mosi; and they are especially obliged to wait in case they arrive at the beginning of the rainy season, there being no kola nuts before the latter part of the Kharif. The price of this nut in Timbuktu varies from 20 to
[235] 100 shells each, and it always constitutes a luxury; so that, even on great festivals, alms consisting of this article are distributed by the rich people of the town. (Barth 1859 : II, 364)

175 The other data we have on prices paid for goods come from the
43 period between 1890 and 1910, at which time French francs had been introduced. At this time the official value of one franc was 1,000 cowries. Around 1904, a trader paid about 50 francs or 50,000 cowries for a head of cattle in Mossi country and sold it for about double the price at Salaga. With the proceeds of this transaction he bought kola nuts at the rate of one franc or 100 cowries per hundred. Thus with the sale of one cow a trader could obtain 10,000 kolas, these being valued at about 500 francs or 500,000 cowries in Mossi country and at 20 or 200 cowries each at Sarfere and Timbuktu (Marc 1909 : 173–4). At Timbuktu about this same period, 1895, traders could buy salt at about 30 francs for a slab weighing between 60 and 100 pounds and sell it for 45 francs at Sarafere, for 60 francs at Djenne, for between 70 and 80 francs at San, and "thus progressively more until they reached Mossi country" (Dubois 1899 : 276). In 1910, Mossi traders bought cattle for about 40 to 100 francs, horses for about 90 francs, donkeys for 25 francs, and so on, and sold these animals in Salaga for three times the prices. There they bought kolas at 2 Fr. 50 per thousand, and sold them at 20 per thousand at Leo on the Mossi border, 35 francs per thousand at Wagadougou, 50 francs at Wahigouya, 60 francs at Saravere, and 100 francs per thousand at Timbuktu. Here these traders bought bars of salt weighing about 75 pounds for between 10 and 12 francs a piece, and sold them for between 40 to 60 francs at Wahigouya, and for from 80 to 100 francs a piece at Dedougou and points as far down as Wagadougou (Tauxier 1917 : 221).

175 Not all the profit from this trade went into the pockets of the
437 traders. We have the report of Binger that the chiefs, besides com-
486 mandering the goods at less than one-hundredth their purchase
651 price, received taxes on each caravan which passed through their territory.

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territory. This report is substantiated by Barth. Marc adds that the caravaneers had

> . . . a considerable amount of incidental expenses. Ten thousand kolas called for two asses or four porters for whom it was necessary to provide food during close to two months. Formerly there had been a certain number of local exactions to pay each time that the caravans crossed a new country. Now there are taxes on the caravans in the Gold Coast and also in French territory. It is also necessary to pay for ferryman who transports the livestock across the Volta [River]. There are risks, and occasionally cattle, fatigued by the trip, arrive in such bad shape that they are sold more cheaply than they had cost. Finally, the realization of profits is often difficult, the kola market being, in the commercial centers of the Mossi, subject to considerable fluctuations at the time when the caravans return. (Marc 1909 : 174)[7]

Sometimes the caravaneers made extensive use of middlemen and did not realize all the profits. Marc, who was stationed at the customs post at Leo on the Mossi border with the Gold Coast, wrote:

> The livestock is bought upon arrival by interpreter-brokers, middlemen between the butchers and the meat merchants, to whom the caravaneers are practically forced to resort. These men buy all the kola nuts brought by the forest natives, and control the market prices . . . These interpreter-brokers apparently speculate on livestock in a most curious way. They have scouts who go out to meet the caravans, sometimes two days' march to the north. These scouts attempt to alarm the travellers with tendentious remarks, until they are willing to cede their herds at a low price. Some times, at the height of the business season—that is, in January and February—the livestock prices may fluctuate by one hundred per cent within a few weeks. The Mande-Dioula vie in eloquence, the Yarse and Mossi in politeness, the Hausa in friendliness. In reality, there is here, an embryonic trading center, a veritable stock exchange, using extensively indigenous methods. ((Marc 1909 : 173)

According to most reports, all the larger market centers of Mossi country were like this.

Caravan centers, like all the lesser market centers in Mossi country, provided merchants not only with trading opportunities but also with occasions for conviviality after hectic days of travel. At Dakay south of Wagadougou, livestock traders found musicians, singers, and the most beautiful dancers in the country. And according to Marc, during the whole caravan season the market was abundantly furnished with beer (Marc 1909 : 175). But if the Mossi enjoyed themselves at

(7) Tauxier (1912 : 539) states that each porter was paid 35 francs for the thirty-five days of travels or at the rate of one franc per day. In addition a caravaneer spent about 300 cowries a day on food for each of his bearers.

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to be sold the article at a lower price. The result is that the pace of 443
commerce in a Mossi market is somewhat relaxed, but the lack of 437
intense competition prevents a great deal of hositility and quarreling [57]
among the market people.

The amount of small trading which takes place in a Mossi market 443
is fantastic, so much so that one gains the impression that some people 434
trade simply for the sake of trading. Everyone tries to get money so 435
that he or she can buy some desired object, but it is impossible for
one to obtain a clear idea of what kind of profit, if any, people make
from their commerce. In fact, the idea of a profit does not seem to
be important when people are selling their own products. Most
people only think about profit when they buy things to resell—whether
these things are of African or European manufacture. This, inci-
dentally, is one of the reasons why the prices of foodstuffs are about
10 per cent lower in the country districts than at Wagadougou, and
concomitently, why imported products are 10 to 20 per cent higher
in the rural districts than at Wagadougou where they are bought.
When a woman takes such products as cotton, beans or millet to
market, she may gross about 100 francs in the course of the day. But
out of this she may give a few francs to her husband to buy kola nuts,
a few francs to her daughter to buy a plastic necklace, and spend the
rest for a cotton skirt, a piece of meat and condiments for her sauces.
Men whose wives do not bring many goods to market must usually
give them about 100 francs to spend on the various products the
family needs. There are no official restrictions on the kinds of goods 443
which may or may not be sold in the Mossi markets. In pre-European 432
times slaves and eunuchs were the common stock-in-trade of the
major markets and of some of the smaller ones as well. The only
active supervision that existed and still exists concerns the butchering
of meat. Every person who sells meat in the market must exhibit the
skin of the butchered animal in a public place so that there will be no
question as to the ownership of the animal. If the meat in question is
the remains of a cow killed and half-eaten by a lion, then the village
or district chief must be notified before the meat enters the market.
The person in charge of this task used to be, and often still is, a man 443
called the Kos Naba, a kind of sales chief. He also formerly doubled 554
as a tax collector for the rulers and chiefs. Another official, the Raga 651
Naba, where he still exists, is more concerned with protecting the 656
lives and property of the people who trade at the markets, but he also
supervises the sale of some commodities there and formerly also
collected taxes for his superior.

In pre-European times, every important Mossi prince and district [175]
chief had the counterpart of a Kos Naba and Raga Naba, to collect
taxes in their markets.

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443 taxes in their markets. The French abolished both of these offices
554 when they took over the country, because they looked upon them as
651 purely exploitative rather than regulatory agents. But like so many
656 other Mossi political institutions which the French have "abolished,"
178 the Kos Naga and Raga Naba persist in many of the districts, and per-
[644] haps even in such large centers as Wagadougou. These officials persist
[829] because one of the basic assumptions of the Mossi is that everything
[825] must have a "chief." They believe that even the animals in the bush have chiefs, and if men, too, did not have chiefs then social life would be chaos. Thus, in the rural areas many or most district chiefs have retained their market officials even though the roles of these officials have become highly attenuated and so secretive that their existence is often denied.

175 Taxes collected at the market places played an important part in
443 supporting the traditional political hierarchy of the Mossi people.
651 The Kos Naba collected 250 cowries in taxes for every beef cattle
[644] slaughtered at the market and took their humps and gave them to a palace official called the Nemdo Naba (meat chief) for distribution in the royal household. He also collected 250 cowries on every cow sold there, but did not usually tax goats and sheep. In lieu of this he occasionally took a head or two of these animals from each herd that passed through the market and sent them to the palace kitchens. Donkeys were also taxed at the rate of 200 cowries per head sold in the market. Horses sold to the nobility were not taxed, but those exported were taxed about 300 cowries.

175 The Raga Naba collected the taxes on other commodities sold at
443 market. Cotton weavers paid him taxes according to the size of their
651 bolts of cloth, and cotton producers paid as much as 20 cowries on
463 especially large sales of their raw produce. The tailors and dyers paid no fixed tax on their wares, but were asked to send clothing to the palace. Every donkey- or ox-load of salt which entered the market place was assessed a tax of 300 cowries. The smiths were not taxed in cowries, but had to supply the wives of the Moro Naba with hoes and the palace personnel with arrowheads, spearpoints and iron clubs. The jewelers also sent bracelets as presents to the ruler. There were no fixed taxes on cereals, vegetables and cooked food sold at market, but each day the Raga Naba, accompanied by several pages or retainers carrying baskets, went from vendor to vendor taking several calabash-fuls of their produce for use in the palace. In addition, the vendors of cooked food had to feed the young grooms of the Moro Naba who were not regularly fed by the palace household. The beer sellers, too, while they were not assessed taxes, contributed a good percentage of their beverage to palace and market personnel who demanded the

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customary "taste" with greater frequency and freedom than did ordinary buyers. But the most valuable tax collected by the Raga Naba was on the sale of slaves, whose buyers paid a tax of 1,000 cowries per head.

There is some evidence, mainly from Europeans, that the Mossi occasionally may have found the market taxes prohibitive. Binger reports that during his visit to the Mossi in 1888, the high taxes exacted by the Moro Naba were "one of the causes which placed Wagadougou in second place [as a market town] and which made Mane the commercial capital of Mossi country" (Binger 1892 : 467). Binger, himself, was caught in the institutionalized gift system and wrote sarcastically: "The day of the market [at Wagadougou] the receipts are good. People bring every-thing to the palace including millet as well as hoes or peanuts, and everything is accepted. *All this giving is left to the generosity of the customers . . .*" (Binger 1892 : 465) (his italics). Even so, one cannot be sure that the Mossi felt the same way about paying taxes to their rulers as Binger felt. There is, incidentally, always an air of mutual recriminations among the Mossi and their rulers about the level of reciprocation between them. The people admit that the chiefs are indispensable; yet they complain that they are greedy—they "eat" too much. The chiefs insist that it is difficult to rule a territory and complain that the people are ungrateful.

SOCIAL AND RITUAL ASPECTS OF THE MARKETPLACE

Although the offices of Kos Naba and Raga Naba have been abolished officially, these officials still exist in many Mossi districts, and even when they do not exist, some men acting in their stead appropriate commodities in the markets for the chiefs. Furthermore, the *nakomce* (plural of *nabiga*—chief's child) or nobles still wander about the market places taking handfuls of kola nuts, peanuts and everything they need without the people becoming angry or complaining to the French about it. Once when I visited a market in the company of a *nabiga*, the local Raga Naba came up to where we were buying meat and indicated to the butcher that one of his customers was a *nabiga* and that he should treat him accordingly. It is not because of ignorance that the market people continue to grant these privileges to the nobles and the chiefs, but rather because they believe that only the market officials, and not the Europeans, can take care of the markets.

One of the most important tasks of the Raga Naba (or in the absence of this official, the Kos Naba) is to propitiate the *tengkouga* in the market place, or supervise the sacrifices which the *tengsobas* make to them. The task of the market spirits is believed to be so difficult—

643 imposes a heavy obligation on the chief. He is expected to in-
241 vite the emperor's principal bodyguards (samand'kamba) -- and there are many of them -- to a meal. He is also required to furnish a basket of millet for sowing the field of the Mogho Naba when the first rains come.

652 Utilization of the produce of the emperor's fields. As noted
644 in an earlier chapter [255] under Labor required of Mossi subjects by their naba," the Mogho Naba does not use the millet from his own field. The produce is used to feed the horses, to support the pages and samand'kamba, and especially to make beer on the festive days known as the tinsé and basgha of the king.

[256] Chapter 17

Inheritance and Rights of Succession among the Mossi

428 We have dealt with the question of inheritance at considerable length in the chapter on "Customs and Enthronement of Mossi Chiefs." We return to the subject because it seems necessary to clarify certain details of this question which is so important from the legal point of view.

The opening of succession. The succession is open upon the death of an individual, but property is not passed until after the funeral ceremonies (for all that concerns funerals, see the section on "Death").

Why is there a delay in taking possession of the property? As we have seen above in many chapters, the Moaga is superstitious. An old belief has it that to take possession of the property of the deceased before the funeral is celebrated will bring certain death to the heir or will cause some calamity for the whole family.

Further, since all the members of the family must be assembled for the funeral observances, the inheritance is well publicized, and [257] no one can later claim to have been defrauded.

Requirements for succession. In order to inherit, the following requirements must be met.

1. To be born before the succession is opened.

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VII

THE ECONOMIC FOUNDATION

THE REVENUE for the support of the Mossi chiefs and their governmental system came from many sources in a variety of forms. The Mossi of Ouagadougou held that "the Mogho Naba is master of everything" (*Mogh Nab n so fa*), and when they referred to the control he and his chiefs exercised over their goods and services, they said, "The commoner rears his livestock for the chief," and cited the proverb "The snake gets whatever is in the belly of the frog."

Since the Mossi were, and still are, primarily an agricultural people, the products of the soil were the main source of revenue. The Mossi chiefs did not own the land, but they controlled it and assigned land rights to their subjects. The Mossi believed that land had no value apart from people, and, conversely, that people could not exist without land. As they said, "Land is the mother; it fed the ancestors of this generation; it feeds the present generation and its children; and it provides the final resting place for all men." Therefore, a Mossi chief never hesitated to give anyone permission to use unoccupied land. It was in his interest to do so, because the more subjects he commanded, the greater were his revenue and prestige. An unpopular chief was censured not by a withholding of tribute and presents, but by a mass exodus of his subjects to another area.

Through the administrative hierarchy, the common people contributed to the support of the various levels of government. The Mogho Naba periodically received agricultural produce from all his subjects. Through the village chiefs, the village people sent part of their produce to the district chiefs, who forwarded it to the provincial ministers. They, in turn, delivered it to the central government during a ceremony appropriately called "Soretasgho" ("completion of the road"). This event occurred at the end of the harvest festival, after all the crops had been gathered in.[1]

To open the ceremony, the provincial governors' retainers began to clear the paths leading from the governors' compounds to the palace, for they had

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worked for the Mogho Naba in and around the palace courtyard, and in the fields. They also kept his herds and provided him with animals from their own herds. Like the Dapore, they were seldom sold, but they often had to give their sons and daughters to the Mogho Naba.

The last group of persons who contributed their services to the Mogho Naba were the Kamboinse. Their origin is also unclear. Most of my respondents claimed that the Kamboinse and their chief first came to Ouagadougou from the direction of the Gold Coast, that they bore guns, and that they offered their services as guards to the Mogho Naba.[21] Later on, the sovereign allegedly assigned slaves to the Kamboinse unit, with the result that the entire group eventually took on a serf-like character. The Kamboinse guarded the Mogho Naba's palace and seized for him the goods of persons whom he condemned to death.

The services performed for the Mogho Naba by his pages and other youthful retainers also contributed significantly to the support of his administration. We have already seen how these young men and boys took care of his every need and functioned as important messengers within the royal household. The Mogho Naba also had control over the daughters of his serfs, whom he used to obtain revenue from aliens and subjects alike. Periodically, the Mogho Naba gave one of these girls as pughsiudga to a man, thus obligating him to render goods and services to the court. Moreover, the man had to return the eldest daughter he had by this wife to the Mogho Naba as a future pughsiudga. In this way, the sovereign had a revolving store of women through whom he could bind men to himself in a nexus of obligations, and from whom he eventually received additional women.[22]

The provincial ministers of the Ouagadougou kingdom occupied such a strategic position within the central administration that anyone rendering gifts or tribute to the Mogho Naba always gave presents to them as well. Their main source of revenue, however, came from the villages under their direct control, and from the retainers who lived in their compounds and in their wards in the capital. The economic relations between the ministers and their villages were similar to those between the district chiefs and their villages, and will be discussed below. The retainers, serfs, and slaves who served these ministers provided them with many of the services their counterparts rendered to the Mogho Naba. They kept their houses in repair and provided them with firewood and with fodder for their horses. Many of them also cultivated fields for their masters. Whenever the ministers needed extra goods or services, they called on those persons who lived in their compounds or in their wards. For example, hun-

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634 district chief's wrath. Thus, there was some method in the collection of this
651 tribute and certain expectations had to be met, even though many of the
[622] contributors may have felt that their gifts were voluntary.

In direct contrast, Dim Delobson, himself a chief, states that Mossi chiefs demanded a stipulated amount from their villagers. He adds, however, that the tribute "varied in amount according to the resources of the contributors," and that the district chief set the "amount of cowries and grain due from each village in accordance with the number of its inhabitants."[24] According to him, the rate of assessment was usually 100 cowries for a married man and 50 for an adult bachelor (apparently, this difference was an acknowledgment of the woman's contribution to her husband's wealth). In addition, each adult male was assessed 10 baskets of millet of about 100 pounds each. Dim Delobson adds that to these exactions the district chief added his own contributions to the Mogho Naba, usually in the form of cattle.

[114] It seems that Dim Delobson rationalized and regularized a rather informal system of contributions. The present-day Mossi declare that soil differences in the villages and variations in rainfall prevented a district chief from demanding a set tribute, because no one could tell whether a crop would be good or bad. Only a ruler's informers could tell him how much he should receive each year, and the chief based his exactions on this report. Several of my respondents agreed with Dim Delobson that the district chief provided mostly cattle for the annual tribute to the Mogho Naba, and that the village people furnished cowries, small animals, and grain.

634 A district chief was seldom wealthy, because he always had to use his
652 revenue to fulfill unexpected obligations toward his subjects, his superiors
574 in the political hierarchy, and his household. He had to be generous to his subjects, providing millet water, millet beer, and the more expensive imported kola nuts for those who visited and conferred with him daily. He was expected to provide food and shelter for the countless strangers who settled in his district, until they could provide for themselves. He also lodged and fed the messengers who brought him orders from the capital, and gave them gifts to take back to the provincial ministers. And he had to provide goods for the many members of his family who depended upon him. Finally, in the event of crop failure or famine in any of his villages, he had to provide grain from his granaries to feed the hungry. "How could he do otherwise? Was he not a 'father' to his people?"

634 The expectation that the district chief should provide hospitality to his
574 subjects was so strong that those chiefs or princes who were deprived of
579 an income for any reason often resorted to banditry to fulfil their obliga-
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they might take the lives and property of their subjects. There are many stories of avaricious chiefs who convicted wealthy commoners of spurious crimes and had them executed or banished in order to seize their wealth. There are also stories of twin tricksters, Raogo, a boy, and Poko, a girl, two *enfants terribles* who always succeeded in outwitting and killing avaricious chiefs. When I asked a district chief to explain the significance of the Raogo and Poko tales, he replied that they were "meaningless stories told by children who do not understand how difficult it is for a chief to command and protect men." This remark prompted one of his officials to add that in olden days, people gladly supported the Mogho Naba and his chiefs in order to be safe from their enemies—a statement which might have been made by a conscientious government official anywhere. However, whether commoners or chiefs, all Mossi believed that men must have government, and that without it chaos would prevail.

The Mossi political organization was subject to severe strains. For one thing, its economic basis was not very strong. True, goods and services were channeled to the capital from the smallest areas, and in time this permitted the establishment of increasingly complex governmental structures. Nevertheless, the Mossi fiscal system was not highly developed, and much of the revenue the rulers received came to them in the form of legal fees and gifts. Moreover, most of these revenues were irregular in nature.

Despite this fact, the Mossi believed that their rulers were wealthy—and there can be no doubt that they were wealthier than their subjects. Nevertheless, visiting Europeans found little difference between the standard of living of the chiefs and that of the people. Binger would have us believe that Mogho Naba Sanum bragged so much about imaginary wealth, including 10,000 horses, that he "managed to convince himself of it."[28] Binger's subsequent remarks about Sanum's resources are illuminating even if somewhat biased, because they throw light on the economic basis of the Ouagadougou kingdom. He tells us that Sanum's revenues were

> not well regulated. He lives on gifts and offerings which people have brought him with the aim of obtaining justice, or to demand something from him. He sometimes sends a band of men to capture slaves in Kipirsi country, or at least supports such ventures. But these revenues, like those of all the black chiefs, are not sufficient, because these men are prone to squander their resources. As a result, these sovereigns are compelled to use expedients in order to procure horses and other commodities. Thus, like the rulers of Tieba, Pegue, and Kong, Naba Sanum still has captives in villages devoted to agriculture, but he does not take proper care of these villages. If he does not receive enough millet in the form of gifts, he must sell his slaves in order to procure it.[27]

651 For the Baloum Naba, the work was done by all the bilbalsé.
645 The Kam Naba set the day for the sekka (gathering), and all the
241 young and able-bodied men were required to report. They received the food they required from the Baloum Naba. The number of work days was not fixed. The sekka might be held once or several times, depending on the acreage.

For the other ministers, the Ouidi Naba, Gounga Naba, and Larrhallé Naba, the field work was done by the people in their entourage (that is, the inhabitants of their respective sections) and in the neighboring villages which were formerly under their jurisdiction. Since the formation of the canton of Ouagadougou and its outskirts, the area has been under the exclusive authority of the Baloum Naba (fourth minister of the emperor).

645 If, however, the fields were so extensive that their cultiva-
476 tion could not be taken care of solely by the above system -- the
241 laborers also had to care for their own fields -- the ministers [76] called for volunteers from among the young men in the neighboring villages and paid them with food and drink. This is the sissoaga, a system commonly in use among the Mossi.

645 (b) Construction and repair of houses. As a general rule, re-
651 pair of the roofs of huts in the establishments of the province chiefs
356 was the duty of the inhabitants of their respective sections and of the neighboring villages under their jurisdiction.

651 The canton chiefs. The cultivation of the fields of the naba
634 and the repair of the huts in their establishments were wholly in-
241 cumbent on their subjects. Each village had a fixed number of
356 huts to be repaired or roofed; this is known as sough'pilli, and it is still in effect annually.

651 Today, perhaps in the interests of tranquillity, canton chiefs require labor service in their fields only from their sogoné and samand'kamba and sometimes even resort to the sissoaga.

The local administration, with respect for local customs, has the policy of organizing the system in a way that, in our opinion, will safeguard the interests of the natives, overburdened due to the negligence of the province chiefs, and at the same time will enhance the prestige of the Mossi chiefs.

653 The naba is not entitled to any other labor services. The building of dams to provide water for the villages cannot be

653 considered forced labor since this work is done in the common interest.

[77] Installation of a Market

366 As in many other circumstances, the Mossi first consult soothsayers when they desire to establish a market. The Moaga [singular of Mossi] is convinced that invisible spirits are everywhere, behind his house, under the trees, in the fields and groves, and even in uninhabited places, so above all he is anxious to obtain the good will of these beings whose anger is fearful. It is, therefore, only after consulting several soothsayers, who use various types of divination (with cowries, stones, sand, etc.), that the village chief has chickens and livestock sacrificed on the site where he wishes to set up the new market. The naba chooses two or three candidates from among his followers, and the soothsayers are required to indicate which of these has the best prospect of good fortune and a promising future. This person will be the one who performs the sacrifice. The victims are furnished, in theory, by the village or canton chief, unless he decides to call on the populace. In this case, a small assessment is made on some of the notables, and the proceeds are used to buy chickens, a goat, or a sheep.

366 In any event, the canton chief is not permitted to appropriate the animals in the villages or sections under his jurisdiction as would be done in the case of sacrifices offered for the general welfare of the country.

The individual chosen by the bagba [soothsayers] presents himself at the site, accompanied by a more or less [78] impressive crowd, depending on the importance of the village. The women bring fritters and other provisions.

The following sacramental words are pronounced: "Ya sida Ting' Naba yeta nan lougoul dagh, Naba zidwendé Bad kom deghin kon zigh tinghin damba, tib kon yaramba, tib regh kon saramba, tiya gnimassem lad ratta, tib regh lass zim-yellé, tiya nogoam la tigue koada soaba lad zoïta." A literal translation follows. "This is true, the canton chief wishes to install a market on this spot. Oh God, the Sun, here are water and animals for zigh tinghin damba (people who died childless), for grandparents and ancestors. We ask

The Basgha of the Mogho Naba, or the Nights the Emperor M'ba (Rarengma) Sleeps Away from Home

(May my father not arrive before I do.)

769 The basgha. Before making use of his newly harvested crops, the Moaga ikanda (married man, head of a family) is obligated to
782 offer this new produce to his ancestors. Therefore, he has dam
796 (dolo, millet beer) prepared with the large red [153] millet, already sprouted, and cakes made with the millet or the sorghum. He kills chickens and a goat, or a ram, and invites his neighbors and relatives to the feast. He is convinced that the manes of his ancestors share the feast.

The emperor of the Mossi is no exception to this rule. The basgha of the Mogho Naba is celebrated with more pomp, and we shall describe it briefly below.

It should first be noted that there is no particular date set by custom for the basgha, either for the Mogho Naba or for the ordinary Moaga. Everyone celebrates it whenever he can after the harvest.

491 The sotasgo (completion of the road). Before the French came and the administration took over road building, each minister had
● 653 a road or, more accurately, a broad path which led straight to the king's courtyard and which had to be maintained by the minister. Since everyone is busy in the fields during the winter months, it is easily understandable that the roads are somewhat neglected during that season. When the Mogho Naba decides to put everything to rights with his ancestors, he notifies the Ouidi Naba, his first minister, who sends word to the other ministers that they must clear their soyan (from soré, "path"). The ministers order the inhabitants of their respective sections to do the work, but put off completing the last stretch leading into the courtyard, samandé, [154] until the date for sotasgo is known.

653 Sotasgo takes place on a Saturday.

The Ouidi Naba makes a large pile of several loads of millet (kaguindi) and chooses about forty strong young men to carry it into the court of the king. His colleagues (Larrhallé Naba, Gounga

653 Naba, and Baloum Naba) do the same thing. (We have seen in an earlier chapter, under "Payments to the Mogho Naba" that the millet brought by the ministers and vassals makes up the food supply for the emperor and his wives; the harvest from his own fields is used to feed foreigners and to make beer for the basgha.)

[533] In order to arouse the young men to greater efforts, drummers accompany them, playing "pang'rog'kamga, kamba komsomba (these young men were born of strength; they are worthy of their parents)."

Loads of millet are presented to the emperor during his first audience (wend'pous yan), after the ministers have paid their respects. The Soré Naba (literally, "chief of the path"), taking his place before the Mogho Naba, but with his back to him, orders the young men by the sound of drums to finish clearing the roads of the naba up to the king's courtyard. Since the work was virtually completed, this is a mere formality.

The ministers' followers and the bearers who brought in the millet, equipped with axes, daba, and even sticks, pretend to work energetically. They gesticulate, cry out, and [155] sing. The Soré Naba then goes under a shelter reserved for him, and the young men join him there.

796 769 The Ouidi Naba, the Larrhallé Naba, the Gounga Naba, and the Kamsaoug'Naba salute the emperor, and it is only then that the latter sets the date for the celebration of his basgha.

Once the date is set, the bodyguards of the Mogho Nabo (samand'kamba), whose chiefs are Samandé and Rakogdo, are ordered to start at once to repairing the shelters in the courtyard where the daily audiences are held.

Sleeping away from home. Three days before the Feast of the Dead and as soon as he has given his pugtiéma (first wife) the sprouted millet for making dam (beer), the Mogho Naba becomes uneasy. This is because the kimsé (manes of his ancestors) are present in the house. He must find more peaceful lodgings.

On Wednesday evening, therefore, he goes to the home of the Samand'Naba of Kamsaoghin. He spends the night there, but at cockcrow the following morning he returns to his home where he spends the day. That night he goes to Gounghin and spends the night in a house near the home of the Gounga Naba, his third minister.

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chiefs. The Mogho Naba continued to receive a yearly stipend from the government, and local chiefs were still respected by the older people and by the more tradition-minded youths. Nevertheless, the drive toward the elimination of chiefly status in the Upper Volta went on. In January 1962, government decrees prohibited "the wearing of any costume or headgear indicating the status of chief or slave";[53] thus, the remaining Mossi chiefs are to be unrecognizable as such outside their own villages and districts. The chiefs, for their part, seem to have become reconciled to their fate. Many of their young relatives are joining the growing ranks of the new politicians.

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to be sold the article at a lower price. The result is that the pace of commerce in a Mossi market is somewhat relaxed, but the lack of intense competition prevents a great deal of hositility and quarreling among the market people.

The amount of small trading which takes place in a Mossi market is fantastic, so much so that one gains the impression that some people trade simply for the sake of trading. Everyone tries to get money so that he or she can buy some desired object, but it is impossible for one to obtain a clear idea of what kind of profit, if any, people make from their commerce. In fact, the idea of a profit does not seem to be important when people are selling their own products. Most people only think about profit when they buy things to resell—whether these things are of African or European manufacture. This, incidentally, is one of the reasons why the prices of foodstuffs are about 10 per cent lower in the country districts than at Wagadougou, and concommitently, why imported products are 10 to 20 per cent higher in the rural districts than at Wagadougou where they are bought. When a woman takes such products as cotton, beans or millet to market, she may gross about 100 francs in the course of the day. But out of this she may give a few francs to her husband to buy kola nuts, a few francs to her daughter to buy a plastic necklace, and spend the rest for a cotton skirt, a piece of meat and condiments for her sauces. Men whose wives do not bring many goods to market must usually give them about 100 francs to spend on the various products the family needs. There are no official restrictions on the kinds of goods which may or may not be sold in the Mossi markets. In pre-European times slaves and eunuchs were the common stock-in-trade of the major markets and of some of the smaller ones as well. The only active supervision that existed and still exists concerns the butchering of meat. Every person who sells meat in the market must exhibit the skin of the butchered animal in a public place so that there will be no question as to the ownership of the animal. If the meat in question is the remains of a cow killed and half-eaten by a lion, then the village or district chief must be notified before the meat enters the market. The person in charge of this task used to be, and often still is, a man called the Kos Naba, a kind of sales chief. He also formerly doubled as a tax collector for the rulers and chiefs. Another official, the Raga Naba, where he still exists, is more concerned with protecting the lives and property of the people who trade at the markets, but he also supervises the sale of some commodities there and formerly also collected taxes for his superior.

In pre-European times, every important Mossi prince and district chief had the counterpart of a Kos Naba and Raga Naba, to collect taxes in their markets.

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443 taxes in their markets. The French abolished both of these offices
554 when they took over the country, because they looked upon them as
651 purely exploitative rather than regulatory agents. But like so many
656 other Mossi political institutions which the French have "abolished,"
178 the Kos Naga and Raga Naba persist in many of the districts, and per-
[648] haps even in such large centers as Wagadougou. These officials persist
[829] because one of the basic assumptions of the Mossi is that everything
[825] must have a "chief." They believe that even the animals in the bush have chiefs, and if men, too, did not have chiefs then social life would be chaos. Thus, in the rural areas many or most district chiefs have retained their market officials even though the roles of these officials have become highly attenuated and so secretive that their existence is often denied.

175 Taxes collected at the market places played an important part in
443 supporting the traditional political hierarchy of the Mossi people.
651 The Kos Naba collected 250 cowries in taxes for every beef cattle
[644] slaughtered at the market and took their humps and gave them to a palace official called the Nemdo Naba (meat chief) for distribution in the royal household. He also collected 250 cowries on every cow sold there, but did not usually tax goats and sheep. In lieu of this he occasionally took a head or two of these animals from each herd that passed through the market and sent them to the palace kitchens. Donkeys were also taxed at the rate of 200 cowries per head sold in the market. Horses sold to the nobility were not taxed, but those exported were taxed about 300 cowries.

175 The Raga Naba collected the taxes on other commodities sold at
443 market. Cotton weavers paid him taxes according to the size of their
651 bolts of cloth, and cotton producers paid as much as 20 cowries on
463 especially large sales of their raw produce. The tailors and dyers paid no fixed tax on their wares, but were asked to send clothing to the palace. Every donkey- or ox-load of salt which entered the market place was assessed a tax of 300 cowries. The smiths were not taxed in cowries, but had to supply the wives of the Moro Naba with hoes and the palace personnel with arrowheads, spearpoints and iron clubs. The jewelers also sent bracelets as presents to the ruler. There were no fixed taxes on cereals, vegetables and cooked food sold at market, but each day the Raga Naba, accompanied by several pages or retainers carrying baskets, went from vendor to vendor taking several calabash-fuls of their produce for use in the palace. In addition, the vendors of cooked food had to feed the young grooms of the Moro Naba who were not regularly fed by the palace household. The beer sellers, too, while they were not assessed taxes, contributed a good percentage of their beverage to palace and market personnel who demanded the

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customary "taste" with greater frequency and freedom than did ordinary buyers. But the most valuable tax collected by the Raga Naba was on the sale of slaves, whose buyers paid a tax of 1,000 cowries per head.

There is some evidence, mainly from Europeans, that the Mossi occasionally may have found the market taxes prohibitive. Binger reports that during his visit to the Mossi in 1888, the high taxes exacted by the Moro Naba were "one of the causes which placed Wagadougou in second place [as a market town] and which made Mane the commercial capital of Mossi country" (Binger 1892 : 467). Binger, himself, was caught in the institutionalized gift system and wrote sarcastically: "The day of the market [at Wagadougou] the receipts are good. People bring every-thing to the palace including millet as well as hoes or peanuts, and everything is accepted. *All this giving is left to the generosity of the customers . . .*" (Binger 1892 : 465) (his italics). Even so, one cannot be sure that the Mossi felt the same way about paying taxes to their rulers as Binger felt. There is, incidentally, always an air of mutual recriminations among the Mossi and their rulers about the level of reciprocation between them. The people admit that the chiefs are indispensable; yet they complain that they are greedy—they "eat" too much. The chiefs insist that it is difficult to rule a territory and complain that the people are ungrateful.

SOCIAL AND RITUAL ASPECTS OF THE MARKETPLACE

Although the offices of Kos Naba and Raga Naba have been abolished officially, these officials still exist in many Mossi districts, and even when they do not exist, some men acting in their stead appropriate commodities in the markets for the chiefs. Furthermore, the *nakomce* (plural of *nabiga*—chief's child) or nobles still wander about the market places taking handfuls of kola nuts, peanuts and everything they need without the people becoming angry or complaining to the French about it. Once when I visited a market in the company of a *nabiga*, the local Raga Naba came up to where we were buying meat and indicated to the butcher that one of his customers was a *nabiga* and that he should treat him accordingly. It is not because of ignorance that the market people continue to grant these privileges to the nobles and the chiefs, but rather because they believe that only the market officials, and not the Europeans, can take care of the markets.

One of the most important tasks of the Raga Naba (or in the absence of this official, the Kos Naba) is to propitiate the *tengkouga* in the market place, or supervise the sacrifices which the *tengsobas* make to them. The task of the market spirits is believed to be so difficult—

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443 due to the bickering, quarreling and even fighting they have to
554 prevent by cooling the tempers of the market people—that they
776 become quite angry. When the spirits are not satisfied, they fail in
782 their tasks and real trouble breaks out in the market, disrupting the trading; and if they are not pacified they may even cause the death of the market officials.[12]

In the days before the market officials were banned, these sacrifices were performed regularly. At that time the Raga Naba simply asked the Kos Naba to seize the appropriate animal in the market to perform [648] the rite. The problem today is that since the French have abolished the office of Raga Naba, and in some districts have prevented the chief from even naming one secretly, the markets in the latter local- [208] ities are considered "dangerous markets." Once a market acquires such a reputation, people do not like to visit it because they fear that they would get into fights or quarrels. Not only this, but it is believed that if a market has been without a Raga Naba for a long time, the *tengkouga* there become so angry for being neglected that they kill [123] the first chief appointed to it. This was the reality or belief behind a series of misadventures of which I was the victim.

123 I had spent an entire day in a market, and on returning home could
443 not find my pen. The next morning I sent an assistant to the chief
554 telling him about the loss and asking him to have an announcement
656 made in the market on the next market day that I would pay a handsome reward to whomever should find and deliver the pen. The chief sent back a reply saying that since there was no Raga Naba, he would have the Kos Naba acquaint the people with my loss. On the day of the market, I waited until midday, when most of the people had arrived, and then went to see whether the Kos Naba had any news of the pen. I checked with several of my friends to see whether they had heard about the pen and discovered, to my chagrin, that no an- [564] nouncement had been made about it. I went and told the Kos Naba that the people were not hearing about the pen and suggested that one way to do so would be to have the Binderes (drummers and griots) circulate through the market announcing the loss. The Kos Naba refused to do this, and when I enlisted the aid of the chief's secretary, he, too, said that it could not be done because there was no Raga Naba. I had some notes on the institution of the Raga Naba, but as I did not know everything about it, I was, therefore, frankly puzzled

(12) Zahan (1954 : 371) states that "the place where all kinds of merchandise accumulate and where strangers come is a place charged with forces. In time, these forces build up to such a point within the precincts of the market that some purifications are necessary to liberate them. To omit making them would expose the participants to excitements leading to brawls and compromising the place of the transactions."

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and a bit peeved at not being able to put my idea into practice. I next sought the advice and consolation of an elder noble who listened quite calmly and then said: "The customs of these kafirs (heathens) are foolish." Being a Moslem, my friend was very often critical of the pagans, and could be relied upon to explain why their customs were "foolish." He said that in former days the Raga Naba would have climbed a tree and announced to the crowd any message from the district chief. Moreover, he was the custodian of all lost articles and restored them to their owners. The Moslem said that my request could not be granted because there was no Raga Naba, and that probably there would never be another. When the French first banned the institution, the local chief dismissed the Raga Naba. With the passage of years, however, the market became so dangerous that the chief tried to appoint another ex-serf to the job. This man soon died, and his successor died shortly after being appointed. Since that time the chief has made no attempt to name a new market chief.

With this new knowledge I called my aide and inquired from him whether this information was true and if so, why did he not tell me the true state of affairs. His reply was that he did not wish to say that the market was bad because the local people believed that they had solved the problem of the lack of a Raga Naba. When the last Raga Naba died, the chief decided not to name a new one, but in order to placate the market *tengkouga,* he ordered his *tengsoba* to make sacrifices to it. It was believed that these sacrifices would be acceptable as long as the officiant did not bear the title of Raga Naba. The other functions of the Raga Naba, such as collecting goods for the chief and preserving peace in the market, were taken over by the Kos Naba and another servant of the chief. However, the Kos Naba had to be careful lest he overstep his authority in such a way as would acquaint the *tengkouga* with the real situation. In my case, the chief was acting by trying to get the Kos Naba to acquaint the people with my loss in as inconspicuous a manner as possible. The consensus was that the Kos Naba would have risked his life had he made any kind of announcement to the market people, because the *tengkouga* would have thought that he was the new Raga Naba, and if not contented with the people would have killed him. Under these circumstances, I withdrew my request. I discovered later that my pen was not lost but had been in the hut all the time.

Those chiefs who have succeeded in retaining their market officials even secretly have been able to maintain their control over public behavior there. The Mossi are fairly law-abiding despite the persistence among them of a warrior tradition. Every man who goes to market, or anywhere for that matter, usually carries a baton over his

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shoulder; but when he arrives in the market, he calmly places his weapon on top of one of the sheds before he makes his rounds. The women do not carry any weapons to market except their "words" but even these are not often used because of the desire to avoid hostility—which the Mossi do not like to have disrupt one of their major institutions.

The rural market is the center of Mossi social life, and friends as well as enemies meet within its confines. What Mangin wrote some forty years ago is still true: "Every self-respecting Mossi—man or woman, child or elder—must go to market at least once in a while, were it only to look . . . and to be looked at, if he can put on some handsome clothes" (Mangin 1921 : 53). Except for the Moslems who are now experimenting with a form of Purdah, there are few persons who do not go to market. The absence of someone from the market for more than two consecutive occasions is a sure sign of illness, travel, or family crisis. As one man said to me, "I must go to market, and when I get there I look for three persons: my girl friend, my debtor and my enemy. If I do now know whether any of them are at the market I am ill at ease. And when I go to the market and do not see them all, the market is not good."

The lively character of the Mossi market will be discussed later, but throughout this kaleidoscope of activities certain consistencies can be discerned. For example, one notices many different kinds of greetings and salutations in the market place, but each one of them correctly indicates the exact relation or relationship between the persons involved. Young girls on passing each other on one of their innumerable circuits of the market bend their knees slightly and place both of their cupped hands on their own breasts. Only then will they stop and exchange news. At the end of the conversation they repeat the same greeting and continue their rounds. Both girls and women greet casual male acquaintances in the same way, but invariably kneel if the male stops and talks to them. Women sometime kneel when speaking to each other, but always do so when addressing any male relative of a respected category, who may then send them on errands such as buying tobacco from the vendors. A man who meets a female benefactor, such as a woman who has given medicine to one of his children, invariably kneels down before her. She may do the same thing out of respect for his male status. However, when a man meets either his mother in-law or his father's sister, he is the one to kneel down in order to greet her. Two men who are equals normally shake hands, but if not, the junior in status or in age kneels down before his elder or superior. Sometimes a high status man will prevent his greeter from kneeling by raising him. When

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When one asks the Mossi directly, "What is a market?" the response to this question is: "A market is a place where people 443 meet to buy and sell. People travel from one market place to another 829 market place, and on the way they stop and see their friends in other villages. In the market one often meets and drinks with one's friends. People also go to distant markets to find things which they do not grow themselves or which cannot be found in their own markets."

Lending support to the Mossi contention that markets are places 443 where one goes to buy and sell is the fact that most important markets 487 in their country are found at the intersections of well-traveled routes. These intersections are often the places where chiefs have their capi- [631] tals or compounds and this leads to the further idea that there is a connection between chiefs and markets, if only because the power of the chiefs makes markets possible. This does not mean, however, 443 that the market is a purely physical entity which can only exist under 571 the aegis of a chief, or that it is a purely economic institution. First of all, some markets, especially the smaller ones, are moved periodically without too much difficulty. Secondly, and of great importance, is the fact that whenever and wherever there is a large gathering of Mossi there is a "market." Indeed one can say that Mossi seldom come together in large numbers without coming to a market, or without creating one. It appears that the Mossi cannot interact with one [437] another in any circumstance without also exchanging goods of some kind. For example, when a pagan chief holds the annual festival to [769] his ancestors, the people who attend form a market in the vicinity of his compound. In those districts where the chiefs have become Chris- [792] tians and celebrate their birthdays rather than the traditional an- [527] cestors' rites, the people go to pay them homage and also "make a market." Similarly, whenever there is a funeral of an important chief, [766] the people from the surrounding villages or even districts bring commodities to his hamlet and hold a market during the ceremony. On [796] Christmas day, 1955, the people of Manga district "moved their market" about 500 yards to the Catholic Mission grounds where the Christians were celebrating their holiday. And after celebrating the prayers of Ramadan, the Moslems and their pagan townsmen repair to the markets to spend the rest of the day.

Most Mossi markets are inaugurated with religious ceremonies ex- 443 cept those which develop by accretion—that is, by more and more per- 433 sons coming voluntarily to trade. When a chief orders that a market be [659] created or when a market is moved from one place to another place for any reason, the chief is the person who gives the order for the ceremony to be performed. First of all he speaks to his Raga Naba (market [554] chief), usually a non-Mossi slave, about the need for the market or the desirability of changing its location. This man then consults a *teng-*

II. Military Organization

701 An army, properly speaking, with cadres and hierarchies, did not exist among the Mossi.

721 In the event of war, the Tansoba or Tampsoba (war minister) notified the canton chiefs who promptly assembled with all their able-bodied men and as many horsemen as possible.

705 The villages were charged with feeding the soldiers.

III. Judicial Organization

692 693 Justice was rendered in conformity with local customs which had been handed down from generation to generation and according to local practice.

1. By village chiefs, assisted by some of the elders, for petty affairs, pilfering, and insults.

2. The canton chief, assisted by his court dignitaries and the minister, ruled on matters concerning theft, adultery, and bodily attacks, as well as on other matters.

3. The Mogho Naba took cognizance of all matters of general interest, especially with crimes of assassination and murder. In theory, he could by himself pronounce the death sentence on the [565] nakomsé [descendants of Mogho Naba]. Contrary to general belief, a [56] kombéré (canton chief) also had the power of life and death over his subjects. How many individuals have been put to 661 death merely because they were wealthy! How many village chiefs have been killed by the canton chiefs over their territories without any intervention by the Mogho Naba! The nakomsé could 565 be executed, however, only for very serious crimes, such as 684 adultery with a woman of the nobility. The guilty man was led 762 into the bush by old nakomsé; they gave him a rope with which he was expected to hang himself and thus expiate his crime.

694 431 Justice was free; no fee was expected or assessed. The plaintiff, however, customarily presented the naba with a white or light gray rooster, accompanied by the traditional satchel containing from 200 to 1,000 cowries.

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to the Mogho Naba: "Since I have come to you, give the first rank to this man. I will show him what he must do to please you. He will be the Ouidi Naba."

A man from Tansobongo, having heard that the Ouidi Naba was living in the greatest ease, came to see him. He, too, was a handsome youth. He was presented to the Mogho Naba (Naba Oubri) by the Gounga Naba who proposed the young man's appointment as second minister, the Larrhallé Naba, and reserved for himself the post of third minister.

So it came about that the Gounga Naba is the emperor's third minister.

645 place where there were once many goumsé (gounga, silk-cotton tree); hence, his name.

He is a brother-in-arms of the Tansoba and always accom-
[726] panied him to war, where he chose death rather than defeat, especially if the Tansoba had been killed.

644 (d) Baloum Naba, the chief steward of the palace and chief servitor of the Mogho Naba. He never goes to war, but remains always at the side of the Mogho Naba. It is his duty to carry out
[781] [65] sacrifices, such as killing the chickens or livestock offered to the manes or to the spirits when such sacrifices are prescribed by the soothsayers or other charlatans for the health and well-being of the Mogho Naba.

(e) Kamsaogho Naba, formerly accompanied the Tansoba to
[839] war. The Kamsaogho Naba is a eunuch, and for this reason he is commonly called Mogho Naba na poug'tiéma, "first wife of the Mogho Naba."

Other personages (not ministers). (a) Samandé Naba, in charge of all of the people in the outer courtyard of the Mogho Naba and a brother-in-arms of the Larrhallé Naba.

644 (b) Poé Naba, formerly the confessor for the wives and pages
687 of the Mogho Naba. His duty, carried out by magical practices,
661 was to denounce those wives or persons guilty of treason or of

644 attempted adultery. This practice (poéré) found many victims,
687 and its suppression by the French was a real service to the Mossi,
661 who were formerly murdered for a trifle. An ogling glance at a chief's wife was punishable by death. A man who met one of the wives of the Mogho Naba on the road was executed along with the wife. If one met a napagha [royal wife], he left the path and took to the bush. The woman herself would run off and return to the road only when she was sure that the man was a long way off.

Such is naturally no longer the case, and the wives of the Mogho Naba on their way to the market at [66] Ouagadougou no longer expect not to be looked at or even jostled. I hasten to add, however, that the Mossi still retain great respect for them and will even swallow serious insults, such as tampiri, "bastard," from a napagha if they are so unlucky as to offend them.

644 (c) Daporé Naba, chief of the section of the free or house slaves. It was formerly the duty of the Daporé Naba and his fol-
693 lowers to massacre any pages or other convicted persons whose execution had been ordered by the Mogho Naba.

644 (d) Bend'Naba, chief of the drummers of the Mogho Naba.

(e) Soré Naba (literally, "chief of the path"), the drummer who always accompanies the warriors and who, therefore, even in time of peace, is allotted a horse.

644 If the enemy appears to be winning during a battle, the Soré
726 Naba kindles the courage of the warriors of the Mogho Naba and constantly asks for a head, m'data zougou. This means that he is asking each warrior to forget himself and to think only of victory. In order to have a victory, the enemy must suffer such losses that they decide either to retreat or to surrender. Thus, the expression m'data zougou implies ruthless slaughter.

701 (f) Tansoba or Tampsoba, the war chief. The Tansoba of the Mogho Naba lives in a small village, Moussa, in the province of the Baloum Naba.

701 [67] When there is friction between the Mogho Naba and one of his vassals and there seems to be no hope of agreement, the
687 Mogho Naba sends to the Tansoba for logdo (warriors armed with arrows). The Tansoba at once proceeds to Ouagadougou and stops at Baoghin. The emperor assembles his ministers and the principal dignitaries of his court and says to them: "I never thought that chief X, to whom I myself gave the pougla (red fez) would dare to

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651 Mossi circle into several administrative districts, still continue to
178 make substantial annual gifts to the Mogho Naba (cowries, cattle, and a considerable amount of grain, millet and rice).

634 Payments Due the Kombemba (canton chiefs). Formerly each
651 canton held one or more ritual feasts each year, and the Mossi subjects, that is, the tengsoba (village elders, notables, and those in comfortable circumstances), regularly made gifts to the canton chief (cowries, goats, sheep, and roosters). The Peulh [Peul] gave cattle.

The canton chiefs also retained a portion of the payment made by the people for the benefit of the Mogho Naba.

[178] At the present time these traditional gifts are still made, but white or light gray roosters are more and more being substituted for livestock. [71]

661 Payments due the Ministers of the Mogho Naba. In order to
431 maintain good relations with the ministers, court officials, and intermediaries between the emperor and his vassals, the canton
644 chiefs in former times used to present unspecified gifts to the
634 high dignitaries at court when they paid their respects to the Mogho Naba. A certain number of cowries was given to the pougtiéma, first wife of the Mogho Naba (500 cowries equals two and a half francs, formerly 50 centimes).

A canton chief who has been called to Ouagadougou for some reason may choose not to call on the emperor, but he is obligated to bring cowries, a sheep, or a rooster to the minister who is head of the province in which his canton is located.

651 Common laws. (a) Regulation of market fees. Before the ar-
443 rival of the French, market fees at Ouagadougou were collected for the benefit of the Mogho Naba by a collector in his employ.

In important villages, fees were collected by Gourounsi [Grunshi] captives on behalf of the canton chiefs (kombemba).

651 (b) Hunting. In former times, before the fields were cleared
224 for seeding, the Mossi used to go out in groups of several villages on hunting drives. Small game (partridges, guinea fowl, hares,
634 etc.) were left to the hunters. On the other hand, a haunch of any quadruped killed (deer, gazelle, coba [a kind of horse antelope], etc.) was reserved for the canton chief.

651 [72] (c) Fishing. Fishing in the larger water holes could take
226 place only by authorization of the canton chiefs. The day on
634 which fishing took place was treated as a holiday. All the young men in the village and their neighbors, even if the latter did not belong to the canton, came out on the day set by the canton chief and fished for the benefit of the naba. All large fish were reserved for him, and only the small ones were left to the fishermen.

This practice still prevails.

776 Other common laws. Many deities are worshipped by the
782 Mossi. Groves, fields, mountains, etc., all have their "god."
661 It often happens that the naba (canton chief), at the behest of the soothsayers, offers an animal. This may be a sheep, a goat, or even a cow, and it is offered to one or another of the deities, either for his personal interests or for those of his people, or perhaps to ask for rain. The naba dispatches some sogoné [servitor] or samand'kamba [people of the outer courtyard] to one of the villages in his canton to find a victim. The animal is taken without its owner having any right to complain or to ask for compensation. Is there not a Mossi saying to the effect, Talagh-gounda
[538] Naba'gninga the serf raises livestock for the benefit of his naba)"?

For sacrifices prescribed for the Mogho Naba, the animals are provided either by the inhabitants of the [73] town of Ouagadougou and its environs or by the canton chiefs.

Labor Service Customarily Required of the Mossi on Behalf of their Chiefs

651 Forced labor was used to cultivate the fields of the naba and to repair or construct their houses.

647 The Mogho Naba. (a) Cultivation of fields. The duty of
651 cultivating the fields of the Mogho Naba fell entirely on the Bilbalsé,
241 the residents of Bilbalogo (section of the Baloum Naba) and on all former servitors and descendants of former servitors. The Kam Naba (chief of the young men), charged with assembling the workers, had a crier announce in all the important markets that on such-and-such a day the Bilbalsé were to assemble in the emperor's

562 593 644 Rights of parents over their daughters. Although, as has already been noted, the parents retain the right to help their daughters in small ways, they may not, under any circumstances or pretext, break off their engagement nor prevent their marriage. Still less can they promise the daughter to a third party or expect any sort of gifts from the naba.

Later on, in the event that there is agreement between the parties, the husbands may give trifling presents to their in-laws, but there is neither obligation nor coercion to do so.

562 858 Exceptions. Girls given to the marabouts by the naba are considered a kind of alms (saraka), and any children born of such unions belong to the true fathers and may not be disposed of by the chief.

644 357 858 Disposition of boys. Boys recruited as sogoné or samand'kamba are required to serve the naba faithfully, but they continue to belong to their real relatives from whom they annually receive cowries and particularly the fougoibga (blanket).

644 357 661 Although the sogoné are regularly fed and clothed by the naba -- because [168] a naba must always be surrounded by many pages -- this is not done for the samand'kamba. In many cantons and especially in Ouagadougou at the emperor's court, they receive only a meager pittance every two, three, four, or seven days since their role as "vagabond" or groom is supposed to provide them with ample opportunities to rob or rather to pillage the natives. During the winter the grooms and other samand'kamba go out into fields of maize and millet at night or in the morning, and there is general looting. As for any fowl lingering in the karaga (fields of millet near the huts), they are killed and hidden in the bundles of hay used to feed the horses. There are exceptions to this rule: some ministers of the emperor and canton chiefs give their samand'kamba at least one meal per day -- at night -- and during the winter, because they are doing field work, they are given cooked beans or sagbo (millet cakes) at noon.

644 357 608 In general way, however, it may be said that this type of servitor is not supported by the naba. Like the sogoné, the samand'biga chooses a mother at the court of the naba. He helps her cultivate her plot and performs other small services for her (weaving her clothes,

631 powers to his vassals, the province chiefs, who in turn entrust them to the canton chiefs, and these do likewise with the village chiefs. Thus, when a native wants to move from one canton to another, or 631 even from one village to another, he must be authorized to do so. 166 He must request the permission of the canton or village chief to settle 425 in such-and-such a place, and the chief of the village where he wants to live tells him where he may build his huts and which field he may cultivate. The naba may dispossess one of his subjects, if he so wishes, and give his field to another. After all, he "has the strength." This rarely happens, however, and a native who has cleared a piece of bush, fertilized a plot to sow maize, sowed and weeded the ground, is usually assured of a harvest, except in case of war. If a man is evicted, on the other hand, there is no appeal; neither the canton chief nor the province chief would listen to him; they would do the same thing if the opportunity arose.

421 There is no communal property. Every individual works his fields for his own account; he himself collects the fruit of his labor and remains its undisputed master. Nevertheless, every native owes his 651 chiefs and benefactors a tithe; and at harvest time it is interesting 431 to watch everyone sorting ears of maize, braiding sorghum stems, and measuring out baskets of small millet. The village chief is to get so many ears of maize; the canton chief, if he does not reside too far away, so many others; the father- or fathers-in-law will get theirs, and so will one friend or another to whom one owes cowries, or who has previously granted a favor. However, everyone who deals out goods right and left will in turn get some from various other people and approximately regain his expenditure. The village chiefs offer more sizable gifts to the canton chiefs, and the latter do likewise to the province chiefs.

651 These were, in fact, taxes, not fixed taxes per capita, but com- 661 pletely arbitrary ones. If the naba found a gift insufficient, he had no compunction about saying so, and the person involved had to comply. It is said that the naba of Koupéla paid annually 500,000 cowries (500 francs) and /23/ three horses to the naba of Bélousa, and a million cowries (1000 francs) in two installments to the Moro Naba, to whom he also gave five horses. The gifts to the Moro Naba were brought first to the naba of Bélousa and from there conveyed to Ouagadougou: ever the hierarchy.

This quasi-official tax, however, was not the only one. Whenever the Moro Naba wanted horses, cattle, or anything whatever, he

651 661 had a province chief notified, and everyone hastened to carry out his wishes. If a province chief in turn wanted something, if he was short of millet or wished to build huts, he had one or several canton chiefs notified, and these in turn advised the village chiefs; through them everything was slowly carried out, for it took time to transmit these orders, but the common man never failed to comply.

Such a system made it impossible for an individual to accumulate wealth. A surplus of goods would have aroused the naba's cupidity, and he would have found some excuse to tax this overly enterprising subject more than the others. This is why those who owned a few cows carefully concealed it by entrusting them to the Peul. The latter could not hope to increase their herds rapidly, because the nabas were always in need of fine, fat cattle for some alleged sacrifice or festivity.

651 661 431 At certain times the canton chiefs and even the village chiefs, as well as people desirous of making a good impression, must go to the naba to greet him and to present him with gifts which never amount to less than 500 cowries (50 francs). When the naba undertakes an important task, such as the building of several huts, the weeding of his field, or the harvesting of his millet, some of the people are summoned to help him, and it is proper for the others to come and offer him gifts. His convalescence from illness is an occasion for gifts also, and, if he has eluded some danger, he must quickly be congratulated and given cowries. On every festive day or on the days following, each naba must go to his province chief to greet him and to bring him gifts in proportion to the importance of his own position. Whenever the naba travels, every village where he stops must give him food and drink, and thus offer him chickens, goats, sheep, or even a cow if the village is sufficiently important. The grooms and other servants in the retinue of the naba manage for themselves at the expense of the inhabitants. This is quite a burden, especially since the naba, when he returns home, expects more greetings and cowries.

726 War was another important source of revenue. Binger describes what he witnessed at the court of Boukari-Koutou, who was later Moro Naba under the name of Nabã Wobro and who was deposed by Voulet's arrival. Before leaving for war, the sorcerers were consulted and indicated the tangandé or sacred grove where a sacrifice was to be made in order to insure victory. The province chief then took out his flag, a mere staff with charms and a cow's tail hanging at

224 Each village goes there in a group, burning the bush and driving on the game. If the plan is carried out properly, the animals are eventually enclosed within a circle of fire behind which stand the natives, some on horseback and armed with spears, others on foot with their dogs and equipped merely with sticks or sometimes with bows and arrows. The bows are of medium size and made of hard wood. The 411 224 string is usually made from a rattan stem or a millet stalk. Arrows are made of the tough and light stems of tall reeds; they are not barbed, but the tip is made of iron and shaped like a harpoon, with two and sometimes three pairs of teeth. The leather quiver hangs from the shoulder.

224 The panic-stricken hares, deer, antelope of various kinds, guinea hens, and partridges run all around the fiery circle, and those who manage to cross this first obstacle are felled by the blows of the hunters. These hunts are sometimes quite fruitful, and buffalo and koba are 224 occasionally caught. Unfortunately, every animal killed in the bush 661 belongs by right to the naba, who searches the hunters' bags and takes what he pleases. If he learns that a lucky hunter has killed an antelope and failed to bring it, he summons him to his presence, reproves him harshly for his lack of consideration, and thrashes him soundly. It must nevertheless be said that such cases are constantly growing rarer, and now the natives flatly refuse to yield their catch.

224 Often no game is caught because one of the villages has failed to appear and the animals have fled through the unguarded opening. In short, these hunting parties are mostly a pastime and entertainment. The hunters who bring back a catch are few, owing to the large number of men who participate. It is true that when they set out for the hunt they all hope they will be lucky. They all are thirsty, for at this time of year the sun is very hot and it is better to hunt in the middle of the day when the game lies down in the bushes and cannot run very far. These hunting parties dwindle year by year. The cultivated fields are more extensive, and the game has withdrawn deeper into the bush. Also, the natives find it more difficult to reaching an agreement for large parties of beaters; /51/ they prefer to hunt in small groups, far from the chiefs' sight, so that nothing will be taken from them.

226 In addition to hunting, fishing is the great pastime at this time of year.1 Professional fishermen are as rare as professional hunters. Of [48] course, those who live on the banks of streams usually know how to swim, especially when they live near those watercourses which are most difficult to ford.

1[i.e., February - April. - Analyst]

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obligations to the Moro-naba, his lands were raided, his women seized and, if he were caught, he was killed.

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It is difficult to ascertain how the institution of provincial administrators arose among the Mossi. Some of the people still believe that the ministers were formerly slaves of the Moro-naba, but Delobsom claims that the first ministers were warrior companions of Naba Oubri, the founder of the Ouagadougou dynasty.[4] These men were not members of the royal lineage and thus were inferior in status to the members of the royal lineage and sublineages under their supervision. However, as emissaries of the Moro-naba, these ministers were entitled to respect by all the people. The ministers recommended successors to vacant district chieftainships; thus it was incumbent upon a district chief to be friendly with his minister if he wished succession to go to his eldest son.

The minister was the person who carried orders from the Moro-naba to the district chiefs, and he reported back to the Moro-naba on conditions in the district he visited. However, the minister could not interfere in the internal affairs of a district, nor could the district chief complain to the Moro-naba about a minister. Everyone was required to observe the strict hierarchy; the only sanction that the district chief exercised over his minister was to appeal to another minister in the hope that the Moro-naba would come to his aid.

The districts that comprised the provinces of the ministers were scattered around the country and were not equal in size or importance. One minister, the Baloum-naba, controlled the districts ruled over by those chiefs who were the sons of recent rulers. Another, the Kamsoro-naba, a eunuch, had control of the largest and wealthiest districts, but he, in contrast to the other ministers, was not succeeded by sons and, when he died, the Moro-naba inherited all of his property. The ministers frequently became very wealthy because they received gifts whenever their charges went to Ouagadougou to pay homage to the ruler. The people from the districts under their control provided labor for their fields and for the upkeep of their houses. The ministers also received bribes from persons seeking vacant district chieftainships.

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When a district chief or Kombéré died, his heirs sent a horse or a sheep with leaves on its tail to notify the ruler of the death. The Moro-naba always questioned the envoys, and when he was satisfied that his man had not met with foul play, he sent the animal to his chief minister. The Moro-naba then sent his own envoys to the late chief's house with offerings for sacrifices to their common ancestors, and also instructed the envoys to collect the death offerings from the chief's relatives. After the funeral the eldest son of the dead chief and the other pretenders went to Ouagadougou bearing gifts to the district minister and the other important men surrounding the ruler. When the time came to name the new district chief, the Moro-naba called his ministers together and asked them: "Which one of the candidates is really capable of succeeding the late chief?"

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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less of the amount of millet harvested from the Mogho Naba's fields, there had to be one hundred baskets full of grain. If the number of baskets filled with the Mogho Naba's grain fell short of the mark, the serfs and slaves had to make up the difference with the produce of their own fields. The ceremony concluded with sacrifices to the royal ancestors, after which the Mogho Naba's wives, daughters, and sisters gave beer and kola nuts to the laborers.

As head of the central government, the Mogho Naba received revenue in the form of money and livestock which the district chiefs collected from the village people. These were given to him during an elaborate annual ceremony called the "Basgha" ("feast of the royal ancestors"). Several days before this post-harvest festival, the district chiefs and their retainers arrived in the capital and lodged with their provincial ministers. At a designated time during the ceremony, the district chiefs and nobles went to the palace. In provincial contingents and led by their ministers, they walked up to the sovereign's throne and gave the Mossi salute. After they had returned to their places, their servants gave the royal pages the presents they had brought to the palace.

The Dimdamba apparently made their annual contribution to the Mogho Naba at the time of the Basgha. There is one report that they took this opportunity to send gifts to the ruler's son, the Djiba Naba, as well. The Dimdamba customarily sent the Mogho Naba part of the goods they had seized in combat against non-Mossi peoples, as well as a tax (*fado*) out of the goods they had inherited from their predecessors.[3] There is also some evidence that the Mogho Naba solicited goods from the Dimdamba at other times. Crozat says:

> During my first visit to Yako, three envoys from Ouagadougou were at the chief's house. They were tax collectors. They had come to offer the vassal a silver bracelet sent by the sovereign. The Yako Naba responded by sending horses, captives, and cowries to Ouagadougou.[4]

Crozat could not understand this reciprocity between the Mogho Naba and his vassals, and questions whether the Mogho Naba really collected taxes from them. He concludes that the Mogho Naba did receive taxes, "but these are never given to him except in the form of presents which are reciprocated."[5] Crozat found it puzzling and disturbing that many of the Dimdamba had not given the Mogho Naba any "taxes" for several years. He indicated, moreover, that they did not wish to pay taxes to the Ouagadougou ruler even under the guise of an exchange of presents. This was especially true of the Yatenga Naba, who had not sent the Mogho Naba any presents for six or seven years prior to 1890. Crozat surmised that

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permission to use weogho in the district, and new hamlets arose in this way. A Yirisoba who could not obtain adequate land on which to grow food for his family left the district and sought land elsewhere, especially among his mother's patrilineage. However, village and district chiefs always tried to prevent this because they did not like to lose any of their subjects.

As director of economic activities in the household, the Yirisoba supervised the agricultural labor of his charges. It was he who directed the work of his wives, his sons, and his sons' wives, and supervised the care of the family herd. He provided the cotton, which was carded and spun by the women and woven by the men. It was also his task to ensure adequate clothing for the members of his household; and he sold excess commodities in order to buy salt, kola nuts, bracelets, foreign clothes, and other products imported from the forest and desert zones. In each case, the Yirisoba had to balance judiciously the requirements of his household against his obligations to the community and to the political hierarchy. He had to prevent economic rivalry among his sons, and especially among his sons' wives. He had to make sure that every married member of the household had sufficient time to provide goods and services for his own family, and that foodstuffs were distributed equitably among the wives. Finally, he had to use the resources of the household to build and maintain the nexus of socioeconomic relationships that provided wives for the male members of the household, and to meet his obligations to the political hierarchy.

The Yirisoba also had social and economic responsibilities toward the other members of his babissi and boodoo. He furnished labor and goods to needy lineage members and to non-relatives with whom he had marriage arrangements. Since much of this help was given on the basis of ultimate reciprocity, very little loss was involved. However, the relationship between commoner and noble families was quite different. In theory, the nobles had no claims on the property of the commoners; but in practice, they did claim such rights. Furthermore, commoner lineages often gave the nobles many more wives than the nobles returned. This inequality enabled the nobles to receive more goods and services from their marriage partners among the commoners than they gave in return. The nobles thus took advantage of their power as possessors of the nam, but even membership in the royal lineage did not exempt them from supporting the governmental services at all levels. This duty was incumbent upon every Moaga.

The Mossi people could not refuse to support their political organization, but often complained about having to do so. Many Mossi felt that their rulers were greedy and avaricious and received too many gifts. Some Mossi held that if the chiefs were not placated with goods and services,

they might take the lives and property of their subjects. There are many stories of avaricious chiefs who convicted wealthy commoners of spurious crimes and had them executed or banished in order to seize their wealth. There are also stories of twin tricksters, Raogo, a boy, and Poko, a girl, two *enfants terribles* who always succeeded in outwitting and killing avaricious chiefs. When I asked a district chief to explain the significance of the Raogo and Poko tales, he replied that they were "meaningless stories told by children who do not understand how difficult it is for a chief to command and protect men." This remark prompted one of his officials to add that in olden days, people gladly supported the Mogho Naba and his chiefs in order to be safe from their enemies—a statement which might have been made by a conscientious government official anywhere. However, whether commoners or chiefs, all Mossi believed that men must have government, and that without it chaos would prevail.

The Mossi political organization was subject to severe strains. For one thing, its economic basis was not very strong. True, goods and services were channeled to the capital from the smallest areas, and in time this permitted the establishment of increasingly complex governmental structures. Nevertheless, the Mossi fiscal system was not highly developed, and much of the revenue the rulers received came to them in the form of legal fees and gifts. Moreover, most of these revenues were irregular in nature.

Despite this fact, the Mossi believed that their rulers were wealthy—and there can be no doubt that they were wealthier than their subjects. Nevertheless, visiting Europeans found little difference between the standard of living of the chiefs and that of the people. Binger would have us believe that Mogho Naba Sanum bragged so much about imaginary wealth, including 10,000 horses, that he "managed to convince himself of it."[28] Binger's subsequent remarks about Sanum's resources are illuminating even if somewhat biased, because they throw light on the economic basis of the Ouagadougou kingdom. He tells us that Sanum's revenues were

> not well regulated. He lives on gifts and offerings which people have brought him with the aim of obtaining justice, or to demand something from him. He sometimes sends a band of men to capture slaves in Kipirsi country, or at least supports such ventures. But these revenues, like those of all the black chiefs, are not sufficient, because these men are prone to squander their resources. As a result, these sovereigns are compelled to use expedients in order to procure horses and other commodities. Thus, like the rulers of Tieba, Pegue, and Kong, Naba Sanum still has captives in villages devoted to agriculture, but he does not take proper care of these villages. If he does not receive enough millet in the form of gifts, he must sell his slaves in order to procure it.[27]

634 spirits. The chiefs could not refuse such requests, especially when the vil-
622 lagers were poor, because they were regarded as "fathers of their people."
782 In some cases, however, district chiefs had to protect their subjects against unscrupulous Tengsobadamba who took advantage of local crises and tried
661 to prey upon the villagers by refusing to perform the requisite sacrifices
793 unless they received substantial gifts. The ensuing struggle was between
634 the secular and the sacred; between the chief as a representative of the con-
782 querors, and the Tengsoba as a member of the conquered group. It was always resolved in favor of the Mossi chief, who never permitted his Tengsobadamba the same privileges held by religious practitioners in neighboring societies.[9] The Mossi chiefs recognized that they needed the Tengsobadamba, and many myths recount how invading Mossi chiefs went into the woods where the Tengsobadamba were hiding to beseech and eventually force them to return to their districts so that sacrifices might be continued. On the other hand, the Mossi chiefs always insisted on the primacy of the nam over any other power. They employed the Tengsobadamba to intercede with Tenga for the welfare of their subjects, but they never allowed the priests to control them.

771 The coming of Moslems to the kingdom of Ouagadougou had little
795 effect on the way in which the Mogho Nanamse used the traditional reli-
643 gious system to bolster their political power.[10] In fact, the Mossi rulers later used Islam and its adherents in the same manner as they had used the
[797] aboriginal religion. The Moslems first tried to subdue the Mossi in the fifteenth century by persuasion, and later by the jihad. Both attempts
[648] failed, but the Moslems finally entered Mossi country as refugees from
[167] Sudanese wars. Their fortunes waxed and waned, depending on whether they were befriended by the ruler in whose territory they lived. During
[798] certain periods, they were subjected to many restrictions and were forbidden by the Mogho Naba to recite their prayers in public places.[11] At other
[797] times, they were left free to practice their religion, and even succeeded in converting several Mogho Nanamse to Islam. Under converts such as Savadogo (ca. 1760), Islam spread into many districts and gave rise to such important local centers as Sakhaboutenga (Dakay).

771 The Moslems in Ouagadougou were represented at the court by their
795 Imam. This person even received his badge of office—a white turban and white robe—from the Mogho Naba, and had to swear in the name of Allah
792 and *Nabiyama* (the prophet Mohammed) to be faithful to him, obey him, and aid him in times of need. However, he did not have to drink the namtibo as suggested by Dim Delobson; nor did he have to observe such non-Moslem customs as drinking the millet beer the Mogho Naba provided for

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175 stock against marauding beasts and thieves. All caravaneers had to
437 pay a tax to the local chiefs to cross their borders or to stop in their
486 markets to trade. Binger reported that the caravans which passed
651 through the market center of Wagadougou had to give the Moro
[66] Naba a share of their merchandise, aside from the presents which
they gave to him. He also reported that the horse traders from the Yatenga, in the north of Mossi country, and the Hausa caravaneers, were sometimes forced to sell part of their wares to the Moro Naba at one-hundredth the purchase price (Binger 1892 : II, 292–300). Not all the caravaneers submitted to extortion, however, and at one period many of them traded with Mane instead of passing through Wagadougou where the tariffs were too high. On the other hand, the Mossi chiefs did not tolerate any trespassing on their territories by
[685] caravans that did not pay taxes. Those who tried to avoid doing so
[365] were subjected to attack by the mounted nobles *(nakomce)* on behalf of the district chiefs. Wise caravan leaders not only paid their taxes but established close relationships with the chiefs in order to receive adequate protection from some nobles who illegally attacked and looted the caravans.

175 It is impossible to know the actual volume of caravan trade which
437 passed through Mossi country, but we can get a fairly good idea of it
439 by examining the customs reports on goods crossing the border between Mossi country and the northern territories of the Gold Coast in the few years just following European conquest.[6] For 1901 and 1903 the official figures were:

TABLE 28A
Mossi Trade (1901–3)

Year	*Horses*	*Cattle*	*Sheep and Goats*	*Loaded Donkeys*	*Bales of Cotton Cloth*
1901	126	3,111	18,181	2,095	236
1903	196	6,624	30,892	4,294	369

Lucien Marc, who had the opportunity to check the volume of this trade for 1904 and 1905, guessed that about 16,000 cattle and 75,000 sheep and goats passed through the customs post in Mossi country. Furthermore, he believed that since

> ... the Mossi also supply in part the markets of Togoland and the market at Bondoukou [Ivory Coast], one can estimate at least an annual export of 20,000 cattle and 100,000 sheep or goats. The import of kola nuts is at least 500 tons. (Marc 1909 : 178)

[113] (6) Great Britain Parliamentary Papers: Cd. 788–27, no. 357, Northern territories of Gold Coast, report of 1901 in Acc. and Papers, vol. LXIV 1902. Cd. 2238–6, no. 429, N.Ts of Gold Coast, report of 1903 in Acc. and Papers, 1904, and 1905, vol. LI.

9:Skinner E-5 (1955-1957)1960 FA28 Mossi FA28

TRADITIONAL AND MODERN PATTERNS OF SUCCESSION TO POLITICAL OFFICE AMONG THE MOSSI OF THE VOLTAIC REPUBLIC*

ELLIOTT P. SKINNER

643 A characteristic of kingship shared by early European monarchies and many African societies has been the hazardous interregnum. In Europe this period was a time of shifting loyalties, intrigues, and bargained alliances; and the people's cry "the king is dead long live the king" was uttered without pause as if to abolish a hiatus that made them uneasy. The European monarchy later developed a strength and stability which enabled a king to pass on succession quietly to his heir. In African societies where the political power of the court was not strong, and the line of succession was not clearly delineated, the attempt was made to avoid a hazardous interregnum by keeping the people ritually ignorant of the death of a king. Only when the electors were ready to choose his successor were the people told of their monarch's demise. Even then, there was some real or ritual violence as the [662 669] numerous candidates vied for the vacant office.[1] Africans have themselves interpreted these stormy interregnums as being valuable for their societies. According to Oberg, in the Ankole Kingdom of Uganda, "The Bahima demanded that the strongest of the king's sons should be their leader and that the test should be one of war. The brothers must fight among themselves until one of them alone remained alive in Ankole Kingdom of Uganda to claim the drum and the mugabeship."[2] Other African populations believed that violent interregnums served to convince the people that a ruler was necessary. The Mossi of the Western Sudan was one of those societies which had a difficult interregnum. In this paper I shall try to show that this pattern coinciding [121] as it did, with a flexibility of succession to power among the ruling group, enabled this population to elect capable rulers before European conquest, helped them to insure the continuity of the ruling dynasty under European domination, and is now serving them in good stead during a period of transition to effective independence

*This paper was read at the Meeting of the African Studies Association held in Boston in September, 1959. It is based upon field work conducted in the Voltaic Republic under the auspices of the Ford Foundation African Studies Program (1955-1957). The author alone is responsible for its contents.

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645
686 all the chaos would come a new appreciation for the task of the chief, and a cessation of the grumbling that the chiefs were greedy.

662 The Mossi interregnum also served another purpose. It gave the
428 electors the opportunity to exhaust and redistribute much of the patri-
666 mony of the dead ruler, which was brought to them by his heirs who were trying to obtain the chieftainship through bribery. Sometimes, a candidate's ability to collect a great deal of goods with which to press his suit often revealed to the electors the strength of his following in the district or village, for had he been an unpopular man he would have had to use only his own resources.

666 The Mossi electors were always concerned with the health and
643 character of a potential chief, and turned down the most promising
175 candidates who were deficient in any of these qualities. For example, when Moro Naba Sanum died in 1890 without leaving a male heir, his younger brother, Bokary Koutou, was the strongest candidate for the *nam*. Yet he was passed over, at first, by the electors because of his reputation as a bandit and a rebel. We know from Captain Binger, a Frenchman who met Bokary in 1888, that this prince was indeed a bandit and a slave raider. But Binger, although deploring Bokary's conduct, exonerated him on the grounds that the Moro Naba had sent him into exile without any means of support. This was true, but the
[687] reason that Moro Naba Sanum did so was because Bokary had raised a rebellion against him as an attempt to obtain their father's position. Bokary was forbidden to appear in the capital; but when he heard that his brother Sanum was dead, he took a force of soldiers and hurried to Wagadougou fearing that an attempt would have been made to prevent his election. When he found that his fears were justified, he became
[669] desperate and secreted a force of Gurunsi warriors around the elector's meeting place, threatening to kill them if he was not named Moro Naba. They succumbed to his threat and he received the *nam*. During
643 the customary speech in which a new ruler chose his official name,
175 announced his program for the people and the country, or ridiculed his erstwhile competitors, Bokary Koutou said: "A hundred ghosts cannot frighten an elephant (Wobogo)," meaning that he was not afraid
648 of any of his enemies. He thereafter became known as Moro Naba
721 Wobogo, and he chose to live up to his boast when the French arrived
175 and asked him to sign a treaty of protection with them. He refused

9:Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1960 FA28 Mossi FA28

and chose to fight, and when defeated, fled to the Gold Coast (Ghana). From here he intrigued with the British against the French and even succeeded in having his brother poisoned for accepting the title of Moro Naba. It was only when the British accepted French sovereignty over Mossi country that Bokary accepted his deposition and permanent exile.

Once the traditional electors had chosen one of Bokary's younger relatives, Siguiri as Moro Naba, the Mossi people themselves quietly accepted French rule. Their behavior was in this respect similar to that of many indigenous populations with complex political institutions who had been conquered by the Europeans. In contrast, the neighboring Dogon, Gurunsi, and Lobi, whose political systems were very simple, and who had been constantly raided by the Mossi for slaves, kept on rebelling against French rule, and in some cases shot poisoned arrows at French tax collectors and labor recruiters as late as 1941. The only opposition which they offered the French was in 1910 when an attempt was made to reorganize the Mossi districts for administrative reasons. However, when the French changed their policy of direct administration to a form of indirect rule, the Mossi remained so peaceful that by 1922 there was only one administrator for every 60,000 inhabitants.

Moro Naba Kom who reigned from 1905 to 1942 skillfully preserved the power of the ruling dynasty during a period when the Mossi people were subjected to a rather severe forced labor regime. This was also a period during which the administration deposed chiefs who ran afoul of its wishes or policies. The political ability of this ruler is best exemplified by the order of succession that occurred in the Doulougou district. In 1895 Moro Naba Wobogo had appointed his own son as Doulougou chief in place of Koabga Wedraogo whom he had deposed and killed. However, when Wobogo fled from the French the next year, his son, the Doulougou chief, killed himself because he did not wish to follow his father into exile. The new Moro Naba Siguiri placed a son of the former district chief, Koabga Wodraogo, as chief of Doulougou. This chief died in 1906 and was replaced by a brother. Unfortunately this chief ran afoul of the French, was deposed and placed in "obligatory residence" in another district where he died in 1927. The Moro Naba then elected another son of ex-

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643 Moro Naba Wobogo as chief of Doulougou, but this chief was assas-
636 sinated. Thereafter the Moro Naba placed his own brother as chief
175 of Doulougou district only to have him deposed by the French in 1932
662 for abusing his power. Now the Moro Naba again turned to a descendant of Koabga Wedrago and named him chief, but the French also deposed and jailed this chief for incapacity. Finally in 1935, the Moro Naba named his own son, Etienne Kongo, as chief, and this man was still chief when I left the Mossi in 1957. The interesting feature of this succession is that the Moro Naba confined it to three specific families: his own, that of ex-Moro Naba Wobogo, and that of the ancient chiefly line of Doulougou. In no case did Moro Naba Kom attempt to elevate to chieftainship the son or relative of a man whom the French deposed. He named a chief from another one of the chiefly families, and when a member of this line was deposed, he quickly turned to another one. In this way, the Moro Naba never gave the French any cause for thinking that he disapproved of their action by placing as chief a relative of the man they had deposed. This type of succession was only possible because of the flexibility in the Mossi mode of chiefly succession. Furthermore, the district people readily accepted the chiefs appointed by the Moro Naba because he never deviated from their cultural expectations, or violated the accepted norm of succession.

636 A more serious attempt on the part of the French to influence the
643 traditional political organization of the Mossi came when they tried to enroll the sons of the Moro Naba and those of other chiefs in a special school in order to make these boys adjuncts in their administration. The eldest sons of the Moro Naba and of the officials around Wagadougou were all sent to school because they were well known to the French.
636 However, in the rural districts, the chiefs hesitated to send their eldest
643 sons to school. First of all, they regarded this plan as another form of
186 forced labor from which their sons might never return. And secondly,
662 because they also feared that if these youths did return as educated men, they would have been Christianized, and thereby would have been unable or unwilling to perform the important roles which chiefs had vis-a-vis the ancestors. To palliate the French the chiefs sent their youngest or motherless sons to schools, or in some cases substituted the sons

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of their former serfs and slaves who were theoretically also "their sons."

The sons of the chiefs and those boys of commoner, serf, and slave origins who had gone to the mission schools became the first group of educated Mossi. The educated commoners had no function in the traditional political system and were readily absorbed by the local French bureaucracy. However, since these persons were not sufficient to fill the administration's need of literate Mossi, the sons of chiefs and even the carefully coached missionary catechists were encouraged to join the civil service. The result of this policy was that almost no literate Mossi were elected to district and village chieftainship before the end of the second world war.

The relatively rapid political development which came to French Africa as a result of the Brazzaville Conference of 1944 and the aftermath of the war presented the traditional Mossi political hierarchy with a grave problem: "Who should represent the Mossi people in the new French assemblies and councils both in Africa and in metropolitan France?" There were three possibilities: They could be represented by educated foreign Africans; by the educated sons of Mossi chiefs whose loyalties were not known; or by the potentially hostile educated Mossi commoners. The first hint of the Moro Naba's policy was revealed when the Africans were called upon to select delegates to send to the French Constituent Assembly on October 21, 1945. Houphouet [Boigny], who anticipated the determination of the Mossi to support their own candidate, had vainly taken the precaution of sending an emissary to the Moro Naba prior to the September 8 meeting [which the Africans had called to plan strategy]. The Moro Naba proved unamenable to the suggestion that he support Houphouet's candidacy, and insisted on backing one of his own loyals vassals, Tenga Wedraogo or Baloum Naba.[5] This action showed clearly that the Mossi had planned to use educated chiefs who could also represent them in the assemblies. The flexible pattern of Mossi political succession enabled the Moro Naba and his advisers to meet this new contingency. In three districts, Manga, Sapone, and Kaya, the eldest sons of deceased chiefs were passed over, and their younger educated brothers were elected to the vacant chieftainships. There were some hard feelings over the appointment of Sapone, but the reason given was that the new chief was partially blind in one eye. I have no data for the reaction of

9:Skinner E-5 (1955-1957)1960 FA28 Mossi FA28

636
646 the Kaya people to their new chief. However, in Manga the proposed
666 election of a young chief over his four elder brothers did cause some
662 concern and talk about Catholic machinations because the nominee was of that faith. But there was no overt opposition to him once he had been elected. His elder brother accepted the wishes of the Moro Naba with good graces even though he remains a rather tragic individual.

643 The differential treatment that the Manga Naba receives from the
636 administration is obvious to everyone. Whereas the other district chiefs are still summarily summoned to the administrative center, and kept waiting, the Manga Naba sends his assistants to represent him. When the Governor of the Haute Volta came to Manga to make it an administrative subdivision, he was entertained by the Manga Naba while the neighboring district chiefs celebrated outside. It was the political power of this educated chief which was responsible for Manga becoming an administrative subdivision even though it is located several miles from the highway which runs between Wagadougou and Ghana. Furthermore, the population of the neighboring district all complain that Manga's population has gained a disproportionate share of all the services provided by the governmental agencies whose headquarters are there. The fears which the Manga people and the other Mossi have had over their chiefs being Catholic have not materialized in Manga. Of course, the Manga Naba does perform the rituals on the
[769] day of the ancestral feasts. These rites are now being performed by his father's brother who has become the ritual head of the ruling lineage (and it is possible that this line may become the line which performs this task for the now "secular" chief). However, when the
[797] chief celebrates the anniversary of his conversion to Catholicism at the mission, afterwards he holds court in his house where he receives from Catholics, Moslems, and pagans alike, the gifts he normally would have received in the feast of the ancestors.[6]

The most important function of such Mossi chiefs as the Manga Naba is to defend the interests of the Mossi people in the territorial assemblies and the French councils and assemblies while preserving the ruling tradition of the descendants of Wedraogo and Wubri. In his capacity as politician-chief, the Manga Naba joined a fellow Mossi of rather humble origin in sponsoring several bills in the Assembly of

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fathers died. In this way the rulers not only retained the allegiance of the boys' fathers but had a unique opportunity to determine whether these boys were qualified to succeed to the nam.

The life of a page was confining, even if sometimes very rewarding. Pages were bound by the demands of the ruler, whose every wish had to be satisfied immediately. A quarrelsome ruler was a terror to his pages, who had to bear silently his insults and blows. On the other hand, a considerate monarch permitted or encouraged his pages to profit from the small political intrigues in which they were invariably involved. Prospective district chiefs "made friends" with pages to find out whether their suits were progressing, or to whom they might usefully offer gifts. The pages used any money they might procure to buy clothes for themselves, to supplement the clothing and presents they received from their relatives. Every page was "adopted" by one of the royal wives, who prepared his meals and took care of him. In return, he helped this woman cultivate her field when his presence was not required by the monarch. When a page completed his service satisfactorily, he received a pughsiudga as a wife. If his work had not been satisfactory, he was simply dismissed.

The only woman who played any significant role at the court of the Mogho Naba was the Pughtiema, his head wife. She was the only wife to whom he presented his friends, and whom he allowed his subjects to visit. This woman, who was commonly the widow of the former Mogho Naba, was often chosen because she was past childbearing age: she was thus older and wiser than the other wives, less preoccupied with children, and above the sexual jealousies that may often develop in polygynous households. She arbitrated among the wives and stood *in loco parentis* to the younger ones, whom she instructed and advised. She served also as official hostess to the ancestors during the annual propitiatory rituals. It was her duty to prepare the millet beer and millet water for the sacrifices to the ancestors, who were believed to feast at her hut before they visited the rest of the household. In addition, it was she who prepared to accompany the Mogho Naba to La each day. Lastly, it was her duty to introduce any new royal wife to the ancestors, and to ask them to watch over this potential mother of their descendants.

The ruler inherited some of his wives from his father; some he received from his many friends and vassals; and others he selected from among his pughsiudse. Crozat reports that Mogho Naba Wobogo (1890–96) allegedly had a hundred wives. Crozat did not see this many women at Wobogo's court, understandably, since most of a ruler's wives lived in villages, where they were guarded by eunuchs.[23] Of the substantial number of royal wives

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It was only when this man had returned to the capital that all the nobles in the local ruling lineage were invited to Ouagadougou to press their claims. Only the dead chief's babissi went to Ouagadougou, even though all nobles subscribed to the traditional concept that "the nam does not belong to any one sub-lineage; it can be given to any nobleman." Unlike the others, these nobles did not shave their heads in mourning, thus indicating their candidacy for the nam. When they donned sheepskin cloaks and carried spears on their shoulders, they indicated that they were interested in the nam of the district. 634 [613] [302] [765]

Before a candidate for the district chieftainship left for Ouagadougou, he collected livestock, money, clothing, and grain from his friends to give as gifts or bribes to important officials in the capital. When he arrived there, he lived with friends and conducted his campaign from their home. He and the other candidates visited their provincial minister and his colleagues, the Mogho Naba, and other courtiers, giving presents ostensibly as a sign of friendship but actually with the ultimate aim of impressing these people with their generosity. These activities were often very costly; for if the Ouagadougou officials suspected that the candidates were wealthy, they made every effort to obtain as many presents as possible. It was not unusual for candidates for the district chieftainship to remain at the capital as long as "thirty-three" or "sixty-six" days before the officials were satisfied with their generosity and made preparations for the election. 634 662

The evening before the election, the Baloum Naba asked each candidate to provide a chicken and a sheep for the evening sacrifices to the namtibo.[11] After the morning ceremony on the following day, the Ouidi Naba reminded the sovereign that a new chief had to be chosen for Nobere district. The Mogho Naba summoned the Gounga Naba and asked him which candidate had the best character and was most capable of taking care of the district—a question which shows that the Mossi never placed primogeniture above the ability to rule.[12] The Gounga Naba had already consulted his friends about the matter, but he recounted both the good and the bad qualities of each candidate. At the same time, he hinted which one would make the best chief. He finally told the Mogho Naba that all of the candidates were worthy men, adding, "You can give the nam to any of them." The Mogho Naba then looked around to ascertain whether the other ministers had concurred in the Gounga Naba's implied choice before declaring, "I will give the nam to X, because when his [father, grandfather, or brother, used in the generic or classificatory sense] was alive, he was good to me. The ancestors would be angry if I did not give his [son, grandson, or brother] the nam." With these words the selection was made, and the ministers now prepared to install the successful candidate. 634 645 643 [782]

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to the control of his brother at Nobere. The other district, still called Vooko but now half its former size, was given to a descendant of its deposed ruler. The relationship between these two rulers and the Nobere Naba was that of vassals and lord. They did not stand up in the presence of the Nobere Naba, but knelt or sat on the ground and uncovered their heads in respect to him. The Nobere Naba traditionally appointed the village chiefs in the Vooko and Nobila districts; however, he sometimes granted that right to the two district chiefs. Furthermore, the traditional provincial administrator could not transmit any orders to those two district chiefs without first notifying the Nobere Naba. In their everyday affairs the two chiefs were autonomous, but the Nobere Naba could challenge and countermand all their actions. Actually, he did seem to exercise greater control over Vooko than over Nobila. One may even say that the relationship between the Nobere district chief and the Vooko chief was like that between the Mogho Naba and his district chiefs, and that the relationship between the Nobere Naba and the Nobila Naba was comparable to the one between the Mogho Naba and the Dimdamba. We have seen that the Dimdamba claimed equality with the Mogho Naba because of their alleged descent from a putative common ancestor. The Nobere Naba was actually more closely related to the Nobila Naba than to the Vooko Naba, and his behavior toward them reflected this fact. In both cases, the relationships involved were determined by the concept of joint possession of the nam by the ruling family.

A district chief was not required to notify his superior when he wished to confer the nam upon a village chief. In this choice he was completely autonomous and subject only to tradition. The fact is that on the district and village levels, traditions were more frequently modified in the face of practical political and socio-economic considerations. This occurred primarily because the district chief had closer relations with persons who possessed goods and services or who controlled them directly than did the chiefs on higher levels. Secondly, he was often under great temptation to allow presents or bribes to affect his choice of subordinate chiefs.

When a Tenga Naba died, the district chief permitted control of the village to revert to its Tengsoba. If there was none, the village was "given" to the eldest man among the aboriginal Ninisi lineages or to the eldest member of the ruling lineage segment. However, none of these persons was considered anything but a trustee of the village, and even when the trustee was a potential candidate for the nam, the Mossi did not feel that this man had any advantage over his competitors. Whoever held control of the village was held responsible for its affairs by the district administrator until the new chief was elected.

Competition for chieftainship on this level was very keen because of the

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634 622 greater number of lineage members eligible for the nam and the shallow genealogical depth. Every man who had the ability or desire to rule was 634 encouraged to seek the post. Many candidates tried to impress the district 622 chief and his advisers with their good qualities; most tried to bribe them. 662 Since the candidates could not openly seek the post during the day, they visited the important officials of the district at night, taking money and cattle as presents. Some candidates even promised wives. The intrigues on this level, such as seeking the friendship of pages to find out about the activities of rivals, paralleled those at Ouagadougou. The more gifts a candidate gave the district chief, the more his rivals tried to surpass him. Consequently, the district chief often kept the office vacant for months or even as long as two or three years in order to enjoy these lucrative gifts. Neither the caretakers of the village, who complained about the administrative problems of a village without a chief, nor the Tengsobadamba, who declared that without the permission of a chief they could not make sacrifices to help the people avoid illness, drought, and sterility, could force the Kombere Naba to name a new village chief. Only when the candidates had exhausted most of their wealth was the process to elect the chief set in motion.

634 The district chief had a better knowledge of the character of candidates 622 for the village chieftainship than the Dimdamba or Mogho Nanamse had about the men whom they selected. The district chiefs were better able than other Mossi rulers to obey the dictum that only those men capable of "keeping" the country should rule. Nevertheless, before making a choice, the Kombere Naba called in the local minister responsible for the village in question and discussed with him the character and capabilities of the various candidates.[42] As on higher levels, the eldest son of the former chief [651] was usually favored, especially if he had sent a large *fado* (death tax) to [662] the district chief and had been generous to him during the interregnum. But it was also possible that one of the dead chief's younger sons or one of his brothers or uncles might be chosen. In some cases, the district chiefs [613] chose men from related sub-lineages that had not held the nam for generations. One district chief chose a man who had lived away from the village for thirty years. He had gone to live in his mother's brother's village as a young man and did not return until he was named chief. Admittedly, such cases were exceptional, but they kept alive in the minds of the local people the concept of the Mossi lineage's corporate possession of the nam.

On the day chosen for the election of a village chief, all the candidates with their unshaved heads and sheepskin mantles reported to the village [431] administrator's house along with all the other men of their lineage. They gave him presents, and he led them to the compound of the district chief.

Naba was responsible for checking these depredations, but he had little coercive force since these nobles were infinitely superior to him in rank. 634 635 645

The Mogho Naba held his five ministers responsible for the administration of the districts within their provinces. Therefore they had to function as liaison officers between him and the district chiefs. Every morning, in order of precedence, the ministers reported the news they had received from their provinces since the previous day. At this time, the Mogho Naba also gave them messages for their districts. Later in the day, the ministers presented to the ruler those persons who had come from their provinces to the capital with special grievances, requests, or gifts. Delicate affairs of state were left for the evening, when they were discussed by the Mogho Naba, his minister or ministers, and other important persons.

From all reports, these administrative affairs kept both the ministers and the Mogho Naba quite busy. Binger, who could barely conceal his displeasure with Mogho Naba Sanum, gives this critical but otherwise highly illuminating view of the Mossi ruler's administrative activities: 643 644

> The duties of Naba Sanum are not too important. They consist of receiving visits throughout the day. In the morning, at about six o'clock, the drums announce that the ruler has arisen. When he has washed and refreshed himself with a meal, his captives and his wives go to his chamber to salute him. Then comes the turn of strangers, people of the neighborhood, petitioners, and others. They squat before the reception area until the ruler deigns to appear. When a large number of people have gathered, one of the [pages] goes to notify the ruler, who then arrives, sits on his cushion, and casts an amiable glance on the gathering while all present snap their fingers. As soon as Naba Sanum is seated, the petitioners and visitors hurry toward the monarch, throw themselves face down on the earth, and cover their heads with sand. Then each of them gets up and presents a gift of greater or lesser importance, in cowries or foodstuffs, according to what he wishes to ask. Then the [pages] come and say to the ruler, "A certain man has brought a sack of cowries, or a goat, or an ox. He desires to speak to you." The ruler thanks all of them with a *nif kende* (thanks) and retires into his chamber. It is well known that not one out of fifty petitioners was given the opportunity to have his wishes heard. Those who were heard had first spoken to an attendant who, after being paid in advance, had put off their case indefinitely by stating that it would be dealt with next. . . . Since the monarch's days are so well filled, one easily understands why he finds it difficult to deal effectively with the internal and external affairs of his kingdom; in any case, Mossi country is in a period of decadence that will only be aggravated with time.[28] [662]

The activities Binger considered frivolous were, on the contrary, important for the proper administration of the kingdom. The Mogho Naba had to receive petitions from the districts and transmit administrative orders to 643 [114]

634 against the Mogho Naba. I say "allegedly" because it was never quite clear
687 whether the district chief was at fault or whether the Mogho Naba wanted to replace him for dynastic reasons. For example, Tanga, a district chief, was accused by Mogho Naba Sanum (1850–90) of withholding tribute and of maladministration. The Ouidi Naba who administered Tanga's district advised him to prove his innocence by making a sacrifice on Naba Oubri's tomb, and then go to Ouagadougou and ask the Mogho Naba's forgiveness.
634 Tanga agreed to do so. But it appears that the Mogho Naba, who wished
687 to place his own father's brother in Tanga's place, did not want a reconcili-
662 ation. He waged war on Tanga, and seized his relatives, retainers, and cattle. Tanga tried to regain his losses by appealing to his provincial minister, but the minister told him that the Mogho Naba had distributed the livestock and had sold the people to Hausa traders. Moreover, he informed Tanga that he could not help him because the Mogho Naba could do as he
[669] pleased. Tanga thereupon decided to take matters into his own hands. He successfully attacked the Mogho Naba's villages, and was still a rebel when the French arrived shortly afterward.[26]

634 Tanga's action was unusual, for district chiefs seldom risked rebelling
687 against the Mogho Naba when accused of maladministration. In 1895, for example, Koabga, chief of Doulougou district in the province of the Gounga
669 Naba, took poison rather than wage war when Mogho Naba Wobogo accused him of misgovernment. Usually, a district chief who disobeyed an order of the Mogho Naba was summoned to the capital to answer the charge of lese majesty. If he was found guilty, the ruler knocked the bonnet off his head, thus deposing him, and had him strangled. The Mossi seldom
[762] spilled royal blood. A district chief who refused to go to Ouagadougou could either kill himself (traditionally by taking arsenic) or resort to civil war.[27] If he chose suicide, he was given an honorable burial as though he had died naturally. If the Mogho Naba sent down an army, however, the offending chief was invariably killed. His compound was burned, his slaves and cattle were seized, and his allies and immediate relatives were compelled to flee. The strength of this tradition is borne out by Tanga's case. He had successfully resisted the attempts of two Mogho Nanamse to bring him to heel, and was still at large when the French conquered the country.
[648] But Ouidi Naba Koabga, who had deserted his sovereign and selected Kouka Koutou as Mogho Naba under French orders, had not forgiven Tanga. When the French asked him what additional steps they should take to pacify the country, he asked them to capture Tanga. The unfortunate district chief was captured, placed on an unsaddled colt, and taken to Ouagadougou, where he was ignominiously executed.[28]

[P.78]

V

LAW AND THE JUDICIAL PROCESS

671 THE Mossi possessed a comprehensive body of rules governing human conduct. These rules were well known to the people, and violators were punished by the responsible authorities. The Mossi might be said to have had substantive law, but they had no written codes. Nevertheless, the lack of written codes does not warrant Mangin's blanket criticism of Mossi judicial processes: "Of course, there was no written code, no formal scale of penalties. Everything depended on custom and on the whim of the judge. [662] Thus, the wealthy could obtain sentences in their favor by paying the judges, and thieves could avoid punishment by sharing their loot with the Naba."[1] Custom did dictate the penalties, just as "written custom" dictates penalties [692] in all written legal codes. But, as we shall see, the Mossi did have a known [695] scale of penalties. Moreover, a Mossi judge had to be careful in rendering judgment, because his decisions could be reviewed by a higher court.

596 The head of the Mossi extended family, the *Yirisoba,* was responsible 681 for the everyday conduct of his charges. It was his duty to settle all family quarrels, and to punish persons guilty of theft within the compound, disrespect toward elders, and incest. Punishment for the lesser wrongs included 596 reprimands and floggings. A person found guilty of disrespect to the elders 683 or of incest could be banished from the group. But banishment was so severe 684 that it was imposed only if the criminal refused to make the usual conciliatory gestures and was condemned by all the members of his boodoo. Even after this condemnation, however, he could ask a "sister's son," a yagenga, [613] to intercede for him. This man, the son of a female lineage member, had many privileges within his mother's brother's lineage, including the right to mediate between an exile and his boodoo.

593 Amicable relations within the family group were most often disrupted 586 by conjugal difficulties. A Mossi husband could occasionally flog an erring 613 wife, but he was not allowed to maltreat her. When a man became disgusted with his wife and wished to repudiate her, he put her water pots in the compound yard. This rather serious action often led to hostile relations

time safeguarding his position within the district and toward the Mogho Naba. For, as already pointed out, the district chief who failed to protect his subjects as well as to rule them was deposed and executed by the sovereign.

The promptness with which the lower courts dealt with litigations left little time for pre-trial bribery, and there is general agreement that the traditional courts were just. Of course, some lower chiefs were known to have been unfair and to have taken bribes. However, they were always in danger of having their verdicts appealed to Ouagadougou.

The Mossi believed in and acted on the dictum that "the truth is at Ouagadougou." They were convinced that they could obtain justice from the Mogho Naba if from no other chief. If a man was not satisfied with the ruling of a lower chief, he was free in theory to seek a higher verdict, and this influenced the kind of justice rendered on the lower level. As a rule, however, the district chiefs did not favor appeals to Ouagadougou. They felt, like most Mossi, that the less their superiors knew about their activities, the better. Thus, the district chief used all of his influence to prevent cases from being appealed to the capital. Some district chiefs were not above coercing litigants into such abstention. They even threatened them with reprisals if the verdict should be unfavorable. But the greatest deterrent against such appeals was the expenditure of time and money. The docket of the Mogho Naba's court was always crowded, and the suitors often had to remain at the capital for as long as three months before they were given a hearing.[9] During this period they often spent more money than the action was worth. Marc states that the word "Ouagadougou" means "the place where one becomes thin," a reference to the amount of money litigants had to spend while waiting for their cases to be heard.[10]

When the object of a lawsuit was the inheritance of cattle, the litigants sustained a double loss. As soon as they asked that the case be taken to the capital, the district chief impounded the cattle. While the case was pending he appropriated the cows' milk, and when the case was settled both he and the Mogho Naba received some animals. Thus, suitors were usually under a great deal of pressure to resolve their problems on the district level. However, if they were determined to go to the capital, they were permitted to do so.

The district chief always sent one of his retainers to the capital with the litigants. The group went directly to the district's provincial minister, who was empowered to hear the appeal and decide whether it should be brought before the Mogho Naba or returned to the district court. If he decided to send it to the Mogho Naba, he placed it on the docket and told the

15. *Ibid.*, p. 673.
16. Delafosse, II, 128–29.
17. Binger, II, 502.
18. Crozat, p. 4849.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 4822.
20. The structure of the Mossi kingdoms and their relationship with the autonomous principalities make it difficult to determine the exact number of districts within each unit. For example, the Mossi people always claimed that the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou was sovereign over "333" chiefs (cf. Binger, I, 502). However, since the Mossi always associate the number 3 with males, any number giving a multiple of threes is suspect. Binger stated that some of the chiefs referred to as part of the 333 were no more than village chiefs. However, Tauxier (*Le Noir du Soudan*, p. 567), describing the kingdom of Ouagadougou, states, "At the top of this hierarchy is the king, the Mogho Naba, paramount chief of the Mossi, residing at Ouagadougou. To give at least an idea of the relative importance of this empire, without going further than, say, the cercle of Ouagadougou, there were eight provinces comprising 300 *cantons* [districts], 5,000 villages or small towns, and 861,700 inhabitants."

While voicing the myth that the Mogho Naba had "under his control 333 chiefs or Nabas," Dim Delobson actually gives only about 150 chiefs in his list of district and other chiefs (pp. 46, 288–97). It was impossible for me to get any idea of the number of chiefs, because the Mossi hierarchy has changed radically since 1905.

21. Dim Delobson, p. 63.
22. Cheron, "Contribution," p. 651.
23. The Mossi did not acknowledge the defeat of Mogho Naba Wobogo by the French until the Ouidi Naba surrendered to the invaders and installed a ruler they had chosen.
24. Archives, Document 1G-334. Lambert describes Karfo as "a curious figure who unfortunately is not well known."
25. Binger, I, 465.
26. Dim Delobson, pp. 15–45, *passim*.
27. It appears that the monarchs found fault with their district chiefs most readily when they had sons or other relatives in need of districts to govern. Since a possessor of the nam could not be deprived of it while alive, he had to be accused of some crime and executed. Koabga was replaced as Doulougou Naba by Lassanne Congo (called Naba Kouliga), a son of the Mogho Naba. On the other hand, when Naba Pusha of Nobere district fled rather than commit suicide or start a civil war, he was replaced by his own brother, who became Naba Soulougou.
28. Dim Delobson, p. 44.
29. Cheron, "Contribution," p. 655.

CHAPTER FIVE

1. Mangin, p. 25.
2. Mangin does not discuss rape, but reported that an "abductor" was beaten and put in irons. The girl was returned to her family, and if she gave birth to a child, it was killed (pp. 26–27).
3. Dim Delobson, p. 55.
4. Most of my informants state quite clearly that the district chiefs did not have the right to impose the death penalty, but could do so if they were discreet about it and did not take advantage of their subjects. But Dim Delobson states: "Contrary to what people generally believe, the Kombere—the chief of the *canton* [district]—also had the power of life and death over his subjects. How many persons have been put to death only because they were wealthy? How many village chiefs have been killed by the district chiefs in their territories without the Mogho Naba's intervention?" (pp. 55–56).
5. Dim Delobson (p. 56) insists that justice was free of charge, but added that

664 554 "The wives of the Moro Haba never give birth or raise their children at his own place of residence, but only in one of the eunuch villages. In theory they do not stand above the wives of common natives, but in practice they enjoy high consideration among the Mossi, like all that is connected with the Moro Naba.

"The sons of the sovereign, once weaned, are entrusted to a province or canton chief who is put in charge of their education. [582] At the age of ten they are married and settled in a village, where they live, surrounded by a court, but without necessarily being given a territorial command.

"The prerogatives attached to the title of Moro Naba's son are vast as long as the monarch is alive. They grant the right to steal, to loot, and even to kill with impunity.

"Upon the death of the Moro Naba, his sons become mere nakomsé (sons of chiefs) whose position nevertheless remains quite privileged.

643 644 554 "One of the sons of the deceased sovereign, however, is granted special privileges. At the death of the Moro Naba, the latter's wives elect one of his young sons who adopts his name and, so to speak, perpetuates him. He has no /territorial/ command, but he is surrounded by a court similar to that of the Moro Naba, he enjoys respect almost equal to that paid to the latter, and he is a sacred figure. No one has the right to contradict him or to harm him.

644 554 "As for the Moro Naba's daughters, although in principle they do not stand above ordinary Mossi girls, in practice they are treated with the strictest respect by all natives. Once married, they have almost complete freedom of action vis-à-vis their husband, and they often take advantage of this to lead a most unruly existence.

643 766 "When the Moro Naba's death has been verified, his burial is carried out and followed by the funeral ceremonies, which are held in the same fashion as for a common native, with the sole difference /574/ that they have more brilliance and that the sacrifices are more sizable.

642 672 "For the whole duration of the interregnum, the land falls into a state of complete anarchy. Everyone has the right to kill, loot, and steal as he pleases. Convicts who are serving sentence are fully pardoned and set free.

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port of the coastal Ivory Coast population. There was little they could do about it, however, because 'the decision of the Mogho Naba was irrevocable.'"[4]

The election was hotly contested. The candidates based their campaigns on local issues: taxes, forced labor, the lack of public services, the status of the traditional chiefs, colonialism, racial discrimination, and so on. The Parti Démocratique de la Côte d'Ivoire (PDCI), led by Houphouët-Boigny, stressed the need for combating racial discrimination and exploitation by European planters. The Union pour la Défense des Interêts de la Haute-Volta (UDIHV), formed by the Mogho Naba and a group of mission-educated young men and led by the Baloum Naba, stressed the need to end forced labor, especially among the Mossi, and to place all the Mossi under one territorial government. The UDIHV realized that it had little chance of gaining votes in the south, and therefore concentrated its efforts in the north. However, no credence is to be given to the story that "Whenever [the Baloum Naba] was free from [official] supervision, he told the people, 'Vote for my friend Houphouët. . . . What would I do in Paris, with my forty wives and at my age? I can't speak a blasted word of French.'"[5] Houphouët-Boigny won the election by the surprisingly narrow margin of 12,650 to 11,620.[6]

Houphouët-Boigny played a leading role in persuading the first Constituent Assembly to submit to the voters a number of important liberal colonial reforms. These included the abolition of the Indigénat; the freedom of meeting and association; the bestowal of French citizenship on colonial peoples without affecting their traditional personal status; the use of the French Penal Code in all courts dealing with criminal cases; and the abolition of forced labor.[7]

There was some discussion in the Assembly of what role the traditional chiefs should play in the projected political structure of Overseas France. One group of delegates held that "the structure of the local Assemblies should be tied intimately to the existing structure of the overseas societies. Otherwise, they would be bogus Assemblies whose decisions would serve the interests of only one class in the society, the dominant class."[8] These men felt that while many chiefs were conservatives and might incline to "neo-feudalism," the new elite of young educated Africans who aspired to replace the Europeans were, for the most part, European-trained and out of contact with the rural masses. These delegates believed that only the chiefs could provide adequate popular leadership, and that the French Union could not cohere or develop unless the chiefs had some status vis-à-vis the elite and prestige in the eyes of the people.[9]

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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*175 *648 642 643 631 [668] in 1946 to visit and consult with the Yatenga Naba about Mossi reunification, thus ending a centuries-old tradition whereby the two rulers could not meet for fear of death inflicted by the ancestors. Their project was now received with greater interest by the local Europeans, both *colons* and administrators, who were alarmed by Houphouët-Boigny's radicalism and bent on preventing the spread of virulent anti-colonialism among the well-disciplined Voltaic populations.

*175 642 668 665 Shortly after the constitution was approved, the administration announced that elections would be held on December 15 for the Second College of the Ivory Coast's General Council or Territorial Assembly (to be composed of Africans and persons without full French citizenship) and for the other organs of the French Union. Once again Houphouët-Boigny and the RDA, having gained the support of the PDCI and the Parti Progressiste de la Côte d'Ivoire (PPCI), tried to obtain the backing of the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou and the Mossi-supported UDIHV (shortly to become the Union Voltaïque).[13] Again the Mogho Naba refused. Gabriel D'Arboussier, one of Houphouët-Boigny's lieutenants and an important official of the RDA, later charged that the ruler had been influenced by the Minister of Overseas France, Coste-Floret, who told him that the RDA "was no more democratic than it was African, that it was not an Assembly, and that Africans should rally to an institution that was truly African."[14] In any event, the Mogho Naba and the UDIHV decided to oppose the RDA. They emphasized the common interests of the Upper Volta and championed Voltaic candidates, Mossi and non-Mossi alike.

*175 666 631 The electoral law of the territories promulgated in October 1946 did not specifically discriminate against the chiefs, but it was heavily weighted in favor of the educated and urban elite. The electorate was confined to civil servants; soldiers and veterans of the armed forces; chiefs; permanent employees of commercial, industrial, craft, or agricultural establishments; members and former members, for at least two years, of cooperatives, trade unions, and committees of provident societies; holders of official decorations; members of prewar courts and councils including the Chambers of Commerce, Agriculture, and Industry, and agricultural unions; Christian priests and ministers; owners of registered real property; holders of driving or shooting licenses; and persons literate in French or Arabic. Candidates for election to the Territorial Assemblies had to be at least twenty-three years of age, to be registered on the electoral list as residents of the territory, to have a good knowledge of French, and to post a bond of 5,000 CFA (Colonies Françaises d'Afrique) francs, which was forfeited if the candidate received less than 5 per cent of the votes in his election district. Many chiefs were eligible to vote, but, because their fathers had opposed their be-

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964

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matter from events in French West Africa and the rest of Overseas France. 643 All projects undertaken in the Upper Volta became of interest to the other 631 units of the French Union because the funds to support them had to be 554 voted on by representatives of the whole, including not only local Mossi 648* and non-Mossi, but also Africans in other territories, French colonial populations outside Africa, and the metropolitan French.

The conditions that were to have the greatest effect on the position of 175* Mossi chiefs were created in January 1949, when elections were held to 631 choose the Upper Volta's first General Council. The major parties involved 666 in the election were the Mossi-dominated Union Voltaïque; the Entente 665 Voltaïque, a local section of the RDA representing the interests of such [646] non-Mossi populations as the Lobi, Fulani, Bobo, Senufo, and Gurunsi; and a group of smaller ethnic parties such as the Union Lobie and the Indépendants. The campaign reflected all the tensions and conflicts prevalent among the administration, the RDA, the non-Mossi parties, and the Union Voltaïque. Both the Union Lobie and the Indépendants spoke out against what they feared to be Mossi domination, and accused the Mossi chiefs of "neo-feudalism." The Union Voltaïque accused the RDA of radicalism, of associating with communists, and of hostility to the chiefs. It cited as evidence the deposal of several Agni and Senufo chiefs in the Ivory Coast by partisans of the RDA. The RDA, in turn, charged the Union Voltaïque with supporting reactionary, feudal-minded chiefs, and thus with opposing the true interests of the Mossi and other Voltaic peoples. Furthermore, it accused Masson (Governor Mouragues's executive officer) of encouraging the cercle commanders to fight against the RDA, and of jailing about 300 RDA members at Bobo-Dioulasso.[23]

As expected, the Union Voltaïque won most of the seats in the more populous Mossi section of the Upper Volta, and thus was able to dominate the political institutions created by the administration. Nevertheless, the election produced deep political scars in the Upper Volta, and lasting enmity between the RDA and the Mossi chiefs.

During the years that followed the reunification of the Upper Volta, the 175* Mossi chiefs as such were not accorded any specific status by the administra- 648* tion. Beginning in 1953, bills designed to regularize the status of the chiefs 631 were submitted by Mossi delegates to the Assembly of the French Union [646] and to various other organs of the French Union, but to no effect. The Mossi chiefs meanwhile sought to define their own position. In 1952, under 175* the leadership of the Mogho Naba, they formed an organization called the 631 Union of the Traditional Chiefs of the Upper Volta. Article IV of the stat- 647 utes which they filed with the territorial administration reads as follows: [643]

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chief became ridiculously smaller when distributed among the producers; gone the tolls along the roads. Henceforth, all such services will be duly and individually compensated.

Even in the most remote and least accessible villages, people speak of liberty. The old women who go to the pools for water sit down for a moment near their jars in order to talk about it. Even bush fires spread less rapidly than this news.[27]

Very few Mossi in the rural areas were qualified to vote in the first post-war elections, and those who were qualified voted for the candidates preferred by the chiefs. However, as the franchise was progressively broadened after 1951, and many more Mossi and non-Mossi politicians traveled through the rural areas, the politicians favored by the chiefs found that they had to campaign to maintain their position. Both the chiefs and their politicians resented this. One visitor to the Upper Volta reports: "A highly educated Mossi of the Upper Volta told me, 'Citizenship has unsettled and ruined the people. Everyone has become his own master, and believes himself free to do whatever he wishes.'"[28] Opposition to the chiefs and their friends came from the Moslems, who supported their co-religionists for office, and from a growing group of young Mossi who resented the power of the chiefs. In 1955 one such group in Yatenga, composed of mission-educated youths, war veterans, and former workers, broke away from the Union Voltaïque and formed the Mouvement Démocratique Voltaïque (MDV) under the joint leadership of Gérard Ouédraogo and Michel Dorange, a Frenchman, who had been a captain in the colonial army. The partisans of the MDV often came into violent conflict with the supporters of the chiefs, but the organization itself was not banned by the administration, because its members included many veterans, and because Dorange was one of its leaders.

The appearance of the anti-chief MDV was symptomatic of the problems which the Mossi chiefs were to encounter as the people became free to elect their own representatives. For one thing, the people could now censure their chiefs by voting for their opponents, who appealed to them in terms of release from traditional prestations. But more important, even those Mossi politicians who were still friendly to the chiefs and depended on their support for election were becoming increasingly autonomous. The chiefs were operating in one power structure, the politicians in another and more important one. In Dakar, in Paris, and in the Palace of Versailles (where the Assembly of the French Union met) Mossi politicians dealt not only with local African problems but with problems the chiefs knew nothing about. As the politicians grew skillful at the game of metropolitan

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As the politicians grew skillful at the game of metropolitan politics, their power increasingly eclipsed that of their chiefly benefactors and of local French administrators. For example: 175* 631 554 665 634

> A local chef de poste summoned the district chiefs to bring their potential draftees for the war in Algeria early in the morning on a specific date to be examined by medical officers. Those chiefs who looked upon any summons with a trepidation born of their past experience with prewar administrators, arrived at the headquarters as early as 5:30 A.M. on the morning in question, bringing their young men with them. Many of these chiefs, whose only [489] means of transportation was their slow-moving ceremonial horse, spent the [492] night en route to be there at dawn. More sophisticated chiefs coming from similar distances left on the same morning and arrived at about 8:00 A.M., the hour when the administrator himself was first seen stirring in his residence. One chief, a war veteran, rode up on his bicycle at about 8:45 A.M. [493] in a most unchiefly manner and became the butt of jokes from the other waiting chiefs. Another district chief, who was an elected representative, did not arrive until about 9:30 A.M., and he was greeted on arrival by the administrator. This man had only about half a mile to travel, and he did so in his car. His colleagues greeted him with a mixture of jokes, feigned awe, and surprise, and some of them addressed him as "Mogho Naba" and "Governor."[29]

Another example of the shift in the balance of power was the relationship that developed between Joseph Conombo and the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou. The Mogho Naba had nominated and supported Conombo as a candidate for deputy to the National Assembly. He was elected, and later became Secretary of the Interior in the Mendès-France Government of 1954. He thus had access to power undreamed of by the Mogho Naba. Being a Moaga as well as a good politician, he never flaunted his authority before his traditional chief; nor did the Mogho Naba try to exercise his traditional powers over him. But their behavior toward each other clearly demonstrated that they were both aware of the shift in power, even though they were both too wise and too polite to make an issue of it. 175* 643 554 648* 646

Other political forces also jeopardized the position of the chiefs. For example, as head of the Union Voltaïque, Conombo had an honored position within a Paris-based African parliamentary group called the Indépendants d'Outre-Mer (IOM). He would have held an even more important position within this group if he had had wider support among the non-Mossi in the Upper Volta. But his power was limited by the presence and competition of the MDV, which, while Mossi-supported, was anti-chief; the Mouvement Populaire de la Révolution Africaine (MPA), an anti-Mossi and anti-RDA party formed in 1954 by Nazi Boni of the Bobo ethnic group and supported by some officials in the administration; and the Parti Démocratique Voltaïque (PDV), a local branch of a now less radical RDA 175* 646 648* 665 554

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*175 created out of the defunct Entente Voltaïque. In an attempt to gain the sup-
*646 port of these parties and of the young Mossi intellectuals who, while anti-
648 chief, were not yet willing to join the PDV, Conombo officially scrapped
●665 the Union Voltaïque in 1955 and formed the Parti Social d'Education des
554 Masses Africaines (PSEMA).[30] The party pledged to promote social reform and the right of Africans to manage their own affairs, and to struggle against family, regional, and racial hatreds. But it did not win the support of the non-Mossi; nor did it attract many young Mossi, who did not believe that it had discarded the mantle of the chiefs. Conombo's readiness to ally himself with anti-chief forces, however, did make it obvious to the chiefs that when politicians were out to gain power, they did not always take the interests of the chiefs into account.

*175 In 1956, when a *loi-cadre* granting almost complete autonomy to the
642 French African territories was approved by the National Assembly, it made
631 no provision for the participation of the traditional chiefs in the projected
578 governmental structure.[31] In fact, as preparations were being made to implement the new reforms, a number of politicians and educated Africans launched an attack on the chiefs which seems to have been a step toward edging them out of power altogether. The newspaper *Afrique Nouvelle*, published in Dakar but read by the educated elite throughout French West Africa, carried a series of articles that proclaimed: "The district chiefs should be given neither a position nor a salary!" "Let us democratize the chieftainship!" and "Let us decapitate the district!" (i.e., let us do away with the district chief). Over a photo showing the traditional chiefs, *Afrique Nouvelle* ran the caption, "Are they still chiefs of the territories?"[32]

[554] The Mossi chiefs, who had retained more power and prestige than any other chiefs in French West Africa, bore the brunt of these attacks and rose to defend the rights of all the chiefs. Their most able spokesman was Bouda, a Councillor of the French Union and a district chief in his own right. He wrote in *Afrique Nouvelle*:

> The Mossi [socio-political] organization, by its simplicity and cohesiveness, aroused the admiration of France, which respected and retained it.
>
> The power of the Mossi chief may be great, but it is not used to oppose the progress which is being made. The Mossi chief is not as much of a conformist as people have a tendency to believe. The social and political revolution which, since 1946, has made Mossi country so different from what it was before the war, is effecting the transition from a society largely encompassed by Nabas possessing real authority, an authority sanctioned by custom, to a more progressive way of life whose essential characteristics are underlined by the growth of towns, the uprooting of a large part of the population, and the triumph of the desire to be on one's own. . . .

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The Mossi chiefs indeed understand today that a tradition, no matter how respected, is not immutable. It is susceptible to change and evolution; it will evolve. 642 631

In all truth, and with due deference to those who systematically denigrate everything connected with them, the chiefs have borne positive witness to the characteristic spirit of this country, and it is as unfair as it is stupid to deny the important role they have played in certain cases in the cause of tranquility and peace. 578

As the natural spokesmen for their people, they have been, in many instances, the first to pay a heavy price for the common cause. Without them, demagoguery would have plunged the country into irreparable decadence. . . .

The demands of the traditional chiefs are justified and deserve to be heeded, because, in the face of the inertia of the Government and the rapid development of events, it is to be feared that the chiefs, although disposed by nature to be patient and to wait quietly, might run rather than walk in the days to come.[33]

In December 1956, the Mossi chiefs, supported by the other traditional chiefs in French West Africa, convoked a Congress of Chiefs at Dakar. This Congress approved a constitution for an organization called the Federal Union of the Syndicates of the Traditional Chiefs, and adopted a proposal on the need for a statute governing the status and material well-being of the chiefs. The Congress did underline the apolitical character of the chieftainship, but asked that the chiefs be given some recognition in the new structures being created by the loi-cadre. 175* 642 631 665

On the local level, the Mossi chiefs convoked a Syndicate of the Traditional Chiefs of the Upper Volta at Tenkodogo a month later. Its president, Etienne Congo, brother of Mogho Naba Sagha II of Ouagadougou, declared:

At this time, when vast changes are under way, it would be inconceivable for us, the traditional chiefs, not to take an active part in the new developments, of whose urgent and precarious nature we are fully aware.

Our position is clear: we are not opposed in any way to this evolution.

As for statutory matters, I wish to express our concern over the fact that at the very moment when the loi-cadre is turning an important page in the history of Africa, our group has been left out.[34]

The Mossi chiefs had indeed been abandoned by the French administration. Although they continued to receive the support of some politicians, it soon became clear that the latter were mainly interested in maneuvering for power under the loi-cadre and in uniting their parties to this end. Conombo, the leader of the PSEMA, was induced by his supporters and by a 668 175* 631 642 665 [648]*

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number of young educated Mossi to merge his party with the PDV-RDA in the hope of gaining a foothold in the Bobo-Dioulasso area and of uniting the Mossi and non-Mossi of the Upper Volta. The two parties did merge in September 1956, becoming the Parti Démocratique Unifié (PDU). The PDU's manifesto roundly condemned the "artificial division of the territory into East and West Volta" and the "classification of the population as Mossi and non-Mossi," and urged all Voltaics to join the new party. In addition, it declared that the Mossi chiefs merited some status in the territory because they had preserved their "political entity throughout African history."[35] The PDU went so far as to make the Mogho Naba its honorary president, and to speculate that he might be made the Governor of an autonomous or independent Upper Volta.

Nevertheless, the merger was to be a greater victory for the opponents of the Mossi chiefs than for their allies in the PSEMA. For one thing, many of the anti-chief Mossi intellectuals now joined the PDU, bringing with them their modernistic views. For another, since former RDA members were running for office in the Upper Volta under the banner of the PDU, the local chiefs had to give up their opposition to these candidates, and the French administration did likewise. This hands-off policy gave all the candidates, even those who were basically hostile to the chiefs, a better chance of being elected.

The PDU won a slight over-all majority and a large Ouagadougou majority in the Upper Volta elections for the Territorial Assembly and the Government Council in March 1957. However, the anti-chief MDV carried the Ouahigouya (Yatenga) area, and an Indépendant candidate, Maurice Yaméogo, defeated a supporter of the Mossi chiefs, Henri Guissou, in the Koudougou area. Of great importance was the election of Ouezzain Coulibaly, one of the early non-Mossi Voltaic supporters of Houphouët-Boigny, who had returned to the Upper Volta after the merger of the PSEMA and the PDV-RDA. Coulibaly was elected on the PDU ticket as a representative for Banfora, a district in the western region.[36]

Unfortunately for the Mossi chiefs, the RDA emerged from the March elections as the strongest party in all the former French West African territories. Because of this, most of the politicians in the Upper Volta sought to establish a modus vivendi with Houphouët-Boigny, the Party's recognized leader. Most of them went to visit him at Yamoussokro, his home in the Ivory Coast, and out of these meetings there emerged a realignment of the MDV and the PDV-RDA wing of the PDU at the expense of Conombo and the PSEMA group. This created a new majority in the Upper Volta, and Coulibaly, an old ally of Houphouët-Boigny long suspected by the

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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Mossi chiefs of being a modernist, was elected as the first Vice-President of the new government. Not only was the Mogho Naba deprived of the opportunity to become the African head of the Upper Volta, but such stalwart supporters of the chiefs as Conombo and Bouda were left out of the government. Thus, after twelve years of opposition to Houphouët-Boigny, Mogho Naba Sagha and his chiefs were finally defeated. Their defeat was made even more ignominious by the elevation of a non-Mossi commoner to a position of dominance over the Mossi chiefs.[37]

Having lost out in the Upper Volta; the Mossi chiefs had no spokesman when the new Vice-Presidents of the Government Councils of the French West African territories and the European Presidents of these territories met at Dakar to discuss the problems of the truncated French West Africa Federation. No one mentioned the problem of the position of the traditional chiefs. As far as the politicians were concerned, the issue of the chief on the inter-territorial level was dead. It had relevance only in those territories where the chiefs retained some influence.

In an effort to consolidate their hold on the Upper Volta, the PDV-RDA members in the PDU met in September 1957 and sought to convert the PDU into a territorial subsection of the RDA. This move was resisted by the supporters of the chiefs within the PDU, especially by Conombo, who as leader of the PSEMA, an important faction within the PDU, had been completely eclipsed by Coulibaly and the PDV. Conombo resigned from the PDU and announced his intention to rebuild the PSEMA with the support of the Mossi chiefs. On November 12, however, before his plans could be put into action, Mogho Naba Sagha II died in Ouagadougou and political activities in the Upper Volta came to a standstill. A period of national mourning was proclaimed, and politicians from all parties gathered to pay their last respects and to eulogize the monarch.

Sagha's death, like that of all Mossi princes, was ascribed to foul means, although it was clear that he had succumbed to uremia. The people reacted to the interregnum by looting, and the shopkeepers in Ouagadougou and surrounding areas were compelled to close their establishments. "The people of Ouagadougou ran to Saba, but the merchants there were quite diligent, and needed no police force to protect them."[38] It was reported that those wives of the deceased ruler who were not at the palace at the time of his death took off the brass anklets denoting their royal status and became free women. If this actually happened, it was an unprecedented occurrence.

When the Mossi traditional electoral college convened to choose a new Mogho Naba, it reportedly considered the candidacy of both Moussa Con-

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645
696 all the chaos would come a new appreciation for the task of the chief, and a cessation of the grumbling that the chiefs were greedy.

662 The Mossi interregnum also served another purpose. It gave the
428 electors the opportunity to exhaust and redistribute much of the patri-
666 mony of the dead ruler, which was brought to them by his heirs who were trying to obtain the chieftainship through bribery. Sometimes, a candidate's ability to collect a great deal of goods with which to press his suit often revealed to the electors the strength of his following in the district or village, for had he been an unpopular man he would have had to use only his own resources.

666 The Mossi electors were always concerned with the health and
643 character of a potential chief, and turned down the most promising
175 candidates who were deficient in any of these qualities. For example, when Moro Naba Sanum died in 1890 without leaving a male heir, his younger brother, Bokary Koutou, was the strongest candidate for the *nam*. Yet he was passed over, at first, by the electors because of his reputation as a bandit and a rebel. We know from Captain Binger, a Frenchman who met Bokary in 1888, that this prince was indeed a bandit and a slave raider. But Binger, although deploring Bokary's conduct, exonerated him on the grounds that the Moro Naba had sent him into exile without any means of support. This was true, but the
[687] reason that Moro Naba Sanum did so was because Bokary had raised a rebellion against him as an attempt to obtain their father's position. Bokary was forbidden to appear in the capital; but when he heard that his brother Sanum was dead, he took a force of soldiers and hurried to Wagadougou fearing that an attempt would have been made to prevent his election. When he found that his fears were justified, he became
[669] desperate and secreted a force of Gurunsi warriors around the elector's meeting place, threatening to kill them if he was not named Moro Naba. They succumbed to his threat and he received the *nam*. During
643 the customary speech in which a new ruler chose his official name,
175 announced his program for the people and the country, or ridiculed his erstwhile competitors, Bokary Koutou said: "A hundred ghosts cannot frighten an elephant (Wobogo)," meaning that he was not afraid
648 of any of his enemies. He thereafter became known as Moro Naba
721 Wobogo, and he chose to live up to his boast when the French arrived
175 and asked him to sign a treaty of protection with them. He refused

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of their former serfs and slaves who were theoretically also "their sons." 636

The sons of the chiefs and those boys of commoner, serf, and slave 643
origins who had gone to the mission schools became the first group 186
of educated Mossi. The educated commoners had no function in the 662
traditional political system and were readily absorbed by the local French bureaucracy. However, since these persons were not sufficient to fill the administration's need of literate Mossi, the sons of chiefs and even the carefully coached missionary catechists were encouraged to join the civil service. The result of this policy was that almost no literate Mossi were elected to district and village chieftainship before the end of the second world war.

The relatively rapid political development which came to French 636
Africa as a result of the Brazzaville Conference of 1944 and the after- 646
math of the war presented the traditional Mossi political hierarchy with a grave problem: "Who should represent the Mossi people in the new French assemblies and councils both in Africa and in metropolitan France?" There were three possibilities: They could be represented by educated foreign Africans; by the educated sons of Mossi chiefs whose loyalties were not known; or by the potentially hostile educated Mossi commoners. The first hint of the Moro Naba's policy was re- 636
vealed when the Africans were called upon to select delegates to send 646
to the French Constituent Assembly on October 21, 1945. Houphouet 666
[Boigny], who anticipated the determination of the Mossi to support 662
their own candidate, had vainly taken the precaution of sending an emissary to the Moro Naba prior to the September 8 meeting [which the Africans had called to plan strategy]. The Moro Naba proved unamenable to the suggestion that he support Houphouet's candidacy, and insisted on backing one of his own loyals vassals, Tenga Wedraogo or Baloum Naba.[5] This action showed clearly that the Mossi had planned to use educated chiefs who could also represent them in the assemblies. The flexible pattern of Mossi political succession enabled the Moro Naba and his advisers to meet this new contingency. In three districts, Manga, Sapone, and Kaya, the eldest sons of deceased chiefs were passed over, and their younger educated brothers were elected to the vacant chieftainships. There were some hard feelings over the appointment of Sapone, but the reason given was that the new chief was partially blind in one eye. I have no data for the reaction of

9:Skinner E-5 (1955-1957)1960 FA28 Mossi FA28

636
646 the Kaya people to their new chief. However, in Manga the proposed
666 election of a young chief over his four elder brothers did cause some
662 concern and talk about Catholic machinations because the nominee was of that faith. But there was no overt opposition to him once he had been elected. His elder brother accepted the wishes of the Moro Naba with good graces even though he remains a rather tragic individual.

647 The differential treatment that the Manga Naba receives from the
636 administration is obvious to everyone. Whereas the other district chiefs are still summarily summoned to the administrative center, and kept waiting, the Manga Naba sends his assistants to represent him. When the Governor of the Haute Volta came to Manga to make it an administrative subdivision, he was entertained by the Manga Naba while the neighboring district chiefs celebrated outside. It was the political power of this educated chief which was responsible for Manga becoming an administrative subdivision even though it is located several miles from the highway which runs between Wagadougou and Ghana. Furthermore, the population of the neighboring district all complain that Manga's population has gained a disproportionate share of all the services provided by the governmental agencies whose headquarters are there. The fears which the Manga people and the other Mossi have had over their chiefs being Catholic have not materialized in Manga. Of course, the Manga Naba does perform the rituals on the
[769] day of the ancestral feasts. These rites are now being performed by his father's brother who has become the ritual head of the ruling lineage (and it is possible that this line may become the line which performs this task for the now "secular" chief). However, when the
[797] chief celebrates the anniversary of his conversion to Catholicism at the mission, afterwards he holds court in his house where he receives from Catholics, Moslems, and pagans alike, the gifts he normally would have received in the feast of the ancestors.[8]

The most important function of such Mossi chiefs as the Manga Naba is to defend the interests of the Mossi people in the territorial assemblies and the French councils and assemblies while preserving the ruling tradition of the descendants of Wedraogo and Wubri. In his capacity as politician-chief, the Manga Naba joined a fellow Mossi of rather humble origin in sponsoring several bills in the Assembly of

Some of the more important rulers, such as the heads of the Yatenga, Fada-N'Gourma, and Tenkodogo kingdoms, were chosen by local electoral colleges, which did not have to seek the approval of the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou or notify him of the choices made. Their authority, as we have seen, was supported by claims of equality with Ouagadougou. But, with the exception of the Tenkodogo ruler, they were actually farther removed from the main line of royal descent than the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou. The autonomous Dimdamba had their own electoral colleges, which in some cases were made up of men related to the electoral-college members of the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou. (For example, the Ouidi Naba of Boulsa was descended from the Ouidi Naba of Ouagadougou.) These local colleges were usually free to nominate and elect the Dimdamba without consulting the Mogho Naba, even though he ratified many nominations.[35] According to Cheron, "The nomination of the Dim of Boulsa did not become definitive until ratified by the Mogho Naba, who was always consulted by the electors and who could impose his own candidate."[36] This was not always true; nor did every Mogho Naba refrain from interfering in the internal affairs of autonomous provinces. Whether he did or not often depended on his strength relative to that of the Dimdamba. Once the Dimdamba had been chosen, however, they were installed with ceremonies similar to those for the Ouagadougou ruler.

Like their superiors, the Dimdamba had the authority to delegate power to the Kombemba and Tense Nanamse. Some of them also had the right to grant the nam to a fellow Dim. The Boussouma Naba, for instance, could grant it to the Mane Naba.[37] Mogho Nanamse granted such rights to Dimdamba for various reasons. They might do so on the basis of their relative strength vis-à-vis a particular Dim at a particular time, or because they admired him or were closely related to him. However, a Dim exercised sovereignty in his own name, regardless of whether he was subordinate to the Mogho Naba or to another Dim. In contrast, the district chiefs and the village chiefs exercised sovereignty on behalf of the Mogho Naba or of the Dim in whose territory they resided.

The installation ceremonies for the two lower orders of chiefs were not too different from those for the Mogho Nanamse and Dimdamba. For example, when the Nobere district chief died, the provincial minister for Nobere—in this case the Gounga Naba—reported his death to the Mogho Naba. The ruler then summoned one of the deceased chief's officials to the capital to report on the qualifications of all potential candidates for the nam. The provincial minister, in turn, dispatched one of his own representatives to the district to verify the reports he had received. It was only when this

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according to the Mossi, the imminent death of an important chief; secondly, a meteor had passed unexpectedly over Ouagadougou between 8 and 9 P.M. [on March 12th], vividly impressing the Mogho Naba himself.

It is quite possible that the emotions induced by these phenomena aggravated the heart condition that felled him. Certain people have maintained that the Mogho Naba, being opposed to all foreign domination and convinced that serious developments were imminent, voluntarily commited suicide by poison in order to elude them. So far, there is no proof that such a rumor has really been adrift. The matter is under strict investigation.[80]

The Mossi people practiced as best they could the traditional rituals connected with the death of a Mogho Naba. During the interregnum, however, the administration did not permit the usual chaos, ritual or otherwise. One administration report states: "Young people tried to steal things in the market, taking advantage of the old customs, but they were checked."[81] A later report adds that the traditions of the Napoko and the Kourita were honored, and that one hundred persons were arrested for the ritual larceny of small objects.

The traditional Mossi authorities allegedly requested that the deceased Mogho Naba, as one who had worn the Legion of Honor, be given full military honors. This required the placing of his body in a coffin so that the funeral cortege could move through the streets, a fact which introduced a new ritual element in royal funerals. Once this ceremony was over, however, the representatives of the administration withdrew, and the body was buried according to customary rites. [766] [177]

The traditional electoral college then proceeded with the task of choosing a new ruler. The choice was between Issoufou Congo, Kom's eldest son, who was then a lieutenant in the French Colonial Army in the Ivory Coast, and his younger brother, Etienne Congo, chief of the Doulougou district. With the administration's permission, the college elected Issoufou Congo. He took the title "Sagha" (the second Mogho Naba to bear that name), and was installed with traditional ceremonies. [666]

The message Sagha sent to the French High Commissioner bears quoting. Like the traditional speeches of newly elected Mogho Nanamse, it was believed by the Mossi people to contain subtle jibes at enemies, praises to benefactors and friends, and portents of future plans. The Mogho Naba said: 175* 648* 643 537

> At the moment when I take command of the Mossi people, I must thank you for having placed me on the throne of my father. I give you assurance of my fidelity toward France in all circumstances. Be assured by this testimony that my father will remain for me an honored person and a guide. I will walk in the footsteps of my father. In these difficult times, my people and I re-

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XI

CHIEFS AND POLITICIANS

THE MOSSI CHIEFS were neither present nor represented at the Brazzaville Conference, and thus had no voice in the discussions about the postwar political structure of the territories and their place in this structure. The delegates laid the groundwork for the governmental structure, but failed to define the role of the chiefs.[1] Thus, when the first postwar elections were held in August 1945 to select municipal officers (the first elections held in French West Africa outside of Senegal), none of the African chiefs had a role aside from their unofficial influence on their subjects.[2] The Mossi who were in Abidjan, Ivory Coast, and who were qualified to vote took part in the election, but the Mossi in Mogho could not vote because their towns had not yet been granted municipal status. 175* 666 631

The first election in which the Mossi and their chiefs voted was the one held in October 1945 to elect delegates from the Ivory Coast (Ouagadougou was then considered the Upper Ivory Coast) to the Constituent Assembly in Paris, which was to establish the Fourth French Republic. Félix Houphouët-Boigny, a Baulé chief, planter, and founder of the African Agricultural Union (Syndicat Agricole Africain), had won the municipal elections in Abidjan, and now sought the support of the Abidjan Mossi for his candidacy to the Assembly. The Mossi spokesman in Abidjan, Zebango Pohi, stated that the Mossi would vote only for a Voltaic, and that the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou (who because of his father's reputation and his own educational qualifications was now acknowledged as the spokesman for all Mossi chiefs) would decide whom the Mossi would support.[3] Houphouët-Boigny then sought the support of the Mogho Naba, but the ruler was committed to a policy of detaching Mossi country from the Ivory Coast and named one of his own traditional ministers, the Baloum Naba. Houphouët-Boigny and his supporters were reportedly "greatly surprised by the Mogho Naba's choice. They felt that the honest but illiterate Baloum Naba was unqualified for the task, and, moreover, could not hope to gain the sup- 175* 666 648* [643]

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*175 port of the coastal Ivory Coast population. There was little they could do
*648 about it, however, because 'the decision of the Mogho Naba was irrevo-
● 666 cable.'"[4]

[643] The election was hotly contested. The candidates based their campaigns
*175 on local issues: taxes, forced labor, the lack of public services, the status of
666 the traditional chiefs, colonialism, racial discrimination, and so on. The
665 Parti Démocratique de la Côte d'Ivoire (PDCI), led by Houphouët-Boigny, stressed the need for combating racial discrimination and exploitation by European planters. The Union pour la Défense des Interêts de la Haute-Volta (UDIHV), formed by the Mogho Naba and a group of mission-educated young men and led by the Baloum Naba, stressed the need to end forced labor, especially among the Mossi, and to place all the Mossi under one territorial government. The UDIHV realized that it had little chance of gaining votes in the south, and therefore concentrated its efforts in the north. However, no credence is to be given to the story that "Whenever [the Baloum Naba] was free from [official] supervision, he told the people, 'Vote for my friend Houphouët. . . . What would I do in Paris, with my forty wives and at my age? I can't speak a blasted word of French.'"[5] Houphouët-Boigny won the election by the surprisingly narrow margin of 12,650 to 11,620.[6]

*175 Houphouët-Boigny played a leading role in persuading the first Con-
*648 stituent Assembly to submit to the voters a number of important liberal
668 colonial reforms. These included the abolition of the Indigénat; the free-
[646] dom of meeting and association; the bestowal of French citizenship on co-
[177] lonial peoples without affecting their traditional personal status; the use of the French Penal Code in all courts dealing with criminal cases; and the abolition of forced labor.[7]

*175 There was some discussion in the Assembly of what role the traditional
631 chiefs should play in the projected political structure of Overseas France.
646 One group of delegates held that "the structure of the local Assemblies
177 should be tied intimately to the existing structure of the overseas societies. Otherwise, they would be bogus Assemblies whose decisions would serve the interests of only one class in the society, the dominant class."[8] These men felt that while many chiefs were conservatives and might incline to "neo-feudalism," the new elite of young educated Africans who aspired to replace the Europeans were, for the most part, European-trained and out of contact with the rural masses. These delegates believed that only the chiefs could provide adequate popular leadership, and that the French Union could not cohere or develop unless the chiefs had some status vis-à-vis the elite and prestige in the eyes of the people.[9]

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Another group held that the chiefs need not be formally associated with the governmental apparatus. A historical precedent was cited: in the early days of colonialism, the chiefs had not become civil servants, and their status had not been impaired. Thus, when a chief collected taxes for the administration, his action was comparable to his former collection of tribute; when he recruited forced labor for the administration and the large plantations, it was similar to the traditional corvée; and when he asked people to plant certain crops, it was like asking them to cultivate his own fields. In a word, as the institution of chieftainship had adjusted to past changes in African societies, so it had the capacity to adjust in the future.[10]

631 648* [182]

Other delegates, and apparently the French administrators as well, felt that the chiefs should be associated with the administration, but as administrative assistants and not as elected representatives of the masses.[11] Since the position of the chiefs was sacred as well as secular, it was argued, political defeat might impair their position as "the fathers of their people."[12]

The constitution drafted by the first Constituent Assembly (lacking any provisions concerning the traditional chiefs) was finally submitted to the voters in May 1946. Although it won a majority of overseas votes, it was defeated by the French people. The subsequently convened second Constituent Assembly was subjected to a great deal of pressure by a group of colonialists called Etats Généraux de Colonisation, and as a result many of the provisions of the first constitution, among them the single-college provision and various rights of citizenship, were not included in the second. The revised constitution was accepted by the French voters in October 1946.[13] By this time, however, many of the African delegates had become so disillusioned with the French parliamentarians in the National Assembly that they decided to fend for themselves. They met in Bamako in the French Sudan and formed an inter-territorial grouping called the Rassemblement Démocratique Africain (RDA), led by Houphouët-Boigny. Houphouët-Boigny was strongly anti-imperialist, and the party received the active support of the French Communists. It adopted a violently anti-colonial platform, pledging to rally the peoples of Africa to a world-wide struggle against colonial imperialism, and to try to bring all of the emerging political parties in French Africa under its banner in order to achieve the "emancipation of the African masses."[14]

175* 648* 642 666 175* 648* 668

The Mogho Naba and the other Mossi chiefs, noting the anti-colonial posture of the RDA and the hostile reaction of the colonial regime to this group, attempted to take advantage of the situation by advocating the reintegration of the Upper Volta under their more conservative auspices. The Mogho Naba had already taken advantage of the Bastille Day celebration

175* 648* 642 643 631

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*175 *648 642 643 631 [668] in 1946 to visit and consult with the Yatenga Naba about Mossi reunification, thus ending a centuries-old tradition whereby the two rulers could not meet for fear of death inflicted by the ancestors. Their project was now received with greater interest by the local Europeans, both *colons* and administrators, who were alarmed by Houphouët-Boigny's radicalism and bent on preventing the spread of virulent anti-colonialism among the well-disciplined Voltaic populations.

*175 642 668 665 Shortly after the constitution was approved, the administration announced that elections would be held on December 15 for the Second College of the Ivory Coast's General Council or Territorial Assembly (to be composed of Africans and persons without full French citizenship) and for the other organs of the French Union. Once again Houphouët-Boigny and the RDA, having gained the support of the PDCI and the Parti Progressiste de la Côte d'Ivoire (PPCI), tried to obtain the backing of the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou and the Mossi-supported UDIHV (shortly to become the Union Voltaïque).[15] Again the Mogho Naba refused. Gabriel D'Arboussier, one of Houphouët-Boigny's lieutenants and an important official of the RDA, later charged that the ruler had been influenced by the Minister of Overseas France, Coste-Floret, who told him that the RDA "was no more democratic than it was African, that it was not an Assembly, and that Africans should rally to an institution that was truly African."[16] In any event, the Mogho Naba and the UDIHV decided to oppose the RDA. They emphasized the common interests of the Upper Volta and championed Voltaic candidates, Mossi and non-Mossi alike.

*175 666 631 The electoral law of the territories promulgated in October 1946 did not specifically discriminate against the chiefs, but it was heavily weighted in favor of the educated and urban elite. The electorate was confined to civil servants; soldiers and veterans of the armed forces; chiefs; permanent employees of commercial, industrial, craft, or agricultural establishments; members and former members, for at least two years, of cooperatives, trade unions, and committees of provident societies; holders of official decorations; members of prewar courts and councils including the Chambers of Commerce, Agriculture, and Industry, and agricultural unions; Christian priests and ministers; owners of registered real property; holders of driving or shooting licenses; and persons literate in French or Arabic. Candidates for election to the Territorial Assemblies had to be at least twenty-three years of age, to be registered on the electoral list as residents of the territory, to have a good knowledge of French, and to post a bond of 5,000 CFA (Colonies Françaises d'Afrique) francs, which was forfeited if the candidate received less than 5 per cent of the votes in his election district. Many chiefs were eligible to vote, but, because their fathers had opposed their be-

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ing educated at mission-sponsored schools, few were qualified to run for office.[17]

More serious for the position of the Mossi chiefs, perhaps, was the fact that many of them either were ill informed about the election or refused to take it seriously. Balima states that a surprisingly large number of Mossi chiefs "could not understand very well the importance of this novelty—which is understandable; had no interest in the formalities, which they nevertheless carried out; and somewhat haphazardly designated as candidates African civil servants to whom they were not even tied by close bonds of friendship."[18] Of course, another reason for this choice of "African civil servants" was that they were among the only persons with the training and education required for candidacy. Nevertheless, the candidates included a few educated members of chiefly families—persons who, not being in the main line of descent or being otherwise ineligible for office in the traditional system, had been "given" to the Europeans to be educated.

The partisans of the Mossi chiefs were victorious in the northern part of the Ivory Coast in an election that saw the emergence of such Voltaic politicians of later fame as Blaise Benon, François Bouda, Zinda Kaboré, Christophe Kalenzaga, Tindougou Ouédraogo, Zebango Pohi, and Maurice Yaméogo. However, the Second College was dominated by Houphouët-Boigny and his RDA colleagues. Despite the Mogho Naba's opposition, RDA delegates set out to ameliorate conditions in the Volta region. For example, the RDA secured the passage of bills to raise the Mogho Naba's salary from 60,000 francs a year, a trifling sum in view of his official and private expenses, to about 500,000 francs a year. Similarly, it ensured that Mossi and other Voltaic students would receive a fair share of the scholarships which France had assigned to colonial students.[19]

These gestures did not dampen the ardor of the Mossi chiefs for the reintegration of the Upper Volta. In April 1947, when French President Auriol, touring the territories to observe the operation of the new political institutions, visited the Upper Volta, the Yatenga Naba, the Tenkodogo Naba, and the head ruler of Fada-N'Gourma met the presidential party at Ouagadougou and pressed their claim for separate territorial status. The French reportedly welcomed this petition because it gave them an opportunity to clip the wings of Houphouët-Boigny, as well as to ensure the aid of the chiefs in procuring adequate manpower for a projected extension of the Abidjan–Bobo-Dioulasso railroad to Ouagadougou. The problem was to convince the National Assembly in Paris that the reunification of the Upper Volta was in the best interests of all concerned.

The French government set up a Parliamentary Commission and sent its chairman, Jean Jacques Duglas, to Ouagadougou and other Voltaic re-

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matter from events in French West Africa and the rest of Overseas France. All projects undertaken in the Upper Volta became of interest to the other units of the French Union because the funds to support them had to be voted on by representatives of the whole, including not only local Mossi and non-Mossi, but also Africans in other territories, French colonial populations outside Africa, and the metropolitan French.

The conditions that were to have the greatest effect on the position of Mossi chiefs were created in January 1949, when elections were held to choose the Upper Volta's first General Council. The major parties involved in the election were the Mossi-dominated Union Voltaïque; the Entente Voltaïque, a local section of the RDA representing the interests of such non-Mossi populations as the Lobi, Fulani, Bobo, Senufo, and Gurunsi; and a group of smaller ethnic parties such as the Union Lobie and the Indépendants. The campaign reflected all the tensions and conflicts prevalent among the administration, the RDA, the non-Mossi parties, and the Union Voltaïque. Both the Union Lobie and the Indépendants spoke out against what they feared to be Mossi domination, and accused the Mossi chiefs of "neo-feudalism." The Union Voltaïque accused the RDA of radicalism, of associating with communists, and of hostility to the chiefs. It cited as evidence the deposal of several Agni and Senufo chiefs in the Ivory Coast by partisans of the RDA. The RDA, in turn, charged the Union Voltaïque with supporting reactionary, feudal-minded chiefs, and thus with opposing the true interests of the Mossi and other Voltaic peoples. Furthermore, it accused Masson (Governor Mouragues's executive officer) of encouraging the cercle commanders to fight against the RDA, and of jailing about 300 RDA members at Bobo-Dioulasso.[23] 175* 631 666 665 [646]

As expected, the Union Voltaïque won most of the seats in the more populous Mossi section of the Upper Volta, and thus was able to dominate the political institutions created by the administration. Nevertheless, the election produced deep political scars in the Upper Volta, and lasting enmity between the RDA and the Mossi chiefs.

During the years that followed the reunification of the Upper Volta, the Mossi chiefs as such were not accorded any specific status by the administration. Beginning in 1953, bills designed to regularize the status of the chiefs were submitted by Mossi delegates to the Assembly of the French Union and to various other organs of the French Union, but to no effect. The Mossi chiefs meanwhile sought to define their own position. In 1952, under the leadership of the Mogho Naba, they formed an organization called the Union of the Traditional Chiefs of the Upper Volta. Article IV of the statutes which they filed with the territorial administration reads as follows: 175* 648* 631 [646] 175* 631 647 [643]

chief became ridiculously smaller when distributed among the producers; gone the tolls along the roads. Henceforth, all such services will be duly and individually compensated.

Even in the most remote and least accessible villages, people speak of liberty. The old women who go to the pools for water sit down for a moment near their jars in order to talk about it. Even bush fires spread less rapidly than this news.[27]

Very few Mossi in the rural areas were qualified to vote in the first post-war elections, and those who were qualified voted for the candidates preferred by the chiefs. However, as the franchise was progressively broadened after 1951, and many more Mossi and non-Mossi politicians traveled through the rural areas, the politicians favored by the chiefs found that they had to campaign to maintain their position. Both the chiefs and their politicians resented this. One visitor to the Upper Volta reports: "A highly educated Mossi of the Upper Volta told me, 'Citizenship has unsettled and ruined the people. Everyone has become his own master, and believes himself free to do whatever he wishes.'"[28] Opposition to the chiefs and their friends came from the Moslems, who supported their co-religionists for office, and from a growing group of young Mossi who resented the power of the chiefs. In 1955 one such group in Yatenga, composed of mission-educated youths, war veterans, and former workers, broke away from the Union Voltaïque and formed the Mouvement Démocratique Voltaïque (MDV) under the joint leadership of Gérard Ouédraogo and Michel Dorange, a Frenchman, who had been a captain in the colonial army. The partisans of the MDV often came into violent conflict with the supporters of the chiefs, but the organization itself was not banned by the administration, because its members included many veterans, and because Dorange was one of its leaders.

The appearance of the anti-chief MDV was symptomatic of the problems which the Mossi chiefs were to encounter as the people became free to elect their own representatives. For one thing, the people could now censure their chiefs by voting for their opponents, who appealed to them in terms of release from traditional prestations. But more important, even those Mossi politicians who were still friendly to the chiefs and depended on their support for election were becoming increasingly autonomous. The chiefs were operating in one power structure, the politicians in another and more important one. In Dakar, in Paris, and in the Palace of Versailles (where the Assembly of the French Union met) Mossi politicians dealt not only with local African problems but with problems the chiefs knew nothing about. As the politicians grew skillful at the game of metropolitan

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175 631 642 665 668 number of young educated Mossi to merge his party with the PDV-RDA in the hope of gaining a foothold in the Bobo-Dioulasso area and of uniting the Mossi and non-Mossi of the Upper Volta. The two parties did merge in September 1956, becoming the Parti Démocratique Unifié (PDU). The PDU's manifesto roundly condemned the "artificial division of the territory into East and West Volta" and the "classification of the population as Mossi and non-Mossi," and urged all Voltaics to join the new party. In addition, it declared that the Mossi chiefs merited some status in the territory because they had preserved their "political entity throughout African history."[35] The PDU went so far as to make the Mogho Naba its honorary president, and to speculate that he might be made the Governor of an autonomous or independent Upper Volta.

Nevertheless, the merger was to be a greater victory for the opponents of the Mossi chiefs than for their allies in the PSEMA. For one thing, many of the anti-chief Mossi intellectuals now joined the PDU, bringing with them their modernistic views. For another, since former RDA members were running for office in the Upper Volta under the banner of the PDU, the local chiefs had to give up their opposition to these candidates, and the French administration did likewise. This hands-off policy gave all the candidates, even those who were basically hostile to the chiefs, a better chance of being elected.

[666] The PDU won a slight over-all majority and a large Ouagadougou majority in the Upper Volta elections for the Territorial Assembly and the Government Council in March 1957. However, the anti-chief MDV carried the Ouahigouya (Yatenga) area, and an Indépendant candidate, Maurice Yaméogo, defeated a supporter of the Mossi chiefs, Henri Guissou, in the Koudougou area. Of great importance was the election of Ouezzain Coulibaly, one of the early non-Mossi Voltaic supporters of Houphouët-Boigny, who had returned to the Upper Volta after the merger of the PSEMA and the PDV-RDA. Coulibaly was elected on the PDU ticket as a representative for Banfora, a district in the western region.[36]

Unfortunately for the Mossi chiefs, the RDA emerged from the March elections as the strongest party in all the former French West African territories. Because of this, most of the politicians in the Upper Volta sought to establish a modus vivendi with Houphouët-Boigny, the Party's recognized leader. Most of them went to visit him at Yamoussokro, his home in the Ivory Coast, and out of these meetings there emerged a realignment of the MDV and the PDV-RDA wing of the PDU at the expense of Conombo and the PSEMA group. This created a new majority in the Upper Volta, and Coulibaly, an old ally of Houphouët-Boigny long suspected by the

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Mossi chiefs of being a modernist, was elected as the first Vice-President of the new government. Not only was the Mogho Naba deprived of the opportunity to become the African head of the Upper Volta, but such stalwart supporters of the chiefs as Conombo and Bouda were left out of the government. Thus, after twelve years of opposition to Houphouët-Boigny, Mogho Naba Sagha and his chiefs were finally defeated. Their defeat was made even more ignominious by the elevation of a non-Mossi commoner to a position of dominance over the Mossi chiefs.[37]

Having lost out in the Upper Volta, the Mossi chiefs had no spokesman when the new Vice-Presidents of the Government Councils of the French West African territories and the European Presidents of these territories met at Dakar to discuss the problems of the truncated French West Africa Federation. No one mentioned the problem of the position of the traditional chiefs. As far as the politicians were concerned, the issue of the chief on the inter-territorial level was dead. It had relevance only in those territories where the chiefs retained some influence.

In an effort to consolidate their hold on the Upper Volta, the PDV-RDA members in the PDU met in September 1957 and sought to convert the PDU into a territorial subsection of the RDA. This move was resisted by the supporters of the chiefs within the PDU, especially by Conombo, who as leader of the PSEMA, an important faction within the PDU, had been completely eclipsed by Coulibaly and the PDV. Conombo resigned from the PDU and announced his intention to rebuild the PSEMA with the support of the Mossi chiefs. On November 12, however, before his plans could be put into action, Mogho Naba Sagha II died in Ouagadougou and political activities in the Upper Volta came to a standstill. A period of national mourning was proclaimed, and politicians from all parties gathered to pay their last respects and to eulogize the monarch.

Sagha's death, like that of all Mossi princes, was ascribed to foul means, although it was clear that he had succumbed to uremia. The people reacted to the interregnum by looting, and the shopkeepers in Ouagadougou and surrounding areas were compelled to close their establishments. "The people of Ouagadougou ran to Saba, but the merchants there were quite diligent, and needed no police force to protect them."[38] It was reported that those wives of the deceased ruler who were not at the palace at the time of his death took off the brass anklets denoting their royal status and became free women. If this actually happened, it was an unprecedented occurrence.

When the Mossi traditional electoral college convened to choose a new Mogho Naba, it reportedly considered the candidacy of both Moussa Con-

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964

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go, Sagha's eldest son, and Etienne Congo, Sagha's brother. Etienne Congo allegedly had the support of some politicians, but he was rejected in favor of Moussa. The new ruler was accepted by the Government Council as the "supreme chief of the Mossi" and was installed in the traditional manner. He indicated in his acceptance speech that he was "like a rock [*kougri*] that nothing can move," and became known as Mogho Naba Kougri. A few days after his installation, he appeared in full regalia before the members of the Territorial Assembly to deliver what was probably the most difficult inauguration speech ever composed by a Mogho Naba. This speech will be quoted in full, because it may well be a eulogy for the Mossi chief:

> Over and above the signs of respect shown to the mortal remains of my father, and later the expressions of keen satisfaction on the people's part for the choice of which I have been the object—over and above all this, I see the great interest that the governmental and administrative authorities attach to the role which my ancestors have always fulfilled, and which I am called upon to fulfill anew. Over and above all of these external manifestations, I see the unfailing love of all the Mossi for the throne I occupy and for the tradition I represent along with my confreres. Because the importance of my position, as well as the honor that befalls me, surpasses the meager reality and the possibilities of one man, it is with conviction, sincerity, and faith that I present myself to all of you to tell you that while I accept with fortitude these responsibilities and these honors for the love of my people, I count upon the cooperation and friendship of all, the faithfulness, devotion, and courage of all the Mossi, to acquit myself worthily and to preside not in a passive but in an active and decisive way over the social and economic evolution of our country.
>
> Although I represent tradition and custom in this country; although I must ensure the survival of venerable customs, concerning which we shall be intransigent; I am aware, nevertheless, that there are customs which adapt themselves with difficulty to the exigencies of the modern times in which we live.
>
> This is why, in addressing myself to all the customary chiefs, and especially to my closest associates, I shall say that we have no right to remain passive observers of the reconstruction of our country and of the multiple transformations of the society over whose destiny we have always presided. We must move along with the tide, but in order not to be swept along at a headlong pace and risk failure before reaching our goal, we must stand in the vanguard of the race and lead it at a vigorous and satisfying pace, but one which does not stifle the weak, for they too have a right to life, to progress, to well-being, and to our protection.
>
> As recently as ten years ago, it was easy to be a chief, just as it was easy to be a cercle commander. It was enough to give orders for everything to run smoothly. But today, the chief must add to his title a real merit, a knowledge of men, a true devotion, an integrity, and, above all, a commitment to the welfare of the people under his jurisdiction. It is under these conditions alone

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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It will be well if the Mogho Naba understands that he owns but the vestige of a past whose hour has irrevocably tolled, and that his message to the President of the Council [de Gaulle] commits no one in the Upper Volta but himself, a mere citizen like the others.

I deplore the discrimination which the message of the Mogho Naba implicitly contains. I should like to say to the Mogho Naba that in the Upper Volta there are no Mossi, Fulani, or Bobo people, but only Black people struggling for their liberty. No Mossi or any other Voltaic would agree to the Mogho Naba's expression of fidelity to France in his name. If this must be done, then the Territorial Assembly and the Government Council alone are qualified to do so.[42]

Despite these attacks and numerous suggestions in the press that the Mogho Naba and the Mossi chiefs were developing a "Touré complex" (i.e., the fear of suffering the same fate as the Fulani chiefs of Fouta Djallon, who had been deposed by Sékou Touré, Vice-President of the Guinea Government Council), the Mossi ruler actively supported acceptance of the constitution of the Fifth French Republic, which promised the colonies full internal self-government within the "French Community." Since the constitution was adopted by the Upper Volta population by an overwhelming favorable vote of 99.1 per cent, no one could estimate how effective the Mogho Naba's support had been.[43] [177] [642]

Coulibaly died just before the referendum, and was replaced on an interim basis by Yaméogo. The parliamentarians accordingly had to choose a new leader, now to be President of the Government Council, as well as to draw up a constitution for the new republic and determine whether it would join any of the regional federations then being considered by several territories. The Territorial Assembly was scheduled to meet in extraordinary session on October 17, 1958, to select a successor to Coulibaly. The Mogho Naba, anticipating dissension and perhaps once again seeking the limelight, sent a message to the representatives on October 15, urging "a government of union and public safety." But the politicians resented what they regarded as his interference in matters that did not concern him; few, if any, took his message seriously, and none replied. 175* 646 642 666 [643] [578]

The Mogho Naba therefore decided to force the issue. He summoned his traditional ministers to a conference, and, despite the objections of the Baloum Naba, obtained their permission to order his Tansoba to muster his warriors and lay siege to the Territorial Assembly. Early in the morning of October 17, about 3,000 Mossi warriors, armed with bows and arrows, swords, spears, and ancient flint guns, converged on the Assembly. Later that morning, the Mogho Naba himself, accompanied by his Tansoba, 175* 643 669 578

[post-world war I period]

*175 *648 666 port of the coastal Ivory Coast population. There was little they could do about it, however, because 'the decision of the Mogho Naba was irrevocable.' "[4]

[643] *175 666 665 The election was hotly contested. The candidates based their campaigns on local issues: taxes, forced labor, the lack of public services, the status of the traditional chiefs, colonialism, racial discrimination, and so on. The Parti Démocratique de la Côte d'Ivoire (PDCI), led by Houphouët-Boigny, stressed the need for combating racial discrimination and exploitation by European planters. The Union pour la Défense des Interêts de la Haute-Volta (UDIHV), formed by the Mogho Naba and a group of mission-educated young men and led by the Baloum Naba, stressed the need to end forced labor, especially among the Mossi, and to place all the Mossi under one territorial government. The UDIHV realized that it had little chance of gaining votes in the south, and therefore concentrated its efforts in the north. However, no credence is to be given to the story that "Whenever [the Baloum Naba] was free from [official] supervision, he told the people, 'Vote for my friend Houphouët. . . . What would I do in Paris, with my forty wives and at my age? I can't speak a blasted word of French.' "[5] Houphouët-Boigny won the election by the surprisingly narrow margin of 12,650 to 11,620.[6]

*175 *648 ●668 [646] [177] Houphouët-Boigny played a leading role in persuading the first Constituent Assembly to submit to the voters a number of important liberal colonial reforms. These included the abolition of the Indigénat; the freedom of meeting and association; the bestowal of French citizenship on colonial peoples without affecting their traditional personal status; the use of the French Penal Code in all courts dealing with criminal cases; and the abolition of forced labor.[7]

*175 631 646 177 There was some discussion in the Assembly of what role the traditional chiefs should play in the projected political structure of Overseas France. One group of delegates held that "the structure of the local Assemblies should be tied intimately to the existing structure of the overseas societies. Otherwise, they would be bogus Assemblies whose decisions would serve the interests of only one class in the society, the dominant class."[8] These men felt that while many chiefs were conservatives and might incline to "neo-feudalism," the new elite of young educated Africans who aspired to replace the Europeans were, for the most part, European-trained and out of contact with the rural masses. These delegates believed that only the chiefs could provide adequate popular leadership, and that the French Union could not cohere or develop unless the chiefs had some status vis-à-vis the elite and prestige in the eyes of the people.[9]

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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Another group held that the chiefs need not be formally associated with the governmental apparatus. A historical precedent was cited: in the early days of colonialism, the chiefs had not become civil servants, and their status had not been impaired. Thus, when a chief collected taxes for the administration, his action was comparable to his former collection of tribute; when he recruited forced labor for the administration and the large plantations, it was similar to the traditional corvée; and when he asked people to plant certain crops, it was like asking them to cultivate his own fields. In a word, as the institution of chieftainship had adjusted to past changes in African societies, so it had the capacity to adjust in the future.[10] [182]

Other delegates, and apparently the French administrators as well, felt that the chiefs should be associated with the administration, but as administrative assistants and not as elected representatives of the masses.[11] Since the position of the chiefs was sacred as well as secular, it was argued, political defeat might impair their position as "the fathers of their people."[12]

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The constitution drafted by the first Constituent Assembly (lacking any provisions concerning the traditional chiefs) was finally submitted to the voters in May 1946. Although it won a majority of overseas votes, it was defeated by the French people. The subsequently convened second Constituent Assembly was subjected to a great deal of pressure by a group of colonialists called Etats Généraux de Colonisation, and as a result many of the provisions of the first constitution, among them the single-college provision and various rights of citizenship, were not included in the second. The revised constitution was accepted by the French voters in October 1946.[13]

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By this time, however, many of the African delegates had become so disillusioned with the French parliamentarians in the National Assembly that they decided to fend for themselves. They met in Bamako in the French Sudan and formed an inter-territorial grouping called the Rassemblement Démocratique Africain (RDA), led by Houphouët-Boigny. Houphouët-Boigny was strongly anti-imperialist, and the party received the active support of the French Communists. It adopted a violently anti-colonial platform, pledging to rally the peoples of Africa to a world-wide struggle against colonial imperialism, and to try to bring all of the emerging political parties in French Africa under its banner in order to achieve the "emancipation of the African masses."[14]

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The Mogho Naba and the other Mossi chiefs, noting the anti-colonial posture of the RDA and the hostile reaction of the colonial regime to this group, attempted to take advantage of the situation by advocating the reintegration of the Upper Volta under their more conservative auspices. The Mogho Naba had already taken advantage of the Bastille Day celebration

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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*175 *648 642 643 631 [668] in 1946 to visit and consult with the Yatenga Naba about Mossi reunification, thus ending a centuries-old tradition whereby the two rulers could not meet for fear of death inflicted by the ancestors. Their project was now received with greater interest by the local Europeans, both *colons* and administrators, who were alarmed by Houphouët-Boigny's radicalism and bent on preventing the spread of virulent anti-colonialism among the well-disciplined Voltaic populations.

*175 642 668 665 Shortly after the constitution was approved, the administration announced that elections would be held on December 15 for the Second College of the Ivory Coast's General Council or Territorial Assembly (to be composed of Africans and persons without full French citizenship) and for the other organs of the French Union. Once again Houphouët-Boigny and the RDA, having gained the support of the PDCI and the Parti Progressiste de la Côte d'Ivoire (PPCI), tried to obtain the backing of the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou and the Mossi-supported UDIHV (shortly to become the Union Voltaïque).[15] Again the Mogho Naba refused. Gabriel D'Arboussier, one of Houphouët-Boigny's lieutenants and an important official of the RDA, later charged that the ruler had been influenced by the Minister of Overseas France, Coste-Floret, who told him that the RDA "was no more democratic than it was African, that it was not an Assembly, and that Africans should rally to an institution that was truly African."[16] In any event, the Mogho Naba and the UDIHV decided to oppose the RDA. They emphasized the common interests of the Upper Volta and championed Voltaic candidates, Mossi and non-Mossi alike.

*175 666 631 The electoral law of the territories promulgated in October 1946 did not specifically discriminate against the chiefs, but it was heavily weighted in favor of the educated and urban elite. The electorate was confined to civil servants; soldiers and veterans of the armed forces; chiefs; permanent employees of commercial, industrial, craft, or agricultural establishments; members and former members, for at least two years, of cooperatives, trade unions, and committees of provident societies; holders of official decorations; members of prewar courts and councils including the Chambers of Commerce, Agriculture, and Industry, and agricultural unions; Christian priests and ministers; owners of registered real property; holders of driving or shooting licenses; and persons literate in French or Arabic. Candidates for election to the Territorial Assemblies had to be at least twenty-three years of age, to be registered on the electoral list as residents of the territory, to have a good knowledge of French, and to post a bond of 5,000 CFA (Colonies Françaises d'Afrique) francs, which was forfeited if the candidate received less than 5 per cent of the votes in his election district. Many chiefs were eligible to vote, but, because their fathers had opposed their be-

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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ing educated at mission-sponsored schools, few were qualified to run for office.[17]

More serious for the position of the Mossi chiefs, perhaps, was the fact that many of them either were ill informed about the election or refused to take it seriously. Balima states that a surprisingly large number of Mossi chiefs "could not understand very well the importance of this novelty—which is understandable; had no interest in the formalities, which they nevertheless carried out; and somewhat haphazardly designated as candidates African civil servants to whom they were not even tied by close bonds of friendship."[18] Of course, another reason for this choice of "African civil servants" was that they were among the only persons with the training and education required for candidacy. Nevertheless, the candidates included a few educated members of chiefly families—persons who, not being in the main line of descent or being otherwise ineligible for office in the traditional system, had been "given" to the Europeans to be educated.

The partisans of the Mossi chiefs were victorious in the northern part of the Ivory Coast in an election that saw the emergence of such Voltaic politicians of later fame as Blaise Benon, François Bouda, Zinda Kaboré, Christophe Kalenzaga, Tindougou Ouédraogo, Zebango Pohi, and Maurice Yaméogo. However, the Second College was dominated by Houphouët-Boigny and his RDA colleagues. Despite the Mogho Naba's opposition, RDA delegates set out to ameliorate conditions in the Volta region. For example, the RDA secured the passage of bills to raise the Mogho Naba's salary from 60,000 francs a year, a trifling sum in view of his official and private expenses, to about 500,000 francs a year. Similarly, it ensured that Mossi and other Voltaic students would receive a fair share of the scholarships which France had assigned to colonial students.[19]

These gestures did not dampen the ardor of the Mossi chiefs for the reintegration of the Upper Volta. In April 1947, when French President Auriol, touring the territories to observe the operation of the new political institutions, visited the Upper Volta, the Yatenga Naba, the Tenkodogo Naba, and the head ruler of Fada-N'Gourma met the presidential party at Ouagadougou and pressed their claim for separate territorial status. The French reportedly welcomed this petition because it gave them an opportunity to clip the wings of Houphouët-Boigny, as well as to ensure the aid of the chiefs in procuring adequate manpower for a projected extension of the Abidjan–Bobo-Dioulasso railroad to Ouagadougou. The problem was to convince the National Assembly in Paris that the reunification of the Upper Volta was in the best interests of all concerned.

The French government set up a Parliamentary Commission and sent its chairman, Jean Jacques Duglas, to Ouagadougou and other Voltaic re-

chief became ridiculously smaller when distributed among the producers; gone the tolls along the roads. Henceforth, all such services will be duly and individually compensated.

Even in the most remote and least accessible villages, people speak of liberty. The old women who go to the pools for water sit down for a moment near their jars in order to talk about it. Even bush fires spread less rapidly than this news.[27]

Very few Mossi in the rural areas were qualified to vote in the first post-war elections, and those who were qualified voted for the candidates preferred by the chiefs. However, as the franchise was progressively broadened after 1951, and many more Mossi and non-Mossi politicians traveled through the rural areas, the politicians favored by the chiefs found that they had to campaign to maintain their position. Both the chiefs and their politicians resented this. One visitor to the Upper Volta reports: "A highly educated Mossi of the Upper Volta told me, 'Citizenship has unsettled and ruined the people. Everyone has become his own master, and believes himself free to do whatever he wishes.'"[28] Opposition to the chiefs and their friends came from the Moslems, who supported their co-religionists for office, and from a growing group of young Mossi who resented the power of the chiefs. In 1955 one such group in Yatenga, composed of mission-educated youths, war veterans, and former workers, broke away from the Union Voltaïque and formed the Mouvement Démocratique Voltaïque (MDV) under the joint leadership of Gérard Ouédraogo and Michel Dorange, a Frenchman, who had been a captain in the colonial army. The partisans of the MDV often came into violent conflict with the supporters of the chiefs, but the organization itself was not banned by the administration, because its members included many veterans, and because Dorange was one of its leaders.

The appearance of the anti-chief MDV was symptomatic of the problems which the Mossi chiefs were to encounter as the people became free to elect their own representatives. For one thing, the people could now censure their chiefs by voting for their opponents, who appealed to them in terms of release from traditional prestations. But more important, even those Mossi politicians who were still friendly to the chiefs and depended on their support for election were becoming increasingly autonomous. The chiefs were operating in one power structure, the politicians in another and more important one. In Dakar, in Paris, and in the Palace of Versailles (where the Assembly of the French Union met) Mossi politicians dealt not only with local African problems but with problems the chiefs knew nothing about. As the politicians grew skillful at the game of metropolitan

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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CHIEFS AND POLITICIANS

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The Mossi chiefs indeed understand today that a tradition, no matter how respected, is not immutable. It is susceptible to change and evolution; it will evolve.

In all truth, and with due deference to those who systematically denigrate everything connected with them, the chiefs have borne positive witness to the characteristic spirit of this country, and it is as unfair as it is stupid to deny the important role they have played in certain cases in the cause of tranquility and peace.

As the natural spokesmen for their people, they have been, in many instances, the first to pay a heavy price for the common cause. Without them, demagoguery would have plunged the country into irreparable decadence. . . .

The demands of the traditional chiefs are justified and deserve to be heeded, because, in the face of the inertia of the Government and the rapid development of events, it is to be feared that the chiefs, although disposed by nature to be patient and to wait quietly, might run rather than walk in the days to come.[53]

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In December 1956, the Mossi chiefs, supported by the other traditional chiefs in French West Africa, convoked a Congress of Chiefs at Dakar. This Congress approved a constitution for an organization called the Federal Union of the Syndicates of the Traditional Chiefs, and adopted a proposal on the need for a statute governing the status and material well-being of the chiefs. The Congress did underline the apolitical character of the chieftainship, but asked that the chiefs be given some recognition in the new structures being created by the loi-cadre.

On the local level, the Mossi chiefs convoked a Syndicate of the Traditional Chiefs of the Upper Volta at Tenkodogo a month later. Its president, Etienne Congo, brother of Mogho Naba Sagha II of Ouagadougou, declared:

> At this time, when vast changes are under way, it would be inconceivable for us, the traditional chiefs, not to take an active part in the new developments, of whose urgent and precarious nature we are fully aware.
>
> Our position is clear: we are not opposed in any way to this evolution.
>
> As for statutory matters, I wish to express our concern over the fact that at the very moment when the loi-cadre is turning an important page in the history of Africa, our group has been left out.[54]

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The Mossi chiefs had indeed been abandoned by the French administration. Although they continued to receive the support of some politicians, it soon became clear that the latter were mainly interested in maneuvering for power under the loi-cadre and in uniting their parties to this end. Conombo, the leader of the PSEMA, was induced by his supporters and by a

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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number of young educated Mossi to merge his party with the PDV-RDA in the hope of gaining a foothold in the Bobo-Dioulasso area and of uniting the Mossi and non-Mossi of the Upper Volta. The two parties did merge in September 1956, becoming the Parti Démocratique Unifié (PDU). The PDU's manifesto roundly condemned the "artificial division of the territory into East and West Volta" and the "classification of the population as Mossi and non-Mossi," and urged all Voltaics to join the new party. In addition, it declared that the Mossi chiefs merited some status in the territory because they had preserved their "political entity throughout African history."[88] The PDU went so far as to make the Mogho Naba its honorary president, and to speculate that he might be made the Governor of an autonomous or independent Upper Volta.

Nevertheless, the merger was to be a greater victory for the opponents of the Mossi chiefs than for their allies in the PSEMA. For one thing, many of the anti-chief Mossi intellectuals now joined the PDU, bringing with them their modernistic views. For another, since former RDA members were running for office in the Upper Volta under the banner of the PDU, the local chiefs had to give up their opposition to these candidates, and the French administration did likewise. This hands-off policy gave all the candidates, even those who were basically hostile to the chiefs, a better chance of being elected.

The PDU won a slight over-all majority and a large Ouagadougou majority in the Upper Volta elections for the Territorial Assembly and the Government Council in March 1957. However, the anti-chief MDV carried the Ouahigouya (Yatenga) area, and an Indépendant candidate, Maurice Yaméogo, defeated a supporter of the Mossi chiefs, Henri Guissou, in the Koudougou area. Of great importance was the election of Ouezzain Coulibaly, one of the early non-Mossi Voltaic supporters of Houphouët-Boigny, who had returned to the Upper Volta after the merger of the PSEMA and the PDV-RDA. Coulibaly was elected on the PDU ticket as a representative for Banfora, a district in the western region.[89]

Unfortunately for the Mossi chiefs, the RDA emerged from the March elections as the strongest party in all the former French West African territories. Because of this, most of the politicians in the Upper Volta sought to establish a modus vivendi with Houphouët-Boigny, the Party's recognized leader. Most of them went to visit him at Yamoussokro, his home in the Ivory Coast, and out of these meetings there emerged a realignment of the MDV and the PDV-RDA wing of the PDU at the expense of Conombo and the PSEMA group. This created a new majority in the Upper Volta, and Coulibaly, an old ally of Houphouët-Boigny long suspected by the

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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Mossi chiefs of being a modernist, was elected as the first Vice-President of the new government. Not only was the Mogho Naba deprived of the opportunity to become the African head of the Upper Volta, but such stalwart supporters of the chiefs as Conombo and Bouda were left out of the government. Thus, after twelve years of opposition to Houphouët-Boigny, Mogho Naba Sagha and his chiefs were finally defeated. Their defeat was made even more ignominious by the elevation of a non-Mossi commoner to a position of dominance over the Mossi chiefs.[37]

Having lost out in the Upper Volta, the Mossi chiefs had no spokesman when the new Vice-Presidents of the Government Councils of the French West African territories and the European Presidents of these territories met at Dakar to discuss the problems of the truncated French West Africa Federation. No one mentioned the problem of the position of the traditional chiefs. As far as the politicians were concerned, the issue of the chief on the inter-territorial level was dead. It had relevance only in those territories where the chiefs retained some influence.

In an effort to consolidate their hold on the Upper Volta, the PDV-RDA members in the PDU met in September 1957 and sought to convert the PDU into a territorial subsection of the RDA. This move was resisted by the supporters of the chiefs within the PDU, especially by Conombo, who as leader of the PSEMA, an important faction within the PDU, had been completely eclipsed by Coulibaly and the PDV. Conombo resigned from the PDU and announced his intention to rebuild the PSEMA with the support of the Mossi chiefs. On November 12, however, before his plans could be put into action, Mogho Naba Sagha II died in Ouagadougou and political activities in the Upper Volta came to a standstill. A period of national mourning was proclaimed, and politicians from all parties gathered to pay their last respects and to eulogize the monarch.

Sagha's death, like that of all Mossi princes, was ascribed to foul means, although it was clear that he had succumbed to uremia. The people reacted to the interregnum by looting, and the shopkeepers in Ouagadougou and surrounding areas were compelled to close their establishments. "The people of Ouagadougou ran to Saba, but the merchants there were quite diligent, and needed no police force to protect them."[38] It was reported that those wives of the deceased ruler who were not at the palace at the time of his death took off the brass anklets denoting their royal status and became free women. If this actually happened, it was an unprecedented occurrence.

When the Mossi traditional electoral college convened to choose a new Mogho Naba, it reportedly considered the candidacy of both Moussa Con-

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175 For all its occasional eloquence, the new Mogho Naba's speech was
643 clearly self-serving; moreover, the French officials to whom it was addressed
[648] were withdrawing from the territory, and the young Mossi elite had other ideas about the distribution of power. It is no wonder, then, that most of the politicians listened to his speech in respectful silence and then "calmly went ahead with their tasks," confident, it seems, in their new status as the elected representatives of the people.[40]

175 The new Mogho Naba was faced with a political situation in which
643 he could play only a limited role. His strength now lay exclusively among
668 the more conservative elements of the newly enfranchised rural masses.
578 The political representative of this group was Conombo, who in November 1957 went ahead with his plans to rebuild the PSEMA. In December Conombo saw a chance to embarrass and perhaps defeat the Coulibaly
[646] Government when the Territorial Assembly decided to vote on the budget of the Upper Volta; he and his followers withheld their vote of confidence in the Government and tried to force it to resign. But the conditions under which the members of the Territorial Assembly could force a government to resign were not clearly defined by the loi-cadre. The various parliamentary groups appealed in vain to Paris and to Houphouët-Boigny to resolve the problem. Coulibaly broke the impasse by forming a new coalition and giving Maurice Yaméogo, an Indépendant candidate who had been a member of the RDA and later of the MDV but had switched back to the RDA, the important portfolio of Minister of the Interior. Finally, the Assembly, which had been adjourned, reconvened in April 1958 and confirmed Coulibaly in power. In a speech to the Assembly, Coulibaly declared: "It is my imperative task to tell you that each one of you is faced today with a decisive choice. You must choose either a pooling of efforts and good will in the interests of the country, or the pursuit of personal quarrels and partisan rivalries that will undermine the public welfare."[41]

175 The Mogho Naba and his political allies suffered yet another defeat
643 with the Assembly's approval of the Coulibaly Government. However,
648 Kougri had other strings to his bow. In June 1958, when de Gaulle re-
578 turned to power, Kougri sought to gain the General's favor, and to raise his own status, by pledging his support and that of the Mossi chiefs. This astute political move infuriated many Voltaics, Mossi and non-Mossi, politicians and non-politicians. Amadou Tamboura, a member of the MDV, replied to the Mogho Naba in the newspaper *Paris-Dakar*. Under the headline, "The Message of the Mogho Naba to General de Gaulle Commits Only Himself," he wrote:

[46] Chapter 3

Political, Administrative, and Judicial Organization of the Mossi Empire

I. Political and Administrative Organization

643 The Mossi empire of Ouagadougou was governed prior to the period of French occupation by a supreme chief, the Mogho Naba, who was revered by all his subjects as a "god" and whose territory, in the minds of his people, had no limits. He had the power of life and death over all his subjects.

[192] The word mogho means "country of the Mossi," but by extension it also means "the world." Thus, in this sense the Mogho Naba was regarded as the master of the world.

643 631 It is said that he had under his rule 333 chiefs, naba, among whom were his ministers, the three sogon'kassemsé (great servitors), and some forty petty chiefs called kougzindba, which refers to the heaps of stones designating the place of each minister or petty naba in the emperor's court.

643 177 The authority of the Mogho Naba over his vassals. In spite of the claims made by a colonial official who was trying to free the canton chiefs of one of the administrative districts of the colony from the authority of the Mogho Naba, the emperor's power never was merely nominal. If it has become so, it is a consequence of the intervention of French [47] administrative authority in the politics of the country -- an intervention which has resulted in assigning too much power to certain chiefs.

643 669 I do not mean to imply that before French penetration into the country there were not real conflicts, wars or mere skirmishes (1),

1. In Chapter 1 [not translated]we described in great detail the war waged by the Mogho Nabas Sanum and Wobgo against Lallé. We said also that Sanum warred with the Boussouma Naba and with Boulsa.

but the chiefs who tried by these means to free themselves from the emperor's authority were usually punished for their temerity.

701 oppose me. I therefore demand that his fez be returned to me."
687 To take away the fez of a naba is to dethrone him and reduce him to the level of his subjects.

The court officials, including the Tansoba, at once send emissaries to the chief at fault, asking him to choose between suicide (some take a poison called sounadré, while others kill themselves with a poisoned arrow) and war with the Mogho Naba.

If the chief is not prepared for such a summons, he kills himself, and the envoys return with the news.

● 669 If, on the other hand, he declares that he wants pouwega, that
701 is, war and a noble death, he sends back the representatives of the ministers. A few days later, with drums beating and the Tansoba, chief of the army, at its head, the whole warrior band appears before his walls.

The Tansoba sends the Samandé Naba to the chief to ask him to confirm his declaration of war. If the naba still wants war, he usually replies: "Ya yingri bala la ka sakénian."

The Tansoba withdraws, sending word to the chief [68] to expect him back on a stated day (seven or eight days later); this period of time will enable the chief to assemble his warriors also. When the day arrives, it is a merciless battle, a massacre.

727 Often the forces of the Mogho Naba are victorious, and in that event the slaves, livestock, and other property go to those who seized them. Only the corpses belong to the Tansoba.

701 If an arrow, even a poisoned one, wounds the Tansoba, he
577 must under no circumstances pull it out. Indeed, he must often endure thirst and hunger, and it is only when he is at rest in an enclosed place that the arrows are removed from his body. It should
[789] be noted that since the Tansoba's costume is virtually covered with amulets and other charms, he is not very likely to be wounded seriously by an arrow. This is not, of course, to belittle his bravery and composure in the face of danger, since he is expected never to retreat and, if the enemy is victorious, often prefers to kill
[762] himself rather than to report a defeat to the Mogho Naba.

644 There are, in addition to the foregoing, a great many petty naba whose role is not clearly defined and of whom it seems needless to speak.

70| When a chief assembled his men, no one stayed behind. Only the
72| women, children, invalids, and old men guarded the villages. Those who had no horses formed the infantry; they were armed with bow
[411] and arrows, usually poisoned, and a large sword hung from the shoulder. The horsemen carried a sword and a spear that rested on the tip of the foot and was held at mid-height with the right hand. The Mossi cavalry was especially numerous and fearful. The Moro Naba stayed
[643] home when his people went to war. He gathered together as many horses as possible, and, when horsemen lost their mounts, they came to him to get another horse and rejoin the fight.

669 The last wars before the French conquest of Koupéla, which we shall describe briefly, were civil wars that took place either between the people of Tenkodogo and those of Koupéla, or between the Mossi and the Gourmantché.

669 /12/ As generally happened in parallel cases, these wars followed the death of a naba, when several pretenders wrangled over the suc-
643 cession. It was in order to prevent such wars that only the immediate entourage of the naba was informed of his death. Outsiders were to remain in ignorance and believe the naba to be ill in his hut. The fatal news was spread only when the head of the family had gathered all that was necessary to honor the deceased in proper fashion by celebrating the kouré. (5)

5. Kouré, funeral ceremony in honor of the dead. See below.

669 When Naba Kidba died, leaving only a child of five or six to succeed him, a man from Kazem'bouanga who was powerful by virtue of his wealth and the number of his men decided to seize the throne. His followers had taken for themselves the name of Kazem'-bouanga and used to say: "Although the hyena (katré) is not the equal (zéma) of the donkey (bouanga), she nevertheless attacks and kills him if she meets him in the bush: similarly, although we are not as powerful as the inhabitants of Koupéla, we will manage to defeat them." And indeed, they marched on Koupéla. The prime minister, who bears the title, Saman'Naba (head of the outer courtyard), and whose own name was Wenkosgaraga, seized the child and fled with him to Sapara, the nearest village under the direct authority of the Moro Naba, located nine kilometers from Koupéla.

669 Having learned of this, the men from Kazem'bouanga proceeded to Sapara, but the inhabitants of the village refused to yield the child who had been entrusted to them; meanwhile, the Saman'Naba had returned to his province and gathered all the followers of the young naba. With the aid of the inhabitants of Sapara, the warriors of the Saman'-Naba cut to pieces the pretender's column, killed a great many of his men, and drove them back home. The Saman'Naba then took the child to Ouagadougou, had him invested by the Moro Naba, and returned to Koupéla. The child was Naba Ibri, father of the present naba, who was reigning in Koupéla when Lt. Voulet arrived. His defeated rival killed himself.

669 About the same time, on the death of his father Yenkouaré, 648 Batchandé was elected king of Gourma. Some of the villages, Gyékango among them, refused to recognize his authority. Batchandé appealed to the naba of Bélousa who rounded up his warriors and ordered them to join the men of the naba of Fada. Koupéla, a vassal province of Bélousa, took part in the expedition. Gyékango, however, was bravely defended by its chief and its inhabitants, who were favored by very propitious terrain covered with thorny scrub behind which the besieged men took cover to shoot on the Mossi. This was during the dry season. Thirst completed what the courage of the Gyékango people had begun, and many Mossi perished. The naba of Bélousa was so humiliated that he wished to die of thirst, but he was saved by the naba of Pwitenga. At this point Capt. Baud arrived in Fada from Dahomey. Batchandé requested his help against his rebellious subjects, and Capt. Baud seized Gyékango which has since been called Baudéni, "Baud's village."

A war waged in favor of Lébréboundou by the people of Koupéla against those of Tenkodogo /13/ has left vivid memories. Like the preceding, it was a civil war which broke out on the death of a chief. The naba of Tenkodogo having died, the elders elected Naba Korongo as his successor, but Lébréboundou attempted to seize power. He appealed to the people of Fada and to those of Koupéla. The naba of Tenkodogo, at bay, requested in vain the aid of the naba of Bélousa and that of the Moro Naba. Both replied that the winner would be recognized as chief. The men from Tenkodogo were driven back with losses, but this occurred just at the time when the French troops arrived. The elected naba of Tenkodogo appealed to the head of the expedition, who killed the pretender and installed the lawfully elected man in Tenkodogo.

669 The last wars in the Koupéla area, therefore, were all civil wars that broke out upon the death of chiefs in the adjacent regions of Koupéla, Fada, and Tenkodogo.

721 The most usual theater of warfare, however, was Bousanga /Busansi/ country. If a Bousanga woman enslaved to the naba of Koupéla ran away, the naba demanded her return. If his request was turned down, this meant war. When the Mossi ran short of millet, when their herds had been decimated by an epizootic disease, or even simply when they wished to obtain slaves, the naba would assemble his ministers and direct them to raid the Bousansé. The Saman'Naba would take [701] charge of the war. The Trabana, an experienced warrior, acted as chief of staff, and all the other chiefs, heads of cantons and villages; assembled their men. This was a festive occasion, and its abolition is still lamented by many people, especially among the chiefs.

727 Everything was looted; the harvest and herds were shared, and the 567 population was reduced to slavery. Since we have mentioned slaves, we shall provide some details on the subject.

567 Slavery existed in Mossi country, but in a very mild form. The agricultural Mossi kept slaves to till their fields. It was to their advantage to treat them well and thus turn them to good account. [435] Slaves constituted a source of wealth. An adult slave sold for 50 to 100 francs according to his strength, and no distinction was made between men and women. It was, therefore, unusual for a Mossi to kill a slave. Custom certainly sanctioned his right to do so, and no one, not even his chief, could call him to account for his act; his slave was his property, and he could do with him as he pleased. When he wished to get rid of a slave, however, he found it more lucrative to sell him. Besides, a slave should be attached to the household; a [278] maltreated slave might run away, even at the risk of being caught and in spite of the drug he was forced to drink, which, like the Lethean waters, was supposed to cause him to lose his memory. On the other hand, a well-treated, well-fed slave had the hope of obtaining a wife and becoming in turn the master of a hut. When his master was pleased with him, when he had rendered an important service, he was sometimes given one of the master's daughters in marriage; this made him free, and his children were not born slaves. Slaves could also be freed if their family agreed to redeem them. They were freed most frequently by means of an exchange: one of their daughters, sisters, or nieces was given in their place. This custom persisted until quite recently.

635 wear spurs and to have pages and a pillow. When the festivities are over at Kourit'Yaorin, the naba enters Koupéla where he is to reside.

643 When the Moro Naba died, the country fell prey to revolution and
669 to the servants of the deceased, who looted everything they could. This is why the death of the Moro Naba was carefully concealed until the day of the funeral; this is why, once it had been announced, no one dared go out without a bow and arrows or at least a spear. Women and children stayed home. In order to prevent any disorder, a new
643 election was called as soon as possible. The Widi Naba acted as intermediary and gathered the votes of the electors. The latter numbered twenty-five: the five high ministers and twenty other chiefs, of no great importance in everyday life, who were not canton chiefs and were often mere family heads, but who were high electors by right inherited from father to son since the founding of the Ouagadougou dynasty. These twenty-five electors consulted the people of their entourage and told the Widi Naba which candidate had received their vote. There could be several candidates, but to be elected one had to be a member of the family /22/of Naba Oubri, the founder of the dynasty. Once the funeral ceremonies were over, the Widi Naba rounded up all the canton chiefs and all the nabas present in Ouagadougou, and proclaimed the name of the man chosen, to whom he presented the badges of office. Numerous ceremonies followed, the most solemn of which took place in a small village called Paspanga, two kilometers from Ouagadougou. All the nabas went there in turn, beginning with the defeated candidates, to render their oath of loyalty.

All these customs were followed for the investiture of the present Moro Naba, Naba Kom.

Chapter 3. Rights of Chiefs and Rights of Private Individuals

631 The nabas, whether heads of villages, cantons, or provinces, were all-powerful, and no one could act without their knowledge or own anything beyond what they permitted him to possess.

In theory, Mossi country belongs entirely to the Moro Naba, who may dispose of everything as he wishes and give land to anyone he pleases. In practice, the Moro Naba delegates some of his

643 "Following the funeral ceremony, an electoral college consisting of the Ouidi Naba as president, assisted by the Gounga Naba, Laralé Naba, and Tamsaba, assembles in the greatest mystery and holds its meetings in a spot as withdrawn or inconspicuous as possible. Owing to the reigning state of anarchy, indeed, the followers of the various candidates would not fail to disturb the deliberations of the electoral college if they were to find out where it is meeting, and to support the candidacy of their respective favorites with arrow shots.

"When the members of the college have come to an agreement on the choice of the new sovereign (who can only be selected among the direct descendants of Oubry, founder of the empire) they secretly warn the chosen man, who also comes to them in secret. Then each of the four electors convokes his warriors, who come and gather around them and the new Moro Naba. On the following morning the informed populace flocks in, and the sovereign is proclaimed king.

"The disturbances of the interregnum come to an end from that moment.

"The Moro Naba, followed by the high dignitaries and the multitude, goes to Tamvilli (a quarter of Ouagadougou), where he spends the first day of his reign. When evening comes, he goes to the chief of the village of Ouagadougou where he spends the night. On the following morning he goes to Paspanga (a quarter of Ouagadougou) where, on the spot where the dwelling of Naba Kom once stood, he receives the canton chiefs and nakomsé, who come and render their oath of fealty. Finally, when this last formality is over, the members of the electoral college depart, and he proceeds along with the Baloum Naba, Kamsoro Naba, and Jussaba Naba to the royal residence.

"The unlucky /575/ pretenders are subjected to the most cruel banter throughout the coronation ceremonies, but once these are over they become kourita, or in other words the highest-ranking nakomsé.

643 669 "We have already stated that as soon as the Moro Naba is proclaimed sovereign, the disturbances of the interregnum come to an end. Mossi history records but a single case where the decision

643 of the electoral college was not accepted by the populace and dis-
669 turbances occurred in spite of the proclamation of the king-elect. This was when Naba Sagha, the son of Naba Kom, was chosen. The people would have liked to see Kaoko, son of Naba Zombéré, nominated. Dissatisfied because the sovereign of their choice had not reached the throne, they would not acknowledge the man chosen by the college. The new monarch managed to take over the throne only after waging a bloody battle at the head of his followers against his unlucky rival.

645 The province chiefs who are ministers are nominated by the
635 Moro Naba, who selects the man most deserving of the succession among the closest relatives of the chief to be replaced. Province chiefs enjoy considerable power in the administration of their provinces, they are surrounded with a large court, but they stand under the direct control of the Moro Naba.

635 It must be added that aside from the five provinces lying under the direct rule of the Moro Naba of Ouagadougou, there were four others (Boussouma and Béloussa to the northeast, Yako to the northwest, Tenkodogo to the southeast) that were mere vassal provinces and that actually enjoyed nearly complete autonomy prior to our occupation. Tenkodogo province was especially important.

The chiefs of these /latter/ provinces were true monarchs selected in the same fashion as the Moro Naba by the electoral college of their province. Once elected, they enjoyed all the prerogatives of sovereignty, nominating the canton chiefs and administering their provinces as they saw fit.

Their power was as absolute in their own sphere as that of the Moro Naba over the whole of his subject provinces, but they ac-
[631] knowledged his sovereignty and offered him a gift as a token of their vassalage at the time when their powers were handed over to them.

/576/ Within the subject provinces, the canton chiefs were
634 nominated by the Moro Naba on the basis of an introduction by the
624 province chief. They were always selected among the closest relatives of the chief they were to replace, always descendants of Oubry, the first Moro Naba. They stood under the direct orders of the province chief, whom they had to use as an intermediary to communicate with the Moro Naba. It was their task to proceed with

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TRADITIONAL AND MODERN PATTERNS OF SUCCESSION TO POLITICAL OFFICE AMONG THE MOSSI OF THE VOLTAIC REPUBLIC*

ELLIOTT P. SKINNER

643 A characteristic of kingship shared by early European monarchies and many African societies has been the hazardous interregnum. In Europe this period was a time of shifting loyalties, intrigues, and bargained alliances; and the people's cry "the king is dead long live the king" was uttered without pause as if to abolish a hiatus that made them uneasy. The European monarchy later developed a strength and stability which enabled a king to pass on succession quietly to his heir. In African societies where the political power of the court was not strong, and the line of succession was not clearly delineated, the attempt was made to avoid a hazardous interregnum by keeping the people ritually ignorant of the death of a king. Only when the electors were ready to choose his successor were the people told of their monarch's demise. Even then, there was some real or ritual violence as the [662 669] numerous candidates vied for the vacant office.[1] Africans have themselves interpreted these stormy interregnums as being valuable for their societies. According to Oberg, in the Ankole Kingdom of Uganda, "The Bahima demanded that the strongest of the king's sons should be their leader and that the test should be one of war. The brothers must fight among themselves until one of them alone remained alive in Ankole Kingdom of Uganda to claim the drum and the mugabeship."[2] Other African populations believed that violent interregnums served to convince the people that a ruler was necessary. The Mossi of the Western Sudan was one of those societies which had a difficult interregnum. In this paper I shall try to show that this pattern coinciding [121] as it did, with a flexibility of succession to power among the ruling group, enabled this population to elect capable rulers before European conquest, helped them to insure the continuity of the ruling dynasty under European domination, and is now serving them in good stead during a period of transition to effective independence

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chief. If he was not qualified then one of his younger brothers, or 631
one of father's brothers or uncles was chosen. Yet, the fiction of 613
equal access to the *nam* was important to the Mossi because it enabled them to adhere to their most important political axiom which was that "The only man who should rule is one who can keep the country." Regencies were avoided, and persons with physical and character defects were barred. Moreover, this flexibility gave the electors a wide choice of candidates from which to choose the person best fitted for chieftainship at any given period. The Mossi have always believed that it is difficult to rule men and this is what they mean when they declare: "Nanamsè toumdè ya yida fa fa"—"The work of the chiefs is the most difficult of all."[3] For example, it does not seem like an accident that the first ruler, Moro Naba Wubri, was succeeded by four of his brothers in turn instead of by his sons. The Mossi had not completely conquered the territory, and the young sons were incapable of handling the complex political situation. The graves of each of the successors to Wubri in different parts of the country remain as markers to testify to the difficult task which the early rulers had in controlling their realm.

The Mossi believed, and still do believe, that it was only when con- [812]
flict developed after a ruler died, that the people realized how necessary and valuable a chief was. The death of a chief, especially of the Moro [764]
Naba, was kept a secret until the war minister arrived at the capital with his troops. Only then did the cry go up: "The fire has gone out!"; and as soon as it was heard, violence broke out throughout the [669]
land. Prisoners were released, thieves rifled the markets, and the *nakomces*, or nobles, rode about the countryside doing whatever they wished. This custom persisted as late as 1942. Reporting to his superior in Abijan about the events that transpired in Wagadougou when Moro Naba Kom died, the French commander wrote: "On Friday, March 13, 1942, young people, profiting from old custom, tried to steal things, but they were stopped and about one hundred were arrested."[4] Throughout all the chaos which attended the death of a 645
king, the war minister remained calm unless an attempt was actually 696
made to seize power. He never attempted to stop the public disorder or to catch thieves or murderers, because everyone believed that out of

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645
696 all the chaos would come a new appreciation for the task of the chief, and a cessation of the grumbling that the chiefs were greedy.

662
428 The Mossi interregnum also served another purpose. It gave the electors the opportunity to exhaust and redistribute much of the patri-
666 mony of the dead ruler, which was brought to them by his heirs who were trying to obtain the chieftainship through bribery. Sometimes, a candidate's ability to collect a great deal of goods with which to press his suit often revealed to the electors the strength of his following in the district or village, for had he been an unpopular man he would have had to use only his own resources.

666 The Mossi electors were always concerned with the health and
643 character of a potential chief, and turned down the most promising
175 candidates who were deficient in any of these qualities. For example, when Moro Naba Sanum died in 1890 without leaving a male heir, his younger brother, Bokary Koutou, was the strongest candidate for the *nam*. Yet he was passed over, at first, by the electors because of his reputation as a bandit and a rebel. We know from Captain Binger, a Frenchman who met Bokary in 1888, that this prince was indeed a bandit and a slave raider. But Binger, although deploring Bokary's conduct, exonerated him on the grounds that the Moro Naba had sent him into exile without any means of support. This was true, but the
[687] reason that Moro Naba Sanum did so was because Bokary had raised a rebellion against him as an attempt to obtain their father's position. Bokary was forbidden to appear in the capital; but when he heard that his brother Sanum was dead, he took a force of soldiers and hurried to Wagadougou fearing that an attempt would have been made to prevent his election. When he found that his fears were justified, he became
[669] desperate and secreted a force of Gurunsi warriors around the elector's meeting place, threatening to kill them if he was not named Moro Naba. They succumbed to his threat and he received the *nam*. During
643 the customary speech in which a new ruler chose his official name,
175 announced his program for the people and the country, or ridiculed his erstwhile competitors, Bokary Koutou said: "A hundred ghosts cannot frighten an elephant (Wobogo)," meaning that he was not afraid
648 of any of his enemies. He thereafter became known as Moro Naba
721 Wobogo, and he chose to live up to his boast when the French arrived
175 and asked him to sign a treaty of protection with them. He refused

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required mature rulers, or an uncle may have vanquished a nephew by 643
physical prowess or force of character.

The pretenders to the Mossi nam began to press their claims as soon as 643
propriety allowed. They presented gifts to the Ouidi Naba and to the other 645
ministers in an attempt to sway the issue. The Ouidi Naba finally called a secret council composed of the Gounga Naba, the Larhalle Naba, the Kamsaogho Naba, and the Tansoba, and recited to them the following formula: "The country does not have a chief, and it needs one. Among all the people who wish to be elected [*di nam,* "eat the nam"], it is for you to choose the most worthy."[14] To this the councillors responded: "Naba! You are our superior, and the right to make the choice rests upon you alone." Thus given a free hand, the Ouidi Naba chose the most capable candidate. However, before announcing his choice, he said to the Tansoba, "My heart is heavy because I fear that those persons whose hopes have not been fulfilled will resort to violence to get their way." The Tansoba responded, "That will be against tradition and justice. Do not fear. I am here with my army to see that your decision is respected." Having received the support of the Tansoba, the Ouidi Naba announced his choice to the other councillors. They said to him, "Naba! You have expressed our will, and that of all the people." It is not to be understood from these formulas that the other councillors had no voice in selecting the candidate. They did in fact advise the Ouidi Naba concerning the best candidate, but these formulas emphasized that it was the Ouidi Naba, as prime minister, who was responsible for the choice.

The Ouidi Naba's choice of a new Mogho Naba was kept secret until the successful candidate was summoned for investiture. This occurred on the second night of the late Mogho Naba's funeral ceremony. Toward nightfall, the Ouidi Naba secretly dispatched a messenger to summon the successful candidate. The need for secrecy was demonstrated in 1891, when 175
Boukary Koutou forced the committee to name him Mogho Naba. The cir- 643
cumstances were as follows: Mogho Naba Sanum died without male issue, 669
and all his brothers vied for the nam. One of them, Boukary Koutou, was 645
felt to be ineligible because he had been exiled for leading a civil war against Sanum, but like his brothers he hastened to Ouagadougou. Boukary feared that the electors would not look favorably upon his claim, and when he failed to ascertain their intentions he decided upon a *coup d'état.* He gathered an army composed of his supporters and his Gurunsi slaves, and surrounded the compound in which the electors were gathered. One of the electors discovered the army during a break in the deliberations and reported his findings to the Ouidi Naba. The chief minister and his aides

knew that Boukary Koutou was the only person capable of such a conspiracy. Fearing for their lives if they did not nominate him, they immediately sent a messenger to summon him as the successful candidate.[15] Under normal circumstances, however, there was no coercion of the ministers and the nominee was quietly brought to the councillors.

Wearing a pair of trousers and a sheepskin mantle and carrying a spear in each hand, the nominee entered the courtyard of the compound through the women's door.[16] He was preceded by the Samande Nabila, who sprinkled the earth with water. He came up to the councillors and saluted them, and the Ouidi Naba addressed him as follows: "Before your father [brother] died, did he designate you to be his successor?" The nominee replied, "No, Sire! My father has left you free to choose whom you wish, be he a blind man or a leper!" This question was asked three times, and the nominee responded three times. The Ouidi Naba then made the following declaration: "I am giving you the nam of your father and grandfathers. You must try to conduct yourself as they did when they had the nam." The Ouidi Naba then listed the names of the territories over which the ruler had absolute power and authority. The new monarch raised his two spears in the air, made a speech in which he announced three guiding principles by which he vowed to reign, and "named a name," that is, suggested the title by which he wished to be known. For example, Mogho Naba Sagha II (1942–57) said in his inaugural speech: "Without rain, there is no life. I will be like rain for the country." He then became known as Mogho Naba Sagha ("Rain"), a rather fitting title for a ruler in a country with uncertain rainfall. The present Mogho Naba stressed in his inaugural speech (in 1957) that he was "solid as a rock." His official title is now Mogho Naba Kougri ("Rock").[17]

The taking of a new name was only the first step in the elaborate process through which a man became Mogho Naba. Next, the Ouidi Naba took the two spears from the new monarch and removed his sheepskin mantle. Then he gave him his new white clothes, which included a pair of trousers, a bonnet, and a sleeveless robe, all made for him by the people of the Sculougou ward in the capital. Next, he was given a cushion made by the people of Baramimi. The Baloum Naba then took the closely guarded namtibo, the sacred amulets of the dynasty, and used them in the preparation of a potion of millet beer mixed with millet-flour water, part of which was poured as a libation to the earth goddess, Tenga.[18] The ruler and the assembled ministers all partook of the potion in a kind of communion. The ministers then shook the ruler's hand, an act thereafter forbidden, and departed for their own compounds. The newly elected

643 763 [645] [793] the Tansoba, the members of the royal sub-lineage, and the district chiefs. The Tengsoba of the Ouagadougou area was also notified. Because he was a descendant of the aboriginal Ninisi population that "owned" the land, he supervised the burial ceremony.

[701] The Mogho Naba's death was kept secret, and no mourning was allowed until the Crown Prince had arrived at the capital and the Tansoba had recruited an army to protect the realm against would-be usurpers of power. Then the cry was raised in the palace, to reverberate throughout the land, 643 that "the fire had gone out." Once the ruler's death had been announced, 764 the country was plunged into an interregnum, which was characterized by 669 ritual and often by actual anarchy. The people in the towns immediately looted the markets and stole their neighbors' goods; the prisoners and captives in stocks were released by their guards; the nakomce in all the territories, districts, and villages subjected the local populations to robbery and pillage; and the members of the monarch's babissi began their intrigues for power. The traditional sanction for this anarchy was that only when people suffer during the breakdown of political control do they really appreciate the sovereign's role. The Mossi declare (with some truth) that no one was safe during the interregnum. However, as we shall see, the ruler was symbolically kept alive, and the country was never without effective political leadership.

766 644 643 When the Tengsoba arrived at the palace, he was joined by five hereditary funeral chiefs: the Pazany'tengsoba, the Tampouy Naba, the Benghin Naba, the Toghin Naba, and the Tanghin Naba. In the ceremony that followed, he gave permission for the royal grave to be dug. Meanwhile, the ruler's body was prepared for burial in the traditional manner by his female relatives and laid in state in the zongo. These women kept vigil over the body, shouting and weeping. Only the five ministers of the realm and the male members of the ruler's babissi were allowed to pay homage to the corpse within the zongo. All other mourners had to pay their respects to the monarch's eldest daughter, who, as Napoko, was dressed in the dead sovereign's clothes and sat in his place before the zongo. As her father's symbolic representative, she held daily court and received greetings and homage from all visitors until a new ruler was chosen. The drummer who sat by her side declared to all visitors, "You say that the Mogho Naba is dead! Well, who is that sitting there? Tell me! Is that not the Mogho Naba?"

766 643 [782] The ruler was buried the day after he died, at the end of an elaborate ceremony. Libations were poured out to the ancient rulers, and sacrifices made to them. All the important officials and members of the royal mini-

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634 The Kombere Naba, as the person who had "eaten the nam" of the district, was infused with some of the power and authority of the Mogho Naba and had the right to use force to maintain this power and authority. He was [576] respected, and people uncovered their heads and removed their slippers in his presence. Unlike the Mogho Naba, the Kombere Naba was permitted to eat with his peers. But whenever he drank the musicians made a roar-like sound with their instruments, and when he sneezed his attendants clapped. These rituals were rigidly adhered to because the Kombere Naba was readily accessible to the populace and might easily have lost their respect if he behaved in an undignified manner. He emphasized his social distance from them by never visiting the market place, and he did not go anywhere without a large entourage.

The Kombere Naba performed ceremonies and duties that were similar to but simpler than those of the Mogho Naba, and he was surrounded by officers bearing the same titles as those in the capital. But, as will be shown later, these officials had fewer and sometimes different duties than the courtiers at Ouagadougou. Some district chiefs had as many pages and wives as the Mogho Naba, but this was as much a result of their own desires as of their popularity with the local people. The death and funeral rites of a [766] district chief were not as elaborate as those of a Mogho Naba. They included the circumambulation of the chief's compound by the principal heir and [788] heiress, the symbolic reign of the Napoko, and the banishment of the Kourita.[41]

634 Every district chief, whether a Mogho Naba's vassal or a Dim's subordi-
778 nate, was empowered to bestow the nam on his own subordinates. These [622] might be other district chiefs; but most often they were village chiefs. The circumstances under which a Kombere Naba received the authority to grant the nam to another Kombere Naba were usually complex and sprang from rebellions and dynastic changes. Once granted, this authority was seldom revoked, but the district chief had to report to his immediate superior, a Mogho Naba or Dim, whenever he wished to confer the nam upon another district chief.

634 In some cases the Mogho Naba invested a district chief himself, and
175 afterward placed him under the control of a neighboring district chief. For
669 example, the chiefs of two districts, Vooko and Nobila, were always installed
778 by the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou, but were supervised by the Nobere district chief. This practice dates back to the civil war involving Mogho Naba Sagha I (ca. 1787–1803), in which chiefs of Vooko and Nobere sided with the loser. The Mogho Naba executed the local rebels and placed one of his sons in Nobere. He then divided Vooko into two districts, placing a younger son in the one he called Nobila (little Nobere) and subjecting him

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634 175 669 778

to the control of his brother at Nobere. The other district, still called Vooko but now half its former size, was given to a descendant of its deposed ruler. The relationship between these two rulers and the Nobere Naba was that of vassals and lord. They did not stand up in the presence of the Nobere Naba, but knelt or sat on the ground and uncovered their heads in respect to him. The Nobere Naba traditionally appointed the village chiefs in the Vooko and Nobila districts; however, he sometimes granted that right to the two district chiefs. Furthermore, the traditional provincial administrator could not transmit any orders to those two district chiefs without first notifying the Nobere Naba. In their everyday affairs the two chiefs were autonomous, but the Nobere Naba could challenge and countermand all their actions. Actually, he did seem to exercise greater control over Vooko than over Nobila. One may even say that the relationship between the Nobere district chief and the Vooko chief was like that between the Mogho Naba and his district chiefs, and that the relationship between the Nobere Naba and the Nobila Naba was comparable to the one between the Mogho Naba and the Dimdamba. We have seen that the Dimdamba claimed equality with the Mogho Naba because of their alleged descent from a putative common ancestor. The Nobere Naba was actually more closely related to the Nobila Naba than to the Vooko Naba, and his behavior toward them reflected this fact. In both cases, the relationships involved were determined by the concept of joint possession of the nam by the ruling family.

634 778 [622] [631]

A district chief was not required to notify his superior when he wished to confer the nam upon a village chief. In this choice he was completely autonomous and subject only to tradition. The fact is that on the district and village levels, traditions were more frequently modified in the face of practical political and socio-economic considerations. This occurred primarily because the district chief had closer relations with persons who possessed goods and services or who controlled them directly than did the chiefs on higher levels. Secondly, he was often under great temptation to allow presents or bribes to affect his choice of subordinate chiefs.

634 778 622 [662]

When a Tenga Naba died, the district chief permitted control of the village to revert to its Tengsoba. If there was none, the village was "given" to the eldest man among the aboriginal Ninisi lineages or to the eldest member of the ruling lineage segment. However, none of these persons was considered anything but a trustee of the village, and even when the trustee was a potential candidate for the nam, the Mossi did not feel that this man had any advantage over his competitors. Whoever held control of the village was held responsible for its affairs by the district administrator until the new chief was elected.

634 622 [793]

Competition for chieftainship on this level was very keen because of the

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634 against the Mogho Naba. I say "allegedly" because it was never quite clear
687 whether the district chief was at fault or whether the Mogho Naba wanted to replace him for dynastic reasons. For example, Tanga, a district chief, was accused by Mogho Naba Sanum (1850-90) of withholding tribute and of maladministration. The Ouidi Naba who administered Tanga's district advised him to prove his innocence by making a sacrifice on Naba Oubri's tomb, and then go to Ouagadougou and ask the Mogho Naba's forgiveness.
634 Tanga agreed to do so. But it appears that the Mogho Naba, who wished
687 to place his own father's brother in Tanga's place, did not want a reconcili-
662 ation. He waged war on Tanga, and seized his relatives, retainers, and cattle. Tanga tried to regain his losses by appealing to his provincial minister, but the minister told him that the Mogho Naba had distributed the livestock and had sold the people to Hausa traders. Moreover, he informed Tanga that he could not help him because the Mogho Naba could do as he
[669] pleased. Tanga thereupon decided to take matters into his own hands. He successfully attacked the Mogho Naba's villages, and was still a rebel when the French arrived shortly afterward.[26]

634 Tanga's action was unusual, for district chiefs seldom risked rebelling
687 against the Mogho Naba when accused of maladministration. In 1895, for example, Koabga, chief of Doulougou district in the province of the Gounga
669 Naba, took poison rather than wage war when Mogho Naba Wobogo accused him of misgovernment. Usually, a district chief who disobeyed an order of the Mogho Naba was summoned to the capital to answer the charge of lese majesty. If he was found guilty, the ruler knocked the bonnet off his head, thus deposing him, and had him strangled. The Mossi seldom
[762] spilled royal blood. A district chief who refused to go to Ouagadougou could either kill himself (traditionally by taking arsenic) or resort to civil war.[27] If he chose suicide, he was given an honorable burial as though he had died naturally. If the Mogho Naba sent down an army, however, the offending chief was invariably killed. His compound was burned, his slaves and cattle were seized, and his allies and immediate relatives were compelled to flee. The strength of this tradition is borne out by Tanga's case. He had successfully resisted the attempts of two Mogho Nanamse to bring him to heel, and was still at large when the French conquered the country.
[648] But Ouidi Naba Koabga, who had deserted his sovereign and selected Kouka Koutou as Mogho Naba under French orders, had not forgiven Tanga. When the French asked him what additional steps they should take to pacify the country, he asked them to capture Tanga. The unfortunate district chief was captured, placed on an unsaddled colt, and taken to Ouagadougou, where he was ignominiously executed.[28]

be related to her was tried and executed. In some cases, he was put to death without a trial. Adultery with a royal wife was considered so reprehensible that both adulterers were publicly beaten to death. Their bodies were denied burial and were thrown into the bush to be eaten by vultures. The Dapore Naba and the Baglere Naba seized and retained the man's property.

Men who committed treason against the Mogho Naba were usually killed before they could be tried. Chiefs and nobles who were suspected of treason and who consented to come to Ouagadougou for trial were deposed and executed if found guilty. Those who were found innocent were released and sent back to their chiefly duties. The sole exception on record to this general rule was the case of Naba Yemde, a Dim of Boulsa province. He had fought and defeated the forces of Mogho Naba Sanum, and when the Mogho Naba sent a larger army and routed him, he was treacherously delivered to the monarch by another Dim. Sanum found Yemde innocent of treason, but had him executed because he had violated another rule: as the descendant of a Kourita, he had come face to face with the Mogho Naba, thus jeopardizing the monarch's life. This exception is always cited by the Mossi when the inevitability of execution for treason is brought up. Actually, a person accused of treason rarely went to court. He either took poison or died in battle against the royal forces. As a posthumous punishment, his compound was burned, his property seized, and his relatives and servants sold into slavery outside the country. Thus, the supreme penalty was not merely the death of a traitor but the permanent banishment of his entire lineage.

WARFARE

628 642 643 175 [648] Yatenga Naba (and other rulers) or treading on his territory should not be overlooked. The suggestion that force was not the only consideration was lent force by later events. The French conquest later reduced the rulers of both Ouagadougou and Yatenga to impotence and obviated war between them, yet they did not meet until 1946—some fifty years after the conquest. They met then only because they had to represent their subjects at a meeting to plan the restoration of the Upper Volta and reunite all the descendants of Oubri and Ouedraogo into one territory.

Relative strength obviously played an important part in determining whether one Mossi kingdom interfered in the internal affairs of another. For example, when a Tenkodogo ruler asked a Mogho Naba to help him suppress Busansi subjects who had rebelled, the Mogho Naba readily complied.[14] But when a fratricidal struggle over the nam broke out in Tenkodogo in 1894, the Mogho Naba decided not to intervene even though he was asked to do so.[15]

628 643 669 175 The central governments of the various kingdoms found it necessary to wage war against their subordinate territories at regular intervals. In the Ouagadougou kingdom, most of these wars seem to have been administrative actions against a prince or district chief who had contravened an order from the Mogho Naba or refused to pay tribute. The Dimdamba were the Mogho Naba's most rebellious subordinates, and it was against them that he fought most of his wars. Characteristic of these wars was the series between Naba Ligidi (1866–90), Dim of Boussouma province, and Mogho Naba Sanum.[16] Ligidi had seized and turned over to the Mogho Naba the recalcitrant Naba Yemde, then Dim of Boulsa, and confiscated the rebel's property. Later on, when the Mogho Naba had made peace with Yemde's son, Naba Kiba, he asked Ligidi to surrender the seized property. Ligidi refused to do so, and the angry Mogho Naba sent the royal army into his territory. The army sacked and burned several villages and retreated. Ligidi's forces skirmished with the rear guard but abandoned pursuit near the Ouagadougou border.

Ligidi took his revenge by helping a district chief who had rebelled against Naba Kiba. While he was thus engaged, the royal army again attacked and defeated him. Four days later, it reinvaded Boussouma, engaged Ligidi's forces at a place called Goudri, and won a brilliant victory. Despite Ligidi's furious counter-attacks, the army captured his capital, Ouayougya. The ruler's army finally returned to Ouagadougou, satisfied that Ligidi was thoroughly beaten. But the Mogho Naba had underestimated Ligidi's tenacity. For the next ten years, this Dim waged war against his fellow Dimdamba. The Mogho Naba finally grew tired of his depreda-

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tions and launched another expedition against Ouayougya. The expedition failed because of a lack of water, and the army was forced to return to Ouagadougou. The war would have continued had not both Mogho Naba Sanum and Ligidi died in 1890. 628 669 175 643

It appears that the Mogho Naba tolerated fighting among his immediate subordinates, and seldom intervened in local wars unless one of the combatants openly flouted his authority. For example, when the autonomous principality of Riziam attempted to wrest control of Salmetenga district from Boussouma province, Mogho Naba Doulougou did not intervene. He knew that Salmetenga owed allegiance to Boussouma, but was perfectly willing to allow its ruler to transfer allegiance to Riziam. When Boussouma was on the brink of defeat, the Salmetenga Naba fled to Ouagadougou to seek asylum. The Mogho Naba sent him back to Naba Piga, the Boussouma Dim, with the request that he be allowed to live. Piga was so angry with the chief that he ignored the Mogho Naba's request and executed him. This incurred the wrath of Mogho Naba Doulougou, and he sent an army to attack Piga. Fortunately for this disobedient Dim, the Mogho Naba died and the attack was called off.[17]

The reaction of Mogho Naba Koutou to fighting among his subordinates was more typical. He did not interfere in a long series of battles between the principalities of Riziam and Mane which culminated in 1866 when the Riziam people seized, imprisoned, and executed several Mane merchants who had gone to buy salt in Timbuktu. Mane appealed to its brother province of Boussouma for aid, and Riziam appealed to a Fulani chieftain for reinforcements. Before a battle could ensue, however, the Boussouma Dim, Naba Siguiri, died after drinking some millet beer, and the fighting was called off. Naba Kom of Mane then went off alone with his army, defeated the Fulani, and killed their chief, Sekki. When Ligidi (the chief mentioned above) succeeded his father, Naba Siguiri, he elected to continue the war against Riziam with the help of the Mane army, but the battle was inconclusive. The stalemate did not satisfy the bellicose Ligidi, who attacked Riziam once more in 1871, burning villages and seizing property. The Riziam people finally rallied and halted him. They ambushed his soldiers when they tried to retreat, and harried them so thoroughly that Ligidi had to call off the war when slaughter and thirst decimated his ranks.[18] [648]

Similarly, Mogho Naba Sanum did not interfere when one of his own district chiefs, the Salogho Naba, was attacked and defeated by the ruler of Tema principality. Nor did he enter the fray when another of his district chiefs was attacked and defeated by the Boulsa Dim. The fighting in both 628 669 175 643 634

cases was over women. The Tema Dim successfully defended his principality against a Zittenga district chief who not only had the effrontery to demand the return of a wife who had fled into Tema but also invaded the principality when she failed to return.[19] The Boulsa Dim attacked and defeated the Salogho Naba when he refused to repatriate a man and woman convicted of adultery who had fled into his district. It is possible that in each case the Mogho Naba refused to become involved in a squabble over women, but it is more likely that he refrained from participating in a local war that did not threaten the security of the entire country.

Many Dimdamba made it a practice to help each other in wars against common enemies. In the middle of the nineteenth century, Naba Zende of Tema and Naba Totoabo of Yako joined in a war against Naba Sebogo of La when Sebogo refused to repatriate one of Totoabo's wives, who had fled into his territory. The two victorious allies burned villages in La and forced Sebogo to flee for his life. They searched for the woman, but she was never found. The successors of the three rulers remained embittered by this war and eventually renewed the fighting. On this occasion, Naba Tanga of Tema and Naba Sagha of Yako fought against Naba Kombase of La. But this time Yako and Tema were unable to defeat La and had to withdraw. There is no evidence that the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou took any part in these wars.[20]

The Mogho Naba appears to have taken a greater interest in wars between his Dimdamba and non-Mossi populations, and to have profited by them occasionally. When the followers of a Fulani chief named Karfo carried off some cattle belonging to the Boussouma people, the Boussouma Dim, Naba Siguiri, threatened war if the animals were not returned. Karfo not only refused to surrender the cattle but insulted Siguiri in his reply. Siguiri marched against the Fulani, killed Karfo, seized all the cattle he could find, and sent some of the "most beautiful animals" to Mogho Naba Koutou.[21]

Although the Mogho Naba tolerated wars among his Dimdamba, he apparently forbade the district chiefs under his direct command to fight among themselves. As we saw in Chapter IV, some such fighting did take place, but the Mogho Naba seems to have ignored it in most cases because of its relative unimportance. The Mossi, on the other hand, magnified this local fighting, which they called *tengkom* ("civil war"), and which consisted of mere skirmishes between villages or neighboring districts, with few casualties. In fact, the Gounga Naba once stopped a war between districts after only nineteen persons had died. But as a rule, districts seldom if ever fought among themselves. The actual combatants were villagers

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who fought the villagers of other districts over stray livestock, stolen goods, and runaway women, in that order of frequency.

The main reason for these inter-village wars was the lack of local mechanisms (aside from meetings of district chiefs) to deal with problems between villagers of different districts. If the district chiefs refused to meet, they could either refer the matter to the provincial level or allow the villages to resolve the problem among themselves. Many district chiefs preferred the latter course because it saved them from interference by the authorities in the capital. Besides, these problems were usually unimportant and did not pit one entire district against another. People of different districts were often bound to each other by familial and ritual ties, and did not like to fight against relatives. Only when the potential combatants were unrelated or all attempts at reconciliation failed would the people of a village (and occasionally of a district) band together, either secretly without their chiefs or under their chiefs, and go to war. In such cases, persons who had relatives in the enemy villages often remained at home.

The inhabitants of Mossi districts did band together eagerly under their chiefs to participate in slave-raiding expeditions into non-Mossi territories. This type of warfare seems to have been fairly common. Ruelle writes, "Before our [French] occupation, warfare was the chief preoccupation of the chiefs. Moreover, expeditions into Gurunsi country had as their goal pillage and the procurement of slaves for sale."[22] Similarly, Mangin states, "The Gurunsi and Busansi were frequently raided with the sole intent of obtaining slaves."[23] Binger gives the following description of a Mossi slave-catching expedition and the subsequent disposal of the slaves:

> During my second stay at Banema, Boukary [later Mogho Naba Wobogo], knowing my aversion to pillage and slavery and fearing to displease me, sent off two expeditions during the night without warning me—one to Nabouli, and the other towards the south to Baouer'a. By six o'clock in the morning of the following day, the returning horsemen were heralded by gunshots. Soon afterwards, a line of slaves of both sexes appeared, tied to each other by a cord slung around their necks. The expedition to Nabouli brought back seventeen slaves; that to Baouer'a brought only five, along with an ass laden with salt and a little cotton. As soon as these unfortunate people arrived, they were given water to drink, and mallets were used to remove the rings and copper bracelets which they wore on their arms and legs. Then they were classified into three categories:
>
> 1. The men formed a lot destined for immediate sale for fear that they should run away. They were led forthwith to Sakhaboutenga, to be exchanged against sorghum for the horses, millet for the personnel, and gunpowder.
> 2. A second lot, composed of women, was kept as a reserve to trade for horses.

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posted to alert the troops in case the enemy should attempt an attack at dawn. If the war was waged against foreigners, individual soldiers were allowed to keep a slave or a cow out of the booty; the remainder was divided between the district chiefs and the central government. In victorious civil wars against the enemies of the Mogho Naba, however, the entire booty was sent to the capital.

When the Mossi had to defend their own territory, their most common tactic was to evacuate the villages. This was the technique most often employed against invading French forces.[29] Other defenses included palisaded villages, barricades of fallen trees, trenches, and hedges, some with poisoned foot traps. Mangin reports that the Boulsa were defeated in their war with Fada-N'Gourma not only because their enemies fought valiantly, but also because they "were favored by very propitious terrain covered with thorny scrub, behind which the besieged men took cover to shoot on the Mossi."[30] Mangin does not say whether the scrub was poisoned, but his data indicate that this type of defense was common in the area. The Mossi say that the use of poisoned prickly plants (*silenage*) against invading forces dates back to the early conquest of the territory. Tradition recounts that Naba Oubri was unable to conquer Ouagadougou until his Ninisi wife advised him to shoe his soldiers against the poisoned foot traps of the aborigines.

Mossi wars or raids were usually limited to the dry season and stopped at the beginning of the planting season. Commenting on the war between Boulsa and Fada-N'Gourma, Mangin tells us: "This was during the dry season. Thirst completed what the courage of the Gyekango people had begun, and many Mossi perished."[31] Tradition recounts that it took Mogho Naba Waraga five successive years of attack before he defeated Ramzi, the rebellious chief of Riziam principality. He finally defeated him when his army attacked the province before its people had been able to harvest their crops and retire into an impregnable fortress for the dry season. Judging by the reports of European visitors, this type of dry-season warfare continued as late as the 1890's. For example, Crozat could not understand why the Mogho Naba did not send an army to defeat the chief of Lalle district, who had imprudently raided a village near Ouagadougou, and he concluded that the ruler did not have an army. The fact is, however, that Crozat was in Ouagadougou between September 9 and September 30, a period when the potential soldiers of the Mogho Naba had not yet harvested their crops. Had Crozat remained in Mossi country for three or four months longer, he would have seen the ruler's army in action; for, as a matter of fact, the Lalle Naba's attack on Mogho Naba Wobogo was but the latest episode in a prolonged struggle between the two rulers.

726 For several years Mogho Naba Sanum had tried unsuccessfully to corner
628 and defeat the rebellious Lalle Naba. Then one dry season the Mogho Naba
669 called his Tansoba and said to him:

> "I want you to assemble immediately an army composed only of courageous men, to go to Lalle and bring me, alive, Tanga [also called Wobogo], chief of that district." Several thousand men, eager for glory, were gathered, and the army advanced against Lalle. It managed to burn Siguele, Tanga's residence, but did not capture the chief, who had fled to Koudougou. The royal army would have pursued him, but because the rainy season was imminent, and the men were needed to work in the fields, the army returned to Ouagadougou with a considerable amount of booty. The king received his war minister very kindly, because he foresaw the impending defeat of his obstinate enemy. The Mogho Naba then said to his warriors, "Go and cultivate your fields, but remember that as soon as the harvest has been stored, you have to capture Tanga. Regardless of the cost, I must have him, even if all of you must die."[32]

Mogho Naba Sanum died before he could capture Tanga, and the task fell to his successor, Mogho Naba Wobogo, who fared no better. One dry season, the royal army chased the rebel into Gurunsi territory but failed to catch him. They would have continued the chase, but "it was during the rainy season, and the royal army was disbanded."[33]

[648] Mogho Naba Wobogo never succeeded in capturing Tanga, because the French came in and conquered the Mossi. Nevertheless, the rebel did not go unpunished. After the French had completed their conquest they asked the Ouidi Naba what steps should be taken to ensure peace. He told them to capture and kill the Lalle Naba. This unfortunate chief was hunted down, captured, placed on an unsaddled colt, and brought to Ouagadougou, where he was publicly humiliated and then executed.

701 The episode with Tanga and the limiting of warfare to the dry season
726 indicate that the Mogho Naba did not have the resources to maintain a standing army, and, therefore, had difficulty exerting his authority by the use of force. There is no doubt that the Mogho Nanamse were able to gather very large armies at specific times against both internal and external enemies, but when the planting period came the soldiers had to attend to their crops. This lack of resources also limited the power and authority of Mogho Nanamse over their autonomous subordinates. As a result, the Mossi kingdoms remained segmentary in nature, and became highly organized only at certain periods of their history.[34] The availability of military resources thus had a significant effect on the nature of the Mossi governmental and political system.

because of this delinquency, the Mogho Naba might hesitate to come to the aid of any of his vassals if a general war broke out. It is true that the Mogho Naba did not aid the Yatenga ruler when the French arrived. But whether this was because of his failure to pay taxes, or because the French conquest of the Yatenga coincided with a civil war there, we shall probably never know. We do know that many of the Mogho Naba's vassals came to his aid when the French finally arrived at Ouagadougou. It is my opinion that the gifts exchanged between Yatenga and Ouagadougou were not "tributary," but were more in the nature of tokens of friendship between two peers.

The Mogho Naba and his provincial ministers also received revenue as a function of their judicial roles. The nature and disposition of the fines levied against legal offenders were discussed in Chapter V. The Mogho Naba's fees came in the form of the traditional gifts the litigants gave him even before their cases were tried. These gifts were never regarded as bribes, for this would have contradicted the Mossi axiom that "the truth is at Ouagadougou."

The Mogho Naba inherited all the property of the Kamsaogho Naba, and claimed all the property of district chiefs who died without close relatives. He also received inheritance taxes (fado) from the estates of deceased district chiefs. In collecting the fado, the Mogho Naba first retained the horse on which the messenger came to announce the chief's death. He reciprocated by sending envoys with cowries and animals to be offered to their common ancestors at the chief's funeral. After the funeral, the envoys claimed the dead chief's quiver of arrows to take to Ouagadougou for deposit with those of other dead chiefs. Then they demanded the fado, and jestingly told the heirs that the Mogho Naba would be satisfied with nothing less than "a thousand of everything" (*tusri bumbu fa*) the deceased had possessed: wives, slaves, horses, cows, goats, chickens, articles of clothing, and so on. The heirs pleaded poverty and jokingly gave the envoys a few old and sickly animals, old chickens, tattered pieces of clothing, etc. Eventually, they handed out the fado, which usually consisted of livestock, clothing, food, weapons, jewelry, cowries, and even slaves. Lastly, they gave the envoys the chief's ceremonial horse and presents for themselves.

The Mogho Naba and his ministers collected a considerable amount of revenue from the traders who visited Ouagadougou and the larger market towns and village markets throughout the kingdom.[6] The Mossi (especially the assimilated Yarse) were good traders, and they benefited from their country's strategic location between the Sahara and the forest regions. According to Barth, some six caravan routes crossed the country, linking

[P.126]

VIII

RELIGION AND GOVERNMENT

796
642 RELIGION AND RITUAL played an important role in supporting and preserv-
[769] ing the Mossi political system. Religio-political ceremonies were centered
[776] around the ancestors (Keemse) and the earth deities (Tengkouga); the otiose high god (Ouennam or Naba Zid Ouende) had a very minor role.

769 The political importance of ancestor veneration lay in the fact that every
642 Mossi chief claimed Nyennega of Dagomba and her descendants, Ouedra-
778 ogo and Oubri, as his ancestors. Furthermore, possession of the amulets of Rialle, Nyennega's husband and Ouedraogo's father, legitimized possession
[613] of the nam. In order to rule, a Moaga had either to be a member of a royal lineage still in possession of the nam or to have received the nam from such
669 a lineage. No Moaga ever tried to usurp the nam of a kingdom or princi-
778 pality without trying to steal the royal amulets at the same time; nor, if his
642 rebellion was successful, did he ever fail to claim that he had stolen the amulets or had received them as a gift. Thus Yadega, who rebelled against
769 his father's brother, Mogho Naba Koudoumie, and founded the Yatenga kingdom, declared that he had obtained Rialle's amulets. He claimed that they had been given to him by his sister, Pabre, who had stolen them from Ouagadougou and had thus deprived that kingdom of any legitimate sanctions for power. Thus, when the Yatenga people declare that they are equal to Ouagadougou, they add that the only "amulets" that still legitimize the nam of the Ouagadougou dynasty are the droppings left behind by Pabre's horse as she fled northward.

769 Similarly, all the princes who founded principalities and proclaimed
642 their independence of Ouagadougou defended their action on the grounds
643 that they, being as close to the main line of descent as the Mogho Naba, were also entitled to rule. The younger sons of deceased Mogho Nanamse
[631] who were banished from the capital as Kouritadamba and who subse-
[634] quently became provincial Dimdamba also stressed their relationship to the royal ancestors. Even those district chiefs whose ancestors had prob-

*175 *648 None of these men reached Ouagadougou, however, and no treaties were signed.[34]

The events that eventually led to the fall of the Mossi had already occurred two years earlier in the Sudan, even before the last group of European agents tried to reach Mossi country. In 1893, the French defeated Ahmadou, the sultan of the Toucouleur, and captured Bandiagara, just *175 north of Mossi country. Thus, when civil war broke out in Yatenga be- *648 tween Naba Baongo and a rebel noble, Bagare, the French were near enough to take advantage of the situation. Baongo journeyed to Bandi- •669 agara and sought the aid of France against his enemy. The French commander, Destenave, desiring to place the country under French protection and not wishing to become involved in local dynastic rivalries, tried to reconcile all the dissident elements. The Yatenga ruler rejected this offer and launched an attack against Bagare, but was killed during the ensuing battle. Bagare then became Yatenga Naba. Soon afterward, he became embroiled in a civil war with rival princes of the royal house and sought help from Destenave, who, according to Tauxier, "was awaiting an opportunity such as this to take a decisive action, which, starting with Yatenga, would have annexed all Mossi areas to our other Sudanese possessions."[35] In May 1895, the French troops accompanied Bagare to Yatenga, defeated the rebels, reinstalled him in the sacred town of Gourcy, and placed his *175 realm under the protection of France. While still in Yatenga, Destenave allegedly sent a message to the ruler of Ouagadougou asking him to sign *648 a treaty with France. Mogho Naba Wobogo reportedly replied:

> I had the oracles consulted a long time ago, and they all answered that if I should see a white man, I would be a dead man. I know that the whites want me to die in order to take my country. And besides, you (my friend) pretend that they are coming to help me organize my country. But I find my country very good as it is. I have absolutely no need of them; I know what is good for me, and what I need. Also, you should consider yourself fortunate that I am not having your head cut off. Away with you, then, and, above all, do not return.[36]

Destenave ignored this reply and pushed southward to the Ouagadougou territories. His small force met with such resistance at Yako that he retreated to his base at Bandiagara. Shortly afterward he returned to Paris and appealed to Colonial Minister Delcassé to send a strong military force to occupy Say (on the Niger River), Mossi country, and the surrounding area, and subject them to a military administration. Before Destenave could return, however, the commander of the Sudan, Lt.-Col. Trentinian, ordered Lt. Voulet to prepare the way for the occupation of Mossi country.[37]

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With his staff, African infantry, cavalry, and bearers, Voulet left Bandiagara in July 1896 to conquer the Mossi and Gurunsi territories. As the column entered Yatenga it was hailed by Bagare, who had again been chased from his capital by rebel forces. Voulet allowed him to join the invading force, and together they proceeded to Gourcy.[38] According to French sources, the Mossi army offered only token resistance, and the people deserted their villages as the column advanced.[39] In contrast, local tradition states that the Mossi fought valiantly, and that heroes entrenched themselves along the way to die at their posts. However, the French eventually routed the defenders and reinstalled Bagare at Gourcy. Voulet then proceeded to Yako, and the population fled. After capturing this town, Voulet proceeded to Ouagadougou.

175* 648* [669]

The events leading to the capture of the Mossi capital are not clear, because the official sources and the information culled from the memories of witnesses differ a great deal. Noll reports that Voulet sent an emissary to Mogho Naba Wobogo demanding the surrender of the town, and that the emissary was whipped for bringing bad news to the ruler and sent back to Voulet with a rejection of his demand. In the words of Noll, "That insult was immediately punished, and that same evening the French flag flew above the walls of Ouagadougou."[40]

One Mossi version, as related by Dim Delobson, is that a man named Seddo met Voulet's column and, after acting as its guide until nightfall, ran off and notified Mogho Naba Wobogo that the column would arrive at Ouagadougou the following day. The ruler's ministers then held a conference. Some of them counseled him to await the French and show them the flags and the treaty of protection they had received from the British. Others feared that if the Mogho Naba waited for the French, they might seize him, maltreat him, humiliate him before all the people, and probably kill him. They advised him to leave the country. Wobogo decided to be prudent and fled the capital.[41]

According to another tradition, a Moslem from Bere district who had been to Mecca and who had encountered Europeans told Wobogo that it would be folly for the Mossi to try to fight the gun-bearing invaders, and that he should either surrender or flee. The Tansoba who heard this statement became so angry that he wanted to kill the speaker. He declared that no man could enter Mossi country without the ruler's permission, and he swore to die before this happened. However, the other councillors persuaded Wobogo to leave the capital.

[645]

Dim Delobson states that Voulet arrived at Ouagadougou with his column in September 1896, and sent a former Gurunsi slave of the Mossi with

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*175 Voulet left Ouagadougou in February to establish French control
648 among the Gurunsi, leaving a military commander, Captain Scal, and a Resident Officer at Ouagadougou. But he acted without taking into account the resourcefulness of Wobogo (now once more Boukary Koutou), who
[645] had gained the allegiance of chiefs in the Manga area. The Gounga Naba,
[634] who was provincial minister for that region, tried to gain the support of the Djiba and Rissouma districts for Mogho Naba Sighiri. He failed, and or-
[669] dered the troops of Garanse, Nobere, Toise, and Yake districts to attack Boukary Koutou's supporters. In the ensuing battle the Gounga Naba's forces lost nine men, the rebels ten. The Gounga Naba considered these losses too high and called off the fighting.[46]

*175 Meanwhile, Boukary Koutou had sent an appeal to Steward, the com-
*648 mander of a British force that was then on its march of conquest through Gambaga and that had designs on Ouagadougou, "for protection in virtue
643 of the treaty concluded with Mr. Ferguson in 1894." Wishing to avoid conflict with the British, Voulet hastened to Tenkodogo in February 1897 to meet Steward, and the two men established boundaries between the French and British spheres of influence. Boukary Koutou was thus left to fend for himself.[47] Undaunted, he crossed the Gold Coast frontier once more and proceeded toward Ouagadougou. Scal heard about his activities and decided to launch an attack against him. He took Boukary Koutou by surprise in June 1897, and forced him to flee. Boukary passed through Bere district and arrived in the Gold Coast, where he was granted refuge by the British. About a year later, he convinced a Colonel Northcott that he had been unjustly deposed by the French, and that under the treaty of 1894 the British were his protectors and were obliged to restore him to his throne. In May 1898, a British force under Northcott and with Boukary Koutou in tow arrived at Kombissiri, some twenty-five miles from Ouagadougou, but here they were met by French emissaries who brought with them copies of the treaty of protection signed by Sighiri in January 1897. The British troops retreated, taking the dejected ruler with them into permanent exile.[48] Boukary reportedly settled at Zangoiri, a few miles from Gambaga.[49] He was forbidden to enter Gambaga because of the tradition that if he ever saw the Gambaga ruler, both of them would die. Boukary never returned to Mossi country. He died and was buried in the Gold Coast in 1904, but his funeral was held at Ouagadougou.[50]

Boukary Koutou is seen in retrospect as a tragic figure, whose main fault seems to have been that he ruled at the most difficult time in his country's history. Judging by his treatment of Binger, he appears to have
[173] been a clever politician, but his resources were of no avail against the

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175* 643 648* 578

It will be well if the Mogho Naba understands that he owns but the vestige of a past whose hour has irrevocably tolled, and that his message to the President of the Council [de Gaulle] commits no one in the Upper Volta but himself, a mere citizen like the others.

I deplore the discrimination which the message of the Mogho Naba implicitly contains. I should like to say to the Mogho Naba that in the Upper Volta there are no Mossi, Fulani, or Bobo people, but only Black people struggling for their liberty. No Mossi or any other Voltaic would agree to the Mogho Naba's expression of fidelity to France in his name. If this must be done, then the Territorial Assembly and the Government Council alone are qualified to do so.[42]

Despite these attacks and numerous suggestions in the press that the Mogho Naba and the Mossi chiefs were developing a "Touré complex" (i.e., the fear of suffering the same fate as the Fulani chiefs of Fouta Djallon, who had been deposed by Sékou Touré, Vice-President of the Guinea Government Council), the Mossi ruler actively supported acceptance of the constitution of the Fifth French Republic, which promised the colonies full internal self-government within the "French Community." Since the constitution was adopted by the Upper Volta population by an overwhelming favorable vote of 99.1 per cent, no one could estimate how effective the Mogho Naba's support had been.[43] [177] [642]

Coulibaly died just before the referendum, and was replaced on an interim basis by Yaméogo. The parliamentarians accordingly had to choose a new leader, now to be President of the Government Council, as well as to draw up a constitution for the new republic and determine whether it would join any of the regional federations then being considered by several territories. The Territorial Assembly was scheduled to meet in extraordinary session on October 17, 1958, to select a successor to Coulibaly. The Mogho Naba, anticipating dissension and perhaps once again seeking the limelight, sent a message to the representatives on October 15, urging "a government of union and public safety." But the politicians resented what they regarded as his interference in matters that did not concern him; few, if any, took his message seriously, and none replied. 175* 646 642 666 [643] [578]

The Mogho Naba therefore decided to force the issue. He summoned his traditional ministers to a conference, and, despite the objections of the Baloum Naba, obtained their permission to order his Tansoba to muster his warriors and lay siege to the Territorial Assembly. Early in the morning of October 17, about 3,000 Mossi warriors, armed with bows and arrows, swords, spears, and ancient flint guns, converged on the Assembly. Later that morning, the Mogho Naba himself, accompanied by his Tansoba, 175* 643 669 578

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*175 643 669 *578 [648]

arrived on the scene, dressed in his dark-brown cotton war cloak and his war bonnet, the symbol of his power. The demonstration lasted until 11 A.M., when the French Army undertook to scatter the warriors. Finally, the Ouidi Naba ordered the warriors to return to the palace. Only then did Max Berthet, the High Commissioner, open the Assembly session with an expression of regret for the "unacceptable and incomprehensible" demonstrations.[44]

The Assembly adjourned that afternoon and did not meet again until October 20. In the interim, the parliamentarians took measures to deal with this challenge to their power. On October 18, the Government Council issued a communiqué "stigmatizing Friday's demonstration." The Council regretted that the demonstration had prevented a democratically elected body from sitting, but affirmed that "order and public security, indispensable to everyday life, will be maintained."[45] On the following day a longer communiqué was issued, declaring that a truce had been signed by the authorized representatives of the Union Démocratique (Voltaic section of the RDA) and the Mouvement de Regroupement Africain (Voltaic section of the PRA) after a three-day meeting in Ouagadougou. According to the communiqué, the two groups had agreed that "the unity of the democratic forces of the country" was "the decisive question of the hour."

[646] The Territorial Assembly met in Plenary Session on October 20, and on the basis of the political truce, 68 representatives unanimously elected Maurice Yaméogo as President of the Government Council. The politicians further showed their disdain for the Mogho Naba by adopting the following motion:

> The Territorial Assembly, in the unanimous assurance that it alone has the mandate of the Voltaic people to legislate in their name, solemnly declares that, in the face of all opposition, it will work to give the Voltaic State democratic institutions conforming to the aspirations of the population, within the framework of the constitution which they approved by such a strong majority on September 28. Furthermore, it is insistent in its demands that the authorities responsible for public order do everything in their power to determine the persons responsible for the demonstration and to see what should be done to avoid a recurrence of such an event.[46]

The Mogho Naba soon found to his chagrin that even some of his own vassal chiefs had turned against him. They had been persuaded by the politicians that the French Government would never allow the Mogho Naba to take over the country, and furthermore that he had overstepped his bounds and had thereby endangered further the institution of the chieftainship. The Bureau of the Syndicate of the Traditional Chiefs of

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the Upper Volta met, discussed "the affair of October 17," and issued a statement dissociating itself from the Mogho Naba's action, reaffirming its desire to collaborate with the established authority, and requesting a clarification of the status of chiefs in the new order. The Government Council of the Upper Volta welcomed this statement, and hastened to reassure the chiefs that their status was not in danger: "It is not a question of damaging the traditional chiefs as a group, but rather of stigmatizing vigorously an act emanating from a superior chief like Mogho Naba Kougri, the consequences of which, unforeseen as they were, could have placed all the Mossi chiefs in a regrettable and irreparable position."[47]

The Mogho Naba had obviously reached a political impasse, and he next turned his attention to creating a new image of the chieftainship. To this end, he married a young Mossi woman in accordance with the civil statutes of the state, thus becoming the first Mogho Naba and the first important Mossi chief to do so. A spokesman at the wedding placed this act in its proper perspective with the following words:

> I should now like to underscore the fact that this date, November 22 [1958], will be inscribed officially in the annals of the Upper Volta. For the first time in the history of our country, an Emperor, the person who best symbolizes tradition, has upset ancestral habits in the interest of progress. For the first time a woman will be given consideration in a royal court where she will be able to feel at her ease. For the first time, the spouse of a traditional chief will have her place near her husband as an equal and steady companion.[48]

The politicians were apparently prepared to recognize the eminence of the chiefs as long as they did not attempt to intervene in the affairs of the state, and a number of them attended the Mogho Naba's wedding. Among those present were the Presidents of both the Government Council and the Territorial Assembly, parliamentarians from various parties, and the mayors of Bobo-Dioulasso and Ouagadougou. On December 10, 1958, the Territorial Assembly confirmed Yaméogo as President of the Government Council. The Assembly also approved his slate of ministers, among them Bouda, the Mossi chief who had once been a strong supporter of the traditional political hierarchy but who now belonged to the UDV-RDA. Then, on December 11, the Assembly decided to adopt the draft of a proposed constitution for the Upper Volta. Articles 2 and 3 of Paragraph I of this constitution state explicitly:

> The Republic of the Upper Volta is one and indivisible, secular, democratic, and social. Its principle is that the government is *of the people, by the people, and for the people. . . .*
>
> *Sovereignty belongs to the people. No section of the population, and no individual, may usurp it.* [Italics mine.][49]

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V

LAW AND THE JUDICIAL PROCESS

671 THE Mossi possessed a comprehensive body of rules governing human conduct. These rules were well known to the people, and violators were punished by the responsible authorities. The Mossi might be said to have had substantive law, but they had no written codes. Nevertheless, the lack of written codes does not warrant Mangin's blanket criticism of Mossi judicial processes: "Of course, there was no written code, no formal scale of penalties. Everything depended on custom and on the whim of the judge. [662] Thus, the wealthy could obtain sentences in their favor by paying the judges, and thieves could avoid punishment by sharing their loot with the Naba."[1] Custom did dictate the penalties, just as "written custom" dictates penalties [692] in all written legal codes. But, as we shall see, the Mossi did have a known [695] scale of penalties. Moreover, a Mossi judge had to be careful in rendering judgment, because his decisions could be reviewed by a higher court.

596 The head of the Mossi extended family, the *Yirisoba,* was responsible 681 for the everyday conduct of his charges. It was his duty to settle all family quarrels, and to punish persons guilty of theft within the compound, disrespect toward elders, and incest. Punishment for the lesser wrongs included 596 reprimands and floggings. A person found guilty of disrespect to the elders 683 or of incest could be banished from the group. But banishment was so severe 684 that it was imposed only if the criminal refused to make the usual conciliatory gestures and was condemned by all the members of his boodoo. Even after this condemnation, however, he could ask a "sister's son," a yagenga, [613] to intercede for him. This man, the son of a female lineage member, had many privileges within his mother's brother's lineage, including the right to mediate between an exile and his boodoo.

593 Amicable relations within the family group were most often disrupted 586 by conjugal difficulties. A Mossi husband could occasionally flog an erring 613 wife, but he was not allowed to maltreat her. When a man became disgusted with his wife and wished to repudiate her, he put her water pots in the compound yard. This rather serious action often led to hostile relations

691 428 634 father had given the woman a silver bracelet before he died, and that the babissi felt that this was sufficient, since she had a husband to provide for her. Furthermore, Moussa said that the inheritance had already been distributed, and that any redistribution would impose a hardship on all concerned.

695 Interpreting the inheritance law according to common practice, the chief 691 428 634 ruled that the milk from a man's cattle was for *all* his children, regardless of sex, and that the fact that the father had formerly given the daughter a bracelet should not have influenced the distribution of the inheritance. The chief stated that the woman should receive at least one cow, and that if the defendant did not agree, he (the chief) would recall all the animals and supervise their distribution. He did not feel that he had to state the principles by which he had reached his judgment, for the consensus among the people of the district was that the heir was trying to take advantage of the law for his own selfish interests. Rather than appeal to Ouagadougou, Moussa and his babissi accepted the verdict.

671 On the basis of these and other cases, we are led to the conclusion that the Mossi felt that law and the judicial process should serve to reconcile people and to maintain what was commonly considered to be social justice.

634 692 684 593 Most of the cases at the district court were tried in the same manner as those cited above. Cases involving relations between men and women were the most common. This is paradoxical, because the district chief tried to avoid any involvement with such cases. For every domestic case tried by the district chief, five others were sent back to the village or lineage level. Even so, it is estimated that about 80 per cent of the cases tried by Mossi district chiefs ultimately concerned women. The most common case of this type was the alleged refusal of a woman to return to her husband.[8] If the judge found that another man had encouraged her to leave her husband, he ordered her to return to him and warned her and the man about the possibility of serious difficulty with her husband's relatives. On the other hand, if the chief found that the woman had left a cruel husband who threatened to harm her or her relatives, he warned the husband not to carry out his threats. The Mossi had no bride price; thus, a woman's family was not faced with the problem of restitution. Sometimes, an angry husband did demand that his wife's family return the gifts (*pogopossum*, "thanks for the woman") he had given them from time to time—e.g., at funerals—and they complied.

684 692 634 Adultery cases were next in frequency at the district court. A man convicted of adultery with another man's wife was either warned to leave her alone or fined a sheep or a goat. He was also liable to be put in stocks for

567 control by the canton chiefs in whose territories they are located.
622 The inhabitants pay nothing to the kombéré nor can the chief require any labor service in his fields or for the upkeep of his houses. They recognize only the Mogho Naba as chief.

567 Kamboinsé. True Kamboinsé are not Mossi; they came from the west during the reign of Naba Waraga (nineteenth successor of Oubri). Like the dapobi of the Dapoya section they came with guns (their chief even had a [ceremonial] stool) to put themselves under the authority of the Mogho Naba. Their chief, Gambaré by name, told the emperor that they had come to offer themselves as soldiers and slaves to help him pacify his territory. The Kamboinsé occupy a section of the town behind the Catholic mission on the right side of the road to Pô.

When the emperor's native gunners found themselves faced with competition from foreigners, they countered by appointing their own chief who took the title of Kamboin Naba. They are, however, different from the true Kamboinsé, and they live a dozen or so kilometers from Ouagadougou in the villages of Kamboinsé and Wobrigré.

While the first-mentioned Kamboinsé are voluntary slaves, the others are true slaves captured in war or bought by the emperor.

567 426 [92] Use of slaves as security for debt. Captives might be used to settle debts. It should be noted that the right to own slaves was not limited to the emperor and his vassals. Any prosperous Moaga (dakangré) might own them.

[612] If the head of a household died leaving debts, the heirs could sell a few slaves to pay off the obligation. If, however, the creditor preferred to have the slaves, the latter were put up for appraisal just as though they were livestock.

In the same way, slaves could be traded for horses, garments, or even loads of kola nuts.

567 If slaves were maltreated by their owners, providing that the latter were not of the nobility, they could put themselves under the protection of the naba. In that event they ceased to belong to their former owners. On the other hand, if a Moaga took it upon himself [682] to kill a slave, he at once had to pay a fine of 100,000 cowries to his canton chief as a blood price.

567 439 Ordinarily, captives who were brought back from the wars were at once sold to the Haoussa [Hausa] or Yarcé [Yarse] who traded

768 heirs, to his brothers. If the deceased was the keeper and guard-
428 ian of the family fetish, it is taken to the home of his eldest brother or to a person designated by custom.

We have seen, however, that the Moaga will not live in a home without consulting a soothsayer. Therefore, if the spirits are not favorable to the heir, the home is turned over to the other sons or to the brothers of the deceased. Besides, in many cases the eldest son is already married and the head of a family and already has his own home. He then lodges his dakompa (young unmarried brothers) or one of his uncles in his father's home.

428 Acceptance or repudiation of inheritances. Consequences.
To accept and receive an inheritance involves the obligation to
426 pay the debts and claims against it. Among the Mossi, an inheri-
672 tance is never refused since a refusal does not free one from the obligation to pay the debts of the deceased. Relatives always collaborate, not because of any feeling for common property -- which [261] does not exist, as we have seen above -- but out of respect for the principle of collective responsibility which has been developed in the interests of public order. Creditors will naturally claim their due first from the legitimate heir, but if the estate cannot meet its obligations, all of the close relatives are jointly responsible.

428 The estate does not include any gifts made to members of the family by the deceased during his lifetime.

Wills. Among the Mossi, a will is always made orally.

In the presence of his relatives -- uncles and brothers -- and of his neighbors, who have been assembled for the occasion, the testator makes known his last wishes to his legitimate heir, who will have full rights as his testamentary successor. However, in the event that the will is intended to disinherit the legitimate heir and if for some reason or other he is not present, the testator will entrust the execution of his last wishes to the oldest member of the family present.

Disinheritance of the heir presumptive. In the presence of witnesses and under the conditions indicated above, the testator explains his reasons for disinheriting the heir presumptive. In the event that the reasons seem insufficient, the witnesses will seek

695 tomb and force him to drink water in which earth from the grave had been diluted. This test was greatly feared, for the Mossi believe that the deceased will come and take his revenge.

The defendant went free unless his guilt was proved by witnesses. When arguments arose about the ownership of fields, domestic animals, etc., each person concerned would give his arguments and summon his witnesses, and the judges made a decision on the basis of the discussions. If two women quarreled, their husbands were supposed to get together and reach a decision. The province chief judged disputes
692 concerning marriage. For instance, if a girl had been promised to someone and the bride price was paid in part, and then her father changed his mind and gave her to another, the disappointed suitor could appeal to the province chief, who saw to it that the payment was returned. If the defendant ran away to avoid trial, he could only be tried in absentia if witnesses deposed against him.

/25/ The sentence was carried out as far as possible, even in the
696 absence of the convicted party; if he returned, the trial was not re-
691 opened but he could appeal to the province chief. The family is
692 held responsible in every case. If the sentence includes a fine, and if the convicted person's property is insufficient, the property of his relatives is seized. People are held accountable for their children's debts, and if the defendant runs away, one of his relatives is seized in his place. On the other hand, the head of the family is the abso-
[593] lute master and the judge of the family. He must pay his children's debts and the fines they have incurred, but he may chastise them, even put them to death, or banish and curse them, a punishment which as a rule is greatly feared. All this indicates the strength of the family ties, which we shall study in the second part of this work. The naba saw to the execution of the sentence pronounced by the court; the executive and judicial powers were vested in the same person. If anyone refused to pay his debts or to pay the inflicted penalty, he was stripped of his property. No commutation of the sentence was allowed, and the person condemned to irons or to death had to suffer the sentence himself and could not go free by paying a fine or by substituting a slave. Capital punishment was carried out in public. The province chief was entitled to grant a pardon, but,
[761] of course, he made use of this right quite rarely. A man's life counts for so little in the eyes of the Black!

695 The procedure was the same for all, men and women. The sons
681 of nabas, the nakomsé, however, were neither tried nor punished in
554 public. They were not tied with ropes, but with strips of fabric; and if condemned to death, they were hanged rather than clubbed to death. In any case, complaints against them were extremely rare. The sons of a powerful naba could do anything with impunity.

681 For examples, here are a few crimes and their respective punishments. Of course, there was no written code, no formal scale of penalties. Everything depended on custom and on the whim of the judge. Thus, the wealthy could obtain sentences in their favor by
696 paying the judges, and thieves could avoid punishment by sharing
691 their loot with the naba. Otherwise, a thief caught in the act was
685 flogged, sometimes to death. He was condemned to several months in irons, and exposed to public ridicule before the naba's hut; he had to restore what he had taken, and his family was held responsible. If he repeated the offense, he was led to the marketplace with a rope around his neck; he was supplied with an abundance of meat and dolo /beer/, and then clubbed to death at the foot of a tree. In Ouagadougou he was sometimes made a eunuch instead. This was almost the equivalent of a death sentence, because the operation was carried out in such barbarous fashion that death often ensued. French justice more leniently imprisons the thieves, a cause of complaint by honest people who find the punishment too mild.

682 In case of willful murder, the killer was put to death; if he could
683 not be found, a member of his family was executed in his place.
672 In case of a brawl, no attempt was made to determine who had started the fight or who was in the right. (Manslaughter was punished by a fine paid to the victim's family. The right /26/ of self-defense was, of course, recognized. If blows and wounds had been inflicted, the adversaries were put in irons.)

681 Old women were often accused of being witches and of eating
683 children's souls. If their crime was considered proved, if the sorcerers
888 consulted declared some old woman guilty of a baby's death, she was put to death in very cruel fashion: a second opening was made in a clay pot so that her head could be put completely within it; then the pot was heated intensely and placed over the head of the unfortunate woman.

685 If a goat or sheep caused damage to a field, the animal could be killed on the spot. The owner had to be notified, but he was not

861 receive any advice from him. The Mossi, fathers and mothers alike, do not know how to train their children. Under the pretext that a small child does not know what he is doing, the parents allow him to do as he pleases and to carry out his every whim without punishment. Tots who can barely articulate two words utter the coarsest insults to their mother and beat her with their small fists without being punished. The onlookers merely remark that some day he will be a fighter. To chastise him would be to make him cry, and a child's tears are always an embarrassment to be avoided as much as possible. When a child behaves badly, when he fights, steals, seeks out the company of professional thieves or young scamps, when he tells everybody what he has seen and heard and cannot keep a secret, when complaints are made against him, then his father and mother punish him and warn him not to do it again; but they do not prevent wrong doing, and [672] if necessary they will pay his debts, because all members of the family, especially the father, are held liable. The father does not teach his son the cult and the sacrifices, but he does request the boy's help. The child watches his father, and when he grows up, he does as his father did.

857 Boys of twelve or fifteen may fail to return home in the evening for any reason whatever, without warning, and no one worries about it: "He will come soon enough." The young man of twenty builds 884 himself a hut apart from his father's house, in order to have greater 593 freedom and to receive any visitors he may want. Besides his father's field, he cultivates his own piece of land and sells the produce /36/ himself in order to buy clothes. His father feeds him but rarely presents him with gifts of clothing when he is old enough to work for himself. If he weaves cloth during the dry season, he may do with it as he pleases, sell it or make clothing. His father has no say in the matter. It is the father, however, who teaches his sons how to 868 593 cultivate the soil, how to plait mats, and sometimes how to weave. If the father works at a trade, he teaches it to his sons: the drummers teach their children to beat the drum and to sing the chief's praises; the jewellers and smiths teach their sons their respective professions.

593 The father usually is fond of his children and likes to play with them when they are small. He watches over them while the mother does her household tasks. Parents sincerely lament their children's death, and children that of their siblings. Undoubtedly there are parents with the greatest indifference toward their offspring, but such

478 son or a young brother of marriageable age in his former soukala.
593 The daughters, however, get the movable property such as slaves, livestock, grain, cowries, etc. (with the exception of wives).

The oldest daughter takes the largest share. Out of ten beeves she will take six (if there are three daughters, for example) and the two younger daughters will take two each. Out of four slaves she will take two, and the two younger daughters will take one each. Out of 1,000 cowries, the oldest will take 600, the other two 200 each.

The same thing applies if there are no brothers but only daughters and brothers' sons, since the latter have the same rights as their fathers. Thus, it is the eldest son of the younger brother who inherits along with the daughters of the deceased.

593 In this third variant of the Mossi family, in short, the bonds that connect the various households in the family are now of two kinds only:

1. There are the religious bonds, since the head of the entire family remains the high priest of this collectivity.

2. There are also the judicial bonds (collective responsibility
593 of the family in case of injury done to other people).
672 "If a man is in debt," says Moulins, p. 34, op. cit. /Monographie du cercle de Ouagadougou/, "his family is held responsible for payment. If he commits a misdemeanor, his family is held responsible for financial reparation.

"If he commits a crime of murder, one of his relatives will be put to death in his place if he has not himself been seized (at least, this is what happened prior to our occupation).

"When the head of the family is served a complaint against one of the individuals under his authority, he appeals first, of course, to the guilty party himself if the latter owns /553/ any property, then to the soukala to which the man belongs, then to the one headed by his nearest relative, etc. Vis-à-vis third parties, however, the family itself, as a whole, is held responsible for reparation.

"The formidable responsibility devolving to the family entails, as its logical counterpart, putting at its disposal, powers sufficient

593 672 to guard against dangers resulting from the obligation to make reparation for injuries committed by one of its members. This has led naturally to a recognition of the family's right, in the person of its head, to take whatever measures are necessary for the preservation of its common interests. Prior to our occupation, such measures could go as far as putting in irons or even putting to death an individual who called upon the collective responsibility of the family too frequently or too onerously, and thus threatened to endanger its equilibrium. The decision of a family head involving the [443] death sentence or putting in irons for life for one of his people, however, only became final with the naba's approval. The latter could oppose it by assuming financial responsibility, in the family's stead, for all future misdemeanors committed by the person he had pardoned."

593 174 We come now to an interesting although extremely ticklish subject, namely, the causes of the partial decommunalization of the Mossi family.

If we look at the present workaday life of these people, their decommunalization seems inexplicable in view of the fact that we are dealing with a group of cultivators, somewhat indolent to be sure, but nevertheless cultivators first and foremost. The Mossi, on the other hand, are not herdsmen. They are very mediocre stock-breeders. Among them as among other Blacks of West Africa, hunting merely accounts for a small percentage of their total food-producing activities. They are not traders, either. We see nothing here, therefore, that might explain the decommunalization of the family, and we must refer back to the previous workaday life of this people. We saw earlier, however, that while the present Mossi population originated /554/ from the fusion of two disparate elements, one of those elements was similar to the Bobo, Gourounsi, Habé, Kipirsi, etc., and thus deeply communal and patriarchal. It is obviously not from this element that the present decommunalization might stem.

Fortunately, there exists another and very different element. The Mossi who came from the Dagomba were, as we know, Blacks who were 1) warriors and conquerors, 2) breeders of horses, no doubt,

664 554 "The wives of the Moro Haba never give birth or raise their children at his own place of residence, but only in one of the eunuch villages. In theory they do not stand above the wives of common natives, but in practice they enjoy high consideration among the Mossi, like all that is connected with the Moro Naba.

"The sons of the sovereign, once weaned, are entrusted to a province or canton chief who is put in charge of their education. [582] At the age of ten they are married and settled in a village, where they live, surrounded by a court, but without necessarily being given a territorial command.

"The prerogatives attached to the title of Moro Naba's son are vast as long as the monarch is alive. They grant the right to steal, to loot, and even to kill with impunity.

"Upon the death of the Moro Naba, his sons become mere nakomsé (sons of chiefs) whose position nevertheless remains quite privileged.

643 644 554 "One of the sons of the deceased sovereign, however, is granted special privileges. At the death of the Moro Naba, the latter's wives elect one of his young sons who adopts his name and, so to speak, perpetuates him. He has no /territorial/ command, but he is surrounded by a court similar to that of the Moro Naba, he enjoys respect almost equal to that paid to the latter, and he is a sacred figure. No one has the right to contradict him or to harm him.

644 554 "As for the Moro Naba's daughters, although in principle they do not stand above ordinary Mossi girls, in practice they are treated with the strictest respect by all natives. Once married, they have almost complete freedom of action vis-à-vis their husband, and they often take advantage of this to lead a most unruly existence.

643 766 "When the Moro Naba's death has been verified, his burial is carried out and followed by the funeral ceremonies, which are held in the same fashion as for a common native, with the sole difference /574/ that they have more brilliance and that the sacrifices are more sizable.

642 672 "For the whole duration of the interregnum, the land falls into a state of complete anarchy. Everyone has the right to kill, loot, and steal as he pleases. Convicts who are serving sentence are fully pardoned and set free.

593 861 858 The right to discipline a child belongs principally to the father (but also to the heads of work group, compound, and family) or to the mother, depending on the age of the child.

"The mother," says Vadier, "has the right to discipline boys until they are circumcised, girls until they marry. This does not mean that the father cannot intervene during that time to reprimand or chastise one of his children, but that he nearly always leaves it to the mother.

"After the boy's circumcision and the girl's marriage, the right to punish belongs to the father and no longer to the mother."

593 858 672 The duty of surveillance belongs principally to the father, and secondly to the heads of the work group, compound, and family. One of its consequences is financial liability. If a child steals or commits some reprehensible act which may call for compensation, the father is primarily responsible and must indemnify the injured parties, after seizing whatever property the child may own.

593 858 443 Formerly, when a native could not manage to discipline a son or daughter whose behavior was very bad, he would hand the child over to the Moro Naba after consulting the family head and the family council. From that day forward he would give up his paternal authority, and the Moro Naba alone would hold it with broader prerogatives. If the child continued to commit extortion, the Moro Naba had the right to have him put to death. When it was a girl who was handed to the naba, the latter would give the father a woman of his own household in exchange if he happened to be favorably disposed toward him.

Now, since the French occupation, this is no longer done. In such cases, nowadays, the child is simply expelled from the compound and from the household.

858 593 A father could not give his child as security, nor could he pawn him temporarily as a slave.

593 429 858 Paternal authority is relinquished in two cases, actually very infrequent: (1) when the father goes insane; and (2) when he has committed incest.

In such a case, paternal authority passes to his oldest living brother, or, if there is no brother, to the oldest son. This guardian has exactly the same powers over the child as the father had.

858 In case of insanity, the children are required to help their father and mother /258/ and to attend to their needs. In case of incest, they have no obligations toward the guilty party.

429 If the deceased has no brother or grown son, the family head apportions the children among various members of the family.

The guardian has the same obligations toward his ward and enjoys the same rights over them as did their deceased father. By the same token, the wards have the same duties toward their guardian as they did toward their father.

The child inherits from his guardian just like the latter's legitimate children.

[672] Like the father, the guardian is liable for damages caused by his ward.

591 Adoption. —Adoption occurs in Yatenga.

When two spouses have no progeny (this is quite unusual) or simply fail to have any right away, they sometimes adopt a child. The child must be taken into their family. Adoption does not require any formalities.

The child, adopted at a very young age, is never consulted.

The matter is adjusted between the adoptive father, the child's father, and the family head.

Either a girl or boy may be adopted, but actually boys are adopted for the most part.

From the day of his adoption the child enters the household of his adoptive father and mother as a legitimate child.

Actually, this manner of adoption differs from the French one in that it is limited to the family, to the total family.

In addition to this method of adoption and pertaining to the same category, let us point out a curious custom among the Mossi.

The oldest son, according to custom, must not be brought up by his father. As soon as he leaves his mother's breast or sometimes following circumcision, he is handed over to the /father's/ younger or older brother, who raises him and gives him a wife. Upon the death of his father, however, he comes into the latter's inheritance and thus does not really leave the household to which he was born.

672 Interdiction. —"Only the insane are subject to interdiction," says Vadier.

"When a native is afflicted with insanity, the family head and other members of the family meet to discuss the case of the sick person. If he is recognized as irresponsible, the head of the family has all the inhabitants of the village warned to have no dealings with him. Indeed, according to custom, no one /263/ could be held civilly liable for agreements made by a native afflicted with insanity.

672 "If the insane person still has a father, it is his duty to warn the people of the neighborhood.

"All the deeds made, the debts contracted, and the commercial transactions effected by the insane person are declared void. No third parties may appeal against members of the insane person's family."

000 Now let us deal with the appendages of the family.

We shall divide this section into the following headings.

1. Clients.
2. Domestic servants.
3. Slaves. Their origins.
4. Slaves. Name.
5. Slaves. Kinds of slaves.
6. Serfs.

Let us begin with the clients.

464 1. Clients. The usual clientage involving a household which requests support, protection, food, and shelter from a rich family, in return for which the household will labor for the family and live with it, is not to be found among the Mossi and Foulsé of Yatenga. It does happen, however, that a young man who desires to acquire quickly a wife, a horse, some property, or an amount of authority which does not usually revert to young men decides to leave his family and his compound to place himself in the service of some chief (Moro Naba, canton chief, village chief, tengasoba, etc.). It is the young men, rasamba, who make such decisions. Once they have won what they sought to obtain, however, they return to their families. When one goes to a tengasoba, he usually expects only a wife from him, and he does not leave until the tengasoba dies. Then, provided with a wife, he returns to his family. Naturally, these "temporary volunteers" preserve all their rights in their respective families.

464 Let us note further that during times of famine some Mossi request
731 work from people of better means. The duration of their work is usually very short, scarcely more than a few days (two or three days, for example).

464 The employee and employer (if these terms may be used here) are in no way bound to each other. The former may leave whenever he wishes, and the latter may dismiss him as he pleases. He must, however, pay for the employee's work days in full. The daily

775 ground; he also pours what is left at the bottom of the gourd, so the
769 souls will rejoice with him. It is considered a great honor when a
[554] naba tells an elder to grasp one side of the gourd and to pour along with him.

775 One must not laugh about the souls of the deceased and their visits
761 to earth. If you doubt their return, listen to what an old naba once told me. "One day, I had gone to visit a naba, my friend and neighbor. We had arranged to meet at his house with another neighboring chief. He gave us a very nice welcome, and the day was most pleasant. We were resting at night in the shelter of his soukala when we were suddenly awakened by the sound of harness bells and horses galloping. On the following day we left our host. No sooner had we left than he took ill. A week later he died. The souls had come to fetch him. Oh! Father, do not laugh about the souls of the deceased!" And the good old man trembled with emotion. This is what our Mossi believe. They firmly believe in all these ghost stories.

775 Are the souls reincarnated? Small children who die before the age of reason are said to return in the person of the first child borne by their mother. This is why, especially if the mother has lost several
[304] children in a row, the baby is marked at birth with distinctive signs, particularly tattooings on the belly and lower back; sometimes, if he
[766] dies, a piece of his ear is cut off, or a toe or finger joint broken. It is said that the child born next will bear the same marks, but no living example of this could be cited. Often, the mother leaves the hut where her baby died. An old woman spreads ashes before the door in the evening, and if small footprints are found in the morning, it is a sign that the child came back and wishes to return to his mother's bosom.

Rebirth is not granted to anyone other than young children, not even to young unmarried people. They remain in the place of the souls for years on end, the number of which cannot be ascertained, and no distinction is made between the rich and the poor, the powerful and their subjects.

775 The soul of suicides, cursed in death, is not entitled as a rule to
762 funeral ceremonies. It wanders through the world without harming anyone, but unable to find rest.

577 Morality is reduced to its simplest expression. Whatever harms
673 other people is bad. Think your own intimate thoughts and desire anything you like; as long as you do no harm to your fellow man, no fault has been committed. Fornication and adultery are faults only

577
673 insofar as they involve an offense to justice. /88/ I do not speak of
[839] unnatural practices, which are almost unknown. When theft, murder, even insults, blows and wounds are punished, they are punished as injustices. Calumny is abhorred, and it is a very serious insult to say that someone has slandered someone else. A Mossi will not forgive an insult against his mother, because it is prejudicial to the family honor and hence to himself. In dealing with the natives, therefore, it is necessary to be careful and not to commit any injustices. They are very sensitive to this; while they accept a just punishment without complaint when the offense has been proved, they reject indignantly any accusation which cannot be proved, even when it is well founded.

577 In addition to this general morality, many things are forbidden not
784 because they are evil, but because they entail baleful consequences. The taboos (kisgou to the Mossi, from kisé, "to forbid") are almost innumerable. They may be divided into two classes: permanent kisgou, which affect the whole family, and personal and transitory kisgou.

784 The former usually consist of a prohibition to eat a certain animal or to do a certain thing. Thus some nabas are forbidden to meet, to see one another, and if they disregard this prohibition, one of them will die before the year is over. This prohibition is easily explained by the incessant wars which were formerly waged between important chiefs, and their fear of being poisoned or done away with in some other way by one of their enemies. Another instance: a Mossi goes to war on a frisky horse and he is forced to flee. His foes are about to seize him, and he owes his escape to the swiftness of his mount. When he returns home, he decrees that the horse will be a sacred animal to him and to his descendants, and that henceforth all his children and their children must treat horses well and may not eat their flesh under penalty of blindness or leprosy. This is the extent of the prohibition. The horse is not considered a guardian animal, no sacrifices are offered to it, and the Mossi do not call it tangandé (guardian animal of the village) or siga((soul-animal), but kisgou (prohibition).

784 Sometimes the kisgou affects only certain members of the family.
262 A father has been ill after eating dog flesh on two or three occasions. He consults the sorcerer, who states that dog flesh is forbidden to him and to his children, but not to other members of his family. A person

567 now the circle of Tenkodogo constituted a reservoir (figuratively called lambagré, "cotton reserve") from which the warriors and vassals of the emperor brought back hundreds of young slaves. This was because Garango recognized no authority; it was dependent neither on the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou nor on the king of Tenkodogo. Tradition has it that the warriors of the Mossi chiefs were always surprising the people of Garango on market days. The memory of these raids is why, even today the markets at Garango [366] are open only from six in the morning until noon.

The Mossi considered themselves to be free men, and no one, [644] not even naba, had the [85] right to reduce a Moaga subject to slavery. The facial tattoos made it easy to distinguish the Moaga [304] from foreigners.

Since there were few contacts between neighboring villages, 567 it was difficult even for highwaymen to sell young people from near- 674 by areas. This does not mean that there were not, all the same, captives of Mossi origin. Bandits rode, for instance, from Ouagadougou to Boussouma. They always carried large leather [492] sacks tied to their saddles and into them thrust children and women who were taken by surprise while gathering fruit in the bush. Such captives were always sold far from their home villages. Naturally such practices were severely dealt with by the naba. Naba Wobgo drove the canton chief of Bilgotenga, Warongo, from his territory because he enslaved Mossi people. Warongo was forced to take refuge in Yatenga and returned home only after the coming of the French.

567 Some of the slaves brought back from Garango were kept by the emperor, and the rest were distributed among the warriors. Up to that time no one thought of using them for anything but field work and domestic labor.

It was Naba Baongo, the twenty-sixth successor of Oubri, who first thought of selling the slaves. He said: "Id kossi bazas kamba tib boude nan wa saĩ" (literally, "let us sell these slave dogs; perhaps, one day, [86] there will be no more of them"). It is as if the emperor had foreseen the suppression of slavery and the emancipation of the slaves.

Today one seldom encounters former Boussanga slaves. They have no doubt returned to their villages since the arrival of the [304] French. Their descendants (house slaves, dogyiri) now wear the same facial tattoos as the Mossi.

22/ for roasting and is replaced with green millet, eaten raw after being
24/ beaten with a small stick to remove the chaff. /47/ Certain kinds of
262 large millet are sweet and not too unpleasant to eat in this fashion.
Horses grow fat because millet is their staple food and they may eat
221 as much as they please. Men also profit greatly, because beer brewed
241 from new millet tastes much better than that made from old millet,
273 and when millet abounds, drink is never wanting. At this time rice is harvested, threshed on the threshing floors, and laid aside carefully for festive occasions.

221 At the end of October the rains have stopped almost completely.
241 The beans are gathered and laid out in the fields on millet stalks or on séko held up from the ground by forked stakes to keep the termites from eating them, or the beans may be brought home and tossed on the séko which serve as shelters in front of the soukala. Now is the time to harvest the small millet, which is dry. The millet stalks are severed at ground level by the men and laid out with all heads oriented in the same direction to facilitate the work of the women, who cut off the heads and gather them in heaps. When the millet has been cut, the women fill their baskets. The largest containers are used for the occasion, and each woman uses her ingenuity to pile the millet as high as possible over her basket, using the longest ears or bean stems as supports, like the Zouaves who vie for the tallest pack. Should the line of women on their way back to the village meet a man known for his generosity, they sing, cry out, and surround him until he throws them a few handfuls of cowries to buy a jar of beer.

221 As they near the threshing floor their cries get louder, and each
241 woman comes to the granary and hands her basket to the man who
251 stands there. These granaries are very crudely built and consist basi-
343 cally of sticks driven into the ground in a circle to hold up a séko which is wrapped around them. The floor is made up of another séko, usually resting on the ground but sometimes raised on stones or forked sticks to avoid termites. This is where the millet is placed prior to threshing. The granaries stand around the threshing floor of beaten earth, which is located 100 or 200 meters from the village, some-
674 times even farther. Thieves are no important threat. They may cut down millet when it stands in the bush, but they rarely steal millet already stored. Only goats, sheep, and guinea hens are to be feared, and they are kept away from the granaries by thorns.

221 As soon as these heavier tasks are over, everyone digs up peanuts
241 and peas. The whole family gathers under the shade of a tree, and

789 /103/ Happily, it is possible to avoid lightning. To achieve this,
821 it is necessary to find in the bush a white substance rather similar to hyena droppings which the natives call "rain dung," as well as certain tree roots. Part of these roots is left to soak in water for three days, and the rest is burned to ashes. A chicken is sacrificed to the tim. Then the water in which the roots have steeped is used to cook the millet mush, and the sauce is made with baobab leaves. All the soukala dwellers must eat this millet mush, and every one of them is marked on the back and chest with a cross of ashes mixed with karite butter. The horse and donkey, alone among the animals, are similarly marked on the back, chest, and inside the mouth. The huts are marked on the east side, the direction from which the rain comes, and above the entrance. Now there is nothing to be feared. We do feel, however, that lightning-rods are more effective.

759 All these tim, medicinal remedies, amulets, talismans, and
756 superstitious recipes, are prescribed either by true doctors who actually know the properties of herbs and effect real cures or by sorcerers. The doctors are often consulted. Since they specialize in certain diseases, they are consulted for those diseases alone. Those who have been cured by a medicine willingly make it known to friends who are afflicted with the same illness. The doctors are as numerous as the diseases which afflict mankind.

278 Some doctors are not merely healers but also poisoners, and they
674 are greatly feared. The surest way to get rid of an enemy is to consult them, but their fees are high. They have slow poisons which consume the victim gradually and the overwhelming ones which kill in a few hours. They put them in drinks, in millet mush, or more
754 often in kola nuts. There are also people, sorcerers rather than doctors, who claim the power to kill at a distance and who know how to practice sympathetic magic. Their prestige has waned since the French occupation because they have not managed to kill the Whites who settled in the country; but they say that our tim are more powerful than theirs.

759 The sorcerers are also numerous. There are those who take up the
756 call of their own accord and those who are born sorcerers. The former
791 are the bagré and seuya; the latter the tibo, bartibo, waongo, and nyonnyonsé. Pardon us these barbaric words, but they are impossible to translate.

791 The bagré is the nice, innocuous kind of sorcerer, who helps the
756 poor for a penny or two. He is consulted about everything. For example, what does the future hold? Will fire destroy my huts or won't

181 The Mossi are a mixture of defects and qualities. As a rule they
577 are not overly scrupulous about stealing and lying, but these deficiencies
674 are not so deeply rooted that they could not be corrected with the development of a more refined conscience. The Mossi are thievish because they often have the opportunity to take what belongs to others, especially cowries which are handled in a very intricate manner. It is so easy, when counting cowries, to slip a few into a pocket without the master's notice! There are some highway robbers, who are greatly feared, and many of them are very skillful. They are, of course, a very small minority.

181 Debts are the most frequent cause of theft. As a rule every Mossi
577 is both a debtor and a creditor, and when he borrows only God knows
426 when he will repay. If someone owes him a debt, he borrows, saying, "So-and-So owes me such-and-such an amount; when he pays me back, I will repay you," and he always finds someone who is willing to lend. Who can deny a friend such a favor? In order to be repaid numerous steps will prove necessary, and the day when the sum is refunded will be a happy one. This shortcoming is so ingrained among them that the wealthiest people are not exempt from it, and although able to return what they have borrowed without difficulty, they do not return it.

181 The Mossi lie easily, but they especially practice the method of
577 mental reservation. When questioned, they excel at posing another question, to find out whether their questioner is really acquainted with the facts. If they can mislead one, they do; on the other hand, if they feel that to confess would be to their advantage, they do so even if their confession implicates their accomplices; but they only do so if they are quite sure of coming through safely.

The Mossi are not false or deceitful, but they often fail to tell the truth for fear of displeasing a more powerful person. They try to guess the reply expected by their questioner, and much caution is needed when a precise piece of information is required. They also deceive by telling only half the truth; when queried, they sometimes reply to a question but suppress a detail which would have modified the answer or opened the way to another question.

They are discreet and know how to keep a secret, especially the king's secrets. When they do not wish to tell anything, they say "I don't know." This is not incriminating, and it cuts short any prying question.

644 who will make him into a soroné if he is a boy, or alone have the right to give her in marriage if she is a girl."

643 Moulins also provides interesting details on the manner in which the Moro Naba spends his days, or rather spent them in the past, for this description refers to the state of affairs prior to the French occupation.

"From Ouarga's reign onward, the Moro Nabas, who had previously resided successively in various parts of the empire, settled at Ouagadougou where they have lived ever since. Custom constrains them never to leave /571/ the capital except in unusually serious circumstances. This is because the land falls into anarchy [674 696] when the sovereign is absent from Ouagadougou. All theft, pillage, and murder committed at that time remain unprosecuted.

644 173 "Every morning at seven, the Moro Naba emerges from his hut. His saddled horse waits before the door. He mounts it and pretends to set out on his way, but after riding around his hut he dismounts and goes back into his hut only to come out again immediately.

"This formality of the protocol has the following origin. A long time ago the favorite wife of the Moro Naba having fled to La, the sovereign wished to go and fetch her himself. He mounted his horse and was about to leave when all the court dignitaries rushed to him, admonishing him not to carry out his project, for his absence from Ouagadougou could only result in anarchy. The monarch gave way, and soon afterwards his wife returned of her own accord. It is in memory of the magnanimity of this sovereign, who sacrificed himself in the interests of his people, that every morning since that time the Moro Naba has pretended to prepare for departure and to then give up his plan.

644 "Following this ceremony, the Moro Naba settles himself in a recess sunk into the wall that surrounds his residence, and then, to the strains of abundant music, the whole court comes to the sovereign and prostrates itself before him, brow in the dust, forearms striking the ground in rhythm with a great clicking of bracelets. Then business is attended to.

"First, the five province chiefs come forward in order of precedence, relate to the Moro Naba those events which have taken place since the preceding day, and receive his instructions for the day. Then they present to him the canton and village chiefs and the common natives who wish for an audience.

692 or because the litigants had rejected the village chief's verdict). The chief
634 then asked the plaintiff or "the people of X village" to state their case.
695 Someone usually spoke up, and after he had finished, the chief asked the defendant or defendants to do likewise. The litigants were then asked to produce reputable witnesses to support or refute the testimony.

[641] Witnesses had to be male, adult (to have begun to "push a beard"), and
[562] free. Women and bondsmen had no legal personality before a Mossi court.
[567] A slave was represented at court by his master, and a woman by her husband (and, by extension, by his patrilineage). In marital quarrels or property suits, a woman was usually represented by her patrilineage. Only if
[576] she alone could give the required evidence was she allowed in court. When she was asked to testify, she knelt, and spoke in a high, thin, soft voice, thus showing extreme respect to the chief and proper deference to the court. Except for these restrictions, any person could be called in as a witness.
[578] Tempers often ran fairly high among the litigants' relatives and friends while they gave their testimony and argued the case, but their physical separation and their respect for the chief prevented abuse and fighting. Anyone who started a fight in court was liable to a beating by the samandekamba.

[674] The Mossi believed that most people, given sufficient reason, would commit any crime. Thus they examined the litigants carefully and at great length in an attempt to "get behind" the offense. The district chief interrogated the litigants, but the dignity of the court prevented him from arguing with them. As a matter of fact, most of the cross-examination was done by the litigants themselves. From time to time, the village administrator and the chief's confidants asked brief, direct questions. When a woman was involved, the chief's Pughtiema usually listened to the proceedings from behind a wall and questioned her. When all the evidence was in, the chief either rendered his verdict without delay or retired to the zongo to confer with his confidants and the village administrator. He took the latter course whenever he felt that further discussion was necessary or that false testimony was confusing the issue. Not until he felt that he had the facts well in hand did he return to the court to render his verdict.

The Mossi did not use ordeals in court except in the "chastity trials" conducted by the Pwe Naba. Some litigants called upon the ancestors to kill them if they were not telling the truth; others went to earth shrines and drank an infusion of dust to show that they were not afraid of the spirits who wrought vengeance on the guilty. However, such acts were never carried out in court and thus were of no use to the chief.

The following case, tried in a district court in 1956, illustrates the Mossi

686 634 692 died while he was using it, the owner could not press any claims. However, the borrower was obliged to sell the animal's flesh and give the money to the owner along with the animal's skin as proof of its death. Under no circumstances would a district chief absolve a man from paying the market value of an animal if he failed to return the skin. Such failure would brand him as a thief and involve an additional fine.

685 The Mossi considered theft a major crime. A thief could be killed with [674] impunity if he was caught in the act and in the presence of several witnesses. If these conditions were not met but the man killed was known to have been a thief, the killer was fined several cows. But if he was known to have been a man of good character, the killer ran the risk of being executed. In this way, the Mossi tried to prevent any abuse of an accepted practice. The theft of grain and other foodstuffs was considered especially reprehensible, because it was held to indicate that the thief was so depraved 685 that he would not even grow his own food. During the rule of Naba Kag- 175 lere of Nobere district (1888–1906), a man called Yahiya left his own village of Donse and went to a village called Quitenga to steal sweet potatoes. The people of that village caught him in the act and shot him with a poisoned arrow as he made his escape. Yahiya died without revealing the source of his wound, and his babissi, suspecting foul play, asked Kaglere to investigate. When the Quitenga people learned of the investigation, they went forward voluntarily and reported the circumstances under which they had wounded Yahiya. Kaglere absolved them of all guilt and told the Donse people that Yahiya had deserved to die, not only because he had stolen food (which he might have received if he had asked for it), but because sweet potatoes were the easiest vegetable to cultivate.

685 A thief who was too clever to be caught in the act but who was apprehended afterwards was treated quite harshly by the Mossi court. Here, the [682] penalty of double indemnity was often applied. A man who was brought to court for stealing a chicken or guinea hen was fined a goat or a sheep. Hence the Mossi proverb "Zou noaga ronda bouga"—"He who steals a [696] chicken repays a goat." The thief who stole one cow had to return several. If a thief could not pay the fine, he was placed in stocks until his relatives paid for him. If they refused to do so, the chief's retainers seized their prop- [762] erty, sold it, and made restitution. This often compelled the family of a recidivous thief to make him commit suicide. If the family would not re- [634] sort to this, the district chief had the man seized and clubbed to death.[7] Sometimes the chief sent recidivists to the Mogho Naba, who sent them to a [568] village called Teemetenga to be made into eunuchs.[8]

[599] The Mossi seem to have made a distinction between theft and pillage—

567 part of the emperor's harem. The dapobi belonging to the canton chiefs, belonging to the kombemba, are of the same origin. While the Mogho Naba could not sell the dapobi of Kibissi origin, the emperor and the canton chiefs could do as they liked with the true dapobi. They were sold for the most trifling faults and their wives and children were either sent away with them or turned over to other deserving captives.

Slaves of the Crown. (a) The bangaré. These are Peulh captives who have gradually cast off the authority of their masters and who have submitted voluntarily to the authority of the Mogho Naba.

A herd of cattle is called nab'bangaré, and it seems likely that the word bangaré, "herd," to designate this type of slave came from that source. However, the bangaré are not solely former Peulh slaves since a free individual who has committed a serious crime in his [90] native village and fears reprisal comes to join the "herd."

Once presented to the Mogho Naba, they were henceforth considered slaves and, as such, immune from prosecution.

567 The principal bangaré villages, generally known as "independent
621 villages," are: Kaïbo (province of Gounga); Manghin, Zaanga (canton of Zorgongo); Zaon'pighin, Payaobtinga (canton of Boudry); Nabasnoghin (canton of Nedogo); Bangar'Nabilin (canton of Zorgo); Gandaogo (canton of Zoungou); Boumintoré, Sidtenga, Mandié, Bougoumbarga, etc.

567 The emperor could supply himself from these "herds" when-
681 ever the need arose. Any bangaré who had committed serious crimes or who had been denounced as dangerous individuals who spread disorder in the villages or committed robbery were castrated and made into eunuchs or sold by order of the emperor.

[582] The bangaré intermarry since no free Mossi father would give them a daughter in marriage. This is solely due to the fact that if the emperor decided to sell a bangaré, his family would share the same fate. The father of the wife would not intervene in such a case, because this might be dangerous for him. So it is easily understandable that, under these circumstances, no father would seek such a match.

567 Bangaré chiefs. The chiefs of bangaré villages [91] are ap-
622 pointed by the Mogho Naba. The villages themselves are free of any

567 them for kola nuts with the Açhanti [Ashanti] or for loaves of salt
439 at Timbuktu. Although they were always transported by roundabout routes to prevent them from finding their way back to their homes, still some of them always managed to escape.

492 The naba used the young yemdado as soroné or grooms, and
567 they would often [93] take the young and attractive women (yempoksé) as wives.

641 The sale of free men. Neither the emperor of the Mossi nor
681 his vassals sold their subjects. Individuals who were regarded as dangerous were simply put to death unless they took refuge in a bangaré to avoid being executed, as has been noted above. Some were sent to the emperor to be made into eunuchs.

304 The facial tattoos worn by the Mossi clearly distinguished them
567 from neighboring peoples. However, if by accident or because of
689 need a naba sold a free man and the latter was claimed by his relatives, the chief was required to buy back the slave or to indemnify his family. We have described above how a canton chief was exiled by the emperor for having sold free Mossi.

583 Concealed selling of women and children. In the chapter on
562 marriage customs among the Mossi we shall show that a native Moaga did not demand a bride price because he did not want to feel that
567 he was selling his daughter. There is no doubt that this rule has exceptions. Indeed, we shall show that the failure to pay a debt, a bout of drunkenness, or a favor received might suffice to mortgage the future of a daughter, even though at the time she might be a small child and quite unaware of her fate. In any event, there would be no question of her expressing any opinion, since her wishes are never taken into account. During periods of famine -- which have been
[731] occurring almost [94] regularly for some years -- a small basket of millet is enough to make a father promise his daughter. In the same way, we regret to say, a great many girls are promised in exchange for trifling sums at the time the poll tax is paid.

567 Rights of slaves. Since he is regarded as an inferior being, the yemdaogo (slave) has no well-defined rights. He is required to perform all kinds of domestic work and must give unquestioning obedience to his master and the master's family. Besides his essential duties, however, he is permitted to do some farming for himself, practice some trade, or to raise cattle, with the proceeds constituting

644 [101] It is to be noted that a gourdful of this water with
554 millet flour on which a bit of karite butter is floating is a custom-
576 ary courtesy offering among the Mossi. It is most improper to greet or to receive a stranger by offering him plain water.

644 On the fourth or fifth day the Djiba Naba proceeds to Zoanghna
782 (a village located two or three kilometers behind the government buildings) and there hands over a sheep and a cow to serve as offerings to the sacred amulets of the ancestors and to protect him from evil spirits and wicked people. He does not spend the night in this village but returns home immediately after the sacrifice.

644 Several days later the decision is made to install the new naba
788 in his domain. A large number of soroné, drummers, and followers accompany him on what amounts to a kind of obligatory pilgrimage which we shall describe briefly.

The following itinerary is customary.

First, the Djiba Naba goes to Badnogo where he spends the night. The next day he goes on to Samba where he is offered water with flour in it, and for his part, he gives salt to be shared among the old women of the village.

One may ask why salt is given to the old women and not to
[888] the other people. The Mossi call old women nough' pouk ramba, that is, those who, when blessing you, clasp their hands so as to make a higher power hear and grant their prayers.

644 [102] On the following day he proceeds to Tensobitenga
788 where he remains for three days. Beer is prepared for him; he is
431 given a cow for his followers and a wife for himself. At Nakamtenga, his next stop, the village chief welcomes him with a sheep and many baskets and bowls of sagbo (millet mush).

644 He does not remain here for the night but instead goes on to
788 Koubri. This is the village where eunuchs formerly suffered the cruel operation of castration (1). The canton chief meets him, leads

839 1. Eunuchs. Bandits, thieves, murderers,
304 and slaves or soroné (servitors) convicted
681 of adultery with women of the nobility were the only ones sent to Koubri, a canton in the circle of Ouagadougou, to be castrated. This operation involved only the removal

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of the testicles, until the day when a eunuch managed, no one knows how, to take advantage of some of the women he was supposed to be guarding. From then on it was deemed necessary to remove the penis completely, and a copper cartridge was inserted for purposes of urination.

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As soon as the person fainted after undergoing the operation, a drink was concocted whose ingredients are unknown. When he revived, he was so thirsty that he downed the drink in a single gulp. It is said that the drug stupefied the eunuch to such a degree that he would be incapable of taking vengeance even if he had any weapons at hand.

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It was only after he had completely recovered that the victim was sent to the Mogho Naba. The latter assigned him the duty of guarding a harem or a royal tomb.

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him to his house, seats him by his side, and announces to the populace that he has just been visited by his son (Koubri Naba is a descendant of the Mogho Naba).

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He then offers the crown prince a cow and a great deal of [103] beer, and then, before he leaves, the Djiba Naba has free access to the chief's household where he takes as a wife the first nubile girl he encounters. The stay at Koubri traditionally lasted for seven days, but it could be shortened to two or three in view of the great expense involved in entertaining a prince of such high rank, especially at the present time when the canton chiefs no longer enjoy their former prestige.

The Djiba Naba continues on his way to Kombissiri where he is the guest of the canton chief. For a week, in addition to his food which must, of course, be copious and abundant quantities of beer, the crown prince also receives a cow, a sheep, and, before his departure for Doulougou, a wife.

[i.e. canton chief — Analyst]

695 The procedure was the same for all, men and women. The sons
681 of nabas, the nakomsé, however, were neither tried nor punished in
554 public. They were not tied with ropes, but with strips of fabric; and if condemned to death, they were hanged rather than clubbed to death. In any case, complaints against them were extremely rare. The sons of a powerful naba could do anything with impunity.

681 For examples, here are a few crimes and their respective punishments. Of course, there was no written code, no formal scale of penalties. Everything depended on custom and on the whim of the judge. Thus, the wealthy could obtain sentences in their favor by
696 paying the judges, and thieves could avoid punishment by sharing
691 their loot with the naba. Otherwise, a thief caught in the act was
685 flogged, sometimes to death. He was condemned to several months in irons, and exposed to public ridicule before the naba's hut; he had to restore what he had taken, and his family was held responsible. If he repeated the offense, he was led to the marketplace with a rope around his neck; he was supplied with an abundance of meat and dolo /beer/, and then clubbed to death at the foot of a tree. In Ouagadougou he was sometimes made a eunuch instead. This was almost the equivalent of a death sentence, because the operation was carried out in such barbarous fashion that death often ensued. French justice more leniently imprisons the thieves, a cause of complaint by honest people who find the punishment too mild.

682 In case of willful murder, the killer was put to death; if he could
683 not be found, a member of his family was executed in his place.
672 In case of a brawl, no attempt was made to determine who had started the fight or who was in the right. (Manslaughter was punished by a fine paid to the victim's family. The right /26/ of self-defense was, of course, recognized. If blows and wounds had been inflicted, the adversaries were put in irons.)

681 Old women were often accused of being witches and of eating
683 children's souls. If their crime was considered proved, if the sorcerers consulted declared some old woman guilty of a baby's death, she was
888 put to death in very cruel fashion: a second opening was made in a clay pot so that her head could be put completely within it; then the pot was heated intensely and placed over the head of the unfortunate woman.

685 If a goat or sheep caused damage to a field, the animal could be killed on the spot. The owner had to be notified, but he was not

596 heir but to the oldest member of the family. Nothing is done without consulting the family head, and even if a member of the family occupies an important post, he continues to show the greatest deference toward his family head, his elder. This is why the present prime minister of Koupéla, the Saman'Naba, leaves the prerogatives of a family head to his uncle; he does not take the liberty of offering sacrifices on the Day of the Dead, and he consults his elder on all
596 matters which fall within his jurisdiction. The head of the family,
681 however, does not have the right of life or death over its members or over his own wives. Even if the latter steal or commit adultery, they may not be put to death; only the district chiefs may kill their own wives. A husband or family elder may beat them, put them in irons, or even more rarely /35/ turn them out of the household, but he may not kill them. Also, the family head may not dispose of the family property, nor force his kin to hand it over. He may, however, request his relatives to help him pay his debts or obtain a wife, but he may not force them to do so. Nevertheless, they always help him as best they can.

593 Children are directly subject to their father. While the latter
596 consults the family head whenever he must make a serious decision, the children consult their father, who in turn goes to the family head, who often goes to the village chief, who resorts to the canton chief, who consults the head of the province if the matter warrants it. Mature reflection thus precedes every serious decision.

593 The father is the absolute master of his children. He has the right of life or death over them, and sometimes he made use of this right, especially when a child was born deformed or became an incorrigible thief. He sees to the marriage of his daughters. He may exchange them for other women, or he may give them in marriage to a creditor in order to pay his debts. He may place his sons in the service of a relative or friend. The eldest son seldom remains in his father's household, especially if the father is wealthy or a naba; the father is too afraid that his son may do away with him, the sooner to come into his inheritance. To give one's son to another man is a convenient way to get rid of the problem of his marriage; it will become the concern of the boy's master.

861 Fathers take little part in the education of their children. Daughters always remain with their mothers until their marriage. Sons help their father as soon as they are old enough to work, but they never

635 The Ouidi-naba answered: "Naba, you may do as you desire." The ruler
631 then said, "Under these conditions I will designate the eldest son of the late chief as the new Kombéré because his father has never forgotten me, or gave me any trouble when he was alive. It will not be good to reject his son." The ministers then called the heir and put the following question to him three times: "Before his death, did your father designate anyone to replace him as chief?" The heir replied three times: "No! My father did not designate anyone. You may name anyone you wish; even if he is a blind man or a leper." The heir was then given a bonnet, the symbol of
[778] the *nam*, and made to swear on drinking the Tibo, a ritual potion, that if he ever betrayed the ruler, may the Tibo kill him. Thereafter, all the members of the new chief's lineage swore to respect and obey him.

635 The power and function of the Kombéré were similar to those of the Moro-naba, but on a much reduced scale. As the person who had received
631 the *nam* from the Moro-naba, he was supreme in his district, subject only
578 to his obligation to the head ruler. These obligations included the customary gifts and aid in warfare. There is some evidence that many of the Kombérés were lax in paying this tribute and rendering homage to the Moro-naba and consequently were punished or killed. Naba Warga fought a five-year-long civil war against a rebellious vassal before the rebel was killed, and Naba Wobogo was engaged in a three-year civil war with one of his vassals when the French arrived in the country. It is not clear whether the Moro-naba was able to prevent or stop war between his vassals over strayed cattle or stolen women. The Mossi in the district of Nobéré said that the Moro-naba did not often know when neighboring villages were at war. These wars did not involve the loss of territories by the districts, since it was ritually forbidden for one district chief to take lands from another.

631 The district chiefs had ministers who helped them administer the districts. These ministers were descendants of the sons of the Moro-naba's ministers who accompanied the first district chief when he took up his fief. They had control of several villages and they channeled goods and services from the villages to the district heads. The hierarchy of command was also strictly observed on this level, and a village chief who had disputes with other village chiefs, or who had important cases to be judged, was required always to be accompanied by his minister when he visited the district chief. This official could put any man into stocks for
[681 serious crimes, but he could authorize the death only of commoners. It
565] must be pointed out, however, that in many cases the district chief usurped the rights of the Moro-naba, and had a troublesome noble secretly strangled. The district chief, like the Moro-naba, could not be deposed; he was often forced to commit suicide or met death by foul play or in open civil war. The people in the district reacted to an unjust ruler by leaving his territories.

The village chiefs held their fiefs directly from the district chiefs, and

681 As far as penalties were concerned, Mossi justice was stern and thus ran counter to the "patriarchal" justice of the Bobo, Gourounsi, etc. Murder was always punished by death (except in the case of nobles). As for thefts, physical aggression, and matters involving debts, they were adjusted in the manner described when we discussed the Yarsé, who were subject to Mossi justice since they were settled in their territory /not translated/. [754] We shall not, therefore, go over this again. Let us merely note that the Mossi, being fetishists, were familiar with matters of sorcery.

695 754 At Dembo, in the Yatenga area, when a young person died suddenly, "red powder" would be mixed in water and everyone would drink of it while swearing by Tensé /Tr.: the earth deities/ that he was innocent. The culprits would die. In other villages of the Yatenga area, people suspected of dealing in sorcery had to drink earth taken from the spot where sacrifices were performed and diluted in water. Those /581/ who refused to drink and swear were killed. At Kabayoro, a Mossi village located in the canton of Koumbili, if a man or woman suddendly ill, it was said that it was So-and-So, a sorcerer, who had eaten the soul. If the sick person died, his hands were washed with water and the liquid was given to the sorcerer to drink. He had to swear his innocence and invoke death unto himself if he should lie. If guilty he died; if innocent the water did him no harm. If he refused to swear and drink, he was put in irons and left there to die of hunger and thirst. The bara /soothsayer/ played no role in such occurrences. It was the sick person who pointed out the sorcerer. If the patient failed to designate someone, however, this meant that he was simply dying of [761] illness.

701 Now for the army and police. "In case of war," says Moulins, "the province chiefs summoned the canton chiefs, who hastened forth with all their able-bodied men. They all gathered behind the Tamsaba and followed him.

625 "As for policing, it was taken care of by village and canton chiefs, who arrested culprits with the help of their own followers, or, if necessary, by summoning the whole male population of the village."

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28

The Mogho Naba had an elaborate court composed of many officials, relatives, and servants. The most important courtiers were the five ministers, who appeared daily at court and took part in all important ceremonies in addition to administering their own provinces. Aside from these men, the Mogho Naba had a number of other officials called Naba whose responsibilities covered the full range of duties in the palace and in the capital. One of the most interesting was the Pwe Naba, a royal diviner and court chaperon. His chief duty was to guard the morals of the pages and the royal wives; he also administered the ordeal to persons accused of treason. The pages were required to be chaste until they were discharged from the palace, lest their amorous adventures lead them to compromise the virtue of the royal wives, with whom they were constantly in contact. A wife and a page suspected of adultery were tested by the Pwe Naba. He forced them to look into a mirror or a calabash of water, and declared them guilty or innocent according to the way their faces were reflected. If they were found guilty, the wife was executed and the page was either executed or discharged in disgrace. The Pwe Naba also saw to it that strangers did not address the ruler's wives either on the street or in the market. Offenders were executed.

The Dapore Naba served as the court's chief executioner and as head of a group of the Mogho Naba's hereditary serfs. Members of the royal clan were executed by strangulation, since royal blood could not be shed; all other persons were executed either with a sword, by hanging, or with heavy clubs. Another palace official was the Ouedrango Naba, the head groom. It was he who saddled and presented the king's ceremonial horse to him at the morning ceremony. The Kambo Naba commanded the palace guard; only he and his guards were permitted to carry guns. The Samande Naba and the Samande Nabila supervised the work of the samande-kamba, young men who worked around the palace courtyard and kept watch with heavy batons to enforce order during ceremonies. A lesser palace official was the Zusoaba Kasanga, who, as chief of the palace eunuchs, ruled over the guardians of the royal harem. The Gande Naba made sacrifices for the ruler and also distributed gifts from the king to the royal officials and the royal household.

Another courtier, and one who played an important role during the installation of the new ruler, was the Ouagadougou Naba. As a direct descendant of the Ninisi, he was all but indispensable at sacrifices propitiating or honoring his ancestors. The Bendere Naba was the chief musician and court historian; according to some reports, a Bendere Naba was killed instantly if he made a mistake while reciting the ruler's genealogy. The Raga Naba was chief of the markets in the capital. Under him were

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V

LAW AND THE JUDICIAL PROCESS

671 THE Mossi possessed a comprehensive body of rules governing human conduct. These rules were well known to the people, and violators were punished by the responsible authorities. The Mossi might be said to have had substantive law, but they had no written codes. Nevertheless, the lack of written codes does not warrant Mangin's blanket criticism of Mossi judicial processes: "Of course, there was no written code, no formal scale of penalties. Everything depended on custom and on the whim of the judge. [662] Thus, the wealthy could obtain sentences in their favor by paying the judges, and thieves could avoid punishment by sharing their loot with the Naba."[1] Custom did dictate the penalties, just as "written custom" dictates penalties [692] in all written legal codes. But, as we shall see, the Mossi did have a known [695] scale of penalties. Moreover, a Mossi judge had to be careful in rendering judgment, because his decisions could be reviewed by a higher court.

596 The head of the Mossi extended family, the *Yirisoba,* was responsible for the everyday conduct of his charges. It was his duty to settle all family 681 quarrels, and to punish persons guilty of theft within the compound, disrespect toward elders, and incest. Punishment for the lesser wrongs included 596 reprimands and floggings. A person found guilty of disrespect to the elders 683 or of incest could be banished from the group. But banishment was so severe 684 that it was imposed only if the criminal refused to make the usual conciliatory gestures and was condemned by all the members of his boodoo. Even after this condemnation, however, he could ask a "sister's son," a yagenga, [613] to intercede for him. This man, the son of a female lineage member, had many privileges within his mother's brother's lineage, including the right to mediate between an exile and his boodoo.

593 Amicable relations within the family group were most often disrupted 586 by conjugal difficulties. A Mossi husband could occasionally flog an erring 613 wife, but he was not allowed to maltreat her. When a man became disgusted with his wife and wished to repudiate her, he put her water pots in the compound yard. This rather serious action often led to hostile relations

between the lineages concerned. If either the repudiated woman or a member of her husband's lineage wished to initiate a reconciliation, she or he had to summon a yagenga. He alone was permitted to reconcile the couple after the pots had been placed in the courtyard. When a woman felt that she was being maltreated by her husband, she usually fled to her own patrilineage and waited for her husband's patrilineage—usually his brothers—to visit her male relatives and discuss the case. If the woman was judged guilty, she was reprimanded and sometimes flogged by her own relatives for causing trouble between the two lineages, and then sent home to her husband. However, if the man was found guilty, his wife was returned to him, but he was warned that he would forfeit all rights to her if he maltreated her again. A man who lost his wife through repeated maltreatment could not take the matter to court, because chiefs usually refused to deal with purely domestic issues. His only recourse was to induce one of his lineage brothers to recall a daughter who had married into his wife's lineage. This act was usually sufficient to bring about the reconciliation of the estranged couple before innocent persons were hurt.

The Mossi made every effort to solve minor problems without recourse to the chiefs. The local Boodkasemdamba and lineage elders adjudicated quarrels and simple offenses involving members of minimal segments in the various village saghse. They even tried to resolve difficulties between lineage members of larger segments who lived in different villages. The elders often imposed punishments such as reprimands, floggings, and even banishment. The convicted person did not usually appeal to the chief, because he knew that the chief would advise him to settle his problem within the family.

Unrelated villagers also tried to settle difficulties among themselves without appealing to the chief. For example, a man who was caught stealing could be beaten or even killed by his intended victims, and the chief did not punish them for their action. In many cases, villagers simply took the thief back to his relatives, knowing they would punish him. Occasionally, a family disgraced by a thieving member forced him to kill himself. When this happened the chief held an inquest but took no other action.

The Mossi gave a fairly simple explanation for returning a thief to his relatives for punishment. They said that every family had "weak" members, and that by not harming the captured thief they were only protecting themselves against retaliation if one of their own relatives should commit a similar crime. But a more important reason seems to have been their fear of starting a feud that might result in the premeditated murder of a man and the subsequent execution of his murderer.

The one crime that invoked terrible unofficial sanctions was rape. If the

682 found to have been justified—that is, if the victim was a thief or a nocturnal intruder—then the accused was acquitted or simply fined. If, however, the 682 accused was found guilty of murder, he was sentenced to die, and the mode 696 of execution was at the chief's pleasure. The chief surrendered the prisoner to his executioners, serfs who lived in the Baglere ward. They took him into the woods and carried out the sentence by strangulation, hanging, decapitation, clubbing, or stoning.

696 The perpetrator of an unusually heinous crime was often ordered to kill himself with a poisoned arrow. This form of execution was feared most, because it tested the murderer's mettle and called into play the [634] coercive force of his lineage if he proved to be a coward. When such an execution was ordered, the district chief had a poisoned arrow prepared and brought to the murderer's father, his brother, or his father's brother's son. The relative gave the arrow to the condemned man, and, while apologizing for his painful mission, explained that the crime had to be expiated. If the murderer agreed to kill himself, his relatives prepared food and drink for [766] him while his grave was dug. Some proud and brave men helped their relatives dig the oblong-shaped grave required for a murderer; some even insisted on digging it themselves. When both the food and the grave had been prepared, the murderer bade his relatives farewell, took the food and the poisoned arrow, and went into a hut. Here he ate the food and after- 696 ward killed himself by pushing the poisoned arrow into his leg. In some cases he had to be provided with a second arrow to hasten his death. If a 626 cowardly murderer refused to kill himself, one of his relatives offered to 613 die in his stead. He told the murderer that death was preferable to the knowledge that his lineage brother was a coward. What would happen, he asked the murderer, if he saw a relative being harmed? Would he choose his own safety rather than run the risk of death? The other relatives asked the same questions, and this subtle coercion was usually sufficient to induce the most cowardly man to kill himself. There are no reports of a murderer's permitting a relative to die for him; life would have been impossible for him afterward. One suspects that if ever a murderer had attempted to elude his fate, the district chief would have had him executed.

634 The district court also prescribed capital punishment for individuals ● 681 convicted of arson, abduction, witchcraft, or lese majesty. A person con- [685] victed of willfully setting fire to someone's hut or crops was put to death even if no one was killed in the resulting fire; he was held to have [683] jeopardized the life and livelihood of his victims. Similarly, the rare person convicted of threatening the well-being of others through the practice of [695] witchcraft was usually tortured and killed. Conviction usually followed the testimony of witnesses or the confession of the accused.

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The torture was seen as a punishment, and not as a form of ordeal to ascertain guilt or innocence. It was designed to cause the culprit as much suffering as possible before he died, and its harshness reflects the Mossi fear of witches and witchcraft. In one form of punishment called *koudgilga*, the culprit was sent to the smith, who tortured him by placing hot iron balls in both his hands. He was then beaten to death. Another type of punishment called *swengalenga* was more painful. A pottery jar from which the bottom had been removed was heated in a fire. Then it was placed over the head of the convicted witch and allowed to burn its way down onto his shoulders. The culprit was subsequently killed. Sometimes a convicted witch was not killed; instead, a man was sent to Ouagadougou to be castrated and sold as a eunuch, and a woman was sold outside the country as a slave.

Gross disrespect toward the chief and crimes of lese majesty were uncommon among the Mossi. These crimes were usually committed by persons who came into close contact with the chief—nobles and court retainers—rather than by commoners, serfs, or slaves. The most common form of lese majesty was adultery with one of the district chief's wives. The penalty for this was death for both violators. Anyone who dared insult the district chief at court was seized and executed. The same fate awaited those who talked about him maliciously in public or threatened to stir a rebellion against him. If the culprits were commoners, they were executed; if they were nobles, they were strangled in secret or were forced to commit suicide.

The district chief was caught in a dilemma whenever nobles committed major crimes or unlawful acts. They could not be imprisoned, and only the Mogho Naba had the legal prerogative to execute them. When a noble committed a major crime such as treason or rebellion, he was sent to the capital to be executed by slaves, who strangled him with a piece of cotton cloth. However, no district chief could allow the nobles to commit crimes with impunity, secure in the knowledge that they could only be punished at Ouagadougou. If a nobleman subverted the chief's rule by repeated acts of cruelty and brigandage, he was executed, although illegally. The executioners were the Baglere Naba and the Dapore Naba. These two men secretly visited the condemned noble, taking with them a bundle as a present from the chief. This bundle contained a new white robe in which were secreted a chief's bonnet and a poisoned arrow. As soon as the noble saw the gift, he knew that he was being ordered to kill himself. If he attempted to raise an alarm or run away, he was instantly strangled and his body was discarded in the bush. If he accepted the sentence, he was allowed to have food prepared, to eat, and then to kill himself. The chief ordered an elaborate funeral for his kinsman as though he had died an ordinary death. Thus, he was able to observe all the proprieties while at the same

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 695

litigants when it would be heard. On the day set he took his charges to 643
court, where they waited in the company of the litigants from other districts 692
and from the wards of the capital itself. 634

The procedure of the Mogho Naba's court differed little from that of the district chief's court. When called upon, the litigant stated his case, called witnesses, and underwent cross-examination by his opponents and by ministers of the Mogho Naba. The litigants were not allowed to look at the Mogho Naba while they spoke, but had to kneel forward on the ground with their faces turned away from him. The Mogho Naba himself seldom looked at the litigants and rarely questioned them. When presented with a complex case, the Mogho Naba, like the district chief, retired with his councillors and canvassed their opinion in order "to ascertain whether or not their verdicts were similar to his own." Nevertheless, he could not follow their advice. He had to make up his own mind, and when he returned to court he rendered his verdict, which could not be appealed. If those who received an unfavorable verdict showed any displeasure, they were taken outside by the palace guards and executed.

The penalties imposed by the Ouagadougou court were usually more severe than those handed down at the district level. The main reason for this was that aside from cases involving residents of Ouagadougou, the lawsuits tried by the Mogho Naba were serious ones and often had been sent to him on appeal. Moreover, the Mogho Naba's court was alone em- [681]
powered to impose the death penalty within the kingdom of Ouagadougou. It should be noted here once more that district chiefs often executed criminals. But it should also be reiterated that the Mogho Naba never surrendered his prerogative to the district chiefs. They simply usurped it, and if they used it judiciously they were not penalized.

Those nobles and commoners who were convicted for serious crimes at 643
the monarch's court were killed by the royal executioners. Moreover, in 696
contrast to the procedure at the district court, the criminal's property was 692
often seized before his execution. The reason for this is not clear, but it 634
was probably related to the lack of a personal relationship between the court and the relatives of the accused, which enabled the Mogho Naba to impose a harsher penalty. The district chief, it must be remembered, lived in close association with his people and was influenced in his behavior by social relationships. Interestingly enough, the Mogho Naba did not keep the goods seized, but allowed them to be distributed among his executioners.

Crimes against the person or office of the Mogho Naba were punished [687]
with greater severity than crimes against the district chief. Any man who was seen speaking to one of the ruler's wives and who did not happen to

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15. *Ibid.*, p. 673.
16. Delafosse, II, 128–29.
17. Binger, II, 502.
18. Crozat, p. 4849.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 4822.

20. The structure of the Mossi kingdoms and their relationship with the autonomous principalities make it difficult to determine the exact number of districts within each unit. For example, the Mossi people always claimed that the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou was sovereign over "333" chiefs (cf. Binger, I, 502). However, since the Mossi always associate the number 3 with males, any number giving a multiple of threes is suspect. Binger stated that some of the chiefs referred to as part of the 333 were no more than village chiefs. However, Tauxier (*Le Noir du Soudan*, p. 567), describing the kingdom of Ouagadougou, states, "At the top of this hierarchy is the king, the Mogho Naba, paramount chief of the Mossi, residing at Ouagadougou. To give at least an idea of the relative importance of this empire, without going further than, say, the cercle of Ouagadougou, there were eight provinces comprising 300 *cantons* [districts], 5,000 villages or small towns, and 861,700 inhabitants."

While voicing the myth that the Mogho Naba had "under his control 333 chiefs or Nabas," Dim Delobson actually gives only about 150 chiefs in his list of district and other chiefs (pp. 46, 288–97). It was impossible for me to get any idea of the number of chiefs, because the Mossi hierarchy has changed radically since 1905.

21. Dim Delobson, p. 63.
22. Cheron, "Contribution," p. 651.
23. The Mossi did not acknowledge the defeat of Mogho Naba Wobogo by the French until the Ouidi Naba surrendered to the invaders and installed a ruler they had chosen.
24. Archives, Document 1G-334. Lambert describes Karfo as "a curious figure who unfortunately is not well known."
25. Binger, I, 465.
26. Dim Delobson, pp. 15–45, *passim*.
27. It appears that the monarchs found fault with their district chiefs most readily when they had sons or other relatives in need of districts to govern. Since a possessor of the nam could not be deprived of it while alive, he had to be accused of some crime and executed. Koabga was replaced as Doulougou Naba by Lassanne Congo (called Naba Kouliga), a son of the Mogho Naba. On the other hand, when Naba Pusha of Nobere district fled rather than commit suicide or start a civil war, he was replaced by his own brother, who became Naba Soulougou.
28. Dim Delobson, p. 44.
29. Cheron, "Contribution," p. 655.

CHAPTER FIVE

1. Mangin, p. 25.
2. Mangin does not discuss rape, but reported that an "abductor" was beaten and put in irons. The girl was returned to her family, and if she gave birth to a child, it was killed (pp. 26–27).
3. Dim Delobson, p. 55.
4. Most of my informants state quite clearly that the district chiefs did not have the right to impose the death penalty, but could do so if they were discreet about it and did not take advantage of their subjects. But Dim Delobson states: "Contrary to what people generally believe, the Kombere—the chief of the *canton* [district]—also had the power of life and death over his subjects. How many persons have been put to death only because they were wealthy? How many village chiefs have been killed by the district chiefs in their territories without the Mogho Naba's intervention?" (pp. 55–56).
5. Dim Delobson (p. 56) insists that justice was free of charge, but added that

567 control by the canton chiefs in whose territories they are located.
622 The inhabitants pay nothing to the kombéré nor can the chief require any labor service in his fields or for the upkeep of his houses. They recognize only the Mogho Naba as chief.

567 Kamboinsé. True Kamboinsé are not Mossi; they came from the west during the reign of Naba Waraga (nineteenth successor of Oubri). Like the dapobi of the Dapoya section they came with guns (their chief even had a [ceremonial] stool) to put themselves under the authority of the Mogho Naba. Their chief, Gambaré by name, told the emperor that they had come to offer themselves as soldiers and slaves to help him pacify his territory. The Kamboinsé occupy a section of the town behind the Catholic mission on the right side of the road to Pô.

When the emperor's native gunners found themselves faced with competition from foreigners, they countered by appointing their own chief who took the title of Kamboin Naba. They are, however, different from the true Kamboinsé, and they live a dozen or so kilometers from Ouagadougou in the villages of Kamboinsé and Wobrigré.

While the first-mentioned Kamboinsé are voluntary slaves, the others are true slaves captured in war or bought by the emperor.

567 426 [92] Use of slaves as security for debt. Captives might be used to settle debts. It should be noted that the right to own slaves was not limited to the emperor and his vassals. Any prosperous Moaga (dakangré) might own them.

[612] If the head of a household died leaving debts, the heirs could sell a few slaves to pay off the obligation. If, however, the creditor preferred to have the slaves, the latter were put up for appraisal just as though they were livestock.

In the same way, slaves could be traded for horses, garments, or even loads of kola nuts.

567 If slaves were maltreated by their owners, providing that the latter were not of the nobility, they could put themselves under the protection of the naba. In that event they ceased to belong to their former owners. On the other hand, if a Moaga took it upon himself [682] to kill a slave, he at once had to pay a fine of 100,000 cowries to his canton chief as a blood price.

567 439 Ordinarily, captives who were brought back from the wars were at once sold to the Haoussa [Hausa] or Yarcé [Yarse] who traded

695 The procedure was the same for all, men and women. The sons
681 of nabas, the nakomsé, however, were neither tried nor punished in
554 public. They were not tied with ropes, but with strips of fabric; and if condemned to death, they were hanged rather than clubbed to death. In any case, complaints against them were extremely rare. The sons of a powerful naba could do anything with impunity.

681 For examples, here are a few crimes and their respective punishments. Of course, there was no written code, no formal scale of penalties. Everything depended on custom and on the whim of the judge. Thus, the wealthy could obtain sentences in their favor by
696 paying the judges, and thieves could avoid punishment by sharing
691 their loot with the naba. Otherwise, a thief caught in the act was
685 flogged, sometimes to death. He was condemned to several months in irons, and exposed to public ridicule before the naba's hut; he had to restore what he had taken, and his family was held responsible. If he repeated the offense, he was led to the marketplace with a rope around his neck; he was supplied with an abundance of meat and dolo /beer/, and then clubbed to death at the foot of a tree. In Ouagadougou he was sometimes made a eunuch instead. This was almost the equivalent of a death sentence, because the operation was carried out in such barbarous fashion that death often ensued. French justice more leniently imprisons the thieves, a cause of complaint by honest people who find the punishment too mild.

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685 If a goat or sheep caused damage to a field, the animal could be killed on the spot. The owner had to be notified, but he was not

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The newly elected monarch secreted himself either at the Samande Nabila's home or elsewhere in the capital until daybreak. Tradition holds that if he were killed before being officially proclaimed before his subjects as the new ruler, the assassin could become Mogho Naba.[19] 643 [682]

The public ceremonies marking the official proclamation of the new ruler's accession to power took place on the following day. Early that morning, the monarch left his secret sleeping quarters and proceeded to the Koumbi Naba's house. Here he dressed in his white garments and mounted an old, unsaddled horse. The Baloum Naba then gave him a sack containing the namtibo, which he placed over his shoulder, and the Kaizi Naba led him out of the courtyard by the women's door. As the ruler's horse passed through the gate, his sister, the *Napoko* ("female ruler"), cried, "The sun has reappeared! The fire is relighted! The earth lives again!" A large crowd of musicians and warriors who had been alerted by the ministers shouted and danced as they accompanied the monarch, who circled the compound three times.[20] The ruler then reentered the compound, and this time he came out through the men's door as a sign of his full status. Here he was greeted by the Ouidi Naba, who proclaimed in a loud voice, "Mossi people, here is the Mogho Naba!" The warriors shouted and fired their muskets, and the musicians played. Then all the dignitaries and their followers solemnly prostrated themselves and paid homage and swore allegiance to their monarch. He, in turn, listened attentively when his ministers and some of the elder chiefs gave him advice about how the affairs of state should be conducted. After each declaration of loyalty or word of counsel, the people shouted in praise of their ruler. The Bendere Naba, accompanied by his musicians, then recited the ruler's genealogy, announced the pledges the new monarch had made to his people, and acclaimed him by his royal title, "Mogho Naba [X]." From this moment on, no child born during his reign could bear the ruler's name, and those persons who already bore it called themselves *Nab'yure* ("king's name"). 643 796 [645] [644] [551]

As the next stage in the ceremony the Mogho Naba, accompanied by his retinue, visited the various wards in the capital. In each he was proclaimed ruler and received the allegiance of both Mossi and non-Mossi ward chiefs. He visited the wards controlled by such men as the Loumbila Naba, the Sapone Naba, and the Ouagadougou Naba, and at each stop the ward chief declared, "People of [X], here is your new sovereign." Having been acknowledged by the leading chiefs of the capital, the new ruler then returned to his host's house. He emerged later in the day to visit the compound of a palace attendant, the Samande Nabila, where he sat under a 643 [621] [641] 643 641

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He was also liable to be put in stocks for 684
several days, and when released he was warned against visiting the local 692
markets, where he might be tempted to renew his illicit relations. A noble- 634
man convicted of adultery was often merely warned or fined, since his [696]
movements could not be restricted. But if a man caught his wife and an- [682]
other man in *flagrante delicto* and killed them, his act was considered justifiable homicide (even if the slain man was a noble), and he went free. If, however, he killed the lover but spared his wife, he had to send her to the chief's household. Here she was made to perform hard work under the supervision of the palace guards until it was believed that she had reformed. A man who was experiencing difficulties with an unfaithful wife and feared he might eventually kill her or her paramour also sent her to the chief's compound for a few months.

The Mossi have always been great creditors and debtors, and cases con- 686
cerning indebtedness seem to have been next in frequency at the district 692
court. The chief usually dismissed cases of indebtedness brought against 634
minors, because it was considered unseemly for adults to give credit or to loan valuable property to youths not yet of age. Thus, if the minor's family refused to make restitution, the creditor usually had no redress. However, [613]
if a woman borrowed property and refused to return it, her husband's lineage was held responsible. Similarly, if an adult male borrowed anything and refused to return it or to do so on time, the case was taken to the local court and eventually to the district court. The creditor was asked to supply witnesses to the loan, and if the chief was satisfied that the loan had been made under the conditions specified, the debtor was ordered to make restitution. If the debtor claimed bankruptcy, the chief ordered that his goods be seized and sold, and that restitution be made to the creditor. If the debtor 686
was truly destitute, his relatives were compelled to pay his debts. The col- 692
lective responsibility of the babissi for the debts of its members was seen 634
most clearly in cases where men died in a state of indebtedness. The credi- 613
tors were allowed to summon the debtor's babissi to court, and if proof of the debt was established, the relatives were compelled to repay. If they failed to do so, the chief's police seized and sold their goods to repay the debt.

Cases dealing with violations of civil contracts were somewhat similar. 686
The Mossi did not believe in the axiom *caveat emptor*. If a man sold an 634
animal that died within a week for no apparent reason, the chief ordered 692
an investigation. If it was found that the animal had been ill when sold, the chief ordered that the buyer be reimbursed. If the investigation showed that the animal had been healthy when sold, no restitution was made. Similarly, if a man borrowed an ass or an ox to transport goods and the animal

a practice whereby nobles deprived commoners of their property. Those 685
nobles who lived among commoners quite often confiscated their neigh- 579
bors' property. But this was not regarded as theft and was not punishable 565
as such, although a rapacious nobleman could be sanctioned for terrorizing and "spoiling" a village. If a nobleman was caught performing an act that *was* considered theft, or if he was accused and found guilty of theft, he was severely punished. During Kaglere's reign, the people of a small village 686
suffered a series of livestock thefts. One day, while the friends of a village 685
chief were sitting with him, a dog came out of the chief's compound 622
dragging an animal skin. The men recognized the skin as that described for a stolen goat, and decided to investigate. In the chief's courtyard they discovered the hole from which the dog had unearthed the skin. They also found the skins of several other stolen animals. The villagers took the [692]
village chief to the district chief, who found him guilty and exiled him [634]
from the region. In passing judgment, the district chief told him that he had been elected "to care for the village," but that he had betrayed his trust by robbing his own people.

According to Mossi law, willful homicide or murder was punishable by 682
execution. The Mossi did not use wergild or "blood money," but insisted on the *lex talionis,* which they interpreted as "a life for a life." They did not believe that money or any other valuables could compensate for the life of a man, nor would they allow a slave to be executed in place of the murderer. They believed that only by executing the murderer himself could they prevent his victim's relatives from resorting to vengeance and thus "spoiling" the district or village.

A man who grievously wounded another was apprehended, bound, and taken to the village chief and subsequently to the district chief. Here he was [696]
kept in stocks in the serfs' quarter without being tried until his victim either died or recovered. If his victim recovered and the judge found that the wound had been inflicted accidentally, the defendant was fined or had his goods confiscated, but he was released. If the judge found that the victim had been wounded in a fair fight, the prisoner was usually censured and dismissed. The chief often warned the wounded man that he ought to have lived up to the Mossi axiom that a grown man is always able to protect himself. If, however, the trial revealed that the prisoner had ambushed his victim with the intent to kill, he either was fined several cows or had his entire property confiscated. District chiefs are known to have executed [634]
the perpetrators of cowardly ambushes even though their victims recovered. [696]

If a man died at the hands of another, an inquest was held immediately. If the killing had been accidental or committed in self-defense, or if it was

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755 must be procured. The leaf used to cover a wound must be held by means of a thin cotton cord with cowries attached at the end, three cowries for a boy, four for a girl. A hemp cord with three or four knots, worn around the neck, wrist, or any other part of the body, prevents swelling of that part and is also a master remedy against hair worms. Sometimes it is not so easy to secure the prescribed amulet, for instance, if it is the beak or claw of a hawk, a deer horn, or certain parts of a buffalo or koba. The poor Mossi goes to great pains to find this indispensable amulet.

763 Do as he may, sooner or later he must die. When an old man feels that his end is near, he calls his family and gives them his last instructions. He talks to his eldest son and tells him where his cattle and caches are to be found, who are his debtors and creditors. Sometimes death comes swiftly without warning, and the old man has no time to talk to his heir; a large part of the fortune is thus lost, because a Mossi in good health never tells anybody, especially not his /68/ children, where his property is, and those to whom he has entrusted it do not return it. Some Peul have made rather nice profits in this fashion.

761 The death of a young man or woman or more especially that of a small child is usually ascribed to an old woman who is said to have 754 eaten the child's soul, and some old women claim to have this secret. [683] The sorcerer points out the guilty woman who is seized and put to death. Every sudden or accidental death is ascribed to an evil spirit, and the funeral ceremonies reflect this.

762 Suicide is extremely rare, but it does occur. Here is one case where we knew the participants. A man quarreled with his wife. The wife, who was stronger than her husband, overwhelmed him in the fight, and the neighbors openly ridiculed him. The following day the husband was found hanging in his hut. A pit was hastily dug [766] in his nearest field, and he was tossed into it naked without further ceremony. Suicide is regarded as a criminal act, and even the corpse is punished for it.

763 Like all human beings, the Mossi fear death. No longer to eat millet mush or to drink dolo seems to them the greatest of misfortunes. Still, when a Mossi sees death approaching, he resigns himself to it and accepts it stoically. He rests his head on the lap of his first wife, and his other wives gather around him. His friends and the village elders sit before the soukala, and all wait silently for hours until the

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[P.78]

V

LAW AND THE JUDICIAL PROCESS

671 THE Mossi possessed a comprehensive body of rules governing human conduct. These rules were well known to the people, and violators were punished by the responsible authorities. The Mossi might be said to have had substantive law, but they had no written codes. Nevertheless, the lack of written codes does not warrant Mangin's blanket criticism of Mossi judicial processes: "Of course, there was no written code, no formal scale of penalties. Everything depended on custom and on the whim of the judge. [662] Thus, the wealthy could obtain sentences in their favor by paying the judges, and thieves could avoid punishment by sharing their loot with the Naba."[1] Custom did dictate the penalties, just as "written custom" dictates penalties [692] in all written legal codes. But, as we shall see, the Mossi did have a known [695] scale of penalties. Moreover, a Mossi judge had to be careful in rendering judgment, because his decisions could be reviewed by a higher court.

596 The head of the Mossi extended family, the *Yirisoba,* was responsible 681 for the everyday conduct of his charges. It was his duty to settle all family quarrels, and to punish persons guilty of theft within the compound, disrespect toward elders, and incest. Punishment for the lesser wrongs included 596 reprimands and floggings. A person found guilty of disrespect to the elders 683 or of incest could be banished from the group. But banishment was so severe 684 that it was imposed only if the criminal refused to make the usual conciliatory gestures and was condemned by all the members of his boodoo. Even after this condemnation, however, he could ask a "sister's son," a yagenga, [613] to intercede for him. This man, the son of a female lineage member, had many privileges within his mother's brother's lineage, including the right to mediate between an exile and his boodoo.

593 Amicable relations within the family group were most often disrupted 586 by conjugal difficulties. A Mossi husband could occasionally flog an erring 613 wife, but he was not allowed to maltreat her. When a man became disgusted with his wife and wished to repudiate her, he put her water pots in the compound yard. This rather serious action often led to hostile relations

682 found to have been justified—that is, if the victim was a thief or a nocturnal intruder—then the accused was acquitted or simply fined. If, however, the 682 accused was found guilty of murder, he was sentenced to die, and the mode 696 of execution was at the chief's pleasure. The chief surrendered the prisoner to his executioners, serfs who lived in the Baglere ward. They took him into the woods and carried out the sentence by strangulation, hanging, decapitation, clubbing, or stoning.

696 The perpetrator of an unusually heinous crime was often ordered to kill himself with a poisoned arrow. This form of execution was feared most, because it tested the murderer's mettle and called into play the [634] coercive force of his lineage if he proved to be a coward. When such an execution was ordered, the district chief had a poisoned arrow prepared and brought to the murderer's father, his brother, or his father's brother's son. The relative gave the arrow to the condemned man, and, while apologizing for his painful mission, explained that the crime had to be expiated. If the murderer agreed to kill himself, his relatives prepared food and drink for [766] him while his grave was dug. Some proud and brave men helped their relatives dig the oblong-shaped grave required for a murderer; some even insisted on digging it themselves. When both the food and the grave had been prepared, the murderer bade his relatives farewell, took the food and the poisoned arrow, and went into a hut. Here he ate the food and after- 696 ward killed himself by pushing the poisoned arrow into his leg. In some cases he had to be provided with a second arrow to hasten his death. If a 626 cowardly murderer refused to kill himself, one of his relatives offered to 613 die in his stead. He told the murderer that death was preferable to the knowledge that his lineage brother was a coward. What would happen, he asked the murderer, if he saw a relative being harmed? Would he choose his own safety rather than run the risk of death? The other relatives asked the same questions, and this subtle coercion was usually sufficient to induce the most cowardly man to kill himself. There are no reports of a murderer's permitting a relative to die for him; life would have been impossible for him afterward. One suspects that if ever a murderer had attempted to elude his fate, the district chief would have had him executed.

634 The district court also prescribed capital punishment for individuals 681 convicted of arson, abduction, witchcraft, or lese majesty. A person con- [685] victed of willfully setting fire to someone's hut or crops was put to death even if no one was killed in the resulting fire; he was held to have [683] jeopardized the life and livelihood of his victims. Similarly, the rare person convicted of threatening the well-being of others through the practice of [695] witchcraft was usually tortured and killed. Conviction usually followed the testimony of witnesses or the confession of the accused.

II. Military Organization

701 An army, properly speaking, with cadres and hierarchies, did not exist among the Mossi.

721 In the event of war, the Tansoba or Tampsoba (war minister) notified the canton chiefs who promptly assembled with all their able-bodied men and as many horsemen as possible.

705 The villages were charged with feeding the soldiers.

III. Judicial Organization

692 693 Justice was rendered in conformity with local customs which had been handed down from generation to generation and according to local practice.

1. By village chiefs, assisted by some of the elders, for petty affairs, pilfering, and insults.

2. The canton chief, assisted by his court dignitaries and the minister, ruled on matters concerning theft, adultery, and bodily attacks, as well as on other matters.

3. The Mogho Naba took cognizance of all matters of general interest, especially with crimes of assassination and murder. In theory, he could by himself pronounce the death sentence on the [565] nakomsé [descendants of Mogho Naba]. Contrary to general belief, a [56] kombéré (canton chief) also had the power of life and 661 death over his subjects. How many individuals have been put to death merely because they were wealthy! How many village chiefs have been killed by the canton chiefs over their territories without any intervention by the Mogho Naba! The nakomsé could 565 be executed, however, only for very serious crimes, such as 684 adultery with a woman of the nobility. The guilty man was led 762 into the bush by old nakomsé; they gave him a rope with which he was expected to hang himself and thus expiate his crime.

694 431 Justice was free; no fee was expected or assessed. The plaintiff, however, customarily presented the naba with a white or light gray rooster, accompanied by the traditional satchel containing from 200 to 1,000 cowries.

644 The sogoné may not wear trousers. He wears a type of
357 drawers called benda. All the nanamsé (plural of naba) have
292 followed the example of Naba Warga, and nowadays the most insignificant kombéré has at least a dozen sogoné.

[161]

The Napogré. General Conditions. Number of Wives of the Emperor Today. Ornaments.

644 Depending on whether the napagha is destined for the chief
595 himself or for one of his brothers or sons, the instruction of the napogré are given either in the quarters of the pugtiéma (first wife of the naba) or at the home of one of the old nabissi.

644 Water is heated and in it is put a bit of karite butter and other
595 ingredients. After the girl's head, armpits, and public hair have
302 been shaved by some old women, the pugtiéma or the old man dips a hand into the water, utters certain cabalistic words, and gives the names of all the chiefs who have succeeded each other up to the father of the current ruler.

644 The water is then given to the old women who bathe the
595 young napagha. It is at this time that she is instructed in the duties and obligations of the napogré, what she may do and what she should avoid.

[301] The new wife is then adorned with bracelets, kouaba (plural of kobré), and with rouamba [ankle rings], or with only bracelets. The chief may marry her at once or, depending on the circumstances, send her to the man for whom she is destined.

● [684] The napagha must never have relations with any man other than her husband as long as she lives. Formerly she was pitilessly killed if she broke this rule. [162]

[302 As we have just seen, the napagha has no hair, and this is
30[] the primary distinctive mark. Also, she wears bracelets on her wrists, sometimes even on her arms and some on her ankles (this is done mostly by favorites). Finally some wear kouaba, ornaments most often worn by old women.

The number of wives or napagha varies according to the importance of the naba and especially according to the desires of naba. According to the 1926 census, the present Mogho Naba had thirty-seven wives.

583 to the sort of concubinage that "free marriage" is, as practiced in Mossi country.

The Situation of the Betrothed Couple during the Engagement

584 Generally speaking, the fiancé is supposed to avoid his betrothed before marriage. They treat each other with a kind of shy reserve.

Aside from the gifts made to the village elders and some cowries given to the future in-laws at the time of his first visit, no further demands are made on the fiancé.

584 684 The young man is formally forbidden to carry on an intrigue with a woman in the girl's village. If he does so, not only may the engagement be broken, but the lover may never again set foot in the village on paid of death.

Breaking the Engagement

584 When an engagement is broken, the gifts received need not be returned. On the other hand, the death of the girl is not regarded as breaking the engagement; the family must, sooner or later, offer another daughter to the young man to replace the girl who died.

An engagement may be broken [179] automatically in case of adultery, discussed below, or in the event of a quarrel between the two families.

Marriage Between First Cousins

582 Marriage between first cousins is not allowed. There can be no valid union between the children of a brother and sister, between a man and the daughter of either his father's or his mother's brother.

588 582 751 However, it sometimes happens -- inadvertently -- that a girl who has been given in marriage in a very distant village may find that her husband is a descendant of a great-grandparent (material or paternal) in the same family as her own. Had this been known, the marriage would not have taken place. Ordinarily, distant relationship is not discovered until long after the marriage, after complicated genealogical research. In that case, one of the pair, usually the wife,

843 4. A pregnant woman must not step over her husband; this would make him ill.

833 5. The sexual act may be performed with impunity in the courtyard of a dwelling (at night). Otherwise, it is expressly forbidden to do it outside the house and in any way other than lying on a mat or Peulh secco, in any case never directly on the ground.

845 6. The delivery will be difficult and complicated if the child was conceived in adultery. If the woman is to be delivered, it is 837 absolutely necessary that she confess the name of her accomplice 847 in the presence of witnesses. In this case, if the husband demands it -- and he always does -- the newborn child is killed by the erring wife immediately after it is born (1). [185]

> 1. The procedure is as follows. Some young mothers simply twist its neck and strangle it. Others put the baby in a jar of lukewarm water. The baby instinctively drinks and finally drowns.

837 Adultery. Before the arrival of the French, adultery committed by the nakomsé (descendants of naba) was punished by the death of 684 the guilty couple. Among ordinary Mossi, the culprit was simply banished from the family.

However, if the lover was not a relative of the woman's husband, he was forbidden henceforth to come to the village where the woman lived. If he failed to observe this rule, he risked being killed.

As a general rule, a Moaga woman takes a lover in a village 837 some distance away from her husband's village and not far from her own. When she asks her husband's permission to visit her family, she profits by the opportunity to spend some time with her lover or to let him know that she is going to her parents' home.

Dissolution of Marriage. Divorce.

586 A divorce may be imposed by a husband who no longer loves his wife, but neither ill-health nor sterility may be invoked for the 842 purpose. In the latter case, it is simply assumed that God does not want the woman to have children. She is often regarded with scorn, but sometimes no attention is paid to her lack of children.

685 entitled to complain and merely removed the animal. If the damage was caused by a cow or donkey, the owner of the field had to obtain a witness and was entitled to recover damages.

425 Whoever found an object of small value, such as a knife or even a garment, was entitled to keep it, but anything valuable, such as a sheep, a donkey, or, all the more, a cow, had to be handed over to the naba and became his property.

684 837 The province chief alone could pass sentence on a rapist. He was beaten and put in irons, the girl was returned to her family, and, if she gave birth, the child was killed. If the girl had been promised to the naba, the rapist was put to death. An adulterer caught in flagrante delicto could be killed by the deceived husband, but if he had not been caught in flagrante delicto, if he had managed to run away, or if he had merely been denounced by the woman, the deceived husband could do nothing. A girl's seducer usually became her husband if she gave birth, but he had to provide another girl for her betrothed.

791 787 837 The province chief had a special procedure to insure the faithfulness of his numerous wives and his pages. When a wife or page did not behave properly, the Poënaba was supposed to point them out to the naba. He proceeded as follows. Every Friday the Poënaba left his village on foot, a whip in his hand. A servant preceded him with a leather satchel containing charms. No one was allowed to come near him. Everyone fled into the bush, and the path he had followed was closed to other people until they learned that the dreadful man had reached the home of the naba. The wives were gathered together. The Poënaba filled a large gourd with water, poured in his ingredients, and sat before it. The women came to him one by one and cast their reflection in the water. The Poënaba looked in and claimed to recognize those wives who were faithful and those who were not. The former were allowed to go free, but they were often beaten to remove any possible inclination to unfaithfulness. Those designated as unfaithful were seized and had to denounce their accomplice. Both the man and woman were clubbed to death. If the woman pointed out as guilty had no accomplice or refused to name him, she alone was killed. Women still point out with terror the place of execution. This procedure was very barbarous, and its abuses were flagrant. To avoid an accusation which would cost them /27/ their lives, the poor women were ready to do anything, and they presented the Poënaba with all the gifts they could gather in order to be spared.

593 not shelter her but must on the contrary return her to her husband.
562 If difficulties arise, the husband appeals to the naba, who forces the wife to return to her husband, at whose hands she will get a beating when she arrives....

"...The powers of a deceived husband over his wife's lover
593 were quite fearsome prior to our occupation. He could, at will,
837 either deal with the culprit himself or defer his complaint to the
684 naba. If he dealt himself with his rival and killed him, he handed out the adulterous woman to the Moro Naba and did not have to answer for his crime. If he merely wounded the man, no matter how seriously, he was regarded as having acted in the fullness of his rights as an injured husband, and he kept the wife and gave her a beating. If he appealed to the naba, the guilty pair were punished by being put in irons for a variable period of time. Furthermore, if the adultery had been committed with the wife of a dapouy naba of the Moro Naba (that is to say, a man to whom the Moro Naba had himself given some girl in marriage), the accomplice was compelled to pay the deceived husband a fine of 100,000 cowries.

"Finally, in case of adultery with a chief's wife, both culprits were put to death."

On this subject I find in my notes that prior to our occupation, when a naba was deceived by one of his wives, he killed her with
[762] poison and ordered the wife's lover to commit suicide. The latter did this by plunging the head of a poisoned arrow into the calf of his leg.

"It is plain," the author of the Monographie goes on to say, "that the lover was dealt with in the most rigorous manner of all. He could be put to death by the deceived husband in every case, while the wives of a chief were alone liable to supreme punishment. The lover could also be punished with a fine, in a single case anticipated by custom. Finally, he was invariably put in irons on the naba's orders if the deceived husband placed a complaint against him.

"As for the adulterous wife, except when she was /563/ handed over to the Moro Naba by her husband as reparation for the murder of her partner, punishment for her misdemeanor amounted merely to a more or less rigorous beating or to irons for a short period of time. She could, it is true, be turned out by her husband, but the latter

593 made use of this right quite rarely. The woman has productive
837 value in terms of children and labor. And then, in the majority
684 of cases, the husband would merely fulfill the dearest of his wife's desires by doing so."

593 While the Mossi wife has duties toward her husband, the latter
586 also has obligations toward his wives.

"A wife," says the Monographie, "has the right to demand from her husband more than mere platonic relations.

"Should the latter prevail, however, owing to the husband's impotence or illness, or simply as a result of ill will, the neglected wife would communicate the situation to the first wife of the family head, who would in turn inform her spouse.

"Should the husband's behavior be caused by physical incapacity, the woman would be taken from him and given to one of his brothers, or if there were none to his nearest relative, his sons excepted. Should his behavior be due merely to ill will, however, remonstrances would be made to him, and should these prove fruitless at the end of a few days, the woman would be considered free to return to her family."

593 Just as the husband owes his wives fulfillment of the conjugal
837 duty, he also owes them relative faithfulness.

"The husband has an obligation of relative faithfulness toward his wives, that of not keeping a concubine at the conjugal domicile.
[586] Should he transgress this rule, his wives would be fully entitled to obtain a divorce from him, unless he should agree to turn out his partner as a result of his wives' complaint or the intervention of the family head.

"This rule is strictly obeyed, except for the Mossi of the Kipirsi who allow the presence of the husband's concubines among his legitimate wives, and who have rules governing their respective positions.

"In any case the husband is everywhere allowed to /564/ deceive his wives as he pleases outside the conjugal domicile, and they are not entitled to complain about this in any way. Nevertheless, they nearly always have at their disposal a practically infallible although circuitous means of causing the greatest inconvenience to the fickle husband and his partner. As a result of the custom that pledges girls in marriage at a very early age, a husband can hardly commit

644 "In addition to these dignitaries, the Moro Naba is surrounded with a veritable army of soroné (pages), samandé (bodyguards), ourkima (grooms), and jussaba (eunuchs)."

Some explanations are in order concerning the soroné. They are young boys or adolescents, from seven or eight to fifteen years old, who are to be found not only around the Moro Naba but around all Mossi chiefs, no matter who they may be, ministers, dignitaries, canton chiefs, and even village chiefs. These chiefs obtain them, as we saw earlier, by claiming the first-born son as well as the first-born daughter of all the men to whom they give a wife. The boy is made into a soroné, and the girl used to perpetuate the recruitment of soroné and servitors by giving her in marriage to one of them.

644 The soroné wear their hair like women. Like them, they wear heavy copper bracelets at the wrists and ankles, and if rumor is to 838 be credited, they not only /570/ bear the attributes of women but also substitute for them occasionally. It seems that the Mossi must 834 not have carnal relations with their wives on Friday. This is a religious ordinance meant to ingratiate the divinities, but it overlooked the soroné.... In any case this corruption does not reach the common masses of the Mossi, who do not have the means to employ soroné. Thus it applies only to chiefs.

644 No matter what the case may be, the soroné are usually selected among the most attractive boys, and some of them have great beauty with their woman's hairdo.

Another duty of their position is to remain virgins... as far as women are concerned.

644 "Every year," says Moulins, "the chastity of the Moro Naba's 787 soroné is put to a test. They are requested by the Pouy Naba to cast their 684 reflection into a gourd full of water, and according to the manner in which the reflection is cast, they are proclaimed free from stain or convicted of carnal relations, in which case, prior to our occupation, they were put to death without further delay. This is because the soroné, as confidants of the Naba, are often entrusted with state secrets and could only maintain the discretion required by their position if they were to avoid the entreaties of love.

644 "When the soroné reach manhood, the Naba gives them a wife and sends them away. The first child born of the union between a soroné and the wife given him by the Naba devolves to the latter,

644 "The Moro Naba, assisted by his ministers and with the help of frequent libations of dolo, listens to the requests which are made /572/ to him and passes sentence on the trials which are referred to him.

"Around eleven o'clock he withdraws into his hut and rests until three o'clock, at which time he comes and seats himself on his throne again.

"The Moro Naba's every gesture is prescribed by a minute protocol and accompanied by flute and drum music and finger snappings by his entourage.

"Is he riding out for a short stroll around Ouagadougou? The whole court follows him, either on foot or on horseback. His griot make the air re-echo with their shouts, to the accompaniment of drums and flutes. A groom leads his horse by the rein, while two soroné hold his stirrups and a third one, on horseback by his side, shelters him with a huge umbrella. Other pages follow carrying his pillow, his sword, and canari of dolo from which the sovereign draws frequent and abundant libations along the way.

"At night the Moro Naba, in disguise and accompanied by a single soroné, wanders incognito through the various village quarters in order to find out what is going on without being recognized.

[782] "On certain set dates, he goes to localities named Sabaye and Saraboutenga, not far from Ouagadougou, where he sacrifices beeves, sheep, and chickens.

644 595 "The Moro Naba has very numerous wives. In addition to those he marries himself, there are those of his predecessor and all those that devolve to him in the course of his reign, among them, in certain cases, the adulterous wives of his subjects.

644 595 684 "The sovereign's wives do not all live with him. They are settled in villages ruled by eunuchs and near which no one could come, on pain of death, prior to our occupation. Every year the faithfulness of the Moro Naba's wives is checked by submitting them to the same test as the soroné. Adultery is punished by death for the wife as well as her partner. It even seems that adultery with one of the sovereign's wives is regarded /573/ as the least pardonable crime a man can commit. In fact, the nakomsé or sons of chiefs are liable to the death penalty only in this case.

582 the household a more serious and more binding affair among the
836 Bambara than in this particular region. /241/

Vadier says on the subject, "The fact that a young girl has had relations with a native other than her husband prior to marriage is by no means an impediment to the marriage.

"Many betrothed girls have lovers. It even happens quite frequently that their fathers are forced to go in search of them at the homes of the young men with whom they have run away. Actually, this matter is of no concern to the husband. As long as he gets the woman, the rest matters little to him. It is not unusual for a girl to bring a child which she had by another man into her husband's home. This child eventually returns to its natural father."

582 This picture is painted in rather bleak colors. In reality, fathers
836 and mothers do try, as best they can, to prevent their daughters from
585 taking lovers. They do not like to see them go to the "tom-tom,"
626 but they can scarcely keep them from going, and often the "tom-tom,"
684 like our own country dances, plays havoc with a young girl's virtue. If the girl says nothing, everything goes well. Since among the Mossi there is no exhibition of the skirt cloth following the consummation of the marriage, there is no evidence. Even if the husband knows ahead of time or finds out at the last moment, he says nothing out of shame, to avoid being scorned. When the father leads his daughter to the hut of the ancestors before sending her to her fiancé, however, she often does not dare enter the hut. Having lost her virginity and fearing that she might be killed by the ancestors, she admits her wrongdoing to her father. Sometimes she may have the courage or the effrontery to enter the ancestral hut, but later, if she falls ill in her husband's hut, she will interpret her condition as the ancestors' vengeance for the sort of moral perjury she committed by entering their hut in a state of transgression, and she will confess to her husband what she has done. In both cases the lover is confronted, in the first instance by the father, in the second by the husband, and a goat, two canari of dolo, and a chicken are demanded from him. A sacrifice will be offered to the ancestors with these various items to ask their forgiveness, they will pardon the wife and the lover, and order will be restored.

848 Sometimes, as mentioned earlier, a child is the fruit of a girl's passion. The lover having made reparation and the ancestors being satisfied, the husband will accept the child along with the girl, but

848 as soon as the baby is old enough to leave its mother, the husband, not wishing to keep it with him, will return the child to its natural father.

582 171 In short, virginity is not rigidly demanded of the girl, although it is considered better and more respectable than non-virginity. The Mossi are not as demanding on this point as the Bambara, and in this, according to my data, they are like all other Voltaic peoples.

684 Let us note one further detail. If the lover from whom reparation is demanded for the damage caused, that is to say, the payment of the goat, chicken, and two canari of dolo, does not want to give them, the husband would formerly appeal /242/ to the Moro Naba, who forced the lover to pay what he owed and in addition confiscated for himself a part of his goods for his salary as a judge. If the lover owned nothing, his family paid for him. Nowadays, the village or canton chiefs are still approached about such matters, and they force the lover to make the customary payment.

593 Rights and duties of the husband and wife. —The husband owes assistance and help to his wife. He must protect her and come to her aid whenever necessary.

The husband must support his wife. To secure food, he usually belongs to a work group, as we have seen earlier. The work group sustains the husband and wife for seven months out of twelve. The rest of the time, the husband maintains the wife with the produce of his small fields. The wife also has her own little patches of cultivated land (as big as a handkerchief), but they are not used to procure food for the household unless the husband is completely destitute. Hence, the produce from these little patches of soil usually goes to the wife herself.

In any case, it is the husband and not the group who must provide clothing for his wife. He does this with the earnings from his small fields.

593 586 If the husband should refuse to support his wife, although able to do so, she would take her complaint to the head of her spouse's family. If the husband still refused to support her after the intervention of the family head, the woman would regain her freedom and could return to her family.

593 The husband must see to his ailing or invalid wife's upkeep until her death.

562 When she dies, a woman's property goes to her children. The
428 objects used by women go to the daughters (bracelets, skirt cloths), while other items (animals, etc.) go to the sons. More exactly, the first-born is favored among the sons and the oldest girl among the daughters. If there are no children, the husband does not take anything, and whatever the wife leaves goes to her family, to her sisters and brothers in the first line of descent. Not having had any children by the deceased, the husband would be ashamed to take what she left.

837 Adultery. —The wife owes faithfulness to her spouse. Unfaithfulness, however, is not very important, for unless it occurs repeatedly, it does not usually result in a break. The husband merely beats his wife and scolds her.

837 When the wife has fled to a lover, her husband goes in search of
684 her. The lover will have to provide a sheep (the sheep may be replaced by a goat), a chicken, and two canari of dolo, all of which
782 are to be sacrificed to the ancestors so they will forgive the woman.
769 She cannot re-enter her house until the sacrifice has been performed; without it the ancestors would kill her. They are unbending, more so than the husband to be sure, about the latter's honor. Should a husband know his wife to be guilty and do nothing about it, the ancestors would be furious and they would kill him, hence the necessity for action on the husband's part.

837 If the husband cannot find his runaway wife, the duty of searching
684 for her and bringing her back to him falls to his father-in-law.

Formerly, before the French occupation, if the lover did not want to return the woman, her father appealed to the naba, that is, the chief of the village or canton, or even to the Moro Naba, who sent horsemen to arrest the guilty pair. He restored the wife to her husband and confiscated for his own benefit the lover's animals and millet granaries.

Nowadays, since the French occupation, one appeals to the commanding officer of the circle and to the native provincial court for the wife's return.

684 Sometimes, in the past, the husband killed his wife's lover when
643 he caught him flagrante delicto. He had the right to do so, but this caused him to lose his /246/ wife who became the property of the Moro Naba. The lover's property likewise reverted to the Moro Naba.

684 In any event, the husband did not have the right to kill his wife
643 except when she was caught flagrante delicto, unless he was the
565

684 Moro Naba or a member of the aristocracy. When one of his wives
643 deceived him, the Moro Naba had her killed along with her lover.
565 The guilty pair were strangled with cotton bands. Concerning the nakomsé /descendants of nabas/, the true nakomsé (for the descendants of Naba Rawa and Naba Yadega are no longer considered nakomsé at the present day and have reverted to the mass of the common people), the true nakomsé related to royalty since the time of Naba Nabacéré (1625-1655) and his descendants, Pigo (1720-1739) and Kango (1754-1787), when one of their wives had deceived them, they appealed first to the Basi Naba, head of the nakomsé, and presented the guilty pair to him. The Basi Naba sent them on to the Moro Naba, who had the woman and her lover strangled. The lover's property went to the Rassam Naba, chief of the people of Bingo who were in charge of the execution. The same procedure applied when the people of Bingo (house slaves of the Moro Naba) executed the wife of a Moro Naba and her lover. The property, which could not with decency revert to the deceived Moro Naba, went to the Rassam Naba, chief of Bingo.

837 Just as the wife owes faithfulness to her husband, the husband owes
684 faithfulness to his wife or wives. Violations of this rule are frequent, however, and the husband's escapades are far less important than those of the wife. In all events, the husband's infidelity never entails annulment of the marriage. Although the wives do not have the right to say much when their husband deceives them (provided he does not install his concubine in the conjugal household, and this in fact never happens), they do have two possibilities of revenge. The first is very rarely used by the Mossi women of Yatenga. It consists of notifying the husband of the woman with whom their husband is deceiving them. This results in more or less serious trouble for their husband. If their husband ventures to take into his hut for awhile a woman who does not belong to him, it may happen (and this occurs more frequently) that his wives will gather, wait for the guilty woman at the door of the soukala, and give her a good thrashing when she comes out. The husband cannot say anything to them. He himself is protected, so to speak, by his status as a husband and left outside the argument, but revenge is taken on his unlucky accomplice, and while nothing is said to him, he can do nothing to protect her.

586 Divorce. —Divorce occurs in Yatenga more frequently than among the Bambara for reasons which were explained above. Here are the

000 16. Circumcision.
17. Excision.
18. After the circumcision.
19. Emancipation and coming of age.
20. Guardianship.
21. Adoption.
22. Interdiction.

Let us begin with filiation.

848 Filiation. —"The Mossi," says Vadier, "distinguish three types of filiation: (1) legitimate filiation; (2) natural filiation; and (3) filiation from incest.

As for filiation from adultery, it is regarded exactly in the same manner as natural filiation.

[843] The period of gestation is believed to be from seven to twelve months. A child conceived outside this lapse of time is regarded as a natural child. Moreover, a woman need only tell her husband that the child she is carrying in her womb is not his and he will disown it.

When the illegitimate child or one born of adultery reaches the age of three or six (depending on its sex), it is entrusted to its natural father. In spite of this separation, the child retains its rights of inheritance from its mother.

848 Filiation from incest does not exist, or rather there is not enough
847 time for obligations and rights to be created. Indeed, according to a barbarous custom, the child born of incest is put to death immediately after birth by the women who assisted with the delivery.

835 Incest rules apply between kin of any degree in the ascending and descending lines: sister and brother, uncle and niece, nephew and aunt, and all their relatives in the direct ascending and descending lines; father-in-law and daughter-in-law; son-in-law and mother-in-law. /251/

684 When incest occurs, the guilty pair are driven from their families and from Yatenga, and the naba confiscates all their property."

843 Theory of birth. —The Mossi believe that when a woman is
115 pregnant, the soul of an ancestor has returned within her. We shall speak of this animistic explanation of birth later under "Religion" /not translated/.

In fact, resemblances between the child and some previously known ancestor are pointed out as often as possible, and it is said that this particular ancestor was reincarnated within the woman.

842 How children are welcomed. —The Mossi are very happy to have children and want by all means to have some. This is indeed to their full advantage, since children work from the age of seven or eight, since they make sacrifices for their parents when the latter are dead, and since the daughters, by marrying, bring in gifts for the family. The more children one has, the happier one is.

842 789 "Under these circumstances," says Vadier, "a barren woman is very poorly regarded by her husband and not greatly esteemed by her neighbors. To overcome this sterility when it occurs, both spouses appeal to the gods. They both go to the tengasoba, the religious chief of the village, with a chicken, a goat, or a sheep, according to their means. The tengasoba cuts the animal's throat on a special stone, collects its blood, and boils it in a vessel along with various tree barks which have certain properties.

"This concoction is then given to the woman, who must mix it with her sarabou. If the spouses later have a child, they must, under threat of calling forth the vengeance of the divinity (the Earth, in [431] this case), offer the tengasoba a gift of 3, 000 cowries if they had a boy or 4, 000 cowries if they had a girl.

"The tengasoba also overcome sterility by cutting the animal's throat in the sacred grove (kango)."

847 Abortions. —Abortions nevertheless occur. Sometimes Mossi women cause an abortion in the event of an illegitimate pregnancy which occurred in the husband's absence. In addition, abortions are rather frequent among unmarried mothers. To conceal their lapse, [791] they appeal to the tipa or timisoba (makers of charms, medicines, and poisons) who give them a special brew of which they hold the secret.

[586] These practices are, of course, very poorly regarded by the Mossi. Married women who resort to them are turned out by their husband's. In addition, if a woman dies as the result of an abortion, her husband is likely to manifest joy and to state that the woman received a just punishment for her transgression. Finally, in former times after the [684] death of the guilty woman, the husband would go to the Moro Naba and denounce her lover to him. The naba confiscated all the lover's property.

843 Childbirth. —Among wealthy Mossi, the pregnant woman is treated with a certain regard. She does not work after the third month /252/ of pregnancy if this is her first, or after the sixth month if she has

593 The Moro Naba, after he has been notified by the family council,
684 pronounces the forfeiture of paternal authority. In case of incest, the guilty party was driven out of the territory.

593 Duties of children toward their parents. —The children owe obedience to their father and mother. They also owe them respect.

Their labor obligations are distributed among the fields of the work group, the father's private fields, the mother's small private plots, and their own little plots. Naturally they work most on the large fields belonging to the work group.

304 Circumcision. —Circumcision is performed at the age of 13 or 14.
881 It takes place in the month of December, hence during the dry, cool season. At this time the children are not needed to help in the fields, as they are in the winter season. This is also the case in the hot, dry season, but at that time the wounds would heal less quickly. This leaves the dry, cold season, which is excellently suited to the treatment of the circumcised, a time when the children have nothing whatever to do and the grown-ups very little.

304 Circumcision is performed on a certain number of children at the
621 same time. When a small village is involved, all the children in the village are circumcised at once. When a large village is involved,
593 the children in each quarter are circumcised together. The children
881 themselves ask their big brother if they may be circumcised when they feel that they have reached a suitable age for this operation. The big brother decides and says yes or no.

304 The children also set the exact date for the circumcision and go to
326 the man who has charge of the operation to make the arrangements.
881 In Yatenga, as a rule, he is a blacksmith (at Ouahigouya, for example, from the quarter of the Baloum-Naba). Sometimes, however, non-blacksmiths, either Foulsé or Mossi, perform the operation. When a performer of operations dies, he is replaced by someone who knows how to circumcise, either a brother or a son of the deceased or someone from another family.

304 Circumcision is not performed in the evening or at night, as happens
881 among other Blacks of West Africa, but at six o'clock in the morning. A particularly kind man among the people of the quarter or of the village has been chosen by the children who are to be circumcised. He wakes them up on that morning and takes them to the man who is to perform the operation. Big brothers accompany their younger brothers, but the father and mother do not witness the operation and are not even

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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The Mogho Naba had an elaborate court composed of many officials, relatives, and servants. The most important courtiers were the five ministers, who appeared daily at court and took part in all important ceremonies in addition to administering their own provinces. Aside from these men, the Mogho Naba had a number of other officials called Naba whose responsibilities covered the full range of duties in the palace and in the capital. One of the most interesting was the Pwe Naba, a royal diviner and court chaperon. His chief duty was to guard the morals of the pages and the royal wives; he also administered the ordeal to persons accused of treason. The pages were required to be chaste until they were discharged from the palace, lest their amorous adventures lead them to compromise the virtue of the royal wives, with whom they were constantly in contact. A wife and a page suspected of adultery were tested by the Pwe Naba. He forced them to look into a mirror or a calabash of water, and declared them guilty or innocent according to the way their faces were reflected. If they were found guilty, the wife was executed and the page was either executed or discharged in disgrace. The Pwe Naba also saw to it that strangers did not address the ruler's wives either on the street or in the market. Offenders were executed.

The Dapore Naba served as the court's chief executioner and as head of a group of the Mogho Naba's hereditary serfs. Members of the royal clan were executed by strangulation, since royal blood could not be shed; all other persons were executed either with a sword, by hanging, or with heavy clubs. Another palace official was the Ouedrango Naba, the head groom. It was he who saddled and presented the king's ceremonial horse to him at the morning ceremony. The Kambo Naba commanded the palace guard; only he and his guards were permitted to carry guns. The Samande Naba and the Samande Nabila supervised the work of the samande-kamba, young men who worked around the palace courtyard and kept watch with heavy batons to enforce order during ceremonies. A lesser palace official was the Zusoaba Kasanga, who, as chief of the palace eunuchs, ruled over the guardians of the royal harem. The Gande Naba made sacrifices for the ruler and also distributed gifts from the king to the royal officials and the royal household.

Another courtier, and one who played an important role during the installation of the new ruler, was the Ouagadougou Naba. As a direct descendant of the Ninisi, he was all but indispensable at sacrifices propitiating or honoring his ancestors. The Bendere Naba was the chief musician and court historian; according to some reports, a Bendere Naba was killed instantly if he made a mistake while reciting the ruler's genealogy. The Raga Naba was chief of the markets in the capital. Under him were

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V

LAW AND THE JUDICIAL PROCESS

671 THE Mossi possessed a comprehensive body of rules governing human conduct. These rules were well known to the people, and violators were punished by the responsible authorities. The Mossi might be said to have had substantive law, but they had no written codes. Nevertheless, the lack of written codes does not warrant Mangin's blanket criticism of Mossi judicial processes: "Of course, there was no written code, no formal scale of penalties. Everything depended on custom and on the whim of the judge. [662] Thus, the wealthy could obtain sentences in their favor by paying the judges, and thieves could avoid punishment by sharing their loot with the Naba."[1] Custom did dictate the penalties, just as "written custom" dictates penalties [692] in all written legal codes. But, as we shall see, the Mossi did have a known scale of penalties. Moreover, a Mossi judge had to be careful in rendering judgment, because his decisions could be reviewed by a higher court. [695]

596 The head of the Mossi extended family, the *Yirisoba,* was responsible for the everyday conduct of his charges. It was his duty to settle all family 681 quarrels, and to punish persons guilty of theft within the compound, disrespect toward elders, and incest. Punishment for the lesser wrongs included 596 reprimands and floggings. A person found guilty of disrespect to the elders 683 or of incest could be banished from the group. But banishment was so severe that it was imposed only if the criminal refused to make the usual conciliatory gestures and was condemned by all the members of his boodoo. Even 684 after this condemnation, however, he could ask a "sister's son," a yagenga, [613] to intercede for him. This man, the son of a female lineage member, had many privileges within his mother's brother's lineage, including the right to mediate between an exile and his boodoo.

593 Amicable relations within the family group were most often disrupted 586 by conjugal difficulties. A Mossi husband could occasionally flog an erring 613 wife, but he was not allowed to maltreat her. When a man became disgusted with his wife and wished to repudiate her, he put her water pots in the compound yard. This rather serious action often led to hostile relations

between the lineages concerned. If either the repudiated woman or a mem- 593
ber of her husband's lineage wished to initiate a reconciliation, she or he 586
had to summon a yagenga. He alone was permitted to reconcile the couple 613
after the pots had been placed in the courtyard. When a woman felt that she was being maltreated by her husband, she usually fled to her own patrilineage and waited for her husband's patrilineage—usually his brothers—to visit her male relatives and discuss the case. If the woman was judged guilty, she was reprimanded and sometimes flogged by her own relatives for causing trouble between the two lineages, and then sent home to her husband. However, if the man was found guilty, his wife was returned to him, but he was warned that he would forfeit all rights to her if he maltreated her again. A man who lost his wife through repeated maltreatment [691]
could not take the matter to court, because chiefs usually refused to deal with purely domestic issues. His only recourse was to induce one of his lineage brothers to recall a daughter who had married into his wife's lineage. This act was usually sufficient to bring about the reconciliation of the estranged couple before innocent persons were hurt.

The Mossi made every effort to solve minor problems without recourse 692
to the chiefs. The local Boodkasemdamba and lineage elders adjudicated 613
quarrels and simple offenses involving members of minimal segments in 627
the various village saghse. They even tried to resolve difficulties between lineage members of larger segments who lived in different villages. The [681]
elders often imposed punishments such as reprimands, floggings, and even [622]
banishment. The convicted person did not usually appeal to the chief, because he knew that the chief would advise him to settle his problem within the family.

Unrelated villagers also tried to settle difficulties among themselves with- 622
out appealing to the chief. For example, a man who was caught stealing 685
could be beaten or even killed by his intended victims, and the chief did 627
not punish them for their action. In many cases, villagers simply took the thief back to his relatives, knowing they would punish him. Occasionally, a family disgraced by a thieving member forced him to kill himself. When this happened the chief held an inquest but took no other action.

The Mossi gave a fairly simple explanation for returning a thief to his 685
relatives for punishment. They said that every family had "weak" mem- 627
bers, and that by not harming the captured thief they were only protecting themselves against retaliation if one of their own relatives should commit a similar crime. But a more important reason seems to have been their fear of starting a feud that might result in the premeditated murder of a man and the subsequent execution of his murderer.

The one crime that invoked terrible unofficial sanctions was rape. If the 684

offender was caught in the act, he was immediately killed. If he was merely suspected of guilt both by his own lineage and by the lineage of the wronged woman, he was banished from his lineage and from the village. So swift and sure was this punishment that a rapist always fled if he believed he would be discovered. The Mossi considered rape such a heinous crime that if the act resulted in pregnancy, an abortion was attempted; if this failed, the child was killed at birth. Furthermore, the rapist could never hope to return to his community, because even if the yagenga appealed on his behalf and his lineage forgave him, the community ban still stood.[2]

The village chief was usually aware of the torts and crimes that occurred in his village, and of how the families concerned had handled them. He seldom interfered in the internal affairs of a lineage, or in problems between lineages, unless he felt that a case was beyond their legal competence. In the case of a rapist's expulsion, community feeling usually ran so high that if the chief intervened, it was only to support the will of the community. However, when people could not settle their differences peaceably or when a major crime was committed within a village, the chief usually summoned the offender to his court for trial. His right to do so was sanctioned by his possession of the nam, but the very concept of the nam often made his task difficult. If he was a commoner, the nobles often emphasized their relationship to the holder of the royal nam, the district chief, and objected to being tried by a commoner. They usually appeared at the village court if summoned, but often attempted afterward to find some excuse for taking their case to the district chief. They felt that their local reputation would prevent them from receiving a fair hearing from anyone but their lineage brother. Furthermore, if they were judged and convicted in the lower court and the verdict was confirmed in the district court, they felt that the district chief, in concurring with the village chief, had broken the solidarity of their lineage. But if they took their case directly to the district chief, they knew they were being judged by an equal or a superior, and that an unfavorable judgment would not damage their status.

The competence of the village chief to deal with court cases was limited.[3] He did pass on all the legal infractions that occurred in his village, but he tried to adjudicate only the minor cases. Thus, he tried cases involving theft, quarrels, trespassing, adultery, indebtedness, and abuse, and tried to settle them by reprimanding the guilty ones. He sent cases involving serious injury and homicide to the district court, along with cases he was unable to resolve.

The district court was a most efficient and effective judicial organ, and the nature of the Mossi judicial process was most evident on this level. The

691 father had given the woman a silver bracelet before he died, and that the
428 babissi felt that this was sufficient, since she had a husband to provide for
634 her. Furthermore, Moussa said that the inheritance had already been distributed, and that any redistribution would impose a hardship on all concerned.

695 Interpreting the inheritance law according to common practice, the chief
691 ruled that the milk from a man's cattle was for *all* his children, regardless
428 of sex, and that the fact that the father had formerly given the daughter a
634 bracelet should not have influenced the distribution of the inheritance. The chief stated that the woman should receive at least one cow, and that if the defendant did not agree, he (the chief) would recall all the animals and supervise their distribution. He did not feel that he had to state the principles by which he had reached his judgment, for the consensus among the people of the district was that the heir was trying to take advantage of the law for his own selfish interests. Rather than appeal to Ouagadougou, Moussa and his babissi accepted the verdict.

671 On the basis of these and other cases, we are led to the conclusion that the Mossi felt that law and the judicial process should serve to reconcile people and to maintain what was commonly considered to be social justice.

634 Most of the cases at the district court were tried in the same manner as
692 those cited above. Cases involving relations between men and women were
684 the most common. This is paradoxical, because the district chief tried to avoid any involvement with such cases. For every domestic case tried by
593 the district chief, five others were sent back to the village or lineage level. Even so, it is estimated that about 80 per cent of the cases tried by Mossi district chiefs ultimately concerned women. The most common case of this type was the alleged refusal of a woman to return to her husband.[8] If the judge found that another man had encouraged her to leave her husband, he ordered her to return to him and warned her and the man about the possibility of serious difficulty with her husband's relatives. On the other hand, if the chief found that the woman had left a cruel husband who threatened to harm her or her relatives, he warned the husband not to carry out his threats. The Mossi had no bride price; thus, a woman's family was not faced with the problem of restitution. Sometimes, an angry husband did demand that his wife's family return the gifts (*pogopossum*, "thanks for the woman") he had given them from time to time—e.g., at funerals—and they complied.

684 Adultery cases were next in frequency at the district court. A man con-
692 victed of adultery with another man's wife was either warned to leave her
634 alone or fined a sheep or a goat. He was also liable to be put in stocks for

He was also liable to be put in stocks for 684
several days, and when released he was warned against visiting the local 692
markets, where he might be tempted to renew his illicit relations. A noble- 634
man convicted of adultery was often merely warned or fined, since his [696]
movements could not be restricted. But if a man caught his wife and an- [682]
other man in *flagrante delicto* and killed them, his act was considered justifiable homicide (even if the slain man was a noble), and he went free. If, however, he killed the lover but spared his wife, he had to send her to the chief's household. Here she was made to perform hard work under the supervision of the palace guards until it was believed that she had reformed. A man who was experiencing difficulties with an unfaithful wife and feared he might eventually kill her or her paramour also sent her to the chief's compound for a few months.

The Mossi have always been great creditors and debtors, and cases con- 686
cerning indebtedness seem to have been next in frequency at the district 692
court. The chief usually dismissed cases of indebtedness brought against 634
minors, because it was considered unseemly for adults to give credit or to loan valuable property to youths not yet of age. Thus, if the minor's family refused to make restitution, the creditor usually had no redress. However, [613]
if a woman borrowed property and refused to return it, her husband's lineage was held responsible. Similarly, if an adult male borrowed anything and refused to return it or to do so on time, the case was taken to the local court and eventually to the district court. The creditor was asked to supply witnesses to the loan, and if the chief was satisfied that the loan had been made under the conditions specified, the debtor was ordered to make restitution. If the debtor claimed bankruptcy, the chief ordered that his goods be seized and sold, and that restitution be made to the creditor. If the debtor 686
was truly destitute, his relatives were compelled to pay his debts. The col- 692
lective responsibility of the babissi for the debts of its members was seen 634
most clearly in cases where men died in a state of indebtedness. The credi- 613
tors were allowed to summon the debtor's babissi to court, and if proof of the debt was established, the relatives were compelled to repay. If they failed to do so, the chief's police seized and sold their goods to repay the debt.

Cases dealing with violations of civil contracts were somewhat similar. 686
The Mossi did not believe in the axiom *caveat emptor*. If a man sold an 634
animal that died within a week for no apparent reason, the chief ordered 692
an investigation. If it was found that the animal had been ill when sold, the chief ordered that the buyer be reimbursed. If the investigation showed that the animal had been healthy when sold, no restitution was made. Similarly, if a man borrowed an ass or an ox to transport goods and the animal

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The torture was seen as a punishment, and not as a form of ordeal to 695
ascertain guilt or innocence. It was designed to cause the culprit as much 696
suffering as possible before he died, and its harshness reflects the Mossi fear of witches and witchcraft. In one form of punishment called *koudgilga*, the culprit was sent to the smith, who tortured him by placing hot iron balls in both his hands. He was then beaten to death. Another type of punishment called *swengalenga* was more painful. A pottery jar from which the bottom had been removed was heated in a fire. Then it was placed over the head of the convicted witch and allowed to burn its way down onto his shoulders. The culprit was subsequently killed. Sometimes a convicted witch was not killed; instead, a man was sent to Ouagadougou to be castrated and [304] sold as a eunuch, and a woman was sold outside the country as a slave. [567]

Gross disrespect toward the chief and crimes of lese majesty were uncommon among the Mossi. These crimes were usually committed by 687 persons who came into close contact with the chief—nobles and court retainers—rather than by commoners, serfs, or slaves. The most common form of [684] lese majesty was adultery with one of the district chief's wives. The penalty [634] for this was death for both violators. Anyone who dared insult the district chief at court was seized and executed. The same fate awaited those who talked about him maliciously in public or threatened to stir a rebellion against him. If the culprits were commoners, they were executed; if they were nobles, they were strangled in secret or were forced to commit suicide.

The district chief was caught in a dilemma whenever nobles committed 634
major crimes or unlawful acts. They could not be imprisoned, and only the 565
Mogho Naba had the legal prerogative to execute them. When a noble 681
committed a major crime such as treason or rebellion, he was sent to the capital to be executed by slaves, who strangled him with a piece of cotton cloth. However, no district chief could allow the nobles to commit crimes 634
with impunity, secure in the knowledge that they could only be punished
at Ouagadougou. If a nobleman subverted the chief's rule by repeated acts 696
of cruelty and brigandage, he was executed, although illegally. The execu- 565
tioners were the Baglere Naba and the Dapore Naba. These two men [693]
secretly visited the condemned noble, taking with them a bundle as a present from the chief. This bundle contained a new white robe in which were secreted a chief's bonnet and a poisoned arrow. As soon as the noble saw the gift, he knew that he was being ordered to kill himself. If he attempted to raise an alarm or run away, he was instantly strangled and his body was discarded in the bush. If he accepted the sentence, he was allowed to have food prepared, to eat, and then to kill himself. The chief ordered an elaborate funeral for his kinsman as though he had died an ordinary death. Thus, he was able to observe all the proprieties while at the same

be related to her was tried and executed. In some cases, he was put to death without a trial. Adultery with a royal wife was considered so reprehensible that both adulterers were publicly beaten to death. Their bodies were denied burial and were thrown into the bush to be eaten by vultures. The Dapore Naba and the Baglere Naba seized and retained the man's property.

Men who committed treason against the Mogho Naba were usually killed before they could be tried. Chiefs and nobles who were suspected of treason and who consented to come to Ouagadougou for trial were deposed and executed if found guilty. Those who were found innocent were released and sent back to their chiefly duties. The sole exception on record to this general rule was the case of Naba Yemde, a Dim of Boulsa province. He had fought and defeated the forces of Mogho Naba Sanum, and when the Mogho Naba sent a larger army and routed him, he was treacherously delivered to the monarch by another Dim. Sanum found Yemde innocent of treason, but had him executed because he had violated another rule: as the descendant of a Kourita, he had come face to face with the Mogho Naba, thus jeopardizing the monarch's life. This exception is always cited by the Mossi when the inevitability of execution for treason is brought up. Actually, a person accused of treason rarely went to court. He either took poison or died in battle against the royal forces. As a posthumous punishment, his compound was burned, his property seized, and his relatives and servants sold into slavery outside the country. Thus, the supreme penalty was not merely the death of a traitor but the permanent banishment of his entire lineage.

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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837 man even refrains from making overtures to a woman whose husband's female relatives may be married to a member of his own lineage. He fears that a wronged husband may have the wives of his lineage brothers recalled, thus causing dissension within and between the two lineages. If none of these complications are present, a man seeks out a person who knows the woman and sends a message declaring his intentions. If the response is favorable, the man then buys four large kola nuts (four being the number for a woman), wraps them together with 44 francs, and send them to his lady. This procedure may be followed on subsequent market days without the two parties ever coming into direct contact with each other. Finally, however, a rendezvous is arranged, and on the pretense of leaving the market to visit a relative for several days, the woman goes instead to her lover's village.

837 These casual affairs started at the market sometimes become quite serious, and if for any reason they are sanctioned by the relatives of either the man or the woman, they often lead to the breakup of a marriage. And since the market is the place where disputants of any sort most likely come into contact, it is here that fights over "stolen" wives break out.

837 This pattern of extramarial relationships centering around the market place is so common among the Mossi that the younger men, and even some of the older ones, are disappointed with the "market" when their mistresses do not appear. Mossi men who sit under the shelters around the market place can usually give an inquirer not only the name of a woman, the name and village of her husband and father, but also the name and village of her paramour. Characteristically enough, they are always "ignorant" of the escapades of their own female relatives or of the wives of their lineage members. The only time when men act as though their relatives might be involved in extramarital affairs is when for some purpose or another a man has to recall a wife or daughter who has gone to visit a relative in another village or district. Regardless of how pressing the problem may be, a man will seldom go directly to his father-in-law's house to recall the woman. He goes to the market nearest to his in-laws' village, and seeks his wife there. If he does not find her or any of her relatives, he goes to the part of the market in which people from her village sell their products and sends a message to her family that he will come for her the next day, or that he would like her to come home.

443 A market place is also one of the best places to look for news of a runaway wife, or of any stranger in an area. The Mossi say that women have footprints like an elephant in that they can be found quite easily, but that the footprints are always clearest in the market.

695 The procedure was the same for all, men and women. The sons
681 of nabas, the nakomsé, however, were neither tried nor punished in
554 public. They were not tied with ropes, but with strips of fabric; and if condemned to death, they were hanged rather than clubbed to death. In any case, complaints against them were extremely rare. The sons of a powerful naba could do anything with impunity.

681 For examples, here are a few crimes and their respective punishments. Of course, there was no written code, no formal scale of penalties. Everything depended on custom and on the whim of the judge. Thus, the wealthy could obtain sentences in their favor by
696 paying the judges, and thieves could avoid punishment by sharing
691 their loot with the naba. Otherwise, a thief caught in the act was
685 flogged, sometimes to death. He was condemned to several months in irons, and exposed to public ridicule before the naba's hut; he had to restore what he had taken, and his family was held responsible. If he repeated the offense, he was led to the marketplace with a rope around his neck; he was supplied with an abundance of meat and dolo /beer/, and then clubbed to death at the foot of a tree. In Ouagadougou he was sometimes made a eunuch instead. This was almost the equivalent of a death sentence, because the operation was carried out in such barbarous fashion that death often ensued. French justice more leniently imprisons the thieves, a cause of complaint by honest people who find the punishment too mild.

682 In case of willful murder, the killer was put to death; if he could
683 not be found, a member of his family was executed in his place.
672 In case of a brawl, no attempt was made to determine who had started the fight or who was in the right. (Manslaughter was punished by a fine paid to the victim's family. The right /26/ of self-defense was, of course, recognized. If blows and wounds had been inflicted, the adversaries were put in irons.)

681 Old women were often accused of being witches and of eating
683 children's souls. If their crime was considered proved, if the sorcerers consulted declared some old woman guilty of a baby's death, she was
888 put to death in very cruel fashion: a second opening was made in a clay pot so that her head could be put completely within it; then the pot was heated intensely and placed over the head of the unfortunate woman.

685 If a goat or sheep caused damage to a field, the animal could be killed on the spot. The owner had to be notified, but he was not

685 entitled to complain and merely removed the animal. If the damage was caused by a cow or donkey, the owner of the field had to obtain a witness and was entitled to recover damages.

425 Whoever found an object of small value, such as a knife or even a garment, was entitled to keep it, but anything valuable, such as a sheep, a donkey, or, all the more, a cow, had to be handed over to the naba and became his property.

684 837 The province chief alone could pass sentence on a rapist. He was beaten and put in irons, the girl was returned to her family, and, if she gave birth, the child was killed. If the girl had been promised to the naba, the rapist was put to death. An adulterer caught in flagrante delicto could be killed by the deceived husband, but if he had not been caught in flagrante delicto, if he had managed to run away, or if he had merely been denounced by the woman, the deceived husband could do nothing. A girl's seducer usually became her husband if she gave birth, but he had to provide another girl for her betrothed.

791 787 837 The province chief had a special procedure to insure the faithfulness of his numerous wives and his pages. When a wife or page did not behave properly, the Poënaba was supposed to point them out to the naba. He proceeded as follows. Every Friday the Poënaba left his village on foot, a whip in his hand. A servant preceded him with a leather satchel containing charms. No one was allowed to come near him. Everyone fled into the bush, and the path he had followed was closed to other people until they learned that the dreadful man had reached the home of the naba. The wives were gathered together. The Poënaba filled a large gourd with water, poured in his ingredients, and sat before it. The women came to him one by one and cast their reflection in the water. The Poënaba looked in and claimed to recognize those wives who were faithful and those who were not. The former were allowed to go free, but they were often beaten to remove any possible inclination to unfaithfulness. Those designated as unfaithful were seized and had to denounce their accomplice. Both the man and woman were clubbed to death. If the woman pointed out as guilty had no accomplice or refused to name him, she alone was killed. Women still point out with terror the place of execution. This procedure was very barbarous, and its abuses were flagrant. To avoid an accusation which would cost them /27/ their lives, the poor women were ready to do anything, and they presented the Poënaba with all the gifts they could gather in order to be spared.

10:Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1964 FA28 Mossi FA28

tween the Mossi and several other ethnic groups. In each instance the structural relationship in which joking occurs is characterized by the five features listed above.

Joking with the Mother's Brother

The relationship with a maternal uncle is marked by all five of the structural features mentioned. Separation results from the rules of patrilineal descent and inheritance rules, from patrisib exogamy, and from the general observance of patrilocal residence. The relationship is reciprocal in that a mother's brother serves throughout Ego's life as an important alternative source of emotional, economic, and social support: he often acts as intermediary in disputes between Ego and his parents or the elders of his lineage; he gives Ego frequent gifts; and residence in the mother's patriclan is the most frequent alternative to patrilocality. In turn Ego, as a result of the permissive relationship he enjoys with the spirits of his deceased cognatic kinsmen, often serves their living descendants as an intermediary in their ritual efforts to maintain a secure relationship with the ancestral spirits.

Ambivalence between Ego and his mother's brother and her other kin results from the conflicting sources of "conjunction" and "dissociation" just mentioned. The conflict between a strong affective bond—a "feeling" of kinship—and a system of inheritance which denies it jural recognition generates frustration. The ambivalence in the relationship is manifested not only by joking, which is asymmetrical—with Ego being the more aggressive—but by theft as well. Perhaps as partial compensation for his inability to inherit matrilaterally, Ego is permitted to steal his mother's brother's property during his lifetime and can also make off with the beer and some of the animals collected for his funeral.

As for equality of status, the descent groups of Ego and mother's brother are structurally equivalent. Although their respective positions within these two groups differ, the permissiveness of Ego's relationship to his maternal uncle absolves him from recognition of the canons of comportment that otherwise prevail among the Mossi in relations between persons of differing status. Indeed, disregard for such status differences is part of the "joke." Independence is assured by the fact that Ego and his mother's brother are members of autonomous descent groups and that each is responsive only to the authority of his respective lineage elders.

Joking with a Mother's Brother's Wife

Joking between Ego and his mother's brother's wife is to be regarded as a separate relationship because of her nonmembership in the mother's brother's descent group, but certain of the structural circumstances are similar. The source of separation from the mother's brother's wife is evident. The reciprocal tie that unites them is indirect; when Ego is received warmly in his mother's brother's household it is the wife of the latter who prepares the food he is given. Similarly, as a member of her husband's patriclan, she benefits

between the lineages concerned. If either the repudiated woman or a member of her husband's lineage wished to initiate a reconciliation, she or he had to summon a yagenga. He alone was permitted to reconcile the couple after the pots had been placed in the courtyard. When a woman felt that she was being maltreated by her husband, she usually fled to her own patrilineage and waited for her husband's patrilineage—usually his brothers—to visit her male relatives and discuss the case. If the woman was judged guilty, she was reprimanded and sometimes flogged by her own relatives for causing trouble between the two lineages, and then sent home to her husband. However, if the man was found guilty, his wife was returned to him, but he was warned that he would forfeit all rights to her if he maltreated her again. A man who lost his wife through repeated maltreatment could not take the matter to court, because chiefs usually refused to deal with purely domestic issues. His only recourse was to induce one of his lineage brothers to recall a daughter who had married into his wife's lineage. This act was usually sufficient to bring about the reconciliation of the estranged couple before innocent persons were hurt.

The Mossi made every effort to solve minor problems without recourse to the chiefs. The local Boodkasemdamba and lineage elders adjudicated quarrels and simple offenses involving members of minimal segments in the various village saghse. They even tried to resolve difficulties between lineage members of larger segments who lived in different villages. The elders often imposed punishments such as reprimands, floggings, and even banishment. The convicted person did not usually appeal to the chief, because he knew that the chief would advise him to settle his problem within the family.

Unrelated villagers also tried to settle difficulties among themselves without appealing to the chief. For example, a man who was caught stealing could be beaten or even killed by his intended victims, and the chief did not punish them for their action. In many cases, villagers simply took the thief back to his relatives, knowing they would punish him. Occasionally, a family disgraced by a thieving member forced him to kill himself. When this happened the chief held an inquest but took no other action.

The Mossi gave a fairly simple explanation for returning a thief to his relatives for punishment. They said that every family had "weak" members, and that by not harming the captured thief they were only protecting themselves against retaliation if one of their own relatives should commit a similar crime. But a more important reason seems to have been their fear of starting a feud that might result in the premeditated murder of a man and the subsequent execution of his murderer.

The one crime that invoked terrible unofficial sanctions was rape. If the

The following case, tried in a district court in 1956, 691
illustrates the Mossi' 685

concept of justice. To reach the central market, the people of Donse village 634
used a path that ran across the fields belonging to two of their fellow villagers, Zami and Isa. The path was normally open all year round, even during the planting season, because neither man wished to inconvenience the villagers. But one day the two men quarreled, and shortly thereafter Isa announced his decision to close his path during the planting season. He said he feared that "people would steal his growing crops" if he left it open. Moreover, he wanted to use the path to increase his planting area. Zami objected to what he considered an insult, and, believing that Isa had violated a customary rule, used the path. In doing so, he crushed several stalks of millet. Isa witnessed his action, and the men came to blows. When the village chief proved unable to reconcile them, they were brought before the district court.

The district chief ruled that according to Mossi custom, a man could 695
close a path during the planting season to prevent people from stealing his 691
crops. But if he closed a path, he had to provide an alternative route, for no 685
one had the right to restrict the movements of others. The chief sympa- 634
thized with Isa over the small size of his field, but insisted that he provide a path across or around it. However, he persuaded Zami to let Isa use a portion of his land in compensation for the new path.

The chief tried to reconcile the interests of Isa and Zami with those of the entire village. He apparently felt that reconciliation was more useful than judgment. He did uphold the law that the right of passage is mandatory, but also maintained that a man has the right to protect his property from potential thieves. At the same time, he made it clear that although a man may defend his own rights, he may not do so by infringing upon the rights of others.

The same principles seem to have been upheld in the following case, 691
also recorded in 1956, which is interesting because it illustrates the flexi- 428
bility of Mossi law. A man named Hammadou died, leaving fifteen cows as his legacy. Moussa, his eldest son and principal heir, distributed the cows among his father's other sons and male relatives, but did not give any to his father's daughter. Strictly speaking, he was right to exclude her, because a [562]
woman was not supposed to inherit any of her father's property unless he had no living lineal or collateral relatives. In practice, however, a daughter always received part of her father's legacy, especially if he had been wealthy. Hammadou's daughter therefore felt slighted, and when she received no redress from Moussa or her other male relatives, she had the case taken to [692]
the village chief. He could not resolve it, and referred it to the district chief.

When Moussa was called before the district chief, he explained that his [634]

686 634 692 died while he was using it, the owner could not press any claims. However, the borrower was obliged to sell the animal's flesh and give the money to the owner along with the animal's skin as proof of its death. Under no circumstances would a district chief absolve a man from paying the market value of an animal if he failed to return the skin. Such failure would brand him as a thief and involve an additional fine.

685 [674] The Mossi considered theft a major crime. A thief could be killed with impunity if he was caught in the act and in the presence of several witnesses. If these conditions were not met but the man killed was known to have been a thief, the killer was fined several cows. But if he was known to have been a man of good character, the killer ran the risk of being executed. In this way, the Mossi tried to prevent any abuse of an accepted practice. The theft of grain and other foodstuffs was considered especially reprehensible, because it was held to indicate that the thief was so depraved that he would not even grow his own food. During the rule of Naba Kaglere of Nobere district (1888–1906), a man called Yahiya left his own village of Donse and went to a village called Quitenga to steal sweet potatoes. The people of that village caught him in the act and shot him with a poisoned arrow as he made his escape. Yahiya died without revealing the source of his wound, and his babissi, suspecting foul play, asked Kaglere to investigate. When the Quitenga people learned of the investigation, they went forward voluntarily and reported the circumstances under which they had wounded Yahiya. Kaglere absolved them of all guilt and told the Donse people that Yahiya had deserved to die, not only because he had stolen food (which he might have received if he had asked for it), but because sweet potatoes were the easiest vegetable to cultivate.

685 [692] A thief who was too clever to be caught in the act but who was apprehended afterwards was treated quite harshly by the Mossi court. Here, the penalty of double indemnity was often applied. A man who was brought to court for stealing a chicken or guinea hen was fined a goat or a sheep. Hence the Mossi proverb "Zou noaga ronda bouga"—"He who steals a chicken repays a goat." [696] The thief who stole one cow had to return several. If a thief could not pay the fine, he was placed in stocks until his relatives paid for him. If they refused to do so, the chief's retainers seized their property, sold it, and made restitution. [762] This often compelled the family of a recidivous thief to make him commit suicide. If the family would not resort to this, the district chief had the man seized and clubbed to death.[7] [634] Sometimes the chief sent recidivists to the Mogho Naba, who sent them to a village called Teemetenga to be made into eunuchs.[8] [565]

[579] The Mossi seem to have made a distinction between theft and pillage—

a practice whereby nobles deprived commoners of their property. Those 685
nobles who lived among commoners quite often confiscated their neigh- 579
bors' property. But this was not regarded as theft and was not punishable 565
as such, although a rapacious nobleman could be sanctioned for terrorizing and "spoiling" a village. If a nobleman was caught performing an act that *was* considered theft, or if he was accused and found guilty of theft, he was severely punished. During Kaglere's reign, the people of a small village 686
suffered a series of livestock thefts. One day, while the friends of a village 685
chief were sitting with him, a dog came out of the chief's compound 622
dragging an animal skin. The men recognized the skin as that described for a stolen goat, and decided to investigate. In the chief's courtyard they discovered the hole from which the dog had unearthed the skin. They also found the skins of several other stolen animals. The villagers took the [692]
village chief to the district chief, who found him guilty and exiled him [634]
from the region. In passing judgment, the district chief told him that he had been elected "to care for the village," but that he had betrayed his trust by robbing his own people.

According to Mossi law, willful homicide or murder was punishable by 682
execution. The Mossi did not use wergild or "blood money," but insisted on the *lex talionis,* which they interpreted as "a life for a life." They did not believe that money or any other valuables could compensate for the life of a man, nor would they allow a slave to be executed in place of the murderer. They believed that only by executing the murderer himself could they prevent his victim's relatives from resorting to vengeance and thus "spoiling" the district or village.

A man who grievously wounded another was apprehended, bound, and taken to the village chief and subsequently to the district chief. Here he was [696]
kept in stocks in the serfs' quarter without being tried until his victim either died or recovered. If his victim recovered and the judge found that the wound had been inflicted accidentally, the defendant was fined or had his goods confiscated, but he was released. If the judge found that the victim had been wounded in a fair fight, the prisoner was usually censured and dismissed. The chief often warned the wounded man that he ought to have lived up to the Mossi axiom that a grown man is always able to protect himself. If, however, the trial revealed that the prisoner had ambushed his victim with the intent to kill, he either was fined several cows or had his entire property confiscated. District chiefs are known to have executed [634]
the perpetrators of cowardly ambushes even though their victims recovered. [696]

If a man died at the hands of another, an inquest was held immediately. If the killing had been accidental or committed in self-defense, or if it was

682 found to have been justified—that is, if the victim was a thief or a nocturnal intruder—then the accused was acquitted or simply fined. If, however, the 682 accused was found guilty of murder, he was sentenced to die, and the mode 696 of execution was at the chief's pleasure. The chief surrendered the prisoner to his executioners, serfs who lived in the Baglere ward. They took him into the woods and carried out the sentence by strangulation, hanging, decapitation, clubbing, or stoning.

696 The perpetrator of an unusually heinous crime was often ordered to kill himself with a poisoned arrow. This form of execution was feared most, because it tested the murderer's mettle and called into play the [634] coercive force of his lineage if he proved to be a coward. When such an execution was ordered, the district chief had a poisoned arrow prepared and brought to the murderer's father, his brother, or his father's brother's son. The relative gave the arrow to the condemned man, and, while apologizing for his painful mission, explained that the crime had to be expiated. If the murderer agreed to kill himself, his relatives prepared food and drink for [766] him while his grave was dug. Some proud and brave men helped their relatives dig the oblong-shaped grave required for a murderer; some even insisted on digging it themselves. When both the food and the grave had been prepared, the murderer bade his relatives farewell, took the food and the poisoned arrow, and went into a hut. Here he ate the food and after-696 ward killed himself by pushing the poisoned arrow into his leg. In some 626 cases he had to be provided with a second arrow to hasten his death. If a 613 cowardly murderer refused to kill himself, one of his relatives offered to die in his stead. He told the murderer that death was preferable to the knowledge that his lineage brother was a coward. What would happen, he asked the murderer, if he saw a relative being harmed? Would he choose his own safety rather than run the risk of death? The other relatives asked the same questions, and this subtle coercion was usually sufficient to induce the most cowardly man to kill himself. There are no reports of a murderer's permitting a relative to die for him; life would have been impossible for him afterward. One suspects that if ever a murderer had attempted to elude his fate, the district chief would have had him executed.

634 The district court also prescribed capital punishment for individuals 681 convicted of arson, abduction, witchcraft, or lese majesty. A person con-[685] victed of willfully setting fire to someone's hut or crops was put to death even if no one was killed in the resulting fire; he was held to have [683] jeopardized the life and livelihood of his victims. Similarly, the rare person convicted of threatening the well-being of others through the practice of [695] witchcraft was usually tortured and killed. Conviction usually followed the testimony of witnesses or the confession of the accused.

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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175 stock against marauding beasts and thieves. All caravaneers had to
437 pay a tax to the local chiefs to cross their borders or to stop in their
486 markets to trade. Binger reported that the caravans which passed
651 through the market center of Wagadougou had to give the Moro
[66] Naba a share of their merchandise, aside from the presents which they gave to him. He also reported that the horse traders from the Yatenga, in the north of Mossi country, and the Hausa caravaneers, were sometimes forced to sell part of their wares to the Moro Naba at one-hundredth the purchase price (Binger 1892 : II, 292–300). Not all the caravaneers submitted to extortion, however, and at one period many of them traded with Mane instead of passing through Wagadougou where the tariffs were too high. On the other hand, the Mossi chiefs did not tolerate any trespassing on their territories by
[685] caravans that did not pay taxes. Those who tried to avoid doing so
[365] were subjected to attack by the mounted nobles *(nakomce)* on behalf of the district chiefs. Wise caravan leaders not only paid their taxes but established close relationships with the chiefs in order to receive adequate protection from some nobles who illegally attacked and looted the caravans.

175 It is impossible to know the actual volume of caravan trade which
437 passed through Mossi country, but we can get a fairly good idea of it
439 by examining the customs reports on goods crossing the border between Mossi country and the northern territories of the Gold Coast in the few years just following European conquest.[6] For 1901 and 1903 the official figures were:

TABLE 28A
Mossi Trade (1901–3)

Year	*Horses*	*Cattle*	*Sheep and Goats*	*Loaded Donkeys*	*Bales of Cotton Cloth*
1901	126	3,111	18,181	2,095	236
1903	196	6,624	30,892	4,294	369

Lucien Marc, who had the opportunity to check the volume of this trade for 1904 and 1905, guessed that about 16,000 cattle and 75,000 sheep and goats passed through the customs post in Mossi country. Furthermore, he believed that since

> ... the Mossi also supply in part the markets of Togoland and the market at Bondoukou [Ivory Coast], one can estimate at least an annual export of 20,000 cattle and 100,000 sheep or goats. The import of kola nuts is at least 500 tons. (Marc 1909 : 178)

[113] (6) Great Britain Parliamentary Papers: Cd. 788–27, no. 357, Northern territories of Gold Coast, report of 1901 in Acc. and Papers, vol. LXIV 1902. Cd. 2238–6, no. 429, N.Ts of Gold Coast, report of 1903 in Acc. and Papers, 1904, and 1905, vol. LI.

4: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1957
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643 The war minister replied, "That will be against tradition and justice to the dead ruler. Do not fear; I am here with my arms to see that your decision is respected" (this was not always an empty gesture, for one man, Wobogo, forced a Ouidi-naba to elect him).[3] When the lesser ministers were notified as to the choice of the new sovereign they said: "You have expressed our will and the will of all the people." The elector then secretly called the new ruler and, taking off the man's goat's skin (the symbol of those seeking the chieftainship) told him: "I am giving you the house of your father and of your grandfather." Then the ministers and the chief musician escorted the new ruler before his subjects, and the Ouidi-naba shouted: "Here is he who has the power of life and death over you." The following day all the members of the ruling lineage and sublineages swore not to betray their new ruler. The minister of war then swore, in the name of all the people, to protect the new ruler with his life if the need ever arose. Next followed ceremonies during which a descendant of the original Ninisi inhabitants made sacrifices, in the name of the new sovereign, to his ancient ancestors.

643 642 [778] In analyzing the power of the Moro-naba we must take into consideration the concept of *nam* which is described as "power" or "the force of God." It is this force of God that enables one man to control another, and gives the sovereign the power of life and death over his subjects. Moreover, once a man had "eaten the *nam*," the Mossi constitution had no provisions for deposing him. The Mossi generally claim that only one of their thirty-three rulers was ever deposed, and that he was the ruler who ran away from the French. However, there is another tradition that states that one sovereign, Karfo, was forced to commit suicide by his Ouidi-naba.

According to the Mossi constitution, the Moro-naba had complete control over the lands of the state, and was the only one empowered to distribute these lands as fiefs. Any attack on the lands of the state was an attack on the Moro-naba and thus a cause for war. The Moro-naba alone had the right to make war, and in this he was helped by his vassals, the district chiefs, and their armies. He was court of final appeal for crimes that carried the death penalty and, theoretically, only he had the right to condemn a nobleman to death.

651 686 Every year the district chiefs under the command of their ministers went to the capital to pay allegiance to the Moro-naba with gifts of cows, goats, sheep, cowries, and grain. The animals were presents from the stock of the district chiefs, but the cowries and grain were collected from the villagers of the districts. The people of the several wards in the capital furnished labor for the cultivation of the sovereign's fields and for the upkeep of his houses. The Moro-naba received substantial sums of money from taxes on the sale of slaves or other merchandise in the Ouagadougou market. He also received presents of slaves when his vassals raided the surrounding countries. If a district chief failed to fulfill all of these

4: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1957
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obligations to the Moro-naba, his lands were raided, his women seized and, if he were caught, he was killed.

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It is difficult to ascertain how the institution of provincial administrators arose among the Mossi. Some of the people still believe that the ministers were formerly slaves of the Moro-naba, but Delobsom claims that the first ministers were warrior companions of Naba Oubri, the founder of the Ouagadougou dynasty.[4] These men were not members of the royal lineage and thus were inferior in status to the members of the royal lineage and sublineages under their supervision. However, as emissaries of the Moro-naba, these ministers were entitled to respect by all the people. The ministers recommended successors to vacant district chieftainships; thus it was incumbent upon a district chief to be friendly with his minister if he wished succession to go to his eldest son.

The minister was the person who carried orders from the Moro-naba to the district chiefs, and he reported back to the Moro-naba on conditions in the district he visited. However, the minister could not interfere in the internal affairs of a district, nor could the district chief complain to the Moro-naba about a minister. Everyone was required to observe the strict hierarchy; the only sanction that the district chief exercised over his minister was to appeal to another minister in the hope that the Moro-naba would come to his aid.

The districts that comprised the provinces of the ministers were scattered around the country and were not equal in size or importance. One minister, the Baloum-naba, controlled the districts ruled over by those chiefs who were the sons of recent rulers. Another, the Kamsoro-naba, a eunuch, had control of the largest and wealthiest districts, but he, in contrast to the other ministers, was not succeeded by sons and, when he died, the Moro-naba inherited all of his property. The ministers frequently became very wealthy because they received gifts whenever their charges went to Ouagadougou to pay homage to the ruler. The people from the districts under their control provided labor for their fields and for the upkeep of their houses. The ministers also received bribes from persons seeking vacant district chieftainships.

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When a district chief or Kombéré died, his heirs sent a horse or a sheep with leaves on its tail to notify the ruler of the death. The Moro-naba always questioned the envoys, and when he was satisfied that his man had not met with foul play, he sent the animal to his chief minister. The Moro-naba then sent his own envoys to the late chief's house with offerings for sacrifices to their common ancestors, and also instructed the envoys to collect the death offerings from the chief's relatives. After the funeral the eldest son of the dead chief and the other pretenders went to Ouagadougou bearing gifts to the district minister and the other important men surrounding the ruler. When the time came to name the new district chief, the Moro-naba called his ministers together and asked them: "Which one of the candidates is really capable of succeeding the late chief?"

He was also liable to be put in stocks for 684
several days, and when released he was warned against visiting the local 692
markets, where he might be tempted to renew his illicit relations. A noble- 634
man convicted of adultery was often merely warned or fined, since his [696]
movements could not be restricted. But if a man caught his wife and an- [682]
other man in *flagrante delicto* and killed them, his act was considered justifiable homicide (even if the slain man was a noble), and he went free. If, however, he killed the lover but spared his wife, he had to send her to the chief's household. Here she was made to perform hard work under the supervision of the palace guards until it was believed that she had reformed. A man who was experiencing difficulties with an unfaithful wife and feared he might eventually kill her or her paramour also sent her to the chief's compound for a few months.

The Mossi have always been great creditors and debtors, and cases con- 686
cerning indebtedness seem to have been next in frequency at the district 692
court. The chief usually dismissed cases of indebtedness brought against 634
minors, because it was considered unseemly for adults to give credit or to loan valuable property to youths not yet of age. Thus, if the minor's family refused to make restitution, the creditor usually had no redress. However, [613]
if a woman borrowed property and refused to return it, her husband's lineage was held responsible. Similarly, if an adult male borrowed anything and refused to return it or to do so on time, the case was taken to the local court and eventually to the district court. The creditor was asked to supply witnesses to the loan, and if the chief was satisfied that the loan had been made under the conditions specified, the debtor was ordered to make restitution. If the debtor claimed bankruptcy, the chief ordered that his goods be seized and sold, and that restitution be made to the creditor. If the debtor 686
was truly destitute, his relatives were compelled to pay his debts. The col- 692
lective responsibility of the babissi for the debts of its members was seen 634
most clearly in cases where men died in a state of indebtedness. The credi- 613
tors were allowed to summon the debtor's babissi to court, and if proof of the debt was established, the relatives were compelled to repay. If they failed to do so, the chief's police seized and sold their goods to repay the debt.

Cases dealing with violations of civil contracts were somewhat similar. 686
The Mossi did not believe in the axiom *caveat emptor*. If a man sold an 634
animal that died within a week for no apparent reason, the chief ordered 692
an investigation. If it was found that the animal had been ill when sold, the chief ordered that the buyer be reimbursed. If the investigation showed that the animal had been healthy when sold, no restitution was made. Similarly, if a man borrowed an ass or an ox to transport goods and the animal

686 634 692 died while he was using it, the owner could not press any claims. However, the borrower was obliged to sell the animal's flesh and give the money to the owner along with the animal's skin as proof of its death. Under no circumstances would a district chief absolve a man from paying the market value of an animal if he failed to return the skin. Such failure would brand him as a thief and involve an additional fine.

685 The Mossi considered theft a major crime. A thief could be killed with [678] impunity if he was caught in the act and in the presence of several witnesses. If these conditions were not met but the man killed was known to have been a thief, the killer was fined several cows. But if he was known to have been a man of good character, the killer ran the risk of being executed. In this way, the Mossi tried to prevent any abuse of an accepted practice. The theft of grain and other foodstuffs was considered especially reprehensible, because it was held to indicate that the thief was so depraved 685 that he would not even grow his own food. During the rule of Naba Kag- 175 lere of Nobere district (1888–1906), a man called Yahiya left his own village of Donse and went to a village called Quitenga to steal sweet potatoes. The people of that village caught him in the act and shot him with a poisoned arrow as he made his escape. Yahiya died without revealing the source of his wound, and his babissi, suspecting foul play, asked Kaglere to investigate. When the Quitenga people learned of the investigation, they went forward voluntarily and reported the circumstances under which they had wounded Yahiya. Kaglere absolved them of all guilt and told the Donse people that Yahiya had deserved to die, not only because he had stolen food (which he might have received if he had asked for it), but because sweet potatoes were the easiest vegetable to cultivate.

685 A thief who was too clever to be caught in the act but who was apprehended afterwards was treated quite harshly by the Mossi court. Here, the [692] penalty of double indemnity was often applied. A man who was brought to court for stealing a chicken or guinea hen was fined a goat or a sheep. Hence the Mossi proverb "Zou noaga ronda bouga"—"He who steals a [696] chicken repays a goat." The thief who stole one cow had to return several. If a thief could not pay the fine, he was placed in stocks until his relatives paid for him. If they refused to do so, the chief's retainers seized their prop- [762] erty, sold it, and made restitution. This often compelled the family of a recidivous thief to make him commit suicide. If the family would not re- [634] sort to this, the district chief had the man seized and clubbed to death.[7] Sometimes the chief sent recidivists to the Mogho Naba, who sent them to a [565] village called Teemetenga to be made into eunuchs.[8]

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as such, although a rapacious nobleman could be sanctioned for terrorizing and "spoiling" a village. If a nobleman was caught performing an act that *was* considered theft, or if he was accused and found guilty of theft, he was severely punished. During Kaglere's reign, the people of a small village 686
suffered a series of livestock thefts. One day, while the friends of a village 685
chief were sitting with him, a dog came out of the chief's compound 622
dragging an animal skin. The men recognized the skin as that described for a stolen goat, and decided to investigate. In the chief's courtyard they discovered the hole from which the dog had unearthed the skin. They also found the skins of several other stolen animals. The villagers took the [692]
village chief to the district chief, who found him guilty and exiled him [634]
from the region. In passing judgment, the district chief told him that he had been elected "to care for the village," but that he had betrayed his trust by robbing his own people.

According to Mossi law, willful homicide or murder was punishable by 682
execution. The Mossi did not use wergild or "blood money," but insisted on the *lex talionis,* which they interpreted as "a life for a life." They did not believe that money or any other valuables could compensate for the life of a man, nor would they allow a slave to be executed in place of the murderer. They believed that only by executing the murderer himself could they prevent his victim's relatives from resorting to vengeance and thus "spoiling" the district or village.

A man who grievously wounded another was apprehended, bound, and taken to the village chief and subsequently to the district chief. Here he was [696]
kept in stocks in the serfs' quarter without being tried until his victim either died or recovered. If his victim recovered and the judge found that the wound had been inflicted accidentally, the defendant was fined or had his goods confiscated, but he was released. If the judge found that the victim had been wounded in a fair fight, the prisoner was usually censured and dismissed. The chief often warned the wounded man that he ought to have lived up to the Mossi axiom that a grown man is always able to protect himself. If, however, the trial revealed that the prisoner had ambushed his victim with the intent to kill, he either was fined several cows or had his entire property confiscated. District chiefs are known to have executed [634]
the perpetrators of cowardly ambushes even though their victims recovered. [696]

If a man died at the hands of another, an inquest was held immediately. If the killing had been accidental or committed in self-defense, or if it was

173 abruptly, as though he were somewhat provoked by this obstacle
644 to what he wants to do. At the same time the saddle is removed and the horse returned to the stables.

It should also be noted that every morning the pougtiéma (first wife) orders a basket and hamper to be filled with all the things needed for a journey, intending to accompany her husband to Lâ.

As soon as the Mogho Naba postpones his journey to the following day, the pougtiéma, duly warned, unpacks her basket.

Today, the breath of civilization has blown upon these ancient practices, and the present Mogho Naba merely sees his horse, which is walked up and down while he is receiving his ministers. The animal is at once taken back to the stables when the [62] king returns to his palace without having tried to mount it, much less having heard any entreaties from the Kamsaongo Naba.

Koaga Basgo

644 At sundown each day the Baloum Naba goes to the residence
789 of the Mogho Naba for the koaga. Only the Zusobin-Kassanga (chief eunuch) and the Sogon'kassanga (ranking servitor) assist at this performance. The koaga is a sort of earthenware basin into which is put a bit of fire and ... mystery. The head servitor places the koaga in the courtyard in front of the antechamber and blows on the fire, which quickly blazes up and then dies down. Meanwhile, the bendré (drummer) has been rubbing his hand back and forth over the waxed portion of the drumhead.

During the whole performance, no one is allowed either to enter or leave the house of the Mogho Naba. Anyone coming from
[687] the outside is not allowed to pass through the courtyard during the proceedings and anyone caught watching the koaga basgo was severely punished by the lash or even executed. When the performance is over, the Zusoba and the Baloum Naba, each of whom was seated at a particular place, arise, then approach and greet each other, and wait to be served some dam before separating for the rest of the night. They sometimes also salute the Mogho Naba before returning to their quarters.

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to the Mogho Naba: "Since I have come to you, give the first rank to this man. I will show him what he must do to please you. He will be the Ouidi Naba."

A man from Tansobongo, having heard that the Ouidi Naba was living in the greatest ease, came to see him. He, too, was a handsome youth. He was presented to the Mogho Naba (Naba Oubri) by the Gounga Naba who proposed the young man's appointment as second minister, the Larrhallé Naba, and reserved for himself the post of third minister.

So it came about that the Gounga Naba is the emperor's third minister.

645 place where there were once many goumsé (gounga, silk-cotton tree); hence, his name.

[726] He is a brother-in-arms of the Tansoba and always accompanied him to war, where he chose death rather than defeat, especially if the Tansoba had been killed.

644 (d) Baloum Naba, the chief steward of the palace and chief servitor of the Mogho Naba. He never goes to war, but remains always at the side of the Mogho Naba. It is his duty to carry out [781] [65] sacrifices, such as killing the chickens or livestock offered to the manes or to the spirits when such sacrifices are prescribed by the soothsayers or other charlatans for the health and well-being of the Mogho Naba.

(e) Kamsaogho Naba, formerly accompanied the Tansoba to [839] war. The Kamsaogho Naba is a eunuch, and for this reason he is commonly called Mogho Naba na poug'tiéma, "first wife of the Mogho Naba."

Other personages (not ministers). (a) Samandé Naba, in charge of all of the people in the outer courtyard of the Mogho Naba and a brother-in-arms of the Larrhallé Naba.

644 687 661 (b) Poé Naba, formerly the confessor for the wives and pages of the Mogho Naba. His duty, carried out by magical practices, was to denounce those wives or persons guilty of treason or of

644 attempted adultery. This practice (poéré) found many victims,
687 and its suppression by the French was a real service to the Mossi,
661 who were formerly murdered for a trifle. An ogling glance at a chief's wife was punishable by death. A man who met one of the wives of the Mogho Naba on the road was executed along with the wife. If one met a napagha [royal wife], he left the path and took to the bush. The woman herself would run off and return to the road only when she was sure that the man was a long way off.

Such is naturally no longer the case, and the wives of the Mogho Naba on their way to the market at [66] Ouagadougou no longer expect not to be looked at or even jostled. I hasten to add, however, that the Mossi still retain great respect for them and will even swallow serious insults, such as tampiri, "bastard," from a napagha if they are so unlucky as to offend them.

644 (c) Daporé Naba, chief of the section of the free or house
693 slaves. It was formerly the duty of the Daporé Naba and his followers to massacre any pages or other convicted persons whose execution had been ordered by the Mogho Naba.

644 (d) Bend'Naba, chief of the drummers of the Mogho Naba.

(e) Soré Naba (literally, "chief of the path"), the drummer who always accompanies the warriors and who, therefore, even in time of peace, is allotted a horse.

644 If the enemy appears to be winning during a battle, the Soré
726 Naba kindles the courage of the warriors of the Mogho Naba and constantly asks for a head, m'data zougou. This means that he is asking each warrior to forget himself and to think only of victory. In order to have a victory, the enemy must suffer such losses that they decide either to retreat or to surrender. Thus, the expression m'data zougou implies ruthless slaughter.

701 (f) Tansoba or Tampsoba, the war chief. The Tansoba of the Mogho Naba lives in a small village, Moussa, in the province of the Baloum Naba.

701 [67] When there is friction between the Mogho Naba and one
687 of his vassals and there seems to be no hope of agreement, the Mogho Naba sends to the Tansoba for logdo (warriors armed with arrows). The Tansoba at once proceeds to Ouagadougou and stops at Baoghin. The emperor assembles his ministers and the principal dignitaries of his court and says to them: "I never thought that chief X, to whom I myself gave the pougla (red fez) would dare to

701 oppose me. I therefore demand that his fez be returned to me."
687 To take away the fez of a naba is to dethrone him and reduce him to the level of his subjects.

The court officials, including the Tansoba, at once send emissaries to the chief at fault, asking him to choose between suicide (some take a poison called sounadré, while others kill themselves with a poisoned arrow) and war with the Mogho Naba.

If the chief is not prepared for such a summons, he kills himself, and the envoys return with the news.

669 If, on the other hand, he declares that he wants pouwega, that
701 is, war and a noble death, he sends back the representatives of the ministers. A few days later, with drums beating and the Tansoba, chief of the army, at its head, the whole warrior band appears before his walls.

The Tansoba sends the Samandé Naba to the chief to ask him to confirm his declaration of war. If the naba still wants war, he usually replies: "Ya yingri bala la ka sakénian."

The Tansoba withdraws, sending word to the chief [68] to expect him back on a stated day (seven or eight days later); this period of time will enable the chief to assemble his warriors also. When the day arrives, it is a merciless battle, a massacre.

Often the forces of the Mogho Naba are victorious, and in that
727 event the slaves, livestock, and other property go to those who seized them. Only the corpses belong to the Tansoba.

701 If an arrow, even a poisoned one, wounds the Tansoba, he
577 must under no circumstances pull it out. Indeed, he must often endure thirst and hunger, and it is only when he is at rest in an enclosed place that the arrows are removed from his body. It should
[789] be noted that since the Tansoba's costume is virtually covered with amulets and other charms, he is not very likely to be wounded seriously by an arrow. This is not, of course, to belittle his bravery and composure in the face of danger, since he is expected
[762] never to retreat and, if the enemy is victorious, often prefers to kill himself rather than to report a defeat to the Mogho Naba.

644 There are, in addition to the foregoing, a great many petty naba whose role is not clearly defined and of whom it seems needless to speak.

1: Delobsom--42 I-5 (no date) 1933 FA28 Mossi FA28

Respect Due the Home of the Naba

554 The kombéré is absolute master of his territory. His subjects must show him the same deference as he himself shows to the Mogho Naba.

However, even though he is not a noble, a minister of the emperor need not remove his cap to respond to the salute of a kombéré. On the contrary, the latter is required to humble himself, to give way before him just as he would before the Mogho Naba.

644 The nabiga (son of a naba), nakomsé (descendants of naba) and, still more, an ordinary Moaga are all categorically forbidden to wear their shoes or their caps at the court of the naba. The only exception to the rule is when the person is a Moslem convert, but even then he always leaves his shoes at the door. He may, however, wear his cap or turban. Shoes and headgear may be put on again only after the subject is 300 meters from the house of the naba. Sometimes, in places where custom is rigorously enforced, the person must be out of sight.

[687] Any infraction of these rules was punished severely by the lash and by confiscation of property by the samand'kamba of the naba [110] when the offender was not of the nobility, that is, was neither nabiga nor nakombga.

291 It is interesting to note that wearing the fez, originally one of the badges of chiefdom, was forbidden to the nabiga and all the more to the talga (ordinary Moaga). Today it is commonly worn by men and youths since European traders and shops have made common an article which was once very rare.

576 Shaking hands. One seldom sees a naba extend his hand to one of his subjects or, more especially, to his brothers or fellow nobles (nakomsé).

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There are two reasons for this prohibition: 1) the naba is supposed to maintain a certain distance between himself and his subjects, a normal practice; and 2) a superstitious belief has it that persons harboring evil intentions toward the chief put magic powders on their hands to cause swellings which may develop into real abscesses.

[154]

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595 foreigners who are being housed by the naba. [164]

Each sogoné or samanbiga chooses a mother from among the
644 wives of the naba (only those in the first two sections).
595

He helps her to cultivate her plot of ground and receives in
357 return a little food over and above the ration of sagbo given to the
608 sogoné as a group.

At Nanore (1), for example, it was formerly the rule that

1. Canton in the administrative district of Koudougou.

when a woman brought some sagbo to her adopted son, she could not simply hand it to him. Instead, holes were dug in the courtyard of the naba, into which the woman put the sagbo and sauce. Then the young man came to eat the food, and later the woman came back for her bowls.

644 Finally, it is still forbidden for anyone to play a guitar when
595 a napagha is passing by unless the player is the naba himself or
533 someone called upon to play by the naba. It should be noted that
● 687 the Moaga prefers the guitar for intimate occasions. Therefore, to
832 play it when a napagha passes by is actually to court her.

The Pogsiouré, or the Recruitment of Sogoné and Saman'kamba

643 Aside from a few special cases limited by custom which we
562 shall presently describe, the naba can never dispose of the daughters of his subjects, either to make them [165] his own wives or to bestow them on someone else, without the permission of the parents.

Pogsiouré comes from pog', the diminutive of pagha, "woman," and from siouré, diminutive of sioubo, "to give anticipating a profit."

562 As a result of family quarrels or even voluntarily, a Moaga
431 "may give away his daughters and those of his brothers and close
643 relatives to the naba." It is obvious that the naba cannot keep all of these girls, so he gives some of them to his brothers, his uncles, his sons, and even to ordinary Mossi who have done him a service.

In the same way -- and this is more frequent -- every sogoné (page) or samand'biga [singular of samand'kamba] (bodyguard or

687 631 Moulins adds, "Custom does not anticipate the possibility of a chief being, properly speaking, stripped of his rule. A naba who gives the sovereign reasons for complaint is summoned under a pretext of some sort and put to death without further ceremony at the close of the audience granted to him. If the chief, guessing at the true purpose of the Moro Naba's invitation, demurs at going, a column is sent into the region over which he rules with the mission of seizing him and taking him to the Moro Naba, who has him put to death by his pages."

622 Let us add that in the Mossi /language/ a village chief is called tengasoba or tenganaba, from tenga, "earth, place, spot" and by extension "village," and from naba or soba, "chief." There are also chiefs of quarters called sakanaba, sakasoba, or sakakasaman, from saka, "quarter," and naba, soba, or kasaman, "chief." Mossi villages are indeed divided into quarters located some 200, 300, 400, or 500 meters apart and consisting of several soukala which usually stand, as we know, 40 or 50 meters apart. When the head of a quarter dies, it is the oldest soukala chief in the quarter who replaces him.

565 Below the Moro Naba and the chiefs of provinces, cantons, and villages, there existed among the Mossi a true aristocracy, a genuine nobility, the nakomsé, or sons of chiefs. "They were granted," says Moulins, "important privileges. They had the right to loot passing caravans and to demand from the common natives gifts of cowries, livestock, grain, etc., which the latter could not deny them. They were forbidden to kill, but if they committed murder, instead of being put to death, they were merely put in irons for a short period of time. Furthermore, they were granted the privilege of being tried only by the Moro Naba, head of their house, for all their crimes and misdemeanors." They are all descended, or supposed to be descended, from Moro Naba Oubry, conqueror of Mossi territory.

565 171 The existence of this aristocracy among the Mossi must be carefully noted, for it distinguishes them sharply from the populations we have studied up to now, Bobo, Nounouma, Kassouna, Sissala, Dagari, etc. Nobles are not found often among the Blacks of West Africa, and they are found only among groups that are, or formerly

9:Skinner E-5 (1955-1957)1960 FA28 Mossi FA28

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696 all the chaos would come a new appreciation for the task of the chief, and a cessation of the grumbling that the chiefs were greedy.

662
428 The Mossi interregnum also served another purpose. It gave the electors the opportunity to exhaust and redistribute much of the patri-
666 mony of the dead ruler, which was brought to them by his heirs who were trying to obtain the chieftainship through bribery. Sometimes, a candidate's ability to collect a great deal of goods with which to press his suit often revealed to the electors the strength of his following in the district or village, for had he been an unpopular man he would have had to use only his own resources.

666 The Mossi electors were always concerned with the health and
643 character of a potential chief, and turned down the most promising
175 candidates who were deficient in any of these qualities. For example, when Moro Naba Sanum died in 1890 without leaving a male heir, his younger brother, Bokary Koutou, was the strongest candidate for the *nam*. Yet he was passed over, at first, by the electors because of his reputation as a bandit and a rebel. We know from Captain Binger, a Frenchman who met Bokary in 1888, that this prince was indeed a bandit and a slave raider. But Binger, although deploring Bokary's conduct, exonerated him on the grounds that the Moro Naba had sent him into exile without any means of support. This was true, but the
[687] reason that Moro Naba Sanum did so was because Bokary had raised a rebellion against him as an attempt to obtain their father's position. Bokary was forbidden to appear in the capital; but when he heard that his brother Sanum was dead, he took a force of soldiers and hurried to Wagadougou fearing that an attempt would have been made to prevent his election. When he found that his fears were justified, he became
[669] desperate and secreted a force of Gurunsi warriors around the elector's meeting place, threatening to kill them if he was not named Moro Naba. They succumbed to his threat and he received the *nam*. During
643 the customary speech in which a new ruler chose his official name,
175 announced his program for the people and the country, or ridiculed his erstwhile competitors, Bokary Koutou said: "A hundred ghosts cannot frighten an elephant (Wobogo)," meaning that he was not afraid
648 of any of his enemies. He thereafter became known as Moro Naba
721 Wobogo, and he chose to live up to his boast when the French arrived
175 and asked him to sign a treaty of protection with them. He refused

10:Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1964 FA28 Mossi FA28
Yatenga

tionally charged relationships would be such a serious breach of etiquette as to threaten permanent damage, if not actual dissolution, of the marriage relationship (Hammond 1959: 187; 1963: 21). Thus if he has been angered over his wife's frequent failure to prepare his food properly, or to present it to him before his kinsmen with a proper show of deference, he need not and should not reprimand her directly. He need only wait until she is visited by one of her younger sisters when he can call out:

> Eh! Here come women more worthless than my wife! What do you want here? Are you looking for *sacabo* (a millet cake)? Who eats well here? Do you want an old groundnut? No one here has tasted *sacabo* with sauce since your sister came to my house!

By expressing his resentment of his wife in this way the husband is able—indirectly—to communicate the cause of his displeasure, to elicit support for himself and social pressure against her, and to achieve harmlessly the reduction of his hostile feelings. All this he accomplishes without risking the sort of direct and angry confrontation which might have a permanently damaging effect on their relationship. The wife's younger sisters cannot take offense at this joking, and they can be relied upon to relay the husband's complaints to their sister—if, indeed, she does not herself overhear the joking exchange. Furthermore, since a wife's younger sisters are usually aware of the sources of her grievance with her husband, they can use the same means to communicate to him the reason for her resentment and consequent failure to perform her domestic tasks to his satisfaction.

Similarly, when a man's younger brothers come into the presence of his wife, she is expected to insult them in the same way—to deride with humor their appearance, their lack of energy, their skill at their work, or their intelligence. The expectation and acceptance of such joking provides her with an indirect means of criticizing her husband as well. By saving her grievances until she is in the company of her husband's younger siblings, she may, within the context of joking, pour out her resentment at the way she is treated, revealing succinctly the causes of her dissatisfaction. His brothers can be relied upon to relay to her husband what she has said, if he has not himself overheard the exchange. If he recognizes as valid the criticism implied by her joking remarks, he may correct those aspects of his behavior which are frustrating or unsatisfactory to her. Indeed, if the criticisms are justified, his kinsmen are likely to exert pressure on him to do so. The joking provides the woman with a means of channeling in a culturally acceptable manner the aggressive feelings generated by her frustrations. And her husband's younger brothers, by retorting with hostile banter of the same sort, can convey to her the dissatisfaction of both her husband and their other kinsmen with her comportment, thus providing her, too, with a chance to mend her ways.

By these means both marriage partners have an equal opportunity to evaluate the content of the other's criticism and, if necessary, to alter their behavior accordingly. Since this is achieved through joking, the result of such an exchange is the maintenance of communication, the exercise of a measure of social control, and the mutual reduction of frustration without the face-to-face conflict that might result in permanent damage to both the marriage relation-

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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to render homage to the monarch. This attracted the attention of the Mogho 635
Naba, who investigated the grievance of the district chief. If the provincial 645
minister were found to be in serious error, he might be deposed and exe- 634
cuted. The Ouidi Naba was theoretically exempt from such punishment, 578
but it is doubtful that a strong monarch would have allowed even this official to cause trouble.

A provincial governor dissatisfied with a district chief under his charge could, under certain conditions, have him deposed and put to death. He achieved this by complaining to the monarch that the chief was either withholding tribute or misgoverning his people. In most cases, however, the minister could curb the district chief by hinting that his son would not receive a recommendation as successor to the nam of the district. This was usually enough to win the cooperation of the most recalcitrant chief, if only because his future status as the honored ancestor of a ruling local line would be jeopardized if he rebelled. These sanctions were thus sufficient to ensure satisfactory relations between the provincial ministers and their district chiefs, at least on the surface. This was to the advantage of both groups, [687]
since in the final analysis the failure of either to administer or rule well might result in the death penalty.

Many districts and villages in Ouagadougou were administered not by 634
the provincial ministers but by officials directly responsible to the Mogho 621
Naba. The districts in question were often ruled by close relatives of the Mogho Naba or by persons who had gained his good graces. The villages [567]
were often inhabited by slaves and governed by headmen who were themselves slaves. Like the other territories of the Mogho Naba, these districts and villages were not physically contiguous. The districts were mixed in with districts administered by the provincial ministers, and the villages stood within the territorial boundaries of district chiefs. Whenever the [203]
Mogho Naba wanted to communicate with a chief of such a village or district, he sent one of his retainers. The chiefs, in turn, used their own people to send messages and goods to Ouagadougou. The general administration of these districts and villages differed little from that of the territories administered by the provincial ministers. The main difference was that the Mogho Naba took a greater interest in their everyday affairs. This called for greater efficiency on the part of local officials; for they, like the other chiefs, faced the penalty of deposition and death for maladministration.

Of all Mossi officials, the district chiefs had the most difficult adminis- 634
trative task. They were in direct contact with the people, and thus ran a greater risk of being charged with misgovernment. Countless district chiefs [687]
were deposed and executed because they had allegedly disobeyed or rebelled

634 against the Mogho Naba. I say "allegedly" because it was never quite clear
687 whether the district chief was at fault or whether the Mogho Naba wanted to replace him for dynastic reasons. For example, Tanga, a district chief, was accused by Mogho Naba Sanum (1850–90) of withholding tribute and of maladministration. The Ouidi Naba who administered Tanga's district advised him to prove his innocence by making a sacrifice on Naba Oubri's tomb, and then go to Ouagadougou and ask the Mogho Naba's forgiveness.
634 Tanga agreed to do so. But it appears that the Mogho Naba, who wished
687 to place his own father's brother in Tanga's place, did not want a reconcili-
662 ation. He waged war on Tanga, and seized his relatives, retainers, and cattle. Tanga tried to regain his losses by appealing to his provincial minister, but the minister told him that the Mogho Naba had distributed the livestock and had sold the people to Hausa traders. Moreover, he informed Tanga that he could not help him because the Mogho Naba could do as he
[669] pleased. Tanga thereupon decided to take matters into his own hands. He successfully attacked the Mogho Naba's villages, and was still a rebel when the French arrived shortly afterward.[26]

634 Tanga's action was unusual, for district chiefs seldom risked rebelling
687 against the Mogho Naba when accused of maladministration. In 1895, for example, Koabga, chief of Doulougou district in the province of the Gounga
669 Naba, took poison rather than wage war when Mogho Naba Wobogo accused him of misgovernment. Usually, a district chief who disobeyed an order of the Mogho Naba was summoned to the capital to answer the charge of lese majesty. If he was found guilty, the ruler knocked the bonnet off his head, thus deposing him, and had him strangled. The Mossi seldom
[762] spilled royal blood. A district chief who refused to go to Ouagadougou could either kill himself (traditionally by taking arsenic) or resort to civil war.[27] If he chose suicide, he was given an honorable burial as though he had died naturally. If the Mogho Naba sent down an army, however, the offending chief was invariably killed. His compound was burned, his slaves and cattle were seized, and his allies and immediate relatives were compelled to flee. The strength of this tradition is borne out by Tanga's case. He had successfully resisted the attempts of two Mogho Nanamse to bring him to heel, and was still at large when the French conquered the country.
[648] But Ouidi Naba Koabga, who had deserted his sovereign and selected Kouka Koutou as Mogho Naba under French orders, had not forgiven Tanga. When the French asked him what additional steps they should take to pacify the country, he asked them to capture Tanga. The unfortunate district chief was captured, placed on an unsaddled colt, and taken to Ouagadougou, where he was ignominiously executed.[28]

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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difficulty discharging these duties, for, nobles aside, the Mossi usually obeyed 634
orders from their chiefs—a fact verified by most observers. At the same time, a district chief had to be temperate in his demands upon his villagers, and could not take advantage of his obligations to the Mogho Naba as a means of personal enrichment. Similarly, the district administrators could not seek personal gain either by augmenting the demands of the district chief or by withholding part of the goods and services rendered to him. District administrators who were found guilty of maladministration or embezzlement were executed, because activities of this kind could—and often did—jeopardize the life of the district chief.

The Mossi might complain among themselves about the administrative 634
policies of their district chief, but they took no measures against him unless 687
he was very cruel or exploitative. A district chief who by his disregard for 578
the people's welfare was believed to have lost the ability to "command 626
people" jeopardized not only his position but also his life. When the people were dissatisfied with a chief, they either boycotted him or deserted their villages and migrated to another district, thus "increasing the force" (nam) of the chief who gave them sanctuary. This placed the deserted chief in a rather difficult position. Mogho Nanamse are known to have ordered the 634
execution of district chiefs and even autonomous Dimdamba who had lost 687
their subjects through their own fault. In 1863, when Mogho Naba Sanum 626
was informed that the ruler of Boussouma, Naba Zande, had been chased away by his subjects for administrative abuses and had fled to a Ouagadougou village, he had him captured and executed.[29] Thus, the threat that people might leave the district was often strong enough to ensure a just administration, because the district chiefs and officials depended upon the villagers not only for the economic support of the central administration but also for their livelihood and their lives.

Those district chiefs who supervised other district chiefs for the Mogho 634
Naba did not interfere with the internal administration of the districts. 628
The chiefs of the Vooko and Nobila districts, for instance, had administrators of their own to look after their villages. But they were responsible to the chief of Nobere district, not their respective provincial ministers, for their internal affairs. Moreover, they had to follow the Nobere chief when he went to Ouagadougou to pay homage and allegiance to the Mogho Naba. But aside from these prescriptions, the chiefs of these subordinate districts administered their territories in the same manner as the Nobere chief administered his own.

The Mossi village chief had no administrators of his own to help him 622
with day-to-day affairs of his village. However, like the district chief, he 623

622 had a group of confidants who acted as an informal council. These men
623 included senior members of his own lineage, elders from other local lineages, and personal friends. Again, like the confidants of the district chiefs, these men visited the village chief whenever they were not busy with their own affairs to talk to him about wives, crops, and village matters. Although protocol was at a minimum on this level, the chief had to maintain a high
[613] degree of decorum. As a member of the ruling lineage of the district, he
[565] had noble status and had to be treated accordingly. The non-noble village chief was also respected as a recipient of the nam. But all chiefs, whether
622 nobles or commoners, were expected to lead exemplary lives lest the flaws in their characters as revealed by the intimacy of village life should weaken their prestige.

622 The village chief received his orders from the district chief through the
203 administrator in charge of his village or through one of this official's servants. He, in turn, used his own sons or relatives to transmit messages to the heads of the saghse. If the message was extremely important, the village chief's messenger might be accompanied by the administrator's messenger or by the district chief's personal representatives. The saksobadamba then transmitted the order to the various compound heads. This hierarchy was always followed because, by following it, the officials knew who was responsible for disobeying or frustrating the wishes of the superior chiefs. As on the district level, the orders transmitted to the village and its sections dealt with such things as collecting tribute, picking fruits from the district chief's trees, allocating labor for the district chief or his personal retainers, transferring or summoning cases to the district court, procuring sacrificial animals for the local Tengsoba, and requesting soldiers. The village chief also sent his own messages to the saghse. These messages, however, dealt with such village matters as local sacrifices, quarrels, and court cases.

622 Misrule and maladministration by a village chief were punished either
● 687 by the district chief or by the villagers. Like other Mossi rulers, the village chief could not be deposed and allowed to live. However, he had a better
634 chance of fleeing and finding refuge in another district. His presence in a strange district did not challenge the authority of the local chief, and he had no opportunities to seize any of his host's villages. In fact, if the refugee was accompanied by a large number of his subjects, his host might even give him land on which to erect a new village. The proviso was, of course, that he should not "spoil" the district by causing trouble. If a village chief accused of maladministration was seized by the district chief before he could
[696] flee, he was invariably executed. If he was a commoner, he was decapitated or even stoned to death; if he was a nobleman, he was taken into the bush and strangled in secret by the district police

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and strangled in secret by the district police. If a district chief hesitated to punish a village chief whose followers had complained, the aggrieved lineage or the entire village simply took its movable property and left. This sanction does not seem to have been applied often, but its threat was normally sufficient to curb the excesses of the worst village chief.

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The torture was seen as a punishment, and not as a form of ordeal to 695
ascertain guilt or innocence. It was designed to cause the culprit as much 696
suffering as possible before he died, and its harshness reflects the Mossi fear of witches and witchcraft. In one form of punishment called *koudgilga*, the culprit was sent to the smith, who tortured him by placing hot iron balls in both his hands. He was then beaten to death. Another type of punishment called *swengalenga* was more painful. A pottery jar from which the bottom had been removed was heated in a fire. Then it was placed over the head of the convicted witch and allowed to burn its way down onto his shoulders. The culprit was subsequently killed. Sometimes a convicted witch was [304]
not killed; instead, a man was sent to Ouagadougou to be castrated and [567]
sold as a eunuch, and a woman was sold outside the country as a slave.

Gross disrespect toward the chief and crimes of lese majesty were un- 687
common among the Mossi. These crimes were usually committed by persons who came into close contact with the chief—nobles and court retainers—rather than by commoners, serfs, or slaves. The most common form of [684]
lese majesty was adultery with one of the district chief's wives. The penalty [634]
for this was death for both violators. Anyone who dared insult the district chief at court was seized and executed. The same fate awaited those who talked about him maliciously in public or threatened to stir a rebellion against him. If the culprits were commoners, they were executed; if they were nobles, they were strangled in secret or were forced to commit suicide.

The district chief was caught in a dilemma whenever nobles committed 634
major crimes or unlawful acts. They could not be imprisoned, and only the 565
Mogho Naba had the legal prerogative to execute them. When a noble 681
committed a major crime such as treason or rebellion, he was sent to the capital to be executed by slaves, who strangled him with a piece of cotton cloth. However, no district chief could allow the nobles to commit crimes 634
with impunity, secure in the knowledge that they could only be punished
at Ouagadougou. If a nobleman subverted the chief's rule by repeated acts 696
of cruelty and brigandage, he was executed, although illegally. The execu- 565
tioners were the Baglere Naba and the Dapore Naba. These two men [693]
secretly visited the condemned noble, taking with them a bundle as a present from the chief. This bundle contained a new white robe in which were secreted a chief's bonnet and a poisoned arrow. As soon as the noble saw the gift, he knew that he was being ordered to kill himself. If he attempted to raise an alarm or run away, he was instantly strangled and his body was discarded in the bush. If he accepted the sentence, he was allowed to have food prepared, to eat, and then to kill himself. The chief ordered an elaborate funeral for his kinsman as though he had died an ordinary death. Thus, he was able to observe all the proprieties while at the same

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litigants when it would be heard. On the day set he took his charges to court, where they waited in the company of the litigants from other districts and from the wards of the capital itself. 643 692 634

The procedure of the Mogho Naba's court differed little from that of the district chief's court. When called upon, the litigant stated his case, called witnesses, and underwent cross-examination by his opponents and by ministers of the Mogho Naba. The litigants were not allowed to look at the Mogho Naba while they spoke, but had to kneel forward on the ground with their faces turned away from him. The Mogho Naba himself seldom looked at the litigants and rarely questioned them. When presented with a complex case, the Mogho Naba, like the district chief, retired with his councillors and canvassed their opinion in order "to ascertain whether or not their verdicts were similar to his own." Nevertheless, he could not follow their advice. He had to make up his own mind, and when he returned to court he rendered his verdict, which could not be appealed. If those who received an unfavorable verdict showed any displeasure, they were taken outside by the palace guards and executed.

The penalties imposed by the Ouagadougou court were usually more severe than those handed down at the district level. The main reason for this was that aside from cases involving residents of Ouagadougou, the lawsuits tried by the Mogho Naba were serious ones and often had been sent to him on appeal. Moreover, the Mogho Naba's court was alone empowered to impose the death penalty within the kingdom of Ouagadougou. [681] It should be noted here once more that district chiefs often executed criminals. But it should also be reiterated that the Mogho Naba never surrendered his prerogative to the district chiefs. They simply usurped it, and if they used it judiciously they were not penalized.

Those nobles and commoners who were convicted for serious crimes at the monarch's court were killed by the royal executioners. Moreover, in contrast to the procedure at the district court, the criminal's property was often seized before his execution. The reason for this is not clear, but it was probably related to the lack of a personal relationship between the court and the relatives of the accused, which enabled the Mogho Naba to impose a harsher penalty. The district chief, it must be remembered, lived in close association with his people and was influenced in his behavior by social relationships. Interestingly enough, the Mogho Naba did not keep the goods seized, but allowed them to be distributed among his executioners. 643 696 692 634

Crimes against the person or office of the Mogho Naba were punished with greater severity than crimes against the district chief. [687] Any man who was seen speaking to one of the ruler's wives and who did not happen to

be related to her was tried and executed. In some cases, he was put to death without a trial. Adultery with a royal wife was considered so reprehensible that both adulterers were publicly beaten to death. Their bodies were denied burial and were thrown into the bush to be eaten by vultures. The Dapore Naba and the Baglere Naba seized and retained the man's property.

Men who committed treason against the Mogho Naba were usually killed before they could be tried. Chiefs and nobles who were suspected of treason and who consented to come to Ouagadougou for trial were deposed and executed if found guilty. Those who were found innocent were released and sent back to their chiefly duties. The sole exception on record to this general rule was the case of Naba Yemde, a Dim of Boulsa province. He had fought and defeated the forces of Mogho Naba Sanum, and when the Mogho Naba sent a larger army and routed him, he was treacherously delivered to the monarch by another Dim. Sanum found Yemde innocent of treason, but had him executed because he had violated another rule: as the descendant of a Kourita, he had come face to face with the Mogho Naba, thus jeopardizing the monarch's life. This exception is always cited by the Mossi when the inevitability of execution for treason is brought up. Actually, a person accused of treason rarely went to court. He either took poison or died in battle against the royal forces. As a posthumous punishment, his compound was burned, his property seized, and his relatives and servants sold into slavery outside the country. Thus, the supreme penalty was not merely the death of a traitor but the permanent banishment of his entire lineage.

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The Mogho Naba had an elaborate court composed of many officials, relatives, and servants. The most important courtiers were the five ministers, who appeared daily at court and took part in all important ceremonies in addition to administering their own provinces. Aside from these men, the Mogho Naba had a number of other officials called Naba whose responsibilities covered the full range of duties in the palace and in the capital. One of the most interesting was the Pwe Naba, a royal diviner and court chaperon. His chief duty was to guard the morals of the pages and the royal wives; he also administered the ordeal to persons accused of treason. The pages were required to be chaste until they were discharged from the palace, lest their amorous adventures lead them to compromise the virtue of the royal wives, with whom they were constantly in contact. A wife and a page suspected of adultery were tested by the Pwe Naba. He forced them to look into a mirror or a calabash of water, and declared them guilty or innocent according to the way their faces were reflected. If they were found guilty, the wife was executed and the page was either executed or discharged in disgrace. The Pwe Naba also saw to it that strangers did not address the ruler's wives either on the street or in the market. Offenders were executed.

The Dapore Naba served as the court's chief executioner and as head of a group of the Mogho Naba's hereditary serfs. Members of the royal clan were executed by strangulation, since royal blood could not be shed; all other persons were executed either with a sword, by hanging, or with heavy clubs. Another palace official was the Ouedrango Naba, the head groom. It was he who saddled and presented the king's ceremonial horse to him at the morning ceremony. The Kambo Naba commanded the palace guard; only he and his guards were permitted to carry guns. The Samande Naba and the Samande Nabila supervised the work of the samande-kamba, young men who worked around the palace courtyard and kept watch with heavy batons to enforce order during ceremonies. A lesser palace official was the Zusoaba Kasanga, who, as chief of the palace eunuchs, ruled over the guardians of the royal harem. The Gande Naba made sacrifices for the ruler and also distributed gifts from the king to the royal officials and the royal household.

Another courtier, and one who played an important role during the installation of the new ruler, was the Ouagadougou Naba. As a direct descendant of the Ninisi, he was all but indispensable at sacrifices propitiating or honoring his ancestors. The Bendere Naba was the chief musician and court historian; according to some reports, a Bendere Naba was killed instantly if he made a mistake while reciting the ruler's genealogy. The Raga Naba was chief of the markets in the capital. Under him were

567 them for kola nuts with the Achanti [Ashanti] or for loaves of salt
439 at Timbuktu. Although they were always transported by roundabout routes to prevent them from finding their way back to their homes, still some of them always managed to escape.

492 The naba used the young yemdado as soroné or grooms, and
567 they would often [93] take the young and attractive women (yempoksé) as wives.

641 The sale of free men. Neither the emperor of the Mossi nor
681 his vassals sold their subjects. Individuals who were regarded as dangerous were simply put to death unless they took refuge in a bangaré to avoid being executed, as has been noted above. Some were sent to the emperor to be made into eunuchs.

304 The facial tattoos worn by the Mossi clearly distinguished them
567 from neighboring peoples. However, if by accident or because of need a naba sold a free man and the latter was claimed by his rela-
●689 tives, the chief was required to buy back the slave or to indemnify his family. We have described above how a canton chief was exiled by the emperor for having sold free Mossi.

583 Concealed selling of women and children. In the chapter on
562 marriage customs among the Mossi we shall show that a native Moaga did not demand a bride price because he did not want to feel that
567 he was selling his daughter. There is no doubt that this rule has exceptions. Indeed, we shall show that the failure to pay a debt, a bout of drunkenness, or a favor received might suffice to mortgage the future of a daughter, even though at the time she might be a small child and quite unaware of her fate. In any event, there would be no question of her expressing any opinion, since her wishes are never taken into account. During periods of famine -- which have been
[731] occurring almost [94] regularly for some years -- a small basket of millet is enough to make a father promise his daughter. In the same way, we regret to say, a great many girls are promised in exchange for trifling sums at the time the poll tax is paid.

567 Rights of slaves. Since he is regarded as an inferior being, the yemdaogo (slave) has no well-defined rights. He is required to perform all kinds of domestic work and must give unquestioning obedience to his master and the master's family. Besides his essential duties, however, he is permitted to do some farming for himself, practice some trade, or to raise cattle, with the proceeds constituting

695 tomb and force him to drink water in which earth from the grave had been diluted. This test was greatly feared, for the Mossi believe that the deceased will come and take his revenge.

The defendant went free unless his guilt was proved by witnesses. When arguments arose about the ownership of fields, domestic animals, etc., each person concerned would give his arguments and summon his witnesses, and the judges made a decision on the basis of the discussions. If two women quarreled, their husbands were supposed to get together and reach a decision. The province chief judged disputes 692 concerning marriage. For instance, if a girl had been promised to someone and the bride price was paid in part, and then her father changed his mind and gave her to another, the disappointed suitor could appeal to the province chief, who saw to it that the payment was returned. If the defendant ran away to avoid trial, he could only be tried in absentia if witnesses deposed against him.

/25/ The sentence was carried out as far as possible, even in the 696 absence of the convicted party; if he returned, the trial was not re- 691 opened but he could appeal to the province chief. The family is 672 held responsible in every case. If the sentence includes a fine, and if the convicted person's property is insufficient, the property of his relatives is seized. People are held accountable for their children's debts, and if the defendant runs away, one of his relatives is seized in his place. On the other hand, the head of the family is the abso- [593] lute master and the judge of the family. He must pay his children's debts and the fines they have incurred, but he may chastise them, even put them to death, or banish and curse them, a punishment which as a rule is greatly feared. All this indicates the strength of the family ties, which we shall study in the second part of this work. The naba saw to the execution of the sentence pronounced by the court; the executive and judicial powers were vested in the same person. If anyone refused to pay his debts or to pay the inflicted penalty, he was stripped of his property. No commutation of the sentence was allowed, and the person condemned to irons or to death had to suffer the sentence himself and could not go free by paying a fine or by substituting a slave. Capital punishment was carried out in public. The province chief was entitled to grant a pardon, but, [761] of course, he made use of this right quite rarely. A man's life counts for so little in the eyes of the Black!

695 The procedure was the same for all, men and women. The sons
681 of nabas, the nakomsé, however, were neither tried nor punished in
554 public. They were not tied with ropes, but with strips of fabric; and if condemned to death, they were hanged rather than clubbed to death. In any case, complaints against them were extremely rare. The sons of a powerful naba could do anything with impunity.

681 For examples, here are a few crimes and their respective punishments. Of course, there was no written code, no formal scale of penalties. Everything depended on custom and on the whim of the judge. Thus, the wealthy could obtain sentences in their favor by
696 paying the judges, and thieves could avoid punishment by sharing
691 their loot with the naba. Otherwise, a thief caught in the act was
685 flogged, sometimes to death. He was condemned to several months in irons, and exposed to public ridicule before the naba's hut; he had to restore what he had taken, and his family was held responsible. If he repeated the offense, he was led to the marketplace with a rope around his neck; he was supplied with an abundance of meat and dolo /beer/, and then clubbed to death at the foot of a tree. In Ouagadougou he was sometimes made a eunuch instead. This was almost the equivalent of a death sentence, because the operation was carried out in such barbarous fashion that death often ensued. French justice more leniently imprisons the thieves, a cause of complaint by honest people who find the punishment too mild.

682 In case of willful murder, the killer was put to death; if he could
683 not be found, a member of his family was executed in his place.
672 In case of a brawl, no attempt was made to determine who had started the fight or who was in the right. (Manslaughter was punished by a fine paid to the victim's family. The right /26/ of self-defense was, of course, recognized. If blows and wounds had been inflicted, the adversaries were put in irons.)

681 Old women were often accused of being witches and of eating
683 children's souls. If their crime was considered proved, if the sorcerers
888 consulted declared some old woman guilty of a baby's death, she was put to death in very cruel fashion: a second opening was made in a clay pot so that her head could be put completely within it; then the pot was heated intensely and placed over the head of the unfortunate woman.

685 If a goat or sheep caused damage to a field, the animal could be killed on the spot. The owner had to be notified, but he was not

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between the lineages concerned. If either the repudiated woman or a member of her husband's lineage wished to initiate a reconciliation, she or he had to summon a yagenga. He alone was permitted to reconcile the couple after the pots had been placed in the courtyard. When a woman felt that she was being maltreated by her husband, she usually fled to her own patrilineage and waited for her husband's patrilineage—usually his brothers—to visit her male relatives and discuss the case. If the woman was judged guilty, she was reprimanded and sometimes flogged by her own relatives for causing trouble between the two lineages, and then sent home to her husband. However, if the man was found guilty, his wife was returned to him, but he was warned that he would forfeit all rights to her if he maltreated her again. A man who lost his wife through repeated maltreatment could not take the matter to court, because chiefs usually refused to deal with purely domestic issues. His only recourse was to induce one of his lineage brothers to recall a daughter who had married into his wife's lineage. This act was usually sufficient to bring about the reconciliation of the estranged couple before innocent persons were hurt.

The Mossi made every effort to solve minor problems without recourse to the chiefs. The local Boodkasemdamba and lineage elders adjudicated quarrels and simple offenses involving members of minimal segments in the various village saghse. They even tried to resolve difficulties between lineage members of larger segments who lived in different villages. The elders often imposed punishments such as reprimands, floggings, and even banishment. The convicted person did not usually appeal to the chief, because he knew that the chief would advise him to settle his problem within the family.

Unrelated villagers also tried to settle difficulties among themselves without appealing to the chief. For example, a man who was caught stealing could be beaten or even killed by his intended victims, and the chief did not punish them for their action. In many cases, villagers simply took the thief back to his relatives, knowing they would punish him. Occasionally, a family disgraced by a thieving member forced him to kill himself. When this happened the chief held an inquest but took no other action.

The Mossi gave a fairly simple explanation for returning a thief to his relatives for punishment. They said that every family had "weak" members, and that by not harming the captured thief they were only protecting themselves against retaliation if one of their own relatives should commit a similar crime. But a more important reason seems to have been their fear of starting a feud that might result in the premeditated murder of a man and the subsequent execution of his murderer.

The one crime that invoked terrible unofficial sanctions was rape. If the

The following case, tried in a district court in 1956, 691
illustrates the Mossi' 685

concept of justice. To reach the central market, the people of Donse village 634
used a path that ran across the fields belonging to two of their fellow villagers, Zami and Isa. The path was normally open all year round, even during the planting season, because neither man wished to inconvenience the villagers. But one day the two men quarreled, and shortly thereafter Isa announced his decision to close his path during the planting season. He said he feared that "people would steal his growing crops" if he left it open. Moreover, he wanted to use the path to increase his planting area. Zami objected to what he considered an insult, and, believing that Isa had violated a customary rule, used the path. In doing so, he crushed several stalks of millet. Isa witnessed his action, and the men came to blows. When the village chief proved unable to reconcile them, they were brought before the district court.

The district chief ruled that according to Mossi custom, a man could 695
close a path during the planting season to prevent people from stealing his 691
crops. But if he closed a path, he had to provide an alternative route, for no 685
one had the right to restrict the movements of others. The chief sympa- 634
thized with Isa over the small size of his field, but insisted that he provide a path across or around it. However, he persuaded Zami to let Isa use a portion of his land in compensation for the new path.

The chief tried to reconcile the interests of Isa and Zami with those of the entire village. He apparently felt that reconciliation was more useful than judgment. He did uphold the law that the right of passage is mandatory, but also maintained that a man has the right to protect his property from potential thieves. At the same time, he made it clear that although a man may defend his own rights, he may not do so by infringing upon the rights of others.

The same principles seem to have been upheld in the following case, 691
also recorded in 1956, which is interesting because it illustrates the flexi- 428
bility of Mossi law. A man named Hammadou died, leaving fifteen cows as his legacy. Moussa, his eldest son and principal heir, distributed the cows among his father's other sons and male relatives, but did not give any to his father's daughter. Strictly speaking, he was right to exclude her, because a [562]
woman was not supposed to inherit any of her father's property unless he had no living lineal or collateral relatives. In practice, however, a daughter always received part of her father's legacy, especially if he had been wealthy. Hammadou's daughter therefore felt slighted, and when she received no redress from Moussa or her other male relatives, she had the case taken to [692]
the village chief. He could not resolve it, and referred it to the district chief.

When Moussa was called before the district chief, he explained that his [634]

691 428 634 father had given the woman a silver bracelet before he died, and that the babissi felt that this was sufficient, since she had a husband to provide for her. Furthermore, Moussa said that the inheritance had already been distributed, and that any redistribution would impose a hardship on all concerned.

695 691 428 634 Interpreting the inheritance law according to common practice, the chief ruled that the milk from a man's cattle was for *all* his children, regardless of sex, and that the fact that the father had formerly given the daughter a bracelet should not have influenced the distribution of the inheritance. The chief stated that the woman should receive at least one cow, and that if the defendant did not agree, he (the chief) would recall all the animals and supervise their distribution. He did not feel that he had to state the principles by which he had reached his judgment, for the consensus among the people of the district was that the heir was trying to take advantage of the law for his own selfish interests. Rather than appeal to Ouagadougou, Moussa and his babissi accepted the verdict.

671 On the basis of these and other cases, we are led to the conclusion that the Mossi felt that law and the judicial process should serve to reconcile people and to maintain what was commonly considered to be social justice.

634 692 684 593 Most of the cases at the district court were tried in the same manner as those cited above. Cases involving relations between men and women were the most common. This is paradoxical, because the district chief tried to avoid any involvement with such cases. For every domestic case tried by the district chief, five others were sent back to the village or lineage level. Even so, it is estimated that about 80 per cent of the cases tried by Mossi district chiefs ultimately concerned women. The most common case of this type was the alleged refusal of a woman to return to her husband.[6] If the judge found that another man had encouraged her to leave her husband, he ordered her to return to him and warned her and the man about the possibility of serious difficulty with her husband's relatives. On the other hand, if the chief found that the woman had left a cruel husband who threatened to harm her or her relatives, he warned the husband not to carry out his threats. The Mossi had no bride price; thus, a woman's family was not faced with the problem of restitution. Sometimes, an angry husband did demand that his wife's family return the gifts (*pogopossum*, "thanks for the woman") he had given them from time to time—e.g., at funerals—and they complied.

684 692 634 Adultery cases were next in frequency at the district court. A man convicted of adultery with another man's wife was either warned to leave her alone or fined a sheep or a goat. He was also liable to be put in stocks for

II. Military Organization

701 An army, properly speaking, with cadres and hierarchies, did not exist among the Mossi.

721 In the event of war, the Tansoba or Tampsoba (war minister) notified the canton chiefs who promptly assembled with all their able-bodied men and as many horsemen as possible.

705 The villages were charged with feeding the soldiers.

III. Judicial Organization

692 693 Justice was rendered in conformity with local customs which had been handed down from generation to generation and according to local practice.

1. By village chiefs, assisted by some of the elders, for petty affairs, pilfering, and insults.

2. The canton chief, assisted by his court dignitaries and the minister, ruled on matters concerning theft, adultery, and bodily attacks, as well as on other matters.

3. The Mogho Naba took cognizance of all matters of general interest, especially with crimes of assassination and murder. In theory, he could by himself pronounce the death sentence on the [565] nakomsé [descendants of Mogho Naba]. Contrary to general belief, a [56] kombéré (canton chief) also had the power of life and death over his subjects. How many individuals have been put to 661 death merely because they were wealthy! How many village chiefs have been killed by the canton chiefs over their territories without any intervention by the Mogho Naba! The nakomsé could 565 be executed, however, only for very serious crimes, such as 684 adultery with a woman of the nobility. The guilty man was led 762 into the bush by old nakomsé; they gave him a rope with which he was expected to hang himself and thus expiate his crime.

694 Justice was free; no fee was expected or assessed. The plaintiff, 431 however, customarily presented the naba with a white or light gray rooster, accompanied by the traditional satchel containing from 200 to 1,000 cowries.

726 the end. A man appointed for the task carried this flag in the front line of battle. He was never to look back and always to walk forward, and he bore no weapons other than a bow and arrows. If he was killed, another man took his place. When a village was besieged,
727 all the spoils devolved by right to the naba, who took /24/ his choice and left the rest to his men. All able-bodied men who could still fight and who refused to become slaves were put to death; the old men were spared, and the women and children reduced to slavery. The naba became master of all the slaves taken by cavalrymen mounted on his own horses. If any disagreement arose about a capture, the naba seized the prize; if the individuals concerned managed to reach an agreement, they shared the booty amicably. Those who had seized a horse or a slave on their own initiative could keep it, but more often than not they offered part of their prize to the naba in order to avoid difficulties. The war did not end with a peace treaty. It ceased when the loot was considered sufficient. The Gourounsi and Bousansé countries thus were true granaries for the Mossi, who drew upon them according to their needs.

692 The nabas did not merely administer their lands and collect taxes; they also dispensed justice, civil and criminal. The village chief usually judged a case of first instance, but the convicted party could appeal the sentence to the canton chief and through him to the province chief, or he might even resort directly to the latter. The judges
695 were always assisted by assessors, *the village elders for the petty* nabas, the ministers for the province chiefs. Criminals were judged as promptly as possible, and the accused were subjected to imprisonment only while awaiting the arrival of witnesses. They were allowed to name their own witnesses, and these were summoned.

No questioning similar to that of our examining magistrates preceded the session. Everything took place openly, and anyone could speak up whenever he pleased. Torture was not employed to obtain incriminating confessions, but sometimes was used to unmask false witnesses. Sons were not allowed to testify in favor of their father, nor slaves and servants in favor of their master: their testimony might too easily be biased.

In case of dispute, there was no trial by ordeal nor intervention by a sorcerer. The judge did not put the witnesses under oath, but a litigant could say: "If I lie, may I fail to rise from here (that is, may I die)." If someone accused of being indebted to a recently deceased individual denied this debt, the heir could lead him to the

695 tomb and force him to drink water in which earth from the grave had been diluted. This test was greatly feared, for the Mossi believe that the deceased will come and take his revenge.

The defendant went free unless his guilt was proved by witnesses. When arguments arose about the ownership of fields, domestic animals, etc., each person concerned would give his arguments and summon his witnesses, and the judges made a decision on the basis of the discussions. If two women quarreled, their husbands were supposed to get together and reach a decision. The province chief judged disputes 692 concerning marriage. For instance, if a girl had been promised to someone and the bride price was paid in part, and then her father changed his mind and gave her to another, the disappointed suitor could appeal to the province chief, who saw to it that the payment was returned. If the defendant ran away to avoid trial, he could only be tried in absentia if witnesses deposed against him.

696 /25/ The sentence was carried out as far as possible, even in the 691 absence of the convicted party; if he returned, the trial was not re- 692 opened but he could appeal to the province chief. The family is held responsible in every case. If the sentence includes a fine, and if the convicted person's property is insufficient, the property of his relatives is seized. People are held accountable for their children's debts, and if the defendant runs away, one of his relatives is seized in his place. On the other hand, the head of the family is the abso- [593] lute master and the judge of the family. He must pay his children's debts and the fines they have incurred, but he may chastise them, even put them to death, or banish and curse them, a punishment which as a rule is greatly feared. All this indicates the strength of the family ties, which we shall study in the second part of this work. The naba saw to the execution of the sentence pronounced by the court; the executive and judicial powers were vested in the same person. If anyone refused to pay his debts or to pay the inflicted penalty, he was stripped of his property. No commutation of the sentence was allowed, and the person condemned to irons or to death had to suffer the sentence himself and could not go free by paying a fine or by substituting a slave. Capital punishment was carried out in public. The province chief was entitled to grant a pardon, but, [761] of course, he made use of this right quite rarely. A man's life counts for so little in the eyes of the Black!

651 "Market-place dues were levied by the Dara Haba, for the sovereign's account, on the markets surrounding Ouagadougou. The Moro Naba also got the tusks of elephants and one haunch of every buffalo or koba killed by hunters.

643 651 425 "Furthermore, the right of confiscation which the sovereign could use for his own benefit without any precise rule imperatively limiting the conditions under which he could exercise it, permitted him to augment, whenever needed, the revenue derived from his usual sources.

651 "Province chiefs, in turn, had the right to demand, through the canton chiefs, whatever they needed for the support of their families and retinues. Canton chiefs held the same rights over the villages within their rule. The village chiefs themselves received from their subjects a certain number of gifts."

692 Justice was rendered as follows: /580/

1. By the family heads, aided by the family elders.
2. By the village chiefs, aided by the village elders.
3. By the canton chiefs, aided by the elders of their own quarter.
4. By the province chiefs, aided by the elders of their own quarter and by the dignitaries of their entourage.
5. By the Moro Naba, aided by his ministers and the dignitaries of his entourage.

"The respective competence /legal authority/ of those various jurisdictions," says Moulins, "were in no way clearly determined or defined. The deed and the circumstances alone were taken into account in bringing up before a certain authority a matter which the lower jurisdiction had proved unable to resolve. A matter which the family council had been unable to solve was brought before the village chief, then the canton chief, the province chief, and finally the Moro Naba.

694 "Justice was free of charge in the sense that procedural expenses were unknown, but custom demanded that a litigant should never appear before a judge empty handed. He had to offer him at least a white chicken. The outcome of a trial must often have depended on the greater or lesser generosity displayed by the respective sides."

643 La, a village near Koudougou district. His eldest wife, the *Pughtiema,*
796 appeared carrying her household utensils in order to accompany her husband. However, all the ministers, led by the Kamsaogho Naba, implored the monarch to have his horse unsaddled and to postpone the trip until the following day. Feigning anger, the Mogho Naba reluctantly agreed to remain in the capital, ordered his horse unsaddled, dismissed his wife, and re-entered the palace.[8]

173 The tradition about the origin of this ritual reveals something of the
643 Mossi attitude toward the human frailties of their rulers. It appears that
796 Poko, the favorite wife of Mogho Naba Waraga (ca. 1660–80), asked permission to visit her father at La, and that he refused to grant her request because of his love and admiration for her. Nevertheless, she continued to ask him for permission, and after her third request he granted her wish and sent a page and a small girl with her as chaperons. When Poko did not return to the palace on the third day, Naba Waraga sent two pages to her father's compound to fetch her, and here they discovered that she had died. Fearing the king's wrath toward persons who brought bad tidings, the pages did not report back to him but notified the ministers of Poko's death. When subsequent messengers also failed to return, the king decided to go to La. The following day, after the morning ceremonies, he ordered his horse saddled and commanded the Pughtiema to get ready to accompany him on his journey. But the ministers, anxious to protect him from grief, told him that a great king never followed a mere woman under any circumstances and persuaded him not to depart. The monarch went back into the palace, and the dignitaries ordered the horse unsaddled and sent it away. Shortly afterwards, the king changed his mind and decided to go to La, but he was beseeched not to do so. He swore that he would leave the following morning, and that if he were prevented from doing so, he would advise all his descendants to try to go to La every morning until one of them succeeded.[9]

643 At the end of this ceremony, a page gave the ministers an ample supply
644 of beer and kola nuts. The Moslems were given presents of kola nuts and
692 millet water (*zom kom*) sweetened with honey, since they were forbidden
576 to drink millet beer. Later in the morning, the Mogho Naba left the palace
[431] and entered the zongo, where he greeted his visitors, accepted gifts from visiting chiefs and subjects, dispensed gifts in turn, and presided over the court of justice. Anyone who went to see the ruler had to be accompanied by his provincial minister or his host—regardless of whether it was his purpose to pay a courtesy visit, to pledge allegiance, to plead for aid, or to give
643 testimony in a lawsuit. Pages moved back and forth between the palace
644 and the courtyard, dispensing kola nuts and beer or millet water prepared
576

by the sovereign's wives. Other pages waited upon the monarch, and accompanied him when he moved about the courtyard. When the ruler drank any liquid, the pages rubbed the palm of one hand with the fingers of the other; when he sneezed, everyone clapped; and when he stepped out to urinate, a page accompanied him, turned his back to him, knelt down, and saluted by rubbing his palm.

When the Mogho Naba had finished his morning audiences, he entered his palace for a solitary meal. This meal was prepared by one of his young wives, who tasted it in his presence before giving it to the page who served him.[10] After eating, the monarch rested for a few hours; then he emerged into the courtyard to grant audiences and hear court cases until sunset. At that time he retired to his palace, and those courtiers who were not connected with the evening ceremonies returned to their homes.

The ceremony that closed the day at the monarch's court was called "Kwaga Basgha" (literally, "final meal"). This ceremony still survives. As soon as the sun began to set, the samande-kamba took their heavy batons and stood guard to prevent unauthorized persons from coming near the *namtibo* (royal amulets). The Baloum Naba and the Bendere Naba entered the palace courtyard and knelt before the zongo. The chief page then brought out the *kwaga*, a pottery vessel containing a fire ritually associated with the namtibo.[11] The vessel was placed on the ground, and the page blew on the fire to make it burn brightly. Meanwhile, the Bendere Naba rubbed his fingers across his drum to make the growl of a lion. When the fire finally died out, the Zusoaba Kasanga and the Baloum Naba closed the ceremony by rising, coming together, and saluting the namtibo in the traditional Mossi manner. (The Mogho Naba did not attend this ceremony.) Before the officials left for the night, the pages gave them pots of beer prepared by the royal wives. Sometimes these officials visited the Mogho Naba before they retired to their compounds. Once these men had departed, the pages served the ruler his evening meal, which again had been prepared by one of his young wives.

During the hours of darkness the Mogho Naba conducted many secret affairs of state and conversed with the members of his household. Persons seeking the nam of a deceased relative were often granted audience at night, as were litigants in court cases. When there were no pressing matters of state, the ruler gathered some of the royal wives around him and discussed family affairs, which protocol forbade him to discuss during the day. Some rulers reportedly disguised themselves and visited the wards of the town in the company of a young man from the palace, in an effort to learn things that did not ordinarily come to a ruler's attention.

The Mogho Naba slept in a grass hut in the palace compound. Two

[P.78]

V

LAW AND THE JUDICIAL PROCESS

671 THE Mossi possessed a comprehensive body of rules governing human conduct. These rules were well known to the people, and violators were punished by the responsible authorities. The Mossi might be said to have had substantive law, but they had no written codes. Nevertheless, the lack of written codes does not warrant Mangin's blanket criticism of Mossi judicial processes: "Of course, there was no written code, no formal scale of penalties. Everything depended on custom and on the whim of the judge. [662] Thus, the wealthy could obtain sentences in their favor by paying the judges, and thieves could avoid punishment by sharing their loot with the Naba."[1] Custom did dictate the penalties, just as "written custom" dictates penalties [692] in all written legal codes. But, as we shall see, the Mossi did have a known [695] scale of penalties. Moreover, a Mossi judge had to be careful in rendering judgment, because his decisions could be reviewed by a higher court.

596 The head of the Mossi extended family, the *Yirisoba,* was responsible 681 for the everyday conduct of his charges. It was his duty to settle all family quarrels, and to punish persons guilty of theft within the compound, disrespect toward elders, and incest. Punishment for the lesser wrongs included 596 reprimands and floggings. A person found guilty of disrespect to the elders 683 or of incest could be banished from the group. But banishment was so severe 684 that it was imposed only if the criminal refused to make the usual conciliatory gestures and was condemned by all the members of his boodoo. Even after this condemnation, however, he could ask a "sister's son," a yagenga, [613] to intercede for him. This man, the son of a female lineage member, had many privileges within his mother's brother's lineage, including the right to mediate between an exile and his boodoo.

593 Amicable relations within the family group were most often disrupted 586 by conjugal difficulties. A Mossi husband could occasionally flog an erring 613 wife, but he was not allowed to maltreat her. When a man became disgusted with his wife and wished to repudiate her, he put her water pots in the compound yard. This rather serious action often led to hostile relations

between the lineages concerned. If either the repudiated woman or a member of her husband's lineage wished to initiate a reconciliation, she or he had to summon a yagenga. He alone was permitted to reconcile the couple after the pots had been placed in the courtyard. When a woman felt that she was being maltreated by her husband, she usually fled to her own patrilineage and waited for her husband's patrilineage—usually his brothers—to visit her male relatives and discuss the case. If the woman was judged guilty, she was reprimanded and sometimes flogged by her own relatives for causing trouble between the two lineages, and then sent home to her husband. However, if the man was found guilty, his wife was returned to him, but he was warned that he would forfeit all rights to her if he maltreated her again. A man who lost his wife through repeated maltreatment could not take the matter to court, because chiefs usually refused to deal with purely domestic issues. His only recourse was to induce one of his lineage brothers to recall a daughter who had married into his wife's lineage. This act was usually sufficient to bring about the reconciliation of the estranged couple before innocent persons were hurt.

The Mossi made every effort to solve minor problems without recourse to the chiefs. The local Boodkasemdamba and lineage elders adjudicated quarrels and simple offenses involving members of minimal segments in the various village saghse. They even tried to resolve difficulties between lineage members of larger segments who lived in different villages. The elders often imposed punishments such as reprimands, floggings, and even banishment. The convicted person did not usually appeal to the chief, because he knew that the chief would advise him to settle his problem within the family.

Unrelated villagers also tried to settle difficulties among themselves without appealing to the chief. For example, a man who was caught stealing could be beaten or even killed by his intended victims, and the chief did not punish them for their action. In many cases, villagers simply took the thief back to his relatives, knowing they would punish him. Occasionally, a family disgraced by a thieving member forced him to kill himself. When this happened the chief held an inquest but took no other action.

The Mossi gave a fairly simple explanation for returning a thief to his relatives for punishment. They said that every family had "weak" members, and that by not harming the captured thief they were only protecting themselves against retaliation if one of their own relatives should commit a similar crime. But a more important reason seems to have been their fear of starting a feud that might result in the premeditated murder of a man and the subsequent execution of his murderer.

The one crime that invoked terrible unofficial sanctions was rape. If the

offender was caught in the act, he was immediately killed. If he was merely suspected of guilt both by his own lineage and by the lineage of the wronged woman, he was banished from his lineage and from the village. So swift and sure was this punishment that a rapist always fled if he believed he would be discovered. The Mossi considered rape such a heinous crime that if the act resulted in pregnancy, an abortion was attempted; if this failed, the child was killed at birth. Furthermore, the rapist could never hope to return to his community, because even if the yagenga appealed on his behalf and his lineage forgave him, the community ban still stood.[2]

The village chief was usually aware of the torts and crimes that occurred in his village, and of how the families concerned had handled them. He seldom interfered in the internal affairs of a lineage, or in problems between lineages, unless he felt that a case was beyond their legal competence. In the case of a rapist's expulsion, community feeling usually ran so high that if the chief intervened, it was only to support the will of the community. However, when people could not settle their differences peaceably or when a major crime was committed within a village, the chief usually summoned the offender to his court for trial. His right to do so was sanctioned by his possession of the nam, but the very concept of the nam often made his task difficult. If he was a commoner, the nobles often emphasized their relationship to the holder of the royal nam, the district chief, and objected to being tried by a commoner. They usually appeared at the village court if summoned, but often attempted afterward to find some excuse for taking their case to the district chief. They felt that their local reputation would prevent them from receiving a fair hearing from anyone but their lineage brother. Furthermore, if they were judged and convicted in the lower court and the verdict was confirmed in the district court, they felt that the district chief, in concurring with the village chief, had broken the solidarity of their lineage. But if they took their case directly to the district chief, they knew they were being judged by an equal or a superior, and that an unfavorable judgment would not damage their status.

The competence of the village chief to deal with court cases was limited.[3] He did pass on all the legal infractions that occurred in his village, but he tried to adjudicate only the minor cases. Thus, he tried cases involving theft, quarrels, trespassing, adultery, indebtedness, and abuse, and tried to settle them by reprimanding the guilty ones. He sent cases involving serious injury and homicide to the district court, along with cases he was unable to resolve.

The district court was a most efficient and effective judicial organ, and the nature of the Mossi judicial process was most evident on this level. The

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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district court did not deal with all cases referred to it. Many cases, especially those concerning the behavior of women, were referred back to the village to be resolved by the respective lineages. The district chief considered it beneath his dignity to deal with such cases, and his guards ostentatiously chased away the litigants. He consented to try such cases only when he suspected that more serious trouble would develop if he did not. Theoretically, district courts could not try cases involving the death penalty, but in practice most of them did. Higher chiefs tolerated this as long as district chiefs did not abuse their usurpation of power.[4]

When a major crime was committed in a district, the case was usually sent immediately to the district court. The chief of the village where the crime had been committed sent one of his relatives with the accused or with the litigants to the district chief's compound, and dispatched another relative to notify the village administrator. The administrator either went to the district court to await the litigants, or sent his representative to meet the court-bound party on the way and question them about the case. Such parties were often very large, because the Mossi believed that a man should not go to court alone. They felt that the criminal act of a relative reflected on all of them, and that it was important for them to appear with him. To quote a Mossi proverb, "A chicken without its feathers is a very small bird indeed." Therefore, no matter how grievous his crime might be, the accused was accompanied to court by his relatives. If his own lineage members refused to do so, his mother's patrilineage was duty-bound to come to his aid. These relatives believed that they would incur ancestral wrath if they refused to help him.

As soon as the accused or the litigants arrived at the district chief's compound, a page notified him that the people of such-and-such a village had brought him a case. If it was after dark, the chief told his police to take charge of the litigants until morning; otherwise he prepared to convene the court. When the chief was ready, the page reappeared and alerted the court party, who had been milling about in the courtyard under the watchful eyes of the chief's guards. They ranged themselves at a respectful distance on either side of the chief's chair. When he appeared they arose, and when he sat down they knelt and offered the customary salutation. The litigants and their relatives then gave the chief the customary kola nuts, cowries, and chickens.[5] He, in turn, acknowledged the gifts and inquired about the case. The relatives of the village chief who had accompanied the litigants reported what had allegedly happened; what action, if any, had been taken by the village court; and why the case had been brought to the district court (either because the crime was too serious to be judged on the village level,

692 634 695 or because the litigants had rejected the village chief's verdict). The chief then asked the plaintiff or "the people of X village" to state their case. Someone usually spoke up, and after he had finished, the chief asked the defendant or defendants to do likewise. The litigants were then asked to produce reputable witnesses to support or refute the testimony.

[641] Witnesses had to be male, adult (to have begun to "push a beard"), and [562] free. Women and bondsmen had no legal personality before a Mossi court. [567] A slave was represented at court by his master, and a woman by her husband (and, by extension, by his patrilineage). In marital quarrels or property suits, a woman was usually represented by her patrilineage. Only if [576] she alone could give the required evidence was she allowed in court. When she was asked to testify, she knelt, and spoke in a high, thin, soft voice, thus showing extreme respect to the chief and proper deference to the court. Except for these restrictions, any person could be called in as a witness. [578] Tempers often ran fairly high among the litigants' relatives and friends while they gave their testimony and argued the case, but their physical separation and their respect for the chief prevented abuse and fighting. Anyone who started a fight in court was liable to a beating by the samandekamba.

[674] The Mossi believed that most people, given sufficient reason, would commit any crime. Thus they examined the litigants carefully and at great length in an attempt to "get behind" the offense. The district chief interrogated the litigants, but the dignity of the court prevented him from arguing with them. As a matter of fact, most of the cross-examination was done by the litigants themselves. From time to time, the village administrator and the chief's confidants asked brief, direct questions. When a woman was involved, the chief's Pughtiema usually listened to the proceedings from behind a wall and questioned her. When all the evidence was in, the chief either rendered his verdict without delay or retired to the zongo to confer with his confidants and the village administrator. He took the latter course whenever he felt that further discussion was necessary or that false testimony was confusing the issue. Not until he felt that he had the facts well in hand did he return to the court to render his verdict.

The Mossi did not use ordeals in court except in the "chastity trials" conducted by the Pwe Naba. Some litigants called upon the ancestors to kill them if they were not telling the truth; others went to earth shrines and drank an infusion of dust to show that they were not afraid of the spirits who wrought vengeance on the guilty. However, such acts were never carried out in court and thus were of no use to the chief.

The following case, tried in a district court in 1956, illustrates the Mossi

The following case, tried in a district court in 1956, 691
illustrates the Mossi 685

concept of justice. To reach the central market, the people of Donse village 634
used a path that ran across the fields belonging to two of their fellow villagers, Zami and Isa. The path was normally open all year round, even during the planting season, because neither man wished to inconvenience the villagers. But one day the two men quarreled, and shortly thereafter Isa announced his decision to close his path during the planting season. He said he feared that "people would steal his growing crops" if he left it open. Moreover, he wanted to use the path to increase his planting area. Zami objected to what he considered an insult, and, believing that Isa had violated a customary rule, used the path. In doing so, he crushed several stalks of millet. Isa witnessed his action, and the men came to blows. When the village chief proved unable to reconcile them, they were brought before the district court.

The district chief ruled that according to Mossi custom, a man could 695
close a path during the planting season to prevent people from stealing his 691
crops. But if he closed a path, he had to provide an alternative route, for no 685
one had the right to restrict the movements of others. The chief sympa- 634
thized with Isa over the small size of his field, but insisted that he provide a path across or around it. However, he persuaded Zami to let Isa use a portion of his land in compensation for the new path.

The chief tried to reconcile the interests of Isa and Zami with those of the entire village. He apparently felt that reconciliation was more useful than judgment. He did uphold the law that the right of passage is mandatory, but also maintained that a man has the right to protect his property from potential thieves. At the same time, he made it clear that although a man may defend his own rights, he may not do so by infringing upon the rights of others.

The same principles seem to have been upheld in the following case, 691
also recorded in 1956, which is interesting because it illustrates the flexi- 428
bility of Mossi law. A man named Hammadou died, leaving fifteen cows as his legacy. Moussa, his eldest son and principal heir, distributed the cows among his father's other sons and male relatives, but did not give any to his father's daughter. Strictly speaking, he was right to exclude her, because a [562]
woman was not supposed to inherit any of her father's property unless he had no living lineal or collateral relatives. In practice, however, a daughter always received part of her father's legacy, especially if he had been wealthy. Hammadou's daughter therefore felt slighted, and when she received no redress from Moussa or her other male relatives, she had the case taken to [692]
the village chief. He could not resolve it, and referred it to the district chief.

When Moussa was called before the district chief, he explained that his [634]

father had given the woman a silver bracelet before he died, and that the babissi felt that this was sufficient, since she had a husband to provide for her. Furthermore, Moussa said that the inheritance had already been distributed, and that any redistribution would impose a hardship on all concerned.

Interpreting the inheritance law according to common practice, the chief ruled that the milk from a man's cattle was for *all* his children, regardless of sex, and that the fact that the father had formerly given the daughter a bracelet should not have influenced the distribution of the inheritance. The chief stated that the woman should receive at least one cow, and that if the defendant did not agree, he (the chief) would recall all the animals and supervise their distribution. He did not feel that he had to state the principles by which he had reached his judgment, for the consensus among the people of the district was that the heir was trying to take advantage of the law for his own selfish interests. Rather than appeal to Ouagadougou, Moussa and his babissi accepted the verdict.

On the basis of these and other cases, we are led to the conclusion that the Mossi felt that law and the judicial process should serve to reconcile people and to maintain what was commonly considered to be social justice.

Most of the cases at the district court were tried in the same manner as those cited above. Cases involving relations between men and women were the most common. This is paradoxical, because the district chief tried to avoid any involvement with such cases. For every domestic case tried by the district chief, five others were sent back to the village or lineage level. Even so, it is estimated that about 80 per cent of the cases tried by Mossi district chiefs ultimately concerned women. The most common case of this type was the alleged refusal of a woman to return to her husband.[8] If the judge found that another man had encouraged her to leave her husband, he ordered her to return to him and warned her and the man about the possibility of serious difficulty with her husband's relatives. On the other hand, if the chief found that the woman had left a cruel husband who threatened to harm her or her relatives, he warned the husband not to carry out his threats. The Mossi had no bride price; thus, a woman's family was not faced with the problem of restitution. Sometimes, an angry husband did demand that his wife's family return the gifts (*pogopossum*, "thanks for the woman") he had given them from time to time—e.g., at funerals—and they complied.

Adultery cases were next in frequency at the district court. A man convicted of adultery with another man's wife was either warned to leave her alone or fined a sheep or a goat. He was also liable to be put in stocks for

He was also liable to be put in stocks for 684
several days, and when released he was warned against visiting the local 692
markets, where he might be tempted to renew his illicit relations. A noble- 634
man convicted of adultery was often merely warned or fined, since his [696]
movements could not be restricted. But if a man caught his wife and an- [682]
other man in *flagrante delicto* and killed them, his act was considered justifiable homicide (even if the slain man was a noble), and he went free. If, however, he killed the lover but spared his wife, he had to send her to the chief's household. Here she was made to perform hard work under the supervision of the palace guards until it was believed that she had reformed. A man who was experiencing difficulties with an unfaithful wife and feared he might eventually kill her or her paramour also sent her to the chief's compound for a few months.

The Mossi have always been great creditors and debtors, and cases con- 686
cerning indebtedness seem to have been next in frequency at the district 692
court. The chief usually dismissed cases of indebtedness brought against 634
minors, because it was considered unseemly for adults to give credit or to loan valuable property to youths not yet of age. Thus, if the minor's family refused to make restitution, the creditor usually had no redress. However, [613]
if a woman borrowed property and refused to return it, her husband's lineage was held responsible. Similarly, if an adult male borrowed anything and refused to return it or to do so on time, the case was taken to the local court and eventually to the district court. The creditor was asked to supply witnesses to the loan, and if the chief was satisfied that the loan had been made under the conditions specified, the debtor was ordered to make restitution. If the debtor claimed bankruptcy, the chief ordered that his goods be seized and sold, and that restitution be made to the creditor. If the debtor 686
was truly destitute, his relatives were compelled to pay his debts. The col- 692
lective responsibility of the babissi for the debts of its members was seen 634
most clearly in cases where men died in a state of indebtedness. The credi- 613
tors were allowed to summon the debtor's babissi to court, and if proof of the debt was established, the relatives were compelled to repay. If they failed to do so, the chief's police seized and sold their goods to repay the debt.

Cases dealing with violations of civil contracts were somewhat similar. 686
The Mossi did not believe in the axiom *caveat emptor*. If a man sold an 634
animal that died within a week for no apparent reason, the chief ordered 692
an investigation. If it was found that the animal had been ill when sold, the chief ordered that the buyer be reimbursed. If the investigation showed that the animal had been healthy when sold, no restitution was made. Similarly, if a man borrowed an ass or an ox to transport goods and the animal

634 died while he was using it, the owner could not press any claims. However,
692 the borrower was obliged to sell the animal's flesh and give the money to the owner along with the animal's skin as proof of its death. Under no circumstances would a district chief absolve a man from paying the market value of an animal if he failed to return the skin. Such failure would brand him as a thief and involve an additional fine.

685 The Mossi considered theft a major crime. A thief could be killed with
[674] impunity if he was caught in the act and in the presence of several witnesses. If these conditions were not met but the man killed was known to have been a thief, the killer was fined several cows. But if he was known to have been a man of good character, the killer ran the risk of being executed. In this way, the Mossi tried to prevent any abuse of an accepted practice. The theft of grain and other foodstuffs was considered especially reprehensible, because it was held to indicate that the thief was so depraved
685 that he would not even grow his own food. During the rule of Naba Kag-
175 lere of Nobere district (1888–1906), a man called Yahiya left his own village of Donse and went to a village called Quitenga to steal sweet potatoes. The people of that village caught him in the act and shot him with a poisoned arrow as he made his escape. Yahiya died without revealing the source of his wound, and his babissi, suspecting foul play, asked Kaglere to investigate. When the Quitenga people learned of the investigation, they went forward voluntarily and reported the circumstances under which they had wounded Yahiya. Kaglere absolved them of all guilt and told the Donse people that Yahiya had deserved to die, not only because he had stolen food (which he might have received if he had asked for it), but because sweet potatoes were the easiest vegetable to cultivate.

685 A thief who was too clever to be caught in the act but who was appre-
[692] hended afterwards was treated quite harshly by the Mossi court. Here, the penalty of double indemnity was often applied. A man who was brought to court for stealing a chicken or guinea hen was fined a goat or a sheep. Hence the Mossi proverb "Zou noaga ronda bouga"—"He who steals a
[696] chicken repays a goat." The thief who stole one cow had to return several. If a thief could not pay the fine, he was placed in stocks until his relatives paid for him. If they refused to do so, the chief's retainers seized their prop-
[762] erty, sold it, and made restitution. This often compelled the family of a recidivous thief to make him commit suicide. If the family would not re-
[634] sort to this, the district chief had the man seized and clubbed to death.[7] Sometimes the chief sent recidivists to the Mogho Naba, who sent them to a
[563] village called Teemetenga to be made into eunuchs.[8]

[579] The Mossi seem to have made a distinction between theft and pillage—

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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a practice whereby nobles deprived commoners of their property. Those 685
nobles who lived among commoners quite often confiscated their neigh- 579
bors' property. But this was not regarded as theft and was not punishable 565
as such, although a rapacious nobleman could be sanctioned for terrorizing and "spoiling" a village. If a nobleman was caught performing an act that *was* considered theft, or if he was accused and found guilty of theft, he was severely punished. During Kaglere's reign, the people of a small village 686
suffered a series of livestock thefts. One day, while the friends of a village 685
chief were sitting with him, a dog came out of the chief's compound 622
dragging an animal skin. The men recognized the skin as that described for a stolen goat, and decided to investigate. In the chief's courtyard they discovered the hole from which the dog had unearthed the skin. They also found the skins of several other stolen animals. The villagers took the [692]
village chief to the district chief, who found him guilty and exiled him [634]
from the region. In passing judgment, the district chief told him that he had been elected "to care for the village," but that he had betrayed his trust by robbing his own people.

According to Mossi law, willful homicide or murder was punishable by 682
execution. The Mossi did not use wergild or "blood money," but insisted on the *lex talionis,* which they interpreted as "a life for a life." They did not believe that money or any other valuables could compensate for the life of a man, nor would they allow a slave to be executed in place of the murderer. They believed that only by executing the murderer himself could they prevent his victim's relatives from resorting to vengeance and thus "spoiling" the district or village.

A man who grievously wounded another was apprehended, bound, and taken to the village chief and subsequently to the district chief. Here he was [696]
kept in stocks in the serfs' quarter without being tried until his victim either died or recovered. If his victim recovered and the judge found that the wound had been inflicted accidentally, the defendant was fined or had his goods confiscated, but he was released. If the judge found that the victim had been wounded in a fair fight, the prisoner was usually censured and dismissed. The chief often warned the wounded man that he ought to have lived up to the Mossi axiom that a grown man is always able to protect himself. If, however, the trial revealed that the prisoner had ambushed his victim with the intent to kill, he either was fined several cows or had his entire property confiscated. District chiefs are known to have executed [634]
the perpetrators of cowardly ambushes even though their victims recovered. [696]

If a man died at the hands of another, an inquest was held immediately. If the killing had been accidental or committed in self-defense, or if it was

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time safeguarding his position within the district and toward the Mogho Naba. For, as already pointed out, the district chief who failed to protect his subjects as well as to rule them was deposed and executed by the sovereign.

The promptness with which the lower courts dealt with litigations left little time for pre-trial bribery, and there is general agreement that the traditional courts were just. Of course, some lower chiefs were known to have been unfair and to have taken bribes. However, they were always in danger of having their verdicts appealed to Ouagadougou.

The Mossi believed in and acted on the dictum that "the truth is at Ouagadougou." They were convinced that they could obtain justice from the Mogho Naba if from no other chief. If a man was not satisfied with the ruling of a lower chief, he was free in theory to seek a higher verdict, and this influenced the kind of justice rendered on the lower level. As a rule, however, the district chiefs did not favor appeals to Ouagadougou. They felt, like most Mossi, that the less their superiors knew about their activities, the better. Thus, the district chief used all of his influence to prevent cases from being appealed to the capital. Some district chiefs were not above coercing litigants into such abstention. They even threatened them with reprisals if the verdict should be unfavorable. But the greatest deterrent against such appeals was the expenditure of time and money. The docket of the Mogho Naba's court was always crowded, and the suitors often had to remain at the capital for as long as three months before they were given a hearing.[9] During this period they often spent more money than the action was worth. Marc states that the word "Ouagadougou" means "the place where one becomes thin," a reference to the amount of money litigants had to spend while waiting for their cases to be heard.[10]

When the object of a lawsuit was the inheritance of cattle, the litigants sustained a double loss. As soon as they asked that the case be taken to the capital, the district chief impounded the cattle. While the case was pending he appropriated the cows' milk, and when the case was settled both he and the Mogho Naba received some animals. Thus, suitors were usually under a great deal of pressure to resolve their problems on the district level. However, if they were determined to go to the capital, they were permitted to do so.

The district chief always sent one of his retainers to the capital with the litigants. The group went directly to the district's provincial minister, who was empowered to hear the appeal and decide whether it should be brought before the Mogho Naba or returned to the district court. If he decided to send it to the Mogho Naba, he placed it on the docket and told the

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litigants when it would be heard. On the day set he took his charges to court, where they waited in the company of the litigants from other districts and from the wards of the capital itself. 643 692 634

The procedure of the Mogho Naba's court differed little from that of the district chief's court. When called upon, the litigant stated his case, called witnesses, and underwent cross-examination by his opponents and by ministers of the Mogho Naba. The litigants were not allowed to look at the Mogho Naba while they spoke, but had to kneel forward on the ground with their faces turned away from him. The Mogho Naba himself seldom looked at the litigants and rarely questioned them. When presented with a complex case, the Mogho Naba, like the district chief, retired with his councillors and canvassed their opinion in order "to ascertain whether or not their verdicts were similar to his own." Nevertheless, he could not follow their advice. He had to make up his own mind, and when he returned to court he rendered his verdict, which could not be appealed. If those who received an unfavorable verdict showed any displeasure, they were taken outside by the palace guards and executed.

The penalties imposed by the Ouagadougou court were usually more severe than those handed down at the district level. The main reason for this was that aside from cases involving residents of Ouagadougou, the lawsuits tried by the Mogho Naba were serious ones and often had been sent to him on appeal. Moreover, the Mogho Naba's court was alone empowered to impose the death penalty within the kingdom of Ouagadougou. [681] It should be noted here once more that district chiefs often executed criminals. But it should also be reiterated that the Mogho Naba never surrendered his prerogative to the district chiefs. They simply usurped it, and if they used it judiciously they were not penalized.

Those nobles and commoners who were convicted for serious crimes at the monarch's court were killed by the royal executioners. Moreover, in contrast to the procedure at the district court, the criminal's property was often seized before his execution. The reason for this is not clear, but it was probably related to the lack of a personal relationship between the court and the relatives of the accused, which enabled the Mogho Naba to impose a harsher penalty. The district chief, it must be remembered, lived in close association with his people and was influenced in his behavior by social relationships. Interestingly enough, the Mogho Naba did not keep the goods seized, but allowed them to be distributed among his executioners. 643 696 692 634

Crimes against the person or office of the Mogho Naba were punished with greater severity than crimes against the district chief. Any man who was seen speaking to one of the ruler's wives and who did not happen to [687]

be related to her was tried and executed. In some cases, he was put to death without a trial. Adultery with a royal wife was considered so reprehensible that both adulterers were publicly beaten to death. Their bodies were denied burial and were thrown into the bush to be eaten by vultures. The Dapore Naba and the Baglere Naba seized and retained the man's property.

Men who committed treason against the Mogho Naba were usually killed before they could be tried. Chiefs and nobles who were suspected of treason and who consented to come to Ouagadougou for trial were deposed and executed if found guilty. Those who were found innocent were released and sent back to their chiefly duties. The sole exception on record to this general rule was the case of Naba Yemde, a Dim of Boulsa province. He had fought and defeated the forces of Mogho Naba Sanum, and when the Mogho Naba sent a larger army and routed him, he was treacherously delivered to the monarch by another Dim. Sanum found Yemde innocent of treason, but had him executed because he had violated another rule: as the descendant of a Kourita, he had come face to face with the Mogho Naba, thus jeopardizing the monarch's life. This exception is always cited by the Mossi when the inevitability of execution for treason is brought up. Actually, a person accused of treason rarely went to court. He either took poison or died in battle against the royal forces. As a posthumous punishment, his compound was burned, his property seized, and his relatives and servants sold into slavery outside the country. Thus, the supreme penalty was not merely the death of a traitor but the permanent banishment of his entire lineage.

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because of this delinquency, the Mogho Naba might hesitate to come to the aid of any of his vassals if a general war broke out. It is true that the Mogho Naba did not aid the Yatenga ruler when the French arrived. But whether this was because of his failure to pay taxes, or because the French conquest of the Yatenga coincided with a civil war there, we shall probably never know. We do know that many of the Mogho Naba's vassals came to his aid when the French finally arrived at Ouagadougou. It is my opinion that the gifts exchanged between Yatenga and Ouagadougou were not "tributary," but were more in the nature of tokens of friendship between two peers.

The Mogho Naba and his provincial ministers also received revenue as a function of their judicial roles. The nature and disposition of the fines levied against legal offenders were discussed in Chapter V. The Mogho Naba's fees came in the form of the traditional gifts the litigants gave him even before their cases were tried. These gifts were never regarded as bribes, for this would have contradicted the Mossi axiom that "the truth is at Ouagadougou."

The Mogho Naba inherited all the property of the Kamsaogho Naba, and claimed all the property of district chiefs who died without close relatives. He also received inheritance taxes (fado) from the estates of deceased district chiefs. In collecting the fado, the Mogho Naba first retained the horse on which the messenger came to announce the chief's death. He reciprocated by sending envoys with cowries and animals to be offered to their common ancestors at the chief's funeral. After the funeral, the envoys claimed the dead chief's quiver of arrows to take to Ouagadougou for deposit with those of other dead chiefs. Then they demanded the fado, and jestingly told the heirs that the Mogho Naba would be satisfied with nothing less than "a thousand of everything" (*tusri bumbu fa*) the deceased had possessed: wives, slaves, horses, cows, goats, chickens, articles of clothing, and so on. The heirs pleaded poverty and jokingly gave the envoys a few old and sickly animals, old chickens, tattered pieces of clothing, etc. Eventually, they handed out the fado, which usually consisted of livestock, clothing, food, weapons, jewelry, cowries, and even slaves. Lastly, they gave the envoys the chief's ceremonial horse and presents for themselves.

The Mogho Naba and his ministers collected a considerable amount of revenue from the traders who visited Ouagadougou and the larger market towns and village markets throughout the kingdom.[8] The Mossi (especially the assimilated Yarse) were good traders, and they benefited from their country's strategic location between the Sahara and the forest regions. According to Barth, some six caravan routes crossed the country, linking

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creased his force" and ultimately added to his income. Men who had been compelled to flee from other districts because of crimes or power struggles were granted refuge and given pughsiudse. In this manner, the district chief, like the Mogho Naba, established seignorial rights over his new subjects, incorporated them into the district, and obtained goods and services from them. The better a district chief's reputation, the greater the number of refugees who sought shelter with him and added to his wealth. Conversely, a chief who was known for his injustice, his rascality, and his excessive demands from persons seeking the village nam was shunned by potential subjects and might even be deserted by his own.

Those persons who visited the district chief's compound to settle court cases also contributed to his revenue. When the case dealt with cattle or other livestock, the chief received a few animals. In other cases, he received only the customary gifts from the litigants. He also received gifts from all the families in his district several times a year. One occasion was the "Tense," a festival in honor of the mother of Mogho Naba Oubri, the founder of the Ouagadougou dynasty; the other was the Basgha. During these two ceremonies every village chief, preceded by his district administrator and followed by his subjects, paid homage to the district chief and gave him presents. The district chief retained part of what he received for the upkeep of his household and to fulfill such obligations as hospitality to travelers, and added the remainder to his own annual tribute to the Mogho Naba.

The manner in which the district chief collected his annual tax or tribute for the Mogho Naba is the subject of controversy. Several of my respondents declared that the collection of this tribute was rather informal. The district chief allegedly notified the village chiefs that he wished to give a present to the Mogho Naba, and these chiefs sent word to the family heads, who, in turn, notified every household. The village people then collected chickens and livestock, baskets of grain, and cowries, and sent them up through the hierarchy to the district chief. The district chief's retainers checked the gifts from each village very carefully, and if some villages gave less than was expected of them, the district chief summoned their chiefs for explanations. In most cases the district chief knew exactly how much could be expected of his subjects, because his informers—usually his own pages and courtyard servants, or messengers of the local administrators—kept him informed of the wealth of each hamlet. Usually, a village chief who had withheld too much from the commodities turned over to him, or who had not demanded sufficient goods from his villagers, sought to make amends. It was in his interest to do so, since it was always dangerous to incur the

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tions. Binger, who found Boukary Koutou (the future Mogho Naba Wobogo) living in exile for having led a rebellion against his brother, Mogho Naba Sanum, tells us: 574 579 434

> Boukary has no resources, and does not even have the advantage of receiving periodic tribute from several large villages. In order to subsist and to maintain a certain status, he is compelled to live by pillage and even by brigandage. From time to time, his horsemen make incursions into the outskirts of some Gurunsi or Kipirsi village, and carry off by surprise the inhabitants whom they find working the fields or looking for wood. His people also hide and lie in wait along the roads to capture any persons who may pass within their range. This type of behavior has given Boukary Naba a bad reputation. However, the people who understand his position forgive him, knowing the situation in which his brother has placed him. And, in spite of all this, he has numerous partisans, and many others who would be happy to see him gain power.[28]

Those district chiefs or princes who wished to retain their power legitimately were forced to be generous or run the risk of losing the allegiance and good will of their villagers, who were their ultimate supporters. 634 574

It is very difficult to generalize about the amount of revenue collected by a village chief. He did not receive any revenue from the land used by his villagers. He treated the weogho in his village in the same manner as the district chief. If some families grew too large and wanted to establish permanent residence in the village bush, they asked the chief for permission to settle there. However, many village chiefs had special areas of waste for their own use. They had usually received them as gifts from some district chief, and therefore had the right to collect tribute on any crops, firewood, or fish obtained from these lands. 651 622 634 [361] [431]

The average village chief's main source of revenue was derived from the agricultural and other labor of his wives and relatives. A village chief received a number of wives from his subjects and from aliens living in his village. These women helped cultivate his fields. If their labor was insufficient he called a sosogha, to which he often invited his wives' relatives. Some chiefs also had serfs and slaves who helped cultivate their land and kept their cattle as well. [464] [566] [567]

The village chief did not have the power to tax his subjects. Instead, he functioned as a channel through which commodities and services passed up the hierarchy and on to Ouagadougou. Many villagers voluntarily helped the chief to repair his huts and compound walls and to cut thatch for his roofs. Many gave him baskets of grain and other vegetable products after the harvest. They also visited him and gave him presents during the annual rites to his ancestors. In contrast to higher chiefs, however, the village head [476] [431] [692]

did not derive any revenue from his judicial functions. He could not levy a fine against any malefactor. However, his intermediary position between the villagers and the district chief did permit him to obtain some revenue whenever commodities moved from one level to the other.

The officials who administered the villages for the district chief received part of their revenue from the villages under their charge. These local administrators had no courts or retainers comparable to those at the provincial level. However, they did have a large number of wives who contributed valuable agricultural labor. These administrators were permitted to ask the village chiefs for soose on their own fields several times during the planting season, but—unlike the district chiefs—they were not permitted to have the villagers cultivate special fields for them. In return for any help received, they had to provide food and drink for the workers.

The administrator received most of his revenue as a by-product of active duty in the villages. When he visited a village or transmitted a message to a village chief, he almost invariably received a sheep, a goat, a chicken, or some millet, from the village chief. He also acquired large quantities of goods during the village interregnum: he received gifts from the chief's heirs during the chief's funeral; he received additional presents when they took the fado to the district chief; he could prolong the interregnum in order to receive as many bribes as possible from contenders for the nam; and he was handsomely rewarded when the candidate he had backed was finally installed in office.

The extended family was the basic socio-economic unit supporting the Mossi political organization. The Yirisoba received land rights in his saka from his Sakakasma, who had obtained his rights from the village chief. An extended family in need of additional land would seek help from its Sakakasma or its Boodkasma. When the family no longer needed this land, it reverted to the lineage. If all the land granted to the lineage was already occupied, the extended family, through its lineage head, asked the village chief for more land. The chief usually granted this request, unless he had no more weogho available. In this case, the needy Yirisoba sometimes tried to borrow land from his non-kin neighbors. Such a step was not undertaken lightly, however. If a man borrowed land from his own lineage members or from the chief, the land rights reverted to its donors without difficulty. However, if he borrowed land from another lineage and either he or his benefactor died without assuring the return of the land, litigation often ensued. In some cases a man would seek land from his lineage brothers in another village, who let him use some of their land with their chief's permission. Some Yirisobadamba even asked their district chief for

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monial activities, especially since they were considered interesting "feudal" anachronisms to be shown to visiting officials and travelers. He also retained the power to appoint district chiefs, but the French often vetoed men they disliked and suggested that other candidates be elected. He also lost all control over his provincial administrators. The administrative chain now extended from the cercle commanders, through the provincial ministers and district chiefs, down to the village chiefs. Many provincial ministers, out of loyalty to the traditional system, occasionally briefed the Mogho Naba on the policies the French had ordered them to carry out, and told him about the state of affairs in the districts. This was completely unofficial if not illegal, but it made little difference to the French.

One serious blow to the power of the Mossi chiefs, especially on the district level, was their loss of judicial autonomy. Mossi country was subjected to the Indigénat, a rather harsh code of law for new colonies, which was promulgated by a decree of September 1887. Under this code, administrators could hold summary trials and punish any Moaga, whether chief or commoner. In June 1905, the Mossi chiefs regained some of their judicial power when a supplementary decree established village, district, and cercle courts throughout Haut-Sénégal et Niger.[10] Mossi village chiefs regained their police powers and the right to reconcile disputes among their people, but their decisions could be appealed to a district court. The district chief heard appeals and judged civil and criminal cases, but in all deliberations he was aided by two assessors appointed by the Governor. His judgment could be appealed to a cercle court, which was presided over by a European, who was assisted by two Africans. They heard appeals and judged crimes for which the penalty could be no more than five years. Penalties handed down by this court could be appealed to the Supreme Court of the Federation of French West Africa in Dakar, which judged all major crimes.

Thus the Mossi chiefs did regain part of their judicial power; but because the decree of 1905 did not abolish the Indigénat, local French administrators could easily countermand this power. Moreover, some administrators, dissatisfied with the Mossi courts and possibly resentful at their own loss of judicial power, sent numerous complaints to Dakar about the incompetence of the chiefs and the injustices perpetrated by village and district courts. As a result, a decree of August 1912 abolished the judicial power of the Mossi and of all other African chiefs, and instructed them to refer all litigation to courts at the poste, subdivision, and cercle levels.[11]

During the period before the First World War, the Mossi chiefs lost not only their judicial power but also much of the economic and religious basis of their political power. The French administration abolished slavery

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administration, and failed to serve as an administrative training ground for either the Mossi ministers or the commoner representatives.[88]

During the Hesling period, the Mossi district chiefs remained in power, but the French, through their African administrative assistants, kept a stricter watch on district affairs. The chiefs regained some of their judicial (or, rather, conciliatory) power in 1921 when the Governor, dissatisfied with the territory's legal system, promulgated a decree reorganizing the courts and giving the Mossi district and village chiefs the right of adjudication in minor cases involving civil and commercial matters.[89] However, they had to send all cases involving serious crimes and all appeals from other cases to higher courts. Because their subjects could appeal to the subdivision courts and because they risked reprimand by administrators when their verdicts were deemed unjust, many Mossi chiefs complied. They tried to do so even when the litigants themselves would have preferred not to deal with the administrators. Often the chiefs overtly told the litigants to go to the administrators but covertly persuaded them not to do so. In this manner they observed all proprieties toward both the French and their subjects.

The village and district courts had to send all criminal offenses such as assault and battery cases and major thefts, as well as appeals against their verdicts, to a "tribunal of the first degree," which was presided over by a subdivision commander and his Mossi assessors. Cases were taken to the tribunal only when the dispute was extremely serious or when people were gravely injured, because Mossi villagers hesitated to take their cases to officials who, when not swamped with work, had little patience with the complexities of Mossi litigation. Moreover, the Mossi feared to subject their fellows to the rigors of the Indigénat, which was still in existence, because, as one official source declares, "If this regime subsists, it is because the Voltaic populations have not yet reached a level of development that would permit the withdrawal of a weapon which is so readily useful to the commanders of administrative units. Besides, when judiciously managed, it does not present any danger in these underdeveloped regions."

Cases which the subdivision commanders considered too serious for their courts were sent to "tribunals of the second degree" at the cercle level. From there, cases were sent to a "colonial court of appeal," which was presided over by the Chief Officer of Political Affairs of the territory and which could sentence a criminal to three to ten years in prison. More serious crimes carrying longer prison terms or the death penalty were sent up to the Supreme Court at Dakar. Owing in part to the lack of communication between the rural districts and the higher courts, the Mossi

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were seldom able to follow a case higher than the subdivision level. In cases involving long imprisonment or the death penalty, the relatives of the condemned person usually learned about the sentence through rumors from the capital, but seldom through the administration.

One judicial duty which the administration gave the Mossi chiefs and which they had always disliked was the adjudication of domestic cases. They found such cases even more difficult and distasteful after Hesling issued a circular on "The Condition of the Native Woman," which is summarized in a semi-official report as follows:

> [The Governor] is pained to see [the Mossi woman] so often subjected to a special form of slavery which, notably at the time of marriage, reduces her to the role of a domestic animal. Without wishing to interfere with ingrained native traditions, the Governor desires "to prime the desirable evolution by means of judicial decisions." Thus he comes to the decision that in those lawsuits concerning marriage in which formerly the woman was not consulted, she must henceforth be present and must argue the case with her husband. M. Hesling trusts that this procedural reform, which he hopes will give the native woman "a consciousness of her individuality and her rights," will be followed in the courts by further reforms. First of all [the courts] must weaken and then progressively modify those traditions which promote injustice toward women. . . . Questions will no doubt be raised as to whether it is necessary to set up regulations on such matters. However, M. Hesling advises his administrators to adjust [such regulations] to, and apply them with respect for, ancestral traditions. It will be interesting to see the results obtained in this attempt, and to see whether the "moussos" [a malapropism denoting Mossi women] of the Upper Volta will acquire some individuality.[40]

The Mossi chiefs were not told that the Governor's circular recommending a change in the status of women stipulated that traditional practices be taken into account. But even if they had been told, they would not have been impressed, because any fundamental change in the status of women would have placed their whole society in jeopardy. Woman exchange stood at the core of a social, economic, and political nexus that held Mossi society together. True, in pre-conquest times most quarrels and lawsuits were caused by trouble over women, but the marriage system was upheld by all the other institutions. Even after the arrival of the French and the weakening of the chiefs' judicial role, the Mossi could punish violators of the marriage system by imposing social sanctions. They now feared that if the French passed laws giving the women free choice in marriage, and the chiefs had to adjudicate on the basis of these laws, all traditional sanctions would become obsolete. Neither the chiefs nor the Mossi on the Councils of Native Notables nor the elders welcomed any discussion about

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the status of women. They maintained that the French had conquered the Mossi men, not the women, and that the administration should not interfere with the way in which a Moaga treated his wife. Ironically enough, there was little the administration could do for the Mossi women, since the latter were too timid to approach the Europeans. Most of them continued to react to maltreatment from their husbands by running away, but now they went to the Gold Coast with labor migrants instead of returning to their lineage.

Although the Mossi chiefs had little autonomy in the administration of their subjects, and had to look to the administration for guidance in nearly everything they did, they were not completely powerless. They were the representatives of the colonial administration on the local level, and as such they could control their subjects through the differential allocation of prestations. Those Mossi who had maintained the traditional respect for the chiefs could look forward to less arduous tasks for the administration and to the avoidance of forced labor or army recruitment. Those who by their actions or attitude indicated that they had lost respect for the chiefs were penalized accordingly. Chiefs were also able to retain some control over their subjects because they were still the centers of social, economic, and political relations within their territories. They still received homage and presents from their more loyal or traditionalistic subjects, and with these goods and services they could bind other persons to themselves. Clever chiefs were able to manipulate the colonial administration and use it to enhance their traditional position so successfully that the administration and the missionaries had to take these men into account whenever they wished to establish contact with the population.

The desire of the missionaries to establish missions and schools for the purpose of converting the Mossi to Christianity presented the chiefs with a great challenge because, unlike the administration, the missionaries tried to establish direct contact with the people. The chiefs not only did not like to have Europeans living in their midst, but feared that they would lose control over their subjects who went to live near the missions. However, the chiefs could not refuse to grant the missionaries land on which to build missions and schools. They also provided labor for them, just as they did for the construction of administrative buildings and roads. Similarly, the chiefs recruited children for the mission schools in the same spirit as they recruited students for the schools of the administration. The difference between the Catholic missionaries and the administration with respect to education was that while the former were interested in educating the children of chiefs, they were also interested in children from other backgrounds. Nevertheless, the majority of chiefs continued to send to school

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ity in local matters, even though the Indigénat had been abolished. They adjudicated minor offenses committed in their territories or referred to them on appeal by the districts and villages. They attempted to settle family quarrels and commercial cases, and ordered that restitution be made in cases of theft. However, they had to send any difficult case or major crime up the hierarchy until it reached the officials authorized to deal with it.

The French administrators also continued to act as intermediaries between the large commercial enterprises in Ouagadougou who wished to recruit men for labor or to buy local produce and enterprises in the larger Mossi towns. Thus, if a private firm in Ouagadougou wanted men to work on the roads, it asked the *chef de poste* (administrator) of a region to tell the district chiefs that its representatives would come to recruit men on a certain date. If a large business was planning to canvass a certain area in order to buy shea nuts, it asked the local administrators to notify the chiefs. No one was ever quite certain whether these activities were legal, but no one questioned them. The *chefs de poste* might simply have been giving the people information that they could not have obtained by any other means.

The Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou, like the supreme chiefs of the other Mossi regions, continued to perform both the administrative role assigned to him by the colonial government and his traditional politico-ceremonial role. He was partly responsible, through his active cooperation with the administration, for the rapidity with which the Upper Volta became a functioning entity. For example, in his anxiety to make his capital worthy of being the territory's administrative center, he gave his full support to the extension of the Abidjan-Bobo-Dioulasso railroad to Ouagadougou. But he always succeeded in giving the impression (to foreigners at least) of detachment and dissociation from the French administration. His behavior was quite different when he functioned as Mogho Naba of the Ouagadougou Mossi. The following is a brief description of a visit he made to one of the districts:

> The Mogho Naba arrived unexpectedly at the district chief's headquarters, where no preparations had been made for his visit. It appears that he was on a tour of his domains to consult with the local chiefs about the forthcoming elections, and had simply dropped in to visit the district chief. However, as soon as his presence became known around the district, important village chiefs and the heads of lineages all put on their robes and appeared to pay homage to him. Meanwhile, he was consulting with his host. But as soon as the conversation was over he came out into the compound, where he was saluted by the chief's Bendere, who praised the royal ancestors by reciting

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175 their genealogies and traditions. The Mogho Naba was pleased by the reci-
643 tation and thanked the drummer.

634 Later that day, the Mogho Naba presented himself in the courtyard of
574 the district chief's compound to be saluted by the village chiefs and by the
182 heads of lineages. They came to him in the traditional way, rubbing their palms and bending their foreheads to the ground. He addressed them, and in response they snapped their fingers in the customary manner. Then, one by one, the village chiefs and the lineage elders came to their monarch and gave him presents of money which ranged from 50 to 200 francs. The Mogho Naba paid little attention to the sums given, being more interested in this act of homage and fealty. However, he listened carefully as each donor announced his name and rank within the official hierarchy or village. He later thanked them collectively and departed. This ceremony, while not very elaborate, differed little in detail from those characteristic of the traditional Mossi's relationship to their Mogho Naba. The new element here was that the monarch was traveling around his domain, establishing a close relationship with his chiefs and subjects, whose support he needed for his modern political alliances.[28]

*175
643 The Mogho Naba continued to hold the morning ceremony at court,
796 even though it was rapidly losing its traditional function and becoming of
182 major interest only to visitors. He also continued to hold those ceremonies associated with individual appointments to the nam and with traditional
● [692] sacrifices. Unknown to many was the fact that traditional authorities at court still judged legal cases which many Mossi refused to take to the Europeans.

*175 In contrast to the Mogho Naba, the traditional provincial ministers now
645 lost most of the power they had held in the pre-conquest period, and all the
182 duties they had acquired in the immediate post-conquest era. As we have seen, one minister, the Baloum Naba, had entered politics at the suggestion of the Mogho Naba, but even he was now relegated to the entourage that accompanied the Mogho Naba and the European administrators on visits to the ministers' former provinces. The increased number of European administrators had made these ministers superfluous.

*178 The district chiefs retained some prestige after the war. They could still
*175 judge legal cases, with the understanding that the litigants were free to go
554 to the Europeans if they so desired and had to be sent there in serious cases.
634 Their major problem was that a more efficient administration was taking
[692] a greater interest in district affairs. For the first time since the conquest, officials were visiting some of the more remote villages. No longer were they said to "act as locusts"—that is, to appear periodically to garner supplies and men from the districts and then disappear until the next onslaught. Instead, they appeared regularly to collect taxes and to take censuses, and

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644 attempted adultery. This practice (poéré) found many victims,
687 and its suppression by the French was a real service to the Mossi,
661 who were formerly murdered for a trifle. An ogling glance at a chief's wife was punishable by death. A man who met one of the wives of the Mogho Naba on the road was executed along with the wife. If one met a napagha [royal wife], he left the path and took to the bush. The woman herself would run off and return to the road only when she was sure that the man was a long way off.

Such is naturally no longer the case, and the wives of the Mogho Naba on their way to the market at [66] Ouagadougou no longer expect not to be looked at or even jostled. I hasten to add, however, that the Mossi still retain great respect for them and will even swallow serious insults, such as tampiri, "bastard," from a napagha if they are so unlucky as to offend them.

644 (c) Daporé Naba, chief of the section of the free or house slaves. It was formerly the duty of the Daporé Naba and his fol-
● 683 lowers to massacre any pages or other convicted persons whose execution had been ordered by the Mogho Naba.

644 (d) Bend'Naba, chief of the drummers of the Mogho Naba.

(e) Soré Naba (literally, "chief of the path"), the drummer who always accompanies the warriors and who, therefore, even in time of peace, is allotted a horse.

644 If the enemy appears to be winning during a battle, the Soré
726 Naba kindles the courage of the warriors of the Mogho Naba and constantly asks for a head, m'data zougou. This means that he is asking each warrior to forget himself and to think only of victory. In order to have a victory, the enemy must suffer such losses that they decide either to retreat or to surrender. Thus, the expression m'data zougou implies ruthless slaughter.

701 (f) Tansoba or Tampsoba, the war chief. The Tansoba of the Mogho Naba lives in a small village, Moussa, in the province of the Baloum Naba.

701 [67] When there is friction between the Mogho Naba and one of his vassals and there seems to be no hope of agreement, the
687 Mogho Naba sends to the Tansoba for logdo (warriors armed with arrows). The Tansoba at once proceeds to Ouagadougou and stops at Baoghin. The emperor assembles his ministers and the principal dignitaries of his court and says to them: "I never thought that chief X, to whom I myself gave the pougla (red fez) would dare to

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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The Mogho Naba had an elaborate court composed of many officials, relatives, and servants. The most important courtiers were the five ministers, who appeared daily at court and took part in all important ceremonies in addition to administering their own provinces. Aside from these men, the Mogho Naba had a number of other officials called Naba whose responsibilities covered the full range of duties in the palace and in the capital. One of the most interesting was the Pwe Naba, a royal diviner and court chaperon. His chief duty was to guard the morals of the pages and the royal wives; he also administered the ordeal to persons accused of treason. The pages were required to be chaste until they were discharged from the palace, lest their amorous adventures lead them to compromise the virtue of the royal wives, with whom they were constantly in contact. A wife and a page suspected of adultery were tested by the Pwe Naba. He forced them to look into a mirror or a calabash of water, and declared them guilty or innocent according to the way their faces were reflected. If they were found guilty, the wife was executed and the page was either executed or discharged in disgrace. The Pwe Naba also saw to it that strangers did not address the ruler's wives either on the street or in the market. Offenders were executed.

The Dapore Naba served as the court's chief executioner and as head of a group of the Mogho Naba's hereditary serfs. Members of the royal clan were executed by strangulation, since royal blood could not be shed; all other persons were executed either with a sword, by hanging, or with heavy clubs. Another palace official was the Ouedrango Naba, the head groom. It was he who saddled and presented the king's ceremonial horse to him at the morning ceremony. The Kambo Naba commanded the palace guard; only he and his guards were permitted to carry guns. The Samande Naba and the Samande Nabila supervised the work of the samande-kamba, young men who worked around the palace courtyard and kept watch with heavy batons to enforce order during ceremonies. A lesser palace official was the Zusoaba Kasanga, who, as chief of the palace eunuchs, ruled over the guardians of the royal harem. The Gande Naba made sacrifices for the ruler and also distributed gifts from the king to the royal officials and the royal household.

Another courtier, and one who played an important role during the installation of the new ruler, was the Ouagadougou Naba. As a direct descendant of the Ninisi, he was all but indispensable at sacrifices propitiating or honoring his ancestors. The Bendere Naba was the chief musician and court historian; according to some reports, a Bendere Naba was killed instantly if he made a mistake while reciting the ruler's genealogy. The Raga Naba was chief of the markets in the capital. Under him were

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The torture was seen as a punishment, and not as a form of ordeal to ascertain guilt or innocence. It was designed to cause the culprit as much suffering as possible before he died, and its harshness reflects the Mossi fear of witches and witchcraft. In one form of punishment called *koudgilga*, the culprit was sent to the smith, who tortured him by placing hot iron balls in both his hands. He was then beaten to death. Another type of punishment called *swengalenga* was more painful. A pottery jar from which the bottom had been removed was heated in a fire. Then it was placed over the head of the convicted witch and allowed to burn its way down onto his shoulders. The culprit was subsequently killed. Sometimes a convicted witch was not killed; instead, a man was sent to Ouagadougou to be castrated and sold as a eunuch, and a woman was sold outside the country as a slave.

Gross disrespect toward the chief and crimes of lese majesty were uncommon among the Mossi. These crimes were usually committed by persons who came into close contact with the chief—nobles and court retainers—rather than by commoners, serfs, or slaves. The most common form of lese majesty was adultery with one of the district chief's wives. The penalty for this was death for both violators. Anyone who dared insult the district chief at court was seized and executed. The same fate awaited those who talked about him maliciously in public or threatened to stir a rebellion against him. If the culprits were commoners, they were executed; if they were nobles, they were strangled in secret or were forced to commit suicide.

The district chief was caught in a dilemma whenever nobles committed major crimes or unlawful acts. They could not be imprisoned, and only the Mogho Naba had the legal prerogative to execute them. When a noble committed a major crime such as treason or rebellion, he was sent to the capital to be executed by slaves, who strangled him with a piece of cotton cloth. However, no district chief could allow the nobles to commit crimes with impunity, secure in the knowledge that they could only be punished at Ouagadougou. If a nobleman subverted the chief's rule by repeated acts of cruelty and brigandage, he was executed, although illegally. The executioners were the Baglere Naba and the Dapore Naba. These two men secretly visited the condemned noble, taking with them a bundle as a present from the chief. This bundle contained a new white robe in which were secreted a chief's bonnet and a poisoned arrow. As soon as the noble saw the gift, he knew that he was being ordered to kill himself. If he attempted to raise an alarm or run away, he was instantly strangled and his body was discarded in the bush. If he accepted the sentence, he was allowed to have food prepared, to eat, and then to kill himself. The chief ordered an elaborate funeral for his kinsman as though he had died an ordinary death. Thus, he was able to observe all the proprieties while at the same

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694 431 Justice was free; no fee was expected or assessed. The plaintiff, however, customarily presented the naba with a white or light gray rooster, accompanied by the traditional satchel containing from 200 to 1,000 cowries.

651 "Market-place dues were levied by the Dara Haba, for the sovereign's account, on the markets surrounding Ouagadougou. The Moro Naba also got the tusks of elephants and one haunch of every buffalo or koba killed by hunters.

643 651 425 "Furthermore, the right of confiscation which the sovereign could use for his own benefit without any precise rule imperatively limiting the conditions under which he could exercise it, permitted him to augment, whenever needed, the revenue derived from his usual sources.

651 "Province chiefs, in turn, had the right to demand, through the canton chiefs, whatever they needed for the support of their families and retinues. Canton chiefs held the same rights over the villages within their rule. The village chiefs themselves received from their subjects a certain number of gifts."

692 Justice was rendered as follows: /580/

1. By the family heads, aided by the family elders.
2. By the village chiefs, aided by the village elders.
3. By the canton chiefs, aided by the elders of their own quarter.
4. By the province chiefs, aided by the elders of their own quarter and by the dignitaries of their entourage.
5. By the Moro Naba, aided by his ministers and the dignitaries of his entourage.

"The respective competence /legal authority/ of those various jurisdictions," says Moulins, "were in no way clearly determined or defined. The deed and the circumstances alone were taken into account in bringing up before a certain authority a matter which the lower jurisdiction had proved unable to resolve. A matter which the family council had been unable to solve was brought before the village chief, then the canton chief, the province chief; and finally the Moro Naba.

694 "Justice was free of charge in the sense that procedural expenses were unknown, but custom demanded that a litigant should never appear before a judge empty handed. He had to offer him at least a white chicken. The outcome of a trial must often have depended on the greater or lesser generosity displayed by the respective sides."

726 the end. A man appointed for the task carried this flag in the front line of battle. He was never to look back and always to walk forward, and he bore no weapons other than a bow and arrows. If he was killed, another man took his place. When a village was besieged,
727 all the spoils devolved by right to the naba, who took /24/ his choice and left the rest to his men. All able-bodied men who could still fight and who refused to become slaves were put to death; the old men were spared, and the women and children reduced to slavery. The naba became master of all the slaves taken by cavalrymen mounted on his own horses. If any disagreement arose about a capture, the naba seized the prize; if the individuals concerned managed to reach an agreement, they shared the booty amicably. Those who had seized a horse or a slave on their own initiative could keep it, but more often than not they offered part of their prize to the naba in order to avoid difficulties. The war did not end with a peace treaty. It ceased when the loot was considered sufficient. The Gourounsi and Bousansé countries thus were true granaries for the Mossi, who drew upon them according to their needs.

692 The nabas did not merely administer their lands and collect taxes; they also dispensed justice, civil and criminal. The village chief usually judged a case of first instance, but the convicted party could appeal the sentence to the canton chief and through him to the province chief, or he might even resort directly to the latter. The judges
695 were always assisted by assessors, the village elders for the petty nabas, the ministers for the province chiefs. Criminals were judged as promptly as possible, and the accused were subjected to imprisonment only while awaiting the arrival of witnesses. They were allowed to name their own witnesses, and these were summoned.

No questioning similar to that of our examining magistrates preceded the session. Everything took place openly, and anyone could speak up whenever he pleased. Torture was not employed to obtain incriminating confessions, but sometimes was used to unmask false witnesses. Sons were not allowed to testify in favor of their father, nor slaves and servants in favor of their master: their testimony might too easily be biased.

In case of dispute, there was no trial by ordeal nor intervention by a sorcerer. The judge did not put the witnesses under oath, but a litigant could say: "If I lie, may I fail to rise from here (that is, may I die)." If someone accused of being indebted to a recently deceased individual denied this debt, the heir could lead him to the

695 tomb and force him to drink water in which earth from the grave had been diluted. This test was greatly feared, for the Mossi believe that the deceased will come and take his revenge.

The defendant went free unless his guilt was proved by witnesses. When arguments arose about the ownership of fields, domestic animals, etc., each person concerned would give his arguments and summon his witnesses, and the judges made a decision on the basis of the discussions. If two women quarreled, their husbands were supposed to get together and reach a decision. The province chief judged disputes 692 concerning marriage. For instance, if a girl had been promised to someone and the bride price was paid in part, and then her father changed his mind and gave her to another, the disappointed suitor could appeal to the province chief, who saw to it that the payment was returned. If the defendant ran away to avoid trial, he could only be tried in absentia if witnesses deposed against him.

/25/ The sentence was carried out as far as possible, even in the 696 absence of the convicted party; if he returned, the trial was not re- 691 opened but he could appeal to the province chief. The family is 692 held responsible in every case. If the sentence includes a fine, and if the convicted person's property is insufficient, the property of his relatives is seized. People are held accountable for their children's debts, and if the defendant runs away, one of his relatives is seized in his place. On the other hand, the head of the family is the abso- [513] lute master and the judge of the family. He must pay his children's debts and the fines they have incurred, but he may chastise them, even put them to death, or banish and curse them, a punishment which as a rule is greatly feared. All this indicates the strength of the family ties, which we shall study in the second part of this work. The naba saw to the execution of the sentence pronounced by the court; the executive and judicial powers were vested in the same person. If anyone refused to pay his debts or to pay the inflicted penalty, he was stripped of his property. No commutation of the sentence was allowed, and the person condemned to irons or to death had to suffer the sentence himself and could not go free by paying a fine or by substituting a slave. Capital punishment was carried out in public. The province chief was entitled to grant a pardon, but, [761] of course, he made use of this right quite rarely. A man's life counts for so little in the eyes of the Black!

695 The procedure was the same for all, men and women. The sons
681 of nabas, the nakomsé, however, were neither tried nor punished in
554 public. They were not tied with ropes, but with strips of fabric; and if condemned to death, they were hanged rather than clubbed to death. In any case, complaints against them were extremely rare. The sons of a powerful naba could do anything with impunity.

681 For examples, here are a few crimes and their respective punishments. Of course, there was no written code, no formal scale of penalties. Everything depended on custom and on the whim of the judge. Thus, the wealthy could obtain sentences in their favor by
696 paying the judges, and thieves could avoid punishment by sharing
691 their loot with the naba. Otherwise, a thief caught in the act was
685 flogged, sometimes to death. He was condemned to several months in irons, and exposed to public ridicule before the naba's hut; he had to restore what he had taken, and his family was held responsible. If he repeated the offense, he was led to the marketplace with a rope around his neck; he was supplied with an abundance of meat and dolo /beer/, and then clubbed to death at the foot of a tree. In Ouagadougou he was sometimes made a eunuch instead. This was almost the equivalent of a death sentence, because the operation was carried out in such barbarous fashion that death often ensued. French justice more leniently imprisons the thieves, a cause of complaint by honest people who find the punishment too mild.

682 In case of willful murder, the killer was put to death; if he could
683 not be found, a member of his family was executed in his place.
672 In case of a brawl, no attempt was made to determine who had started the fight or who was in the right. (Manslaughter was punished by a fine paid to the victim's family. The right /26/ of self-defense was, of course, recognized. If blows and wounds had been inflicted, the adversaries were put in irons.)

681 Old women were often accused of being witches and of eating
683 children's souls. If their crime was considered proved, if the sorcerers
888 consulted declared some old woman guilty of a baby's death, she was put to death in very cruel fashion: a second opening was made in a clay pot so that her head could be put completely within it; then the pot was heated intensely and placed over the head of the unfortunate woman.

685 If a goat or sheep caused damage to a field, the animal could be killed on the spot. The owner had to be notified, but he was not

791 it? Will my journey be successful? And so forth. If the answer is un-
756 favorable, what must I do to avert misfortune? The bagré are resorted to especially in case of illness, to find out which spirit caused the disease and what the spirit wants. The role of the sorcerers is thus /104/ chiefly to prescribe the sacrifice and to indicate to whom it must be directed. More rarely they prescribe a medicine, but no one puts much faith in such remedies; in most instances, they indicate a negative treatment by stating what is forbidden to the patient.

756 They use the process of elimination to spot the disease. "He has a headache," says the sorcerer. If the reply is negative, he mentions another part of the body. "A stomach-ache . . . No. A pain in the arm . . . No." He must eventually hit on the right statement. If the sick person is cured following the prescribed sacrifice, the sorcerer is said to be skillful and to be truly in touch with the spirits, and his practice and income grow accordingly. If the patient is not cured or dies, it is either because the sorcerer has cheated or because he does not "see." Another sorcerer is sought out, in the hope of finding a true seer.

Sorcerers are carefully listened to, and everything they prescribe is faithfully carried out. Since they sometimes guess right, since even more often the patient is cured through auto-suggestion because the sorcerer said that he would be cured, since among people who fall ill those who get well are fortunately more numerous than those who die, for all these reasons the prestige of the sorcerers is high and their practice numerous, for it includes all the Mossi. The bara (plural of bagré) are not feared. They are abused when their prescriptions fail, and they are never consulted in the course of trials to find out the name of a culprit.

791 On the other hand, people often ask them who has killed their
695 child, their wife, their livestock, and the bagré sometimes indicates the culprit, with resulting enmity between the wronged party and the individual pointed out as guilty. The latter often resorts to trial by ordeal in self-defense. He himself suggests that he should drink poison, or that he should be burned with a red-hot iron or strangled with braided shreds of straw. If he is innocent, the poison will not harm him, the fire will not burn him, the straws will come apart. Only those who wished to do so resorted to such ordeals, and the judges never made use of this procedure. In trials actual proof had to be submitted.

681 As far as penalties were concerned, Mossi justice was stern and thus ran counter to the "patriarchal" justice of the Bobo, Gourounsi, etc. Murder was always punished by death (except in the case of nobles). As for thefts, physical aggression, and matters involving debts, they were adjusted in the manner described when we discussed the Yarsé, who were subject to Mossi justice since they were settled in their territory /not translated/.
[754] We shall not, therefore, go over this again. Let us merely note that the Mossi, being fetishists, were familiar with matters of sorcery.

695 754 At Dembo, in the Yatenga area, when a young person died suddenly, "red powder" would be mixed in water and everyone would drink of it while swearing by Tensé /Tr.: the earth deities/ that he was innocent. The culprits would die. In other villages of the Yatenga area, people suspected of dealing in sorcery had to drink earth taken from the spot where sacrifices were performed and diluted in water. Those /581/ who refused to drink and swear were killed. At Kabayoro, a Mossi village located in the canton of Koumbili, if a man or woman suddendly ill, it was said that it was So-and-So, a sorcerer, who had eaten the soul. If the sick person died, his hands were washed with water and the liquid was given to the sorcerer to drink. He had to swear his innocence and invoke death unto himself if he should lie. If guilty he died; if innocent the water did him no harm. If he refused to swear and drink, he was put in irons and left there to die of hunger and thirst. The bara /soothsayer/ played no role in such occurrences. It was the sick person who pointed out the sorcerer. If the patient failed to designate someone, however, this meant that he was simply dying of illness. [761]

701 Now for the army and police. "In case of war," says Moulins, "the province chiefs summoned the canton chiefs, who hastened forth with all their able-bodied men. They all gathered behind the Tamsaba and followed him.

625 "As for policing, it was taken care of by village and canton chiefs, who arrested culprits with the help of their own followers, or, if necessary, by summoning the whole male population of the village."

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V

LAW AND THE JUDICIAL PROCESS

671 THE MOSSI possessed a comprehensive body of rules governing human conduct. These rules were well known to the people, and violators were punished by the responsible authorities. The Mossi might be said to have had substantive law, but they had no written codes. Nevertheless, the lack of written codes does not warrant Mangin's blanket criticism of Mossi judicial processes: "Of course, there was no written code, no formal scale of penalties. Everything depended on custom and on the whim of the judge. [662] Thus, the wealthy could obtain sentences in their favor by paying the judges, and thieves could avoid punishment by sharing their loot with the Naba."[1] Custom did dictate the penalties, just as "written custom" dictates penalties [692] in all written legal codes. But, as we shall see, the Mossi did have a known [695] scale of penalties. Moreover, a Mossi judge had to be careful in rendering judgment, because his decisions could be reviewed by a higher court.

596 The head of the Mossi extended family, the *Yirisoba,* was responsible 681 for the everyday conduct of his charges. It was his duty to settle all family quarrels and to punish persons guilty of theft within the compound, disrespect toward elders, and incest. Punishment for the lesser wrongs included 596 reprimands and floggings. A person found guilty of disrespect to the elders 683 or of incest could be banished from the group. But banishment was so severe 684 that it was imposed only if the criminal refused to make the usual conciliatory gestures and was condemned by all the members of his boodoo. Even after this condemnation, however, he could ask a "sister's son," a yagenga, [613] to intercede for him. This man, the son of a female lineage member, had many privileges within his mother's brother's lineage, including the right to mediate between an exile and his boodoo.

593 Amicable relations within the family group were most often disrupted 586 by conjugal difficulties. A Mossi husband could occasionally flog an erring 613 wife, but he was not allowed to maltreat her. When a man became disgusted with his wife and wished to repudiate her, he put her water pots in the compound yard. This rather serious action often led to hostile relations

684 offender was caught in the act, he was immediately killed. If he was merely
[613] suspected of guilt both by his own lineage and by the lineage of the wronged woman, he was banished from his lineage and from the village. So swift and sure was this punishment that a rapist always fled if he believed he
[847] would be discovered. The Mossi considered rape such a heinous crime that if the act resulted in pregnancy, an abortion was attempted; if this failed,
[613] the child was killed at birth. Furthermore, the rapist could never hope to
[629] return to his community, because even if the yagenga appealed on his behalf and his lineage forgave him, the community ban still stood.[2]

692 The village chief was usually aware of the torts and crimes that occurred
622 in his village, and of how the families concerned had handled them. He seldom interfered in the internal affairs of a lineage, or in problems between lineages, unless he felt that a case was beyond their legal competence.
[684] In the case of a rapist's expulsion, community feeling usually ran so high that if the chief intervened, it was only to support the will of the community. However, when people could not settle their differences peaceably or when a major crime was committed within a village, the chief usually summoned
622 the offender to his court for trial. His right to do so was sanctioned by his
692 possession of the nam, but the very concept of the nam often made his task
565 difficult. If he was a commoner, the nobles often emphasized their rela-
634 tionship to the holder of the royal nam, the district chief, and objected to
695 being tried by a commoner. They usually appeared at the village court if summoned, but often attempted afterward to find some excuse for taking their case to the district chief. They felt that their local reputation would prevent them from receiving a fair hearing from anyone but their lineage brother. Furthermore, if they were judged and convicted in the lower court and the verdict was confirmed in the district court, they felt that the district chief, in concurring with the village chief, had broken the solidarity of their lineage. But if they took their case directly to the district chief, they knew they were being judged by an equal or a superior, and that an unfavorable judgment would not damage their status.

622 The competence of the village chief to deal with court cases was limited.[3]
692 He did pass on all the legal infractions that occurred in his village, but he tried to adjudicate only the minor cases. Thus, he tried cases involving theft, quarrels, trespassing, adultery, indebtedness, and abuse, and tried to
[695] settle them by reprimanding the guilty ones. He sent cases involving serious injury and homicide to the district court, along with cases he was unable to resolve.

692 The district court was a most efficient and effective judicial organ, and
634 the nature of the Mossi judicial process was most evident on this level. The

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district court did not deal with all cases referred to it. Many cases, especially those concerning the behavior of women, were referred back to the village to be resolved by the respective lineages. The district chief considered it beneath his dignity to deal with such cases, and his guards ostentatiously chased away the litigants. He consented to try such cases only when he suspected that more serious trouble would develop if he did not. Theoretically, district courts could not try cases involving the death penalty, but in practice most of them did. Higher chiefs tolerated this as long as district chiefs did not abuse their usurpation of power.[4]

When a major crime was committed in a district, the case was usually sent immediately to the district court. The chief of the village where the crime had been committed sent one of his relatives with the accused or with the litigants to the district chief's compound, and dispatched another relative to notify the village administrator. The administrator either went to the district court to await the litigants, or sent his representative to meet the court-bound party on the way and question them about the case. Such parties were often very large, because the Mossi believed that a man should not go to court alone. They felt that the criminal act of a relative reflected on all of them, and that it was important for them to appear with him. To quote a Mossi proverb, "A chicken without its feathers is a very small bird indeed." Therefore, no matter how grievous his crime might be, the accused was accompanied to court by his relatives. If his own lineage members refused to do so, his mother's patrilineage was duty-bound to come to his aid. These relatives believed that they would incur ancestral wrath if they refused to help him.

As soon as the accused or the litigants arrived at the district chief's compound, a page notified him that the people of such-and-such a village had brought him a case. If it was after dark, the chief told his police to take charge of the litigants until morning; otherwise he prepared to convene the court. When the chief was ready, the page reappeared and alerted the court party, who had been milling about in the courtyard under the watchful eyes of the chief's guards. They ranged themselves at a respectful distance on either side of the chief's chair. When he appeared they arose, and when he sat down they knelt and offered the customary salutation. The litigants and their relatives then gave the chief the customary kola nuts, cowries, and chickens.[5] He, in turn, acknowledged the gifts and inquired about the case. The relatives of the village chief who had accompanied the litigants reported what had allegedly happened; what action, if any, had been taken by the village court; and why the case had been brought to the district court (either because the crime was too serious to be judged on the village level,

692 634 695 or because the litigants had rejected the village chief's verdict). The chief then asked the plaintiff or "the people of X village" to state their case. Someone usually spoke up, and after he had finished, the chief asked the defendant or defendants to do likewise. The litigants were then asked to produce reputable witnesses to support or refute the testimony.

[641] Witnesses had to be male, adult (to have begun to "push a beard"), and [562] free. Women and bondsmen had no legal personality before a Mossi court. [567] A slave was represented at court by his master, and a woman by her husband (and, by extension, by his patrilineage). In marital quarrels or property suits, a woman was usually represented by her patrilineage. Only if [576] she alone could give the required evidence was she allowed in court. When she was asked to testify, she knelt, and spoke in a high, thin, soft voice, thus showing extreme respect to the chief and proper deference to the court. Except for these restrictions, any person could be called in as a witness. [578] Tempers often ran fairly high among the litigants' relatives and friends while they gave their testimony and argued the case, but their physical separation and their respect for the chief prevented abuse and fighting. Anyone who started a fight in court was liable to a beating by the samandekamba.

[674] The Mossi believed that most people, given sufficient reason, would commit any crime. Thus they examined the litigants carefully and at great length in an attempt to "get behind" the offense. The district chief interrogated the litigants, but the dignity of the court prevented him from arguing with them. As a matter of fact, most of the cross-examination was done by the litigants themselves. From time to time, the village administrator and the chief's confidants asked brief, direct questions. When a woman was involved, the chief's Pughtiema usually listened to the proceedings from behind a wall and questioned her. When all the evidence was in, the chief either rendered his verdict without delay or retired to the zongo to confer with his confidants and the village administrator. He took the latter course whenever he felt that further discussion was necessary or that false testimony was confusing the issue. Not until he felt that he had the facts well in hand did he return to the court to render his verdict.

The Mossi did not use ordeals in court except in the "chastity trials" conducted by the Pwe Naba. Some litigants called upon the ancestors to kill them if they were not telling the truth; others went to earth shrines and drank an infusion of dust to show that they were not afraid of the spirits who wrought vengeance on the guilty. However, such acts were never carried out in court and thus were of no use to the chief.

The following case, tried in a district court in 1956, illustrates the Mossi

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The following case, tried in a district court in 1956, illustrates the Mossi concept of justice. To reach the central market, the people of Donse village used a path that ran across the fields belonging to two of their fellow villagers, Zami and Isa. The path was normally open all year round, even during the planting season, because neither man wished to inconvenience the villagers. But one day the two men quarreled, and shortly thereafter Isa announced his decision to close his path during the planting season. He said he feared that "people would steal his growing crops" if he left it open. Moreover, he wanted to use the path to increase his planting area. Zami objected to what he considered an insult, and, believing that Isa had violated a customary rule, used the path. In doing so, he crushed several stalks of millet. Isa witnessed his action, and the men came to blows. When the village chief proved unable to reconcile them, they were brought before the district court. 691 685 634

The district chief ruled that according to Mossi custom, a man could close a path during the planting season to prevent people from stealing his crops. But if he closed a path, he had to provide an alternative route, for no one had the right to restrict the movements of others. The chief sympathized with Isa over the small size of his field, but insisted that he provide a path across or around it. However, he persuaded Zami to let Isa use a portion of his land in compensation for the new path. 695 691 685 634

The chief tried to reconcile the interests of Isa and Zami with those of the entire village. He apparently felt that reconciliation was more useful than judgment. He did uphold the law that the right of passage is mandatory, but also maintained that a man has the right to protect his property from potential thieves. At the same time, he made it clear that although a man may defend his own rights, he may not do so by infringing upon the rights of others.

The same principles seem to have been upheld in the following case, also recorded in 1956, which is interesting because it illustrates the flexibility of Mossi law. A man named Hammadou died, leaving fifteen cows as his legacy. Moussa, his eldest son and principal heir, distributed the cows among his father's other sons and male relatives, but did not give any to his father's daughter. Strictly speaking, he was right to exclude her, because a woman was not supposed to inherit any of her father's property unless he had no living lineal or collateral relatives. In practice, however, a daughter always received part of her father's legacy, especially if he had been wealthy. Hammadou's daughter therefore felt slighted, and when she received no redress from Moussa or her other male relatives, she had the case taken to the village chief. He could not resolve it, and referred it to the district chief. 691 428 [562] [692]

When Moussa was called before the district chief, he explained that his [634]

691 father had given the woman a silver bracelet before he died, and that the
428 babissi felt that this was sufficient, since she had a husband to provide for
634 her. Furthermore, Moussa said that the inheritance had already been distributed, and that any redistribution would impose a hardship on all concerned.

695 Interpreting the inheritance law according to common practice, the chief
691 ruled that the milk from a man's cattle was for *all* his children, regardless
428 of sex, and that the fact that the father had formerly given the daughter a
634 bracelet should not have influenced the distribution of the inheritance. The chief stated that the woman should receive at least one cow, and that if the defendant did not agree, he (the chief) would recall all the animals and supervise their distribution. He did not feel that he had to state the principles by which he had reached his judgment, for the consensus among the people of the district was that the heir was trying to take advantage of the law for his own selfish interests. Rather than appeal to Ouagadougou, Moussa and his babissi accepted the verdict.

671 On the basis of these and other cases, we are led to the conclusion that the Mossi felt that law and the judicial process should serve to reconcile people and to maintain what was commonly considered to be social justice.

634 Most of the cases at the district court were tried in the same manner as
692 those cited above. Cases involving relations between men and women were
684 the most common. This is paradoxical, because the district chief tried to avoid any involvement with such cases. For every domestic case tried by
593 the district chief, five others were sent back to the village or lineage level. Even so, it is estimated that about 80 per cent of the cases tried by Mossi district chiefs ultimately concerned women. The most common case of this type was the alleged refusal of a woman to return to her husband.[8] If the judge found that another man had encouraged her to leave her husband, he ordered her to return to him and warned her and the man about the possibility of serious difficulty with her husband's relatives. On the other hand, if the chief found that the woman had left a cruel husband who threatened to harm her or her relatives, he warned the husband not to carry out his threats. The Mossi had no bride price; thus, a woman's family was not faced with the problem of restitution. Sometimes, an angry husband did demand that his wife's family return the gifts (*pogopossum*, "thanks for the woman") he had given them from time to time—e.g., at funerals—and they complied.

684 Adultery cases were next in frequency at the district court. A man con-
692 victed of adultery with another man's wife was either warned to leave her
634 alone or fined a sheep or a goat. He was also liable to be put in stocks for

682 found to have been justified—that is, if the victim was a thief or a nocturnal
682 intruder—then the accused was acquitted or simply fined. If, however, the accused was found guilty of murder, he was sentenced to die, and the mode
696 of execution was at the chief's pleasure. The chief surrendered the prisoner to his executioners, serfs who lived in the Baglere ward. They took him into the woods and carried out the sentence by strangulation, hanging, decapitation, clubbing, or stoning.

696 The perpetrator of an unusually heinous crime was often ordered to kill himself with a poisoned arrow. This form of execution was feared most, because it tested the murderer's mettle and called into play the
[634] coercive force of his lineage if he proved to be a coward. When such an execution was ordered, the district chief had a poisoned arrow prepared and brought to the murderer's father, his brother, or his father's brother's son. The relative gave the arrow to the condemned man, and, while apologizing for his painful mission, explained that the crime had to be expiated. If the murderer agreed to kill himself, his relatives prepared food and drink for
[766] him while his grave was dug. Some proud and brave men helped their relatives dig the oblong-shaped grave required for a murderer; some even insisted on digging it themselves. When both the food and the grave had been prepared, the murderer bade his relatives farewell, took the food and the poisoned arrow, and went into a hut. Here he ate the food and after-
696 ward killed himself by pushing the poisoned arrow into his leg. In some cases he had to be provided with a second arrow to hasten his death. If a
626 cowardly murderer refused to kill himself, one of his relatives offered to
613 die in his stead. He told the murderer that death was preferable to the knowledge that his lineage brother was a coward. What would happen, he asked the murderer, if he saw a relative being harmed? Would he choose his own safety rather than run the risk of death? The other relatives asked the same questions, and this subtle coercion was usually sufficient to induce the most cowardly man to kill himself. There are no reports of a murderer's permitting a relative to die for him; life would have been impossible for him afterward. One suspects that if ever a murderer had attempted to elude his fate, the district chief would have had him executed.

634 The district court also prescribed capital punishment for individuals
681 convicted of arson, abduction, witchcraft, or lese majesty. A person con-
[685] victed of willfully setting fire to someone's hut or crops was put to death even if no one was killed in the resulting fire; he was held to have
[683] jeopardized the life and livelihood of his victims. Similarly, the rare person convicted of threatening the well-being of others through the practice of
[695] witchcraft was usually tortured and killed. Conviction usually followed the testimony of witnesses or the confession of the accused.

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The torture was seen as a punishment, and not as a form of ordeal to ascertain guilt or innocence. It was designed to cause the culprit as much suffering as possible before he died, and its harshness reflects the Mossi fear of witches and witchcraft. In one form of punishment called *koudgilga*, the culprit was sent to the smith, who tortured him by placing hot iron balls in both his hands. He was then beaten to death. Another type of punishment called *swengalenga* was more painful. A pottery jar from which the bottom had been removed was heated in a fire. Then it was placed over the head of the convicted witch and allowed to burn its way down onto his shoulders. The culprit was subsequently killed. Sometimes a convicted witch was not killed; instead, a man was sent to Ouagadougou to be castrated and sold as a eunuch, and a woman was sold outside the country as a slave.

Gross disrespect toward the chief and crimes of lese majesty were uncommon among the Mossi. These crimes were usually committed by persons who came into close contact with the chief—nobles and court retainers—rather than by commoners, serfs, or slaves. The most common form of lese majesty was adultery with one of the district chief's wives. The penalty for this was death for both violators. Anyone who dared insult the district chief at court was seized and executed. The same fate awaited those who talked about him maliciously in public or threatened to stir a rebellion against him. If the culprits were commoners, they were executed; if they were nobles, they were strangled in secret or were forced to commit suicide.

The district chief was caught in a dilemma whenever nobles committed major crimes or unlawful acts. They could not be imprisoned, and only the Mogho Naba had the legal prerogative to execute them. When a noble committed a major crime such as treason or rebellion, he was sent to the capital to be executed by slaves, who strangled him with a piece of cotton cloth. However, no district chief could allow the nobles to commit crimes with impunity, secure in the knowledge that they could only be punished at Ouagadougou. If a nobleman subverted the chief's rule by repeated acts of cruelty and brigandage, he was executed, although illegally. The executioners were the Baglere Naba and the Dapore Naba. These two men secretly visited the condemned noble, taking with them a bundle as a present from the chief. This bundle contained a new white robe in which were secreted a chief's bonnet and a poisoned arrow. As soon as the noble saw the gift, he knew that he was being ordered to kill himself. If he attempted to raise an alarm or run away, he was instantly strangled and his body was discarded in the bush. If he accepted the sentence, he was allowed to have food prepared, to eat, and then to kill himself. The chief ordered an elaborate funeral for his kinsman as though he had died an ordinary death. Thus, he was able to observe all the proprieties while at the same

696 90 565 634 time safeguarding his position within the district and toward the Mogho Naba. For, as already pointed out, the district chief who failed to protect his subjects as well as to rule them was deposed and executed by the sovereign.

692 662 The promptness with which the lower courts dealt with litigations left little time for pre-trial bribery, and there is general agreement that the traditional courts were just. Of course, some lower chiefs were known to [695] have been unfair and to have taken bribes. However, they were always in danger of having their verdicts appealed to Ouagadougou.

695 643 692 634 The Mossi believed in and acted on the dictum that "the truth is at Ouagadougou." They were convinced that they could obtain justice from the Mogho Naba if from no other chief. If a man was not satisfied with the ruling of a lower chief, he was free in theory to seek a higher verdict, and this influenced the kind of justice rendered on the lower level. As a rule, however, the district chiefs did not favor appeals to Ouagadougou. They felt, like most Mossi, that the less their superiors knew about their activities, the better. Thus, the district chief used all of his influence to prevent cases from being appealed to the capital. Some district chiefs were not above coercing litigants into such abstention. They even threatened them with reprisals if the verdict should be unfavorable. But the greatest deterrent against such appeals was the expenditure of time and money. The docket of the Mogho Naba's court was always crowded, and the suitors often had to remain at the capital for as long as three months before they were given a hearing.[9] During this period they often spent more money than the action was worth. Marc states that the word "Ouagadougou" means "the place where one becomes thin," a reference to the amount of money litigants had to spend while waiting for their cases to be heard.[10]

When the object of a lawsuit was the inheritance of cattle, the litigants sustained a double loss. As soon as they asked that the case be taken to the capital, the district chief impounded the cattle. While the case was pending he appropriated the cows' milk, and when the case was settled both he and the Mogho Naba received some animals. Thus, suitors were usually under a great deal of pressure to resolve their problems on the district level. However, if they were determined to go to the capital, they were permitted to do so.

The district chief always sent one of his retainers to the capital with the litigants. The group went directly to the district's provincial minister, who was empowered to hear the appeal and decide whether it should be brought before the Mogho Naba or returned to the district court. If he decided to send it to the Mogho Naba, he placed it on the docket and told the

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litigants when it would be heard. On the day set he took his charges to court, where they waited in the company of the litigants from other districts and from the wards of the capital itself. 643 692 634

The procedure of the Mogho Naba's court differed little from that of the district chief's court. When called upon, the litigant stated his case, called witnesses, and underwent cross-examination by his opponents and by ministers of the Mogho Naba. The litigants were not allowed to look at the Mogho Naba while they spoke, but had to kneel forward on the ground with their faces turned away from him. The Mogho Naba himself seldom looked at the litigants and rarely questioned them. When presented with a complex case, the Mogho Naba, like the district chief, retired with his councillors and canvassed their opinion in order "to ascertain whether or not their verdicts were similar to his own." Nevertheless, he could not follow their advice. He had to make up his own mind, and when he returned to court he rendered his verdict, which could not be appealed. If those who received an unfavorable verdict showed any displeasure, they were taken outside by the palace guards and executed.

The penalties imposed by the Ouagadougou court were usually more severe than those handed down at the district level. The main reason for this was that aside from cases involving residents of Ouagadougou, the lawsuits tried by the Mogho Naba were serious ones and often had been sent to him on appeal. Moreover, the Mogho Naba's court was alone empowered to impose the death penalty within the kingdom of Ouagadougou. [681] It should be noted here once more that district chiefs often executed criminals. But it should also be reiterated that the Mogho Naba never surrendered his prerogative to the district chiefs. They simply usurped it, and if they used it judiciously they were not penalized.

Those nobles and commoners who were convicted for serious crimes at the monarch's court were killed by the royal executioners. Moreover, in contrast to the procedure at the district court, the criminal's property was often seized before his execution. The reason for this is not clear, but it was probably related to the lack of a personal relationship between the court and the relatives of the accused, which enabled the Mogho Naba to impose a harsher penalty. The district chief, it must be remembered, lived in close association with his people and was influenced in his behavior by social relationships. Interestingly enough, the Mogho Naba did not keep the goods seized, but allowed them to be distributed among his executioners. 643 696 692 634

Crimes against the person or office of the Mogho Naba were punished with greater severity than crimes against the district chief. Any man who was seen speaking to one of the ruler's wives and who did not happen to [687]

644 during his peregrinations. He will bestow some of these on his followers
788 and keep the prettiest for himself.

431 In the old days, the Boulsa Naba, Boussouma Naba, Konkisitenga Naba, and all the others who were, so to speak, independent "rulers" of their lands never brought annual tribute to the Mogho Naba without sending gifts to his eldest son at Djiba.

In the same way, the canton chiefs were expected to make the same annual gifts to the Djiba Naba as to his father.

644 It should also be noted that chiefs who had quarreled with the
696 Mogho Naba and were in danger of being executed could readily obtain pardons by the expedient of buying the friendship of the Djiba Naba. The emperor, after all, was reluctant to distress his son by putting to death one of his intimates.

[107] Chapter 7

The Mossi Salute. Respect due the Home of a Naba.
The Cap. Precedence among Chiefs.
A Legend Concerning the Origins of Mossi Chiefdom.

Salutation of the Naba (Nab'Pousgho)

647 The kombemba (canton chiefs) and nayirdamba (ministers and other court dignitaries), when calling upon the Mogho Naba, are required to remove their cap when they reach the threshold. They hand it to their soroné (servitors) or followers. If they did not come on horseback, they must give their néoda (shoes) to a page and walk barefoot. In a word, they remove anything which might impede the execution of the very complicated Mossi salute.

The following passages concerning the Mossi salute are taken from Father Mangin.

Mossi Salute

644 "The Moaga puts down everything, load, hat, cap, and sword,
576 removes his shoes, and sits on the ground. He folds his legs slightly and bends the upper part of his body forward. The elbows rest on the ground, spread as far apart as possible. The forearms, folded

796
643 of the present house of Ouendasida, the police adjutant), and there he attended the salam presided over by the Imam.

After the ceremony, the Imam, surrounded by the faithful, went to call upon the emperor for the doua (a kind of benediction involving the recitation of verses from the Koran). The Imam received kola nuts and sheep or a cow.

[368] At the present time the two mosques exist in name only; the one real mosque is that of the Imam in the ward of the mohémé (marabouts). The present Mogho Naba never attends the salam on feast days. He goes to the Circle [Administration Building], then to the home of the Governor, and finally returns home to await the visit of the representative of Islam in Mossi country.

643 The only Mogho Naba who was truly a Moslem was Naba
368 Koutou, the twenty-seventh successor of Oubri. He was sent to
177 the Koranic school at Sagabtenga and is said to have made a creditable record there. When he succeeded his father, he installed a mosque in front of the women's gate. Since then a mosque has traditionally been located in the same place on the palace grounds of every Mogho Naba, even though, as in the case of the present emperor, he was not a believer.

643 Naba Koutou regularly made his salam in accordance with
177 the rites of the Moslem faith and even observed the thirty days of abstinence during the month of fasting. [210] All his children had Moslem names. All, except his eldest son who succeeded him as Naba Sanum, were sent to Koranic schools, although none did any serious work there since they were more interested in becoming naba.

643 During his lifetime, Naba Koutou himself never sentenced
●696 anyone to death, even if he were guilty. He loved peace. When his ministers submitted serious cases to him, he always said: "Go and do what seems best and do not tell me what fate was meted out to the guilty." Like Pontius Pilate, he allowed his ministers to bear the responsibility for the crimes. Since he gave little credence to what the priests said of poeré (confession by the use of magic), he acquitted individuals condemned to death by that barbaric method.

695 tomb and force him to drink water in which earth from the grave had been diluted. This test was greatly feared, for the Mossi believe that the deceased will come and take his revenge.

The defendant went free unless his guilt was proved by witnesses. When arguments arose about the ownership of fields, domestic animals, etc., each person concerned would give his arguments and summon his witnesses, and the judges made a decision on the basis of the discussions. If two women quarreled, their husbands were supposed to get together and reach a decision. The province chief judged disputes
692 concerning marriage. For instance, if a girl had been promised to someone and the bride price was paid in part, and then her father changed his mind and gave her to another, the disappointed suitor could appeal to the province chief, who saw to it that the payment was returned. If the defendant ran away to avoid trial, he could only be tried in absentia if witnesses deposed against him.

696 /25/ The sentence was carried out as far as possible, even in the
691 absence of the convicted party; if he returned, the trial was not re-
672 opened but he could appeal to the province chief. The family is held responsible in every case. If the sentence includes a fine, and if the convicted person's property is insufficient, the property of his relatives is seized. People are held accountable for their children's debts, and if the defendant runs away, one of his relatives is seized in his place. On the other hand, the head of the family is the abso-
[593] lute master and the judge of the family. He must pay his children's debts and the fines they have incurred, but he may chastise them, even put them to death, or banish and curse them, a punishment which as a rule is greatly feared. All this indicates the strength of the family ties, which we shall study in the second part of this work. The naba saw to the execution of the sentence pronounced by the court; the executive and judicial powers were vested in the same person. If anyone refused to pay his debts or to pay the inflicted penalty, he was stripped of his property. No commutation of the sentence was allowed, and the person condemned to irons or to death had to suffer the sentence himself and could not go free by paying a fine or by substituting a slave. Capital punishment was carried out in public. The province chief was entitled to grant a pardon, but,
[761] of course, he made use of this right quite rarely. A man's life counts for so little in the eyes of the Black!

695 The procedure was the same for all, men and women. The sons
681 of nabas, the nakomsé, however, were neither tried nor punished in
554 public. They were not tied with ropes, but with strips of fabric; and if condemned to death, they were hanged rather than clubbed to death. In any case, complaints against them were extremely rare. The sons of a powerful naba could do anything with impunity.

681 For examples, here are a few crimes and their respective punishments. Of course, there was no written code, no formal scale of penalties. Everything depended on custom and on the whim of the judge. Thus, the wealthy could obtain sentences in their favor by
696 paying the judges, and thieves could avoid punishment by sharing
691 their loot with the naba. Otherwise, a thief caught in the act was
685 flogged, sometimes to death. He was condemned to several months in irons, and exposed to public ridicule before the naba's hut; he had to restore what he had taken, and his family was held responsible. If he repeated the offense, he was led to the marketplace with a rope around his neck; he was supplied with an abundance of meat and dolo /beer/, and then clubbed to death at the foot of a tree. In Ouagadougou he was sometimes made a eunuch instead. This was almost the equivalent of a death sentence, because the operation was carried out in such barbarous fashion that death often ensued. French justice more leniently imprisons the thieves, a cause of complaint by honest people who find the punishment too mild.

682 In case of willful murder, the killer was put to death; if he could
683 not be found, a member of his family was executed in his place.
672 In case of a brawl, no attempt was made to determine who had started the fight or who was in the right. (Manslaughter was punished by a fine paid to the victim's family. The right /26/ of self-defense was, of course, recognized. If blows and wounds had been inflicted, the adversaries were put in irons.)

681 Old women were often accused of being witches and of eating
683 children's souls. If their crime was considered proved, if the sorcerers
888 consulted declared some old woman guilty of a baby's death, she was put to death in very cruel fashion: a second opening was made in a clay pot so that her head could be put completely within it; then the pot was heated intensely and placed over the head of the unfortunate woman.

685 If a goat or sheep caused damage to a field, the animal could be killed on the spot. The owner had to be notified, but he was not

644 who will make him into a sorone if he is a boy, or alone have the right to give her in marriage if she is a girl."

643 Moulins also provides interesting details on the manner in which the Moro Naba spends his days, or rather spent them in the past, for this description refers to the state of affairs prior to the French occupation.

"From Ouarga's reign onward, the Moro Nabas, who had previously resided successively in various parts of the empire, settled at Ouagadougou where they have lived ever since. Custom constrains them never to leave /571/ the capital except in unusually serious circumstances. This is because the land falls into anarchy [674 when the sovereign is absent from Ouagadougou. All theft, pillage, 696] and murder committed at that time remain unprosecuted.

644 "Every morning at seven, the Moro Naba emerges from his hut. 173 His saddled horse waits before the door. He mounts it and pretends to set out on his way, but after riding around his hut he dismounts and goes back into his hut only to come out again immediately.

"This formality of the protocol has the following origin. A long time ago the favorite wife of the Moro Naba having fled to La, the sovereign wished to go and fetch her himself. He mounted his horse and was about to leave when all the court dignitaries rushed to him, admonishing him not to carry out his project, for his absence from Ouagadougou could only result in anarchy. The monarch gave way, and soon afterwards his wife returned of her own accord. It is in memory of the magnanimity of this sovereign, who sacrificed himself in the interests of his people, that every morning since that time the Moro Naba has pretended to prepare for departure and to then give up his plan.

644 "Following this ceremony, the Moro Naba settles himself in a recess sunk into the wall that surrounds his residence, and then, to the strains of abundant music, the whole court comes to the sovereign and prostrates itself before him, brow in the dust, forearms striking the ground in rhythm with a great clicking of bracelets. Then business is attended to.

"First, the five province chiefs come forward in order of precedence, relate to the Moro Naba those events which have taken place since the preceding day, and receive his instructions for the day. Then they present to him the canton and village chiefs and the common natives who wish for an audience.

chief. If he was not qualified then one of his younger brothers, or 631
one of father's brothers or uncles was chosen. Yet, the fiction of 613
equal access to the *nam* was important to the Mossi because it enabled them to adhere to their most important political axiom which was that "The only man who should rule is one who can keep the country." Regencies were avoided, and persons with physical and character defects were barred. Moreover, this flexibility gave the electors a wide choice of candidates from which to choose the person best fitted for chieftainship at any given period. The Mossi have always believed that it is difficult to rule men and this is what they mean when they declare: "Nanamsè toumdè ya yida fa fa"—"The work of the chiefs is the most difficult of all."[3] For example, it does not seem like an accident that the first ruler, Moro Naba Wubri, was succeeded by four of his brothers in turn instead of by his sons. The Mossi had not completely conquered the territory, and the young sons were incapable of handling the complex political situation. The graves of each of the successors to Wubri in different parts of the country remain as markers to testify to the difficult task which the early rulers had in controlling their realm.

The Mossi believed, and still do believe, that it was only when con- [812]
flict developed after a ruler died, that the people realized how necessary and valuable a chief was. The death of a chief, especially of the Moro [764]
Naba, was kept a secret until the war minister arrived at the capital with his troops. Only then did the cry go up: "The fire has gone out!"; and as soon as it was heard, violence broke out throughout the [669]
land. Prisoners were released, thieves rifled the markets, and the *nakomces*, or nobles, rode about the countryside doing whatever they wished. This custom persisted as late as 1942. Reporting to his superior in Abijan about the events that transpired in Wagadougou when Moro Naba Kom died, the French commander wrote: "On Friday, March 13, 1942, young people, profiting from old custom, tried to steal things, but they were stopped and about one hundred were arrested."[4] Throughout all the chaos which attended the death of a 645
king, the war minister remained calm unless an attempt was actually 696
made to seize power. He never attempted to stop the public disorder or to catch thieves or murderers, because everyone believed that out of

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645
696 all the chaos would come a new appreciation for the task of the chief, and a cessation of the grumbling that the chiefs were greedy.

662 The Mossi interregnum also served another purpose. It gave the
428 electors the opportunity to exhaust and redistribute much of the patri-
666 mony of the dead ruler, which was brought to them by his heirs who were trying to obtain the chieftainship through bribery. Sometimes, a candidate's ability to collect a great deal of goods with which to press his suit often revealed to the electors the strength of his following in the district or village, for had he been an unpopular man he would have had to use only his own resources.

666 The Mossi electors were always concerned with the health and
643 character of a potential chief, and turned down the most promising
175 candidates who were deficient in any of these qualities. For example, when Moro Naba Sanum died in 1890 without leaving a male heir, his younger brother, Bokary Koutou, was the strongest candidate for the *nam*. Yet he was passed over, at first, by the electors because of his reputation as a bandit and a rebel. We know from Captain Binger, a Frenchman who met Bokary in 1888, that this prince was indeed a bandit and a slave raider. But Binger, although deploring Bokary's conduct, exonerated him on the grounds that the Moro Naba had sent him into exile without any means of support. This was true, but the
[687] reason that Moro Naba Sanum did so was because Bokary had raised a rebellion against him as an attempt to obtain their father's position. Bokary was forbidden to appear in the capital; but when he heard that his brother Sanum was dead, he took a force of soldiers and hurried to Wagadougou fearing that an attempt would have been made to prevent his election. When he found that his fears were justified, he became
[669] desperate and secreted a force of Gurunsi warriors around the elector's meeting place, threatening to kill them if he was not named Moro Naba. They succumbed to his threat and he received the *nam*. During
643 the customary speech in which a new ruler chose his official name,
175 announced his program for the people and the country, or ridiculed his erstwhile competitors, Bokary Koutou said: "A hundred ghosts cannot frighten an elephant (Wobogo)," meaning that he was not afraid
648 of any of his enemies. He thereafter became known as Moro Naba
721 Wobogo, and he chose to live up to his boast when the French arrived
175 and asked him to sign a treaty of protection with them. He refused

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The Mogho Naba had an elaborate court composed of many officials, 644
relatives, and servants. The most important courtiers were the five minis- [645]
ters, who appeared daily at court and took part in all important ceremonies in addition to administering their own provinces. Aside from these men, the Mogho Naba had a number of other officials called Naba whose re- 644
sponsibilities covered the full range of duties in the palace and in the capital. 791
One of the most interesting was the Pwe Naba, a royal diviner and court 684
chaperon. His chief duty was to guard the morals of the pages and the 695
royal wives; he also administered the ordeal to persons accused of treason. The pages were required to be chaste until they were discharged from the palace, lest their amorous adventures lead them to compromise the virtue of the royal wives, with whom they were constantly in contact. A wife and a page suspected of adultery were tested by the Pwe Naba. He forced them to look into a mirror or a calabash of water, and declared them guilty or innocent according to the way their faces were reflected. If they were found guilty, the wife was executed and the page was either executed or dis- 644
charged in disgrace. The Pwe Naba also saw to it that strangers did not 791
address the ruler's wives either on the street or in the market. Offenders 681
were executed.

The Dapore Naba served as the court's chief executioner and as head 644
of a group of the Mogho Naba's hereditary serfs. Members of the royal 693
clan were executed by strangulation, since royal blood could not be shed; 696
all other persons were executed either with a sword, by hanging, or with heavy clubs. Another palace official was the Ouedrango Naba, the head 644
groom. It was he who saddled and presented the king's ceremonial horse to him at the morning ceremony. The Kambo Naba commanded the palace guard; only he and his guards were permitted to carry guns. The Samande Naba and the Samande Nabila supervised the work of the samande-kamba, young men who worked around the palace courtyard and kept watch with heavy batons to enforce order during ceremonies. A lesser palace official was the Zusoaba Kasanga, who, as chief of the palace eunuchs, [782]
ruled over the guardians of the royal harem. The Gande Naba made sacri- [431]
fices for the ruler and also distributed gifts from the king to the royal offi- cials and the royal household.

Another courtier, and one who played an important role during the installation of the new ruler, was the Ouagadougou Naba. As a direct descendant of the Ninisi, he was all but indispensable at sacrifices propitiating or honoring his ancestors. The Bendere Naba was the chief musi- [688]
cian and court historian; according to some reports, a Bendere Naba was killed instantly if he made a mistake while reciting the ruler's genealogy. The Raga Naba was chief of the markets in the capital. Under him were

622 had a group of confidants who acted as an informal council. These men
623 included senior members of his own lineage, elders from other local lineages, and personal friends. Again, like the confidants of the district chiefs, these men visited the village chief whenever they were not busy with their own affairs to talk to him about wives, crops, and village matters. Although protocol was at a minimum on this level, the chief had to maintain a high
[613] degree of decorum. As a member of the ruling lineage of the district, he
[565] had noble status and had to be treated accordingly. The non-noble village chief was also respected as a recipient of the nam. But all chiefs, whether
622 nobles or commoners, were expected to lead exemplary lives lest the flaws in their characters as revealed by the intimacy of village life should weaken their prestige.

622 The village chief received his orders from the district chief through the
203 administrator in charge of his village or through one of this official's servants. He, in turn, used his own sons or relatives to transmit messages to the heads of the saghse. If the message was extremely important, the village chief's messenger might be accompanied by the administrator's messenger or by the district chief's personal representatives. The saksobadamba then transmitted the order to the various compound heads. This hierarchy was always followed because, by following it, the officials knew who was responsible for disobeying or frustrating the wishes of the superior chiefs. As on the district level, the orders transmitted to the village and its sections dealt with such things as collecting tribute, picking fruits from the district chief's trees, allocating labor for the district chief or his personal retainers, transferring or summoning cases to the district court, procuring sacrificial animals for the local Tengsoba, and requesting soldiers. The village chief also sent his own messages to the saghse. These messages, however, dealt with such village matters as local sacrifices, quarrels, and court cases.

622 Misrule and maladministration by a village chief were punished either
687 by the district chief or by the villagers. Like other Mossi rulers, the village
634 chief could not be deposed and allowed to live. However, he had a better chance of fleeing and finding refuge in another district. His presence in a strange district did not challenge the authority of the local chief, and he had no opportunities to seize any of his host's villages. In fact, if the refugee was accompanied by a large number of his subjects, his host might even give him land on which to erect a new village. The proviso was, of course, that he should not "spoil" the district by causing trouble. If a village chief accused of maladministration was seized by the district chief before he could
[696] flee, he was invariably executed. If he was a commoner, he was decapitated or even stoned to death; if he was a nobleman, he was taken into the bush and strangled in secret by the district police

He was also liable to be put in stocks for 684
several days, and when released he was warned against visiting the local 692
markets, where he might be tempted to renew his illicit relations. A noble- 634
man convicted of adultery was often merely warned or fined, since his [696]
movements could not be restricted. But if a man caught his wife and an- [622]
other man in *flagrante delicto* and killed them, his act was considered justifiable homicide (even if the slain man was a noble), and he went free. If, however, he killed the lover but spared his wife, he had to send her to the chief's household. Here she was made to perform hard work under the supervision of the palace guards until it was believed that she had reformed. A man who was experiencing difficulties with an unfaithful wife and feared he might eventually kill her or her paramour also sent her to the chief's compound for a few months.

The Mossi have always been great creditors and debtors, and cases con- 686
cerning indebtedness seem to have been next in frequency at the district 692
court. The chief usually dismissed cases of indebtedness brought against 634
minors, because it was considered unseemly for adults to give credit or to loan valuable property to youths not yet of age. Thus, if the minor's family refused to make restitution, the creditor usually had no redress. However, [613]
if a woman borrowed property and refused to return it, her husband's lineage was held responsible. Similarly, if an adult male borrowed anything and refused to return it or to do so on time, the case was taken to the local court and eventually to the district court. The creditor was asked to supply witnesses to the loan, and if the chief was satisfied that the loan had been made under the conditions specified, the debtor was ordered to make restitution. If the debtor claimed bankruptcy, the chief ordered that his goods be seized and sold, and that restitution be made to the creditor. If the debtor 686
was truly destitute, his relatives were compelled to pay his debts. The col- 692
lective responsibility of the babissi for the debts of its members was seen 634
most clearly in cases where men died in a state of indebtedness. The credi- 613
tors were allowed to summon the debtor's babissi to court, and if proof of the debt was established, the relatives were compelled to repay. If they failed to do so, the chief's police seized and sold their goods to repay the debt.

Cases dealing with violations of civil contracts were somewhat similar. 686
The Mossi did not believe in the axiom *caveat emptor*. If a man sold an 634
animal that died within a week for no apparent reason, the chief ordered 692
an investigation. If it was found that the animal had been ill when sold, the chief ordered that the buyer be reimbursed. If the investigation showed that the animal had been healthy when sold, no restitution was made. Similarly, if a man borrowed an ass or an ox to transport goods and the animal

634 died while he was using it, the owner could not press any claims. However,
692 the borrower was obliged to sell the animal's flesh and give the money to the owner along with the animal's skin as proof of its death. Under no circumstances would a district chief absolve a man from paying the market value of an animal if he failed to return the skin. Such failure would brand him as a thief and involve an additional fine.

685 The Mossi considered theft a major crime. A thief could be killed with
[674] impunity if he was caught in the act and in the presence of several witnesses. If these conditions were not met but the man killed was known to have been a thief, the killer was fined several cows. But if he was known to have been a man of good character, the killer ran the risk of being executed. In this way, the Mossi tried to prevent any abuse of an accepted practice. The theft of grain and other foodstuffs was considered especially reprehensible, because it was held to indicate that the thief was so depraved
685 that he would not even grow his own food. During the rule of Naba Kag-
175 lere of Nobere district (1888–1906), a man called Yahiya left his own village of Donse and went to a village called Quitenga to steal sweet potatoes. The people of that village caught him in the act and shot him with a poisoned arrow as he made his escape. Yahiya died without revealing the source of his wound, and his babissi, suspecting foul play, asked Kaglere to investigate. When the Quitenga people learned of the investigation, they went forward voluntarily and reported the circumstances under which they had wounded Yahiya. Kaglere absolved them of all guilt and told the Donse people that Yahiya had deserved to die, not only because he had stolen food (which he might have received if he had asked for it), but because sweet potatoes were the easiest vegetable to cultivate.

685 A thief who was too clever to be caught in the act but who was appre-
hended afterwards was treated quite harshly by the Mossi court. Here, the
[692] penalty of double indemnity was often applied. A man who was brought to court for stealing a chicken or guinea hen was fined a goat or a sheep. Hence the Mossi proverb "Zou noaga ronda bouga"—"He who steals a
[696] chicken repays a goat." The thief who stole one cow had to return several. If a thief could not pay the fine, he was placed in stocks until his relatives paid for him. If they refused to do so, the chief's retainers seized their prop-
[762] erty, sold it, and made restitution. This often compelled the family of a recidivous thief to make him commit suicide. If the family would not re-
[634] sort to this, the district chief had the man seized and clubbed to death.[7] Sometimes the chief sent recidivists to the Mogho Naba, who sent them to a
[565] village called Teemetenga to be made into eunuchs.[8]
[599] The Mossi seem to have made a distinction between theft and pillage—

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a practice whereby nobles deprived commoners of their property. Those 685
nobles who lived among commoners quite often confiscated their neigh- 579
bors' property. But this was not regarded as theft and was not punishable 565
as such, although a rapacious nobleman could be sanctioned for terrorizing and "spoiling" a village. If a nobleman was caught performing an act that *was* considered theft, or if he was accused and found guilty of theft, he was severely punished. During Kaglere's reign, the people of a small village 686
suffered a series of livestock thefts. One day, while the friends of a village 685
chief were sitting with him, a dog came out of the chief's compound 622
dragging an animal skin. The men recognized the skin as that described for a stolen goat, and decided to investigate. In the chief's courtyard they discovered the hole from which the dog had unearthed the skin. They also found the skins of several other stolen animals. The villagers took the [692]
village chief to the district chief, who found him guilty and exiled him [634]
from the region. In passing judgment, the district chief told him that he had been elected "to care for the village," but that he had betrayed his trust by robbing his own people.

According to Mossi law, willful homicide or murder was punishable by 682
execution. The Mossi did not use wergild or "blood money," but insisted on the *lex talionis,* which they interpreted as "a life for a life." They did not believe that money or any other valuables could compensate for the life of a man, nor would they allow a slave to be executed in place of the murderer. They believed that only by executing the murderer himself could they prevent his victim's relatives from resorting to vengeance and thus "spoiling" the district or village.

A man who grievously wounded another was apprehended, bound, and taken to the village chief and subsequently to the district chief. Here he was [696]
kept in stocks in the serfs' quarter without being tried until his victim either died or recovered. If his victim recovered and the judge found that the wound had been inflicted accidentally, the defendant was fined or had his goods confiscated, but he was released. If the judge found that the victim had been wounded in a fair fight, the prisoner was usually censured and dismissed. The chief often warned the wounded man that he ought to have lived up to the Mossi axiom that a grown man is always able to protect himself. If, however, the trial revealed that the prisoner had ambushed his victim with the intent to kill, he either was fined several cows or had his entire property confiscated. District chiefs are known to have executed [634]
the perpetrators of cowardly ambushes even though their victims recovered. [696]

If a man died at the hands of another, an inquest was held immediately. If the killing had been accidental or committed in self-defense, or if it was

682 found to have been justified—that is, if the victim was a thief or a nocturnal intruder—then the accused was acquitted or simply fined. If, however, the 682 accused was found guilty of murder, he was sentenced to die, and the mode 696 of execution was at the chief's pleasure. The chief surrendered the prisoner to his executioners, serfs who lived in the Baglere ward. They took him into the woods and carried out the sentence by strangulation, hanging, decapitation, clubbing, or stoning.

696 The perpetrator of an unusually heinous crime was often ordered to kill himself with a poisoned arrow. This form of execution was feared most, because it tested the murderer's mettle and called into play the [634] coercive force of his lineage if he proved to be a coward. When such an execution was ordered, the district chief had a poisoned arrow prepared and brought to the murderer's father, his brother, or his father's brother's son. The relative gave the arrow to the condemned man, and, while apologizing for his painful mission, explained that the crime had to be expiated. If the murderer agreed to kill himself, his relatives prepared food and drink for [766] him while his grave was dug. Some proud and brave men helped their relatives dig the oblong-shaped grave required for a murderer; some even insisted on digging it themselves. When both the food and the grave had been prepared, the murderer bade his relatives farewell, took the food and the poisoned arrow, and went into a hut. Here he ate the food and after-696 ward killed himself by pushing the poisoned arrow into his leg. In some 626 cases he had to be provided with a second arrow to hasten his death. If a 613 cowardly murderer refused to kill himself, one of his relatives offered to die in his stead. He told the murderer that death was preferable to the knowledge that his lineage brother was a coward. What would happen, he asked the murderer, if he saw a relative being harmed? Would he choose his own safety rather than run the risk of death? The other relatives asked the same questions, and this subtle coercion was usually sufficient to induce the most cowardly man to kill himself. There are no reports of a murderer's permitting a relative to die for him; life would have been impossible for him afterward. One suspects that if ever a murderer had attempted to elude his fate, the district chief would have had him executed.

634 The district court also prescribed capital punishment for individuals 681 convicted of arson, abduction, witchcraft, or lese majesty. A person con-[685] victed of willfully setting fire to someone's hut or crops was put to death even if no one was killed in the resulting fire; he was held to have [683] jeopardized the life and livelihood of his victims. Similarly, the rare person convicted of threatening the well-being of others through the practice of [695] witchcraft was usually tortured and killed. Conviction usually followed the testimony of witnesses or the confession of the accused.

The torture was seen as a punishment, and not as a form of ordeal to ascertain guilt or innocence. It was designed to cause the culprit as much suffering as possible before he died, and its harshness reflects the Mossi fear of witches and witchcraft. In one form of punishment called *koudgilga*, the culprit was sent to the smith, who tortured him by placing hot iron balls in both his hands. He was then beaten to death. Another type of punishment called *swengalenga* was more painful. A pottery jar from which the bottom had been removed was heated in a fire. Then it was placed over the head of the convicted witch and allowed to burn its way down onto his shoulders. The culprit was subsequently killed. Sometimes a convicted witch was not killed; instead, a man was sent to Ouagadougou to be castrated and sold as a eunuch, and a woman was sold outside the country as a slave.

Gross disrespect toward the chief and crimes of lese majesty were uncommon among the Mossi. These crimes were usually committed by persons who came into close contact with the chief—nobles and court retainers—rather than by commoners, serfs, or slaves. The most common form of lese majesty was adultery with one of the district chief's wives. The penalty for this was death for both violators. Anyone who dared insult the district chief at court was seized and executed. The same fate awaited those who talked about him maliciously in public or threatened to stir a rebellion against him. If the culprits were commoners, they were executed; if they were nobles, they were strangled in secret or were forced to commit suicide.

The district chief was caught in a dilemma whenever nobles committed major crimes or unlawful acts. They could not be imprisoned, and only the Mogho Naba had the legal prerogative to execute them. When a noble committed a major crime such as treason or rebellion, he was sent to the capital to be executed by slaves, who strangled him with a piece of cotton cloth. However, no district chief could allow the nobles to commit crimes with impunity, secure in the knowledge that they could only be punished at Ouagadougou. If a nobleman subverted the chief's rule by repeated acts of cruelty and brigandage, he was executed, although illegally. The executioners were the Baglere Naba and the Dapore Naba. These two men secretly visited the condemned noble, taking with them a bundle as a present from the chief. This bundle contained a new white robe in which were secreted a chief's bonnet and a poisoned arrow. As soon as the noble saw the gift, he knew that he was being ordered to kill himself. If he attempted to raise an alarm or run away, he was instantly strangled and his body was discarded in the bush. If he accepted the sentence, he was allowed to have food prepared, to eat, and then to kill himself. The chief ordered an elaborate funeral for his kinsman as though he had died an ordinary death. Thus, he was able to observe all the proprieties while at the same

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time safeguarding his position within the district and toward the Mogho Naba. For, as already pointed out, the district chief who failed to protect his subjects as well as to rule them was deposed and executed by the sovereign.

The promptness with which the lower courts dealt with litigations left little time for pre-trial bribery, and there is general agreement that the traditional courts were just. Of course, some lower chiefs were known to have been unfair and to have taken bribes. However, they were always in danger of having their verdicts appealed to Ouagadougou.

The Mossi believed in and acted on the dictum that "the truth is at Ouagadougou." They were convinced that they could obtain justice from the Mogho Naba if from no other chief. If a man was not satisfied with the ruling of a lower chief, he was free in theory to seek a higher verdict, and this influenced the kind of justice rendered on the lower level. As a rule, however, the district chiefs did not favor appeals to Ouagadougou. They felt, like most Mossi, that the less their superiors knew about their activities, the better. Thus, the district chief used all of his influence to prevent cases from being appealed to the capital. Some district chiefs were not above coercing litigants into such abstention. They even threatened them with reprisals if the verdict should be unfavorable. But the greatest deterrent against such appeals was the expenditure of time and money. The docket of the Mogho Naba's court was always crowded, and the suitors often had to remain at the capital for as long as three months before they were given a hearing.[9] During this period they often spent more money than the action was worth. Marc states that the word "Ouagadougou" means "the place where one becomes thin," a reference to the amount of money litigants had to spend while waiting for their cases to be heard.[10]

When the object of a lawsuit was the inheritance of cattle, the litigants sustained a double loss. As soon as they asked that the case be taken to the capital, the district chief impounded the cattle. While the case was pending he appropriated the cows' milk, and when the case was settled both he and the Mogho Naba received some animals. Thus, suitors were usually under a great deal of pressure to resolve their problems on the district level. However, if they were determined to go to the capital, they were permitted to do so.

The district chief always sent one of his retainers to the capital with the litigants. The group went directly to the district's provincial minister, who was empowered to hear the appeal and decide whether it should be brought before the Mogho Naba or returned to the district court. If he decided to send it to the Mogho Naba, he placed it on the docket and told the

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litigants when it would be heard. On the day set he took his charges to court, where they waited in the company of the litigants from other districts and from the wards of the capital itself. 643 692 634

The procedure of the Mogho Naba's court differed little from that of the district chief's court. When called upon, the litigant stated his case, called witnesses, and underwent cross-examination by his opponents and by ministers of the Mogho Naba. The litigants were not allowed to look at the Mogho Naba while they spoke, but had to kneel forward on the ground with their faces turned away from him. The Mogho Naba himself seldom looked at the litigants and rarely questioned them. When presented with a complex case, the Mogho Naba, like the district chief, retired with his councillors and canvassed their opinion in order "to ascertain whether or not their verdicts were similar to his own." Nevertheless, he could not follow their advice. He had to make up his own mind, and when he returned to court he rendered his verdict, which could not be appealed. If those who received an unfavorable verdict showed any displeasure, they were taken outside by the palace guards and executed.

The penalties imposed by the Ouagadougou court were usually more severe than those handed down at the district level. The main reason for this was that aside from cases involving residents of Ouagadougou, the lawsuits tried by the Mogho Naba were serious ones and often had been sent to him on appeal. Moreover, the Mogho Naba's court was alone empowered to impose the death penalty within the kingdom of Ouagadougou. [681] It should be noted here once more that district chiefs often executed criminals. But it should also be reiterated that the Mogho Naba never surrendered his prerogative to the district chiefs. They simply usurped it, and if they used it judiciously they were not penalized.

Those nobles and commoners who were convicted for serious crimes at the monarch's court were killed by the royal executioners. Moreover, in contrast to the procedure at the district court, the criminal's property was often seized before his execution. The reason for this is not clear, but it was probably related to the lack of a personal relationship between the court and the relatives of the accused, which enabled the Mogho Naba to impose a harsher penalty. The district chief, it must be remembered, lived in close association with his people and was influenced in his behavior by social relationships. Interestingly enough, the Mogho Naba did not keep the goods seized, but allowed them to be distributed among his executioners. 643 696 692 634

Crimes against the person or office of the Mogho Naba were punished with greater severity than crimes against the district chief. Any man who was seen speaking to one of the ruler's wives and who did not happen to [687]

696 be related to her was tried and executed. In some cases, he was put to death
692 without a trial. Adultery with a royal wife was considered so reprehensible
634 that both adulterers were publicly beaten to death. Their bodies were
[687] denied burial and were thrown into the bush to be eaten by vultures. The
[684] Dapore Naba and the Baglere Naba seized and retained the man's property.

Men who committed treason against the Mogho Naba were usually
687 killed before they could be tried. Chiefs and nobles who were suspected of
643 treason and who consented to come to Ouagadougou for trial were deposed
692 and executed if found guilty. Those who were found innocent were released and sent back to their chiefly duties. The sole exception on record to this general rule was the case of Naba Yemde, a Dim of Boulsa province.
[669] He had fought and defeated the forces of Mogho Naba Sanum, and when the Mogho Naba sent a larger army and routed him, he was treacherously delivered to the monarch by another Dim. Sanum found Yemde innocent of treason, but had him executed because he had violated another rule: as the descendant of a Kourita, he had come face to face with the Mogho Naba, thus jeopardizing the monarch's life. This exception is always cited by the Mossi when the inevitability of execution for treason is brought up. Actually, a person accused of treason rarely went to court. He either took poison or died in battle against the royal forces. As a posthumous punishment, his compound was burned, his property seized, and his relatives and servants sold into slavery outside the country. Thus, the supreme penalty
[613] was not merely the death of a traitor but the permanent banishment of his entire lineage.

592 A typical soukala consists of the master's hut, a hut for each wife, one hut for the sheep and goats, another for the horse if he has one, a hut for the family mill, and, finally, a receiving hut with two doors sufficiently high to permit entrance without stooping and set sometimes [351] as an entrance way and sometimes within the cluster of huts. All these dwellings stand in a circle and are joined either by a cob wall or by /11/ mat fences taller than a man and held up by stakes. The master's hut, which usually stands beside the huts for the horses and sheep, is set off from the others by mats to insure his privacy. A low wall describes an arc within the inner courtyard; this is the kitchen [273] when it is not raining. Big jars of fired clay which are used to brew [415] millet beer rest between the huts. In front of this cluster of huts, a shelter is built, usually high enough to permit standing and consisting basically of forked stakes with branches and séko resting upon them; this shelter serves as a refuge during the hot part of the day. Small boys and unmarried girls live with their mother, while older boys, servants, and slaves each have their separate huts which face the dwellings of the master and his wives.

The term yri or soukala covers this whole complex of structures. [591] Each soukala is a distinct unit, and, some time after they marry, the children build their own residence, set completely apart from that of their parents, often in another part of the village and sometimes in [361] another village altogether. The soukala stand fifteen to twenty meters apart, and, because of this, the villages, though adequately concentrated, cover a rather extensive area. The heads of cantons 342 place an ostrich egg at the peak of the roof on their own dwellings, [237] and some even build terraced huts higher than the surrounding dwell- [554] ings. They keep their riches in these huts and a prison in the base- [697] ment. An earthen stairway leads to the terrace where the master of [512] the house receives his guests when the sun begins to sink on the horizon.

721 These people, apparently so peaceful today, were formerly quite warlike and went off to war at the slightest pretext. Foreign to the land they now occupy, the Mossi must have conquered it by force of arms. The Tarik-es-Soudan /History of Sudan/ relates that the people of Yatenga seized Timbuktu in the fourteenth century, and in 721 the fifteenth they probably carried their incursions as far as Lake 701 Bébo and even Oualata. (4) The Mossi army was greatly feared.

4. Delafosse, op. cit., Vol. 2, p. 80.

/Additional information on the "Tansoba" or Minister of War, may be found in category 645./

II. Military Organization

701 An army, properly speaking, with cadres and hierarchies, did not exist among the Mossi.

721 In the event of war, the Tansoba or Tampsoba (war minister) notified the canton chiefs who promptly assembled with all their able-bodied men and as many horsemen as possible.

705 The villages were charged with feeding the soldiers.

III. Judicial Organization

692 693 Justice was rendered in conformity with local customs which had been handed down from generation to generation and according to local practice.

1. By village chiefs, assisted by some of the elders, for petty affairs, pilfering, and insults.

2. The canton chief, assisted by his court dignitaries and the minister, ruled on matters concerning theft, adultery, and bodily attacks, as well as on other matters.

3. The Mogho Naba took cognizance of all matters of general interest, especially with crimes of assassination and murder. In theory, he could by himself pronounce the death sentence on the [565] nakomsé [descendants of Mogho Naba]. Contrary to general belief, a [56] kombéré (canton chief) also had the power of life and death over his subjects. How many individuals have been put to 661 death merely because they were wealthy! How many village chiefs have been killed by the canton chiefs over their territories without any intervention by the Mogho Naba! The nakomsé could 565 be executed, however, only for very serious crimes, such as 684 adultery with a woman of the nobility. The guilty man was led 762 into the bush by old nakomsé; they gave him a rope with which he was expected to hang himself and thus expiate his crime.

694 431 Justice was free; no fee was expected or assessed. The plaintiff, however, customarily presented the naba with a white or light gray rooster, accompanied by the traditional satchel containing from 200 to 1,000 cowries.

644 attempted adultery. This practice (poéré) found many victims,
687 and its suppression by the French was a real service to the Mossi,
661 who were formerly murdered for a trifle. An ogling glance at a chief's wife was punishable by death. A man who met one of the wives of the Mogho Naba on the road was executed along with the wife. If one met a napagha [royal wife], he left the path and took to the bush. The woman herself would run off and return to the road only when she was sure that the man was a long way off.

Such is naturally no longer the case, and the wives of the Mogho Naba on their way to the market at [66] Ouagadougou no longer expect not to be looked at or even jostled. I hasten to add, however, that the Mossi still retain great respect for them and will even swallow serious insults, such as tampiri, "bastard," from a napagha if they are so unlucky as to offend them.

644 (c) Daporé Naba, chief of the section of the free or house
683 slaves. It was formerly the duty of the Daporé Naba and his followers to massacre any pages or other convicted persons whose execution had been ordered by the Mogho Naba.

644 (d) Bend'Naba, chief of the drummers of the Mogho Naba.

(e) Soré Naba (literally, "chief of the path"), the drummer who always accompanies the warriors and who, therefore, even in time of peace, is allotted a horse.

644 If the enemy appears to be winning during a battle, the Soré
726 Naba kindles the courage of the warriors of the Mogho Naba and constantly asks for a head, m'data zougou. This means that he is asking each warrior to forget himself and to think only of victory. In order to have a victory, the enemy must suffer such losses that they decide either to retreat or to surrender. Thus, the expression m'data zougou implies ruthless slaughter.

● 701 (f) Tansoba or Tampsoba, the war chief. The Tansoba of the Mogho Naba lives in a small village, Moussa, in the province of the Baloum Naba.

701 [67] When there is friction between the Mogho Naba and one
687 of his vassals and there seems to be no hope of agreement, the Mogho Naba sends to the Tansoba for logdo (warriors armed with arrows). The Tansoba at once proceeds to Ouagadougou and stops at Baoghin. The emperor assembles his ministers and the principal dignitaries of his court and says to them: "I never thought that chief X, to whom I myself gave the pougla (red fez) would dare to

701 oppose me. I therefore demand that his fez be returned to me."
687 To take away the fez of a naba is to dethrone him and reduce him to the level of his subjects.

The court officials, including the Tansoba, at once send emissaries to the chief at fault, asking him to choose between suicide (some take a poison called sounadré, while others kill themselves with a poisoned arrow) and war with the Mogho Naba.

If the chief is not prepared for such a summons, he kills himself, and the envoys return with the news.

669 If, on the other hand, he declares that he wants pouwega, that
701 is, war and a noble death, he sends back the representatives of the ministers. A few days later, with drums beating and the Tansoba, chief of the army, at its head, the whole warrior band appears before his walls.

The Tansoba sends the Samandé Naba to the chief to ask him to confirm his declaration of war. If the naba still wants war, he usually replies: "Ya yingri bala la ka sakénian."

The Tansoba withdraws, sending word to the chief [68] to expect him back on a stated day (seven or eight days later); this period of time will enable the chief to assemble his warriors also. When the day arrives, it is a merciless battle, a massacre.

727 Often the forces of the Mogho Naba are victorious, and in that event the slaves, livestock, and other property go to those who seized them. Only the corpses belong to the Tansoba.

701 If an arrow, even a poisoned one, wounds the Tansoba, he
577 must under no circumstances pull it out. Indeed, he must often endure thirst and hunger, and it is only when he is at rest in an enclosed place that the arrows are removed from his body. It should
[789] be noted that since the Tansoba's costume is virtually covered with amulets and other charms, he is not very likely to be wounded seriously by an arrow. This is not, of course, to belittle his bravery and composure in the face of danger, since he is expected
[762] never to retreat and, if the enemy is victorious, often prefers to kill himself rather than to report a defeat to the Mogho Naba.

644 There are, in addition to the foregoing, a great many petty naba whose role is not clearly defined and of whom it seems needless to speak.

644 conferred by the Mogho Naba on the canton chiefs.

292 With the exception of the Tenkodogo Naba and, more re-
554 cently, the Boussouma Naba, neither of whom renders honors to the Mogho Naba, all ministers, other petty dima, and chiefs of Mossi cantons must take off his cap to greet the emperor.

576 (a) Between ministers. The Ouidi Naba does not remove his
554 cap for any of his colleagues.

The Larrhallé Naba, Gounga Naba, and Kamsaongo Naba are
645 equals and greet each other with their caps on.

The Baloum Naba and Samandé Naba are also equals, and they do not take off their caps when greeting each other. However, they were required to remove their caps (pougla) and even to perform the kantissé in the presence of the three principal ministers.

[116] Next in importance are the Nemdo Naba or "chief of the meat" [in charge of slaughtering], the Poé Naba who is confessor to the emperor's wives, the Bend Naba, chief of the drummers, and, finally, a whole string of petty chiefs of no importance who can hardly be distinguished from the general populace and whom it would be fruitless to enumerate here.

The Poé Naba may keep his cap on when he is in the presence of the Baloum Naba or the Samandé Naba, but he must remove it for the other ministers and must even prostrate himself to perform the kantissé.

645 Not very long ago, when the province chiefs of Ouagadougou
574 possessed neither comfortable houses nor furniture, the ministers rarely visited each other. I have even once seen a minister sit on the ground in order to give his seat to one of his colleagues.

645 Whenever matters came up which required a meeting, the ministers met at night in one or another of their homes without the knowledge of the public.

645 Today, the principal ministers have proper reception rooms.
576 They can, therefore, remain seated when a more important colleague calls upon them and limit their special consideration of the visitor to offering him a Morris armchair or a folding chair.

701 The Tensoba, the minister of war, never takes off his cap for a
554 minister or a canton chief. He does so only before the emperor.
645

701 Formerly, when war broke out and he was summoned to [117]
554 Ouagadougou, the Tansoba [sic] assembled the principal ministers
645 of the Mogho Naba at the home of his host, and his word was final.

Aside from this special case, he might call upon a minister, but then a servitor always brought along the cushion on which he would sit until the minister receives him in his private quarters. He was never received in public.

Once inside, the Tansoba occupied the best seat, and the minister got down on the floor and performed the Mossi salute.

In sum, the Tansoba was held in higher esteem than any other personage at the king's court.

(b) At the present time. Today ministers often visit each other.
645 Since they have rapid means of transportation at their disposal, they
574 regularly go about without escorts. Most often their visits are made in order to deal with matters of general interest.

When a minister calls upon another minister, he keeps his cap
645 on and neither removes his shoes nor performs the kantissé. They
576 are equals. This equality has been established by the local admin-
574 istration which has granted the same rights and salary to all. The minister shakes hands with his colleague and takes a seat. He is served copious quantities of beer, and then he takes his leave.

In spite of assertions to the contrary, the Mossi empire is po-
642 litically disorganized. This accounts for the errors committed by the local administration and the [118] mistakes held against the ministers of the Mogho Naba who for a long time were granted too much power.

The Origin of Mossi Chiefdom (Legend), or the Way the Peulh, the Yarcé, and the Blacksmiths Salute Mossi Chiefs

773 The Peulh, the Yarcé, and, to a certain extent, the black-
184 smiths do not perform the kantissé (Mossi salute). They have a dif-
576 ferent way of saluting naba. A curious legend explains this phenomenon. However bizarre it may seem, it is not lacking in interest, and we shall tell it just as it was handed down to us.

1: Delobsom--154 I-5 (no date) 1933 FA28 Mossi FA28

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701

Tansoba
Mossi Minister of War.
From the Mission of the White
Fathers at Ouagadougou.

592 A typical soukala consists of the master's hut, a hut for each wife, one hut for the sheep and goats, another for the horse if he has one, a hut for the family mill, and, finally, a receiving hut with two doors sufficiently high to permit entrance without stooping and set sometimes as an entrance way and sometimes within the cluster of huts. All [351] these dwellings stand in a circle and are joined either by a cob wall or by /11/ mat fences taller than a man and held up by stakes. The master's hut, which usually stands beside the huts for the horses and sheep, is set off from the others by mats to insure his privacy. A low wall describes an arc within the inner courtyard; this is the kitchen when it is not raining. Big jars of fired clay which are used to brew [273 415] millet beer rest between the huts. In front of this cluster of huts, a shelter is built, usually high enough to permit standing and consisting basically of forked stakes with branches and séko resting upon them; this shelter serves as a refuge during the hot part of the day. Small boys and unmarried girls live with their mother, while older boys, servants, and slaves each have their separate huts which face the dwellings of the master and his wives.

The term yri or soukala covers this whole complex of structures. [591] Each soukala is a distinct unit, and, some time after they marry, the children build their own residence, set completely apart from that of their parents, often in another part of the village and sometimes in [361] another village altogether. The soukala stand fifteen to twenty meters apart, and, because of this, the villages, though adequately concentrated, cover a rather extensive area. The heads of cantons 342 place an ostrich egg at the peak of the roof on their own dwellings, [237] and some even build terraced huts higher than the surrounding dwell- [554] ings. They keep their riches in these huts and a prison in the base- [697] ment. An earthen stairway leads to the terrace where the master of [512] the house receives his guests when the sun begins to sink on the horizon.

721 These people, apparently so peaceful today, were formerly quite warlike and went off to war at the slightest pretext. Foreign to the land they now occupy, the Mossi must have conquered it by force of arms. The Tarik-es-Soudan /History of Sudan/ relates that the people of Yatenga seized Timbuktu in the fourteenth century, and in 721 the fifteenth they probably carried their incursions as far as Lake 701 Bébo and even Oualata. (4) The Mossi army was greatly feared.

4. Delafosse, op. cit., Vol. 2, p. 80.

701 When a chief assembled his men, no one stayed behind. Only the
721 women, children, invalids, and old men guarded the villages. Those who had no horses formed the infantry; they were armed with bow
[411] and arrows, usually poisoned, and a large sword hung from the shoulder. The horsemen carried a sword and a spear that rested on the tip of the foot and was held at mid-height with the right hand. The Mossi cavalry was especially numerous and fearful. The Moro Naba stayed
[643] home when his people went to war. He gathered together as many horses as possible, and, when horsemen lost their mounts, they came to him to get another horse and rejoin the fight.

669 The last wars before the French conquest of Koupéla, which we shall describe briefly, were civil wars that took place either between the people of Tenkodogo and those of Koupéla, or between the Mossi and the Gourmantché.

669 /12/ As generally happened in parallel cases, these wars followed the death of a naba, when several pretenders wrangled over the suc-
643 cession. It was in order to prevent such wars that only the immediate entourage of the naba was informed of his death. Outsiders were to remain in ignorance and believe the naba to be ill in his hut. The fatal news was spread only when the head of the family had gathered all that was necessary to honor the deceased in proper fashion by celebrating the kouré. (5)

5. Kouré, funeral ceremony in honor of the dead. See below.

669 When Naba Kidba died, leaving only a child of five or six to succeed him, a man from Kazem'bouanga who was powerful by virtue of his wealth and the number of his men decided to seize the throne. His followers had taken for themselves the name of Kazem'-bouanga and used to say: "Although the hyena (katré) is not the equal (zéma) of the donkey (bouanga), she nevertheless attacks and kills him if she meets him in the bush: similarly, although we are not as powerful as the inhabitants of Koupéla, we will manage to defeat them." And indeed, they marched on Koupéla. The prime minister, who bears the title, Saman'Naba (head of the outer courtyard), and whose own name was Wenkosgaraga, seized the child and fled with him to Sapara, the nearest village under the direct authority of the Moro Naba, located nine kilometers from Koupéla.

669 The last wars in the Koupéla area, therefore, were all civil wars that broke out upon the death of chiefs in the adjacent regions of Koupéla, Fada, and Tenkodogo.

721 The most usual theater of warfare, however, was Bousanga /Busansi/ country. If a Bousanga woman enslaved to the naba of Koupéla ran away, the naba demanded her return. If his request was turned down, this meant war. When the Mossi ran short of millet, when their herds had been decimated by an epizootic disease, or even simply when they wished to obtain slaves, the naba would assemble his ministers and direct them to raid the Bousansé. The Saman'Naba would take charge of the war. The Trabana, an experienced warrior, acted as [70] chief of staff, and all the other chiefs, heads of cantons and villages; assembled their men. This was a festive occasion, and its abolition is still lamented by many people, especially among the chiefs.

727 Everything was looted; the harvest and herds were shared, and the 567 population was reduced to slavery. Since we have mentioned slaves, we shall provide some details on the subject.

567 Slavery existed in Mossi country, but in a very mild form. The agricultural Mossi kept slaves to till their fields. It was to their advantage to treat them well and thus turn them to good account. [435] Slaves constituted a source of wealth. An adult slave sold for 50 to 100 francs according to his strength, and no distinction was made between men and women. It was, therefore, unusual for a Mossi to kill a slave. Custom certainly sanctioned his right to do so, and no one, not even his chief, could call him to account for his act; his slave was his property, and he could do with him as he pleased. When he wished to get rid of a slave, however, he found it more lucrative to sell him. Besides, a slave should be attached to the household; a [278] maltreated slave might run away, even at the risk of being caught and in spite of the drug he was forced to drink, which, like the Lethean waters, was supposed to cause him to lose his memory. On the other hand, a well-treated, well-fed slave had the hope of obtaining a wife and becoming in turn the master of a hut. When his master was pleased with him, when he had rendered an important service, he was sometimes given one of the master's daughters in marriage; this made him free, and his children were not born slaves. Slaves could also be freed if their family agreed to redeem them. They were freed most frequently by means of an exchange: one of their daughters, sisters, or nieces was given in their place. This custom persisted until quite recently.

631 The canton chiefs consult the oldest men in the village where they reside, and the village chiefs make no decisions bearing on the community without assembling the elders and listening to their advice.

Everything is carried out through the channels of the hierarchy. A province chief never transmits an order directly to a village ruled by a canton chief, but he advises the latter who notifies the village chief, and the village chief in turn calls the elders together, conveys the orders to them, and through them informs all his subjects. The orders passed down in this formal way are always carried out, but if perchance a canton chief should wish to disobey his province chief, he would be seconded by his people who recognize his authority before any other.

643 645 701 The last Moro Nabas had become to some extent idle kings. The protocol to which they were subjected by custom constantly encumbered them, not unlike European court etiquette. The Moro Naba was surrounded with a veritable court. As mentioned above, his High Council was composed of five chief ministers. To these should be added the Iman who represents the Moslems and who wields a certain influence, and the Teng'Soba. /Tr. Among the Mossi there is both a Teng'Soba, earth priest, and a Tan'Soba, war minister. It would seem that the latter is meant here./ The duties of the latter are quite specialized. He does not live in the same village as the Moro Naba, and he rules a canton. In case of war, he is consulted on the timeliness of the hostilities and on their chances of success. It devolves upon him at this time to make the proper sacrifices and to question the ancestral spirits. When war has been decided on, he takes command of the armies, and everyone, the ministers and the canton chiefs, must obey him. The Moro Naba remains in Ouagadougou.

644 839 A crowd of subalterns gravitate around these high dignitaries. The eunuchs are not very respectable people; sometimes habitual thieves were made eunuchs, as were, in general, those pages guilty of too much familiarity with the naba's wives. Some of them could reach a high position. The Kamisoro were always eunuchs, and several important cantons were set aside for them.

644 The pages are young boys, hand-picked from the country's most gifted children. They must serve the naba, and they bear the name soroné. The naba is never alone; he always has one or several pages by his side. One holds the fan, one stands near the monarch to help him shift his position, another takes care of his shoes, yet another of his scepter; the great cup-bearer constantly holds a gourd filled with strong millet beer and covered by a tray of artistically woven basketry.

681 As far as penalties were concerned, Mossi justice was stern and thus ran counter to the "patriarchal" justice of the Bobo, Gourounsi, etc. Murder was always punished by death (except in the case of nobles). As for thefts, physical aggression, and matters involving debts, they were adjusted in the manner described when we discussed the Yarsé, who were subject to Mossi justice since they were settled in their territory /not translated/. [754] We shall not, therefore, go over this again. Let us merely note that the Mossi, being fetishists, were familiar with matters of sorcery.

695 754 At Dembo, in the Yatenga area, when a young person died suddenly, "red powder" would be mixed in water and everyone would drink of it while swearing by Tensé /Tr.: the earth deities/ that he was innocent. The culprits would die. In other villages of the Yatenga area, people suspected of dealing in sorcery had to drink earth taken from the spot where sacrifices were performed and diluted in water. Those /581/ who refused to drink and swear were killed. At Kabayoro, a Mossi village located in the canton of Koumbili, if a man or woman suddendly ill, it was said that it was So-and-So, a sorcerer, who had eaten the soul. If the sick person died, his hands were washed with water and the liquid was given to the sorcerer to drink. He had to swear his innocence and invoke death unto himself if he should lie. If guilty he died; if innocent the water did him no harm. If he refused to swear and drink, he was put in irons and left there to die of hunger and thirst. The bara /soothsayer/ played no role in such occurrences. It was the sick person who pointed out the sorcerer. If the patient failed to designate someone, however, this meant that he was simply dying of illness. [761]

701 Now for the army and police. "In case of war," says Moulins, "the province chiefs summoned the canton chiefs, who hastened forth with all their able-bodied men. They all gathered behind the Tamsaba and followed him.

625 "As for policing, it was taken care of by village and canton chiefs, who arrested culprits with the help of their own followers, or, if necessary, by summoning the whole male population of the village."

643 the Tansoba, the members of the royal sub-lineage, and the district chiefs.
763 The Tengsoba of the Ouagadougou area was also notified. Because he was
[645] a descendant of the aboriginal Ninisi population that "owned" the land, he
[793] supervised the burial ceremony.

The Mogho Naba's death was kept secret, and no mourning was allowed
[701] until the Crown Prince had arrived at the capital and the Tansoba had recruited an army to protect the realm against would-be usurpers of power. Then the cry was raised in the palace, to reverberate throughout the land,
643 that "the fire had gone out." Once the ruler's death had been announced,
764 the country was plunged into an interregnum, which was characterized by
669 ritual and often by actual anarchy. The people in the towns immediately looted the markets and stole their neighbors' goods; the prisoners and captives in stocks were released by their guards; the nakomce in all the territories, districts, and villages subjected the local populations to robbery and pillage; and the members of the monarch's babissi began their intrigues for power. The traditional sanction for this anarchy was that only when people suffer during the breakdown of political control do they really appreciate the sovereign's role. The Mossi declare (with some truth) that no one was safe during the interregnum. However, as we shall see, the ruler was symbolically kept alive, and the country was never without effective political leadership.

766 When the Tengsoba arrived at the palace, he was joined by five hereditary funeral chiefs: the Pazany'tengsoba, the Tampouy Naba, the Benghin
644 Naba, the Toghin Naba, and the Tanghin Naba. In the ceremony that fol-
643 lowed, he gave permission for the royal grave to be dug. Meanwhile, the ruler's body was prepared for burial in the traditional manner by his female relatives and laid in state in the zongo. These women kept vigil over the body, shouting and weeping. Only the five ministers of the realm and the male members of the ruler's babissi were allowed to pay homage to the corpse within the zongo. All other mourners had to pay their respects to the monarch's eldest daughter, who, as Napoko, was dressed in the dead sovereign's clothes and sat in his place before the zongo. As her father's symbolic representative, she held daily court and received greetings and homage from all visitors until a new ruler was chosen. The drummer who sat by her side declared to all visitors, "You say that the Mogho Naba is dead! Well, who is that sitting there? Tell me! Is that not the Mogho Naba?"

766 The ruler was buried the day after he died, at the end of an elaborate
643 ceremony. Libations were poured out to the ancient rulers, and sacrifices
[782] made to them. All the important officials and members of the royal mini-

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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mal lineage segment except the pretenders to the throne shaved their heads as a sign of mourning. The royal pretenders donned sheepskin mantles to signify that they were willing to "eat the nam." Once the ruler had been buried, the country settled down to an uneasy peace until the eighth day, when the funeral ceremonies took place. In the meantime, the Napoko symbolically held daily court, and the Tansoba's army acted as a check against the attempts of ambitious princes to seize power by force of arms.

Two days before the funeral, the Kamsaogho Naba selected the Kourita, who was to replace the Napoko as the living symbolic representative of the dead Mogho Naba. The person chosen to be Kourita was usually a young son of the deceased king, but since this person was banished from the capital, most of the royal wives hid their young children or fled the palace with them.[33] Once the Kourita had been chosen, the Kamsaogho Naba performed a ceremony (similar to those connected with the divine kings of the Near East) during which the youth was given one of his father's horses, dressed in his father's clothes, and given his father's youngest widow as a wife. He was then paid the homage due the Mogho Naba, and after receiving many gifts from the dignitaries, he was banished from Ouagadougou forever. As he went through the country, he was treated like the Mogho Naba and given many wives and presents. If he should chance to return to Ouagadougou or see the new Mogho Naba, either or both of them would be killed by the ancestors. Many Mossi districts seem to have been founded by exiled Kouritadamba. These men were undoubtedly among the numerous "elder" sons of past kings who are said to have "refused" the nam and gone to live in the districts now governed by their descendants.

The choice and banishment of the Kourita heralded the funeral rites, which were characterized by numerous animal sacrifices to the ancestors in the name of the deceased ruler. On the afternoon of the first day of the funeral, the Crown Prince mounted a horse and left the palace by the women's door. The Napoko then took the bridle of her brother's horse and led him and an immense crowd of cavalry, armed warriors, and musicians around the palace walls three times. After the third round, the Napoko demanded that her brother give her a personal servant as a present; he hesitated, but finally granted her request. The Napoko was then lifted up by the warriors, who shouted as they carried her home. The funeral thus came to an end.

All Mossi potentates tried to emulate the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou in matters of pomp, ceremony, and government.[34] Their courts were inferior to his, but only because they were less powerful and less wealthy.

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28

Binger reports that the Mossi were divided into "a number of confederacies, more or less independent of each other, whose chiefs were vassals of Naba Sanum, the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou." He found, nevertheless, that although the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou claimed suzerainty over the Yatenga, he could not grant travelers permission to enter that territory.[3]

Crozat, who visited the Mossi in 1890, just two years after Binger, was told repeatedly that the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou had the right to control the destinies of all chiefs who claimed descent from Ouedraogo and Oubri. But he, too, found that the principalities were self-governing and mutually independent, and were united only by the weak bond that attached them all to Ouagadougou. Noting the claims of the people he encountered that Ouagadougou was still supreme, Crozat suggests that "time and circumstances have weakened this sovereignty. The ruler of Ouagadougou is regarded by the other chiefs merely as their senior and the head of their family. They seldom obey him, yet they recognize that in certain cases he has the right to give them orders." Like many Frenchmen who came after him, Crozat concludes, "One will be struck, as I have been, by this political organization in which the waning of the central authority has led to a true feudal system closely reminiscent of a certain period in our own history."[3]

Delafosse tells us that "the authority of the emperor [of Ouagadougou] does not seem to have been ignored within his borders except in very rare instances. The vassal kings, who were brothers, sons, or nephews of the emperor, usually obeyed him. In any case, the emperor did not interfere with the administration [of their territories], and required nothing from them except the payment of taxes and the raising of contingents for any expeditions he might have to organize against outside enemies (the emperors of Mali, Gao, or Segou; Moroccan pashas; etc.). In return, the emperor granted his support to those of his vassals who were unable to command the obedience of their subjects or tributaries."[4]

It appears, then, that although the independent rulers and autonomous princes sometimes recognized the supremacy (if not the seniority) of the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou, they were relatively free to rule as they wished. As possessors of the nam, they claimed and exercised the right to administer the peoples of their realms. It appears, furthermore, that the rulers of Ouagadougou seldom challenged the independence of their confreres in Yatenga, although the latter often disturbed them. For example, when Yatenga Naba Kango (ca. 1754-89) sacked and burned the Ouagadougou district of Yako for sheltering refugees from a civil war, the Mogho Naba did not come to the aid of the Yako Naba. Nor did he take offense when this chief, in order to regain his seat, was compelled to switch his

634 721 567 175 3. Finally, a third lot, composed of young girls and young boys, was distributed among the warriors and put into their charge. The boys will be employed until further notice as grooms to the warriors; later on, those who prove themselves useful and docile will be kept. The others will be sold at the first opportunity. The girls will be given in marriage to warriors who distinguish themselves.[26]

721 643 644 701 [645] The military campaigns of the Mossi, in contrast to their slave-raiding expeditions, appear to have been well organized. When the Mogho Naba felt that a war was necessary, he summoned his five provincial ministers and the Tansoba to a parley. If war was decided upon, the Tansoba was given full charge of all operations. This man, chosen from a hereditary clan of warriors who lived in a village called Tansob'tenga in Sapone district, was listed among the Mogho Naba's courtiers but seldom appeared at court unless war was imminent. His duties as chief warrior were considered so dangerous that he constantly sought out religious practitioners for supernatural aid. Nevertheless, a war minister who was good and brave was not expected to live very long. If he did live to become gray-haired, the other courtiers made fun of him by pretending that his graying head could only be the result of his having carried a sheep captured in warfare on his head as a present to the ruler.

701 721 644 [202] [411] Once given a mandate for war, the Tansoba collected his magico-religious apparatus and prepared the requisite sacrifices. He then asked the provincial ministers to notify the district chiefs to assemble with their warriors under the leadership of the local Tansobadamba, who were often members of the Tansoba clan. When the district chiefs received this notice, they beat their *zongagondo* (war drums), and the local administrators sent orders for men to the village chiefs. The village chiefs, in turn, beat their war drums to summon their noble cavalrymen and commoner foot soldiers, who came armed with bows and arrows, spears, swords, and clubs, with or [278] without iron tips. The tips of the sharp weapons were often covered with a vegetable poison derived from a shrub of the Strophanthus species. Some [411] of the men also carried guns after firearms were introduced among the [177] Mossi from the desert region and from the coast. Many carried rawhide [714] shields.

701 726 [648] As soon as the village contingents had assembled and had gathered their provisions, they marched to the district centers. Then they proceeded either to the place of battle or to Ouagadougou. In the latter case, they became part of the royal army and were joined by the forces of those princes who were prepared to honor their obligation to the Mogho Naba. For example, when the French invaded Ouagadougou in 1896, the Boulsa Dim sent his prime minister "at the head of an army to aid Mogho Naba

Wobogo. However, he did not have to intervene, because while still en route he heard that Ouagadougou had fallen."[25] Thanks to this type of aid, the Mogho Naba was able to gather quite a large army, a fact that contradicts Crozat's belief that the Mogho Naba was a "king without an army."[26]

The early Mogho Nanamse used to accompany their armies into the field, but this practice was later abandoned and was revived periodically only by the more adventurous rulers. (The last ruler to die in warfare was Mogho Naba Doulougou [ca. 1800].) However, it was the Mogho Naba's duty to greet the army when it came to Ouagadougou, to beat the royal war drum, and to turn the troops over to the Tansoba. This officer served as commander in chief of the army, and was assisted by the Gounga Naba, a provincial minister, who served as his aide-de-camp. The Gounga Naba was expected to die rather than retreat in battle, especially if the Tansoba was killed. Two other ministers, the Kamsaogho Naba and the Larhalle Naba, also accompanied the army. The later Baloum Nanamse did not venture into battle, because they had to attend to the personal needs of the Mogho Naba. In early times, however, they accompanied their sovereigns into battle and fought alongside them. The Ouidi Naba never went to war, because it was his duty to look after the kingdom. He had to ensure the interests of all the people even if the royal army was defeated, the country invaded, and the ruler killed or forced to flee. The Samande Naba went to war and served as chief of the infantry.

Scouts preceded each district contingent as the army marched off to battle. Within the contingent, the younger warriors marched in front, followed by older men. It was the duty of the more experienced warriors to make sure that the younger men did not break ranks and run under the stress of battle. Behind the foot soldiers came the cavalry, composed of nobles and of the few commoners who possessed horses. Behind these came the district chief, surrounded by his own palace guard. Several heralds known as *yumba* (sing. *yuma*) accompanied the district forces to exhort them to fight. As the men marched to battle the yumba shouted:

> Men! Your ancestors were not slaves. They were men. They were stronger than anyone else. They did not bathe with water; they bathed with blood. Do you wish to return home to drink millet water and eat bread? Never! A man does not eat bread or drink millet water; a man fights. Your ancestors were not afraid of anyone; you must not be afraid of anyone. Even if you are killed today, you must march ahead, beat your enemies, and take their villages. You must not be afraid!

Mossi armies on the march used scouts to keep a sharp lookout for the enemy or for any evidence that he was aware of impending attack. The tactics these scouts used to avoid detection, such as camouflaging themselves

726 For several years Mogho Naba Sanum had tried unsuccessfully to corner
628 and defeat the rebellious Lalle Naba. Then one dry season the Mogho Naba
669 called his Tansoba and said to him:

> "I want you to assemble immediately an army composed only of courageous men, to go to Lalle and bring me, alive, Tanga [also called Wobogo], chief of that district." Several thousand men, eager for glory, were gathered, and the army advanced against Lalle. It managed to burn Siguele, Tanga's residence, but did not capture the chief, who had fled to Koudougou. The royal army would have pursued him, but because the rainy season was imminent, and the men were needed to work in the fields, the army returned to Ouagadougou with a considerable amount of booty. The king received his war minister very kindly, because he foresaw the impending defeat of his obstinate enemy. The Mogho Naba then said to his warriors, "Go and cultivate your fields, but remember that as soon as the harvest has been stored, you have to capture Tanga. Regardless of the cost, I must have him, even if all of you must die."[22]

Mogho Naba Sanum died before he could capture Tanga, and the task fell to his successor, Mogho Naba Wobogo, who fared no better. One dry season, the royal army chased the rebel into Gurunsi territory but failed to catch him. They would have continued the chase, but "it was during the rainy season, and the royal army was disbanded."[23]

[648] Mogho Naba Wobogo never succeeded in capturing Tanga, because the French came in and conquered the Mossi. Nevertheless, the rebel did not go unpunished. After the French had completed their conquest they asked the Ouidi Naba what steps should be taken to ensure peace. He told them to capture and kill the Lalle Naba. This unfortunate chief was hunted down, captured, placed on an unsaddled colt, and brought to Ouagadougou, where he was publicly humiliated and then executed.

● 701 The episode with Tanga and the limiting of warfare to the dry season
726 indicate that the Mogho Naba did not have the resources to maintain a standing army, and, therefore, had difficulty exerting his authority by the use of force. There is no doubt that the Mogho Nanamse were able to gather very large armies at specific times against both internal and external enemies, but when the planting period came the soldiers had to attend to their crops. This lack of resources also limited the power and authority of Mogho Nanamse over their autonomous subordinates. As a result, the Mossi kingdoms remained segmentary in nature, and became highly organized only at certain periods of their history.[24] The availability of military resources thus had a significant effect on the nature of the Mossi governmental and political system.

worked for the Mogho Naba in and around the palace courtyard, and in the fields. They also kept his herds and provided him with animals from their own herds. Like the Dapore, they were seldom sold, but they often had to give their sons and daughters to the Mogho Naba.

The last group of persons who contributed their services to the Mogho Naba were the Kamboinse. Their origin is also unclear. Most of my respondents claimed that the Kamboinse and their chief first came to Ouagadougou from the direction of the Gold Coast, that they bore guns, and that they offered their services as guards to the Mogho Naba.[21] Later on, the sovereign allegedly assigned slaves to the Kamboinse unit, with the result that the entire group eventually took on a serf-like character. The Kamboinse guarded the Mogho Naba's palace and seized for him the goods of persons whom he condemned to death.

The services performed for the Mogho Naba by his pages and other youthful retainers also contributed significantly to the support of his administration. We have already seen how these young men and boys took care of his every need and functioned as important messengers within the royal household. The Mogho Naba also had control over the daughters of his serfs, whom he used to obtain revenue from aliens and subjects alike. Periodically, the Mogho Naba gave one of these girls as pughsiudga to a man, thus obligating him to render goods and services to the court. Moreover, the man had to return the eldest daughter he had by this wife to the Mogho Naba as a future pughsiudga. In this way, the sovereign had a revolving store of women through whom he could bind men to himself in a nexus of obligations, and from whom he eventually received additional women.[22]

The provincial ministers of the Ouagadougou kingdom occupied such a strategic position within the central administration that anyone rendering gifts or tribute to the Mogho Naba always gave presents to them as well. Their main source of revenue, however, came from the villages under their direct control, and from the retainers who lived in their compounds and in their wards in the capital. The economic relations between the ministers and their villages were similar to those between the district chiefs and their villages, and will be discussed below. The retainers, serfs, and slaves who served these ministers provided them with many of the services their counterparts rendered to the Mogho Naba. They kept their houses in repair and provided them with firewood and with fodder for their horses. Many of them also cultivated fields for their masters. Whenever the ministers needed extra goods or services, they called on those persons who lived in their compounds or in their wards. For example, hun-

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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*175 *648 eight soldiers to reconnoiter the town. (This slave might be the emissary referred to by Noll.) The people who had gathered for the market day were unaware that an attack on the capital was imminent, and were frightened when they saw the soldiers. A deaf man named Wanda, who was a tax collector in the market, went home for his gun and his horse in the belief that the Mogho Naba's army was on the march. He went out to meet the French and was killed. Later that day the Mossi army, under the command of Koabga, the Kamsaogho Naba, and the Tansoba, launched an attack on the invaders. Their flint guns, spears, clubs, and poisoned arrows were powerless against superior French arms. Dim Delobson states that when the French guns began to fire, "It was a thorough stampede; all tried to save themselves and fled in all directions. Some of them, in their precipitous flight, even rode past their homes and villages." [645] According to local tradition, one of the first persons to run was the Tansoba, who had once pledged to defend the Mogho Naba to the death. About five o'clock that afternoon, the French flag flew over Wobogo's palace.[42] The Mogho Naba and his army did not regroup until they reached a village called Bagare, some 25 miles southeast of the capital.

Three days later, Wobogo marched back toward Ouagadougou at the head of a large army in an attempt to crush the relatively few enemy soldiers. But Voulet's men chased him toward the south. It was either during this battle or after he returned from the pursuit of Wobogo that Voulet burned Ouagadougou to punish its inhabitants for helping their sovereign. Meanwhile, Wobogo had regrouped his forces, and although Voulet pursued him and burned Mane and Boussouma, where the sovereign had sought refuge, Wobogo fled rather than sign a treaty with the invaders. This attitude surprised and annoyed Voulet, who is quoted as saying:

> Although we represent peace, safety, security on the trade routes, and thus ease of communication . . . nothing could prevail against their fear that in accepting us, they would also have to accept the suppression of slavery: the principal activity around which everything revolves in this backward country. The majority of the population are kept well in hand [by their chiefs]. Although the central power (I speak of the authority of the chief of Ouagadougou vis-à-vis the other chiefs, his vassals) is *relatively* weak, each of these vassals, on the other hand, is thoroughly obeyed in his own territory. There is not one village chief who would dare to receive us if his superior forbade him to do so. We are told that if anyone permitted himself such a liberty, he would have his head cut off the moment our backs were turned.[43]

After being routed by Voulet's forces for the second time, the Mogho Naba sent requests for aid to many of the autonomous Dimdamba and to [701] his district chiefs. The Dim of Boulsa sent an army under the command

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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of his prime minister, Rimsekedo, and the chiefs of the districts of Bere, Djiba, Manga, Nobere, and Rissouma led their armies to join the royal forces at a rallying point near the White Volta River. Meanwhile, Voulet had expended most of his supplies in trying to bring Wobogo to terms. Having failed to do so, he tried to solve the problems of Mossi government by electing Wobogo's younger brother, Mazi, as ruler of Ouagadougou and emperor of the Mossi. Voulet then marched off to his base at Bandiagara by way of the White Volta, hoping to catch and defeat Wobogo's forces along the way. The monarch fled at Voulet's approach, so that when the forces of Rimsekedo and of the district chiefs arrived at the rendezvous, "they found only the droppings of Wobogo's horses," and angrily returned home. Naba Kaglere, chief of Nobere, was allegedly so infuriated by Wobogo's cowardice that he withdrew his support from his sovereign. However, the chiefs of Djiba and Rissouma remained faithful to their ruler, and the Dim of Mane attempted to intercept Voulet's advance toward Bandiagara, only to be defeated by the French, who burned his villages.

When Wobogo heard that the enemy had left the country, he ordered that the roof of his palace be restored, resumed his traditional duties such as appointing to office the heirs of district chiefs who had died during his absence, and prepared to return to the capital. In the interim Mazi had died (under suspicious circumstances, according to the French), thus leaving the people of Ouagadougou without a ruler and eager for Wobogo's return.[44] Unfortunately for the Mogho Naba, Voulet unexpectedly returned to Ouagadougou in December 1896, thus preventing Wobogo's return. Voulet, too, was in a predicament, for he had few allies among the Mossi, and Wobogo was firmly entrenched near Kombissiri in the south. To prevent many chiefs from coming to the aid of their sovereign, Voulet immediately launched an offensive against Wobogo. He burned several villages along the way, and received the allegiance of Wobogo's two brothers, Tarbega and Mahmadou, of two of his sons, and of two of his important vassals, the Mane Naba and the Boussouma Naba. But he failed to find the sovereign, who had fled to the region of Djiba and Nobere. Voulet then turned back to Ouagadougou, which he reached about a month later, in January 1897. On the following day, the Ouidi Naba surrendered, and two days later the Tansoba followed suit. Voulet now formally deposed Mogho Naba Wobogo. A week later, he obtained the permission and cooperation of the traditional electors and placed Wobogo's brother Mahmadou on the throne as Mogho Naba Sighiri. This sovereign then "solemnly signed a treaty which placed his kingdom under the protection of France."[45]

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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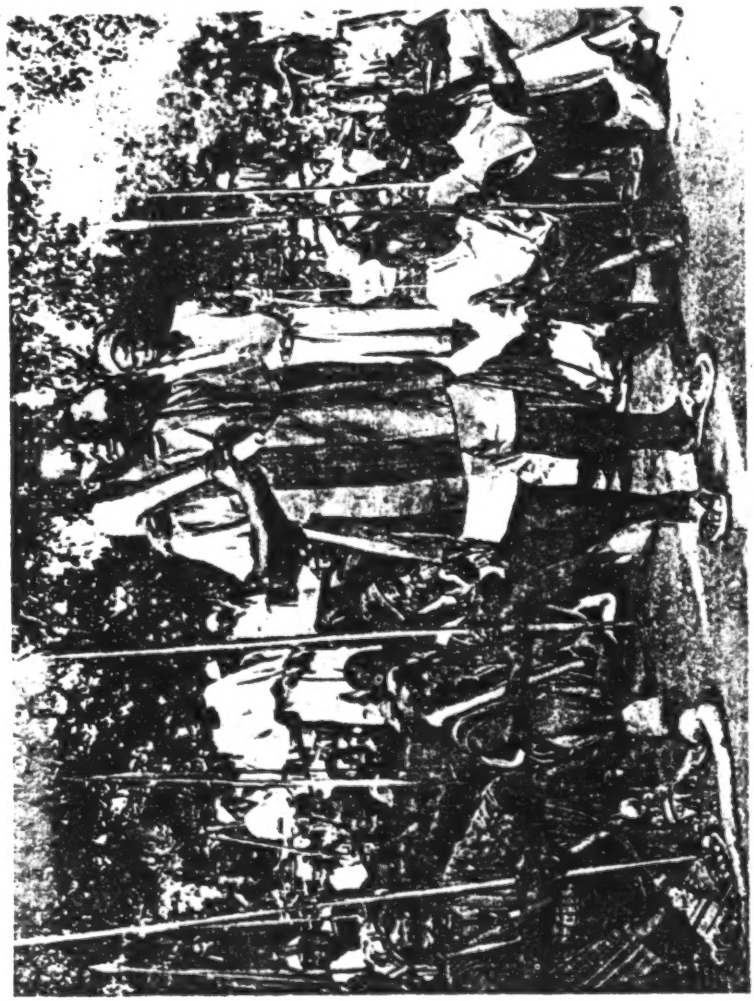

Mogho Naba Kougri's warriors, many bearing traditional weapons, respond to their sovereign's call for aid against the new French administration.

[p. 178 - G]

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Above: The Mossi Salute.
Below: A Naba and his Horsemen.

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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Wobogo. However, he did not have to intervene, because while still en route he heard that Ouagadougou had fallen."[25] Thanks to this type of aid, the Mogho Naba was able to gather quite a large army, a fact that contradicts Crozat's belief that the Mogho Naba was a "king without an army."[26]

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Scouts preceded each district contingent as the army marched off to battle. Within the contingent, the younger warriors marched in front, followed by older men. It was the duty of the more experienced warriors to make sure that the younger men did not break ranks and run under the stress of battle. Behind the foot soldiers came the cavalry, composed of nobles and of the few commoners who possessed horses. Behind these came the district chief, surrounded by his own palace guard. Several heralds known as *yumba* (sing. *yuma*) accompanied the district forces to exhort them to fight. As the men marched to battle the yumba shouted:

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11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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13. Binger, I, 18, 440.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 450.
15. *Ibid.*, pp. 469-70.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 460.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 467.
18. Von François, p. 143 ff.
19. Marc, p. 36.
20. Crozat, p. 4820.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 4835.
22. *Ibid.*
23. *Ibid.*, p. 4836.
24. *Ibid.*
25. *Ibid.*
26. *Ibid.*, p. 4849.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 4850.

[404] 28. Marc, p. 38. He attempts to maintain historical veracity: "Contrary to what Crozat believed, the Mogho Naba was able to assemble thousands of horsemen with which to confront the French."

29. Monteil, p. 163.

30. He gives an account of the northern region of Ghana in a secret report quoted in Wolfson, p. 199.

31. "Les Missions Françaises dans La Boucle du Niger," *Bull. du Comité de L'Afrique Française*, VII (1897), 108-9.

32. *Ibid.*

33. *Bull. du Comité de L'Afrique Française*, V (1895), 276. The people of Nobere say that Alby went to the ruler's son at Djiba and asked to be taken to Ouagadougou because he had presents for the Mogho Naba. But the prince, noting the soldiers with the European, secretly went to his father and told him about the mission. Mogho Naba Wobogo then called his ministers together and asked them whether the visitor should be received. They told him that they feared this visit was a trick to capture the country, and told the Djiba Naba to tell his guest that Mogho Naba Wobogo did not want any Europeans in his kingdom.

34. Marc, pp. 35-38. See "Les Missions Françaises dans La Boucle du Niger," *Bull. du Comité de L'Afrique Française*, VII (1897), 107-12, for a discussion of the controversy between the European powers for control of these territories.

35. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Yatenga*, p. 109.

36. Barry, p. 131.

37. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Yatenga*, p. 111.

38. Noll, p. 257. The Mossi were a bit chagrined that a relatively small force conquered them. This force consisted of Lt. Voulet, his adjutant Lt. Chanoine, Sergeants Laury and Le Geriel, 29 Senegalese infantrymen, 10 spahis, 180 Sudanese infantrymen [411] armed with European weapons, 40 Sudanese horsemen, and 250 porters. The Mossi now insist that although this force was small, it had more fire-power than they had ever encountered, and that they had only flint guns aside from their traditional weapons. They say that if they had had rifles, no one would ever have entered their country.

39. Archives, Document 15G-190 (June 1897).

40. Noll, p. 257.
41. Dim Delobson, p. 38.
42. *Ibid.*, p. 39 ff.
43. Randau, p. 433.

44. It is not clear whether Mazi was poisoned (as the French claim), or whether he died a natural death. Despite French claims to the contrary, the Mossi insist that Mazi was never ruler of Ouagadougou, and they do not include him in their genealogies. The present chief of Nobere insists that Mazi was never Mogho Naba and that he died a natural death. Dim Delobson also declares that although Mazi was Wobogo's sworn enemy, and would have liked to become Mogho Naba, he was ill when Voulet called upon him and died before acceding to power. (Dim Delobson, pp. 41-42.)

45. Lambert, p. 73.

46. Archives, Doc. 15G-190 (May 1897). The Nobere people deny that they supported the French, but official documents of the period report that it was the Nobere Naba who informed the French of Boukary Koutou's activities. The people of Nobere

II. Military Organization

701 An army, properly speaking, with cadres and hierarchies, did not exist among the Mossi.

721 In the event of war, the Tansoba or Tampsoba (war minister) notified the canton chiefs who promptly assembled with all their able-bodied men and as many horsemen as possible.

705 The villages were charged with feeding the soldiers.

III. Judicial Organization

692 693 Justice was rendered in conformity with local customs which had been handed down from generation to generation and according to local practice.

1. By village chiefs, assisted by some of the elders, for petty affairs, pilfering, and insults.

2. The canton chief, assisted by his court dignitaries and the minister, ruled on matters concerning theft, adultery, and bodily attacks, as well as on other matters.

3. The Mogho Naba took cognizance of all matters of general interest, especially with crimes of assassination and murder. In theory, he could by himself pronounce the death sentence on the [565] nakomsé [descendants of Mogho Naba]. Contrary to general belief, a [56] kombéré (canton chief) also had the power of life and 661 death over his subjects. How many individuals have been put to death merely because they were wealthy! How many village chiefs have been killed by the canton chiefs over their territories without any intervention by the Mogho Naba! The nakomsé could 565 be executed, however, only for very serious crimes, such as 684 adultery with a woman of the nobility. The guilty man was led 762 into the bush by old nakomsé; they gave him a rope with which he was expected to hang himself and thus expiate his crime.

694 431 Justice was free; no fee was expected or assessed. The plaintiff, however, customarily presented the naba with a white or light gray rooster, accompanied by the traditional satchel containing from 200 to 1,000 cowries.

644 Ministers and other officials at the court of the Mogho Naba. In the courtyard where the emperor's audiences are held, [114] there are heaps of stones to mark the places of the ministers and their followers.

The Ouidi Naba, Larrhallé Naba, Gounga Naba, and Kamsaongho Naba assemble with their followers. The Baloum Naba, Zusobinkassanga, and the rest also have their fixed places. They are not permitted to leave their places to greet one another until they have saluted the Mogho Naba.

In the old days only the Baloum Naba, the Zusoaba, and the Kamsaogho, together with the servitors and grooms, were allowed to call upon the emperor in his palace courtyard. The other ministers and court officials (Ouidi Naba, Larrhallé Naba, Gounga Naba, etc.) were not, under any pretext or circumstance, permitted to penetrate the interior courtyard of the home of the Mogho Naba. They had their presence announced by soroné and [344] waited under a shelter (benda zandé) in the audience courtyard. Only a few years ago, when the present Gounga Naba succeeded his father, he asked the reason for this prohibition. Since no good reason was given, he asked the emperor for permission to break the rule, and since that time all his colleagues have followed suit.

644 The cap. We have seen that at the time of his appointment [115] each minister, court official, and canton chief is presented 292 with a cap by the Mogho Naba. Obviously he cannot wear the 554 same cap for the rest of his life, so later replacements bought by him are regarded as just as sacred as the original. All his subjects, even the son of a naba, are strictly forbidden to wear this cap. We have also seen that in the old days an ordinary Moaga was expressly forbidden to wear the red fez (1) since this was the type of headgear

[714]

1. Among the Habè [Habe] the hogon is the [illegible] is the only one who may wear the red fez. When young Habè men are taken into the [French] army as riflemen, they never again wear the red fez [part of the army uniform] after they are discharged and return to their homes.

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Tansoba
Mossi Minister of War.
From the Mission of the White Fathers at Ouagadougou.

634 721 567 175 3. Finally, a third lot, composed of young girls and young boys, was distributed among the warriors and put into their charge. The boys will be employed until further notice as grooms to the warriors; later on, those who prove themselves useful and docile will be kept. The others will be sold at the first opportunity. The girls will be given in marriage to warriors who distinguish themselves.[24]

721 643 644 701 [645] The military campaigns of the Mossi, in contrast to their slave-raiding expeditions, appear to have been well organized. When the Mogho Naba felt that a war was necessary, he summoned his five provincial ministers and the Tansoba to a parley. If war was decided upon, the Tansoba was given full charge of all operations. This man, chosen from a hereditary clan of warriors who lived in a village called Tansob'tenga in Sapone district, was listed among the Mogho Naba's courtiers but seldom appeared at court unless war was imminent. His duties as chief warrior were considered so dangerous that he constantly sought out religious practitioners for supernatural aid. Nevertheless, a war minister who was good and brave was not expected to live very long. If he did live to become gray-haired, the other courtiers made fun of him by pretending that his graying head could only be the result of his having carried a sheep captured in warfare on his head as a present to the ruler.

701 721 644 [202] [411] Once given a mandate for war, the Tansoba collected his magico-religious apparatus and prepared the requisite sacrifices. He then asked the provincial ministers to notify the district chiefs to assemble with their warriors under the leadership of the local Tansobadamba, who were often members of the Tansoba clan. When the district chiefs received this notice, they beat their *zongagondo* (war drums), and the local administrators sent orders for men to the village chiefs. The village chiefs, in turn, beat their war drums to summon their noble cavalrymen and commoner foot soldiers, who came armed with bows and arrows, spears, swords, and clubs, with or [278] without iron tips. The tips of the sharp weapons were often covered with a vegetable poison derived from a shrub of the Strophanthus species. Some [411] of the men also carried guns after firearms were introduced among the [177] Mossi from the desert region and from the coast. Many carried rawhide [714] shields.

701 726 [648] As soon as the village contingents had assembled and had gathered their provisions, they marched to the district centers. Then they proceeded either to the place of battle or to Ouagadougou. In the latter case, they became part of the royal army and were joined by the forces of those princes who were prepared to honor their obligation to the Mogho Naba. For example, when the French invaded Ouagadougou in 1896, the Boulsa Dim sent his prime minister "at the head of an army to aid Mogho Naba

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Mogho Naba Kougri concedes to the administration, and orders his warriors to disband.

[p. 178-H]

II. Military Organization

701 An army, properly speaking, with cadres and hierarchies, did not exist among the Mossi.

721 In the event of war, the Tansoba or Tampsoba (war minister) notified the canton chiefs who promptly assembled with all their able-bodied men and as many horsemen as possible.

705 The villages were charged with feeding the soldiers.

III. Judicial Organization

692 693 Justice was rendered in conformity with local customs which had been handed down from generation to generation and according to local practice.

1. By village chiefs, assisted by some of the elders, for petty affairs, pilfering, and insults.

2. The canton chief, assisted by his court dignitaries and the minister, ruled on matters concerning theft, adultery, and bodily attacks, as well as on other matters.

3. The Mogho Naba took cognizance of all matters of general interest, especially with crimes of assassination and murder. In theory, he could by himself pronounce the death sentence on the [565] nakomsé [descendants of Mogho Naba]. Contrary to general belief, a [56] kombéré (canton chief) also had the power of life and death over his subjects. How many individuals have been put to 661 death merely because they were wealthy! How many village chiefs have been killed by the canton chiefs over their territories without any intervention by the Mogho Naba! The nakomsé could 565 be executed, however, only for very serious crimes, such as 684 adultery with a woman of the nobility. The guilty man was led 762 into the bush by old nakomsé; they gave him a rope with which he was expected to hang himself and thus expiate his crime.

694 Justice was free; no fee was expected or assessed. The plaintiff, 431 however, customarily presented the naba with a white or light gray rooster, accompanied by the traditional satchel containing from 200 to 1,000 cowries.

592 A typical soukala consists of the master's hut, a hut for each wife, one hut for the sheep and goats, another for the horse if he has one, a hut for the family mill, and, finally, a receiving hut with two doors sufficiently high to permit entrance without stooping and set sometimes [351] as an entrance way and sometimes within the cluster of huts. All these dwellings stand in a circle and are joined either by a cob wall or by /11/ mat fences taller than a man and held up by stakes. The master's hut, which usually stands beside the huts for the horses and sheep, is set off from the others by mats to insure his privacy. A low wall describes an arc within the inner courtyard; this is the kitchen when it is not raining. [273] Big jars of fired clay which are used to brew [415] millet beer rest between the huts. In front of this cluster of huts, a shelter is built, usually high enough to permit standing and consisting basically of forked stakes with branches and séko resting upon them; this shelter serves as a refuge during the hot part of the day. Small boys and unmarried girls live with their mother, while older boys, servants, and slaves each have their separate huts which face the dwellings of the master and his wives.

The term yri or soukala covers this whole complex of structures. [591] Each soukala is a distinct unit, and, some time after they marry, the children build their own residence, set completely apart from that of their parents, often in another part of the village and sometimes in [361] another village altogether. The soukala stand fifteen to twenty meters apart, and, because of this, the villages, though adequately concentrated, cover a rather extensive area. The heads of cantons 342 place an ostrich egg at the peak of the roof on their own dwellings, [237] and some even build terraced huts higher than the surrounding dwell- [554] ings. They keep their riches in these huts and a prison in the base- [697] ment. An earthen stairway leads to the terrace where the master of [512] the house receives his guests when the sun begins to sink on the horizon.

● 721 These people, apparently so peaceful today, were formerly quite warlike and went off to war at the slightest pretext. Foreign to the land they now occupy, the Mossi must have conquered it by force of arms. The Tarik-es-Soudan /History of Sudan/ relates that the people of Yatenga seized Timbuktu in the fourteenth century, and in 722 the fifteenth they probably carried their incursions as far as Lake 701 Bébo and even Oualata. (4) The Mossi army was greatly feared.

4. Delafosse, op. cit., Vol. 2, p. 80.

701 When a chief assembled his men, no one stayed behind. Only the
72 women, children, invalids, and old men guarded the villages. Those
who had no horses formed the infantry; they were armed with bow
[411] and arrows, usually poisoned, and a large sword hung from the shoulder.
The horsemen carried a sword and a spear that rested on the tip of
the foot and was held at mid-height with the right hand. The Mossi
cavalry was especially numerous and fearful. The Moro Naba stayed
[643] home when his people went to war. He gathered together as many
horses as possible, and, when horsemen lost their mounts, they came
to him to get another horse and rejoin the fight.

669 The last wars before the French conquest of Koupéla, which we
shall describe briefly, were civil wars that took place either between
the people of Tenkodogo and those of Koupéla, or between the Mossi
and the Gourmantché.

669 /12/ As generally happened in parallel cases, these wars followed
the death of a naba, when several pretenders wrangled over the suc-
643 cession. It was in order to prevent such wars that only the immediate
entourage of the naba was informed of his death. Outsiders were to
remain in ignorance and believe the naba to be ill in his hut. The
fatal news was spread only when the head of the family had gathered
all that was necessary to honor the deceased in proper fashion by
celebrating the kouré. (5)

5. Kouré, funeral ceremony in honor of the dead. See below.

669 When Naba Kidba died, leaving only a child of five or six to
succeed him, a man from Kazem'bouanga who was powerful by
virtue of his wealth and the number of his men decided to seize the
throne. His followers had taken for themselves the name of Kazem'-
bouanga and used to say: "Although the hyena (katré) is not the
equal (zéma) of the donkey (bouanga), she nevertheless attacks and
kills him if she meets him in the bush: similarly, although we are
not as powerful as the inhabitants of Koupéla, we will manage to de-
feat them." And indeed, they marched on Koupéla. The prime
minister, who bears the title, Saman'Naba (head of the outer court-
yard), and whose own name was Wenkosgaraga, seized the child
and fled with him to Sapara, the nearest village under the direct
authority of the Moro Naba, located nine kilometers from Koupéla.

669 The last wars in the Koupéla area, therefore, were all civil wars that broke out upon the death of chiefs in the adjacent regions of Koupéla, Fada, and Tenkodogo.

721 The most usual theater of warfare, however, was Bousanga /Busansi/ country. If a Bousanga woman enslaved to the naba of Koupéla ran away, the naba demanded her return. If his request was turned down, this meant war. When the Mossi ran short of millet, when their herds had been decimated by an epizootic disease, or even simply when they wished to obtain slaves, the naba would assemble his ministers and direct them to raid the Bousansé. The Saman'Naba would take [701] charge of the war. The Trabana, an experienced warrior, acted as chief of staff, and all the other chiefs, heads of cantons and villages; assembled their men. This was a festive occasion, and its abolition is still lamented by many people, especially among the chiefs. 727 Everything was looted; the harvest and herds were shared, and the 567 population was reduced to slavery. Since we have mentioned slaves, we shall provide some details on the subject.

567 Slavery existed in Mossi country, but in a very mild form. The agricultural Mossi kept slaves to till their fields. It was to their advantage to treat them well and thus turn them to good account. [435] Slaves constituted a source of wealth. An adult slave sold for 50 to 100 francs according to his strength, and no distinction was made between men and women. It was, therefore, unusual for a Mossi to kill a slave. Custom certainly sanctioned his right to do so, and no one, not even his chief, could call him to account for his act; his slave was his property, and he could do with him as he pleased. When he wished to get rid of a slave, however, he found it more lucrative to sell him. Besides, a slave should be attached to the household; a [278] maltreated slave might run away, even at the risk of being caught and in spite of the drug he was forced to drink, which, like the Lethean waters, was supposed to cause him to lose his memory. On the other hand, a well-treated, well-fed slave had the hope of obtaining a wife and becoming in turn the master of a hut. When his master was pleased with him, when he had rendered an important service, he was sometimes given one of the master's daughters in marriage; this made him free, and his children were not born slaves. Slaves could also be freed if their family agreed to redeem them. They were freed most frequently by means of an exchange: one of their daughters, sisters, or nieces was given in their place. This custom persisted until quite recently.

174 he entered into Bambarra. The inhabitants of Yenné saw him on the opposite shore of the Niger (2) before they had been told of his march.

2. Djenné is not right on the Niger nor on the Bani, but at a certain distance between the two rivers.

His flotilla joined him that same day, and, after having unloaded his provisions, he crossed the river with one part of his army and took Yenné by assault during the night. This exploit so frightened the Bambarra king that he asked for peace. He agreed to pay the victor an annual tribute of a certain number of slaves and to give back to the Gotto inhabitants all that had been taken away from them. (3)

521 648

3. This passage would indicate that the Dyoula of Gottogo (or Bondoukou), having some grievances against the Bambara of the Ségou region (assaulted peddlers, unpaid debts, etc.), went to the king of the Mossi to obtain justice, and that this might have been one of the causes of the war. There doubtless existed reciprocal grievances between Bambara and Mossi or between their natural allies.

Moussee /sic/ returned to Gotto in triumph, and he was proclaimed king. He gave his name to the capital."

As one can see, the important and valuable fact that must be extracted from this thick forest is the capture of Dienné by the king of the northern Mossi, the king of Yatenga (who at that time was Kango), during his struggles with the Bambara, that is, with Ngolo who was his contemporary. Because of his informants, who obviously did not 174 inform him with absolute precision and thus made him commit many 114 small errors or miscalculations, Mungo-Park embellished the true fact with imaginary details. First of all, there is the name of Kango, Moossie, Moussie /sic/, which is the name of the conqueror's country and not his own name. Then, the name of Gotto is given to the Mossi country, undoubtedly because of a confusion, either in the minds of the Blacks who informed Mungo-Park or in the mind of the great

778 whose ancestors had ruled the soil of the territory. In the name of
782 the Moro Naba, he entrusted him with the task of offering all those gifts to the Earth so that the latter might favor the sovereign. Ouagadougou Naba performed the sacrifice before the door of his soukala.

When the Moro Naba went to war, he also ordered the chief
[721] of Ougadougou to perform a sacrifice to the Earth. The bara indicated what should be sacrificed in order to insure victory, to "break" the villages that were to be attacked.

782 When rain failed to come, the Moro Naba would go to the hillock at Koumbé /sic/-Padanda, and have the head of the quarter offer a sacrifice (beef, sheep, chicken) to secure rain. If rain refused to come, the bara were consulted once more, and sacrifices were offered until it came.

776 The Mossi also have a sky god whom they call Ounam as well
782 as Naba Ouendé or Naba Ouondé, meaning "Sun Chief." This is a
794 trace of the sun cult, which is unusual in Black West Africa, all opinions to the contrary notwithstanding. /590/ The majority of the Mossi sacrifice much more to ancestors and to the Earth than to Naba Ouondé, who is to them a somewhat remote god.

794 It must be added that Lieutenant Desplagnes found among the
782 Mossi an esoteric cult of the sun, moon, and fire, which is peculiar to religious initiates (Ouango) whom we shall mention later.

"The Hougho-Ouango of the Mossi (among the Mossi, those priests reside in the villages of Boujema, Mani, Kondogho, Yolo, and Tio) sacrifice to the sun in order to bind it to the Earth. They do this morning and evening, sunrise and sunset, during the first week of the winter season, and every six days in the morning at sunrise thereafter
[778] They also go to altars made of three conical stones and offer sacrifices and libations, always surrounded by the populace, family heads, drummers, and familial masks (ouango).

794 "Those priests tend the sacred fire throughout the year in a
372 small, highly adorned recess dug into one of their house walls. At
783 the end of the rainy season they will use it to light the great purifying bush fires.

794 "They perform sacrifices at every new moon, and they have
782 seven important feasts a year for their divinity. Finally, during the solar festivities, they use a cow's tail to tie down the sun to the earth and to bind its life-giving heat." (Le Plateau central nigérien /The Central Nigarian Plateau/, pages 275 and 276.)

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645
696 all the chaos would come a new appreciation for the task of the chief, and a cessation of the grumbling that the chiefs were greedy.

662 The Mossi interregnum also served another purpose. It gave the
428 electors the opportunity to exhaust and redistribute much of the patri-
666 mony of the dead ruler, which was brought to them by his heirs who were trying to obtain the chieftainship through bribery. Sometimes, a candidate's ability to collect a great deal of goods with which to press his suit often revealed to the electors the strength of his following in the district or village, for had he been an unpopular man he would have had to use only his own resources.

666 The Mossi electors were always concerned with the health and
643 character of a potential chief, and turned down the most promising
175 candidates who were deficient in any of these qualities. For example, when Moro Naba Sanum died in 1890 without leaving a male heir, his younger brother, Bokary Koutou, was the strongest candidate for the *nam*. Yet he was passed over, at first, by the electors because of his reputation as a bandit and a rebel. We know from Captain Binger, a Frenchman who met Bokary in 1888, that this prince was indeed a bandit and a slave raider. But Binger, although deploring Bokary's conduct, exonerated him on the grounds that the Moro Naba had sent him into exile without any means of support. This was true, but the
[687] reason that Moro Naba Sanum did so was because Bokary had raised a rebellion against him as an attempt to obtain their father's position. Bokary was forbidden to appear in the capital; but when he heard that his brother Sanum was dead, he took a force of soldiers and hurried to Wagadougou fearing that an attempt would have been made to prevent his election. When he found that his fears were justified, he became
[669] desperate and secreted a force of Gurunsi warriors around the elector's meeting place, threatening to kill them if he was not named Moro Naba. They succumbed to his threat and he received the *nam*. During
643 the customary speech in which a new ruler chose his official name,
175 announced his program for the people and the country, or ridiculed his erstwhile competitors, Bokary Koutou said: "A hundred ghosts cannot frighten an elephant (Wobogo)," meaning that he was not afraid
648 of any of his enemies. He thereafter became known as Moro Naba
721 Wobogo, and he chose to live up to his boast when the French arrived
175 and asked him to sign a treaty of protection with them. He refused

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and chose to fight, and when defeated, fled to the Gold Coast (Ghana). From here he intrigued with the British against the French and even succeeded in having his brother poisoned for accepting the title of Moro Naba. It was only when the British accepted French sovereignty over Mossi country that Bokary accepted his deposition and permanent exile.

Once the traditional electors had chosen one of Bokary's younger relatives, Siguiri as Moro Naba, the Mossi people themselves quietly accepted French rule. Their behavior was in this respect similar to that of many indigenous populations with complex political institutions who had been conquered by the Europeans. In contrast, the neighboring Dogon, Gurunsi, and Lobi, whose political systems were very simple, and who had been constantly raided by the Mossi for slaves, kept on rebelling against French rule, and in some cases shot poisoned arrows at French tax collectors and labor recruiters as late as 1941. The only opposition which they offered the French was in 1910 when an attempt was made to reorganize the Mossi districts for administrative reasons. However, when the French changed their policy of direct administration to a form of indirect rule, the Mossi remained so peaceful that by 1922 there was only one administrator for every 60,000 inhabitants.

Moro Naba Kom who reigned from 1905 to 1942 skillfully preserved the power of the ruling dynasty during a period when the Mossi people were subjected to a rather severe forced labor regime. This was also a period during which the administration deposed chiefs who ran afoul of its wishes or policies. The political ability of this ruler is best exemplified by the order of succession that occurred in the Doulougou district. In 1895 Moro Naba Wobogo had appointed his own son as Doulougou chief in place of Koabga Wedraogo whom he had deposed and killed. However, when Wobogo fled from the French the next year, his son, the Doulougou chief, killed himself because he did not wish to follow his father into exile. The new Moro Naba Siguiri placed a son of the former district chief, Koabga Wodraogo, as chief of Doulougou. This chief died in 1906 and was replaced by a brother. Unfortunately this chief ran afoul of the French, was deposed and placed in "obligatory residence" in another district where he died in 1927. The Moro Naba then elected another son of ex-

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[P.93]

VI

WARFARE

THE Mossi were proud of their warrior tradition, which had earned them 721
their several kingdoms, principalities, and districts. Even the least district [173]
chief had stories about the wars in which his ancestors had wrested their territories from aboriginal populations. These traditions of conquest legitimized to a large extent the power of the Mossi kings and chiefs, who never hesitated to use force in order to obtain tribute, to maintain their rule, and to enforce their authority. The Mossi value fighting ability so [181]
highly that even today, when fighting is no longer necessary, most Mossi males in the rural areas carry sticks and other weapons on their shoulders as symbols of manhood. In their view, every man should know how to fight and should be able to defend his village, his district, and his kingdom.

According to tradition, the northward thrust of the Mossi warriors dur- 648
ing the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries carried them into the region of the Niger River bend. Here, around A.D. 1329, the Yatenga Mossi 173
attacked and sacked the town of Timbuktu, which belongs to the Mali. When Mali was on the decline during the early fifteenth century, the Mossi again attacked its towns. According to the *Tarikh es-Sudan*, when 648
the Mali ruler appointed Amin-ben-Ahmad jurisconsul of Timbuktu, 175

> the sultan of the Mossi led an expedition against Benka. The population of that region went out to engage the enemy, and at that time left others sitting around El Hadj. He pronounced certain words on the millet which was being served and asked those around him to eat of it. All of them ate except the son-in-law of El Hadj, who did not because he was related to him. "Now go and fight," said the holy man, "and you will have nothing to fear from the weapons of the enemy." All, in effect, returned safe and sound, and only those persons who did not eat the millet died in the battle. The king of the Mossi was routed, and his troops were chased without having seized anything from the people of Benka. All this thanks to the protection of the blessed person.[1]

Later, the Mossi attacked towns of the Songhai empire whenever they felt strong enough, only to be driven away later by a stronger adversary. Sa'di describes a Mossi incursion into the Songhai empire as follows:

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ancestors who were in the other world. Accompanied by his ministers, he 648
went to the temple of the idol of the country. The learned holy man went 175
there also, in order to see how one went about consulting the dead. They 787
began by making the customary offerings; then a very old man appeared. At his appearance everyone prostrated himself and then the king announced the object of his visit. Calling upon the names of the ancestors, the old man said: "I will never agree to this step for you. On the contrary, you must fight until you or they die to the last man."

Then Na'asira replied to the mallam: "Return to your master and tell 648
him that between us there will be only war and combat." Remaining alone 175
in the temple with the personage who appeared in the form of an old man, the mallam questioned him in these words: "In the name of God Almighty I ask you to declare who you are." "I am Iblis [Satan]," replied the deceiving old man; "I have led them astray so that they will all die in a state of unbelief."

Mour returned to prince Askia-El-Hadj-Mohammed and reported all which had come to pass. "Now," he added, "your duty is to fight them." Straightway he launched his war against them, killed a number of their men, devastated their fields, plundered their habitations, and took their children into captivity. All of the men and women who were taken away as captives were made the object of divine benediction [converted to Islam]. In the entire country, no other expedition outside of this one had the character of a holy war made in the name of God.[4]

The rulers of the Songhai appear to have kept up their attacks on the Mossi during the following hundred years. One of them, Askia Daoud, launched an expedition against the Mossi in 1549 to celebrate his accession to the throne. He attacked and defeated them again in 1561 while on his way to attack Bornou, and their ruler "abandoned the country with all his troops."[5] After this and several other crushing defeats, the Mossi refrained from attacking Songhai territory. Their ardor for external adventures apparently cooled after this period, and there are no reports of their fighting anyone else except the Bambara of Segou in the eighteenth century.[6] Of [721] ● course, Mossi chiefs made local forays among smaller neighboring groups such as the Busansi, Gurunsi, and Samogo, but only to catch slaves.

During the nineteenth century—a rather chaotic period in the western Sudan—the Mossi appear to have been immune from outside attacks. Crozat, who visited them in 1890, states: "From the very first, in Mossi country, one feels that one has entered a new land, more peaceful, richer, and more populous [than other African countries he had visited]. . . . The people one meets on the roads are workers on their way to the fields, or are carrying wares to the neighboring market. They are not like the Songhai and the Bobo, who always carry bows on their shoulders."[7] The immunity of the Mossi from attack by such intrepid nineteenth-century

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who fought the villagers of other districts over stray livestock, stolen goods, and runaway women, in that order of frequency.

The main reason for these inter-village wars was the lack of local mechanisms (aside from meetings of district chiefs) to deal with problems between villagers of different districts. If the district chiefs refused to meet, they could either refer the matter to the provincial level or allow the villages to resolve the problem among themselves. Many district chiefs preferred the latter course because it saved them from interference by the authorities in the capital. Besides, these problems were usually unimportant and did not pit one entire district against another. People of different districts were often bound to each other by familial and ritual ties, and did not like to fight against relatives. Only when the potential combatants were unrelated or all attempts at reconciliation failed would the people of a village (and occasionally of a district) band together, either secretly without their chiefs or under their chiefs, and go to war. In such cases, persons who had relatives in the enemy villages often remained at home.

The inhabitants of Mossi districts did band together eagerly under their chiefs to participate in slave-raiding expeditions into non-Mossi territories. This type of warfare seems to have been fairly common. Ruelle writes, "Before our [French] occupation, warfare was the chief preoccupation of the chiefs. Moreover, expeditions into Gurunsi country had as their goal pillage and the procurement of slaves for sale."[22] Similarly, Mangin states, "The Gurunsi and Busansi were frequently raided with the sole intent of obtaining slaves."[23] Binger gives the following description of a Mossi slave-catching expedition and the subsequent disposal of the slaves:

> During my second stay at Banema, Boukary [later Mogho Naba Wobogo], knowing my aversion to pillage and slavery and fearing to displease me, sent off two expeditions during the night without warning me—one to Nabouli, and the other towards the south to Baouer'a. By six o'clock in the morning of the following day, the returning horsemen were heralded by gunshots. Soon afterwards, a line of slaves of both sexes appeared, tied to each other by a cord slung around their necks. The expedition to Nabouli brought back seventeen slaves; that to Baouer'a brought only five, along with an ass laden with salt and a little cotton. As soon as these unfortunate people arrived, they were given water to drink, and mallets were used to remove the rings and copper bracelets which they wore on their arms and legs. Then they were classified into three categories:
>
> 1. The men formed a lot destined for immediate sale for fear that they should run away. They were led forthwith to Sakhaboutenga, to be exchanged against sorghum for the horses, millet for the personnel, and gunpowder.
> 2. A second lot, composed of women, was kept as a reserve to trade for horses.

634 721 567 175

3. Finally, a third lot, composed of young girls and young boys, was distributed among the warriors and put into their charge. The boys will be employed until further notice as grooms to the warriors; later on, those who prove themselves useful and docile will be kept. The others will be sold at the first opportunity. The girls will be given in marriage to warriors who distinguish themselves.[24]

721 643 644 701 [645] The military campaigns of the Mossi, in contrast to their slave-raiding expeditions, appear to have been well organized. When the Mogho Naba felt that a war was necessary, he summoned his five provincial ministers and the Tansoba to a parley. If war was decided upon, the Tansoba was given full charge of all operations. This man, chosen from a hereditary clan of warriors who lived in a village called Tansob'tenga in Sapone district, was listed among the Mogho Naba's courtiers but seldom appeared at court unless war was imminent. His duties as chief warrior were considered so dangerous that he constantly sought out religious practitioners for supernatural aid. Nevertheless, a war minister who was good and brave was not expected to live very long. If he did live to become gray-haired, the other courtiers made fun of him by pretending that his graying head could only be the result of his having carried a sheep captured in warfare on his head as a present to the ruler.

701 721 644 [202] [411] Once given a mandate for war, the Tansoba collected his magico-religious apparatus and prepared the requisite sacrifices. He then asked the provincial ministers to notify the district chiefs to assemble with their warriors under the leadership of the local Tansobadamba, who were often members of the Tansoba clan. When the district chiefs received this notice, they beat their *songagondo* (war drums), and the local administrators sent orders for men to the village chiefs. The village chiefs, in turn, beat their war drums to summon their noble cavalrymen and commoner foot soldiers, who came armed with bows and arrows, spears, swords, and clubs, with or [278] without iron tips. The tips of the sharp weapons were often covered with a vegetable poison derived from a shrub of the Strophanthus species. Some [411] of the men also carried guns after firearms were introduced among the [177] Mossi from the desert region and from the coast. Many carried rawhide [714] shields.

As soon as the village contingents had assembled and had gathered their 701 provisions, they marched to the district centers. Then they proceeded 726 either to the place of battle or to Ouagadougou. In the latter case, they became part of the royal army and were joined by the forces of those princes who were prepared to honor their obligation to the Mogho Naba. For [648] example, when the French invaded Ouagadougou in 1896, the Boulsa Dim sent his prime minister "at the head of an army to aid Mogho Naba

726 with leaves and branches and crawling upon the ground, can be witnessed
[764] even today at Mossi funerals where men re-enact warfare practices. Whenever possible, the Mossi preferred to take the enemy by surprise, but this was seldom possible when large-scale fighting and massive preparations were involved.

When two Mossi armies drew up to each other, the heralds from both sides issued such challenges and epithets as: "If you men do not wish to die, you should run or you will never eat again. We will have your blood to wash with." In the meantime, the Tansobadamba on both sides deployed their forces in accordance with the number of men available, the spirit of
[723] the enemy, and the nature of the terrain. From the description of warfare given to me by an old Tansoba in Nobere district, it appears that the strategy most commonly used was to split the infantry in two while attacking, thus making room for the cavalry to charge through. If the initial charge was successful, the attack was maintained, but if it failed, the army usually turned about and fled. Despite their braggadocio, Mossi commanders seldom insisted that their troops fight against overwhelming odds.
[644] However, shame over impending defeat often induced such officers as the
[645] Tansoba and the Gounga Naba to fight to the death. For example, during the war between Boulsa and Fada-N'Gourma in 1897, the Boulsa army lost so many men that the Boulsa Dim wanted to commit suicide in his humiliation. However, he was prevented from doing so by one of his subordinates.[27]

Soldiers wounded by poisoned spears or arrows extracted the projectiles if possible, and kept on fighting until they died. Even if they were wounded
[789] by an unpoisoned weapon, they did not seek medical aid. Most wounded men believed that they were doomed, because their protective amulets had
[727] failed them. For the same reason, a defeated army fleeing a battlefield made no attempt to retrieve its dead and dying, but left them to the vultures. When an army was victorious, however, the Mossi either carried their dead home for burial or buried them on the battlefield, saving some item of their clothing or equipment for the funeral.

Victorious Mossi armies usually pursued the enemy, burning villages as
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[567] fought against non-Mossi, they captured young people to be sold as slaves. Then they collected all the available booty and departed hurriedly, fearing
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posted to alert the troops in case the enemy should attempt an attack at 726
dawn. If the war was waged against foreigners, individual soldiers were
allowed to keep a slave or a cow out of the booty; the remainder was divided 727
between the district chiefs and the central government. In victorious civil [648]
wars against the enemies of the Mogho Naba, however, the entire booty was [669]
sent to the capital.

When the Mossi had to defend their own territory, their most common 725
tactic was to evacuate the villages. This was the technique most often em- [648]
ployed against invading French forces.[29] Other defenses included palisaded
villages, barricades of fallen trees, trenches, and hedges, some with poisoned
foot traps. Mangin reports that the Boulsa were defeated in their war with
Fada-N'Gourma not only because their enemies fought valiantly, but also
because they "were favored by very propitious terrain covered with thorny
scrub, behind which the besieged men took cover to shoot on the Mossi."[30]
Mangin does not say whether the scrub was poisoned, but his data indicate
that this type of defense was common in the area. The Mossi say that the [824]
use of poisoned prickly plants (*silenage*) against invading forces dates back
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Mossi wars or raids were usually limited to the dry season and stopped 726
at the beginning of the planting season. Commenting on the war between 669
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season. Thirst completed what the courage of the Gyekango people had
begun, and many Mossi perished."[31] Tradition recounts that it took Mogho
Naba Waraga five successive years of attack before he defeated Ramzi, the
rebellious chief of Riziam principality. He finally defeated him when his
army attacked the province before its people had been able to harvest their
crops and retire into an impregnable fortress for the dry season. Judging
by the reports of European visitors, this type of dry-season warfare continued
as late as the 1890's. For example, Crozat could not understand why the
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the potential soldiers of the Mogho Naba had not yet harvested their crops.
Had Crozat remained in Mossi country for three or four months longer,
he would have seen the ruler's army in action; for, as a matter of fact, the
Lalle Naba's attack on Mogho Naba Wobogo was but the latest episode in
a prolonged struggle between the two rulers.

645
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to the Mogho Naba: "Since I have come to you, give the first rank to this man. I will show him what he must do to please you. He will be the Ouidi Naba."

A man from Tansobongo, having heard that the Ouidi Naba was living in the greatest ease, came to see him. He, too, was a handsome youth. He was presented to the Mogho Naba (Naba Oubri) by the Gounga Naba who proposed the young man's appointment as second minister, the Larrhallé Naba, and reserved for himself the post of third minister.

So it came about that the Gounga Naba is the emperor's third minister.

645 place where there were once many goumsé (gounga, silk-cotton tree); hence, his name.

[126] He is a brother-in-arms of the Tansoba and always accompanied him to war, where he chose death rather than defeat, especially if the Tansoba had been killed.

644 (d) Baloum Naba, the chief steward of the palace and chief servitor of the Mogho Naba. He never goes to war, but remains always at the side of the Mogho Naba. It is his duty to carry out [181] [65] sacrifices, such as killing the chickens or livestock offered to the manes or to the spirits when such sacrifices are prescribed by the soothsayers or other charlatans for the health and well-being of the Mogho Naba.

(e) Kamsaogho Naba, formerly accompanied the Tansoba to [839] war. The Kamsaogho Naba is a eunuch, and for this reason he is commonly called Mogho Naba na poug'tiéma, "first wife of the Mogho Naba."

Other personages (not ministers). (a) Samandé Naba, in charge of all of the people in the outer courtyard of the Mogho Naba and a brother-in-arms of the Larrhallé Naba.

644 687 661 (b) Poé Naba, formerly the confessor for the wives and pages of the Mogho Naba. His duty, carried out by magical practices, was to denounce those wives or persons guilty of treason or of

644 attempted adultery. This practice (poéré) found many victims,
687 and its suppression by the French was a real service to the Mossi,
661 who were formerly murdered for a trifle. An ogling glance at a chief's wife was punishable by death. A man who met one of the wives of the Mogho Naba on the road was executed along with the wife. If one met a napagha [royal wife], he left the path and took to the bush. The woman herself would run off and return to the road only when she was sure that the man was a long way off.

Such is naturally no longer the case, and the wives of the Mogho Naba on their way to the market at [66] Ouagadougou no longer expect not to be looked at or even jostled. I hasten to add, however, that the Mossi still retain great respect for them and will even swallow serious insults, such as tampiri, "bastard," from a napagha if they are so unlucky as to offend them.

644 (c) Daporé Naba, chief of the section of the free or house
683 slaves. It was formerly the duty of the Daporé Naba and his followers to massacre any pages or other convicted persons whose execution had been ordered by the Mogho Naba.

644 (d) Bend'Naba, chief of the drummers of the Mogho Naba.

(e) Soré Naba (literally, "chief of the path"), the drummer who always accompanies the warriors and who, therefore, even in time of peace, is allotted a horse.

644 If the enemy appears to be winning during a battle, the Soré
● 726 Naba kindles the courage of the warriors of the Mogho Naba and constantly asks for a head, m'data zougou. This means that he is asking each warrior to forget himself and to think only of victory. In order to have a victory, the enemy must suffer such losses that they decide either to retreat or to surrender. Thus, the expression m'data zougou implies ruthless slaughter.

701 (f) Tansoba or Tampsoba, the war chief. The Tansoba of the Mogho Naba lives in a small village, Moussa, in the province of the Baloum Naba.

701 [67] When there is friction between the Mogho Naba and one
687 of his vassals and there seems to be no hope of agreement, the Mogho Naba sends to the Tansoba for logdo (warriors armed with arrows). The Tansoba at once proceeds to Ouagadougou and stops at Baoghin. The emperor assembles his ministers and the principal dignitaries of his court and says to them: "I never thought that chief X, to whom I myself gave the pougla (red fez) would dare to

342 is continued, and the process goes on until the hut is completed, that is, when it reaches a height of about 1.65 meters. The house is built without any openings, but when the walls are up, a [219] low door is put in, having the shape of a pointed arch. The interior of many Mossi houses is divided by a low wall, called kogré, which makes the hut very dark. A few small holes are made with the handle of a daba, and these, with the low door, are [726] the only openings. In time of war, the Moaga used to shoot his arrows through these tiny holes. Before the roof is put on, the [751] walls are daubed with wet ashes, a practice which is supposed to guarantee good health for the new inhabitants.

The roof is conical in shape. It is made with poles which are tightly tied at the top with vines. Stiff mats, zarsé, are placed on the poles. They are held in place with fibers and are covered with braided straw. Some twenty persons are needed to put up the roof. The construction of the house is then finished. Only the plastering remains to be done. For this job, the women collect a special kind of earth, boalga, which they mix with manure from cows or horses and then coat the walls with it. When this operation is completed, the women cover the floor with a ferruginous material that is sprinkled with water and tamped down with bits of flat wood called silpama. After the floor has been smoothed down, the sasgo is the next step. This involves covering the surface with a sticky material, boudou, mixed with ground charcoal. This is rubbed over and over with glass sherds or special stones called sassega. The shiny black surface obtained in this fashion prevents the ferruginous material from soiling the family's clothes. Some [824] people sprinkle the finished floor with kanmé, an infusion made of the skin of the néré fruit, in order to make it wear well.

[220] Construction workers. The master of the house is aided by his own brothers and other relatives in the same clan. He does not request help from outsiders. The women's job is to get the water needed for the mortar.

The earth used in building is taken from a hole near the house, the tan-nako (from tando, "earth," and nako, "hole"). This excavation is later filled with all the waste from the house and ordure from the courtyard. The tan-nako, well fertilized in this manner is planted with maize, and this field is called the kamanga.

651 661 had a province chief notified, and everyone hastened to carry out his wishes. If a province chief in turn wanted something, if he was short of millet or wished to build huts, he had one or several canton chiefs notified, and these in turn advised the village chiefs; through them everything was slowly carried out, for it took time to transmit these orders, but the common man never failed to comply.

Such a system made it impossible for an individual to accumulate wealth. A surplus of goods would have aroused the naba's cupidity, and he would have found some excuse to tax this overly enterprising subject more than the others. This is why those who owned a few cows carefully concealed it by entrusting them to the Peul. The latter could not hope to increase their herds rapidly, because the nabas were always in need of fine, fat cattle for some alleged sacrifice or festivity.

651 661 431 At certain times the canton chiefs and even the village chiefs, as well as people desirous of making a good impression, must go to the naba to greet him and to present him with gifts which never amount to less than 500 cowries (50 francs). When the naba undertakes an important task, such as the building of several huts, the weeding of his field, or the harvesting of his millet, some of the people are summoned to help him, and it is proper for the others to come and offer him gifts. His convalescence from illness is an occasion for gifts also, and, if he has eluded some danger, he must quickly be congratulated and given cowries. On every festive day or on the days following, each naba must go to his province chief to greet him and to bring him gifts in proportion to the importance of his own position. Whenever the naba travels, every village where he stops must give him food and drink, and thus offer him chickens, goats, sheep, or even a cow if the village is sufficiently important. The grooms and other servants in the retinue of the naba manage for themselves at the expense of the inhabitants. This is quite a burden, especially since the naba, when he returns home, expects more greetings and cowries.

726 War was another important source of revenue. Binger describes what he witnessed at the court of Boukari-Koutou, who was later Moro Naba under the name of Naba Wobro and who was deposed by Voulet's arrival. Before leaving for war, the sorcerers were consulted and indicated the tangandé or sacred grove where a sacrifice was to be made in order to insure victory. The province chief then took out his flag, a mere staff with charms and a cow's tail hanging at

726 the end. A man appointed for the task carried this flag in the front line of battle. He was never to look back and always to walk forward, and he bore no weapons other than a bow and arrows. If he was killed, another man took his place. When a village was besieged,
727 all the spoils devolved by right to the naba, who took /24/ his choice and left the rest to his men. All able-bodied men who could still fight and who refused to become slaves were put to death; the old men were spared, and the women and children reduced to slavery. The naba became master of all the slaves taken by cavalrymen mounted on his own horses. If any disagreement arose about a capture, the naba seized the prize; if the individuals concerned managed to reach an agreement, they shared the booty amicably. Those who had seized a horse or a slave on their own initiative could keep it, but more often than not they offered part of their prize to the naba in order to avoid difficulties. The war did not end with a peace treaty. It ceased when the loot was considered sufficient. The Gourounsi and Bousansé countries thus were true granaries for the Mossi, who drew upon them according to their needs.

692 The nabas did not merely administer their lands and collect taxes; they also dispensed justice, civil and criminal. The village chief usually judged a case of first instance, but the convicted party could appeal the sentence to the canton chief and through him to the province chief, or he might even resort directly to the latter. The judges were always assisted by assessors, the village elders for the petty nabas, the ministers for the province chiefs. Criminals were judged as promptly as possible, and the accused were subjected to imprisonment only while awaiting the arrival of witnesses. They were allowed to name their own witnesses, and these were summoned.

No questioning similar to that of our examining magistrates preceded the session. Everything took place openly, and anyone could speak up whenever he pleased. Torture was not employed to obtain incriminating confessions, but sometimes was used to unmask false witnesses. Sons were not allowed to testify in favor of their father, nor slaves and servants in favor of their master: their testimony might too easily be biased.

In case of dispute, there was no trial by ordeal nor intervention by a sorcerer. The judge did not put the witnesses under oath, but a litigant could say: "If I lie, may I fail to rise from here (that is, may I die)." If someone accused of being indebted to a recently deceased individual denied this debt, the heir could lead him to the

634 721 567 175 3. Finally, a third lot, composed of young girls and young boys, was distributed among the warriors and put into their charge. The boys will be employed until further notice as grooms to the warriors; later on, those who prove themselves useful and docile will be kept. The others will be sold at the first opportunity. The girls will be given in marriage to warriors who distinguish themselves.[24]

721 643 644 701 [645] The military campaigns of the Mossi, in contrast to their slave-raiding expeditions, appear to have been well organized. When the Mogho Naba felt that a war was necessary, he summoned his five provincial ministers and the Tansoba to a parley. If war was decided upon, the Tansoba was given full charge of all operations. This man, chosen from a hereditary clan of warriors who lived in a village called Tansob'tenga in Sapone district, was listed among the Mogho Naba's courtiers but seldom appeared at court unless war was imminent. His duties as chief warrior were considered so dangerous that he constantly sought out religious practitioners for supernatural aid. Nevertheless, a war minister who was good and brave was not expected to live very long. If he did live to become gray-haired, the other courtiers made fun of him by pretending that his graying head could only be the result of his having carried a sheep captured in warfare on his head as a present to the ruler.

701 721 644 [202] [411] Once given a mandate for war, the Tansoba collected his magico-religious apparatus and prepared the requisite sacrifices. He then asked the provincial ministers to notify the district chiefs to assemble with their warriors under the leadership of the local Tansobadamba, who were often members of the Tansoba clan. When the district chiefs received this notice, they beat their *zongagondo* (war drums), and the local administrators sent orders for men to the village chiefs. The village chiefs, in turn, beat their war drums to summon their noble cavalrymen and commoner foot soldiers, who came armed with bows and arrows, spears, swords, and clubs, with or [278] without iron tips. The tips of the sharp weapons were often covered with a vegetable poison derived from a shrub of the Strophanthus species. Some [411] of the men also carried guns after firearms were introduced among the [177] Mossi from the desert region and from the coast. Many carried rawhide [714] shields.

701 726 As soon as the village contingents had assembled and had gathered their provisions, they marched to the district centers. Then they proceeded either to the place of battle or to Ouagadougou. In the latter case, they became part of the royal army and were joined by the forces of those princes [648] who were prepared to honor their obligation to the Mogho Naba. For example, when the French invaded Ouagadougou in 1896, the Boulsa Dim sent his prime minister "at the head of an army to aid Mogho Naba

Wobogo. However, he did not have to intervene, because while still en route he heard that Ouagadougou had fallen."[25] Thanks to this type of aid, the Mogho Naba was able to gather quite a large army, a fact that contradicts Crozat's belief that the Mogho Naba was a "king without an army."[26]

The early Mogho Nanamse used to accompany their armies into the field, but this practice was later abandoned and was revived periodically only by the more adventurous rulers. (The last ruler to die in warfare was Mogho Naba Doulougou [ca. 1800].) However, it was the Mogho Naba's duty to greet the army when it came to Ouagadougou, to beat the royal war drum, and to turn the troops over to the Tansoba. This officer served as commander in chief of the army, and was assisted by the Gounga Naba, a provincial minister, who served as his aide-de-camp. The Gounga Naba was expected to die rather than retreat in battle, especially if the Tansoba was killed. Two other ministers, the Kamsaogho Naba and the Larhalle Naba, also accompanied the army. The later Baloum Nanamse did not venture into battle, because they had to attend to the personal needs of the Mogho Naba. In early times, however, they accompanied their sovereigns into battle and fought alongside them. The Ouidi Naba never went to war, because it was his duty to look after the kingdom. He had to ensure the interests of all the people even if the royal army was defeated, the country invaded, and the ruler killed or forced to flee. The Samande Naba went to war and served as chief of the infantry.

Scouts preceded each district contingent as the army marched off to battle. Within the contingent, the younger warriors marched in front, followed by older men. It was the duty of the more experienced warriors to make sure that the younger men did not break ranks and run under the stress of battle. Behind the foot soldiers came the cavalry, composed of nobles and of the few commoners who possessed horses. Behind these came the district chief, surrounded by his own palace guard. Several heralds known as *yumba* (sing. *yuma*) accompanied the district forces to exhort them to fight. As the men marched to battle the yumba shouted:

> Men! Your ancestors were not slaves. They were men. They were stronger than anyone else. They did not bathe with water; they bathed with blood. Do you wish to return home to drink millet water and eat bread? Never! A man does not eat bread or drink millet water; a man fights. Your ancestors were not afraid of anyone; you must not be afraid of anyone. Even if you are killed today, you must march ahead, beat your enemies, and take their villages. You must not be afraid!

Mossi armies on the march used scouts to keep a sharp lookout for the enemy or for any evidence that he was aware of impending attack. The tactics these scouts used to avoid detection, such as camouflaging themselves

●726 with leaves and branches and crawling upon the ground, can be witnessed
[764] even today at Mossi funerals where men re-enact warfare practices. Whenever possible, the Mossi preferred to take the enemy by surprise, but this was seldom possible when large-scale fighting and massive preparations were involved.

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726 For several years Mogho Naba Sanum had tried unsuccessfully to corner
628 and defeat the rebellious Lalle Naba. Then one dry season the Mogho Naba
669 called his Tansoba and said to him:

> "I want you to assemble immediately an army composed only of courageous men, to go to Lalle and bring me, alive, Tanga [also called Wobogo], chief of that district." Several thousand men, eager for glory, were gathered, and the army advanced against Lalle. It managed to burn Siguele, Tanga's residence, but did not capture the chief, who had fled to Koudougou. The royal army would have pursued him, but because the rainy season was imminent, and the men were needed to work in the fields, the army returned to Ouagadougou with a considerable amount of booty. The king received his war minister very kindly, because he foresaw the impending defeat of his obstinate enemy. The Mogho Naba then said to his warriors, "Go and cultivate your fields, but remember that as soon as the harvest has been stored, you have to capture Tanga. Regardless of the cost, I must have him, even if all of you must die."[52]

Mogho Naba Sanum died before he could capture Tanga, and the task fell to his successor, Mogho Naba Wobogo, who fared no better. One dry season, the royal army chased the rebel into Gurunsi territory but failed to catch him. They would have continued the chase, but "it was during the rainy season, and the royal army was disbanded."[53]

[648] Mogho Naba Wobogo never succeeded in capturing Tanga, because the French came in and conquered the Mossi. Nevertheless, the rebel did not go unpunished. After the French had completed their conquest they asked the Ouidi Naba what steps should be taken to ensure peace. He told them to capture and kill the Lalle Naba. This unfortunate chief was hunted down, captured, placed on an unsaddled colt, and brought to Ouagadougou, where he was publicly humiliated and then executed.

701 The episode with Tanga and the limiting of warfare to the dry season
726 indicate that the Mogho Naba did not have the resources to maintain a standing army, and, therefore, had difficulty exerting his authority by the use of force. There is no doubt that the Mogho Nanamse were able to gather very large armies at specific times against both internal and external enemies, but when the planting period came the soldiers had to attend to their crops. This lack of resources also limited the power and authority of Mogho Nanamse over their autonomous subordinates. As a result, the Mossi kingdoms remained segmentary in nature, and became highly organized only at certain periods of their history.[54] The availability of military resources thus had a significant effect on the nature of the Mossi governmental and political system.

701 oppose me. I therefore demand that his fez be returned to me."
687 To take away the fez of a naba is to dethrone him and reduce him to the level of his subjects.

The court officials, including the Tansoba, at once send emissaries to the chief at fault, asking him to choose between suicide (some take a poison called sounadré, while others kill themselves with a poisoned arrow) and war with the Mogho Naba.

If the chief is not prepared for such a summons, he kills himself, and the envoys return with the news.

669 If, on the other hand, he declares that he wants pouwega, that
701 is, war and a noble death, he sends back the representatives of the ministers. A few days later, with drums beating and the Tansoba, chief of the army, at its head, the whole warrior band appears before his walls.

The Tansoba sends the Samandé Naba to the chief to ask him to confirm his declaration of war. If the naba still wants war, he usually replies: "Ya yingri bala la ka sakénian."

The Tansoba withdraws, sending word to the chief [68] to expect him back on a stated day (seven or eight days later); this period of time will enable the chief to assemble his warriors also. When the day arrives, it is a merciless battle, a massacre.

● 727 Often the forces of the Mogho Naba are victorious, and in that event the slaves, livestock, and other property go to those who seized them. Only the corpses belong to the Tansoba.

701 If an arrow, even a poisoned one, wounds the Tansoba, he
577 must under no circumstances pull it out. Indeed, he must often endure thirst and hunger, and it is only when he is at rest in an enclosed place that the arrows are removed from his body. It should
[789] be noted that since the Tansoba's costume is virtually covered with amulets and other charms, he is not very likely to be wounded seriously by an arrow. This is not, of course, to belittle his bravery and composure in the face of danger, since he is expected
[762] never to retreat and, if the enemy is victorious, often prefers to kill himself rather than to report a defeat to the Mogho Naba.

644 There are, in addition to the foregoing, a great many petty naba whose role is not clearly defined and of whom it seems needless to speak.

567 The only slaves who have remained faithful to their masters or, more exactly, who have preferred to remain in Mossi territory after their emancipation, are nearly all Gourounsi.

The Gourounsi Captives

567 727 648 [439] Sonrhaï [Songhai] forces led by Alpha Haïnon, Gazeré, and Babato used to raid Gourounsi country. They reduced a large number of Gourounsi to slavery, immediately making soldiers of the more enterprising among them to fight against their own people and selling or exchanging the rest for horses. Mossi country has always had a large supply of horses, so the Mossi used to go to Léo to trade their horses for slaves or simply to trade their slaves to the Sonrhaï for cowries.

567 648 The Sonrhaï chiefs maintained good relations with the emperor of the Mossi, Naba Sanum. That is why they spared the Gourounsi village chiefs who had taken refuge with the Mogho Naba.

Boukary-koutou, the future Naba Wobgo, enjoyed the [87] regard and friendship of the Sonrhaï since he aided them in their wars against the Gourounsi in exchange for an ample share of the booty and slaves. We have shown that the large number of Gourounsi whom he brought with him to Ouagadougou contributed mightily to his being named emperor of the Mossi.

567 651 During the reigns of Naba Koutou, Sanum, and Wobgo, there were special slave markets attached to the regular markets at Ouagadougou and other large centers. A fee of 1,000 cowries was collected for the benefit of the naba for each captive sold, regardless of sex.

567 302 787 When owners desired to sell a slave, they first shaved his head, and it was only after the hair had begun to grow again that he was taken to market. The cutting of the hair derives from a superstition among the Mossi.

Depending on where the hair starts to grow, whether well back on the head, at the forehead, or near the ears, the interpretation varies as to how the slave is to be regarded: as a dangerous being; as a lucky or unlucky influence on the family owning him.

We shall not now go into details since such beliefs will be discussed in a special section.

669 The last wars in the Koupéla area, therefore, were all civil wars that broke out upon the death of chiefs in the adjacent regions of Koupéla, Fada, and Tenkodogo.

721 The most usual theater of warfare, however, was Bousanga /Busansi/ country. If a Bousanga woman enslaved to the naba of Koupéla ran away, the naba demanded her return. If his request was turned down, this meant war. When the Mossi ran short of millet, when their herds had been decimated by an epizootic disease, or even simply when they wished to obtain slaves, the naba would assemble his ministers and direct them to raid the Bousansé. The Saman'Naba would take [701] charge of the war. The Trabana, an experienced warrior, acted as chief of staff, and all the other chiefs, heads of cantons and villages; assembled their men. This was a festive occasion, and its abolition is still lamented by many people, especially among the chiefs.

● 727 Everything was looted; the harvest and herds were shared, and the 567 population was reduced to slavery. Since we have mentioned slaves, we shall provide some details on the subject.

567 Slavery existed in Mossi country, but in a very mild form. The agricultural Mossi kept slaves to till their fields. It was to their advantage to treat them well and thus turn them to good account. [435] Slaves constituted a source of wealth. An adult slave sold for 50 to 100 francs according to his strength, and no distinction was made between men and women. It was, therefore, unusual for a Mossi to kill a slave. Custom certainly sanctioned his right to do so, and no one, not even his chief, could call him to account for his act; his slave was his property, and he could do with him as he pleased. When he wished to get rid of a slave, however, he found it more lucrative to sell him. Besides, a slave should be attached to the household; a [278] maltreated slave might run away, even at the risk of being caught and in spite of the drug he was forced to drink, which, like the Lethean waters, was supposed to cause him to lose his memory. On the other hand, a well-treated, well-fed slave had the hope of obtaining a wife and becoming in turn the master of a hut. When his master was pleased with him, when he had rendered an important service, he was sometimes given one of the master's daughters in marriage; this made him free, and his children were not born slaves. Slaves could also be freed if their family agreed to redeem them. They were freed most frequently by means of an exchange: one of their daughters, sisters, or nieces was given in their place. This custom persisted until quite recently.

726 the end. A man appointed for the task carried this flag in the front line of battle. He was never to look back and always to walk forward, and he bore no weapons other than a bow and arrows. If he was killed, another man took his place. When a village was besieged,
● 727 all the spoils devolved by right to the naba, who took /24/ his choice and left the rest to his men. All able-bodied men who could still fight and who refused to become slaves were put to death; the old men were spared, and the women and children reduced to slavery. The naba became master of all the slaves taken by cavalrymen mounted on his own horses. If any disagreement arose about a capture, the naba seized the prize; if the individuals concerned managed to reach an agreement, they shared the booty amicably. Those who had seized a horse or a slave on their own initiative could keep it, but more often than not they offered part of their prize to the naba in order to avoid difficulties. The war did not end with a peace treaty. It ceased when the loot was considered sufficient. The Gourounsi and Bousansé countries thus were true granaries for the Mossi, who drew upon them according to their needs.

692 The nabas did not merely administer their lands and collect taxes; they also dispensed justice, civil and criminal. The village chief usually judged a case of first instance, but the convicted party could appeal the sentence to the canton chief and through him to the province chief, or he might even resort directly to the latter. The judges
695 were always assisted by assessors, the village elders for the petty nabas, the ministers for the province chiefs. Criminals were judged as promptly as possible, and the accused were subjected to imprisonment only while awaiting the arrival of witnesses. They were allowed to name their own witnesses, and these were summoned.

No questioning similar to that of our examining magistrates preceded the session. Everything took place openly, and anyone could speak up whenever he pleased. Torture was not employed to obtain incriminating confessions, but sometimes was used to unmask false witnesses. Sons were not allowed to testify in favor of their father, nor slaves and servants in favor of their master: their testimony might too easily be biased.

In case of dispute, there was no trial by ordeal nor intervention by a sorcerer. The judge did not put the witnesses under oath, but a litigant could say: "If I lie, may I fail to rise from here (that is, may I die)." If someone accused of being indebted to a recently deceased individual denied this debt, the heir could lead him to the

586 It nevertheless happens, though very rarely, that the husband is unable to convince his wife and returns home alone. No one troubles the wife from then on, and her relatives give her full freedom. The grudge of the rejected husband may be persistent, however, and his vengeance frightful. The bride price is not returned; the husband should have known how to keep his wife. It is nevertheless acknowledged that the children born of the union, boys or girls, belong to the father, and he does not fail to claim them when they are grown, or if they run away to their mother.

564 467 Negro populations often contain caste groups, set apart from each other by tight barriers. The most outstanding of these are the rules prohibiting marriage between members of the same caste or between those who belong to a caste and those who do not. Such prohibitions do not exist among the Mossi, except in the sense mentioned earlier. Although three caste-like groups exist among them, drummers, smiths, and undertakers, they are castes only in the sense that those who do not belong to such a family cannot exercise the profession. It might be more accurate to call them guilds.

533 [534] The drummers (binda) are those who play the bindré, a sort of large gourd with an aperture about 40 centimeters in diameter and covered with hide. Only those who belong to the drummers' family may play on this drum, which apparently is peculiar to the Mossi, [782] but anyone may play on the other drums. The drummers are present at all sacrifices offered by the naba; on Friday, the day of sacrifice, they go and pay their respects to him. When sacrifices are offered, they are entitled to the head of the victim. They are present at all [764] burials, where they play their drum and receive a remuneration which varies with the wealth of the deceased. If it is one of their members who died, they receive neither cowries nor food. They go to war [727] with their drums. If they are so unfortunate as to be made prisoners, they are never sold but ruthlessly killed; this is done either to prevent them from going back into the fray and stirring the warriors to sack the village, or because no one would want to buy them since they belong to a naba who would retaliate against their captors, or for both reasons at once. The drummers are the country's griot, a term hallowed by custom. They know the genealogy of every naba and sing his praises. Each province chief has a number of drummers and never travels without taking some of them with him. At other times they go to /34/ the market and follow the best-dressed people, singing

464 salary consists either of 100 cowries (10 centimes) or a basket of unthreshed millet. In addition to this, the employer feeds the employee. This is limited, I repeat, to times of famine.

/264/ True clientage, such as we described among the Malinké, does not occur among the Mossi.

2. Domestic servants. The domestic servant, such as exists in 356 France and other civilized societies, does not and never did exist among the Mossi. Actually, domestic tasks (cleaning, cooking, and washing) are performed by the women in Yatenga society. For a corroboration of this, we refer the reader to what we said above about women's tasks.

567 3. Slaves. Origins. The Mossi owned slaves prior to the French occupation. They still own some nowadays, although far fewer, only those, in fact, who did not run away. Since recruitment dried up at its source through the prohibition bearing on the purchase and sale of slaves, reinforced by severe penalties, the number of captives has dwindled day by day, and it is obvious that eventually they will disappear completely. At present, this has not yet come to pass.

[727] The Mossi used to obtain their slaves through raids on the Samo, Bobo, Kipirsi, Gourounsi, Habbé, and Rimaïbe /slaves of the Peul/. The Yarsé also brought some from the southern markets (Sikasso, Samory states, etc.) and sold them all over Yatenga. They kept many for their own benefit, and they possessed more slaves than the Mossi (as merchants, indeed, they always owned more slaves than the Mossi). The Peul of Yatenga also had many slaves, more than the Mossi, which they obtained through raid or purchase.

Voluntary slavery and debt slavery provided no captives, since these two kinds of slavery never existed in the region.

The Mossi of Yatenga themselves did not constitute a source of slaves for other Mossi of Yatenga. One Mossi of the region could not be the slave of another Mossi. Only members of the alien groups listed above could be enslaved (including the Mossi of Ouagadougou). The Peul were not enslaved, but only held for ransom, since they were both rich (in cattle) and lazy. Their Rimaïbe, however, as we have said, were taken as captives (a Peul would certainly not be willing to pay any ransom for them).

727 When two factions were at war in Yatenga, the Mossi who were made prisoners were killed immediately, including small children of the male sex, even those who were still at their mother's breast.

●727 Only the sons of the two warring chiefs were spared. They were returned to their families for ransom. The women were also spared and returned to their husbands in exchange for other women or livestock. If their husbands did not come and claim them, the conquerors took them as wives and not as slaves.

567 435 Let us say a few words about the price of a slave. A man was worth 40, 000 cowries; a woman, 50, 000 or 60, 000; a young man, 50, 000; a young girl, 80, 000. We can see that the qualities most valued were, on the one hand, membership in the female sex and, on the other hand, youth.

567 4. Name. A slave is called yemba in Mossi (pl., yembésé) when no distinction is made between the sexes. When a male slave is meant, /265/ the word yembraogo is used (yembraodo or yembrâdo in the plural). For a female slave, one uses yempoka (yempokosé in the plural).

5. Kinds of slaves. The yembraogo, once bought or captured, was placed in irons, or to put it more precisely, irons were fastened to his feet in order to prevent him from escaping, but leaving him free to work. These irons were left on him for two or three years. When it was certain that he would not run away, the irons were removed. He spent all his time working for his master during the cultivating season, or he worked the small private fields belonging to his master's wives. In return, he was clothed and fed at all times. He could be resold, and this was done if there was dissatisfaction with him or his work.

If the master was satisfied with him, he bought him a wife. Then the slave became a bingo man, a "bingo," and was no longer a yembraogo. He passed from the status of a captive by trade or war to that of a house slave. Bingo is the name given to house slaves among the Mossi of Yatenga. At Ouagadougou they are called daparé or deporé (poré or paré meaning "back"); the daparé or daporé is the man who walks behind his master, the attendant, the slave. The bingo could not be resold except in unusual circumstances, such as when he committed fornication with his master's wife.

[592] When the master had but a few of them, the bingo lived in the same compound, with a door of their own leading outside. When there was a number of them, they had a small compound next to the one of the family.

During the season of cultivation, the bingo worked for his master two days out of three. During the dry season, he also worked for him

726 with leaves and branches and crawling upon the ground, can be witnessed
[764] even today at Mossi funerals where men re-enact warfare practices. Whenever possible, the Mossi preferred to take the enemy by surprise, but this was seldom possible when large-scale fighting and massive preparations were involved.

When two Mossi armies drew up to each other, the heralds from both sides issued such challenges and epithets as: "If you men do not wish to die, you should run or you will never eat again. We will have your blood to wash with." In the meantime, the Tansobadamba on both sides deployed their forces in accordance with the number of men available, the spirit of
[723] the enemy, and the nature of the terrain. From the description of warfare given to me by an old Tansoba in Nobere district, it appears that the strategy most commonly used was to split the infantry in two while attacking, thus making room for the cavalry to charge through. If the initial charge was successful, the attack was maintained, but if it failed, the army usually turned about and fled. Despite their braggadocio, Mossi commanders seldom insisted that their troops fight against overwhelming odds.
[644] However, shame over impending defeat often induced such officers as the
[645] Tansoba and the Gounga Naba to fight to the death. For example, during the war between Boulsa and Fada-N'Gourma in 1897, the Boulsa army lost so many men that the Boulsa Dim wanted to commit suicide in his humiliation. However, he was prevented from doing so by one of his subordinates.[27]

Soldiers wounded by poisoned spears or arrows extracted the projectiles if possible, and kept on fighting until they died. Even if they were wounded
[789] by an unpoisoned weapon, they did not seek medical aid. Most wounded men believed that they were doomed, because their protective amulets had
[727] failed them. For the same reason, a defeated army fleeing a battlefield made no attempt to retrieve its dead and dying, but left them to the vultures. When an army was victorious, however, the Mossi either carried their dead home for burial or buried them on the battlefield, saving some item of their clothing or equipment for the funeral.

Victorious Mossi armies usually pursued the enemy, burning villages as
[648] they went. The soldiers killed all the infants and the infirm, and when they
[567] fought against non-Mossi, they captured young people to be sold as slaves. Then they collected all the available booty and departed hurriedly, fearing
[727] that the confiscated cattle and slaves would slow their return and enable the rallied enemy to catch up with them.[28] If the army could not return home before dark, camp was set up for the night near a body of water so that the Tansobadamba could offer thanksgiving sacrifices. Pickets were later

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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posted to alert the troops in case the enemy should attempt an attack at 726
dawn. If the war was waged against foreigners, individual soldiers were
allowed to keep a slave or a cow out of the booty; the remainder was divided 727
between the district chiefs and the central government. In victorious civil [648]
wars against the enemies of the Mogho Naba, however, the entire booty was [669]
sent to the capital.

When the Mossi had to defend their own territory, their most common 725
tactic was to evacuate the villages. This was the technique most often em- [648]
ployed against invading French forces.[29] Other defenses included palisaded
villages, barricades of fallen trees, trenches, and hedges, some with poisoned
foot traps. Mangin reports that the Boulsa were defeated in their war with
Fada-N'Gourma not only because their enemies fought valiantly, but also
because they "were favored by very propitious terrain covered with thorny
scrub, behind which the besieged men took cover to shoot on the Mossi."[30]
Mangin does not say whether the scrub was poisoned, but his data indicate
that this type of defense was common in the area. The Mossi say that the [824]
use of poisoned prickly plants (*silenage*) against invading forces dates back
to the early conquest of the territory. Tradition recounts that Naba Oubri
was unable to conquer Ouagadougou until his Ninisi wife advised him to
shoe his soldiers against the poisoned foot traps of the aborigines.

Mossi wars or raids were usually limited to the dry season and stopped 726
at the beginning of the planting season. Commenting on the war between 669
Boulsa and Fada-N'Gourma, Mangin tells us: "This was during the dry 628
season. Thirst completed what the courage of the Gyekango people had
begun, and many Mossi perished."[31] Tradition recounts that it took Mogho
Naba Waraga five successive years of attack before he defeated Ramzi, the
rebellious chief of Riziam principality. He finally defeated him when his
army attacked the province before its people had been able to harvest their
crops and retire into an impregnable fortress for the dry season. Judging
by the reports of European visitors, this type of dry-season warfare continued
as late as the 1890's. For example, Crozat could not understand why the
Mogho Naba did not send an army to defeat the chief of Lalle district, who
had imprudently raided a village near Ouagadougou, and he concluded
that the ruler did not have an army. The fact is, however, that Crozat was
in Ouagadougou between September 9 and September 30, a period when
the potential soldiers of the Mogho Naba had not yet harvested their crops.
Had Crozat remained in Mossi country for three or four months longer,
he would have seen the ruler's army in action; for, as a matter of fact, the
Lalle Naba's attack on Mogho Naba Wobogo was but the latest episode in
a prolonged struggle between the two rulers.

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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less of the amount of millet harvested from the Mogho Naba's fields, there had to be one hundred baskets full of grain. If the number of baskets filled with the Mogho Naba's grain fell short of the mark, the serfs and slaves had to make up the difference with the produce of their own fields. The ceremony concluded with sacrifices to the royal ancestors, after which the Mogho Naba's wives, daughters, and sisters gave beer and kola nuts to the laborers.

As head of the central government, the Mogho Naba received revenue in the form of money and livestock which the district chiefs collected from the village people. These were given to him during an elaborate annual ceremony called the "Basgha" ("feast of the royal ancestors"). Several days before this post-harvest festival, the district chiefs and their retainers arrived in the capital and lodged with their provincial ministers. At a designated time during the ceremony, the district chiefs and nobles went to the palace. In provincial contingents and led by their ministers, they walked up to the sovereign's throne and gave the Mossi salute. After they had returned to their places, their servants gave the royal pages the presents they had brought to the palace.

The Dimdamba apparently made their annual contribution to the Mogho Naba at the time of the Basgha. There is one report that they took this opportunity to send gifts to the ruler's son, the Djiba Naba, as well. The Dimdamba customarily sent the Mogho Naba part of the goods they had seized in combat against non-Mossi peoples, as well as a tax (*fado*) out of the goods they had inherited from their predecessors.[3] There is also some evidence that the Mogho Naba solicited goods from the Dimdamba at other times. Crozat says:

> During my first visit to Yako, three envoys from Ouagadougou were at the chief's house. They were tax collectors. They had come to offer the vassal a silver bracelet sent by the sovereign. The Yako Naba responded by sending horses, captives, and cowries to Ouagadougou.[4]

Crozat could not understand this reciprocity between the Mogho Naba and his vassals, and questions whether the Mogho Naba really collected taxes from them. He concludes that the Mogho Naba did receive taxes, "but these are never given to him except in the form of presents which are reciprocated."[5] Crozat found it puzzling and disturbing that many of the Dimdamba had not given the Mogho Naba any "taxes" for several years. He indicated, moreover, that they did not wish to pay taxes to the Ouagadougou ruler even under the guise of an exchange of presents. This was especially true of the Yatenga Naba, who had not sent the Mogho Naba any presents for six or seven years prior to 1890. Crozat surmised that

567 them for kola nuts with the Achanti [Ashanti] or for loaves of salt
439 at Timbuktu. Although they were always transported by roundabout routes to prevent them from finding their way back to their homes, still some of them always managed to escape.

492 The naba used the young yemdado as soroné or grooms, and
567 they would often [93] take the young and attractive women (yempoksé) as wives.

641 The sale of free men. Neither the emperor of the Mossi nor
681 his vassals sold their subjects. Individuals who were regarded as dangerous were simply put to death unless they took refuge in a bangaré to avoid being executed, as has been noted above. Some were sent to the emperor to be made into eunuchs.

304 The facial tattoos worn by the Mossi clearly distinguished them
567 from neighboring peoples. However, if by accident or because of need a naba sold a free man and the latter was claimed by his rela-
689 tives, the chief was required to buy back the slave or to indemnify his family. We have described above how a canton chief was exiled by the emperor for having sold free Mossi.

583 Concealed selling of women and children. In the chapter on marriage customs among the Mossi we shall show that a native
562 Moaga did not demand a bride price because he did not want to feel that
567 he was selling his daughter. There is no doubt that this rule has exceptions. Indeed, we shall show that the failure to pay a debt, a bout of drunkenness, or a favor received might suffice to mortgage the future of a daughter, even though at the time she might be a small child and quite unaware of her fate. In any event, there would be no question of her expressing any opinion, since her wishes are never taken into account. During periods of famine -- which have been
•[731] occurring almost [94] regularly for some years -- a small basket of millet is enough to make a father promise his daughter. In the same way, we regret to say, a great many girls are promised in exchange for trifling sums at the time the poll tax is paid.

567 Rights of slaves. Since he is regarded as an inferior being, the yemdaogo (slave) has no well-defined rights. He is required to perform all kinds of domestic work and must give unquestioning obedience to his master and the master's family. Besides his essential duties, however, he is permitted to do some farming for himself, practice some trade, or to raise cattle, with the proceeds constituting

672 "If the insane person still has a father, it is his duty to warn the people of the neighborhood.

"All the deeds made, the debts contracted, and the commercial transactions effected by the insane person are declared void. No third parties may appeal against members of the insane person's family."

000 Now let us deal with the appendages of the family.

We shall divide this section into the following headings.

1. Clients.
2. Domestic servants.
3. Slaves. Their origins.
4. Slaves. Name.
5. Slaves. Kinds of slaves.
6. Serfs.

Let us begin with the clients.

464 1. Clients. The usual clientage involving a household which requests support, protection, food, and shelter from a rich family, in return for which the household will labor for the family and live with it, is not to be found among the Mossi and Foulsé of Yatenga. It does happen, however, that a young man who desires to acquire quickly a wife, a horse, some property, or an amount of authority which does not usually revert to young men decides to leave his family and his compound to place himself in the service of some chief (Moro Naba, canton chief, village chief, tengasoba, etc.). It is the young men, rasamba, who make such decisions. Once they have won what they sought to obtain, however, they return to their families. When one goes to a tengasoba, he usually expects only a wife from him, and he does not leave until the tengasoba dies. Then, provided with a wife, he returns to his family. Naturally, these "temporary volunteers" preserve all their rights in their respective families.

464 Let us note further that during times of famine some Mossi request
●131 work from people of better means. The duration of their work is usually very short, scarcely more than a few days (two or three days, for example).

464 The employee and employer (if these terms may be used here) are in no way bound to each other. The former may leave whenever he wishes, and the latter may dismiss him as he pleases. He must, however, pay for the employee's work days in full. The daily

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between the living and the dead," but also to strengthen the political bonds 796
between the Mogho Naba and his chiefs, down to the humblest elder of a 182
Mossi compound.

In addition to the Basgha and Tense, the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou 769
appears to have offered another yearly sacrifice to Tenga. Each year, after 796
the Basgha, the Mogho Naba, the Baloum Naba, and a large entourage re- 782
portedly visited a large earth shrine called Tantibo in the vicinity of Saba- 643
tenga to offer propitiatory sacrifices in the name of all the people. When [778]
the royal party arrived at Sabatenga, they were joined by the Sabatenga Naba and his Tengsoba. The group proceeded to the foot of the sacred hill, and here the monarch dismounted, took off his bonnet and shoes, and climbed the hill. He made the customary Mossi salute at the shrine and looked on silently while the Tengsoba sacrificed animals and poured libations of millet beer and millet water in supplication for the health and prosperity of the Mogho Naba and all his people.[7]

When evil befell Mossi country in spite of the annual sacrifices to the ancestors and to the earth deity, the Mogho Naba had to offer additional sacrifices. If the country was plagued by drought, the ruler went to an [731] ●
earth shrine in Ouagadougou itself, called "Kom be paspanga" (literally, "water is strong there"), for a sacrifice. Moreover, he might order all his [634]
district and village chiefs to perform similar sacrifices to the earth shrines [622]
within their territories. In Nobere district, for instance, the district chief
went to the village called Barkago, where, standing barefoot and bareheaded on the hilly shrine known as Beta, he ordered the local village chief and the Tengsoba to offer sacrifices for rain and good health.

It is generally believed by the Mossi that when the French attacked 648
Ouagadougou, the deposed Mogho Naba Wobogo made sacrifices to earth 782
shrines. Tradition has it that he sacrificed a black cock, a black ram, a black donkey, and a black slave on a large hill near the White Volta River, beseeching the earth goddess to drive the French away and to destroy the traitor Mazi whom they had placed upon the throne. When Mazi died, the Mossi people believed that he had received his just deserts from the earth shrine for treason. The French believe that Mazi was poisoned.[8]

The district and village chiefs, like the Mogho Naba, were required to 634
make propitiatory sacrifices to the earth shrines on behalf of their subjects. 622
Before taking office, a district chief was ritually shown the major earth 782
shrines in his territory, and he could not ignore their existence and their need for sacrifices. In a country with major local variations in rainfall and localized animal and human epidemics, the Tengsobadamba of stricken
areas always called upon the local chiefs to help them propitiate disgruntled [793]
spirits.

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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people also assemble sheep of
the Mossi variety, which are very puny. The larger variety of long-haired 175
Macina sheep are seldom exported. Once the livestock has been assembled, 437 439
the chief of the caravan would also provide himself with cotton bands. [231]
This native fabric has often been described; it is commonly used on the [436]
caravan routes to pay for the food of the travellers. (Marc 1909 : 172)

Most of the caravans through Mossi country traveled as much as 175
fifteen or twenty miles a day. They left at the first sign of dawn, 437
traveled steadily until the heat became too intense, and then stopped 484
to rest. They resumed their march when the sun was midway between the zenith and the horizon, and then stopped at some village or stream for the night. This schedule was followed on the next day if the caravan was far from a market center, but in the vicinity of a large market the caravan might remain stationary as many as six days while its merchants traded for more livestock or merchandise. This being 175
the case, it is difficult to gauge how long it took the caravans to make 437
the journey from Salaga in Ghana to Timbuktu. Our best data come 484
from an analysis of Krauss' itinerary. He left Salaga with a caravan 487
on July 7, 1885, heading north through Walwale, and arrived in Bere, 103
a distance of some 250 miles (today's road mileage) towards the end
of August. Famine delayed the caravan at Bere for some time, and he [231]
did not complete the 50 miles or so to Wagadougou until September 24. He remained in the Mossi capital until October 26, some thirty-two days, before his caravan headed north again through Tema, Yatenga and Bandiagara. Krauss does not tell us when he reached Douentza, some 400 miles northweast of Wagadougou, or how long he remained there, but on December 7, a few days after he had left Douenzta on the last 200- or 250-mile leg of his voyage to Timbuktu, the Moro Naba ordered him to return to Wagadougou. It is possible that it took Krauss' caravan some thirty-five odd days to make the trip from Wagadougou to Douentza. His return to Wagadougou took him only about thirty days, since he arrived there on January 7, 1886. He apparently had to wait some fifteen days there for a caravan going south, because he did not leave the Mossi capital until January 22, 1886 (Krause 1887–88). Judging from this itinerary, it probably took caravans between five and six months to travel from the forest zones to the desert, a distance of about a thousand miles at the most. This averages about six or seven miles a day, with the normal stops for rest and marketing, instead of the fifteen or twenty miles a day which the average caravan covered when it was on the road.

The caravans did not encounter many dangers or difficulties during 175
their voyage. When the caravaneers had friends along the way they 437
stopped at their friends' homes for the night, and when they camped 484
in uninhabited places men were posted to protect the goods and live-
stock against marauding beasts and thieves.

843 A woman's role is to bear children. When she knows that she is pregnant, she no longer consents to come to her husband, but she is careful not to inform him of her state; if she told him, the child would die. If her parents happen to pass away during her pregnancy, she does not go into mourning and does not attend the funeral. If she is newly wed and has not yet borne children, one of the other wives of her husband, or, if there are none, the husband's sister, comes at night to sprinkle the husband and wife with water. The young wife will henceforth call this woman her husband, prepare millet mush for her, and heat the water in which she washes. When the pregnancy begins to show, one of the wife's female relatives consults the sorcerer [782] to find out which sacrifice should be offered so that all will go well, but the husband is not informed of this consultation. Sometimes the sacrifice is repeated when the birth draws near. When the first baby 851 is born, the husband sends a child to his wife's relatives with a rooster or a hen depending on the newborn's sex. The child tosses the bird into the yard without saying a word and runs away; everybody understands.

847 /40/ A child born deformed, lame, or blind is done away with; 845 it is simply drowned without further ado if considered incurable. In ●732 olden times, twins were often drowned also because their birth entails 761 difficulties for the family, who must offer special sacrifices; some- 753 times only one of them was done away with. If they are spared and die a natural death, the mother wears a small bell at her ankle until the anniversary of the death (koure). If the mother happens to die or the father becomes ill, the sorcerer need only say so and the children are put to death, because they are said to have caused the illness or death of their parents. A baby who could barely walk was once brought by relatives to the Koupéla Fathers. He had been born on a Friday and his mother had died; that was sufficient to call for his sacrifice. His relatives tried unsuccessfully to poison him; they exposed him for three days in the bush, and the child did not die. As a last resort they brought him to the missionaries, who hastened to shelter him. Children recognized as insane are abandoned in the bush where they die of hunger.

732 It is only fair to add, however, that these barbarous practices 845 reminiscent of Sparta are not invariably followed. Several lame and incurably ill children are carefully tended by their parents, and some twins born prior to the French occupation are alive and in good health.

582 I. Differences of tribe or caste. The Mossi may not contract
326 marriage with blacksmiths. This is absolutely forbidden. However,
564 they may marry among the Foulsé, Samo, Peul, Yarsé, etc."

This calls for several remarks. The blacksmiths of Yatenga are Foulsé and not Mossi. However, it is not a tribal difference which dictates the prohibition under discussion, since the Mossi can marry among the Foulsé as a whole. It is rather a difference in caste. It must be noted, as we said above /not translated/, that the common Foulsé cannot marry blacksmiths either.

[171] Here, as in all of the /French/ Sudan, blacksmiths are both feared and scorned. Basically, they are regarded as fearful sorcerers.

582 II. Kinship. There must be a lapse of 200 years between the time of the betrothed couple and the time when their common ancestor lived. This is likewise an absolute impediment.

III. If a Mossi has relations with a young girl or woman belonging to his fiancée's soukala during the period of his engagement, the marriage cannot take place.

This impediment, however, is not absolute. If the guilty man begs for the forgiveness of the family head and the latter accords it, the union may be effected later."

582 IV. Unnatural practices. The marriage cannot take place: (1) if
839 the betrothed man has been caught in the act of sexual intercourse with a she-ass (a phenomenon none too rare in Yatenga); and (2) if the betrothed girl has relations with a native who had sexual intercourse with a she-ass. These impediments are absolute.

This is why the inhabitants of a Yatenga village (Dénia) who are reputed to have had relations with asses in former times may not marry outside their locality.

582 V. Infirmities. If the fiancé is blind, the marriage may not take
[132] place unless the girl consents to it. No one can constrain her to do so.

VI. Leprosy. The same applies when the fiancé has leprosy.

VII. Impuberty of the betrothed pair. The marriage cannot take place unless both parties are nubile. This is an absolute impediment, but in practice the problem rarely arises.

VIII. Insanity of one of the betrothed."

582 Question of virginity. The girl's virginity is not very important
830 here and, it must be pointed out, far less so than among the Bambara. This is, incidentally, connected with the fact that the marriage bond is less sound and the separation of the spouses easier to obtain. A combination of related facts makes the institution of marriage and

774 828 761 In the course of a dream, the soul may warn its owner of a threatening danger. One day a native, whose village and name were told to me, dreamed that his enemy offered him a kola nut. Much anxiety ensued, for this is a sign used by the soul to indicate that an enemy threatens one with death. In such a case there is only one remedy, to deposit a few cowries on a nest of large red ants, so they will avert the disaster. The man set out immediately for the nearest ant nest. Alas, a snake bit him along the way, and he died before he could offer his gift to the ants! Such occurrences obviously make a profound imprint on the imagination of the natives, who immediately react with the sophism: post hoc, propter hoc. A few such cases are sufficient to anchor them forever in their superstitions, and innumerable such occurrences were related to me.

774 761 If the soul can leave the body, it is possible to seize it and to prevent it from re-entering its body, and this is why our Blacks do not like to be photographed. They say that there is an evil spirit in the box, who takes the soul and eats it. This is proved by the fact that the individual may later be seen on the piece of paper.

774 753 One becomes sick when his soul cannot re-enter the body because it is held prisoner by an evil sorcerer or by a kikiriga, and many sacrifices must be offered to obtain its release /86/ and return. Entreaties are usually directed to the tangandé in such cases, because it is stronger than all the other spirits, stronger even than the sorcerers, and because its function is to protect the village.

774 761 754 775 Sometimes the soul was so well hidden that the tangandé cannot find it: the sorcerer has eaten it right away, or the tangandé itself is in collusion; or the ancestral spirits are calling the sick person; or, finally, it is God who sent the disease. Nothing can be done, and the person dies. His soul changes names, and henceforth is called kyma. It leaves the body at the moment of death. If it was taken by a sorcerer or by the ancestral spirits, at the moment of death it leaves the sacred grove where it was held captive. It proceeds to the place of souls from where it will return to the grave whenever sacrifices are offered to it. It will also return if it wishes to afflict the survivors with a disease of some sort.

775 735 Is the soul punished for the evil it has done on earth and rewarded for the good? Opinions on the subject differ. Some say that when one gives alms to the poor, and the Mossi frequently do, when one is generous and hospitable, God takes all that has been given and sets

775 it aside to return it to the soul when it leaves the body. From this
[735] comes the thank-you wish, "May God repay you!" If the deceased led an evil life, if he was quarrelsome or a thief, if he killed, he is condemned to walk over live coals to reach God, or if he is a murderer, he may come to God only after he has drunk all the blood he has shed, which God has saved for this purpose. The major offenders are detained by the treetops and never reach the place of souls. It must be said, however, that most Mossi take little heed of the penalties which may await them in the other life or deny their existence altogether.

The souls go to Bourtenga, the "gathering place of the souls," according to the etymology of the word, a place of indeterminate geographical location, or they go to Pilimpikou, a mountain located
775 in Kipirsi country. Their sole occupation over there is to go to market
764 at night, and this is why on the day of burial the deceased is given cowries so that he may buy millet beer and clothes in order not to look like a tramp.

The souls are white but otherwise they look like men, although they are nimbler and can move effortlessly and with great rapidity
[264] from one place to another. They do everything upside down; they eat with the left hand and do with it all the things we do with the right, and this is why the corpse is washed with the left hand. They wear their clothes inside out, with the pocket of the breechcloth facing in; they carry the spears iron downward, and they walk backwards because their eyes are placed behind their head. This is why the kourita who represents the deceased wears everything inside out.

775 The souls of the animals sacrificed to him, chickens, sheep, goats,
769 beeves, etc., go to join the deceased, who can thus feast, invite friends, and gather kin together, for people are reunited up there. Although nabas are no longer such, those who were subject to them on earth recreate their court. It is said that parents come to fetch their children, /87/ nabas their pages and favorite wives, and friends their friends, unless the survivors treat them very well and provide them with lots of food.

Indeed, the souls of the dead come back to earth to receive the gifts which are offered to them, to drink the blood of the victims sacrificed in their honor and the millet beer prepared for them on the annual Day of the Dead (basra). This is why no Mossi faithful to tradition ever drinks millet beer without first pouring a little on the

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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175 fitto, levied upon each ass by the petty chiefs on the road is very consider-
437 able. From 5,000 to 6,000 guro, or kola nuts, constitute an assload.
435 Selga, the market place for this important article, being, it appears, a
[651] most miserable town, where even water is very scarce and can only be
[316] purchased at an exorbitant price, the merchants always manage to make their stay here as short as possible, awaiting the proper season in Yendi, a town said to be as large as Timbuktu, or in Kulfela, the great market place of Mosi; and they are especially obliged to wait in case they arrive at the beginning of the rainy season, there being no kola nuts before the latter part of the Kharif. The price of this nut in Timbuktu varies from 20 to
[235] 100 shells each, and it always constitutes a luxury; so that, even on great festivals, alms consisting of this article are distributed by the rich people of the town. (Barth 1859 : II, 364)

175 The other data we have on prices paid for goods come from the
43 period between 1890 and 1910, at which time French francs had been introduced. At this time the official value of one franc was 1,000 cowries. Around 1904, a trader paid about 50 francs or 50,000 cowries for a head of cattle in Mossi country and sold it for about double the price at Salaga. With the proceeds of this transaction he bought kola nuts at the rate of one franc or 100 cowries per hundred. Thus with the sale of one cow a trader could obtain 10,000 kolas, these being valued at about 500 francs or 500,000 cowries in Mossi country and at 20 or 200 cowries each at Sarfere and Timbuktu (Marc 1909 : 173–4). At Timbuktu about this same period, 1895, traders could buy salt at about 30 francs for a slab weighing between 60 and 100 pounds and sell it for 45 francs at Sarafere, for 60 francs at Djenne, for between 70 and 80 francs at San, and "thus progressively more until they reached Mossi country" (Dubois 1899 : 276). In 1910, Mossi traders bought cattle for about 40 to 100 francs, horses for about 90 francs, donkeys for 25 francs, and so on, and sold these animals in Salaga for three times the prices. There they bought kolas at 2 Fr. 50 per thousand, and sold them at 20 per thousand at Leo on the Mossi border, 35 francs per thousand at Wagadougou, 50 francs at Wahigouya, 60 francs at Saravere, and 100 francs per thousand at Timbuktu. Here these traders bought bars of salt weighing about 75 pounds for between 10 and 12 francs a piece, and sold them for between 40 to 60 francs at Wahigouya, and for from 80 to 100 francs a piece at Dedougou and points as far down as Wagadougou (Tauxier 1917 : 221).

175 Not all the profit from this trade went into the pockets of the
437 traders. We have the report of Binger that the chiefs, besides com-
486 mandering the goods at less than one-hundredth their purchase
651 price, received taxes on each caravan which passed through their
territory.

428 Actually, those shares vary from region to region among the
593 Mossi. Thus, in certain areas, the oldest son gets the soukala, the
184 fields, two thirds of the livestock, cowries, and money, all the slaves and grain, as well as clothing, jewelry, weapons, horses, etc. The other sons get the remaining goods. The daughters get nothing. As for the wives, the oldest son takes three quarters and the other sons one quarter. In such cases, the eldest son is much more heavily favored than in the cases mentioned earlier.

At Kombisiguiri, this is even more accentuated. The oldest son may keep everything if he wishes. He may also give something to the other sons of the deceased or to the latter's brothers.

In short, at the stage /of evolution/ with which we are dealing, the transmission of property ranges from a complete and absolute law of primogeniture to an uneven sharing heavily tipped toward the eldest son.

593 Let us add that when the eldest son receives an estate, if his
●736 brothers are not yet of an age to be married, he keeps them at his home, in his own household (this is why, although Mossi households in principle include only a husband, his wives, children, and slaves, sometimes they also contain young unmarried brothers). In the morning they work for him, and in the afternoon they work their own little plots. The older brother provides them with food at all times, but not with clothes. They must procure their clothing with the returns from their own little plots. When they reach marriageable age, the older brother buys them a wife and helps them settle on their own.

429 When the head of a soukala dies leaving only small sons, his
593 younger brother takes all the property for the time being but saves it for the legitimate heirs. When the eldest son of the deceased has grown up, the brother leaves the soukala and returns to his own former one, taking only his own belongings. /552/ At that time, all the real estate and movable property devolve to the oldest son and partly to the other sons.

If the head of a soukala leaves no sons but only brothers and
428 daughters, the inheritance is shared between his younger brother and
593 his daughters. The younger brother takes the soukala, the fields, and the wives. He leaves his own soukala and settles in that of the deceased, where he brings all his belongings. He puts up either a

8: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1958
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how important is the conversion of the chiefs, or, at least, their sympathy for our religion, in the spread of Catholicism." The missionaries may have been successful in the village of the Manga district chief because he was sympathetic to them, but they made few converts in the villages far from the district center or in the neighboring districts. In the Béré district, a few miles from Manga, the Catholics have made only 22 converts despite more than 15 years' work. In Manga, however, they were able to "recruit" most of the young children for their church and school. When an old man was asked why his children became Catholic, he tried to evade the question but finally replied that he did not control the minds of his children. Knowing the nature of administrative practice in the upper Volta before 1946, and the nature of Mossi family structure, we looked further for the answer.

Paradoxically, it comes from a Catholic missionary, André Dupont, who, seeking to discover the reason for the decrease of patients in the Catholic-controlled maternity clinics, asked:

> Why have the maternity clinics which in 1942 served more than seventy mothers a month now serve only two or three? "We are no longer forced to go," reply the villagers. Was it the fear of sanction which accounted for the unanimous use of the clinics? Alas! It would seem to be so. The use of force and sanction have rendered odious an institution of charity. It would have been better if the mothers were only encouraged to use the clinics. "These natives do not understand," I am told sometimes. But how does one expect them to understand? (Dupont 1949:4)

Fear was certainly one of the reasons why the people in Manga embraced Catholicism. Before 1946 (the Brazzaville conference in 1944 abolished forced labor), men and women were recruited for work on the roads and on Ivory Coast plantations, and children were recruited for the schools. The district chiefs often gathered orphans and the children of their former serfs and sent them to the mission to fill the quotas, but many children and whole families voluntarily attached themselves to the missions. The reasons for so doing are legion, but in some cases it was simply the desire to accept the new religious faith.

Once at the mission the children were taught French and the tenets of Catholicism. Many of the boys later became catechists or priests and several girls went into the nunnery. However, the largest group of educated youths became the clerical personnel of the administration and were lost to missionary activity. Because the administration lacked French-speaking Mossi, the young people received good jobs. This desertion to the administration has become so serious that the missionaries at Manga have ceased to teach French to their catechists and now use the vernacular.

Conversion to Catholicism, bringing with it the knowledge of French, was formerly one of the sure roads to upward social mobility. Most Catholic teachers at Manga (and at Nobéré) are individuals who were recruited as unwilling school-boys but today are the highest paid members of their lineages. Other gains have accrued to persons who become Catholics. For example, the people at Manga believe that the missionaries used their influence with the

312 hour for the impurities and the residue to settle to the bottom of
271 the vessel. Then the water is poured off into another container and is ready to be used for drinking or cooking.

[824] (b) It is also possible to use an additive known as missim (crushed tamarind leaves). The water becomes clear, but it is, of course, somewhat sour. Although it may be drunk, it is
[252] ideally suited to cooking since the Mossi add missim (from miki, "to make sour") even to the water of springs and wells before they use it to prepare their principal food, sagbo.

744 In the town of Ouagadougou frequent visits by the sanitary
312 officers remind the natives of the necessity of keeping fresh water in their containers. They are also encouraged to fill in during the winter the low places holding water where mosquitoes might breed.

515 Laundering. There is no doubt [231] that the Moaga is care-
296 less about the cleanliness of his clothing. There is no shortage of soap -- karite butter, of which it is made, is plentiful -- but he believes that frequent laundering will wear out his clothes too quickly. He also thinks -- which is childish -- that the dirtier a garment is, the cleaner it will wash. He thinks it completely ridiculous for clothes to be ironed. It must be admitted that among the Mossi only a married man can require his wives to wash his clothes. A mother also takes care of her children's clothes, but a bachelor is forced to wash his own things. This, we think, explains the extreme negligence shown by some of them
[461] who let their clothes get dirtier and dirtier. Indolence, alas, is one of the dominant defects of the native of Mossi country.

514 Toilet arrangements. In general the Mossi have no regular latrines. Men, women, in short, everyone, simply goes into the bush. The only exception is the very young children who take care of their needs on the threshold. At night, especially during the winter when the grain is fairly tall, grownups themselves go to the kamanga or karaga (millet or maize field near the living quarters).

364 When the town of Ouagadougou was made a mixed commune [Ed., smallest French territorial subdivision, with both French and native representation in the municipal council], it was possible to install, at municipal expense, a number of lavatories in certain

751 it. It is recognized that smallpox does not hit the same place twice (obviously, when it has already killed all those who could be killed), and fear of catching the disease prevents many natives from undergoing the operation. The Administration is rendering great services
744 with its vaccination tours, which will be all the more successful since the experiments carried out by our Fathers some years ago, with tubes of vaccine kindly sent by the Administrator of Ouagadougou, bore excellent results and checked an epidemic which was decimating the population. Smallpox victims are nursed /67/ as carefully as possible.
757 They are laid on a bed of sand which retains heat. When the pocks are ripe, they are punctured with a thorn, and then the patient is rubbed with sand. The eyes are washed with an antiseptic decoction, and the patient gargles frequently with peppered water.

Medicinal herbs, tree leaves, and barks are the basis of all remedies, in the form of infusions or poultices. The study of these medicines would no doubt be of interest to a specialist. But would the natives who hold the secret of their preparation be willing to surrender it?

[572] When a friend is ill, even if he lives far away, the right thing is to
755 visit him, offer him sympathy, and even more appropriately bring him some gifts. The relatives of the sick person consult the sorcerer, for it is necessary to determine the agency that caused the disease. Sorcerers rarely prescribe a medicine. Their role is to point out the part of the body which is afflicted and especially to indicate the spirit *who should receive the sacrifice. Another man, who in most cases* has nothing to do with witchcraft, knows the medicines. If the patient improves after the prescribed sacrifices have been offered, it means that the sorcerer knows his business well; if not, it means that he has cheated.

758 Every self-respecting sorcerer must prescribe a negative treatment, in the sense of pointing out certain things the patient must not eat. Sometimes goat or chicken flesh is forbidden for the duration of the illness or permanently. Sometimes it is a certain kind of sauce, or millet or bean fritters. On the other hand, since the Mossi eat no eggs, especially not raw, and drink hardly any milk, they sustain the sick with plenty of millet beer and with an unappetizing mush of coarsely ground millet, often mixed with powdered charcoal. Patients have difficulty absorbing such a mixture and occasionally die of
755 starvation. Sometimes the sorcerer also indicates an amulet that

583 to the sort of concubinage that "free marriage" is, as practiced in Mossi country.

The Situation of the Betrothed Couple during the Engagement

584 Generally speaking, the fiancé is supposed to avoid his betrothed before marriage. They treat each other with a kind of shy reserve.

Aside from the gifts made to the village elders and some cowries given to the future in-laws at the time of his first visit, no further demands are made on the fiancé.

584 684 The young man is formally forbidden to carry on an intrigue with a woman in the girl's village. If he does so, not only may the engagement be broken, but the lover may never again set foot in the village on paid of death.

Breaking the Engagement

584 When an engagement is broken, the gifts received need not be returned. On the other hand, the death of the girl is not regarded as breaking the engagement; the family must, sooner or later, offer another daughter to the young man to replace the girl who died.

An engagement may be broken [179] automatically in case of adultery, discussed below, or in the event of a quarrel between the two families.

Marriage Between First Cousins

582 Marriage between first cousins is not allowed. There can be no valid union between the children of a brother and sister, between a man and the daughter of either his father's or his mother's brother.

588 582 751 However, it sometimes happens -- inadvertently -- that a girl who has been given in marriage in a very distant village may find that her husband is a descendant of a great-grandparent (material or paternal) in the same family as her own. Had this been known, the marriage would not have taken place. Ordinarily, distant relationship is not discovered until long after the marriage, after complicated genealogical research. In that case, one of the pair, usually the wife,

588 582 751 wears a bracelet made of copper and iron intertwined, kalembanga, which is believed to protect the wearer against any disaster due to the technically illegal marriage. The kalembanga is also believed to protect the children born of the union from sudden death.

Polygyny

595 Polygyny is the rule throughout Mossi country. It is true that the number of wives varies with the resources and position of the individual. Mere heads of compounds who are somewhat well off may have [180] from five to eight wives and numerous fiancées. The [584] latter are usually reserved for the dakompa (older sons and younger brothers of the head of the family), assuming that these men will in turn render real service and be completely devoted to the head of the household.

There are many reasons for the practice of polygyny, but the main one is procreation. The under-nourished natives must rely on [853] the mother's milk to feed their babies and must therefore wait two [834] or even three years before resuming sexual relations with a wife who is a nursing mother. Therefore, they prefer to have several wives.

Consummation

585 When the young girl is taken to her husband, she is entrusted to a woman whom she will henceforth treat as "mother."

A few days after the departure of the cortege, whose composition we shall describe presently, the man claims his fiancée. She is taken at night to the nuptial hut, which has no special features, and no one is present at the consummation of the marriage. In this respect the Mossi differ from the Bambara, who have a griot or an old woman accompany the couple to help the young man, if necessary, overcome the girl's resistance.

It goes without saying that if the girl is found to be a virgin, the [181] husband is overjoyed. If she is not a virgin, the love which he may have felt for her before possessing her is much diminished. The man shows the girl his anger, certain that she will at least tell her mother about it.

342 is continued, and the process goes on until the hut is completed, that is, when it reaches a height of about 1.65 meters. The house is built without any openings, but when the walls are up, a [219] low door is put in, having the shape of a pointed arch. The interior of many Mossi houses is divided by a low wall, called kogré, which makes the hut very dark. A few small holes are made with the handle of a daba, and these, with the low door, are [726] the only openings. In time of war, the Moaga used to shoot his arrows through these tiny holes. Before the roof is put on, the [751] walls are daubed with wet ashes, a practice which is supposed to guarantee good health for the new inhabitants.

The roof is conical in shape. It is made with poles which are tightly tied at the top with vines. Stiff mats, zarsé, are placed on the poles. They are held in place with fibers and are covered with braided straw. Some twenty persons are needed to put up the roof. The construction of the house is then finished. Only the plastering remains to be done. For this job, the women collect a special kind of earth, boalga, which they mix with manure from cows or horses and then coat the walls with it. When this operation is completed, the women cover the floor with a ferruginous material that is sprinkled with water and tamped down with bits of flat wood called silpama. After the floor has been smoothed down, the sasgo is the next step. This involves covering the surface with a sticky material, boudou, mixed with ground charcoal. This is rubbed over and over with glass sherds or special stones called sassega. The shiny black surface obtained in this fashion prevents the ferruginous material from soiling the family's clothes. Some [824] people sprinkle the finished floor with kanmé, an infusion made of the skin of the néré fruit, in order to make it wear well.

[220] Construction workers. The master of the house is aided by his own brothers and other relatives in the same clan. He does not request help from outsiders. The women's job is to get the water needed for the mortar.

The earth used in building is taken from a hole near the house, the tan-nako (from tando, "earth," and nako, "hole"). This excavation is later filled with all the waste from the house and ordure from the courtyard. The tan-nako, well fertilized in this manner is planted with maize, and this field is called the kamanga.

753 /66/ This is because illness is usually attributed to an evil spirit,
761 which must not be irked with complaints. Yet in everyday language it is God who is the cause of everything, of health as well as of death. The sorcerers consulted indicate which spirit must be appeased, to whom sacrifices must be offered; or they state quite frankly that the hour of the sick person has come, that his life is over and he is about to rejoin his ancestors, for it is often the latter who call him and come to fetch him. In the case of old men and especially of old women, death is considered a natural event. An old man has many children who will give him a fine funeral, and it is time for him to make way for his eldest son. If a quarrelsome person falls sick, his illness is often attributed to an evil spell cast by an enemy. When
[763] an elder is about to die, those who have caused him offense come to beg his forgiveness and only find peace when they have obtained it, for the old man might return to obtain his revenge. Sudden death is usually ascribed to poison and, alas, this is often the case. Sometimes it is also attributed to an evil spirit, especially in case of accident, fall, snake bite, etc.

755 The instinct of self-preservation is so strong in man that the Mossi
757 although they ascribe a superhuman origin to illness, nevertheless fight it. It is true that all their treatments combine medicinal and superstitious elements to drive off evil spirits, and whatever the remedy, true medicine or amulet, it is always a tim; there is only the one
759 word to designate it. Some of the natives know how to treat certain illnesses, and people come to consult them, often from far away. One has a medicine against snakes, and he makes it in complete secrecy on a certain day; one knows how to treat colds and bronchitis;
[752] another, dysentery; yet another, sores. The bone-setters are often very skillful, and with the mere pressure of their fingers they can set a dislocated joint or a broken leg; then they enclose it between tightly-bound millet stalks as a splint. These doctors prescribe remedies without resorting to sacrifices or witchcraft. Sometimes they live with their patient to care for him, of course for a fee, especially if the person gets well.

751 Smallpox vaccination is performed, but often too late, on individuals who already have the germ. The vaccine is taken from a seriously ill person without any precautionary antiseptic measures. The vaccinated individual is usually made very sick and sometimes dies of

751 it. It is recognized that smallpox does not hit the same place twice (obviously, when it has already killed all those who could be killed), and fear of catching the disease prevents many natives from undergoing the operation. The Administration is rendering great services
744 with its vaccination tours, which will be all the more successful since the experiments carried out by our Fathers some years ago, with tubes of vaccine kindly sent by the Administrator of Ouagadougou, bore excellent results and checked an epidemic which was decimating the population. Smallpox victims are nursed /67/ as carefully as possible.
757 They are laid on a bed of sand which retains heat. When the pocks are ripe, they are punctured with a thorn, and then the patient is rubbed with sand. The eyes are washed with an antiseptic decoction, and the patient gargles frequently with peppered water.

Medicinal herbs, tree leaves, and barks are the basis of all remedies, in the form of infusions or poultices. The study of these medicines would no doubt be of interest to a specialist. But would the natives who hold the secret of their preparation be willing to surrender it?

[572] When a friend is ill, even if he lives far away, the right thing is to
755 visit him, offer him sympathy, and even more appropriately bring him some gifts. The relatives of the sick person consult the sorcerer, for it is necessary to determine the agency that caused the disease. Sorcerers rarely prescribe a medicine. Their role is to point out the part of the body which is afflicted and especially to indicate the spirit who should receive the sacrifice. Another man, who in most cases has nothing to do with witchcraft, knows the medicines. If the patient improves after the prescribed sacrifices have been offered, it means that the sorcerer knows his business well; if not, it means that he has cheated.

758 Every self-respecting sorcerer must prescribe a negative treatment, in the sense of pointing out certain things the patient must not eat. Sometimes goat or chicken flesh is forbidden for the duration of the illness or permanently. Sometimes it is a certain kind of sauce, or millet or bean fritters. On the other hand, since the Mossi eat no eggs, especially not raw, and drink hardly any milk, they sustain the sick with plenty of millet beer and with an unappetizing mush of coarsely ground millet, often mixed with powdered charcoal. Patients have difficulty absorbing such a mixture and occasionally die of
755 starvation. Sometimes the sorcerer also indicates an amulet that

782 755 Then the sacrificer and his assistants eat the victim, but the patient does not partake of it.

782 751 [753] The silent sacrifice, mand'moukou—also called "egg sacrifice," mand'gellé, because an egg is offered—is made in the following circumstances. Some diseases have the dismal faculty of talking like people. They call someone, who answers to his name thinking that a human being has called him. This is sufficient, he will fall ill and die.

The sorcerer decrees that such a disease threatens the village, and that a silent sacrifice is in order. The naba and the elders anxiously delegate one of the men among them to offer the sacrifice. On the following day in the morning, the appointed elder takes an egg, often also a kola nut and special roots, and follows the path which the disease would take if it came to the village. He walks in complete silence. When he reaches a certain point, he brings the egg close to his lips and tells it secretly that a disease threatens the village, and that if the disease tries to follow this path, the egg must stop it. Then he places the egg, kola nut, and roots upon the ground or buries them and retraces his steps. /94/ The egg, a chicken-to-be that cannot yet talk, is chosen as a symbol of the silence that must be observed to ward off the disease.

In the procedure called "bad sacrifice," the victim is not eaten by those present but left on the spot, where it rots or is eaten by vultures and hyenas. Any animal may be offered in this fashion, but the sorcerer alone may decide when the sacrifice is called for. It is usually performed to avert a general misfortune, for example, to ward off a contagious disease that will devour the animal and leave the people alone. The victim is sometimes abandoned alive and driven into the bush.

782 Anything may be offered in sacrifice if the sorcerer says so: kola nuts, cowries, the ashes of certain barks or roots, red stones, the inner fruit of the karite tree, etc. Chickens are the victims most commonly chosen, but sacrifices of goats and sheep are not uncommon. We have already mentioned the guinea hen as the sacrifice preferred by the kikirsi. The nabas are sometimes required to sacrifice cows or donkeys in certain cases. Some nabas, but not all, may sacrifice horses. Finally, even men were sacrificed in the old days. Certain tangamma [563] were greedy for human sacrifices, and the Peul were often used for this purpose. Natives with light skins tending to red, thus closer to [826] the color of ancestral spirits which are said to be white, were sacrificed to these spirits in preference to any others.

spilled salt, /99/ four-leaf clovers, hares crossing the roadway, etc., been altogether eradicated by science?

No matter how things may stand among us, superstition reigns supreme among the Mossi. Amulets and talismans are greatly valued. Anything may contribute to their manufacture, from the highly prized head of a crowned crane to that of a hawk or a gray heron. Anything may be found in the numerous little bags which hang down a native's neck, from scraps of paper with a few words of Arabic scribbled upon them which Moslem Marabouts distribute in large numbers throughout the Sudan, to cowries or the ashes of every possible and imaginable root. There are amulet bracelets which are worn on the left arm and which protect against seuya sorcerers (see p. 127) if their wearer remembers to push them swiftly up his arm when meeting one of those dreadful soul-eaters. There are bracelets which protect people in fights, and iron rings which act as safeguards against snake bite. Do you want to be welcomed and accepted by the man whose daughter you wish to marry? Wear a certain bracelet on your right arm, and your hopes will come true.

Amulets are worn around the head, neck, arm, or wrist. They are sewn to the cap or to the clothes, attached to the belt, to the pipe, to the staff, anywhere. The list would be endless if we tried to enumerate all the various kinds of amulets. The shoulder blade of a beef fastened to the end of a stick and an iron chain stretched across the soukala entrance protect its inhabitants against a host of misfortunes and unpleasant nocturnal visitations. People consider themselves fortunate to possess such easy protection against the numerous spirits prowling for victims.

If you have dogs, watch them carefully. If they are so careless as to lie down or relieve themselves in a basket, or to vomit within the hut, kill them fast or you will die yourself. If your bitch bears only one puppy, kill her pitilessly. When the gray heron flies over the huts shrieking, mothers beat on their jars for fear that their children will get diarrhea. Hunters must not eat koba meat before they engage in their sport, and if they want to gain skill, they must secure certain roots, cook them in water, and wash their hands with the mixture.

Sunday is the day of the spirits, the day when koure is held. It is also a good day to build huts. There is nothing special about Monday, but you must be careful about Tuesday, for you never know what it

755 so that my heart may rejoice unceasingly. Then I will come back with another chicken, so that you too may rejoice and continue to protect my wives and my children." Then the sacrifice is concluded. This formula does indicate that the power of the medicine is wholly ascribed to God.

751 Certain superstitious practices that belong in the tim category are used in special cases. For the sake of curiosity, here is what is done when a man has killed a hyena and to protect the huts against lightning.

[828] If a man kills a hyena, he must hastily consult some other native who previously has killed one, or he will become raving mad. The hunter goes to such a man who knows a remedy against this raving madness and takes him a chicken. The man indicates which roots must be obtained, and the hunter gathers them in the bush. He cuts them to pieces and brings them to his doctor who seizes a jar, grabs the chicken, and pulls it toward the roots, then says while pouring water into the ar: "God-tim and his kikiriga, arise, stretch out your hand, and take this water to drink it; take this chicken to eat it, and grant the man who has killed a hyena not to become raving mad." He sacrifices the chicken and pours the blood into the pot. Then he puts half of the roots into the jar and reduces the other half to ashes.

The hunter takes the whole thing home, and for seven days he puts water from the medicine into his millet mush and ashes from the roots into his sauce.

On the seventh day all the family members get together and come with their friends to greet the hunter. They all toss cowries into the gourd which contains the medicine, then proceed to market with much ceremony. The hunter fastens the head of the hyena to the end of a staff and bears it triumphantly to market. He has /102/ the right to take pistachios, beans, millet, cakes, etc., free of charge, anything he wishes. When he is finished taking things, stealing like a hyena, the procession falls into line once more and proceeds to a thick tree near the market. There, the hunter drives his staff into the ground, and everybody starts dancing around him; then they take small sticks and strike him, and he hastily runs away. He is now sure that he will not become raving mad, and what is more from now on he may kill as many hyenas as he wishes without fear.

845 The birth of twins is a good omen when they are of different sex.
787 If they are of the same sex, however, it is a sign of approaching death for the father if they are girls, or for the mother if they are of the male sex. To conjure away this fate, a chicken is sacrificed.

853 Nursing. —When a woman is unable to nurse her child, another woman of the family is called in as a wet nurse, or, more simply, a goat is made to suckle the child. Both cases, however, are quite unusual.

854 Charms for children and tattooing. To protect the child from ill-
751 ness or accidents, a necklace with a charm containing the ashes of various shrubs is placed around its neck about two months after birth.

304 The child is tattooed two and a half or three years after birth. Old women are in charge of this operation. They trace out the lines for the scars on the child's face with a sharp little knife which is bent at the tip. Then they put a mixture of karite butter and powdered charcoal on the wounds to stop the flow of blood.

Tattooing is the same for all the Mossi of Yatenga without distinction of rank. It consists of three vertical scars on each cheek, an oblique one on either side of the face from the corner between the eye and nose to the base of the cheek, and two or three little ones in the middle of the forehead. /255/

854 The very young child. —As in all of the /French/ Sudan, the mother carries the child on her back, wrapped in a cloth that is knotted in front over or under the breasts. She goes thus everywhere, works, pounds millet, etc., with the child on her back.

853 When she wants to suckle it, she brings it to her side, astraddle one hip, and supports it with one arm. She does not put it on the ground unless she is in her hut or teaching it how to walk.

When the child is two or three, it stops nursing and is put on the ground.

857 Until they are four or five, the children run about the compound and around it. At that age, they begin to go out into the bush all by themselves and to play with the other little boys.

Children's games. —We shall deal with this subject under "Mode of Subsistence (hygiene, games, play)."

857 Familial education. —The boys, as soon as they reach the age of
868 five or six, go with their big brother and tend the goats in the bush. They also go and fetch firewood, straw, etc. When they are nine or ten, they begin to handle the daba /a field implement/. At eleven or twelve they are already doing men's work.

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of the testicles, until the day when a eunuch managed, no one knows how, to take advantage of some of the women he was supposed to be guarding. From then on it was deemed necessary to remove the penis completely, and a copper cartridge was inserted for purposes of urination.

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As soon as the person fainted after undergoing the operation, a drink was concocted whose ingredients are unknown. When he revived, he was so thirsty that he downed the drink in a single gulp. It is said that the drug stupefied the eunuch to such a degree that he would be incapable of taking vengeance even if he had any weapons at hand.

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It was only after he had completely recovered that the victim was sent to the Mogho Naba. The latter assigned him the duty of guarding a harem or a royal tomb.

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him to his house, seats him by his side, and announces to the populace that he has just been visited by his son (Koubri Naba is a descendant of the Mogho Naba).

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He then offers the crown prince a cow and a great deal of [103] beer, and then, before he leaves, the Djiba Naba has free access to the chief's household where he takes as a wife the first nubile girl he encounters. The stay at Koubri traditionally lasted for seven days, but it could be shortened to two or three in view of the great expense involved in entertaining a prince of such high rank, especially at the present time when the canton chiefs no longer enjoy their former prestige.

The Djiba Naba continues on his way to Kombissiri where he is the guest of the canton chief. For a week, in addition to his food which must, of course, be copious and abundant quantities of beer, the crown prince also receives a cow, a sheep, and, before his departure for Doulougou, a wife.

[i.e. canton chief — Analyst]

304 Wanzouri; and so on through Nodo, Koulwandé, Wemba, etc.
551 There is even the favorite who is called Ponsom because he is given special privileges.

Zouinsi yuiya (names of the guards of the kéogo and of those
304 who watch over the bankoensé). Seven days after the ceremony some of the zouinsi are chosen to supervise the kéogo, to take care of its organization and to arrange the games. A real hierarchy is involved, beginning with the Soré Naba ("chief of the path"), who is, so to speak, the head of the establishment, and proceeding down in order of [266] precedence through Sobila Naba, Dag'noré, and Dag'Nobila (gatekeepers). The role of the latter is to allow any zounga [singular of zouinsi] to re-enter the enclosure while preventing any of the circumcised boys from leaving the enclosure without their permission. The Galli and Gallibila are in charge of the drums. The Imam and the Imambilla ("chiefs of pardon") protect the bankoensé from ill-treatment by the zouinsi. Then there is Banzambo, a comic character who is always performing all sorts of dances to relieve the monotony of life in the kéogo and give the boys a little fun. His gyrations always amuse the company. The duty of two characters called Wagdré, "chief thief," and Wagd'billa, "little thief," is to steal the meat acquired by the newly circumcised boys during forays or the saghbo brought by the boys' parents. They compensate for their mischief, however, by putting the younger children to bed and feeding them when the games go on too long. They do this in spite of the vigilance of the guards.

The Nané and Nanebilla, along with the Bankoé, are the masters of ceremonies.

Support of the circumcised boys. As we have already pointed out, the relatives of the boys are expected to provide them with morning and evening meals during their recovery. Actually, the boys get very meager rations since more than half of the food -- after the choicest bits have been set aside by the lembré (person in charge of tasting the food)-- is reserved [267] for the many zouinsi. Since most of them are bachelors, they welcome a chance to eat their fill.

304 Care given the sick boys. A specially arranged corner of the
752 kéogo serves as an infirmary. Treatment consists of washing the

304 wound with warm water which often is not scrupulously clean
752 since the gourd in which it is kept is not always washed. The
[278] wound is dusted with a charred substance (made by burning the bark or leaves of the baguem-baga plant) mixed with karite butter. It is bandaged with a leaf from the kantonga bush, tied on with a bit of thread. Once the wound has begun to heal, it is wrapped in cotton strips. The water used to wash the wound is thrown into a hole that is covered with a stone.

304 Special language of the kéogo. In order to prevent the Moaga
198 (here meaning an uncircumcised person) from understanding what is said within the kéogo or between the boys and the guards, a special language has been developed. Some of its words are as follows:

Water (kom in ordinary Mossi language), hargo;
Millet cake (saghbo in Mossi), lâbo;
Sauce (zindo in Mossi), kirou;
Fire (bougoum in Mossi), nionom;
Beer (dam in Mossi), sonnom;
A robe or blanket (fougou in Mossi), pilli;
Mat (pinri in Mossi), wanghé. [268]

304 Distinctive attire of the circumcised boys (bankoanga). His
292 costume, wallimba or zougba, consists of a fringed loincloth with pockets. He carries a rough stick (zâbré) with which he hunts rabbits and other small game.

He accompanies his evening dance with an instrument called
304 wassimba, a curved stick on the end of which are strung four or
293 five pieces of gourd, roughly circular in shape, with holes bored through them.

304 Tom-toms. The bankoensé (newly circumcised boys) dance
534 to the beat of two drums like those used in the warba and waongo
535 (see the chapter on native dances). The drums are called gangango when they accompany other dances, but here they are called gallyans.

304 Prohibitions in the kéogo. A Moaga (1) is strictly forbidden

1. "Moaga" is used here in a pejorative sense and means an uncircumcised man.

224 Mossi as to us the king of beasts, the master of the bush (wé' naba), and they attack it only if it has killed a man.

These hunters make their own powder with ground charcoal and 224 saltpeter extracted from earth soaked with urine. This earth is washed 389 carefully, and a residue of saltpeter crystals is left when the liquid evaporates. Usually no sulphur is added because it is too costly. This powder burns well, and when made carefully it is quite effective. The hunters keep it in small gourds or ram horns; they only make a little at a time. Hard pebbles are used as bullets.

224 The natives know how to disguise themselves skillfully, and they only shoot at very close range when the animal is not moving. They often lie in wait for hours on end, sometimes for the whole night. They know the habits of the animals and the water holes where they come to drink, and they build small huts with branches or dig holes where they hid under foliage. Others more ingeniously build a vast funnel-shaped trap, its open base sometimes one or even two kilometers long; the sides of equal length consist of thorn fences, and the tip of the funnel, which is located near a thick tree, leaves barely enough space for the animal to pass through. The hunter takes his position up in the tree with bow and arrows and settles comfortably because he may have to wait a long time. Unsuspecting animals follow the thorn fence and come to the tree where they are killed. The hunters manage to fell some handsome game in this fashion, even elephants, in spite of their very primitive weapons.

/50/ Professional hunters, those who always have adventures to relate and who say like those of Tarascon that they never miss a shot, such true hunters are rare, but those who hunt as a pastime are as numerous as the Mossi themselves. A Mossi never goes out without [411] a stick. When asked why he does so, he answers that it is to kill ● 752 snakes, which — alas! — take so many victims, and to drive off dogs; and then, "I might find a hare or some other animal in the bush, and [231] what would I kill it with if I didn't have a stick?" Many of them have dogs which are truly not very ferocious, but they are poorly fed and preserve all their agility. A Mossi on his way to the fields or walking from one village to another always keeps his ears and eyes open; he is on the lookout for meat! Since he does not have many ideas, he is seldom absorbed in his thoughts or absent-minded.

The season we are now studying is the time of large-scale hunting. Several villages get together and set a date and a meeting place.

1 [i.e. February - April. - Analyst]

753 /66/ This is because illness is usually attributed to an evil spirit,
761 which must not be irked with complaints. Yet in everyday language it is God who is the cause of everything, of health as well as of death. The sorcerers consulted indicate which spirit must be appeased, to whom sacrifices must be offered; or they state quite frankly that the hour of the sick person has come, that his life is over and he is about to rejoin his ancestors, for it is often the latter who call him and come to fetch him. In the case of old men and especially of old women, death is considered a natural event. An old man has many children who will give him a fine funeral, and it is time for him to make way for his eldest son. If a quarrelsome person falls sick, his illness is often attributed to an evil spell cast by an enemy. When
[763] an elder is about to die, those who have caused him offense come to beg his forgiveness and only find peace when they have obtained it, for the old man might return to obtain his revenge. Sudden death is usually ascribed to poison and, alas, this is often the case. Sometimes it is also attributed to an evil spirit, especially in case of accident, fall, snake bite, etc.

755 The instinct of self-preservation is so strong in man that the Mossi,
757 although they ascribe a superhuman origin to illness, nevertheless, fight it. It is true that all their treatments combine medicinal and superstitious elements to drive off evil spirits, and whatever the remedy, true medicine or amulet, it is always a tim; there is only the one
759 word to designate it. Some of the natives know how to treat certain illnesses, and people come to consult them, often from far away. One has a medicine against snakes, and he makes it in complete secrecy on a certain day; one knows how to treat colds and bronchitis;
[752] another, dysentery; yet another, sores. The bone-setters are often very skillful, and with the mere pressure of their fingers they can set a dislocated joint or a broken leg; then they enclose it between tightly-bound millet stalks as a splint. These doctors prescribe remedies without resorting to sacrifices or witchcraft. Sometimes they live with their patient to care for him, of course for a fee, especially if the person gets well.

751 Smallpox vaccination is performed, but often too late, on individuals who already have the germ. The vaccine is taken from a seriously ill person without any precautionary antiseptic measures. The vaccinated individual is usually made very sick and sometimes dies of

789 Blessings and curses are also used. Should they be classed with the cult, or with magic? One way or the other, there are natives who have the power to kill anyone merely by saying a word. They can make the harvest wither, the cattle sicken. There are also some who can bless, make a trip propitious, an undertaking successful. If you
752 are wounded, go to them. They will put around the wounded part of
755 your body a greasy rope with three or four knots according to your sex;
801 there will be no swelling, and the wound will heal quickly.

782 Such are the major sacrifices and the practices of the cult. The
769 sacrifices offered to the spirits of the dead on the day of burial or on
796 the day of kouré have not been mentioned, because the animals offered are not properly speaking sacrificed (kou mando) but offered, presented, fabré. We shall now mention the sacrifices made on the Day of the Dead.

The Koupéla Mossi have two major feast days: the Day of the Dead or basra, and the Moslem sheep celebration called kibsa. Both are intimate family affairs.

Basra is the feast of the dead. On that day every family head must offer sacrifices to his ancestral spirits, and he alone may sacrifice upon the grave. Even if a member of the family has become powerful and wealthy, he will not offer the sacrifice which devolves by right to the family head. All members of the family who wish to offer a sacrifice on the ancestral grave must, therefore, go to their elder on that day. Anyone may sacrifice to the kikirsi and tangandé, and almost everyone does at this time. It is mainly on this occasion that little children may be seen gravely sacrificing their chicken to their kikirsi and to the tangandé; each makes it a point of honor to offer his own animal. Only chickens are sacrificed on that day.

Basra is not celebrated by every family on the same day. Some celebrate it before the province chief does, others after him, while most families do it on the same day he does.

/96/ The naba of Koupéla proceeds as described below, and the ceremonies are the same for his subjects with the sole difference that being less wealthy they cannot offer as many sacrifices. The basra is always celebrated by the naba on a Saturday. Already on Thursday he has taken non-fermented beer from the vats and poured it on the graves of his father and grandfather. He has also sacrificed a chicken on each of the tombs. Wherever an ancestor of the naba is buried, the guardian of the grave sacrifices a chicken. This is repeated on

789 A number of grigris made by Mossi timisoba have passed
791 through my hands. I shall list them and briefly describe them below.

1. A cow's tail at the tip of a wooden handle. When one is travelling during the winter season and a storm threatens, one need only wave the cow's tail and the storm does not burst. Once in the village, one stops waving it and the rain comes.

2. A hollow koba horn in which tamarind leaves, peanuts, and
[757] gum have been placed. In case of headache one opens the horn by its small upper lid, takes /592/ a pinch of the mixture, and swallows it. Then one does this again and also rubs a little on the forehead.

3. A small hoe with a chicken's head fastened to the handle. When during a dance one wishes to silence a singer who has been singing too long in order to sing oneself, one grips the hoe and covers the chicken's mouth. The singer is silenced, and in addition one sings perfectly.

4. A small hoe covered with leopardskin at the bend. If one is
[752] bitten by a snake, one cuts off a very small piece of the skin and puts it in a canari full of water. Then one rubs the bite with this water.

5. A deer horn with a fine red cord wrapped around it. Inside the horn there are tiégélara and karité seeds. The opening of the horn is closed with a wad of cotton.

If an enemy comes looking for a fight, one places some of the contents of the horn on a leather bracelet which is slipped on the left wrist. No harm can come to you, and the quarrel will immediately come to an end.

6. A deer horn containing crushed scorpions and pimento. If one wishes to become an indefatigable dancer, one need only rub one's back with the mixture.

7. Leather bracelets with powdered rice inside. People who wear one of those bracelets on the arm can be sure that the stick or sword which their enemy may attempt to use against them will break in his hands.

8. Iron bracelets covered with crocodile skin. Same purpose.

9. Cotton bracelets with honey and salt inside. If your wife
[842] is sterile, it is sufficient to put the bracelet in water in order to make her fertile.

789 10. A deer horn covered with leather and containing millet and
791 pounded-bean flour. On the outside there is a hooked piece of iron.
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304 881 notified, nor are the family heads. The women, girls, and other boys (those who are not to be circumcised) cannot witness the operation, and this is actually forbidden to them. Circumcision is performed in the bush, 500 meters from the village, in the open air by the side of a tree. There is no location determined by custom, however, and a spot is chosen each year at will.

The man who is performing the operation ties the tip of the patient's prepuce with a string /259/, and the boy squats down. A small block of wood is placed under the penis, and the tip of the penis rests upon it. The man places a small iron cleaver on the spot marked by the string, and deals it a sharp, neat blow with a stone, so the blade will make a clean cut. Naturally, a copious hemorrhage ensues. It is [752] first allowed to take its course for a while, and then the man stanches it by putting dust upon the wound. Each child is circumcised in turn. When the operations are over, the man who was chosen, the nané, leads the circumcised boys to another spot, 500 meters from the village, under a tree. He has the heads of the children's families notified (and they notify in turn the children's parents) that the boys have just been circumcised and beg forgiveness for having done this without telling them. Family heads, fathers, and mothers naturally forgive in accordance with custom. Meanwhile, the boys are taking care of themselves. By tying a string around the body, they lift the penis so its tip will not rub against the thighs. The string holds another cord which lifts the penis in a horizontal position. To maintain it in this position, they also place under the penis a little piece of forked wood, the tip of which rests on the testicles. They do not dress the wounds as yet. This will not be done until three days have passed.

304 342 881 Meanwhile, the men of the circumcised boys' compounds build two sheds in Mossi style (low, on forks, with a thick straw roof), one outside the village where the young men are, the other inside the village in front of the compound of the nané. Food for the circumcised boys is provided by their families. Each mother makes sarabou for her son, but the mothers do not bring it themselves, for, being women, they are not permitted to see the newly-circumcised boys. They send the sarabou through some boy who has already been circumcised. In the evening when it is quite dark, around seven o'clock, the nané brings the children to sleep under the shed erected in the village. Before daybreak in the morning they will, like shadows, leave again for the bush.

304 At the end of three days, the nané sends a few circumcised boys of
824 preceding years, rasamba, to look in the bush for bark of the néré,
752 karite, n'pékou, and the n'kouna trees. He has them boiled in a large
881 canari and then allows the water to cool until it is lukewarm. Then he calls the bankonsé (this is the name of the newly circumcised boys in Mossi, bankonka in the singular, bankonsé in the plural) and orders them to wash their penes in this water. At the same time he has the leaves of the kantoboga boiled. This is an aloe-type plant of which we have already spoken /not translated/. When this washing is done, the bankonsé smear their penes with cow butter (karite butter is avoided because it is believed to soften the penis and to make it less virile), and then, after cutting kantoboga leaves into pieces, they wrap them around the member, forming a sort of sheath. These leaves are wrapped with cotton thread so they will stay in place. /260/

From then on, the same procedure is repeated every morning and every evening. The bankonsé undo the bandage, wash with néré or karite water, apply fresh butter and new kantoboga leaves. This is done until the wounds are healed.

Néré water, once prepared, keeps for seven days. The supply of kantoboga leaves is renewed only when there are no more on hand.

304 The bankonsé do not stir for the first three days. From the third
883 to the tenth day, they begin to take a little exercise. For example,
881 they fetch whatever water they need. At the end of ten days, they walk about in the bush, fetch firewood which they stack in piles, and do the same with straw. In the open country they chase hares, rats, and snakes with sticks, in short, all the small game which is to be found there. When there is water in the vicinity, they fish for frogs and fish. They also pick berries from bushes, etc.

[292] Their clothing consists of a kind of skirt which goes down to their ankles and which is made of old garments torn to shreds, of frayed cotton bands.

In the evening from time to time the bankonsé have tom-tom sessions near the shed where they sleep in the village. The griot /drummers, minstrels/ come and play on their instruments. Since this is done at night, men, women, and children may attend.

304 The bankonsé are entitled to ransack the bush and to take every-
425 thing they find: chickens, goats, sheep, cotton, etc. The owners
881 have no right to object, but this applies only to small livestock. The bankonsé have no right to larger animals and horses.

11; Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28

567 643 651 [464] [439] Naba Baongo (ca. 1800–30) decided that it was more profitable to sell them.[16] Subsequent rulers, especially the two Mogho Nanamse who ruled just prior to the French conquest, sold most of their captives to passing caravans or in special sections of the larger markets. When other persons sold slaves in the market, the Raga Naba collected some 1,000 cowries on each transaction—the largest tax on any market commodity.

567 839 The Mossi rulers seem to have benefited even more from the sale of eunuchs, for they had a monopoly over them. The Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou sent some captured slaves and all recidivous thieves to Teemetenga village in Koubri district, some 13 miles south of the capital, to be [752] operated upon.[17] So successful were the Mossi surgeons that—in contrast to specialists in other areas, who lost nine lives for every successful castration—the mortality among the Mossi was only one out of ten.[18] Some of [439] the eunuchs furnished by the Mossi were sold as far away as Constantinople, a fact which surprised the French ambassador to Turkey who saw [195] them there in 1900.[19]

566 643 563 621 In addition to slaves and eunuchs, the Mogho Naba kept a large number of bondsmen to provide services for him. One group, the Dapore, lived in a ward of the capital called Dapoya, and had a chief, the Dapore Naba, who was himself a Dapore. The origin of these people is obscure, but they seem to have been the children of foreign captives who were brought to Ouagadougou and placed in the ruler's service. Some of them even claimed that their ancestors had come to Ouagadougou voluntarily and had placed themselves under the care and protection of the ruler. This seems unlikely, however, since the status of these people resembles that of persons captured by Sudanese rulers and installed in special wards as serfs.[20] Some of the Dapore lived in villages of their own and cultivated fields for the Mogho Naba. Others lived in a ward of Ouagadougou, served in the [839] palace household, and provided the royal executioners. Some were selected to serve as palace eunuchs, and placed under the charge of the Kamsaogho [567] Naba. The Dapore were hardly ever sold unless they were convicted criminals. The Mogho Naba and his chiefs refrained from selling serfs or captives who had been born in Mossi country. However, they often claimed the sons and daughters of these people as pages or pughsiudse.

The Baglere made up the second group of bondsmen providing services for the Mogho Naba. They, too, lived in a special ward and were headed by the Baglere Naba, one of their own people. Their origin is also obscure: some of them claimed to be descended from Fulani slaves who had run away from their masters and sought asylum in Mossi country; others believed that they were the descendants of foreign captives. The Baglere

843 A woman's role is to bear children. When she knows that she is pregnant, she no longer consents to come to her husband, but she is careful not to inform him of her state; if she told him, the child would die. If her parents happen to pass away during her pregnancy, she does not go into mourning and does not attend the funeral. If she is newly wed and has not yet borne children, one of the other wives of her husband, or, if there are none, the husband's sister, comes at night to sprinkle the husband and wife with water. The young wife will henceforth call this woman her husband, prepare millet mush for her, and heat the water in which she washes. When the pregnancy begins to show, one of the wife's female relatives consults the sorcerer [782] to find out which sacrifice should be offered so that all will go well, but the husband is not informed of this consultation. Sometimes the sacrifice is repeated when the birth draws near. When the first baby 851 is born, the husband sends a child to his wife's relatives with a rooster or a hen depending on the newborn's sex. The child tosses the bird into the yard without saying a word and runs away; everybody understands.

847 /40/ A child born deformed, lame, or blind is done away with; 845 it is simply drowned without further ado if considered incurable. In 732 olden times, twins were often drowned also because their birth entails 761 difficulties for the family, who must offer special sacrifices; some- 753 times only one of them was done away with. If they are spared and die a natural death, the mother wears a small bell at her ankle until the anniversary of the death (koure). If the mother happens to die or the father becomes ill, the sorcerer need only say so and the children are put to death, because they are said to have caused the illness or death of their parents. A baby who could barely walk was once brought by relatives to the Koupéla Fathers. He had been born on a Friday and his mother had died; that was sufficient to call for his sacrifice. His relatives tried unsuccessfully to poison him; they exposed him for three days in the bush, and the child did not die. As a last resort they brought him to the missionaries, who hastened to shelter him. Children recognized as insane are abandoned in the bush where they die of hunger.

732 It is only fair to add, however, that these barbarous practices 845 reminiscent of Sparta are not invariably followed. Several lame and incurably ill children are carefully tended by their parents, and some twins born prior to the French occupation are alive and in good health.

753 /66/ This is because illness is usually attributed to an evil spirit,
761 which must not be irked with complaints. Yet in everyday language it is God who is the cause of everything, of health as well as of death. The sorcerers consulted indicate which spirit must be appeased, to whom sacrifices must be offered; or they state quite frankly that the hour of the sick person has come, that his life is over and he is about to rejoin his ancestors, for it is often the latter who call him and come to fetch him. In the case of old men and especially of old women, death is considered a natural event. An old man has many children who will give him a fine funeral, and it is time for him to make way for his eldest son. If a quarrelsome person falls sick, his illness is often attributed to an evil spell cast by an enemy. When
[763] an elder is about to die, those who have caused him offense come to beg his forgiveness and only find peace when they have obtained it, for the old man might return to obtain his revenge. Sudden death is usually ascribed to poison and, alas, this is often the case. Sometimes it is also attributed to an evil spirit, especially in case of accident, fall, snake bite, etc.

755 The instinct of self-preservation is so strong in man that the Mossi,
757 although they ascribe a superhuman origin to illness, nevertheless fight it. It is true that all their treatments combine medicinal and superstitious elements to drive off evil spirits, and whatever the remedy, true medicine or amulet, it is always a tim; there is only the one
759 word to designate it. Some of the natives know how to treat certain illnesses, and people come to consult them, often from far away. One has a medicine against snakes, and he makes it in complete secrecy on a certain day; one knows how to treat colds and bronchitis;
[752] another, dysentery; yet another, sores. The bone-setters are often very skillful, and with the mere pressure of their fingers they can set a dislocated joint or a broken leg; then they enclose it between tightly-bound millet stalks as a splint. These doctors prescribe remedies without resorting to sacrifices or witchcraft. Sometimes they live with their patient to care for him, of course for a fee, especially if the person gets well.

751 Smallpox vaccination is performed, but often too late, on individuals who already have the germ. The vaccine is taken from a seriously ill person without any precautionary antiseptic measures. The vaccinated individual is usually made very sick and sometimes dies of

776 Wintoro at noon when it scorches the earth (Winniga toro). It must be
821 added, however, that sometimes the sun is called Na /Naba/ Wendé, "God-king." At night God is supposed to retire into his hut, since the sun is no longer visible, and yet he continues to be everywhere. "If you commit an offense during the night, God knows about it." The Mossi are likely to say when the sun stands at the zenith, "It is God who makes the sun scorch us today." Thus they do seem, in practice, to make a distinction between God and the sun. The sun is God's dwelling, but it is not God. But what inconsistency in all this!

Natural phenomena are sometimes attributed to God. Lightning kills those who have done evil, it kills livestock wrongly obtained through fraud or theft, and it is sent in punishment by God ... unless it is sent by an enemy. Amulets and fetishes derive their power from
776 God, as already mentioned, and the same applies to medicinal remedies. Illness is usually attributed to an evil spirit who must be
[753] appeased, but sometimes it is also attributed to God. The Mossi do not seem to grant a soul to inanimate objects, but only to animate beings: plants, animals, men. Yet, as a rule, inexplicable or abnormal phenomena are attributed to spirits dwelling in inanimate objects.

There are three kinds of spirits: the tisé (plural of tiga, "tree"), who dwell exclusively in trees; the kikirsi (plural of kikiriga), or spirits proper; and the tangamma (plural of tangandé), the protective spirits of the villages who dwell in sacred groves.

The tisé reside preferably in those trees which stand near the huts, but some of them also dwell in the bush. They have a special liking for the tamarind tree and bastard mahogany, but they are not at all fond of the doubalé, which shelters bats. At night they leave their dwelling and go into the huts. Their bodies are human in form, but invisible to the common run of mankind. They are much taller and fatter than men, and they are black and walk with their feet up in the air and their heads down to the ground.

At night they wander about, and their presence is betrayed by a
776 darkening of the doorway; they are so fat that they blot out the light.
753 Woe to the man who has no water in his soukala, who has saved no millet beer! The tiga who comes and finds nothing causes pimples to grow all over the man's body; this is the illness characteristic of the tisé. He is fortunate if he gets away with so little, for the tisé can afflict him with many other diseases or even kill him. If the tiga manages to touch someone, the place touched will swell; if someone

776 makes noise in the bush under certain leafy trees, his cheeks will swell
753 out. The tisé talk, even during the day. It is their voices which are heard when the wind stirs the leaves. We had /81/ papaw seeds planted all around our dwelling. They had sprouted and grown well; the fruit was already ripening. One morning, no papaw trees were left in
[824] Koupéla! The naba had decreed that these were talking trees, that they would cause illness to those who had them in their soukala ... and the papaws had been cut down!

776 Fortunately, it is possible to protect oneself against the tisé. First,
782 those trees which shelter them may be felled, and the spirits will move elsewhere. Some very beautiful trees vanish thus from the villages. The tisé may also be appeased with sacrifices. Does this result in tree cult, dendrolatry? Indeed not! The Mossi clearly make the distinction between the tree and the spirit that inhabits it, and they sacrifice to the spirit. Sometimes also, a tree was planted on the
[769] grave of the elder who founded the village, and sacrifices are made to the ancestral spirit at the foot of the tree. Finally, there are fetishes more powerful than the tisé. It is enough to know which roots and barks the tisé do not like, to steep them in water, and to place the pot at the door of the hut. When a tiga sees this fetish, he invariably runs away. Some Peul are said to have the power to distinguish between those trees where spirits dwell and those where they do not, and to kill the former trees merely by rubbing them with butter! This must be done in a special way.

776 The kikirsi are imps, red or black all over, and only a few centi-
754 meters high. Their body has the same shape as ours, but it is much nimbler and more tenuous—something ethereal and impalpable that only the sorcerers can discern. The latter call them with a low whistle or by shaking a peculiarly shaped gourd that looks like a handle
[534] ending in a sphere. This gourd is dried without being opened, and the seeds gather in the sphere. The sorcerer makes noise by shaking this instrument, and the kikirsi flock to him singing.

776 There are good and evil kikirsi, and the good ones only do evil when forced to do so; for instance, when someone puts pepper in their sauce. They abhor pepper but they love honey, and every good housewife who wishes to preserve her honey covers it carefully with pepper to prevent the kikirsi from eating it. They are inordinately fond of sesame, and they dote on millet cakes (samsa); every woman who makes millet cakes offers them a few. People who eat samsa while walking are careful to drop a few crumbs to the ground. On the

776 other hand, the kikirsi do not drink fermented millet beer, but they must be offered some before the yeast (da'nodo) is added. They have their preferences like human beings. They know hatred and jealousy, and sometimes they even kill one another. They are said to have two 776 sexes, to marry, and to procreate. They even have the special faculty 845 of always bearing twins, and this is why twins are called by their 551 name and are dedicated to them; it is believed that spirits dwell within them.

776 The birth of twins causes their mother much trouble. Formerly 845 both were sometimes put to death, while at other times only one was killed. When a woman bears twins, she builds at the door of her hut 782 a tiny miniature house where the spirits dwelling /82/ within her children will take shelter. Three times a year if her means allow it, in the spring, in the winter, and at the height of the rainy season, or at least once a year, a guinea hen must be offered to the kikirsi. This fowl is sacrificed exclusively to them. On that day they must also be offered their favorite foods, and this means that honey, sesame, and millet cakes must be purchased, that beer must be prepared and a jar saved without yeast, that millet mush has to be cooked, and especially that no pepper be added to the sauce. Otherwise the husband, wife, or children will be afflicted with a dreadful eye disease, for [753] such is the illness which the kikirsi have the power of visiting on human beings.

776 As children, twins may wear only the kankabra, a garment made 845 of black and whitish threads, the characteristic clothing of the kikirsi. Happily, they are later allowed to dress as they please. If the mother dies, the twins offer the sacrifices themselves and build the small hut that serves as a dwelling for their little spirit. The later born twin is considered the older of the two. They both wear the same bracelet and share everything given to them. It is not considered proper to make a gift to one without giving the same thing to the other. Actually, these customs are to be found in Africa from Bambara country to Tanganyika.

776 To return to the kikirsi themselves, they are present everywhere. In the bush they are fond of termite nests, large and small. They 241 also like open spaces. They are to be found around the villages; there are ponds set apart for the kikirsi, wells considered to belong to them. There are spirits watching over every field, and before sowing, as also before harvesting millet, the master of the field sacrifices a chicken to the spirit on a stone in the middle of the field. The

774 828 761 In the course of a dream, the soul may warn its owner of a threatening danger. One day a native, whose village and name were told to me, dreamed that his enemy offered him a kola nut. Much anxiety ensued, for this is a sign used by the soul to indicate that an enemy threatens one with death. In such a case there is only one remedy, to deposit a few cowries on a nest of large red ants, so they will avert the disaster. The man set out immediately for the nearest ant nest. Alas, a snake bit him along the way, and he died before he could offer his gift to the ants! Such occurrences obviously make a profound imprint on the imagination of the natives, who immediately react with the sophism: post hoc, propter hoc. A few such cases are sufficient to anchor them forever in their superstitions, and innumerable such occurrences were related to me.

774 761 If the soul can leave the body, it is possible to seize it and to prevent it from re-entering its body, and this is why our Blacks do not like to be photographed. They say that there is an evil spirit in the box, who takes the soul and eats it. This is proved by the fact that the individual may later be seen on the piece of paper.

774 753 One becomes sick when his soul cannot re-enter the body because it is held prisoner by an evil sorcerer or by a kikiriga, and many sacrifices must be offered to obtain its release /86/ and return. Entreaties are usually directed to the tangandé in such cases, because it is stronger than all the other spirits, stronger even than the sorcerers, and because its function is to protect the village.

774 761 754 775 Sometimes the soul was so well hidden that the tangandé cannot find it: the sorcerer has eaten it right away, or the tangandé itself is in collusion; or the ancestral spirits are calling the sick person; or, finally, it is God who sent the disease. Nothing can be done, and the person dies. His soul changes names, and henceforth is called kyma. It leaves the body at the moment of death. If it was taken by a sorcerer or by the ancestral spirits, at the moment of death it leaves the sacred grove where it was held captive. It proceeds to the place of souls from where it will return to the grave whenever sacrifices are offered to it. It will also return if it wishes to afflict the survivors with a disease of some sort.

775 735 Is the soul punished for the evil it has done on earth and rewarded for the good? Opinions on the subject differ. Some say that when one gives alms to the poor, and the Mossi frequently do, when one is generous and hospitable, God takes all that has been given and sets

784 born among the Peul, to whom dog flesh is forbidden, may have the
262 dog as kisgou. Sometimes the kisgou concerns only him, his son, and grandson and not his other descendants, because the son and grandson will follow his own soul, while the soul of the other descendants will follow that of his mother, their great-grandmother, to whom dog flesh is not forbidden. A sorcerer's reasoning against which there is no argument!

/89/ This kind of kisgou is the more binding of the two, but it may be terminated if the person who established it offers the proper sacrifices, or if one of his descendants, of his own will, releases himself and his children from it. Thus the family of the Saman'Naba, Prime Minister of Koupéla, has the hare as kisgou. When the naba saw his Christian brothers and son eat hare flesh with impunity, without becoming blind or leprous, he took to eating it himself without ill effects.

784 Parents teach their children about the various family kisgou and
869 instill the proper awe into them so they will not eat these animals.
753 Involuntary disregard of one's kisgou may lead to illness, and the sorcerer consulted indicates what has to be done and what sacrifice must be offered to the tangandé to obtain his forgiveness. If the slip was deliberate, if it showed contempt, no forgiveness is possible.

784 The second kind of kisgou is quite special and personal. It consists
758 of the various prohibitions imposed by the sorcerers on a sick person.
262 A certain kind of meat or sauce is forbidden to the patient, or he may not drink water containing millet flour, or he may not eat millet or bean cakes. This is how a poor rachitic child with a heart disease was successively forbidden practically every kind of food. His relatives had the greatest difficulty finding those foods that were not forbidden to him, and eventually he died of starvation. All such kisgou terminate of course with the illness that caused them, unless the disease is incurable and lasts to the end of the patient's life.

Chapter 2. The Cult

000 If we define religion with Mgr. Le Roy (1) as "The body of beliefs,

1. Mgr. Le Roy, op. cit., p. 49.

782 755 Then the sacrificer and his assistants eat the victim, but the patient does not partake of it.

782 751 [753] The silent sacrifice, mand'moukou—also called "egg sacrifice," mand'gellé, because an egg is offered—is made in the following circumstances. Some diseases have the dismal faculty of talking like people. They call someone, who answers to his name thinking that a human being has called him. This is sufficient, he will fall ill and die.

The sorcerer decrees that such a disease threatens the village, and that a silent sacrifice is in order. The naba and the elders anxiously delegate one of the men among them to offer the sacrifice. On the following day in the morning, the appointed elder takes an egg, often also a kola nut and special roots, and follows the path which the disease would take if it came to the village. He walks in complete silence. When he reaches a certain point, he brings the egg close to his lips and tells it secretly that a disease threatens the village, and that if the disease tries to follow this path, the egg must stop it. Then he places the egg, kola nut, and roots upon the ground or buries them and retraces his steps. /94/ The egg, a chicken-to-be that cannot yet talk, is chosen as a symbol of the silence that must be observed to ward off the disease.

In the procedure called "bad sacrifice," the victim is not eaten by those present but left on the spot, where it rots or is eaten by vultures and hyenas. Any animal may be offered in this fashion, but the sorcerer alone may decide when the sacrifice is called for. It is usually performed to avert a general misfortune, for example, to ward off a contagious disease that will devour the animal and leave the people alone. The victim is sometimes abandoned alive and driven into the bush.

782 Anything may be offered in sacrifice if the sorcerer says so: kola nuts, cowries, the ashes of certain barks or roots, red stones, the inner fruit of the karite tree, etc. Chickens are the victims most commonly chosen, but sacrifices of goats and sheep are not uncommon. We have already mentioned the guinea hen as the sacrifice preferred by the kikirsi. The nabas are sometimes required to sacrifice cows or donkeys in certain cases. Some nabas, but not all, may sacrifice horses. Finally, even men were sacrificed in the old days. Certain tangamma [563] were greedy for human sacrifices, and the Peul were often used for this purpose. Natives with light skins tending to red, thus closer to [826] the color of ancestral spirits which are said to be white, were sacrificed to these spirits in preference to any others.

Respect Due the Home of the Naba

554 The kombéré is absolute master of his territory. His subjects must show him the same deference as he himself shows to the Mogho Naba.

However, even though he is not a noble, a minister of the emperor need not remove his cap to respond to the salute of a kombéré. On the contrary, the latter is required to humble himself, to give way before him just as he would before the Mogho Naba.

644 The nabiga (son of a naba), nakomsé (descendants of naba) and, still more, an ordinary Moaga are all categorically forbidden to wear their shoes or their caps at the court of the naba. The only exception to the rule is when the person is a Moslem convert, but even then he always leaves his shoes at the door. He may, however, wear his cap or turban. Shoes and headgear may be put on again only after the subject is 300 meters from the house of the naba. Sometimes, in places where custom is rigorously enforced, the person must be out of sight.

[687] Any infraction of these rules was punished severely by the lash and by confiscation of property by the samand'kamba of the naba [110] when the offender was not of the nobility, that is, was neither nabiga nor nakombga.

291 It is interesting to note that wearing the fez, originally one of the badges of chiefdom, was forbidden to the nabiga and all the more to the talga (ordinary Moaga). Today it is commonly worn by men and youths since European traders and shops have made common an article which was once very rare.

576 Shaking hands. One seldom sees a naba extend his hand to one
443 of his subjects or, more especially, to his brothers or fellow nobles (nakomsé).

There are two reasons for this prohibition: 1) the naba is supposed to maintain a certain distance between himself and his subjects, a normal practice; and 2) a superstitious belief has it that persons [154] harboring evil intentions toward the chief put magic powders on their hands to cause swellings which may develop into real abscesses.

562 girl is used to pay debts; a man borrows on the promise of giving his
584 daughter in marriage. She will be handed over, often with no bride
567 price other than the borrowed sum; and, contrary to the custom noted above, since she is considered a slave, her first daughter does not belong to the grandfather. A girl may also be given in exchange for her enslaved brother or uncle, who thus recovers his freedom. A man may be seriously ill and call a doctor who agrees to treat him on the condition that the patient's daughter be given to him if he gets well. The father does recover, and the girl is given in marriage to the fortunate doctor. Exchange of daughters also takes place: a native may give his daughter in marriage to another, who in turn gives him his own.

562 A girl is given in marriage by her mother only if she was born out
584 of wedlock, and her father is thus theoretically unknown. The sisters
848 of certain nabas are the only ones permitted to choose their husbands
[554] according to their own wishes and to leave them when they please.
593 The fickle existence they lead is easy to imagine! In all other cases the girl is given in marriage by her father, or by his heir if the father is dead. (1) The mother is not consulted, but since she cares for the

[754]

1. It would be onerous and indeed impossible to list all the various situations that may arise. The sorcerers quite often interfere, and who knows what goes through a sorcerer's mind! One case among many: a woman bore a daughter after raising several others who died immediately following marriage; the father consulted the sorcerer to find out whether he should promise this last daughter in marriage. The sorcerer stated that she must be left free to choose her own husband, or else she would die like her sisters. The father left her free.

daughter until the latter marries, she may through advice, promises, or even threats dissuade her from a certain match /29/ or welcome her if she runs away from a husband to whom she was given against her will.

755 must be procured. The leaf used to cover a wound must be held by means of a thin cotton cord with cowries attached at the end, three cowries for a boy, four for a girl. A hemp cord with three or four knots, worn around the neck, wrist, or any other part of the body, prevents swelling of that part and is also a master remedy against hair worms. Sometimes it is not so easy to secure the prescribed amulet, for instance, if it is the beak or claw of a hawk, a deer horn, or certain parts of a buffalo or koba. The poor Mossi goes to great pains to find this indispensable amulet.

763 Do as he may, sooner or later he must die. When an old man feels that his end is near, he calls his family and gives them his last instructions. He talks to his eldest son and tells him where his cattle and caches are to be found, who are his debtors and creditors. Sometimes death comes swiftly without warning, and the old man has no time to talk to his heir; a large part of the fortune is thus lost, because a Mossi in good health never tells anybody, especially not his /68/ children, where his property is, and those to whom he has entrusted it do not return it. Some Peul have made rather nice profits in this fashion.

761 The death of a young man or woman or more especially that of a small child is usually ascribed to an old woman who is said to have 754 eaten the child's soul, and some old women claim to have this secret. [683] The sorcerer points out the guilty woman who is seized and put to death. Every sudden or accidental death is ascribed to an evil spirit, and the funeral ceremonies reflect this.

762 Suicide is extremely rare, but it does occur. Here is one case where we knew the participants. A man quarreled with his wife. The wife, who was stronger than her husband, overwhelmed him in the fight, and the neighbors openly ridiculed him. The following day the husband was found hanging in his hut. A pit was hastily dug [766] in his nearest field, and he was tossed into it naked without further ceremony. Suicide is regarded as a criminal act, and even the corpse is punished for it.

763 Like all human beings, the Mossi fear death. No longer to eat millet mush or to drink dolo seems to them the greatest of misfortunes. Still, when a Mossi sees death approaching, he resigns himself to it and accepts it stoically. He rests his head on the lap of his first wife, and his other wives gather around him. His friends and the village elders sit before the soukala, and all wait silently for hours until the

776 makes noise in the bush under certain leafy trees, his cheeks will swell
753 out. The tisé talk, even during the day. It is their voices which are heard when the wind stirs the leaves. We had /81/ papaw seeds planted all around our dwelling. They had sprouted and grown well; the fruit was already ripening. One morning, no papaw trees were left in
[824] Koupéla! The naba had decreed that these were talking trees, that they would cause illness to those who had them in their soukala ... and the papaws had been cut down!

776 Fortunately, it is possible to protect oneself against the tisé. First,
782 those trees which shelter them may be felled, and the spirits will move elsewhere. Some very beautiful trees vanish thus from the villages. The tisé may also be appeased with sacrifices. Does this result in tree cult, dendrolatry? Indeed not! The Mossi clearly make the distinction between the tree and the spirit that inhabits it, and they sacrifice to the spirit. Sometimes also, a tree was planted on the
[769] grave of the elder who founded the village, and sacrifices are made to the ancestral spirit at the foot of the tree. Finally, there are fetishes more powerful than the tisé. It is enough to know which roots and barks the tisé do not like, to steep them in water, and to place the pot at the door of the hut. When a tiga sees this fetish, he invariably runs away. Some Peul are said to have the power to distinguish between those trees where spirits dwell and those where they do not, and to kill the former trees merely by rubbing them with butter! This must be done in a special way.

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776 The naba does so more than anyone else; on the Day of the Dead
782 (basra) he always makes sacrifices there, and usually the village elders accompany him.

776 A village may have several tangandé /sic/, but the protective
778 animal or animals—most often there are two—are the same in all the sacred groves, of which there are as many as there are tangandé /sic/. Nothing may be taken from a sacred grove; everything in it is sacred. No wood may be cut down, and it is forbidden even to gather dead wood which has fallen by itself. By the same token, the dry grass may not be set afire, not even in the area around the grove. If all precautions have been duly taken and fire nevertheless spreads to the sacred grove, nothing can be done and the village people are not held responsible. On the other hand, outsiders are prevented, by force if necessary, from taking anything whatever from the sacred grove. If the outsider is powerful and cannot be restrained, expiatory sacrifices are offered after his departure.

776 The tangandé is thus a guardian animal, and yet some tangamma
754 retaliate by afflicting the guilty party with diseases. If one of the sorcerers who eat souls (seuya) offers gifts to a tangandé, the latter will help him and refuse to restore the soul which has been entrusted to it, unless more substantial gifts are forthcoming. One may pray to a tangandé and make a vow, for example, promise it a goat or sheep if it kills a designated enemy. The goat is purchased pending the enemy's death. Sometimes the tangandé takes its time and
[781] several years go by. The spirit is chided and told to hurry, and finally decides to do away with the person in question. Then the goat is sacrificed.

776 Some people say that all tangamma come from the Fada N'Gourma
778 region, where the father of all tangamma is to be found. It is the
787 sorcerer's task to point out the tangamma and the place of their residence. Once, for example, a village had just been founded. The elders had found a piece of ground propitious to agriculture, in the vicinity of water, and had built their huts. At the beginning /84/ of the winter season, when the time came for sowing, they shared out the neighboring bush and proceeded to lay out their fields. One day a leopard driven out of its lair took to flight before their eyes and repaired to a thicket. Immediately the people were called, the thicket surrounded and searched thoroughly. No leopard was found. On the following day the same episode took place in the same spot. This happened three times, and every time it proved impossible to

776 tangandé in every detail either, for only the village may have a tangandé, and there does not seem to be any magic pact unless the sacrifices offered are considered as such a pact, which does not seem justified. The tangandé-animal is never sacrificed, and no special initiation takes place.

774 761 [775] The closest thing to totemism among the Mossi seems to be their concept of the human soul, and yet it is not, properly speaking, a totem in the sense indicated by these authors. Every man has a soul that lives on after death and takes the name of kyma, while during life it is called siga. Shortly before death it takes the name of toullé [197] /85/ in Ouagadougou or toundo in Koupela, but siga, toundo, kyma are one and the same thing, one and the same principle. According to the Mossi, this soul is an animal, invisible of course, a snake, a crocodile, a deer, a hare. The soul is related to this animal, it belongs to the same family, so that to kill a snake or a crocodile in a village where the soul of the inhabitants is a snake or a crocodile is to kill an inhabitant of the village; every individual related to the snake has a snake in the village to represent thim, and he will die when his soul-animal dies.

774 784 Yet, and this runs counter to the definitions of totemism, the individual expects no aid from this animal, never sacrifices to it, and never kills it himself to renew the kinship pact. A person whose soul is a crocodile is forbidden to kill crocodiles in his own village, but he may kill them elsewhere, although he may never eat them, while he may kill the tangandé animal as long as he does so outside the tangandé, and he may eat it at any time. Some people, when they [766] find a dead soul-animal of their family near their village, render it funeral honors, weep, wail, and bury it as one of their own, but they offer it no gifts and hold no koureé. Generally it is merely covered with earth. The most widespread soul-animals are a kind of snake (bosombodro) and the crocodile. Several families may have the same [582] one, and marriage, although exogamic, is not forbidden between members of these families.

774 754 The soul may leave the body and in fact leaves it often, especially during the night. If children had a good time in a certain place, if they enjoyed themselves at someone's house, the soul returns there at night. This is when the worst is to be feared from the sorcerers; they may seize the soul by surprise, and its unfortunate owner will die.

774 In the course of a dream, the soul may warn its owner of a threaten-
828 ing danger. One day a native, whose village and name were told to
761 me, dreamed that his enemy offered him a kola nut. Much anxiety ensued, for this is a sign used by the soul to indicate that an enemy threatens one with death. In such a case there is only one remedy, to deposit a few cowries on a nest of large red ants, so they will avert the disaster. The man set out immediately for the nearest ant nest. Alas, a snake bit him along the way, and he died before he could offer his gift to the ants! Such occurrences obviously make a profound imprint on the imagination of the natives, who immediately react with the sophism: post hoc, propter hoc. A few such cases are sufficient to anchor them forever in their superstitions, and innumerable such occurrences were related to me.

774 If the soul can leave the body, it is possible to seize it and to pre-
761 vent it from re-entering its body, and this is why our Blacks do not like to be photographed. They say that there is an evil spirit in the box, who takes the soul and eats it. This is proved by the fact that the individual may later be seen on the piece of paper.

774 One becomes sick when his soul cannot re-enter the body because
753 it is held prisoner by an evil sorcerer or by a kikiriga, and many sacrifices must be offered to obtain its release /86/ and return. Entreaties are usually directed to the tangandé in such cases, because it is stronger than all the other spirits, stronger even than the sorcerers, and because its function is to protect the village.

774 Sometimes the soul was so well hidden that the tangandé cannot
761 find it: the sorcerer has eaten it right away; or the tangandé itself
● 754 is in collusion; or the ancestral spirits are calling the sick person; or,
775 finally, it is God who sent the disease. Nothing can be done, and the person dies. His soul changes names, and henceforth is called kyma. It leaves the body at the moment of death. If it was taken by a sorcerer or by the ancestral spirits, at the moment of death it leaves the sacred grove where it was held captive. It proceeds to the place of souls from where it will return to the grave whenever sacrifices are offered to it. It will also return if it wishes to afflict the survivors with a disease of some sort.

775 Is the soul punished for the evil it has done on earth and rewarded
735 for the good? Opinions on the subject differ. Some say that when one gives alms to the poor, and the Mossi frequently do, when one is generous and hospitable, God takes all that has been given and sets

789 /103/ Happily, it is possible to avoid lightning. To achieve this,
821 it is necessary to find in the bush a white substance rather similar to hyena droppings which the natives call "rain dung," as well as certain tree roots. Part of these roots is left to soak in water for three days, and the rest is burned to ashes. A chicken is sacrificed to the tim. Then the water in which the roots have steeped is used to cook the millet mush, and the sauce is made with baobab leaves. All the soukala dwellers must eat this millet mush, and every one of them is marked on the back and chest with a cross of ashes mixed with karite butter. The horse and donkey, alone among the animals, are similarly marked on the back, chest, and inside the mouth. The huts are marked on the east side, the direction from which the rain comes, and above the entrance. Now there is nothing to be feared. We do feel, however, that lightning-rods are more effective.

759 All these tim, medicinal remedies, amulets, talismans, and
756 superstitious recipes, are prescribed either by true doctors who actually know the properties of herbs and effect real cures or by sorcerers. The doctors are often consulted. Since they specialize in certain diseases, they are consulted for those diseases alone. Those who have been cured by a medicine willingly make it known to friends who are afflicted with the same illness. The doctors are as numerous as the diseases which afflict mankind.

278 Some doctors are not merely healers but also poisoners, and they
674 are greatly feared. The surest way to get rid of an enemy is to consult them, but their fees are high. They have slow poisons which consume the victim gradually and the overwhelming ones which kill in a few hours. They put them in drinks, in millet mush, or more often in kola nuts. There are also people, sorcerers rather than doctors,
754 who claim the power to kill at a distance and who know how to practice sympathetic magic. Their prestige has waned since the French occupation because they have not managed to kill the Whites who settled in the country; but they say that our tim are more powerful than theirs.

754 The sorcerers are also numerous. There are those who take up the
756 call of their own accord and those who are born sorcerers. The former
791 are the bagré and seuya; the latter the tibo, bartibo, waongo, and nyonnyonsé. Pardon us these barbaric words, but they are impossible to translate.

791 The bagre is the nice, innocuous kind of sorcerer, who helps the
756 poor for a penny or two. He is consulted about everything. For example, what does the future hold? Will fire destroy my huts or won't

791 Anyone may become a sorcerer, and those who take up the call
756 are usually poor chaps who have nothing to live on, who do not have the strength to till the soil, or who simply want to live without working. When someone enters the brotherhood of bara, people say that he wants to learn how to be idle, and they laugh about it.

791 During the dry season the country is overrun with hordes of Gourounsi and Nankana, filthy and ragged, who claim to know everything and to possess a charm for every purpose, even to make peanuts grow. Led by a chief who speaks a few words of Mossi, they wander from one village to another, dancing and singing for the nabas like the mountebanks who perform at the wagon door of fortune tellers to attract the public... They are consulted, and they return home well rigged out thanks to the cowries they have gathered in Mossi country.

754 /105/ The seuya or soul-eaters are greatly feared. The death of
774 a native, especially that of a child, is often ascribed to them. They have the power of leaving the human body they inhabit and wandering about everywhere in search of a soul to eat. Fire is their vehicle, and they travel about at night on the will-o'-the-wisps that wander in the fields around the huts. They may be stopped by the trees and thrown to the ground, and those who possess an amulet more powerful than their can drive them away.

The seuya are extremely dangerous, for complete protection against them is impossible. They work by night. Every mortal soul leaves the body often during the night and goes wandering about. Woe to it if it should come upon a seuya. He will pounce upon the soul or put it under a big stone, and the unfortunate body that owns it will fall ill and eventually die. The only remedy is to offer a sacrifice to the tangandé, and the guardian animal of the village will go on a search until it locates and releases the unhappy soul; the tangandé causes it to re-enter the body, and the sick person gets well. If, however, the seuya ate the soul, or if he is in connivance with the tangandé, nothing can be done, and death swiftly ensues.

791 The bagré sorcerers can tell who is a seuya and who is not. Some
754 of them have a tim which permits them to distinguish the seuya in a crowd of people. They need only smoke a pipe, and the eyes of the soul-eating man will redden and fill with tears. Those accused of
754 being seuya usually deny the charge, and to call someone a seuya is
[578] one of the worst insults. We have already described the heinous death inflicted on these unfortunate people. Old women especially are

754 accused of eating the souls of little children, and I have known some who boasted of possessing this power!

The tibo are a family of sorcerers. People are born tibo, and the village they inhabit is called Tibin. The naba of this village has the special faculty of discerning all sorts of things, especially whether someone has an enemy, merely by gazing into a gourd filled with water in which a certain charm has been placed. A chicken was previously sacrificed on the gourd. This naba, and he alone, can also kill at a distance. To obtain his protection, it is necessary to bring him a goat, a chicken, millet flour mixed with water, and millet beer. Sooner or later the one designated will die! If it takes too long, the sorcerer always has an excuse handy.

754 778 The village of Tibin contains a hut where the tibo fetishes are lined in a row. These fetishes consist basically of clay pots containing water, branches, and tree leaves. They are covered with clay gourds of the kind used to cook sauce, and the sacrifices are made on these gourds. It is said that there are snakes and turtles in the pots, but only the tibo sorcerers can see them. Every village has its tibo jar in the naba's household, either at the door of his hut or hanging inside. These tibo are the dwellings of powerful kikirsi.

754 781 535 /106/ The bartibo are professional dancers. They have the faculty of distinguishing while dancing those who have the power of killing people, whether poison-givers or seuya. The bartibo themselves claim to have the power of riding the wind and going to kill anyone they wish. They specialize, however, in child-bearing charms for the benefit of sterile women.

754 292 The waongo also belong to a special family. People are born tibo, bartibo, waongo, or nyonnyonga. For their ceremonies, the waongo don garments made of the bark of baobabs which cover them completely. These strange garments completely conceal the person. A figure may be seen walking, but the person cannot be recognized, and a dreadful illness threatens those who dare to strike it. This is why people, when they see these shapeless forms, run away as fast as they can.

[761] The waongo wear masks when they celebrate the koure (death anniversary) of another waongo. They can ride the wind and inflict diseases; they can even kill if they wish.

754 The nyonnyonsé also ride the wind. The members of this family of sorcerers can kill anyone pointed out to them. People who wish to do away with an enemy go to a nyonnyonga and ask him how much he wants to kill the person they designate. The sorcerer asks for a cow, a sheep, anything whatever, and a chicken. The chicken is sacrificed on the handle of a hatchet, at the end where the iron is hafted, which is pierced with three holes and wrapped with thin cords. Following this sacrifice the sorcerer goes to sleep, and night or day his soul goes off with the wind, head down, hatchet in hand. When it meets the soul of the person who is to be killed, the sorcerer's soul strikes it with the hatchet and kills it, then returns to its own body. It seems that the female sorcerers are the most ferocious!

Anyone who wants it may obtain this power, but a fee is required. The lifespan of these sorcerers increases in proportion to the number of people they have killed, and those who wish to be initiated must offer them the life of one of their children or at least of a relative, for the sorcerers are not satisfied with a stranger or a slave.

It would be interesting to investigate the sacrifices and ceremonies which attend these initiations. It does seem that these tibo, waongo, and nyonnyonsé sorcerers belong to the realm of black magic, for the natives tell dreadful stories about them and list their victims by name. We must confess, however, that we were unable to secure any further trustworthy details about these sorcerers, and that we had no personal contact with any of them. We could not verify all that was told us about them, and therefore we shall not discuss the subject any further. In any case, these sorcerers if questioned would have told us nothing unless they had come to be converted.

754 575 These families of sorcerers are a small minority among the Mossi, and if they can be called closed sects, secret societies,, /107/ they are to our knowledge the sole ones extant. In Mossi country, therefore, there are properly speaking no secret societies, nothing like the sects found in Bambara country, (1) and this is a good thing.

1. Abbé Henry, L'ame d'un peuple africain /The Soul of an African People/, Bibliothèque Anthropos 1, 2, passim.

Likewise, there are no initiations, no secret cults celebrated at night, no esoteric doctrines. Is this because the nabas, intent on remaining the sole masters, would not allow a power greater than theirs to develop? Or is it for some other reason?

681 As far as penalties were concerned, Mossi justice was stern and thus ran counter to the "patriarchal" justice of the Bobo, Gourounsi, etc. Murder was always punished by death (except in the case of nobles). As for thefts, physical aggression, and matters involving debts, they were adjusted in the manner described when we discussed the Yarsé, who were subject to Mossi justice since they were settled in their territory /not translated/. [754] We shall not, therefore, go over this again. Let us merely note that the Mossi, being fetishists, were familiar with matters of sorcery.

695 754 At Dembo, in the Yatenga area, when a young person died suddenly, "red powder" would be mixed in water and everyone would drink of it while swearing by Tensé /Tr.: the earth deities/ that he was innocent. The culprits would die. In other villages of the Yatenga area, people suspected of dealing in sorcery had to drink earth taken from the spot where sacrifices were performed and diluted in water. Those /581/ who refused to drink and swear were killed. At Kabayoro, a Mossi village located in the canton of Koumbili, if a man or woman suddendly ill, it was said that it was So-and-So, a sorcerer, who had eaten the soul. If the sick person died, his hands were washed with water and the liquid was given to the sorcerer to drink. He had to swear his innocence and invoke death unto himself if he should lie. If guilty he died; if innocent the water did him no harm. If he refused to swear and drink, he was put in irons and left there to die of hunger and thirst. The bara /soothsayer/ played no role in such occurrences. It was the sick person who pointed out the sorcerer. If the patient failed to designate someone, however, this meant that he was simply dying of illness. [761]

701 Now for the army and police. "In case of war," says Moulins, "the province chiefs summoned the canton chiefs, who hastened forth with all their able-bodied men. They all gathered behind the Tamsaba and followed him.

625 "As for policing, it was taken care of by village and canton chiefs, who arrested culprits with the help of their own followers, or, if necessary, by summoning the whole male population of the village."

789 If someone tells you that you own many animals, or that they are
791 very handsome, this gives bad luck, as you know. So, to ward it off,
777 /593/ you grasp your grigri by slipping two fingers into the iron hook and two others into the curve of the horn, and then you hang it in your hut, or better still, you hang it from the neck of one of the threatened animals.

789 11. A small turtle completely enclosed in a small leather bag
791 along with a powdered aquatic leaf called kouri. If you have a
755 stomach-ache, you cover the flat side of the object with butter and rub your stomach with it.

789 12. A small piece of wood covered with lizardskin in the middle
791 and leather at the ends and prolonged at one end by an iron tip.
832 If one wishes for the favors of a woman who refuses to grant them, one comes near the cruel woman while gripping the grigri in the left fist, its tip pointing up. At the same time, one presses the woman's hand tightly with the right hand. This method of seduction is claimed to be infallible.

789 13. A koba horn covered with leather and prolonged at the broad
791 end with a chicken foot. Inside, the horn contains rice, salt, and
●754 soumbara. If you were threatened by a spell performed against you, you would slip the horn upon your head, with the thick end between the eyes and the pointed end behind the head. Then you would have nothing to fear.

14. A deer horn containing barkoundi leaves and closed with a lid adorned with a cowrie.

To prevent a sorcerer from eating the soul of a third party, you lift the lid with the aid of a knife covered with karité butter, you take with this knife a little of the contents of the horn, and you spread it on your forehead.

535 In addition to the bara and timisoba, the Mossi also have ouango.
532 "The ouango," says Marc (op. cit., pages 152 and 155), "are
575 dancers whose costume consists of a huge liana robe which covers the entire body and which is surmounted by a wooden mask painted red and black and usually representing /594/ the head of an animal. The ouango are members of a rather mysterious brotherhood. They have a special language, and the Mossi believe that anyone who says a word

793 the sacrifice and killed the donkey. He also slit the throat of a
643 horse, a beef, and a sheep. (This eunuch in charge of guarding the
839 tomb was called by the name of Naba Koutou, and in a way per-
778 petuated the deceased Moro Naba. He was granted special privi-
leges. If a man who was condemned to death ran away and reached
the tomb, he was safe but became the eunuch's slave. Similarly,
[567] a captive who ran away from his master gained his freedom from the
latter if he reached the grave, but became the slave of Naba Koutou.
Finally, at that time, it was forbidden to ride by the hut on a donkey.
Naba Koutou would seize the donkey, or at least demand a ransom
in cowries before returning it. This applied to any animals who ran
astray near the tomb. The tomb still exists nowadays, along with
the Naba Koutou who watches over it, but the latter no longer enjoys
the same privileges.)

793 We saw earlier that the Moro Naba had a sort of minister of the
645 cult in the person of the Gandé Naba, high priest and sacrificer.
There was also the Pouy Naba, or chief of the fetisheers, whose
function was probably to mediate between the Mossi bara and
timisoba as a whole and the central authorities.

782 Let us close this study of Mossi religion, which incidentally is
quite incomplete and a mere outline, with a few words on the human
sacrifices that were performed /597/ in the territory prior to our
occupation, and a few words on circumcision as well.

782 "Human sacrifices," says Marc., p. 156, "definitely took place
766 among the Mossi up to the time when we occupied the territory.
Whenever a Moro Naba died at Ouagadougou, one of his wives and
one of his horses were sent to Gambaga in order to be sacrificed on
the tomb of Ouidiraogo (?) who is regarded as the mother of the first
Moro Naba. Soon after the occupation of Ouagadougou by the French,
782 the dethroned Moro Naba, Boukary Koutou, ordered the sacrifice of a
● 754 black rooster, a black goat, a black donkey, a black beef, and a
black slave on one of the mountains overlooking the White Volta.
This, it seems, was bound to cause the immediate death of the new
Moro Naba enthroned by Voulet."

304 As for circumcision, the Mossi circumcise boys and excise girls.
Boys are circumcised when they are from eight to twelve years
old, and thirty or forty of them are circumcised at one time. The

8: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1958
FA28 Mossi FA28

595 co-wives and other women of the extended families. Even the Catholic hus-
797 bands would not help their wives with household tasks requiring more than
182 one person, nor would they violate tradition by chatting with their wives except at night in their huts. Another factor is that after the Mossi Christian
[846] woman has given birth to a child, she follows the traditional custom and goes back to her parents' home to remain there during the two or three years' lactation period. This imposes a great hardship on a Catholic husband because during this time he is left without wife or helpmate. In the extended family household there would have been women to take care of a man's material needs, and his mistresses would have taken care of his sexual needs. The Catholic can and does ask the mission for a young girl to take care of his material needs, but of course she is not expected to satisfy his sexual de-
[837] sires. Obviously this arrangement is not satisfactory, and many Catholic men, with the acquiescence of their wives, keep mistresses. Dim Delobson comments:

> Ouagadougou has a large number of Christians, but does this mean that these people in their love for the church respect all her rules? Alas! there are a large number of Christians who oblige their lawful wives to leave the conjugal couch and make way for the accommodation of mistresses . . . in conformity with the old custom. But this is a subject which is too delicate to discuss further. I only note it in passing: *Noli me tangere* (1934:169).

797 Despite the influence of tradition on Mossi Catholics, I feel it would be a
794 mistake to say that the complexity of Catholic dogma is one of the drawbacks to missionary success in this country. One Mossi has already been made a bishop of the Catholic Church, and most of the proselytizing in Manga falls on the two Mossi priests and the five Mossi nuns. Under the supervision of two White Fathers, the Catholic children and adults are acquainted with the dogma and rituals of the church. The festivals are well attended and celebrated with as much pomp as possible. Although the Mass is sung in Latin, the Mossi have adapted some of their traditional tunes to the Mass, and use their own language for prayers and hymns. Catholics observe all the sacraments including Confession—a sacrament which is hazardous from the Mossi point of view, because man must lay bare his innermost thoughts to the priests, who, in the final analysis, are Europeans and thus administrators.

It is true that even the staunchest Catholics in Manga have not abandoned all belief in traditional rituals and religious credos. For example, many Mossi Catholics believe in the existence of sorcerers, but the Catholic Church
[754] does not recognize the existence of sorcerers or such evil forces (I have met White Fathers who believe that there are unexplainable psychic and physical phenomena in Africa), and moreover has no way of dealing with them. "But," says Dim Delobson (1934:136), "the Mossi believe so strongly in the power of such entities, that even those converted to Christianity cannot always escape the action of malevolent practitioners." The result is that many Catholics desert the church when they believe that only traditional specialists can help them with personal problems. Catholic families easily aban-

513 The Mogho Naba slept in a grass hut in the palace compound. Two

643 reasons are given for the choice of a grass hut over a brick building: first,
[342] the grass hut was considered better protection against sorcerers, who were
[754] believed to induce storms that destroy buildings and their occupants; sec-
[775] ond, it was believed that the ruler's ancestors preferred to visit grass huts because it was easier for them to enter through the interstices in the walls.
[644] When the monarch retired for the night, one of his pages stood guard at the door. The Mogho Naba usually slept all night, but he occasionally made the rounds with a page to check on the palace guards or the safety (and virtue) of his wives.

643 The routine of the Mogho Naba seldom varied. Only in times of danger
[644] or on great ceremonial occasions did protocol permit any major changes in court procedure. Normally, pages, ministers, and other court officials adhered very strictly to their traditional tasks.

The Mossi considered the king's office to be such a difficult one that even today they say, *Mogho Naba toumde ya yida fa* ("The Mogho Naba's task is the most difficult of all"). Nevertheless, the Mogho Naba's office was always eagerly sought, and considerable care had to be exercised to
[645] ensure that the right person was chosen. As soon as the incumbent Mogho Naba died, and even before he was buried, the Ouidi Naba, as prime minister, began the consultations leading to the selection of a new monarch. Mossi custom decreed that the eldest son of a previous ruler be chosen as the new Mogho Naba. This choice was not automatic, however, in view of the primary consideration that the person selected should have the skill to "keep" the country. Other qualifications for office were membership in the royal minimal lineage, soundness of body and mind, and sufficient age to command universal respect. Given these requirements and the lack of any provisions for a regency, it is not surprising that a dead ruler's sons, brothers, uncles, and even grandchildren—that is, his entire babissi—should have competed to "eat the nam" (accede to power).[12] Of the thirty-four kings who have ruled since Oubri, the founder of the Ouagadougou dynasty, twelve succeeded their brothers and twenty-two their fathers. Interestingly enough, there is some indication that at the beginning of the Ouagadougou dynasty, the successor of a king was usually chosen from among his brothers before the nam was passed on to the next generation.[13] For example, Oubri's four sons all reigned in turn before the kingship descended to the son of the last brother in office. Then, two of this brother's sons reigned before the nam descended to a new generation. Initially, then, seniority within the royal lineage, like seniority within the local ruling lineages, may have been determined by generation. On the other hand, accidental factors may have governed: a weak state organization may have

753 /66/ This is because illness is usually attributed to an evil spirit,
761 which must not be irked with complaints. Yet in everyday language it is God who is the cause of everything, of health as well as of death. The sorcerers consulted indicate which spirit must be appeased, to whom sacrifices must be offered; or they state quite frankly that the hour of the sick person has come, that his life is over and he is about to rejoin his ancestors, for it is often the latter who call him and come to fetch him. In the case of old men and especially of old women, death is considered a natural event. An old man has many children who will give him a fine funeral, and it is time for him to make way for his eldest son. If a quarrelsome person falls sick, his illness is often attributed to an evil spell cast by an enemy. When
[763] an elder is about to die, those who have caused him offense come to beg his forgiveness and only find peace when they have obtained it, for the old man might return to obtain his revenge. Sudden death is usually ascribed to poison and, alas, this is often the case. Sometimes it is also attributed to an evil spirit, especially in case of accident, fall, snake bite, etc.

755 The instinct of self-preservation is so strong in man that the Mossi
757 although they ascribe a superhuman origin to illness, nevertheless fight it. It is true that all their treatments combine medicinal and superstitious elements to drive off evil spirits, and whatever the remedy, true medicine or amulet, it is always a tim; there is only the one
759 word to designate it. Some of the natives know how to treat certain illnesses, and people come to consult them, often from far away. One has a medicine against snakes, and he makes it in complete secrecy on a certain day; one knows how to treat colds and bronchitis;
[752] another, dysentery; yet another, sores. The bone-setters are often very skillful, and with the mere pressure of their fingers they can set a dislocated joint or a broken leg; then they enclose it between tightly-bound millet stalks as a splint. These doctors prescribe remedies without resorting to sacrifices or witchcraft. Sometimes they live with their patient to care for him, of course for a fee, especially if the person gets well.

751 Smallpox vaccination is performed, but often too late, on individuals who already have the germ. The vaccine is taken from a seriously ill person without any precautionary antiseptic measures. The vaccinated individual is usually made very sick and sometimes dies of

751 it. It is recognized that smallpox does not hit the same place twice (obviously, when it has already killed all those who could be killed), and fear of catching the disease prevents many natives from undergoing the operation. The Administration is rendering great services
744 with its vaccination tours, which will be all the more successful since the experiments carried out by our Fathers some years ago, with tubes of vaccine kindly sent by the Administrator of Ouagadougou, bore excellent results and checked an epidemic which was decimating the population. Smallpox victims are nursed /67/ as carefully as possible.
757 They are laid on a bed of sand which retains heat. When the pocks are ripe, they are punctured with a thorn, and then the patient is rubbed with sand. The eyes are washed with an antiseptic decoction, and the patient gargles frequently with peppered water.

Medicinal herbs, tree leaves, and barks are the basis of all remedies, in the form of infusions or poultices. The study of these medicines would no doubt be of interest to a specialist. But would the natives who hold the secret of their preparation be willing to surrender it?

[572] When a friend is ill, even if he lives far away, the right thing is to
755 visit him, offer him sympathy, and even more appropriately bring him some gifts. The relatives of the sick person consult the sorcerer, for it is necessary to determine the agency that caused the disease. Sorcerers rarely prescribe a medicine. Their role is to point out the part of the body which is afflicted and especially to indicate the spirit who should receive the sacrifice. Another man, who in most cases has nothing to do with witchcraft, knows the medicines. If the patient improves after the prescribed sacrifices have been offered, it means that the sorcerer knows his business well; if not, it means that he has cheated.

758 Every self-respecting sorcerer must prescribe a negative treatment, in the sense of pointing out certain things the patient must not eat. Sometimes goat or chicken flesh is forbidden for the duration of the illness or permanently. Sometimes it is a certain kind of sauce, or millet or bean fritters. On the other hand, since the Mossi eat no eggs, especially not raw, and drink hardly any milk, they sustain the sick with plenty of millet beer and with an unappetizing mush of coarsely ground millet, often mixed with powdered charcoal. Patients have difficulty absorbing such a mixture and occasionally die of
755 starvation. Sometimes the sorcerer also indicates an amulet that

755 must be procured. The leaf used to cover a wound must be held by means of a thin cotton cord with cowries attached at the end, three cowries for a boy, four for a girl. A hemp cord with three or four knots, worn around the neck, wrist, or any other part of the body, prevents swelling of that part and is also a master remedy against hair worms. Sometimes it is not so easy to secure the prescribed amulet, for instance, if it is the beak or claw of a hawk, a deer horn, or certain parts of a buffalo or koba. The poor Mossi goes to great pains to find this indispensable amulet.

763 Do as he may, sooner or later he must die. When an old man feels that his end is near, he calls his family and gives them his last instructions. He talks to his eldest son and tells him where his cattle and caches are to be found, who are his debtors and creditors. Sometimes death comes swiftly without warning, and the old man has no time to talk to his heir; a large part of the fortune is thus lost, because a Mossi in good health never tells anybody, especially not his /68/ children, where his property is, and those to whom he has entrusted it do not return it. Some Peul have made rather nice profits in this fashion.

761 The death of a young man or woman or more especially that of a small child is usually ascribed to an old woman who is said to have 754 eaten the child's soul, and some old women claim to have this secret. [683] The sorcerer points out the guilty woman who is seized and put to death. Every sudden or accidental death is ascribed to an evil spirit, and the funeral ceremonies reflect this.

762 Suicide is extremely rare, but it does occur. Here is one case where we knew the participants. A man quarreled with his wife. The wife, who was stronger than her husband, overwhelmed him in the fight, and the neighbors openly ridiculed him. The following day the husband was found hanging in his hut. A pit was hastily dug [766] in his nearest field, and he was tossed into it naked without further ceremony. Suicide is regarded as a criminal act, and even the corpse is punished for it.

763 Like all human beings, the Mossi fear death. No longer to eat millet mush or to drink dolo seems to them the greatest of misfortunes. Still, when a Mossi sees death approaching, he resigns himself to it and accepts it stoically. He rests his head on the lap of his first wife, and his other wives gather around him. His friends and the village elders sit before the soukala, and all wait silently for hours until the

776 kikiriga, in turn, are to ward off anything that might harm the crop,
241 birds, caterpillars, thieves, and the like, and to fill with millet a granary of the size drawn on the ground with ashes at the time of harvest. If the kikiriga has properly carried out his duties, he gets another chicken when all the grain has been gathered in a heap.
776 Pregnant women are under the protection of a special kikiriga, and
[843] small children have one of their own to ward off illness and danger. Do we not say ourselves that a special Providence watches over the very young?

776 Actually, everyone has his kikiriga. Some have an evil one, and
828 those are the people who quarrel with everybody, the ones who are never successful, whose livestock dies, for the kikirsi often kill the goats, sheep, and horses that die of illness. Other people have a
[577] good kikiriga, and for them everything goes well; they were born under a lucky star. These are the engaging, sweet, good-natured people
[513] who get rich and who have many children. When a Mossi lies down to sleep in his hut, he rests his head on a stone or a small mound of beaten earth. This is where his kikiriga dwells, and from time to time, especially when he feels the need for special protection, he
[782] sacrifices a guinea hen or sometimes even a goat, with the understanding that the spirit will chase away all fellow spirits who might want to harm him and will avert all illness and all danger from his path.

/83/ The tangandé is a spirit who has the shape of an animal and
776 who is regarded as the protector of a village. The term is also ex-
778 tended to designate the spirit's place of residence, usually the sacred
825 grove but sometimes a mere stone or even an open space. The tangandé may be a crocodile, a boa, a leopard, a turtle, a deer, a hare, etc. The animal is sacred to the whole village and may not be killed in the sacred grove, but it may be killed elsewhere, even a short distance from the thicket.

776 The tangandé is a guardian spirit because it protects men and sends
755 its servants to accompany the village people on trips when they request it to do so. The natives incessantly turn to it for protection, and the sorcerers incessantly refer those who consult them to the tangandé to obtain cures and to request the release of souls held captive
776 by evil sorcerers. When someone dies, sacrifices are made to the
782 tangandé with requests to protect the survivors and to ward off illness.
[774] When souls leave the body during sleep, they often go to the sacred grove. Anyone may sacrifice to the tangandé and in the tangandé.

782 539 no'pelra t'eb kis'tangandé t'a déé n'di né teng'kikirsi lé teng'portapa.

bird, a white rooster, and to offer it to the tangandé, so that he may take it and it with the kikirsi of the village and their wives.

782 539 755 This formula may vary with the circumstances. This is when the sacrificer sets forth his wishes. He tells the tangandé, for instance, that his son is ill and that he has consulted the sorcerer, who has told him to take a white rooster and offer it to the tangandé with water, so that the tangandé may restore his son's health. Then he pours the water behind his back, toward the east, and says:

Na-wendé, déé a ybou kom! God-king, receive the water of your rising!

Then he pours water before him, to the west, and says:

Na-wendé, déé a kyenbo kom! God-king, receive the water of your setting!

Finally he pours water on the sacrificial stone or before his feet, saying:

Tangandé, yk'n'déé kom nyou la kwen la biga lafi! Tangandé, arise, receive the water and drink it, and grant health to my son!

Nyé lé zouanga, nini ka yé. He is like a blind man, he no longer has eyes.

Tangandé nyé youngo né wintoro la ko biga lafi. The tangandé, he sees night and day and grants health to my child.

If the sacrifice includes an offering of millet beer, he pours some on the sacrificial stone, saying:

Na-Wendé ka nyou dam yé, la porédimma nyouda. God-king does not drink beer, but those of his retinue do.

Then he seizes the rooster with his left hand, bends its head back by pulling the comb, and slits its throat. He allows the blood to flow upon the stone where the water was poured, while saying:

Tangandé déé noara n'di, la kwen la biga lafi né sounoro! Tangandé, receive this rooster and eat it, and grant my child health and joy!

Then he tosses the rooster before him, saying:

Noara bé Wennam, ba souk' ba'a. This rooster is for God; may He dispell the illness.

Then he sends his child to get the rooster. The boy grasps the bird when it is lying on its back and if necessary helps it to achieve this

782 position. /92/ He drags it along the ground by the feet to the
539 sacrificer, who says:
755 T'a vouda bemdaoge. Drag me enemies along the ground.

The sacrificer then seizes the chicken and sets it upon its feet, holding its head straight:

T'a timma biga! May He grant health to my child!

He turns the rooster around, with its head down and its legs up in the air:

T'a terlda bema! May He cause my enemies to bite the dust!

With his left hand he tears feathers from the neck, spits on them, and glues them to the stone or to the ground with the victims's blood, saying:

Yelbandé tou sébro! May all that is evil go with the wind!

Ta toubré oum! May his /my enemy's/ ears catch (my curses)!

Ta nif ka nya yé! May he /my enemy's/ eyes go blind!

He breaks one of the chicken's legs:

T'a kao bemdaogo karga! Break the leg of my male enemies!

He breaks the other leg:

T'a kao bempoko karga! Break the leg of my female enemies!

He returns the bird to the child, who carries it away. The remaining water and beer are poured on the very spot of the sacrifice.

The rooster is plucked there or at home and roasted or cooked in water according to the sacrifice. The sacrificer removes the claws, beak, pinions, and liver, and he places them in the left hand of his child who lays them by the path some distance away, saying:

Mand'déé gobra, la kwen détogo nyé masem. The sacrifice is received with the left hand, but grant him health with the right hand.

He returns to the place where the people are gathered, and the victim is shared among all present. When all have eaten, they gather in a group before the sacrificer and greet him as follows:

Wennam déé mando! May God receive /Tr., the Mossi word means "eat"/ your sacrifice!

Wennam tou taoré! May God accept it!

The sacrifice is over.

782 If a goat, sheep, or beef was sacrificed, the hair on top of the
755 head is pulled out instead of neck feathers, and a piece of the rope used to tie the victim is added. All of this is glued where the blood was shed, and the victim's legs are not broken.

Such is the usual sacrificial formula. Variations are of course introduced by individuals and by the customs of particular regions. This is the mand'zallé.

/93/ The mand'lingdem or mand'dédem, which we might call "hidden sacrifice," is offered for the sake of someone who is ill and on the point of death. His illness is due to the fact that the soul has left his body. The sorcerer has said that it is to be found in the tangandé. Without the sick person's knowledge, hence the name "hidden sacrifice," his father goes to the tangandé, accompanied by another of his children who bears the victim and some water and by the sick person's mother who bears a large gourd half filled with water and a smaller gourd inside it.

The sacrifice is offered as previously described, but while the child is roasting the chicken, the sacrificer tosses onto the ground three cowries in the case of a sick boy, four in the case of a girl, and pours a little water. Then he invokes the sick child by name:
[801] "Bila, come, answer me." He calls three times for a boy, four times for a girl. He then takes the cowries and some of the soil which was soaked with water and the animal's blood. The woman lifts the small gourd which floats in the water, the sacrificer places the mud and cowries at the bottom of the large container, and the woman quickly covers the mixture with the small gourd which she holds down in the water. This procedure is repeated three or four times according to the patient's sex. The woman then heads toward home, holding the container in one hand and still bearing down on the small gourd to prevent it from floating. The sacrificer follows her, waving his sword or spear behind her to ward off the evil spirits. The soul is at the bottom of the water, amid the bloody mud and cowries, and they must do their utmost to prevent it from running away again.

When the procession reaches the patient, he is made to sit up, and the woman pours the water of the large gourd on his head, without lifting the smaller gourd. If the sick person, surprised by this sudden shower, gives a start, it means that he is saved; his soul has re-entered his body. Otherwise, nothing can be done, and the unfortunate person is abandoned to his fate; the tangandé did not want to return the soul.

782 755 Then the sacrificer and his assistants eat the victim, but the patient does not partake of it.

782 751 [753] The silent sacrifice, mand'moukou—also called "egg sacrifice," mand'gellé, because an egg is offered—is made in the following circumstances. Some diseases have the dismal faculty of talking like people. They call someone, who answers to his name thinking that a human being has called him. This is sufficient, he will fall ill and die.

The sorcerer decrees that such a disease threatens the village, and that a silent sacrifice is in order. The naba and the elders anxiously delegate one of the men among them to offer the sacrifice. On the following day in the morning, the appointed elder takes an egg, often also a kola nut and special roots, and follows the path which the disease would take if it came to the village. He walks in complete silence. When he reaches a certain point, he brings the egg close to his lips and tells it secretly that a disease threatens the village, and that if the disease tries to follow this path, the egg must stop it. Then he places the egg, kola nut, and roots upon the ground or buries them and retraces his steps. /94/ The egg, a chicken-to-be that cannot yet talk, is chosen as a symbol of the silence that must be observed to ward off the disease.

In the procedure called "bad sacrifice," the victim is not eaten by those present but left on the spot, where it rots or is eaten by vultures and hyenas. Any animal may be offered in this fashion, but the sorcerer alone may decide when the sacrifice is called for. It is usually performed to avert a general misfortune, for example, to ward off a contagious disease that will devour the animal and leave the people alone. The victim is sometimes abandoned alive and driven into the bush.

782 Anything may be offered in sacrifice if the sorcerer says so: kola nuts, cowries, the ashes of certain barks or roots, red stones, the inner fruit of the karite tree, etc. Chickens are the victims most commonly chosen, but sacrifices of goats and sheep are not uncommon. We have already mentioned the guinea hen as the sacrifice preferred by the kikirsi. The nabas are sometimes required to sacrifice cows or donkeys in certain cases. Some nabas, but not all, may sacrifice horses. Finally, even men were sacrificed in the old days. Certain tangamma [563] were greedy for human sacrifices, and the Peul were often used for this purpose. Natives with light skins tending to red, thus closer to [826] the color of ancestral spirits which are said to be white, were sacrificed to these spirits in preference to any others.

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782 to these spirits in preference to any others. These sacrifices were rare, and they were the sole prerogative of the highest chiefs.

Sometimes a vow is made instead of an immediate sacrifice. This is the poulongo mando. For example, a disease rages in the country, or someone has a serious undertaking at hand and wonders how it will turn out, or he wishes to dispose of an enemy. The person who makes the vow goes to the tangandé or to the kikirsi stone, carrying a gourd of water. He pours the water, saying, "Tangandé, if this illness departs, or if my understanding succeeds, or if my enemy dies, I will sacrifice to you a goat or a beef." To prove his good intentions, he buys the promised goat or cow at the first opportunity. If the tangandé or kikirsi grants his request, he fulfills his vow; in the sacrificial formula, instead of saying that the sorcerer told him to offer a certain victim, he mentions his vow and often promises another sacrifice on the following year.

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782 The Moslems have invented another bloodless sacrifice for their own benefit. Here is the recipe: "If someone is ill in your soukala,
755 take a kola nut, honey, honey cakes, beans, maize, and cowries and mix them all in a gourd filled with water. Then call in a Yarga or Peul Moslem to say a prayer. Of course, this man will only make the trip /95/ for a fee. A sheep at least must accompany the request." Grave, stately, and guarded as all good Moslems are supposed to be, the man sits down in the inner courtyard near the hut where the sick person lies, and the people sit around him, both hands open before their eyes, like a book, with their little fingers joined. The Moslem begins his prayer in Mossi, repeating the request that was made to him, that the patient should get well. When he is finished, he moves both hands across his face, three times for a boy, four times for a girl. Then the people go back to their former position, and the man utters some gibberish in Arabic or Peul. When he is through, all the people move their hands repeatedly across their faces; the head of the household dips his hand in the gourd which contains the mixture described above and puts it to his forehead; the children carry everything away; and everyone greets the sanctimonious rascal with the words: "May God grant your prayer!" Then the man sets out for home with the same gravity as before. The water will be used to wash the patient, and some of it will also be added to his food. None of this is very alarming, and if some patients get well through auto-suggestion, all the better.

789 Blessings and curses are also used. Should they be classed with the cult, or with magic? One way or the other, there are natives who have the power to kill anyone merely by saying a word. They can make the harvest wither, the cattle sicken. There are also some who can bless, make a trip propitious, an undertaking successful. If you 752 are wounded, go to them. They will put around the wounded part of 755 your body a greasy rope with three or four knots according to your sex; 801 there will be no swelling, and the wound will heal quickly.

782 Such are the major sacrifices and the practices of the cult. The 769 sacrifices offered to the spirits of the dead on the day of burial or on 796 the day of kouré have not been mentioned, because the animals offered are not properly speaking sacrificed (kou mando) but offered, presented, fabré. We shall now mention the sacrifices made on the Day of the Dead.

The Koupéla Mossi have two major feast days: the Day of the Dead or basra, and the Moslem sheep celebration called kibsa. Both are intimate family affairs.

Basra is the feast of the dead. On that day every family head must offer sacrifices to his ancestral spirits, and he alone may sacrifice upon the grave. Even if a member of the family has become powerful and wealthy, he will not offer the sacrifice which devolves by right to the family head. All members of the family who wish to offer a sacrifice on the ancestral grave must, therefore, go to their elder on that day. Anyone may sacrifice to the kikirsi and tangandé, and almost everyone does at this time. It is mainly on this occasion that little children may be seen gravely sacrificing their chicken to their kikirsi and to the tangandé; each makes it a point of honor to offer his own animal. Only chickens are sacrificed on that day.

Basra is not celebrated by every family on the same day. Some celebrate it before the province chief does, others after him, while most families do it on the same day he does.

/96/ The naba of Koupéla proceeds as described below, and the ceremonies are the same for his subjects with the sole difference that being less wealthy they cannot offer as many sacrifices. The basra is always celebrated by the naba on a Saturday. Already on Thursday he has taken non-fermented beer from the vats and poured it on the graves of his father and grandfather. He has also sacrificed a chicken on each of the tombs. Wherever an ancestor of the naba is buried, the guardian of the grave sacrifices a chicken. This is repeated on

302 husband by legacy; while men are shaved only when they receive their first wife, because then they become masters of a hut, but they are not shaved when they get new wives because their status does not change again. A man who is appointed naba must lose his hair which was that of a subject and no longer suitable to a chief. A dead person [764] may only be buried without being shaved if he died an accidental death, etc.

789 The cross also plays a role which must not be overrated, but which is nevertheless real. The hilts of swords bear the shape of a cross; the feet, hands, and chest of the sick are often anointed with charcoal mixed in fat, always in the shape of a cross. The chests and backs of soukala dwellers are also marked with crosses to protect them against lightning. The huts are marked likewise, and crosses are drawn even inside the mouths of horses and donkeys. A cross is also drawn on the hut door of those who are seriously ill so as to ward off evil spirits. A cross of ashes on the chest and back is part of the mourning costume.

What is the origin of this custom? The natives cannot say, and invariably reply, "This is what our fathers did."

In addition to these superstitious practices that do not commit one to anything and that harm no one, there are others which can be very useful to /101/ those who practice them, and others yet which seem indeed to fall into the category of magic. We are referring to what the natives designate by the generic name of tim, without differentiating between true remedies of medicinal origin and superstitions or evil spells which should be characterized as magic. Indeed, it is often quite difficult to distinguish between the two.

755 Amulets and charms are tim to the natives, and so are the medicines which their specialists prescribe and which seem to have real effectiveness. We mentioned them briefly when we spoke of illness. We did not say that the preparation of these medicines rarely goes unaccompanied by some sorcery, and that the person who has been cured by a remedy must at least keep some in a little bag and sacrifice a chicken to it every year. Everything is done as in the usual sacrifices, but the invoking formula is replaced with the following: "God-tim, stretch out your hand and take this chicken. God has given me a powerful medicine. May this medicine protect me night and day, in the middle of the night and on the path, where we amuse ourselves and in the huts. Keep the jaws of the snake shut so that next year I may still be in good health, so that no misfortune may come to me,

755 so that my heart may rejoice unceasingly. Then I will come back with another chicken, so that you too may rejoice and continue to protect my wives and my children." Then the sacrifice is concluded. This formula does indicate that the power of the medicine is wholly ascribed to God.

751 Certain superstitious practices that belong in the tim category are used in special cases. For the sake of curiosity, here is what is done when a man has killed a hyena and to protect the huts against lightning.

[82] If a man kills a hyena, he must hastily consult some other native who previously has killed one, or he will become raving mad. The hunter goes to such a man who knows a remedy against this raving madness and takes him a chicken. The man indicates which roots must be obtained, and the hunter gathers them in the bush. He cuts them to pieces and brings them to his doctor who seizes a jar, grabs the chicken, and pulls it toward the roots, then says while pouring water into the ar: "God-tim and his kikiriga, arise, stretch out your hand, and take this water to drink it; take this chicken to eat it, and grant the man who has killed a hyena not to become raving mad." He sacrifices the chicken and pours the blood into the pot. Then he puts half of the roots into the jar and reduces the other half to ashes.

The hunter takes the whole thing home, and for seven days he puts water from the medicine into his millet mush and ashes from the roots into his sauce.

On the seventh day all the family members get together and come with their friends to greet the hunter. They all toss cowries into the gourd which contains the medicine, then proceed to market with much ceremony. The hunter fastens the head of the hyena to the end of a staff and bears it triumphantly to market. He has /102/ the right to take pistachios, beans, millet, cakes, etc., free of charge, anything he wishes. When he is finished taking things, stealing like a hyena, the procession falls into line once more and proceeds to a thick tree near the market. There, the hunter drives his staff into the ground, and everybody starts dancing around him; then they take small sticks and strike him, and he hastily runs away. He is now sure that he will not become raving mad, and what is more from now on he may kill as many hyenas as he wishes without fear.

771 their traditional fear. Nevertheless, Captain Lambert says that
648 prior to the French occupation, Moslems were forbidden by the
[798] Moro Naba to /585/ say their prayers (kella) publicly. They merely recited their rosary (séki) silently.

797 Since the French occupation, the Mossi have lost all their prejudices against Islam, because they have been conquered by a different foe. In addition the Moslems tell them, as they do everywhere else in West Africa, that the Whites will only be vanquished and will only leave the country when everyone has become a Moslem. This leads the Mossi to start salaaming, and actually it is probable that there have been more conversions to Islam among the Mossi since our occupation than prior to it. This result, which may appear strange at first, is indubitable. Actually these conversions, although more numerous than they used to be, are still rare if we consider that the enormous majority of the Mossi population and the territory as a whole remains fetishistic.

Let us proceed to a description of Mossi religious customs.

781 First, the funeral ceremonies.

755 When a Mossi is ill he summons a soothsayer (bara in Mossi). The latter takes some earth and looks at it to see what will happen to the sick man. Then he states either that the latter will get well, on condition of obliging with a sheep and a chicken, or else that he will die. In the first case the requested chicken and sheep are brought to the bara, and then, if the sick person gets well, he gets something else, a sheep or 5,000 cowries. If the sick person dies, contrary to prediction, the family merely says that the bara was a liar and nothing else happens.

764 If the deceased is a man, it is the family elders who care for him. They stretch his limbs and even his fingers so he will not turn rigid immediately, and they close his eyes. Then one of the elders washes the corpse with cold water in the presence of the whole family. After this, the elders sew a shroud with cotton bands to wrap around the deceased, and then he is rolled up in a mat.

The soukala chiefs (we know that among the Mossi every household head is the head of a soukala) are buried in the courtyard /586/ of their soukala, or else before its gate. The grave diggers are fetched, and they dig a hole the size of a man, lay the corpse at the bottom, and place boards above it to prevent the soil from weighing

789 If someone tells you that you own many animals, or that they are
791 very handsome, this gives bad luck, as you know. So, to ward it off,
777 /593/ you grasp your grigri by slipping two fingers into the iron hook and two others into the curve of the horn, and then you hang it in your hut, or better still, you hang it from the neck of one of the threatened animals.-

789 11. A small turtle completely enclosed in a small leather bag
791 along with a powdered aquatic leaf called kouri. If you have a
755 stomach-ache, you cover the flat side of the object with butter and rub your stomach with it.

789 12. A small piece of wood covered with lizardskin in the middle
791 and leather at the ends and prolonged at one end by an iron tip.
832 If one wishes for the favors of a woman who refuses to grant them, one comes near the cruel woman while gripping the grigri in the left fist, its tip pointing up. At the same time, one presses the woman's hand tightly with the right hand. This method of seduction is claimed to be infallible.

789 13. A koba horn covered with leather and prolonged at the broad
791 end with a chicken foot. Inside, the horn contains rice, salt, and
754 soumbara. If you were threatened by a spell performed against you, you would slip the horn upon your head, with the thick end between the eyes and the pointed end behind the head. Then you would have nothing to fear.

14. A deer horn containing barkoundi leaves and closed with a lid adorned with a cowrie.

To prevent a sorcerer from eating the soul of a third party, you lift the lid with the aid of a knife covered with karité butter, you take with this knife a little of the contents of the horn, and you spread it on your forehead.

535 In addition to the bara and timisoba, the Mossi also have ouango.
532 "The ouango," says Marc (op. cit., pages 152 and 155), "are
575 dancers whose costume consists of a huge liana robe which covers the entire body and which is surmounted by a wooden mask painted red and black and usually representing /594/ the head of an animal. The ouango are members of a rather mysterious brotherhood. They have a special language, and the Mossi believe that anyone who says a word

843 already borne children. Among the common people, the woman works up to the time of her delivery. Like other Sudanese women, the Mossi woman is inured to the pains of childbirth and devoid of any nervousness.

843 787 When their wives are pregnant, the Mossi often go to consult the baga /sorcerer/ to find out what sacrifices should be made so the event will turn out well. As he is wont to do, the baga indicates such-and-such a sacrifice. He also prognosticates on request whether to expect a boy or a girl.

843 755 If the pregnant woman has been frightened by an evil spirit (kinkirga), she summons the tipa who washes her body with a specially prepared liquid or merely administers violent blows on her head with tarakanré (cowhide sandals of which we spoke earlier /not translated/) to drive out the evil spirit.

844 The Mossi woman may give birth only in her own hut. She would consider it a shameful thing if the child were born in her husband's private hut.

When a woman gives birth, she makes a confession to the old women who assist her, because she fears too much suffering or an unsuccessful delivery if she does not confess the faults she has committed. The old women go and repeat them to the husband, who says, "That's all right, I knew it all," and forgives her. In short, the torments of childbirth are put to use by the old women to procure a confession.

There are midwives among the Mossi (in Mossi, pougourorosa). They are paid by the husband. However, they do not receive a [431] salary, properly speaking, but rather a gift (a piece of salt, a skirt cloth, etc.). If nothing is given to them, they cannot and do not make any demands.

In addition to the midwife, the old women of the compound, quarter, or village come and help the patient.

844 576 For the delivery itself, the Mossi woman goes down on hands and knees, her arms stretched out upon the ground, her body slightly inclined from head to hips, in the posture ordinarily used to salute or to remain before a chief. The midwife stays behind her.

844 When the child is born, the women present heat up a very strong concoction with red pepper, soumbara /locust bean/, etc. The woman is made to swallow this, and it is supposed to foster the emission of blood and all other impure matter. Then she is washed with warm water. Her loins are also rubbed vigorously so that the strain undergone in childbirth will not be felt there later. Likewise,

789 /103/ Happily, it is possible to avoid lightning. To achieve this,
821 it is necessary to find in the bush a white substance rather similar to hyena droppings which the natives call "rain dung," as well as certain tree roots. Part of these roots is left to soak in water for three days, and the rest is burned to ashes. A chicken is sacrificed to the tim. Then the water in which the roots have steeped is used to cook the millet mush, and the sauce is made with baobab leaves. All the soukala dwellers must eat this millet mush, and every one of them is marked on the back and chest with a cross of ashes mixed with karite butter. The horse and donkey, alone among the animals, are similarly marked on the back, chest, and inside the mouth. The huts are marked on the east side, the direction from which the rain comes, and above the entrance. Now there is nothing to be feared. We do feel, however, that lightning-rods are more effective.

759 All these tim, medicinal remedies, amulets, talismans, and
756 superstitious recipes, are prescribed either by true doctors who actually know the properties of herbs and effect real cures or by sorcerers. The doctors are often consulted. Since they specialize in certain diseases, they are consulted for those diseases alone. Those who have been cured by a medicine willingly make it known to friends who are afflicted with the same illness. The doctors are as numerous as the diseases which afflict mankind.

278 Some doctors are not merely healers but also poisoners, and they
674 are greatly feared. The surest way to get rid of an enemy is to consult them, but their fees are high. They have slow poisons which consume the victim gradually and the overwhelming ones which kill in a few hours. They put them in drinks, in millet mush, or more
754 often in kola nuts. There are also people, sorcerers rather than doctors, who claim the power to kill at a distance and who know how to practice sympathetic magic. Their prestige has waned since the French occupation because they have not managed to kill the Whites who settled in the country; but they say that our tim are more powerful than theirs.

754 The sorcerers are also numerous. There are those who take up the
756 call of their own accord and those who are born sorcerers. The former
791 are the bagré and seuya; the latter the tibo, bartibo, waongo, and nyonnyonsé. Pardon us these barbaric words, but they are impossible to translate.

791 The bagre is the nice, innocuous kind of sorcerer, who helps the
756 poor for a penny or two. He is consulted about everything. For example, what does the future hold? Will fire destroy my huts or won't

791 it? Will my journey be successful? And so forth. If the answer is un-
756 favorable, what must I do to avert misfortune? The bagré are resorted to especially in case of illness, to find out which spirit caused the disease and what the spirit wants. The role of the sorcerers is thus /104/ chiefly to prescribe the sacrifice and to indicate to whom it must be directed. More rarely they prescribe a medicine, but no one puts much faith in such remedies; in most instances, they indicate a negative treatment by stating what is forbidden to the patient.

756 They use the process of elimination to spot the disease. "He has a headache," says the sorcerer. If the reply is negative, he mentions another part of the body. "A stomach-ache ... No. A pain in the arm ... No." He must eventually hit on the right statement. If the sick person is cured following the prescribed sacrifice, the sorcerer is said to be skillful and to be truly in touch with the spirits, and his practice and income grow accordingly. If the patient is not cured or dies, it is either because the sorcerer has cheated or because he does not "see." Another sorcerer is sought out, in the hope of finding a true seer.

Sorcerers are carefully listened to, and everything they prescribe is faithfully carried out. Since they sometimes guess right, since even more often the patient is cured through auto-suggestion because the sorcerer said that he would be cured, since among people who fall ill those who get well are fortunately more numerous than those who die, for all these reasons the prestige of the sorcerers is high and their practice numerous, for it includes all the Mossi. The bara (plural of bagré) are not feared. They are abused when their prescriptions fail, and they are never consulted in the course of trials to find out the name of a culprit.

791 On the other hand, people often ask them who has killed their
695 child, their wife, their livestock, and the bagré sometimes indicates the culprit, with resulting enmity between the wronged party and the individual pointed out as guilty. The latter often resorts to trial by ordeal in self-defense. He himself suggests that he should drink poison, or that he should be burned with a red-hot iron or strangled with braided shreds of straw. If he is innocent, the poison will not harm him, the fire will not burn him, the straws will come apart. Only those who wished to do so resorted to such ordeals, and the judges never made use of this procedure. In trials actual proof had to be submitted.

791 Anyone may become a sorcerer, and those who take up the call
756 are usually poor chaps who have nothing to live on, who do not have the strength to till the soil, or who simply want to live without working. When someone enters the brotherhood of bara, people say that he wants to learn how to be idle, and they laugh about it.

791 During the dry season the country is overrun with hordes of Gourounsi and Nankana, filthy and ragged, who claim to know everything and to possess a charm for every purpose, even to make peanuts grow. Led by a chief who speaks a few words of Mossi, they wander from one village to another, dancing and singing for the nabas like the mountebanks who perform at the wagon door of fortune tellers to attract the public... They are consulted, and they return home well rigged out thanks to the cowries they have gathered in Mossi country.

754 /105/ The seuya or soul-eaters are greatly feared. The death of
774 a native, especially that of a child, is often ascribed to them. They have the power of leaving the human body they inhabit and wandering about everywhere in search of a soul to eat. Fire is their vehicle, and they travel about at night on the will-o'-the-wisps that wander in the fields around the huts. They may be stopped by the trees and thrown to the ground, and those who possess an amulet more powerful than their can drive them away.

The seuya are extremely dangerous, for complete protection against them is impossible. They work by night. Every mortal soul leaves the body often during the night and goes wandering about. Woe to it if it should come upon a seuya. He will pounce upon the soul or put it under a big stone, and the unfortunate body that owns it will fall ill and eventually die. The only remedy is to offer a sacrifice to the tangandé, and the guardian animal of the village will go on a search until it locates and releases the unhappy soul; the tangandé causes it to re-enter the body, and the sick person gets well. If, however, the seuya ate the soul, or if he is in connivance with the tangandé, nothing can be done, and death swiftly ensues.

791 The bagré sorcerers can tell who is a seuya and who is not. Some
754 of them have a tim which permits them to distinguish the seuya in a crowd of people. They need only smoke a pipe, and the eyes of the soul-eating man will redden and fill with tears. Those accused of
754 being seuya usually deny the charge, and to call someone a seuya is
[578] one of the worst insults. We have already described the heinous death inflicted on these unfortunate people. Old women especially are

753 /66/ This is because illness is usually attributed to an evil spirit,
761 which must not be irked with complaints. Yet in everyday language it is God who is the cause of everything, of health as well as of death. The sorcerers consulted indicate which spirit must be appeased, to whom sacrifices must be offered; or they state quite frankly that the hour of the sick person has come, that his life is over and he is about to rejoin his ancestors, for it is often the latter who call him and come to fetch him. In the case of old men and especially of old women, death is considered a natural event. An old man has many children who will give him a fine funeral, and it is time for him to make way for his eldest son. If a quarrelsome person falls sick, his
[763] illness is often attributed to an evil spell cast by an enemy. When an elder is about to die, those who have caused him offense come to beg his forgiveness and only find peace when they have obtained it, for the old man might return to obtain his revenge. Sudden death is usually ascribed to poison and, alas, this is often the case. Sometimes it is also attributed to an evil spirit, especially in case of accident, fall, snake bite, etc.

755 The instinct of self-preservation is so strong in man that the Mossi,
757 although they ascribe a superhuman origin to illness, nevertheless fight it. It is true that all their treatments combine medicinal and superstitious elements to drive off evil spirits, and whatever the remedy, true medicine or amulet, it is always a tim; there is only the one
759 word to designate it. Some of the natives know how to treat certain illnesses, and people come to consult them, often from far away. One has a medicine against snakes, and he makes it in complete secrecy on a certain day; one knows how to treat colds and bronchitis;
[752] another, dysentery; yet another, sores. The bone-setters are often very skillful, and with the mere pressure of their fingers they can set a dislocated joint or a broken leg; then they enclose it between tightly-bound millet stalks as a splint. These doctors prescribe remedies without resorting to sacrifices or witchcraft. Sometimes they live with their patient to care for him, of course for a fee, especially if the person gets well.

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757 They are laid on a bed of sand which retains heat. When the pocks are ripe, they are punctured with a thorn, and then the patient is rubbed with sand. The eyes are washed with an antiseptic decoction, and the patient gargles frequently with peppered water.

Medicinal herbs, tree leaves, and barks are the basis of all remedies, in the form of infusions or poultices. The study of these medicines would no doubt be of interest to a specialist. But would the natives who hold the secret of their preparation be willing to surrender it?

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755 visit him, offer him sympathy, and even more appropriately bring him some gifts. The relatives of the sick person consult the sorcerer, for it is necessary to determine the agency that caused the disease. Sorcerers rarely prescribe a medicine. Their role is to point out the part of the body which is afflicted and especially to indicate the spirit who should receive the sacrifice. Another man, who in most cases has nothing to do with witchcraft, knows the medicines. If the patient improves after the prescribed sacrifices have been offered, it means that the sorcerer knows his business well; if not, it means that he has cheated.

758 Every self-respecting sorcerer must prescribe a negative treatment, in the sense of pointing out certain things the patient must not eat. Sometimes goat or chicken flesh is forbidden for the duration of the illness or permanently. Sometimes it is a certain kind of sauce, or millet or bean fritters. On the other hand, since the Mossi eat no eggs, especially not raw, and drink hardly any milk, they sustain the sick with plenty of millet beer and with an unappetizing mush of coarsely ground millet, often mixed with powdered charcoal. Patients have difficulty absorbing such a mixture and occasionally die of
755 starvation. Sometimes the sorcerer also indicates an amulet that

231 will not take it. The Mossi only eat it themselves if there is no
262 other kind of millet available, or in times of famine. In any case,
[757] the red millet has a constipating effect, and when people suffer from colic they are given a to /mush/ of red millet to check the attack.

243 The Mossi also grow the ordinary large white millet, which is the kind grown most extensively, aside from sanio, throughout the Sudan. The Mossi call it baninga, the Bambara kéningué or guessékélé. It is called kéningué around Ségou, and guessékélé around Nioro. The Nounouma call it nienso, and so do the Kassonfra /Awana/. The Kassonboura /Kasena/ call it béninga, that is to say, they have adopted the Mossi word and slightly altered it. (We saw, in fact, that some Kassouna-Boura, at least those of Po and Tiahané, are Kassouna-Mossi rather than Kassouna-Boura.)

Europeans often give this kind of millet the name of "pearly millet" /mil nacré/ or "horse millet," because it is tender and easy to crush.

/470/ This millet is not grown by every Mossi. Those who do grow the large white millet eat it themselves. They also give it to
[231] their horses. It is cultivated exactly in the same fashion as the small millet, that is to say, it is sown and harvested at the same time.

The Mossi also grow the kipéléro or kipélégo (from ki, "millet," and péléro or pélégo, "white"). This is the yaro or yara of the Gourounsi, and probably the n'guéné or n'kendé of the Bambara and Malinké, a kind of millet intermediate between the small and large white varieties. Actually, one of my informants told me that the kipéléro is sown along with the ordinary small millet, that no distinction is made between the two, and that they are used for the same purposes, while another informant maintained that it is a kind of large white millet.

The Mossi also grow some gadiaba. This is a kind of large millet which is either white or red. The Bambara call it gadiabadié when it is white, hamadiboubou when it is red. The Mossi refer to the gadiabadié as noira. They cultivate it only in Boussouma province. As for hamadiboubou, it is not to be found among the Mossi.

As far as the early millet /mil précoce/ is concerned, the Mossi are familiar with it and call it nado, but they do not cultivate it. This is the souna of the Bambara, the tiara of the Nounouma and

222 These pods, of course, are not eaten. They merely serve to
263 make the tô sauce fresh and sour, as the Blacks like it.

The pods[1] themselves are only eaten in times of famine, because
[261] they give colic. In addition, they harm the mouth, tongue, and teeth (gingivitis).

In ordinary times, the natives use them medically as a fever remedy. They boil them with pimento and drink the decoction. This is done by the Mossi as well as by the Gourounsi, Bambara, etc.

Tamarind pods are also made into dry balls which are sold at market. They are crudely mashed with a pestle, and then pressed together in cold water into balls of varying size. Whenever one wishes to give the to a tamarind taste, one pries loose a small piece of the ball with a knife and places it in the canari of boiling water where millet flour will be added.

278 Like the Bambara, the Mossi prepare a purging drink with the
757 tamarind pod, either fresh or dried. It is boiled in water, a tiny bit of millet flour is added, and the drink is consumed when slightly warm. This decoction has laxative properties. The Haoussa are also familiar with it, but the Gourounsi are not.

222 To summarize, the tamarind pod has two chief uses among the
137 Mossi and other Blacks of West Africa. It serves to sour and freshen the tô, and it also serves as a purgative.

222 Let us add that Dr. Rançon, in the account of his /501/ trip through Upper Gambia, described the preparation of a tamarind drink for European consumption. The pod is left to dissolve in cold water for three hours, sugar is added, and a sort of lemonade results.

222 The Mossi have rônier in every village. This, as we know, is a
137 variety of palm tree.

"It is the largest palm tree, Borassus flabelliformis," says Dr. Rançon (Dans la Haute-Gambie, pages 139 to 141). "It is easy to recognize owing to its height and characteristic appearance. Its trunk is very long and may sometimes reach 25 or 30 meters. It is swollen in the middle, and its lower and upper parts are much less thick, much more slender. The bark is blackish and bears scars of the wounds left by fallen leaves. The wood, although it looks spongy, is quite tough and hard to dent with a saw. Rônier logs are heavier than water. This is one of the rare woods that do not float. The leaves of a grown rônier are clustered in a thick bunch at the

[1] [i.e. tamarind pods — Analyst]

789 A number of grigris made by Mossi timisoba have passed
791 through my hands. I shall list them and briefly describe them below.

1. A cow's tail at the tip of a wooden handle. When one is traveling during the winter season and a storm threatens, one need only wave the cow's tail and the storm does not burst. Once in the village, one stops waving it and the rain comes.

2. A hollow koba horn in which tamarind leaves, peanuts, and
[757] gum have been placed. In case of headache one opens the horn by its small upper lid, takes /592/ a pinch of the mixture, and swallows it. Then one does this again and also rubs a little on the forehead.

3. A small hoe with a chicken's head fastened to the handle. When during a dance one wishes to silence a singer who has been singing too long in order to sing oneself, one grips the hoe and covers the chicken's mouth. The singer is silenced, and in addition one sings perfectly.

4. A small hoe covered with leopardskin at the bend. If one is
[752] bitten by a snake, one cuts off a very small piece of the skin and puts it in a canari full of water. Then one rubs the bite with this water.

5. A deer horn with a fine red cord wrapped around it. Inside the horn there are tiégélara and karité seeds. The opening of the horn is closed with a wad of cotton.

If an enemy comes looking for a fight, one places some of the contents of the horn on a leather bracelet which is slipped on the left wrist. No harm can come to you, and the quarrel will immediately come to an end.

6. A deer horn containing crushed scorpions and pimento. If one wishes to become an indefatigable dancer, one need only rub one's back with the mixture.

7. Leather bracelets with powdered rice inside. People who wear one of those bracelets on the arm can be sure that the stick or sword which their enemy may attempt to use against them will break in his hands.

8. Iron bracelets covered with crocodile skin. Same purpose.

9. Cotton bracelets with honey and salt inside. If your wife
[842] is sterile, it is sufficient to put the bracelet in water in order to make her fertile.

789 10. A deer horn covered with leather and containing millet and
791 pounded-bean flour. On the outside there is a hooked piece of iron.
777

364 For the Mossi, as for all other men, life ends in death, with or without illness. The Blacks do not know how to prevent diseases, and they know very little about fighting them. Hygiene is almost unknown. The huts are poorly aired, the chickens and in general all the animals in the inner courtyard walk everywhere and foul everything. The courtyard is swept often, but the hut of the sheep and goats is located in the midst of the other dwellings; the horse is kept within the soukala [514] itself; and people relieve themselves anywhere, wherever they find a convenient spot. The manure is gathered in a heap, but it is kept next to the huts and gives off a nauseating smell and noxious miasmas, especially at the beginning of the rainy season.

515 The Mossi are not dirty, but they cannot be called clean. Those who dwell in villages abundantly supplied with water at all times are the cleanest. The women, who fetch water every day and thus have an opportunity to wash, are usually cleaner than the men. A Mossi never passes a pond without drinking copiously and washing all over, and this would seem to prove that those who go dirty do so unwillingly; they have no water nearby, and it would be too much trouble to go to the river to bathe. Clothing, especially breechcloths, is often repulsively dirty. This is because washing wears out clothes, and who knows when new ones will be available? No wonder disease has such a hold on this people.

855 Child care is quite rudimentary: a few baths; enemas two or three 165 times a day, without which it is said their bowels would not move; and that is all. At the slightest indisposition the sorcerer is consulted, or else the child is left to himself; he will get well or die, and nothing is done about it. As a consequence, child mortality is very high. 758 Those who fall prey to a contagious disease are not isolated. A healthy child lies on the same mat as one with smallpox, a leper drinks from the common gourd unless his lips are covered with sores. People do, however, hesitate to sit where a syphilitic person with sores previously sat. The education of the Mossi in matters of hygiene is wholly yet to be learned.

576 On meeting someone, Mossi politeness requires that an inquiry be made about his health and that of all his relatives. The response invariably is "So-and-So is well," and the other in turn responds, "May God permit his health to wax." It is only after a little conversation that a certain person is said to be ill or to be getting better. 195 It is not said that someone died, but that he ran short of strength, that he passed away, that he left us.

751 it. It is recognized that smallpox does not hit the same place twice (obviously, when it has already killed all those who could be killed), and fear of catching the disease prevents many natives from undergoing the operation. The Administration is rendering great services
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755 starvation. Sometimes the sorcerer also indicates an amulet that

784 born among the Peul, to whom dog flesh is forbidden, may have the
262 dog as kisgou. Sometimes the kisgou concerns only him, his son, and grandson and not his other descendants, because the son and grandson will follow his own soul, while the soul of the other descendants will follow that of his mother, their great-grandmother, to whom dog flesh is not forbidden. A sorcerer's reasoning against which there is no argument!

/89/ This kind of kisgou is the more binding of the two, but it may be terminated if the person who established it offers the proper sacrifices, or if one of his descendants, of his own will, releases himself and his children from it. Thus the family of the Saman'Naba, Prime Minister of Koupéla, has the hare as kisgou. When the naba saw his Christian brothers and son eat hare flesh with impunity, without becoming blind or leprous, he took to eating it himself without ill effects.

784 Parents teach their children about the various family kisgou and
869 instill the proper awe into them so they will not eat these animals.
753 Involuntary disregard of one's kisgou may lead to illness, and the sorcerer consulted indicates what has to be done and what sacrifice must be offered to the tangandé to obtain his forgiveness. If the slip was deliberate, if it showed contempt, no forgiveness is possible.

784 The second kind of kisgou is quite special and personal. It consists
●758 of the various prohibitions imposed by the sorcerers on a sick person.
262 A certain kind of meat or sauce is forbidden to the patient, or he may not drink water containing millet flour, or he may not eat millet or bean cakes. This is how a poor rachitic child with a heart disease was successively forbidden practically every kind of food. His relatives had the greatest difficulty finding those foods that were not forbidden to him, and eventually he died of starvation. All such kisgou terminate of course with the illness that caused them, unless the disease is incurable and lasts to the end of the patient's life.

Chapter 2. The Cult

000 If we define religion with Mgr. Le Roy (1) as "The body of beliefs,

1. Mgr. Le Roy, op. cit., p. 49.

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761 which must not be irked with complaints. Yet in everyday language it is God who is the cause of everything, of health as well as of death. The sorcerers consulted indicate which spirit must be appeased, to whom sacrifices must be offered; or they state quite frankly that the hour of the sick person has come, that his life is over and he is about to rejoin his ancestors, for it is often the latter who call him and come to fetch him. In the case of old men and especially of old women, death is considered a natural event. An old man has many children who will give him a fine funeral, and it is time for him to make way for his eldest son. If a quarrelsome person falls sick, his illness is often attributed to an evil spell cast by an enemy. When
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789 /103/ Happily, it is possible to avoid lightning. To achieve this,
821 it is necessary to find in the bush a white substance rather similar to hyena droppings which the natives call "rain dung," as well as certain tree roots. Part of these roots is left to soak in water for three days, and the rest is burned to ashes. A chicken is sacrificed to the tim. Then the water in which the roots have steeped is used to cook the millet mush, and the sauce is made with baobab leaves. All the soukala dwellers must eat this millet mush, and every one of them is marked on the back and chest with a cross of ashes mixed with karite butter. The horse and donkey, alone among the animals, are similarly marked on the back, chest, and inside the mouth. The huts are marked on the east side, the direction from which the rain comes, and above the entrance. Now there is nothing to be feared. We do feel, however, that lightning-rods are more effective.

759 All these tim, medicinal remedies, amulets, talismans, and
756 superstitious recipes, are prescribed either by true doctors who actually know the properties of herbs and effect real cures or by sorcerers. The doctors are often consulted. Since they specialize in certain diseases, they are consulted for those diseases alone. Those who have been cured by a medicine willingly make it known to friends who are afflicted with the same illness. The doctors are as numerous as the diseases which afflict mankind.

278 Some doctors are not merely healers but also poisoners, and they
674 are greatly feared. The surest way to get rid of an enemy is to consult them, but their fees are high. They have slow poisons which consume the victim gradually and the overwhelming ones which kill in a few hours. They put them in drinks, in millet mush, or more
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12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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When a woman has a number of stillbirths or
845 loses her children when they are still babies, however, it is believed
761 than these children were embodiments of the same *kinkirsi* (spirits)
776 who must be tricked into remaining on earth when it returns, and
443 the market place is chosen as the site for this trickery. As soon as such
851 a woman gives birth to a child, and old woman places it in a basket
443 and on the next market day takes it to the market place. Her intention is to "sell" the child in the hope that it would not die if owned by someone other than its mother. The old woman walks around the market place shouting: "I have something to sell!" Invariably a man will walk up to her, and after ascertaining the contents of the basket, offer to buy it. The price varies with the fortune of the man, but traditionally the amount paid has been 500 cowries or their equivalent. The man takes the child for a few minutes and then returns it to its vendor, telling her in a loud voice so that the kinkirsi will hear: "I would like you to give this child to 'X' (the child's mother) to be reared for me and I will pay for its upbringing and will come
[551] for the child in a few years. He then gives the child the name *Yamba*
[553] (slave), or *Yemdaogo* (male slave) if male and *Yempoko* (female slave) if a girl. The old woman then returns the child to its mother, relating what has passed in the market and indicating who the "owner" of her child is. The "owner" of the child may not even see the child again, and naturally does not take this ownership seriously. In many cases the money with which he bought the child was given to him by the child's father.

852 The market also plays an important part in the circumcision and
443 incision ceremonies of Mossi boys and girls. For about two to three months after the actual operations the young children, especially the boys are secluded in the circumcision lodges or compounds and have almost no contact with the village population. Their re-introduction to society always takes place on the great market day. The parents of the children buy new clothing for them this occasion, and on the appointed day the boys or girls parade together in the market and are offered gifts by the market people. Later in the day, they are dismissed and individually feted by their relatives.

585 Owing to the relatively unceremonious nature of Mossi marriages,
76 the market does not play a role in Mossi weddings. However, the
554 same thing cannot be said about the last important *rite de passage,*
443 especially the funeral of a chief, or important elder. Prior to the intervention of the French, and to a lesser extent even today, the announcement of the death of an important ruler was seen as the breakdown of law and order and was ritually dramatized by a popular raid
[565] on the markets throughout the territories (Skinner : ms). During the interregnum the vendors are subject to constant raids by members of

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FA28 Mossi FA28

the noble class, whose actions embody the ideology that the exercise of sovereignty is a corporate right which reverts to all of them when the head ruler dies. Much of this raiding is symbolic and does not interrupt market activities.

Many of the ceremonies connected with the funeral of chiefs and respected deceased elders take place in the market. Sometime between the interment of the dead person, the *keema,* and the first burial ceremonies, the sister-in-law *(dakia)* of the dead man in her role as joking relative—a role she plays until the funeral ceremonies are completed—impersonates him in the market place. On the day chosen for this rite the *dakia* dresses in the clothes of the *keema* and goes to market. While there, she acts as she observed her brother-in-law to have acted in the past: she circles the market and buys goods; she buys beer from his favorite beer seller and drinks with his friends; and for a moment, at least, she sits with his old cronies in their favorite haunts and takes part in their discussions. She may even be serenaded by *griots* who sing praises in honor of "her" ancestors, and she rewards them before leaving the market place that evening.

The market is the scene of an important ritual during the final funeral ceremonies, which are held about one year after a man was buried. On the morning of this ceremony the female relatives of the *keema,* led by his eldest daughter and his *dakia,* appear in the market and go from stall to stall buying all the things the deceased used in his lifetime. These include meat, *zumbala* (locust bean balls), cotton, tobacco, salt, kola nuts, peppers, *kumba* (a tomato), cakes, cooked millet-mush balls, potatoes, etc. When they have gathered all of these things, they retire to a spot near the market where they lay out all the foodstuff in baskets. In the meantime, the drummers play the royal airs, if the dead man was a chief, or ordinary rhythms if he was a commoner. Then the *keema's* eldest daughter places a basket on her head and, accompanied by four men, leads a procession of drummers and of the other women, also with their baskets, around the market. While this procession is circling the market three times in honor of the deceased, the *dakia,* carrying a very old basket containing the stalest food she could find, weaves back and forth through the marching throng making a nuisance of herself. After the third round the marchers return to their assembly point whence the eldest daughter and some of the older women now rush into the market, stealing merchandise from the stalls and placing it in their baskets. This assault is often so quickly done that it is fairly successful. The raiders then join the other mourners at the assembly point, where with bowed heads they listen respectfully while the chief drummer recites the genealogy of the *keema* and tells him that the people from the surrounding villages

643 are placed in the tomb: two sheep skins (gando); some cushions
766 (nagpouya); several bolsters (fourkamsé); and a zoukougré -- all made of leather. All of these are arranged as though the chief were to lie down to rest.

After the corpse has been washed (Naba Siguire, father of the present Mogho Naba, was washed by marabouts [125] since he was the son of a naba who was a Moslem believer), it is clothed all in white. In the house of every Mogho Naba a corner of the wall is
[531 decorated with rather attractive designs, and the dead Mogho Naba
● 761] is carried through it on his way to the tomb. The sight of this corner, which is seldom visited, reminds the chief still living of the mortality of all beings and makes him realize that in the same way as he succeeded someone, so will he, in turn, be replaced by another; the corner will one day become an opening through which his own body will pass at the end of his lifetime.

In addition to the garments in which he is clothed, the following items are placed in the grave beside him: a folded white robe (fou yorgo); a pair of trousers (kourga); a blanket (fou gobga); a pair of slippers (néoda); a small knife (souga); a sword (zangoégo); a gourd of beer (dam) with a calabash over the neck and a small cloth (leppré) over it; a loaf of salt (yamsem); a gourd filled with a hundred kola nuts (gouré wamdé); a sewn sack filled with cowries (liguide ne yolmoumdi); napaga ornaments (douamba and zuyan); and tobacco if the chief smoked or chewed it.

[767] The undertaker is entitled to take the salt, some kola nuts, and some meat when he departs.

[126] When the burial is over, one walks around the house of the deceased.

643 It should be noted that before the burial or sometimes when the death of the king is first known, all of his wives who have children take flight for fear that their son will be made kourita.

The kourita is a child of the deceased and must bear the latter's name. He is exiled and must never, so long as he lives, look upon the new Mogho Naba. Until the emperor is represented on earth by his kourita, his successor cannot be named. This explains the general flight of all of the wives who have children.

to divine Providence. These are the mystics.

However, the deism of either type is not very deep. All believe that a dead person will rejoin his ancestors and dwell eternally with them. They imagine, however, that "the road to Eternity is hard and the Kingdom of God so remote from the earth that they give cowries to their dead to pay their way through difficulties, the hazards of the journey being directly related to the good or bad actions of the deceased."

This may be said to be a kind of vague notion of a hell or a purgatory. However, this hell is neither the "everlasting fire of the Christians nor the horrible sufferings of the Moslems," since the person is supposed to be with his relatives.

The Alkyoamé. One sometimes hears a Moaga say: "I cannot avenge what you have done to me, but it will be settled on the day of alkyoamé." This is a somewhat superficial notion of a Day of Judgment. The Moaga does not really believe in a final judgment any more than he believes in the end of the world or the resurrection of the body. By the words alkyoamé daré, he alludes to the day when he and his enemy will both die and God will subject one of them to a punishment -- understood to be temporary -- for the harm he has done the other. [200]

Beliefs and Superstitions Concerning the Soul After Death

What do the Mossi believe the human being to be? Man is composed of three elements: the visible body, the siga or toulé (soul), and the kima (ghost).

The siga, which may be called the soul, is the part of the man which is to return to God.

Siga. According to the Mossi, the siga or toulé is easily frightened. A great sorrow, illness, or the death of a loved one can cause it to abandon the body temporarily. It then assumes a human appearance and can be seen by the person himself or by others. In that case, charms or fetishes are used to make it return.

Its temporary absence from the body is not thought to have any serious consequences since this does not disturb the normal functions of the human organism, but, since body and soul cannot

714 761 live without each other, its prolonged absence is thought to cause death.

Kima (from ki, "to die"). This is a sort of silhouette of a 714 person who is about to die. It is visible only to certain initiates. 763 It is said, however, to be somewhat deformed, and its presence may make one's hair stand on end or cause shivers that paralyze the legs and make walking impossible.

715 The siga may be distinguished from the kima in that the latter, being already dead, has its head completely shaved, wears ashes in the form of [201] a cross or X on its forehead, or has its feet stained with blood.

As soon as the person dies, his kima roams around the house for a time and then joins his ancestors at Pilimpikou.

715 Pilimpikou. Pilimpikou is a village belonging to the ad- 718 ministrative district of Koudougou (upper Volta). On a mountain nearby, there is a grotto which is regarded as the sacred place where the kimsé of all the dead Mossi assemble.

Legend has it that any deceased relative may be found again at Pilimpikou if one were so unfortunate as not to have been present during his last moments. One can also go there to find out where the deceased has hidden part of his fortune or some valuable object.

It is said that one has only to go to the Tingsoba of Pilimpikou and ask him to use his influence to call the deceased.

The Tingsoba orders the petitioner not to shed a single tear at the sight of the "ghost," and, the legend goes on to say, if the secret of the interview with the kima is not kept, the person will die within the year.

Finally, it is believed that when the kimsé welcome new members -- they represent the whole family of all the dead Mossi for countless generations -- they organize games whose echoes are heard by the inhabitants of Pilimpikou.

715 Young people of both sexes who were unmarried at the time of their death and newborn children who have died [202] return to that place where they dwelt before coming into the world in order to "return to human form in the womb of another woman or of their former mother." As we noted in an earlier paragraph, the Mossi believe in reincarnation. [203]

695 tomb and force him to drink water in which earth from the grave had been diluted. This test was greatly feared, for the Mossi believe that the deceased will come and take his revenge.

The defendant went free unless his guilt was proved by witnesses. When arguments arose about the ownership of fields, domestic animals, etc., each person concerned would give his arguments and summon his witnesses, and the judges made a decision on the basis of the discussions. If two women quarreled, their husbands were supposed to get together and reach a decision. The province chief judged disputes 692 concerning marriage. For instance, if a girl had been promised to someone and the bride price was paid in part, and then her father changed his mind and gave her to another, the disappointed suitor could appeal to the province chief, who saw to it that the payment was returned. If the defendant ran away to avoid trial, he could only be tried in absentia if witnesses deposed against him.

696 /25/ The sentence was carried out as far as possible, even in the 691 absence of the convicted party; if he returned, the trial was not re-672 opened but he could appeal to the province chief. The family is held responsible in every case. If the sentence includes a fine, and if the convicted person's property is insufficient, the property of his relatives is seized. People are held accountable for their children's debts, and if the defendant runs away, one of his relatives is seized in his place. On the other hand, the head of the family is the abso-[593] lute master and the judge of the family. He must pay his children's debts and the fines they have incurred, but he may chastise them, even put them to death, or banish and curse them, a punishment which as a rule is greatly feared. All this indicates the strength of the family ties, which we shall study in the second part of this work. The naba saw to the execution of the sentence pronounced by the court; the executive and judicial powers were vested in the same person. If anyone refused to pay his debts or to pay the inflicted penalty, he was stripped of his property. No commutation of the sentence was allowed, and the person condemned to irons or to death had to suffer the sentence himself and could not go free by paying a fine or by substituting a slave. Capital punishment was carried out in public. The province chief was entitled to grant a pardon, but, [761] of course, he made use of this right quite rarely. A man's life counts for so little in the eyes of the Black!

843 A woman's role is to bear children. When she knows that she is pregnant, she no longer consents to come to her husband, but she is careful not to inform him of her state; if she told him, the child would die. If her parents happen to pass away during her pregnancy, she does not go into mourning and does not attend the funeral. If she is newly wed and has not yet borne children, one of the other wives of her husband, or, if there are none, the husband's sister, comes at night to sprinkle the husband and wife with water. The young wife will henceforth call this woman her husband, prepare millet mush for her, and heat the water in which she washes. When the pregnancy begins to show, one of the wife's female relatives consults the sorcerer [782] to find out which sacrifice should be offered so that all will go well, but the husband is not informed of this consultation. Sometimes the sacrifice is repeated when the birth draws near. When the first baby 851 is born, the husband sends a child to his wife's relatives with a rooster or a hen depending on the newborn's sex. The child tosses the bird into the yard without saying a word and runs away; everybody understands.

847 /40/ A child born deformed, lame, or blind is done away with; 845 it is simply drowned without further ado if considered incurable. In 732 olden times, twins were often drowned also because their birth entails 761 difficulties for the family, who must offer special sacrifices; some- 753 times only one of them was done away with. If they are spared and die a natural death, the mother wears a small bell at her ankle until the anniversary of the death (kouré). If the mother happens to die or the father becomes ill, the sorcerer need only say so and the children are put to death, because they are said to have caused the illness or death of their parents. A baby who could barely walk was once brought by relatives to the Koupéla Fathers. He had been born on a Friday and his mother had died; that was sufficient to call for his sacrifice. His relatives tried unsuccessfully to poison him; they exposed him for three days in the bush, and the child did not die. As a last resort they brought him to the missionaries, who hastened to shelter him. Children recognized as insane are abandoned in the bush where they die of hunger.

732 It is only fair to add, however, that these barbarous practices 845 reminiscent of Sparta are not invariably followed. Several lame and incurably ill children are carefully tended by their parents, and some twins born prior to the French occupation are alive and in good health.

753 /66/ This is because illness is usually attributed to an evil spirit,
761 which must not be irked with complaints. Yet in everyday language it is God who is the cause of everything, of health as well as of death. The sorcerers consulted indicate which spirit must be appeased, to whom sacrifices must be offered; or they state quite frankly that the hour of the sick person has come, that his life is over and he is about to rejoin his ancestors, for it is often the latter who call him and come to fetch him. In the case of old men and especially of old women, death is considered a natural event. An old man has many children who will give him a fine funeral, and it is time for him to make way for his eldest son. If a quarrelsome person falls sick, his
[763] illness is often attributed to an evil spell cast by an enemy. When an elder is about to die, those who have caused him offense come to beg his forgiveness and only find peace when they have obtained it, for the old man might return to obtain his revenge. Sudden death is usually ascribed to poison and, alas, this is often the case. Sometimes it is also attributed to an evil spirit, especially in case of accident, fall, snake bite, etc.

755 The instinct of self-preservation is so strong in man that the Mossi,
757 although they ascribe a superhuman origin to illness, nevertheless fight it. It is true that all their treatments combine medicinal and superstitious elements to drive off evil spirits, and whatever the remedy, true medicine or amulet, it is always a tim; there is only the one
759 word to designate it. Some of the natives know how to treat certain illnesses, and people come to consult them, often from far away. One has a medicine against snakes, and he makes it in complete secrecy on a certain day; one knows how to treat colds and bronchitis;
[752] another, dysentery; yet another, sores. The bone-setters are often very skillful, and with the mere pressure of their fingers they can set a dislocated joint or a broken leg; then they enclose it between tightly-bound millet stalks as a splint. These doctors prescribe remedies without resorting to sacrifices or witchcraft. Sometimes they live with their patient to care for him, of course for a fee, especially if the person gets well.

751 Smallpox vaccination is performed, but often too late, on individuals who already have the germ. The vaccine is taken from a seriously ill person without any precautionary antiseptic measures. The vaccinated individual is usually made very sick and sometimes dies of

755 must be procured. The leaf used to cover a wound must be held by means of a thin cotton cord with cowries attached at the end, three cowries for a boy, four for a girl. A hemp cord with three or four knots, worn around the neck, wrist, or any other part of the body, prevents swelling of that part and is also a master remedy against hair worms. Sometimes it is not so easy to secure the prescribed amulet, for instance, if it is the beak or claw of a hawk, a deer horn, or certain parts of a buffalo or koba. The poor Mossi goes to great pains to find this indispensable amulet.

763 Do as he may, sooner or later he must die. When an old man feels that his end is near, he calls his family and gives them his last instructions. He talks to his eldest son and tells him where his cattle and caches are to be found, who are his debtors and creditors. Sometimes death comes swiftly without warning, and the old man has no time to talk to his heir; a large part of the fortune is thus lost, because a Mossi in good health never tells anybody, especially not his /68/ children, where his property is, and those to whom he has entrusted it do not return it. Some Peul have made rather nice profits in this fashion.

761 The death of a young man or woman or more especially that of a small child is usually ascribed to an old woman who is said to have 754 eaten the child's soul, and some old women claim to have this secret. [683] The sorcerer points out the guilty woman who is seized and put to death. Every sudden or accidental death is ascribed to an evil spirit, and the funeral ceremonies reflect this.

762 Suicide is extremely rare, but it does occur. Here is one case where we knew the participants. A man quarreled with his wife. The wife, who was stronger than her husband, overwhelmed him in the fight, and the neighbors openly ridiculed him. The following day the husband was found hanging in his hut. A pit was hastily dug [766] in his nearest field, and he was tossed into it naked without further ceremony. Suicide is regarded as a criminal act, and even the corpse is punished for it.

763 Like all human beings, the Mossi fear death. No longer to eat millet mush or to drink dolo seems to them the greatest of misfortunes. Still, when a Mossi sees death approaching, he resigns himself to it and accepts it stoically. He rests his head on the lap of his first wife, and his other wives gather around him. His friends and the village elders sit before the soukala, and all wait silently for hours until the

766 The death of a naba, as we mentioned earlier, is carefully con-
cealed; the more powerful he was, the more careful the concealment.
579 This is done out of fear of the disturbances which would be created by those who aspire to his succession, or by scoundrels who might take advantage of the absence of authority to indulge in every kind of robbery. At the death of the Moro Naba his province was sacked by armed bands, and no one dared to go out unarmed. On the day following the death of Moro Naba Sigri, we had to fetch millet from a village located a few kilometers from Ouagadougou. All the bearers were armed with bows, arrows, and spears. They made an interesting picture in the moonlight.

766 In spite of all their amulets and all their sacrifices, nabas die just like their subjects, and when this happens, his relatives hastily dig a pit in the entrance hut of the soukala and lay the corpse there without any ceremonies. Those wishing to see the naba will be told that he is unwell. The naba of Koupéla is especially favored in this respect. One of the huts in his soukala, standing near the entrance, is set aside for his burial. A pit has been dug within the hut, and every /72/ day the caretaker comes to pour dolo into the hole. This caretaker must not have a wife, and if he happens to have one before his appointment to this post, the naba takes her for himself. On the other hand, the caretaker eats the same food as the naba and drinks the same millet beer. Needless to say, this job is not in great demand. The
[761] naba may not enter the hut, and when the roof is in need of repair, the drummers are sent for, and the naba must flee; woe to him if he should hear the sound of the drums, for he would die within the year. When the naba of Koupéla dies, his hands and feet are immediately pierced with big thorns so that he may not return; should he venture to seize one of his people after his death, the thorns would cause him such pain that he would immediately let go of his prey. The corpse is tossed into the pit to fall as it may. The Mossi, full of respect for their chiefs when they are alive, make up for it when they are dead.

Young unmarried men or girls are buried with a previously deceased old woman of the family, so that someone will take care of them in the other life. Their death is regarded as a true misfortune and mourned accordingly. There are no dances or ceremonies. The father, mother, and younger siblings shave their heads on the second or third day after the burial.

[775] A small child is buried by the path. He will soon return in the person of the first child borne by his mother after his death.

766 Suicides are buried like our dogs; here, all dogs are eaten. Lepers
[761] are buried at night without festivities. Accidental death, whether
[262] from a fall, snake bite, or any other cause, is attributed to an evil spirit who must not be irked by granting funerary honors to its victim, or else it would return and kill another member of the family. This is why those who die of an accident are buried without ceremonies and without undertakers. Their heads are not shaved, because God has called them with their hair on, as the Mossi say. A pit is dug, they
769 are buried, and that is all. They have no one to represent them; to the anniversary of their death, the koure, they have no kourita.

Every Mossi who dies of illness, be it man, woman, child, or naba, survives in the person of the kourita. In the case of a married man, the kourita or koutoarsa (who imitates the deceased) is a woman of the dead person's family, usually one of the wives of one of his younger brothers, someone who bears a certain resemblance to the deceased. She is chosen by the family, and sometimes designated by the dying person. She wears the clothes of the deceased, his shirt, his blanket, his hat, his shoes, his bracelets, and his rings; she wears his belt and knives, walks with his staff, his hoe, his doré, and bears his spear, blade pointing toward the ground. She walks like the person she represents. She must imitate him in every way and keep his presence alive in the household. If the deceased was usually accompanied by a /73/ child bearing his satchel, the kourita is followed by the same child bearing the same satchel, but turned inside out. If the deceased was a leper and had no fingers, she pretends not to have any; if he liked to laugh, she laughs; if he was peevish and quarreled with everyone, she maintains a constant state of anger. The children of the deceased call her their father; the wives call her their husband and prepare her millet mush. If the dead man was a naba, she is called naba; if he was not, she is called by the name of the deceased.

769 She acts in this manner until the day of koure. On that day she
428 shaves her head like the other members of the family, and her role ends there. She retains the name kourita, however, and on the day when the inheritance is distributed, she receives a garment in exchange for the clothes of the deceased. If the heir is generous, if the inheritance allows it, she is given some livestock, sometimes a child. It is said that the kourita dies sooner than if she had not played this role, because the ancestral spirits will come and fetch her. For this reason, the position is not in great demand.

776 tangandé in every detail either, for only the village may have a tangandé, and there does not seem to be any magic pact unless the sacrifices offered are considered as such a pact, which does not seem justified. The tangandé-animal is never sacrificed, and no special initiation takes place.

774 The closest thing to totemism among the Mossi seems to be their
761 concept of the human soul, and yet it is not, properly speaking, a
[775] totem in the sense indicated by these authors. Every man has a soul that lives on after death and takes the name of kyma, while during life it is called siga. Shortly before death it takes the name of toullé
[197] /85/ in Ouagadougou or toundo in Koupela, but siga, toundo, kyma are one and the same thing, one and the same principle. According to the Mossi, this soul is an animal, invisible of course, a snake, a crocodile, a deer, a hare. The soul is related to this animal, it belongs to the same family, so that to kill a snake or a crocodile in a village where the soul of the inhabitants is a snake or a crocodile is to kill an inhabitant of the village; every individual related to the snake has a snake in the village to represent thim, and he will die when his soul-animal dies.

774 Yet, and this runs counter to the definitions of totemism, the in-
784 dividual expects no aid from this animal, never sacrifices to it, and never kills it himself to renew the kinship pact. A person whose soul is a crocodile is forbidden to kill crocodiles in his own village, but he may kill them elsewhere, although he may never eat them, while he may kill the tangandé animal as long as he does so outside the tangandé, and he may eat it at any time. Some people, when they
[766] find a dead soul-animal of their family near their village, render it funeral honors, weep, wail, and bury it as one of their own, but they offer it no gifts and hold no koure. Generally it is merely covered with earth. The most widespread soul-animals are a kind of snake (bosombodro) and the crocodile. Several families may have the same
[582] one, and marriage, although exogamic, is not forbidden between members of these families.

774 The soul may leave the body and in fact leaves it often, especially
754 during the night. If children had a good time in a certain place, if they enjoyed themselves at someone's house, the soul returns there at night. This is when the worst is to be feared from the sorcerers; they may seize the soul by surprise, and its unfortunate owner will die.

774 In the course of a dream, the soul may warn its owner of a threaten-
828 ing danger. One day a native, whose village and name were told to
761 me, dreamed that his enemy offered him a kola nut. Much anxiety ensued, for this is a sign used by the soul to indicate that an enemy threatens one with death. In such a case there is only one remedy, to deposit a few cowries on a nest of large red ants, so they will avert the disaster. The man set out immediately for the nearest ant nest. Alas, a snake bit him along the way, and he died before he could offer his gift to the ants! Such occurrences obviously make a profound imprint on the imagination of the natives, who immediately react with the sophism: post hoc, propter hoc. A few such cases are sufficient to anchor them forever in their superstitions, and innumerable such occurrences were related to me.

774 If the soul can leave the body, it is possible to seize it and to pre-
761 vent it from re-entering its body, and this is why our Blacks do not like to be photographed. They say that there is an evil spirit in the box, who takes the soul and eats it. This is proved by the fact that the individual may later be seen on the piece of paper.

774 One becomes sick when his soul cannot re-enter the body because
753 it is held prisoner by an evil sorcerer or by a kikiriga, and many sacrifices must be offered to obtain its release /86/ and return. Entreaties are usually directed to the tangandé in such cases, because it is stronger than all the other spirits, stronger even than the sorcerers, and because its function is to protect the village.

774 Sometimes the soul was so well hidden that the tangandé cannot
761 find it: the sorcerer has eaten it right away, or the tangandé itself
754 is in collusion; or the ancestral spirits are calling the sick person; or,
775 finally, it is God who sent the disease. Nothing can be done, and the person dies. His soul changes names, and henceforth is called kyma. It leaves the body at the moment of death. If it was taken by a sorcerer or by the ancestral spirits, at the moment of death it leaves the sacred grove where it was held captive. It proceeds to the place of souls from where it will return to the grave whenever sacrifices are offered to it. It will also return if it wishes to afflict the survivors with a disease of some sort.

775 Is the soul punished for the evil it has done on earth and rewarded
735 for the good? Opinions on the subject differ. Some say that when one gives alms to the poor, and the Mossi frequently do, when one is generous and hospitable, God takes all that has been given and sets

775 ground; he also pours what is left at the bottom of the gourd, so the
769 souls will rejoice with him. It is considered a great honor when a
[554] naba tells an elder to grasp one side of the gourd and to pour along with him.

775 One must not laugh about the souls of the deceased and their visits to earth. If you doubt their return, listen to what an old naba once
761 told me. "One day, I had gone to visit a naba, my friend and neighbor. We had arranged to meet at his house with another neighboring chief. He gave us a very nice welcome, and the day was most pleasant. We were resting at night in the shelter of his soukala when we were suddenly awakened by the sound of harness bells and horses galloping. On the following day we left our host. No sooner had we left than he took ill. A week later he died. The souls had come to fetch him. Oh! Father, do not laugh about the souls of the deceased!" And the good old man trembled with emotion. This is what our Mossi believe. They firmly believe in all these ghost stories.

775 Are the souls reincarnated? Small children who die before the age of reason are said to return in the person of the first child borne by their mother. This is why, especially if the mother has lost several
[304] children in a row, the baby is marked at birth with distinctive signs, particularly tattooings on the belly and lower back; sometimes, if he
[766] dies, a piece of his ear is cut off, or a toe or finger joint broken. It is said that the child born next will bear the same marks, but no living example of this could be cited. Often, the mother leaves the hut where her baby died. An old woman spreads ashes before the door in the evening, and if small footprints are found in the morning, it is a sign that the child came back and wishes to return to his mother's bosom.

Rebirth is not granted to anyone other than young children, not even to young unmarried people. They remain in the place of the souls for years on end, the number of which cannot be ascertained, and no distinction is made between the rich and the poor, the powerful and their subjects.

775 The soul of suicides, cursed in death, is not entitled as a rule to
762 funeral ceremonies. It wanders through the world without harming anyone, but unable to find rest.

577 Morality is reduced to its simplest expression. Whatever harms
673 other people is bad. Think your own intimate thoughts and desire anything you like; as long as you do no harm to your fellow man, no fault has been committed. Fornication and adultery are faults only

681 As far as penalties were concerned, Mossi justice was stern and thus ran counter to the "patriarchal" justice of the Bobo, Gourounsi, etc. Murder was always punished by death (except in the case of nobles). As for thefts, physical aggression, and matters involving debts, they were adjusted in the manner described when we discussed the Yarsé, who were subject to Mossi justice since they were settled in their territory /not translated/. [754] We shall not, therefore, go over this again. Let us merely note that the Mossi, being fetishists, were familiar with matters of sorcery.

695 754 At Dembo, in the Yatenga area, when a young person died suddenly, "red powder" would be mixed in water and everyone would drink of it while swearing by Tensé /Tr.: the earth deities/ that he was innocent. The culprits would die. In other villages of the Yatenga area, people suspected of dealing in sorcery had to drink earth taken from the spot where sacrifices were performed and diluted in water. Those /581/ who refused to drink and swear were killed. At Kabayoro, a Mossi village located in the canton of Koumbili, if a man or woman suddendly ill, it was said that it was So-and-So, a sorcerer, who had eaten the soul. If the sick person died, his hands were washed with water and the liquid was given to the sorcerer to drink. He had to swear his innocence and invoke death unto himself if he should lie. If guilty he died; if innocent the water did him no harm. If he refused to swear and drink, he was put in irons and left there to die of hunger and thirst. The bara /soothsayer/ played no role in such occurrences. It was the sick person who pointed out the sorcerer. If the patient failed to designate someone, however, this meant that he was simply dying of illness. [761]

701 Now for the army and police. "In case of war," says Moulins, "the province chiefs summoned the canton chiefs, who hastened forth with all their able-bodied men. They all gathered behind the Tamsaba and followed him.

625 "As for policing, it was taken care of by village and canton chiefs, who arrested culprits with the help of their own followers, or, if necessary, by summoning the whole male population of the village."

8: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1958
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776 considered the wife of a male deity called *Winnam*, *Windé*, or *Naba Zidiwindé*. The true nature of Winnam is not clear. The Mossi say: "Winnam is the sun, and Winnam is God"; he is considered a sun god as well as a supreme deity. [775] Winnam is venerated but he is not feared, because it is the dead ancestors who chastise evil-doers by affliction or death. When wicked people die they face the wrath of the ancestors in *Keemsétenga*, or land of the ancestors.

The Mossi have several concepts of the spiritual essence or animating prin-
774 ciple of man. First there is the *seega* (pl. *seesé*), an entity found in all living beings; it leaves the body during sleep, and its adventures provide the dreams of men. The seega can be captured during its nocturnal wanderings or in places where large crowds congregate. If the seega is captured and eaten by a [761] sorcerer, its owner will die. A man's shadow is also called his seega; persons about to die have no shadows, since their seesé have either been stolen or have [822] left on their own account.

Another principle called the *keema* (pl. *keemsé*) is associated with the dead
775 or with persons about to die. The keema of a dying man wanders around and often frightens people; as soon as he is dead, he is no longer referred to by name but is called the "keema." Keemsé is also the word used for the generalized [769] ancestors who sanction the behavior of the living and who must be placated if people wish to have enough food, wives, children, and good health. A man's own keemsé take a vital interest in his affairs, in return for which they receive nourishment in the form of the seesé (animals do not have keemsé) of sacrificed animals.

[827] The breath, called *wousem*, is also considered an animating principle by the Mossi and, since it leaves the body through the nose at death, they believe that a man's nose is the first thing to die. It is not clear how the seega is disposed of when the body dies. Some people say it remains forever about the haunts of man; others believe that it goes to a mountain called Plimpikou and disappears into a cavern. Still others believe that the seega becomes the keema and goes to Plimpikou, from whence the keemsé come to visit their descendants. It is difficult to determine whether the Mossi have always been vague about their traditional religious concepts or whether this uncertainty is the result of the influx of such foreign creeds as Islam and Christianity.

The first recorded contact between the Mossi and Moslems took place
175 around 1328 when the Yatenga Mossi attacked, burned, and sacked Timbuktu,
797 then held by the Dia dynasty of the Songhoi (Dubois 1896:251). For more than a century afterward, the Mossi pursued a turbulent and aggressive policy in the region of the Niger bend, pushing as far as Gourma, Walata, and Banku (ibid:127). They were finally defeated and routed by Sonni Ali in 1477. In 1499, when Askia the Great (El Hadj Mohammed ben Abou Bekr, usurper of the Songhoi throne from the Sonni dynasty in 1494) returned from his pilgrimage to Mecca, he launched a *jihad* or holy war on the Mossi who had rejected his ultimatum to adopt Islam. Askia defeated the Mossi, "devastated the towns and countryside, took men, women, and children as prisoners, and forcibly converted these captives to Islam" (Dubois 1896:127–128). The

 643

Naba regularly saw his son in private, and that the prince often interceded 644
successfully with his father for the lives of rebels or criminals. 593

The Mogho Naba seldom saw his younger sons, who usually remained 634
with their mothers' patrilineages until they were old enough to be assigned district chieftainships or sent to live in villages controlled by the Baloum Naba. He was rather suspicious of these boys, who, if certain traditions are believed, were not averse to plotting the death of the Djiba Naba in order to succeed to the nam. The district chiefs also feared these younger sons, in whose favor they were often deposed by the Mogho Naba. Almost all of the dynastic changes that occurred in the Mossi districts seem to have stemmed from a ruler's attempt to find districts for his brothers or his younger sons.

The ruler was less concerned with the welfare of his daughters and 643
female relatives. Their marriages seldom benefited the political system. 644
As a matter of fact, the behavior of a royal princess usually strained the re- 593
lations between her husband and the ruling lineage. The reason for this [562]
was a status conflict: as wives, they had low prestige in Mossi society; but as relatives of the Mogho Naba, they enjoyed high status. This contradiction made it difficult for them to accept the low estate of wives. Consequently, they clashed with their husband and often dominated the women and co-wives in his compound. Since few Mossi men tolerate strife within their household, these noble wives often withdrew from their husband's home and established one of their own. The one exception to this pattern was the ruler's eldest daughter, the Napoko, whose ceremonial duties at his death and during the interregnum compelled her to remain loyal to the husband chosen for her by the king. Like her brother, the Crown Prince, if she violated any of the traditions and thus became ineligible to fulfill her duties to her father and to the state, she endangered the country at its weakest moment, when the government was being transferred from the deceased Mogho Naba to his successor.

The death of a Mogho Naba was usually attributed to foul play or 643
supernatural forces. When Mogho Naba Sagha II died in 1957, a report 761
from Ouagadougou stated that the Governor of the Upper Volta had felt constrained to have an autopsy performed to quell rumors that the monarch had died of poisoning.[82] The obvious function of such rumors was to dramatize the gravity of the situation during the interregnum.

Because the Mogho Naba was usually accompanied by a page, it was 643
often this boy who witnessed his death. It was the page's responsibility to 763
notify the Baloum Naba, who notified, in order, the Ouidi Naba, the Lar- [644]
halle Naba, the Kamsaogho Naba, the Gounga Naba, the ruler's children, [645]

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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[World War II Period]

French Forces were present there. The official Vichy radio began broadcasts urging discipline, increased production, and "patriotic cooperation in making the Federation [of French West Africa] a military bastion against the encroachment of its British neighbors."[58] In response, local officials ordered Mossi chiefs to provide laborers to build trenches and fortifications between the two areas. The Free French, for their part, used the Gold Coast as a center for the distribution of anti-Pétain propaganda, and tried to employ returning Mossi labor migrants as couriers. The majority of these young men were not interested in politics, however, and those who were prevailed upon to take propaganda leaflets into Mossi country simply discarded them as soon as they crossed the border.

The pressures, counter-pressures, and anxieties of this period were apparently too much for Mogho Naba Kom II, who died on March 12, 1942. By the next morning, countless rumors to the effect that the Mogho Naba had committed suicide had spread as far as the Gold Coast. The most widespread rumor was that the Mogho Naba's anti-Pétainist views had become clear to the administration. In reprisal, he was "placed under surveillance on Boisson's orders and separated from his subjects. He died solemnly by his own hand after having summoned his son and commanded him not to take office 'until the true French should return.'"[59] Another widely circulated rumor, probably originated by Moslems, was that the Catholic missionaries, freed from the restraints of Paris, had tried to compel the Mogho Naba to divorce his many wives and become monogamous. The Mogho Naba allegedly could not comply with this demand because it would have been a severe violation of Mossi tradition for a royal wife to become the wife of any other man while her husband was still alive. Faced with this dilemma, the rumor said, the Mogho Naba committed suicide.

The official French report on the Mogho Naba's death reveals that the administration was aware of these and other rumors and of their potential influence on the behavior of the Mossi people. The report also shows that the French officials believed, and credited the Mossi with believing, the classical superstition that "The heavens themselves blaze forth the death of princes." The report states:

> Over the last few years, the health of Saidou Congo [Mogho Naba Kom II] has been impaired by heart trouble, and it was a heart attack which carried him off at about 11 P.M. on March 12th.
>
> The natives have no explanation for sudden deaths, and attribute them either to supernatural intervention or to poison. Besides, two phenomena had occurred just then to strike the imagination: there had been a total eclipse of the moon on the night of March 2d to 3d, which announced,

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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When a woman has a number of stillbirths or
845 loses her children when they are still babies, however, it is believed
761 than these children were embodiments of the same *kinkirsi* (spirits)
776 who must be tricked into remaining on earth when it returns, and
443 the market place is chosen as the site for this trickery. As soon as such
851 a woman gives birth to a child, and old woman places it in a basket
443 and on the next market day takes it to the market place. Her intention is to "sell" the child in the hope that it would not die if owned by someone other than its mother. The old woman walks around the market place shouting: "I have something to sell!" Invariably a man will walk up to her, and after ascertaining the contents of the basket, offer to buy it. The price varies with the fortune of the man, but traditionally the amount paid has been 500 cowries or their equivalent. The man takes the child for a few minutes and then returns it to its vendor, telling her in a loud voice so that the kinkirsi will hear: "I would like you to give this child to 'X' (the child's mother) to be reared for me and I will pay for its upbringing and will come
[551] for the child in a few years. He then gives the child the name *Yamba*
[553] (slave), or *Yemdaogo* (male slave) if male and *Yempoko* (female slave) if a girl. The old woman then returns the child to its mother, relating what has passed in the market and indicating who the "owner" of her child is. The "owner" of the child may not even see the child again, and naturally does not take this ownership seriously. In many cases the money with which he bought the child was given to him by the child's father.

852 The market also plays an important part in the circumcision and
443 incision ceremonies of Mossi boys and girls. For about two to three months after the actual operations the young children, especially the boys are secluded in the circumcision lodges or compounds and have almost no contact with the village population. Their re-introduction to society always takes place on the great market day. The parents of the children buy new clothing for them this occasion, and on the appointed day the boys or girls parade together in the market and are offered gifts by the market people. Later in the day, they are dismissed and individually feted by their relatives.

585 Owing to the relatively unceremonious nature of Mossi marriages,
76 the market does not play a role in Mossi weddings. However, the
554 same thing cannot be said about the last important *rite de passage,*
443 especially the funeral of a chief, or important elder. Prior to the intervention of the French, and to a lesser extent even today, the announcement of the death of an important ruler was seen as the breakdown of law and order and was ritually dramatized by a popular raid
[565] on the markets throughout the territories (Skinner : ms). During the interregnum the vendors are subject to constant raids by members of

II. Military Organization

701 An army, properly speaking, with cadres and hierarchies, did not exist among the Mossi.

721 In the event of war, the Tansoba or Tampsoba (war minister) notified the canton chiefs who promptly assembled with all their able-bodied men and as many horsemen as possible.

705 The villages were charged with feeding the soldiers.

III. Judicial Organization

692 693 Justice was rendered in conformity with local customs which had been handed down from generation to generation and according to local practice.

1. By village chiefs, assisted by some of the elders, for petty affairs, pilfering, and insults.

2. The canton chief, assisted by his court dignitaries and the minister, ruled on matters concerning theft, adultery, and bodily attacks, as well as on other matters.

3. The Mogho Naba took cognizance of all matters of general interest, especially with crimes of assassination and murder. In theory, he could by himself pronounce the death sentence on the [565] nakomsé [descendants of Mogho Naba]. Contrary to general belief, a [56] kombéré (canton chief) also had the power of life and 661 death over his subjects. How many individuals have been put to death merely because they were wealthy! How many village chiefs have been killed by the canton chiefs over their territories without any intervention by the Mogho Naba! The nakomsé could 565 684 be executed, however, only for very serious crimes, such as adultery with a woman of the nobility. The guilty man was led ● 762 into the bush by old nakomsé; they gave him a rope with which he was expected to hang himself and thus expiate his crime.

694 431 Justice was free; no fee was expected or assessed. The plaintiff, however, customarily presented the naba with a white or light gray rooster, accompanied by the traditional satchel containing from 200 to 1,000 cowries.

701 oppose me. I therefore demand that his fez be returned to me."
687 To take away the fez of a naba is to dethrone him and reduce him to the level of his subjects.

The court officials, including the Tansoba, at once send emissaries to the chief at fault, asking him to choose between suicide (some take a poison called sounadré, while others kill themselves with a poisoned arrow) and war with the Mogho Naba.

If the chief is not prepared for such a summons, he kills himself, and the envoys return with the news.

669 If, on the other hand, he declares that he wants pouwega, that
701 is, war and a noble death, he sends back the representatives of the ministers. A few days later, with drums beating and the Tansoba, chief of the army, at its head, the whole warrior band appears before his walls.

The Tansoba sends the Samandé Naba to the chief to ask him to confirm his declaration of war. If the naba still wants war, he usually replies: "Ya yingri bala la ka sakénian."

The Tansoba withdraws, sending word to the chief [68] to expect him back on a stated day (seven or eight days later); this period of time will enable the chief to assemble his warriors also. When the day arrives, it is a merciless battle, a massacre.

727 Often the forces of the Mogho Naba are victorious, and in that event the slaves, livestock, and other property go to those who seized them. Only the corpses belong to the Tansoba.

701 If an arrow, even a poisoned one, wounds the Tansoba, he
577 must under no circumstances pull it out. Indeed, he must often endure thirst and hunger, and it is only when he is at rest in an enclosed place that the arrows are removed from his body. It should
[789] be noted that since the Tansoba's costume is virtually covered with amulets and other charms, he is not very likely to be wounded seriously by an arrow. This is not, of course, to belittle his bravery and composure in the face of danger, since he is expected
[762] never to retreat and, if the enemy is victorious, often prefers to kill himself rather than to report a defeat to the Mogho Naba.

644 There are, in addition to the foregoing, a great many petty naba whose role is not clearly defined and of whom it seems needless to speak.

755 must be procured. The leaf used to cover a wound must be held by means of a thin cotton cord with cowries attached at the end, three cowries for a boy, four for a girl. A hemp cord with three or four knots, worn around the neck, wrist, or any other part of the body, prevents swelling of that part and is also a master remedy against hair worms. Sometimes it is not so easy to secure the prescribed amulet, for instance, if it is the beak or claw of a hawk, a deer horn, or certain parts of a buffalo or koba. The poor Mossi goes to great pains to find this indispensable amulet.

763 Do as he may, sooner or later he must die. When an old man feels that his end is near, he calls his family and gives them his last instructions. He talks to his eldest son and tells him where his cattle and caches are to be found, who are his debtors and creditors. Sometimes death comes swiftly without warning, and the old man has no time to talk to his heir; a large part of the fortune is thus lost, because a Mossi in good health never tells anybody, especially not his /68/ children, where his property is, and those to whom he has entrusted it do not return it. Some Peul have made rather nice profits in this fashion.

761 The death of a young man or woman or more especially that of a small child is usually ascribed to an old woman who is said to have 754 eaten the child's soul, and some old women claim to have this secret. [683] The sorcerer points out the guilty woman who is seized and put to death. Every sudden or accidental death is ascribed to an evil spirit, and the funeral ceremonies reflect this.

762 Suicide is extremely rare, but it does occur. Here is one case where we knew the participants. A man quarreled with his wife. The wife, who was stronger than her husband, overwhelmed him in the fight, and the neighbors openly ridiculed him. The following day the husband was found hanging in his hut. A pit was hastily dug [766] in his nearest field, and he was tossed into it naked without further ceremony. Suicide is regarded as a criminal act, and even the corpse is punished for it.

763 Like all human beings, the Mossi fear death. No longer to eat millet mush or to drink dolo seems to them the greatest of misfortunes. Still, when a Mossi sees death approaching, he resigns himself to it and accepts it stoically. He rests his head on the lap of his first wife, and his other wives gather around him. His friends and the village elders sit before the soukala, and all wait silently for hours until the

775 ground; he also pours what is left at the bottom of the gourd, so the
769 souls will rejoice with him. It is considered a great honor when a
[554] naba tells an elder to grasp one side of the gourd and to pour along with him.

775 One must not laugh about the souls of the deceased and their visits
761 to earth. If you doubt their return, listen to what an old naba once told me. "One day, I had gone to visit a naba, my friend and neighbor. We had arranged to meet at his house with another neighboring chief. He gave us a very nice welcome, and the day was most pleasant. We were resting at night in the shelter of his soukala when we were suddenly awakened by the sound of harness bells and horses galloping. On the following day we left our host. No sooner had we left than he took ill. A week later he died. The souls had come to fetch him. Oh! Father, do not laugh about the souls of the deceased!" And the good old man trembled with emotion. This is what our Mossi believe. They firmly believe in all these ghost stories.

775 Are the souls reincarnated? Small children who die before the age of reason are said to return in the person of the first child borne by their mother. This is why, especially if the mother has lost several
[304] children in a row, the baby is marked at birth with distinctive signs, particularly tattooings on the belly and lower back; sometimes, if he
[766] dies, a piece of his ear is cut off, or a toe or finger joint broken. It is said that the child born next will bear the same marks, but no living example of this could be cited. Often, the mother leaves the hut where her baby died. An old woman spreads ashes before the door in the evening, and if small footprints are found in the morning, it is a sign that the child came back and wishes to return to his mother's bosom.

Rebirth is not granted to anyone other than young children, not even to young unmarried people. They remain in the place of the souls for years on end, the number of which cannot be ascertained, and no distinction is made between the rich and the poor, the powerful and their subjects.

775 The soul of suicides, cursed in death, is not entitled as a rule to
762 funeral ceremonies. It wanders through the world without harming anyone, but unable to find rest.

577 Morality is reduced to its simplest expression. Whatever harms
673 other people is bad. Think your own intimate thoughts and desire anything you like; as long as you do no harm to your fellow man, no fault has been committed. Fornication and adultery are faults only

593 not shelter her but must on the contrary return her to her husband.
562 If difficulties arise, the husband appeals to the naba, who forces the wife to return to her husband, at whose hands she will get a beating when she arrives....

"...The powers of a deceived husband over his wife's lover
593 were quite fearsome prior to our occupation. He could, at will,
837 either deal with the culprit himself or defer his complaint to the
684 naba. If he dealt himself with his rival and killed him, he handed out the adulterous woman to the Moro Naba and did not have to answer for his crime. If he merely wounded the man, no matter how seriously, he was regarded as having acted in the fullness of his rights as an injured husband, and he kept the wife and gave her a beating. If he appealed to the naba, the guilty pair were punished by being put in irons for a variable period of time. Furthermore, if the adultery had been committed with the wife of a dapouy naba of the Moro Naba (that is to say, a man to whom the Moro Naba had himself given some girl in marriage), the accomplice was compelled to pay the deceived husband a fine of 100,000 cowries.

"Finally, in case of adultery with a chief's wife, both culprits were put to death."

On this subject I find in my notes that prior to our occupation, when a naba was deceived by one of his wives, he killed her with
[762] poison and ordered the wife's lover to commit suicide. The latter did this by plunging the head of a poisoned arrow into the calf of his leg.

"It is plain," the author of the Monographie goes on to say, "that the lover was dealt with in the most rigorous manner of all. He could be put to death by the deceived husband in every case, while the wives of a chief were alone liable to supreme punishment. The lover could also be punished with a fine, in a single case anticipated by custom. Finally, he was invariably put in irons on the naba's orders if the deceived husband placed a complaint against him.

"As for the adulterous wife, except when she was /563/ handed over to the Moro Naba by her husband as reparation for the murder of her partner, punishment for her misdemeanor amounted merely to a more or less rigorous beating or to irons for a short period of time. She could, it is true, be turned out by her husband, but the latter

10:Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1964 FA28 Mossi FA28

tween the Mossi and several other ethnic groups. In each instance the structural relationship in which joking occurs is characterized by the five features listed above.

Joking with the Mother's Brother

The relationship with a maternal uncle is marked by all five of the structural features mentioned. Separation results from the rules of patrilineal descent and inheritance rules, from patrisib exogamy, and from the general observance of patrilocal residence. The relationship is reciprocal in that a mother's brother serves throughout Ego's life as an important alternative source of emotional, economic, and social support: he often acts as intermediary in disputes between Ego and his parents or the elders of his lineage; he gives Ego frequent gifts; and residence in the mother's patriclan is the most frequent alternative to patrilocality. In turn Ego, as a result of the permissive relationship he enjoys with the spirits of his deceased cognatic kinsmen, often serves their living descendants as an intermediary in their ritual efforts to maintain a secure relationship with the ancestral spirits.

Ambivalence between Ego and his mother's brother and her other kin results from the conflicting sources of "conjunction" and "dissociation" just mentioned. The conflict between a strong affective bond—a "feeling" of kinship—and a system of inheritance which denies it jural recognition generates frustration. The ambivalence in the relationship is manifested not only by joking, which is asymmetrical—with Ego being the more aggressive—but by theft as well. Perhaps as partial compensation for his inability to inherit matrilaterally, Ego is permitted to steal his mother's brother's property during his lifetime and can also make off with the beer and some of the animals collected for his funeral.

As for equality of status, the descent groups of Ego and mother's brother are structurally equivalent. Although their respective positions within these two groups differ, the permissiveness of Ego's relationship to his maternal uncle absolves him from recognition of the canons of comportment that otherwise prevail among the Mossi in relations between persons of differing status. Indeed, disregard for such status differences is part of the "joke." Independence is assured by the fact that Ego and his mother's brother are members of autonomous descent groups and that each is responsive only to the authority of his respective lineage elders.

Joking with a Mother's Brother's Wife

Joking between Ego and his mother's brother's wife is to be regarded as a separate relationship because of her nonmembership in the mother's brother's descent group, but certain of the structural circumstances are similar. The source of separation from the mother's brother's wife is evident. The reciprocal tie that unites them is indirect; when Ego is received warmly in his mother's brother's household it is the wife of the latter who prepares the food he is given. Similarly, as a member of her husband's patriclan, she benefits

645 dom during the interregnum.[23] The latter task was especially suited to a prime minister, since the Mossi regarded the interregnum as the most difficult period in their political life. The Ouidi Naba's administrative tasks were considered so important that he never went to war and was theoretically immune from punishment or execution by the Mogho Naba. This immunity was necessary, because the Mogho Naba had the right to execute anyone who brought him unwelcome news, and often did so. Since the Ouidi Naba announced good news as well as bad, it would have been folly to subject him to this rule. Some reports in the French colonial archives state that the Mogho Naba was expected to follow the Ouidi Naba's advice at all times, and could not veto any of his actions. These reports add, moreover, that if a Ouidi Naba considered a Mogho Naba dangerous for the welfare of the country, he could rightfully compel the ruler to kill himself. According to Lambert, one Ouidi Naba known as Baba forced Mogho Naba Karfo (ca. 1800) to commit suicide. It appears that aside from waging a long and unpopular war against Naba Djighima of Lalle, this Mogho Naba had seized the riches of his wealthy subjects for distribution among the poor. Moreover, he allegedly dispensed justice without making much distinction between nobles and commoners, which so displeased the nobles that they encouraged the Ouidi Naba to put Karfo to death. Baba sent the sovereign a poisoned arrow and a message consisting of a single word: *ki* (die). Karfo allegedly committed suicide that very night.[24]

Thus, it appears that under certain conditions the prime minister could impeach his "all-powerful" sovereign. We cannot assume, however, that all prime ministers were sufficiently powerful to control the Mogho Naba. Many Mogho Nanamse limited their Ouidi Naba to merely giving advice on affairs of state and insisted that he concern himself solely with his own province.

The provinces administered by the five ministers were made up of smaller entities or districts. The districts in the provinces of the Ouidi Naba, the Larhalle Naba, and the Gounga Naba were ruled by the sons and other descendants of ancient Mogho Nanamse. The province controlled by the Kamsaogho Naba was more important. His districts were the wealthiest and among the most populous in the nation, and they brought the largest revenues to the Mogho Naba. The reason for this, of course, was that the Kamsaogho Naba was a eunuch and had no heirs; when he died, all his riches reverted to the Mogho Naba. The province controlled by the Baloum Naba was the most difficult to administer. Its districts were ruled by the sons of recent Mogho Nanamse who felt that as holders of the nam they were free to appropriate the goods of the population. The Baloum

634 against the Mogho Naba. I say "allegedly" because it was never quite clear
687 whether the district chief was at fault or whether the Mogho Naba wanted to replace him for dynastic reasons. For example, Tanga, a district chief, was accused by Mogho Naba Sanum (1850–90) of withholding tribute and of maladministration. The Ouidi Naba who administered Tanga's district advised him to prove his innocence by making a sacrifice on Naba Oubri's tomb, and then go to Ouagadougou and ask the Mogho Naba's forgiveness.
634 Tanga agreed to do so. But it appears that the Mogho Naba, who wished
687 to place his own father's brother in Tanga's place, did not want a reconciliation. He waged war on Tanga, and seized his relatives, retainers, and
662 cattle. Tanga tried to regain his losses by appealing to his provincial minister, but the minister told him that the Mogho Naba had distributed the livestock and had sold the people to Hausa traders. Moreover, he informed Tanga that he could not help him because the Mogho Naba could do as he
[669] pleased. Tanga thereupon decided to take matters into his own hands. He successfully attacked the Mogho Naba's villages, and was still a rebel when the French arrived shortly afterward.[26]

634 Tanga's action was unusual, for district chiefs seldom risked rebelling
687 against the Mogho Naba when accused of maladministration. In 1895, for example, Koabga, chief of Doulougou district in the province of the Gounga
669 Naba, took poison rather than wage war when Mogho Naba Wobogo accused him of misgovernment. Usually, a district chief who disobeyed an order of the Mogho Naba was summoned to the capital to answer the charge of lese majesty. If he was found guilty, the ruler knocked the bonnet off his head, thus deposing him, and had him strangled. The Mossi seldom
[762] spilled royal blood. A district chief who refused to go to Ouagadougou could either kill himself (traditionally by taking arsenic) or resort to civil war.[27] If he chose suicide, he was given an honorable burial as though he had died naturally. If the Mogho Naba sent down an army, however, the offending chief was invariably killed. His compound was burned, his slaves and cattle were seized, and his allies and immediate relatives were compelled to flee. The strength of this tradition is borne out by Tanga's case. He had successfully resisted the attempts of two Mogho Nanamse to bring him to heel, and was still at large when the French conquered the country.
[648] But Ouidi Naba Koabga, who had deserted his sovereign and selected Kouka Koutou as Mogho Naba under French orders, had not forgiven Tanga. When the French asked him what additional steps they should take to pacify the country, he asked them to capture Tanga. The unfortunate district chief was captured, placed on an unsaddled colt, and taken to Ouagadougou, where he was ignominiously executed.[28]

634 died while he was using it, the owner could not press any claims. However,
692 the borrower was obliged to sell the animal's flesh and give the money to the owner along with the animal's skin as proof of its death. Under no circumstances would a district chief absolve a man from paying the market value of an animal if he failed to return the skin. Such failure would brand him as a thief and involve an additional fine.

685 The Mossi considered theft a major crime. A thief could be killed with
[674] impunity if he was caught in the act and in the presence of several witnesses. If these conditions were not met but the man killed was known to have been a thief, the killer was fined several cows. But if he was known to have been a man of good character, the killer ran the risk of being executed. In this way, the Mossi tried to prevent any abuse of an accepted practice. The theft of grain and other foodstuffs was considered especially reprehensible, because it was held to indicate that the thief was so depraved
685 that he would not even grow his own food. During the rule of Naba Kag-
175 lere of Nobere district (1888–1906), a man called Yahiya left his own village of Donse and went to a village called Quitenga to steal sweet potatoes. The people of that village caught him in the act and shot him with a poisoned arrow as he made his escape. Yahiya died without revealing the source of his wound, and his babissi, suspecting foul play, asked Kaglere to investigate. When the Quitenga people learned of the investigation, they went forward voluntarily and reported the circumstances under which they had wounded Yahiya. Kaglere absolved them of all guilt and told the Donse people that Yahiya had deserved to die, not only because he had stolen food (which he might have received if he had asked for it), but because sweet potatoes were the easiest vegetable to cultivate.

685 A thief who was too clever to be caught in the act but who was appre-
[682] hended afterwards was treated quite harshly by the Mossi court. Here, the penalty of double indemnity was often applied. A man who was brought to court for stealing a chicken or guinea hen was fined a goat or a sheep. Hence the Mossi proverb "Zou noaga ronda bouga"—"He who steals a
[696] chicken repays a goat." The thief who stole one cow had to return several. If a thief could not pay the fine, he was placed in stocks until his relatives paid for him. If they refused to do so, the chief's retainers seized their prop-
[762] erty, sold it, and made restitution. This often compelled the family of a recidivous thief to make him commit suicide. If the family would not re-
[634] sort to this, the district chief had the man seized and clubbed to death.[7] Sometimes the chief sent recidivists to the Mogho Naba, who sent them to a
[565] village called Teemetenga to be made into eunuchs.[8]
[579]

The Mossi seem to have made a distinction between theft and pillage—

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000 19. There is a curious story among the people of Nobere district that Mogho Naba Mottoba (who reigned in the seventeenth century) was not a Mossi but a Fulani who was given the nam after he chanced upon the installation ceremony and assassinated the newly elected man during the night. This story is denied in Ouagadougou; in fact, it contradicts the genealogical records of the ruling dynasty. However, the genealogy does show that Mottoba's father, Mogho Naba Guiliga, had succeeded his brother, and it is possible that there was dynastic rivalry for the nam between Mottoba and the former Mogho Naba's son. [174]

20. This rite was performed during the installation of the present Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou, although it is hardly recognizable as described in *Newsweek* (December 9, 1957, p. 48): "A man named Moussa Congo assumed the name of Kougri Naba last week and became the 35th Mogho Naba of the Mossi in the capital city of Ouagadougou in the Upper Volta region of French West Africa. Son of Emperor Issoufou Congo, Kougri Naba, as the new Mogho Naba, has one white horse, 200 wives, and 8,000 warriors, who danced around his palace ten times." [182]

21. This practice has apparently lapsed since Mogho Naba Kougri moved into the modern concrete palace built for his father, Mogho Naba Sagha II.

22. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Soudan*, pp. 569–70. Tauxier claims the Mogho Nanamse used the pages for homosexual purposes on Fridays in order to circumvent the Moslem prohibition against intercourse with women on this holy day. Homosexuality is rare among the Mossi, as Tauxier himself admits, and most Mossi deny that the Mogho Nanamse ever resorted to it. However, one respondent did state that he had heard about homosexuality among certain past rulers. [838]

23. Crozat, p. 4849.

24. When Mogho Naba Kom II died under mysterious circumstances in 1942, it was rumored that he had committed suicide rather than reduce the number of his wives as ordered by the administration under the influence of the Catholic missionaries. Kom allegedly held that no one can inherit a sovereign's wife during his lifetime. Therefore, in order to avoid loss of status by seeing his wives go to commoners, he chose death so they would be inherited by nobles. [648] [762] [797]

25. The statement in *Newsweek* (December 9, 1957, p. 48) that Kougri has two hundred wives is untrue. [114]

26. Intermarriage between the Mossi and the Fulani has produced a people known as the Simili-Mossi. Nevertheless, the Mossi are strongly prejudiced against the Fulani, especially against the women, stating that the Moaga who has sexual intercourse with a Fulani woman must bathe in nine different rivers before he becomes clean. The basis of this prejudice appears to be that Fulani women are not cultivators and therefore are unacceptable as Mossi wives. [563]

27. Mossi women know a great deal about the history and traditions of their people. But they never indicate that they do except during such rituals, when they are required to play certain roles.

28. Dim Delobson, p. 96.

29. Dim Delobson (p. 101) states that there are "sacred things" in this village, but I have been unable to substantiate his report.

30. Dim Delobson (p. 104) gives the classic explanation of this nighttime ride. On his ride from Bere to Djiba, the mounted prince must try to touch a certain branch of a certain tree. If he is destined to succeed his father, he will succeed in touching the branch; if he is not, the branch will magically withdraw at his approach. [824]

I visited the area in which this ritual reportedly took place, but the people in the vicinity denied that such a tree existed.

31. *Ibid.*, p. 106.

32. IFAN (Compte Rendu No. 429). There are many other rumors concerning Kom's death. In a book praising the loyalty of the Africans to the Free French Gov- [648]

The Kombéré: Death, Enthronement

631 763 202 Death. Upon the death of a kombéré two representatives in mourning are sent from the canton to Ouagadougou to deliver the sad news to the Mogho Naba. The envoys are entrusted with a horse or a sheep, depending on the importance of the naba. Tanga branches are tied to the animal's tail (see Ouidi Naba, Chapter 4).

[136] When the first emissary reaches the courtyard of the Mogho Naba, he sits down, taking care to place one hand on the ground and stretching out his arm. Since the very sight of the horse is significant, even before any explanation is offered, the Zusoaba enters the house of the Mogho Naba and comes out again bearing a gourd of water with flour in it (zom kom) which he pours on the envoy's arm.

The horse is then handed over to a representative of the Ouidi Naba who removes the branches and leads the animal to Widhin [Ouidin].

The Zusoaba takes back the gourd, and it is only then that the Ouidi Naba says to the Mogho Naba: "Naba zagl yka sambga le tongalamé (Chief So-and-So has been stricken with such-and-such an illness and has succumbed)." It should be added that before going to see the Mogho Naba, the envoys first inform the ministers of the death of the kombéré.

631 766 The Mogho Naba asks a few appropriate questions and sends the representatives to prepare the kouré. On the day of the ceremony, the Nabitienga (eldest son of the deceased chief) has large quantities of beer and saghbo prepared and sheep and cattle killed to feed the people gathered in great numbers for the occasion.

The house is circled, as was described for the Mogho Naba.

[415] (a) Koupéogo (kouré basket). The koupéogo is a basket, artistically made, into which is put the foutou (clothing of the deceased), [137] koursi (trousers), his pougla (red fez), his néoda (slippers), the zandé (club), and the wed'zouré (horse's tail). This basket is laid upon a pé'gaongo (skin of a sheep) in the zaongo (antechamber).

One of the sisters of the Nabitienga, usually the eldest daughter of the deceased, carries the péogo outside and seats herself at the place where the dead chief held his daily audiences (guéré). The benda, liunsé, and gangandó drums are played together, and then

774 761 live without each other, its prolonged absence is thought to cause death.

Kima (from ki, "to die"). This is a sort of silhouette of a 774 person who is about to die. It is visible only to certain initiates. 763 It is said, however, to be somewhat deformed, and its presence may make one's hair stand on end or cause shivers that paralyze the legs and make walking impossible.

775 The siga may be distinguished from the kima in that the latter, being already dead, has its head completely shaved, wears ashes in the form of [201] a cross or X on its forehead, or has its feet stained with blood.

As soon as the person dies, his kima roams around the house for a time and then joins his ancestors at Pilimpikou.

775 Pilimpikou. Pilimpikou is a village belonging to the ad- 778 ministrative district of Koudougou (upper Volta). On a mountain nearby, there is a grotto which is regarded as the sacred place where the kimsé of all the dead Mossi assemble.

Legend has it that any deceased relative may be found again at Pilimpikou if one were so unfortunate as not to have been present during his last moments. One can also go there to find out where the deceased has hidden part of his fortune or some valuable object.

It is said that one has only to go to the Tingsoba of Pilimpikou and ask him to use his influence to call the deceased.

The Tingsoba orders the petitioner not to shed a single tear at the sight of the "ghost," and, the legend goes on to say, if the secret of the interview with the kima is not kept, the person will die within the year.

Finally, it is believed that when the kimsé welcome new members -- they represent the whole family of all the dead Mossi for countless generations -- they organize games whose echoes are heard by the inhabitants of Pilimpikou.

775 Young people of both sexes who were unmarried at the time of their death and newborn children who have died [202] return to that place where they dwelt before coming into the world in order to "return to human form in the womb of another woman or of their former mother." As we noted in an earlier paragraph, the Mossi believe in reincarnation. [203]

753 /66/ This is because illness is usually attributed to an evil spirit,
761 which must not be irked with complaints. Yet in everyday language it is God who is the cause of everything, of health as well as of death. The sorcerers consulted indicate which spirit must be appeased, to whom sacrifices must be offered; or they state quite frankly that the hour of the sick person has come, that his life is over and he is about to rejoin his ancestors, for it is often the latter who call him and come to fetch him. In the case of old men and especially of old women, death is considered a natural event. An old man has many children who will give him a fine funeral, and it is time for him to make way for his eldest son. If a quarrelsome person falls sick, his illness is often attributed to an evil spell cast by an enemy. When
[763] an elder is about to die, those who have caused him offense come to beg his forgiveness and only find peace when they have obtained it, for the old man might return to obtain his revenge. Sudden death is usually ascribed to poison and, alas, this is often the case. Sometimes it is also attributed to an evil spirit, especially in case of accident, fall, snake bite, etc.

755 The instinct of self-preservation is so strong in man that the Mossi,
757 although they ascribe a superhuman origin to illness, nevertheless fight it. It is true that all their treatments combine medicinal and superstitious elements to drive off evil spirits, and whatever the remedy, true medicine or amulet, it is always a tim; there is only the one
759 word to designate it. Some of the natives know how to treat certain illnesses, and people come to consult them, often from far away. One has a medicine against snakes, and he makes it in complete secrecy on a certain day; one knows how to treat colds and bronchitis;
[752] another, dysentery; yet another, sores. The bone-setters are often very skillful, and with the mere pressure of their fingers they can set a dislocated joint or a broken leg; then they enclose it between tightly-bound millet stalks as a splint. These doctors prescribe remedies without resorting to sacrifices or witchcraft. Sometimes they live with their patient to care for him, of course for a fee, especially if the person gets well.

751 Smallpox vaccination is performed, but often too late, on individuals who already have the germ. The vaccine is taken from a seriously ill person without any precautionary antiseptic measures. The vaccinated individual is usually made very sick and sometimes dies of

755 must be procured. The leaf used to cover a wound must be held by means of a thin cotton cord with cowries attached at the end, three cowries for a boy, four for a girl. A hemp cord with three or four knots, worn around the neck, wrist, or any other part of the body, prevents swelling of that part and is also a master remedy against hair worms. Sometimes it is not so easy to secure the prescribed amulet, for instance, if it is the beak or claw of a hawk, a deer horn, or certain parts of a buffalo or koba. The poor Mossi goes to great pains to find this indispensable amulet.

763 Do as he may, sooner or later he must die. When an old man feels that his end is near, he calls his family and gives them his last instructions. He talks to his eldest son and tells him where his cattle and caches are to be found, who are his debtors and creditors. Sometimes death comes swiftly without warning, and the old man has no time to talk to his heir; a large part of the fortune is thus lost, because a Mossi in good health never tells anybody, especially not his /68/ children, where his property is, and those to whom he has entrusted it do not return it. Some Peul have made rather nice profits in this fashion.

761 The death of a young man or woman or more especially that of a small child is usually ascribed to an old woman who is said to have 754 eaten the child's soul, and some old women claim to have this secret. [683] The sorcerer points out the guilty woman who is seized and put to death. Every sudden or accidental death is ascribed to an evil spirit, and the funeral ceremonies reflect this.

762 Suicide is extremely rare, but it does occur. Here is one case where we knew the participants. A man quarreled with his wife. The wife, who was stronger than her husband, overwhelmed him in the fight, and the neighbors openly ridiculed him. The following day the husband was found hanging in his hut. A pit was hastily dug [766] in his nearest field, and he was tossed into it naked without further ceremony. Suicide is regarded as a criminal act, and even the corpse is punished for it.

763 Like all human beings, the Mossi fear death. No longer to eat millet mush or to drink dolo seems to them the greatest of misfortunes. Still, when a Mossi sees death approaching, he resigns himself to it and accepts it stoically. He rests his head on the lap of his first wife, and his other wives gather around him. His friends and the village elders sit before the soukala, and all wait silently for hours until the

763 old man passes away. Suddenly, a shrill and lugubrious cry uttered by the first wife pierces the air and announces to everyone that a soul has just left its body and appeared before God. All the women rally to this call, and for a few minutes the most plaintive laments fill the dead man's soukala.

764 767 Silence is soon restored. One of the family members fetches the undertaker, lada, without whom it is impossible to proceed with the burial. Meanwhile, one of the séko which enclose the inner courtyard is torn off to permit the soul to get through and leave the living in peace. An old woman and the dead man's children proceed to lay out the corpse, using only their left hand. The body is washed with warm water and vigorously soaped, then annointed with karite butter. The head is shaved and the hair buried, unless the shaving was done before the dying man breathed his last, in which case the hair is tossed to the wind. When the corpse has been thoroughly washed, the undertaker softens the joints of the neck, arms, and legs so the body will slide more easily into the pit; then he lays out the body in the hut of the first wife if she is still alive, otherwise in the hut of the dead man.

764 The corpse is laid out on a mat, on its side in the position of a sleeping man, with arms and legs folded, and covered with a white blanket. As soon as the body is laid out, lugubrious cries are heard once more, and the men and youths go to dig the pit while the women remain sitting in the courtyard and watch the corpse. Women friends and neighbors prepare food for the family which has been visited by death.

The grave is usually dug in the family field, where the ancestors already rest. The villages have no common graveyards; /69/ each family has its own. Nevertheless, the vicinity of a sacred grove is sometimes used as a cemetery. To be buried away from one's relatives is a great misfortune, and one who dies far from his village strongly desires that his body be returned there; the family always fulfills this last wish if at all possible. Otherwise, the dead person is buried along the road that leads to his village. In order to rest near his ancestors in his last sleep, a native who feels that his strength is ebbing may build his huts in the middle of the bush, at the place where the village of his ancestors used to stand. An old man esteemed and loved by his family is buried in front of the soukala, and this is the rule for nabas.

The undertaker prescribes the shape and size of the grave, but anyone may dig it. Mossi graves consist of a circular pit about 1.50

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Naba regularly saw his son in private, and that the prince often interceded 644
successfully with his father for the lives of rebels or criminals. 593

The Mogho Naba seldom saw his younger sons, who usually remained 634
with their mothers' patrilineages until they were old enough to be assigned district chieftainships or sent to live in villages controlled by the Baloum Naba. He was rather suspicious of these boys, who, if certain traditions are believed, were not averse to plotting the death of the Djiba Naba in order to succeed to the nam. The district chiefs also feared these younger sons, in whose favor they were often deposed by the Mogho Naba. Almost all of the dynastic changes that occurred in the Mossi districts seem to have stemmed from a ruler's attempt to find districts for his brothers or his younger sons.

The ruler was less concerned with the welfare of his daughters and 643
female relatives. Their marriages seldom benefited the political system. 644
As a matter of fact, the behavior of a royal princess usually strained the re- 593
lations between her husband and the ruling lineage. The reason for this [562]
was a status conflict: as wives, they had low prestige in Mossi society; but as relatives of the Mogho Naba, they enjoyed high status. This contradiction made it difficult for them to accept the low estate of wives. Consequently, they clashed with their husband and often dominated the women and co-wives in his compound. Since few Mossi men tolerate strife within their household, these noble wives often withdrew from their husband's home and established one of their own. The one exception to this pattern was the ruler's eldest daughter, the Napoko, whose ceremonial duties at his death and during the interregnum compelled her to remain loyal to the husband chosen for her by the king. Like her brother, the Crown Prince, if she violated any of the traditions and thus became ineligible to fulfill her duties to her father and to the state, she endangered the country at its weakest moment, when the government was being transferred from the deceased Mogho Naba to his successor.

The death of a Mogho Naba was usually attributed to foul play or 643
supernatural forces. When Mogho Naba Sagha II died in 1957, a report 761
from Ouagadougou stated that the Governor of the Upper Volta had felt constrained to have an autopsy performed to quell rumors that the monarch had died of poisoning.[11] The obvious function of such rumors was to dramatize the gravity of the situation during the interregnum.

Because the Mogho Naba was usually accompanied by a page, it was 643
often this boy who witnessed his death. It was the page's responsibility to 763
notify the Baloum Naba, who notified, in order, the Ouidi Naba, the Lar- [644]
halle Naba, the Kamsaogho Naba, the Gounga Naba, the ruler's children, [645]

643 the Tansoba, the members of the royal sub-lineage, and the district chiefs.
763 The Tengsoba of the Ouagadougou area was also notified. Because he was
[645] a descendant of the aboriginal Ninisi population that "owned" the land, he
[793] supervised the burial ceremony.

The Mogho Naba's death was kept secret, and no mourning was allowed
[701] until the Crown Prince had arrived at the capital and the Tansoba had recruited an army to protect the realm against would-be usurpers of power. Then the cry was raised in the palace, to reverberate throughout the land,
643 that "the fire had gone out." Once the ruler's death had been announced,
764 the country was plunged into an interregnum, which was characterized by
669 ritual and often by actual anarchy. The people in the towns immediately looted the markets and stole their neighbors' goods; the prisoners and captives in stocks were released by their guards; the nakomce in all the territories, districts, and villages subjected the local populations to robbery and pillage; and the members of the monarch's babissi began their intrigues for power. The traditional sanction for this anarchy was that only when people suffer during the breakdown of political control do they really appreciate the sovereign's role. The Mossi declare (with some truth) that no one was safe during the interregnum. However, as we shall see, the ruler was symbolically kept alive, and the country was never without effective political leadership.

766 When the Tengsoba arrived at the palace, he was joined by five hereditary funeral chiefs: the Pazany'tengsoba, the Tampouy Naba, the Benghin
644 Naba, the Toghin Naba, and the Tanghin Naba. In the ceremony that fol-
643 lowed, he gave permission for the royal grave to be dug. Meanwhile, the ruler's body was prepared for burial in the traditional manner by his female relatives and laid in state in the zongo. These women kept vigil over the body, shouting and weeping. Only the five ministers of the realm and the male members of the ruler's babissi were allowed to pay homage to the corpse within the zongo. All other mourners had to pay their respects to the monarch's eldest daughter, who, as Napoko, was dressed in the dead sovereign's clothes and sat in his place before the zongo. As her father's symbolic representative, she held daily court and received greetings and homage from all visitors until a new ruler was chosen. The drummer who sat by her side declared to all visitors, "You say that the Mogho Naba is dead! Well, who is that sitting there? Tell me! Is that not the Mogho Naba?"

766 The ruler was buried the day after he died, at the end of an elaborate
643 ceremony. Libations were poured out to the ancient rulers, and sacrifices
[782] made to them. All the important officials and members of the royal mini-

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*175 *648 French Forces were present there. The official Vichy radio began broadcasts urging discipline, increased production, and "patriotic cooperation in making the Federation [of French West Africa] a military bastion against the encroachment of its British neighbors."[28] In response, local officials ordered Mossi chiefs to provide laborers to build trenches and fortifications between the two areas. The Free French, for their part, used the Gold Coast as a center for the distribution of anti-Pétain propaganda, and tried to employ returning Mossi labor migrants as couriers. The majority of these young men were not interested in politics, however, and those who were prevailed upon to take propaganda leaflets into Mossi country simply discarded them as soon as they crossed the border.

*175 *648 643 The pressures, counter-pressures, and anxieties of this period were apparently too much for Mogho Naba Kom II, who died on March 12, 1942. By the next morning, countless rumors to the effect that the Mogho Naba had committed suicide had spread as far as the Gold Coast. The most widespread rumor was that the Mogho Naba's anti-Pétainist views had become clear to the administration. In reprisal, he was "placed under surveillance on Boisson's orders and separated from his subjects. He died solemnly by his own hand after having summoned his son and commanded him not to take office 'until the true French should return.'"[29] Another widely circulated rumor, probably originated by Moslems, was that the Catholic missionaries, freed from the restraints of Paris, had tried to compel the Mogho Naba to divorce his many wives and become monogamous. The Mogho Naba allegedly could not comply with this demand because it would have been a severe violation of Mossi tradition for a royal wife to become the wife of any other man while her husband was still alive. Faced with this dilemma, the rumor said, the Mogho Naba committed suicide.

The official French report on the Mogho Naba's death reveals that the administration was aware of these and other rumors and of their potential influence on the behavior of the Mossi people. The report also shows that the French officials believed, and credited the Mossi with believing, the classical superstition that "The heavens themselves blaze forth the death of princes." The report states:

> Over the last few years, the health of Saidou Congo [Mogho Naba Kom II] has been impaired by heart trouble, and it was a heart attack which carried him off at about 11 P.M. on March 12th.
>
> [761] [821] [763] The natives have no explanation for sudden deaths, and attribute them either to supernatural intervention or to poison. Besides, two phenomena had occurred just then to strike the imagination: there had been a total eclipse of the moon on the night of March 2d to 3d, which announced,

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 175* 648* 643 [821] [763]

according to the Mossi, the imminent death of an important chief; secondly, a meteor had passed unexpectedly over Ouagadougou between 8 and 9 P.M. [on March 12th], vividly impressing the Mogho Naba himself.

It is quite possible that the emotions induced by these phenomena aggravated the heart condition that felled him. Certain people have maintained that the Mogho Naba, being opposed to all foreign domination and convinced that serious developments were imminent, voluntarily commited suicide by poison in order to elude them. So far, there is no proof that such a rumor has really been adrift. The matter is under strict investigation.[80]

The Mossi people practiced as best they could the traditional rituals connected with the death of a Mogho Naba. During the interregnum, however, the administration did not permit the usual chaos, ritual or otherwise. One administration report states: "Young people tried to steal things in the market, taking advantage of the old customs, but they were checked."[81] A later report adds that the traditions of the Napoko and the Kourita were honored, and that one hundred persons were arrested for the ritual larceny of small objects.

The traditional Mossi authorities allegedly requested that the deceased Mogho Naba, as one who had worn the Legion of Honor, be given full military honors. This required the placing of his body in a coffin so that the funeral cortege could move through the streets, a fact which introduced a new ritual element in royal funerals. Once this ceremony was over, however, the representatives of the administration withdrew, and the body was buried according to customary rites. [766] [177]

The traditional electoral college then proceeded with the task of choosing a new ruler. The choice was between Issoufou Congo, Kom's eldest son, who was then a lieutenant in the French Colonial Army in the Ivory Coast, and his younger brother, Etienne Congo, chief of the Doulougou district. With the administration's permission, the college elected Issoufou Congo. He took the title "Sagha" (the second Mogho Naba to bear that name), and was installed with traditional ceremonies. [666]

The message Sagha sent to the French High Commissioner bears quoting. Like the traditional speeches of newly elected Mogho Nanamse, it was believed by the Mossi people to contain subtle jibes at enemies, praises to benefactors and friends, and portents of future plans. The Mogho Naba said: 175* 648* 643 537

> At the moment when I take command of the Mossi people, I must thank you for having placed me on the throne of my father. I give you assurance of my fidelity toward France in all circumstances. Be assured by this testimony that my father will remain for me an honored person and a guide. I will walk in the footsteps of my father. In these difficult times, my people and I re-

775 that the same baby is returning. So, in order to induce him to
553 remain on earth, they give him a significant name.

One of these is Yewayan (literally, "one who has returned"), meaning "Here he is, back again; it is he once more, and we recognize him."

The same name is used for all members of the same family.

Scars. When a child is a year or two old, the family calls
304 in an old woman who draws more or less straight lines on his face (cheeks, chin, forehead, even the nose) with a razor. These marks vary according to region and are not [193] the same, for example, at Kaya as at Ouagadougou.

The design used most often, however, has three straight lines from forehead to chin and one or two horizontal lines running across the nose and joining the vertical lines on the cheeks.

Feeding. If a mother does not have enough milk, she goes
853 very early in the morning to a tree, for example, the kamsaongo
782 or wédega (of the family of gohine lianas), to ask for milk. She falls to her knees, and believing that she is addressing a living person, she makes her request humbly, but with what faith! It appears that the prayer is often granted, but the woman must never again go under the tree or she will lose her milk.

The question of choosing a nurse does not arise in Mossi
853 country unless the mother dies. In that case, the little orphan is
604 entrusted to a sister of the child's father. If she has been a mother, she too goes to the tree to ask for milk, as described above, even if her most recent delivery occurred years before. Finally, if the child thus nursed is a girl and survives, she becomes the property of her father's sister who will give her in marriage, later on, to the suitor of her choice.

III. Death

764 The importance of funeral ceremonies depends on the age and
554 rank of the deceased.

Nitiema (aged persons). Upon the death of an [194] old man or woman, all the relatives who live in the village are assembled.

764 554 The body is kept in the funerary chamber for a whole day, and then the burial ceremonies are begun. The eldest son and daughter in the family throw cowries in the tomb (1) so that their father

1. Different types of tombs. Among the Mossi there are several kinds of tombs. The yaobulga (tomb in the form of a well), the highly favored type, is reserved for all those, young or old, who die a natural death.

The sampogyaogo (from sampogré, "wound," and yaogo, "tomb") is rectangular in form and reserved for all those who die following a serious wound, snake bite, lightning, and drowning, or who fall on the field of battle. In these cases there is almost no kouré (funeral ceremony). Only the relatives shave their heads and receive visitors who bring them condolence. There are no celebrations or ceremonies. On the day of the second kouré, a little beer is served to visitors.

or grandfather may buy water "when he is thirsty and pay the tolls on the way to Eternity." The persons in charge of the burial take some of the cowries.

The relatives organize games and dances which go on for three or four days. Finally, everyone has his head shaved, and the date is set for the principal funeral ceremony. On that day, all of the relatives, sons, married daughters, close relatives, and grandsons, bring chickens, livestock, and cowries. All the inhabitants of the village are expected to prepare beer. Livestock and chickens are killed, and the meat is distributed to the people who come for the ceremony. Dances [195] go on for several days, and the dancers, as well as the drummers, receive cowries.

It should be noted that the grandchildren keep their chickens or livestock after slaughtering them and may dispose of them as they wish.

764 554 [187] The sinddo is performed only at the death of an aged person. It involves cutting up a living animal whose meat, as soon as it is cooked, is eaten by all the members of the bereaved family. During this operation a strong person holds the animal's muzzle shut; it is believed that a single cry from the creature means certain death for someone in the family.

The tomb of aged persons has the form of a well at the top; it is rectangular below, or at least wider, so the corpse may lie in it.

Ikanda (married man). The ceremony is much less impressive for a young husband. The deceased is simply washed, wrapped in a Peulh secco, and buried. A few chickens are killed. There are no dances at the second kouré.

Heads of families. After the deceased has been washed, dressed, wrapped in a mat or secco, and [196] laid out on the threshold of his hut (1), the lagda (undertaker) offers him the blood

1. The venré (opening). We have already seen that among the nakomsé a hole was cut through a wall of the house or through the wall surrounding the courtyard and that through this opening the body was carried to its last resting place.

In general, this is done for the father of a family. The body is laid out by the opening, and his eldest son and all his daughters (the daughters of the deceased and those of his brothers) must pass through the opening ahead of the corpse. On this occasion the girls tie branches around their hips in lieu of skirts, and the son removes his loincloth. The children of the deceased are held by the arms and legs and put by turn through the opening, in such a way that their bodies brush against the corpse.

The eldest son, by passing safely through the venré, proves to those present

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that he did not cause his father's death. The daughters who dare go through the opening, even those who are grown women, are greeted with bravos by the crowd. The wives receive generous gifts from their husbands. The reason for this is that no girl who had been pregnant before being led to her husband would dare to pass through the opening because the deceased and other kimsé (ancestral spirits) would strike her dead.

This is why some women disappear at the crucial moment, to the great shame of their husbands.

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The funerary hut is fumigated by burning a certain aromatic plant known as sompiga. The Bambara and the Wolof call it benguefala or benguefira. The same plant was widely used by the Europeans during the recent outbreak of yellow fever, either in an infusion, in a tisane, or mixed with the shower water.

of chickens which are killed at his feet. He pronounces some ritual words which may be summarized as follows: "Accept these chickens and these cowries and do not return; may everything you leave behind profit your heirs!;" etc.

The body is then carried away. On reaching [197] the tomb, the bearers carry the corpse around it three times and then place the body on the ground. The undertaker goes into the tomb and arranges the sleeping place. The mat is removed, and the body is handed in to him. The members of the family and other relatives at once begin to weep as the opening is closed with a stone, and the whole is covered with earth.

The eldest daughter of the deceased and his wives cover their bodies with ashes. The pugtiéma (first wife) and the eldest daughter wrap leafy branches around their waists, and the rest of the family wear vines on their foreheads. This is the first mourning.

Forty or fifty days later the second funeral ceremony is held, accompanied by various games, the playing of tom-toms, killing

764 animals, beer, etc. (see the description above). This is the
554 second mourning.

Dakonré (bachelor). Only his father and mother shave their heads. He is wrapped in a Mossi secco and buried without further ceremony. He is not even washed.

Bi-kouré (funeral for a newborn child). If the first-born child of a young mother dies, the girl returns to her family and remains there for thirteen days. Then she comes back to her husband, accompanied by some of her relatives. The latter bring chickens and guinea fowl to be served with the millet cake brought to the girl's husband. In return, the husband has chickens and guinea fowl killed and millet cake prepared, thus making an even exchange with his in-laws.

[198] Custom requires that the girl's relatives spend a night on the road before returning to their village. Even if their village is quite near they spend the night in the bush.

It should be added that if a second child dies at birth, there is no kouré.

Pagh'sin kataré biga (childless woman). There is no ceremony. She is buried in the same manner as the bachelor.

The Existence of God, Heaven, and Hell

776 The Moaga believes in the existence of a superior being, invisible or visible (the sun has long been considered as a "god" by many of them), who created the heavens, the earth, and all living things. This being is called Wende or Wenam (from wende, "world," and nam, "chiefdom"; thus, "Master of the World").

Although the Moaga sometimes attributes his misfortunes to the evil spells of his enemies, nevertheless he recognizes that nothing can be done without the consent of God. Hence he constantly invokes the name in every circumstance of his life, especially when he makes sacrifices.

Even the makers of fetishes, magicians, and sorcerers recognize this power and frequently invoke it.

792 There are certain Mossi who make no charms or fetishes and who are neither Moslems nor Christians. They harm no one, [199] forgive those who offend them, and attribute everything that happens to them -- for good or ill -- solely

773 According to tradition, he had beside him a toabga (a kind of
535 magic axe) and a tibo (a sacred object, fetish).
776 The people captured him and put him in a safe place. But of what possible use could he be to them? Nobody knew. [237] He was something unknown and fearful.

One day the people had gone off to hold the kouré (funeral observances) of an old man and were on their way back home. They were warba dancers. They were all singing as they approached the house of the waongo, who came out. The dancers were terrified and ran away. Only one of the singers had the courage to remain behind.

He went on with the songs and the waongo followed him right up to the house of the deceased, and there he began to dance.

From this it was concluded that the waongo had something to do with funerals. Since that time the waongo is summoned whenever an old man or woman of the Nioniossé (soukoaba) dies. He never dances for deceased young people.

Since the waongo or, rather, the soukou is considered to be sacred and to embody a sort of religion which possesses secrets that should not be made known to everyone, a special language --
[198] a deformation of the môré [Mossi] language -- has been invented. It is understood only by the initiates.

535 The waongo dances to the sound of a special tom-tom, accompanied by songs and praises in the secret language. The dance is of no special interest; it involves more or less frenetic movements, such as characterize most of the dances of the indigenous peoples.

The waongo is always accompanied by a circle of young men dressed in a narrow strip of cotton, decorated with cowries, and carrying satchels at their sides. These boys make movements with their heads which [238] are precisely like those made by circus
[534] horses. In addition to the tom-tom, flute players (wissé) accompany the dances.

535 We shall now speak of the true funeral dance, called warba.
764 It is performed by men wearing skirts, a kind of net shirt dyed blue, and headdresses made of cowrie shells. A long fringe, weighted

535 764 with metal and worn around the hips, distinguishes this costume from others. The movements of the fringe follow the movements of the body. It soon is revolving so rapidly that it looks like a top.

Many people, however, do not own the special costume just described, and they merely tie a blanket around their loins. During the movements of the dance, this produces a very comical effect since it looks like the wagging tail of a monkey.

[534] The musical instruments which accompany this dance are long tom-toms (gangando); some of them are narrower at the middle and look like long, thin spools for thread.

The dancers also accompany themselves with tiny metal instruments which are like Spanish castanets.

The dance itself is performed in a circle under the direction of the chief of the warba whose costume is [239] richer than the others. All of the dancers usually wear many charms on their [789] heads (tail of an ox and heads of birds stained with the blood of sacrificed chickens).

[775] The warba proves that the Mossi believe in the immortality of the soul. They believe that the dance is necessary to enable the soul of the departed to join the souls of his ancestors. They hope in this way to earn the good favor of the new spirit.

Thus, this dance has a moral basis. However, it seems that the same cannot be said for the other dances which are performed so widely today.

535 In addition to these three national Mossi dances, there are some other dances performed only by women and girls which are actually exercises in physical culture rather than true dances. We shall speak only of the principal one, the kiguibtobo ("dance of the bumping buttocks").

The kiguibtobo. This dance is performed by a group of women, usually at the beginning of cool weather after the harvests are in. The dancers clap their hands while singers raise their melodious voices. The dance is rhythmic. Two dancers leave the group and take their places in the center of the circle. They go back and forth, and then suddenly at a given point in the song [240] they turn back to back so that their buttocks touch and bump each other in time to the music. The dancers must be equally strong

586 It nevertheless happens, though very rarely, that the husband is unable to convince his wife and returns home alone. No one troubles the wife from then on, and her relatives give her full freedom. The grudge of the rejected husband may be persistent, however, and his vengeance frightful. The bride price is not returned; the husband should have known how to keep his wife. It is nevertheless acknowledged that the children born of the union, boys or girls, belong to the father, and he does not fail to claim them when they are grown, or if they run away to their mother.

564 467 Negro populations often contain caste groups, set apart from each other by tight barriers. The most outstanding of these are the rules prohibiting marriage between members of the same caste or between those who belong to a caste and those who do not. Such prohibitions do not exist among the Mossi, except in the sense mentioned earlier. Although three caste-like groups exist among them, drummers, smiths, and undertakers, they are castes only in the sense that those who do not belong to such a family cannot exercise the profession. It might be more accurate to call them guilds.

533 [534] The drummers (binda) are those who play the bindré, a sort of large gourd with an aperture about 40 centimeters in diameter and covered with hide. Only those who belong to the drummers' family may play on this drum, which apparently is peculiar to the Mossi, [782] but anyone may play on the other drums. The drummers are present at all sacrifices offered by the naba; on Friday, the day of sacrifice, they go and pay their respects to him. When sacrifices are offered, they are entitled to the head of the victim. They are present at all [764] burials, where they play their drum and receive a remuneration which varies with the wealth of the deceased. If it is one of their members who died, they receive neither cowries nor food. They go to war [727] with their drums. If they are so unfortunate as to be made prisoners, they are never sold but ruthlessly killed; this is done either to prevent them from going back into the fray and stirring the warriors to sack the village, or because no one would want to buy them since they belong to a naba who would retaliate against their captors, or for both reasons at once. The drummers are the country's griot, a term hallowed by custom. They know the genealogy of every naba and sing his praises. Each province chief has a number of drummers and never travels without taking some of them with him. At other times they go to /34/ the market and follow the best-dressed people, singing

763 old man passes away. Suddenly, a shrill and lugubrious cry uttered by the first wife pierces the air and announces to everyone that a soul has just left its body and appeared before God. All the women rally to this call, and for a few minutes the most plaintive laments fill the dead man's soukala.

764 767 Silence is soon restored. One of the family members fetches the undertaker, lada, without whom it is impossible to proceed with the burial. Meanwhile, one of the séko which enclose the inner courtyard is torn off to permit the soul to get through and leave the living in peace. An old woman and the dead man's children proceed to lay out the corpse, using only their left hand. The body is washed with warm water and vigorously soaped, then annointed with karite butter. The head is shaved and the hair buried, unless the shaving was done before the dying man breathed his last, in which case the hair is tossed to the wind. When the corpse has been thoroughly washed, the undertaker softens the joints of the neck, arms, and legs so the body will slide more easily into the pit; then he lays out the body in the hut of the first wife if she is still alive, otherwise in the hut of the dead man.

764 The corpse is laid out on a mat, on its side in the position of a sleeping man, with arms and legs folded, and covered with a white blanket. As soon as the body is laid out, lugubrious cries are heard once more, and the men and youths go to dig the pit while the women remain sitting in the courtyard and watch the corpse. Women friends and neighbors prepare food for the family which has been visited by death.

The grave is usually dug in the family field, where the ancestors already rest. The villages have no common graveyards; /69/ each family has its own. Nevertheless, the vicinity of a sacred grove is sometimes used as a cemetery. To be buried away from one's relatives is a great misfortune, and one who dies far from his village strongly desires that his body be returned there; the family always fulfills this last wish if at all possible. Otherwise, the dead person is buried along the road that leads to his village. In order to rest near his ancestors in his last sleep, a native who feels that his strength is ebbing may build his huts in the middle of the bush, at the place where the village of his ancestors used to stand. An old man esteemed and loved by his family is buried in front of the soukala, and this is the rule for nabas.

The undertaker prescribes the shape and size of the grave, but anyone may dig it. Mossi graves consist of a circular pit about 1.50

764 meters in diameter and 0.70 meter in depth. At the bottom of this first hole or against the wall, a second pit is dug, 0.75 meter in diameter. The bottom of the second hole is enlarged to form a sort of chamber, 1.50 to 2 meters in length and 0.75 meter in depth, where the body will be laid. This chamber is plastered with a preparation of néré to make the inner surface very smooth.

Young men spend the whole night at this task. Meanwhile, friends and absent relatives hasten to the house of the deceased as soon as they hear of his death; drummers also come, on the lookout for a few jars of beer and a few cowries. Everyone dances, sings, and makes merry.

764 The children and younger brothers of the deceased wear mourning
765 clothes: *an ample apron with a large pocket*, adorned with cloth streamers and various designs on a red or blue background; a small gourd as head covering; a circle of ashes on the face, and a cross of ashes on the back. The daughters and sisters of the deceased wear in addition a bunch of leaves in the back and thin white cotton cords around the neck. The eldest son wears a sheep skin across his chest and over the shoulder. At dawn the millet beer comes, the millet
764 mush is ready, and they are taken to the men who dug the grave. The undertaker tosses a little beer onto the soil removed from the pit and mixes it with some millet mush. Then the merry-making comes to a halt, and everyone drinks, eats, and rests for a while. Sometimes the dancing is taken up again around noon. When the sun dips toward the horizon, the burial gets underway.

An opening is made in the hut where the dead man lays, and the corpse is removed through it. The body is laid in front of the hole, and every one of the dead man's children must pass through and step over his father's corpse. The body is then laid on a stretcher, but not tied as yet; it is taken back into the courtyard, through the opening left by the séko which was removed at the moment of death. The eldest son now draws near with a goat or chicken, according to his means, and gives it to the undertaker who offers it to the deceased by shoving it forward three times and saying: "Your son offers you this goat, so it will bear kids for you." The other children may also present offerings, as well as the friends, /70/ and the undertaker offers them all to the deceased in the same manner. In some localities, the animals thus presented are taken home by the undertaker, who kills
[184] and eats them, and no sacrifice is made on the spot; elsewhere the victims are killed near the corpse.

764 When the last chicken has been offered, the body is wrapped in a very pliant mat and bound tightly to the stretcher. The funeral procession gets underway. The women and children walk ahead of the body, and the friends and village people follow with the drummers. If the deceased was an important person, horsemen join the procession and guns bark. If the deceased was the head of the household, the procession winds around the soukala three times. Women, who are never heads of a household, are not granted this honor. Then the procession goes toward the grave in a roundabout way, passing by the favorite spots of the deceased: an old woman, for instance, is taken to the place from which she used to fetch water and to the marketplace where she went to sell grain. The drummers bang away, everyone shrieks, sings, and exchanges insults so coarse that no one was willing to repeat them to me. The procession comes to a halt three times if the deceased was an old woman, twice if it was an old man, and the noise rises to a new pitch.

When the procession reaches the grave, everyone stops for the last time and becomes silent. The stretcher is lowered, and the relatives utter a subdued and melancholy chant: "May the chief of hatred (the being who killed the deceased) depart!" The body is laid out near the pit. One of the undertakers, who alone may bury someone who died of illness, stands in the first hole, and another waits in the funeral chamber to receive the body. The cords which bind the corpse to the stretcher are cut, and the mat removed. Those undertakers who are not occupied at the moment stretch blankets around the pit to hide the body from the onlookers. The man in the first hole seizes the corpse and passes it on through the opening of the funeral chamber to the second undertaker, who takes it in his arms, lays it on its side on a mat with the head toward the south and facing east in the case of a man, west in the case of a woman, with the arms and legs folded.

As soon as the corpse has vanished, the blankets are removed, and the eldest son steps forward. He offers the dead man a mourning [801] apron, in the pocket of which he has placed 444 cowries in the case of a woman, 333 in the case of a man, or even 4, 444 or 3, 333, according to his means, and the undertaker presents them to the deceased, saying that his eldest son is offering him cowries to buy drinking water (to be translated as beer). He also offers clothing: for a man, two pairs of trousers, two shirts, two blankets, and a cap, if he wishes to do things lavishly; and blankets in the case of a woman, some to

764 be worn, others for carrying jars or to take to market. A woman is also offered a gourd to cook sauce, along with pepper, spices of all sorts, and salt. In addition, she is given the spindle that she used to spin cotton, but first its stem is broken; in fact, everything which is offered to the dead is previously damaged or torn. Wealthy friends also present clothes, and the others toss cowries to the dead. The undertakers carefully cover the smaller hole with blankets to prevent the cowries /71/ from falling into the pit. Every once in a while they allow a few to slide down, but they keep the greater part to themselves. When everyone has tossed in his offering, the undertakers take one, two, or several pieces of clothing; this is their share, and the practice is sanctioned by custom. They also take a few handfuls of cowries from the mourning apron, and someone hastens to count them. All eyes are anxiously focussed on the person who counts them, [80] 787 for either a man or a woman will die soon, depending on whether the number of cowries comes nearer to 333 or to 444.

Finally the undertakers close up the pit. If the deceased was an old woman, the smaller opening is plugged with one of the large jars in which she prepared millet beer; if a man, it is covered with a small jar or sometimes, especially if the opening is larger, with sticks laid as close together as possible. The corpse is thus completely isolated in its funeral chamber. The larger hole is then filled up with the soil removed from the pit. A jar and an earthen sauce pot are placed on top in the case of a woman, an earthen pot and a large stone in the case of a man.

Everyone withdraws to drink, eat, and rest. There is no dancing that night, but they make up for it on the following day and even on the day after that, if the wealth of the deceased permits it. On the second day after the funeral in the case of an old man, on the third day for an old woman, the children and younger brothers of the deceased shave their heads, go to thank those who have helped them, and remove their mourning clothes. There will be no further preoccupation with the deceased until the anniversary festivities or koure.

[184] Such are the ceremonies which usually attend the death and burial of a married man or woman, those who have children. We say "usually," for all these complex ceremonies may be curtailed and modified to a greater or lesser extent, depending on the region and the customs peculiar to one family or another.

775 it aside to return it to the soul when it leaves the body. From this
[735] comes the thank-you wish, "May God repay you!" If the deceased led an evil life, if he was quarrelsome or a thief, if he killed, he is condemned to walk over live coals to reach God, or if he is a murderer, he may come to God only after he has drunk all the blood he has shed, which God has saved for this purpose. The major offenders are detained by the treetops and never reach the place of souls. It must be said, however, that most Mossi take little heed of the penalties which may await them in the other life or deny their existence altogether.

The souls go to Bourtenga, the "gathering place of the souls," according to the etymology of the word, a place of indeterminate geographical location, or they go to Pilimpikou, a mountain located
775 in Kipirsi country. Their sole occupation over there is to go to market
764 at night, and this is why on the day of burial the deceased is given cowries so that he may buy millet beer and clothes in order not to look like a tramp.

The souls are white but otherwise they look like men, although they are nimbler and can move effortlessly and with great rapidity
[264] from one place to another. They do everything upside down; they eat with the left hand and do with it all the things we do with the right, and this is why the corpse is washed with the left hand. They wear their clothes inside out, with the pocket of the breechcloth facing in; they carry the spears iron downward, and they walk backwards because their eyes are placed behind their head. This is why the kourita who represents the deceased wears everything inside out.

775 The souls of the animals sacrificed to him, chickens, sheep, goats,
769 beeves, etc., go to join the deceased, who can thus feast, invite friends, and gather kin together, for people are reunited up there. Although nabas are no longer such, those who were subject to them on earth recreate their court. It is said that parents come to fetch their children, /87/ nabas their pages and favorite wives, and friends their friends, unless the survivors treat them very well and provide them with lots of food.

Indeed, the souls of the dead come back to earth to receive the gifts which are offered to them, to drink the blood of the victims sacrificed in their honor and the millet beer prepared for them on the annual Day of the Dead (basra). This is why no Mossi faithful to tradition ever drinks millet beer without first pouring a little on the

302 husband by legacy; while men are shaved only when they receive their first wife, because then they become masters of a hut, but they are not shaved when they get new wives because their status does not change again. A man who is appointed naba must lose his hair which was that of a subject and no longer suitable to a chief. A dead person [764] may only be buried without being shaved if he died an accidental death, etc.

789 The cross also plays a role which must not be overrated, but which is nevertheless real. The hilts of swords bear the shape of a cross; the feet, hands, and chest of the sick are often anointed with charcoal mixed in fat, always in the shape of a cross. The chests and backs of soukala dwellers are also marked with crosses to protect them against lightning. The huts are marked likewise, and crosses are drawn even inside the mouths of horses and donkeys. A cross is also drawn on the hut door of those who are seriously ill so as to ward off evil spirits. A cross of ashes on the chest and back is part of the mourning costume.

What is the origin of this custom? The natives cannot say, and invariably reply, "This is what our fathers did."

In addition to these superstitious practices that do not commit one to anything and that harm no one, there are others which can be very useful to /101/ those who practice them, and others yet which seem indeed to fall into the category of magic. We are referring to what the natives designate by the generic name of tim, without differentiating between true remedies of medicinal origin and superstitions or evil spells which should be characterized as magic. Indeed, it is often quite difficult to distinguish between the two.

755 Amulets and charms are tim to the natives, and so are the medicines which their specialists prescribe and which seem to have real effectiveness. We mentioned them briefly when we spoke of illness. We did not say that the preparation of these medicines rarely goes unaccompanied by some sorcery, and that the person who has been cured by a remedy must at least keep some in a little bag and sacrifice a chicken to it every year. Everything is done as in the usual sacrifices, but the invoking formula is replaced with the following: "God-tim, stretch out your hand and take this chicken. God has given me a powerful medicine. May this medicine protect me night and day, in the middle of the night and on the path, where we amuse ourselves and in the huts. Keep the jaws of the snake shut so that next year I may still be in good health, so that no misfortune may come to me,

771 their traditional fear. Nevertheless, Captain Lambert says that
648 prior to the French occupation, Moslems were forbidden by the
[798] Moro Naba to /585/ say their prayers (kella) publicly. They merely recited their rosary (séki) silently.

797 Since the French occupation, the Mossi have lost all their prejudices against Islam, because they have been conquered by a different foe. In addition the Moslems tell them, as they do everywhere else in West Africa, that the Whites will only be vanquished and will only leave the country when everyone has become a Moslem. This leads the Mossi to start salaaming, and actually it is probable that there have been more conversions to Islam among the Mossi since our occupation than prior to it. This result, which may appear strange at first, is indubitable. Actually these conversions, although more numerous than they used to be, are still rare if we consider that the enormous majority of the Mossi population and the territory as a whole remains fetishistic.

Let us proceed to a description of Mossi religious customs.
787 First, the funeral ceremonies.
755 When a Mossi is ill he summons a soothsayer (bara in Mossi). The latter takes some earth and looks at it to see what will happen to the sick man. Then he states either that the latter will get well, on condition of obliging with a sheep and a chicken, or else that he will die. In the first case the requested chicken and sheep are brought to the bara, and then, if the sick person gets well, he gets something else, a sheep or 5,000 cowries. If the sick person dies, contrary to prediction, the family merely says that the bara was a liar and nothing else happens.

764 If the deceased is a man, it is the family elders who care for him. They stretch his limbs and even his fingers so he will not turn rigid immediately, and they close his eyes. Then one of the elders washes the corpse with cold water in the presence of the whole family. After this, the elders sew a shroud with cotton bands to wrap around the deceased, and then he is rolled up in a mat.

The soukala chiefs (we know that among the Mossi every household head is the head of a soukala) are buried in the courtyard /586/ of their soukala, or else before its gate. The grave diggers are fetched, and they dig a hole the size of a man, lay the corpse at the bottom, and place boards above it to prevent the soil from weighing

764 down on the chest of the deceased. Then they spread out on the boards a layer of clay, and add earth until the hole is filled. A small canari is placed on the grave to mark its location.

Other members of the soukala are buried around it in the maize field. A canari is also placed upon the grave. The same applies to slaves. Only people stricken with sleeping sickness are buried [766] in the bush, to prevent the spread of the disease.

The deceased is buried on the morning following the day of his death. The heir of the deceased soukala chief and the family elders kill chickens upon the grave. They take the animals by the legs and crush their skull on the floor of the grave. This is the liturgical procedure for such killings. Nine chickens are thus killed [536] in succession and set aside to be eaten. If the soukala is wealthy, sheep are killed instead of chickens. They are seized by their hind legs and their head is struck three times on the floor of the grave, then their throat is cut with a knife. The souls of all those animals go to the deceased.

On the night following the burial, people people play drums, shriek, dance, shoot guns. When day breaks everyone returns home to wash, rest, and eat. Then they return when the sun sets, and this goes on for three successive nights.

765 When the ceremony is over, the date of a new reunion is set for 30, 40, 60 days or even a year later. This second ceremony is often made to coincide with the time of the millet harvest. The children of the deceased have their heads shaved. Much to is prepared. The sisters and daughters who have married away come on the date set, bringing sheep and dolo. The family and the whole village come to greet the successor of the deceased soukala head, to drink and to eat. The griot and large drums are sent for. People make music, dance, sing, and drink for two days, and /587/ this time there is no weeping. This second reunion ends the funeral ceremonies occasioned by someone's death.

769 The Mossi have a yearly feast for their dead and their ancestors. It is the Tiougou or Bassara, which is also called Péléga in other areas. This feast is celebrated in December, when all the millet has been harvested and the cold weather has come. The family and soukala heads have much dolo prepared and pour it onto the graves

8: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1958
FA28 Mossi FA28

he received from them. This unequal exchange, plus the nobles' prerogative of seizing the wives of pagans, contribu.ed to the increase of the Moslems. 622 797 582

The conversion of Mossi to Islam is sometimes accompanied by a rupture in the relationships between persons involved in "friendships" with a view of obtaining wives. A great quarrel developed in the district between a pagan chief and a recent convert who refused to give the chief a daughter promised as a wife. The chief became furious and claimed that the Moslem had broken a promise made years ago, but the Moslem claimed that it was against his new religion to give his daughter to a pagan. It is not true that Moslems in the village do not exchange wives with pagans, but the Moslems often try to convert their pagan friends so that the brides will not have to revert to paganism. The chief's difficulty was that he could not become a Moslem because of his ritual and ceremonial relationship with the ancestors. The Moslem men do not have such difficulties with their pagan wives because most women follow their husbands' dictates in religious and other matters. Many Moslem men attempt to prevent their wives from having sacrifices made to the ancestors, but if a woman really wishes such a sacrifice she can easily have it arranged through her pagan relatives. If a woman married to a Moslem refuses to observe Islamic practices, she is liable to divorce and runs the risk of having her children taken away. 572 622 582 797 [562] [593] [586]

Mossi anxiety over children is often instrumental in converting them to Islam. When a woman is barren or her young children die, she consults a soothsayer (*barga*). She is either told that her Tengkougre benefactor was not amply rewarded and recalled the children, or that her "Moslem" children (children who wished to be Moslems) were angry because they were given pagan names. In the latter case she is advised to make a gift to a Moslem and to ask her husband to build a Moslem prayer-circle outside his hut so that when her children "return" (are born again) they will see it. Finally, she is advised to give all her children Moslem names. I could discover no reason why the pagan soothsayers advise these anxious parents to adopt Islam, except that they hope that complicated prescriptions will be more efficacious. Nevertheless, so effective is this technique for gaining converts to Islam that even members of the family of the chief pagan priest are not immune to it. Furthermore, once a woman has a Moslem child, all her other children must be Moslems or they will die. A man whose children are all Moslem has no recourse except to adopt Islam if he wants a funeral, because his Moslem sons may not give him a pagan funeral. 797 842 [787] [551] [764]

Every Mossi, whether Moslem or non-Moslem, wishes a proper funeral, and now that travel has increased the fact of being Moslem or pagan is of great importance. Many young migrants to Ashanti have reported that their dead pagan comrades were unceremoniously disposed of, while the local Christians and Moslems took care of their dead coreligionists. But despite this fact, and the belief of administrators and missionaries, I found no evidence that the seasonal and other migration of Mossi youth to Ghana and the Ivory Coast have contributed very much to the spread of Islam. It is true that some of the thou- 797 167 [164]

9:Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1960 FA28 Mossi FA28

chief. If he was not qualified then one of his younger brothers, or 631
one of father's brothers or uncles was chosen. Yet, the fiction of 613
equal access to the *nam* was important to the Mossi because it enabled them to adhere to their most important political axiom which was that "The only man who should rule is one who can keep the country." Regencies were avoided, and persons with physical and character defects were barred. Moreover, this flexibility gave the electors a wide choice of candidates from which to choose the person best fitted for chieftainship at any given period. The Mossi have always believed that it is difficult to rule men and this is what they mean when they declare: "Nanamsè toumdè ya yida fa fa"—"The work of the chiefs is the most difficult of all."[3] For example, it does not seem like an accident that the first ruler, Moro Naba Wubri, was succeeded by four of his brothers in turn instead of by his sons. The Mossi had not completely conquered the territory, and the young sons were incapable of handling the complex political situation. The graves of each of the successors to Wubri in different parts of the country remain as markers to testify to the difficult task which the early rulers had in controlling their realm.

The Mossi believed, and still do believe, that it was only when con- [812]
flict developed after a ruler died, that the people realized how necessary
and valuable a chief was. The death of a chief, especially of the Moro [764]
Naba, was kept a secret until the war minister arrived at the capital with his troops. Only then did the cry go up: "The fire has gone out!"; and as soon as it was heard, violence broke out throughout the [669]
land. Prisoners were released, thieves rifled the markets, and the
nakomces, or nobles, rode about the countryside doing whatever they wished. This custom persisted as late as 1942. Reporting to his superior in Abijan about the events that transpired in Wagadougou when Moro Naba Kom died, the French commander wrote: "On Friday, March 13, 1942, young people, profiting from old custom, tried to steal things, but they were stopped and about one hundred were arrested."[4] Throughout all the chaos which attended the death of a 645
king, the war minister remained calm unless an attempt was actually 696
made to seize power. He never attempted to stop the public disorder or to catch thieves or murderers, because everyone believed that out of

643 the Tansoba, the members of the royal sub-lineage, and the district chiefs.
763 The Tengsoba of the Ouagadougou area was also notified. Because he was
[645] a descendant of the aboriginal Ninisi population that "owned" the land, he
[793] supervised the burial ceremony.

The Mogho Naba's death was kept secret, and no mourning was allowed
[701] until the Crown Prince had arrived at the capital and the Tansoba had recruited an army to protect the realm against would-be usurpers of power. Then the cry was raised in the palace, to reverberate throughout the land,
643 that "the fire had gone out." Once the ruler's death had been announced,
764 the country was plunged into an interregnum, which was characterized by
669 ritual and often by actual anarchy. The people in the towns immediately looted the markets and stole their neighbors' goods; the prisoners and captives in stocks were released by their guards; the nakomce in all the territories, districts, and villages subjected the local populations to robbery and pillage; and the members of the monarch's babissi began their intrigues for power. The traditional sanction for this anarchy was that only when people suffer during the breakdown of political control do they really appreciate the sovereign's role. The Mossi declare (with some truth) that no one was safe during the interregnum. However, as we shall see, the ruler was symbolically kept alive, and the country was never without effective political leadership.

766 When the Tengsoba arrived at the palace, he was joined by five hereditary funeral chiefs: the Pazany'tengsoba, the Tampouy Naba, the Benghin
644 Naba, the Toghin Naba, and the Tanghin Naba. In the ceremony that fol-
643 lowed, he gave permission for the royal grave to be dug. Meanwhile, the ruler's body was prepared for burial in the traditional manner by his female relatives and laid in state in the zongo. These women kept vigil over the body, shouting and weeping. Only the five ministers of the realm and the male members of the ruler's babissi were allowed to pay homage to the corpse within the zongo. All other mourners had to pay their respects to the monarch's eldest daughter, who, as Napoko, was dressed in the dead sovereign's clothes and sat in his place before the zongo. As her father's symbolic representative, she held daily court and received greetings and homage from all visitors until a new ruler was chosen. The drummer who sat by her side declared to all visitors, "You say that the Mogho Naba is dead! Well, who is that sitting there? Tell me! Is that not the Mogho Naba?"

766 The ruler was buried the day after he died, at the end of an elaborate
643 ceremony. Libations were poured out to the ancient rulers, and sacrifices
[782] made to them. All the important officials and members of the royal mini-

Wobogo. However, he did not have to intervene, because while still en route he heard that Ouagadougou had fallen."[88] Thanks to this type of aid, the Mogho Naba was able to gather quite a large army, a fact that contradicts Crozat's belief that the Mogho Naba was a "king without an army."[89]

The early Mogho Nanamse used to accompany their armies into the field, but this practice was later abandoned and was revived periodically only by the more adventurous rulers. (The last ruler to die in warfare was Mogho Naba Doulougou [ca. 1800].) However, it was the Mogho Naba's duty to greet the army when it came to Ouagadougou, to beat the royal war drum, and to turn the troops over to the Tansoba. This officer served as commander in chief of the army, and was assisted by the Gounga Naba, a provincial minister, who served as his aide-de-camp. The Gounga Naba was expected to die rather than retreat in battle, especially if the Tansoba was killed. Two other ministers, the Kamsaogho Naba and the Larhalle Naba, also accompanied the army. The later Baloum Nanamse did not venture into battle, because they had to attend to the personal needs of the Mogho Naba. In early times, however, they accompanied their sovereigns into battle and fought alongside them. The Ouidi Naba never went to war, because it was his duty to look after the kingdom. He had to ensure the interests of all the people even if the royal army was defeated, the country invaded, and the ruler killed or forced to flee. The Samande Naba went to war and served as chief of the infantry.

Scouts preceded each district contingent as the army marched off to battle. Within the contingent, the younger warriors marched in front, followed by older men. It was the duty of the more experienced warriors to make sure that the younger men did not break ranks and run under the stress of battle. Behind the foot soldiers came the cavalry, composed of nobles and of the few commoners who possessed horses. Behind these came the district chief, surrounded by his own palace guard. Several heralds known as *yumba* (sing. *yuma*) accompanied the district forces to exhort them to fight. As the men marched to battle the yumba shouted:

> Men! Your ancestors were not slaves. They were men. They were stronger than anyone else. They did not bathe with water; they bathed with blood. Do you wish to return home to drink millet water and eat bread? Never! A man does not eat bread or drink millet water; a man fights. Your ancestors were not afraid of anyone; you must not be afraid of anyone. Even if you are killed today, you must march ahead, beat your enemies, and take their villages. You must not be afraid!

Mossi armies on the march used scouts to keep a sharp lookout for the enemy or for any evidence that he was aware of impending attack. The tactics these scouts used to avoid detection, such as camouflaging themselves

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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726 with leaves and branches and crawling upon the ground, can be witnessed
[764] even today at Mossi funerals where men re-enact warfare practices. Whenever possible, the Mossi preferred to take the enemy by surprise, but this was seldom possible when large-scale fighting and massive preparations were involved.

When two Mossi armies drew up to each other, the heralds from both sides issued such challenges and epithets as: "If you men do not wish to die, you should run or you will never eat again. We will have your blood to wash with." In the meantime, the Tansobadamba on both sides deployed their forces in accordance with the number of men available, the spirit of
[723] the enemy, and the nature of the terrain. From the description of warfare given to me by an old Tansoba in Nobere district, it appears that the strategy most commonly used was to split the infantry in two while attacking, thus making room for the cavalry to charge through. If the initial charge was successful, the attack was maintained, but if it failed, the army usually turned about and fled. Despite their braggadocio, Mossi commanders seldom insisted that their troops fight against overwhelming odds.
[644] However, shame over impending defeat often induced such officers as the
[645] Tansoba and the Gounga Naba to fight to the death. For example, during the war between Boulsa and Fada-N'Gourma in 1897, the Boulsa army lost so many men that the Boulsa Dim wanted to commit suicide in his humiliation. However, he was prevented from doing so by one of his subordinates.[27]

Soldiers wounded by poisoned spears or arrows extracted the projectiles if possible, and kept on fighting until they died. Even if they were wounded
[789] by an unpoisoned weapon, they did not seek medical aid. Most wounded men believed that they were doomed, because their protective amulets had
[727] failed them. For the same reason, a defeated army fleeing a battlefield made no attempt to retrieve its dead and dying, but left them to the vultures. When an army was victorious, however, the Mossi either carried their dead home for burial or buried them on the battlefield, saving some item of their clothing or equipment for the funeral.

Victorious Mossi armies usually pursued the enemy, burning villages as
[648] they went. The soldiers killed all the infants and the infirm, and when they
[567] fought against non-Mossi, they captured young people to be sold as slaves. Then they collected all the available booty and departed hurriedly, fearing
[727] that the confiscated cattle and slaves would slow their return and enable the rallied enemy to catch up with them.[28] If the army could not return home before dark, camp was set up for the night near a body of water so that the Tansobadamba could offer thanksgiving sacrifices. Pickets were later

764 meters in diameter and 0.70 meter in depth. At the bottom of this first hole or against the wall, a second pit is dug, 0.75 meter in diameter. The bottom of the second hole is enlarged to form a sort of chamber, 1.50 to 2 meters in length and 0.75 meter in depth, where the body will be laid. This chamber is plastered with a preparation of néré to make the inner surface very smooth.

Young men spend the whole night at this task. Meanwhile, friends and absent relatives hasten to the house of the deceased as soon as they hear of his death; drummers also come, on the lookout for a few jars of beer and a few cowries. Everyone dances, sings, and makes merry.

764 The children and younger brothers of the deceased wear mourning clothes: an ample apron with a large pocket, adorned with cloth
765 streamers and various designs on a red or blue background; a small gourd as head covering; a circle of ashes on the face, and a cross of ashes on the back. The daughters and sisters of the deceased wear in addition a bunch of leaves in the back and thin white cotton cords around the neck. The eldest son wears a sheep skin across his chest and over the shoulder. At dawn the millet beer comes, the millet
764 mush is ready, and they are taken to the men who dug the grave. The undertaker tosses a little beer onto the soil removed from the pit and mixes it with some millet mush. Then the merry-making comes to a halt, and everyone drinks, eats, and rests for a while. Sometimes the dancing is taken up again around noon. When the sun dips toward the horizon, the burial gets underway.

An opening is made in the hut where the dead man lays, and the corpse is removed through it. The body is laid in front of the hole, and every one of the dead man's children must pass through and step over his father's corpse. The body is then laid on a stretcher, but not tied as yet; it is taken back into the courtyard, through the opening left by the séko which was removed at the moment of death. The eldest son now draws near with a goat or chicken, according to his means, and gives it to the undertaker who offers it to the deceased by shoving it forward three times and saying: "Your son offers you this goat, so it will bear kids for you." The other children may also present offerings, as well as the friends, /70/ and the undertaker offers them all to the deceased in the same manner. In some localities, the animals thus presented are taken home by the undertaker, who kills
[184] and eats them, and no sacrifice is made on the spot; elsewhere the victims are killed near the corpse.

764 down on the chest of the deceased. Then they spread out on the boards a layer of clay, and add earth until the hole is filled. A small canari is placed on the grave to mark its location.

Other members of the soukala are buried around it in the maize field. A canari is also placed upon the grave. The same applies to slaves. Only people stricken with sleeping sickness are buried [766] in the bush, to prevent the spread of the disease.

The deceased is buried on the morning following the day of his death. The heir of the deceased soukala chief and the family elders kill chickens upon the grave. They take the animals by the legs and crush their skull on the floor of the grave. This is the liturgical procedure for such killings. Nine chickens are thus killed [556] in succession and set aside to be eaten. If the soukala is wealthy, sheep are killed instead of chickens. They are seized by their hind legs and their head is struck three times on the floor of the grave, then their throat is cut with a knife. The souls of all those animals go to the deceased.

On the night following the burial, people people play drums, shriek, dance, shoot guns. When day breaks everyone returns home to wash, rest, and eat. Then they return when the sun sets, and this goes on for three successive nights.

765 When the ceremony is over, the date of a new reunion is set for 30, 40, 60 days or even a year later. This second ceremony is often made to coincide with the time of the millet harvest. The children of the deceased have their heads shaved. Much to is prepared. The sisters and daughters who have married away come on the date set, bringing sheep and dolo. The family and the whole village come to greet the successor of the deceased soukala head, to drink and to eat. The griot and large drums are sent for. People make music, dance, sing, and drink for two days, and /587/ this time there is no weeping. This second reunion ends the funeral ceremonies occasioned by someone's death.

769 The Mossi have a yearly feast for their dead and their ancestors. It is the Tiougou or Bassara, which is also called Péléga in other areas. This feast is celebrated in December, when all the millet has been harvested and the cold weather has come. The family and soukala heads have much dolo prepared and pour it onto the graves

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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It was only when this man had returned to the capital that all the nobles in the local ruling lineage were invited to Ouagadougou to press their claims. Only the dead chief's babissi went to Ouagadougou, even though all nobles subscribed to the traditional concept that "the nam does not belong to any one sub-lineage; it can be given to any nobleman." Unlike the others, these nobles did not shave their heads in mourning, thus indicating their candidacy for the nam. When they donned sheepskin cloaks and carried spears on their shoulders, they indicated that they were interested in the nam of the district. 634 [613] [302] [765]

Before a candidate for the district chieftainship left for Ouagadougou, he collected livestock, money, clothing, and grain from his friends to give as gifts or bribes to important officials in the capital. When he arrived there, he lived with friends and conducted his campaign from their home. He and the other candidates visited their provincial minister and his colleagues, the Mogho Naba, and other courtiers, giving presents ostensibly as a sign of friendship but actually with the ultimate aim of impressing these people with their generosity. These activities were often very costly; for if the Ouagadougou officials suspected that the candidates were wealthy, they made every effort to obtain as many presents as possible. It was not unusual for candidates for the district chieftainship to remain at the capital as long as "thirty-three" or "sixty-six" days before the officials were satisfied with their generosity and made preparations for the election. 634 662

The evening before the election, the Baloum Naba asked each candidate to provide a chicken and a sheep for the evening sacrifices to the namtibo.[33] After the morning ceremony on the following day, the Ouidi Naba reminded the sovereign that a new chief had to be chosen for Nobere district. The Mogho Naba summoned the Gounga Naba and asked him which candidate had the best character and was most capable of taking care of the district—a question which shows that the Mossi never placed primogeniture above the ability to rule.[34] The Gounga Naba had already consulted his friends about the matter, but he recounted both the good and the bad qualities of each candidate. At the same time, he hinted which one would make the best chief. He finally told the Mogho Naba that all of the candidates were worthy men, adding, "You can give the nam to any of them." The Mogho Naba then looked around to ascertain whether the other ministers had concurred in the Gounga Naba's implied choice before declaring, "I will give the nam to X, because when his [father, grandfather, or brother, used in the generic or classificatory sense] was alive, he was good to me. The ancestors would be angry if I did not give his [son, grandson, or brother] the nam." With these words the selection was made, and the ministers now prepared to install the successful candidate. 634 645 643 [782]

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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[Post World War II Period]

Mossi chiefs of being a modernist, was elected as the first Vice-President of the new government. Not only was the Mogho Naba deprived of the opportunity to become the African head of the Upper Volta, but such stalwart supporters of the chiefs as Conombo and Bouda were left out of the government. Thus, after twelve years of opposition to Houphouët-Boigny, Mogho Naba Sagha and his chiefs were finally defeated. Their defeat was made even more ignominious by the elevation of a non-Mossi commoner to a position of dominance over the Mossi chiefs.[37]

Having lost out in the Upper Volta, the Mossi chiefs had no spokesman when the new Vice-Presidents of the Government Councils of the French West African territories and the European Presidents of these territories met at Dakar to discuss the problems of the truncated French West Africa Federation. No one mentioned the problem of the position of the traditional chiefs. As far as the politicians were concerned, the issue of the chief on the inter-territorial level was dead. It had relevance only in those territories where the chiefs retained some influence.

In an effort to consolidate their hold on the Upper Volta, the PDV-RDA members in the PDU met in September 1957 and sought to convert the PDU into a territorial subsection of the RDA. This move was resisted by the supporters of the chiefs within the PDU, especially by Conombo, who as leader of the PSEMA, an important faction within the PDU, had been completely eclipsed by Coulibaly and the PDV. Conombo resigned from the PDU and announced his intention to rebuild the PSEMA with the support of the Mossi chiefs. On November 12, however, before his plans could be put into action, Mogho Naba Sagha II died in Ouagadougou and political activities in the Upper Volta came to a standstill. A period of national mourning was proclaimed, and politicians from all parties gathered to pay their last respects and to eulogize the monarch.

Sagha's death, like that of all Mossi princes, was ascribed to foul means, although it was clear that he had succumbed to uremia. The people reacted to the interregnum by looting, and the shopkeepers in Ouagadougou and surrounding areas were compelled to close their establishments. "The people of Ouagadougou ran to Saba, but the merchants there were quite diligent, and needed no police force to protect them."[38] It was reported that those wives of the deceased ruler who were not at the palace at the time of his death took off the brass anklets denoting their royal status and became free women. If this actually happened, it was an unprecedented occurrence.

When the Mossi traditional electoral college convened to choose a new Mogho Naba, it reportedly considered the candidacy of both Moussa Con-

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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the noble class, whose actions embody the ideology that the exercise of sovereignty is a corporate right which reverts to all of them when the head ruler dies. Much of this raiding is symbolic and does not interrupt market activities.

Many of the ceremonies connected with the funeral of chiefs and respected deceased elders take place in the market. Sometime between the interment of the dead person, the *keema,* and the first burial ceremonies, the sister-in-law *(dakia)* of the dead man in her role as joking relative—a role she plays until the funeral ceremonies are completed—impersonates him in the market place. On the day chosen for this rite the *dakia* dresses in the clothes of the *keema* and goes to market. While there, she acts as she observed her brother-in-law to have acted in the past: she circles the market and buys goods; she buys beer from his favorite beer seller and drinks with his friends; and for a moment, at least, she sits with his old cronies in their favorite haunts and takes part in their discussions. She may even be serenaded by *griots* who sing praises in honor of "her" ancestors, and she rewards them before leaving the market place that evening.

The market is the scene of an important ritual during the final funeral ceremonies, which are held about one year after a man was buried. On the morning of this ceremony the female relatives of the *keema,* led by his eldest daughter and his *dakia,* appear in the market and go from stall to stall buying all the things the deceased used in his lifetime. These include meat, *zumbala* (locust bean balls), cotton, tobacco, salt, kola nuts, peppers, *kumba* (a tomato), cakes, cooked millet-mush balls, potatoes, etc. When they have gathered all of these things, they retire to a spot near the market where they lay out all the foodstuff in baskets. In the meantime, the drummers play the royal airs, if the dead man was a chief, or ordinary rhythms if he was a commoner. Then the *keema's* eldest daughter places a basket on her head and, accompanied by four men, leads a procession of drummers and of the other women, also with their baskets, around the market. While this procession is circling the market three times in honor of the deceased, the *dakia,* carrying a very old basket containing the stalest food she could find, weaves back and forth through the marching throng making a nuisance of herself. After the third round the marchers return to their assembly point whence the eldest daughter and some of the older women now rush into the market, stealing merchandise from the stalls and placing it in their baskets. This assault is often so quickly done that it is fairly successful. The raiders then join the other mourners at the assembly point, where with bowed heads they listen respectfully while the chief drummer recites the genealogy of the *keema* and tells him that the people from the surrounding villages

765 602 443 and districts were present to honor him. This being completed, the *griots* are paid, everyone rises and shouts *Ne Wardo* (the salutation at funerals), and that part of the funeral ceremony during which a man [571] takes leave of the market community is concluded. Now his relatives, descendants and friends all return to the market, whose sights and sounds make it an integral part of the life cycle of the Mossi—the one institution of their society in which almost everyone participates actively.

443 512 571 Preparation for a market day, especially the tri-weekly Friday market or *Raga kasanga,* usually begins on Thursday. This day is characterized by a great deal of activity: preparing the commodities which are to be sold the next day, washing body and clothes, and combing hair. The women who prepare the beer and fried foods work late into the night preparing their wares, and a visit to the homes of the [857] *griots* finds them preparing their drums. The little boys who go to the roadside to chant Moslem prayers to the passers-by, and the little girls who sell water to these strangers redouble their efforts until late on Thursday night to get enough money to buy presents in the market the next day. Finally, when it is quite late and the beer-making fires are out, everyone retires until the morning of the market.

At 7:00 A.M. on Friday the market is deserted except for a leper who sweeps out the stalls of the sellers in return for bits of food or presents of money. Looking at the empty stalls, one has a certain amount of difficulty imagining that this spot will be crowded with human beings five hours hence. But one is also conscious of the fact that even at this early hour scores of persons have already left their homes in distant villages and are on their way to market loaded with prod- [402] uce and with high hopes for the day. About 9:00 A.M. the first women arrive, balancing net-covered bundles on their heads, and take their positions in the various sections of the market with either face or back pointing to the direction from which they came. By 9:30 A.M. the butchers have arrived with their bleating sheep and goats and an [273] aged cow. The first beer sellers have also arrived and are giving "sips" to men before they settle down to sustained drinking.

The pace of the market quickens about 10:30, and in the distance the first tap of the Bindere's drum resounds. All of a sudden, the market seems to have become a giant magnet, drawing long lines of [854] people towards it along every path and from every direction. Women dressed in brightly colored print cloths and dresses, with babies straddling their backs and the inevitable bundles on their head, saunter into their places. Young children run ahead of their mothers or stumble behind them. Those vendors of European products who customarily transport their goods in boxes on bicycles arrive in the

773 protection. The Peulh would acquire more cattle by taking charge of the animals belonging to the Mossi, and the Yarga would find better markets for his salt and kola nuts. As for the blacksmith, he would make the many farm implements needed for the cultivation of the vast domains which were either not worked at all or insufficiently exploited because of the lack of tools.

They set the date for their return. Once more the naba received them very cordially, but they showed no greater deference to him than they had shown on their first visit.

And so the legend comes to an end by concluding that this is why the Peulh and the Yarga have retained their spirit of independence. As for the blacksmith, who remained poorer, he came [526] to submit to certain regulations which are common to all the Mossi although he never leaves his forge to salute the naba when he passes. As has already been noted, he merely strikes his zanré against his anvil, just as formerly he struck it on the ground by way of salutation.

[124] Chapter 8

Customs. Enthronement of the Naba. Names.

Death of a Mogho Naba

643 The death of a Mogho Naba is kept secret until the arrival at
●766 Ouagadougou of the Tansoba, who was forewarned when the illness became grave. On his arrival, the public is told that "the fire has gone out" (bougsaré kimé).

The personages in charge of the burial are Pazany'ting'soba (the undertaker), Tampouy Naba, Kassiri Naba, Benghin Naba, Toghin Naba, Ganin Naba, and Tanghin Naba.

The arrangement of the tomb. The grave in which the mortal remains of the king are buried is really a subterranean hut. Before the king is placed in his final dwelling (1), the following things

1. The body is wrapped in one or several cow hides.

643 are placed in the tomb: two sheep skins (gando); some cushions
766 (nagpouya); several bolsters (fourkamsé); and a zoukougré -- all made of leather. All of these are arranged as though the chief were to lie down to rest.

After the corpse has been washed (Naba Siguire, father of the present Mogho Naba, was washed by marabouts [125] since he was the son of a naba who was a Moslem believer), it is clothed all in white. In the house of every Mogho Naba a corner of the wall is
[531 decorated with rather attractive designs, and the dead Mogho Naba
761] is carried through it on his way to the tomb. The sight of this corner, which is seldom visited, reminds the chief still living of the mortality of all beings and makes him realize that in the same way as he succeeded someone, so will he, in turn, be replaced by another; the corner will one day become an opening through which his own body will pass at the end of his lifetime.

In addition to the garments in which he is clothed, the following items are placed in the grave beside him: a folded white robe (fou yorgo); a pair of trousers (kourga); a blanket (fou gobga); a pair of slippers (néoda); a small knife (souga); a sword (zangoégo); a gourd of beer (dam) with a calabash over the neck and a small cloth (leppré) over it; a loaf of salt (yamsem); a gourd filled with a hundred kola nuts (gouré wamdé); a sewn sack filled with cowries (liguide ne yolmoumdi); napaga ornaments (douamba and zuyan); and tobacco if the chief smoked or chewed it.

[767] The undertaker is entitled to take the salt, some kola nuts, and some meat when he departs.

[126] When the burial is over, one walks around the house of the deceased.

643 It should be noted that before the burial or sometimes when the death of the king is first known, all of his wives who have children take flight for fear that their son will be made kourita.

The kourita is a child of the deceased and must bear the latter's name. He is exiled and must never, so long as he lives, look upon the new Mogho Naba. Until the emperor is represented on earth by his kourita, his successor cannot be named. This explains the general flight of all of the wives who have children.

The Kombéré: Death, Enthronement

631 763 202 Death. Upon the death of a kombéré two representatives in mourning are sent from the canton to Ouagadougou to deliver the sad news to the Mogho Naba. The envoys are entrusted with a horse or a sheep, depending on the importance of the naba. Tanga branches are tied to the animal's tail (see Ouidi Naba, Chapter 4).

[136] When the first emissary reaches the courtyard of the Mogho Naba, he sits down, taking care to place one hand on the ground and stretching out his arm. Since the very sight of the horse is significant, even before any explanation is offered, the Zusoaba enters the house of the Mogho Naba and comes out again bearing a gourd of water with flour in it (zom kom) which he pours on the envoy's arm.

The horse is then handed over to a representative of the Ouidi Naba who removes the branches and leads the animal to Widhin [Ouidin].

The Zusoaba takes back the gourd, and it is only then that the Ouidi Naba says to the Mogho Naba: "Naba zagl yka sambga le tongalamé (Chief So-and-So has been stricken with such-and-such an illness and has succumbed)." It should be added that before going to see the Mogho Naba, the envoys first inform the ministers of the death of the kombéré.

631 766 The Mogho Naba asks a few appropriate questions and sends the representatives to prepare the kouré. On the day of the ceremony, the Nabitienga (eldest son of the deceased chief) has large quantities of beer and saghbo prepared and sheep and cattle killed to feed the people gathered in great numbers for the occasion.

The house is circled, as was described for the Mogho Naba.

[415] (a) Koupéogo (kouré basket). The koupéogo is a basket, artistically made, into which is put the foutou (clothing of the deceased), [137] koursi (trousers), his pougla (red fez), his néoda (slippers), the zandé (club), and the wed'zouré (horse's tail). This basket is laid upon a pé'gaongo (skin of a sheep) in the zaongo (antechamber).

One of the sisters of the Nabitienga, usually the eldest daughter of the deceased, carries the péogo outside and seats herself at the place where the dead chief held his daily audiences (guéré). The benda, liunsé, and gangando drums are played together, and then

631 everyone gives what he can. Everyone from the Nabitienga down
●766 through his brothers and sisters, close relatives, and their brothers and sisters, in short, anyone even remotely related to the deceased, comes up and offers something. Most often the gift is made up of cowries.

The koupéogo is then returned to the zaongo. Some zom kom (water with flour in it) and some dam (dolo or fermented millet beer) are poured at the door of the antechamber.

The benda and other drummers gather up all the cowries they have received and go a short distance from the house to divide them up.

The benda are expected to give a few cowries to any Yarga, Silmimoaga, or sayan (1) who happens to pass by during the dis-

1. Yarga: a Dioula [Diula] of the Mandé [Mande] group. Silmimoaga: one who has adopted the customs of the Peulh.

tribution.

Sayan: blacksmith.

643 428] (b) Fado. This is the share that goes by right to the Mogho Naba from the estate of every kombéré.

[138] The Mogho Naba sends representatives to whom are entrusted a rooster, a sheep, and, depending on the importance of the chief, a cow and 5,000 to 10,000 cowries.

As soon as he has been presented to the Nabitienga, the first envoy of the Mogho Naba says to him: "Nab'kayé ti mog'naba yel tid wa pous' nabitiengh'togo lad reguib' lokon'wa tib laguemb taba ti ya yel koudgo (Such-and-such a chief having died, the Mogho Naba sends us to deliver his condolences to the Nabitienga and to request of him that the quiver of the naba be turned over to us so that it may be placed beside those of his ancestors, as is the custom)."

The Nabitienga thanks them and orders the loko [quiver] to be brought out at once. It is placed on the ground, and sacrifice is made, in turn, of the chicken, the sheep, and even the cow sent by the Mogho Naba.

631 All of these preliminaries are only the beginning, and when
643 they are completed, the emperor's first envoy orders the Nabitienga
428 to go out into the sunshine so that the fado [share for the Mogho
766 Naba] may be claimed. The Nabitienga complies with the request. Thereupon the first envoy says to him through a messenger: "Mogh' Naba yé tid wa reg fado, ya nig'tousri (1,000 head of cattle), pissi tousri (1,000 sheep), bouss'tousri (1,000 goats), foutou tousri (1,000 garments)," etc. To which the Nabitienga replies: "Tond ba sin ki a ka bas roumsi ne arzek'yé (our late father left neither animals nor other wealth sufficient to satisfy the demands of the Mogho Naba)."

The messenger reports the reply to the emperor's representatives. The relatives of the Nabitienga go [139] to gather together a wanka (hoe), a laré (ax), and a goégo (sickle), and then they tell the nayiridamba (representatives) to go into the antechamber where all of the wealth is piled up. The nayirdamba [sic] send in some soroné who come back and report on what is there. Then they ask the Nabitienga for the fado a second time, and this time it is given to them in the form of the following articles: a robe, a pair of trousers, bracelets, fodo, rouamba (ornaments of the napagha), an ample robe, a pair of slippers, a knife (zangoégo), some salt, some cowries, kalgo (soumbala) balls, nemdo (dried meat), moui (rice), etc.

The envoys are housed for a whole week by the Mabitienga, aided by the inhabitants and his relatives.

On the eighth day, before taking leave of his guests, the Nabitienga slaughters a cow, has large quantities of saghbo and beer prepared and sheep killed, gives clothing to all the envoys of the Mogho Naba, offers them up to 50,000 cowries, depending on their importance, etc.

He has a horse saddled with his father's saddle, and the animal is tethered in front of the antechamber.

One of the nayirdamba unties the horse and walks three times around the house of the deceased naba. The person who mounts the horse is given liguidi (cowries) and clothing and the fez of the naba. He is entitled to keep all this after his return to Ouagadougou, after he has reported to the authorities. The horse becomes the property of the Mogho Naba and is turned over to the Wedranga Naba (personal equerry of the king).

631 duty of these representatives to assemble the notables of the villages and to order them to submit to the new naba, the only one recognized by the Mogho Naba.

631 527 In order to show their joy,[1] the people have large quantities of beer prepared, and games are organized which may continue for several days. The village notables come to offer their submission and to swear fealty, bringing gifts (cowries, sheep, etc.) in accordance with the resources of the village and the wealth of the inhabitants.

631 431 When the nayirdamba leave for Ougadougou, the naba gives: a wife and a robe to the Bilbalga; a wife and a robe to the soroné of the Mogho Naba; a wife and a robe to the soroné or the Baloum-Naba; a wife and a robe to the child of the Bend'Naba; etc.

Any children born to the women [145] so given belong, respectively, to the masters of these representatives.

631 766 Burial. Their burial is carried out in much the same manner as in the case of the Mogho Naba, except for the specific persons involved. The arrangement of the tomb is also similar, although there is, of course, less pomp displayed. [146]

[1] [i.e. At the appointment of the new naba—Analyst]

Chapter 9

The Two Major Mossi Festivals

Mossi Festivals

796 527 In actual fact, there is only one annual festival celebrated by the Mossi. It is known as tinsé or tingana. A second festival, which is more a family affair, is called basgha. The latter is variously named, depending on the region: for the Mogho Naba, it is called m'barengma; for the ordinary Moaga, basgha; in certain regions, kinkirga; etc. Although the date for the first festival is fixed by the Mogho Naba, the second festival is celebrated by each canton chief, each village chief, or each ikanda (married man) on any day that suits him, usually after the harvest.

In addition to these principal festivals, every important village has its annual festival, a kind of special market day. On

755 must be procured. The leaf used to cover a wound must be held by means of a thin cotton cord with cowries attached at the end, three cowries for a boy, four for a girl. A hemp cord with three or four knots, worn around the neck, wrist, or any other part of the body, prevents swelling of that part and is also a master remedy against hair worms. Sometimes it is not so easy to secure the prescribed amulet, for instance, if it is the beak or claw of a hawk, a deer horn, or certain parts of a buffalo or koba. The poor Mossi goes to great pains to find this indispensable amulet.

763 Do as he may, sooner or later he must die. When an old man feels that his end is near, he calls his family and gives them his last instructions. He talks to his eldest son and tells him where his cattle and caches are to be found, who are his debtors and creditors. Sometimes death comes swiftly without warning, and the old man has no time to talk to his heir; a large part of the fortune is thus lost, because a Mossi in good health never tells anybody, especially not his /68/ children, where his property is, and those to whom he has entrusted it do not return it. Some Peul have made rather nice profits in this fashion.

761 The death of a young man or woman or more especially that of a
754 small child is usually ascribed to an old woman who is said to have eaten the child's soul, and some old women claim to have this secret.
[683] The sorcerer points out the guilty woman who is seized and put to death. Every sudden or accidental death is ascribed to an evil spirit, and the funeral ceremonies reflect this.

762 Suicide is extremely rare, but it does occur. Here is one case where we knew the participants. A man quarreled with his wife. The wife, who was stronger than her husband, overwhelmed him in the fight, and the neighbors openly ridiculed him. The following day the husband was found hanging in his hut. A pit was hastily dug
[766] in his nearest field, and he was tossed into it naked without further ceremony. Suicide is regarded as a criminal act, and even the corpse is punished for it.

763 Like all human beings, the Mossi fear death. No longer to eat millet mush or to drink dolo seems to them the greatest of misfortunes. Still, when a Mossi sees death approaching, he resigns himself to it and accepts it stoically. He rests his head on the lap of his first wife, and his other wives gather around him. His friends and the village elders sit before the soukala, and all wait silently for hours until the

766 579 The death of a naba, as we mentioned earlier, is carefully concealed; the more powerful he was, the more careful the concealment. This is done out of fear of the disturbances which would be created by those who aspire to his succession, or by scoundrels who might take advantage of the absence of authority to indulge in every kind of robbery. At the death of the Moro Naba his province was sacked by armed bands, and no one dared to go out unarmed. On the day following the death of Moro Naba Sigri, we had to fetch millet from a village located a few kilometers from Ouagadougou. All the bearers were armed with bows, arrows, and spears. They made an interesting picture in the moonlight.

766 In spite of all their amulets and all their sacrifices, nabas die just like their subjects, and when this happens, his relatives hastily dig a pit in the entrance hut of the soukala and lay the corpse there without any ceremonies. Those wishing to see the naba will be told that he is unwell. The naba of Koupéla is especially favored in this respect. One of the huts in his soukala, standing near the entrance, is set aside for his burial. A pit has been dug within the hut, and every /72/ day the caretaker comes to pour dolo into the hole. This caretaker must not have a wife, and if he happens to have one before his appointment to this post, the naba takes her for himself. On the other hand, the caretaker eats the same food as the naba and drinks the same millet beer. Needless to say, this job is not in great demand. The [761] naba may not enter the hut, and when the roof is in need of repair, the drummers are sent for, and the naba must flee; woe to him if he should hear the sound of the drums, for he would die within the year. When the naba of Koupéla dies, his hands and feet are immediately pierced with big thorns so that he may not return; should he venture to seize one of his people after his death, the thorns would cause him such pain that he would immediately let go of his prey. The corpse is tossed into the pit to fall as it may. The Mossi, full of respect for their chiefs when they are alive, make up for it when they are dead.

Young unmarried men or girls are buried with a previously deceased old woman of the family, so that someone will take care of them in the other life. Their death is regarded as a true misfortune and mourned accordingly. There are no dances or ceremonies. The father, mother, and younger siblings shave their heads on the second or third day after the burial.

[775] A small child is buried by the path. He will soon return in the person of the first child borne by his mother after his death.

766 Suicides are buried like our dogs; here, all dogs are eaten. Lepers
[761] are buried at night without festivities. Accidental death, whether
[262] from a fall, snake bite, or any other cause, is attributed to an evil spirit who must not be irked by granting funerary honors to its victim, or else it would return and kill another member of the family. This is why those who die of an accident are buried without ceremonies and without undertakers. Their heads are not shaved, because God has called them with their hair on, as the Mossi say. A pit is dug, they
769 are buried, and that is all. They have no one to represent them; to the anniversary of their death, the koure, they have no kourita.

Every Mossi who dies of illness, be it man, woman, child, or naba, survives in the person of the kourita. In the case of a married man, the kourita or koutoarsa (who imitates the deceased) is a woman of the dead person's family, usually one of the wives of one of his younger brothers, someone who bears a certain resemblance to the deceased. She is chosen by the family, and sometimes designated by the dying person. She wears the clothes of the deceased, his shirt, his blanket, his hat, his shoes, his bracelets, and his rings; she wears his belt and knives, walks with his staff, his hoe, his dore, and bears his spear, blade pointing toward the ground. She walks like the person she represents. She must imitate him in every way and keep his presence alive in the household. If the deceased was usually accompanied by a /73/ child bearing his satchel, the kourita is followed by the same child bearing the same satchel, but turned inside out. If the deceased was a leper and had no fingers, she pretends not to have any; if he liked to laugh, she laughs; if he was peevish and quarreled with everyone, she maintains a constant state of anger. The children of the deceased call her their father; the wives call her their husband and prepare her millet mush. If the dead man was a naba, she is called naba; if he was not, she is called by the name of the deceased.

769 She acts in this manner until the day of koure. On that day she
428 shaves her head like the other members of the family, and her role ends there. She retains the name kourita, however, and on the day when the inheritance is distributed, she receives a garment in exchange for the clothes of the deceased. If the heir is generous, if the inheritance allows it, she is given some livestock, sometimes a child. It is said that the kourita dies sooner than if she had not played this role, because the ancestral spirits will come and fetch her. For this reason, the position is not in great demand.

769 On Monday millet beer is prepared for Wednesday, and the dances and games continue, as they do on Tuesday. On this day all the wives of the dead man vanish, because they must not witness the ceremony of pounding the grave that will take place on the following day.

/75/ On Wednesday morning the whole family goes to the grave
769 with paddles, accompanied by drummers and the undertaker. The
767 women have brought water, and everyone pounds the earth over the grave, on top of which an earthen pot is left in the case of a woman, a stone in the case of a man. When the grave has been thoroughly pounded, the undertaker kills a chicken on the stone or pot and says: "Take the chicken from the grave, eat it with your family, and leave your children in peace." Then he takes a gourd of beer and pours it over the grave. The chicken is roasted and eaten, and the jar of beer is drunk on the spot. Everyone returns to the house of the deceased, and the games and dances are taken up with renewed vigor.

769 On Thursday the whole family goes to market and thanks the friends who have assisted at the festivities and who have helped them.

The funeral ceremonies are now over, and there will be no further ado about the deceased except once a year on the Day of the Dead.

Young men or girls who die childless also have a kouré, usually on the same day as an old man or woman who died previously. If no one in the family has recently died, the children's kouré is carried out without ceremonies. The father, mother, and younger siblings shave and build a small hut which represents the hut of the deceased, and this is where the chickens or sometimes a goat are offered to him. Millet beer, of course, is distributed to the relatives and friends who are present, but there is no dancing and no pounding of the grave.

Ostensibly the death of a naba is not known, and the poor man is
766 buried without ceremony. When his heirs have gathered all that is needed to give their father a funeral worthy of him, they have the news of his death spread everywhere on a Saturday morning. A dummy built with the dead man's clothes is laid in the hut of his first wife or in his own hut, and all the ceremonies are carried out Saturday night as they would be for any other important burial. The dummy is carried like a corpse; the soil covering the pit is disturbed slightly, and the clothes are buried there. On the following day, Sunday, all
769 the kouré ceremonies are held, and their solemnity is proportional to the naba's power.

Thus everyone has his kouré, with the exception of nursing children, who will soon return, and of suicides.

776 tangandé in every detail either, for only the village may have a tangandé, and there does not seem to be any magic pact unless the sacrifices offered are considered as such a pact, which does not seem justified. The tangandé-animal is never sacrificed, and no special initiation takes place.

774 761 [775] The closest thing to totemism among the Mossi seems to be their concept of the human soul, and yet it is not, properly speaking, a totem in the sense indicated by these authors. Every man has a soul that lives on after death and takes the name of kyma, while during life it is called siga. Shortly before death it takes the name of toullé [197] /85/ in Ouagadougou or toundo in Koupela, but siga, toundo, kyma are one and the same thing, one and the same principle. According to the Mossi, this soul is an animal, invisible of course, a snake, a crocodile, a deer, a hare. The soul is related to this animal, it belongs to the same family, so that to kill a snake or a crocodile in a village where the soul of the inhabitants is a snake or a crocodile is to kill an inhabitant of the village; every individual related to the snake has a snake in the village to represent thim, and he will die when his soul-animal dies.

774 784 Yet, and this runs counter to the definitions of totemism, the individual expects no aid from this animal, never sacrifices to it, and never kills it himself to renew the kinship pact. A person whose soul is a crocodile is forbidden to kill crocodiles in his own village, but he may kill them elsewhere, although he may never eat them, while he may kill the tangandé animal as long as he does so outside the tangandé, and he may eat it at any time. Some people, when they [746] find a dead soul-animal of their family near their village, render it funeral honors, weep, wail, and bury it as one of their own, but they offer it no gifts and hold no koure. Generally it is merely covered with earth. The most widespread soul-animals are a kind of snake (bosombodro) and the crocodile. Several families may have the same [50] one, and marriage, although exogamic, is not forbidden between members of these families.

774 754 The soul may leave the body and in fact leaves it often, especially during the night. If children had a good time in a certain place, if they enjoyed themselves at someone's house, the soul returns there at night. This is when the worst is to be feared from the sorcerers; they may seize the soul by surprise, and its unfortunate owner will die.

775 ground; he also pours what is left at the bottom of the gourd, so the
769 souls will rejoice with him. It is considered a great honor when a
[554] naba tells an elder to grasp one side of the gourd and to pour along with him.

775 One must not laugh about the souls of the deceased and their visits
761 to earth. If you doubt their return, listen to what an old naba once told me. "One day, I had gone to visit a naba, my friend and neighbor. We had arranged to meet at his house with another neighboring chief. He gave us a very nice welcome, and the day was most pleasant. We were resting at night in the shelter of his soukala when we were suddenly awakened by the sound of harness bells and horses galloping. On the following day we left our host. No sooner had we left than he took ill. A week later he died. The souls had come to fetch him. Oh! Father, do not laugh about the souls of the deceased!" And the good old man trembled with emotion. This is what our Mossi believe. They firmly believe in all these ghost stories.

775 Are the souls reincarnated? Small children who die before the age of reason are said to return in the person of the first child borne by their mother. This is why, especially if the mother has lost several
[304] children in a row, the baby is marked at birth with distinctive signs, particularly tattooings on the belly and lower back; sometimes, if he
[766] dies, a piece of his ear is cut off, or a toe or finger joint broken. It is said that the child born next will bear the same marks, but no living example of this could be cited. Often, the mother leaves the hut where her baby died. An old woman spreads ashes before the door in the evening, and if small footprints are found in the morning, it is a sign that the child came back and wishes to return to his mother's bosom.

Rebirth is not granted to anyone other than young children, not even to young unmarried people. They remain in the place of the souls for years on end, the number of which cannot be ascertained, and no distinction is made between the rich and the poor, the powerful and their subjects.

775 The soul of suicides, cursed in death, is not entitled as a rule to
762 funeral ceremonies. It wanders through the world without harming anyone, but unable to find rest.

577 Morality is reduced to its simplest expression. Whatever harms
673 other people is bad. Think your own intimate thoughts and desire anything you like; as long as you do no harm to your fellow man, no fault has been committed. Fornication and adultery are faults only

664 554 "The wives of the Moro Haba never give birth or raise their children at his own place of residence, but only in one of the eunuch villages. In theory they do not stand above the wives of common natives, but in practice they enjoy high consideration among the Mossi, like all that is connected with the Moro Naba.

"The sons of the sovereign, once weaned, are entrusted to a province or canton chief who is put in charge of their education. [582] At the age of ten they are married and settled in a village, where they live, surrounded by a court, but without necessarily being given a territorial command.

"The prerogatives attached to the title of Moro Naba's son are vast as long as the monarch is alive. They grant the right to steal, to loot, and even to kill with impunity.

"Upon the death of the Moro Naba, his sons become mere nakomsé (sons of chiefs) whose position nevertheless remains quite privileged.

643 644 554 "One of the sons of the deceased sovereign, however, is granted special privileges. At the death of the Moro Naba, the latter's wives elect one of his young sons who adopts his name and, so to speak, perpetuates him. He has no /territorial/ command, but he is surrounded by a court similar to that of the Moro Naba, he enjoys respect almost equal to that paid to the latter, and he is a sacred figure. No one has the right to contradict him or to harm him.

644 554 "As for the Moro Naba's daughters, although in principle they do not stand above ordinary Mossi girls, in practice they are treated with the strictest respect by all natives. Once married, they have almost complete freedom of action vis-à-vis their husband, and they often take advantage of this to lead a most unruly existence.

643 766 "When the Moro Naba's death has been verified, his burial is carried out and followed by the funeral ceremonies, which are held in the same fashion as for a common native, with the sole difference /574/ that they have more brilliance and that the sacrifices are more sizable.

642 672 "For the whole duration of the interregnum, the land falls into a state of complete anarchy. Everyone has the right to kill, loot, and steal as he pleases. Convicts who are serving sentence are fully pardoned and set free.

764 down on the chest of the deceased. Then they spread out on the boards a layer of clay, and add earth until the hole is filled. A small canari is placed on the grave to mark its location.

Other members of the soukala are buried around it in the maize field. A canari is also placed upon the grave. The same applies to slaves. Only people stricken with sleeping sickness are buried [766] in the bush, to prevent the spread of the disease.

The deceased is buried on the morning following the day of his death. The heir of the deceased soukala chief and the family elders kill chickens upon the grave. They take the animals by the legs and crush their skull on the floor of the grave. This is the liturgical procedure for such killings. Nine chickens are thus killed [536] in succession and set aside to be eaten. If the soukala is wealthy, sheep are killed instead of chickens. They are seized by their hind legs and their head is struck three times on the floor of the grave, then their throat is cut with a knife. The souls of all those animals go to the deceased.

On the night following the burial, people people play drums, shriek, dance, shoot guns. When day breaks everyone returns home to wash, rest, and eat. Then they return when the sun sets, and this goes on for three successive nights.

765 When the ceremony is over, the date of a new reunion is set for 30, 40, 60 days or even a year later. This second ceremony is often made to coincide with the time of the millet harvest. The children of the deceased have their heads shaved. Much to is prepared. The sisters and daughters who have married away come on the date set, bringing sheep and dolo. The family and the whole village come to greet the successor of the deceased soukala head, to drink and to eat. The griot and large drums are sent for. People make music, dance, sing, and drink for two days, and /587/ this time there is no weeping. This second reunion ends the funeral ceremonies occasioned by someone's death.

769 The Mossi have a yearly feast for their dead and their ancestors. It is the Tiougou or Bassara, which is also called Péléga in other areas. This feast is celebrated in December, when all the millet has been harvested and the cold weather has come. The family and soukala heads have much dolo prepared and pour it onto the graves

793 the sacrifice and killed the donkey. He also slit the throat of a
643 horse, a beef, and a sheep. (This eunuch in charge of guarding the
839 tomb was called by the name of Naba Koutou, and in a way per-
778 petuated the deceased Moro Naba. He was granted special privi-
leges. If a man who was condemned to death ran away and reached
the tomb, he was safe but became the eunuch's slave. Similarly,
[567] a captive who ran away from his master gained his freedom from the
latter if he reached the grave, but became the slave of Naba Koutou.
Finally, at that time, it was forbidden to ride by the hut on a donkey.
Naba Koutou would seize the donkey, or at least demand a ransom
in cowries before returning it. This applied to any animals who ran
astray near the tomb. The tomb still exists nowadays, along with
the Naba Koutou who watches over it, but the latter no longer enjoys
the same privileges.)

793 We saw earlier that the Moro Naba had a sort of minister of the
645 cult in the person of the Gandé Naba, high priest and sacrificer.
There was also the Pouy Naba, or chief of the fetisheers, whose
function was probably to mediate between the Mossi bara and
timisoba as a whole and the central authorities.

782 Let us close this study of Mossi religion, which incidentally is
quite incomplete and a mere outline, with a few words on the human
sacrifices that were performed /597/ in the territory prior to our
occupation, and a few words on circumcision as well.

782 "Human sacrifices," says Marc., p. 156, "definitely took place
766 among the Mossi up to the time when we occupied the territory.
Whenever a Moro Naba died at Ouagadougou, one of his wives and
one of his horses were sent to Gambaga in order to be sacrificed on
the tomb of Ouidiraogo (?) who is regarded as the mother of the first
Moro Naba. Soon after the occupation of Ouagadougou by the French,
782 the dethroned Moro Naba, Boukary Koutou, ordered the sacrifice of a
754 black rooster, a black goat, a black donkey, a black beef, and a
black slave on one of the mountains overlooking the White Volta.
This, it seems, was bound to cause the immediate death of the new
Moro Naba enthroned by Voulet."

304 As for circumcision, the Mossi circumcise boys and excise girls.
Boys are circumcised when they are from eight to twelve years
old, and thirty or forty of them are circumcised at one time. The

643 the Tansoba, the members of the royal sub-lineage, and the district chiefs.
763 The Tengsoba of the Ouagadougou area was also notified. Because he was
[645] a descendant of the aboriginal Ninisi population that "owned" the land, he
[793] supervised the burial ceremony.

The Mogho Naba's death was kept secret, and no mourning was allowed
[701] until the Crown Prince had arrived at the capital and the Tansoba had recruited an army to protect the realm against would-be usurpers of power. Then the cry was raised in the palace, to reverberate throughout the land,
643 that "the fire had gone out." Once the ruler's death had been announced,
764 the country was plunged into an interregnum, which was characterized by
669 ritual and often by actual anarchy. The people in the towns immediately looted the markets and stole their neighbors' goods; the prisoners and captives in stocks were released by their guards; the nakomce in all the territories, districts, and villages subjected the local populations to robbery and pillage; and the members of the monarch's babissi began their intrigues for power. The traditional sanction for this anarchy was that only when people suffer during the breakdown of political control do they really appreciate the sovereign's role. The Mossi declare (with some truth) that no one was safe during the interregnum. However, as we shall see, the ruler was symbolically kept alive, and the country was never without effective political leadership.

766 When the Tengsoba arrived at the palace, he was joined by five hereditary funeral chiefs: the Pazany'tengsoba, the Tampouy Naba, the Benghin
644 Naba, the Toghin Naba, and the Tanghin Naba. In the ceremony that fol-
643 lowed, he gave permission for the royal grave to be dug. Meanwhile, the ruler's body was prepared for burial in the traditional manner by his female relatives and laid in state in the zongo. These women kept vigil over the body, shouting and weeping. Only the five ministers of the realm and the male members of the ruler's babissi were allowed to pay homage to the corpse within the zongo. All other mourners had to pay their respects to the monarch's eldest daughter, who, as Napoko, was dressed in the dead sovereign's clothes and sat in his place before the zongo. As her father's symbolic representative, she held daily court and received greetings and homage from all visitors until a new ruler was chosen. The drummer who sat by her side declared to all visitors, "You say that the Mogho Naba is dead! Well, who is that sitting there? Tell me! Is that not the Mogho Naba?"

766 The ruler was buried the day after he died, at the end of an elaborate
643 ceremony. Libations were poured out to the ancient rulers, and sacrifices
[782] made to them. All the important officials and members of the royal mini-

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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mal lineage segment except the pretenders to the throne shaved their heads as a sign of mourning. The royal pretenders donned sheepskin mantles to signify that they were willing to "eat the nam." Once the ruler had been buried, the country settled down to an uneasy peace until the eighth day, when the funeral ceremonies took place. In the meantime, the Napoko symbolically held daily court, and the Tansoba's army acted as a check against the attempts of ambitious princes to seize power by force of arms.

Two days before the funeral, the Kamsaogho Naba selected the Kourita, who was to replace the Napoko as the living symbolic representative of the dead Mogho Naba. The person chosen to be Kourita was usually a young son of the deceased king, but since this person was banished from the capital, most of the royal wives hid their young children or fled the palace with them.[23] Once the Kourita had been chosen, the Kamsaogho Naba performed a ceremony (similar to those connected with the divine kings of the Near East) during which the youth was given one of his father's horses, dressed in his father's clothes, and given his father's youngest widow as a wife. He was then paid the homage due the Mogho Naba, and after receiving many gifts from the dignitaries, he was banished from Ouagadougou forever. As he went through the country, he was treated like the Mogho Naba and given many wives and presents. If he should chance to return to Ouagadougou or see the new Mogho Naba, either or both of them would be killed by the ancestors. Many Mossi districts seem to have been founded by exiled Kouritadamba. These men were undoubtedly among the numerous "elder" sons of past kings who are said to have "refused" the nam and gone to live in the districts now governed by their descendants.

The choice and banishment of the Kourita heralded the funeral rites, which were characterized by numerous animal sacrifices to the ancestors in the name of the deceased ruler. On the afternoon of the first day of the funeral, the Crown Prince mounted a horse and left the palace by the women's door. The Napoko then took the bridle of her brother's horse and led him and an immense crowd of cavalry, armed warriors, and musicians around the palace walls three times. After the third round, the Napoko demanded that her brother give her a personal servant as a present; he hesitated, but finally granted her request. The Napoko was then lifted up by the warriors, who shouted as they carried her home. The funeral thus came to an end.

All Mossi potentates tried to emulate the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou in matters of pomp, ceremony, and government.[24] Their courts were inferior to his, but only because they were less powerful and less wealthy.

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634 The Kombere Naba, as the person who had "eaten the nam" of the district, was infused with some of the power and authority of the Mogho Naba and had the right to use force to maintain this power and authority. He was [576] respected, and people uncovered their heads and removed their slippers in his presence. Unlike the Mogho Naba, the Kombere Naba was permitted to eat with his peers. But whenever he drank the musicians made a roar-like sound with their instruments, and when he sneezed his attendants clapped. These rituals were rigidly adhered to because the Kombere Naba was readily accessible to the populace and might easily have lost their respect if he behaved in an undignified manner. He emphasized his social distance from them by never visiting the market place, and he did not go anywhere without a large entourage.

The Kombere Naba performed ceremonies and duties that were similar to but simpler than those of the Mogho Naba, and he was surrounded by officers bearing the same titles as those in the capital. But, as will be shown later, these officials had fewer and sometimes different duties than the courtiers at Ouagadougou. Some district chiefs had as many pages and wives as the Mogho Naba, but this was as much a result of their own desires as of their popularity with the local people. The death and funeral rites of a [766] district chief were not as elaborate as those of a Mogho Naba. They included the circumambulation of the chief's compound by the principal heir and [788] heiress, the symbolic reign of the Napoko, and the banishment of the Kourita.[41]

634 Every district chief, whether a Mogho Naba's vassal or a Dim's subordi-
778 nate, was empowered to bestow the nam on his own subordinates. These [622] might be other district chiefs; but most often they were village chiefs. The circumstances under which a Kombere Naba received the authority to grant the nam to another Kombere Naba were usually complex and sprang from rebellions and dynastic changes. Once granted, this authority was seldom revoked, but the district chief had to report to his immediate superior, a Mogho Naba or Dim, whenever he wished to confer the nam upon another district chief.

634 In some cases the Mogho Naba invested a district chief himself, and
175 afterward placed him under the control of a neighboring district chief. For
669 example, the chiefs of two districts, Vooko and Nobila, were always installed
778 by the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou, but were supervised by the Nobere district chief. This practice dates back to the civil war involving Mogho Naba Sagha I (ca. 1787–1803), in which chiefs of Vooko and Nobere sided with the loser. The Mogho Naba executed the local rebels and placed one of his sons in Nobere. He then divided Vooko into two districts, placing a younger son in the one he called Nobila (little Nobere) and subjecting him

682 found to have been justified—that is, if the victim was a thief or a nocturnal
682 intruder—then the accused was acquitted or simply fined. If, however, the accused was found guilty of murder, he was sentenced to die, and the mode
696 of execution was at the chief's pleasure. The chief surrendered the prisoner to his executioners, serfs who lived in the Baglere ward. They took him into the woods and carried out the sentence by strangulation, hanging, decapitation, clubbing, or stoning.

696 The perpetrator of an unusually heinous crime was often ordered to kill himself with a poisoned arrow. This form of execution was feared most, because it tested the murderer's mettle and called into play the
[634] coercive force of his lineage if he proved to be a coward. When such an execution was ordered, the district chief had a poisoned arrow prepared and brought to the murderer's father, his brother, or his father's brother's son. The relative gave the arrow to the condemned man, and, while apologizing for his painful mission, explained that the crime had to be expiated. If the murderer agreed to kill himself, his relatives prepared food and drink for
[766] him while his grave was dug. Some proud and brave men helped their relatives dig the oblong-shaped grave required for a murderer; some even insisted on digging it themselves. When both the food and the grave had been prepared, the murderer bade his relatives farewell, took the food and the poisoned arrow, and went into a hut. Here he ate the food and after-
696 ward killed himself by pushing the poisoned arrow into his leg. In some
626 cases he had to be provided with a second arrow to hasten his death. If a cowardly murderer refused to kill himself, one of his relatives offered to
613 die in his stead. He told the murderer that death was preferable to the knowledge that his lineage brother was a coward. What would happen, he asked the murderer, if he saw a relative being harmed? Would he choose his own safety rather than run the risk of death? The other relatives asked the same questions, and this subtle coercion was usually sufficient to induce the most cowardly man to kill himself. There are no reports of a murderer's permitting a relative to die for him; life would have been impossible for him afterward. One suspects that if ever a murderer had attempted to elude his fate, the district chief would have had him executed.

634 The district court also prescribed capital punishment for individuals
681 convicted of arson, abduction, witchcraft, or lese majesty. A person con-
[685] victed of willfully setting fire to someone's hut or crops was put to death even if no one was killed in the resulting fire; he was held to have
[683] jeopardized the life and livelihood of his victims. Similarly, the rare person convicted of threatening the well-being of others through the practice of
[695] witchcraft was usually tortured and killed. Conviction usually followed the testimony of witnesses or the confession of the accused.

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[World War II Period]

175* 648* 643 [821] [763]

according to the Mossi, the imminent death of an important chief; secondly, a meteor had passed unexpectedly over Ouagadougou between 8 and 9 P.M. [on March 12th], vividly impressing the Mogho Naba himself.

It is quite possible that the emotions induced by these phenomena aggravated the heart condition that felled him. Certain people have maintained that the Mogho Naba, being opposed to all foreign domination and convinced that serious developments were imminent, voluntarily commited suicide by poison in order to elude them. So far, there is no proof that such a rumor has really been adrift. The matter is under strict investigation.[80]

The Mossi people practiced as best they could the traditional rituals connected with the death of a Mogho Naba. During the interregnum, however, the administration did not permit the usual chaos, ritual or otherwise. One administration report states: "Young people tried to steal things in the market, taking advantage of the old customs, but they were checked."[81] A later report adds that the traditions of the Napoko and the Kourita were honored, and that one hundred persons were arrested for the ritual larceny of small objects.

The traditional Mossi authorities allegedly requested that the deceased Mogho Naba, as one who had worn the Legion of Honor, be given full military honors. This required the placing of his body in a coffin so that the funeral cortege could move through the streets, a fact which introduced a new ritual element in royal funerals. Once this ceremony was over, however, the representatives of the administration withdrew, and the body was buried according to customary rites. [766] [177]

The traditional electoral college then proceeded with the task of choosing a new ruler. The choice was between Issoufou Congo, Kom's eldest son, who was then a lieutenant in the French Colonial Army in the Ivory Coast, and his younger brother, Etienne Congo, chief of the Doulougou district. With the administration's permission, the college elected Issoufou Congo. He took the title "Sagha" (the second Mogho Naba to bear that name), and was installed with traditional ceremonies. [666]

The message Sagha sent to the French High Commissioner bears quoting. Like the traditional speeches of newly elected Mogho Nanamse, it was believed by the Mossi people to contain subtle jibes at enemies, praises to benefactors and friends, and portents of future plans. The Mogho Naba said: 175* 648* 643 537

> At the moment when I take command of the Mossi people, I must thank you for having placed me on the throne of my father. I give you assurance of my fidelity toward France in all circumstances. Be assured by this testimony that my father will remain for me an honored person and a guide. I will walk in the footsteps of my father. In these difficult times, my people and I re-

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The Mogho Naba's daughter, the Napoko, impersonates her deceased father at his funeral ceremonies. Note that she wears one of his robes, his slippers, and his bonnet, and has his sword behind her.

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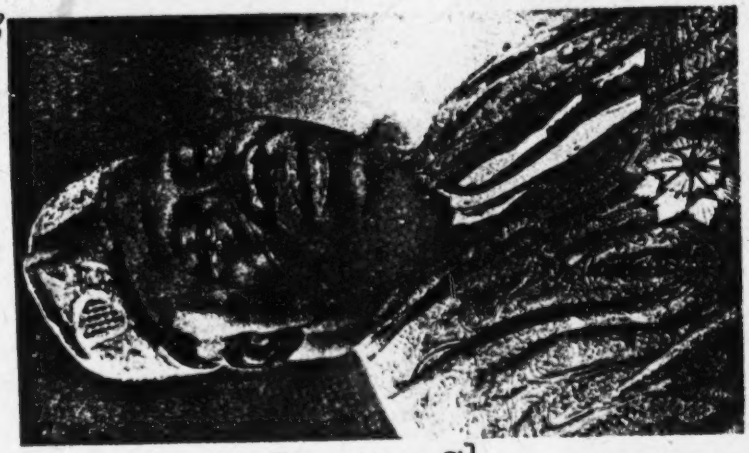

Mogho Naba Sagha II (1942–57), who was instrumental in reuniting the Mossi people into one territory, the Upper Volta.

[p. 178 - 8]

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When one asks the Mossi directly, "What is a market?"
the response to this question is: "A market is a place where people 443
meet to buy and sell. People travel from one market place to another 829
market place, and on the way they stop and see their friends in other villages. In the market one often meets and drinks with one's friends. People also go to distant markets to find things which they do not grow themselves or which cannot be found in their own markets."

Lending support to the Mossi contention that markets are places 443
where one goes to buy and sell is the fact that most important markets 487
in their country are found at the intersections of well-traveled routes. These intersections are often the places where chiefs have their capi- [631]
tals or compounds and this leads to the further idea that there is a connection between chiefs and markets, if only because the power of the chiefs makes markets possible. This does not mean, however, 443
that the market is a purely physical entity which can only exist under 571
the aegis of a chief, or that it is a purely economic institution. First of all, some markets, especially the smaller ones, are moved periodically without too much difficulty. Secondly, and of great importance, is the fact that whenever and wherever there is a large gathering of Mossi there is a "market." Indeed one can say that Mossi seldom come together in large numbers without coming to a market, or without creating one. It appears that the Mossi cannot interact with one [437]
another in any circumstance without also exchanging goods of some kind. For example, when a pagan chief holds the annual festival to [769]
his ancestors, the people who attend form a market in the vicinity of his compound. In those districts where the chiefs have become Chris- [797]
tians and celebrate their birthdays rather than the traditional an- [527]
cestors' rites, the people go to pay them homage and also "make a market." Similarly, whenever there is a funeral of an important chief, [766]
the people from the surrounding villages or even districts bring commodities to his hamlet and hold a market during the ceremony. On [796]
Christmas day, 1955, the people of Manga district "moved their market" about 500 yards to the Catholic Mission grounds where the Christians were celebrating their holiday. And after celebrating the prayers of Ramadan, the Moslems and their pagan townsmen repair to the markets to spend the rest of the day.

Most Mossi markets are inaugurated with religious ceremonies ex- 443
cept those which develop by accretion—that is, by more and more per- 433
sons coming voluntarily to trade. When a chief orders that a market be [652]
created or when a market is moved from one place to another place for any reason, the chief is the person who gives the order for the ceremony to be performed. First of all he speaks to his Raga Naba (market [554]
chief), usually a non-Mossi slave, about the need for the market or the desirability of changing its location. This man then consults a *teng-*

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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the noble class, whose actions embody the ideology that the exercise of sovereignty is a corporate right which reverts to all of them when the head ruler dies. Much of this raiding is symbolic and does not interrupt market activities.

Many of the ceremonies connected with the funeral of chiefs and respected deceased elders take place in the market. Sometime between the interment of the dead person, the *keema,* and the first burial ceremonies, the sister-in-law *(dakia)* of the dead man in her role as joking relative—a role she plays until the funeral ceremonies are completed—impersonates him in the market place. On the day chosen for this rite the *dakia* dresses in the clothes of the *keema* and goes to market. While there, she acts as she observed her brother-in-law to have acted in the past: she circles the market and buys goods; she buys beer from his favorite beer seller and drinks with his friends; and for a moment, at least, she sits with his old cronies in their favorite haunts and takes part in their discussions. She may even be serenaded by *griots* who sing praises in honor of "her" ancestors, and she rewards them before leaving the market place that evening.

The market is the scene of an important ritual during the final funeral ceremonies, which are held about one year after a man was buried. On the morning of this ceremony the female relatives of the *keema,* led by his eldest daughter and his *dakia,* appear in the market and go from stall to stall buying all the things the deceased used in his lifetime. These include meat, *zumbala* (locust bean balls), cotton, tobacco, salt, kola nuts, peppers, *kumba* (a tomato), cakes, cooked millet-mush balls, potatoes, etc. When they have gathered all of these things, they retire to a spot near the market where they lay out all the foodstuff in baskets. In the meantime, the drummers play the royal airs, if the dead man was a chief, or ordinary rhythms if he was a commoner. Then the *keema's* eldest daughter places a basket on her head and, accompanied by four men, leads a procession of drummers and of the other women, also with their baskets, around the market. While this procession is circling the market three times in honor of the deceased, the *dakia,* carrying a very old basket containing the stalest food she could find, weaves back and forth through the marching throng making a nuisance of herself. After the third round the marchers return to their assembly point whence the eldest daughter and some of the older women now rush into the market, stealing merchandise from the stalls and placing it in their baskets. This assault is often so quickly done that it is fairly successful. The raiders then join the other mourners at the assembly point, where with bowed heads they listen respectfully while the chief drummer recites the genealogy of the *keema* and tells him that the people from the surrounding villages

643 are placed in the tomb: two sheep skins (gando); some cushions
766 (nagpouya); several bolsters (fourkamsé); and a zoukougré -- all made of leather. All of these are arranged as though the chief were to lie down to rest.

After the corpse has been washed (Naba Siguire, father of the present Mogho Naba, was washed by marabouts [125] since he was the son of a naba who was a Moslem believer), it is clothed all in white. In the house of every Mogho Naba a corner of the wall is
[531 decorated with rather attractive designs, and the dead Mogho Naba
761] is carried through it on his way to the tomb. The sight of this corner, which is seldom visited, reminds the chief still living of the mortality of all beings and makes him realize that in the same way as he succeeded someone, so will he, in turn, be replaced by another; the corner will one day become an opening through which his own body will pass at the end of his lifetime.

In addition to the garments in which he is clothed, the following items are placed in the grave beside him: a folded white robe (fou yorgo); a pair of trousers (kourga); a blanket (fou gobga); a pair of slippers (néoda); a small knife (souga); a sword (zangoégo); a gourd of beer (dam) with a calabash over the neck and a small cloth (leppré) over it; a loaf of salt (yamsem); a gourd filled with a hundred kola nuts (gouré wamdé); a sewn sack filled with cowries (liguide ne yolmoumdi); napaga ornaments (douamba and zuyan); and tobacco if the chief smoked or chewed it.

• [767] The undertaker is entitled to take the salt, some kola nuts, and some meat when he departs.

[126] When the burial is over, one walks around the house of the deceased.

643 It should be noted that before the burial or sometimes when the death of the king is first known, all of his wives who have children take flight for fear that their son will be made kourita.

The kourita is a child of the deceased and must bear the latter's name. He is exiled and must never, so long as he lives, look upon the new Mogho Naba. Until the emperor is represented on earth by his kourita, his successor cannot be named. This explains the general flight of all of the wives who have children.

533 their praises and beating fiercely on their drums in the hope of receiving a few cowries, kola nuts, or at least some beer.

326 306 The smiths (saba), by which is meant those who work with iron, extract the metal from the ore and make it into hoes and hatchets. They sometimes work with wood, as in other parts of the Sudan, but usually this industry is carried out by members of another guild. The jewellers make bracelets, file teeth, repair worn hoes, etc. They are not smiths, properly speaking, and anyone may exercise their trade.

767 The undertakers (lada) offer gifts to the spirits of the deceased on the day of death or its anniversary (koure). They also lay the corpse in the grave, and if death was due to illness, it is impossible to proceed with the burial without them. But anyone may dig the grave and carry the corpse. We shall discuss the undertakers again when funerals are described.

Chapter 2. The Family

596 The structure of the Roman family and the power granted to the paterfamilias, its very foundation, have been greatly and justly admired. Something like the paterfamilias is to be found among the Mossi. Would that we also found the Roman matron! As we have seen above, every Mossi is subject to the Moro Naba, a province chief, a canton chief, and a village chief. He is also subject in a more immediate sense to the head of his family, and he can do nothing without his consent. If he wishes to marry, he consults the family head, in whose household his bride will lodge when she arrives in the village. On the other hand, the man who wishes to give his daughter in marriage never does so without consulting his family head, at whose house the girl will stay before she goes to live with her husband.

[551] The family is thus very tightly organized among the Mossi. Each family has a name which is seldom used; if one of its members was ever naba, the name derives from that of the first naba. Members of [582 the same family may not intermarry, and usually they all have the 784] same kisgou (prohibition), whether the term designates a totem, a taboo, or something else altogether. The head of the family is its oldest member. Upon his death, the authority is transferred not to his

763 old man passes away. Suddenly, a shrill and lugubrious cry uttered by the first wife pierces the air and announces to everyone that a soul has just left its body and appeared before God. All the women rally to this call, and for a few minutes the most plaintive laments fill the dead man's soukala.

764 767 Silence is soon restored. One of the family members fetches the undertaker, lada, without whom it is impossible to proceed with the burial. Meanwhile, one of the séko which enclose the inner courtyard is torn off to permit the soul to get through and leave the living in peace. An old woman and the dead man's children proceed to lay out the corpse, using only their left hand. The body is washed with warm water and vigorously soaped, then annointed with karite butter. The head is shaved and the hair buried, unless the shaving was done before the dying man breathed his last, in which case the hair is tossed to the wind. When the corpse has been thoroughly washed, the undertaker softens the joints of the neck, arms, and legs so the body will slide more easily into the pit; then he lays out the body in the hut of the first wife if she is still alive, otherwise in the hut of the dead man.

764 The corpse is laid out on a mat, on its side in the position of a sleeping man, with arms and legs folded, and covered with a white blanket. As soon as the body is laid out, lugubrious cries are heard once more, and the men and youths go to dig the pit while the women remain sitting in the courtyard and watch the corpse. Women friends and neighbors prepare food for the family which has been visited by death.

The grave is usually dug in the family field, where the ancestors already rest. The villages have no common graveyards; /69/ each family has its own. Nevertheless, the vicinity of a sacred grove is sometimes used as a cemetery. To be buried away from one's relatives is a great misfortune, and one who dies far from his village strongly desires that his body be returned there; the family always fulfills this last wish if at all possible. Otherwise, the dead person is buried along the road that leads to his village. In order to rest near his ancestors in his last sleep, a native who feels that his strength is ebbing may build his huts in the middle of the bush, at the place where the village of his ancestors used to stand. An old man esteemed and loved by his family is buried in front of the soukala, and this is the rule for nabas.

The undertaker prescribes the shape and size of the grave, but anyone may dig it. Mossi graves consist of a circular pit about 1.50

769 for the koure, which for lack of a better term we have called an anniversary, although the festivities may be held a few days after the burial if everything is ready.

769 The koure is always celebrated on Sunday. The kourita, the eldest son, or the head of the family first sets a date, but this is not the real 767 date. A few days later he discloses the true day to everyone. Relatives and friends gather on Saturday for a gala family dinner of meat, salt, beer, and sarabo. Sunday at daybreak the women wail, weep, and shriek. At dawn the members of the deceased person's family shave their heads, mark themselves with stripes of ashes, and don mourning clothes, exactly as they did on the day of the death. Around noon, each of the relatives and friends brings an animal as an offering to the deceased. The undertaker (lada) presents it. First he takes the sheep given by the eldest son and stands before the door of the hut in which the body was laid after death. Three times he offers the sheep by making it move forward and back, while saying: "Your son gives you a sheep. Take it and eat it with your whole family." Then he seizes the sheep and holds its jaws shut to prevent it from bleating. Helpers drag the sheep out of the inner courtyard and slit its throat. An old woman comes to catch the blood in a gourd. The meat is cooked separately, while the blood mixed with millet flour is cooked with the viscera, liver, lungs, and some salt. This is the semdle, of which all members of the family must partake. This is one of the customs to which the Mossi are most attached. While the oldest son's sheep is butchered and prepared, each of the children presents his victim to the undertaker, who offers it to the deceased as before. Then comes the turn of other relatives and friends.

When all the animals have been offered, the undertaker takes some beer from a jar which has stood in the sun and empties a gourdful onto the grave. The rest of the jar is his. The remainder of the day 769 is devoted to the slaughter of all the victims, which vary in number according to the wealth and fame of the deceased, to cooking them, eating them, and drinking. In the evening, one of the dead man's daughters takes a gourd full of water, places it on her head without a pad, and walks three times around her father's soukala, shrieking and weeping. All those present follow her and blend their wails with hers. She returns to the inner courtyard and pours the water from her gourd into the pot where the millet mush is cooking. If the head of the household had a dog, the animal is now killed and eaten. The whole night is spent in endless dances and games.

769 On Monday millet beer is prepared for Wednesday, and the dances and games continue, as they do on Tuesday. On this day all the wives of the dead man vanish, because they must not witness the ceremony of pounding the grave that will take place on the following day.

/75/ On Wednesday morning the whole family goes to the grave
769 with paddles, accompanied by drummers and the undertaker. The
767 women have brought water, and everyone pounds the earth over the grave, on top of which an earthen pot is left in the case of a woman, a stone in the case of a man. When the grave has been thoroughly pounded, the undertaker kills a chicken on the stone or pot and says: "Take the chicken from the grave, eat it with your family, and leave your children in peace." Then he takes a gourd of beer and pours it over the grave. The chicken is roasted and eaten, and the jar of beer is drunk on the spot. Everyone returns to the house of the deceased, and the games and dances are taken up with renewed vigor.

769 On Thursday the whole family goes to market and thanks the friends who have assisted at the festivities and who have helped them.

The funeral ceremonies are now over, and there will be no further ado about the deceased except once a year on the Day of the Dead.

Young men or girls who die childless also have a koure, usually on the same day as an old man or woman who died previously. If no one in the family has recently died, the children's koure is carried out without ceremonies. The father, mother, and younger siblings shave and build a small hut which represents the hut of the deceased, and this is where the chickens or sometimes a goat are offered to him. Millet beer, of course, is distributed to the relatives and friends who are present, but there is no dancing and no pounding of the grave.

Ostensibly the death of a naba is not known, and the poor man is
766 buried without ceremony. When his heirs have gathered all that is needed to give their father a funeral worthy of him, they have the news of his death spread everywhere on a Saturday morning. A dummy built with the dead man's clothes is laid in the hut of his first wife or in his own hut, and all the ceremonies are carried out Saturday night as they would be for any other important burial. The dummy is carried like a corpse; the soil covering the pit is disturbed slightly, and the clothes are buried there. On the following day, Sunday, all
769 the koure ceremonies are held, and their solemnity is proportional to the naba's power.

Thus everyone has his koure, with the exception of nursing children, who will soon return, and of suicides.

562 584 When the girl reaches marriageable age, she usually finds herself with a husband who is sometimes older than her father and whom she cannot possibly love. She must go to him, however, since such is her father's will.

[173] [173] The fiancé brings some gifts (cowries, chickens, millet 583] beer) and claims his wife. The girl is sent off to her husband's home with no ceremony being performed.

This second type of forced marriage has the parents' consent.

587 428 562 768 Marriage by inheritance. When the head of a household dies, the women, who are considered a part of his estate, are divided up just as is the rest of the property. They are apportioned to the sons of the deceased, or his brothers if the sons are not of marriageable age. However, unlike the procedure for a chief's estate, in which the wife is just a "thing," these wives may choose their husbands from among the members of the family.

This is semi-free marriage.

587 Besides the type of marriage which we shall later call "free marriage" -- a form which occurs very frequently since it includes the marriages of loose women who may have as many as nine husbands, only stopping at the last one because of old age -- there is also remarriage due to successive widowhoods. Some women are so [177] unlucky as to lose [174] a succession of husbands. They are finally avoided like the plague since they have the reputation of being cursed by the gods (Mossi, kombwinga; Bambara, térédiougou).

584 Marriage after a conventional proposal. When a young man wishes to ask for the hand of a young girl who is not yet engaged, he chooses as his go-between a person who is on good terms with the elders of the girl's village. If the response is favorable, the young man brings a chicken, a secco (dagnopinri) [coarse matting] to close the doorway, and some fagots. He goes back to his village and returns at intervals bearing sprouted millet or millet beer and a chicken for the head of the family. The latter at last tells the go-between: "Tell X... that we accept him as our son and that we shall try to give him satisfaction as soon as possible."

Some time later the young man returns once more with a chicken, sprouted millet, or beer for the elders of the village. He makes

428 custom which decrees that he likewise inherits all of his father's responsibilities as head of the family.

428 562 Do daughters and wives share in an estate? Daughters have no share in an estate although their brothers may give them trifling gifts.

Wives never inherit from their husbands. They can only benefit indirectly as the representatives of their young sons. On the contrary, since the wife is considered a piece of property, [259] she is actually a part of the estate to the same extent as the rest of the property left by the deceased.

428 Disposition of an unclaimed estate. Only the canton chief is qualified to inherit the property of a deceased person having no known relatives.

Rights and Obligations Governing Property in the Family

421 Property is owned individually. Individual property is strictly a private matter. The head of the family has no rights over property acquired individually by the women and children or by other relatives under his rule. They may dispose of their possessions as they see fit. A mother may do some trading to provide savings for her children. The head of the family may not use such property under any circumstances without the consent of the true owner.

428 593 Does a husband inherit from his wife? A husband has no right to his wife's property. He cannot even claim it if she dies childless, since in that case it goes to her own relatives (brothers or sisters) or, failing that, to their children.

428 Aside from their rights in their father's estate, children inherit their mother's property.

[426] When the head of a family borrows cowries from [260] a member of his compound, he must repay the loan with a given time. His own property is inalienably his as long as he lives, and then it makes up his estate, along with his wives.

768 428 Disposition of a house after death. When the head of a compound dies, the establishment is not destroyed. It automatically passes to the heirs, that is, to his sons or, if he has no legitimate

768 428 heirs, to his brothers. If the deceased was the keeper and guardian of the family fetish, it is taken to the home of his eldest brother or to a person designated by custom.

We have seen, however, that the Moaga will not live in a home without consulting a soothsayer. Therefore, if the spirits are not favorable to the heir, the home is turned over to the other sons or to the brothers of the deceased. Besides, in many cases the eldest son is already married and the head of a family and already has his own home. He then lodges his dakompa (young unmarried brothers) or one of his uncles in his father's home.

428 Acceptance or repudiation of inheritances. Consequences. To accept and receive an inheritance involves the obligation to 426 pay the debts and claims against it. Among the Mossi, an inheri- 672 tance is never refused since a refusal does not free one from the obligation to pay the debts of the deceased. Relatives always collaborate, not because of any feeling for common property -- which [261] does not exist, as we have seen above -- but out of respect for the principle of collective responsibility which has been developed in the interests of public order. Creditors will naturally claim their due first from the legitimate heir, but if the estate cannot meet its obligations, all of the close relatives are jointly responsible.

428 The estate does not include any gifts made to members of the family by the deceased during his lifetime.

Wills. Among the Mossi, a will is always made orally.

In the presence of his relatives -- uncles and brothers -- and of his neighbors, who have been assembled for the occasion, the testator makes known his last wishes to his legitimate heir, who will have full rights as his testamentary successor. However, in the event that the will is intended to disinherit the legitimate heir and if for some reason or other he is not present, the testator will entrust the execution of his last wishes to the oldest member of the family present.

Disinheritance of the heir presumptive. In the presence of witnesses and under the conditions indicated above, the testator explains his reasons for disinheriting the heir presumptive. In the event that the reasons seem insufficient, the witnesses will seek

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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645 dom during the interregnum.[23] The latter task was especially suited to a prime minister, since the Mossi regarded the interregnum as the most difficult period in their political life. The Ouidi Naba's administrative tasks were considered so important that he never went to war and was theoretically immune from punishment or execution by the Mogho Naba. This immunity was necessary, because the Mogho Naba had the right to execute anyone who brought him unwelcome news, and often did so. Since the Ouidi Naba announced good news as well as bad, it would have been folly to subject him to this rule. Some reports in the French colonial archives state that the Mogho Naba was expected to follow the Ouidi Naba's advice at all times, and could not veto any of his actions. These reports add, moreover, that if a Ouidi Naba considered a Mogho Naba dangerous for the welfare of the country, he could rightfully compel the ruler to kill himself. According to Lambert, one Ouidi Naba known as Baba forced Mogho Naba Karfo (ca. 1800) to commit suicide. It appears that aside from waging a long and unpopular war against Naba Djighima of Lalle, this Mogho Naba had seized the riches of his wealthy subjects for distribution among the poor. Moreover, he allegedly dispensed justice without making much distinction between nobles and commoners, which so displeased the nobles that they encouraged the Ouidi Naba to put Karfo to death. Baba sent the sovereign a poisoned arrow and a message consisting of a single word: *ki* (die). Karfo allegedly committed suicide that very night.[24]

645 643 [203] [195] [762]

Thus, it appears that under certain conditions the prime minister could impeach his "all-powerful" sovereign. We cannot assume, however, that all prime ministers were sufficiently powerful to control the Mogho Naba. Many Mogho Nanamse limited their Ouidi Naba to merely giving advice on affairs of state and insisted that he concern himself solely with his own province.

The provinces administered by the five ministers were made up of smaller entities or districts. The districts in the provinces of the Ouidi Naba, the Larhalle Naba, and the Gounga Naba were ruled by the sons and other descendants of ancient Mogho Nanamse. The province controlled by the Kamsaogho Naba was more important. His districts were the wealthiest and among the most populous in the nation, and they brought the largest revenues to the Mogho Naba. The reason for this, of course, was that the Kamsaogho Naba was a eunuch and had no heirs; when he died, all his riches reverted to the Mogho Naba. The province controlled by the Baloum Naba was the most difficult to administer. Its districts were ruled by the sons of recent Mogho Nanamse who felt that as holders of the nam they were free to appropriate the goods of the population. The Baloum

634 635 645 [768]

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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631 because of this delinquency, the Mogho Naba might hesitate to come to
651 the aid of any of his vassals if a general war broke out. It is true that the
643 Mogho Naba did not aid the Yatenga ruler when the French arrived.
114 But whether this was because of his failure to pay taxes, or because the
[648] French conquest of the Yatenga coincided with a civil war there, we shall
[669] probably never know. We do know that many of the Mogho Naba's vassals came to his aid when the French finally arrived at Ouagadougou. It is my opinion that the gifts exchanged between Yatenga and Ouagadougou were not "tributary," but were more in the nature of tokens of friendship between two peers.

643 The Mogho Naba and his provincial ministers also received revenue as
645 a function of their judicial roles. The nature and disposition of the fines
692 levied against legal offenders were discussed in Chapter V. The Mogho
651 Naba's fees came in the form of the traditional gifts the litigants gave him
[431] even before their cases were tried. These gifts were never regarded as bribes, for this would have contradicted the Mossi axiom that "the truth is at Ouagadougou."

643 The Mogho Naba inherited all the property of the Kamsaogho Naba,
651 and claimed all the property of district chiefs who died without close rela-
634 tives. He also received inheritance taxes (fado) from the estates of deceased
768 district chiefs. In collecting the fado, the Mogho Naba first retained the
[428] horse on which the messenger came to announce the chief's death. He reciprocated by sending envoys with cowries and animals to be offered to their common ancestors at the chief's funeral. After the funeral, the envoys claimed the dead chief's quiver of arrows to take to Ouagadougou for deposit with those of other dead chiefs. Then they demanded the fado, and jestingly told the heirs that the Mogho Naba would be satisfied with nothing less than "a thousand of everything" (*tusri bumbu fa*) the deceased had possessed: wives, slaves, horses, cows, goats, chickens, articles of clothing, and so on. The heirs pleaded poverty and jokingly gave the envoys a few old and sickly animals, old chickens, tattered pieces of clothing, etc. Eventually, they handed out the fado, which usually consisted of livestock, clothing, food, weapons, jewelry, cowries, and even slaves. Lastly, they gave the envoys the chief's ceremonial horse and presents for themselves.

643 The Mogho Naba and his ministers collected a considerable amount of
645 revenue from the traders who visited Ouagadougou and the larger market
651 towns and village markets throughout the kingdom.[8] The Mossi (especially
439 the assimilated Yarse) were good traders, and they benefited from their country's strategic location between the Sahara and the forest regions.
[487] According to Barth, some six caravan routes crossed the country, linking

796 that day there is dam (beer) in every house and abundant meat,
527 and the inhabitants of nearby villages come to the festivities.

Here we shall describe only the two major festivals, tinsé and basgha.

Tinsé (Mossi Ritual Festival), or Naba Oubri Ma Kouré
(The Funeral of Naba Oubri's Mother)

796 Origin. Naba Oubri, son of Zoungrana and [147] founder of
the Ouagadougou dynasty, gave his mother a very impressive
● 769 kouré (funeral). The kouré took on the appearance of a great festival because of the large number of animals sacrificed, the generous supply of food, and the great quantity of beer (dam) prepared. Since Oubri was very powerful, he ordered that the anniversary of his mother's funeral should be celebrated every year, even after his death. His mother was Pogh'toe Hinga (literally, "bearded woman").

For this reason and also to obtain health for his people and abundant rain for their crops, the Mogho Naba still quite regularly celebrates this annual festival known as tinsé (from tinga "earth"). There is no set date for it; it is celebrated whenever possible, usually after the harvest.

Preparatory sacrifices. Before setting the date for the tinsé,
796 the Mogho Naba has livestock (cows, sheep) and roosters killed
769 on the tombs of his predecessors.
782 According to precedence, the sacrifices begin with Naba Zoungrana, Oubri's father, whose tomb is at Komtoega in the circle of Tenkodogo. The Mogho Naba sends a cow to the Loumbi-Raogo Naba to be sacrificed on the tomb of Naba Oubri. Oubriyaogo Naba (the guardian of Oubri's tomb) has the duty of sacrificing the animal.

The other animals are sacrificed by the Ouagadougou Naba, representing the family of the Ninissi (first [148] inhabitants of the country). He is accompanied by the eunuchs who are the guardians of the tombs (yad'nanamsé).

In order to honor emperors whose tombs are in various parts of the colony, representatives of the Mogho Naba are sent out with

796 sacrificial animals, and they are required to celebrate the festi-
769 val in these villages before returning to Ouagadougou.
782 In the old days the animals destined to be sacrificed were captured in the cantons by horsemen assigned to that duty. Today, however, the Mogho Naba requests his vassals to supply them.

It should be noted that the following Peulh chiefs provide cattle of their own volition and without any compulsion: Komtam Silmanaba, Gombogo Silminaba, Kourgou Silminaba, and Barkoundba Silminaba.

796 Setting the date for the ceremony. A week after the sacrifices
769 the emperor summons the Tansoba (war minister) or, if he cannot appear (sickness or some other chance reason), the Konkosé Naba. This personage must reply to the summons on the day he receives it.

796 The king then assembles his principal ministers and sets the
769 date for the celebration of the tinsé, twenty or twenty-one days
211 ahead. The Mogho Naba hands the Tansoba several knotted ropes (yoda) which are to be distributed by him to the following chiefs: [149] Sapone Naba, Tuili Naba, and Loumbila Naba.

The last-named chief hands his rope over to the Dapelgo Naba and to the Méguet Naba.

There are as many knots in the rope as there are days remaining until the festival.

As soon as the Tansoba has handed over the ropes, he must immediately return to his village.

The persons who have received the ropes are required to transmit them to the kombemba (plural of kombéré, canton chief) who untie a knot each day.

796 Celebration of the festival. Early on the day of the ceremony,
769 a Friday (arzouma), the ministers and other court officials present themselves before the king to wish him welcome (tabo).

The Mogho Naba presents a loaf of salt (yamss'néré, literally
796 "salt millstone") which is to be divided among the following digni-
769 taries: Ouidi Naba, Larrhallé Naba, Gounga Naba, Kamsaongho
263 Naba, Bougretenga Naba, Benga Naba, Poé Naba, Tampouï Naba, Bend'Naba, and their followers.

Half of a loaf of salt is also offered to the Baloum Naba, Dapoya Naba, Samandé Naba, and Wedranga Naba.

796 769 263 The latter reserve a small share for the Zussoba [150] (chief eunuch) and the Bilbalsé (inhabitants of Bilbalogo, the section of the Baloum Naba).

796 769 The next morning, Saturday, the king has a large number of cattle slaughtered and many sagbo cakes prepared. The latter are piled one on top of another to form tahinsé (mountains) in the courtyard where the daily audiences are held.

On these mountains of sagbo are placed whole quarters of sheep. Many bowls of cooked rice are put in rows beside the millet cakes.

The Larrhallé Naba, the second minister who is in command of the Samandé (the court), stands before one of the mountains of sagbo, takes a cake which he divides into three parts, and tosses them at random in different directions in the courtyard. Thus he offers food to the invisible spirits and to the manes of previous ministers who once frequented the place. During this ceremony he utters some words which may be translated as follows: "Take this sagbo and bring peace and happiness to the emperor and to his people."

After this, the Larrhallé Naba returns to his kouga (mound of stones) to make way for the Gand'Naba. The latter, too, picks up a cake and also the foot of a cow. Then the king's bodyguard, the followers of the ministers, the Bilbalssé, and the emperor's servitors make a dash for the mountains of sagbo and the rice, and there is a general scramble to get the biggest piece. It goes without saying that they come out of the fray covered with sauce, and half of the food is spilled on the ground. [151]

At this point, the ministers and their escorts depart.

Each ikanda (head of a family) calls the family elder (the patriarch) and gives him a rooster and a goat (lacking a sheep) to be sacrificed to the manes of his ancestors. The old man pronounces the following words: "Youmd yelle n'ta, ta zagla yel t'm konfo, tif reg kouin gnimassem, la sounogo, ta pam kodo, la rogom (accept these offerings on the part of X... and grant him health, happiness, and prosperity. Protect his family and grant him good harvests and many children.

796 769 263 776 It is interesting to note that the meat, whether boiled or roasted, is never seasoned with red pepper (tiparé), for the tinsé [spirits]

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would visit their anger upon those who were guilty of such an indiscretion by making them blind or at least causing them severe eye trouble in later years.

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[261]

Everyone celebrates the tinsé at home by preparing all sorts of food (sagbo, rice, corn, beans, etc.). The people stuff themselves to the point of indigestion.

Thirty days after the anniversary celebration of the funeral of Oubri's mother, the Tansoba (war minister) returns to the emperor the rope used for the date of the tinsé.

Around the fortieth day, that is, a week after the departure of the Tansoba, the Loumbila Naba comes to salute the emperor. The latter gives him a cow to be slaughtered at Widin (section of the Ouidi Naba).

A week after the departure of the Loumbila Naba, [152] the Guilingou Tengsoba pays a visit to the Mogho Naba. We have already seen that it was an ancestor of this Tengsoba who asked Naba Zoungrana to send his son, Oubri, to administer the country and to help him drive out the Habé who today live by the cliffs of Bandiagara (Sudan). The Mogho Naba is obligated to give a cow and some salt to this Tengsoba.

Then comes the turn of the Saponé Naba (nayrdin, representative of Naba Kouda) who, with his followers, receives a cow and some salt. Finally, for Bonsa Naba, Kamsaonguin Tengsoba, and Pazani Tengsoba, the Mogho Naba has a sheep killed which is served with many plates of sagbo.

It should be noted that when the Tangsob-ramba appear before the emperor they put down their laya (magic axes) and are at once brought white roosters which they are expected to kill in the timpelem (courtyard).

Thus, it is apparent that this festival has no particularly remarkable features. Its sole aim is to make peace between the living and the dead and to give everyone a chance to eat well.

The Basgha of the Mogho Naba, or the Nights the Emperor M'ba (Rarengma) Sleeps Away from Home

(May my father not arrive before I do.)

769 The basgha. Before making use of his newly harvested crops, the Moaga ikanda (married man, head of a family) is obligated to
782 offer this new produce to his ancestors. Therefore, he has dam
796 (dolo, millet beer) prepared with the large red [153] millet, already sprouted, and cakes made with the millet or the sorghum. He kills chickens and a goat, or a ram, and invites his neighbors and relatives to the feast. He is convinced that the manes of his ancestors share the feast.

The emperor of the Mossi is no exception to this rule. The basgha of the Mogho Naba is celebrated with more pomp, and we shall describe it briefly below.

It should first be noted that there is no particular date set by custom for the basgha, either for the Mogho Naba or for the ordinary Moaga. Everyone celebrates it whenever he can after the harvest.

491 The sotasgo (completion of the road). Before the French came
653 and the administration took over road building, each minister had a road or, more accurately, a broad path which led straight to the king's courtyard and which had to be maintained by the minister. Since everyone is busy in the fields during the winter months, it is easily understandable that the roads are somewhat neglected during that season. When the Mogho Naba decides to put everything to rights with his ancestors, he notifies the Ouidi Naba, his first minister, who sends word to the other ministers that they must clear their soyan (from soré, "path"). The ministers order the inhabitants of their respective sections to do the work, but put off completing the last stretch leading into the courtyard, samandé, [154] until the date for sotasgo is known.

653 Sotasgo takes place on a Saturday.

The Ouidi Naba makes a large pile of several loads of millet (kaguindi) and chooses about forty strong young men to carry it into the court of the king. His colleagues (Larrhallé Naba, Gounga

653 Naba, and Baloum Naba) do the same thing. (We have seen in an earlier chapter, under "Payments to the Mogho Naba" that the millet brought by the ministers and vassals makes up the food supply for the emperor and his wives; the harvest from his own fields is used to feed foreigners and to make beer for the basgha.)

[533] In order to arouse the young men to greater efforts, drummers accompany them, playing "pang'rog'kamga, kamba komsomba (these young men were born of strength; they are worthy of their parents)."

Loads of millet are presented to the emperor during his first audience (wend'pous yan), after the ministers have paid their respects. The Soré Naba (literally, "chief of the path"), taking his place before the Mogho Naba, but with his back to him, orders the young men by the sound of drums to finish clearing the roads of the naba up to the king's courtyard. Since the work was virtually completed, this is a mere formality.

The ministers' followers and the bearers who brought in the millet, equipped with axes, daba, and even sticks, pretend to work energetically. They gesticulate, cry out, and [155] sing. The Soré Naba then goes under a shelter reserved for him, and the young men join him there.

796 The Ouidi Naba, the Larrhallé Naba, the Gounga Naba, and the
769 Kamsaoug' Naba salute the emperor, and it is only then that the latter sets the date for the celebration of his basgha.

Once the date is set, the bodyguards of the Mogho Nabo (samand'kamba), whose chiefs are Samandé and Rakogdo, are ordered to start at once to repairing the shelters in the courtyard where the daily audiences are held.

Sleeping away from home. Three days before the Feast of the Dead and as soon as he has given his pugtiéma (first wife) the sprouted millet for making dam (beer), the Mogho Naba becomes uneasy. This is because the kimsé (manes of his ancestors) are present in the house. He must find more peaceful lodgings.

On Wednesday evening, therefore, he goes to the home of the Samand'Naba of Kamsaoghin. He spends the night there, but at cockcrow the following morning he returns to his home where he spends the day. That night he goes to Gounghin and spends the night in a house near the home of the Gounga Naba, his third minister.

196 Friday night he stays at the home of Bangr'Naba Sambo. Very early
●769 Saturday morning he returns home in time to be present when the Bend'Naba (chief of the drummers) comes to wish him a happy new year and a long life and to pray that Wenam (God) will spare him to [156] offer many more bascé (plural of basgha) in honor of his predecessors.

[431] It goes without saying that during the nights spent away from home the emperor receives many visitors and substantial gifts. The persons at whose homes he spends the night naturally give him the warmest possible welcome.

Preparatory sacrifices. These are performed inside the house of the Mogho Naba, and the details are known only to the following four persons: Mogho Naba, Emperor of the Mossi; Baloum Naba, chief steward and chief of pages; Zussoba Kassanga, chief eunuch and guardian of the harem; the pugtiéma, the first wife of the Mogho Naba.

196 It is known that animals are sacrificed, with the Mogho Naba
769 himself holding the victim and pronouncing the sacramental words.
782 Perhaps there is also worship of certain sacred fetishes. In any event, we are convinced that there is nothing involved in the ceremony which is contrary to the principles of French civilization since there is no human sacrifice. We should have liked very much to describe these ancient practices, but the secret has been well kept.

196 Celebration of basgha. As soon as the Mogho Naba appears in
769 front of the zango (antechamber), the Bend' Naba beats a drum while
533 calling the names of deceased naba, beginning with Naba Oubri, the founder of the Ouagadougou dynasty. [157]

As soon as the Bend'Naba stops playing, he and his followers are served sagbo (millet cakes), moul' (rice), dam (millet beer), and nemdo (meat).

196 Likewise, the ministers and other court officials who come to
769 greet tabo (the new year) are given dam, sagbo, rice, and meat by
[554] the Mogho Naba. The food is distributed to the dignitaries in the order of precedence, and the rest is reserved for the Bilbalessé and other followers of the ministers.

About eight-thirty, the ministers and court officials say
[516] wennatassé, "God be with us," which means good bye, and then they return home.

169 they return to their homes.

196 The Bend'Naba and other drummers remain in the courtyard until the Sogon' kassanga (chief eunuch) bring to them, on behalf
533 of the emperor, the sum of 10,000 cowries and some beer. In the old days a young captive, seated amidst the cowries, accompanied these gifts. The messengers say to the drummers: "Nab'yet b'wa póustabo (the king sends us to give you these gifts on the occasion of his basgha)."

The chief of the drummers pours a drink for the Zussoba and orders his followers to play together "Tompaongo, Wend'kaouss'Naba nioré, Wenna wilig'vinré" (literally, "We thank the king for his gifts. May God give the Mogho Naba long life and allow us to come back to play here next year").

Before sending them away, the Mogho Naba is obligated to give a karfo (black robe [158] imported by the Haoussa) to the Bend' Naba and a robe to the Loun Naba (chief of the luinsé). Water with flour in it is likewise brought to the Bend'Naba, and he scatters it about the courtyard. The emperor is required by custom to walk upon this water of gnimassem (of good health) as he goes back to his apartments.

When all these formalities have been completed, the Bend'Naba, accompanied by his bards, takes his leave. The festival is over. On the days following, the drummers call on the ministers and
[431] the other court dignitaries and are given many gifts (cowries and livestock).

All of these gifts are retained by the Bend'Naba or by someone chosen by him, and they are distributed later, with due regard for the hierarchy existing among the griot. The share of the older men is always greater than that accorded to the younger ones. [159]

Chapter 10

The Wives of the Naba. The sogoné. The Pogsiouré

Naba Warga and the Origin of the Sogoné

173 Naba Warga was constantly at war with the Riziam Naba, who
644 was called Mamzi (which means "I myself do not know"). He had
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622 1. Ti'douda béleum villi n'pam n'dou. Those who wish to
539 climb a tree seize the branches for support. /21/

2. Gigemdé sen touka séolro, wenniginamma, walpélronamma, nonga morbo, la'b zuéta gemdé. The lion digs up the salty earth (good to eat); the buffalo and koba /a kind of horse antelope/ like to eat it, but fear the lion. (The enemies of the Saman'Naba would like to take his place, but fear the naba.)

3. Kong'panga, bar'bala. Those who lack strength remain servants.

645 The appointment of the high ministers involves only a few gifts,
636 offered during the festive days which last from the death of the minister to the nomination of his successor. The eldest son usually inherits the position, but the province chief may designate anyone he pleases.

636 Upon the death of the naba of Koupéla, a province chief, the ministers hold a council and decide among themselves who is to be his successor. The eldest son is nearly always chosen. Before the name of the man selected is announced, the head of the village section that bears the name Koupéla notifies the canton chiefs, who gather in the village of Koupéla. When everyone has arrived, the Tabrana /sic/ proclaims the name of the man chosen, and they all proceed to Bélousa to disclose their choice to the naba and to request his investiture. The naba of Bélousa usually accepts the man thus formally designated. If there is disagreement, or if he himself would prefer a different choice, he notifies the Moro Naba accordingly and indicates his own preferences; when his messenger returns, he proclaims the appointment, and everyone submits to his will. After all, he "has the strength." As badges of investiture, the naba of Bélousa presents the chosen man with a cap, a pair of shoes, and a scepter. The new naba still may not wear the cap, put on the shoes, or hold the scepter. He must proceed first to the grave of the ancestor of the
[769] people, Naba Kourita, where he offers sacrifices, especially that of a cow. The festivities last for seven days, in the course of which millet beer flows freely and cattle is slaughtered in large numbers. In the course of these festivities the head of the chosen man is shaved, and he receives from the messengers of the naba of Bélousa the cap, shoes, and scepter; only then does he truly become a naba, with the right to

766 Suicides are buried like our dogs; here, all dogs are eaten. Lepers
[761] are buried at night without festivities. Accidental death, whether
[262] from a fall, snake bite, or any other cause, is attributed to an evil spirit who must not be irked by granting funerary honors to its victim, or else it would return and kill another member of the family. This is why those who die of an accident are buried without ceremonies and without undertakers. Their heads are not shaved, because God has called them with their hair on, as the Mossi say. A pit is dug, they
769 are buried, and that is all. They have no one to represent them; to the anniversary of their death, the koure, they have no kourita.

Every Mossi who dies of illness, be it man, woman, child, or naba, survives in the person of the kourita. In the case of a married man, the kourita or koutoarsa (who imitates the deceased) is a woman of the dead person's family, usually one of the wives of one of his younger brothers, someone who bears a certain resemblance to the deceased. She is chosen by the family, and sometimes designated by the dying person. She wears the clothes of the deceased, his shirt, his blanket, his hat, his shoes, his bracelets, and his rings; she wears his belt and knives, walks with his staff, his hoe, his dore, and bears his spear, blade pointing toward the ground. She walks like the person she represents. She must imitate him in every way and keep his presence alive in the household. If the deceased was usually accompanied by a /73/ child bearing his satchel, the kourita is followed by the same child bearing the same satchel, but turned inside out. If the deceased was a leper and had no fingers, she pretends not to have any; if he liked to laugh, she laughs; if he was peevish and quarreled with everyone, she maintains a constant state of anger. The children of the deceased call her their father; the wives call her their husband and prepare her millet mush. If the dead man was a naba, she is called naba; if he was not, she is called by the name of the deceased.

769 She acts in this manner until the day of koure. On that day she
428 shaves her head like the other members of the family, and her role ends there. She retains the name kourita, however, and on the day when the inheritance is distributed, she receives a garment in exchange for the clothes of the deceased. If the heir is generous, if the inheritance allows it, she is given some livestock, sometimes a child. It is said that the kourita dies sooner than if she had not played this role, because the ancestral spirits will come and fetch her. For this reason, the position is not in great demand.

769 In addition to this kourita, if the deceased was head of the house-
[184] hold, his oldest daughter, or in her absence, his granddaughter, occasionally plays a role and is also called kourita, but this custom is less widespread. Her mourning clothes are embellished with thin cords of red straw (bini) around the neck and wrists and above the elbow and at the ankles, 13 for a man and 14 for a woman. Around her head she wears cotton threads (pana) which hang down her back like a long tail, ending in a pompon. The first kourita, previously mentioned, sometimes wears these badges also. This second kourita actually has only one task, namely, to plant large millet where her father's huts stood. When the millet is ripe, she sets it aside to use for preparing millet beer on the day of the kouré. Sometimes her position is held for three years, and she cannot shave during this time. To offset this, it is she who brews the beer for the Day of the Dead (basra). At the end of three years, she shaves and takes up her usual way of life. No such kourita is provided for an old woman, since she was not the head of a household.

A mother is kourita for a child who dies before he marries. She wears at her ankle a thin cotton cord to which she adds a knot daily
[801] for the duration of mourning, 33 days for a boy, 44 days for a girl.

The Moro Naba has a kourita like other Mossi, but on the day of the kouré a young boy of his family is appointed to represent him for life. This kourita adopts the name of the dead naba, and all through the dry season he goes from canton to canton, as the true Moro Naba could not do in his lifetime. Everywhere he is greeted and entertained with great honors, he receives many gifts, and his men loot what they can. One place only is closed to him, Ouagadougou, the residence of his successor. If they were to meet, one of them would die within the year. At present there are among the Mossi two kourita of Moro Nabas: that of Naba Sanem, who welcomed Binger, and that of Naba Sigri, enthroned as a result of Voulet's conquest and deceased in 1905. Naba Wobro, deposed by our troops, has no kourita because he was
[643] no longer Moro Naba when he died; he had failed tradition by leaving Ouagadougou and thereby renounced his rights as a sovereign.

/74/ The first funeral is a temporary expedient; the human body decomposes quickly, and the burial has to be held before all the friends and relatives can be assembled. Also, death comes by surprise; there are not enough cowries, the animals have not been gathered in sufficient numbers, and the deceased must be granted the honors due his rank, he must be offered numerous victims. These are the reasons

769 for the koure, which for lack of a better term we have called an anniversary, although the festivities may be held a few days after the burial if everything is ready.

769 The koure is always celebrated on Sunday. The kourita, the eldest son, or the head of the family first sets a date, but this is not the real 767 date. A few days later he discloses the true day to everyone. Relatives and friends gather on Saturday for a gala family dinner of meat, salt, beer, and sarabo. Sunday at daybreak the women wail, weep, and shriek. At dawn the members of the deceased person's family shave their heads, mark themselves with stripes of ashes, and don mourning clothes, exactly as they did on the day of the death. Around noon, each of the relatives and friends brings an animal as an offering to the deceased. The undertaker (lada) presents it. First he takes the sheep given by the eldest son and stands before the door of the hut in which the body was laid after death. Three times he offers the sheep by making it move forward and back, while saying: "Your son gives you a sheep. Take it and eat it with your whole family." Then he seizes the sheep and holds its jaws shut to prevent it from bleating. Helpers drag the sheep out of the inner courtyard and slit its throat. An old woman comes to catch the blood in a gourd. The meat is cooked separately, while the blood mixed with millet flour is cooked with the viscera, liver, lungs, and some salt. This is the semdle, of which all members of the family must partake. This is one of the customs to which the Mossi are most attached. While the oldest son's sheep is butchered and prepared, each of the children presents his victim to the undertaker, who offers it to the deceased as before. Then comes the turn of other relatives and friends.

When all the animals have been offered, the undertaker takes some beer from a jar which has stood in the sun and empties a gourdful onto the grave. The rest of the jar is his. The remainder of the day 769 is devoted to the slaughter of all the victims, which vary in number according to the wealth and fame of the deceased, to cooking them, eating them, and drinking. In the evening, one of the dead man's daughters takes a gourd full of water, places it on her head without a pad, and walks three times around her father's soukala, shrieking and weeping. All those present follow her and blend their wails with hers. She returns to the inner courtyard and pours the water from her gourd into the pot where the millet mush is cooking. If the head of the household had a dog, the animal is now killed and eaten. The whole night is spent in endless dances and games.

769 On Monday millet beer is prepared for Wednesday, and the dances and games continue, as they do on Tuesday. On this day all the wives of the dead man vanish, because they must not witness the ceremony of pounding the grave that will take place on the following day.

/75/ On Wednesday morning the whole family goes to the grave
769 with paddles, accompanied by drummers and the undertaker. The
767 women have brought water, and everyone pounds the earth over the grave, on top of which an earthen pot is left in the case of a woman, a stone in the case of a man. When the grave has been thoroughly pounded, the undertaker kills a chicken on the stone or pot and says: "Take the chicken from the grave, eat it with your family, and leave your children in peace." Then he takes a gourd of beer and pours it over the grave. The chicken is roasted and eaten, and the jar of beer is drunk on the spot. Everyone returns to the house of the deceased, and the games and dances are taken up with renewed vigor.

769 On Thursday the whole family goes to market and thanks the friends who have assisted at the festivities and who have helped them.

The funeral ceremonies are now over, and there will be no further ado about the deceased except once a year on the Day of the Dead.

Young men or girls who die childless also have a koure, usually on the same day as an old man or woman who died previously. If no one in the family has recently died, the children's koure is carried out without ceremonies. The father, mother, and younger siblings shave and build a small hut which represents the hut of the deceased, and this is where the chickens or sometimes a goat are offered to him. Millet beer, of course, is distributed to the relatives and friends who are present, but there is no dancing and no pounding of the grave.

Ostensibly the death of a naba is not known, and the poor man is
766 buried without ceremony. When his heirs have gathered all that is needed to give their father a funeral worthy of him, they have the news of his death spread everywhere on a Saturday morning. A dummy built with the dead man's clothes is laid in the hut of his first wife or in his own hut, and all the ceremonies are carried out Saturday night as they would be for any other important burial. The dummy is carried like a corpse; the soil covering the pit is disturbed slightly, and the clothes are buried there. On the following day, Sunday, all
769 the koure ceremonies are held, and their solemnity is proportional to the naba's power.

Thus everyone has his koure, with the exception of nursing children, who will soon return, and of suicides.

776 makes noise in the bush under certain leafy trees, his cheeks will swell
753 out. The tisé talk, even during the day. It is their voices which are heard when the wind stirs the leaves. We had /81/ papaw seeds planted all around our dwelling. They had sprouted and grown well; the fruit was already ripening. One morning, no papaw trees were left in
[824] Koupéla! The naba had decreed that these were talking trees, that they would cause illness to those who had them in their soukala ... and the papaws had been cut down!

776 Fortunately, it is possible to protect oneself against the tisé. First,
782 those trees which shelter them may be felled, and the spirits will move elsewhere. Some very beautiful trees vanish thus from the villages. The tisé may also be appeased with sacrifices. Does this result in tree cult, dendrolatry? Indeed not! The Mossi clearly make the distinction between the tree and the spirit that inhabits it, and they sacrifice to the spirit. Sometimes also, a tree was planted on the
[769] grave of the elder who founded the village, and sacrifices are made to the ancestral spirit at the foot of the tree. Finally, there are fetishes more powerful than the tisé. It is enough to know which roots and barks the tisé do not like, to steep them in water, and to place the pot at the door of the hut. When a tiga sees this fetish, he invariably runs away. Some Peul are said to have the power to distinguish between those trees where spirits dwell and those where they do not, and to kill the former trees merely by rubbing them with butter! This must be done in a special way.

776 The kikirsi are imps, red or black all over, and only a few centi-
754 meters high. Their body has the same shape as ours, but it is much nimbler and more tenuous—something ethereal and impalpable that only the sorcerers can discern. The latter call them with a low whistle or by shaking a peculiarly shaped gourd that looks like a handle
[534] ending in a sphere. This gourd is dried without being opened, and the seeds gather in the sphere. The sorcerer makes noise by shaking this instrument, and the kikirsi flock to him singing.

776 There are good and evil kikirsi, and the good ones only do evil when forced to do so; for instance, when someone puts pepper in their sauce. They abhor pepper but they love honey, and every good housewife who wishes to preserve her honey covers it carefully with pepper to prevent the kikirsi from eating it. They are inordinately fond of sesame, and they dote on millet cakes (samsa); every woman who makes millet cakes offers them a few. People who eat samsa while walking are careful to drop a few crumbs to the ground. On the

775 it aside to return it to the soul when it leaves the body. From this
[735] comes the thank-you wish, "May God repay you!" If the deceased led an evil life, if he was quarrelsome or a thief, if he killed, he is condemned to walk over live coals to reach God, or if he is a murderer, he may come to God only after he has drunk all the blood he has shed, which God has saved for this purpose. The major offenders are detained by the treetops and never reach the place of souls. It must be said, however, that most Mossi take little heed of the penalties which may await them in the other life or deny their existence altogether.

The souls go to Bourtenga, the "gathering place of the souls," according to the etymology of the word, a place of indeterminate geographical location, or they go to Pilimpikou, a mountain located in Kipirsi country. Their sole occupation over there is to go to market
775 at night, and this is why on the day of burial the deceased is given
764 cowries so that he may buy millet beer and clothes in order not to look like a tramp.

The souls are white but otherwise they look like men, although they are nimbler and can move effortlessly and with great rapidity
[264] from one place to another. They do everything upside down; they eat with the left hand and do with it all the things we do with the right, and this is why the corpse is washed with the left hand. They wear their clothes inside out, with the pocket of the breechcloth facing in; they carry the spears iron downward, and they walk backwards because their eyes are placed behind their head. This is why the kourita who represents the deceased wears everything inside out.

775 The souls of the animals sacrificed to him, chickens, sheep, goats,
769 beeves, etc., go to join the deceased, who can thus feast, invite friends, and gather kin together, for people are reunited up there. Although nabas are no longer such, those who were subject to them on earth recreate their court. It is said that parents come to fetch their children, /87/ nabas their pages and favorite wives, and friends their friends, unless the survivors treat them very well and provide them with lots of food.

Indeed, the souls of the dead come back to earth to receive the gifts which are offered to them, to drink the blood of the victims sacrificed in their honor and the millet beer prepared for them on the annual Day of the Dead (basra). This is why no Mossi faithful to tradition ever drinks millet beer without first pouring a little on the

775 ground; he also pours what is left at the bottom of the gourd, so the
769 souls will rejoice with him. It is considered a great honor when a
[554] naba tells an elder to grasp one side of the gourd and to pour along with him.

775 One must not laugh about the souls of the deceased and their visits
761 to earth. If you doubt their return, listen to what an old naba once told me. "One day, I had gone to visit a naba, my friend and neighbor. We had arranged to meet at his house with another neighboring chief. He gave us a very nice welcome, and the day was most pleasant. We were resting at night in the shelter of his soukala when we were suddenly awakened by the sound of harness bells and horses galloping. On the following day we left our host. No sooner had we left than he took ill. A week later he died. The souls had come to fetch him. Oh! Father, do not laugh about the souls of the deceased!" And the good old man trembled with emotion. This is what our Mossi believe. They firmly believe in all these ghost stories.

775 Are the souls reincarnated? Small children who die before the age of reason are said to return in the person of the first child borne by their mother. This is why, especially if the mother has lost several
[304] children in a row, the baby is marked at birth with distinctive signs, particularly tattooings on the belly and lower back; sometimes, if he
[766] dies, a piece of his ear is cut off, or a toe or finger joint broken. It is said that the child born next will bear the same marks, but no living example of this could be cited. Often, the mother leaves the hut where her baby died. An old woman spreads ashes before the door in the evening, and if small footprints are found in the morning, it is a sign that the child came back and wishes to return to his mother's bosom.

Rebirth is not granted to anyone other than young children, not even to young unmarried people. They remain in the place of the souls for years on end, the number of which cannot be ascertained, and no distinction is made between the rich and the poor, the powerful and their subjects.

775 The soul of suicides, cursed in death, is not entitled as a rule to
762 funeral ceremonies. It wanders through the world without harming anyone, but unable to find rest.

577 Morality is reduced to its simplest expression. Whatever harms
673 other people is bad. Think your own intimate thoughts and desire anything you like; as long as you do no harm to your fellow man, no fault has been committed. Fornication and adultery are faults only

789 Blessings and curses are also used. Should they be classed with the cult, or with magic? One way or the other, there are natives who have the power to kill anyone merely by saying a word. They can make the harvest wither, the cattle sicken. There are also some who can bless, make a trip propitious, an undertaking successful. If you
752 are wounded, go to them. They will put around the wounded part of
755 your body a greasy rope with three or four knots according to your sex;
801 there will be no swelling, and the wound will heal quickly.

782 Such are the major sacrifices and the practices of the cult. The
769 sacrifices offered to the spirits of the dead on the day of burial or on
796 the day of kouré have not been mentioned, because the animals offered are not properly speaking sacrificed (kou mando) but offered, presented, fabré. We shall now mention the sacrifices made on the Day of the Dead.

The Koupéla Mossi have two major feast days: the Day of the Dead or basra, and the Moslem sheep celebration called kibsa. Both are intimate family affairs.

Basra is the feast of the dead. On that day every family head must offer sacrifices to his ancestral spirits, and he alone may sacrifice upon the grave. Even if a member of the family has become powerful and wealthy, he will not offer the sacrifice which devolves by right to the family head. All members of the family who wish to offer a sacrifice on the ancestral grave must, therefore, go to their elder on that day. Anyone may sacrifice to the kikirsi and tangandé, and almost everyone does at this time. It is mainly on this occasion that little children may be seen gravely sacrificing their chicken to their kikirsi and to the tangandé; each makes it a point of honor to offer his own animal. Only chickens are sacrificed on that day.

Basra is not celebrated by every family on the same day. Some celebrate it before the province chief does, others after him, while most families do it on the same day he does.

/96/ The naba of Koupéla proceeds as described below, and the ceremonies are the same for his subjects with the sole difference that being less wealthy they cannot offer as many sacrifices. The basra is always celebrated by the naba on a Saturday. Already on Thursday he has taken non-fermented beer from the vats and poured it on the graves of his father and grandfather. He has also sacrificed a chicken on each of the tombs. Wherever an ancestor of the naba is buried, the guardian of the grave sacrifices a chicken. This is repeated on

782 Friday evening. The sacrifice is the usual one described earlier, but
769 the invoking formula is replaced with the following: "Soul of my
796 father, stretch out your hand and take this chicken which I offer you; grant me to reach next year in good health, and I will return with another chicken." The chicken killed on the grave is not roasted as in other sacrifices, but cooked in water.

On those days one must be careful not to sleep outside. The souls come to drink beer from the vats, and woe to those who lie in their way. They will kill them or at least make them seriously ill.

782 On the feast day itself, all those who have some obligation toward
769 the naba or toward the man who is holding the festivities, such as
796 those to whom he has given a wife or who have asked him for one,
431 come to greet him with a rooster and cowries if they did not come on the previous day. Many of his subjects, especially the canton chiefs, also come to offer their rooster and cowries. On the other hand, if an important visitor comes on that day, it is an elementary rule of civility to offer him a rooster.

782 Usually, on the very day of the festivities, no sacrifices are offered
769 on the graves. The victims are offered to the protective kikirsi of
796 the hut, of the inner courtyard, of the outer courtyard, of the whole soukala. The number of sacrificed chickens varies in proportion to the number of gifts. When the sacrifices are over, the naba assembles his people, and the beer is brought in and presented to him. He first pours a little on the ground as an offering to the ancestral spirits, then he drinks and distributes the ars among his people. This is not
[273] a good day to discuss important matters, because after noon everybody is more or less drunk.

On the following Monday and Wednesday, the naba proceeds at dawn with great pomp to two neighboring villages (Nakalbo and Sabré) to sacrifice a beef to the tangandé. Much feasting ensues there on those two days; the naba loses a beef /in each village/ but gains many chickens and a few thousand cowries. He also goes to the village of Toulgou on the day when basra is celebrated in that locality, because his family originated there.

527 The kibsa is the Moslem sheep feast, and it is celebrated forty days after the end of the great feast. All Mossi celebrate it in private; every family has brewed millet beer, and on that day millet mush is replaced with rice and meat. These festivities are even more intimate than the previous ones in the sense that they are held

754 accused of eating the souls of little children, and I have known some who boasted of possessing this power!

The tibo are a family of sorcerers. People are born tibo, and the village they inhabit is called Tibin. The naba of this village has the special faculty of discerning all sorts of things, especially whether someone has an enemy, merely by gazing into a gourd filled with water in which a certain charm has been placed. A chicken was previously sacrificed on the gourd. This naba, and he alone, can also kill at a distance. To obtain his protection, it is necessary to bring him a goat, a chicken, millet flour mixed with water, and millet beer. Sooner or later the one designated will die! If it takes too long, the sorcerer always has an excuse handy..

754 778 The village of Tibin contains a hut where the tibo fetishes are lined in a row. These fetishes consist basically of clay pots containing water, branches, and tree leaves. They are covered with clay gourds of the kind used to cook sauce, and the sacrifices are made on these gourds. It is said that there are snakes and turtles in the pots, but only the tibo sorcerers can see them. Every village has its tibo jar in the naba's household, either at the door of his hut or hanging inside. These tibo are the dwellings of powerful kikirsi.

754 /106/ The bartibo are professional dancers. They have the faculty 791 of distinguishing while dancing those who have the power of killing 535 people, whether poison-givers or seuya. The bartibo themselves claim to have the power of riding the wind and going to kill anyone they wish. They specialize, however, in child-bearing charms for the benefit of sterile women.

754 The waongo also belong to a special family. People are born tibo, 292 bartibo, waongo, or nyonnyonga. For their ceremonies, the waongo don garments made of the bark of baobabs which cover them completely. These strange garments completely conceal the person. A figure may be seen walking, but the person cannot be recognized, and a dreadful illness threatens those who dare to strike it. This is why people, when they see these shapeless forms, run away as fast as they can. [769] The waongo wear masks when they celebrate the koure (death anniversary) of another waongo. They can ride the wind and inflict diseases; they can even kill if they wish.

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they are so exclusively occupied with political or religious duties. In every case, they own fields and are dependent upon their produce for an important part of their subsistence.

Each Mossi village in the Yatenga holds a market every third day; markets operate in nearby villages on the intermediate days. There are few full-time merchants; men usually market their wares themselves and trade in items of European manufacture. Except for the sale of meat, it is a man's wives who sell farm produce. For marketing her husband's surplus millet, a woman receives a gift when the market closes.

Markets are most active in the early hours of the morning when meat and farm produce are fresh. By afternoon only a few merchants stay on, trying to sell their remaining produce to late-comers at greatly reduced prices. Social satisfactions derived from participation in the market are greatly valued; it provides an opportunity for meeting friends and kinsmen and for exchanging gossip and observations on one another's dress, the crops, and current political developments. The market is a place for making loans and receiving small gifts from kinsmen and friends, for flirtations and the arrangement of rendezvous, and for that casual sort of social interaction which is one of the principal pleasures of life in the Yatenga.

The Mossi farmer is dependent on the co-operation of the members of his lineage both for the success of his individual economic endeavor and for their support if his crop should fail. To be assured of this support, he must contribute generously to the maintenance of his position in the intricate network of rights and obligations which describes the relationship of the individual to his kin group. A constant exchange of visits and presents, ceremonial and economic assistance, and presence and participation in the affairs of the lineage are necessary to maintain his status within this group.

The nature of the social, economic, and emotional dependence of the individual on his kinsmen, his affinal relations, and his neighbors is such that his social well-being and economic success may properly be regarded as depending as much on his skill in manipulating this complex web of relationships as on his specifically economic endeavors. When a man decides to forego a second weeding of his fields in order to prepare presents and make the journey to the funeral of a kinsman, he is making a choice which, considered in the total context of the culture, is realistically in accord with his own economic best interest.

The farmer feels equally dependent on the deceased members of his lineage, the ancestral spirits (*kiemse*). If he feeds them a chicken, they may steal the soul from a neighboring stand of millet and bring it to enrich his own field. If properly treated, they can be depended upon to protect his shea nut trees from the high winds which might otherwise

769 destroy the yield. And, depending on his attentions to them, they can give or take away the good health necessary to carry him through the arduous activity of the rainy season when work is hardest, the granaries nearly empty, and food in short supply. Separate ancestral spirits look out for different aspects of the well-being of the individual. Satisfying their various sacrificial requirements is both expensive and time-consuming, but their good will is essential to the success of the farmer, and it is in his own best interest to be attentive to their needs.

THE EARTH CUSTODIANS

793 A close relationship exists between the control of the water supply
776 upon which the agricultural economy depends and the authority of the earth custodians in their role as intermediaries with the several manifestations of Wennam, the Mossi deity. The deity itself is somewhat aloof from the affairs of men, but through his specific manifestations and with the intercession of the earth custodians (*Tenga Soba namba*), descendants of the indigenous inhabitants of the Yatenga, the individual propitiates Wennam in order to control the various forces of the natural and supernatural environment upon which the success of his economic or social endeavor is dependent. Tenga Wende, his terrestrial manifestation, and Tido Wende, which gives life to the vegetable kingdom, are the aspects of Wennam which are most frequently evoked; but Siguiri Wende, the deified first ancestor of the Mossi; Ki Wende, the millet god; and Saga Wende, the rain deity, are also frequently called upon for help.

Each Mossi village in the Yatenga is divided into one or more areas,
793 each of which is in the "command" of one of the village earth custodians.
[36] Each of these areas contains both the dwelling of the Savadogo lineage of the earth custodian and the residence and farmlands of various "true" Mossi lineages. The head of each lineage maintains the good will of the terrestrial manifestation of the deity through the intercession of the earth custodian who "commands" his land. In some instances a lineage may own land under the authority of two different earth custodians; in this case offerings must be made at the shrine (*tenga*) of each.

793 The good fortune which may be secured through obeisance to the terrestrial manifestation of the deity (Tenga Wende) involves both
782 sacrifices and gifts of money to the earth custodian and abstention from acts offensive to the earth. For example, sexual intercourse may take
[833 place only in a private courtyard or within the house. Violation of this
783] rule defiles the land and must be expiated through a special sacrifice and the payment of a fine to the earth custodian. Any lost object found in the
778 public way or in the bush is in the custody of the earth deity and must be turned over to the earth custodian to await the inquiry of the proper owners. If such objects are unclaimed, they are given to Tenga Wende

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221 796 time. "Waraga," which means "first cultivation," is the name given to the fifth. The sixth, which appears in early September or late August, is called "Baca," meaning "second cultivation."

If the millet is not yet ripe for harvest at the appearance of the seventh moon, it is also called "Baca," since the work of cultivation must continue. This choice rests with the chief of the village of Room. The entire Mossi kingdom waits for his decision to know whether the ceremonial cycle called "Basga," which closes the economic year, is to begin or whether the harvest and its attendant ceremonies are to be put off for another month. Just behind his residence is a sacred millet field whose [774 824] grains, as they mature, contain an aspect of the souls (*riim shiise*) of the dead kings of the Yatenga. When the millet in this field is ready to be cut, the next moon to appear is called "Yalem," and the ceremonial cycle which closes the economic year is begun. In the early days of the Yatenga [769] dynasty millet from this field was used to prepare a sacrificial gruel to propitiate the deceased rulers of the newly established kingdom. When it is cut today, a first portion is taken to the altar at Room dedicated to the souls of these early kings. Two other bundles of millet are prepared from the same field. One is sent to the *Yatenga Naba* at Ouahigouya, who is the living descendant of the dead kings. The other is sent to the village of Gourcy, the former capital and the first residence of the founder of the Yatenga dynasty, Naba Yadiga.

The emissaries to the two political centers are accompanied by young people who break off stalks of millet from the fields along their way, adding these to the bundles of grain so as to include all of the farmers of the [769] Yatenga in this offering which symbolizes the dependence of the Mossi on the benevolence of the souls of the dead kings and their living descendant. The millet taken to Ouahigouya is sacrificed at the palace altar of the former rulers. Part of the millet sent to Gourcy is sacrificed at the altar of the spirits of the former village chiefs (*nakom shiise*); the other part is sacrificed at the shrine of the former kings. At Ouahigouya and Gourcy a portion of each sacrificial offering of millet is returned to Room [182] with stalks from the local crop at each place. These are used to make a final sacrifice symbolizing the interdependent relationship of Mossi religious, economic, and political organizations. The ceremonial cycle serves to demonstrate the reliance of the people on the benevolence of the spirits of their former kings for their social, economic, and supernatural well-being.

A ceremony called "Kom Filiga" follows. Meaning "water thanksgiving," it is the occasion for thanking the Mossi ruler, the *Yatenga Naba*, for the wise direction of affairs which has permitted the farmers to cultivate their fields in peace. All village and canton chiefs travel to Ouahigouya to salute their king and rededicate themselves to his service.

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The next moon, called "Tido," is the occasion for a ceremony thanking Wennam, through his terrestrial and vegetal manifestations, for his support during the growing season and for the rich harvests that have been received. Though it is directed by the custodians of the earth, it is their auxiliaries, the Bogaba, who officiate and who sacrifice at the altars to Tido Wende. After they have finished, others may offer a chicken as thanks for successful harvests or for the birth of a child.

At the appearance of the next moon the ceremony called "Filiga" is celebrated, thanking the ancestors of each lineage for their protection during the hard months of the rainy season. The initial sacrifices are made by the village chief both at the shrine to the spirits of the former chiefs and at the ancestral shrine of his lineage. Because their offerings are made to powerful spirits, it is wiser not to refer directly to them by name. They are called *Kikirigo Na Maore*, which means "twin dance." The twin spirits, like the ancestral spirits (*kiemse*), give children. Thus, through indirection a "charged" word is avoided by calling the sacrifice after an analogous but less powerful force. The specific purpose of the first sacrifice is to ask the protection and the assistance of the spirits of the former chiefs during the dangerous period which is to follow. The ancestral spirits of the villagers are then propitiated, and individuals who fail to perform the sacrifices properly may be punished by their ancestors. It is also believed that the ancestors may try to call some of the members of the lineage to join them at this time.

The sacrifices are made by the children of the daughters of the lineage (*Yasenamba*), whose permissive relationship with their mother's kinsmen is paralleled by their relationship to the ancestral spirits of their lineage. The lineage head presents the first chicken for sacrifice. Its throat is slowly cut as it is offered to the "twin" (*kikirigo*), as the "first ancestor" of the lineage is called—again through indirection, for even if the name of the first ancestor were known, it would be presumptuous of his descendants to call him by name. A chicken is then sacrificed to the "old ancestors" of the great-grandfather's generation, to the ancestors of the grandfather's generation, and to those of the fathers' generation who are deceased. As each chicken's throat is cut, the ancestors are thanked for their protection throughout the rainy season and requested to continue to look out for the welfare of their descendants during the months of the dry season which follow. Other men of the lineage may then give chickens to be sacrificed.

The final aspect of the ritual closing of the economic year is the ceremony called "Na Poosum," or "chief's salutation." It is essentially a social occasion. The homage to the central political authority made at Kom Filiga is now complemented on the village level. The elders of each lineage go to the village chief with presents of millet and assurances of

764 down on the chest of the deceased. Then they spread out on the boards a layer of clay, and add earth until the hole is filled. A small canari is placed on the grave to mark its location.

Other members of the soukala are buried around it in the maize field. A canari is also placed upon the grave. The same applies to slaves. Only people stricken with sleeping sickness are buried [766] in the bush, to prevent the spread of the disease.

The deceased is buried on the morning following the day of his death. The heir of the deceased soukala chief and the family elders kill chickens upon the grave. They take the animals by the legs and crush their skull on the floor of the grave. This is the liturgical procedure for such killings. Nine chickens are thus killed [536] in succession and set aside to be eaten. If the soukala is wealthy, sheep are killed instead of chickens. They are seized by their hind legs and their head is struck three times on the floor of the grave, then their throat is cut with a knife. The souls of all those animals go to the deceased.

On the night following the burial, people people play drums, shriek, dance, shoot guns. When day breaks everyone returns home to wash, rest, and eat. Then they return when the sun sets, and this goes on for three successive nights.

765 When the ceremony is over, the date of a new reunion is set for 30, 40, 60 days or even a year later. This second ceremony is often made to coincide with the time of the millet harvest. The children of the deceased have their heads shaved. Much to is prepared. The sisters and daughters who have married away come on the date set, bringing sheep and dolo. The family and the whole village come to greet the successor of the deceased soukala head, to drink and to eat. The griot and large drums are sent for. People make music, dance, sing, and drink for two days, and /587/ this time there is no weeping. This second reunion ends the funeral ceremonies occasioned by someone's death.

769 The Mossi have a yearly feast for their dead and their ancestors. It is the Tiougou or Bassara, which is also called Péléga in other areas. This feast is celebrated in December, when all the millet has been harvested and the cold weather has come. The family and soukala heads have much dolo prepared and pour it onto the graves

769 along with millet flour mixed in water. A few chickens are also killed. No one works on that day, but people eat, drink, and rest. There is no drumming or dancing, however.

Other Mossi (at Yakki, for example) make offerings to the ancestors in the hut of their first wife rather than on the graves.

Another feast comes at sowing time and is called Tengana. Certain leaves are sought in the bush, cooked with beans and underground peas, and eaten. Much dolo is also preapred.

241 On the first day of sowing, one goes to the fields and offers a
776 chicken, millet flour, and dolo to the field stones (tenkougouri) and to the earth (tenga or tempeloun), so the sowing will go well, so there will be a good harvest, and so everyone will be in good health.

There is also an earth feast or Tensé (plural of tenga), which is celebrated once a year during the rainy season. It is the Moro Naba who sets the exact date of the Tensé. Every soukala head
[782] kills a beef, a sheep, or a chicken. The young men collect the blood of the sacrificed animals in gourds and pour some upon the ground (to the Earth) in order to secure a good crop. The remainder is mixed with the flour of large white millet and eaten. Much dolo is consumed. The earth feast is the special festivity of those people who are called Tenga (earth), Tembila, Tenfisi, etc., and of those who were born on the day of the Tensé.

On that day sacrifices are also offered to Naba Ouondé (the Chief God).

/588/ On years when the previous millet harvest was bad, the Tensé is not celebrated.

The Mossi have no special harvesting feast. Actually, it is the Tiougou or Bassara (celebrated when the millet has been harvested) that is the harvesting feast as well as the feast of the ancestors.

782 The Mossi do not offer sacrifices to isolated trees, but they do
778 to sacred groves or woods.

At Ouagadougou, at the spot where the White Fathers now live, there once stood a small sacred wood made up of large trees and thorny bushes, where sacrifices were offered before the French tore it down.

Every year the Moro Naba offered a sheep and a chicken to this sacred grove through the head of the Sékou quarter. He also offered

562 When she dies, a woman's property goes to her children. The
428 objects used by women go to the daughters (bracelets, skirt cloths), while other items (animals, etc.) go to the sons. More exactly, the first-born is favored among the sons and the oldest girl among the daughters. If there are no children, the husband does not take anything, and whatever the wife leaves goes to her family, to her sisters and brothers in the first line of descent. Not having had any children by the deceased, the husband would be ashamed to take what she left.

837 Adultery. —The wife owes faithfulness to her spouse. Unfaithfulness, however, is not very important, for unless it occurs repeatedly it does not usually result in a break. The husband merely beats his wife and scolds her.

837 When the wife has fled to a lover, her husband goes in search of
684 her. The lover will have to provide a sheep (the sheep may be re-
782 placed by a goat), a chicken, and two canari of dolo, all of which
769 are to be sacrificed to the ancestors so they will forgive the woman. She cannot re-enter her house until the sacrifice has been performed; without it the ancestors would kill her. They are unbending, more so than the husband to be sure, about the latter's honor. Should a husband know his wife to be guilty and do nothing about it, the ancestors would be furious and they would kill him, hence the necessity for action on the husband's part.

837 If the husband cannot find his runaway wife, the duty of searching
684 for her and bringing her back to him falls to his father-in-law.

Formerly, before the French occupation, if the lover did not want to return the woman, her father appealed to the naba, that is, the chief of the village or canton, or even to the Moro Naba, who sent horsemen to arrest the guilty pair. He restored the wife to her husband and confiscated for his own benefit the lover's animals and millet granaries.

Nowadays, since the French occupation, one appeals to the commanding officer of the circle and to the native provincial court for the wife's return.

684 Sometimes, in the past, the husband killed his wife's lover when
643 he caught him flagrante delicto. He had the right to do so, but this caused him to lose his /246/ wife who became the property of the Moro Naba. The lover's property likewise reverted to the Moro Naba.

684 In any event, the husband did not have the right to kill his wife
643 except when she was caught flagrante delicto, unless he was the
565

8: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1958
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rulers left the Dagomba region in the Gold Coast (present-day Ghana) during the 11th century and moved into the bend of the Niger River, carving out three large kingdoms and smaller principalities in the process. At the head of these still extant kingdoms are rulers (*Moro Nabas*) who hold feudal-like control of the provinces, districts, and villages which comprise their domains. A complex hierarchical administrative apparatus extends the power of the rulers into the smallest village, and funnels taxes and tribute back to them. French conquest modified this highly efficient system but did not greatly change it. The Mossi state apparatus rests on an economy which produces cotton cloth, horses, sheep, cattle, and goats, but the main support of this large population—one of the densest in the Sudan—is grain agriculture. Today, some Mossi districts still have as many as 70 persons per square mile. 105 173 105

The Mossi are divided into stratified royal, noble, and commoner patrilineages. Characteristic of this lineage system is a process by which royal sublineages descend serially until they merge with the mass of commoner lineages. Below the lineages there were once large non-Mossi groups of serfs and slaves, but these people have now been grouped into lineages and have become Mossi. Patrilocal polygynous extended family households, grouped into villages, form the basic Mossi settlement pattern. Marriages are arranged between unrelated persons through the agency of lineage members who establish "friendly" relationships. The two friends might ask their lineage heads for women to exchange as wives, or the "friend" who has received more gifts from his opposite number will give over a wife. Because only the older men have women and goods at their disposal, they are usually the ones who receive wives. The result is that most young men have no wives and must content themselves with occasional lovers until they inherit wives from lineage members. The Mossi have a great fear of incestuous relations which bring down the wrath of the ancestors (the *Keemsé*).

Ancestor veneration is at the core of Mossi religious behavior. The recent ancestors are notified, through sacrifices, of the important events in the lives of their descendants, and they are expected to aid in solving everyday problems. The ancestors also invoke their sanctions against antisocial behavior among their descendants. Once a year the Mossi people, in concert with the Moro Nabas, appeal to their individual and collective ancestors for good crops, large families, and for the preservation of the dynasty. Often associated with the ancestors as propitiatory agents are local deities called *Tengkougas* (sing. *Tenkougre*) or earth shrines, visibly manifested by clumps of trees, mountains, rocks, or rivers. *Tengsobas* or earth priests appeal to the Tengkougas on behalf of the local populations for help in sickness, for rain and good crops, and for children. When proper sacrifices are offered to the Tengkougas, their spiritual agents, called *kinkirsé*, enter the wombs of women and are born as children. Twins and children who die young are regarded as "evil" kinkirsé who entered a woman without being invited. Nevertheless, many persons consider twins as special gifts to parents in favor of the earth deities. 768 [778] [842] [845]

The earth itself, *Tenga*, is one of the principal deities of the Mossi. Tenga is 776 [823]

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776 considered the wife of a male deity called *Winnam*, *Windé*, or *Naba Zidiwindé*. The true nature of Winnam is not clear. The Mossi say: "Winnam is the sun, and Winnam is God"; he is considered a sun god as well as a supreme deity. [775] Winnam is venerated but he is not feared, because it is the dead ancestors who chastise evil-doers by affliction or death. When wicked people die they face the wrath of the ancestors in *Keemsélenga*, or land of the ancestors.

The Mossi have several concepts of the spiritual essence or animating principle of man. First there is the *seega* (pl. *seesé*), an entity found in all living beings; it leaves the body during sleep, and its adventures provide the dreams of men. The seega can be captured during its nocturnal wanderings or in places where large crowds congregate. If the seega is captured and eaten by a [761] sorcerer, its owner will die. A man's shadow is also called his seega; persons about to die have no shadows, since their seesé have either been stolen or have [822] left on their own account.

Another principle called the *keema* (pl. *keemsé*) is associated with the dead or with persons about to die. The keema of a dying man wanders around and often frightens people; as soon as he is dead, he is no longer referred to by name but is called the "keema." Keemsé is also the word used for the generalized [769] ancestors who sanction the behavior of the living and who must be placated if people wish to have enough food, wives, children, and good health. A man's own keemsé take a vital interest in his affairs, in return for which they receive nourishment in the form of the seesé (animals do not have keemsé) of sacrificed animals.

[827] The breath, called *vousem*, is also considered an animating principle by the Mossi and, since it leaves the body through the nose at death, they believe that a man's nose is the first thing to die. It is not clear how the seega is disposed of when the body dies. Some people say it remains forever about the haunts of man; others believe that it goes to a mountain called Plimpikou and disappears into a cavern. Still others believe that the seega becomes the keema and goes to Plimpikou, from whence the keemsé come to visit their descendants. It is difficult to determine whether the Mossi have always been vague about their traditional religious concepts or whether this uncertainty is the result of the influx of such foreign creeds as Islam and Christianity.

The first recorded contact between the Mossi and Moslems took place around 1328 when the Yatenga Mossi attacked, burned, and sacked Timbuktu, then held by the Dia dynasty of the Songhoi (Dubois 1896:251). For more than a century afterward, the Mossi pursued a turbulent and aggressive policy in the region of the Niger bend, pushing as far as Gourma, Walata, and Banku (ibid:127). They were finally defeated and routed by Sonni Ali in 1477. In 1499, when Askia the Great (El Hadj Mohammed ben Abou Bekr, usurper of the Songhoi throne from the Sonni dynasty in 1494) returned from his pilgrimage to Mecca, he launched a *jihad* or holy war on the Mossi who had rejected his ultimatum to adopt Islam. Askia defeated the Mossi, "devastated the towns and countryside, took men, women, and children as prisoners, and forcibly converted these captives to Islam" (Dubois 1896:127–128). The

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175 schools and 4,000 Moslems in Ouagadougou (seven percent of whom were non-
797 Mossi). By 1944 there were about 240 schools and approximately 25,000
871 Moslems. The last census, 1954, did not record the number of Koranic schools but gave the figure of 60,000 Moslems in the Ouagadougou region.[3] The 4,000 Moslems of Nobéré comprise 42 percent of that district's population. With the exception of one Catholic school master and the Catholic catechist who came to the district during 1956, the population is pagan. It might be relevant to point out that Nobéré has the highest percentage of Moslems in Kombissiri, an administrative unit (a subdivision) which has 152,000 pagans, 23,000 Moslems, 3,000 Catholics, and about 100 Protestants.

797 As noted above, Islam first came into the Nobéré district with Ngado, who replaced a dissident pagan chief, but Ngado's lineal descendants reverted to
634 paganism until a few years ago when the present district chief became a nominal Moslem. The cadet sons of Ngado did not revert to paganism, and today all the noble sublineages of the district are Moslem. We may note here that one of the main aspects of Islamic proselytization in this district, as elsewhere among the Mossi, has been the conversion of persons who do not hold strategic positions vis-à-vis the ancestors. The present chief is no exception to this rule, because he is only a nominal Moslem. His eldest son is the only one in the family who is not a Moslem—a status which is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain in a growing Moslem population. The chief himself became partially converted to Islam in gratitude to a Moslem Hausa trader who cured his illness. He recites the five daily prayers and observes most of the prescriptions of Islam, but he still drinks European beer, subscribes to many pagan rites and
[769] beliefs, and supervises the annual Péléga or sacrifice to the ancestors. This dual allegiance is politically expedient because the chief can function as the head of the Moslem community as well as the traditional head of all the people. He does have occasional difficulty with intolerant Moslems who wish him to become a devout Moslem, and with the traditionalists who claim that today the crops are smaller, the people sicker, and the women barren because of the neglect of the ancestors. However, with the approach of holy days, these differences are resolved in the interest of community harmony.

622 The chiefs of the villages under the overall command of the district chief are mainly pagan, since they are descended from the district chief replaced by
797 Ngado. Yet they command villages inhabited by the noble Moslem sublineages
769 of the ruling house as well as by commoner lineages. The village chief cannot become a Moslem because he too is responsible for sacrifices to the ancestors, without whose help his people would suffer. He does not take an active part in Moslem festivities, but receives the homage due a chief from the Moslems on these and other occasions. However, most village chiefs show an interest in Moslem affairs, and one of them, the chief of Vooko, built a prayer-circle (*misseri*) for Moslems who came to pay homage.

622 The pivotal role which the village chief plays in the exchange of wives be-
797 tween Moslems and pagans has led indirectly to the increase of the Moslem
582 population. Before the French conquest he gave the Moslems more wives than

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797 administration to have one of their converts, a younger son of the late chief,
555 elected to the district chieftainship over his elder brother. This belief is probably unfounded, since the Moro Naba seems to be electing the literate sons of chiefs to their fathers' positions so that educated chiefs, and not educated commoners, can serve as members of French parliamentary bodies. Unfortunately, the people of Manga do not understand modern political problems, and have accepted the new chief only because of their traditional respect for the chieftainship.

634 The conversion of the Manga chief to Catholicism has not engendered
797 many problems for his pagan subjects. The chief's primary duty—to begin the yearly ceremonial cycle of sacrifices to the ancestors—has been taken over
769 by his father's brother, who is now considered the ritual head of the chiefly
[602] lineage. Nevertheless, to the chief still accrue the gains of this ceremony because his followers pay him homage and bring him gifts on his birthday, which comes at this period. Moslems in the community also pay their respects at this time, and they prefer his Catholic birthday celebration to the bloody sacrifices of chickens to the ancestors. On the other hand, the chief shows little of the common Catholic disapproval of Moslems and sends gifts to their leaders on the Moslem feast days. He also entertains the district Moslems when they come to pay him homage.

797 The Catholic chief does not act as a pivot in the exchange of wives be-
634 tween pagans of his lineage and the other lineages. This task now falls to his father's brothers. Nevertheless, as district chief he is constantly involved
582 with the marital problems involving pagan parents and their Catholic children. The main source of the difficulty is that Catholic girls are encouraged to refuse to join their pagan husbands when so ordered by their parents. The mission not only insists that the girl freely choose her own husband, but encourages her to reject a polygynous union. Catholicism thereby interposes it-
[562] self between the girls and their society, not only impairing the prestige of their fathers and lineages but also giving the girls more freedom than they would ordinarily possess.

The pagans claim that by encouraging girls to choose mates without parental consent, the Catholics are really taking the opportunity to obtain wives for young Catholic men. Paradoxically, there seems to be some truth in this, since Bouniol, a White Father, states:

> A Mossi who is unable to acquire a wife by [traditional] means must either remain unmarried or seduce another man's wife . . . they must choose between celibacy and immorality.
>
> Such a state of affairs creates many problems for the missions, especially as the system is recognized and sanctioned by the colonial authorities. . . . Young native Christians are obviously placed in a very awkward position. Their conversion angers their parents, who refuse to give them a wife; neither will their friends bestow a daughter upon them, because they know that they will not receive one in return, since a Christian may not give a daughter in marriage to a pagan. . . . *Consequently, unless the missionaries help them to find a wife, they must remain unmarried—a very discouraging prospect!* (1920:160 italics mine)

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636
646 the Kaya people to their new chief. However, in Manga the proposed
666 election of a young chief over his four elder brothers did cause some
662 concern and talk about Catholic machinations because the nominee was of that faith. But there was no overt opposition to him once he had been elected. His elder brother accepted the wishes of the Moro Naba with good graces even though he remains a rather tragic individual.

643 The differential treatment that the Manga Naba receives from the
636 administration is obvious to everyone. Whereas the other district chiefs are still summarily summoned to the administrative center, and kept waiting, the Manga Naba sends his assistants to represent him. When the Governor of the Haute Volta came to Manga to make it an administrative subdivision, he was entertained by the Manga Naba while the neighboring district chiefs celebrated outside. It was the political power of this educated chief which was responsible for Manga becoming an administrative subdivision even though it is located several miles from the highway which runs between Wagadougou and Ghana. Furthermore, the population of the neighboring district all complain that Manga's population has gained a disproportionate share of all the services provided by the governmental agencies whose headquarters are there. The fears which the Manga people and the other Mossi have had over their chiefs being Catholic have not materialized in Manga. Of course, the Manga Naba does perform the rituals on the
[769] day of the ancestral feasts. These rites are now being performed by his father's brother who has become the ritual head of the ruling lineage (and it is possible that this line may become the line which performs this task for the now "secular" chief). However, when the
[797] chief celebrates the anniversary of his conversion to Catholicism at the mission, afterwards he holds court in his house where he receives from Catholics, Moslems, and pagans alike, the gifts he normally would have received in the feast of the ancestors.[8]

The most important function of such Mossi chiefs as the Manga Naba is to defend the interests of the Mossi people in the territorial assemblies and the French councils and assemblies while preserving the ruling tradition of the descendants of Wedraogo and Wubri. In his capacity as politician-chief, the Manga Naba joined a fellow Mossi of rather humble origin in sponsoring several bills in the Assembly of

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vincial minister for Djiba, and rendered homage to the sovereign. After 634
this reception the prince went to the Gounga Naba's compound, which 644
henceforth was his headquarters whenever he visited Ouagadougou; for, like other district chiefs, he had to consult with this minister before seeing the monarch. Everyone in the kingdom had to follow the political hierarchy, even the ruler's heir.

The young prince remained at his host's house and from there visited the other important officials, in the order of their rank, receiving from each presents of sheep, millet beer, kola nuts, and sometimes wives. He then [795] visited the Imam of the Ouagadougou Moslem community, where he received a blessing in the name of Allah and was given kola nuts and millet water sweetened with honey. On the fourth or fifth day the prince went to [769] a small village called Zoangha, where he made a sacrifice to his ancestors and requested their protection against all enemies.[29] He returned to Ouagadougou on the same day and was given a palace escort to accompany him to his district.

During his journey, the royal heir had the opportunity to establish or 634
re-establish friendly relations with district chiefs who were now his peers, 644
but who might someday become his subjects. He visited in turn the war 431
leader at Tansobatenga, the Koubri Naba, the Ipelse Naba, and the Kondrin Naba. Each of these chiefs offered him livestock, slaves, and wives. He, in turn, distributed salt (a valuable commodity) to the old women and gave kola nuts and other commodities to the chiefs' head wives. The Baganmini Naba presented the prince with a special quiver of arrows, and the chief of the Fulani at Bedego gave him a pretty maiden and one of his best bulls. The prince spent a few days with each of his hosts, but stayed for seven days in Bere, a district bordering on his own. The Bere Naba gave him a wife, a robe, and a cow, and sent messengers to the village chiefs of Djiba to announce that their chief had arrived in Bere. The chiefs then journeyed to Bere, pledged allegiance to their ruler, and presented gifts to him. On the seventh night there was a ritual (whose main features are 634
unclear), in the course of which the prince entered Djiba secretly on horse- 644
back, accompanied only by one servant, one groom, and the nobles and [788]
chiefs of Djiba.[30] Most members of the escort who had accompanied him from the capital were left behind at Bere, and followed only when the prince had established himself in his district. When the prince's band entered Djiba under cover of darkness, it was met by the local Ouidi Naba, who ruled the district in the absence of a Crown Prince. The Ouidi Naba now became the prince's protector if the boy were still young, or his most trusted adviser if he were old enough to rule by himself.

[P. 60]

IV

ADMINISTRATION

642 631 [825] THE MOSSI always looked to their rulers, especially to the Mogho Nanamse, the Dimdamba, and the Kombemba, to determine administrative policies and to pronounce on all relevant issues. All foreigners who requested information were told, "You must talk to the chief."[1] The Mossi believed that men cannot live without chiefs, and insisted that even animals have chiefs. Mossi rulers were therefore expected to ensure internal tranquillity in times of peace and to protect their subjects and territories in times of war. The expectation that they would also provide impartial judgment is best expressed by a dictum of the Ouagadougou people: "The truth is at Ouagadougou." [769] Finally, Mossi chiefs were held responsible for inducing the ancestors to bring health and prosperity to their subjects. To this end, they supervised and participated in rituals to their ancestors and encouraged the people in every territory, district, village, and compound to do likewise. In return, the people paid homage and allegiance to their chiefs and provided them with the goods and services they needed to support the administrative process.

643 631 642 175 The nature of the administrative relationship between the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou, the rulers of Yatenga, Fada-N'Gourma, and Tenkodogo, and the autonomous Dimdamba was not clear to the early visitors to Mossi country, and remains a matter of controversy. Two conflicting principles were always at work: seniority with respect to the nam and claims of close descent from Ouedraogo and Oubri on the one hand, and relative political strength or military power on the other. The stronger a ruler, the less he deferred to his lineal seniors. He might even claim a supremacy over them that came close to a claim of seniority. When Barth visited the Sudan in 1853, he was told that the Mossi country was "split into a number of small principalities, almost totally independent of each other, and paying only slight homage to the principality of Woghododogo." Barth reports, however, that the Dim of Boussouma was "probably the most powerful of the Mossi chiefs at the . . . time, especially with regard to cavalry." Similarly,

less of the amount of millet harvested from the Mogho Naba's fields, there had to be one hundred baskets full of grain. If the number of baskets filled with the Mogho Naba's grain fell short of the mark, the serfs and slaves had to make up the difference with the produce of their own fields. The ceremony concluded with sacrifices to the royal ancestors, after which the Mogho Naba's wives, daughters, and sisters gave beer and kola nuts to the laborers.

As head of the central government, the Mogho Naba received revenue in the form of money and livestock which the district chiefs collected from the village people. These were given to him during an elaborate annual ceremony called the "Basgha" ("feast of the royal ancestors"). Several days before this post-harvest festival, the district chiefs and their retainers arrived in the capital and lodged with their provincial ministers. At a designated time during the ceremony, the district chiefs and nobles went to the palace. In provincial contingents and led by their ministers, they walked up to the sovereign's throne and gave the Mossi salute. After they had returned to their places, their servants gave the royal pages the presents they had brought to the palace.

The Dimdamba apparently made their annual contribution to the Mogho Naba at the time of the Basgha. There is one report that they took this opportunity to send gifts to the ruler's son, the Djiba Naba, as well. The Dimdamba customarily sent the Mogho Naba part of the goods they had seized in combat against non-Mossi peoples, as well as a tax (*fado*) out of the goods they had inherited from their predecessors.[3] There is also some evidence that the Mogho Naba solicited goods from the Dimdamba at other times. Crozat says:

> During my first visit to Yako, three envoys from Ouagadougou were at the chief's house. They were tax collectors. They had come to offer the vassal a silver bracelet sent by the sovereign. The Yako Naba responded by sending horses, captives, and cowries to Ouagadougou.[4]

Crozat could not understand this reciprocity between the Mogho Naba and his vassals, and questions whether the Mogho Naba really collected taxes from them. He concludes that the Mogho Naba did receive taxes, "but these are never given to him except in the form of presents which are reciprocated."[5] Crozat found it puzzling and disturbing that many of the Dimdambe had not given the Mogho Naba any "taxes" for several years. He indicated, moreover, that they did not wish to pay taxes to the Ouagadougou ruler even under the guise of an exchange of presents. This was especially true of the Yatenga Naba, who had not sent the Mogho Naba any presents for six or seven years prior to 1890. Crozat surmised that

[P.126]

VIII

RELIGION AND GOVERNMENT

796
642 RELIGION AND RITUAL played an important role in supporting and preserv-
[769] ing the Mossi political system. Religio-political ceremonies were centered
[776] around the ancestors (Keemse) and the earth deities (Tengkouga); the otiose high god (Ouennam or Naba Zid Ouende) had a very minor role.

769 The political importance of ancestor veneration lay in the fact that every
642 Mossi chief claimed Nyennega of Dagomba and her descendants, Ouedra-
778 ogo and Oubri, as his ancestors. Furthermore, possession of the amulets of Rialle, Nyennega's husband and Ouedraogo's father, legitimized possession
[613] of the nam. In order to rule, a Moaga had either to be a member of a royal lineage still in possession of the nam or to have received the nam from such
669 a lineage. No Moaga ever tried to usurp the nam of a kingdom or princi-
778 pality without trying to steal the royal amulets at the same time; nor, if his rebellion was successful, did he ever fail to claim that he had stolen the
642 amulets or had received them as a gift. Thus Yadega, who rebelled against
769 his father's brother, Mogho Naba Koudoumie, and founded the Yatenga kingdom, declared that he had obtained Rialle's amulets. He claimed that they had been given to him by his sister, Pabre, who had stolen them from Ouagadougou and had thus deprived that kingdom of any legitimate sanctions for power. Thus, when the Yatenga people declare that they are equal to Ouagadougou, they add that the only "amulets" that still legitimize the nam of the Ouagadougou dynasty are the droppings left behind by Pabre's horse as she fled northward.

769 Similarly, all the princes who founded principalities and proclaimed
642 their independence of Ouagadougou defended their action on the grounds
643 that they, being as close to the main line of descent as the Mogho Naba, were also entitled to rule. The younger sons of deceased Mogho Nanamse
[631] who were banished from the capital as Kouritadamba and who subse-
[634] quently became provincial Dimdamba also stressed their relationship to the royal ancestors. Even those district chiefs whose ancestors had prob-

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769 642 613 [634]

ably been younger sons sent to rule in conquered territories claimed that their ancestors were direct descendants of Ouedraogo and Oubri. Thus, to the Mossi, the power to rule was intimately linked to closeness of descent from the royal ancestors. The supernatural power of these ancestors, and the vigilance they were believed to maintain over the affairs of their descendants, were regarded as important factors in Mossi government.

796 631 643 769 [778] [782]

From the moment when the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou or any other Mossi ruler "drank the namtibo" and thereby received the nam of his ancestors, he had the right—indeed, the duty—to offer sacrifices to these ancestors in the name of his subjects. Every night, throughout Mossi country, the Baloum Naba of every ruler performed an act of supplication (Kwaga Basgha) to the ancestors. He beseeched them to protect the subjects of their descendants through the night, to maintain peace in Mossi country, and to grant health, children, and prosperity to all Mossi. This nightly ceremony was climaxed yearly by an elaborate ritual in honor of the ancestors (called the Basgha in some areas, and the Pelegha, Filigha, or Kinkiriga in others) that began at the highest levels of the government and ultimately linked every Mossi chief and lineage head.

643 769 241 782 796 [644]

The Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou, like the other Mogho Nanamse and Dimdamba, initiated this ceremony in his own kingdom. His celebration, called "M'barengma," was held at the end of the Mossi agricultural year and after the Soretasgho. Thus, the M'barengma was a New Year's festival in thanksgiving for good crops, as well as the annual Feast of the Dead. A few weeks before the first moon of the new year (the *ki-basgha* or *ki-pelegha*), the Mogho Naba ordered his soghondamba and samande-kamba to clean up the palace buildings and courtyards—an activity intended to notify the ever-vigilant ancestors that preparations were being made to offer sacrifices in their honor. A short time later, the Mogho Naba gave grain from his fields to the Pughtiema so she could prepare millet water for the sacrifices. Present-day Mossi insist that part of the grain came from the first ears harvested that year and part from those of the previous year. This was supposed to symbolize the continuity between crops, mirroring the continuity between the ruler and his ancestors. A few days before the principal ceremony, the Mogho Naba ordered the Larhalle Naba to pour millet water and sacrifice chickens on the graves of former Mogho Nanamse.

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Shortly before the ki-basgha moon appeared, the ruler had to leave his palace at night to elude the ancestors, who had been attracted by the preparations and who were expected to be angry when they discovered that the sacrifices were not yet ready. The unjust ruler feared ancestral sanctions; the just ruler that his ancestors might want him to join them. One night he

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went to the home of his Samande Naba, the next to the Gounghin ward, then to Baghin, and subsequently to the homes of other officials. He could not remain long at one place for fear that the ancestors might find him. Every morning, however, when the cock's crow heralded the ancestors' departure, he returned to his palace.

The principal part of the Basgha ceremony was performed on the night when the crescent moon appeared. On that night more than any other, the ruler had to seek refuge elsewhere, because the ancestors visited the palace to accept the sacrifices offered to them by the Pughtiema with the help of the Baloum Naba and the chief eunuch of the harem. The exact nature of this ceremony is unknown, but it is known that the Baloum Naba used the sacred namtibo along with animals and millet-flour water provided by the Pughtiema and the chief eunuch for propitiatory sacrifices to the ancestors. The aim of these sacrifices was to induce the ancestors to grant good crops, health, happiness, and children to their descendants, and to "increase the force of the namtibo."[1] At cock's crow the Bendere Naba sprinkled a flour infusion called *gningmassem* ("water of health") on the palace courtyard so that the ruler might walk upon it when he returned. The Mogho Naba was greeted with drumbeats and escorted to the palace gate. His entry into the antechamber marked the close of this ceremony, and the people retired until later in the day.

The elaborate public ceremony of the Basgha took place in mid-morning. The ministers and important officials, clad in ceremonial garb, arrived at the palace quite early. When the Mogho Naba appeared, the Bendere Naba recited the official genealogy, starting with Ouedraogo and Oubri and ending with elaborate praises of the current ruler. The ministers and their entourage then saluted the Mogho Naba and wished him *Ne tarbo,* which means a happy and prosperous new year for himself and the country. He, in turn, took advantage of this occasion to give many presents to his retinue, and his wives distributed huge amounts of food and drink to the assembly until everyone was satiated. Then all the officials except the Bendere Naba and his group paid homage to the Mogho Naba and departed. The musicians remained at court most of the day, beating their drums and singing praises to their sovereign and his illustrious ancestors. The royal pages kept them well supplied with food and beer, and now and again during the day the ruler sent them gifts among which robes were often included. Whenever the drummers received a gift, they slipped into a rhythmic pattern that signified: *Tompaongo, Wend'kaouss' Naba niore, Wenne wilig vinre,* or, "We bow in thanksgiving for your gift. May God give the ruler long life. May God grant us to be alive next year so that we may do this again." The

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climax of this gift-giving came when the ruler sent the Bendere Naba about 19,000 cowries and a slave.[8] This ceremony terminated at nightfall.

The close of the Mogho Naba's Basgha heralded the start of similar ceremonies throughout his kingdom. The heads of the other Mossi kingdoms and the Dimdamba were free to hold their own Basgha when they wished; but the Ouagadougou ruler's own subjects, including the provincial ministers, district chiefs, village chiefs, and lineage heads, apparently were not. One reason for this, aside from respect for the ruler, was that the important officials' head wives had to wait for the yeast (*dabili*) from the Mogho Naba's beer before they could prepare the sacrificial offerings for their husbands' ancestors. This dabili went from district to district or to several districts at once, depending on whether the chiefs celebrated Basgha at the same time or successively. Thus, the dabili from the capital united all the wives of the royal clan, and made for both a ritual continuity in the veneration of all ancestors and a strengthening of religious and political bonds.

The Basgha ceremonies on the district level were much less elaborate than those held at Ouagadougou, but just as important. The district chief, too, had his buildings repaired and his grain distributed for sacrifices for the ancestors. A few days before the actual ceremony, he ordered the Gande Naba to pour millet water on the graves of recently deceased chiefs and to sacrifice chickens there. As in Ouagadougou, these sacrifices were offered to induce the chiefly ancestors to grant the villagers health, food, and children. Unlike the Mogho Naba, most district chiefs did not ritually hide from their ancestors for several nights prior to the ceremony. Some of them did change their sleeping place within the compound every night, and the court people always slept indoors during this period. On the night of the Basgha itself, however, the district chiefs did not sleep in their compounds.

As in Ouagadougou, the Pughtiema performed the main ceremony by pouring millet water as a libation to the ancestors who visited her hut. She was assisted by the Baloum Naba, who had possession of the namtibo. Apparently, the district chief remained in hiding and took no part in the ceremony. But he was the main figure in the morning ceremony, which differed little from that of Ouagadougou. In some districts the Tengsoba performed a public sacrifice to the ancestors. He was given the namtibo—sacred objects that had belonged to former district chiefs—and poured libations and sacrificed chickens to all of the chief's ancestors. He also prayed both to these ancestors and to his own on the chief's behalf, and beseeched them to grant long life and happiness to the district population. He also declared that the sacred objects would seek out and kill any enemies of the local ruler, wherever they might be. Once this ritual had been com-

pleted, the remainder of the ceremony followed the pattern of the Ouagadougou ritual.

During the weeks that followed, the village chiefs and the heads of the larger lineage segments all offered sacrifices to their ancestors. The Pughtiema of each prominent local administrator, chief, or lineage head prepared and poured the millet water as a libation to the ancestors. Whenever possible, each of these personages invited musicians to sing praises to his ancestors. He dressed in his best robe and sat outside his hut to receive presents from his relatives, friends, and subjects, along with their best wishes for the new year, and for long life and prosperity. In return he gave them kola nuts, beer, and food. Thus, in celebrating the Basgha, all the Mossi were united in prayers and supplications to the ancestors, upon whom rested the future of their country and the successful reign of the descendants of Ouedraogo and Oubri.

The earth deity, Tenga, held the central place in the second major religio-political ceremony which linked all Mossi. This ritual, called *Tense* (from *tenga*, "earth") and sometimes *Naba Oubri ma koure* ("the anniversary of the funeral of Mogho Naba Oubri's mother"), was so important to Mossi cohesion that it was banned by the French, and as a result its main features are now unclear. According to tradition, Naba Oubri loved Poughtoenga, his Ninisi mother, so much, and was so pleased with the elaborate funeral he gave her, that he decided to repeat this ceremony each year in the hope that his subjects would be blessed with the bountiful crops and herds which had made the first one possible. Curiously enough, Oubri's mother was not a central figure in the Tense celebration. Instead, great stress was placed on the fructifying powers of the earth and on the importance of the royal ancestors in Mossi life. The juxtaposition and association of the earth deity with Oubri's mother has important implications for the Mossi political organization. Mossi tradition holds that a Ninisi woman was the ancestress of the Mossi of Ouagadougou. Her people probably celebrated the Tense as a fertility rite to their earth goddess, Tenga. The Mossi apparently took over the ceremony and used it both as a fertility rite and as a memorial festival, thus symbolically uniting the conquerors and the conquered.[3]

In contrast to the Basgha, no special date appears to have been set for the celebration of the Tense. It was held sometime before the crops were sowed, but according to Tauxier it was not celebrated at all in Ouagadougou when the previous year's harvest had been poor.[4] Before setting the date for the festival, the Mogho Naba summoned the Larhalle Naba and ordered him to have sacrifices made on the graves of all former rulers. This minister

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provided the sacrificial animals for the royal tombs in the area of the capital, and the Ouagadougou Naba, as chief Tengsoba, performed the sacrifices. The Larhalle Naba also dispatched his servants to the distant districts where royal tombs were located, with orders to obtain (by force, if necessary) the animals for the sacrifices from the local populations and give them to the special guardians of the tombs. Sacrifices were made on the grave of Naba Oubri at Koudougou and on that of his father, Zoungourana, in the village of Zomtoega in Tenkodogo. However, there is no indication that a sacrifice was made on the grave of Ouedraogo, who is believed to have died in Sagabatenga but whose burial place is unknown. Nor is it clear whether, as some Mossi claim, annual sacrifices were made on the alleged grave of Nyennega in Gambaga. As soon as these preparatory sacrifices had been completed and the Mogho Naba had been notified, preparations were made for the celebration.

The Mogho Naba met with the Larhalle Naba, and the date of the Tense was set for twenty-one days after the meeting. On the following day, the Larhalle Naba made five cords out of tree bark and tied nineteen knots in each of them. The next day, he gave each provincial minister a cord to send to the districts in his province. The provincial ministers then sent their messengers with the cords to the districts, with orders to untie one knot every day the cords were in transit. Thus a district chief, counting the number of knots in the cord on the day it reached him, knew how many days were left before the Tense. As soon as the entire kingdom had been notified of the festival, the envoys returned to Ouagadougou and returned the cords to their ministers.

On the Friday morning before the Tense, the Larhalle Naba went to the palace. Kneeling before the monarch, he untied the last knot on each cord to indicate that the ceremony would begin on the morrow. To acknowledge this fact, the Mogho Naba distributed bars of salt to his courtiers and visitors instead of the customary kola nuts, beer, and millet water. Visitors left the court early in order to provide their families with foodstuffs for the celebration.

Early on Saturday morning, royal servants brought huge quantities of beef and mutton that had been cooked without pepper (this spice being disliked by the ancestors) and other foods, and deposited them in large heaps in the courtyard. Nearby, they also placed numerous large pots of millet beer. As soon as the morning ceremony was over, the Larhalle Naba slowly approached the Mogho Naba, who presented him with a new white robe. The minister donned the robe and walked to the piles of food, from which he took three portions of millet mush, dipped them in a specially

prepared sauce, and flung them in three directions to the waiting ancestral spirits. He then beseeched the royal spirits, the spirits of former provincial ministers, and the spirits of the ancient people (the Ninisi) to grant a long life to the Mogho Naba and peace to all the Mossi. He repeated the ritual with three morsels of meat and with the contents of a pot of beer. When he had finished, the Gande Naba picked up the food thrown to the ancestors and carried it away. He did not look backward for fear that he should see the ancestors and die as a result. The departure of the Gande Naba was the signal for the palace retainers to rush toward the food. They seized and ate what they could, spilling and wasting a good deal in the process.[5]

Meanwhile, chiefs and headmen held similar ceremonies in every district, village, hamlet, and compound in the Ouagadougou kingdom. District and village chiefs offered sacrifices to their ancestors in the name of their subjects. The sacrifices on the hamlet and compound level were more specific. Every grown man had to take a sheep, goat, or chicken to his elder and request that it be offered to the ancestors in his name. The elder sacrificed the animal and beseeched the ancestors to grant the petitioner good health, bountiful crops, and many children during the coming year. The women and children did not take part in the ritual, but they did participate in the general feasting that followed.

The festivities of the Tense lasted only a few days in the districts and villages, but in the capital it did not end officially until about four weeks had elapsed. At the end of this period, the Larhalle Naba gave the Mogho Naba all the cords that had been used to mark the coming of the Tense. A few days later, the chief Tengsoba of Guillingou, the native village of Oubri's mother, and the Tengsobadamba of other important ceremonial centers, visited the Mogho Naba in the palace courtyard. Here they all sacrificed white cocks and placed the blood and feathers of their victims on their ceremonial axes in order to "increase the power" of these objects. Later on, they were given cooked mutton, millet cakes, and other presents. Their departure for home later in the day marked the close of the Tense.

The religio-political function of the Tense is quite explicit, despite the statement by Dim Delobson, himself a Mossi chief (but also a convert to Catholicism), that "it is apparent that this festival has no outstanding features. Its sole aim is to make peace between the living and the dead, and, in the process, to allow everyone to enjoy the food."[6] Judging by the reports of old men who participated in the festival before it was banned, the people did have a good time and enjoyed the food. What is important, however, is that like the Basgha, the Tense served not only "to make peace

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between the living and the dead," but also to strengthen the political bonds 796
between the Mogho Naba and his chiefs, down to the humblest elder of a 182
Mossi compound.

In addition to the Basgha and Tense, the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou 769
appears to have offered another yearly sacrifice to Tenga. Each year, after 796
the Basgha, the Mogho Naba, the Baloum Naba, and a large entourage re- 782
portedly visited a large earth shrine called Tantibo in the vicinity of Saba- 543
tenga to offer propitiatory sacrifices in the name of all the people. When [778]
the royal party arrived at Sabatenga, they were joined by the Sabatenga Naba and his Tengsoba. The group proceeded to the foot of the sacred hill, and here the monarch dismounted, took off his bonnet and shoes, and climbed the hill. He made the customary Mossi salute at the shrine and looked on silently while the Tengsoba sacrificed animals and poured libations of millet beer and millet water in supplication for the health and prosperity of the Mogho Naba and all his people.[7]

When evil befell Mossi country in spite of the annual sacrifices to the ancestors and to the earth deity, the Mogho Naba had to offer additional sacrifices. If the country was plagued by drought, the ruler went to an [731]
earth shrine in Ouagadougou itself, called "Kom be paspanga" (literally, "water is strong there"), for a sacrifice. Moreover, he might order all his [634]
district and village chiefs to perform similar sacrifices to the earth shrines [622]
within their territories. In Nobere district, for instance, the district chief went to the village called Barkago, where, standing barefoot and bareheaded on the hilly shrine known as Beta, he ordered the local village chief and the Tengsoba to offer sacrifices for rain and good health.

It is generally believed by the Mossi that when the French attacked 648
Ouagadougou, the deposed Mogho Naba Wobogo made sacrifices to earth 782
shrines. Tradition has it that he sacrificed a black cock, a black ram, a black donkey, and a black slave on a large hill near the White Volta River, beseeching the earth goddess to drive the French away and to destroy the traitor Mazi whom they had placed upon the throne. When Mazi died, the Mossi people believed that he had received his just deserts from the earth shrine for treason. The French believe that Mazi was poisoned.[8]

The district and village chiefs, like the Mogho Naba, were required to 634
make propitiatory sacrifices to the earth shrines on behalf of their subjects. 622
Before taking office, a district chief was ritually shown the major earth 782
shrines in his territory, and he could not ignore their existence and their need for sacrifices. In a country with major local variations in rainfall and localized animal and human epidemics, the Tengsobadamba of stricken areas always called upon the local chiefs to help them propitiate disgruntled [793]
spirits.

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When one asks the Mossi directly, "What is a market?" the response to this question is: "A market is a place where people meet to buy and sell. People travel from one market place to another market place, and on the way they stop and see their friends in other villages. In the market one often meets and drinks with one's friends. People also go to distant markets to find things which they do not grow themselves or which cannot be found in their own markets."

Lending support to the Mossi contention that markets are places where one goes to buy and sell is the fact that most important markets in their country are found at the intersections of well-traveled routes. These intersections are often the places where chiefs have their capitals or compounds and this leads to the further idea that there is a connection between chiefs and markets, if only because the power of the chiefs makes markets possible. This does not mean, however, that the market is a purely physical entity which can only exist under the aegis of a chief, or that it is a purely economic institution. First of all, some markets, especially the smaller ones, are moved periodically without too much difficulty. Secondly, and of great importance, is the fact that whenever and wherever there is a large gathering of Mossi there is a "market." Indeed one can say that Mossi seldom come together in large numbers without coming to a market, or without creating one. It appears that the Mossi cannot interact with one another in any circumstance without also exchanging goods of some kind. For example, when a pagan chief holds the annual festival to his ancestors, the people who attend form a market in the vicinity of his compound. In those districts where the chiefs have become Christians and celebrate their birthdays rather than the traditional ancestors' rites, the people go to pay them homage and also "make a market." Similarly, whenever there is a funeral of an important chief, the people from the surrounding villages or even districts bring commodities to his hamlet and hold a market during the ceremony. On Christmas day, 1955, the people of Manga district "moved their market" about 500 yards to the Catholic Mission grounds where the Christians were celebrating their holiday. And after celebrating the prayers of Ramadan, the Moslems and their pagan townsmen repair to the markets to spend the rest of the day.

Most Mossi markets are inaugurated with religious ceremonies except those which develop by accretion—that is, by more and more persons coming voluntarily to trade. When a chief orders that a market be created or when a market is moved from one place to another place for any reason, the chief is the person who gives the order for the ceremony to be performed. First of all he speaks to his Raga Naba (market chief), usually a non-Mossi slave, about the need for the market or the desirability of changing its location. This man then consults a *teng-*

Chapter 12

The Penetration of Islam into Mossi Country

Islam in the Land of the Mogho Naba

643 The Mogho Naba, like his subjects, is above all an animist,
794 and it is hard to understand how he reconciles his fetishism with
the complex dogmas of Islam and with the many interdictions of
771 Christianity.

The Mogho Naba, however, is quite capable of being a Catholic or a Moslem on appropriate occasions and at the same time respecting the traditions of his ancestors. Thus, when the Christians celebrate Christmas, the emperor of the Mossi devoutly attends Midnight Mass. He keeps his cap on, however, just as the bishop wears his miter. In the same way he embraces Islam during the following three festivals: the moaghrem (the Mossi zembendé); Ramadan (nolokré; "to loosen the mouth"); and, finally, the zoulhési (the Mossi tabaski or kibsa).

797 Before describing how the Mogho Naba celebrates these Moslem festivals, we shall give a brief history of Islam among the Mossi and discuss the appointment of imams.

The Arrival of Islam among the Mossi

797 It was during the reign of Naba Doulgou, the twenty-third
793 Mogho Naba [204] after Oubri, founder of the Ouagadougou dynasty, that Islam took root in the empire of the Mogho Naba, and it was at that time that an imam was appointed at Ouagadougou.

Naba Sawadogo, who succeeded his father, Doulgou, sent his children to the Koranic school. Many of them obtained a fairly good education there, and the eldest son, who later succeeded to the throne under the name of Naba Koutou, even became a marabout. The development of Islam in Mossi country dates from his reign, as does practice of giving children of the Mogho Naba Moslem names such as Saïdou, Mahama, Moumouni, etc.

The Moslem Naba

791 1. Virtually all of the inhabitants of Nobéré, Nobila, and
771 Toècé (cantons in the present province of the Gounga Naba) are converts to Islam for reasons of personal convenience. They are the descendants of Naba Saga, twenty-second successor of Oubri.

2. The inhabitants of the villages of Doundoulma (descendants of Naba Kom, twenty-first successor of Oubri), Garpinné, and Kouila (descendants of Naba Doulgou or Roulgou, twenty-third successor of Oubri) are reputed to be devout Moslems. [211]

3. Kombissiri Naba Siguiri, circle of Ouagadougou.

4. Ramongo Naba Baongo, circle of Koudougou. Both of the above were descendants of Naba Warba nineteenth successor of Oubri, and were converted to Islam.

The present chiefs of these cantons are educated Moslems and possess mosques.

5. Sao Naba, a descendant of Naba Ouédraogo, circle of Ouagadougou, was converted nearly thirty years ago. His first teacher was a pilgrim returned from Mecca and a native of the village of Nakamtenga (near Kombissiri). He continued his study of the Koran under the direction of Sayenouné Bathily, a marabout originally from Kaédi (Mauretania) who was such a formidable thaumaturge that the local administration had to send him home in 1916. Sao Naba has a mosque, but it would appear that the Moslem religion has not diminished his animistic beliefs since he continues to make sacrifices to the manes and to drink beer from time to time (on customary feast days, for example).

6. Gourpila Naba (circle of Ouagadougou) is a former samand' biga of the present Mogho Naba and his conversion to Islam is recent, within the last six or seven years.

7. Boala Naba (circle of Ouagadougou) is a devout Moslem.

8. Gaongo Naba (circle of Ouagadougou) is also a devout Moslem. [212]

In conclusion let us point out that the present emperor con-
[551 tinues the tradition of giving Moslem names to his children and
871] has several of his sons in Koranic schools. There is no doubt that more of his children are being educated in these schools than in the official primary school. [213]

777 It would seem that living as they do in the midst of spirits who
157 permeate the air, the earth, the fire, the houses, the fields, and everything else, and who are not always in an accommodating mood, the Mossi would live in a perpetual state of terror since they have everything to fear from the poisoners during the day, the seuya during the night, but this is not the case. The Mossi are a light-hearted people; they like to laugh, and they do not look a bit worried. Once, as I pointed this out to an old man, he replied: "Everyone does not have enemies. And then, why worry about the inevitable?" In fact, those dreadful sorcerers are only to be feared by those who know that they have an enemy and that he can resort to the power of the sorcerers. The spirits are pacified with sacrifices, and if a soul is seized at night by a seuya, the only thing to do is to try one's best to release it.

Furthermore, like so many others, the Mossi easily forget all these beliefs in the course of everyday life and act as if they were masters of their own actions and confident of achieving their goals. Laughingly and playfully they toss sticks and stones at the wind eddies that whirl by, stirring up the dust and dry leaves. And yet, how many spirits and sorcerers may they conceal, each more dreadful than the next! The most ardent believers consult sorcerers and offer sacrifices before every undertaking; the others only bother with sacrifices on the Day of the Dead and when misfortune strikes. Is it not suffering that recalls us to the religious life, because it reminds us of our dependence on a power greater than ours? Here as elsewhere, there are ardent and lukewarm believers; no one seems to be indifferent, and atheism is unknown. They are not yet sufficiently civilized for such ideas!

000 Their conversion to Catholicism seems to be only a matter of time. Messis quidem multa, operarii autem pauci. /The harvest is great, but the workers are few./ May the Master of the Harvest dispatch many workers to this land and hasten the day when the whole of this people will enter the divine fold!

/108/ CONCLUSION

181 By way of conclusion, we shall now attempt to draw in rough outline the mental characteristics of the Mossi as we see them.

642 648 In short, the Mossi enjoyed the benefits of a strong and centralized government, established no doubt in former times at the price of large-scale massacres and exterminations. And this is what makes us ponder and what is, so to speak, the reverse side of the Black conquerors' coin. It is probable that Oubry, the founder of the Mossi empire in /584/ the twelfth century, was in his time something of a Samory or a Rabah. He probably managed to establish his empire only through the crushing, pillage, and massacre of a tremendous number of small, independent Black villages or small Lélésé, Nounouma, Boussansé, and Habé cantons. Yet in the nineteenth century, on the soil of this empire established at such a price, there were 25 inhabitants per square kilometer, while among the neighboring Gourounsi who have retained their freedom there are the 5 or 6 inhabitants per square kilometer common to West Africa as a whole. In addition, while the Gourounsi were prey to the Songhay, the Habé to the Toucouleur, and the Malinké and Bambara to Samory, our Mossi lived in safety. They had less independence and anarchistic freedom, but they had internal peace and external security. They had to obey their chiefs, but they knew no domestic struggles, no crushing by foreign pillagers. In short, the Mossi had entered upon the course of orderly government, and represented a superior state of civilization.

771 Now, we need only furnish a few details on Mossi religion. The majority of the Mossi population has remained fetishistic. We saw above that the Mossi, at the time of their great expansion in the bend of the Niger, came into conflict with a Moslem-
771 648 ized empire, the Mali empire, and that the second Songhay empire also led redoutable religious crusades against the Mossi. Under such circumstances the Mossi were bound to regard Islam as a foe. It is true that later the destruction of the second Songhay empire by the Moroccans (1591) brought peace to the Mossi on their northern frontier and freed them from the fear of Moslem invasion. The Yarsé settled in turn among the Mossi, and owing to their intelligence, industry, and capacity for trade, created for themselves a well-respected position. This was bound to incline the Mossi favorably toward Islam, or at least to lessen their prejudices and

771 their traditional fear. Nevertheless, Captain Lambert says that
648 prior to the French occupation, Moslems were forbidden by the
[798] Moro Naba to /585/ say their prayers (kella) publicly. They merely recited their rosary (séki) silently.

797 Since the French occupation, the Mossi have lost all their prejudices against Islam, because they have been conquered by a different foe. In addition the Moslems tell them, as they do everywhere else in West Africa, that the Whites will only be vanquished and will only leave the country when everyone has become a Moslem. This leads the Mossi to start salaaming, and actually it is probable that there have been more conversions to Islam among the Mossi since our occupation than prior to it. This result, which may appear strange at first, is indubitable. Actually these conversions, although more numerous than they used to be, are still rare if we consider that the enormous majority of the Mossi population and the territory as a whole remains fetishistic.

Let us proceed to a description of Mossi religious customs.

787 First, the funeral ceremonies.

755 When a Mossi is ill he summons a soothsayer (bara in Mossi). The latter takes some earth and looks at it to see what will happen to the sick man. Then he states either that the latter will get well, on condition of obliging with a sheep and a chicken, or else that he will die. In the first case the requested chicken and sheep are brought to the bara, and then, if the sick person gets well, he gets something else, a sheep or 5,000 cowries. If the sick person dies, contrary to prediction, the family merely says that the bara was a liar and nothing else happens.

764 If the deceased is a man, it is the family elders who care for him. They stretch his limbs and even his fingers so he will not turn rigid immediately, and they close his eyes. Then one of the elders washes the corpse with cold water in the presence of the whole family. After this, the elders sew a shroud with cotton bands to wrap around the deceased, and then he is rolled up in a mat.

The soukala chiefs (we know that among the Mossi every household head is the head of a soukala) are buried in the courtyard /586/ of their soukala, or else before its gate. The grave diggers are fetched, and they dig a hole the size of a man, lay the corpse at the bottom, and place boards above it to prevent the soil from weighing

The Mossi grow tobacco in fields around their

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248 homesteads, where they also cultivate their most important cash crops, cotton and indigo, which are used in the manufacture and dyeing of cotton cloth.

136 The wild fauna of Mossi country include several species of antelope, deer, monkeys, rabbits, snakes, and wild pigs. Elephants roam the beds of rivers and streams and often destroy cultivated fields, while lions and hyenas distress the people by attacking livestock. The pools and rivers of Mossi country are inhabited by turtles, crocodiles, and various species of scaled and scaleless fish. Chickens, muscovy ducks, and half-domesticated guinea fowl are the most valuable species of birds.

231 The Mossi have long been famous for their splendid donkeys and [492] horses. Donkeys are sometimes ridden, but they are used primarily as [439] beasts of burden. Horses are important for military and ceremonial purposes and for export to the tsetse-fly zones to the south. The Mossi raise two main types of cattle: a zebu-like animal in the northern regions and a [439] dwarf variety in the south. These animals are raised primarily for their milk and for export, and are seldom killed for meat until they are fairly old. Goats and sheep provide the main source of meat. Hog-raising is not widespread, and seems to be declining in importance with the increased ob- [771] [178] servance of Islamic food taboos, which is on the uprise even among people who are still pagans.

135 The subsoil of Mossi country is not well known, but so far there have been no major discoveries of mineral deposits. The only known gold field [301] remained unworked in aboriginal times. The Mossi do not like to wear [325] gold ornaments, preferring jewelry worked from imported copper and [439] silver. The northern Mossi worked their local iron in aboriginal times, but those in the south obtained this metal from caravan traders.

175 The nineteenth-century reports of Barth and other European travelers 439 indicate that the Mossi conducted a rather extensive foreign trade. At least six caravan routes passed through their territory, and traders such as the [443] Hausa and Mandingo visited the important Mossi trading centers at Yako, Pouitenga, and Ouagadougou, where they exchanged Saharan and forest products for Mossi livestock and cloth.[3]

101 The Mossi belong to the Voltaic culture area, a name given by Delafosse to the regions drained by the Black, Red, and White Voltas and their tributaries. The area embraces parts of Mali, the Ivory Coast, Dahomey, the Upper Volta, and northern Ghana.[4] It includes a vast congeries of peoples such [197] as the Dagomba, Mamprusi, Dagari, Birifo, Senufo, Gurmanche, Gurunsi, Lobi, Bobo, Tallensi, Konkomba, Dogon, Somba, Fulse, and Ninisi, all of whom speak languages belonging to the Gur or Moshi-Grunshi group of

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634 spirits. The chiefs could not refuse such requests, especially when the vil-
622 lagers were poor, because they were regarded as "fathers of their people."
782 In some cases, however, district chiefs had to protect their subjects against unscrupulous Tengsobadamba who took advantage of local crises and tried
661 to prey upon the villagers by refusing to perform the requisite sacrifices
793 unless they received substantial gifts. The ensuing struggle was between
634 the secular and the sacred; between the chief as a representative of the con-
782 querors, and the Tengsoba as a member of the conquered group. It was always resolved in favor of the Mossi chief, who never permitted his Tengsobadamba the same privileges held by religious practitioners in neighboring societies.[9] The Mossi chiefs recognized that they needed the Tengsobadamba, and many myths recount how invading Mossi chiefs went into the woods where the Tengsobadamba were hiding to beseech and eventually force them to return to their districts so that sacrifices might be continued. On the other hand, the Mossi chiefs always insisted on the primacy of the nam over any other power. They employed the Tengsobadamba to intercede with Tenga for the welfare of their subjects, but they never allowed the priests to control them.

771 The coming of Moslems to the kingdom of Ouagadougou had little
795 effect on the way in which the Mogho Nanamse used the traditional reli-
643 gious system to bolster their political power.[10] In fact, the Mossi rulers later used Islam and its adherents in the same manner as they had used the
[797] aboriginal religion. The Moslems first tried to subdue the Mossi in the fifteenth century by persuasion, and later by the jihad. Both attempts
[648] failed, but the Moslems finally entered Mossi country as refugees from
[167] Sudanese wars. Their fortunes waxed and waned, depending on whether they were befriended by the ruler in whose territory they lived. During
[798] certain periods, they were subjected to many restrictions and were forbidden by the Mogho Naba to recite their prayers in public places.[11] At other
[797] times, they were left free to practice their religion, and even succeeded in converting several Mogho Nanamse to Islam. Under converts such as Savadogo (ca. 1760), Islam spread into many districts and gave rise to such important local centers as Sakhaboutenga (Dakay).

771 The Moslems in Ouagadougou were represented at the court by their
795 Imam. This person even received his badge of office—a white turban and
792 white robe—from the Mogho Naba, and had to swear in the name of Allah and *Nabiyama* (the prophet Mohammed) to be faithful to him, obey him, and aid him in times of need. However, he did not have to drink the namtibo as suggested by Dim Delobson; nor did he have to observe such non-Moslem customs as drinking the millet beer the Mogho Naba provided for

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his guests.[13] On the contrary, when the Imam visited the ruler on Fridays 795
or during important festivals to read from the Koran, the sovereign gave 792
him sweetened millet water and appropriate gifts.

Most Mossi rulers at all levels had Moslems among their councillors. 795
These men were often the only persons who had traveled extensively out- 645
side the country (on pilgrimages to Mecca), and thus could counsel a ruler 648
about how to deal with foreign visitors. Most early European visitors to Mossi country were either helped or hindered (chiefly the latter, it seems) by these travel-wise councillors. Crozat had difficulties with the Moslems long before he arrived in Mossi country proper. When he got to Lanfiera, the Mossi who lived there were alarmed, and refused to help him proceed to Ouagadougou despite his protestations that "I come for the good of all, white and black, that we may be together like brothers, since the same God has made us all." Crozat reports that his plea was in vain because "El Hadj All-Karl declared that he would not receive me, and he will not receive me. El Hadj is wise, El Hadj is prudent, El Hadj knows all, El Hadj does not make decisions without good foresight, and once made, he keeps them."[13]

Crozat had the same difficulty when he entered Mossi country. He tells 795
us, "At Dounse [near Yako], for example, the marabouts did not look 645
favorably upon my arrival, and it took a great deal of insistence on the part 648
of Moussa to convince the Imam, my unwilling host, to present me to the 792
chief who had expressed the desire to see me."[14] Crozat also found that he had to lodge with the Imam when he arrived at Ouagadougou, and he was assigned the same huts "which had served Captain Binger," who had visited the capital before him. He was disappointed with his reception and declares:

> I already knew from experience what sort of influence these men exercised over the chiefs. As a councillor of the chief, the Imam was overtly acknowledged as the second official in the village, but in reality he often commanded it. The Imam of Ouagadougou, therefore, could do much to help me or to hurt me. My decision to court him might flatter him, and that would be a move in the direction of winning his good graces, which, all things considered, was most important to me. The result was only partly in my favor. I succeeded insofar as the Imam was not hostile to me, but he did not help me as he might have.[15]

These Moslem councillors realized better than most other people what the visits of the Europeans implied for the independence of the country, and they tried their best to counsel the monarchs against receiving such visitors.

Beginning with Mogho Naba Doulougou (ca. 1750) Mossi sovereigns, 771
whether Moslem or pagan, participated in the more important Moslem festi- 795
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795 vals. Being monarchs of the Mossi, they could not do otherwise. A few
643 days before the Moslem feast of Tabaski (called *Kibsa* by the Mossi), the
796 Mogho Naba sent the Imam of Ouagadougou cattle and sheep to be sacri-
184 ficed on the holy day. On the day of the festival, the Mogho Naba and his entourage went to the mosque and joined the Imam and his flock in prayer. After the ceremony the sovereign returned to his palace and ordered that a well-washed sheep be given to the Imam for a sacrifice. This Moslem sacrifice was performed in the palace courtyard, and the Mogho Naba himself held the tail of the animal while the Imam officiated. The Mogho Naba afterward ordered his servants to provide millet water and food for his Moslem subjects. Similar ceremonies were held in all of the districts and villages where Moslems lived.

The feast at the end of the Moslem month of Ramadan was also celebrated by the Mogho Naba and most of the people within the kingdom—a fact that so surprised Binger that he wrote, "It is a most curious fact that, whether Moslem or not, all the blacks celebrate this feast."[16] The Moslems usually flattered the Mogho Naba and the other chiefs by pretending to believe that they had observed the month-long fast (which the Mossi called *no-lwere*, from *nore*, "mouth," and *lwere*, "to tie up") during Ramadan.
[576] Thus, whenever they visited the Mogho Naba or another chief during this period, they greeted him with the salutation *Ne no-lwere*, which means, "I greet you who are fasting." Similarly, the morning after the end of the fasting period, the ruler and his officials were ritually given millet water "to break their fast." The important point here is that everyone knew that the Mogho Naba's fast was a ritual fiction. Binger, who was with Boukary Naba at the end of Ramadan before this prince became Mogho Naba Wobogo, commented: "Boukary Naba is a Moslem in outward appearance only. When the prayers were about to begin, he asked me whether I was going to worship. I told him that this festival was not in accord with those of the Christians. He seemed to be delighted by the idea that the whites are not Moslems."[17]

Most Mossi chiefs celebrated the end of Ramadan in a grander manner than they did Tabaski. The members of the royal household joined the other inhabitants of the capital in their anxious vigil for the crescent moon that was to herald the start of the ceremonies. There was general rejoicing when the moon appeared, and all through the night palace guards fired shots and launched arrows into the air. The following morning, the Mogho Naba went to the mosque with his courtiers to attend prayers. Then he returned to his palace to await the Imam, who came to offer prayers of thanksgiving. The Mogho Naba gave him presents, and was visited by gift-bearing

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Moslems. In return, he gave them millet water sweetened with honey, millet cakes, meat, and kola nuts.

The celebration of the festival in the districts was not as imposing as it was at Ouagadougou, but we have Binger's excellent eyewitness account of the festivities at Sakhaboutenga:

> First of all, Boukary sent word that he would like me to accompany him to Sakhaboutenga, where it is his custom to go on the day of the festival. The chief's men spent the entire day attending to preparations: they distributed powder, cleaned guns, tried on harnesses, and polished copper fittings as we would in France on the eve of a great parade. . . . It was an occasion for revelry, and they took full advantage of it. They ate as much as they could, drank a great deal of beer, and fired many rounds of ammunition. . . . In the evening there was a moment of consternation: no one had seen the crescent; however, they consoled themselves by repeating that although it had not been sighted here, it had certainly shown itself elsewhere, and they sat down to drink beer all night long.
>
> Monday, June 11. Early this morning Boukary sent a horseman to Sakhaboutenga to consult the marabouts. The messenger soon returned and assured the chief that the moon will be seen tonight. "All the marabouts have said so." The much-desired crescent appeared for a few moments this evening; shots were fired through half the night, and beer ran in floods. . . .
>
> Tuesday, June 12. From four o'clock in the morning, the tam-tams sounded everywhere, and everyone was busy; it is obvious that this is the eve of an important event. . . . Half an hour after our departure we arrived at Sakhaboutenga. We dismounted and camped under the trees at the entrance of the village. Some Moslems from the neighborhood came, greeted Boukary, and offered him some kola nuts in lots varying from five to eight. But they always held them out in a fold of their robe [it being forbidden for a commoner to hand a gift directly to a chief]. A village ..earby sent twelve large jars of beer.
>
> From afar and from all directions, long files of Moslems emerged from the village on their way to the Imam's for prayers. Several onlookers arrived on donkeys from the surrounding countryside. The religious ceremony took place on a flat expanse to the east of the village. It was an impressive spectacle. The crowd was silent. The faithful, ranged in ranks about 20 feet deep, prostrated themselves and rose again in perfect harmony and with awesome slowness. From time to time the voice of the Imam was raised, and his *amina* [amen] was heard with deep reverence.
>
> There were about three thousand persons of both sexes there, almost all of them dressed in white. The *bournous* [robes], the red tarbooshes, and the multitude of black faces lent to the ceremony the grandiose character of an oriental fete. As soon as the prayers were over, Boukary Naba walked up to the Imam of Sakhaboutenga to the sound of tam-tams to receive his blessing and the good wishes of the Moslems, who wished on my illustrious host many horses and warriors. Boukary Naba ordered that the Imam be given a magnificent sheep and several sheepskins full of cowries. He presents this

gift every year to the Imam and to Karamakho Isa, for whom he has great veneration. These are old and wise men who cannot but give him excellent counsel.[18]

The relations between Boukary Koutou and the Moslems of the Sakhaboutenga district show how Mossi chiefs, though pagans, were able to establish viable political bonds with potentially hostile believers of another religion. Boukary Koutou was probably a Moslem "in outward appearance only," as Binger suggests. Nevertheless, it was by being Moslems of this kind that Mossi rulers managed to retain the allegiance of their Moslem subjects. This was their duty as "fathers of their people," and apparently they did it without much hesitation. In this manner, they effectively used religion to bolster their power and sustain their authority.

Ritual connections between the Mossi rulers and the chiefs of surrounding countries enabled them to protect their subjects from foreign attack and to maintain internal cohesion. The numerous reciprocal gifts between the Mossi and such other Voltaic groups as the Dagomba, Mamprusi, and Gurmanche were based on the belief in descent from a common ancestor or ancestress. Ritual and the supernatural thus played an extremely important role in the cohesiveness of the Mossi kingdoms and in the functioning of their governmental processes. Without these ritual factors, it is doubtful whether the Mossi rulers would have been able to maintain such a relatively high degree of control over their subjects, given the relative weakness of their economic resources, communications, and armed forces. In trying to understand why the Mossi retained their autonomy for so long, one must take into consideration the statement made by a French officer a year after the Mossi were conquered: "We must not lose sight of the fact that [the Mossi] have always presented a common front to strangers, and that a single word of command is sufficient to unite them against the invader in the name of kinship and national unity."[19]

The phase of Mossi political history that began when Nyennega left Dagomba and moved northward came to an end with the European conquest. Most French scholars believe that the Mossi were in a state of decadence at the time of conquest and might have fallen to such African conquerors as El Hadj Omar, Samory Touré, or Baba To. The fact remains, however, that these conquerors all skirted Mossi country without entering it. If these African rulers believed that the Mossi were invincible in their unity, it was because the Mossi, through mythical bonds of common descent and actual bonds of kinship, had welded themselves into a cohesive and powerful group.

701 Formerly, when war broke out and he was summoned to [117]
554 Ouagadougou, the Tansoba [sic] assembled the principal ministers
645 of the Mogho Naba at the home of his host, and his word was final.

Aside from this special case, he might call upon a minister, but then a servitor always brought along the cushion on which he would sit until the minister receives him in his private quarters. He was never received in public.

Once inside, the Tansoba occupied the best seat, and the minister got down on the floor and performed the Mossi salute.

In sum, the Tansoba was held in higher esteem than any other personage at the king's court.

(b) At the present time. Today ministers often visit each other.
645 Since they have rapid means of transportation at their disposal, they
574 regularly go about without escorts. Most often their visits are made in order to deal with matters of general interest.

When a minister calls upon another minister, he keeps his cap
645 on and neither removes his shoes nor performs the kantissé. They
576 are equals. This equality has been established by the local admin-
574 istration which has granted the same rights and salary to all. The minister shakes hands with his colleague and takes a seat. He is served copious quantities of beer, and then he takes his leave.

In spite of assertions to the contrary, the Mossi empire is po-
642 litically disorganized. This accounts for the errors committed by the local administration and the [118] mistakes held against the ministers of the Mogho Naba who for a long time were granted too much power.

The Origin of Mossi Chiefdom (Legend), or the Way the Peulh, the Yarcé, and the Blacksmiths Salute Mossi Chiefs

● 773 The Peulh, the Yarcé, and, to a certain extent, the black-
184 smiths do not perform the kantissé (Mossi salute). They have a dif-
576 ferent way of saluting naba. A curious legend explains this phenomenon. However bizarre it may seem, it is not lacking in interest, and we shall tell it just as it was handed down to us.

•773 Origins of chiefdom. God first created four brothers. Like Adam and Eve in Paradise, they lived a life of ease without thought for tomorrow. When God saw this, he made four hàpidgou baskets and in them placed four miracles. The baskets were of different weights and shapes. Then he called the four brothers and said to them: "The future of each of you will depend on your choice." The eldest chose the heaviest basket, the second brother imitated his elder brother, the third took the largest basket, and the youngest took the last and smallest basket.

God then said to them: "Go forth into the world (that is, [119] Mossi country), and each of you build your house on a plain."

The next morning the four brothers started out. They came to a broad plain, and there the eldest brother remained. The three other brothers were grieved to leave him, but they continued on their way until each had found a place to settle.

It was then that the following miracles occurred.

1. The blacksmith (sayan in Mossi). Upon awakening the morning after he was established, the eldest brother found himself surrounded by a small family, large quantities of iron, and an anvil. These were the contents of his chosen kapidgou. The man at once realized that he was supposed to use the iron for something useful, so he set to work and, with God's help, discovered the hoe (wanka) and the axe (laré) which are essential for farming. Thus, he became a blacksmith (sayan).

2. The Peulh ("silmiga" in Mossi). The second brother, upon awakening, found himself surrounded by great numbers of oxen and cows, herded by some young men of his tribe. There was nothing in the way of shelter except a kind of crude hut (songdo), but he himself was very trim. His clothing was all white, and he had a white cap wound with a turban. He realized that he was the master of all of the beings around him, because he had only to give an order and large gourds filled with milk were at once brought to him. Thus, he became a Peulh.

3. The Yarga. The third brother, on waking, found [120] himself surrounded by donkeys laden with salt, kola nuts, and other articles of trade. Like his elder brother, the Peulh, he wore an ample white robe, but his cap was of a darker color. Thus, he

773 became the Yarga or tradesman.

4. The naba. As for the youngest brother, imagine his astonishment upon awakening to find himself in a splendid dwelling made up of many tata [houses] and surrounded by a real court with hundreds of courtiers, horses, and grooms. He saw a crowd approach and prostrate themselves in the Mossi salute as it is performed today. Furthermore, he had a harem. He realized that he was the uncontested master of all these people. Thus was created the naba.

These four brothers, however, could not endure having no news of each other. One day the eldest brother, the blacksmith, said to himself: "I am going to undertake a journey to find my brothers and learn what has happened to them." He started out, first taking care to provide himself with some of the tools he had made. When he reached the village, he had great difficulty in making his way through the herds of cattle and their herders. Finally he managed to present himself to the master of the place, the owner of so much wealth, and recognized his brother, the Peulh. The latter received him cordially and saw to it that abundant food, prepared in large part from milk, was served to him.

[121] After he had rested, the blacksmith told the Peulh the object of his journey, and the latter decided to accompany him. They left at dawn, the blacksmith with his load of daba (wanksé) and the Peulh followed by some of his cattle and by many bearers carrying gourds filled with milk for the journey. At nightfall they reached the village of their brother, the Yarga, whom they hardly recognized. For the first time they tasted kola nuts (gouré) which, they were told, came from komnoré (shores of great rivers). In short, the Yarga gave his brothers a worthy reception.

When the blacksmith and the Peulh told their brother that they were merely passing through to inquire about his health and that they were going on the next morning to seek their youngest brother, the Yarga, in turn decided to accompany them. All three set out with many followers. The tradesman loaded a donkey with salt, intending to sell some of it to people encountered along the way and to give the rest to his young brother.

They were overcome with both admiration and fear when they reached the youngest brother's house. They had heard along the

113 road -- but did not take the news seriously -- that their brother had become a "great naba," that he ruled over numerous subjects and that it would be difficult to approach the throne on which he sat. To their great surprise, all came about exactly as had been foretold. They encountered great difficulties in breaking through the rigid court protocol. They were repulsed by sogoné, jostled by grooms, and had to wait for hours [122] before His Majesty the Naba deigned to receive them as though they were the humblest of his subjects. In spite of their protestations, the courtiers of the naba had not for a moment believed that there might really be a family tie between these strangers and the one whom they regarded as a "god."

Flourishes on drums finally announced the appearance of the potentate. When he took his place on the throne (guéré), even though his three brothers were filled with wonder, jealousy nevertheless arose in their hearts. They looked at each other questioningly. Should they abase themselves as did his subjects? Here is what happened. The blacksmith sat down on the ground but did not imitate the Mossi salute. He merely struck the ground with his zanré. The Peulh, who was more arrogant, squatted, held his arms out in front, closed his fists, and then casually uttered these words: "Lafibé raoua, gang'bélafi" (literally, "Good day, man, how are you?"). He had kept his cap on but had left his néoda (shoes) at the door out of respect and fear. As for the Yarga, who was nearest to the naba, he sat down on the ground, slightly bent his legs, bowed a little, and finally rubbed his hands together slightly by way of salutation. He had also left his néoda at the door but had kept his cap on, like his brother, the Peulh.

The naba had them led to the home of one of his ministers and for several days saw to it that they were given copious meals and presented them with many gifts.

In return, the blacksmith presented the naba with a load of wanksé [123] (hoes) to cultivate his fields, the Peulh gave him some cattle, and the Yarga gave a bar of salt.

Finally they decided to leave their young brother and return to their respective villages. They took counsel along the way and decided to settle in the territory of the naba, thus making sure of his

773 protection. The Peulh would acquire more cattle by taking charge of the animals belonging to the Mossi, and the Yarga would find better markets for his salt and kola nuts. As for the blacksmith, he would make the many farm implements needed for the cultivation of the vast domains which were either not worked at all or insufficiently exploited because of the lack of tools.

They set the date for their return. Once more the naba received them very cordially, but they showed no greater deference to him than they had shown on their first visit.

And so the legend comes to an end by concluding that this is why the Peulh and the Yarga have retained their spirit of independence. As for the blacksmith, who remained poorer, he came [526] to submit to certain regulations which are common to all the Mossi although he never leaves his forge to salute the naba when he passes. As has already been noted, he merely strikes his zanré against his anvil, just as formerly he struck it on the ground by way of salutation.

[124] Chapter 8

Customs. Enthronement of the Naba. Names.

Death of a Mogho Naba

643 766 The death of a Mogho Naba is kept secret until the arrival at Ouagadougou of the Tansoba, who was forewarned when the illness became grave. On his arrival, the public is told that "the fire has gone out" (bougsaré kimé).

The personages in charge of the burial are Pazany'ting'soba (the undertaker), Tampouy Naba, Kassiri Naba, Benghin Naba, Toghin Naba, Ganin Naba, and Tanghin Naba.

The arrangement of the tomb. The grave in which the mortal remains of the king are buried is really a subterranean hut. Before the king is placed in his final dwelling (1), the following things

1. The body is wrapped in one or several cow hides.

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533

And you do not want to let her go!
Are you perchance this child's mother or father?
You are not the God who created her."

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832 The wennega consists mostly of back-and-forth movements of the hips in slow rhythm. Various figures are performed, but there is always the same rhythm and the same swaying of the hips. The sweetheart herself begins to dance, a curious fact, since women do not usually take part in the men's dances.

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776 We have noted that another form of Mossi dance is religious, the waongo. The waongo is a mysterious being, half animal, half spirit.

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776 Origin of the waongo. Tradition has it that this being was one day found all alone on a plain. Those who first saw him took fright and ran away. They went to tell the village elders, who assembled a goodly number of young men, armed [236] with arrows and sticks, to overcome this strange being.

He was not found at the place where he had first been seen. He had moved some distance away. The villagers surrounded him, and the elders, who had brought him a rooster, began to question him: "If he should be taken to the village, would he hurt the villagers? Would he bring misfortune?" The chicken was then sacrificed, but it is told that the sacrifice was not accepted.

The elders returned to the village and brought back a white rooster (norapelga), a he-goat (boéga), and a dog (bâga). Then they addressed the waongo, saying: "We were perhaps mistaken just now. Perhaps you wanted an animal in addition to the rooster we offered to you? If, by becoming our guest, you can bring us happiness, good health, and children, accept these offerings!" They slaughtered the rooster and the goat and killed the dog. This time the sacrifices were accepted.

[532] What the waongo is. The waongo consists of a mask, usually representing the head of an animal, and a bindou (a kind of long cloak made from the bark of the béringa shrub which is soaked in water for a long time to blacken it or from baobab fibers).

773 According to tradition, he had beside him a toabga (a kind of
535 magic axe) and a tibo (a sacred object, fetish).
776 The people captured him and put him in a safe place. But of what possible use could he be to them? Nobody knew. [237] He was something unknown and fearful.

One day the people had gone off to hold the kouré (funeral observances) of an old man and were on their way back home. They were warba dancers. They were all singing as they approached the house of the waongo, who came out. The dancers were terrified and ran away. Only one of the singers had the courage to remain behind.

He went on with the songs and the waongo followed him right up to the house of the deceased, and there he began to dance.

From this it was concluded that the waongo had something to do with funerals. Since that time the waongo is summoned whenever an old man or woman of the Nioniossé (soukoaba) dies. He never dances for deceased young people.

Since the waongo or, rather, the soukou is considered to be sacred and to embody a sort of religion which possesses secrets
[198] that should not be made known to everyone, a special language -- a deformation of the môré [Mossi] language -- has been invented. It is understood only by the initiates.

535 The waongo dances to the sound of a special tom-tom, accompanied by songs and praises in the secret language. The dance is of no special interest; it involves more or less frenetic movements, such as characterize most of the dances of the indigenous peoples.

The waongo is always accompanied by a circle of young men dressed in a narrow strip of cotton, decorated with cowries, and carrying satchels at their sides. These boys make movements with their heads which [238] are precisely like those made by circus
[534] horses. In addition to the tom-tom, flute players (wissé) accompany the dances.

535 We shall now speak of the true funeral dance, called warba.
764 It is performed by men wearing skirts, a kind of net shirt dyed blue, and headdresses made of cowrie shells. A long fringe, weighted

613 778 602 554 usually been banished from their patrilineage for some illegal act or had voluntarily left home after a dispute over inheritance of the nam, goods, or women.

The fact that noble lineages often absorbed sisters' sons was only one of the reasons why such lineages survived and expanded, even if only at the expense of other lineages within the local society. Another reason for this growth was that the nobles, possessing the nam and its prerogatives, received more wives than the commoners. They had more children and thus multiplied more rapidly. Mossi lineages were generally exogamous through their whole depth, but exogamy became increasingly mandatory as the segments became smaller. Marriage within a maximal lineage was permitted only when some of its members had moved so far away from its original locality that the original ties were either forgotten or ignored. The Mossi [773] have myths in which the lineage founder gives his overly numerous descendants permission to marry certain of their relatives. Even so, if a marriage was actually found to have occurred between distant relatives, appropriate sacrifices had to be made to the ancestors.

613 Marriage was also forbidden between persons who could trace a common maternal ancestor. But because the time depth here was very shallow, total bilateral exogamy was practiced to a depth of only four or five generations. Of course, the differential concern with genealogies between those who had access to the nam and those who did not, had an effect on the extent to which exogamy was practiced.

613 583 Most Mossi marriages were based on an exchange of women between two lineages linked by a long-term series of reciprocal exchanges of goods and services. Women were regarded as the most valuable part of this system. In theory, only the Boodkasma of a babissi had the right to give a woman as a wife to another lineage. However, the initiators of the reciprocal relations between lineage segments were often babissi heads, Yirisobadamba (heads of nuclear families), or individual lineage members. When a man from one lineage "made friends" with a member of another and rendered him a service or received a favor from him, their respective lineages were considered to be involved. The corporate nature of the lineage segment was acknowledged by all persons engaged in reciprocal relations, and the relations between two individuals were seen as relations between their lineages.

When a man wished to give a daughter to a friend as a wife, he had to consult his Boodkasma, who then gave the woman to the friend's Boodkasma. The latter accepted the woman as a wife for the lineage rather than for the man involved. The lineage retained its rights *in gene-*

792 to divine Providence. These are the mystics.

However, the deism of either type is not very deep. All 775 believe that a dead person will rejoin his ancestors and dwell eternally with them. They imagine, however, that "the road to Eternity is hard and the Kingdom of God so remote from the earth that they give cowries to their dead to pay their way through difficulties, the hazards of the journey being directly related to the good or bad actions of the deceased."

This may be said to be a kind of vague notion of a hell or a purgatory. However, this hell is neither the "everlasting fire of the Christians nor the horrible sufferings of the Moslems," since the person is supposed to be with his relatives.

The Alkyoamé. One sometimes hears a Moaga say: "I cannot avenge what you have done to me, but it will be settled on the day of alkyoamé." This is a somewhat superficial notion of a Day of Judgment. The Moaga does not really believe in a final judgment any more than he believes in the end of the world or the resurrection of the body. By the words alkyoamé daré, he alludes to the day when he and his enemy will both die and God will subject one of them to a punishment -- understood to be temporary -- for the harm he has done the other. [200]

Beliefs and Superstitions Concerning the Soul After Death

• 774 What do the Mossi believe the human being to be? Man is composed of three elements: the visible body, the siga or toulé (soul), and the kima (ghost).

The siga, which may be called the soul, is the part of the man which is to return to God.

Siga. According to the Mossi, the siga or toulé is easily frightened. A great sorrow, illness, or the death of a loved one can cause it to abandon the body temporarily. It then assumes a human appearance and can be seen by the person himself or by others. In that case, charms or fetishes are used to make it return.

774 Its temporary absence from the body is not thought to have 761 any serious consequences since this does not disturb the normal functions of the human organism, but, since body and soul cannot

774 761 live without each other, its prolonged absence is thought to cause death.

Kima (from ki, "to die"). This is a sort of silhouette of a 774 person who is about to die. It is visible only to certain initiates. 763 It is said, however, to be somewhat deformed, and its presence may make one's hair stand on end or cause shivers that paralyze the legs and make walking impossible.

775 The siga may be distinguished from the kima in that the latter, being already dead, has its head completely shaved, wears ashes in the form of [201] a cross or X on its forehead, or has its feet stained with blood.

As soon as the person dies, his kima roams around the house for a time and then joins his ancestors at Pilimpikou.

775 Pilimpikou. Pilimpikou is a village belonging to the ad- 778 ministrative district of Koudougou (upper Volta). On a mountain nearby, there is a grotto which is regarded as the sacred place where the kimsé of all the dead Mossi assemble.

Legend has it that any deceased relative may be found again at Pilimpikou if one were so unfortunate as not to have been present during his last moments. One can also go there to find out where the deceased has hidden part of his fortune or some valuable object.

It is said that one has only to go to the Tingsoba of Pilimpikou and ask him to use his influence to call the deceased.

The Tingsoba orders the petitioner not to shed a single tear at the sight of the "ghost," and, the legend goes on to say, if the secret of the interview with the kima is not kept, the person will die within the year.

Finally, it is believed that when the kimsé welcome new members -- they represent the whole family of all the dead Mossi for countless generations -- they organize games whose echoes are heard by the inhabitants of Pilimpikou.

775 Young people of both sexes who were unmarried at the time of their death and newborn children who have died [202] return to that place where they dwelt before coming into the world in order to "return to human form in the womb of another woman or of their former mother." As we noted in an earlier paragraph, the Mossi believe in reincarnation. [203]

000 help each other. If they are sometimes, indeed too often, fleeced by middlemen—and it would seem that the various European administrations, no matter what their nationality, should prevent such speculations in their own best interests—if the natives are fleeced, a European ignorant of the customs and the language would be fleeced all the more. Who would guard his herds during his absence; who would lead them to far markets if he stayed home? It is difficult to find a native [181] who can be fully trusted. At present, however, trading in livestock is the only possible source of profit in the country.

The forthcoming railroad will soon change trade conditions and promote the interests of the Europeans without undermining those of the natives. This is to be desired, because Mossi country will only come fully into its own when its products can be exported. The natives were too long isolated as a result of their continuous warfare, and the nabas, it must be said, were too inclined to monopolize all the goods, for trade to develop in a significant way. The French peace, by making the roads safe, has already done much for the country; it will achieve even more when the railroad which is now cutting across Mossi country links it on the one hand to the Ivory Coast and on the other hand to the Niger Colony. Trade will then no longer be carried out exclusively with the Germans and the British, and as soon as native products find sure channels of export, the raising of livestock and agriculture itself will be greatly extended. The Mossi are not averse to trade. [181 They actually seem to possess a real knack for it, which until now 439] they have had no opportunity to exercise freely. They have not yet taken full advantage of their transactions, and this is why they seemed to some observers to have no aptitude for trade. They will adapt to it, as they already are.

/65/ Chapter 3. Hygiene, Disease, Death, and Burial

828 Part of life, especially the life of a Black, is spent in sleep, but 774 the slumberer is sometimes disturbed by dreams that are more or less 787 extraordinary. The Mossi attribute dreams to ancestral and other spirits. They also say that the soul leaves the body during sleep and does the things witnessed in the dream. Sorcerers are consulted to find out what caused the dreams and how to cope with the bad omens.

776 kikiriga, in turn, are to ward off anything that might harm the crop,
241 birds, caterpillars, thieves, and the like, and to fill with millet a granary of the size drawn on the ground with ashes at the time of harvest. If the kikiriga has properly carried out his duties, he gets another chicken when all the grain has been gathered in a heap.
776 Pregnant women are under the protection of a special kikiriga, and
[843] small children have one of their own to ward off illness and danger. Do we not say ourselves that a special Providence watches over the very young?

776 Actually, everyone has his kikiriga. Some have an evil one, and
828 those are the people who quarrel with everybody, the ones who are never successful, whose livestock dies, for the kikirsi often kill the goats, sheep, and horses that die of illness. Other people have a
[677] good kikiriga, and for them everything goes well; they were born under a lucky star. These are the engaging, sweet, good-natured people
[513] who get rich and who have many children. When a Mossi lies down to sleep in his hut, he rests his head on a stone or a small mound of beaten earth. This is where his kikiriga dwells, and from time to time, especially when he feels the need for special protection, he
[782] sacrifices a guinea hen or sometimes even a goat, with the understanding that the spirit will chase away all fellow spirits who might want to harm him and will avert all illness and all danger from his path.

/83/ The tangandé is a spirit who has the shape of an animal and
776 who is regarded as the protector of a village. The term is also ex-
778 tended to designate the spirit's place of residence, usually the sacred
825 grove but sometimes a mere stone or even an open space. The tangandé may be a crocodile, a boa, a leopard, a turtle, a deer, a hare, etc. The animal is sacred to the whole village and may not be killed in the sacred grove, but it may be killed elsewhere, even a short distance from the thicket.

776 The tangandé is a guardian spirit because it protects men and sends
755 its servants to accompany the village people on trips when they request it to do so. The natives incessantly turn to it for protection, and the sorcerers incessantly refer those who consult them to the tangandé to obtain cures and to request the release of souls held captive
776 by evil sorcerers. When someone dies, sacrifices are made to the
782 tangandé with requests to protect the survivors and to ward off illness. When souls leave the body during sleep, they often go to the sacred
[774] grove. Anyone may sacrifice to the tangandé and in the tangandé.

776 tangandé in every detail either, for only the village may have a tangandé, and there does not seem to be any magic pact unless the sacrifices offered are considered as such a pact, which does not seem justified. The tangandé animal is never sacrificed, and no special initiation takes place.

774 761 [775] The closest thing to totemism among the Mossi seems to be their concept of the human soul, and yet it is not, properly speaking, a totem in the sense indicated by these authors. Every man has a soul that lives on after death and takes the name of kyma, while during life it is called siga. Shortly before death it takes the name of toullé [197] /85/ in Ouagadougou or toundo in Koupela, but siga, toundo, kyma are one and the same thing, one and the same principle. According to the Mossi, this soul is an animal, invisible of course, a snake, a crocodile, a deer, a hare. The soul is related to this animal, it belongs to the same family, so that to kill a snake or a crocodile in a village where the soul of the inhabitants is a snake or a crocodile is to kill an inhabitant of the village; every individual related to the snake has a snake in the village to represent thim, and he will die when his soul-animal dies.

774 784 Yet, and this runs counter to the definitions of totemism, the individual expects no aid from this animal, never sacrifices to it, and never kills it himself to renew the kinship pact. A person whose soul is a crocodile is forbidden to kill crocodiles in his own village, but he may kill them elsewhere, although he may never eat them, while he may kill the tangandé animal as long as he does so outside the tangandé, and he may eat it at any time. Some people, when they [766] find a dead soul-animal of their family near their village, render it funeral honors, weep, wail, and bury it as one of their own, but they offer it no gifts and hold no koure. Generally it is merely covered with earth. The most widespread soul-animals are a kind of snake (bosombodro) and the crocodile. Several families may have the same [582] one, and marriage, although exogamic, is not forbidden between members of these families.

774 754 The soul may leave the body and in fact leaves it often, especially during the night. If children had a good time in a certain place, if they enjoyed themselves at someone's house, the soul returns there at night. This is when the worst is to be feared from the sorcerers; they may seize the soul by surprise, and its unfortunate owner will die.

774 828 761 In the course of a dream, the soul may warn its owner of a threatening danger. One day a native, whose village and name were told to me, dreamed that his enemy offered him a kola nut. Much anxiety ensued, for this is a sign used by the soul to indicate that an enemy threatens one with death. In such a case there is only one remedy, to deposit a few cowries on a nest of large red ants, so they will avert the disaster. The man set out immediately for the nearest ant nest. Alas, a snake bit him along the way, and he died before he could offer his gift to the ants! Such occurrences obviously make a profound imprint on the imagination of the natives, who immediately react with the sophism: post hoc, propter hoc. A few such cases are sufficient to anchor them forever in their superstitions, and innumerable such occurrences were related to me.

774 761 If the soul can leave the body, it is possible to seize it and to prevent it from re-entering its body, and this is why our Blacks do not like to be photographed. They say that there is an evil spirit in the box, who takes the soul and eats it. This is proved by the fact that the individual may later be seen on the piece of paper.

774 753 One becomes sick when his soul cannot re-enter the body because it is held prisoner by an evil sorcerer or by a kikiriga, and many sacrifices must be offered to obtain its release /86/ and return. Entreaties are usually directed to the tangandé in such cases, because it is stronger than all the other spirits, stronger even than the sorcerers, and because its function is to protect the village.

774 761 754 775 Sometimes the soul was so well hidden that the tangandé cannot find it: the sorcerer has eaten it right away, or the tangandé itself is in collusion; or the ancestral spirits are calling the sick person; or, finally, it is God who sent the disease. Nothing can be done, and the person dies. His soul changes names, and henceforth is called kyma. It leaves the body at the moment of death. If it was taken by a sorcerer or by the ancestral spirits, at the moment of death it leaves the sacred grove where it was held captive. It proceeds to the place of souls from where it will return to the grave whenever sacrifices are offered to it. It will also return if it wishes to afflict the survivors with a disease of some sort.

775 735 Is the soul punished for the evil it has done on earth and rewarded for the good? Opinions on the subject differ. Some say that when one gives alms to the poor, and the Mossi frequently do, when one is generous and hospitable, God takes all that has been given and sets

791 Anyone may become a sorcerer, and those who take up the call
756 are usually poor chaps who have nothing to live on, who do not have the strength to till the soil, or who simply want to live without working. When someone enters the brotherhood of bara, people say that he wants to learn how to be idle, and they laugh about it.

791 During the dry season the country is overrun with hordes of Gourounsi and Nankana, filthy and ragged, who claim to know everything and to possess a charm for every purpose, even to make peanuts grow. Led by a chief who speaks a few words of Mossi, they wander from one village to another, dancing and singing for the nabas like the mountebanks who perform at the wagon door of fortune tellers to attract the public... They are consulted, and they return home well rigged out thanks to the cowries they have gathered in Mossi country.

754 /105/ The seuya or soul-eaters are greatly feared. The death of
774 a native, especially that of a child, is often ascribed to them. They have the power of leaving the human body they inhabit and wandering about everywhere in search of a soul to eat. Fire is their vehicle, and they travel about at night on the will-o'-the-wisps that wander in the fields around the huts. They may be stopped by the trees and thrown to the ground, and those who possess an amulet more powerful than their can drive them away.

The seuya are extremely dangerous, for complete protection against them is impossible. They work by night. Every mortal soul leaves the body often during the night and goes wandering about. Woe to it if it should come upon a seuya. He will pounce upon the soul or put it under a big stone, and the unfortunate body that owns it will fall ill and eventually die. The only remedy is to offer a sacrifice to the tangandé, and the guardian animal of the village will go on a search until it locates and releases the unhappy soul; the tangandé causes it to re-enter the body, and the sick person gets well. If, however, the seuya ate the soul, or if he is in connivance with the tangandé, nothing can be done, and death swiftly ensues.

791 The bagré sorcerers can tell who is a seuya and who is not. Some
754 of them have a tim which permits them to distinguish the seuya in a crowd of people. They need only smoke a pipe, and the eyes of the soul-eating man will redden and fill with tears. Those accused of
754 being seuya usually deny the charge, and to call someone a seuya is
[578] one of the worst insults. We have already described the heinous death inflicted on these unfortunate people. Old women especially are

Tenga Wende of the desire for a good growing year and gives each girl a small part of the wet earth near the shrine; this represents the now sanctified soul (*shiga*) and is placed under the granary from which the millet seeds for the new crop will be taken. 796 221

Then those who possess land controlled by the earth custodian organize a hunt for his benefit. The following day, the earth custodian visits each lineage which possesses fields in areas of the bush under his custodianship. He is given calabashes filled with millet gruel, which he pours as a libation on the earth, asking Tenga Wende to grant good health, heavy rains, and a successful harvest to the household. As the libation is poured, the women try to catch a little in their own calabashes of gruel, which they then pour as their sacrifice. Because the millet from the granaries of good harvests is lucky, other women want to try to catch a little of it in their own offerings; thus the libations spill from one calabash into another as they fall on the earth. [782] [777]

The second moon is called "Bega" after the ceremonial which coincides with the first labor in the fields, the clearing and burning which precedes planting. After making a sacrifice at his own altar, the earth custodian goes to the residence of the neighboring priest (*Boga*) specifically charged with the propitiation of the vegetal manifestation of the deity. This visit symbolizes the interdependent relationship of the two priests and the supernatural powers which they control. The *Boga* then repeats the libations made during the previous ritual, but this time the offerings of millet gruel are made to Tido Wende, the force which gives life to the plants, rather than to the earth. [793]

A sacrifice to Pogo Wende, the specific manifestation of Tenga Wende which guards a farmer's fields, is usually made after they have been cleared and prepared for planting. Either before or after the sowing of the first seeds, the farmer asks the earth custodian to sacrifice a sheep or a goat to the field deity, requesting good health, heavy rains, and a rich harvest. This sacrifice (*Pogo Mande*) is the final aspect of the ceremonial preparations for the new economic cycle. It is designed to enlist the benevolence not only of Pogo Wende but also of the twin spirits which inhabit the field. If the twins are well disposed toward the farmer, they will protect the soul (*ki shiga*) of his millet stand from the twin spirits from neighboring fields who might try to steal it. Like the ancestral spirits, the twin spirits send a high wind into a field, blowing the ripening grains from the stalk and liberating their "souls" (*shiise*), which are then captured to enrich the spirits' own fields. [776] [782] [774]

The third moon of the year is called "Cundiba Bega." The fourth, which usually corresponds with the European month of June, is called "unaccompanied" (Quizale), referring to the fact that no ceremonial is observed during its phase. The hard work in the fields is begun at this

5: Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1959
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221 796 time. "Waraga," which means "first cultivation," is the name given to the fifth. The sixth, which appears in early September or late August, is called "Baca," meaning "second cultivation."

If the millet is not yet ripe for harvest at the appearance of the seventh moon, it is also called "Baca," since the work of cultivation must continue. This choice rests with the chief of the village of Room. The entire Mossi kingdom waits for his decision to know whether the ceremonial cycle called "Basga," which closes the economic year, is to begin or whether the harvest and its attendant ceremonies are to be put off for another month. Just behind his residence is a sacred millet field whose grains, as they mature, contain an aspect of the souls (*riim shiise*) of the dead kings of the Yatenga. When the millet in this field is ready to be cut, the next moon to appear is called "Yalem," and the ceremonial cycle which closes the economic year is begun. In the early days of the Yatenga dynasty millet from this field was used to prepare a sacrificial gruel to propitiate the deceased rulers of the newly established kingdom. When it is cut today, a first portion is taken to the altar at Room dedicated to the souls of these early kings. Two other bundles of millet are prepared from the same field. One is sent to the *Yatenga Naba* at Ouahigouya, who is the living descendant of the dead kings. The other is sent to the village of Gourcy, the former capital and the first residence of the founder of the Yatenga dynasty, Naba Yadiga.

[774 824] [769]

The emissaries to the two political centers are accompanied by young people who break off stalks of millet from the fields along their way, adding these to the bundles of grain so as to include all of the farmers of the Yatenga in this offering which symbolizes the dependence of the Mossi on the benevolence of the souls of the dead kings and their living descendant. The millet taken to Ouahigouya is sacrificed at the palace altar of the former rulers. Part of the millet sent to Gourcy is sacrificed at the altar of the spirits of the former village chiefs (*nakom shiise*); the other part is sacrificed at the shrine of the former kings. At Ouahigouya and Gourcy a portion of each sacrificial offering of millet is returned to Room with stalks from the local crop at each place. These are used to make a final sacrifice symbolizing the interdependent relationship of Mossi religious, economic, and political organizations. The ceremonial cycle serves to demonstrate the reliance of the people on the benevolence of the spirits of their former kings for their social, economic, and supernatural well-being.

[769] [182]

A ceremony called "Kom Filiga" follows. Meaning "water thanksgiving," it is the occasion for thanking the Mossi ruler, the *Yatenga Naba*, for the wise direction of affairs which has permitted the farmers to cultivate their fields in peace. All village and canton chiefs travel to Ouahigouya to salute their king and rededicate themselves to his service.

8: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1958
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776 considered the wife of a male deity called *Winnam*, *Windé*, or *Naba Zidiwindé*. The true nature of Winnam is not clear. The Mossi say: "Winnam is the sun, and Winnam is God"; he is considered a sun god as well as a supreme deity. [775] Winnam is venerated but he is not feared, because it is the dead ancestors who chastise evil-doers by affliction or death. When wicked people die they face the wrath of the ancestors in *Keemsélenga*, or land of the ancestors.

The Mossi have several concepts of the spiritual essence or animating principle of man. 774 First there is the *seega* (pl. *seesé*), an entity found in all living beings; it leaves the body during sleep, and its adventures provide the dreams of men. The seega can be captured during its nocturnal wanderings or in places where large crowds congregate. If the seega is captured and eaten by a [761] sorcerer, its owner will die. A man's shadow is also called his seega; persons about to die have no shadows, since their seesé have either been stolen or have [822] left on their own account.

Another principle called the *keema* (pl. *keemsé*) is associated with the dead or with persons about to die. 775 The keema of a dying man wanders around and often frightens people; as soon as he is dead, he is no longer referred to by name but is called the "keema." Keemsé is also the word used for the generalized [769] ancestors who sanction the behavior of the living and who must be placated if people wish to have enough food, wives, children, and good health. A man's own keemsé take a vital interest in his affairs in return for which they receive nourishment in the form of the seesé (animals do not have keemsé) of sacrificed animals.

The breath, called *vousem*, is also considered an animating principle by the [827] Mossi and, since it leaves the body through the nose at death, they believe that a man's nose is the first thing to die. It is not clear how the seega is disposed of when the body dies. Some people say it remains forever about the haunts of man; others believe that it goes to a mountain called Plimpikou and disappears into a cavern. Still others believe that the seega becomes the keema and goes to Plimpikou, from whence the keemsé come to visit their descendants. It is difficult to determine whether the Mossi have always been vague about their traditional religious concepts or whether this uncertainty is the result of the influx of such foreign creeds as Islam and Christianity.

The first recorded contact between the Mossi and Moslems took place 175 around 1328 when the Yatenga Mossi attacked, burned, and sacked Timbuktu, 797 then held by the Dia dynasty of the Songhoi (Dubois 1896:251). For more than a century afterward, the Mossi pursued a turbulent and aggressive policy in the region of the Niger bend, pushing as far as Gourma, Walata, and Banku (ibid:127). They were finally defeated and routed by Sonni Ali in 1477. In 1499, when Askia the Great (El Hadj Mohammed ben Abou Bekr, usurper of the Songhoi throne from the Sonni dynasty in 1494) returned from his pilgrimage to Mecca, he launched a *jihad* or holy war on the Mossi who had rejected his ultimatum to adopt Islam. Askia defeated the Mossi, "devastated the towns and countryside, took men, women, and children as prisoners, and forcibly converted these captives to Islam" (Dubois 1896:127–128). The

553 event associated with it. We shall classify children under two headings: 1) ordinary children; 2) children especially sought.

The second category refers to children born after their parents have consulted the soothsayers, given alms and sacrifices, or employed other magical procedures.

Since the ordinary child is regarded as a spontaneous gift of God, his name is given by the father's close relatives unless some recent or remote event requires a name having particular significance.

551 Some examples of common ordinary names are Bila and Poko.

Names having special meanings are illustrated by the following examples.

Passektale (from passek, "insufficient," and talé, "resentment, hatred") means "I do not know what has caused the hatred which is felt for me."

Paratsida (from paraté, "to be unwilling," and sida, "truth") means "enemy of truth," a name intimating that people dislike the truth.

Dimpougoubnoma (literally, dima, "great chief, king"; pougbo, "to follow"; and noma, "profitable, good") is a name given to a child born of a mother given by a chief or one whose father has been given some important gift by a chief just before the child's birth.

842 [192] If a woman has no children after several years, the husband consults the soothsayers, makes offerings and sacrifices, employs
782 charms, and finally resorts to the tinsé ([sing.] tinkougri, from tinga, "earth," and kougri, "stone") or to the tiga (fetish tree). The woman goes with her husband to the possessor of the god. They take a rooster and some cowries. After they explain the object of their visit, the rooster is killed by the priest, and if the offering is accepted, the couple is dismissed with a formal promise that their prayers will be answered.

553 If, in due course, the wife is delivered of a child, the baby must be named Tinga, and his brothers and sisters will be named Timbila, Timpoko, etc., or if the tiga was appealed to, the baby must be called Tiga, and his siblings, Tibila, Tipoko, etc.

715 It also happens that after successive births, the babies die. Since
553 the Mossi, as we have noted, believe in reincarnation, they assume --

775 that the same baby is returning. So, in order to induce him to
553 remain on earth, they give him a significant name.

One of these is Yewayan (literally, "one who has returned"), meaning "Here he is, back again; it is he once more, and we recognize him."

The same name is used for all members of the same family.

304 Scars. When a child is a year or two old, the family calls in an old woman who draws more or less straight lines on his face (cheeks, chin, forehead, even the nose) with a razor. These marks vary according to region and are not [193] the same, for example, at Kaya as at Ouagadougou.

The design used most often, however, has three straight lines from forehead to chin and one or two horizontal lines running across the nose and joining the vertical lines on the cheeks.

853 Feeding. If a mother does not have enough milk, she goes
782 very early in the morning to a tree, for example, the kamsaongo or wédega (of the family of gohine lianas), to ask for milk. She falls to her knees, and believing that she is addressing a living person, she makes her request humbly, but with what faith! It appears that the prayer is often granted, but the woman must never again go under the tree or she will lose her milk.

853 The question of choosing a nurse does not arise in Mossi
604 country unless the mother dies. In that case, the little orphan is entrusted to a sister of the child's father. If she has been a mother, she too goes to the tree to ask for milk, as described above, even if her most recent delivery occurred years before. Finally, if the child thus nursed is a girl and survives, she becomes the property of her father's sister who will give her in marriage, later on, to the suitor of her choice.

III. Death

764 The importance of funeral ceremonies depends on the age and
554 rank of the deceased.

Nitiema (aged persons). Upon the death of an [194] old man or woman, all the relatives who live in the village are assembled.

to divine Providence. These are the mystics.

However, the deism of either type is not very deep. All believe that a dead person will rejoin his ancestors and dwell eternally with them. They imagine, however, that "the road to Eternity is hard and the Kingdom of God so remote from the earth that they give cowries to their dead to pay their way through difficulties, the hazards of the journey being directly related to the good or bad actions of the deceased."

This may be said to be a kind of vague notion of a hell or a purgatory. However, this hell is neither the "everlasting fire of the Christians nor the horrible sufferings of the Moslems," since the person is supposed to be with his relatives.

The Alkyoamé. One sometimes hears a Moaga say: "I cannot avenge what you have done to me, but it will be settled on the day of alkyoamé." This is a somewhat superficial notion of a Day of Judgment. The Moaga does not really believe in a final judgment any more than he believes in the end of the world or the resurrection of the body. By the words alkyoamé daré, he alludes to the day when he and his enemy will both die and God will subject one of them to a punishment -- understood to be temporary -- for the harm he has done the other. [200]

Beliefs and Superstitions Concerning the Soul After Death

What do the Mossi believe the human being to be? Man is composed of three elements: the visible body, the siga or toulé (soul), and the kima (ghost).

The siga, which may be called the soul, is the part of the man which is to return to God.

Siga. According to the Mossi, the siga or toulé is easily frightened. A great sorrow, illness, or the death of a loved one can cause it to abandon the body temporarily. It then assumes a human appearance and can be seen by the person himself or by others. In that case, charms or fetishes are used to make it return.

Its temporary absence from the body is not thought to have any serious consequences since this does not disturb the normal functions of the human organism, but, since body and soul cannot

714 761 live without each other, its prolonged absence is thought to cause death.

Kima (from ki, "to die"). This is a sort of silhouette of a 714 person who is about to die. It is visible only to certain initiates. 763 It is said, however, to be somewhat deformed, and its presence may make one's hair stand on end or cause shivers that paralyze the legs and make walking impossible.

715 The siga may be distinguished from the kima in that the latter, being already dead, has its head completely shaved, wears ashes in the form of [201] a cross or X on its forehead, or has its feet stained with blood.

As soon as the person dies, his kima roams around the house for a time and then joins his ancestors at Pilimpikou.

Pilimpikou. Pilimpikou is a village belonging to the ad- 715 ministrative district of Koudougou (upper Volta). On a mountain 718 nearby, there is a grotto which is regarded as the sacred place where the kimsé of all the dead Mossi assemble.

Legend has it that any deceased relative may be found again at Pilimpikou if one were so unfortunate as not to have been present during his last moments. One can also go there to find out where the deceased has hidden part of his fortune or some valuable object.

It is said that one has only to go to the Tingsoba of Pilimpikou and ask him to use his influence to call the deceased.

The Tingsoba orders the petitioner not to shed a single tear at the sight of the "ghost," and, the legend goes on to say, if the secret of the interview with the kima is not kept, the person will die within the year.

Finally, it is believed that when the kimsé welcome new members -- they represent the whole family of all the dead Mossi for countless generations -- they organize games whose echoes are heard by the inhabitants of Pilimpikou.

715 Young people of both sexes who were unmarried at the time of their death and newborn children who have died [202] return to that place where they dwelt before coming into the world in order to "return to human form in the womb of another woman or of their former mother." As we noted in an earlier paragraph, the Mossi believe in reincarnation. [203]

535 764 with metal and worn around the hips, distinguishes this costume from others. The movements of the fringe follow the movements of the body. It soon is revolving so rapidly that it looks like a top.

Many people, however, do not own the special costume just described, and they merely tie a blanket around their loins. During the movements of the dance, this produces a very comical effect since it looks like the wagging tail of a monkey.

[534] The musical instruments which accompany this dance are long tom-toms (gangando); some of them are narrower at the middle and look like long, thin spools for thread.

The dancers also accompany themselves with tiny metal instruments which are like Spanish castanets.

The dance itself is performed in a circle under the direction of the chief of the warba whose costume is [239] richer than the others. All of the dancers usually wear many charms on their [789] heads (tail of an ox and heads of birds stained with the blood of sacrificed chickens).

The warba proves that the Mossi believe in the immortality of [775] the soul. They believe that the dance is necessary to enable the soul of the departed to join the souls of his ancestors. They hope in this way to earn the good favor of the new spirit.

Thus, this dance has a moral basis. However, it seems that the same cannot be said for the other dances which are performed so widely today.

535 In addition to these three national Mossi dances, there are some other dances performed only by women and girls which are actually exercises in physical culture rather than true dances. We shall speak only of the principal one, the kiguibtobo ("dance of the bumping buttocks").

The kiguibtobo. This dance is performed by a group of women, usually at the beginning of cool weather after the harvests are in. The dancers clap their hands while singers raise their melodious voices. The dance is rhythmic. Two dancers leave the group and take their places in the center of the circle. They go back and forth, and then suddenly at a given point in the song [240] they turn back to back so that their buttocks touch and bump each other in time to the music. The dancers must be equally strong

304 184 The Nioniossé and the Soukoaba do not practice circumcision, and that is why they are called Mossé. In villages inhabited solely by Nioniossé, a kéogo may not be set up. At present some boys of Nionioga origin ignore the prohibition and go to their mother's village (Yastenga) to have the purifying operation (1).

[775] 1. Apparently the Moslems believe that those who are circumcised will not go to hell.

304 832 626 Among the Mossi many Christians voluntarily have themselves circumcised; women -- even Christians -- feel a certain repugnance for the touch of the "Moaga."

Finally, excision is also esteemed among the Mossi, except among the Nioniossé who do not practice it. Girls who are not excised are scorned by their friends and will have no lovers.

766 The death of a naba, as we mentioned earlier, is carefully con-
579 cealed; the more powerful he was, the more careful the concealment. This is done out of fear of the disturbances which would be created by those who aspire to his succession, or by scoundrels who might take advantage of the absence of authority to indulge in every kind of robbery. At the death of the Moro Naba his province was sacked by armed bands, and no one dared to go out unarmed. On the day following the death of Moro Naba Sigri, we had to fetch millet from a village located a few kilometers from Ouagadougou. All the bearers were armed with bows, arrows, and spears. They made an interesting picture in the moonlight.

766 In spite of all their amulets and all their sacrifices, nabas die just like their subjects, and when this happens, his relatives hastily dig a pit in the entrance hut of the soukala and lay the corpse there without any ceremonies. Those wishing to see the naba will be told that he is unwell. The naba of Koupéla is especially favored in this respect. One of the huts in his soukala, standing near the entrance, is set aside for his burial. A pit has been dug within the hut, and every /72/ day the caretaker comes to pour dolo into the hole. This caretaker must not have a wife, and if he happens to have one before his appointment to this post, the naba takes her for himself. On the other hand, the caretaker eats the same food as the naba and drinks the same millet beer. Needless to say, this job is not in great demand. The
[761] naba may not enter the hut, and when the roof is in need of repair, the drummers are sent for, and the naba must flee; woe to him if he should hear the sound of the drums, for he would die within the year. When the naba of Koupéla dies, his hands and feet are immediately pierced with big thorns so that he may not return; should he venture to seize one of his people after his death, the thorns would cause him such pain that he would immediately let go of his prey. The corpse is tossed into the pit to fall as it may. The Mossi, full of respect for their chiefs when they are alive, make up for it when they are dead.

Young unmarried men or girls are buried with a previously deceased old woman of the family, so that someone will take care of them in the other life. Their death is regarded as a true misfortune and mourned accordingly. There are no dances or ceremonies. The father, mother, and younger siblings shave their heads on the second or third day after the burial.

[775] A small child is buried by the path. He will soon return in the person of the first child borne by his mother after his death.

776 tangandé in every detail either, for only the village may have a tangandé, and there does not seem to be any magic pact unless the sacrifices offered are considered as such a pact, which does not seem justified. The tangandé-animal is never sacrificed, and no special initiation takes place.

774 761 The closest thing to totemism among the Mossi seems to be their concept of the human soul, and yet it is not, properly speaking, a totem in the sense indicated by these authors. Every man has a soul [775] that lives on after death and takes the name of kyma, while during life it is called siga. Shortly before death it takes the name of toullé [197] /85/ in Ouagadougou or toundo in Koupela, but siga, toundo, kyma are one and the same thing, one and the same principle. According to the Mossi, this soul is an animal, invisible of course, a snake, a crocodile, a deer, a hare. The soul is related to this animal, it belongs to the same family, so that to kill a snake or a crocodile in a village where the soul of the inhabitants is a snake or a crocodile is to kill an inhabitant of the village; every individual related to the snake has a snake in the village to represent thim, and he will die when his soul-animal dies.

774 784 Yet, and this runs counter to the definitions of totemism, the individual expects no aid from this animal, never sacrifices to it, and never kills it himself to renew the kinship pact. A person whose soul is a crocodile is forbidden to kill crocodiles in his own village, but he may kill them elsewhere, although he may never eat them, while he may kill the tangandé animal as long as he does so outside the tangandé, and he may eat it at any time. Some people, when they [766] find a dead soul-animal of their family near their village, render it funeral honors, weep, wail, and bury it as one of their own, but they offer it no gifts and hold no kouré. Generally it is merely covered with earth. The most widespread soul-animals are a kind of snake (bosombodro) and the crocodile. Several families may have the same [582] one, and marriage, although exogamic, is not forbidden between members of these families.

774 754 The soul may leave the body and in fact leaves it often, especially during the night. If children had a good time in a certain place, if they enjoyed themselves at someone's house, the soul returns there at night. This is when the worst is to be feared from the sorcerers; they may seize the soul by surprise, and its unfortunate owner will die.

774 In the course of a dream, the soul may warn its owner of a threaten-
828 ing danger. One day a native, whose village and name were told to
761 me, dreamed that his enemy offered him a kola nut. Much anxiety ensued, for this is a sign used by the soul to indicate that an enemy threatens one with death. In such a case there is only one remedy, to deposit a few cowries on a nest of large red ants, so they will avert the disaster. The man set out immediately for the nearest ant nest. Alas, a snake bit him along the way, and he died before he could offer his gift to the ants! Such occurrences obviously make a profound imprint on the imagination of the natives, who immediately react with the sophism: post hoc, propter hoc. A few such cases are sufficient to anchor them forever in their superstitions, and innumerable such occurrences were related to me.

774 If the soul can leave the body, it is possible to seize it and to pre-
761 vent it from re-entering its body, and this is why our Blacks do not like to be photographed. They say that there is an evil spirit in the box, who takes the soul and eats it. This is proved by the fact that the individual may later be seen on the piece of paper.

774 One becomes sick when his soul cannot re-enter the body because
753 it is held prisoner by an evil sorcerer or by a kikiriga, and many sacrifices must be offered to obtain its release /86/ and return. Entreaties are usually directed to the tangandé in such cases, because it is stronger than all the other spirits, stronger even than the sorcerers, and because its function is to protect the village.

774 Sometimes the soul was so well hidden that the tangandé cannot
761 find it: the sorcerer has eaten it right away, or the tangandé itself
754 is in collusion; or the ancestral spirits are calling the sick person; or, finally, it is God who sent the disease. Nothing can be done, and
775 the person dies. His soul changes names, and henceforth is called kyma. It leaves the body at the moment of death. If it was taken by a sorcerer or by the ancestral spirits, at the moment of death it leaves the sacred grove where it was held captive. It proceeds to the place of souls from where it will return to the grave whenever sacrifices are offered to it. It will also return if it wishes to afflict the survivors with a disease of some sort.

775 Is the soul punished for the evil it has done on earth and rewarded
735 for the good? Opinions on the subject differ. Some say that when one gives alms to the poor, and the Mossi frequently do, when one is generous and hospitable, God takes all that has been given and sets

775 it aside to return it to the soul when it leaves the body. From this
[735] comes the thank-you wish, "May God repay you!" If the deceased led an evil life, if he was quarrelsome or a thief, if he killed, he is condemned to walk over live coals to reach God, or if he is a murderer, he may come to God only after he has drunk all the blood he has shed, which God has saved for this purpose. The major offenders are detained by the treetops and never reach the place of souls. It must be said, however, that most Mossi take little heed of the penalties which may await them in the other life or deny their existence altogether.

The souls go to Bourtenga, the "gathering place of the souls," according to the etymology of the word, a place of indeterminate geographical location, or they go to Pilimpikou, a mountain located
775 in Kipirsi country. Their sole occupation over there is to go to market
764 at night, and this is why on the day of burial the deceased is given cowries so that he may buy millet beer and clothes in order not to look like a tramp.

The souls are white but otherwise they look like men, although they are nimbler and can move effortlessly and with great rapidity
[264] from one place to another. They do everything upside down; they eat with the left hand and do with it all the things we do with the right, and this is why the corpse is washed with the left hand. They wear their clothes inside out, with the pocket of the breechcloth facing in; they carry the spears iron downward, and they walk backwards because their eyes are placed behind their head. This is why the kourita who represents the deceased wears everything inside out.

775 The souls of the animals sacrificed to him, chickens, sheep, goats,
769 beeves, etc., go to join the deceased, who can thus feast, invite friends, and gather kin together, for people are reunited up there. Although nabas are no longer such, those who were subject to them on earth recreate their court. It is said that parents come to fetch their children, /87/ nabas their pages and favorite wives, and friends their friends, unless the survivors treat them very well and provide them with lots of food.

Indeed, the souls of the dead come back to earth to receive the gifts which are offered to them, to drink the blood of the victims sacrificed in their honor and the millet beer prepared for them on the annual Day of the Dead (basra). This is why no Mossi faithful to tradition ever drinks millet beer without first pouring a little on the

775 ground; he also pours what is left at the bottom of the gourd, so the
769 souls will rejoice with him. It is considered a great honor when a
[554] naba tells an elder to grasp one side of the gourd and to pour along with him.

775 One must not laugh about the souls of the deceased and their visits
761 to earth. If you doubt their return, listen to what an old naba once told me. "One day, I had gone to visit a naba, my friend and neighbor. We had arranged to meet at his house with another neighboring chief. He gave us a very nice welcome, and the day was most pleasant. We were resting at night in the shelter of his soukala when we were suddenly awakened by the sound of harness bells and horses galloping. On the following day we left our host. No sooner had we left than he took ill. A week later he died. The souls had come to fetch him. Oh! Father, do not laugh about the souls of the deceased!" And the good old man trembled with emotion. This is what our Mossi believe. They firmly believe in all these ghost stories.

775 Are the souls reincarnated? Small children who die before the age of reason are said to return in the person of the first child borne by their mother. This is why, especially if the mother has lost several
[304] children in a row, the baby is marked at birth with distinctive signs, particularly tattooings on the belly and lower back; sometimes, if he
[766] dies, a piece of his ear is cut off, or a toe or finger joint broken. It is said that the child born next will bear the same marks, but no living example of this could be cited. Often, the mother leaves the hut where her baby died. An old woman spreads ashes before the door in the evening, and if small footprints are found in the morning, it is a sign that the child came back and wishes to return to his mother's bosom.

Rebirth is not granted to anyone other than young children, not even to young unmarried people. They remain in the place of the souls for years on end, the number of which cannot be ascertained, and no distinction is made between the rich and the poor, the powerful and their subjects.

775 The soul of suicides, cursed in death, is not entitled as a rule to
762 funeral ceremonies. It wanders through the world without harming anyone, but unable to find rest.

577 Morality is reduced to its simplest expression. Whatever harms
673 other people is bad. Think your own intimate thoughts and desire anything you like; as long as you do no harm to your fellow man, no fault has been committed. Fornication and adultery are faults only

000 16. Circumcision.
17. Excision.
18. After the circumcision.
19. Emancipation and coming of age.
20. Guardianship.
21. Adoption.
22. Interdiction.

Let us begin with filiation.

848 Filiation. —"The Mossi," says Vadier, "distinguish three types of filiation: (1) legitimate filiation; (2) natural filiation; and (3) filiation from incest.

As for filiation from adultery, it is regarded exactly in the same manner as natural filiation.

[843] The period of gestation is believed to be from seven to twelve months. A child conceived outside this lapse of time is regarded as a natural child. Moreover, a woman need only tell her husband that the child she is carrying in her womb is not his and he will disown it.

When the illegitimate child or one born of adultery reaches the age of three or six (depending on its sex), it is entrusted to its natural father. In spite of this separation, the child retains its rights of inheritance from its mother.

848 847 Filiation from incest does not exist, or rather there is not enough time for obligations and rights to be created. Indeed, according to a barbarous custom, the child born of incest is put to death immediately after birth by the women who assisted with the delivery.

835 Incest rules apply between kin of any degree in the ascending and descending lines: sister and brother, uncle and niece, nephew and aunt, and all their relatives in the direct ascending and descending lines; father-in-law and daughter-in-law; son-in-law and mother-in-law. /251/

684 When incest occurs, the guilty pair are driven from their families and from Yatenga, and the naba confiscates all their property."

843 715 Theory of birth. —The Mossi believe that when a woman is pregnant, the soul of an ancestor has returned within her. We shall speak of this animistic explanation of birth later under "Religion" /not translated/.

In fact, resemblances between the child and some previously known ancestor are pointed out as often as possible, and it is said that this particular ancestor was reincarnated within the woman.

8: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1958
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776 considered the wife of a male deity called *Winnam*, *Windé*, or *Naba Zidiwindé*. The true nature of Winnam is not clear. The Mossi say: "Winnam is the sun, and Winnam is God"; he is considered a sun god as well as a supreme deity. [775] Winnam is venerated but he is not feared, because it is the dead ancestors who chastise evil-doers by affliction or death. When wicked people die they face the wrath of the ancestors in *Keemsélenga*, or land of the ancestors.

The Mossi have several concepts of the spiritual essence or animating principle of man. 774 First there is the *seega* (pl. *seesé*), an entity found in all living beings; it leaves the body during sleep, and its adventures provide the dreams of men. The seega can be captured during its nocturnal wanderings or in places where large crowds congregate. If the seega is captured and eaten by a [761] sorcerer, its owner will die. A man's shadow is also called his seega; persons about to die have no shadows, since their seesé have either been stolen or have [822] left on their own account.

Another principle called the *keema* (pl. *keemsé*) is associated with the dead 775 or with persons about to die. The keema of a dying man wanders around and often frightens people; as soon as he is dead, he is no longer referred to by name but is called the "keema." Keemsé is also the word used for the generalized [769] ancestors who sanction the behavior of the living and who must be placated if people wish to have enough food, wives, children, and good health. A man's own keemsé take a vital interest in his affairs, in return for which they receive nourishment in the form of the seesé (animals do not have keemsé) of sacrificed animals.

[827] The breath, called *vousem*, is also considered an animating principle by the Mossi and, since it leaves the body through the nose at death, they believe that a man's nose is the first thing to die. It is not clear how the seega is disposed of when the body dies. Some people say it remains forever about the haunts of man; others believe that it goes to a mountain called Plimpikou and disappears into a cavern. Still others believe that the seega becomes the keema and goes to Plimpikou, from whence the keemsé come to visit their descendants. It is difficult to determine whether the Mossi have always been vague about their traditional religious concepts or whether this uncertainty is the result of the influx of such foreign creeds as Islam and Christianity.

The first recorded contact between the Mossi and Moslems took place 175 around 1328 when the Yatenga Mossi attacked, burned, and sacked Timbuktu, 797 then held by the Dia dynasty of the Songhoi (Dubois 1896:251). For more than a century afterward, the Mossi pursued a turbulent and aggressive policy in the region of the Niger bend, pushing as far as Gourma, Walata, and Banku (ibid:127). They were finally defeated and routed by Sonni Ali in 1477. In 1499, when Askia the Great (El Hadj Mohammed ben Abou Bekr, usurper of the Songhoi throne from the Sonni dynasty in 1494) returned from his pilgrimage to Mecca, he launched a *jihad* or holy war on the Mossi who had rejected his ultimatum to adopt Islam. Askia defeated the Mossi, "devastated the towns and countryside, took men, women, and children as prisoners, and forcibly converted these captives to Islam" (Dubois 1896:127–128). The

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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cestors. They did not remember how they were related unless they happened to have a common grandfather or great-grandfather who had held the nam. The differential value thus placed on genealogies by the noble and non-noble lineages was due in most cases to the differential access of these lineages to the strategic resources of Mossi society. People who held the nam [554] and belonged to noble lineages enjoyed special claims to goods and services. Those whose lineages did not hold the nam had no such privileges.

613 554

Because Mossi society was basically patrilineal, a man shared in the status and the corporate assets of his patrilineage. Conversely, a man had no access to the status or resources of his mother's patrilineage except for some ritual rights and duties that accrued to him as a *yagenga* (a sister's or daughter's son). These rights and duties included residence in the home of a maternal patrilineage during childhood, attendance at sacrifices to the mother's patrilineal ancestors, the settling of quarrels between maternal kinsmen, and ritual license to seize specific items of property from these relatives. This license dramatized the *lack* of access rather than *freedom* of access to the property of maternal relatives.

[591]

613 778 602 554 [175]

When a man's maternal relatives controlled the nam of the territory in which he lived, he could improve his social and economic position. In many cases, a young man who had gone to live as a "stranger" with a noble uncle or grandfather remained with these relatives. His privilege to remain was sanctioned by the Mossi belief that a boy's maternal ancestors would wreak vengeance on any person who tried to evict him from the village from which his mother had been "sent into the bush" (given away as a wife). By using various strategies and subterfuges, the "stranger" obtained wives through his maternal relatives and used their land and other resources. After several generations the lineal descendants of the "stranger" frequently became indistinguishable from their maternal relatives, although such cases were not often formally acknowledged. Whether these "sisters' children" ever managed to obtain the nam of their mother's patrilineage is a moot point, because in theory they could not. Yet, also by Mossi definition, a man could never inherit rights and duties in his mother's patrilineage; however, it is known that this did happen. It is possible that the close check kept by the ruling lineage on its genealogy made usurpation impossible. Yet I know of several cases in which candidates for chiefship feared competition from men whose descent actually barred them from the nam.

The son of a nobleman and a commoner woman seldom attached himself permanently to his maternal patrilineage, although he retained all of his customary rights, privileges, and duties in it. Occasionally, noblemen did attach themselves to their maternal relatives, but those who did had

513 The Mogho Naba slept in a grass hut in the palace

compound. Two
643 reasons are given for the choice of a grass hut over a brick building: first,
[342] the grass hut was considered better protection against sorcerers, who were
[754] believed to induce storms that destroy buildings and their occupants; sec-
[775] ond, it was believed that the ruler's ancestors preferred to visit grass huts because it was easier for them to enter through the interstices in the walls.
[644] When the monarch retired for the night, one of his pages stood guard at the door. The Mogho Naba usually slept all night, but he occasionally made the rounds with a page to check on the palace guards or the safety (and virtue) of his wives.

643 The routine of the Mogho Naba seldom varied. Only in times of danger
[644] or on great ceremonial occasions did protocol permit any major changes in court procedure. Normally, pages, ministers, and other court officials adhered very strictly to their traditional tasks.

The Mossi considered the king's office to be such a difficult one that even today they say, *Mogho Naba toumde ya yida fa* ("The Mogho Naba's task is the most difficult of all"). Nevertheless, the Mogho Naba's office was always eagerly sought, and considerable care had to be exercised to ensure that the right person was chosen. As soon as the incumbent Mogho
[645] Naba died, and even before he was buried, the Ouidi Naba, as prime minister, began the consultations leading to the selection of a new monarch. Mossi custom decreed that the eldest son of a previous ruler be chosen as the new Mogho Naba. This choice was not automatic, however, in view of the primary consideration that the person selected should have the skill to "keep" the country. Other qualifications for office were membership in the royal minimal lineage, soundness of body and mind, and sufficient age to command universal respect. Given these requirements and the lack of any provisions for a regency, it is not surprising that a dead ruler's sons, brothers, uncles, and even grandchildren—that is, his entire babissi—should have competed to "eat the nam" (accede to power).[12] Of the thirty-four kings who have ruled since Oubri, the founder of the Ouagadougou dynasty, twelve succeeded their brothers and twenty-two their fathers. Interestingly enough, there is some indication that at the beginning of the Ouagadougou dynasty, the successor of a king was usually chosen from among his brothers before the nam was passed on to the next generation.[13] For example, Oubri's four sons all reigned in turn before the kingship descended to the son of the last brother in office. Then, two of this brother's sons reigned before the nam descended to a new generation. Initially, then, seniority within the royal lineage, like seniority within the local ruling lineages, may have been determined by generation. On the other hand, accidental factors may have governed: a weak state organization may have

[57] Chapter 4

The Court of the Mogho Naba. Tribute and Payments Due. Obligations of Mossi Subjects to their Naba.

Morning Honors Paid to the Emperor of the Mossi

644 The council of the emperor of the Mossi is held every morning in front of an antechamber called zango which opens out upon a very large courtyard.

831 The Mossi have for a long time regarded the sun as a "god."
776 Wend'pous yan, "God shows himself," refers to the rising of
643 the sun, but it is used in a figurative sense to refer to the emergence of the Mogho Naba. This illustrates the regard held by the Mossi people for their chief since he is compared to the star of daylight and thus to a "god."

643 The Mogho Naba appears each morning dressed in an ample red robe and with a red gourmousga (a kind of burnoose) folded and
292 thrown over his shoulders. On his head he wears a cap, a fez, topped with a wazourfou sebré (literally, "silver paper" [streamers], that is to say, silver amulet). Red represents the light that comes
[822] with the appearance of the sun, while the silver on the cap represents the brilliance of the star itself.

644 Before the time set for the start of the ceremony, the three sogon'kassemsé (great servitors) bring into the courtyard the [58] cushion, nagpouré, and all the other insignia of office. As soon as
[201] the Mogho Naba appears, they arise and make a snapping sound with thumb and index finger to indicate that the naba is coming.

"Wend'pous yan" is also cried out by the gagando and luinsé
[533] (drummers) as soon as His Majesty sits down. The Bend'Naba [chief drummer] is the only one who does not beat his drum; instead, he rubs his finger back and forth over the waxed part of the drum head to imitate the roar of the lion. Four or five young men bearing loaded rifles take their places in front of the emperor.

Honors are rendered to the Mogho Naba in the following order.

1. The Samandé Naba, Baloum Naba, Wedranga Naba, and Simandé Nabila, as well as the Zusoabin'kassanga (chief eunuch and guardian of the emperor's household), are the first to greet His Majesty and to inquire about his health.

651 [72] (c) Fishing. Fishing in the larger water holes could take
226 place only by authorization of the canton chiefs. The day on
634 which fishing took place was treated as a holiday. All the young men in the village and their neighbors, even if the latter did not belong to the canton, came out on the day set by the canton chief and fished for the benefit of the naba. All large fish were reserved for him, and only the small ones were left to the fishermen.

This practice still prevails.

776 Other common laws. Many deities are worshipped by the
782 Mossi. Groves, fields, mountains, etc., all have their "god."
661 It often happens that the naba (canton chief), at the behest of the soothsayers, offers an animal. This may be a sheep, a goat, or even a cow, and it is offered to one or another of the deities, either for his personal interests or for those of his people, or perhaps to ask for rain. The naba dispatches some sogoné [servitor] or samand'kamba [people of the outer courtyard] to one of the villages in his canton to find a victim. The animal is taken without its owner having any right to complain or to ask for compensation. Is there not a Mossi saying to the effect, Talagh-gounda
[538] Naba'gninga the serf raises livestock for the benefit of his naba)"?

For sacrifices prescribed for the Mogho Naba, the animals are provided either by the inhabitants of the [73] town of Ouagadougou and its environs or by the canton chiefs.

Labor Service Customarily Required of the Mossi on Behalf of their Chiefs

651 Forced labor was used to cultivate the fields of the naba and to repair or construct their houses.

647 The Mogho Naba. (a) Cultivation of fields. The duty of
651 cultivating the fields of the Mogho Naba fell entirely on the Bilbalsé,
241 the residents of Bilbalogo (section of the Baloum Naba) and on all former servitors and descendants of former servitors. The Kam Naba (chief of the young men), charged with assembling the workers, had a crier announce in all the important markets that on such-and-such a day the Bilbalsé were to assemble in the emperor's

796 769 263 The latter reserve a small share for the Zussoba [150] (chief eunuch) and the Bilbalsé (inhabitants of Bilbalogo, the section of the Baloum Naba).

796 769 The next morning, Saturday, the king has a large number of cattle slaughtered and many sagbo cakes prepared. The latter are piled one on top of another to form tahinsé (mountains) in the courtyard where the daily audiences are held.

On these mountains of sagbo are placed whole quarters of sheep. Many bowls of cooked rice are put in rows beside the millet cakes.

The Larrhallé Naba, the second minister who is in command of the Samandé (the court), stands before one of the mountains of sagbo, takes a cake which he divides into three parts, and tosses them at random in different directions in the courtyard. Thus he offers food to the invisible spirits and to the manes of previous ministers who once frequented the place. During this ceremony he utters some words which may be translated as follows: "Take this sagbo and bring peace and happiness to the emperor and to his people."

After this, the Larrhallé Naba returns to his kouga (mound of stones) to make way for the Gand'Naba. The latter, too, picks up a cake and also the foot of a cow. Then the king's bodyguard, the followers of the ministers, the Bilbalssé, and the emperor's servitors make a dash for the mountains of sagbo and the rice, and there is a general scramble to get the biggest piece. It goes without saying that they come out of the fray covered with sauce, and half of the food is spilled on the ground. [151]

At this point, the ministers and their escorts depart.

Each ikanda(head of a family) calls the family elder (the patriarch) and gives him a rooster and a goat (lacking a sheep) to be sacrificed to the manes of his ancestors. The old man pronounces the following words: "Youmd yelle n'ta, ta zagla yel t'm konfo, tif reg kouin gnimassem, la sounogo, ta pam kodo, la rogom (accept these offerings on the part of X...and grant him health, happiness, and prosperity. Protect his family and grant him good harvests and many children.

796 769 263 776 It is interesting to note that the meat, whether boiled or roasted, is never seasoned with red pepper (tiparé), for the tinsé [spirits]

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would visit their anger upon those who were guilty of such an indiscretion by making them blind or at least causing them severe eye trouble in later years.

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Everyone celebrates the tinsé at home by preparing all sorts of food (sagbo, rice, corn, beans, etc.). The people stuff themselves to the point of indigestion.

Thirty days after the anniversary celebration of the funeral of Oubri's mother, the Tansoba (war minister) returns to the emperor the rope used for the date of the tinsé.

Around the fortieth day, that is, a week after the departure of the Tansoba, the Loumbila Naba comes to salute the emperor. The latter gives him a cow to be slaughtered at Widin (section of the Ouidi Naba).

A week after the departure of the Loumbila Naba, [152] the Guilingou Tengsoba pays a visit to the Mogho Naba. We have already seen that it was an ancestor of this Tengsoba who asked Naba Zoungrana to send his son, Oubri, to administer the country and to help him drive out the Habé who today live by the cliffs of Bandiagara (Sudan). The Mogho Naba is obligated to give a cow and some salt to this Tengsoba.

Then comes the turn of the Saponé Naba (nayrdin, representative of Naba Kouda) who, with his followers, receives a cow and some salt. Finally, for Bonsa Naba, Kamsaonguin Tengsoba, and Pazani Tengsoba, the Mogho Naba has a sheep killed which is served with many plates of sagbo.

It should be noted that when the Tangsob-ramba appear before the emperor they put down their laya (magic axes) and are at once brought white roosters which they are expected to kill in the timpelem (courtyard).

Thus, it is apparent that this festival has no particularly remarkable features. Its sole aim is to make peace between the living and the dead and to give everyone a chance to eat well.

641 as part of the family.

2. When a Moaga emigrates and settles permanently in a foreign country, either to take up trading or to study the precepts of Islam. He is forced to abandon his usual customs and to scorn ancestral ways, thus losing his personal status. If he wishes to embrace Islam, he changes his name, and if he should return to his native village, he would no longer try to be identified as a Moaga, whose customs and beliefs he no longer shares and whom he now regards as an inferior.

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641 [188] As has been noted, the Moaga woman who marries a foreigner or the foreign woman who marries a Moaga subject retains her own nationality. Thus, marriage does not involve any loss of nationality. Customs may have been modified, but it is certain that even a Moaga woman who had lived abroad for a long time would soon resume the customs and practices of her own country. The same may be said of a foreign woman who might divorce her Moaga husband and return to her own land.

Naturalization. Since naturalization is unknown, children born in Mossi country of a foreign father and either a Moaga or a foreign mother remain foreign. Furthermore, since children take their father's nationality, a divorce will not affect their status.

II. Birth

842 Conception. The natives have no very well-defined idea of the process of conception. In their minds, the primary cause is God (Wenam), Master of Heaven and Earth, who gives children. It seems, however, that Wendé or Wenam forces the kinkirsi (spirits) to change into a human egg when the sperm is transmitted at the time of ejaculation.

The kinkirsi are invisible beings said to resemble small children and who live near certain houses or [189] groves. Only a few favored persons can see them.

In the same connection, it is believed that ancestors or certain deceased relatives are reincarnated.

843 Pregnancy. It is known that complete cessation of menstruation and the development and darkening of the breasts are the signs of

764 animals, beer, etc. (see the description above). This is the
554 second mourning.

Dakonré (bachelor). Only his father and mother shave their heads. He is wrapped in a Mossi secco and buried without further ceremony. He is not even washed.

Bi-kouré (funeral for a newborn child). If the first-born child of a young mother dies, the girl returns to her family and remains there for thirteen days. Then she comes back to her husband, accompanied by some of her relatives. The latter bring chickens and guinea fowl to be served with the millet cake brought to the girl's husband. In return, the husband has chickens and guinea fowl killed and millet cake prepared, thus making an even exchange with his in-laws.

[198] Custom requires that the girl's relatives spend a night on the road before returning to their village. Even if their village is quite near they spend the night in the bush.

It should be added that if a second child dies at birth, there is no kouré.

Pagh'sin kataré biga (childless woman). There is no ceremony. She is buried in the same manner as the bachelor.

The Existence of God, Heaven, and Hell

•776 The Moaga believes in the existence of a superior being, invisible or visible (the sun has long been considered as a "god" by many of them), who created the heavens, the earth, and all living things. This being is called Wende or Wenam (from wende, "world," and nam, "chiefdom"; thus, "Master of the World").

Although the Moaga sometimes attributes his misfortunes to the evil spells of his enemies, nevertheless he recognizes that nothing can be done without the consent of God. Hence he constantly invokes the name in every circumstance of his life, especially when he makes sacrifices.

Even the makers of fetishes, magicians, and sorcerers recognize this power and frequently invoke it.

792 There are certain Mossi who make no charms or fetishes and who are neither Moslems nor Christians. They harm no one, [199] forgive those who offend them, and attribute everything that happens to them -- for good or ill -- solely

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And you do not want to let her go!
Are you perchance this child's mother or father?
You are not the God who created her."

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832 The wennega consists mostly of back-and-forth movements of the hips in slow rhythm. Various figures are performed, but there is always the same rhythm and the same swaying of the hips. The sweetheart herself begins to dance, a curious fact, since women do not usually take part in the men's dances.

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776 We have noted that another form of Mossi dance is religious, the waongo. The waongo is a mysterious being, half animal, half spirit.

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776 Origin of the waongo. Tradition has it that this being was one day found all alone on a plain. Those who first saw him took fright and ran away. They went to tell the village elders, who assembled a goodly number of young men, armed [236] with arrows and sticks, to overcome this strange being.

He was not found at the place where he had first been seen. He had moved some distance away. The villagers surrounded him, and the elders, who had brought him a rooster, began to question him: "If he should be taken to the village, would he hurt the villagers? Would he bring misfortune?" The chicken was then sacrificed, but it is told that the sacrifice was not accepted.

The elders returned to the village and brought back a white rooster (norapelga), a he-goat (boéga), and a dog (bâga). Then they addressed the waongo, saying: "We were perhaps mistaken just now. Perhaps you wanted an animal in addition to the rooster we offered to you? If, by becoming our guest, you can bring us happiness, good health, and children, accept these offerings!" They slaughtered the rooster and the goat and killed the dog. This time the sacrifices were accepted.

[532] What the waongo is. The waongo consists of a mask, usually representing the head of an animal, and a bindou (a kind of long cloak made from the bark of the béringa shrub which is soaked in water for a long time to blacken it or from baobab fibers).

773 According to tradition, he had beside him a toabga (a kind of
535 magic axe) and a tibo (a sacred object, fetish).
776 The people captured him and put him in a safe place. But of what possible use could he be to them? Nobody knew. [237] He was something unknown and fearful.

One day the people had gone off to hold the kouré (funeral observances) of an old man and were on their way back home. They were warba dancers. They were all singing as they approached the house of the waongo, who came out. The dancers were terrified and ran away. Only one of the singers had the courage to remain behind.

He went on with the songs and the waongo followed him right up to the house of the deceased, and there he began to dance.

From this it was concluded that the waongo had something to do with funerals. Since that time the waongo is summoned whenever an old man or woman of the Nioniossé (soukoaba) dies. He never dances for deceased young people.

Since the waongo or, rather, the soukou is considered to be sacred and to embody a sort of religion which possesses secrets that should not be made known to everyone, a special language --
[198] a deformation of the môré [Mossi] language -- has been invented. It is understood only by the initiates.

535 The waongo dances to the sound of a special tom-tom, accompanied by songs and praises in the secret language. The dance is of no special interest; it involves more or less frenetic movements, such as characterize most of the dances of the indigenous peoples.

The waongo is always accompanied by a circle of young men dressed in a narrow strip of cotton, decorated with cowries, and carrying satchels at their sides. These boys make movements with their heads which [238] are precisely like those made by circus
[534] horses. In addition to the tom-tom, flute players (wissé) accompany the dances.

535 We shall now speak of the true funeral dance, called warba.
764 It is performed by men wearing skirts, a kind of net shirt dyed blue, and headdresses made of cowrie shells. A long fringe, weighted

304 day the one in charge of the circumcision, a wealthy Yarga or Mossi
563 who has the means to feed several of the people to be circumcised,
852 chooses a tree to serve as shelter for the operation. Rain need not be taken into account, for circumcision is always performed during the dry season from December to April, when agricultural work is at a
[178] standstill. The tree is surrounded with straw mats, forming the téoo or sacred enclosure which no one who is not circumcised may come near without running the risk of being insulted and often beaten; if he should dare to step inside it, he would be stricken by the greatest misfortunes. The Peul sets out a flat stone, sacrifices a chicken in order to make the spirit of the tree benevolent toward those to be circumcised, and operates on the boys one by one. Drums are played throughout the operation to drown the cries of the victims.

852 For three days afterwards the newly circumcised boys do nothing. They rest and tend their wounds. They remain isolated from the rest
[535] of the community for two or three months, sometimes even longer. Judging by the dances which close the festivities, dancing must be their primary concern during that period of time. They also thresh the millet of those who invite them to do so, but no uncircumcised person may join them, no uninitiated individual may come near them.
[198] They do not speak the Mossi language at this time, but a special tongue of which they learn enough to serve them in their everyday needs. Woe to those who forget and use their native tongue; they are
[551] beaten with switches made of a kind of willow. Even their names are changed, and no one may call them by their Mossi names.

The circumcised boys are divided in two groups, one "male" and one "female." One of the groups bears the name of the hyena (kwara in their language) and the other is called masalro, whose French equivalent we do not know. The hyena group must strain their wits to snatch food, even from the other circumcised boys, who are kept constantly on the alert. The other group makes improper gestures during the dance.

852 The circumcised boys are covered with gray dust to alter their
293 appearance completely. A tail is fastened to the back of their breech-
776 cloth, hanging to the ground. It is made of plaited cotton thread and
481 ends in a pompon. Its function is to drive off the kikirsi spirits, who apparently do not like circumcised persons. The boys walk bent over and leaning on sticks like old men. This is done to test their obedience and to see if they listen carefully to what they are told.

852 shaved strips on top of the head, while the sides are shaved similarly
[302] in semi-circular strips. On the seventh day, people who were previously circumcised bring chickens to sacrifice to the spirits of the paths so that all will go well, but the newly circumcised take no part in the proceedings. The children wash, oil themselves, and put on their
852 beautiful clothes. Everything is brand new, the breechcloth, the
292 trousers, the shirt, the blanket, and the headgear. The belt is adorned
301 with a knife in a leather sheath and with a needle case which has at the end a tuft of leather strips with cowries attached to them. They
[776] hold a cow's tail, also adorned with cowries, to drive off the scheuyan spirits who dislike little rascals and people who dress too well. Both wrists are adorned with copper bracelets. Needless to say, this flashy new outfit with its cowries that clang like bells lures the eye and bewitches the young boys, who decide to be circumcised at the first opportunity so they too may eat well and wear beautiful clothes.

852 /44/ The circumcised boys continue to walk bent over, leaning on
[481] their sticks, but their crude staff is replaced with two sticks decorated with burnt designs and tied together. They no longer wear a tail. They go to greet the chiefs, and they thank those who have given them gifts. They walk to the sound of the large drum, since the bindré is forbidden at circumcision ceremonies, and sing plaintive chants to the spirits. They parade in the marketplace and display their clothes in the villages. They dance before the chiefs, and their dances are very
[535] graceful indeed. They dance in unison to the beat of the drum, making the same gestures all together or two by two, varying the figures in accordance with the beat. After seven days the festivities are over, and they all return to their families and take up everyday life as though nothing had happened.

We shall now study this everyday life.

/45/ BOOK III. DAILY WORK AND TRADES

Chapter 1. Occupations of a Mossi

221 The Mossi are essentially cultivators, and it may be said that no
241 Mossi who works at a trade will fail to cultivate his fields when the

124 The problem is aggravated by the fact that the Mossi possess no religious theories and are not in the habit of discussing their beliefs. They are bewildered by the slightest "Why," the most elementary "how is it so." To fulfill the needs of our European minds, therefore, it proved necessary to put a little order and clarity into the ideas we gleaned here and there. In this area especially we have avoided as much as possible any tendency to systematize, and we can say that there is nothing of our own in the two chapters that follow. We have listened to the natives, elicited explanations, asked questions, and made note of the answers. We shall now transcribe the results. Of course the answers did not always agree, and we /78/ were forced to make choices on the basis of those testimonies which appeared most worthy of trust. The disagreements were on matters of detail only, and on the whole the statements persistently agreed on the most important points. In any case, whenever a serious doubt arises, we shall be careful to point it out.

776 576 How could Lt. Marc ever write, "We do not believe that the Mossi have the concept of a single God and Creator"? (1) The idea of God

1. Marc, Au pays des Mossi /In Mossi Country/, p. 158.

is everywhere to be found among this people. The merest wish, the simplest greeting, includes the name of God. When someone is going away, the person who is leaving and those who are staying hold the following exchange: "May God be with me," says the one who goes; "May God see you home! May God cause you to return! May God move your legs!" answer those who remain.

Persons who receive gifts tell their benefactor: "May God keep you! May God cause you to remain a long time (on this earth)! May God reward you! May God repay you!"

If a friend is seen wearing a new garment, this occasions another greeting: "May God allow you to wear it out before you discard it!"

If he is eating, he is told: "May God cause you to profit by it!"

If he comes to announce the birth of an heir: "God grant that you may suspend him from your shoulder!" /Tr., Mossi children from age [854] two or thereabouts are often carried astraddle the hip and holding on to the shoulder./

If he is leaving to return on the same day: "May God grant us the pleasure of talking to each other!"

776 At the end of the day, the Mossi greet each other as follows: "May
576 God grant you a tommorrow!" To which they must reply: "May God give you a good morrow!"

On festive days those who meet tell each other: "May God lead you to the next year! May God allow you to see a new year!"

God gives health, maintains it, and restores it to the sick:

"May God give you health!" they wish each other, "May God increase your health! May God make you happy!"

Those who are in danger, or ill, are told:

"May God keep you from misfortune! May God restore your health! May God come with health and a cooling breeze!"

When death has struck, sympathy is offered to the family as follows:

"May God hinder the day (of death)!"

An arriving horseman is told: "May God help you dismount!" And to the man who has just lost a horse: "May God restore your tethering post!" (For only those who own a horse have a tethering post.)

When asked, "Who gives power to the medicines and to the amulets?"
776 a Mossi invariably replies that it is God.

God knows everything and is called upon as a witness: "By God!" If unjustly accused, the Mossi calls upon God: "God sees inside me, /79/ and He knows that there is nothing there!" And if someone does not know the name for something, he adds immediately, "But God knows it."

God disposes of everything, and the Mossi often say among themselves:

"If God grants me the day after tomorrow, I shall come"; "he was about to fall, but God came to his aid"; "we start talking in the morning and request God's protection."

God is everywhere, and it is impossible to hide from Him. God preserves us, and one naba who bore no trace of Islamism once told me: "We are in God's hand; we are God's sheep, and He watches over us as my son watches over my own sheep." It sounds like an echo of the Gospels: "I am the good shepherd." It would be easy to furnish other examples. God is superior to all spirits. He created them and He sends them to man, but He did not make them evil. Nevertheless, God may help us obtain revenge from our enemies, and His sacred name often recurs in curses: "May God suspend from your neck the bag of poverty! May God destroy you! May He destroy him completely! May God burn him in the fire!" (2) Every

776 2. We owe this list of formulas to the kindness of Fr. Thueux, the European who undoubtedly knows the Mossi language most intimately. May we express here our hearty thanks.

sacrifice includes a curse against enemies.

Beyond these wishes, however, no prayer is addressed to God
776 directly; no sacrifice is offered to Him without mention of spirits.
782 Yet, as we shall see in the following chapter, the invocations of the sacrificial formula are addressed mostly to God, and when the sacrifice is over all those who have participated in it greet the sacrificer with these words: "May God accept your sacrifice; may God receive it!"

But who is this God? Is he one or many? Has he a body, or is he
776 spirit? Where does he dwell? So many questions which a Mossi has never asked himself and which leave him momentarily bewildered. "Is God one or many?" "I don't know" is the usual answer. If one insists, he says that God is one. But a difficulty arises: "Why then, in sacrifices, do you invoke God-king male and God-king female?" Again: "I don't know; this is what our fathers said."

Does God have a body? Yes, assuredly, for only a highly practiced
776 intelligence can conceive of a pure spirit. But what is this body like?
821 "I don't know." Where is God? "Everywhere." But does he occupy a special place? "God is the sun."

Do they identify God with the sun? It is difficult for us to establish
776 a settled opinion on the subject. They do seem to grant the identifi-
782 cation, and in the course of sacrifices—after all, their sacrificial
821 formulas must fit their concept of divinity—they offer God water for his rising and pour it to the east, water for his retiring and pour it to the west. In a quarrel the weaker party says: "God is my witness that I have not harmed you; God will pay you back in kind," and points toward the sun. Sacrifices are never /80/ offered in the middle of the night; but then they are not made in the middle of the day either, and they may be offered in the evening, when the sun has dipped below the horizon. The names for God and for the sun are
776 different. Wendé is the proper name for God, Wennam indicates
821 God's power (Wende nam). These words have no plural and thus indicate a belief in God's oneness. The sun is called Winniga, or

776 Wintoro at noon when it scorches the earth (Winniga toro). It must be
821 added, however, that sometimes the sun is called Na /Naba/ Wendé, "God-king." At night God is supposed to retire into his hut, since the sun is no longer visible, and yet he continues to be everywhere. "If you commit an offense during the night, God knows about it." The Mossi are likely to say when the sun stands at the zenith, "It is God who makes the sun scorch us today." Thus they do seem, in practice, to make a distinction between God and the sun. The sun is God's dwelling, but it is not God. But what inconsistency in all this!

Natural phenomena are sometimes attributed to God. Lightning kills those who have done evil, it kills livestock wrongly obtained through fraud or theft, and it is sent in punishment by God ... unless
776 it is sent by an enemy. Amulets and fetishes derive their power from God, as already mentioned, and the same applies to medicinal remedies. Illness is usually attributed to an evil spirit who must be
[753] appeased, but sometimes it is also attributed to God. The Mossi do not seem to grant a soul to inanimate objects, but only to animate beings: plants, animals, men. Yet, as a rule, inexplicable or abnormal phenomena are attributed to spirits dwelling in inanimate objects.

There are three kinds of spirits: the tisé (plural of tiga, "tree"), who dwell exclusively in trees; the kikirsi (plural of kikiriga), or spirits proper; and the tangamma (plural of tangandé), the protective spirits of the villages who dwell in sacred groves.

The tisé reside preferably in those trees which stand near the huts, but some of them also dwell in the bush. They have a special liking for the tamarind tree and bastard mahogany, but they are not at all fond of the doubalé, which shelters bats. At night they leave their dwelling and go into the huts. Their bodies are human in form, but invisible to the common run of mankind. They are much taller and fatter than men, and they are black and walk with their feet up in the air and their heads down to the ground.

At night they wander about, and their presence is betrayed by a
776 darkening of the doorway; they are so fat that they blot out the light.
753 Woe to the man who has no water in his soukala, who has saved no millet beer! The tiga who comes and finds nothing causes pimples to grow all over the man's body; this is the illness characteristic of the tisé. He is fortunate if he gets away with so little, for the tisé can afflict him with many other diseases or even kill him. If the tiga manages to touch someone, the place touched will swell; if someone

776 makes noise in the bush under certain leafy trees, his cheeks will swell
753 out. The tisé talk, even during the day. It is their voices which are heard when the wind stirs the leaves. We had /81/ papaw seeds planted all around our dwelling. They had sprouted and grown well; the fruit was already ripening. One morning, no papaw trees were left in
[824] Koupéla! The naba had decreed that these were talking trees, that they would cause illness to those who had them in their soukala . . . and the papaws had been cut down!

776 Fortunately, it is possible to protect oneself against the tisé. First, those trees which shelter them may be felled, and the spirits will move
782 elsewhere. Some very beautiful trees vanish thus from the villages. The tisé may also be appeased with sacrifices. Does this result in tree cult, dendrolatry? Indeed not! The Mossi clearly make the distinction between the tree and the spirit that inhabits it, and they sacrifice to the spirit. Sometimes also, a tree was planted on the
[769] grave of the elder who founded the village, and sacrifices are made to the ancestral spirit at the foot of the tree. Finally, there are fetishes more powerful than the tisé. It is enough to know which roots and barks the tisé do not like, to steep them in water, and to place the pot at the door of the hut. When a tiga sees this fetish, he invariably runs away. Some Peul are said to have the power to distinguish between those trees where spirits dwell and those where they do not, and to kill the former trees merely by rubbing them with butter! This must be done in a special way.

776 The kikirsi are imps, red or black all over, and only a few centi-
754 meters high. Their body has the same shape as ours, but it is much nimbler and more tenuous—something ethereal and impalpable that only the sorcerers can discern. The latter call them with a low whistle or by shaking a peculiarly shaped gourd that looks like a handle
[534] ending in a sphere. This gourd is dried without being opened, and the seeds gather in the sphere. The sorcerer makes noise by shaking this instrument, and the kikirsi flock to him singing.

776 There are good and evil kikirsi, and the good ones only do evil when forced to do so; for instance, when someone puts pepper in their sauce. They abhor pepper but they love honey, and every good housewife who wishes to preserve her honey covers it carefully with pepper to prevent the kikirsi from eating it. They are inordinately fond of sesame, and they dote on millet cakes (samsa); every woman who makes millet cakes offers them a few. People who eat samsa while walking are careful to drop a few crumbs to the ground. On the

776 other hand, the kikirsi do not drink fermented millet beer, but they must be offered some before the yeast (da'nodo) is added. They have their preferences like human beings. They know hatred and jealousy, and sometimes they even kill one another. They are said to have two 776 sexes, to marry, and to procreate. They even have the special faculty 845 of always bearing twins, and this is why twins are called by their 551 name and are dedicated to them; it is believed that spirits dwell within them.

776 The birth of twins causes their mother much trouble. Formerly 845 both were sometimes put to death, while at other times only one was killed. When a woman bears twins, she builds at the door of her hut 782 a tiny miniature house where the spirits dwelling /82/ within her children will take shelter. Three times a year if her means allow it, in the spring, in the winter, and at the height of the rainy season, or at least once a year, a guinea hen must be offered to the kikirsi. This fowl is sacrificed exclusively to them. On that day they must also be offered their favorite foods, and this means that honey, sesame, and millet cakes must be purchased, that beer must be prepared and a jar saved without yeast, that millet mush has to be cooked, and especially that no pepper be added to the sauce. Otherwise the husband, [753] wife, or children will be afflicted with a dreadful eye disease, for such is the illness which the kikirsi have the power of visiting on human beings.

776 As children, twins may wear only the kankabra, a garment made 845 of black and whitish threads, the characteristic clothing of the kikirsi. Happily, they are later allowed to dress as they please. If the mother dies, the twins offer the sacrifices themselves and build the small hut that serves as a dwelling for their little spirit. The later born twin is considered the older of the two. They both wear the same bracelet and share everything given to them. It is not considered proper to make a gift to one without giving the same thing to the other. Actually, these customs are to be found in Africa from Bambara country to Tanganyika.

776 To return to the kikirsi themselves, they are present everywhere. In the bush they are fond of termite nests, large and small. They 241 also like open spaces. They are to be found around the villages; there are ponds set apart for the kikirsi, wells considered to belong to them. There are spirits watching over every field, and before sowing, as also before harvesting millet, the master of the field sacrifices a chicken to the spirit on a stone in the middle of the field. The

776 kikiriga, in turn, are to ward off anything that might harm the crop,
241 birds, caterpillars, thieves, and the like, and to fill with millet a granary of the size drawn on the ground with ashes at the time of harvest. If the kikiriga has properly carried out his duties, he gets another chicken when all the grain has been gathered in a heap.

776 Pregnant women are under the protection of a special kikiriga, and
[843] small children have one of their own to ward off illness and danger. Do we not say ourselves that a special Providence watches over the very young?

776 Actually, everyone has his kikiriga. Some have an evil one, and
828 those are the people who quarrel with everybody, the ones who are never successful, whose livestock dies, for the kikirsi often kill the goats, sheep, and horses that die of illness. Other people have a
[577] good kikiriga, and for them everything goes well; they were born under a lucky star. These are the engaging, sweet, good-natured people
[513] who get rich and who have many children. When a Mossi lies down to sleep in his hut, he rests his head on a stone or a small mound of beaten earth. This is where his kikiriga dwells, and from time to time, especially when he feels the need for special protection, he
[782] sacrifices a guinea hen or sometimes even a goat, with the understanding that the spirit will chase away all fellow spirits who might want to harm him and will avert all illness and all danger from his path.

/83/ The tangandé is a spirit who has the shape of an animal and
776 who is regarded as the protector of a village. The term is also ex-
778 tended to designate the spirit's place of residence, usually the sacred
825 grove but sometimes a mere stone or even an open space. The tangandé may be a crocodile, a boa, a leopard, a turtle, a deer, a hare, etc. The animal is sacred to the whole village and may not be killed in the sacred grove, but it may be killed elsewhere, even a short distance from the thicket.

776 The tangandé is a guardian spirit because it protects men and sends
755 its servants to accompany the village people on trips when they request it to do so. The natives incessantly turn to it for protection, and the sorcerers incessantly refer those who consult them to the tangandé to obtain cures and to request the release of souls held captive
776 by evil sorcerers. When someone dies, sacrifices are made to the
782 tangandé with requests to protect the survivors and to ward off illness.
[774] When souls leave the body during sleep, they often go to the sacred grove. Anyone may sacrifice to the tangandé and in the tangandé.

●776 The naba does so more than anyone else; on the Day of the Dead
782 (basra) he always makes sacrifices there, and usually the village elders accompany him.

776 A village may have several tangandé /sic/, but the protective
animal or animals—most often there are two—are the same in all the
778 sacred groves, of which there are as many as there are tangandé /sic/. Nothing may be taken from a sacred grove; everything in it is sacred. No wood may be cut down, and it is forbidden even to gather dead wood which has fallen by itself. By the same token, the dry grass may not be set afire, not even in the area around the grove. If all precautions have been duly taken and fire nevertheless spreads to the sacred grove, nothing can be done and the village people are not held responsible. On the other hand, outsiders are prevented, by force if necessary, from taking anything whatever from the sacred grove. If the outsider is powerful and cannot be restrained, expiatory sacrifices are offered after his departure.

776 The tangandé is thus a guardian animal, and yet some tangamma
754 retaliate by afflicting the guilty party with diseases. If one of the sorcerers who eat souls (seuya) offers gifts to a tangandé, the latter will help him and refuse to restore the soul which has been entrusted to it, unless more substantial gifts are forthcoming. One may pray to a tangandé and make a vow, for example, promise it a goat or sheep if it kills a designated enemy. The goat is purchased pending the enemy's death. Sometimes the tangandé takes its time and
[781] several years go by. The spirit is chided and told to hurry, and finally decides to do away with the person in question. Then the goat is sacrificed.

776 Some people say that all tangamma come from the Fada N'Gourma
778 region, where the father of all tangamma is to be found. It is the
787 sorcerer's task to point out the tangamma and the place of their residence. Once, for example, a village had just been founded. The elders had found a piece of ground propitious to agriculture, in the vicinity of water, and had built their huts. At the beginning /84/ of the winter season, when the time came for sowing, they shared out the neighboring bush and proceeded to lay out their fields. One day a leopard driven out of its lair took to flight before their eyes and repaired to a thicket. Immediately the people were called, the thicket surrounded and searched thoroughly. No leopard was found. On the following day the same episode took place in the same spot. This happened three times, and every time it proved impossible to

776 find the leopard, which had suddenly vanished. The puzzled elders,
778 like the good Mossi they were, consulted the sorcerer who stated that
787 the leopard was their tangandé, and the thicket to which it had repaired was its sacred grove. He also prescribed the sacrifices to be offered.

776 As the blood of the victims flowed, the children saw a turtle
787 walking toward the sacred grove and tried to seize it. The elder prevented then from doing so and again resorted to the superior knowledge of the sorcerer to find out what this might possibly mean: a turtle entering the sacred grove during a sacrifice to the tangandé! The sorcerer pronounced the following oracle: the turtle is the child of the tangandé and thus becomes sacred to our village. Since that time the village has had the leopard and turtle as its tangandé /sic/.

776 The tangandé may actually be a stone or a tree which is regarded as the guardian of the village, but this is more unusual. The tangandé might perhaps be considered as a sort of village totem. If we take Salomon Reinach's definition of the totem as "the animal, plant, or more rarely mineral or heavenly body which the clan acknowledges as an ancestor, a protector, and a rallying sign," (3) we find that the

3. Salomon Reinach, Cultes, mythes et religion /Cults, Myths, and Religion/, p. 81.

tangandé is usually an animal, a guardian animal, but that it is not regarded as an ancestor and it does not serve as a rallying sign, for
[621] several villages may have the same tangamma /sic/—many have the crocodile and boa—without considering this as a bond between them.

Monseigneur Le Roy defines totemism as follows: "An institution consisting essentially of a magic pact, which reflects and constitutes a kinship, mystical and supernatural in nature, by which an invisible spirit in the visible shape of an animal, or, in exceptional cases, of a plant, mineral, or astral body, is associated with an individual, a family, a clan, a tribe, or a secret society for the purpose of reciprocal services." (4) This definition does not correspond to the

4. Mgr. Le Roy, La religion des primitifs /Primitive Religion/, p. 132.

●776 tangandé in every detail either, for only the village may have a tangandé, and there does not seem to be any magic pact unless the sacrifices offered are considered as such a pact, which does not seem justified. The tangandé-animal is never sacrificed, and no special initiation takes place.

774 761 [775] The closest thing to totemism among the Mossi seems to be their concept of the human soul, and yet it is not, properly speaking, a totem in the sense indicated by these authors. Every man has a soul that lives on after death and takes the name of kyma, while during life it is called siga. Shortly before death it takes the name of toullé [197] /85/ in Ouagadougou or toundo in Koupela, but siga, toundo, kyma are one and the same thing, one and the same principle. According to the Mossi, this soul is an animal, invisible of course, a snake, a crocodile, a deer, a hare. The soul is related to this animal, it belongs to the same family, so that to kill a snake or a crocodile in a village where the soul of the inhabitants is a snake or a crocodile is to kill an inhabitant of the village; every individual related to the snake has a snake in the village to represent thim, and he will die when his soul-animal dies.

774 784 Yet, and this runs counter to the definitions of totemism, the individual expects no aid from this animal, never sacrifices to it, and never kills it himself to renew the kinship pact. A person whose soul is a crocodile is forbidden to kill crocodiles in his own village, but he may kill them elsewhere, although he may never eat them, while he may kill the tangandé animal as long as he does so outside the tangandé, and he may eat it at any time. Some people, when they [766] find a dead soul-animal of their family near their village, render it funeral honors, weep, wail, and bury it as one of their own, but they offer it no gifts and hold no kouré. Generally it is merely covered with earth. The most widespread soul-animals are a kind of snake (bosombodro) and the crocodile. Several families may have the same [582] one, and marriage, although exogamic, is not forbidden between members of these families.

774 754 The soul may leave the body and in fact leaves it often, especially during the night. If children had a good time in a certain place, if they enjoyed themselves at someone's house, the soul returns there at night. This is when the worst is to be feared from the sorcerers; they may seize the soul by surprise, and its unfortunate owner will die.

794 Later, in 1917, in my book Noir du Yatenga /Blacks of Yatenga/, since the few attempts that I had made in Yatenga to find this cult of the sun had given no results, I wrote (page 277):

"The sun is called ouindigho or ouindigha in Mossi (tili in Bambara). The word has a certain relationship with Ouendé, and the word Ouendé seems to be part of the construction of the word ouindigho. In any case, the Mossi and the Foulsé of Yatenga make no sacrifices to the sun. I interrogated in vain several important people about the details given by Lieutenant Desplagnes, pages 275 and 276 of his work, Plateau Central Nigérien about a cult of the sun in Mossi. It is true that these details concern the religious society of the Ouango and the villages where the members of this society would be operating: this would apply to villages of the Residency of Kaya (such as, Mané, Boujéma, etc.). One could thus pursue the studies in Kaya. /32/ In any case, the cult of the sun is totally unknown in Yatenga."

In my conclusion, I denied that there was a cult of the sun among the Mossi of Yatenga, while I admitted that one might be able to find this cult in other parts of Mossi country, particularly in the Residency (today, the circle) of Kaya.

794 114 The question was at that point when Father Eugène Mangin published a study on the Mossi in Anthropos ("Les Mossi. Essai sur les us et coutumes du Soudan Occidental" /The Mossi, an Essay on the Usages and Customs of Western Sudan/, Vienna, 1916), a study in which the author, who lived for a long time in Ouagadougou among the central Mossi, brought most of his effort to bear on a study of the religious life of his charges. It may well be that Father Mangin's observations touch upon the question of sun worship in that country in a definitive manner, better than Binger and Desplagnes had done.

794 The Mossi, says Father Mangin, in their sacrifices to Ouendé, offer water for his rising and pour it to the east, and offer water for his setting and pour it to the west. In an argument, the weakest will also say: "God (Ouendé) is my witness that I have done you no harm, God [776] will give it back to you," and he will point to the sun. Thus, Ouendé, the principal god of the Mossi, is indeed a sun god, and indeed the Mossi worship, in him, the sun.

Does this mean that Ouendé cannot also be a god of the sky or of the atmosphere, as I maintained in my Noir du Yatenga? Certainly not, and indeed Father Mangin mentions that Ouendé commands

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769 destroy the yield. And, depending on his attentions to them, they can give or take away the good health necessary to carry him through the arduous activity of the rainy season when work is hardest, the granaries nearly empty, and food in short supply. Separate ancestral spirits look out for different aspects of the well-being of the individual. Satisfying their various sacrificial requirements is both expensive and time-consuming, but their good will is essential to the success of the farmer, and it is in his own best interest to be attentive to their needs.

THE EARTH CUSTODIANS

793 A close relationship exists between the control of the water supply upon which the agricultural economy depends and the authority of the 776 earth custodians in their role as intermediaries with the several manifestations of Wennam, the Mossi deity. The deity itself is somewhat aloof from the affairs of men, but through his specific manifestations and with the intercession of the earth custodians (*Tenga Soba namba*), descendants of the indigenous inhabitants of the Yatenga, the individual propitiates Wennam in order to control the various forces of the natural and supernatural environment upon which the success of his economic or social endeavor is dependent. Tenga Wende, his terrestrial manifestation, and Tido Wende, which gives life to the vegetable kingdom, are the aspects of Wennam which are most frequently evoked; but Siguiri Wende, the deified first ancestor of the Mossi; Ki Wende, the millet god; and Saga Wende, the rain deity, are also frequently called upon for help.

Each Mossi village in the Yatenga is divided into one or more areas, 793 each of which is in the "command" of one of the village earth custodians. [36] Each of these areas contains both the dwelling of the Savadogo lineage of the earth custodian and the residence and farmlands of various "true" Mossi lineages. The head of each lineage maintains the good will of the terrestrial manifestation of the deity through the intercession of the earth custodian who "commands" his land. In some instances a lineage may own land under the authority of two different earth custodians; in this case offerings must be made at the shrine (*tenga*) of each.

793 The good fortune which may be secured through obeisance to the terrestrial manifestation of the deity (Tenga Wende) involves both 782 sacrifices and gifts of money to the earth custodian and abstention from acts offensive to the earth. For example, sexual intercourse may take [833 place only in a private courtyard or within the house. Violation of this 783] rule defiles the land and must be expiated through a special sacrifice and the payment of a fine to the earth custodian. Any lost object found in the 778 public way or in the bush is in the custody of the earth deity and must be turned over to the earth custodian to await the inquiry of the proper owners. If such objects are unclaimed, they are given to Tenga Wende

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by being placed on his altar, where they become part of the earth symbols (*tiinse*). As a result, these altars are piled high with old sardine cans, bicycle parts, remnants of clothing, unusual stones and scraps of metal, baskets, wooden implements, and weapons, which are left there to decompose slowly and return to the earth. Travelers in a strange village need never fear that their property will be stolen if they deposit it near the altar of the earth custodian. 778

When a farmer wishes to clear a part of the bush which has previously been unused, he must first ask permission of the earth custodian and make a present to the earth deity. If he wishes to use the land again the following year, the request and the gift must be repeated. Such a field may be passed on to his descendants, who have a right to the land so long as they acknowledge each year the authority of the earth custodian. If a new well is to be dug, his authorization must be requested, and his advice may also be asked for the proper place to seek water. The wise Mossi farmer consults the earth custodian frequently about his agricultural activities. He also reports anything that he may have done to alter the condition of his farmlands or the surrounding bush, not because each individual act is of such great importance, but because maintaining good relations with the custodian of the earth is in the interest of his own economic security. 241 782 793

OTHER ASPECTS OF RELIGION

Other descendants of the original inhabitants of the Yatenga, the Bogoba, are especially charged with the propitiation of Tido Wendé, the vegetal manifestation of Wennam. In addition to the many manifestations of Wennam and the complex organization of priests and ceremonial designed for his propitiation, many other forces inhabit the unseen world of the Mossi. Indeed, to the observer their number and variety might at first seem to be almost as great as the number of Mossi with whom he may discuss these beings. Each man's description of these supernatural beings varies in terms of his subjective reaction resulting either from direct experience of them or from stories he has heard concerning their behavior. In contrast to Wennam, whose disposition is essentially benevolent so long as he is properly propitiated, these lesser supernatural beings are more frequently malicious and always more difficult to control. Perhaps for these reasons they are not worshiped. The Mossi's concern is not to propitiate them but to neutralize their evil intentions by the use of protective charms (*tim*). 776

The "bush," the unused land lying beyond the farms, is the least-known aspect of the Mossi natural environment. This is especially true of those far areas of the bush where even the authority of the earth custodians does not extend and where unknown spirits dwell. For although the 776 823

776 bush is included in the orderly universe which the Mossi have fabri-
823 cated, it exists at the periphery and is a thing to be feared. The name of this unknown and unowned part of the bush is synonymous with fear. Dreams in which an individual sees frightening images are called "bush
[828] creeping up" (*weogo doore*) or "bush traps you" (*weogo n'yoko fo*). These phrases are also used to describe the emotional shock, the feeling of fear, elicited by the unexpected sight of a frightening object like a corpse or a lion.

Most important among the supernatural beings inhabiting the bush are the twin spirits (*kikirdisi*). Living in pairs or in larger groups, they inhabit the bush, caves, baobab trees, and certain dense thickets of underbrush. While specific details vary, it is generally conceded that they are small, about a foot tall, black like the Mossi, and of both sexes. Their social organization is like that of men: each group is ruled over by a twin spirit-chief (*Kikirdisi Naba*).

845 Twin children are always regarded as the emissaries of the twin spirits.
776 Shortly after the birth of twins their mother takes a present of food to a place where the twin spirits are known to dwell. Leaving the gift and expressing her thanks, she also makes it clear to the twin spirits that if they have any sort of malicious intent in sending her their children they might as well take them back immediately, since she will tolerate no foolishness. If, through her new children, they plan to torment her, they should save their efforts and desist at once. While the twin spirits are frequently mischief-makers, they are more frivolous than malicious and essentially neither good nor evil. The death of newborn twins is accepted with relief, for it is believed certain that the twin spirits have been thwarted in their mischievous intent and have conceded defeat.

THE ECONOMIC AND CEREMONIAL CYCLE

796 A brief description of the economic cycle and the ceremonials which
221 mark its phases will serve to illustrate the way the Mossi perceive their relationship to the forces of their natural, supernatural, and social milieux and the methods by which they seek to assure their well-being through control of these forces. The year is usually divided into twelve
[805] moons whose names refer either to the principal economic activity of the season or to a ceremonial which accompanies it.

The first moon of the Mossi year is called "Gambo" after the name of the village which celebrates its first rain-making ceremony (*Tengana*) at this time. Although the rains are still five or six months away, this ritual marks the beginning of the new economic cycle. Each household which possesses land controlled by the earth custodian sends one of its young girls with an offering of millet gruel to place at the altar of Tenga Wende, the terrestrial manifestation of the deity. The earth custodian advises

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Tenga Wende of the desire for a good growing year and gives each girl a small part of the wet earth near the shrine; this represents the now sanctified soul (*shiga*) and is placed under the granary from which the millet seeds for the new crop will be taken. 796 221

Then those who possess land controlled by the earth custodian organize a hunt for his benefit. The following day, the earth custodian visits each lineage which possesses fields in areas of the bush under his custodianship. He is given calabashes filled with millet gruel, which he pours as a libation on the earth, asking Tenga Wende to grant good health, heavy rains, and a successful harvest to the household. As the libation is poured, the women try to catch a little in their own calabashes of gruel, which they then pour as their sacrifice. Because the millet from the granaries of good harvests is lucky, other women want to try to catch a little of it in their own offerings; thus the libations spill from one calabash into another as they fall on the earth. [782] [777]

The second moon is called "Bega" after the ceremonial which coincides with the first labor in the fields, the clearing and burning which precedes planting. After making a sacrifice at his own altar, the earth custodian goes to the residence of the neighboring priest (*Boga*) specifically charged with the propitiation of the vegetal manifestation of the deity. This visit symbolizes the interdependent relationship of the two priests and the supernatural powers which they control. The *Boga* then repeats the libations made during the previous ritual, but this time the offerings of millet gruel are made to Tido Wende, the force which gives life to the plants, rather than to the earth. [793]

A sacrifice to Pogo Wende, the specific manifestation of Tenga Wende which guards a farmer's fields, is usually made after they have been cleared and prepared for planting. Either before or after the sowing of the first seeds, the farmer asks the earth custodian to sacrifice a sheep or a goat to the field deity, requesting good health, heavy rains, and a rich harvest. This sacrifice (*Pogo Mande*) is the final aspect of the ceremonial preparations for the new economic cycle. It is designed to enlist the benevolence not only of Pogo Wende but also of the twin spirits which inhabit the field. If the twins are well disposed toward the farmer, they will protect the soul (*ki shiga*) of his millet stand from the twin spirits from neighboring fields who might try to steal it. Like the ancestral spirits, the twin spirits send a high wind into a field, blowing the ripening grains from the stalk and liberating their "souls" (*shiise*), which are then captured to enrich the spirits' own fields. [776] [782] [774]

The third moon of the year is called "Cundiba Bega." The fourth, which usually corresponds with the European month of June, is called "unaccompanied" (Quizale), referring to the fact that no ceremonial is observed during its phase. The hard work in the fields is begun at this

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The next moon, called "Tido," is the occasion for a ceremony thanking Wennam, through his terrestrial and vegetal manifestations, for his support during the growing season and for the rich harvests that have been received. Though it is directed by the custodians of the earth, it is their auxiliaries, the Bogaba, who officiate and who sacrifice at the altars to Tido Wende. After they have finished, others may offer a chicken as thanks for successful harvests or for the birth of a child.

At the appearance of the next moon the ceremony called "Filiga" is celebrated, thanking the ancestors of each lineage for their protection during the hard months of the rainy season. The initial sacrifices are made by the village chief both at the shrine to the spirits of the former chiefs and at the ancestral shrine of his lineage. Because their offerings are made to powerful spirits, it is wiser not to refer directly to them by name. They are called *Kikirigo Na Maore*, which means "twin dance." The twin spirits, like the ancestral spirits (*kiemse*), give children. Thus, through indirection a "charged" word is avoided by calling the sacrifice after an analogous but less powerful force. The specific purpose of the first sacrifice is to ask the protection and the assistance of the spirits of the former chiefs during the dangerous period which is to follow. The ancestral spirits of the villagers are then propitiated, and individuals who fail to perform the sacrifices properly may be punished by their ancestors. It is also believed that the ancestors may try to call some of the members of the lineage to join them at this time.

The sacrifices are made by the children of the daughters of the lineage (*Yasenamba*), whose permissive relationship with their mother's kinsmen is paralleled by their relationship to the ancestral spirits of their lineage. The lineage head presents the first chicken for sacrifice. Its throat is slowly cut as it is offered to the "twin" (*kikirigo*), as the "first ancestor" of the lineage is called—again through indirection, for even if the name of the first ancestor were known, it would be presumptuous of his descendants to call him by name. A chicken is then sacrificed to the "old ancestors" of the great-grandfather's generation, to the ancestors of the grandfather's generation, and to those of the fathers' generation who are deceased. As each chicken's throat is cut, the ancestors are thanked for their protection throughout the rainy season and requested to continue to look out for the welfare of their descendants during the months of the dry season which follow. Other men of the lineage may then give chickens to be sacrificed.

The final aspect of the ritual closing of the economic year is the ceremony called "Na Poosum," or "chief's salutation." It is essentially a social occasion. The homage to the central political authority made at Kom Filiga is now complemented on the village level. The elders of each lineage go to the village chief with presents of millet and assurances of

000 We are now finished with Mossi industries, not because this work is complete or definitive of course, nor because I have listed and thoroughly studied all this people's trades. I have said enough, however, to draw a significant outline /537/ of these industries and to show that they are flourishing. We may now proceed to trading.

438 443 Among the Mossi, as everywhere else in West Africa, one must distinguish the internal trade of the territory from its external trade.

As among other Blacks, the internal trade formerly was, and still is, ensured by village markets which are held at the most important localities on set days, for example every three days, every five days, etc. Thus at Ouagadougou, before the arrival of the Whites, the market was held every three days. Now it is a daily affair.

443 782 At every village where a market was held, there was a "market chief" named by the village chief. The market chief performed a sacrifice for the market. On a large consecrated stone he killed a chicken, a goat, or a sheep which he provided himself. [776] The animal was offered to the sky divinity (Ounam) to preclude fights on the market place. When this was over, our chief gave a hand to Ounam in his pacifying role, with the aid of a club if necessary.

443 All internal and external products of the territory were retailed at those markets, largely by women whom the Blacks, as we know, are in the habit of sending to market with surplus goods to sell. We shall not dwell on the internal Mossi trade, which is the same as in all black countries, a small retail trade nourished and vitalized by the external trade. Let us, therefore, proceed to the latter.

439 The external Mossi trade is the usual trade of the Sudan, which we have already described and which operates from north to south and south to north. Livestock is led toward the south, kola nuts are brought toward the north, salt is brought back toward the south, etc. We should add to this the cotton strips which constitute one of the important Mossi products (they are made by the Yarsé and by the Mossi themselves, as we saw). Those cotton strips, like livestock, are taken south where cotton is poorly grown.

778 whose ancestors had ruled the soil of the territory. In the name of
782 the Moro Naba, he entrusted him with the task of offering all those gifts to the Earth so that the latter might favor the sovereign. Ouagadougou Naba performed the sacrifice before the door of his soukala.

When the Moro Naba went to war, he also ordered the chief
[727] of Ougadougou to perform a sacrifice to the Earth. The bara indicated what should be sacrificed in order to insure victory, to "break" the villages that were to be attacked.

782 When rain failed to come, the Moro Naba would go to the hillock at Koumbé /sic/-Padanda, and have the head of the quarter offer a sacrifice (beef, sheep, chicken) to secure rain. If rain refused to come, the bara were consulted once more, and sacrifices were offered until it came.

●776 The Mossi also have a sky god whom they call Ounam as well
782 as Naba Ouendé or Naba Ouondé, meaning "Sun Chief." This is a
794 trace of the sun cult, which is unusual in Black West Africa, all opinions to the contrary notwithstanding. /590/ The majority of the Mossi sacrifice much more to ancestors and to the Earth than to Naba Ouondé, who is to them a somewhat remote god.

794 It must be added that Lieutenant Desplagnes found among the
782 Mossi an esoteric cult of the sun, moon, and fire, which is peculiar to religious initiates (Ouango) whom we shall mention later.

"The Hougho-Ouango of the Mossi (among the Mossi, those priests reside in the villages of Boujema, Mani, Kondogho, Yolo, and Tio) sacrifice to the sun in order to bind it to the Earth. They do this morning and evening, sunrise and sunset, during the first week of the winter season, and every six days in the morning at sunrise thereafter.
[778] They also go to altars made of three conical stones and offer sacrifices and libations, always surrounded by the populace, family heads, drummers, and familial masks (ouango).

794 "Those priests tend the sacred fire throughout the year in a
372 small, highly adorned recess dug into one of their house walls. At
783 the end of the rainy season they will use it to light the great purifying bush fires.

794 "They perform sacrifices at every new moon, and they have
782 seven important feasts a year for their divinity. Finally, during the solar festivities, they use a cow's tail to tie down the sun to the earth and to bind its life-giving heat." (Le Plateau central nigérien /The Central Nigerian Plateau/, pages 275 and 276.)

000 nigérien /The Central Nigérian Plateau/, pages 275 and 276.)

782 The Mossi sacrifice to evil spirits (kinkirga in the singular,
●776 kinkirsi in the plural). In Mossi villages, when the cold weather begins, the oldest man in the village performs a sacrifice to avert the wrath of evil spirits. These are indeed fearsome, for among other things they cause the storms, the fierce winds that lay flat the millet and maize. Those spirits usually live in the bush and inhabit
[824] in particular the kankalra trees (lenga in Mandé), to which the Mossi offer sacrifices but whose leaves they nevertheless eat. There are Mossi who can see the kinkirsi and who have fights with them.

791 Now, let us say a word about the priestly organization of the Mossi.

/591/ First of all, among the Mossi as among other Blacks, there are soothsayers and makers of grigris. The soothsayers are called bara and the grigri makers timisoba, meaning "grigri chiefs," from timi, "grigri" and soba, "chief." This is exactly the same word formation as that of basitigui in Bambara.

Prior to the French occupation there were considerable numbers of bara among the Mossi, at least one for every village. Since the arrival of the Whites, however, they are much fewer. The bara dis-
[787] close things with the aid of some earth. Since they only charge a few cowries for a consultation, they till the soil during the winter season and even work at a trade during the dry season, for example at shoemaking or weaving. They teach the bara's calling to their children.

791 The timisoba, although less numerous than the bara, do not make
789 a living by making grigris either. They, too, till the soil and work at a trade. They only make grigris on order and do not make them up in advance.

The timisoba goes into the bush and cuts out the roots of certain trees. He burns them and puts the charcoal in bags which he hangs either inside or outside his hut. This charcoal is or becomes grigri. In order to make other objects into grigris, he reduces the charcoal to powder, mixes it with karité butter, and marks with it all the objects he wishes to make into grigris, such as cow's tails, deer horns, sheep horns, etc. This charcoal powder is put to all sorts of uses. The timisoba even mixes it with his millet flour and eats it.

8: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1958
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rulers left the Dagomba region in the Gold Coast (present-day Ghana) during the 11th century and moved into the bend of the Niger River, carving out three large kingdoms and smaller principalities in the process. At the head of these still extant kingdoms are rulers (*Moro Nabas*) who hold feudal-like control of the provinces, districts, and villages which comprise their domains. A complex hierarchical administrative apparatus extends the power of the rulers into the smallest village, and funnels taxes and tribute back to them. French conquest modified this highly efficient system but did not greatly change it. The Mossi state apparatus rests on an economy which produces cotton cloth, horses, sheep, cattle, and goats, but the main support of this large population—one of the densest in the Sudan—is grain agriculture. Today, some Mossi districts still have as many as 70 persons per square mile. 105 173 105

The Mossi are divided into stratified royal, noble, and commoner patrilineages. Characteristic of this lineage system is a process by which royal sublineages descend serially until they merge with the mass of commoner lineages. Below the lineages there were once large non-Mossi groups of serfs and slaves, but these people have now been grouped into lineages and have become Mossi. Patrilocal polygynous extended family households, grouped into villages, form the basic Mossi settlement pattern. Marriages are arranged between unrelated persons through the agency of lineage members who establish "friendly" relationships. The two friends might ask their lineage heads for women to exchange as wives, or the "friend" who has received more gifts from his opposite number will give over a wife. Because only the older men have women and goods at their disposal, they are usually the ones who receive wives. The result is that most young men have no wives and must content themselves with occasional lovers until they inherit wives from lineage members. The Mossi have a great fear of incestuous relations which bring down the wrath of the ancestors (the *Keemsé*).

Ancestor veneration is at the core of Mossi religious behavior. The recent ancestors are notified, through sacrifices, of the important events in the lives of their descendants, and they are expected to aid in solving everyday problems. The ancestors also invoke their sanctions against antisocial behavior among their descendants. Once a year the Mossi people, in concert with the Moro Nabas, appeal to their individual and collective ancestors for good crops, large families, and for the preservation of the dynasty. Often associated with the ancestors as propitiatory agents are local deities called *Tengkougas* (sing. *Tenkougre*) or earth shrines, visibly manifested by clumps of trees, mountains, rocks, or rivers. *Tengsobas* or earth priests appeal to the Tengkougas on behalf of the local populations for help in sickness, for rain and good crops, and for children. When proper sacrifices are offered to the Tengkougas, their spiritual agents, called *kinkirsé*, enter the wombs of women and are born as children. Twins and children who die young are regarded as "evil" kinkirsé who entered a woman without being invited. Nevertheless, many persons consider twins as special gifts to parents in favor of the earth deities. 769 [778] [842] [845]

The earth itself, *Tenga*, is one of the principal deities of the Mossi. Tenga is 776 [823]

8: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1958
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776 considered the wife of a male deity called *Winnam*, *Windé*, or *Naba Zidiwindé*. The true nature of Winnam is not clear. The Mossi say: "Winnam is the sun, and Winnam is God"; he is considered a sun god as well as a supreme deity. [775] Winnam is venerated but he is not feared, because it is the dead ancestors who chastise evil-doers by affliction or death. When wicked people die they face the wrath of the ancestors in *Keemsétenga*, or land of the ancestors.

The Mossi have several concepts of the spiritual essence or animating principle of man. 774 First there is the *seega* (pl. *seesé*), an entity found in all living beings; it leaves the body during sleep, and its adventures provide the dreams of men. The seega can be captured during its nocturnal wanderings or in places where large crowds congregate. If the seega is captured and eaten by a [761] sorcerer, its owner will die. A man's shadow is also called his seega; persons about to die have no shadows, since their seesé have either been stolen or have [822] left on their own account.

Another principle called the *keema* (pl. *keemsé*) is associated with the dead 775 or with persons about to die. The keema of a dying man wanders around and often frightens people; as soon as he is dead, he is no longer referred to by name but is called the "keema." Keemsé is also the word used for the generalized [769] ancestors who sanction the behavior of the living and who must be placated if people wish to have enough food, wives, children, and good health. A man's own keemsé take a vital interest in his affairs, in return for which they receive nourishment in the form of the seesé (animals do not have keemsé) of sacrificed animals.

[827] The breath, called *vousem*, is also considered an animating principle by the Mossi and, since it leaves the body through the nose at death, they believe that a man's nose is the first thing to die. It is not clear how the seega is disposed of when the body dies. Some people say it remains forever about the haunts of man; others believe that it goes to a mountain called Plimpikou and disappears into a cavern. Still others believe that the seega becomes the keema and goes to Plimpikou, from whence the keemsé come to visit their descendants. It is difficult to determine whether the Mossi have always been vague about their traditional religious concepts or whether this uncertainty is the result of the influx of such foreign creeds as Islam and Christianity.

The first recorded contact between the Mossi and Moslems took place 175 around 1328 when the Yatenga Mossi attacked, burned, and sacked Timbuktu, 797 then held by the Dia dynasty of the Songhoi (Dubois 1896:251). For more than a century afterward, the Mossi pursued a turbulent and aggressive policy in the region of the Niger bend, pushing as far as Gourma, Walata, and Banku (ibid:127). They were finally defeated and routed by Sonni Ali in 1477. In 1499, when Askia the Great (El Hadj Mohammed ben Abou Bekr, usurper of the Songhoi throne from the Sonni dynasty in 1494) returned from his pilgrimage to Mecca, he launched a *jihad* or holy war on the Mossi who had rejected his ultimatum to adopt Islam. Askia defeated the Mossi, "devastated the towns and countryside, took men, women, and children as prisoners, and forcibly converted these captives to Islam" (Dubois 1896:127–128). The

643 knew that Boukary Koutou was the only person capable of such a con-
669 spiracy. Fearing for their lives if they did not nominate him, they immedi-
645 ately sent a messenger to summon him as the successful candidate.[15] Under normal circumstances, however, there was no coercion of the ministers and the nominee was quietly brought to the councillors.

645 Wearing a pair of trousers and a sheepskin mantle and carrying a spear
643 in each hand, the nominee entered the courtyard of the compound through
[292] the women's door.[16] He was preceded by the Samande Nabila, who sprinkled the earth with water. He came up to the councillors and saluted them, and the Ouidi Naba addressed him as follows: "Before your father [brother] died, did he designate you to be his successor?" The nominee replied, "No, Sire! My father has left you free to choose whom you wish, be he a blind man or a leper!" This question was asked three times, and
645 the nominee responded three times. The Ouidi Naba then made the fol-
643 lowing declaration: "I am giving you the nam of your father and grand-
551 fathers. You must try to conduct yourself as they did when they had the nam." The Ouidi Naba then listed the names of the territories over which the ruler had absolute power and authority. The new monarch raised his two spears in the air, made a speech in which he announced three guiding principles by which he vowed to reign, and "named a name," that is, suggested the title by which he wished to be known. For example, Mogho Naba Sagha II (1942–57) said in his inaugural speech: "Without rain, there is no life. I will be like rain for the country." He then became known as Mogho Naba Sagha ("Rain"), a rather fitting title for a ruler in a country with uncertain rainfall. The present Mogho Naba stressed in his inaugural speech (in 1957) that he was "solid as a rock." His official title is now Mogho Naba Kougri ("Rock").[17]

The taking of a new name was only the first step in the elaborate proc-
645 ess through which a man became Mogho Naba. Next, the Ouidi Naba
643 took the two spears from the new monarch and removed his sheepskin mantle. Then he gave him his new white clothes, which included a pair of trousers, a bonnet, and a sleeveless robe, all made for him by the people of the Sculougou ward in the capital. Next, he was given a cushion made
[789] by the people of Baramimi. The Baloum Naba then took the closely
[782] guarded namtibo, the sacred amulets of the dynasty, and used them in the preparation of a potion of millet beer mixed with millet-flour water, part
[776] of which was poured as a libation to the earth goddess, Tenga.[18] The ruler and the assembled ministers all partook of the potion in a kind of communion. The ministers then shook the ruler's hand, an act thereafter forbidden, and departed for their own compounds. The newly elected

648 warriors as El Hadj Omar and Samory Touré surprised and puzzled many
175 of their early visitors. Binger explains it as follows:

> Thanks to the primitive tribes that surrounded them like a rampart, the Mossi were spared the incursions of their powerful neighbors. This immunity cannot last much longer, because [Mogho Naba] Sanum is weak, has little spirit, and is badly counseled.[8]

Binger was partly correct in attributing the immunity of the Mossi to the presence of weaker groups on their borders. To the military adventurers of the period, the Mossi must have appeared invulnerable when compared to their weaker neighbors. Nevertheless, the Mossi declare that it was their vigilance and willingness to fight that prevented Samory Touré, among others, from invading their country.[9] They claim to have captured and executed nine of the ten spies he sent to survey their territory. The one spy who returned allegedly told Samory Touré that the Mossi were too strong to be attacked, because they banded together against all outsiders.

175 Crozat attributes the Mossi freedom from attack to miraculous and
648 magical factors:
789

> There is widespread belief in surrounding territories that Mossi country is inviolable. Alone amid the troubled populations that surround it, it enjoys relative peace. It owes this to the very special protection of a deity, and also to the virtues of the special talismans owned by the ruler of Ouagadougou. The terror inspired by these charms is such that some years ago the leader of Gadiari's column suffered a mass desertion of his men when he tried to lead them to the conquest of Mossi country. He himself was killed, perhaps by his own *sofas* [soldiers]. This case cannot be expected to undermine belief in these presumptuous charms.[10]

[176]

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648 This statement, like Binger's, contains an element of truth, but not in
[114] the way that Crozat believed. The Ouagadougou kingdom did have a series of ritual pacts with neighboring Mossi and non-Mossi groups. Crozat found that Mogho Naba Sanum was on "good terms" with the people of Fada-N'Gourma. He tells us that this friendship was maintained by a "curious custom" whereby the Ouagadougou ruler sent wives, captives, and horses from his predecessor's estate to the ruler of the Gurmanche.[11] Similarly, Pinchon, a British officer stationed in the Gold Coast at the beginning of the century, reports that there existed an ancient pact between the Mossi and the Mamprusi. This pact kept the ruler of each country from attacking the other on pain of death by the ancestors. Like the pact between the Mossi and the Gurmanche, this agreement was sanctioned by an annual gift of a horse, slaves, and cloth from the Mossi to the Mamprusi. Pinchon speculates that it was the existence of this pact that induced the Mamprusi

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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ruler to grant asylum to Mogho Naba Wobogo in 1897. He adds that it was probably the injunction in the pact that they should never meet which prevented the ruler from personally receiving Wobogo.[18] 648 175

A ritual pact also bound the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou to the ruler of Dagomba. He sent him goods from the estate of the previous Mogho Naba as well as gifts for yearly sacrifices on the grave of Nyennega, the Mossi progenitrix. There are reports that the Ouagadougou ruler also exchanged annual presents with the Ashanti ruler, but it is not known whether these were courtesy gifts or goods sanctioning ritual pacts.

The ritual pacts among Mossi kingdoms and between them and their neighbors appear to have derived from actual or putative kinship ties. This seems to be supported not only by the traditions of the Mossi but also by those of the surrounding peoples. Whatever their origin, these pacts seem to have afforded their beneficiaries a remarkable degree of freedom from external aggression. It is possible that the Mossi and their neighbors really believed in the efficacy of supernatural sanctions, for purposes of mutual protection. But one suspects that it was the relative weakness of these various groups that caused them to rely on supernatural agencies rather than military might for protection. As will be pointed out below, the Mossi (and probably all of their important neighbors) had considerable difficulty in building and maintaining a fighting force sufficiently large to wage protracted or large-scale wars against foreign groups. 174 648 776 789

The Mossi kingdoms seldom fought among themselves, although their leaders quarreled over status and committed aggression against each other's territories. For example, the Ouagadougou rulers, who claimed suzerainty over Yatenga, often tried to impose their will on that kingdom. Yet, although they were usually rebuffed by the Yatenga Naba, they never tried to resolve the issue by force of arms. In fact, even when a Yatenga ruler appears to have given the Mogho Naba just cause for war, little fighting actually took place. Several times the Yatenga rulers seized such principalities as Riziam and Yako, which were dependent on Ouagadougou, but in no case did the Ouagadougou rulers wage war against them. In 1890, Crozat witnessed Mogho Naba Wobogo's attempt to stop a war between Yatenga and Yako. The Yako people wanted to obey their sovereign and stop the war, but the Yatenga monarch refused to do so.[19] 628 642 643 175

Crozat attributes the ineffectiveness of the Mogho Naba's authority over brother kingdoms to the fact that he had no standing army with which to enforce his rule. While relative strength may have been and probably was the main reason for the Mogho Naba's lack of aggressiveness, the ritual pact that prevented the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou from meeting the

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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621 651 634 243 For example, the villagers of Barkago traditionally cultivated and harvested a field of millet behind his compound for the chief. The people of Pinse, Donse, Passingtenga, and Tewarka cultivated millet for him in their own villages, and those of Togose and Basbedo cultivated rice for him in their excellent lowlands.

243 634 566 567 The district chief had fields both behind his compound and in the bush, which were cultivated for him by his retainers, serfs, and slaves. More than the Mogho Naba and the provincial ministers, the district chief believed that a Moaga must perform agricultural work during the planting season; to show his interest in farming, he often personally supervised the work on his plantations. When the task of weeding or harvesting proved too much for his own people, he asked his villages for a *sosogha*. On that day, each [464] village chief, accompanied by his men, went to the district chief's fields, where, to the accompaniment of drums and chants and with the verbal encouragement of district administrators, the villages vied with each other in their task. The district chief usually sat under a tree and watched the [465] proceedings and occasionally visited the various contingents to observe the progress made. Toward evening, the chief's wives gave the workers large quantities of food and drink in compensation for their services.

651 634 Like the Mogho Naba, the district chief had officials who collected taxes on commodities sold in local markets. These district market officials were usually serfs, Gurunsi captives, or bondsmen from other populations. Mossi [776] rarely served in such capacities because many of the local market places were considered ritually dangerous, and their titular deities, the Tengkouga, were believed to wreak vengeance on market officials who were tardy with sacrifices. The local Kos Naba supervised the slaughtering of every animal killed in the market, kept its skin so that its ownership could be verified if necessary, and collected taxes from the butchers in the form of meat or cowries. The Raga Naba of the district was not as strict as his counterpart in Ouagadougou, and seldom imposed formal taxes on the traders. He usually walked around the market, trailed by the chief's servants, and seized calabashes of grain and other commodities, which he placed in the servants' baskets. The Raga Naba did not tax those itinerant traders or caravaneers who visited the markets in the district, nor did he interfere with them in any other way. These merchants usually had business and personal relations with the chief, and he himself handled revenue from this source. The merchants gave him goods from the forest and Sahara regions, and he in turn often gave them wives, who were thus taken out of the district.

[167] [434] The Mossi district chief was always on the lookout for new sources of revenue, and thus welcomed strangers into his district because they "in-

[P.126]

VIII

RELIGION AND GOVERNMENT

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642 RELIGION AND RITUAL played an important role in supporting and preserv-
[769] ing the Mossi political system. Religio-political ceremonies were centered
[776] around the ancestors (Keemse) and the earth deities (Tengkouga); the otiose high god (Ouennam or Naba Zid Ouende) had a very minor role.

769 The political importance of ancestor veneration lay in the fact that every
642 Mossi chief claimed Nyennega of Dagomba and her descendants, Ouedra-
778 ogo and Oubri, as his ancestors. Furthermore, possession of the amulets of Rialle, Nyennega's husband and Ouedraogo's father, legitimized possession
[613] of the nam. In order to rule, a Moaga had either to be a member of a royal lineage still in possession of the nam or to have received the nam from such
669 a lineage. No Moaga ever tried to usurp the nam of a kingdom or princi-
778 pality without trying to steal the royal amulets at the same time; nor, if his rebellion was successful, did he ever fail to claim that he had stolen the
642 amulets or had received them as a gift. Thus Yadega, who rebelled against
769 his father's brother, Mogho Naba Koudoumie, and founded the Yatenga kingdom, declared that he had obtained Rialle's amulets. He claimed that they had been given to him by his sister, Pabre, who had stolen them from Ouagadougou and had thus deprived that kingdom of any legitimate sanctions for power. Thus, when the Yatenga people declare that they are equal to Ouagadougou, they add that the only "amulets" that still legitimize the nam of the Ouagadougou dynasty are the droppings left behind by Pabre's horse as she fled northward.

769 Similarly, all the princes who founded principalities and proclaimed
642 their independence of Ouagadougou defended their action on the grounds
643 that they, being as close to the main line of descent as the Mogho Naba, were also entitled to rule. The younger sons of deceased Mogho Nanamse
[631] who were banished from the capital as Kourritadamba and who subse-
[634] quently became provincial Dimdamba also stressed their relationship to the royal ancestors. Even those district chiefs whose ancestors had prob-

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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pleted, the remainder of the ceremony followed the pattern of the Ouagadougou ritual.

During the weeks that followed, the village chiefs and the heads of the larger lineage segments all offered sacrifices to their ancestors. The Pughtiema of each prominent local administrator, chief, or lineage head prepared and poured the millet water as a libation to the ancestors. Whenever possible, each of these personages invited musicians to sing praises to his ancestors. He dressed in his best robe and sat outside his hut to receive presents from his relatives, friends, and subjects, along with their best wishes for the new year, and for long life and prosperity. In return he gave them kola nuts, beer, and food. Thus, in celebrating the Basgha, all the Mossi were united in prayers and supplications to the ancestors, upon whom rested the future of their country and the successful reign of the descendants of Ouedraogo and Oubri.

The earth deity, Tenga, held the central place in the second major religio-political ceremony which linked all Mossi. This ritual, called *Tense* (from *tenga*, "earth") and sometimes *Naba Oubri ma koure* ("the anniversary of the funeral of Mogho Naba Oubri's mother"), was so important to Mossi cohesion that it was banned by the French, and as a result its main features are now unclear. According to tradition, Naba Oubri loved Poughtoenga, his Ninisi mother, so much, and was so pleased with the elaborate funeral he gave her, that he decided to repeat this ceremony each year in the hope that his subjects would be blessed with the bountiful crops and herds which had made the first one possible. Curiously enough, Oubri's mother was not a central figure in the Tense celebration. Instead, great stress was placed on the fructifying powers of the earth and on the importance of the royal ancestors in Mossi life. The juxtaposition and association of the earth deity with Oubri's mother has important implications for the Mossi political organization. Mossi tradition holds that a Ninisi woman was the ancestress of the Mossi of Ouagadougou. Her people probably celebrated the Tense as a fertility rite to their earth goddess, Tenga. The Mossi apparently took over the ceremony and used it both as a fertility rite and as a memorial festival, thus symbolically uniting the conquerors and the conquered.[3]

In contrast to the Basgha, no special date appears to have been set for the celebration of the Tense. It was held sometime before the crops were sowed, but according to Tauxier it was not celebrated at all in Ouagadougou when the previous year's harvest had been poor.[4] Before setting the date for the festival, the Mogho Naba summoned the Larhalle Naba and ordered him to have sacrifices made on the graves of all former rulers. This minister

What Mangin referred to euphemistically as "difficulties with the white man" was, to the Mossi, rather drastic punishment for non-payment of taxes. If a man refused to pay his taxes, the Mossi chief was permitted to sequester his goods and sell them. If the man had neither the taxes nor the goods, the chief had to send him and his wife (or wives) to the administrative post to be punished. Sometimes, a man and his wife would be made to look at the sun from sunrise to sunset while intoning the prayer *Ouennam co mam ligidi* ("God, give me money"). Other times, a man would be made to run around the administrative post with his wife on his back; if he had several wives, he had to take each one in turn. Then his wife or wives had to carry him around. The Mossi claim that a man had to run around the post three times, and his wife four. This is probably an exaggeration, however, because the numbers 3 and 4 are symbolically associated with men and women, respectively.

A further source of difficulty for the Mossi chiefs, and one which became more serious as time went by, was that they were charged by the administration to recruit men for both labor and military service. Initially, the chiefs had to supply men to transport grain for the French-organized agricultural societies from one region to another; later, they were commanded to supply labor for private and public works. Labouret states:

> The initial recruitment, which took place in 1912, was carried out without any difficulty, thanks to the unexpected afflux of volunteers. This was not the case in subsequent years. The reason for this was that the credulous natives of these distant regions, lacking any contact with the world, believed that the Europeans were carrying off their most robust youths to sell them to the Men of the Sea [mythical cannibalistic beings].[13]

The Mossi were alarmed at the high rate of mortality among the young men who went away to work. They had a saying, *Nansara toumde di Mossi* ("White man's work eats [kills] people"), and resisted the recruiting attempts of their chiefs. There was, however, less opposition to recruitment for military service, owing in part to the Mossi tradition of warfare. Many Mossi youths served in France during World War I, and additional hundreds served in an African contingent recruited "by an administrator named d'Arboussier, and with the cooperation of the Mogho Naba, to take possession of northern Togoland."[14]

The manner in which the Mossi chiefs administered their territories before the First World War was conditioned by the colonial administrators even when it was not directly controlled by them. The Mogho Naba had gradually lost most of his power, and he had no authority to act without the specific authorization of the French. He retained most of his cere-

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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plaintiffs gave the chiefs the traditional presents of a white cock and a sack containing from 200 to 1,000 cowries.

6. Mangin declares: "Most of the troubles which arise between one Mossi and another derive from their wives and from their debts; yet it may not be said, as a general rule, that women are unhappy or ill treated" (p. 39; see also p. 33). But cf. Dim Delobson, pp. 182, 185.

7. Mangin states that in Koupela a recidivous thief was "led to the market place with a rope around his neck; he was supplied with an abundance of meat and beer, and then clubbed to death at the foot of a tree" (p. 25). I doubt whether this practice was very widespread, because the Mossi were afraid to anger the market Tengkouga (earth spirits) by spilling blood in the market place.

8. Cf. Ruelle, pp. 679 ff.

9. Binger, I, 462.

10. But cf. Marc, p. 134.

CHAPTER SIX

1. Sa'di, pp. 45–46. The date of this battle and the location of Benka are unknown. However, Delafosse (II, 141) believes that it was located in the Massina region on the shores of Lake Debo.

2. Sa'di, pp. 112–13.

3. *Ibid.*, pp. 114–15.

4. *Ibid.*, pp. 121–23. The chronicle also states (p. 168) that these Mossi captives were installed in a special ward of Askia's capital, a practice apparently followed by all victorious Sudanese groups including the Mossi.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 173.

6. See Delafosse, II, 143–45, and Tauxier, *Le Noir du Yatenga*, pp. 88–91.

7. Crozat, p. 4822.

8. Binger, I, 502.

9. Almamy Samory Touré was the last empire-builder in the western Sudan. He was defeated by the French in 1898 and exiled to Gabon, where he died in 1900. See Binger, I, 84ff.

10. Crozat, p. 4837.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 4849.

12. Archives, Document 1G-315 (1903–1904).

13. Crozat, p. 4849.

14. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Soudan*, p. 463.

15. Mangin, p. 13.

16. Cheron, "Contribution," pp. 655, 675–76.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 673.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 676.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 654.

20. *Ibid.*, pp. 685–86.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 674.

22. Ruelle, p. 686.

23. Mangin, p. 62.

24. Binger, I, 473.

25. Cheron, "Contribution," p. 660.

26. Crozat, p. 4849.

27. Mangin, p. 12.

28. For example, when Mogho Naba Sanum's army attacked Boussouma, it made "such a rapid retreat" that Ligidi, the Boussouma Dim, could only counterattack the army's rear guard (Cheron, "Contribution," p. 676).

29. Archives, Document 15G-190 (1897–98).

30. Mangin, p. 12.

31. *Ibid.*

32. Dim Delobson, p. 21.

33. *Ibid.*, p. 29.

34. Cf. Southall (pp. 246–60) for a discussion of the "segmentary" state in Africa.

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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This man then consults a teng-

443 *soba* (earth priest) who must be also a *barga* (soothsayer) to find out
787 where in a certain area it would be most propitious to locate the new
[791] market. After the *tengsoba* has ascertained the number and nature of
[776] the *tengkouga* (earth deities, plural of *Tengkougri)* in the designated spot, he tells the *Raga Naba* what type of sacrifice would be appropri-
443 ate. A few days later the *Raga Naba*, his young assistant and the *teng-*
782 *soba* take *zom kom* (milletflour), *dam* (sorghum beer), and a chicken (or goat) of the designated color, and go to the new market place.
[776] Here they pick out the stone or three which is the abode of the spirit or spirits, if there are several of them, and prepare to make the offering. The *Raga Naba* takes the millet water and pours some on the ground saying: "Good God, take this water, drink it, and take this other water (here he pours the beer), and give it to all the *tengkouga* in the villages so that the market will aways be good and there will be no fighting in the market!" Then the *Raga Naba* takes the sacrificial animal, and in the case of a chicken pulls off the neck feathers and cuts its throat, saying: "Good God, take this chicken and heed all the prayers of the people of this market!" He releases the chicken and waits to see whether it will fall on its back, thereby indicating whether the petition has been accepted. Of course, if it has not been accepted, a new site is chosen. If the sacrifice has been accepted, then the *Raga Naba* gives the chicken to his young helper to be cleaned and roasted. He then prays to the *tengkouga* who live in the market place and begs them to help with the market. When the boy brings back the dissected chicken, the *Raga Naba* cuts the liver into two parts; one for God and the other for the local *tengkouga*. He then says, "Now that God and the *Tengkouga* have eaten, they should drink," and forthwith pours out the remainder of the millet water. The *Raga Naba* then distributes the remainder of the roasted chicken among those present saying, "*Winnam dege* (God has accepted the sacrifice)." Only after this ceremony is completed can the market be opened.[9]

443 All Mossi markets, except those which specialize in one type of
366 trading, have the same basic physical structure even though they vary in size from one-eighth of an acre to as much as four or five acres. We do not know the size of some of the traditional markets such as Pouitenga, La, Yako, Dakay, Belousa, Mane, and Tema, but we have Crozat's report that "The market at Wagadougou, which is found at Kounkounbissi, the royal residence . . . is large" (Crozat 1891 : 4848). Since the market at Wagadougou was smaller than some of the other important ones, we may assume that some of the markets must have been quite large. At the same time, the physical appurtenances of Mossi markets are not elaborate, or were not so until today. In the

(9) See Zahan (1954 : 371) and Mangin (1921 : 53).

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customary "taste" with greater frequency and freedom than did ordinary buyers. But the most valuable tax collected by the Raga Naba was on the sale of slaves, whose buyers paid a tax of 1,000 cowries per head.

There is some evidence, mainly from Europeans, that the Mossi occasionally may have found the market taxes prohibitive. Binger reports that during his visit to the Mossi in 1888, the high taxes exacted by the Moro Naba were "one of the causes which placed Wagadougou in second place [as a market town] and which made Mane the commercial capital of Mossi country" (Binger 1892 : 467). Binger, himself, was caught in the institutionalized gift system and wrote sarcastically: "The day of the market [at Wagadougou] the receipts are good. People bring every-thing to the palace including millet as well as hoes or peanuts, and everything is accepted. *All this giving is left to the generosity of the customers . . .*" (Binger 1892 : 465) (his italics). Even so, one cannot be sure that the Mossi felt the same way about paying taxes to their rulers as Binger felt. There is, incidentally, always an air of mutual recriminations among the Mossi and their rulers about the level of reciprocation between them. The people admit that the chiefs are indispensable; yet they complain that they are greedy—they "eat" too much. The chiefs insist that it is difficult to rule a territory and complain that the people are ungrateful.

SOCIAL AND RITUAL ASPECTS OF THE MARKETPLACE

Although the offices of Kos Naba and Raga Naba have been abolished officially, these officials still exist in many Mossi districts, and even when they do not exist, some men acting in their stead appropriate commodities in the markets for the chiefs. Furthermore, the *nakomce* (plural of *nabiga*—chief's child) or nobles still wander about the market places taking handfuls of kola nuts, peanuts and everything they need without the people becoming angry or complaining to the French about it. Once when I visited a market in the company of a *nabiga*, the local Raga Naba came up to where we were buying meat and indicated to the butcher that one of his customers was a *nabiga* and that he should treat him accordingly. It is not because of ignorance that the market people continue to grant these privileges to the nobles and the chiefs, but rather because they believe that only the market officials, and not the Europeans, can take care of the markets.

One of the most important tasks of the Raga Naba (or in the absence of this official, the Kos Naba) is to propitiate the *tengkouga* in the market place, or supervise the sacrifices which the *tengsobas* make to them. The task of the market spirits is believed to be so difficult—

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443 due to the bickering, quarreling and even fighting they have to
554 prevent by cooling the tempers of the market people—that they
776 become quite angry. When the spirits are not satisfied, they fail in
782 their tasks and real trouble breaks out in the market, disrupting the trading; and if they are not pacified they may even cause the death of the market officials.[12]

In the days before the market officials were banned, these sacrifices were performed regularly. At that time the Raga Naba simply asked the Kos Naba to seize the appropriate animal in the market to perform
[648] the rite. The problem today is that since the French have abolished the office of Raga Naba, and in some districts have prevented the chief from even naming one secretly, the markets in the latter local-
[208] ities are considered "dangerous markets." Once a market acquires such a reputation, people do not like to visit it because they fear that they would get into fights or quarrels. Not only this, but it is believed that if a market has been without a Raga Naba for a long time, the *tengkouga* there become so angry for being neglected that they kill
[123] the first chief appointed to it. This was the reality or belief behind a series of misadventures of which I was the victim.

123 I had spent an entire day in a market, and on returning home could
443 not find my pen. The next morning I sent an assistant to the chief
554 telling him about the loss and asking him to have an announcement
656 made in the market on the next market day that I would pay a handsome reward to whomever should find and deliver the pen. The chief sent back a reply saying that since there was no Raga Naba, he would have the Kos Naba acquaint the people with my loss. On the day of the market, I waited until midday, when most of the people had arrived, and then went to see whether the Kos Naba had any news of the pen. I checked with several of my friends to see whether they had heard about the pen and discovered, to my chagrin, that no an-
[564] nouncement had been made about it. I went and told the Kos Naba that the people were not hearing about the pen and suggested that one way to do so would be to have the Binderes (drummers and griots) circulate through the market announcing the loss. The Kos Naba refused to do this, and when I enlisted the aid of the chief's secretary, he, too, said that it could not be done because there was no Raga Naba. I had some notes on the institution of the Raga Naba, but as I did not know everything about it, I was, therefore, frankly puzzled

(12) Zahan (1954 : 371) states that "the place where all kinds of merchandise accumulate and where strangers come is a place charged with forces. In time, these forces build up to such a point within the precincts of the market that some purifications are necessary to liberate them. To omit making them would expose the participants to excitements leading to brawls and compromising the place of the transactions."

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and a bit peeved at not being able to put my idea into practice. I next sought the advice and consolation of an elder noble who listened quite calmly and then said: "The customs of these kafirs (heathens) are foolish." Being a Moslem, my friend was very often critical of the pagans, and could be relied upon to explain why their customs were "foolish." He said that in former days the Raga Naba would have climbed a tree and announced to the crowd any message from the district chief. Moreover, he was the custodian of all lost articles and restored them to their owners. The Moslem said that my request could not be granted because there was no Raga Naba, and that probably there would never be another. When the French first banned the institution, the local chief dismissed the Raga Naba. With the passage of years, however, the market became so dangerous that the chief tried to appoint another ex-serf to the job. This man soon died, and his successor died shortly after being appointed. Since that time the chief has made no attempt to name a new market chief.

With this new knowledge I called my aide and inquired from him whether this information was true and if so, why did he not tell me the true state of affairs. His reply was that he did not wish to say that the market was bad because the local people believed that they had solved the problem of the lack of a Raga Naba. When the last Raga Naba died, the chief decided not to name a new one, but in order to placate the market *tengkouga,* he ordered his *tengsoba* to make sacrifices to it. It was believed that these sacrifices would be acceptable as long as the officiant did not bear the title of Raga Naba. The other functions of the Raga Naba, such as collecting goods for the chief and preserving peace in the market, were taken over by the Kos Naba and another servant of the chief. However, the Kos Naba had to be careful lest he overstep his authority in such a way as would acquaint the *tengkouga* with the real situation. In my case, the chief was acting by trying to get the Kos Naba to acquaint the people with my loss in as inconspicuous a manner as possible. The consensus was that the Kos Naba would have risked his life had he made any kind of announcement to the market people, because the *tengkouga* would have thought that he was the new Raga Naba, and if not contented with the people would have killed him. Under these circumstances, I withdrew my request. I discovered later that my pen was not lost but had been in the hut all the time.

Those chiefs who have succeeded in retaining their market officials even secretly have been able to maintain their control over public behavior there. The Mossi are fairly law-abiding despite the persistence among them of a warrior tradition. Every man who goes to market, or anywhere for that matter, usually carries a baton over his

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When a woman has a number of stillbirths or
845 loses her children when they are still babies, however, it is believed
761 than these children were embodiments of the same *kinkirsi* (spirits)
776 who must be tricked into remaining on earth when it returns, and
443 the market place is chosen as the site for this trickery. As soon as such
851 a woman gives birth to a child, and old woman places it in a basket
443 and on the next market day takes it to the market place. Her intention is to "sell" the child in the hope that it would not die if owned by someone other than its mother. The old woman walks around the market place shouting: "I have something to sell!" Invariably a man will walk up to her, and after ascertaining the contents of the basket, offer to buy it. The price varies with the fortune of the man, but traditionally the amount paid has been 500 cowries or their equivalent. The man takes the child for a few minutes and then returns it to its vendor, telling her in a loud voice so that the kinkirsi will hear: "I would like you to give this child to 'X' (the child's mother) to be reared for me and I will pay for its upbringing and will come
[551] for the child in a few years. He then gives the child the name *Yamba*
[553] (slave), or *Yemdaogo* (male slave) if male and *Yempoko* (female slave) if a girl. The old woman then returns the child to its mother, relating what has passed in the market and indicating who the "owner" of her child is. The "owner" of the child may not even see the child again, and naturally does not take this ownership seriously. In many cases the money with which he bought the child was given to him by the child's father.

852 The market also plays an important part in the circumcision and
443 incision ceremonies of Mossi boys and girls. For about two to three months after the actual operations the young children, especially the boys are secluded in the circumcision lodges or compounds and have almost no contact with the village population. Their re-introduction to society always takes place on the great market day. The parents of the children buy new clothing for them this occasion, and on the appointed day the boys or girls parade together in the market and are offered gifts by the market people. Later in the day, they are dismissed and individually feted by their relatives.

585 Owing to the relatively unceremonious nature of Mossi marriages,
76 the market does not play a role in Mossi weddings. However, the
554 same thing cannot be said about the last important *rite de passage*,
443 especially the funeral of a chief, or important elder. Prior to the intervention of the French, and to a lesser extent even today, the announcement of the death of an important ruler was seen as the breakdown of law and order and was ritually dramatized by a popular raid
[565] on the markets throughout the territories (Skinner : ms). During the interregnum the vendors are subject to constant raids by members of

562 584 When the girl reaches marriageable age, she usually finds herself with a husband who is sometimes older than her father and whom she cannot possibly love. She must go to him, however, since such is her father's will.

[431 585] [173] The fiancé brings some gifts (cowries, chickens, millet beer) and claims his wife. The girl is sent off to her husband's home with no ceremony being performed.

This second type of forced marriage has the parents' consent.

587 428 562 768 Marriage by inheritance. When the head of a household dies, the women, who are considered a part of his estate, are divided up just as is the rest of the property. They are apportioned to the sons of the deceased, or his brothers if the sons are not of marriageable age. However, unlike the procedure for a chief's estate, in which the wife is just a "thing," these wives may choose their husbands from among the members of the family.

This is semi-free marriage.

587 Besides the type of marriage which we shall later call "free marriage" -- a form which occurs very frequently since it includes the marriages of loose women who may have as many as nine husbands, only stopping at the last one because of old age -- there is also remarriage due to successive widowhoods. Some women are so [177] unlucky as to lose [174] a succession of husbands. They are finally avoided like the plague since they have the reputation of being cursed by the gods (Mossi, kombwinga; Bambara, térédiougou).

584 Marriage after a conventional proposal. When a young man wishes to ask for the hand of a young girl who is not yet engaged, he chooses as his go-between a person who is on good terms with the elders of the girl's village. If the response is favorable, the young man brings a chicken, a secco (dagnopinri) [coarse matting] to close the doorway, and some fagots. He goes back to his village and returns at intervals bearing sprouted millet or millet beer and a chicken for the head of the family. The latter at last tells the go-between: "Tell X... that we accept him as our son and that we shall try to give him satisfaction as soon as possible."

Some time later the young man returns once more with a chicken, sprouted millet, or beer for the elders of the village. He makes

776 kikiriga, in turn, are to ward off anything that might harm the crop,
241 birds, caterpillars, thieves, and the like, and to fill with millet a granary of the size drawn on the ground with ashes at the time of harvest. If the kikiriga has properly carried out his duties, he gets another chicken when all the grain has been gathered in a heap.
776 Pregnant women are under the protection of a special kikiriga, and
[843] small children have one of their own to ward off illness and danger. Do we not say ourselves that a special Providence watches over the very young?

776 Actually, everyone has his kikiriga. Some have an evil one, and
828 those are the people who quarrel with everybody, the ones who are never successful, whose livestock dies, for the kikirsi often kill the goats, sheep, and horses that die of illness. Other people have a
[577] good kikiriga, and for them everything goes well; they were born under a lucky star. These are the engaging, sweet, good-natured people
[513] who get rich and who have many children. When a Mossi lies down to sleep in his hut, he rests his head on a stone or a small mound of beaten earth. This is where his kikiriga dwells, and from time to time, especially when he feels the need for special protection, he
[782] sacrifices a guinea hen or sometimes even a goat, with the understanding that the spirit will chase away all fellow spirits who might want to harm him and will avert all illness and all danger from his path.

/83/ The tangandé is a spirit who has the shape of an animal and
776 who is regarded as the protector of a village. The term is also ex-
778 tended to designate the spirit's place of residence, usually the sacred
825 grove but sometimes a mere stone or even an open space. The tangandé may be a crocodile, a boa, a leopard, a turtle, a deer, a hare, etc. The animal is sacred to the whole village and may not be killed in the sacred grove, but it may be killed elsewhere, even a short distance from the thicket.

776 The tangandé is a guardian spirit because it protects men and sends
755 its servants to accompany the village people on trips when they request it to do so. The natives incessantly turn to it for protection, and the sorcerers incessantly refer those who consult them to the tangandé to obtain cures and to request the release of souls held captive
776 by evil sorcerers. When someone dies, sacrifices are made to the
782 tangandé with requests to protect the survivors and to ward off illness.
[774] When souls leave the body during sleep, they often go to the sacred grove. Anyone may sacrifice to the tangandé and in the tangandé.

000 spilled salt, /99/ four-leaf clovers, hares crossing the roadway, etc., been altogether eradicated by science?

751/ 789 No matter how things may stand among us, superstition reigns supreme among the Mossi. Amulets and talismans are greatly valued. Anything may contribute to their manufacture, from the highly prized head of a crowned crane to that of a hawk or a gray heron. Anything may be found in the numerous little bags which hang down a native's neck, from scraps of paper with a few words of Arabic scribbled upon them which Moslem Marabouts distribute in large numbers throughout the Sudan, to cowries or the ashes of every possible and imaginable root. There are amulet bracelets which are worn on the left arm and which protect against seuya sorcerers (see p. 127) if their wearer remembers to push them swiftly up his arm when meeting one of those dreadful soul-eaters. There are bracelets which protect people in fights, and iron rings which act as safeguards against snake bite. Do you want to be welcomed and accepted by the man whose daughter you wish to marry? Wear a certain bracelet on your right arm, and your hopes will come true.

Amulets are worn around the head, neck, arm, or wrist. They are sewn to the cap or to the clothes, attached to the belt, to the pipe, to the staff, anywhere. The list would be endless if we tried to enumerate all the various kinds of amulets. The shoulder blade of a beef fastened to the end of a stick and an iron chain stretched across the soukala entrance protect its inhabitants against a host of misfortunes and unpleasant nocturnal visitations. People consider themselves fortunate to possess such easy protection against the numerous spirits prowling for victims.

787 If you have dogs, watch them carefully. If they are so careless as to lie down or relieve themselves in a basket, or to vomit within the hut, kill them fast or you will die yourself. If your bitch bears only one puppy, kill her pitilessly. When the gray heron flies over the huts shrieking, mothers beat on their jars for fear that their 783 children will get diarrhea. Hunters must not eat koba meat before 789 they engage in their sport, and if they want to gain skill, they must 224 secure certain roots, cook them in water, and wash their hands with the mixture.

777 Sunday is the day of the spirits, the day when koure is held. It is also a good day to build huts. There is nothing special about Monday, but you must be careful about Tuesday, for you never know what it

777 may hold in store. Wednesday is unreservedly bad, and you must not start a job or leave for a trip on that day. Thursday and Friday are propitious to weddings, especially Friday. On Saturday the sorcerers take the day off and hold no consultations. In addition, every individual has his own lucky day and his unlucky day, which he must know and bear in mind.

778 787 823 Some stones are said to have fallen from heaven. On the day when they fall, the village chief immediately covers all the jars in his hut which contain charms. If he knocks one down in his haste, he will die within the year. These stones are held sacred. Those who can lift them /100/ have nothing to fear, but those who cannot are soon to die. People may also interrogate such a stone, whose reply is considered favorable if they manage to lift it, unfavorable if they cannot [788] do so. Passersby toss millet stalks onto the stone, or twigs cut along the way, or sometimes cowries, to procure success in their endeavors.

821 787 Comets are omens of war or of the death of a great chief. When Halley's comet appeared on the horizon, the chickens, goats, and sheep had a bad time of it. It was necessary to ward off all the possible misfortunes. It is true that the comet was magnificent, spreading for several days from one end of the sky nearly to another, and it is understandable that the natives should be upset. We have heard that many people were troubled in our civilized countries, where the comet could not be seen in all its splendor. In spite of all those sacrifices, the chief of one of the principal cantons in the province, the naba of Pwitenga, died that very year!

000 We must limit our enumeration, and these few examples, which could easily be multiplied, suffice to make clear the role of amulets and superstitions in the life of this people.

801 One further word on superstitions. The reader may have noticed that the numbers three and four and their composites have recurred constantly according to the sex of the person spoken of. Three is reserved for men and four for women. In the sacrifices, God-king male is called three times. God-king female four times. The cord of the charm has three or four knots according to sex; mothers mourn their children for 33 or 44 days. A dead man receives 333 or 3, 333 cowries, a dead woman 444 or 4, 444, etc.

302 Every time a native changes his status, his hair must be removed. Babies are shaved before they are given a name, girls before they come to their husband, women when they are transferred to a new

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Tenga Wende of the desire for a good growing year and gives each girl a small part of the wet earth near the shrine; this represents the now sanctified soul (*shiga*) and is placed under the granary from which the millet seeds for the new crop will be taken.

Then those who possess land controlled by the earth custodian organize a hunt for his benefit. The following day, the earth custodian visits each lineage which possesses fields in areas of the bush under his custodianship. He is given calabashes filled with millet gruel, which he pours as a libation on the earth, asking Tenga Wende to grant good health, heavy rains, and a successful harvest to the household. As the libation is poured, the women try to catch a little in their own calabashes of gruel, which they then pour as their sacrifice. Because the millet from the granaries of good harvests is lucky, other women want to try to catch a little of it in their own offerings; thus the libations spill from one calabash into another as they fall on the earth.

The second moon is called "Bega" after the ceremonial which coincides with the first labor in the fields, the clearing and burning which precedes planting. After making a sacrifice at his own altar, the earth custodian goes to the residence of the neighboring priest (*Boga*) specifically charged with the propitiation of the vegetal manifestation of the deity. This visit symbolizes the interdependent relationship of the two priests and the supernatural powers which they control. The *Boga* then repeats the libations made during the previous ritual, but this time the offerings of millet gruel are made to Tido Wende, the force which gives life to the plants, rather than to the earth.

A sacrifice to Pogo Wende, the specific manifestation of Tenga Wende which guards a farmer's fields, is usually made after they have been cleared and prepared for planting. Either before or after the sowing of the first seeds, the farmer asks the earth custodian to sacrifice a sheep or a goat to the field deity, requesting good health, heavy rains, and a rich harvest. This sacrifice (*Pogo Mande*) is the final aspect of the ceremonial preparations for the new economic cycle. It is designed to enlist the benevolence not only of Pogo Wende but also of the twin spirits which inhabit the field. If the twins are well disposed toward the farmer, they will protect the soul (*ki shiga*) of his millet stand from the twin spirits from neighboring fields who might try to steal it. Like the ancestral spirits, the twin spirits send a high wind into a field, blowing the ripening grains from the stalk and liberating their "souls" (*shiise*), which are then captured to enrich the spirits' own fields.

The third moon of the year is called "Cundiba Bega." The fourth, which usually corresponds with the European month of June, is called "unaccompanied" (Quizale), referring to the fact that no ceremonial is observed during its phase. The hard work in the fields is begun at this

789 A number of grigris made by Mossi timisoba have passed
791 through my hands. I shall list them and briefly describe them below.

1. A cow's tail at the tip of a wooden handle. When one is traveling during the winter season and a storm threatens, one need only wave the cow's tail and the storm does not burst. Once in the village, one stops waving it and the rain comes.

2. A hollow koba horn in which tamarind leaves, peanuts, and
[751] gum have been placed. In case of headache one opens the horn by its small upper lid, takes /592/ a pinch of the mixture, and swallows it. Then one does this again and also rubs a little on the forehead.

3. A small hoe with a chicken's head fastened to the handle. When during a dance one wishes to silence a singer who has been singing too long in order to sing oneself, one grips the hoe and covers the chicken's mouth. The singer is silenced, and in addition one sings perfectly.

4. A small hoe covered with leopardskin at the bend. If one is
[752] bitten by a snake, one cuts off a very small piece of the skin and puts it in a canari full of water. Then one rubs the bite with this water.

5. A deer horn with a fine red cord wrapped around it. Inside the horn there are tiégélara and karité seeds. The opening of the horn is closed with a wad of cotton.

If an enemy comes looking for a fight, one places some of the contents of the horn on a leather bracelet which is slipped on the left wrist. No harm can come to you, and the quarrel will immediately come to an end.

6. A deer horn containing crushed scorpions and pimento. If one wishes to become an indefatigable dancer, one need only rub one's back with the mixture.

7. Leather bracelets with powdered rice inside. People who wear one of those bracelets on the arm can be sure that the stick or sword which their enemy may attempt to use against them will break in his hands.

8. Iron bracelets covered with crocodile skin. Same purpose.

9. Cotton bracelets with honey and salt inside. If your wife
[842] is sterile, it is sufficient to put the bracelet in water in order to make her fertile.

789 10. A deer horn covered with leather and containing millet and
791 pounded-bean flour. On the outside there is a hooked piece of iron.
● 777

789 If someone tells you that you own many animals, or that they are
791 very handsome, this gives bad luck, as you know. So, to ward it off,
777 /593/ you grasp your grigri by slipping two fingers into the iron hook and two others into the curve of the horn, and then you hang it in your hut, or better still, you hang it from the neck of one of the threatened animals.

789 11. A small turtle completely enclosed in a small leather bag
791 along with a powdered aquatic leaf called kouri. If you have a
755 stomach-ache, you cover the flat side of the object with butter and rub your stomach with it.

789 12. A small piece of wood covered with lizardskin in the middle
791 and leather at the ends and prolonged at one end by an iron tip.
832 If one wishes for the favors of a woman who refuses to grant them, one comes near the cruel woman while gripping the grigri in the left fist, its tip pointing up. At the same time, one presses the woman's hand tightly with the right hand. This method of seduction is claimed to be infallible.

789 13. A koba horn covered with leather and prolonged at the broad
791 end with a chicken foot. Inside, the horn contains rice, salt, and
754 soumbara. If you were threatened by a spell performed against you, you would slip the horn upon your head, with the thick end between the eyes and the pointed end behind the head. Then you would have nothing to fear.

14. A deer horn containing barkoundi leaves and closed with a lid adorned with a cowrie.

To prevent a sorcerer from eating the soul of a third party, you lift the lid with the aid of a knife covered with karité butter, you take with this knife a little of the contents of the horn, and you spread it on your forehead.

535 In addition to the bara and timisoba, the Mossi also have ouãngo.
532 "The ouango," says Marc (op. cit., pages 152 and 155), "are
575 dancers whose costume consists of a huge liana robe which covers the entire body and which is surmounted by a wooden mask painted red and black and usually representing /594/ the head of an animal. The ouango are members of a rather mysterious brotherhood. They have a special language, and the Mossi believe that anyone who says a word

/Additional information on the "nam" in relation to Mossi lineages may be found in category 613./

714 761 live without each other, its prolonged absence is thought to cause death.

714 763 Kima (from ki, "to die"). This is a sort of silhouette of a person who is about to die. It is visible only to certain initiates. It is said, however, to be somewhat deformed, and its presence may make one's hair stand on end or cause shivers that paralyze the legs and make walking impossible.

715 The siga may be distinguished from the kima in that the latter, being already dead, has its head completely shaved, wears ashes in the form of [201] a cross or X on its forehead, or has its feet stained with blood.

As soon as the person dies, his kima roams around the house for a time and then joins his ancestors at Pilimpikou.

715 718 Pilimpikou. Pilimpikou is a village belonging to the administrative district of Koudougou (upper Volta). On a mountain nearby, there is a grotto which is regarded as the sacred place where the kimsé of all the dead Mossi assemble.

Legend has it that any deceased relative may be found again at Pilimpikou if one were so unfortunate as not to have been present during his last moments. One can also go there to find out where the deceased has hidden part of his fortune or some valuable object.

It is said that one has only to go to the Tingsoba of Pilimpikou and ask him to use his influence to call the deceased.

The Tingsoba orders the petitioner not to shed a single tear at the sight of the "ghost," and, the legend goes on to say, if the secret of the interview with the kima is not kept, the person will die within the year.

Finally, it is believed that when the kimsé welcome new members -- they represent the whole family of all the dead Mossi for countless generations -- they organize games whose echoes are heard by the inhabitants of Pilimpikou.

715 Young people of both sexes who were unmarried at the time of their death and newborn children who have died [202] return to that place where they dwelt before coming into the world in order to "return to human form in the womb of another woman or of their former mother." As we noted in an earlier paragraph, the Mossi believe in reincarnation. [203]

304 day the one in charge of the circumcision, a wealthy Yarga or Mossi
563 who has the means to feed several of the people to be circumcised,
852 chooses a tree to serve as shelter for the operation. Rain need not be taken into account, for circumcision is always performed during the dry season from December to April, when agricultural work is at a
[778] standstill. The tree is surrounded with straw mats, forming the téoo or sacred enclosure which no one who is not circumcised may come near without running the risk of being insulted and often beaten; if he should dare to step inside it, he would be stricken by the greatest misfortunes. The Peul sets out a flat stone, sacrifices a chicken in order to make the spirit of the tree benevolent toward those to be circumcised, and operates on the boys one by one. Drums are played throughout the operation to drown the cries of the victims.

852 For three days afterwards the newly circumcised boys do nothing. They rest and tend their wounds. They remain isolated from the rest
[535] of the community for two or three months, sometimes even longer. Judging by the dances which close the festivities, dancing must be their primary concern during that period of time. They also thresh the millet of those who invite them to do so, but no uncircumcised person may join them, no uninitiated individual may come near them.
[198] They do not speak the Mossi language at this time, but a special tongue of which they learn enough to serve them in their everyday needs. Woe to those who forget and use their native tongue; they are
[551] beaten with switches made of a kind of willow. Even their names are changed, and no one may call them by their Mossi names.

The circumcised boys are divided in two groups, one "male" and one "female." One of the groups bears the name of the hyena (kwara in their language) and the other is called masalro, whose French equivalent we do not know. The hyena group must strain their wits to snatch food, even from the other circumcised boys, who are kept constantly on the alert. The other group makes improper gestures during the dance.

852 The circumcised boys are covered with gray dust to alter their
293 appearance completely. A tail is fastened to the back of their breech-
776 cloth, hanging to the ground. It is made of plaited cotton thread and
481 ends in a pompon. Its function is to drive off the kikirsi spirits, who apparently do not like circumcised persons. The boys walk bent over and leaning on sticks like old men. This is done to test their obedience and to see if they listen carefully to what they are told.

776 kikiriga, in turn, are to ward off anything that might harm the crop,
241 birds, caterpillars, thieves, and the like, and to fill with millet a granary of the size drawn on the ground with ashes at the time of harvest. If the kikiriga has properly carried out his duties, he gets another chicken when all the grain has been gathered in a heap.
776 Pregnant women are under the protection of a special kikiriga, and
[843] small children have one of their own to ward off illness and danger. Do we not say ourselves that a special Providence watches over the very young?

776 Actually, everyone has his kikiriga. Some have an evil one, and
828 those are the people who quarrel with everybody, the ones who are never successful, whose livestock dies, for the kikirsi often kill the goats, sheep, and horses that die of illness. Other people have a
[577] good kikiriga, and for them everything goes well; they were born under a lucky star. These are the engaging, sweet, good-natured people who get rich and who have many children. When a Mossi lies down
[513] to sleep in his hut, he rests his head on a stone or a small mound of beaten earth. This is where his kikiriga dwells, and from time to time, especially when he feels the need for special protection, he
[782] sacrifices a guinea hen or sometimes even a goat, with the understanding that the spirit will chase away all fellow spirits who might want to harm him and will avert all illness and all danger from his path.

/83/ The tangandé is a spirit who has the shape of an animal and
776 who is regarded as the protector of a village. The term is also ex-
778 tended to designate the spirit's place of residence, usually the sacred
825 grove but sometimes a mere stone or even an open space. The tangandé may be a crocodile, a boa, a leopard, a turtle, a deer, a hare, etc. The animal is sacred to the whole village and may not be killed in the sacred grove, but it may be killed elsewhere, even a short distance from the thicket.

The tangandé is a guardian spirit because it protects men and sends
776 its servants to accompany the village people on trips when they re-
755 quest it to do so. The natives incessantly turn to it for protection, and the sorcerers incessantly refer those who consult them to the tangandé to obtain cures and to request the release of souls held captive
776 by evil sorcerers. When someone dies, sacrifices are made to the
782 tangandé with requests to protect the survivors and to ward off illness. When souls leave the body during sleep, they often go to the sacred
[774] grove. Anyone may sacrifice to the tangandé and in the tangandé.

776 The naba does so more than anyone else; on the Day of the Dead
782 (basra) he always makes sacrifices there, and usually the village elders accompany him.

776 A village may have several tangandé /sic/, but the protective animal or animals—most often there are two—are the same in all the
778 sacred groves, of which there are as many as there are tangandé /sic/. Nothing may be taken from a sacred grove; everything in it is sacred. No wood may be cut down, and it is forbidden even to gather dead wood which has fallen by itself. By the same token, the dry grass may not be set afire, not even in the area around the grove. If all precautions have been duly taken and fire nevertheless spreads to the sacred grove, nothing can be done and the village people are not held responsible. On the other hand, outsiders are prevented, by force if necessary, from taking anything whatever from the sacred grove. If the outsider is powerful and cannot be restrained, expiatory sacrifices are offered after his departure.

776 The tangandé is thus a guardian animal, and yet some tangamma
754 retaliate by afflicting the guilty party with diseases. If one of the sorcerers who eat souls (seuya) offers gifts to a tangandé, the latter will help him and refuse to restore the soul which has been entrusted to it, unless more substantial gifts are forthcoming. One may pray to a tangandé and make a vow, for example, promise it a goat or sheep if it kills a designated enemy. The goat is purchased pending the enemy's death. Sometimes the tangandé takes its time and
[781] several years go by. The spirit is chided and told to hurry, and finally decides to do away with the person in question. Then the goat is sacrificed.

776 Some people say that all tangamma come from the Fada N'Gourma
778 region, where the father of all tangamma is to be found. It is the sorcerer's task to point out the tangamma and the place of their
787 residence. Once, for example, a village had just been founded. The elders had found a piece of ground propitious to agriculture, in the vicinity of water, and had built their huts. At the beginning /84/ of the winter season, when the time came for sowing, they shared out the neighboring bush and proceeded to lay out their fields. One day a leopard driven out of its lair took to flight before their eyes and repaired to a thicket. Immediately the people were called, the thicket surrounded and searched thoroughly. No leopard was found. On the following day the same episode took place in the same spot. This happened three times, and every time it proved impossible to

776 find the leopard, which had suddenly vanished. The puzzled elders,
778 like the good Mossi they were, consulted the sorcerer who stated that
787 the leopard was their tangandé, and the thicket to which it had repaired was its sacred grove. He also prescribed the sacrifices to be offered.

776 As the blood of the victims flowed, the children saw a turtle
787 walking toward the sacred grove and tried to seize it. The elder prevented then from doing so and again resorted to the superior knowledge of the sorcerer to find out what this might possibly mean: a turtle entering the sacred grove during a sacrifice to the tangandé! The sorcerer pronounced the following oracle: the turtle is the child of the tangandé and thus becomes sacred to our village. Since that time the village has had the leopard and turtle as its tangandé /sic/.

776 The tangandé may actually be a stone or a tree which is regarded as the guardian of the village, but this is more unusual. The tangandé might perhaps be considered as a sort of village totem. If we take Salomon Reinach's definition of the totem as "the animal, plant, or more rarely mineral or heavenly body which the clan acknowledges as an ancestor, a protector, and a rallying sign," (3) we find that the

3. Salomon Reinach, Cultes, mythes et religion /Cults, Myths, and Religion/, p. 81.

tangandé is usually an animal, a guardian animal, but that it is not regarded as an ancestor and it does not serve as a rallying sign, for
[621] several villages may have the same tangamma /sic/—many have the crocodile and boa—without considering this as a bond between them.

Monseigneur Le Roy defines totemism as follows: "An institution consisting essentially of a magic pact, which reflects and constitutes a kinship, mystical and supernatural in nature, by which an invisible spirit in the visible shape of an animal, or, in exceptional cases, of a plant, mineral, or astral body, is associated with an individual, a family, a clan, a tribe, or a secret society for the purpose of reciprocal services." (4) This definition does not correspond to the

4. Mgr. Le Roy, La religion des primitifs /Primitive Religion/, p. 132.

777 may hold in store. Wednesday is unreservedly bad, and you must not start a job or leave for a trip on that day. Thursday and Friday are propitious to weddings, especially Friday. On Saturday the sorcerers take the day off and hold no consultations. In addition, every individual has his own lucky day and his unlucky day, which he must know and bear in mind.

778 787 823 Some stones are said to have fallen from heaven. On the day when they fall, the village chief immediately covers all the jars in his hut which contain charms. If he knocks one down in his haste, he will die within the year. These stones are held sacred. Those who can lift them /100/ have nothing to fear, but those who cannot are soon to die. People may also interrogate such a stone, whose reply is considered favorable if they manage to lift it, unfavorable if they cannot [788] do so. Passersby toss millet stalks onto the stone, or twigs cut along the way, or sometimes cowries, to procure success in their endeavors.

821 787 Comets are omens of war or of the death of a great chief. When Halley's comet appeared on the horizon, the chickens, goats, and sheep had a bad time of it. It was necessary to ward off all the possible misfortunes. It is true that the comet was magnificent, spreading for several days from one end of the sky nearly to another, and it is understandable that the natives should be upset. We have heard that many people were troubled in our civilized countries, where the comet could not be seen in all its splendor. In spite of all those sacrifices, the chief of one of the principal cantons in the province, the naba of Pwitenga, died that very year!

000 We must limit our enumeration, and these few examples, which could easily be multiplied, suffice to make clear the role of amulets and superstitions in the life of this people.

801 One further word on superstitions. The reader may have noticed that the numbers three and four and their composites have recurred constantly according to the sex of the person spoken of. Three is reserved for men and four for women. In the sacrifices, God-king male is called three times. God-king female four times. The cord of the charm has three or four knots according to sex; mothers mourn their children for 33 or 44 days. A dead man receives 333 or 3, 333 cowries, a dead woman 444 or 4, 444, etc.

302 Every time a native changes his status, his hair must be removed. Babies are shaved before they are given a name, girls before they come to their husband, women when they are transferred to a new

754 accused of eating the souls of little children, and I have known some who boasted of possessing this power!

The tibo are a family of sorcerers. People are born tibo, and the village they inhabit is called Tibin. The naba of this village has the special faculty of discerning all sorts of things, especially whether someone has an enemy, merely by gazing into a gourd filled with water in which a certain charm has been placed. A chicken was previously sacrificed on the gourd. This naba, and he alone, can also kill at a distance. To obtain his protection, it is necessary to bring him a goat, a chicken, millet flour mixed with water, and millet beer. Sooner or later the one designated will die! If it takes too long, the sorcerer always has an excuse handy.

754 778 The village of Tibin contains a hut where the tibo fetishes are lined in a row. These fetishes consist basically of clay pots containing water, branches, and tree leaves. They are covered with clay gourds of the kind used to cook sauce, and the sacrifices are made on these gourds. It is said that there are snakes and turtles in the pots, but only the tibo sorcerers can see them. Every village has its tibo jar in the naba's household, either at the door of his hut or hanging inside. These tibo are the dwellings of powerful kikirsi.

754 781 535 /106/ The bartibo are professional dancers. They have the faculty of distinguishing while dancing those who have the power of killing people, whether poison-givers or seuya. The bartibo themselves claim to have the power of riding the wind and going to kill anyone they wish. They specialize, however, in child-bearing charms for the benefit of sterile women.

754 292 The waongo also belong to a special family. People are born tibo, bartibo, waongo, or nyonnyonga. For their ceremonies, the waongo don garments made of the bark of baobabs which cover them completely. These strange garments completely conceal the person. A figure may be seen walking, but the person cannot be recognized, and a dreadful illness threatens those who dare to strike it. This is why people, when they see these shapeless forms, run away as fast as they can.

[769] The waongo wear masks when they celebrate the koure (death anniversary) of another waongo. They can ride the wind and inflict diseases; they can even kill if they wish.

794 sunrise and at sunset, during the first week of the winter season, then, later, only every six days, in the morning at sunrise. They go to the [778] altars, formed by three conical stones, to offer sacrifices and libations, always surrounded by all the people, the heads of families, tom-tom players, and family masks (Ouango).

"During the entire year, in a highly decorated niche dug into a [372] wall of their houses, the priests watch the sacred fire with which, at the end of the rainy season, they must light the great purifying brush fires."

Lieutenant Desplagnes adds in a note:

"They make sacrifices at each new moon, and then have seven great feasts each year for the divinity. Finally, during the sun festivals, [237] they use a cow's tail to tie the sun to the earth and assure its fertilizing warmth." /31/

794 171 In my book Noir du Soudan, Pays Mossi et Gourounsi /Blacks of the Sudan, Country of the Mossi and Gourounsi/ (1912), I reproduced this page of Lieutenant Desplagnes without comment (page 590). In addition, I described the cult of the sun among the Gourounsi, who, like the Mossi, are part of the Voltaic family. Thus, on page 241, I wrote:

"The Kassonfra, like the Nounouma and the Menkiéra, say that they offer no sacrifice either to the moon or to the sun. However, I found an exception in the village of Nitiédougou (canton of Sia). It would seem that here, in the early mornings when the sun rises and begins to leave the horizon, people offer it a chicken or whatever else they wish to offer. Moreover, this sacrifice is only made when the voro (1) says it should be made.

1. Soothsayer.

"My informant claims that this same procedure is followed, not only in Nitiédougou and in the little canton of Sia, but also in all of the Kasouna (Kassonfra and Kassonboura) country. He must be mistaken (2) since my previous informants and my interpreter, who is

2. Today, on the other hand, I tend to think he was right.

Kassonboura, have neither seen nor heard of anything like it."

643 The war minister replied, "That will be against tradition and justice to the dead ruler. Do not fear; I am here with my arms to see that your decision is respected" (this was not always an empty gesture, for one man, Wobogo, forced a Ouidi-naba to elect him).[3] When the lesser ministers were notified as to the choice of the new sovereign they said: "You have expressed our will and the will of all the people." The elector then secretly called the new ruler and, taking off the man's goat's skin (the symbol of those seeking the chieftainship) told him: "I am giving you the house of your father and of your grandfather." Then the ministers and the chief musician escorted the new ruler before his subjects, and the Ouidi-naba shouted: "Here is he who has the power of life and death over you." The following day all the members of the ruling lineage and sublineages swore not to betray their new ruler. The minister of war then swore, in the name of all the people, to protect the new ruler with his life if the need ever arose. Next followed ceremonies during which a descendant of the original Ninisi inhabitants made sacrifices, in the name of the new sovereign, to his ancient ancestors.

643 642 [778] In analyzing the power of the Moro-naba we must take into consideration the concept of *nam* which is described as "power" or "the force of God." It is this force of God that enables one man to control another, and gives the sovereign the power of life and death over his subjects. Moreover, once a man had "eaten the *nam*," the Mossi constitution had no provisions for deposing him. The Mossi generally claim that only one of their thirty-three rulers was ever deposed, and that he was the ruler who ran away from the French. However, there is another tradition that states that one sovereign, Karfo, was forced to commit suicide by his Ouidi-naba.

According to the Mossi constitution, the Moro-naba had complete control over the lands of the state, and was the only one empowered to distribute these lands as fiefs. Any attack on the lands of the state was an attack on the Moro-naba and thus a cause for war. The Moro-naba alone had the right to make war, and in this he was helped by his vassals, the district chiefs, and their armies. He was court of final appeal for crimes that carried the death penalty and, theoretically, only he had the right to condemn a nobleman to death.

651 686 Every year the district chiefs under the command of their ministers went to the capital to pay allegiance to the Moro-naba with gifts of cows, goats, sheep, cowries, and grain. The animals were presents from the stock of the district chiefs, but the cowries and grain were collected from the villagers of the districts. The people of the several wards in the capital furnished labor for the cultivation of the sovereign's fields and for the upkeep of his houses. The Moro-naba received substantial sums of money from taxes on the sale of slaves or other merchandise in the Ouagadougou market. He also received presents of slaves when his vassals raided the surrounding countries. If a district chief failed to fulfill all of these

4: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1957
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635 The Ouidi-naba answered: "Naba, you may do as you desire." The ruler
631 then said, "Under these conditions I will designate the eldest son of the late chief as the new Kombéré because his father has never forgotten me, or gave me any trouble when he was alive. It will not be good to reject his son." The ministers then called the heir and put the following question to him three times: "Before his death, did your father designate anyone to replace him as chief?" The heir replied three times: "No! My father did not designate anyone. You may name anyone you wish; even if he is a blind man or a leper." The heir was then given a bonnet, the symbol of [778] the *nam*, and made to swear on drinking the Tibo, a ritual potion, that if he ever betrayed the ruler, may the Tibo kill him. Thereafter, all the members of the new chief's lineage swore to respect and obey him.

The power and function of the Kombéré were similar to those of the
635 Moro-naba, but on a much reduced scale. As the person who had received
631 the *nam* from the Moro-naba, he was supreme in his district, subject only
578 to his obligation to the head ruler. These obligations included the customary gifts and aid in warfare. There is some evidence that many of the Kombérés were lax in paying this tribute and rendering homage to the Moro-naba and consequently were punished or killed. Naba Warga fought a five-year-long civil war against a rebellious vassal before the rebel was killed, and Naba Wobogo was engaged in a three-year civil war with one of his vassals when the French arrived in the country. It is not clear whether the Moro-naba was able to prevent or stop war between his vassals over strayed cattle or stolen women. The Mossi in the district of Nobéré said that the Moro-naba did not often know when neighboring villages were at war. These wars did not involve the loss of territories by the districts, since it was ritually forbidden for one district chief to take lands from another.

631 The district chiefs had ministers who helped them administer the districts. These ministers were descendants of the sons of the Moro-naba's ministers who accompanied the first district chief when he took up his fief. They had control of several villages and they channeled goods and services from the villages to the district heads. The hierarchy of command was also strictly observed on this level, and a village chief who had disputes with other village chiefs, or who had important cases to be judged, was required always to be accompanied by his minister when he visited the district chief. This official could put any man into stocks for [681 serious crimes, but he could authorize the death only of commoners. It 565] must be pointed out, however, that in many cases the district chief usurped the rights of the Moro-naba, and had a troublesome noble secretly strangled. The district chief, like the Moro-naba, could not be deposed; he was often forced to commit suicide or met death by foul play or in open civil war. The people in the district reacted to an unjust ruler by leaving his territories.

The village chiefs held their fiefs directly from the district chiefs, and

5: Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1959
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769 destroy the yield. And, depending on his attentions to them, they can give or take away the good health necessary to carry him through the arduous activity of the rainy season when work is hardest, the granaries nearly empty, and food in short supply. Separate ancestral spirits look out for different aspects of the well-being of the individual. Satisfying their various sacrificial requirements is both expensive and time-consuming, but their good will is essential to the success of the farmer, and it is in his own best interest to be attentive to their needs.

THE EARTH CUSTODIANS

793 A close relationship exists between the control of the water supply
716 upon which the agricultural economy depends and the authority of the earth custodians in their role as intermediaries with the several manifestations of Wennam, the Mossi deity. The deity itself is somewhat aloof from the affairs of men, but through his specific manifestations and with the intercession of the earth custodians (*Tenga Soba namba*), descendants of the indigenous inhabitants of the Yatenga, the individual propitiates Wennam in order to control the various forces of the natural and supernatural environment upon which the success of his economic or social endeavor is dependent. Tenga Wende, his terrestrial manifestation, and Tido Wende, which gives life to the vegetable kingdom, are the aspects of Wennam which are most frequently evoked; but Siguiri Wende, the deified first ancestor of the Mossi; Ki Wende, the millet god; and Saga Wende, the rain deity, are also frequently called upon for help.

Each Mossi village in the Yatenga is divided into one or more areas,
793 each of which is in the "command" of one of the village earth custodians.
[36] Each of these areas contains both the dwelling of the Savadogo lineage of the earth custodian and the residence and farmlands of various "true" Mossi lineages. The head of each lineage maintains the good will of the terrestrial manifestation of the deity through the intercession of the earth custodian who "commands" his land. In some instances a lineage may own land under the authority of two different earth custodians; in this case offerings must be made at the shrine (*tenga*) of each.

793 The good fortune which may be secured through obeisance to the
782 terrestrial manifestation of the deity (Tenga Wende) involves both sacrifices and gifts of money to the earth custodian and abstention from acts offensive to the earth. For example, sexual intercourse may take
[833 place only in a private courtyard or within the house. Violation of this
783] rule defiles the land and must be expiated through a special sacrifice and the payment of a fine to the earth custodian. Any lost object found in the
778 public way or in the bush is in the custody of the earth deity and must be turned over to the earth custodian to await the inquiry of the proper owners. If such objects are unclaimed, they are given to Tenga Wende

5: Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1959
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by being placed on his altar, where they become part of the earth symbols (*tiinse*). As a result, these altars are piled high with old sardine cans, bicycle parts, remnants of clothing, unusual stones and scraps of metal, baskets, wooden implements, and weapons, which are left there to decompose slowly and return to the earth. Travelers in a strange village need never fear that their property will be stolen if they deposit it near the altar of the earth custodian. 778

When a farmer wishes to clear a part of the bush which has previously been unused, he must first ask permission of the earth custodian and make a present to the earth deity. If he wishes to use the land again the following year, the request and the gift must be repeated. Such a field may be passed on to his descendants, who have a right to the land so long as they acknowledge each year the authority of the earth custodian. If a new well is to be dug, his authorization must be requested, and his advice may also be asked for the proper place to seek water. The wise Mossi farmer consults the earth custodian frequently about his agricultural activities. He also reports anything that he may have done to alter the condition of his farmlands or the surrounding bush, not because each individual act is of such great importance, but because maintaining good relations with the custodian of the earth is in the interest of his own economic security. 241 782 793

OTHER ASPECTS OF RELIGION

Other descendants of the original inhabitants of the Yatenga, the Bogoba, are especially charged with the propitiation of Tido Wendé, the vegetal manifestation of Wennam. In addition to the many manifestations of Wennam and the complex organization of priests and ceremonial designed for his propitiation, many other forces inhabit the unseen world of the Mossi. Indeed, to the observer their number and variety might at first seem to be almost as great as the number of Mossi with whom he may discuss these beings. Each man's description of these supernatural beings varies in terms of his subjective reaction resulting either from direct experience of them or from stories he has heard concerning their behavior. In contrast to Wennam, whose disposition is essentially benevolent so long as he is properly propitiated, these lesser supernatural beings are more frequently malicious and always more difficult to control. Perhaps for these reasons they are not worshiped. The Mossi's concern is not to propitiate them but to neutralize their evil intentions by the use of protective charms (*tim*). 776

The "bush," the unused land lying beyond the farms, is the least-known aspect of the Mossi natural environment. This is especially true of those far areas of the bush where even the authority of the earth custodians does not extend and where unknown spirits dwell. For although the 776 823

224 435 At Kombisiguiri, as we have just seen, there are 10 elephant hunters out of about 70 chiefs of compounds. Among the latter there are also some 20 men who hunt other animals, but they are cultivators who hunt on the side. They seek buffalo. When they kill one, they sell the meat to the village that stands nearest to the spot of the kill for 35,000 cowries. They also hunt the koba antelope, whose meat is worth from 20,000 cowries, the striped deer worth 6,500, the pig deer worth 5,000, the wart hog worth 10,000. They also hunt hares, bustards, guinea fowl, partridges, turtle-doves, etc.

224 262 The Mossi do not hunt monkeys and do not eat them. /495/ Actually, there are very few in Mossi territory, except for the red-haired monkeys who are great lovers of millet and maize.

224 825 778 The Mossi do not hunt crocodiles because the latter are held sacred. If one were to kill a crocodile, one would become ill, one's head would swell and one's teeth would fall out. Snakes, on the other hand, are killed and eaten, but in Mossi territory proper there are few large ones (pythons, boas) because the climate is not sufficiently humid. They are more numerous in Boussansé and Gourounsi lands.

226 Fishing is less important than hunting among the Mossi, for the simple reason that the land, with its low rainfall, only has muddy ponds during the dry season (on this subject, see our Introduction /not translated/). Thus, not only do the Mossi lack professional fishermen, but the villages do not even undertake collective fishing during the dry season (with the exception of some southern localities, in Kombisiguiri for example). Only children attempt to catch the mudfish which are always present in large quantities in small ponds, even when they are nearly dry.

222 Gathering, on the other hand, plays the same role among the Mossi as among the other Sudanese Blacks, and we shall study it here in some detail, since we have only described it in broad outline so far.

222 137 The tree most widespread throughout Mossi territory, and which grows wild, is the karité. Its leaves are a pleasant green, and it is somewhat similar to our Normandy apple tree. Its bark is whitish and made of small juxtaposed quadrilaterals. It is the karité which

769 along with millet flour mixed in water. A few chickens are also killed. No one works on that day, but people eat, drink, and rest. There is no drumming or dancing, however.

Other Mossi (at Yakki, for example) make offerings to the ancestors in the hut of their first wife rather than on the graves.

Another feast comes at sowing time and is called Tengana. Certain leaves are sought in the bush, cooked with beans and underground peas, and eaten. Much dolo is also preapred.

241 On the first day of sowing, one goes to the fields and offers a
776 chicken, millet flour, and dolo to the field stones (tenkougouri) and to the earth (tenga or tempeloun), so the sowing will go well, so there will be a good harvest, and so everyone will be in good health.

There is also an earth feast or Tensé (plural of tenga), which is celebrated once a year during the rainy season. It is the Moro Naba who sets the exact date of the Tensé. Every soukala head
[782] kills a beef, a sheep, or a chicken. The young men collect the blood of the sacrificed animals in gourds and pour some upon the ground (to the Earth) in order to secure a good crop. The remainder is mixed with the flour of large white millet and eaten. Much dolo is consumed. The earth feast is the special festivity of those people who are called Tenga (earth), Tembila, Tenfisi, etc., and of those who were born on the day of the Tensé.

On that day sacrifices are also offered to Naba Ouondé (the Chief God).

/588/ On years when the previous millet harvest was bad, the Tensé is not celebrated.

The Mossi have no special harvesting feast. Actually, it is the Tiougou or Bassara (celebrated when the millet has been harvested) that is the harvesting feast as well as the feast of the ancestors.

782 The Mossi do not offer sacrifices to isolated trees, but they do
778 to sacred groves or woods.

At Ouagadougou, at the spot where the White Fathers now live, there once stood a small sacred wood made up of large trees and thorny bushes, where sacrifices were offered before the French tore it down.

Every year the Moro Naba offered a sheep and a chicken to this sacred grove through the head of the Sékou quarter. He also offered

782 dolo and millet flour. There was no set time for this. The flesh
778 of the sacrificed animals devolved to the sacrificer, the head of Sékou.

At present day sacred groves are still to be found in various Mossi villages. Thus, for example, there are three at Kabayoro, two of which belong to individuals and one to the village. The Earth chief /Tr.: Tengsoba/ of Kabayoro offers sacrifices to the village grove whenever the bara says so.

The Mossi also make sacrifices to the hills.

At Sabtinga, about 17 kilometers northwest of Ouagadougou, there is a rise in the ground called Tantiibo where the Moro Naba used to go once a year with the Baloum Naba, many chiefs and people at the time when the weather begins to grow cold. He ordered a beef, a chicken, millet flour, and a gourd of dolo to be taken along, and they were handed over to the head of the quarter where the hillock stood. This chief performed the sacrifice and begged the piece of ground to grant good health to the Moro Naba. Only
[839] the Moro Naba, the Balou, the sacred people (eunuchs), and the soroné were present at the sacrifice, Other people who had come to Sabtinga remained in the village, whence the Moro Naba set out on foot to the spot of the sacrifice.

At Kombé-Padanda, a small hillock located in a /589/ Ouagadougou quarter, the same sacrifice was offered in the same fashion and at the same time of year.

326 Let us add that when Mossi blacksmiths go and smelt iron ore
782 in the bush, they kill chickens and offer millet flour on the spot where they extract the ore. The sacrifice is offered to the spirits of the hill, as well as to the Earth and to Naba Ouondé.

778 Sacrifices are made to watercourses as well as to hills, either
782 at fishing time or whenever the bara indicate that a certain stream requires a certain sacrifice.

825 As far as crocodiles are concerned, some of them are held
262 sacred by the Mossi. As for snakes, they are killed and usually eaten, but not everyone eats them. Some people abstain.

778 As for the Earth, the Moro Naba had sheep, chickens, millet
782 flour, and dolo handed over to the Baloum Naba through eunuchs several times a year, whenever a bara told him to do so. The Baloum Naba handed these gifts in person to the chief of Ouagadougou,

778 whose ancestors had ruled the soil of the territory. In the name of
782 the Moro Naba, he entrusted him with the task of offering all those gifts to the Earth so that the latter might favor the sovereign. Ouagadougou Naba performed the sacrifice before the door of his soukala.

When the Moro Naba went to war, he also ordered the chief
[F27] of Ougadougou to perform a sacrifice to the Earth. The bara indicated what should be sacrificed in order to insure victory, to "break" the villages that were to be attacked.

782 When rain failed to come, the Moro Naba would go to the hillock at Koumbé /sic/-Padanda, and have the head of the quarter offer a sacrifice (beef, sheep, chicken) to secure rain. If rain refused to come, the bara were consulted once more, and sacrifices were offered until it came.

776 The Mossi also have a sky god whom they call Oumam as well
782 as Naba Ouendé or Naba Ouondé, meaning "Sun Chief." This is a
794 trace of the sun cult, which is unusual in Black West Africa, all opinions to the contrary notwithstanding. /590/ The majority of the Mossi sacrifice much more to ancestors and to the Earth than to Naba Ouondé, who is to them a somewhat remote god.

794 It must be added that Lieutenant Desplagnes found among the
782 Mossi an esoteric cult of the sun, moon, and fire, which is peculiar to religious initiates (Ouango) whom we shall mention later.

"The Hougho-Ouango of the Mossi (among the Mossi, those priests reside in the villages of Boujema, Mani, Kondogho, Yolo, and Tio) sacrifice to the sun in order to bind it to the Earth. They do this morning and evening, sunrise and sunset, during the first week of the winter season, and every six days in the morning at sunrise thereafter.
[778] They also go to altars made of three conical stones and offer sacrifices and libations, always surrounded by the populace, family heads, drummers, and familial masks (ouango).

794 "Those priests tend the sacred fire throughout the year in a
372 small, highly adorned recess dug into one of their house walls. At
783 the end of the rainy season they will use it to light the great purifying bush fires.

794 "They perform sacrifices at every new moon, and they have
782 seven important feasts a year for their divinity. Finally, during the solar festivities, they use a cow's tail to tie down the sun to the earth and to bind its life-giving heat." (Le Plateau central nigérien /The Central Nigerian Plateau/, pages 275 and 276.)

793 never offers sacrifices himself to the Earth at Ouagadougou, nor does
174 he have them offered by the Gandé Naba, his minister of religion. He entrusts with this task the Ouagadougou Naba, who is a grandson of the autochtonous inhabitants and thus favorably regarded by the local divinities. Similarly, when the Moro Naba sacrifices to the hillocks surrounding Ouagadougou, he entrusts the local chief with the offerings and the physical sacrifice. Now, what the Moro Naba still does at Ouagadougou was no doubt done by other Mossi chiefs throughout the land after conquest, once the submission of the autochtonous inhabitants had been ensured by force of arms. Hence, the institution of the Tensoba.

One might object that Earth chiefs are also to be found in Gourounsi territory, although the Gourounsi are independent. We know, however, that the present-day Gourounsi cantons were not the achievement of the Gourounsi themselves but of minor Mossi dynasties established in the territory. Under the circumstances, the same substitution of conquering chiefs for conquered chiefs has occurred there as in Mossi territory, with the same consequences.

793 "The Tensoba," says Marc, p. 157, "whose title means 'Master of the Earth,' stands in opposition to the naba who is a military chief....

"The Tensoba is the indispensable mediator between the ancestors and their living descendants. It is he who conducts the funeral ceremonies and who decides on the honors to be rendered on the Day of the Dead. It is to him that one appeals in case of an epidemic or any public misfortune, since misfortunes are always due to the evil inclinations of ancestors that must be allayed."

793 /596/ Actually, the institution of the Earth chief does not strip
643 the village and canton chiefs of all religious powers. In some areas,
839 as Marc pointed out, the Earth chiefs have gradually vanished, and
718 the political chiefs have become religious chiefs as well. They per-
[431] form sacrifices on the bara's advice, without failing to make a gift of some sort (100 or 1,000 cowries) to the latter also. By the same token and up to a point, the Moro Naba is invested with a religious character and with religious attributes. It is he, as we have already seen, who orders the performance of sacrifices to the Earth, to the hills. Every year during the dry season, he has a donkey sacrificed to Naba Koutou, a former Moro Naba, in the hut where the latter is buried. Prior to our occupation it was a eunuch who performed

793 the sacrifice and killed the donkey. He also slit the throat of a
643 horse, a beef, and a sheep. (This eunuch in charge of guarding the
839 tomb was called by the name of Naba Koutou, and in a way per-
778 petuated the deceased Moro Naba. He was granted special privi-
leges. If a man who was condemned to death ran away and reached
the tomb, he was safe but became the eunuch's slave. Similarly,
[567] a captive who ran away from his master gained his freedom from the
latter if he reached the grave, but became the slave of Naba Koutou.
Finally, at that time, it was forbidden to ride by the hut on a donkey.
Naba Koutou would seize the donkey, or at least demand a ransom
in cowries before returning it. This applied to any animals who ran
astray near the tomb. The tomb still exists nowadays, along with
the Naba Koutou who watches over it, but the latter no longer enjoys
the same privileges.)

793 We saw earlier that the Moro Naba had a sort of minister of the
645 cult in the person of the Gandé Naba, high priest and sacrificer.
There was also the Pouy Naba, or chief of the fetisheers, whose
function was probably to mediate between the Mossi bara and
timisoba as a whole and the central authorities.

782 Let us close this study of Mossi religion, which incidentally is
quite incomplete and a mere outline, with a few words on the human
sacrifices that were performed /597/ in the territory prior to our
occupation, and a few words on circumcision as well.

782 "Human sacrifices," says Marc., p. 156, "definitely took place
766 among the Mossi up to the time when we occupied the territory.
Whenever a Moro Naba died at Ouagadougou, one of his wives and
one of his horses were sent to Gambaga in order to be sacrificed on
the tomb of Ouidiraogo (?) who is regarded as the mother of the first
Moro Naba. Soon after the occupation of Ouagadougou by the French,
782 the dethroned Moro Naba, Boukary Koutou, ordered the sacrifice of a
754 black rooster, a black goat, a black donkey, a black beef, and a
black slave on one of the mountains overlooking the White Volta.
This, it seems, was bound to cause the immediate death of the new
Moro Naba enthroned by Voulet."

304 As for circumcision, the Mossi circumcise boys and excise girls.
Boys are circumcised when they are from eight to twelve years
old, and thirty or forty of them are circumcised at one time. The

8: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1958
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rulers left the Dagomba region in the Gold Coast (present-day Ghana) during the 11th century and moved into the bend of the Niger River, carving out three large kingdoms and smaller principalities in the process. At the head of these still extant kingdoms are rulers (*Moro Nabas*) who hold feudal-like control of the provinces, districts, and villages which comprise their domains. A complex hierarchical administrative apparatus extends the power of the rulers into the smallest village, and funnels taxes and tribute back to them. French conquest modified this highly efficient system but did not greatly change it. The Mossi state apparatus rests on an economy which produces cotton cloth, horses, sheep, cattle, and goats, but the main support of this large population—one of the densest in the Sudan—is grain agriculture. Today, some Mossi districts still have as many as 70 persons per square mile. 105 173 105

The Mossi are divided into stratified royal, noble, and commoner patrilineages. Characteristic of this lineage system is a process by which royal sublineages descend serially until they merge with the mass of commoner lineages. Below the lineages there were once large non-Mossi groups of serfs and slaves, but these people have now been grouped into lineages and have become Mossi. Patrilocal polygynous extended family households, grouped into villages, form the basic Mossi settlement pattern. Marriages are arranged between unrelated persons through the agency of lineage members who establish "friendly" relationships. The two friends might ask their lineage heads for women to exchange as wives, or the "friend" who has received more gifts from his opposite number will give over a wife. Because only the older men have women and goods at their disposal, they are usually the ones who receive wives. The result is that most young men have no wives and must content themselves with occasional lovers until they inherit wives from lineage members. The Mossi have a great fear of incestuous relations which bring down the wrath of the ancestors (the *Keemsé*).

Ancestor veneration is at the core of Mossi religious behavior. The recent ancestors are notified, through sacrifices, of the important events in the lives of their descendants, and they are expected to aid in solving everyday problems. The ancestors also invoke their sanctions against antisocial behavior among their descendants. Once a year the Mossi people, in concert with the Moro Nabas, appeal to their individual and collective ancestors for good crops, large families, and for the preservation of the dynasty. Often associated with the ancestors as propitiatory agents are local deities called *Tengkougas* (sing. *Tenkougre*) or earth shrines, visibly manifested by clumps of trees, mountains, rocks, or rivers. *Tengsobas* or earth priests appeal to the Tengkougas on behalf of the local populations for help in sickness, for rain and good crops, and for children. When proper sacrifices are offered to the Tengkougas, their spiritual agents, called *kinkirsé*, enter the wombs of women and are born as children. Twins and children who die young are regarded as "evil" kinkirsé who entered a woman without being invited. Nevertheless, many persons consider twins as special gifts to parents in favor of the earth deities. 769 [778] [842] [845]

The earth itself, *Tenga*, is one of the principal deities of the Mossi. Tenga is 776 [823]

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II

SOVEREIGNTY, KINSHIP, AND COMMUNITY

THE Mossi restricted all important positions within the traditional political 642
organization to persons who claimed lineal descent from Ouedraogo and 613
Oubri, the ancient founders of the Mossi nation. Thus all the *Mogho Na-* [173]
namse, Dimdamba, Kombemba, and *Tense Nanamse*—the heads of king-
doms, principalities, districts, and villages, respectively—claimed descent
in the royal line. The bond of kinship among all important Mossi rulers [614]
was symbolized by membership in the lion clan (*Gegema*) and affiliated
clans or *boodoo* founded by ancient members of the ruling families. Al- 613
though the Mossi respected clan totems, they did not stress clan organ- 778
ization. They were more interested in membership in the segmentary 642
lineages within the clans.[1] Yet not all Mossi groups stressed lineage affilia-
tion. This was of supreme importance only for nobles whose membership
in particular segments of ruling lineages gave them access to the *nam*—
the power first possessed by the ancient founders, which is described by
the Mossi as "that force of God which enables one man to control another."
So important was the corporate possession of the nam by a ruling lineage [554]
that with few exceptions, membership in such a lineage gave a Moaga
noble status.[2] Lineage segmentation gave some segments easier access to [578]
the nam, however, and resulting conflicts over sovereignty gave rise to the
various Mossi kingdoms, principalities, and even districts.

Every Mossi ruling line attempted to legitimize its position by claiming
the most direct descent from Ouedraogo and Oubri. The descendants of the
founder of a local ruling lineage would claim that he had been an elder son
deprived of his patrimony by unscrupulous younger brothers, or an elder
son disqualified by a physical handicap from receiving the nam. Some rul- 642
ing lineages even claimed that their founders had been elder sons who had 613
voluntarily forsaken the problems of government and established new 173
districts for themselves. Whenever tradition recounted that a younger son 778
had indeed founded a kingdom or district, it was invariably said that he

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had done so with full permission of his father and in place of an unadventurous elder brother.

For example, the ruling family of the Boulsa province claimed that its ancestor, Naba Namende, was the eldest son of Mogho Naba Oubri and chose to become his father's *Kourita* (a young son of a deceased Mogho Naba chosen as his father's personal representative on earth) and go into exile rather than subject his younger brother to the ordeal. At the same time, Namende sought to retain royal power equal to that of his brother, the new Mogho Naba, by taking Oubri's royal amulets with him.[3]

Mane province, too, was founded by one Nyaseme, a son of Koudoumie, who felt that he should have been given the nam. When routed in battle by his elder brother Kouda, he moved into the region of Mane, where he defeated the indigenous Ninisi and ruled over them. The princes who broke away from Ouagadougou during Koudoumie's reign considered themselves theoretically equal to the supreme ruler. Thus, they took the title of Dim. By so doing, they dramatized their claim to equality of status, if not of power, with the Mogho Naba, and their determination to "submit only to God."[4]

The Mossi insist that the relationship between the Mogho Naba and the Dimdamba was similar to that between father and sons, since the Dimdamba were "really the sons of the Mogho Naba" and are said to have acted as such. This analogy is interesting in view of the Mossi traditional pattern of avoidance—combined with love and tolerance—between fathers and elder sons.[5] The Dimdamba were often allowed to act at variance with the Mogho Naba. Some of them shifted allegiance from kingdom to kingdom; others usurped the power of the Mogho Naba over smaller districts, or claimed that they had been given this power; and most of them regulated their own affairs with little interference from their sovereign. He, as "father," interfered on occasion in their internal affairs, demanding help from them and often chastising them if they failed to comply.

The Mogho Naba and the Dimdamba often appointed their younger sons or brothers as rulers (Kombemba) of the districts that made up their kingdoms and principalities. In this way, power and authority were kept within the royal clan and its lineages. Nevertheless, in keeping with the concept of corporate access to the nam, the rulers of these dependencies had traditions that served to reconcile their claims to kingly or princely status with their actual subordinate position. District founders, too, were often portrayed as eldest sons who had been cheated out of their patrimony or had voluntarily left it to establish new districts. In some cases, the legendary heroes were granted miraculous births as well.

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634 tured slaves, whom he settled behind his compound and in separate villages
173 under their own chiefs. He also welcomed refugees from wars in other territories and established them in special villages under their own chiefs.

631 The Dimdamba followed a similar practice in establishing power and
173 control. According to Cheron, when Mogho Naba Koudoumie sent his son Tiraongo to conquer the Ninisi of Boussouma, the Ninisi defended themselves fiercely. Tiraongo's advance was thus very slow until he found a Ninisi named Wine, dressed in a panther's skin and hiding in a hole, "who on the promise that his life would be saved, consented to serve as guide to Tiraongo and to make propitiatory sacrifices to the divinities of the country. Thanks to him, the Mossi were able to progress to Somtongande."[6] Boulsa tradition recounts that when Naba Namende left Ouagadougou as the Kourita of Mogho Naba Oubri and took possession of their province, he placed his sons at the head of the principal villages "in order to control it [Boulsa] better."[7] One son was even sent to rule over a village at the request of the local Tengsoba.

634 The villages that made up a Mossi district were usually ruled by chiefs
613 who belonged to sub-lineages of the local ruling lineage. These village
778 chiefs and the members of their lineage formed a noble class, the *nakomce*
[565] ("children of the Naba"). As long as a lineage held the nam of a district, all of its sub-lineages had all the privileges of the noble class, regardless of whether they had charge of villages. But if the Mogho Naba deprived
[558] a ruling lineage of the nam by deposing the district chief, all its members were reduced to commoner status. Such people still traced their descent from the Mogho Naba who was the ancestor of their lineage founder, but this relationship ceased to be important unless the lineage recovered the nam of the district. If it did not, the former ruling lineage officially lost its ancient link with the royal clan within a few generations and became a nondescript local group.

634 The place of a deposed royal lineage was usually taken by the relatives
613 of the nobles who subsequently acquired the nam of the district. These
778 newcomers were genealogically closer to the ruling Mogho Naba, and
557 formed the new nakomce of the district. The new district chief sometimes sent his sons to rule over the villages under his command. But if the village
558 chiefs did not suffer the same fate as their lineage head at the hands of the Mogho Naba, the new district chief often permitted them to retain their posts. Thus they retained possession of the nam but lost their noble status. They served the new district chief in a political sense much as the Tengsoba served him in a ritual sense.

554 The plight of deposed district nakomce shows quite clearly the distinc-
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tion made by the Mossi between kinship and sovereignty within their 602
governmental system. Kinship was the basis on which the ruling class 778
was formed. However, sovereignty itself, although associated with kinship, was not unalterably linked with it. When a ruling Mossi kin group held the nam, its subgroups were linked by bonds of prestige. But once this group lost the nam or access to the nam, its component subgroups began to drift away. That this situation could exist shows the true nature of the relationship between sovereignty and kinship within the Mossi political system.

There were other chiefs in Mossi districts who had never had either a 602
lineal or a collateral relationship with any lineage of the ancient royal clan.[8] 554
These men were the descendants of provincial ministers. They became 634
chiefs for the same reasons that the sons of ruling sovereigns became 657
chiefs. When a Mogho Naba sent his sons to replace deposed district chiefs, the young men were usually accompanied by a full complement of administrators. These administrators, mostly younger sons of administrators at Ouagadougou who would not normally succeed their fathers, often automatically replaced the administrators of the former chiefs. But if, for reasons of administrative efficiency, the new chiefs elected to retain the administrators of their predecessors, they assigned village chieftainships to the newcomers. They might also settle them in independent hamlets and furnish them with wives and slaves. For chiefs in this category, kinship did play an initial role in the accession to power; but since they were not related to the district chief, they never gained noble status. Socially, they were comparable to chiefs who were former nobles; as in the latter's case, their kinship ties with the administrators at Ouagadougou gradually lost their significance.

There were yet other kinds of chiefs or men who rated the title Naba 634
in Mossi districts. They included: the descendants of aboriginal chiefs, the chiefs of alien groups, and the chiefs of the Mossi refugee groups that had left other districts because of disputes over the nam. In districts where there were large groups of the autochthonous Ninisi, there were Ninisi "chiefs"; in most cases, however, these "chiefs" were really the senior Tengsobadamba of the villages. In most other districts, the sole Ninisi "chief" was the official Tengsoba of the district chief. This man had ritual power but no political power. Yet he was called Naba, because the Mossi thought that all persons in positions of command or prominence must be named chiefs. Villages made up of aliens (Busansi, Gurunsi, Yarse, and occasionally Fulani) had chiefs in the true sense of the word. These men were granted access to the nam by the district chiefs, and their [778] [428]

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[428] power and authority were inherited by their families in the same manner as among Mossi lineages.

634 The last important category of Mossi chiefs included men who ruled over slave and serf villages. These men were themselves the descendants
622 of slaves and serfs, for no free-born Mossi were placed in such posts. Needless to say, these chiefs were never lineally or collaterally related to the
[602] district chiefs, and therefore were never nobles. However, they might be affinally related to district chiefs, and in such cases the relationship was often of some political value.

It must be emphasized that once a man was made chief, he was respected, if not honored, by all the people of the district. In some districts, the Dapore Naba and the Baglere Naba, chiefs of two categories of serfs, were among the most valued assistants of the Kombere Naba. The only
[565] people who sometimes refused to honor the village chiefs were the nakomce,
[778] who were the holders of the district nam. Nevertheless, they were censored by the Kombere if they were disrespectful to his subordinates. No district chief could allow his government to be jeopardized by the maltreatment of persons who served it. In any conflict between the nam and the kin group, the supremacy of the nam was always maintained.

613 Every Mossi ruler, whether he held the nam of a kingdom, principality,
631 district, or village, was *ipso facto* also *Boodkasma* (literally, "family head")
622 of the local segment of his boodoo. The word boodoo refers to patrilineal groups that anthropologists would normally call clans, maximal lineages, major lineages, or minor lineages. The Mossi do not make any terminological distinction between these levels of their segmentary lineage system. Nevertheless, they recognize and use the status differences between these units to limit the access of each unit to the corporate assets of the boodoo. Their major social distinction is drawn between the minor lineage, which is also called boodoo, and its component minimal lineages. Each minimal-
[596] lineage unit is called a *babissi* (literally, "father's brother"), and is really a large extended family composed of relatives who had a common ancestor, three, four, or at most five generations ago.

643 The Mogho Naba, for example, was head of his babissi as well as ex
613 officio head of the entire royal clan. Those rulers who claimed equality with him claimed that they, not he, were the true heads of the royal clan and the "direct" descendants of Ouedraogo and Oubri. As a function of their political position, the many princes and district chiefs were heads of their own babissi and of the maximal lineage to which their babissi be-
631 longed. Like the Mogho Naba, they were the ex officio heads of all members
613 of their boodoo who lived in their territory and who claimed descent from the same royal ancestors,

the same royal ancestors. A Mossi village chief was likewise the head of his babissi and ex officio head of all the other babissi in his village that belonged to his boodoo. As the official Boodkasma of his village's ruling lineage, the village chief held junior or senior status in relation to other village chiefs of the same boodoo who were also the Boodkasemdamba of their respective lineage segments.

Possession of the nam influenced the pattern of seniority within lineages and lineage segments. In most cases, seniority was based on age and generation. Thus, the oldest man of the oldest generation was the Boodkasma, and his office devolved upon the next oldest man when he died. But within the ruling lineages and their segments, the man who held the nam, whether young or old, was automatically senior to all others. This does not mean that these ruling lineages did not recognize age and generational seniority. For example, whenever a chief died and sovereignty returned to the lineage as a corporate group, the senior noble of the senior generation became the acting Boodkasma and lineage head. Like all Boodkasemdamba, he managed the affairs of his group, but only until a new chief was elected. The new Boodkasma, however, sometimes delegated some of his social rights and ritual obligations to this elder, who was often regarded as the unofficial or semi-official Boodkasma of his lineage. Similarly, the senior nobles of all segments of the ruling lineage were also regarded as Boodkasemdamba. Because they were so regarded and because of the role they played, these men seldom came into conflict with the district chief. He gave them a certain amount of leeway in dealing with the everyday affairs of their group. It was understood by all, however, that nothing should jeopardize the most important asset of the lineage—the nam. Therefore, the chief was obeyed in all important matters involving the noble lineage of the district. In such matters he listened to no one; for, as one district chief said, "Once I have received the nam from the Mogho Naba, no man in this district stands above me!"

This dominance of political relations over social relations was made clear by the behavior of commoners toward ruling nobles on the one hand, and of nobles among themselves on the other. Commoners showed greater respect and deference toward members of the ruling babissi than toward persons belonging to other noble babissi. Thus, they were more respectful to the district chief's father's brothers, his siblings, and his children than to his more distant relatives. Within the noble lineage itself, everyone had to respect the chief as the holder of the nam, but otherwise the generational principle of respect and deference was maintained. The eldest nobleman of the eldest generation received deference from all others (excluding the

554 613 571 778 chief), and the hierarchy of respect descended to the youngest nobleman of the youngest generation. Very often, the full-grown son and presumed heir of the district chief had to kneel in respect to a distantly related younger man of an elder generation. Of course, this deference ceased if and when he became chief. If he did not receive the nam, he continued to show deference to all his lineage elders. This distinction between nam and boodoo was [578] a source of potential conflict within the ruling lineages. The people usually accepted the implications of both principles, but when they did not, there were dynastic quarrels and territorial secessions.

622 613 554 778 571 The age and generational principles also operated within non-noble ruling lineages, but here too they were often complicated by the possession of the nam. Those village chiefs who had lost their noble status but retained the nam acted as official Boodkasemdamba of their local lineage segments and had considerable influence over their lineage although they did not control all its segments. Each lineage segment had its own Boodkasma, who normally ran its affairs. But because of the importance of the nam in Mossi life, the Boodkasemdamba deferred to the village chief in [565] important matters pertaining to their own boodoo. However, the generational principle was followed within the local boodoo. Almost no one deferred to the children of the village chief, who, after all, were not nakomce.

613 571 778 The situation within commoner lineages that did not hold the nam was quite different. The age and generational principles obtained within the lineage segments of these boodoo, but never *across* the segments, as they did across the babissi. These segments were more autonomous. Each had its own Boodkasma, who looked after it without deferring to anyone. This autonomy was all the more pronounced since the segments of non-noble lineages tended to be scattered throughout a district. They interacted socially and politically only when they were physically close. In any case, in the absence of the nam, the segments of non-noble lineages had no reason to remain together; they tended to lose their hierarchical quality and to become equal and separate.

613 173 778 As would be expected in such circumstances, not all Mossi lineages paid the same attention to their genealogies. Noble lineages kept track of their actual or putative ancestors, whereas non-noble lineages tended to ignore them and to let geographical proximity determine meaningful kinship ties. This loss of interest in exact genealogies was found even among lineages that had lost the nam of a district and with it their nobility, but still retained the nam of a village. Members of the minimal units in such lineages competed actively for the village nam and were interested in fairly recent an-

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cestors. They did not remember how they were related unless they happened to have a common grandfather or great-grandfather who had held the nam. The differential value thus placed on genealogies by the noble and non-noble lineages was due in most cases to the differential access of these lineages to the strategic resources of Mossi society. People who held the nam [554] and belonged to noble lineages enjoyed special claims to goods and services. Those whose lineages did not hold the nam had no such privileges.

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Because Mossi society was basically patrilineal, a man shared in the status and the corporate assets of his patrilineage. Conversely, a man had no access to the status or resources of his mother's patrilineage except for some ritual rights and duties that accrued to him as a *yagenga* (a sister's or daughter's son). These rights and duties included residence in the home of a maternal patrilineage during childhood, attendance at sacrifices to the mother's patrilineal ancestors, the settling of quarrels between maternal kinsmen, and ritual license to seize specific items of property from these relatives. This license dramatized the *lack* of access rather than *freedom* of access to the property of maternal relatives.

[591]

613 778 602 554 [795]

When a man's maternal relatives controlled the nam of the territory in which he lived, he could improve his social and economic position. In many cases, a young man who had gone to live as a "stranger" with a noble uncle or grandfather remained with these relatives. His privilege to remain was sanctioned by the Mossi belief that a boy's maternal ancestors would wreak vengeance on any person who tried to evict him from the village from which his mother had been "sent into the bush" (given away as a wife). By using various strategies and subterfuges, the "stranger" obtained wives through his maternal relatives and used their land and other resources. After several generations the lineal descendants of the "stranger" frequently became indistinguishable from their maternal relatives, although such cases were not often formally acknowledged. Whether these "sisters' children" ever managed to obtain the nam of their mother's patrilineage is a moot point, because in theory they could not. Yet, also by Mossi definition, a man could never inherit rights and duties in his mother's patrilineage; however, it is known that this did happen. It is possible that the close check kept by the ruling lineage on its genealogy made usurpation impossible. Yet I know of several cases in which candidates for chiefship feared competition from men whose descent actually barred them from the nam.

The son of a nobleman and a commoner woman seldom attached himself permanently to his maternal patrilineage, although he retained all of his customary rights, privileges, and duties in it. Occasionally, noblemen did attach themselves to their maternal relatives, but those who did had

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usually been banished from their patrilineage for some illegal act or had voluntarily left home after a dispute over inheritance of the nam, goods, or women.

The fact that noble lineages often absorbed sisters' sons was only one of the reasons why such lineages survived and expanded, even if only at the expense of other lineages within the local society. Another reason for this growth was that the nobles, possessing the nam and its prerogatives, received more wives than the commoners. They had more children and thus multiplied more rapidly. Mossi lineages were generally exogamous through their whole depth, but exogamy became increasingly mandatory as the segments became smaller. Marriage within a maximal lineage was permitted only when some of its members had moved so far away from its original locality that the original ties were either forgotten or ignored. The Mossi have myths in which the lineage founder gives his overly numerous descendants permission to marry certain of their relatives. Even so, if a marriage was actually found to have occurred between distant relatives, appropriate sacrifices had to be made to the ancestors.

Marriage was also forbidden between persons who could trace a common maternal ancestor. But because the time depth here was very shallow, total bilateral exogamy was practiced to a depth of only four or five generations. Of course, the differential concern with genealogies between those who had access to the nam and those who did not, had an effect on the extent to which exogamy was practiced.

Most Mossi marriages were based on an exchange of women between two lineages linked by a long-term series of reciprocal exchanges of goods and services. Women were regarded as the most valuable part of this system. In theory, only the Boodkasma of a babissi had the right to give a woman as a wife to another lineage. However, the initiators of the reciprocal relations between lineage segments were often babissi heads, Yirisobadamba (heads of nuclear families), or individual lineage members. When a man from one lineage "made friends" with a member of another and rendered him a service or received a favor from him, their respective lineages were considered to be involved. The corporate nature of the lineage segment was acknowledged by all persons engaged in reciprocal relations, and the relations between two individuals were seen as relations between their lineages.

When a man wished to give a daughter to a friend as a wife, he had to consult his Boodkasma, who then gave the woman to the friend's Boodkasma. The latter accepted the woman as a wife for the lineage rather than for the man involved. The lineage retained its rights *in gene-*

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habited by Yarse, people of Mandingo origin who had been assimilated by the Mossi. There were no Fulani in Nobere, even though some lived in nearby districts. But in Pinse village there lived people called Simili-Mossi, who claimed descent from Fulani herdsmen and Mossi women. Basbedo village was inhabited and ruled by people of Busansi origin. They claimed that their ancestors had fled from famine and other hardships in Busansi country and had been granted haven by Naba Biligo. The people who lived in the two saghse of Nab'tenga called Dapore (Dapobi) and Baglere (Bangare) were serfs of diverse non-Mossi origin. Saghse or compounds of Gurunsi slaves were found close to the dwellings of nobles and village chiefs throughout the district.

The number of saghse in the villages of Nobere district varied according to the size of the village and the pattern of nam inheritance within the major lineage segment that ruled the village. The saka itself housed a minor-lineage segment. The larger the village's minor lineage segment and the greater this group's genealogical depth, the more numerous were its component segments and thus its saghse. The proliferation of saghse and minor-lineage segments within the ruling lineage of a village was dependent primarily on possession of the nam. As soon as a man received the nam, he obtained control over a large amount of goods and services. He was then in a position to obtain many wives for himself and his immediate relatives, and as a result his minimal lineage grew rapidly. In time this group became so large that it split from its brother babissi within the saka, and formed a new saka of its own. Finally, this babissi became a minor lineage in its own saka, in segmental opposition to the other babissi and minor lineages within the other saghse. If the descendants of one man retained the nam for about three generations, their lineage segment and saka grew larger and in time cast off its own junior segments. However, if the segment lost the nam to a man of another babissi and saka, it ceased to proliferate. Some such groups even declined and disappeared by fusing with other local segments of the same lineage. Here is how the system worked in Barkago village of Nobere district.

Barkago itself was founded sometime in the dim past by a son of Naba Biligo. It had an area of eight or ten square miles and a population of about 650 when the French arrived in 1896. Its boundaries were set by such natural phenomena as clumps of trees, hills, and ravines. The village itself included five distinct saghse separated by footpaths, hills, rocks, and ravines, and an area of wasteland (*weogho*). Three of the saghse, Natenga ("chief's land"), Godin, and Kedpalago, were inhabited by the minor segments of the boodoo of Naba Biligo. Here is how this came about. After

the original segment of the ruling Biligo lineage had lived in Barkago for some time, it divided into two minor lineages and settled in two saghse, Natenga and Godin. A noble from Godin possessed the nam, but it eventually passed to a noble from Natenga. The new chief then founded a new saka called Kedpalago because he wanted more living space for his own children. As a result, the minor lineage of Natenga now had two babissi living in two saghse. The minor lineage of Godin subsequently declined in size and prestige. The only evidence of its former importance was that its eldest male continued to make separate sacrifices to his own chiefly ancestors, even though the more recent holders of the nam made sacrifices to all former chiefs. These independent sacrifices were made in spite of the fact that this minor lineage kept growing smaller because its male members left to live elsewhere or to join maternal patrilineages with higher status. The sacrifices were expected to cease only if and when the minor lineage were to disappear with the incorporation of the widows and orphans of its last surviving males into the other Biligo groups of the village and district. Of course, if the Godin minor lineage had regained the nam, it undoubtedly would have experienced a rebirth and renewal of strength. It might have attracted its daughter's sons, and even aliens who would have lived in its saghse as they did in those of the ruling lineage segments.

A fourth saka, Nakomgo ("we hunger after the nam"), was inhabited by the noble descendants of Naba Ngado, the district chief who had replaced the descendant of Naba Biligo of Nobere. Since these nobles traced their descent from two full brothers, Kouliga and Kongo, they formed two related minor lineages with five component minimal lineages. The compounds of the two babissi of the Kouliga minor lineage were separate but contiguous. Near them were the compounds of the three babissi of the Kongo minor lineage. Scattered about in the Nakomgo saka were compounds of sisters' sons, strangers, and nobles' slaves.

The people of Narila, the fifth saka of Barkago, were members of the aboriginal Ninisi population, and thus furnished the village's earth-priest. He made sacrifices to the earth shrines in the village, gave ritual permission for building compounds and digging graves, and took control of the village during the period between the death of a chief and the accession of another. Scattered throughout the various saghse were compounds inhabited by people of serf, slave, or refugee origin.

Of all the groups within the village, the Ngado people kept the most exact genealogies. They did so because one of the segments of their maximal lineage held the district nam, and as nobles they had theoretical access to it. Once they had lost the nam of the district, the descendants of Biligo

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also lost much of their interest in preserving their genealogies. Their local 613
lineage segment, which controlled the village nam, still showed interest in 798
its genealogy, but the people of Godin did not quite remember how they were related to the ruling lineage segment. Several times in the recent history of Barkago (and other villages), the men who were given the village nam had to be recalled from distant villages where they were living with maternal patrilineages. So relatively unimportant was possession of the village nam without concomitant noble status that after Naba Ngado took over, the local Biligo people began to ignore all local genealogical records except descent from Biligo. The Ninisi people had the least reason to be interested in their genealogy, and they simply ignored it. They had been separated from the other Ninisi groups in the district for so long that they did not even forbid marriage into those groups.

In villages such as Barkago, the existence of several lineage groupings 613
and families of strangers facilitated local marriages. But in villages with 621
fewer lineage groups, the time came when all groups were so closely linked by marriage and affinal alliances that for all practical purposes the village became an exogamous unit. By 1956, this process had reached such an advanced stage in Barkago that hardly any marriages took place between the Ninisi and Biligo local lineage segments. Both groups were permitted to marry the local descendants of Ngado, because the latter were more recent arrivals in the village. These marriages were of great significance to all villagers because they linked the nobles and the commoners in a series of exchanges. Moreover, because the groups were linked through sisters' sons [565] with special privileges in both groups, problems deriving from status differences were more easily solved. [606] Even the most arrogant noble was often constrained by ancestral sanctions to maintain amicable relations with his [607] in-laws.

The Biligo lineage of Barkago contracted marriages with the other, nonrelated groups within and without the district. The Ngado people did likewise. Whether these nobles were able to marry noble women of other districts is a moot point. Owing to distance and politics, no such marriages are known to have occurred, and no one seems to know whether they were permissible. The Ninisi, who had always been commoners, had the largest marriage circle of all the village groups. They were able to marry nobles, commoners, and the Ninisi of the district and other districts.

The inhabitants of a Mossi village built their houses and cultivated their 423
crops on land the village chief had granted to their respective lineages. 613
Since the royal lineage, by right of conquest, controlled all of Mossi country, the rights of usufruct of a lineage depended ultimately on the Mogho [643]

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634 A man usually heard about his nomination through his "friends" (usu-
645 ally pages) long before the Baloum Naba had received instructions from the
Ouidi Naba to summon him to the palace. Nevertheless, protocol demanded
[576] that he show proper humility and surprise at receiving the news, and that
he be tardy in arriving at court. When he arrived, he was taken before the
Ouidi Naba, who asked him three times, "Did your [father] say who should
be his successor?" To this the nominee replied each time, "No, Naba! My
[father] did not say who should replace him. You may appoint anyone you
wish, even if he is a blind man or a leper." The Ouidi Naba then asked the
candidate, "Which of the nakomce do the district people prefer?" The can-
didate's standard reply was, "That is the affair of the Mogho Naba. The
people will accept anyone, even a blind man or a leper." This question was
asked three times, and each time the candidate gave the same answer. The
Ouidi Naba then declared, "The Mogho Naba has given you the nam of
your [father]." Upon hearing these words, the Samande Kasma (head ser-
vant of the palace) came up to the new chief and removed his sheepskin
mantle, while the samande-kamba took their heavy batons and chased away
the other pretenders who, having heard about the election, had come to the
palace. The samande-kamba then bore the new chief on their shoulders to
the *tomboko* (a circle filled with sand in the courtyard). To the accompani-
ment of the royal airs played by musicians under the direction of the Ben-
dere Naba, he took sand and poured it on his head as a sign of submission
to the Mogho Naba. The ruler's wives and the courtiers surrounded the
new chief, raised their hands over his head, and shouted their praises to the
Mogho Naba. Then the new chief showed his respect for all the ministers
[576] and important men, in order of rank, by falling on his knees before them in
the traditional Mossi salute. He then went to the Bendere Naba's shed,
where he stood in the middle of the musicians and made a speech, the leit-
motiv of which became his ruling title. The present chief of Nobere, whose
name is Naba Boulga ("Well"), says that he made the following speech
when he was nominated: "I am like a well; he who opens me will profit
greatly." After the new chief had thus "taken a name," he came to the
zongo to "drink the namtibo."

634 The drinking of the namtibo was the highlight of the election ceremony
[778] because it strengthened the link between the new chief and his ancestors
and provided the ritual sanction for loyalty, obedience, and service to the
Mogho Naba.[46] After the new chief had drunk the namtibo, he called upon
the ancestors to kill him if he should ever betray the Mogho Naba or fail to
[641] render him homage and faithful service. This oath was the sign for the un-
successful candidates to pledge their allegiance to the new chief. Then they

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634 The Kombere Naba, as the person who had "eaten the nam" of the district, was infused with some of the power and authority of the Mogho Naba and had the right to use force to maintain this power and authority. He was [576] respected, and people uncovered their heads and removed their slippers in his presence. Unlike the Mogho Naba, the Kombere Naba was permitted to eat with his peers. But whenever he drank the musicians made a roar-like sound with their instruments, and when he sneezed his attendants clapped. These rituals were rigidly adhered to because the Kombere Naba was readily accessible to the populace and might easily have lost their respect if he behaved in an undignified manner. He emphasized his social distance from them by never visiting the market place, and he did not go anywhere without a large entourage.

The Kombere Naba performed ceremonies and duties that were similar to but simpler than those of the Mogho Naba, and he was surrounded by officers bearing the same titles as those in the capital. But, as will be shown later, these officials had fewer and sometimes different duties than the courtiers at Ouagadougou. Some district chiefs had as many pages and wives as the Mogho Naba, but this was as much a result of their own desires as of their popularity with the local people. The death and funeral rites of a [766] district chief were not as elaborate as those of a Mogho Naba. They included the circumambulation of the chief's compound by the principal heir and [788] heiress, the symbolic reign of the Napoko, and the banishment of the Kourita.[41]

634 Every district chief, whether a Mogho Naba's vassal or a Dim's subordi-
778 nate, was empowered to bestow the nam on his own subordinates. These [622] might be other district chiefs; but most often they were village chiefs. The circumstances under which a Kombere Naba received the authority to grant the nam to another Kombere Naba were usually complex and sprang from rebellions and dynastic changes. Once granted, this authority was seldom revoked, but the district chief had to report to his immediate superior, a Mogho Naba or Dim, whenever he wished to confer the nam upon another district chief.

634 In some cases the Mogho Naba invested a district chief himself, and
175 afterward placed him under the control of a neighboring district chief. For
669 example, the chiefs of two districts, Vooko and Nobila, were always installed
778 by the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou, but were supervised by the Nobere district chief. This practice dates back to the civil war involving Mogho Naba Sagha I (ca. 1787–1803), in which chiefs of Vooko and Nobere sided with the loser. The Mogho Naba executed the local rebels and placed one of his sons in Nobere. He then divided Vooko into two districts, placing a younger son in the one he called Nobila (little Nobere) and subjecting him

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to the control of his brother at Nobere. The other district, still called Vooko but now half its former size, was given to a descendant of its deposed ruler. The relationship between these two rulers and the Nobere Naba was that of vassals and lord. They did not stand up in the presence of the Nobere Naba, but knelt or sat on the ground and uncovered their heads in respect to him. The Nobere Naba traditionally appointed the village chiefs in the Vooko and Nobila districts; however, he sometimes granted that right to the two district chiefs. Furthermore, the traditional provincial administrator could not transmit any orders to those two district chiefs without first notifying the Nobere Naba. In their everyday affairs the two chiefs were autonomous, but the Nobere Naba could challenge and countermand all their actions. Actually, he did seem to exercise greater control over Vooko than over Nobila. One may even say that the relationship between the Nobere district chief and the Vooko chief was like that between the Mogho Naba and his district chiefs, and that the relationship between the Nobere Naba and the Nobila Naba was comparable to the one between the Mogho Naba and the Dimdamba. We have seen that the Dimdamba claimed equality with the Mogho Naba because of their alleged descent from a putative common ancestor. The Nobere Naba was actually more closely related to the Nobila Naba than to the Vooko Naba, and his behavior toward them reflected this fact. In both cases, the relationships involved were determined by the concept of joint possession of the nam by the ruling family.

A district chief was not required to notify his superior when he wished to confer the nam upon a village chief. In this choice he was completely autonomous and subject only to tradition. The fact is that on the district and village levels, traditions were more frequently modified in the face of practical political and socio-economic considerations. This occurred primarily because the district chief had closer relations with persons who possessed goods and services or who controlled them directly than did the chiefs on higher levels. Secondly, he was often under great temptation to allow presents or bribes to affect his choice of subordinate chiefs.

When a Tenga Naba died, the district chief permitted control of the village to revert to its Tengsoba. If there was none, the village was "given" to the eldest man among the aboriginal Ninisi lineages or to the eldest member of the ruling lineage segment. However, none of these persons was considered anything but a trustee of the village, and even when the trustee was a potential candidate for the nam, the Mossi did not feel that this man had any advantage over his competitors. Whoever held control of the village was held responsible for its affairs by the district administrator until the new chief was elected.

Competition for chieftainship on this level was very keen because of the

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VIII

RELIGION AND GOVERNMENT

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642 RELIGION AND RITUAL played an important role in supporting and preserv-
[769] ing the Mossi political system. Religio-political ceremonies were centered
[776] around the ancestors (Keemse) and the earth deities (Tengkouga); the otiose high god (Ouennam or Naba Zid Ouende) had a very minor role.

769 The political importance of ancestor veneration lay in the fact that every Mossi chief claimed Nyennega of Dagomba and her descendants, Ouedra-
642 ogo and Oubri, as his ancestors. Furthermore, possession of the amulets of
● 778 Rialle, Nyennega's husband and Ouedraogo's father, legitimized possession of the nam. In order to rule, a Moaga had either to be a member of a royal
[613] lineage still in possession of the nam or to have received the nam from such a lineage. No Moaga ever tried to usurp the nam of a kingdom or princi-
669 pality without trying to steal the royal amulets at the same time; nor, if his
778 rebellion was successful, did he ever fail to claim that he had stolen the
642 amulets or had received them as a gift. Thus Yadega, who rebelled against
769 his father's brother, Mogho Naba Koudoumie, and founded the Yatenga kingdom, declared that he had obtained Rialle's amulets. He claimed that they had been given to him by his sister, Pabre, who had stolen them from Ouagadougou and had thus deprived that kingdom of any legitimate sanctions for power. Thus, when the Yatenga people declare that they are equal to Ouagadougou, they add that the only "amulets" that still legitimize the nam of the Ouagadougou dynasty are the droppings left behind by Pabre's horse as she fled northward.

769 Similarly, all the princes who founded principalities and proclaimed
642 their independence of Ouagadougou defended their action on the grounds
643 that they, being as close to the main line of descent as the Mogho Naba, were also entitled to rule. The younger sons of deceased Mogho Nanamse
[631] who were banished from the capital as Kouritadamba and who subse-
[634] quently became provincial Dimdamba also stressed their relationship to the royal ancestors. Even those district chiefs whose ancestors had prob-

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ably been younger sons sent to rule in conquered territories claimed that their ancestors were direct descendants of Ouedraogo and Oubri. Thus, to the Mossi, the power to rule was intimately linked to closeness of descent from the royal ancestors. The supernatural power of these ancestors, and the vigilance they were believed to maintain over the affairs of their descendants, were regarded as important factors in Mossi government.

From the moment when the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou or any other Mossi ruler "drank the namtibo" and thereby received the nam of his ancestors, he had the right—indeed, the duty—to offer sacrifices to these ancestors in the name of his subjects. Every night, throughout Mossi country, the Baloum Naba of every ruler performed an act of supplication (Kwaga Basgha) to the ancestors. He beseeched them to protect the subjects of their descendants through the night, to maintain peace in Mossi country, and to grant health, children, and prosperity to all Mossi. This nightly ceremony was climaxed yearly by an elaborate ritual in honor of the ancestors (called the Basgha in some areas, and the Pelegha, Filigha, or Kinkiriga in others) that began at the highest levels of the government and ultimately linked every Mossi chief and lineage head.

The Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou, like the other Mogho Nanamse and Dimdamba, initiated this ceremony in his own kingdom. His celebration, called "M'barengma," was held at the end of the Mossi agricultural year and after the Soretasgho. Thus, the M'barengma was a New Year's festival in thanksgiving for good crops, as well as the annual Feast of the Dead. A few weeks before the first moon of the new year (the *ki-basgha* or *ki-pelegha*), the Mogho Naba ordered his soghondamba and samande-kamba to clean up the palace buildings and courtyards—an activity intended to notify the ever-vigilant ancestors that preparations were being made to offer sacrifices in their honor. A short time later, the Mogho Naba gave grain from his fields to the Pughtiema so she could prepare millet water for the sacrifices. Present-day Mossi insist that part of the grain came from the first ears harvested that year and part from those of the previous year. This was supposed to symbolize the continuity between crops, mirroring the continuity between the ruler and his ancestors. A few days before the principal ceremony, the Mogho Naba ordered the Larhalle Naba to pour millet water and sacrifice chickens on the graves of former Mogho Nanamse.

Shortly before the ki-basgha moon appeared, the ruler had to leave his palace at night to elude the ancestors, who had been attracted by the preparations and who were expected to be angry when they discovered that the sacrifices were not yet ready. The unjust ruler feared ancestral sanctions; the just ruler that his ancestors might want him to join them. One night he

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went to the home of his Samande Naba, the next to the Gounghin ward, then to Baghin, and subsequently to the homes of other officials. He could not remain long at one place for fear that the ancestors might find him. Every morning, however, when the cock's crow heralded the ancestors' departure, he returned to his palace.

The principal part of the Basgha ceremony was performed on the night when the crescent moon appeared. On that night more than any other, the ruler had to seek refuge elsewhere, because the ancestors visited the palace to accept the sacrifices offered to them by the Pughtiema with the help of the Baloum Naba and the chief eunuch of the harem. The exact nature of this ceremony is unknown, but it is known that the Baloum Naba used the sacred namtibo along with animals and millet-flour water provided by the Pughtiema and the chief eunuch for propitiatory sacrifices to the ancestors. The aim of these sacrifices was to induce the ancestors to grant good crops, health, happiness, and children to their descendants, and to "increase the force of the namtibo."[1] At cock's crow the Bendere Naba sprinkled a flour infusion called *gningmassem* ("water of health") on the palace courtyard so that the ruler might walk upon it when he returned. The Mogho Naba was greeted with drumbeats and escorted to the palace gate. His entry into the antechamber marked the close of this ceremony, and the people retired until later in the day.

The elaborate public ceremony of the Basgha took place in mid-morning. The ministers and important officials, clad in ceremonial garb, arrived at the palace quite early. When the Mogho Naba appeared, the Bendere Naba recited the official genealogy, starting with Ouedraogo and Oubri and ending with elaborate praises of the current ruler. The ministers and their entourage then saluted the Mogho Naba and wished him *Ne tarbo,* which means a happy and prosperous new year for himself and the country. He, in turn, took advantage of this occasion to give many presents to his retinue, and his wives distributed huge amounts of food and drink to the assembly until everyone was satiated. Then all the officials except the Bendere Naba and his group paid homage to the Mogho Naba and departed. The musicians remained at court most of the day, beating their drums and singing praises to their sovereign and his illustrious ancestors. The royal pages kept them well supplied with food and beer, and now and again during the day the ruler sent them gifts among which robes were often included. Whenever the drummers received a gift, they slipped into a rhythmic pattern that signified: *Tompaongo, Wend'kaouss' Naba niore, Wenne wilig vinre,* or, "We bow in thanksgiving for your gift. May God give the ruler long life. May God grant us to be alive next year so that we may do this again." The

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climax of this gift-giving came when the ruler sent the Bendere Naba about 19,000 cowries and a slave.[8] This ceremony terminated at nightfall.

The close of the Mogho Naba's Basgha heralded the start of similar ceremonies throughout his kingdom. The heads of the other Mossi kingdoms and the Dimdamba were free to hold their own Basgha when they wished; but the Ouagadougou ruler's own subjects, including the provincial ministers, district chiefs, village chiefs, and lineage heads, apparently were not. One reason for this, aside from respect for the ruler, was that the important officials' head wives had to wait for the yeast (*dabili*) from the Mogho Naba's beer before they could prepare the sacrificial offerings for their husbands' ancestors. This dabili went from district to district or to several districts at once, depending on whether the chiefs celebrated Basgha at the same time or successively. Thus, the dabili from the capital united all the wives of the royal clan, and made for both a ritual continuity in the veneration of all ancestors and a strengthening of religious and political bonds.

The Basgha ceremonies on the district level were much less elaborate than those held at Ouagadougou, but just as important. The district chief, too, had his buildings repaired and his grain distributed for sacrifices for the ancestors. A few days before the actual ceremony, he ordered the Gande Naba to pour millet water on the graves of recently deceased chiefs and to sacrifice chickens there. As in Ouagadougou, these sacrifices were offered to induce the chiefly ancestors to grant the villagers health, food, and children. Unlike the Mogho Naba, most district chiefs did not ritually hide from their ancestors for several nights prior to the ceremony. Some of them did change their sleeping place within the compound every night, and the court people always slept indoors during this period. On the night of the Basgha itself, however, the district chiefs did not sleep in their compounds.

As in Ouagadougou, the Pughtiema performed the main ceremony by pouring millet water as a libation to the ancestors who visited her hut. She was assisted by the Baloum Naba, who had possession of the namtibo. Apparently, the district chief remained in hiding and took no part in the ceremony. But he was the main figure in the morning ceremony, which differed little from that of Ouagadougou. In some districts the Tengsoba performed a public sacrifice to the ancestors. He was given the namtibo—sacred objects that had belonged to former district chiefs—and poured libations and sacrificed chickens to all of the chief's ancestors. He also prayed both to these ancestors and to his own on the chief's behalf, and beseeched them to grant long life and happiness to the district population. He also declared that the sacred objects would seek out and kill any enemies of the local ruler, wherever they might be. Once this ritual had been com-

pleted, the remainder of the ceremony followed the pattern of the Ouagadougou ritual.

During the weeks that followed, the village chiefs and the heads of the larger lineage segments all offered sacrifices to their ancestors. The Pughtiema of each prominent local administrator, chief, or lineage head prepared and poured the millet water as a libation to the ancestors. Whenever possible, each of these personages invited musicians to sing praises to his ancestors. He dressed in his best robe and sat outside his hut to receive presents from his relatives, friends, and subjects, along with their best wishes for the new year, and for long life and prosperity. In return he gave them kola nuts, beer, and food. Thus, in celebrating the Basgha, all the Mossi were united in prayers and supplications to the ancestors, upon whom rested the future of their country and the successful reign of the descendants of Ouedraogo and Oubri.

The earth deity, Tenga, held the central place in the second major religio-political ceremony which linked all Mossi. This ritual, called *Tense* (from *tenga*, "earth") and sometimes *Naba Oubri ma koure* ("the anniversary of the funeral of Mogho Naba Oubri's mother"), was so important to Mossi cohesion that it was banned by the French, and as a result its main features are now unclear. According to tradition, Naba Oubri loved Poughtoenga, his Ninisi mother, so much, and was so pleased with the elaborate funeral he gave her, that he decided to repeat this ceremony each year in the hope that his subjects would be blessed with the bountiful crops and herds which had made the first one possible. Curiously enough, Oubri's mother was not a central figure in the Tense celebration. Instead, great stress was placed on the fructifying powers of the earth and on the importance of the royal ancestors in Mossi life. The juxtaposition and association of the earth deity with Oubri's mother has important implications for the Mossi political organization. Mossi tradition holds that a Ninisi woman was the ancestress of the Mossi of Ouagadougou. Her people probably celebrated the Tense as a fertility rite to their earth goddess, Tenga. The Mossi apparently took over the ceremony and used it both as a fertility rite and as a memorial festival, thus symbolically uniting the conquerors and the conquered.[3]

In contrast to the Basgha, no special date appears to have been set for the celebration of the Tense. It was held sometime before the crops were sowed, but according to Tauxier it was not celebrated at all in Ouagadougou when the previous year's harvest had been poor.[4] Before setting the date for the festival, the Mogho Naba summoned the Larhalle Naba and ordered him to have sacrifices made on the graves of all former rulers. This minister

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28

between the living and the dead," but also to strengthen the political bonds between the Mogho Naba and his chiefs, down to the humblest elder of a Mossi compound.

In addition to the Basgha and Tense, the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou appears to have offered another yearly sacrifice to Tenga. Each year, after the Basgha, the Mogho Naba, the Baloum Naba, and a large entourage reportedly visited a large earth shrine called Tantibo in the vicinity of Sabatenga to offer propitiatory sacrifices in the name of all the people. When the royal party arrived at Sabatenga, they were joined by the Sabatenga Naba and his Tengsoba. The group proceeded to the foot of the sacred hill, and here the monarch dismounted, took off his bonnet and shoes, and climbed the hill. He made the customary Mossi salute at the shrine and looked on silently while the Tengsoba sacrificed animals and poured libations of millet beer and millet water in supplication for the health and prosperity of the Mogho Naba and all his people.[7]

When evil befell Mossi country in spite of the annual sacrifices to the ancestors and to the earth deity, the Mogho Naba had to offer additional sacrifices. If the country was plagued by drought, the ruler went to an earth shrine in Ouagadougou itself, called "Kom be paspanga" (literally, "water is strong there"), for a sacrifice. Moreover, he might order all his district and village chiefs to perform similar sacrifices to the earth shrines within their territories. In Nobere district, for instance, the district chief went to the village called Barkago, where, standing barefoot and bareheaded on the hilly shrine known as Beta, he ordered the local village chief and the Tengsoba to offer sacrifices for rain and good health.

It is generally believed by the Mossi that when the French attacked Ouagadougou, the deposed Mogho Naba Wobogo made sacrifices to earth shrines. Tradition has it that he sacrificed a black cock, a black ram, a black donkey, and a black slave on a large hill near the White Volta River, beseeching the earth goddess to drive the French away and to destroy the traitor Mazi whom they had placed upon the throne. When Mazi died, the Mossi people believed that he had received his just deserts from the earth shrine for treason. The French believe that Mazi was poisoned.[8]

The district and village chiefs, like the Mogho Naba, were required to make propitiatory sacrifices to the earth shrines on behalf of their subjects. Before taking office, a district chief was ritually shown the major earth shrines in his territory, and he could not ignore their existence and their need for sacrifices. In a country with major local variations in rainfall and localized animal and human epidemics, the Tengsobadamba of stricken areas always called upon the local chiefs to help them propitiate disgruntled spirits.

776 The naba does so more than anyone else; on the Day of the Dead
782 (basra) he always makes sacrifices there, and usually the village elders accompany him.

776 A village may have several tangandé /sic/, but the protective
778 animal or animals—most often there are two—are the same in all the sacred groves, of which there are as many as there are tangandé /sic/. Nothing may be taken from a sacred grove; everything in it is sacred. No wood may be cut down, and it is forbidden even to gather dead wood which has fallen by itself. By the same token, the dry grass may not be set afire, not even in the area around the grove. If all precautions have been duly taken and fire nevertheless spreads to the sacred grove, nothing can be done and the village people are not held responsible. On the other hand, outsiders are prevented, by force if necessary, from taking anything whatever from the sacred grove. If the outsider is powerful and cannot be restrained, expiatory sacrifices are offered after his departure.

776 The tangandé is thus a guardian animal, and yet some tangamma
754 retaliate by afflicting the guilty party with diseases. If one of the sorcerers who eat souls (seuya) offers gifts to a tangandé, the latter will help him and refuse to restore the soul which has been entrusted to it, unless more substantial gifts are forthcoming. One may pray to a tangandé and make a vow, for example, promise it a goat or sheep if it kills a designated enemy. The goat is purchased pending the enemy's death. Sometimes the tangandé takes its time and
[781] several years go by. The spirit is chided and told to hurry, and finally decides to do away with the person in question. Then the goat is sacrificed.

776 Some people say that all tangamma come from the Fada N'Gourma
778 region, where the father of all tangamma is to be found. It is the sorcerer's task to point out the tangamma and the place of their
787 residence. Once, for example, a village had just been founded. The elders had found a piece of ground propitious to agriculture, in the vicinity of water, and had built their huts. At the beginning /84/ of the winter season, when the time came for sowing, they shared out the neighboring bush and proceeded to lay out their fields. One day a leopard driven out of its lair took to flight before their eyes and repaired to a thicket. Immediately the people were called, the thicket surrounded and searched thoroughly. No leopard was found. On the following day the same episode took place in the same spot. This happened three times, and every time it proved impossible to

645
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to the Mogho Naba: "Since I have come to you, give the first rank to this man. I will show him what he must do to please you. He will be the Ouidi Naba."

A man from Tansobongo, having heard that the Ouidi Naba was living in the greatest ease, came to see him. He, too, was a handsome youth. He was presented to the Mogho Naba (Naba Oubri) by the Gounga Naba who proposed the young man's appointment as second minister, the Larrhallé Naba, and reserved for himself the post of third minister.

So it came about that the Gounga Naba is the emperor's third minister.

645 place where there were once many goumsé (gounga, silk-cotton tree); hence, his name.

[126] He is a brother-in-arms of the Tansoba and always accompanied him to war, where he chose death rather than defeat, especially if the Tansoba had been killed.

644 (d) Baloum Naba, the chief steward of the palace and chief servitor of the Mogho Naba. He never goes to war, but remains always at the side of the Mogho Naba. It is his duty to carry out [182] [65] sacrifices, such as killing the chickens or livestock offered to the manes or to the spirits when such sacrifices are prescribed by the soothsayers or other charlatans for the health and well-being of the Mogho Naba.

(e) Kamsaogho Naba, formerly accompanied the Tansoba to [839] war. The Kamsaogho Naba is a eunuch, and for this reason he is commonly called Mogho Naba na poug'tiéma, "first wife of the Mogho Naba."

Other personages (not ministers). (a) Samandé Naba, in charge of all of the people in the outer courtyard of the Mogho Naba and a brother-in-arms of the Larrhallé Naba.

644 687 661 (b) Poé Naba, formerly the confessor for the wives and pages of the Mogho Naba. His duty, carried out by magical practices, was to denounce those wives or persons guilty of treason or of

651 [72] (c) Fishing. Fishing in the larger water holes could take
226 place only by authorization of the canton chiefs. The day on
634 which fishing took place was treated as a holiday. All the young men in the village and their neighbors, even if the latter did not belong to the canton, came out on the day set by the canton chief and fished for the benefit of the naba. All large fish were reserved for him, and only the small ones were left to the fishermen.

This practice still prevails.

776 Other common laws. Many deities are worshipped by the
782 Mossi. Groves, fields, mountains, etc., all have their "god."
661 It often happens that the naba (canton chief), at the behest of the soothsayers, offers an animal. This may be a sheep, a goat, or even a cow, and it is offered to one or another of the deities, either for his personal interests or for those of his people, or perhaps to ask for rain. The naba dispatches some sogoné [servitor] or samand'kamba [people of the outer courtyard] to one of the villages in his canton to find a victim. The animal is taken without its owner having any right to complain or to ask for compensation. Is there not a Mossi saying to the effect, Talagh-gounda
[538] Naba'gninga the serf raises livestock for the benefit of his naba)"?

For sacrifices prescribed for the Mogho Naba, the animals are provided either by the inhabitants of the [73] town of Ouagadougou and its environs or by the canton chiefs.

Labor Service Customarily Required of the Mossi on Behalf of their Chiefs

651 Forced labor was used to cultivate the fields of the naba and to repair or construct their houses.

647 The Mogho Naba. (a) Cultivation of fields. The duty of
651 cultivating the fields of the Mogho Naba fell entirely on the Bilbalsé;
241 the residents of Bilbalogo (section of the Baloum Naba) and on all former servitors and descendants of former servitors. The Kam Naba (chief of the young men), charged with assembling the workers, had a crier announce in all the important markets that on such-and-such a day the Bilbalsé were to assemble in the emperor's

653 considered forced labor since this work is done in the common interest.

[77] Installation of a Market

366 787 782 As in many other circumstances, the Mossi first consult soothsayers when they desire to establish a market. The Moaga [singular of Mossi] is convinced that invisible spirits are everywhere, behind his house, under the trees, in the fields and groves, and even in uninhabited places, so above all he is anxious to obtain the good will of these beings whose anger is fearful. It is, therefore, only after consulting several soothsayers, who use various types of divination (with cowries, stones, sand, etc.), that the village chief has chickens and livestock sacrificed on the site where he wishes to set up the new market. The naba chooses two or three candidates from among his followers, and the soothsayers are required to indicate which of these has the best prospect of good fortune and a promising future. This person will be the one who performs the sacrifice. The victims are furnished, in theory, by the village or canton chief, unless he decides to call on the populace. In this case, a small assessment is made on some of the notables, and the proceeds are used to buy chickens, a goat, or a sheep.

366 782 In any event, the canton chief is not permitted to appropriate the animals in the villages or sections under his jurisdiction as would be done in the case of sacrifices offered for the general welfare of the country.

The individual chosen by the bagba [soothsayers] presents himself at the site, accompanied by a more or less [78] impressive crowd, depending on the importance of the village. The women bring fritters and other provisions.

The following sacramental words are pronounced: "Ya sida Ting' Naba yeta nan lougoul dagh, Naba zidwendé Bad kom deghin kon zigh tinghin damba, tib kon yaramba, tib regh kon saramba, tiya gnimassem lad ratta, tib regh lass zim-yellé, tiya nogoam la tigue koada soaba lad zoïta." A literal translation follows. "This is true, the canton chief wishes to install a market on this spot. Oh God, the Sun, here are water and animals for zigh tinghin damba (people who died childless), for grandparents and ancestors. We ask

366 for good fortune and health. Prevent all bloodshed in this market.
782 We also fear those who are quarrelsome and those who talk too much, those who provoke disorder." The chicken is the first victim to be sacrificed, and if the offering is accepted, it must have first fallen on its back and only then turned over face downward (this means that the gods of the place will protect the naba and the persons who will frequent the market). Next the goat or sheep is killed.

The new market is opened immediately after the sacrifice. Those present buy the women's fritters. Ordinarily, Mossi markets
[443] are held every three days. The news travels rapidly that such-and-such a village has a market, and thus the business of the market gradually grows.

366 Collection of fees. It is only later on, one or even two years after the installation of his new market and when [79] it is success-
651 ful, that the canton chief appoints a yaguinga (grandson, or, more
[601] accurately in native terms, a sister's son (nephew)or son's son (grandson), of the naba or of a member of his family) or a Gourounsi captive to act as collector of market fees. (We shall list below the various fees for a place in the market as they were collected for the benefit of the naba before the arrival of the French.)

366 Transfer of the market. Upon the death of a naba (the emperor, a vassal chief, or even the chief of the village where the market is held), the market is temporarily set up in another place. In large towns, such as Ouagadougou, for example, there may be as many markets as there are sections. These temporary markets are called kim'dagha (market of the kimsé, that is, of the deceased).

366 When a new naba has been named, the market is moved back
782 to its former site and the reinstallation calls for new sacrifices of fowl and livestock. That was why in 1897, when the market at Ouagadougou was being re-established, the emperor asked the captain who was in command of the post to provide a cow to be sacrificed along with a sheep and a rooster which he himself provided.

Likewise, whenever a hyena has run through the market (its
366 presence is discovered either by the tracks left by the animal or by
825 consulting the soothsayers), just as happens when a naba dies, the
787 market must be moved elsewhere for a few days. It is believed that if [80] a brawl should occur after a hyena had passed through the market, there would certainly be a death.

567 Were slaves part of an estate? Among the Mossi, the wives
428 are part of an estate on the same footing as the rest of the property
562 of the deceased. The same thing applies to the captives (yemaé) and dogyiri (house slaves) who constitute and integral part of the estate. They constitute a patrimony to be handed down from father to son in accordance with the customary order of succession. They remain the exclusive property of the legitimate heir and are not distributed as are the wives of the deceased.

[97] Chapter 6

Djiba Naba, Crown Prince of the Mossi Empire

Preliminary Remarks

644 In writing on this subject we have not tried to ascertain whether the canton of Djiba was once independent or whether it was under the direct authority of the Mogho Naba.

At the outbreak of the World War in 1914 the Djiba Naba, a brother of the present emperor, Naba Kom, was drafted into the army, and another brother had to be appointed to take his place. The latter's administration was in many ways unsatisfactory, so when the Djiba Naba, on his return from the front, had to be sent to Doulougou to replace a deceased son of Naba Wobgo, the Mogho Naba retained direct authority over the canton of Djiba. Meanwhile, his eldest son had returned from Tunis and had been officially named the chief of Djiba, but he had had to leave again for military service at Salonika. Thus, it can be said that even before the canton of Djiba had been made the prerogative of the eldest son of Naba Zombré, it had already been under the latter's authority.

It was during the reign of Naba Zombré, twenty-third Mogho Naba, that the eldest son of the emperor was given jurisdiction over the canton of Djiba. Naba Zombré, after Naba Niandeffo, had one of the longest reigns in the history of the country. He actually ruled for sixty years.

643 [98] An old tradition requires an emperor who has ruled for
782 thirty years to go to Oubritenga to celebrate zom'bika (literally,

643 "to mount the bika").

782 Bika. When the emperor goes to Oubritenga, a large pit is dug in which all sorts of provisions are placed and, finally, a living man. Poles cover the opening of the tomb where the suffocated man lies, and the whole thing is covered with earth. A throne (guéré) is placed on the grave, and it is there that the emperor -- with little ceremony -- receives the faithful during his stay at Oubritenga. In carrying out this practice, the emperor is considered as having died and then come to life again. Hence, when he returns to Ouagadougou, after an absence which may last for years, he is welcomed by the populace with the greatest enthusiasm, and he must carry out all sorts of customary obligations just as he did at the beginning of his reign.

This custom is of course bound to disappear. In any event, if it were still an obligatory ceremony today, the man would no doubt be replaced by a rooster.

643 644 Naba Zombré went to Oubritenga to mount the bika and remained there for three years. His eldest son acted for him at Ouagadougou and in the process acquired some fame and the esteem of the populace.

When his father returned, it was obviously necessary to bestow upon this prince, who had already tasted the "joys" of ruling, and developed a real talent for command, a post of real distinction. Djiba was chosen. From that day on, [99] as soon as the eldest son of the Mogho Naba reaches the age of discretion, he is appointed Djiba Naba. It is thus understandable that Naba Kom, enthroned at an early age, was much disturbed when two of his sons were sent to Senegal and then to Tunisia.

644 The appointment of the Djiba Naba differs very little from that of other canton chiefs, but this naba has certain obligations which will be discussed below.

Before Appointment

644 782 Before his appointment, the crown prince of the Mossi empire first proceeds to the village of Zango where he must remain for a week. He must bring with him a sheep, a white rooster, and a cow which are to be given to the village chief for use in a sacrifice to

644 tenpelem (the earth) in order that he may have health, happiness,
782 etc. In addition, he provides a bar of salt which is to be shared among the old women.

As he passes through Nonsin, he gives a sheep, a white rooster, and some salt for a similar sacrifice.

644 On the seventh day he returns to Ouagadougou and stops at Bilbalogo, the home of the Kam Naba (chief of the young men), whose guest he becomes. The Mogho Naba informs his ministers, and the day is set for the appointment.

The customary formalities are nearly identical with those required for the appointment of canton chiefs (kombemba).

[100] After Appointment

On the day following his appointment, the Djiba Naba calls upon his father. A cushion (nagpouré) is placed near a shed in the emperor's courtyard at the foot of a special stake called the "zandaogo of the Djiba Naba." The Djiba Naba becomes the guest of the Gounga Naba, in whose section he will henceforth stay whenever he comes to Ouagadougou. (At the present time, because of the enmity between the emperor and his brothers, the Djiba Naba stays at Kamsaoghin [section of the Kamsaogho Naba], not far from his father's house.)

644 He then has to call upon his father's ministers, and precedence
557 requires him to visit the Ouidi Naba, the prime minister, first. As soon as the latter is notified of the arrival of the Djiba Naba, he offers him a sheep, some dam (beer) and some kola nuts.

Then the crown prince goes to the Larrhallé Naba, who is required to present him with the same gifts, and thence to the Kamsogo Naba, chief eunuch, where the same honors are rendered to him and where he is also given a sheep, beer, and kola nuts.

He next calls upon the Gounga Naba, the Poé Naba, the Samande Naba and, finally, the Baloum Naba, from whom he receives many gifts.

On the third day he completes his visits by calling upon the imam who represents Islam at Ouagadougou. There he is offered water containing [millet] flour and honey, as well as kola nuts.

644 554 576 [101] It is to be noted that a gourdful of this water with millet flour on which a bit of karite butter is floating is a customary courtesy offering among the Mossi. It is most improper to greet or to receive a stranger by offering him plain water.

644 782 On the fourth or fifth day the Djiba Naba proceeds to Zoanghna (a village located two or three kilometers behind the government buildings) and there hands over a sheep and a cow to serve as offerings to the sacred amulets of the ancestors and to protect him from evil spirits and wicked people. He does not spend the night in this village but returns home immediately after the sacrifice.

644 788 Several days later the decision is made to install the new naba in his domain. A large number of soroné, drummers, and followers accompany him on what amounts to a kind of obligatory pilgrimage which we shall describe briefly.

The following itinerary is customary.

First, the Djiba Naba goes to Badnogo where he spends the night. The next day he goes on to Samba where he is offered water with flour in it, and for his part, he gives salt to be shared among the old women of the village.

One may ask why salt is given to the old women and not to the other people. The Mossi call old women nough' pouk ramba, [888] that is, those who, when blessing you, clasp their hands so as to make a higher power hear and grant their prayers.

644 788 431 [102] On the following day he proceeds to Tensobitenga where he remains for three days. Beer is prepared for him; he is given a cow for his followers and a wife for himself. At Nakamtenga, his next stop, the village chief welcomes him with a sheep and many baskets and bowls of sagbo (millet mush).

644 788 He does not remain here for the night but instead goes on to Koubri. This is the village where eunuchs formerly suffered the cruel operation of castration (1). The canton chief meets him, leads

839 304 681 1. Eunuchs. Bandits, thieves, murderers, and slaves or soroné (servitors) convicted of adultery with women of the nobility were the only ones sent to Koubri, a canton in the circle of Ouagadougou, to be castrated. This operation involved only the removal

796 that day there is dam (beer) in every house and abundant meat,
527 and the inhabitants of nearby villages come to the festivities.

Here we shall describe only the two major festivals, tinsé and basgha.

Tinsé (Mossi Ritual Festival), or Naba Oubri Ma Kouré
(The Funeral of Naba Oubri's Mother)

796 Origin. Naba Oubri, son of Zoungrana and [147] founder of
769 the Ouagadougou dynasty, gave his mother a very impressive kouré (funeral). The kouré took on the appearance of a great festival because of the large number of animals sacrificed, the generous supply of food, and the great quantity of beer (dam) prepared. Since Oubri was very powerful, he ordered that the anniversary of his mother's funeral should be celebrated every year, even after his death. His mother was Pogh'toe Hinga (literally, "bearded woman").

For this reason and also to obtain health for his people and abundant rain for their crops, the Mogho Naba still quite regularly celebrates this annual festival known as tinsé (from tinga "earth"). There is no set date for it; it is celebrated whenever possible, usually after the harvest.

Preparatory sacrifices. Before setting the date for the tinsé,
796 the Mogho Naba has livestock (cows, sheep) and roosters killed
769 on the tombs of his predecessors.

●782 According to precedence, the sacrifices begin with Naba Zoungrana, Oubri's father, whose tomb is at Komtoega in the circle of Tenkodogo. The Mogho Naba sends a cow to the Loumbi-Raogo Naba to be sacrificed on the tomb of Naba Oubri. Oubriyaogo Naba (the guardian of Oubri's tomb) has the duty of sacrificing the animal.

The other animals are sacrificed by the Ouagadougou Naba, representing the family of the Ninissi (first [148] inhabitants of the country). He is accompanied by the eunuchs who are the guardians of the tombs (yad'nanamsé).

In order to honor emperors whose tombs are in various parts of the colony, representatives of the Mogho Naba are sent out with

796 sacrificial animals, and they are required to celebrate the festi-
769 val in these villages before returning to Ouagadougou.
782 In the old days the animals destined to be sacrificed were captured in the cantons by horsemen assigned to that duty. Today, however, the Mogho Naba requests his vassals to supply them.

It should be noted that the following Peulh chiefs provide cattle of their own volition and without any compulsion: Komtam Silmanaba, Gombogo Silminaba, Kourgou Silminaba, and Barkoundba Silminaba.

796 Setting the date for the ceremony. A week after the sacrifices
769 the emperor summons the Tansoba (war minister) or, if he cannot appear (sickness or some other chance reason), the Konkosé Naba. This personage must reply to the summons on the day he receives it.

796 The king then assembles his principal ministers and sets the
769 date for the celebration of the tinsé, twenty or twenty-one days
211 ahead. The Mogho Naba hands the Tansoba several knotted ropes (yoda) which are to be distributed by him to the following chiefs: [149] Sapone Naba, Tuili Naba, and Loumbila Naba.

The last-named chief hands his rope over to the Dapelgo Naba and to the Méguet Naba.

There are as many knots in the rope as there are days remaining until the festival.

As soon as the Tansoba has handed over the ropes, he must immediately return to his village.

The persons who have received the ropes are required to transmit them to the kombemba (plural of kombéré, canton chief) who untie a knot each day.

796 Celebration of the festival. Early on the day of the ceremony,
769 a Friday (arzouma), the ministers and other court officials present themselves before the king to wish him welcome (tabo).

796 The Mogho Naba presents a loaf of salt (yamss'néré, literally
769 "salt millstone") which is to be divided among the following digni-
263 taries: Ouidi Naba, Larrhallé Naba, Gounga Naba, Kamsaongho Naba, Bougretenga Naba, Benga Naba, Poé Naba, Tampouf Naba, Bend'Naba, and their followers.

Half of a loaf of salt is also offered to the Baloum Naba, Dapoya Naba, Samandé Naba, and Wedranga Naba.

The Basgha of the Mogho Naba, or the Nights the Emperor M'ba (Rarengma) Sleeps Away from Home

(May my father not arrive before I do.)

769 The basgha. Before making use of his newly harvested crops, the Moaga ikanda (married man, head of a family) is obligated to
782 offer this new produce to his ancestors. Therefore, he has dam
796 (dolo, millet beer) prepared with the large red [153] millet, already sprouted, and cakes made with the millet or the sorghum. He kills chickens and a goat, or a ram, and invites his neighbors and relatives to the feast. He is convinced that the manes of his ancestors share the feast.

The emperor of the Mossi is no exception to this rule. The basgha of the Mogho Naba is celebrated with more pomp, and we shall describe it briefly below.

It should first be noted that there is no particular date set by custom for the basgha, either for the Mogho Naba or for the ordinary Moaga. Everyone celebrates it whenever he can after the harvest.

491 The sotasgo (completion of the road). Before the French came and the administration took over road building, each minister had
653 a road or, more accurately, a broad path which led straight to the king's courtyard and which had to be maintained by the minister. Since everyone is busy in the fields during the winter months, it is easily understandable that the roads are somewhat neglected during that season. When the Mogho Naba decides to put everything to rights with his ancestors, he notifies the Ouidi Naba, his first minister, who sends word to the other ministers that they must clear their soyan (from soré, "path"). The ministers order the inhabitants of their respective sections to do the work, but put off completing the last stretch leading into the courtyard, samandé, [154] until the date for sotasgo is known.

653 Sotasgo takes place on a Saturday.

The Ouidi Naba makes a large pile of several loads of millet (kaguindi) and chooses about forty strong young men to carry it into the court of the king. His colleagues (Larrhallé Naba, Gounga

796 Friday night he stays at the home of Bangr'Naba Sambo. Very early
769 Saturday morning he returns home in time to be present when the Bend'Naba (chief of the drummers) comes to wish him a happy new year and a long life and to pray that Wenam (God) will spare him to [156] offer many more bascé (plural of basgha) in honor of his predecessors.

[431] It goes without saying that during the nights spent away from home the emperor receives many visitors and substantial gifts. The persons at whose homes he spends the night naturally give him the warmest possible welcome.

Preparatory sacrifices. These are performed inside the house of the Mogho Naba, and the details are known only to the following four persons: Mogho Naba, Emperor of the Mossi; Baloum Naba, chief steward and chief of pages; Zussoba Kassanga, chief eunuch and guardian of the harem; the pugtiéma, the first wife of the Mogho Naba.

796 It is known that animals are sacrificed, with the Mogho Naba
769 himself holding the victim and pronouncing the sacramental words. Perhaps there is also worship of certain sacred fetishes. In any
782 event, we are convinced that there is nothing involved in the ceremony which is contrary to the principles of French civilization since there is no human sacrifice. We should have liked very much to describe these ancient practices, but the secret has been well kept.

Celebration of basgha. As soon as the Mogho Naba appears in
796 front of the zango (antechamber), the Bend' Naba beats a drum while
769 calling the names of deceased naba, beginning with Naba Oubri, the
533 founder of the Ouagadougou dynasty. [157]

As soon as the Bend'Naba stops playing, he and his followers are served sagbo (millet cakes), mouf (rice), dam (millet beer), and nemdo (meat).

796 Likewise, the ministers and other court officials who come to
769 greet tabo (the new year) are given dam, sagbo, rice, and meat by
[554] the Mogho Naba. The food is distributed to the dignitaries in the order of precedence, and the rest is reserved for the Bilbalessé and other followers of the ministers.

About eight-thirty, the ministers and court officials say
[576] wennatassé, "God be with us," which means good bye, and then they return home.

843 pregnancy in a woman. It is also known that the woman will give birth in nine months, but since it is impossible to be sure of the date of delivery, the pregnant woman is watched over constantly and is under the surveillance of the old women. In a general way, nature is allowed to take its course, but some people prefer to con-
[781 sult the soothsayers and the priests and to give alms and sacrifices
782] to avoid a miscarriage.

During pregnancy, women are forbidden to eat honey and, in general, any sweet foods.

Seguene-vando (from seguene, "to wear a skirt," and vando, "leaves, branches"). A few months after the cessation of menstruation, the pregnant woman is sent into the kim-dogo (hut of the kimsé, manes of the ancestors) at the home of the family elder. There she is completely disrobed, and branches are tied around her loins.

844 Delivery. Delivery takes place in the woman's own hut. There is no special preparation. [190] Old women who have had much practice help the mother while others heat water in which to cleanse the newborn child of all impurities.

No one except the old women is present during the delivery.
[842] Women who have not yet borne children are sent away, and for good reason since the sight of the birth process might make them sterile.

Finally, if the afterbirth does not come out at the time of birth or soon after, there are certain special measures taken to hasten its emergence.

846 Three or four days after the delivery, depending on whether the child is a boy or a girl, the mother, who has so far remained indoors, goes out for the first time.

She carries a sickle to ward off ghosts and other evil spirits.

The new mother's co-wives and relatives bring her safandé (soap), kamé (karite butter), and kalgo (soumbala); others give her cowries. The father has a sheep or rooster killed and a millet cake prepared.

The woman who acted as midwife is sent a ball of sagbo (millet mush) and a chicken leg.. The heads of the mother and child are
[302] partially shaved, and there is nothing else to do but to choose a name for the child. [191]

553 Choice of a name. Among the Mossi, a child's personal name depends on circumstances which preceded the birth or on an important

553 event associated with it. We shall classify children under two headings: 1) ordinary children; 2) children especially sought.

The second category refers to children born after their parents have consulted the soothsayers, given alms and sacrifices, or employed other magical procedures.

Since the ordinary child is regarded as a spontaneous gift of God, his name is given by the father's close relatives unless some recent or remote event requires a name having particular significance.

551 Some examples of common ordinary names are Bila and Poko.

Names having special meanings are illustrated by the following examples.

Passektale (from passek, "insufficient," and talé, "resentment, hatred") means "I do not know what has caused the hatred which is felt for me."

Paratsida (from paraté, "to be unwilling," and sida, "truth") means "enemy of truth," a name intimating that people dislike the truth.

Dimpougoubnoma (literally, dima, "great chief, king"; pougbo, "to follow"; and noma, "profitable, good") is a name given to a child born of a mother given by a chief or one whose father has been given some important gift by a chief just before the child's birth.

842 [192] If a woman has no children after several years, the husband consults the soothsayers, makes offerings and sacrifices, employs
782 charms, and finally resorts to the tinsé ([sing.] tinkougri, from tinga, "earth," and kougri, "stone") or to the tiga (fetish tree). The woman goes with her husband to the possessor of the god. They take a rooster and some cowries. After they explain the object of their visit, the rooster is killed by the priest, and if the offering is accepted, the couple is dismissed with a formal promise that their prayers will be answered.

553 If, in due course, the wife is delivered of a child, the baby must be named Tinga, and his brothers and sisters will be named Timbila, Timpoko, etc., or if the tiga was appealed to, the baby must be called Tiga, and his siblings, Tibila, Tipoko, etc.

715 It also happens that after successive births, the babies die. Since
553 the Mossi, as we have noted, believe in reincarnation, they assume --

775 that the same baby is returning. So, in order to induce him to
553 remain on earth, they give him a significant name.

One of these is Yewayan (literally, "one who has returned"), meaning "Here he is, back again; it is he once more, and we recognize him."

The same name is used for all members of the same family.

304 Scars. When a child is a year or two old, the family calls in an old woman who draws more or less straight lines on his face (cheeks, chin, forehead, even the nose) with a razor. These marks vary according to region and are not [193] the same, for example, at Kaya as at Ouagadougou.

The design used most often, however, has three straight lines from forehead to chin and one or two horizontal lines running across the nose and joining the vertical lines on the cheeks.

853 Feeding. If a mother does not have enough milk, she goes very early in the morning to a tree, for example, the kamsaongo
● 782 or wédega (of the family of gohine lianas), to ask for milk. She falls to her knees, and believing that she is addressing a living person, she makes her request humbly, but with what faith! It appears that the prayer is often granted, but the woman must never again go under the tree or she will lose her milk.

853 The question of choosing a nurse does not arise in Mossi
604 country unless the mother dies. In that case, the little orphan is entrusted to a sister of the child's father. If she has been a mother, she too goes to the tree to ask for milk, as described above, even if her most recent delivery occurred years before. Finally, if the child thus nursed is a girl and survives, she becomes the property of her father's sister who will give her in marriage, later on, to the suitor of her choice.

III. Death

764 The importance of funeral ceremonies depends on the age and
554 rank of the deceased.

Nitiema (aged persons). Upon the death of an [194] old man or woman, all the relatives who live in the village are assembled.

342 Of course, like all European houses in the region under dis-
177 cussion, these buildings are, unfortunately, made of mud bricks, but is that not the rule in French West Africa?

342 In the homes of those two ministers of the emperor who are most advanced, the reception rooms are arranged in such a way that callers benefit from a constant flow of fresh air through large openings. During periods of extreme heat, a punkah operated
[417] by a sogoné in the middle [216] of the room provides air for the panting visitors. The wall, always whitewashed with kaolin, bears an
[353] an advertisement or two, the picture of an important chief, or perhaps some family photographs, which enliven the apartments a bit. All of this shows a real anxiety on the part of the chiefs to develop along the lines of progress and civilization.

In recent years, some of the notables at Ouagadougou have built houses with clay roofs, not so much to live in as to safeguard their family valuables against fire and theft.

Finally, it should be noted that custom requires every new naba for the first three years of his reign to live in songodo, straw huts, which will be described later. Only then may he build with clay.

Dwellings of Mossi Subjects

342 Temporary dwelling. Before building his conjugal hut, the
787 young man consults a soothsayer in order to make sure that the site chosen is not haunted by evil spirits and that he will have happiness and good fortune if he lives there.

342 Even if the soothsayer finds nothing especially alarming about the site, he always orders a chicken or other animal to be sacri-
● 782 ficed or alms to be given. The young man arranges with the village elder [217] or, if he is a [Nioniosse], with the Tingsoba (from tenga "earth," and soba, "master"), to sacrifice the victim.

The Tingsoba goes to the site and calls for two small gourds which contain ordinary water and water mixed with flour, respectively. He invokes all his ancestors and pours the water on the ground, praying God to accept it for His wife, Tinga, who is absorbing it. Then he kills the chicken, saying: "On -- on,

342 mamé ka koud'ti y a niesmé yé ya saramb' boumbou, yaramb'
782 boumbou, ti oua ta mamé" (which means something to this effect, "Accept the offering which I present in the name of X.... He appealed to me because I am the Tingsoba of the village. I do not consider myself to be more able than the other villagers, but this ceremony is a matter concerning our ancestors and I inherited the position from my predecessors").

The chicken is held with its feet up and head down, so that the blood mixes with the water having flour in it, and then it is thrown a short distance away. If the offering is accepted, the victim will fall on its back. Then it is hastily picked up, and a few feathers are pulled out and stuck into the slightly coagulated blood.

The chicken is given to the children to be plucked and roasted on the fire without salt or pepper. A leg is offered to the Tingsoba, and the rest of the meat is eaten by the family of the young man.

Part of the liver (saonré), however, is thrown onto the place of the sacrifice and thus offered to the spirits, [218] the invisible inhabitants of the place, so they will look favorably on the new household and help the couple to have children.

It should be noted that the Tingsoba may turn in any direction to make the sacrifice since no particular orientation is required.

342 A young husband's temporary dwelling is a simple straw hut made of the branches of a tree called randega. The branches are stuck into the ground, tied together at the top, walled around the base with Mossi mats (sougzakpinri), and roofed with thatch.

Permanent dwelling. After a year in the temporary dwelling the young man starts to build his permanent home if his means allow it. This is a group of clay huts, joined to each other by more or less even walls.

The earth must first be dug up, and the soil removed from the excavation must be dampened and molded into balls of mortar. A circle is laid out on the site by means of a string tied to a central stake. The foundation is built to a depth of about twenty centimeters. Mortar is put on the foundation, and construction of the walls is begun. These are always circular in form, and their dimensions vary. The mortar is allowed to dry before the work

535 or there will be falls which are inevitable when one of the girls is too robust.

535 539 Here, chosen at random, is one of the kiguibtobo songs:

> M'Ma ho, ka M'Ma warla y e
> Lebin wa regh'big' tim boudguin
> n'di Mossa yarbate ribo
>
> "Mother, oh, my mother,
> Come quickly and take my child,
> For I am going to the next village
> To consume pitilessly the goods of
> these wretched Mossé." (1)
>
> 1. Mossi.

[241] Chapter 16

Agriculture

241 787 Selection of land to be tilled. As he is wont to do in all important matters, the Moaga entrusts to a soothsayer the responsibility of choosing the land to be cultivated. In actual fact, he chooses it himself, but the diviner must tell him whether or not it is haunted by spirits and what sacrifices are advisable to protect him from evil spirits.

The soothsayer always warns him of the presence of spirits (kinkirsi) and prescribes the necessary sacrifices and alms.

241 782 Sacrifices. The new occupant calls for the head of the family or, if he is a Nionioga, for the Tengsoba, who is in charge of sacrifices. The following sacramental words are pronounced: "A zaguel tib reg' noag'la zom kom kon Naba zidwende, tib kon zig'tinguin damba, tib kon timpelem, tib kon yaramba, kon saramba, tib reg'kon zig, kinkirga ta wa me nan baou ki, on -- on tib reg'koin gnimassem, lass' pogh'banga, lasse zoug'banga, naore banga ..." Translation: "On the part of X, I offer this rooster and this water with flour to the sun god (Zidwendé), to the

241 brothers of the family heads who died childless (zig'tinguin damba),
782 and to the ancestors and grandparents. May they see to it that these offerings are accepted by the kinkirsi (spirits of the fields) and that the latter favor X with [242] good health and large crops of millet and beans."

[787] Once these sacrifices have been made -- if they are accepted, the rooster falls on its back -- the new owner has his land cleared and awaits the winter season.

Field work. As soon as the first rains have come, the owner goes once more to the field and has another rooster killed and offered to the kinkirga [singular of kinkirsi] with a plea for gnimassem (good health) and large harvests which he will consume with new wives and new children (pog'palla, la bipalla). Afterward he sows large and small millet, peanuts, beans, etc.

If the year has been a good one and the Moaga has had fine crops, he is happy and in good time will remember the spirit of the fields. For the moment he is busy transporting the millet to the temporary granary (lourgho).

Threshing millet. Before his millet is threshed, the Moaga must make a sacrifice to the zéiga (threshing floor). The ritual words differ from those described above only in the following words: "X asks that this millet, which he will eat, be good for him and that he eat it in peace and good health with his family." (Kita ri ki wan ne lafi layelsomdé né a zak'ramba.)

241 [243] He then appeals to the young men of the village for help
476 in threshing his grain. For the occasion he has a great deal of beer
[252] prepared and quantities of beans (benga) cooked. The beans are prepared with sesame (sinni). After the job is done, two children between the ages of six and seven are called, and their hands filled with the bean mixture. They must run around the threshing floor while eating some of the beans. The rest will be scattered to the winds. They must stop three times for breath and look at each other. Then the remaining beans are distributed among the workers. They are also given beer.

423 Do owners retain rights over abandoned land? In order to occupy abandoned land; permission must first be obtained from the former owner, who retains his rights over the land. He may reclaim it at

264 meal of sagbo in the evening.

What we call breakfast is hardly known. Between the two main meals, however, the chiefs have meat grilled or roasted. They are very fond of it and have it seasoned with enough salt and pepper to make it possible to consume the endless number of [273] small gourds of beer which they drink from morning to night.

The Moaga has only one real meal a day, the evening meal. A large millet cake satisfies the day's hunger. If there is any left over, he keeps it carefully for his morning meal. If there is none left, a frequent state of affairs, he makes do with his zompanrga, crushed millet diluted with water and sometimes eaten with a bit of vegetable fat or a few peanuts.

He rarely eats any rice, and if he has no sagbo, he contents himself with benga and souma.

261 It is during the festivals that the Moaga eats his fill. At such
527 times the head of the compound kills a goat, a sheep, or some chickens and has sagbo and fabirama prepared, or beans with copious amounts of karite butter. This is the feast. The members of the family stuff themselves to the point where attacks of diarrhea are inevitable. The results of the attacks are all the more serious in that they are never cared for properly.

The only seasonings known to the Moaga are kalgo (soumbala),
263 red pepper, okra, and salt. No more than a few years ago, how-
439 ever, before the [251] development of trade in the colony, salt was brought from Timbuktu and Mopti by the Dioula and Yarcé and was so expensive that the Mossi people who lived in the countryside often went for six months without tasting salted food.

241 There is reason to believe that the time is not far off when the Moaga will devote his efforts much more intensively to cash crops, such as cotton, potatoes, peanuts, etc. In this domain, the province chiefs at Ouagadougou have made real progress.

Mogh'Nab' Kawinré (Threshing the Grain of the Mogho Naba)

241 Sacrifices. For this ceremony, the emperor summons the
643 Mankougoudougou Tengsoba (a descendant of the autochthonous
782 Nioniossé, masters of the land) to Ouagadougou and gives him a

241 sheep to be sacrificed to the threshing floor (zéiga).

643 The work. After this sacrifice, around two-thirty in the after-
782 noon, the Kam Naba (a notable in the section of the Baloum Naba) proceeds to the threshing floor with the young men from Bilbalogo and Dapoya who have been assembled for the occasion. The operation involves beating the millet stalks with tree branches cut to form an obtuse angle and called dabandé or soika.

643 When the job is done, the workers depart, [252] leaving the
241 grain to be gathered up another day.

The next morning they return to the field, preceded by the Bend' Naba (chief drummer), who plays the bouloumbougri kabse nanamsé to which the other drummers respond with bouroum-bouroum (the Bend Naba gives the names of the emperor's ministers, recalling the origins of each one, and wishes a happy new year to Oubri-yiri Naba, "master of the house of Oubri," that is, to the Mogho Naba; bouroum-bouroum has no special meaning).

Immediately thereafter, the Bend Naba invites the young men to the warba (funeral dance), which is actually only a confused stamping on the millet which in the process is scattered far and wide. Suddenly the drums stop, the signal for a rest. Then the Kam Naba from Bilbalogo divides the pile of millet into two parts by tracing a straight line across the center of the zéiga. The people from Bilbalogo (the section of the Baloum Naba) gather one half, and those from Dapoya (section of the house slaves) gather up the other half.

Whether it is a good or bad year, the emperor's harvest is expected to yield 100 baskets (péog' koabga) full of grain.

The Mogho Naba sends 50 to 70 canari of beer to the workers and shortly goes there himself. He also distributes two or three wassé (from waga, load of 1,000 kola nuts) to the ministers and to the workers.

After thanking and encouraging the workers, the [253] emperor returns to his house, escorted by his ministers and all the horsemen.

643 Mankougoudougou Tensoba then uses wet ashes to make three
241 lines on the ground in different parts of the zéiga. Then he takes
782 a lagha (small earthenware jar) and puts some water into it. He

643 241 782 pronounces a few sacramental words and lightly sprinkles the millet, saying: "Zâbre saga Ybéogo sâga, samb'da kôbo la ka toin sameb'la fi yé (the morning and evening rains may put a stop to the cultivation of the fields, but cannot injure the health of the King)." He next takes a straw broom (sagha) and pulls it apart in order to get a bit of millet to put into the lagha mentioned above. He goes then to the temporary granary (lourgho, granary [343] made of Mossi secco) and walks around it three times. An emissary of the emperor gives him a white rooster (nora-pelga), some beer (dam), and zom-kom (water with flour in it). The priest sits down in the shade of the lourgho and before making the sacrifice pronounces the following words: "Naba Siguiri bad'kom, deghin kon Naba Wogbo, tib reg, kon Naba Sanum, tib kon Naba Koutou, tib reg' kon Naba Baongo, tib kon Naba Karfo, tib reg'kon Naba Sawadogo, tib reg la be kon Nab, gnimassem, la lafi," which means literally, "I offer this rooster, this water with flour, and this beer to Naba Siguiri (father of the reigning emperor) in order that he will persuade the Mogho Nabas Wobgo, Sanum, Koukou, Baongo, Karfo, and Sawadogo, to accept them, so that the emperor may enjoy good health and happiness."

The Tengsoba then hands the small quantity of millet [254] which he took earlier to the pugtiéma (first wife of the king) to be made into a millet cake and offered to the spirits (manes of deceased emperors and other spirits of the threshing floor).

643 251 Transporting the millet to the granaries. The wives, daughters, and sisters of the Mogho Naba are alone given the duty of carrying the millet to the granaries (baoré) (1). We have already noted that

1. This baoré granary is made of earth mixed with quantities of straw.

there are supposed to be a hundred loads of grain, even though the harvest may not fill twenty baskets. The number of baskets required by custom is attained by putting a small quantity of millet in each basket.

643 241 The millet intentionally left on the zéiga. A little millet is purposely left here and there on the zéiga, and the Kassiri Naba (village chief) takes it for his own use. This signal favor, however,

M
566 may leave his master whenever he pleases, either to devote himself
M to trade or to enter the service of another man; but often he gets all
F his work from his master.

563 The Peul shepherds never were slaves of the Mossi, because they
M only knew how to watch the herds and were incapable of working the
F land. They were, nevertheless, held in severe vassalage by the Mossi,
[784] especially by the nabas, and served as victims in certain sacrifices.
Some Mossi sold by the Yarsé or by other Mossi have occasionally been
their slaves, especially in the Dori region called Gyémaré by the
natives.

/15/ Chapter 2. Administration

M
157 The power of the chiefs and the submission of their subjects are
characteristic traits of Mossi country. The spirit of submission
permeates the whole Mossi mentality. The Mossi are not particularly
secretive or incommunicative, as the Bambara are said to be. On
the contrary, they talk quite freely to their friends, even of their
personal affairs; this does not mean that they are unable to keep a
secret, especially if it is the king's secret. Two individuals have to
be equals if there is to be some freedom between them; this freedom
may develop into a certain closeness, but never into friendship in the
highest sense of the term. If the Mossi appears secretive, it is because
he is afraid to offend someone more powerful than himself. He al-
ways yields before a chief, before someone who "has the strength,"
as he puts it, while inwardly he may retain his own opinion and act
as he pleases. When a chief talks, he hears nothing but these words
M in reply: bé néré, naba — "That's it, that's right. I agree with you."
576 The Mossi salute, formerly used in all the Black empires of the
Sudan, especially in the courts of Ghana, Mali, and Gao, provides
good evidence of this mentality. When we first enter the country as
foreigners, we are shocked to see a man thus lower himself before
another man. In order to salute, the Mossi puts down his load, hat,
and sword, removes his shoes, sits on the ground, folds his legs slightly,
and leans the upper part of his body forward. The elbows rest against
the ground, as far apart as possible; the forearms, folded in front of

585 It should be noted that these ceremonies are often curtailed. They
184 may also vary in ways that will not be described here. Sometimes they may not take place at all. This happens when the girl already has a husband prior to her birth, or when she is part of an inheritance. In such cases her relatives merely take her to her husband.

585 No sacrifices are performed during the marriage ceremonies. The
782 husband does offer a sacrifice on the day he builds a hut for his wife, and at the place where the structure is to be erected. The girl's mother consults the sorcerer a few times to find out if her daughter will be welcomed in her new home, and to know which sacrifice must be offered to ward off illness while she lives with her husband. She communicates the answer to the girl's father, and he himself offers the prescribed sacrifice.

602 In theory, the husband owes nothing else to his in-laws. In practice,
431 he would hold himself in poor esteem if he were not to present them with a few more gifts, especially on important feast days. When his maize is harvested, he sets aside a few ears for his wife's relatives; when his millet is threshed, he is sure to send some to his father-in-law; whenever he organizes any sort of festivity, his in-laws are invited; and he personally helps them in their work.

586 There is no divorce in the formal sense of a judgment rendered by law. A husband may send his wife back to her relatives if she steals, if she is lazy, or especially if she commits adultery, but even in the latter case his action will be regarded with disapproval. It is a husband's duty to watch over his wife and, if necessary, to discipline her. The man who repudiates his wife makes himself unpopular and cannot obtain new wives. It also happens, and this occurs more frequently, that the wife runs away and goes back to her family, /33/ either because she complains of ill treatment, or because she is not happy with her husband, or for some other reason of a more or less dubious character. If the husband manages to catch up with her before she gets home, no great problem is involved. He merely beats her and shuts her in for a few days. If she does reach her relatives, especially if they are in connivance, the husband must present a few gifts to them and even to his wife. The in-laws usually try to convince their daughter to return to her husband, but they do not force her to do so. Even the naba, when called upon to intervene, limits himself to the use of moral authority; his threats usually persuade the woman to return to her husband, who may himself use force if he wishes.

586 It nevertheless happens, though very rarely, that the husband is unable to convince his wife and returns home alone. No one troubles the wife from then on, and her relatives give her full freedom. The grudge of the rejected husband may be persistent, however, and his vengeance frightful. The bride price is not returned; the husband should have known how to keep his wife. It is nevertheless acknowledged that the children born of the union, boys or girls, belong to the father, and he does not fail to claim them when they are grown, or if they run away to their mother.

564 467 Negro populations often contain caste groups, set apart from each other by tight barriers. The most outstanding of these are the rules prohibiting marriage between members of the same caste or between those who belong to a caste and those who do not. Such prohibitions do not exist among the Mossi, except in the sense mentioned earlier. Although three caste-like groups exist among them, drummers, smiths, and undertakers, they are castes only in the sense that those who do not belong to such a family cannot exercise the profession. It might be more accurate to call them guilds.

533 [534] The drummers (binda) are those who play the bindré, a sort of large gourd with an aperture about 40 centimeters in diameter and covered with hide. Only those who belong to the drummers' family may play on this drum, which apparently is peculiar to the Mossi, but anyone may play on the other drums. The drummers are present [782] at all sacrifices offered by the naba; on Friday, the day of sacrifice, they go and pay their respects to him. When sacrifices are offered, they are entitled to the head of the victim. They are present at all [764] burials, where they play their drum and receive a remuneration which varies with the wealth of the deceased. If it is one of their members who died, they receive neither cowries nor food. They go to war [727] with their drums. If they are so unfortunate as to be made prisoners, they are never sold but ruthlessly killed; this is done either to prevent them from going back into the fray and stirring the warriors to sack the village, or because no one would want to buy them since they belong to a naba who would retaliate against their captors, or for both reasons at once. The drummers are the country's griot, a term hallowed by custom. They know the genealogy of every naba and sing his praises. Each province chief has a number of drummers and never travels without taking some of them with him. At other times they go to /34/ the market and follow the best-dressed people, singing

843 A woman's role is to bear children. When she knows that she is pregnant, she no longer consents to come to her husband, but she is careful not to inform him of her state; if she told him, the child would die. If her parents happen to pass away during her pregnancy, she does not go into mourning and does not attend the funeral. If she is newly wed and has not yet borne children, one of the other wives of her husband, or, if there are none, the husband's sister, comes at night to sprinkle the husband and wife with water. The young wife will henceforth call this woman her husband, prepare millet mush for her, and heat the water in which she washes. When the pregnancy begins to show, one of the wife's female relatives consults the sorcerer [782] to find out which sacrifice should be offered so that all will go well, but the husband is not informed of this consultation. Sometimes the sacrifice is repeated when the birth draws near. When the first baby 851 is born, the husband sends a child to his wife's relatives with a rooster or a hen depending on the newborn's sex. The child tosses the bird into the yard without saying a word and runs away; everybody understands.

847 /40/ A child born deformed, lame, or blind is done away with; 845 it is simply drowned without further ado if considered incurable. In 732 olden times, twins were often drowned also because their birth entails 761 difficulties for the family, who must offer special sacrifices; some- 753 times only one of them was done away with. If they are spared and die a natural death, the mother wears a small bell at her ankle until the anniversary of the death (koure). If the mother happens to die or the father becomes ill, the sorcerer need only say so and the children are put to death, because they are said to have caused the illness or death of their parents. A baby who could barely walk was once brought by relatives to the Koupéla Fathers. He had been born on a Friday and his mother had died; that was sufficient to call for his sacrifice. His relatives tried unsuccessfully to poison him; they exposed him for three days in the bush, and the child did not die. As a last resort they brought him to the missionaries, who hastened to shelter him. Children recognized as insane are abandoned in the bush where they die of hunger.

732 It is only fair to add, however, that these barbarous practices 845 reminiscent of Sparta are not invariably followed. Several lame and incurably ill children are carefully tended by their parents, and some twins born prior to the French occupation are alive and in good health.

776 2. We owe this list of formulas to the kindness of Fr. Thueux, the European who undoubtedly knows the Mossi language most intimately. May we express here our hearty thanks.

sacrifice includes a curse against enemies.

Beyond these wishes, however, no prayer is addressed to God
776 directly; no sacrifice is offered to Him without mention of spirits.
782 Yet, as we shall see in the following chapter, the invocations of the sacrificial formula are addressed mostly to God, and when the sacrifice is over all those who have participated in it greet the sacrificer with these words: "May God accept your sacrifice; may God receive it!"

776 But who is this God? Is he one or many? Has he a body, or is he spirit? Where does he dwell? So many questions which a Mossi has never asked himself and which leave him momentarily bewildered. "Is God one or many?" "I don't know" is the usual answer. If one insists, he says that God is one. But a difficulty arises: "Why then, in sacrifices, do you invoke God-king male and God-king female?" Again: "I don't know; this is what our fathers said."

776 Does God have a body? Yes, assuredly, for only a highly practiced
821 intelligence can conceive of a pure spirit. But what is this body like? "I don't know." Where is God? "Everywhere." But does he occupy a special place? "God is the sun."

776 Do they identify God with the sun? It is difficult for us to establish
782 a settled opinion on the subject. They do seem to grant the identifi-
821 cation, and in the course of sacrifices—after all, their sacrificial formulas must fit their concept of divinity—they offer God water for his rising and pour it to the east, water for his retiring and pour it to the west. In a quarrel the weaker party says: "God is my witness that I have not harmed you; God will pay you back in kind," and points toward the sun. Sacrifices are never /80/ offered in the middle of the night; but then they are not made in the middle of the day either, and they may be offered in the evening, when the sun has dipped below the horizon. The names for God and for the sun are
776 different. Wendé is the proper name for God, Wennam indicates
821 God's power (Wende nam). These words have no plural and thus indicate a belief in God's oneness. The sun is called Winniga, or

776 makes noise in the bush under certain leafy trees, his cheeks will swell
753 out. The tisé talk, even during the day. It is their voices which are heard when the wind stirs the leaves. We had /81/ papaw seeds planted all around our dwelling. They had sprouted and grown well; the fruit was already ripening. One morning, no papaw trees were left in
[824] Koupéla! The naba had decreed that these were talking trees, that they would cause illness to those who had them in their soukala ... and the papaws had been cut down!

776 Fortunately, it is possible to protect oneself against the tisé. First,
782 those trees which shelter them may be felled, and the spirits will move elsewhere. Some very beautiful trees vanish thus from the villages. The tisé may also be appeased with sacrifices. Does this result in tree cult, dendrolatry? Indeed not! The Mossi clearly make the distinction between the tree and the spirit that inhabits it, and they sacrifice to the spirit. Sometimes also, a tree was planted on the
[769] grave of the elder who founded the village, and sacrifices are made to the ancestral spirit at the foot of the tree. Finally, there are fetishes more powerful than the tisé. It is enough to know which roots and barks the tisé do not like, to steep them in water, and to place the pot at the door of the hut. When a tiga sees this fetish, he invariably runs away. Some Peul are said to have the power to distinguish between those trees where spirits dwell and those where they do not, and to kill the former trees merely by rubbing them with butter! This must be done in a special way.

776 The kikirsi are imps, red or black all over, and only a few centi-
754 meters high. Their body has the same shape as ours, but it is much nimbler and more tenuous—something ethereal and impalpable that only the sorcerers can discern. The latter call them with a low whistle or by shaking a peculiarly shaped gourd that looks like a handle
[534] ending in a sphere. This gourd is dried without being opened, and the seeds gather in the sphere. The sorcerer makes noise by shaking this instrument, and the kikirsi flock to him singing.

776 There are good and evil kikirsi, and the good ones only do evil when forced to do so; for instance, when someone puts pepper in their sauce. They abhor pepper but they love honey, and every good housewife who wishes to preserve her honey covers it carefully with pepper to prevent the kikirsi from eating it. They are inordinately fond of sesame, and they dote on millet cakes (samsa); every woman who makes millet cakes offers them a few. People who eat samsa while walking are careful to drop a few crumbs to the ground. On the

776 other hand, the kikirsi do not drink fermented millet beer, but they must be offered some before the yeast (da'nodo) is added. They have their preferences like human beings. They know hatred and jealousy, and sometimes they even kill one another. They are said to have two 776 sexes, to marry, and to procreate. They even have the special faculty 845 of always bearing twins, and this is why twins are called by their 551 name and are dedicated to them; it is believed that spirits dwell within them.

776 The birth of twins causes their mother much trouble. Formerly 845 both were sometimes put to death, while at other times only one was killed. When a woman bears twins, she builds at the door of her hut 782 a tiny miniature house where the spirits dwelling /82/ within her children will take shelter. Three times a year if her means allow it, in the spring, in the winter, and at the height of the rainy season, or at least once a year, a guinea hen must be offered to the kikirsi. This fowl is sacrificed exclusively to them. On that day they must also be offered their favorite foods, and this means that honey, sesame, and millet cakes must be purchased, that beer must be prepared and a jar saved without yeast, that millet mush has to be cooked, and especially that no pepper be added to the sauce. Otherwise the husband, wife, or children will be afflicted with a dreadful eye disease, for [753] such is the illness which the kikirsi have the power of visiting on human beings.

776 As children, twins may wear only the kankabra, a garment made 845 of black and whitish threads, the characteristic clothing of the kikirsi. Happily, they are later allowed to dress as they please. If the mother dies, the twins offer the sacrifices themselves and build the small hut that serves as a dwelling for their little spirit. The later born twin is considered the older of the two. They both wear the same bracelet and share everything given to them. It is not considered proper to make a gift to one without giving the same thing to the other. Actually, these customs are to be found in Africa from Bambara country to Tanganyika.

776 To return to the kikirsi themselves, they are present everywhere. In the bush they are fond of termite nests, large and small. They 241 also like open spaces. They are to be found around the villages; there are ponds set apart for the kikirsi, wells considered to belong to them. There are spirits watching over every field, and before sowing, as also before harvesting millet, the master of the field sacrifices a chicken to the spirit on a stone in the middle of the field. The

776 kikiriga, in turn, are to ward off anything that might harm the crop,
241 birds, caterpillars, thieves, and the like, and to fill with millet a granary of the size drawn on the ground with ashes at the time of harvest. If the kikiriga has properly carried out his duties, he gets another chicken when all the grain has been gathered in a heap.
776 Pregnant women are under the protection of a special kikiriga, and
[843] small children have one of their own to ward off illness and danger. Do we not say ourselves that a special Providence watches over the very young?

776 Actually, everyone has his kikiriga. Some have an evil one, and
828 those are the people who quarrel with everybody, the ones who are never successful, whose livestock dies, for the kikirsi often kill the goats, sheep, and horses that die of illness. Other people have a
[577] good kikiriga, and for them everything goes well; they were born under a lucky star. These are the engaging, sweet, good-natured people who get rich and who have many children. When a Mossi lies down
[513] to sleep in his hut, he rests his head on a stone or a small mound of beaten earth. This is where his kikiriga dwells, and from time to time, especially when he feels the need for special protection, he
[782] sacrifices a guinea hen or sometimes even a goat, with the understanding that the spirit will chase away all fellow spirits who might want to harm him and will avert all illness and all danger from his path.

/83/ The tangandé is a spirit who has the shape of an animal and
776 who is regarded as the protector of a village. The term is also ex-
778 tended to designate the spirit's place of residence, usually the sacred
825 grove but sometimes a mere stone or even an open space. The tangandé may be a crocodile, a boa, a leopard, a turtle, a deer, a hare, etc. The animal is sacred to the whole village and may not be killed in the sacred grove, but it may be killed elsewhere, even a short distance from the thicket.

776 The tangandé is a guardian spirit because it protects men and sends
755 its servants to accompany the village people on trips when they request it to do so. The natives incessantly turn to it for protection, and the sorcerers incessantly refer those who consult them to the tangandé to obtain cures and to request the release of souls held captive
776 by evil sorcerers. When someone dies, sacrifices are made to the
782 tangandé with requests to protect the survivors and to ward off illness.
[774] When souls leave the body during sleep, they often go to the sacred grove. Anyone may sacrifice to the tangandé and in the tangandé.

776 The naba does so more than anyone else; on the Day of the Dead
782 (basra) he always makes sacrifices there, and usually the village elders accompany him.

776 A village may have several tangandé /sic/, but the protective
778 animal or animals—most often there are two—are the same in all the sacred groves, of which there are as many as there are tangandé /sic/. Nothing may be taken from a sacred grove; everything in it is sacred. No wood may be cut down, and it is forbidden even to gather dead wood which has fallen by itself. By the same token, the dry grass may not be set afire, not even in the area around the grove. If all precautions have been duly taken and fire nevertheless spreads to the sacred grove, nothing can be done and the village people are not held responsible. On the other hand, outsiders are prevented, by force if necessary, from taking anything whatever from the sacred grove. If the outsider is powerful and cannot be restrained, expiatory sacrifices are offered after his departure.

776 The tangandé is thus a guardian animal, and yet some tangamma
754 retaliate by afflicting the guilty party with diseases. If one of the sorcerers who eat souls (seuya) offers gifts to a tangandé, the latter will help him and refuse to restore the soul which has been entrusted to it, unless more substantial gifts are forthcoming. One may pray to a tangandé and make a vow, for example, promise it a goat or sheep if it kills a designated enemy. The goat is purchased pending the enemy's death. Sometimes the tangandé takes its time and
[781] several years go by. The spirit is chided and told to hurry, and finally decides to do away with the person in question. Then the goat is sacrificed.

776 Some people say that all tangamma come from the Fada N'Gourma
778 region, where the father of all tangamma is to be found. It is the sorcerer's task to point out the tangamma and the place of their
787 residence. Once, for example, a village had just been founded. The elders had found a piece of ground propitious to agriculture, in the vicinity of water, and had built their huts. At the beginning /84/ of the winter season, when the time came for sowing, they shared out the neighboring bush and proceeded to lay out their fields. One day a leopard driven out of its lair took to flight before their eyes and repaired to a thicket. Immediately the people were called, the thicket surrounded and searched thoroughly. No leopard was found. On the following day the same episode took place in the same spot. This happened three times, and every time it proved impossible to

000 obligations, and practices through which man acknowledges the supernatural world, fulfills his duties toward it and requests its assistance," there remains for us to investigate, now that beliefs have been studied, how the Mossi communicate with this supernatural world, how they discharge their obligations toward it, and how they request its assistance. This involves the whole matter of sacrifices and ceremonies.

Beyond this acknowledged and reasonable cult, however, there is another, magic, which is "the art of coercing into one's service the forces of nature, or harnessing the powers of the invisible world, through certain occult practices of a more ore less religious character." (2) This involves the whole area of superstitions, amulets, fetishes,

2. Ibid., p. 331.

and charms, and, more especially, the sorcerers and their practices.

782 Sacrifice is the central act of the cult in every religion, and it is usually bloody. Whatever their origin, the Mossi are no exception to this rule which applies to all mankind. They make bloody sacrifices and commune in the sacrifice to such a point that even those who did not witness the killing may eat of the animal and are said to have offered the sacrifice along with the sacrificer.

/90/ The blood of chickens, goats, sheep, and beeves is shed at the slightest pretext; sometimes it is the blood of donkeys, horses, and formerly even men. A Mossi will not undertake anything without sacrificing to his tangandé (guardian animal) or to his kikirsi (spirits). If he does not know to whom to address his sacrifice, he consults a sorcerer.

If a member of the family is ill, one or several sacrifices are offered; if someone leaves on a journey, if he goes hunting or fishing, he offers sacrifices. Sacrifices are also made when two men have quarreled and wish to make up their differences, and innumerable sacrifices are required as a result of dreams, evil forebodings, and dangers which seem to threaten. Sacrifices are made to gain the favors of kikirsi or ancestral spirits, to beg for success in an undertaking, to fulfill a row, to ward off a disease, to harm an enemy, to appease an irked ancestor or some incensed tisé, kikirsi, or tangamma. Hardly any medicines are prepared without a sacrifice, and sacrifices are part of all spells, of all procedures meant to harm an enemy. Sacrifices are offered before sowing, before harvesting, before building

782 a hut for one's wife. Sacrifices are made for every purpose, for everybody, and practically to everything.

Sacrifices are made everywhere. The sacred grove is the place most frequently chosen, along with the dwelling-stone of the kikiriga who protects the house. Sacrifices may be made, however, in the fields, in open spaces where nothing grows, or on the path which leads to the tangandé either from the village where one lives or from one's village of origin, if it is learned that the spirit requires a sacrifice and one cannot go there in person.

Any man may offer a sacrifice once he has reached the age of reason, and children of about ten are sometimes seen offering their sacrifices with as much solemnity as their elders. Women cannot [562] themselves make sacrifices; they must resort to the agency of men. They may, however, furnish the victim and partake of it when it is eaten. Nabas and men of some wealth have their own appointed sacrificer or sacrificers. This is compulsory for province chiefs, who themselves never sacrifice in public ceremonies and quite rarely in private.

There are several kinds of sacrifices, and we shall study each one of them in turn, the better to understand how the Mossi communicate with the invisible world.

First, the characteristic sacrifice which serves as basis to all the others, the mand'zallé.

The sacrificer, accompanied by his son bearing a white or otherwise colored rooster and a gourd containing millet flour mixed with water, proceeds to the place of the sacrifice, for example, to the tangandé.

Upon arriving he says:

782 Kabré, kabré. — Excuse me, pardon me.

539 /91/ Then he sits down, his face turned to the west, and taking the victim in his hands, he says:

Na-Wend'daogo, sak'a tan!	God-king male, answer thrice!
Na-Wend'poko, sak'a nasé!	God-king female, answer four times!
Na-Wend'ka kou ned'yé, kon ky yé.	If God-king does not kill, we do not die.
Na-Wendé ka léo, ned'kon lu'yé. — Pilimpik'dim n'yélé; lila kom'dim n'yélé t'eb y noara, ti	If God-king does not bind, we are not bound. — The butterflies have told us; the spirits of the water have told us to take a

782 539 no'pelra t'eb kis'tangandé t'a déé n'di né teng'kikirsi lé teng'portapa.

bird, a white rooster, and to offer it to the tangandé, so that he may take it and it with the kikirsi of the village and their wives.

782 539 755 This formula may vary with the circumstances. This is when the sacrificer sets forth his wishes. He tells the tangandé, for instance, that his son is ill and that he has consulted the sorcerer, who has told him to take a white rooster and offer it to the tangandé with water, so that the tangandé may restore his son's health. Then he pours the water behind his back, toward the east, and says:

Na-wendé, déé a ybou kom! God-king, receive the water of your rising!

Then he pours water before him, to the west, and says:

Na-wendé, déé a kyenbo kom! God-king, receive the water of your setting!

Finally he pours water on the sacrificial stone or before his feet, saying:

Tangandé, yk'n'déé kom nyou la kwen la biga lafi! Tangandé, arise, receive the water and drink it, and grant health to my son!

Nyé lé zouanga, nini ka yé. He is like a blind man, he no longer has eyes.

Tangandé nyé youngo né wintoro la ko biga lafi. The tangandé, he sees night and day and grants health to my child.

If the sacrifice includes an offering of millet beer, he pours some on the sacrificial stone, saying:

Na-Wendé ka nyou dam yé, la porédimma nyouda. God-king does not drink beer, but those of his retinue do.

Then he seizes the rooster with his left hand, bends its head back by pulling the comb, and slits its throat. He allows the blood to flow upon the stone where the water was poured, while saying:

Tangandé déé noara n'di, la kwen la biga lafi né sounoro! Tangandé, receive this rooster and eat it, and grant my child health and joy!

Then he tosses the rooster before him, saying:

Noara bé Wennam, ba souk' ba'a. This rooster is for God; may He dispell the illness.

Then he sends his child to get the rooster. The boy grasps the bird when it is lying on its back and if necessary helps it to achieve this

782 539 755 position. /92/ He drags it along the ground by the feet to the sacrificer, who says:

T'a vouda bemdaoge. — Drag me enemies along the ground.

The sacrificer then seizes the chicken and sets it upon its feet, holding its head straight:

T'a timma biga! — May He grant health to my child!

He turns the rooster around, with its head down and its legs up in the air:

T'a terida bema! — May He cause my enemies to bite the dust!

With his left hand he tears feathers from the neck, spits on them, and glues them to the stone or to the ground with the victims's blood, saying:

Yelbandé tou sébro! — May all that is evil go with the wind!

Ta toubré oum! — May his /my enemy's/ ears catch (my curses)!

Ta nif ka nya yé! — May he /my enemy's/ eyes go blind!

He breaks one of the chicken's legs:

T'a kao bemdaogo karga! — Break the leg of my male enemies!

He breaks the other leg:

T'a kao bempoko karga! — Break the leg of my female enemies!

He returns the bird to the child, who carries it away. The remaining water and beer are poured on the very spot of the sacrifice.

The rooster is plucked there or at home and roasted or cooked in water according to the sacrifice. The sacrificer removes the claws, beak, pinions, and liver, and he places them in the left hand of his child who lays them by the path some distance away, saying:

Mand'déé gobra, la kwen détogo nyé masem. — The sacrifice is received with the left hand, but grant him health with the right hand.

He returns to the place where the people are gathered, and the victim is shared among all present. When all have eaten, they gather in a group before the sacrificer and greet him as follows:

Wennam déé mando! — May God receive /Tr., the Mossi word means "eat"/ your sacrifice!

Wennam tou taoré! — May God accept it!

The sacrifice is over.

782 755 If a goat, sheep, or beef was sacrificed, the hair on top of the head is pulled out instead of neck feathers, and a piece of the rope used to tie the victim is added. All of this is glued where the blood was shed, and the victim's legs are not broken.

Such is the usual sacrificial formula. Variations are of course introduced by individuals and by the customs of particular regions. This is the mand'zallé.

/93/ The mand'lingdem or mand'dédem, which we might call "hidden sacrifice," is offered for the sake of someone who is ill and on the point of death. His illness is due to the fact that the soul has left his body. The sorcerer has said that it is to be found in the tangandé. Without the sick persons knowledge, hence the name "hidden sacrifice," his father goes to the tangandé, accompanied by another of his children who bears the victim and some water and by the sick person's mother who bears a large gourd half filled with water and a smaller gourd inside it.

The sacrifice is offered as previously described, but while the child is roasting the chicken, the sacrificer tosses onto the ground three cowries in the case of a sick boy, four in the case of a girl, and pours a little water. Then he invokes the sick child by name: [801] "Bila, come, answer me." He calls three times for a boy, four times for a girl. He then takes the cowries and some of the soil which was soaked with water and the animals blood. The woman lifts the small gourd which floats in the water, the sacrificer places the mud and cowries at the bottom of the large container, and the woman quickly covers the mixture with the small gourd which she holds down in the water. This procedure is repeated three or four times according to the patient's sex. The woman then heads toward home, holding the container in one hand and still bearing down on the small gourd to prevent it from floating. The sacrificer follows her, waving his sword or spear behind her to ward off the evil spirits. The soul is at the bottom of the water, amid the bloody mud and cowries, and they must do their utmost to prevent it from running away again.

When the procession reaches the patient, he is made to sit up, and the woman pours the water of the large gourd on his head, without lifting the smaller gourd. If the sick person, surprised by this sudden shower, gives a start, it means that he is saved; his soul has re-entered his body. Otherwise, nothing can be done, and the unfortunate person is abandoned to his fate; the tangandé did not want to return the soul.

782 755 Then the sacrificer and his assistants eat the victim, but the patient does not partake of it.

782 751 [753] The silent sacrifice, mand'moukou—also called "egg sacrifice," mand'gellé, because an egg is offered—is made in the following circumstances. Some diseases have the dismal faculty of talking like people. They call someone, who answers to his name thinking that a human being has called him. This is sufficient, he will fall ill and die.

The sorcerer decrees that such a disease threatens the village, and that a silent sacrifice is in order. The naba and the elders anxiously delegate one of the men among them to offer the sacrifice. On the following day in the morning, the appointed elder takes an egg, often also a kola nut and special roots, and follows the path which the disease would take if it came to the village. He walks in complete silence. When he reaches a certain point, he brings the egg close to his lips and tells it secretly that a disease threatens the village, and that if the disease tries to follow this path, the egg must stop it. Then he places the egg, kola nut, and roots upon the ground or buries them and retraces his steps. /94/ The egg, a chicken-to-be that cannot yet talk, is chosen as a symbol of the silence that must be observed to ward off the disease.

In the procedure called "bad sacrifice," the victim is not eaten by those present but left on the spot, where it rots or is eaten by vultures and hyenas. Any animal may be offered in this fashion, but the sorcerer alone may decide when the sacrifice is called for. It is usually performed to avert a general misfortune, for example, to ward off a contagious disease that will devour the animal and leave the people alone. The victim is sometimes abandoned alive and driven into the bush.

782 Anything may be offered in sacrifice if the sorcerer says so: kola nuts, cowries, the ashes of certain barks or roots, red stones, the inner fruit of the karite tree, etc. Chickens are the victims most commonly chosen, but sacrifices of goats and sheep are not uncommon. We have already mentioned the guinea hen as the sacrifice preferred by the kikirsi. The nabas are sometimes required to sacrifice cows or donkeys in certain cases. Some nabas, but not all, may sacrifice horses. Finally, even men were sacrificed in the old days. Certain tangamma [563] were greedy for human sacrifices, and the Peul were often used for this purpose. Natives with light skins tending to red, thus closer to [826] the color of ancestral spirits which are said to be white, were sacrificed to these spirits in preference to any others.

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782 to these spirits in preference to any others. These sacrifices were rare, and they were the sole prerogative of the highest chiefs.

Sometimes a vow is made instead of an immediate sacrifice. This is the poulongo mando. For example, a disease rages in the country, or someone has a serious undertaking at hand and wonders how it will turn out, or he wishes to dispose of an enemy. The person who makes the vow goes to the tangandé or to the kikirsi stone, carrying a gourd of water. He pours the water, saying, "Tangandé, if this illness departs, or if my understanding succeeds, or if my enemy dies, I will sacrifice to you a goat or a beef." To prove his good intentions, he buys the promised goat or cow at the first opportunity. If the tangandé or kikirsi grants his request, he fulfills his vow; in the sacrificial formula, instead of saying that the sorcerer told him to offer a certain victim, he mentions his vow and often promises another sacrifice on the following year.

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782 The Moslems have invented another bloodless sacrifice for their own benefit. Here is the recipe: "If someone is ill in your soukala,
755 take a kola nut, honey, honey cakes, beans, maize, and cowries and mix them all in a gourd filled with water. Then call in a Yarga or Peul Moslem to say a prayer. Of course, this man will only make the trip /95/ for a fee. A sheep at least must accompany the request." Grave, stately, and guarded as all good Moslems are supposed to be, the man sits down in the inner courtyard near the hut where the sick person lies, and the people sit around him, both hands open before their eyes, like a book, with their little fingers joined. The Moslem begins his prayer in Mossi, repeating the request that was made to him, that the patient should get well. When he is finished, he moves both hands across his face, three times for a boy, four times for a girl. Then the people go back to their former position, and the man utters some gibberish in Arabic or Peul. When he is through, all the people move their hands repeatedly across their faces; the head of the household dips his hand in the gourd which contains the mixture described above and puts it to his forehead; the children carry everything away; and everyone greets the sanctimonious rascal with the words: "May God grant your prayer!" Then the man sets out for home with the same gravity as before. The water will be used to wash the patient, and some of it will also be added to his food. None of this is very alarming, and if some patients get well through auto-suggestion, all the better.

789 Blessings and curses are also used. Should they be classed with the cult, or with magic? One way or the other, there are natives who have the power to kill anyone merely by saying a word. They can make the harvest wither, the cattle sicken. There are also some who can bless, make a trip propitious, an undertaking successful. If you
752 are wounded, go to them. They will put around the wounded part of
755 your body a greasy rope with three or four knots according to your sex;
801 there will be no swelling, and the wound will heal quickly.

782 Such are the major sacrifices and the practices of the cult. The
769 sacrifices offered to the spirits of the dead on the day of burial or on
796 the day of kouré have not been mentioned, because the animals offered are not properly speaking sacrificed (kou mando) but offered, presented, fabré. We shall now mention the sacrifices made on the Day of the Dead.

The Koupéla Mossi have two major feast days: the Day of the Dead or basra, and the Moslem sheep celebration called kibsa. Both are intimate family affairs.

Basra is the feast of the dead. On that day every family head must offer sacrifices to his ancestral spirits, and he alone may sacrifice upon the grave. Even if a member of the family has become powerful and wealthy, he will not offer the sacrifice which devolves by right to the family head. All members of the family who wish to offer a sacrifice on the ancestral grave must, therefore, go to their elder on that day. Anyone may sacrifice to the kikirsi and tangandé, and almost everyone does at this time. It is mainly on this occasion that little children may be seen gravely sacrificing their chicken to their kikirsi and to the tangandé; each makes it a point of honor to offer his own animal. Only chickens are sacrificed on that day.

Basra is not celebrated by every family on the same day. Some celebrate it before the province chief does, others after him, while most families do it on the same day he does.

/96/ The naba of Koupéla proceeds as described below, and the ceremonies are the same for his subjects with the sole difference that being less wealthy they cannot offer as many sacrifices. The basra is always celebrated by the naba on a Saturday. Already on Thursday he has taken non-fermented beer from the vats and poured it on the graves of his father and grandfather. He has also sacrificed a chicken on each of the tombs. Wherever an ancestor of the naba is buried, the guardian of the grave sacrifices a chicken. This is repeated on

782 Friday evening. The sacrifice is the usual one described earlier, but
769 the invoking formula is replaced with the following: "Soul of my
796 father, stretch out your hand and take this chicken which I offer you; grant me to reach next year in good health, and I will return with another chicken." The chicken killed on the grave is not roasted as in other sacrifices, but cooked in water.

On those days one must be careful not to sleep outside. The souls come to drink beer from the vats, and woe to those who lie in their way. They will kill them or at least make them seriously ill.

782 On the feast day itself, all those who have some obligation toward
769 the naba or toward the man who is holding the festivities, such as
796 those to whom he has given a wife or who have asked him for one,
431 come to greet him with a rooster and cowries if they did not come on the previous day. Many of his subjects, especially the canton chiefs, also come to offer their rooster and cowries. On the other hand, if an important visitor comes on that day, it is an elementary rule of civility to offer him a rooster.

782 Usually, on the very day of the festivities, no sacrifices are offered
769 on the graves. The victims are offered to the protective kikirsi of
796 the hut, of the inner courtyard, of the outer courtyard, of the whole soukala. The number of sacrificed chickens varies in proportion to the number of gifts. When the sacrifices are over, the naba assembles his people, and the beer is brought in and presented to him. He first pours a little on the ground as an offering to the ancestral spirits, then he drinks and distributes the ars among his people. This is not
[273] a good day to discuss important matters, because after noon everybody is more or less drunk.

On the following Monday and Wednesday, the naba proceeds at dawn with great pomp to two neighboring villages (Nakalbo and Sabré) to sacrifice a beef to the tangandé. Much feasting ensues there on those two days; the naba loses a beef /in each village/ but gains many chickens and a few thousand cowries. He also goes to the village of Toulgou on the day when basra is celebrated in that locality, because his family originated there.

527 The kibsa is the Moslem sheep feast, and it is celebrated forty days after the end of the great feast. All Mossi celebrate it in private; every family has brewed millet beer, and on that day millet mush is replaced with rice and meat. These festivities are even more intimate than the previous ones in the sense that they are held

527

observed everywhere. In Bélousa, it is called kytouara. The name kibsa, on the other hand, is known everywhere, but special circumstances may prevent its celebration. Thus the warriors of one canton were defeated on that day, consider the kibsa unpropitious, and no longer celebrate it.

mention briefly.

The naky (naba ky, "naba's millet") is the naba's personal feast. It is always celebrated on a Saturday, like all the naba's ceremonies. It is proclaimed at market by the village-crier twenty-one days be-
[782] forehand. Seven days before the feast, the naba sacrifices a goat on the threshing floor and eats it on the spot after it has been roasted. The three nabas assigned as keepers of the naba's millet thresh a little grain, and every day they return to the grounds to thresh a little more until the day of the festivities. The quantity of millet thus flailed does not fill more than two baskets.

On the day of the feast, early in the morning, the high ministers go with their retinues to greet the naba: "May God be with you; may God grant you to see the year through!" A procession is formed and proceeds to the naba's threshing floor. His sisters and wives take part of the millet threshed on the previous days and carry it /98/, shrieking and dancing, to a granary located outside the naba's soukala. Then everyone drinks copiously.

Two days later, in the evening, another ceremony takes place. The naba's relatives go to the threshing floor and wrap the remaining millet in grass stalks; the bundle is carried to the sound of drums with jesting, shrieks, and dancing, as on the day of a burial. The millet is placed in the granary alongside the grain brought in on the day of the feast, and a sheep and a chicken are sacrificed nearby and
[782] shared among those present. The naba does not partake of this flesh. Actually he hides throughout the ceremony, for if he saw the pro-
[784] cession he would die.

What is the origin of this custom, which reminds the naba that in spite of all his power he is mortal like his subjects? What is the origin of that other custom, mentioned earlier, of building near his dwelling the hut where he will be buried? The Romans used to remind their

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769 destroy the yield. And, depending on his attentions to them, they can give or take away the good health necessary to carry him through the arduous activity of the rainy season when work is hardest, the granaries nearly empty, and food in short supply. Separate ancestral spirits look out for different aspects of the well-being of the individual. Satisfying their various sacrificial requirements is both expensive and time-consuming, but their good will is essential to the success of the farmer, and it is in his own best interest to be attentive to their needs.

THE EARTH CUSTODIANS

793 A close relationship exists between the control of the water supply
776 upon which the agricultural economy depends and the authority of the earth custodians in their role as intermediaries with the several manifestations of Wennam, the Mossi deity. The deity itself is somewhat aloof from the affairs of men, but through his specific manifestations and with the intercession of the earth custodians (*Tenga Soba namba*), descendants of the indigenous inhabitants of the Yatenga, the individual propitiates Wennam in order to control the various forces of the natural and supernatural environment upon which the success of his economic or social endeavor is dependent. Tenga Wende, his terrestrial manifestation, and Tido Wende, which gives life to the vegetable kingdom, are the aspects of Wennam which are most frequently evoked; but Siguiri Wende, the deified first ancestor of the Mossi; Ki Wende, the millet god; and Saga Wende, the rain deity, are also frequently called upon for help.

Each Mossi village in the Yatenga is divided into one or more areas,
793 each of which is in the "command" of one of the village earth custodians.
[36] Each of these areas contains both the dwelling of the Savadogo lineage of the earth custodian and the residence and farmlands of various "true" Mossi lineages. The head of each lineage maintains the good will of the terrestrial manifestation of the deity through the intercession of the earth custodian who "commands" his land. In some instances a lineage may own land under the authority of two different earth custodians; in this case offerings must be made at the shrine (*tenga*) of each.

793 The good fortune which may be secured through obeisance to the terrestrial manifestation of the deity (Tenga Wende) involves both
● 782 sacrifices and gifts of money to the earth custodian and abstention from acts offensive to the earth. For example, sexual intercourse may take
[833 place only in a private courtyard or within the house. Violation of this
783] rule defiles the land and must be expiated through a special sacrifice and the payment of a fine to the earth custodian. Any lost object found in the
778 public way or in the bush is in the custody of the earth deity and must be turned over to the earth custodian to await the inquiry of the proper owners. If such objects are unclaimed, they are given to Tenga Wende

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by being placed on his altar, where they become part of the earth symbols (*tiinse*). As a result, these altars are piled high with old sardine cans, bicycle parts, remnants of clothing, unusual stones and scraps of metal, baskets, wooden implements, and weapons, which are left there to decompose slowly and return to the earth. Travelers in a strange village need never fear that their property will be stolen if they deposit it near the altar of the earth custodian. 778

When a farmer wishes to clear a part of the bush which has previously been unused, he must first ask permission of the earth custodian and make a present to the earth deity. If he wishes to use the land again the following year, the request and the gift must be repeated. Such a field may be passed on to his descendants, who have a right to the land so long as they acknowledge each year the authority of the earth custodian. If a new well is to be dug, his authorization must be requested, and his advice may also be asked for the proper place to seek water. The wise Mossi farmer consults the earth custodian frequently about his agricultural activities. He also reports anything that he may have done to alter the condition of his farmlands or the surrounding bush, not because each individual act is of such great importance, but because maintaining good relations with the custodian of the earth is in the interest of his own economic security. 241 782 793

OTHER ASPECTS OF RELIGION

Other descendants of the original inhabitants of the Yatenga, the Bogoba, are especially charged with the propitiation of Tido Wendé, the vegetal manifestation of Wennam. In addition to the many manifestations of Wennam and the complex organization of priests and ceremonial designed for his propitiation, many other forces inhabit the unseen world of the Mossi. Indeed, to the observer their number and variety might at first seem to be almost as great as the number of Mossi with whom he may discuss these beings. Each man's description of these supernatural beings varies in terms of his subjective reaction resulting either from direct experience of them or from stories he has heard concerning their behavior. In contrast to Wennam, whose disposition is essentially benevolent so long as he is properly propitiated, these lesser supernatural beings are more frequently malicious and always more difficult to control. Perhaps for these reasons they are not worshiped. The Mossi's concern is not to propitiate them but to neutralize their evil intentions by the use of protective charms (*tim*). 776

The "bush," the unused land lying beyond the farms, is the least-known aspect of the Mossi natural environment. This is especially true of those far areas of the bush where even the authority of the earth custodians does not extend and where unknown spirits dwell. For although the 776 823

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Tenga Wende of the desire for a good growing year and gives each girl a small part of the wet earth near the shrine; this represents the now sanctified soul (*shiga*) and is placed under the granary from which the millet seeds for the new crop will be taken. 796 221

Then those who possess land controlled by the earth custodian organize a hunt for his benefit. The following day, the earth custodian visits each lineage which possesses fields in areas of the bush under his custodianship. He is given calabashes filled with millet gruel, which he pours as a libation on the earth, asking Tenga Wende to grant good health, heavy rains, and a successful harvest to the household. As the libation is poured, the women try to catch a little in their own calabashes of gruel, which they then pour as their sacrifice. Because the millet from the granaries of good harvests is lucky, other women want to try to catch a little of it in their own offerings; thus the libations spill from one calabash into another as they fall on the earth. [782] [777]

The second moon is called "Bega" after the ceremonial which coincides with the first labor in the fields, the clearing and burning which precedes planting. After making a sacrifice at his own altar, the earth custodian goes to the residence of the neighboring priest (*Boga*) specifically charged with the propitiation of the vegetal manifestation of the deity. This visit symbolizes the interdependent relationship of the two priests and the supernatural powers which they control. The *Boga* then repeats the libations made during the previous ritual, but this time the offerings of millet gruel are made to Tido Wende, the force which gives life to the plants, rather than to the earth. [793]

A sacrifice to Pogo Wende, the specific manifestation of Tenga Wende which guards a farmer's fields, is usually made after they have been cleared and prepared for planting. Either before or after the sowing of the first seeds, the farmer asks the earth custodian to sacrifice a sheep or a goat to the field deity, requesting good health, heavy rains, and a rich harvest. This sacrifice (*Pogo Mande*) is the final aspect of the ceremonial preparations for the new economic cycle. It is designed to enlist the benevolence not only of Pogo Wende but also of the twin spirits which inhabit the field. If the twins are well disposed toward the farmer, they will protect the soul (*ki shiga*) of his millet stand from the twin spirits from neighboring fields who might try to steal it. Like the ancestral spirits, the twin spirits send a high wind into a field, blowing the ripening grains from the stalk and liberating their "souls" (*shiise*), which are then captured to enrich the spirits' own fields. [776] [782] [774]

The third moon of the year is called "Cundiba Bega." The fourth, which usually corresponds with the European month of June, is called "unaccompanied" (Quizale), referring to the fact that no ceremonial is observed during its phase. The hard work in the fields is begun at this

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The next moon, called "Tido," is the occasion for a ceremony thanking Wennam, through his terrestrial and vegetal manifestations, for his support during the growing season and for the rich harvests that have been received. Though it is directed by the custodians of the earth, it is their auxiliaries, the Bogaba, who officiate and who sacrifice at the altars to Tido Wende. After they have finished, others may offer a chicken as thanks for successful harvests or for the birth of a child.

At the appearance of the next moon the ceremony called "Filiga" is celebrated, thanking the ancestors of each lineage for their protection during the hard months of the rainy season. The initial sacrifices are made by the village chief both at the shrine to the spirits of the former chiefs and at the ancestral shrine of his lineage. Because their offerings are made to powerful spirits, it is wiser not to refer directly to them by name. They are called *Kikirigo Na Maore*, which means "twin dance." The twin spirits, like the ancestral spirits (*kiemse*), give children. Thus, through indirection a "charged" word is avoided by calling the sacrifice after an analogous but less powerful force. The specific purpose of the first sacrifice is to ask the protection and the assistance of the spirits of the former chiefs during the dangerous period which is to follow. The ancestral spirits of the villagers are then propitiated, and individuals who fail to perform the sacrifices properly may be punished by their ancestors. It is also believed that the ancestors may try to call some of the members of the lineage to join them at this time.

The sacrifices are made by the children of the daughters of the lineage (*Yasenamba*), whose permissive relationship with their mother's kinsmen is paralleled by their relationship to the ancestral spirits of their lineage. The lineage head presents the first chicken for sacrifice. Its throat is slowly cut as it is offered to the "twin" (*kikirigo*), as the "first ancestor" of the lineage is called—again through indirection, for even if the name of the first ancestor were known, it would be presumptuous of his descendants to call him by name. A chicken is then sacrificed to the "old ancestors" of the great-grandfather's generation, to the ancestors of the grandfather's generation, and to those of the fathers' generation who are deceased. As each chicken's throat is cut, the ancestors are thanked for their protection throughout the rainy season and requested to continue to look out for the welfare of their descendants during the months of the dry season which follow. Other men of the lineage may then give chickens to be sacrificed.

The final aspect of the ritual closing of the economic year is the ceremony called "Na Poosum," or "chief's salutation." It is essentially a social occasion. The homage to the central political authority made at Kom Filiga is now complemented on the village level. The elders of each lineage go to the village chief with presents of millet and assurances of

563 From a political standpoint, they were subject to the high Mossi powers just like the Yarsé, but like the latter and aside from this, they had preserved all their personal and economic freedom.

231 Let us add a few words about the various races of livestock which are to be found in Mossi territory.

As far as cattle is concerned, there are three races in the Ouagadougou circle:

1. Humped cattle, which is found mostly in the northern and eastern parts of the circle. This beef is tall, with a short dewlap and large horns. It is well suited to porterage, and furnishes excellent butcher's meat. There are some 5,000 head of humped cattle in the circle, 2,000 males and 3,000 females.

2. Humpless or local cattle. This beef has small horns, is found chiefly in the western and southwestern regions, and is usually designated by the name of Kipirsi cattle. It is not suited to porterage and yields inferior meat, but it is much stronger than the humped beef and better adapted to the climate.

3. Ordinary cattle, the result of a cross between the two preceding species. This beef has the strength of the Kipirsi cattle and is considerably taller. It is, furthermore, capable of being fattened, and can thus furnish meat of very good quality. This type predominates among the Tenkodogo Mossi. It comprises about 20,000 head, 8,000 males and 12,000 females.

It is therefore the local cattle (71,000 head), which is most numerous. The humped beeves are worth from 40 to 100 francs, [435] /489/ and the humpless beeves from 30 to 40 francs. The natives [232] are familiar with castration but practice it at random on any subject that comes to hand.

231 Prior to the arrival of the French, the Mossi used their cattle for meat and for sacrifices, but the two uses really amounted to one ● 782 (the former) since the animals offered to a dead person are always 651 eaten by the living. Nowadays, the Mossi sell their cattle to pay their tax. They still eat meat, although apparently not as much as before. The need to pay a tax which has been understood imperfectly, raised too rapidly and levied too harshly over the past few years, has forced them to save their cattle in order to sell it on the southern kola markets.

000 We are now finished with Mossi industries, not because this work is complete or definitive of course, nor because I have listed and thoroughly studied all this people's trades. I have said enough, however, to draw a significant outline /537/ of these industries and to show that they are flourishing. We may now proceed to trading.

438 443 Among the Mossi, as everywhere else in West Africa, one must distinguish the internal trade of the territory from its external trade.

As among other Blacks, the internal trade formerly was, and still is, ensured by village markets which are held at the most important localities on set days, for example every three days, every five days, etc. Thus at Ouagadougou, before the arrival of the Whites, the market was held every three days. Now it is a daily affair.

443 782 At every village where a market was held, there was a "market chief" named by the village chief. The market chief performed a sacrifice for the market. On a large consecrated stone he killed a chicken, a goat, or a sheep which he provided himself. [776] The animal was offered to the sky divinity (Ounam) to preclude fights on the market place. When this was over, our chief gave a hand to Ounam in his pacifying role, with the aid of a club if necessary.

443 All internal and external products of the territory were retailed at those markets, largely by women whom the Blacks, as we know, are in the habit of sending to market with surplus goods to sell. We shall not dwell on the internal Mossi trade, which is the same as in all black countries, a small retail trade nourished and vitalized by the external trade. Let us, therefore, proceed to the latter.

439 The external Mossi trade is the usual trade of the Sudan, which we have already described and which operates from north to south and south to north. Livestock is led toward the south, kola nuts are brought toward the north, salt is brought back toward the south, etc. We should add to this the cotton strips which constitute one of the important Mossi products (they are made by the Yarsé and by the Mossi themselves, as we saw). Those cotton strips, like livestock, are taken south where cotton is poorly grown.

584 To arrange a marriage, one offers gifts to the girl's family on
596 festive days. The gift grows more sizable from year to year. Finally, at the time of marriage, one offers 25 or 30 francs as a bride price.

Girls are also exchanged among families. /545/ One family may pledge one of its daughters to another family for one of its young men, while the second family provides a girl for a boy of the first family.

Even if a man buys a wife at market and has children by her, it is not he but his family head who gives those children in marriage.

If a young man goes himself to a family head, asks for a wife, and obtains her without any payment, without any bride price, it is the girl's father who disposes of the first daughter born of the union. He is entitled to take her with him as soon as she is no longer at the breast, and he will later give her in marriage. The other children are given in marriage by their father's family head.

596 4. The head of the family performs religious sacrifices for the
782 whole family, and acts as its judge.

5. When a family head dies, the headship of the family goes
596 to his younger brother along with the family property, that is,
428 his soukala if it is a family one (built by the family or with the help of the family), the available family fields, the movable family property (livestock, slaves, cowries, clothing, family jewels, etc.). The movable private property of the deceased, on the other hand (livestock, slaves, cowries, clothing, private jewels, etc.) go to the oldest son along with the fields cultivated by the deceased and by his household, that is, the private property of the deceased. Finally, the soukala, if it was built by the deceased all by himself and without the aid of his family, goes to his oldest son as well since it is private property.

The brother who inherits gives some of the movable family property to the other brothers, but only if he feels like doing so.

Here, family property is by far the most important.

Such is the oldest variant of the Mossi family type that prevails at the present day. Actually, this variant still persists in quite a few Mossi localities.

Now, here is the second variant:

592 1. Every household lives separately, works separately (except
596 for the clearing of the family fields), and sees to its own subsistence.

592 People who are thus settled on their own work for themselves and no
596 longer for /546/ their father, with whom they lived and for whom they worked prior to marriage. They nevertheless offer gifts to their father from time to time.

2. As far as the marriage of children belonging to those house-
592 holds is concerned, a distinction must be made among the following
596 possibilities. When they are the children of wives bought by the fam-
584 ily head, it is the latter who gives them in marriage. When they are the children of wives obtained by the husband himself, it is the latter who gives them in marriage.

Or else a rough compromise is made (in Boussouma province, for example). The first son and first daughter of the union are given in marriage by the family head, while the other children are given in marriage by the household.

596 3. It is the head of the family, however, who alone is entitled
782 to offer religious sacrifices for the whole family, and who always acts as its judge.

4. When the head of the family dies, the headship is trans-
596 mitted to his younger brother along with the family property. The
428 private property of the deceased goes to all his sons, but the oldest son is favored. This actually constitutes the difference between this family type and the preceding one as far as inheritance is concerned. While in the preceding type the oldest son alone inherited, in this type all sons inherit but the eldest is heavily favored.

Thus, if the soukala was the private property of the deceased, it goes to the eldest son. If he is able to cultivate them all, the latter also keeps all the fields cultivated by the deceased. If he is not able to do so, he gives the surplus to his brothers.

As for livestock, if there are ten head that belonged privately to the deceased, and if there are three sons and two daughters, the oldest son will get four, each other son will get two, and each daughter will get one.

[567] As for slaves, if the situation is the same, the oldest son will take five out of ten, the second son three, the third son two, and the daughters will get none.

Cowries and grain are apportioned in the same manner.

In addition to these shares given to the younger sons and to the daughters, it must be noted that private property has acquired greater

644 "The Moro Naba, assisted by his ministers and with the help of frequent libations of dolo, listens to the requests which are made /572/ to him and passes sentence on the trials which are referred to him.

"Around eleven o'clock he withdraws into his hut and rests until three o'clock, at which time he comes and seats himself on his throne again.

"The Moro Naba's every gesture is prescribed by a minute protocol and accompanied by flute and drum music and finger snappings by his entourage.

"Is he riding out for a short stroll around Ouagadougou? The whole court follows him, either on foot or on horseback. His griot make the air re-echo with their shouts, to the accompaniment of drums and flutes. A groom leads his horse by the rein, while two soroné hold his stirrups and a third one, on horseback by his side, shelters him with a huge umbrella. Other pages follow carrying his pillow, his sword, and canari of dolo from which the sovereign draws frequent and abundant libations along the way.

"At night the Moro Naba, in disguise and accompanied by a single soroné, wanders incognito through the various village quarters in order to find out what is going on without being recognized.

"On certain set dates, he goes to localities named Sabaye and [782] Saraboutenga, not far from Ouagadougou, where he sacrifices beeves, sheep, and chickens.

644 595 "The Moro Naba has very numerous wives. In addition to those he marries himself, there are those of his predecessor and all those that devolve to him in the course of his reign, among them, in certain cases, the adulterous wives of his subjects.

644 595 684 "The sovereign's wives do not all live with him. They are settled in villages ruled by eunuchs and near which no one could come, on pain of death, prior to our occupation. Every year the faithfulness of the Moro Naba's wives is checked by submitting them to the same test as the soroné. Adultery is punished by death for the wife as well as her partner. It even seems that adultery with one of the sovereign's wives is regarded /573/ as the least pardonable crime a man can commit. In fact, the nakomsé or sons of chiefs are liable to the death penalty only in this case.

769 along with millet flour mixed in water. A few chickens are also killed. No one works on that day, but people eat, drink, and rest. There is no drumming or dancing, however.

Other Mossi (at Yakki, for example) make offerings to the ancestors in the hut of their first wife rather than on the graves.

Another feast comes at sowing time and is called Tengana. Certain leaves are sought in the bush, cooked with beans and underground peas, and eaten. Much dolo is also preapred.

244 On the first day of sowing, one goes to the fields and offers a
776 chicken, millet flour, and dolo to the field stones (tenkougouri) and to the earth (tenga or tempeloun), so the sowing will go well, so there will be a good harvest, and so everyone will be in good health.

There is also an earth feast or Tensé (plural of tenga), which is celebrated once a year during the rainy season. It is the Moro Naba who sets the exact date of the Tensé. Every soukala head
[782] kills a beef, a sheep, or a chicken. The young men collect the blood of the sacrificed animals in gourds and pour some upon the ground (to the Earth) in order to secure a good crop. The remainder is mixed with the flour of large white millet and eaten. Much dolo is consumed. The earth feast is the special festivity of those people who are called Tenga (earth), Tembila, Tenfisi, etc., and of those who were born on the day of the Tensé.

On that day sacrifices are also offered to Naba Ouondé (the Chief God).

/588/ On years when the previous millet harvest was bad, the Tensé is not celebrated.

The Mossi have no special harvesting feast. Actually, it is the Tiougou or Bassara (celebrated when the millet has been harvested) that is the harvesting feast as well as the feast of the ancestors.

782 The Mossi do not offer sacrifices to isolated trees, but they do
778 to sacred groves or woods.

At Ouagadougou, at the spot where the White Fathers now live, there once stood a small sacred wood made up of large trees and thorny bushes, where sacrifices were offered before the French tore it down.

Every year the Moro Naba offered a sheep and a chicken to this sacred grove through the head of the Sékou quarter. He also offered

782 dolo and millet flour. There was no set time for this. The flesh
778 of the sacrificed animals devolved to the sacrificer, the head of Sékou.

At present day sacred groves are still to be found in various Mossi villages. Thus, for example, there are three at Kabayoro, two of which belong to individuals and one to the village. The Earth chief /Tr.: Tengsoba/ of Kabayoro offers sacrifices to the village grove whenever the bara says so.

The Mossi also make sacrifices to the hills.

At Sabtinga, about 17 kilometers northwest of Ouagadougou, there is a rise in the ground called Tantiibo where the Moro Naba used to go once a year with the Baloum Naba, many chiefs and people at the time when the weather begins to grow cold. He ordered a beef, a chicken, millet flour, and a gourd of dolo to be taken along, and they were handed over to the head of the quarter where the hillock stood. This chief performed the sacrifice and begged the piece of ground to grant good health to the Moro Naba. Only
[839] the Moro Naba, the Balou, the sacred people (eunuchs), and the soroné were present at the sacrifice, Other people who had come to Sabtinga remained in the village, whence the Moro Naba set out on foot to the spot of the sacrifice.

At Kombé-Padanda, a small hillock located in a /589/ Ouagadougou quarter, the same sacrifice was offered in the same fashion and at the same time of year.

326 Let us add that when Mossi blacksmiths go and smelt iron ore
782 in the bush, they kill chickens and offer millet flour on the spot where they extract the ore. The sacrifice is offered to the spirits of the hill, as well as to the Earth and to Naba Ouondé.

778 Sacrifices are made to watercourses as well as to hills, either
782 at fishing time or whenever the bara indicate that a certain stream requires a certain sacrifice.

825 As far as crocodiles are concerned, some of them are held
262 sacred by the Mossi. As for snakes, they are killed and usually eaten, but not everyone eats them. Some people abstain.

778 As for the Earth, the Moro Naba had sheep, chickens, millet
782 flour, and dolo handed over to the Baloum Naba through eunuchs several times a year, whenever a bara told him to do so. The Baloum Naba handed these gifts in person to the chief of Ouagadougou,

778 whose ancestors had ruled the soil of the territory. In the name of
782 the Moro Naba, he entrusted him with the task of offering all those gifts to the Earth so that the latter might favor the sovereign. Ouagadougou Naba performed the sacrifice before the door of his soukala.

When the Moro Naba went to war, he also ordered the chief
[72] of Ougadougou to perform a sacrifice to the Earth. The bara indicated what should be sacrificed in order to insure victory, to "break" the villages that were to be attacked.

782 When rain failed to come, the Moro Naba would go to the hillock at Koumbé /sic/-Padanda, and have the head of the quarter offer a sacrifice (beef, sheep, chicken) to secure rain. If rain refused to come, the bara were consulted once more, and sacrifices were offered until it came.

776 The Mossi also have a sky god whom they call Ounam as well
782 as Naba Ouendé or Naba Ouondé, meaning "Sun Chief." This is a
794 trace of the sun cult, which is unusual in Black West Africa, all opinions to the contrary notwithstanding. /590/ The majority of the Mossi sacrifice much more to ancestors and to the Earth than to Naba Ouondé, who is to them a somewhat remote god.

794 It must be added that Lieutenant Desplagnes found among the
782 Mossi an esoteric cult of the sun, moon, and fire, which is peculiar to religious initiates (Ouango) whom we shall mention later.

"The Hougho-Ouango of the Mossi (among the Mossi, those priests reside in the villages of Boujema, Mani, Kondogho, Yolo, and Tio) sacrifice to the sun in order to bind it to the Earth. They do this morning and evening, sunrise and sunset, during the first week of the winter season, and every six days in the morning at sunrise thereafter.
[778] They also go to altars made of three conical stones and offer sacrifices and libations, always surrounded by the populace, family heads, drummers, and familial masks (ouango).

794 "Those priests tend the sacred fire throughout the year in a
372 small, highly adorned recess dug into one of their house walls. At
783 the end of the rainy season they will use it to light the great purifying bush fires.

794 "They perform sacrifices at every new moon, and they have
782 seven important feasts a year for their divinity. Finally, during the solar festivities, they use a cow's tail to tie down the sun to the earth and to bind its life-giving heat." (Le Plateau central nigérien /The Central Nigerian Plateau/, pages 275 and 276.)

nigérien /The Central Nigerian Plateau/, pages 275 and 276.)

The Mossi sacrifice to evil spirits (kinkirga in the singular, kinkirsi in the plural). In Mossi villages, when the cold weather begins, the oldest man in the village performs a sacrifice to avert the wrath of evil spirits. These are indeed fearsome, for among other things they cause the storms, the fierce winds that lay flat the millet and maize. Those spirits usually live in the bush and inhabit in particular the kankalra trees (lenga in Mandé), to which the Mossi offer sacrifices but whose leaves they nevertheless eat. There are Mossi who can see the kinkirsi and who have fights with them.

Now, let us say a word about the priestly organization of the Mossi.

/591/ First of all, among the Mossi as among other Blacks, there are soothsayers and makers of grigris. The soothsayers are called bara and the grigri makers timisoba, meaning "grigri chiefs," from timi, "grigri" and soba, "chief." This is exactly the same word formation as that of basitigui in Bambara.

Prior to the French occupation there were considerable numbers of bara among the Mossi, at least one for every village. Since the arrival of the Whites, however, they are much fewer. The bara disclose things with the aid of some earth. Since they only charge a few cowries for a consultation, they till the soil during the winter season and even work at a trade during the dry season, for example at shoemaking or weaving. They teach the bara's calling to their children.

The timisoba, although less numerous than the bara, do not make a living by making grigris either. They, too, till the soil and work at a trade. They only make grigris on order and do not make them up in advance.

The timisoba goes into the bush and cuts out the roots of certain trees. He burns them and puts the charcoal in bags which he hangs either inside or outside his hut. This charcoal is or becomes grigri. In order to make other objects into grigris, he reduces the charcoal to powder, mixes it with karité butter, and marks with it all the objects he wishes to make into grigris, such as cow's tails, deer horns, sheep horns, etc. This charcoal powder is put to all sorts of uses. The timisoba even mixes it with his millet flour and eats it.

793 the sacrifice and killed the donkey. He also slit the throat of a
643 horse, a beef, and a sheep. (This eunuch in charge of guarding the
839 tomb was called by the name of Naba Koutou, and in a way per-
778 petuated the deceased Moro Naba. He was granted special privi-
leges. If a man who was condemned to death ran away and reached
the tomb, he was safe but became the eunuch's slave. Similarly,
[567] a captive who ran away from his master gained his freedom from the
latter if he reached the grave, but became the slave of Naba Koutou.
Finally, at that time, it was forbidden to ride by the hut on a donkey.
Naba Koutou would seize the donkey, or at least demand a ransom
in cowries before returning it. This applied to any animals who ran
astray near the tomb. The tomb still exists nowadays, along with
the Naba Koutou who watches over it, but the latter no longer enjoys
the same privileges.)

793 We saw earlier that the Moro Naba had a sort of minister of the
645 cult in the person of the Gandé Naba, high priest and sacrificer.
There was also the Pouy Naba, or chief of the fetisheers, whose
function was probably to mediate between the Mossi bara and
timisoba as a whole and the central authorities.

782 Let us close this study of Mossi religion, which incidentally is
quite incomplete and a mere outline, with a few words on the human
sacrifices that were performed /597/ in the territory prior to our
occupation, and a few words on circumcision as well.

782 "Human sacrifices," says Marc., p. 156, "definitely took place
766 among the Mossi up to the time when we occupied the territory.
Whenever a Moro Naba died at Ouagadougou, one of his wives and
one of his horses were sent to Gambaga in order to be sacrificed on
the tomb of Ouidiraogo (?) who is regarded as the mother of the first
Moro Naba. Soon after the occupation of Ouagadougou by the French,
782 the dethroned Moro Naba, Boukary Koutou, ordered the sacrifice of a
754 black rooster, a black goat, a black donkey, a black beef, and a
black slave on one of the mountains overlooking the White Volta.
This, it seems, was bound to cause the immediate death of the new
Moro Naba enthroned by Voulet."

304 As for circumcision, the Mossi circumcise boys and excise girls.
Boys are circumcised when they are from eight to twelve years
old, and thirty or forty of them are circumcised at one time. The

585 On the appointed day the fiancé sends two men of his family, one of whom is usually his brother, to fetch his bride. These two natives [431] come to the home of the family head with 13 canari /jars/ of dolo. Then the feasting begins.

The father takes his daughter to the hut of the ancestors, cuts the [782] throat of a chicken on the fetish stone so the future marriage will be happy, and discloses to her the name of her husband.

The young fiancée, escorted by two old women of her family and the two emissaries of her fiancé, proceed to the latter's home.

For four days the young bride will stay in a hut alone with the old women. During this period, the old women give her all the customary advice and show her the course of behavior she must follow to please her future spouse.

The bridegroom comes every day to greet the old women, but during this interview the young girl takes great care to hide her face from him.

On the third day, in the evening, the husband has a sheep and goat slaughtered. He chooses a leg of mutton which he puts aside with the [252] animal's skin, and he has a large quantity of sarabou /millet mush/ cooked along with the remaining meat. He takes the whole thing to the old women. They distribute the sarabou among all the members of the family and carefully put aside the leg of mutton and the skin which they will take on the following day to the girl's mother to show her that her daughter has indeed been delivered to her husband.

Then the husband has his bride brought to his hut where the marriage is consummated.

There is nothing compulsory about this four-day waiting period. It happens frequently that the consummation of the marriage takes place on the day following the young girl's arrival. Occasionally it is delayed for several days when, as sometimes happens, an elderly fiancé gives the bride who was originally intended for him to his son or to some other member of the family.

The marriage is valid from the day of the departure of the old women who brought the girl to her husband's soukala.

The consummation of the marriage is by no means necessary to validate the union. If the husband neglects his new bride for too long, however (a year, for example), she may demand explanations." /240/

582 Impediments to marriage. —"The impediments to marriage," says Vadier, "are as follows.

562 When she dies, a woman's property goes to her children. The
428 objects used by women go to the daughters (bracelets, skirt cloths), while other items (animals, etc.) go to the sons. More exactly, the first-born is favored among the sons and the oldest girl among the daughters. If there are no children, the husband does not take anything, and whatever the wife leaves goes to her family, to her sisters and brothers in the first line of descent. Not having had any children by the deceased, the husband would be ashamed to take what she left.

837 Adultery. —The wife owes faithfulness to her spouse. Unfaithfulness, however, is not very important, for unless it occurs repeatedly, it does not usually result in a break. The husband merely beats his wife and scolds her.

837 When the wife has fled to a lover, her husband goes in search of
684 her. The lover will have to provide a sheep (the sheep may be re-
782 placed by a goat), a chicken, and two canari of dolo, all of which are to be sacrificed to the ancestor so they will forgive the woman.
769 She cannot re-enter her house until the sacrifice has been performed; without it the ancestors would kill her. They are unbending, more so than the husband to be sure, about the latter's honor. Should a husband know his wife to be guilty and do nothing about it, the ancestors would be furious and they would kill him, hence the necessity for action on the husbands part.

837 If the husband cannot find his runaway wife, the duty of searching
684 for her and bringing her back to him falls to his father-in-law.

Formerly, before the French occupation, if the lover did not want to return the woman, her father appealed to the naba, that is, the chief of the village or canton, or even to the Moro Naba, who sent horsemen to arrest the guilty pair. He restored the wife to her husband and confiscated for his own benefit he lover's animals and millet granaries.

Nowadays, since the French occupation, one appeals to the commanding officer of the circle and to the native provincial court for the wife's return.

684 Sometimes, in the past, the husband killed his wife's lover when
643 he caught him flagrante delicto. He had the right to do so, but this caused him to lose his /246/ wife who became the property of the Moro Naba. The lover's property likewise reverted to the Moro Naba.

684 In any event, the husband did not have the right to kill his wife
643 except when she was caught flagrante delicto, unless he was the
565

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Karême), celebrate the great festival of Ramadan and the lesser festivals, and 794
aspire to make the pilgrimage to Mecca. Most of the Moslems can lead prayers, but only about one-tenth of their number can read and recite the Koran. [212]
However, today the masters (*karasambas*) of the 32 Koranic schools in the district are endeavoring to instruct the many boys and few girls in reading the [871]
Koran and understanding Moslem theology.

The Karême is observed by most adult Moslems in the community with the exception of invalids and working men. Moslems say that the fast is intended to turn the minds of the people to God, and they distinguish between the Moslems "of the mouth" who break the fast and those "of the heart" who [184]
fast until Ramadan. The crescent moon of Ramadan is greeted with guns and general rejoicing and the following morning the Moslems gather at the tomb of Ngado to give praises to God; during the rest of the day they pay homage to the chief and visit their friends. However, a change in the traditional observance of Ramadan is expected, because one of the Moslem leaders objects to the [178]
ceremony at the tomb of Ngado. He feels that some Moslems are beginning to regard the tomb of the first Moslem as an earth shrine or Tengkougre.

So far, only five of the more prominent Moslems in the district have made 794
or are making the pilgrimage to Mecca. The first man made the voyage about 788
seven years ago, and is now conducting a Koranic school in a neighboring district. His brother went to Mecca about two years ago and is now the senior *El Hadj* in the district. Of the two men who were on the pilgrimage when I arrived in the district, one has since died near the Red Sea and the other is still away. One other man left for Mecca and returned to the district during my stay. Most of the pilgrims now fly to Mecca; only two men followed the traditional route through Ghana, Kano, Lake Chad, the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan (now Sudan), and on to Mecca. In general, all pilgrims have used their own re- [613]
sources for the trip, but they receive some help from their lineage brothers and from the other Moslems in the district and in Ouagadougou.

The pilgrimage to Mecca represents the greatest event in the lives of the district Moslems. When the last pilgrim left, a great crowd gathered at his house and prayed for his safe journey, and some even accompanied him to [621]
Ouagadougou and remained there until he left. The Moslems and many pagans of the district, under the command of the district chief, cultivated his fields during his absence. And when the new El Hadj returned, a large crowd accompanied him to his house with shouts of joy. There he killed a sheep in thanks- [782]
giving, sprinkled the crowd with holy water from Mecca, and recounted his experiences. His listeners were impressed by his airplane flight and the description of Mecca, but they showed the greatest interest when he said that Mecca women covered their faces and that most Meccan men were monogamous. The local Moslems smiled when they heard this bit of news from one of their members, but I have seen them scowl when discussing the monogamous practice desired by the Christians.

The attitudes of Moslems differ very little from those of the other Mossi 794
as regards children and polygyny. They say that they do not believe in the 595 842

the original segment of the ruling Biligo lineage had lived in Barkago for some time, it divided into two minor lineages and settled in two saghse, Natenga and Godin. A noble from Godin possessed the nam, but it eventually passed to a noble from Natenga. The new chief then founded a new saka called Kedpalago because he wanted more living space for his own children. As a result, the minor lineage of Natenga now had two babissi living in two saghse. The minor lineage of Godin subsequently declined in size and prestige. The only evidence of its former importance was that its eldest male continued to make separate sacrifices to his own chiefly ancestors, even though the more recent holders of the nam made sacrifices to all former chiefs. These independent sacrifices were made in spite of the fact that this minor lineage kept growing smaller because its male members left to live elsewhere or to join maternal patrilineages with higher status. The sacrifices were expected to cease only if and when the minor lineage were to disappear with the incorporation of the widows and orphans of its last surviving males into the other Biligo groups of the village and district. Of course, if the Godin minor lineage had regained the nam, it undoubtedly would have experienced a rebirth and renewal of strength. It might have attracted its daughter's sons, and even aliens who would have lived in its saghse as they did in those of the ruling lineage segments.

A fourth saka, Nakomgo ("we hunger after the nam"), was inhabited by the noble descendants of Naba Ngado, the district chief who had replaced the descendant of Naba Biligo of Nobere. Since these nobles traced their descent from two full brothers, Kouliga and Kongo, they formed two related minor lineages with five component minimal lineages. The compounds of the two babissi of the Kouliga minor lineage were separate but contiguous. Near them were the compounds of the three babissi of the Kongo minor lineage. Scattered about in the Nakomgo saka were compounds of sisters' sons, strangers, and nobles' slaves.

The people of Narila, the fifth saka of Barkago, were members of the aboriginal Ninisi population, and thus furnished the village's earth-priest. He made sacrifices to the earth shrines in the village, gave ritual permission for building compounds and digging graves, and took control of the village during the period between the death of a chief and the accession of another. Scattered throughout the various saghse were compounds inhabited by people of serf, slave, or refugee origin.

Of all the groups within the village, the Ngado people kept the most exact genealogies. They did so because one of the segments of their maximal lineage held the district nam, and as nobles they had theoretical access to it. Once they had lost the nam of the district, the descendants of Biligo

knew that Boukary Koutou was the only person capable of such a conspiracy. Fearing for their lives if they did not nominate him, they immediately sent a messenger to summon him as the successful candidate.[15] Under normal circumstances, however, there was no coercion of the ministers and the nominee was quietly brought to the councillors.

Wearing a pair of trousers and a sheepskin mantle and carrying a spear in each hand, the nominee entered the courtyard of the compound through the women's door.[16] He was preceded by the Samande Nabila, who sprinkled the earth with water. He came up to the councillors and saluted them, and the Ouidi Naba addressed him as follows: "Before your father [brother] died, did he designate you to be his successor?" The nominee replied, "No, Sire! My father has left you free to choose whom you wish, be he a blind man or a leper!" This question was asked three times, and the nominee responded three times. The Ouidi Naba then made the following declaration: "I am giving you the nam of your father and grandfathers. You must try to conduct yourself as they did when they had the nam." The Ouidi Naba then listed the names of the territories over which the ruler had absolute power and authority. The new monarch raised his two spears in the air, made a speech in which he announced three guiding principles by which he vowed to reign, and "named a name," that is, suggested the title by which he wished to be known. For example, Mogho Naba Sagha II (1942–57) said in his inaugural speech: "Without rain, there is no life. I will be like rain for the country." He then became known as Mogho Naba Sagha ("Rain"), a rather fitting title for a ruler in a country with uncertain rainfall. The present Mogho Naba stressed in his inaugural speech (in 1957) that he was "solid as a rock." His official title is now Mogho Naba Kougri ("Rock").[17]

The taking of a new name was only the first step in the elaborate process through which a man became Mogho Naba. Next, the Ouidi Naba took the two spears from the new monarch and removed his sheepskin mantle. Then he gave him his new white clothes, which included a pair of trousers, a bonnet, and a sleeveless robe, all made for him by the people of the Sculougou ward in the capital. Next, he was given a cushion made by the people of Baramimi. The Baloum Naba then took the closely guarded namtibo, the sacred amulets of the dynasty, and used them in the preparation of a potion of millet beer mixed with millet-flour water, part of which was poured as a libation to the earth goddess, Tenga.[18] The ruler and the assembled ministers all partook of the potion in a kind of communion. The ministers then shook the ruler's hand, an act thereafter forbidden, and departed for their own compounds. The newly elected

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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The Mogho Naba had an elaborate court composed of many officials, relatives, and servants. The most important courtiers were the five ministers, who appeared daily at court and took part in all important ceremonies in addition to administering their own provinces. Aside from these men, the Mogho Naba had a number of other officials called Naba whose responsibilities covered the full range of duties in the palace and in the capital. One of the most interesting was the Pwe Naba, a royal diviner and court chaperon. His chief duty was to guard the morals of the pages and the royal wives; he also administered the ordeal to persons accused of treason. The pages were required to be chaste until they were discharged from the palace, lest their amorous adventures lead them to compromise the virtue of the royal wives, with whom they were constantly in contact. A wife and a page suspected of adultery were tested by the Pwe Naba. He forced them to look into a mirror or a calabash of water, and declared them guilty or innocent according to the way their faces were reflected. If they were found guilty, the wife was executed and the page was either executed or discharged in disgrace. The Pwe Naba also saw to it that strangers did not address the ruler's wives either on the street or in the market. Offenders were executed.

The Dapore Naba served as the court's chief executioner and as head of a group of the Mogho Naba's hereditary serfs. Members of the royal clan were executed by strangulation, since royal blood could not be shed; all other persons were executed either with a sword, by hanging, or with heavy clubs. Another palace official was the Ouedrango Naba, the head groom. It was he who saddled and presented the king's ceremonial horse to him at the morning ceremony. The Kambo Naba commanded the palace guard; only he and his guards were permitted to carry guns. The Samande Naba and the Samande Nabila supervised the work of the samande-kamba, young men who worked around the palace courtyard and kept watch with heavy batons to enforce order during ceremonies. A lesser palace official was the Zusoaba Kasanga, who, as chief of the palace eunuchs, ruled over the guardians of the royal harem. The Gande Naba made sacrifices for the ruler and also distributed gifts from the king to the royal officials and the royal household.

Another courtier, and one who played an important role during the installation of the new ruler, was the Ouagadougou Naba. As a direct descendant of the Ninisi, he was all but indispensable at sacrifices propitiating or honoring his ancestors. The Bendere Naba was the chief musician and court historian; according to some reports, a Bendere Naba was killed instantly if he made a mistake while reciting the ruler's genealogy. The Raga Naba was chief of the markets in the capital. Under him were

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fathers died. In this way the rulers not only retained the allegiance of the boys' fathers but had a unique opportunity to determine whether these boys were qualified to succeed to the nam. 644

The life of a page was confining, even if sometimes very rewarding. Pages were bound by the demands of the ruler, whose every wish had to be satisfied immediately. A quarrelsome ruler was a terror to his pages, who had to bear silently his insults and blows. On the other hand, a considerate monarch permitted or encouraged his pages to profit from the small [662] political intrigues in which they were invariably involved. Prospective district chiefs "made friends" with pages to find out whether their suits were progressing, or to whom they might usefully offer gifts. The pages used any money they might procure to buy clothes for themselves, to supplement the clothing and presents they received from their relatives. Every page was "adopted" by one of the royal wives, who prepared his meals and took care of him. In return, he helped this woman cultivate her field when his presence was not required by the monarch. When a page completed his service satisfactorily, he received a pughsiudga as a wife. If his work had not been satisfactory, he was simply dismissed.

The only woman who played any significant role at the court of the Mogho Naba was the Pughtiema, his head wife. She was the only wife to whom he presented his friends, and whom he allowed his subjects to visit. This woman, who was commonly the widow of the former Mogho Naba, was often chosen because she was past childbearing age: she was thus older and wiser than the other wives, less preoccupied with children, and above the sexual jealousies that may often develop in polygynous households. She arbitrated among the wives and stood *in loco parentis* to the younger ones, whom she instructed and advised. She served also as official hostess to the ancestors during the annual propitiatory rituals. It was her duty to prepare the millet beer and millet water for the sacrifices [782] to the ancestors, who were believed to feast at her hut before they visited the rest of the household. In addition, it was she who prepared to accompany the Mogho Naba to La each day. Lastly, it was her duty to introduce any new royal wife to the ancestors, and to ask them to watch over this potential mother of their descendants. 644 595 643

The ruler inherited some of his wives from his father; some he received from his many friends and vassals; and others he selected from among his pughsiudse. Crozat reports that Mogho Naba Wobogo (1890–96) allegedly had a hundred wives. Crozat did not see this many women at Wobogo's [714] court, understandably, since most of a ruler's wives lived in villages, where they were guarded by eunuchs.[23] Of the substantial number of royal wives

643 the Tansoba, the members of the royal sub-lineage, and the district chiefs.
763 The Tengsoba of the Ouagadougou area was also notified. Because he was
[645] a descendant of the aboriginal Ninisi population that "owned" the land, he
[793] supervised the burial ceremony.

The Mogho Naba's death was kept secret, and no mourning was allowed
[701] until the Crown Prince had arrived at the capital and the Tansoba had recruited an army to protect the realm against would-be usurpers of power. Then the cry was raised in the palace, to reverberate throughout the land,
643 that "the fire had gone out." Once the ruler's death had been announced,
764 the country was plunged into an interregnum, which was characterized by
669 ritual and often by actual anarchy. The people in the towns immediately looted the markets and stole their neighbors' goods; the prisoners and captives in stocks were released by their guards; the nakomce in all the territories, districts, and villages subjected the local populations to robbery and pillage; and the members of the monarch's babissi began their intrigues for power. The traditional sanction for this anarchy was that only when people suffer during the breakdown of political control do they really appreciate the sovereign's role. The Mossi declare (with some truth) that no one was safe during the interregnum. However, as we shall see, the ruler was symbolically kept alive, and the country was never without effective political leadership.

766 When the Tengsoba arrived at the palace, he was joined by five hereditary funeral chiefs: the Pazany'tengsoba, the Tampouy Naba, the Benghin
644 Naba, the Toghin Naba, and the Tanghin Naba. In the ceremony that fol-
643 lowed, he gave permission for the royal grave to be dug. Meanwhile, the ruler's body was prepared for burial in the traditional manner by his female relatives and laid in state in the zongo. These women kept vigil over the body, shouting and weeping. Only the five ministers of the realm and the male members of the ruler's babissi were allowed to pay homage to the corpse within the zongo. All other mourners had to pay their respects to the monarch's eldest daughter, who, as Napoko, was dressed in the dead sovereign's clothes and sat in his place before the zongo. As her father's symbolic representative, she held daily court and received greetings and homage from all visitors until a new ruler was chosen. The drummer who sat by her side declared to all visitors, "You say that the Mogho Naba is dead! Well, who is that sitting there? Tell me! Is that not the Mogho Naba?"

766 The ruler was buried the day after he died, at the end of an elaborate
643 ceremony. Libations were poured out to the ancient rulers, and sacrifices
[782] made to them. All the important officials and members of the royal mini-

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mal lineage segment except the pretenders to the throne shaved their heads as a sign of mourning. The royal pretenders donned sheepskin mantles to signify that they were willing to "eat the nam." Once the ruler had been buried, the country settled down to an uneasy peace until the eighth day, when the funeral ceremonies took place. In the meantime, the Napoko symbolically held daily court, and the Tansoba's army acted as a check against the attempts of ambitious princes to seize power by force of arms.

Two days before the funeral, the Kamsaogho Naba selected the Kourita, who was to replace the Napoko as the living symbolic representative of the dead Mogho Naba. The person chosen to be Kourita was usually a young son of the deceased king, but since this person was banished from the capital, most of the royal wives hid their young children or fled the palace with them.[23] Once the Kourita had been chosen, the Kamsaogho Naba performed a ceremony (similar to those connected with the divine kings of the Near East) during which the youth was given one of his father's horses, dressed in his father's clothes, and given his father's youngest widow as a wife. He was then paid the homage due the Mogho Naba, and after receiving many gifts from the dignitaries, he was banished from Ouagadougou forever. As he went through the country, he was treated like the Mogho Naba and given many wives and presents. If he should chance to return to Ouagadougou or see the new Mogho Naba, either or both of them would be killed by the ancestors. Many Mossi districts seem to have been founded by exiled Kouritadamba. These men were undoubtedly among the numerous "elder" sons of past kings who are said to have "refused" the nam and gone to live in the districts now governed by their descendants.

The choice and banishment of the Kourita heralded the funeral rites, which were characterized by numerous animal sacrifices to the ancestors in the name of the deceased ruler. On the afternoon of the first day of the funeral, the Crown Prince mounted a horse and left the palace by the women's door. The Napoko then took the bridle of her brother's horse and led him and an immense crowd of cavalry, armed warriors, and musicians around the palace walls three times. After the third round, the Napoko demanded that her brother give her a personal servant as a present; he hesitated, but finally granted her request. The Napoko was then lifted up by the warriors, who shouted as they carried her home. The funeral thus came to an end.

All Mossi potentates tried to emulate the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou in matters of pomp, ceremony, and government.[24] Their courts were inferior to his, but only because they were less powerful and less wealthy.

It was only when this man had returned to the capital that all the nobles in the local ruling lineage were invited to Ouagadougou to press their claims. Only the dead chief's babissi went to Ouagadougou, even though all nobles subscribed to the traditional concept that "the nam does not belong to any one sub-lineage; it can be given to any nobleman." Unlike the others, these nobles did not shave their heads in mourning, thus indicating their candidacy for the nam. When they donned sheepskin cloaks and carried spears on their shoulders, they indicated that they were interested in the nam of the district. 634 [613] [302] [765]

Before a candidate for the district chieftainship left for Ouagadougou, he collected livestock, money, clothing, and grain from his friends to give as gifts or bribes to important officials in the capital. When he arrived there, he lived with friends and conducted his campaign from their home. He and the other candidates visited their provincial minister and his colleagues, the Mogho Naba, and other courtiers, giving presents ostensibly as a sign of friendship but actually with the ultimate aim of impressing these people with their generosity. These activities were often very costly; for if the Ouagadougou officials suspected that the candidates were wealthy, they made every effort to obtain as many presents as possible. It was not unusual for candidates for the district chieftainship to remain at the capital as long as "thirty-three" or "sixty-six" days before the officials were satisfied with their generosity and made preparations for the election. 634 662

The evening before the election, the Baloum Naba asked each candidate to provide a chicken and a sheep for the evening sacrifices to the namtibo.[28] After the morning ceremony on the following day, the Ouidi Naba reminded the sovereign that a new chief had to be chosen for Nobere district. The Mogho Naba summoned the Gounga Naba and asked him which candidate had the best character and was most capable of taking care of the district—a question which shows that the Mossi never placed primogeniture above the ability to rule.[29] The Gounga Naba had already consulted his friends about the matter, but he recounted both the good and the bad qualities of each candidate. At the same time, he hinted which one would make the best chief. He finally told the Mogho Naba that all of the candidates were worthy men, adding, "You can give the nam to any of them." The Mogho Naba then looked around to ascertain whether the other ministers had concurred in the Gounga Naba's implied choice before declaring, "I will give the nam to X, because when his [father, grandfather, or brother, used in the generic or classificatory sense] was alive, he was good to me. The ancestors would be angry if I did not give his [son, grandson, or brother] the nam." With these words the selection was made, and the ministers now prepared to install the successful candidate. 634 645 643 [782]

643 651 796 become overgrown with grass and weeds during the rainy season. This clearing was done to within a few yards of the palace, but was not completed. Early in the morning of the day chosen for the actual rendering of the agricultural tribute, the retainers placed baskets of produce along these paths. During the morning ceremony, the Ouidi Naba presented a basket of millet to the Mogho Naba. Then the Bendere Naba, acting as Sore Naba ("chief of the road"), signaled on his drum, and the men with baskets who were waiting on the uncleared portion of the paths, preceded by drummers and men with hoes, axes, and other tools, began to move forward. The men in the processions raised a din, shouting, singing, drumming, and pretending that the task of clearing was very difficult. From time to time, the more energetic among those who were not carrying bundles ran ahead of the others, turned somersaults, and then, going through the motions of warriors in battle, pranced back into the procession. All the processions came to the shed occupied by the royal drummers and deposited their burdens. These were later retrieved by the palace staff and stored for use in the royal household.

643 644 241 The royal household was also supplied with produce grown by the royal wives. Foodstuffs for guests and fodder for the ruler's horses were provided by the people of the Bilbalgo and Dapoya wards, which were under the general supervision of the Kam Naba. Two or three times during the agricultural season, this official recruited extra help from these wards to help [464] [465] cultivate the fields. In recompense for this *sosogha* (work bee), the laborers were given food, drink, and kola nuts from the royal household. At the 243 end of the year, the harvesting and threshing of the grain from the Mogho 643 Naba's fields was the occasion for an elaborate ceremony, "Mogh Nab' 644 kawinre" ("threshing the ruler's grain").[2]

796 To begin this ceremony, the Mogho Naba summoned a local earth- [791] [782] priest, the Manougoudougou Tengsoba, to the court. This man, a descendant of the Ninisi, had to perform the propitiatory sacrifices to the earth deity who was symbolized by the threshing floor. After the sacrifices were completed, the Kam Naba went to the threshing floor with the young men of the Bilbalgo and Dapoya wards, who threshed the millet gathered there. The next morning they all returned to the threshing floor with the Bendere Naba and his minstrels, who recited the Mogho Naba's genealogy and sang praises to his ancestors. The drummers then beat out work rhythms and traditional drum patterns to which the workers danced while scattering the millet far and wide. Finally, the dancing stopped, and the Kam Naba drew a line on the threshing floor, dividing the pile of millet in two; the Bilbalgo people gathered one half, the Dapoya people the other. Regard-

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769 642 613 [634]

ably been younger sons sent to rule in conquered territories claimed that their ancestors were direct descendants of Ouedraogo and Oubri. Thus, to the Mossi, the power to rule was intimately linked to closeness of descent from the royal ancestors. The supernatural power of these ancestors, and the vigilance they were believed to maintain over the affairs of their descendants, were regarded as important factors in Mossi government.

796 631 643 769 [778] [782]

From the moment when the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou or any other Mossi ruler "drank the namtibo" and thereby received the nam of his ancestors, he had the right—indeed, the duty—to offer sacrifices to these ancestors in the name of his subjects. Every night, throughout Mossi country, the Baloum Naba of every ruler performed an act of supplication (Kwaga Basgha) to the ancestors. He beseeched them to protect the subjects of their descendants through the night, to maintain peace in Mossi country, and to grant health, children, and prosperity to all Mossi. This nightly ceremony was climaxed yearly by an elaborate ritual in honor of the ancestors (called the Basgha in some areas, and the Pelegha, Filigha, or Kinkiriga in others) that began at the highest levels of the government and ultimately linked every Mossi chief and lineage head.

643 769 241 782 796 [644]

The Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou, like the other Mogho Nanamse and Dimdamba, initiated this ceremony in his own kingdom. His celebration, called "M'barengma," was held at the end of the Mossi agricultural year and after the Soretasgho. Thus, the M'barengma was a New Year's festival in thanksgiving for good crops, as well as the annual Feast of the Dead. A few weeks before the first moon of the new year (the *ki-basgha* or *ki-pelegha*), the Mogho Naba ordered his soghondamba and samande-kamba to clean up the palace buildings and courtyards—an activity intended to notify the ever-vigilant ancestors that preparations were being made to offer sacrifices in their honor. A short time later, the Mogho Naba gave grain from his fields to the Pughtiema so she could prepare millet water for the sacrifices. Present-day Mossi insist that part of the grain came from the first ears harvested that year and part from those of the previous year. This was supposed to symbolize the continuity between crops, mirroring the continuity between the ruler and his ancestors. A few days before the principal ceremony, the Mogho Naba ordered the Larhalle Naba to pour millet water and sacrifice chickens on the graves of former Mogho Nanamse.

[645]

Shortly before the ki-basgha moon appeared, the ruler had to leave his palace at night to elude the ancestors, who had been attracted by the preparations and who were expected to be angry when they discovered that the sacrifices were not yet ready. The unjust ruler feared ancestral sanctions; the just ruler that his ancestors might want him to join them. One night he

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went to the home of his Samande Naba, the next to the Gounghin ward, then to Baghin, and subsequently to the homes of other officials. He could not remain long at one place for fear that the ancestors might find him. Every morning, however, when the cock's crow heralded the ancestors' departure, he returned to his palace.

The principal part of the Basgha ceremony was performed on the night when the crescent moon appeared. On that night more than any other, the ruler had to seek refuge elsewhere, because the ancestors visited the palace to accept the sacrifices offered to them by the Pughtiema with the help of the Baloum Naba and the chief eunuch of the harem. The exact nature of this ceremony is unknown, but it is known that the Baloum Naba used the sacred namtibo along with animals and millet-flour water provided by the Pughtiema and the chief eunuch for propitiatory sacrifices to the ancestors. The aim of these sacrifices was to induce the ancestors to grant good crops, health, happiness, and children to their descendants, and to "increase the force of the namtibo."[1] At cock's crow the Bendere Naba sprinkled a flour infusion called *gningmassem* ("water of health") on the palace courtyard so that the ruler might walk upon it when he returned. The Mogho Naba was greeted with drumbeats and escorted to the palace gate. His entry into the antechamber marked the close of this ceremony, and the people retired until later in the day.

The elaborate public ceremony of the Basgha took place in mid-morning. The ministers and important officials, clad in ceremonial garb, arrived at the palace quite early. When the Mogho Naba appeared, the Bendere Naba recited the official genealogy, starting with Ouedraogo and Oubri and ending with elaborate praises of the current ruler. The ministers and their entourage then saluted the Mogho Naba and wished him *Ne tarbo*, which means a happy and prosperous new year for himself and the country. He, in turn, took advantage of this occasion to give many presents to his retinue, and his wives distributed huge amounts of food and drink to the assembly until everyone was satiated. Then all the officials except the Bendere Naba and his group paid homage to the Mogho Naba and departed. The musicians remained at court most of the day, beating their drums and singing praises to their sovereign and his illustrious ancestors. The royal pages kept them well supplied with food and beer, and now and again during the day the ruler sent them gifts among which robes were often included. Whenever the drummers received a gift, they slipped into a rhythmic pattern that signified: *Tompaongo, Wend'kaoust' Naba niore, Wenne wilig vinre*, or, "We bow in thanksgiving for your gift. May God give the ruler long life. May God grant us to be alive next year so that we may do this again." The

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climax of this gift-giving came when the ruler sent the Bendere Naba about 19,000 cowries and a slave.[8] This ceremony terminated at nightfall.

The close of the Mogho Naba's Basgha heralded the start of similar ceremonies throughout his kingdom. The heads of the other Mossi kingdoms and the Dimdamba were free to hold their own Basgha when they wished; but the Ouagadougou ruler's own subjects, including the provincial ministers, district chiefs, village chiefs, and lineage heads, apparently were not. One reason for this, aside from respect for the ruler, was that the important officials' head wives had to wait for the yeast (*dabili*) from the Mogho Naba's beer before they could prepare the sacrificial offerings for their husbands' ancestors. This dabili went from district to district or to several districts at once, depending on whether the chiefs celebrated Basgha at the same time or successively. Thus, the dabili from the capital united all the wives of the royal clan, and made for both a ritual continuity in the veneration of all ancestors and a strengthening of religious and political bonds.

The Basgha ceremonies on the district level were much less elaborate than those held at Ouagadougou, but just as important. The district chief, too, had his buildings repaired and his grain distributed for sacrifices for the ancestors. A few days before the actual ceremony, he ordered the Gande Naba to pour millet water on the graves of recently deceased chiefs and to sacrifice chickens there. As in Ouagadougou, these sacrifices were offered to induce the chiefly ancestors to grant the villagers health, food, and children. Unlike the Mogho Naba, most district chiefs did not ritually hide from their ancestors for several nights prior to the ceremony. Some of them did change their sleeping place within the compound every night, and the court people always slept indoors during this period. On the night of the Basgha itself, however, the district chiefs did not sleep in their compounds.

As in Ouagadougou, the Pughtiema performed the main ceremony by pouring millet water as a libation to the ancestors who visited her hut. She was assisted by the Baloum Naba, who had possession of the namtibo. Apparently, the district chief remained in hiding and took no part in the ceremony. But he was the main figure in the morning ceremony, which differed little from that of Ouagadougou. In some districts the Tengsoba performed a public sacrifice to the ancestors. He was given the namtibo—sacred objects that had belonged to former district chiefs—and poured libations and sacrificed chickens to all of the chief's ancestors. He also prayed both to these ancestors and to his own on the chief's behalf, and beseeched them to grant long life and happiness to the district population. He also declared that the sacred objects would seek out and kill any enemies of the local ruler, wherever they might be. Once this ritual had been com-

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pleted, the remainder of the ceremony followed the pattern of the Ouagadougou ritual.

During the weeks that followed, the village chiefs and the heads of the larger lineage segments all offered sacrifices to their ancestors. The Pughtiema of each prominent local administrator, chief, or lineage head prepared and poured the millet water as a libation to the ancestors. Whenever possible, each of these personages invited musicians to sing praises to his ancestors. He dressed in his best robe and sat outside his hut to receive presents from his relatives, friends, and subjects, along with their best wishes for the new year, and for long life and prosperity. In return he gave them kola nuts, beer, and food. Thus, in celebrating the Basgha, all the Mossi were united in prayers and supplications to the ancestors, upon whom rested the future of their country and the successful reign of the descendants of Ouedraogo and Oubri.

The earth deity, Tenga, held the central place in the second major religio-political ceremony which linked all Mossi. This ritual, called *Tense* (from *tenga*, "earth") and sometimes *Naba Oubri ma koure* ("the anniversary of the funeral of Mogho Naba Oubri's mother"), was so important to Mossi cohesion that it was banned by the French, and as a result its main features are now unclear. According to tradition, Naba Oubri loved Poughtoenga, his Ninisi mother, so much, and was so pleased with the elaborate funeral he gave her, that he decided to repeat this ceremony each year in the hope that his subjects would be blessed with the bountiful crops and herds which had made the first one possible. Curiously enough, Oubri's mother was not a central figure in the Tense celebration. Instead, great stress was placed on the fructifying powers of the earth and on the importance of the royal ancestors in Mossi life. The juxtaposition and association of the earth deity with Oubri's mother has important implications for the Mossi political organization. Mossi tradition holds that a Ninisi woman was the ancestress of the Mossi of Ouagadougou. Her people probably celebrated the Tense as a fertility rite to their earth goddess, Tenga. The Mossi apparently took over the ceremony and used it both as a fertility rite and as a memorial festival, thus symbolically uniting the conquerors and the conquered.[8]

In contrast to the Basgha, no special date appears to have been set for the celebration of the Tense. It was held sometime before the crops were sowed, but according to Tauxier it was not celebrated at all in Ouagadougou when the previous year's harvest had been poor.[9] Before setting the date for the festival, the Mogho Naba summoned the Larhalle Naba and ordered him to have sacrifices made on the graves of all former rulers. This minister

provided the sacrificial animals for the royal tombs in the area of the capital, and the Ouagadougou Naba, as chief Tengsoba, performed the sacrifices. The Larhalle Naba also dispatched his servants to the distant districts where royal tombs were located, with orders to obtain (by force, if necessary) the animals for the sacrifices from the local populations and give them to the special guardians of the tombs. Sacrifices were made on the grave of Naba Oubri at Koudougou and on that of his father, Zoungourana, in the village of Zomtoega in Tenkodogo. However, there is no indication that a sacrifice was made on the grave of Ouedraogo, who is believed to have died in Sagabatenga but whose burial place is unknown. Nor is it clear whether, as some Mossi claim, annual sacrifices were made on the alleged grave of Nyennega in Gambaga. As soon as these preparatory sacrifices had been completed and the Mogho Naba had been notified, preparations were made for the celebration.

The Mogho Naba met with the Larhalle Naba, and the date of the Tense was set for twenty-one days after the meeting. On the following day, the Larhalle Naba made five cords out of tree bark and tied nineteen knots in each of them. The next day, he gave each provincial minister a cord to send to the districts in his province. The provincial ministers then sent their messengers with the cords to the districts, with orders to untie one knot every day the cords were in transit. Thus a district chief, counting the number of knots in the cord on the day it reached him, knew how many days were left before the Tense. As soon as the entire kingdom had been notified of the festival, the envoys returned to Ouagadougou and returned the cords to their ministers.

On the Friday morning before the Tense, the Larhalle Naba went to the palace. Kneeling before the monarch, he untied the last knot on each cord to indicate that the ceremony would begin on the morrow. To acknowledge this fact, the Mogho Naba distributed bars of salt to his courtiers and visitors instead of the customary kola nuts, beer, and millet water. Visitors left the court early in order to provide their families with foodstuffs for the celebration.

Early on Saturday morning, royal servants brought huge quantities of beef and mutton that had been cooked without pepper (this spice being disliked by the ancestors) and other foods, and deposited them in large heaps in the courtyard. Nearby, they also placed numerous large pots of millet beer. As soon as the morning ceremony was over, the Larhalle Naba slowly approached the Mogho Naba, who presented him with a new white robe. The minister donned the robe and walked to the piles of food, from which he took three portions of millet mush, dipped them in a specially

prepared sauce, and flung them in three directions to the waiting ancestral spirits. He then beseeched the royal spirits, the spirits of former provincial ministers, and the spirits of the ancient people (the Ninisi) to grant a long life to the Mogho Naba and peace to all the Mossi. He repeated the ritual with three morsels of meat and with the contents of a pot of beer. When he had finished, the Gande Naba picked up the food thrown to the ancestors and carried it away. He did not look backward for fear that he should see the ancestors and die as a result. The departure of the Gande Naba was the signal for the palace retainers to rush toward the food. They seized and ate what they could, spilling and wasting a good deal in the process.[5]

Meanwhile, chiefs and headmen held similar ceremonies in every district, village, hamlet, and compound in the Ouagadougou kingdom. District and village chiefs offered sacrifices to their ancestors in the name of their subjects. The sacrifices on the hamlet and compound level were more specific. Every grown man had to take a sheep, goat, or chicken to his elder and request that it be offered to the ancestors in his name. The elder sacrificed the animal and beseeched the ancestors to grant the petitioner good health, bountiful crops, and many children during the coming year. The women and children did not take part in the ritual, but they did participate in the general feasting that followed.

The festivities of the Tense lasted only a few days in the districts and villages, but in the capital it did not end officially until about four weeks had elapsed. At the end of this period, the Larhalle Naba gave the Mogho Naba all the cords that had been used to mark the coming of the Tense. A few days later, the chief Tengsoba of Guillingou, the native village of Oubri's mother, and the Tengsobadamba of other important ceremonial centers, visited the Mogho Naba in the palace courtyard. Here they all sacrificed white cocks and placed the blood and feathers of their victims on their ceremonial axes in order to "increase the power" of these objects. Later on, they were given cooked mutton, millet cakes, and other presents. Their departure for home later in the day marked the close of the Tense.

The religio-political function of the Tense is quite explicit, despite the statement by Dim Delobson, himself a Mossi chief (but also a convert to Catholicism), that "it is apparent that this festival has no outstanding features. Its sole aim is to make peace between the living and the dead, and, in the process, to allow everyone to enjoy the food."[6] Judging by the reports of old men who participated in the festival before it was banned, the people did have a good time and enjoyed the food. What is important, however, is that like the Basgha, the Tense served not only "to make peace

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between the living and the dead," but also to strengthen the political bonds 796
between the Mogho Naba and his chiefs, down to the humblest elder of a 182
Mossi compound.

In addition to the Basgha and Tense, the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou 769
appears to have offered another yearly sacrifice to Tenga. Each year, after 796
the Basgha, the Mogho Naba, the Baloum Naba, and a large entourage re- 782
portedly visited a large earth shrine called Tantibo in the vicinity of Saba- 643
tenga to offer propitiatory sacrifices in the name of all the people. When [778]
the royal party arrived at Sabatenga, they were joined by the Sabatenga Naba and his Tengsoba. The group proceeded to the foot of the sacred hill, and here the monarch dismounted, took off his bonnet and shoes, and climbed the hill. He made the customary Mossi salute at the shrine and looked on silently while the Tengsoba sacrificed animals and poured libations of millet beer and millet water in supplication for the health and prosperity of the Mogho Naba and all his people.[1]

When evil befell Mossi country in spite of the annual sacrifices to the ancestors and to the earth deity, the Mogho Naba had to offer additional sacrifices. If the country was plagued by drought, the ruler went to an [731]
earth shrine in Ouagadougou itself, called "Kom be paspanga" (literally, "water is strong there"), for a sacrifice. Moreover, he might order all his [634]
district and village chiefs to perform similar sacrifices to the earth shrines [622]
within their territories. In Nobere district, for instance, the district chief went to the village called Barkago, where, standing barefoot and bareheaded on the hilly shrine known as Beta, he ordered the local village chief and the Tengsoba to offer sacrifices for rain and good health.

It is generally believed by the Mossi that when the French attacked 648
Ouagadougou, the deposed Mogho Naba Wobogo made sacrifices to earth 782
shrines. Tradition has it that he sacrificed a black cock, a black ram, a black donkey, and a black slave on a large hill near the White Volta River, beseeching the earth goddess to drive the French away and to destroy the traitor Mazi whom they had placed upon the throne. When Mazi died, the Mossi people believed that he had received his just deserts from the earth shrine for treason. The French believe that Mazi was poisoned.[2]

The district and village chiefs, like the Mogho Naba, were required to 634
make propitiatory sacrifices to the earth shrines on behalf of their subjects. 622
Before taking office, a district chief was ritually shown the major earth 782
shrines in his territory, and he could not ignore their existence and their need for sacrifices. In a country with major local variations in rainfall and localized animal and human epidemics, the Tengsobadamba of stricken areas always called upon the local chiefs to help them propitiate disgruntled [793]
spirits.

634 spirits. The chiefs could not refuse such requests, especially when the vil-
622 lagers were poor, because they were regarded as "fathers of their people."
782 In some cases, however, district chiefs had to protect their subjects against unscrupulous Tengsobadamba who took advantage of local crises and tried
661 to prey upon the villagers by refusing to perform the requisite sacrifices
793 unless they received substantial gifts. The ensuing struggle was between
634 the secular and the sacred; between the chief as a representative of the con-
782 querors, and the Tengsoba as a member of the conquered group. It was always resolved in favor of the Mossi chief, who never permitted his Tengsobadamba the same privileges held by religious practitioners in neighboring societies.[9] The Mossi chiefs recognized that they needed the Tengsobadamba, and many myths recount how invading Mossi chiefs went into the woods where the Tengsobadamba were hiding to beseech and eventually force them to return to their districts so that sacrifices might be continued. On the other hand, the Mossi chiefs always insisted on the primacy of the nam over any other power. They employed the Tengsobadamba to intercede with Tenga for the welfare of their subjects, but they never allowed the priests to control them.

771 The coming of Moslems to the kingdom of Ouagadougou had little
795 effect on the way in which the Mogho Nanamse used the traditional reli-
643 gious system to bolster their political power.[10] In fact, the Mossi rulers later used Islam and its adherents in the same manner as they had used the
[797] aboriginal religion. The Moslems first tried to subdue the Mossi in the fifteenth century by persuasion, and later by the jihad. Both attempts
[648] failed, but the Moslems finally entered Mossi country as refugees from
[167] Sudanese wars. Their fortunes waxed and waned, depending on whether they were befriended by the ruler in whose territory they lived. During
[798] certain periods, they were subjected to many restrictions and were forbidden by the Mogho Naba to recite their prayers in public places.[11] At other
[797] times, they were left free to practice their religion, and even succeeded in converting several Mogho Nanamse to Islam. Under converts such as Savadogo (ca. 1760), Islam spread into many districts and gave rise to such important local centers as Sakhaboutenga (Dakay).

771 The Moslems in Ouagadougou were represented at the court by their
795 Imam. This person even received his badge of office—a white turban and white robe—from the Mogho Naba, and had to swear in the name of Allah
792 and *Nabiyama* (the prophet Mohammed) to be faithful to him, obey him, and aid him in times of need. However, he did not have to drink the namtibo as suggested by Dim Delobson; nor did he have to observe such non-Moslem customs as drinking the millet beer the Mogho Naba provided for

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This man then consults a teng-
443 *soba* (earth priest) who must be also a *barga* (soothsayer) to find out
787 where in a certain area it would be most propitious to locate the new
[791] market. After the *tengsoba* has ascertained the number and nature of
[776] the *tengkouga* (earth deities, plural of *Tengkougri)* in the designated spot, he tells the *Raga Naba* what type of sacrifice would be appropri-
443 ate. A few days later the *Raga Naba*, his young assistant and the *teng-*
782 *soba* take *zom kom* (milletflour), *dam* (sorghum beer), and a chicken (or goat) of the designated color, and go to the new market place.
[776] Here they pick out the stone or three which is the abode of the spirit or spirits, if there are several of them, and prepare to make the offering. The *Raga Naba* takes the millet water and pours some on the ground saying: "Good God, take this water, drink it, and take this other water (here he pours the beer), and give it to all the *tengkouga* in the villages so that the market will aways be good and there will be no fighting in the market!" Then the *Raga Naba* takes the sacrificial animal, and in the case of a chicken pulls off the neck feathers and cuts its throat, saying: "Good God, take this chicken and heed all the prayers of the people of this market!" He releases the chicken and waits to see whether it will fall on its back, thereby indicating whether the petition has been accepted. Of course, if it has not been accepted, a new site is chosen. If the sacrifice has been accepted, then the *Raga Naba* gives the chicken to his young helper to be cleaned and roasted. He then prays to the *tengkouga* who live in the market place and begs them to help with the market. When the boy brings back the dissected chicken, the *Raga Naba* cuts the liver into two parts; one for God and the other for the local *tengkouga*. He then says, "Now that God and the *Tengkouga* have eaten, they should drink," and forthwith pours out the remainder of the millet water. The *Raga Naba* then distributes the remainder of the roasted chicken among those present saying, "*Winnam dege* (God has accepted the sacrifice)." Only after this ceremony is completed can the market be opened.[9]

443 All Mossi markets, except those which specialize in one type of
366 trading, have the same basic physical structure even though they vary in size from one-eighth of an acre to as much as four or five acres. We do not know the size of some of the traditional markets such as Pouitenga, La, Yako, Dakay, Belousa, Mane, and Tema, but we have Crozat's report that "The market at Wagadougou, which is found at Kounkounbissi, the royal residence . . . is large" (Crozat 1891 : 4848). Since the market at Wagadougou was smaller than some of the other important ones, we may assume that some of the markets must have been quite large. At the same time, the physical appurtenances of Mossi markets are not elaborate, or were not so until today. In the

(9) See Zahan (1954 : 371) and Mangin (1921 : 53).

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customary "taste" with greater frequency and freedom than did ordinary buyers. But the most valuable tax collected by the Raga Naba was on the sale of slaves, whose buyers paid a tax of 1,000 cowries per head.

There is some evidence, mainly from Europeans, that the Mossi occasionally may have found the market taxes prohibitive. Binger reports that during his visit to the Mossi in 1888, the high taxes exacted by the Moro Naba were "one of the causes which placed Wagadougou in second place [as a market town] and which made Mane the commercial capital of Mossi country" (Binger 1892 : 467). Binger, himself, was caught in the institutionalized gift system and wrote sarcastically: "The day of the market [at Wagadougou] the receipts are good. People bring every-thing to the palace including millet as well as hoes or peanuts, and everything is accepted. *All this giving is left to the generosity of the customers . . .*" (Binger 1892 : 465) (his italics). Even so, one cannot be sure that the Mossi felt the same way about paying taxes to their rulers as Binger felt. There is, incidentally, always an air of mutual recriminations among the Mossi and their rulers about the level of reciprocation between them. The people admit that the chiefs are indispensable; yet they complain that they are greedy—they "eat" too much. The chiefs insist that it is difficult to rule a territory and complain that the people are ungrateful.

SOCIAL AND RITUAL ASPECTS OF THE MARKETPLACE

Although the offices of Kos Naba and Raga Naba have been abolished officially, these officials still exist in many Mossi districts, and even when they do not exist, some men acting in their stead appropriate commodities in the markets for the chiefs. Furthermore, the *nakomce* (plural of *nabiga*—chief's child) or nobles still wander about the market places taking handfuls of kola nuts, peanuts and everything they need without the people becoming angry or complaining to the French about it. Once when I visited a market in the company of a *nabiga*, the local Raga Naba came up to where we were buying meat and indicated to the butcher that one of his customers was a *nabiga* and that he should treat him accordingly. It is not because of ignorance that the market people continue to grant these privileges to the nobles and the chiefs, but rather because they believe that only the market officials, and not the Europeans, can take care of the markets.

One of the most important tasks of the Raga Naba (or in the absence of this official, the Kos Naba) is to propitiate the *tengkouga* in the market place, or supervise the sacrifices which the *tengsobas* make to them. The task of the market spirits is believed to be so difficult—

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443 due to the bickering, quarreling and even fighting they have to
554 prevent by cooling the tempers of the market people—that they
776 become quite angry. When the spirits are not satisfied, they fail in
● 782 their tasks and real trouble breaks out in the market, disrupting the trading; and if they are not pacified they may even cause the death of the market officials.[12]

In the days before the market officials were banned, these sacrifices were performed regularly. At that time the Raga Naba simply asked the Kos Naba to seize the appropriate animal in the market to perform
[648] the rite. The problem today is that since the French have abolished the office of Raga Naba, and in some districts have prevented the chief from even naming one secretly, the markets in the latter local-
[208] ities are considered "dangerous markets." Once a market acquires such a reputation, people do not like to visit it because they fear that they would get into fights or quarrels. Not only this, but it is believed that if a market has been without a Raga Naba for a long time, the *tengkouga* there become so angry for being neglected that they kill
[123] the first chief appointed to it. This was the reality or belief behind a series of misadventures of which I was the victim.

123 I had spent an entire day in a market, and on returning home could
443 not find my pen. The next morning I sent an assistant to the chief
554 telling him about the loss and asking him to have an announcement
656 made in the market on the next market day that I would pay a handsome reward to whomever should find and deliver the pen. The chief sent back a reply saying that since there was no Raga Naba, he would have the Kos Naba acquaint the people with my loss. On the day of the market, I waited until midday, when most of the people had arrived, and then went to see whether the Kos Naba had any news of the pen. I checked with several of my friends to see whether they had heard about the pen and discovered, to my chagrin, that no an-
[564] nouncement had been made about it. I went and told the Kos Naba that the people were not hearing about the pen and suggested that one way to do so would be to have the Binderes (drummers and griots) circulate through the market announcing the loss. The Kos Naba refused to do this, and when I enlisted the aid of the chief's secretary, he, too, said that it could not be done because there was no Raga Naba. I had some notes on the institution of the Raga Naba, but as I did not know everything about it, I was, therefore, frankly puzzled

(12) Zahan (1954 : 371) states that "the place where all kinds of merchandise accumulate and where strangers come is a place charged with forces. In time, these forces build up to such a point within the precincts of the market that some purifications are necessary to liberate them. To omit making them would expose the participants to excitements leading to brawls and compromising the place of the transactions."

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957)1962
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and a bit peeved at not being able to put my idea into practice. I next sought the advice and consolation of an elder noble who listened quite calmly and then said: "The customs of these kafirs (heathens) are foolish." Being a Moslem, my friend was very often critical of the pagans, and could be relied upon to expain why their customs were "foolish." He said that in former days the Raga Naba would have climbed a tree and announced to the cowd any message from the district chief. Moreover, he was the custodian of all lost articles and restored them to their owners. The Moslem said that my request could not be granted because there was no Raga Naba, and that probably there would never be another. When the French first banned the institution, the local chief dismissed the Raga Naba. With the passage of years, however, the market became so dangerous that the chief tried to appoint another ex-serf to the job. This man soon died, and his successor died shortly after being appointed. Since that time the chief has made no attempt to name a new market chief.

With this new knowledge I called my aide and inquired from him whether this information was true and if so, why did he not tell me the true state of affairs. His reply was that he did not wish to say that the market was bad because the local people believed that they had solved the problem of the lack of a Raga Naba. When the last Raga Naba died, the chief decided not to name a new one, but in order to placate the market *tengkouga*, he ordered his *tengsoba* to make sacrifices to it. It was believed that these sacrifices would be acceptable as long as the officiant did not bear the title of Raga Naba. The other functions of the Raga Naba, such as collecting goods for the chief and preserving peace in the market, were taken over by the Kos Naba and another servant of the chief. However, the Kos Naba had to be careful lest he overstep his authority in such a way as would acquaint the *tengkouga* with the real situation. In my case, the chief was acting by trying to get the Kos Naba to acquaint the people with my loss in as inconspicuous a manner as possible. The consensus was that the Kos Naba would have risked his life had he made any kind of announcement to the market people, because the *tengkouga* would have thought that he was the new Raga Naba, and if not contented with the people would have killed him. Under these circumstances, I withdrew my request. I discovered later that my pen was not lost but had been in the hut all the time.

Those chiefs who have succeeded in retaining their market officials even secretly have been able to maintain their control over public behavior there. The Mossi are fairly law-abiding despite the persistence among them of a warrior tradition. Every man who goes to market, or anywhere for that matter, usually carries a baton over his

000 spilled salt, /99/ four-leaf clovers, hares crossing the roadway, etc., been altogether eradicated by science?

751 No matter how things may stand among us, superstition reigns
789 supreme among the Mossi. Amulets and talismans are greatly valued. Anything may contribute to their manufacture, from the highly prized head of a crowned crane to that of a hawk or a gray heron. Anything may be found in the numerous little bags which hang down a native's neck, from scraps of paper with a few words of Arabic scribbled upon them which Moslem Marabouts distribute in large numbers throughout the Sudan, to cowries or the ashes of every possible and imaginable root. There are amulet bracelets which are worn on the left arm and which protect against seuya sorcerers (see p. 127) if their wearer remembers to push them swiftly up his arm when meeting one of those dreadful soul-eaters. There are bracelets which protect people in fights, and iron rings which act as safeguards against snake bite. Do you want to be welcomed and accepted by the man whose daughter you wish to marry? Wear a certain bracelet on your right arm, and your hopes will come true.

Amulets are worn around the head, neck, arm, or wrist. They are sewn to the cap or to the clothes, attached to the belt, to the pipe, to the staff, anywhere. The list would be endless if we tried to enumerate all the various kinds of amulets. The shoulder blade of a beef fastened to the end of a stick and an iron chain stretched across the soukala entrance protect its inhabitants against a host of misfortunes and unpleasant nocturnal visitations. People consider themselves fortunate to possess such easy protection against the numerous spirits prowling for victims.

787 If you have dogs, watch them carefully. If they are so careless as to lie down or relieve themselves in a basket, or to vomit within the hut, kill them fast or you will die yourself. If your bitch bears only one puppy, kill her pitilessly. When the gray heron flies over the huts shrieking, mothers beat on their jars for fear that their
783 children will get diarrhea. Hunters must not eat koba meat before
789 they engage in their sport, and if they want to gain skill, they must
224 secure certain roots, cook them in water, and wash their hands with the mixture.

777 Sunday is the day of the spirits, the day when koure is held. It is also a good day to build huts. There is nothing special about Monday, but you must be careful about Tuesday, for you never know what it

769 destroy the yield. And, depending on his attentions to them, they can give or take away the good health necessary to carry him through the arduous activity of the rainy season when work is hardest, the granaries nearly empty, and food in short supply. Separate ancestral spirits look out for different aspects of the well-being of the individual. Satisfying their various sacrificial requirements is both expensive and time-consuming, but their good will is essential to the success of the farmer, and it is in his own best interest to be attentive to their needs.

THE EARTH CUSTODIANS

793 A close relationship exists between the control of the water supply upon which the agricultural economy depends and the authority of the 776 earth custodians in their role as intermediaries with the several manifestations of Wennam, the Mossi deity. The deity itself is somewhat aloof from the affairs of men, but through his specific manifestations and with the intercession of the earth custodians (*Tenga Soba namba*), descendants of the indigenous inhabitants of the Yatenga, the individual propitiates Wennam in order to control the various forces of the natural and supernatural environment upon which the success of his economic or social endeavor is dependent. Tenga Wende, his terrestrial manifestation, and Tido Wende, which gives life to the vegetable kingdom, are the aspects of Wennam which are most frequently evoked; but Siguiri Wende, the deified first ancestor of the Mossi; Ki Wende, the millet god; and Saga Wende, the rain deity, are also frequently called upon for help.

Each Mossi village in the Yatenga is divided into one or more areas, 793 each of which is in the "command" of one of the village earth custodians. [36] Each of these areas contains both the dwelling of the Savadogo lineage of the earth custodian and the residence and farmlands of various "true" Mossi lineages. The head of each lineage maintains the good will of the terrestrial manifestation of the deity through the intercession of the earth custodian who "commands" his land. In some instances a lineage may own land under the authority of two different earth custodians; in this case offerings must be made at the shrine (*tenga*) of each.

793 The good fortune which may be secured through obeisance to the terrestrial manifestation of the deity (Tenga Wende) involves both 782 sacrifices and gifts of money to the earth custodian and abstention from acts offensive to the earth. For example, sexual intercourse may take [833 place only in a private courtyard or within the house. Violation of this 783 rule defiles the land and must be expiated through a special sacrifice and the payment of a fine to the earth custodian. Any lost object found in the 778 public way or in the bush is in the custody of the earth deity and must be turned over to the earth custodian to await the inquiry of the proper owners. If such objects are unclaimed, they are given to Tenga Wende

778 whose ancestors had ruled the soil of the territory. In the name of
782 the Moro Naba, he entrusted him with the task of offering all those gifts to the Earth so that the latter might favor the sovereign. Ouagadougou Naba performed the sacrifice before the door of his soukala.

When the Moro Naba went to war, he also ordered the chief
[F27] of Ougadougou to perform a sacrifice to the Earth. The bara indicated what should be sacrificed in order to insure victory, to "break" the villages that were to be attacked.

782 When rain failed to come, the Moro Naba would go to the hillock at Koumbé /sic/-Padanda, and have the head of the quarter offer a sacrifice (beef, sheep, chicken) to secure rain. If rain refused to come, the bara were consulted once more, and sacrifices were offered until it came.

776 The Mossi also have a sky god whom they call Ounam as well
782 as Naba Ouendé or Naba Ouondé, meaning "Sun Chief." This is a
794 trace of the sun cult, which is unusual in Black West Africa, all opinions to the contrary notwithstanding. /590/ The majority of the Mossi sacrifice much more to ancestors and to the Earth than to Naba Ouondé, who is to them a somewhat remote god.

794 It must be added that Lieutenant Desplagnes found among the
782 Mossi an esoteric cult of the sun, moon, and fire, which is peculiar to religious initiates (Ouango) whom we shall mention later.

"The Hougho-Ouango of the Mossi (among the Mossi, those priests reside in the villages of Boujema, Mani, Kondogho, Yolo, and Tio) sacrifice to the sun in order to bind it to the Earth. They do this morning and evening, sunrise and sunset, during the first week of the winter season, and every six days in the morning at sunrise thereafter.
[778] They also go to altars made of three conical stones and offer sacrifices and libations, always surrounded by the populace, family heads, drummers, and familial masks (ouango).

794 "Those priests tend the sacred fire throughout the year in a
372 small, highly adorned recess dug into one of their house walls. At
● 783 the end of the rainy season they will use it to light the great purifying bush fires.

794 "They perform sacrifices at every new moon, and they have
782 seven important feasts a year for their divinity. Finally, during the solar festivities, they use a cow's tail to tie down the sun to the earth and to bind its life-giving heat." (Le Plateau central nigérien /The Central Nigarian Plateau/, pages 275 and 276.)

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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mal lineage segment except the pretenders to the throne shaved their heads as a sign of mourning. The royal pretenders donned sheepskin mantles to signify that they were willing to "eat the nam." Once the ruler had been buried, the country settled down to an uneasy peace until the eighth day, when the funeral ceremonies took place. In the meantime, the Napoko symbolically held daily court, and the Tansoba's army acted as a check against the attempts of ambitious princes to seize power by force of arms.

Two days before the funeral, the Kamsaogho Naba selected the Kourita, who was to replace the Napoko as the living symbolic representative of the dead Mogho Naba. The person chosen to be Kourita was usually a young son of the deceased king, but since this person was banished from the capital, most of the royal wives hid their young children or fled the palace with them.[23] Once the Kourita had been chosen, the Kamsaogho Naba performed a ceremony (similar to those connected with the divine kings of the Near East) during which the youth was given one of his father's horses, dressed in his father's clothes, and given his father's youngest widow as a wife. He was then paid the homage due the Mogho Naba, and after receiving many gifts from the dignitaries, he was banished from Ouagadougou forever. As he went through the country, he was treated like the Mogho Naba and given many wives and presents. If he should chance to return to Ouagadougou or see the new Mogho Naba, either or both of them would be killed by the ancestors. Many Mossi districts seem to have been founded by exiled Kouritadamba. These men were undoubtedly among the numerous "elder" sons of past kings who are said to have "refused" the nam and gone to live in the districts now governed by their descendants.

The choice and banishment of the Kourita heralded the funeral rites, which were characterized by numerous animal sacrifices to the ancestors in the name of the deceased ruler. On the afternoon of the first day of the funeral, the Crown Prince mounted a horse and left the palace by the women's door. The Napoko then took the bridle of her brother's horse and led him and an immense crowd of cavalry, armed warriors, and musicians around the palace walls three times. After the third round, the Napoko demanded that her brother give her a personal servant as a present; he hesitated, but finally granted her request. The Napoko was then lifted up by the warriors, who shouted as they carried her home. The funeral thus came to an end.

All Mossi potentates tried to emulate the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou in matters of pomp, ceremony, and government.[24] Their courts were inferior to his, but only because they were less powerful and less wealthy.

533 their praises and beating fiercely on their drums in the hope of receiving a few cowries, kola nuts, or at least some beer.

326 The smiths (saba), by which is meant those who work with iron,
306 extract the metal from the ore and make it into hoes and hatchets. They sometimes work with wood, as in other parts of the Sudan, but usually this industry is carried out by members of another guild. The jewellers make bracelets, file teeth, repair worn hoes, etc. They are not smiths, properly speaking, and anyone may exercise their trade.

767 The undertakers (lada) offer gifts to the spirits of the deceased on the day of death or its anniversary (koure). They also lay the corpse in the grave, and if death was due to illness, it is impossible to proceed with the burial without them. But anyone may dig the grave and carry the corpse. We shall discuss the undertakers again when funerals are described.

Chapter 2. The Family

596 The structure of the Roman family and the power granted to the paterfamilias, its very foundation, have been greatly and justly admired. Something like the paterfamilias is to be found among the Mossi. Would that we also found the Roman matron! As we have seen above, every Mossi is subject to the Moro Naba, a province chief, a canton chief, and a village chief. He is also subject in a more immediate sense to the head of his family, and he can do nothing without his consent. If he wishes to marry, he consults the family head, in whose household his bride will lodge when she arrives in the village. On the other hand, the man who wishes to give his daughter in marriage never does so without consulting his family head, at whose house the girl will stay before she goes to live with her husband.

[551] The family is thus very tightly organized among the Mossi. Each family has a name which is seldom used; if one of its members was ever naba, the name derives from that of the first naba. Members of
[582 the same family may not intermarry, and usually they all have the
●784] same kisgou (prohibition), whether the term designates a totem, a taboo, or something else altogether. The head of the family is its oldest member. Upon his death, the authority is transferred not to his

776 tangandé in every detail either, for only the village may have a tangandé, and there does not seem to be any magic pact unless the sacrifices offered are considered as such a pact, which does not seem justified. The tangandé-animal is never sacrificed, and no special initiation takes place.

774 761 [775] The closest thing to totemism among the Mossi seems to be their concept of the human soul, and yet it is not, properly speaking, a totem in the sense indicated by these authors. Every man has a soul that lives on after death and takes the name of kyma, while during life it is called siga. Shortly before death it takes the name of toullé /85/ in Ouagadougou or toundo in Koupela, but siga, toundo, kyma [197] are one and the same thing, one and the same principle. According to the Mossi, this soul is an animal, invisible of course, a snake, a crocodile, a deer, a hare. The soul is related to this animal, it belongs to the same family, so that to kill a snake or a crocodile in a village where the soul of the inhabitants is a snake or a crocodile is to kill an inhabitant of the village; every individual related to the snake has a snake in the village to represent thim, and he will die when his soul-animal dies.

774 784 Yet, and this runs counter to the definitions of totemism, the individual expects no aid from this animal, never sacrifices to it, and never kills it himself to renew the kinship pact. A person whose soul is a crocodile is forbidden to kill crocodiles in his own village, but he may kill them elsewhere, although he may never eat them, while he may kill the tangandé animal as long as he does so outside the tangandé, and he may eat it at any time. Some people, when they [766] find a dead soul-animal of their family near their village, render it funeral honors, weep, wail, and bury it as one of their own, but they offer it no gifts and hold no kouré. Generally it is merely covered with earth. The most widespread soul-animals are a kind of snake (bosombodro) and the crocodile. Several families may have the same [502] one, and marriage, although exogamic, is not forbidden between members of these families.

774 754 The soul may leave the body and in fact leaves it often, especially during the night. If children had a good time in a certain place, if they enjoyed themselves at someone's house, the soul returns there at night. This is when the worst is to be feared from the sorcerers; they may seize the soul by surprise, and its unfortunate owner will die.

577 673 [839] insofar as they involve an offense to justice. /88/ I do not speak of unnatural practices, which are almost unknown. When theft, murder, even insults, blows and wounds are punished, they are punished as injustices. Calumny is abhorred, and it is a very serious insult to say that someone has slandered someone else. A Mossi will not forgive an insult against his mother, because it is prejudicial to the family honor and hence to himself. In dealing with the natives, therefore, it is necessary to be careful and not to commit any injustices. They are very sensitive to this; while they accept a just punishment without complaint when the offense has been proved, they reject indignantly any accusation which cannot be proved, even when it is well founded.

577 784 In addition to this general morality, many things are forbidden not because they are evil, but because they entail baleful consequences. The taboos (kisgou to the Mossi, from kisé, "to forbid") are almost innumerable. They may be divided into two classes: permanent kisgou, which affect the whole family, and personal and transitory kisgou.

784 The former usually consist of a prohibition to eat a certain animal or to do a certain thing. Thus some nabas are forbidden to meet, to see one another, and if they disregard this prohibition, one of them will die before the year is over. This prohibition is easily explained by the incessant wars which were formerly waged between important chiefs, and their fear of being poisoned or done away with in some other way by one of their enemies. Another instance: a Mossi goes to war on a frisky horse and he is forced to flee. His foes are about to seize him, and he owes his escape to the swiftness of his mount. When he returns home, he decrees that the horse will be a sacred animal to him and to his descendants, and that henceforth all his children and their children must treat horses well and may not eat their flesh under penalty of blindness or leprosy. This is the extent of the prohibition. The horse is not considered a guardian animal, no sacrifices are offered to it, and the Mossi do not call it tangandé (guardian animal of the village) or siga (soul-animal), but kisgou (prohibition).

784 262 Sometimes the kisgou affects only certain members of the family. A father has been ill after eating dog flesh on two or three occasions. He consults the sorcerer, who states that dog flesh is forbidden to him and to his children, but not to other members of his family. A person

784 born among the Peul, to whom dog flesh is forbidden, may have the
262 dog as kisgou. Sometimes the kisgou concerns only him, his son, and grandson and not his other descendants, because the son and grandson will follow his own soul, while the soul of the other descendants will follow that of his mother, their great-grandmother, to whom dog flesh is not forbidden. A sorcerer's reasoning against which there is no argument!

/89/ This kind of kisgou is the more binding of the two, but it may be terminated if the person who established it offers the proper sacrifices, or if one of his descendants, of his own will, releases himself and his children from it. Thus the family of the Saman'Naba, Prime Minister of Koupéla, has the hare as kisgou. When the naba saw his Christian brothers and son eat hare flesh with impunity, without becoming blind or leprous, he took to eating it himself without ill effects.

784 Parents teach their children about the various family kisgou and
869 instill the proper awe into them so they will not eat these animals.
753 Involuntary disregard of one's kisgou may lead to illness, and the sorcerer consulted indicates what has to be done and what sacrifice must be offered to the tangandé to obtain his forgiveness. If the slip was deliberate, if it showed contempt, no forgiveness is possible.

784 The second kind of kisgou is quite special and personal. It consists
758 of the various prohibitions imposed by the sorcerers on a sick person.
262 A certain kind of meat or sauce is forbidden to the patient, or he may not drink water containing millet flour, or he may not eat millet or bean cakes. This is how a poor rachitic child with a heart disease was successively forbidden practically every kind of food. His relatives had the greatest difficulty finding those foods that were not forbidden to him, and eventually he died of starvation. All such kisgou terminate of course with the illness that caused them, unless the disease is incurable and lasts to the end of the patient's life.

Chapter 2. The Cult

000 If we define religion with Mgr. Le Roy (1) as "The body of beliefs,

1. Mgr. Le Roy, op. cit., p. 49.

527 observed everywhere. In Bélousa, it is called kytouara. The name kibsa, on the other hand, is known everywhere, but special circumstances may prevent its celebration. Thus the warriors of one canton were defeated on that day, consider the kibsa unpropitious, and no longer celebrate it.

mention briefly.

The naky (naba ky, "naba's millet") is the naba's personal feast. It is always celebrated on a Saturday, like all the naba's ceremonies. It is proclaimed at market by the village-crier twenty-one days beforehand. Seven days before the feast, the naba sacrifices a goat on [182] the threshing floor and eats it on the spot after it has been roasted. The three nabas assigned as keepers of the naba's millet thresh a little grain, and every day they return to the grounds to thresh a little more until the day of the festivities. The quantity of millet thus flailed does not fill more than two baskets.

On the day of the feast, early in the morning, the high ministers go with their retinues to greet the naba: "May God be with you; may God grant you to see the year through!" A procession is formed and proceeds to the naba's threshing floor. His sisters and wives take part of the millet threshed on the previous days and carry it /98/, shrieking and dancing, to a granary located outside the naba's soukala. Then everyone drinks copiously.

Two days later, in the evening, another ceremony takes place. The naba's relatives go to the threshing floor and wrap the remaining millet in grass stalks; the bundle is carried to the sound of drums with jesting, shrieks, and dancing, as on the day of a burial. The millet is placed in the granary alongside the grain brought in on the day of the feast, and a sheep and a chicken are sacrificed nearby and [182] shared among those present. The naba does not partake of this flesh. Actually he hides throughout the ceremony, for if he saw the pro- [184] cession he would die.

What is the origin of this custom, which reminds the naba that in spite of all his power he is mortal like his subjects? What is the origin of that other custom, mentioned earlier, of building near his dwelling the hut where he will be buried? The Romans used to remind their

173

1. Pogotoenga, or rather Pogotoéga, means "woman of the baobab, " and comes from pogo, meaning "woman, " and toéga, meaning "baobab" /a species of tree/. One may wonder what relation there is between this name and the fact that Pogotoenga was dedicated to virginity, if one ignores the customs of the Sudanese. A woman dedicated
568 to a baobab (a powerful vegetal divinity) is considered the spouse of the baobab. Therefore, she cannot enter into marriage with a man, which means forced celibacy. It is true that certain Blacks (for instance, the Dialonké of the Faranah circle, French Guinea) consider that a woman married to a spirit owes him only her spirit or spiritual form, and that her material body is free. From this arises the fact that with those Blacks, and some others as well, women-fetishes, women married to spirits or divinities, are actually prostitutes and practice
• [786] prostitution. They are, besides, very rare. In short, they are allowed to prostitute themselves but not to marry. It is sacred prostitution, well known to the whole of oriental and Greco-Roman antiquity. Thus, virginity (sacred), on the one hand, and prostitution (sacred), on the other, are rather strangely derived from the same order of ideas.

173 her birth as being a stranger to her sex, and he had her given masculine clothes.

"Pogotoenga developed quickly. At the age of ten, she reached a degree of incomparable beauty, and at about the same period, torn by the ardors of puberty, she succeeded—despite the strict vigilance of the old man, anxious to remain faithful to his oath—in fleeing the paternal household.

Although pursued for a long time, she managed to evade all /8/ attempts at capturing her, until the day when, wandering in what is

653 considered forced labor since this work is done in the common interest.

[77] Installation of a Market

366 787 782 As in many other circumstances, the Mossi first consult soothsayers when they desire to establish a market. The Moaga [singular of Mossi] is convinced that invisible spirits are everywhere, behind his house, under the trees, in the fields and groves, and even in uninhabited places, so above all he is anxious to obtain the good will of these beings whose anger is fearful. It is, therefore, only after consulting several soothsayers, who use various types of divination (with cowries, stones, sand, etc.), that the village chief has chickens and livestock sacrificed on the site where he wishes to set up the new market. The naba chooses two or three candidates from among his followers, and the soothsayers are required to indicate which of these has the best prospect of good fortune and a promising future. This person will be the one who performs the sacrifice. The victims are furnished, in theory, by the village or canton chief, unless he decides to call on the populace. In this case, a small assessment is made on some of the notables, and the proceeds are used to buy chickens, a goat, or a sheep.

366 782 In any event, the canton chief is not permitted to appropriate the animals in the villages or sections under his jurisdiction as would be done in the case of sacrifices offered for the general welfare of the country.

The individual chosen by the bagba [soothsayers] presents himself at the site, accompanied by a more or less [78] impressive crowd, depending on the importance of the village. The women bring fritters and other provisions.

The following sacramental words are pronounced: "Ya sida Ting' Naba yeta nan lougoul dagh, Naba zidwendé Bad kom deghin kon zigh tinghin damba, tib kon yaramba, tib regh kon saramba, tiya gnimassem lad ratta, tib regh lass zim-yellé, tiya nogoam la tigue koada soaba lad zoïta." A literal translation follows. "This is true, the canton chief wishes to install a market on this spot. Oh God, the Sun, here are water and animals for zigh tinghin damba (people who died childless), for grandparents and ancestors. We ask

366 for good fortune and health. Prevent all bloodshed in this market.
782 We also fear those who are quarrelsome and those who talk too much, those who provoke disorder." The chicken is the first victim to be sacrificed, and if the offering is accepted, it must have first fallen on its back and only then turned over face downward (this means that the gods of the place will protect the naba and the persons who will frequent the market). Next the goat or sheep is killed.

The new market is opened immediately after the sacrifice. Those present buy the women's fritters. Ordinarily, Mossi markets
[443] are held every three days. The news travels rapidly that such-and-such a village has a market, and thus the business of the market gradually grows.

Collection of fees. It is only later on, one or even two years
366 after the installation of his new market and when [79] it is success-
651 ful, that the canton chief appoints a yaguinga (grandson, or, more
[601] accurately in native terms, a sister's son (nephew)or son's son (grandson), of the naba or of a member of his family) or a Gourounsi captive to act as collector of market fees. (We shall list below the various fees for a place in the market as they were collected for the benefit of the naba before the arrival of the French.)

366 Transfer of the market. Upon the death of a naba (the emperor, a vassal chief, or even the chief of the village where the market is held), the market is temporarily set up in another place. In large towns, such as Ouagadougou, for example, there may be as many markets as there are sections. These temporary markets are called kim'dagha (market of the kimsé, that is, of the deceased).

366 When a new naba has been named, the market is moved back
782 to its former site and the reinstallation calls for new sacrifices of fowl and livestock. That was why in 1897, when the market at Ouagadougou was being re-established, the emperor asked the captain who was in command of the post to provide a cow to be sacrificed along with a sheep and a rooster which he himself provided.

Likewise, whenever a hyena has run through the market (its
366 presence is discovered either by the tracks left by the animal or by
825 consulting the soothsayers), just as happens when a naba dies, the
● 787 market must be moved elsewhere for a few days. It is believed that if [80] a brawl should occur after a hyena had passed through the market, there would certainly be a death.

567 The only slaves who have remained faithful to their masters or, more exactly, who have preferred to remain in Mossi territory after their emancipation, are nearly all Gourounsi.

The Gourounsi Captives

567 727 648 Sonrhaï [Songhai] forces led by Alpha Haïnon, Gazeré, and Babato used to raid Gourounsi country. They reduced a large number of Gourounsi to slavery, immediately making soldiers of the more enterprising among them to fight against their own people and selling or exchanging the rest for horses. Mossi country has always had a large supply of horses, so the Mossi used to go to Léo to trade their horses for slaves or simply to trade their slaves to the Sonrhaï for cowries. [439]

567 648 The Sonrhaï chiefs maintained good relations with the emperor of the Mossi, Naba Sanum. That is why they spared the Gourounsi village chiefs who had taken refuge with the Mogho Naba.

Boukary-koutou, the future Naba Wobgo, enjoyed the [87] regard and friendship of the Sonrhaï since he aided them in their wars against the Gourounsi in exchange for an ample share of the booty and slaves. We have shown that the large number of Gourounsi whom he brought with him to Ouagadougou contributed mightily to his being named emperor of the Mossi.

567 651 During the reigns of Naba Koutou, Sanum, and Wobgo, there were special slave markets attached to the regular markets at Ouagadougou and other large centers. A fee of 1,000 cowries was collected for the benefit of the naba for each captive sold, regardless of sex.

567 302 787 When owners desired to sell a slave, they first shaved his head, and it was only after the hair had begun to grow again that he was taken to market. The cutting of the hair derives from a superstition among the Mossi.

Depending on where the hair starts to grow, whether well back on the head, at the forehead, or near the ears, the interpretation varies as to how the slave is to be regarded: as a dangerous being; as a lucky or unlucky influence on the family owning him.

We shall not now go into details since such beliefs will be discussed in a special section.

The Kourita

43 As we have just seen, the child who is made kourita is exiled and is no longer regarded as a member of the family. He is himself the Naba, and he must never see the new emperor. His brothers may visit him, and he may visit them.

1. The kourita is washed with the remainder of the water that was used to wash the body of the deceased king.

2. He is carried through the same opening (vonré) as was used to carry out the body of the dead naba.

3. He is given the woman with whom the chief last had sexual relations before he was stricken by illness.

4. He is also given the horse which the deceased king rode every Friday.

[127] He is dressed in the last garments worn by the deceased. He is given one or two servitors and as many grooms and is then sent to the Kilwin Naba (chief of a hamlet near Bissiga, three kilometers from Ouagadougou), who is required to give him hospitality for about a month.

In the old days, the power of a kourita was almost unlimited. Indeed, during his stay at Kilwin, he had the right to pillage, to ruin everything, and to live like a true potentate. Naturally he always had plenty of willing helpers to aid him in plundering the property of the unfortunate Mossi. The kourita traveled about through many cantons where the kombemba (plural of kombéré) paid him all the honors due the Mogho Naba. It was during these wanderings that he finally chose a permanent residence.

[127] The new Mogho Naba is obliged to satisfy all the desires of the kourita to avoid being visited by him, an omen of disaster. Indeed, the Mossi believe that if the kourita should visit the new Mogho Naba, the latter would die.

The Enthronement -- Before and After

As we have already seen, once the burial is completed, one walks around the house of the deceased king. Then, the following persons are summoned to Ouagadougou:

1. Loumbila Naba.

584 visits and presents a few small gifts. This state of affairs goes on for one or several years. Finally the head of the family calls together his little council and makes known his intention of giving So-and-So's daughter to X... from such-and-such village. There is seldom a refusal since he has sole authority to give the girls in marriage. The young man is then sent to make the acquaintance of his prospective in-laws. As soon as he is presented, he makes a small gift (usually [175] 100 to 1,000 cowries are given).

If the girl is the oldest daughter, her fiancé is expected to bring a sheep, a hoe, a guinea hen, and some beer.

585 The young man is then told the date on which he may send for his fiancée. He has nothing further to do, except to make some preparations and to wait. When the girl is brought to him, he kills some chickens and a goat if he has one, and he has food prepared for the girl's escort. He must also give cowries to them, the amount depending on his own resources.

In many villages the girls married in this way never leave their husbands for fear of being cursed by their parents and condemned never to see their native villages again.

574 Finally, if the wife gives birth, the husband sends a chicken to
851 the village elder and the wife goes there to visit.

● 787 Girls who are hostile to a husband. These are girls whom the
584 soothsayers point out as hostile to a husband.

Although these girls are promised at an early age, just like other girls, they must not know that they are engaged, and if their fiancés should by chance come to visit, they are treated like ordinary guests who have just happened by.

583 When such a girl reaches seventeen, her fiancé arranges with her family to send her to the waterhole, the well, or the nearest market.

[176] The fiancé selects a group of his strongest friends, plies them with beer, and sends them off with instructions to abduct his fiancée on the way. The latter, accompanied by a woman or by other girls, is surrounded unexpectedly and seized by strong arms despite the resistance, often quite vigorous, of her brothers or her companions. She is then taken to the home of her husband.

A few days later some people are designated to take the girl's effects to her husband's home and to receive the traditional gifts.

843 pregnancy in a woman. It is also known that the woman will give birth in nine months, but since it is impossible to be sure of the date of delivery, the pregnant woman is watched over constantly and is under the surveillance of the old women. In a general way, nature is allowed to take its course, but some people prefer to con-
[781 sult the soothsayers and the priests and to give alms and sacrifices
782] to avoid a miscarriage.

During pregnancy, women are forbidden to eat honey and, in general, any sweet foods.

Seguene-vando (from seguene, "to wear a skirt," and vando, "leaves, branches"). A few months after the cessation of menstruation, the pregnant woman is sent into the kim-dogo (hut of the kimsé, manes of the ancestors) at the home of the family elder. There she is completely disrobed, and branches are tied around her loins.

844 Delivery. Delivery takes place in the woman's own hut. There is no special preparation. [190] Old women who have had much practice help the mother while others heat water in which to cleanse the newborn child of all impurities.

No one except the old women is present during the delivery.
[842] Women who have not yet borne children are sent away, and for good reason since the sight of the birth process might make them sterile.

Finally, if the afterbirth does not come out at the time of birth or soon after, there are certain special measures taken to hasten its emergence.

846 Three or four days after the delivery, depending on whether the child is a boy or a girl, the mother, who has so far remained indoors, goes out for the first time.

She carries a sickle to ward off ghosts and other evil spirits.

The new mother's co-wives and relatives bring her safandé (soap), kamé (karite butter), and kalgo (soumbala); others give her cowries. The father has a sheep or rooster killed and a millet cake prepared.

The woman who acted as midwife is sent a ball of sagbo (millet mush) and a chicken leg. The heads of the mother and child are
[302] partially shaved, and there is nothing else to do but to choose a name for the child. [191]

553 Choice of a name. Among the Mossi, a child's personal name depends on circumstances which preceded the birth or on an important

764 554 [787] The sinddo is performed only at the death of an aged person. It involves cutting up a living animal whose meat, as soon as it is cooked, is eaten by all the members of the bereaved family. During this operation a strong person holds the animal's muzzle shut; it is believed that a single cry from the creature means certain death for someone in the family.

The tomb of aged persons has the form of a well at the top; it is rectangular below, or at least wider, so the corpse may lie in it.

Ikanda (married man). The ceremony is much less impressive for a young husband. The deceased is simply washed, wrapped in a Peulh secco, and buried. A few chickens are killed. There are no dances at the second kouré.

Heads of families. After the deceased has been washed, dressed, wrapped in a mat or secco, and [196] laid out on the threshold of his hut (1), the lagda (undertaker) offers him the blood

1. The venré (opening). We have already seen that among the nakomsé a hole was cut through a wall of the house or through the wall surrounding the courtyard and that through this opening the body was carried to its last resting place.

In general, this is done for the father of a family. The body is laid out by the opening, and his eldest son and all his daughters (the daughters of the deceased and those of his brothers) must pass through the opening ahead of the corpse. On this occasion the girls tie branches around their hips in lieu of skirts, and the son removes his loincloth. The children of the deceased are held by the arms and legs and put by turn through the opening, in such a way that their bodies brush against the corpse.

The eldest son, by passing safely through the venré, proves to those present

Chapter 13

Dwellings of the Mossi Chiefs

342 554 787 We have seen, in an earlier chapter under "Labor Duties and Obligations of Mossi Subjects to their Chiefs," how the dwelling of the naba is built and repaired. We know also that the naba like all his subjects, consults a soothsayer to select the site for his dwelling. He needs to know whether he should keep his father's establishment, build a new one on the site of his grandfather's home, or finally, if the spirits are not favorable, whether he might build on unoccupied land.

342 554 The establishment of a naba differed from those of his subjects in former times in the great number of huts included within it. Also, there was an empty ostrich egg on the roof of each hut.

The sketch which follows shows the home of a naba before the arrival of the French. Such houses exist even today in certain areas.

There were no native houses with terraces or clay roofs. To be sure, the Mogho Naba had one, but although it was copied from the Djenné style, [214] it had, aside from a few doors and tiny windows, only a single opening in the ceiling the size of a canari. This was supposed to admit air to the inhabitants, and it was blocked up during the winter.

The Ouidi Naba (first minister) and the Kamsaongo Naba (chief eunuch) also had tata, but they were smaller. The former kept the sacred water (nam-tibo) and the latter the wealth of his master, the emperor.

342 177 A description of the typical dwelling of the Moaga will be given later. At present, especially since the installation of the [French] government at Ouagadougou, virtually all of the province and canton chiefs have dwellings more or less of the European type. The present tata of the Mogho Naba, the Baloum Naba, and the Ouidi Naba at Ouagadougou, those of the Konkistenga Naba at Imasshoro and at Zoétigomdé, and that of the Lallé Naba at Koudougou -- to mention only the principal ones -- prove that real progress has been made in housing by the Mossi chiefs.

342 177 Of course, like all European houses in the region under discussion, these buildings are, unfortunately, made of mud bricks, but is that not the rule in French West Africa?

342 In the homes of those two ministers of the emperor who are most advanced, the reception rooms are arranged in such a way that callers benefit from a constant flow of fresh air through large openings. During periods of extreme heat, a punkah operated [417] by a sogoné in the middle [216] of the room provides air for the panting visitors. The wall, always whitewashed with kaolin, bears an [353] an advertisement or two, the picture of an important chief, or perhaps some family photographs, which enliven the apartments a bit. All of this shows a real anxiety on the part of the chiefs to develop along the lines of progress and civilization.

In recent years, some of the notables at Ouagadougou have built houses with clay roofs, not so much to live in as to safeguard their family valuables against fire and theft.

Finally, it should be noted that custom requires every new naba for the first three years of his reign to live in songodo, straw huts, which will be described later. Only then may he build with clay.

Dwellings of Mossi Subjects

342 787 Temporary dwelling. Before building his conjugal hut, the young man consults a soothsayer in order to make sure that the site chosen is not haunted by evil spirits and that he will have happiness and good fortune if he lives there.

342 782 Even if the soothsayer finds nothing especially alarming about the site, he always orders a chicken or other animal to be sacrificed or alms to be given. The young man arranges with the village elder [217] or, if he is a [Nioniosse], with the Tingsoba (from tenga "earth," and soba, "master"), to sacrifice the victim.

The Tingsoba goes to the site and calls for two small gourds which contain ordinary water and water mixed with flour, respectively. He invokes all his ancestors and pours the water on the ground, praying God to accept it for His wife, Tinga, who is absorbing it. Then he kills the chicken, saying: "On -- on,

535 or there will be falls which are inevitable when one of the girls is too robust.

535 539 Here, chosen at random, is one of the kiguibtobo songs:

M'Ma ho, ka M'Ma warla y e
Lebin wa regh'big' tim boudguin
n'di Mossa yarbate ribo

"Mother, oh, my mother,
Come quickly and take my child,
For I am going to the next village
To consume pitilessly the goods of
these wretched Mossé." (1)

1. Mossi.

[241] Chapter 16

Agriculture

241 787 Selection of land to be tilled. As he is wont to do in all important matters, the Moaga entrusts to a soothsayer the responsibility of choosing the land to be cultivated. In actual fact, he chooses it himself, but the diviner must tell him whether or not it is haunted by spirits and what sacrifices are advisable to protect him from evil spirits.

The soothsayer always warns him of the presence of spirits (kinkirsi) and prescribes the necessary sacrifices and alms.

241 782 Sacrifices. The new occupant calls for the head of the family or, if he is a Nionioga, for the Tengsoba, who is in charge of sacrifices. The following sacramental words are pronounced: "A zaguel tib reg' noag'la zom kom kon Naba zidwende, tib kon zig'tinguin damba, tib kon timpelem, tib kon yaramba, kon saramba, tib reg'kon zig, kinkirga ta wa me man baou ki, on -- on tib reg'koin gnimassem, lass' pogh'banga, lasse zoug'banga, naore banga ..." Translation: "On the part of X, I offer this rooster and this water with flour to the sun god (Zidwendé), to the

241 782 brothers of the family heads who died childless (zig'tinguin damba), and to the ancestors and grandparents. May they see to it that these offerings are accepted by the kinkirsi (spirits of the fields) and that the latter favor X with [242] good health and large crops of millet and beans."

[787] Once these sacrifices have been made -- if they are accepted, the rooster falls on its back -- the new owner has his land cleared and awaits the winter season.

Field work. As soon as the first rains have come, the owner goes once more to the field and has another rooster killed and offered to the kinkirga [singular of kinkirsi] with a plea for gnimassem (good health) and large harvests which he will consume with new wives and new children (pog'palla, la bipalla). Afterward he sows large and small millet, peanuts, beans, etc.

If the year has been a good one and the Moaga has had fine crops, he is happy and in good time will remember the spirit of the fields. For the moment he is busy transporting the millet to the temporary granary (lourgho).

Threshing millet. Before his millet is threshed, the Moaga must make a sacrifice to the zéiga (threshing floor). The ritual words differ from those described above only in the following words: "X asks that this millet, which he will eat, be good for him and that he eat it in peace and good health with his family." (Kita ri ki wan ne lafi layelsomdé né a zak'ramba.)

241 476 [252] [243] He then appeals to the young men of the village for help in threshing his grain. For the occasion he has a great deal of beer prepared and quantities of beans (benga) cooked. The beans are prepared with sesame (sinni). After the job is done, two children between the ages of six and seven are called, and their hands filled with the bean mixture. They must run around the threshing floor while eating some of the beans. The rest will be scattered to the winds. They must stop three times for breath and look at each other. Then the remaining beans are distributed among the workers. They are also given beer.

423 Do owners retain rights over abandoned land? In order to occupy abandoned land; permission must first be obtained from the former owner, who retains his rights over the land. He may reclaim it at

685 entitled to complain and merely removed the animal. If the damage was caused by a cow or donkey, the owner of the field had to obtain a witness and was entitled to recover damages.

425 Whoever found an object of small value, such as a knife or even a garment, was entitled to keep it, but anything valuable, such as a sheep, a donkey, or, all the more, a cow, had to be handed over to the naba and became his property.

684 837 The province chief alone could pass sentence on a rapist. He was beaten and put in irons, the girl was returned to her family, and, if she gave birth, the child was killed. If the girl had been promised to the naba, the rapist was put to death. An adulterer caught in flagrante delicto could be killed by the deceived husband, but if he had not been caught in flagrante delicto, if he had managed to run away, or if he had merely been denounced by the woman, the deceived husband could do nothing. A girl's seducer usually became her husband if she gave birth, but he had to provide another girl for her betrothed.

791 ●787 837 The province chief had a special procedure to insure the faithfulness of his numerous wives and his pages. When a wife or page did not behave properly, the Poënaba was supposed to point them out to the naba. He proceeded as follows. Every Friday the Poënaba left his village on foot, a whip in his hand. A servant preceded him with a leather satchel containing charms. No one was allowed to come near him. Everyone fled into the bush, and the path he had followed was closed to other people until they learned that the dreadful man had reached the home of the naba. The wives were gathered together. The Poënaba filled a large gourd with water, poured in his ingredients, and sat before it. The women came to him one by one and cast their reflection in the water. The Poënaba looked in and claimed to recognize those wives who were faithful and those who were not. The former were allowed to go free, but they were often beaten to remove any possible inclination to unfaithfulness. Those designated as unfaithful were seized and had to denounce their accomplice. Both the man and woman were clubbed to death. If the woman pointed out as guilty had no accomplice or refused to name him, she alone was killed. Women still point out with terror the place of execution. This procedure was very barbarous, and its abuses were flagrant. To avoid an accusation which would cost them /27/ their lives, the poor women were ready to do anything, and they presented the Poënaba with all the gifts they could gather in order to be spared.

000 help each other. If they are sometimes, indeed too often, fleeced by middlemen—and it would seem that the various European administrations, no matter what their nationality, should prevent such speculations in their own best interests—If the natives are fleeced, a European ignorant of the customs and the language would be fleeced all the more. Who would guard his herds during his absence; who would lead them to far markets if he stayed home? It is difficult to find a native [181] who can be fully trusted. At present, however, trading in livestock is the only possible source of profit in the country.

The forthcoming railroad will soon change trade conditions and promote the interests of the Europeans without undermining those of the natives. This is to be desired, because Mossi country will only come fully into its own when its products can be exported. The natives were too long isolated as a result of their continuous warfare, and the nabas, it must be said, were too inclined to monopolize all the goods, for trade to develop in a significant way. The French peace, by making the roads safe, has already done much for the country; it will achieve even more when the railroad which is now cutting across Mossi country links it on the one hand to the Ivory Coast and on the other hand to the Niger Colony. Trade will then no longer be carried out exclusively with the Germans and the British, and as soon as native products find sure channels of export, the raising of livestock and agriculture itself will be greatly extended. The Mossi are not averse to trade. [181 They actually seem to possess a real knack for it, which until now 439] they have had no opportunity to exercise freely. They have not yet taken full advantage of their transactions, and this is why they seemed to some observers to have no aptitude for trade. They will adapt to it, as they already are.

/65/ Chapter 3. Hygiene, Disease, Death, and Burial

828 Part of life, especially the life of a Black, is spent in sleep, but 774 the slumberer is sometimes disturbed by dreams that are more or less 787 extraordinary. The Mossi attribute dreams to ancestral and other spirits. They also say that the soul leaves the body during sleep and does the things witnessed in the dream. Sorcerers are consulted to find out what caused the dreams and how to cope with the bad omens.

764 be worn, others for carrying jars or to take to market. A woman is also offered a gourd to cook sauce, along with pepper, spices of all sorts, and salt. In addition, she is given the spindle that she used to spin cotton, but first its stem is broken; in fact, everything which is offered to the dead is previously damaged or torn. Wealthy friends also present clothes, and the others toss cowries to the dead. The undertakers carefully cover the smaller hole with blankets to prevent the cowries /71/ from falling into the pit. Every once in a while they allow a few to slide down, but they keep the greater part to themselves. When everyone has tossed in his offering, the undertakers take one, two, or several pieces of clothing; this is their share, and the practice is sanctioned by custom. They also take a few handfuls of cowries from the mourning apron, and someone hastens to count them. All eyes are anxiously focussed on the person who counts them, [80] 787 for either a man or a woman will die soon, depending on whether the number of cowries comes nearer to 333 or to 444.

Finally the undertakers close up the pit. If the deceased was an old woman, the smaller opening is plugged with one of the large jars in which she prepared millet beer; if a man, it is covered with a small jar or sometimes, especially if the opening is larger, with sticks laid as close together as possible. The corpse is thus completely isolated in its funeral chamber. The larger hole is then filled up with the soil removed from the pit. A jar and an earthen sauce pot are placed on top in the case of a woman, an earthen pot and a large stone in the case of a man.

Everyone withdraws to drink, eat, and rest. There is no dancing that night, but they make up for it on the following day and even on the day after that, if the wealth of the deceased permits it. On the second day after the funeral in the case of an old man, on the third day for an old woman, the children and younger brothers of the deceased shave their heads, go to thank those who have helped them, and remove their mourning clothes. There will be no further preoccupation with the deceased until the anniversary festivities or koure.

[184] Such are the ceremonies which usually attend the death and burial of a married man or woman, those who have children. We say "usually," for all these complex ceremonies may be curtailed and modified to a greater or lesser extent, depending on the region and the customs peculiar to one family or another.

776 The naba does so more than anyone else; on the Day of the Dead
782 (basra) he always makes sacrifices there, and usually the village elders accompany him.

776 A village may have several tangandé /sic/, but the protective animal or animals—most often there are two—are the same in all the
778 sacred groves, of which there are as many as there are tangandé /sic/. Nothing may be taken from a sacred grove; everything in it is sacred. No wood may be cut down, and it is forbidden even to gather dead wood which has fallen by itself. By the same token, the dry grass may not be set afire, not even in the area around the grove. If all precautions have been duly taken and fire nevertheless spreads to the sacred grove, nothing can be done and the village people are not held responsible. On the other hand, outsiders are prevented, by force if necessary, from taking anything whatever from the sacred grove. If the outsider is powerful and cannot be restrained, expiatory sacrifices are offered after his departure.

776 The tangandé is thus a guardian animal, and yet some tangamma
754 retaliate by afflicting the guilty party with diseases. If one of the sorcerers who eat souls (seuya) offers gifts to a tangandé, the latter will help him and refuse to restore the soul which has been entrusted to it, unless more substantial gifts are forthcoming. One may pray to a tangandé and make a vow, for example, promise it a goat or sheep if it kills a designated enemy. The goat is purchased pending the enemy's death. Sometimes the tangandé takes its time and
[781] several years go by. The spirit is chided and told to hurry, and finally decides to do away with the person in question. Then the goat is sacrificed.

776 Some people say that all tangamma come from the Fada N'Gourma
778 region, where the father of all tangamma is to be found. It is the
787 sorcerer's task to point out the tangamma and the place of their residence. Once, for example, a village had just been founded. The elders had found a piece of ground propitious to agriculture, in the vicinity of water, and had built their huts. At the beginning /84/ of the winter season, when the time came for sowing, they shared out the neighboring bush and proceeded to lay out their fields. One day a leopard driven out of its lair took to flight before their eyes and repaired to a thicket. Immediately the people were called, the thicket surrounded and searched thoroughly. No leopard was found. On the following day the same episode took place in the same spot. This happened three times, and every time it proved impossible to

776 find the leopard, which had suddenly vanished. The puzzled elders,
778 like the good Mossi they were, consulted the sorcerer who stated that
787 the leopard was their tangandé, and the thicket to which it had repaired was its sacred grove. He also prescribed the sacrifices to be offered.

776 As the blood of the victims flowed, the children saw a turtle
787 walking toward the sacred grove and tried to seize it. The elder prevented then from doing so and again resorted to the superior knowledge of the sorcerer to find out what this might possibly mean: a turtle entering the sacred grove during a sacrifice to the tangandé! The sorcerer pronounced the following oracle: the turtle is the child of the tangandé and thus becomes sacred to our village. Since that time the village has had the leopard and turtle as its tangandé /sic/.

776 The tangandé may actually be a stone or a tree which is regarded as the guardian of the village, but this is more unusual. The tangandé might perhaps be considered as a sort of village totem. If we take Salomon Reinach's definition of the totem as "the animal, plant, or more rarely mineral or heavenly body which the clan acknowledges as an ancestor, a protector, and a rallying sign," (3) we find that the

3. Salomon Reinach, Cultes, mythes et religion /Cults, Myths, and Religion/, p. 81.

tangandé is usually an animal, a guardian animal, but that it is not regarded as an ancestor and it does not serve as a rallying sign, for
[621] several villages may have the same tangamma /sic/—many have the crocodile and boa—without considering this as a bond between them.

Monseigneur Le Roy defines totemism as follows: "An institution consisting essentially of a magic pact, which reflects and constitutes a kinship, mystical and supernatural in nature, by which an invisible spirit in the visible shape of an animal, or, in exceptional cases, of a plant, mineral, or astral body, is associated with an individual, a family, a clan, a tribe, or a secret society for the purpose of reciprocal services." (4) This definition does not correspond to the

4. Mgr. Le Roy, La religion des primitifs /Primitive Religion/, p. 132.

000 spilled salt, /99/ four-leaf clovers, hares crossing the roadway, etc., been altogether eradicated by science?

751 No matter how things may stand among us, superstition reigns
789 supreme among the Mossi. Amulets and talismans are greatly valued. Anything may contribute to their manufacture, from the highly prized head of a crowned crane to that of a hawk or a gray heron. Anything may be found in the numerous little bags which hang down a native's neck, from scraps of paper with a few words of Arabic scribbled upon them which Moslem Marabouts distribute in large numbers throughout the Sudan, to cowries or the ashes of every possible and imaginable root. There are amulet bracelets which are worn on the left arm and which protect against seuya sorcerers (see p. 127) if their wearer remembers to push them swiftly up his arm when meeting one of those dreadful soul-eaters. There are bracelets which protect people in fights, and iron rings which act as safeguards against snake bite. Do you want to be welcomed and accepted by the man whose daughter you wish to marry? Wear a certain bracelet on your right arm, and your hopes will come true.

Amulets are worn around the head, neck, arm, or wrist. They are sewn to the cap or to the clothes, attached to the belt, to the pipe, to the staff, anywhere. The list would be endless if we tried to enumerate all the various kinds of amulets. The shoulder blade of a beef fastened to the end of a stick and an iron chain stretched across the soukala entrance protect its inhabitants against a host of misfortunes and unpleasant nocturnal visitations. People consider themselves fortunate to possess such easy protection against the numerous spirits prowling for victims.

● 787 If you have dogs, watch them carefully. If they are so careless as to lie down or relieve themselves in a basket, or to vomit within the hut, kill them fast or you will die yourself. If your bitch bears only one puppy, kill her pitilessly. When the gray heron flies over the huts shrieking, mothers beat on their jars for fear that their
783 children will get diarrhea. Hunters must not eat koba meat before
789 they engage in their sport, and if they want to gain skill, they must
224 secure certain roots, cook them in water, and wash their hands with the mixture.

777 Sunday is the day of the spirits, the day when koure is held. It is also a good day to build huts. There is nothing special about Monday, but you must be careful about Tuesday, for you never know what it

777 may hold in store. Wednesday is unreservedly bad, and you must not start a job or leave for a trip on that day. Thursday and Friday are propitious to weddings, especially Friday. On Saturday the sorcerers take the day off and hold no consultations. In addition, every individual has his own lucky day and his unlucky day, which he must know and bear in mind.

778 Some stones are said to have fallen from heaven. On the day when they fall, the village chief immediately covers all the jars in his hut which contain charms. If he knocks one down in his haste, he will die within the year. These stones are held sacred. Those who can lift them /100/ have nothing to fear, but those who cannot are soon to die. People may also interrogate such a stone, whose reply is considered favorable if they manage to lift it, unfavorable if they cannot do so. Passersby toss millet stalks onto the stone, or twigs cut along the way, or sometimes cowries, to procure success in their endeavors.

821 Comets are omens of war or of the death of a great chief. When Halley's comet appeared on the horizon, the chickens, goats, and sheep had a bad time of it. It was necessary to ward off all the possible misfortunes. It is true that the comet was magnificent, spreading for several days from one end of the sky nearly to another, and it is understandable that the natives should be upset. We have heard that many people were troubled in our civilized countries, where the comet could not be seen in all its splendor. In spite of all those sacrifices, the chief of one of the principal cantons in the province, the naba of Ouitenga, died that very year.

We must limit our enumeration, and these few examples, which could easily be multiplied, suffice to make clear the role of amulets and superstitions in the life of this people.

801 One further word on superstitions. The reader may have noticed that the numbers three and four and their composites have recurred constantly according to the sex of the person spoken of. Three is reserved for men and four for women. In the sacrifices, God-king male is called three times. God-king female four times. The cord of the charm has three or four knots according to sex; mothers mourn their children for 33 or 44 days. A dead man receives 333 or 3, 333 cowries, a dead woman 444 or 4, 444, etc.

302 Every time a native changes his status, his hair must be removed. Babies are shaved before they are given a name, girls before they come to their husband, women when they are transferred to a new

644 "In addition to these dignitaries, the Moro Naba is surrounded with a veritable army of soroné (pages), samandé (bodyguards), ourkima (grooms), and jussaba (eunuchs)."

Some explanations are in order concerning the soroné. They are young boys or adolescents, from seven or eight to fifteen years old, who are to be found not only around the Moro Naba but around all Mossi chiefs, no matter who they may be, ministers, dignitaries, canton chiefs, and even village chiefs. These chiefs obtain them, as we saw earlier, by claiming the first-born son as well as the first-born daughter of all the men to whom they give a wife. The boy is made into a soroné, and the girl used to perpetuate the recruitment of soroné and servitors by giving her in marriage to one of them.

644 The soroné wear their hair like women. Like them, they wear heavy copper bracelets at the wrists and ankles, and if rumor is to 838 be credited, they not only /570/ bear the attributes of women but also substitute for them occasionally. It seems that the Mossi must 834 not have carnal relations with their wives on Friday. This is a religious ordinance meant to ingratiate the divinities, but it overlooked the soroné.... In any case this corruption does not reach the common masses of the Mossi, who do not have the means to employ soroné. Thus it applies only to chiefs.

644 No matter what the case may be, the soroné are usually selected among the most attractive boys, and some of them have great beauty with their woman's hairdo.

Another duty of their position is to remain virgins... as far as women are concerned.

644 "Every year," says Moulins, "the chastity of the Moro Naba's 181 soroné is put to a test. They are requested by the Pouy Naba to cast their 684 reflection into a gourd full of water, and according to the manner in which the reflection is cast, they are proclaimed free from stain or convicted of carnal relations, in which case, prior to our occupation, they were put to death without further delay. This is because the soroné, as confidants of the Naba, are often entrusted with state secrets and could only maintain the discretion required by their position if they were to avoid the entreaties of love.

644 "When the soroné reach manhood, the Naba gives them a wife and sends them away. The first child born of the union between a soroné and the wife given him by the Naba devolves to the latter,

771 648 [798] their traditional fear. Nevertheless, Captain Lambert says that prior to the French occupation, Moslems were forbidden by the Moro Naba to /585/ say their prayers (kella) publicly. They merely recited their rosary (séki) silently.

797 Since the French occupation, the Mossi have lost all their prejudices against Islam, because they have been conquered by a different foe. In addition the Moslems tell them, as they do everywhere else in West Africa, that the Whites will only be vanquished and will only leave the country when everyone has become a Moslem. This leads the Mossi to start salaaming, and actually it is probable that there have been more conversions to Islam among the Mossi since our occupation than prior to it. This result, which may appear strange at first, is indubitable. Actually these conversions, although more numerous than they used to be, are still rare if we consider that the enormous majority of the Mossi population and the territory as a whole remains fetishistic.

Let us proceed to a description of Mossi religious customs.

787 First, the funeral ceremonies.

755 When a Mossi is ill he summons a soothsayer (bara in Mossi). The latter takes some earth and looks at it to see what will happen to the sick man. Then he states either that the latter will get well, on condition of obliging with a sheep and a chicken, or else that he will die. In the first case the requested chicken and sheep are brought to the bara, and then, if the sick person gets well, he gets something else, a sheep or 5,000 cowries. If the sick person dies, contrary to prediction, the family merely says that the bara was a liar and nothing else happens.

764 If the deceased is a man, it is the family elders who care for him. They stretch his limbs and even his fingers so he will not turn rigid immediately, and they close his eyes. Then one of the elders washes the corpse with cold water in the presence of the whole family. After this, the elders sew a shroud with cotton bands to wrap around the deceased, and then he is rolled up in a mat.

The soukala chiefs (we know that among the Mossi every household head is the head of a soukala) are buried in the courtyard /586/ of their soukala, or else before its gate. The grave diggers are fetched, and they dig a hole the size of a man, lay the corpse at the bottom, and place boards above it to prevent the soil from weighing

000 nigérien /The Central Nigerian Plateau/, pages 275 and 276.)

782 The Mossi sacrifice to evil spirits (kinkirga in the singular,
776 kinkirsi in the plural). In Mossi villages, when the cold weather begins, the oldest man in the village performs a sacrifice to avert the wrath of evil spirits. These are indeed fearsome, for among other things they cause the storms, the fierce winds that lay flat the millet and maize. Those spirits usually live in the bush and inhabit
[824] in particular the kankalra trees (lenga in Mandé), to which the Mossi offer sacrifices but whose leaves they nevertheless eat. There are Mossi who can see the kinkirsi and who have fights with them.

791 Now, let us say a word about the priestly organization of the Mossi.

/591/ First of all, among the Mossi as among other Blacks, there are soothsayers and makers of grigris. The soothsayers are called bara and the grigri makers timisoba, meaning "grigri chiefs," from timi, "grigri" and soba, "chief." This is exactly the same word formation as that of basitigui in Bambara.

Prior to the French occupation there were considerable numbers of bara among the Mossi, at least one for every village. Since the arrival of the Whites, however, they are much fewer. The bara dis-
[787] close things with the aid of some earth. Since they only charge a few cowries for a consultation, they till the soil during the winter season and even work at a trade during the dry season, for example at shoemaking or weaving. They teach the bara's calling to their children.

791 The timisoba, although less numerous than the bara, do not make
789 a living by making grigris either. They, too, till the soil and work at a trade. They only make grigris on order and do not make them up in advance.

The timisoba goes into the bush and cuts out the roots of certain trees. He burns them and puts the charcoal in bags which he hangs either inside or outside his hut. This charcoal is or becomes grigri. In order to make other objects into grigris, he reduces the charcoal to powder, mixes it with karité butter, and marks with it all the objects he wishes to make into grigris, such as cow's tails, deer horns, sheep horns, etc. This charcoal powder is put to all sorts of uses. The timisoba even mixes it with his millet flour and eats it.

843 already borne children. Among the common people, the woman works up to the time of her delivery. Like other Sudanese women, the Mossi woman is inured to the pains of childbirth and devoid of any nervousness.

843 When their wives are pregnant, the Mossi often go to consult the
787 baga /sorcerer/ to find out what sacrifices should be made so the event will turn out well. As he is wont to do, the baga indicates such-and-such a sacrifice. He also prognosticates on request whether to expect a boy or a girl.

843 If the pregnant woman has been frightened by an evil spirit
755 (kinkirga), she summons the tipa who washes her body with a specially prepared liquid or merely administers violent blows on her head with tarakanré (cowhide sandals of which we spoke earlier /not translated/) to drive out the evil spirit.

844 The Mossi woman may give birth only in her own hut. She would consider it a shameful thing if the child were born in her husband's private hut.

When a woman gives birth, she makes a confession to the old women who assist her, because she fears too much suffering or an unsuccessful delivery if she does not confess the faults she has committed. The old women go and repeat them to the husband, who says, "That's all right, I knew it all," and forgives her. In short, the torments of childbirth are put to use by the old women to procure a confession.

There are midwives among the Mossi (in Mossi, pougourorosa). They are paid by the husband. However, they do not receive a
[431] salary, properly speaking, but rather a gift (a piece of salt, a skirt cloth, etc.). If nothing is given to them, they cannot and do not make any demands.

In addition to the midwife, the old women of the compound, quarter, or village come and help the patient.

844 For the delivery itself, the Mossi woman goes down on hands and
576 knees, her arms stretched out upon the ground, her body slightly inclined from head to hips, in the posture ordinarily used to salute or to remain before a chief. The midwife stays behind her.

844 When the child is born, the women present heat up a very strong concoction with red pepper, soumbara /locust bean/, etc. The woman is made to swallow this, and it is supposed to foster the emission of blood and all other impure matter. Then she is washed with warm water. Her loins are also rubbed vigorously so that the strain undergone in childbirth will not be felt there later. Likewise,

845 The birth of twins is a good omen when they are of different sex.
787 If they are of the same sex, however, it is a sign of approaching death for the father if they are girls, or for the mother if they are of the male sex. To conjure away this fate, a chicken is sacrificed.

853 Nursing. —When a woman is unable to nurse her child, another woman of the family is called in as a wet nurse, or, more simply, a goat is made to suckle the child. Both cases, however, are quite unusual.

854 Charms for children and tattooing. To protect the child from ill-
751 ness or accidents, a necklace with a charm containing the ashes of various shrubs is placed around its neck about two months after birth.

304 The child is tattooed two and a half or three years after birth. Old women are in charge of this operation. They trace out the lines for the scars on the child's face with a sharp little knife which is bent at the tip. Then they put a mixture of karite butter and powdered charcoal on the wounds to stop the flow of blood.

Tattooing is the same for all the Mossi of Yatenga without distinction of rank. It consists of three vertical scars on each cheek, an oblique one on either side of the face from the corner between the eye and nose to the base of the cheek, and two or three little ones in the middle of the forehead. /255/

854 The very young child. —As in all of the /French/ Sudan, the mother carries the child on her back, wrapped in a cloth that is knotted in front over or under the breasts. She goes thus everywhere, works, pounds millet, etc., with the child on her back.

853 When she wants to suckle it, she brings it to her side, astraddle one hip, and supports it with one arm. She does not put it on the ground unless she is in her hut or teaching it how to walk.

When the child is two or three, it stops nursing and is put on the ground.

857 Until they are four or five, the children run about the compound and around it. At that age, they begin to go out into the bush all by themselves and to play with the other little boys.

Children's games. —We shall deal with this subject under "Mode of Subsistence (hygiene, games, play)."

857 Familial education. —The boys, as soon as they reach the age of five or six, go with their big brother and tend the goats in the bush.
868 They also go and fetch firewood, straw, etc. When they are nine or ten, they begin to handle the daba /a field implement/. At eleven or twelve they are already doing men's work.

8: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1958
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he received from them. This unequal exchange, plus the nobles' prerogative of seizing the wives of pagans, contributed to the increase of the Moslems. 622 797 582

The conversion of Mossi to Islam is sometimes accompanied by a rupture in the relationships between persons involved in "friendships" with a view of obtaining wives. A great quarrel developed in the district between a pagan chief and a recent convert who refused to give the chief a daughter promised as a wife. The chief became furious and claimed that the Moslem had broken a promise made years ago, but the Moslem claimed that it was against his new religion to give his daughter to a pagan. It is not true that Moslems in the village do not exchange wives with pagans, but the Moslems often try to convert their pagan friends so that the brides will not have to revert to paganism. The chief's difficulty was that he could not become a Moslem because of his ritual and ceremonial relationship with the ancestors. The Moslem men do not have such difficulties with their pagan wives because most women follow their husbands' dictates in religious and other matters. Many Moslem men attempt to prevent their wives from having sacrifices made to the ancestors, but if a woman really wishes such a sacrifice she can easily have it arranged through her pagan relatives. If a woman married to a Moslem refuses to observe Islamic practices, she is liable to divorce and runs the risk of having her children taken away. 572 622 582 797 [562] [593] [586]

Mossi anxiety over children is often instrumental in converting them to Islam. When a woman is barren or her young children die, she consults a soothsayer (*barga*). She is either told that her Tengkougre benefactor was not amply rewarded and recalled the children, or that her "Moslem" children (children who wished to be Moslems) were angry because they were given pagan names. In the latter case she is advised to make a gift to a Moslem and to ask her husband to build a Moslem prayer-circle outside his hut so that when her children "return" (are born again) they will see it. Finally, she is advised to give all her children Moslem names. I could discover no reason why the pagan soothsayers advise these anxious parents to adopt Islam, except that they hope that complicated prescriptions will be more efficacious. Nevertheless, so effective is this technique for gaining converts to Islam that even members of the family of the chief pagan priest are not immune to it. Furthermore, once a woman has a Moslem child, all her other children must be Moslems or they will die. A man whose children are all Moslem has no recourse except to adopt Islam if he wants a funeral, because his Moslem sons may not give him a pagan funeral. 797 842 [787] [551] [164]

Every Mossi, whether Moslem or non-Moslem, wishes a proper funeral, and now that travel has increased the fact of being Moslem or pagan is of great importance. Many young migrants to Ashanti have reported that their dead pagan comrades were unceremoniously disposed of, while the local Christians and Moslems took care of their dead coreligionists. But despite this fact, and the belief of administrators and missionaries, I found no evidence that the seasonal and other migration of Mossi youth to Ghana and the Ivory Coast have contributed very much to the spread of Islam. It is true that some of the thou- 797 167 [164]

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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648 175 Sonni-Ali entered Kabara in the year 882 after the Hegira (1477); and it was during the course of the same year that the king of the Mossi entered Sama. In 884 (1479) Sonni-Ali was at Tosoko. . . .

During the month of Jumada I of that year (July 9 to August 8, 1480), the king of the Mossi entered Biro [the Songhai name for Walata] and did not leave until Jumada II (August 8 to September 7, 1480). The siege lasted one month, and during that time he demanded a woman from the inhabitants. . . . After the siege the Mossi king gave battle to the inhabitants of Biro, vanquished them, and took them and their families into captivity. But, as he was returning to his country with his booty, the inhabitants of Biro followed and fought him, and freed their families. Omar-ben-Mohammed-Nadi, who was at Biro at this time, distinguished himself by his valor and ardor during the battle; for he was the first warrior to attack the Mossi king and thus force him to give up the families which had been captured.[2]

A few years later, the Mossi again invaded the area, this time making war on Sonni-Ali himself. The chronicler writes:

Then the prince Sonni-Ali undertook the task of digging a canal leading from Ras-el-Ma to Biro. He was devoting all his effort and a great deal of energy to this task when word reached him that the king of the Mossi had decided to make war on him, and was then leading the attack at the head of his troops. Sonni-Ali was at a place called Chan-Fenech when he heard this news, and he stopped work on the canal right there. God spared the inhabitants of Biro the misfortune which threatened them; for Sonni-Ali, going out to meet the king of the Mossi, made contact with him at a place called Djiniki-To'oi, situated near the town of Kobi behind the river. The battle took place there, and the victorious Sonni-Ali put the Mossi king to flight, and pursued him into his own country. That battle took place in the year 888 (1483).[3]

This battle seems to have represented the high point in the northern expansion of the Mossi, because the next reference to them in the *Tarikh es-Sudan* tells of Askia-El-Hadj-Mohammed's holy war against them. This man, who had usurped the throne from Sonni-Ali's heir, made a pilgrimage to Mecca, and when he returned he decided to convert the pagan masses of the Sudan to Islam:

During the year 903 (August 1497 to August 1498), he undertook an expedition against Na'asira, the king of the Mossi. He took with him the mallam, Mour-Salih-Djaaura, inviting him to give the necessary indications so that the expedition would be a veritable holy war made in the name of God. Mour did not refuse this request, and explained to the prince all the rules relative to the holy war. The prince of the faithful, Askia-Mohammed, then asked the mallam to be his envoy to the Mossi king. The learned holy man accepted this mission; he went to the country of the Mossi and delivered the letter of his master which called upon the king to embrace Islam. Before [787] replying, the Mossi ruler declared that he wished first of all to consult his

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ancestors who were in the other world. Accompanied by his ministers, he 648
went to the temple of the idol of the country. The learned holy man went 175
there also, in order to see how one went about consulting the dead. They 787
began by making the customary offerings; then a very old man appeared. At his appearance everyone prostrated himself and then the king announced the object of his visit. Calling upon the names of the ancestors, the old man said: "I will never agree to this step for you. On the contrary, you must fight until you or they die to the last man."

Then Na'asira replied to the mallam: "Return to your master and tell 648
him that between us there will be only war and combat." Remaining alone 175
in the temple with the personage who appeared in the form of an old man, the mallam questioned him in these words: "In the name of God Almighty I ask you to declare who you are." "I am Iblis [Satan]," replied the deceiving old man; "I have led them astray so that they will all die in a state of unbelief."

Mour returned to prince Askia-El-Hadj-Mohammed and reported all which had come to pass. "Now," he added, "your duty is to fight them." Straightway he launched his war against them, killed a number of their men, devastated their fields, plundered their habitations, and took their children into captivity. All of the men and women who were taken away as captives were made the object of divine benediction [converted to Islam]. In the entire country, no other expedition outside of this one had the character of a holy war made in the name of God.[4]

The rulers of the Songhai appear to have kept up their attacks on the Mossi during the following hundred years. One of them, Askia Daoud, launched an expedition against the Mossi in 1549 to celebrate his accession to the throne. He attacked and defeated them again in 1561 while on his way to attack Bornou, and their ruler "abandoned the country with all his troops."[5] After this and several other crushing defeats, the Mossi refrained from attacking Songhai territory. Their ardor for external adventures apparently cooled after this period, and there are no reports of their fighting anyone else except the Bambara of Segou in the eighteenth century.[6] Of [721]
course, Mossi chiefs made local forays among smaller neighboring groups such as the Busansi, Gurunsi, and Samogo, but only to catch slaves.

During the nineteenth century—a rather chaotic period in the western Sudan—the Mossi appear to have been immune from outside attacks. Crozat, who visited them in 1890, states: "From the very first, in Mossi country, one feels that one has entered a new land, more peaceful, richer, and more populous [than other African countries he had visited]. . . . The people one meets on the roads are workers on their way to the fields, or are carrying wares to the neighboring market. They are not like the Songhai and the Bobo, who always carry bows on their shoulders."[7] The immunity of the Mossi from attack by such intrepid nineteenth-century

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This man then consults a teng-
443 *soba* (earth priest) who must be also a *barga* (soothsayer) to find out
787 where in a certain area it would be most propitious to locate the new
[791] market. After the *tengsoba* has ascertained the number and nature of
[776] the *tengkouga* (earth deities, plural of *Tengkougri)* in the designated spot, he tells the *Raga Naba* what type of sacrifice would be appropri-
443 ate. A few days later the *Raga Naba*, his young assistant and the *teng-*
782 *soba* take *zom kom* (milletflour), *dam* (sorghum beer), and a chicken (or goat) of the designated color, and go to the new market place.
[778] Here they pick out the stone or three which is the abode of the spirit or spirits, if there are several of them, and prepare to make the offering. The *Raga Naba* takes the millet water and pours some on the ground saying: "Good God, take this water, drink it, and take this other water (here he pours the beer), and give it to all the *tengkouga* in the villages so that the market will aways be good and there will be no fighting in the market!" Then the *Raga Naba* takes the sacrificial animal, and in the case of a chicken pulls off the neck feathers and cuts its throat, saying: "Good God, take this chicken and heed all the prayers of the people of this market!" He releases the chicken and waits to see whether it will fall on its back, thereby indicating whether the petition has been accepted. Of course, if it has not been accepted, a new site is chosen. If the sacrifice has been accepted, then the *Raga Naba* gives the chicken to his young helper to be cleaned and roasted. He then prays to the *tengkouga* who live in the market place and begs them to help with the market. When the boy brings back the dissected chicken, the *Raga Naba* cuts the liver into two parts; one for God and the other for the local *tengkouga*. He then says, "Now that God and the *Tengkouga* have eaten, they should drink," and forthwith pours out the remainder of the millet water. The *Raga Naba* then distributes the remainder of the roasted chicken among those present saying, "*Winnam dege* (God has accepted the sacrifice)." Only after this ceremony is completed can the market be opened.[9]

443 All Mossi markets, except those which specialize in one type of
366 trading, have the same basic physical structure even though they vary in size from one-eighth of an acre to as much as four or five acres. We do not know the size of some of the traditional markets such as Pouitenga, La, Yako, Dakay, Belousa, Mane, and Tema, but we have Crozat's report that "The market at Wagadougou, which is found at Kounkounbissi, the royal residence . . . is large" (Crozat 1891 : 4848). Since the market at Wagadougou was smaller than some of the other important ones, we may assume that some of the markets must have been quite large. At the same time, the physical appurtenances of Mossi markets are not elaborate, or were not so until today. In the

(9) See Zahan (1954 : 371) and Mangin (1921 : 53).

644 2. Next come the Ouidi Naba, the Larralé Naba, the Kamsaogo Naba, the Gounga Naba, the Nemdo Naba, and the Poé Naba.

[527] 788 3. On Friday and other Moslem holidays, the imam who represents Islam at Ouagadougou comes to give the doua, a kind of benediction which consists of reciting verses from the Koran, in the morning as well as in the evening.

Lebeg'sonre. As soon as these honors have been completed, the Mogho Naba goes back into his house to put on a less dazzling costume. Shortly thereafter he once more returns to the courtyard.

[59] Next the Baloum Naba and his retinue present their respects as described above. The Ouidi Naba and his followers are not required to do so unless they have foreigners to present to His Majesty.

[533] Then, the Bend'Naba, gangando, and luinsé (drummers) and the doudissi (violin players) play together in praise of the Mogho Naba.

It should be noted that the Mogho Naba speaks to no one before his morning appearance. It is not until he has finished his ceremonial duties and returned to his apartments that his tampa (sisters) greet him.

644 273 Before the officials and ministers of the court return to their homes and as soon as the Mogho Naba has withdrawn, the Sogon'-kassanga, that is, the ranking servitor, offers them some dam (known as dolo or fermented millet beer).

1. One canari [jar] of dam is offered to the Baloum Naba, who is obligated to give a gourdful to the Zusoaba, one to the Wedkim Naba (chief groom), and one to the Soré Naba (Bendré, "chief of the path").

2. A canari of dam is then offered to the Ouidi Naba who is obligated to give a gourdful to the Poé Naba (chief confessor for the wives and pages of the Mogho Naba) and one koré [gourd] to the Bend'Naba. He drinks the remainder with the other ministers in his retinue.

[276] 3. On Fridays and holidays, kola nuts, gouré are offered to the imam after he has given his doua and before the Mogho Naba goes to renew his pledge of loyalty [60] to France before the representative of the Republic in Upper Volta.

644 554 576 [101] It is to be noted that a gourdful of this water with millet flour on which a bit of karite butter is floating is a customary courtesy offering among the Mossi. It is most improper to greet or to receive a stranger by offering him plain water.

644 782 On the fourth or fifth day the Djiba Naba proceeds to Zoanghna (a village located two or three kilometers behind the government buildings) and there hands over a sheep and a cow to serve as offerings to the sacred amulets of the ancestors and to protect him from evil spirits and wicked people. He does not spend the night in this village but returns home immediately after the sacrifice.

644 788 Several days later the decision is made to install the new naba in his domain. A large number of soroné, drummers, and followers accompany him on what amounts to a kind of obligatory pilgrimage which we shall describe briefly.

The following itinerary is customary.

First, the Djiba Naba goes to Badnogo where he spends the night. The next day he goes on to Samba where he is offered water with flour in it, and for his part, he gives salt to be shared among the old women of the village.

One may ask why salt is given to the old women and not to the other people. The Mossi call old women nough' pouk ramba, [888] that is, those who, when blessing you, clasp their hands so as to make a higher power hear and grant their prayers.

644 788 431 [102] On the following day he proceeds to Tensobitenga where he remains for three days. Beer is prepared for him; he is given a cow for his followers and a wife for himself. At Nakamtenga, his next stop, the village chief welcomes him with a sheep and many baskets and bowls of sagbo (millet mush).

644 788 He does not remain here for the night but instead goes on to Koubri. This is the village where eunuchs formerly suffered the cruel operation of castration (1). The canton chief meets him, leads

839 304 681 1. Eunuchs. Bandits, thieves, murderers, and slaves or soroné (servitors) convicted of adultery with women of the nobility were the only ones sent to Koubri, a canton in the circle of Ouagadougou, to be castrated. This operation involved only the removal

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of the testicles, until the day when a eunuch managed, no one knows how, to take advantage of some of the women he was supposed to be guarding. From then on it was deemed necessary to remove the penis completely, and a copper cartridge was inserted for purposes of urination.

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As soon as the person fainted after undergoing the operation, a drink was concocted whose ingredients are unknown. When he revived, he was so thirsty that he downed the drink in a single gulp. It is said that the drug stupefied the eunuch to such a degree that he would be incapable of taking vengeance even if he had any weapons at hand.

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It was only after he had completely recovered that the victim was sent to the Mogho Naba. The latter assigned him the duty of guarding a harem or a royal tomb.

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him to his house, seats him by his side, and announces to the populace that he has just been visited by his son (Koubri Naba is a descendant of the Mogho Naba).

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He then offers the crown prince a cow and a great deal of [103] beer, and then, before he leaves, the Djiba Naba has free access to the chief's household where he takes as a wife the first nubile girl he encounters. The stay at Koubri traditionally lasted for seven days, but it could be shortened to two or three in view of the great expense involved in entertaining a prince of such high rank, especially at the present time when the canton chiefs no longer enjoy their former prestige.

The Djiba Naba continues on his way to Kombissiri where he is the guest of the canton chief. For a week, in addition to his food which must, of course, be copious and abundant quantities of beer, the crown prince also receives a cow, a sheep, and, before his departure for Doulougou, a wife.

[i.e. canton chief — Analyst]

644 788 431 The chief of the canton of Doulougou, where the prince is a guest for another week, also gives him beer, a sheep, a cow, a robe, and, finally, a wife.

At Bagamini, where he goes next, he receives from the canton chief a cow, a wife, a quiver, and arrows, presented with these significant words: "Ad locko la pema taon widi, laf ra taon neb'yé ti ya f'ba yemsé" (literally, "Take these arrows to shoot against horses and not against men, for the latter are your father's slaves and the country also belongs to him and therefore to you").

Seven days later he leaves Bagamini and goes to Ipelsé where he receives the same warm welcome. On leaving, he will take with him a cow and a wife.

He likewise remains at Ipelsé for seven days. Passing through Bedgo in the domain of the Peulh chief, the Djiba Naba chooses the finest [104] bull from the herd of cattle which must be presented to him. He likewise takes a girl from the chief's household who becomes his property. He then goes on to Guirgo where he is guest of the canton chief for a whole week. On his departure he receives a cow, a robe, and a wife from the chief.

The inhabitants of the village of Kakamsé, through which the Djiba Naba merely passes, bring him quantities of millet cakes (sagbo) and a gift of their choice (a sheep, a goat, a cow, cowries, beer, etc.).

The crown prince continues on to Kondrin and remains there for three days. In addition to sagho and dam, the chief of Kondrin is required to offer him a cow and a wife before his departure.

From there he proceeds to Béré where the chief, called Rimbissi Kasma (the oldest descendant of the Mogho Naba), gives the Djiba Naba a cow, a robe, and a wife and acts as his host for a week.

644 788 824 During the night of the seventh day, the notables of the canton of Djiba come to Béré to look for the naba. He allows himself to be led away, accompanied by only a single servitor and a groom. The rest of the escort from Ouagadougou remains behind and follows him the next morning (1).

1. Why this departure at night and seeming escape? On the route leading into his

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dominion, the Djiba Naba must pass under a tree whose branches he should be able to touch since he is on horseback. His whole future depends upon his doing so. It is from this day forward that the prince will have a long life and will succeed his father. It is believed that the tree has magical powers and that its branches will withdraw of their own accord as the prince passes by if, even though he is the emperor's eldest son, he is not the successor designated by Wendé (God).

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[105] In advance of his coming, care has been taken to find a nice dwelling suitable to house a prince who is the emperor's eldest son. With this in view, an establishment has been chosen which is well built and fairly large, one belonging to a dakangré (prosperous man), and His Highness is conducted to it. As soon as the Djiba Naba has dismounted, his involuntary host must leave his home and take shelter with one of his neighbors. He takes great care to gather all his property, money (liguidi) and wives, into one part of the house; the rest henceforth belongs to the naba. Indeed, it is not long before the establishment is enlarged and some of the huts demolished to make way for more sumptuous buildings.

As soon as the prince is installed, the displaced host receives some gifts and wives as a kind of indemnity for loss. A suitable house is built for him a few hundred meters away.

For several days, celebrations are the rule throughout the canton of Djiba. All the notables and village chiefs, including neighboring canton chiefs who have not had the honor of receiving the prince, come to pay their respects to the new naba and to bring him large gifts.

The escort from Ouagadougou is then sent back [106] with many gifts. The most important nayirdamba [court dignitaries] receive wives and clothing.

Besides the wives the Djiba Naba may have had before his appointment, it is to be noted that he collected quite a harem

644 during his peregrinations. He will bestow some of these on his followers
788 and keep the prettiest for himself.
431 In the old days, the Boulsa Naba, Boussouma Naba, Konkisitenga Naba, and all the others who were, so to speak, independent "rulers" of their lands never brought annual tribute to the Mogho Naba without sending gifts to his eldest son at Djiba.

In the same way, the canton chiefs were expected to make the same annual gifts to the Djiba Naba as to his father.

644 It should also be noted that chiefs who had quarreled with the
696 Mogho Naba and were in danger of being executed could readily obtain pardons by the expedient of buying the friendship of the Djiba Naba. The emperor, after all, was reluctant to distress his son by putting to death one of his intimates.

[107] Chapter 7

The Mossi Salute. Respect due the Home of a Naba.
The Cap. Precedence among Chiefs.
A Legend Concerning the Origins of Mossi Chiefdom.

Salutation of the Naba (Nab'Pousgho)

647 The kombemba (canton chiefs) and nayirdamba (ministers and other court dignitaries), when calling upon the Mogho Naba, are required to remove their cap when they reach the threshold. They hand it to their soroné (servitors) or followers. If they did not come on horseback, they must give their néoda (shoes) to a page and walk barefoot. In a word, they remove anything which might impede the execution of the very complicated Mossi salute.

The following passages concerning the Mossi salute are taken from Father Mangin.

Mossi Salute

644 "The Moaga puts down everything, load, hat, cap, and sword,
576 removes his shoes, and sits on the ground. He folds his legs slightly and bends the upper part of his body forward. The elbows rest on the ground, spread as far apart as possible. The forearms, folded

221 After a few hours when the millet has been sufficiently threshed,
241 the emptied and broken husks are swept to the side. The grain is
476 gathered in a heap, and a strong fellow tosses it into the air with a
788 wooden shovel to separate the chaff from the good grain, which is put in a heap. When all the grain has thus been winnowed, it is surrounded with a ring of ashes to protect it against evil spirits. Then one of the threshers, who is not a member of the family, puts some millet in a gourd and sprinkles it with water. He proceeds to throw it by the handful onto the millet pile, saying: "So-and-So fears rain," mentioning the name of the owner of the harvest and the name of every member of his family. He ends by saying: "When we are finished weeding, let the drought come. When we are finished planting, let the heavy rains come." If the owner of a horse is present, he receives a gourd of millet for his mount. Each of the elders also takes some for his chicken. If this ceremony is not carried out, the millet may not be used as seed the following year.

221 /49/ The women come with their baskets; a man takes one of the
251 brooms and sinks it into the millet heap in various places; then the
[482] men fill the baskets and help the women place them on their heads. At the house the millet is unloaded into granaries made of clay mixed with finely cut straw. These granaries have the shape of large jars 1.50 meters high; they usually rest on large stones, and they are
[343] smoked out beforehand to get rid of termites. They are closed with a lid of the same material and covered with a small thatch roof as a protection against rain, for they usually stand in the open air in the inner courtyard. Millet beer is brought and drunk on the spot while the millet is being winnowed. Sometimes the festivities end with dancing, and then everyone goes home, to begin again another day. The month of January goes by in this fashion.

221 February, March, and April are vacation months, months for hunting and fishing.

224 Actually no Mossi is a hunter, yet all Mossi are hunters to some
411 degree. Since the French occupation, men armed with very primitive flint guns are sometimes seen on the fringes of the heavy bush which borders the Volta and contains large game. These flint guns are so crude that they frequently burst and wound the man who recklessly
224 loaded it with too much powder. These natives know the bush thoroughly and are very helpful to the adventurers who wish to hunt koba, buffalo, elephant, leopard, or even lion, although the latter is to the

777 may hold in store. Wednesday is unreservedly bad, and you must not start a job or leave for a trip on that day. Thursday and Friday are propitious to weddings, especially Friday. On Saturday the sorcerers take the day off and hold no consultations. In addition, every individual has his own lucky day and his unlucky day, which he must know and bear in mind.

778 Some stones are said to have fallen from heaven. On the day when
787 they fall, the village chief immediately covers all the jars in his hut
823 which contain charms. If he knocks one down in his haste, he will die within the year. These stones are held sacred. Those who can lift them /100/ have nothing to fear, but those who cannot are soon to die. People may also interrogate such a stone, whose reply is considered favorable if they manage to lift it, unfavorable if they cannot
[788] do so. Passersby toss millet stalks onto the stone, or twigs cut along the way, or sometimes cowries, to procure success in their endeavors.

821 Comets are omens of war or of the death of a great chief. When
787 Halley's comet appeared on the horizon, the chickens, goats, and sheep had a bad time of it. It was necessary to ward off all the possible misfortunes. It is true that the comet was magnificent, spreading for several days from one end of the sky nearly to another, and it is understandable that the natives should be upset. We have heard that many people were troubled in our civilized countries, where the comet could not be seen in all its splendor. In spite of all those sacrifices, the chief of one of the principal cantons in the province, the naba of Pwitenga, died that very year!

000 We must limit our enumeration, and these few examples, which could easily be multiplied, suffice to make clear the role of amulets and superstitions in the life of this people.

801 One further word on superstitions. The reader may have noticed that the numbers three and four and their composites have recurred constantly according to the sex of the person spoken of. Three is reserved for men and four for women. In the sacrifices, God-king male is called three times. God-king female four times. The cord of the charm has three or four knots according to sex; mothers mourn their children for 33 or 44 days. A dead man receives 333 or 3, 333 cowries, a dead woman 444 or 4, 444, etc.

302 Every time a native changes his status, his hair must be removed. Babies are shaved before they are given a name, girls before they come to their husband, women when they are transferred to a new

Karême), celebrate the great festival of Ramadan and the lesser festivals, and 794
aspire to make the pilgrimage to Mecca. Most of the Moslems can lead prayers, but only about one-tenth of their number can read and recite the Koran. [212]
However, today the masters (*karasambas*) of the 32 Koranic schools in the district are endeavoring to instruct the many boys and few girls in reading the [871]
Koran and understanding Moslem theology.

The Karême is observed by most adult Moslems in the community with the exception of invalids and working men. Moslems say that the fast is intended to turn the minds of the people to God, and they distinguish between the Moslems "of the mouth" who break the fast and those "of the heart" who [184]
fast until Ramadan. The crescent moon of Ramadan is greeted with guns and general rejoicing and the following morning the Moslems gather at the tomb of Ngado to give praises to God; during the rest of the day they pay homage to the chief and visit their friends. However, a change in the traditional observance of Ramadan is expected, because one of the Moslem leaders objects to the [178]
ceremony at the tomb of Ngado. He feels that some Moslems are beginning to regard the tomb of the first Moslem as an earth shrine or Tengkougre.

So far, only five of the more prominent Moslems in the district have made 794
or are making the pilgrimage to Mecca. The first man made the voyage about 788
seven years ago, and is now conducting a Koranic school in a neighboring district. His brother went to Mecca about two years ago and is now the senior *El Hadj* in the district. Of the two men who were on the pilgrimage when I arrived in the district, one has since died near the Red Sea and the other is still away. One other man left for Mecca and returned to the district during my stay. Most of the pilgrims now fly to Mecca; only two men followed the traditional route through Ghana, Kano, Lake Chad, the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan (now Sudan), and on to Mecca. In general, all pilgrims have used their own re- [613]
sources for the trip, but they receive some help from their lineage brothers and from the other Moslems in the district and in Ouagadougou.

The pilgrimage to Mecca represents the greatest event in the lives of the district Moslems. When the last pilgrim left, a great crowd gathered at his house and prayed for his safe journey, and some even accompanied him to [621]
Ouagadougou and remained there until he left. The Moslems and many pagans of the district, under the command of the district chief, cultivated his fields during his absence. And when the new El Hadj returned, a large crowd accompanied him to his house with shouts of joy. There he killed a sheep in thanks- [782]
giving, sprinkled the crowd with holy water from Mecca, and recounted his experiences. His listeners were impressed by his airplane flight and the description of Mecca, but they showed the greatest interest when he said that Mecca women covered their faces and that most Meccan men were monogamous. The local Moslems smiled when they heard this bit of news from one of their members, but I have seen them scowl when discussing the monogamous practice desired by the Christians.

The attitudes of Moslems differ very little from those of the other Mossi 794 595
as regards children and polygyny. They say that they do not believe in the 842

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vincial minister for Djiba, and rendered homage to the sovereign. After 634
this reception the prince went to the Gounga Naba's compound, which 644
henceforth was his headquarters whenever he visited Ouagadougou; for, like other district chiefs, he had to consult with this minister before seeing the monarch. Everyone in the kingdom had to follow the political hierarchy, even the ruler's heir.

The young prince remained at his host's house and from there visited the other important officials, in the order of their rank, receiving from each presents of sheep, millet beer, kola nuts, and sometimes wives. He then [795] visited the Imam of the Ouagadougou Moslem community, where he received a blessing in the name of Allah and was given kola nuts and millet water sweetened with honey. On the fourth or fifth day the prince went to [769] a small village called Zoangha, where he made a sacrifice to his ancestors and requested their protection against all enemies.[29] He returned to Ouagadougou on the same day and was given a palace escort to accompany him to his district.

During his journey, the royal heir had the opportunity to establish or 634
re-establish friendly relations with district chiefs who were now his peers, 644
but who might someday become his subjects. He visited in turn the war 431
leader at Tansobatenga, the Koubri Naba, the Ipelse Naba, and the Kondrin Naba. Each of these chiefs offered him livestock, slaves, and wives. He, in turn, distributed salt (a valuable commodity) to the old women and gave kola nuts and other commodities to the chiefs' head wives. The Baganmini Naba presented the prince with a special quiver of arrows, and the chief of the Fulani at Bedego gave him a pretty maiden and one of his best bulls. The prince spent a few days with each of his hosts, but stayed for seven days in Bere, a district bordering on his own. The Bere Naba gave him a wife, a robe, and a cow, and sent messengers to the village chiefs of Djiba to announce that their chief had arrived in Bere. The chiefs then journeyed to Bere, pledged allegiance to their ruler, and presented gifts to him. On the seventh night there was a ritual (whose main features are 634
unclear), in the course of which the prince entered Djiba secretly on horse- 644
back, accompanied only by one servant, one groom, and the nobles and [788]
chiefs of Djiba.[30] Most members of the escort who had accompanied him from the capital were left behind at Bere, and followed only when the prince had established himself in his district. When the prince's band entered Djiba under cover of darkness, it was met by the local Ouidi Naba, who ruled the district in the absence of a Crown Prince. The Ouidi Naba now became the prince's protector if the boy were still young, or his most trusted adviser if he were old enough to rule by himself.

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mal lineage segment except the pretenders to the throne shaved their heads as a sign of mourning. The royal pretenders donned sheepskin mantles to signify that they were willing to "eat the nam." Once the ruler had been buried, the country settled down to an uneasy peace until the eighth day, when the funeral ceremonies took place. In the meantime, the Napoko symbolically held daily court, and the Tansoba's army acted as a check against the attempts of ambitious princes to seize power by force of arms.

Two days before the funeral, the Kamsaogho Naba selected the Kourita, who was to replace the Napoko as the living symbolic representative of the dead Mogho Naba. The person chosen to be Kourita was usually a young son of the deceased king, but since this person was banished from the capital, most of the royal wives hid their young children or fled the palace with them.[44] Once the Kourita had been chosen, the Kamsaogho Naba performed a ceremony (similar to those connected with the divine kings of the Near East) during which the youth was given one of his father's horses, dressed in his father's clothes, and given his father's youngest widow as a wife. He was then paid the homage due the Mogho Naba, and after receiving many gifts from the dignitaries, he was banished from Ouagadougou forever. As he went through the country, he was treated like the Mogho Naba and given many wives and presents. If he should chance to return to Ouagadougou or see the new Mogho Naba, either or both of them would be killed by the ancestors. Many Mossi districts seem to have been founded by exiled Kouritadamba. These men were undoubtedly among the numerous "elder" sons of past kings who are said to have "refused" the nam and gone to live in the districts now governed by their descendants.

The choice and banishment of the Kourita heralded the funeral rites, which were characterized by numerous animal sacrifices to the ancestors in the name of the deceased ruler. On the afternoon of the first day of the funeral, the Crown Prince mounted a horse and left the palace by the women's door. The Napoko then took the bridle of her brother's horse and led him and an immense crowd of cavalry, armed warriors, and musicians around the palace walls three times. After the third round, the Napoko demanded that her brother give her a personal servant as a present; he hesitated, but finally granted her request. The Napoko was then lifted up by the warriors, who shouted as they carried her home. The funeral thus came to an end.

All Mossi potentates tried to emulate the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou in matters of pomp, ceremony, and government.[44] Their courts were inferior to his, but only because they were less powerful and less wealthy.

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hoisted him on their shoulders and proceeded to his host's house with loud acclaim. 634

The next morning, the new chief went to the palace to pay homage to the Mogho Naba and receive from him the traditional cowries, three kola nuts, and a small jar of millet water. In the days that followed, he celebrated his good fortune at the house of the important ministers and court officials. About a week later he returned to the palace, and the Baloum Naba's chief assistant invested him with the insignia of office: a white gown, a cushion, a pair of slippers, and, most important, a bonnet—the true symbol of chieftainship. Soon afterward, the new chief asked the Mogho Naba and his provincial minister for permission to return home. He was then provided with an escort to accompany him to his district.

The journey of a new chief to his district was marked by pomp and ceremony. The Nobere Naba stopped at such districts as Toudou and Twili, where he was entertained by the chiefs and presented with wives and other gifts. Some districts he would never be allowed to visit again, and others he had to bypass during his joyful journey. The reasons for these restrictions and prohibitions have long since been forgotten, but they were probably instituted to prevent conflicts among Kombemba and to prevent the new chief from coming into contact with the descendants of the Kouritadamba of former Mogho Nanamse. 634 574

As the new Nobere Naba neared his district, he was met by a welcoming committee of village chiefs, nobles, and commoners, who pledged allegiance to him and gave him wives, goods, clothing, money, grain, and livestock. He was then taken to the Soulougre Naba, a descendant of the aboriginal Ninisi, at whose hands he had to undergo another series of rites before he could set up his new compound and begin his rule. These ceremonies were rather simple in comparison with those at Ouagadougou, but they represented a ritual re-enactment of the Mossi conquest of the district, and reinforced the status relationship between the Mossi and the aboriginal population. At the end of seven days, the Kombere Naba gave the Soulougre Naba a black cow to be sacrificed at a pool called Yarega, a shrine of the ancient Ninisi on a tributary of the White Volta River. When this final rite was over, an enthusiastic crowd fetched the chief, and the young people of Soulougre village bore him aloft to his compound. A period of celebration now began during which all the heads of villages, lineages, and compounds paid homage and swore allegiance to their ruler. This ended when the chief summoned his escort from Ouagadougou and gave presents to those who wished to return there and wives and land to those who wished to settle in his district. 634 [641] [431] [788]

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634 The Kombere Naba, as the person who had "eaten the nam" of the district, was infused with some of the power and authority of the Mogho Naba and had the right to use force to maintain this power and authority. He was [576] respected, and people uncovered their heads and removed their slippers in his presence. Unlike the Mogho Naba, the Kombere Naba was permitted to eat with his peers. But whenever he drank the musicians made a roar-like sound with their instruments, and when he sneezed his attendants clapped. These rituals were rigidly adhered to because the Kombere Naba was readily accessible to the populace and might easily have lost their respect if he behaved in an undignified manner. He emphasized his social distance from them by never visiting the market place, and he did not go anywhere without a large entourage.

The Kombere Naba performed ceremonies and duties that were similar to but simpler than those of the Mogho Naba, and he was surrounded by officers bearing the same titles as those in the capital. But, as will be shown later, these officials had fewer and sometimes different duties than the courtiers at Ouagadougou. Some district chiefs had as many pages and wives as the Mogho Naba, but this was as much a result of their own desires as of their popularity with the local people. The death and funeral rites of a [766] district chief were not as elaborate as those of a Mogho Naba. They included the circumambulation of the chief's compound by the principal heir and [788] heiress, the symbolic reign of the Napoko, and the banishment of the Kourita.[41]

634 Every district chief, whether a Mogho Naba's vassal or a Dim's subordi-
778 nate, was empowered to bestow the nam on his own subordinates. These [622] might be other district chiefs; but most often they were village chiefs. The circumstances under which a Kombere Naba received the authority to grant the nam to another Kombere Naba were usually complex and sprang from rebellions and dynastic changes. Once granted, this authority was seldom revoked, but the district chief had to report to his immediate superior, a Mogho Naba or Dim, whenever he wished to confer the nam upon another district chief.

634 In some cases the Mogho Naba invested a district chief himself, and
175 afterward placed him under the control of a neighboring district chief. For
669 example, the chiefs of two districts, Vooko and Nobila, were always installed
778 by the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou, but were supervised by the Nobere district chief. This practice dates back to the civil war involving Mogho Naba Sagha I (ca. 1787–1803), in which chiefs of Vooko and Nobere sided with the loser. The Mogho Naba executed the local rebels and placed one of his sons in Nobere. He then divided Vooko into two districts, placing a younger son in the one he called Nobila (little Nobere) and subjecting him

173 644 abruptly, as though he were somewhat provoked by this obstacle to what he wants to do. At the same time the saddle is removed and the horse returned to the stables.

It should also be noted that every morning the pougtiéma (first wife) orders a basket and hamper to be filled with all the things needed for a journey, intending to accompany her husband to Lâ.

As soon as the Mogho Naba postpones his journey to the following day, the pougtiéma, duly warned, unpacks her basket.

Today, the breath of civilization has blown upon these ancient practices, and the present Mogho Naba merely sees his horse, which is walked up and down while he is receiving his ministers. The animal is at once taken back to the stables when the [62] king returns to his palace without having tried to mount it, much less having heard any entreaties from the Kamsaongo Naba.

Koaga Basgo

644 789 At sundown each day the Baloum Naba goes to the residence of the Mogho Naba for the koaga. Only the Zusobin-Kassanga (chief eunuch) and the Sogon'kassanga (ranking servitor) assist at this performance. The koaga is a sort of earthenware basin into which is put a bit of fire and ... mystery. The head servitor places the koaga in the courtyard in front of the antechamber and blows on the fire, which quickly blazes up and then dies down. Meanwhile, the bendré (drummer) has been rubbing his hand back and forth over the waxed portion of the drumhead.

During the whole performance, no one is allowed either to enter or leave the house of the Mogho Naba. Anyone coming from [687] the outside is not allowed to pass through the courtyard during the proceedings and anyone caught watching the koaga basgo was severely punished by the lash or even executed. When the performance is over, the Zusoba and the Baloum Naba, each of whom was seated at a particular place, arise, then approach and greet each other, and wait to be served some dam before separating for the rest of the night. They sometimes also salute the Mogho Naba before returning to their quarters.

701 oppose me. I therefore demand that his fez be returned to me."
687 To take away the fez of a naba is to dethrone him and reduce him to the level of his subjects.

The court officials, including the Tansoba, at once send emissaries to the chief at fault, asking him to choose between suicide (some take a poison called sounadré, while others kill themselves with a poisoned arrow) and war with the Mogho Naba.

If the chief is not prepared for such a summons, he kills himself, and the envoys return with the news.

669 If, on the other hand, he declares that he wants pouwega, that
701 is, war and a noble death, he sends back the representatives of the ministers. A few days later, with drums beating and the Tansoba, chief of the army, at its head, the whole warrior band appears before his walls.

The Tansoba sends the Samandé Naba to the chief to ask him to confirm his declaration of war. If the naba still wants war, he usually replies: "Ya yingri bala la ka sakénian."

The Tansoba withdraws, sending word to the chief [68] to expect him back on a stated day (seven or eight days later); this period of time will enable the chief to assemble his warriors also. When the day arrives, it is a merciless battle, a massacre.

727 Often the forces of the Mogho Naba are victorious, and in that event the slaves, livestock, and other property go to those who seized them. Only the corpses belong to the Tansoba.

701 If an arrow, even a poisoned one, wounds the Tansoba, he
577 must under no circumstances pull it out. Indeed, he must often endure thirst and hunger, and it is only when he is at rest in an enclosed place that the arrows are removed from his body. It should
[789] be noted that since the Tansoba's costume is virtually covered with amulets and other charms, he is not very likely to be wounded seriously by an arrow. This is not, of course, to belittle his bravery and composure in the face of danger, since he is expected
[762] never to retreat and, if the enemy is victorious, often prefers to kill himself rather than to report a defeat to the Mogho Naba.

644 There are, in addition to the foregoing, a great many petty naba whose role is not clearly defined and of whom it seems needless to speak.

535 764 with metal and worn around the hips, distinguishes this costume from others. The movements of the fringe follow the movements of the body. It soon is revolving so rapidly that it looks like a top.

Many people, however, do not own the special costume just described, and they merely tie a blanket around their loins. During the movements of the dance, this produces a very comical effect since it looks like the wagging tail of a monkey.

[534] The musical instruments which accompany this dance are long tom-toms (gangando); some of them are narrower at the middle and look like long, thin spools for thread.

The dancers also accompany themselves with tiny metal instruments which are like Spanish castanets.

The dance itself is performed in a circle under the direction of the chief of the warba whose costume is [239] richer than the others. All of the dancers usually wear many charms on their [789] heads (tail of an ox and heads of birds stained with the blood of sacrificed chickens).

[775] The warba proves that the Mossi believe in the immortality of the soul. They believe that the dance is necessary to enable the soul of the departed to join the souls of his ancestors. They hope in this way to earn the good favor of the new spirit.

Thus, this dance has a moral basis. However, it seems that the same cannot be said for the other dances which are performed so widely today.

535 In addition to these three national Mossi dances, there are some other dances performed only by women and girls which are actually exercises in physical culture rather than true dances. We shall speak only of the principal one, the kiguibtobo ("dance of the bumping buttocks").

The kiguibtobo. This dance is performed by a group of women, usually at the beginning of cool weather after the harvests are in. The dancers clap their hands while singers raise their melodious voices. The dance is rhythmic. Two dancers leave the group and take their places in the center of the circle. They go back and forth, and then suddenly at a given point in the song [240] they turn back to back so that their buttocks touch and bump each other in time to the music. The dancers must be equally strong

304 Children are tattooed at any age, sometimes when already grown. Many Yarsé do not tattoo their children, and the Mossi themselves do not seem especially to hold to this barbarous custom which sometimes disfigures an individual. The tattooing is done with a razor, and powdered charcoal is put into the wounds. In order to soften the skin and to alleviate the pain, the whole face is covered with oil until the wounds are healed, leaving more or less accentuated scars depending on the success of the operation. Some natives are completely disfigured by thick excrescences of flesh as the result of a faulty operation.

Sorcerers sometimes have the strange idea of prescribing tattoo marks on the belly or lower back of children whose older siblings have [789] died. For instance, a woman had lost three of her children. She consulted a sorcerer when the fourth was born, and he declared with the greatest seriousness that the child would die if his buttocks were not marked with stripes and his belly with tattooings radiating from the navel. The child was marked accordingly, and he lived! Young girls nearly always tattoo their belly with lines extending radially from the navel; many adorn their chest above the bosom with small stripes running perpendicular to the breasts and parallel between them. The tattooing patterns we have described here are, of course, only the most widespread types, because there is a great variety of markings.

304 852 Just as there is no set age for tattooing, there is none for circumcision. Children of seven or eight are circumcised along with youths and even mature men. Circumcision does not seem to be a Mossi [184] custom, for it is not a general practice. In Ouagadougou province most children are circumcised, while in Koupéla province most of them are not. However, the custom is gaining yearly in Koupéla. The head of the family often has himself circumcised because he is ill, and his children follow suit. Thus circumcision is introduced into the family, for once the father has undergone the operation, his 304 children do likewise. Sometimes the mother is a Yarga, thus from a 563 Moslem family, and her children are circumcised, a new gain for the 852 practice. It also happens that children are drawn to it through sheer curiosity and the enticing assurances of the Peul and Yarsé, who are usually Moslems and thus circumcised, and who spread propaganda all around them. Excision, on the other hand, is universal.

/42/ When there is a group to be circumcised, their relatives set a date with the Peul who is to perform the operation. At dawn of that

226 most difficult to ford. Each watercourse, or more exactly each pond,
[423 belongs to a naba and bears a special name, so no river has the same name
55P] name all along its course. During the dry season the lelek /bed?/ of the watercourses is usually dry. Here and there are to be found ponds of varying depth where the cattle is watered. These ponds are where the natives fish. They wait until the water level subsides to knee height, for otherwise fishing would be too difficult.

226 The fishing gear is as crude as the hunting gear. There is a small
227 net held open by three sticks forming a triangle and crossed by a tough stick that is held in the hand, quite similar to the spoon-nets we use to gather shrimp. Above all a sort of wicker trap is used, conical in shape, open at the base and closed at the tip with a movable lid. This trap sometimes contains a second one made of very flexible sticks that are attached to the base of the first one. The two traps thus have a common base, but the second one opens within the first. The fish enters the trap and is held by the sticks of the smaller cone, which close in as the fish tries to get out. The fisherman removes the trap from the water or leaves it sunk in the mud, opens the lid, plunges in his hand and removes the fish, which is confined and easy to seize. The fisherman then puts it in a net or in a leather bag.

226 On a set date the owner of the pond offers sacrifices to the crocodiles
825 so they will not bite anybody. This is why the naba of Koupéla, before he fishes in his pond, must sacrifice a black goat and a chicken. No one may kill a crocodile while fishing, or the naba will die before the year is over. Was not a crocodile killed in his father's pond on
[78P] the very year when he died? Before they go fishing, the natives make charms by burning roots and tree bark inside their traps. If the charm is good, the fish will rush headlong into the net or trap.

226 The fishermen gather at one end of the pond. They stand in a row across the water and move slowly forward while dipping their nets and traps over and over again. All the fish caught are put in bags or tossed to friends who stand on the shore, but, as during the hunt, the naba takes an ample share and seizes the finest specimens. The ponds hold mostly silurids anyway, which like mud and retain its odor and taste even when cooked. The Volta rivers, on the other hand, contain more abundant and more varied fish. /52/ When the natives have crossed and recrossed the pond several times, only small fry remain, and everyone goes home glad to have a little fish for the sauce and especially to have escaped the teeth of the crocodiles, for in spite of

789 Blessings and curses are also used. Should they be classed with the cult, or with magic? One way or the other, there are natives who have the power to kill anyone merely by saying a word. They can make the harvest wither, the cattle sicken. There are also some who can bless, make a trip propitious, an undertaking successful. If you
752 are wounded, go to them. They will put around the wounded part of
755 your body a greasy rope with three or four knots according to your sex;
801 there will be no swelling, and the wound will heal quickly.

782 Such are the major sacrifices and the practices of the cult. The
769 sacrifices offered to the spirits of the dead on the day of burial or on
796 the day of kouré have not been mentioned, because the animals offered are not properly speaking sacrificed (kou mando) but offered, presented, fabré. We shall now mention the sacrifices made on the Day of the Dead.

The Koupéla Mossi have two major feast days: the Day of the Dead or basra, and the Moslem sheep celebration called kibsa. Both are intimate family affairs.

Basra is the feast of the dead. On that day every family head must offer sacrifices to his ancestral spirits, and he alone may sacrifice upon the grave. Even if a member of the family has become powerful and wealthy, he will not offer the sacrifice which devolves by right to the family head. All members of the family who wish to offer a sacrifice on the ancestral grave must, therefore, go to their elder on that day. Anyone may sacrifice to the kikirsi and tangandé, and almost everyone does at this time. It is mainly on this occasion that little children may be seen gravely sacrificing their chicken to their kikirsi and to the tangandé; each makes it a point of honor to offer his own animal. Only chickens are sacrificed on that day.

Basra is not celebrated by every family on the same day. Some celebrate it before the province chief does, others after him, while most families do it on the same day he does.

/96/ The naba of Koupéla proceeds as described below, and the ceremonies are the same for his subjects with the sole difference that being less wealthy they cannot offer as many sacrifices. The basra is always celebrated by the naba on a Saturday. Already on Thursday he has taken non-fermented beer from the vats and poured it on the graves of his father and grandfather. He has also sacrificed a chicken on each of the tombs. Wherever an ancestor of the naba is buried, the guardian of the grave sacrifices a chicken. This is repeated on

spilled salt, /99/ four-leaf clovers, hares crossing the roadway, etc., been altogether eradicated by science?

751 No matter how things may stand among us, superstition reigns
789 supreme among the Mossi. Amulets and talismans are greatly valued. Anything may contribute to their manufacture, from the highly prized head of a crowned crane to that of a hawk or a gray heron. Anything may be found in the numerous little bags which hang down a native's neck, from scraps of paper with a few words of Arabic scribbled upon them which Moslem Marabouts distribute in large numbers throughout the Sudan, to cowries or the ashes of every possible and imaginable root. There are amulet bracelets which are worn on the left arm and which protect against seuya sorcerers (see p. 127) if their wearer remembers to push them swiftly up his arm when meeting one of those dreadful soul-eaters. There are bracelets which protect people in fights, and iron rings which act as safeguards against snake bite. Do you want to be welcomed and accepted by the man whose daughter you wish to marry? Wear a certain bracelet on your right arm, and your hopes will come true.

Amulets are worn around the head, neck, arm, or wrist. They are sewn to the cap or to the clothes, attached to the belt, to the pipe, to the staff, anywhere. The list would be endless if we tried to enumerate all the various kinds of amulets. The shoulder blade of a beef fastened to the end of a stick and an iron chain stretched across the soukala entrance protect its inhabitants against a host of misfortunes and unpleasant nocturnal visitations. People consider themselves fortunate to possess such easy protection against the numerous spirits prowling for victims.

787 If you have dogs, watch them carefully. If they are so careless as to lie down or relieve themselves in a basket, or to vomit within the hut, kill them fast or you will die yourself. If your bitch bears only one puppy, kill her pitilessly. When the gray heron flies over the huts shrieking, mothers beat on their jars for fear that their
783 children will get diarrhea. Hunters must not eat koba meat before
789 they engage in their sport, and if they want to gain skill, they must
224 secure certain roots, cook them in water, and wash their hands with the mixture.

777 Sunday is the day of the spirits, the day when koure is held. It is also a good day to build huts. There is nothing special about Monday, but you must be careful about Tuesday, for you never know what it

302 husband by legacy; while men are shaved only when they receive their first wife, because then they become masters of a hut, but they are not shaved when they get new wives because their status does not change again. A man who is appointed naba must lose his hair which was that of a subject and no longer suitable to a chief. A dead person [764] may only be buried without being shaved if he died an accidental death, etc.

789 The cross also plays a role which must not be overrated, but which is nevertheless real. The hilts of swords bear the shape of a cross; the feet, hands, and chest of the sick are often anointed with charcoal mixed in fat, always in the shape of a cross. The chests and backs of soukala dwellers are also marked with crosses to protect them against lightning. The huts are marked likewise, and crosses are drawn even inside the mouths of horses and donkeys. A cross is also drawn on the hut door of those who are seriously ill so as to ward off evil spirits. A cross of ashes on the chest and back is part of the mourning costume.

What is the origin of this custom? The natives cannot say, and invariably reply, "This is what our fathers did."

In addition to these superstitious practices that do not commit one to anything and that harm no one, there are others which can be very useful to /101/ those who practice them, and others yet which seem indeed to fall into the category of magic. We are referring to what the natives designate by the generic name of tim, without differentiating between true remedies of medicinal origin and superstitions or evil spells which should be characterized as magic. Indeed, it is often quite difficult to distinguish between the two.

755 Amulets and charms are tim to the natives, and so are the medicines which their specialists prescribe and which seem to have real effectiveness. We mentioned them briefly when we spoke of illness. We did not say that the preparation of these medicines rarely goes unaccompanied by some sorcery, and that the person who has been cured by a remedy must at least keep some in a little bag and sacrifice a chicken to it every year. Everything is done as in the usual sacrifices, but the invoking formula is replaced with the following: "God-tim, stretch out your hand and take this chicken. God has given me a powerful medicine. May this medicine protect me night and day, in the middle of the night and on the path, where we amuse ourselves and in the huts. Keep the jaws of the snake shut so that next year I may still be in good health, so that no misfortune may come to me,

821 Water in general and rain in particular are a blessing in this sun-
825 scorched land. Crocodiles are reputed to attract water to their dwelling-place. To kill a crocodile may not necessarily amount to homicide, but it amounts at least to drying out a watercourse or pond, for the crocodiles will leave the place and the water will leave with them. If rain is too long delayed, the crop will not have time to ripen; if it falls too heavily, especially at the beginning and at the end of the winter season, weeds will choke the millet, or the flowers will fall before the fruit is formed.

789 Rain is, therefore, desired or feared according to the circumstances,
829 and the power to make rain and to ward it off devolves upon the naba, who rules on the life and death of his subjects. In truth every powerful man is believed to possess this power, and how often they requested me to make rain! Is it not true that Whites can do anything? They are related to the ancestral spirits, their color proves it! Do they not come from the land of water? Did they not emerge from the water? In spite of my assertions that God alone can make rain, that one must pray for it, their skeptical smiles made it plain that they did not believe me.

789 The naba has the charm, the talisman, to draw rain. All he need do when a storm threatens is to take from his hut a certain jar full of certain roots and fill it with water to overflowing. On the other hand, if he wishes to ward off rain, he burns another kind of root, and the wind carries the smoke in the direction where the naba wishes to send the clouds; or else he hangs a cow's or horse's tail to a stick by a thread, and the wind tosses it, thus driving the clouds away. This is why the naba sends one of his men to market when the rainy season draws near, to gather karite fruit from each woman there, because the pits are used to make the charm and must be obtained in this fashion. If a person other than the naba has tried to make rain and failed, he attributes his failure to someone more powerful than himself; if the naba fails, no one says anything about it, or else it is said that the naba did not really wish to attract or to ward off the rain.

821 Every storm is accompanied by lightning, which often kills people in this land of violent thunderstorms. Its effects are attributed to an evil spirit, to an enemy who can send lightning if he knows the proper tim, or to God Himself. Lightning strikes thieves and murderers; it is a punishment. If it does not kill the thief himself, it kills the proceeds of the theft, the stolen horse or sheep. It never kills a person without reason.

789 /103/ Happily, it is possible to avoid lightning. To achieve this,
821 it is necessary to find in the bush a white substance rather similar to hyena droppings which the natives call "rain dung," as well as certain tree roots. Part of these roots is left to soak in water for three days, and the rest is burned to ashes. A chicken is sacrificed to the tim. Then the water in which the roots have steeped is used to cook the millet mush, and the sauce is made with baobab leaves. All the soukala dwellers must eat this millet mush, and every one of them is marked on the back and chest with a cross of ashes mixed with karite butter. The horse and donkey, alone among the animals, are similarly marked on the back, chest, and inside the mouth. The huts are marked on the east side, the direction from which the rain comes, and above the entrance. Now there is nothing to be feared. We do feel, however, that lightning-rods are more effective.

759 All these tim, medicinal remedies, amulets, talismans, and
756 superstitious recipes, are prescribed either by true doctors who actually know the properties of herbs and effect real cures or by sorcerers. The doctors are often consulted. Since they specialize in certain diseases, they are consulted for those diseases alone. Those who have been cured by a medicine willingly make it known to friends who are afflicted with the same illness. The doctors are as numerous as the diseases which afflict mankind.

278 Some doctors are not merely healers but also poisoners, and they
674 are greatly feared. The surest way to get rid of an enemy is to consult them, but their fees are high. They have slow poisons which consume the victim gradually and the overwhelming ones which kill in a few hours. They put them in drinks, in millet mush, or more
754 often in kola nuts. There are also people, sorcerers rather than doctors, who claim the power to kill at a distance and who know how to practice sympathetic magic. Their prestige has waned since the French occupation because they have not managed to kill the Whites who settled in the country; but they say that our tim are more powerful than theirs.

754 The sorcerers are also numerous. There are those who take up the
756 call of their own accord and those who are born sorcerers. The former
791 are the bagré and seuya; the latter the tibo, bartibo, waongo, and nyonnyonsé. Pardon us these barbaric words, but they are impossible to translate.

791 The bagre is the nice, innocuous kind of sorcerer, who helps the
756 poor for a penny or two. He is consulted about everything. For example, what does the future hold? Will fire destroy my huts or won't

nigérien /The Central Nigerian Plateau/, pages 275 and 276.)

The Mossi sacrifice to evil spirits (kinkirga in the singular, kinkirsi in the plural). In Mossi villages, when the cold weather begins, the oldest man in the village performs a sacrifice to avert the wrath of evil spirits. These are indeed fearsome, for among other things they cause the storms, the fierce winds that lay flat the millet and maize. Those spirits usually live in the bush and inhabit in particular the kankalra trees (lenga in Mandé), to which the Mossi offer sacrifices but whose leaves they nevertheless eat. There are Mossi who can see the kinkirsi and who have fights with them.

Now, let us say a word about the priestly organization of the Mossi.

/591/ First of all, among the Mossi as among other Blacks, there are soothsayers and makers of grigris. The soothsayers are called bara and the grigri makers timisoba, meaning "grigri chiefs," from timi, "grigri" and soba, "chief." This is exactly the same word formation as that of basitigui in Bambara.

Prior to the French occupation there were considerable numbers of bara among the Mossi, at least one for every village. Since the arrival of the Whites, however, they are much fewer. The bara disclose things with the aid of some earth. Since they only charge a few cowries for a consultation, they till the soil during the winter season and even work at a trade during the dry season, for example at shoemaking or weaving. They teach the bara's calling to their children.

The timisoba, although less numerous than the bara, do not make a living by making grigris either. They, too, till the soil and work at a trade. They only make grigris on order and do not make them up in advance.

The timisoba goes into the bush and cuts out the roots of certain trees. He burns them and puts the charcoal in bags which he hangs either inside or outside his hut. This charcoal is or becomes grigri. In order to make other objects into grigris, he reduces the charcoal to powder, mixes it with karité butter, and marks with it all the objects he wishes to make into grigris, such as cow's tails, deer horns, sheep horns, etc. This charcoal powder is put to all sorts of uses. The timisoba even mixes it with his millet flour and eats it.

6: Tauxier--128 G-4,5 (ca. 1908) 1912 FA28 Mossi FA28

789 A number of grigris made by Mossi timisoba have passed
791 through my hands. I shall list them and briefly describe them below.

1. A cow's tail at the tip of a wooden handle. When one is traveling during the winter season and a storm threatens, one need only wave the cow's tail and the storm does not burst. Once in the village, one stops waving it and the rain comes.

2. A hollow koba horn in which tamarind leaves, peanuts, and
[751] gum have been placed. In case of headache one opens the horn by its small upper lid, takes /592/ a pinch of the mixture, and swallows it. Then one does this again and also rubs a little on the forehead.

3. A small hoe with a chicken's head fastened to the handle. When during a dance one wishes to silence a singer who has been singing too long in order to sing oneself, one grips the hoe and covers the chicken's mouth. The singer is silenced, and in addition one sings perfectly.

4. A small hoe covered with leopardskin at the bend. If one is
[752] bitten by a snake, one cuts off a very small piece of the skin and puts it in a canari full of water. Then one rubs the bite with this water.

5. A deer horn with a fine red cord wrapped around it. Inside the horn there are tiégélara and karité seeds. The opening of the horn is closed with a wad of cotton.

If an enemy comes looking for a fight, one places some of the contents of the horn on a leather bracelet which is slipped on the left wrist. No harm can come to you, and the quarrel will immediately come to an end.

6. A deer horn containing crushed scorpions and pimento. If one wishes to become an indefatigable dancer, one need only rub one's back with the mixture.

7. Leather bracelets with powdered rice inside. People who wear one of those bracelets on the arm can be sure that the stick or sword which their enemy may attempt to use against them will break in his hands.

8. Iron bracelets covered with crocodile skin. Same purpose.

9. Cotton bracelets with honey and salt inside. If your wife
[842] is sterile, it is sufficient to put the bracelet in water in order to make her fertile.

789 10. A deer horn covered with leather and containing millet and
791 pounded-bean flour. On the outside there is a hooked piece of iron.
777

789 If someone tells you that you own many animals, or that they are
791 very handsome, this gives bad luck, as you know. So, to ward it off,
777 /593/ you grasp your grigri by slipping two fingers into the iron hook and two others into the curve of the horn, and then you hang it in your hut, or better still, you hang it from the neck of one of the threatened animals.

789 11. A small turtle completely enclosed in a small leather bag
791 along with a powdered aquatic leaf called kouri. If you have a
755 stomach-ache, you cover the flat side of the object with butter and rub your stomach with it.

789 12. A small piece of wood covered with lizardskin in the middle
791 and leather at the ends and prolonged at one end by an iron tip.
832 If one wishes for the favors of a woman who refuses to grant them, one comes near the cruel woman while gripping the grigri in the left fist, its tip pointing up. At the same time, one presses the woman's hand tightly with the right hand. This method of seduction is claimed to be infallible.

789 13. A koba horn covered with leather and prolonged at the broad
791 end with a chicken foot. Inside, the horn contains rice, salt, and
754 soumbara. If you were threatened by a spell performed against you, you would slip the horn upon your head, with the thick end between the eyes and the pointed end behind the head. Then you would have nothing to fear.

14. A deer horn containing barkoundi leaves and closed with a lid adorned with a cowrie.

To prevent a sorcerer from eating the soul of a third party, you lift the lid with the aid of a knife covered with karité butter, you take with this knife a little of the contents of the horn, and you spread it on your forehead.

535 In addition to the bara and timisoba, the Mossi also have ouango.
532 "The ouango," says Marc (op. cit., pages 152 and 155), "are
575 dancers whose costume consists of a huge liana robe which covers the entire body and which is surmounted by a wooden mask painted red and black and usually representing /594/ the head of an animal. The ouango are members of a rather mysterious brotherhood. They have a special language, and the Mossi believe that anyone who says a word

842 How children are welcomed. —The Mossi are very happy to have children and want by all means to have some. This is indeed to their full advantage, since children work from the age of seven or eight, since they make sacrifices for their parents when the latter are dead, and since the daughters, by marrying, bring in gifts for the family. The more children one has, the happier one is.

842 "Under these circumstances," says Vadier, "a barren woman is very poorly regarded by her husband and not greatly esteemed by her neighbors. To overcome this sterility when it occurs, both spouses appeal to the gods. They both go to the tengasoba, the religious chief of the village, with a chicken, a goat, or a sheep, according to their means. The tengasoba cuts the animal's throat on a special stone, collects its blood, and boils it in a vessel along with various tree barks which have certain properties.

"This concoction is then given to the woman, who must mix it with her sarabou. If the spouses later have a child, they must, under threat of calling forth the vengeance of the divinity (the Earth, in this case), offer the tengasoba a gift of 3,000 cowries if they had a boy or 4,000 cowries if they had a girl.

"The tengasoba also overcome sterility by cutting the animal's throat in the sacred grove (kango)."

847 Abortions. —Abortions nevertheless occur. Sometimes Mossi women cause an abortion in the event of an illegitimate pregnancy which occurred in the husband's absence. In addition, abortions are rather frequent among unmarried mothers. To conceal their lapse, they appeal to the tipa or timisoba (makers of charms, medicines, and poisons) who give them a special brew of which they hold the secret.

These practices are, of course, very poorly regarded by the Mossi. Married women who resort to them are turned out by their husband's. In addition, if a woman dies as the result of an abortion, her husband is likely to manifest joy and to state that the woman received a just punishment for her transgression. Finally, in former times after the death of the guilty woman, the husband would go to the Moro Naba and denounce her lover to him. The naba confiscated all the lover's property.

843 Childbirth. —Among wealthy Mossi, the pregnant woman is treated with a certain regard. She does not work after the third month /252/ of pregnancy if this is her first, or after the sixth month if she has

knew that Boukary Koutou was the only person capable of such a conspiracy. Fearing for their lives if they did not nominate him, they immediately sent a messenger to summon him as the successful candidate.[16] Under normal circumstances, however, there was no coercion of the ministers and the nominee was quietly brought to the councillors.

Wearing a pair of trousers and a sheepskin mantle and carrying a spear in each hand, the nominee entered the courtyard of the compound through the women's door.[16] He was preceded by the Samande Nabila, who sprinkled the earth with water. He came up to the councillors and saluted them, and the Ouidi Naba addressed him as follows: "Before your father [brother] died, did he designate you to be his successor?" The nominee replied, "No, Sire! My father has left you free to choose whom you wish, be he a blind man or a leper!" This question was asked three times, and the nominee responded three times. The Ouidi Naba then made the following declaration: "I am giving you the nam of your father and grandfathers. You must try to conduct yourself as they did when they had the nam." The Ouidi Naba then listed the names of the territories over which the ruler had absolute power and authority. The new monarch raised his two spears in the air, made a speech in which he announced three guiding principles by which he vowed to reign, and "named a name," that is, suggested the title by which he wished to be known. For example, Mogho Naba Sagha II (1942–57) said in his inaugural speech: "Without rain, there is no life. I will be like rain for the country." He then became known as Mogho Naba Sagha ("Rain"), a rather fitting title for a ruler in a country with uncertain rainfall. The present Mogho Naba stressed in his inaugural speech (in 1957) that he was "solid as a rock." His official title is now Mogho Naba Kougri ("Rock").[17]

The taking of a new name was only the first step in the elaborate process through which a man became Mogho Naba. Next, the Ouidi Naba took the two spears from the new monarch and removed his sheepskin mantle. Then he gave him his new white clothes, which included a pair of trousers, a bonnet, and a sleeveless robe, all made for him by the people of the Sculougou ward in the capital. Next, he was given a cushion made by the people of Baramimi. The Baloum Naba then took the closely guarded namtibo, the sacred amulets of the dynasty, and used them in the preparation of a potion of millet beer mixed with millet-flour water, part of which was poured as a libation to the earth goddess, Tenga.[18] The ruler and the assembled ministers all partook of the potion in a kind of communion. The ministers then shook the ruler's hand, an act thereafter forbidden, and departed for their own compounds. The newly elected

648 warriors as El Hadj Omar and Samory Touré surprised and puzzled many
175 of their early visitors. Binger explains it as follows:

> Thanks to the primitive tribes that surrounded them like a rampart, the Mossi were spared the incursions of their powerful neighbors. This immunity cannot last much longer, because [Mogho Naba] Sanum is weak, has little spirit, and is badly counseled.[8]

Binger was partly correct in attributing the immunity of the Mossi to the presence of weaker groups on their borders. To the military adventurers of the period, the Mossi must have appeared invulnerable when compared to their weaker neighbors. Nevertheless, the Mossi declare that it was their vigilance and willingness to fight that prevented Samory Touré, among others, from invading their country.[9] They claim to have captured and executed nine of the ten spies he sent to survey their territory. The one spy who returned allegedly told Samory Touré that the Mossi were too strong to be attacked, because they banded together against all outsiders.

175 Crozat attributes the Mossi freedom from attack to miraculous and
648 magical factors:
789
[176]

> There is widespread belief in surrounding territories that Mossi country is inviolable. Alone amid the troubled populations that surround it, it enjoys relative peace. It owes this to the very special protection of a deity, and also to the virtues of the special talismans owned by the ruler of Ouagadougou. The terror inspired by these charms is such that some years ago the leader of Gadiari's column suffered a mass desertion of his men when he tried to lead them to the conquest of Mossi country. He himself was killed, perhaps by his own *sofas* [soldiers]. This case cannot be expected to undermine belief in these presumptuous charms.[10]

175 This statement, like Binger's, contains an element of truth, but not in
648 the way that Crozat believed. The Ouagadougou kingdom did have a
[114] series of ritual pacts with neighboring Mossi and non-Mossi groups. Crozat found that Mogho Naba Sanum was on "good terms" with the people of Fada-N'Gourma. He tells us that this friendship was maintained by a "curious custom" whereby the Ouagadougou ruler sent wives, captives, and horses from his predecessor's estate to the ruler of the Gurmanche.[11] Similarly, Pinchon, a British officer stationed in the Gold Coast at the beginning of the century, reports that there existed an ancient pact between the Mossi and the Mamprusi. This pact kept the ruler of each country from attacking the other on pain of death by the ancestors. Like the pact between the Mossi and the Gurmanche, this agreement was sanctioned by an annual gift of a horse, slaves, and cloth from the Mossi to the Mamprusi. Pinchon speculates that it was the existence of this pact that induced the Mamprusi

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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ruler to grant asylum to Mogho Naba Wobogo in 1897. He adds that it was probably the injunction in the pact that they should never meet which prevented the ruler from personally receiving Wobogo.[12] 648 175

A ritual pact also bound the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou to the ruler of Dagomba. He sent him goods from the estate of the previous Mogho Naba as well as gifts for yearly sacrifices on the grave of Nyennega, the Mossi progenitrix. There are reports that the Ouagadougou ruler also exchanged annual presents with the Ashanti ruler, but it is not known whether these were courtesy gifts or goods sanctioning ritual pacts.

The ritual pacts among Mossi kingdoms and between them and their neighbors appear to have derived from actual or putative kinship ties. This seems to be supported not only by the traditions of the Mossi but also by those of the surrounding peoples. Whatever their origin, these pacts seem to have afforded their beneficiaries a remarkable degree of freedom from external aggression. It is possible that the Mossi and their neighbors really believed in the efficacy of supernatural sanctions, for purposes of mutual protection. But one suspects that it was the relative weakness of these various groups that caused them to rely on supernatural agencies rather than military might for protection. As will be pointed out below, the Mossi (and probably all of their important neighbors) had considerable difficulty in building and maintaining a fighting force sufficiently large to wage protracted or large-scale wars against foreign groups. 174 648 776 789

The Mossi kingdoms seldom fought among themselves, although their leaders quarreled over status and committed aggression against each other's territories. For example, the Ouagadougou rulers, who claimed suzerainty over Yatenga, often tried to impose their will on that kingdom. Yet, although they were usually rebuffed by the Yatenga Naba, they never tried to resolve the issue by force of arms. In fact, even when a Yatenga ruler appears to have given the Mogho Naba just cause for war, little fighting actually took place. Several times the Yatenga rulers seized such principalities as Riziam and Yako, which were dependent on Ouagadougou, but in no case did the Ouagadougou rulers wage war against them. In 1890, Crozat witnessed Mogho Naba Wobogo's attempt to stop a war between Yatenga and Yako. The Yako people wanted to obey their sovereign and stop the war, but the Yatenga monarch refused to do so.[13] 628 642 643 175

Crozat attributes the ineffectiveness of the Mogho Naba's authority over brother kingdoms to the fact that he had no standing army with which to enforce his rule. While relative strength may have been and probably was the main reason for the Mogho Naba's lack of aggressiveness, the ritual pact that prevented the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou from meeting the

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726 with leaves and branches and crawling upon the ground, can be witnessed
[964] even today at Mossi funerals where men re-enact warfare practices. Whenever possible, the Mossi preferred to take the enemy by surprise, but this was seldom possible when large-scale fighting and massive preparations were involved.

When two Mossi armies drew up to each other, the heralds from both sides issued such challenges and epithets as: "If you men do not wish to die, you should run or you will never eat again. We will have your blood to wash with." In the meantime, the Tansobadamba on both sides deployed their forces in accordance with the number of men available, the spirit of
[723] the enemy, and the nature of the terrain. From the description of warfare given to me by an old Tansoba in Nobere district, it appears that the strategy most commonly used was to split the infantry in two while attacking, thus making room for the cavalry to charge through. If the initial charge was successful, the attack was maintained, but if it failed, the army usually turned about and fled. Despite their braggadocio, Mossi commanders seldom insisted that their troops fight against overwhelming odds.
[644] However, shame over impending defeat often induced such officers as the
[645] Tansoba and the Gounga Naba to fight to the death. For example, during the war between Boulsa and Fada-N'Gourma in 1897, the Boulsa army lost so many men that the Boulsa Dim wanted to commit suicide in his humiliation. However, he was prevented from doing so by one of his subordinates.[27]

Soldiers wounded by poisoned spears or arrows extracted the projectiles if possible, and kept on fighting until they died. Even if they were wounded
[789] by an unpoisoned weapon, they did not seek medical aid. Most wounded men believed that they were doomed, because their protective amulets had
[727] failed them. For the same reason, a defeated army fleeing a battlefield made no attempt to retrieve its dead and dying, but left them to the vultures. When an army was victorious, however, the Mossi either carried their dead home for burial or buried them on the battlefield, saving some item of their clothing or equipment for the funeral.

Victorious Mossi armies usually pursued the enemy, burning villages as
[648] they went. The soldiers killed all the infants and the infirm, and when they
[567] fought against non-Mossi, they captured young people to be sold as slaves. Then they collected all the available booty and departed hurriedly, fearing
[727] that the confiscated cattle and slaves would slow their return and enable the rallied enemy to catch up with them.[28] If the army could not return home before dark, camp was set up for the night near a body of water so that the Tansobadamba could offer thanksgiving sacrifices. Pickets were later

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*175 *648 European powers established in the vicinity realized that by controlling the markets of the Mossi, they could become masters of all the commercial routes in the interior near the bend of the Niger River."[19] The French pursued a more aggressive policy than any other power, dispatching mission after mission to the Mossi. In August 1890, Crozat was sent "to establish friendly relations between the French Sudan and the Mossi."[20] When he reached Ouagadougou in September, he found that Boukary Koutou had succeeded his brother and was reigning as Mogho Naba Wobogo.

Crozat, like Binger, was disappointed by the appearance of the Mossi capital, which he describes in the following words: "Like the smallest of Mossi hamlets, the capital is but a village surrounded by fields, and except for the absence of forest vegetation, nothing would indicate to the traveler that this is a great center and the home of the sovereign."[21] Most European travelers in the Sudan were disappointed by the capitals of African states. They could not reconcile the glowing reports of the Africans with their own ideas of royal splendor. Crozat was even more disappointed with Boukary Koutou. He states:

*175 *648 643

> The king of Ouagadougou is the same Boukary Naba who was Binger's cordial host at Banema; but what I was told about him and what I saw a little later were two different things, and the difference was to the ruler's disadvantage. Binger knew him as friendly, dignified, simple, somewhat opportunistic, and showing very little displeasure at his brother and predecessor who had exiled him from Ouagadougou. I found myself in the presence of a monarch very proud of his newly obtained but long-hoped-for dignity (Boukary, in effect, became king at Ouagadougou only because his brother died without male issue). Yet he was timid, shaky, and lived confined to his palace with his servants and wives, not daring to go out. He spent his time consulting holy men who had him under their control and who used up the resources of the realm to contrive the oddest and most expensive charms in order to allay the ruler's fear that he would be assassinated.[22]

[789] [792]

Mogho Naba Wobogo did little to change Crozat's opinion of him. He hesitated to grant the Frenchman an interview because his councillors had advised against it. When Crozat was finally permitted to see the ruler, he told him:

> I was sent to you by the white chief who rules all the countries of the blacks from Bamako to Kayes, and from Fouta-Djallon to Kaarta. I have come in his name, and in the name of the ruler of all the French, to greet you and congratulate you on your ascension to the throne and to thank you for having received so well my countryman, the white man, who came to the Mossi two years ago. My superior has instructed me to remain with you for several days, so that you may have the opportunity to find out that whites will not harm you, and so that you may become our friend.[23]

685 entitled to complain and merely removed the animal. If the damage was caused by a cow or donkey, the owner of the field had to obtain a witness and was entitled to recover damages.

425 Whoever found an object of small value, such as a knife or even a garment, was entitled to keep it, but anything valuable, such as a sheep, a donkey, or, all the more, a cow, had to be handed over to the naba and became his property.

684 837 The province chief alone could pass sentence on a rapist. He was beaten and put in irons, the girl was returned to her family, and, if she gave birth, the child was killed. If the girl had been promised to the naba, the rapist was put to death. An adulterer caught in flagrante delicto could be killed by the deceived husband, but if he had not been caught in flagrante delicto, if he had managed to run away, or if he had merely been denounced by the woman, the deceived husband could do nothing. A girl's seducer usually became her husband if she gave birth, but he had to provide another girl for her betrothed.

791 787 837 The province chief had a special procedure to insure the faithfulness of his numerous wives and his pages. When a wife or page did not behave properly, the Poënaba was supposed to point them out to the naba. He proceeded as follows. Every Friday the Poënaba left his village on foot, a whip in his hand. A servant preceded him with a leather satchel containing charms. No one was allowed to come near him. Everyone fled into the bush, and the path he had followed was closed to other people until they learned that the dreadful man had reached the home of the naba. The wives were gathered together. The Poënaba filled a large gourd with water, poured in his ingredients, and sat before it. The women came to him one by one and cast their reflection in the water. The Poënaba looked in and claimed to recognize those wives who were faithful and those who were not. The former were allowed to go free, but they were often beaten to remove any possible inclination to unfaithfulness. Those designated as unfaithful were seized and had to denounce their accomplice. Both the man and woman were clubbed to death. If the woman pointed out as guilty had no accomplice or refused to name him, she alone was killed. Women still point out with terror the place of execution. This procedure was very barbarous, and its abuses were flagrant. To avoid an accusation which would cost them /27/ their lives, the poor women were ready to do anything, and they presented the Poënaba with all the gifts they could gather in order to be spared.

789 /103/ Happily, it is possible to avoid lightning. To achieve this,
821 it is necessary to find in the bush a white substance rather similar to hyena droppings which the natives call "rain dung," as well as certain tree roots. Part of these roots is left to soak in water for three days, and the rest is burned to ashes. A chicken is sacrificed to the tim. Then the water in which the roots have steeped is used to cook the millet mush, and the sauce is made with baobab leaves. All the soukala dwellers must eat this millet mush, and every one of them is marked on the back and chest with a cross of ashes mixed with karite butter. The horse and donkey, alone among the animals, are similarly marked on the back, chest, and inside the mouth. The huts are marked on the east side, the direction from which the rain comes, and above the entrance. Now there is nothing to be feared. We do feel, however, that lightning-rods are more effective.

759 All these tim, medicinal remedies, amulets, talismans, and
756 superstitious recipes, are prescribed either by true doctors who actually know the properties of herbs and effect real cures or by sorcerers. The doctors are often consulted. Since they specialize in certain diseases, they are consulted for those diseases alone. Those who have been cured by a medicine willingly make it known to friends who are afflicted with the same illness. The doctors are as numerous as the diseases which afflict mankind.

278 Some doctors are not merely healers but also poisoners, and they
674 are greatly feared. The surest way to get rid of an enemy is to consult them, but their fees are high. They have slow poisons which consume the victim gradually and the overwhelming ones which kill in a few hours. They put them in drinks, in millet mush, or more
754 often in kola nuts. There are also people, sorcerers rather than doctors, who claim the power to kill at a distance and who know how to practice sympathetic magic. Their prestige has waned since the French occupation because they have not managed to kill the Whites who settled in the country; but they say that our tim are more powerful than theirs.

754 The sorcerers are also numerous. There are those who take up the
756 call of their own accord and those who are born sorcerers. The former
● 791 are the bagré and seuya; the latter the tibo, bartibo, waongo, and nyonnyonsé. Pardon us these barbaric words, but they are impossible to translate.

791 The bagre is the nice, innocuous kind of sorcerer, who helps the
756 poor for a penny or two. He is consulted about everything. For example, what does the future hold? Will fire destroy my huts or won't

791 it? Will my journey be successful? And so forth. If the answer is un-
756 favorable, what must I do to avert misfortune? The bagré are resorted to especially in case of illness, to find out which spirit caused the disease and what the spirit wants. The role of the sorcerers is thus /104/ chiefly to prescribe the sacrifice and to indicate to whom it must be directed. More rarely they prescribe a medicine, but no one puts much faith in such remedies; in most instances, they indicate a negative treatment by stating what is forbidden to the patient.

756 They use the process of elimination to spot the disease. "He has a headache," says the sorcerer. If the reply is negative, he mentions another part of the body. "A stomach-ache ... No. A pain in the arm ... No." He must eventually hit on the right statement. If the sick person is cured following the prescribed sacrifice, the sorcerer is said to be skillful and to be truly in touch with the spirits, and his practice and income grow accordingly. If the patient is not cured or dies, it is either because the sorcerer has cheated or because he does not "see." Another sorcerer is sought out, in the hope of finding a true seer.

Sorcerers are carefully listened to, and everything they prescribe is faithfully carried out. Since they sometimes guess right, since even more often the patient is cured through auto-suggestion because the sorcerer said that he would be cured, since among people who fall ill those who get well are fortunately more numerous than those who die, for all these reasons the prestige of the sorcerers is high and their practice numerous, for it includes all the Mossi. The bara (plural of bagré) are not feared. They are abused when their prescriptions fail, and they are never consulted in the course of trials to find out the name of a culprit.

791 On the other hand, people often ask them who has killed their
child, their wife, their livestock, and the bagré sometimes indicates
695 the culprit, with resulting enmity between the wronged party and the individual pointed out as guilty. The latter often resorts to trial by ordeal in self-defense. He himself suggests that he should drink poison, or that he should be burned with a red-hot iron or strangled with braided shreds of straw. If he is innocent, the poison will not harm him, the fire will not burn him, the straws will come apart. Only those who wished to do so resorted to such ordeals, and the judges never made use of this procedure. In trials actual proof had to be submitted.

791 Anyone may become a sorcerer, and those who take up the call
756 are usually poor chaps who have nothing to live on, who do not have the strength to till the soil, or who simply want to live without working. When someone enters the brotherhood of bara, people say that he wants to learn how to be idle, and they laugh about it.

791 During the dry season the country is overrun with hordes of Gourounsi and Nankana, filthy and ragged, who claim to know everything and to possess a charm for every purpose, even to make peanuts grow. Led by a chief who speaks a few words of Mossi, they wander from one village to another, dancing and singing for the nabas like the mountebanks who perform at the wagon door of fortune tellers to attract the public... They are consulted, and they return home well rigged out thanks to the cowries they have gathered in Mossi country.

754 /105/ The seuya or soul-eaters are greatly feared. The death of
774 a native, especially that of a child, is often ascribed to them. They have the power of leaving the human body they inhabit and wandering about everywhere in search of a soul to eat. Fire is their vehicle, and they travel about at night on the will-o'-the-wisps that wander in the fields around the huts. They may be stopped by the trees and thrown to the ground, and those who possess an amulet more powerful than their can drive them away.

The seuya are extremely dangerous, for complete protection against them is impossible. They work by night. Every mortal soul leaves the body often during the night and goes wandering about. Woe to it if it should come upon a seuya. He will pounce upon the soul or put it under a big stone, and the unfortunate body that owns it will fall ill and eventually die. The only remedy is to offer a sacrifice to the tangandé, and the guardian animal of the village will go on a search until it locates and releases the unhappy soul; the tangandé causes it to re-enter the body, and the sick person gets well. If, however, the seuya ate the soul, or if he is in connivance with the tangandé, nothing can be done, and death swiftly ensues.

791 The bagré sorcerers can tell who is a seuya and who is not. Some
754 of them have a tim which permits them to distinguish the seuya in a crowd of people. They need only smoke a pipe, and the eyes of the soul-eating man will redden and fill with tears. Those accused of
754 being seuya usually deny the charge, and to call someone a seuya is
[578] one of the worst insults. We have already described the heinous death inflicted on these unfortunate people. Old women especially are

754 accused of eating the souls of little children, and I have known some who boasted of possessing this power!

The tibo are a family of sorcerers. People are born tibo, and the village they inhabit is called Tibin. The naba of this village has the special faculty of discerning all sorts of things, especially whether someone has an enemy, merely by gazing into a gourd filled with water in which a certain charm has been placed. A chicken was previously sacrificed on the gourd. This naba, and he alone, can also kill at a distance. To obtain his protection, it is necessary to bring him a goat, a chicken, millet flour mixed with water, and millet beer. Sooner or later the one designated will die! If it takes too long, the sorcerer always has an excuse handy..

754 778 The village of Tibin contains a hut where the tibo fetishes are lined in a row. These fetishes consist basically of clay pots containing water, branches, and tree leaves. They are covered with clay gourds of the kind used to cook sauce, and the sacrifices are made on these gourds. It is said that there are snakes and turtles in the pots, but only the tibo sorcerers can see them. Every village has its tibo jar in the naba's household, either at the door of his hut or hanging inside. These tibo are the dwellings of powerful kikirsi.

754 /106/ The bartibo are professional dancers. They have the faculty 771 of distinguishing while dancing those who have the power of killing 535 people, whether poison-givers or senya. The bartibo themselves claim to have the power of riding the wind and going to kill anyone they wish. They specialize, however, in child-bearing charms for the benefit of sterile women.

754 The waongo also belong to a special family. People are born tibo, 292 bartibo, waongo, or nyonnyonga. For their ceremonies, the waongo don garments made of the bark of baobabs which cover them completely. These strange garments completely conceal the person. A figure may be seen walking, but the person cannot be recognized, and a dreadful illness threatens those who dare to strike it. This is why people, when they see these shapeless forms, run away as fast as they can. [769] The waongo wear masks when they celebrate the koure (death anniversary) of another waongo. They can ride the wind and inflict diseases; they can even kill if they wish.

080 nigérien /The Central Nigerian Plateau/, pages 275 and 276.)

782 776 The Mossi sacrifice to evil spirits (kinkirga in the singular, kinkirsi in the plural). In Mossi villages, when the cold weather begins, the oldest man in the village performs a sacrifice to avert the wrath of evil spirits. These are indeed fearsome, for among other things they cause the storms, the fierce winds that lay flat the millet and maize. Those spirits usually live in the bush and inhabit [824] in particular the kankalra trees (lenga in Mandé), to which the Mossi offer sacrifices but whose leaves they nevertheless eat. There are Mossi who can see the kinkirsi and who have fights with them.

791 Now, let us say a word about the priestly organization of the Mossi.

/591/ First of all, among the Mossi as among other Blacks, there are soothsayers and makers of grigris. The soothsayers are called bara and the grigri makers timisoba, meaning "grigri chiefs," from timi, "grigri" and soba, "chief." This is exactly the same word formation as that of basitigui in Bambara.

Prior to the French occupation there were considerable numbers of bara among the Mossi, at least one for every village. Since the arrival of the Whites, however, they are much fewer. The bara dis- [787] close things with the aid of some earth. Since they only charge a few cowries for a consultation, they till the soil during the winter season and even work at a trade during the dry season, for example at shoemaking or weaving. They teach the bara's calling to their children.

791 789 The timisoba, although less numerous than the bara, do not make a living by making grigris either. They, too, till the soil and work at a trade. They only make grigris on order and do not make them up in advance.

The timisoba goes into the bush and cuts out the roots of certain trees. He burns them and puts the charcoal in bags which he hangs either inside or outside his hut. This charcoal is or becomes grigri. In order to make other objects into grigris, he reduces the charcoal to powder, mixes it with karité butter, and marks with it all the objects he wishes to make into grigris, such as cow's tails, deer horns, sheep horns, etc. This charcoal powder is put to all sorts of uses. The timisoba even mixes it with his millet flour and eats it.

789 A number of grigris made by Mossi timisoba have passed
791 through my hands. I shall list them and briefly describe them below.

1. A cow's tail at the tip of a wooden handle. When one is traveling during the winter season and a storm threatens, one need only wave the cow's tail and the storm does not burst. Once in the village, one stops waving it and the rain comes.

2. A hollow koba horn in which tamarind leaves, peanuts, and
[757] gum have been placed. In case of headache one opens the horn by its small upper lid, takes /592/ a pinch of the mixture, and swallows it. Then one does this again and also rubs a little on the forehead.

3. A small hoe with a chicken's head fastened to the handle. When during a dance one wishes to silence a singer who has been singing too long in order to sing oneself, one grips the hoe and covers the chicken's mouth. The singer is silenced, and in addition one sings perfectly.

4. A small hoe covered with leopardskin at the bend. If one is
[752] bitten by a snake, one cuts off a very small piece of the skin and puts it in a canari full of water. Then one rubs the bite with this water.

5. A deer horn with a fine red cord wrapped around it. Inside the horn there are tiégélara and karité seeds. The opening of the horn is closed with a wad of cotton.

If an enemy comes looking for a fight, one places some of the contents of the horn on a leather bracelet which is slipped on the left wrist. No harm can come to you, and the quarrel will immediately come to an end.

6. A deer horn containing crushed scorpions and pimento. If one wishes to become an indefatigable dancer, one need only rub one's back with the mixture.

7. Leather bracelets with powdered rice inside. People who wear one of those bracelets on the arm can be sure that the stick or sword which their enemy may attempt to use against them will break in his hands.

8. Iron bracelets covered with crocodile skin. Same purpose.

9. Cotton bracelets with honey and salt inside. If your wife
[842] is sterile, it is sufficient to put the bracelet in water in order to make her fertile.

789 10. A deer horn covered with leather and containing millet and
791 pounded-bean flour. On the outside there is a hooked piece of iron.
777

789 If someone tells you that you own many animals, or that they are
791 very handsome, this gives bad luck, as you know. So, to ward it off,
777 /593/ you grasp your grigri by slipping two fingers into the iron hook and two others into the curve of the horn, and then you hang it in your hut, or better still, you hang it from the neck of one of the threatened animals.

789 11. A small turtle completely enclosed in a small leather bag
791 along with a powdered aquatic leaf called kouri. If you have a
755 stomach-ache, you cover the flat side of the object with butter and rub your stomach with it.

789 12. A small piece of wood covered with lizardskin in the middle
791 and leather at the ends and prolonged at one end by an iron tip.
832 If one wishes for the favors of a woman who refuses to grant them, one comes near the cruel woman while gripping the grigri in the left fist, its tip pointing up. At the same time, one presses the woman's hand tightly with the right hand. This method of seduction is claimed to be infallible.

789 13. A koba horn covered with leather and prolonged at the broad
791 end with a chicken foot. Inside, the horn contains rice, salt, and
754 soumbara. If you were threatened by a spell performed against you, you would slip the horn upon your head, with the thick end between the eyes and the pointed end behind the head. Then you would have nothing to fear.

14. A deer horn containing barkoundi leaves and closed with a lid adorned with a cowrie.

To prevent a sorcerer from eating the soul of a third party, you lift the lid with the aid of a knife covered with karité butter, you take with this knife a little of the contents of the horn, and you spread it on your forehead.

535 In addition to the bara and timisoba, the Mossi also have ouango.
532 "The ouango," says Marc (op. cit., pages 152 and 155), "are
575 dancers whose costume consists of a huge liana robe which covers the entire body and which is surmounted by a wooden mask painted red and black and usually representing /594/ the head of an animal. The ouango are members of a rather mysterious brotherhood. They have a special language, and the Mossi believe that anyone who says a word

842 How children are welcomed. —The Mossi are very happy to have children and want by all means to have some. This is indeed to their full advantage, since children work from the age of seven or eight, since they make sacrifices for their parents when the latter are dead, and since the daughters, by marrying, bring in gifts for the family. The more children one has, the happier one is.

842 789 "Under these circumstances," says Vadier, "a barren woman is very poorly regarded by her husband and not greatly esteemed by her neighbors. To overcome this sterility when it occurs, both spouses appeal to the gods. They both go to the tengasoba, the religious chief of the village, with a chicken, a goat, or a sheep, according to their means. The tengasoba cuts the animal's throat on a special stone, collects its blood, and boils it in a vessel along with various tree barks which have certain properties.

"This concoction is then given to the woman, who must mix it with her sarabou. If the spouses later have a child, they must, under threat of calling forth the vengeance of the divinity (the Earth, in [431] this case), offer the tengasoba a gift of 3,000 cowries if they had a boy or 4,000 cowries if they had a girl.

"The tengasoba also overcome sterility by cutting the animal's throat in the sacred grove (kango)."

847 Abortions. —Abortions nevertheless occur. Sometimes Mossi women cause an abortion in the event of an illegitimate pregnancy which occurred in the husband's absence. In addition, abortions are rather frequent among unmarried mothers. To conceal their lapse, [791] they appeal to the tipa or timisoba (makers of charms, medicines, and poisons) who give them a special brew of which they hold the secret.

[586] These practices are, of course, very poorly regarded by the Mossi. Married women who resort to them are turned out by their husband's. In addition, if a woman dies as the result of an abortion, her husband is likely to manifest joy and to state that the woman received a just punishment for her transgression. Finally, in former times after the [684] death of the guilty woman, the husband would go to the Moro Naba and denounce her lover to him. The naba confiscated all the lover's property.

843 Childbirth. —Among wealthy Mossi, the pregnant woman is treated with a certain regard. She does not work after the third month /252/ of pregnancy if this is her first, or after the sixth month if she has

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The Mogho Naba had an elaborate court composed of many officials, relatives, and servants. The most important courtiers were the five ministers, who appeared daily at court and took part in all important ceremonies in addition to administering their own provinces. Aside from these men, the Mogho Naba had a number of other officials called Naba whose responsibilities covered the full range of duties in the palace and in the capital. One of the most interesting was the Pwe Naba, a royal diviner and court chaperon. His chief duty was to guard the morals of the pages and the royal wives; he also administered the ordeal to persons accused of treason. The pages were required to be chaste until they were discharged from the palace, lest their amorous adventures lead them to compromise the virtue of the royal wives, with whom they were constantly in contact. A wife and a page suspected of adultery were tested by the Pwe Naba. He forced them to look into a mirror or a calabash of water, and declared them guilty or innocent according to the way their faces were reflected. If they were found guilty, the wife was executed and the page was either executed or discharged in disgrace. The Pwe Naba also saw to it that strangers did not address the ruler's wives either on the street or in the market. Offenders were executed.

The Dapore Naba served as the court's chief executioner and as head of a group of the Mogho Naba's hereditary serfs. Members of the royal clan were executed by strangulation, since royal blood could not be shed; all other persons were executed either with a sword, by hanging, or with heavy clubs. Another palace official was the Ouedrango Naba, the head groom. It was he who saddled and presented the king's ceremonial horse to him at the morning ceremony. The Kambo Naba commanded the palace guard; only he and his guards were permitted to carry guns. The Samande Naba and the Samande Nabila supervised the work of the samande-kamba, young men who worked around the palace courtyard and kept watch with heavy batons to enforce order during ceremonies. A lesser palace official was the Zusoaba Kasanga, who, as chief of the palace eunuchs, ruled over the guardians of the royal harem. The Gande Naba made sacrifices for the ruler and also distributed gifts from the king to the royal officials and the royal household.

Another courtier, and one who played an important role during the installation of the new ruler, was the Ouagadougou Naba. As a direct descendant of the Ninisi, he was all but indispensable at sacrifices propitiating or honoring his ancestors. The Bendere Naba was the chief musician and court historian; according to some reports, a Bendere Naba was killed instantly if he made a mistake while reciting the ruler's genealogy. The Raga Naba was chief of the markets in the capital. Under him were

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643 651 796 become overgrown with grass and weeds during the rainy season. This clearing was done to within a few yards of the palace, but was not completed. Early in the morning of the day chosen for the actual rendering of the agricultural tribute the retainers placed baskets of produce along these paths. During the morning ceremony, the Ouidi Naba presented a basket of millet to the Mogho Naba. Then the Bendere Naba, acting as Sore Naba ("chief of the road"), signaled on his drum, and the men with baskets who were waiting on the uncleared portion of the paths, preceded by drummers and men with hoes, axes, and other tools, began to move forward. The men in the processions raised a din, shouting, singing, drumming, and pretending that the task of clearing was very difficult. From time to time, the more energetic among those who were not carrying bundles ran ahead of the others, turned somersaults, and then, going through the motions of warriors in battle, pranced back into the procession. All the processions came to the shed occupied by the royal drummers and deposited their burdens. These were later retrieved by the palace staff and stored for use in the royal household.

643 644 241 The royal household was also supplied with produce grown by the royal wives. Foodstuffs for guests and fodder for the ruler's horses were provided by the people of the Bilbalgo and Dapoya wards, which were under the general supervision of the Kam Naba. Two or three times during the agricultural season, this official recruited extra help from these wards to help [464] [465] cultivate the fields. In recompense for this *sosogha* (work bee), the laborers were given food, drink, and kola nuts from the royal household. At the 243 643 644 end of the year, the harvesting and threshing of the grain from the Mogho Naba's fields was the occasion for an elaborate ceremony, "Mogh Nab' kawinre" ("threshing the ruler's grain").[2]

796 [791] [792] To begin this ceremony, the Mogho Naba summoned a local earth-priest, the Manougoudougou Tengsoba, to the court. This man, a descendant of the Ninisi, had to perform the propitiatory sacrifices to the earth deity who was symbolized by the threshing floor. After the sacrifices were completed, the Kam Naba went to the threshing floor with the young men of the Bilbalgo and Dapoya wards, who threshed the millet gathered there. The next morning they all returned to the threshing floor with the Bendere Naba and his minstrels, who recited the Mogho Naba's genealogy and sang praises to his ancestors. The drummers then beat out work rhythms and traditional drum patterns to which the workers danced while scattering the millet far and wide. Finally, the dancing stopped, and the Kam Naba drew a line on the threshing floor, dividing the pile of millet in two; the Bilbalgo people gathered one half, the Dapoya people the other. Regard-

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pleted, the remainder of the ceremony followed the pattern of the Ouagadougou ritual.

During the weeks that followed, the village chiefs and the heads of the larger lineage segments all offered sacrifices to their ancestors. The Pughtiema of each prominent local administrator, chief, or lineage head prepared and poured the millet water as a libation to the ancestors. Whenever possible, each of these personages invited musicians to sing praises to his ancestors. He dressed in his best robe and sat outside his hut to receive presents from his relatives, friends, and subjects, along with their best wishes for the new year, and for long life and prosperity. In return he gave them kola nuts, beer, and food. Thus, in celebrating the Basgha, all the Mossi were united in prayers and supplications to the ancestors, upon whom rested the future of their country and the successful reign of the descendants of Ouedraogo and Oubri.

The earth deity, Tenga, held the central place in the second major religio-political ceremony which linked all Mossi. This ritual, called *Tense* (from *tenga*, "earth") and sometimes *Naba Oubri ma koure* ("the anniversary of the funeral of Mogho Naba Oubri's mother"), was so important to Mossi cohesion that it was banned by the French, and as a result its main features are now unclear. According to tradition, Naba Oubri loved Poughtoenga, his Ninisi mother, so much, and was so pleased with the elaborate funeral he gave her, that he decided to repeat this ceremony each year in the hope that his subjects would be blessed with the bountiful crops and herds which had made the first one possible. Curiously enough, Oubri's mother was not a central figure in the Tense celebration. Instead, great stress was placed on the fructifying powers of the earth and on the importance of the royal ancestors in Mossi life. The juxtaposition and association of the earth deity with Oubri's mother has important implications for the Mossi political organization. Mossi tradition holds that a Ninisi woman was the ancestress of the Mossi of Ouagadougou. Her people probably celebrated the Tense as a fertility rite to their earth goddess, Tenga. The Mossi apparently took over the ceremony and used it both as a fertility rite and as a memorial festival, thus symbolically uniting the conquerors and the conquered.[8]

In contrast to the Basgha, no special date appears to have been set for the celebration of the Tense. It was held sometime before the crops were sowed, but according to Tauxier it was not celebrated at all in Ouagadougou when the previous year's harvest had been poor.[6] Before setting the date for the festival, the Mogho Naba summoned the Larhalle Naba and ordered him to have sacrifices made on the graves of all former rulers. This minister

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provided the sacrificial animals for the royal tombs in the area of the capital, and the Ouagadougou Naba, as chief Tengsoba, performed the sacrifices. The Larhalle Naba also dispatched his servants to the distant districts where royal tombs were located, with orders to obtain (by force, if necessary) the animals for the sacrifices from the local populations and give them to the special guardians of the tombs. Sacrifices were made on the grave of Naba Oubri at Koudougou and on that of his father, Zoungourana, in the village of Zomtoega in Tenkodogo. However, there is no indication that a sacrifice was made on the grave of Ouedraogo, who is believed to have died in Sagabatenga but whose burial place is unknown. Nor is it clear whether, as some Mossi claim, annual sacrifices were made on the alleged grave of Nyennega in Gambaga. As soon as these preparatory sacrifices had been completed and the Mogho Naba had been notified, preparations were made for the celebration.

The Mogho Naba met with the Larhalle Naba, and the date of the Tense was set for twenty-one days after the meeting. On the following day, the Larhalle Naba made five cords out of tree bark and tied nineteen knots in each of them. The next day, he gave each provincial minister a cord to send to the districts in his province. The provincial ministers then sent their messengers with the cords to the districts, with orders to untie one knot every day the cords were in transit. Thus a district chief, counting the number of knots in the cord on the day it reached him, knew how many days were left before the Tense. As soon as the entire kingdom had been notified of the festival, the envoys returned to Ouagadougou and returned the cords to their ministers.

On the Friday morning before the Tense, the Larhalle Naba went to the palace. Kneeling before the monarch, he untied the last knot on each cord to indicate that the ceremony would begin on the morrow. To acknowledge this fact, the Mogho Naba distributed bars of salt to his courtiers and visitors instead of the customary kola nuts, beer, and millet water. Visitors left the court early in order to provide their families with foodstuffs for the celebration.

Early on Saturday morning, royal servants brought huge quantities of beef and mutton that had been cooked without pepper (this spice being disliked by the ancestors) and other foods, and deposited them in large heaps in the courtyard. Nearby, they also placed numerous large pots of millet beer. As soon as the morning ceremony was over, the Larhalle Naba slowly approached the Mogho Naba, who presented him with a new white robe. The minister donned the robe and walked to the piles of food, from which he took three portions of millet mush, dipped them in a specially

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This man then consults a teng-

443 *soba* (earth priest) who must be also a *barga* (soothsayer) to find out
782 where in a certain area it would be most propitious to locate the new
[791] market. After the *tengsoba* has ascertained the number and nature of
[776] the *tengkouga* (earth deities, plural of *Tengkougri*) in the designated spot, he tells the *Raga Naba* what type of sacrifice would be appropri-
443 ate. A few days later the *Raga Naba*, his young assistant and the *teng-*
782 *soba* take *zom kom* (milletflour), *dam* (sorghum beer), and a chicken (or goat) of the designated color, and go to the new market place.
[776] Here they pick out the stone or three which is the abode of the spirit or spirits, if there are several of them, and prepare to make the offering. The *Raga Naba* takes the millet water and pours some on the ground saying: "Good God, take this water, drink it, and take this other water (here he pours the beer), and give it to all the *tengkouga* in the villages so that the market will aways be good and there will be no fighting in the market!" Then the *Raga Naba* takes the sacrificial animal, and in the case of a chicken pulls off the neck feathers and cuts its throat, saying: "Good God, take this chicken and heed all the prayers of the people of this market!" He releases the chicken and waits to see whether it will fall on its back, thereby indicating whether the petition has been accepted. Of course, if it has not been accepted, a new site is chosen. If the sacrifice has been accepted, then the *Raga Naba* gives the chicken to his young helper to be cleaned and roasted. He then prays to the *tengkouga* who live in the market place and begs them to help with the market. When the boy brings back the dissected chicken, the *Raga Naba* cuts the liver into two parts; one for God and the other for the local *tengkouga*. He then says, "Now that God and the *Tengkouga* have eaten, they should drink," and forthwith pours out the remainder of the millet water. The *Raga Naba* then distributes the remainder of the roasted chicken among those present saying, "*Winnam dege* (God has accepted the sacrifice)." Only after this ceremony is completed can the market be opened.*

443 All Mossi markets, except those which specialize in one type of
366 trading, have the same basic physical structure even though they vary in size from one-eighth of an acre to as much as four or five acres. We do not know the size of some of the traditional markets such as Pouitenga, La, Yako, Dakay, Belousa, Mane, and Tema, but we have Crozat's report that "The market at Wagadougou, which is found at Kounkounbissi, the royal residence . . . is large" (Crozat 1891 : 4848). Since the market at Wagadougou was smaller than some of the other important ones, we may assume that some of the markets must have been quite large. At the same time, the physical appurtenances of Mossi markets are not elaborate, or were not so until today. In the

(*) See Zahan (1954 : 571) and Mangin (1921 : 55).

764 animals, beer, etc. (see the description above). This is the
554 second mourning.

Dakonré (bachelor). Only his father and mother shave their heads. He is wrapped in a Mossi secco and buried without further ceremony. He is not even washed.

Bi-kouré (funeral for a newborn child). If the first-born child of a young mother dies, the girl returns to her family and remains there for thirteen days. Then she comes back to her husband, accompanied by some of her relatives. The latter bring chickens and guinea fowl to be served with the millet cake brought to the girl's husband. In return, the husband has chickens and guinea fowl killed and millet cake prepared, thus making an even exchange with his in-laws.

[198] Custom requires that the girl's relatives spend a night on the road before returning to their village. Even if their village is quite near they spend the night in the bush.

It should be added that if a second child dies at birth, there is no kouré.

Pagh'sin kataré biga (childless woman). There is no ceremony. She is buried in the same manner as the bachelor.

The Existence of God, Heaven, and Hell

776 The Moaga believes in the existence of a superior being, invisible or visible (the sun has long been considered as a "god" by many of them), who created the heavens, the earth, and all living things. This being is called Wende or Wenam (from wende, "world," and nam, "chiefdom"; thus, "Master of the World").

Although the Moaga sometimes attributes his misfortunes to the evil spells of his enemies, nevertheless he recognizes that nothing can be done without the consent of God. Hence he constantly invokes the name in every circumstance of his life, especially when he makes sacrifices.

Even the makers of fetishes, magicians, and sorcerers recognize this power and frequently invoke it.

792 There are certain Mossi who make no charms or fetishes and who are neither Moslems nor Christians. They harm no one, [199] forgive those who offend them, and attribute everything that happens to them -- for good or ill -- solely

to divine Providence. These are the mystics.

However, the deism of either type is not very deep. All believe that a dead person will rejoin his ancestors and dwell eternally with them. They imagine, however, that "the road to Eternity is hard and the Kingdom of God so remote from the earth that they give cowries to their dead to pay their way through difficulties, the hazards of the journey being directly related to the good or bad actions of the deceased."

This may be said to be a kind of vague notion of a hell or a purgatory. However, this hell is neither the "everlasting fire of the Christians nor the horrible sufferings of the Moslems," since the person is supposed to be with his relatives.

The Alkyoamé. One sometimes hears a Moaga say: "I cannot avenge what you have done to me, but it will be settled on the day of alkyoamé." This is a somewhat superficial notion of a Day of Judgment. The Moaga does not really believe in a final judgment any more than he believes in the end of the world or the resurrection of the body. By the words alkyoamé daré, he alludes to the day when he and his enemy will both die and God will subject one of them to a punishment -- understood to be temporary -- for the harm he has done the other. [200]

Beliefs and Superstitions Concerning the Soul After Death

What do the Mossi believe the human being to be? Man is composed of three elements: the visible body, the siga or toulé (soul), and the kima (ghost).

The siga, which may be called the soul, is the part of the man which is to return to God.

Siga. According to the Mossi, the siga or toulé is easily frightened. A great sorrow, illness, or the death of a loved one can cause it to abandon the body temporarily. It then assumes a human appearance and can be seen by the person himself or by others. In that case, charms or fetishes are used to make it return.

Its temporary absence from the body is not thought to have any serious consequences since this does not disturb the normal functions of the human organism, but, since body and soul cannot

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sented the sun itself. The toilet was performed in complete silence, for no one was allowed to speak to the monarch until after the ceremony. Meanwhile, in the courtyard, the court dignitaries, visitors, and the musicians and minstrels (*bendere*) took their places. The provincial ministers sat on their respective stones (*coganaramse*), and the visitors sat by their hosts. The pages at the door of the zongo awaited the moment when the Mogho Naba and his escort would emerge from the zongo. On seeing the two pages who preceded the monarch, they snapped their fingers as a signal to the still silent bendere. 644 796 [645]

On seeing the monarch, the chief musician, the Bendere Naba, rubbed his fingers across the top of his drum to produce the sound of a lion's growl, and the other drummers and violinists played the royal air, "Ouend pous yan." The head guard, the Kambo Naba, and his men, carrying guns, walked up from the side and knelt down facing the assembly. And the *samande-kamba*, the "servants of the courtyard," came with heavy batons to guard against crimes of lese majesty. From the wings came a groom with a partly saddled ceremonial horse. As soon as the monarch was seated on his throne, his two pages moved to the front and knelt down facing the courtyard. The salutations now began. The first group of ministers, led by the Baloum Naba and including the Samande Naba, the Samande Nabila, the Ouedrange Naba, the Kamsaogho Naba, and the Zusoaba Kasanga, left their stones and came to the throne with slow steps and bowed heads. A few yards from the monarch, they knelt on the ground, and with their fingers folded and their thumbs in the air, leaned forward, struck the ground with both hands three times, and then rubbed the palms of their left hands with the fingers of their right. Then they arose, and with heads still bowed walked backwards to their places.[6] With the music still playing, another group of ministers, led by the Ouidi Naba and including such men as the Gounga Naba, the Larhalle Naba, and the Pwe Naba, saluted the ruler in the same manner. On Fridays and other Islamic holy days, the Moslem Imam representing the Ouagadougou congregation read aloud from the Koran. This part of the ceremony ended when the Mogho Naba rose, and, with the measured steps and swaying gait that signified royalty, retired to the zongo, preceded by his two pages.[7] [533] 643 645 796 576 [792] [481]

A few minutes later, the monarch returned to the courtyard without his red robe and glittering headdress. There was a second round of salutations comparable to the first, but this time the Ouidi Naba and his group did not appear unless it was an important occasion or important guests were present. When this part of the ceremony was over, the monarch called for his half-saddled horse and announced that he wished to go to 643 796

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634 spirits. The chiefs could not refuse such requests, especially when the vil-
622 lagers were poor, because they were regarded as "fathers of their people."
782 In some cases, however, district chiefs had to protect their subjects against unscrupulous Tengsobadamba who took advantage of local crises and tried
661 to prey upon the villagers by refusing to perform the requisite sacrifices
793 unless they received substantial gifts. The ensuing struggle was between
634 the secular and the sacred; between the chief as a representative of the con-
782 querors, and the Tengsoba as a member of the conquered group. It was always resolved in favor of the Mossi chief, who never permitted his Tengsobadamba the same privileges held by religious practitioners in neighboring societies.[9] The Mossi chiefs recognized that they needed the Tengsobadamba, and many myths recount how invading Mossi chiefs went into the woods where the Tengsobadamba were hiding to beseech and eventually force them to return to their districts so that sacrifices might be continued. On the other hand, the Mossi chiefs always insisted on the primacy of the nam over any other power. They employed the Tengsobadamba to intercede with Tenga for the welfare of their subjects, but they never allowed the priests to control them.

771 The coming of Moslems to the kingdom of Ouagadougou had little
795 effect on the way in which the Mogho Nanamse used the traditional reli-
643 gious system to bolster their political power.[10] In fact, the Mossi rulers later used Islam and its adherents in the same manner as they had used the
[797] aboriginal religion. The Moslems first tried to subdue the Mossi in the fifteenth century by persuasion, and later by the jihad. Both attempts
[648] failed, but the Moslems finally entered Mossi country as refugees from
[167] Sudanese wars. Their fortunes waxed and waned, depending on whether they were befriended by the ruler in whose territory they lived. During
[798] certain periods, they were subjected to many restrictions and were forbidden by the Mogho Naba to recite their prayers in public places.[11] At other
[797] times, they were left free to practice their religion, and even succeeded in converting several Mogho Nanamse to Islam. Under converts such as Savadogo (ca. 1760), Islam spread into many districts and gave rise to such important local centers as Sakhaboutenga (Dakay).

771 The Moslems in Ouagadougou were represented at the court by their
795 Imam. This person even received his badge of office—a white turban and white robe—from the Mogho Naba, and had to swear in the name of Allah
● 792 and *Nabiyama* (the prophet Mohammed) to be faithful to him, obey him, and aid him in times of need. However, he did not have to drink the namtibo as suggested by Dim Delobson; nor did he have to observe such non-Moslem customs as drinking the millet beer the Mogho Naba provided for

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his guests.[13] On the contrary, when the Imam visited the ruler on Fridays or during important festivals to read from the Koran, the sovereign gave him sweetened millet water and appropriate gifts.

Most Mossi rulers at all levels had Moslems among their councillors. These men were often the only persons who had traveled extensively outside the country (on pilgrimages to Mecca), and thus could counsel a ruler about how to deal with foreign visitors. Most early European visitors to Mossi country were either helped or hindered (chiefly the latter, it seems) by these travel-wise councillors. Crozat had difficulties with the Moslems long before he arrived in Mossi country proper. When he got to Lanfiera, the Mossi who lived there were alarmed, and refused to help him proceed to Ouagadougou despite his protestations that "I come for the good of all, white and black, that we may be together like brothers, since the same God has made us all." Crozat reports that his plea was in vain because "El Hadj All-Karl declared that he would not receive me, and he will not receive me. El Hadj is wise, El Hadj is prudent, El Hadj knows all, El Hadj does not make decisions without good foresight, and once made, he keeps them."[13]

Crozat had the same difficulty when he entered Mossi country. He tells us, "At Dounse [near Yako], for example, the marabouts did not look favorably upon my arrival, and it took a great deal of insistence on the part of Moussa to convince the Imam, my unwilling host, to present me to the chief who had expressed the desire to see me."[14] Crozat also found that he had to lodge with the Imam when he arrived at Ouagadougou, and he was assigned the same huts "which had served Captain Binger," who had visited the capital before him. He was disappointed with his reception and declares:

> I already knew from experience what sort of influence these men exercised over the chiefs. As a councillor of the chief, the Imam was overtly acknowledged as the second official in the village, but in reality he often commanded it. The Imam of Ouagadougou, therefore, could do much to help me or to hurt me. My decision to court him might flatter him, and that would be a move in the direction of winning his good graces, which, all things considered, was most important to me. The result was only partly in my favor. I succeeded insofar as the Imam was not hostile to me, but he did not help me as he might have.[15]

These Moslem councillors realized better than most other people what the visits of the Europeans implied for the independence of the country, and they tried their best to counsel the monarchs against receiving such visitors.

Beginning with Mogho Naba Doulougou (ca. 1750) Mossi sovereigns, whether Moslem or pagan, participated in the more important Moslem festi-

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Moslems. In return, he gave them millet water sweetened with honey, millet cakes, meat, and kola nuts.

The celebration of the festival in the districts was not as imposing as it was at Ouagadougou, but we have Binger's excellent eyewitness account of the festivities at Sakhaboutenga:

> First of all, Boukary sent word that he would like me to accompany him to Sakhaboutenga, where it is his custom to go on the day of the festival. The chief's men spent the entire day attending to preparations: they distributed powder, cleaned guns, tried on harnesses, and polished copper fittings as we would in France on the eve of a great parade. . . . It was an occasion for revelry, and they took full advantage of it. They ate as much as they could, drank a great deal of beer, and fired many rounds of ammunition. . . . In the evening there was a moment of consternation: no one had seen the crescent; however, they consoled themselves by repeating that although it had not been sighted here, it had certainly shown itself elsewhere, and they sat down to drink beer all night long.
>
> Monday, June 11. Early this morning Boukary sent a horseman to Sakhaboutenga to consult the marabouts. The messenger soon returned and assured the chief that the moon will be seen tonight. "All the marabouts have said so." The much-desired crescent appeared for a few moments this evening; shots were fired through half the night, and beer ran in floods. . . .
>
> Tuesday, June 12. From four o'clock in the morning, the tam-tams sounded everywhere, and everyone was busy; it is obvious that this is the eve of an important event. . . . Half an hour after our departure we arrived at Sakhaboutenga. We dismounted and camped under the trees at the entrance of the village. Some Moslems from the neighborhood came, greeted Boukary, and offered him some kola nuts in lots varying from five to eight. But they always held them out in a fold of their robe [it being forbidden for a commoner to hand a gift directly to a chief]. A village nearby sent twelve large jars of beer.
>
> From afar and from all directions, long files of Moslems emerged from the village on their way to the Imam's for prayers. Several onlookers arrived on donkeys from the surrounding countryside. The religious ceremony took place on a flat expanse to the east of the village. It was an impressive spectacle. The crowd was silent. The faithful, ranged in ranks about 20 feet deep, prostrated themselves and rose again in perfect harmony and with awesome slowness. From time to time the voice of the Imam was raised, and his *amina* [amen] was heard with deep reverence.
>
> There were about three thousand persons of both sexes there, almost all of them dressed in white. The *bournous* [robes], the red tarbooshes, and the multitude of black faces lent to the ceremony the grandiose character of an oriental fete. As soon as the prayers were over, Boukary Naba walked up to the Imam of Sakhaboutenga to the sound of tam-tams to receive his blessing and the good wishes of the Moslems, who wished on my illustrious host many horses and warriors. Boukary Naba ordered that the Imam be given a magnificent sheep and several sheepskins full of cowries. He presents this

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*175 *648 European powers established in the vicinity realized that by controlling the markets of the Mossi, they could become masters of all the commercial routes in the interior near the bend of the Niger River."[19] The French pursued a more aggressive policy than any other power, dispatching mission after mission to the Mossi. In August 1890, Crozat was sent "to establish friendly relations between the French Sudan and the Mossi."[20] When he reached Ouagadougou in September, he found that Boukary Koutou had succeeded his brother and was reigning as Mogho Naba Wobogo.

Crozat, like Binger, was disappointed by the appearance of the Mossi capital, which he describes in the following words: "Like the smallest of Mossi hamlets, the capital is but a village surrounded by fields, and except for the absence of forest vegetation, nothing would indicate to the traveler that this is a great center and the home of the sovereign."[21] Most European travelers in the Sudan were disappointed by the capitals of African states. They could not reconcile the glowing reports of the Africans with their own ideas of royal splendor. Crozat was even more disappointed with Boukary Koutou. He states:

*175 *648 643

> The king of Ouagadougou is the same Boukary Naba who was Binger's cordial host at Banema; but what I was told about him and what I saw a little later were two different things, and the difference was to the ruler's disadvantage. Binger knew him as friendly, dignified, simple, somewhat opportunistic, and showing very little displeasure at his brother and predecessor who had exiled him from Ouagadougou. I found myself in the presence of a monarch very proud of his newly obtained but long-hoped-for dignity (Boukary, in effect, became king at Ouagadougou only because his brother died without male issue). Yet he was timid, shaky, and lived confined to his palace with his servants and wives, not daring to go out. He spent his time consulting holy men who had him under their control and who used up the resources of the realm to contrive the oddest and most expensive charms in order to allay the ruler's fear that he would be assassinated.[22]

[789] [792]

Mogho Naba Wobogo did little to change Crozat's opinion of him. He hesitated to grant the Frenchman an interview because his councillors had advised against it. When Crozat was finally permitted to see the ruler, he told him:

> I was sent to you by the white chief who rules all the countries of the blacks from Bamako to Kayes, and from Fouta-Djallon to Kaarta. I have come in his name, and in the name of the ruler of all the French, to greet you and congratulate you on your ascension to the throne and to thank you for having received so well my countryman, the white man, who came to the Mossi two years ago. My superior has instructed me to remain with you for several days, so that you may have the opportunity to find out that whites will not harm you, and so that you may become our friend.[23]

Chapter 12

The Penetration of Islam into Mossi Country

Islam in the Land of the Mogho Naba

643 The Mogho Naba, like his subjects, is above all an animist,
794 and it is hard to understand how he reconciles his fetishism with
771 the complex dogmas of Islam and with the many interdictions of Christianity.

The Mogho Naba, however, is quite capable of being a Catholic or a Moslem on appropriate occasions and at the same time respecting the traditions of his ancestors. Thus, when the Christians celebrate Christmas, the emperor of the Mossi devoutly attends Midnight Mass. He keeps his cap on, however, just as the bishop wears his miter. In the same way he embraces Islam during the following three festivals: the moaghrem (the Mossi zembendé); Ramadan (nolokré, "to loosen the mouth"); and, finally, the zoulhési (the Mossi tabaski or kibsa).

797 Before describing how the Mogho Naba celebrates these Moslem festivals, we shall give a brief history of Islam among the Mossi and discuss the appointment of imams.

The Arrival of Islam among the Mossi

797 It was during the reign of Naba Doulgou, the twenty-third
793 Mogho Naba [204] after Oubri, founder of the Ouagadougou dynasty, that Islam took root in the empire of the Mogho Naba, and it was at that time that an imam was appointed at Ouagadougou.

Naba Sawadogo, who succeeded his father, Doulgou, sent his children to the Koranic school. Many of them obtained a fairly good education there, and the eldest son, who later succeeded to the throne under the name of Naba Koutou, even became a marabout. The development of Islam in Mossi country dates from his reign, as does practice of giving children of the Mogho Naba Moslem names such as Saïdou, Mahama, Moumouni, etc.

791 Gambaga Naba (chief of a vast territory in the British colony of the Gold Coast) was, as we have already seen [not translated], 793 the father of Nyennenga, mother of Ouedraogo, the real founder of the Mossi empire. As is well known, any king tends to imitate an illustrious relative and to follow his lead in all matters which might lend him distinction.

This being the case, here is how Doulgou happened to install a marabout at his side. It is said that in addition to his many ministers the king of Gambaga had an imam whose duty was to settle all complicated matters. He was, at the same time, an intimate counselor of the king. Mogho Naba Doulgou, who ruled over a large territory and who felt that he was just as powerful as his ancestor, the king of Gambaga, decided that he, too, wanted to consult only an imam for certain affairs. The emperor had a friend [205] who was a marabout in the region of Zitenga and whose name was Moustapha. Doulgou summoned him to Ouagadougou and conferred upon him the title of Imam.

It goes without saying that neither the learning of this adept in Islam nor any of his other qualifications were checked and that he was not chosen by other marabouts. Thus, the Imam of the Mogho Naba is principally a court dignitary, just like the Ouidi Naba, for example, and, as such, his appointment involves certain barbaric procedures. This is why, after he has been given his turban and his burnoose (insignia of chiefdom) he is invited to a house called surbinda. In this sacred place he is handed a [272] gourdful of a loathsome beverage, tibo, a mixture of human and animal blood, which all canton chiefs, all ministers, and all court officials must drink at the time of their appointment to make them incapable of treason or lese majesty. The imam takes up the gourd and utters the following sacramental words: "I shall never, under any circumstances, betray the Mogho Naba; I shall come to his aid in time of war; I shall execute without question all orders received from my King," etc.... He then pretends to drink some of the beverage and hands it to the Ouidi Naba who puts the liquid back into the copper jar in which it has been kept for nearly a thousand years. Once these formalities have been completed, he is the Imam of the Mogho Naba. As is

797 the case for canton chiefs and ministers, this position is handed
793 down in [206] the same family. Obviously a son is not called to succeed his father unless he has been educated well enough to settle, to the satisfaction of the emperor, the few questions which will be submitted to him. In any event, the choice will always fall on a member of the family of Moustapha, the first Imam.

Celebration of the Moslem Festivals by the Mogho Naba

796 Moaghrem (the Mossi zambende). The moaghrem marks the beginning of the new year of the hegira. Every Moslem family must feast on the evening before the holiday. The next morning, that is, on the tenth day of the month of Moaghrem [Muharram], the sourata, book of the year, is read, and one learns the name of the saint who will preside over the destiny of the world for the next 360 days. Alms are stipulated. This festival, which represents a return to joy, solemnly commemorates the day on which the Patriarch, Noe [Noah] (called Nabi Nouhou by the marabouts), alone blessed by the Lord, first set foot on dry land after the flood which exterminated mankind. This was a return to life, and it was the Day of Fire.

The Mossi have never understood the meaning of the Moslem festivals and celebrate them in their own way. They did not understand that the "Day of Fire" meant a return to family life, to cooking food over a fire, but instead made up a curious custom which is more reminiscent of the taking of the Bastille. On that day they light torches, chase each other about, and burn each other. This sometimes results in [207] real injuries which fortunately are easily healed.

The Silmissi (Peulh of Mossi country) do rather better since they sprinkle themselves with cool water. This represents at least a wish for good health.

796 The tabaski (zoulhési or Mossi kibsa). In the old days the Mogho
643 Naba was required to go to the great mosque at Zoaghna on the day of tabaski.

Yarnaba, chief of the Yarcé (Dioula whose ancestor, Koanda, came to Mossi country during the reign of Koumdoumié, the eighth Mogho Naba), has the duty of sacrificing the cattle and sheep

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composed of two major groups of communities," Fortes goes on to describe this pattern succinctly: 171

> On the one side are those that claim to be descendants of immigrants from parts of the country other than their present habitats. On the other side are communities that claim to be the autochthonous inhabitants. . . . Many of the immigrant communities claim descent from forbears of the Mampuru ruling stock. Though now wholly amalgamated with the alleged aboriginal inhabitants, they have certain ritual observances and a system of chieftainship similar to those of the Mamprusi. . . . The institution distinctive of the autochthonous communities is the office of "Custodian of the Earth." This ritual office, involving priestly functions in connection with the cult of the Earth, is found among many West African peoples from the Senegal to the mouth of the Niger. In the Voltaic region it is the exclusive prerogative of the autochthonous communities.[2] [793]

The inhabitants of the Yatenga at the time of the arrival of the Mossi were the Kurumankobe, or Fulse, as they are called by the Mossi. Their descendants recognize their indigenous origin but have become almost wholly acculturated to the Mossi. While most Mossi bear the sib name Wedraogo and maintain political control in the Yatenga, the descendants of the Kurumankobe usually have the sib name Savadogo and are excluded from the exercise of political authority. They have retained the custodianship of the earth, and the elders of their lineages and sibs are the Mossi's *Tenga Soba namba*, their "earth custodians," charged with propitiating the supernatural forces of nature. 173 563 614 [793]

POLITICAL AND SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

The present king of the Yatenga, the *Yatenga Naba*, is a lineal descendant of the first ruler, Naba Yadiga. The members of the lineage of the king are called "those who maintain themselves upon us" (*riim namba*). Directly subordinate to the authority of the Yatenga Naba are his four grand ministers, each of whom has authority over a particular province (*solum*) of the Yatenga.[3] 631 [644] [635]

The province over which each of the grand ministers presides as lord is divided up into a number of cantons (*tense*), each of which is ruled by a chief who is the central political authority both of the village in which he resides and of the villages within the canton. Like the province, the concept of the canton is not precisely territorial. Some villages may owe 631 634

[2] Meyer Fortes, *The Dynamics of Clanship among the Tallensi* (London: Oxford University Press, 1945), p. 6.

[3] These provinces refer not only to geographical areas of the kingdom but to particular categories of the population. For example, the *Balum Naba* has direct authority over the southern regions of the Yatenga and indirect authority over the cantons of Riziam and Zittenga, political entities which have never fully recognized the central authority of the *Yatenga Naba*. This same minister is also especially charged with maintaining liaison with certain of the more important earth custodians throughout the Yatenga.

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769 destroy the yield. And, depending on his attentions to them, they can give or take away the good health necessary to carry him through the arduous activity of the rainy season when work is hardest, the granaries nearly empty, and food in short supply. Separate ancestral spirits look out for different aspects of the well-being of the individual. Satisfying their various sacrificial requirements is both expensive and time-consuming, but their good will is essential to the success of the farmer, and it is in his own best interest to be attentive to their needs.

THE EARTH CUSTODIANS

793 A close relationship exists between the control of the water supply upon which the agricultural economy depends and the authority of the 776 earth custodians in their role as intermediaries with the several manifestations of Wennam, the Mossi deity. The deity itself is somewhat aloof from the affairs of men, but through his specific manifestations and with the intercession of the earth custodians (*Tenga Soba namba*), descendants of the indigenous inhabitants of the Yatenga, the individual propitiates Wennam in order to control the various forces of the natural and supernatural environment upon which the success of his economic or social endeavor is dependent. Tenga Wende, his terrestrial manifestation, and Tido Wende, which gives life to the vegetable kingdom, are the aspects of Wennam which are most frequently evoked; but Siguiri Wende, the deified first ancestor of the Mossi; Ki Wende, the millet god; and Saga Wende, the rain deity, are also frequently called upon for help.

Each Mossi village in the Yatenga is divided into one or more areas, 793 each of which is in the "command" of one of the village earth custodians. [36] Each of these areas contains both the dwelling of the Savadogo lineage of the earth custodian and the residence and farmlands of various "true" Mossi lineages. The head of each lineage maintains the good will of the terrestrial manifestation of the deity through the intercession of the earth custodian who "commands" his land. In some instances a lineage may own land under the authority of two different earth custodians; in this case offerings must be made at the shrine (*tenga*) of each.

793 The good fortune which may be secured through obeisance to the terrestrial manifestation of the deity (Tenga Wende) involves both 782 sacrifices and gifts of money to the earth custodian and abstention from acts offensive to the earth. For example, sexual intercourse may take [833 place only in a private courtyard or within the house. Violation of this 783] rule defiles the land and must be expiated through a special sacrifice and the payment of a fine to the earth custodian. Any lost object found in the 778 public way or in the bush is in the custody of the earth deity and must be turned over to the earth custodian to await the inquiry of the proper owners. If such objects are unclaimed, they are given to Tenga Wende

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by being placed on his altar, where they become part of the earth symbols (*tiinse*). As a result, these altars are piled high with old sardine cans, bicycle parts, remnants of clothing, unusual stones and scraps of metal, baskets, wooden implements, and weapons, which are left there to decompose slowly and return to the earth. Travelers in a strange village need never fear that their property will be stolen if they deposit it near the altar of the earth custodian. 778

When a farmer wishes to clear a part of the bush which has previously been unused, he must first ask permission of the earth custodian and make a present to the earth deity. If he wishes to use the land again the following year, the request and the gift must be repeated. Such a field may be passed on to his descendants, who have a right to the land so long as they acknowledge each year the authority of the earth custodian. If a new well is to be dug, his authorization must be requested, and his advice may also be asked for the proper place to seek water. The wise Mossi farmer consults the earth custodian frequently about his agricultural activities. He also reports anything that he may have done to alter the condition of his farmlands or the surrounding bush, not because each individual act is of such great importance, but because maintaining good relations with the custodian of the earth is in the interest of his own economic security. 241 782 793

OTHER ASPECTS OF RELIGION

Other descendants of the original inhabitants of the Yatenga, the Bogoba, are especially charged with the propitiation of Tido Wendé, the vegetal manifestation of Wennam. In addition to the many manifestations of Wennam and the complex organization of priests and ceremonial designed for his propitiation, many other forces inhabit the unseen world of the Mossi. Indeed, to the observer their number and variety might at first seem to be almost as great as the number of Mossi with whom he may discuss these beings. Each man's description of these supernatural beings varies in terms of his subjective reaction resulting either from direct experience of them or from stories he has heard concerning their behavior. In contrast to Wennam, whose disposition is essentially benevolent so long as he is properly propitiated, these lesser supernatural beings are more frequently malicious and always more difficult to control. Perhaps for these reasons they are not worshiped. The Mossi's concern is not to propitiate them but to neutralize their evil intentions by the use of protective charms (*tim*). 776

The "bush," the unused land lying beyond the farms, is the least-known aspect of the Mossi natural environment. This is especially true of those far areas of the bush where even the authority of the earth custodians does not extend and where unknown spirits dwell. For although the 776 823

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Tenga Wende of the desire for a good growing year and gives each girl a small part of the wet earth near the shrine; this represents the now sanctified soul (*shiga*) and is placed under the granary from which the millet seeds for the new crop will be taken.

Then those who possess land controlled by the earth custodian organize a hunt for his benefit. The following day, the earth custodian visits each lineage which possesses fields in areas of the bush under his custodianship. He is given calabashes filled with millet gruel, which he pours as a libation on the earth, asking Tenga Wende to grant good health, heavy rains, and a successful harvest to the household. As the libation is poured, the women try to catch a little in their own calabashes of gruel, which they then pour as their sacrifice. Because the millet from the granaries of good harvests is lucky, other women want to try to catch a little of it in their own offerings; thus the libations spill from one calabash into another as they fall on the earth.

The second moon is called "Bega" after the ceremonial which coincides with the first labor in the fields, the clearing and burning which precedes planting. After making a sacrifice at his own altar, the earth custodian goes to the residence of the neighboring priest (*Boga*) specifically charged with the propitiation of the vegetal manifestation of the deity. This visit symbolizes the interdependent relationship of the two priests and the supernatural powers which they control. The *Boga* then repeats the libations made during the previous ritual, but this time the offerings of millet gruel are made to Tido Wende, the force which gives life to the plants, rather than to the earth.

A sacrifice to Pogo Wende, the specific manifestation of Tenga Wende which guards a farmer's fields, is usually made after they have been cleared and prepared for planting. Either before or after the sowing of the first seeds, the farmer asks the earth custodian to sacrifice a sheep or a goat to the field deity, requesting good health, heavy rains, and a rich harvest. This sacrifice (*Pogo Mande*) is the final aspect of the ceremonial preparations for the new economic cycle. It is designed to enlist the benevolence not only of Pogo Wende but also of the twin spirits which inhabit the field. If the twins are well disposed toward the farmer, they will protect the soul (*ki shiga*) of his millet stand from the twin spirits from neighboring fields who might try to steal it. Like the ancestral spirits, the twin spirits send a high wind into a field, blowing the ripening grains from the stalk and liberating their "souls" (*shiise*), which are then captured to enrich the spirits' own fields.

The third moon of the year is called "Cundiba Bega." The fourth, which usually corresponds with the European month of June, is called "unaccompanied" (Quizale), referring to the fact that no ceremonial is observed during its phase. The hard work in the fields is begun at this

535 while the ouango are singing will surely die within the year. (The
532 ouango sing at the funeral ceremonies of important personages, at the
575 second ceremony performed a month or a year after the burial) The masks of the ouango are made in the greatest secrecy. They have to be carved out of a single piece of wood, and the man who is making one must not be seen as long as his task has not been completed.

535 "In our opinion it would be most interesting to try and study
575 the ouango and their customs more closely than we succeeded in
171 doing. We believe, indeed, that theirs is a very old institution
174 antedating the arrival of the Mossi in the Volta basin, an institution which they found among the peoples they conquered and which they preserved, no doubt because they did not dare fight it. Ouango are to be found throughout Gourounsi territory, and the dou noticed by Binger among the Bobo would seem to have the same origin. The dancers with totemic masks who appear in some of Desplagnes' photographs are quite similar to the Mossi ouango."

The Mossi ouango are thus no different from the Bobo dou, the Khassonké mamadiombo, the Habé and Bambara namakoro, the Malinké dokho, the Landouman /Landuma/ simo, etc.

773 The Earth chief or Tensoba is also part of the Mossi priestly
174 organization. We are already familiar with Earth chiefs, whom we encountered among the Gourounsi. They exercise no political authority in the village, but they are entrusted with the performance of sacrifices to the Earth and to other local divinities.

The presence of those Earth chiefs among the Mossi is no doubt to be explained by the superposition of the conquering group over the conquered group. When the Mossi invaded and conquered the country, they placed their own men at the head of all the villages and all the cantons in the course of conquest, /595/ to ensure the submission of the vanquished population. They never felt, however, (and they hold this in common with the rest of West Africa) that they were themselves qualified to offer sacrifices to the Earth and other divinities of the place. Only the vanquished, former owners of the latter and on good terms with it, were qualified to do this. The former autochtonous political chief thus naturally became a religious chief under Mossi authority. We have already seen that the Moro Naba

793 never offers sacrifices himself to the Earth at Ouagadougou, nor does
174 he have them offered by the Gandé Naba, his minister of religion. He entrusts with this task the Ouagadougou Naba, who is a grandson of the autochtonous inhabitants and thus favorably regarded by the local divinities. Similarly, when the Moro Naba sacrifices to the hillocks surrounding Ouagadougou, he entrusts the local chief with the offerings and the physical sacrifice. Now, what the Moro Naba still does at Ouagadougou was no doubt done by other Mossi chiefs throughout the land after conquest, once the submission of the autochtonous inhabitants had been ensured by force of arms. Hence, the institution of the Tensoba.

One might object that Earth chiefs are also to be found in Gourounsi territory, although the Gourounsi are independent. We know, however, that the present-day Gourounsi cantons were not the achievement of the Gourounsi themselves but of minor Mossi dynasties established in the territory. Under the circumstances, the same substitution of conquering chiefs for conquered chiefs has occurred there as in Mossi territory, with the same consequences.

793 "The Tensoba," says Marc, p. 157, "whose title means 'Master of the Earth,' stands in opposition to the naba who is a military chief....

"The Tensoba is the indispensable mediator between the ancestors and their living descendants. It is he who conducts the funeral ceremonies and who decides on the honors to be rendered on the Day of the Dead. It is to him that one appeals in case of an epidemic or any public misfortune, since misfortunes are always due to the evil inclinations of ancestors that must be allayed."

793 /596/ Actually, the institution of the Earth chief does not strip
643 the village and canton chiefs of all religious powers. In some areas,
839 as Marc pointed out, the Earth chiefs have gradually vanished, and
778 the political chiefs have become religious chiefs as well. They per-
[431] form sacrifices on the bara's advice, without failing to make a gift of some sort (100 or 1,000 cowries) to the latter also. By the same token and up to a point, the Moro Naba is invested with a religious character and with religious attributes. It is he, as we have already seen, who orders the performance of sacrifices to the Earth, to the hills. Every year during the dry season, he has a donkey sacrificed to Naba Koutou, a former Moro Naba, in the hut where the latter is buried. Prior to our occupation it was a eunuch who performed

793 the sacrifice and killed the donkey. He also slit the throat of a
643 horse, a beef, and a sheep. (This eunuch in charge of guarding the
839 tomb was called by the name of Naba Koutou, and in a way per-
778 petuated the deceased Moro Naba. He was granted special privi-
leges. If a man who was condemned to death ran away and reached
the tomb, he was safe but became the eunuch's slave. Similarly,
[567] a captive who ran away from his master gained his freedom from the
latter if he reached the grave, but became the slave of Naba Koutou.
Finally, at that time, it was forbidden to ride by the hut on a donkey.
Naba Koutou would seize the donkey, or at least demand a ransom
in cowries before returning it. This applied to any animals who ran
astray near the tomb. The tomb still exists nowadays, along with
the Naba Koutou who watches over it, but the latter no longer enjoys
the same privileges.)

● 793 We saw earlier that the Moro Naba had a sort of minister of the
645 cult in the person of the Gandé Naba, high priest and sacrificer.
There was also the Pouy Naba, or chief of the fetisheers, whose
function was probably to mediate between the Mossi bara and
timisoba as a whole and the central authorities.

782 Let us close this study of Mossi religion, which incidentally is
quite incomplete and a mere outline, with a few words on the human
sacrifices that were performed /597/ in the territory prior to our
occupation, and a few words on circumcision as well.

782 "Human sacrifices," says Marc., p. 156, "definitely took place
766 among the Mossi up to the time when we occupied the territory.
Whenever a Moro Naba died at Ouagadougou, one of his wives and
one of his horses were sent to Gambaga in order to be sacrificed on
the tomb of Ouidiraogo (?) who is regarded as the mother of the first
Moro Naba. Soon after the occupation of Ouagadougou by the French,
782 the dethroned Moro Naba, Boukary Koutou, ordered the sacrifice of a
754 black rooster, a black goat, a black donkey, a black beef, and a
black slave on one of the mountains overlooking the White Volta.
This, it seems, was bound to cause the immediate death of the new
Moro Naba enthroned by Voulet."

304 As for circumcision, the Mossi circumcise boys and excise girls.
Boys are circumcised when they are from eight to twelve years
old, and thirty or forty of them are circumcised at one time. The

643 the Tansoba, the members of the royal sub-lineage, and the district chiefs.
763 The Tengsoba of the Ouagadougou area was also notified. Because he was
[645] a descendant of the aboriginal Ninisi population that "owned" the land, he
[793] supervised the burial ceremony.

The Mogho Naba's death was kept secret, and no mourning was allowed
[701] until the Crown Prince had arrived at the capital and the Tansoba had recruited an army to protect the realm against would-be usurpers of power. Then the cry was raised in the palace, to reverberate throughout the land,
643 that "the fire had gone out." Once the ruler's death had been announced,
764 the country was plunged into an interregnum, which was characterized by
669 ritual and often by actual anarchy. The people in the towns immediately looted the markets and stole their neighbors' goods; the prisoners and captives in stocks were released by their guards; the nakomce in all the territories, districts, and villages subjected the local populations to robbery and pillage; and the members of the monarch's babissi began their intrigues for power. The traditional sanction for this anarchy was that only when people suffer during the breakdown of political control do they really appreciate the sovereign's role. The Mossi declare (with some truth) that no one was safe during the interregnum. However, as we shall see, the ruler was symbolically kept alive, and the country was never without effective political leadership.

766 When the Tengsoba arrived at the palace, he was joined by five hereditary funeral chiefs: the Razany'tengsoba, the Tampouy Naba, the Benghin
644 Naba, the Toghin Naba, and the Tanghin Naba. In the ceremony that fol-
643 lowed, he gave permission for the royal grave to be dug. Meanwhile, the ruler's body was prepared for burial in the traditional manner by his female relatives and laid in state in the zongo. These women kept vigil over the body, shouting and weeping. Only the five ministers of the realm and the male members of the ruler's babissi were allowed to pay homage to the corpse within the zongo. All other mourners had to pay their respects to the monarch's eldest daughter, who, as Napoko, was dressed in the dead sovereign's clothes and sat in his place before the zongo. As her father's symbolic representative, she held daily court and received greetings and homage from all visitors until a new ruler was chosen. The drummer who sat by her side declared to all visitors, "You say that the Mogho Naba is dead! Well, who is that sitting there? Tell me! Is that not the Mogho Naba?"

766 The ruler was buried the day after he died, at the end of an elaborate
643 ceremony. Libations were poured out to the ancient rulers, and sacrifices
[782] made to them. All the important officials and members of the royal mini-

to the control of his brother at Nobere. The other district, still called Vooko but now half its former size, was given to a descendant of its deposed ruler. The relationship between these two rulers and the Nobere Naba was that of vassals and lord. They did not stand up in the presence of the Nobere Naba, but knelt or sat on the ground and uncovered their heads in respect to him. The Nobere Naba traditionally appointed the village chiefs in the Vooko and Nobila districts; however, he sometimes granted that right to the two district chiefs. Furthermore, the traditional provincial administrator could not transmit any orders to those two district chiefs without first notifying the Nobere Naba. In their everyday affairs the two chiefs were autonomous, but the Nobere Naba could challenge and countermand all their actions. Actually, he did seem to exercise greater control over Vooko than over Nobila. One may even say that the relationship between the Nobere district chief and the Vooko chief was like that between the Mogho Naba and his district chiefs, and that the relationship between the Nobere Naba and the Nobila Naba was comparable to the one between the Mogho Naba and the Dimdamba. We have seen that the Dimdamba claimed equality with the Mogho Naba because of their alleged descent from a putative common ancestor. The Nobere Naba was actually more closely related to the Nobila Naba than to the Vooko Naba, and his behavior toward them reflected this fact. In both cases, the relationships involved were determined by the concept of joint possession of the nam by the ruling family.

A district chief was not required to notify his superior when he wished to confer the nam upon a village chief. In this choice he was completely autonomous and subject only to tradition. The fact is that on the district and village levels, traditions were more frequently modified in the face of practical political and socio-economic considerations. This occurred primarily because the district chief had closer relations with persons who possessed goods and services or who controlled them directly than did the chiefs on higher levels. Secondly, he was often under great temptation to allow presents or bribes to affect his choice of subordinate chiefs.

When a Tenga Naba died, the district chief permitted control of the village to revert to its Tengsoba. If there was none, the village was "given" to the eldest man among the aboriginal Ninisi lineages or to the eldest member of the ruling lineage segment. However, none of these persons was considered anything but a trustee of the village, and even when the trustee was a potential candidate for the nam, the Mossi did not feel that this man had any advantage over his competitors. Whoever held control of the village was held responsible for its affairs by the district administrator until the new chief was elected.

Competition for chieftainship on this level was very keen because of the

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The district chiefs did not often exercise their rights over fruit trees in the weogho, as the wasteland in their districts was called. If a villager went into the weogho and collected fruit or wood from the chief's trees, he surrendered only part of it to the chief. On the other hand, if he received permission from a district chief to farm in the weogho, he was obliged to gather and send to the chief the fruit on any valuable trees. A district chief sometimes granted the rights over certain fruit trees in the inhabited areas to specific families or individuals, for personal reasons or as a reward for services. In such cases, the chief forfeited his rights to these trees, but retained his rights to the others.[28]

District chiefs also controlled all the resources of creeks and pools within their jurisdiction that were not sacred to certain aboriginal families, or which had not been transferred to specific persons. The aboriginal Ninisi families always notified the district chief when they planned to perform their annual fishing rite to the earth deities. He, in turn, sent representatives to the ceremony, and they were given part of the catch as his share. Persons who were granted permission to fish in the chief's water holes gave him a substantial part of their catch, and even those persons who had private control of fishing places regularly did the same.

The district chiefs also had rights to certain parts of animals caught in their territories. This applied especially to animals caught with such traditional weapons as traps, clubs, bows and arrows, and spears. Men who had obtained flint guns and other firearms from the Ashanti or elsewhere and who had bought their own powder were not obliged to give the chief a part of their game, but it was always prudent to do so. According to a long-standing tradition, the tusk and legs of a slain elephant that were not resting on the ground belonged to the chief, and those that lay on the ground belonged to the Tengsoba in whose ritual jurisdiction the animal had been slain. But the district chief's secular power was so much stronger than the Tengsoba's sacred power that he usually took both tusks, leaving the Tengsoba only two legs. The district chief also received other portions of elephants and parts of all the larger animals killed in his territory. And when hunters in the district were successful in the chase, they usually gave him entire small animals.

Every village in a district contributed to the district chief's revenue by performing special services for him. Certain villages were responsible for keeping specific huts in his compound in good condition; others, whose lands bordered on the woods, had to provide firewood for his compound; and yet others furnished grass and other fodder for his horses. Many villages had the task of cultivating special fields and crops for the district chief.

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climax of this gift-giving came when the ruler sent the Bendere Naba about 19,000 cowries and a slave.[2] This ceremony terminated at nightfall.

The close of the Mogho Naba's Basgha heralded the start of similar ceremonies throughout his kingdom. The heads of the other Mossi kingdoms and the Dimdamba were free to hold their own Basgha when they wished; but the Ouagadougou ruler's own subjects, including the provincial ministers, district chiefs, village chiefs, and lineage heads, apparently were not. One reason for this, aside from respect for the ruler, was that the important officials' head wives had to wait for the yeast (*dabili*) from the Mogho Naba's beer before they could prepare the sacrificial offerings for their husbands' ancestors. This dabili went from district to district or to several districts at once, depending on whether the chiefs celebrated Basgha at the same time or successively. Thus, the dabili from the capital united all the wives of the royal clan, and made for both a ritual continuity in the veneration of all ancestors and a strengthening of religious and political bonds.

The Basgha ceremonies on the district level were much less elaborate than those held at Ouagadougou, but just as important. The district chief, too, had his buildings repaired and his grain distributed for sacrifices for the ancestors. A few days before the actual ceremony, he ordered the Gande Naba to pour millet water on the graves of recently deceased chiefs and to sacrifice chickens there. As in Ouagadougou, these sacrifices were offered to induce the chiefly ancestors to grant the villagers health, food, and children. Unlike the Mogho Naba, most district chiefs did not ritually hide from their ancestors for several nights prior to the ceremony. Some of them did change their sleeping place within the compound every night, and the court people always slept indoors during this period. On the night of the Basgha itself, however, the district chiefs did not sleep in their compounds.

As in Ouagadougou, the Pughtiema performed the main ceremony by pouring millet water as a libation to the ancestors who visited her hut. She was assisted by the Baloum Naba, who had possession of the namtibo. Apparently, the district chief remained in hiding and took no part in the ceremony. But he was the main figure in the morning ceremony, which differed little from that of Ouagadougou. In some districts the Tengsoba performed a public sacrifice to the ancestors. He was given the namtibo—sacred objects that had belonged to former district chiefs—and poured libations and sacrificed chickens to all of the chief's ancestors. He also prayed both to these ancestors and to his own on the chief's behalf, and beseeched them to grant long life and happiness to the district population. He also declared that the sacred objects would seek out and kill any enemies of the local ruler, wherever they might be. Once this ritual had been com-

prepared sauce, and flung them in three directions to the waiting ancestral spirits. He then beseeched the royal spirits, the spirits of former provincial ministers, and the spirits of the ancient people (the Ninisi) to grant a long life to the Mogho Naba and peace to all the Mossi. He repeated the ritual with three morsels of meat and with the contents of a pot of beer. When he had finished, the Gande Naba picked up the food thrown to the ancestors and carried it away. He did not look backward for fear that he should see the ancestors and die as a result. The departure of the Gande Naba was the signal for the palace retainers to rush toward the food. They seized and ate what they could, spilling and wasting a good deal in the process.[5]

Meanwhile, chiefs and headmen held similar ceremonies in every district, village, hamlet, and compound in the Ouagadougou kingdom. District and village chiefs offered sacrifices to their ancestors in the name of their subjects. The sacrifices on the hamlet and compound level were more specific. Every grown man had to take a sheep, goat, or chicken to his elder and request that it be offered to the ancestors in his name. The elder sacrificed the animal and beseeched the ancestors to grant the petitioner good health, bountiful crops, and many children during the coming year. The women and children did not take part in the ritual, but they did participate in the general feasting that followed.

The festivities of the Tense lasted only a few days in the districts and villages, but in the capital it did not end officially until about four weeks had elapsed. At the end of this period, the Larhalle Naba gave the Mogho Naba all the cords that had been used to mark the coming of the Tense. A few days later, the chief Tengsoba of Guillingou, the native village of Oubri's mother, and the Tengsobadamba of other important ceremonial centers, visited the Mogho Naba in the palace courtyard. Here they all sacrificed white cocks and placed the blood and feathers of their victims on their ceremonial axes in order to "increase the power" of these objects. Later on, they were given cooked mutton, millet cakes, and other presents. Their departure for home later in the day marked the close of the Tense.

The religio-political function of the Tense is quite explicit, despite the statement by Dim Delobson, himself a Mossi chief (but also a convert to Catholicism), that "it is apparent that this festival has no outstanding features. Its sole aim is to make peace between the living and the dead, and, in the process, to allow everyone to enjoy the food."[6] Judging by the reports of old men who participated in the festival before it was banned, the people did have a good time and enjoyed the food. What is important, however, is that like the Basgha, the Tense served not only "to make peace

11; Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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between the living and the dead," but also to strengthen the political bonds 796
between the Mogho Naba and his chiefs, down to the humblest elder of a 182
Mossi compound.

In addition to the Basgha and Tense, the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou 769
appears to have offered another yearly sacrifice to Tenga. Each year, after 796
the Basgha, the Mogho Naba, the Baloum Naba, and a large entourage re- 782
portedly visited a large earth shrine called Tantibo in the vicinity of Saba- 643
tenga to offer propitiatory sacrifices in the name of all the people. When [778]
the royal party arrived at Sabatenga, they were joined by the Sabatenga Naba and his Tengsoba. The group proceeded to the foot of the sacred hill, and here the monarch dismounted, took off his bonnet and shoes, and climbed the hill. He made the customary Mossi salute at the shrine and looked on silently while the Tengsoba sacrificed animals and poured libations of millet beer and millet water in supplication for the health and prosperity of the Mogho Naba and all his people.[7]

When evil befell Mossi country in spite of the annual sacrifices to the ancestors and to the earth deity, the Mogho Naba had to offer additional sacrifices. If the country was plagued by drought, the ruler went to an [731]
earth shrine in Ouagadougou itself, called "Kom be paspanga" (literally, "water is strong there"), for a sacrifice. Moreover, he might order all his [634]
district and village chiefs to perform similar sacrifices to the earth shrines [622]
within their territories. In Nobere district, for instance, the district chief went to the village called Barkago, where, standing barefoot and bareheaded on the hilly shrine known as Beta, he ordered the local village chief and the Tengsoba to offer sacrifices for rain and good health.

It is generally believed by the Mossi that when the French attacked 648
Ouagadougou, the deposed Mogho Naba Wobogo made sacrifices to earth 782
shrines. Tradition has it that he sacrificed a black cock, a black ram, a black donkey, and a black slave on a large hill near the White Volta River, beseeching the earth goddess to drive the French away and to destroy the traitor Mazi whom they had placed upon the throne. When Mazi died, the Mossi people believed that he had received his just deserts from the earth shrine for treason. The French believe that Mazi was poisoned.[8]

The district and village chiefs, like the Mogho Naba, were required to 634
make propitiatory sacrifices to the earth shrines on behalf of their subjects. 622
Before taking office, a district chief was ritually shown the major earth 782
shrines in his territory, and he could not ignore their existence and their need for sacrifices. In a country with major local variations in rainfall and localized animal and human epidemics, the Tengsobadamba of stricken areas always called upon the local chiefs to help them propitiate disgruntled [793]
spirits.

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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634 spirits. The chiefs could not refuse such requests, especially when the vil-
622 lagers were poor, because they were regarded as "fathers of their people."
782 In some cases, however, district chiefs had to protect their subjects against unscrupulous Tengsobadamba who took advantage of local crises and tried
661 to prey upon the villagers by refusing to perform the requisite sacrifices
●793 unless they received substantial gifts. The ensuing struggle was between
634 the secular and the sacred; between the chief as a representative of the con-
782 querors, and the Tengsoba as a member of the conquered group. It was always resolved in favor of the Mossi chief, who never permitted his Tengsobadamba the same privileges held by religious practitioners in neighboring societies.[9] The Mossi chiefs recognized that they needed the Tengsobadamba, and many myths recount how invading Mossi chiefs went into the woods where the Tengsobadamba were hiding to beseech and eventually force them to return to their districts so that sacrifices might be continued. On the other hand, the Mossi chiefs always insisted on the primacy of the nam over any other power. They employed the Tengsobadamba to intercede with Tenga for the welfare of their subjects, but they never allowed the priests to control them.

771 The coming of Moslems to the kingdom of Ouagadougou had little
795 effect on the way in which the Mogho Nanamse used the traditional reli-
643 gious system to bolster their political power.[10] In fact, the Mossi rulers later used Islam and its adherents in the same manner as they had used the
[797] aboriginal religion. The Moslems first tried to subdue the Mossi in the fifteenth century by persuasion, and later by the jihad. Both attempts
[648] failed, but the Moslems finally entered Mossi country as refugees from
[167] Sudanese wars. Their fortunes waxed and waned, depending on whether they were befriended by the ruler in whose territory they lived. During
[798] certain periods, they were subjected to many restrictions and were forbidden by the Mogho Naba to recite their prayers in public places.[11] At other times, they were left free to practice their religion, and even succeeded in
[797] converting several Mogho Nanamse to Islam. Under converts such as Savadogo (ca. 1760), Islam spread into many districts and gave rise to such important local centers as Sakhaboutenga (Dakay).

771 The Moslems in Ouagadougou were represented at the court by their
795 Imam. This person even received his badge of office—a white turban and white robe—from the Mogho Naba, and had to swear in the name of Allah
792 and *Nabiyama* (the prophet Mohammed) to be faithful to him, obey him, and aid him in times of need. However, he did not have to drink the namtibo as suggested by Dim Delobson; nor did he have to observe such non-Moslem customs as drinking the millet beer the Mogho Naba provided for

Chapter 12

The Penetration of Islam into Mossi Country

Islam in the Land of the Mogho Naba

643 The Mogho Naba, like his subjects, is above all an animist, and it is hard to understand how he reconciles his fetishism with
● 794 the complex dogmas of Islam and with the many interdictions of
771 Christianity.

The Mogho Naba, however, is quite capable of being a Catholic or a Moslem on appropriate occasions and at the same time respecting the traditions of his ancestors. Thus, when the Christians celebrate Christmas, the emperor of the Mossi devoutly attends Midnight Mass. He keeps his cap on, however, just as the bishop wears his miter. In the same way he embraces Islam during the following three festivals: the moaghrem (the Mossi zembendé); Ramadan (nolokré, "to loosen the mouth"); and, finally, the zoulhési (the Mossi tabaski or kibsa).

797 Before describing how the Mogho Naba celebrates these Moslem festivals, we shall give a brief history of Islam among the Mossi and discuss the appointment of imams.

The Arrival of Islam among the Mossi

797 It was during the reign of Naba Doulgou, the twenty-third
793 Mogho Naba [204] after Oubri, founder of the Ouagadougou dynasty, that Islam took root in the empire of the Mogho Naba, and it was at that time that an imam was appointed at Ouagadougou.

Naba Sawadogo, who succeeded his father, Doulgou, sent his children to the Koranic school. Many of them obtained a fairly good education there, and the eldest son, who later succeeded to the throne under the name of Naba Koutou, even became a marabout. The development of Islam in Mossi country dates from his reign, as does practice of giving children of the Mogho Naba Moslem names such as Saïdou, Mahama, Moumouni, etc.

174 traveler himself, between the people of Gotto who were mixed in this
114 affair and the Mossi of Yatenga who made the expedition. Finally, Naba Kango, although he brought great glory /29/ in the eighteenth century to the Mossi dynasty of Yatenga, obviously did not find, at the beginning of his reign, an absolute fragmentation of small countries which he would have gathered under single authority. He doubtless limited himself to restoring a kingdom that had formerly been powerful and centralized, and which he made so again through his personal prestige. In any case, he did not give his name to the Mossi (it is, on the contrary, the Mossi who, in Mungo-Park's description, give him his name), any more than to the capital which he indeed founded and which he called Ouahigouya. All these details are thus false or imaginary, but the principal fact remains and is very interesting. Mungo-Park arrived in Ségou just in time, in 1796, to
[153] record it before the weak memories of the Mossi and Bambara Negroes would have condemned it to hopeless oblivion. /30/

Chapter 4

The Cult of the Sun Among the Mossi

•194 Do the Mossi adore the sun? And is their great god Ouendé partly or wholly a sun god?

Binger was the first to state that the Mossi adored the sun. "They are fetishists," he says (1), "but they have a cult of the sun, which

1. Du Niger au golfe de Guinée
/From the Niger to the Gulf of Guinea/,
Vol. I, p. 492.

still today bears the same name as God; they call it Wouidi."

In turn, Lieutenant Desplagnes, in his Plateau Central Nigérien /Central Nigerian Plateau/ (pp. 275, 276) said in 1907:

"The Hougho-Ouango of Mossi (these priests live in Mossi in the villages of Boujema, Mani, Kondogho, Yolo, Tio) make sacrifices to the sun in order to bind it to the earth, morning and evening, at

794 sunrise and at sunset, during the first week of the winter season, then, later, only every six days, in the morning at sunrise. They go to the [778] altars, formed by three conical stones, to offer sacrifices and libations, always surrounded by all the people, the heads of families, tom-tom players, and family masks (Ouango).

"During the entire year, in a highly decorated niche dug into a [372] wall of their houses, the priests watch the sacred fire with which, at the end of the rainy season, they must light the great purifying brush fires."

Lieutenant Desplagnes adds in a note:

"They make sacrifices at each new moon, and then have seven great feasts each year for the divinity. Finally, during the sun festivals, [287] they use a cow's tail to tie the sun to the earth and assure its fertilizing warmth." /31/

794 171 In my book Noir du Soudan, Pays Mossi et Gourounsi /Blacks of the Sudan, Country of the Mossi and Gourounsi/ (1912), I reproduced this page of Lieutenant Desplagnes without comment (page 590). In addition, I described the cult of the sun among the Gourounsi, who, like the Mossi, are part of the Voltaic family. Thus, on page 241, I wrote:

"The Kassonfra, like the Nounouma and the Menkiéra, say that they offer no sacrifice either to the moon or to the sun. However, I found an exception in the village of Nitiédougou (canton of Sia). It would seem that here, in the early mornings when the sun rises and begins to leave the horizon, people offer it a chicken or whatever else they wish to offer. Moreover, this sacrifice is only made when the voro (1) says it should be made.

1. Soothsayer.

"My informant claims that this same procedure is followed, not only in Nitiédougou and in the little canton of Sia, but also in all of the Kasouna (Kassonfra and Kassonboura) country. He must be mistaken (2) since my previous informants and my interpreter, who is

2. Today, on the other hand, I tend to think he was right.

Kassonboura, have neither seen nor heard of anything like it."

●794 Later, in 1917, in my book Noir du Yatenga /Blacks of Yatenga/, since the few attempts that I had made in Yatenga to find this cult of the sun had given no results, I wrote (page 277):

"The sun is called ouindigho or ouindígha in Mossi (tili in Bambara). The word has a certain relationship with Ouendé, and the word Ouendé seems to be part of the construction of the word ouindigho. In any case, the Mossi and the Foulsé of Yatenga make no sacrifices to the sun. I interrogated in vain several important people about the details given by Lieutenant Desplagnes, pages 275 and 276 of his work, Plateau Central Nigérien about a cult of the sun in Mossi. It is true that these details concern the religious society of the Ouango and the villages where the members of this society would be operating: this would apply to villages of the Residency of Kaya (such as, Mané, Boujéma, etc.). One could thus pursue the studies in Kaya. /32/ In any case, the cult of the sun is totally unknown in Yatenga."

In my conclusion, I denied that there was a cult of the sun among the Mossi of Yatenga, while I admitted that one might be able to find this cult in other parts of Mossi country, particularly in the Residency (today, the circle) of Kaya.

794 114 The question was at that point when Father Eugène Mangin published a study on the Mossi in Anthropos ("Les Mossi. Essai sur les us et coutumes du Soudan Occidental" /The Mossi, an Essay on the Usages and Customs of Western Sudan/, Vienna, 1916), a study in which the author, who lived for a long time in Ouagadougou among the central Mossi, brought most of his effort to bear on a study of the religious life of his charges. It may well be that Father Mangin's observations touch upon the question of sun worship in that country in a definitive manner, better than Binger and Desplagnes had done.

794 The Mossi, says Father Mangin, in their sacrifices to Ouendé, offer water for his rising and pour it to the east, and offer water for his setting and pour it to the west. In an argument, the weakest will also say: "God (Ouendé) is my witness that I have done you no harm, God [796] will give it back to you," and he will point to the sun. Thus, Ouendé, the principal god of the Mossi, is indeed a sun god, and indeed the Mossi worship, in him, the sun.

Does this mean that Ouendé cannot also be a god of the sky or of the atmosphere, as I maintained in my Noir du Yatenga? Certainly not, and indeed Father Mangin mentions that Ouendé commands

794 lightning as well, which he can do only if he is the Sky-Atmosphere.
[82] "The natural phenomena," he says, "are sometimes attributed to God. Lightning kills those who have done evil, it kills the animal ill-gotten through fraud or theft, and it is God who sends lightning as a punishment..." Thus, Ouendé, while being the sun, is also the Sky-Atmosphere, and other things too, for he has characteristics that go
[797] beyond the sun divinity and the sky divinity. We must not forget here that the Allah of the Moslems is well known among the Mossi and has his established representatives there (Yarsé of Mandé origin, Peul, etc.), or temporary ones (merchants who have come from the north or south, Soninnké /Soninke/, Songhay, Dyoula). Thus, for a long time, /38/ the Moslem conception of god could and has, in effect, rubbed off on the sun-atmosphere-god of the Mossi. The latter might have waged war on the Songhay sultans who led religious crusades against them, yet it is also true that they were content to bestow upon their most important god the remarkable characteristics that struck them and that they admired in the Moslem god. Thus, Ouendé gradually became more and more a supreme god, although it would seem that in the beginning, he was only a sun god and an atmosphere god, first separated, later fused with a predominance of the sun god element.

To summarize, it has been well established that one finds the cult of the sun among the Mossi, along with many other elements as
[171] we have just shown. I have since found this cult among the Dorhosié (1922) and the Gouro (1923). However, among the Gouro, it is relegated to a few fetishists and does not interest the bulk of the population. Among the Dorhosié, on the contrary, it interests the vast multitude and occasions a solemn sacrifice made in the winter, at the end of the old year and the beginning of the new. Among these people, however, the sun divinity has not become a leading divinity as it has among the Mossi. It is one divinity among several and is rather subordinate to the cult of the Earth-brush and that of the Sky-atmosphere. Moreover, I am persuaded that more far-reaching studies among all the branches of the Voltaic population would uncover, here and there, the cult of the sun, as among the Mossi, the Gourounsi, the Dorhosié, etc.

[pp. 34 ff. not processed]

778 whose ancestors had ruled the soil of the territory. In the name of
782 the Moro Naba, he entrusted him with the task of offering all those gifts to the Earth so that the latter might favor the sovereign. Ouagadougou Naba performed the sacrifice before the door of his soukala.

When the Moro Naba went to war, he also ordered the chief
[721] of Ougadougou to perform a sacrifice to the Earth. The bara indicated what should be sacrificed in order to insure victory, to "break" the villages that were to be attacked.

782 When rain failed to come, the Moro Naba would go to the hillock at Koumbé /sic/-Padanda, and have the head of the quarter offer a sacrifice (beef, sheep, chicken) to secure rain. If rain refused to come, the bara were consulted once more, and sacrifices were offered until it came.

776 The Mossi also have a sky god whom they call Ounam as well
782 as Naba Ouendé or Naba Ouondé, meaning "Sun Chief." This is a
● 794 trace of the sun cult, which is unusual in Black West Africa, all opinions to the contrary notwithstanding. /590/ The majority of the Mossi sacrifice much more to ancestors and to the Earth than to Naba Ouondé, who is to them a somewhat remote god.

794 It must be added that Lieutenant Desplagnes found among the
782 Mossi an esoteric cult of the sun, moon, and fire, which is peculiar to religious initiates (Ouango) whom we shall mention later.

"The Hougho-Ouango of the Mossi (among the Mossi, those priests reside in the villages of Boujema, Mani, Kondogho, Yolo, and Tio) sacrifice to the sun in order to bind it to the Earth. They do this morning and evening, sunrise and sunset, during the first week of the winter season, and every six days in the morning at sunrise thereafter
[778] They also go to altars made of three conical stones and offer sacrifices and libations, always surrounded by the populace, family heads, drummers, and familial masks (ouango).

794 "Those priests tend the sacred fire throughout the year in a
372 small, highly adorned recess dug into one of their house walls. At
783 the end of the rainy season they will use it to light the great purifying bush fires.

"They perform sacrifices at every new moon, and they have
794 seven important feasts a year for their divinity. Finally, during
782 the solar festivities, they use a cow's tail to tie down the sun to the earth and to bind its life-giving heat." (Le Plateau central nigérien (The Central Nigerian Plateau), pages 275 and 276.)

8: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1958
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797 sands of Mossi who fled their homeland to escape forced labor or military serv-
167 ice ultimately returned as Moslems, but the majority of seasonal migrants do not have enough contact with foreign populations for them to become Moslems. Most of the Mossi who migrate to Ghana work on cocoa farms far removed from large centers of population. It is also true that even those Mossi who worked for Moslems on the farms and found it expedient to "pray" (as the Mossi refer to conversion to Islam) soon reverted to paganism on their return in order to escape the displeasure of their lineage members. I have recorded several cases of pagans who became Moslems only when they returned from abroad to find their relatives all converted to Islam.

571 797 Today there are obvious rewards for those Mossi who embrace Islam; be-
554 sides such tangible rewards as getting wives and children, there are the intan-
566 gible ones of upward social mobility and greater prestige. It is important to
[567] note that most liberated slaves and serfs are now Moslems. Formerly these non-Mossi had low status, but today those who have been to Mecca bear such proud titles as *Hadji*. On the night before Ramadan, one of these men gave a talk before the Nobéré chief during which he chided the chief for his impiety and voiced the hope that the next chief would be a true Moslem. He admitted that the chief might interpret such a speech from a former serf as impertinence, but he begged him to accept the censure as coming from the servant of *Nabiyama* (the prophet). This same man had refused to pay homage to the chief at the annual sacrifice to the ancestors, and when admonished returned the daughter which the chief had given him as a wife. In earlier days a chief would not have given a daughter to a serf, and moreover, a disrespectful serf could be killed instantly.

797 Many French administrators and Christian missionaries allege that Mossi
291 youth embrace Islam because they like the beautiful robes and red fezzes of the
515 Moslems, but this is a naive explanation for the conduct of a highly sophisticated people. Most young men in Nobéré wear Moslem-type clothes because such clothes are the mode. Now that sun helmets, dark glasses, and women's raincoats with hoods are in vogue, pagans as well as Moslems wear them. What is of interest, however, is that when pagans become Moslems they wear cleaner clothes and affect a different style of life.

● 794 The local consensus is that Moslems are much better behaved than pagans
577 because they do not swear, fight, or get drunk in public. The man chosen as Imam is required to have such characteristics as mercy toward evil-doers, benevolence, magnanimity, physical beauty, and virility. Yet many Mossi say that the Moslems can be worse than any other people. They accuse them of being charlatans, of selling Koranic verses as charms, and of committing murder by the use of magical formulae. Neither pagans nor Moslems believe that a man is necessarily good because he recites his daily prayers or goes to Mecca.

794 Moslems in the district follow most precepts of their religion: they recite the five daily prayers according to the rites of Tidjani (there are only two Moslems of the Hamada sect in the district and no members of the Hamallist sect), give alms to the poor, observe the month-long fast (called by the Mossi the

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Karême), celebrate the great festival of Ramadan and the lesser festivals, and 794
aspire to make the pilgrimage to Mecca. Most of the Moslems can lead prayers, but only about one-tenth of their number can read and recite the Koran. [212]
However, today the masters (*karasambas*) of the 32 Koranic schools in the district are endeavoring to instruct the many boys and few girls in reading the [871]
Koran and understanding Moslem theology.

The Karême is observed by most adult Moslems in the community with the exception of invalids and working men. Moslems say that the fast is intended to turn the minds of the people to God, and they distinguish between the Moslems "of the mouth" who break the fast and those "of the heart" who [184]
fast until Ramadan. The crescent moon of Ramadan is greeted with guns and general rejoicing and the following morning the Moslems gather at the tomb of Ngado to give praises to God; during the rest of the day they pay homage to the chief and visit their friends. However, a change in the traditional observance of Ramadan is expected, because one of the Moslem leaders objects to the [178]
ceremony at the tomb of Ngado. He feels that some Moslems are beginning to regard the tomb of the first Moslem as an earth shrine or Tengkougre.

So far, only five of the more prominent Moslems in the district have made 794
or are making the pilgrimage to Mecca. The first man made the voyage about 788
seven years ago, and is now conducting a Koranic school in a neighboring district. His brother went to Mecca about two years ago and is now the senior *El Hadj* in the district. Of the two men who were on the pilgrimage when I arrived in the district, one has since died near the Red Sea and the other is still away. One other man left for Mecca and returned to the district during my stay. Most of the pilgrims now fly to Mecca; only two men followed the traditional route through Ghana, Kano, Lake Chad, the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan (now Sudan), and on to Mecca. In general, all pilgrims have used their own re- [613]
sources for the trip, but they receive some help from their lineage brothers and from the other Moslems in the district and in Ouagadougou.

The pilgrimage to Mecca represents the greatest event in the lives of the district Moslems. When the last pilgrim left, a great crowd gathered at his house and prayed for his safe journey, and some even accompanied him to [621]
Ouagadougou and remained there until he left. The Moslems and many pagans of the district, under the command of the district chief, cultivated his fields during his absence. And when the new El Hadj returned, a large crowd accompanied him to his house with shouts of joy. There he killed a sheep in thanks- [782]
giving, sprinkled the crowd with holy water from Mecca, and recounted his experiences. His listeners were impressed by his airplane flight and the description of Mecca, but they showed the greatest interest when he said that Mecca women covered their faces and that most Meccan men were monogamous. The local Moslems smiled when they heard this bit of news from one of their members, but I have seen them scowl when discussing the monogamous practice desired by the Christians.

The attitudes of Moslems differ very little from those of the other Mossi 794
as regards children and polygyny. They say that they do not believe in the 595 842

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794 efficacy of ancestor veneration and do not "kill chickens" to the ancestors, but
595 they maintain that it is a man's duty to have many wives so that he may have
842 children to succeed him. Furthermore, since Mohammed himself decreed that his followers may keep four wives, provided they treat each with the same degree of kindness, there is no conflict between Islamic tenets and Mossi practice of polygny. The average Moslem has two wives, but even the few men in the district who have more than four wives do not appear overly concerned about transgressing the tenets of their faith. Mossi Moslems have not adopted the
[582] paternal parallel cousin marriage so common among other Moslems, and show surprise when told that Islam permits such marriages. However, they have modified their marriage behavior to harmonize with what they consider an Islamic tenet that "a man should not marry the widow of his father." The Moslem Mossi profess to look with horror on these marriages among their pagan brothers, preferring the levirate instead.

794 The Moslems' attitude toward the low status of women in Mossi society has not changed, and in one respect it can even be said that this attitude has
562 been strengthened. Many Moslem wives now cover their faces, and many El Hadjis have attempted to place their wives in purdah by preventing them from going to the market for fear they would come in contact with pagan men. The development of this practice is running counter to the growing emancipation of Mossi women, who have just begun to leave their villages for periodic visits to the larger towns. Nevertheless, the important fact is that the Mecca pilgrims have the opportunity to see Moslem women playing roles which are forbidden or unknown to Mossi women. And while it is true that the Mossi pilgrims would not easily adopt and foster monogamy, their receptivity to new Islamic beliefs and customs might have a liberating effect on their treatment of women. Once institutional and cultural changes have been accepted by the El Hadjis, they are likely to spread quite rapidly throughout the society because men who have visited Mecca are believed to have returned filled with wisdom and understanding.

797 Christianity came to the Mossi on January 24, 1900, shortly after French conquest. As noted above, the first missionaries were well treated, but the Mossi balked at the attempts at conversion. Nevertheless, by 1919 the White Fathers of the Catholic missions had established several centers, among which was the district of Manga where this study was conducted. Manga is considered a Catholic district, but there are only 3,000 Catholics out of a population of 124,000—which also includes 9,200 Moslems and five Protestants.
[184] Thus, in contrast to Moslem Nobéré, which has no Catholics or Protestants, Manga, like most districts in Mossi territory, has a Moslem community.

The conversion of the Mossi in Manga to Catholicism follows the classical pattern of missionary proselytization in the country. Monsignor Socquet (1956:62) states that the Mossi always react to attempts at conversion with the statement: " 'We are looking at our chief,' that is to say, 'We will follow our chief in conversion as in all other matters. If he is favorable to it, then we will not go against his will.' " Socquet concludes: "It is thus understandable

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595 co-wives and other women of the extended families. Even the Catholic hus-
797 bands would not help their wives with household tasks requiring more than
182 one person, nor would they violate tradition by chatting with their wives except at night in their huts. Another factor is that after the Mossi Christian
[846] woman has given birth to a child, she follows the traditional custom and goes back to her parents' home to remain there during the two or three years' lactation period. This imposes a great hardship on a Catholic husband because during this time he is left without wife or helpmate. In the extended family household there would have been women to take care of a man's material needs, and his mistresses would have taken care of his sexual needs. The Catholic can and does ask the mission for a young girl to take care of his material needs, but of course she is not expected to satisfy his sexual de-
[837] sires. Obviously this arrangement is not satisfactory, and many Catholic men, with the acquiescence of their wives, keep mistresses. Dim Delobson comments:

> Ouagadougou has a large number of Christians, but does this mean that these people in their love for the church respect all her rules? Alas! there are a large number of Christians who oblige their lawful wives to leave the conjugal couch and make way for the accommodation of mistresses . . . in conformity with the old custom. But this is a subject which is too delicate to discuss further. I only note it in passing: *Noli me tangere* (1934:169).

797 Despite the influence of tradition on Mossi Catholics, I feel it would be a mistake to say that the complexity of Catholic dogma is one of the drawbacks
●794 to missionary success in this country. One Mossi has already been made a bishop of the Catholic Church, and most of the proselytizing in Manga falls on the two Mossi priests and the five Mossi nuns. Under the supervision of two White Fathers, the Catholic children and adults are acquainted with the dogma and rituals of the church. The festivals are well attended and celebrated with as much pomp as possible. Although the Mass is sung in Latin, the Mossi have adapted some of their traditional tunes to the Mass, and use their own language for prayers and hymns. Catholics observe all the sacraments including Confession—a sacrament which is hazardous from the Mossi point of view, because man must lay bare his innermost thoughts to the priests, who, in the final analysis, are Europeans and thus administrators.

It is true that even the staunchest Catholics in Manga have not abandoned all belief in traditional rituals and religious credos. For example, many
[754] Mossi Catholics believe in the existence of sorcerers, but the Catholic Church does not recognize the existence of sorcerers or such evil forces (I have met White Fathers who believe that there are unexplainable psychic and physical phenomena in Africa), and moreover has no way of dealing with them. "But," says Dim Delobson (1934:136), "the Mossi believe so strongly in the power of such entities, that even those converted to Christianity cannot always escape the action of malevolent practitioners." The result is that many Catholics desert the church when they believe that only traditional specialists can help them with personal problems. Catholic families easily aban-

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don Christianity when told by shamans that to do so is necessary in order to have children. Unfortunately, the panoply of saints in modern French Catholicism does not seem to be able to syncretize with or displace the local deities, and thus come to the aid of the Mossi. This weakness of modern Catholicism in West Africa appears to make it unable to deal with many of the insecurities which arise in the daily lives of its adherents. 797 794

The American Protestant missionaries were never able to establish stations in either Manga or Nobéré because of the relative strengths of Catholicism and Islam in these two districts. However, they do have stations in Po and Koubri, 30 and 50 miles away. The 1954 census lists five Protestants in Manga, but I could find only one family head who had been a Protestant and that during the period when he worked for missionaries. It is interesting to note that when he returned to his native Manga he did not become a Catholic but embraced Islam instead. Although Protestants among the Mossi are trying very hard, they are working under three handicaps: (1) the opposition of the local administration, (2) their own explicit cultural bias, and (3) the puritanical nature of their brand of American Midwestern Protestantism. 797

The first Protestant missionaries to arrive in 1926 reported: "There has often been opposition to the preaching of the Gospel in the district, and there is a continual under-current which has hindered many from accepting Christ" (Assemblies of God Mission 1934:14). Americans who wished to train the young Mossi to read and write found official opposition to the use of the vernacular for such purposes, and were obliged to receive French teaching certificates. When one recognizes that in those days less than one-tenth of one percent of the Mossi children were in schools (today the number is just over three percent) one cannot help feeling that any kind of education would have been useful to the Mossi. During the war the Pétain-oriented administration restricted the movements of the Americans and frightened off their converts. And finally, the Americans come under the general disapprobation with which the Mossi view most Europeans. [871] [609]

American Protestants are fairly well insulated from the Mossi population, and have only now begun to show any interest in Mossi culture and problems. Geoffrey Gorer, who visited the Mossi in 1935, wrote:

> There were some American missionaries in this village, a whole family living in a house filled with texts; I do not know what creed they preached, or with what success; they looked more like American missionaries than I had thought anyone could have done off the films . . . they spoke with a dispassionate "none of our business" disapproval of the ill treatment of the negroes, who they said were ruled entirely by fear (1935:149).

Many of the Protestant missionaries who are now working with the Mossi are still inclined to agree with the first missionaries' ethnocentric judgement of their customs:

> Moral standards are very low. Nothing is wrong until it is found out. Chastity is unknown . . . we questioned in vain many natives in search of a suitable Mossi word for "virgin." They all declared there was no such word in their language. . . . Many

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vincial minister for Djiba, and rendered homage to the sovereign. After 634
this reception the prince went to the Gounga Naba's compound, which 644
henceforth was his headquarters whenever he visited Ouagadougou; for, like other district chiefs, he had to consult with this minister before seeing the monarch. Everyone in the kingdom had to follow the political hierarchy, even the ruler's heir.

The young prince remained at his host's house and from there visited the other important officials, in the order of their rank, receiving from each presents of sheep, millet beer, kola nuts, and sometimes wives. He then [795] visited the Imam of the Ouagadougou Moslem community, where he received a blessing in the name of Allah and was given kola nuts and millet water sweetened with honey. On the fourth or fifth day the prince went to [769] a small village called Zoangha, where he made a sacrifice to his ancestors and requested their protection against all enemies.[29] He returned to Ouagadougou on the same day and was given a palace escort to accompany him to his district.

During his journey, the royal heir had the opportunity to establish or 634
re-establish friendly relations with district chiefs who were now his peers, 644
but who might someday become his subjects. He visited in turn the war 431
leader at Tansobatenga, the Koubri Naba, the Ipelse Naba, and the Kondrin Naba. Each of these chiefs offered him livestock, slaves, and wives. He, in turn, distributed salt (a valuable commodity) to the old women and gave kola nuts and other commodities to the chiefs' head wives. The Baganmini Naba presented the prince with a special quiver of arrows, and the chief of the Fulani at Bedego gave him a pretty maiden and one of his best bulls. The prince spent a few days with each of his hosts, but stayed for seven days in Bere, a district bordering on his own. The Bere Naba gave him a wife, a robe, and a cow, and sent messengers to the village chiefs of Djiba to announce that their chief had arrived in Bere. The chiefs then journeyed to Bere, pledged allegiance to their ruler, and presented gifts to him. On the seventh night there was a ritual (whose main features are 634
unclear), in the course of which the prince entered Djiba secretly on horse- 644
back, accompanied only by one servant, one groom, and the nobles and [788]
chiefs of Djiba.[30] Most members of the escort who had accompanied him from the capital were left behind at Bere, and followed only when the prince had established himself in his district. When the prince's band entered Djiba under cover of darkness, it was met by the local Ouidi Naba, who ruled the district in the absence of a Crown Prince. The Ouidi Naba now became the prince's protector if the boy were still young, or his most trusted adviser if he were old enough to rule by himself.

spirits. The chiefs could not refuse such requests, especially when the villagers were poor, because they were regarded as "fathers of their people." In some cases, however, district chiefs had to protect their subjects against unscrupulous Tengsobadamba who took advantage of local crises and tried to prey upon the villagers by refusing to perform the requisite sacrifices unless they received substantial gifts. The ensuing struggle was between the secular and the sacred; between the chief as a representative of the conquerors, and the Tengsoba as a member of the conquered group. It was always resolved in favor of the Mossi chief, who never permitted his Tengsobadamba the same privileges held by religious practitioners in neighboring societies.[9] The Mossi chiefs recognized that they needed the Tengsobadamba, and many myths recount how invading Mossi chiefs went into the woods where the Tengsobadamba were hiding to beseech and eventually force them to return to their districts so that sacrifices might be continued. On the other hand, the Mossi chiefs always insisted on the primacy of the nam over any other power. They employed the Tengsobadamba to intercede with Tenga for the welfare of their subjects, but they never allowed the priests to control them.

The coming of Moslems to the kingdom of Ouagadougou had little effect on the way in which the Mogho Nanamse used the traditional religious system to bolster their political power.[10] In fact, the Mossi rulers later used Islam and its adherents in the same manner as they had used the aboriginal religion. The Moslems first tried to subdue the Mossi in the fifteenth century by persuasion, and later by the jihad. Both attempts failed, but the Moslems finally entered Mossi country as refugees from Sudanese wars. Their fortunes waxed and waned, depending on whether they were befriended by the ruler in whose territory they lived. During certain periods, they were subjected to many restrictions and were forbidden by the Mogho Naba to recite their prayers in public places.[11] At other times, they were left free to practice their religion, and even succeeded in converting several Mogho Nanamse to Islam. Under converts such as Savadogo (ca. 1760), Islam spread into many districts and gave rise to such important local centers as Sakhaboutenga (Dakay).

The Moslems in Ouagadougou were represented at the court by their Imam. This person even received his badge of office—a white turban and white robe—from the Mogho Naba, and had to swear in the name of Allah and *Nabiyama* (the prophet Mohammed) to be faithful to him, obey him, and aid him in times of need. However, he did not have to drink the namtibo as suggested by Dim Delobson; nor did he have to observe such non-Moslem customs as drinking the millet beer the Mogho Naba provided for

his guests.[13] On the contrary, when the Imam visited the ruler on Fridays or during important festivals to read from the Koran, the sovereign gave him sweetened millet water and appropriate gifts.

Most Mossi rulers at all levels had Moslems among their councillors. These men were often the only persons who had traveled extensively outside the country (on pilgrimages to Mecca), and thus could counsel a ruler about how to deal with foreign visitors. Most early European visitors to Mossi country were either helped or hindered (chiefly the latter, it seems) by these travel-wise councillors. Crozat had difficulties with the Moslems long before he arrived in Mossi country proper. When he got to Lanfiera, the Mossi who lived there were alarmed, and refused to help him proceed to Ouagadougou despite his protestations that "I come for the good of all, white and black, that we may be together like brothers, since the same God has made us all." Crozat reports that his plea was in vain because "El Hadj All-Karl declared that he would not receive me, and he will not receive me. El Hadj is wise, El Hadj is prudent, El Hadj knows all, El Hadj does not make decisions without good foresight, and once made, he keeps them."[13]

Crozat had the same difficulty when he entered Mossi country. He tells us, "At Dounse [near Yako], for example, the marabouts did not look favorably upon my arrival, and it took a great deal of insistence on the part of Moussa to convince the Imam, my unwilling host, to present me to the chief who had expressed the desire to see me."[14] Crozat also found that he had to lodge with the Imam when he arrived at Ouagadougou, and he was assigned the same huts "which had served Captain Binger," who had visited the capital before him. He was disappointed with his reception and declares:

> I already knew from experience what sort of influence these men exercised over the chiefs. As a councillor of the chief, the Imam was overtly acknowledged as the second official in the village, but in reality he often commanded it. The Imam of Ouagadougou, therefore, could do much to help me or to hurt me. My decision to court him might flatter him, and that would be a move in the direction of winning his good graces, which, all things considered, was most important to me. The result was only partly in my favor. I succeeded insofar as the Imam was not hostile to me, but he did not help me as he might have.[16]

These Moslem councillors realized better than most other people what the visits of the Europeans implied for the independence of the country, and they tried their best to counsel the monarchs against receiving such visitors.

Beginning with Mogho Naba Doulougou (ca. 1750) Mossi sovereigns, whether Moslem or pagan, participated in the more important Moslem festi-

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vals. Being monarchs of the Mossi, they could not do otherwise. A few days before the Moslem feast of Tabaski (called *Kibsa* by the Mossi), the Mogho Naba sent the Imam of Ouagadougou cattle and sheep to be sacrificed on the holy day. On the day of the festival, the Mogho Naba and his entourage went to the mosque and joined the Imam and his flock in prayer. After the ceremony the sovereign returned to his palace and ordered that a well-washed sheep be given to the Imam for a sacrifice. This Moslem sacrifice was performed in the palace courtyard, and the Mogho Naba himself held the tail of the animal while the Imam officiated. The Mogho Naba afterward ordered his servants to provide millet water and food for his Moslem subjects. Similar ceremonies were held in all of the districts and villages where Moslems lived.

The feast at the end of the Moslem month of Ramadan was also celebrated by the Mogho Naba and most of the people within the kingdom—a fact that so surprised Binger that he wrote, "It is a most curious fact that, whether Moslem or not, all the blacks celebrate this feast."[16] The Moslems usually flattered the Mogho Naba and the other chiefs by pretending to believe that they had observed the month-long fast (which the Mossi called *no-lwere*, from *nore*, "mouth," and *lwere*, "to tie up") during Ramadan. [576] Thus, whenever they visited the Mogho Naba or another chief during this period, they greeted him with the salutation *Ne no-lwere*, which means, "I greet you who are fasting." Similarly, the morning after the end of the fasting period, the ruler and his officials were ritually given millet water "to break their fast." The important point here is that everyone knew that the Mogho Naba's fast was a ritual fiction. Binger, who was with Boukary Naba at the end of Ramadan before this prince became Mogho Naba Wobogo, commented: "Boukary Naba is a Moslem in outward appearance only. When the prayers were about to begin, he asked me whether I was going to worship. I told him that this festival was not in accord with those of the Christians. He seemed to be delighted by the idea that the whites are not Moslems."[17]

Most Mossi chiefs celebrated the end of Ramadan in a grander manner than they did Tabaski. The members of the royal household joined the other inhabitants of the capital in their anxious vigil for the crescent moon that was to herald the start of the ceremonies. There was general rejoicing when the moon appeared, and all through the night palace guards fired shots and launched arrows into the air. The following morning, the Mogho Naba went to the mosque with his courtiers to attend prayers. Then he returned to his palace to await the Imam, who came to offer prayers of thanksgiving. The Mogho Naba gave him presents, and was visited by gift-bearing

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Moslems. In return, he gave them millet water sweetened with honey, millet cakes, meat, and kola nuts.

The celebration of the festival in the districts was not as imposing as it was at Ouagadougou, but we have Binger's excellent eyewitness account of the festivities at Sakhaboutenga:

> First of all, Boukary sent word that he would like me to accompany him to Sakhaboutenga, where it is his custom to go on the day of the festival. The chief's men spent the entire day attending to preparations: they distributed powder, cleaned guns, tried on harnesses, and polished copper fittings as we would in France on the eve of a great parade. . . . It was an occasion for revelry, and they took full advantage of it. They ate as much as they could, drank a great deal of beer, and fired many rounds of ammunition. . . . In the evening there was a moment of consternation: no one had seen the crescent; however, they consoled themselves by repeating that although it had not been sighted here, it had certainly shown itself elsewhere, and they sat down to drink beer all night long.
>
> Monday, June 11. Early this morning Boukary sent a horseman to Sakhaboutenga to consult the marabouts. The messenger soon returned and assured the chief that the moon will be seen tonight. "All the marabouts have said so." The much-desired crescent appeared for a few moments this evening; shots were fired through half the night, and beer ran in floods. . . .
>
> Tuesday, June 12. From four o'clock in the morning, the tam-tams sounded everywhere, and everyone was busy; it is obvious that this is the eve of an important event. . . . Half an hour after our departure we arrived at Sakhaboutenga. We dismounted and camped under the trees at the entrance of the village. Some Moslems from the neighborhood came, greeted Boukary, and offered him some kola nuts in lots varying from five to eight. But they always held them out in a fold of their robe [it being forbidden for a commoner to hand a gift directly to a chief]. A village nearby sent twelve large jars of beer.
>
> From afar and from all directions, long files of Moslems emerged from the village on their way to the Imam's for prayers. Several onlookers arrived on donkeys from the surrounding countryside. The religious ceremony took place on a flat expanse to the east of the village. It was an impressive spectacle. The crowd was silent. The faithful, ranged in ranks about 20 feet deep, prostrated themselves and rose again in perfect harmony and with awesome slowness. From time to time the voice of the Imam was raised, and his *amina* [amen] was heard with deep reverence.
>
> There were about three thousand persons of both sexes there, almost all of them dressed in white. The *bournous* [robes], the red tarbooshes, and the multitude of black faces lent to the ceremony the grandiose character of an oriental fete. As soon as the prayers were over, Boukary Naba walked up to the Imam of Sakhaboutenga to the sound of tam-tams to receive his blessing and the good wishes of the Moslems, who wished on my illustrious host many horses and warriors. Boukary Naba ordered that the Imam be given a magnificent sheep and several sheepskins full of cowries. He presents this

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gift every year to the Imam and to Karamakho Isa, for whom he has great veneration. These are old and wise men who cannot but give him excellent counsel.[18]

The relations between Boukary Koutou and the Moslems of the Sakhaboutenga district show how Mossi chiefs, though pagans, were able to establish viable political bonds with potentially hostile believers of another religion. Boukary Koutou was probably a Moslem "in outward appearance only," as Binger suggests. Nevertheless, it was by being Moslems of this kind that Mossi rulers managed to retain the allegiance of their Moslem subjects. This was their duty as "fathers of their people," and apparently they did it without much hesitation. In this manner, they effectively used religion to bolster their power and sustain their authority.

Ritual connections between the Mossi rulers and the chiefs of surrounding countries enabled them to protect their subjects from foreign attack and to maintain internal cohesion. The numerous reciprocal gifts between the Mossi and such other Voltaic groups as the Dagomba, Mamprusi, and Gurmanche were based on the belief in descent from a common ancestor or ancestress. Ritual and the supernatural thus played an extremely important role in the cohesiveness of the Mossi kingdoms and in the functioning of their governmental processes. Without these ritual factors, it is doubtful whether the Mossi rulers would have been able to maintain such a relatively high degree of control over their subjects, given the relative weakness of their economic resources, communications, and armed forces. In trying to understand why the Mossi retained their autonomy for so long, one must take into consideration the statement made by a French officer a year after the Mossi were conquered: "We must not lose sight of the fact that [the Mossi] have always presented a common front to strangers, and that a single word of command is sufficient to unite them against the invader in the name of kinship and national unity."[19]

The phase of Mossi political history that began when Nyennega left Dagomba and moved northward came to an end with the European conquest. Most French scholars believe that the Mossi were in a state of decadence at the time of conquest and might have fallen to such African conquerors as El Hadj Omar, Samory Touré, or Baba To. The fact remains, however, that these conquerors all skirted Mossi country without entering it. If these African rulers believed that the Mossi were invincible in their unity, it was because the Mossi, through mythical bonds of common descent and actual bonds of kinship, had welded themselves into a cohesive and powerful group.

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to Mossi society and to their own authority than the French administration itself. This was primarily due to the fact that these missionaries, as Frenchmen, were very deeply involved not only in preaching Christianity, but also in changing Mossi society by introducing modern medical practices and education. Moreover, as was later brought out, they did not hesitate to use coercion to gain their ends. In seeking to understand why the number of patients in a maternity clinic had declined from an all-time high in the late 1920's and early 1930's to almost zero in the late 1940's, André Dupont, a Catholic missionary, was told by Mossi women, "We are no longer forced to go." He comments: "Was it the fear of sanction that accounted for the unanimous use of the clinic? Alas! It would seem to be so. The use of force and sanction have made a charitable institution odious. It would have been better if the mothers had only been encouraged to use the clinics. 'These natives do not understand,' I am sometimes told. But how are they expected to understand?"[44]

The American Protestant missionaries did little to challenge the authority of either the Mossi chiefs or the French administration. They were interested only in religious education, and concentrated on teaching the Scripture. The British social critic Geoffrey Gorer, who visited the Mossi during the Hesling period, reports: "There were some American missionaries in this village, a whole family living in a house filled with texts; I do not know what creed they preached or with what success. . . . They spoke with a dispassionate 'none of our business' disapproval of the ill treatment of the negroes, who they said were ruled entirely by fear."[45]

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The Moslems, on the other hand, took advantage of the declining power of the Mossi chiefs to spread their doctrines. They pointed out, with little fear of contradiction, that formerly the chiefs had checked the spread of Islam in order to protect their own religion, which supported their political power, but that this power had now been broken by the French. They continued to preach that as soon as all the black people became Moslems the whites would leave, and pointed out that whereas the missionaries had succeeded in getting the administration to attack the marriage customs of the pagan Mossi, they had not interfered with the marriage customs of the Moslem Mossi.[46] Moreover, the Moslems tried to impress upon the chiefs that conversion to Islam brought with it the benefit of being judged according to Koranic principles rather than native law or French statutes. This propaganda was relatively successful, and by the end of the Hesling period the number of Koranic schools and converts among the Mossi had increased eightfold. True to form, however, the Mossi chiefs seldom adopted Islam or permitted their elder sons to do so. But they did allow

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their younger sons to become Moslems, and soon abandoned their active resistance to Islam.

Hesling did not permit the Mossi chiefs to revive their traditional religio-political rituals and ceremonies such as the Tense, but he continued to tolerate the Basgha. The French banned the Mossi market chiefs, because they believed (with some justification) that these officials used their offices to procure revenue for the chiefs. The difficulty was that the market chiefs were also responsible for arranging sacrifices to the market deities, which in the absence of such sacrifices would not protect the people from quarrels and violence in the market place. Some chiefs covertly retained their market chiefs; others obeyed the administration and remained anxious over the behavior of their subjects in the market. In general, however, most Mossi chiefs tried to adjust to the religious changes that were taking place, and sought to maintain at least surface amicability with all religious groups. Commenting upon the behavior of the Mogho Naba in this regard, Dim Delobson states:

> The Mogho Naba, above all, is a believer in animism like all his subjects, and it is hard to understand how he manages to reconcile his fetishism with the complex dogmas of Islam and with the many interdictions of Christianity. However, the Mogho Naba is quite capable of being a Catholic or a Moslem on appropriate occasions, while at the same time respecting the traditions of his ancestors. Thus, when the Christians are celebrating Christmas, the emperor of the Mossi devoutly attends midnight Mass. Nevertheless, he wears his fez [really the bonnet which is the symbol of his office], just as the bishop wears his miter. He likewise embraces Islam for the three Moslem festivals.[47]

Hesling failed in his attempt to develop the Upper Volta as a viable colony, and many of the chiefs whom he had used as his auxiliaries lost not only a great deal of power but also a great deal of prestige in the eyes of their subjects because of the role they had played vis-à-vis the administration. By 1929 the economy of the Upper Volta was in poor condition: cotton production had declined; taxes (raised from 5,800,000 francs in 1921 to 18,274,000 francs in 1927 and scheduled to be raised to 26,400,000 francs in 1930) were unbearable; many of the roads that were too extensive, too little used, and too difficult to maintain had been abandoned; and more than 46,000 laborers who had worked in the cotton fields and on the roads had fled to the neighboring Gold Coast.[48] The Colonial Minister, Sarraut, ordered that the colony of the Upper Volta be dismembered. He states in his decree of September 1932 that the suppression of the Upper Volta "would permit appreciable savings, and would make the adminis-

chief became ridiculously smaller when distributed among the producers; gone the tolls along the roads. Henceforth, all such services will be duly and individually compensated.

Even in the most remote and least accessible villages, people speak of liberty. The old women who go to the pools for water sit down for a moment near their jars in order to talk about it. Even bush fires spread less rapidly than this news.[27]

Very few Mossi in the rural areas were qualified to vote in the first post-war elections, and those who were qualified voted for the candidates preferred by the chiefs. However, as the franchise was progressively broadened after 1951, and many more Mossi and non-Mossi politicians traveled through the rural areas, the politicians favored by the chiefs found that they had to campaign to maintain their position. Both the chiefs and their politicians resented this. One visitor to the Upper Volta reports: "A highly educated Mossi of the Upper Volta told me, 'Citizenship has unsettled and ruined the people. Everyone has become his own master, and believes himself free to do whatever he wishes.'"[28] Opposition to the chiefs and their friends came from the Moslems, who supported their co-religionists for office, and from a growing group of young Mossi who resented the power of the chiefs. In 1955 one such group in Yatenga, composed of mission-educated youths, war veterans, and former workers, broke away from the Union Voltaïque and formed the Mouvement Démocratique Voltaïque (MDV) under the joint leadership of Gérard Ouédraogo and Michel Dorange, a Frenchman, who had been a captain in the colonial army. The partisans of the MDV often came into violent conflict with the supporters of the chiefs, but the organization itself was not banned by the administration, because its members included many veterans, and because Dorange was one of its leaders.

The appearance of the anti-chief MDV was symptomatic of the problems which the Mossi chiefs were to encounter as the people became free to elect their own representatives. For one thing, the people could now censure their chiefs by voting for their opponents, who appealed to them in terms of release from traditional prestations. But more important, even those Mossi politicians who were still friendly to the chiefs and depended on their support for election were becoming increasingly autonomous. The chiefs were operating in one power structure, the politicians in another and more important one. In Dakar, in Paris, and in the Palace of Versailles (where the Assembly of the French Union met) Mossi politicians dealt not only with local African problems but with problems the chiefs knew nothing about. As the politicians grew skillful at the game of metropolitan

631 duty of these representatives to assemble the notables of the villages and to order them to submit to the new naba, the only one recognized by the Mogho Naba.

631 In order to show their joy,[1] the people have large quantities of
527 beer prepared, and games are organized which may continue for several days. The village notables come to offer their submission and to swear fealty, bringing gifts (cowries, sheep, etc.) in accordance with the resources of the village and the wealth of the inhabitants.

631 When the nayirdamba leave for Ougadougou, the naba gives:
431 a wife and a robe to the Bilbalga; a wife and a robe to the sorone of the Mogho Naba; a wife and a robe to the sorone or the Baloum-Naba; a wife and a robe to the child of the Bend'Naba; etc.

Any children born to the women [145] so given belong, respectively, to the masters of these representatives.

631 Burial. Their burial is carried out in much the same manner
766 as in the case of the Mogho Naba, except for the specific persons involved. The arrangement of the tomb is also similar, although there is, of course, less pomp displayed. [146]

[1] [i.e. At the appointment of the new naba—Analyst]

Chapter 9

The Two Major Mossi Festivals

Mossi Festivals

796 In actual fact, there is only one annual festival celebrated by
527 the Mossi. It is known as tinsé or tingana. A second festival, which is more a family affair, is called basgha. The latter is variously named, depending on the region: for the Mogho Naba, it is called m'barengma; for the ordinary Moaga, basgha; in certain regions, kinkirga; etc. Although the date for the first festival is fixed by the Mogho Naba, the second festival is celebrated by each canton chief, each village chief, or each ikanda (married man) on any day that suits him, usually after the harvest.

In addition to these principal festivals, every important village has its annual festival, a kind of special market day. On

796 527 that day there is dam (beer) in every house and abundant meat, and the inhabitants of nearby villages come to the festivities.

Here we shall describe only the two major festivals, tinsé and basgha.

Tinsé (Mossi Ritual Festival), or Naba Oubri Ma Kouré
(The Funeral of Naba Oubri's Mother)

796 769 Origin. Naba Oubri, son of Zoungrana and [147] founder of the Ouagadougou dynasty, gave his mother a very impressive kouré (funeral). The kouré took on the appearance of a great festival because of the large number of animals sacrificed, the generous supply of food, and the great quantity of beer (dam) prepared. Since Oubri was very powerful, he ordered that the anniversary of his mother's funeral should be celebrated every year, even after his death. His mother was Pogh'toe Hinga (literally, "bearded woman").

For this reason and also to obtain health for his people and abundant rain for their crops, the Mogho Naba still quite regularly celebrates this annual festival known as tinsé (from tinga "earth"). There is no set date for it; it is celebrated whenever possible, usually after the harvest.

796 769 Preparatory sacrifices. Before setting the date for the tinsé, the Mogho Naba has livestock (cows, sheep) and roosters killed on the tombs of his predecessors.

782 According to precedence, the sacrifices begin with Naba Zoungrana, Oubri's father, whose tomb is at Komtoega in the circle of Tenkodogo. The Mogho Naba sends a cow to the Loumbi-Raogo Naba to be sacrificed on the tomb of Naba Oubri. Oubriyaogo Naba (the guardian of Oubri's tomb) has the duty of sacrificing the animal.

The other animals are sacrificed by the Ouagadougou Naba, representing the family of the Ninissi (first [148] inhabitants of the country). He is accompanied by the eunuchs who are the guardians of the tombs (yad'nanamsé).

In order to honor emperors whose tombs are in various parts of the colony, representatives of the Mogho Naba are sent out with

796 sacrificial animals, and they are required to celebrate the festi-
769 val in these villages before returning to Ouagadougou.
782 In the old days the animals destined to be sacrificed were captured in the cantons by horsemen assigned to that duty. Today, however, the Mogho Naba requests his vassals to supply them.

It should be noted that the following Peulh chiefs provide cattle of their own volition and without any compulsion: Komtam Silmanaba, Gombogo Silminaba, Kourgou Silminaba, and Barkoundba Silminaba.

796 Setting the date for the ceremony. A week after the sacrifices
769 the emperor summons the Tansoba (war minister) or, if he cannot appear (sickness or some other chance reason), the Konkosé Naba. This personage must reply to the summons on the day he receives it.

796 The king then assembles his principal ministers and sets the
769 date for the celebration of the tinsé, twenty or twenty-one days
211 ahead. The Mogho Naba hands the Tansoba several knotted ropes (yoda) which are to be distributed by him to the following chiefs: [149] Sapone Naba, Tuili Naba, and Loumbila Naba.

The last-named chief hands his rope over to the Dapelgo Naba and to the Méguet Naba.

There are as many knots in the rope as there are days remaining until the festival.

As soon as the Tansoba has handed over the ropes, he must immediately return to his village.

The persons who have received the ropes are required to transmit them to the kombemba (plural of kombéré, canton chief) who untie a knot each day.

796 Celebration of the festival. Early on the day of the ceremony,
769 a Friday (arzouma), the ministers and other court officials present themselves before the king to wish him welcome (tabo).

The Mogho Naba presents a loaf of salt (yamss'néré, literally
796 "salt millstone") which is to be divided among the following digni-
769 taries: Ouidi Naba, Larrhallé Naba, Gounga Naba, Kamsaongho
263 Naba, Bougretenga Naba, Benga Naba, Poé Naba, Tampouï Naba, Bend'Naba, and their followers.

Half of a loaf of salt is also offered to the Baloum Naba, Dapoya Naba, Samandé Naba, and Wedranga Naba.

796 769 263 The latter reserve a small share for the Zussoba [150] (chief eunuch) and the Bilbalsé (inhabitants of Bilbalogo, the section of the Baloum Naba).

796 769 The next morning, Saturday, the king has a large number of cattle slaughtered and many sagbo cakes prepared. The latter are piled one on top of another to form tahinsé (mountains) in the courtyard where the daily audiences are held.

On these mountains of sagbo are placed whole quarters of sheep. Many bowls of cooked rice are put in rows beside the millet cakes.

The Larrhallé Naba, the second minister who is in command of the Samandé (the court), stands before one of the mountains of sagbo, takes a cake which he divides into three parts, and tosses them at random in different directions in the courtyard. Thus he offers food to the invisible spirits and to the manes of previous ministers who once frequented the place. During this ceremony he utters some words which may be translated as follows: "Take this sagbo and bring peace and happiness to the emperor and to his people."

After this, the Larrhallé Naba returns to his kouga (mound of stones) to make way for the Gand'Naba. The latter, too, picks up a cake and also the foot of a cow. Then the king's bodyguard, the followers of the ministers, the Bilbalssé, and the emperor's servitors make a dash for the mountains of sagbo and the rice, and there is a general scramble to get the biggest piece. It goes without saying that they come out of the fray covered with sauce, and half of the food is spilled on the ground. [151]

At this point, the ministers and their escorts depart.

Each ikanda(head of a family) calls the family elder (the patriarch) and gives him a rooster and a goat (lacking a sheep) to be sacrificed to the manes of his ancestors. The old man pronounces the following words: "Youmd yelle n'ta, ta zagla yel t'm konfo, tif reg kouin gnimassem, la sounogo, ta pam kodo, la rogom (accept these offerings on the part of X... and grant him health, happiness, and prosperity. Protect his family and grant him good harvests and many children.

796 769 263 776 It is interesting to note that the meat, whether boiled or roasted, is never seasoned with red pepper (tiparé), for the tinsé [spirits]

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769 would visit their anger upon those who were guilty of such an in-
263 discretion by making them blind or at least causing them severe
776 eye trouble in later years.

796 Everyone celebrates the tinsé at home by preparing all sorts of
769 food (sagbo, rice, corn, beans, etc.). The people stuff them-
[261] selves to the point of indigestion.

Thirty days after the anniversary celebration of the funeral of Oubri's mother, the Tansoba (war minister) returns to the emperor the rope used for the date of the tinsé.

Around the fortieth day, that is, a week after the departure of the Tansoba, the Loumbila Naba comes to salute the emperor. The latter gives him a cow to be slaughtered at Widin (section of the Ouidi Naba).

A week after the departure of the Loumbila Naba, [152] the Guilingou Tengsoba pays a visit to the Mogho Naba. We have already seen that it was an ancestor of this Tengsoba who asked Naba Zoungrana to send his son, Oubri, to administer the country and to help him drive out the Habé who today live by the cliffs of Bandiagara (Sudan). The Mogho Naba is obligated to give a cow and some salt to this Tengsoba.

Then comes the turn of the Saponé Naba (nayrdin, representative of Naba Kouda) who, with his followers, receives a cow and some salt. Finally, for Bonsa Naba, Kamsaonguin Tengsoba, and Pazani Tengsoba, the Mogho Naba has a sheep killed which is served with many plates of sagbo.

It should be noted that when the Tangsob-ramba appear before the emperor they put down their laya (magic axes) and are at once brought white roosters which they are expected to kill in the timpelem (courtyard).

Thus, it is apparent that this festival has no particularly remarkable features. Its sole aim is to make peace between the living and the dead and to give everyone a chance to eat well.

The Basgha of the Mogho Naba, or the Nights the Emperor M'ba (Rarengma) Sleeps Away from Home

(May my father not arrive before I do.)

769 The basgha. Before making use of his newly harvested crops, the Moaga ikanda (married man, head of a family) is obligated to offer this new produce to his ancestors. Therefore, he has dam (dolo, millet beer) prepared with the large red [153] millet, already sprouted, and cakes made with the millet or the sorghum. He kills chickens and a goat, or a ram, and invites his neighbors and relatives to the feast. He is convinced that the manes of his ancestors share the feast.

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The emperor of the Mossi is no exception to this rule. The basgha of the Mogho Naba is celebrated with more pomp, and we shall describe it briefly below.

It should first be noted that there is no particular date set by custom for the basgha, either for the Mogho Naba or for the ordinary Moaga. Everyone celebrates it whenever he can after the harvest.

491 The sotasgo (completion of the road). Before the French came and the administration took over road building, each minister had a road or, more accurately, a broad path which led straight to the king's courtyard and which had to be maintained by the minister. Since everyone is busy in the fields during the winter months, it is easily understandable that the roads are somewhat neglected during that season. When the Mogho Naba decides to put everything to rights with his ancestors, he notifies the Ouidi Naba, his first minister, who sends word to the other ministers that they must clear their soyan (from soré, "path"). The ministers order the inhabitants of their respective sections to do the work, but put off completing the last stretch leading into the courtyard, samandé, [154] until the date for sotasgo is known.

653

653 Sotasgo takes place on a Saturday.

The Ouidi Naba makes a large pile of several loads of millet (kaguindi) and chooses about forty strong young men to carry it into the court of the king. His colleagues (Larrhallé Naba, Gounga

653 Naba, and Baloum Naba) do the same thing. (We have seen in an earlier chapter, under "Payments to the Mogho Naba" that the millet brought by the ministers and vassals makes up the food supply for the emperor and his wives; the harvest from his own fields is used to feed foreigners and to make beer for the basgha.)

[533] In order to arouse the young men to greater efforts, drummers accompany them, playing "pang'rog'kamga, kamba komsomba (these young men were born of strength; they are worthy of their parents)."

Loads of millet are presented to the emperor during his first audience (wend'pous yan), after the ministers have paid their respects. The Soré Naba (literally, "chief of the path"), taking his place before the Mogho Naba, but with his back to him, orders the young men by the sound of drums to finish clearing the roads of the naba up to the king's courtyard. Since the work was virtually completed, this is a mere formality.

The ministers' followers and the bearers who brought in the millet, equipped with axes, daba, and even sticks, pretend to work energetically. They gesticulate, cry out, and [155] sing. The Soré Naba then goes under a shelter reserved for him, and the young men join him there.

~~786~~ 769 The Ouidi Naba, the Larrhallé Naba, the Gounga Naba, and the Kamsaoug' Naba salute the emperor, and it is only then that the latter sets the date for the celebration of his basgha.

Once the date is set, the bodyguards of the Mogho Nabo (samand' kamba), whose chiefs are Samandé and Rakogdo, are ordered to start at once to repairing the shelters in the courtyard where the daily audiences are held.

Sleeping away from home. Three days before the Feast of the Dead and as soon as he has given his pugtiéma (first wife) the sprouted millet for making dam (beer), the Mogho Naba becomes uneasy. This is because the kimsé (manes of his ancestors) are present in the house. He must find more peaceful lodgings.

On Wednesday evening, therefore, he goes to the home of the Samand'Naba of Kamsaoghin. He spends the night there, but at cockcrow the following morning he returns to his home where he spends the day. That night he goes to Gounghin and spends the night in a house near the home of the Gounga Naba, his third minister.

796 Friday night he stays at the home of Bangr'Naba Sambo. Very early
769 Saturday morning he returns home in time to be present when the Bend'Naba (chief of the drummers) comes to wish him a happy new year and a long life and to pray that Wenam (God) will spare him to [156] offer many more bascé (plural of basgha) in honor of his predecessors.

[431] It goes without saying that during the nights spent away from home the emperor receives many visitors and substantial gifts. The persons at whose homes he spends the night naturally give him the warmest possible welcome.

Preparatory sacrifices. These are performed inside the house of the Mogho Naba, and the details are known only to the following four persons: Mogho Naba, Emperor of the Mossi; Baloum Naba, chief steward and chief of pages; Zussoba Kassanga, chief eunuch and guardian of the harem; the pugtiéma, the first wife of the Mogho Naba.

796 It is known that animals are sacrificed, with the Mogho Naba
769 himself holding the victim and pronouncing the sacramental words. Perhaps there is also worship of certain sacred fetishes. In any
782 event, we are convinced that there is nothing involved in the ceremony which is contrary to the principles of French civilization since there is no human sacrifice. We should have liked very much to describe these ancient practices, but the secret has been well kept.

796 Celebration of basgha. As soon as the Mogho Naba appears in
769 front of the zango (antechamber), the Bend' Naba beats a drum while calling the names of deceased naba, beginning with Naba Oubri, the
533 founder of the Ouagadougou dynasty. [157]

As soon as the Bend'Naba stops playing, he and his followers are served sagbo (millet cakes), mouï (rice), dam (millet beer), and nemdo (meat).

796 Likewise, the ministers and other court officials who come to
769 greet tabo (the new year) are given dam, sagbo, rice, and meat by
[554] the Mogho Naba. The food is distributed to the dignitaries in the order of precedence, and the rest is reserved for the Bilbalessé and other followers of the ministers.

About eight-thirty, the ministers and court officials say
[576] wennatassé, "God be with us," which means good bye, and then they return home.

769 they return to their homes.

796 The Bend'Naba and other drummers remain in the courtyard until the Sogon' kassanga (chief eunuch) bring to them, on behalf
533 of the emperor, the sum of 10,000 cowries and some beer. In the old days a young captive, seated amidst the cowries, accompanied these gifts. The messengers say to the drummers: "Nab'yet b'wa poustabo (the king sends us to give you these gifts on the occasion of his basgha)."

The chief of the drummers pours a drink for the Zussoba and orders his followers to play together "Tompaongo, Wend'kaouss'Naba nioré, Wenna wilig'vinré" (literally, "We thank the king for his gifts. May God give the Mogho Naba long life and allow us to come back to play here next year").

Before sending them away, the Mogho Naba is obligated to give a karfo (black robe [158] imported by the Haoussa) to the Bend' Naba and a robe to the Loun Naba (chief of the luinsé). Water with flour in it is likewise brought to the Bend'Naba, and he scatters it about the courtyard. The emperor is required by custom to walk upon this water of gnimassem (of good health) as he goes back to his apartments.

When all these formalities have been completed, the Bend'Naba, accompanied by his bards, takes his leave. The festival is over. On the days following, the drummers call on the ministers and
[431] the other court dignitaries and are given many gifts (cowries and livestock).

All of these gifts are retained by the Bend'Naba or by someone chosen by him, and they are distributed later, with due regard for the hierarchy existing among the griot. The share of the older men is always greater than that accorded to the younger ones. [159]

Chapter 10

The Wives of the Naba. The sogoné. The Pogsiouré

Naba Warga and the Origin of the Sogoné

173 Naba Warga was constantly at war with the Riziam Naba, who
644 was called Mamzi (which means "I myself do not know"). He had
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797 the case for canton chiefs and ministers, this position is handed
793 down in [206] the same family. Obviously a son is not called to succeed his father unless he has been educated well enough to settle, to the satisfaction of the emperor, the few questions which will be submitted to him. In any event, the choice will always fall on a member of the family of Moustapha, the first Imam.

Celebration of the Moslem Festivals by the Mogho Naba

796 Moaghrem (the Mossi zambende). The moaghrem marks the beginning of the new year of the hegira. Every Moslem family must feast on the evening before the holiday. The next morning, that is, on the tenth day of the month of Moaghrem [Muharram], the sourata, book of the year, is read, and one learns the name of the saint who will preside over the destiny of the world for the next 360 days. Alms are stipulated. This festival, which represents a return to joy, solemnly commemorates the day on which the Patriarch, Noe [Noah] (called Nabi Nouhou by the marabouts), alone blessed by the Lord, first set foot on dry land after the flood which exterminated mankind. This was a return to life, and it was the Day of Fire.

The Mossi have never understood the meaning of the Moslem festivals and celebrate them in their own way. They did not understand that the "Day of Fire" meant a return to family life, to cooking food over a fire, but instead made up a curious custom which is more reminiscent of the taking of the Bastille. On that day they light torches, chase each other about, and burn each other. This sometimes results in [207] real injuries which fortunately are easily healed.

The Silmissi (Peulh of Mossi country) do rather better since they sprinkle themselves with cool water. This represents at least a wish for good health.

796 The tabaski (zoulhési or Mossi kibsa). In the old days the Mogho
643 Naba was required to go to the great mosque at Zoaghna on the day of tabaski.

Yarnaba, chief of the Yarcé (Dioula whose ancestor, Koanda, came to Mossi country during the reign of Koumdoumié, the eighth Mogho Naba), has the duty of sacrificing the cattle and sheep

796 643 provided by the emperor. The meat is distributed among the assembled faithful. The salam took place in the mosque, and on this occasion the emperor became a Moslem whether or not he was actually a believer. He was expected to take his place among the faithful immediately behind the Imam. As soon as the Imam finished reciting verses from the sacred books, he turns toward the faithful, says, "A salama leckum," and then shakes the king's hand. When the prayer is ended, the emperor returns home, and the Imam soon follows to sacrifice the tabaski sheep. The Mogho Naba himself is required to hold the animal's tail.

Ramadan (Mossi nolokré). It is well known that Ramadan or Lent of the Moslems (the nolokré of the Mossi, from noré, "mouth," and lokré, "untie the knot, loosen") involves a series of privations and abstinences [208] during which the defenceless body is subjected to all sorts of indispositions, sometimes giving rise to real illness.

It is also obvious that the emperor is subject to so severe a regime and to so many obligations that it would be impossible for him to fast, as do the marabouts, even if he were a believer. Nevertheless, the emperor has been so thoroughly persuaded of the yelsomdé (bliss) attained by the penitent after the thirty days of suffering and since he is by no means indifferent to anything concerning the splendors of the Beyond, he asks for volunteers among his entourage who will practice abstinence in his place. On the day of the festival, they receive many gifts (robes, cowries, etc.).

What follows is a summary of the manner in which the king of the Mossi celebrated Ramadan a few years ago.

On the day of the festival, the Gare-yarga (Yarga in charge [272] of the saddle) appears early in the morning bearing hydromel in an old gourd which is said to have been used by Naba Rimba. He drinks a little of the liquid to "break the fast" and then offers a gourdful to the Mogho Naba for the same purpose. The remainder is given to the ministers and other court officials.

The emperor offers food to all present (bowls of rice and sagbo). He has had one or two cows and many sheep slaughtered in advance.

Around seven-thirty in the morning the Mogho Naba used to go with his usual entourage to Roundé-yiri (a place of prayers, a kind of outdoor mosque which [209] used to be located northwest

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643 of the present house of Ouendasida, the police adjutant), and there he attended the salam presided over by the Imam.

After the ceremony, the Imam, surrounded by the faithful, went to call upon the emperor for the doua (a kind of benediction involving the recitation of verses from the Koran). The Imam received kola nuts and sheep or a cow.

[368] At the present time the two mosques exist in name only; the one real mosque is that of the Imam in the ward of the mohémé (marabouts). The present Mogho Naba never attends the salam on feast days. He goes to the Circle [Administration Building], then to the home of the Governor, and finally returns home to await the visit of the representative of Islam in Mossi country.

643 The only Mogho Naba who was truly a Moslem was Naba
368 Koutou, the twenty-seventh successor of Oubri. He was sent to
177 the Koranic school at Sagabtenga and is said to have made a creditable record there. When he succeeded his father, he installed a mosque in front of the women's gate. Since then a mosque has traditionally been located in the same place on the palace grounds of every Mogho Naba, even though, as in the case of the present emperor, he was not a believer.

643 Naba Koutou regularly made his salam in accordance with
177 the rites of the Moslem faith and even observed the thirty days of abstinence during the month of fasting. [210] All his children had Moslem names. All, except his eldest son who succeeded him as Naba Sanum, were sent to Koranic schools, although none did any serious work there since they were more interested in becoming naba.

643 During his lifetime, Naba Koutou himself never sentenced
696 anyone to death, even if he were guilty. He loved peace. When his ministers submitted serious cases to him, he always said: "Go and do what seems best and do not tell me what fate was meted out to the guilty." Like Pontius Pilate, he allowed his ministers to bear the responsibility for the crimes. Since he gave little credence to what the priests said of poéré (confession by the use of magic), he acquitted individuals condemned to death by that barbaric method.

789 Blessings and curses are also used. Should they be classed with the cult, or with magic? One way or the other, there are natives who have the power to kill anyone merely by saying a word. They can make the harvest wither, the cattle sicken. There are also some who can bless, make a trip propitious, an undertaking successful. If you
752 are wounded, go to them. They will put around the wounded part of
755 your body a greasy rope with three or four knots according to your sex;
801 there will be no swelling, and the wound will heal quickly.

782 Such are the major sacrifices and the practices of the cult. The
769 sacrifices offered to the spirits of the dead on the day of burial or on
796 the day of kouré have not been mentioned, because the animals offered are not properly speaking sacrificed (kou mando) but offered, presented, fabré. We shall now mention the sacrifices made on the Day of the Dead.

The Koupéla Mossi have two major feast days: the Day of the Dead or basra, and the Moslem sheep celebration called kibsa. Both are intimate family affairs.

Basra is the feast of the dead. On that day every family head must offer sacrifices to his ancestral spirits, and he alone may sacrifice upon the grave. Even if a member of the family has become powerful and wealthy, he will not offer the sacrifice which devolves by right to the family head. All members of the family who wish to offer a sacrifice on the ancestral grave must, therefore, go to their elder on that day. Anyone may sacrifice to the kikirsi and tangandé, and almost everyone does at this time. It is mainly on this occasion that little children may be seen gravely sacrificing their chicken to their kikirsi and to the tangandé; each makes it a point of honor to offer his own animal. Only chickens are sacrificed on that day.

Basra is not celebrated by every family on the same day. Some celebrate it before the province chief does, others after him, while most families do it on the same day he does.

/96/ The naba of Koupéla proceeds as described below, and the ceremonies are the same for his subjects with the sole difference that being less wealthy they cannot offer as many sacrifices. The basra is always celebrated by the naba on a Saturday. Already on Thursday he has taken non-fermented beer from the vats and poured it on the graves of his father and grandfather. He has also sacrificed a chicken on each of the tombs. Wherever an ancestor of the naba is buried, the guardian of the grave sacrifices a chicken. This is repeated on

782 Friday evening. The sacrifice is the usual one described earlier, but
769 the invoking formula is replaced with the following: "Soul of my
796 father, stretch out your hand and take this chicken which I offer you; grant me to reach next year in good health, and I will return with another chicken." The chicken killed on the grave is not roasted as in other sacrifices, but cooked in water.

On those days one must be careful not to sleep outside. The souls come to drink beer from the vats, and woe to those who lie in their way. They will kill them or at least make them seriously ill.

782 On the feast day itself, all those who have some obligation toward
769 the naba or toward the man who is holding the festivities, such as
796 those to whom he has given a wife or who have asked him for one,
431 come to greet him with a rooster and cowries if they did not come on the previous day. Many of his subjects, especially the canton chiefs, also come to offer their rooster and cowries. On the other hand, if an important visitor comes on that day, it is an elementary rule of civility to offer him a rooster.

782 Usually, on the very day of the festivities, no sacrifices are offered
769 on the graves. The victims are offered to the protective kikirsi of
796 the hut, of the inner courtyard, of the outer courtyard, of the whole soukala. The number of sacrificed chickens varies in proportion to the number of gifts. When the sacrifices are over, the naba assembles his people, and the beer is brought in and presented to him. He first pours a little on the ground as an offering to the ancestral spirits, then he drinks and distributes the ars among his people. This is not
[273] a good day to discuss important matters, because after noon everybody is more or less drunk.

On the following Monday and Wednesday, the naba proceeds at dawn with great pomp to two neighboring villages (Nakalbo and Sabré) to sacrifice a beef to the tangandé. Much feasting ensues there on those two days; the naba loses a beef /in each village/ but gains many chickens and a few thousand cowries. He also goes to the village of Toulgou on the day when basra is celebrated in that locality, because his family originated there.

527 The kibsa is the Moslem sheep feast, and it is celebrated forty days after the end of the great feast. All Mossi celebrate it in private; every family has brewed millet beer, and on that day millet mush is replaced with rice and meat. These festivities are even more intimate than the previous ones in the sense that they are held

5: Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1959
FA28 Mossi FA28

776 bush is included in the orderly universe which the Mossi have fabri-
823 cated, it exists at the periphery and is a thing to be feared. The name of this unknown and unowned part of the bush is synonymous with fear. Dreams in which an individual sees frightening images are called "bush
[828] creeping up" (*weogo doore*) or "bush traps you" (*weogo n'yoko fo*). These phrases are also used to describe the emotional shock, the feeling of fear, elicited by the unexpected sight of a frightening object like a corpse or a lion.

Most important among the supernatural beings inhabiting the bush are the twin spirits (*kikirdisi*). Living in pairs or in larger groups, they inhabit the bush, caves, baobab trees, and certain dense thickets of underbrush. While specific details vary, it is generally conceded that they are small, about a foot tall, black like the Mossi, and of both sexes. Their social organization is like that of men: each group is ruled over by a twin spirit-chief (*Kikirdisi Naba*).

845 Twin children are always regarded as the emissaries of the twin spirits.
776 Shortly after the birth of twins their mother takes a present of food to a place where the twin spirits are known to dwell. Leaving the gift and expressing her thanks, she also makes it clear to the twin spirits that if they have any sort of malicious intent in sending her their children they might as well take them back immediately, since she will tolerate no foolishness. If, through her new children, they plan to torment her, they should save their efforts and desist at once. While the twin spirits are frequently mischief-makers, they are more frivolous than malicious and essentially neither good nor evil. The death of newborn twins is accepted with relief, for it is believed certain that the twin spirits have been thwarted in their mischievous intent and have conceded defeat.

THE ECONOMIC AND CEREMONIAL CYCLE

796 A brief description of the economic cycle and the ceremonials which
221 mark its phases will serve to illustrate the way the Mossi perceive their relationship to the forces of their natural, supernatural, and social milieux and the methods by which they seek to assure their well-being through control of these forces. The year is usually divided into twelve
[805] moons whose names refer either to the principal economic activity of the season or to a ceremonial which accompanies it.

The first moon of the Mossi year is called "Gambo" after the name of the village which celebrates its first rain-making ceremony (*Tengana*) at this time. Although the rains are still five or six months away, this ritual marks the beginning of the new economic cycle. Each household which possesses land controlled by the earth custodian sends one of its young girls with an offering of millet gruel to place at the altar of Tenga Wende, the terrestrial manifestation of the deity. The earth custodian advises

Tenga Wende of the desire for a good growing year and gives each girl a small part of the wet earth near the shrine; this represents the now sanctified soul (*shiga*) and is placed under the granary from which the millet seeds for the new crop will be taken. 796 221

Then those who possess land controlled by the earth custodian organize a hunt for his benefit. The following day, the earth custodian visits each lineage which possesses fields in areas of the bush under his custodianship. He is given calabashes filled with millet gruel, which he pours as a libation on the earth, asking Tenga Wende to grant good health, heavy rains, and a successful harvest to the household. As the libation is poured, the women try to catch a little in their own calabashes of gruel, which they then pour as their sacrifice. Because the millet from the granaries of good harvests is lucky, other women want to try to catch a little of it in their own offerings; thus the libations spill from one calabash into another as they fall on the earth. [782] [777]

The second moon is called "Bega" after the ceremonial which coincides with the first labor in the fields, the clearing and burning which precedes planting. After making a sacrifice at his own altar, the earth custodian goes to the residence of the neighboring priest (*Boga*) specifically charged with the propitiation of the vegetal manifestation of the deity. This visit symbolizes the interdependent relationship of the two priests and the supernatural powers which they control. The *Boga* then repeats the libations made during the previous ritual, but this time the offerings of millet gruel are made to Tido Wende, the force which gives life to the plants, rather than to the earth. [793]

A sacrifice to Pogo Wende, the specific manifestation of Tenga Wende which guards a farmer's fields, is usually made after they have been cleared and prepared for planting. Either before or after the sowing of the first seeds, the farmer asks the earth custodian to sacrifice a sheep or a goat to the field deity, requesting good health, heavy rains, and a rich harvest. This sacrifice (*Pogo Mande*) is the final aspect of the ceremonial preparations for the new economic cycle. It is designed to enlist the benevolence not only of Pogo Wende but also of the twin spirits which inhabit the field. If the twins are well disposed toward the farmer, they will protect the soul (*ki shiga*) of his millet stand from the twin spirits from neighboring fields who might try to steal it. Like the ancestral spirits, the twin spirits send a high wind into a field, blowing the ripening grains from the stalk and liberating their "souls" (*shiise*), which are then captured to enrich the spirits' own fields. [776] [782] [774]

The third moon of the year is called "Cundiba Bega." The fourth, which usually corresponds with the European month of June, is called "unaccompanied" (Quizale), referring to the fact that no ceremonial is observed during its phase. The hard work in the fields is begun at this

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221 time. "Waraga," which means "first cultivation," is the name given to
796 the fifth. The sixth, which appears in early September or late August, is called "Baca," meaning "second cultivation."

If the millet is not yet ripe for harvest at the appearance of the seventh moon, it is also called "Baca," since the work of cultivation must continue. This choice rests with the chief of the village of Room. The entire Mossi kingdom waits for his decision to know whether the ceremonial cycle called "Basga," which closes the economic year, is to begin or whether the harvest and its attendant ceremonies are to be put off for another month. Just behind his residence is a sacred millet field whose [774 824] grains, as they mature, contain an aspect of the souls (*riim shiise*) of the dead kings of the Yatenga. When the millet in this field is ready to be cut, the next moon to appear is called "Yalem," and the ceremonial cycle which closes the economic year is begun. In the early days of the Yatenga [769] dynasty millet from this field was used to prepare a sacrificial gruel to propitiate the deceased rulers of the newly established kingdom. When it is cut today, a first portion is taken to the altar at Room dedicated to the souls of these early kings. Two other bundles of millet are prepared from the same field. One is sent to the *Yatenga Naba* at Ouahigouya, who is the living descendant of the dead kings. The other is sent to the village of Gourcy, the former capital and the first residence of the founder of the Yatenga dynasty, Naba Yadiga.

The emissaries to the two political centers are accompanied by young people who break off stalks of millet from the fields along their way, adding these to the bundles of grain so as to include all of the farmers of the [769] Yatenga in this offering which symbolizes the dependence of the Mossi on the benevolence of the souls of the dead kings and their living descendant. The millet taken to Ouahigouya is sacrificed at the palace altar of the former rulers. Part of the millet sent to Gourcy is sacrificed at the altar of the spirits of the former village chiefs (*nakom shiise*); the other part is sacrificed at the shrine of the former kings. At Ouahigouya and Gourcy a portion of each sacrificial offering of millet is returned to Room [182] with stalks from the local crop at each place. These are used to make a final sacrifice symbolizing the interdependent relationship of Mossi religious, economic, and political organizations. The ceremonial cycle serves to demonstrate the reliance of the people on the benevolence of the spirits of their former kings for their social, economic, and supernatural well-being.

A ceremony called "Kom Filiga" follows. Meaning "water thanksgiving," it is the occasion for thanking the Mossi ruler, the *Yatenga Naba*, for the wise direction of affairs which has permitted the farmers to cultivate their fields in peace. All village and canton chiefs travel to Ouahigouya to salute their king and rededicate themselves to his service.

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The next moon, called "Tido," is the occasion for a ceremony thanking Wennam, through his terrestrial and vegetal manifestations, for his support during the growing season and for the rich harvests that have been received. Though it is directed by the custodians of the earth, it is their auxiliaries, the Bogaba, who officiate and who sacrifice at the altars to Tido Wende. After they have finished, others may offer a chicken as thanks for successful harvests or for the birth of a child. 221 796

At the appearance of the next moon the ceremony called "Filiga" is celebrated, thanking the ancestors of each lineage for their protection during the hard months of the rainy season. The initial sacrifices are made by the village chief both at the shrine to the spirits of the former chiefs and at the ancestral shrine of his lineage. Because their offerings are made to powerful spirits, it is wiser not to refer directly to them by name. They are called *Kikirigo Na Maore*, which means "twin dance." The twin spirits, like the ancestral spirits (*kiemse*), give children. Thus, through indirection a "charged" word is avoided by calling the sacrifice after an analogous but less powerful force. The specific purpose of the first sacrifice is to ask the protection and the assistance of the spirits of the former chiefs during the dangerous period which is to follow. The ancestral spirits of the villagers are then propitiated, and individuals who fail to perform the sacrifices properly may be punished by their ancestors. It is also believed that the ancestors may try to call some of the members of the lineage to join them at this time. [769 782] [776]

The sacrifices are made by the children of the daughters of the lineage (*Yasenamba*), whose permissive relationship with their mother's kinsmen is paralleled by their relationship to the ancestral spirits of their lineage. The lineage head presents the first chicken for sacrifice. Its throat is slowly cut as it is offered to the "twin" (*kikirigo*), as the "first ancestor" of the lineage is called—again through indirection, for even if the name of the first ancestor were known, it would be presumptuous of his descendants to call him by name. A chicken is then sacrificed to the "old ancestors" of the great-grandfather's generation, to the ancestors of the grandfather's generation, and to those of the fathers' generation who are deceased. As each chicken's throat is cut, the ancestors are thanked for their protection throughout the rainy season and requested to continue to look out for the welfare of their descendants during the months of the dry season which follow. Other men of the lineage may then give chickens to be sacrificed.

The final aspect of the ritual closing of the economic year is the ceremony called "Na Poosum," or "chief's salutation." It is essentially a social occasion. The homage to the central political authority made at Kom Filiga is now complemented on the village level. The elders of each lineage go to the village chief with presents of millet and assurances of

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221 their continued reliance upon his political power and intercession with
796 his noble ancestors, in order that the village may enjoy peace through the coming months of the dry season and early rains at the beginning of the next economic cycle.

With this observance all of the sources of power—both social and supernatural—upon which the Mossis' well-being is dependent have been thanked for their support throughout the year just ended and have been encouraged, by the generosity of their supplicants, to continue their benevolence for the year to come. The Mossi understand the nature of these forces and the manner in which they can be controlled. They know them as manifestations of a deity who will reward their observance of ceremonial obligations with the soft winds and heavy rains that bring a rich harvest. The individual is intellectually and emotionally absorbed in maintaining a balance in his relationship to a world he understands. His efforts to maintain this balance are occasionally frustrated by sorcery or the contrary will of his deity, but he enjoys, nonetheless, a very real security.

CULTURAL ADJUSTMENTS AT THE NIGER IRRIGATION PROJECT

177 Given the nature of these interrelationships between the organization of economic activity and the social and religious institutions of their
241 culture, the adjustment of the Mossi who have been resettled at the Niger Irrigation Project has implications which go beyond mere technological adaptation. The settlers must, in fact, adjust to a totally changed cultural setting.

Arriving at the Niger project, they fail to find the institutions upon which they have always depended for their security; they find instead a natural environment governed by forces they do not know. Their water supply is no longer dependent on the supernatural controls of the earth custodians but comes from a dam built by Europeans. They are socially isolated from their kinsmen and their ancestral spirits in the Yatenga, and they derive little comfort from the presence of fellow Mossi with whom they have neither consanguineal nor affinal relationship.

[466] Settlers were forcibly recruited for the Niger Irrigation Project until 1944, when forced labor was abolished throughout the French Union. Now a recruitment program brings Mossi families to the project each year; every family head receives a house, oxen, a plow, and a plot of land proportionate to the number of active workers accompanying him. Under the supervision of European agronomists, they apply modern methods to the production of rice and cotton. The project administration buys their crop for cash after deducting fees for seed, irrigation, mechanized cultivation, transportation, and processing. In theory, ten years of

769 along with millet flour mixed in water. A few chickens are also killed. No one works on that day, but people eat, drink, and rest. There is no drumming or dancing, however.

Other Mossi (at Yakki, for example) make offerings to the ancestors in the hut of their first wife rather than on the graves.

Another feast comes at sowing time and is called Tengana. Certain leaves are sought in the bush, cooked with beans and underground peas, and eaten. Much dolo is also preapred.

244 On the first day of sowing, one goes to the fields and offers a
• 776 chicken, millet flour, and dolo to the field stones (tenkougouri) and to the earth (tenga or tempeloun), so the sowing will go well, so there will be a good harvest, and so everyone will be in good health.

There is also an earth feast or Tensé (plural of tenga), which is celebrated once a year during the rainy season. It is the Moro Naba who sets the exact date of the Tensé. Every soukala head [782] kills a beef, a sheep, or a chicken. The young men collect the blood of the sacrificed animals in gourds and pour some upon the ground (to the Earth) in order to secure a good crop. The remainder is mixed with the flour of large white millet and eaten. Much dolo is consumed. The earth feast is the special festivity of those people who are called Tenga (earth), Tembila, Tenfisi, etc., and of those who were born on the day of the Tensé.

On that day sacrifices are also offered to Naba Ouondé (the Chief God).

/588/ On years when the previous millet harvest was bad, the Tensé is not celebrated.

The Mossi have no special harvesting feast. Actually, it is the Tiougou or Bassara (celebrated when the millet has been harvested) that is the harvesting feast as well as the feast of the ancestors.

782 The Mossi do not offer sacrifices to isolated trees, but they do
778 to sacred groves or woods.

At Ouagadougou, at the spot where the White Fathers now live, there once stood a small sacred wood made up of large trees and thorny bushes, where sacrifices were offered before the French tore it down.

Every year the Moro Naba offered a sheep and a chicken to this sacred grove through the head of the Sékou quarter. He also offered

643 the name of the current ruler. When Crozat asked one of his Mossi bearers why Boukary Koutou had chosen a title that means "elephant," the man declared, "He is an elephant; he is king of all kings as the elephant is king of all animals; a great elephant-king he is."[2] Another Moaga, meeting Crozat on the road to Ouagadougou, told him to be prepared to meet a monarch "whose riches are inexhaustible and whose splendor is marvelous. [644] He and his family wear only the most admirable European clothes; a thousand horses stand before his door, and there are more than a thousand women in his house. He is served by one hundred eunuchs; he commands as master 333 chiefs; and when he speaks to them it is as though God himself had spoken; everyone bows down before him and obeys."[3] Crozat, looking at the Mogho Naba through European eyes, did not find the "great [576] king" he had expected. Yet he and later European visitors to the Mossi [516] capital did affirm that all Mossi officials and district chiefs prostrated themselves in obeisance to their sovereign, even if they did not subsequently follow his instructions.[4]

643 Many rituals associated with the person and court of the Mogho Naba served to emphasize the high esteem in which he was held by his subjects. ● 796 For example, the sovereign showed himself every morning at a ceremony called "Ouend pous yan" (literally, "God rises," or "the sun rises") that survives to this day. The name of this ceremony has led many scholars [114] and travelers to assert that traditionally the Mogho Naba was considered a divine king. Dim Delobson states that this ceremony "shows the regard which the Mossi have for their chief, since they compare him to the sun, and thus to a 'god.'"[5] However, the Mossi do not now and probably never did regard their monarchs either as gods or as divine kings. There is a great deal of difference between regarding a man as "powerful and brilliant" like the sun and regarding him as divine. As a matter of fact, the [522] Mossi very often dramatize in humorous fashion the all-too-human frailties of their rulers, without ever considering it sacrilegious to do so. On the other hand, the Mogho Naba, as the supreme ruler, was expected to follow faithfully the strict etiquette demanded by his exalted position.

643 The morning ceremony was opened by the ruler's chief page, the *so-* 796 *ghone-kasanga*, who sprinkled a phylacteric solution around a throne 644 (*guere*) in the courtyard in front of a reception room called the *zongo*. Other pages (*soghondamba*) brought out a large cushion (*naghpure*), the ruler's sword, and other personal accouterments, and placed them on the [292] throne. Still other pages aided the Mogho Naba in his toilet. He was clothed in a large red robe, which symbolized the rising sun; he wore a bonnet surmounted by silver streamers (*wazourfou sebere*), which repre-
-sented the sun itself-

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 643

sented the sun itself. The toilet was performed in complete silence, for no 644 one was allowed to speak to the monarch until after the ceremony. Meanwhile, in the courtyard, the court dignitaries, visitors, and the musicians and 796 minstrels (*bendere*) took their places. The provincial ministers sat on their [645] respective stones (*coganaramse*), and the visitors sat by their hosts. The pages at the door of the zongo awaited the moment when the Mogho Naba and his escort would emerge from the zongo. On seeing the two pages who preceded the monarch, they snapped their fingers as a signal to the still silent bendere.

On seeing the monarch, the chief musician, the Bendere Naba, rubbed [533] his fingers across the top of his drum to produce the sound of a lion's growl, and the other drummers and violinists played the royal air, "Ouend pous yan." The head guard, the Kambo Naba, and his men, carrying guns, walked up from the side and knelt down facing the assembly. And the *samande-kamba*, the "servants of the courtyard," came with heavy batons to guard against crimes of lese majesty. From the wings came a groom with a partly saddled ceremonial horse. As soon as the monarch was seated on his throne, his two pages moved to the front and knelt down facing the courtyard. The salutations now began. The first group of ministers, led 643 by the Baloum Naba and including the Samande Naba, the Samande Na- 645 bila, the Ouedrange Naba, the Kamsaogho Naba, and the Zusoaba Kasan- 796 ga, left their stones and came to the throne with slow steps and bowed 576 heads. A few yards from the monarch, they knelt on the ground, and with their fingers folded and their thumbs in the air, leaned forward, struck the ground with both hands three times, and then rubbed the palms of their left hands with the fingers of their right. Then they arose, and with heads still bowed walked backwards to their places.[6] With the music still playing, another group of ministers, led by the Ouidi Naba and including such men as the Gounga Naba, the Larhalle Naba, and the Pwe Naba, saluted the ruler in the same manner. On Fridays and other Islamic holy days, the [792] Moslem Imam representing the Ouagadougou congregation read aloud from the Koran. This part of the ceremony ended when the Mogho Naba [481] rose, and, with the measured steps and swaying gait that signified royalty, retired to the zongo, preceded by his two pages.[7]

A few minutes later, the monarch returned to the courtyard without his red robe and glittering headdress. There was a second round of salutations comparable to the first, but this time the Ouidi Naba and his group did not appear unless it was an important occasion or important guests were present. When this part of the ceremony was over, the monarch 643 called for his half-saddled horse and announced that he wished to go to 796

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643 La, a village near Koudougou district. His eldest wife, the *Pughtiema,*
796 appeared carrying her household utensils in order to accompany her husband. However, all the ministers, led by the Kamsaogho Naba, implored the monarch to have his horse unsaddled and to postpone the trip until the following day. Feigning anger, the Mogho Naba reluctantly agreed to remain in the capital, ordered his horse unsaddled, dismissed his wife, and re-entered the palace.[8]

173 The tradition about the origin of this ritual reveals something of the
643 Mossi attitude toward the human frailties of their rulers. It appears that
796 Poko, the favorite wife of Mogho Naba Waraga (ca. 1660–80), asked permission to visit her father at La, and that he refused to grant her request because of his love and admiration for her. Nevertheless, she continued to ask him for permission, and after her third request he granted her wish and sent a page and a small girl with her as chaperons. When Poko did not return to the palace on the third day, Naba Waraga sent two pages to her father's compound to fetch her, and here they discovered that she had died. Fearing the king's wrath toward persons who brought bad tidings, the pages did not report back to him but notified the ministers of Poko's death. When subsequent messengers also failed to return, the king decided to go to La. The following day, after the morning ceremonies, he ordered his horse saddled and commanded the Pughtiema to get ready to accompany him on his journey. But the ministers, anxious to protect him from grief, told him that a great king never followed a mere woman under any circumstances and persuaded him not to depart. The monarch went back into the palace, and the dignitaries ordered the horse unsaddled and sent it away. Shortly afterwards, the king changed his mind and decided to go to La, but he was beseeched not to do so. He swore that he would leave the following morning, and that if he were prevented from doing so, he would advise all his descendants to try to go to La every morning until one of them succeeded.[9]

643 At the end of this ceremony, a page gave the ministers an ample supply
644 of beer and kola nuts. The Moslems were given presents of kola nuts and
692 millet water (*zom kom*) sweetened with honey, since they were forbidden
576 to drink millet beer. Later in the morning, the Mogho Naba left the palace
[431] and entered the zongo, where he greeted his visitors, accepted gifts from visiting chiefs and subjects, dispensed gifts in turn, and presided over the court of justice. Anyone who went to see the ruler had to be accompanied by his provincial minister or his host—regardless of whether it was his purpose to pay a courtesy visit, to pledge allegiance, to plead for aid, or to give
643 testimony in a lawsuit. Pages moved back and forth between the palace
644 and the courtyard, dispensing kola nuts and beer or millet water prepared
576

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by the sovereign's wives. Other pages waited upon the monarch, and accompanied him when he moved about the courtyard. When the ruler drank any liquid, the pages rubbed the palm of one hand with the fingers of the other; when he sneezed, everyone clapped; and when he stepped out to urinate, a page accompanied him, turned his back to him, knelt down, and saluted by rubbing his palm.

When the Mogho Naba had finished his morning audiences, he entered his palace for a solitary meal. This meal was prepared by one of his young wives, who tasted it in his presence before giving it to the page who served him.[10] After eating, the monarch rested for a few hours; then he emerged into the courtyard to grant audiences and hear court cases until sunset. At that time he retired to his palace, and those courtiers who were not connected with the evening ceremonies returned to their homes.

The ceremony that closed the day at the monarch's court was called "Kwaga Basgha" (literally, "final meal"). This ceremony still survives. As soon as the sun began to set, the samande-kamba took their heavy batons and stood guard to prevent unauthorized persons from coming near the *namtibo* (royal amulets). The Baloum Naba and the Bendere Naba entered the palace courtyard and knelt before the zongo. The chief page then brought out the *kwaga*, a pottery vessel containing a fire ritually associated with the namtibo.[11] The vessel was placed on the ground, and the page blew on the fire to make it burn brightly. Meanwhile, the Bendere Naba rubbed his fingers across his drum to make the growl of a lion. When the fire finally died out, the Zusoaba Kasanga and the Baloum Naba closed the ceremony by rising, coming together, and saluting the namtibo in the traditional Mossi manner. (The Mogho Naba did not attend this ceremony.) Before the officials left for the night, the pages gave them pots of beer prepared by the royal wives. Sometimes these officials visited the Mogho Naba before they retired to their compounds. Once these men had departed, the pages served the ruler his evening meal, which again had been prepared by one of his young wives.

During the hours of darkness the Mogho Naba conducted many secret affairs of state and conversed with the members of his household. Persons seeking the nam of a deceased relative were often granted audience at night, as were litigants in court cases. When there were no pressing matters of state, the ruler gathered some of the royal wives around him and discussed family affairs, which protocol forbade him to discuss during the day. Some rulers reportedly disguised themselves and visited the wards of the town in the company of a young man from the palace, in an effort to learn things that did not ordinarily come to a ruler's attention.

The Mogho Naba slept in a grass hut in the palace compound. Two

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The newly elected monarch secreted himself either at the Samande Nabila's home or elsewhere in the capital until daybreak. Tradition holds that if he were killed before being officially proclaimed before his subjects as the new ruler, the assassin could become Mogho Naba.[19]

The public ceremonies marking the official proclamation of the new ruler's accession to power took place on the following day. Early that morning, the monarch left his secret sleeping quarters and proceeded to the Koumbi Naba's house. Here he dressed in his white garments and mounted an old, unsaddled horse. The Baloum Naba then gave him a sack containing the namtibo, which he placed over his shoulder, and the Kaizi Naba led him out of the courtyard by the women's door. As the ruler's horse passed through the gate, his sister, the *Napoko* ("female ruler"), cried, "The sun has reappeared! The fire is relighted! The earth lives again!" A large crowd of musicians and warriors who had been alerted by the ministers shouted and danced as they accompanied the monarch, who circled the compound three times.[20] The ruler then reentered the compound, and this time he came out through the men's door as a sign of his full status. Here he was greeted by the Ouidi Naba, who proclaimed in a loud voice, "Mossi people, here is the Mogho Naba!" The warriors shouted and fired their muskets, and the musicians played. Then all the dignitaries and their followers solemnly prostrated themselves and paid homage and swore allegiance to their monarch. He, in turn, listened attentively when his ministers and some of the elder chiefs gave him advice about how the affairs of state should be conducted. After each declaration of loyalty or word of counsel, the people shouted in praise of their ruler. The Bendere Naba, accompanied by his musicians, then recited the ruler's genealogy, announced the pledges the new monarch had made to his people, and acclaimed him by his royal title, "Mogho Naba [X]." From this moment on, no child born during his reign could bear the ruler's name, and those persons who already bore it called themselves *Nab'yure* ("king's name").

As the next stage in the ceremony the Mogho Naba, accompanied by his retinue, visited the various wards in the capital. In each he was proclaimed ruler and received the allegiance of both Mossi and non-Mossi ward chiefs. He visited the wards controlled by such men as the Loumbila Naba, the Sapone Naba, and the Ouagadougou Naba, and at each stop the ward chief declared, "People of [X], here is your new sovereign." Having been acknowledged by the leading chiefs of the capital, the new ruler then returned to his host's house. He emerged later in the day to visit the compound of a palace attendant, the Samande Nabila, where he sat under a

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VII

THE ECONOMIC FOUNDATION

THE REVENUE for the support of the Mossi chiefs and their governmental system came from many sources in a variety of forms. The Mossi of Ouagadougou held that "the Mogho Naba is master of everything" (*Mogh Nab n so fa*), and when they referred to the control he and his chiefs exercised over their goods and services, they said, "The commoner rears his livestock for the chief," and cited the proverb "The snake gets whatever is in the belly of the frog."

Since the Mossi were, and still are, primarily an agricultural people, the products of the soil were the main source of revenue. The Mossi chiefs did not own the land, but they controlled it and assigned land rights to their subjects. The Mossi believed that land had no value apart from people, and, conversely, that people could not exist without land. As they said, "Land is the mother; it fed the ancestors of this generation; it feeds the present generation and its children; and it provides the final resting place for all men." Therefore, a Mossi chief never hesitated to give anyone permission to use unoccupied land. It was in his interest to do so, because the more subjects he commanded, the greater were his revenue and prestige. An unpopular chief was censured not by a withholding of tribute and presents, but by a mass exodus of his subjects to another area.

Through the administrative hierarchy, the common people contributed to the support of the various levels of government. The Mogho Naba periodically received agricultural produce from all his subjects. Through the village chiefs, the village people sent part of their produce to the district chiefs, who forwarded it to the provincial ministers. They, in turn, delivered it to the central government during a ceremony appropriately called "Soretasgho" ("completion of the road"). This event occurred at the end of the harvest festival, after all the crops had been gathered in.[1]

To open the ceremony, the provincial governors' retainers began to clear the paths leading from the governors' compounds to the palace, for they had

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643 651 796 become overgrown with grass and weeds during the rainy season. This clearing was done to within a few yards of the palace, but was not completed. Early in the morning of the day chosen for the actual rendering of the agricultural tribute, the retainers placed baskets of produce along these paths. During the morning ceremony, the Ouidi Naba presented a basket of millet to the Mogho Naba. Then the Bendere Naba, acting as Sore Naba ("chief of the road"), signaled on his drum, and the men with baskets who were waiting on the uncleared portion of the paths, preceded by drummers and men with hoes, axes, and other tools, began to move forward. The men in the processions raised a din, shouting, singing, drumming, and pretending that the task of clearing was very difficult. From time to time, the more energetic among those who were not carrying bundles ran ahead of the others, turned somersaults, and then, going through the motions of warriors in battle, pranced back into the procession. All the processions came to the shed occupied by the royal drummers and deposited their burdens. These were later retrieved by the palace staff and stored for use in the royal household.

643 644 241 The royal household was also supplied with produce grown by the royal wives. Foodstuffs for guests and fodder for the ruler's horses were provided by the people of the Bilbalgo and Dapoya wards, which were under the general supervision of the Kam Naba. Two or three times during the agricultural season, this official recruited extra help from these wards to help [464] cultivate the fields. In recompense for this *sosogha* (work bee), the laborers [465] were given food, drink, and kola nuts from the royal household. At the 243 end of the year, the harvesting and threshing of the grain from the Mogho 643 Naba's fields was the occasion for an elaborate ceremony, "Mogh Nab' 644 kawinre" ("threshing the ruler's grain").[2]

796 To begin this ceremony, the Mogho Naba summoned a local earth- [791] priest, the Manougoudougou Tengsoba, to the court. This man, a descend- [792] ant of the Ninisi, had to perform the propitiatory sacrifices to the earth deity who was symbolized by the threshing floor. After the sacrifices were completed, the Kam Naba went to the threshing floor with the young men of the Bilbalgo and Dapoya wards, who threshed the millet gathered there. The next morning they all returned to the threshing floor with the Bendere Naba and his minstrels, who recited the Mogho Naba's genealogy and sang praises to his ancestors. The drummers then beat out work rhythms and traditional drum patterns to which the workers danced while scattering the millet far and wide. Finally, the dancing stopped, and the Kam Naba drew a line on the threshing floor, dividing the pile of millet in two; the Bilbalgo people gathered one half, the Dapoya people the other. Regard-

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less of the amount of millet harvested from the Mogho Naba's fields, there had to be one hundred baskets full of grain. If the number of baskets filled with the Mogho Naba's grain fell short of the mark, the serfs and slaves had to make up the difference with the produce of their own fields. The ceremony concluded with sacrifices to the royal ancestors, after which the Mogho Naba's wives, daughters, and sisters gave beer and kola nuts to the laborers.

As head of the central government, the Mogho Naba received revenue in the form of money and livestock which the district chiefs collected from the village people. These were given to him during an elaborate annual ceremony called the "Basgha" ("feast of the royal ancestors"). Several days before this post-harvest festival, the district chiefs and their retainers arrived in the capital and lodged with their provincial ministers. At a designated time during the ceremony, the district chiefs and nobles went to the palace. In provincial contingents and led by their ministers, they walked up to the sovereign's throne and gave the Mossi salute. After they had returned to their places, their servants gave the royal pages the presents they had brought to the palace.

The Dimdamba apparently made their annual contribution to the Mogho Naba at the time of the Basgha. There is one report that they took this opportunity to send gifts to the ruler's son, the Djiba Naba, as well. The Dimdamba customarily sent the Mogho Naba part of the goods they had seized in combat against non-Mossi peoples, as well as a tax (*fado*) out of the goods they had inherited from their predecessors.[8] There is also some evidence that the Mogho Naba solicited goods from the Dimdamba at other times. Crozat says:

> During my first visit to Yako, three envoys from Ouagadougou were at the chief's house. They were tax collectors. They had come to offer the vassal a silver bracelet sent by the sovereign. The Yako Naba responded by sending horses, captives, and cowries to Ouagadougou.[9]

Crozat could not understand this reciprocity between the Mogho Naba and his vassals, and questions whether the Mogho Naba really collected taxes from them. He concludes that the Mogho Naba did receive taxes, "but these are never given to him except in the form of presents which are reciprocated."[10] Crozat found it puzzling and disturbing that many of the Dimdamba had not given the Mogho Naba any "taxes" for several years. He indicated, moreover, that they did not wish to pay taxes to the Ouagadougou ruler even under the guise of an exchange of presents. This was especially true of the Yatenga Naba, who had not sent the Mogho Naba any presents for six or seven years prior to 1890. Crozat surmised that

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The district chiefs did not often exercise their rights over fruit trees in the weogho, as the wasteland in their districts was called. If a villager went into the weogho and collected fruit or wood from the chief's trees, he surrendered only part of it to the chief. On the other hand, if he received permission from a district chief to farm in the weogho, he was obliged to gather and send to the chief the fruit on any valuable trees. A district chief sometimes granted the rights over certain fruit trees in the inhabited areas to specific families or individuals, for personal reasons or as a reward for services. In such cases, the chief forfeited his rights to these trees, but retained his rights to the others.[22]

District chiefs also controlled all the resources of creeks and pools within their jurisdiction that were not sacred to certain aboriginal families, or which had not been transferred to specific persons. The aboriginal Ninisi [226] families always notified the district chief when they planned to perform [796] their annual fishing rite to the earth deities. He, in turn, sent representatives to the ceremony, and they were given part of the catch as his share. Persons who were granted permission to fish in the chief's water holes gave him a substantial part of their catch, and even those persons who had private control of fishing places regularly did the same.

224 651 634 [411] [177] [793]

The district chiefs also had rights to certain parts of animals caught in their territories. This applied especially to animals caught with such traditional weapons as traps, clubs, bows and arrows, and spears. Men who had obtained flint guns and other firearms from the Ashanti or elsewhere and who had bought their own powder were not obliged to give the chief a part of their game, but it was always prudent to do so. According to a long-standing tradition, the tusk and legs of a slain elephant that were not resting on the ground belonged to the chief, and those that lay on the ground belonged to the Tengsoba in whose ritual jurisdiction the animal had been slain. But the district chief's secular power was so much stronger than the Tengsoba's sacred power that he usually took both tusks, leaving the Tengsoba only two legs. The district chief also received other portions of elephants and parts of all the larger animals killed in his territory. And when hunters in the district were successful in the chase, they usually gave him entire small animals.

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Every village in a district contributed to the district chief's revenue by performing special services for him. Certain villages were responsible for keeping specific huts in his compound in good condition; others, whose lands bordered on the woods, had to provide firewood for his compound; and yet others furnished grass and other fodder for his horses. Many villages had the task of cultivating special fields and crops for the district chief.

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creased his force" and ultimately added to his income. Men who had been compelled to flee from other districts because of crimes or power struggles were granted refuge and given pughsiudse. In this manner, the district chief, like the Mogho Naba, established seignorial rights over his new subjects, incorporated them into the district, and obtained goods and services from them. The better a district chief's reputation, the greater the number of refugees who sought shelter with him and added to his wealth. Conversely, a chief who was known for his injustice, his rascality, and his excessive demands from persons seeking the village nam was shunned by potential subjects and might even be deserted by his own.

Those persons who visited the district chief's compound to settle court cases also contributed to his revenue. When the case dealt with cattle or other livestock, the chief received a few animals. In other cases, he received only the customary gifts from the litigants. He also received gifts from all the families in his district several times a year. One occasion was the "Tense," a festival in honor of the mother of Mogho Naba Oubri, the founder of the Ouagadougou dynasty; the other was the Basgha. During these two ceremonies every village chief, preceded by his district administrator and followed by his subjects, paid homage to the district chief and gave him presents. The district chief retained part of what he received for the upkeep of his household and to fulfill such obligations as hospitality to travelers, and added the remainder to his own annual tribute to the Mogho Naba.

The manner in which the district chief collected his annual tax or tribute for the Mogho Naba is the subject of controversy. Several of my respondents declared that the collection of this tribute was rather informal. The district chief allegedly notified the village chiefs that he wished to give a present to the Mogho Naba, and these chiefs sent word to the family heads, who, in turn, notified every household. The village people then collected chickens and livestock, baskets of grain, and cowries, and sent them up through the hierarchy to the district chief. The district chief's retainers checked the gifts from each village very carefully, and if some villages gave less than was expected of them, the district chief summoned their chiefs for explanations. In most cases the district chief knew exactly how much could be expected of his subjects, because his informers—usually his own pages and courtyard servants, or messengers of the local administrators—kept him informed of the wealth of each hamlet. Usually, a village chief who had withheld too much from the commodities turned over to him, or who had not demanded sufficient goods from his villagers, sought to make amends. It was in his interest to do so, since it was always dangerous to incur the

[P.126]

VIII

RELIGION AND GOVERNMENT

796
642 RELIGION AND RITUAL played an important role in supporting and preserv-
[769] ing the Mossi political system. Religio-political ceremonies were centered
[776] around the ancestors (Keemse) and the earth deities (Tengkouga); the otiose high god (Ouennam or Naba Zid Ouende) had a very minor role.

769 The political importance of ancestor veneration lay in the fact that every
642 Mossi chief claimed Nyennega of Dagomba and her descendants, Ouedra-
778 ogo and Oubri, as his ancestors. Furthermore, possession of the amulets of Rialle, Nyennega's husband and Ouedraogo's father, legitimized possession
[613] of the nam. In order to rule, a Moaga had either to be a member of a royal lineage still in possession of the nam or to have received the nam from such
669 a lineage. No Moaga ever tried to usurp the nam of a kingdom or princi-
778 pality without trying to steal the royal amulets at the same time; nor, if his rebellion was successful, did he ever fail to claim that he had stolen the
642 amulets or had received them as a gift. Thus Yadega, who rebelled against
769 his father's brother, Mogho Naba Koudoumie, and founded the Yatenga kingdom, declared that he had obtained Rialle's amulets. He claimed that they had been given to him by his sister, Pabre, who had stolen them from Ouagadougou and had thus deprived that kingdom of any legitimate sanctions for power. Thus, when the Yatenga people declare that they are equal to Ouagadougou, they add that the only "amulets" that still legitimize the nam of the Ouagadougou dynasty are the droppings left behind by Pabre's horse as she fled northward.

769 Similarly, all the princes who founded principalities and proclaimed
642 their independence of Ouagadougou defended their action on the grounds
643 that they, being as close to the main line of descent as the Mogho Naba, were also entitled to rule. The younger sons of deceased Mogho Nanamse
[631] who were banished from the capital as Kouritadamba and who subse-
[634] quently became provincial Dimdamba also stressed their relationship to the royal ancestors. Even those district chiefs whose ancestors had prob-

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ably been younger sons sent to rule in conquered territories claimed that their ancestors were direct descendants of Ouedraogo and Oubri. Thus, to the Mossi, the power to rule was intimately linked to closeness of descent from the royal ancestors. The supernatural power of these ancestors, and the vigilance they were believed to maintain over the affairs of their descendants, were regarded as important factors in Mossi government.

From the moment when the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou or any other Mossi ruler "drank the namtibo" and thereby received the nam of his ancestors, he had the right—indeed, the duty—to offer sacrifices to these ancestors in the name of his subjects. Every night, throughout Mossi country, the Baloum Naba of every ruler performed an act of supplication (Kwaga Basgha) to the ancestors. He beseeched them to protect the subjects of their descendants through the night, to maintain peace in Mossi country, and to grant health, children, and prosperity to all Mossi. This nightly ceremony was climaxed yearly by an elaborate ritual in honor of the ancestors (called the Basgha in some areas, and the Pelegha, Filigha, or Kinkiriga in others) that began at the highest levels of the government and ultimately linked every Mossi chief and lineage head.

The Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou, like the other Mogho Nanamse and Dimdamba, initiated this ceremony in his own kingdom. His celebration, called "M'barengma," was held at the end of the Mossi agricultural year and after the Soretasgho. Thus, the M'barengma was a New Year's festival in thanksgiving for good crops, as well as the annual Feast of the Dead. A few weeks before the first moon of the new year (the *ki-basgha* or *ki-pelegha*), the Mogho Naba ordered his soghondamba and samande-kamba to clean up the palace buildings and courtyards—an activity intended to notify the ever-vigilant ancestors that preparations were being made to offer sacrifices in their honor. A short time later, the Mogho Naba gave grain from his fields to the Pughtiema so she could prepare millet water for the sacrifices. Present-day Mossi insist that part of the grain came from the first ears harvested that year and part from those of the previous year. This was supposed to symbolize the continuity between crops, mirroring the continuity between the ruler and his ancestors. A few days before the principal ceremony, the Mogho Naba ordered the Larhalle Naba to pour millet water and sacrifice chickens on the graves of former Mogho Nanamse.

Shortly before the ki-basgha moon appeared, the ruler had to leave his palace at night to elude the ancestors, who had been attracted by the preparations and who were expected to be angry when they discovered that the sacrifices were not yet ready. The unjust ruler feared ancestral sanctions; the just ruler that his ancestors might want him to join them. One night he

769 went to the home of his Samande Naba, the next to the Gounghin ward,
796 then to Baghin, and subsequently to the homes of other officials. He could
241 not remain long at one place for fear that the ancestors might find him.
782 Every morning, however, when the cock's crow heralded the ancestors' departure, he returned to his palace.

The principal part of the Basgha ceremony was performed on the night when the crescent moon appeared. On that night more than any other, the ruler had to seek refuge elsewhere, because the ancestors visited the palace to accept the sacrifices offered to them by the Pughtiema with the help of the Baloum Naba and the chief eunuch of the harem. The exact [778] nature of this ceremony is unknown, but it is known that the Baloum Naba used the sacred namtibo along with animals and millet-flour water provided by the Pughtiema and the chief eunuch for propitiatory sacrifices to the ancestors. The aim of these sacrifices was to induce the ancestors to grant good crops, health, happiness, and children to their descendants, and to "increase the force of the namtibo."[1] At cock's crow the Bendere Naba sprinkled a flour infusion called *gningmassem* ("water of health") on the palace courtyard so that the ruler might walk upon it when he returned. The Mogho Naba was greeted with drumbeats and escorted to the palace gate. His entry into the antechamber marked the close of this ceremony, and the people retired until later in the day.

The elaborate public ceremony of the Basgha took place in mid-morning. The ministers and important officials, clad in ceremonial garb, arrived at the palace quite early. When the Mogho Naba appeared, the Bendere Naba recited the official genealogy, starting with Ouedraogo and Oubri and ending with elaborate praises of the current ruler. The ministers and their entourage then saluted the Mogho Naba and wished him *Ne tarbo,* which means a happy and prosperous new year for himself and the country. He, in turn, took advantage of this occasion to give many presents to his retinue, and his wives distributed huge amounts of food and drink to the assembly until everyone was satiated. Then all the officials except the Bendere Naba and his group paid homage to the Mogho Naba and departed. The musicians remained at court most of the day, beating their drums and singing praises to their sovereign and his illustrious ancestors. The royal pages kept them well supplied with food and beer, and now and again during the day the ruler sent them gifts among which robes were often included. [431] Whenever the drummers received a gift, they slipped into a rhythmic pattern that [202] signified: *Tompaongo, Wend'kaouss' Naba niore, Wenne wilig vinre,* or, "We bow in thanksgiving for your gift. May God give the ruler long life. May God grant us to be alive next year so that we may do this again." The

climax of this gift-giving came when the ruler sent the Bendere Naba about 19,000 cowries and a slave.[8] This ceremony terminated at nightfall.

The close of the Mogho Naba's Basgha heralded the start of similar ceremonies throughout his kingdom. The heads of the other Mossi kingdoms and the Dimdamba were free to hold their own Basgha when they wished; but the Ouagadougou ruler's own subjects, including the provincial ministers, district chiefs, village chiefs, and lineage heads, apparently were not. One reason for this, aside from respect for the ruler, was that the important officials' head wives had to wait for the yeast (*dabili*) from the Mogho Naba's beer before they could prepare the sacrificial offerings for their husbands' ancestors. This dabili went from district to district or to several districts at once, depending on whether the chiefs celebrated Basgha at the same time or successively. Thus, the dabili from the capital united all the wives of the royal clan, and made for both a ritual continuity in the veneration of all ancestors and a strengthening of religious and political bonds.

The Basgha ceremonies on the district level were much less elaborate than those held at Ouagadougou, but just as important. The district chief, too, had his buildings repaired and his grain distributed for sacrifices for the ancestors. A few days before the actual ceremony, he ordered the Gande Naba to pour millet water on the graves of recently deceased chiefs and to sacrifice chickens there. As in Ouagadougou, these sacrifices were offered to induce the chiefly ancestors to grant the villagers health, food, and children. Unlike the Mogho Naba, most district chiefs did not ritually hide from their ancestors for several nights prior to the ceremony. Some of them did change their sleeping place within the compound every night, and the court people always slept indoors during this period. On the night of the Basgha itself, however, the district chiefs did not sleep in their compounds.

As in Ouagadougou, the Pughtiema performed the main ceremony by pouring millet water as a libation to the ancestors who visited her hut. She was assisted by the Baloum Naba, who had possession of the namtibo. Apparently, the district chief remained in hiding and took no part in the ceremony. But he was the main figure in the morning ceremony, which differed little from that of Ouagadougou. In some districts the Tengsoba performed a public sacrifice to the ancestors. He was given the namtibo—sacred objects that had belonged to former district chiefs—and poured libations and sacrificed chickens to all of the chief's ancestors. He also prayed both to these ancestors and to his own on the chief's behalf, and beseeched them to grant long life and happiness to the district population. He also declared that the sacred objects would seek out and kill any enemies of the local ruler, wherever they might be. Once this ritual had been com-

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pleted, the remainder of the ceremony followed the pattern of the Ouagadougou ritual.

During the weeks that followed, the village chiefs and the heads of the larger lineage segments all offered sacrifices to their ancestors. The Pughtiema of each prominent local administrator, chief, or lineage head prepared and poured the millet water as a libation to the ancestors. Whenever possible, each of these personages invited musicians to sing praises to his ancestors. He dressed in his best robe and sat outside his hut to receive presents from his relatives, friends, and subjects, along with their best wishes for the new year, and for long life and prosperity. In return he gave them kola nuts, beer, and food. Thus, in celebrating the Basgha, all the Mossi were united in prayers and supplications to the ancestors, upon whom rested the future of their country and the successful reign of the descendants of Ouedraogo and Oubri.

The earth deity, Tenga, held the central place in the second major religio-political ceremony which linked all Mossi. This ritual, called *Tense* (from *tenga*, "earth") and sometimes *Naba Oubri ma koure* ("the anniversary of the funeral of Mogho Naba Oubri's mother"), was so important to Mossi cohesion that it was banned by the French, and as a result its main features are now unclear. According to tradition, Naba Oubri loved Poughtoenga, his Ninisi mother, so much, and was so pleased with the elaborate funeral he gave her, that he decided to repeat this ceremony each year in the hope that his subjects would be blessed with the bountiful crops and herds which had made the first one possible. Curiously enough, Oubri's mother was not a central figure in the Tense celebration. Instead, great stress was placed on the fructifying powers of the earth and on the importance of the royal ancestors in Mossi life. The juxtaposition and association of the earth deity with Oubri's mother has important implications for the Mossi political organization. Mossi tradition holds that a Ninisi woman was the ancestress of the Mossi of Ouagadougou. Her people probably celebrated the Tense as a fertility rite to their earth goddess, Tenga. The Mossi apparently took over the ceremony and used it both as a fertility rite and as a memorial festival, thus symbolically uniting the conquerors and the conquered.[3]

In contrast to the Basgha, no special date appears to have been set for the celebration of the Tense. It was held sometime before the crops were sowed, but according to Tauxier it was not celebrated at all in Ouagadougou when the previous year's harvest had been poor.[4] Before setting the date for the festival, the Mogho Naba summoned the Larhalle Naba and ordered him to have sacrifices made on the graves of all former rulers. This minister

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provided the sacrificial animals for the royal tombs in the area of the capital, and the Ouagadougou Naba, as chief Tengsoba, performed the sacrifices. The Larhalle Naba also dispatched his servants to the distant districts where royal tombs were located, with orders to obtain (by force, if necessary) the animals for the sacrifices from the local populations and give them to the special guardians of the tombs. Sacrifices were made on the grave of Naba Oubri at Koudougou and on that of his father, Zoungourana, in the village of Zomtoega in Tenkodogo. However, there is no indication that a sacrifice was made on the grave of Ouedraogo, who is believed to have died in Sagabatenga but whose burial place is unknown. Nor is it clear whether, as some Mossi claim, annual sacrifices were made on the alleged grave of Nyennega in Gambaga. As soon as these preparatory sacrifices had been completed and the Mogho Naba had been notified, preparations were made for the celebration.

The Mogho Naba met with the Larhalle Naba, and the date of the Tense was set for twenty-one days after the meeting. On the following day, the Larhalle Naba made five cords out of tree bark and tied nineteen knots in each of them. The next day, he gave each provincial minister a cord to send to the districts in his province. The provincial ministers then sent their messengers with the cords to the districts, with orders to untie one knot every day the cords were in transit. Thus a district chief, counting the number of knots in the cord on the day it reached him, knew how many days were left before the Tense. As soon as the entire kingdom had been notified of the festival, the envoys returned to Ouagadougou and returned the cords to their ministers.

On the Friday morning before the Tense, the Larhalle Naba went to the palace. Kneeling before the monarch, he untied the last knot on each cord to indicate that the ceremony would begin on the morrow. To acknowledge this fact, the Mogho Naba distributed bars of salt to his courtiers and visitors instead of the customary kola nuts, beer, and millet water. Visitors left the court early in order to provide their families with foodstuffs for the celebration.

Early on Saturday morning, royal servants brought huge quantities of beef and mutton that had been cooked without pepper (this spice being disliked by the ancestors) and other foods, and deposited them in large heaps in the courtyard. Nearby, they also placed numerous large pots of millet beer. As soon as the morning ceremony was over, the Larhalle Naba slowly approached the Mogho Naba, who presented him with a new white robe. The minister donned the robe and walked to the piles of food, from which he took three portions of millet mush, dipped them in a specially

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prepared sauce, and flung them in three directions to the waiting ancestral spirits. He then beseeched the royal spirits, the spirits of former provincial ministers, and the spirits of the ancient people (the Ninisi) to grant a long life to the Mogho Naba and peace to all the Mossi. He repeated the ritual with three morsels of meat and with the contents of a pot of beer. When he had finished, the Gande Naba picked up the food thrown to the ancestors and carried it away. He did not look backward for fear that he should see the ancestors and die as a result. The departure of the Gande Naba was the signal for the palace retainers to rush toward the food. They seized and ate what they could, spilling and wasting a good deal in the process.[8]

Meanwhile, chiefs and headmen held similar ceremonies in every district, village, hamlet, and compound in the Ouagadougou kingdom. District and village chiefs offered sacrifices to their ancestors in the name of their subjects. The sacrifices on the hamlet and compound level were more specific. Every grown man had to take a sheep, goat, or chicken to his elder and request that it be offered to the ancestors in his name. The elder sacrificed the animal and beseeched the ancestors to grant the petitioner good health, bountiful crops, and many children during the coming year. The women and children did not take part in the ritual, but they did participate in the general feasting that followed.

The festivities of the Tense lasted only a few days in the districts and villages, but in the capital it did not end officially until about four weeks had elapsed. At the end of this period, the Larhalle Naba gave the Mogho Naba all the cords that had been used to mark the coming of the Tense. A few days later, the chief Tengsoba of Guillingou, the native village of Oubri's mother, and the Tengsobadamba of other important ceremonial centers, visited the Mogho Naba in the palace courtyard. Here they all sacrificed white cocks and placed the blood and feathers of their victims on their ceremonial axes in order to "increase the power" of these objects. Later on, they were given cooked mutton, millet cakes, and other presents. Their departure for home later in the day marked the close of the Tense.

The religio-political function of the Tense is quite explicit, despite the statement by Dim Delobson, himself a Mossi chief (but also a convert to Catholicism), that "it is apparent that this festival has no outstanding features. Its sole aim is to make peace between the living and the dead, and, in the process, to allow everyone to enjoy the food."[9] Judging by the reports of old men who participated in the festival before it was banned, the people did have a good time and enjoyed the food. What is important, however, is that like the Basgha, the Tense served not only "to make peace

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between the living and the dead," but also to strengthen the political bonds between the Mogho Naba and his chiefs, down to the humblest elder of a Mossi compound.

In addition to the Basgha and Tense, the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou appears to have offered another yearly sacrifice to Tenga. Each year, after the Basgha, the Mogho Naba, the Baloum Naba, and a large entourage reportedly visited a large earth shrine called Tantibo in the vicinity of Sabatenga to offer propitiatory sacrifices in the name of all the people. When the royal party arrived at Sabatenga, they were joined by the Sabatenga Naba and his Tengsoba. The group proceeded to the foot of the sacred hill, and here the monarch dismounted, took off his bonnet and shoes, and climbed the hill. He made the customary Mossi salute at the shrine and looked on silently while the Tengsoba sacrificed animals and poured libations of millet beer and millet water in supplication for the health and prosperity of the Mogho Naba and all his people.[1]

When evil befell Mossi country in spite of the annual sacrifices to the ancestors and to the earth deity, the Mogho Naba had to offer additional sacrifices. If the country was plagued by drought, the ruler went to an earth shrine in Ouagadougou itself, called "Kòm be paspanga" (literally, "water is strong there"), for a sacrifice. Moreover, he might order all his district and village chiefs to perform similar sacrifices to the earth shrines within their territories. In Nobere district, for instance, the district chief went to the village called Barkago, where, standing barefoot and bareheaded on the hilly shrine known as Beta, he ordered the local village chief and the Tengsoba to offer sacrifices for rain and good health.

It is generally believed by the Mossi that when the French attacked Ouagadougou, the deposed Mogho Naba Wobogo made sacrifices to earth shrines. Tradition has it that he sacrificed a black cock, a black ram, a black donkey, and a black slave on a large hill near the White Volta River, beseeching the earth goddess to drive the French away and to destroy the traitor Mazi whom they had placed upon the throne. When Mazi died, the Mossi people believed that he had received his just deserts from the earth shrine for treason. The French believe that Mazi was poisoned.[2]

The district and village chiefs, like the Mogho Naba, were required to make propitiatory sacrifices to the earth shrines on behalf of their subjects. Before taking office, a district chief was ritually shown the major earth shrines in his territory, and he could not ignore their existence and their need for sacrifices. In a country with major local variations in rainfall and localized animal and human epidemics, the Tengsobadamba of stricken areas always called upon the local chiefs to help them propitiate disgruntled spirits.

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his guests.[13] On the contrary, when the Imam visited the ruler on Fridays or during important festivals to read from the Koran, the sovereign gave him sweetened millet water and appropriate gifts.

Most Mossi rulers at all levels had Moslems among their councillors. These men were often the only persons who had traveled extensively outside the country (on pilgrimages to Mecca), and thus could counsel a ruler about how to deal with foreign visitors. Most early European visitors to Mossi country were either helped or hindered (chiefly the latter, it seems) by these travel-wise councillors. Crozat had difficulties with the Moslems long before he arrived in Mossi country proper. When he got to Lanfiera, the Mossi who lived there were alarmed, and refused to help him proceed to Ouagadougou despite his protestations that "I come for the good of all, white and black, that we may be together like brothers, since the same God has made us all." Crozat reports that his plea was in vain because "El Hadj All-Karl declared that he would not receive me, and he will not receive me. El Hadj is wise, El Hadj is prudent, El Hadj knows all, El Hadj does not make decisions without good foresight, and once made, he keeps them."[14]

Crozat had the same difficulty when he entered Mossi country. He tells us, "At Dounse [near Yako], for example, the marabouts did not look favorably upon my arrival, and it took a great deal of insistence on the part of Moussa to convince the Imam, my unwilling host, to present me to the chief who had expressed the desire to see me."[15] Crozat also found that he had to lodge with the Imam when he arrived at Ouagadougou, and he was assigned the same huts "which had served Captain Binger," who had visited the capital before him. He was disappointed with his reception and declares:

> I already knew from experience what sort of influence these men exercised over the chiefs. As a councillor of the chief, the Imam was overtly acknowledged as the second official in the village, but in reality he often commanded it. The Imam of Ouagadougou, therefore, could do much to help me or to hurt me. My decision to court him might flatter him, and that would be a move in the direction of winning his good graces, which, all things considered, was most important to me. The result was only partly in my favor. I succeeded insofar as the Imam was not hostile to me, but he did not help me as he might have.[16]

These Moslem councillors realized better than most other people what the visits of the Europeans implied for the independence of the country, and they tried their best to counsel the monarchs against receiving such visitors.

Beginning with Mogho Naba Doulougou (ca. 1750) Mossi sovereigns, whether Moslem or pagan, participated in the more important Moslem festi-

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vals. Being monarchs of the Mossi, they could not do otherwise. A few days before the Moslem feast of Tabaski (called *Kibsa* by the Mossi), the Mogho Naba sent the Imam of Ouagadougou cattle and sheep to be sacrificed on the holy day. On the day of the festival, the Mogho Naba and his entourage went to the mosque and joined the Imam and his flock in prayer. After the ceremony the sovereign returned to his palace and ordered that a well-washed sheep be given to the Imam for a sacrifice. This Moslem sacrifice was performed in the palace courtyard, and the Mogho Naba himself held the tail of the animal while the Imam officiated. The Mogho Naba afterward ordered his servants to provide millet water and food for his Moslem subjects. Similar ceremonies were held in all of the districts and villages where Moslems lived.

The feast at the end of the Moslem month of Ramadan was also celebrated by the Mogho Naba and most of the people within the kingdom—a fact that so surprised Binger that he wrote, "It is a most curious fact that, whether Moslem or not, all the blacks celebrate this feast."[16] The Moslems usually flattered the Mogho Naba and the other chiefs by pretending to believe that they had observed the month-long fast (which the Mossi called *no-lwere*, from *nore*, "mouth," and *lwere*, "to tie up") during Ramadan. [576] Thus, whenever they visited the Mogho Naba or another chief during this period, they greeted him with the salutation *Ne no-lwere*, which means, "I greet you who are fasting." Similarly, the morning after the end of the fasting period, the ruler and his officials were ritually given millet water "to break their fast." The important point here is that everyone knew that the Mogho Naba's fast was a ritual fiction. Binger, who was with Boukary Naba at the end of Ramadan before this prince became Mogho Naba Wobogo, commented: "Boukary Naba is a Moslem in outward appearance only. When the prayers were about to begin, he asked me whether I was going to worship. I told him that this festival was not in accord with those of the Christians. He seemed to be delighted by the idea that the whites are not Moslems."[17]

Most Mossi chiefs celebrated the end of Ramadan in a grander manner than they did Tabaski. The members of the royal household joined the other inhabitants of the capital in their anxious vigil for the crescent moon that was to herald the start of the ceremonies. There was general rejoicing when the moon appeared, and all through the night palace guards fired shots and launched arrows into the air. The following morning, the Mogho Naba went to the mosque with his courtiers to attend prayers. Then he returned to his palace to await the Imam, who came to offer prayers of thanksgiving. The Mogho Naba gave him presents, and was visited by gift-bearing

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Moslems. In return, he gave them millet water sweetened with honey, millet cakes, meat, and kola nuts. 643 771

The celebration of the festival in the districts was not as imposing as it was at Ouagadougou, but we have Binger's excellent eyewitness account of the festivities at Sakhaboutenga: 634 795 796

> First of all, Boukary sent word that he would like me to accompany him to Sakhaboutenga, where it is his custom to go on the day of the festival. The chief's men spent the entire day attending to preparations: they distributed powder, cleaned guns, tried on harnesses, and polished copper fittings as we would in France on the eve of a great parade. . . . It was an occasion for revelry, and they took full advantage of it. They ate as much as they could, drank a great deal of beer, and fired many rounds of ammunition. . . . In the evening there was a moment of consternation: no one had seen the crescent; however, they consoled themselves by repeating that although it had not been sighted here, it had certainly shown itself elsewhere, and they sat down to drink beer all night long. 771 184
>
> Monday, June 11. Early this morning Boukary sent a horseman to Sakhaboutenga to consult the marabouts. The messenger soon returned and assured the chief that the moon will be seen tonight. "All the marabouts have said so." The much-desired crescent appeared for a few moments this evening; shots were fired through half the night, and beer ran in floods. . . . [792]
>
> Tuesday, June 12. From four o'clock in the morning, the tam-tams sounded everywhere, and everyone was busy; it is obvious that this is the eve of an important event. . . . Half an hour after our departure we arrived at Sakhaboutenga. We dismounted and camped under the trees at the entrance of the village. Some Moslems from the neighborhood came, greeted Boukary, and offered him some kola nuts in lots varying from five to eight. But they always held them out in a fold of their robe [it being forbidden for a commoner to hand a gift directly to a chief]. A village nearby sent twelve large jars of beer.
>
> From afar and from all directions, long files of Moslems emerged from the village on their way to the Imam's for prayers. Several onlookers arrived on donkeys from the surrounding countryside. The religious ceremony took place on a flat expanse to the east of the village. It was an impressive spectacle. The crowd was silent. The faithful, ranged in ranks about 20 feet deep, prostrated themselves and rose again in perfect harmony and with awesome slowness. From time to time the voice of the Imam was raised, and his *amina* [amen] was heard with deep reverence.
>
> There were about three thousand persons of both sexes there, almost all of them dressed in white. The *bournous* [robes], the red tarbooshes, and the multitude of black faces lent to the ceremony the grandiose character of an oriental fete. As soon as the prayers were over, Boukary Naba walked up to the Imam of Sakhaboutenga to the sound of tam-tams to receive his blessing and the good wishes of the Moslems, who wished on my illustrious host many horses and warriors. Boukary Naba ordered that the Imam be given a magnificent sheep and several sheepskins full of cowries. He presents this

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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gift every year to the Imam and to Karamakho Isa, for whom he has great veneration. These are old and wise men who cannot but give him excellent counsel.[18]

The relations between Boukary Koutou and the Moslems of the Sakhaboutenga district show how Mossi chiefs, though pagans, were able to establish viable political bonds with potentially hostile believers of another religion. Boukary Koutou was probably a Moslem "in outward appearance only," as Binger suggests. Nevertheless, it was by being Moslems of this kind that Mossi rulers managed to retain the allegiance of their Moslem subjects. This was their duty as "fathers of their people," and apparently they did it without much hesitation. In this manner, they effectively used religion to bolster their power and sustain their authority.

Ritual connections between the Mossi rulers and the chiefs of surrounding countries enabled them to protect their subjects from foreign attack and to maintain internal cohesion. The numerous reciprocal gifts between the Mossi and such other Voltaic groups as the Dagomba, Mamprusi, and Gurmanche were based on the belief in descent from a common ancestor or ancestress. Ritual and the supernatural thus played an extremely important role in the cohesiveness of the Mossi kingdoms and in the functioning of their governmental processes. Without these ritual factors, it is doubtful whether the Mossi rulers would have been able to maintain such a relatively high degree of control over their subjects, given the relative weakness of their economic resources, communications, and armed forces. In trying to understand why the Mossi retained their autonomy for so long, one must take into consideration the statement made by a French officer a year after the Mossi were conquered: "We must not lose sight of the fact that [the Mossi] have always presented a common front to strangers, and that a single word of command is sufficient to unite them against the invader in the name of kinship and national unity."[19]

The phase of Mossi political history that began when Nyennega left Dagomba and moved northward came to an end with the European conquest. Most French scholars believe that the Mossi were in a state of decadence at the time of conquest and might have fallen to such African conquerors as El Hadj Omar, Samory Touré, or Baba To. The fact remains, however, that these conquerors all skirted Mossi country without entering it. If these African rulers believed that the Mossi were invincible in their unity, it was because the Mossi, through mythical bonds of common descent and actual bonds of kinship, had welded themselves into a cohesive and powerful group.

[post-world war II period]

175 their genealogies and traditions. The Mogho Naba was pleased by the reci-
643 tation and thanked the drummer.

634 Later that day, the Mogho Naba presented himself in the courtyard of
the district chief's compound to be saluted by the village chiefs and by the
574 heads of lineages. They came to him in the traditional way, rubbing their
182 palms and bending their foreheads to the ground. He addressed them, and in response they snapped their fingers in the customary manner. Then, one by one, the village chiefs and the lineage elders came to their monarch and gave him presents of money which ranged from 50 to 200 francs. The Mogho Naba paid little attention to the sums given, being more interested in this act of homage and fealty. However, he listened carefully as each donor announced his name and rank within the official hierarchy or village. He later thanked them collectively and departed. This ceremony, while not very elaborate, differed little in detail from those characteristic of the traditional Mossi's relationship to their Mogho Naba. The new element here was that the monarch was traveling around his domain, establishing a close relationship with his chiefs and subjects, whose support he needed for his modern political alliances.[28]

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643 The Mogho Naba continued to hold the morning ceremony at court,
796 even though it was rapidly losing its traditional function and becoming of
182 major interest only to visitors. He also continued to hold those ceremonies associated with individual appointments to the nam and with traditional
[692] sacrifices. Unknown to many was the fact that traditional authorities at court still judged legal cases which many Mossi refused to take to the Europeans.

*175 In contrast to the Mogho Naba, the traditional provincial ministers now
645 lost most of the power they had held in the pre-conquest period, and all the
182 duties they had acquired in the immediate post-conquest era. As we have seen, one minister, the Baloum Naba, had entered politics at the suggestion of the Mogho Naba, but even he was now relegated to the entourage that accompanied the Mogho Naba and the European administrators on visits to the ministers' former provinces. The increased number of European administrators had made these ministers superfluous.

*178 The district chiefs retained some prestige after the war. They could still
*175 judge legal cases, with the understanding that the litigants were free to go
554 to the Europeans if they so desired and had to be sent there in serious cases.
634 Their major problem was that a more efficient administration was taking
[692] a greater interest in district affairs. For the first time since the conquest, officials were visiting some of the more remote villages. No longer were they said to "act as locusts"—that is, to appear periodically to garner supplies and men from the districts and then disappear until the next onslaught. Instead, they appeared regularly to collect taxes and to take censuses, and

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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When one asks the Mossi directly, "What is a market?"
the response to this question is: "A market is a place where people 443
meet to buy and sell. People travel from one market place to another 829
market place, and on the way they stop and see their friends in other villages. In the market one often meets and drinks with one's friends. People also go to distant markets to find things which they do not grow themselves or which cannot be found in their own markets."

Lending support to the Mossi contention that markets are places 443
where one goes to buy and sell is the fact that most important markets 487
in their country are found at the intersections of well-traveled routes. These intersections are often the places where chiefs have their capi- [631]
tals or compounds and this leads to the further idea that there is a connection between chiefs and markets, if only because the power of the chiefs makes markets possible. This does not mean, however, 443
that the market is a purely physical entity which can only exist under 571
the aegis of a chief, or that it is a purely economic institution. First of all, some markets, especially the smaller ones, are moved periodically without too much difficulty. Secondly, and of great importance, is the fact that whenever and wherever there is a large gathering of Mossi there is a "market." Indeed one can say that Mossi seldom come together in large numbers without coming to a market, or without creating one. It appears that the Mossi cannot interact with one [437]
another in any circumstance without also exchanging goods of some kind. For example, when a pagan chief holds the annual festival to [769]
his ancestors, the people who attend form a market in the vicinity of his compound. In those districts where the chiefs have become Chris- [797]
tians and celebrate their birthdays rather than the traditional an- [527]
cestors' rites, the people go to pay them homage and also "make a market." Similarly, whenever there is a funeral of an important chief, [766]
the people from the surrounding villages or even districts bring commodities to his hamlet and hold a market during the ceremony. On [796]
Christmas day, 1955, the people of Manga district "moved their market" about 500 yards to the Catholic Mission grounds where the Christians were celebrating their holiday. And after celebrating the prayers of Ramadan, the Moslems and their pagan townsmen repair to the markets to spend the rest of the day.

Most Mossi markets are inaugurated with religious ceremonies ex- 443
cept those which develop by accretion—that is, by more and more per- 433
sons coming voluntarily to trade. When a chief orders that a market be [659]
created or when a market is moved from one place to another place for any reason, the chief is the person who gives the order for the ceremony to be performed. First of all he speaks to his Raga Naba (market [554]
chief), usually a non-Mossi slave, about the need for the market or the desirability of changing its location. This man then consults a *teng-*

Chapter 12

The Penetration of Islam into Mossi Country

Islam in the Land of the Mogho Naba

643 The Mogho Naba, like his subjects, is above all an animist,
794 and it is hard to understand how he reconciles his fetishism with
771 the complex dogmas of Islam and with the many interdictions of Christianity.

The Mogho Naba, however, is quite capable of being a Catholic or a Moslem on appropriate occasions and at the same time respecting the traditions of his ancestors. Thus, when the Christians celebrate Christmas, the emperor of the Mossi devoutly attends Midnight Mass. He keeps his cap on, however, just as the bishop wears his miter. In the same way he embraces Islam during the following three festivals: the moaghrem (the Mossi zembendé); Ramadan (nolokré, "to loosen the mouth"); and, finally, the zoulhési (the Mossi tabaski or kibsa).

797 Before describing how the Mogho Naba celebrates these Moslem festivals, we shall give a brief history of Islam among the Mossi and discuss the appointment of imams.

The Arrival of Islam among the Mossi

797 It was during the reign of Naba Doulgou, the twenty-third
793 Mogho Naba [204] after Oubri, founder of the Ouagadougou dynasty, that Islam took root in the empire of the Mogho Naba, and it was at that time that an imam was appointed at Ouagadougou.

Naba Sawadogo, who succeeded his father, Doulgou, sent his children to the Koranic school. Many of them obtained a fairly good education there, and the eldest son, who later succeeded to the throne under the name of Naba Koutou, even became a marabout. The development of Islam in Mossi country dates from his reign, as does practice of giving children of the Mogho Naba Moslem names such as Saïdou, Mahama, Moumouni, etc.

791 Gambaga Naba (chief of a vast territory in the British colony
793 of the Gold Coast) was, as we have already seen [not translated], the father of Nyennenga, mother of Ouedraogo, the real founder of the Mossi empire. As is well known, any king tends to imitate an illustrious relative and to follow his lead in all matters which might lend him distinction.

This being the case, here is how Doulgou happened to install a marabout at his side. It is said that in addition to his many ministers the king of Gambaga had an imam whose duty was to settle all complicated matters. He was, at the same time, an intimate counselor of the king. Mogho Naba Doulgou, who ruled over a large territory and who felt that he was just as powerful as his ancestor, the king of Gambaga, decided that he, too, wanted to consult only an imam for certain affairs. The emperor had a friend [205] who was a marabout in the region of Zitenga and whose name was Moustapha. Doulgou summoned him to Ouagadougou and conferred upon him the title of Imam.

It goes without saying that neither the learning of this adept in Islam nor any of his other qualifications were checked and that he was not chosen by other marabouts. Thus, the Imam of the Mogho Naba is principally a court dignitary, just like the Ouidi Naba, for example, and, as such, his appointment involves certain barbaric procedures. This is why, after he has been given his turban and his burnoose (insignia of chiefdom) he is invited to a house called surbinda. In this sacred place he is handed a
[272] gourdful of a loathsome beverage, tibo, a mixture of human and animal blood, which all canton chiefs, all ministers, and all court officials must drink at the time of their appointment to make them incapable of treason or lese majesty. The imam takes up the gourd and utters the following sacramental words: "I shall never, under any circumstances, betray the Mogho Naba; I shall come to his aid in time of war; I shall execute without question all orders received from my King," etc.... He then pretends to drink some of the beverage and hands it to the Ouidi Naba who puts the liquid back into the copper jar in which it has been kept for nearly a thousand years. Once these formalities have been completed, he is the Imam of the Mogho Naba. As is

797 the case for canton chiefs and ministers, this position is handed
793 down in [206] the same family. Obviously a son is not called to succeed his father unless he has been educated well enough to settle, to the satisfaction of the emperor, the few questions which will be submitted to him. In any event, the choice will always fall on a member of the family of Moustapha, the first Imam.

Celebration of the Moslem Festivals by the Mogho Naba

796 Moaghrem (the Mossi zambende). The moaghrem marks the beginning of the new year of the hegira. Every Moslem family must feast on the evening before the holiday. The next morning, that is, on the tenth day of the month of Moaghrem [Muharram], the sourata, book of the year, is read, and one learns the name of the saint who will preside over the destiny of the world for the next 360 days. Alms are stipulated. This festival, which represents a return to joy, solemnly commemorates the day on which the Patriarch, Noe [Noah] (called Nabi Nouhou by the marabouts), alone blessed by the Lord, first set foot on dry land after the flood which exterminated mankind. This was a return to life, and it was the Day of Fire.

The Mossi have never understood the meaning of the Moslem festivals and celebrate them in their own way. They did not understand that the "Day of Fire" meant a return to family life, to cooking food over a fire, but instead made up a curious custom which is more reminiscent of the taking of the Bastille. On that day they light torches, chase each other about, and burn each other. This sometimes results in [207] real injuries which fortunately are easily healed.

The Silmissi (Peulh of Mossi country) do rather better since they sprinkle themselves with cool water. This represents at least a wish for good health.

796 The tabaski (zoulhési or Mossi kibsa). In the old days the Mogho
643 Naba was required to go to the great mosque at Zoaghna on the day of tabaski.

Yarnaba, chief of the Yarcé (Dioula whose ancestor, Koanda, came to Mossi country during the reign of Koumdoumié, the eighth Mogho Naba), has the duty of sacrificing the cattle and sheep

The Moslem Naba

791 1. Virtually all of the inhabitants of Nobéré, Nobila, and
771 Toècé (cantons in the present province of the Gounga Naba) are converts to Islam for reasons of personal convenience. They are the descendants of Naba Saga, twenty-second successor of Oubri.

2. The inhabitants of the villages of Doundoulma (descendants of Naba Kom, twenty-first successor of Oubri), Garpinné, and Kouila (descendants of Naba Doulgou or Roulgou, twenty-third successor of Oubri) are reputed to be devout Moslems. [211]

3. Kombissiri Naba Siguiri, circle of Ouagadougou.

4. Ramongo Naba Baongo, circle of Koudougou. Both of the above were descendants of Naba Warba nineteenth successor of Oubri, and were converted to Islam.

The present chiefs of these cantons are educated Moslems and possess mosques.

5. Sao Naba, a descendant of Naba Ouédraogo, circle of Ouagadougou, was converted nearly thirty years ago. His first teacher was a pilgrim returned from Mecca and a native of the village of Nakamtenga (near Kombissiri). He continued his study of the Korăn under the direction of Sayenouné Bathily, a marabout originally from Kaédi (Mauretania) who was such a formidable thaumaturge that the local administration had to send him home in 1916. Sao Naba has a mosque, but it would appear that the Moslem religion has not diminished his animistic beliefs since he continues to make sacrifices to the manes and to drink beer from time to time (on customary feast days, for example).

6. Gourpila Naba (circle of Ouagadougou) is a former samand' biga of the present Mogho Naba and his conversion to Islam is recent, within the last six or seven years.

7. Boala Naba (circle of Ouagadougou) is a devout Moslem.

8. Gaongo Naba (circle of Ouagadougou) is also a devout Moslem. [212]

In conclusion let us point out that the present emperor con-
[551 tinues the tradition of giving Moslem names to his children and
871] has several of his sons in Koranic schools. There is no doubt that more of his children are being educated in these schools than in the official primary school. [213]

000 Obviously, our European civilization will undermine both these tendencies at the outset, and what will it bring in their stead? As soon as their education becomes sufficient to make them doubt the existence of spirits and the power of sorcerers, as soon as they come to feel that the only remaining power of their chiefs derives from a White who often lives at a distance of several days' march, but who hears grievances and listens willingly to charges against nabas, and that it is possible to have a naba imprisoned, or at least to cause him serious difficulties, as soon as this happens, the Mossi will hold up their heads. Since they do not lack independence when they are not afraid, their chiefs will lose all their authority, and anarchy will result. When superstitious beliefs lose their grip, the natives will become skeptics, and selfishness will reign supreme with its train of vices.

Christianity alone can avert this moral breakdown by furnishing a sound conception of authority and by replacing the fear of spirits and sorcerers with the fear or rather the love of God. The Church has always been the great initiating force of civilization, which does not consist merely of economic development or greater material well-being, but especially of the moral uplift of thoughts and feelings.

Indeed, the conversion of this people to Catholicism is but a matter of time and of tact and kindness on the part of missionaries. Anything may be obtained from the Mossi by those who gain their love, who win the respect of the nabas and if possible their understanding, if not their trust and affection, by showing regard for them and respecting their respectable side, who explain to all people, old and young, what is expected of them and make them understand their task thoroughly, for they are capable of grasping it, who make sure that those people over whom they possess some authority do carry out their tasks, and who can be firm when necessary.

[197] Alas! The missionaries are too few. To this day, there are but two missions and eight missionaries for the evangelization of 1, 500, 000 souls. One can only wish to see their numbers increase considerably, for there is no lack of locations favorable to the establishment of missions, and wherever missionaries settle and carry out their work, they will, by spreading Christian civilization, cause the acceptance, or better, the love of the rule of France who sends them /116/ in the name of God. There is need for haste. Islam may become a danger, and in a not too distant future important lines of communication will cut through the land. Railroads are drawing near, bringing with them

794 lightning as well, which he can do only if he is the Sky-Atmosphere.
[82] "The natural phenomena," he says, "are sometimes attributed to God. Lightning kills those who have done evil, it kills the animal ill-gotten through fraud or theft, and it is God who sends lightning as a punishment..." Thus, Ouendé, while being the sun, is also the Sky-Atmosphere, and other things too, for he has characteristics that go beyond the sun divinity and the sky divinity. We must not forget here
[797] that the Allah of the Moslems is well known among the Mossi and has his established representatives there (Yarsé of Mandé origin, Peul, etc.), or temporary ones (merchants who have come from the north or south, Soninnké /Soninke/, Songhay, Dyoula). Thus, for a long time, /33/ the Moslem conception of god could and has, in effect, rubbed off on the sun-atmosphere-god of the Mossi. The latter might have waged war on the Songhay sultans who led religious crusades against them, yet it is also true that they were content to bestow upon their most important god the remarkable characteristics that struck them and that they admired in the Moslem god. Thus, Ouendé gradually became more and more a supreme god, although it would seem that in the beginning, he was only a sun god and an atmosphere god, first separated, later fused with a predominance of the sun god element.

To summarize, it has been well established that one finds the cult of the sun among the Mossi, along with many other elements as
[71] we have just shown. I have since found this cult among the Dorhosié (1922) and the Gouro (1923). However, among the Gouro, it is relegated to a few fetishists and does not interest the bulk of the population. Among the Dorhosié, on the contrary, it interests the vast multitude and occasions a solemn sacrifice made in the winter, at the end of the old year and the beginning of the new. Among these people, however, the sun divinity has not become a leading divinity as it has among the Mossi. It is one divinity among several and is rather subordinate to the cult of the Earth-brush and that of the Sky-atmosphere. Moreover, I am persuaded that more far-reaching studies among all the branches of the Voltaic population would uncover, here and there, the cult of the sun, as among the Mossi, the Gourounsi, the Dorhosié, etc.

[pp. 34 ff. not processed]

5: Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1959
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debt-free cultivation entitle the settler to permanent residence on the land he has been loaned. 177 241

Adaptation to the conditions of the new geographical setting in which the Mossi find themselves has been relatively rapid and easy. The Yatenga and the Niger project lie within the same climatic zone; the only important ecological difference between the two areas is the increased water supply resulting from irrigation. This change in the origin of the water supply, control of which provides a basic sanction of Mossi religion, was less disturbing to traditional belief than might have been anticipated.

Rather than diminishing their belief in their own religion, it only convinces the Mossi colonists that the forces of the natural order are different in their new habitat and accordingly must be controlled in a different way. Finding the indigenous inhabitants of the French Sudan, the Bambara, to be zealous Moslems, the Mossi settlers have accepted Islam as the religion of their new country. Confident that their religious obligations in the Yatenga will be taken care of by the elders who have remained behind, and with some pressure from those who have already become Moslemized, new arrivals rapidly embrace Islam as the system by which the supernatural forces governing their new environment can be manipulated. 797 177

Their acceptance of Islam has been as superficial as it has been rapid. There is time neither for the study of Moslem theology nor for the soul-searching which must precede the rejection of previously held religious beliefs. With a tradition which emphasizes the observance of religious form rather than intense emotional participation in ceremonial, their observance of the five daily prayers, taking of a Moslem name, deference to the marabout, and casual attention to certain dietary prohibitions should be viewed as their rational reaction to the fact of being in a strange land with an obviously different supernatural order which must be dealt with in a new way. Desire for a measure of control over this new supernatural order, pressure for conformity to the religious norms of their new social setting, and—perhaps most significantly—the permissiveness which characterizes the West African's acceptance of the existence of new supernatural forces, makes Islamization possible without the rejection of previously held religious ideas or practices. [157]

In contrast to the relative ease of their adaptation to the natural and supernatural aspects of their new environment, their adjustment to the social situations which result from the change in economic organization has been most difficult. They must, of course, learn a new technology: the cultivation of rice and cotton by modern methods. Since the machines used for clearing the land and for the harvest are operated by 177 241

771 their traditional fear. Nevertheless, Captain Lambert says that
648 prior to the French occupation, Moslems were forbidden by the
[798] Moro Naba to /585/ say their prayers (kella) publicly. They merely recited their rosary (séki) silently.

797 Since the French occupation, the Mossi have lost all their prejudices against Islam, because they have been conquered by a different foe. In addition the Moslems tell them, as they do everywhere else in West Africa, that the Whites will only be vanquished and will only leave the country when everyone has become a Moslem. This leads the Mossi to start salaaming, and actually it is probable that there have been more conversions to Islam among the Mossi since our occupation than prior to it. This result, which may appear strange at first, is indubitable. Actually these conversions, although more numerous than they used to be, are still rare if we consider that the enormous majority of the Mossi population and the territory as a whole remains fetishistic.

Let us proceed to a description of Mossi religious customs.

781 First, the funeral ceremonies.

755 When a Mossi is ill he summons a soothsayer (bara in Mossi). The latter takes some earth and looks at it to see what will happen to the sick man. Then he states either that the latter will get well, on condition of obliging with a sheep and a chicken, or else that he will die. In the first case the requested chicken and sheep are brought to the bara, and then, if the sick person gets well, he gets something else, a sheep or 5,000 cowries. If the sick person dies, contrary to prediction, the family merely says that the bara was a liar and nothing else happens.

764 If the deceased is a man, it is the family elders who care for him. They stretch his limbs and even his fingers so he will not turn rigid immediately, and they close his eyes. Then one of the elders washes the corpse with cold water in the presence of the whole family. After this, the elders sew a shroud with cotton bands to wrap around the deceased, and then he is rolled up in a mat.

The soukala chiefs (we know that among the Mossi every household head is the head of a soukala) are buried in the courtyard /586/ of their soukala, or else before its gate. The grave diggers are fetched, and they dig a hole the size of a man, lay the corpse at the bottom, and place boards above it to prevent the soil from weighing

8: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1958
FA28 Mossi FA28

Christianity and Islam among the Mossi[1]

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• 797 THE twin forces of Christianity and Islam are both seriously contending for the conversion of the pagan masses of the Western Sudan. Islam first penetrated this region during the 11th century and succeeded in converting many people to its faith. Christianity arrived on the scene only 60 years ago, and has not had the time to win many converts. However, there remained many societies in this area which were largely pagan until European conquests exposed them almost simultaneously to the influences of both Christianity and Islam. One such society, the Mossi, has been described as the principal island of resistance to Islam in the Sudan (Gouilly 1952:52). André (1924:31) states that the Mossi "offered to the Animists an irreducible rampart against the invasion of Islam." And Delafosse concurs that the Mossi "seem to have been particularly hostile to Islam which has made no progress among them since the Hegira. And although an appreciable number of Moslem strangers (Yarsé) lived among them, they have almost all remained pagans" (1912, vol. 3:187).

The first Christian Catholic missionaries arrived in Mossi territory in 1900, just four years after French conquest. These missionaries were kindly if fearfully received by the people, who gave them land for building a mission and for cultivating crops. The Mossi helped the Christians cultivate these crops and willingly allowed the children to attend the mission school. Nevertheless, when the missionaries tried to convert the children to Catholicism, the parents objected and withdrew the children from school (Socquet 1956:62). The Protestant American "Assemblies of God" mission first worked among the Mossi in 1926, and in 1931 they reported that the outlook for conversions was "hopeful" (Cooksey and McLeish 1931:215). But from 1926 to date, the Protestants have made negligible progress in their conversions. There are today about 155,000 Moslems, 26,000 Catholics, and 1,760 Protestants in a Mossi population of over 1,500,000. These figures attest to the fact that despite a long history of resistance to foreign religious systems, many Mossi are now abandoning their traditional religion. But the figures also show that while Islam is gaining many converts, the Catholics are making only slight progress, and the American Protestants hardly any at all. There are obviously many reasons for the differential advance of these three religious systems. In this paper I will examine and analyze the processes by which these religious systems attempt to gain converts, and delineate the reasons for their differential success.

173 The Mossi who are now feeling the impact of external religious influences
105 represent the unique example of a Sudanese group which has preserved its
[186] ethnic identity and political autonomy through all the vicissitudes of Sudanic history until French conquest in 1896. Tradition records that the first Mossi

776 considered the wife of a male deity called *Winnam*, *Windé*, or *Naba Zidiwindé*. The true nature of Winnam is not clear. The Mossi say: "Winnam is the sun, and Winnam is God"; he is considered a sun god as well as a supreme deity. [775] Winnam is venerated but he is not feared, because it is the dead ancestors who chastise evil-doers by affliction or death. When wicked people die they face the wrath of the ancestors in *Keemsétenga*, or land of the ancestors.

The Mossi have several concepts of the spiritual essence or animating prin-
774 ciple of man. First there is the *seega* (pl. *seesé*), an entity found in all living beings; it leaves the body during sleep, and its adventures provide the dreams of men. The seega can be captured during its nocturnal wanderings or in places where large crowds congregate. If the seega is captured and eaten by a [761] sorcerer, its owner will die. A man's shadow is also called his seega; persons about to die have no shadows, since their seesé have either been stolen or have [822] left on their own account.

Another principle called the *keema* (pl. *keemsé*) is associated with the dead
775 or with persons about to die. The keema of a dying man wanders around and often frightens people; as soon as he is dead, he is no longer referred to by name but is called the "keema." Keemsé is also the word used for the generalized ancestors who sanction the behavior of the living and who must be placated if [769] people wish to have enough food, wives, children, and good health. A man's own keemsé take a vital interest in his affairs, in return for which they receive nourishment in the form of the seesé (animals do not have keemsé) of sacrificed animals.

[827] The breath, called *vousem*, is also considered an animating principle by the Mossi and, since it leaves the body through the nose at death, they believe that a man's nose is the first thing to die. It is not clear how the seega is disposed of when the body dies. Some people say it remains forever about the haunts of man; others believe that it goes to a mountain called Plimpikou and disappears into a cavern. Still others believe that the seega becomes the keema and goes to Plimpikou, from whence the keemsé come to visit their descendants. It is difficult to determine whether the Mossi have always been vague about their traditional religious concepts or whether this uncertainty is the result of the influx of such foreign creeds as Islam and Christianity.

The first recorded contact between the Mossi and Moslems took place
175 around 1328 when the Yatenga Mossi attacked, burned, and sacked Timbuktu,
● 197 then held by the Dia dynasty of the Songhoi (Dubois 1896:251). For more than a century afterward, the Mossi pursued a turbulent and aggressive policy in the region of the Niger bend, pushing as far as Gourma, Walata, and Banku (ibid:127). They were finally defeated and routed by Sonni Ali in 1477. In 1499, when Askia the Great (El Hadj Mohammed ben Abou Bekr, usurper of the Songhoi throne from the Sonni dynasty in 1494) returned from his pilgrimage to Mecca, he launched a *jihad* or holy war on the Mossi who had rejected his ultimatum to adopt Islam. Askia defeated the Mossi, "devastated the towns and countryside, took men, women, and children as prisoners, and forcibly converted these captives to Islam" (Dubois 1896:127–128). The

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pagan Mossi and the Moslem Songhoi fought several other battles until Songhoi power was broken by the Moroccans, who conquered Timbuktu in 1590. 175 797

The Moslems made no further attempt to convert the Mossi by force, but Moslem pressure did not stop; it now came in the peaceful guise of Moslem merchants and Yarsé Moslem refugees from the Mandingo cities such as Timbuktu and Djenne, who received permission from the Mossi rulers to settle in the country. However, judging from the reports of the first Europeans to reach the Mossi, the Moslems lived under many restrictions and were forbidden by the Moro Nabas to recite their prayers in public places (Tauxier 1912:585–586). Despite these restrictions, the Moslems were able to extend their influence through conversion of the cadet sons of the rulers and conversion of at least one ruler of the Ouagadougou Mossi dynasty.

About 1780 Naba Kom, the son of Zombré and a Yarsé Moslem woman, permitted the Yarsé to live in the villages and sent one of them to the Gold Coast for religious instruction. His son, Naba Sagha, was involved in a civil war and replaced some dissident pagan district chiefs with his Moslem sons. The present ruling lineage of Nobéré (where I worked) is descended from Ngado, one of these sons.[3] But although the rulers permitted their younger sons to adopt Islam, they themselves and the heirs to the thrones remained pagan in order to maintain the bonds with the ancestors. The exception to this rule was Doulougou, the grandson of Sagha, who was elected Moro Naba despite being a Moslem. Now the spread of Islam was given new impetus: Yarsé proselyting increased, mosques were built in Ouagadougou and in the villages, and many Koranic schools were founded. But with Doulougou's death the rulers reverted to paganism and Moslem influence declined. Nevertheless, the learned Moslem Imams continued to serve at court and used their knowledge of the outside world for the benefit of the rulers.

The Moslem Mossi showed the greatest hostility to the first Europeans who arrived in the country. The Imam of Yako, under the influence of his Tidjani son (who had made the pilgrimage to Mecca), refused to have any dealings with Europeans. Furthermore, he convinced the Moro Naba that death awaited any ruler who granted an audience to a European. When the French attacked the Mossi in 1896, an Imam from Béré, a former pilgrim, told the ruler to flee and not depend on his ill-equipped soldiers to defeat the gun-bearing invaders. Lamberth reported that the Moslems told the defeated and demoralized Mossi that "as soon as all the blacks become Moslems, the whites will leave" (Tauxier 1912:792).

No one knows how many Moslems were in Ouagadougou when the French arrived. Delafosse (1912, vol. 3:193) records that around the turn of the century there were about 42 Koranic schools with 230 students scattered around the country. Tauxier (1912:793), writing about the same period, states that there were 33 Koranic schools with about 358 students. No Koranic schools were reported for the Nobéré and Manga districts, but I know that there were several in the neighboring district of Béré. In 1926 there were 70 Koranic 175 797 871

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175 schools and 4,000 Moslems in Ouagadougou (seven percent of whom were non-
797 Mossi). By 1944 there were about 240 schools and approximately 25,000
871 Moslems. The last census, 1954, did not record the number of Koranic schools but gave the figure of 60,000 Moslems in the Ouagadougou region.[3] The 4,000 Moslems of Nobéré comprise 42 percent of that district's population. With the exception of one Catholic school master and the Catholic catechist who came to the district during 1956, the population is pagan. It might be relevant to point out that Nobéré has the highest percentage of Moslems in Kombissiri, an administrative unit (a subdivision) which has 152,000 pagans, 23,000 Moslems, 3,000 Catholics, and about 100 Protestants.

797 As noted above, Islam first came into the Nobéré district with Ngado, who replaced a dissident pagan chief, but Ngado's lineal descendants reverted to
634 paganism until a few years ago when the present district chief became a nominal Moslem. The cadet sons of Ngado did not revert to paganism, and today all the noble sublineages of the district are Moslem. We may note here that one of the main aspects of Islamic proselytization in this district, as elsewhere among the Mossi, has been the conversion of persons who do not hold strategic positions vis-à-vis the ancestors. The present chief is no exception to this rule, because he is only a nominal Moslem. His eldest son is the only one in the family who is not a Moslem—a status which is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain in a growing Moslem population. The chief himself became partially converted to Islam in gratitude to a Moslem Hausa trader who cured his illness. He recites the five daily prayers and observes most of the prescriptions of Islam, but he still drinks European beer, subscribes to many pagan rites and
[769] beliefs, and supervises the annual Péléga or sacrifice to the ancestors. This dual allegiance is politically expedient because the chief can function as the head of the Moslem community as well as the traditional head of all the people. He does have occasional difficulty with intolerant Moslems who wish him to become a devout Moslem, and with the traditionalists who claim that today the crops are smaller, the people sicker, and the women barren because of the neglect of the ancestors. However, with the approach of holy days, these differences are resolved in the interest of community harmony.

622 The chiefs of the villages under the overall command of the district chief are mainly pagan, since they are descended from the district chief replaced by
797 Ngado. Yet they command villages inhabited by the noble Moslem sublineages
769 of the ruling house as well as by commoner lineages. The village chief cannot become a Moslem because he too is responsible for sacrifices to the ancestors, without whose help his people would suffer. He does not take an active part in Moslem festivities, but receives the homage due a chief from the Moslems on these and other occasions. However, most village chiefs show an interest in Moslem affairs, and one of them, the chief of Vooko, built a prayer-circle (*mizseri*) for Moslems who came to pay homage.

622 The pivotal role which the village chief plays in the exchange of wives be-
797 tween Moslems and pagans has led indirectly to the increase of the Moslem
582 population. Before the French conquest he gave the Moslems more wives than

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he received from them. This unequal exchange, plus the nobles' prerogative of seizing the wives of pagans, contributed to the increase of the Moslems. 622 797 582

The conversion of Mossi to Islam is sometimes accompanied by a rupture in the relationships between persons involved in "friendships" with a view of obtaining wives. A great quarrel developed in the district between a pagan chief and a recent convert who refused to give the chief a daughter promised as a wife. The chief became furious and claimed that the Moslem had broken a promise made years ago, but the Moslem claimed that it was against his new religion to give his daughter to a pagan. It is not true that Moslems in the village do not exchange wives with pagans, but the Moslems often try to convert their pagan friends so that the brides will not have to revert to paganism. The chief's difficulty was that he could not become a Moslem because of his ritual and ceremonial relationship with the ancestors. The Moslem men do not have such difficulties with their pagan wives because most women follow their husbands' dictates in religious and other matters. Many Moslem men attempt to prevent their wives from having sacrifices made to the ancestors, but if a woman really wishes such a sacrifice she can easily have it arranged through her pagan relatives. If a woman married to a Moslem refuses to observe Islamic practices, she is liable to divorce and runs the risk of having her children taken away. 572 622 582 797 [562] [593] [586]

Mossi anxiety over children is often instrumental in converting them to Islam. When a woman is barren or her young children die, she consults a soothsayer (*barga*). She is either told that her Tengkougre benefactor was not amply rewarded and recalled the children, or that her "Moslem" children (children who wished to be Moslems) were angry because they were given pagan names. In the latter case she is advised to make a gift to a Moslem and to ask her husband to build a Moslem prayer-circle outside his hut so that when her children "return" (are born again) they will see it. Finally, she is advised to give all her children Moslem names. I could discover no reason why the pagan soothsayers advise these anxious parents to adopt Islam, except that they hope that complicated prescriptions will be more efficacious. Nevertheless, so effective is this technique for gaining converts to Islam that even members of the family of the chief pagan priest are not immune to it. Furthermore, once a woman has a Moslem child, all her other children must be Moslems or they will die. A man whose children are all Moslem has no recourse except to adopt Islam if he wants a funeral, because his Moslem sons may not give him a pagan funeral. 797 842 [787] [551] [164]

Every Mossi, whether Moslem or non-Moslem, wishes a proper funeral, and now that travel has increased the fact of being Moslem or pagan is of great importance. Many young migrants to Ashanti have reported that their dead pagan comrades were unceremoniously disposed of, while the local Christians and Moslems took care of their dead coreligionists. But despite this fact, and the belief of administrators and missionaries, I found no evidence that the seasonal and other migration of Mossi youth to Ghana and the Ivory Coast have contributed very much to the spread of Islam. It is true that some of the thou- 797 167 [164]

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797 sands of Mossi who fled their homeland to escape forced labor or military serv-
167 ice ultimately returned as Moslems, but the majority of seasonal migrants do not have enough contact with foreign populations for them to become Moslems. Most of the Mossi who migrate to Ghana work on cocoa farms far removed from large centers of population. It is also true that even those Mossi who worked for Moslems on the farms and found it expedient to "pray" (as the Mossi refer to conversion to Islam) soon reverted to paganism on their return in order to escape the displeasure of their lineage members. I have recorded several cases of pagans who became Moslems only when they returned from abroad to find their relatives all converted to Islam.

571 Today there are obvious rewards for those Mossi who embrace Islam; be-
797 sides such tangible rewards as getting wives and children, there are the intan-
554 gible ones of upward social mobility and greater prestige. It is important to
566 note that most liberated slaves and serfs are now Moslems. Formerly these non-
[567] Mossi had low status, but today those who have been to Mecca bear such proud titles as *Hadji*. On the night before Ramadan, one of these men gave a talk before the Nobéré chief during which he chided the chief for his impiety and voiced the hope that the next chief would be a true Moslem. He admitted that the chief might interpret such a speech from a former serf as impertinence, but he begged him to accept the censure as coming from the servant of *Nabiyama* (the prophet). This same man had refused to pay homage to the chief at the annual sacrifice to the ancestors, and when admonished returned the daughter which the chief had given him as a wife. In earlier days a chief would not have given a daughter to a serf, and moreover, a disrespectful serf could be killed instantly.

797 Many French administrators and Christian missionaries allege that Mossi
291 youth embrace Islam because they like the beautiful robes and red fezzes of the Moslems, but this is a naive explanation for the conduct of a highly sophisti-
515 cated people. Most young men in Nobéré wear Moslem-type clothes because such clothes are the mode. Now that sun helmets, dark glasses, and women's raincoats with hoods are in vogue, pagans as well as Moslems wear them. What is of interest, however, is that when pagans become Moslems they wear cleaner clothes and affect a different style of life.

794 The local consensus is that Moslems are much better behaved than pagans
577 because they do not swear, fight, or get drunk in public. The man chosen as Imam is required to have such characteristics as mercy toward evil-doers, benevolence, magnanimity, physical beauty, and virility. Yet many Mossi say that the Moslems can be worse than any other people. They accuse them of being charlatans, of selling Koranic verses as charms, and of committing murder by the use of magical formulae. Neither pagans nor Moslems believe that a man is necessarily good because he recites his daily prayers or goes to Mecca.

Moslems in the district follow most precepts of their religion: they recite
794 the five daily prayers according to the rites of Tidjani (there are only two Moslems of the Hamada sect in the district and no members of the Hamallist sect), give alms to the poor, observe the month-long fast (called by the Mossi the

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794 efficacy of ancestor veneration and do not "kill chickens" to the ancestors, but
595 they maintain that it is a man's duty to have many wives so that he may have
842 children to succeed him. Furthermore, since Mohammed himself decreed that his followers may keep four wives, provided they treat each with the same degree of kindness, there is no conflict between Islamic tenets and Mossi practice of polygny. The average Moslem has two wives, but even the few men in the district who have more than four wives do not appear overly concerned about transgressing the tenets of their faith. Mossi Moslems have not adopted the [582] paternal parallel cousin marriage so common among other Moslems, and show surprise when told that Islam permits such marriages. However, they have modified their marriage behavior to harmonize with what they consider an Islamic tenet that "a man should not marry the widow of his father." The Moslem Mossi profess to look with horror on these marriages among their pagan brothers, preferring the levirate instead.

794 The Moslems' attitude toward the low status of women in Mossi society
562 has not changed, and in one respect it can even be said that this attitude has been strengthened. Many Moslem wives now cover their faces, and many El Hadjis have attempted to place their wives in purdah by preventing them from going to the market for fear they would come in contact with pagan men. The development of this practice is running counter to the growing emancipation of Mossi women, who have just begun to leave their villages for periodic visits to the larger towns. Nevertheless, the important fact is that the Mecca pilgrims have the opportunity to see Moslem women playing roles which are forbidden or unknown to Mossi women. And while it is true that the Mossi pilgrims would not easily adopt and foster monogamy, their receptivity to new Islamic beliefs and customs might have a liberating effect on their treatment of women. Once institutional and cultural changes have been accepted by the El Hadjis, they are likely to spread quite rapidly throughout the society because men who have visited Mecca are believed to have returned filled with wisdom and understanding.

797 Christianity came to the Mossi on January 24, 1900, shortly after French conquest. As noted above, the first missionaries were well treated, but the Mossi balked at the attempts at conversion. Nevertheless, by 1919 the White Fathers of the Catholic missions had established several centers, among which was the district of Manga where this study was conducted. Manga is considered a Catholic district, but there are only 3,000 Catholics out of a population of 124,000—which also includes 9,200 Moslems and five Protestants. [184] Thus, in contrast to Moslem Nobéré, which has no Catholics or Protestants, Manga, like most districts in Mossi territory, has a Moslem community.

The conversion of the Mossi in Manga to Catholicism follows the classical pattern of missionary proselytization in the country. Monsignor Socquet (1956:62) states that the Mossi always react to attempts at conversion with the statement: " 'We are looking at our chief,' that is to say, 'We will follow our chief in conversion as in all other matters. If he is favorable to it, then we will not go against his will.' " Socquet concludes: "It is thus understandable

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how important is the conversion of the chiefs, or, at least, their sympathy for our religion, in the spread of Catholicism." The missionaries may have been successful in the village of the Manga district chief because he was sympathetic to them, but they made few converts in the villages far from the district center or in the neighboring districts. In the Béré district, a few miles from Manga, the Catholics have made only 22 converts despite more than 15 years' work. In Manga, however, they were able to "recruit" most of the young children for their church and school. When an old man was asked why his children became Catholic, he tried to evade the question but finally replied that he did not control the minds of his children. Knowing the nature of administrative practice in the upper Volta before 1946, and the nature of Mossi family structure, we looked further for the answer.

Paradoxically, it comes from a Catholic missionary, André Dupont, who, seeking to discover the reason for the decrease of patients in the Catholic-controlled maternity clinics, asked:

> Why have the maternity clinics which in 1942 served more than seventy mothers a month now serve only two or three? "We are no longer forced to go," reply the villagers. Was it the fear of sanction which accounted for the unanimous use of the clinics? Alas! It would seem to be so. The use of force and sanction have rendered odious an institution of charity. It would have been better if the mothers were only encouraged to use the clinics. "These natives do not understand," I am told sometimes. But how does one expect them to understand? (Dupont 1949:4)

Fear was certainly one of the reasons why the people in Manga embraced Catholicism. Before 1946 (the Brazzaville conference in 1944 abolished forced labor), men and women were recruited for work on the roads and on Ivory Coast plantations, and children were recruited for the schools. The district chiefs often gathered orphans and the children of their former serfs and sent them to the mission to fill the quotas, but many children and whole families voluntarily attached themselves to the missions. The reasons for so doing are legion, but in some cases it was simply the desire to accept the new religious faith.

Once at the mission the children were taught French and the tenets of Catholicism. Many of the boys later became catechists or priests and several girls went into the nunnery. However, the largest group of educated youths became the clerical personnel of the administration and were lost to missionary activity. Because the administration lacked French-speaking Mossi, the young people received good jobs. This desertion to the administration has become so serious that the missionaries at Manga have ceased to teach French to their catechists and now use the vernacular.

Conversion to Catholicism, bringing with it the knowledge of French, was formerly one of the sure roads to upward social mobility. Most Catholic teachers at Manga (and at Nobéré) are individuals who were recruited as unwilling school-boys but today are the highest paid members of their lineages. Other gains have accrued to persons who become Catholics. For example, the people at Manga believe that the missionaries used their influence with the

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797 administration to have one of their converts, a younger son of the late chief,
555 elected to the district chieftainship over his elder brother. This belief is probably unfounded, since the Moro Naba seems to be electing the literate sons of chiefs to their fathers' positions so that educated chiefs, and not educated commoners, can serve as members of French parliamentary bodies. Unfortunately, the people of Manga do not understand modern political problems, and have accepted the new chief only because of their traditional respect for the chieftainship.

634 The conversion of the Manga chief to Catholicism has not engendered
797 many problems for his pagan subjects. The chief's primary duty—to begin
769 the yearly ceremonial cycle of sacrifices to the ancestors—has been taken over
[602] by his father's brother, who is now considered the ritual head of the chiefly lineage. Nevertheless, to the chief still accrue the gains of this ceremony because his followers pay him homage and bring him gifts on his birthday, which comes at this period. Moslems in the community also pay their respects at this time, and they prefer his Catholic birthday celebration to the bloody sacrifices of chickens to the ancestors. On the other hand, the chief shows little of the common Catholic disapproval of Moslems and sends gifts to their leaders on the Moslem feast days. He also entertains the district Moslems when they come to pay him homage.

797 The Catholic chief does not act as a pivot in the exchange of wives be-
634 tween pagans of his lineage and the other lineages. This task now falls to his
582 father's brothers. Nevertheless, as district chief he is constantly involved with the marital problems involving pagan parents and their Catholic children. The main source of the difficulty is that Catholic girls are encouraged to refuse to join their pagan husbands when so ordered by their parents. The mission not only insists that the girl freely choose her own husband, but encourages her to reject a polygynous union. Catholicism thereby interposes it-
[562] self between the girls and their society, not only impairing the prestige of their fathers and lineages but also giving the girls more freedom than they would ordinarily possess.

The pagans claim that by encouraging girls to choose mates without parental consent, the Catholics are really taking the opportunity to obtain wives for young Catholic men. Paradoxically, there seems to be some truth in this, since Bouniol, a White Father, states:

> A Mossi who is unable to acquire a wife by [traditional] means must either remain unmarried or seduce another man's wife . . . they must choose between celibacy and immorality.
>
> Such a state of affairs creates many problems for the missions, especially as the system is recognized and sanctioned by the colonial authorities. . . . Young native Christians are obviously placed in a very awkward position. Their conversion angers their parents, who refuse to give them a wife; neither will their friends bestow a daughter upon them, because they know that they will not receive one in return, since a Christian may not give a daughter in marriage to a pagan. . . . *Consequently, unless the missionaries help them to find a wife, they must remain unmarried—a very discouraging prospect!* (1920:160 italics mine)

When a young Catholic receives a wife through the mission, he may visit her father and pay the customary respect by giving him kola nuts and brass coins. The father of a mission girl may accept or reject his son-in-law as he sees fit, but formerly he could not defy the power of the missions. 797 582 634

A pagan youth who wishes to marry one of the mission girls has to discuss the matter with the priests and swear publicly that he will become a Christian. Before 1946 the young man had to fulfill his promise or be intimidated by the chief and the missionaries until he relented or fled the district. Today, however, the priests usually abandon their efforts to obtain the conversion of the young men after three months have passed. In some cases the young men take their wives and move to other districts, and return only after the girls have given up Catholicism. Despite the lure of wives from the mission, not many young men become Christians on this account because the Mossi are still concerned primarily with family relationships and the effect that conversion would have on these relationships. [596]

The church's prohibition of polygyny is by far the most serious bar to the spread of Catholicism. Many men do not adopt Catholicism simply because they fear that monogamous marriages would not produce children. Father Paternot (Considine 1954:103) has cited a study purporting to show that Christian Mossi have more children than the pagans, but the ordinary people of the district would not accept the facts he presented. They cite their personal experience to the contrary. Dim Delobson (1934:136), a Mossi converted to Catholicism, states: 797 595 842

> A certain number of Christians of my acquaintance whose wives did not have children during the first years of marriage had recourse to magical practices in order to get children. These simple people thought that although they had an omnipotent God beside them, they could impudently—after all the good priests will not know about it—ask the little, but also powerful gods to grant them some material favors here on earth. When the gods given children were taken for Holy Baptism, they were given Christian names instead of the names of the earth shrines, and they did not wear magical charms which would have indicated to the priest the real state of affairs. Nevertheless, the children were bathed in water to which magical potions were added, and when the mothers went to visit their parents, sacrifices of chickens were given to the benevolent Tengkougas.

The Mossi's strong desire for children is admittedly one of the main reasons for leaving the Catholic Church so that they can take other spouses in addition to barren ones. The church has now belatedly recognized this problem and, knowing that it cannot prevent men from taking plural wives, allows them to come to church but prohibits them from taking the Mass.

Many cultural factors besides the desire for children make polygyny important for the Mossi, and make conversion detrimental to the functioning of their family system. Because of lineage opposition to their conversions, some converts are forced to establish nuclear households—a practice out of harmony with the normal rhythm of Mossi life. The reason for this disharmony is that Mossi women married to Catholics must work alone instead of with 595 797 182 [594]

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595 co-wives and other women of the extended families. Even the Catholic hus-
797 bands would not help their wives with household tasks requiring more than
182 one person, nor would they violate tradition by chatting with their wives except at night in their huts. Another factor is that after the Mossi Christian
[846] woman has given birth to a child, she follows the traditional custom and goes back to her parents' home to remain there during the two or three years' lactation period. This imposes a great hardship on a Catholic husband because during this time he is left without wife or helpmate. In the extended family household there would have been women to take care of a man's material needs, and his mistresses would have taken care of his sexual needs. The Catholic can and does ask the mission for a young girl to take care of his material needs, but of course she is not expected to satisfy his sexual de-
[837] sires. Obviously this arrangement is not satisfactory, and many Catholic men, with the acquiescence of their wives, keep mistresses. Dim Delobson comments:

> Ouagadougou has a large number of Christians, but does this mean that these people in their love for the church respect all her rules? Alas! there are a large number of Christians who oblige their lawful wives to leave the conjugal couch and make way for the accommodation of mistresses . . . in conformity with the old custom. But this is a subject which is too delicate to discuss further. I only note it in passing: *Noli me tangere* (1934:169).

797 Despite the influence of tradition on Mossi Catholics, I feel it would be a
794 mistake to say that the complexity of Catholic dogma is one of the drawbacks to missionary success in this country. One Mossi has already been made a bishop of the Catholic Church, and most of the proselytizing in Manga falls on the two Mossi priests and the five Mossi nuns. Under the supervision of two White Fathers, the Catholic children and adults are acquainted with the dogma and rituals of the church. The festivals are well attended and celebrated with as much pomp as possible. Although the Mass is sung in Latin, the Mossi have adapted some of their traditional tunes to the Mass, and use their own language for prayers and hymns. Catholics observe all the sacraments including Confession—a sacrament which is hazardous from the Mossi point of view, because man must lay bare his innermost thoughts to the priests, who, in the final analysis, are Europeans and thus administrators.

It is true that even the staunchest Catholics in Manga have not abandoned all belief in traditional rituals and religious credos. For example, many Mossi Catholics believe in the existence of sorcerers, but the Catholic Church
[754] does not recognize the existence of sorcerers or such evil forces (I have met White Fathers who believe that there are unexplainable psychic and physical phenomena in Africa), and moreover has no way of dealing with them. "But," says Dim Delobson (1934:136), "the Mossi believe so strongly in the power of such entities, that even those converted to Christianity cannot always escape the action of malevolent practitioners." The result is that many Catholics desert the church when they believe that only traditional specialists can help them with personal problems. Catholic families easily aban-

8: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1958
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don Christianity when told by shamans that to do so is necessary in order to have children. Unfortunately, the panoply of saints in modern French Catholicism does not seem to be able to syncretize with or displace the local deities, and thus come to the aid of the Mossi. This weakness of modern Catholicism in West Africa appears to make it unable to deal with many of the insecurities which arise in the daily lives of its adherents. 797 794

The American Protestant missionaries were never able to establish stations in either Manga or Nobéré because of the relative strengths of Catholicism and Islam in these two districts. However, they do have stations in Po and Koubri, 30 and 50 miles away. The 1954 census lists five Protestants in Manga, but I could find only one family head who had been a Protestant and that during the period when he worked for missionaries. It is interesting to note that when he returned to his native Manga he did not become a Catholic but embraced Islam instead. Although Protestants among the Mossi are trying very hard, they are working under three handicaps: (1) the opposition of the local administration, (2) their own explicit cultural bias, and (3) the puritanical nature of their brand of American Midwestern Protestantism. 797

The first Protestant missionaries to arrive in 1926 reported: "There has often been opposition to the preaching of the Gospel in the district, and there is a continual under-current which has hindered many from accepting Christ" (Assemblies of God Mission 1934:14). Americans who wished to train the young Mossi to read and write found official opposition to the use of the vernacular for such purposes, and were obliged to receive French teaching certificates. When one recognizes that in those days less than one-tenth of one percent of the Mossi children were in schools (today the number is just over three percent) one cannot help feeling that any kind of education would have been useful to the Mossi. During the war the Pétain-oriented administration restricted the movements of the Americans and frightened off their converts. And finally, the Americans come under the general disapprobation with which the Mossi view most Europeans. [871] [609]

American Protestants are fairly well insulated from the Mossi population, and have only now begun to show any interest in Mossi culture and problems. Geoffrey Gorer, who visited the Mossi in 1935, wrote:

> There were some American missionaries in this village, a whole family living in a house filled with texts; I do not know what creed they preached, or with what success; they looked more like American missionaries than I had thought anyone could have done off the films . . . they spoke with a dispassionate "none of our business" disapproval of the ill treatment of the negroes, who they said were ruled entirely by fear (1935:149).

Many of the Protestant missionaries who are now working with the Mossi are still inclined to agree with the first missionaries' ethnocentric judgement of their customs:

> Moral standards are very low. Nothing is wrong until it is found out. Chastity is unknown . . . we questioned in vain many natives in search of a suitable Mossi word for "virgin." They all declared there was no such word in their language. . . . Many

8: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1958
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797 horrifying and degrading customs of theirs, we would not dare to put in print (Assemblies of God Mission 1934:12).

Given such reactions, it is not surprising that the Protestants take no opportunity to use "heathen" beliefs and practices to further their own work. When they do take an interest in village affairs, it is usually to aid some young woman having marital difficulties with her lineage members (Sanders 1953:43). Since most Mossi problems are ultimately concerned with women, one can take it as a general rule that they are not in sympathy with any religious system which aggravates this problem.

The American Protestants have the most puritanical religious regime of all the proselyting religions in this country. The Catholics forbid polygyny, and the Moslems prohibit the use of alcohol, but the American Protestants forbid polygyny, drinking native beer, smoking cigarettes, and chewing kola nuts. The result is that the Protestants find it difficult to gain converts, and are constantly weeding out "rice Christians" from their mission stations. One young Catholic informant said that he was very impressed with the Americans who drove up in their big cars and straightway "cried out the Evangelists." Asked why the missionaries did not get converts, he said that the Mossi were afraid of whites. This response, while true, is inadequate, but as one former Protestant said to me, "With the Americans one can do nothing." So far the American Protestants have made little progress and it is safe to predict that the puritan brand of American Protestantism is not going to make much headway among the Mossi.

The old pagan priest, seeing the steady advance of the new religious systems, tells the visitor that the traditional ways of the ancestors are disappearing and that now the Mossi must follow one of three ways: Allah (Islàm), Péredamba soré (Catholicism), or Americadamba soré (Protestantism). He is sad to see this happen, but even his grandchildren are now Moslems. In the struggle between Cathòlicism and Islam for adherents it is the general consensus that Islamic conversions are on the increase. Islam is gaining, not only because of the reasons already cited but also because the political situation, which has greatly changed since the Brazzaville conference in 1944, is still rapidly changing. Today the Moslems are gaining twenty converts to every Catholic convert, largely because the Mossi do not now fear official sanctions.
797 For example, the Manga mission installed a Mossi catechist in Nobéré with
798 the avowed purpose of gaining converts among Moslem and pagan children enrolled at the new state-run school. The people of the district initially refused to give their land for such a station, but were overruled by the administration through the chief. Although the teacher is a Catholic, he has not dared to encourage any of his students to join the church. The one pagan child who showed an interest in Catholicism was immediately ostracized and beaten by the other students. Shortly afterward, many Moslem parents attempted to withdraw their children from the school, claiming that the children could not attend Koranic classes and the public schools at the same time. But the teacher, realizing the source of their fear, told them that the school

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would remain entirely secular in nature. The Imam at Nobéré is positive that now the White Fathers do not have "force" behind them, no conversions will be made in the district. He said that the Moslems here do not rely on force to convert the pagans, and leave them alone if they resist persuasion to embrace Islam. 797 798

Mossi politicians who, for the most part, were trained by the Catholics and are still supported by the church, are careful not to offend their pagan and Moslem constituents. One internationally-known Mossi politician told a Nobéré audience that he had a Moslem name in addition to his Catholic name, and that he even attended a Koranic school. Although this admission did not help him gain the votes of the Moslems, he carried the district because he was supported by the chief and received the votes of the pagans. The politicians are now under pressure from the people to expand the system of public schools so that the road to social mobility, through education, would be open to pagans and Moslems as well as Catholics. Even in Manga, where the government-supported parochial school is adequate for the school population, there are plans to build a public school. The special prerogative of the mission schools to use noncertificated personnel on their teaching staffs is now being attacked by teachers who themselves were trained in these schools. These teachers are demanding that the government either cease paying salaries to the unqualified teachers in the mission schools or else employ similar persons in the public schools. Thus one of the most important channels through which the Catholics obtained converts is being consciously narrowed. 797 871

CONCLUSION

The spread of Islam in Africa south of the Sahara is one of the significant cultural events in this area. Islam is not only spreading at the expense of the indigenous religious systems, but is taking precedence over Christianity brought to Africa by the conquering Europeans. The reasons cited for the success of Islam over Christianity are legion. They include: the adaptability of Islam in contrast to the rigidity of Christianity (Greenberg 1946:70; Goilly 1952:173; Marty 1917:283); the simplicity of Islamic doctrines, as opposed to the complexity of Christianity (Delafosse 1931:236; Quellien 1910:38–39); and the "imponderable factors" brought about by European conquest (Goilly 1952:261–266). 797

In this paper I have shown that Islam has made greater progress than has Christianity among the Mossi because:

(1) Christianity has a negative appeal to the Mossi because it was brought by their conquerors. For the proud Mossi, Christianity is intimately linked with their first real invasion, defeat, and occupation by aliens in their long history. In contrast, Islam has penetrated the country by peaceful means after its initial failure at proselytization by means of the jihad.

(2) In the early period of this century, the European administration recruited Mossi men and women for forced labor at home and in the Ivory Coast, and recruited children for the mission schools. But as soon as forced

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797 labor was abolished and the Mossi could do as they wished, mission school and church attendance declined, and the Mossi mothers even refused to attend the Catholic maternity clinics. During this entire period, the Moslems were propagating the ideas that recruitment for forced labor and other injustices would cease only when all the Mossi embraced Islam.

(3) Catholicism attempted to break down the Mossi social system during the period when their political system was rendered practially impotent. But while the Mossi could not forcibly oppose the effects of French policy on their political system, they effectively neutralized the church's attempts to disrupt their social system. In contrast to Catholicism, Islamic practices and tenets harmonized with many aspects of the Mossi social system, especially with regard to polygny and the status of women. Many Mossi converted to Islam in order to fulfill the prescriptions of pagan shamans, who linked conversion with the acquisition of children to continue the lineage. Christianity did not admit the existence of the tradtional supernatural forces, and evolved no techniques for dealing with the Mossi's belief in the efficacy of such forces. In the sphere of social mobility, Islam permitted the most illiterate emancipated serf to make a p. image and return an honored El Hadj, while only the most brilliant scholar is able to become an official in the Catholic community.

(4) More of the young men who leave their homes to serve in the armed forces or spend long periods away as laborers return as Moslems than as Christians. There is, however, no evidence that the increased Islamization of the Mossi is due to the heavy seasonal migration of young men to Ghana and Ivory Coast.

(5) American Protestantism, although not associated with French administrative policy, was negatively received because its missionaries were Europeans (whites). Furthermore, the extremely intolerant Protestant attitude toward the traditional Mossi religion and the puritanical nature of their religion made their efforts at conversion highly unsuccessful.

(6) The increase of public schools is lessening the importance of Catholicism and the Catholic school as the only means of social mobility through education. The newly emancipated pagan and Moslem masses are forcing the Catholic-trained Mossi politicians to act in the interest of their constituents, even if at the expense of the missions and Catholicism. The Catholics have consecrated the first Mossi bishop and have installed him in his see, but the return of each plane-load of Mossi Hadjis from Mecca spreads Islam into the remotest villages.

NOTES

114 [1] This article is an expanded version of a paper read at a meeting of the American Anthropological Association in Chicago, 1957. The field work on which this analysis is based was conducted among the Mossi of Ouagadougou from November 1955 to January 1957, and was made [122] possible by a Fellowship from The Ford Foundation African Studies Program. Needless to say, all ideas contained herein are my own. During these months among the Mossi I lived both in the predominantly Moslem district of Nobéré, and in the district of Manga, which has a fairly

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636
646 the Kaya people to their new chief. However, in Manga the proposed
666 election of a young chief over his four elder brothers did cause some
662 concern and talk about Catholic machinations because the nominee was of that faith. But there was no overt opposition to him once he had been elected. His elder brother accepted the wishes of the Moro Naba with good graces even though he remains a rather tragic individual.

643 The differential treatment that the Manga Naba receives from the
636 administration is obvious to everyone. Whereas the other district chiefs are still summarily summoned to the administrative center, and kept waiting, the Manga Naba sends his assistants to represent him. When the Governor of the Haute Volta came to Manga to make it an administrative subdivision, he was entertained by the Manga Naba while the neighboring district chiefs celebrated outside. It was the political power of this educated chief which was responsible for Manga becoming an administrative subdivision even though it is located several miles from the highway which runs between Wagadougou and Ghana. Furthermore, the population of the neighboring district all complain that Manga's population has gained a disproportionate share of all the services provided by the governmental agencies whose headquarters are there. The fears which the Manga people and the other Mossi have had over their chiefs being Catholic have not materialized in Manga. Of course, the Manga Naba does perform the rituals on the
[769] day of the ancestral feasts. These rites are now being performed by his father's brother who has become the ritual head of the ruling lineage (and it is possible that this line may become the line which performs this task for the now "secular" chief). However, when the
[97] chief celebrates the anniversary of his conversion to Catholicism at the mission, afterwards he holds court in his house where he receives from Catholics, Moslems, and pagans alike, the gifts he normally would have received in the feast of the ancestors.[6]

The most important function of such Mossi chiefs as the Manga Naba is to defend the interests of the Mossi people in the territorial assemblies and the French councils and assemblies while preserving the ruling tradition of the descendants of Wedraogo and Wubri. In his capacity as politician-chief, the Manga Naba joined a fellow Mossi of rather humble origin in sponsoring several bills in the Assembly of

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634 spirits. The chiefs could not refuse such requests, especially when the vil-
622 lagers were poor, because they were regarded as "fathers of their people."
782 In some cases, however, district chiefs had to protect their subjects against unscrupulous Tengsobadamba who took advantage of local crises and tried
661 to prey upon the villagers by refusing to perform the requisite sacrifices
793 unless they received substantial gifts. The ensuing struggle was between
634 the secular and the sacred; between the chief as a representative of the con-
782 querors, and the Tengsoba as a member of the conquered group. It was always resolved in favor of the Mossi chief, who never permitted his Tengsobadamba the same privileges held by religious practitioners in neighboring societies.[9] The Mossi chiefs recognized that they needed the Tengsobadamba, and many myths recount how invading Mossi chiefs went into the woods where the Tengsobadamba were hiding to beseech and eventually force them to return to their districts so that sacrifices might be continued. On the other hand, the Mossi chiefs always insisted on the primacy of the nam over any other power. They employed the Tengsobadamba to intercede with Tenga for the welfare of their subjects, but they never allowed the priests to control them.

771 The coming of Moslems to the kingdom of Ouagadougou had little
795 effect on the way in which the Mogho Nanamse used the traditional reli-
643 gious system to bolster their political power.[10] In fact, the Mossi rulers later used Islam and its adherents in the same manner as they had used the
[797] aboriginal religion. The Moslems first tried to subdue the Mossi in the fifteenth century by persuasion, and later by the jihad. Both attempts
[648] failed, but the Moslems finally entered Mossi country as refugees from
[167] Sudanese wars. Their fortunes waxed and waned, depending on whether they were befriended by the ruler in whose territory they lived. During
[798] certain periods, they were subjected to many restrictions and were forbidden by the Mogho Naba to recite their prayers in public places.[11] At other
[797] times, they were left free to practice their religion, and even succeeded in converting several Mogho Nanamse to Islam. Under converts such as Savadogo (ca. 1760), Islam spread into many districts and gave rise to such important local centers as Sakhaboutenga (Dakay).

771 The Moslems in Ouagadougou were represented at the court by their
795 Imam. This person even received his badge of office—a white turban and white robe—from the Mogho Naba, and had to swear in the name of Allah
792 and *Nabiyama* (the prophet Mohammed) to be faithful to him, obey him, and aid him in times of need. However, he did not have to drink the namtibo as suggested by Dim Delobson; nor did he have to observe such non-Moslem customs as drinking the millet beer the Mogho Naba provided for

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not enter Mossi territory. Nevertheless, he obtained rather precise information on the important caravan routes leading from Timbuktu through the Mossi trade centers of Ouagadougou, Kaya, Yako, and Koupela, down to Salaga and other towns in Ghana, and even across to Sansane Mango in Togoland. His data on the Mossi are invaluable:

> The whole triangle interposed between the Niger toward the north, and the country of the Eastern Mandingoes or Wangarawa toward the south, appears to be inhabited by a single race of people whose language, although they are divided into several states and nations, nevertheless appears originally to have been the same stock. It is very probable that this race in ancient times occupied the whole upper course of the Niger, and that this tract may have been wrested from it in later times by the Songhai and the Mandingoes, especially that section of the latter which is generally called Bambara. These are the Gourma toward the N.E., the Tombo toward the N.W., and between them the Mossi. . . . The strongest among these pagan kingdoms five centuries ago, and even at the present moment, is that of the Mossi, although the country is split into a number of small principalities, almost totally independent of each other, and paying only some slight homage to the ruler of the principality of Woghodogo.[7]

Europe learned more about the Mossi from Sigismund Koelle, who visited Sierra Leone in 1854. His informant was one Andrew Dixon, who had lived in Koupela before being captured and sold into slavery. He furnished information on the location of the Mossi, their wars with the Busansi, and their important commercial and political relations with the Ashanti.[8] Koelle's report, taken in conjunction with the reports of Dupuis, Bowdich, Clapperton, and Barth, shows that the Ashanti, like the Hausa and other coastal peoples, were protecting their trade when they attempted to isolate the peoples of the interior from the Europeans. But as soon as the British defeated the Ashanti in the war of 1873–74, the Sudan was opened and adventurers poured in. In 1877 and 1878, two missionaries of the Basel Mission visited the northern regions of Ghana, and subsequently gave a good description of Mossi commerce in that area.[9] Lonsdale, who visited Salaga in 1881, found among the traders in the market "the Mossi with his cattle, sheep, and slaves—these latter, generally Gurunsi, are not exposed for sale in the street or market, but can be seen where the owner resides."[10]

The activities of the various European nations in West Africa and other regions at this time led to military and diplomatic difficulties, which the Berlin Conference of 1884–85 was convened to resolve. Agreement was reached to assign "spheres of influence" to the various European nations, to regulate trade, and to provide for arbitration between rival claimants of conquered or "protected" territories. In West Africa, this meant the end

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the status of women. They maintained that the French had conquered the Mossi men, not the women, and that the administration should not interfere with the way in which a Moaga treated his wife. Ironically enough, there was little the administration could do for the Mossi women, since the latter were too timid to approach the Europeans. Most of them continued to react to maltreatment from their husbands by running away, but now they went to the Gold Coast with labor migrants instead of returning to their lineage.

Although the Mossi chiefs had little autonomy in the administration of their subjects, and had to look to the administration for guidance in nearly everything they did, they were not completely powerless. They were the representatives of the colonial administration on the local level, and as such they could control their subjects through the differential allocation of prestations. Those Mossi who had maintained the traditional respect for the chiefs could look forward to less arduous tasks for the administration and to the avoidance of forced labor or army recruitment. Those who by their actions or attitude indicated that they had lost respect for the chiefs were penalized accordingly. Chiefs were also able to retain some control over their subjects because they were still the centers of social, economic, and political relations within their territories. They still received homage and presents from their more loyal or traditionalistic subjects, and with these goods and services they could bind other persons to themselves. Clever chiefs were able to manipulate the colonial administration and use it to enhance their traditional position so successfully that the administration and the missionaries had to take these men into account whenever they wished to establish contact with the population.

The desire of the missionaries to establish missions and schools for the purpose of converting the Mossi to Christianity presented the chiefs with a great challenge because, unlike the administration, the missionaries tried to establish direct contact with the people. The chiefs not only did not like to have Europeans living in their midst, but feared that they would lose control over their subjects who went to live near the missions. However, the chiefs could not refuse to grant the missionaries land on which to build missions and schools. They also provided labor for them, just as they did for the construction of administrative buildings and roads. Similarly, the chiefs recruited children for the mission schools in the same spirit as they recruited students for the schools of the administration. The difference between the Catholic missionaries and the administration with respect to education was that while the former were interested in educating the children of chiefs, they were also interested in children from other backgrounds. Nevertheless, the majority of chiefs continued to send to school

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only those children whose parents could not prevent them from being sent away. Many of the boys came from serf and commoner families; a few others were the orphan sons or very young sons of chiefs. As a result, few of the chiefs' sons received an education, and thus they were later unable to compete effectively with commoners who had gained a valuable education at the missions.

Acknowledging the average Moaga's refusal to adopt Catholicism as long as his chiefs remained pagan, the missionaries made a valiant attempt to convert the chiefs. Monsignor Socquet reports that when asked why they did not become Catholics most Mossi replied: " 'We are looking to our chief,' that is to say, 'We will follow our chief in conversion as in all other matters. If he is in favor of it, we will not go against his will.' " Socquet concludes: "It is thus easy to understand how important is the conversion of the chiefs, or at least their sympathy for our religion, to the spread of Catholicism."[41] However, the chiefs and their eldest sons were the most difficult to convert because they were responsible for supervising and carrying out the traditional sacrifices to the royal ancestors, without whose help the Mossi people believed that they could not survive.

The attempts of the missionaries to recruit as many girls as possible for education and conversion alienated the chiefs, because it got them involved in the delicate problem of the status of women and struck at one of the few remaining bulwarks of their traditional power. The problem was that many of the girls whom the missionaries wanted as students were or had been betrothed, or were actually living in their husbands' compounds, when they were taken to the mission. Here the girls were educated and, in the words of Sister Marie-André, "wished to abandon those practices" that were "repugnant to them"—i.e., they rejected polygynous marriages and desired to choose their own spouses.[42] Those men who lost fiancées or wives as a result of missionary activities sought redress from their chiefs. But the chiefs were powerless against the missionaries, and after the promulgation of Hesling's circular nothing could be done. Many Mossi chiefs were also parties to the defeated marriage alliances because of their involvement in the pughsiure system. Because their prestige and power were at stake, and because they were unable to combat the Europeans openly, these chiefs often used devious means to spirit away the girls from the missions and to return them to their fiancés or husbands. Such activities angered the missionaries, who through the administrators either punished the guilty chiefs or sought new legislation in this area.

The chiefs, the missions, and the French administration were perpetually embroiled because both the chiefs and the missions wanted Mossi women for their own purposes. The administration was caught in the

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middle. The Mossi accused the missionaries of being especially anxious to get girls who could become the wives of their converts, and accused them of "stealing" the women. Paradoxically, this charge is supported by a missionary of the White Fathers:

> A Mossi who is unable to acquire a wife by traditional means must either remain unmarried or seduce another man's wife . . . they must choose between celibacy and immorality.
>
> Such a state of affairs creates many problems for the missions, especially since the system is recognized and sanctioned by the colonial authorities. . . . Young native Christians are obviously placed in a very awkward position. Their conversion angers their parents, who refuse to give them a wife; neither will their friends bestow a daughter upon them, because they know that they will not receive one in return, since a Christian may not give a daughter in marriage to a pagan. . . . *Consequently, unless the missionaries help them to find a wife, they must remain unmarried—a very discouraging prospect.* [Italics mine.][43]

The Mossi chiefs objected strongly to these activities of the missionaries on behalf of their converts, for they insisted that marriages could not legally take place outside the traditional pattern of reciprocity in woman exchange. They argued that the priests had no daughters, but that once they had obtained wives for their male converts, the daughters of these converts would in fact be pughsiudse to the priests and would be used by them to obtain further converts. There was some truth in this argument. Some young men, anxious to obtain wives without trouble and hard work, approached the mission girls, only to be told that the missionaries alone could sanction their marriage. The priests asked only that the potential husbands become Catholics. Some young men agreed and became Catholics; others reneged on their promise after they had been baptized and married. When a young man left the Church himself and also forbade his wife to go to church, the missionaries sought help from the district chief. If he did not satisfy them, they asked the district commander to intervene on their behalf. The young man then had to return to the Church with his wife or leave the district. Many men chose the latter course, taking their wives to visit some distant relatives or to the Gold Coast, until the women, burdened by motherhood and reintegrated into the traditional social system, lost all desire to renew their association with the missionaries. Under these circumstances, the missionaries could not summon the couple to the administrative center, because they had not violated any of the tenets of the Governor's circular. Furthermore, most administrators, like the Mossi chiefs, had little interest in such cases.

The Mossi chiefs considered the Catholic missionaries a greater threat

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to Mossi society and to their own authority than the French administration itself. This was primarily due to the fact that these missionaries, as Frenchmen, were very deeply involved not only in preaching Christianity, but also in changing Mossi society by introducing modern medical practices and education. Moreover, as was later brought out, they did not hesitate to use coercion to gain their ends. In seeking to understand why the number of patients in a maternity clinic had declined from an all-time high in the late 1920's and early 1930's to almost zero in the late 1940's, André Dupont, a Catholic missionary, was told by Mossi women, "We are no longer forced to go." He comments: "Was it the fear of sanction that accounted for the unanimous use of the clinic? Alas! It would seem to be so. The use of force and sanction have made a charitable institution odious. It would have been better if the mothers had only been encouraged to use the clinics. 'These natives do not understand,' I am sometimes told. But how are they expected to understand?"[44]

The American Protestant missionaries did little to challenge the authority of either the Mossi chiefs or the French administration. They were interested only in religious education, and concentrated on teaching the Scripture. The British social critic Geoffrey Gorer, who visited the Mossi during the Hesling period, reports: "There were some American missionaries in this village, a whole family living in a house filled with texts; I do not know what creed they preached or with what success. . . . They spoke with a dispassionate 'none of our business' disapproval of the ill treatment of the negroes, who they said were ruled entirely by fear."[45]

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The Moslems, on the other hand, took advantage of the declining power of the Mossi chiefs to spread their doctrines. They pointed out, with little fear of contradiction, that formerly the chiefs had checked the spread of Islam in order to protect their own religion, which supported their political power, but that this power had now been broken by the French. They continued to preach that as soon as all the black people became Moslems the whites would leave, and pointed out that whereas the missionaries had succeeded in getting the administration to attack the marriage customs of the pagan Mossi, they had not interfered with the marriage customs of the Moslem Mossi.[46] Moreover, the Moslems tried to impress upon the chiefs that conversion to Islam brought with it the benefit of being judged according to Koranic principles rather than native law or French statutes. This propaganda was relatively successful, and by the end of the Hesling period the number of Koranic schools and converts among the Mossi had increased eightfold. True to form, however, the Mossi chiefs seldom adopted Islam or permitted their elder sons to do so. But they did allow

177 their younger sons to become Moslems, and soon abandoned their active
*648 resistance to Islam.

63 Hesling did not permit the Mossi chiefs to revive their traditional religio-
[795] political rituals and ceremonies such as the Tense, but he continued to toler-
[797] ate the Basgha. The French banned the Mossi market chiefs, because they believed (with some justification) that these officials used their offices to procure revenue for the chiefs. The difficulty was that the market chiefs were also responsible for arranging sacrifices to the market deities, which in the absence of such sacrifices would not protect the people from quarrels and violence in the market place. Some chiefs covertly retained their market chiefs; others obeyed the administration and remained anxious over the behavior of their subjects in the market. In general, however, most Mossi chiefs tried to adjust to the religious changes that were taking place, and sought to maintain at least surface amicability with all religious groups. Commenting upon the behavior of the Mogho Naba in this regard,
[643] Dim Delobson states:

> The Mogho Naba, above all, is a believer in animism like all his subjects, and it is hard to understand how he manages to reconcile his fetishism with the complex dogmas of Islam and with the many interdictions of Christianity. However, the Mogho Naba is quite capable of being a Catholic or a Moslem on appropriate occasions, while at the same time respecting the traditions of his ancestors. Thus, when the Christians are celebrating Christmas, the emperor of the Mossi devoutly attends midnight Mass. Nevertheless, he wears his fez [really the bonnet which is the symbol of his office], just as the bishop wears his miter. He likewise embraces Islam for the three Moslem festivals.[47]
> [292]

*175 Hesling failed in his attempt to develop the Upper Volta as a viable
*648 colony, and many of the chiefs whom he had used as his auxiliaries lost
[631] not only a great deal of power but also a great deal of prestige in the eyes
[558] of their subjects because of the role they had played vis-à-vis the administration. By 1929 the economy of the Upper Volta was in poor condition:
[433] cotton production had declined; taxes (raised from 5,800,000 francs in
[651] 1921 to 18,274,000 francs in 1927 and scheduled to be raised to 26,400,000
[491] francs in 1930) were unbearable; many of the roads that were too extensive, too little used, and too difficult to maintain had been abandoned; and
[167] more than 46,000 laborers who had worked in the cotton fields and on the roads had fled to the neighboring Gold Coast.[48] The Colonial Minister, Sarraut, ordered that the colony of the Upper Volta be dismembered. He states in his decree of September 1932 that the suppression of the Upper Volta "would permit appreciable savings, and would make the adminis-

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000 19. There is a curious story among the people of Nobere district that Mogho Naba Mottoba (who reigned in the seventeenth century) was not a Mossi but a Fulani who was given the nam after he chanced upon the installation ceremony and assassinated the newly elected man during the night. This story is denied in Ouagadougou; in fact, it contradicts the genealogical records of the ruling dynasty. However, the gene-
[174] alogy does show that Mottoba's father, Mogho Naba Guiliga, had succeeded his brother, and it is possible that there was dynastic rivalry for the nam between Mottoba and the former Mogho Naba's son.

20. This rite was performed during the installation of the present Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou, although it is hardly recognizable as described in *Newsweek* (December 9, 1957, p. 48): "A man named Moussa Congo assumed the name of Kougri Naba last week and became the 35th Mogho Naba of the Mossi in the capital city of Ouagadougou in the Upper Volta region of French West Africa. Son of Emperor Issoufou Congo, Kougri Naba, as the new Mogho Naba, has one white horse, 200 wives, and 8,000 warriors, who danced around his palace ten times."

[182] 21. This practice has apparently lapsed since Mogho Naba Kougri moved into the modern concrete palace built for his father, Mogho Naba Sagha II.

[838] 22. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Soudan*, pp. 569–70. Tauxier claims the Mogho Nanamse used the pages for homosexual purposes on Fridays in order to circumvent the Moslem prohibition against intercourse with women on this holy day. Homosexuality is rare among the Mossi, as Tauxier himself admits, and most Mossi deny that the Mogho Nanamse ever resorted to it. However, one respondent did state that he had heard about homosexuality among certain past rulers.

23. Crozat, p. 4849.

[648] 24. When Mogho Naba Kom II died under mysterious circumstances in 1942, it
[762] was rumored that he had committed suicide rather than reduce the number of his wives as ordered by the administration under the influence of the Catholic mission-
[797] aries. Kom allegedly held that no one can inherit a sovereign's wife during his lifetime. Therefore, in order to avoid loss of status by seeing his wives go to commoners, he chose death so they would be inherited by nobles.

[114] 25. The statement in *Newsweek* (December 9, 1957, p. 48) that Kougri has two hundred wives is untrue.

26. Intermarriage between the Mossi and the Fulani has produced a people known
[563] as the Simili-Mossi. Nevertheless, the Mossi are strongly prejudiced against the Fulani, especially against the women, stating that the Moaga who has sexual intercourse with a Fulani woman must bathe in nine different rivers before he becomes clean. The basis of this prejudice appears to be that Fulani women are not cultivators and therefore are unacceptable as Mossi wives.

27. Mossi women know a great deal about the history and traditions of their people. But they never indicate that they do except during such rituals, when they are required to play certain roles.

28. Dim Delobson, p. 96.

29. Dim Delobson (p. 101) states that there are "sacred things" in this village, but I have been unable to substantiate his report.

[824] 30. Dim Delobson (p. 104) gives the classic explanation of this nighttime ride. On his ride from Bere to Djiba, the mounted prince must try to touch a certain branch of a certain tree. If he is destined to succeed his father, he will succeed in touching the branch; if he is not, the branch will magically withdraw at his approach.

I visited the area in which this ritual reportedly took place, but the people in the vicinity denied that such a tree existed.

31. *Ibid.*, p. 106.

[648] 32. IFAN (Compte Rendu No. 429). There are many other rumors concerning Kom's death. In a book praising the loyalty of the Africans to the Free French Gov-

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CHAPTER SEVEN

1. Dim Delobson, pp. 153ff.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 251–54.
3. Cheron, "Contribution," p. 674.
4. Crozat, p. 484.
5. *Ibid.*
6. Skinner, "Trade and Markets," pp. 237–78.
7. Barth, III, 644–48.
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 202–4.
9. Dubois, pp. 282–92, 300.
10. Great Britain, Parliamentary papers: Cd. 788–27, No. 357, Acc. Papers, Vol. LXIV (1902).
11. Marc, p. 178.
12. Binger, I, 467.
13. Crozat, p. 484.
14. Binger, I, 465.
15. Mangin, p. 23.
16. Dim Delobson, pp. 83–86.
17. Ruelle, p. 679.
18. Bovill, p. 244.
19. Gautier, p. 139; cf. Mangin, p. 112.
20. Cf. Sa'di, p. 168.
21. The chief of the Kamboinse was the only Mossi "chief" to possess a stool, which is indicative of an Akan origin. The Akan origin of this group is further supported by Koelle's evidence: a Mossi informant told him that the Mossi called the Ashanti "Kamboinse" (Koelle, p. 6).
22. Skinner, "The Mossi 'Pogisoure,'" pp. 20–22.
23. Cf. Ouédraogo and Prost, pp. 16–18.
24. Dim Delobson, p. 25.
25. Binger, I, 470.
26. *Ibid.*, pp. 502–4.
27. *Ibid.*, pp. 504–5.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 456.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 502.

CHAPTER EIGHT

1. Cf. Dim Delobson, p. 156. He speculates that the Mogho Naba himself sacrificed the animals in the presence of his senior wife and courtiers.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 157.
3. Tauxier (*Le Noir du Yatenga*, p. 379) reports that a comparable ceremony among the Yatenga Mossi was called the "Bega," and that in reality it was a Pulse ceremony "adopted by the Mossi." According to him, both the Pulse and the Mossi held this festival in order to obtain good harvests the following year, and made sacrifices to "the ancestors, to the Earth, and to God."
4. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Soudan*, p. 588.
5. Dim Delobson's description (pp. 148 ff) of the Tenne differs somewhat from that given to me by my respondents. According to his version, the Tanaoba played the role I have ascribed to the Larhalle Naba. Furthermore, he states that the Tenne was held on Friday, an impossible fact since Saturday is the Mossi "day of the dead." In any case, all of my respondents insisted that Saturday, and not Friday, was the day on which the Tenne was held. It is possible that Dim Delobson mistook the eve of the festival for its beginning, in which case his error is understandable. In most other respects our descriptions are not too different.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 152.
7. There is a widespread tradition in Mossi country that the Tenkodogo Naba made and still makes similar sacrifices at Kouroungoutenga and Sassabloga, two important earth shrines. There is a controversy about whether human sacrifices were ever offered there. The missionaries in the region claim they were. The Mossi deny this and accuse the missionaries of slander.

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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When one asks the Mossi directly, "What is a market?" the response to this question is: "A market is a place where people meet to buy and sell. People travel from one market place to another market place, and on the way they stop and see their friends in other villages. In the market one often meets and drinks with one's friends. People also go to distant markets to find things which they do not grow themselves or which cannot be found in their own markets."

Lending support to the Mossi contention that markets are places where one goes to buy and sell is the fact that most important markets in their country are found at the intersections of well-traveled routes. These intersections are often the places where chiefs have their capitals or compounds and this leads to the further idea that there is a connection between chiefs and markets, if only because the power of the chiefs makes markets possible. This does not mean, however, that the market is a purely physical entity which can only exist under the aegis of a chief, or that it is a purely economic institution. First of all, some markets, especially the smaller ones, are moved periodically without too much difficulty. Secondly, and of great importance is the fact that whenever and wherever there is a large gathering of Mossi there is a "market." Indeed one can say that Mossi seldom come together in large numbers without coming to a market, or without creating one. It appears that the Mossi cannot interact with one another in any circumstance without also exchanging goods of some kind. For example, when a pagan chief holds the annual festival to his ancestors, the people who attend form a market in the vicinity of his compound. In those districts where the chiefs have become Christians and celebrate their birthdays rather than the traditional ancestors' rites, the people go to pay them homage and also "make a market." Similarly, whenever there is a funeral of an important chief, the people from the surrounding villages or even districts bring commodities to his hamlet and hold a market during the ceremony. On Christmas day, 1955, the people of Manga district "moved their market" about 500 yards to the Catholic Mission grounds where the Christians were celebrating their holiday. And after celebrating the prayers of Ramadan, the Moslems and their pagan townsmen repair to the markets to spend the rest of the day.

Most Mossi markets are inaugurated with religious ceremonies except those which develop by accretion—that is, by more and more persons coming voluntarily to trade. When a chief orders that a market be created or when a market is moved from one place to another place for any reason, the chief is the person who gives the order for the ceremony to be performed. First of all he speaks to his Raga Naba (market chief), usually a non-Mossi slave, about the need for the market or the desirability of changing its location. This man then consults a *teng-*

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shoulder; but when he arrives in the market, he calmly places his weapon on top of one of the sheds before he makes his rounds. The women do not carry any weapons to market except their "words" but even these are not often used because of the desire to avoid hostility—which the Mossi do not like to have disrupt one of their major institutions.

The rural market is the center of Mossi social life, and friends as well as enemies meet within its confines. What Mangin wrote some forty years ago is still true: "Every self-respecting Mossi—man or woman, child or elder—must go to market at least once in a while, were it only to look . . . and to be looked at, if he can put on some handsome clothes" (Mangin 1921 : 53). Except for the Moslems who are now experimenting with a form of Purdah, there are few persons who do not go to market. The absence of someone from the market for more than two consecutive occasions is a sure sign of illness, travel, or family crisis. As one man said to me, "I must go to market, and when I get there I look for three persons: my girl friend, my debtor and my enemy. If I do now know whether any of them are at the market I am ill at ease. And when I go to the market and do not see them all, the market is not good."

The lively character of the Mossi market will be discussed later, but throughout this kaleidoscope of activities certain consistencies can be discerned. For example, one notices many different kinds of greetings and salutations in the market place, but each one of them correctly indicates the exact relation or relationship between the persons involved. Young girls on passing each other on one of their innumerable circuits of the market bend their knees slightly and place both of their cupped hands on their own breasts. Only then will they stop and exchange news. At the end of the conversation they repeat the same greeting and continue their rounds. Both girls and women greet casual male acquaintances in the same way, but invariably kneel if the male stops and talks to them. Women sometime kneel when speaking to each other, but always do so when addressing any male relative of a respected category, who may then send them on errands such as buying tobacco from the vendors. A man who meets a female benefactor, such as a woman who has given medicine to one of his children, invariably kneels down before her. She may do the same thing out of respect for his male status. However, when a man meets either his mother in-law or his father's sister, he is the one to kneel down in order to greet her. Two men who are equals normally shake hands, but if not, the junior in status or in age kneels down before his elder or superior. Sometimes a high status man will prevent his greeter from kneeling by raising him. When

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market and set up their small tables to display all types of goods from trinkets to single lumps of sugar. And the more numerous young men, who have no goods but have money in their pockets, go to the leaf-covered sheds, place their weapons on top of them, and take seats from which to view the passing parade. Imperceptibly, the hum in the market increases as people find their places and greet one another with *Ne Raga*, the market greeting, until by 11:30 A.M. the whole market reverberates with sounds of drumming, cries of vendors, and the shrill voice of water hawkers and juvenile vendors. Now the market is in full swing.

From midday until about 3:30 P.M., the Mossi market is a sea of humanity—talking, laughing, arranging rendezvous, quarreling, selling, buying, parading, and (where youngsters are concerned) often crying for want of money to buy a desired object. The return of migrants lends additional color and excitement to the market as these young people walk about in their new clothes, encouraging the drummers to sing louder praises, the maidens to feel jealous of the clothes of the migrants' female relatives, the former migrants to reminisce about the days when they too had bright new clothes, and the young boys to dream of going off one day to obtain the things they need.

Men, noting that their female relatives are spending too much time looking over the wares of a vendor of European products or of the kola-nut seller, wander over ostensibly to help in the purchase but really to prevent love affairs. The failure to observe such a precaution may be the cause of the shouting a man hears in the distance, and off he hurries to see whether a lineage brother or a friend may need his aid. He may either get into the battle himself, or aid the Raga Naba and the other elders to chase the battlers out of the market place, or to take them to the chief. This may indeed restore some peace and good fellowship to the market.

Elders, now more interested in beer than in other pleasures, pass the heat of the market day under the beer sellers' shed. From time to time one of them may be interrupted by a young man bringing him three kola nuts, one or two of which are immediately broken and given to friends. However, when an oldster, whether a drinking pagan or a Moslem teetotaler, sees or overhears a young man buying four kolas, he may frown or smile in the knowledge that mischief is afoot. Loud-voiced predictions of the consequences of evil-doing may suddenly disturb the merrymakers as American missionaries speaking in perfect More (the language of the Mossi) appear and harangue the market people. Then, as suddenly, the *Americadambá* depart in their large cars, and the curious pagans, amused Catholics or hostile Moslems who had gathered to hear the gospel return to

771 their traditional fear. Nevertheless, Captain Lambert says that
648 prior to the French occupation, Moslems were forbidden by the
[648] Moro Naba to /585/ say their prayers (kella) publicly. They merely recited their rosary (séki) silently.

797 Since the French occupation, the Mossi have lost all their prejudices against Islam, because they have been conquered by a different foe. In addition the Moslems tell them, as they do everywhere else in West Africa, that the Whites will only be vanquished and will only leave the country when everyone has become a Moslem. This leads the Mossi to start salaaming, and actually it is probable that there have been more conversions to Islam among the Mossi since our occupation than prior to it. This result, which may appear strange at first, is indubitable. Actually these conversions, although more numerous than they used to be, are still rare if we consider that the enormous majority of the Mossi population and the territory as a whole remains fetishistic.

Let us proceed to a description of Mossi religious customs.

787 First, the funeral ceremonies.

755 When a Mossi is ill he summons a soothsayer (bara in Mossi). The latter takes some earth and looks at it to see what will happen to the sick man. Then he states either that the latter will get well, on condition of obliging with a sheep and a chicken, or else that he will die. In the first case the requested chicken and sheep are brought to the bara, and then, if the sick person gets well, he gets something else, a sheep or 5,000 cowries. If the sick person dies, contrary to prediction, the family merely says that the bara was a liar and nothing else happens.

764 If the deceased is a man, it is the family elders who care for him. They stretch his limbs and even his fingers so he will not turn rigid immediately, and they close his eyes. Then one of the elders washes the corpse with cold water in the presence of the whole family. After this, the elders sew a shroud with cotton bands to wrap around the deceased, and then he is rolled up in a mat.

The soukala chiefs (we know that among the Mossi every household head is the head of a soukala) are buried in the courtyard /586/ of their soukala, or else before its gate. The grave diggers are fetched, and they dig a hole the size of a man, lay the corpse at the bottom, and place boards above it to prevent the soil from weighing

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797 horrifying and degrading customs of theirs, we would not dare to put in print (Assemblies of God Mission 1934:12).

Given such reactions, it is not surprising that the Protestants take no opportunity to use "heathen" beliefs and practices to further their own work. When they do take an interest in village affairs, it is usually to aid some young woman having marital difficulties with her lineage members (Sanders 1953:43). Since most Mossi problems are ultimately concerned with women, one can take it as a general rule that they are not in sympathy with any religious system which aggravates this problem.

The American Protestants have the most puritanical religious regime of all the proselyting religions in this country. The Catholics forbid polygyny, and the Moslems prohibit the use of alcohol, but the American Protestants forbid polygyny, drinking native beer, smoking cigarettes, and chewing kola nuts. The result is that the Protestants find it difficult to gain converts, and are constantly weeding out "rice Christians" from their mission stations. One young Catholic informant said that he was very impressed with the Americans who drove up in their big cars and straightway "cried out the Evangelists." Asked why the missionaries did not get converts, he said that the Mossi were afraid of whites. This response, while true, is inadequate, but as one former Protestant said to me, "With the Americans one can do nothing." So far the American Protestants have made little progress and it is safe to predict that the puritan brand of American Protestantism is not going to make much headway among the Mossi.

The old pagan priest, seeing the steady advance of the new religious systems, tells the visitor that the traditional ways of the ancestors are disappearing and that now the Mossi must follow one of three ways: Allah (Islam), Péredamba soré (Catholicism), or Americadamba soré (Protestantism). He is sad to see this happen, but even his grandchildren are now Moslems. In the struggle between Catholicism and Islam for adherents it is the general consensus that Islamic conversions are on the increase. Islam is gaining, not only because of the reasons already cited but also because the political situation, which has greatly changed since the Brazzaville conference in 1944, is still rapidly changing. Today the Moslems are gaining twenty converts to every Catholic convert, largely because the Mossi do not now fear official sanctions. 797 For example, the Manga mission installed a Mossi catechist in Nobéré with the avowed purpose of gaining converts among Moslem and pagan children 798 enrolled at the new state-run school. The people of the district initially refused to give their land for such a station, but were overruled by the administration through the chief. Although the teacher is a Catholic, he has not dared to encourage any of his students to join the church. The one pagan child who showed an interest in Catholicism was immediately ostracized and beaten by the other students. Shortly afterward, many Moslem parents attempted to withdraw their children from the school, claiming that the children could not attend Koranic classes and the public schools at the same time. But the teacher, realizing the source of their fear, told them that the school

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would remain entirely secular in nature. The Imam at Nobéré is positive that now the White Fathers do not have "force" behind them, no conversions will be made in the district. He said that the Moslems here do not rely on force to convert the pagans, and leave them alone if they resist persuasion to embrace Islam. 797 798

Mossi politicians who, for the most part, were trained by the Catholics and are still supported by the church, are careful not to offend their pagan and Moslem constituents. One internationally-known Mossi politician told a Nobéré audience that he had a Moslem name in addition to his Catholic name, and that he even attended a Koranic school. Although this admission did not help him gain the votes of the Moslems, he carried the district because he was supported by the chief and received the votes of the pagans. The politicians are now under pressure from the people to expand the system of public schools so that the road to social mobility, through education, would be open to pagans and Moslems as well as Catholics. Even in Manga, where the government-supported parochial school is adequate for the school population, there are plans to build a public school. The special prerogative of the mission schools to use noncertificated personnel on their teaching staffs is now being attacked by teachers who themselves were trained in these schools. These teachers are demanding that the government either cease paying salaries to the unqualified teachers in the mission schools or else employ similar persons in the public schools. Thus one of the most important channels through which the Catholics obtained converts is being consciously narrowed. 797 871

CONCLUSION

The spread of Islam in Africa south of the Sahara is one of the significant cultural events in this area. Islam is not only spreading at the expense of the indigenous religious systems, but is taking precedence over Christianity brought to Africa by the conquering Europeans. The reasons cited for the success of Islam over Christianity are legion. They include: the adaptability of Islam in contrast to the rigidity of Christianity (Greenberg 1946:70; Goilly 1952:173; Marty 1917:283); the simplicity of Islamic doctrines, as opposed to the complexity of Christianity (Delafosse 1931:236; Quellien 1910:38–39); and the "imponderable factors" brought about by European conquest (Goilly 1952:261–266). 797

In this paper I have shown that Islam has made greater progress than has Christianity among the Mossi because:

(1) Christianity has a negative appeal to the Mossi because it was brought by their conquerors. For the proud Mossi, Christianity is intimately linked with their first real invasion, defeat, and occupation by aliens in their long history. In contrast, Islam has penetrated the country by peaceful means after its initial failure at proselytization by means of the jihad.

(2) In the early period of this century, the European administration recruited Mossi men and women for forced labor at home and in the Ivory Coast, and recruited children for the mission schools. But as soon as forced

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634 spirits. The chiefs could not refuse such requests, especially when the vil-
622 lagers were poor, because they were regarded as "fathers of their people."
782 In some cases, however, district chiefs had to protect their subjects against unscrupulous Tengsobadamba who took advantage of local crises and tried
661 to prey upon the villagers by refusing to perform the requisite sacrifices
793 unless they received substantial gifts. The ensuing struggle was between
634 the secular and the sacred; between the chief as a representative of the con-
782 querors, and the Tengsoba as a member of the conquered group. It was always resolved in favor of the Mossi chief, who never permitted his Tengsobadamba the same privileges held by religious practitioners in neighboring societies.[9] The Mossi chiefs recognized that they needed the Tengsobadamba, and many myths recount how invading Mossi chiefs went into the woods where the Tengsobadamba were hiding to beseech and eventually force them to return to their districts so that sacrifices might be continued. On the other hand, the Mossi chiefs always insisted on the primacy of the nam over any other power. They employed the Tengsobadamba to intercede with Tenga for the welfare of their subjects, but they never allowed the priests to control them.

771 The coming of Moslems to the kingdom of Ouagadougou had little
795 effect on the way in which the Mogho Nanamse used the traditional reli-
643 gious system to bolster their political power.[10] In fact, the Mossi rulers later
[797] used Islam and its adherents in the same manner as they had used the aboriginal religion. The Moslems first tried to subdue the Mossi in the fifteenth century by persuasion, and later by the jihad. Both attempts
[648] failed, but the Moslems finally entered Mossi country as refugees from
[167] Sudanese wars. Their fortunes waxed and waned, depending on whether they were befriended by the ruler in whose territory they lived. During
[798] certain periods, they were subjected to many restrictions and were forbidden by the Mogho Naba to recite their prayers in public places.[11] At other
[797] times, they were left free to practice their religion, and even succeeded in converting several Mogho Nanamse to Islam. Under converts such as Savadogo (ca. 1760), Islam spread into many districts and gave rise to such important local centers as Sakhaboutenga (Dakay).

771 The Moslems in Ouagadougou were represented at the court by their
795 Imam. This person even received his badge of office—a white turban and
792 white robe—from the Mogho Naba, and had to swear in the name of Allah and *Nabiyama* (the prophet Mohammed) to be faithful to him, obey him, and aid him in times of need. However, he did not have to drink the namtibo as suggested by Dim Delobson; nor did he have to observe such non-Moslem customs as drinking the millet beer the Mogho Naba provided for

764 When the last chicken has been offered, the body is wrapped in a very pliant mat and bound tightly to the stretcher. The funeral procession gets underway. The women and children walk ahead of the body, and the friends and village people follow with the drummers. If the deceased was an important person, horsemen join the procession and guns bark. If the deceased was the head of the household, the procession winds around the soukala three times. Women, who are never heads of a household, are not granted this honor. Then the procession goes toward the grave in a roundabout way, passing by the favorite spots of the deceased: an old woman, for instance, is taken to the place from which she used to fetch water and to the marketplace where she went to sell grain. The drummers bang away, everyone shrieks, sings, and exchanges insults so coarse that no one was willing to repeat them to me. The procession comes to a halt three times if the deceased was an old woman, twice if it was an old man, and the noise rises to a new pitch.

When the procession reaches the grave, everyone stops for the last time and becomes silent. The stretcher is lowered, and the relatives utter a subdued and melancholy chant: "May the chief of hatred (the being who killed the deceased) depart!" The body is laid out near the pit. One of the undertakers, who alone may bury someone who died of illness, stands in the first hole, and another waits in the funeral chamber to receive the body. The cords which bind the corpse to the stretcher are cut, and the mat removed. Those undertakers who are not occupied at the moment stretch blankets around the pit to hide the body from the onlookers. The man in the first hole seizes the corpse and passes it on through the opening of the funeral chamber to the second undertaker, who takes it in his arms, lays it on its side on a mat with the head toward the south and facing east in the case of a man, west in the case of a woman, with the arms and legs folded.

As soon as the corpse has vanished, the blankets are removed, and the eldest son steps forward. He offers the dead man a mourning
[801] apron, in the pocket of which he has placed 444 cowries in the case of a woman, 333 in the case of a man, or even 4, 444 or 3, 333, according to his means, and the undertaker presents them to the deceased, saying that his eldest son is offering him cowries to buy drinking water (to be translated as beer). He also offers clothing: for a man, two pairs of trousers, two shirts, two blankets, and a cap, if he wishes to do things lavishly; and blankets in the case of a woman, some to

764 be worn, others for carrying jars or to take to market. A woman is also offered a gourd to cook sauce, along with pepper, spices of all sorts, and salt. In addition, she is given the spindle that she used to spin cotton, but first its stem is broken; in fact, everything which is offered to the dead is previously damaged or torn. Wealthy friends also present clothes, and the others toss cowries to the dead. The undertakers carefully cover the smaller hole with blankets to prevent the cowries /71/ from falling into the pit. Every once in a while they allow a few to slide down, but they keep the greater part to themselves. When everyone has tossed in his offering, the undertakers take one, two, or several pieces of clothing; this is their share, and the practice is sanctioned by custom. They also take a few handfuls of cowries from the mourning apron, and someone hastens to count them. All eyes are anxiously focussed on the person who counts them, [80] 787 for either a man or a woman will die soon, depending on whether the number of cowries comes nearer to 333 or to 444.

Finally the undertakers close up the pit. If the deceased was an old woman, the smaller opening is plugged with one of the large jars in which she prepared millet beer; if a man, it is covered with a small jar or sometimes, especially if the opening is larger, with sticks laid as close together as possible. The corpse is thus completely isolated in its funeral chamber. The larger hole is then filled up with the soil removed from the pit. A jar and an earthen sauce pot are placed on top in the case of a woman, an earthen pot and a large stone in the case of a man.

Everyone withdraws to drink, eat, and rest. There is no dancing that night, but they make up for it on the following day and even on the day after that, if the wealth of the deceased permits it. On the second day after the funeral in the case of an old man, on the third day for an old woman, the children and younger brothers of the deceased shave their heads, go to thank those who have helped them, and remove their mourning clothes. There will be no further preoccupation with the deceased until the anniversary festivities or kouré.

[184] Such are the ceremonies which usually attend the death and burial of a married man or woman, those who have children. We say "usually," for all these complex ceremonies may be curtailed and modified to a greater or lesser extent, depending on the region and the customs peculiar to one family or another.

769 In addition to this kourita, if the deceased was head of the house-
[184] hold, his oldest daughter, or in her absence, his granddaughter, occasionally plays a role and is also called kourita, but this custom is less widespread. Her mourning clothes are embellished with thin cords of red straw (bini) around the neck and wrists and above the elbow and at the ankles, 13 for a man and 14 for a woman. Around her head she wears cotton threads (pana) which hang down her back like a long tail, ending in a pompon. The first kourita, previously mentioned, sometimes wears these badges also. This second kourita actually has only one task, namely, to plant large millet where her father's huts stood. When the millet is ripe, she sets it aside to use for preparing millet beer on the day of the koure. Sometimes her position is held for three years, and she cannot shave during this time. To offset this, it is she who brews the beer for the Day of the Dead (basra). At the end of three years, she shaves and takes up her usual way of life. No such kourita is provided for an old woman, since she was not the head of a household.

A mother is kourita for a child who dies before he marries. She wears at her ankle a thin cotton cord to which she adds a knot daily
[801] for the duration of mourning, 33 days for a boy, 44 days for a girl.

The Moro Naba has a kourita like other Mossi, but on the day of the koure a young boy of his family is appointed to represent him for life. This kourita adopts the name of the dead naba, and all through the dry season he goes from canton to canton, as the true Moro Naba could not do in his lifetime. Everywhere he is greeted and entertained with great honors, he receives many gifts, and his men loot what they can. One place only is closed to him, Ouagadougou, the residence of his successor. If they were to meet, one of them would die within the year. At present there are among the Mossi two kourita of Moro Nabas: that of Naba Sanem, who welcomed Binger, and that of Naba Sigri, enthroned as a result of Voulet's conquest and deceased in 1905. Naba Wobro, deposed by our troops, has no kourita because he was
[643] no longer Moro Naba when he died; he had failed tradition by leaving Ouagadougou and thereby renounced his rights as a sovereign.

/74/ The first funeral is a temporary expedient; the human body decomposes quickly, and the burial has to be held before all the friends and relatives can be assembled. Also, death comes by surprise; there are not enough cowries, the animals have not been gathered in sufficient numbers, and the deceased must be granted the honors due his rank, he must be offered numerous victims. These are the reasons

782 If a goat, sheep, or beef was sacrificed, the hair on top of the
755 head is pulled out instead of neck feathers, and a piece of the rope used to tie the victim is added. All of this is glued where the blood was shed, and the victim's legs are not broken.

Such is the usual sacrificial formula. Variations are of course introduced by individuals and by the customs of particular regions. This is the mand'zallé.

/93/ The mand'lingdem or mand'dédem, which we might call "hidden sacrifice," is offered for the sake of someone who is ill and on the point of death. His illness is due to the fact that the soul has left his body. The sorcerer has said that it is to be found in the tangandé. Without the sick person's knowledge, hence the name "hidden sacrifice," his father goes to the tangandé, accompanied by another of his children who bears the victim and some water and by the sick person's mother who bears a large gourd half filled with water and a smaller gourd inside it.

The sacrifice is offered as previously described, but while the child is roasting the chicken, the sacrificer tosses onto the ground three cowries in the case of a sick boy, four in the case of a girl, and pours a little water. Then he invokes the sick child by name:
[801] "Bila, come, answer me." He calls three times for a boy, four times for a girl. He then takes the cowries and some of the soil which was soaked with water and the animal's blood. The woman lifts the small gourd which floats in the water, the sacrificer places the mud and cowries at the bottom of the large container, and the woman quickly covers the mixture with the small gourd which she holds down in the water. This procedure is repeated three or four times according to the patient's sex. The woman then heads toward home, holding the container in one hand and still bearing down on the small gourd to prevent it from floating. The sacrificer follows her, waving his sword or spear behind her to ward off the evil spirits. The soul is at the bottom of the water, amid the bloody mud and cowries, and they must do their utmost to prevent it from running away again.

When the procession reaches the patient, he is made to sit up, and the woman pours the water of the large gourd on his head, without lifting the smaller gourd. If the sick person, surprised by this sudden shower, gives a start, it means that he is saved; his soul has re-entered his body. Otherwise, nothing can be done, and the unfortunate person is abandoned to his fate; the tangandé did not want to return the soul.

789 Blessings and curses are also used. Should they be classed with the cult, or with magic? One way or the other, there are natives who have the power to kill anyone merely by saying a word. They can make the harvest wither, the cattle sicken. There are also some who can bless, make a trip propitious, an undertaking successful. If you 752 are wounded, go to them. They will put around the wounded part of 755 your body a greasy rope with three or four knots according to your sex; 801 there will be no swelling, and the wound will heal quickly.

782 Such are the major sacrifices and the practices of the cult. The 769 sacrifices offered to the spirits of the dead on the day of burial or on 796 the day of kouré have not been mentioned, because the animals offered are not properly speaking sacrificed (kou mando) but offered, presented, fabré. We shall now mention the sacrifices made on the Day of the Dead.

The Koupéla Mossi have two major feast days: the Day of the Dead or basra, and the Moslem sheep celebration called kibsa. Both are intimate family affairs.

Basra is the feast of the dead. On that day every family head must offer sacrifices to his ancestral spirits, and he alone may sacrifice upon the grave. Even if a member of the family has become powerful and wealthy, he will not offer the sacrifice which devolves by right to the family head. All members of the family who wish to offer a sacrifice on the ancestral grave must, therefore, go to their elder on that day. Anyone may sacrifice to the kikirsi and tangandé, and almost everyone does at this time. It is mainly on this occasion that little children may be seen gravely sacrificing their chicken to their kikirsi and to the tangandé; each makes it a point of honor to offer his own animal. Only chickens are sacrificed on that day.

Basra is not celebrated by every family on the same day. Some celebrate it before the province chief does, others after him, while most families do it on the same day he does.

/96/ The naba of Koupéla proceeds as described below, and the ceremonies are the same for his subjects with the sole difference that being less wealthy they cannot offer as many sacrifices. The basra is always celebrated by the naba on a Saturday. Already on Thursday he has taken non-fermented beer from the vats and poured it on the graves of his father and grandfather. He has also sacrificed a chicken on each of the tombs. Wherever an ancestor of the naba is buried, the guardian of the grave sacrifices a chicken. This is repeated on

777 may hold in store. Wednesday is unreservedly bad, and you must not start a job or leave for a trip on that day. Thursday and Friday are propitious to weddings, especially Friday. On Saturday the sorcerers take the day off and hold no consultations. In addition, every individual has his own lucky day and his unlucky day, which he must know and bear in mind.

778 787 823 Some stones are said to have fallen from heaven. On the day when they fall, the village chief immediately covers all the jars in his hut which contain charms. If he knocks one down in his haste, he will die within the year. These stones are held sacred. Those who can lift them /100/ have nothing to fear, but those who cannot are soon to die. People may also interrogate such a stone, whose reply is considered favorable if they manage to lift it, unfavorable if they cannot [788] do so. Passersby toss millet stalks onto the stone, or twigs cut along the way, or sometimes cowries, to procure success in their endeavors.

821 787 Comets are omens of war or of the death of a great chief. When Halley's comet appeared on the horizon, the chickens, goats, and sheep had a bad time of it. It was necessary to ward off all the possible misfortunes. It is true that the comet was magnificent, spreading for several days from one end of the sky nearly to another, and it is understandable that the natives should be upset. We have heard that many people were troubled in our civilized countries, where the comet could not be seen in all its splendor. In spite of all those sacrifices, the chief of one of the principal cantons in the province, the naba of Pwitenga, died that very year!

000 We must limit our enumeration, and these few examples, which could easily be multiplied, suffice to make clear the role of amulets and superstitions in the life of this people.

801 One further word on superstitions. The reader may have noticed that the numbers three and four and their composites have recurred constantly according to the sex of the person spoken of. Three is reserved for men and four for women. In the sacrifices, God-king male is called three times. God-king female four times. The cord of the charm has three or four knots according to sex; mothers mourn their children for 33 or 44 days. A dead man receives 333 or 3, 333 cowries, a dead woman 444 or 4, 444, etc.

302 Every time a native changes his status, his hair must be removed. Babies are shaved before they are given a name, girls before they come to their husband, women when they are transferred to a new

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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[Pre-World War II Period]

What Mangin referred to euphemistically as "difficulties with the white man" was, to the Mossi, rather drastic punishment for non-payment of taxes. If a man refused to pay his taxes, the Mossi chief was permitted to sequester his goods and sell them. If the man had neither the taxes nor the goods, the chief had to send him and his wife (or wives) to the administrative post to be punished. Sometimes, a man and his wife would be made to look at the sun from sunrise to sunset while intoning the prayer *Ouennam co mam ligidi* ("God, give me money"). Other times, a man would be made to run around the administrative post with his wife on his back; if he had several wives, he had to take each one in turn. Then his wife or wives had to carry him around. The Mossi claim that a man had to run around the post three times, and his wife four. This is probably an exaggeration, however, because the numbers 3 and 4 are symbolically associated with men and women, respectively.

A further source of difficulty for the Mossi chiefs, and one which became more serious as time went by, was that they were charged by the administration to recruit men for both labor and military service. Initially, the chiefs had to supply men to transport grain for the French-organized agricultural societies from one region to another; later, they were commanded to supply labor for private and public works. Labouret states:

> The initial recruitment, which took place in 1912, was carried out without any difficulty, thanks to the unexpected afflux of volunteers. This was not the case in subsequent years. The reason for this was that the credulous natives of these distant regions, lacking any contact with the world, believed that the Europeans were carrying off their most robust youths to sell them to the Men of the Sea [mythical cannibalistic beings].[13]

The Mossi were alarmed at the high rate of mortality among the young men who went away to work. They had a saying, *Nansara toumde di Mossi* ("White man's work eats [kills] people"), and resisted the recruiting attempts of their chiefs. There was, however, less opposition to recruitment for military service, owing in part to the Mossi tradition of warfare. Many Mossi youths served in France during World War I, and additional hundreds served in an African contingent recruited "by an administrator named d'Arboussier, and with the cooperation of the Mogho Naba, to take possession of northern Togoland."[14]

The manner in which the Mossi chiefs administered their territories before the First World War was conditioned by the colonial administrators even when it was not directly controlled by them. The Mogho Naba had gradually lost most of his power, and he had no authority to act without the specific authorization of the French. He retained most of his cere-

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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larger markets there were and are solid stalls which are built and tenanted by merchants. In the small district and village markets, these stalls are built out of millet stalks which offer little but protection against the noonday sun on market days. Men build these structures for their womenfolk and for themselves. Some of the shelters which are not used for trading serve as galleries where the young blades look out and comment on the passing scene. Others are used as meeting places by adult men who sit and discuss all sorts of affairs. Still others are used by the older men, who gather there to arrange marriages between their several families, wait for gifts from younger men who seek wives, or spend a great deal of time reminiscing about their youthful adventures. Those persons who do not have such shelters sit in the sun or use grass lean-tos as protection from the sun.

Except in the large towns, Mossi markets are held between the hours of 10:00 A.M. and 4:00 P.M. every fourth day. In the larger towns there are daily markets, but these remained unimportant until today when they serve a growing urban population. The capital city of Wagadougou now even has an "evening" market which opens about 4:00 P.M. and closes at about 9:00 P.M. In addition, numerous daily markets have sprung up in many of its wards. The three-day markets are, however, the traditional type, and they are still the most numerous through the country. By "three-day market" I mean that a market is held one day, not held over the two following days, and then held again on the next day. These markets also have a 21-day cycle from one *Ragakasanga* or *Rag'kasanga* ("larger market") on a Friday to another *Rag'kasanga* on a Friday three weeks later, a total of seven markets between the two important ones. The people give no adequate explanation for the observance of the three-day cycle or the 21-day cycle. One man did suggest that it took the women three days to prepare beer and this was why markets could not be held more often, but even he did not speculate about the 21-day cycle.[10] This same man did point out, however, that the cycle made little difference to persons who really liked to go to market, since it was possible for

(10) Zahan (1954 : 373) apparently found one of the few Mossi informants with a mystical bent; he reports that the seven three-day cycles of markets in the 21-day cycle have the following significance for the Yatenga people: "The first of these numbers explains the cycle of the person (7 symbolizes the complete person: male [to which the Mossi assign the number 3] and female [to which they assign the number 4], the second that of the creation." He believes that each market starts a new cycle, a beginning and an end: "the seventh market signifies the most perfect equilibrium: the one which exists between the universe, mankind, and the divinity." In a footnote he suggests that this symbolism is not too different among the Dogon, who are "ideologically and geographically close to the Mossi." Peter Hammond, who worked in Ystenga, could not find this kind of symbolism.

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
FA28 Mossi FA28

837 man even refrains from making overtures to a woman whose hus-
band's female relatives may be married to a member of his own
[684] lineage. He fears that a wronged husband may have the wives of his
[613] lineage brothers recalled, thus causing dissension within and between
the two lineages. If none of these complications are present, a man
seeks out a person who knows the woman and sends a message de-
[431] claring his intentions. If the response is favorable, the man then buys
[80] four large kola nuts (four being the number for a woman), wraps
them together with 44 francs, and send them to his lady. This pro-
cedure may be followed on subsequent market days without the two
parties ever coming into direct contact with each other. Finally,
however, a rendezvous is arranged, and on the pretense of leaving
the market to visit a relative for several days, the woman goes instead
to her lover's village.

837 These casual affairs started at the market sometimes become quite
586 serious, and if for any reason they are sanctioned by the relatives of
either the man or the woman, they often lead to the breakup of a
[443] marriage. And since the market is the place where disputants of any
[578] sort most likely come into contact, it is here that fights over "stolen"
wives break out.

837 This pattern of extramarial relationships centering around the
443 market place is so common among the Mossi that the younger men,
and even some of the older ones, are disappointed with the "market"
when their mistresses do not appear. Mossi men who sit under the
shelters around the market place can usually give an inquirer not
only the name of a woman, the name and village of her husband and
father, but also the name and village of her paramour. Characteristic-
ally enough, they are always "ignorant" of the escapades of their own
female relatives or of the wives of their lineage members. The only
593 time when men act as though their relatives might be involved in
443 extramarital affairs is when for some purpose or another a man has
to recall a wife or daughter who has gone to visit a relative in another
village or district. Regardless of how pressing the problem may be, a
man will seldom go directly to his father-in-law's house to recall the
woman. He goes to the market nearest to his in-laws' village, and
seeks his wife there. If he does not find her or any of her relatives,
he goes to the part of the market in which people from her village sell
their products and sends a message to her family that he will come
for her the next day, or that he would like her to come home.

443 A market place is also one of the best places to look for news of a
203 runaway wife, or of any stranger in an area. The Mossi say that
women have footprints like an elephant in that they can be found
quite easily, but that the footprints are always clearest in the market.

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In connection with this problem, I shall enumerate below the digits from one to ten in Mossi, in closely related languages (Dagomba, Nankana /Nankanse/), and in derivative tongues (Dagari, Boura, Gourma).

	Mossi	Dagomba	Nankana	Dagari	Boura	Gourma
Un . .	Yémeri	N'Dan	Yendé	Yen	Gni	Ieudi
Deux .	Yibou	Niyi	Yi	Ayi	Niyé	Lié
Trois .	Tabo	Nta	Ntan	Ata	Ngata	Ita
Quatre	Nasé	Nahé	Anasé	Ana	Anasi	Ina
Cinq .	Nou	Anou	Anou	Anou	Nganou	Imou
Six . .	Ayobé	Ayobo	Ayobé	Ayobe	Vendenta	Ilouoba
Sept .	Yopoï	Ayopoué	Ayopoué	Ayopoué	Nantanasé	Illélé
Huit .	Ani	Ani	Ani	Ani	Nané (ou Nani)	Ni
Neuf .	Aoué	Aoué	Aoué	Voué	Noo	Ia
Dix . .	Piga	Pia	Pia	Pié	Pi	Piga

174 2. The second question is a priori less difficult to solve. It concerns the time when the Yarsé or Ouangarbé settled in Mossi territory.

Marc and Moulins do not agree on this score.

Speaking of Mossi territory, Marc says (op. cit., p. 142), "It was most probably its reputation as a peaceful land that lured the Mandé-Dioula /Diula/ or present-day Yarsé about the middle of the eighteenth century. According to the native traditions summarized by Binger, some Mandé-Dioula who were established in Ségou and who had taken a stand against N'Golo, victor over Sogoné, fled in fear of retaliation after the death of Sogoné in 1754 and came to settle among the Mossi. N'Golo attempted to pursue them, and twice came and attacked the Mossi. Both expeditions failed, and N'Golo died in the course of the second one in 1787."

/465/ According to Marc, the Yarsé would thus be Mandé-Dyoula /sic/ from Ségou who settled in Mossi territory in the eighteenth century. Moulins has quite a different idea.

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28

CHAPTER THREE

1. Dim Delobson, pp. 8-9.

2. Crozat, p. 4849.

[802] 3. *Ibid.* The Mossi always use multiples of three in connection with masculine affairs.

4. Archives, Document 15G-190 (1897-98, Haute Volta).

5. Dim Delobson, p. 37. The difficulty here is caused by the Mossi words and their meanings. For example, the words for "God" are Ouennam and Ouende. The words for "sun" are the same. The ethnologists can speculate about whether the Mossi once worshiped the sun or whether a high god has evolved into a supreme deity. But the Mossi do not agree that their use of the same words for God and for the sun implies that they believe God is the sun, or that the sun is their God. It should be pointed out *inter alia* that many African peoples are not awed by their gods and grant them human feelings and attributes. The Mossi regard their supreme being Ouennam as an otiose deity who is not too concerned with human affairs. It is the ancestors who provide the sanctions for good conduct.

[171] 6. It seems certain that Ibn Battuta saw a similar salutation in Mali: "The Negroes are of all people the most submissive to their king, and the most abject in their behavior before him. They swear by his name, saying *Mansa Souliman ki* [the Emperor Souliman has commanded]. If he summons any of them while he is holding an audience in his pavilion, the person summoned takes off his clothes and puts on worn garments, removes his turban and dons a dirty skullcap, and enters with his garments and trousers raised knee-high. He goes forward in an attitude of humility and dejection, and knocks the ground hard with his elbows, then stands with bowed head and bent back, listening to what he says. If anyone addresses the king and receives a reply from him, he uncovers his back and throws dust over his head and back, for all the world like a bather splashing himself with water. I used to wonder how it was that they did not blind themselves" (Gibb, p. 327; cf. Mangin, p. 15).

Obviously, Ibn Battuta found this salutation distasteful. Most Europeans feel the same way about the Mossi salute. If a Moaga visited England, he might be equally struck by the sight of a great soldier or statesman kneeling before a *woman ruler* and being touched on the shoulder with a sword.

[171] 7. It is interesting to compare this account with Ibn Battuta's description of Mansa Souliman, king of Mali: "On certain days the sultan holds audiences in the palace yard, where there is a platform under a tree, with three steps; this they call the *pempi*. . . . The sultan comes out of a door in the corner of the palace, carrying a bow in his hand and a quiver on his back. On his head he has a golden skullcap bound with a gold band which has narrow ends shaped like knives, more than a span in length. His usual dress is a velvety red tunic, made of the European fabric called *mutanfas*. The sultan is preceded by his musicians, who carry gold and silver guimbris (two-stringed guitars), and behind him come three hundred armed slaves. He walks in a leisurely fashion, affecting a very slow movement, and even stops from time to time. On reaching the *pempi*, he stops and looks round the assembly, then ascends it in the sedate manner of a preacher ascending a mosque pulpit. As he takes his seat, the drums, trumpets, and bugles are sounded" (Gibb, p. 326).

[177] 8. It is possible that the Mossi either borrowed this tradition from Mali or shared part of the Mali king complex, for Ibn Battuta reports that a similar rite was held in
[171] Mali during the fourteenth century. He says that when the ruler entered the pavilion for the morning ceremony, "two saddled and bridled horses are brought, along with two goats, which they hold to serve as a protection against the evil eye" (Gibb, p. 326).

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15. *Ibid.*, p. 673.
16. Delafosse, II, 128–29.
17. Binger, II, 502.
18. Crozat, p. 4849.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 4822.

20. The structure of the Mossi kingdoms and their relationship with the autonomous principalities make it difficult to determine the exact number of districts within each unit. For example, the Mossi people always claimed that the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou was sovereign over "333" chiefs (cf. Binger, I, 502). However, since the Mossi always associate the number 3 with males, any number giving a multiple of threes is suspect. Binger stated that some of the chiefs referred to as part of the 333 were no more than village chiefs. However, Tauxier (*Le Noir du Soudan*, p. 567), describing the kingdom of Ouagadougou, states, "At the top of this hierarchy is the king, the Mogho Naba, paramount chief of the Mossi, residing at Ouagadougou. To give at least an idea of the relative importance of this empire, without going further than, say, the cercle of Ouagadougou, there were eight provinces comprising 300 *cantons* [districts], 5,000 villages or small towns, and 861,700 inhabitants."

[802] [622]

While voicing the myth that the Mogho Naba had "under his control 333 chiefs or Nabas," Dim Delobson actually gives only about 150 chiefs in his list of district and other chiefs (pp. 46, 288–97). It was impossible for me to get any idea of the number of chiefs, because the Mossi hierarchy has changed radically since 1905.

[114]

21. Dim Delobson, p. 63.
22. Cheron, "Contribution," p. 651.

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23. The Mossi did not acknowledge the defeat of Mogho Naba Wobogo by the French until the Ouidi Naba surrendered to the invaders and installed a ruler they had chosen.

24. Archives, Document 1G-334. Lambert describes Karfo as "a curious figure who unfortunately is not well known."
25. Binger, I, 465.
26. Dim Delobson, pp. 15–45, *passim*.

27. It appears that the monarchs found fault with their district chiefs most readily when they had sons or other relatives in need of districts to govern. Since a possessor of the nam could not be deprived of it while alive, he had to be accused of some crime and executed. Koabga was replaced as Doulougou Naba by Lassanne Congo (called Naba Kouliga), a son of the Mogho Naba. On the other hand, when Naba Pusha of Nobere district fled rather than commit suicide or start a civil war, he was replaced by his own brother, who became Naba Soulougou.

[662]

28. Dim Delobson, p. 44.
29. Cheron, "Contribution," p. 655.

CHAPTER FIVE

[847]

1. Mangin, p. 25.

2. Mangin does not discuss rape, but reported that an "abductor" was beaten and put in irons. The girl was returned to her family, and if she gave birth to a child, it was killed (pp. 26–27).

3. Dim Delobson, p. 55.

4. Most of my informants state quite clearly that the district chiefs did not have the right to impose the death penalty, but could do so if they were discreet about it and did not take advantage of their subjects. But Dim Delobson states: "Contrary to what people generally believe, the Kombere—the chief of the *canton* [district]—also had the power of life and death over his subjects. How many persons have been put to death only because they were wealthy? How many village chiefs have been killed by the district chiefs in their territories without the Mogho Naba's intervention?" (pp. 55–56).

[681]

[431]

5. Dim Delobson (p. 56) insists that justice was free of charge, but added that

221 rains come, laying aside any other task no matter what his profession
241 may be. The Mossi year is divided as described below, and year follows year without bringing any changes in this monotonous existence.

The rainy season from May to October is the time of the hard labor of cultivation, and all Mossi devote themselves fully to the task. Men, women, and children are always in the fields. They cut down the thorn bushes at the beginning of May, as soon as the Pleiades appear [805] on the horizon and the baobabs begin to burgeon. This is spring (sigu). For this work they use a small hatchet, a few centimeters wide, with a short, easily grasped handle, and a forked stick to fold back the thorny branches so they may more conveniently be cut at the base. The branches are piled in heaps and burned one evening as soon as they are dry. When the first copious rains fall, usually in June, the natives immediately sow the small white millet used to make sarabo, the staple of the aboriginal diet, and the large red millet or sorghum from which millet beer is made.

Sowing is regarded as one of the most laborious tasks, because it forces the sower to remain bent so as not to lose sight of the stretch already covered. The natives sow with an old worn-out hoe, with which they strike the ground twice in order to make a small hole. The grain is carried in a gourd held by a string to the left hand; this leaves the fingers free to seize a few grains which are dropped into the hole. A little soil is then replaced by the hoe. When the rain has soaked the ground more thoroughly and the millet has begun to grow, maize is sowed around the huts.

Following the first weeding of the fields, beans are sowed among the shoots of small millet, and cotton among those of large red millet or near the watercourses. The ground is then prepared to sow rice, peanuts, and native peas. Meanwhile the fields must be hoed incessantly to remove the weeds that would smother the young millet shoots. If the rain is too abundant at the end of June, the cultivators are often overwhelmed with work, and they complain that it has become impossible to keep their fields clean. Gombo (okra) and all the condiments for making sauce, peppers, tomatoes, etc., are planted around the maize fields, near the huts, along with /46/ native hemp and all sorts of gourd plants. In favorable soil, hence only in certain areas, fabirama, manioc, and yams are cultivated in a special manner.

221 Those who raise chicks take them along to the fields in an oblong
235 cage of plaited straw or willow. When they get to the spot where

221 they will be working, they open the door of the cage and the mother
235 hen comes out. She is tied to the basket with a string, and the chicks run around her. If their master finds a good termite nest, he takes it to his little charges and breaks it in two. In the evening he puts the hen and chicks back into the basket and carries it home suspended from his shoulder.

[805] The heavy rains fall in July and August. This is summer (seoro).
221 Whenever the ground is not too soggy, everybody runs to the fields at
241 dawn and works until nightfall. One or two women stay home to pre-
476 pare food for the laborers, whose strength must be maintained for all this hard work. No one may rest. Only the sick and the helpless old people stay home, and even they are put to work, looking after the babies. This is the time when wealthy people call friends to their aid. The owner of a vast field has every member of the village notified — especially the young men, those who own some obligation toward him, those who have an eye on his daughters — that on a certain date he will be weeding his field, and at dawn of that day everyone gathers and labors while the drums spur them on. On another occasion, this man in turn will help those who have worked for him. This practice of mutual aid is very advantageous because a field overgrown with weeds is cleaned in a single day, but it becomes onerous when people must appeal to their neighbors several times in the course of a season.

221 The heavy rains stop in August or September, the maize is ripe,
241 and feasting begins. Roasted corn ears are a prized tidbit, especially
262 when the kernels are still tender. There is one kind of maize, faintly sweet, which when sautéed in butter recalls our garden peas. Everywhere the children and even the elders feast on maize; everywhere people offer a visitor a few ears of maize, which are often roasted on the spot. When the maize harvest is completed, maize gruel, which recalls the famous Italian polenta, advantageously replaces millet mush and brings a pleasant change to the daily fare, especially since gombo is ripening and adds variety to the sauce as well. Bellies fill out, faces glow with health, and as a very natural sequence, hearts are flooded with joy. The end of the dry season may have been difficult because millet was running low; the winter tasks may have been laborious; but now everyone makes up for it. The harvested maize is replaced in the fields by tobacco; its seedlings were prepared as the harvest drew near.

[805] At the end of September or beginning of October, the large red millet is ripe. This is autumn (houpéla). Maize is now too tough

221 the men bring bunches of peanuts. While nibbling on the green nuts
241 and talking, they all separate the pods from the leaves. The latter
are carefully set aside along with the bean leaves. They make ex-
[231] cellent fodder for the horses during the dry season, when the sun has
burned off all the grass in the bush.

221 By November harvesting is completed. The sun has already dried
241 out the grass, and the time has come to cut straw for séko and roofing.
356 /48/ This task is usually reserved for children and servants (dakonré).
857 The head of the household tells each one of them the number of straw
bundles he is to cut, and every morning the children set off in groups,
a sickle on their shoulders. They look for straw on the banks of the
watercourses and return when the sun begins to scorch. This marks
the end of the working day, and there is nothing to do now but rest.
The dry season is indeed a time of rest, and from November to May
there are no pressing tasks.

● [805] It gets cold in December. This is winter (sapolro). The natives
221 gather at dawn around fires of millet stalks, twigs, or straw; anything
241 combustible serves. Every newcomer must contribute an armful; it
[372] is the price of admission to a seat near the fire. At the end of December
476 all the straw for roofing has been stored, and then the small millet
is threshed. Every inhabitant of the village has the use of the thresh-
ing floor in turn. He notifies his friends and acquaintances as he did
when he weeded his field. The millet beer is ready, and on the pre-
vious day the women have covered the area with cow dung diluted in
water to harden the floor. At dawn the friends arrive, and the millet
is removed from the granary and spread out on the floor. This is done
with the help of millet stalks tied together in bundles and dragged
along the ground with ropes while a man bears down upon them.
The flail is merely a stick cut in the bush, a tree branch shaped in
such a way that the part which is held in the hand is rather thin and
flexible, while the part which is used for threshing is quite thick and
forms an obtuse angle with the part in the hand. The boys line up in
a row, with the tots at either end; the drummers stand before or behind
them; and the flails fall with the beat, crushing the ears of millet
and separating the very dry grain from the stalks. All the while the
old men sit in the shade of the granaries, talking, smoking, and
sewing clothes. When the threshers get to the end of the floor, they
retrace their steps and rest, while the old men gather with straw brooms
the grain which has been scattered outside the pile.

5: Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1959
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776 bush is included in the orderly universe which the Mossi have fabri-
823 cated, it exists at the periphery and is a thing to be feared. The name of this unknown and unowned part of the bush is synonymous with fear. Dreams in which an individual sees frightening images are called "bush
[828] creeping up" (*weogo doore*) or "bush traps you" (*weogo n'yoko fo*). These phrases are also used to describe the emotional shock, the feeling of fear, elicited by the unexpected sight of a frightening object like a corpse or a lion.

Most important among the supernatural beings inhabiting the bush are the twin spirits (*kikirdisi*). Living in pairs or in larger groups, they inhabit the bush, caves, baobab trees, and certain dense thickets of underbrush. While specific details vary, it is generally conceded that they are small, about a foot tall, black like the Mossi, and of both sexes. Their social organization is like that of men: each group is ruled over by a twin spirit-chief (*Kikirdisi Naba*).

845 Twin children are always regarded as the emissaries of the twin spirits.
Shortly after the birth of twins their mother takes a present of food to a
776 place where the twin spirits are known to dwell. Leaving the gift and expressing her thanks, she also makes it clear to the twin spirits that if they have any sort of malicious intent in sending her their children they might as well take them back immediately, since she will tolerate no foolishness. If, through her new children, they plan to torment her, they should save their efforts and desist at once. While the twin spirits are frequently mischief-makers, they are more frivolous than malicious and essentially neither good nor evil. The death of newborn twins is accepted with relief, for it is believed certain that the twin spirits have been thwarted in their mischievous intent and have conceded defeat.

THE ECONOMIC AND CEREMONIAL CYCLE

796 A brief description of the economic cycle and the ceremonials which
mark its phases will serve to illustrate the way the Mossi perceive their
221 relationship to the forces of their natural, supernatural, and social milieux and the methods by which they seek to assure their well-being through control of these forces. The year is usually divided into twelve
[805] moons whose names refer either to the principal economic activity of the season or to a ceremonial which accompanies it.

The first moon of the Mossi year is called "Gambo" after the name of the village which celebrates its first rain-making ceremony (*Tengana*) at this time. Although the rains are still five or six months away, this ritual marks the beginning of the new economic cycle. Each household which possesses land controlled by the earth custodian sends one of its young girls with an offering of millet gruel to place at the altar of Tenga Wende, the terrestrial manifestation of the deity. The earth custodian advises

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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larger markets there were and are solid stalls which are built and tenanted by merchants. In the small district and village markets, these stalls are built out of millet stalks which offer little but protection against the noonday sun on market days. Men build these structures for their womenfolk and for themselves. Some of the shelters which are not used for trading serve as galleries where the young blades look out and comment on the passing scene. Others are used as meeting places by adult men who sit and discuss all sorts of affairs. Still others are used by the older men, who gather there to arrange marriages between their several families, wait for gifts from younger men who seek wives, or spend a great deal of time reminiscing about their youthful adventures. Those persons who do not have such shelters sit in the sun or use grass lean-tos as protection from the sun.

Except in the large towns, Mossi markets are held between the hours of 10:00 A.M. and 4:00 P.M. every fourth day. In the larger towns there are daily markets, but these remained unimportant until today when they serve a growing urban population. The capital city of Wagadougou now even has an "evening" market which opens about 4:00 P.M. and closes at about 9:00 P.M. In addition, numerous daily markets have sprung up in many of its wards. The three-day markets are, however, the traditional type, and they are still the most numerous through the country. By "three-day market" I mean that a market is held one day, not held over the two following days, and then held again on the next day. These markets also have a 21-day cycle from one *Ragakasanga* or *Rag'kasanga* ("larger market") on a Friday to another *Rag'kasanga* on a Friday three weeks later, a total of seven markets between the two important ones. The people give no adequate explanation for the observance of the three-day cycle or the 21-day cycle. One man did suggest that it took the women three days to prepare beer and this was why markets could not be held more often, but even he did not speculate about the 21-day cycle.[10] This same man did point out, however, that the cycle made little difference to persons who really liked to go to market, since it was possible for

(10) Zahan (1954 : 373) apparently found one of the few Mossi informants with a mystical bent; he reports that the seven three-day cycles of markets in the 21-day cycle have the following significance for the Yatenga people: "The first of these numbers explains the cycle of the person (7 symbolizes the complete person: male [to which the Mossi assign the number 3] and female [to which they assign the number 4], the second that of the creation." He believes that each market starts a new cycle, a beginning and an end: "the seventh market signifies the most perfect equilibrium: the one which exists between the universe, mankind, and the divinity." In a footnote he suggests that this sybolism is not too different among the Dogon, who are "ideologically and geographically close to the Mossi." Peter Hammond, who worked in Yatenga, could not find this kind of symbolism.

9:Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1960 FA28 Mossi FA28

chief. If he was not qualified then one of his younger brothers, or 631
one of father's brothers or uncles was chosen. Yet, the fiction of 613
equal access to the *nam* was important to the Mossi because it enabled them to adhere to their most important political axiom which was that "The only man who should rule is one who can keep the country." Regencies were avoided, and persons with physical and character defects were barred. Moreover, this flexibility gave the electors a wide choice of candidates from which to choose the person best fitted for chieftainship at any given period. The Mossi have always believed that it is difficult to rule men and this is what they mean when they declare: "Nanamsè toumdè ya yida fa fa"—"The work of the chiefs is the most difficult of all."[3] For example, it does not seem like an accident that the first ruler, Moro Naba Wubri, was succeeded by four of his brothers in turn instead of by his sons. The Mossi had not completely conquered the territory, and the young sons were incapable of handling the complex political situation. The graves of each of the successors to Wubri in different parts of the country remain as markers to testify to the difficult task which the early rulers had in controlling their realm.

The Mossi believed, and still do believe, that it was only when con- [812]
flict developed after a ruler died, that the people realized how necessary
and valuable a chief was. The death of a chief, especially of the Moro [764]
Naba, was kept a secret until the war minister arrived at the capital with his troops. Only then did the cry go up: "The fire has gone out!"; and as soon as it was heard, violence broke out throughout the
land. Prisoners were released, thieves rifled the markets, and the [669]
nakomces, or nobles, rode about the countryside doing whatever they wished. This custom persisted as late as 1942. Reporting to his superior in Abijan about the events that transpired in Wagadougou when Moro Naba Kom died, the French commander wrote: "On Friday, March 13, 1942, young people, profiting from old custom, tried to steal things, but they were stopped and about one hundred were arrested."[4] Throughout all the chaos which attended the death of a 645
king, the war minister remained calm unless an attempt was actually 696
made to seize power. He never attempted to stop the public disorder or to catch thieves or murderers, because everyone believed that out of

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The Court of the Mogho Naba. Tribute and Payments Due. Obligations of Mossi Subjects to their Naba.

Morning Honors Paid to the Emperor of the Mossi

644 The council of the emperor of the Mossi is held every morning in front of an antechamber called zango which opens out upon a very large courtyard.

81 The Mossi have for a long time regarded the sun as a "god."
776 Wend'pous yan, "God shows himself," refers to the rising of
643 the sun, but it is used in a figurative sense to refer to the emergence of the Mogho Naba. This illustrates the regard held by the Mossi people for their chief since he is compared to the star of daylight and thus to a "god."

643 The Mogho Naba appears each morning dressed in an ample
292 red robe and with a red gourmousga (a kind of burnoose) folded and thrown over his shoulders. On his head he wears a cap, a fez, topped with a wazourfou sebré (literally, "silver paper" [streamers], that is to say, silver amulet). Red represents the light that comes
[822] with the appearance of the sun, while the silver on the cap represents the brilliance of the star itself.

644 Before the time set for the start of the ceremony, the three sogon'kassemsé (great servitors) bring into the courtyard the [58] cushion, nagpouré, and all the other insignia of office. As soon as
[201] the Mogho Naba appears, they arise and make a snapping sound with thumb and index finger to indicate that the naba is coming.

"Wend'pous yan" is also cried out by the gagando and luinsé
[533] (drummers) as soon as His Majesty sits down. The Bend'Naba [chief drummer] is the only one who does not beat his drum; instead, he rubs his finger back and forth over the waxed part of the drum head to imitate the roar of the lion. Four or five young men bearing loaded rifles take their places in front of the emperor.

Honors are rendered to the Mogho Naba in the following order.

1. The Samandé Naba, Baloum Naba, Wedranga Naba, and Simandé Nabila, as well as the Zusoabin'kassanga (chief eunuch and guardian of the emperor's household), are the first to greet His Majesty and to inquire about his health.

776 2. We owe this list of formulas to the kindness of Fr. Thueux, the European who undoubtedly knows the Mossi language most intimately. May we express here our hearty thanks.

sacrifice includes a curse against enemies.

Beyond these wishes, however, no prayer is addressed to God
776 directly; no sacrifice is offered to Him without mention of spirits.
782 Yet, as we shall see in the following chapter, the invocations of the sacrificial formula are addressed mostly to God, and when the sacrifice is over all those who have participated in it greet the sacrificer with these words: "May God accept your sacrifice; may God receive it!"

776 But who is this God? Is he one or many? Has he a body, or is he spirit? Where does he dwell? So many questions which a Mossi has never asked himself and which leave him momentarily bewildered. "Is God one or many?" "I don't know" is the usual answer. If one insists, he says that God is one. But a difficulty arises: "Why then, in sacrifices, do you invoke God-king male and God-king female?" Again: "I don't know; this is what our fathers said."

776 Does God have a body? Yes, assuredly, for only a highly practiced intelligence can conceive of a pure spirit. But what is this body like?
821 "I don't know." Where is God? "Everywhere." But does he occupy a special place? "God is the sun."

776 Do they identify God with the sun? It is difficult for us to establish
782 a settled opinion on the subject. They do seem to grant the identifi-
821 cation, and in the course of sacrifices—after all, their sacrificial formulas must fit their concept of divinity—they offer God water for his rising and pour it to the east, water for his retiring and pour it to the west. In a quarrel the weaker party says: "God is my witness that I have not harmed you; God will pay you back in kind," and points toward the sun. Sacrifices are never /80/ offered in the middle of the night; but then they are not made in the middle of the day either, and they may be offered in the evening, when the sun has dipped below the horizon. The names for God and for the sun are
776 different. Wendé is the proper name for God, Wennam indicates
821 God's power (Wende nam). These words have no plural and thus indicate a belief in God's oneness. The sun is called Winniga, or

776 Wintoro at noon when it scorches the earth (Winniga toro). It must be
821 added, however, that sometimes the sun is called Na /Naba/ Wendé, "God-king." At night God is supposed to retire into his hut, since the sun is no longer visible, and yet he continues to be everywhere. "If you commit an offense during the night, God knows about it." The Mossi are likely to say when the sun stands at the zenith, "It is God who makes the sun scorch us today." Thus they do seem, in practice, to make a distinction between God and the sun. The sun is God's dwelling, but it is not God. But what inconsistency in all this!

Natural phenomena are sometimes attributed to God. Lightning kills those who have done evil, it kills livestock wrongly obtained through fraud or theft, and it is sent in punishment by God ... unless it is sent by an enemy. Amulets and fetishes derive their power from
776 God, as already mentioned, and the same applies to medicinal remedies. Illness is usually attributed to an evil spirit who must be
[753] appeased, but sometimes it is also attributed to God. The Mossi do not seem to grant a soul to inanimate objects, but only to animate beings: plants, animals, men. Yet, as a rule, inexplicable or abnormal phenomena are attributed to spirits dwelling in inanimate objects.

There are three kinds of spirits: the tisé (plural of tiga, "tree"), who dwell exclusively in trees; the kikirsi (plural of kikiriga), or spirits proper; and the tangamma (plural of tangandé), the protective spirits of the villages who dwell in sacred groves.

The tisé reside preferably in those trees which stand near the huts, but some of them also dwell in the bush. They have a special liking for the tamarind tree and bastard mahogany, but they are not at all fond of the doubalé, which shelters bats. At night they leave their dwelling and go into the huts. Their bodies are human in form, but invisible to the common run of mankind. They are much taller and fatter than men, and they are black and walk with their feet up in the air and their heads down to the ground.

At night they wander about, and their presence is betrayed by a
776 darkening of the doorway; they are so fat that they blot out the light.
753 Woe to the man who has no water in his soukala, who has saved no millet beer! The tiga who comes and finds nothing causes pimples to grow all over the man's body; this is the illness characteristic of the tisé. He is fortunate if he gets away with so little, for the tisé can afflict him with many other diseases or even kill him. If the tiga manages to touch someone, the place touched will swell; if someone

777 may hold in store. Wednesday is unreservedly bad, and you must not start a job or leave for a trip on that day. Thursday and Friday are propitious to weddings, especially Friday. On Saturday the sorcerers take the day off and hold no consultations. In addition, every individual has his own lucky day and his unlucky day, which he must know and bear in mind.

778 787 823 Some stones are said to have fallen from heaven. On the day when they fall, the village chief immediately covers all the jars in his hut which contain charms. If he knocks one down in his haste, he will die within the year. These stones are held sacred. Those who can lift them /100/ have nothing to fear, but those who cannot are soon to die. People may also interrogate such a stone, whose reply is considered favorable if they manage to lift it, unfavorable if they cannot [788] do so. Passersby toss millet stalks onto the stone, or twigs cut along the way, or sometimes cowries, to procure success in their endeavors.

821 787 Comets are omens of war or of the death of a great chief. When Halley's comet appeared on the horizon, the chickens, goats, and sheep had a bad time of it. It was necessary to ward off all the possible misfortunes. It is true that the comet was magnificent, spreading for several days from one end of the sky nearly to another, and it is understandable that the natives should be upset. We have heard that many people were troubled in our civilized countries, where the comet could not be seen in all its splendor. In spite of all those sacrifices, the chief of one of the principal cantons in the province, the naba of Pwitenga, died that very year!

000 We must limit our enumeration, and these few examples, which could easily be multiplied, suffice to make clear the role of amulets and superstitions in the life of this people.

801 One further word on superstitions. The reader may have noticed that the numbers three and four and their composites have recurred constantly according to the sex of the person spoken of. Three is reserved for men and four for women. In the sacrifices, God-king male is called three times. God-king female four times. The cord of the charm has three or four knots according to sex; mothers mourn their children for 33 or 44 days. A dead man receives 333 or 3, 333 cowries, a dead woman 444 or 4, 444, etc.

302 Every time a native changes his status, his hair must be removed. Babies are shaved before they are given a name, girls before they come to their husband, women when they are transferred to a new

821 Water in general and rain in particular are a blessing in this sun-
825 scorched land. Crocodiles are reputed to attract water to their dwelling-place. To kill a crocodile may not necessarily amount to homicide, but it amounts at least to drying out a watercourse or pond, for the crocodiles will leave the place and the water will leave with them. If rain is too long delayed, the crop will not have time to ripen; if it falls too heavily, especially at the beginning and at the end of the winter season, weeds will choke the millet, or the flowers will fall before the fruit is formed.

789 Rain is, therefore, desired or feared according to the circumstances, and the power to make rain and to ward it off devolves upon the naba,
829 who rules on the life and death of his subjects. In truth every powerful man is believed to possess this power, and how often they requested me to make rain! Is it not true that Whites can do anything? They are related to the ancestral spirits, their color proves it! Do they not come from the land of water? Did they not emerge from the water? In spite of my assertions that God alone can make rain, that one must pray for it, their skeptical smiles made it plain that they did not believe me.

789 The naba has the charm, the talisman, to draw rain. All he need do when a storm threatens is to take from his hut a certain jar full of certain roots and fill it with water to overflowing. On the other hand, if he wishes to ward off rain, he burns another kind of root, and the wind carries the smoke in the direction where the naba wishes to send the clouds; or else he hangs a cow's or horse's tail to a stick by a thread, and the wind tosses it, thus driving the clouds away. This is why the naba sends one of his men to market when the rainy season draws near, to gather karite fruit from each woman there, because the pits are used to make the charm and must be obtained in this fashion. If a person other than the naba has tried to make rain and failed, he attributes his failure to someone more powerful than himself; if the naba fails, no one says anything about it, or else it is said that the naba did not really wish to attract or to ward off the rain.

821 Every storm is accompanied by lightning, which often kills people in this land of violent thunderstorms. Its effects are attributed to an evil spirit, to an enemy who can send lightning if he knows the proper tim, or to God Himself. Lightning strikes thieves and murderers; it is a punishment. If it does not kill the thief himself, it kills the proceeds of the theft, the stolen horse or sheep. It never kills a person without reason.

789 /103/ Happily, it is possible to avoid lightning. To achieve this,
821 it is necessary to find in the bush a white substance rather similar to hyena droppings which the natives call "rain dung," as well as certain tree roots. Part of these roots is left to soak in water for three days, and the rest is burned to ashes. A chicken is sacrificed to the tim. Then the water in which the roots have steeped is used to cook the millet mush, and the sauce is made with baobab leaves. All the soukala dwellers must eat this millet mush, and every one of them is marked on the back and chest with a cross of ashes mixed with karite butter. The horse and donkey, alone among the animals, are similarly marked on the back, chest, and inside the mouth. The huts are marked on the east side, the direction from which the rain comes, and above the entrance. Now there is nothing to be feared. We do feel, however, that lightning-rods are more effective.

759 All these tim, medicinal remedies, amulets, talismans, and
756 superstitious recipes, are prescribed either by true doctors who actually know the properties of herbs and effect real cures or by sorcerers. The doctors are often consulted. Since they specialize in certain diseases, they are consulted for those diseases alone. Those who have been cured by a medicine willingly make it known to friends who are afflicted with the same illness. The doctors are as numerous as the diseases which afflict mankind.

278 Some doctors are not merely healers but also poisoners, and they
674 are greatly feared. The surest way to get rid of an enemy is to consult them, but their fees are high. They have slow poisons which consume the victim gradually and the overwhelming ones which kill in a few hours. They put them in drinks, in millet mush, or more
754 often in kola nuts. There are also people, sorcerers rather than doctors, who claim the power to kill at a distance and who know how to practice sympathetic magic. Their prestige has waned since the French occupation because they have not managed to kill the Whites who settled in the country; but they say that our tim are more powerful than theirs.

754 The sorcerers are also numerous. There are those who take up the
756 call of their own accord and those who are born sorcerers. The former
791 are the bagré and seuya; the latter the tibo, bartibo, waongo, and nyonnyonsé. Pardon us these barbaric words, but they are impossible to translate.

791 The bagre is the nice, innocuous kind of sorcerer, who helps the
756 poor for a penny or two. He is consulted about everything. For example, what does the future hold? Will fire destroy my huts or won't

794 lightning as well, which he can do only if he is the Sky-Atmosphere.
[82] "The natural phenomena," he says, "are sometimes attributed to God. Lightning kills those who have done evil, it kills the animal ill-gotten through fraud or theft, and it is God who sends lightning as a punishment..." Thus, Ouendé, while being the sun, is also the Sky-Atmosphere, and other things too, for he has characteristics that go
[797] beyond the sun divinity and the sky divinity. We must not forget here that the Allah of the Moslems is well known among the Mossi and has his established representatives there (Yarsé of Mandé origin, Peul, etc.), or temporary ones (merchants who have come from the north or south, Soninnké /Soninke/, Songhay, Dyoula). Thus, for a long time, /33/ the Moslem conception of god could and has, in effect, rubbed off on the sun-atmosphere-god of the Mossi. The latter might have waged war on the Songhay sultans who led religious crusades against them, yet it is also true that they were content to bestow upon their most important god the remarkable characteristics that struck them and that they admired in the Moslem god. Thus, Ouendé gradually became more and more a supreme god, although it would seem that in the beginning, he was only a sun god and an atmosphere god, first separated, later fused with a predominance of the sun god element.

To summarize, it has been well established that one finds the cult of the sun among the Mossi, along with many other elements as
[171] we have just shown. I have since found this cult among the Dorhosié (1922) and the Gouro (1923). However, among the Gouro, it is relegated to a few fetishists and does not interest the bulk of the population. Among the Dorhosié, on the contrary, it interests the vast multitude and occasions a solemn sacrifice made in the winter, at the end of the old year and the beginning of the new. Among these people, however, the sun divinity has not become a leading divinity as it has among the Mossi. It is one divinity among several and is rather subordinate to the cult of the Earth-brush and that of the Sky-atmosphere. Moreover, I am persuaded that more far-reaching studies among all the branches of the Voltaic population would uncover, here and there, the cult of the sun, as among the Mossi, the Gourounsi, the Dorhosié, etc.

[pp. 34 ff. not processed]

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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French Forces were present there. The official Vichy radio began broadcasts urging discipline, increased production, and "patriotic cooperation in making the Federation [of French West Africa] a military bastion against the encroachment of its British neighbors."[88] In response, local officials ordered Mossi chiefs to provide laborers to build trenches and fortifications between the two areas. The Free French, for their part, used the Gold Coast as a center for the distribution of anti-Pétain propaganda, and tried to employ returning Mossi labor migrants as couriers. The majority of these young men were not interested in politics, however, and those who were prevailed upon to take propaganda leaflets into Mossi country simply discarded them as soon as they crossed the border.

The pressures, counter-pressures, and anxieties of this period were apparently too much for Mogho Naba Kom II, who died on March 12, 1942. By the next morning, countless rumors to the effect that the Mogho Naba had committed suicide had spread as far as the Gold Coast. The most widespread rumor was that the Mogho Naba's anti-Pétainist views had become clear to the administration. In reprisal, he was "placed under surveillance on Boisson's orders and separated from his subjects. He died solemnly by his own hand after having summoned his son and commanded him not to take office 'until the true French should return.'"[89] Another widely circulated rumor, probably originated by Moslems, was that the Catholic missionaries, freed from the restraints of Paris, had tried to compel the Mogho Naba to divorce his many wives and become monogamous. The Mogho Naba allegedly could not comply with this demand because it would have been a severe violation of Mossi tradition for a royal wife to become the wife of any other man while her husband was still alive. Faced with this dilemma, the rumor said, the Mogho Naba committed suicide.

The official French report on the Mogho Naba's death reveals that the administration was aware of these and other rumors and of their potential influence on the behavior of the Mossi people. The report also shows that the French officials believed, and credited the Mossi with believing, the classical superstition that "The heavens themselves blaze forth the death of princes." The report states:

> Over the last few years, the health of Saidou Congo [Mogho Naba Kom II] has been impaired by heart trouble, and it was a heart attack which carried him off at about 11 P.M. on March 12th.
>
> The natives have no explanation for sudden deaths, and attribute them either to supernatural intervention or to poison. Besides, two phenomena had occurred just then to strike the imagination: there had been a total eclipse of the moon on the night of March 2d to 3d, which announced,

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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 177 175*

according to the Mossi, the imminent death of an important chief; secondly, 648*
a meteor had passed unexpectedly over Ouagadougou between 8 and 9 P.M. 643
[on March 12th], vividly impressing the Mogho Naba himself. [821]

It is quite possible that the emotions induced by these phenomena aggra- [763]
vated the heart condition that felled him. Certain people have maintained that the Mogho Naba, being opposed to all foreign domination and convinced that serious developments were imminent, voluntarily commited suicide by poison in order to elude them. So far, there is no proof that such a rumor has really been adrift. The matter is under strict investigation.[80]

The Mossi people practiced as best they could the traditional rituals connected with the death of a Mogho Naba. During the interregnum, however, the administration did not permit the usual chaos, ritual or otherwise. One administration report states: "Young people tried to steal things in the market, taking advantage of the old customs, but they were checked."[81] A later report adds that the traditions of the Napoko and the Kourita were honored, and that one hundred persons were arrested for the ritual larceny of small objects.

The traditional Mossi authorities allegedly requested that the deceased Mogho Naba, as one who had worn the Legion of Honor, be given full military honors. This required the placing of his body in a coffin so that [766]
the funeral cortege could move through the streets, a fact which introduced [177]
a new ritual element in royal funerals. Once this ceremony was over, however, the representatives of the administration withdrew, and the body was buried according to customary rites.

The traditional electoral college then proceeded with the task of choos- [666]
ing a new ruler. The choice was between Issoufou Congo, Kom's eldest son, who was then a lieutenant in the French Colonial Army in the Ivory Coast, and his younger brother, Etienne Congo, chief of the Doulougou district. With the administration's permission, the college elected Issoufou Congo. He took the title "Sagha" (the second Mogho Naba to bear that name), and was installed with traditional ceremonies.

The message Sagha sent to the French High Commissioner bears quot- 175*
ing. Like the traditional speeches of newly elected Mogho Nanamse, it 648*
was believed by the Mossi people to contain subtle jibes at enemies, praises 643
to benefactors and friends, and portents of future plans. The Mogho Naba 537
said:

> At the moment when I take command of the Mossi people, I must thank you for having placed me on the throne of my father. I give you assurance of my fidelity toward France in all circumstances. Be assured by this testimony that my father will remain for me an honored person and a guide. I will walk in the footsteps of my father. In these difficult times, my people and I re-

[57] Chapter 4

The Court of the Mogho Naba. Tribute and Payments Due. Obligations of Mossi Subjects to their Naba.

Morning Honors Paid to the Emperor of the Mossi

644 The council of the emperor of the Mossi is held every morning in front of an antechamber called zango which opens out upon a very large courtyard.

831 The Mossi have for a long time regarded the sun as a "god."
776 Wend'pous yan, "God shows himself," refers to the rising of
643 the sun, but it is used in a figurative sense to refer to the emergence of the Mogho Naba. This illustrates the regard held by the Mossi people for their chief since he is compared to the star of daylight and thus to a "god."

643 The Mogho Naba appears each morning dressed in an ample red robe and with a red gourmousga (a kind of burnoose) folded and
292 thrown over his shoulders. On his head he wears a cap, a fez, topped with a wazourfou sebré (literally, "silver paper" [streamers], that is to say, silver amulet). Red represents the light that comes
[822] with the appearance of the sun, while the silver on the cap represents the brilliance of the star itself.

644 Before the time set for the start of the ceremony, the three sogon'kassemsé (great servitors) bring into the courtyard the [58] cushion, nagpouré, and all the other insignia of office. As soon as
[201] the Mogho Naba appears, they arise and make a snapping sound with thumb and index finger to indicate that the naba is coming.

"Wend'pous yan" is also cried out by the gagando and luinsé
[533] (drummers) as soon as His Majesty sits down. The Bend'Naba [chief drummer] is the only one who does not beat his drum; instead, he rubs his finger back and forth over the waxed part of the drum head to imitate the roar of the lion. Four or five young men bearing loaded rifles take their places in front of the emperor.

Honors are rendered to the Mogho Naba in the following order.

1. The Samandé Naba, Baloum Naba, Wedranga Naba, and Simandé Nabila, as well as the Zusoabin'kassanga (chief eunuch and guardian of the emperor's household), are the first to greet His Majesty and to inquire about his health.

8: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1958
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776 considered the wife of a male deity called *Winnam*, *Windé*, or *Naba Zidiwindé*. The true nature of Winnam is not clear. The Mossi say: "Winnam is the sun, and Winnam is God"; he is considered a sun god as well as a supreme deity. [775] Winnam is venerated but he is not feared, because it is the dead ancestors who chastise evil-doers by affliction or death. When wicked people die they face the wrath of the ancestors in *Keemsétenga*, or land of the ancestors.

The Mossi have several concepts of the spiritual essence or animating principle of man. First there is the *seega* (pl. *seesé*), an entity found in all living beings; it leaves the body during sleep, and its adventures provide the dreams of men. The seega can be captured during its nocturnal wanderings or in places where large crowds congregate. If the seega is captured and eaten by a [761] sorcerer, its owner will die. A man's shadow is also called his seega; persons about to die have no shadows, since their seesé have either been stolen or have [822] left on their own account.

Another principle called the *keema* (pl. *keemsé*) is associated with the dead or with persons about to die. The keema of a dying man wanders around and often frightens people; as soon as he is dead, he is no longer referred to by name but is called the "keema." Keemsé is also the word used for the generalized [769] ancestors who sanction the behavior of the living and who must be placated if people wish to have enough food, wives, children, and good health. A man's own keemsé take a vital interest in his affairs, in return for which they receive nourishment in the form of the seesé (animals do not have keemsé) of sacrificed animals.

[827] The breath, called *vousem*, is also considered an animating principle by the Mossi and, since it leaves the body through the nose at death, they believe that a man's nose is the first thing to die. It is not clear how the seega is disposed of when the body dies. Some people say it remains forever about the haunts of man; others believe that it goes to a mountain called Plimpikou and disappears into a cavern. Still others believe that the seega becomes the keema and goes to Plimpikou, from whence the keemsé come to visit their descendants. It is difficult to determine whether the Mossi have always been vague about their traditional religious concepts or whether this uncertainty is the result of the influx of such foreign creeds as Islam and Christianity.

The first recorded contact between the Mossi and Moslems took place around 1328 when the Yatenga Mossi attacked, burned, and sacked Timbuktu, then held by the Dia dynasty of the Songhoi (Dubois 1896:251). For more than a century afterward, the Mossi pursued a turbulent and aggressive policy in the region of the Niger bend, pushing as far as Gourma, Walata, and Banku (ibid:127). They were finally defeated and routed by Sonni Ali in 1477. In 1499, when Askia the Great (El Hadj Mohammed ben Abou Bekr, usurper of the Songhoi throne from the Sonni dynasty in 1494) returned from his pilgrimage to Mecca, he launched a *jihad* or holy war on the Mossi who had rejected his ultimatum to adopt Islam. Askia defeated the Mossi, "devastated the towns and countryside, took men, women, and children as prisoners, and forcibly converted these captives to Islam" (Dubois 1896:127–128). The

777 may hold in store. Wednesday is unreservedly bad, and you must not start a job or leave for a trip on that day. Thursday and Friday are propitious to weddings, especially Friday. On Saturday the sorcerers take the day off and hold no consultations. In addition, every individual has his own lucky day and his unlucky day, which he must know and bear in mind.

778 Some stones are said to have fallen from heaven. On the day when
787 they fall, the village chief immediately covers all the jars in his hut
823 which contain charms. If he knocks one down in his haste, he will die within the year. These stones are held sacred. Those who can lift them /100/ have nothing to fear, but those who cannot are soon to die. People may also interrogate such a stone, whose reply is considered favorable if they manage to lift it, unfavorable if they cannot
[788] do so. Passersby toss millet stalks onto the stone, or twigs cut along the way, or sometimes cowries, to procure success in their endeavors.

821 Comets are omens of war or of the death of a great chief. When
787 Halley's comet appeared on the horizon, the chickens, goats, and sheep had a bad time of it. It was necessary to ward off all the possible misfortunes. It is true that the comet was magnificent, spreading for several days from one end of the sky nearly to another, and it is understandable that the natives should be upset. We have heard that many people were troubled in our civilized countries, where the comet could not be seen in all its splendor. In spite of all those sacrifices, the chief of one of the principal cantons in the province, the naba of Pwitenga, died that very year!

000 We must limit our enumeration, and these few examples, which could easily be multiplied, suffice to make clear the role of amulets and superstitions in the life of this people.

801 One further word on superstitions. The reader may have noticed that the numbers three and four and their composites have recurred constantly according to the sex of the person spoken of. Three is reserved for men and four for women. In the sacrifices, God-king male is called three times. God-king female four times. The cord of the charm has three or four knots according to sex; mothers mourn their children for 33 or 44 days. A dead man receives 333 or 3, 333 cowries, a dead woman 444 or 4, 444, etc.

302 Every time a native changes his status, his hair must be removed. Babies are shaved before they are given a name, girls before they come to their husband, women when they are transferred to a new

5: Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1959
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by being placed on his altar, where they become part of the earth symbols (*tiinse*). As a result, these altars are piled high with old sardine cans, bicycle parts, remnants of clothing, unusual stones and scraps of metal, baskets, wooden implements, and weapons, which are left there to decompose slowly and return to the earth. Travelers in a strange village need never fear that their property will be stolen if they deposit it near the altar of the earth custodian. 778

When a farmer wishes to clear a part of the bush which has previously been unused, he must first ask permission of the earth custodian and make a present to the earth deity. If he wishes to use the land again the following year, the request and the gift must be repeated. Such a field may be passed on to his descendants, who have a right to the land so long as they acknowledge each year the authority of the earth custodian. If a new well is to be dug, his authorization must be requested, and his advice may also be asked for the proper place to seek water. The wise Mossi farmer consults the earth custodian frequently about his agricultural activities. He also reports anything that he may have done to alter the condition of his farmlands or the surrounding bush, not because each individual act is of such great importance, but because maintaining good relations with the custodian of the earth is in the interest of his own economic security. 241 782 793

OTHER ASPECTS OF RELIGION

Other descendants of the original inhabitants of the Yatenga, the Bogoba, are especially charged with the propitiation of Tido Wendé, the vegetal manifestation of Wennam. In addition to the many manifestations of Wennam and the complex organization of priests and ceremonial designed for his propitiation, many other forces inhabit the unseen world of the Mossi. Indeed, to the observer their number and variety might at first seem to be almost as great as the number of Mossi with whom he may discuss these beings. Each man's description of these supernatural beings varies in terms of his subjective reaction resulting either from direct experience of them or from stories he has heard concerning their behavior. In contrast to Wennam, whose disposition is essentially benevolent so long as he is properly propitiated, these lesser supernatural beings are more frequently malicious and always more difficult to control. Perhaps for these reasons they are not worshiped. The Mossi's concern is not to propitiate them but to neutralize their evil intentions by the use of protective charms (*tim*). 776

The "bush," the unused land lying beyond the farms, is the least-known aspect of the Mossi natural environment. This is especially true of those far areas of the bush where even the authority of the earth custodians does not extend and where unknown spirits dwell. For although the 776 823

5: Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1959
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776 bush is included in the orderly universe which the Mossi have fabri-
●823 cated, it exists at the periphery and is a thing to be feared. The name of this unknown and unowned part of the bush is synonymous with fear. Dreams in which an individual sees frightening images are called "bush
[828] creeping up" (*weogo doore*) or "bush traps you" (*weogo n'yoko fo*). These phrases are also used to describe the emotional shock, the feeling of fear, elicited by the unexpected sight of a frightening object like a corpse or a lion.

Most important among the supernatural beings inhabiting the bush are the twin spirits (*kikirdisi*). Living in pairs or in larger groups, they inhabit the bush, caves, baobab trees, and certain dense thickets of underbrush. While specific details vary, it is generally conceded that they are small, about a foot tall, black like the Mossi, and of both sexes. Their social organization is like that of men: each group is ruled over by a twin spirit-chief (*Kikirdisi Naba*).

845 Twin children are always regarded as the emissaries of the twin spirits.
776 Shortly after the birth of twins their mother takes a present of food to a place where the twin spirits are known to dwell. Leaving the gift and expressing her thanks, she also makes it clear to the twin spirits that if they have any sort of malicious intent in sending her their children they might as well take them back immediately, since she will tolerate no foolishness. If, through her new children, they plan to torment her, they should save their efforts and desist at once. While the twin spirits are frequently mischief-makers, they are more frivolous than malicious and essentially neither good nor evil. The death of newborn twins is accepted with relief, for it is believed certain that the twin spirits have been thwarted in their mischievous intent and have conceded defeat.

THE ECON IC AND CEREMONIAL CYCLE

796 A brief description of the economic cycle and the ceremonials which
221 mark its phases will serve to illustrate the way the Mossi perceive their relationship to the forces of their natural, supernatural, and social milieux and the methods by which they seek to assure their well-being through control of these forces. The year is usually divided into twelve
[805] moons whose names refer either to the principal economic activity of the season or to a ceremonial which accompanies it.

The first moon of the Mossi year is called "Gambo" after the name of the village which celebrates its first rain-making ceremony (*Tengana*) at this time. Although the rains are still five or six months away, this ritual marks the beginning of the new economic cycle. Each household which possesses land controlled by the earth custodian sends one of its young girls with an offering of millet gruel to place at the altar of Tenga Wende, the terrestrial manifestation of the deity. The earth custodian advises

rulers left the Dagomba region in the Gold Coast (present-day Ghana) during the 11th century and moved into the bend of the Niger River, carving out three large kingdoms and smaller principalities in the process. At the head of these still extant kingdoms are rulers (*Moro Nabas*) who hold feudal-like control of the provinces, districts, and villages which comprise their domains. A complex hierarchical administrative apparatus extends the power of the rulers into the smallest village, and funnels taxes and tribute back to them. French conquest modified this highly efficient system but did not greatly change it. The Mossi state apparatus rests on an economy which produces cotton cloth, horses, sheep, cattle, and goats, but the main support of this large population—one of the densest in the Sudan—is grain agriculture. Today, some Mossi districts still have as many as 70 persons per square mile. 105 173 105

The Mossi are divided into stratified royal, noble, and commoner patrilineages. Characteristic of this lineage system is a process by which royal sublineages descend serially until they merge with the mass of commoner lineages. Below the lineages there were once large non-Mossi groups of serfs and slaves, but these people have now been grouped into lineages and have become Mossi. Patrilocal polygynous extended family households, grouped into villages, form the basic Mossi settlement pattern. Marriages are arranged between unrelated persons through the agency of lineage members who establish "friendly" relationships. The two friends might ask their lineage heads for women to exchange as wives, or the "friend" who has received more gifts from his opposite number will give over a wife. Because only the older men have women and goods at their disposal, they are usually the ones who receive wives. The result is that most young men have no wives and must content themselves with occasional lovers until they inherit wives from lineage members. The Mossi have a great fear of incestuous relations which bring down the wrath of the ancestors (the *Keemsé*).

Ancestor veneration is at the core of Mossi religious behavior. The recent ancestors are notified, through sacrifices, of the important events in the lives of their descendants, and they are expected to aid in solving everyday problems. The ancestors also invoke their sanctions against antisocial behavior among their descendants. Once a year the Mossi people, in concert with the Moro Nabas, appeal to their individual and collective ancestors for good crops, large families, and for the preservation of the dynasty. Often associated with the ancestors as propitiatory agents are local deities called *Tengkougas* (sing. *Tenkougre*) or earth shrines, visibly manifested by clumps of trees, mountains, rocks, or rivers. *Tengsobas* or earth priests appeal to the Tengkougas on behalf of the local populations for help in sickness, for rain and good crops, and for children. When proper sacrifices are offered to the Tengkougas, their spiritual agents, called *kinkirsé*, enter the wombs of women and are born as children. Twins and children who die young are regarded as "evil" kinkirsé who entered a woman without being invited. Nevertheless, many persons consider twins as special gifts to parents in favor of the earth deities. 769 [778] [842] [845]

The earth itself, *Tenga*, is one of the principal deities of the Mossi. Tenga is 776 [823]

644 The chief of the canton of Doulougou, where the prince is a
788 guest for another week, also gives him beer, a sheep, a cow, a
431 robe, and, finally, a wife.

At Bagamini, where he goes next, he receives from the canton chief a cow, a wife, a quiver, and arrows, presented with these significant words: "Ad locko la pema taon widi, laf ra taon neb'yé ti ya f'ba yemsé" (literally, "Take these arrows to shoot against horses and not against men, for the latter are your father's slaves and the country also belongs to him and therefore to you").

Seven days later he leaves Bagamini and goes to Ipelsé where he receives the same warm welcome. On leaving, he will take with him a cow and a wife.

He likewise remains at Ipelsé for seven days. Passing through Bedgo in the domain of the Peulh chief, the Djiba Naba chooses the finest [104] bull from the herd of cattle which must be presented to him. He likewise takes a girl from the chief's household who becomes his property. He then goes on to Guirgo where he is guest of the canton chief for a whole week. On his departure he receives a cow, a robe, and a wife from the chief.

The inhabitants of the village of Kakamsé, through which the Djiba Naba merely passes, bring him quantities of millet cakes (sagbo) and a gift of their choice (a sheep, a goat, a cow, cowries, beer, etc.).

The crown prince continues on to Kondrin and remains there for three days. In addition to sagho and dam, the chief of Kondrin is required to offer him a cow and a wife before his departure.

From there he proceeds to Béré where the chief, called Rimbissi Kasma (the oldest descendant of the Mogho Naba), gives the Djiba Naba a cow, a robe, and a wife and acts as his host for a week.

644 During the night of the seventh day, the notables of the
788 canton of Djiba come to Béré to look for the naba. He allows him-
● 824 self to be led away, accompanied by only a single servitor and a groom. The rest of the escort from Ouagadougou remains behind and follows him the next morning (1).

1. Why this departure at night and seeming escape? On the route leading into his

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dominion, the Djiba Naba must pass under a tree whose branches he should be able to touch since he is on horseback. His whole future depends upon his doing so. It is from this day forward that the prince will have a long life and will succeed his father. It is believed that the tree has magical powers and that its branches will withdraw of their own accord as the prince passes by if, even though he is the emperor's eldest son, he is not the successor designated by Wendé (God).

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[105] In advance of his coming, care has been taken to find a nice dwelling suitable to house a prince who is the emperor's eldest son. With this in view, an establishment has been chosen which is well built and fairly large, one belonging to a dakangré (prosperous man), and His Highness is conducted to it. As soon as the Djiba Naba has dismounted, his involuntary host must leave his home and take shelter with one of his neighbors. He takes great care to gather all his property, money (liguidi) and wives, into one part of the house; the rest henceforth belongs to the naba. Indeed, it is not long before the establishment is enlarged and some of the huts demolished to make way for more sumptuous buildings.

As soon as the prince is installed, the displaced host receives some gifts and wives as a kind of indemnity for loss. A suitable house is built for him a few hundred meters away.

For several days, celebrations are the rule throughout the canton of Djiba. All the notables and village chiefs, including neighboring canton chiefs who have not had the honor of receiving the prince, come to pay their respects to the new naba and to bring him large gifts.

The escort from Ouagadougou is then sent back [106] with many gifts. The most important nayirdamba [court dignitaries] receive wives and clothing.

Besides the wives the Djiba Naba may have had before his appointment, it is to be noted that he collected quite a harem

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that he did not cause his father's death. The daughters who dare go through the opening, even those who are grown women, are greeted with bravos by the crowd. The wives receive generous gifts from their husbands. The reason for this is that no girl who had been pregnant before being led to her husband would dare to pass through the opening because the deceased and other kimsé (ancestral spirits) would strike her dead.

This is why some women disappear at the crucial moment, to the great shame of their husbands.

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The funerary hut is fumigated by burning a certain aromatic plant known as sompiga. The Bambara and the Wolof call it benguefala or benguefira. The same plant was widely used by the Europeans during the recent outbreak of yellow fever, either in an infusion, in a tisane, or mixed with the shower water.

of chickens which are killed at his feet. He pronounces some ritual words which may be summarized as follows: "Accept these chickens and these cowries and do not return; may everything you leave behind profit your heirs!;" etc.

The body is then carried away. On reaching [197] the tomb, the bearers carry the corpse around it three times and then place the body on the ground. The undertaker goes into the tomb and arranges the sleeping place. The mat is removed, and the body is handed in to him. The members of the family and other relatives at once begin to weep as the opening is closed with a stone, and the whole is covered with earth.

The eldest daughter of the deceased and his wives cover their bodies with ashes. The pugtiéma (first wife) and the eldest daughter wrap leafy branches around their waists, and the rest of the family wear vines on their foreheads. This is the first mourning.

Forty or fifty days later the second funeral ceremony is held, accompanied by various games, the playing of tom-toms, killing

342 is continued, and the process goes on until the hut is completed, that is, when it reaches a height of about 1.65 meters. The house is built without any openings, but when the walls are up, a [219] low door is put in, having the shape of a pointed arch. The interior of many Mossi houses is divided by a low wall, called kogré, which makes the hut very dark. A few small holes are made with the handle of a daba, and these, with the low door, are [726] the only openings. In time of war, the Moaga used to shoot his arrows through these tiny holes. Before the roof is put on, the [751] walls are daubed with wet ashes, a practice which is supposed to guarantee good health for the new inhabitants.

The roof is conical in shape. It is made with poles which are tightly tied at the top with vines. Stiff mats, zarsé, are placed on the poles. They are held in place with fibers and are covered with braided straw. Some twenty persons are needed to put up the roof. The construction of the house is then finished. Only the plastering remains to be done. For this job, the women collect a special kind of earth, boalga, which they mix with manure from cows or horses and then coat the walls with it. When this operation is completed, the women cover the floor with a ferruginous material that is sprinkled with water and tamped down with bits of flat wood called silpama. After the floor has been smoothed down, the sasgo is the next step. This involves covering the surface with a sticky material, boudou, mixed with ground charcoal. This is rubbed over and over with glass sherds or special stones called sassega. The shiny black surface obtained in this fashion prevents the ferruginous material from soiling the family's clothes. Some [824] people sprinkle the finished floor with kanmé, an infusion made of the skin of the néré fruit, in order to make it wear well.

[220] Construction workers. The master of the house is aided by his own brothers and other relatives in the same clan. He does not request help from outsiders. The women's job is to get the water needed for the mortar.

The earth used in building is taken from a hole near the house, the tan-nako (from tando, "earth," and nako, "hole"). This excavation is later filled with all the waste from the house and ordure from the courtyard. The tan-nako, well fertilized in this manner is planted with maize, and this field is called the kamanga.

312 hour for the impurities and the residue to settle to the bottom of
271 the vessel. Then the water is poured off into another container and is ready to be used for drinking or cooking.

[B-24] (b) It is also possible to use an additive known as missim (crushed tamarind leaves). The water becomes clear, but it is, of course, somewhat sour. Although it may be drunk, it is
[252] ideally suited to cooking since the Mossi add missim (from miki, "to make sour") even to the water of springs and wells before they use it to prepare their principal food, sagbo.

744 In the town of Ouagadougou frequent visits by the sanitary
312 officers remind the natives of the necessity of keeping fresh water in their containers. They are also encouraged to fill in during the winter the low places holding water where mosquitoes might breed.

515 Laundering. There is no doubt [231] that the Moaga is care-
296 less about the cleanliness of his clothing. There is no shortage of soap -- karite butter, of which it is made, is plentiful -- but he believes that frequent laundering will wear out his clothes too quickly. He also thinks -- which is childish -- that the dirtier a garment is, the cleaner it will wash. He thinks it completely ridiculous for clothes to be ironed. It must be admitted that among the Mossi only a married man can require his wives to wash his clothes. A mother also takes care of her children's clothes, but a bachelor is forced to wash his own things. This, we think, explains the extreme negligence shown by some of them
[461] who let their clothes get dirtier and dirtier. Indolence, alas, is one of the dominant defects of the native of Mossi country.

514 Toilet arrangements. In general the Mossi have no regular latrines. Men, women, in short, everyone, simply goes into the bush. The only exception is the very young children who take care of their needs on the threshold. At night, especially during the winter when the grain is fairly tall, grownups themselves go to the kamanga or karaga (millet or maize field near the living quarters).

364 When the town of Ouagadougou was made a mixed commune [Ed., smallest French territorial subdivision, with both French and native representation in the municipal council], it was possible to install, at municipal expense, a number of lavatories in certain

776 makes noise in the bush under certain leafy trees, his cheeks will swell
753 out. The tisé talk, even during the day. It is their voices which are heard when the wind stirs the leaves. We had /81/ papaw seeds planted all around our dwelling. They had sprouted and grown well; the fruit was already ripening. One morning, no papaw trees were left in
[824] Koupéla! The naba had decreed that these were talking trees, that they would cause illness to those who had them in their soukala ... and the papaws had been cut down!

776 Fortunately, it is possible to protect oneself against the tisé. First,
782 those trees which shelter them may be felled, and the spirits will move elsewhere. Some very beautiful trees vanish thus from the villages. The tisé may also be appeased with sacrifices. Does this result in tree cult, dendrolatry? Indeed not! The Mossi clearly make the distinction between the tree and the spirit that inhabits it, and they sacrifice to the spirit. Sometimes also, a tree was planted on the
[769] grave of the elder who founded the village, and sacrifices are made to the ancestral spirit at the foot of the tree. Finally, there are fetishes more powerful than the tisé. It is enough to know which roots and barks the tisé do not like, to steep them in water, and to place the pot at the door of the hut. When a tiga sees this fetish, he invariably runs away. Some Peul are said to have the power to distinguish between those trees where spirits dwell and those where they do not, and to kill the former trees merely by rubbing them with butter! This must be done in a special way.

776 The kikirsi are imps, red or black all over, and only a few centi-
754 meters high. Their body has the same shape as ours, but it is much nimbler and more tenuous—something ethereal and impalpable that only the sorcerers can discern. The latter call them with a low whistle or by shaking a peculiarly shaped gourd that looks like a handle
[534] ending in a sphere. This gourd is dried without being opened, and the seeds gather in the sphere. The sorcerer makes noise by shaking this instrument, and the kikirsi flock to him singing.

776 There are good and evil kikirsi, and the good ones only do evil when forced to do so; for instance, when someone puts pepper in their sauce. They abhor pepper but they love honey, and every good housewife who wishes to preserve her honey covers it carefully with pepper to prevent the kikirsi from eating it. They are inordinately fond of sesame, and they dote on millet cakes (samsa); every woman who makes millet cakes offers them a few. People who eat samsa while walking are careful to drop a few crumbs to the ground. On the

belonging to him, he can be relied upon to share with the members of the lineage if this should be necessary.

Capital goods in the form of houses, granaries, and fields are the 613
property of the lineage. Individual rights are limited to temporary use 423
and custodianship but are passed on to others when a general shift in residence and role follows the death of a senior member of the lineage. Although property is passed on in accordance with the rules of descent in the lineage, part of the property redistributed represents the product 428
of the labor of the lineage as a consanguineal kin group. For, as has been 613
indicated, the labor of the wives, who are not lineage members, is as important as that of their husbands and children.

The lineage head discusses the coming year with the other elders, and 241
an over-all production plan is made out. They decide what fields are to 613
be left fallow, what ones are to be planted to cotton and the varieties of millet, what lands may be used by individuals desiring to plant a cash crop, and what, if any, land may be loaned to neighboring lineages or to in-laws. With the approach of the first rains, all economically active men and women go to their fields to prepare them for planting, leaving behind in the village only the old people and the children who are still too small to assist in the fields or tend their fathers' animals.

A considerable portion of the land within the limits of a Mossi village 423
is under the direct control of the village chief (*Tenga Naba*) and the 632
earth custodian (*Tenga Soba*), the local representatives of political and supernatural authority. This land is used for the public way, for the market place, and for burial grounds and latrines. Except for that which is too poor for any purpose, all available land within several miles of a village is put under cultivation.

Ki is the generic name which the Moesi give to the millet, which is the 241
basic product in their economy and which receives the largest single 243
allocation of land and labor of any Mossi economic activity. Two kinds of millet are planted, a large-grained variety (*kenda*) and a small-grained variety (*kazua*). Millet is the first crop to be planted after the rains have begun. Small- and large-grained millet seeds are frequently mixed and sown in the same field. Small-grained millet may also be sown in the same field with a white bean (*benga*). A "tired" field may be left fallow for five, ten, or fifteen years. When it is first replanted, it will be seeded to millet for the first three years. The fourth year it may again be put into millet, but if the previous crop was not good, cotton will be planted. Usually, a Mossi farmer plants cotton for two years, millet for three, then groundnuts, more cotton, then two more years of millet. It is 241
believed that cotton renews the soil because of the intensive cultivation [824]
required: the earth is brought up into hillocks and turned over; after picking, the plant may be turned under and left to enrich the soil.

5: Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1959
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221 796 time. "Waraga," which means "first cultivation," is the name given to the fifth. The sixth, which appears in early September or late August, is called "Baca," meaning "second cultivation."

If the millet is not yet ripe for harvest at the appearance of the seventh moon, it is also called "Baca," since the work of cultivation must continue. This choice rests with the chief of the village of Room. The entire Mossi kingdom waits for his decision to know whether the ceremonial cycle called "Basga," which closes the economic year, is to begin or whether the harvest and its attendant ceremonies are to be put off for another month. Just behind his residence is a sacred millet field whose [774 824] grains, as they mature, contain an aspect of the souls (*riim shiise*) of the dead kings of the Yatenga. When the millet in this field is ready to be cut, the next moon to appear is called "Yalem," and the ceremonial cycle which closes the economic year is begun. In the early days of the Yatenga [769] dynasty millet from this field was used to prepare a sacrificial gruel to propitiate the deceased rulers of the newly established kingdom. When it is cut today, a first portion is taken to the altar at Room dedicated to the souls of these early kings. Two other bundles of millet are prepared from the same field. One is sent to the *Yatenga Naba* at Ouahigouya, who is the living descendant of the dead kings. The other is sent to the village of Gourcy, the former capital and the first residence of the founder of the Yatenga dynasty, Naba Yadiga.

The emissaries to the two political centers are accompanied by young people who break off stalks of millet from the fields along their way, adding these to the bundles of grain so as to include all of the farmers of the [769] Yatenga in this offering which symbolizes the dependence of the Mossi on the benevolence of the souls of the dead kings and their living descendant. The millet taken to Ouahigouya is sacrificed at the palace altar of the former rulers. Part of the millet sent to Gourcy is sacrificed at the altar of the spirits of the former village chiefs (*nakom shiise*); the other part is sacrificed at the shrine of the former kings. At Ouahigouya and Gourcy a portion of each sacrificial offering of millet is returned to Room [182] with stalks from the local crop at each place. These are used to make a final sacrifice symbolizing the interdependent relationship of Mossi religious, economic, and political organizations. The ceremonial cycle serves to demonstrate the reliance of the people on the benevolence of the spirits of their former kings for their social, economic, and supernatural well-being.

A ceremony called "Kom Filiga" follows. Meaning "water thanksgiving," it is the occasion for thanking the Mossi ruler, the *Yatenga Naba*, for the wise direction of affairs which has permitted the farmers to cultivate their fields in peace. All village and canton chiefs travel to Ouahigouya to salute their king and rededicate themselves to his service.

000 nigérien /The Central Nigerian Plateau/, pages 275 and 276.)

782 776 The Mossi sacrifice to evil spirits (kinkirga in the singular, kinkirsi in the plural). In Mossi villages, when the cold weather begins, the oldest man in the village performs a sacrifice to avert the wrath of evil spirits. These are indeed fearsome, for among other things they cause the storms, the fierce winds that lay flat the millet and maize. Those spirits usually live in the bush and inhabit [824] in particular the kankalra trees (lenga in Mandé), to which the Mossi offer sacrifices but whose leaves they nevertheless eat. There are Mossi who can see the kinkirsi and who have fights with them.

791 Now, let us say a word about the priestly organization of the Mossi.

/591/ First of all, among the Mossi as among other Blacks, there are soothsayers and makers of grigris. The soothsayers are called bara and the grigri makers timisoba, meaning "grigri chiefs," from timi, "grigri" and soba, "chief." This is exactly the same word formation as that of basitigui in Bambara.

Prior to the French occupation there were considerable numbers of bara among the Mossi, at least one for every village. Since the arrival of the Whites, however, they are much fewer. The bara dis- [787] close things with the aid of some earth. Since they only charge a few cowries for a consultation, they till the soil during the winter season and even work at a trade during the dry season, for example at shoemaking or weaving. They teach the bara's calling to their children.

791 789 The timisoba, although less numerous than the bara, do not make a living by making grigris either. They, too, till the soil and work at a trade. They only make grigris on order and do not make them up in advance.

The timisoba goes into the bush and cuts out the roots of certain trees. He burns them and puts the charcoal in bags which he hangs either inside or outside his hut. This charcoal is or becomes grigri. In order to make other objects into grigris, he reduces the charcoal to powder, mixes it with karité butter, and marks with it all the objects he wishes to make into grigris, such as cow's tails, deer horns, sheep horns, etc. This charcoal powder is put to all sorts of uses. The timisoba even mixes it with his millet flour and eats it.

304 At the end of three days, the nané sends a few circumcised boys of
824 preceding years, rasamba, to look in the bush for bark of the néré,
752 karite, n'pékou, and the n'kouna trees. He has them boiled in a large
881 canari and then allows the water to cool until it is lukewarm. Then he calls the bankonsé (this is the name of the newly circumcised boys in Mossi, bankonka in the singular, bankonsé in the plural) and orders them to wash their penes in this water. At the same time he has the leaves of the kantoboga boiled. This is an aloe-type plant of which we have already spoken /not translated/. When this washing is done, the bankonsé smear their penes with cow butter (karite butter is avoided because it is believed to soften the penis and to make it less virile), and then, after cutting kantoboga leaves into pieces, they wrap them around the member, forming a sort of sheath. These leaves are wrapped with cotton thread so they will stay in place. /260/

From then on, the same procedure is repeated every morning and every evening. The bankonsé undo the bandage, wash with néré or karite water, apply fresh butter and new kantoboga leaves. This is done until the wounds are healed.

Néré water, once prepared, keeps for seven days. The supply of kantoboga leaves is renewed only when there are no more on hand.

304 The bankonsé do not stir for the first three days. From the third
883 to the tenth day, they begin to take a little exercise. For example,
881 they fetch whatever water they need. At the end of ten days, they walk about in the bush, fetch firewood which they stack in piles, and do the same with straw. In the open country they chase hares, rats, and snakes with sticks, in short, all the small game which is to be found there. When there is water in the vicinity, they fish for frogs and fish. They also pick berries from bushes, etc.

[292] Their clothing consists of a kind of skirt which goes down to their ankles and which is made of old garments torn to shreds, of frayed cotton bands.

In the evening from time to time the bankonsé have tom-tom sessions near the shed where they sleep in the village. The griot /drummers, minstrels/ come and play on their instruments. Since this is done at night, men, women, and children may attend.

304 The bankonsé are entitled to ransack the bush and to take every-
425 thing they find: chickens, goats, sheep, cotton, etc. The owners
881 have no right to object, but this applies only to small livestock. The bankonsé have no right to larger animals and horses.

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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posted to alert the troops in case the enemy should attempt an attack at dawn. If the war was waged against foreigners, individual soldiers were allowed to keep a slave or a cow out of the booty; the remainder was divided between the district chiefs and the central government. In victorious civil wars against the enemies of the Mogho Naba, however, the entire booty was sent to the capital.

When the Mossi had to defend their own territory, their most common tactic was to evacuate the villages. This was the technique most often employed against invading French forces.[29] Other defenses included palisaded villages, barricades of fallen trees, trenches, and hedges, some with poisoned foot traps. Mangin reports that the Boulsa were defeated in their war with Fada-N'Gourma not only because their enemies fought valiantly, but also because they "were favored by very propitious terrain covered with thorny scrub, behind which the besieged men took cover to shoot on the Mossi."[30] Mangin does not say whether the scrub was poisoned, but his data indicate that this type of defense was common in the area. The Mossi say that the use of poisoned prickly plants (*silenage*) against invading forces dates back to the early conquest of the territory. Tradition recounts that Naba Oubri was unable to conquer Ouagadougou until his Ninisi wife advised him to shoe his soldiers against the poisoned foot traps of the aborigines.

Mossi wars or raids were usually limited to the dry season and stopped at the beginning of the planting season. Commenting on the war between Boulsa and Fada-N'Gourma, Mangin tells us: "This was during the dry season. Thirst completed what the courage of the Gyekango people had begun, and many Mossi perished."[31] Tradition recounts that it took Mogho Naba Waraga five successive years of attack before he defeated Ramzi, the rebellious chief of Riziam principality. He finally defeated him when his army attacked the province before its people had been able to harvest their crops and retire into an impregnable fortress for the dry season. Judging by the reports of European visitors, this type of dry-season warfare continued as late as the 1890's. For example, Crozat could not understand why the Mogho Naba did not send an army to defeat the chief of Lalle district, who had imprudently raided a village near Ouagadougou, and he concluded that the ruler did not have an army. The fact is, however, that Crozat was in Ouagadougou between September 9 and September 30, a period when the potential soldiers of the Mogho Naba had not yet harvested their crops. Had Crozat remained in Mossi country for three or four months longer, he would have seen the ruler's army in action; for, as a matter of fact, the Lalle Naba's attack on Mogho Naba Wobogo was but the latest episode in a prolonged struggle between the two rulers.

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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000 19. There is a curious story among the people of Nobere district that Mogho Naba Mottoba (who reigned in the seventeenth century) was not a Mossi but a Fulani who was given the nam after he chanced upon the installation ceremony and assassinated the newly elected man during the night. This story is denied in Ouagadougou; in fact, it contradicts the genealogical records of the ruling dynasty. However, the gene-
[174] alogy does show that Mottoba's father, Mogho Naba Guiliga, had succeeded his brother, and it is possible that there was dynastic rivalry for the nam between Mottoba and the former Mogho Naba's son.

20. This rite was performed during the installation of the present Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou, although it is hardly recognizable as described in *Newsweek* (December 9, 1957, p. 48): "A man named Moussa Congo assumed the name of Kougri Naba last week and became the 35th Mogho Naba of the Mossi in the capital city of Ouagadougou in the Upper Volta region of French West Africa. Son of Emperor Issoufou Congo, Kougri Naba, as the new Mogho Naba, has one white horse, 200 wives, and 8,000 warriors, who danced around his palace ten times."

[182] 21. This practice has apparently lapsed since Mogho Naba Kougri moved into the modern concrete palace built for his father, Mogho Naba Sagha II.

[838] 22. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Soudan*, pp. 569–70. Tauxier claims the Mogho Nanamse used the pages for homosexual purposes on Fridays in order to circumvent the Moslem prohibition against intercourse with women on this holy day. Homosexuality is rare among the Mossi, as Tauxier himself admits, and most Mossi deny that the Mogho Nanamse ever resorted to it. However, one respondent did state that he had heard about homosexuality among certain past rulers.

23. Crozat, p. 4849.

[648] 24. When Mogho Naba Kom II died under mysterious circumstances in 1942, it
[762] was rumored that he had committed suicide rather than reduce the number of his wives as ordered by the administration under the influence of the Catholic mission-
[797] aries. Kom allegedly held that no one can inherit a sovereign's wife during his lifetime. Therefore, in order to avoid loss of status by seeing his wives go to commoners, he chose death so they would be inherited by nobles.

[114] 25. The statement in *Newsweek* (December 9, 1957, p. 48) that Kougri has two hundred wives is untrue.

26. Intermarriage between the Mossi and the Fulani has produced a people known
[563] as the Simili-Mossi. Nevertheless, the Mossi are strongly prejudiced against the Fulani, especially against the women, stating that the Moaga who has sexual intercourse with a Fulani woman must bathe in nine different rivers before he becomes clean. The basis of this prejudice appears to be that Fulani women are not cultivators and therefore are unacceptable as Mossi wives.

27. Mossi women know a great deal about the history and traditions of their people. But they never indicate that they do except during such rituals, when they are required to play certain roles.

28. Dim Delobson, p. 96.

29. Dim Delobson (p. 101) states that there are "sacred things" in this village, but I have been unable to substantiate his report.

[324] 30. Dim Delobson (p. 104) gives the classic explanation of this nighttime ride. On his ride from Bere to Djiba, the mounted prince must try to touch a certain branch of a certain tree. If he is destined to succeed his father, he will succeed in touching the branch; if he is not, the branch will magically withdraw at his approach.

I visited the area in which this ritual reportedly took place, but the people in the vicinity denied that such a tree existed.

31. *Ibid.*, p. 106.

[648] 32. IFAN (Compte Rendu No. 429). There are many other rumors concerning Kom's death. In a book praising the loyalty of the Africans to the Free French Gov-

366 for good fortune and health. Prevent all bloodshed in this market.
782 We also fear those who are quarrelsome and those who talk too much, those who provoke disorder." The chicken is the first victim to be sacrificed, and if the offering is accepted, it must have first fallen on its back and only then turned over face downward (this means that the gods of the place will protect the naba and the persons who will frequent the market). Next the goat or sheep is killed.

The new market is opened immediately after the sacrifice. Those present buy the women's fritters. Ordinarily, Mossi markets
[443] are held every three days. The news travels rapidly that such-and-such a village has a market, and thus the business of the market gradually grows.

Collection of fees. It is only later on, one or even two years
366 after the installation of his new market and when [79] it is success-
651 ful, that the canton chief appoints a yaguinga (grandson, or, more
[601] accurately in native terms, a sister's son (nephew)or son's son (grandson), of the naba or of a member of his family) or a Gourounsi captive to act as collector of market fees. (We shall list below the various fees for a place in the market as they were collected for the benefit of the naba before the arrival of the French.)

366 Transfer of the market. Upon the death of a naba (the emperor, a vassal chief, or even the chief of the village where the market is held), the market is temporarily set up in another place. In large towns, such as Ouagadougou, for example, there may be as many markets as there are sections. These temporary markets are called kim'dagha (market of the kimsé, that is, of the deceased).

When a new naba has been named, the market is moved back
366 to its former site and the reinstallation calls for new sacrifices of
782 fowl and livestock. That was why in 1897, when the market at Ouagadougou was being re-established, the emperor asked the captain who was in command of the post to provide a cow to be sacrificed along with a sheep and a rooster which he himself provided.

Likewise, whenever a hyena has run through the market (its
366 presence is discovered either by the tracks left by the animal or by
825 consulting the soothsayers), just as happens when a naba dies, the
787 market must be moved elsewhere for a few days. It is believed that if [80] a brawl should occur after a hyena had passed through the market, there would certainly be a death.

226 most difficult to ford. Each watercourse, or more exactly each pond,
[423 belongs to a naba and bears a special name, so no river has the same name
55P] name all along its course. During the dry season the lelek /bed?/ of the watercourses is usually dry. Here and there are to be found ponds of varying depth where the cattle is watered. These ponds are where the natives fish. They wait until the water level subsides to knee height, for otherwise fishing would be too difficult.

226 The fishing gear is as crude as the hunting gear. There is a small
227 net held open by three sticks forming a triangle and crossed by a tough stick that is held in the hand, quite similar to the spoon-nets we use to gather shrimp. Above all a sort of wicker trap is used, conical in shape, open at the base and closed at the tip with a movable lid. This trap sometimes contains a second one made of very flexible sticks that are attached to the base of the first one. The two traps thus have a common base, but the second one opens within the first. The fish enters the trap and is held by the sticks of the smaller cone, which close in as the fish tries to get out. The fisherman removes the trap from the water or leaves it sunk in the mud, opens the lid, plunges in his hand and removes the fish, which is confined and easy to seize. The fisherman then puts it in a net or in a leather bag.

226 On a set date the owner of the pond offers sacrifices to the crocodiles
825 so they will not bite anybody. This is why the naba of Koupéla, before he fishes in his pond, must sacrifice a black goat and a chicken. No one may kill a crocodile while fishing, or the naba will die before the year is over. Was not a crocodile killed in his father's pond on
[78P] the very year when he died? Before they go fishing, the natives make charms by burning roots and tree bark inside their traps. If the charm is good, the fish will rush headlong into the net or trap.

226 The fishermen gather at one end of the pond. They stand in a row across the water and move slowly forward while dipping their nets and traps over and over again. All the fish caught are put in bags or tossed to friends who stand on the shore, but, as during the hunt, the naba takes an ample share and seizes the finest specimens. The ponds hold mostly silurids anyway, which like mud and retain its odor and taste even when cooked. The Volta rivers, on the other hand, contain more abundant and more varied fish. /52/ When the natives have crossed and recrossed the pond several times, only small fry remain, and everyone goes home glad to have a little fish for the sauce and especially to have escaped the teeth of the crocodiles, for in spite of

776 kikiriga, in turn, are to ward off anything that might harm the crop,
241 birds, caterpillars, thieves, and the like, and to fill with millet a granary of the size drawn on the ground with ashes at the time of harvest. If the kikiriga has properly carried out his duties, he gets another chicken when all the grain has been gathered in a heap.
776 Pregnant women are under the protection of a special kikiriga, and
[843] small children have one of their own to ward off illness and danger. Do we not say ourselves that a special Providence watches over the very young?

776 Actually, everyone has his kikiriga. Some have an evil one, and
828 those are the people who quarrel with everybody, the ones who are never successful, whose livestock dies, for the kikirsi often kill the goats, sheep, and horses that die of illness. Other people have a
[677] good kikiriga, and for them everything goes well; they were born under a lucky star. These are the engaging, sweet, good-natured people
[513] who get rich and who have many children. When a Mossi lies down to sleep in his hut, he rests his head on a stone or a small mound of beaten earth. This is where his kikiriga dwells, and from time to time, especially when he feels the need for special protection, he
[782] sacrifices a guinea hen or sometimes even a goat, with the understanding that the spirit will chase away all fellow spirits who might want to harm him and will avert all illness and all danger from his path.

/83/ The tangandé is a spirit who has the shape of an animal and
776 who is regarded as the protector of a village. The term is also ex-
778 tended to designate the spirit's place of residence, usually the sacred
825 grove but sometimes a mere stone or even an open space. The tangandé may be a crocodile, a boa, a leopard, a turtle, a deer, a hare, etc. The animal is sacred to the whole village and may not be killed in the sacred grove, but it may be killed elsewhere, even a short distance from the thicket.

776 The tangandé is a guardian spirit because it protects men and sends
755 its servants to accompany the village people on trips when they request it to do so. The natives incessantly turn to it for protection, and the sorcerers incessantly refer those who consult them to the tangandé to obtain cures and to request the release of souls held captive
776 by evil sorcerers. When someone dies, sacrifices are made to the
782 tangandé with requests to protect the survivors and to ward off illness.
[774] When souls leave the body during sleep, they often go to the sacred grove. Anyone may sacrifice to the tangandé and in the tangandé.

821 Water in general and rain in particular are a blessing in this sun-
825 scorched land. Crocodiles are reputed to attract water to their dwelling-place. To kill a crocodile may not necessarily amount to homicide, but it amounts at least to drying out a watercourse or pond, for the crocodiles will leave the place and the water will leave with them. If rain is too long delayed, the crop will not have time to ripen; if it falls too heavily, especially at the beginning and at the end of the winter season, weeds will choke the millet, or the flowers will fall before the fruit is formed.

789 Rain is, therefore, desired or feared according to the circumstances, and the power to make rain and to ward it off devolves upon the naba,
829 who rules on the life and death of his subjects. In truth every powerful man is believed to possess this power, and how often they requested me to make rain! Is it not true that Whites can do anything? They are related to the ancestral spirits, their color proves it! Do they not come from the land of water? Did they not emerge from the water? In spite of my assertions that God alone can make rain, that one must pray for it, their skeptical smiles made it plain that they did not believe me.

789 The naba has the charm, the talisman, to draw rain. All he need do when a storm threatens is to take from his hut a certain jar full of certain roots and fill it with water to overflowing. On the other hand, if he wishes to ward off rain, he burns another kind of root, and the wind carries the smoke in the direction where the naba wishes to send the clouds; or else he hangs a cow's or horse's tail to a stick by a thread, and the wind tosses it, thus driving the clouds away. This is why the naba sends one of his men to market when the rainy season draws near, to gather karite fruit from each woman there, because the pits are used to make the charm and must be obtained in this fashion. If a person other than the naba has tried to make rain and failed, he attributes his failure to someone more powerful than himself; if the naba fails, no one says anything about it, or else it is said that the naba did not really wish to attract or to ward off the rain.

821 Every storm is accompanied by lightning, which often kills people in this land of violent thunderstorms. Its effects are attributed to an evil spirit, to an enemy who can send lightning if he knows the proper tim, or to God Himself. Lightning strikes thieves and murderers; it is a punishment. If it does not kill the thief himself, it kills the proceeds of the theft, the stolen horse or sheep. It never kills a person without reason.

224 435 At Kombisiguiri, as we have just seen, there are 10 elephant hunters out of about 70 chiefs of compounds. Among the latter there are also some 20 men who hunt other animals, but they are cultivators who hunt on the side. They seek buffalo. When they kill one, they sell the meat to the village that stands nearest to the spot of the kill for 35,000 cowries. They also hunt the koba antelope, whose meat is worth from 20,000 cowries, the striped deer worth 6,500, the pig deer worth 5,000, the wart hog worth 10,000. They also hunt hares, bustards, guinea fowl, partridges, turtle-doves, etc.

224 262 The Mossi do not hunt monkeys and do not eat them. /495/ Actually, there are very few in Mossi territory, except for the red-haired monkeys who are great lovers of millet and maize.

224 825 778 The Mossi do not hunt crocodiles because the latter are held sacred. If one were to kill a crocodile, one would become ill, one's head would swell and one's teeth would fall out. Snakes, on the other hand, are killed and eaten, but in Mossi territory proper there are few large ones (pythons, boas) because the climate is not sufficiently humid. They are more numerous in Boussansé and Gourounsi lands.

226 Fishing is less important than hunting among the Mossi, for the simple reason that the land, with its low rainfall, only has muddy ponds during the dry season (on this subject, see our Introduction /not translated/). Thus, not only do the Mossi lack professional fishermen, but the villages do not even undertake collective fishing during the dry season (with the exception of some southern localities, in Kombisiguiri for example). Only children attempt to catch the mudfish which are always present in large quantities in small ponds, even when they are nearly dry.

222 Gathering, on the other hand, plays the same role among the Mossi as among the other Sudanese Blacks, and we shall study it here in some detail, since we have only described it in broad outline so far.

222 137 The tree most widespread throughout Mossi territory, and which grows wild, is the karité. Its leaves are a pleasant green, and it is somewhat similar to our Normandy apple tree. Its bark is whitish and made of small juxtaposed quadrilaterals. It is the karité which

137 They are 7 or 8 meters tall, 10 meters at most, and their huge fruits are bunched in clusters of five or six rather than forty or fifty.

There are no rônier in the Mossi bush itself, but there are some
137 in every Mossi village. They originated from seeds tossed at random
222 after eating the fruits, or from an ancient cultivation of the tree. The rônier, therefore, is not a natural product of Mossi territory and should not, in all exactitude, be listed among the gathering crops. On the other hand, can it be listed with the cultivated crops at the present day, and can we call cultivation the act of tossing seeds to the ground in order to get rid of them? No matter what the truth may be, the Mossi eat /503/ the fruits of their rônier but do not extract any palm wine. As we have just said, they use the fibers of the leaves for their wickerwork.

137 While the rônier occur in Mossi territory, there are, on the other hand, no palm-oil trees and palmier-ban /?/. Those begin to appear only in Gourounsi territory, to the south of the Mossi.

222 We have just reviewed the most important gathering trees in
137 the area, but the Mossi bush contains many others, less important to be sure but nevertheless useful, which we shall now mention.

First, there is the ganra or ganga (sounsoun in Mandé, diomba in Peuhl and Sarakolé). This is the medlar tree of West Africa. In appearance, it is a big tree similar to the karité but even bigger, with a thicker and more powerful trunk.

The fruit is a medlar, smaller than the European one. When green, it has the same acrid taste and numbs the mouth. When ripe, it is such as we eat it in Europe. The natives begin to eat it during the rainy season and consume it until January.

386 The wives of Bambara blacksmiths make a varnish for pots and
171 canari with the bark of the sounsoun. As for the wives of Mossi blacksmiths, they prefer to use for this purpose the bark of two trees we shall mention later, the nobora and the sibi. In Gourounsi territory, on the other hand, the women who make pottery pluck the medlars while still green and crush them. They add water, thus making a sort of varnish which they use on the canari after they are fired. The ganra is called kano in Nounouma, kakano in Kassouna, kalo in Sissala, and ganra or ganga in Nankana and Mossi.

● 825 Let us add that among the Mossi, as in all of West Africa, the ganra tree is closely related to fetishistic superstitions, and will be mentioned again in a later chapter on religion.

782 dolo and millet flour. There was no set time for this. The flesh
778 of the sacrificed animals devolved to the sacrificer, the head of Sékou.

At present day sacred groves are still to be found in various Mossi villages. Thus, for example, there are three at Kabayoro, two of which belong to individuals and one to the village. The Earth chief /Tr.: Tengsoba/ of Kabayoro offers sacrifices to the village grove whenever the bara says so.

The Mossi also make sacrifices to the hills.

At Sabtinga, about 17 kilometers northwest of Ouagadougou, there is a rise in the ground called Tantiibo where the Moro Naba used to go once a year with the Baloum Naba, many chiefs and people at the time when the weather begins to grow cold. He ordered a beef, a chicken, millet flour, and a gourd of dolo to be taken along, and they were handed over to the head of the quarter where the hillock stood. This chief performed the sacrifice and begged the piece of ground to grant good health to the Moro Naba. Only
[839] the Moro Naba, the Balou, the sacred people (eunuchs), and the soroné were present at the sacrifice, Other people who had come to Sabtinga remained in the village, whence the Moro Naba set out on foot to the spot of the sacrifice.

At Kombé-Padanda, a small hillock located in a /589/ Ouagadougou quarter, the same sacrifice was offered in the same fashion and at the same time of year.

326 Let us add that when Mossi blacksmiths go and smelt iron ore
782 in the bush, they kill chickens and offer millet flour on the spot where they extract the ore. The sacrifice is offered to the spirits of the hill, as well as to the Earth and to Naba Ouondé.

778 Sacrifices are made to watercourses as well as to hills, either
782 at fishing time or whenever the bara indicate that a certain stream requires a certain sacrifice.

825 As far as crocodiles are concerned, some of them are held
262 sacred by the Mossi. As for snakes, they are killed and usually eaten, but not everyone eats them. Some people abstain.

778 As for the Earth, the Moro Naba had sheep, chickens, millet
782 flour, and dolo handed over to the Baloum Naba through eunuchs several times a year, whenever a bara told him to do so. The Baloum Naba handed these gifts in person to the chief of Ouagadougou,

[P. 60]

IV

ADMINISTRATION

642 631 THE Mossi always looked to their rulers, especially to the Mogho Nanamse, the Dimdamba, and the Kombemba, to determine administrative policies and to pronounce on all relevant issues. All foreigners who requested information were told, "You must talk to the chief."[1] The Mossi believed that [825] men cannot live without chiefs, and insisted that even animals have chiefs. Mossi rulers were therefore expected to ensure internal tranquillity in times of peace and to protect their subjects and territories in times of war. The expectation that they would also provide impartial judgment is best expressed by a dictum of the Ouagadougou people: "The truth is at Ouagadougou." [769] Finally, Mossi chiefs were held responsible for inducing the ancestors to bring health and prosperity to their subjects. To this end, they supervised and participated in rituals to their ancestors and encouraged the people in every territory, district, village, and compound to do likewise. In return, the people paid homage and allegiance to their chiefs and provided them with the goods and services they needed to support the administrative process.

643 631 642 175 The nature of the administrative relationship between the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou, the rulers of Yatenga, Fada-N'Gourma, and Tenkodogo, and the autonomous Dimdamba was not clear to the early visitors to Mossi country, and remains a matter of controversy. Two conflicting principles were always at work: seniority with respect to the nam and claims of close descent from Ouedraogo and Oubri on the one hand, and relative political strength or military power on the other. The stronger a ruler, the less he deferred to his lineal seniors. He might even claim a supremacy over them that came close to a claim of seniority. When Barth visited the Sudan in 1853, he was told that the Mossi country was "split into a number of small principalities, almost totally independent of each other, and paying only slight homage to the principality of Woghododogo." Barth reports, however, that the Dim of Boussouma was "probably the most powerful of the Mossi chiefs at the . . . time, especially with regard to cavalry." Similarly,

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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443 taxes in their markets. The French abolished both of these offices
557 when they took over the country, because they looked upon them as
651 purely exploitative rather than regulatory agents. But like so many
656 other Mossi political institutions which the French have "abolished,"
178 the Kos Naga and Raga Naba persist in many of the districts, and per-
648 haps even in such large centers as Wagadougou. These officials persist
829 because one of the basic assumptions of the Mossi is that everything
825 must have a "chief." They believe that even the animals in the bush have chiefs, and if men, too, did not have chiefs then social life would be chaos. Thus, in the rural areas many or most district chiefs have retained their market officials even though the roles of these officials have become highly attenuated and so secretive that their existence is often denied.

175 Taxes collected at the market places played an important part in
443 supporting the traditional political hierarchy of the Mossi people.
651 The Kos Naba collected 250 cowries in taxes for every beef cattle
649 slaughtered at the market and took their humps and gave them to a palace official called the Nemdo Naba (meat chief) for distribution in the royal household. He also collected 250 cowries on every cow sold there, but did not usually tax goats and sheep. In lieu of this he occasionally took a head or two of these animals from each herd that passed through the market and sent them to the palace kitchens. Donkeys were also taxed at the rate of 200 cowries per head sold in the market. Horses sold to the nobility were not taxed, but those exported were taxed about 300 cowries.

175 The Raga Naba collected the taxes on other commodities sold at
443 market. Cotton weavers paid him taxes according to the size of their
651 bolts of cloth, and cotton producers paid as much as 20 cowries on
463 especially large sales of their raw produce. The tailors and dyers paid no fixed tax on their wares, but were asked to send clothing to the palace. Every donkey- or ox-load of salt which entered the market place was assessed a tax of 300 cowries. The smiths were not taxed in cowries, but had to supply the wives of the Moro Naba with hoes and the palace personnel with arrowheads, spearpoints and iron clubs. The jewelers also sent bracelets as presents to the ruler. There were no fixed taxes on cereals, vegetables and cooked food sold at market, but each day the Raga Naba, accompanied by several pages or retainers carrying baskets, went from vendor to vendor taking several calabash-fuls of their produce for use in the palace. In addition, the vendors of cooked food had to feed the young grooms of the Moro Naba who were not regularly fed by the palace household. The beer sellers, too, while they were not assessed taxes, contributed a good percentage of their beverage to palace and market personnel who demanded the

782 755 Then the sacrificer and his assistants eat the victim, but the patient does not partake of it.

782 751 [753] The silent sacrifice, mand'moukou—also called "egg sacrifice," mand'gellé, because an egg is offered—is made in the following circumstances. Some diseases have the dismal faculty of talking like people. They call someone, who answers to his name thinking that a human being has called him. This is sufficient, he will fall ill and die.

The sorcerer decrees that such a disease threatens the village, and that a silent sacrifice is in order. The naba and the elders anxiously delegate one of the men among them to offer the sacrifice. On the following day in the morning, the appointed elder takes an egg, often also a kola nut and special roots, and follows the path which the disease would take if it came to the village. He walks in complete silence. When he reaches a certain point, he brings the egg close to his lips and tells it secretly that a disease threatens the village, and that if the disease tries to follow this path, the egg must stop it. Then he places the egg, kola nut, and roots upon the ground or buries them and retraces his steps. /94/ The egg, a chicken-to-be that cannot yet talk, is chosen as a symbol of the silence that must be observed to ward off the disease.

In the procedure called "bad sacrifice," the victim is not eaten by those present but left on the spot, where it rots or is eaten by vultures and hyenas. Any animal may be offered in this fashion, but the sorcerer alone may decide when the sacrifice is called for. It is usually performed to avert a general misfortune, for example, to ward off a contagious disease that will devour the animal and leave the people alone. The victim is sometimes abandoned alive and driven into the bush.

782 Anything may be offered in sacrifice if the sorcerer says so: kola nuts, cowries, the ashes of certain barks or roots, red stones, the inner fruit of the karite tree, etc. Chickens are the victims most commonly chosen, but sacrifices of goats and sheep are not uncommon. We have already mentioned the guinea hen as the sacrifice preferred by the kikirsi. The nabas are sometimes required to sacrifice cows or donkeys in certain cases. Some nabas, but not all, may sacrifice horses. Finally, even men were sacrificed in the old days. Certain tangamma [563] were greedy for human sacrifices, and the Peul were often used for this purpose. Natives with light skins tending to red, thus closer to [826] the color of ancestral spirits which are said to be white, were sacrificed to these spirits in preference to any others.

844 the child is washed in warm water and then placed on a mat in a sort of nest made with old skirt cloths and various bits of fabric. Then the woman is placed on the mat next to the child which can now be suckled. Let us note, however, one final ceremony. Before the
844 woman gives the breast, the child is washed in dolo, especially the
853 inside /253/ of the nose and the genitalia, for the Mossi, like the
●826 Bambara, are convinced that mother's milk has an injurious effect on these two parts of a child's anatomy. If the child, while suckling, should breathe in some milk through its nose, this would, it is said, cause the interior of the organ to rot. Likewise, were a few drops to fall on its genitalia, that part would suffer from it. The dolo prevents such lamentable accidents.

846 At the end of three days, the woman leaves the compound and goes to pay a call on the old women who helped her and to thank them. After two weeks or a month, she takes up her usual tasks.

The Mossi and Foulsé women of Yatenga carry their children on
854 the back after the fashion of other Sudanese women, holding them in a skirt cloth which they tie and knot up in front over the breasts.

851 Baptism. —No celebration takes place at birth. The child is bap-
553 tized about a month later. One of the older members of the family, other than the mother and father, chooses the name. In selecting it, the sponsor takes some event into account, whether important or unimportant, which occurred during the mother's pregnancy. If she was frightened by a horse, the child is named Oueyfo. If, by accident, she crushed a chicken to death, the newborn is called Noga. If a sacrifice was made for the expected child on a hill, he is named Tenga; if the sacrifice was made to a bastard mahogany tree, the child is called Kouka, etc.

551 Let us note that most Mossi proper names, male or female, are the names of vegetables, trees, animals, etc., that is, precisely those names with which an attempt was made to replace the traditional proper names in France in 1793.

Curiously enough, there are no family names. When one wants to pinpoint someone's individuality, one says, "So-and-So (here, the proper name), son of So-and-So (here, the father's proper name)." If there are two men with the same name in one compound, an agnomen will be used to distinguish them, for example, "Tenga the Big and Tenga the Small." As for the Mossi sondogo (pl., sondéré), which is the same as the Bambara diamou, this is a clan name (we shall return

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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8. Cf. Marc, p. 156.
9. Cf. Fortes, pp. 258–71.
10. Skinner, "The Diffusion of Islam," pp. 659–69.
11. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Soudan*, pp. 585–86.
12. Dim Delobson, p. 205.
13. Crozat, p. 4820.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 4822.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 4835.
16. Binger, I, 452.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 456.
18. *Ibid.*, pp. 452–56.
19. Archives, Document 15G-190 (1897–98). Instructions left to Captain Scal by Destenave, June 1897.

CHAPTER NINE

1. Marc, p. 17.
2. Barth, III, 595. Although it is possible that the Wolof prince Bemoy did hear about the Mossi, he was mistaken about the name of their ruler. Interestingly enough, the title "Ogane" is not too dissimilar from Hogon, the title of head men among the Dogon (Habe or Kado) whom the Mossi had pushed into the hills of Bandiagara. Cf. Bascom, p. 24.
3. Barth, III, 606.
4. Bowdich, p. 180.
5. Dupuis, Appendix CVII.
6. Clapperton, II, 323.
7. Barth, III, 643–49. As cited earlier, Barth states that the Portuguese got reports about the Mossi in the year 1533 "from the wrong side, namely from Benin." This may not have been altogether "the wrong side," however, for Barth gives us data on caravans from Mossi country to Sansane Mango in Togoland that indicate how news about the Mossi might have traveled from the interior to Benin city in Nigeria.
8. Koelle, p. 6. Dixon, who seems to have been one of the few captured Mossi sold to the West, reports: "Mose is west of Gurma, east of Andemtenga, where a different language is spoken. Mose is also two days journey from Butmera, where the same language is spoken; four days from Bulega [Bolga tanga], the language still the same, and confederate with Kambonse, i.e. Asante; two days from Yaongo, with still the same language; six days from Bosanse which is at enmity with Mose and where people bore their lips, and often tie them together with grass, and whose language is different from Mose; four days from Busma also a different language, and in which country there is a very high mountain (Tanga) from which those who ascend never come back again [probably a reference to Plimpikou, the Mossi holy mountain]; three or four weeks from Kambonse, i.e. Asante. Kupeala is four days from Wardyga [Ouagadougou] the Mossi capital, whither the king of Asante often sent presents; and one month from Salak [Salaga], an Asante town, where they bring kola nuts."
9. Marc, p. 30.
10. Great Britain, Parliamentary papers xlvi, 1882.
11. The people of Nobere, Manga, and other districts surrounding Bere have traditions about Krause, who is remembered as the first white-skinned person ever seen in those parts. The color of his skin was attributed to the fact that, "like the fish," he had come out of the sea.
12. Krause, pp. 92 ff. Although there is no evidence to this effect in the literature, it appears certain that Mossi government officials knew of Krause's visit. They treated most travelers in the following manner: "After entering a town the party is given in charge of a man usually termed 'housemaster.' It is his duty to exercise surveillance over the action of the stranger and to report the result to the authorities. . . . The trader conducts his business through his 'housemaster,' who usually makes a handsome gain by acting as middleman (G. E. Ferguson, quoted in Wolfson, p. 199).

776 considered the wife of a male deity called *Winnam*, *Windé*, or *Naba Zidiwindé*. The true nature of Winnam is not clear. The Mossi say: "Winnam is the sun, and Winnam is God"; he is considered a sun god as well as a supreme deity. [775] Winnam is venerated but he is not feared, because it is the dead ancestors who chastise evil-doers by affliction or death. When wicked people die they face the wrath of the ancestors in *Keemsétenga*, or land of the ancestors.

The Mossi have several concepts of the spiritual essence or animating prin-
774 ciple of man. First there is the *seega* (pl. *seesé*), an entity found in all living beings; it leaves the body during sleep, and its adventures provide the dreams of men. The seega can be captured during its nocturnal wanderings or in places [761] where large crowds congregate. If the seega is captured and eaten by a sorcerer, its owner will die. A man's shadow is also called his seega; persons about to die have no shadows, since their seesé have either been stolen or have [822] left on their own account.

Another principle called the *keema* (pl. *keemsé*) is associated with the dead
775 or with persons about to die. The keema of a dying man wanders around and often frightens people; as soon as he is dead, he is no longer referred to by name but is called the "keema." Keemsé is also the word used for the generalized [769] ancestors who sanction the behavior of the living and who must be placated if people wish to have enough food, wives, children, and good health. A man's own keemsé take a vital interest in his affairs, in return for which they receive nourishment in the form of the seesé (animals do not have keemsé) of sacrificed animals.

● [827] The breath, called *vousem*, is also considered an animating principle by the Mossi and, since it leaves the body through the nose at death, they believe that a man's nose is the first thing to die. It is not clear how the seega is disposed of when the body dies. Some people say it remains forever about the haunts of man; others believe that it goes to a mountain called Plimpikou and disappears into a cavern. Still others believe that the seega becomes the keema and goes to Plimpikou, from whence the keemsé come to visit their descendants. It is difficult to determine whether the Mossi have always been vague about their traditional religious concepts or whether this uncertainty is the result of the influx of such foreign creeds as Islam and Christianity.

The first recorded contact between the Mossi and Moslems took place
175 around 1328 when the Yatenga Mossi attacked, burned, and sacked Timbuktu,
797 then held by the Dia dynasty of the Songhoi (Dubois 1896:251). For more than a century afterward, the Mossi pursued a turbulent and aggressive policy in the region of the Niger bend, pushing as far as Gourma, Walata, and Banku (ibid:127). They were finally defeated and routed by Sonni Ali in 1477. In 1499, when Askia the Great (El Hadj Mohammed ben Abou Bekr, usurper of the Songhoi throne from the Sonni dynasty in 1494) returned from his pilgrimage to Mecca, he launched a *jihad* or holy war on the Mossi who had rejected his ultimatum to adopt Islam. Askia defeated the Mossi, "devastated the towns and countryside, took men, women, and children as prisoners, and forcibly converted these captives to Islam" (Dubois 1896:127–128). The

000 help each other. If they are sometimes, indeed too often, fleeced by middlemen—and it would seem that the various European administrations, no matter what their nationality, should prevent such speculations in their own best interests—if the natives are fleeced, a European ignorant of the customs and the language would be fleeced all the more. Who would guard his herds during his absence; who would lead them to far markets if he stayed home? It is difficult to find a native [181] who can be fully trusted. At present, however, trading in livestock is the only possible source of profit in the country.

The forthcoming railroad will soon change trade conditions and promote the interests of the Europeans without undermining those of the natives. This is to be desired, because Mossi country will only come fully into its own when its products can be exported. The natives were too long isolated as a result of their continuous warfare, and the nabas, it must be said, were too inclined to monopolize all the goods, for trade to develop in a significant way. The French peace, by making the roads safe, has already done much for the country; it will achieve even more when the railroad which is now cutting across Mossi country links it on the one hand to the Ivory Coast and on the other hand to the Niger Colony. Trade will then no longer be carried out exclusively with the Germans and the British, and as soon as native products find sure channels of export, the raising of livestock and agriculture itself will be greatly extended. The Mossi are not averse to trade. [181 They actually seem to possess a real knack for it, which until now 439] they have had no opportunity to exercise freely. They have not yet taken full advantage of their transactions, and this is why they seemed to some observers to have no aptitude for trade. They will adapt to it, as they already are.

/65/ Chapter 3. Hygiene, Disease, Death, and Burial

828 Part of life, especially the life of a Black, is spent in sleep, but 774 the slumberer is sometimes disturbed by dreams that are more or less 787 extraordinary. The Mossi attribute dreams to ancestral and other spirits. They also say that the soul leaves the body during sleep and does the things witnessed in the dream. Sorcerers are consulted to find out what caused the dreams and how to cope with the bad omens.

776 kikiriga, in turn, are to ward off anything that might harm the crop,
241 birds, caterpillars, thieves, and the like, and to fill with millet a granary of the size drawn on the ground with ashes at the time of harvest. If the kikiriga has properly carried out his duties, he gets another chicken when all the grain has been gathered in a heap.
776 Pregnant women are under the protection of a special kikiriga, and
[843] small children have one of their own to ward off illness and danger. Do we not say ourselves that a special Providence watches over the very young?

776 Actually, everyone has his kikiriga. Some have an evil one, and
828 those are the people who quarrel with everybody, the ones who are never successful, whose livestock dies, for the kikirsi often kill the goats, sheep, and horses that die of illness. Other people have a
[677] good kikiriga, and for them everything goes well; they were born under a lucky star. These are the engaging, sweet, good-natured people
[513] who get rich and who have many children. When a Mossi lies down to sleep in his hut, he rests his head on a stone or a small mound of beaten earth. This is where his kikiriga dwells, and from time to time, especially when he feels the need for special protection, he
[782] sacrifices a guinea hen or sometimes even a goat, with the understanding that the spirit will chase away all fellow spirits who might want to harm him and will avert all illness and all danger from his path.

/83/ The tangandé is a spirit who has the shape of an animal and
776 who is regarded as the protector of a village. The term is also ex-
778 tended to designate the spirit's place of residence, usually the sacred
825 grove but sometimes a mere stone or even an open space. The tangandé may be a crocodile, a boa, a leopard, a turtle, a deer, a hare, etc. The animal is sacred to the whole village and may not be killed in the sacred grove, but it may be killed elsewhere, even a short distance from the thicket.

776 The tangandé is a guardian spirit because it protects men and sends
755 its servants to accompany the village people on trips when they request it to do so. The natives incessantly turn to it for protection, and the sorcerers incessantly refer those who consult them to the tangandé to obtain cures and to request the release of souls held captive
776 by evil sorcerers. When someone dies, sacrifices are made to the
782 tangandé with requests to protect the survivors and to ward off illness.
[774] When souls leave the body during sleep, they often go to the sacred grove. Anyone may sacrifice to the tangandé and in the tangandé.

774 In the course of a dream, the soul may warn its owner of a threaten-
828 ing danger. One day a native, whose village and name were told to
761 me, dreamed that his enemy offered him a kola nut. Much anxiety ensued, for this is a sign used by the soul to indicate that an enemy threatens one with death. In such a case there is only one remedy, to deposit a few cowries on a nest of large red ants, so they will avert the disaster. The man set out immediately for the nearest ant nest. Alas, a snake bit him along the way, and he died before he could offer his gift to the ants! Such occurrences obviously make a profound imprint on the imagination of the natives, who immediately react with the sophism: post hoc, propter hoc. A few such cases are sufficient to anchor them forever in their superstitions, and innumerable such occurrences were related to me.

774 If the soul can leave the body, it is possible to seize it and to pre-
761 vent it from re-entering its body, and this is why our Blacks do not like to be photographed. They say that there is an evil spirit in the box, who takes the soul and eats it. This is proved by the fact that the individual may later be seen on the piece of paper.

774 One becomes sick when his soul cannot re-enter the body because
753 it is held prisoner by an evil sorcerer or by a kikiriga, and many sacrifices must be offered to obtain its release /86/ and return. Entreaties are usually directed to the tangandé in such cases, because it is stronger than all the other spirits, stronger even than the sorcerers, and because its function is to protect the village.

774 Sometimes the soul was so well hidden that the tangandé cannot
761 find it: the sorcerer has eaten it right away, or the tangandé itself
754 is in collusion; or the ancestral spirits are calling the sick person; or,
775 finally, it is God who sent the disease. Nothing can be done, and the person dies. His soul changes names, and henceforth is called kyma. It leaves the body at the moment of death. If it was taken by a sorcerer or by the ancestral spirits, at the moment of death it leaves the sacred grove where it was held captive. It proceeds to the place of souls from where it will return to the grave whenever sacrifices are offered to it. It will also return if it wishes to afflict the survivors with a disease of some sort.

775 Is the soul punished for the evil it has done on earth and rewarded
735 for the good? Opinions on the subject differ. Some say that when one gives alms to the poor, and the Mossi frequently do, when one is generous and hospitable, God takes all that has been given and sets

755 so that my heart may rejoice unceasingly. Then I will come back with another chicken, so that you too may rejoice and continue to protect my wives and my children." Then the sacrifice is concluded. This formula does indicate that the power of the medicine is wholly ascribed to God.

751 Certain superstitious practices that belong in the tim category are used in special cases. For the sake of curiosity, here is what is done when a man has killed a hyena and to protect the huts against lightning.

[82] If a man kills a hyena, he must hastily consult some other native who previously has killed one, or he will become raving mad. The hunter goes to such a man who knows a remedy against this raving madness and takes him a chicken. The man indicates which roots must be obtained, and the hunter gathers them in the bush. He cuts them to pieces and brings them to his doctor who seizes a jar, grabs the chicken, and pulls it toward the roots, then says while pouring water into the jar: "God-tim and his kikiriga, arise, stretch out your hand, and take this water to drink it; take this chicken to eat it, and grant the man who has killed a hyena not to become raving mad." He sacrifices the chicken and pours the blood into the pot. Then he puts half of the roots into the jar and reduces the other half to ashes.

The hunter takes the whole thing home, and for seven days he puts water from the medicine into his millet mush and ashes from the roots into his sauce.

On the seventh day all the family members get together and come with their friends to greet the hunter. They all toss cowries into the gourd which contains the medicine, then proceed to market with much ceremony. The hunter fastens the head of the hyena to the end of a staff and bears it triumphantly to market. He has /102/ the right to take pistachios, beans, millet, cakes, etc., free of charge, anything he wishes. When he is finished taking things, stealing like a hyena, the procession falls into line once more and proceeds to a thick tree near the market. There, the hunter drives his staff into the ground, and everybody starts dancing around him; then they take small sticks and strike him, and he hastily runs away. He is now sure that he will not become raving mad, and what is more from now on he may kill as many hyenas as he wishes without fear.

5: Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1959
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776 bush is included in the orderly universe which the Mossi have fabri-
823 cated, it exists at the periphery and is a thing to be feared. The name of this unknown and unowned part of the bush is synonymous with fear. Dreams in which an individual sees frightening images are called "bush
[828] creeping up" (*weogo doore*) or "bush traps you" (*weogo n'yoko fo*). These phrases are also used to describe the emotional shock, the feeling of fear, elicited by the unexpected sight of a frightening object like a corpse or a lion.

Most important among the supernatural beings inhabiting the bush are the twin spirits (*kikirdisi*). Living in pairs or in larger groups, they inhabit the bush, caves, baobab trees, and certain dense thickets of underbrush. While specific details vary, it is generally conceded that they are small, about a foot tall, black like the Mossi, and of both sexes. Their social organization is like that of men: each group is ruled over by a twin spirit-chief (*Kikirdisi Naba*).

845 Twin children are always regarded as the emissaries of the twin spirits.
776 Shortly after the birth of twins their mother takes a present of food to a place where the twin spirits are known to dwell. Leaving the gift and expressing her thanks, she also makes it clear to the twin spirits that if they have any sort of malicious intent in sending her their children they might as well take them back immediately, since she will tolerate no foolishness. If, through her new children, they plan to torment her, they should save their efforts and desist at once. While the twin spirits are frequently mischief-makers, they are more frivolous than malicious and essentially neither good nor evil. The death of newborn twins is accepted with relief, for it is believed certain that the twin spirits have been thwarted in their mischievous intent and have conceded defeat.

THE ECONOMIC AND CEREMONIAL CYCLE

796 A brief description of the economic cycle and the ceremonials which
221 mark its phases will serve to illustrate the way the Mossi perceive their relationship to the forces of their natural, supernatural, and social milieux and the methods by which they seek to assure their well-being through control of these forces. The year is usually divided into twelve
[805] moons whose names refer either to the principal economic activity of the season or to a ceremonial which accompanies it.

The first moon of the Mossi year is called "Gambo" after the name of the village which celebrates its first rain-making ceremony (*Tengana*) at this time. Although the rains are still five or six months away, this ritual marks the beginning of the new economic cycle. Each household which possesses land controlled by the earth custodian sends one of its young girls with an offering of millet gruel to place at the altar of Tenga Wende, the terrestrial manifestation of the deity. The earth custodian advises

821 Water in general and rain in particular are a blessing in this sun-
825 scorched land. Crocodiles are reputed to attract water to their dwelling-place. To kill a crocodile may not necessarily amount to homicide, but it amounts at least to drying out a watercourse or pond, for the crocodiles will leave the place and the water will leave with them. If rain is too long delayed, the crop will not have time to ripen; if it falls too heavily, especially at the beginning and at the end of the winter season, weeds will choke the millet, or the flowers will fall before the fruit is formed.

789 Rain is, therefore, desired or feared according to the circumstances, and the power to make rain and to ward it off devolves upon the naba,
829 who rules on the life and death of his subjects. In truth every powerful man is believed to possess this power, and how often they requested me to make rain! Is it not true that Whites can do anything? They are related to the ancestral spirits, their color proves it! Do they not come from the land of water? Did they not emerge from the water? In spite of my assertions that God alone can make rain, that one must pray for it, their skeptical smiles made it plain that they did not believe me.

789 The naba has the charm, the talisman, to draw rain. All he need do when a storm threatens is to take from his hut a certain jar full of certain roots and fill it with water to overflowing. On the other hand, if he wishes to ward off rain, he burns another kind of root, and the wind carries the smoke in the direction where the naba wishes to send the clouds; or else he hangs a cow's or horse's tail to a stick by a thread, and the wind tosses it, thus driving the clouds away. This is why the naba sends one of his men to market when the rainy season draws near, to gather karite fruit from each woman there, because the pits are used to make the charm and must be obtained in this fashion. If a person other than the naba has tried to make rain and failed, he attributes his failure to someone more powerful than himself; if the naba fails, no one says anything about it, or else it is said that the naba did not really wish to attract or to ward off the rain.

821 Every storm is accompanied by lightning, which often kills people in this land of violent thunderstorms. Its effects are attributed to an evil spirit, to an enemy who can send lightning if he knows the proper tim, or to God Himself. Lightning strikes thieves and murderers; it is a punishment. If it does not kill the thief himself, it kills the proceeds of the theft, the stolen horse or sheep. It never kills a person without reason.

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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When one asks the Mossi directly, "What is a market?"
the response to this question is: "A market is a place where people 443
meet to buy and sell. People travel from one market place to another 829
market place, and on the way they stop and see their friends in other villages. In the market one often meets and drinks with one's friends. People also go to distant markets to find things which they do not grow themselves or which cannot be found in their own markets."

Lending support to the Mossi contention that markets are places 443
where one goes to buy and sell is the fact that most important markets 487
in their country are found at the intersections of well-traveled routes. These intersections are often the places where chiefs have their capi- [631]
tals or compounds and this leads to the further idea that there is a connection between chiefs and markets, if only because the power of the chiefs makes markets possible. This does not mean, however, 443
that the market is a purely physical entity which can only exist under 571
the aegis of a chief, or that it is a purely economic institution. First of all, some markets, especially the smaller ones, are moved periodically without too much difficulty. Secondly, and of great importance, is the fact that whenever and wherever there is a large gathering of Mossi there is a "market." Indeed one can say that Mossi seldom come together in large numbers without coming to a market, or without creating one. It appears that the Mossi cannot interact with one [437]
another in any circumstance without also exchanging goods of some kind. For example, when a pagan chief holds the annual festival to [769]
his ancestors, the people who attend form a market in the vicinity of his compound. In those districts where the chiefs have become Chris- [797]
tians and celebrate their birthdays rather than the traditional an- [527]
cestors' rites, the people go to pay them homage and also "make a market." Similarly, whenever there is a funeral of an important chief, [766]
the people from the surrounding villages or even districts bring commodities to his hamlet and hold a market during the ceremony. On [796]
Christmas day, 1955, the people of Manga district "moved their market" about 500 yards to the Catholic Mission grounds where the Christians were celebrating their holiday. And after celebrating the prayers of Ramadan, the Moslems and their pagan townsmen repair to the markets to spend the rest of the day.

Most Mossi markets are inaugurated with religious ceremonies ex- 443
cept those which develop by accretion—that is, by more and more per- 433
sons coming voluntarily to trade. When a chief orders that a market be [659]
created or when a market is moved from one place to another place for any reason, the chief is the person who gives the order for the ceremony to be performed. First of all he speaks to his Raga Naba (market [554]
chief), usually a non-Mossi slave, about the need for the market or the desirability of changing its location. This man then consults a *teng-*

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443 sages to specific villages, to find the help needed in the event of a
571 fight, and finally to find an escape route by which one can leave in the event of trouble.

443 The vendors in the larger markets of Mossi country include Yoru-
463 ba, Hausa and other ethnic groups, many of whose members were
563 born in Mossi country and have never visited the land of their fathers. The lives of these people are usually centered around the markets; where the markets are held every day, many of the men, women and children of these foreign groups spend almost all of their lives at the
[439] markets. In marked contrast to the Mossi, they usually sell products of foreign provenience, whether African or European, and seldom deal in the local products. These vendors are tolerated by the Mossi and are valued for their commerce, but are always regarded as outsiders. And as outsiders the markets do not belong to them, but only
443 to the Mossi. Even so, the Mossi do not really like the larger markets.
829 True, one can buy all kinds of wonderful goods on the large markets, but to the Mossi, a market is more than a place where one goes to buy and sell, even though everyone who goes there tries to do some of both.

443 There is a marked division of labor among the vendors in a Mossi
462 market—a division which can be seen at its best on the local markets.
438 Here only the women sell cooked food, beer, millet, rice, peanuts,
439 shea-butter, tobacco, and all of the other locally grown vegetables and vegetable products, except cotton which may also be sold by a man. In contrast, women do not sell such local products as cotton cloth, hemp, jewelry, iron implements and leather goods, which are the province of the men. Only men may butcher and sell animals and meat in the market. And they alone control the commerce in foreign food articles such as salt and dried fish. Both men and women sell the valuable imported kola nut, but only men sell goods of European manufacture such as cigarettes, matches, sugar, mirrors and so on.
[857] Small girls sell calabashes of water to everyone, and small boys wander through the market selling single cigarettes, bundles of a few matches, single lumps of sugar, chickens and guinea fowls, and skewers of roasted meat.

443 There is little competition about someone else having "stolen"
437 a customer. The reason for this is mainly that every person in the market is a potential customer of everyone else. Normally, a buyer
432 simply moves from seller to seller sampling the goods if that is possible (some unscrupulous men can even get drunk in the process of "sampling" beer) and trying to get the best bargain. No seller would think of running after a customer, and customers seldom, if ever, move away from a vendor in the hope that he would be called back
to be sold the article at a lower price.

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443 taxes in their markets. The French abolished both of these offices
554 when they took over the country, because they looked upon them as
651 purely exploitative rather than regulatory agents. But like so many
656 other Mossi political institutions which the French have "abolished,"
178 the Kos Naga and Raga Naba persist in many of the districts, and per-
[648] haps even in such large centers as Wagadougou. These officials persist
[829] because one of the basic assumptions of the Mossi is that everything
[825] must have a "chief." They believe that even the animals in the bush have chiefs, and if men, too, did not have chiefs then social life would be chaos. Thus, in the rural areas many or most district chiefs have retained their market officials even though the roles of these officials have become highly attenuated and so secretive that their existence is often denied.

175 Taxes collected at the market places played an important part in
443 supporting the traditional political hierarchy of the Mossi people.
651 The Kos Naba collected 250 cowries in taxes for every beef cattle
[644] slaughtered at the market and took their humps and gave them to a palace official called the Nemdo Naba (meat chief) for distribution in the royal household. He also collected 250 cowries on every cow sold there, but did not usually tax goats and sheep. In lieu of this he occasionally took a head or two of these animals from each herd that passed through the market and sent them to the palace kitchens. Donkeys were also taxed at the rate of 200 cowries per head sold in the market. Horses sold to the nobility were not taxed, but those exported were taxed about 300 cowries.

175 The Raga Naba collected the taxes on other commodities sold at
443 market. Cotton weavers paid him taxes according to the size of their
651 bolts of cloth, and cotton producers paid as much as 20 cowries on
463 especially large sales of their raw produce. The tailors and dyers paid no fixed tax on their wares, but were asked to send clothing to the palace. Every donkey- or ox-load of salt which entered the market place was assessed a tax of 300 cowries. The smiths were not taxed in cowries, but had to supply the wives of the Moro Naba with hoes and the palace personnel with arrowheads, spearpoints and iron clubs. The jewelers also sent bracelets as presents to the ruler. There were no fixed taxes on cereals, vegetables and cooked food sold at market, but each day the Raga Naba, accompanied by several pages or retainers carrying baskets, went from vendor to vendor taking several calabash-fuls of their produce for use in the palace. In addition, the vendors of cooked food had to feed the young grooms of the Moro Naba who were not regularly fed by the palace household. The beer sellers, too, while they were not assessed taxes, contributed a good percentage of their beverage to palace and market personnel who demanded the

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customary "taste" with greater frequency and freedom than did ordinary buyers. But the most valuable tax collected by the Raga Naba was on the sale of slaves, whose buyers paid a tax of 1,000 cowries per head.

There is some evidence, mainly from Europeans, that the Mossi occasionally may have found the market taxes prohibitive. Binger reports that during his visit to the Mossi in 1888, the high taxes exacted by the Moro Naba were "one of the causes which placed Wagadougou in second place [as a market town] and which made Mane the commercial capital of Mossi country" (Binger 1892 : 467). Binger, himself, was caught in the institutionalized gift system and wrote sarcastically: "The day of the market [at Wagadougou] the receipts are good. People bring every-thing to the palace including millet as well as hoes or peanuts, and everything is accepted. *All this giving is left to the generosity of the customers . . .*" (Binger 1892 : 465) (his italics). Even so, one cannot be sure that the Mossi felt the same way about paying taxes to their rulers as Binger felt. There is, incidentally, always an air of mutual recriminations among the Mossi and their rulers about the level of reciprocation between them. The people admit that the chiefs are indispensable; yet they complain that they are greedy—they "eat" too much. The chiefs insist that it is difficult to rule a territory and complain that the people are ungrateful.

SOCIAL AND RITUAL ASPECTS OF THE MARKETPLACE

Although the offices of Kos Naba and Raga Naba have been abolished officially, these officials still exist in many Mossi districts, and even when they do not exist, some men acting in their stead appropriate commodities in the markets for the chiefs. Furthermore, the *nakomce* (plural of *nabiga*—chief's child) or nobles still wander about the market places taking handfuls of kola nuts, peanuts and everything they need without the people becoming angry or complaining to the French about it. Once when I visited a market in the company of a *nabiga*, the local Raga Naba came up to where we were buying meat and indicated to the butcher that one of his customers was a *nabiga* and that he should treat him accordingly. It is not because of ignorance that the market people continue to grant these privileges to the nobles and the chiefs, but rather because they believe that only the market officials, and not the Europeans, can take care of the markets.

One of the most important tasks of the Raga Naba (or in the absence of this official, the Kos Naba) is to propitiate the *tengkouga* in the market place, or supervise the sacrifices which the *tengsobas* make to them. The task of the market spirits is believed to be so difficult—

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the noble class, whose actions embody the ideology that the exercise of sovereignty is a corporate right which reverts to all of them when the head ruler dies. Much of this raiding is symbolic and does not interrupt market activities.

Many of the ceremonies connected with the funeral of chiefs and respected deceased elders take place in the market. Sometime between the interment of the dead person, the *keema,* and the first burial ceremonies, the sister-in-law *(dakia)* of the dead man in her role as joking relative—a role she plays until the funeral ceremonies are completed—impersonates him in the market place. On the day chosen for this rite the *dakia* dresses in the clothes of the *keema* and goes to market. While there, she acts as she observed her brother-in-law to have acted in the past: she circles the market and buys goods; she buys beer from his favorite beer seller and drinks with his friends; and for a moment, at least, she sits with his old cronies in their favorite haunts and takes part in their discussions. She may even be serenaded by *griots* who sing praises in honor of "her" ancestors, and she rewards them before leaving the market place that evening.

The market is the scene of an important ritual during the final funeral ceremonies, which are held about one year after a man was buried. On the morning of this ceremony the female relatives of the *keema,* led by his eldest daughter and his *dakia,* appear in the market and go from stall to stall buying all the things the deceased used in his lifetime. These include meat, *zumbala* (locust bean balls), cotton, tobacco, salt, kola nuts, peppers, *kumba* (a tomato), cakes, cooked millet-mush balls, potatoes, etc. When they have gathered all of these things, they retire to a spot near the market where they lay out all the foodstuff in baskets. In the meantime, the drummers play the royal airs, if the dead man was a chief, or ordinary rhythms if he was a commoner. Then the *keema's* eldest daughter places a basket on her head and, accompanied by four men, leads a procession of drummers and of the other women, also with their baskets, around the market. While this procession is circling the market three times in honor of the deceased, the *dakia,* carrying a very old basket containing the stalest food she could find, weaves back and forth through the marching throng making a nuisance of herself. After the third round the marchers return to their assembly point whence the eldest daughter and some of the older women now rush into the market, stealing merchandise from the stalls and placing it in their baskets. This assault is often so quickly done that it is fairly successful. The raiders then join the other mourners at the assembly point, where with bowed heads they listen respectfully while the chief drummer recites the genealogy of the *keema* and tells him that the people from the surrounding villages

535 /38/ To tell the truth, however, the Mossi do not know how to dance. With the exception of the circumcision dance and of some villages of dancers where people devote themselves methodically to choreography, the greater part of the population do not know how to dance gracefully. This does not prevent them, one and all, from indulging in the dance. Men and women dance separately. The most common male dance consists of a rapid motion of the upper part of the body, from left to right and right to left; the feet do not leave the ground, and they are moved forward very slowly. The arms are bent up to shoulder height and away from the body; the fingers are extended, and arms and hands shake along with the rest of the body. When performed by professionals, who are sometimes found in the villages, this motion is rather graceful but lacks breadth of style.
[292] The dancers wear a cardboard headpiece, its crest adorned with a band of cowries and its sides often embellished with bits of mirror fragments, feathers, and all sorts of small, gaudy articles. The upper part of the body is covered with a tight, wide-meshed garment, decorated at the waist with pompons or cowries and small bells. The dancer wears
[301] on the middle finger a piece of iron which looks like a large clam shell, and on his thumb an iron ring. He strikes one against the other in rhythm. His wrist is often adorned with a bracelet made of several of these iron shells; hanging from them are small strips of the same metal which clang at the slightest motion. Those who do not have a costume deck themselves out in tawdry finery.

The women dance two at a time, each by herself, spinning around and assuming whatever poses they consider most graceful. When they come near one another, they turn around and strike their backs together; then one of the two withdraws, and another takes her place. All the while, the women spectators clap their hands in rhythm and sing. Sometimes one of them utters a shrill cry to arouse the dancers or to laud one who has proved unusually graceful and lithe.

[831] There are no special dances for the dead, and Mossi dances apparently do not have the obscenity of some Negro dances.

857 But to return to the children. It may be stated, as a general rule, that children can do as they please as long as they help out with everyday tasks, as long as the son helps his father and the daughter her mother. Happily there are exceptions to this, and some parents watch their children quite closely, but these are exceptions. Boys
593 prefer their mother to their father, because the latter must often

152 their family, they love it very much, but they love their husband just as much if they love him at all. If they do not love their husband, naturally they love their family infinitely more.

304 833 When we study the children's life, we shall see that Mossi girls are excised at the age of nine or ten. This barbarous operation naturally removes an important part of a woman's sensual sensitiveness. The Negress is thus a generatrix rather than a lover. One cannot say of her as of the Latin poet's mistress: crispum ... docta movere latus /gracefully moving her slender body/. She is passive in love and content to give herself without resistance to the man's passion.

831 577 The morality of Mossi women is certainly laxer than that of European women. (Naturally, I compare the Mossi woman to the respectable woman of our occidental societies.) We saw earlier that the breach of virginity prior to marriage was not unusual and was tolerated with considerable leniency by custom. Adultery is also frequent and is punished in crude and rustic fashion. The woman is beaten and then forgiven. In short, morals are certainly less rigid than in our own countries. On the other hand, prostitution does not [549] exist, and this is a great moral advantage. Briefly, the division of labor in the sexual domain, as in other domains, is far less developed among the Mossi of Yatenga than among the highly evolved civilizations of our European and occidental countries. The same applies to the other Sudanese populations.

000 Now we turn to Children and Education. We shall discuss these matters in the following order. /250/

1. Filiation.
2. Theory of birth.
3. How children are welcomed.
4. Abortion.
5. Childbirth.
6. Baptism.
7. Freaks. Twins.
8. Nursing.
9. Charms for children and tattooings.
10. Children's games.
11. Familial education.
12. Education of children among themselves. Societies.
13. Young people's tasks.
14. Rights and duties of parents toward their children.
15. Duties of children toward their parents.

644
595 foreigners who are being housed by the naba. [164]

Each sogoné or samanbiga chooses a mother from among the
644 wives of the naba (only those in the first two sections).
595

He helps her to cultivate her plot of ground and receives in
357 return a little food over and above the ration of sagbo given to the
608 sogoné as a group.

At Nanore (1), for example, it was formerly the rule that

> 1. Canton in the administrative district of Koudougou.

when a woman brought some sagbo to her adopted son, she could not simply hand it to him. Instead, holes were dug in the courtyard of the naba, into which the woman put the sagbo and sauce. Then the young man came to eat the food, and later the woman came back for her bowls.

644 Finally, it is still forbidden for anyone to play a guitar when
595 a napagha is passing by unless the player is the naba himself or
533 someone called upon to play by the naba. It should be noted that
687 the Moaga prefers the guitar for intimate occasions. Therefore, to
832 play it when a napagha passes by is actually to court her.

The Pogsiouré, or the Recruitment of Sogoné and Saman'kamba

643 Aside from a few special cases limited by custom which we
562 shall presently describe, the naba can never dispose of the daughters of his subjects, either to make them [165] his own wives or to bestow them on someone else, without the permission of the parents.

Pogsiouré comes from pog', the diminutive of pagha, "woman," and from siouré, diminutive of sioubo, "to give anticipating a profit."

562 As a result of family quarrels or even voluntarily, a Moaga
431 "may give away his daughters and those of his brothers and close
643 relatives to the naba." It is obvious that the naba cannot keep all of these girls, so he gives some of them to his brothers, his uncles, his sons, and even to ordinary Mossi who have done him a service.

In the same way -- and this is more frequent -- every sogoné (page) or samand'biga [singular of samand'kamba] (bodyguard or

364 sections and especially around the market. Now formal regulations require the inhabitants [232] to dig latrine ditches in the compounds, but it will be a long time before the native loses the habit of relieving himself in the open air.

Chapter 15

Mossi Dances and their Significance (1)

1. An excerpt, revised and completed, from a lecture delivered by the author on December 24, 1926.

535 In this chapter, we shall describe the Mossi dances, explain their meaning, and tell of the old beliefs with which they are connected.

Indeed, these dances occupy a place apart in the general category of dances of indigenous peoples.

The latter, for the most part and notably among the Boussancé and the Gourma [Gurma], are only exuberant displays, sometimes exercises in suppleness, sometimes caricatures of the motions of love.

The Mossi dances, on the other hand, are actually performed in accordance with fixed rules. There are three types: 1) dances which we shall call sentimental, known as wennega; 2) dances that are part war dance and part religious, called waongo; and finally 3) funeral dances known as warba.

535 In order of precedence, let us begin with the love dance
533 called wennega. This is executed at gatherings. The lover and
832 his sweetheart -- the latter dressed in black, the ceremonial color -- are receiving their friends. Beer is flowing, and mouths are filled with kola nuts. Soon the musicians strike up [234] their
[534] rustic guitars (kondé) which are accompanied by the beating of gourds. The women sing:

539 M' Ba sida talem néré
533 Talem kan-kaïn, talemti
Pagh ka zaïd koulogh wa mandé

539
533

And you do not want to let her go!
Are you perchance this child's mother or father?
You are not the God who created her."

535 The wennega consists mostly of back-and-forth movements
832 of the hips in slow rhythm. Various figures are performed, but there is always the same rhythm and the same swaying of the hips. The sweetheart herself begins to dance, a curious fact, since women do not usually take part in the men's dances.

535 We have noted that another form of Mossi dance is religious,
776 the waongo. The waongo is a mysterious being, half animal, half spirit.

773 Origin of the waongo. Tradition has it that this being was one
535 day found all alone on a plain. Those who first saw him took
776 fright and ran away. They went to tell the village elders, who assembled a goodly number of young men, armed [236] with arrows and sticks, to overcome this strange being.

He was not found at the place where he had first been seen. He had moved some distance away. The villagers surrounded him, and the elders, who had brought him a rooster, began to question him: "If he should be taken to the village, would he hurt the villagers? Would he bring misfortune?" The chicken was then sacrificed, but it is told that the sacrifice was not accepted.

The elders returned to the village and brought back a white rooster (norapelga), a he-goat (boéga), and a dog (bâga). Then they addressed the waongo, saying: "We were perhaps mistaken just now. Perhaps you wanted an animal in addition to the rooster we offered to you? If, by becoming our guest, you can bring us happiness, good health, and children, accept these offerings!" They slaughtered the rooster and the goat and killed the dog. This time the sacrifices were accepted.

[532] What the waongo is. The waongo consists of a mask, usually representing the head of an animal, and a bindou (a kind of long cloak made from the bark of the béringa shrub which is soaked in water for a long time to blacken it or from baobab fibers).

304 184 The Nioniossé and the Soukoaba do not practice circumcision, and that is why they are called Mossé. In villages inhabited solely by Nioniossé, a kéogo may not be set up. At present some boys of Nionioga origin ignore the prohibition and go to their mother's village (Yastenga) to have the purifying operation (1).

[775] 1. Apparently the Moslems believe that those who are circumcised will not go to hell.

304 832 626 Among the Mossi many Christians voluntarily have themselves circumcised; women -- even Christians -- feel a certain repugnance for the touch of the "Moaga."

Finally, excision is also esteemed among the Mossi, except among the Nioniossé who do not practice it. Girls who are not excised are scorned by their friends and will have no lovers.

789 If someone tells you that you own many animals, or that they are
791 very handsome, this gives bad luck, as you know. So, to ward it off,
777 /593/ you grasp your grigri by slipping two fingers into the iron hook and two others into the curve of the horn, and then you hang it in your hut, or better still, you hang it from the neck of one of the threatened animals.

789 11. A small turtle completely enclosed in a small leather bag
791 along with a powdered aquatic leaf called kouri. If you have a
755 stomach-ache, you cover the flat side of the object with butter and rub your stomach with it.

789 12. A small piece of wood covered with lizardskin in the middle
791 and leather at the ends and prolonged at one end by an iron tip.
832 If one wishes for the favors of a woman who refuses to grant them, one comes near the cruel woman while gripping the grigri in the left fist, its tip pointing up. At the same time, one presses the woman's hand tightly with the right hand. This method of seduction is claimed to be infallible.

789 13. A koba horn covered with leather and prolonged at the broad
791 end with a chicken foot. Inside, the horn contains rice, salt, and
754 soumbara. If you were threatened by a spell performed against you, you would slip the horn upon your head, with the thick end between the eyes and the pointed end behind the head. Then you would have nothing to fear.

14. A deer horn containing barkoundi leaves and closed with a lid adorned with a cowrie.

To prevent a sorcerer from eating the soul of a third party, you lift the lid with the aid of a knife covered with karité butter, you take with this knife a little of the contents of the horn, and you spread it on your forehead.

535 In addition to the bara and timisoba, the Mossi also have ouango.
532 "The ouango," says Marc (op. cit., pages 152 and 155), "are
575 dancers whose costume consists of a huge liana robe which covers the entire body and which is surmounted by a wooden mask painted red and black and usually representing /594/ the head of an animal. The ouango are members of a rather mysterious brotherhood. They have a special language, and the Mossi believe that anyone who says a word

843 4. A pregnant woman must not step over her husband; this would make him ill.

833 5. The sexual act may be performed with impunity in the courtyard of a dwelling (at night). Otherwise, it is expressly forbidden to do it outside the house and in any way other than lying on a mat or Peulh secco, in any case never directly on the ground.

845 6. The delivery will be difficult and complicated if the child was conceived in adultery. If the woman is to be delivered, it is 837 absolutely necessary that she confess the name of her accomplice 847 in the presence of witnesses. In this case, if the husband demands it -- and he always does -- the newborn child is killed by the erring wife immediately after it is born (1). [185]

> 1. The procedure is as follows. Some young mothers simply twist its neck and strangle it. Others put the baby in a jar of lukewarm water. The baby instinctively drinks and finally drowns.

837 684 Adultery. Before the arrival of the French, adultery committed by the nakomsé (descendants of naba) was punished by the death of the guilty couple. Among ordinary Mossi, the culprit was simply banished from the family.

However, if the lover was not a relative of the woman's husband, he was forbidden henceforth to come to the village where the woman lived. If he failed to observe this rule, he risked being killed.

837 As a general rule, a Moaga woman takes a lover in a village some distance away from her husband's village and not far from her own. When she asks her husband's permission to visit her family, she profits by the opportunity to spend some time with her lover or to let him know that she is going to her parents' home.

Dissolution of Marriage. Divorce.

586 842 A divorce may be imposed by a husband who no longer loves his wife, but neither ill-health nor sterility may be invoked for the purpose. In the latter case, it is simply assumed that God does not want the woman to have children. She is often regarded with scorn, but sometimes no attention is paid to her lack of children.

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769 destroy the yield. And, depending on his attentions to them, they can give or take away the good health necessary to carry him through the arduous activity of the rainy season when work is hardest, the granaries nearly empty, and food in short supply. Separate ancestral spirits look out for different aspects of the well-being of the individual. Satisfying their various sacrificial requirements is both expensive and time-consuming, but their good will is essential to the success of the farmer, and it is in his own best interest to be attentive to their needs.

THE EARTH CUSTODIANS

793 A close relationship exists between the control of the water supply
776 upon which the agricultural economy depends and the authority of the earth custodians in their role as intermediaries with the several manifestations of Wennam, the Mossi deity. The deity itself is somewhat aloof from the affairs of men, but through his specific manifestations and with the intercession of the earth custodians (*Tenga Soba namba*), descendants of the indigenous inhabitants of the Yatenga, the individual propitiates Wennam in order to control the various forces of the natural and supernatural environment upon which the success of his economic or social endeavor is dependent. Tenga Wende, his terrestrial manifestation, and Tido Wende, which gives life to the vegetable kingdom, are the aspects of Wennam which are most frequently evoked; but Siguiri Wende, the deified first ancestor of the Mossi; Ki Wende, the millet god; and Saga Wende, the rain deity, are also frequently called upon for help.

Each Mossi village in the Yatenga is divided into one or more areas,
793 each of which is in the "command" of one of the village earth custodians.
[36] Each of these areas contains both the dwelling of the Savadogo lineage of the earth custodian and the residence and farmlands of various "true" Mossi lineages. The head of each lineage maintains the good will of the terrestrial manifestation of the deity through the intercession of the earth custodian who "commands" his land. In some instances a lineage may own land under the authority of two different earth custodians; in this case offerings must be made at the shrine (*tenga*) of each.

793 The good fortune which may be secured through obeisance to the
782 terrestrial manifestation of the deity (Tenga Wende) involves both sacrifices and gifts of money to the earth custodian and abstention from acts offensive to the earth. For example, sexual intercourse may take
[833 place only in a private courtyard or within the house. Violation of this
783] rule defiles the land and must be expiated through a special sacrifice and the payment of a fine to the earth custodian. Any lost object found in the
778 public way or in the bush is in the custody of the earth deity and must be turned over to the earth custodian to await the inquiry of the proper owners. If such objects are unclaimed, they are given to Tenga Wende

462 Beside cooking tasks, Mossi women have cleaning tasks. They
356 sweep the huts and soukala with handfuls of straw, small primitive brooms 30 or 40 centimeters long. They wash and bleach clothes and make soap. Finally, it is the women who spin cotton and tamp the floor of the huts.

356 This tamping is done as follows. "The natives spread on the surface to be tamped a layer, 10 centimeters thick, of a special black earth that consists chiefly /561/ of ashes and humus resulting from the decomposition of plants and household refuse.

"Above this, the Mossi spread a second layer consisting of clayey ferruginous gravel, from 3 to 5 centimeters thick. The small pebbles are subsequently reduced by heavy tamping to very fine material. Then, the natives spread a little water over this material and tamp again. Once this is done, they allow the floor to dry.

"This procedure is repeated several times, but ordinary water is replaced with néré water (the latter resulting from the infusion in hot water of the fragments of néré fruit, dondo in Mossi) or water into which cow dung has been mixed. When the last tamping and the last drying have been completed, the natives pour néré water in large quantities onto the new floor.

"Finally, the last procedure consists of polishing the surface with flat stones." (Cahier des rapports of the Ouagadougou circle).

593 The duties of Mossi women toward their husband are as follows:
833 1. The fulfillment of the conjugal duty.
562 "The wife," says Moulins, "must never shirk her conjugal duty except when she is pregnant or nursing.

"Should a woman evade her husband from newlywed shyness or for any other reason, he would use at first all means of persuasion within his command, and especially beg the wife's relatives to have a word with her. Should their exhortations prove vain, coercion would be used by beating the woman or putting her in irons. Finally, should those means fail to bring the wife to compliance, she could be turned out by her husband."

593 2. Faithfulness.
562 "The wife must live with her husband. If she abandons the conjugal domicile, her spouse has the absolute right to force her to return. /562/ If she takes refuge with her relatives, the latter must

833 The conjugal duty. —The wife owes her husband the fulfillment of the conjugal duty.

The wife must never evade it except when she is unwell, pregnant, or when she is nursing. We can see, therefore, that among the Mossi in particular and among the Sudanese in general (for the same customs prevail in this area among all Sudanese Negroes) there is great tact-
[853] fulness. One appreciates this all the more if one bears in mind that here the women suckle their children for two or three years.

"If," says Vadier, "a woman should evade her husband from newly-wed shyness or from any other motive, he would first use all the means of persuasion at his command and, especially, beg the wife's relatives to speak to her. Should their exhortations prove vain, constraint
[593] would be used by giving the wife a beating or putting her in irons. Finally, should these measures fail to bring the spouse to compliance,
[586] she could be turned out by her husband.

"In return, the husband owes the wife the same conjugal duty which he has the right to demand from her.

"Should the husband fail to fulfill it because of impotence, sickness, or simply from ill will, the neglected wife would mention the matter to the family head's first wife, who would in turn notify him.

833 "Should the husband's behavior be caused by physical incapacity,
586 the wife would be taken from him and given to one of his brothers or, if there were none, to his closest male relative, but never to one of his sons. Should it be due merely to ill-feeling, a protest would be made, and should this fail to have any effect after several days, the wife would be allowed to return to her family." /245/

Let us state immediately that these contingencies almost never arise or are so rare as to be practically nonexistent. Custom anticipates them, however, and we have just described what happens when perchance they do arise.

562 Women's property. —Women may own individual property, as we
422 already know, goods which are not shared communally and which belong wholly to them. These goods come from various sources, sometimes the women's small plots of land, sometimes a surplus from the grain they are given to prepare food and which, once made into dolo, is sold for cowries. Sometimes also, the husband's munificence provides them with bracelets and other jewelry. Once given, this jewelry is wholly theirs, and it is added to the trinkets they procure with their own resources.

152 their family, they love it very much, but they love their husband just as much if they love him at all. If they do not love their husband, naturally they love their family infinitely more.

304 When we study the children's life, we shall see that Mossi girls are excised at the age of nine or ten. This barbarous operation naturally ●833 removes an important part of a woman's sensual sensitiveness. The Negress is thus a generatrix rather than a lover. One cannot say of her as of the Latin poet's mistress: crispum ... docta movere latus /gracefully moving her slender body/. She is passive in love and content to give herself without resistance to the man's passion.

831 The morality of Mossi women is certainly laxer than that of 577 European women. (Naturally, I compare the Mossi woman to the respectable woman of our occidental societies.) We saw earlier that the breach of virginity prior to marriage was not unusual and was tolerated with considerable leniency by custom. Adultery is also frequent and is punished in crude and rustic fashion. The woman is beaten and then forgiven. In short, morals are certainly less rigid [548] than in our own countries. On the other hand, prostitution does not exist, and this is a great moral advantage. Briefly, the division of labor in the sexual domain, as in other domains, is far less developed among the Mossi of Yatenga than among the highly evolved civilizations of our European and occidental countries. The same applies to the other Sudanese populations.

000 Now we turn to Children and Education. We shall discuss these matters in the following order. /250/

1. Filiation.
2. Theory of birth.
3. How children are welcomed.
4. Abortion.
5. Childbirth.
6. Baptism.
7. Freaks. Twins.
8. Nursing.
9. Charms for children and tattooings.
10. Children's games.
11. Familial education.
12. Education of children among themselves. Societies.
13. Young people's tasks.
14. Rights and duties of parents toward their children.
15. Duties of children toward their parents.

881 It seems that among the Mossi and Foulsé, the nané does not give
304 moral lessons to the bankonsé, contrary to the procedure among the Bambara where the custom has been preserved.

At the end of a month, the bankonsé are healed. The families are notified, and each household prepares a new pair of breeches and a boubou /robe/ for the young circumcised boys.

On the evening preceding the day when they make their reappearance in the village, around seven o'clock, the skirts of the circumcised boys are heaped into a pile and burned. The following morning the nané leads the bankonsé to the well to wash from head to toe before donning their new clothes. Before leaving camp, the firewood gathered by the boys is distributed among their mothers and the straw among their family heads. The nané also keeps a certain amount for himself. This is his allowance, aside from his being provided with food throughout the month, along with the circumcised boys, by the latter's
[833] relatives. (On the other hand, he had to remain separated from his wife, for there is a superstition that should he approach her, the bankonsé would fail to heal.) When the distribution of straw and firewood has been completed, our circumcised boys make their triumphal entry into the village at seven o'clock in the morning in their /261/ beautiful new garments. To the sound of the tom-tom, they visit all the compounds, calling on everyone. Gifts are offered to them
[431] (kola nuts, cowries, peanuts, cotton, dolo, etc.). When the visits are completed, the celebration is over, and the bankonsé return home.
[551] They may henceforth be called by name again; this could not be done during their retreat.

Excision.—Girls are excised when they are eight, nine, or ten, depending on how mature they are. As with the boys, this is done during the month of December, but instead of being carried out on a village or quarter basis, it is done on a compound basis. The operation itself is performed by an old woman who knows how to do it. It is not she, however, who watches over the girls afterwards, but an old woman of the compound who has them under her supervision for twenty-five or thirty days. During that time, the girls are kept apart, sleeping in their guardian's hut and taking care of themselves. As soon as they can walk, they go and gather wood in the bush for her, they fetch water, spin cotton, etc. At nightfall, they sing in chorus, clapping their hands in rhythm.

When they are healed, they deck themselves with all the bracelets and jewelry they can find in the compound. Thus dressed up and

588 wears a bracelet made of copper and iron intertwined, kalembanga,
582 which is believed to protect the wearer against any disaster due to
751 the technically illegal marriage. The kalembanga is also believed to protect the children born of the union from sudden death.

Polygyny

595 Polygyny is the rule throughout Mossi country. It is true that the number of wives varies with the resources and position of the individual. Mere heads of compounds who are somewhat well off may have [180] from five to eight wives and numerous fiancées. The [584] latter are usually reserved for the dakompa (older sons and younger brothers of the head of the family), assuming that these men will in turn render real service and be completely devoted to the head of the household.

There are many reasons for the practice of polygyny, but the main one is procreation. The under-nourished natives must rely on [853 the mother's milk to feed their babies and must therefore wait two 834] or even three years before resuming sexual relations with a wife who is a nursing mother. Therefore, they prefer to have several wives.

Consummation

585 When the young girl is taken to her husband, she is entrusted to a woman whom she will henceforth treat as "mother."

A few days after the departure of the cortege, whose composition we shall describe presently, the man claims his fiancée. She is taken at night to the nuptial hut, which has no special features, and no one is present at the consummation of the marriage. In this respect the Mossi differ from the Bambara, who have a griot or an old woman accompany the couple to help the young man, if necessary, overcome the girl's resistance.

It goes without saying that if the girl is found to be a virgin, the [181] husband is overjoyed. If she is not a virgin, the love which he may have felt for her before possessing her is much diminished. The man shows the girl his anger, certain that she will at least tell her mother about it.

Social Status of the Moaga Woman and Work Assigned to Her

562 The Moaga woman is regarded as a veritable beast of burden. Household duties and the weaving of cotton for her own and her husband's clothes are not her only occupations. [183] She helps her husband cultivate the family field, and she has her own plots for peanuts, beans, etc.

She endures wretched treatment and must always submit to her husband's whims. She enjoys no consideration whatever and is never called upon to give an opinion. The husband alone rules the home.

[842] If she is so unfortunate as to have no children, she is regarded with scorn. She carries the loads when a move is in progress. A [482] basket and a pyramid of gourds containing her effects and those of her husband are balanced on her head, while the husband canters beside her on a horse or takes his ease on a donkey. If he is afoot, he carries only his quiver, his arrows, his bow, and a club.

To be sure, the Moaga woman may express in unpleasant words her resentment of the maltreatment to which she is subjected, because the Mossi admit that she has no weapon other than her tongue. This is what is meant by the saying, "A woman's mouth is her quiver."

Conjugal Life

834 Interdictions and permissible acts. The couple is forbidden to have sexual relations at the following times.

1. For a period of not less than two years and a half after the 834 birth of a child to safeguard the baby's life. Indeed, it is believed 853 that each child comes into the world with its own supply of milk, and if another child were to be conceived during the nursing period, [184] the first would die because the milk of the newborn child would be fatal to him.

2. During the menstrual period. The reason for this prohibition 834 that the husband's fetishes and charms lose part of their "power" after 841 relations at this time.

3. A pregnant woman visits her husband during the first six or 834 seven months. All relations then cease until some time after the 843 delivery, as indicated above.

304 to look into the enclosure. If he should commit such an indiscretion which is considered a gross blunder, he at once suffers the consequences. He is immediately dragged into the circle undressed, and circumcised without any consultation with his relatives.

It is strictly forbidden to enter the kéogo, with néoda (shoes), a pougla [269] (red fez), and kandé (spears). If a canton chief should take it into his head to visit the circumcised boys -- an unlikely situation -- he would have to leave all his insignia of rank outside.

304 834 Since it has been observed that young men who have had sexual intercourse before their circumcision had difficulty in being healed after the operation, they are advised to avoid sexual intercourse for the first few months after the scars form.

304 262 They do not eat wagha sauce (a sauce made of the immature fruit of the wagka, a tree of the kapok family).

Required exercises for the bankoensé. The bankoensé are 304 required to perform painful and tiring exercises, which consider- 526 ably retards their recovery. We shall describe the principal ones below.

Very early in the morning when it is very cool -- we have pointed out that the ceremony takes place at the beginning of the cool season -- the boys are awakened and forced to lie prone on the cold sand without any covering. This is the bourga. Naturally enough, the limbs become a bit stiff, so they are roundly whipped with berrella (branches of certain trees), ostensibly to give them warmth and strength. Then, to the beat of the tom-toms, they must do the exercise called guella. This difficult feat involves jumping like a frog from a crouching position [270] and at intervals making a circular movement with the legs. They may also be required to do the even more difficult nagda, an exercise which involves walking on the hands with the legs in the air. Another exercise requires the boys, starting from an erect position, to bend backwards until the hands touch the ground. This is called kaougsèga, "back breaker." The unfortunates whose hands fail to reach the ground get a bump on the head. There are also movements of the head called zouanka, like those made by Kassonké girls and the Wiskamba of Mossi country.

644 "In addition to these dignitaries, the Moro Naba is surrounded with a veritable army of soroné (pages), samandé (bodyguards), ourkima (grooms), and jussaba (eunuchs)."

Some explanations are in order concerning the soroné. They are young boys or adolescents, from seven or eight to fifteen years old, who are to be found not only around the Moro Naba but around all Mossi chiefs, no matter who they may be, ministers, dignitaries, canton chiefs, and even village chiefs. These chiefs obtain them, as we saw earlier, by claiming the first-born son as well as the first-born daughter of all the men to whom they give a wife. The boy is made into a soroné, and the girl used to perpetuate the recruitment of soroné and servitors by giving her in marriage to one of them.

644 The soroné wear their hair like women. Like them, they wear heavy copper bracelets at the wrists and ankles, and if rumor is to 838 be credited, they not only /570/ bear the attributes of women but also substitute for them occasionally. It seems that the Mossi must 834 not have carnal relations with their wives on Friday. This is a religious ordinance meant to ingratiate the divinities, but it overlooked the soroné.... In any case this corruption does not reach the common masses of the Mossi, who do not have the means to employ soroné. Thus it applies only to chiefs.

644 No matter what the case may be, the soroné are usually selected among the most attractive boys, and some of them have great beauty with their woman's hairdo.

Another duty of their position is to remain virgins... as far as women are concerned.

644 "Every year," says Moulins, "the chastity of the Moro Naba's 78 soroné is put to a test. They are requested by the Pouy Naba to cast their 684 reflection into a gourd full of water, and according to the manner in which the reflection is cast, they are proclaimed free from stain or convicted of carnal relations, in which case, prior to our occupation, they were put to death without further delay. This is because the soroné, as confidants of the Naba, are often entrusted with state secrets and could only maintain the discretion required by their position if they were to avoid the entreaties of love.

644 "When the soroné reach manhood, the Naba gives them a wife and sends them away. The first child born of the union between a soroné and the wife given him by the Naba devolves to the latter,

Under him were
644 the Kos Naba, who levied taxes on general merchandise sold in the mar-
[651] kets, and the Nemdo Naba, who collected taxes on meat sold in the markets and was responsible for distributing meat within the royal household. Most of these positions were hereditary, but here primogeniture was not as important as in the ruling and administrative lineages.

[648] The various foreign groups in the capital also sent representatives to the court. Among them were the Zangweoto Naba for the Hausa, a Naba for the Songhai, and an Imam for the Ouagadougou Moslems. Even total strangers such as the early European visitors were placed under the care of a special chief.

The most ubiquitous persons at the Mogho Naba's court were the pages, who were boys between the ages of ten and twenty. These boys were regarded as comparable to the ruler's wives, since they served him in the same manner as ordinary Mossi women serve their husbands at home. They wore women's bracelets and women's clothes, and dressed their hair in the
• [834] same style as the royal wives. As we have seen, they were forbidden sexual intercourse until they were released from the royal household.[22]

173 The institution of pages is said to have originated sometime in the sev-
644 enteenth century, during the reign of Mogho Naba Waraga. Before his reign, the wives of the Mogho Naba attended him at court. The change came during a lengthy civil war between Waraga and the chief of Riziam territory, who had refused to pay allegiance to him. During five "dry seasons" (five years) of fighting, the Mogho Naba was attended only by a small boy. He found him so efficient that at the end of the war he resolved to employ only page boys and prohibit his wives from attending him at court. This origin is conjectural. However, the use of pages effectively segregated the royal wives from court intrigues, and, once instituted, the practice spread throughout the country.

644 The Mogho Naba had little difficulty recruiting pages. Many of them were the sons of pughsiudse whom he had given to his subjects as wives. In theory, the Mogho Naba could select boys at will, but in practice the pages were usually selected by the ministers and sent to the palace. Most boys willingly accepted service, but some, often with the support of their parents, resisted confinement to the palace. Some ten-year-olds even ran away to escape their impending fate, but they were soon caught and braceleted with the insignia of their new status. Once this had been done, their lineages encouraged them to remain at the palace. Their period of service
[145] terminated when they began to "push beards," usually at about eighteen years of age. One district chief claims that ancient Mogho Nanamse used to take the sons of district chiefs as pages and release them only when their

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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greeting a lower status benefactor, a man will get down and greet him from a kneeling position. It is because of this elaborate system of greeting, with the many opportunities thus provided for one person to slight another, that many important persons never go to the market. As a rule, the failure of any one person to give the required greeting to another when they meet in the market place is always an indication of strained relations between them.

The persons from whom an individual may buy goods, and the kinds of goods which may be purchased by one individual from another, are governed by convention and social relationships. A person may not buy anything from a relative except European goods. A man cannot buy any but cooked food in the market place, and often he asks a female relative or a passing female to buy it for him. To do the contrary is held to be unmanly and indicative of a bad character. A woman will not buy cotton cloth but will send a man to buy it for her. She would hate to have people believe that she has no male relative to weave it for her, or what is more likely, that she is too lazy to spin the cotton thread which would then be woven for her. A woman may purchase any type of commodity from other women, but she must be careful not to patronize men who are known to be libertines or with whom she is suspected of having an affair. She must also be careful about running errands for men, since people know that men often use this device to establish amorous relationships with women. Men also use this device to give presents, or to arrange secret meetings with them. If any man sees a female relative involved in any of these misadventures, he chases her away and more than likely curses the man, if he does not fight him. In any event, he warns the man to leave the woman alone.

The market is one of the few places where men and women can initiate relationships not sanctioned by their relatives. Under normal conditions marriages are arranged between unrelated individuals through the lineage members who establish "friendly" relationships. Two friends might ask their lineage heads for women to exchange as wives or the "friend" who has received more gifts from the other will give over a wife. Because the older men most often have goods and women at their disposal, they are usually the ones who receive wives. The result is that most young men have no wives, and until they inherit wives from lineage members, are continually seeking to establish intimate relations with women whom they meet on the market place. The technique which a young man employes to gain the favors of a woman he sees at market is highly stereotyped. First of all, he must ascertain that the woman in question is not a member of his maximal lineage or married to a member of his own lineage. A responsible

551 [134] (b) Kata laghem koagb'kon sirigh tanga. (A hundred
645 barking hyenas cannot shake a mountain.)

6. Kamsoro Naba (Ouene Nongué), Naba Niouga ("cat"). He is chief eunuch. Nioug'nok wendé na pa ne Sabelem. (A cat who trusts in God is sure to preserve his blackness.) In other words, one who is protected by the Mogho Naba, his "God," will never lack for anything; everything will come to him as if by magic.

7. Naba Gnighnemdo (Mogho Naba). Naba Oubri, the founder
551 of the Ouagadougou dynasty, fell in love with one of his own daugh-
643 ters and had intercourse with her. The girl became pregnant and
835 gave birth to a son. The wives of Naba Oubri wanted to put both the child and the mother to death. They asked the girl the name of the child's father, and she replied, "Ask my father, he ought to know." When Oubri was questioned, he answered: "Bassi yan ya mam lam gnighnemdo (Do nothing, this is my own flesh)."

The child of this incestuous union was thus named Gnighnemdo and later succeeded his relative, Naba Nasbiré.

The Placing of Statues at Loumbi-Raogo

211 Ganlougdou. In the old days, upon the death of a Mogho
306 Naba or soon after, a jeweler was called in [135] to make a wax
532 statuette, later to be cast in bronze, in the likeness of the late chief. The jeweler also made statuettes of one soroné, one napagha, one bendré, and one lounga, and all were deposited at the home
[177] of the Loumbila Naba. This practice was suppressed upon the arrival of the French, and it appears that there is no statue of Naba Siguiri, father of Naba Kom, the present naba, at Loumbila.

The acting Mogho Naba is never supposed to see these statues, and the jeweler who made the likeness of his father must not see them either. The jeweler was paid 100,000 cowries, a horse, a donkey,
[135] a cow, a wife, a large robe, and 1,000 kola nuts, and he was then sent away from Ouagadougou. He must never return and must never see the new Mogho Naba.

These gifts represented a considerable sum in the old days, even today for that matter. They were given to aid the jeweler in consulting seers and charlatans for the purpose of prolonging his life. Tradition has it that unless he followed faithfully the prescriptions given by the seers, he would die within a year after completing the statues.

000 16. Circumcision.
17. Excision.
18. After the circumcision.
19. Emancipation and coming of age.
20. Guardianship.
21. Adoption.
22. Interdiction.

Let us begin with filiation.

848 Filiation. —"The Mossi," says Vadier, "distinguish three types of filiation: (1) legitimate filiation; (2) natural filiation; and (3) filiation from incest.

As for filiation from adultery, it is regarded exactly in the same manner as natural filiation.

[843] The period of gestation is believed to be from seven to twelve months. A child conceived outside this lapse of time is regarded as a natural child. Moreover, a woman need only tell her husband that the child she is carrying in her womb is not his and he will disown it.

When the illegitimate child or one born of adultery reaches the age of three or six (depending on its sex), it is entrusted to its natural father. In spite of this separation, the child retains its rights of inheritance from its mother.

848 Filiation from incest does not exist, or rather there is not enough time for obligations and rights to be created. Indeed, according to
847 a barbarous custom, the child born of incest is put to death immediately after birth by the women who assisted with the delivery.

835 Incest rules apply between kin of any degree in the ascending and descending lines: sister and brother, uncle and niece, nephew and aunt, and all their relatives in the direct ascending and descending lines; father-in-law and daughter-in-law; son-in-law and mother-in-law. /251/

684 When incest occurs, the guilty pair are driven from their families and from Yatenga, and the naba confiscates all their property."

843 Theory of birth. —The Mossi believe that when a woman is pregnant, the soul of an ancestor has returned within her. We shall
715 speak of this animistic explanation of birth later under "Religion" /not translated/.

In fact, resemblances between the child and some previously known ancestor are pointed out as often as possible, and it is said that this particular ancestor was reincarnated within the woman.

593 adultery except with a woman who is already married. A deceived
837 wife who wishes to take her revenge need only reveal to the spouse of her husband's partner the criminal relations that victimize them both."

593 Let us add that another of the husband's duties is to render help
602 to his wives' relatives if the latter are in needy circumstances.

Of course, the failure to fulfill these obligations could cause
593 the wife to request a divorce. Divorce thus exists among the Mossi,
586 although women rarely resort to it. The bride price is never claimed back by the husband, even if the woman has remained sterile. The children always devolve to the husband.

The husband, on the other hand, may turn out his wife, but Mossi husbands do not usually make use of this right.

585 Let us add that the matter of the girl's virginity at marriage
836 is settled by the Mossi as by most other Blacks. If a girl is bought or betrothed from a very young age, she must preserve herself intact for her future husband. An unbetrothed girl, however, is free to use her own body when she reaches puberty, and if she marries later she cannot be reprimanded for having become a woman prior to her wedding.

567 Let us now proceed to the status of slaves.

Two kinds of slaves are distinguished among the Mossi, aside from the usual distinction between trade slaves and house slaves.

1. The daparé (etymologically, "followers," "men who walk behind their master," from da, "man" and paré, "behind"). They are unmarried slaves.

2. The bagaré ("men of the enclosure"). Those are married captives.

/565/ The daparé live with their master and always remain at his disposal for any work that may come up. They have no small individual plots, therefore, and their master provides them with food and clothing at all times. When they reach marriageable age, their master buys them a wife (or at least it was so in the old days; she would cost the master about 60,000 or 70,000 cowries), and then they settle on their own.

582 I. Differences of tribe or caste. The Mossi may not contract
326 marriage with blacksmiths. This is absolutely forbidden. However,
564 they may marry among the Foulsé, Samo, Peul, Yarsé, etc."

This calls for several remarks. The blacksmiths of Yatenga are Foulsé and not Mossi. However, it is not a tribal difference which dictates the prohibition under discussion, since the Mossi can marry among the Foulsé as a whole. It is rather a difference in caste. It must be noted, as we said above /not translated/, that the common Foulsé cannot marry blacksmiths either.

[171] Here, as in all of the /French/ Sudan, blacksmiths are both feared and scorned. Basically, they are regarded as fearful sorcerers.

582 II. Kinship. There must be a lapse of 200 years between the time of the betrothed couple and the time when their common ancestor lived. This is likewise an absolute impediment.

III. If a Mossi has relations with a young girl or woman belonging to his fiancée's soukala during the period of his engagement, the marriage cannot take place.

This impediment, however, is not absolute. If the guilty man begs for the forgiveness of the family head and the latter accords it, the union may be effected later."

582 IV. Unnatural practices. The marriage cannot take place: (1) if
839 the betrothed man has been caught in the act of sexual intercourse with a she-ass (a phenomenon none too rare in Yatenga); and (2) if the betrothed girl has relations with a native who had sexual intercourse with a she-ass. These impediments are absolute.

This is why the inhabitants of a Yatenga village (Dénia) who are reputed to have had relations with asses in former times may not marry outside their locality.

582 V. Infirmities. If the fiancé is blind, the marriage may not take
[132] place unless the girl consents to it. No one can constrain her to do so.

VI. Leprosy. The same applies when the fiancé has leprosy.

VII. Impuberty of the betrothed pair. The marriage cannot take place unless both parties are nubile. This is an absolute impediment, but in practice the problem rarely arises.

VIII. Insanity of one of the betrothed."

582 Question of virginity. The girl's virginity is not very important
● 836 here and, it must be pointed out, far less so than among the Bambara. This is, incidentally, connected with the fact that the marriage bond is less sound and the separation of the spouses easier to obtain. A combination of related facts makes the institution of marriage and

582 the household a more serious and more binding affair among the
836 Bambara than in this particular region. /241/

Vadier says on the subject, "The fact that a young girl has had relations with a native other than her husband prior to marriage is by no means an impediment to the marriage.

"Many betrothed girls have lovers. It even happens quite frequently that their fathers are forced to go in search of them at the homes of the young men with whom they have run away. Actually, this matter is of no concern to the husband. As long as he gets the woman, the rest matters little to him. It is not unusual for a girl to bring a child
[848] which she had by another man into her husband's home. This child eventually returns to its natural father."

582 This picture is painted in rather bleak colors. In reality, fathers
836 and mothers do try, as best they can, to prevent their daughters from
585 taking lovers. They do not like to see them go to the "tom-tom,"
626 but they can scarcely keep them from going, and often the "tom-tom,"
684 like our own country dances, plays havoc with a young girl's virtue. If the girl says nothing, everything goes well. Since among the Mossi there is no exhibition of the skirt cloth following the consummation of the marriage, there is no evidence. Even if the husband knows ahead of time or finds out at the last moment, he says nothing out of shame, to avoid being scorned. When the father leads his daughter to the hut of the ancestors before sending her to her fiancé, however, she often does not dare enter the hut. Having lost her virginity and fearing that she might be killed by the ancestors, she admits her wrongdoing to her father. Sometimes she may have the courage or the effrontery to enter the ancestral hut, but later, if she falls ill in her husband's hut, she will interpret her condition as the ancestors' vengeance for the sort of moral perjury she committed by entering their hut in a state of transgression, and she will confess to her husband what she has done. In both cases the lover is confronted, in the first instance by the father, in the second by the husband, and a goat, two canari of dolo, and a chicken are demanded from him. A sacrifice will be offered to the ancestors with these various items to ask their forgiveness, they will pardon the wife and the lover, and order will be restored.

848 Sometimes, as mentioned earlier, a child is the fruit of a girl's passion. The lover having made reparation and the ancestors being satisfied, the husband will accept the child along with the girl, but

837 588 548 [586] Free Marriage. The only marriage which can be called free, since it is accepted by both parties, is that of a woman who is unable to endure her first husband and leaves her village with the intention of becoming a prostitute. Divorce is quite rare because the Moaga does not readily agree to it. As she passes through a village, she asks for hospitality, and the news soon spreads that a "free" woman is staying at such-and-such a place. The young men hasten to her and seek to win her favors. Gifts are sent to her, and her hostess is used as go-between. Nine times out of ten, the woman accepts the candidate preferred by her hostess. After some questions concerning his origins and circumstances, one of the young men is accepted as a temporary lover. His comrades come to his aid, and for a few days there is a veritable festival in the village. There is a slight change in the [177] regular fare, since meat is added to the mush; chickens, raised with considerable difficulty, are used for this special treat. This semblance of marriage is thus celebrated. As has been pointed out, however, there has been no divorce, and the deserted husband soon learns the whereabouts of his wife. As soon as he finds out what village she is in -- it may be 100 kilometers away -- he promptly sets out, carrying in a sheepskin enough ground millet for the journey and 500 to 1,000 cowries. He also carries a rooster which, along with the shells, will be offered to the chief of the canton where the lover lives, to whom he will make his claim.

[578] Unions of this sort give rise to three-quarters of the quarrels with which the canton or province chiefs have to deal. A young Moaga who desires peace of mind never regularizes the situation by a so-called marriage even though he may not be able to resist the temptation to harbor the woman for a few days. In any event the affair is easily broken off since sooner or later the woman, eager for change, will want a new lover.

583 Thus, it may be said that although forced marriage has the disadvantage of having a girl marry without her consent, still it also has advantages and a degree of security because the woman, fearing [178] her parents' wrath, rarely leaves her husband. Furthermore, this type of marriage is vastly preferable from the standpoint of peace

843 4. A pregnant woman must not step over her husband; this would make him ill.

853 5. The sexual act may be performed with impunity in the courtyard of a dwelling (at night). Otherwise, it is expressly forbidden to do it outside the house and in any way other than lying on a mat or Peulh secco, in any case never directly on the ground.

845 6. The delivery will be difficult and complicated if the child was conceived in adultery. If the woman is to be delivered, it is 837 absolutely necessary that she confess the name of her accomplice 847 in the presence of witnesses. In this case, if the husband demands it -- and he always does -- the newborn child is killed by the erring wife immediately after it is born (1). [185]

> 1. The procedure is as follows. Some young mothers simply twist its neck and strangle it. Others put the baby in a jar of lukewarm water. The baby instinctively drinks and finally drowns.

837 Adultery. Before the arrival of the French, adultery committed 684 by the nakomsé (descendants of naba) was punished by the death of the guilty couple. Among ordinary Mossi, the culprit was simply banished from the family.

However, if the lover was not a relative of the woman's husband, he was forbidden henceforth to come to the village where the woman lived. If he failed to observe this rule, he risked being killed.

As a general rule, a Moaga woman takes a lover in a village 837 some distance away from her husband's village and not far from her own. When she asks her husband's permission to visit her family, she profits by the opportunity to spend some time with her lover or to let him know that she is going to her parents' home.

Dissolution of Marriage. Divorce.

586 A divorce may be imposed by a husband who no longer loves his wife, but neither ill-health nor sterility may be invoked for the 842 purpose. In the latter case, it is simply assumed that God does not want the woman to have children. She is often regarded with scorn, but sometimes no attention is paid to her lack of children.

685 entitled to complain and merely removed the animal. If the damage was caused by a cow or donkey, the owner of the field had to obtain a witness and was entitled to recover damages.

425 Whoever found an object of small value, such as a knife or even a garment, was entitled to keep it, but anything valuable, such as a sheep, a donkey, or, all the more, a cow, had to be handed over to the naba and became his property.

684 The province chief alone could pass sentence on a rapist. He was 837 beaten and put in irons, the girl was returned to her family, and, if she gave birth, the child was killed. If the girl had been promised to the naba, the rapist was put to death. An adulterer caught in flagrante delicto could be killed by the deceived husband, but if he had not been caught in flagrante delicto, if he had managed to run away, or if he had merely been denounced by the woman, the deceived husband could do nothing. A girl's seducer usually became her husband if she gave birth, but he had to provide another girl for her betrothed.

791 The province chief had a special procedure to insure the faithfulness of his numerous wives and his pages. When a wife or page did 787 not behave properly, the Poënaba was supposed to point them out to 837 the naba. He proceeded as follows. Every Friday the Poënaba left his village on foot, a whip in his hand. A servant preceded him with a leather satchel containing charms. No one was allowed to come near him. Everyone fled into the bush, and the path he had followed was closed to other people until they learned that the dreadful man had reached the home of the naba. The wives were gathered together. The Poënaba filled a large gourd with water, poured in his ingredients, and sat before it. The women came to him one by one and cast their reflection in the water. The Poënaba looked in and claimed to recognize those wives who were faithful and those who were not. The former were allowed to go free, but they were often beaten to remove any possible inclination to unfaithfulness. Those designated as unfaithful were seized and had to denounce their accomplice. Both the man and woman were clubbed to death. If the woman pointed out as guilty had no accomplice or refused to name him, she alone was killed. Women still point out with terror the place of execution. This procedure was very barbarous, and its abuses were flagrant. To avoid an accusation which would cost them /27/ their lives, the poor women were ready to do anything, and they presented the Poënaba with all the gifts they could gather in order to be spared.

584
583 have borrowed. In addition, he would expose himself and the preferred suitor to the vengeance of the rejected one.

583 The bride price is not exorbitant. The total gifts, spread over a period of years, amount to some fifty francs, without counting the work days. Nevertheless, it requires sufficient means to secure at least the necessary cowries. Besides, the child's father prefers to give her to someone who already boasts a certain fame and some wealth, in short, to an elderly man. /30/ This is why children are promised to old dotards, and white-haired men are paired with young girls; while the old men's sons of marriageable age cannot get wives. If the father has the means to pay the bride price, he carefully refrains from helping his son, even if the latter has found a match to his liking.
587 It is true that all the father's wives are inherited by the oldest son,
578 who gives some to his younger brothers; but this occurs only at the old man's death, and this may not happen for a long time. This ex-
593 plains why the oldest son wishes for his father's death, and why the father sends the son away for fear of a premature end. It is only fair to add that some men, with a better understanding of their own interests, marry off their sons as soon as they are old enough.

595 Polygamy exists among the Mossi as in all Black countries. The wealth of a man is gauged by the number of his wives. Women
[556] furnish hands to till the soil, for the wife works in the fields like the husband. Women also furnish children, and if these are daughters, young men will come to offer their services (dakonré) and one day take the girls in marriage; or the father will receive gifts. If the children are boys, they will later aid the father in his work. In these countries where each lives for himself alone, where selfishness reigns supreme, polygamy is easily explained, but it undoubtedly results in a lower birth rate. White-bearded old men cannot have children as numerous and sound as young men in their prime, and the latter, deprived of wives, wear themselves out with their excesses. It is true that those who can afford a dozen wives are few; most have to be content with two, three, or four. Some nabas, nevertheless, own veritable herds of women, and this is certainly a grievous abuse. Their wives are numbered in the hundreds. The greatest moral dis-
[837] order reigns in those harems, where the boys who serve as grooms and pages spend most of their time among their master's wives. This explains the precautions taken by the women's owners and the eunuchs of the Moro Naba, as well as the Poënaba and his sinister duties.

593 not shelter her but must on the contrary return her to her husband.
562 If difficulties arise, the husband appeals to the naba, who forces the wife to return to her husband, at whose hands she will get a beating when she arrives....

"...The powers of a deceived husband over his wife's lover
593 were quite fearsome prior to our occupation. He could, at will,
837 either deal with the culprit himself or defer his complaint to the
684 naba. If he dealt himself with his rival and killed him, he handed out the adulterous woman to the Moro Naba and did not have to answer for his crime. If he merely wounded the man, no matter how seriously, he was regarded as having acted in the fullness of his rights as an injured husband, and he kept the wife and gave her a beating. If he appealed to the naba, the guilty pair were punished by being put in irons for a variable period of time. Furthermore, if the adultery had been committed with the wife of a dapouy naba of the Moro Naba (that is to say, a man to whom the Moro Naba had himself given some girl in marriage), the accomplice was compelled to pay the deceived husband a fine of 100,000 cowries.

"Finally, in case of adultery with a chief's wife, both culprits were put to death."

On this subject I find in my notes that prior to our occupation, when a naba was deceived by one of his wives, he killed her with
[762] poison and ordered the wife's lover to commit suicide. The latter did this by plunging the head of a poisoned arrow into the calf of his leg.

"It is plain," the author of the Monographie goes on to say, "that the lover was dealt with in the most rigorous manner of all. He could be put to death by the deceived husband in every case, while the wives of a chief were alone liable to supreme punishment. The lover could also be punished with a fine, in a single case anticipated by custom. Finally, he was invariably put in irons on the naba's orders if the deceived husband placed a complaint against him.

"As for the adulterous wife, except when she was /563/ handed over to the Moro Naba by her husband as reparation for the murder of her partner, punishment for her misdemeanor amounted merely to a more or less rigorous beating or to irons for a short period of time. She could, it is true, be turned out by her husband, but the latter

593 made use of this right quite rarely. The woman has productive
837 value in terms of children and labor. And then, in the majority
684 of cases, the husband would merely fulfill the dearest of his wife's desires by doing so."

593 While the Mossi wife has duties toward her husband, the latter
586 also has obligations toward his wives.

"A wife," says the Monographie, "has the right to demand from her husband more than mere platonic relations.

"Should the latter prevail, however, owing to the husband's impotence or illness, or simply as a result of ill will, the neglected wife would communicate the situation to the first wife of the family head, who would in turn inform her spouse.

"Should the husband's behavior be caused by physical incapacity, the woman would be taken from him and given to one of his brothers, or if there were none to his nearest relative, his sons excepted. Should his behavior be due merely to ill will, however, remonstrances would be made to him, and should these prove fruitless at the end of a few days, the woman would be considered free to return to her family."

593 Just as the husband owes his wives fulfillment of the conjugal
837 duty, he also owes them relative faithfulness.

"The husband has an obligation of relative faithfulness toward his wives, that of not keeping a concubine at the conjugal domicile.
[586] Should he transgress this rule, his wives would be fully entitled to obtain a divorce from him, unless he should agree to turn out his partner as a result of his wives' complaint or the intervention of the family head.

"This rule is strictly obeyed, except for the Mossi of the Kipirsi who allow the presence of the husband's concubines among his legitimate wives, and who have rules governing their respective positions.

"In any case the husband is everywhere allowed to /564/ deceive his wives as he pleases outside the conjugal domicile, and they are not entitled to complain about this in any way. Nevertheless, they nearly always have at their disposal a practically infallible although circuitous means of causing the greatest inconvenience to the fickle husband and his partner. As a result of the custom that pledges girls in marriage at a very early age, a husband can hardly commit

593 adultery except with a woman who is already married. A deceived
837 wife who wishes to take her revenge need only reveal to the spouse of her husband's partner the criminal relations that victimize them both."

593 Let us add that another of the husband's duties is to render help
602 to his wives' relatives if the latter are in needy circumstances.

Of course, the failure to fulfill these obligations could cause
593 the wife to request a divorce. Divorce thus exists among the Mossi,
586 although women rarely resort to it. The bride price is never claimed back by the husband, even if the woman has remained sterile. The children always devolve to the husband.

The husband, on the other hand, may turn out his wife, but Mossi husbands do not usually make use of this right.

585 Let us add that the matter of the girl's virginity at marriage is settled by the Mossi as by most other Blacks. If a girl is bought
836 or betrothed from a very young age, she must preserve herself intact for her future husband. An unbetrothed girl, however, is free to use her own body when she reaches puberty, and if she marries later she cannot be reprimanded for having become a woman prior to her wedding.

Let us now proceed to the status of slaves.

567 Two kinds of slaves are distinguished among the Mossi, aside from the usual distinction between trade slaves and house slaves.

1. The daparé (etymologically, "followers," "men who walk behind their master," from da, "man" and paré, "behind"). They are unmarried slaves.

2. The bagaré ("men of the enclosure"). Those are married captives.

/565/ The daparé live with their master and always remain at his disposal for any work that may come up. They have no small individual plots, therefore, and their master provides them with food and clothing at all times. When they reach marriageable age, their master buys them a wife (or at least it was so in the old days; she would cost the master about 60,000 or 70,000 cowries), and then they settle on their own.

562 When she dies, a woman's property goes to her children. The
428 objects used by women go to the daughters (bracelets, skirt cloths), while other items (animals, etc.) go to the sons. More exactly, the first-born is favored among the sons and the oldest girl among the daughters. If there are no children, the husband does not take anything, and whatever the wife leaves goes to her family, to her sisters and brothers in the first line of descent. Not having had any children by the deceased, the husband would be ashamed to take what she left.

● 837 Adultery. —The wife owes faithfulness to her spouse. Unfaithfulness, however, is not very important, for unless it occurs repeatedly, it does not usually result in a break. The husband merely beats his wife and scolds her.

837 When the wife has fled to a lover, her husband goes in search of
684 her. The lover will have to provide a sheep (the sheep may be replaced by a goat), a chicken, and two canari of dolo, all of which
782 are to be sacrificed to the ancestors so they will forgive the woman.
769 She cannot re-enter her house until the sacrifice has been performed; without it the ancestors would kill her. They are unbending, more so than the husband to be sure, about the latter's honor. Should a husband know his wife to be guilty and do nothing about it, the ancestors would be furious and they would kill him, hence the necessity for action on the husband's part.

837 If the husband cannot find his runaway wife, the duty of searching
684 for her and bringing her back to him falls to his father-in-law.

Formerly, before the French occupation, if the lover did not want to return the woman, her father appealed to the naba, that is, the chief of the village or canton, or even to the Moro Naba, who sent horsemen to arrest the guilty pair. He restored the wife to her husband and confiscated for his own benefit the lover's animals and millet granaries.

Nowadays, since the French occupation, one appeals to the commanding officer of the circle and to the native provincial court for the wife's return.

684 Sometimes, in the past, the husband killed his wife's lover when
643 he caught him flagrante delicto. He had the right to do so, but this caused him to lose his /246/ wife who became the property of the Moro Naba. The lover's property likewise reverted to the Moro Naba.

684 In any event, the husband did not have the right to kill his wife
643 except when she was caught flagrante delicto, unless he was the
565

684 Moro Naba or a member of the aristocracy. When one of his wives
643 deceived him, the Moro Naba had her killed along with her lover.
565 The guilty pair were strangled with cotton bands. Concerning the nakomsé /descendants of nabas/, the true nakomsé (for the descendants of Naba Rawa and Naba Yadega are no longer considered nakomsé at the present day and have reverted to the mass of the common people), the true nakomsé related to royalty since the time of Naba Nabacéré (1625-1655) and his descendants, Pigo (1720-1739) and Kango (1754-1787), when one of their wives had deceived them, they appealed first to the Basi Naba, head of the nakomsé, and presented the guilty pair to him. The Basi Naba sent them on to the Moro Naba, who had the woman and her lover strangled. The lover's property went to the Rassam Naba, chief of the people of Bingo who were in charge of the execution. The same procedure applied when the people of Bingo (house slaves of the Moro Naba) executed the wife of a Moro Naba and her lover. The property, which could not with decency revert to the deceived Moro Naba, went to the Rassam Naba, chief of Bingo.

● 837 Just as the wife owes faithfulness to her husband, the husband owes
684 faithfulness to his wife or wives. Violations of this rule are frequent, however, and the husband's escapades are far less important than those of the wife. In all events, the husband's infidelity never entails annulment of the marriage. Although the wives do not have the right to say much when their husband deceives them (provided he does not install his concubine in the conjugal household, and this in fact never happens), they do have two possibilities of revenge. The first is very rarely used by the Mossi women of Yatenga. It consists of notifying the husband of the woman with whom their husband is deceiving them. This results in more or less serious trouble for their husband. If their husband ventures to take into his hut for awhile a woman who does not belong to him, it may happen (and this occurs more frequently) that his wives will gather, wait for the guilty woman at the door of the soukala, and give her a good thrashing when she comes out. The husband cannot say anything to them. He himself is protected, so to speak, by his status as a husband and left outside the argument, but revenge is taken on his unlucky accomplice, and while nothing is said to him, he can do nothing to protect her.

586 Divorce. —Divorce occurs in Yatenga more frequently than among the Bambara for reasons which were explained above. Here are the

586 8. Incest. In case incest is committed by one of the spouses, the other has the right to request a divorce. The gifts remain in the husband's possession if the wife is guilty, or revert to her if it was the husband who commited incest."

Such are the major theoretical cases which may result in divorce. Let us first return to one of them: nonfulfillment of the conjugal duty on the husband's part. The results noted by Vadier seem contradictory to those which we mentioned above (under "conjugal duty"). Actually, no contradiction is involved. When a husband does not fulfill his conjugal duty toward his wife (this, incidentally, occurs quite rarely), either the woman has only praise for her husband in all /248/ other respects, or he is cruel and mean and she is dissatisfied with him on other counts. In the first instance, she takes a lover outside her hus- [837] band's compound, a liaison to which he voluntarily shuts his eyes, and she does not request a divorce. In the second case, she does request one. That is how the situation is actually resolved.

586 Among the instances of divorce enumerated by Vadier, the most 837 frequent, or rather the least rare, are as follows. (1) Continual infidelity on the part of the wife. I say "continual," for as we have already noted, while in principle a single infidelity on the woman's part enables the husband to ask for a divorce, in actual fact a wife is never sent back for a single breach of the marriage contract. Instead, she is merely beaten. If the woman persists in betraying her husband, however, he eventually sends her away. (2) Insults passed 586 between each other by the husband and wife in a moment of anger do 578 not count, but insults by the husband about his wife's relatives or by a 602 wife about the husband's relatives are serious. (Incidentally, this [171] sensitivity on the subject of relatives is not peculiar to the Mossi. It is common to all the Sudanese Negroes I have seen, Bambara, Malinké, etc.) Thus, if the husband insults his wife's relatives, she may request a divorce. Actually, a woman who loves her husband does not tell her relatives about insults which he may have aimed at them in a moment of anger. She says nothing and does not ask for a divorce. If she holds other grudges against her husband, however, or secretly wishes for a separation, she will eagerly take advantage of this motive which is considered to be serious. As regards the wife's insults against her husband's relatives (like the preceding, an unusual case among the Mossi), the same thing applies. Either the husband loves his wife and says nothing, or he does not love her and takes this opportunity to get rid of her.

428 As a result, an heir may come into his share of the inheritance through a gift received during the lifetime of the deceased.

431 /273/ Gifts inter vivos. —A Mossi may, while alive, give away whatever he pleases of his own property.

Since he is absolute master of these goods and thus entitled to use them as he sees fit, no one has the right to question the gifts he makes.

421 Incidentally, let us recall that heads of families, compounds, work groups, and households are only the managers and not the owners, in the Roman sense, of the family, zaka, work group, or household property, respectively. As for private, individual goods on which the jus utendi et abutendi may be exercised, we know what they amount to among the Mossi. In practice, moreover, the Mossi are far from taking much advantage of this theoretical right. Here, nevertheless, we are concerned with theory, and the following rules pertain to it.

431 A gift made inter vivos must be made before several witnesses in order to be valid.

No special status is required in order to receive a gift.

The wife possesses the same rights as the husband. The gift will nevertheless be worthless if it is proved that the beneficiary is or was her lover. [837]

596 We are now finished with the Mossi family.

To summarize, as we already stated earlier, this family is communal and patriarchal.

Its communalism, however, is quite unstable. People live, not in family groups, but in family subgroups (the zaka). They work, not in family subgroups, but in sub-subgroups (the work groups). In former times, the zaka may have been a community of labor as well as a community of habitation. As we shall see later /not translated/, this is now the case among the Foulsé or Nioniossé /Nyonyose/, where sometimes it is the zaka that constitutes the community of labor and sometimes it is the work group, and where there seems to be an evolution from the former state of affairs to the latter.

As for patriarchy, it is very clearly defined and established. The family revolves around the man and not around the woman. As I have stated, certain signs induce us to believe that the Mossi family, like the Sudanese family in general, was once matriarchal in the very distant past. At all events, this has long ceased to be the case, and we are dealing now with an unstable communalism paired with clearly defined patriarchy.

8: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1958
FA28 Mossi FA28

595 co-wives and other women of the extended families. Even the Catholic hus-
797 bands would not help their wives with household tasks requiring more than
182 one person, nor would they violate tradition by chatting with their wives except at night in their huts. Another factor is that after the Mossi Christian
[846] woman has given birth to a child, she follows the traditional custom and goes back to her parents' home to remain there during the two or three years' lactation period. This imposes a great hardship on a Catholic husband because during this time he is left without wife or helpmate. In the extended family household there would have been women to take care of a man's material needs, and his mistresses would have taken care of his sexual needs. The Catholic can and does ask the mission for a young girl to take care of his material needs, but of course she is not expected to satisfy his sexual de-
● [837] sires. Obviously this arrangement is not satisfactory, and many Catholic men, with the acquiescence of their wives, keep mistresses. Dim Delobson comments:

> Ouagadougou has a large number of Christians, but does this mean that these people in their love for the church respect all her rules? Alas! there are a large number of Christians who oblige their lawful wives to leave the conjugal couch and make way for the accommodation of mistresses . . . in conformity with the old custom. But this is a subject which is too delicate to discuss further. I only note it in passing: *Noli me tangere* (1934:169).

797 Despite the influence of tradition on Mossi Catholics, I feel it would be a
794 mistake to say that the complexity of Catholic dogma is one of the drawbacks to missionary success in this country. One Mossi has already been made a bishop of the Catholic Church, and most of the proselytizing in Manga falls on the two Mossi priests and the five Mossi nuns. Under the supervision of two White Fathers, the Catholic children and adults are acquainted with the dogma and rituals of the church. The festivals are well attended and celebrated with as much pomp as possible. Although the Mass is sung in Latin, the Mossi have adapted some of their traditional tunes to the Mass, and use their own language for prayers and hymns. Catholics observe all the sacraments including Confession—a sacrament which is hazardous from the Mossi point of view, because man must lay bare his innermost thoughts to the priests, who, in the final analysis, are Europeans and thus administrators.

It is true that even the staunchest Catholics in Manga have not abandoned all belief in traditional rituals and religious credos. For example, many Mossi Catholics believe in the existence of sorcerers, but the Catholic Church
[754] does not recognize the existence of sorcerers or such evil forces (I have met White Fathers who believe that there are unexplainable psychic and physical phenomena in Africa), and moreover has no way of dealing with them. "But," says Dim Delobson (1934:136), "the Mossi believe so strongly in the power of such entities, that even those converted to Christianity cannot always escape the action of malevolent practitioners." The result is that many Catholics desert the church when they believe that only traditional specialists can help them with personal problems. Catholic families easily aban-

10:Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1964 FA28 Mossi FA28
Yatenga

571 604 indirectly from the good will of his ancestral spirits whose benevolence Ego often invokes.

Ambivalence follows from other characteristics of the relationship. Resentment of Ego's depredations of her husband's property and jealous concern for the inheritance rights of her own children appear to be at least partially balanced by a share of the affection her husband shows for Ego. However, joking in this relationship is asymmetrical. The mother's brother's wife takes the more aggressive role, and from the vehemence of her joking, and the [152] structural nature of the relationship, it appears likely that amity lies less heavily in the balance than hostility. The groups to which the two parties belong are equal in status. Their respective positions within them, of course, are not, and this is reflected in the aforementioned asymmetry. Each party is obviously independent of the authority system of the other.

571 607 *Joking Between Siblings-in-Law*

[144] Siblings-in-law who joke are separated by the rule of sib exogamy observed among the Mossi. Reciprocity is basic to the marriage contract that unites their respective kin groups. Several factors tend to create ambivalence in the relationship. Both kin groups—in particular, the extended families of the two marriage partners—profit from the reciprocal tie established between them, but possible failure on the part of either group to reciprocate adequately, [57] particularly with regard to marriage payments, constitutes a persistent source [58] of potential friction. Moreover, the Mossi observe the levirate. Joking between siblings-in-law who are potential spouses, yet are presently constrained by a [137] prohibition against adultery, has frequently been ascribed the function of reducing tension in a situation of conflict. The kin groups of siblings-in-law [147] are always structurally equivalent because groups occupying significantly dif- [58] ferent strata in Mossi society do not intermarry. As members of autonomous descent groups the participants are obviously independent of one another.

571 614 *Joking Between Sibs*

Sibs (or lineages) whose members joke with one another are, of course, also separate groups.[2] They are always united by a strong tradition of reciprocal social and economic aid. Ambivalence apparently stems from the conflict between this tradition of reciprocity and actual competing claims to land. The origin of joking relationships between two descent groups is often ascribed to the alleged fact that, when they first arrived in the village, leaders of both falsely claimed to the chief that he and his kinsmen had arrived first, [423] and thus had a prior right to land, and that the members of the other group were their slaves. Despite their jocular allegations, both groups are in fact structurally equal and independent.

571 56 *Joking Between Age-Sets*

Joking between age-sets within an age-grade varies with the generational

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28

9. In Dim Delobson's account (p. 60), an unnamed wife of the Mogho Naba ran away, and he allegedly tried to follow her because she was the only person in his household who knew how to cook his favorite food. 000

It is interesting that the Mossi have a tradition in which their ruler undergoes the same experience as many a Mossi husband, namely, being betrayed by his wife. It is also interesting that Mogho Naba Waraga is the ruler named in this incident. He is the ruler who waged a five-year-long civil war with one of his vassals. It may well be that his ministers devised the myth about his wife in order to prevent him from leaving the capital to fight. [837]

10. The Mossi practice of tasting food before giving it to another person is obviously connected with the fear of poison. The Mossi believe that only a boorish person would give another person something to eat without first tasting it himself. [576]

11. The full significance of this ceremony is unclear, for the Mossi hesitate to talk about it. It is known that the "sacred fire" is linked to the nocturnal visits of the royal ancestors. But the relationship of the fire to another sacred fire kept in Koubri district (about seventeen miles from Ouagadougou) is not known. [372]

Faithful to Mossi tradition or ignorant of the true nature of the ceremony, Dim Delobson says nothing about the ceremony and does not mention the presence of the namtibo. However, he does report that the palace guards would kill anyone who approached the place where the rite was being performed (p. 62). [114]

12. There are several traditions concerning female regents. However, I believe that they may have their basis in the role the Mogho Naba's daughter played during the interregnum.

13. Mossi genealogies show that only in one case in which the nam passed from a Mogho Naba to his brother did the former Mogho Naba's sons receive districts from their uncle, the new ruler. Since it is difficult to believe that the eleven other Mogho Nanamse who were succeeded by their brothers died without issue, it can only be concluded that the descendants of a ruler who did not inherit the nam were ignored by their uncles in power.

14. To this council could be added other men whose experience was valued. For example, the Baloum Naba was called upon in 1942 to give advice about a successor to Kom.

15. Dim Delobson, pp. 130–32.

16. It is interesting that the sheepskin garb of the Mossi pretenders is similar to the dress of the chiefs among the smaller tribal groups of the Voltaic culture area. If we can assume that culture traits characteristic of ritual and ceremonial practices tend to persist longer than most other traits, we might have evidence that the complex Mossi state evolved from the political organizations found among the smaller local groups. [171] [174]

17. The "naming of a name" speech is part of most Mossi *rites de passage*, and is often used to brag about some achievement or to cast aspersions on one's enemies. Most newly elected monarchs pledge good government, brag about their elevation, and vilify their enemies.

In his inaugural speech Naba Kom II said, "When plenty of water falls during the rainy season, the rivers and seas are glad because they are enlarged." "Kom" means "water," and Kom's speech meant that he pledged to bring happiness to all his subjects.

Boukary Koutou insulted his listeners by declaring, "Even if a hundred ghosts join together, they cannot harm an elephant." He was called Mogho Naba Wobogo ("elephant").

18. It is said that if the amulets were stolen during the interregnum, the thief had to be elected Mogho Naba; if they were stolen afterwards, the ruler lost the basis for the mystical quality of leadership and authority he had inherited from his ancestors.

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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greeting a lower status benefactor, a man will get down and greet him from a kneeling position. It is because of this elaborate system of greeting, with the many opportunities thus provided for one person to slight another, that many important persons never go to the market. As a rule, the failure of any one person to give the required greeting to another when they meet in the market place is always an indication of strained relations between them.

The persons from whom an individual may buy goods, and the kinds of goods which may be purchased by one individual from another, are governed by convention and social relationships. A person may not buy anything from a relative except European goods. A man cannot buy any but cooked food in the market place, and often he asks a female relative or a passing female to buy it for him. To do the contrary is held to be unmanly and indicative of a bad character. A woman will not buy cotton cloth but will send a man to buy it for her. She would hate to have people believe that she has no male relative to weave it for her, or what is more likely, that she is too lazy to spin the cotton thread which would then be woven for her. A woman may purchase any type of commodity from other women, but she must be careful not to patronize men who are known to be libertines or with whom she is suspected of having an affair. She must also be careful about running errands for men, since people know that men often use this device to establish amorous relationships with women. Men also use this device to give presents, or to arrange secret meetings with them. If any man sees a female relative involved in any of these misadventures, he chases her away and more than likely curses the man, if he does not fight him. In any event, he warns the man to leave the woman alone.

The market is one of the few places where men and women can initiate relationships not sanctioned by their relatives. Under normal conditions marriages are arranged between unrelated individuals through the lineage members who establish "friendly" relationships. Two friends might ask their lineage heads for women to exchange as wives or the "friend" who has received more gifts from the other will give over a wife. Because the older men most often have goods and women at their disposal, they are usually the ones who receive wives. The result is that most young men have no wives, and until they inherit wives from lineage members, are continually seeking to establish intimate relations with women whom they meet on the market place. The technique which a young man employes to gain the favors of a woman he sees at market is highly stereotyped. First of all, he must ascertain that the woman in question is not a member of his maximal lineage or married to a member of his own lineage. A responsible

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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man even refrains from making overtures to a woman whose husband's female relatives may be married to a member of his own lineage. He fears that a wronged husband may have the wives of his lineage brothers recalled, thus causing dissension within and between the two lineages. If none of these complications are present, a man seeks out a person who knows the woman and sends a message declaring his intentions. If the response is favorable, the man then buys four large kola nuts (four being the number for a woman), wraps them together with 44 francs, and send them to his lady. This procedure may be followed on subsequent market days without the two parties ever coming into direct contact with each other. Finally, however, a rendezvous is arranged, and on the pretense of leaving the market to visit a relative for several days, the woman goes instead to her lover's village.

These casual affairs started at the market sometimes become quite serious, and if for any reason they are sanctioned by the relatives of either the man or the woman, they often lead to the breakup of a marriage. And since the market is the place where disputants of any sort most likely come into contact, it is here that fights over "stolen" wives break out.

This pattern of extramarial relationships centering around the market place is so common among the Mossi that the younger men, and even some of the older ones, are disappointed with the "market" when their mistresses do not appear. Mossi men who sit under the shelters around the market place can usually give an inquirer not only the name of a woman, the name and village of her husband and father, but also the name and village of her paramour. Characteristically enough, they are always "ignorant" of the escapades of their own female relatives or of the wives of their lineage members. The only time when men act as though their relatives might be involved in extramarital affairs is when for some purpose or another a man has to recall a wife or daughter who has gone to visit a relative in another village or district. Regardless of how pressing the problem may be, a man will seldom go directly to his father-in-law's house to recall the woman. He goes to the market nearest to his in-laws' village, and seeks his wife there. If he does not find her or any of her relatives, he goes to the part of the market in which people from her village sell their products and sends a message to her family that he will come for her the next day, or that he would like her to come home.

A market place is also one of the best places to look for news of a runaway wife, or of any stranger in an area. The Mossi say that women have footprints like an elephant in that they can be found quite easily, but that the footprints are always clearest in the market.

644 "In addition to these dignitaries, the Moro Naba is surrounded with a veritable army of soroné (pages), samandé (bodyguards), ourkima (grooms), and jussaba (eunuchs)."

Some explanations are in order concerning the soroné. They are young boys or adolescents, from seven or eight to fifteen years old, who are to be found not only around the Moro Naba but around all Mossi chiefs, no matter who they may be, ministers, dignitaries, canton chiefs, and even village chiefs. These chiefs obtain them, as we saw earlier, by claiming the first-born son as well as the first-born daughter of all the men to whom they give a wife. The boy is made into a soroné, and the girl used to perpetuate the recruitment of soroné and servitors by giving her in marriage to one of them.

644 The soroné wear their hair like women. Like them, they wear heavy copper bracelets at the wrists and ankles, and if rumor is to 838 be credited, they not only /570/ bear the attributes of women but also substitute for them occasionally. It seems that the Mossi must 834 not have carnal relations with their wives on Friday. This is a religious ordinance meant to ingratiate the divinities, but it overlooked the soroné.... In any case this corruption does not reach the common masses of the Mossi, who do not have the means to employ soroné. Thus it applies only to chiefs.

644 No matter what the case may be, the soroné are usually selected among the most attractive boys, and some of them have great beauty with their woman's hairdo.

Another duty of their position is to remain virgins... as far as women are concerned.

644 "Every year," says Moulins, "the chastity of the Moro Naba's 78 soroné is put to a test. They are requested by the Pouy Naba to cast their 684 reflection into a gourd full of water, and according to the manner in which the reflection is cast, they are proclaimed free from stain or convicted of carnal relations, in which case, prior to our occupation, they were put to death without further delay. This is because the soroné, as confidants of the Naba, are often entrusted with state secrets and could only maintain the discretion required by their position if they were to avoid the entreaties of love.

644 "When the soroné reach manhood, the Naba gives them a wife and sends them away. The first child born of the union between a soroné and the wife given him by the Naba devolves to the latter,

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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000 19. There is a curious story among the people of Nobere district that Mogho Naba Mottoba (who reigned in the seventeenth century) was not a Mossi but a Fulani who was given the nam after he chanced upon the installation ceremony and assassinated the newly elected man during the night. This story is denied in Ouagadougou; in fact, it contradicts the genealogical records of the ruling dynasty. However, the gene-
[174] alogy does show that Mottoba's father, Mogho Naba Guiliga, had succeeded his brother, and it is possible that there was dynastic rivalry for the nam between Mottoba and the former Mogho Naba's son.

20. This rite was performed during the installation of the present Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou, although it is hardly recognizable as described in *Newsweek* (December 9, 1957, p. 48): "A man named Moussa Congo assumed the name of Kougri Naba last week and became the 35th Mogho Naba of the Mossi in the capital city of Ouagadougou in the Upper Volta region of French West Africa. Son of Emperor Issoufou Congo, Kougri Naba, as the new Mogho Naba, has one white horse, 200 wives, and 8,000 warriors, who danced around his palace ten times."

[182] 21. This practice has apparently lapsed since Mogho Naba Kougri moved into the modern concrete palace built for his father, Mogho Naba Sagha II.

22. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Soudan*, pp. 569–70. Tauxier claims the Mogho Nanamse
● [838] used the pages for homosexual purposes on Fridays in order to circumvent the Moslem prohibition against intercourse with women on this holy day. Homosexuality is rare among the Mossi, as Tauxier himself admits, and most Mossi deny that the Mogho Nanamse ever resorted to it. However, one respondent did state that he had heard about homosexuality among certain past rulers.

23. Crozat, p. 4849.

[648] 24. When Mogho Naba Kom II died under mysterious circumstances in 1942, it was rumored that he had committed suicide rather than reduce the number of his
[762] wives as ordered by the administration under the influence of the Catholic mission-aries. Kom allegedly held that no one can inherit a sovereign's wife during his life-
[797] time. Therefore, in order to avoid loss of status by seeing his wives go to commoners, he chose death so they would be inherited by nobles.

[114] 25. The statement in *Newsweek* (December 9, 1957, p. 48) that Kougri has two hundred wives is untrue.

26. Intermarriage between the Mossi and the Fulani has produced a people known
[563] as the Simili-Mossi. Nevertheless, the Mossi are strongly prejudiced against the Fulani, especially against the women, stating that the Moaga who has sexual intercourse with a Fulani woman must bathe in nine different rivers before he becomes clean. The basis of this prejudice appears to be that Fulani women are not cultivators and therefore are unacceptable as Mossi wives.

27. Mossi women know a great deal about the history and traditions of their people. But they never indicate that they do except during such rituals, when they are required to play certain roles.

28. Dim Delobson, p. 96.

29. Dim Delobson (p. 101) states that there are "sacred things" in this village, but I have been unable to substantiate his report.

30. Dim Delobson (p. 104) gives the classic explanation of this nighttime ride. On
[824] his ride from Bere to Djiba, the mounted prince must try to touch a certain branch of a certain tree. If he is destined to succeed his father, he will succeed in touching the branch; if he is not, the branch will magically withdraw at his approach.

I visited the area in which this ritual reportedly took place, but the people in the vicinity denied that such a tree existed.

31. *Ibid.*, p. 106.

[648] 32. IFAN (Compte Rendu No. 429). There are many other rumors concerning Kom's death. In a book praising the loyalty of the Africans to the Free French Gov-

634 among the other ministers. The rich and important cantons
645 were entrusted to the Kamsaogo Naba, chief eunuch. This was
[839] because the emperor wanted to be sure that he would recover the fortune left by this minister at his death. Since the latter was merely the guardian of the king's wives, he had no legitimate heirs. The eunuch appointed to replace him had to establish his own personal fortunes. Only the horses or women which the late minister might have given [49] during his lifetime to persons in his section were left with their owners. [Ed., Mossi villages are
[621] divided into sections (Fr., quartier), which are really hamlets containing several households or compounds. These sections are indigenous, not colonial subdivisions.]

Powers of the Ministers over the Vassal Chiefs of the Mogho Naba

634 It would be a mistake to think that before the French occu-
645 pation the ministers had any great authority over the canton chief.
642 Actually, the ministers' role, as has been pointed out, was to act as intermediaries between the emperor and the canton chiefs. They could not, however, under any right or pretext, intervene in canton affairs, since the kombéré was the only lord in the area whose command had been conferred upon him as an appanage by the Mogho Naba.

That is why it has been possible for canton chiefs who were dissatisfied with the minister under whose rule they found themselves to report, henceforth, to another minister. Furthermore, the Mogho Naba saw no objection to this. The Mossi expression,
[638] Gansobend'ka sambiri n'tont vigri yé ("hospitality is not like kinship; you can evade it") amply illustrates the accuracy of the foregoing. If it is further noted that before the French occupation
[651] the naba came to Ouagadougou only once a year to pay their respects to the emperor and to bring him annual tribute, one will readily understand the insignificance of the ministers' authority over them.

This does not mean, of course, that it was possible to [50] do without any intermediaries, but rather that it was possible to choose them freely. In any case, one of the incentives to

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to the Mogho Naba: "Since I have come to you, give the first rank to this man. I will show him what he must do to please you. He will be the Ouidi Naba."

A man from Tansobongo, having heard that the Ouidi Naba was living in the greatest ease, came to see him. He, too, was a handsome youth. He was presented to the Mogho Naba (Naba Oubri) by the Gounga Naba who proposed the young man's appointment as second minister, the Larrhallé Naba, and reserved for himself the post of third minister.

So it came about that the Gounga Naba is the emperor's third minister.

645 place where there were once many goumsé (gounga, silk-cotton tree); hence, his name.

[726] He is a brother-in-arms of the Tansoba and always accompanied him to war, where he chose death rather than defeat, especially if the Tansoba had been killed.

644 (d) Baloum Naba, the chief steward of the palace and chief servitor of the Mogho Naba. He never goes to war, but remains always at the side of the Mogho Naba. It is his duty to carry out [782] [65] *sacrifices, such as killing the chickens or livestock offered* to the manes or to the spirits when such sacrifices are prescribed by the soothsayers or other charlatans for the health and well-being of the Mogho Naba.

(e) Kamsaogho Naba, formerly accompanied the Tansoba to war. The Kamsaogho Naba is a eunuch, and for this reason he is [839] commonly called Mogho Naba na poug'tiéma, "first wife of the Mogho Naba."

Other personages (not ministers). (a) Samandé Naba, in charge of all of the people in the outer courtyard of the Mogho Naba and a brother-in-arms of the Larrhallé Naba.

644 687 661 (b) Poé Naba, formerly the confessor for the wives and pages of the Mogho Naba. His duty, carried out by magical practices, was to denounce those wives or persons guilty of treason or of

644 554 576 [101] It is to be noted that a gourdful of this water with millet flour on which a bit of karite butter is floating is a customary courtesy offering among the Mossi. It is most improper to greet or to receive a stranger by offering him plain water.

644 782 On the fourth or fifth day the Djiba Naba proceeds to Zoanghna (a village located two or three kilometers behind the government buildings) and there hands over a sheep and a cow to serve as offerings to the sacred amulets of the ancestors and to protect him from evil spirits and wicked people. He does not spend the night in this village but returns home immediately after the sacrifice.

644 788 Several days later the decision is made to install the new naba in his domain. A large number of soroné, drummers, and followers accompany him on what amounts to a kind of obligatory pilgrimage which we shall describe briefly.

The following itinerary is customary.

First, the Djiba Naba goes to Badnogo where he spends the night. The next day he goes on to Samba where he is offered water with flour in it, and for his part, he gives salt to be shared among the old women of the village.

One may ask why salt is given to the old women and not to the other people. The Mossi call old women nough' pouk ramba, [888] that is, those who, when blessing you, clasp their hands so as to make a higher power hear and grant their prayers.

644 788 431 [102] On the following day he proceeds to Tensobitenga where he remains for three days. Beer is prepared for him; he is given a cow for his followers and a wife for himself. At Nakamtenga, his next stop, the village chief welcomes him with a sheep and many baskets and bowls of sagbo (millet mush).

644 788 He does not remain here for the night but instead goes on to Koubri. This is the village where eunuchs formerly suffered the cruel operation of castration (1). The canton chief meets him, leads

839 304 681 1. Eunuchs. Bandits, thieves, murderers, and slaves or soroné (servitors) convicted of adultery with women of the nobility were the only ones sent to Koubri, a canton in the circle of Ouagadougou, to be castrated. This operation involved only the removal

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of the testicles, until the day when a eunuch managed, no one knows how, to take advantage of some of the women he was supposed to be guarding. From then on it was deemed necessary to remove the penis completely, and a copper cartridge was inserted for purposes of urination.

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As soon as the person fainted after undergoing the operation, a drink was concocted whose ingredients are unknown. When he revived, he was so thirsty that he downed the drink in a single gulp. It is said that the drug stupefied the eunuch to such a degree that he would be incapable of taking vengeance even if he had any weapons at hand.

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It was only after he had completely recovered that the victim was sent to the Mogho Naba. The latter assigned him the duty of guarding a harem or a royal tomb.

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him to his house, seats him by his side, and announces to the populace that he has just been visited by his son (Koubri Naba is a descendant of the Mogho Naba).

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He then offers the crown prince a cow and a great deal of [103] beer, and then, before he leaves, the Djiba Naba has free access to the chief's household where he takes as a wife the first nubile girl he encounters. The stay at Koubri traditionally lasted for seven days, but it could be shortened to two or three in view of the great expense involved in entertaining a prince of such high rank, especially at the present time when the canton chiefs no longer enjoy their former prestige.

The Djiba Naba continues on his way to Kombissiri where he is the guest of the canton chief. For a week, in addition to his food which must, of course, be copious and abundant quantities of beer, the crown prince also receives a cow, a sheep, and, before his departure for Doulougou, a wife.

[i.e. canton chief — Analyst]

576 the chest with the hands half-closed and the thumbs raised, strike the ground together three or four times. The Mossi then raises his body a little and rubs the palms of his hands together. He never looks the person he is saluting straight in the face, but keeps his eyes slightly lowered. It is a truly humbled posture, especially when the chief who is being saluted remains standing or on horseback, towering above his subordinate, and barely according him a glance. The women, instead of beating upon the ground with their forearms, strike it with the elbows and raise their open hands, fingers extended, to shoulder height. The grand salute, very rarely used, consists of turning around after the ordinary salute has been completed, seizing some dust with both hands, spreading it on the forehead, and saluting once more.

When two natives who know each other meet along the way, the younger of the two squats first and begins the salute, which the other acknowledges by squatting in turn. If they are carrying loads, they set them down before saluting. They are never in a hurry. Servants and women, when they walk before a chief, bow slightly and join their hands in front of the chest, palms together. Though complicated, the Mossi salute is rendered easily and gracefully by the natives; they are used to it from an early age, and never perform it in the clumsy and awkward manner which is theirs when they attempt to imitate the military salute, so fine and noble when well done and so ludicrous when distorted by a Black.

622 Chiefs are designated by the generic term naba, but a distinction
643 is made between naba and dimma. The latter is elected /16/ according to very precise rules, which we shall mention later, and his authority stems directly from this election. There are only five dimma among the Mossi: the Moro Naba, and the nabas of Fada, Tenkodogo, Boussouma, and Yatenga. The naba, on the other hand, receives his power from another chief more powerful than himself who has chosen him from several candidates.

643 Mossi country lies wholly under the authority of the Moro Naba
645 who is assisted by five high ministers: the Widi Naba, Laralé Naba, Gounga Naba, Kamisoro Naba and Ballum Naba. The respective functions of these ministers are somewhat ill-defined. The Kamisoro
[839] is a eunuch and chief of the eunuchs. Upon his death, since he leaves no heirs, all his property devolves to the Moro Naba. It was thus to the latter's advantage to make him wealthy and to present him with the finest district in the country. The Widi Naba takes the place of the Moro Naba from the time of his death until the investiture

631 The canton chiefs consult the oldest men in the village where they reside, and the village chiefs make no decisions bearing on the community without assembling the elders and listening to their advice.

Everything is carried out through the channels of the hierarchy. A province chief never transmits an order directly to a village ruled by a canton chief, but he advises the latter who notifies the village chief, and the village chief in turn calls the elders together, conveys the orders to them, and through them informs all his subjects. The orders passed down in this formal way are always carried out, but if perchance a canton chief should wish to disobey his province chief, he would be seconded by his people who recognize his authority before any other.

643 645 701 The last Moro Nabas had become to some extent idle kings. The protocol to which they were subjected by custom constantly encumbered them, not unlike European court etiquette. The Moro Naba was surrounded with a veritable court. As mentioned above, his High Council was composed of five chief ministers. To these should be added the Iman who represents the Moslems and who wields a certain influence, and the Teng'Soba. /Tr. Among the Mossi there is both a Teng'Soba, earth priest, and a Tan'Soba, war minister. It would seem that the latter is meant here./ The duties of the latter are quite specialized. He does not live in the same village as the Moro Naba, and he rules a canton. In case of war, he is consulted on the timeliness of the hostilities and on their chances of success. It devolves upon him at this time to make the proper sacrifices and to question the ancestral spirits. When war has been decided on, he takes command of the armies, and everyone, the ministers and the canton chiefs, must obey him. The Moro Naba remains in Ouagadougou.

644 839 A crowd of subalterns gravitate around these high dignitaries. The eunuchs are not very respectable people; sometimes habitual thieves were made eunuchs, as were, in general, those pages guilty of too much familiarity with the naba's wives. Some of them could reach a high position. The Kamisoro were always eunuchs, and several important cantons were set aside for them.

644 The pages are young boys, hand-picked from the country's most gifted children. They must serve the naba, and they bear the name soroné. The naba is never alone; he always has one or several pages by his side. One holds the fan, one stands near the monarch to help him shift his position, another takes care of his shoes, yet another of his scepter; the great cup-bearer constantly holds a gourd filled with strong millet beer and covered by a tray of artistically woven basketry.

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673 insofar as they involve an offense to justice. /88/ I do not speak of
[839] unnatural practices, which are almost unknown. When theft, murder, even insults, blows and wounds are punished, they are punished as injustices. Calumny is abhorred, and it is a very serious insult to say that someone has slandered someone else. A Mossi will not forgive an insult against his mother, because it is prejudicial to the family honor and hence to himself. In dealing with the natives, therefore, it is necessary to be careful and not to commit any injustices. They are very sensitive to this; while they accept a just punishment without complaint when the offense has been proved, they reject indignantly any accusation which cannot be proved, even when it is well founded.

577 In addition to this general morality, many things are forbidden not
784 because they are evil, but because they entail baleful consequences. The taboos (kisgou to the Mossi, from kisé, "to forbid") are almost innumerable. They may be divided into two classes: permanent kisgou, which affect the whole family, and personal and transitory kisgou.

784 The former usually consist of a prohibition to eat a certain animal or to do a certain thing. Thus some nabas are forbidden to meet, to see one another, and if they disregard this prohibition, one of them will die before the year is over. This prohibition is easily explained by the incessant wars which were formerly waged between important chiefs, and their fear of being poisoned or done away with in some other way by one of their enemies. Another instance: a Mossi goes to war on a frisky horse and he is forced to flee. His foes are about to seize him, and he owes his escape to the swiftness of his mount. When he returns home, he decrees that the horse will be a sacred animal to him and to his descendants, and that henceforth all his children and their children must treat horses well and may not eat their flesh under penalty of blindness or leprosy. This is the extent of the prohibition. The horse is not considered a guardian animal, no sacrifices are offered to it, and the Mossi do not call it tangandé (guardian animal of the village) or siga((soul-animal), but kisgou (prohibition).

784 Sometimes the kisgou affects only certain members of the family.
262 A father has been ill after eating dog flesh on two or three occasions. He consults the sorcerer, who states that dog flesh is forbidden to him and to his children, but not to other members of his family. A person

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obligations to the Moro-naba, his lands were raided, his women seized and, if he were caught, he was killed.

It is difficult to ascertain how the institution of provincial administrators arose among the Mossi. Some of the people still believe that the ministers were formerly slaves of the Moro-naba, but Delobsom claims that the first ministers were warrior companions of Naba Oubri, the founder of the Ouagadougou dynasty.[4] These men were not members of the royal lineage and thus were inferior in status to the members of the royal lineage and sublineages under their supervision. However, as emissaries of the Moro-naba, these ministers were entitled to respect by all the people. The ministers recommended successors to vacant district chieftainships; thus it was incumbent upon a district chief to be friendly with his minister if he wished succession to go to his eldest son.

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The minister was the person who carried orders from the Moro-naba to the district chiefs, and he reported back to the Moro-naba on conditions in the district he visited. However, the minister could not interfere in the internal affairs of a district, nor could the district chief complain to the Moro-naba about a minister. Everyone was required to observe the strict hierarchy; the only sanction that the district chief exercised over his minister was to appeal to another minister in the hope that the Moro-naba would come to his aid.

The districts that comprised the provinces of the ministers were scattered around the country and were not equal in size or importance. One minister, the Baloum-naba, controlled the districts ruled over by those chiefs who were the sons of recent rulers. Another, the Kamsoro-naba, a eunuch, had control of the largest and wealthiest districts, but he, in contrast to the other ministers, was not succeeded by sons and, when he died, the Moro-naba inherited all of his property. The ministers frequently became very wealthy because they received gifts whenever their charges went to Ouagadougou to pay homage to the ruler. The people from the districts under their control provided labor for their fields and for the upkeep of their houses. The ministers also received bribes from persons seeking vacant district chieftainships.

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When a district chief or Kombéré died, his heirs sent a horse or a sheep with leaves on its tail to notify the ruler of the death. The Moro-naba always questioned the envoys, and when he was satisfied that his man had not met with foul play, he sent the animal to his chief minister. The Moro-naba then sent his own envoys to the late chief's house with offerings for sacrifices to their common ancestors, and also instructed the envoys to collect the death offerings from the chief's relatives. After the funeral the eldest son of the dead chief and the other pretenders went to Ouagadougou bearing gifts to the district minister and the other important men surrounding the ruler. When the time came to name the new district chief, the Moro-naba called his ministers together and asked them: "Which one of the candidates is really capable of succeeding the late chief?"

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The journey takes six months from the time he leaves Ouagadougou to the time he returns. On his way to the Gold Coast he needs no bearers. He merely takes a Peuhl to herd the cattle, and provides him with food and 300 cowries a day, plus 1 franc on arrival per head of cattle herded.

Our trader stays with another Haoussa from Ouagadougou, another trader of course, who is wealthier than he. He does not pay rent, but offers him gifts from time to time in return for his hospitality.

His family lives at Iko in Haoussa territory, and consists of three wives and three children. He goes and sees them every two years.

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We can see that the Haoussa do their trading in grander and more forceful fashion than the Yarsé. They do not hesitate to expatriate themselves in order to carry out their trade, and in this fashion they have actually colonized southern Nigeria, Dahomey, Togoland, the Gold Coast, Mossi country, etc. Once settled there, they carry their trading operations farther than local merchants, and they hardly do anything else. While the Yarsé is an example of cultivator-trader, the Haoussa of Mossi territory is in most cases an example of pure trader who specializes completely in trading. This is why he towers above the whole trading structure of the country. Bent on gain, a speculator in cowries and French currency, more intelligent than the Mossi and Yarsé, he amasses large fortunes.

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In order to be quite thorough on the subject of present and past trading in Mossi territory, it should be added that formerly the slave trade was carried out alongside that in livestock, cotton fabric, kola nut, and salt. The slaves came chiefly from Gourounsi, /541/, Boussansé, and Kipirsi lands. The Djermabé /Zerma?/, especially, sold slaves to the Mossi in very large numbers when they pillaged Gourounsi territory. This trade, like the others, was in the hands of the Yarsé and Haoussa.

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Let us also add a word about the now-abolished eunuch trade. Formerly, the Mossi furnished some to the Haoussa, who forwarded them to Turkey via Egypt. The operated men were Gourounsi sold to the Mossi by the Zaberma and by their chief Baba-Tô. Some Mossi villages specialized in this kind of work. The village of Koubry,

839 especially, subsisted upon it. The victims, children from twelve
439 to fifteen years old, were provided by the Moro Naba, who kept
304 them afterward or sold them to the Haoussa.

In 1900 our ambassador to Turkey learned that a shipment of eunuchs which had reached Constantinople had originated in Mossi territory, which we had occupied since 1896. He warned the Minister of Foreign Affairs, who notified his colleague the Minister of the Colonies. Strict orders were issued to put an end to this Mossi industry, which has since ceased to exist.

439 Let us finally add the grain trade, which is unusual in Mossi territory. In the years 1906, 1907, and 1908 which saw poor harvests, however, the Mossi were forced to acquire grain in Yatenga (Ouahigouya circle) and in Gourounsi territory by selling livestock.

We have now concluded our discussion of Mossi occupations. Let us proceed to a study of the family and the superposed social organisms.

Chapter II

The Mossi: The Family, Public Powers, and Religion

593 We must state first that the Mossi family is a partly decommunalized family. This may come as a surprise in view of the foregoing section on work (cultivation predominates, stockbreeding is poor, industries flourish, trade is nonexistent), which had led us to expect something altogether different. Nevertheless, this is a fact.

The family is even highly decommunalized, although not everywhere to the same degree. In this respect, five different family types are to be found.

596 The first two are quite rare. They would seem to be witnesses
326 to an ancient state of affairs which has now vanished. Thus, one finds the common patriarchal type among those blacksmiths who are gathered into /special/ quarters or even villages and whom we mentioned in the section on industries. This type is found only among them and not among isolated blacksmiths, where only the common Mossi family type occurs.

782 dolo and millet flour. There was no set time for this. The flesh
778 of the sacrificed animals devolved to the sacrificer, the head of Sékou.

At present day sacred groves are still to be found in various Mossi villages. Thus, for example, there are three at Kabayoro, two of which belong to individuals and one to the village. The Earth chief /Tr.: Tengsoba/ of Kabayoro offers sacrifices to the village grove whenever the bara says so.

The Mossi also make sacrifices to the hills.

At Sabtinga, about 17 kilometers northwest of Ouagadougou, there is a rise in the ground called Tantiibo where the Moro Naba used to go once a year with the Baloum Naba, many chiefs and people at the time when the weather begins to grow cold. He ordered a beef, a chicken, millet flour, and a gourd of dolo to be taken along, and they were handed over to the head of the quarter where the hillock stood. This chief performed the sacrifice and begged the piece of ground to grant good health to the Moro Naba. Only
[839] the Moro Naba, the Balou, the sacred people (eunuchs), and the soroné were present at the sacrifice, Other people who had come to Sabtinga remained in the village, whence the Moro Naba set out on foot to the spot of the sacrifice.

At Kombé-Padanda, a small hillock located in a /589/ Ouagadougou quarter, the same sacrifice was offered in the same fashion and at the same time of year.

326 Let us add that when Mossi blacksmiths go and smelt iron ore
782 in the bush, they kill chickens and offer millet flour on the spot where they extract the ore. The sacrifice is offered to the spirits of the hill, as well as to the Earth and to Naba Ouondé.

778 Sacrifices are made to watercourses as well as to hills, either
782 at fishing time or whenever the bara indicate that a certain stream requires a certain sacrifice.

825 As far as crocodiles are concerned, some of them are held
262 sacred by the Mossi. As for snakes, they are killed and usually eaten, but not everyone eats them. Some people abstain.

778 As for the Earth, the Moro Naba had sheep, chickens, millet
782 flour, and dolo handed over to the Baloum Naba through eunuchs several times a year, whenever a bara told him to do so. The Baloum Naba handed these gifts in person to the chief of Ouagadougou,

793 never offers sacrifices himself to the Earth at Ouagadougou, nor does
174 he have them offered by the Gandé Naba, his minister of religion. He entrusts with this task the Ouagadougou Naba, who is a grandson of the autochtonous inhabitants and thus favorably regarded by the local divinities. Similarly, when the Moro Naba sacrifices to the hillocks surrounding Ouagadougou, he entrusts the local chief with the offerings and the physical sacrifice. Now, what the Moro Naba still does at Ouagadougou was no doubt done by other Mossi chiefs throughout the land after conquest, once the submission of the autochtonous inhabitants had been ensured by force of arms. Hence, the institution of the Tensoba.

One might object that Earth chiefs are also to be found in Gourounsi territory, although the Gourounsi are independent. We know, however, that the present-day Gourounsi cantons were not the achievement of the Gourounsi themselves but of minor Mossi dynasties established in the territory. Under the circumstances, the same substitution of conquering chiefs for conquered chiefs has occurred there as in Mossi territory, with the same consequences.

793 "The Tensoba," says Marc, p. 157, "whose title means 'Master of the Earth,' stands in opposition to the naba who is a military chief....

"The Tensoba is the indispensable mediator between the ancestors and their living descendants. It is he who conducts the funeral ceremonies and who decides on the honors to be rendered on the Day of the Dead. It is to him that one appeals in case of an epidemic or any public misfortune, since misfortunes are always due to the evil inclinations of ancestors that must be allayed."

793 /596/ Actually, the institution of the Earth chief does not strip
643 the village and canton chiefs of all religious powers. In some areas,
839 as Marc pointed out, the Earth chiefs have gradually vanished, and
718 the political chiefs have become religious chiefs as well. They per-
[431] form sacrifices on the bara's advice, without failing to make a gift of some sort (100 or 1,000 cowries) to the latter also. By the same token and up to a point, the Moro Naba is invested with a religious character and with religious attributes. It is he, as we have already seen, who orders the performance of sacrifices to the Earth, to the hills. Every year during the dry season, he has a donkey sacrificed to Naba Koutou, a former Moro Naba, in the hut where the latter is buried. Prior to our occupation it was a eunuch who performed

793 the sacrifice and killed the donkey. He also slit the throat of a
643 horse, a beef, and a sheep. (This eunuch in charge of guarding the
839 tomb was called by the name of Naba Koutou, and in a way per-
778 petuated the deceased Moro Naba. He was granted special privi-
leges. If a man who was condemned to death ran away and reached
the tomb, he was safe but became the eunuch's slave. Similarly,
[567] a captive who ran away from his master gained his freedom from the
latter if he reached the grave, but became the slave of Naba Koutou.
Finally, at that time, it was forbidden to ride by the hut on a donkey.
Naba Koutou would seize the donkey, or at least demand a ransom
in cowries before returning it. This applied to any animals who ran
astray near the tomb. The tomb still exists nowadays, along with
the Naba Koutou who watches over it, but the latter no longer enjoys
the same privileges.)

793 We saw earlier that the Moro Naba had a sort of minister of the
645 cult in the person of the Gandé Naba, high priest and sacrificer.
There was also the Pouy Naba, or chief of the fetisheers, whose
function was probably to mediate between the Mossi bara and
timisoba as a whole and the central authorities.

782 Let us close this study of Mossi religion, which incidentally is
quite incomplete and a mere outline, with a few words on the human
sacrifices that were performed /597/ in the territory prior to our
occupation, and a few words on circumcision as well.

782 "Human sacrifices," says Marc., p. 156, "definitely took place
766 among the Mossi up to the time when we occupied the territory.
Whenever a Moro Naba died at Ouagadougou, one of his wives and
one of his horses were sent to Gambaga in order to be sacrificed on
the tomb of Ouidiraogo (?) who is regarded as the mother of the first
Moro Naba. Soon after the occupation of Ouagadougou by the French,
782 the dethroned Moro Naba, Boukary Koutou, ordered the sacrifice of a
754 black rooster, a black goat, a black donkey, a black beef, and a
black slave on one of the mountains overlooking the White Volta.
This, it seems, was bound to cause the immediate death of the new
Moro Naba enthroned by Voulet."

304 As for circumcision, the Mossi circumcise boys and excise girls.
Boys are circumcised when they are from eight to twelve years
old, and thirty or forty of them are circumcised at one time. The

582 I. Differences of tribe or caste. The Mossi may not contract
326 marriage with blacksmiths. This is absolutely forbidden. However,
564 they may marry among the Foulsé, Samo, Peul, Yarsé, etc."

This calls for several remarks. The blacksmiths of Yatenga are Foulsé and not Mossi. However, it is not a tribal difference which dictates the prohibition under discussion, since the Mossi can marry among the Foulsé as a whole. It is rather a difference in caste. It must be noted, as we said above /not translated/, that the common Foulsé cannot marry blacksmiths either.

[171] Here, as in all of the /French/ Sudan, blacksmiths are both feared and scorned. Basically, they are regarded as fearful sorcerers.

582 II. Kinship. There must be a lapse of 200 years between the time of the betrothed couple and the time when their common ancestor lived. This is likewise an absolute impediment.

III. If a Mossi has relations with a young girl or woman belonging to his fiancée's soukala during the period of his engagement, the marriage cannot take place.

This impediment, however, is not absolute. If the guilty man begs for the forgiveness of the family head and the latter accords it, the union may be effected later."

582 IV. Unnatural practices. The marriage cannot take place: (1) if
●839 the betrothed man has been caught in the act of sexual intercourse with a she-ass (a phenomenon none too rare in Yatenga); and (2) if the betrothed girl has relations with a native who had sexual intercourse with a she-ass. These impediments are absolute.

This is why the inhabitants of a Yatenga village (Dénia) who are reputed to have had relations with asses in former times may not marry outside their locality.

582 V. Infirmities. If the fiancé is blind, the marriage may not take
[132] place unless the girl consents to it. No one can constrain her to do so.

VI. Leprosy. The same applies when the fiancé has leprosy.

VII. Impuberty of the betrothed pair. The marriage cannot take place unless both parties are nubile. This is an absolute impediment, but in practice the problem rarely arises.

VIII. Insanity of one of the betrothed."

582 Question of virginity. The girl's virginity is not very important
836 here and, it must be pointed out, far less so than among the Bambara. This is, incidentally, connected with the fact that the marriage bond is less sound and the separation of the spouses easier to obtain. A combination of related facts makes the institution of marriage and

586 principal theoretical cases which may arise concerning divorce. I borrow them from Vadier.

"Divorce occurs in the following cases.

1. By mutual consent. Spouses may separate if they do not get along. This is very unusual, however, and occurs only after the family heads of both spouses intervene amicably. The /247/ wife keeps whatever gifts her husband may have offered her if it was he who first requested a divorce. On the other hand, she leaves them behind if it was she who asked to leave.

2. Insults. Insults addressed to the husband by the wife, or vice versa, are not grounds for divorce. If the husband insults his wife's relatives, divorce does follow. The wife keeps the gifts.

3. Maltreatment. It is acknowledged that the husband may beat his wife in order to discipline her. If the injuries are serious, however, or if the husband continually beats his wife, she becomes free, but the gifts, sheep, goats, bracelets, etc., which she received from her husband remain in his possession.

4. Nonfulfillment of the conjugal duty. (1) On the husband's part. If the husband does not cohabit with his wife, she cannot say anything, but she is free to have lovers outside of her husband's soukala. If the latter complains, the wife leaves him.

[164] If the husband is infected with a venereal disease, a period of three years is granted him for a cure. If he does not get well after this lapse of time, the wife becomes free.

Verification by the naba takes place, as in the preceding case, if the husband is impotent, and likewise the wife returns to her family. The wife retains the gifts in all three cases.

(2) On the wife's part. If the wife refuses to fulfill her conjugal duty, the husband can turn her out and keep the gifts which he gave to her.

If the wife has a venereal disease, the husband cannot take her back.

5. Infidelity. The husband's infidelity is not grounds for divorce. The infidelity of the wife, however, is sufficient reason to terminate the marriage. The gifts remain with the husband.

6. Lack of support. If the husband refuses to provide food and support for his wife, she may request a divorce, but she must leave to her husband the gifts she received from him.

[839] 7. Guilty relations of one of the spouses with animals or with a person accused of having had intercourse with a she-ass,

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28

567 643 651 [464] [439] Naba Baongo (ca. 1800–30) decided that it was more profitable to sell them.[16] Subsequent rulers, especially the two Mogho Nanamse who ruled just prior to the French conquest, sold most of their captives to passing caravans or in special sections of the larger markets. When other persons sold slaves in the market, the Raga Naba collected some 1,000 cowries on each transaction—the largest tax on any market commodity.

567 839 [752] [439] [175] The Mossi rulers seem to have benefited even more from the sale of eunuchs, for they had a monopoly over them. The Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou sent some captured slaves and all recidivous thieves to Teemetenga village in Koubri district, some 13 miles south of the capital, to be operated upon.[17] So successful were the Mossi surgeons that—in contrast to specialists in other areas, who lost nine lives for every successful castration—the mortality among the Mossi was only one out of ten.[18] Some of the eunuchs furnished by the Mossi were sold as far away as Constantinople, a fact which surprised the French ambassador to Turkey who saw them there in 1900.[19]

566 643 563 621 In addition to slaves and eunuchs, the Mogho Naba kept a large number of bondsmen to provide services for him. One group, the Dapore, lived in a ward of the capital called Dapoya, and had a chief, the Dapore Naba, who was himself a Dapore. The origin of these people is obscure, but they seem to have been the children of foreign captives who were brought to Ouagadougou and placed in the ruler's service. Some of them even claimed that their ancestors had come to Ouagadougou voluntarily and had placed themselves under the care and protection of the ruler. This seems unlikely, however, since the status of these people resembles that of persons captured by Sudanese rulers and installed in special wards as serfs.[20] Some of the Dapore lived in villages of their own and cultivated fields for the Mogho Naba. Others lived in a ward of Ouagadougou, served in the palace household, and provided the royal executioners. Some were selected to serve as palace eunuchs, and placed under the charge of the Kamsoghlo Naba. The Dapore were hardly ever sold unless they were convicted criminals. The Mogho Naba and his chiefs refrained from selling serfs or captives who had been born in Mossi country. However, they often claimed the sons and daughters of these people as pages or pughsiudse.

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The Baglere made up the second group of bondsmen providing services for the Mogho Naba. They, too, lived in a special ward and were headed by the Baglere Naba, one of their own people. Their origin is also obscure: some of them claimed to be descended from Fulani slaves who had run away from their masters and sought asylum in Mossi country; others believed that they were the descendants of foreign captives. The Baglere

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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traded for such articles as needles, mirrors, beads, coral and amber, 175
tea, coffee, fezes, tailored robes, and most important of all, salt 437
(Dubois 1899 : 292–304). Presumably, by the time Dubois reported 439
on this trade, the Mossi had stopped trading slaves and eunuchs into [567]
this region, because we know from other sources that these people [239]
were sold through Timbuktu as far north as Algeria and Constantinople.[8]

The caravans which brought desert and northern goods into Mossi country collected grain, cotton cloth, livestock and slaves to be sold in the forest areas. Captain Lonsdale, an Englishman who visited [566]
Salaga in 1881 and gave a good description of its markets and traders, includes among the latter

> ... the Mossi with his cattle, sheep and slaves—these latter, generally [567]
> Gurunsi, are not exposed for sale in the street or market, but can be seen where the owner resides. (Lonsdale 1882)

The extent to which the Mossi people themselves participated in 175
all aspects of the caravan trade which crossed their country is far 437
from clear. Barth, Lonsdale and Dubois all report that the Mossi were 441
members of the caravans both in the forest zone and in Timbuktu, and my own informants agree with these reports. In contrast, however, both Marc and Tauxier believe that the Mossi were seldom the actual caravaneers. Marc declares that the Yarse

> ... are the most numerous group devoting itself to commerce in the region which we occupy. This is equally true of the Hausa, but probably only over the last years. Moors come sometimes from Dori as far as Wagadougou. One seldom meets Mande-Dioulas. As for the pure Mossi, it was only a short while ago that they themselves began to follow the caravans. (Marc 1909 : 170–71)

Similarly, Tauxier states that

> ... it is not the Mossi who do this [caravan] trading but the Yarse we know so well, and the Hausa settled in Mossi territory. Mossi trade, therefore, is not really Mossi, or at least it was not in the past. If it has now begun to be to some extent, it is thanks to the French settlement in the territory. (Tauxier 1912 : 538)

In the face of the early reports by Barth and others, how does one resolve the contradiction apparent in Tauxier's comments? These early travelers might have mistaken the Yarse for Mossi since these

(8) Marc, 1909 : 170–171. "We met in Mossi country two natives who, when children, had been seized [as slaves] and led through Timbuktu as far as Algeria ... The commerce in slaves was doubled among the Mossi by commerce in eunuchs. Mossi country was one of those rare countries where people knew how to make them, and the Moro Nïabas exported with great profit as far as Constantinople those whom they had had mutilated."

Social Status of the Moaga Woman and Work Assigned to Her

562 The Moaga woman is regarded as a veritable beast of burden. Household duties and the weaving of cotton for her own and her husband's clothes are not her only occupations. [183] She helps her husband cultivate the family field, and she has her own plots for peanuts, beans, etc.

She endures wretched treatment and must always submit to her husband's whims. She enjoys no consideration whatever and is never called upon to give an opinion. The husband alone rules the home.

[842] If she is so unfortunate as to have no children, she is regarded with scorn. She carries the loads when a move is in progress. A [482] basket and a pyramid of gourds containing her effects and those of her husband are balanced on her head, while the husband canters beside her on a horse or takes his ease on a donkey. If he is afoot, he carries only his quiver, his arrows, his bow, and a club.

To be sure, the Moaga woman may express in unpleasant words her resentment of the maltreatment to which she is subjected, because the Mossi admit that she has no weapon other than her tongue. This is what is meant by the saying, "A woman's mouth is her quiver."

Conjugal Life

834 Interdictions and permissible acts. The couple is forbidden to have sexual relations at the following times.

1. For a period of not less than two years and a half after the 834 birth of a child to safeguard the baby's life. Indeed, it is believed 853 that each child comes into the world with its own supply of milk, and if another child were to be conceived during the nursing period, [184] the first would die because the milk of the newborn child would be fatal to him.

2. During the menstrual period. The reason for this prohibition 834 ●841 that the husband's fetishes and charms lose part of their "power" after relations at this time.

3. A pregnant woman visits her husband during the first six or 834 seven months. All relations then cease until some time after the 843 delivery, as indicated above.

593 The wife must obey her husband. The latter has the right to strike
562 her in case of disobedience, adultery, etc. He cannot break one of her limbs, or kill her.

595 Polygamy. —Polygamy is the general rule, at least theoretically. That is to say, the Mossi may have as many spouses as he wishes as long as he can minister to their needs.

595 In actual fact, only rich people have several wives. The majority
589 are monogamous by necessity, and there are even bachelors. As a passing remark, this applies to the Sudanese Negroes in general, for everywhere nature creates approximately as many men as women, and it is hard to visualize how in any one region each man could have several wives. However, in spite of the occurrence of bachelors and a large number of truly monogamous people, the question still stands. It is solved if we bear in mind that girls are married much earlier than men. This results in a much larger number of women than men "in active service," if I may be permitted to say so. Undoubtedly, this (along with the occurrence of bachelors and a considerable number of monogamists), takes care of the objection which naturally arises when we speak of polygamy. /243/

163 It may be, let us add, that the number of girls born here is a little higher than that of boys, as has been noted in England, for example.

595 By way of figures on polygamy, let us state that the Moro Naba
643 Bango, the last one who reigned before the arrival of the French, had
645 about 80 wives. The Naba Koboga, who ruled from 1902 to 1914, had 30 or 40. The present Rassam Naba, one of the ministers of the Moro Naba, has 30 or 35 wives. These are, of course, exceptional figures if the total population of Yatenga is taken into account. In any case, the rich men, notables, and men in easy circumstances always have several wives.

595 Organization of the polygamous household. —"The first wife," says Vadier, "enjoys a certain authority over the others. It is she who transmits her husband's orders to the other wives and who notifies him of their wants, who supervises the preparation of meals and apportions the food. In addition, it is she who comes and tells the
[841] husband that such-and-such a wife is no longer in a state of zim and can now fulfill her conjugal duties.

"Aside from this special prerogative enjoyed by the first wife, all wives have the same rights and duties. In principle, each wife must share in turn her husband's bed. Nevertheless, he is free to summon his favorite wife during the day."

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843 4. A pregnant woman must not step over her husband; this would make him ill.

833 5. The sexual act may be performed with impunity in the courtyard of a dwelling (at night). Otherwise, it is expressly forbidden to do it outside the house and in any way other than lying on a mat or Peulh secco, in any case never directly on the ground.

845 6. The delivery will be difficult and complicated if the child was conceived in adultery. If the woman is to be delivered, it is 837 absolutely necessary that she confess the name of her accomplice 847 in the presence of witnesses. In this case, if the husband demands it -- and he always does -- the newborn child is killed by the erring wife immediately after it is born (1). [185]

> 1. The procedure is as follows. Some young mothers simply twist its neck and strangle it. Others put the baby in a jar of lukewarm water. The baby instinctively drinks and finally drowns.

837 Adultery. Before the arrival of the French, adultery committed 684 by the nakomsé (descendants of naba) was punished by the death of the guilty couple. Among ordinary Mossi, the culprit was simply banished from the family.

However, if the lover was not a relative of the woman's husband, he was forbidden henceforth to come to the village where the woman lived. If he failed to observe this rule, he risked being killed.

As a general rule, a Moaga woman takes a lover in a village 837 some distance away from her husband's village and not far from her own. When she asks her husband's permission to visit her family, she profits by the opportunity to spend some time with her lover or to let him know that she is going to her parents' home.

Dissolution of Marriage. Divorce.

586 A divorce may be imposed by a husband who no longer loves his wife, but neither ill-health nor sterility may be invoked for the 842 purpose. In the latter case, it is simply assumed that God does not want the woman to have children. She is often regarded with scorn, but sometimes no attention is paid to her lack of children.

641 as part of the family.

641 167 2. When a Moaga emigrates and settles permanently in a foreign country, either to take up trading or to study the precepts of Islam. He is forced to abandon his usual customs and to scorn ancestral ways, thus losing his personal status. If he wishes to embrace Islam, he changes his name, and if he should return to his native village, he would no longer try to be identified as a Moaga, whose customs and beliefs he no longer shares and whom he now regards as an inferior.

641 [188] As has been noted, the Moaga woman who marries a foreigner or the foreign woman who marries a Moaga subject retains her own nationality. Thus, marriage does not involve any loss of nationality. Customs may have been modified, but it is certain that even a Moaga woman who had lived abroad for a long time would soon resume the customs and practices of her own country. The same may be said of a foreign woman who might divorce her Moaga husband and return to her own land.

Naturalization. Since naturalization is unknown, children born in Mossi country of a foreign father and either a Moaga or a foreign mother remain foreign. Furthermore, since children take their father's nationality, a divorce will not affect their status.

II. Birth

842 176 Conception. The natives have no very well-defined idea of the process of conception. In their minds, the primary cause is God (Wenam), Master of Heaven and Earth, who gives children. It seems, however, that Wendé or Wenam forces the kinkirsi (spirits) to change into a human egg when the sperm is transmitted at the time of ejaculation.

The kinkirsi are invisible beings said to resemble small children and who live near certain houses or [189] groves. Only a few favored persons can see them.

In the same connection, it is believed that ancestors or certain deceased relatives are reincarnated.

843 Pregnancy. It is known that complete cessation of menstruation and the development and darkening of the breasts are the signs of

843 pregnancy in a woman. It is also known that the woman will give birth in nine months, but since it is impossible to be sure of the date of delivery, the pregnant woman is watched over constantly and is under the surveillance of the old women. In a general way, nature is allowed to take its course, but some people prefer to con-
[787 sult the soothsayers and the priests and to give alms and sacrifices
782] to avoid a miscarriage.

During pregnancy, women are forbidden to eat honey and, in general, any sweet foods.

Seguene-vando (from seguene, "to wear a skirt," and vando, "leaves, branches"). A few months after the cessation of menstruation, the pregnant woman is sent into the kim-dogo (hut of the kimsé, manes of the ancestors) at the home of the family elder. There she is completely disrobed, and branches are tied around her loins.

844 Delivery. Delivery takes place in the woman's own hut. There is no special preparation. [190] Old women who have had much practice help the mother while others heat water in which to cleanse the newborn child of all impurities.

No one except the old women is present during the delivery.
[842] Women who have not yet borne children are sent away, and for good reason since the sight of the birth process might make them sterile.

Finally, if the afterbirth does not come out at the time of birth or soon after, there are certain special measures taken to hasten its emergence.

846 Three or four days after the delivery, depending on whether the child is a boy or a girl, the mother, who has so far remained indoors, goes out for the first time.

She carries a sickle to ward off ghosts and other evil spirits.

The new mother's co-wives and relatives bring her safandé (soap), kamé (karite butter), and kalgo (soumbala); others give her cowries. The father has a sheep or rooster killed and a millet cake prepared.

The woman who acted as midwife is sent a ball of sagbo (millet mush) and a chicken leg. The heads of the mother and child are
[302 partially shaved, and there is nothing else to do but to choose a name for the child. [191]

553 Choice of a name. Among the Mossi, a child's personal name depends on circumstances which preceded the birth or on an important

553 event associated with it. We shall classify children under two headings: 1) ordinary children; 2) children especially sought.

The second category refers to children born after their parents have consulted the soothsayers, given alms and sacrifices, or employed other magical procedures.

Since the ordinary child is regarded as a spontaneous gift of God, his name is given by the father's close relatives unless some recent or remote event requires a name having particular significance.

551 Some examples of common ordinary names are Bila and Poko.

Names having special meanings are illustrated by the following examples.

Passektale (from passek, "insufficient," and talé, "resentment, hatred") means "I do not know what has caused the hatred which is felt for me."

Paratsida (from paraté, "to be unwilling," and sida, "truth") means "enemy of truth," a name intimating that people dislike the truth.

Dimpougoubnoma (literally, dima, "great chief, king"; pougbo, "to follow"; and noma, "profitable, good") is a name given to a child born of a mother given by a chief or one whose father has been given some important gift by a chief just before the child's birth.

842 [~~182~~] If a woman has no children after several years, the husband consults the soothsayers, makes offerings and sacrifices, employs
782 charms, and finally resorts to the tinsé ([sing.] tinkougri, from tinga, "earth," and kougri, "stone") or to the tiga (fetish tree). The woman goes with her husband to the possessor of the god. They take a rooster and some cowries. After they explain the object of their visit, the rooster is killed by the priest, and if the offering is accepted, the couple is dismissed with a formal promise that their prayers will be answered.

553 If, in due course, the wife is delivered of a child, the baby must be named Tinga, and his brothers and sisters will be named Timbila, Timpoko, etc., or if the tiga was appealed to, the baby must be called Tiga, and his siblings, Tibila, Tipoko, etc.

715 It also happens that after successive births, the babies die. Since
553 the Mossi, as we have noted, believe in reincarnation, they assume --

789 A number of grigris made by Mossi timisoba have passed
791 through my hands. I shall list them and briefly describe them below.

1. A cow's tail at the tip of a wooden handle. When one is traveling during the winter season and a storm threatens, one need only wave the cow's tail and the storm does not burst. Once in the village, one stops waving it and the rain comes.

2. A hollow koba horn in which tamarind leaves, peanuts, and
[757] gum have been placed. In case of headache one opens the horn by its small upper lid, takes /592/ a pinch of the mixture, and swallows it. Then one does this again and also rubs a little on the forehead.

3. A small hoe with a chicken's head fastened to the handle. When during a dance one wishes to silence a singer who has been singing too long in order to sing oneself, one grips the hoe and covers the chicken's mouth. The singer is silenced, and in addition one sings perfectly.

4. A small hoe covered with leopardskin at the bend. If one is
[752] bitten by a snake, one cuts off a very small piece of the skin and puts it in a canari full of water. Then one rubs the bite with this water.

5. A deer horn with a fine red cord wrapped around it. Inside the horn there are tiégélara and karité seeds. The opening of the horn is closed with a wad of cotton.

If an enemy comes looking for a fight, one places some of the contents of the horn on a leather bracelet which is slipped on the left wrist. No harm can come to you, and the quarrel will immediately come to an end.

6. A deer horn containing crushed scorpions and pimento. If one wishes to become an indefatigable dancer, one need only rub one's back with the mixture.

7. Leather bracelets with powdered rice inside. People who wear one of those bracelets on the arm can be sure that the stick or sword which their enemy may attempt to use against them will break in his hands.

8. Iron bracelets covered with crocodile skin. Same purpose.

9. Cotton bracelets with honey and salt inside. If your wife
[842] is sterile, it is sufficient to put the bracelet in water in order to make her fertile.

789 10. A deer horn covered with leather and containing millet and
791 pounded-bean flour. On the outside there is a hooked piece of iron.
777

842 How children are welcomed. —The Mossi are very happy to have children and want by all means to have some. This is indeed to their full advantage, since children work from the age of seven or eight, since they make sacrifices for their parents when the latter are dead, and since the daughters, by marrying, bring in gifts for the family. The more children one has, the happier one is.

842 789 "Under these circumstances," says Vadier, "a barren woman is very poorly regarded by her husband and not greatly esteemed by her neighbors. To overcome this sterility when it occurs, both spouses appeal to the gods. They both go to the tengasoba, the religious chief of the village, with a chicken, a goat, or a sheep, according to their means. The tengasoba cuts the animal's throat on a special stone, collects its blood, and boils it in a vessel along with various tree barks which have certain properties.

"This concoction is then given to the woman, who must mix it with her sarabou. If the spouses later have a child, they must, under threat of calling forth the vengeance of the divinity (the Earth, in [431] this case), offer the tengasoba a gift of 3,000 cowries if they had a boy or 4,000 cowries if they had a girl.

"The tengasoba also overcome sterility by cutting the animal's throat in the sacred grove (kango)."

847 Abortions. —Abortions nevertheless occur. Sometimes Mossi women cause an abortion in the event of an illegitimate pregnancy which occurred in the husband's absence. In addition, abortions are rather frequent among unmarried mothers. To conceal their lapse, [791] they appeal to the tipa or timisoba (makers of charms, medicines, and poisons) who give them a special brew of which they hold the secret.

[586] These practices are, of course, very poorly regarded by the Mossi. Married women who resort to them are turned out by their husband's. In addition, if a woman dies as the result of an abortion, her husband is likely to manifest joy and to state that the woman received a just punishment for her transgression. Finally, in former times after the [684] death of the guilty woman, the husband would go to the Moro Naba and denounce her lover to him. The naba confiscated all the lover's property.

843 Childbirth. —Among wealthy Mossi, the pregnant woman is treated with a certain regard. She does not work after the third month /252/ of pregnancy if this is her first, or after the sixth month if she has

8: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1958
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rulers left the Dagomba region in the Gold Coast (present-day Ghana) during the 11th century and moved into the bend of the Niger River, carving out three large kingdoms and smaller principalities in the process. At the head of these still extant kingdoms are rulers (*Moro Nabas*) who hold feudal-like control of the provinces, districts, and villages which comprise their domains. A complex hierarchical administrative apparatus extends the power of the rulers into the smallest village, and funnels taxes and tribute back to them. French conquest modified this highly efficient system but did not greatly change it. The Mossi state apparatus rests on an economy which produces cotton cloth, horses, sheep, cattle, and goats, but the main support of this large population—one of the densest in the Sudan—is grain agriculture. Today, some Mossi districts still have as many as 70 persons per square mile. 105 173 105

The Mossi are divided into stratified royal, noble, and commoner patrilineages. Characteristic of this lineage system is a process by which royal sublineages descend serially until they merge with the mass of commoner lineages. Below the lineages there were once large non-Mossi groups of serfs and slaves, but these people have now been grouped into lineages and have become Mossi. Patrilocal polygynous extended family households, grouped into villages, form the basic Mossi settlement pattern. Marriages are arranged between unrelated persons through the agency of lineage members who establish "friendly" relationships. The two friends might ask their lineage heads for women to exchange as wives, or the "friend" who has received more gifts from his opposite number will give over a wife. Because only the older men have women and goods at their disposal, they are usually the ones who receive wives. The result is that most young men have no wives and must content themselves with occasional lovers until they inherit wives from lineage members. The Mossi have a great fear of incestuous relations which bring down the wrath of the ancestors (the *Keemsé*).

Ancestor veneration is at the core of Mossi religious behavior. The recent ancestors are notified, through sacrifices, of the important events in the lives of their descendants, and they are expected to aid in solving everyday problems. The ancestors also invoke their sanctions against antisocial behavior among their descendants. Once a year the Mossi people, in concert with the Moro Nabas, appeal to their individual and collective ancestors for good crops, large families, and for the preservation of the dynasty. Often associated with the ancestors as propitiatory agents are local deities called *Tengkougas* (sing. *Tenkougre*) or earth shrines, visibly manifested by clumps of trees, mountains, rocks, or rivers. *Tengsobas* or earth priests appeal to the Tengkougas on behalf of the local populations for help in sickness, for rain and good crops, and for children. When proper sacrifices are offered to the Tengkougas, their spiritual agents, called *kinkirsé*, enter the wombs of women and are born as children. Twins and children who die young are regarded as "evil" kinkirsé who entered a woman without being invited. Nevertheless, many persons consider twins as special gifts to parents in favor of the earth deities. 769 [778] [842] [845]

The earth itself, *Tenga*, is one of the principal deities of the Mossi. Tenga is 776 [823]

he received from them. This unequal exchange, plus the nobles' prerogative 622 797 of seizing the wives of pagans, contributed to the increase of the Moslems. 582

The conversion of Mossi to Islam is sometimes accompanied by a rupture in the relationships between persons involved in "friendships" with a view of 572 obtaining wives. A great quarrel developed in the district between a pagan 622 chief and a recent convert who refused to give the chief a daughter promised as 582 a wife. The chief became furious and claimed that the Moslem had broken a 797 promise made years ago, but the Moslem claimed that it was against his new religion to give his daughter to a pagan. It is not true that Moslems in the village do not exchange wives with pagans, but the Moslems often try to convert their pagan friends so that the brides will not have to revert to paganism. The chief's difficulty was that he could not become a Moslem because of his ritual and ceremonial relationship with the ancestors. The Moslem men do not have such difficulties with their pagan wives because most women follow their hus- [562] bands' dictates in religious and other matters. Many Moslem men attempt to [593] prevent their wives from having sacrifices made to the ancestors, but if a woman really wishes such a sacrifice she can easily have it arranged through her pagan relatives. If a woman married to a Moslem refuses to observe Islamic practices, she is liable to divorce and runs the risk of having her children [586] taken away.

Mossi anxiety over children is often instrumental in converting them to 797 Islam. When a woman is barren or her young children die, she consults a sooth- 842 sayer (*barga*). She is either told that her Tengkougre benefactor was not amply rewarded and recalled the children, or that her "Moslem" children (chil- [787] dren who wished to be Moslems) were angry because they were given pagan names. In the latter case she is advised to make a gift to a Moslem and to ask her husband to build a Moslem prayer-circle outside his hut so that when her children "return" (are born again) they will see it. Finally, she is advised to give all her children Moslem names. I could discover no reason why the pagan [551] soothsayers advise these anxious parents to adopt Islam, except that they hope that complicated prescriptions will be more efficacious. Nevertheless, so effective is this technique for gaining converts to Islam that even members of the family of the chief pagan priest are not immune to it. Furthermore, once a woman has a Moslem child, all her other children must be Moslems or they will die. A man whose children are all Moslem has no recourse except to adopt Islam if he wants a funeral, because his Moslem sons may not give him a pagan [764] funeral.

Every Mossi, whether Moslem or non-Moslem, wishes a proper funeral, 797 and now that travel has increased the fact of being Moslem or pagan is of great 167 importance. Many young migrants to Ashanti have reported that their dead [764] pagan comrades were unceremoniously disposed of, while the local Christians and Moslems took care of their dead coreligionists. But despite this fact, and the belief of administrators and missionaries, I found no evidence that the seasonal and other migration of Mossi youth to Ghana and the Ivory Coast have contributed very much to the spread of Islam. It is true that some of the thou-

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Karême), celebrate the great festival of Ramadan and the lesser festivals, and 794
aspire to make the pilgrimage to Mecca. Most of the Moslems can lead prayers, but only about one-tenth of their number can read and recite the Koran. [212]
However, today the masters (*karasambas*) of the 32 Koranic schools in the district are endeavoring to instruct the many boys and few girls in reading the [871]
Koran and understanding Moslem theology.

The Karême is observed by most adult Moslems in the community with the exception of invalids and working men. Moslems say that the fast is intended to turn the minds of the people to God, and they distinguish between the Moslems "of the mouth" who break the fast and those "of the heart" who [184]
fast until Ramadan. The crescent moon of Ramadan is greeted with guns and general rejoicing and the following morning the Moslems gather at the tomb of Ngado to give praises to God; during the rest of the day they pay homage to the chief and visit their friends. However, a change in the traditional observance of Ramadan is expected, because one of the Moslem leaders objects to the [178]
ceremony at the tomb of Ngado. He feels that some Moslems are beginning to regard the tomb of the first Moslem as an earth shrine or Tengkougre.

So far, only five of the more prominent Moslems in the district have made 794
or are making the pilgrimage to Mecca. The first man made the voyage about 788
seven years ago, and is now conducting a Koranic school in a neighboring district. His brother went to Mecca about two years ago and is now the senior *El Hadj* in the district. Of the two men who were on the pilgrimage when I arrived in the district, one has since died near the Red Sea and the other is still away. One other man left for Mecca and returned to the district during my stay. Most of the pilgrims now fly to Mecca; only two men followed the traditional route through Ghana, Kano, Lake Chad, the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan (now Sudan), and on to Mecca. In general, all pilgrims have used their own re- [613]
sources for the trip, but they receive some help from their lineage brothers and from the other Moslems in the district and in Ouagadougou.

The pilgrimage to Mecca represents the greatest event in the lives of the district Moslems. When the last pilgrim left, a great crowd gathered at his house and prayed for his safe journey, and some even accompanied him to [621]
Ouagadougou and remained there until he left. The Moslems and many pagans of the district, under the command of the district chief, cultivated his fields during his absence. And when the new El Hadj returned, a large crowd accompanied him to his house with shouts of joy. There he killed a sheep in thanks- [782]
giving, sprinkled the crowd with holy water from Mecca, and recounted his experiences. His listeners were impressed by his airplane flight and the description of Mecca, but they showed the greatest interest when he said that Mecca women covered their faces and that most Meccan men were monogamous. The local Moslems smiled when they heard this bit of news from one of their members, but I have seen them scowl when discussing the monogamous practice desired by the Christians.

The attitudes of Moslems differ very little from those of the other Mossi 794
as regards children and polygyny. They say that they do not believe in the 595 842

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794 efficacy of ancestor veneration and do not "kill chickens" to the ancestors, but
595 they maintain that it is a man's duty to have many wives so that he may have
842 children to succeed him. Furthermore, since Mohammed himself decreed that his followers may keep four wives, provided they treat each with the same degree of kindness, there is no conflict between Islamic tenets and Mossi practice of polygny. The average Moslem has two wives, but even the few men in the district who have more than four wives do not appear overly concerned about transgressing the tenets of their faith. Mossi Moslems have not adopted the [582] paternal parallel cousin marriage so common among other Moslems, and show surprise when told that Islam permits such marriages. However, they have modified their marriage behavior to harmonize with what they consider an Islamic tenet that "a man should not marry the widow of his father." The Moslem Mossi profess to look with horror on these marriages among their pagan brothers, preferring the levirate instead.

794 The Moslems' attitude toward the low status of women in Mossi society
562 has not changed, and in one respect it can even be said that this attitude has been strengthened. Many Moslem wives now cover their faces, and many El Hadjis have attempted to place their wives in purdah by preventing them from going to the market for fear they would come in contact with pagan men. The development of this practice is running counter to the growing emancipation of Mossi women, who have just begun to leave their villages for periodic visits to the larger towns. Nevertheless, the important fact is that the Mecca pilgrims have the opportunity to see Moslem women playing roles which are forbidden or unknown to Mossi women. And while it is true that the Mossi pilgrims would not easily adopt and foster monogamy, their receptivity to new Islamic beliefs and customs might have a liberating effect on their treatment of women. Once institutional and cultural changes have been accepted by the El Hadjis, they are likely to spread quite rapidly throughout the society because men who have visited Mecca are believed to have returned filled with wisdom and understanding.

797 Christianity came to the Mossi on January 24, 1900, shortly after French conquest. As noted above, the first missionaries were well treated, but the Mossi balked at the attempts at conversion. Nevertheless, by 1919 the White Fathers of the Catholic missions had established several centers, among which was the district of Manga where this study was conducted. Manga is considered a Catholic district, but there are only 3,000 Catholics out of a population of 124,000—which also includes 9,200 Moslems and five Protestants. [184] Thus, in contrast to Moslem Nobéré, which has no Catholics or Protestants, Manga, like most districts in Mossi territory, has a Moslem community.

The conversion of the Mossi in Manga to Catholicism follows the classical pattern of missionary proselytization in the country. Monsignor Socquet (1956:62) states that the Mossi always react to attempts at conversion with the statement: " 'We are looking at our chief,' that is to say, 'We will follow our chief in conversion as in all other matters. If he is favorable to it, then we will not go against his will.' " Socquet concludes: "It is thus understandable

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When a young Catholic receives a wife through the mission, he may visit her father and pay the customary respect by giving him kola nuts and brass coins. The father of a mission girl may accept or reject his son-in-law as he sees fit, but formerly he could not defy the power of the missions. 797 582 634

A pagan youth who wishes to marry one of the mission girls has to discuss the matter with the priests and swear publicly that he will become a Christian. Before 1946 the young man had to fulfill his promise or be intimidated by the chief and the missionaries until he relented or fled the district. Today, however, the priests usually abandon their efforts to obtain the conversion of the young men after three months have passed. In some cases the young men take their wives and move to other districts, and return only after the girls have given up Catholicism. Despite the lure of wives from the mission, not many young men become Christians on this account because the Mossi are still concerned primarily with family relationships and the effect that conversion would have on these relationships. [596]

The church's prohibition of polygyny is by far the most serious bar to the spread of Catholicism. Many men do not adopt Catholicism simply because they fear that monogamous marriages would not produce children. Father Paternot (Considine 1954:103) has cited a study purporting to show that Christian Mossi have more children than the pagans, but the ordinary people of the district would not accept the facts he presented. They cite their personal experience to the contrary. Dim Delobson (1934:136), a Mossi converted to Catholicism, states: 797 595 842

> A certain number of Christians of my acquaintance whose wives did not have children during the first years of marriage had recourse to magical practices in order to get children. These simple people thought that although they had an omnipotent God beside them, they could impudently—after all the good priests will not know about it—ask the little, but also powerful gods to grant them some material favors here on earth. When the gods given children were taken for Holy Baptism, they were given Christian names instead of the names of the earth shrines, and they did not wear magical charms which would have indicated to the priest the real state of affairs. Nevertheless, the children were bathed in water to which magical potions were added, and when the mothers went to visit their parents, sacrifices of chickens were given to the benevolent Tengkougas.

The Mossi's strong desire for children is admittedly one of the main reasons for leaving the Catholic Church so that they can take other spouses in addition to barren ones. The church has now belatedly recognized this problem and, knowing that it cannot prevent men from taking plural wives, allows them to come to church but prohibits them from taking the Mass.

Many cultural factors besides the desire for children make polygyny important for the Mossi, and make conversion detrimental to the functioning of their family system. Because of lineage opposition to their conversions, some converts are forced to establish nuclear households—a practice out of harmony with the normal rhythm of Mossi life. The reason for this disharmony is that Mossi women married to Catholics must work alone instead of with 595 797 182 [594]

[171] Chapter 11

Marriage, Birth, and Death

Marriage

000 In this chapter we shall review all aspects of marriage throughout Mossi country. The customs are the same everywhere, ranging from the marriage of girls reared in the household of the naba to the institution of concubinage. We shall first deal with the most common forms of marriage, then discuss the matter of bride price, and finally conclude with a discussion of the social status of the Moaga woman.

582 Girls are married between the ages of seventeen and nineteen. With certain rare exceptions, a girl of sixteen or eighteen is never sent to her husband. Such an age is considered very unfavorable [843] for child-bearing, and it is even thought that children whose mothers are too young will not survive.

Young men marry between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five.

[172]

562 584 Marriage of a girl reared in the household of a naba. Girls born of the marriage of a woman given to a former servitor by either province or canton chiefs became by right the property of the latter. These girls are taken from their parents when they are old enough to do some work and are entrusted by the naba to his wives. They are henceforth regarded as betrothed to the naba and are obliged to submit to all of the conditions of servitude which are imposed on the other wives.

When they reach marriageable age, they may be given, without either their own or their parents' consent, to freed servitors or to any individual who may have rendered some service to the naba.

This is the first type of forced marriage.

Marriage of a girl given by her parents. Since the girl is regarded as simply a "thing," a being without volition, she may be promised at birth. Very often gratitude for hospitality or the existence of an old debt is sufficient reason for promising a daughter.

Social Status of the Moaga Woman and Work Assigned to Her

562 The Moaga woman is regarded as a veritable beast of burden. Household duties and the weaving of cotton for her own and her husband's clothes are not her only occupations. [183] She helps her husband cultivate the family field, and she has her own plots for peanuts, beans, etc.

She endures wretched treatment and must always submit to her husband's whims. She enjoys no consideration whatever and is never called upon to give an opinion. The husband alone rules the home.

[842] If she is so unfortunate as to have no children, she is regarded with scorn. She carries the loads when a move is in progress. A [482] basket and a pyramid of gourds containing her effects and those of her husband are balanced on her head, while the husband canters beside her on a horse or takes his ease on a donkey. If he is afoot, he carries only his quiver, his arrows, his bow, and a club.

To be sure, the Moaga woman may express in unpleasant words her resentment of the maltreatment to which she is subjected, because the Mossi admit that she has no weapon other than her tongue. This is what is meant by the saying, "A woman's mouth is her quiver."

Conjugal Life

834 Interdictions and permissible acts. The couple is forbidden to have sexual relations at the following times.

1. For a period of not less than two years and a half after the 834 birth of a child to safeguard the baby's life. Indeed, it is believed 853 that each child comes into the world with its own supply of milk, and if another child were to be conceived during the nursing period, [184] the first would die because the milk of the newborn child would be fatal to him.

2. During the menstrual period. The reason for this prohibition 834 that the husband's fetishes and charms lose part of their "power" after 841 relations at this time.

3. A pregnant woman visits her husband during the first six or 834 seven months. All relations then cease until some time after the 843 delivery, as indicated above.

843 4. A pregnant woman must not step over her husband; this would make him ill.

833 5. The sexual act may be performed with impunity in the courtyard of a dwelling (at night). Otherwise, it is expressly forbidden to do it outside the house and in any way other than lying on a mat or Peulh secco, in any case never directly on the ground.

845 6. The delivery will be difficult and complicated if the child was conceived in adultery. If the woman is to be delivered, it is 837 absolutely necessary that she confess the name of her accomplice 847 in the presence of witnesses. In this case, if the husband demands it -- and he always does -- the newborn child is killed by the erring wife immediately after it is born (1). [185]

> 1. The procedure is as follows. Some young mothers simply twist its neck and strangle it. Others put the baby in a jar of lukewarm water. The baby instinctively drinks and finally drowns.

837 Adultery. Before the arrival of the French, adultery committed 684 by the nakomsé (descendants of naba) was punished by the death of the guilty couple. Among ordinary Mossi, the culprit was simply banished from the family.

However, if the lover was not a relative of the woman's husband, he was forbidden henceforth to come to the village where the woman lived. If he failed to observe this rule, he risked being killed.

As a general rule, a Moaga woman takes a lover in a village 837 some distance away from her husband's village and not far from her own. When she asks her husband's permission to visit her family, she profits by the opportunity to spend some time with her lover or to let him know that she is going to her parents' home.

Dissolution of Marriage. Divorce.

586 A divorce may be imposed by a husband who no longer loves his wife, but neither ill-health nor sterility may be invoked for the 842 purpose. In the latter case, it is simply assumed that God does not want the woman to have children. She is often regarded with scorn, but sometimes no attention is paid to her lack of children.

641 as part of the family.

641 2. When a Moaga emigrates and settles permanently in a foreign country, either to take up trading or to study the precepts of
167 Islam. He is forced to abandon his usual customs and to scorn ancestral ways, thus losing his personal status. If he wishes to embrace Islam, he changes his name, and if he should return to his native village, he would no longer try to be identified as a Moaga, whose customs and beliefs he no longer shares and whom he now regards as an inferior.

641 [188] As has been noted, the Moaga woman who marries a foreigner or the foreign woman who marries a Moaga subject retains her own nationality. Thus, marriage does not involve any loss of nationality. Customs may have been modified, but it is certain that even a Moaga woman who had lived abroad for a long time would soon resume the customs and practices of her own country. The same may be said of a foreign woman who might divorce her Moaga husband and return to her own land.

Naturalization. Since naturalization is unknown, children born in Mossi country of a foreign father and either a Moaga or a foreign mother remain foreign. Furthermore, since children take their father's nationality, a divorce will not affect their status.

II. Birth

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776 process of conception. In their minds, the primary cause is God (Wenam), Master of Heaven and Earth, who gives children. It seems, however, that Wendé or Wenam forces the kinkirsi (spirits) to change into a human egg when the sperm is transmitted at the time of ejaculation.

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Seguene-vando (from seguene, "to wear a skirt," and vando, "leaves, branches"). A few months after the cessation of menstruation, the pregnant woman is sent into the kim-dogo (hut of the kimsé, manes of the ancestors) at the home of the family elder. There she is completely disrobed, and branches are tied around her loins.

844 Delivery. Delivery takes place in the woman's own hut. There is no special preparation. [190] Old women who have had much practice help the mother while others heat water in which to cleanse the newborn child of all impurities.

No one except the old women is present during the delivery.
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Finally, if the afterbirth does not come out at the time of birth or soon after, there are certain special measures taken to hasten its emergence.

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She carries a sickle to ward off ghosts and other evil spirits.

The new mother's co-wives and relatives bring her safandé (soap), kamé (karite butter), and kalgo (soumbala); others give her cowries. The father has a sheep or rooster killed and a millet cake prepared.

The woman who acted as midwife is sent a ball of sagbo (millet mush) and a chicken leg. The heads of the mother and child are
[302] partially shaved, and there is nothing else to do but to choose a name for the child. [191]

553 Choice of a name. Among the Mossi, a child's personal name depends on circumstances which preceded the birth or on an important

●843 A woman's role is to bear children. When she knows that she is pregnant, she no longer consents to come to her husband, but she is careful not to inform him of her state; if she told him, the child would die. If her parents happen to pass away during her pregnancy, she does not go into mourning and does not attend the funeral. If she is newly wed and has not yet borne children, one of the other wives of her husband, or, if there are none, the husband's sister, comes at night to sprinkle the husband and wife with water. The young wife will henceforth call this woman her husband, prepare millet mush for her, and heat the water in which she washes. When the pregnancy begins to show, one of the wife's female relatives consults the sorcerer [782] to find out which sacrifice should be offered so that all will go well, but the husband is not informed of this consultation. Sometimes the sacrifice is repeated when the birth draws near. When the first baby 851 is born, the husband sends a child to his wife's relatives with a rooster or a hen depending on the newborn's sex. The child tosses the bird into the yard without saying a word and runs away; everybody understands.

847 /40/ A child born deformed, lame, or blind is done away with; 845 it is simply drowned without further ado if considered incurable. In 732 olden times, twins were often drowned also because their birth entails 761 difficulties for the family, who must offer special sacrifices; some- 753 times only one of them was done away with. If they are spared and die a natural death, the mother wears a small bell at her ankle until the anniversary of the death (koure). If the mother happens to die or the father becomes ill, the sorcerer need only say so and the children are put to death, because they are said to have caused the illness or death of their parents. A baby who could barely walk was once brought by relatives to the Koupéla Fathers. He had been born on a Friday and his mother had died; that was sufficient to call for his sacrifice. His relatives tried unsuccessfully to poison him; they exposed him for three days in the bush, and the child did not die. As a last resort they brought him to the missionaries, who hastened to shelter him. Children recognized as insane are abandoned in the bush where they die of hunger.

732 It is only fair to add, however, that these barbarous practices 845 reminiscent of Sparta are not invariably followed. Several lame and incurably ill children are carefully tended by their parents, and some twins born prior to the French occupation are alive and in good health.

776 kikiriga, in turn, are to ward off anything that might harm the crop,
241 birds, caterpillars, thieves, and the like, and to fill with millet a granary of the size drawn on the ground with ashes at the time of harvest. If the kikiriga has properly carried out his duties, he gets another chicken when all the grain has been gathered in a heap.
776 Pregnant women are under the protection of a special kikiriga, and
[843] small children have one of their own to ward off illness and danger. Do we not say ourselves that a special Providence watches over the very young?

776 Actually, everyone has his kikiriga. Some have an evil one, and
828 those are the people who quarrel with everybody, the ones who are never successful, whose livestock dies, for the kikirsi often kill the goats, sheep, and horses that die of illness. Other people have a
[577] good kikiriga, and for them everything goes well; they were born under a lucky star. These are the engaging, sweet, good-natured people
[513] who get rich and who have many children. When a Mossi lies down to sleep in his hut, he rests his head on a stone or a small mound of beaten earth. This is where his kikiriga dwells, and from time to time, especially when he feels the need for special protection, he
[782] sacrifices a guinea hen or sometimes even a goat, with the understanding that the spirit will chase away all fellow spirits who might want to harm him and will avert all illness and all danger from his path.

/83/ The tangandé is a spirit who has the shape of an animal and
776 who is regarded as the protector of a village. The term is also ex-
778 tended to designate the spirit's place of residence, usually the sacred
825 grove but sometimes a mere stone or even an open space. The tangandé may be a crocodile, a boa, a leopard, a turtle, a deer, a hare, etc. The animal is sacred to the whole village and may not be killed in the sacred grove, but it may be killed elsewhere, even a short distance from the thicket.

776 The tangandé is a guardian spirit because it protects men and sends
755 its servants to accompany the village people on trips when they request it to do so. The natives incessantly turn to it for protection, and the sorcerers incessantly refer those who consult them to the tangandé to obtain cures and to request the release of souls held captive
776 by evil sorcerers. When someone dies, sacrifices are made to the
782 tangandé with requests to protect the survivors and to ward off illness.
[774] When souls leave the body during sleep, they often go to the sacred grove. Anyone may sacrifice to the tangandé and in the tangandé.

000 16. Circumcision.
17. Excision.
18. After the circumcision.
19. Emancipation and coming of age.
20. Guardianship.
21. Adoption.
22. Interdiction.

Let us begin with filiation.

848 Filiation. —"The Mossi," says Vadier, "distinguish three types of filiation: (1) legitimate filiation; (2) natural filiation; and (3) filiation from incest.

As for filiation from adultery, it is regarded exactly in the same manner as natural filiation.

[843] The period of gestation is believed to be from seven to twelve months. A child conceived outside this lapse of time is regarded as a natural child. Moreover, a woman need only tell her husband that the child she is carrying in her womb is not his and he will disown it.

When the illegitimate child or one born of adultery reaches the age of three or six (depending on its sex), it is entrusted to its natural father. In spite of this separation, the child retains its rights of inheritance from its mother.

848 847 Filiation from incest does not exist, or rather there is not enough time for obligations and rights to be created. Indeed, according to a barbarous custom, the child born of incest is put to death immediately after birth by the women who assisted with the delivery.

835 Incest rules apply between kin of any degree in the ascending and descending lines: sister and brother, uncle and niece, nephew and aunt, and all their relatives in the direct ascending and descending lines; father-in-law and daughter-in-law; son-in-law and mother-in-law. /251/

684 When incest occurs, the guilty pair are driven from their families and from Yatenga, and the naba confiscates all their property."

843 715 Theory of birth. —The Mossi believe that when a woman is pregnant, the soul of an ancestor has returned within her. We shall speak of this animistic explanation of birth later under "Religion" /not translated/.

In fact, resemblances between the child and some previously known ancestor are pointed out as often as possible, and it is said that this particular ancestor was reincarnated within the woman.

842 How children are welcomed. —The Mossi are very happy to have children and want by all means to have some. This is indeed to their full advantage, since children work from the age of seven or eight, since they make sacrifices for their parents when the latter are dead, and since the daughters, by marrying, bring in gifts for the family. The more children one has, the happier one is.

842 789 "Under these circumstances," says Vadier, "a barren woman is very poorly regarded by her husband and not greatly esteemed by her neighbors. To overcome this sterility when it occurs, both spouses appeal to the gods. They both go to the tengasoba, the religious chief of the village, with a chicken, a goat, or a sheep, according to their means. The tengasoba cuts the animal's throat on a special stone, collects its blood, and boils it in a vessel along with various tree barks which have certain properties.

"This concoction is then given to the woman, who must mix it with her sarabou. If the spouses later have a child, they must, under threat of calling forth the vengeance of the divinity (the Earth, in [431] this case), offer the tengasoba a gift of 3,000 cowries if they had a boy or 4,000 cowries if they had a girl.

"The tengasoba also overcome sterility by cutting the animal's throat in the sacred grove (kango)."

847 Abortions. —Abortions nevertheless occur. Sometimes Mossi women cause an abortion in the event of an illegitimate pregnancy which occurred in the husband's absence. In addition, abortions are rather frequent among unmarried mothers. To conceal their lapse, [791] they appeal to the tipa or timisoba (makers of charms, medicines, and poisons) who give them a special brew of which they hold the secret.

[586] These practices are, of course, very poorly regarded by the Mossi. Married women who resort to them are turned out by their husband's. In addition, if a woman dies as the result of an abortion, her husband is likely to manifest joy and to state that the woman received a just punishment for her transgression. Finally, in former times after the [684] death of the guilty woman, the husband would go to the Moro Naba and denounce her lover to him. The naba confiscated all the lover's property.

843 Childbirth. —Among wealthy Mossi, the pregnant woman is treated with a certain regard. She does not work after the third month /252/ of pregnancy if this is her first, or after the sixth month if she has

843 already borne children. Among the common people, the woman works up to the time of her delivery. Like other Sudanese women, the Mossi woman is inured to the pains of childbirth and devoid of any nervousness.

843 787 When their wives are pregnant, the Mossi often go to consult the baga /sorcerer/ to find out what sacrifices should be made so the event will turn out well. As he is wont to do, the baga indicates such-and-such a sacrifice. He also prognosticates on request whether to expect a boy or a girl.

843 755 If the pregnant woman has been frightened by an evil spirit (kinkirga), she summons the tipa who washes her body with a specially prepared liquid or merely administers violent blows on her head with tarakanré (cowhide sandals of which we spoke earlier /not translated/) to drive out the evil spirit.

844 The Mossi woman may give birth only in her own hut. She would consider it a shameful thing if the child were born in her husband's private hut.

When a woman gives birth, she makes a confession to the old women who assist her, because she fears too much suffering or an unsuccessful delivery if she does not confess the faults she has committed. The old women go and repeat them to the husband, who says, "That's all right, I knew it all," and forgives her. In short, the torments of childbirth are put to use by the old women to procure a confession.

There are midwives among the Mossi (in Mossi, pougourorosa). They are paid by the husband. However, they do not receive a [431] salary, properly speaking, but rather a gift (a piece of salt, a skirt cloth, etc.). If nothing is given to them, they cannot and do not make any demands.

In addition to the midwife, the old women of the compound, quarter, or village come and help the patient.

844 576 For the delivery itself, the Mossi woman goes down on hands and knees, her arms stretched out upon the ground, her body slightly inclined from head to hips, in the posture ordinarily used to salute or to remain before a chief. The midwife stays behind her.

844 When the child is born, the women present heat up a very strong concoction with red pepper, soumbara /locust bean/, etc. The woman is made to swallow this, and it is supposed to foster the emission of blood and all other impure matter. Then she is washed with warm water. Her loins are also rubbed vigorously so that the strain undergone in childbirth will not be felt there later. Likewise,

fied his sexual desires. Since these women were in the monarch's favor, they were better dressed than the other wives and received more attention from him. The dogunba generally cultivated a large field in common with the aid of the palace retainers, but some insisted on cultivating their own fields instead. Like the other wives, the dogunba usually lived in huts of their own. Childless women sometimes shared the same hut until one of them became pregnant and had to set up a hut for herself and her child. 644 595 342 591

Those wives who lived in special villages under the supervision of eunuchs rarely went to the palace. Usually, they were past childbearing age or had lost favor with the monarch. They cultivated plots of land, spun cotton, and prepared locust-bean flour, locust-bean "balls," and shea butter. They kept a part of the produce for their own use and sent the remainder to the palace stores; the same arrangement obtained for all three categories of palace wives.

The Mogho Naba's heir was usually born while his father was still Crown Prince. He was never born in his father's compound because, unlike other Mossi women, the wife of a Mogho Naba or Crown Prince returned to her father's house for confinement. As soon as she announced her pregnancy, the Pughtiema or one of the older wives held a ceremony to notify the ancestors. Once the rite had been completed, the wife was sent to her relatives for fear that she might be harmed by her less fortunate co-wives. If the child was a boy, the ruler or Crown Prince was notified immediately, because the important privileges of a first-born hinged upon this notification. Since several wives of the Mogho Naba might be pregnant at the same time and errors might be made about the onset and duration of pregnancy, primogeniture had to be established immediately to forestall dynastic conflicts. For example, it is commonly believed that the present Doulougou Naba was born several days before Mogho Naba Sagha II (1942–57) but was deprived of the nam because the messenger who brought news of his birth reached Mogho Naba Kom after the messenger who announced Sagha's birth. Undoubtedly, such allegations were sometimes used to foster and support dynastic rebellions. 644 595 843 644 595 843 428 643 [578]

So strong was the fear that the most likely heir to the nam would be harmed by jealous co-wives that the child and his mother never returned to the palace except for brief visits on ceremonial occasions. The young prince remained with his mother's relatives and was guarded and educated by servants sent from the palace. If his father was on the throne at Ouagadougou when the boy reached the age of ten, he was formally installed as chief of Djiba district, the traditional seat of the Crown Prince. If his father was not on the throne, the boy remained with his mother's relatives and went to Djiba when his grandfather died and his father was installed as Mogho Naba.

644 357 608 for example), and in return the adoptive mother gives him a bit of food, over and above his regular ration.

644 357 [169] In view of these circumstances, those who are not required at the home of the naba to care for the horses or for some special service spend half the year with their relatives.

644 357 565 It is perhaps of interest to point out that the samand'kamba are mostly sons of the chiefs of villages of nabissi (sons of naba), sons of nakomsé (descendants of naba and nabissi), and sometimes even sons of canton chiefs at the court of the Mogho Naba. There is also the child of the ordinary Moaga, who was not made a sogoné because he was not thought worthy of the position. The rigorous discipline required of the former young men teaches them "to suffer in order to be able to command."

644 357 Anticipation of freedom. If the sogoné or samand'biga is the eldest son and is old enough to marry at the time of his father's death, the naba is required to free him, even though the period of obligatory service has not been completed.

643 844 584 Another custom, the zan-boko. There is another curious custom among the Mossi. If during the course of his journeys the naba stops in a village and during his stay a girl is born to a local Mossi woman, the child is his, with full rights, if he has been told of the birth.

However, the naba often knows nothing about the event, and the father takes care not to speak of it and then makes whatever disposition of the child he wishes.

844 584 [170] This custom, however, is practiced to its fullest extent between Mossi. A Moaga sana (stranger) passing through the village is invited by the elders to dig the zan-boko (hole in which the placenta must be buried). This is his zounogo, "opportunity." He gives a few cowries (100 to 200) to the head of the family and becomes the fiancé of the baby girl. Later on, when she reaches puberty, the man will make the customary gifts to the parents, and nothing will stand in the way of the marriage.

843 pregnancy in a woman. It is also known that the woman will give birth in nine months, but since it is impossible to be sure of the date of delivery, the pregnant woman is watched over constantly and is under the surveillance of the old women. In a general way, nature is allowed to take its course, but some people prefer to con-
[781 sult the soothsayers and the priests and to give alms and sacrifices
782] to avoid a miscarriage.

During pregnancy, women are forbidden to eat honey and, in general, any sweet foods.

Seguene-vando (from seguene, "to wear a skirt," and vando, "leaves, branches"). A few months after the cessation of menstruation, the pregnant woman is sent into the kim-dogo (hut of the kimsé, manes of the ancestors) at the home of the family elder. There she is completely disrobed, and branches are tied around her loins.

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She carries a sickle to ward off ghosts and other evil spirits.

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[302] partially shaved, and there is nothing else to do but to choose a name for the child. [191]

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852 Three days after the birth of a male child, or four days in the case
553 of a daughter, the father and mother invite the relatives to come and rejoice over the new addition to the family. On that day the baby's forehead is shaved in a circle, and he is given a name. The husband's sisters or his other wives choose a name for the first child, and the father himself chooses the names of the others.

551 The name is derived from an event which preceded, attended, or followed the birth. If the mother ever happened to kill a chicken, even by mistake, even in her childhood, her first child is called by the generic name for chickens (noara), or else he will die. If the father or mother have seen two snakes in the same spot, the child will bear the name Ganda. If several previous children died, the newborn takes the name Yéwaya, "he has come." If several reasons for specific names concur, for instance, if he should be named Noara, Ganda, Yéwaya, he is called Ywawa, "one with many names." A child often bears the name of an older sibling with the addition of the adjective Bila, "little, younger." Thus, if the older child is called Tibo, the younger one is called Tibila (Tibo Bila, "the little Tibo fetish"). In other words, names are not given haphazardly. Some names are rather pretty: Zuényendé, "he is shy"; Nongabamba, "she loves them (her parents)"; Danimmamyé, "forget me not." Sometimes the name merely indicates the child's sex: Daore, "male"; Poko, "female"; or else the festive occasion or day of the week when the child was born.

304 Just as names are not given haphazardly, tattooings do not vary without reason. The native tattooing consists basically of three parallel lines on each side of the face, running vertically across the cheek from the temples to the chin, with a fourth line leading from the nose perpendicularly to the other three and crossing the cheek horizontal hatching between them, like a ladder; this is the mark of free men and of chiefs' sons. The three vertical lines may also be interrupted halfway down the cheek by three horizontal stripes, and then continue down to the chin; this is the mark of a child who was born
[844] among the Peul because his older siblings had died and the sorcerer had decreed that his mother should give birth among the Peul. This
[197] tattooing is characteristic of a distinct Mossi tribe, which lives among them but speaks a different language—the Marensé, better known as Marka. If a child has a Yarga /Yarse/ mother or grandmother, he will bear one horizontal stripe on the right cheek in addition to the three vertical lines /on each cheek/; this is the Yarsé tattooing.

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844 the child is washed in warm water and then placed on a mat in a sort of nest made with old skirt cloths and various bits of fabric. Then the woman is placed on the mat next to the child which can now be suckled. Let us note, however, one final ceremony. Before the
844 woman gives the breast, the child is washed in dolo, especially the
853 inside /253/ of the nose and the genitalia, for the Mossi, like the
826 Bambara, are convinced that mother's milk has an injurious effect on these two parts of a child's anatomy. If the child, while suckling, should breathe in some milk through its nose, this would, it is said, cause the interior of the organ to rot. Likewise, were a few drops to fall on its genitalia, that part would suffer from it. The dolo prevents such lamentable accidents.

846 At the end of three days, the woman leaves the compound and goes to pay a call on the old women who helped her and to thank them. After two weeks or a month, she takes up her usual tasks.

The Mossi and Foulsé women of Yatenga carry their children on
854 the back after the fashion of other Sudanese women, holding them in a skirt cloth which they tie and knot up in front over the breasts.

851 Baptism. —No celebration takes place at birth. The child is bap-
553 tized about a month later. One of the older members of the family, other than the mother and father, chooses the name. In selecting it, the sponsor takes some event into account, whether important or unimportant, which occurred during the mother's pregnancy. If she was frightened by a horse, the child is named Oueyfo. If, by accident, she crushed a chicken to death, the newborn is called Noga. If a sacrifice was made for the expected child on a hill, he is named Tenga; if the sacrifice was made to a bastard mahogany tree, the child is called Kouka, etc.

551 Let us note that most Mossi proper names, male or female, are the names of vegetables, trees, animals, etc., that is, precisely those names with which an attempt was made to replace the traditional proper names in France in 1793.

Curiously enough, there are no family names. When one wants to pinpoint someone's individuality, one says, "So-and-So (here, the proper name), son of So-and-So (here, the father's proper name)." If there are two men with the same name in one compound, an agnomen will be used to distinguish them, for example, "Tenga the Big and Tenga the Small." As for the Mossi sondogo (pl., sondéré), which is the same as the Bambara diamou, this is a clan name (we shall return

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
FA28 Mossi FA28

What this really means is that the market is the main communication 443
center of Mossi society and news of happenings in the region can be 203
heard there. If a person is in an area one can be sure that the people in the market will know about him, or that he will sooner or later visit the market.

The young men who have returned from work in the cacao fields 167
or towns of Ghana and the Ivory Coast add a great deal of color and 443
excitement to the rural markets of contemporary Mossi country. 556
During the time these young men spend away, they give a great deal of thought and planning to the show they hope to put on when they make the grand tour *(mane do)* of their district's market place. The best day for this is the day of the "great market" and regardles of what day many migrants return to their homes, they wait for that Friday before they show themselves publicly.

On the morning of that day, the typical migrant dresses in his best 167
clothes, lends the remainder of his wardrobe to relatives, and together 443
they go to pay homage to the chief during the morning ceremony 556
(Wend pous yan). The migrant offers the chief such presents as a 431
small amount of money, an article of clothing or kola nuts, and replies [576]
to the chief's questions about the health and welfare of all Mossi in the area whence the migrant came, the whereabouts of "lost" migrants, the nature of the work the migrants were doing, and so on. As soon as the young man receives the chief's permission to leave, he [569]
goes to the market where he is quickly surrounded by *griots* who accompany him in periodic circumambulations of the market place, drumming and singing praises in honor of his ancestry. The migrant is also greeted warmly by his many friends to whom he then gives presents of money, beer and kola nuts. He acknowledges the general praise for having brought goods and clothing for his relatives and takes pride in seeing these relatives dressed in the cloths and clothing he has brought them. If young and unmarried, the migrant also seeks to take advantage of his new-found importance to make the first overtures to available young women or to renew his relationship with former paramours. Towards evening before going home, he rewards the *griots* with money and bear. Many a migrant attempts to prolong this feeling of grandeur by visiting other markets and by dressing up on subsequent grand market days, but after a few weeks he is re-incorporated into the ordinary market routine, and has to make room for the other newly-arrived migrants.

The market is also the place where important rites marking the 443
changing social status of individuals are carried out. Under normal 844
circumstances, the ceremonies attending the birth of a Mossi child are performed at home. When a woman has a number of stillbirths or

843 4. A pregnant woman must not step over her husband; this would make him ill.

833 5. The sexual act may be performed with impunity in the courtyard of a dwelling (at night). Otherwise, it is expressly forbidden to do it outside the house and in any way other than lying on a mat or Peulh secco, in any case never directly on the ground.

845 6. The delivery will be difficult and complicated if the child was conceived in adultery. If the woman is to be delivered, it is 837 absolutely necessary that she confess the name of her accomplice 847 in the presence of witnesses. In this case, if the husband demands it -- and he always does -- the newborn child is killed by the erring wife immediately after it is born (1). [185]

> 1. The procedure is as follows. Some young mothers simply twist its neck and strangle it. Others put the baby in a jar of lukewarm water. The baby instinctively drinks and finally drowns.

837 Adultery. Before the arrival of the French, adultery committed 684 by the nakomsé (descendants of naba) was punished by the death of the guilty couple. Among ordinary Mossi, the culprit was simply banished from the family.

However, if the lover was not a relative of the woman's husband, he was forbidden henceforth to come to the village where the woman lived. If he failed to observe this rule, he risked being killed.

As a general rule, a Moaga woman takes a lover in a village 837 some distance away from her husband's village and not far from her own. When she asks her husband's permission to visit her family, she profits by the opportunity to spend some time with her lover or to let him know that she is going to her parents' home.

Dissolution of Marriage. Divorce.

586 A divorce may be imposed by a husband who no longer loves his wife, but neither ill-health nor sterility may be invoked for the 842 purpose. In the latter case, it is simply assumed that God does not want the woman to have children. She is often regarded with scorn, but sometimes no attention is paid to her lack of children.

843 A woman's role is to bear children. When she knows that she is pregnant, she no longer consents to come to her husband, but she is careful not to inform him of her state; if she told him, the child would die. If her parents happen to pass away during her pregnancy, she does not go into mourning and does not attend the funeral. If she is newly wed and has not yet borne children, one of the other wives of her husband, or, if there are none, the husband's sister, comes at night to sprinkle the husband and wife with water. The young wife will henceforth call this woman her husband, prepare millet mush for her, and heat the water in which she washes. When the pregnancy begins to show, one of the wife's female relatives consults the sorcerer [782] to find out which sacrifice should be offered so that all will go well, but the husband is not informed of this consultation. Sometimes the sacrifice is repeated when the birth draws near. When the first baby 851 is born, the husband sends a child to his wife's relatives with a rooster or a hen depending on the newborn's sex. The child tosses the bird into the yard without saying a word and runs away; everybody understands.

847 /40/ A child born deformed, lame, or blind is done away with; 845 it is simply drowned without further ado if considered incurable. In 732 olden times, twins were often drowned also because their birth entails 761 difficulties for the family, who must offer special sacrifices; some- 753 times only one of them was done away with. If they are spared and die a natural death, the mother wears a small bell at her ankle until the anniversary of the death (koure). If the mother happens to die or the father becomes ill, the sorcerer need only say so and the children are put to death, because they are said to have caused the illness or death of their parents. A baby who could barely walk was once brought by relatives to the Koupela Fathers. He had been born on a Friday and his mother had died; that was sufficient to call for his sacrifice. His relatives tried unsuccessfully to poison him; they exposed him for three days in the bush, and the child did not die. As a last resort they brought him to the missionaries, who hastened to shelter him. Children recognized as insane are abandoned in the bush where they die of hunger.

732 It is only fair to add, however, that these barbarous practices 845 reminiscent of Sparta are not invariably followed. Several lame and incurably ill children are carefully tended by their parents, and some twins born prior to the French occupation are alive and in good health.

776 other hand, the kikirsi do not drink fermented millet beer, but they must be offered some before the yeast (da'nodo) is added. They have their preferences like human beings. They know hatred and jealousy, and sometimes they even kill one another. They are said to have two 776 sexes, to marry, and to procreate. They even have the special faculty ●845 of always bearing twins, and this is why twins are called by their 551 name and are dedicated to them; it is believed that spirits dwell within them.

776 The birth of twins causes their mother much trouble. Formerly 845 both were sometimes put to death, while at other times only one was killed. When a woman bears twins, she builds at the door of her hut 782 a tiny miniature house where the spirits dwelling /82/ within her children will take shelter. Three times a year if her means allow it, in the spring, in the winter, and at the height of the rainy season, or at least once a year, a guinea hen must be offered to the kikirsi. This fowl is sacrificed exclusively to them. On that day they must also be offered their favorite foods, and this means that honey, sesame, and millet cakes must be purchased, that beer must be prepared and a jar saved without yeast, that millet mush has to be cooked, and especially that no pepper be added to the sauce. Otherwise the husband, wife, or children will be afflicted with a dreadful eye disease, for [753] such is the illness which the kikirsi have the power of visiting on human beings.

776 As children, twins may wear only the kankabra, a garment made 845 of black and whitish threads, the characteristic clothing of the kikirsi. Happily, they are later allowed to dress as they please. If the mother dies, the twins offer the sacrifices themselves and build the small hut that serves as a dwelling for their little spirit. The later born twin is considered the older of the two. They both wear the same bracelet and share everything given to them. It is not considered proper to make a gift to one without giving the same thing to the other. Actually, these customs are to be found in Africa from Bambara country to Tanganyika.

776 To return to the kikirsi themselves, they are present everywhere. In the bush they are fond of termite nests, large and small. They 241 also like open spaces. They are to be found around the villages; there are ponds set apart for the kikirsi, wells considered to belong to them. There are spirits watching over every field, and before sowing, as also before harvesting millet, the master of the field sacrifices a chicken to the spirit on a stone in the middle of the field. The

5: Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1959
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776 bush is included in the orderly universe which the Mossi have fabri-
823 cated, it exists at the periphery and is a thing to be feared. The name of this unknown and unowned part of the bush is synonymous with fear. Dreams in which an individual sees frightening images are called "bush
[828] creeping up" (*weogo doore*) or "bush traps you" (*weogo n'yoko fo*). These phrases are also used to describe the emotional shock, the feeling of fear, elicited by the unexpected sight of a frightening object like a corpse or a lion.

Most important among the supernatural beings inhabiting the bush are the twin spirits (*kikirdisi*). Living in pairs or in larger groups, they inhabit the bush, caves, baobab trees, and certain dense thickets of underbrush. While specific details vary, it is generally conceded that they are small, about a foot tall, black like the Mossi, and of both sexes. Their social organization is like that of men: each group is ruled over by a twin spirit-chief (*Kikirdisi Naba*).

845 Twin children are always regarded as the emissaries of the twin spirits.
776 Shortly after the birth of twins their mother takes a present of food to a place where the twin spirits are known to dwell. Leaving the gift and expressing her thanks, she also makes it clear to the twin spirits that if they have any sort of malicious intent in sending her their children they might as well take them back immediately, since she will tolerate no foolishness. If, through her new children, they plan to torment her, they should save their efforts and desist at once. While the twin spirits are frequently mischief-makers, they are more frivolous than malicious and essentially neither good nor evil. The death of newborn twins is accepted with relief, for it is believed certain that the twin spirits have been thwarted in their mischievous intent and have conceded defeat.

THE ECONOMIC AND CEREMONIAL CYCLE

796 A brief description of the economic cycle and the ceremonials which
221 mark its phases will serve to illustrate the way the Mossi perceive their relationship to the forces of their natural, supernatural, and social milieux and the methods by which they seek to assure their well-being through control of these forces. The year is usually divided into twelve
[805] moons whose names refer either to the principal economic activity of the season or to a ceremonial which accompanies it.

The first moon of the Mossi year is called "Gambo" after the name of the village which celebrates its first rain-making ceremony (*Tengana*) at this time. Although the rains are still five or six months away, this ritual marks the beginning of the new economic cycle. Each household which possesses land controlled by the earth custodian sends one of its young girls with an offering of millet gruel to place at the altar of Tenga Wende, the terrestrial manifestation of the deity. The earth custodian advises

551 to the clan later) and not a family name. Ouidiraogo, for example, which is the most widespread clan name among the Mossi, is common to innumerable families.

As for the personal name, proper to the individual, it is quite changeable and variable, for often an individual does not answer to a single name but to two or three: the name his sponsor gave him, the name his mother gives him, the name given him by his friends, and the name given him by his neighbors. On the one hand, the Black likes to conceal his name, while on the other hand he changes it or seems to change it with the greatest ease. We have already seen /in a section not translated/ that the Moro Naba, when ascending the throne, change their proper name to an official name, and from that day forward the former name may never be pronounced. The Mossi who enlist as riflemen (and this is true of all Sudanese men) tend never to sign up under their real name /254/, and this has nothing to do with thoughts of desertion. They give the name of their village or that of their tribe or of a neighboring tribe, or just any name they please. In a word, one cannot look for the same conception of names among the Blacks as is found among Europeans. The European has a name (proper name, family name), and that is the end of it. He is listed, labeled, classified. He cannot do away with it. His name is one with him. The Black is too primitive to have reached this kind of social discipline. He conceals his true personality under the changing names to which he does not want to be linked.

To summarize, the Mossi and Foulsé of Yatenga have (1) a personal name, a first name or proper name as we say in French, along with a certain number of names or agnomina which are used in addition. (2) One says, "So-and-So, son of So-and-So," when wishing to designate someone without confusing him with another person who carries the same name. These two designations provide the proper name and the father's name, but not, properly speaking, the family name. As we already know, the family extends well beyond the household. (3) Although no family names exist, there is the name of the clan, which in turn extends far beyond the family. There is, therefore, both more and less than a family name, but no exact equivalent to it.

845 Freaks. Twins.—Abnormal children frighten the Mossi. Their mothers do not suckle them and thus condemn them to a speedy death.
847 Children born of incest are put to death.

845 The birth of twins is a good omen when they are of different sex.
787 If they are of the same sex, however, it is a sign of approaching death for the father if they are girls, or for the mother if they are of the male sex. To conjure away this fate, a chicken is sacrificed.

853 Nursing. —When a woman is unable to nurse her child, another woman of the family is called in as a wet nurse, or, more simply, a goat is made to suckle the child. Both cases, however, are quite unusual.

854 Charms for children and tattooing. To protect the child from ill-
751 ness or accidents, a necklace with a charm containing the ashes of various shrubs is placed around its neck about two months after birth.

304 The child is tattooed two and a half or three years after birth. Old women are in charge of this operation. They trace out the lines for the scars on the child's face with a sharp little knife which is bent at the tip. Then they put a mixture of karite butter and powdered charcoal on the wounds to stop the flow of blood.

Tattooing is the same for all the Mossi of Yatenga without distinction of rank. It consists of three vertical scars on each cheek, an oblique one on either side of the face from the corner between the eye and nose to the base of the cheek, and two or three little ones in the middle of the forehead. /255/

854 The very young child. —As in all of the /French/ Sudan, the mother carries the child on her back, wrapped in a cloth that is knotted in front over or under the breasts. She goes thus everywhere, works, pounds millet, etc., with the child on her back.

853 When she wants to suckle it, she brings it to her side, astraddle one hip, and supports it with one arm. She does not put it on the ground unless she is in her hut or teaching it how to walk.

When the child is two or three, it stops nursing and is put on the ground.

857 Until they are four or five, the children run about the compound and around it. At that age, they begin to go out into the bush all by themselves and to play with the other little boys.

Children's games. —We shall deal with this subject under "Mode of Subsistence (hygiene, games, play)."

857 Familial education. —The boys, as soon as they reach the age of five or six, go with their big brother and tend the goats in the bush.
868 They also go and fetch firewood, straw, etc. When they are nine or ten, they begin to handle the daba /a field implement/. At eleven or twelve they are already doing men's work.

rulers left the Dagomba region in the Gold Coast (present-day Ghana) during the 11th century and moved into the bend of the Niger River, carving out three large kingdoms and smaller principalities in the process. At the head of these still extant kingdoms are rulers (*Moro Nabas*) who hold feudal-like control of the provinces, districts, and villages which comprise their domains. A complex hierarchical administrative apparatus extends the power of the rulers into the smallest village, and funnels taxes and tribute back to them. French conquest modified this highly efficient system but did not greatly change it. The Mossi state apparatus rests on an economy which produces cotton cloth, horses, sheep, cattle, and goats, but the main support of this large population—one of the densest in the Sudan—is grain agriculture. Today, some Mossi districts still have as many as 70 persons per square mile. 105 173 105

The Mossi are divided into stratified royal, noble, and commoner patrilineages. Characteristic of this lineage system is a process by which royal sublineages descend serially until they merge with the mass of commoner lineages. Below the lineages there were once large non-Mossi groups of serfs and slaves, but these people have now been grouped into lineages and have become Mossi. Patrilocal polygynous extended family households, grouped into villages, form the basic Mossi settlement pattern. Marriages are arranged between unrelated persons through the agency of lineage members who establish "friendly" relationships. The two friends might ask their lineage heads for women to exchange as wives, or the "friend" who has received more gifts from his opposite number will give over a wife. Because only the older men have women and goods at their disposal, they are usually the ones who receive wives. The result is that most young men have no wives and must content themselves with occasional lovers until they inherit wives from lineage members. The Mossi have a great fear of incestuous relations which bring down the wrath of the ancestors (the *Keemsé*).

Ancestor veneration is at the core of Mossi religious behavior. The recent ancestors are notified, through sacrifices, of the important events in the lives of their descendants, and they are expected to aid in solving everyday problems. The ancestors also invoke their sanctions against antisocial behavior among their descendants. Once a year the Mossi people, in concert with the Moro Nabas, appeal to their individual and collective ancestors for good crops, large families, and for the preservation of the dynasty. Often associated with the ancestors as propitiatory agents are local deities called *Tenghougas* (sing. *Tenkougre*) or earth shrines, visibly manifested by clumps of trees, mountains, rocks, or rivers. *Tengsobas* or earth priests appeal to the Tengkougas on behalf of the local populations for help in sickness, for rain and good crops, and for children. When proper sacrifices are offered to the Tengkougas, their spiritual agents, called *kinkirsé*, enter the wombs of women and are born as children. Twins and children who die young are regarded as "evil" kinkirsé who entered a woman without being invited. Nevertheless, many persons consider twins as special gifts to parents in favor of the earth deities. 769 [778] [842] [845]

The earth itself, *Tenga*, is one of the principal deities of the Mossi. Tenga is 776 [823]

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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When a woman has a number of stillbirthr or
845 loses her children when they are still babies, however, it is believed
761 than these children were embodiments of the same *kinkirsi* (spirits)
776 who must be tricked into remaining on earth when it returns, and
443 the market place is chosen as the site for this trickery. As soon as such
851 a woman gives birth to a child, and old woman places it in a basket
443 and on the next market day takes it to the market place. Her intention is to "sell" the child in the hope that it would not die, if owned by someone other than its mother. The old woman walks around the market place shouting: "I have something to sell!" Invariably a man will walk up to her, and after ascertaining the contents of the basket, offer to buy it. The price varies with the fortune of the man, but traditionally the amount paid has been 500 cowries or their equivalent. The man takes the child for a few minutes and then returns it to its vendor, telling her in a loud voice so that the kinkirsi will hear: "I would like you to give this child to 'X' (the child's mother) to be reared for me and I will pay for its upbringing and will come
[551] for the child in a few years. He then gives the child the name *Yamba*
[553] (slave), or *Yemdaogo* (male slave) if male and *Yempoko* (female slave) if a girl. The old woman then returns the child to its mother, relating what has passed in the market and indicating who the "owner" of her child is. The "owner" of the child may not even see the child again, and naturally does not take this ownership seriously. In many cases the money with which he bought the child was given to him by the child's father.

852 The market also plays an important part in the circumcision and
443 incision ceremonies of Mossi boys and girls. For about two to three months after the actual operations the young children, especially the boys are secluded in the circumcision lodges or compounds and have almost no contact with the village population. Their re-introduction to society always takes place on the great market day. The parents of the children buy new clothing for them this occasion, and on the appointed day the boys or girls parade together in the market and are offered gifts by the market people. Later in the day, they are dismissed and individually feted by their relatives.

585 Owing to the relatively unceremonious nature of Mossi marriages,
76 the market does not play a role in Mossi weddings. However, the
554 same thing cannot be said about the last important *rite de passage*,
443 especially the funeral of a chief, or important elder. Prior to the intervention of the French, and to a lesser extent even today, the announcement of the death of an important ruler was seen as the breakdown of law and order and was ritually dramatized by a popular raid
[565] on the markets throughout the territories (Skinner : ms). During the interregnum the vendors are subject to constant raids by members of

843 pregnancy in a woman. It is also known that the woman will give birth in nine months, but since it is impossible to be sure of the date of delivery, the pregnant woman is watched over constantly and is under the surveillance of the old women. In a general way, nature is allowed to take its course, but some people prefer to con-
[781 sult the soothsayers and the priests and to give alms and sacrifices
782] to avoid a miscarriage.

During pregnancy, women are forbidden to eat honey and, in general, any sweet foods.

Seguene-vando (from seguene, "to wear a skirt," and vando, "leaves, branches"). A few months after the cessation of menstruation, the pregnant woman is sent into the kim-dogo (hut of the kimsé, manes of the ancestors) at the home of the family elder. There she is completely disrobed, and branches are tied around her loins.

844 Delivery. Delivery takes place in the woman's own hut. There is no special preparation. [190] Old women who have had much practice help the mother while others heat water in which to cleanse the newborn child of all impurities.

No one except the old women is present during the delivery.
[842] Women who have not yet borne children are sent away, and for good reason since the sight of the birth process might make them sterile.

Finally, if the afterbirth does not come out at the time of birth or soon after, there are certain special measures taken to hasten its emergence.

●846 Three or four days after the delivery, depending on whether the child is a boy or a girl, the mother, who has so far remained indoors, goes out for the first time.

She carries a sickle to ward off ghosts and other evil spirits.

The new mother's co-wives and relatives bring her safandé (soap), kamé (karite butter), and kalgo (soumbala); others give her cowries. The father has a sheep or rooster killed and a millet cake prepared.

The woman who acted as midwife is sent a ball of sagbo (millet mush) and a chicken leg. The heads of the mother and child are
[302] partially shaved, and there is nothing else to do but to choose a name for the child. [191]

553 Choice of a name. Among the Mossi, a child's personal name depends on circumstances which preceded the birth or on an important

844 the child is washed in warm water and then placed on a mat in a sort of nest made with old skirt cloths and various bits of fabric. Then the woman is placed on the mat next to the child which can now be suckled. Let us note, however, one final ceremony. Before the
844 woman gives the breast, the child is washed in dolo, especially the
853 inside /253/ of the nose and the genitalia, for the Mossi, like the
826 Bambara, are convinced that mother's milk has an injurious effect on these two parts of a child's anatomy. If the child, while suckling, should breathe in some milk through its nose, this would, it is said, cause the interior of the organ to rot. Likewise, were a few drops to fall on its genitalia, that part would suffer from it. The dolo prevents such lamentable accidents.

846 At the end of three days, the woman leaves the compound and goes to pay a call on the old women who helped her and to thank them. After two weeks or a month, she takes up her usual tasks.

The Mossi and Foulsé women of Yatenga carry their children on
854 the back after the fashion of other Sudanese women, holding them in a skirt cloth which they tie and knot up in front over the breasts.

851 Baptism. —No celebration takes place at birth. The child is bap-
553 tized about a month later. One of the older members of the family, other than the mother and father, chooses the name. In selecting it, the sponsor takes some event into account, whether important or unimportant, which occurred during the mother's pregnancy. If she was frightened by a horse, the child is named Oueyfo. If, by accident, she crushed a chicken to death, the newborn is called Noga. If a sacrifice was made for the expected child on a hill, he is named Tenga; if the sacrifice was made to a bastard mahogany tree, the child is called Kouka, etc.

551 Let us note that most Mossi proper names, male or female, are the names of vegetables, trees, animals, etc., that is, precisely those names with which an attempt was made to replace the traditional proper names in France in 1793.

Curiously enough, there are no family names. When one wants to pinpoint someone's individuality, one says, "So-and-So (here, the proper name), son of So-and-So (here, the father's proper name)." If there are two men with the same name in one compound, an agnomen will be used to distinguish them, for example, "Tenga the Big and Tenga the Small." As for the Mossi sondogo (pl., sondéré), which is the same as the Bambara diamou, this is a clan name (we shall return

8: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1958
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595 co-wives and other women of the extended families. Even the Catholic hus-
797 bands would not help their wives with household tasks requiring more than
182 one person, nor would they violate tradition by chatting with their wives except at night in their huts. Another factor is that after the Mossi Christian
[846] woman has given birth to a child, she follows the traditional custom and goes back to her parents' home to remain there during the two or three years' lactation period. This imposes a great hardship on a Catholic husband because during this time he is left without wife or helpmate. In the extended family household there would have been women to take care of a man's material needs, and his mistresses would have taken care of his sexual needs. The Catholic can and does ask the mission for a young girl to take care of his material needs, but of course she is not expected to satisfy his sexual de-
[837] sires. Obviously this arrangement is not satisfactory, and many Catholic men, with the acquiescence of their wives, keep mistresses. Dim Delobson comments:

> Ouagadougou has a large number of Christians, but does this mean that these people in their love for the church respect all her rules? Alas! there are a large number of Christians who oblige their lawful wives to leave the conjugal couch and make way for the accommodation of mistresses . . . in conformity with the old custom. But this is a subject which is too delicate to discuss further. I only note it in passing: *Noli me tangere* (1934:169).

797 Despite the influence of tradition on Mossi Catholics, I feel it would be a
794 mistake to say that the complexity of Catholic dogma is one of the drawbacks to missionary success in this country. One Mossi has already been made a bishop of the Catholic Church, and most of the proselytizing in Manga falls on the two Mossi priests and the five Mossi nuns. Under the supervision of two White Fathers, the Catholic children and adults are acquainted with the dogma and rituals of the church. The festivals are well attended and celebrated with as much pomp as possible. Although the Mass is sung in Latin, the Mossi have adapted some of their traditional tunes to the Mass, and use their own language for prayers and hymns. Catholics observe all the sacraments including Confession—a sacrament which is hazardous from the Mossi point of view, because man must lay bare his innermost thoughts to the priests, who, in the final analysis, are Europeans and thus administrators.

It is true that even the staunchest Catholics in Manga have not abandoned all belief in traditional rituals and religious credos. For example, many Mossi Catholics believe in the existence of sorcerers, but the Catholic Church
[754] does not recognize the existence of sorcerers or such evil forces (I have met White Fathers who believe that there are unexplainable psychic and physical phenomena in Africa), and moreover has no way of dealing with them. "But," says Dim Delobson (1934:136), "the Mossi believe so strongly in the power of such entities, that even those converted to Christianity cannot always escape the action of malevolent practitioners." The result is that many Catholics desert the church when they believe that only traditional specialists can help them with personal problems. Catholic families easily aban-

843 4. A pregnant woman must not step over her husband; this would make him ill.

833 5. The sexual act may be performed with impunity in the courtyard of a dwelling (at night). Otherwise, it is expressly forbidden to do it outside the house and in any way other than lying on a mat or Peulh secco, in any case never directly on the ground.

845 6. The delivery will be difficult and complicated if the child was conceived in adultery. If the woman is to be delivered, it is 837 absolutely necessary that she confess the name of her accomplice 847 in the presence of witnesses. In this case, if the husband demands it -- and he always does -- the newborn child is killed by the erring wife immediately after it is born (1). [185]

> 1. The procedure is as follows. Some young mothers simply twist its neck and strangle it. Others put the baby in a jar of lukewarm water. The baby instinctively drinks and finally drowns.

837 Adultery. Before the arrival of the French, adultery committed 684 by the nakomsé (descendants of naba) was punished by the death of the guilty couple. Among ordinary Mossi, the culprit was simply banished from the family.

However, if the lover was not a relative of the woman's husband, he was forbidden henceforth to come to the village where the woman lived. If he failed to observe this rule, he risked being killed.

As a general rule, a Moaga woman takes a lover in a village 837 some distance away from her husband's village and not far from her own. When she asks her husband's permission to visit her family, she profits by the opportunity to spend some time with her lover or to let him know that she is going to her parents' home.

Dissolution of Marriage. Divorce.

586 A divorce may be imposed by a husband who no longer loves his wife, but neither ill-health nor sterility may be invoked for the 842 purpose. In the latter case, it is simply assumed that God does not want the woman to have children. She is often regarded with scorn, but sometimes no attention is paid to her lack of children.

843 A woman's role is to bear children. When she knows that she is pregnant, she no longer consents to come to her husband, but she is careful not to inform him of her state; if she told him, the child would die. If her parents happen to pass away during her pregnancy, she does not go into mourning and does not attend the funeral. If she is newly wed and has not yet borne children, one of the other wives of her husband, or, if there are none, the husband's sister, comes at night to sprinkle the husband and wife with water. The young wife will henceforth call this woman her husband, prepare millet mush for her, and heat the water in which she washes. When the pregnancy begins to show, one of the wife's female relatives consults the sorcerer [782] to find out which sacrifice should be offered so that all will go well, but the husband is not informed of this consultation. Sometimes the sacrifice is repeated when the birth draws near. When the first baby 851 is born, the husband sends a child to his wife's relatives with a rooster or a hen depending on the newborn's sex. The child tosses the bird into the yard without saying a word and runs away; everybody understands.

847 /40/ A child born deformed, lame, or blind is done away with; 845 it is simply drowned without further ado if considered incurable. In 732 olden times, twins were often drowned also because their birth entails 761 difficulties for the family, who must offer special sacrifices; some- 753 times only one of them was done away with. If they are spared and die a natural death, the mother wears a small bell at her ankle until the anniversary of the death (koure). If the mother happens to die or the father becomes ill, the sorcerer need only say so and the children are put to death, because they are said to have caused the illness or death of their parents. A baby who could barely walk was once brought by relatives to the Koupéla Fathers. He had been born on a Friday and his mother had died; that was sufficient to call for his sacrifice. His relatives tried unsuccessfully to poison him; they exposed him for three days in the bush, and the child did not die. As a last resort they brought him to the missionaries, who hastened to shelter him. Children recognized as insane are abandoned in the bush where they die of hunger.

732 It is only fair to add, however, that these barbarous practices 845 reminiscent of Sparta are not invariably followed. Several lame and incurably ill children are carefully tended by their parents, and some twins born prior to the French occupation are alive and in good health.

000 16. Circumcision.
17. Excision.
18. After the circumcision.
19. Emancipation and coming of age.
20. Guardianship.
21. Adoption.
22. Interdiction.

Let us begin with filiation.

848 Filiation. —"The Mossi," says Vadier, "distinguish three types of filiation: (1) legitimate filiation; (2) natural filiation; and (3) filiation from incest.

As for filiation from adultery, it is regarded exactly in the same manner as natural filiation.

[843] The period of gestation is believed to be from seven to twelve months. A child conceived outside this lapse of time is regarded as a natural child. Moreover, a woman need only tell her husband that the child she is carrying in her womb is not his and he will disown it.

When the illegitimate child or one born of adultery reaches the age of three or six (depending on its sex), it is entrusted to its natural father. In spite of this separation, the child retains its rights of inheritance from its mother.

848 Filiation from incest does not exist, or rather there is not enough time for obligations and rights to be created. Indeed, according to
● 847 a barbarous custom, the child born of incest is put to death immediately after birth by the women who assisted with the delivery.

835 Incest rules apply between kin of any degree in the ascending and descending lines: sister and brother, uncle and niece, nephew and aunt, and all their relatives in the direct ascending and descending lines; father-in-law and daughter-in-law; son-in-law and mother-in-law. /251/

684 When incest occurs, the guilty pair are driven from their families and from Yatenga, and the naba confiscates all their property."

843 Theory of birth. —The Mossi believe that when a woman is pregnant, the soul of an ancestor has returned within her. We shall
715 speak of this animistic explanation of birth later under "Religion" /not translated/.

In fact, resemblances between the child and some previously known ancestor are pointed out as often as possible, and it is said that this particular ancestor was reincarnated within the woman.

842 How children are weleomed. —The Mossi are very happy to have children and want by all means to have some. This is indeed to their full advantage, since children work from the age of seven or eight, since they make sacrifices for their parents when the latter are dead, and since the daughters, by marrying, bring in gifts for the family. The more children one has, the happier one is.

842 789 "Under these circumstances," says Vadier, "a barren woman is very poorly regarded by her husband and not greatly esteemed by her neighbors. To overcome this sterility when it occurs, both spouses appeal to the gods. They both go to the tengasoba, the religious chief of the village, with a chicken, a goat, or a sheep, according to their means. The tengasoba cuts the animal's throat on a special stone, collects its blood, and boils it in a vessel along with various tree barks which have certain properties.

"This concoction is then given to the woman, who must mix it with her sarabou. If the spouses later have a child, they must, under threat of calling forth the vengeance of the divinity (the Earth, in [431] this case), offer the tengasoba a gift of 3,000 cowries if they had a boy or 4,000 cowries if they had a girl.

"The tengasoba also overcome sterility by cutting the animal's throat in the sacred grove (kango)."

847 Abortions. —Abortions nevertheless occur. Sometimes Mossi women cause an abortion in the event of an illegitimate pregnancy which occurred in the husband's absence. In addition, abortions are rather frequent among unmarried mothers. To conceal their lapse, [791] they appeal to the tipa or timisoba (makers of charms, medicines, and poisons) who give them a special brew of which they hold the secret.

[586] These practices are, of course, very poorly regarded by the Mossi. Married women who resort to them are turned out by their husband's. In addition, if a woman dies as the result of an abortion, her husband is likely to manifest joy and to state that the woman received a just punishment for her transgression. Finally, in former times after the [684] death of the guilty woman, the husband would go to the Moro Naba and denounce her lover to him. The naba confiscated all the lover's property.

843 Childbirth. —Among wealthy Mossi, the pregnant woman is treated with a certain regard. She does not work after the third month /252/ of pregnancy if this is her first, or after the sixth month if she has

551 to the clan later) and not a family name. Ouidiraogo, for example, which is the most widespread clan name among the Mossi, is common to innumerable families.

As for the personal name, proper to the individual, it is quite changeable and variable, for often an individual does not answer to a single name but to two or three: the name his sponsor gave him, the name his mother gives him, the name given him by his friends, and the name given him by his neighbors. On the one hand, the Black likes to conceal his name, while on the other hand he changes it or seems to change it with the greatest ease. We have already seen /in a section not translated/ that the Moro Naba, when ascending the throne, change their proper name to an official name, and from that day forward the former name may never be pronounced. The Mossi who enlist as riflemen (and this is true of all Sudanese men) tend never to sign up under their real name /254/, and this has nothing to do with thoughts of desertion. They give the name of their village or that of their tribe or of a neighboring tribe, or just any name they please. In a word, one cannot look for the same conception of names among the Blacks as is found among Europeans. The European has a name (proper name, family name), and that is the end of it. He is listed, labeled, classified. He cannot do away with it. His name is one with him. The Black is too primitive to have reached this kind of social discipline. He conceals his true personality under the changing names to which he does not want to be linked.

To summarize, the Mossi and Foulsé of Yatenga have (1) a personal name, a first name or proper name as we say in French, along with a certain number of names or agnomina which are used in addition. (2) One says, "So-and-So, son of So-and-So," when wishing to designate someone without confusing him with another person who carries the same name. These two designations provide the proper name and the father's name, but not, properly speaking, the family name. As we already know, the family extends well beyond the household. (3) Although no family names exist, there is the name of the clan, which in turn extends far beyond the family. There is, therefore, both more and less than a family name, but no exact equivalent to it.

845 Freaks. Twins.—Abnormal children frighten the Mossi. Their mothers do not suckle them and thus condemn them to a speedy death.
847 Children born of incest are put to death.

offender was caught in the act, he was immediately killed. If he was merely suspected of guilt both by his own lineage and by the lineage of the wronged woman, he was banished from his lineage and from the village. So swift and sure was this punishment that a rapist always fled if he believed he would be discovered. The Mossi considered rape such a heinous crime that if the act resulted in pregnancy, an abortion was attempted; if this failed, the child was killed at birth. Furthermore, the rapist could never hope to return to his community, because even if the yagenga appealed on his behalf and his lineage forgave him, the community ban still stood.[2]

The village chief was usually aware of the torts and crimes that occurred in his village, and of how the families concerned had handled them. He seldom interfered in the internal affairs of a lineage, or in problems between lineages, unless he felt that a case was beyond their legal competence. In the case of a rapist's expulsion, community feeling usually ran so high that if the chief intervened, it was only to support the will of the community. However, when people could not settle their differences peaceably or when a major crime was committed within a village, the chief usually summoned the offender to his court for trial. His right to do so was sanctioned by his possession of the nam, but the very concept of the nam often made his task difficult. If he was a commoner, the nobles often emphasized their relationship to the holder of the royal nam, the district chief, and objected to being tried by a commoner. They usually appeared at the village court if summoned, but often attempted afterward to find some excuse for taking their case to the district chief. They felt that their local reputation would prevent them from receiving a fair hearing from anyone but their lineage brother. Furthermore, if they were judged and convicted in the lower court and the verdict was confirmed in the district court, they felt that the district chief, in concurring with the village chief, had broken the solidarity of their lineage. But if they took their case directly to the district chief, they knew they were being judged by an equal or a superior, and that an unfavorable judgment would not damage their status.

The competence of the village chief to deal with court cases was limited.[3] He did pass on all the legal infractions that occurred in his village, but he tried to adjudicate only the minor cases. Thus, he tried cases involving theft, quarrels, trespassing, adultery, indebtedness, and abuse, and tried to settle them by reprimanding the guilty ones. He sent cases involving serious injury and homicide to the district court, along with cases he was unable to resolve.

The district court was a most efficient and effective judicial organ, and the nature of the Mossi judicial process was most evident on this level. The

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15. *Ibid.*, p. 673.
16. Delafosse, II, 128–29.
17. Binger, II, 502.
18. Crozat, p. 4849.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 4822.

20. The structure of the Mossi kingdoms and their relationship with the autonomous principalities make it difficult to determine the exact number of districts within each unit. For example, the Mossi people always claimed that the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou was sovereign over "333" chiefs (cf. Binger, I, 502). However, since the Mossi always associate the number 3 with males, any number giving a multiple of threes is suspect. Binger stated that some of the chiefs referred to as part of the 333 were no more than village chiefs. However, Tauxier (*Le Noir du Soudan*, p. 567), describing the kingdom of Ouagadougou, states, "At the top of this hierarchy is the king, the Mogho Naba, paramount chief of the Mossi, residing at Ouagadougou. To give at least an idea of the relative importance of this empire, without going further than, say, the cercle of Ouagadougou, there were eight provinces comprising 300 *cantons* [districts], 5,000 villages or small towns, and 861,700 inhabitants."

While voicing the myth that the Mogho Naba had "under his control 333 chiefs or Nabas," Dim Delobson actually gives only about 150 chiefs in his list of district and other chiefs (pp. 46, 288–97). It was impossible for me to get any idea of the number of chiefs, because the Mossi hierarchy has changed radically since 1905.

21. Dim Delobson, p. 63.
22. Cheron, "Contribution," p. 651.

23. The Mossi did not acknowledge the defeat of Mogho Naba Wobogo by the French until the Ouidi Naba surrendered to the invaders and installed a ruler they had chosen.

24. Archives, Document 1G-334. Lambert describes Karfo as "a curious figure who unfortunately is not well known."
25. Binger, I, 465.
26. Dim Delobson, pp. 15–45, *passim*.

27. It appears that the monarchs found fault with their district chiefs most readily when they had sons or other relatives in need of districts to govern. Since a possessor of the nam could not be deprived of it while alive, he had to be accused of some crime and executed. Koabga was replaced as Doulougou Naba by Lassanne Congo (called Naba Kouliga), a son of the Mogho Naba. On the other hand, when Naba Pusha of Nobere district fled rather than commit suicide or start a civil war, he was replaced by his own brother, who became Naba Soulougou.

28. Dim Delobson, p. 44.
29. Cheron, "Contribution," p. 655.

CHAPTER FIVE

1. Mangin, p. 25.

2. Mangin does not discuss rape, but reported that an "abductor" was beaten and put in irons. The girl was returned to her family, and if she gave birth to a child, it was killed (pp. 26–27).

3. Dim Delobson, p. 55.

4. Most of my informants state quite clearly that the district chiefs did not have the right to impose the death penalty, but could do so if they were discreet about it and did not take advantage of their subjects. But Dim Delobson states: "Contrary to what people generally believe, the Kombere—the chief of the *canton* [district]—also had the power of life and death over his subjects. How many persons have been put to death only because they were wealthy? How many village chiefs have been killed by the district chiefs in their territories without the Mogho Naba's intervention?" (pp. 55–56).

5. Dim Delobson (p. 56) insists that justice was free of charge, but added that

586 The new husband of a woman who has been deserted does not [186] and cannot maintain any relations whatever with the former husband. In any event, the latter would never agree to see his successor, even though the divorce had been arranged with his consent. Besides, the new marriage is often contracted in another village.

The Question of Nationality Among the Mossi

641 In Mossi country the child takes the father's nationality, and any child born of a Moaga subject is himself a Moaga.

593 Any child, male or female, is under the authority, first, of his father and, above him, of the head of the family. A mother may never, under any circumstances, give her daughter in marriage.

641 If a Moaga woman happens to marry a foreigner, she does not acquire her husband's nationality. In the same way, a foreign girl (a Bambara or a Djerma, for example) does not lose her own nationality when she marries a Moaga. In the eyes of her husband's relatives, as well as the rest of the populace, she remains a foreigner, required to practice the customs of her husband but nevertheless a foreigner.

Thus, when a Moaga subject chooses to emigrate, the nationality of his children who remain in Mossi territory, whether minor or of age, does not ipso facto change.

A legitimate child takes on his father's nationality [187] even though the foreign-born father may have a Moaga as his wife.

Children born of a Moaga father and either a Moaga or foreign-born mother are Mossi.

[848] As for illegitimate children, they take the mother's nationality unless they are recognized, and this can be done only if the mother marries before the birth of the child.

If the child has not been legitimized until after his birth, he will sooner or later suffer from the omission, since his bastard origin will not long remain a secret.

Loss of nationality. The Mossi may lose their nationality only under the following two conditions.

1. When the Moaga subject has been expelled from his village for some serious crime, sent away by his relatives, and no longer regarded

562 girl is used to pay debts; a man borrows on the promise of giving his
584 daughter in marriage. She will be handed over, often with no bride
567 price other than the borrowed sum; and, contrary to the custom noted above, since she is considered a slave, her first daughter does not belong to the grandfather. A girl may also be given in exchange for her enslaved brother or uncle, who thus recovers his freedom. A man may be seriously ill and call a doctor who agrees to treat him on the condition that the patient's daughter be given to him if he gets well. The father does recover, and the girl is given in marriage to the fortunate doctor. Exchange of daughters also takes place: a native may give his daughter in marriage to another, who in turn gives him his own.

562 A girl is given in marriage by her mother only if she was born out
584 of wedlock, and her father is thus theoretically unknown. The sisters
848 of certain nabas are the only ones permitted to choose their husbands
[554] according to their own wishes and to leave them when they please.
593 The fickle existence they lead is easy to imagine! In all other cases the girl is given in marriage by her father, or by his heir if the father is dead. (1) The mother is not consulted, but since she cares for the

[754]

1. It would be onerous and indeed impossible to list all the various situations that may arise. The sorcerers quite often interfere, and who knows what goes through a sorcerer's mind! One case among many: a woman bore a daughter after raising several others who died immediately following marriage; the father consulted the sorcerer to find out whether he should promise this last daughter in marriage. The sorcerer stated that she must be left free to choose her own husband, or else she would die like her sisters. The father left her free.

daughter until the latter marries, she may through advice, promises, or even threats dissuade her from a certain match /29/ or welcome her if she runs away from a husband to whom she was given against her will.

582 the household a more serious and more binding affair among the
836 Bambara than in this particular region. /241/

Vadier says on the subject, "The fact that a young girl has had relations with a native other than her husband prior to marriage is by no means an impediment to the marriage.

"Many betrothed girls have lovers. It even happens quite frequently that their fathers are forced to go in search of them at the homes of the young men with whom they have run away. Actually, this matter is of no concern to the husband. As long as he gets the woman, the rest matters little to him. It is not unusual for a girl to bring a child
[848] which she had by another man into her husband's home. /This child eventually returns to its natural father."

582 This picture is painted in rather bleak colors. In reality, fathers
836 and mothers do try, as best they can, to prevent their daughters from
585 taking lovers. They do not like to see them go to the "tom-tom," but they can scarcely keep them from going, and often the "tom-tom,"
626 like our own country dances, plays havoc with a young girl's virtue.
684 If the girl says nothing, everything goes well. Since among the Mossi there is no exhibition of the skirt cloth following the consummation of the marriage, there is no evidence. Even if the husband knows ahead of time or finds out at the last moment, he says nothing out of shame, to avoid being scorned. When the father leads his daughter to the hut of the ancestors before sending her to her fiancé, however, she often does not dare enter the hut. Having lost her virginity and fearing that she might be killed by the ancestors, she admits her wrongdoing to her father. Sometimes she may have the courage or the effrontery to enter the ancestral hut, but later, if she falls ill in her husband's hut, she will interpret her condition as the ancestors' vengeance for the sort of moral perjury she committed by entering their hut in a state of transgression, and she will confess to her husband what she has done. In both cases the lover is confronted, in the first instance by the father, in the second by the husband, and a goat, two canari of dolo, and a chicken are demanded from him. A sacrifice will be offered to the ancestors with these various items to ask their forgiveness, they will pardon the wife and the lover, and order will be restored.

848 Sometimes, as mentioned earlier, a child is the fruit of a girl's passion. The lover having made reparation and the ancestors being satisfied, the husband will accept the child along with the girl, but

848 as soon as the baby is old enough to leave its mother, the husband, not wishing to keep it with him, will return the child to its natural father.

582 171 In short, virginity is not rigidly demanded of the girl, although it is considered better and more respectable than non-virginity. The Mossi are not as demanding on this point as the Bambara, and in this, according to my data, they are like all other Voltaic peoples.

684 Let us note one further detail. If the lover from whom reparation is demanded for the damage caused, that is to say, the payment of the goat, chicken, and two canari of dolo, does not want to give them, the husband would formerly appeal /242/ to the Moro Naba, who forced the lover to pay what he owed and in addition confiscated for himself a part of his goods for his salary as a judge. If the lover owned nothing, his family paid for him. Nowadays, the village or canton chiefs are still approached about such matters, and they force the lover to make the customary payment.

593 Rights and duties of the husband and wife.—The husband owes assistance and help to his wife. He must protect her and come to her aid whenever necessary.

The husband must support his wife. To secure food, he usually belongs to a work group, as we have seen earlier. The work group sustains the husband and wife for seven months out of twelve. The rest of the time, the husband maintains the wife with the produce of his small fields. The wife also has her own little patches of cultivated land (as big as a handkerchief), but they are not used to procure food for the household unless the husband is completely destitute. Hence, the produce from these little patches of soil usually goes to the wife herself.

In any case, it is the husband and not the group who must provide clothing for his wife. He does this with the earnings from his small fields.

593 586 If the husband should refuse to support his wife, although able to do so, she would take her complaint to the head of her spouse's family. If the husband still refused to support her after the intervention of the family head, the woman would regain her freedom and could return to her family.

593 The husband must see to his ailing or invalid wife's upkeep until her death.

000 16. Circumcision.
17. Excision.
18. After the circumcision.
19. Emancipation and coming of age.
20. Guardianship.
21. Adoption.
22. Interdiction.

Let us begin with filiation.

848 Filiation. —"The Mossi," says Vadier, "distinguish three types of filiation: (1) legitimate filiation; (2) natural filiation; and (3) filiation from incest.

As for filiation from adultery, it is regarded exactly in the same manner as natural filiation.

[843] The period of gestation is believed to be from seven to twelve months. A child conceived outside this lapse of time is regarded as a natural child. Moreover, a woman need only tell her husband that the child she is carrying in her womb is not his and he will disown it.

When the illegitimate child or one born of adultery reaches the age of three or six (depending on its sex), it is entrusted to its natural father. In spite of this separation, the child retains its rights of inheritance from its mother.

848 847 Filiation from incest does not exist, or rather there is not enough time for obligations and rights to be created. Indeed, according to a barbarous custom, the child born of incest is put to death immediately after birth by the women who assisted with the delivery.

835 Incest rules apply between kin of any degree in the ascending and descending lines: sister and brother, uncle and niece, nephew and aunt, and all their relatives in the direct ascending and descending lines; father-in-law and daughter-in-law; son-in-law and mother-in-law. /251/

684 When incest occurs, the guilty pair are driven from their families and from Yatenga, and the naba confiscates all their property."

843 115 Theory of birth. —The Mossi believe that when a woman is pregnant, the soul of an ancestor has returned within her. We shall speak of this animistic explanation of birth later under "Religion" /not translated/.

In fact, resemblances between the child and some previously known ancestor are pointed out as often as possible, and it is said that this particular ancestor was reincarnated within the woman.

428 Let us finally add some miscellaneous remarks about inheritance.

Concerning the natural child. —"The natural child," says Vadier, 848 "has exactly the same rights as the legitimate child. He inherits from his father or mother concurrently with his brothers and in accordance with the rules we discussed previously." This is correct, but let us not forget that the natural child was sent back to its real father by the legitimate husband as soon as it could leave its mother. Hence, he has all these rights in the household of his actual father and not in that of his mother's husband.

428 Concerning the child in utero. —According to Mossi custom, the child in utero inherits property and is regarded as though it had already left its mother's womb.

Disqualification. —There is cause for disqualification, excluding one from the inheritance. If the deceased was killed, the man who killed him is declared disqualified, but this disqualification does not extend to his children.

Objections to an inheritance. —In cases of ordinary inheritance, if the oldest son is not satisfied with what he received, he may take his grievance to the head of the family who tries to settle the matter. In the event that he does not succeed, the naba intervenes. Such an objection on the part of the eldest son is very unusual. The brothers of the deceased and the other sons cannot object, for only the eldest son has the right to do this.

Wills. —No wills are made, either in theory or in practice. Custom reigns supreme. Sometimes a brother who has some grievance against his brothers decides solemnly before he dies that all his property will go to his sons, but this is a purely platonic manifestation. The dying man is allowed to speak as he pleases, and then, once he is dead and buried, nothing is done about it. One acts in accordance with tradition which asserts itself upon all concerned and overrules, by its own dictates, the special wishes of the deceased.

Acceptance and waiver. —They do not exist here. Custom does not allow people to shirk the exercise of their rights, which are at the same time duties.

428 431 Restorations. A Mossi is free to dispose of his own property as he sees fit while he is alive, but it is understood that he must give the item before his death for the gift to be effective and acknowledged as such.

584 visits and presents a few small gifts. This state of affairs goes on for one or several years. Finally the head of the family calls together his little council and makes known his intention of giving So-and-So's daughter to X... from such-and-such village. There is seldom a refusal since he has sole authority to give the girls in marriage. The young man is then sent to make the acquaintance of his prospective in-laws. As soon as he is presented, he makes a small gift (usually [175] 100 to 1,000 cowries are given).

If the girl is the oldest daughter, her fiancé is expected to bring a sheep, a hoe, a guinea hen, and some beer.

585 The young man is then told the date on which he may send for his fiancée. He has nothing further to do, except to make some preparations and to wait. When the girl is brought to him, he kills some chickens and a goat if he has one, and he has food prepared for the girl's escort. He must also give cowries to them, the amount depending on his own resources.

In many villages the girls married in this way never leave their husbands for fear of being cursed by their parents and condemned never to see their native villages again.

574 Finally, if the wife gives birth, the husband sends a chicken to
851 the village elder and the wife goes there to visit.

787 Girls who are hostile to a husband. These are girls whom the
584 soothsayers point out as hostile to a husband.

Although these girls are promised at an early age, just like other girls, they must not know that they are engaged, and if their fiancés should by chance come to visit, they are treated like ordinary guests who have just happened by.

583 When such a girl reaches seventeen, her fiancé arranges with her family to send her to the waterhole, the well, or the nearest market.

[176] The fiancé selects a group of his strongest friends, plies them with beer, and sends them off with instructions to abduct his fiancée on the way. The latter, accompanied by a woman or by other girls, is surrounded unexpectedly and seized by strong arms despite the resistance, often quite vigorous, of her brothers or her companions. She is then taken to the home of her husband.

A few days later some people are designated to take the girl's effects to her husband's home and to receive the traditional gifts.

843 A woman's role is to bear children. When she knows that she is pregnant, she no longer consents to come to her husband, but she is careful not to inform him of her state; if she told him, the child would die. If her parents happen to pass away during her pregnancy, she does not go into mourning and does not attend the funeral. If she is newly wed and has not yet borne children, one of the other wives of her husband, or, if there are none, the husband's sister, comes at night to sprinkle the husband and wife with water. The young wife will henceforth call this woman her husband, prepare millet mush for her, and heat the water in which she washes. When the pregnancy begins to show, one of the wife's female relatives consults the sorcerer [782] to find out which sacrifice should be offered so that all will go well, but the husband is not informed of this consultation. Sometimes the sacrifice is repeated when the birth draws near. When the first baby 851 is born, the husband sends a child to his wife's relatives with a rooster or a hen depending on the newborn's sex. The child tosses the bird into the yard without saying a word and runs away; everybody understands.

847 /40/ A child born deformed, lame, or blind is done away with; 845 it is simply drowned without further ado if considered incurable. In 732 olden times, twins were often drowned also because their birth entails 761 difficulties for the family, who must offer special sacrifices; some- 753 times only one of them was done away with. If they are spared and die a natural death, the mother wears a small bell at her ankle until the anniversary of the death (koure). If the mother happens to die or the father becomes ill, the sorcerer need only say so and the children are put to death, because they are said to have caused the illness or death of their parents. A baby who could barely walk was once brought by relatives to the Koupéla Fathers. He had been born on a Friday and his mother had died; that was sufficient to call for his sacrifice. His relatives tried unsuccessfully to poison him; they exposed him for three days in the bush, and the child did not die. As a last resort they brought him to the missionaries, who hastened to shelter him. Children recognized as insane are abandoned in the bush where they die of hunger.

732 It is only fair to add, however, that these barbarous practices 845 reminiscent of Sparta are not invariably followed. Several lame and incurably ill children are carefully tended by their parents, and some twins born prior to the French occupation are alive and in good health.

844 the child is washed in warm water and then placed on a mat in a sort of nest made with old skirt cloths and various bits of fabric. Then the woman is placed on the mat next to the child which can now be suckled. Let us note, however, one final ceremony. Before the
844 woman gives the breast, the child is washed in dolo, especially the
853 inside /253/ of the nose and the genitalia, for the Mossi, like the
826 Bambara, are convinced that mother's milk has an injurious effect on these two parts of a child's anatomy. If the child, while suckling, should breathe in some milk through its nose, this would, it is said, cause the interior of the organ to rot. Likewise, were a few drops to fall on its genitalia, that part would suffer from it. The dolo prevents such lamentable accidents.

846 At the end of three days, the woman leaves the compound and goes to pay a call on the old women who helped her and to thank them. After two weeks or a month, she takes up her usual tasks.

The Mossi and Foulsé women of Yatenga carry their children on
854 the back after the fashion of other Sudanese women, holding them in a skirt cloth which they tie and knot up in front over the breasts.

851 Baptism. —No celebration takes place at birth. The child is bap-
553 tized about a month later. One of the older members of the family, other than the mother and father, chooses the name. In selecting it, the sponsor takes some event into account, whether important or unimportant, which occurred during the mother's pregnancy. If she was frightened by a horse, the child is named Oueyfo. If, by accident, she crushed a chicken to death, the newborn is called Noga. If a sacrifice was made for the expected child on a hill, he is named Tenga; if the sacrifice was made to a bastard mahogany tree, the child is called Kouka, etc.

551 Let us note that most Mossi proper names, male or female, are the names of vegetables, trees, animals, etc., that is, precisely those names with which an attempt was made to replace the traditional proper names in France in 1793.

Curiously enough, there are no family names. When one wants to pinpoint someone's individuality, one says, "So-and-So (here, the proper name), son of So-and-So (here, the father's proper name)." If there are two men with the same name in one compound, an agnomen will be used to distinguish them, for example, "Tenga the Big and Tenga the Small." As for the Mossi sondogo (pl., sondéré), which is the same as the Bambara diamou, this is a clan name (we shall return

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When a woman has a number of stillbirths or
845 loses her children when they are still babies, however, it is believed
761 than these children were embodiments of the same *kinkirsi* (spirits)
776 who must be tricked into remaining on earth when it returns, and
443 the market place is chosen as the site for this trickery. As soon as such
851 a woman gives birth to a child, and old woman places it in a basket
443 and on the next market day takes it to the market place. Her intention is to "sell" the child in the hope that it would not die if owned by someone other than its mother. The old woman walks around the market place shouting: "I have something to sell!" Invariably a man will walk up to her, and after ascertaining the contents of the basket, offer to buy it. The price varies with the fortune of the man, but traditionally the amount paid has been 500 cowries or their equivalent. The man takes the child for a few minutes and then returns it to its vendor, telling her in a loud voice so that the kinkirsi will hear: "I would like you to give this child to 'X' (the child's mother) to be reared for me and I will pay for its upbringing and will come
[551] for the child in a few years. He then gives the child the name *Yamba*
[553] (slave), or *Yemdaogo* (male slave) if male and *Yempoko* (female slave) if a girl. The old woman then returns the child to its mother, relating what has passed in the market and indicating who the "owner" of her child is. The "owner" of the child may not even see the child again, and naturally does not take this ownership seriously. In many cases the money with which he bought the child was given to him by the child's father.

852 The market also plays an important part in the circumcision and
443 incision ceremonies of Mossi boys and girls. For about two to three months after the actual operations the young children, especially the boys are secluded in the circumcision lodges or compounds and have almost no contact with the village population. Their re-introduction to society always takes place on the great market day. The parents of the children buy new clothing for them this occasion, and on the appointed day the boys or girls parade together in the market and are offered gifts by the market people. Later in the day, they are dismissed and individually feted by their relatives.

585 Owing to the relatively unceremonious nature of Mossi marriages,
76 the market does not play a role in Mossi weddings. However, the
554 same thing cannot be said about the last important *rite de passage,*
443 especially the funeral of a chief, or important elder. Prior to the intervention of the French, and to a lesser extent even today, the announcement of the death of an important ruler was seen as the breakdown of law and order and was ritually dramatized by a popular raid
[555] on the markets throughout the territories (Skinner : ms). During the interregnum the vendors are subject to constant raids by members of

852 Three days after the birth of a male child, or four days in the case
553 of a daughter, the father and mother invite the relatives to come and rejoice over the new addition to the family. On that day the baby's forehead is shaved in a circle, and he is given a name. The husband's sisters or his other wives choose a name for the first child, and the father himself chooses the names of the others.

551 The name is derived from an event which preceded, attended, or followed the birth. If the mother ever happened to kill a chicken, even by mistake, even in her childhood, her first child is called by the generic name for chickens (noara), or else he will die. If the father or mother have seen two snakes in the same spot, the child will bear the name Ganda. If several previous children died, the newborn takes the name Yéwaya, "he has come." If several reasons for specific names concur, for instance, if he should be named Noara, Ganda, Yéwaya, he is called Ywawa, "one with many names." A child often bears the name of an older sibling with the addition of the adjective Bila, "little, younger." Thus, if the older child is called Tibo, the younger one is called Tibila (Tibo Bila, "the little Tibo fetish"). In other words, names are not given haphazardly. Some names are rather pretty: Zuényendé, "he is shy"; Nongabamba, "she loves them (her parents)"; Danimmamyé, "forget me not." Sometimes the name merely indicates the child's sex: Daore, "male"; Poko, "female"; or else the festive occasion or day of the week when the child was born.

304 Just as names are not given haphazardly, tattooings do not vary without reason. The native tattooing consists basically of three parallel lines on each side of the face, running vertically across the cheek from the temples to the chin, with a fourth line leading from the nose perpendicularly to the other three and crossing the cheek horizontal hatching between them, like a ladder; this is the mark of free men and of chiefs' sons. The three vertical lines may also be interrupted halfway down the cheek by three horizontal stripes, and then continue down to the chin; this is the mark of a child who was born
[844] among the Peul because his older siblings had died and the sorcerer had decreed that his mother should give birth among the Peul. This
[197] tattooing is characteristic of a distinct Mossi tribe, which lives among them but speaks a different language—the Marensé, better known as Marka. If a child has a Yarga /Yarse/ mother or grandmother, he will bear one horizontal stripe on the right cheek in addition to the three vertical lines /on each cheek/; this is the Yarsé tattooing.

304 Children are tattooed at any age, sometimes when already grown. Many Yarsé do not tattoo their children, and the Mossi themselves do not seem especially to hold to this barbarous custom which sometimes disfigures an individual. The tattooing is done with a razor, and powdered charcoal is put into the wounds. In order to soften the skin and to alleviate the pain, the whole face is covered with oil until the wounds are healed, leaving more or less accentuated scars depending on the success of the operation. Some natives are completely disfigured by thick excrescences of flesh as the result of a faulty operation.

Sorcerers sometimes have the strange idea of prescribing tattoo marks on the belly or lower back of children whose older siblings have [789] died. For instance, a woman had lost three of her children. She consulted a sorcerer when the fourth was born, and he declared with the greatest seriousness that the child would die if his buttocks were not marked with stripes and his belly with tattooings radiating from the navel. The child was marked accordingly, and he lived! Young girls nearly always tattoo their belly with lines extending radially from the navel; many adorn their chest above the bosom with small stripes running perpendicular to the breasts and parallel between them. The tattooing patterns we have described here are, of course, only the most widespread types, because there is a great variety of markings.

304 Just as there is no set age for tattooing, there is none for circumcision. Children of seven or eight are circumcised along with youths 852 and even mature men. Circumcision does not seem to be a Mossi [184] custom, for it is not a general practice. In Ouagadougou province most children are circumcised, while in Koupéla province most of them are not. However, the custom is gaining yearly in Koupéla. The head of the family often has himself circumcised because he is ill, and his children follow suit. Thus circumcision is introduced into the family, for once the father has undergone the operation, his 304 children do likewise. Sometimes the mother is a Yarga, thus from a 563 Moslem family, and her children are circumcised, a new gain for the 852 practice. It also happens that children are drawn to it through sheer curiosity and the enticing assurances of the Peul and Yarsé, who are usually Moslems and thus circumcised, and who spread propaganda all around them. Excision, on the other hand, is universal.

/42/ When there is a group to be circumcised, their relatives set a date with the Peul who is to perform the operation. At dawn of that

304 day the one in charge of the circumcision, a wealthy Yarga or Mossi
563 who has the means to feed several of the people to be circumcised,
852 chooses a tree to serve as shelter for the operation. Rain need not be taken into account, for circumcision is always performed during the dry season from December to April, when agricultural work is at a
[778] standstill. The tree is surrounded with straw mats, forming the téoo or sacred enclosure which no one who is not circumcised may come near without running the risk of being insulted and often beaten; if he should dare to step inside it, he would be stricken by the greatest misfortunes. The Peul sets out a flat stone, sacrifices a chicken in order to make the spirit of the tree benevolent toward those to be circumcised, and operates on the boys one by one. Drums are played throughout the operation to drown the cries of the victims.

852 For three days afterwards the newly circumcised boys do nothing. They rest and tend their wounds. They remain isolated from the rest
[535] of the community for two or three months, sometimes even longer. Judging by the dances which close the festivities, dancing must be their primary concern during that period of time. They also thresh the millet of those who invite them to do so, but no uncircumcised person may join them, no uninitiated individual may come near them.
[198] They do not speak the Mossi language at this time, but a special tongue of which they learn enough to serve them in their everyday needs. Woe to those who forget and use their native tongue; they are
[551] beaten with switches made of a kind of willow. Even their names are changed, and no one may call them by their Mossi names.

The circumcised boys are divided in two groups, one "male" and one "female." One of the groups bears the name of the hyena (kwara in their language) and the other is called masalro, whose French equivalent we do not know. The hyena group must strain their wits to snatch food, even from the other circumcised boys, who are kept constantly on the alert. The other group makes improper gestures during the dance.

852 The circumcised boys are covered with gray dust to alter their
293 appearance completely. A tail is fastened to the back of their breech-
776 cloth, hanging to the ground. It is made of plaited cotton thread and
481 ends in a pompon. Its function is to drive off the kikirsi spirits, who apparently do not like circumcised persons. The boys walk bent over and leaning on sticks like old men. This is done to test their obedience and to see if they listen carefully to what they are told.

852 When they go into the bush, either to cut down straw or for any other reason, they sing invocations to the spirits of the paths and of the trees in order to propitiate them, to draw their blessing, and to avert illness. They chase everyone in their path, approach the villages, and, if they can, seize a few chickens, goats, or sheep as an extra tidbit. This is the custom, and they even steal the animals of their relatives in this fashion. At night they come up near the huts and beat everyone they meet; they take everything they can find, and no one would think of resisting them. /43/ In any case, during that time, people take good care of their children and send them plenty of food. To have a child undergoing circumcision is a burden to a family.

852 563 869 When the circumcised group consists largely of Moslems, Yarsé or Peul, the one in charge of the circumcision assembles them during rest periods, in the evening, or sometimes in the middle of the night, in order to instruct them. There does not seem to be any esoteric doctrine, and the instructions deal with the glorification of ancestors who were also circumcised there. Only those who are circumcised can enter heaven and have many children; those who are not will taste no happiness in the other life and will remain sterile. The group is also taught that God sits under a black tree on a sheep skin, that he eats from a dish and drinks from a bottle. It is all very childish. They are also told that they must not disclose to anyone, under penalty of death or at least of serious illness, what they have seen and learned during the circumcision period. This is to prevent them from revealing the robberies committed during that time and from discouraging those who should like to undergo the operation; for although it is tempting to eat well, to play a great deal, and especially to wear beautiful clothes, it is also unpleasant to be lashed with willows at the slightest slip, or for not dancing well, for quarreling with or insulting someone, for speaking Mossi, for being slow to go to work.

852 Occasionally, at circumcision time, two sticks are found on the path near the market. They were placed there on purpose, and if one looks to the right and left, he will see two children, all covered with dust and wearing dirty breechcloths. They are newly circumcised boys who are begging, and passersby drop a few cowries to the ground.

852 302 All these ceremonies are soon to end. The clothes are ready, and the children are getting tired and restive. The one in charge of the circumcision decides that the boys are to be shaved, that is, that the circumcision period will end in two weeks. The hair of the circumcised boys is not shaved off completely: strips of hair alternate with

852 shaved strips on top of the head, while the sides are shaved similarly
[302] in semi-circular strips. On the seventh day, people who were previously circumcised bring chickens to sacrifice to the spirits of the paths so that all will go well, but the newly circumcised take no part in the proceedings. The children wash, oil themselves, and put on their
852 beautiful clothes. Everything is brand new, the breechcloth, the
292 trousers, the shirt, the blanket, and the headgear. The belt is adorned
301 with a knife in a leather sheath and with a needle case which has at the end a tuft of leather strips with cowries attached to them. They
[776] hold a cow's tail, also adorned with cowries, to drive off the scheuyan spirits who dislike little rascals and people who dress too well. Both wrists are adorned with copper bracelets. Needless to say, this flashy new outfit with its cowries that clang like bells lures the eye and bewitches the young boys, who decide to be circumcised at the first opportunity so they too may eat well and wear beautiful clothes.
852 /44/ The circumcised boys continue to walk bent over, leaning on
[48] their sticks, but their crude staff is replaced with two sticks decorated with burnt designs and tied together. They no longer wear a tail. They go to greet the chiefs, and they thank those who have given them gifts. They walk to the sound of the large drum, since the bindré is forbidden at circumcision ceremonies, and sing plaintive chants to the spirits. They parade in the marketplace and display their clothes in the villages. They dance before the chiefs, and their dances are very
[535] graceful indeed. They dance in unison to the beat of the drum, making the same gestures all together or two by two, varying the figures in accordance with the beat. After seven days the festivities are over, and they all return to their families and take up everyday life as though nothing had happened.

We shall now study this everyday life.

/45/ BOOK III. DAILY WORK AND TRADES

Chapter 1. Occupations of a Mossi

221 The Mossi are essentially cultivators, and it may be said that no
241 Mossi who works at a trade will fail to cultivate his fields when the

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
FA28 Mossi FA28

When a woman has a number of stillbirths or
845 loses her children when they are still babies, however, it is believed
761 than these children were embodiments of the same *kinkirsi* (spirits)
776 who must be tricked into remaining on earth when it returns, and
443 the market place is chosen as the site for this trickery. As soon as such
851 a woman gives birth to a child, and old woman places it in a basket
443 and on the next market day takes it to the market place. Her intention is to "sell" the child in the hope that it would not die if owned by someone other than its mother. The old woman walks around the market place shouting: "I have something to sell!" Invariably a man will walk up to her, and after ascertaining the contents of the basket, offer to buy it. The price varies with the fortune of the man, but traditionally the amount paid has been 500 cowries or their equivalent. The man takes the child for a few minutes and then returns it to its vendor, telling her in a loud voice so that the kinkirsi will hear: "I would like you to give this child to 'X' (the child's mother) to be reared for me and I will pay for its upbringing and will come
[551] for the child in a few years. He then gives the child the name *Yamba*
[553] (slave), or *Yemdaogo* (male slave) if male and *Yempoko* (female slave) if a girl. The old woman then returns the child to its mother, relating what has passed in the market and indicating who the "owner" of her child is. The "owner" of the child may not even see the child again, and naturally does not take this ownership seriously. In many cases the money with which he bought the child was given to him by the child's father.

852 The market also plays an important part in the circumcision and
443 incision ceremonies of Mossi boys and girls. For about two to three months after the actual operations the young children, especially the boys are secluded in the circumcision lodges or compounds and have almost no contact with the village population. Their re-introduction to society always takes place on the great market day. The parents of the children buy new clothing for them this occasion, and on the appointed day the boys or girls parade together in the market and are offered gifts by the market people. Later in the day, they are dismissed and individually feted by their relatives.

585 Owing to the relatively unceremonious nature of Mossi marriages, the market does not play a role in Mossi weddings. However, the
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554 especially the funeral of a chief, or important elder. Prior to the intervention of the French, and to a lesser extent even today, the announcement of the death of an important ruler was seen as the breakdown of law and order and was ritually dramatized by a popular raid
[565] on the markets throughout the territories (Skinner : ms). During the interregnum the vendors are subject to constant raids by members of

588 582 751 wears a bracelet made of copper and iron intertwined, kalembanga, which is believed to protect the wearer against any disaster due to the technically illegal marriage. The kalembanga is also believed to protect the children born of the union from sudden death.

Polygyny

595 Polygyny is the rule throughout Mossi country. It is true that the number of wives varies with the resources and position of the individual. Mere heads of compounds who are somewhat well off may have [180] from five to eight wives and numerous fiancées. The [584] latter are usually reserved for the dakompa (older sons and younger brothers of the head of the family), assuming that these men will in turn render real service and be completely devoted to the head of the household.

There are many reasons for the practice of polygyny, but the main one is procreation. The under-nourished natives must rely on [853 834] the mother's milk to feed their babies and must therefore wait two or even three years before resuming sexual relations with a wife who is a nursing mother. Therefore, they prefer to have several wives.

Consummation

585 When the young girl is taken to her husband, she is entrusted to a woman whom she will henceforth treat as "mother."

A few days after the departure of the cortege, whose composition we shall describe presently, the man claims his fiancée. She is taken at night to the nuptial hut, which has no special features, and no one is present at the consummation of the marriage. In this respect the Mossi differ from the Bambara, who have a griot or an old woman accompany the couple to help the young man, if necessary, overcome the girl's resistance.

It goes without saying that if the girl is found to be a virgin, the [181] husband is overjoyed. If she is not a virgin, the love which he may have felt for her before possessing her is much diminished. The man shows the girl his anger, certain that she will at least tell her mother about it.

Social Status of the Moaga Woman and Work Assigned to Her

562 The Moaga woman is regarded as a veritable beast of burden. Household duties and the weaving of cotton for her own and her husband's clothes are not her only occupations. [183] She helps her husband cultivate the family field, and she has her own plots for peanuts, beans, etc.

She endures wretched treatment and must always submit to her husband's whims. She enjoys no consideration whatever and is never called upon to give an opinion. The husband alone rules the home.

[842] If she is so unfortunate as to have no children, she is regarded with scorn. She carries the loads when a move is in progress. A [482] basket and a pyramid of gourds containing her effects and those of her husband are balanced on her head, while the husband canters beside her on a horse or takes his ease on a donkey. If he is afoot, he carries only his quiver, his arrows, his bow, and a club.

To be sure, the Moaga woman may express in unpleasant words her resentment of the maltreatment to which she is subjected, because the Mossi admit that she has no weapon other than her tongue. This is what is meant by the saying, "A woman's mouth is her quiver."

Conjugal Life

834 Interdictions and permissible acts. The couple is forbidden to have sexual relations at the following times.

1. For a period of not less than two years and a half after the 834 birth of a child to safeguard the baby's life. Indeed, it is believed ●853 that each child comes into the world with its own supply of milk, and if another child were to be conceived during the nursing period, [184] the first would die because the milk of the newborn child would be fatal to him.

2. During the menstrual period. The reason for this prohibition 834 841 that the husband's fetishes and charms lose part of their "power" after relations at this time.

3. A pregnant woman visits her husband during the first six or 834 seven months. All relations then cease until some time after the 843 delivery, as indicated above.

775 that the same baby is returning. So, in order to induce him to
553 remain on earth, they give him a significant name.

One of these is Yewayan (literally, "one who has returned"), meaning "Here he is, back again; it is he once more, and we recognize him."

The same name is used for all members of the same family.

304 Scars. When a child is a year or two old, the family calls in an old woman who draws more or less straight lines on his face (cheeks, chin, forehead, even the nose) with a razor. These marks vary according to region and are not [193] the same, for example, at Kaya as at Ouagadougou.

The design used most often, however, has three straight lines from forehead to chin and one or two horizontal lines running across the nose and joining the vertical lines on the cheeks.

853 Feeding. If a mother does not have enough milk, she goes
782 very early in the morning to a tree, for example, the kamsaongo or wédega (of the family of gohine lianas), to ask for milk. She falls to her knees, and believing that she is addressing a living person, she makes her request humbly, but with what faith! It appears that the prayer is often granted, but the woman must never again go under the tree or she will lose her milk.

853 The question of choosing a nurse does not arise in Mossi
604 country unless the mother dies. In that case, the little orphan is entrusted to a sister of the child's father. If she has been a mother, she too goes to the tree to ask for milk, as described above, even if her most recent delivery occurred years before. Finally, if the child thus nursed is a girl and survives, she becomes the property of her father's sister who will give her in marriage, later on, to the suitor of her choice.

III. Death

764 The importance of funeral ceremonies depends on the age and
554 rank of the deceased.

Nitiema (aged persons). Upon the death of an [194] old man or woman, all the relatives who live in the village are assembled.

833 The conjugal duty. —The wife owes her husband the fulfillment of the conjugal duty.

The wife must never evade it except when she is unwell, pregnant, or when she is nursing. We can see, therefore, that among the Mossi in particular and among the Sudanese in general (for the same customs prevail in this area among all Sudanese Negroes) there is great tactfulness. One appreciates this all the more if one bears in mind that [853] here the women suckle their children for two or three years.

"If," says Vadier, "a woman should evade her husband from newlywed shyness or from any other motive, he would first use all the means of persuasion at his command and, especially, beg the wife's relatives to speak to her. Should their exhortations prove vain, constraint [543] would be used by giving the wife a beating or putting her in irons. Finally, should these measures fail to bring the spouse to compliance, [586] she could be turned out by her husband.

"In return, the husband owes the wife the same conjugal duty which he has the right to demand from her.

"Should the husband fail to fulfill it because of impotence, sickness, or simply from ill will, the neglected wife would mention the matter to the family head's first wife, who would in turn notify him.

833 "Should the husband's behavior be caused by physical incapacity, 586 the wife would be taken from him and given to one of his brothers or, if there were none, to his closest male relative, but never to one of his sons. Should it be due merely to ill-feeling, a protest would be made, and should this fail to have any effect after several days, the wife would be allowed to return to her family." /245/

Let us state immediately that these contingencies almost never arise or are so rare as to be practically nonexistent. Custom anticipates them, however, and we have just described what happens when perchance they do arise.

562 Women's property. —Women may own individual property, as we 422 already know, goods which are not shared communally and which belong wholly to them. These goods come from various sources, sometimes the women's small plots of land, sometimes a surplus from the grain they are given to prepare food and which, once made into dolo, is sold for cowries. Sometimes also, the husband's munificence provides them with bracelets and other jewelry. Once given, this jewelry is wholly theirs, and it is added to the trinkets they procure with their own resources.

844 the child is washed in warm water and then placed on a mat in a sort of nest made with old skirt cloths and various bits of fabric. Then the woman is placed on the mat next to the child which can now be suckled. Let us note, however, one final ceremony. Before the
844 woman gives the breast, the child is washed in dolo, especially the
853 inside /253/ of the nose and the genitalia, for the Mossi, like the
826 Bambara, are convinced that mother's milk has an injurious effect on these two parts of a child's anatomy. If the child, while suckling, should breathe in some milk through its nose, this would, it is said, cause the interior of the organ to rot. Likewise, were a few drops to fall on its genitalia, that part would suffer from it. The dolo prevents such lamentable accidents.

846 At the end of three days, the woman leaves the compound and goes to pay a call on the old women who helped her and to thank them. After two weeks or a month, she takes up her usual tasks.

The Mossi and Foulsé women of Yatenga carry their children on
854 the back after the fashion of other Sudanese women, holding them in a skirt cloth which they tie and knot up in front over the breasts.

851 Baptism. —No celebration takes place at birth. The child is bap-
553 tized about a month later. One of the older members of the family, other than the mother and father, chooses the name. In selecting it, the sponsor takes some event into account, whether important or unimportant, which occurred during the mother's pregnancy. If she was frightened by a horse, the child is named Oueyfo. If, by accident, she crushed a chicken to death, the newborn is called Noga. If a sacrifice was made for the expected child on a hill, he is named Tenga; if the sacrifice was made to a bastard mahogany tree, the child is called Kouka, etc.

551 Let us note that most Mossi proper names, male or female, are the names of vegetables, trees, animals, etc., that is, precisely those names with which an attempt was made to replace the traditional proper names in France in 1793.

Curiously enough, there are no family names. When one wants to pinpoint someone's individuality, one says, "So-and-So (here, the proper name), son of So-and-So (here, the father's proper name)." If there are two men with the same name in one compound, an agnomen will be used to distinguish them, for example, "Tenga the Big and Tenga the Small." As for the Mossi sondogo (pl., sondéré), which is the same as the Bambara diamou, this is a clan name (we shall return

845 The birth of twins is a good omen when they are of different sex.
787 If they are of the same sex, however, it is a sign of approaching death for the father if they are girls, or for the mother if they are of the male sex. To conjure away this fate, a chicken is sacrificed.

●853 Nursing. —When a woman is unable to nurse her child, another woman of the family is called in as a wet nurse, or, more simply, a goat is made to suckle the child. Both cases, however, are quite unusual.

854 Charms for children and tattooing. To protect the child from ill-
751 ness or accidents, a necklace with a charm containing the ashes of various shrubs is placed around its neck about two months after birth.

304 The child is tattooed two and a half or three years after birth. Old women are in charge of this operation. They trace out the lines for the scars on the child's face with a sharp little knife which is bent at the tip. Then they put a mixture of karite butter and powdered charcoal on the wounds to stop the flow of blood.

Tattooing is the same for all the Mossi of Yatenga without distinction of rank. It consists of three vertical scars on each cheek, an oblique one on either side of the face from the corner between the eye and nose to the base of the cheek, and two or three little ones in the middle of the forehead. /255/

854 The very young child. —As in all of the /French/ Sudan, the mother carries the child on her back, wrapped in a cloth that is knotted in front over or under the breasts. She goes thus everywhere, works, pounds millet, etc., with the child on her back.

853 When she wants to suckle it, she brings it to her side, astraddle one hip, and supports it with one arm. She does not put it on the ground unless she is in her hut or teaching it how to walk.

When the child is two or three, it stops nursing and is put on the ground.

857 Until they are four or five, the children run about the compound and around it. At that age, they begin to go out into the bush all by themselves and to play with the other little boys.

Children's games. —We shall deal with this subject under "Mode of Subsistence (hygiene, games, play)."

857 Familial education. —The boys, as soon as they reach the age of
868 five or six, go with their big brother and tend the goats in the bush. They also go and fetch firewood, straw, etc. When they are nine or ten, they begin to handle the daba /a field implement/. At eleven or twelve they are already doing men's work.

124 The problem is aggravated by the fact that the Mossi possess no religious theories and are not in the habit of discussing their beliefs. They are bewildered by the slightest "Why," the most elementary "how is it so." To fulfill the needs of our European minds, therefore, it proved necessary to put a little order and clarity into the ideas we gleaned here and there. In this area especially we have avoided as much as possible any tendency to systematize, and we can say that there is nothing of our own in the two chapters that follow. We have listened to the natives, elicited explanations, asked questions, and made note of the answers. We shall now transcribe the results. Of course the answers did not always agree, and we /78/ were forced to make choices on the basis of those testimonies which appeared most worthy of trust. The disagreements were on matters of detail only, and on the whole the statements persistently agreed on the most important points. In any case, whenever a serious doubt arises, we shall be careful to point it out.

776 576 How could Lt. Marc ever write, "We do not believe that the Mossi have the concept of a single God and Creator"? (1) The idea of God

1. Marc, Au pays des Mossi /In Mossi Country/, p. 158.

is everywhere to be found among this people. The merest wish, the simplest greeting, includes the name of God. When someone is going away, the person who is leaving and those who are staying hold the following exchange: "May God be with me," says the one who goes; "May God see you home! May God cause you to return! May God move your legs!" answer those who remain.

Persons who receive gifts tell their benefactor: "May God keep you! May God cause you to remain a long time (on this earth)! May God reward you! May God repay you!"

If a friend is seen wearing a new garment, this occasions another greeting: "May God allow you to wear it out before you discard it!"

If he is eating, he is told: "May God cause you to profit by it!"

If he comes to announce the birth of an heir: "God grant that you may suspend him from your shoulder!" /Tr., Mossi children from age [854] two or thereabouts are often carried astraddle the hip and holding on to the shoulder./

If he is leaving to return on the same day: "May God grant us the pleasure of talking to each other!"

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553 tized about a month later. One of the older members of the family, other than the mother and father, chooses the name. In selecting it, the sponsor takes some event into account, whether important or unimportant, which occurred during the mother's pregnancy. If she was frightened by a horse, the child is named Oueyfo. If, by accident, she crushed a chicken to death, the newborn is called Noga. If a sacrifice was made for the expected child on a hill, he is named Tenga; if the sacrifice was made to a bastard mahogany tree, the child is called Kouka, etc.

551 Let us note that most Mossi proper names, male or female, are the names of vegetables, trees, animals, etc., that is, precisely those names with which an attempt was made to replace the traditional proper names in France in 1793.

Curiously enough, there are no family names. When one wants to pinpoint someone's individuality, one says, "So-and-So (here, the proper name), son of So-and-So (here, the father's proper name)." If there are two men with the same name in one compound, an agnomen will be used to distinguish them, for example, "Tenga the Big and Tenga the Small." As for the Mossi sondogo (pl., sondéré), which is the same as the Bambara diamou, this is a clan name (we shall return

845 The birth of twins is a good omen when they are of different sex.
787 If they are of the same sex, however, it is a sign of approaching death for the father if they are girls, or for the mother if they are of the male sex. To conjure away this fate, a chicken is sacrificed.

853 Nursing. —When a woman is unable to nurse her child, another woman of the family is called in as a wet nurse, or, more simply, a goat is made to suckle the child. Both cases, however, are quite unusual.

854 Charms for children and tattooing. To protect the child from ill-
751 ness or accidents, a necklace with a charm containing the ashes of various shrubs is placed around its neck about two months after birth.

304 The child is tattooed two and a half or three years after birth. Old women are in charge of this operation. They trace out the lines for the scars on the child's face with a sharp little knife which is bent at the tip. Then they put a mixture of karite butter and powdered charcoal on the wounds to stop the flow of blood.

Tattooing is the same for all the Mossi of Yatenga without distinction of rank. It consists of three vertical scars on each cheek, an oblique one on either side of the face from the corner between the eye and nose to the base of the cheek, and two or three little ones in the middle of the forehead. /255/

854 The very young child. —As in all of the /French/ Sudan, the mother carries the child on her back, wrapped in a cloth that is knotted in front over or under the breasts. She goes thus everywhere, works, pounds millet, etc., with the child on her back.

853 When she wants to suckle it, she brings it to her side, astraddle one hip, and supports it with one arm. She does not put it on the ground unless she is in her hut or teaching it how to walk.

When the child is two or three, it stops nursing and is put on the ground.

857 Until they are four or five, the children run about the compound and around it. At that age, they begin to go out into the bush all by themselves and to play with the other little boys.

Children's games. —We shall deal with this subject under "Mode of Subsistence (hygiene, games, play)."

857 Familial education. —The boys, as soon as they reach the age of five or six, go with their big brother and tend the goats in the bush.
868 They also go and fetch firewood, straw, etc. When they are nine or ten, they begin to handle the daba /a field implement/. At eleven or twelve they are already doing men's work.

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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and districts were present to honor him. This being completed, the *griots* are paid, everyone rises and shouts *Ne Wardo* (the salutation at funerals), and that part of the funeral ceremony during which a man takes leave of the market community is concluded. Now his relatives, descendants and friends all return to the market, whose sights and sounds make it an integral part of the life cycle of the Mossi—the one institution of their society in which almost everyone participates actively.

Preparation for a market day, especially the tri-weekly Friday market or *Raga kasanga,* usually begins on Thursday. This day is characterized by a great deal of activity: preparing the commodities which are to be sold the next day, washing body and clothes, and combing hair. The women who prepare the beer and fried foods work late into the night preparing their wares, and a visit to the homes of the *griots* finds them preparing their drums. The little boys who go to the roadside to chant Moslem prayers to the passers-by, and the little girls who sell water to these strangers redouble their efforts until late on Thursday night to get enough money to buy presents in the market the next day. Finally, when it is quite late and the beer-making fires are out, everyone retires until the morning of the market.

At 7:00 A.M. on Friday the market is deserted except for a leper who sweeps out the stalls of the sellers in return for bits of food or presents of money. Looking at the empty stalls, one has a certain amount of difficulty imagining that this spot will be crowded with human beings five hours hence. But one is also conscious of the fact that even at this early hour scores of persons have already left their homes in distant villages and are on their way to market loaded with produce and with high hopes for the day. About 9:00 A.M. the first women arrive, balancing net-covered bundles on their heads, and take their positions in the various sections of the market with either face or back pointing to the direction from which they came. By 9:30 A.M. the butchers have arrived with their bleating sheep and goats and an aged cow. The first beer sellers have also arrived and are giving "sips" to men before they settle down to sustained drinking.

The pace of the market quickens about 10:30, and in the distance the first tap of the Binderé's drum resounds. All of a sudden, the market seems to have become a giant magnet, drawing long lines of people towards it along every path and from every direction. Women dressed in brightly colored print cloths and dresses, with babies straddling their backs and the inevitable bundles on their head, saunter into their places. Young children run ahead of their mothers or stumble behind them. Those vendors of European products who customarily transport their goods in boxes on bicycles arrive in the

364 For the Mossi, as for all other men, life ends in death, with or without illness. The Blacks do not know how to prevent diseases, and they know very little about fighting them. Hygiene is almost unknown. The huts are poorly aired, the chickens and in general all the animals in the inner courtyard walk everywhere and foul everything. The courtyard is swept often, but the hut of the sheep and goats is located in the midst of the other dwellings; the horse is kept within the soukala [514] itself; and people relieve themselves anywhere, wherever they find a convenient spot. The manure is gathered in a heap, but it is kept next to the huts and gives off a nauseating smell and noxious miasmas, especially at the beginning of the rainy season.

515 The Mossi are not dirty, but they cannot be called clean. Those who dwell in villages abundantly supplied with water at all times are the cleanest. The women, who fetch water every day and thus have an opportunity to wash, are usually cleaner than the men. A Mossi never passes a pond without drinking copiously and washing all over, and this would seem to prove that those who go dirty do so unwillingly; they have no water nearby, and it would be too much trouble to go to the river to bathe. Clothing, especially breechcloths, is often repulsively dirty. This is because washing wears out clothes, and who knows when new ones will be available? No wonder disease has such a hold on this people.

● 855 Child care is quite rudimentary: a few baths; enemas two or three 165 times a day, without which it is said their bowels would not move; and that is all. At the slightest indisposition the sorcerer is consulted, or else the child is left to himself; he will get well or die, and nothing is done about it. As a consequence, child mortality is very high.

758 Those who fall prey to a contagious disease are not isolated. A healthy child lies on the same mat as one with smallpox, a leper drinks from the common gourd unless his lips are covered with sores. People do, however, hesitate to sit where a syphilitic person with sores previously sat. The education of the Mossi in matters of hygiene is wholly yet to be learned.

576 On meeting someone, Mossi politeness requires that an inquiry be made about his health and that of all his relatives. The response invariably is "So-and-So is well," and the other in turn responds, "May God permit his health to wax." It is only after a little conversation that a certain person is said to be ill or to be getting better.

195 It is not said that someone died, but that he ran short of strength, that he passed away, that he left us.

241 Baningha (large white millet or sorghum).

These two types are grown for food, [247] although the large white millet is especially reserved for horses in well-to-do households.

[262 273] Kazinga (large red millet). As a food the poorer Mossi prefer this to the baningha, but it is more especially grown for the making of dam, millet beer.

[256] Mouï (rice) is sought only by the chiefs, notables, and a few families of dakangba (well-to-do men).

Benga (beans).

Souma (peas of either the small green variety or large white or red ones).

Niouyan (from niouri, "yam"), grown only in certain areas.

Nangouri or sounkama (peanuts).

Pèsça (fabirama) [a tuber plant].

Sinni or sili (sesame), grown only by a few people who like it.

Bito (sorrel), used in preparing the sauce served with sagbo.

Mana (gombo [okra]) is also cultivated.

Aside from its food crops, each family has its own plot for cotton (lamdo) which provides for the clothing needed during the year.

311 178 I am told that fields are much more extensive today than in former times, in spite of the abolition of slavery. This is explained by the fact that many areas supposed to be haunted were formerly left uncultivated. It is said, however, that the Moaga used to grow larger crops since in those days he was closer to the soil.

[248] At the present time there is a lack of farm hands. As [857] recently as twenty years ago, the young Moaga followed his parents to the field as soon as he was six or seven years old. He took a liking to the work at a very young age. Before the French [484] occupation, the Moaga rarely left his village because of the dangers on the roads, frequented in those days by bandits (usually descend- [579] ants of naba). People were even afraid to go into the bush alone, for fear of being attacked, captured, and reduced to slavery.

433 178 There was little contact even between adjoining villages. At Ouagadougou, no one ventured from section to section unless he had very good reason and was armed to the teeth. In short, everyone

241 tuber, Coleus coffini, which Europeans call oussounifing or fabirama,
262 and which may replace potatoes in a pinch, are cultivated in the soils most propitious to them.

221 The precious karite /shea/ tree (Butyrospermum parkii) grows in
262 most fields; its fruit, prized for its cool and slightly sweet flesh, con-
137 tains a pit which yields karite butter, the fat most widely used in
[388] cooking and to make soap. Around the villages, and sometimes even within them, the néré /locust bean/ tree (Parkia africana) produces
[356] elongated pods; its bark, mashed in water, yields a paste that is used to harden the floors of the huts. Its flour makes a cooling drink when
[272] mixed in water, and it may also be eaten; its seeds /8/ are used to make kalro /kalre in the original/, the soumbara of the Bambara, an ingredient /made from locust beans, héré/ of all carefully prepared
137 sauces. The doubalé and silk-cotton or kapokiero trees spread their shade over the weavers, numerous among the Mossi, and over the talkers who are even more. Bamboo grows well in the damp southern regions, and the palm oil tree is occasionally found. The caoutchouc liana, however, has not yet been introduced.

231 Small chickens run in all directions through the villages, along with domesticated guinea hens. Everywhere in the bush near the huts,
[857] little boys herd goats and sheep; this is the task of youngsters here at the age when their contemporaries among us /in France/ begin to learn the alphabet. The most common sheep and goats are small in size. The sheep have short hair. Sometimes, especially in the larger villages where markets are held, goats and sheep are to be seen with
[439] long legs and long, curled horns. They are imported from the north-east and fattened to be sold as butcher's meat. The height of fashion for the wife or a prosperous naba is to be followed by a Touareg /Tuareg/ sheep, well washed and very white. It is fed on millet leftovers and bean mush, and its mistress often presents it with a bit of salt to lick. In short, it is well cared for and agreeably fat; on some important feast day, it will embellish the menu.

The huts are usually guarded by very commonplace dogs, often ill-tempered, but cowardly. A stick is enough to drive them away.
[224] They are mostly used in the hunt, the great Mossi pastime during the dry season. Domesticated ducks are sometimes found in nabas' households, as well as pigeons, but these birds are not widespread and not within the reach of everyone. Finally, almost every group of huts has cats which belong to the women and which are difficult

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The Large Mossi Drums.

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Dance of Young Mossi Girls.

861 receive any advice from him. The Mossi, fathers and mothers alike, do not know how to train their children. Under the pretext that a small child does not know what he is doing, the parents allow him to do as he pleases and to carry out his every whim without punishment. Tots who can barely articulate two words utter the coarsest insults to their mother and beat her with their small fists without being punished. The onlookers merely remark that some day he will be a fighter. To chastise him would be to make him cry, and a child's tears are always an embarrassment to be avoided as much as possible. When a child behaves badly, when he fights, steals, seeks out the company of professional thieves or young scamps, when he tells everybody what he has seen and heard and cannot keep a secret, when complaints are made against him, then his father and mother punish him and warn him not to do it again; but they do not prevent wrong doing, and [672] if necessary they will pay his debts, because all members of the family, especially the father, are held liable. The father does not teach his son the cult and the sacrifices, but he does request the boy's help. The child watches his father, and when he grows up, he does as his father did.

857 Boys of twelve or fifteen may fail to return home in the evening for any reason whatever, without warning, and no one worries about it: "He will come soon enough." The young man of twenty builds 884 himself a hut apart from his father's house, in order to have greater 593 freedom and to receive any visitors he may want. Besides his father's field, he cultivates his own piece of land and sells the produce /36/ himself in order to buy clothes. His father feeds him but rarely presents him with gifts of clothing when he is old enough to work for himself. If he weaves cloth during the dry season, he may do with it as he pleases, sell it or make clothing. His father has no say in the matter. It is the father, however, who teaches his sons how to 868 cultivate the soil, how to plait mats, and sometimes how to weave. 593 If the father works at a trade, he teaches it to his sons: the drummers teach their children to beat the drum and to sing the chief's praises; the jewellers and smiths teach their sons their respective professions.

593 The father usually is fond of his children and likes to play with them when they are small. He watches over them while the mother does her household tasks. Parents sincerely lament their children's death, and children that of their siblings. Undoubtedly there are parents with the greatest indifference toward their offspring, but such

593 cases are rare. Less rare are the children who care little for their parents. Nevertheless, old people are usually treated well and with [888] great respect. A son who abandons his old father or mother is held in very poor esteem. A woman prefers to bear daughters who will help her in her daily work, but she hopes for one or two sons with whom she may live when she is old.

●857 883 [482 312] The girls live with their mother. As soon as they can walk, they follow her to the stream and return with a gourd of water on their heads. As they grow, so does the gourd, and little girls carry water jars weighing from fifteen to twenty kilograms. At home, young girls mill grain to feed the whole family, tend the fire, stir the sauce, wash the dishes and the clothes, sweep, in short, attend to all the household tasks under their mother's guidance. The only task of a woman with two or three half-grown daughters is to supervise their work. Because they are always with their mother, the young girls are usually more responsible and better behaved than the boys. Unfortunately they make up for this later, and more often than not, it is on their own initiative that they go at night to the young men's huts. A young man may give presents to a girl who has already been promised in marriage, and he may do so in front of her mother, who says nothing.

857 883 231 Boys help their father as soon as they are strong enough. Younger boys follow their older brothers into the bush as soon as they can and help them herd the sheep and goats. These boys go out every morning, before the sun has dried the dew, to look for new termite nests full of insects which the chicks are fond of eating. During the dry season, they cut down and plait grass to cover the roofs; if they are old enough, they even cut the firewood. When a little older, if their father or the person with whom they live owns a horse, they watch over it, take it to the stream to water it and to wash it, go into the bush to cut grass for it, and clean the stables. During the winter when the grass is green, each of the horses of a rich naba is cared for by three or four children. Some of them cut the grass, others /37/ stuff it almost by force into the horse's mouth, while one little boy drives the flies away with a stick to which a sort of flexible leather sole is attached. The winter season is a fine time for horses, who grow fat and heavy. Unfortunately, the Black does not think of the future and does not foresee how much dry grass will be needed to bridge the dry season; as a result, the horses suffer a great deal from hunger at that time.

857 The young Mossi, like children in our own country, like to play.
524 Babies have bone hatchets on which they chew; little girls have wooden dolls, and on important feast days they hand them out graciously with a curtsy; whoever takes the doll must give the child a few cowries when he returns it. The boys mold horses, saddles, and horsemen in clay and draw figures in the dust with their fingers, just as we at the same age used to make mud pies and draw funny figures in the margins of our spelling books. Of course, all this is done rather crudely, but it shows that human beings are the same and have similar tastes all over the earth.

857 All children like noise, and the Mossi are no exception. When
534 the stalks of millet are still green, they fashion a kind of harmonica with a vibrating tongue made of a piece of millet stem tied with a thread; or they cut a millet stalk in two and hollow it out, leaving a mere slat which vibrates under the repeated blows of a stick. The sound is augmented by a broken gourd that serves as resonator. These are expendable toys which are thrown away the following day when they have dried out, but it is so easy to make more! The children
857 also make straw rings which are usually worn around the wrist as
524 bracelets, but which may also be used in a game. They are placed on the ground before the players who take turns rolling one of the little hoops. If the ring falls on that of another child, the player who propelled it wins the hoop; if it falls at a certain distance, it is won by the opponent; and if it rolls past that distance, the throw must be repeated.

The older boys and the men have more complicated games.
524 They have a kind of checkers; the board is formed by making small holes [in the ground] by hand, and the pawns are represented by stones. Above all, they have the cowry game, a game of chance,
525 a game of winnings and losses, and like every gamble involving money, a thrilling game. Those who take to it go as far as their European counterparts. They become cheaters, liars, thieves, and indebted. Some have gambled away everything up to their last pair of trousers, their last breechcloth, and have ended up gambling themselves away. This game should be forbidden as strictly as our own games of chance.

535 The game of games, the pastime of pastimes, that which is resorted to on every occasion, happy or sad, and sometimes without any special reason, is the dance. If the Mossi happened to know her, the muse Terpsichore would have no more devoted followers. No man, woman, or child can remain still when dance music fills the air.

535 /38/ To tell the truth, however, the Mossi do not know how to dance. With the exception of the circumcision dance and of some villages of dancers where people devote themselves methodically to choreography, the greater part of the population do not know how to dance gracefully. This does not prevent them, one and all, from indulging in the dance. Men and women dance separately. The most common male dance consists of a rapid motion of the upper part of the body, from left to right and right to left; the feet do not leave the ground, and they are moved forward very slowly. The arms are bent up to shoulder height and away from the body; the fingers are extended, and arms and hands shake along with the rest of the body. When performed by professionals, who are sometimes found in the villages, this motion is rather graceful but lacks breadth of style.

[292] The dancers wear a cardboard headpiece, its crest adorned with a band of cowries and its sides often embellished with bits of mirror fragments, feathers, and all sorts of small, gaudy articles. The upper part of the body is covered with a tight, wide-meshed garment, decorated at the waist with pompons or cowries and small bells. The dancer wears

[301] on the middle finger a piece of iron which looks like a large clam shell, and on his thumb an iron ring. He strikes one against the other in rhythm. His wrist is often adorned with a bracelet made of several of these iron shells; hanging from them are small strips of the same metal which clang at the slightest motion. Those who do not have a costume deck themselves out in tawdry finery.

The women dance two at a time, each by herself, spinning around and assuming whatever poses they consider most graceful. When they come near one another, they turn around and strike their backs together; then one of the two withdraws, and another takes her place. All the while, the women spectators clap their hands in rhythm and sing. Sometimes one of them utters a shrill cry to arouse the dancers or to laud one who has proved unusually graceful and lithe.

[831] There are no special dances for the dead, and Mossi dances apparently do not have the obscenity of some Negro dances.

● 857 But to return to the children. It may be stated, as a general rule, that children can do as they please as long as they help out with everyday tasks, as long as the son helps his father and the daughter her mother. Happily there are exceptions to this, and some parents watch their children quite closely, but these are exceptions. Boys

593 prefer their mother to their father, because the latter must often

221 the men bring bunches of peanuts. While nibbling on the green nuts
241 and talking, they all separate the pods from the leaves. The latter are carefully set aside along with the bean leaves. They make ex-
[231] cellent fodder for the horses during the dry season, when the sun has burned off all the grass in the bush.

221 By November harvesting is completed. The sun has already dried
241 out the grass, and the time has come to cut straw for séko and roofing.
356 /48/ This task is usually reserved for children and servants (dakonré).
857 The head of the household tells each one of them the number of straw bundles he is to cut, and every morning the children set off in groups, a sickle on their shoulders. They look for straw on the banks of the watercourses and return when the sun begins to scorch. This marks the end of the working day, and there is nothing to do now but rest. The dry season is indeed a time of rest, and from November to May there are no pressing tasks.

[805] It gets cold in December. This is winter (sapolro). The natives
221 gather at dawn around fires of millet stalks, twigs, or straw; anything
241 combustible serves. Every newcomer must contribute an armful; it
[372] is the price of admission to a seat near the fire. At the end of December
476 all the straw for roofing has been stored, and then the small millet is threshed. Every inhabitant of the village has the use of the threshing floor in turn. He notifies his friends and acquaintances as he did when he weeded his field. The millet beer is ready, and on the previous day the women have covered the area with cow dung diluted in water to harden the floor. At dawn the friends arrive, and the millet is removed from the granary and spread out on the floor. This is done with the help of millet stalks tied together in bundles and dragged along the ground with ropes while a man bears down upon them. The flail is merely a stick cut in the bush, a tree branch shaped in such a way that the part which is held in the hand is rather thin and flexible, while the part which is used for threshing is quite thick and forms an obtuse angle with the part in the hand. The boys line up in a row, with the tots at either end; the drummers stand before or behind them; and the flails fall with the beat, crushing the ears of millet and separating the very dry grain from the stalks. All the while the old men sit in the shade of the granaries, talking, smoking, and sewing clothes. When the threshers get to the end of the floor, they retrace their steps and rest, while the old men gather with straw brooms the grain which has been scattered outside the pile.

226 the sacrifices, these amphibians have no scruples about biting a foot or leg. However, the crocodiles in these ponds are seldom large enough to sever a limb.

In those places where the water is somewhat shallow and flows for some period of time, the bank dwellers make dams of tree branches intertwined with millet stalks. These are placed diagonally to the current and lead to a sort of funnel closed with a net. The fish follow the dam, enter the funnel, and get caught in the meshes of the net.

The major ceremonies also take place at this time of year.[1] This
221 is when the Day of the Dead is celebrated, when the koure is held.
356 When the first gust of wind unroofs a few huts or at least indicates those that need a new covering, everyone sets down to the task. The thatch cut in December is used for the purpose. Before the soukala,
[283] children and youths knot blades of straw with strings of hemp and
[857] plait seko. They also go into the bush to cut down branches and to gather bark which serves to bind the branches together. When everything is ready, the head of the household calls his people and gathers a few neighbors. The roof is made and laid within a short morning. This task must be repeated every two years or so, and it is men's work entirely. At the beginning of winter, the villages take on a smart
221 new look. This is when people think of building a new hut, the man who has acquired a new wife, the child who has grown into a young man and who can no longer live with his mother, the man whose wealth has increased by a few head of cattle or a horse. The women fetch water, the children knead the mortar with their feet and carry to the mason the mud clods prepared by the old men. These tasks are not laborious, and they are accomplished with merrymaking.

Now the thorn bushes have grown back, the rains will soon fall again, and already a few gusts of wind herald the coming winter. The Pleiades have appeared on the horizon, and the baobabs are budding once more. It is necessary to take up the hoe again and to sow; this is a good thing, because the millet is running low in the granaries. The working cycle we have described must begin anew. And year follows year without bringing any major changes in the life of the common man.

1 [i.e., February-April. -Analyst]

286 There may be five weaver-cultivators in a small village, or fifteen in a large one.

286 283 Customers bring the weaver the cotton thread spun by their wives, for spinning is a family affair. The women spread out the tufts of raw cotton on a small board and extract the seeds by pressing upon them. Then they spin small quantities of cotton between their fingers and thus make it into threads which they coil around a twig. The threads are handed to the weaver in this form.

286 The weaver uncoils the threads and sets them on his loom, which is very primitive. It is the same one used throughout West Africa, and it is called niri in Mossi. The cotton strips are usually from 8 to 10 centimeters wide. Their length, which is quite variable, may reach 50 meters. The weaver makes his loom himself.

Let us present an Ouagadougou weaver, Beïdou Ninkéma, the head of a soukala. He has two wives and no children. He tills the soil during the rainy season and weaves during the dry season. His fields net him more than his trade, because the Yarsé also work at the weaver's trade, and since they are more skillful at it than the Mossi their competition is formidable. /533/ The customers bring him thread, and he makes it into cotton strips. He is paid 500 [435] cowries to make the strips needed for a skirt. Sixty strips are needed to make one skirt.

[294] Our weaver is ~~also~~ a tailor, but only on occasion, and incidentally a tailor of the lowest order for he can only make skirts and cloaks. [435] He cannot make trousers. He makes a cloak for 0.50 franc, a skirt for 0.20 franc, with the fabric supplied, of course.

286 Let us add that child-weavers are also to be found among the Mossi. They make pétala.

● 857 291 "Pétala," says the Cahier des Rapports of the circle /of Ouagadougou/, "are small, very narrow strips, from 10 to 25 millimeters wide, made of multicolored threads, yellow, red, blue, green, etc., dyed in the territory and woven by children on simplified looms.

"Those strips, which are very strong, are used as trouser belts.

[435] "Pétala is worth a little under 0.10 franc a meter, and its sale nets a small profit to the children who make it and who sell it themselves on Mossi markets.

845 The birth of twins is a good omen when they are of different sex.
787 If they are of the same sex, however, it is a sign of approaching death for the father if they are girls, or for the mother if they are of the male sex. To conjure away this fate, a chicken is sacrificed.

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Tattooing is the same for all the Mossi of Yatenga without distinction of rank. It consists of three vertical scars on each cheek, an oblique one on either side of the face from the corner between the eye and nose to the base of the cheek, and two or three little ones in the middle of the forehead. /255/

854 The very young child. —As in all of the /French/ Sudan, the mother carries the child on her back, wrapped in a cloth that is knotted in front over or under the breasts. She goes thus everywhere, works, pounds millet, etc., with the child on her back.

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868 They also go and fetch firewood, straw, etc. When they are nine or ten, they begin to handle the daba /a field implement/. At eleven or twelve they are already doing men's work.

●857 868 The girls remain by their mother's side. They fetch water with her, learn how to pound millet, how to cook, etc. When they are eight or nine, they are taught how to spin cotton.

513 882 The boys sleep in their mother's hut until they are circumcised, that is, until they are about thirteen years old. Thereafter, they sleep in a special hut, kombarogo, with all the other circumcised boys of the compound. The girls sleep in their mother's hut until they are married.

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857 575 Education of children among themselves. Societies. —Mossi children form societies among themselves. These are called nam (they are the same as the Bambara ton or flambolo). There is a society for boys and one for girls in the small villages. In the large villages, as in Ouahigouya, for example, these societies are formed by village quarters.

Each society has its chief and its high dignitaries: its Moro Naba who rules over it with his four ministers. The girls also have their Pourousada Moro Naba and four female ministers. These societies are devoted to play, drinking, tom-tom playing, and dancing.

Each member must furnish a certain number of cowries: the chiefs /256/ give 200 or 300; the mere rasamba, 100; the kondibili, 50; the kondibili-kirise, 30. The Moro Naba of the society collects the dues, and he is also the treasurer.

Another source of income for the society derives from work performed for the people of the village, the owners of fields. The boys do not merely go and offer their services. When someone needs a helping hand with his field, he goes to the Moro Naba of the society who places the whole group at his disposal for a fee. Payment is made in millet which the society uses to make dolo for its celebrations.

Another source of income derives from fining members for lapses in their duties to the society. The Moro Naba of the nam fines those who arrive late when called for work on someone's field or those who go on an errand or a short trip without notifying him in advance.

857 The people fined must give three or four canari of dolo (the usual
575 canari of dolo is worth 150 cowries, or three sous).

The members assemble to eat, to drink dolo, and to dance to the sound of the tom-tom at the compound belonging to the father of the society's Moro Naba. The girls are invited to come and dance.

[171] Among the Mossi of Yatenga, the nam do not have their own huts as do the Bambara ton and flambolo.

Little mock weddings are performed in the societies between the girls and boys. The young spouses offer each other small gifts of cowries, peanuts, cotton, etc.

Once married, the young girls withdraw from their society on account of their husband's jealousy. Married men, on the other hand, may remain in theirs and quite frequently do while they are young. Old men, however, are no longer members of the nam.

883 Young people's tasks. —Young men, after they are circumcised (at the age of 13 or 14), work in the compound or rather in the work group to which they belong on the same days and at the same hours as other members of the group.

They are provided with food by the head of the group seven months out of twelve and by their father five months out of twelve, and they are clothed by the latter.

They have their own little plots, but the produce does not belong exclusively to them. Their father and mother take what they need to feed or clothe the youth. The remainder is his. Boys can thus accumulate a little property of their own before they marry.

Young girls have no little plots of their own to cultivate. They learn how to till the soil by working with their mother in the fields of the work group and in the mother's little private plots. Hence, they are fed by the group seven months out of twelve and by their father and mother for five months, and they are clothed by their parents. The individual property they own consists mostly of trifling jewels usually received as gifts. /257/

573 Rights and duties of parents toward their children. —Paternal authority rests largely with the father of the child, but also partly with the head of the work group, the head of the compound, and the family head. This is understandable, since the child's support is ensured for the greater part of the time, except for clothing, by the work group and since lodging is ensured by the compound.

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443 sages to specific villages, to find the help needed in the event of a
571 fight, and finally to find an escape route by which one can leave in the event of trouble.

443 The vendors in the larger markets of Mossi country include Yoru-
463 ba, Hausa and other ethnic groups, many of whose members were
563 born in Mossi country and have never visited the land of their fathers. The lives of these people are usually centered around the markets; where the markets are held every day, many of the men, women and children of these foreign groups spend almost all of their lives at the
[439] markets. In marked contrast to the Mossi, they usually sell products of foreign provenience, whether African or European, and seldom deal in the local products. These vendors are tolerated by the Mossi and are valued for their commerce, but are always regarded as outsiders. And as outsiders the markets do not belong to them, but only
443 to the Mossi. Even so, the Mossi do not really like the larger markets.
829 True, one can buy all kinds of wonderful goods on the large markets, but to the Mossi, a market is more than a place where one goes to buy and sell, even though everyone who goes there tries to do some of both.

443 There is a marked division of labor among the vendors in a Mossi
462 market—a division which can be seen at its best on the local markets.
438 Here only the women sell cooked food, beer, millet, rice, peanuts,
439 shea-butter, tobacco, and all of the other locally grown vegetables and vegetable products, except cotton which may also be sold by a man. In contrast, women do not sell such local products as cotton cloth, hemp, jewelry, iron implements and leather goods, which are the province of the men. Only men may butcher and sell animals and meat in the market. And they alone control the commerce in foreign food articles such as salt and dried fish. Both men and women sell the valuable imported kola nut, but only men sell goods of European manufacture such as cigarettes, matches, sugar, mirrors and so on.
[857] Small girls sell calabashes of water to everyone, and small boys wander through the market selling single cigarettes, bundles of a few matches, single lumps of sugar, chickens and guinea fowls, and skewers of roasted meat.

443 There is little competition about someone else having "stolen"
437 a customer. The reason for this is mainly that every person in the market is a potential customer of everyone else. Normally, a buyer
432 simply moves from seller to seller sampling the goods if that is possible (some unscrupulous men can even get drunk in the process of "sampling" beer) and trying to get the best bargain. No seller would think of running after a customer, and customers seldom, if ever, move away from a vendor in the hope that he would be called back to be sold the article at a lower price.

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765 and districts were present to honor him. This being completed, the
602 *griots* are paid, everyone rises and shouts *Ne Wardo* (the salutation at
443 funerals), and that part of the funeral ceremony during which a man
[571] takes leave of the market community is concluded. Now his relatives, descendants and friends all return to the market, whose sights and sounds make it an integral part of the life cycle of the Mossi—the one institution of their society in which almost everyone participates actively.

443 Preparation for a market day, especially the tri-weekly Friday
512 market or *Raga kasanga,* usually begins on Thursday. This day is
571 characterized by a great deal of activity: preparing the commodities which are to be sold the next day, washing body and clothes, and combing hair. The women who prepare the beer and fried foods work late into the night preparing their wares, and a visit to the homes of the
[857] *griots* finds them preparing their drums. The little boys who go to the roadside to chant Moslem prayers to the passers-by, and the little girls who sell water to these strangers redouble their efforts until late on Thursday night to get enough money to buy presents in the market the next day. Finally, when it is quite late and the beer-making fires are out, everyone retires until the morning of the market.

At 7:00 A.M. on Friday the market is deserted except for a leper who sweeps out the stalls of the sellers in return for bits of food or presents of money. Looking at the empty stalls, one has a certain amount of difficulty imagining that this spot will be crowded with human beings five hours hence. But one is also conscious of the fact that even at this early hour scores of persons have already left their homes in distant villages and are on their way to market loaded with prod-
[462] uce and with high hopes for the day. About 9:00 A.M. the first women arrive, balancing net-covered bundles on their heads, and take their positions in the various sections of the market with either face or back pointing to the direction from which they came. By 9:30 A.M. the butchers have arrived with their bleating sheep and goats and an
[273] aged cow. The first beer sellers have also arrived and are giving "sips" to men before they settle down to sustained drinking.

The pace of the market quickens about 10:30, and in the distance the first tap of the Bindere's drum resounds. All of a sudden, the market seems to have become a giant magnet, drawing long lines of
[854] people towards it along every path and from every direction. Women dressed in brightly colored print cloths and dresses, with babies straddling their backs and the inevitable bundles on their head, saunter into their places. Young children run ahead of their mothers or stumble behind them. Those vendors of European products who customarily transport their goods in boxes on bicycles arrive in the

562
431 groom) who has served his naba satisfactorily receives, at the
643 time he is freed, a young girl who may be nubile, but who may, on the other hand, be just a small child.

In either case, the former servitor is required to call upon the naba from time to time and to take him gifts (cowries or roosters). If the girl is still living with her relatives, in addition to his trifling presents to the naba, the fiancé may make a few presents to his in-laws, although it is not obligatory.

562 Pogsiouré. The first daughter born of a marriage between a
643 Moaga subject (former servitor, son, brother, or uncle of the naba,
644 etc.) and the woman given to him [166] by the naba becomes the
858 "property" of the latter with full rights over her. She is known as "the daughter of the pogsiouré" and is fated to become pogsiouré in her turn.

643 If the first-born is a boy, the naba may bring him to his
644 court as soon as he reaches the age of discretion to make him either
858 a sogoné or a samand'biga, and the child's father cannot make the
357 slightest objection.

This does not imply that under Mossi law the sogoné and samand'kamba must be children of the pogsiouré. As absolute master of all his subjects, the naba can recruit his servitors throughout his domain as he needs them, with no opposition by the Mossi to this recruitment.

644 The fate of the daughters of the pogsiouré. The girls are
858 taken from their relatives as soon as they are old enough to work
562 and are entrusted by the naba to his own wives.

The latter, for all practical purposes, become the adoptive mothers of these children and, as such, see to their food and clothing. This does not prevent the real mother from bringing cowries and clothing to her daughter, and to make sure that the child will be well treated by the napagha (wife of the naba), she sometimes
[431] even brings the latter a gift of kalgo (soumbala) or karite butter (kamé).

When the girls reach puberty, the naba chooses the most at-
[584] tractive for his fiancées, and the [167] others are given to some of his administrators or to his own relatives.

562 593 644 Rights of parents over their daughters. Although, as has already been noted, the parents retain the right to help their daughters in small ways, they may not, under any circumstances or pretext, break off their engagement nor prevent their marriage. Still less can they promise the daughter to a third party or expect any sort of gifts from the naba.

Later on, in the event that there is agreement between the parties, the husbands may give trifling presents to their in-laws, but there is neither obligation nor coercion to do so.

562 858 Exceptions. Girls given to the marabouts by the naba are considered a kind of alms (saraka), and any children born of such unions belong to the true fathers and may not be disposed of by the chief.

644 357 858 Disposition of boys. Boys recruited as sogoné or samand'kamba are required to serve the naba faithfully, but they continue to belong to their real relatives from whom they annually receive cowries and particularly the fougoibga (blanket).

644 357 661 Although the sogoné are regularly fed and clothed by the naba -- because [168] a naba must always be surrounded by many pages -- this is not done for the samand'kamba. In many cantons and especially in Ouagadougou at the emperor's court, they receive only a meager pittance every two, three, four, or seven days since their role as "vagabond" or groom is supposed to provide them with ample opportunities to rob or rather to pillage the natives. During the winter the grooms and other samand'kamba go out into fields of maize and millet at night or in the morning, and there is general looting. As for any fowl lingering in the karaga (fields of millet near the huts), they are killed and hidden in the bundles of hay used to feed the horses. There are exceptions to this rule: some ministers of the emperor and canton chiefs give their samand'kamba at least one meal per day -- at night -- and during the winter, because they are doing field work, they are given cooked beans or sagbo (millet cakes) at noon.

644 357 608 In general way, however, it may be said that this type of servitor is not supported by the naba. Like the sogoné, the samand'biga chooses a mother at the court of the naba. He helps her cultivate her plot and performs other small services for her (weaving her clothes,

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"The mother," says Vadier, "has the right to discipline boys until they are circumcised, girls until they marry. This does not mean that the father cannot intervene during that time to reprimand or chastise one of his children, but that he nearly always leaves it to the mother.

"After the boy's circumcision and the girl's marriage, the right to punish belongs to the father and no longer to the mother."

593 858 672 The duty of surveillance belongs principally to the father, and secondly to the heads of the work group, compound, and family. One of its consequences is financial liability. If a child steals or commits some reprehensible act which may call for compensation, the father is primarily responsible and must indemnify the injured parties, after seizing whatever property the child may own.

593 858 613 Formerly, when a native could not manage to discipline a son or daughter whose behavior was very bad, he would hand the child over to the Moro Naba after consulting the family head and the family council. From that day forward he would give up his paternal authority, and the Moro Naba alone would hold it with broader prerogatives. If the child continued to commit extortion, the Moro Naba had the right to have him put to death. When it was a girl who was handed to the naba, the latter would give the father a woman of his own household in exchange if he happened to be favorably disposed toward him.

Now, since the French occupation, this is no longer done. In such cases, nowadays, the child is simply expelled from the compound and from the household.

858 593 A father could not give his child as security, nor could he pawn him temporarily as a slave.

593 429 858 Paternal authority is relinquished in two cases, actually very infrequent: (1) when the father goes insane; and (2) when he has committed incest.

In such a case, paternal authority passes to his oldest living brother, or, if there is no brother, to the oldest son. This guardian has exactly the same powers over the child as the father had.

858 In case of insanity, the children are required to help their father and mother /258/ and to attend to their needs. In case of incest, they have no obligations toward the guilty party.

596 heir but to the oldest member of the family. Nothing is done without consulting the family head, and even if a member of the family occupies an important post, he continues to show the greatest deference toward his family head, his elder. This is why the present prime minister of Koupéla, the Saman'Naba, leaves the prerogatives of a family head to his uncle; he does not take the liberty of offering sacrifices on the Day of the Dead, and he consults his elder on all
596 matters which fall within his jurisdiction. The head of the family,
681 however, does not have the right of life or death over its members or over his own wives. Even if the latter steal or commit adultery, they may not be put to death; only the district chiefs may kill their own wives. A husband or family elder may beat them, put them in irons, or even more rarely /35/ turn them out of the household, but he may not kill them. Also, the family head may not dispose of the family property, nor force his kin to hand it over. He may, however, request his relatives to help him pay his debts or obtain a wife, but he may not force them to do so. Nevertheless, they always help him as best they can.

593 Children are directly subject to their father. While the latter
596 consults the family head whenever he must make a serious decision, the children consult their father, who in turn goes to the family head, who often goes to the village chief, who resorts to the canton chief, who consults the head of the province if the matter warrants it. Mature reflection thus precedes every serious decision.

593 The father is the absolute master of his children. He has the right of life or death over them, and sometimes he made use of this right, especially when a child was born deformed or became an incorrigible thief. He sees to the marriage of his daughters. He may exchange them for other women, or he may give them in marriage to a creditor in order to pay his debts. He may place his sons in the service of a relative or friend. The eldest son seldom remains in his father's household, especially if the father is wealthy or a naba; the father is too afraid that his son may do away with him, the sooner to come into his inheritance. To give one's son to another man is a convenient way to get rid of the problem of his marriage; it will become the concern of the boy's master.

861 Fathers take little part in the education of their children. Daughters always remain with their mothers until their marriage. Sons help their father as soon as they are old enough to work, but they never

861 receive any advice from him. The Mossi, fathers and mothers alike, do not know how to train their children. Under the pretext that a small child does not know what he is doing, the parents allow him to do as he pleases and to carry out his every whim without punishment. Tots who can barely articulate two words utter the coarsest insults to their mother and beat her with their small fists without being punished. The onlookers merely remark that some day he will be a fighter. To chastise him would be to make him cry, and a child's tears are always an embarrassment to be avoided as much as possible. When a child behaves badly, when he fights, steals, seeks out the company of professional thieves or young scamps, when he tells everybody what he has seen and heard and cannot keep a secret, when complaints are made against him, then his father and mother punish him and warn him not to do it again; but they do not prevent wrong doing, and [672] if necessary they will pay his debts, because all members of the family, especially the father, are held liable. The father does not teach his son the cult and the sacrifices, but he does request the boy's help. The child watches his father, and when he grows up, he does as his father did.

857 Boys of twelve or fifteen may fail to return home in the evening for any reason whatever, without warning, and no one worries about it: "He will come soon enough." The young man of twenty builds 884 himself a hut apart from his father's house, in order to have greater 593 freedom and to receive any visitors he may want. Besides his father's field, he cultivates his own piece of land and sells the produce /36/ himself in order to buy clothes. His father feeds him but rarely presents him with gifts of clothing when he is old enough to work for himself. If he weaves cloth during the dry season, he may do with it as he pleases, sell it or make clothing. His father has no say in the matter. It is the father, however, who teaches his sons how to 868 593 cultivate the soil, how to plait mats, and sometimes how to weave. If the father works at a trade, he teaches it to his sons: the drummers teach their children to beat the drum and to sing the chief's praises; the jewellers and smiths teach their sons their respective professions.

593 The father usually is fond of his children and likes to play with them when they are small. He watches over them while the mother does her household tasks. Parents sincerely lament their children's death, and children that of their siblings. Undoubtedly there are parents with the greatest indifference toward their offspring, but such

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845 The birth of twins is a good omen when they are of different sex.
787 If they are of the same sex, however, it is a sign of approaching death for the father if they are girls, or for the mother if they are of the male sex. To conjure away this fate, a chicken is sacrificed.

853 Nursing. —When a woman is unable to nurse her child, another woman of the family is called in as a wet nurse, or, more simply, a goat is made to suckle the child. Both cases, however, are quite unusual.

854 Charms for children and tattooing. To protect the child from ill-
751 ness or accidents, a necklace with a charm containing the ashes of various shrubs is placed around its neck about two months after birth.

304 The child is tattooed two and a half or three years after birth. Old women are in charge of this operation. They trace out the lines for the scars on the child's face with a sharp little knife which is bent at the tip. Then they put a mixture of karite butter and powdered charcoal on the wounds to stop the flow of blood.

Tattooing is the same for all the Mossi of Yatenga without distinction of rank. It consists of three vertical scars on each cheek, an oblique one on either side of the face from the corner between the eye and nose to the base of the cheek, and two or three little ones in the middle of the forehead. /255/

854 The very young child. —As in all of the /French/ Sudan, the mother carries the child on her back, wrapped in a cloth that is knotted in front over or under the breasts. She goes thus everywhere, works, pounds millet, etc., with the child on her back.

853 When she wants to suckle it, she brings it to her side, astraddle one hip, and supports it with one arm. She does not put it on the ground unless she is in her hut or teaching it how to walk.

When the child is two or three, it stops nursing and is put on the ground.

857 Until they are four or five, the children run about the compound and around it. At that age, they begin to go out into the bush all by themselves and to play with the other little boys.

Children's games. —We shall deal with this subject under "Mode of Subsistence (hygiene, games, play)."

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Another source of income derives from fining members for lapses in their duties to the society. The Moro Naba of the nam fines those who arrive late when called for work on someone's field or those who go on an errand or a short trip without notifying him in advance.

852 When they go into the bush, either to cut down straw or for any other reason, they sing invocations to the spirits of the paths and of the trees in order to propitiate them, to draw their blessing, and to avert illness. They chase everyone in their path, approach the villages, and, if they can, seize a few chickens, goats, or sheep as an extra tidbit. This is the custom, and they even steal the animals of their relatives in this fashion. At night they come up near the huts and beat everyone they meet; they take everything they can find, and no one would think of resisting them. /43/ In any case, during that time, people take good care of their children and send them plenty of food. To have a child undergoing circumcision is a burden to a family.

852 563 869 When the circumcised group consists largely of Moslems, Yarsé or Peul, the one in charge of the circumcision assembles them during rest periods, in the evening, or sometimes in the middle of the night, in order to instruct them. There does not seem to be any esoteric doctrine, and the instructions deal with the glorification of ancestors who were also circumcised there. Only those who are circumcised can enter heaven and have many children; those who are not will taste no happiness in the other life and will remain sterile. The group is also taught that God sits under a black tree on a sheep skin, that he eats from a dish and drinks from a bottle. It is all very childish. They are also told that they must not disclose to anyone, under penalty of death or at least of serious illness, what they have seen and learned during the circumcision period. This is to prevent them from revealing the robberies committed during that time and from discouraging those who should like to undergo the operation; for although it is tempting to eat well, to play a great deal, and especially to wear beautiful clothes, it is also unpleasant to be lashed with willows at the slightest slip, or for not dancing well, for quarreling with or insulting someone, for speaking Mossi, for being slow to go to work.

852 Occasionally, at circumcision time, two sticks are found on the path near the market. They were placed there on purpose, and if one looks to the right and left, he will see two children, all covered with dust and wearing dirty breechcloths. They are newly circumcised boys who are begging, and passersby drop a few cowries to the ground.

852 302 All these ceremonies are soon to end. The clothes are ready, and the children are getting tired and restive. The one in charge of the circumcision decides that the boys are to be shaved, that is, that the circumcision period will end in two weeks. The hair of the circumcised boys is not shaved off completely: strips of hair alternate with

784 born among the Peul, to whom dog flesh is forbidden, may have the
262 dog as kisgou. Sometimes the kisgou concerns only him, his son, and grandson and not his other descendants, because the son and grandson will follow his own soul, while the soul of the other descendants will follow that of his mother, their great-grandmother, to whom dog flesh is not forbidden. A sorcerer's reasoning against which there is no argument!

/89/ This kind of kisgou is the more binding of the two, but it may be terminated if the person who established it offers the proper sacrifices, or if one of his descendants, of his own will, releases himself and his children from it. Thus the family of the Saman'Naba, Prime Minister of Koupéla, has the hare as kisgou. When the naba saw his Christian brothers and son eat hare flesh with impunity, without becoming blind or leprous, he took to eating it himself without ill effects.

784 Parents teach their children about the various family kisgou and
869 instill the proper awe into them so they will not eat these animals.
753 Involuntary disregard of one's kisgou may lead to illness, and the sorcerer consulted indicates what has to be done and what sacrifice must be offered to the tangandé to obtain his forgiveness. If the slip was deliberate, if it showed contempt, no forgiveness is possible.

784 The second kind of kisgou is quite special and personal. It consists
758 of the various prohibitions imposed by the sorcerers on a sick person.
262 A certain kind of meat or sauce is forbidden to the patient, or he may not drink water containing millet flour, or he may not eat millet or bean cakes. This is how a poor rachitic child with a heart disease was successively forbidden practically every kind of food. His relatives had the greatest difficulty finding those foods that were not forbidden to him, and eventually he died of starvation. All such kisgou terminate of course with the illness that caused them, unless the disease is incurable and lasts to the end of the patient's life.

Chapter 2. The Cult

000 If we define religion with Mgr. Le Roy (1) as "The body of beliefs,

1. Mgr. Le Roy, op. cit., p. 49.

The Moslem Naba

791 1. Virtually all of the inhabitants of Nobéré, Nobila, and
771 Toècé (cantons in the present province of the Gounga Naba) are converts to Islam for reasons of personal convenience. They are the descendants of Naba Saga, twenty-second successor of Oubri.

2. The inhabitants of the villages of Doundoulma (descendants of Naba Kom, twenty-first successor of Oubri), Garpinné, and Kouila (descendants of Naba Doulgou or Roulgou, twenty-third successor of Oubri) are reputed to be devout Moslems. [211]

3. Kombissiri Naba Siguiri, circle of Ouagadougou.

4. Ramongo Naba Baongo, circle of Koudougou. Both of the above were descendants of Naba Warba nineteenth successor of Oubri, and were converted to Islam.

The present chiefs of these cantons are educated Moslems and possess mosques.

5. Sao Naba, a descendant of Naba Ouédraogo, circle of Ouagadougou, was converted nearly thirty years ago. His first teacher was a pilgrim returned from Mecca and a native of the village of Nakamtenga (near Kombissiri). He continued his study of the Koran under the direction of Sayenouné Bathily, a marabout originally from Kaédi (Mauretania) who was such a formidable thaumaturge that the local administration had to send him home in 1916. Sao Naba has a mosque, but it would appear that the Moslem religion has not diminished his animistic beliefs since he continues to make sacrifices to the manes and to drink beer from time to time (on customary feast days, for example).

6. Gourpila Naba (circle of Ouagadougou) is a former samand' biga of the present Mogho Naba and his conversion to Islam is recent, within the last six or seven years.

7. Boala Naba (circle of Ouagadougou) is a devout Moslem.

8. Gaongo Naba (circle of Ouagadougou) is also a devout Moslem. [212]

In conclusion let us point out that the present emperor con-
[551 tinues the tradition of giving Moslem names to his children and
● 871] has several of his sons in Koranic schools. There is no doubt that more of his children are being educated in these schools than in the official primary school. [213]

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pagan Mossi and the Moslem Songhoi fought several other battles until Songhoi power was broken by the Moroccans, who conquered Timbuktu in 1590. 175 797

The Moslems made no further attempt to convert the Mossi by force, but Moslem pressure did not stop; it now came in the peaceful guise of Moslem merchants and Yarsé Moslem refugees from the Mandingo cities such as Timbuktu and Djenne, who received permission from the Mossi rulers to settle in the country. However, judging from the reports of the first Europeans to reach the Mossi, the Moslems lived under many restrictions and were forbidden by the Moro Nabas to recite their prayers in public places (Tauxier 1912:585–586). Despite these restrictions, the Moslems were able to extend their influence through conversion of the cadet sons of the rulers and conversion of at least one ruler of the Ouagadougou Mossi dynasty.

About 1780 Naba Kom, the son of Zombré and a Yarsé Moslem woman, permitted the Yarsé to live in the villages and sent one of them to the Gold Coast for religious instruction. His son, Naba Sagha, was involved in a civil war and replaced some dissident pagan district chiefs with his Moslem sons. The present ruling lineage of Nobéré (where I worked) is descended from Ngado, one of these sons.[2] But although the rulers permitted their younger sons to adopt Islam, they themselves and the heirs to the thrones remained pagan in order to maintain the bonds with the ancestors. The exception to this rule was Doulougou, the grandson of Sagha, who was elected Moro Naba despite being a Moslem. Now the spread of Islam was given new impetus: Yarsé proselyting increased, mosques were built in Ouagadougou and in the villages, and many Koranic schools were founded. But with Doulougou's death the rulers reverted to paganism and Moslem influence declined. Nevertheless, the learned Moslem Imams continued to serve at court and used their knowledge of the outside world for the benefit of the rulers.

The Moslem Mossi showed the greatest hostility to the first Europeans who arrived in the country. The Imam of Yako, under the influence of his Tidjani son (who had made the pilgrimage to Mecca), refused to have any dealings with Europeans. Furthermore, he convinced the Moro Naba that death awaited any ruler who granted an audience to a European. When the French attacked the Mossi in 1896, an Imam from Béré, a former pilgrim, told the ruler to flee and not depend on his ill-equipped soldiers to defeat the gun-bearing invaders. Lamberth reported that the Moslems told the defeated and demoralized Mossi that "as soon as all the blacks become Moslems, the whites will leave" (Tauxier 1912:792).

No one knows how many Moslems were in Ouagadougou when the French arrived. Delafosse (1912, vol. 3:193) records that around the turn of the century there were about 42 Koranic schools with 230 students scattered around the country. Tauxier (1912:793), writing about the same period, states that there were 33 Koranic schools with about 358 students. No Koranic schools were reported for the Nobéré and Manga districts, but I know that there were several in the neighboring district of Béré. In 1926 there were 70 Koranic 175 797 871

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175 schools and 4,000 Moslems in Ouagadougou (seven percent of whom were non-
797 Mossi). By 1944 there were about 240 schools and approximately 25,000
Moslems. The last census, 1954, did not record the number of Koranic schools
871 but gave the figure of 60,000 Moslems in the Ouagadougou region.[3] The 4,000
Moslems of Nobéré comprise 42 percent of that district's population. With the
exception of one Catholic school master and the Catholic catechist who came
to the district during 1956, the population is pagan. It might be relevant to
point out that Nobéré has the highest percentage of Moslems in Kombissiri,
an administrative unit (a subdivision) which has 152,000 pagans, 23,000 Mos-
lems, 3,000 Catholics, and about 100 Protestants.

797 As noted above, Islam first came into the Nobéré district with Ngado, who
replaced a dissident pagan chief, but Ngado's lineal descendants reverted to
634 paganism until a few years ago when the present district chief became a nomi-
nal Moslem. The cadet sons of Ngado did not revert to paganism, and today
all the noble sublineages of the district are Moslem. We may note here that one
of the main aspects of Islamic proselytization in this district, as elsewhere
among the Mossi, has been the conversion of persons who do not hold strategic
positions vis-à-vis the ancestors. The present chief is no exception to this rule,
because he is only a nominal Moslem. His eldest son is the only one in the fam-
ily who is not a Moslem—a status which is becoming increasingly difficult to
maintain in a growing Moslem population. The chief himself became partially
converted to Islam in gratitude to a Moslem Hausa trader who cured his ill-
ness. He recites the five daily prayers and observes most of the prescriptions of
Islam, but he still drinks European beer, subscribes to many pagan rites and
[769] beliefs, and supervises the annual Péléga or sacrifice to the ancestors. This dual
allegiance is politically expedient because the chief can function as the head of
the Moslem community as well as the traditional head of all the people. He
does have occasional difficulty with intolerant Moslems who wish him to be-
come a devout Moslem, and with the traditionalists who claim that today the
crops are smaller, the people sicker, and the women barren because of the
neglect of the ancestors. However, with the approach of holy days, these dif-
ferences are resolved in the interest of community harmony.

622 The chiefs of the villages under the overall command of the district chief
are mainly pagan, since they are descended from the district chief replaced by
797 Ngado. Yet they command villages inhabited by the noble Moslem sublineages
769 of the ruling house as well as by commoner lineages. The village chief cannot
become a Moslem because he too is responsible for sacrifices to the ancestors,
without whose help his people would suffer. He does not take an active part in
Moslem festivities, but receives the homage due a chief from the Moslems on
these and other occasions. However, most village chiefs show an interest in
Moslem affairs, and one of them, the chief of Vooko, built a prayer-circle
(*misseri*) for Moslems who came to pay homage.

622 The pivotal role which the village chief plays in the exchange of wives be-
797 tween Moslems and pagans has led indirectly to the increase of the Moslem
582 population. Before the French conquest he gave the Moslems more wives than

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Karême), celebrate the great festival of Ramadan and the lesser festivals, and 794
aspire to make the pilgrimage to Mecca. Most of the Moslems can lead prayers, but only about one-tenth of their number can read and recite the Koran. [212]
However, today the masters (*karasambas*) of the 32 Koranic schools in the district are endeavoring to instruct the many boys and few girls in reading the [871]
Koran and understanding Moslem theology.

The Karême is observed by most adult Moslems in the community with the exception of invalids and working men. Moslems say that the fast is intended to turn the minds of the people to God, and they distinguish between the Moslems "of the mouth" who break the fast and those "of the heart" who [184]
fast until Ramadan. The crescent moon of Ramadan is greeted with guns and general rejoicing and the following morning the Moslems gather at the tomb of Ngado to give praises to God; during the rest of the day they pay homage to the chief and visit their friends. However, a change in the traditional observance of Ramadan is expected, because one of the Moslem leaders objects to the [178]
ceremony at the tomb of Ngado. He feels that some Moslems are beginning to regard the tomb of the first Moslem as an earth shrine or Tengkougre.

So far, only five of the more prominent Moslems in the district have made 794
or are making the pilgrimage to Mecca. The first man made the voyage about 788
seven years ago, and is now conducting a Koranic school in a neighboring district. His brother went to Mecca about two years ago and is now the senior *El Hadj* in the district. Of the two men who were on the pilgrimage when I arrived in the district, one has since died near the Red Sea and the other is still away. One other man left for Mecca and returned to the district during my stay. Most of the pilgrims now fly to Mecca; only two men followed the traditional route through Ghana, Kano, Lake Chad, the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan (now Sudan), and on to Mecca. In general, all pilgrims have used their own resources for the trip, but they receive some help from their lineage brothers and [613]
from the other Moslems in the district and in Ouagadougou.

The pilgrimage to Mecca represents the greatest event in the lives of the district Moslems. When the last pilgrim left, a great crowd gathered at his house and prayed for his safe journey, and some even accompanied him to [621]
Ouagadougou and remained there until he left. The Moslems and many pagans of the district, under the command of the district chief, cultivated his fields during his absence. And when the new El Hadj returned, a large crowd accompanied him to his house with shouts of joy. There he killed a sheep in thanks- [782]
giving, sprinkled the crowd with holy water from Mecca, and recounted his experiences. His listeners were impressed by his airplane flight and the description of Mecca, but they showed the greatest interest when he said that Mecca women covered their faces and that most Meccan men were monogamous. The local Moslems smiled when they heard this bit of news from one of their members, but I have seen them scowl when discussing the monogamous practice desired by the Christians.

The attitudes of Moslems differ very little from those of the other Mossi 794
as regards children and polygyny. They say that they do not believe in the 595 842

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how important is the conversion of the chiefs, or, at least, their sympathy for our religion, in the spread of Catholicism." The missionaries may have been successful in the village of the Manga district chief because he was sympathetic to them, but they made few converts in the villages far from the district center or in the neighboring districts. In the Béré district, a few miles from Manga, the Catholics have made only 22 converts despite more than 15 years' work. In Manga, however, they were able to "recruit" most of the young children for their church and school. When an old man was asked why his children became Catholic, he tried to evade the question but finally replied that he did not control the minds of his children. Knowing the nature of administrative practice in the upper Volta before 1946, and the nature of Mossi family structure, we looked further for the answer.

Paradoxically, it comes from a Catholic missionary, André Dupont, who, seeking to discover the reason for the decrease of patients in the Catholic-controlled maternity clinics, asked:

> Why have the maternity clinics which in 1942 served more than seventy mothers a month now serve only two or three? "We are no longer forced to go," reply the villagers. Was it the fear of sanction which accounted for the unanimous use of the clinics? Alas! It would seem to be so. The use of force and sanction have rendered odious an institution of charity. It would have been better if the mothers were only encouraged to use the clinics. "These natives do not understand," I am told sometimes. But how does one expect them to understand? (Dupont 1949:4)

Fear was certainly one of the reasons why the people in Manga embraced Catholicism. Before 1946 (the Brazzaville conference in 1944 abolished forced labor), men and women were recruited for work on the roads and on Ivory Coast plantations, and children were recruited for the schools. The district chiefs often gathered orphans and the children of their former serfs and sent them to the mission to fill the quotas, but many children and whole families voluntarily attached themselves to the missions. The reasons for so doing are legion, but in some cases it was simply the desire to accept the new religious faith.

Once at the mission the children were taught French and the tenets of Catholicism. Many of the boys later became catechists or priests and several girls went into the nunnery. However, the largest group of educated youths became the clerical personnel of the administration and were lost to missionary activity. Because the administration lacked French-speaking Mossi, the young people received good jobs. This desertion to the administration has become so serious that the missionaries at Manga have ceased to teach French to their catechists and now use the vernacular.

Conversion to Catholicism, bringing with it the knowledge of French, was formerly one of the sure roads to upward social mobility. Most Catholic teachers at Manga (and at Nobéré) are individuals who were recruited as unwilling school-boys but today are the highest paid members of their lineages. Other gains have accrued to persons who become Catholics. For example, the people at Manga believe that the missionaries used their influence with the

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don Christianity when told by shamans that to do so is necessary in order to have children. Unfortunately, the panoply of saints in modern French Catholicism does not seem to be able to syncretize with or displace the local deities, and thus come to the aid of the Mossi. This weakness of modern Catholicism in West Africa appears to make it unable to deal with many of the insecurities which arise in the daily lives of its adherents. 797 794

The American Protestant missionaries were never able to establish stations in either Manga or Nobéré because of the relative strengths of Catholicism and Islam in these two districts. However, they do have stations in Po and Koubri, 30 and 50 miles away. The 1954 census lists five Protestants in Manga, but I could find only one family head who had been a Protestant and that during the period when he worked for missionaries. It is interesting to note that when he returned to his native Manga he did not become a Catholic but embraced Islam instead. Although Protestants among the Mossi are trying very hard, they are working under three handicaps: (1) the opposition of the local administration, (2) their own explicit cultural bias, and (3) the puritanical nature of their brand of American Midwestern Protestantism. 797

The first Protestant missionaries to arrive in 1926 reported: "There has often been opposition to the preaching of the Gospel in the district, and there is a continual under-current which has hindered many from accepting Christ" (Assemblies of God Mission 1934:14). Americans who wished to train the young Mossi to read and write found official opposition to the use of the vernacular for such purposes, and were obliged to receive French teaching certificates. When one recognizes that in those days less than one-tenth of one percent of the Mossi children were in schools (today the number is just over three percent) one cannot help feeling that any kind of education would have been useful to the Mossi. During the war the Pétain-oriented administration restricted the movements of the Americans and frightened off their converts. And finally, the Americans come under the general disapprobation with which the Mossi view most Europeans. [871] [609]

American Protestants are fairly well insulated from the Mossi population, and have only now begun to show any interest in Mossi culture and problems. Geoffrey Gorer, who visited the Mossi in 1935, wrote:

> There were some American missionaries in this village, a whole family living in a house filled with texts; I do not know what creed they preached, or with what success; they looked more like American missionaries than I had thought anyone could have done off the films . . . they spoke with a dispassionate "none of our business" disapproval of the ill treatment of the negroes, who they said were ruled entirely by fear (1935:149).

Many of the Protestant missionaries who are now working with the Mossi are still inclined to agree with the first missionaries' ethnocentric judgement of their customs:

> Moral standards are very low. Nothing is wrong until it is found out. Chastity is unknown . . . we questioned in vain many natives in search of a suitable Mossi word for "virgin." They all declared there was no such word in their language. . . . Many

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would remain entirely secular in nature. The Imam at Nobéré is positive that now the White Fathers do not have "force" behind them, no conversions will be made in the district. He said that the Moslems here do not rely on force to convert the pagans, and leave them alone if they resist persuasion to embrace Islam.

Mossi politicians who, for the most part, were trained by the Catholics and are still supported by the church, are careful not to offend their pagan and Moslem constituents. One internationally-known Mossi politician told a Nobéré audience that he had a Moslem name in addition to his Catholic name, and that he even attended a Koranic school. Although this admission did not help him gain the votes of the Moslems, he carried the district because he was supported by the chief and received the votes of the pagans. The politicians are now under pressure from the people to expand the system of public schools so that the road to social mobility, through education, would be open to pagans and Moslems as well as Catholics. Even in Manga, where the government-supported parochial school is adequate for the school population, there are plans to build a public school. The special prerogative of the mission schools to use noncertificated personnel on their teaching staffs is now being attacked by teachers who themselves were trained in these schools. These teachers are demanding that the government either cease paying salaries to the unqualified teachers in the mission schools or else employ similar persons in the public schools. Thus one of the most important channels through which the Catholics obtained converts is being consciously narrowed.

CONCLUSION

The spread of Islam in Africa south of the Sahara is one of the significant cultural events in this area. Islam is not only spreading at the expense of the indigenous religious systems, but is taking precedence over Christianity brought to Africa by the conquering Europeans. The reasons cited for the success of Islam over Christianity are legion. They include: the adaptability of Islam in contrast to the rigidity of Christianity (Greenberg 1946:70; Goilly 1952:173; Marty 1917:283); the simplicity of Islamic doctrines, as opposed to the complexity of Christianity (Delafosse 1931:236; Quellien 1910:38–39); and the "imponderable factors" brought about by European conquest (Goilly 1952:261–266).

In this paper I have shown that Islam has made greater progress than has Christianity among the Mossi because:

(1) Christianity has a negative appeal to the Mossi because it was brought by their conquerors. For the proud Mossi, Christianity is intimately linked with their first real invasion, defeat, and occupation by aliens in their long history. In contrast, Islam has penetrated the country by peaceful means after its initial failure at proselytization by means of the jihad.

(2) In the early period of this century, the European administration recruited Mossi men and women for forced labor at home and in the Ivory Coast, and recruited children for the mission schools. But as soon as forced

304 occasion calls for festivities that last for one month, and it is repeated every seven or eight years in each village.

As for girls, they undergo the barbarous operation of excision when they are from eight to twelve years old. The girls' excision is not performed at the same time as the boys' circumcision, but in another year. The attendant festivities also last for one month.

The girls are operated on by a woman, the boys by a man.

It is not the labia of the girls that are severed, but the clitoris itself. Why do this? My informants did not know. Is it to make the weaker sex less susceptible to sensual pleasures? No. It would rather be, my informants tell me, to facilitate the physical union of men and women. This would also be the aim of the boys' circumcision. But my informants were not sure.

881 304 171 We might note that among the Mossi, as in certain other parts of West Africa, for example in Guinea (but not among the Gourounsi, where boys are not circumcised /598/ and girls are often excised at birth), circumcision and excision are combined with an initiation, that is to say, are closely connected with the education and instruction of young men and girls. One takes advantage of the circumcision or excision to complete, so to speak, the instruction and education of youth.

881 304 Marc has the following to say about the subject (op. cit., p. 150). "The circumcision of boys takes place around the age of twelve and occasions important festivities. There seems to be a sort of initiation ceremony, which is performed in rather mysterious circumstances. Unfortunately, it is difficult to find out exactly what does take place."

000 We close our survey of Mossi religion by referring the reader to Appendix 33 /not translated/ for a few complementary details on the Moslem question in the territory. We have also concluded our description of Mossi society as a whole. In order to gain a deeper understanding of its origins as far as the conquering population is concerned, we shall now have a glance at the Foutanké social type in the following chapter /not translated/.

593 The Moro Naba, after he has been notified by the family council,
684 pronounces the forfeiture of paternal authority. In case of incest, the guilty party was driven out of the territory.

593 Duties of children toward their parents. —The children owe obedience to their father and mother. They also owe them respect.

Their labor obligations are distributed among the fields of the work group, the father's private fields, the mother's small private plots, and their own little plots. Naturally they work most on the large fields belonging to the work group.

304 Circumcision. —Circumcision is performed at the age of 13 or 14.
881 It takes place in the month of December, hence during the dry, cool season. At this time the children are not needed to help in the fields, as they are in the winter season. This is also the case in the hot, dry season, but at that time the wounds would heal less quickly. This leaves the dry, cold season, which is excellently suited to the treatment of the circumcised, a time when the children have nothing whatever to do and the grown-ups very little.

304 Circumcision is performed on a certain number of children at the
621 same time. When a small village is involved, all the children in the village are circumcised at once. When a large village is involved,
593 the children in each quarter are circumcised together. The children
881 themselves ask their big brother if they may be circumcised when they feel that they have reached a suitable age for this operation. The big brother decides and says yes or no.

304 The children also set the exact date for the circumcision and go to
326 the man who has charge of the operation to make the arrangements.
881 In Yatenga, as a rule, he is a blacksmith (at Ouahigouya, for example, from the quarter of the Baloum-Naba). Sometimes, however, non-blacksmiths, either Foulsé or Mossi, perform the operation. When a performer of operations dies, he is replaced by someone who knows how to circumcise, either a brother or a son of the deceased or someone from another family.

304 Circumcision is not performed in the evening or at night, as happens
881 among other Blacks of West Africa, but at six o'clock in the morning. A particularly kind man among the people of the quarter or of the village has been chosen by the children who are to be circumcised. He wakes them up on that morning and takes them to the man who is to perform the operation. Big brothers accompany their younger brothers, but the father and mother do not witness the operation and are not even

304 notified, nor are the family heads. The women, girls, and other
881 boys (those who are not to be circumcised) cannot witness the operation, and this is actually forbidden to them. Circumcision is performed in the bush, 500 meters from the village, in the open air by the side of a tree. There is no location determined by custom, however, and a spot is chosen each year at will.

The man who is performing the operation ties the tip of the patient's prepuce with a string /259/, and the boy squats down. A small block of wood is placed under the penis, and the tip of the penis rests upon it. The man places a small iron cleaver on the spot marked by the string, and deals it a sharp, neat blow with a stone, so the blade will make a clean cut. Naturally, a copious hemorrhage ensues. It is
[752] first allowed to take its course for a while, and then the man stanches it by putting dust upon the wound. Each child is circumcised in turn. When the operations are over, the man who was chosen, the nané, leads the circumcised boys to another spot, 500 meters from the village, under a tree. He has the heads of the children's families notified (and they notify in turn the children's parents) that the boys have just been circumcised and beg forgiveness for having done this without telling them. Family heads, fathers, and mothers naturally forgive in accordance with custom. Meanwhile, the boys are taking care of themselves. By tying a string around the body, they lift the penis so its tip will not rub against the thighs. The string holds another cord which lifts the penis in a horizontal position. To maintain it in this position, they also place under the penis a little piece of forked wood, the tip of which rests on the testicles. They do not dress the wounds as yet. This will not be done until three days have passed.

304 Meanwhile, the men of the circumcised boys' compounds build
342 two sheds in Mossi style (low, on forks, with a thick straw roof), one
881 outside the village where the young men are, the other inside the village in front of the compound of the nané. Food for the circumcised boys is provided by their families. Each mother makes sarabou for her son, but the mothers do not bring it themselves, for, being women, they are not permitted to see the newly-circumcised boys. They send the sarabou through some boy who has already been circumcised. In the evening when it is quite dark, around seven o'clock, the nané brings the children to sleep under the shed erected in the village. Before daybreak in the morning they will, like shadows, leave again for the bush.

304 824 752 881 At the end of three days, the nané sends a few circumcised boys of preceding years, rasamba, to look in the bush for bark of the néré, karite, n'pékou, and the n'kouna trees. He has them boiled in a large canari and then allows the water to cool until it is lukewarm. Then he calls the bankonsé (this is the name of the newly circumcised boys in Mossi, bankonka in the singular, bankonsé in the plural) and orders them to wash their penes in this water. At the same time he has the leaves of the kantoboga boiled. This is an aloe-type plant of which we have already spoken /not translated/. When this washing is done, the bankonsé smear their penes with cow butter (karite butter is avoided because it is believed to soften the penis and to make it less virile), and then, after cutting kantoboga leaves into pieces, they wrap them around the member, forming a sort of sheath. These leaves are wrapped with cotton thread so they will stay in place. /260/

From then on, the same procedure is repeated every morning and every evening. The bankonsé undo the bandage, wash with néré or karite water, apply fresh butter and new kantoboga leaves. This is done until the wounds are healed.

Néré water, once prepared, keeps for seven days. The supply of kantoboga leaves is renewed only when there are no more on hand.

304 883 881 The bankonsé do not stir for the first three days. From the third to the tenth day, they begin to take a little exercise. For example, they fetch whatever water they need. At the end of ten days, they walk about in the bush, fetch firewood which they stack in piles, and do the same with straw. In the open country they chase hares, rats, and snakes with sticks, in short, all the small game which is to be found there. When there is water in the vicinity, they fish for frogs and fish. They also pick berries from bushes, etc.

[292] Their clothing consists of a kind of skirt which goes down to their ankles and which is made of old garments torn to shreds, of frayed cotton bands.

In the evening from time to time the bankonsé have tom-tom sessions near the shed where they sleep in the village. The griot /drummers, minstrels/ come and play on their instruments. Since this is done at night, men, women, and children may attend.

304 425 881 The bankonsé are entitled to ransack the bush and to take everything they find: chickens, goats, sheep, cotton, etc. The owners have no right to object, but this applies only to small livestock. The bankonsé have no right to larger animals and horses.

•881 It seems that among the Mossi and Foulsé, the nané does not give
304 moral lessons to the bankonsé, contrary to the procedure among the Bambara where the custom has been preserved.

At the end of a month, the bankonsé are healed. The families are notified, and each household prepares a new pair of breeches and a boubou /robe/ for the young circumcised boys.

On the evening preceding the day when they make their reappearance in the village, around seven o'clock, the skirts of the circumcised boys are heaped into a pile and burned. The following morning the nané leads the bankonsé to the well to wash from head to toe before donning their new clothes. Before leaving camp, the firewood gathered by the boys is distributed among their mothers and the straw among their family heads. The nané also keeps a certain amount for himself. This is his allowance, aside from his being provided with food throughout the month, along with the circumcised boys, by the latter's
[833] relatives. (On the other hand, he had to remain separated from his wife, for there is a superstition that should he approach her, the bankonsé would fail to heal.) When the distribution of straw and firewood has been completed, our circumcised boys make their triumphal entry into the village at seven o'clock in the morning in their /261/ beautiful new garments. To the sound of the tom-tom, they visit all the compounds, calling on everyone. Gifts are offered to them
[431] (kola nuts, cowries, peanuts, cotton, dolo, etc.). When the visits are completed, the celebration is over, and the bankonsé return home.
[551] They may henceforth be called by name again; this could not be done during their retreat.

Excision. ——Girls are excised when they are eight, nine, or ten, depending on how mature they are. As with the boys, this is done during the month of December, but instead of being carried out on a village or quarter basis, it is done on a compound basis. The operation itself is performed by an old woman who knows how to do it. It is not she, however, who watches over the girls afterwards, but an old woman of the compound who has them under her supervision for twenty-five or thirty days. During that time, the girls are kept apart, sleeping in their guardian's hut and taking care of themselves. As soon as they can walk, they go and gather wood in the bush for her, they fetch water, spin cotton, etc. At nightfall, they sing in chorus, clapping their hands in rhythm.

When they are healed, they deck themselves with all the bracelets and jewelry they can find in the compound. Thus dressed up and

881 304 adorned, they go in a group to greet the mother of each one in turn, but they do not go out into the village like the boys.

In short, among the Mossi and Foulsé of Yatenga, circumcision and excision are not characterized by the intervention of any powerful religious society like the komo among the Bambara and among the Mandé in general. Nor do we find here those picturesque details which are so strikingly present among the Malinké of Upper Guinea and even more so among the tribes of Lower Guinea (Soussou /Susu/, Landouman /Landuma/, etc.) (3). Nevertheless, circumcision is

3. On this topic, see André Arcin, La Guinée française /French Guinea/, pp. 438-446, and Noirot, A travers le Foutah-Djallon et le Bambouk /Across the Fouta Djallon and Bambouk/, concerning the Landouman.

important in the lives of the Mossi and Foulsé of Yatenga, because it transforms the child into a young man.

591 After circumcision. —Following circumcision or excision, only marriage remains. When a girl married, as we have seen above, she leaves her compound and goes to her husband's residence. The young man, however, remains in his own compound. He is given a cabin, a hut, for himself and his bride if there is one available and empty, or a new one is built for him. When he has a child, he builds a hut near his own for the young mother and son, unless he is given another one which is available.

884 Emancipation and coming of age. —One can scarcely speak of emancipation and coming of age among the Mossi. A man comes of age when he marries, but he always remains a minor to some extent vis-à-vis his work group, his compound, and his family. Emancipation /262/ and coming of age are French concepts which have no equivalent among the Mossi in particular and the Sudanese in general. One might acknowledge, however, as does Vadier in his monograph on Yatenga, a sort of coming of age around the age of 17 or 18 for purposes of buying and selling.

429 Guardianship. —When a Mossi dies, his wives and children revert to his oldest brother. If there are many wives and children, they are apportioned among the brothers of the deceased. The head of the family presides over the distribution.

859 868 The girls remain by their mother's side. They fetch water with her, learn how to pound millet, how to cook, etc. When they are eight or nine, they are taught how to spin cotton.

513 882 The boys sleep in their mother's hut until they are circumcised, that is, until they are about thirteen years old. Thereafter, they sleep in a special hut, kombarogo, with all the other circumcised boys of the compound. The girls sleep in their mother's hut until they are married.

561 Little boys are called kondibili kirisé, biribili kirisé, or komkirisé (komkiriga in the singular). Little girls are called kompougouli kirisé or bipougouli kirisé. The older girls are kompougouli beda or bipougouli beda. The older boys or young men (they are considered as such once they are circumcised) are rasamba (rasanga in the singular). Young girls are called pourousada or pougousada (pourousadaba in the plural).

Education of children among themselves. Societies. —Mossi 859 575 children form societies among themselves. These are called nam (they are the same as the Bambara ton or flambolo). There is a society for boys and one for girls in the small villages. In the large villages, as in Ouahigouya, for example, these societies are formed by village quarters.

Each society has its chief and its high dignitaries: its Moro Naba who rules over it with his four ministers. The girls also have their Pourousada Moro Naba and four female ministers. These societies are devoted to play, drinking, tom-tom playing, and dancing.

Each member must furnish a certain number of cowries: the chiefs /256/ give 200 or 300; the mere rasamba, 100; the kondibili, 50; the kondibili-kirise, 30. The Moro Naba of the society collects the dues, and he is also the treasurer.

Another source of income for the society derives from work performed for the people of the village, the owners of fields. The boys do not merely go and offer their services. When someone needs a helping hand with his field, he goes to the Moro Naba of the society who places the whole group at his disposal for a fee. Payment is made in millet which the society uses to make dolo for its celebrations.

Another source of income derives from fining members for lapses in their duties to the society. The Moro Naba of the nam fines those who arrive late when called for work on someone's field or those who go on an errand or a short trip without notifying him in advance.

593 cases are rare. Less rare are the children who care little for their parents. Nevertheless, old people are usually treated well and with [888] great respect. A son who abandons his old father or mother is held in very poor esteem. A woman prefers to bear daughters who will help her in her daily work, but she hopes for one or two sons with whom she may live when she is old.

857 The girls live with their mother. As soon as they can walk, they 883 follow her to the stream and return with a gourd of water on their [482 heads. As they grow, so does the gourd, and little girls carry water 312] jars weighing from fifteen to twenty kilograms. At home, young girls mill grain to feed the whole family, tend the fire, stir the sauce, wash the dishes and the clothes, sweep, in short, attend to all the household tasks under their mother's guidance. The only task of a woman with two or three half-grown daughters is to supervise their work. Because they are always with their mother, the young girls are usually more responsible and better behaved than the boys. Unfortunately they make up for this later, and more often than not, it is on their own initiative that they go at night to the young men's huts. A young man may give presents to a girl who has already been promised in marriage, and he may do so in front of her mother, who says nothing.

857 Boys help their father as soon as they are strong enough. Younger 883 boys follow their older brothers into the bush as soon as they can and 231 help them herd the sheep and goats. These boys go out every morning, before the sun has dried the dew, to look for new termite nests full of insects which the chicks are fond of eating. During the dry season, they cut down and plait grass to cover the roofs; if they are old enough, they even cut the firewood. When a little older, if their father or the person with whom they live owns a horse, they watch over it, take it to the stream to water it and to wash it, go into the bush to cut grass for it, and clean the stables. During the winter when the grass is green, each of the horses of a rich naba is cared for by three or four children. Some of them cut the grass, others /37/ stuff it almost by force into the horse's mouth, while one little boy drives the flies away with a stick to which a sort of flexible leather sole is attached. The winter season is a fine time for horses, who grow fat and heavy. Unfortunately, the Black does not think of the future and does not foresee how much dry grass will be needed to bridge the dry season; as a result, the horses suffer a great deal from hunger at that time.

857 The people fined must give three or four canari of dolo (the usual
575 canari of dolo is worth 150 cowries, or three sous).

The members assemble to eat, to drink dolo, and to dance to the sound of the tom-tom at the compound belonging to the father of the society's Moro Naba. The girls are invited to come and dance.

[171] Among the Mossi of Yatenga, the nam do not have their own huts as do the Bambara ton and flambolo.

Little mock weddings are performed in the societies between the girls and boys. The young spouses offer each other small gifts of cowries, peanuts, cotton, etc.

Once married, the young girls withdraw from their society on account of their husband's jealousy. Married men, on the other hand, may remain in theirs and quite frequently do while they are young. Old men, however, are no longer members of the nam.

•883 Young people's tasks. —Young men, after they are circumcised (at the age of 13 or 14), work in the compound or rather in the work group to which they belong on the same days and at the same hours as other members of the group.

They are provided with food by the head of the group seven months out of twelve and by their father five months out of twelve, and they are clothed by the latter.

They have their own little plots, but the produce does not belong exclusively to them. Their father and mother take what they need to feed or clothe the youth. The remainder is his. Boys can thus accumulate a little property of their own before they marry.

Young girls have no little plots of their own to cultivate. They learn how to till the soil by working with their mother in the fields of the work group and in the mother's little private plots. Hence, they are fed by the group seven months out of twelve and by their father and mother for five months, and they are clothed by their parents. The individual property they own consists mostly of trifling jewels usually received as gifts. /257/

573 Rights and duties of parents toward their children. —Paternal authority rests largely with the father of the child, but also partly with the head of the work group, the head of the compound, and the family head. This is understandable, since the child's support is ensured for the greater part of the time, except for clothing, by the work group and since lodging is ensured by the compound.

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861 receive any advice from him. The Mossi, fathers and mothers alike, do not know how to train their children. Under the pretext that a small child does not know what he is doing, the parents allow him to do as he pleases and to carry out his every whim without punishment. Tots who can barely articulate two words utter the coarsest insults to their mother and beat her with their small fists without being punished. The onlookers merely remark that some day he will be a fighter. To chastise him would be to make him cry, and a child's tears are always an embarrassment to be avoided as much as possible. When a child behaves badly, when he fights, steals, seeks out the company of professional thieves or young scamps, when he tells everybody what he has seen and heard and cannot keep a secret, when complaints are made against him, then his father and mother punish him and warn him not to do it again; but they do not prevent wrongdoing, and [672] if necessary they will pay his debts, because all members of the family, especially the father, are held liable. The father does not teach his son the cult and the sacrifices, but he does request the boy's help. The child watches his father, and when he grows up, he does as his father did.

857 Boys of twelve or fifteen may fail to return home in the evening for any reason whatever, without warning, and no one worries about it: "He will come soon enough." The young man of twenty builds ● 884 himself a hut apart from his father's house, in order to have greater 593 freedom and to receive any visitors he may want. Besides his father's field, he cultivates his own piece of land and sells the produce /36/ himself in order to buy clothes. His father feeds him but rarely presents him with gifts of clothing when he is old enough to work for himself. If he weaves cloth during the dry season, he may do with it as he pleases, sell it or make clothing. His father has no say in the matter. It is the father, however, who teaches his sons how to 868 cultivate the soil, how to plait mats, and sometimes how to weave. 593 If the father works at a trade, he teaches it to his sons: the drummers teach their children to beat the drum and to sing the chief's praises; the jewellers and smiths teach their sons their respective professions.

593 The father usually is fond of his children and likes to play with them when they are small. He watches over them while the mother does her household tasks. Parents sincerely lament their children's death, and children that of their siblings. Undoubtedly there are parents with the greatest indifference toward their offspring, but such

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In short, among the Mossi and Foulsé of Yatenga, circumcision and excision are not characterized by the intervention of any powerful religious society like the komo among the Bambara and among the Mandé in general. Nor do we find here those picturesque details which are so strikingly present among the Malinké of Upper Guinea and even more so among the tribes of Lower Guinea (Soussou /Susu/, Landouman /Landuma/, etc.) (3). Nevertheless, circumcision is

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12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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larger markets there were and are solid stalls which are built and tenanted by merchants. In the small district and village markets, these stalls are built out of millet stalks which offer little but protection against the noonday sun on market days. Men build these structures for their womenfolk and for themselves. Some of the shelters which are not used for trading serve as galleries where the young blades look out and comment on the passing scene. Others are used as meeting places by adult men who sit and discuss all sorts of affairs. Still others are used by the older men, who gather there to arrange marriages between their several families, wait for gifts from younger men who seek wives, or spend a great deal of time reminiscing about their youthful adventures. Those persons who do not have such shelters sit in the sun or use grass lean-tos as protection from the sun.

Except in the large towns, Mossi markets are held between the hours of 10:00 A.M. and 4:00 P.M. every fourth day. In the larger towns there are daily markets, but these remained unimportant until today when they serve a growing urban population. The capital city of Wagadougou now even has an "evening" market which opens about 4:00 P.M. and closes at about 9:00 P.M. In addition, numerous daily markets have sprung up in many of its wards. The three-day markets are, however, the traditional type, and they are still the most numerous through the country. By "three-day market" I mean that a market is held one day, not held over the two following days, and then held again on the next day. These markets also have a 21-day cycle from one *Ragakasanga* or *Rag'kasanga* ("larger market") on a Friday to another *Rag'kasanga* on a Friday three weeks later, a total of seven markets between the two important ones. The people give no adequate explanation for the observance of the three-day cycle or the 21-day cycle. One man did suggest that it took the women three days to prepare beer and this was why markets could not be held more often, but even he did not speculate about the 21-day cycle.[10] This same man did point out, however, that the cycle made little difference to persons who really liked to go to market, since it was possible for

(10) Zahan (1954 : 373) apparently found one of the few Mossi informants with a mystical bent; he reports that the seven three-day cycles of markets in the 21-day cycle have the following significance for the Yatenga people: "The first of these numbers explains the cycle of the person (7 symbolizes the complete person: male [to which the Mossi assign the number 3] and female [to which they assign the number 4], the second that of the creation." He believes that each market starts a new cycle, a beginning and an end: "the seventh market signifies the most perfect equilibrium: the one which exists between the universe, mankind, and the divinity." In a footnote he suggests that this sybolism is not too different among the Dogon, who are "ideologically and geographically close to the Mossi." Peter Hammond, who worked in Yatenga, could not find this kind of symbolism.

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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market and set up their small tables to display all types of goods from 443
trinkets to single lumps of sugar. And the more numerous young 512
men, who have no goods but have money in their pockets, go to the 571
leaf-covered sheds, place their weapons on top of them, and take
seats from which to view the passing parade. Imperceptibly, the hum 576
in the market increases as people find their places and greet one
another with *Ne Raga,* the market greeting, until by 11:30 A.M. the
whole market reverberates with sounds of drumming, cries of ven-
dors, and the shrill voice of water hawkers and juvenile vendors. Now
the market is in full swing.

From midday until about 3:30 P.M., the Mossi market is a sea of
humanity—talking, laughing, arranging rendezvous, quarreling, sell-
ing, buying, parading, and (where youngsters are concerned) often
crying for want of money to buy a desired object. The return of mi- 667
grants lends additional color and excitement to the market as these 292
young people walk about in their new clothes, encouraging the drum-
mers to sing louder praises, the maidens to feel jealous of the clothes
of the migrants' female relatives, the former migrants to reminisce
about the days when they too had bright new clothes, and the young
boys to dream of going off one day to obtain the things they need.

Men, noting that their female relatives are spending too much time 443
looking over the wares of a vendor of European products or of the 512
kola-nut seller, wander over ostensibly to help in the purchase but 571
really to prevent love affairs. The failure to observe such a precaution 578
may be the cause of the shouting a man hears in the distance, and
off he hurries to see whether a lineage brother or a friend may need
his aid. He may either get into the battle himself, or aid the Raga
Naba and the other elders to chase the battlers out of the market
place, or to take them to the chief. This may indeed restore some
peace and good fellowship to the market.

Elders, now more interested in beer than in other pleasures, pass 443
the heat of the market day under the beer sellers' shed. From time 512
to time one of them may be interrupted by a young man bringing 571
him three kola nuts, one or two of which are immediately broken 273
and given to friends. However, when an oldster, whether a drinking 287
pagan or a Moslem teetotaler, sees or overhears a young man buying
four kolas, he may frown or smile in the knowledge that mischief is
afoot. Loud-voiced predictions of the consequences of evil-doing 297
may suddenly disturb the merrymakers as American missionaries 197
speaking in perfect More (the language of the Mossi) appear and
harangue the market people. Then, as suddenly, the *Americadamba*
depart in their large cars, and the curious pagans, amused Catholics
or hostile Moslems who had gathered to hear the gospel return to

644 554 576 [101] It is to be noted that a gourdful of this water with millet flour on which a bit of karite butter is floating is a customary courtesy offering among the Mossi. It is most improper to greet or to receive a stranger by offering him plain water.

644 782 On the fourth or fifth day the Djiba Naba proceeds to Zoanghna (a village located two or three kilometers behind the government buildings) and there hands over a sheep and a cow to serve as offerings to the sacred amulets of the ancestors and to protect him from evil spirits and wicked people. He does not spend the night in this village but returns home immediately after the sacrifice.

644 788 Several days later the decision is made to install the new naba in his domain. A large number of soroné, drummers, and followers accompany him on what amounts to a kind of obligatory pilgrimage which we shall describe briefly.

The following itinerary is customary.

First, the Djiba Naba goes to Badnogo where he spends the night. The next day he goes on to Samba where he is offered water with flour in it, and for his part, he gives salt to be shared among the old women of the village.

One may ask why salt is given to the old women and not to the other people. The Mossi call old women nough' pouk ramba, that is, those who, when blessing you, clasp their hands so as to make a higher power hear and grant their prayers. [888]

644 788 431 [102] On the following day he proceeds to Tensobitenga where he remains for three days. Beer is prepared for him; he is given a cow for his followers and a wife for himself. At Nakamtenga, his next stop, the village chief welcomes him with a sheep and many baskets and bowls of sagbo (millet mush).

644 788 He does not remain here for the night but instead goes on to Koubri. This is the village where eunuchs formerly suffered the cruel operation of castration (1). The canton chief meets him, leads

839 304 681 1. Eunuchs. Bandits, thieves, murderers, and slaves or soroné (servitors) convicted of adultery with women of the nobility were the only ones sent to Koubri, a canton in the circle of Ouagadougou, to be castrated. This operation involved only the removal

695 The procedure was the same for all, men and women. The sons
681 of nabas, the nakomse, however, were neither tried nor punished in
554 public. They were not tied with ropes, but with strips of fabric; and if condemned to death, they were hanged rather than clubbed to death. In any case, complaints against them were extremely rare. The sons of a powerful naba could do anything with impunity.

681 For examples, here are a few crimes and their respective punishments. Of course, there was no written code, no formal scale of penalties. Everything depended on custom and on the whim of the
696 judge. Thus, the wealthy could obtain sentences in their favor by
691 paying the judges, and thieves could avoid punishment by sharing their loot with the naba. Otherwise, a thief caught in the act was
685 flogged, sometimes to death. He was condemned to several months in irons, and exposed to public ridicule before the naba's hut; he had to restore what he had taken, and his family was held responsible. If he repeated the offense, he was led to the marketplace with a rope around his neck; he was supplied with an abundance of meat and dolo /beer/, and then clubbed to death at the foot of a tree. In Ouagadougou he was sometimes made a eunuch instead. This was almost the equivalent of a death sentence, because the operation was carried out in such barbarous fashion that death often ensued. French justice more leniently imprisons the thieves, a cause of complaint by honest people who find the punishment too mild.

682 In case of willful murder, the killer was put to death; if he could
683 not be found, a member of his family was executed in his place.
672 In case of a brawl, no attempt was made to determine who had started the fight or who was in the right. (Manslaughter was punished by a fine paid to the victim's family. The right /26/ of self-defense was, of course, recognized. If blows and wounds had been inflicted, the adversaries were put in irons.)

681 Old women were often accused of being witches and of eating
683 children's souls. If their crime was considered proved, if the sorcerers consulted declared some old woman guilty of a baby's death, she was
● 888 put to death in very cruel fashion: a second opening was made in a clay pot so that her head could be put completely within it; then the pot was heated intensely and placed over the head of the unfortunate woman.

685 If a goat or sheep caused damage to a field, the animal could be killed on the spot. The owner had to be notified, but he was not

593 cases are rare. Less rare are the children who care little for their parents. Nevertheless, old people are usually treated well and with [888] great respect. A son who abandons his old father or mother is held in very poor esteem. A woman prefers to bear daughters who will help her in her daily work, but she hopes for one or two sons with whom she may live when she is old.

857 883 [482 312] The girls live with their mother. As soon as they can walk, they follow her to the stream and return with a gourd of water on their heads. As they grow, so does the gourd, and little girls carry water jars weighing from fifteen to twenty kilograms. At home, young girls mill grain to feed the whole family, tend the fire, stir the sauce, wash the dishes and the clothes, sweep, in short, attend to all the household tasks under their mother's guidance. The only task of a woman with two or three half-grown daughters is to supervise their work. Because they are always with their mother, the young girls are usually more responsible and better behaved than the boys. Unfortunately they make up for this later, and more often than not, it is on their own initiative that they go at night to the young men's huts. A young man may give presents to a girl who has already been promised in marriage, and he may do so in front of her mother, who says nothing.

857 883 231 Boys help their father as soon as they are strong enough. Younger boys follow their older brothers into the bush as soon as they can and help them herd the sheep and goats. These boys go out every morning, before the sun has dried the dew, to look for new termite nests full of insects which the chicks are fond of eating. During the dry season, they cut down and plait grass to cover the roofs; if they are old enough, they even cut the firewood. When a little older, if their father or the person with whom they live owns a horse, they watch over it, take it to the stream to water it and to wash it, go into the bush to cut grass for it, and clean the stables. During the winter when the grass is green, each of the horses of a rich naba is cared for by three or four children. Some of them cut the grass, others /37/ stuff it almost by force into the horse's mouth, while one little boy drives the flies away with a stick to which a sort of flexible leather sole is attached. The winter season is a fine time for horses, who grow fat and heavy. Unfortunately, the Black does not think of the future and does not foresee how much dry grass will be needed to bridge the dry season; as a result, the horses suffer a great deal from hunger at that time.